

外国名著小说合集

(套装14册)



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目录

[外国名著小说合集（套装14册）](#)

[一张彩票](#)

[了不起的盖茨比：英汉对照版](#)

[1984：汉英对照](#)

[动物庄园（英汉双语版）](#)

[老人与海\(最新修订版\)\(附英文原版\)\(套装共2册\)](#)

[八月之光](#)

[我弥留之际](#)

[喧哗与骚动](#)

[少年与海](#)

[格兰特船长的儿女](#)

[海底两万里](#)

[神秘岛](#)

[我们](#)

[美妙的新世界:英汉对照](#)

版权信息

书名：外国名著小说合集（套装14册）

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出版时间：2022.11

ISBN：E

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外国名著小说合集（套装**14**册）

一张充满神秘色彩的彩票 一段曲折坎坷的人生

一张彩票

凡尔纳，不仅是科幻小说大师！

[法] 凡尔纳 著
郎悦洁 译 星蔚时代 绘



国内少有的版本
凡尔纳写实小说杰作

武汉出版社
WUHAN PUBLISHING HOUSE

目录

[一张彩票](#)

[译者前言](#)

[主要人物介绍](#)

[第一章 一封让人充满希望的信](#)

[第二章 与众不同的客店](#)

[第三章 一家三口](#)

[第四章 对情人的思念](#)

[第五章 为婚礼做准备](#)

[第六章 陌生客人的来访](#)

[第七章 兄妹的担忧](#)

[第八章 救了一个可爱的客人](#)

[第九章 被救的游客](#)

[第十章 大家成为朋友](#)

[第十一章 寻找奥勒之旅](#)

[第十二章 被赋予神奇色彩的彩票](#)

[第十三章 进一步搜寻遇难船只的残骸](#)

[第十四章 彩票被迫转给卑鄙之徒](#)

[第十五章 关于彩票的谈话](#)

[第十六章 走在开奖的路上](#)

[第十七章 彩票开奖前](#)

[第十八章 挑选漂亮的礼物](#)

[第十九章 开奖现场出现失踪的青年](#)

[第二十章 有情人终成眷属](#)

版权信息

书名：一张彩票

作者：（法）凡尔纳著；郎悦洁译

出版方：武汉出版社

出版时间：2014.7

ISBN：9787543082717

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一张彩票

译者前言

《一张彩票》是19世纪法国著名作家儒勒·凡尔纳的作品。小说围绕着一张被赋予了神秘色彩的彩票而展开叙述。

这张彩票是一位名叫奥勒的年轻人，在他工作的渔船即将沉没时通过漂流瓶留给他的未婚妻伊尔娜的。在彩票的背面，奥勒用文字表达了对未婚妻最后的思念，因而被伊尔娜视为珍宝，不管任何人出多高的代价都不肯脱手。由于这段传奇的经历，彩票被人们赋予了神奇的力量。自私刻薄的债主得知此事之后，便以没收客店为要挟，逼迫伊尔娜一家将彩票转给自己。岂料峰回路转，开奖那天，在开奖现场，伊尔娜的未婚夫奥勒竟然现身，而这张彩票也真的中了头奖。庆幸的是，彩票事先已被为报答救命之恩的挪威国会议员、法学教授霍格先生从高利贷者那里赎了回来，并交还给了奥勒本人，从而使伊尔娜一家得以幸福团圆。

小说的情节本身并不复杂，但却写得跌宕起伏，扣人心弦。在编译过程中，在尽量遵循原文的基础上，在语言叙述上进行了润色。为了增加作品的生动性，文中还加入了些许插图，使读者读起来更有趣味。另外又给每章加上了相应的标题，以方便读者阅读。

作为法国著名作家凡尔纳的作品，本书是他为数不多的反映风土人情的作品之一，读者在其间既能领略到挪威那迷人的自然风光，又能感受到汉森一家的命运起伏，可以说是一部不可不读的经典佳作。

主要人物介绍

汉森太太：

达尔客店的老板娘。作品中的女主人公伊尔娜的母亲。

伊尔娜·汉森：

美丽大方，是客店老板娘汉森太太的女儿，彩票主人奥勒·冈的未婚妻。

如艾尔·汉森：

客店老板娘汉森太太的儿子，伊尔娜的哥哥。热心助人、机智冷静，是一个身体强健的兼职向导。

奥勒·冈：

汉森太太的养子，水手长，伊尔娜的未婚夫，彩票的主人。

赛格弗琳娜：

邦布勒地区一位漂亮的女子，父亲（即厄尔木博）是当地一个最大农庄的主人，同时也是伊尔娜的好姐妹，后来和如艾尔结为夫妻。

桑格伊斯：

汉森太太的债主。尖酸刻薄，为人狡诈，曾以卑鄙的手段夺走了彩票。

希尔维尤斯·霍格：

挪威国会议员、法学教授。善良和蔼，受人爱戴。在一次旅行中被伊尔娜和如艾尔救起后，和他们成为很好的朋友，后来为赎回彩票及寻找奥勒本人起到了重要的作用。

第一章 一封让人充满希望的信

“几点了？”汉森太太磕着烟斗的烟灰问道，冒出的烟雾还在房顶的悬梁上来回盘旋着。

“妈妈，8点了。”伊尔娜回答说。

“这天气太糟糕了，晚上怕是不会有旅客前来住店了。”

“我觉得不会有人来了。但不管怎么样，房间还是都准备好了，要是外面有人叫门，我能听见。”

“你哥哥还没回来吗？”

“没有呢。”

“他没说今天会回来吗？”

“妈，他没说。如艾尔送一位旅客去坦恩湖了，出去的时候就已经很晚了，我觉得他最快也得明天才能回到达尔来。”

“那他就在默尔那儿过夜吗？”

“是啊，很可能，除非他去邦布勒探望厄尔木博庄主。”

“是去看他女儿吧？”

“是的，赛格弗琳娜是我最好的朋友，我一直像爱姐姐那样爱

她。”姑娘笑着回答说。

“那好吧，把门关上，伊尔娜，咱们睡觉去。”

“妈妈，您感觉有什么不舒服吗？”

“没有，不过我打算明天起个早，我得到默尔去一趟。”

“去那儿干吗呀？”

“哎！新的旺季就要到了，咱们得添点食物做储备，不去料理一下怎么行呢？”

“这么说，从克里斯蒂亚尼亚来的押运员和他那装了酒和食物的车子已经到了默尔吗？”

“是啊，伊尔娜，他是今天下午到的。”汉森太太回答说，“锯木厂的监工朗格兰碰到他，然后路过这里的时候告诉我的。咱们的罐头火腿和熏制鱿鱼已经没多少了，可别到时候干瞪眼儿。尤其是天气变好了以后，旅客们随时都可能来特勒玛克旅游。咱们这个小店儿应该做好随时接待他们的准备，让他们住在这儿什么都不缺。你知道吗？伊尔娜，今天都已经是4月15日了。”

“4月15日了！”姑娘嘀咕着说。

“这样吧，明天这儿的一切都由我负责。”汉森太太又说，“我用两个小时把东西备齐，让押运员一块儿送过来。然后我再坐如艾尔的马车跟他一起回来。”

“妈妈，您要是看见邮差，别忘了问问有没有咱们的信。”

“特别要问问有没有你的是吧。很可能有你的信，因为从奥勒上一封来信到现在已经有一个月了。”

“是啊！一个月了，一个多月了！”

“别担心，伊尔娜，稍微耽误几天没什么可奇怪的。再说，要是默尔的邮差没有送信来，那只能说明克里斯蒂亚尼亚那边没收到信，可是信就不能从贝尔根来吗？”

“这也有可能，妈妈。”伊尔娜说，“但是您叫我怎么办呢？我心里还是不好受，因为这儿离纽芬兰渔场太远了，而且还要在气候这么糟糕的季节横渡整个大海。我那可怜的奥勒出去眼看着就快一年了，谁能知道他什么时候才能回到达尔来跟我们团聚呢？”

“等他回来的时候我们还不知道在不在这儿呢。”汉森太太小声地说，不过她的声音很低，女儿没有听见。

客店的大门正对着维斯特夫若哈达尔小路。伊尔娜走过去把门关上，不过没有把门锁上。因为在挪威这个好客的国度里，不用这么小心谨慎，而且不锁门反倒显得更合适一些，这样不管是白天还是晚上，旅客都不用别人给他开门，自己就可以直接走到山庄里的任何一户人家。

无论是在执法大法官管辖的地方，还是在外省最偏僻的乡村，人们都不用担心坏人和强盗会来抢劫和做坏事。在这里居住的人们一直都很安全，从来没有受到过任何企图谋财害命的侵犯。

母亲和女儿住在客店正面二楼的两个房间里。这两个房间空气清新，干净整洁，摆设也很简朴，可以看出是经过一位颇有经验的家庭主妇精心收拾过的。看起来很像木屋的延伸到外面的房顶下是如艾尔的房

间，窗户上镶着精心制作的松木窗框。从那里不但能看到雄伟的群山，还能看到峡谷的深处。还有奔腾咆哮着的马昂河，它的一半是河流，一半是瀑布。在底层的大厅那里，有一座带着粗栏杆，像镜子一样发亮的木制楼梯通到楼上各层。单就这房子的外观来看，可以说再没有比这更有魅力的了，旅游的人们在这里能够享受到在其他挪威客店中享受不到的舒适之感。

伊尔娜和母亲住在二楼，当只有她们两个人在家的时候，两个人总是很早就各回各的房间休息。这次，汉森太太拿着彩色的玻璃烛台，已经迈上了几级台阶，却又突然停住了。

有人在敲门。一个声音喊道：“喂！汉森太太，汉森太太！”

汉森太太只得又走下楼梯。

“这么晚了，谁还会来呢？”她开口问道。

“难道是如艾尔发生了什么意外？”伊尔娜着急地说。

她一边说，一边向大门走去。

一个小伙子正站在门口。是个坐在马车后面，到了下一站再把马牵回来的驿站跟班。

“啊！你这个时候来做什么？”伊尔娜问他。

“首先要祝您晚安。”小伙子回答说。

“没了吗？”

“不！还有，难道你不应该以礼相待吗？”

“是的，应该，不过，是谁让你来的？”

“是你哥哥如艾尔叫我来的。”

“如艾尔？有什么事吗？”汉森太太问道。她慢慢地向大门踱着脚步，好像还带有一定的节奏，这是挪威人走路的特点。挪威的地下矿脉里蕴藏着容易流动的水银，不过挪威人的性格中却很少有或压根没有那种活泼的气质。

可是，小伙子的回答明显是让做母亲的动了感情，她急切地问道：“我儿子没出什么事儿吧？”

“有……有一封信，是克里斯蒂亚尼亚的邮差从德拉蒙带来的……”

“一封从德拉蒙来的信？”汉森太太放低了声音，激动地说。

“这我不知道。”小伙子回答说，“我只知道如艾尔今天回不来了，是他让我到这儿来把这封信交给你们的。”

“这么着急吗？”

“看起来是的。”

“给我吧！”汉森太太回答道，她的声音流露出明显的焦虑。

“信就在这儿呢，很整洁，一点儿都没皱。不过，这封信不是写给您的。”

汉森太太松了一口气。“是给谁的？”她问道。

“是给您女儿的。”

“给我的！”伊尔娜说，“我可以肯定，是奥勒来的信，这信本应该转到克里斯蒂亚尼亚再送过来，可是哥哥不想让我等太长的时间！”

伊尔娜拿过信，凑到桌上的烛光下，看了看地址：“是的……是他，真是他来的信！希望他能告诉我子爵号快回来了。”

这时，汉森太太对小伙子说：“你不想进来吗？”

“好吧，我就待一分钟。今天晚上我一定要赶回去，明天早上还要去跟另一班马车呢。”

“好的，我想麻烦你告诉如艾尔，说我想去找他，让他等我。”

“是明天晚上吗？”

“不是，是明天上午。告诉他在看到我之前，不要离开默尔，我们要一起回达尔。”

“那就这么说好了，汉森太太。”

“来吧，喝点葡萄烧酒怎么样？”

“好主意。”

小伙子走到桌边，汉森太太给他倒了一点提神的烧酒，这种酒有着巨大的抵抗夜雾的力量。小伙子一口就喝光了。

“God Aften!”他说。

“God Aften！我的孩子。”

这是挪威语“晚安”的意思。他们简单地互相道了晚安，连头也没点一下。

小伙子离开了，似乎并不担心还要走一段很长的路。这条路沿着湍急的河流伸向前方，他的身影很快就消失在小路旁边的树林里。

此时此刻，伊尔娜一直在看着奥勒来信的信封，并不着急打开它。可以想象，这个薄信封在到达她的手上之前一定是横渡了整个海洋，这可是挪威西部所有的河流都汇注其中的大海啊。她仔细地检查着信封上的每个邮戳。

这封信是3月15日寄出的，4月15日才到了达尔。难道奥勒在一个月以前就写了这封信？在这一个月里，在纽芬兰的海域里会发生多少事啊！纽芬兰是英国人给新地岛起的名字。眼下还是冬天，正是一年中最危险的季节。那么，这些渔场难道不正是世界上最糟糕的渔场吗？经过北美平原，从北极吹来的强台风会在那里出现。奥勒干的是捕鱼的行当，是艰苦又危险的行当。他做这一行，就是为了给她——这个他一回来就要娶过门的未婚妻，带回一些财富。可怜的奥勒！他会在信中说些什么呢？不用说，他肯定会说自己是一直爱着伊尔娜的，就像伊尔娜会永远爱他一样；他会说虽然他们身处两地，但他们的心是紧紧地连在一起的，还会说他多么盼望着能回到达尔！

是的，他一定会这么说的，伊尔娜对此毫不怀疑。不过，他可能还会说他回家的日子就要到了，贝尔根的渔民们被吸引到离家这么远的地方来进行的捕鱼工作已经接近尾声了，奥勒或许会告诉她，子爵号已经把船上的货物捆绑完毕，准备起航了，他们一定会团圆在维斯特夫若哈达尔的这个幸福的家里一起过完这4月的最后几天。在信的最后，他可能还会让她相信已经可以定个日子，让牧师从默尔来到木制的小教堂来

为他们的婚礼主持仪式了吧？这个教堂的钟楼高高地耸立在茂密的树林之中，离汉森太太的客店也就是几百步的距离。只要撕开信封，拿出奥勒的来信读一读，就会让伊尔娜要么感到难过，要么就是高兴得流出眼泪，那么通过这伤心或是快乐的泪水就能知道信上到底写了些什么。眼下这挪威姑娘还不知道的事儿，要是换了性急的南方姑娘或是达勒加利（瑞典中部地区）、丹麦和荷兰的姑娘，恐怕她们早就知道了！可是伊尔娜还在那儿遐想着，只有在上帝高兴的时候，这些幻想才会停止。曾几何时，人们总是留恋梦境，而现实又是多么让人失望！

汉森太太说：“孩子，你哥哥叫人给你送来的那封信，是奥勒的来信吗？”

“是的，我能看出是他的笔迹。”

“难道你想把信留到明天再看吗？”

最后，伊尔娜又看了一下那个信封，然后，她不紧不慢地把它拆开，从里面取出了一封字迹工整的信。信的内容是这样的：

亲爱的伊尔娜：

如果你知道我们这次捕鱼获得了丰收，而且再过几天就要结束了，你一定会特别高兴。的确，我们已经接近战斗的尾声了。在分开了一年以后，再次回到达尔，看到我唯一的家，也就是你的家，我该有多么幸福啊！

我得到的那份收入有不少呢，这笔钱会作为我们结婚的费用。另外在贝尔根的艾尔普家族的长房之子，艾尔普兄弟经营的轮船公司也得到

了我的通知，说子爵号可能在5月15日到20日之间返回。也就是说，最多再有几个星期，你就能看到我了。

亲爱的伊尔娜，当我再次看到你的时候，我想你一定会比我刚离开时更漂亮了，而且像你的妈妈那样身体健康。我的兄长如艾尔，你的哥哥，这位我也想让他做我哥哥的勇敢正直的朋友，想必他的身体也一定很健康吧！

当你收到这封信时，请代我向汉森太太表达我所有亲切的感情吧，我在这里好像又看到她正站在那木制的扶手椅边上，那椅子还是挨着客厅的旧火炉。请再一次转告她，我会加倍地爱她，因为她是你的母亲，她也是我的养母。

另外，你不要到贝尔根来接我了。因为子爵号可能会比我说的日期更早些起航。不管怎么样，我亲爱的伊尔娜，在我下船二十四小时以后，就能回到达尔了。不过，要是我提前到了的话，你也不要感到意外。

这个冬天，我们遇到了恶劣天气的袭击，这是渔民们从没碰到过的最恶劣的气候。不过幸运的是，鱼汛给我们带来了丰收。子爵号捕了差不多五百吨鱼交到贝尔根，并且因为艾尔普兄弟的安排，鱼已经都卖出去了。总之，跟我们家有关的是，我们赚钱了，我会有一笔很不错的收入，而且我也已经有了整份的股份了。

还有，如果这不算是我给家里带回的财富，那么我还有一种想法，或者更确切地说我有一种预感。我觉得财富会在我回去的时候等着我。是的，财富……还不包括幸福呢！怎么样？关于这一点，我现在还不能说，亲爱的伊尔娜，请你原谅我对你还保留着一个秘密。

这是唯一的秘密！何况，我肯定会告诉你的……是什么时候呢？……怎么说呢，只要时候一到我肯定会告诉你的。要是我们的婚期因为意外的情况而有所耽搁，那么在结婚之前我肯定要告诉你的——要是我按时回来了，而且是在我回到达尔一个星期之后，你像我一直盼望的那样成了我的妻子的话，那就等结婚之后再告诉你！

让我拥抱你吧，亲爱的伊尔娜。还要请你替我拥抱汉森太太和我的兄长如艾尔。我还要亲吻你的前额，因为人们会把特勒玛克地区新娘所戴的高贵且漂亮的花环戴在你的头上，就像那种圣女的光环一样。最后说一声“再见”，我亲爱的伊尔娜，再见了！

你的未婚夫

奥勒·冈1882年3月17日

于圣·皮埃尔·米克隆

第二章 与众不同的客店

房屋在达尔这个地方并不多见，有的只零散地分布在勉强能算是小路的两旁，有的分散在邻近的小山上。这些房屋正对着维斯特夫若哈达尔的狭长河谷，背对着北面的山丘，马昂河就从山脚下流过。这些房屋构成了在当地很常见的一种庄园，这种庄园要么属于一个地主，要么属于一户农民。所有的房屋加起来如果称不上市镇，起码也是个村庄。这里的小教堂是在1855年建成的，后面的圆形房子里有两扇小小的彩色玻璃窗。不远的地方，四角形的钟楼矗立在树丛中，整个教堂都是木制的。各条流向马昂河的溪水上面都架设着菱形结构的木桥，在木头接合的地方塞满了长着青苔的石块。再远一些，会传来嘎嘎吱吱的响声，那是从以水流为动力的一两个简陋的锯木厂里发出来的。锯木厂只有两个水轮，一个是操纵锯子用的，另一个是带动主轴或是厚木板的。远远看去，绿色的薄雾笼罩着教堂、锯木厂、房屋和小木屋，在松柏覆盖的地方呈现出灰暗的颜色，而在桦树覆盖的地方看起来则是青绿色。

这就是景色宜人的达尔山村。这里的房屋精巧别致，有的墙上涂了柔和的嫩绿色或粉红色，有的涂了鲜艳的金黄色或深红色。用桦树皮做的屋顶上长满了绿油油的小草，中间还开着一朵朵的野花，到了秋天还要把它们割掉。这里的一切都让人心旷神怡，这可真算得上是世界上最迷人的地方了。总而言之，达尔是在特勒玛克，而特勒玛克在挪威，景色可以和瑞士相媲美，在群山脚下还有数千个峡湾，海浪在其中咆哮着，翻腾着。

在挪威的贝尔根和克里斯蒂亚尼亚之间，有个巨大的曲颈瓶地段的

凸出部分，特勒玛克就位于这里，它归巴斯贝尔省管辖。这里有高山和冰川，像是瑞士，又不是瑞士。有着北美壮观的瀑布，可这里并不是北美。看它的景色以及涂了颜色的房屋，还有成群结队穿着古代服饰的居民，像是荷兰的有些村镇，可这里又不是荷兰。特勒玛克胜过它们，特勒玛克就是特勒玛克，它的自然景色或许是世间独一无二的。作者曾愉快地访问了这个地区，只要一有机会他就会坐着驿站的马车游览各地。在他的脑海里，这里给他留下的印象是景色迷人的，充满诗意的，让他至今都记忆犹新的。所以，他打算在这个平凡的故事中详细地进行描述。

故事发生在1862年。当时的挪威还没有纵横交错的铁路网，不像现在这样可以从斯德哥尔摩经过克里斯蒂亚尼亚直接到达特隆赫姆。现在，虽然两国没有共同生活的习惯，但一条巨大的铁路干线还是已经把这两个斯堪的纳维亚国家连在了一起。相对于坐马车而言，坐火车虽然要快得多，但在车厢里的旅客却不能观赏道路两边奇特的景色，也不能通过神奇的哥达运河横跨瑞典南部。哥达运河的汽船沿着河闸逐渐上升，能达到三百尺的高度。总之，坐火车的旅客既不能观赏特罗尔丹瀑布，也没有机会在德拉蒙和贡斯堡逗留，更别说看到特勒玛克的各种奇观了。

在那个时候，铁路还处在研究阶段。大约要过二十年才可能在四十个小时之内从东海岸穿过斯堪的纳维亚半岛到达西海岸。要是再买上一张去斯匹次培根群岛的车票，就能直接到达北角。

然而，正是那个由来已久的时代，让达尔成了吸引国内外游客的一个旅游中心。来自国内的游客大多是克里斯蒂亚尼亚的大学生。从达尔出发，游客们可以游览特勒玛克和整个阿尔当瑞地区，可以沿着维斯特夫若哈达尔河谷到达姆若斯湖和坦恩湖地区，还可以沿着河顺流而上到

达奇特的容甘瀑布。在这个村子里，只有一家客店，店里有四间客房，不过这已经可以算得上是本地能够找到的最引人注目、最舒适，同时也是最有名气的客店了。总之，这就是汉森太太所经营的客店。

紫红色的护墙板下嵌着牢固的花岗石，下面还摆着几条长凳。随着岁月的流逝，房梁和墙上的杉木板已经变硬，连斧子都砍不动。粗糙的梁柱横叠在一起，中间有个缝隙的连接处，像是密封的垫圈，上面的泥灰已经长了青苔。这是冬天用来防止风雪往里灌的。室内的天花板拼成了人字形，还涂上了红色和黑色，为的是衬托护墙板那比较柔和的颜色。在大厅的一个角落里，圆形火炉的烟囱和厨房炉灶的烟囱互相连通着。屋子一边有个上了釉的宽大钟盘，里面是制作精良的时针，在挂钟的拨动下，不停地发出响亮的嘀嗒声。在另一边，有一个粗大的黑色三脚架，旁边摆着一个带着褐色条纹的旧写字台。在一块小木板上，竖着一个陶制的蜡烛台，如果把它倒过来放，就是一个可以插三支蜡烛的烛台。

大厅里，摆着家里面最好看的家具。有四条腿凸起来的用桦树根做的桌子和涂着特别醒目的颜色的木头椅子。在有搭扣做小装饰的大柜子里，整齐地放着节日里和礼拜天才穿的漂亮衣服。用硬木做的扶手椅和教堂里神父祷告时坐的椅子的大小差不多，还有那被漆成绿色的看着有点土气的纺车，跟纺纱女工的红色裙子形成鲜明的对照。在大厅的角落里，放着装黄油的罐子以及压黄油时需要用的滚棒、烟盒和骨雕制的锉子。在通往厨房的大门上面，有一个宽大的餐具柜，里面摆放着铜锡器皿、陶制和木制的彩釉碗碟。另外还有埋了一半在涂漆座槽里的小磨石，能当酒杯使用的充满古朴气息的蛋盅以及用来代替壁毯的别致的护墙板，上面画着各种《圣经》中所描述的故事，涂着厄比纳尔¹画片的各种颜色。

再来说说客房，总的来说也是舒适无比的。铺满了绿草的房顶下方，是挂着嫩绿色窗帘的屋檐，房间里面的家具干净整洁，床铺也很宽敞，上面铺着崭新的白色床单，护墙板上用红底黄字书写着《旧约全书》里的一些章节。

值得一提的是，大厅的地板上和一楼、二楼的一样，都铺着桦木、杉木和刺柏的小树枝条，这些树的叶子让屋子里洋溢着生机盎然的气息。在意大利和西班牙，还有比这里更迷人、更吸引人的乡间小客店吗？不，没有谁能想到！而且，蜂拥而来的英国游客也没让客店为此涨价，和瑞士的情况一样，至少在这个时期价格没有上涨。在达尔，人们不用英镑，因为旅客钱包里的英镑很快就会花光，而是用值五个多法郎2的银元以及面值更小的货币，也就是值一个法郎的马克3和仅值一个苏4的铜元。所以，在这里要多加小心，否则就会把铜元误认为是英国的先令。在达尔，流通的也不是旅客在特勒玛克使用，甚至是滥用的那种了不得的钞票，而是白色的一元券，蓝色的五元券，黄色的十元券和绿色的五十元券以及红色的一百元券。要是再有两种票子，就能凑够彩虹所包含的所有颜色了。

另外，在这好客的地方，还有一件事不能被忽视，那就是这儿的伙食相当不错，这是在本地区的多数客店里都很少见的。

事实上，称特勒玛克为“酸奶之乡”并不过分。在蒂内斯、里斯斗斯和蒂诺泽等地的偏僻地方，是根本吃不上面包的，就算是有面包，质量也一点都不好，还不如不吃。那些地方的客店里只供应一种又干又硬的黑乎乎的像纸板一样的燕麦饼，或是干脆只提供一块咬不动的用桦树皮、地衣和麦秆的混合面做成的点心。而且，如果一周之前母鸡不下蛋的话，甚至连鸡蛋都很难吃到。不过，那里有低级啤酒和酸奶，有时还给点咖啡，那咖啡浓得就像是过滤之后所留下的黑炭一样，而不是像莫

加、波旁、里约·努内等地产的咖啡。

相反，在汉森太太客店的地窖和厨房里，储备却很丰富。这样的话，就算是再苛刻的旅客，又会要求些什么呢？店里有烧鱿鱼、腌鱿鱼、熏鱿鱼、海马，有没被污染的产自湖泊的新鲜鱿鱼，还有来自特勒玛克地区河里产的鱼和鲜嫩肥美的家禽，各种各样的腌蛋，用黑麦和大麦面做的薄饼以及味道可口、品质优良的带皮面包，当然也少不了水果，特别是草莓，啤酒和圣·于连⁵陈酒也是必备的，这种酒把法国葡萄酒的盛名都传扬到这些遥远的地方来了。

就这样，达尔客店在北欧各个国家都有了点名气。这些只要翻一下已经泛黄的客店留言本，就很清楚了。留言本上，旅客们都很高兴签名并写下许多夸赞汉森太太的话，他们中绝大多数都是来自斯堪的纳维亚半岛的瑞典人和挪威人，也有不少是英国旅客。其中有一个等了一个小时才看见古斯塔山峰在晨雾中显现出来，之后他就以英国人特有的风格在留言本上写道：有志者，事竟成。

同样，也有一些法国游客。其中一个，请原谅我在这里不提他的姓名，他这样写道：我们除了赞扬客店对我们的接待之外，再没什么可说的了。

上面这句话严格来说是有一些语法错误的，不过这并没什么要紧。虽然这句话从语法上来看有些问题，但我们从中还是可以看出他的感激之情。所以，这并不影响他对汉森太太和她的女儿——维斯特夫若哈达尔那迷人的伊尔娜的赞美之意。

¹ 法国孚日省省会，从18世纪末开始，就是民间画的中心。

² 法国自1795年开始使用的货币单位。

3 德国、芬兰等国的旧本位货币。

4 法国中世纪的货币单位，二十个苏等于一个法郎。

5 处于法国梅多克的中心地带，和波亚克仅隔一条干涸的河沟，是梅多克产区最和谐的村庄和在酒庄的分级体系中占有一席之地酒庄最密集的地方。

第三章 一家三口

不需要深入研究人种学，只要向几位学者请教，就能弄清英国的贵族世家和斯堪的纳维亚王国的祖先之间是具有某种亲缘关系的。单从两国祖先的姓氏相同这一点来说，就完全可以证明了。可是，在挪威没有贵族，而实行民主制度并没有妨碍挪威达到高度的贵族化。在上流社会，大家彼此之间都是平等的，可在下层就不是这样了，哪怕是在最普通的小木屋里，家家也都保留着家谱。家谱在这里已经植根于平民的土壤中，经久不衰。有关封建时代贵族家庭的文字虽然早就不复存在，但这些普通的农民现在却属于那些贵族之家的后代。

住在达尔的汉森一家也是这样，在很久很久以前，他们的父辈有可能是诺曼底的罗龙¹在入侵英国后才拥有爵位的英国贵族的成员。汉森一家目前虽然没有贵族的身份和财富，身上却仍保留着原有的骄傲印记，更确切地说是尊严，这一点在社会上是很受重视的。

好吧，我们不要再提过去的事了。阿拉尔·汉森的祖先虽说是贵族，不过他本人还是做了达尔客店的老板。这份产业是从他父亲和祖父那里继承的，他也经常有意识地对人们说起父辈们在当地的地位。当他去世以后，他的妻子接替他继续开店，而且经营得非常好。

阿拉尔经营客店有没有发财呢？这个可没人知道。但他靠着这个店把儿子如艾尔和女儿伊尔娜养大成人，并且他们的童年生活过得也相当不错。还有，阿拉尔的小姨子的孩子奥勒·冈因其父母的离世，阿拉尔也把奥勒·冈当作自己的亲生儿子来进行抚养。要是没有姨父的照顾，

这个孤儿可能就像那些可怜的小家伙一样，刚一出生就告别人世了。当然，奥勒·冈也没有忘记对姨父、姨母的养育之恩进行报答，没有什么能割断他和汉森一家的联系。他和伊尔娜的结合不仅会加强这种联系，还会成为一辈子的不解之缘。

大约在一年半以前，阿拉尔去世了。除了这个位于达尔地区的客店外，他还给妻子留下了一个山间的小农庄。小农庄不跟外界联系，那里的收入就算不是零，一般也是少得可怜。而且，最近这几个季节的气候也不好，各种作物的收成都不好，连牧草都长得很费劲。那里北风呼啸，冰冻寒冷，经常出现挪威农民所说的那种“钢铁般的夜晚”，作物的幼苗都枯死了，特勒玛克和阿尔当瑞的农民也因此而破产。

不过，汉森太太还是顶住了困难，让自己的生活得以维持。但她是怎么克服困难的，却从来没有对任何人提起，包括对自己的孩子。她天性冷漠，少言寡语，很少和别人交谈。很显然，伊尔娜和如艾尔为此也感到很苦恼。不过，尽管北欧地区的人有尊重家长的天性，兄妹俩也一直小心翼翼，但他们的心里还是会觉得不舒服。况且，汉森太太总是觉得自己的观点是完全正确的，从来都不向他人求助或请教。在这方面，她有着挪威人的独特性格。

那时汉森太太已经五十多岁了，随着岁月的流逝，她的头发已经有些斑白，却没有因此而累垮她那高大的身躯，充满活力的目光从她那深蓝色的眼睛里流露而出，丝毫也没有一点减弱。她的女儿继承了她的这个特点。只是，汉森太太的脸上已经显现出了像废旧纸张那样的淡黄色，前额也开始出现了几道皱纹。

“太太”是斯堪的纳维亚半岛各国的习惯称呼。阿拉尔死后，汉森太太常年都穿着大褶黑裙这样的孝服。浅褐色短上衣的袖笼里，露出两只

本色棉布衬衣的袖子。前胸那里交叉围着一条深色的方巾，还系着一条围裙，大大的扣子从背后把围裙给兜住。她头上总是戴着厚实的丝织无檐帽，这款式都快要过时了。她坐在木头椅子上，身子笔直，在抽用桦树皮做成的小烟斗时，烟斗里散发出来的烟雾在她周围形成一圈浅浅的云雾，也只有在此时，她才会停下纺车。

只要两个孩子一出门，家里就显得格外冷清。

如艾尔·汉森是个老实的孩子。他已经二十五岁了，身材很健硕，像挪威的山民一样高大，性情也很豪爽，不会说大话，勇敢却不冒失。他长着满头的金发和一双蓝色的眼睛，所穿的衣服更突出了他那不易弯曲的挺拔的双肩。他有着健康的身体，简直可以当山路的向导。不仅如此，还有着可以自由呼吸的宽大胸脯，强有力的臂膀以及矫健的适合攀登特勒玛克崎岖山路的双腿。穿着便装时，他看起来像个骑士。戴肩章的青蓝色礼服在他身上再合适不过了，衣服的前胸位置交叉着两条长长的带子，背面的彩色花纹很像是布列塔尼的凯尔特人的服饰。他的衬衣领子很大，看起来像个漏斗，黄色的短裤用带扣的松紧带系到了膝盖下面。头上戴着褐色的宽边帽，帽子上还用黑色条纹和红色飘带来镶了边，腿上是用粗呢做的护腿，还有厚底的平跟靴，脚脖子的一半露在皮靴的褶皮下面，很像海员穿的长靴。

如艾尔本来的职业就是特勒玛克地区和阿尔当瑞深山密林的向导。让他出发就出发，从来不知道疲倦，简直能和挪威的民族英雄、著名的传奇人物罗龙相比。只要一有空，他就陪着英国来的猎人去猎取比赫布里底群岛（位于苏格兰西部海域）的雷鸟更肥的一种雷鸟和比苏格兰的松鸡更嫩的一种鹌鹑。冬天，当饿狼来湖边找食时，猎人就要他陪着去捕狼。而夏天则是捕熊的季节，当大狗熊带着小熊来吃青草的时候，要想抓到它，往往要翻越海拔一千到一千二百英尺的高山。有好几次，要

不是如艾尔力大无比，遇事镇定冷静，才抵御了野兽的袭击，得以脱身，否则恐怕都不会幸免于难。

如果没有游客要他去维斯特夫若哈达尔山谷当向导，也没有猎人要他陪着去打猎，如艾尔就会到几千米高的山上的那个小农庄去照料。农庄里只有牧场，没有任何农作物，汉森太太雇了一个年轻的牧人在那里看守十几头母牛和三十几头羊。

如艾尔生来就很热心，喜欢帮助人，特勒玛克所有山村的人都认识他，喜欢他。他本人则对三个人充满了热爱之情，那就是自己的母亲、被自己视为亲兄弟的奥勒和妹妹伊尔娜。

当奥勒·冈最近一次离开达尔出海捕鱼时，如艾尔觉得很是遗憾，他为自己没有能力向伊尔娜提供陪嫁，不能让她的未婚夫留在身边而感到愧疚。说实在的，要是他自己能习惯海上生活的话，他一定会二话不说，替奥勒·冈出海捕鱼。小两口刚开始过日子总要有些钱才行，可汉森太太又没有答应给钱。如艾尔知道，她是一点都不会动用家产的。所以，奥勒才不得不远离家乡，到大西洋彼岸去赚钱。当时，如艾尔陪他到了山谷的尽头，一直送他上了贝尔根的大路。分别时，两个人长时间地拥抱，如艾尔祝他一路顺风，平安归来。之后，如艾尔就回家来安慰妹妹，他对妹妹一直怀着做哥哥和父亲那样的双重感情。

伊尔娜当时只有十八岁。她不像是挪威客店里普通的女仆，正如人们叫她母亲“太太”一样，别人都叫她“小姐”——英国小姐。金色的头发散在她那美丽的脸上，头上戴的那顶便帽稍微向后倾斜着，还露出长长的辫子。身材好极了！她穿着合身的带着绿花边的红布短上衣，上面绣着花纹，在胸前半敞着，衣服里面是白衬衣，衬衣的袖口和手腕上的镯子挨在一起。体态真是优雅！带银扣的红色腰带别在浅绿色的短裙上，

短裙的外面还围着花色繁多的菱形围裙，下面露出的是白色长袜，脚上穿着一双精制的且具有特勒玛克地方特色的尖头鞋。

是呀！奥勒的未婚妻，那北欧姑娘特有的略带忧伤而又充满笑容的容貌，真的很让人着迷。只要看见她，就会让人想起斯堪的纳维亚神话中那个金发女郎伊尔娜，她取的就是那个幸福的灶旁仙女的名字。

这姑娘既谦虚又聪明，还特别矜持，不过这也没有影响她那优雅的风度，她一直用这样的风度来接待着来到达尔客店的人，这在挪威旅游界已经是人所共知的事了。能跟伊尔娜握握手，或者让她跟所有的男女游客亲切地握手已经成了具有某种魅力的快活事。

每当客人们对她说“谢谢你的这顿美餐，我们吃得非常好”时，她就会用清脆响亮的声音说：“很乐意为您效劳，欢迎您下次再来。”真的，再没有比听到这样悦耳的回答更让人高兴的了。

[1](#) 维京人的首领，海盗头目。

第四章 对情人的思念

奥勒·冈离开家已经一年了。就像他在信中所说的那样，冬天在纽芬兰海域进行作业是一项艰苦的工作。如果能赚钱的话，还是可以赚到不少钱的。虽然在那个海域，袭击船只的季风几个小时之内就能把整个捕鱼船队全都给毁掉，但纽芬兰的海里有着成群的鱼，只要渔民交上好运，就可以让自己的艰辛付出得到巨大的回报。而且，挪威人大多都是好水手，工作也很努力。他们沿着海边的峡湾，从克里斯蒂安桑到达北角，经过芬玛克的暗礁，再经过罗福登海峡，有很多机会来熟悉海上风暴。当他们横渡北大西洋来到遥远的纽芬兰渔场时，他们的大无畏精神就得到了充分体现。他们还是个孩子的时候就已经领教过飓风袭击欧洲海岸时的威力，这就让他们具有了对付纽芬兰猛烈风暴的能力。可是，目前对于海上风暴的袭击，他们还是选择勇往直前，但是情况可就不一样了。

挪威人的这种本领是祖辈传下来的。早在汉森的家族独揽北欧生意的时代，他们的祖先就已经是勇敢的海员了。他们以前可能也从事过海盗的勾当，不过，在那个年代当海盗是很平常的事。无可置疑的是，从那以后，有些事情虽然还需要改进，但是做买卖已经文明有序得多了。不管怎么说，挪威人不光过去和现在是勇敢的航海家，将来也还会是的。

奥勒·冈没有违背祖先的意愿。他学了手艺，学会了做这些粗重的活计，同时还得感谢在贝尔根沿海航行的一位老海员。奥勒的整个童年都是在斯堪的纳维亚王国这个最繁忙的港口度过的。他在当水手以前，

就已经是各个峡湾里胆大的淘气孩子了。他掏过海鸟的窝，钓过大量的能做成鱼干的海鱼。后来他当了见习水手，开始在巴伦支海、北海和北冰洋海域航行，就这样在大渔船上航行了几次，二十一岁的时候他当上了水手长。现在他二十三岁了，每次远航归来到下次出海之前，他都会回来看望亲人，看望他在这世上仅有的几个亲人。

当他回到达尔时，就成了如艾尔真正的伙伴，他跟着如艾尔走遍了大小山岗，一直到了特勒玛克的高原顶峰。他自己很喜欢那里的原野和峡湾，要不是为了陪着伊尔娜，他从来都不会落在后边。渐渐地，奥勒和如艾尔之间建立起了亲密的友情。而奥勒对姑娘的感情则采取了另外的表达方式，这也是很自然的。对此，如艾尔怎么会不进行鼓励呢？在整个省区，妹妹到哪儿去找比奥勒还好的，性格更惹人喜欢的，对人更忠诚的，心肠更热情的小伙子呢？嫁给奥勒，伊尔娜就会过上幸福的生活。就这样，在母亲和哥哥的赞许之下，姑娘就任由自己的感情自然发展下去了。

因为北方人的感情都不善于外露，所以不能责怪他们还没有什么表示。也确实不能责怪，要知道，这是他们特有的表达感情的方式。也不用怀疑，这种方式或许一点都不比别的表达方式差。

终于有一天，四个人正好都在大厅里，奥勒就直截了当地说：“我有一个想法，伊尔娜。”

“什么想法？”姑娘问。

“我觉得咱们应该结婚了。”

“我觉得也是。”

“这可挺合适的。”汉森太太插了一句，好像这件事他们早就讨论过一样。

“真的，不管怎么样，奥勒，”如艾尔开口说，“那我肯定就要当你的大舅子了。”

“是的，”奥勒说，“我的如艾尔，这样一来，我可能就更喜欢你了……”

“这是真的吗？”

“你等着瞧吧！”

“我的天啊，我巴不得呢！”如艾尔说着，握紧了奥勒的手。

“那，这就说定了，伊尔娜？”汉森太太问道。

“是的，妈妈。”姑娘回答说。

“你想得对，伊尔娜。”奥勒接着说，“我很久以前就爱上你了，可是一直没敢说出口。”

“我也一样，奥勒。”

“可我是怎么爱上你的，我却说不清楚。”

“我也说不清楚。”

“可能，伊尔娜，是因为看到你长得越来越漂亮，越来越能干吧……”

“你说得有点跑题了，亲爱的奥勒！”

“不，我可以把一切都告诉你，不会让你脸红的，因为我说的都是真的。汉森太太，您难道没发现我喜欢伊尔娜吗？”

“看出来一点。”

“你呢，如艾尔？”

“我？……我看得很清楚啊。”

“说实在的，”奥勒笑着说，“你们早就应该告诉我啊！”

“那你出远门的事儿呢，奥勒？”汉森太太问道，“刚结婚就出去，你不会觉得太难受吗？”

“要是等结了婚再出门就更难受了。”奥勒回答说，“所以那时候我就不会出门了。”

“你再不出门了吗？”

“是的，伊尔娜，难道让我一年到头跟你分开吗？”

“这么说，这是你最后一次出海吗？”

“是的，不过，要是运气好点的话，这次出海会给我带来一点积蓄，因为艾尔普兄弟已经答应给我整份的股份……”

“他们都是正直的人。”如艾尔说。

“他们是最好的人。”奥勒回答说，“贝尔根所有的海员都很了解他

们，尊敬他们。”

“亲爱的奥勒，”伊尔娜说，“如果你不再出海的话，那你以后打算做什么呢？”

“那好说，我就陪着如艾尔。我有一双好腿，要是光靠两条腿还不够的话，我还可以慢慢地锻炼自己，找点事做。而且，我还想到一件事，也许还不错。我觉得我们为什么不可以建一个来往于德拉蒙、贡斯堡和特勒玛克的山村之间的邮政服务站呢？这些地方的交通很不方便，邮件往来也没有固定的时间，要是能做起来的话应该会有点钱赚。总之，我有一些打算，我还想……”

“还想什么？”

“没什么，等我回来以后咱们再说吧。不过我可以提前告诉你们，我会努力让伊尔娜成为咱们这个地方最让人羡慕的妻子的。是的，我一定会做到这一点。”

“噢，奥勒，你知道，那是很容易做到的。”说着，伊尔娜向他伸出手来，“你的愿望不是已经实现一半了吗？有哪个家庭的幸福能和我们达尔的家庭相比呢？”

谈话中有那么一阵子，汉森太太转过头去。

“那么，事情就这么定了？”奥勒带着欢喜的语气又强调了一遍。

“是的。”如艾尔回答。

“没有别的话要说了吗？”

“没了。”

“你以后不会后悔吗，伊尔娜？”

“一定不会的，亲爱的奥勒。”

“至于结婚的日子，我想还是等你回来以后再定吧。”如艾尔又加了一句。

“好的，不过要是一年之内，我还没有回来带伊尔娜去默尔教堂举行婚礼，那我一定是遇到不幸了。我想我们的朋友安德烈森牧师是不会拒绝为我们做最好的祈祷的。”

就这样，伊尔娜·汉森和奥勒·冈把婚事给确定下来了。

再过八天，年轻的海员就要去贝尔根登船出发了。按照斯堪的纳维亚地区的动人习俗，在告别之前，这对情人举行了订婚仪式。

在挪威这样一个纯朴且讲究礼仪的国度里，结婚以前先订婚是一个最普遍的习俗，而婚礼甚至有时要等两三年后才举行。这难道不会让人想起基督徒最初所奉行的礼仪吗？在通常的理解中，订婚只是男女双方立下誓言，是否能靠得住，全看双方是不是真心实意。但事实却并不是这样的，在挪威，订婚的约束力要大得多，如果说订婚没有法律效力，那至少也会得到风俗习惯这种不成文的规定的认可。就伊尔娜和奥勒的情况来说，只要安排一个仪式，请安德烈森牧师来主持一下就行了。可是，在达尔和附近的大部分山村中都没有牧师。挪威有些地方被称为“礼拜天城市”，是教区的大户人家举行祭礼时聚会的地方，那里才有神父在工作。在那里备有临时住所，每当他们去进行宗教活动时，就会在那儿住上一天。当从那儿离开时，就像朝圣归来一样。

在达尔，其实也有一座小教堂，不过只有在被人邀请的时候牧师才会过去，而且总是主持私人举办的仪式，从来没有举行过公众性质的仪式。只是好在离默尔并不远，从达尔到坦恩湖的尽头不过十公里的路程，而安德烈森牧师又是个乐于助人、擅于行走的人。

就这样，安德烈森牧师以神父和汉森家朋友的双重身份参加了订婚仪式。汉森一家在很早以前就认识他，他也熟悉这一家，作为看着伊尔娜和如艾尔长大的长辈，他很喜欢这兄妹俩，也喜欢这个叫奥勒·冈的“年轻的老水手”。可以说没有什么事情能比这桩婚姻更让他高兴的了。与此同时，这件事也让维斯特夫若哈达尔的整个山谷都沉浸在了节日般的欢乐之中。

所以，在某一天的清晨，天上还下着蒙蒙细雨，安德烈森牧师就披上斗篷，带上纱巾和经书出发了。如艾尔到半路上去迎接他，陪他到了达尔。不难想象，他在汉森太太的客店里受到了热情的招待，还被安排在一楼漂亮的客房里。鲜嫩的刺柏树枝发出的芬芳让房间内清香四溢，就像是进了教堂一样。

第二天一早，达尔小教堂的门打开了。面对着牧师和经书，当着一些亲朋好友和邻居们的面，奥勒宣誓娶伊尔娜为妻，伊尔娜宣誓嫁给奥勒，而当这位年轻的水手在即将开始的最后一次旅行归来后，他们就会正式完婚。虽然要等上漫长的一年，但如果双方互相信得过，时间还是很快就会过去的。

现在，要是没有什么特别的重要原因，奥勒是不能背弃已经成为他未婚妻的伊尔娜的，伊尔娜也不能背弃自己向奥勒立下的誓言。如果奥勒没有在订婚后的几天马上就动身的话，他本可以享受一下订婚给他带来的权利，比如说在他认为合适的时候去看望姑娘，在高兴的时候给姑

娘写封信，甚至可以在姑娘家人不在家的时候跟她手拉着手出去散步。要是遇上节日或是别的什么庆典活动，他还可以优先要求跟姑娘跳舞。但是现在，奥勒不能不去贝尔根了。八天以后，子爵号就要到纽芬兰去捕鱼了。现在，伊尔娜只有盼着来信了，她的未婚夫曾答应过她，会通过欧洲各国的邮差给她寄信。

信是不少，但总是让人等得心烦意乱时才能收到。不过，这些来信还是给他离开后显得沉闷的家里带来了一丝安慰。信上说一路上都是顺风，捕鱼很有收获，利润也很可观。在每封信的末尾，奥勒还总会谈到某个秘密，谈到这个秘密可能给他带来的财富。伊尔娜非常想知道这个秘密，而汉森太太出于别人想不到的原因，也很想了解这个秘密。

后来，汉森太太越来越愁容满面和焦虑不安了，话也少了起来。而且，有一件事更增加了她的忧虑，但她对孩子们却一直没有说出来。

这件事发生在收到奥勒最后一封来信的三天以后，也就是4月19日，汉森太太那天去锯木厂向工头朗格兰订购了一口袋刨花，回来的时候，已经快走到大门口了，这时有一个外地人过来跟她说话。

“您就是汉森太太吗？”那人问道。

“是的，”她回答说，“不过我不认识您。”

“噢！这没什么关系。”那人接着说，“我今天早晨刚从德拉蒙来，一会儿还要回去。”

“从德拉蒙来？”汉森太太急切地问道。

“难道您不认识住在那里的一位名叫桑格伊斯的先生吗？”

“桑格伊斯先生！”汉森太太重复了一遍。听到这个名字，她的脸色立刻变白了且说道，“不错。我认识他！”

“是这样的，桑格伊斯先生知道我要来达尔，就请我替他向您问好。”

“那.....没有别的事吗？”

“没什么事，他只是让我告诉您一声，他下个月可能会过来看您！汉森太太，祝您健康，晚安！”

第五章 为婚礼做准备

奥勒几次来信都说他回来以后会发大财，这给伊尔娜带来了很大的触动。这老实的小伙子到底为什么会这么说呢？伊尔娜一时还想不明白，不过又特别着急想知道。这种情理之中的急切心情是可以理解的，但她只是无缘无故地好奇吗？当然不是。这个秘密跟她有点关系。这个淳朴善良的姑娘对未来的憧憬并没有什么奢望，从没想到会发财致富。对她来说，有奥勒的爱就足够了。就算是得到了财神爷的眷顾，她也不会感到特别的高兴。如果得不到财神爷的眷顾，她也不会有什么不舒服，仅此而已。在奥勒的最后一封信寄到达尔的第二天，伊尔娜和如艾尔就这么想了。在这个问题上，他们的想法是一致的，就跟看待其他问题一样。

那天，如艾尔说：“不，这不可能，妹妹，你一定是对我隐瞒了什么事吧？”

“我.....对你隐瞒了什么事？”

“是的，奥勒走的时候没跟你说起他的秘密吗？”

“那他对你说起过吗，如艾尔？”伊尔娜反问道。

“没说过，妹妹。不过，我跟你可不一样呀！”

“不，哥哥，你跟我是一样的。”

“我可不是奥勒的未婚妻。”

“差不多啦！”姑娘说，“要是他遇到了什么不幸，回不来了，你会和我一样难过，伤心落泪的。”

“啊！妹妹，”如艾尔说，“我可不许你这么想，说什么奥勒回不来了。你说的是真心话吗，伊尔娜？”

“不，当然不是了，如艾尔。但是，我不知道.....我有个不祥的预感.....不祥的梦。”

“亲爱的伊尔娜，一个梦而已，别当真。”

“话是这么说，可梦是怎么出现的呢？”

“梦是我们自己做的，不是上帝给的，你心里害怕，就会让你在睡觉的时候做梦。尤其是当你特别着急地盼望某件事，而你的愿望又快要实现的时候，就经常会出现这种情况。”

“这个我知道，如艾尔。”

“真的，我原来以为你很坚强，很有毅力。可这是为什么呢，你刚收到奥勒的来信，信上说子爵号一个月之内就会回来，但你脑袋里怎么会有这样的想法呢？”

“不，是在心里，如艾尔。”

“现在已经是4月19日了。”如艾尔接着说，“奥勒应该在5月15日到20日之间回来。所以现在着手结婚的准备工作也不算太早了。”

“你是这么想的吗，如艾尔？”

“对呀，我是这么想的，伊尔娜！我甚至觉得，我们现在动手都已

经太晚了。你想想，这次婚礼不仅要让达尔的村民，还要让附近山庄的村民都感到高兴。我要把它弄得热热闹闹的，所有的事都让我来安排吧。”

一般来说，在挪威的乡村，尤其是在特勒玛克，举行这类仪式可不是一件小事，没有一点声势是不行的。当天，如艾尔就去找母亲商量了。当时，正是汉森太太遇见那个人告诉她德拉蒙的桑格伊斯将要来访以后的不一会儿，她正为此而感到惊恐不安呢。她来到大厅，坐在扶手椅上发着呆，心神不定地转动着纺车。如艾尔看得很清楚，母亲要比平常看起来更加焦虑，但谁要问她怎么了，她总会说“没什么”。现在，她的儿子只想跟她聊聊伊尔娜的婚事。

“妈妈，您知道，奥勒在上一封信上说，再过几个星期，他可能就回特勒玛克了。”

“希望是这样吧，”汉森太太说，“希望他能准时回来。”

“那么我们把结婚的日子确定为5月25日，您看有没有什么不合适的？”

“我没意见，只要伊尔娜同意就行。”

“她已经同意了。现在我想问问您，妈妈，您看我们是不是要把婚礼办得体面些？”

“办得体面些，是什么意思？”汉森太太问道，眼睛还是没有离开纺车。

“我是这样想的，要是您同意的话，妈妈，不用说，这个仪式要跟我们家在村里的地位相符合。我们应该把熟人都请来，要是客人多，家

里住不下的话，我想邻居们也会很高兴帮我们安排他们的住宿的。”

“你都打算请谁呢，如艾尔？”

“我想，应该把默尔、蒂乃斯和邦布勒的朋友都请来，这个我来安排。我还想，要是贝尔根的船主艾尔普兄弟能光临的话也会给我们脸上增光。我再跟您说一下，要是您同意，我就把他们请到达尔来过一天。他们都是正直的人，都很喜欢奥勒，我相信他们一定会来的。”

汉森太太问道：“有必要这么大张旗鼓地操办吗？”

“我觉得有必要，妈妈，而且这对咱们的达尔客店也是有好处的。据我了解，自从父亲去世以来，客店的名声一点都没有下降。”

“没有下降……如艾尔，是没有下降。”

“起码要保住父亲在世时的声望，这难道不是我们分内的责任吗？所以我觉得，把妹妹的婚事办得热闹一点会有好处的。”

“好吧，如艾尔。”

“另外，伊尔娜是不是也要开始做准备了，省得到时候手忙脚乱。对我这个想法，妈妈，您有什么意见吗？”

汉森太太说：“没有意见，该准备什么，你们就准备去吧。”

人们或许会觉得如艾尔有些太性急了，如果等奥勒回来以后再确定结婚的日子，再做相关的准备，可能会更好些。但是，就像他所说的，做完一件是一件，早准备好，早安心。再说，准备结婚的各种琐碎的事情还能让伊尔娜分散一下精力。重要的是不要让她时刻被预感所纠缠，

更何况她的预感并没有什么根据。

首先要考虑的一件事是请伴娘。这一点不用担心，已经选好了。她就是邦布勒的一位可爱的小姐，是伊尔娜的知心朋友。伴娘的父亲厄尔木博是省内一个最大农庄的主人。这位正直的老先生也有一定的财产。一直以来他就对如艾尔那温厚的性格十分欣赏，而且应该说，他的女儿赛格弗琳娜也同样喜欢他。所以，当赛格弗琳娜给伊尔娜做伴娘以后，很可能就会在近期内由伊尔娜给她当伴娘了。在挪威，有这样的习俗——当伴娘这种美差通常会专门留给已婚的女子。所以，虽然赛格弗琳娜以伴娘的身份来给伊尔娜·汉森帮忙，看起来有点例外，但对如艾尔却是有好处的。

新娘和伴娘要面对的一个大问题是婚礼那天穿什么衣服。

赛格弗琳娜是个十八岁的金发女郎，长得特别漂亮，她一定要在婚礼上展示一番。当她收到伊尔娜写给她的，如艾尔又坚持要亲手交给她的那封短信时，就赶紧开始准备这件让人很费心的事情了。

其实就是那么一件短上衣的问题。这件上衣要有搭配合适的绣花图案，还要能紧紧地裹住身子，使身体像装在景泰蓝花瓶里一样。而且，有人还建议要做罩在许多衬裙上面的长裙，衬裙的数目既要和赛格弗琳娜的财产相配，又不能影响她那苗条的身段。至于佩戴的首饰，可真够麻烦的，要选镶着珠子的银丝项链，中间那块要用镀金的银制或铜制的上衣别针，还要有能活动的心形坠子的圆片以及领子上的双紧扣，垂着四条小链子的毛织的或镶着红丝的带小球的腰带，碰在一起时能发出好听声音的戒指、镂空造型的银耳环和手镯……总之，是些乡下人用的金银珠宝。其实，金子只是薄薄的一层，所谓银制也只是镀的锡，金银制品是些糊弄人的手艺，珠子是用玻璃做的，钻石也是人造玻璃，不过这

一切看起来还是会叫人眼前一亮的。而且，必要的时候，赛格弗琳娜还会去光顾克里斯蒂亚尼亚的贝内特先生的那品种繁多的商店。她的父亲不会反对她这么做。肯定不会——那善良的父亲还希望女儿这样做呢！何况，赛格弗琳娜那么善良、温顺，是不会把父亲的钱全都花光的。总之，重要的是，在那一天，要让如艾尔觉得她惊艳四射。

当然，伊尔娜也少不了折腾一番。风俗的要求还是很严格的，所以说新娘子挑选结婚的服饰可不是一件容易的事。

露在少女戴的软帽外面那扎着头绳的长辫子要剪掉，兜住围裙的扎在红裙子上装有搭扣的别致腰带也要解下，还要取下奥勒出发时送给她的订婚头巾以及挂着好多个皮制小绣包的饰带，小绣包里装的是一个女人居家常用的各种小玩意，比如短把的银勺子、刀子和叉子以及针线盒什么的。

是的，这些东西用不着了。举行婚礼那天，伊尔娜的头发会随意地披在肩上，因为她的头发特别浓密，不需要使用头发稀疏的挪威姑娘常用的那种麻绳去绑住头发。而且，无论是她的衣服还是首饰，只要打开母亲的箱子就都有了。实际上，这些结婚的穿戴都是一代代传下来的。所以人们又能看见那些古老的绣金边的短上衣、丝绒腰带、单色或各种颜色的绸缎裙子、质地细软的呢袜子、金项链和花冠了，这种斯堪的纳维亚著名的花冠，是用漂亮的镀金纸板做的，平时保存在最结实的衣柜里，周围的毛边上翻着，还点缀着许多珠子或叶子，看起来和欧洲其他国家的橘红花冠很像。不用说，这个绚丽迷人的花冠和那些精细的金银首饰，声音悦耳的吊坠以及色彩斑斓的玻璃珠子，一定会把伊尔娜打扮得光彩照人。就像有些人说的，“头戴花冠的新娘”会让新郎的脸上增光。新郎穿上夺目的结婚礼服，和新娘成为天生的一对。新郎的服饰包括细软的毡帽，钉着密实的银扣子的短礼服，插着竖直花冠的硬领衬

衣，用丝绒镶边的背心以及拿一串串的小绒球缝在膝盖上的短裤，淡黄色的靴子，腰带上的皮刀鞘里面插的是斯堪的纳维亚式的佩刀——真正的挪威人总是随身带着的玩具刀。

所以说，新娘和伴娘各自都有很多的事情要准备。要想在奥勒·冈回来之前准备好，几个星期的时间并不充裕。要是奥勒比原定的日期提前回来，而伊尔娜还没有准备好，她自己是不会埋怨的，奥勒也不会埋怨。

就这样，4月下旬和5月上旬算是忙忙碌碌地过去了。如艾尔利用向导工作的空闲时间亲自上门去邀请客人。因为他常到邦布勒去，所以他在那里有很多朋友。虽然说他并没有去贝尔根邀请艾尔普兄弟，但也给他们寄去了邀请信。并且就像他所想的那样，两位耿直的船主很高兴地接受了邀请，准备前来参加子爵号年轻的水手长奥勒·冈的婚礼。这时已经是5月15日了。人们每时每刻都在盼着看到奥勒从马车上走下来，打开大门，用高兴的声音喊道：“是我，我回来啦！”

还要再有点耐心才行。现在，所有的一切都准备好了，只要打个招呼，赛格弗琳娜就可以盛装出场了。可16日和17日，并没有什么消息，邮差也没有带来一封来自纽芬兰的信件。

“不用奇怪，妹妹。”如艾尔总是这样说，“一艘船总会有些耽搁的。横渡圣·皮埃尔和密克隆到贝尔根的海域需要很长时间。啊！要是子爵号是一艘汽船，而我是这艘船上的机器该有多好呀！我会顶着风浪把船开到岸边，哪怕停靠时会爆炸我也不怕。”他之所以这么说，就是因为看到伊尔娜的忧虑每天都在增加。

特勒玛克的天气很糟糕。从西方，从美洲吹过来的寒风呼啸着穿过

山坡的原野。

姑娘经常叨咕着说：“这风可能对子爵号的航行有好处啊！”

“当然了，”如艾尔说，“不过，要是风力太强的话，可能就会有点障碍，让子爵号先来对付台风。到了大海上，就身不由己了。”

“这么说，你不着急了吗，如艾尔？”

“不是的，伊尔娜，虽然这很让人头疼，不过耽搁些日子还是很平常的。我不着急，因为的确没必要着急。”

19日，客店里来了一位旅客，他要雇一名向导，还要求向导走山路，把他领到阿尔当瑞的边缘地区去。虽然如艾尔很不愿意把伊尔娜一个人留下，但他不能拒绝给人带路。这一次，他至少要外出四十八个小时，很希望回来时能看到奥勒。实际上，年轻人的心里已经感到不安了。应该说，早上动身的时候，他的心情就很不好了。

正好，第二天下午1点多钟时，有人来敲客店的门。

“是奥勒吧！”伊尔娜喊了起来。

她赶紧过去开门。

门外是一个穿着旅行外套的男人，坐在马车上。伊尔娜一看，是个陌生人。

第六章 陌生客人的来访

“这里是汉森太太开的客店吗？”

“是的，先生。”伊尔娜回答说。

“汉森太太在家吗？”

“不在，不过她很快就会回来的。”

“很快就回来吗？”

“她一会儿就回来，您有什么话要跟她说吗？”

“没有，我没有什么要跟她说说的。”

“您是不是想要一个房间？”

“是的，要店里最好的房间。”

“要不要给您准备晚饭呢？”

“要的，赶快准备去吧，一定要是最好的饭菜。”

上面这些就是伊尔娜跟这位旅客的对话，当时这位旅客还没有从马车上下来。他是坐着马车经过挪威中部的森林、湖泊和山谷来到这个特勒玛克的中心地区的。

人们了解马车的作用，这是斯堪的纳维亚人特别喜欢的交通工具。

两根车辕的中间是脖子滚圆、毛色泛黄、带着花纹的马匹，马嚼子不是从嘴巴里穿过去的，而是套在鼻子上面。车上装着两个不算厚的大轮子，在没有弹簧的轮轴上有一个涂了颜色的小车厢，里面勉强能坐下一个人。车篷和挡泥板、踏脚板都是没有的，车厢的后面有一块小板子，驿站的跟班就待在那里。整个马车就像是一只巨大的蜘蛛，两个车轮子就像是两个蜘蛛网。坐上这种原始的马车，走上十五到二十公里的路程再换马，都不会觉得特别疲倦。

看见旅客的手势，伊尔娜就过来牵马。这时，那人站起身来，抖了抖衣服。从他情绪不好而又发牢骚这一点可以看出他下车还有点费劲呢。

“我可以把马车停到车库吗？”他站在门边粗声大气地问。

“可以的，先生。”伊尔娜回答道。

“还要给我的马喂点草料吧？”

“我会叫人把草料放到马棚里的。”

“让他们好好给我照顾啊。”

“当然了，先生。请问您是不是要在达尔待几天呢？”

“我不知道。”

车子 and 马匹被拉到了小仓房里。仓房就建在围墙的里面，靠近山脚的绿树丛中。客店只有这一个马棚兼车库，不过供旅客们使用已经足够了。

很快，那位旅客就按他自己的要求，被安置在了最好的客房里。他脱下外套，就到烧得正旺的炉子边去烤火了，这火是他让人在房间里生的。同时，为了迎合他的怪脾气，伊尔娜还吩咐女帮工给他准备最好的饭菜。女帮工是近郊的一位健壮的姑娘，每到夏天，她就来店帮着她做饭和做些粗活。

新到的客人虽然看起来已经六十多岁，但还算是个结实的男人。他中等身材，瘦瘦的，有点驼背，头很小，脸上也没有胡须，鼻子是尖的，一双小眼睛在大大的眼镜框后面露出尖刻的眼神。额头上带着皱纹，两片薄嘴唇好像从来都不会说什么好话，再加上那两只贪得无厌的手，简直就是一副放债的或是放高利贷者的嘴脸。伊尔娜隐隐地感到这位旅客肯定不会给汉森太太的客店带来什么好事。

他是挪威人，这是毫无疑问的。在斯堪的纳维亚人中，他算是看起来很俗气的那种。他的一身打扮包括一顶宽边帽，一套白布衣服，胸前开扣的上衣，短裤的裤管用皮带在膝盖上扣住，外面披着棕色的羊皮夹袄。因为在特勒玛克的高原和山谷，傍晚和夜里的天气还是很冷的。至于这位旅客姓甚名谁，伊尔娜还没问。不过她很快就会知道的，因为他会在旅客登记本上签名的。

这时，汉森太太回来了。女儿告诉她来了一位旅客，要吃最好的饭菜，住最好的房间。至于他会在达尔待上几天，还不知道，因为他根本就不提这一点。

“他没说自己叫什么名字吗？”汉森太太问道。

“没有，妈妈。”

“也没有说他从哪儿来吗？”

“没有。”

“也许就是个普通的游客吧。不过麻烦的是，如艾尔还没回来，不能为他效劳。要是他想要一名向导的话，咱们可怎么办呢？”

“我看他不是游客。”伊尔娜说，“这是一位上了年纪的先生。”

“如果不是游客，他来达尔干吗呢？”

汉森太太看着像是在对女儿说话，其实是在自言自语，而且语气中带着某种不安的情绪。

这个问题，伊尔娜答不上来，因为关于客人自己的打算，他半个字都没说。

这位旅客在到达客店一个小时以后，就来到跟他的房间相邻的大厅里。看见汉森太太在那儿，他就在门边停了一会儿。

很明显，女老板和他并不认识。于是，他向女主人走过去，从眼镜上方仔细看了看后，说：“我想你就是汉森太太吧？”说话时，他的手连戴在头上的帽子的边都没碰一下。

“是的，先生。”汉森太太回答道。

跟她女儿一样，在这个男人面前，她也觉得浑身不自在，这一点他一定也觉察到了。

“这么说，达尔的汉森太太就是你了？”

“是的，先生。您有什么特别的事情要跟我说吗？”

“没有。我只是想认识认识你。我是你的客人呀。现在，请麻烦你安排他们早点给我准备晚饭。”

“您的晚饭已经准备好了。”伊尔娜说，“请到餐厅用餐吧。”

“好的。”

说完，他就向伊尔娜指的那扇门走去。过了不一会儿，他就在靠窗的一张干净、整洁的桌子前坐了下来。

晚饭做得肯定是相当不错的。任何游客，甚至是那些最挑剔的游客也找不出什么毛病来。可这位急躁的家伙还是挑三拣四，没说一句满意的话。人们不禁要问，他这么挑剔，是因为他的肚子有毛病，还是他的脾气不好呢？樱桃醋栗汤，那么鲜美可口，他只喝了一半。鲑鱼和腌鲱鱼，他只用嘴唇碰了碰。生火腿和鲜嫩美味的半只母鸡以及搭配合适的蔬菜，他都不喜欢，就连地道的法国老窖圣·于连酒和小瓶香槟酒，他也不满意。

吃完了饭，他对女老板还是没有一句感谢的话。

晚饭后，这个粗鲁的家伙点上烟斗，走出饭厅，到马昂河畔散步去了。

走到河边他就开始往回走，两眼直勾勾地盯着客店。他好像是在研究客店的前后左右，上上下下，像是要给客店估价似的。他还数了数客店有几道门、几扇窗，甚至走到起房屋支撑作用的横梁边，用小刀的刀刃在上面刻了两三个小口，似乎是想探究一下木头的质量和保存的程度。他是想估算一下汉森太太的店值多少钱吗？难不成他想成为客店的主人？然而，汉森太太并没打算出售该客店。真是奇了怪了。检查了房

屋以后，他又到院子里去数有多少棵大树和多少棵小树。最后，他迈着小方步开始丈量院子的两边，从他在本子上用铅笔写字的动作来看，他是在把两边的边长进行乘法运算。他不停地晃着脑袋，皱着眉头，还不时地发出表示不满意的哼哼声。

就在他这样来回走动的时候，汉森太太和女儿隔着大厅的玻璃窗一直在看着他，看这个她们与之打交道的是个什么样的怪人啊？这个人来的目的又是什么呢？可惜，这一切都发生在如艾尔不在家的时候，而且这位旅客还会在店里过夜。

“难不成他是个疯子？”伊尔娜问道。

“疯子？不！”汉森太太说，“不过，他肯定是个怪人。”

“让人头疼的是，我们还不知道住在自己家里的是个什么人。”姑娘说。

“伊尔娜，”汉森太太吩咐道，“在客人回来之前，别忘了把登记本送到他房间里去。”

“是的，妈妈。或许他会在那上面签上他的大名。”

快晚上8点钟时，天已经渐渐黑了下来，还下起了小雨，山谷里雾气弥漫，笼罩着半山腰。这时的天气已经不适合去散步了，所以汉森太太的新客人沿着小路走到锯木厂以后，就返回客店了。回来后，他要了一小杯葡萄烧酒，一句话都没多说，也没跟任何人道晚安，自己端上点了蜡烛的木制烛台就直接回房间了，还从里面插上了门，然后整晚都没听见他有什么动静。驿站的跟班在车库里将就了一宿，在马车的两个辕中间陪着那匹毛色泛黄的马睡着了。哪怕外面风吹雨打，也用不着担

心。

第二天，汉森太太和女儿很早就起来了。客人的房里还是一点动静都没有，看来他还在休息。上午9点钟以后，他才来到大厅，还是跟谁都不打招呼，态度却比昨天更蛮横了，一会儿埋怨床太硬，一会儿又说店里太闹把他吵醒了。然后他就打开大门，出去看天色。

天色看起来并不好。凛冽的风席卷着雾气重重的古斯塔山峰，沿着山谷，刮起了一阵阵的狂风。

所以这位旅客不想这么贸然地出门，不过他也没有浪费时间。他一边抽着烟斗，一边在屋里来回走着，想了解一下室内的摆设。他仔细看了每间客房，查验了家具，打开了所有的壁橱和柜子。他在做这些事的时候别提有多么从容了，好像比在他自己家里还随便，不知道的还以为他是一所法院派来的正在进行查封的拍卖估价员呢！如果说这个人有点怪的话，那么他接下来的行为就越来越让人感到可疑了。

等那些事做完以后，他就来到大厅，坐在大椅子上，用生硬严厉的语气向汉森太太提了几个问题：

客店建了多久了？

是她丈夫阿拉尔自己建的，还是他继承的？

店内外有没有经过修整？

围墙里的那个小院和院子里的那个小树林的面积是多少？

店里的生意怎么样，收入多不多？

在旅游旺季平均每天能有多少客人？他们在这儿一般是住一天还是住好几天？

.....

诸如此类。很显然，这位客人还没有注意到放在他房间里的那个登记本，因为起码这最后一个问题的答案，在那上面是能找到答案的。

果然，登记本还放在前一天晚上伊尔娜所放的那个地方，上面还是没有这位客人的签名。

“先生，”汉森太太说，“我不清楚您为什么会对这些事情那么感兴趣。不过，要是您想了解我们的生意，那很容易，您只要看看客店的登记本就知道了。另外我还要请您按照本店的规矩在那上面签上您的名字。”

“我的名字？当然，我会写上我的名字的，汉森太太。等我向您告辞的时候，我会签的。”

“那么要不要给您保留这间客房呢？”

“不用了，”他一边站起来一边说，“吃完午饭我就走了，这样明天晚上就能回到德拉蒙了。”

“回到德拉蒙？”汉森太太紧跟着重复了一遍。

“是的！请马上叫人给我安排午餐。”

“您家住在德拉蒙？”

“对啊。我家住在德拉蒙，请问，这有什么可奇怪的呢？”

就这样，这位旅客在达尔，确切地说是在客店里只待了一天就走了，当地的景色他一点儿也没有欣赏，连村子都没有出，什么古斯塔山，鲁康福斯瀑布和维斯特夫若哈达尔山谷的奇景，他都不感兴趣，他离开常住的德拉蒙不是来旅游的，而是为了他的生意经。看来，他这次除了想仔细研究汉森太太的客店之外，就没什么别的目的了。

伊尔娜看得很清楚，母亲显得心神不定。汉森太太走到扶手椅上坐了下来，推开纺车，待在那里一动不动，一句话也不说。

这时，那位旅客开始走进饭厅吃饭了。午饭做得和昨天的晚饭一样精致可口，可他还是不满意，不紧不慢地吃着喝着。不过他好像对那些银制餐具的价值特别感兴趣——银器是挪威的乡下人特别珍爱的东西，他们常把祖传的刀叉和家里的首饰放在一起。此时此刻，驿站的跟班正在车库里做着出发的准备。

上午11点的时候，马匹和车子已经在客店的门前等候了。天气看起来还是不太好，灰蒙蒙的天空呼呼地刮着冷风，雨点还时不时地像子弹一样拍打在窗户的玻璃上。这位旅客披着羊皮大衣，对外面的风雨看起来并不在意。

吃完午饭，他又把最后一杯葡萄烧酒喝得一滴不剩，然后点上了烟斗，穿上了外套，回到大厅里准备结账。

“马上就准备好了。”伊尔娜说着，坐到了一张小办公桌前。

“快一点！”旅客说。在等的时候，他又说，“把登记本给我，我好签上名字。”汉森太太起身去拿登记本，然后把它放在大桌子上。

客人拿起羽毛笔，透过眼镜上方最后看了一眼汉森太太，然后用粗

体字在本上写下自己的名字，就把它合上了。

这时，伊尔娜把账单递给了他。他拿过账单，核对了各项开销，嘴里还在嘟嘟囔囔的，不用说，他又把所有的开支算了一遍：“哼，可真贵，住了一晚上，吃了两顿饭，竟然要七个半马克？”

“还有驿站跟班和马匹的费用呢！”伊尔娜提醒他说。

“不管怎么说，我还是觉得收费太贵。说实在的，要是店里赚大钱的话，我可一点都不会觉得奇怪。”

“先生！您不用付钱了。”汉森太太说话的声音显得是那样慌乱，别人都没办法听清。

刚才她打开登记本，看到了那上面签的名字，然后她拿过账单，撕得粉碎，又重新说了一遍：“您不用付钱了！”

“我也是这么想的。”旅客回答道。

他来的时候没有跟人问好，走的时候也没有向人道别，就上车离开了。与此同时，马车的跟班也跳上了踏板，不一会儿，就消失在大路的拐弯处了。

伊尔娜打开登记本，只见上面写着这个名字：“桑格伊斯，德拉蒙人。”

第七章 兄妹的担忧

第二天下午，在如艾尔把他的游客送到通往阿尔当瑞的路上以后，就该回来了。

伊尔娜知道哥哥会沿着古斯塔高原附近的马昂河的左岸往回走，就来到水流湍急的河边渡口去等他。她坐在渡船码头的栈桥边上，想了很多。现在除了子爵号一直不回来所引起的心神不定之外，她又添了一桩心事，这是由那个叫桑格伊斯的来访者和汉森太太对他的态度所引起的。为什么汉森太太一看到他的名字就把账单撕碎，还免去他的一切费用呢？这里面肯定有秘密，而且是个重大的秘密。

当如艾尔到来时，终于让伊尔娜从思考当中醒了过来。她远远地看到如艾尔正从高山的顶上往下奔跑。他一会儿出现在狭窄的林中空地上，穿过那些被砍倒或是烧焦的树林中间，一会儿又消失在茂密的松树、桦树和树梢立起来的桦树的树丛中。最后他终于到了河的对岸，跳上了小小的渡船。他划了几下，船就通过了湍急的旋涡。他跳上陡峭的河岸，来到妹妹身边。

“奥勒回来了吗？”他问道。

他首先想到的就是奥勒，可他的问话并没有得到回答。

“也没有他的来信吗？”

“一点音信都没有。”

伊尔娜泣不成声。

“不要这样，你别哭，”如艾尔大声地说，“亲爱的妹妹，别哭……你这一哭太让我难受了……我不能看到你哭。你说，没有收到信，看起来情况有点不对劲啊，不过还没有理由感到失望。这样吧，要是你同意的话，我到贝尔根去打听打听……我去问问艾尔普兄弟，他们可能有纽芬兰那边的消息：为什么子爵号没有进港，是因为船被破坏了呢，还是要避开这糟糕的天气？不用怀疑，大风已经刮了一个多星期了，有时候就有纽芬兰的船到冰岛或是到法罗群岛去躲避的。两年前，奥勒在斯特勒号船上的时候也遇到过这种情况，而且不会每天都有邮差来送信。我说的都是实话，妹妹，冷静一些。要是你把我也弄哭了，那可怎么办呢？”

“我实在是控制不了自己了，哥哥。”

“伊尔娜……伊尔娜……别灰心……我向你保证，我可没有失去希望。”

“我应该相信你说的话吗，如艾尔？”

“当然了，你应该相信我。为了让你放心，你愿不愿让我到贝尔根去一趟，明天早上……要不今天晚上就动身？”

“我不想让你离开我！不！……我不愿意。”伊尔娜回答说。同时她紧紧地抱着哥哥，好像这世上就只有他这一个亲人了一样。

当他们正要赶回客店的时候，天就开始下雨了，接着又刮起了阵阵的狂风，这样一来，他们就不得不到离马昂河几百步远的船工小屋去躲雨。

他们在那儿等着风雨停住。此时，如艾尔觉得应该说点什么，因为在他看来，沉默会比他可以说的话更让人失望，虽然这并不是什么有希望的话。

“妈妈怎么样？”他问道。

“她总是越来越发愁。”伊尔娜回答说。

“我出去的时候没有什么人来吗？”

“有，来了一个客人，他已经走了。”

“这么说，目前店里没有客人了。那个人没要求提供向导吗？”

“没有，如艾尔。”

“那还真不错，因为我可不想离开你。不过，要是天气一直不好的话，我担心今年游客们就不来特勒玛克了。”

“可现在还只是4月份呢，哥哥。”

“当然，不过我预感我们今年的生意不会特别好。总之，走一步看一步吧。对了，你说，那个客人是昨天离开达尔的？”

“对，是昨天上午。”

“他是什么人？”

“这个人好像住在德拉蒙，他是从那儿来的，名字叫桑格伊斯。”

“桑格伊斯？”

“你认识他？”

“不认识。”如艾尔回答说。

伊尔娜在心里考虑着，要不要把哥哥出去这段时间内店里发生的事都告诉他。要是如艾尔知道了这个男人是多么目中无人，又是怎样盘算着房子和家具能值多少钱，汉森太太对他采取的又是怎样一种态度时，他会怎么想呢？他会不会想到母亲那么做是有重要原因的呢？那么，这原因又是什么呢？在母亲和这个桑格伊斯之间到底有什么共同的东西呢？这里面肯定有个秘密关系到整个家庭。如艾尔要是想弄清底细，就会去追问母亲，提出许多问题……那么性格内向，从来都是态度冷漠的汉森太太，一定会像她一直以来所做的那样保持沉默。可这样一来，她和孩子们之间那已经让人觉得痛苦的局面就会变得更糟糕了。

可是她能对如艾尔保守这个秘密吗？这样做，不就相当于给他们的深厚感情带来裂痕吗？这种感情连接着他们彼此之间的情谊。不，一定不能让这份感情受到损害。于是，伊尔娜决定把所有的一切都告诉他。

“以前你去德拉蒙时，从来都没听说过这个叫桑格伊斯的人吗？”她又问。

“从来没听过。”

“那么，如艾尔，你听我说，咱们的妈妈可能认识他，最起码是知道他的名字。”

“她认识桑格伊斯？”

“是啊，哥哥。”

“可是，我从来没听她提到过这个名字呀！”

“前天此人来访之前，她就知道他了，虽然她从来没见过他。”

接着，伊尔娜就跟他讲述了这位旅客在住店时发生的所有事情，还有离店时汉森太太那奇怪的表现，最后伊尔娜还补充说：“如艾尔，我想，我们最好什么也别问妈妈。你知道她，那会让她心里更不好受。不用说，在将来的某一时刻她会以前的秘密告诉我们的。愿上天保佑奥勒赶快回到我们身边来。这样，万一咱们家里有什么痛苦的事情发生，还有咱们三个人一起分担。”

如艾尔认真地听了妹妹的诉说。是的，汉森太太和桑格伊斯之间肯定有什么重大的秘密，才使她这么服从。难道这个人是在清算达尔客店的财产吗？显然不是。可桑格伊斯离开时那张被撕碎的账单，而且他还觉得那是理所当然的，这又意味着什么呢？

如艾尔说：“你说得对，伊尔娜。我什么也不会对妈妈说。可能她也会后悔没对我们说说心里话，希望还不算太晚。可怜的母亲，她一定很不好受，她太固执了。她不明白，儿女是能替她分忧解愁的。”

“总有一天她会明白过来的，如艾尔。”

“是啊，我们盼着吧。不过，从现在起，我一定要搞清楚那个家伙是什么人。厄尔木博先生可能会认识他。一到邦布勒，我就去问他。要是必要的话，我就赶到德拉蒙去打听。在那儿要了解这个人在做些什么，他做的是个什么生意，人们对他的看法怎么样，应该不会太难。”

“我敢说，他不是个好人。”伊尔娜说，“他看起来面目可憎，目光凶狠。在这种粗俗的外表下能有一颗善良的心，那就怪了。”

“好了，”如艾尔说，“不要以貌取人。我确定，要是你在奥勒的怀抱里看见桑格伊斯，可能还会觉得他的外表看起来很招人喜欢呢……”

“我可怜的奥勒。”姑娘低声地说。

“他会回来的，他就在回来的路上了。”如艾尔大声地说，“要有信心，伊尔娜，奥勒已经离我们不远了。等他回来的时候，我们一定要责怪他让我们等了这么久。”

雨停了。两个人走出小屋，走在回家的路上。

“对了，我明天就出发。”如艾尔说道。

“你又要走吗？”

“是的，一早就走。”

“已经定了吗？”

“是的，伊尔娜。我离开阿尔当瑞时，一个朋友跟我说，有一个旅客从鲁康福斯高原的北面来，他明天就到鲁康福斯了。”

“这个旅客是谁呀？”

“我还不知道他的名字呢，不过我一定得到那儿去把他领到达尔来。”

伊尔娜叹了口气说：“既然一定要去，那就去吧。”

“明天天亮我就动身。你会感到难过吗，伊尔娜？”

“当然了，哥哥。你不在家，我就更加心神不宁了，哪怕你只是出去几个钟头，我都会这样。”

“好吧，这回我不是一个人走。”

“那谁跟你一起去呀？”

“你呀，我的妹妹。也应该让你散散心了，我带你一起去。”

“啊！谢谢，我的如艾尔！”

第八章 救了一个可爱的客人

第二天一早，兄妹俩就离开客店出发了。从达尔到著名的瀑布来回要走三十公里，这对如艾尔来说不过是一次散步，但这次要照顾伊尔娜的体力，所以如艾尔租了朗格兰工头的马车。跟别的马车一样，这辆马车只有一个座位。不过由于这位老师傅有些胖，车上就装了一个适合他本人的车厢，因此伊尔娜和如艾尔挤着坐也勉强能坐进去。要是预先通知的那位旅客在鲁康福斯的话，那么回来的时候，他就可以坐如艾尔的位子，而如艾尔就走路或是站在车身后面的踏板上。

从达尔到瀑布，一路上风光宜人，但车却很颠簸。毋庸置疑，与其说这条路是马路，倒不如说是羊肠小道。在马昂河的支流上，每隔几百步远就会用未经刨光的树干架起一座简易的木桥，而挪威的马匹也已经习惯了在这类桥上安稳地前进。马车上虽然没装弹簧，但那长长的车辕也有些弹性，这就在某种程度上减轻了道路不平而造成的颠簸。

这一天天气很好。如艾尔和伊尔娜沿着马昂河清澈的河边那绿油油的草地慢慢地往前走着，很多的桦树给阳光照耀着的道路带来了阴凉，小草上闪烁着晶莹的水珠，那是由夜晚潮湿的水汽所造成的。在河的右岸，海拔两千米高的古斯塔山那覆盖着白雪的山峰发出夺目的光芒。当路的坡度不大的时候，有一段时间马车走得还挺快，但没过多久，山谷就开始变小了，河水也开始加速流动。道路弯弯曲曲的，地势也就有高有低。要从这里经过的确不是件容易的事，好在如艾尔对这一切已经十分熟悉了。而且，有他在身边，伊尔娜也就什么都不怕了。当车身摇晃得厉害时，她就靠在哥哥的肩膀上。这些日子以来，她的脸色一直很苍

白，但是早晨的清新空气却让她那美丽的脸上现出了红晕。

不过，要到达目的地，还要接着向高处前进。不宽的马昂河在两个形成断崖峭壁的山谷里流过，在附近的野地里，可以看到二十多间分散在四处的房屋、荒了的废旧农庄以及散落在桦树林之间的牧人的小房子。过了一会儿，马昂河就看不见了，但它在悬崖峭壁之间的咆哮声还是能听得很清楚。而且不光是这里，一直到高山的山顶，景色都十分迷人。

走了两个小时以后，用来推动两个水轮的落差达一千五百尺的瀑布，还有瀑布旁边的一个锯木厂就出现在他们面前了。在维斯特夫若哈达尔，落差达这么高的瀑布还有不少，但它们的流量却并不大。从这一点上来说，鲁康福斯瀑布要比其更胜一筹。

到了锯木厂，如艾尔和伊尔娜就下车了。

如艾尔问：“再走半小时的路，你不会觉得太累吧，妹妹？”

“不会的，哥哥，我一点儿也不累，再说，走点路对我来说还有好处。”

“哪是一点路呀，好多路呢，还要往上爬呢！”

“那我就扶着你的胳膊走，如艾尔。”

现在，他们就要下车自己走了，因为马车没办法通过崎岖的山路、狭窄的路口和到处都是摇晃的岩石的斜坡。在奇形怪状的岩石上，有的长着树木，有的什么都没有，光秃秃的，这预示着大瀑布就在附近。远处，淡蓝色的地平线上已经升起了一片浓雾，这是鲁康河飞溅上来的水滴，带出的水汽已经升到了很高的空中。

后来，伊尔娜和如艾尔走上一条羊肠小道，所有的向导都认识这条小道，沿着小道走可以走到山谷的隘口，但是需要从大树和小树的中间钻过去。过了没多久，他们俩就坐在一块长了黄色苔藓的岩石上，差不多就在瀑布的对面，这边能直接通向瀑布。

在这里，兄妹俩要是说话，互相也不容易听清。但此时此刻，就算不开口，他们的思想也能相互交流，因为他们的心是相通的。

鲁康河的瀑布水流很急，落差很大，吼声震天。在上游的姆若斯湖和下游的坦恩湖中间，马昂河的河床一下子下陷了差不多九百尺。这个高度相当于尼亚加拉瀑布落差的六倍，而尼亚加拉河的两岸，从美国的一侧到加拿大的一侧，就足有三英里宽。

这儿就是鲁康福斯，有着难以描绘的奇特景色，就算是画出来也不能完全表现它的风貌。有的自然奇景，只有亲眼看到才能体会到它所具有的美，这个享誉整个欧洲大陆的瀑布就是其中之一。

此时，有一个游客正坐在马昂河左岸的峭壁上，他观赏的正是这奇异的景色。从那个位置，他可以居高临下就近观赏鲁康福斯。尽管他的位置很显眼，但无论是如艾尔，还是他的妹妹，都没有看见他。这不是因为离得远，而是山中景色所特有的视觉效果把他显得特别小，所以也就显得比实际距离更远了。

这时，那个旅客站了起来，贸然地向马昂河上像圆形屋顶那样突起的岩顶上走去。很显然，这位好奇的游客想看的正是鲁康福斯的两个洞穴，一个在左边，里面波涛滚滚；另一个在右边，洞里总是雾气蒙蒙。或许他还想去探索一下瀑布的中间是不是还有第三个洞穴，可能这就是鲁康河水流入地下以后又时常涌出急流的原因。或者说，急流是因

为瓦斯爆炸而溢出的，水花四溅，覆盖了周围的田野。

就在此时，那位游客继续向两边斜着的人字形岩顶走去，那上面都是滑溜溜的石头，光秃秃的，花草树木什么都没有。这地方名叫玛丽关，又叫玛丽斯蒂安。

这位冒险的游客可能还不了解这个隘口得以出名的传说。据说有一天，艾斯坦想走这条险路去和维斯特夫若哈达尔的美女玛丽相会。在隘口的另一边，他的未婚妻向他伸出了双臂。突然，他一脚踩空摔倒了，在光滑的岩石上，他一下子没站稳，跌入了万丈深渊，马昂河的急流瞬间就把他吞没了。

艾斯坦的不幸命运会不会又落到这个在鲁康福斯斜坡上冒险的游人身上呢？这可真让人担心。果然，他看到了危险，不过已经太晚了。忽然之间，他便无处立足了，他大叫一声，滚落到二十多步远的地方，恰好抓住了一块岩石的突出部分，下面就是万丈深渊。

如艾尔和伊尔娜还没有看见他的踪迹，但已经听到了他的呼喊声。

“出什么事了？”如艾尔站起来说。

“好像有一声尖叫。”伊尔娜说。

“对，是求救的呼叫。”

“在哪个方向？”

“你听，听！”

如艾尔和伊尔娜往瀑布两边看了看，什么也没看见，可他们十分清

楚地听到了“救救我，救救我”的喊声。鲁康河的急流每隔一分钟会涌出水面，每次都会发出一次响声，这喊声是从那有节奏的空当中传过来的。

“如艾尔，”伊尔娜说，“有游客遇到了危险在呼救。我们应该去救他！”

“是的，妹妹，他就在附近。可是在什么方向呢？在什么地方呢？我什么都看不见啊！”

伊尔娜爬到了她曾坐过的岩石后面的那个斜坡上，两手抓住了覆盖着马昂河左岸的稀疏树丛。

“如艾尔！”她叫了起来。

“你看见了吗？”

“在那边……那边！”

伊尔娜用手指着差不多就悬在深渊上方的那个冒险的游人。要是他踩着薄薄岩石的脚支撑不住，或者他再往下挪一点，再或者他晕过去，那可就没命了。

“我们一定要救他。”伊尔娜说。

“是的，一定要救他！”如艾尔说，“只要镇静一些，我们就能走到他那儿。”

于是，他大叫了一声。游客听见后，把头扭了过来。接着，如艾尔就试着寻找一条可靠的捷径，好把他救上来，让他脱离险境。

“伊尔娜，你怕不怕？”

“不怕，哥哥。”

“你熟悉玛丽斯蒂安吗？”

“我从那儿路过好几回了。”

“那好，你从山顶那边过去，尽可能地靠近游客。然后慢慢地滑到他那儿，抓住他的手让他坚持住。不过要让他先别起来，否则他会头晕的，会把你一起带下去，那你们就都没命了。”

“那你呢，如艾尔？”

“我？当你从上边过去的时候，我就从下面沿着马昂河边的山坡爬过去，等你到了那边的时候，我也就到了。万一你们滑下去的话，我可能还会把你们俩都托住呢。”

然后，趁着鲁康福斯那有节奏的水流声的间隙，如艾尔大声说：“别动，先生.....你等着！我们会想办法去救您！”

伊尔娜消失在高大的树丛里，她从旁边向下面的玛丽斯蒂安隘口的另一个圆形岩石走去。如艾尔很快就看见那个勇敢的姑娘走到了最后几棵树的拐弯处了。

他自己则冒着生命危险，沿着鲁康福斯陡壁附近的圆形岩石的倾斜部分慢慢地爬行前进。沿着万丈深渊的边缘爬过去，没有惊人的镇定和稳健的协调动作是完不成的。而且，由于瀑布溅起的水花，深渊的峭壁已经全被打湿了。

同时，在百尺高的地方，伊尔娜朝着倾斜的方向前进，她这样可以比较容易地到达游客所在的地方。在游客所处的那个位置上，别人只能看见他对着瀑布的那一边的脸。

如艾尔爬到他的下面，停了下来，他牢牢地踩住一个岩石的裂缝后，大声喊道：“喂！先生！”

游客转过头来。

“喂，先生！”如艾尔又喊，“请别动，千万别动，坚持住。”

“您放心吧，我挺得住，我的朋友！”他说话的口气让如艾尔的心放了下来。“要是我坚持不住，一刻钟以前，我就掉进鲁康福斯的深渊了。”

“我妹妹就要走到你那儿去了，”如艾尔又说，“她会抓住您的手。但是，在我到达以前，您不要起来……千万别动啊！”

“好，我能坚持的。”游客回答说。

伊尔娜已经开始从上面下来了，她一面在岩石上寻找着摩擦力较大的立脚点，一面把脚伸到可以站稳脚跟的岩石裂缝里。像许多特勒玛克的姑娘一样，她对山野之间的陡坡已经习以为常了。

她也像如艾尔那样喊道：“要坚持住啊，先生。”

“好的，我坚持……我保证，只要我能坚持，我一定会坚持下去。”

兄妹俩都能看见他，于是分别从上面和下面不断地向他提出各种建议。

“尤其是不要害怕啊！”伊尔娜又嘱咐道。

“我不害怕！”

“我们会来救您的！”如艾尔喊道。

“看在圣·奥拉夫¹的分上，一切都拜托给你们了。我自己是没办法脱险的。”

看得出，这位游客的头脑还很清醒。但是跌倒之后，他的手脚已经有点不听使唤了。他现在能做的只有抓住悬在深渊上空那很薄的突出的岩石。与此同时，伊尔娜还在继续往下走，没过一会儿，她已经离游客很近了。她把脚蹬在凹凸不平的岩石上，拽住了他的手。

游客想把身子缩一下。

“别动，先生……别动……”伊尔娜说，“您要是把我一起往下拖的话，我可没那么大的力气把您拉上来。您要等我哥哥过来，当他站到咱俩和鲁康福斯之间的时候，您再想办法站起来……”

“站起来？我的好姑娘，说起来简单，可做起来不容易呀，恐怕我不能站起来……”

“您是不是受伤了呀，先生？”

“不，没骨折，也没脱臼，我希望是的。不过，腿上的确是擦破了皮。”

这时，如艾尔正在伊尔娜和游客的下面，离他们所在的地方还有二十多尺远。弯曲的岩顶让他没办法直接向他们靠近，如艾尔需要重新从

圆形的那面爬上去。这是最困难的，也是最危险的，得豁出命来做。

“千万别动啊，伊尔娜！”如艾尔又一次喊道，“要是你们俩都滑下来，我又没站好位置，没接住你们，那咱们可就都完了。”

“放心吧，如艾尔！”伊尔娜说，“你自己要小心啊！愿上帝保佑你。”

如艾尔开始贴着肚子往上攀登。有那么两三回，他觉得脚下都快支撑不住了。最后，他终于爬到了游客旁边。

游客是个上了年纪的人，不过身体健壮，相貌堂堂，看起来和蔼可亲。如艾尔一开始还以为他是一个想越过玛丽斯蒂安隘口的愣头青呢！

“您做事缺乏考虑啊，先生！”如艾尔一边说，一边半卧在地上，为的是好喘口气。

“怎么，只是欠考虑吗？”游客说，“您直接说荒唐得了。”

“您是在拿生命去冒险啊！”

“是啊，我也让您冒了生命危险。”

“嘿，我嘛……这是我的本行！”如艾尔说。

之后，如艾尔站起身，说：“现在的问题是要重新回到圆形岩石上面去，好在最难走的路段已经过去了。”

“啊，最难走的！”

“是啊，先生，那段路正好到您脚下就没有了。咱们只要再走一段

不太陡的斜坡就行了。”

“我想您最好别指望我了，我的孩子！我有一条腿，不但是现在，恐怕是几天之内都走不了路了。”

“您试着起来一下。”

“好的……不过您得扶着我……”

“您抓住我妹妹的胳膊，我来扶着您，从腰这儿把您推上去。”

“有把握吗？”

“没问题。”

“那好的，我的朋友们，全靠你们了。你们这么拼命来救我，就看你们的了。”

按照如艾尔说的办法，他们万分小心地行动着。攀爬岩石虽然有点危险，但他们三个人进行得比预料中要更快更好。而且，游客没有韧带和手脚的损伤，只不过是擦破了皮，显得稍微严重点。虽然走起路来还有些疼痛，但他的两条腿要比原先设想的好用得多。

十来分钟以后，游客就离开了玛丽斯蒂安，到达了安全地带。本来他可以在鲁康福斯瀑布上方野地边上的柏树林下歇一会儿，但如艾尔让他再坚持一下，就能到达刚才伊尔娜和如艾尔自己来到瀑布前待过的位于岩石后面的那个小木屋了。于是，游客按照要求努力地坚持着，结果他做到了。伊尔娜和如艾尔一边一个搀扶着他，没费什么劲儿就来到了木屋的门前。

“进去吧，先生。”姑娘说，“您可以在这儿休息一会儿。”

“可以休息一刻钟吗？”

“当然可以，先生。然后，您得同意跟我们到达尔去。”

“达尔？啊，我正要到那儿去呢！”

“您就是从北方来的那位游客吗？”如艾尔问道，“那位客人还让我到阿尔当瑞去等他呢！”

“对，就是我。”

“天啊，您走的路线不对啊……”

“我也想到这一点了。”

“要是我能提前想到会发生这样的事，就会到鲁康福斯的另一边去接您了。”

“这个想法不错啊，勇敢的年轻人，要是那样的话，我就能避免这次冒险了，从我这个年纪来看，这可太不应该了。”

“不管是年老还是年轻，都不应该这么做啊，先生！”伊尔娜说。

三个人一边说着，一边走进了木屋，屋里住着一户农民，有父亲、母亲和两个女儿，他们一起站起来对客人表示欢迎。这时如艾尔才发现，游客有一条腿的膝盖稍微靠下的位置有比较严重的擦伤。这得需要休息一个多星期，但他的大腿并没有扭伤或是骨折，骨头也没有受伤，这一点还是挺重要的。

主人拿出了上好的乳制品，还有很多草莓和一些黑面包来招待客人。如艾尔毫不客气地大吃了一顿，伊尔娜没吃多少，游客的饭量跟她哥哥差不多。他说：“这次这么一折腾可把我饿坏了，我得承认，从玛丽斯蒂安这儿走的确是太不明智了，我还想扮演艾斯坦的角色呢，可我都能做他的父亲，甚至是他的爷爷了。”

“啊！您听说过传说的故事吗？”伊尔娜问。

“当然了。早在我还有奶妈照顾的时候，每次当她哄我睡觉时，就会给我唱这支歌。的确，我知道这个传说，我那勇敢的姑娘，所以说我就更是错得离谱了。现在，我的朋友们，对我这样的受伤人员来说，达尔离得可不近，你们打算怎么把我送过去呢？”

“您什么也不用操心了，先生。”如艾尔回答说，“我们的马车在小路下面等着呢。不过还要走三百步……”

“啊！三百步。”

“而且是走下坡路。”姑娘补充道。

“呃！要是走下坡路的话，那就好办了，朋友们，用一只胳膊扶着我就可以了。”

“为什么不用两只胳膊呢？”如艾尔问道，“我们有四只胳膊可以为您效劳呢！”

“不管是两只，还是四只，我都不用付更多的钱了，对不对？”

“这没什么的。”

“不！起码要表示感谢呀，我发现我还没有感谢你们呢！”

“感谢什么呢，先生？”如艾尔说。

“感谢你们冒着生命危险救了我呀！”

“您想什么时候出发呢？”说着，伊尔娜站了起来，以免他再过多地恭维下去。

“怎么……我想……首先……我，我想别人让我怎么做我就怎么做吧。”

说着，游客向木屋的主人支付了一点餐费之后，就由伊尔娜轻轻地搀扶着，当然主要还是由如艾尔扶着，开始沿着小路往下走。这条弯曲的小路一直通到马昂河的岸边，然后再与通往达尔的大路相连。

他们一边走着，一边不时地发出感叹的“哎、哎”声，还伴随着哈哈大笑。最后他们到了锯木厂，如艾尔就去套车了。五分钟后，游客已经上了车，和姑娘坐在一起。

“那你呢？”他问如艾尔，“我好像是占了你的位子……”

“这个位子我是自愿让给您的。”

“或许大家可以挤一挤……”

“不，不！我长着两条腿呢，先生，向导的两条腿就能比得上车轮子……”

“你的腿真了不起，我的孩子，了不起啊！”

就这样，他们沿着慢慢靠近马昂河的道路向前走着。如艾尔走在马车前面，牵着笼头给马引路，省得马车颠簸得太厉害。

一路上，大家都很开心，至少游客觉得是这样。现在他已经像汉森家的老朋友那样，跟他们聊得十分愉快了。到达客店之前，兄妹俩已经把他称作希尔维尤斯先生，而希尔维尤斯则直接叫他们伊尔娜和如艾尔，三个人好像是已经认识很久的老朋友了。

快下午4点钟的时候，在山村的树林中就能看到达尔教堂小钟楼的尖顶了。没过一会儿，马车就在客店门口停下了。因为旅客从马车上下来还有些费力，所以汉森太太到门口来迎接他。尽管他没提出什么要求，却还是替他安排了最好的房间。

[1](#) 挪威国王，被推崇为“圣徒”，挪威的守护神，挪威自由的捍卫者。

第九章 被救的游客

当天晚上写在旅客登记本上的名字是希尔维尤斯·霍格，正好排在桑格伊斯的后面。人们会发现这两个名字以及两个人之间的明显不同。无论是外表还是内心，两个人都没有共同之处：一个慷慨大方，一个贪婪自私；一个善良和蔼，一个尖酸刻薄。

希尔维尤斯刚刚六十岁，不过从外表上并不能看出来。他身材高大挺拔，又很健壮，气质和体格看起来都很棒，在他那花白的头发下端端正正地长着一副可亲可敬的面孔。他没有留胡子，眼睛和嘴唇总是充满了笑意，他那宽大的前额可以显示出那里承载了最崇高的思想，宽阔的胸怀可以让火热的心在那里随意地跳动。除了这些，他那始终不变的温和脾气、机智灵敏的长相和那厚道慈祥以及富有牺牲精神的性格，都是那么惹人喜爱。

希尔维尤斯·霍格是克里斯蒂亚尼亚人，这已经说明了一切。不仅在挪威首都，就是在挪威全国他都算是知名人士，人们对他充满了尊敬和爱戴。人们对他所表现出的感情，和在斯堪的纳维亚王国的另一都分，也就是瑞典的情形并不相同。

这是可以理解的。

希尔维尤斯·霍格是克里斯蒂亚尼亚的法学教授。在其他国家，律师、工程师、医生和大商人占据了社会阶梯的前几层。而在挪威就不是这样，在挪威，教师属于最高阶层。

如果说瑞典有贵族、僧侣、资产者和农民四个阶级，那么挪威就只有三个阶级，那里没有贵族，连贵族的任何代表人物都没有，甚至连官吏阶级也没有。在这个特殊的国度里，不存在什么特权，官吏都只是谦逊的公仆。一句话，在这里一切都是平等的，政治上也没有高低贵贱之分。

因为霍格在挪威国内是最受尊敬的人物之一，所以他当国会议员也是顺理成章、没什么可奇怪的了。不管是他的才能，还是他在个人生活上的坦诚以及工作方面的清正，都能让他在大议会里对由农村选举产生的农民议员产生影响。

自从1814年制定宪法以来，人们可以有理由这么说：挪威是一个以瑞典国王为总统的共和国。当然，对瑞典国王的特权充满羡慕之情的挪威，也很善于保有自己的自治权。挪威国会和瑞典国会没有一点共同之处。所以，人们很容易就会发现，挪威国会中最有影响、最爱国的议员之一，在这条既不属于瑞典，又不属于挪威的边界地区，受到的会是完全不一样的待遇。

霍格就是这样一个人。他特立独行，不喜欢做官，多次拒绝进入内阁。为了捍卫挪威的所有权益，他对瑞典的蚕食、侵吞行径一直是坚决反对的。

由于这两个国家在道德上和政治上有着如此明显的差别，所以那时的瑞典国王奥斯卡十五世在斯德哥尔摩加冕以后，不得不又到挪威过去的首都德隆丹进行加冕仪式。因为挪威人在做生意方面对瑞典有点不信任，所以克里斯蒂亚尼亚银行并不愿意接收斯德哥尔摩银行发行的钞票。因为两国人民之间的分界线十分清楚，所以在挪威的建筑物和船只上是不挂瑞典国旗的。瑞典的国旗是蓝底、中间配黄色十字，而挪威国

旗是红底、中间配蓝色十字。尽管如此，霍格却仍是一心一意为了挪威，每时每刻都在保卫着挪威的利益。所以，在1854年前后，当挪威议会提出国家不再设代理国王和总督的议案时，他和许多人一起进行了热烈的讨论，并最终促成了议案的通过。

因此，人们可以想象，如果说他在王国的东部不太受人欢迎的话，那么在王国的西部，甚至是西部最偏僻的山村，他还是非常受人尊敬的。他的名字已经被整个挪威山区的人们所熟悉，从克里斯蒂安桑海滩一直到北角的岩石尽头，简直是妇孺皆知，声名显赫，对此他是当之无愧的，任何闲言碎语都不会伤害到这位克里斯蒂亚尼亚的国会议员和法学教授。而且，他是一个真正的充满热情的挪威人，在他身上，毫无他的那些同胞们所常有的那种冷漠无情，在思想上和行动上，他所具有的气质也比斯堪的纳维亚人所固有的那种气质要更加坚决。这些都表现在他那灵敏的动作、热情的言谈和充满活力的姿态之中。要是他生在法国，人们肯定会毫不犹豫地说是“一个南方人”。假如能接受这个比喻，那对他倒是很合适的。

虽然霍格没有从工作当中谋取任何好处，但他的财产也能让他过上富足的生活。他生来就大公无私，从来都是只想别人，不想自己，所以他把地位和财富都放在一边，觉得当个国会议员就可以了，再没什么别的想法。那时，经过一年的紧张的立法工作之后，霍格正利用三个月的假期来放松散心。他离开克里斯蒂亚尼亚已经有六个星期了，打算游遍包括德隆丹、阿尔当瑞、特勒玛克、贡斯堡和德拉蒙县的整个地区。他准备游历这些他还不熟悉的省份，把这当做一次考察兼消遣的旅行。

希尔维尤斯·霍格已经游览了这个地区的一部分地方，只是从北部的一个大区回来时，还想去看看特勒玛克的奇观之一——著名的瀑布。当时，从德隆丹到克里斯蒂亚尼亚的铁路方案正在研究之中，在经过实

地考察以后，他叫人雇了一个向导，以便带着他到达尔去并打算在马昂河的左岸和那位向导碰头。可是，还没等到那位向导，就被玛丽斯蒂安的奇异美景吸引住了，所以他直接跑过去想一睹这惊险的隘口。多么冒失啊，差点儿送了性命。应该说，要不是如艾尔和伊尔娜的搭救，这次旅行以及旅行者的性命就已经在鲁康福斯的万丈深渊中结束了。

第十章 大家成为朋友

在斯堪的纳维亚半岛的这些国家，无论是城市，还是乡村，人们都很有文化素养，他们的文化水平不仅仅局限在读、写、算上。农民们都很喜欢学习，他们很有智慧，也很热心，经常广泛地参与公共事务和市镇上的事情。在挪威国会里，这种人一般占多数，他们有时还穿着地区的服装参加会议。人们请他们出庭做证，是因为他们具有很好的理智和务实的精神，他们对事物的理解虽然有点慢，但也是正确的。当然，更主要的是因为他们清正廉洁。

所以，希尔维尤斯·霍格的名字在整个挪威都是耳熟能详的，甚至在特勒玛克的这一偏僻地区，人们提到他时也都满怀敬意，这也就没什么奇怪的了。而能接待这样一位备受尊敬的客人，汉森太太也觉得有必要告诉他：他能在自己家里住上几天，她感到十分荣幸。

希尔维尤斯·霍格说：“我不知道这能不能给您增光，汉森太太。但我很清楚的一点就是，这让我非常高兴。啊！很久以前，我就听学生们讲过达尔这家热情的客店，所以我曾经打算到这儿来休息一个星期。可是，圣·奥拉夫把我丢下了，我可没想到我会是拖着一条腿来的。”说着，这位出色的人亲切地握了握女店主的手。

“希尔维尤斯先生，”伊尔娜说，“您看是不是让我哥哥去邦布勒找一位医生来，给您看看？”

“一位医生，我的小伊尔娜，这么说，你想让我的双腿再也不能走吗？”

“噢，希尔维尤斯先生。”

“请个医生，为什么不请我的朋友，克里斯蒂亚尼亚的伯克大夫呢？只是擦破了一点皮而已，不用这样吧？”

“虽然是一点小伤，但要是不好好治疗的话，问题可能就会严重了。”如艾尔在一边说。

“啊！这个嘛，如艾尔，你说，你愿意让它变得严重吗？”

“我当然不愿意了，希尔维尤斯先生，上帝保佑我！”

“哈！上帝肯定会保佑你的，也会保佑我和汉森太太的全家，尤其是这位可爱的伊尔娜，大家都愿意照顾我.....”

“那当然啦，希尔维尤斯先生！”

“太好了！我的朋友们，再过四五天就没事了。再说，在这么漂亮的房子里，不恢复健康是不可能的。除了达尔客店之外，人们还能在哪里受到比这更出色、更棒的招待呢？这张舒服的床，还有床头的格言已经比医院那令人讨厌的处方更有效了。还有这扇窗户，多令人高兴啊，它竟然是冲着马昂河河谷的。还有我房间下面那缓缓的流水，整幢房子都充满了古树的芳香。这么好的空气，这山里的空气，难道不就是最好的医生吗？当人们需要“他”的时候，只要把窗户一打开，“他”就进来了，不光能让你振奋，还能增加你的食欲呢！”

希尔维尤斯兴高采烈地说起这所有的一切，他的到来，似乎也给这个家增添了一些欢乐。至少，兄妹俩是这么认为的，他们手拉手，带着同样的感情，一起听着希尔维尤斯说话。

教授先被带到楼下的房间里。接着，他半躺在一把大扶手椅里，腿伸在一只搁脚凳上，开始接受伊尔娜和如艾尔的照料。教授只喜欢接受冷敷的疗法。而事实上，可能也用不着别的治疗方法。

“好，朋友们，好！”他说，“不要随使用药物。现在，你们知道了吧，要不是你们救我，那鲁康福斯的奇景，我可能会看得更真切呢！我会像普通的岩石一样掉进万丈深渊，然后给玛丽斯蒂安的传奇增添新的内容。可是我没办法原谅自己，因为我并非像不幸的艾斯坦那样，有漂亮的未婚妻在对岸等我。”

“那对霍格太太来说，该是多么悲痛啊！”伊尔娜说，“她会永远都得不到安慰。”

“霍格太太？”教授反问了一句，“嘿，霍格太太不会掉一滴眼泪的！”

“噢，希尔维尤斯先生。”

“不！我这么跟你说是因为压根就没有霍格太太，我都不知道霍格太太长什么样子：是胖的，还是瘦的；是小个子，还是高个子……”

“作为您的妻子，我想她应该是娇小可爱、聪明善良的。”伊尔娜回答说。

“啊！真的，小姐！好的，好的！我相信你，我相信你！”

“不过，希尔维尤斯先生，要是您的亲人和朋友真听到这么一个不幸的消息该怎么办呢？”如艾尔问。

“亲人，我没有任何亲人，我的小伙子！朋友嘛，除了我刚刚在汉

森太太家里认识的以外，好像还有一些，因为有你们，才让他们避免了为我伤心地哭一次。现在，告诉我，孩子们，你们可以留我在这里住几天吗？”

“只要您高兴，当然可以了，希尔维尤斯先生，”伊尔娜回答说，“这个房间就属于您了。”

“另外，我曾经希望像其他游客那样，在达尔停留一段时间，从那儿去周游特勒玛克……我现在不去，可能晚些时候再去，嗯，我就是这么想的。”

“在下个星期到来之前，希尔维尤斯先生，我希望您能够站起来。”如艾尔回答说。

“我也希望可以。”

“到时候，我可以陪您到本地区任何您喜欢的地方去。”

“这，我们到时再看吧，如艾尔。等我好了以后，咱们再说。我还有一个月的假期，要是我非得在汉森太太的客店里度过这整整一个月的话，我想我也不会抱怨的。不过我一定要看看两湖之间的维斯特夫若哈达尔山谷，登一下古斯塔山峰，再回到鲁康福斯，因为我在那差点儿掉下去，我还没看到那儿的风光呢……我一定要看到它！”

“您还可以回到那里去呀，希尔维尤斯先生。”伊尔娜说。

“要是这位善良的汉森太太愿意跟我们一起去的话，咱们就一起去。嘿，我想起来了，我的朋友们，我该通知一下我在克里斯蒂亚尼亚的老保姆凯特和老用人凡克，要是我不把自己的消息告诉他们的话，他们会很着急的，我也要挨骂的……现在，我要跟你们坦白地说，草莓和

奶制品，都很新鲜，很好吃，可是因为我不愿意让人不吃东西，所以这些食物就不够了……你们是不是快吃晚饭了？”

“噢，没关系的，希尔维尤斯先生！”

“不，这很有关系。当我在达尔的这段期间，要是我自己待在房间里独自用餐的话，我会觉得无聊的，你们相不相信？要是汉森太太不嫌麻烦的话，我愿意跟你们和你们的母亲一起用餐。”

虽然按照汉森太太的习惯，她或许更喜欢一个人进餐，但当人们把教授的意愿告诉她时，她还是答应了，这也是很自然的。因为对她和她的家人来说，有一位挪威国会的议员跟他们同桌吃饭，这是一件很有面子的事情。

“那就说定了啊，”希尔维尤斯·霍格说，“咱们一起在大厅里吃饭。”

“是的，希尔维尤斯先生，”如艾尔回答说，“等晚饭准备好了，我就把您的座椅推过去。”

“好的，如艾尔先生，怎么不坐马车呢，你只要扶我一下，我就能自己去了，你看我又不是肢体残缺。”

“随您的便好啦，希尔维尤斯先生！”伊尔娜说，“但是，千万不要冒失行动，我求您了……要不然如艾尔马上就找医生去。”

“啊，你在‘威胁’我呢，好吧，我会小心和听话的，既然大家都不让我吃东西，我就要做个最听话的病人……啊，你们难道不饿吗？我的朋友们！”

“只要一刻钟就好了，”伊尔娜说，“只要一刻钟就会给您端来醋栗

汤，马昂河的鳟鱼，还有如艾尔昨天从阿尔当瑞带来的一只松鸡和一整瓶法国酒。”

“谢谢，我勇敢的姑娘，谢谢你！”

当伊尔娜出去准备晚饭并在大厅里摆桌子的时候，如艾尔就把车子送回工头朗格兰家去了，只剩下希尔维尤斯·霍格一个人留在那里。除了想想这个正直的家庭以外，他还能想些什么呢？现在的他既是这个家庭的客人，又是这个家庭带来的好处的受益者，他能做些什么来感谢伊尔娜和如艾尔对他的照顾和招待呢？他还没来得及仔细考虑，十分钟以后，就已经坐在大桌子的首席上了。晚餐十分丰盛，这客店果真是名不虚传，教授吃得十分满意。

晚上是在闲聊中度过的，希尔维尤斯·霍格说得最来劲，汉森太太没有说什么话，希尔维尤斯·霍格就让如艾尔和伊尔娜说。此时，他对这两个人已有的特别的好感更深了，他们之间的情谊是那么动人，让教授多次为之感动。

夜深了，在如艾尔和伊尔娜的搀扶下，教授回到了自己的房间，他们互相亲切地道了晚安，之后他在写有座右铭的大床上一躺下，很快就睡着了。

第二天，希尔维尤斯·霍格一大早就醒了，在有人来敲房门以前，他就已经在思考问题了。

他自言自语地说：“不，我真不知道该如何报答他们才好。总不能让人救了命，治了病，让人照顾好了，简单地说声谢谢就完事呀！一方面，伊尔娜和如艾尔是我的救命恩人，这是不用怀疑的，但问题在于，这不是可以用钱来回报的；另一方面，这个老实人的家庭看来是幸福

的，我不能再为他们的幸福加些什么了。总之，我们还得再聊聊，通过聊天，也许……”

就这样，在教授还需要把腿伸在搁脚凳上的那三四天里，三个人没事时就在一起闲聊。可惜这兄妹俩说话总是有所保留，无论是哥哥，还是妹妹，谈到他们的母亲时就不愿意再多说了，而希尔维尤斯早就看出她心事重重，态度冷漠。而且，出于谨慎，他们也没有把奥勒·冈一直没回来所引起的焦虑感跟教授诉说，他们想的是，把自家的痛苦告诉客人会不会对他的愉快心情产生不好的影响呢？

“可是，”如艾尔对他妹妹说，“可能我们不应该信不过希尔维尤斯先生。他是位能出好主意的人，通过他的一些关系，也许可以知道海军方面是不是有人在关心子爵号的下落。”

“你说得有道理，如艾尔，”伊尔娜说，“我想，我们还是把一切都告诉他吧，不过要等他彻底好了之后。”

“是的，这个不能耽误了！”如艾尔回答。一个星期很快就过去了，尽管希尔维尤斯的脚还有一点不利落，但他已经不需要人的帮助就可以离开自己的房间了。他来到房前树荫下的一条长凳上坐下，从那里，他可以眺望古斯塔山的山峰，山峰在阳光下闪着光芒，马昂河在山脚下汹涌奔流，水流上还夹杂着漂浮的树干。

在这里，还可以看到从达尔到鲁康福斯的公路上来来往往的行人，那些人大多是些旅游者，他们中有的人会在汉森太太的客店里停留一两个小时来吃午饭或吃晚饭。也有克里斯蒂亚尼亚地区的一些大学生，他们背着旅行袋，鸭舌帽上别着标有挪威国徽的小纪念章。

这些大学生认出了教授，就开始了无休无止的问候，这足以证明希

尔维尤斯·霍格受到很多年轻人的爱戴。

“您在这里吗，希尔维尤斯先生？”

“是的，我的朋友们！”

“有人还以为您已经葬身阿尔当瑞河底了呢！”

“他们搞错了，我应该是在鲁康福斯河底才对！”

“好吧，我们以后看到人就说您正在达尔！”

“是的，在达尔，有一条腿.....用三角巾悬吊着。”

“多亏您在汉森太太的客店里找到了好的住所，受到了好的照顾。”

“你们能想到还有比这更好的客店吗？”

“想不到了！”

“还有更正直的人吗？”

“没有了！”那些旅游者都高兴地跟着说。大家都为伊尔娜和如艾尔的健康干杯，因为整个特勒玛克的人都很了解他们。

接着，教授讲起了自己的奇遇，他承认自己有点冒失，还叙述了自己是怎么被救的，还说他多么感激自己的救命恩人。他说：“要是我在这里一直待下去，直到还清我欠的人情，我的法学课程就得长期搁置了，朋友们，那你们就可以无限期地放假了。”

“好啊，希尔维尤斯先生！”快乐的人们接着说，“把您留在达尔的

是漂亮的伊尔娜吧？”

“是一位可爱的姑娘，朋友们，她也是迷人的，托圣·奥拉夫的福，我还只有六十岁呢！”

“为希尔维尤斯先生的健康干杯！”

“为你们的健康干杯，年轻人！去周游全国吧。去长长见识，玩个痛快吧！在你们这个年纪，天气总是晴朗的。但是一定要当心玛丽斯蒂安的隘口，如艾尔和伊尔娜可不会一直在那儿等着拯救那些去冒险的冒失鬼。”

后来，人们都走了，山谷里充满了他们互道“晚安”的欢声笑语。

在这期间，有一两次，如艾尔需要暂时离开家去为那些想爬古斯塔山的旅客当向导。希尔维尤斯·霍格很想跟他们一起去，因为他当时觉得自己已经痊愈了。事实上，他腿上擦伤的地方的确已经开始结疤了。但伊尔娜就是不让他去，因为这样的活动对他来说还是太劳累了，而每当伊尔娜发出这样的命令，他就得遵守。

古斯塔山是一座奇异的山，它的主峰布满了沟壑，峰顶白雪皑皑，从山脚下茂密的松林中巍然突起，看起来像是戴了一个绿色的项圈。在这高山的顶上，景色的确是壮丽无比。东面是纽姆达尔区，西面是阿尔当瑞和雄伟的冰川，山脚下是位于莫斯湖和坦恩湖之间的维斯特夫若哈达尔那弯曲的山谷，像小孩子做游戏用的盒子一样的小型房屋，还有马昂河，就像是一条亮闪闪的带子在绿色的原野上飘动。

为了这次爬山，如艾尔早晨5点钟就起身了，到晚上6点钟才回来。希尔维尤斯·霍格和伊尔娜去接他，在掌舵的木屋附近等他。等旅客和

向导下了渡船，他们就亲切地相互拥抱，这是三个人一起度过的又一个美好的夜晚。虽然教授走起路来腿还不是很灵便，但他已经不再叫痛了。说实在的，他并不急于恢复健康，或者换句话说，他并不急于离开汉森太太的好客之家。

再者说，时间过得太快了。希尔维尤斯·霍格曾写信到克里斯蒂亚尼亚，说他要在达尔待些日子。关于他在鲁康福斯遇险的消息已经传遍了全国。报纸上报道了这一事件，有的报纸还随意加以渲染。于是大量的信件被寄到了客店，还有各种报纸和杂志。这些东西都要仔细去看，并给以答复。希尔维尤斯·霍格每天读信、写回信，而与此同时，如艾尔和伊尔娜的名字也随着这些信件传遍了挪威全国。

可是，在汉森太太家的逗留不能无限地延长下去，但希尔维尤斯·霍格就像刚来这里时那样，还是不知道要用什么样的办法才能报答这对兄妹的救命之恩。不过，他已经开始感觉到这个家庭并不像他原来所想的那么幸福。兄妹俩每天等待来自克里斯蒂亚尼亚或贝尔根的邮件时那种迫切的心情，以及他们因为没有收到信而表现出的那种失望和担忧，都说明这其中一定有原因。

已经是6月9日了。子爵号还是音信全无，而且比它预定回来的时间晚了两个多星期。奥勒一封信也没有来，没有任何办法可以减轻伊尔娜的痛苦。可怜的姑娘绝望了，当她早晨来看希尔维尤斯·霍格的时候，双眼还是通红的。

希尔维尤斯想：“到底出了什么事呢？他们心里有事，但又不肯告诉我，难道是一个外人不能知晓的家庭秘密吗？可是对他们来说，我是外人吗？不是的。他们应该能想到这一点。好吧，当我说我要走的时候，可能他们会意识到将要走的是一个真正的朋友。”

于是，就在那一天，他说：“朋友们，非常遗憾，我离开你们的时候到了。”

“已经到了，希尔维尤斯先生，已经到日子了。”如艾尔带着一种无法控制的冲动情绪大声地说。

“唉！在你们身边，时间过得好快啊！我到达尔已经十七天了！”

“什么？已经十七天了？”伊尔娜说。

“是的，亲爱的孩子，我的假期快结束了。如果我要通过去德拉蒙和贡斯堡来结束这次旅行，那么剩下的这一个星期就很宝贵了。多亏了你们，我在挪威国会的席位才不至于让别人来代替，关于这一点，不光是我自己，就连议会都不知道该怎么感谢你们才好呢！”

“噢！希尔维尤斯先生！”伊尔娜的手好像要捂住他的嘴，不让他再说下去。

“就这样吧，伊尔娜！我不说这个了，至少是在这儿……”

“不能在这儿说，也不能在别的地方说！”姑娘说道。

“好的！我做不了主，我都听你的。不过，如艾尔和你，你们不想到克里斯蒂亚尼亚来看看我吗？”

“看您，希尔维尤斯先生？”

“是的，看我，到我家里来住几天……和汉森太太一起来，这是一定的！”

“要是我们离开了客店，家里没有人，那由谁来打理它呢？”如艾尔

问道。

“我想，当旅游的季节结束以后，客店就不需要你们了。所以，我打算在秋天结束的时候来请你们……”

“希尔维尤斯先生，”伊尔娜说，“这恐怕很难办到……”

“不，朋友们，这很容易办到。别跟我说你们不会接受这样的邀请。到时候我会把你们安排在我家最漂亮的房间里，跟老保姆凯特和老用人凡克一起生活，你们在那里就像是我的孩子一样。到时候，你们可以告诉我，我能为你们做些什么。”

“您是这样打算的吗，希尔维尤斯先生？”如艾尔说着，看了看他的妹妹。

“哥哥！”伊尔娜开口道，她已经明白了如艾尔的想法。

“说吧，我的孩子们，说吧！”

“好吧，我说。希尔维尤斯先生，您能给我们带来很大的荣幸。”

“是什么荣幸呢？”

“就是参加我妹妹伊尔娜的婚礼。如果这没有打扰您的话……”

“她的婚礼！”希尔维尤斯·霍格叫了起来，“怎么！我的小伊尔娜要结婚了？这么大的事，你们还一点也没有跟我说过呢。”

“啊！希尔维尤斯先生！”姑娘说着，眼泪又溢出了眼眶。

“什么时候举行婚礼呢？”

“当上帝高兴把她的未婚夫奥勒送回给我们的时候。”如艾尔回答说。

第十一章 寻找奥勒之旅

如艾尔把关于奥勒·冈的一切都告诉了希尔维尤斯。他认真地听着，心里十分感动。现在他知道了一切，也刚看了奥勒最近的一封来信，信上说他很快会回来，可实际上并没有回来，这对汉森全家来说该有多么着急，多么担心啊！

他想：“我还觉得他们很幸福呢！”可是仔细想想，他觉得兄妹俩虽然很是失望，却还没有放弃希望。他们一直在计算5月份到6月份的那些日子，还多算了天数，结果是算成了双倍。

于是，教授想要跟他们谈谈自己的想法，不是一些空洞无物的道理，而是很有意义的、有道理的想法，目的就是想和他们讨论一下子爵号一直不回来的真正原因。在谈话时，他的态度开始变得严肃起来，因为如艾尔和伊尔娜的忧虑给他留下了深刻的印象。

“孩子们，听我说。坐到我这里来，咱们聊一聊。”

“唉！您能跟我们说些什么呢，希尔维尤斯先生？”伊尔娜带着深深的痛苦回答说。

“我会把我觉得是对的东西告诉你们。”教授又说，“是这样的。我刚才想了一下如艾尔跟我说的一切，我觉得你们是过虑了。我不想给你们什么不切实际的保证，但重要的是咱们要知道事情到底是什么样子的。”

“哎呀！希尔维尤斯先生，”伊尔娜说，“我那可怜的奥勒和子爵号

一起遇难了……我再也看不到他了！”

“妹妹……妹妹！”如艾尔大声喊道，“你冷静一下，让霍格先生说下去……”

“来，咱们都保持镇静，我的孩子们！你们说，奥勒应该回到贝尔根的日子是5月15日到20日，对吗？”

“是的，”如艾尔说，“他信上就是那样写的，是5月15日到20日，可今天已经是6月9日了。”

“这比信上说的子爵号回来的最晚时间还晚了二十天，这一点很重要。我不能说你所想的没有道理，但我们不能像指望一艘轮船那样来要求一只帆船。”

“我也一直跟伊尔娜这么说。”如艾尔说。

“你做得对，孩子。”希尔维尤斯又说，“而且子爵号可能是一艘老船，像纽芬兰的大多数船只那样驾驶不灵，尤其是当它在吃水很深的情况下。另外，这几个星期的天气非常不好，奥勒可能不会按照他信上所提到的日子准时起航。在这种情况下，只要耽误几天，就肯定能让子爵号到现在都到不了，所以你们才一直没有收到他的信。你们要相信我说的这些都是经过仔细思考的。还有一点，你们知不知道，子爵号会不会收到指示，说他们有某种自由，可以根据市场的需要，把货物运到其他的某个港口呢？”

“那奥勒也该写封信呀！”伊尔娜回答说，她甚至没办法在这一点上再有什么希望了。

“谁能说他没写信呢？”教授又说，“要是他写了信的话，那迟到的

就不会再是子爵号，而应该是美洲的邮船了。你想一下，假如奥勒的船不得不到美国的某个港口去，那也就能说明为什么他的信连一封都没有到达欧洲了。”

“到美国……希尔维尤斯先生？”

“有时是会这样的，只要错过一班邮船，就会让大家很长时间都收不到消息……总之，我们可以做一件很简单的事情，那就是向贝尔根的船主打听一下。你们认识船主吗？”

“认识，”如艾尔回答说，“是艾尔普兄弟。”

“长房的儿子，艾尔普兄弟？”希尔维尤斯喊了起来。

“是的。”

“我也认识他们！年纪最小的那个是我的一个好朋友，他跟我差不多大，人们都叫他小艾尔普。我们经常在克里斯蒂亚尼亚一起吃晚饭。艾尔普兄弟，我的孩子们啊，通过他们，我就能知道有关子爵号的各种情况。我今天就给他们写信，要是有必要，我还会去看看他们。”

“您真好，希尔维尤斯先生！”伊尔娜和如艾尔一起说。

“啊！别这么客气，我可不希望你们对我这么客气啊，你们在那里为我做的事，我也没有感谢你们呀。啊，我好不容易有机会为你们做点小事，你们就这样呀！”

“可是，您刚才说要回克里斯蒂亚尼亚去。”如艾尔提醒道。

“好吧，我去贝尔根，要是有必要的话，我就去贝尔根。”

“那样的话，您就要离开我们了，希尔维尤斯先生。”伊尔娜说。

“我想，只要情况还没弄清楚，我就是行动自由的。亲爱的姑娘，我不会离开你们，除非有人把我赶出去……”

“看您说的。”

“啊，其实我很想留在达尔，一直等到奥勒回来。我要认识认识他，我的小伊尔娜的未婚夫，我感觉他也是个正直的小伙子，就跟如艾尔一样。”

“是的，跟他完全一样！”伊尔娜回答。

“我早就觉得会是这样的！”教授喊了起来，他的情绪又开始变好了，也可能他是有意这样的。

“奥勒就像奥勒自己，希尔维尤斯先生，”如艾尔说，“只要他心肠好就可以了。”

“这很有可能啊，我正直的如艾尔，你这么一说我就更想见到他了。噢！恐怕这个时间已经很近了。我有一种预感：子爵号很快就会回来。”

“但愿上帝能听见您说的话！”

“上帝为什么听不见我说话呢？他的听觉是很敏锐的。是的！我要参加伊尔娜的婚礼，因为我已经受到了邀请啊！只要给我延长几个星期的假期，议会所欠的人情就可以还清了。要是那个时候你们让我掉进了鲁康福斯瀑布，那我就是活该倒霉，议会也就更得给我延长假期了。”

“希尔维尤斯先生，”如艾尔说，“听到您这么说可真好，您给我们带来了多大的希望和幸福啊！”

“也可能不会像我所希望的那么大，我的朋友们，因为我的一切都是你们给的，我真不知道……”

“别这么说……别总提那次的冒险啦！”

“不，我还是要说，难道是我自己摆脱了玛丽斯蒂安的魔爪吗？难道是我自己冒着生命危险救了我自己，还把我一直带到达尔客店的吗？在没有医生帮助的情况下，是我自己照顾我，让我得以康复的吗？喂！我要提前跟你们说啊，我可是像一匹拉车的马那样倔强的。嗯，我已经牢牢地记住了要参加伊尔娜和奥勒的婚礼这件事的。圣·奥拉夫保佑我们，我一定会参加他们的婚礼的！”

不得不说，信心是有感染力的，希尔维尤斯·霍格所表达的信心没有什么能够阻挡。可怜的伊尔娜脸上多日的愁云被一丝微笑驱散了，教授对此看得很清楚。伊尔娜很相信他所说的话，也相信事情还有很大的希望。

希尔维尤斯·霍格越说越兴奋了。

“啊，我们应该想想时间过得这么快。来，我们开始为婚礼做准备工作吧！”

“希尔维尤斯先生，准备工作已经开始了，”伊尔娜说，“三个星期以前就开始了！”

“那很好！可不要停下来啊！”

“停下来？”如艾尔说，“一切都准备好了！”

“什么！新娘的裙子，有金银丝的并带有精致搭扣的紧身胸衣和腰带，还有腰带上面的坠子，都准备好了？”

“是啊，包括腰带上面的坠子都准备好了。”

“我的小伊尔娜，将把你打扮得像圣女一样光彩照人的花冠也准备好了吗？”

“是的，希尔维尤斯先生。”

“那么，请柬都准备好了吗？”

“也都弄好了，”如艾尔回答说，“甚至连我们最看重的，给您的那份请柬也准备好了。”

“这么说伴娘也在特勒玛克最好的姑娘中选好了？”

“是在最漂亮的姑娘中选的，希尔维尤斯先生，”如艾尔回答说，“选的就是邦布勒的赛格弗琳娜·厄尔木博小姐！”

“瞧他说话的口气，这老实的孩子！”教授说，“他说这话时脸都红了！喂！喂！那么可不可以说邦布勒的赛格弗琳娜·厄尔木博小姐要成为达尔的汉森·如艾尔太太，这是理所当然的呀？”

“是的，希尔维尤斯先生，赛格弗琳娜是我最好的朋友。”伊尔娜回答说。

“好，又是一桩婚事！”希尔维尤斯·霍格喊了起来，“我相信你们一定会请我的，我也不能不参加对吧。看起来，我得辞去我这个国会议员

的职务了，因为我可能没有时间再去出席会议了。好吧，我那正直的如艾尔，只要你同意，我就给你当证婚人，不过我首先得当你妹妹的证婚人。就这么说定了，你们喜欢叫我做什么就做什么吧，或者更准切地说，我喜欢做什么，你们就得让我做什么！来，亲亲我，小伊尔娜，咱们握握手，还有我的小伙子。现在，咱们去给我的朋友、贝尔根的小艾尔普写信吧！”

兄妹俩离开了楼下那间教授已经租住的房间，带着一线希望各自去忙自己的事了，希尔维尤斯·霍格一个人留在那里。

“可怜的姑娘，可怜的姑娘，”他自言自语地说，“是的，我刚刚让她减轻了一点痛苦……我让她稍稍冷静了一下……但是，奥勒一直都不回来，在这么个季节，海上的天气又那么糟糕，要是子爵号早就已经沉没了……要是奥勒再也回不来了……”

过了一会儿，教授就给贝尔根的船主们写了信。他在信中所询问的就是有关子爵号及其捕鱼作业的最确切的所有情况。他了解一下是不是有某种可以预见的或是无法预见的情况，迫使子爵号改变了靠岸的港口。对他来说，重要的是想尽早知道，贝尔根的批发商和水手们是怎么看待这次延误的。最后，他请他的朋友小艾尔普想办法弄到最准确的信息并在回信中告诉他。

在这封紧急的信件中，希尔维尤斯·霍格也提到了他为什么要关心子爵号的年轻水手长，他对水手长的未婚妻欠下的是什么样的人情。他还说，要是能给汉森太太的孩子们带来某种希望，那他该会有多么高兴等。

信一写好，如艾尔就把它送到了默尔邮局，第二天信就会被取走，

6月11日就可以到达贝尔根了。这样的话，在12日晚上，或者最晚13日上午，小艾尔普先生就可以回信了。

要等到这封回信，至少需要将近三天的时间，这三天是多么难熬啊！但有了教授所说的令人鼓舞的理由和那么抚慰人心的话语，这个等待就显得不那么难熬了。现在他知道了伊尔娜的心事，不就有了一个很好的话题吗？对如艾尔和他妹妹来说，能不断地谈到失踪者又该是何等宽慰的一件事啊！

“现在，我算不算是你们家的人呀？”希尔维尤斯·霍格又说了一遍这句话，“是不是，就像是你们的一个从美洲或是别的地方回来的叔叔吧？”

那么，既然已经是一家人了，就不应该再对他还有什么保留了。

不过，他也不是没有发现两个孩子对他们的母亲的态度。汉森太太那种表面上的镇定，在他看来，除了为奥勒·冈担心之外，一定还有别的原因。他觉得可以找如艾尔谈谈这个问题，可如艾尔却不知道该怎么回答才好。于是，他就想在这个问题上探探汉森太太的口风。可她什么都不说，最后教授只得放弃了解她心事的念头。但毋庸置疑，这些秘密他将来总有一天会知道的。

正像希尔维尤斯·霍格预料的那样，在13日的上午，小艾尔普的回信就到了达尔，如艾尔一大早就去等邮差了。他把信带到大厅，教授、汉森太太和伊尔娜都站在那里。

一开始，大家都一言不发，伊尔娜脸色苍白，话都说不出来了，她的心激动得怦怦直跳，拉着哥哥的手，两个人都同样激动不已。

希尔维尤斯·霍格拆开了信，高声地读着。让他觉得很遗憾的是，小艾尔普的回信只是大致地谈了一些情况。此刻，兄妹俩的眼里正闪着泪光，聚精会神地听他读信。在这两个年轻人的面前，教授没办法掩饰自己的失望。

信上说，子爵号的确是按奥勒·冈在最近一封来信中所说的日期离开了圣·皮埃尔·米克隆。关于这一点，在这艘船离开纽芬兰以后，就由到达贝尔根的其他船只以最明确的方式告诉了小艾尔普。这些船在海上并没有碰到子爵号，不过它们自身也在冰岛附近的海面上经受了恶劣气候的考验，但最终都摆脱了困境。至于子爵号为什么没有像那些船只一样返航，只能说它可能是停在其他什么地方了。再说，这是一艘很坚固的好船，阿梅尔斯弗斯特的弗里凯尔船长一直都指挥得很出色，船员们都是身强力壮的，也都经受过考验。可是这次延误还是不能不令人担心，因为要是再不见其返航的话，子爵号恐怕就已经是船毁人亡了。

关于汉森家那年轻的亲戚，小艾尔普没什么更好的消息可以透露，为此他也觉得很遗憾。但他说奥勒·冈是一位德才兼备的人，难怪他的朋友希尔维尤斯对小伙子十分关心和同情。在信的末尾，小艾尔普向教授表示了敬意，并转达他们全家对教授的问候。最后，他还答应说，只要一有子爵号的消息，不管它在挪威的哪个港口，都会马上告诉他，信的落款是：忠实的艾尔普兄弟。

当希尔维尤斯·霍格念这封信的时候，可怜的伊尔娜就已经受不了了，她倒在一把椅子上，等教授把信念完时，已经是泣不成声了。

如艾尔两手交叉，默默地听着，都没敢看他妹妹一眼。

希尔维尤斯·霍格把信念完，汉森太太就回到自己的房间去了。就

像她等着很多其他不幸的事降临一样，好像她早就料到了结局会是这个样子的。

这时，教授示意伊尔娜和她哥哥到他身边来，他还想和他们谈谈奥勒·冈，他要把自己想到的合情合理的想法跟他们说一下。而且，在小艾尔普的来信之后，他说话的口气显得格外有把握。

不会的，他有一种预感。一定不会，不会一点儿希望都没有的。在挪威和纽芬兰之间的宽阔海面航行的船只中，曾经有过很多次比这时间更长的不返航的先例。是这样的，这是毫无疑问的！子爵号毕竟是一艘船体坚固的船，上面还有可以熟练指挥的船长和精干的船员，所以比起其他因延误而没有及时返航的船只的条件，它不是要好得多吗？这是毫无疑问的。

“咱们要有信心，我的孩子们，”教授接着说，“咱们等着吧，如果子爵号在冰岛和纽芬兰之间翻船的话，很多经常走这条航道返回欧洲的船肯定能发现它的残骸啊！可是，没有发现。在那些远洋捕鱼船只的归途中经常要经过的海面上，也没发现任何残骸。不过我们还是要采取行动，要获得更准确的情报。要是在这个星期之内，我们还没有子爵号的消息或是还没有收到奥勒的来信，我就回克里斯蒂亚尼亚去找海军帮忙，他们会去找的。我相信，通过寻找，一定能得到让大家都满意的结果。”

不过，不管教授的信心有多么足，如艾尔和伊尔娜还是感觉到他现在说话的口气已经不像收到贝尔根的来信以前那样了。那封信上所说的让他们觉得事情好像没什么希望了。希尔维尤斯·霍格现在也不再提及伊尔娜和奥勒·冈那临近的婚期了。然而，他还是用一种让人无法抗拒的语气再三地说：“要说奥勒再也不会出现在汉森太太的家里出现了，不，

这不可能，奥勒不能娶伊尔娜了，我怎么也不相信会发生这样不幸的事。”

这种信念是他个人所特有的，源自他那不屈的性格和坚韧的气质。但怎么才能让别人，尤其是让和子爵号的命运息息相关的人也能体会到这种信念呢？

就这样，又是几天过去了，已经完全康复了的希尔维尤斯·霍格要到郊外去游玩，还一定要伊尔娜和她哥哥陪自己去，为的是不让他们感到孤独。

一天，三个人沿着维斯特夫若哈达尔峡谷一直爬到鲁康福斯瀑布的半山坡。第二天，他们从峡谷上下来，朝默尔和坦恩湖的方向走去。有一次，他们一天一夜都没回家，那是因为他们一直走到邦布勒去了，在那里，教授结识了农庄的主人厄尔木博和他的女儿赛格弗琳娜，她是何等热情地欢迎可怜的伊尔娜，又是用何等体贴关心的话语来安慰她，不用说大家也能想到。在那里，希尔维尤斯·霍格也给这些正直的人们带来了一线希望，因为他已经给克里斯蒂亚尼亚的海军写了信，政府的有关部门也在关心着子爵号的下落。子爵号一定会找到的，奥勒也会回来的，甚至他可能随时都会回来。是的！婚礼的举行就在这六个星期当中。这位善良的人对此深信不疑，以至与其说人们是听从了他的分析，倒不如说是更佩服他的信念。

对汉森太太的孩子们来说，这次去厄尔木博家做客还是很有好处的。当他们回到家里的时候，已经比他们离家时看起来冷静多了。

现在已经是6月15日了，子爵号已经延误一个月了。而从纽芬兰到挪威海岸的航程相对来说并不长，延误一个月，即便是对于一艘帆船来

说，也的确是非同寻常的了。

伊尔娜万分难过，她的哥哥也找不到一句可以安慰她的话。在这两个可怜的人面前，教授觉得自己要做的就是继续抱有希望。他觉得伊尔娜和如艾尔离开家门只是为了去默尔那个方向看看或是去鲁康福斯那条大路上走走，奥勒·冈也可能会从贝尔根回来。如果子爵号的靠岸地点改变的话，他还可能从克里斯蒂亚尼亚回来。

每当树林里响起马车的行进声，空中响起了一点叫声，或是路的拐角处有一个人影出现时，都会让他们的心激动得直跳，可是，一切都没有用。达尔的居民们也都在关心着这件事。他们到马昂河的上游和下游去等邮件，因为大家都惦记着这个在当地很受尊敬的家庭，惦记着奥勒，因为他可以说就是特勒玛克人。然而，无论是从贝尔根，还是从克里斯蒂亚尼亚，都没有来信提供关于失踪者的任何消息。

6月16日，还是没有任何消息。希尔维尤斯·霍格再也待不下去了，他觉得自己一定要亲自出马才行。所以他对大家说，要是第二天还没有消息的话，他就要到克里斯蒂亚尼亚去实地查看一下调查工作是不是正在积极地进行。当然，这就得与伊尔娜和如艾尔暂时分离了。可是，他一定要这样做，等他把事情办完，他会再回来的。

17日，这一天的大部分时间已经过去了，也许这是所有的日子当中最令人不快的一天。从清晨开始，雨就一直在不停地下着，大风穿过树林呼啸着，阵阵的狂风拍打着朝马昂河方向开着的彩色玻璃窗。

已经是晚上7点钟了。人们刚刚吃完晚饭，屋子里一片寂静，好像发生了什么不幸的事情一样，就连希尔维尤斯·霍格也提不起大家谈话的兴致了。他不知道该怎么办，也没什么话可说，因为有的话已经重复

了上百遍，他还有什么可说的呢？难道他没有感觉到，奥勒总也不回来这个事实已经让他以前的论据变得越来越没有说服力了吗？

“我明天早晨就出发去克里斯蒂亚尼亚，”他说，“如艾尔，麻烦你帮我准备一辆马车，把我送到默尔，然后你就赶紧返回达尔。”

“好的，希尔维尤斯先生，”如艾尔说，“要不要我把您送得更远一些呢？”

教授指了指伊尔娜，做了个否定的手势，他不想让她的哥哥离开她的时间过长。

正在这时，通往默尔方向的大路上出现了一点响声，但还不太明显。于是，大家都仔细地听着。不久，就可以确定了，这是一辆马车的声音。马车飞快地驶向达尔。难道是有旅客要到客店来过夜吗？这不太可能，旅客这么晚才来的情况是非常少见的。伊尔娜全身发抖，站了起来。如艾尔向大门走去，打开门，看了看。

声音更响了，正是马蹄声和马车轮子的吱吱声。由于当时外面的风很大，所以他们又把门关上了。希尔维尤斯·霍格在大厅里来回走着，如艾尔和他的妹妹紧紧地靠在一起。

马车离房子只有二十步远了。它是会停下来呢，还是仅仅是路过，最终要到别的地方去？

所有人的心都在剧烈地跳动着。马车停了下来，有人在喊……这不是奥勒·冈的声音！

差不多是同一个时间，就有人在敲门。

如艾尔打开门，看见一个人站在门槛上。

“请问希尔维尤斯·霍格先生在吗？”他问道。

“我就是，”教授说着，走上前去说道，“朋友，请问您是哪位？”

“我是海军领导从克里斯蒂亚尼亚给您派来的专差。”

“您有一封信要给我吗？”

“是的。信在这儿！”

信使递过来一个盖有官方印章的大信封，这时，伊尔娜已经站不住了。她哥哥让她坐在一只小板凳上。其实此时此刻，不管是哥哥，还是妹妹，都不敢催希尔维尤斯·霍格把信拆开。

最终，他还是把信念给了大家听：

教授先生：

为了答复您最近的来信，这里附上材料一份，这份材料是一艘丹麦船只于6月5日在海上找到的。不幸的是，通过这份材料，我们可以看出，子爵号的命运已经确定无疑……

希尔维尤斯·霍格还没把信看完，就从信封里抽出了材料，他反复地看着这份材料。这是一张彩票，号码为9672。彩票的背面，有这样的一段文字：

5月3日。亲爱的伊尔娜，子爵号就快沉没了！我的全部财产就剩下

这张彩票了。我把它托付给了上帝，但愿上帝能将这张彩票送到你的手中。等到开奖的那天，既然我不能去了，就请你一定要到场。请收下这张彩票吧，连同我对你的最后思念！伊尔娜，请你在祈祷的时候别忘了我！永别了，亲爱的未婚妻，永别了！

奥勒·冈

第十二章 被赋予神奇色彩的彩票

年轻水手的秘密已经浮出了水面，他在准备返航之前买了一张彩票——指望靠这次的运气给未婚妻带来一笔财产。在子爵号快要沉没的时候，他把彩票装进了一个瓶子里，连同他对伊尔娜的最后一份心意，一起扔进了大海。

得知了这一点，希尔维尤斯·霍格感到有点沮丧。他看了看信，又看了看那张彩票，沉默了。他还有什么可说的呢？现在，子爵号已经确定是出事了，它上面所载着的所有挪威船员都已经遇难，这还有什么可怀疑的呢？

当希尔维尤斯·霍格正在读那封信的时候，伊尔娜还能控制住自己那极度悲伤的情绪。等他念完奥勒在彩票上写的最后几个字以后，她就昏倒在如艾尔的怀里了。她被抬回房里，由她母亲来照料。以前，她愿意一个人留在房里，而现在，她正跪在床边，为奥勒·冈的灵魂祈祷。

汉森太太回到了大厅。她先向教授走去，好像是有话要说，后来又向楼梯走去，上了楼。如艾尔在把妹妹送到房里以后，就马上离开家了。

在这个被愁云所笼罩的家里，他感觉十分压抑。他需要呼吸一下外面的空气，那夹杂着风雨的空气。那天晚上，他在马昂河边漫无目的地走了很长时间。

现在家里就只剩下希尔维尤斯·霍格一个人了。当这突如其来的打

击刚开始到来时，他的情绪有点低落，但很快就又恢复了以往的坚定。他在大厅里转了两三圈以后，还注意听姑娘有没有在叫他，没听到什么声音，他就在桌边坐下了，思绪万千。

“伊尔娜，”他喃喃自语地说，“伊尔娜再也看不到她的未婚夫了。怎么会有这样的不幸呢？不，一想到这事，就觉得很不可思议。就算是子爵号沉没了，那就完全意味着奥勒已经死了吗？我可不相信！不管是在哪种情况下遇难，难道就可以肯定没有一个人会幸免于难吗？是的，我很是怀疑，而且我还有疑问，尽管伊尔娜、如艾尔和别人都不同意我的疑问——既然子爵号沉没了，那海上怎么会没有任何残骸呢？除了那只瓶子，那只奥勒想把他的最后感情和留在世上的全部财产都装进去的瓶子之外，海上再也找不到其他任何东西，这也解释不通啊！”

霍格手里拿着彩票，他仔细地看，不停地摩挲着，把这张破旧的纸片反反复复地看个不停，这张小纸片上寄托着可怜的小伙子所有的发财希望啊！

教授想更仔细地研究一下这张彩票。他站起身来，又留心地听了听可怜的姑娘有没有在叫她的母亲或是哥哥，然后就回到自己的房里去了。

这是一张由克里斯蒂亚尼亚的学校负责发售的彩票，在当时的挪威，这种彩票非常流行。头奖是十万马克，其他各种奖项的总值为九万马克。彩票的发行量为一百万张，现在已经销售一空。

奥勒·冈的这张彩票上面的号码是9672号。而现在，这个号码不管是好是坏，年轻的水手长对这个号码很有信心是不是有某种秘密的原因，等到彩票开奖的时候，他可能不会在场了。开奖仪式将在下个月的

7月15日，也就是说将在二十八天后举行。按照奥勒最后的遗愿，伊尔娜将代替他到场，应对一切可能出现的情况。

希尔维尤斯·霍格借助蜡烛发出的光亮，认真仔细地反复地读着彩票背面写的那几行字，似乎想从中找到一些没有被发现的意思。

这几行字是用墨水写的。可以明显地看出，奥勒在写这几行字的时候，他的手并没有发抖，这就证明子爵号的水手长在遇难的时候头脑还很冷静，这样就意味着他处在可以利用某个办法逃生的状态，比如说一根浮动的桅杆或是一块漂流的木板——只要船上的东西并没有全部沉入海底。

通过从海上打捞上来的纸片上的这些文字，往往可以了解到船只遇难的地点。可是在这几行字中，既没有关于经度与纬度的记载，也没有关于离得最近的陆地或是岛屿的记载，由此可以得出结论：船长和水手们当时并不知道子爵号处在什么位置，那么这艘船一定是遇到了无法抗拒的风暴的袭击，以致偏离了正常的航道，而当时的气象条件又不允许他们观测到太阳的方向，所以有好几天都没能记录下船的方位。可以推断，从那时起，遇难的船员们很可能就已经不知道自己是位于北大西洋的哪个海域了，处在绝境之中的他们究竟是在纽芬兰海域，还是在冰岛海域，已经无从得知。

这是一种使抱有希望的人彻底绝望的境况。可是，只要有一点迹象，哪怕是十分微小的，寻找工作也能进行。派一艘船去出事的地点，或许会在那里找到一些可以辨认的残骸。谁知道会不会有一个或是几个幸存者已经到了北极大陆沿海的某个地方，在那里因孤立无援而无法返回家园呢？

霍格的脑子里在一点点地产生着这些疑问，不过伊尔娜和如艾尔对此是不能接受的，而教授现在也不敢让他们产生这样的疑问，因为这很可能会让人失望，那会给他们带来极大的痛苦。

“可是，”教授自言自语地说，“要是这份材料没有提供任何可供人们利用的线索的话，那么人们至少还可以知道这个瓶子是在哪个海域里被找到的。关于这一点信中并没有说，但是克里斯蒂亚尼亚的海军不会不知道的，这不就是一个可以利用的线索吗？一边研究通常的水流和气流的方向，一边推算沉船的日期，难道这样不可以吗？总之，我还得再写封信，让他们抓紧调查，就算是什么大的希望。是的！我一定不会扔下这个可怜的伊尔娜不管的。只要我没有确定的证据，就绝不会相信他的未婚夫已经死了。”

希尔维尤斯·霍格就这样思索着。而且，他还拿定主意，不会再谈到自己将采取什么行动，也不会提起他要利用自己的威信去督促别人尽心调查。所以，他给克里斯蒂亚尼亚去的信里写了些什么，伊尔娜和她哥哥都毫不知情。而且，他本来应该是第二天动身的，现在他决定要无限期地推迟，或者更确切地说，他要过几天再走，不过是要去贝尔根。在那里，他将通过艾尔普兄弟了解一下关于子爵号的所有情况，并亲自倾听一些最老练的海员们的意见，然后再决定如何开始进行调查。

根据海军方面提供的情况，克里斯蒂亚尼亚各家报纸，挪威、瑞典和欧洲各国的报纸都抢着报道了那张已经成为证据的彩票，由未婚夫留给未婚妻的这张彩票似乎本身就具有某种感人的力量，公众对此深为感动，这不是没有道理的。

挪威报纸中历史最悠久的《晨报》首先报道了子爵号和奥勒·冈的故事。当时在这个国家出版的其他三十七份报纸都以感人的语言叙述了

这件事情。《新晚报画刊》还发表了一幅遇难场面的想象画。画面上，船帆已经成了碎片，桅杆也已经被折断，失去控制的子爵号即将在波涛汹涌的大海中沉没。奥勒站在船头，怀着对伊尔娜的最后思念，在把自己的灵魂托付给上帝的同时，把瓶子抛向了大海。在远方，在薄雾的笼罩下，一个海浪把瓶子“送”到了年轻的未婚妻脚下。整个画面又以那张彩票作为背景，彩票的号码则被安排在醒目的位置，让人一目了然。画面虽然很简单，但是在这些还信奉翁迪娜¹和瓦尔基里²的神话传说的国家里，一定会引起人们极大的共鸣。

接着，法国、英国甚至是美国的报纸都争相转载了关于这一事件的有关报道并发表了评论。通过报纸和杂志，伊尔娜和奥勒的名字连同他们的故事，已经是人所共知。这位达尔的年轻挪威女子，在不知不觉中就有了让公众舆论产生好感的魅力。而可怜的姑娘并没有想到大家会围绕着自己议论纷纷，她已经深深地陷入痛苦的深渊，无法自拔。

现在看来，这件事在两个大陆都能产生反响就不足为奇了。这一点很好解释，因为人类的天性通常会很自然地沿着迷信的“斜坡”越滑越远。这张奇迹般地从海浪中捞起的号码为9672的彩票，只能说是天赐的奖券。在众多的彩票当中，难道不是只有这张神奇的彩票才有资格获得那十万马克的头奖吗？这不就是奥勒·冈希望得到的一笔财产吗？

所以，如果伊尔娜·汉森同意出售的话，四面八方都会有人来达尔诚心诚意地想购买这张彩票，这也是理所当然的了。一开始时，人们的出价并不高，可是没过多久，这张彩票的价钱却一天比一天高。能够想象得到，随着时间一天天的过去和开奖日期的日益临近，还会出现竞相争购的情况呢！

如果说斯堪的纳维亚王国的人们很容易相信超自然的力量能够干预

人间的事，那么不仅在这里，在国外，甚至是在法国，都有人愿意出高价，就连冷漠的英国人都参与进来了，在他们之后的就是美国人。要知道，他们可是从来不会把美元花在不靠谱的事情上的。大量的信件被寄到达尔，报纸也开始不停地刊登向汉森一家出高价购买有关那张彩票的报道。现在可以说已经形成了一个小小的股票市场，牌价一直在变，而且是不断地在上涨。

有人愿意出几百马克，而这张彩票得头奖的机会却只有百万分之一，这好像是有点不可思议。但是，跟有迷信思想的人是没办法讲清道理的，人们只是在异想天开，而且这种势头已经无法阻挡。

可实际情况就是如此。八天以后，据报上的消息说，这张彩票的牌价已经超过了一千，一千五百，甚至是两千马克。曼彻斯特的一个英国人甚至开出了一百英镑，也就是两千五百马克的价位。波士顿的一个美国人跟着哄抬价格，为购买克里斯蒂亚尼亚发售的9672号彩票，愿意出一千美元，约合五千法郎。

当然，就算公众狂热到如此地步，伊尔娜也没有一点心思去管它。被寄到达尔要买彩票的信件，她甚至连看都不想看。可教授的看法是：既然奥勒·冈把这张9672号彩票的所有权留给了她，那么就应该让她知道人们愿意出高价来购买这张彩票的实情。

但不管出什么价钱，伊尔娜都一概拒绝。因为这张彩票是她的心上人写给她的最后一封来信啊！

拜托大家不要认为这可怜的姑娘拒绝出售那张彩票，是因为心里想着可能会中奖。不是的！她只是把它看作了遇难者临终的诀别，只是想把它当作最值得纪念的东西珍藏起来。她很少去想这些奥勒再也不能跟

她共享的发财机会，对她来说，没有什么能比这种对情物的珍惜更感人，更值得令人感慨的了。

而且，在让伊尔娜了解各种行情的同时，希尔维尤斯和如艾尔都不想对她施加影响，他们认为她应该根据自己的想法来拿主意。现在，他们都已经知道伊尔娜的心里在想些什么了。

如艾尔完全赞同妹妹的意见。他也觉得奥勒·冈的彩票不能转让给任何人，不管对方出多高的价钱。而希尔维尤斯·霍格不光是对伊尔娜表示支持，他还赞赏伊尔娜对这笔生意所持的不闻不问的态度。这张彩票会不会卖给了这个人，又倒卖给那个人，从那个人手中又转给了另一个人，变成一种像钞票那样的东西，而等到开奖的时候又很可能变成一文不值的废纸一张呢？他甚至想得更远：这张彩票具有这么神奇的力量，难道是偶然的吗？不，或许不是的。

要是奥勒·冈在的话，教授可能会对他说：“留着你的彩票吧，小伙子，留着它吧。人们先把它救出了苦海，然后又救出了你。好，走着瞧吧……他们不知道这些……是的，他们不知道。”

连挪威国会议员、法学教授希尔维尤斯·霍格都这样想，那么公众像着了迷似的，还有什么可奇怪的呢？一点都不奇怪，9672号彩票会中奖，是很自然的。在汉森太太家里，没有人反对姑娘的行为，因为那里面包含了很深的感情。没有人反对，除了她的母亲。

人们经常会听到汉森太太对伊尔娜的行为表示不满，尤其是当她不在的时候。这就让如艾尔感到很苦恼，他心里甚至这么想：看来母亲不会仅仅限于表示不满，她可能会私下跟伊尔娜讨论别人出的价钱。

“这张彩票值五千马克。”她反复地说着，“人家出五千马克呢！”

很显然，对于女儿拒绝出售彩票的行为，汉森太太是很不高兴的，她时刻在惦记着五千马克这笔数额不小的款项。只要伊尔娜一句话，五千马克就能到手了。虽然她是挪威人，但她不相信这张彩票会具有非同寻常的价值。要赢得十万马克，只有百万分之一的机会，为了它而去牺牲五千马克，她那冷静而又讲究实际的头脑对这一点显然是不能接受的。很明显，除了一切迷信的因素，在这种不牢靠的情况下，追求那种虚无之物并不是什么明智的举动。但是，人们已经不止一次地说过，对伊尔娜来说，这不是一张普通的彩票，而是奥勒·冈的最后一封来信，一想到要把它卖掉，她的心都要碎了。

可是，汉森太太还是不赞成女儿的做法。可以感觉得到，汉森太太正在生着闷气。不知道哪一天，她就会逼着伊尔娜改变主意。她已经把这个意思对如艾尔说了，而如艾尔却坚定地站在妹妹一边。

希尔维尤斯·霍格对这一切自然是了解的。对伊尔娜心头又增添的这一桩烦恼，他感到很是不安。

有时，如艾尔在跟他谈起这件事时就会说：“难道我妹妹就没有理由拒绝吗？我赞成她的做法，难道这也不对吗？”

“当然对了！”希尔维尤斯·霍格说，“但是，从数学的观点来看，你的母亲又是完全正确的。不过，世界上的事情并不是都按数学的方法来计算的。计算和感情不是一回事！”

在这两个星期里，大家都守护在伊尔娜的身旁。极端的痛苦让她的体质变得十分虚弱，她的健康状况也让人很是担心——幸亏她得到了细心的照顾。应希尔维尤斯·霍格的要求，他的朋友、著名的伯克大夫亲自到达尔来给姑娘看病。大夫建议她要多休息，并尽可能保持平静的心

情。可是谁都知道，只有奥勒的归来才能真正治好她的病，而这一点只有上帝才能办到。尽管如此，希尔维尤斯·霍格还是想尽一切办法来安慰她，并且经常对她说些充满希望的话。虽然这显得有点不太现实，但希尔维尤斯·霍格还是不死心。

已经是6月30日了。从这张彩票由海军部寄到达尔，已经过去十三天了。再过半个月，彩票的开奖仪式就要在克里斯蒂亚尼亚的一所宽敞的校园里热热闹闹地举行了。

就在6月30日这天上午，希尔维尤斯·霍格又收到了海军部的一封来信，这是对他的要求所做的答复。这封信要他同贝尔根的海军当局进行合作，而且信中还批准他在国家的支持下立刻组织开展搜寻子爵号的工作。

关于他即将开始的工作，教授也并不想告诉如艾尔和伊尔娜。他只是对他们说，自己要出去几天，做一次公务旅行。

“希尔维尤斯先生，我求求您，别把我们扔下。”可怜的姑娘对他说。

“扔下你们.....你们不是已经成了我的孩子了吗？”希尔维尤斯·霍格回答说。

如艾尔提出要陪霍格一起去。但是，由于不想让如艾尔猜到自己是要去贝尔根，所以教授只允许他送到默尔。再说，也不能把伊尔娜一个人留下来和她的母亲在一起。在床上躺了几天以后，伊尔娜已经能够起来了，但她还是很虚弱，不能离开房间，她的哥哥也觉得自己不能离开她。

中午11点钟时，马车停在了客店的门口。在和伊尔娜道别以后，教授和如艾尔上车出发了。接着，到了小路的拐角处，两个人就消失在河边那高大的桦树林中了。当天晚上，如艾尔就回到了达尔。

[1](#) 翁迪娜：斯堪的纳维亚神话中的水神。

[2](#) 瓦尔基里：北欧神话中的战争女神。

第十三章 进一步搜寻遇难船只的残骸

希尔维尤斯·霍格到贝尔根去了。虽说他那坚韧的本性和顽强的性格曾一度受到动摇，不过现在已经有所恢复了。他不相信奥勒·冈已经离开了人世，也不能让伊尔娜和她的爱人再也不能相见。不！只要这个消息没有得到最后的确定，他就不认为那是真的。就像人们通常所说的那样，他这么想也是没有别的办法。

那么，他要去贝尔根进行调查，是不是有什么站得住脚的根据呢？是的，应该说是有的，不过那根据还不是很可靠。

当然，奥勒·冈是什么时候把彩票投入大海，装彩票的那个瓶子是在什么时间、什么地点被人捞起的，这些他都知道。海军部的信件已经把上述的情况告诉了他。就是那封信使他做出了立刻前往贝尔根的决定，他要找艾尔普兄弟和港口最有经验的海员了解一下情况，也许这会给搜寻子爵号的工作指出一个好的方向。

这次旅行很顺利。到达默尔之后，霍格打发如艾尔和车子一起回去，自己则换乘桦皮船横渡坦恩湖。在蒂诺泽上岸以后，他没有沿着邦布勒的方向往南走，而是又租了一辆马车顺着阿尔当瑞的大路以最快的速度直接向阿尔当瑞湾奔去。他在那儿乘上了一艘负责海湾运输的小汽艇到了海湾的南部边缘，然后穿过挪威海岸诸多的大小岛屿，在7月2日的早晨从贝尔根的码头上岸了。

这座古老的城市靠近索尼亚海湾和阿尔当瑞海湾，地理位置十分优越。如果有一天地中海的海水被引到瑞士的山脚下来，那么贝尔根就和

瑞士十分相像了。一条由许多白蜡树形成的漂亮林荫道直接通向贝尔根市郊的居民区。城市中，那些由高大的石头砌成的房屋，像是阿拉伯城市的建筑，闪着白色的光芒。这些房屋密密麻麻地构成了一个不等边的三角形，共有三万左右的人口在那里生活。市内的教堂建于公元12世纪。从大海驶来的船只从很远的地方就能看见高高的教堂塔尖。贝尔根虽然不在交通要道上，跟克里斯蒂亚尼亚和德隆丹也离得不近，但它却是挪威的商业城市，而那两个城市则是挪威王国名列前茅的政治中心。

要是在别的情况下，按说教授肯定会有兴趣去研究一下这座城市。单从外貌和风俗来说，与其说贝尔根是挪威的城市，不如说它更像是荷兰的城市，所以它原本就是在旅行计划当中的。可是，自从出了玛丽斯蒂安的那次意外和到了达尔以后，这个计划就有了很大的变动。现在希尔维尤斯·霍格不是打算详细了解这个地区政治和商业情况而进行旅游的议员了，他现在是汉森客店的客人，如艾尔和伊尔娜是他的救命恩人，他们的利益比什么都重要。霍格现在要尽一切努力来报答兄妹俩的救命之恩。他觉得和兄妹俩对他的付出相比，自己为他们做的事情，简直是微不足道。

到了贝尔根以后，霍格在港湾深处售卖各类鱼的码头上了岸，直接去了小艾尔普的住地。

天依旧在下雨，因为贝尔根一年中有三百六十天是下雨天。要想保守秘密，不让外人知道，没有比小艾尔普的好客之家更合适的地方了。而且，希尔维尤斯·霍格在那里受到的接待比其他任何地方都更热情和更让人感动。他的朋友坚持要留下他，就像是对待一件珍贵的寄存物品一样，还特别加以关照，只有拿来一张正式的合法收据，才会把物品交出来。

霍格把自己来到这里的目的是告诉了小艾尔普，跟他谈了子爵号，问他自从上封信以来是不是仍然没有消息，本地的海员是不是认为子爵号真的是连人带货全都沉没了。这次事故让贝尔根的好几个家庭都失去了亲人，难道就没有促使海军当局进行调查吗？

“既然不知道出事的地点，怎么去调查呢？”小艾尔普问。

“是啊，亲爱的小艾尔普，正因为不知道，所以才要想办法去了解嘛。”

“去了解？”

“对啊！就算是不知道子爵号遇难的地点，但至少还知道丹麦船只找到彩票的地点啊，这是一个可靠的根据，我们要是忽略了这一点，那可就是犯罪。”

“这个地方在哪儿呢？”

“您听我说，亲爱的小艾尔普！”

接下来，希尔维尤斯·霍格就把海军方面最近向他提供的新情况以及授予他充分使用这些情报的权力，都跟朋友和盘托出了。

装着奥勒·冈的彩票的那只瓶子是6月5日那天在冰岛西南方向两百海里的地方，由双桅帆船克里斯蒂安号发现的，这艘船的船长是爱尔斯南尔港的莫斯尔曼，当时刮的是东南风。这位船长当时就察看了那张彩票，根据当时的情况，他本该马上对子爵号的幸存者进行救助，可彩票背面写的这几行字，对遇难的地点没有提供任何线索，克里斯蒂安号也就没办法开到出事的海域。

船长莫斯尔曼是个正直的人。要是换成其他的卑鄙小人，很可能会把彩票私藏，可他的脑子里只有一个念头，那就是一回到海港，就把彩票寄给收件人。“达尔，伊尔娜·汉森”，有这几个字就够了，不用知道更多的情况就能寄过去。

然而，回到哥本哈根以后，莫斯尔曼船长心里又想，把彩票直接寄给收件人，还不如把它交给丹麦当局更为妥当，这样做会更可靠，也更合乎规定。于是他就这么做了，哥本哈根海军当局很快就把这件事通知了克里斯蒂亚尼亚的海军当局。

那时，克里斯蒂亚尼亚的海军当局已经收到了霍格的第一封信件，在信中他要求提供关于子爵号的详细情况。人们都知道他对汉森一家的特殊关心，也知道他还要在达尔再停留一段时间，当局的相关人员于是就把丹麦船长找到的彩票给他寄到了达尔，由他转交给伊尔娜·汉森。从那以后，这件事情给予了公众极大的热情，而且由于欧美大陆的报纸都刊登了动人的细节，使大家都难以忘怀。

这些就是希尔维尤斯·霍格对他的朋友小艾尔普所叙述的大致情况。小艾尔普一直在认真地听着，丝毫也没有打断他的讲话。霍格最后说：“所以，有一点是可以肯定的，那就是6月5日，也就是子爵号离开圣·皮埃尔·米克隆驶往欧洲大概一个月以后，有人在冰岛西南方向两百海里的海域找到了那张彩票。”

“那除了这些，您还了解别的情况吗？”

“不了解了，亲爱的小艾尔普。不过，我觉得可以问问贝尔根最有经验的水手，他们以前或是现在曾到过那些海域，了解那儿的风向，尤其是水流的一般方向。根据他们的意见，不就可以画出一个瓶子流经的

路线图吗？然后，大概估计一下瓶子的流速和找到瓶子时已经耗费的时间，这样不就能够推算出奥勒·冈把瓶子扔进大海的地方，也就是子爵号遇难的地点了吗？”

小艾尔普面带着不太乐观的神情摇了摇头。根据可能包含很多错误且模糊不清的线索去进行调查，这不是太冒险了吗？头脑冷静、注重实际的船主小艾尔普觉得应该把这一点对霍格讲清楚。

“好吧，我的朋友小艾尔普，虽然咱们只能得到些许不是那么确定的材料，不过我觉得这也不能成为我们放弃调查的理由。为了这些可怜的人们，我一定要想尽一切办法，因为他们对我有救命之恩。是的，有必要的话我会牺牲我所拥有的一切，绝无二话。只要能找到奥勒·冈，把他还给他的未婚妻伊尔娜·汉森！”

霍格详细地讲述了他在鲁康福斯所经历的危险。他讲到勇敢的如艾尔和他的妹妹是怎样冒着生命危险去救他的，要是没有他们的搭救，他今天就不能在好朋友小艾尔普家做客了。

在外人眼中，小艾尔普不是一个爱幻想的人，但因为事关重大，他也并不反对去试一试，哪怕这种尝试没有什么作用，甚至是很难进行的。所以，他最终还是同意了霍格的意见。

他说：“希尔维尤斯，我会尽全力帮助您的。对，您说得对，哪怕找到子爵号的幸存者的可能性很小，我们也不应该放过这个机会，因为其中毕竟包括这个诚实的奥勒，而他的未婚妻又救过您的性命。”

“是的，小艾尔普，我们不应该放弃，哪怕只有十万分之一的可能性。”教授回答说。

“今天我就叫贝尔根最出色的海员到我的办公室来，我会把那些在冰岛海域或纽芬兰海域航行过或是经常在这些海域航行的海员找来商量商量，看看他们有什么办法。”

“我们会按照他们的意见去做的。”希尔维尤斯·霍格说，我们可以看出他是那么的积极热情，令人为之感动。他接着又说，“而且我还有总督的支持，他授权我可以动用他的一艘护卫舰去寻找子爵号。参加这一工作，事关重大，希望大家能够尽心尽力。”

“我马上就到海军办公室去。”小艾尔普说。

“要不要我陪您一起去？”

“不用了，想必您也累了。”

“是啊，累了……我！我这把年纪。”

“不管怎么样，您还是休息一下吧，我亲爱的，永远年轻的希尔维尤斯，就在这儿等我吧！”

当天，商船船长、渔船海员和驾驶员在小艾尔普家里开了一个会，这其中有不少人还在从事着航海的工作，有的则是上了年纪的退休海员。会议一开始，希尔维尤斯·霍格就向他们介绍了情况。他说奥勒把彩票投入大海的日子是5月3日，丹麦船长捞起彩票的时间是6月5日，地点是在冰岛西南方向两百海里的海域。根据这些线索，大家展开了很长时间的认真讨论，这些勇敢的人都熟悉冰岛海域和纽芬兰海域水流的一般方向，而这又是解决问题所必须考虑到的。

从子爵号离开圣·皮埃尔·米克隆到丹麦船只上的水手捞起瓶子的那段时间，也就是船只遇难的那个时段，有多次的东南风吹过大西洋的这

段海域，也许就是这些暴风导致了子爵号的沉没。子爵号极有可能是顶不住风浪，被迫向后躲避。但当时正好是春分时期，北冰洋的冰块开始漂向大西洋，所以可能会发生相撞事故，子爵号撞上了无法躲过的流动浮冰而导致船体损毁，最终沉没。

如果这种解释能够站得住脚，那为什么全体或部分船员没有带着一些食物逃到某个大冰块上去呢？如果他们逃到了大冰块上，冰块就有可能被推到西北方向去了，幸存者最终就完全有可能在格陵兰海岸的某地登陆。所以，调查应该沿着那个方向，在那些海域进行。

这就是参加会议的海员们对霍格所提出的各种问题的一致回答。不用说，调查应该按照这个方案进行。可是，在子爵号撞上了大冰块的情况下，如果连船只的残骸也找不到，那又能找到什么呢？是不是可以期望事故的幸存者已经回到了本国？这可没有把握。

关于这个棘手的问题，教授发现连最有经验的海员都没办法或是不愿意做出回答。但这也不能成为什么都不用做的理由。在这一点上，大家的意见还是一致的，而且都认为应该尽快行动起来。

在贝尔根，通常都会有几艘属于挪威国家船队的舰艇停在那里。三艘保卫西海岸的护卫舰中的一艘经常停泊在这个海港，这条航线中途会经过德隆丹、芬马克、汉姆弗斯特和北角。此时，就有一艘护卫舰正停在港湾里。

于是，霍格首先起草了一份记录，大致叙述了在小艾尔普家召开的海员会议上大家所达成的共识，然后就直接去了电讯号护卫舰，把政府委托的特殊任务告诉了舰长。

舰长很热情地接待了教授，并表示会积极配合，给予一切的援助。

在贝尔根、罗弗敦群岛和芬马克的渔民被长期而又危险的捕鱼作业引向冰岛和纽芬兰渔场的年代，他就已经在那些海域航行过多次了。所以，他个人了解的情况对即将进行的营救工作会很有帮助，他也答应会竭尽所能。

对于霍格交给舰长的那份上面标明了推测的出事地点的记录，舰长也表示赞同。寻找遇难船只的幸存者，至少也要找到一些残骸的工作应该在冰岛和格陵兰岛之间的海域进行。如果在这些海域里没有发现，舰长就会到附近的海域，也许是巴芬湾的东岸去寻找。“我已经做好了出发的准备，霍格先生。”他说，“煤和食品都已经准备好了，船员也上了船。今天就可以出海了。”

“谢谢您了，舰长。”教授回答说，“您对我的接待让我十分感动。不过，我还有一个问题，您能不能告诉我，你们大概要多少时间才能到达格陵兰岛附近海域？”

“我的舰艇时速为十一海里。不过，贝尔根与格陵兰岛的经度只差二十度左右，所以，我预计在八天之内到达。”

“请您尽可能地抓紧时间，舰长。就算是能有几个人死里逃生，他们陷于困境也已经有两个月了，他们或许流落到了某个荒岛，正在忍受着饥饿的煎熬……”

“时间很紧，霍格先生。今天退潮时我们就出海，我会全速前进的。一旦找到什么踪迹，我就会通过纽芬兰的电话向克里斯蒂亚尼亚的海军当局报告。”

“那就出发吧，舰长。”霍格回答说，“祝您成功！”

当天，在贝尔根全城居民的欢呼声中，电讯号起锚了。当人们看到护卫舰绕过航道消失在港湾最远的小岛后面时，心情都万分激动。

当然，希尔维尤斯·霍格所做的不仅是派出电讯号护卫舰前去调查。他想，要是能多想一些办法去寻找子爵号，人们就有更多的事情可做了。可不可以鼓励航行在费罗埃海域和冰岛海域的商船、渔船、邮船及其他的船，来为调查工作提供帮助呢？完全可以啊！

所以，他以国家的名义设立了一份奖金，承诺任何船只只要提供了关于遇难船的一个线索，就可以得到两千马克。任何个人只要送回遇难船上的一个幸存者，就可获得五千马克。

就这样，霍格在贝尔根逗留的这两天里，做了一切能做到的事来保证这项工作的顺利进行，在这方面他也得到了小艾尔普和贝尔根的海军当局的全力支持。当小艾尔普先生还想挽留他再住些日子的时候，希尔维尤斯·霍格对主人的美意表示了感谢。但是他不想再待下去了，他要赶紧回到伊尔娜和如艾尔那儿去，因为他不放心把他们俩丢下太长的时间。小艾尔普答应他，只要一有消息，就会尽快通知他，再由他转告给汉森一家。

4日一大早，希尔维尤斯·霍格就告别了小艾尔普，坐着小艇渡过了阿尔当瑞湾，如果中途不耽搁的话，他打算在5日晚上回到特勒玛克。

第十四章 彩票被迫转给卑鄙之徒

就在希尔维尤斯·霍格离开贝尔根的当天，在达尔的客店里发生了一次严重的争吵。

可以说，伊尔娜和如艾尔的好朋友——教授的离开，带走了这个家庭的活力和最后一线希望，留下的仅是一幢死气沉沉的屋子。

在这两天里，没有一个旅客到达尔来游玩，如艾尔也就不用离开家门，可以整天留在伊尔娜的身边。毕竟，扔下她一个人，他还是非常不放心的。

大家所料不错，汉森太太的情绪越来越被她内心的痛楚所支配。任何牵涉到她孩子们的事情，甚至是子爵号的遇难，似乎都和她毫无关系。她总是避开别人，躲在自己的房间里，只有在吃饭的时候才出现。但是，只要她和伊尔娜或如艾尔说话，就总会直接或间接地就彩票的问题对他们进行数落，因为他们怎么都不肯卖掉这张彩票，不管是出什么价钱。

不断有人愿意出高价来购买这张彩票，而买主则来自世界各地。有些人的头脑就像是发了疯一样，他们觉得这样一张彩票是肯定会赢得十万马克的奖金的。这次开奖似乎只有一个号码能中，这个号码就是9672。总之，曼彻斯特的英国人和波士顿的美国人出的价钱一直是遥遥领先。英国人出的钱曾比他的对手多几个英镑，但不久美国人就会以超过他几百美元的价格而刷新这项纪录。经过几轮竞相哄抬，最后的价钱是八千马克。除了美国人和英国人之间的自尊心问题之外，这只能用一

种理由来加以解释，那就是真正的偏执狂。

但不管怎样，伊尔娜对所有高价购买的要求做出的都是否定的答复，哪怕这些要求是多么有利可图。终于，这遭到了汉森太太的严厉指责。

一天，她对女儿说：“要是我命令你出让这张彩票呢？如果我命令你这么做的呢？”

“妈妈，那我会感到十分难过。但是，我还是要告诉您，我是不会同意的。”

“可是，如果一定要这样做呢？”

“为什么一定要这样做？”如艾尔问。

汉森太太没有再说什么。面对这个直截了当提出的问题，她脸色苍白，嘴里嘟囔着一些谁也听不懂的话走开了。

“发生了严重的问题，这一定是妈妈和桑格伊斯之间的事情！”如艾尔说。

“是的，哥哥，而且我们能想到将来还会有更麻烦的事情呢！”

“我可怜的伊尔娜，这几个星期以来，难道我们还没有受够吗？还会有什么样的灾难来威胁我们呢？”

“唉！希尔维尤斯先生怎么还不回来呢？”伊尔娜说，“要是他在这里，我就不会这么难过……”

“可是，他又能为我们做些什么呢？”如艾尔说。

一方面，汉森太太过去究竟有什么秘密很难向自己的孩子们开口呢？是一种怎样的不必要的自尊心妨碍她向孩子们诉说自己的忧虑呢？她是不是为某些事情感到内疚呢？而另一方面，为什么在奥勒·冈的彩票和价钱的问题上她要向自己的女儿施加这种压力呢？她到底是因为什么才表现得那么贪婪，一定要把彩票变成金钱呢？这些问题，伊尔娜和如艾尔总有一天会明白的。

7月4日的上午，如艾尔领着他的妹妹去了小教堂，因为伊尔娜每天都会到那里为遇难者祈祷。他在那里等着伊尔娜，然后再把她带回家。

就在这一天，在他们回来的路上，兄妹俩远远地看见汉森太太在树林里正朝着客店的方向急匆匆地走去。她不是一个人，还有一个男人跟在她后面。这个男人大声地说着话，举动显得很蛮横。

伊尔娜和她哥哥突然停住了。

“这个男人是谁？”如艾尔问道。

伊尔娜朝前走了几步。

“我认识他。”她说。

“你认识他？”

“是的，是桑格伊斯！”

“桑格伊斯！德拉蒙的，我不在家的时候，来咱们家的是他吗？”

“是的。就是他。”

“他在我们家的时候像是个当家人似的，好像他有什么特权一

样.....对我们的母亲.....也许还对我们？”

“就是他，哥哥，不用说了，他今天就是来行使这些特权的.....”

“什么特权？啊.....这一回，我倒要看看这个家伙到底来这儿想要干什么！”

如艾尔竭力克制着自己，和他的妹妹躲到一边去了。

过了几分钟，汉森太太和桑格伊斯来到了客店门口。桑格伊斯跨过门槛，第一个走了进去。等汉森太太也进去以后，就把大门关上了，两个人在大厅里坐了下来。

如艾尔和伊尔娜刚走进家门，就听见桑格伊斯呵斥的声音。他们停下脚步，仔细地听着。这时他们听到汉森太太在说话，好像是在哀求。

“咱们进去吧。”如艾尔说。

伊尔娜感到心情很压抑，好像有点透不过气来，如艾尔万分着急，气得直发抖。两个人走进了大厅，门被砰的一声关上了。

桑格伊斯坐在大扶手椅上，看见兄妹俩进来，也没有站起来，只是转过头，从眼镜上边瞥了他们一眼。

“啊！如果我没说错的话，这就是可爱的伊尔娜吧！”他说话的腔调让如艾尔感到十分反感。汉森太太正诚惶诚恐，低声下气地站在他面前，但当她一看见自己的孩子们时，马上就挺直了身子，露出一副很不高兴的神情。

“那位想必就是她的哥哥了？”桑格伊斯又加了一句。

“是的，我是她哥哥。”如艾尔回答说。

接着，他朝前走去，在离椅子两步远的地方站住了，问道：“有什么可以为您效劳的吗？”

桑格伊斯不怀好意地看了他一眼，然后恶狠狠地对他说：“我们就告诉你，年轻人！”他说，“说真的，你们来得正好，我正着急要见你们呢，要是你妹妹能够通情达理的话，咱们还是好商量的。不过，你先坐下吧。你也坐下，姑娘！”

桑格伊斯请他们坐下，好像是在他自己家里似的。如艾尔提醒桑格伊斯注意这一点。

“啊，啊！这伤了你的自尊了吗？真是奇了怪了，你这个小子看起来可不怎么样！”

“就像你说的，是不怎么样。”如艾尔回应道，“谁对我讲礼貌，我就对谁讲礼貌。”

“如艾尔！”汉森太太开口了。

“哥……哥哥！”伊尔娜喊了一声，她的目光像是在提醒如艾尔，让他要沉住气。

如艾尔努力地克制着自己，他退到了大厅的一角，否则他真想把这个无礼的家伙轰出门去。

“现在我可以说话了吗？”桑格伊斯问道。

汉森太太做了一个肯定的表示，这是桑格伊斯得到的唯一回应。在

他看来，这已经足够了。

“下面就是我要说的有关问题。”桑格伊斯说，“你们三个人都要好好给我听着，因为我不喜欢重复已经说过的话！”

很显然，桑格伊斯自认为是个有权把自己的意志强加在他人身上的强者，还以这样的身份在说话。

桑格伊斯接着说：“通过报纸，我知道了一个名叫奥勒·冈的贝尔根地区的年轻水手长的故事，他出了意外。还知道在他的船只子爵号快要沉没的时候，他给未婚妻伊尔娜‘寄’了一张彩票。我听说，由于这张彩票被人找到的情况非同一般，所以公众把它看作是一张神奇的彩票。另外我还知道，人们都认为它具有特殊的运气，一定能够中奖。很多人都跟伊尔娜·汉森提出要购买这张彩票的要求，甚至出了很高的价钱。”

桑格伊斯停顿了一会儿，接着又问：“这是真的吗？”

桑格伊斯刚才提到的这个问题，过了一会儿才有人回答说：“是的……这是真的。”如艾尔说，“那又怎么样呢？”

“那又怎么样？”桑格伊斯接着说，“问题就在这儿。所有的这些要求都是出于荒唐的迷信，我就是这么认为的。但还是有人愿意出钱，而且我想啊，开奖日期这不是要到了，买彩票的价钱肯定还会上涨的。我嘛，我是一个商人，我觉得这是一桩对我来说有利可图的买卖。所以我昨天就离开德拉蒙到达尔来了，为的是跟你们谈谈这张彩票的转让问题，并且请汉森太太给我个比其他买主更优惠的价格。”

尽管桑格伊斯并没有直接和伊尔娜说话，但姑娘却像她以前对待所有提出这种要求的人一样，本能地要回答桑格伊斯的时候，如艾尔阻止

了她。他说：“在回答桑格伊斯先生的要求之前，我想问问他知不知道这张彩票是属于谁的。”

“我觉得当然是属于伊尔娜·汉森的！”

“那么，就应该问问伊尔娜·汉森，看她是不是准备卖掉这张彩票。”

“儿子！”汉森太太开口了。

“让我说完，妈妈。”如艾尔接着说，“这张彩票本来不就是属于我们的兄弟奥勒·冈的吗？难道说他没有资格把彩票留给自己的未婚妻吗？”

“这没什么可说的。”桑格伊斯说。

“那么，要想得到它，就得跟伊尔娜·汉森来谈。”

“好吧，这么爱较真的先生，”桑格伊斯说，“我这就请伊尔娜把这张奥勒·冈给的号码为9672的彩票出让给我。”

“桑格伊斯先生，”姑娘以坚定的语气回答说，“关于这张彩票，有很多人向我提出了要求，不过都没什么用，所以你得到的答复也和其他人一样。我的未婚夫之所以把这张彩票连同他的最后祝愿一起‘寄’给了我，是因为他希望我把它保存起来，而不是要我把它卖掉。所以，不管是谁，不管出多高的价钱，我都不会卖掉的。”

话一说完，伊尔娜就打算离开这里，她觉得自己已经表示了拒绝，那么跟她有关的谈话也就应该随之结束了。只是看见母亲向她打了手势，她才停住了脚步。汉森太太流露出一种怨恨的情绪，而桑格伊斯则

皱着眉头，瞪大眼睛，看起来像要发火了。

“对！你留下，伊尔娜。”他说，“你还得把话说清楚，我之所以坚持我的要求，那是因为我资格坚持。再说，我觉得可能是我没有把话说清楚，或者更确切地说，是你误会我了。有一点是肯定的，那就是这张彩票并不会因为遇难者用手把它封在瓶子里，又及时被人找到而增加中奖的可能性。但是对于公众的狂热这一点来说，我是没有什么理由好讲的。不用说，有很多人都想得到这张彩票，他们已经提出要求想购买这张彩票，我相信他们还会提出要求的。我再重复一遍，这就像是一桩买卖，我是来跟您谈买卖的。”

“先生，您很难跟我妹妹谈到一块去。”如艾尔用挖苦的口气对他说，“您跟她谈的是生意经，她说的却是感情问题。”

“这些都是空话，年轻人！”桑格伊斯又说，“等我解释完以后，你就明白了，如果说这是桩对我有利的买卖的话，对你妹妹来说也不吃亏。另外我还得说上一句，这对她的母亲——汉森太太来说也是有好处的，她跟这件事可有着脱不开的关系。”

如艾尔和伊尔娜你看看我，我看看你——这是不是意味着他们就要知道汉森太太一直对他们所隐瞒的事情了呢？

“我接着说吧，”桑格伊斯说，“我并不觉得这张彩票对奥勒·冈来说值多少钱，就要以多少钱来转让给我。不……不管有没有道理，它都已经具有了某种商品价值。所以，为了把它弄到手，我打算做点牺牲。”

“我们已经跟你说了，”如艾尔插嘴道，“比你出价更高的人，伊尔娜都拒绝了……”

“真的？”桑格伊斯喊了起来，“更高的价钱！价钱高到什么程度？”

“再说，不管什么价钱，我妹妹都不会同意的，我和她的态度一样。”

“啊！居然会这样！那我是跟如艾尔·汉森打交道还是跟伊尔娜·汉森打交道呢？”

“我妹妹和我，我们俩是一样的。”如艾尔回答说，“先生，既然你好像不明白这一点，那就听着吧！”

听了如艾尔的话，桑格伊斯一点都不觉得难为情，他耸了耸肩膀，然后对自己的理由显得很有把握的样子，又接着说：“当我谈到要出一定的价钱来交换彩票的时候，原本的意思是说，我给你们的好处是那么多。出于家庭的利益，我想伊尔娜是不会拒绝的。”

“是吗？”

“而现在，小伙子，该轮到你听着了。我到达尔来不是为了求你妹妹把彩票让给我的，不是的，完全不是！”

“那你要求什么？”

“我不是求，我是需要……因为我想要。”

“你有什么权利？”如艾尔喊道，“你凭什么呀，你，一个外人，竟敢在我母亲家里这么说话？”

“凭所有的人都有的权利说话。”桑格伊斯回答说，“当他在自己家的时候，什么时候想说，就什么时候说；想怎么说，就怎么说。”

“在自己家里！”

如艾尔简直都要气疯了，他冲着桑格伊斯走过去，那个人虽然不是那么容易被吓住的人，却也赶紧从椅子上站了起来。

伊尔娜拦住了她的哥哥。而此时，汉森太太正用双手捂住脑袋，退到了大厅的另一端。

“哥哥……你看妈妈！”姑娘说。

如艾尔一下子停住了。他看见母亲的样子，满腔的愤怒就再也发作不起来了。汉森太太的态度已经完全证明了，她早就被这个桑格伊斯掌控于他的手心之中了。

这家伙看到如艾尔有点犹豫，就以为他又重新占了上风，又回到了他原先的座位上去了。

“是的，在自己家里啊！”桑格伊斯用一种更带有威胁性的口气大声说，“自从她丈夫死后，汉森太太就去做投机生意，不过什么好处都没捞到。就这样，她把你们的父亲去世时留下的没多少的财产都给败光了，只得去跟克里斯蒂亚尼亚的一位银行家借钱。在走投无路的情况下，她拿这幢房子做了抵押，用完全符合手续的订立债务凭据的形式借了一万五千马克。而这张债务凭据呢，由我桑格伊斯从她的债权人那里赎了回来。所以，要是到期不向我还清欠款的话，这所房子就属于我了。”

“什么时候到期？”如艾尔问。

“7月20日，还有十八天。”桑格伊斯说，“到了那一天，不管你愿不愿意，这儿可就是我的家了。”

“如果在那天以前还没有把钱还给你的话，到了那一天，你才是在自己家里呢！”如艾尔顶了他一句，“我现在不允许你用刚才的口气对我妈妈和我妹妹说话！”

“不许我那么说……不许我！”桑格伊斯喊道，“你的母亲不许我那么说吗？”

“您倒是说话啊，妈妈！”如艾尔说着，朝汉森太太走去，他真想把母亲的双手扒开。

“如艾尔……哥哥！”伊尔娜大声说，“可怜可怜她吧……我求求你冷静一点！”

汉森太太低着头，不敢再看她儿子一眼。事实就是那样的，在她丈夫死后的那几年里，她曾希望通过做冒险的生意来发家致富，但是很快，她仅有的那一点钱就打了水漂。后来，她只好去借会叫人倾家荡产的高利贷。而现在，一张以家产作为抵押的债务凭据，落到了这个来自于德拉蒙地区的桑格伊斯的手里。他是一个臭名远扬的放贷者，一个被当地所有人都唾弃的冷血的人。汉森太太只是在那天他来达尔给客店估算值多少钱时，才第一次看见他。

原来这就是压在她心头的秘密，这就是她低三下四的原因。她总是一个人待着，好像要躲着自己的孩子似的，原来就是因为这个。这就是她从来都不肯告诉孩子们的事情，她把孩子们的前途都毁了。

伊尔娜对她刚才听到的话几乎都不敢去想。是的，这么说来桑格伊斯的确是可以发号施令的主人。他今天想要的这张彩票，再过半个月可能就不值钱了，要是不把它交出来的话，那就意味着破产，意味着要卖

掉房子，汉森一家将会倾家荡产，无家可归。

伊尔娜不敢抬起眼睛来看如艾尔，而如艾尔则怒气冲冲，任何关于威胁到未来的话都听不进去，眼睛只盯着桑格伊斯，如果这家伙在他面前说话的态度还像以前那样，他恐怕就再也克制不住自己了……

桑格伊斯知道自己可以控制局面，态度就变得更加强硬，更加蛮不讲理了。

“这张彩票，我要定了，而且我一定能要到手。”他又重复说了一遍，“不过我不会出钱，因为我不知道要出多少钱。但是我可以让汉森太太延期付款，延期两年……两年啊……日子由你自己来定，伊尔娜！”

伊尔娜心里十分担忧，已经说不出话了，她的哥哥替她作了答复，他大声说：“奥勒·冈的彩票不能由伊尔娜·汉森来出卖。所以，不管你怎么想，不管你怎么威胁，我妹妹都不会卖的！现在，你给我出去！”

“出去？”桑格伊斯说，“嘿，不……我可不出去……要是我付出的代价还不够的话……我可以再付出一点。是的！只要交出彩票，我出……我出……”

看来桑格伊斯对占有这张彩票的确有着强烈的意愿，这桩买卖看来会对他有好处，他对此也是确信无疑的。

他走到放着纸、笔和墨水的桌子前坐了下来，过了一会儿，他说：“这就是我付出的代价。”原来这是汉森太太所欠的那笔款项的收据，为了这笔钱，她曾拿达尔的客店作为抵押。

汉森太太双手合十，半弯着身子，看着她的女儿，哀求着她。

“那么现在，”桑格伊斯又说话了，“这张彩票，我要.....我今天就要.....马上就要.....不拿到手，我就不离开达尔。我要彩票，伊尔娜.....我要彩票！”

桑格伊斯走到可怜的姑娘身边，好像要对姑娘进行搜身，从她那儿抢走奥勒的彩票.....

这是如艾尔更加不能容忍的事情，尤其当他听到伊尔娜在喊他：“哥哥.....哥哥！”

“你给我滚出去！”他说。

桑格伊斯不肯出去。如艾尔向他扑了过去，这时伊尔娜说话了：“妈妈，彩票在这儿。”

汉森太太赶快抓过彩票，当她用彩票去换取桑格伊斯的收据时，伊尔娜晕倒在椅子上，几乎失去了知觉。

“伊尔娜.....伊尔娜！”如艾尔叫了起来，“你醒醒.....啊！妹妹，你干了些什么呀！”

“伊尔娜干了什么？”汉森太太回答，“伊尔娜干了什么.....是的，我有罪，是的，为了孩子们的利益，我曾经想把你们父亲留下的财富再增加一些。是的，是我毁了你们的前途，是我给这个家庭带来了贫困.....但伊尔娜救了我们大家.....这就是她所做的一切.....谢谢，伊尔娜.....谢谢你。”

这时，如艾尔发现桑格伊斯还待在那儿。

“你.....你还在这儿!”他叫了起来。接着，如艾尔朝桑格伊斯走去，抓住了他的肩膀并把他提了起来，尽管他挣扎着，喊叫着，还是被如艾尔赶出了门。

第十五章 关于彩票的谈话

第二天晚上，希尔维尤斯·霍格回到了达尔。关于这次旅行，他什么话都没说，谁都不知道他去了一趟贝尔根。他打定主意，除非是已经开始的搜寻工作有了一点结果，否则他会汉森一家一直保持沉默。从贝尔根或克里斯蒂亚尼亚寄来给他的所有的私人信件或电报都会送到客店，他决心就在那儿关注着事情的进展。

他对这件事一直都抱有希望吗？答案是肯定的，但必须承认的是，这只是一种预感而已。

教授刚一回来，很快就感觉到在他出去的这段时间里发生了很严重的事情。如艾尔和伊尔娜的态度已经清楚地表明他们和汉森太太之间已经把话说开了。难道汉森太太一家最近又遭受了新的不幸吗？

这只能让希尔维尤斯·霍格觉得万分苦恼，因为他对兄妹俩怀有的那种慈父般的感情，已经胜过了他对自己孩子的感情。在这短暂的离别的日子，兄妹俩多么想念他啊，他自己也是同样地想念着他们。

他想：“他们会告诉我的。他们应该对我说呀，难道我不是这家里的一员吗？”

是的，希尔维尤斯·霍格对自己现在有权过问他年轻朋友的私生活很有信心，他有权知道为什么如艾尔和伊尔娜会表现得比他离开的时候更加痛苦，也许他要不了多久就能了解到事情的原委。

果然，兄妹俩正盼着向这位善良的人道出实情呢，因为他们也对霍

格怀着子女对父辈般的那种爱戴的感情。可以说，兄妹俩正希望教授能来询问他们呢！这两天他们觉得特别孤独，尤其是希尔维尤斯·霍格对自己去了哪里丝毫不提。

是的，对他们来说现在的时间比以往任何时候都更加难熬。他们觉得霍格的离开和寻找子爵号没什么关系，他们怎么也不会想到，希尔维尤斯·霍格隐瞒这次旅行，就是为了万一在寻找失败时，免得让他们感到极大的失望。现在对他们来说，教授在他们身边要显得比任何时候都更有必要。他们需要看到他，需要征求他的意见，需要倾听他那总是充满了热情的让人宽心的话语。但是，他们敢把自己和德拉蒙的放高利贷者之间发生的一切，还有汉森太太是怎样毁了家庭的前途这件事告诉他吗？当希尔维尤斯·霍格得知彩票已经不在伊尔娜手中，汉森太太已经用它来摆脱了那个无耻的债主以后，他会怎么想呢？可是，他终究会知道这一切的。那么，谁先开口呢？不知道是希尔维尤斯·霍格呢，还是如艾尔和伊尔娜呢。可这都无关紧要。

可以肯定的是，教授很快就知道了这件事。他已经得知了汉森太太和她的孩子们当时是处在怎样的一种困境下。如果这笔债务没有因出让彩票而得以解除的话，半个月以后，那个放高利贷的家伙就要把他们赶出达尔客店了。

如艾尔当着妹妹的面，向希尔维尤斯·霍格叙述了这个悲惨的故事。

“你们不应该放弃彩票，”他先是喊了起来，“不，不应该那么做！”

“我怎么能不放弃呢，希尔维尤斯先生？”心神不定的姑娘回答说。

“不能啊！这是毫无疑问的！你不能放弃……可是……唉！要是我

当时在的话.....”

如果他，希尔维尤斯·霍格教授当时在场的话，他会怎么处理呢？关于这一点，他什么也没说。他接着说：“是的，我亲爱的伊尔娜、如艾尔，你们是做了你们应该做的事情，可是，让我生气的是，桑格伊斯利用了公众的过分热情。要是人们把可怜的奥勒留下的这张彩票赋予了一种神奇的价值，那么桑格伊斯就会从中获得好处。但是，认为9672这个号码一定会交上好运的这个想法也是荒唐可笑的。总之一句话，要是我，可能就不会交出彩票。不仅拒绝交给桑格伊斯，最好也拒绝交给汉森太太。”

听了希尔维尤斯·霍格的一番话，兄妹俩没什么可说的了。伊尔娜是出于孝心，把彩票交给了汉森太太，这一点不需要指责。她下决心作出的牺牲，并不是放弃了在克里斯蒂亚尼亚开奖时，这张彩票可能中奖的机遇，而是放弃了奥勒·冈的遗愿，这等于放弃了她未婚夫留给她的最后的纪念物。

现在一切都无可挽回了。桑格伊斯已经把彩票拿到手了，成了彩票的主人，他可以拿去高价拍卖。一个狠心的放高利贷者将拿着这个遇难者感人的惜别之物去谋取财富，不！希尔维尤斯·霍格怎么可能容忍这一切呢！

所以，就在当天，希尔维尤斯·霍格想就这一问题和汉森太太谈谈，尽管这次谈话和这件事没什么关系，但在他们之间可以说还是很有必要的，何况他的对手是个非常讲究实际的女人。而且，可以肯定的是，这个女人的理智要远多于感情。

汉森太太听教授把话说完以后，问道：“这么说，您是在责备我

了，霍格先生？”

“当然了，汉森太太。”

“要是您责备我冒失地去做投机生意，使孩子们的财产遭受了损失，那么您指责得对。但如果您是责怪我为了还债所采取的做法，那么您就错了。您还有什么要说的吗？”

“没有了。”

“说句实话，我们应该拒绝桑格伊斯的要求吗？他为了得到这张彩票，已经支付了一万五千马克，而这张彩票本身的价值并不牢靠。我再问您一次，您说该不该拒绝他呢？”

“也该，也不该，汉森太太。”

“不是该不该的问题，霍格先生，是的确不应该拒绝。从您所了解的情况来看，是因为我们的将来受到了威胁，当然，这是由于我的过错而造成的，这一点我承认，我也理解伊尔娜的心情。是的，我理解她不愿意出让奥勒·冈的那张彩票的心情。但是，如果事情关系到几天以后就要被人从房子里赶出去，你知道，这房子是我丈夫去世的地方，也是我的孩子们出生的地方，这样的话我就不能再体谅伊尔娜的心情了。您呢，霍格先生，您要是处在我的位置上，也不会有别的办法了吧！”

“不会的，汉森太太，我有办法！”

“那您会怎么办呢？”

“我宁愿什么办法都试一试，也不会牺牲自己的女儿在这种情况下所得到的彩票。”

“这种情况就会让彩票变得更值钱吗？”

“关于这一点，不管是您，还是我，现在谁也不知道。”

“不，霍格先生。大家都知道，它只不过就是一张彩票，中奖的机会是百万分之一。难道就因为它是装在一个瓶子里并在海上被人找到的，您就觉得它会值更多的钱吗？”

面对这么尖锐的问题，希尔维尤斯·霍格除了觉得尴尬和无话可说之外，真没什么可说的了。所以，他又回到感情的角度来谈问题，他说：“现在的情况是这样的：奥勒·冈在他遇难的时候，给伊尔娜留下了他在这世上仅有的财产。他甚至嘱咐伊尔娜，如果这张彩票有幸能‘寄’到她手中的话，在开奖的那天，她一定要带着这张彩票到场。可现在，彩票却不在伊尔娜的手里。”

“奥勒·冈要是回来了，他也不会反对把自己的彩票让给桑格伊斯的。”汉森太太回答说。

“这也有可能，”希尔维尤斯·霍格接着说，“但只有他才有权这么做。要是他没有死，要是他在这次遇难事件中没有丧生……要是……明天，或者今天他就回来了，您该怎么去跟他说呢？”

“奥勒回不来了。”汉森太太语气低沉地说，“奥勒已经死了，霍格先生，他的确是已经死了。”

“汉森太太，您对有关的情况并不了解。”教授提高了嗓音，语气中带着一种不同寻常的信念，说道，“为了找到这次遇难事件的幸存者，人们已经展开了十分仔细的搜寻工作。这会有结果的。是的，或许在这次彩票开奖之前就会有结果。只要没有确凿的证据证明奥勒·冈已经在

沉船事故中丧生，您就没有权利说他已经死了。我现在之所以没有这么大的把握跟您的孩子们提到这些，是因为我不愿意给他们那么一种希望，而这种希望有可能会带来痛苦的失望。但是，对您，汉森太太，我要把我的想法告诉您！说奥勒死了，不，我不相信……我不相信他已经死了，我不相信！”

争论到这种地步，汉森太太已经没办法再和教授继续争辩了，她再也不说话了。这位多少还相信一点迷信的挪威妇女低下了头，好像奥勒·冈马上就要出现在她面前似的。

“不管怎么说，汉森太太，”希尔维尤斯·霍格又开口道，“在使用伊尔娜的彩票之前，有一件很简单的事情可以做，而您却没有做。”

“是什么事情呢，霍格先生？”

“您应该首先问问您的朋友们，问问您家的朋友们。他们是不会拒绝帮助您的，他们或者可以在债权问题上替代桑格伊斯，或者可以借给您所需的款项，以便把钱还给桑格伊斯。”

“霍格先生，我没有可以求援的朋友。”

“有，您有的，汉森太太，至少我就认识一位。他肯定会毫不犹豫地帮助您的，并把这看作是一种报答。”

“是谁啊？”

“希尔维尤斯·霍格，挪威国会的议员！”

汉森太太再也没什么话可说了，只是对着教授鞠躬。

“但是，事情已经这样了，没办法挽回了，真是可惜。”希尔维尤斯·霍格又说，“汉森太太，我会非常感谢您，别把这次谈话告诉您的孩子们，关于这次谈话，没必要再提了！”

两个人就这样分手了。

教授又继续他那已经习惯了的生活，每天照常散步。他花了几个小时，和如艾尔、伊尔娜一起游览了达尔的近郊，但没有走得太远，为的是不让姑娘感到疲倦。

回到房里以后，教授又开始写信，这是个很重要的工作。他给贝尔根的海军当局和克里斯蒂亚尼亚的海军当局方面写了一封又一封的信，他要把正在协助进行寻找子爵号这件事的所有人员的热情都调动起来。他的全部心思都集中在了一点上：找到奥勒，找到奥勒！他甚至觉得自己应该再出去二十四小时，当然是为了同汉森一家的利益有着紧密关联的那件事。并且，为此所做的是或叫别人去做的一切，都会始终作为秘密进行保守。

但是，伊尔娜的健康状况受到了如此严重的打击，只能慢慢地恢复。可怜的姑娘靠着对奥勒的日夜思念来打发日子，那夹杂着她思念之情的一线希望也逐渐变得渺茫起来。幸运的是姑娘身边还有两个她在这世上最爱的人，其中一个正在不断地鼓励着她。

可是，这些就够了吗？难道不应该想尽一切办法来让她分散一下注意力吗？怎样才能让她从那些想法中解脱出来呢？那些想法像是铁链一样把她和子爵号的遇难者牢牢地拴在了一起，而且占据了她的整个身心。

就这样熬到了7月12日。

离克里斯蒂亚尼亚学校彩票开奖的日期只有四天了。

毫无疑问，桑格伊斯搞的投机活动已经被公众所知晓。由于他的精心安排，一些报纸早就发布消息说：那张人所共知的“赋有天命”的9672号彩票，已经落到了德拉蒙的桑格伊斯先生手中，这张彩票正准备出售，谁出价最高，谁就会得到它。而桑格伊斯先生之所以能得到上面所说的那张彩票，是因为他花了很高的价钱从伊尔娜·汉森那里买来的。

可以想象，这一消息一经宣布，会大大有损姑娘在群众中的威信。伊尔娜竟然要了高价，把遇难者，也就是自己的未婚夫奥勒·冈的彩票卖了出去。她把这最后的纪念品给变卖了，不过《晨报》非常及时地刊登了一条解释性的消息，使读者们知道了整个事情的经过。这样一来，人们就知道了桑格伊斯的插手是属于什么性质的问题了，也知道了那张彩票是怎样落入他的手中的。所以，公众就把谴责的矛头转到了德拉蒙的放高利贷者的头上。这个没良心的债主竟敢趁汉森一家遇到不幸时从中渔利。于是就出现了下面的情况：好像所有的人都串通好了似的，当这张彩票在伊尔娜手中时，人们曾出过高价，可现在却没有人愿意向新的彩票拥有者出同样的价钱了。自从桑格伊斯的手玷污了这张彩票以后，先前人们曾赋予它的那种不可思议的神奇价值好像也随之消失了。结果，桑格伊斯等于是做了一桩很糟糕的买卖——这张众所周知的9672号彩票恐怕要砸在他手里了。

当然，不管是伊尔娜还是如艾尔，他们并不知道上面所提到的事情。这可真是万幸！这事儿到了放高利贷者的手中竟成了唯利是图的交易，要是他们知道自己也和这一桩买卖有关的话，该有多么难过啊！

7月12日那天，快到晚上的时候，邮差送来了一封给希尔维尤斯·霍格教授的信。

在这封由海军当局寄来的信中，还夹了一封从克里斯蒂安桑寄来的信件，后者是克里斯蒂亚尼亚海湾入口处的一个小港。可以看得出，这封信并没有给希尔维尤斯·霍格带来什么新的情况，因为他把信塞进了口袋，既没有向如艾尔，也没有向伊尔娜谈到这封来信。只是当霍格要回自己的房间，跟他们道晚安时才说：“孩子们，你们知道吗？再过三天就要开奖了。难道你们不打算去参加吗？”

“还有什么必要呢，希尔维尤斯先生？”伊尔娜回答说。

“可是，”教授又说，“奥勒是希望他的未婚妻参加的。这也是他写的最后几行字里明确嘱咐过的，我想我们应该顺从奥勒的遗愿。”

“但是，这张彩票已经不在伊尔娜这儿了。”如艾尔回答说，“而且谁也不知道它落到了什么人的手里。”

“那没关系，”希尔维尤斯·霍格说，“我只是要求你们陪我去趟克里斯蒂亚尼亚。”

“您希望这样做吗？希尔维尤斯先生？”姑娘问道。

“不是我，亲爱的伊尔娜，希望这样做的是奥勒，我们应该听奥勒的话才对！”

“妹妹，希尔维尤斯先生说得对。”如艾尔说道。

“是的，应该这样做。那您打算什么时候动身呢？”

“明天，天一亮咱们就走，让圣·奥拉夫保佑我们吧！”

第十六章 走在开奖的路上

第二天，霍格和伊尔娜坐上朗格兰工头的马车出发了。在那颜色鲜艳的小车厢里，他们并排坐着——不用说，车上没有如艾尔的位子，勇敢的小伙子在马车旁边步行跟着他们。马儿正欢快地摇晃着脑袋。对身强体壮的如艾尔来说，从达尔到默尔的四十公里路程并不算什么。

马车沿着马昂河左岸维斯特夫若哈达尔的山谷前行，山谷中景色优美，十分迷人。在那狭窄的山谷里，长满了成荫的绿树，上千个山泉从高处奔流而下。在这条弯曲小路的每个拐弯处，都可以看到古斯塔山上的两个闪亮的白雪皑皑的山峰若隐若现。

天空万里无云，气候宜人，风儿徐徐地吹过，伴着温暖的阳光。离开达尔客店以来，霍格的神情也恢复了平静，但有点让人感到奇怪，这也可能是故意装出来的，为的是让这次旅行能把伊尔娜和如艾尔心头的愁云驱散。

两个半小时之后他们就到了坦恩湖边的默尔，马车必须停在那儿，因为它已经不能再往前走了，除非换一部能在水上漂的车子。湖边的小路通到山谷的这个终点，在湖边只有一个起岸的码头。总之，要坐上开往坦恩湖各个口岸的小船，就要在这里等候。

在瀑布下面的山村小教堂边，马车停下了。这个瀑布有五百英尺高，在这个方位能够清楚地看见它五分之一的流程。从高处下来后，它流进了山间的裂缝深处，然后汇入坦恩湖。

一条用桦树皮做的小船正停靠于岸边，两位船夫也已经等在岸边了，正在准备摆渡。这种船并不平稳，旅客只要在船上从这一边到另一边稍微走动一下，就有可能落入水中。

早晨的湖光景色十分迷人，黑夜中的雾气被初升的太阳扫得无影无踪，简直是再没有比这更美好的天气了。

“你有没有觉得很累啊，勇敢的如艾尔？”教授一下车就问。

“没有，不累，希尔维尤斯先生。我不是已经习惯在特勒玛克走长路了吗？”

“嗯，这倒是！你说，从默尔到克里斯蒂亚尼亚有没有一条最近的路呢？”

“有呀，希尔维尤斯先生。一到坦恩湖顶端的蒂诺泽就有……不过，因为我们没有提前通知，所以我不知道届时咱们能不能找到一辆马车。”

“放心吧。小伙子，”教授回答说，“我已经预先通知他们并让他们准备好了一辆马车。我不想让你从默尔步行到克里斯蒂亚尼亚。”

“如果需要的话……”如艾尔说。

“不需要了。咱们还是谈谈怎么走吧，说说你的想法。”

“是这样，到了蒂诺泽以后，希尔维尤斯先生，咱们要绕过福尔湖，走维克和波尔凯斯若到莫斯的这段路，再从莫斯向贡斯堡、汉逊和德拉蒙前进。如果我们日夜不停行走的话，明天下午就能到达克里斯蒂亚尼亚了。”

“太好了！如艾尔。我看你对这个地区很熟悉，这真的是一条理想的路线。”

“这是条捷径。”

“好吧，如艾尔，是不是捷径，我不在乎，你明白吗？”霍格说，“我还知道另一条路，只需要多走几个钟头。小伙子，你是知道这条路的，虽然你没有说。”

“哪条路？”

“就是经过邦布勒的那条路啊！”

“经过邦布勒？”

“对，邦布勒。你别不好意思了！邦布勒，农场主厄尔木博和他的女儿赛格弗琳娜不是住在那儿吗？”

“希尔维尤斯先生！”

“咱们走我说的那条路吧，不是从北面绕，而是从南面绕过福尔湖，这样不是也可以到达贡斯堡吗？”

“是的，也能到，这样就更好了！”如艾尔笑着回答。

“希尔维尤斯先生，我替哥哥谢谢您！”姑娘说。

“这也是为了你，小伊尔娜，因为我想，顺路去看看你的朋友赛格弗琳娜，你一定会很高兴的。”

当渡船停稳以后，三个人上了船，在船尾堆放的一堆绿树枝上坐了

下来。两个船夫，一个划桨，一个掌舵，将船驶向了湖心。

离开湖岸以后，从亥克诺埃开始，湖面才开阔起来。亥克诺埃位于濒临峡湾的岩石边上，是个只有两三户人家的小村。马昂河的河水平静地流入这个峡湾。在这里，湖面处在陡壁之间，高山看起来逐渐地向后退去，只有当小船从山脚下驶过的时候，才更显出群山的高大。和群山相比，小船就像是一只水鸟。

从湖面上看，十几个小岛在上面零散地分布着，有的是光秃秃的，什么都没有，有的则是绿油油地长满了小草，时不时地，可以看到有些渔家的小屋建在岛上。在湖面上，还漂着未经加工的树干和附近锯木厂的木排。

看到这些，希尔维尤斯·霍格就打开了他的话匣子，看来他一定是很想开个玩笑：“按照斯堪的纳维亚诗人的说法，湖泊是挪威的眼睛，那么，应该承认，就像《圣经》上所说的那样，挪威眼睛里的梁木可不止一根啊！”

快下午4点钟的时候，小船到了蒂诺泽。

这是一个十分简朴的村庄。不过这没什么关系，因为霍格本来就没打算在这里停留，哪怕是一个钟头都不想多待。正如他对如艾尔所说的那样，一辆马车已经在岸边等候了。因为早在很久以前霍格就打算进行这次旅行了，所以早在克里斯蒂亚尼亚时就给贝内特先生写过信，要他为这次旅行能够顺利进行且人员免受劳累之苦而提供方便。因此，在指定的这一天，一辆老式的四轮马车就已经在蒂诺泽等着了，车厢里还准备了足够的食物，这样一来，一路上的交通工具还有吃饭的问题就都有了保证，不用去吃特勒玛克那些村庄里孵过的鸡蛋、结块的牛奶和斯巴

达式的粗劣饭菜了。

蒂诺泽差不多就位于坦恩湖的旁边。马昂河从这里形成了一个很美的瀑布直流而下，一直流到下面的山谷才恢复它本来的流速。驿站的马匹已经准备好了，等他们一到，马车就立刻朝邦布勒的方向驶去。

在那个时代，漫游挪威，尤其是特勒玛克的唯一的方式就是乘坐马车。也许后来出现的铁路还会让旅游者对本国的马车和贝内特先生的敞篷四轮马车深深怀念呢！

不用说，如艾尔对这个地段已经熟悉得不能再熟悉了，那是他从达尔到邦布勒经常走的路线。

到了晚上8点钟，希尔维尤斯·霍格和如艾尔兄妹才到达了邦布勒这个小镇。

尽管他们没有事先通知，但农庄的主人厄尔木博还是给了他们最热情的接待。赛格弗琳娜亲切地拥抱了她的朋友，她发现伊尔娜由于过度伤心，脸色显得十分苍白。有那么一段时间，两位姑娘单独待在一起，说起了悄悄话。

“亲爱的伊尔娜，”赛格弗琳娜说，“你可别因为悲伤而把自己的身体弄垮了，其实我还是很有信心的，干吗要认为没有希望再见到可怜的奥勒了呢？我们从报上看到了，有人正在想办法寻找子爵号呢！一定会找到的……哎，我相信希尔维尤斯·霍格先生也还抱着希望呢……伊尔娜，亲爱的，你可千万别泄气啊！”

伊尔娜早就说不出话了，只能以眼泪来代替回答。赛格弗琳娜把她紧紧地搂在怀里。

啊，如果这些纯朴善良的人能够获得幸福，那么农场主厄尔木博一家会从他们身上感受到多大的快乐啊！

“这么说，你们要直接去克里斯蒂亚尼亚了？”主人问希尔维尤斯·霍格。

“是的，厄尔木博先生。”

“是去参加彩票的开奖仪式吗？”

“当然了。”

“哎，既然奥勒·冈的彩票已经被那个该死的桑格伊斯夺走了，这又何必呢！”

“这是奥勒的遗愿。”教授回答说，“我们应当尊重他的遗愿。”

“据说，德拉蒙的那个放高利贷的家伙，用高价得到那张彩票以后就没没能把它脱手。”

“是的，的确是有人那么说，厄尔木博先生。”

“好啊！他这是活该，这个卑鄙的家伙。”

“这个坏蛋……霍格先生……这真是太好了！”

“是呀，太好了，厄尔木博先生。”

当然，晚饭还是在农庄里吃的。因为朋友们如果不接受邀请的话，赛格弗琳娜和她的父亲是不会同意他们离开的。不过，重要的是，要是想在夜里把绕道邦布勒所耽误的几个钟头争取回来的话，就不能再耽误

了。所以，晚上9点钟的时候，村里的一个小伙子就把马匹从驿站拉过来了，并套上了车。

“亲爱的厄尔木博先生，下次再来的时候，只要您允许，我就在饭桌旁吃它六个小时。”希尔维尤斯·霍格对农庄的主人说，“不过，今天饭后我们就不吃点心了，就这样握手告别吧，叫您那可爱的赛格弗琳娜亲亲我的小伊尔娜吧！”互相吻别后，他们就动身了。

在这个高纬度地区，夕阳的余晖要长达几个小时。太阳下山以后，天空还是很明亮，也能清楚地看到地平线。

从邦布勒到贡斯堡需要经过希德达尔和福尔湖南岸的道路，同时还要穿越特勒玛克的整个南部地区，这条路连接着附近的村镇和山庄，虽然崎岖不平，但景色却十分美丽。

经过一个小时不停地赶路以后，希尔维尤斯·霍格在车上远远地看见了希德达尔的教堂。那是座奇特的古老建筑，设计者好像并没有考虑到线条是否规则，那最上面的塔尖一个比一个高。这个圆锥形的塔群是个令人敬仰的地方，似乎是从13世纪斯堪的纳维亚的建筑工程中留下来的。整个教堂都是木制的，无论是拼在一起的横梁，还是由交错纵横的木板所构成的墙壁，甚至是最后一个小塔尖的尖顶都是由木头制成的。

夜幕已渐渐降临，却仍可见白日的余光，到了将近半夜1点钟的时候，黑夜终于在崭新一天的黎明中躲藏起来了。

坐在前排的如艾尔陷入了沉思，伊尔娜也在车厢里想着心事。希尔维尤斯·霍格和车夫交谈了几句，就叫他催马快走。后来，路上就只有牲口走路时身上挂的铃铛所发出的声音，甩鞭子的噼啪声和车轮在路上的咯吱声了。

马车一直在不停地赶路，毕竟没什么必要在里斯斗斯停留，这个驿站的环境并不是很好，周围是纵横杂乱的杉木树林，再往外则是光秃秃的荒山野岭。到了蒂内斯，他们看到有一些房屋高高地矗立在石柱子上，尽管这是个景色宜人的小山庄，但他们也没有在这里多停留一会儿。马车又继续向前驶去，路上又响起了铁器碰撞的叮当声以及没有拧紧的螺钉和松动的弹簧发出的声响。车夫是无可挑剔的，这个不时甩鞭的善良老人正处在半睡半醒的状态，他有时会不由自主地向左边那匹马挥动一下鞭子。这可不是出于恶意，而是出于偏心，因为右边那匹马是他自己的，而左边这匹则是他本村邻居的。

早上5点钟，希尔维尤斯·霍格睁开眼睛，伸了伸胳膊，深深地呼吸着空气中那沁人心脾的芳香气息。

马车到了贡斯堡，穿过拉根河上的大桥，又从教堂附近走了过去，在离拉布罗瀑布不远的地方停了下来。

“朋友们，如果你们同意，我们就在这儿换马。”希尔维尤斯·霍格说，“现在吃午饭还太早，不如到德拉蒙以后再好好休息。到了那儿，我们再好好地吃一顿，这样就可以省下贝内特先生给我们准备的食物了。”

大家都表示同意。于是，教授和如艾尔只在矿山的小旅店喝了一小杯葡萄烧酒。一刻钟以后，马就换好了，他们又上路了。

出了城，马车就要爬一段陡坡了，这是特意修在山坡上的一条路。不一会儿，大家就能看到前边贡斯堡银矿那高高的竖井的影子了。后来这样的景象就看不到了，只剩下无边的杉树林，置身其中，感到的只是阴暗和凉爽，就像是待在只见亮光而没有热气的地窖里一样。

敞篷的四轮马车在一个名叫汉逊的木材城又重新换了匹马。他们又走了很长的一段路，路上还经常会遇到插上插销的栅栏，把他们的路给拦住了，不花上五六个先令，就不能叫人把它打开。这是个富饶的地区，在成片的果树林里，累累果实压弯了树枝，像是柳树的枝条一样。快到德拉蒙的时候，山谷开始变得陡峭起来。

中午12点时，人们看到了两条长长的大街，这是属于克里斯蒂亚尼亚湾一侧的这座城市的。街道两旁的房屋都漆了颜色。这里的港口向来都很繁忙，大片的木排占去了很多地方，来这里装运北方货物的船只挤得是密密麻麻。

马车停在“斯堪的纳维亚旅店”门口。客店老板长着白胡子，像个大人物似的，一本正经地站在店门口。他凭着世界上所有客店老板所特有的那种察言观色的本领，问道：“这两位先生和这位小姐想必是要用餐吧？”

“是的，您说对了。”希尔维尤斯·霍格说，“请尽快给我们安排吧！”

“好的，马上就好！”

很快，饭菜就端了上来。说实话，还是相当不错的，特别是有一盘配了香菜的本地海鱼，教授吃得津津有味。

中午1点30分时，马车又换了匹新马，回到了该旅店门前。接着，马匹又小跑着再一次走上了德拉蒙的大街。

但是，当经过一幢不显眼的并与邻近色彩鲜明的房屋形成明显反差的小矮屋时，如艾尔不禁感到了一阵恶心。

“桑格伊斯！”他喊了起来。

“啊，他就是桑格伊斯先生？”希尔维尤斯·霍格问，“是啊，他看起来气色可不好！”

确实是桑格伊斯，他正在自家门口抽烟。他有没有认出坐在马车前面的如艾尔，没人能够知道，因为马车在成堆的有薄有厚的板子之间飞快地驶了过去。

穿过了一条两边栽有结满红彤彤果实的花椒树的大路后，马车进入了茂密的松树林，沿着“极乐山谷”方向驶去。这是一片景色秀丽的低洼地带，一层一层的土坡向天边延伸着。然后又看到了几百个小山冈，上面大部分都盖着别墅或是山庄。黄昏时分，马车开始沿着广阔的草地向海边奔去，路上可以看到，在墨绿色树林的衬托下，农庄的房屋显得更加鲜艳夺目。最后他们来到了三面都是秀丽山冈的克里斯蒂亚尼亚海港，在那里有着无数的小港湾、小型的停船泊位和木头码头，海湾的小船和渡船都在这里靠岸。

在这个纬度的地区，晚上9点钟的时候天还很亮，老式的马车沿着已经没有行人的街道叮叮当当地进入了市区。

按照希尔维尤斯·霍格的吩咐，马车停在了维多利亚旅店门口。伊尔娜和如艾尔要在这里住宿，已经给他们订好了房间。亲切地互道晚安之后，教授就回自己家了，他的老保姆凯特和老用人凡克正急切地等着他回来。

第十七章 彩票开奖前

在挪威，克里斯蒂亚尼亚应该算是大都市，而要是英国或是法国，则只能算作是个小城市。要不是经常发生火灾，它就会依旧保持着11世纪初建时的那种风貌了。

事实上，这座城市兴建于1624年，当时的克里斯蒂安国王重建了这座城市。那时的城市名叫奥博索洛，后来把建设该城的国王的姓氏女性化了而取名为克里斯蒂亚尼亚。

这是一座中规中矩的城市，街道宽阔笔直，清静幽雅，房屋都是由白石头或红砖砌成的。在一个煞是漂亮的花园中央，耸立着一座皇家城堡，名叫奥尔斯卡尔斯陆。这座宽敞的四方形建筑，虽是伊奥尼亚式¹的，但其特征并不明显。在市内还有几个教堂，里面陈列的艺术珍品也不会对虔诚的信徒们造成干扰。除了这些，城市里也有一些民用建筑和公共建筑，还有一座规模不小的圆形的百货商场，里面摆放着国内外的各种产品，真是琳琅满目。

整座城市似乎没有什么太新奇的东西，但特别值得欣赏的是它的地理位置，三面都是起起伏伏的群山，因此让它拥有了一个优美的环境。市内的富人区和新区都很平坦，只有带着北非风格的城堡区才会高出一些，在这个地区，到处是横七竖八的房屋、木屋和砖砌的茅屋，在这里居住着穷苦的百姓。与其说那些房屋的鲜艳颜色多么讨人喜欢，倒不如说让人觉得惊讶。

别以为“城堡”这个形容非洲城市的词，就不能用来形容北欧的城

市。克里斯蒂亚尼亚海港附近也有突尼斯、摩洛哥和阿尔及利亚那样的居民区，这儿也有突尼斯人、摩洛哥人和阿尔及利亚人，而且这里的流动人口和那些国家的穷人相比也差不了多少。总之，因为克里斯蒂亚尼亚的边缘靠近大海，上部又是绿油油的山冈，所以整座城市的景色十分迷人。它的海湾简直可以和那不勒斯海湾相媲美了。同索伦萨或卡斯特拉玛尔 的海岸一样，在克里斯蒂亚尼亚的海滨也随处可见别墅和木屋，它们大多在墨绿色的松树林中若隐若现，被北极地区特有的朦胧薄雾所笼罩着。

希尔维尤斯·霍格终于回到了克里斯蒂亚尼亚。说真的，他这次是在无法预料的情况下，中断了旅游回来的。咳！就等到明年再旧地重游吧，现在最重要的是如艾尔和伊尔娜。霍格之所以没让他们住到自己家里来，是因为需要有两个房间才能接待他们。虽然老凡克和老凯特一定会欢迎他们，可还没来得及做准备。所以，教授就把他们领到了维多利亚旅店，让人特别关照他们。这是当然，挪威国会的议员希尔维尤斯·霍格介绍的客人一定会受到格外的重视的。

但是，当教授要求人们要像照顾他本人一样照顾他的客人时，他并没有说出他们两个人的名字。他觉得，为谨慎起见，一定要先隐瞒如艾尔·汉森和伊尔娜·汉森的姓名和身份。大家知道，过去关于伊尔娜已经有了很多流言，这让她觉得很不好过。所以，关于她到达克里斯蒂亚尼亚这件事还是先低调些为好。

他们约定，在第二天午饭之前，希尔维尤斯·霍格不来看兄妹俩。午饭在中午11点到12点之间进行。

实际上，教授自己还有些事情要办，需要花费整个上午的时间。等这些事办完之后，他就会来找如艾尔和伊尔娜的。在这以后一直到下午

3点举行开奖仪式时为止，教授就不会再离开他们了。

如艾尔一起床就去找妹妹伊尔娜，看见她已经穿好衣服在房间里等着他了。在这一天她想必会更加痛苦，为了让她摆脱这种情绪，如艾尔就提议一起出去散散步，等午饭时再回来。伊尔娜为了不让哥哥扫兴，就同意了他的建议。于是两个人就到城里随意地走走。

这是一个星期日。在北方城市的假日里，散步的人本来是不多的，但与之相反，这里的街上却热闹非凡。不仅城里人没有从城市赶到乡下去，他们还看见很多郊区的乡下人涌进城来。连接首都和郊区的环米奥桑湖铁路不得不为此加开了列车。可见家喻户晓的克里斯蒂亚尼亚学校的开奖仪式吸引了不少来看热闹的人，尤其是和自身有利益关系的人。

大街上人山人海，有的是全家人，甚至是全村人都集体出动了，他们心里默默地祈祷着不要白来一趟——谁不希望中奖呢？彩票已经销售了一百万张。对很多老实人来说，哪怕只得到一两百马克的奖金，都会让他们在回到自己那简陋的庄园或是小山庄时而感到心满意足。

如艾尔和伊尔娜离开维多利亚旅店后，首先来到了延伸至海湾东面的码头。这个地方的人比较少，在小酒馆里，大杯大杯的啤酒和葡萄烧酒让干渴的喉咙不断地感受到了清凉爽口的感觉。

当兄妹俩在店铺和一排排的酒桶以及来自各地的成堆的箱子中间漫步的时候，那些缆在岸边或停在海里的船只引起了他们的特别注意。难道在这些船中就没有几艘曾在贝尔根海港停泊过吗？虽然子爵号从那里经过以后就再也没有回来。

“奥勒……我可怜的奥勒。”伊尔娜喃喃地说。看她这样子，如艾尔就想带她离开海湾，到城市中地势较高的居民区去。在那里，无论是在

街上，还是在广场上，兄妹俩都能听到人群中有不少人在议论他们。

“是呀，竟然有人出一万马克购买那张9672号彩票。”一个人说。

“一万马克？”另一个人说，“我听说有人出两万马克，甚至还有更多的呢！”

“纽约的万得彼特先生出了三万马克。”

“伦敦的巴灵财团出了四万马克。”

“巴黎的洛希尔财团出了六万马克。”

对于这些夸张的数字，大家都知道该怎么对待。如果照这样继续往上涨的话，人们新出的价钱，最终会超过头奖本身的金额。

对购买伊尔娜·汉森的彩票的价格的说法，这些传播消息的人所说的各不相同，但他们在谴责德拉蒙的那个放高利贷者的行为时却是异口同声的。

“这该死的坏蛋，桑格伊斯，他对这些正直的人是不会有怜悯之心的。”

“哼！他在特勒玛克早就臭名远扬了，他干这种事可不是头一回的了！”

“有人说，他出高价买了奥勒·冈的彩票，后来卖不出去了！”

“肯定没人愿意买！”

“这不奇怪，这张彩票只有在伊尔娜·汉森手里才值钱呢！”

“当然了，彩票落到桑格伊斯手里就一文不值了。”

“太好了！他活该倒霉，既然他花了一万五千马克，就应该让他损失一万五千马克！”

“不过，要是这个无赖中了头奖呢？”

“这.....他妈的！”

“那就是命运太不公平了！不管怎么说，但愿他别来参加开奖。”

“他不会来的，因为有人会让他难堪的。”

大家都知道，出于谨慎或是其他原因，桑格伊斯并不想参加开奖仪式，因为头天晚上他还待在德拉蒙自己的家里呢！

伊尔娜听了这些话，十分感动，如艾尔感觉到妹妹的胳膊在自己的手臂中微微地颤动着。他们快速地走过去，不想再更多地听下去，仿佛他们害怕受到人群中这些素不相识的朋友的热烈欢迎。

至于希尔维尤斯·霍格，他们也希望在城里能碰到他，虽然实际上并没有碰上。在人们的谈论中通过偶然听到的几句话，使他们得知大家都已经了解了教授回到克里斯蒂亚尼亚的消息。早上就有人看见教授急匆匆地走过，一会儿去港口，一会儿又去海军办公室，看起来特别忙，既没有时间问话，也没有时间答话。

当然，如艾尔本可以向任何一个行人打听希尔维尤斯·霍格教授家的地址，相信每个人都会乐意告诉如艾尔，并领他去找教授的。但如艾尔不想冒失地行动，所以他没有那样做。既然大家约好了在旅店见面，那么最好还是回到那儿去等。

上午10点30分左右的时候，伊尔娜叫如艾尔往回走。她感觉很疲劳，所有提到她名字的谈论都使她感到难受。于是她回到维多利亚旅店，并上楼去自己的房间等着希尔维尤斯·霍格回来。

如艾尔待在旅店底层的阅览室里，机械地翻阅着克里斯蒂亚尼亚的各种报刊以消磨时间。突然他脸色发白，目光也瞬间模糊了，报纸从他的手中掉了下来.....

在一期《晨报》的海上新闻专栏里，他读到了一篇发自纽芬兰的通讯报道：“电讯号护卫舰到达了估计是子爵号遇难的地点，没有找到任何残骸。沿着格陵兰岛海岸寻找，也是一无所获。因此，可以断定子爵号的全体船员全都不幸身亡。”

[1](#) 位于小亚细亚爱琴海上，是古希腊时代对今天土耳其安纳托利亚西南海岸地区的称呼，即爱琴海东岸的希腊爱奥尼亚人定居地。

第十八章 挑选漂亮的礼物

“您好，贝内特先生，能有机会跟您握握手，我感到很高兴。”

“我也感到十分荣幸，霍格先生。”

“荣幸，高兴，高兴，荣幸……”教授回答说，“反正都一样。”

“我看，您在挪威中部的旅行是顺利地结束了。”

“不，这次旅行并没有结束，只是告一段落，贝内特先生。至少今年是这样的。”

“那么，霍格先生，您就给我讲讲您在达尔认识的那些正直、善良的朋友吧。”

“不错，贝内特先生，他们是正直的人，正直而又勇敢的人！用这两个词来形容他们是很贴切的。”

“从报刊报道的消息来看，应当承认，他们很值得同情。”

“是的，很值得同情，贝内特先生！不幸的事情接二连三地打击着这些可怜的人们，我以前是真的没有见过。”

“可不是嘛，霍格先生。子爵号遇难以后，又来了个可恶的桑格伊斯！”

“您说得对，贝内特先生。”

“总而言之，霍格先生，伊尔娜·汉森把彩票卖了，把欠账还清了，她做得还是对的。”

“您这样认为吗？那您说，您为什么会这么想呢？”

“因为，跟什么也得不到比起来，她毕竟拿到了一万五千马克。”

“啊，贝内特先生！”希尔维尤斯·霍格反驳说，“您是个做大买卖的人，说话可真讲究实际啊！不过，从另一个角度来看，这可是个感情问题，而感情是不能用钱来计算的！”

“那是当然了，霍格先生。不过，我冒昧地说句不中听的，被您保护的姑娘，她的感情很可能是白费了。”

“为什么这么说呢？”

“您想想看，一张彩票能算什么？只有百万分之一的中奖机会。”

“那倒是，是百万分之一。机会的确是不多，贝内特先生，机会真的是不多！”

“所以说，前些日子的狂热劲过了后，人们理所当然会有这样的反应。据说，那个一心为了搞投机才买这张彩票的桑格伊斯到现在还没找到买主呢！”

“好像是这样的，贝内特先生。”

“可是，要是那个该死的放贷者真的中了头奖，那可真是一件令人气愤的事情！”

“肯定会引起公愤的，贝内特先生。令人气愤，这话说得对极了。”

希尔维尤斯·霍格一边说，一边在店铺里，也就是在贝内特先生的大商场里闲逛。这个大商场在克里斯蒂亚尼亚和整个挪威都很有名气。在这里，可以说没有什么东西买不到。旅行车、成批的马车、成箱的食品、成筐的酒和罐头，旅游时穿的服装和生活用品，甚至连《向导手册》都少不了，这些东西可以把旅客一直送到芬马克最偏远的村镇，送到拉波尼，送到北极。而且不光有这些，还有别的东西呢！贝内特先生还向自然与历史的爱好者们提供地下埋藏的各种石头和金属样品以及挪威各地的动物标本，如鸟类、昆虫类和各种爬行动物。另外，不得了解的一件事是，再没有哪个地方能找到比他的橱窗里的东西更齐全的且出自本地的各种首饰和摆设了。那些想去游览斯堪的纳维亚地区的游客都把这位绅士当成了“救世主”。在人们眼里，他神通广大，克里斯蒂亚尼亚少了他就不行。

“霍格先生，那么您想必是在蒂诺泽找到了事先向我要的车子了吧？”

“对呀，既然我向您提出了要求，贝内特先生，我就相信车子到时候肯定会准备好的。”

“您过奖了，霍格先生。不过，您在来信中说，你们应该有三个人.....”

“是的，三个人，不错。”

“那么，那两个人呢？”

“他们昨天晚上就已经到了，一切都很好，现在正在维多利亚旅店等着我，一会儿我就去找他们。”

“他们就是……”

“是的，贝内特先生，正是……所以我请您替我保密，我不想让他们的到来弄得满城风雨。”

“可怜的姑娘。”

“是啊，她可是吃尽了苦头。”

“既然她的未婚夫留给她的彩票已经不属于她了，您为什么还要叫她来参加开奖仪式呢？”

“不是我要她参加的，贝内特先生，而是奥勒·冈。不管是对您，还是对任何人，我都要不停地强调说，我们应当尊重奥勒的遗愿。”

“这是当然，您所做的事的出发点终究都是好的，亲爱的霍格先生。”

“亲爱的贝内特先生，您这是在恭维我吧？”

“不是的。汉森一家在人生道路上碰到了您，这对他们来说是很幸运的。”

“哈！更幸运的是，我在生活之路上碰到了他们。”

“我看，您总有一颗善良的心。”

“贝内特先生，既然每个人都有一颗心，那么就应该让它是一颗善良的心，您说对不对？”希尔维尤斯·霍格先生笑容可掬地回答了这位可敬的老板。

“现在，贝内特先生，”他又说，“我到贵店来可不是为了听您赞扬的，我来是为了别的事。”

“您说吧，看我有什么能为您效劳的。”

“您知道，要是鲁康福斯把我‘送还’的话，它只能‘送回’我的遗体。要是没有如艾尔·汉森和伊尔娜·汉森的帮助，我今天也就没有机会再见到您了。”

“是的，是的！这个我知道！”贝内特先生回答说，“各家报纸都报道了您的奇遇。说实在的，这两位勇敢的年轻人真应该中头奖。”

“这也是我的心愿，”希尔维尤斯·霍格说，“但是，既然现在已经不可能了，那么我不能不让小伊尔娜带点小礼品以留个纪念，就返回达尔去吧！”

“这是个好主意啊，霍格先生。”

“那就请您帮我，在您所有的宝贝当中挑上几件能使姑娘高兴的东西吧！”

“很愿意为您效劳。”贝内特先生说。

接着，他就请教授到出售本地珠宝的专柜去挑选。不知道一件挪威首饰算不算是对克里斯蒂亚尼亚和贝内特先生那令人赞叹的百货商店的最好纪念呢？事实上，这也正是希尔维尤斯·霍格先生的意思，于是这位殷勤的老板就向他打开了所有的橱窗。

“看看吧，”他说，“选首饰我不在行，贝内特先生，我相信您的眼光。”

“我们会有共同的观点的，霍格先生。”

橱窗里陈列着一套套挪威和瑞典的首饰，工艺都极为精湛，总的来说，这些首饰的手工要比材料贵得多。

“这是什么？”教授问。

“这是一只带活动小珠的双层戒指，它会发出叮叮当当的声音，非常好听。”

“的确很漂亮！”希尔维尤斯·霍格说着，用小指的指尖试了试戒指，“先把这只戒指放在一边吧，贝内特先生，我们再看看别的東西。”

“要看手镯还是项链？”

“每样都看一看，贝内特先生，要是您同意的话，就每样都看看吧，这个是……”

“这是妇女成对地戴在胸前的小圆牌。您注意到镀在红底褶皱毛料上的黄铜的颜色了吗？这东西很好看，价钱也不贵。”

“确实很好看，贝内特先生，请把这件也先放在一边吧！”

“不过，霍格先生，我要告诉您，这些圆牌可是新娘子在结婚的日子里戴的，而且……”

“托圣·奥拉夫的福，您说得对，贝内特先生，您说得很对！我可怜的伊尔娜，可惜不是奥勒，而是我送给她这件礼物，而且我又不是送给一个新娘子。”

“是啊，霍格先生。”

“我们再看看别的适合姑娘佩戴的首饰吧！啊，贝内特先生，这个十字架怎么样？”

“这是挂在胸前的十字架，带空心圆盘的，脖子一动就会发出声音。”

“非常漂亮……非常漂亮……请先放在一边吧，贝内特先生。我想等看完您的全部陈设之后再做选择。”

“好的，但是……”

“但是什么？”

“这种十字架是斯卡尼地区的新娘子去教堂举行婚礼时戴的……”

“真是见鬼了，贝内特先生，应该承认，我的手气不好。”

“霍格先生，因为我备的货和销售最多的就是新娘子戴的首饰，所以您不要为此而感到奇怪。”

“我一点都不觉得奇怪，贝内特先生。不过，这终究会让我为难。”

“咳，您还是买您刚才放在一边的金戒指吧！”

“好的……这个金戒指……不过我还想要点别的更……怎么说呢？更有艺术性的首饰。”

“那很好办，买这块银丝勋章吧，它的四排小链挂在姑娘的脖子上，看起来很不错。看！勋章上点缀着许多小珠子，还带着细线模样的黄铜丝，还有梨形的彩色珍珠哪！这是挪威金银珠宝业中最独特的产品之一。”

“对的……对……”希尔维尤斯·霍格说，“的确是一件漂亮的首饰，不过对我那朴实的伊尔娜来说，可能有点太奢华了。其实，我比较喜欢您刚才指给我看的小圆牌和悬挂款的十字架。那些难道都只是结婚用的饰物，就不能当作礼物送给一个姑娘吗？”

“霍格先生，”贝内特先生说，“挪威国会对这一点还没立法，或许这是一项空白啊……”

“好吧，好的，贝内特先生，我们会做出安排的。现在我还要买十字架和小圆牌。我想，我的小伊尔娜总有一天要结婚的。像她那么美丽善良的姑娘，总会有机会用上这些装饰品的。就这么定了，我买这些。”

“好的，霍格先生。”

“开奖的时候，我们能见到您吗，贝内特先生？”

“肯定能。”

“我觉得那会是一件很有意思的事。”

“当然，这是一定的。”

“一会儿见，贝内特先生，一会儿见。”

“一会儿见，霍格先生。”

“哎！”教授一边探身去看一个橱窗，一边说，“这里有两个漂亮的戒指，我刚才怎么没看见呢？”

“啊！这些戒指不适合您，霍格先生。这是在结婚仪式上由牧师套

在新郎与新娘的手指上的，是需要刻字的戒指。”

“真的吗？嗯，我也买了，一会儿见吧，贝内特先生！一会儿见！”

希尔维尤斯·霍格走出商场，像二十岁的小伙子那样迈着轻快的步子，向维多利亚旅店走去。

来到旅店前厅下面，第一眼看到的就是“光明在此”这几个字，用醒目的字体写在煤气灯上。

他自言自语地说：“哎，这几个字写在这还挺合适呢！对啊，光明在此……光明在此。”

伊尔娜正坐在房间里，在窗前等着。教授刚一敲门，门就自己开了。

“啊！希尔维尤斯先生！”姑娘叫了一声，同时从椅子上站了起来。

“我来了，我来了！不过，现在的问题不是叫我希尔维尤斯先生，我的小伊尔娜，而是吃午饭。午饭都准备好了，我饿坏了。如艾尔跑哪儿去了？”

“在阅览室呢！”

“好的，我去找他！亲爱的孩子，你赶快下来找我们啊！”

希尔维尤斯·霍格离开伊尔娜的房间去找如艾尔了。如艾尔也正在等他，不过心情很沉重。

可怜的小伙子把《晨报》指给他看。电讯号船长的电报让人对子爵号的完全损毁再也不抱任何怀疑了。

“伊尔娜看过这个吗？”教授赶忙问。

“没有，希尔维尤斯先生，没有！最好别让她太早知道。”

“是的，的确是，我的孩子……我们吃饭去吧。”

过了一会儿，三个人在餐厅的雅间坐下了，希尔维尤斯·霍格狼吞虎咽地吃起来。

这是一顿丰盛的午餐，饭菜和晚餐一样多。看看这个菜单吧：加了啤酒的凉汤，外加柠檬片、撒着酥皮面包末的桂皮块，酱汁烧鲑鱼，面包粉烧牛肉，带血的烤牛肉，不加佐料但香味又很浓郁的沙拉，香草冰激凌，土豆泥，黑刺莓果，樱桃和玉米，再配上法国的圣·于连陈葡萄酒。

“哈，好极了，好极了！”希尔维尤斯·霍格不停地重复着这句话，“简直就跟到了达尔的汉森太太的客店一样。”

他嘴里全是饭菜，都不能说出话来了，一双善良的眼睛在绽露着笑意。如艾尔、伊尔娜本想和他一起好好地吃上一顿，可他们实在是做不到。可怜的姑娘费了很大劲才吃完了她自己的那份饭菜。

吃完饭后，希尔维尤斯·霍格说：“我的孩子们，对于这样一顿美餐，你们不赏脸吃，这可不对啊！不过，我也不勉强你们。不管怎么说，如果中午你们没吃饱，晚上就能多吃一些。譬如今天晚上我就不知道自己还能不能跟你们在一起，而现在嘛，我该退席了。”

教授说着，就站了起来。他接过如艾尔递过来的帽子，这时伊尔娜拉住他，说：“希尔维尤斯先生，您还坚持要我陪您去吗？”

“去参加开奖仪式吗？……当然，我坚持，而且很坚决，我亲爱的姑娘！”

“可是这对我来说是很痛苦的。”

“是很痛苦，我也承认。但是，奥勒希望你去参加开奖仪式，伊尔娜，我们应当尊重奥勒的遗愿。”显然，希尔维尤斯·霍格已经把这句话当成了口头禅。

第十九章 开奖现场出现失踪的青年

克里斯蒂亚尼亚学校的礼堂里已经是人山人海了，因为在这里即将要举行开奖仪式，而且由于礼堂里装不下这么多人，所以甚至连林荫道上都挤满了人。附近的街道上也是人满为患，因为林荫道也不宽，容纳不了这么多的人。

事实就是这样的，在7月15日这个星期天，挪威人那原本的好静性格，人们一点都看不出来，因为此时的他们都表现得异常兴奋。他们这种过度的兴奋是因为对开奖感兴趣，还是因为炎热的天气呢？再或者是和两者都有关系呢？斯堪的纳维亚人经常吃很多清凉解渴的甜蜜果，可今天，无论吃多少，都没办法让他们冷静下来。

开奖仪式定在下午3点钟准时开始。有一百张奖券，共分三类：第一类，票面从一百马克至一千马克的奖券有九十张，总额为四万五千马克；第二类，票面从一千马克至九千马克的奖券有九张，总额也是四万五千马克；第三类，只有一张头奖为十万马克的奖券。

这类彩票开奖，常会把头奖的开奖放在最后。大奖不属于第一号，而是属于最后一号，也就是第一百号。这样就会持续不断地给观众带来新的感觉，激起新的热情，让他们心里忐忑不安。因为每个号只能赢一次，不能再赢第二次。如果从票箱里再抽出来，就会宣布作废。

这一切程序大家都很熟悉，只等时候一到就开奖。不过为了消磨那漫长的等候时间，人们都在聊天，聊得最多的就是伊尔娜·汉森的动人事迹。如果奥勒·冈的彩票还在她手里的话，大家都会希望她中奖，当

然，最好是在自己中奖之后。

此时，有些人已经知道了发表在《晨报》上的消息。于是一传十，十传百，在很短的时间内，所有参加开奖仪式的人都知道电讯号护卫舰的寻找工作是一无所获，而且也被迫停止了寻找子爵号残骸的工作。船上没有一个人能够幸存，可怜的伊尔娜也许永远都见不着她的未婚夫了。

这时，有一件意外的事情转移了人们的注意力。有人说，桑格伊斯打算离开德拉蒙了，有人还声称已经在克里斯蒂亚尼亚的街上看到他了。他会不会厚着脸皮到礼堂来呢？要是他来了，相信大家都会以最猛烈的人身攻击来对付这个坏蛋，他也敢来参加开奖……不过，这似乎不太可能，因为传闻并不可信。总之，就当是一场虚惊吧，没什么大不了的。

到了快下午2点15分的时候，人群中一阵骚动。原来是希尔维尤斯·霍格教授到了大学校门口。

他在这件事中所起的作用已经是家喻户晓了，他被汉森太太的孩子们救起以后，就想尽一切办法来报答他们。看见他来，人群中立刻自动让出了一条通道，大家都在说着赞扬他的话。希尔维尤斯·霍格向大家亲切地点头示意，欢呼声不久就响成了一片。

不过，教授不是一个人来的。当离他最近的人们给他让道时，发现他用胳膊挽着一个姑娘，还有一个小伙子跟在他俩后面。

一个小伙子，还有一个姑娘！这个发现就像被闪电击中全身一样，所有人的头脑中都在一瞬间闪过了千百个同样的念头。

“伊尔娜……伊尔娜·汉森！”

几乎所有的人都脱口而出喊了这个名字。

是啊！是伊尔娜，她已经激动得快支撑不住了，要不是希尔维尤斯·霍格搀着，紧紧地扶着她，她恐怕都站不稳。在这个本来属于她的节日里，由于奥勒·冈的缺席，这可怜的女主角宁愿待在达尔自己的小房间里。她真的很想回避人们的好奇心，尽管这是充满了同情的好奇心。但希尔维尤斯·霍格要求她来，她也不能不来。

“让一让！让一让！”周围很多人都在喊着，大家站成两排让希尔维尤斯·霍格、伊尔娜和如艾尔过去。不少人伸过手来跟他们握手，还伴随着亲切友好的话语，这热烈的场面让希尔维尤斯·霍格都觉得十分感动。

“是的，是她，朋友们……是我的小伊尔娜，是我把她从达尔领到这儿来的。”他说。

然后，他转过身去说：“这是如艾尔，她那忠厚老实的哥哥。不过，大家要注意啊，不要把他們给挤坏了。”当如艾尔用双手挡住来自各方面的拥挤时，教授的两只手却因为力气没那么大，被握得十分疲惫了。不过此时，他的眼神却闪闪发光，虽然已有一小滴激动的泪花在眼角闪烁。值得眼科医生注意的是，这一小滴泪花是带着光芒的。

他们足足走了一刻钟才从学校的林荫道穿过，进入礼堂，到了留给教授的座位上，总之是费了很大的力气。然后，希尔维尤斯·霍格就在伊尔娜和如艾尔的中间坐了下来。

下午2点30分时，礼堂尽头的主席台后面，有一扇门打开了，办公

室主任出来了，这个人看起来严肃认真，镇定自若，头部摆出的姿势是所有专门主持会议的人所特有的。他后面跟着两个助手，同样也是严肃庄重的样子。接着又进来六个小女孩，身披饰带和鲜花，都是金发蓝眼的姑娘，她们的双手呈现出红色，让人可以清楚地看出这是童贞的双手，是专门负责抽彩的。

他们登上主席台时，台下响起了一阵欢呼和喧哗的声音。首先，这说明大家在看见克里斯蒂亚尼亚彩票的负责人时感到高兴；其次，这也说明由于他们出场得太晚，大家都已经等得不耐烦了。

之所以安排了六个小姑娘，是因为有六个票箱。六个票箱整齐地摆在一张桌子上，每抽一次，就能抽出六个号码。

在六个票箱中，每个票箱内都有从一到零，一共十个号码，这些号码代表一百万中的个、十、百、千、万和十万位数。没有第七个票箱代表百万位数，是因为按照抽奖方式的规定，假如一次抽出了六个零，就代表百万位数，这样就能让每个号数都有均等的中奖机会。另外，按照规定，号码从观众左边的票箱开始抽取，一个一个依次抽出。这样，中奖的号码就等于在大家的眼皮底下被一一抽出。首先是十万位数，然后是万位数，以此类推，直到个位数为止。通过这种方式，人们可以看到，每抽出一个数字，大家都是怀着何等激动的心情在盼着自己的运气不断增长的。

下午3点整时，钟又敲响了，主任摆了摆手，宣布仪式正式开始。这时，早已持续好几分钟的嘈杂议论声才渐渐安静下来。

主任站了起来，热情洋溢地发表了一个简短的即席讲话。讲话中，他表示自己因为不能让每张彩票都中头奖而感到遗憾。接着他发出指

令，开始进行第一类奖券的抽取。大家知道，这一类中共有九十张奖券，所以需要费点时间。

六个小姑娘按照规则，开始了机械的抽奖工作，这样做能让观众没有时间感到厌烦。的确，每抽一次，中奖的可能性就增加一次，观众的心情也会更加激动，没有人愿意离开自己的位子，就连那些已经被证实没有什么希望中奖的人（通过核对已抽出的号码），也不想走开。

这样进行了一个小时，没有发生什么意外的事情。不过，大家也都看到，9672这个号码还没有被抽出，否则的话，它就没有赢得十万马克的机会了。

“这对桑格伊斯来说倒是个好兆头！”坐在教授旁边的一个人说。

“哎！大奖落到他头上，那才怪呢！虽然他的号码并不一般。”另一个人说。

“是呀，一个非同寻常的号码！”希尔维尤斯·霍格说，“不过，还是别刨根问底了……我没办法告诉你们。”

不知不觉，第二类抽奖开始了。这一类有九个奖，这个过程是会很有意思的。第九十一个会得到一千马克，第九十二个会得到两千马克，以此类推，直到第九十九个会得到九千马克。而第三类抽奖，大家也都还记得——那就是只有一个的头奖。

72521号彩票中奖并得了五千马克，这张彩票是属于一个正直的海港船员的，所有的观众都向他喝彩，他也理所当然地接受了大家的欢呼。

另一个号码为823752的彩票中得六千马克的奖金。当如艾尔告诉希

尔维尤斯·霍格，这张彩票是属于邦布勒地区的漂亮姑娘赛格弗琳娜时，教授的高兴劲就甭提了。

这时发生了这样一件事，让观众们激动地议论纷纷。那就是当抽到第九十七个奖，也就是获得七千马克的那个彩票号码时，有这么一瞬间，大家都以为桑格伊斯要走运了，能得到这个奖呢！

其实，中奖的是9627号。这个号码同奥勒·冈的那个彩票号码只相差45号。

接着抽出的两个号就相差很远了：775号和76287号。

第二类抽奖就这样结束了，现在只剩下最后一张十万马克的奖券了。

此时，群情激动，非同一般，人们很难用语言来形容那激动的程度。议论的声浪先由礼堂传到林荫道，再传到大街上。好几分钟过去了，还没有安静下来。后来，声音渐渐小了下来，接着又是一片寂静。可以说，观众全都愣住了——这种寂静中带有某种程度的惊诧。我们不恰当地打个比方，就像是死囚被押赴刑场时的那种惊诧。不过这种惊诧不是因为要掉脑袋，而是对那十万马克的头奖究竟会属于谁而忐忑不安。

如艾尔两臂交叉放在胸前，目光模糊地凝视着前方，他也许是人群中最淡定的人了。伊尔娜弯腰坐在那儿，心里只想着可怜的奥勒。她本能地在用目光寻找着他，好像在开奖的最后时刻他就会出现的。

至于希尔维尤斯·霍格，他……不用描述他当时所处的状况了。

主任宣布：“现在开始抽十万马克的大奖。”

这一声可不一般，好像是从这位庄重的主持人的腹腔中发出来的。这或许是因为还有几张彩票没有抽到，还有中大奖的希望吧！

第一个小姑娘从左边的票箱里抽出了一个号码，亮给观众看。

“零！”主任说。

这个“零”并没有引起多大的反应。人们似乎早就料到了。

“零！”第二个小姑娘抽出的号码也是“零”。两个“零”！此时，大家都注意到，所有从一到九千九百九十九号之间的彩票中奖的机会明显地增加了。可是，不要忘记奥勒·冈的彩票号码是9672。奇怪的是，希尔维尤斯·霍格有点开始坐不住了，好像他的座椅在左右摇晃似的。

第三个小姑娘刚从第三个票箱抽出一个号码，主任就宣布：“九！”

“九！”……这是奥勒·冈那张彩票的第一个号码。

“六！”主任又说。

果然，第四个小姑娘拿着一个“六”展现在众人眼前。这些盯着她的目光就像都是上了膛的手枪，让小姑娘都有点害怕了。

现在对一到九十九号的彩票来说，中奖的可能性都是百分之一。难道奥勒·冈的彩票会让十万马克的巨款落入该死的桑格伊斯的腰包吗？说实在的，真要是那样的话，人们就会对上帝产生怀疑。

第五个小姑娘把手伸进票箱，抽出了第五个号码。

“七！”主任的嗓子明显地哽住了，连第一排的观众都没听清楚。

但是，就算是没听清，还可以看呀！这时，五个小姑娘面向观众，拿着这样五个数字：00967。

这也就是说，中奖的号码一定是在9670和9679之间。所以，现在这几个数字之间的每个号码都有十分之一的中奖机会。观众们全都屏住了呼吸等待着。

站起来的希尔维尤斯·霍格握住了伊尔娜的手，此时所有的目光都转向了这位可怜的姑娘。在牺牲了她未婚夫留给她的最后纪念物的同时，难道她也就牺牲了奥勒·冈曾经为了她，也为了他自己所梦想得到的财富吗？

第六个姑娘很费力地把手伸进了票箱。她已经有些发抖了。最终，这个小丫头终于抽出了一个号码。

“二！”主任叫了起来。

说完，他就倒在椅子上，激动得有点喘不过气来。

“9672！”一个助手声音响亮地宣布。

这是奥勒·冈的彩票号码，而彩票却已经属于桑格伊斯！这个大家都知道，而且人人都知道这位放高利贷者是怎样把它弄到手的。如果这张彩票是在伊尔娜·汉森的手中，大学礼堂里本来会响起雷鸣般的欢呼声，而此时此刻却是一片寂静。

那么，桑格伊斯这个坏蛋现在会不会拿着那张彩票来领取奖金呢？

“9672号彩票中奖十万马克！”助手重复了一遍后问道，“谁来领奖？”

“我！”

刚才答应的是德拉蒙的放高利贷者吗？

不！那是一个小伙子，一个脸色苍白，但从相貌乃至全身看起来都带有饱经风霜之迹的年轻人，不过他整个人却闪耀着动人的光彩，而且是十分动人的。

一听到这声音，伊尔娜就站了起来，发出一声尖叫，所有的人都听见了这一声叫喊，接着，她就倒了下去。

那位青年挤开人群冲了过来，正好用双臂接住了昏过去的姑娘。

他就是奥勒·冈！

第二十章 有情人终成眷属

他就是奥勒·冈。奇迹般地从子爵号遇难事件中死里逃生的奥勒·冈。

电讯号没有把他带回欧洲，是因为当时他已经不在护卫舰搜寻的海域。他那时已经乘上了一艘回国的船只，正在返回克里斯蒂亚尼亚的途中。

这就是希尔维尤斯·霍格所叙述的情况，就是他向一切愿意倾听这个故事的人所重复的一切。人们听了后，都相信他讲的是真话。就这样，他用得意的口气把故事不厌其烦地讲述着。他周围的人又你传我，我传他……最后连聚集在礼堂外面林荫道和附近街道上的人们都知道了这个故事。

没过多久，克里斯蒂亚尼亚全城的人都知道子爵号遇难事件中的那个年轻人回来了，还知道他已经中了学校彩票的大奖。

故事都是由希尔维尤斯·霍格讲给大家听的，因为当伊尔娜醒过来时，如艾尔正把奥勒紧紧地搂在怀里，弄得他都快要窒息了，没法开口讲话。

“伊尔娜……亲爱的伊尔娜！”奥勒说，“是呀……是我……是你的未婚夫……不久就会成为你的丈夫。”

“我们明天就办，孩子们，明天就办！”希尔维尤斯·霍格叫了起来，“今天晚上我们就回达尔。这可是人们过去从来都没有见过的新鲜

事，人们将会看到一名法学教授，一名挪威国会议员，会像特勒玛克最健壮的小伙子一样，在一次婚礼上跳舞。”

不过，希尔维尤斯·霍格是怎样知道奥勒·冈的故事的呢？

很简单，是海军部给他寄到达尔的最后一封信上告诉他的。实际上，他在达尔收到的最后一封信上，已经告诉了他一些事情，至于这封从克里斯蒂安桑寄来的信上到底写了什么，他没有向任何人透露。信上说，丹麦的双桅帆船热尼尤斯号，船长克罗芒，中途在克里斯蒂安桑靠岸了，船上载有子爵号的幸存者，其中就有年轻的水手长奥勒·冈。三天后，他就会抵达克里斯蒂亚尼亚。

海军部的来信中还说，这些遇难船员历尽艰险，至今身体还十分虚弱。所以，关于伊尔娜未婚夫归来的事，希尔维尤斯·霍格没有跟伊尔娜透露半个字，而且在回信中，他还提出要对这次归来的事情严加保密，结果就使得这个秘密被封锁得严严实实，没有对外透露半点风声。

那么，为什么电讯号护卫舰没有找到子爵号的任何残骸和幸存者呢？这也很容易解释。

当猛烈的风暴来临时，正在冰岛以南两百海里海面上的子爵号几乎已经失去了控制，被迫向西北方向漂流。从5月3日到4日的晚上，一直在刮着狂风，结果子爵号撞上了来自格陵兰岛海域的浮动的巨大冰山。两者相撞的情景极其惨烈，五分钟后，子爵号就要沉到海底了。就在这时，奥勒写了那几行文字，他在那张彩票上给未婚妻写下了最后的诀别之词，然后就把彩票装进了一个瓶子，投进了大海。

子爵号的大部分船员，包括船长在内，都在相撞时丧了命，只有奥勒·冈和四个伙伴在子爵号即将沉入大海的一瞬间，跳到了冰山的一个

残块上。要不是可怕的风暴把冰块推到了西北方向，他们恐怕也要丧命，只不过是晚几天而已。两天以后，又累又饿的五位幸存者被风暴推到了格陵兰岛的南岸。这是个荒无人烟的海岸，多亏了上帝保佑，他们才得以存活。在那里，要是几天之内还没有得到救援的话，他们早就没命了。

不过，他们为什么没能回到位于另一个海滨的巴凡海湾的丹麦渔场呢？原来，被暴风吹离了航道的帆船热尼尤斯号当时正路过那儿，五位幸存者就向它发出了求救信号。这样，他们才被救上船。

可是，热尼尤斯号被逆风所阻，一直都跨越不过格陵兰岛到挪威这段较短的航程。也就是这个原因，使得奥勒在7月12日才到达克里斯蒂安桑，15日上午才到达克里斯蒂亚尼亚。

在当天上午，希尔维尤斯·霍格就到船上去了。在那儿，他找到了身体还很虚弱的奥勒，把自从奥勒在圣·皮埃尔·米克隆寄去最后一封信到现在所发生的一切都告诉了他，然后霍格把奥勒领到自己家里，并且要求热尼尤斯号船员在几个小时之内要保守秘密。后来的事，大家就都知道了。

按照事先的约定，奥勒要来参加开奖仪式。可是，他还有力气来吗？当然有了，他有的是力气，况且伊尔娜也会到场。那么这次抽奖，他还可能得到好处吗？有，绝对有，不仅对他，而且对他的未婚妻都有好处。

事实上，希尔维尤斯·霍格早就顺利地桑格伊斯手中赎回了那张彩票。他是用德拉蒙的放高利贷者支付给汉森太太的原价将它赎回来的。当时，哄抬彩票的价格已经不可能，桑格伊斯正盼着这张彩票能

够脱手呢！

“诚实的奥勒，”希尔维尤斯·霍格说着，就把那张彩票交还给他，“我想奉还给伊尔娜的，并不是一次发财的机会，因为，总的说来那似乎是不太可能的，我想给她的是在你认为就快要失去生命时向她表示的最后的诀别。”

应该说，希尔维尤斯·霍格是个很有主意的人，比那个桑格伊斯要强得多。当桑格伊斯知道了开奖的结果时，简直恨不得要撞墙而死。

现在，达尔客店有了十万马克。是的，整整十万马克，因为希尔维尤斯·霍格一直都不愿意让人偿还他为赎回奥勒·冈的彩票所付的那笔钱——这是他心甘情愿在伊尔娜结婚的时候送给她的嫁妆。

也许人们会觉得奇怪，为什么曾经令人十分瞩目的这个9672号在抽奖时正好中了大奖呢？的确，这是很让人感到奇怪，不过，这也不是不可能的。但不管怎样，这已经成了现实。

希尔维尤斯·霍格、奥勒、如艾尔和伊尔娜当天晚上就离开了克里斯蒂亚尼亚，回去的时候他们依旧绕道邦布勒，因为要把赛格弗琳娜中奖的奖金交给她。

当再次经过希德达尔小教堂时，伊尔娜想起了两天前还萦绕在心中的伤感情思，但是看见奥勒，她就又很快回到了幸福的现实之中。

托圣·奥拉夫的福，四天以后，当伊尔娜挽着丈夫奥勒·冈的胳膊走出达尔的小教堂时，她头上那光彩夺目的花环把她衬托得多么漂亮啊！接下来就举行了盛大的结婚仪式，它的影响之大，已经遍及了特勒玛克的所有村庄。漂亮的伴娘赛格弗琳娜和她的父亲——农庄的主人厄尔木

博，她的未婚夫如艾尔以及摆脱了桑格伊斯威胁的汉森太太，每个人都兴高采烈。

人们也许会问，所有的这些朋友，这些客人，其中就包括艾尔普家族的长房之子——艾尔普兄弟，还有其他的很多人，是不是都来参加这对新婚夫妇的婚礼了呢？是不是都来看法学教授、挪威国会议员希尔维尤斯·霍格跳舞了呢？这个还真不知道。但不管怎么说，教授的确是兴致勃勃地跳了舞，他和亲爱的伊尔娜跳了开场舞，又和迷人的赛格弗琳娜跳了收场舞。

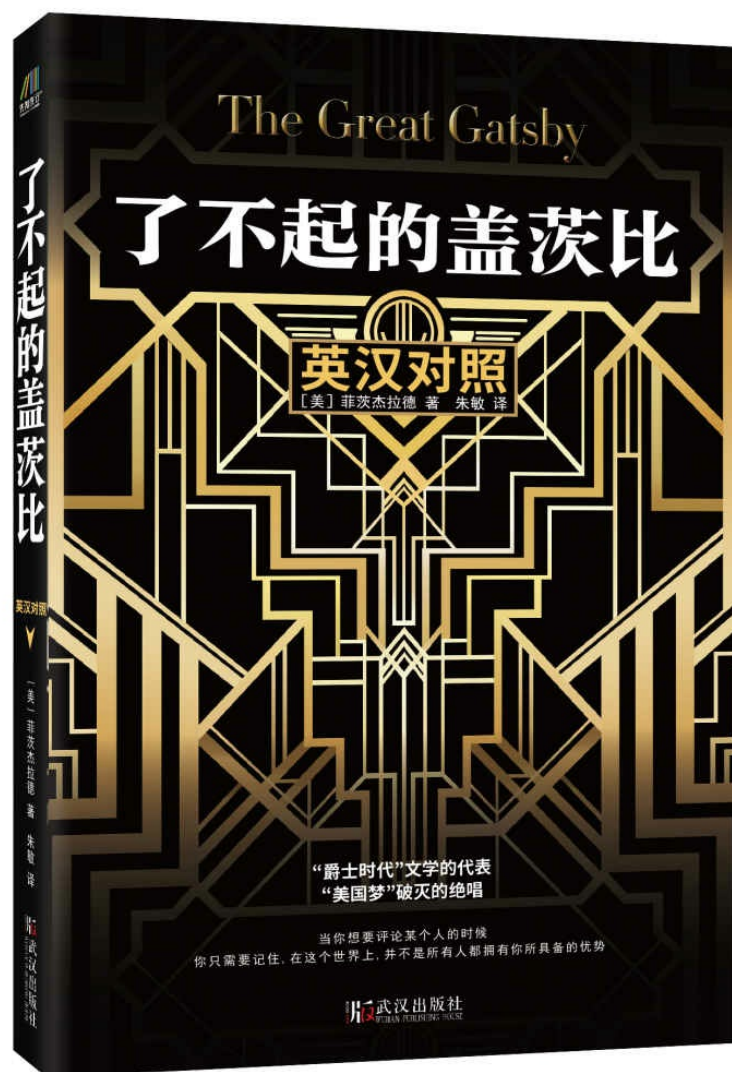
第二天，维斯特夫若哈达尔的整个山谷都响起了阵阵的欢呼声，在这欢呼声中，教授离开了达尔，并答应会再来参加如艾尔的婚礼。又过了几星期，男女双方的亲友们在欢乐热闹的气氛中庆祝了这一婚礼。

这一回，教授和迷人的赛格弗琳娜跳了开场舞。

从那以后，希尔维尤斯·霍格就再也没跳过舞。

过去经受了种种严峻考验的达尔客店，现在遇到的高兴事接连不断。不用说，这都是希尔维尤斯·霍格的功劳，但他却并不承认，还总是重复说：“哎，我还欠着汉森太太的孩子们的情呢！”

至于那张早已家喻户晓的彩票，在开奖以后就还给了奥勒·冈。现在这张彩票被镶在一个木制的小镜框里，陈列在客店大厅的显要位置处。不过，大家看到的，不是印有著名的9672号彩票的正面，而是彩票的反面，上面写着遇难的奥勒·冈留给他的未婚妻伊尔娜·汉森的最后的诀别之词。



目录

[了不起的盖茨比：英汉对照版](#)

[第一章](#)

[第二章](#)

[第三章](#)

[第四章](#)

[第五章](#)

[第六章](#)

[第七章](#)

[第八章](#)

[第九章](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

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书名：了不起的盖茨比：英汉对照版

作者：[美]菲茨杰拉德著；朱敏译

出版方：武汉出版社

出版时间：2018.8

ISBN：9787543073432

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了不起的盖茨比：英汉对照版

第一章

在我年轻懵懂、易受外界影响的年纪，父亲曾给我一个忠告，此后，这个忠告一直在我的心头萦绕。

“当你想要评论某个人的时候，”他对我说，“你只需要记住，在这个世界上，并不是所有人都拥有你所具备的优势。”

他没再说什么，但是我们之间总能够彼此心照不宣、心有灵犀，并且，我能听出他的弦外之音。时间一长，我形成了对任何人都保留判断的习惯。这个习惯使很多性格稀奇古怪的人向我敞开心扉，也使我成了很多无聊透顶的人的牺牲品。这种品性一旦出现在一个正常人的身上，就很容易被心术不正的家伙所察觉，并图谋不轨地与之接近。因此，在大学期间，我就被不公正地谴责为政客，因为我私下里知道一些狂妄不羁无名小卒的伤心秘事。这些秘密并不是我特意去打探的——当我通过一些迹象准确无误地意识到别人要对我诉衷肠时，总会装出昏昏欲睡的样子，出神地若有所思或者持一种敌对的轻浮态度。因为年轻人的诉衷肠，他们用以表达心声的言词通常是剽窃来的，并且由于明显的压抑变得支离破碎、难以理解。我无限希望能对任何事情都保留判断，并且还有点担心如果我忘记父亲的忠告，是否会错过些什么，正如父亲自命不凡地告诫，我也在自命不凡地重申：基本的道德观是生而不均的。

在我对自己的宽容行为进行一番夸耀之后，我必须得承认，它是有限度的。人们的行为也许是建立在坚硬的石块或潮湿的沼泽地上，但在过了一定程度之后，我就不在乎它究竟建立在什么之上了。去年秋天，

我从东部回来的时候，我希望全世界的人都均衡化，并永远关注道德信念；我不再希望以一种高高在上的姿态看穿人们的内心。只有盖茨比，也就是赋予本书名字的那个人，能够对我这种反应无动于衷。盖茨比这个人，他身上所代表的一切都是我发自内心嘲讽的对象。如果人们的个性是由一系列完整的成功行为塑成的，那么他一定光芒万丈，他对于未来生活的前景具有高度的敏感性，就像一台能准确预测万里之外地震的精密仪器。这种敏捷的反应能力与那被誉为“创造性秉性”的柔弱无力的敏感性毫无关系——它是内心永怀希望的一种天赋，一种罗曼蒂克式随时准备着的浪漫情怀，他的这种品性我再也没在别人身上发现过，很可能今后再也见不到了。不——盖茨比最终的结局无可厚非；是那吞噬盖茨比心灵的东西，是那紧随他美好梦想的肮脏尘埃暂时使我对人们一时的大悲大喜、得意失意变得麻木不仁。

我所在的家族是中西部城市一个三世兴旺的名门望族——卡拉维家族，也算是个大家族。据传我们是布克罗奇公爵^①的后代，但我们家族的实际奠基人是我祖父的哥哥，他于1851年来到这儿，买了个替身去参加南北战争，自己则开始从事我父亲至今仍在从事的五金器具批发生意。

我从没见过这位伯祖，但是大家都认为我跟他长得挺像，特别是与父亲在办公室悬挂的那张画像里的庄重冷漠的面孔相对比时。我于1915年毕业于纽黑文，刚好比父亲晚了25年。不久之后，我就参加了那场所谓的被延迟了的伟大的日耳曼民族大迁徙——第一次世界大战。我在战争反击的过程中感到有无穷的乐趣，回来之后却觉得身心疲惫不堪。中西部并没有成为世界的乐土，相反，却像宇宙破败的边缘——于是我决定去东部学习做债券生意。我认识的人几乎都在做债券生意，所以我认为它应该能再养活一个单身汉。我所有的叔伯姑娘们对此进行了详细的

探讨，就像是在为我选择一所预备学校，并且最终带着沉重的神色，犹豫不决地说：“就这样，好——吧。”父亲同意资助我一年。经过一再的拖延，我最终于1922年的春天来到东部，并且，也许是在这里扎下根了。

在城里，首先要解决的实际问题就是找到房子住。但那时正值暖季，并且我刚刚离开芳草缤纷、绿树成荫的故乡，所以，当办公室里有个年轻人提出在城市近郊合租一座房子的时候，我觉得那是个很不错的主意。他找到一处住所——是一座饱经风雨侵蚀带走廊的木板结构平房，每月房租80美元。但就在我们将要搬进去的前一刻，公司却把他调到华盛顿，所以，我只好一个人住到郊区。我养了条狗——至少在它跑掉前我跟它在一起待了段日子——还有一辆旧道奇车，一名芬兰女佣——她负责给我叠被铺床、准备早餐，每当她在电炉上忙碌时，嘴里总是自言自语地咕哝着一些芬兰谚语。

我就这样孤独地过了几天，直到一天早上一个看起来比我对此地更陌生的人在路上拦住了我。

“去西埃格怎么走？”他无助地问道。

我告诉了他，并带着他继续向前行。这时候，我不再感到孤单。我成了一名向导，一位开拓者，一个早期移民。他无意中授予了我这片土地上自由民的荣誉称号。

阳光普照大地，树木一瞬间就枝繁叶茂了，这一切就像电影快进镜头中的事物生长，我那个坚定的信念又回来了：未来生活伴随着这个炽热的秋天，欣欣向荣地展开了。

首先，我有很多书要读，还要从这清新怡人的空气中汲取养分。我

买了十几本关于银行、信贷和证券投资方面的书，这些红色烫金封皮的书立在我的书架上，就像刚从铸币厂里出来的新币，准备向我揭开只有迈达斯①、摩根②和米赛纳斯③才掌握的令人惊喜的秘密。除此以外，我还热衷于读其他方面的书。在大学期间，我的文笔还算不错——有一年我为《耶鲁新闻》写了一系列严肃庄重而又平实易懂的社论——现在我要把这些重新带入我的生活，成为那些专才无法做到的博而不精的通才。这不仅仅是则名言警句——从一个窗口向外看，人生更易获得成功。

完全出于一种偶然，我在北美最奇怪的社区之一租下了这座房子。这个社区位于纽约市东部一个狭长喧嚣的小岛上，在这里，除了一些其他的奇异自然景观，还有两块形状怪异的土地。它们位于城市的二十英里以外，呈巨大的卵形，轮廓相同，仅被一个恬静的水湾隔开，一直延伸到西半球那片最恬静的海洋水域，就像是长岛海峡一个巨大的湿润的谷地。它们并不是标准的椭圆——就像哥伦布故事中的鸡蛋，它们与海域连接的那端都被磨平了——但是，它们的外形竟是如此相似，以至于那些凭空飞过的海鸥看到后会惊叹不已。而对于岛上那些不会飞的居民来说，一个有关他们的有趣现象就是他们除了外形和身高相似外，其他各方面俱不相同。

我住在西埃格，这个，嗯，它的确是两个半岛中不太时髦的那个，但如果仅仅以这点来说，这只是非常表面地标识了两个小岛之间那怪异而又极其凶险的对比。我的房子刚好位于半岛的顶端，据南部仅50码，并且被两幢以每季度12000~15000美元天价租下的豪宅挤压着。在我右边的这幢以任何标准衡量都称得上是个大家伙——它俨然是仿照诺曼底市政厅而建，在其一端矗立着一座新建的塔楼，上面稀稀疏疏地覆盖着一片野生的常春藤，还有一个大理石筑成的游泳池，连带一片占地面积

超过四十英亩的草坪和花园。这就是盖茨比的豪宅。或者，我当时还不认识盖茨比先生，它是一位名叫盖茨比的先生居住的宅邸。与他的房子相比，我的房子真是个丑八怪，不过它卑微到了毫不起眼的地步，以致人们往往忽略了。所以，我每个月只需掏80美元，就可以心安理得地享受这一切：观赏这片美丽的海景，局部欣赏我邻居那片美丽的草坪，以及很欣慰地如此近距离地接近一名百万富翁。

穿过这片恬静的海湾，位于时髦的东埃格，临水而建的那座白色宅邸熠熠生辉。这个夏天发生的故事就在我驱车到汤姆·布坎南夫妇家赴宴的那个晚上悄然开始了。黛西是我的远房表妹，而汤姆，实际上在大学时我就认识他了，并且就在战争结束后我还去他们芝加哥的家里待了两天。

汤姆，黛西的丈夫，在体育界有颇高的名望。他是纽黑文有史以来最伟大的橄榄球运动员之一，实际上在全国也很有名，一个只有21岁的年轻人在某一领域就取得了如此令人惊叹的成就，那么今后他无论做什么事都显得有点处于走下坡路的味道了。他的家族富得惊人，即使还在上大学时，他那挥金如土的纨绔习气就备受指责了，但现在他离开芝加哥搬到东部来了，那排场让你惊愕得简直无法呼吸。例如，他竟然把老家森林湖镇^①的一群打马球用的马全部运过来了——很难想象我的同辈人中竟有富到如此地步的人。

我不太清楚他们为什么会搬到东部来。他们已经在法国待了一年，不为什么缘故。只要哪个地方有人打马球，只要哪个地方富翁云集，他们就会继续不停地四处搬家。黛西在电话里告诉我说这将是他们最后一次搬家，我才不信——我还真看不透黛西的内心，但是我能肯定汤姆是永远闲不下来的，他渴望着、追寻着过去橄榄球比赛岁月中那种扣人心弦的刺激。

于是，在那个暖风微拂的晚上，我驱车东埃格去见两个我几乎不相知的老朋友。他们的房子精雕细琢得超出了我的预想，那是一座红白相间、令人赏心悦目的宅邸，拥有乔治亚殖民统治时期的建筑艺术风格，俯瞰着整个海湾。草坪缘起海岸，一直延伸到别墅前门，足有四分之一英里长，一路越过日晷、砖道和百花怒放的花园，在它与房子交接处，一片青翠欲滴、明亮耀眼的常春藤沿墙飘摇，生机盈动。房子正面被一排法式的落地长窗与外界隔断，与落日的余晖交相辉映，闪耀夺目，敞开怀抱拥抱这个暖风微醺的午后。汤姆·布坎南身穿骑装，叉着两腿站在前门走廊上。

他已经彻底不同于纽黑文岁月时的样子了。现在的他是个头发呈稻黄色、嘴角带着嘲讽、举止傲慢的三十多岁的中年男人。他那双目空一切的眼睛在脸上显得格外突出，给人一种咄咄逼人的姿态。现在即使是他身上穿着的那件文雅的漂亮的骑装也不能掩盖里面那副魁梧的身躯。他的双腿似乎塞满了那双闪耀夺目的皮靴，以至于把那上面的花边带子都挤压得紧紧的。当他的双肩在薄薄的外衣下动弹时，你可以看到一大块肌肉在移动。这是个力大无穷的身躯，同时也是副残忍无情的躯壳。

他说话时发出生硬粗哑的声音，更加给人造成性情暴戾的印象；并且里头还夹杂着一种高高在上的轻蔑口吻，即使是对待他喜欢的人也是如此，在纽黑文就有人对他的为人厌恶至极了。

“现在，你可不要认为我对这些事情的看法是终结性的，”他好像在对你说，“仅仅因为我比你更强壮更具有男子气概。”我们同属于一个高年级社团，但当时我们的关系并不密切，我总感觉他很欣赏我，并且以他那一向粗野可鄙、目中无人的方式渴望着我同样也喜欢他。

我们在洒满阳光的走廊上聊了一会儿。

“我住的地儿还不赖吧，”他说着，目光不停地掠过四周。

他抓住我的一只胳膊，把我转过来，一只宽大的手掌四下指给我瞧。

掠过眼前的景色是一座意大利式凹形花园，占地约半英亩的香气馥郁的深色玫瑰花，一艘狮鼻形状的汽艇随着波浪在岸边上下起伏。

“这里曾经是石油大王得梅因的下榻之处。”他又把我转过来，以一种表面客气却又不置可否的口吻说道，“我们进去吧。”

我们穿过一条高高的回廊走进一间明亮的玫瑰色大厅，两端的法式落地窗把这间大厅轻盈地嵌在这栋别墅里面。窗户都敞开着，映衬着外边那似乎要长进来的鲜草，微微闪耀着白光。一阵微风拂过房间，被吹起的窗帘一端飘进来，一端飘出去，就像白色的旗帜迎风飘扬，卷曲着飞向天花板上那呈糖花婚礼蛋糕形状的装饰图案，然后又轻轻地掠过绛色的地毯，如同风拂过海面般地留下一道道阴影。

房间里唯一不动的东西是那张巨型沙发，上面坐着两位年轻的女士，她们就像是坐在一个着陆于地面的飘浮着的大气球上。俩人都一袭纯白，并且衣袂飘飘就像刚才环绕屋子飞行了一周而此刻被风吹回来了似的。我当时正站着，凝神听窗帘随风而动发出的声响以及墙上一幅画发出的嘎吱嘎吱的声音，突然汤姆·布坎南“嘭”的一声把后面的窗户关上了，房间里的余风这才渐止渐息，窗帘、地毯以及那两位少妇才慢慢地飘落回地上。

较年轻的那位女士我素未谋面，她在长沙发的一端把整个身子舒展开来，一动也不动，并且微微翘着下巴，仿佛为了保持上面的东西平衡不让它滑落似的。她是否用眼角的余光瞥见了，我并不知道，可她竟

无半点反应。事实上，反倒是我吃了一惊，我嘴里咕哝着，为我的不速光临叨扰了她而向她致歉。

另一位女孩，黛西，做出欲起身的架势，她的身子微微向前倾，面露殷勤，然后“扑哧”一声笑了，让人摸不着头脑却又非常娇媚可爱，弄得我也笑了。接着，我就进屋来了。

“我高兴得快要瘫掉了。”

她又笑了笑，仿佛觉得自己说了一句诙谐有趣的话，然后拉起我的手，仰着脸打量了我一会儿，那神情就像在说我是这个世界上她最想见到的人。这就是她的与众不同。她轻声告诉我那个一直保持平衡姿势的女孩姓贝克。（我私下里听说黛西的轻言细语只是一种让人家靠近她的方式，但这些毫不相干的闲言碎语丝毫无损她的这种迷人之处。）

不管怎么说，贝克小姐的嘴唇还是蠕动了一下，微微地向我点头打了一下招呼，几乎令人不易察觉。接着又把头仰了回去——她在设法保持平衡的东西明显稍稍滑动了一丁点，这使她一惊。于是道歉的话又一次要从我嘴中滑出，几乎任何形式的完全的我行我素都会令我满心佩服。

我回转头看着我的表妹，她开始问我问题，声音低柔而又迷人。这种声音必须侧耳倾听，每句话就好像一串永不会重奏的音符。她那略显幽怨的可爱面庞上洋溢着欢快的神采，双眼明眸善睐，双唇娇艳热情，发出的声音激动人心，就如歌唱般悦耳，使每一个青睐于她的男人都难以忘怀。一声低柔的“听着”，暗示着她片刻之前刚做完一些欢欣有趣的事情，并且下一刻这些事情将随之而来。

我告诉她我是怎样在前往东部的途中在芝加哥逗留了一天，以及那

里的一大群朋友怎样通过我传达对她的深深祝福。

“他们想我吗？”她欣喜万分地大声问道。

“整座城镇一片荒凉。所有的汽车都把左后轮胎漆成黑色，作为哀悼的花圈，北部沿岸一带哀号声彻夜响不停。”

“太令人激动了！汤姆，我们回去吧，明天就走！”接着她无意地说了一句：“你应该看看孩子。”

“我正想看看呢。”

“她正睡觉呢，只有三岁。你从没见过她么？”

“从没有。”

“嗯，你应该去看看她，她是……”

汤姆·布坎南本来一直在房里心神不宁地走来走去，这会儿他停了下来，把一只手搭在我肩上。

“你最近干什么营生，尼克？”

“我做债券生意。”

“跟谁？”

我告诉了他。

“从没听说过。”他肯定地回答，这让我很窝火。

“你会听说的，”我简短地回答道，“只要你一直待在东部。”

“哦，我会一直待在东部的，不必担心，”他说这话的同时眼瞟着黛西，然后又看着我，似乎还在提防着别的什么。“如果我还搬到别处去住，那我将是个彻头彻尾的傻瓜。”

说到这里，贝克小姐说了声：“完全正确。”这句话如此突兀，以至于吓了我一跳。这是她自我进到房间以来讲的第一句话。很明显，就像吓着了我不一样，她也为自己的话感到吃惊。接着她打了个呵欠，敏捷熟练地从沙发上站了起来。

“我的身子都麻了，”她抱怨道，“我不知道在那张沙发上躺了多久。”

“别看着我”，黛西反驳道，“整整一个下午我都在劝你到纽约去。”

“不，谢谢，”贝克小姐对着刚从餐饮房端来的四杯鸡尾酒说，“我正认认真真地锻炼身体呢。”

男主人看着她，满脸狐疑。

“就是说嘛！”他把杯中的酒一饮而尽，好像杯子里就剩一滴酒似的。“我真想不出你干成过啥。”

我看着贝克小姐，想知道她曾经“干成过”的事情。我饶有趣味地看着她。她是个身材苗条、胸部小巧的姑娘，身板笔直，由于她把身子摆得很正，这使她越发像个军校学员一样身姿挺拔。她用那双灰色的、因阳光照射而略眯起的双眼打量着我，苍白、可爱而又略带愠色的脸上现出彬彬有礼而又充满好奇的神色。这使得我突然间觉得我在哪儿见过她本人，或者是看过她的相片。

“你住在西半岛，”她轻蔑地说，“我认识那儿的一个人。”

“我一个也不认识…….”

“你肯定认识盖茨比。”

“盖茨比？”黛西追问道，“哪个盖茨比？”

就在我回答他是我邻居之前，传晚饭了，汤姆不由分说地挽起我的一只胳膊，像移动一只棋子般地把拽出了房间。

两位女士轻轻把手搭在腰际，娉娉婷婷、娇媚慵懒地走在我们之前来到了一个玫瑰色的阳台，阳台迎向夕阳，在那摆放着一张餐桌，桌上四根蜡烛在渐渐平息下来的余风中摇曳生姿。

“为什么点蜡烛？”黛西皱着眉头不满意地说道，随后她“噼啪”一声用指头掐灭了烛芯。“两周后就是一年中白昼最长的日子了。”她兴致勃勃地看着我们说道。“你们是否总是在期待一年中最长的那天但最终又错过了它？我就是这样。”

“我们应该有点打算。”贝克小姐打着呵欠在桌旁坐了下来，像要到床上睡觉似的。

“好吧，”黛西说，“我们打算做点什么呢？”她无助地转向我：“人们通常计划做些什么呢？”

在我回答之前，她突然两眼惊恐地盯着她的小指头。

“瞧！”她抱怨道，“我把小指头碰伤了。”

我们都瞧了瞧——指关节有些青紫。

“都怨你，汤姆，”她指责道，“我知道你不是故意的，但你确实做了。这就是我嫁给一个粗野男人的报应，你这个粗壮笨拙的家伙……”

“我讨厌粗笨这个词，”汤姆蛮横地反驳道，“即使是开玩笑也不行。”“就是粗笨。”黛西执拗地坚持。

有时候她和贝克小姐会说说笑笑，但一点也不张扬，不过彼此开开一些无伤大雅的小玩笑，但从不会喋喋不休地大谈特谈。她们的谈吐教养就像她们的白衣裙，就像她们那毫无杂念、超然的眼睛一样显得淡然镇定。她们就坐在这里，陪伴着汤姆和我，礼貌文雅地和我俩彼此应酬，相互取悦。她们知道不一会儿这个宴会就会结束，这个夜晚也会悄然逝去，一切烟消云散。这不同于西部，晚宴一段接一段节奏紧密地逼近尾声，伴随着人们的惋惜失望或是对时光飞逝的紧张不安。

“黛西，你让我觉得自己不够文明，”我坦诚地说道。这会儿，我正喝第二杯虽然带点软木塞味儿但口味相当醇正的红葡萄酒。“你能不能谈谈庄稼或聊点别的什么？”

我说这话并没什么特别的意思，但是大家的反应让我颇感意外。

“文明正被撕得粉碎，”汤姆猛地开腔，“我开始以可怕的悲观主义论调看待事物了，你有没有读过戈达德写的《有色帝国的兴起》这本书？”

“没有，怎么啦？”我答道，对他的语气感到很惊讶。

“嗯，这是本好书，每个人都应该去读一下。这本书的主旨是告诫我们，如果我们白人种族稍不留神，就会有被彻底灭绝的危险。书中全是科学翔实材料，并且已经得到了证明。”

“汤姆正在变得非常博学，”黛西说道，脸上露出一一种漫不经心的忧伤表情。“他看一些带着很长字眼的晦涩难懂的书。刚才我们提到的那个词是什么来着……”

“我说，这些书都是有科学根据的，”汤姆固执己见，不耐烦地瞟了她一眼。“这个家伙讲明了一切问题。现在轮到我们这个占统治地位的种族要小心行事，否则其他的人种就会操控一切。”

“我们要把他们打倒。”黛西轻轻地说道，同时冲着炽热的夕阳猛眨了眨眼。

“你应该去加利福尼亚住……”贝克小姐刚开口，汤姆在椅子上重重地一扭身，她的话立马就被打断了。

“他的观点是我们都属于北欧民族。我是，你是，你也是，以及……”在稍微犹豫了一下后，他微微点了点头，算是把黛西也包括进来了。这时，黛西冲我眨了眨眼。“我们创造了科学、艺术等等，以及一切构成文明的东西。你们懂吗？”

在他的一本正经中有一些悲伤，似乎他的那种自以为是的态度，虽然比以前更明显，但对他来说已远远不够了。就在这时，房间的电话铃响了，男管家离开了门廊，黛西立刻抓住这个空当，把身子向我凑了凑。

“我要告诉你家里的一个秘密”，她兴奋地小声说道，“是关于这个男管家的鼻子，你想知道关于他鼻子的事情吗？”“我今晚来这儿就是为此。”

“其实，他过去不是个管家，他曾经在纽约专门给人家做银器擦拭

员。那户人家有一套可供200来号人使用的银器。他每天得从早擦到晚，最后他的鼻子严重受到影响……”

“后来情况变得越来越糟糕。”贝克小姐插嘴道。

“是的，情况变得越来越糟，最后他不得不辞了那份工作。”

有那么一阵儿，夕阳的最后一缕余晖映照在她那生机勃勃的可爱脸蛋上，显得浪漫多情；她的声音总使我情不自禁地俯身向前，屏息倾听。随后，余晖开始褪去，每一道霞光都眷恋着她的脸庞不忍离去，就像大街上欢乐玩闹的孩子在黄昏仍不愿离去。

管家回来后，附在汤姆耳旁轻声耳语了几句，汤姆皱了皱眉，把椅子往后一推，一身不吭地走进了房间。他的离去似乎激发了黛西内心的什么，黛西又把身子向前凑了凑，她的声音婉转动听，像唱歌一样。

“我喜欢看到你坐在我的餐桌前，尼克。看到你会让我想起一朵——一朵玫瑰花，一朵纯正的玫瑰花，不是吗？”她转向贝克小姐，希望得到她的认同，“他是不是像一朵纯正的玫瑰？”

这当然不对。我一丁点儿也不像玫瑰，她只是在乱说一气，但是话里却洋溢着一种炙热的温情，仿佛隐藏在这些令人窒息的、激动人心的话后的那颗心就要跳出来向你敞开心扉。突然，她把餐巾纸往桌上一扔，说了声对不起，就走进房间里去了。

贝克小姐和我彼此交换了一下眼神，不露声色。当我想要说点什么时，她警觉地站了起来，并警觉地发出了一声“嘘”。房间里能听到一阵明显被压抑的却热情洋溢的讲话声，贝克小姐无所顾忌地探过身去，想一听究竟。讲话声听起来在微微发颤，时而低沉，时而高亢，然后就悄

无声息了。

“你所说的盖茨比是我的邻居……”我说道。

“别说话，我想听听在发生什么。”

“发生什么事了吗？”我无知地问道。

“你的意思是你不知道？”贝克小姐说，明显很惊讶。“我以为人人都知道了。”“我真不知道。”

“这个——”她迟疑了一下说，“汤姆在纽约有别的女人了。”“有别的女人？”我茫然地重复了一遍。

贝克小姐点了点头。

“她应该识趣一点，别在吃饭的时间给他打电话。你不这样认为吗？”

在我弄懂她的意思之前，传来一阵裙子的窸窣声和靴子的咯吱声，汤姆和黛西回到了餐桌上。

“真没办法。”黛西故作轻松地大声说。

她坐了下来，细细地打量了我和贝克小姐一番，接着说：“我往门外看了一会儿，觉得真是浪漫极了，有一只小鸟停在草坪上，我认为它一定是一只搭乘‘康纳德’或者‘白星’公司的邮轮到这儿的夜莺。它一直在唱歌……”其实她自己的声音也像是在唱歌，“这很浪漫，不是吗，汤姆？”

“很浪漫，”他说道，然后苦着脸对我说：“如果吃完饭天色还早

的话，我带你去我的马厩看看。”

屋里的电话铃音又一次响起，这让大家吃了一惊，由于黛西坚定地朝汤姆摇了摇头，关于马厩的话题——事实上餐桌上所有的话题都烟消云散了。在我关于餐桌最后五分钟的片段记忆里，我记得蜡烛又给点燃了，毫无意义地，并且我有意识地想正视一下每一个人，但又不想迎上对方的眼睛。我猜不透汤姆和黛西在想什么，但我怀疑即使是贝克小姐——这个对一切料事如神、心存不疑的人，能够完全把第五位客人急迫而又尖利的催促声抛诸脑后。对于有某种特质的人来说，这种情形似乎变得非常有趣——而我的本能反应是立即打电话报警。

不用说，马的话题再也没人提起。汤姆和贝克小姐，俩人之间相隔几英尺，暮色笼罩着他俩。他们慢慢踱回了书房，好像要去为一具真实存在的尸体守夜，我则尽量装出一副饶有趣味而又什么都不知道的样子，跟着黛西穿过一连串相互连接着的长廊，来到前面的门廊，在它的冥冥幽暗中，我们肩并肩坐在一张柳条靠背长椅上。

黛西双手捧脸，好像在摩挲她那可爱的脸庞，同时她的眼睛慢慢向那天鹅绒般的夜色望去。我看得出她的内心正波涛汹涌，所以我问了几个我自认为有镇痛作用的问题，是关于她的小女儿的。

“我们彼此并不十分了解，尼克，”她突然说道，“即使我们是表亲，你也没有来参加我的婚礼。”

“那会儿我还没从战场上回来。”

“是的。”她迟疑了一下，“唉，我过得很糟糕，尼克，我把一切都看透了。”

很明显她这样做有她自己的理由，我等着她继续往下说，可她却停了，于是一会儿之后，我只好勉强把话题扯回到她女儿身上。

“我想她应该会说话，嗯——会吃饭，什么都会了吧？”

“噢，是的，”她心不在焉地看着我，“听着，尼克，让我告诉你生的时候我都说了些什么，你想听吗？”

“乐意之至。”

“听完之后你就会明白我对事物持有怎样的态度。唉，那时她还出生不到一个小时，天晓得汤姆跑哪儿去了。我从麻醉中醒来，感到被完全抛弃了一样。我立即问护士生了男孩儿还是女孩儿，护士跟我说是个女孩儿，于是我就扭过头哭了起来。‘好吧，’我说，‘我很高兴她是个女孩儿，并且我希望她会是个傻瓜’——一个漂亮的小傻瓜，这是这个世界上女孩子最好的出路。”

“现在你明白了为什么我觉得一切都很糟，”她继续坚定地说道，“每个人都这样认为——那些思想最进步的人也如此。我全都知道。我什么地方都去过，什么场面都见过，什么事情都做过。”她的双眼环顾四周时炯炯放光，傲视逼人，很像汤姆的眼睛，接着她发出一阵令人毛骨悚然的讥笑。“世故啊——上帝，我变得世故了。”

她的话音刚落，不再逼迫我去注意倾听、相信她的话，我感到她说话并非出自真心。这让我很不舒服，仿佛整个晚上只是一个骗局，设计这个骗局是为了从我这儿获取一种支持她的情感。我等待着，果不其然，一会儿之后她瞧了瞧我，可爱的脸上浮现出一抹绝对的傻笑，似乎在向人们宣告她和汤姆已经成为了一个属于上流社会的秘密社团的会员。

屋里，那间绯红色的房间灯火通明。汤姆和贝克小姐各自坐在长沙发的两端，她在为他大声朗读《周六晚邮报》——那些含混不清又无语调变化的字眼听起来倒能抚慰人心。灯光映射在他的靴子上闪闪发亮，照在她如秋叶般的黄头发上却黯淡无光，当她翻动报纸时，手臂上纤细的肌肉也随之微颤，灯光也随之跳跃。

当我们进去时，她举起一只手示意我们先别说话。“未完待续，”她说道，随手把报纸往桌上一扔，“敬请期待下期。”

她不停地抖动膝盖，舒展了一下身体，随后便站了起来。

“十点了，”她说道，好像在天花板上看到了时间似的。“好女孩得去睡觉了。”

“乔丹明天会去打联赛，”黛西解释说，“在威斯彻斯特那边。”

“哦——原来你是乔丹·贝克。”

现在我知道为什么她看起来面熟——她那张讨人喜欢又略带轻蔑的脸庞已经很多次出现在那些报道阿希维尔、温泉和棕榈海滩①赛事的报刊照片上。我也听说过她的一些事，那是一些挑剔的、令人不悦的闲言碎语，至于内容是什么，我早忘了。

“晚安，”她柔声说道，“八点叫醒我，行吗？”

“如果你起得来的话。”

“我会的。晚安，卡拉维先生。回头见。”

“你们当然会再见面的，”黛西肯定地说，“事实上，我想保个媒。

你看，尼克，你经常来这走动，然后我想——嗯——把你们俩撮合到一起。你知道的——比如碰巧把你俩锁进一个大衣柜，把你们放到一条船上，推进海里，等等诸如此类.....”

“晚安，”贝克小姐在楼梯上喊道，“我可一句也没听见。”

“她是个好女孩，”过了一会儿，汤姆说道，“他们不应该让她这样全国各地的到处乱跑。”

“你说谁不应该？”黛西冷冷地问道。

“她的家人。”

“她家里只剩一个七老八十的老姑妈。此外，尼克将来可以照顾她，对吗，尼克？她今年夏天会经常到这儿来过周末。我想这里的家庭氛围对她有好处。”

黛西和汤姆彼此默默对视了一会儿。

“她是来自纽约吗？”我很快问道。

“来自路易斯维尔^①，我们在一起在那儿度过了纯洁的少女时代。我们美丽纯洁的.....”

“你是不是在走廊上跟尼克说了一些心里话？”汤姆突然问道。

“我说了吗？”她看着我，“我似乎不记得了，但我想我们谈论了北欧民族。是的，我确定我们谈了这个话题；不知不觉就聊上了它，事情总是这样，你知道的.....”

“不要轻易相信你听到的任何事。”汤姆告诫我说。

我淡淡地说我什么也没听到，几分钟之后我就起身准备回家。他们把我送到门口，肩并肩地站在一方明亮的灯光中。当我发动汽车时，黛西不容分说地喊道：“等等！我忘了问你点事，这很重要。我们听说你跟西部的一个女孩订婚了。”

“没错儿，”汤姆温和地附和道，“我们听说你订婚了。”

“这是个谣言。我太穷了。”

“但我们听说了，”黛西坚持道，说这话时，笑颜如鲜花般绽放，真令我吃了一惊。“我们听三个人说过，所以这肯定是真的。”

我当然知道他们指的是什么，但我真没订婚。事实上，正是因为传出了我要结婚的谣言，才促使我来到东部。你总不能因为谣言而跟老朋友绝交，但另一方面，我也不打算因为流言而结婚。

他们的关心使我深受感动，他们的富裕也不再令我感到那么遥不可及。当我开车离开时，我心存疑惑，同时还感到有点厌恶。在我看来，黛西应该做的事是抱着孩子立即冲出这个家，但是很显然，她脑子里并没有这样的想法。至于汤姆，他在纽约有了别的女人并不让我感到惊讶，令我惊讶的是，他竟然因为一本书变得神情沮丧。某种东西正促使他对陈腐的思想感兴趣，并孜孜以求，好像他那强壮的身体里面蕴含的自我中心不能再滋养他那颗武断的心灵了。

从路旁旅馆的屋顶和加油站前的空地望去，一派盛夏的景致赫然在目，那里放着一排排的红色气泵，暴露在一圈圈灯光里。回到西埃格村的家后，我把汽车停在了车棚下，然后在草地上那台闲置的修草机上坐了一会儿。风已经停了，只留下一个喧闹明亮的夜晚，树上翅膀的扑棱声，持续不断的风琴声以及被称为地上风箱的青蛙的聒噪声，充盈耳

畔。月光下，一片黑色的猫影在移动，当我转过头去看它时，我发现此地并非只有我一人——五十英尺开外，一个人影出现在我邻居宅邸的阴影里。他站在那儿，双手插进衣兜，正抬头仰望那像胡椒粉一样布满天空的点点银星。他那悠闲的举止和站在草坪上稳健的步态表明此人正是盖茨比先生，他出来寻找我们头顶上属于他的那片星空。

我决定跟他打招呼。贝克小姐在餐宴上提到了他，这正好可以用来引出自我介绍。可我并没有跟他打招呼，因为他的动作暗示我，他想一个人待着——他以一种奇怪的方式朝黑暗的海面伸出了双臂，虽然我离他很远，但我能肯定他在发抖。不知不觉中我也朝海面望去，什么也没有，除了一盏孤独的绿灯，灯光微弱而遥远，那也许是一个码头的尽头。当我回过头再次寻找盖茨比时，他消失了，把我一人孤独地留在这不平静的夜色中。

第二章

从西埃格到纽约的大约半途中，公路和铁路不期而遇，并行了四分之一英里的路程，以便绕开一片荒地。这是一个灰烬弥漫的谷地——在一个神秘古怪的农场里，灰烬像小麦一样疯狂蔓延，筑成山脊、山丘和奇形怪状的花园；又幻化成房子、烟囱和袅袅上升的炊烟形状；最后，奇幻般地，一鼓作气地形成了一群灰白的人，他们在慢慢地蠕动，似乎要在尘土飞扬的空气中灰飞烟灭。偶尔，一列灰白的汽车循着一条无形的轨迹缓慢前进，冷不丁地发出一声可怕的“嘎吱”声。车停下不动，立刻便有一群灰白色的人拿着沉重的铁锹蜂拥而上，扬起一片尘幕，使你看不清他们究竟在干什么。

但是在这片灰蒙蒙的土地和永远飘浮在它上空的灰暗尘土上，过一会儿，你就能感觉到T.J.艾克尔伯格大夫的眼睛。这是双蓝色的眼睛，硕大无比——光瞳孔就有一码来高。它们不是从什么人的脸上往外看，而是透过架在几乎看不到的鼻子上的一幅巨大的黄眼镜往外看。显然这是某个异想天开的外科大夫把它们立在这里，以便在皇后镇上招徕更多的生意，一直到他自己永远地闭上了双眼，或者是搬到别的什么地方，最终把它们遗忘在这里。但是他的双眼，因为久未刷漆，又经日晒雨淋，变得有点黯淡无光，但仍然若有所思地注视着这片阴森严穆的土地。

在这个灰谷底的边上，有一条肮脏的小河。并且，每当吊桥升起让驳船通过的时候，等候过桥的火车里的乘客就要盯着这片阴郁的景象看上半个小时。平时，火车开到这里至少要逗留一分钟，也正是因为这个

原因，我第一次见到了汤姆·布坎南的情妇。

汤姆有个情妇，这事儿认识他的人都知道。

认识他的人都很反感他带着情妇出入宾客盈门的餐馆酒店，把她独自一人扔在那儿，自己却到处闲逛，去和某个认识的人聊天。虽然我对她很好奇，但并不想跟她见面。可我还是见到她了。一天下午，我和汤姆同乘一辆火车去纽约。当我们的火车被一堆土堆阻挡，不能前进时，汤姆“噌”地站了起来，拽着我的胳膊，不由分说地把我拉下了车。

“我们下车吧，”他坚持道，“我想让你见见我的女朋友。”

我认为他可能是午餐时喝多了，以致于强硬地要求我作陪，都有要动武的架势了。他那一贯傲慢自大的个性使他认为星期日下午我并没有更重要的事情要做。

我跟着他跨过一道低矮的刷白的铁路围栏，在艾克尔伯格大夫持久的目光注视下，沿着铁路往回走了100码。映入眼帘的唯一建筑是一排黄砖砌成的房子，坐落在荒地的边缘，类似于这片地区的一条商业“主街”^①，除此以外，前后左右什么也没有。这里有三家店面，其中一家用于出租；另一家是间通宵餐馆，沿着一条煤灰铺的路可以走进去；第三家经营汽车修理，招牌上写着：汽车修理——J.乔治·B.威尔逊——买卖汽车，我跟着汤姆走了进去。

车铺里面空荡荡的，显得清冷萧条，只看见一辆落满灰尘、破旧不堪的福特汽车蜷缩在阴暗的角落里。我突然间想到这间车铺只是用来掩人耳目的，奢侈豪华、浪漫温馨的公寓就隐藏在楼上。就在这时，车铺的老板出现在一间办公室的门口，不停地用抹布擦着手。他满头金发，无精打采，脸色苍白，模样还算英俊。当他看到我们时，那双浅蓝色的

眼睛闪过一丝微弱的希望。

“你好哇，威尔逊，老伙计，”汤姆说道，愉快地拍了拍他的肩。“生意怎么样啊？”

“还凑合吧，”威尔逊回答道，显然不足以令人相信，“你什么时候把那车卖给我？”

“下周吧，我已经让我的人在修它了。”

“他的进度很慢吧，是吗？”

“不，不慢，”汤姆冷冷地说，“如果你是这样认为的，那我最好把它卖给别人算了。”

“我不是那个意思，”威尔逊赶紧解释，“我的意思只是……”

他的声音越来越弱，汤姆开始不耐烦地扫视车铺四周。然后我听见楼上传来一阵脚步声，不一会儿，办公室门口就出现了一个身材粗壮的妇人，把光线挡了个严严实实。她约莫三十五岁左右，开始发胖，但就像有些女人一样，这给她增添了几分肉感的风韵。她穿着一件污迹斑斑的深蓝色绉纱衣裙，上面的那张脸谈不上有多美，但只要一接近，就能立即感觉到她充满活力，仿佛她浑身的神经一直在燃烧。笑意慢慢在她脸上浮现，走过她丈夫身旁时，她就当他幽灵一样不存在，和汤姆握手时，她眼里焕发出炽热的神采。接着她润了润双唇，头也不转地对她丈夫低声粗气地说道：“你怎么不拿几把椅子来啊，好让客人坐下！”

“哦，当然，”威尔逊急忙回应道，随后便向办公室走去，一下子便与墙面的水泥色融为一体。一片灰白的尘土蒙盖住了他的深色外套、灰黄的头发以及周围的一切，除了他的妻子。此刻她正走向汤姆。

“我想见你，”汤姆渴求地说，“搭下一趟车。”

“我会在火车底层的报摊等你。”

她点点头走开了，就在这时，乔治·威尔逊拿着两把椅子从办公室门口出来。

我们在公路下沿比较隐秘的地方等她。再过几天就是7月4号了，一个灰头土脸、瘦骨嶙峋的印度小孩在铁轨旁点放一排“鱼雷”鞭炮。

“真是个鬼地方，不是吗？”汤姆说道，同时冲艾克尔伯格大夫皱了皱眉。

“确实很糟糕。”

“离开这地儿对她有好处。”

“难道她丈夫不反对吗？”

“你是说威尔逊？他以为她去纽约看妹妹呢。他是个呆子，连自己是死是活都不清楚。”

于是汤姆·布坎南和他的女朋友，还有我，我们仨一起搭车前往纽约；或者确切地说，也不是一起，因为威尔逊夫人出于小心起见，坐在另一节车厢。汤姆还是有所顾忌，怕东埃格半岛也有熟人坐在这列火车上。

威尔逊太太这时已经换上了一件棕褐色的细棉布花裙，车到达纽约站，汤姆扶她走上站台时，裙子把她那肥臀包得紧紧的。在一个报摊旁，她买了一份《漫谈城市》报和一本电影杂志，又在车站的一个杂货

店里买了一瓶冷霜和一小瓶香水。到楼上后，在一片阴森的隆隆车声中，她放走了四辆出租车，最后选中了一辆簇新的，罩着灰白车套的淡紫色出租车。乘着这辆车，我们逃离了车站喧嚣繁杂的人群，驶进灿烂明媚的阳光中。但不一会儿，她突然猛地从车窗旁转过身，身子向前倾，拍了拍前面的玻璃。

“我想买那里面的一只狗，”她急切地说道，“我想在公寓里养只狗，在公寓里……养养狗挺好的。”

我们把车倒回到一个头发灰白的老头儿旁边，有点可笑的是，此人竟长得如此像约翰·D·洛克菲勒^①。在他胸前晃来晃去的那只篮子里挤着一团刚刚出生的小狗崽，但品种不明。

“它们都是些什么种类的狗？”当他来到车窗旁时，威尔逊太太急忙问道。

“各种品种都有，夫人，您想要哪种？”

“我想要一只警犬，我猜你没有这种狗吧？”

老头儿犹疑地朝篮子里看了看，然后伸进手，抓住一只小狗的后颈，小狗被拎了出来，直扭身子。

“这不是只警犬。”汤姆说道。

“不，这确实不是只纯正的警犬，”老头儿略带失望地说道，“它多半是只艾尔达犬。”他抚摸着小狗背部的棕褐色皮毛。“看看这狗毛，简直就是件天然的外套，养这条狗你绝对不用担心它会感冒。”

“我觉得它很可爱，”威尔逊太太兴高采烈地说道，“它值多少钱？”

“这条狗对吗？”他略带艳羡地望着它，“你给十块钱吧。”

这只艾尔达犬，毫无疑问它身上某些地方确实带点艾尔达品种的特点，尽管它的爪子太白了，它趴在威尔逊太太的大腿上，就这么被易主了，此刻她正欣喜无比地摩挲着小狗那身不怕风吹雨淋的皮毛。

“这狗是雌的还是雄的？”她含蓄地问道。

“那只狗吗？它是只雄狗。”

“这是只母狗，”汤姆肯定地说道，“给你钱，拿着它再去批发十只狗吧。”

我们驶进第五大道，天气温暖和煦，呈现出一派田园风光。在这个夏日的周日午后，即使是看到一群白羊转过街角我也不会感到惊讶。

“停车，”我说道，“我得在这儿和你们分手了。”

“不，你别这样，”汤姆立马回应道。“如果你不进去公寓的话，梅特尔会伤心的，是吧，梅特尔？”

“来吧，”她劝道，“我会打电话给我的妹妹凯瑟琳，只要有眼光的人都称许她是个大美人儿。”

“嗯，我是很想去，可是……”

我们继续向前开，然后车子掉头穿过中央公园，又朝西往一百号以上的街区①驶去。在第158号大街，矗立着一排白色蛋糕似的公寓，轿车在其中的一栋前停了下来。威尔逊太太把眼睛往四下一扫，俨然女王回皇宫般的气势，然后拾掇起她买的东西和那只小狗，趾高气扬地走了

进去。

“我要叫麦基夫妇过来，”在我们乘电梯上去时，她郑重其事地宣布。“当然，我也会打电话叫我妹妹过来。”

他们的公寓在楼的顶层，有一间小小的客厅，小小的厨房，小小的卧室，还有一间浴室。小客厅里放满了绣帷罩饰的家具，一直挤到了门边，家具对客厅来说实在是太大了，以致在房间里动一动就要碰上罩布上的绘画——一幅凡尔赛宫^②仕女在花园荡秋千的景象。房间里只有一幅被放大的装饰画，很像一只母鸡蹲在一块轮廓不清晰的石头上，但远远望去，母鸡幻化成了一项无沿女帽，帽子下边儿是一张健壮老太太的脸，容光四射，俯视着整个房间。桌上摆放着几份过期的《漫谈城市》报，一本《彼得·西门别传》以及几本专门散播百老汇丑闻的杂志。威尔逊太太此刻最关心的是她的小狗，她好不容易才说服电梯工给她弄来了一个铺满稻草的纸箱和一些牛奶，他还主动带来了一听个儿大又硬实的狗饼干，饼干在牛奶里泡了整整一个下午，竟然一点儿也没松化。此刻，汤姆从上锁的柜门抽屉里取出一瓶威士忌酒。

一生中我只喝醉过两次，那天下午就是第二次。于是那天发生的所有事情似乎都有点模模糊糊，好像给罩上了一层雾似的。即使是在八点以后，房间里依然阳光普照，威尔逊太太坐在汤姆的大腿上给许多人挨个儿打着电话。之后，因为没有烟了，我就出去到街角的杂货铺里买了几包。当我回来时，他俩都不见了，于是我就识趣地坐在会客厅，读《彼得·西门别传》这本小说——也许是书写得太烂了，也许是喝了威士忌后酒性发作，反正我啥也没看懂。

当汤姆和梅特尔（第一杯酒下肚后，我和威尔逊太太就开始直呼其名了）重新出现时，客人们也开始陆续登门拜访了。

威尔逊太太的妹妹——凯瑟琳，是位三十岁左右、身材苗条却浑身俗气的女人，长着一头又硬又密的红头发，脸上抹得跟牛奶一样白。她的眉毛是拔过后又画上的，勾勒出一个显得更加俏皮的眉尖，可是眉毛却想要恢复成天然的模样，结果弄得她的整个脸都有点模糊不清了。当她走动时，手上数不清的陶瓷手镯也跟着忽上忽下，不停地发出稀里哗啦的声响。她走进来时轻车熟路，以一种主人自居的神气扫视了一遍家具，以致我怀疑她是不是在这里住。当我问她是否在这儿住时，她开始肆无忌惮地放声大笑，重复了一遍我的问题后告诉我她和一个女孩儿住在旅馆。

麦基先生住在楼下，是个面色苍白、女里女气的男人。他刚刮过胡子，因为他的颧骨上还有点点白色的肥皂泡，他进屋时彬彬有礼地跟每个人打了声招呼。他跟我说他是“玩儿艺术的”，后来我才搞明白他是一个摄影师，威尔逊太太母亲的那张模糊不清的照片就是他给放大的，挂在墙上像个幽灵。他的妻子是个尖声细气、无精打采的人，还算有点姿色，但长得不讨人喜欢，她自豪地告诉我说自从结婚以来，她丈夫已经给她拍过127次照了。

威尔逊太太不知在什么时候换了装束，那是件做工考究的午后装——一件淡黄色的雪纺绸薄纱裙，当她在房里走动时，裙子不断地发出窸窣窸窣的声响。在衣服的作用下，她的举止神态也发生了改变。在车铺里她给人的印象是十分有活力，此刻变成了十足的傲慢。随着时间一分一秒地过去，她的笑声、她的举止、她的言辞变得越来越做作，似乎由于她在无限地膨胀，房子周围的空间被挤压得越来越小，到最后她似乎在围绕着烟雾缭绕的空气中一根发出吱吱响的、吵闹的轮轴旋转。

“亲爱的，”她装腔作势地对她妹妹大声说道，“这年头大多数人都是骗子，他们满脑子只想着钱。上周我让一个女人给我看了下脚，你要

是看到她给我的账单，会以为她刚给我割了阑尾呢。”

“那女人叫什么？”麦基太太问道。

“埃布哈特太太，她专门上门给人家看脚。”

“我喜欢你的衣服，”麦基太太说道，“我觉得它很漂亮。”

威尔逊太太把眉毛一挑，轻蔑地拒绝了这个恭维。

“这只是件破玩意儿，”她说道，“我只有在不怎么注意形象的时候才随便穿穿它呢。”

“但你穿上它真的很好看，如果你明白我的意思的话，”麦基太太继续说，“要是切斯特能把你这个姿态拍下来，我想他肯定能创作出一幅杰作。”

我们都默默地瞅了瞅威尔逊太太，此刻她正把一缕头发从眼前撩开，然后回过头对我们粲然一笑。麦基先生偏着头，目不转睛地注视着她，然后在前面用手前前后后地比划着。

“我应该转换一下光线，”过了一会儿，他说道。“我想让她的身材呈现出立体感，同时我要设法拍到后面的头发。”

“我认为不用转换光线，”麦基太太大声说。“我觉得光线……”

她丈夫说了一声“嘘”，然后我们又把目光转向摄影对象，就在这时，汤姆打了个响哈欠，站了起来。

“麦基家的，喝点什么吧，”他说道，“再来点冰块儿和矿泉水，梅特尔，要不然大家都要睡着了。”

“我早就吩咐那小伙子拿点冰块儿过来。”梅特尔失望地挑了挑眉，表现出对下人的偷懒感到无可奈何。“这些人！你就得整天看着他们。”

她看了我一眼，莫名其妙地笑了。然后跳跃着朝她的小狗奔过去，对小狗狂吻一阵后，又大摇大摆地走进厨房，那架势就像有十几名大厨在那里静候她的命令。

“我在长岛拍了些不错的照片。”麦基先生说道。

汤姆面无表情地看着他。

“我已经把其中的两幅装裱起来，挂在楼下了。”

“两幅什么？”汤姆问道。

“两幅专题作品。其中一幅我给它命名为‘蒙塔海角——海鸥’，另一幅命名为‘蒙塔海角——大海’。”

威尔逊太太的妹妹凯瑟琳在沙发上挨着我坐。

“你也住在长岛吗？”她问道。

“我住在西埃格。”

“真的吗？大约一个月前我参加了一位名叫盖茨比先生举行的派对，你认识他吗？”

“我就住在他家隔壁。”

“哟，人家说他是德国皇帝威廉•凯撒的侄子还是表弟啥的，他的钱都是从那儿来的。”

“真的吗？”

她点了点头。

“我有点怕他，不想跟他扯上什么关系。”

这场关于我邻居的引人入胜的交谈被麦基太太打断了，她突然指着凯瑟琳大声说：“切斯特，我想你可以帮她拍几张照。”但麦基先生只是不耐烦地点了点头，又把注意力集中到汤姆身上。

“我想在长岛开展更多工作，要是我能获得机会进入的话，我只需他们给我一个开始的机会。”

“问梅特尔吧，”汤姆说道，就在威尔逊太太端着盘子走进来时，他突然爆发出一阵大笑。“她会给你写介绍信的。对吧，梅特尔？”

“做什么？”她不解地问道。

“你可以写封信把麦基介绍给你丈夫，以便他能给他拍些照片。”当他在替照片想名字时，嘴巴无声地动了一会儿。“像乔治.B.威尔逊在加油站，等等诸如此类的。”

凯瑟琳向我凑近身子，附在我耳边悄声说：“这俩谁都受不了他们家那口子。”

“他们会吗？”

“受不了他们了，”她看了看梅特尔又看了看汤姆，“我想说的是，既然受不了对方，干吗还在一起生活呢？换做是我的话，早就离婚然后又立马各自结婚了。”

“难道她也不喜欢威尔逊吗？”

梅特尔无意间听到了这个问题，作了回答，回答令人颇感意外，听起来既激烈又粗俗。

“你瞧，”凯瑟琳得意地嚷嚷起来，随后又压低了声音，“事实上是他妻子不让他们在一起的，她是个天主教徒，他们不兴离婚。”

黛西不是天主教徒，我真是对这个精心编制的谎言感到有点诧异。

“等到他们结婚了，”凯瑟琳继续说道，“他们会去西部生活一阵子，直到这场风波平静下来。”

“去欧洲不是更稳妥吗？”

“噢，你喜欢欧洲？”她惊讶地喊道，“我刚从蒙特卡洛①回来。”

“真的？”

“就在去年，我跟另一名女孩一块儿去的。”

“待的时间长吗？”

“不长，我们只去了蒙特卡洛就回来了，取道马赛②。我们动身时带了1200多美元，但仅仅两天时间，我们就在自己住的房间里全被输光了。你都不知道我们回来时有多狼狈。天哪，我恨死那个地方了！”

傍晚时分，从窗外望去，天空澄澈，就像是地中海湛蓝而甜蜜的海水，随后麦基太太那尖细的嗓音把我的思绪扯回屋里。

“我也差点犯了个错误，”她兴致勃勃地说道，“我差点嫁给一个追

求我多年的犹太小伙子。我知道他配不上我，大家一直对我说：‘露西尔，那个男人配不上你！’但要是我没遇见切斯特，他就把我娶到手了。”

“是的，但是听着，”梅特尔·威尔逊点了点头，说道，“至少你并没有嫁给他。”

“我知道我没有。”

“唉，可我嫁给他了，”梅特尔含混地说道，“这就是你我之间的区别。”

“你为什么要嫁给他呢，梅特尔？”凯瑟琳追问道，“没有人强迫你这么做呀！”

梅特尔想了一会儿。

“我嫁给他是因为我原以为他是名绅士，”她最后说道，“我原以为他懂点教养，谁知他连舔我的鞋都不配。”

“你有那么一阵子曾疯狂地喜欢他。”凯瑟琳说道。

“疯狂地喜欢他？”梅特尔难以置信地大声嚷嚷，“谁说我曾疯狂地喜欢他？我对他的喜欢还没有对那边那个男人多呢。”

她突然用手指着我，然后每个人都用责难的目光盯着我，于是我赶紧做出一副不期望谁来爱的表情。

“说我疯狂，那就是我嫁给他的那一刻，当时我立马就知道我犯了个错误。他为了跟我结婚，从别人那儿借了婚服，也从来没有告诉过

我，直到有一天他出门儿，那人来索还了，‘噢，那是你的礼服？’我说道，‘这真是有史以来我第一次听到这事儿。’可我还是把礼服给了他，然后我整个下午都在那儿捶床痛哭。”

“她真应该离开他，”凯瑟琳对我说道，“他们已经在那个汽车铺住了11年了，汤姆是她的第一个情人。”

这瓶威士忌酒——已经是第二瓶了——被在场的宾客频频要求斟上，只有凯瑟琳除外，她觉得“空腹的感觉很好”。汤姆按铃叫那个看门人出去买了一种很出名的三明治，晚饭也包括在里面了。我几次想告辞，打算在柔和的夜色中朝东向公园那边走去，但每次当我试图想出去时，我就感觉被一些粗野、激烈的争论给缠上了，它们就像绳子一样把我拉回固定在椅子上。然而，在城市上空，这些呈现黄色灯光的窗户一定给那些在夜色中不经意的漫步人增添了个人隐私，我就看到了一个，他抬头仰望、陷入沉思。我好像身处其中又好像置身度外，同时对生活永无休止的多姿多彩既感到着迷，又产生厌恶。

梅特尔突然间把她的椅子向我移近，喷吐着微醺的气息向我讲述她跟汤姆第一次邂逅的故事。

“故事发生在两个面对面的小座位上，通常火车上这种座位是没人占的。我正去往纽约看我妹妹，并打算在那儿住一晚。他身穿礼服，脚蹬一双漆皮皮鞋。一见到他，我的视线简直无法移开，可每次他看我时，我不得不装作在看他头顶的广告。当我下车进站时，他紧挨着我，他那穿着雪白衬衣的前胸贴着我的手臂，于是我告诉他我得叫警察了，但他知道我在说谎。我简直昏了头了，跟着他一起上了出租车，还以为搭的地铁哩。那时我满脑子里一遍一遍地问自己：‘能长相厮守吗？能长相厮守吗？’”

她把身子转向麦基太太，随后房间里充斥着她那十分做作的笑声。

“亲爱的，”她大声说道，“等我换下这件衣裳就把它送给你，明天我再去另买一套。我得为要买的东西列张清单。我要做按摩、烫头发，给我的小狗买个项圈，然后还要买一个那种你一按弹簧就能把烟头掐灭的可爱的小烟灰缸，我还要给我母亲的墓地添个新花圈，上面系黑丝带的那种，可以用一整个夏天。我得为这些要做的事情列个单子，以防我忘了哪件。”

时针指向九点，片刻之后我再看表时，发现已经十点了。麦基先生已经在椅子上睡着了，紧攥着两个拳头放在大腿上，活像一张斗士的照片。我掏出手绢替他把干在脸上的白色泡沫给擦掉了，它们令我整个下午都很不舒服。

这只小狗趴在桌上，睁着两只还什么都看不见的眼睛透过烟雾四下观望，时不时地发出几声微弱的呻吟。屋里的人时而不见了，时而又出现了，正打算去某个地方，却突然发现对方不见了，然后又找着了，发现对方就在眼前。临近半夜时，汤姆·布坎南和威尔逊太太面对面激烈地讨论着是否威尔逊太太有权利提到黛西的名字。

“黛西！黛西！黛西！”威尔逊太太大声喊道，“我想什么时候说就什么时候说！黛西！黛西……”

汤姆·布坎南敏捷地稍微一动，一巴掌打在威尔逊太太的鼻子上。

然后浴室里满地都是沾血的毛巾，伴随着女人的责骂声，高悬在这一片混乱之上的是一阵拖长声调的、时断时续的撕心裂肺的嚎叫。麦基先生从睡梦中惊醒，恍恍惚惚地朝门边走去，走到半路，又转过身，盯着眼前的一幕——他的妻子和凯瑟琳一边责骂一边安慰，在拥挤的家具

之间磕磕绊绊地跑来跑去取药品。躺在沙发上那个绝望的身影，血流不止，挣扎着要把一份《漫谈城市》报摊在印有凡尔赛图景的织锦毯上。接着麦基先生转过身继续朝门口走去，我从衣架上取下帽子，也跟了出来。

“改天一起吃顿午饭。”当我们在电梯里小声交谈时，他提议道。

“在哪儿？”

“随便什么地方都可以。”

“不要触碰电梯开关，”电梯工迸出一句。

“请原谅！”麦基先生不失尊严地说道，“我不知道我碰到它了。”

“好的，”我同意了，“很乐意奉陪。”

.....我站在麦基先生的床边，他在双层床单上坐了起来，穿着内衣内裤，手里拿着一大本相册。

“美女与野兽.....孤独.....杂货店老马.....布鲁克林桥.....”

之后，我在宾夕法尼亚车站冷冰冰的地下候车室地上躺了下来，半睡半醒着，一边看着早晨刚出的《论坛报》，一边等候清晨四点的那趟列车。

第三章

整个夏天，我邻居家通宵奏乐，夜夜笙歌。在他的蓝色花园里，一群红男绿女像飞蛾一样在笑语、香槟和星光中来了又去。午后涨潮时，我看到他的宾客们从高高搭起的木排上往下跳水，或者在他滚烫的海滩上沐日光浴，同时他的两条汽艇划破海湾的水面，拖着滑木板在飞溅的泡沫中前进。到了周末，他的那辆劳斯莱斯变成了一辆公共汽车，从上午九点到半夜穿梭在城中接送一批批宾客，而他的那辆旅行车则像一只敏捷的黄色甲虫奔跑着接送一趟趟的火车车次。到了周一，八个仆人，外加一名园丁用拖把、硬毛刷、锤子和园艺剪刀得辛辛苦苦干上个一整天，收拾头天晚上留下的残迹。

每逢周五，五箱从纽约的某个水果商那儿批发的橘子和柠檬会如约而至，到了周一，同样是这些水果，被榨干了汁水后，变成了半拉半拉的果皮，像金字塔般高高地被堆放在他家后门旁。厨房里有一台榨汁机，只要仆人的拇指按下那个小小的按钮达两百次，就能在半小时之内榨出两百个橘子的果汁。

至少两周有一次，一个宴会承办团会从城里赶到这儿，带着好几百英尺的篷布和足够数量的彩灯把盖茨比巨大的花园装扮得像棵圣诞树。自助餐桌上摆满了各种食物，应有尽有。香喷喷的烤火腿周围摆满了各式各样的沙拉以及粉皮猪肉和烘烤得黄灿灿的火鸡。主宴会厅里有一个用真正的铜杆搭建的酒吧，上面陈列着杜松子酒和烈酒，以及早已被人忘怀的甘露酒，来的女宾大多是年轻人，根本分不清楚到底是哪种酒。

乐队在七点以前已经到达，并不是什么只有五件乐器的小乐队，而是一支拥有双簧管、长号、萨克斯管、大小提琴、短号、短笛、高低音铜鼓等全套乐器的大型乐队。最后一批客人已经从海滩游泳归来，此刻正在楼上更衣，从纽约开来的汽车五辆一排停在车道，大厅、会客室和走廊变得色彩斑斓，女宾们的发型争奇斗艳，她们身披的各式披肩足以令生产纱巾闻名的卡斯蒂尔^①也黯然失色。酒吧那边忙得热火朝天，一巡又一巡的鸡尾酒香气弥漫着整个花园，直到空气中充满了唧唧喳喳的谈话声、笑语声以及偶然的、转眼便忘的打趣和寒暄，还有从未谋面的女宾们之间热情洋溢的交谈。

随着大地渐渐褪尽了落日的余晖，灯光变得更加明亮。此时，乐队演奏起温馨的鸡尾酒乐曲。众宾客像演唱歌剧一样，提高了一个音调，越来越容易引起欢笑，一会儿便会迸发出一阵笑声，一句玩笑话就会把大家逗得大乐。人流动得越来越快，时而随着新客人的加入而扩大，时而又散开，一眨眼又重新聚拢起来。有些人已经开始到处徘徊游窜，一些脸皮较厚的女孩儿在比较固定的人群中穿行，一会儿在欢乐的短暂瞬间成为众人瞩目的焦点，把气氛弄得热烈而欢快，一会儿芳踪又扬长而去。她们在不断变换的灯光下，在变幻不定的面孔、话语和色彩中来回穿梭。

突然，在这群吉普赛人似的姑娘中，有浑身珠光宝气的一位，随手抓了一杯鸡尾酒一饮而尽，壮了壮胆子，然后像弗里斯克^①般挥动着双手，一个人在篷布搭的舞池里手舞足蹈起来。沉静了片刻之后，乐队指挥殷勤地为她变换了曲子的节奏，随后人群中爆发出一阵叽叽喳喳的说话声，因为有人误传她就是“愚人舞蹈团”里的吉尔达·格瑞^②的替角儿。晚会正式开始了。

第一次去盖茨比家的那个晚上，我相信我是少数几个得到正式邀请

的客人之一。大多数人并没有受到邀请——他们是自己来的。他们坐上汽车，车子把他们带到长岛，不知怎么地就停在了盖茨比的家门口。到了那儿，只要有个认识盖茨比的人引见一下，随后，他们就像在娱乐场所一样，各行其是。有时候，他们从来到走，压根儿就没有见过盖茨比，他们怀着一颗真心来参加派对，这份儿诚意便是他们的入场券了。

我确实是受到了邀请。那个星期六的清晨，一个身穿蓝色制服的司机穿过我家的草坪，带来了一份他主人发出的措辞非常正式的请柬，上面写着：如蒙大驾光临今晚举行的“小型聚会”，他本人将感到十分荣幸。上面还说，他见过我几次，很久之前就想登门拜访，却因为种种原因，未能如愿，深表遗憾等等。最后签名是杰伊·盖茨比，落笔很有气势。

晚上7点刚过，我就穿上白色法兰绒便装走过他家的草坪参加聚会。我局促不安地在素不相识的人群中转来转去，虽然偶尔也会跟在上下班火车上见过的人打个照面。令我感到吃惊的是，有不少英国年轻人，他们衣着考究，却面露饥色，都在热情地与成功富有的美国人低声交谈。我能确定他们是在推销什么东西：债券、保险或者汽车什么的。他们个个都很焦急，知道好赚的钱触手可及，他们深信只要说话得体，这些钱就是他们的了。

我到那儿就试图找男主人，但当我问两三个人他的行踪时，他们都用很吃惊的表情盯着我，并夸张地说不知道主人的踪迹，于是我悄悄地溜回摆放着鸡尾酒的餐桌——这是花园里唯一一个单身汉可以逗留但又不至于显得无所事事和孤孤单单的地方。

正当我想喝个酩酊大醉，以摆脱这种窘境时，乔丹·贝克从屋子里走了出来，站在大理石台阶的顶部，身子微微向后倾斜，带着轻蔑的神

情俯视着整个花园。

不管人家欢迎与否，在我跟身边经过的人莫名其妙地打招呼前，我得给自己找个伴儿。“你好啊！”我大声喊着，朝她走过去。我的嗓音在花园里听起来大得很不自然。

“我想你也许会来，”当我走到她跟前时，她心不在焉地回应了一句。“我记得你住谁家隔壁……”

她满不在乎地跟我握了握手，表示她待会儿再来关照我。接着去听两个停在台阶底下、身穿一模一样黄色衣裙的姑娘说话。

“嗨！”她们一起喊道，“真遗憾你没赢。”

说的是高尔夫联赛，在上周的决赛中她输了。

“你不认识我们，”其中一个穿黄衣服的女孩说道，“但我们一个月前在这儿见过你。”

“从那以后你们就染了头发，”乔丹说道。我吃了一惊，但是这两个女孩已经漫不经心地走开了，所以她的话就像是对刚升起的月亮说的。毫无疑问，月亮就像被做成了晚餐，出自宴会承办者的食篮。乔丹用她那纤细的、晒成金黄色的胳膊挽着我，我们走下台阶，在花园里漫步。月色溶溶中，扑鼻而来的是一阵鸡尾酒香，随后我们和那两个穿黄衣裙的女孩儿以及三位先生坐在一张桌旁，互相喃喃地咕哝着介绍自己。

“你经常来参加这样的聚会吗？”乔丹问她身边坐着的女孩儿。

“上一次就是见到你的那次。”女孩机敏而自信地回答道，接着她转向同伴，“你不是吗，露西尔？”

露西尔也是这样。

“我喜欢来，”露西尔说道，“我从不在意干什么，所以我总能玩得很开心。上次我来这时，我的礼服勾住了椅子，划破了，他问了我的姓名和地址，不到一周我就收到了一个来自克罗里的邮包，里面是一件簇新的晚礼服。”

“你收下它了吗？”乔丹问道。

“当然收下了，我原打算今晚穿它的，但是领口太开了，得改改。衣服是浅蓝色的，上面镶着淡紫色的珠子，值260美元呢。”

“一个家伙做出这样的事，真是有趣，”另一个女孩急切地说道，“他不想惹任何人的麻烦。”

“谁不想？”我问道。

“盖茨比，有人告诉我说……”

这两个女孩和乔丹神秘地凑到一块儿。

“有人跟我说他曾经杀过人。”

我们都打了个冷颤，那三个还叫不上名字的先生也把身子向前倾，想听个明白。

“我认为事情并不如此，”露西尔不相信地辩论道，“他更有可能是战争期间的一个德国间谍。”

其中一位先生附和地点了点头。

“我是从一个知道他全部事情的人那里听说的，他们一起在德国长大。”他肯定地说，设法使我们相信。

“噢，不是的，”第一个女孩儿说道，“不是那样的，他战争期间待在美国军队。”看到我们又倾向于相信她的话，她便兴致勃勃地探过身子，“在他以为没人看他时候你看他一眼，我敢打赌他杀过人。”

她眯起眼睛，身子哆嗦起来，露西尔也跟着哆嗦起来。我们都转过身，四下搜寻着盖茨比。有些人认为这个世界上没有什么事情值得窃窃私语了，可正是这些人在窃窃私语地谈论盖茨比，这就足以证明他可以引起人们多少浪漫的遐想了。

第一顿晚餐——午后又会有一顿，拉开了序幕，乔丹邀请我加入她的小团体，他们独自围坐在花园另一边的一张餐桌旁。有三对已婚夫妇和乔丹的爱慕者，一名执拗的大学生，说话喜欢含沙射影，并且显然认为乔丹早晚都会委身于他。不同于派对上的自由散漫，这个团体个个正襟危坐，俨然一副代表庄重的乡间贵族姿态——东埃格村人屈尊莅临西埃格，小心谨慎地绕开着这儿的寻欢作乐，怕有损体面。

“我们出去吧，”在白白浪费了半个小时后，乔丹悄声对我说道，“这儿的人对我太斯文了。”

我们站起身，接着她向大伙儿解释说我们想去拜访男主人，她说我从没见过他，这话让我很不舒服。那位大学生玩世不恭而又略带忧郁地点了点头。

第一眼，我们扫向酒吧，那儿挤满了人，但盖茨比不在那儿。她望向台阶，也没发现他，他也没在走廊上。偶然间，我们走进了一扇看上去很气派的门，进入一座高耸的哥特式图书馆，墙壁上嵌着英国橡树浮

雕，也许是从海外的某处遗址被整块儿运过来的。

一个胖胖的中年男人，戴着一副硕大的猫头鹰眼式的眼镜，有点微醉地坐在一个大桌旁，眼神游离地盯着架上的书。当我们进去时，他兴奋地转过头，把乔丹从上到下打量了一番。

“你觉得怎么样？”他唐突地问道。

“什么怎么样？”

他把手朝书架一扬。

“关于那个。事实上你们不需要去一探究竟，我敢保证，它们是真的。”

“这些书吗？”

他点了点头。

“绝对是真的，有页码，该有的都有。我原以为他们只是好看经用的空壳儿，事实上，它们全是真正的书，一页一页。来，让我拿一本给你们瞧。”

他想当然地以为我们也对那些书存有怀疑，他急急忙忙地跑到书架旁，取回了《斯托达德①演说集》的第一卷。

“瞧瞧！”他大声嚷嚷，“这是本货真价实的印刷品。他把我搞懵了。这家伙是个十足的贝拉斯科②。太了不起了，这么完美，真是惟妙惟肖！知道什么时候及时收手——连书页都没裁开。你还想要什么呢？你还盼着什么呢？”

他把书一把从我手中夺去，然后急急忙忙地把它重放回了书架上。嘴里咕哝着什么哪怕抽掉一块儿砖，整个图书馆都有可能塌掉这样的话。

“谁带你们来的？”他追问道，“还是你们擅自闯入？我是被人领进来的，大多数客人也是。”

乔丹满含笑意又略带机警地看着他，没作回答。

“我是被一位叫罗斯福的女士带进来的，”他继续说道，“克劳德·罗斯福太太，你们认识她吗？昨晚我在哪儿碰到了她。我已经醉了快一个礼拜了，我想坐在图书馆里能让我清醒点儿。”

“有用吗？”

“我觉得有点儿用，确切地我也说不清，我只在这儿待了一个小时。我告诉你关于这些书了吗？它们是真的，它们……”

“你已经告诉我们了。”

我们一本正经地跟他握手后退了回去。

花园里，人们已经开始在铺着帆布的地上跳舞。上了年纪的男人们搂着年轻姑娘旋转着翩翩起舞，舞姿不甚优雅，自以为高人一等的男男女女成双成对地搂在一起，踏着流行的舞步，守在舞池的边角，一些落单的女孩则独自舞着，或者有时去接替一下乐队的班卓琴手和鼓手，好让他们歇口气。午夜时分，欢乐的气氛更浓烈了。一个著名的男高音歌唱家唱了一首意大利歌曲，一个声名狼藉的女低音歌手则唱了支爵士曲。花园里其他人则亮出了自家的“拿手好戏”，伴随着一阵阵欢乐而空洞的笑声响彻夏日的星空。舞台上有一对双胞胎，应该是那两个穿黄衣

裙的女孩，也身穿舞服表演了一支儿童舞蹈。香槟酒用比洗指碗大的玻璃杯盛着，一杯一杯地被端出来。月亮升得更高了，一个银色天平样的三角形星座悬浮在海湾的上空，随着草坪上生硬的、细细的班卓琴音微微震颤。

我仍和乔丹·贝克待在一块儿。我们坐在一张餐桌旁，同坐的还有一位年纪和我相仿的先生和一个爱吵闹的年轻姑娘，她动不动就放声大笑。现在我也开始惬意地享受了，我已经喝了两大杯香槟，眼前的景象变得充满意义、质朴自然而又深远莫测。

在表演的空当，这位先生看着我，笑了。

“你看起来面熟，”他有礼貌地说，“你是不是在战争期间被编在第一师？”

“怎么，是的。我在第九机枪营。”

“我在第七步兵营，一直待到1918年6月。我就知道我以前在哪见过你。”

我们谈了一会儿法国的那些潮湿、灰白的小村庄，显然他就住在附近，因为他告诉我他刚刚买了一架水上飞机，并打算在第二天早上试飞。“想跟我一起吗，老伙计？就在海湾附近的海岸边。”

“什么时候？”

“只要你觉得方便，任何时候都行。”

我正想问他的名字，就在这时，乔丹转过头看着我，笑了笑。

“现在玩得开心了吧？”她问道。

“好多啦。”我又转过身，面对着新相识的这位。“对我来说，这是个特别的宴会。我连男主人都没见到，我住在那边……”我朝远处看不见的地方扬了一下手，“一个叫盖茨比的人让他的司机给了我一份请帖。”

他看了我一会儿，好像没弄明白我说什么。

“我就是盖茨比。”他突然说。

“什么？”我惊呼道，“噢，真是对不起。”

“我以为你认识我，老伙计。恐怕我不是一个好主人。”

他善解人意地笑了笑——不仅仅是善解人意。它是那种让你感到十分放心的很罕见的一种笑，这种笑，也许在你的一生中只能碰到四五次。这种微笑只是在那么一瞬间面对着，或似乎面对着整个永恒的世界，随后又集中到你身上，表现出对你的一种不能抗拒的偏爱。它能够理解你，恰好就到你需要被理解的程度；信任你，就好像你自己信任自己一样，并且能令你十分相信，你给他留下了你能给别人留下的最好印象。就在那时，笑容消失了，我眼前是一位文雅的年轻的壮年男子，不过三十一二岁，措词文雅，文绉绉的举止显得有点可笑。就在他介绍自己的前一刻，我突然间强烈地觉得他的话语一定是经过再三斟酌的。

就在盖茨比先生要介绍自己时，一个男管家匆匆跑来，告诉他芝加哥来了电话。于是，他依次向我们每个人微微鞠了个躬，以表歉意。

“如果你需要什么，请尽管开口，老伙计，”他恳切地说道，“请原谅，待会儿再过来陪你。”

当他走后，我立马转向乔丹，迫不及待地想要她知道我的惊讶。我原以为盖茨比先生是个红光满面、肥肠大耳的中年男人。

“他是谁？”我迫切地问道，“你知道吗？”

“就是个名叫盖茨比的人呗。”

“我是说，他从哪儿来，做什么的？”

“现在你开始对这个话题感兴趣了，”她懒洋洋地笑着说道。“好吧，他曾经跟我说他念过牛津大学。”

一个模糊的背景开始在他身后形成，不过她的下一句话立马就让它消失了。

“但是，我不相信。”

“为什么不信？”

“我也不知道，”她坚持道，“我认为他没去过那儿。”她说话的语调让我想起了另一个姑娘说的话：“我认为他杀过人”，于是更激起了我的好奇心。我本来会毫不怀疑地相信人家跟我说的盖茨比是从路易斯安那州的沼泽地里蹦出来的，或者是从纽约东部的贫民窟底层走出来的，等等诸如此类的话，那还好理解一些。但是，年纪轻轻的人——至少依据我有限的经验，我不相信他们怎么能，如此酷地不知从哪个地方冒出来，然后在长岛海湾买了一栋皇宫一样的豪宅。

“不管怎样，他会举办大型宴会，”乔丹说道，像一般城里人一样，讨厌深究细枝末节，于是就换了个话题。“并且我也喜欢大型聚会，大

家可以亲亲热热的，而在小宴会上就感觉完全没有个人隐私。”

这时响起一阵低音鼓的隆隆声，接着便突然听到乐队指挥开腔，他的声音盖过了荡漾在花园上空的回音。

“女士们，先生们，”他大声说道，“应盖茨比先生的请求，我们决定为你们呈上迪米尔·托斯托夫先生的最新作品，去年五月，它在卡耐基大厅演奏时获得了极大的关注。如果各位看过报纸，就知道它曾经轰动一时。”他带着居高临下的神情欢快地微微一笑，接着说：“真是轰动一时啊！”话音刚落，大伙儿全乐了。

“这首曲子叫作，”他兴致勃勃地准备结束讲话，“迪米尔·托斯托夫的世界爵士史。”

托斯托夫先生的作品没有吸引我，因为演奏一开始，我的眼睛就落在了盖茨比身上。他正独自站在大理石台阶上，用满意的目光对人群看来看去。他的棕褐色的皮肤紧紧贴在脸上，显得很有魅力，他的短头发看起来就像是每天都经过修剪似的。在他身上，我实在看不出有什么邪恶的地方。我怀疑是不是因为他不喝酒才使他跟众宾客不同，因为在我看来，随着来宾们越来越放纵开怀，他的仪态变得越来越沉稳庄重了。当这首“世界爵士史”乐曲演奏完毕时，姑娘们像哈巴狗似地快乐地一头栽在男士们的肩头，有的姑娘嬉闹着后仰晕倒在先生们的怀里，甚至有的还往人群里倒，因为她们知道肯定会有人把她们扶住。但是没有人倒在盖茨比身上，也没有法式的波波头靠上盖茨比的肩，更没有四重唱小组拉着盖茨比先生加入。

“请原谅。”

盖茨比的男管家突然站到我们身边。

“是贝克小姐吗？”他问道，“请原谅，盖茨比先生想要跟您单独谈谈。”

“跟我吗？”她吃惊地大声问道。

“是的，女士。”

她慢慢站起来，吃惊地向我挑了挑眉，随后就跟着男管家向屋里走去。我注意到她穿晚礼服，确切的说是所有的衣服，都跟穿运动服一样——一举一动都充满了激情和活力，就好像是在清新爽亮的早晨初次学习如何行走在高尔夫球场上。

我又孤身一人了，时间差不多两点了。有那么一会儿，一阵嘈杂的声音从平台上面那间长长的、嵌有许多玻璃的屋里传出来，吸引了宾客们的注意。乔丹的追求者，那个大学生，此刻正和两个歌舞团的女孩大谈助产术，并极力邀请我加入他们的谈话，但我走进了屋子，脱身溜掉了。

大房间里挤满了人。那两个穿黄衣裙女孩中的一个正在弹钢琴，在她身边站着一个身材高挑的、红头发的年轻女士，她来自一个著名的合唱队，此刻正唱着歌。她已经喝了不少香槟，并且在唱的过程中，不合时宜地认定万事万物都值得悲哀，所以她不仅是在唱，简直是在哭了。每当稍有停顿时，她就开始哽咽，时断时续地哭泣，随后又继续用震颤的女高音歌唱。眼泪顺着她的两颊流下来——但显得很 unnatural，因为它们与她那画得很浓的眼睫毛混在一块儿时，就变得漆黑，最后在她脸上汇成了一道道缓缓流淌的小溪。于是有人开玩笑地建议她演唱一首用脸上的音符谱成的乐曲，听了这话，她两手往上一甩，栽倒在一张椅子上，醉醺醺地呼呼大睡起来。

“她刚才跟一个自称是她丈夫的男人打了一架。”站在我旁边的一个女孩儿解释道。

我四下里看了看，发现大多数留下未走的女客都在跟自称是她们丈夫的男人们吵架，甚至是乔丹的同伴，那个来自东埃格村的四人组合，也因意见不合而分裂。其中有个男人正趣味盎然地跟一个女演员攀谈，他的妻子，起先还试图对这种情形不失尊严、不以为然地置之一笑，最后终于彻底爆发了，开始从侧面对他攻击——冷不丁地突然出现在他身边，像一条被激怒的毒蛇一样在他耳边嘶嘶地吐着信子：“你保证过的。”

不愿回家的还不只是那些任性的男人们。此刻大厅里还有两个很清醒的先生和他们怒气冲冲的太太，两位太太在用稍微提高的声音互相安慰着。

“每当他见我玩得很高兴，他就想回家。”

“在我人生中从没见过这么自私的家伙。”

“我们总是最先告辞的一对儿。”

“我们也是。”

“唉，今晚我们成最晚离开的了。”其中一位先生怯生生地说，“乐队半个小时之前就离开了。”

尽管两位太太一致认为这样恶毒的话语简直难以置信，这场争辩还是以短暂的打斗收场了，两位太太被抱起来，手扭脚踢地，冲进了夜色之中。

当我在大厅里等着拿帽子时，藏书室的门打开了，乔丹·贝克和盖茨比一起走了出来。他正在跟她说最后一句话，但是当很多人走过来跟他告别时，他之前热切的态度立马变得一本正经了。

乔丹的同伴们在走廊上不耐烦地召唤她，但她还是逗留了一会儿，跟我握手道别。

“我刚才听到了一件非常令人惊奇的事，”她小声说道，“我们在这多久了？”

“怎么，大概一个小时吧。”

“它……真令人惊奇。”她心不在焉地重复道。“但我发过誓不说出去，可我现在却在这儿吊你的胃口了。”她在我面前优雅地打了个呵欠，“有时间来看看我吧……在电话簿的……西古奈·霍华德太太名下找……我的姨妈……”她边说边急急忙忙地离开了，挥动着她晒得棕褐色的手，轻快地敬了个礼，然后加入到正在门口等待的同伴当中。

第一次做客就待到这么晚，我感到很不好意思，于是我加入到盖茨比最后一批客人当中去，此刻他们正簇拥在他身边。我向他解释其实在晚会刚开始的时候我就想去找他，并为没在花园里认出他来致歉。

“不用客气，”他恳切地说道，“别再想它了，老伙计。”这个熟悉的称呼比之前他亲昵地用手拍过我的肩膀更让我觉得亲切。“别忘了明天上午九点我们还要驾着水上飞机飞上天呢。”

随后男管家走近前，站在他身后：“先生，费城来电话。”

“好的，等会儿。告诉他们我一会儿就来……晚安。”

“晚安。”

“晚安。”他笑了笑，突然间我觉得作为最后一批客人离去，有某种令人愉悦的意义，似乎他也一直这样希望着。“晚安，老伙计……晚安。”

但是当我走下台阶时，我发现这个夜晚并没有就此终结。门外五十英尺开外的地方，十几盏车灯照出了一个混乱喧嚣的场景。路边的沟渠里，在距离盖茨比家车道两分钟路程的地方，翻着一辆崭新的四轮轿式汽车，右侧向上，有个车轮被撞飞了，是墙上很突出的一角把这个轮子撞掉的，现在有五六个好奇的司机正在那里围观。但是，由于他们把车停在路上，造成道路拥堵，背后的那些车就不停地按着喇叭，声音嘈杂刺耳，给这个原本就混乱不堪的画面更添上了一层乱。

一个身穿长风衣的男人从失事汽车里爬了出来，站在马路中间，轻松而又迷惑地看看车子，又看看轮胎，最后又看看围观者。

“瞧！”他解释道，“它翻到沟里去了。”

显然这个事令他很惊讶，开始我只是觉得他的这种惊讶与众不同，然后我认出了他——那个早先光顾盖茨比藏书室的人。

“怎么回事啊？”

他送了耸肩。

“我对机械一无所知。”他毅然决然地说。

“但这是怎么发生的？你把车开到墙上去了吗？”

“别问我，”“猫头鹰眼”（译者注：此人一直带着一副类似猫头鹰眼的眼镜）说道，把事情推卸得一干二净。“我对开车知道的很少，几乎一无所知。就这么发生了，这就是我知道的全部。”

“好吧，既然你不太会开车，就不应该在夜里瞎开。”

“可我连试也没试，”他愤愤不平地解释说，“我连试都没试。”

围观的人都变得目瞪口呆。

“你想自杀吗？”

“你应该庆幸，只掉了个轮子！不会开车，还连试都不试。”

“你不明白，”肇事者解释道，“我没开车，车里还有另外一个人。”

这句话引起的震惊招来了一阵“啊——啊——啊”的声音，同时那小轿车的门被摇摇晃晃地打开了。围观的群众——此时已是一大帮人了，不由自主地往后退了一步。当车门打开时，一片死一般的沉寂。接着，慢慢地，一点一点地，一个脸色苍白的、晃晃悠悠的人从失事车辆里跨了出来，着地时还用他那只大舞鞋试探性地在地上蹭。

被车鸣声弄晕了头，这个幽灵般的人站在那儿晃了一会儿，然后才看清那个穿着长风衣的男人。

“出什么事了？”他平静地问道，“我们用光汽油了吗？”

“瞧！”

五六根手指一齐指向那个被撞掉的车轮，他盯着它看了一会儿，然后又抬头往上瞅，好像怀疑轮子是从天上掉下来似的。

“它被撞掉了，”有人解释道。

他点点头。

“刚开始我没注意到车子停下来了。”

顿了顿，然后他深吸了口气，挺直了肩膀，用一种坚定的语气说道：“谁能告诉我哪儿有加油站吗？”

至少有十几个人，其中有几个脑子比他清醒一些，向他解释说车轮和车身已经完全分家了。

“倒车，”过了一会儿，他提议道，“把车子正过来。”

“但是轮子已经掉了！”

他犹豫了一下。

“试试无妨。”他说道。

嘈杂的车鸣声越来越高，我扭头穿过草坪向家走去，中途回头望了一眼。一轮明月照耀在盖茨比豪宅的上空，夜色依旧美好，花园里依旧华灯璀璨，但欢声笑语已悄然消逝。华丽的门窗突然透出一股死一般的空虚沉寂，映衬着主人的身影愈发显得孤独，此刻他正站在走廊上，举起一只手一本正经地跟大家道别。

通读目前我所写的这些，我发现我已给大家造成这样的印象：这几周里连续三个夜晚断断续续的发生的一些事已经占据了我整个的身心。但恰恰相反，它们只是这个喧嚣夏季里一些偶然事件，并且，很久以后，我对它们的关注远不如我对自己事情的关注。

大多数时间我都在工作。每天清晨，我就匆匆穿过纽约南部摩天大楼之间的白色缝隙赶往诚记信托公司去上班，一路上，迎着太阳，影子偏西。我跟公司里的其他职员和一些年轻的债券推销员混熟了，并且跟他们一起在阴暗拥挤的小餐馆儿里共进午餐，吃的是小猪肉香肠、土豆泥，饮料是咖啡。我甚至还跟一名住在泽西城的女孩儿谈了场短暂的恋爱，她在会计部门工作，但是她的哥哥开始向我投来鄙夷的目光，所以当七月份去度假时，我赶紧结束了这段恋情。

我经常在耶鲁俱乐部吃晚饭——不知为什么，我觉得这是我一天中最糟糕的时光。然后就爬上楼，到图书馆里专心致志地学习一个小时关于投资和有关证券方面的知识。通常周围会有一些吵吵闹闹的人，但他们从不到图书馆来，所以这是个学习的好去处。之后，如果夜色撩人，我就顺着麦迪逊大街溜达，经过那家古老的默里山酒馆，然后穿过33号大街，一直到达宾夕法尼亚车站。

我开始喜欢纽约，这里的夜晚充满着冒险刺激，显得活泼奔放，还可以心满意足地看着不断闪过的红男绿女，还有川流不息的车辆，这些令你眼花缭乱、目不暇接。我喜欢沿着第五大街漫步，从熙熙攘攘的人流中挑出几个妙龄女子，遐想着几分钟后进入她们的生活，没有人会发现或是反对。有时候，我会想象着我跟随她们，来到她们藏在隐秘街角的公寓，然后她们在进门之前朝我回眸一笑，接着便消失在温馨的夜色中。在这个大都市朦胧撩人的夜色中，有时我会产生一种孤独感，它继续缭绕在心头，久久挥之不去，我觉得其他人也有这种孤独感。那些年轻的穷职员，在窗前久久徘徊，一直等到进餐馆独自吃上一顿晚饭，以打发每个夜晚和生活中最令人难熬的时光。

时间又到晚上八点，四十几号街那一带昏暗的巷道里挤满了响着马达声的出租车，五辆一排地向剧院驶去，这时我感到心猛地一沉。当出

租车停下的时候，你可以看见车里的人依偎在一起，听见他们在唱歌，还有无法听见的说笑逗乐，还能看见车里点燃的香烟形成的一道道莫可名状的烟圈。同时，我也在头脑中想象着急匆匆赶着去寻欢作乐并分享着他们的快乐，于是我为他们祝福。

有一段时间我没见到乔丹·贝克，然后在仲夏的时候我又见到了她。起初我很高兴能到处跟着她跑，因为她是个高尔夫球冠军，所有人都知道她的名字。然后我发现不仅仅只是这些，事实上我并没有真正爱上她，只是感到有点好奇。那张对世事厌倦、不可一世的面孔，背后藏着什么——大多数虚伪做作最终都会掩藏着一些什么，即使在开头它们并不这样，有一天，我发现了这点。那天我们一起去参加沃里克家的家庭宴会，她把一辆借来的车没盖上车顶就停在雨里淋，还对此事撒谎。突然间我记起来了那晚没在黛西家想起来的关于她的一些事，在她第一次参加的一个很重要的高尔夫联赛上，发生了一场风波，闹到了差点儿要上报的地步。有人说在半决赛中，她挪动了她的处于不利地位的一个球，这件事酿成了一场丑闻，然后不知怎么的就悄无声息了。一个球童撤回了他的证词，唯一的另外一个目击者也宣称也许是他弄错了。这件事和这个名字一起都留在了我的脑海里。

乔丹·贝克本能地避开头脑精明的男人，现在我明白这是为什么了，因为当事情维持在一个恒定的水平面上，来自各方的歧义都不可能时，她就会有安全感。她的不诚实已经到了无可救药的地步，她不能忍受处于劣势地位，又不心甘情愿。我猜想她年纪还很小的时候就开始耍各种花招了，以向世人维持她那种冷峻的又傲慢无礼的微笑，同时还满足她那矫健结实躯体的要求。

不过我对这些感到无所谓，一个女人的不诚实并不值得人们过多地去苛责，我只是偶感遗憾，随后便忘了。同样是在那次家庭聚会上，我

们之间展开了一场关于开车的有趣的谈话。谈话因这而起——在她开车经过几个工人身边时，挨得太近了，以致车的挡泥板蹭掉了一个工人外衣上的一粒扣子。

“你开车太大意了，”我严肃地对她说，“你要么就小心点开，要么就别开。”

“我已经很小心了。”

“不，你并不小心。”

“唉，只要别人小心点就行了。”她轻轻地说道。

“这跟你开车有什么关系？”

“他们会给我让道，”她固执己见，“双方不小心才会出事呢。”

“假如你遇到跟你一样不小心的人呢？”

“我希望我永远也不会，”她回答说，“我讨厌粗心的人，这就是我为什么会喜欢你。”

她那双灰白的、因阳光照射而眯起的眼睛此刻正直视前方，但她故意转变了我俩的关系，有那么一会儿我以为自己爱上了她，但我是个思维迟钝的人，并且内心充满的各种清规戒律在抑制着我的种种欲望，我明白我首先要做的事情是把自己彻彻底底地从老家那场纠纷中解脱出来。我仍然在一周一封地写信，并署上：“爱你的尼克。”可我满脑子里想的倒是那个打网球的姑娘，她的上嘴唇上密密地沁出一排小汗珠是怎样一幅图景。不管怎样，我模模糊糊地意识到要想重获自由，就必须首先巧妙地摆脱那个纠纷。

每个人都会设想自己至少拥有四种主要美德中的一个，而我的就是这个：我是我认识的为数不多的诚实的人中的一个。

第四章

星期日上午，每当教堂的钟声回荡在海岸边村庄时，时髦社会的红男绿女们就抵达盖茨比的家，在他家的草坪上追欢买笑。

“他是个私酒贩，”年轻的女宾们穿梭在他家的花丛中，一边喝着鸡尾酒，一边窃窃私语道。“有一次他杀了一个人，那人发现他是兴登堡①的侄子，恶魔的表弟。递给我一支玫瑰，亲爱的，然后请给我的酒杯斟上一点点酒。”

有一次我在一张时刻表的空白处登记那些夏天来到盖茨比家的客人名单，现在这已经是张很旧的时刻表了，在折叠处都要断开了，上面写的标题是：“本表于1922年7月5日起生效”。但我仍然记得那些字迹变得灰白的名字，较之于我的一概而论，它们会让你更清楚地明白有哪些人接受过盖茨比的款待，以及虽然对男主人一无所知也对他报以微妙的敬意。

从东埃格来的有切斯特·贝克夫妇以及里奇夫妇，以及一名叫本生的男子，我在耶鲁就认识他了。还有韦伯斯特·西维特医生，去年夏天他在缅因州溺水身亡。还有霍恩比姆夫妇和威利·伏尔泰夫妇，以及叫布莱克巴克的一大家子，他们总是聚集在角落，一有人走近就像山羊似的翘起鼻子。除此以外还有伊思梅夫妇和克里斯蒂夫妇（或者应该说是休伯特·奥尔巴陪同克里斯蒂先生的太太），以及埃德加·比弗，据说，那家伙的头发在冬日的下午会无缘无故地变得像棉花一样白。

我记得克拉伦斯·恩迪福来自东埃格。他只来过一次，穿着白灯笼

裤，在花园里和一名叫艾蒂的流浪汉干了一架。从遥远的岛外到此的客人还有奇德勒夫妇和O.R.P.斯查得夫妇，还有来自乔治亚州的斯通瓦尔·杰克逊·亚布拉姆夫妇和非西嘉德夫妇以及里普利·斯奈尔夫妇，斯奈尔进监狱的前三天，在这喝得酩酊大醉，躺在沙砾车道上，以至于尤利塞斯·斯维特太太的汽车碾着他的右手。除此以外，达西夫妇也来了，同来的还有年过六旬的S.B.怀特贝特，以及莫里斯·A·弗林克、汉姆海德夫妇和烟草进口商贝鲁加及他的女儿们。

来自西半岛的有波尔夫妇、穆尔莱迪夫妇、塞西尔·罗伯克、塞西尔·肖用、州参议员古利克，以及卓越电影公司的当家人牛顿·奥基德、艾克霍斯特和克莱德·科恩、小唐·S·施沃兹以及阿瑟·麦卡蒂，这些人都跟电影界有这样那样的关系。还有卡特利普夫妇、贝姆勃格夫妇和G·厄尔·马尔东，他就是那个掐死自己妻子的一个姓马尔东的人的弟弟。赞助商达·冯坦诺也来过，还有爱德·莱格罗、詹姆斯·B·菲来特（诨名是“劣酒”）、德·琼夫妇和欧内斯特·利里——他们都是来赌博的，每当菲来特在花园里到处闲逛，就意味着他将输得精光，然后第二天他就会操纵联合运输公司的股票，以赚取利润，弥补损失。

一个名叫克里普斯普林格的男人经常来这儿，而且一待就是很长时间，以至于人们叫他“寄生虫”——我怀疑他是否有家。戏剧界人士有葛斯·威兹、霍勒斯·奥多诺万、莱斯特·迈尔、乔治·德克维德和弗朗西斯·布尔。从纽约来的有克罗姆夫妇、贝克海森夫妇、丹尼克夫妇、罗素·贝蒂、科里根夫妇、凯利赫夫妇、杜厄夫妇、斯科里夫妇、S·W·贝尔奇夫妇、斯默克夫妇和年轻的奎因夫妇——现已离婚，还有亨利·L·帕姆多，他后来在泰晤士广场卧轨自杀。

本尼·麦克莱纳亨总是和四个姑娘一起来。每次来的都不是同一批人，不过她们彼此长得很相像，所以很明显，似乎他们以前来过。我忘

了她们的名字——大概是叫杰奎琳什么的，或许是康斯薇拉，再或者是葛洛莉亚，或者朱迪，或是琼，总之她们的姓要么是美妙动听的花名或者月份名，要么就是令人肃然起敬的美国大资本家的大姓，要是被人追问，她们就会承认自己只是他们的远亲而已。

除这些以外，我还记得福斯蒂娜·奥布莱恩至少来过一次，还有贝德克姐妹和年轻的布鲁尔——战争期间，他的鼻子被打掉了。还有阿尔布鲁克斯伯格先生和海格小姐——他的未婚妻，以及阿迪泰·费兹彼德夫妇和曾经担任过美国退伍军人协会会长的P·朱厄特先生，还有克劳迪娅·希普小姐和一个传闻是她司机的男伴。还有一位亲王什么的，我们都叫他公爵，至于他的名字，即便我曾经知道，现在也忘了。

那年夏天，所有这些都来过盖茨比家。

六月底的一个上午，九点的时候，盖茨比的豪华轿车沿着石头铺成的车道一路颠簸，驶到我家门口，然后就听见从他那有三个音调的汽车喇叭里传出一阵悦耳的声响。这是他第一次拜访我，虽然我已经去过他家的聚会两次，坐过他的水上飞机，并在他的殷情邀请下，频繁光顾他的私人海滩。

“早上好，老伙计。今天跟我共进午餐吧，我们这就一起坐车进城。”

他正站在轿车的挡板上，保持身体平衡，表现出美国人特有的那种身体灵活的特点——我猜，那是源于年轻时没干什么重体力活，或者更有可能是因紧张剧烈的运动练就的一种不拘一格的优美身形。透过他那谨小慎微的言行举止，他的好动表现出了他的这一品性。他一刻也安静不下来，不是用一只脚踩着什么地方，就是一只手在不耐烦地一张一

合。

他见我正羡慕地盯着他的车看。

“它很漂亮，不是吗，老伙计？”他从车里跳出来以便让我更好地看。“难道你以前没见过它吗？”

我见过，每个人都见过。车子是浓浓的乳白色，镀上了镍，益发显得闪闪发亮，长长的车身上这里那里的突出部分，是内设的放帽子、食品和工具的箱子，设计巧妙、别出心裁。呈阶梯状的、像迷宫一样的挡风玻璃，折射出十几个太阳，扑朔迷离。我们坐进了好几层玻璃后面的车厢，车厢用绿色皮革装饰，坐进去感觉像进了温室，动身向城里开去。

在过去的一个月里，我跟他交谈过五六次，令我失望的是，他话很少。所以我对他的第一印象——那时我认为他是个举足轻重的人物，已经慢慢地消退了，现在他在我心目中仅仅是一家路旁豪华旅馆的老板。

接下来的旅程令人感到窘迫不安。在我们到达西埃格村之前，盖茨比开始文绉绉地说话，还没说完就没了，同时犹豫不决地用手拍打着他的焦糖色的西服盖住的膝盖处。

“我说，老伙计，”他突然冒出一句，“你现在到底对我有什么看法？”

我有点懵了，只好泛泛而谈，搪塞一通。

“好吧，我要告诉你关于我的身世，”他打断我的话，“我不想你在听到各种谣言后对我产生错误的看法。”

也就是说，对于那些在他家大厅里指控他的流言蜚语，他还是略有耳闻的。

“向上帝发誓，我说的都是事实。”他突然举起了右手，好像若说了半句虚言，随时准备接受上帝的惩罚。“我是中西部某位富人的儿子——现在家人都去世了，我在美国长大，却是在牛津接受的教育，因为我的祖先们都在那里上好多年的学，这是个家族传统。”

他侧视了一下我——现在我明白为什么乔丹·贝克会觉得他在撒谎。他在说到“在牛津上学”时轻描淡写地一语带过，或者吞吞吐吐，哽哽咽咽，好像这话以前让他很难堪似的。带着这种怀疑，他的话就显得支离破碎，经不起推敲，于是，我开始怀疑他是不是有什么不可告人之处。

“在中西部的哪个部位？”我漫不经心地问道。

“圣弗朗西斯科。”

“明白了。”

“我的家人都去世了，所以我继承了一大笔钱。”

他的声音听起来很凝重，好像一大家人突然全部死去的痛苦记忆仍然萦绕在他的心头，有那么一会儿，我觉得他在耍我，但在瞥了他一眼后，我又对他的话信以为真了。

“之后我就像个年轻的印度王子一样游历在欧洲各国的首府，像巴黎、威尼斯、罗马等等，收集珠宝，主要是红宝石，打打猎，偶尔画个画，纯粹是为了自我消遣，试图忘掉很久以前在我身上发生的那些伤心事。”

因为他的话实在令人难以相信，我极力忍住不让自己笑出来。他说的这些陈词滥调仅仅在我脑子里构成了这样一幅画面：在傀儡戏里，一个头上裹着头巾的“角色”在布罗涅森林①里追赶老虎，边跑身子里的木屑边往外漏。

“然后战争爆发了，老伙计。这对我来说是个获得解脱的好机会，我很努力地试图一死了之，但老天似乎认为我应该继续活着。战争一开始我就被任命为陆军中尉，在阿贡森里战役中，我率领我的机枪营部队的残众继续往前行进了很远，中途长达半英里的两翼军队为我们掩护，因为歩兵团不能行进。于是我们在那待了两天两夜，一百三十来号人，十六挺刘易斯式机关枪。当歩兵团最终赶上来时，他们在堆积如山的尸体中找到了三个师的德国军队的徽章。于是我被提拔为少校，每一个同盟国政府都授予我一枚勋章——甚至连黑山国②也不例外，就是亚德里亚海边的那个小小的黑山国！”

小小的小黑山国！他说这几个字时，嗓音略微提高，还点头笑了笑。仿佛这笑中包含着对黑山国饱受罹难的历史的理解和对黑山国人民英勇抵抗敌人的同情。这微笑也表示他十分欣赏这个民族的情结链，正因为此，黑山国百姓从他们那小小的温暖的心田里发出了对他的赞美。现在我由怀疑转而被深深地吸引住了，就像在急匆匆地浏览十几本杂志。

他把手伸进口袋，掏出一个系在一根缎带上的金属片，放到我手掌上。

“这就是那枚黑山国授予的勋章。”

让我吃惊的是，那块东西看上去还真像那么回事。“丹尼罗勋章”，

上面刻着一圈铭文：“黑山国国王尼古拉斯·莱克斯。”

“翻过来看看。”

“杰伊·盖茨比少校，”我念道，“为了纪念他的英勇卓越。”

“这儿还有另一件我随身携带的东西，纪念牛津岁月的一件纪念品。它是在三一学院①的校园里照的——我左边的那个人现在是唐卡斯特伯爵。”

这是一张照片，上面有五六个年轻人，身穿色彩鲜明的运动夹克，在一个拱门里晃悠，穿过拱门可以看见许多尖顶。里面有盖茨比，看上去比现在小点儿，不过也不年轻多少——手里拿着一根板球棒。

这样看来，都是真的了。我仿佛看见一张张虎皮挂在他在威尼斯大运河旁的豪宅里，闪耀夺目。我又仿佛看见他正在打开一箱红宝石，用它们那耀眼的红色光芒来抚慰他因心碎带来的痛苦。

“今天我要请你帮个大忙，”他说道，同时心满意足地把他的纪念品们放回口袋。“所以我认为你应该对我有所了解，我不想让你觉得我只是一个无名小辈。你知道的，我通常在陌生人中间瞎混，我从这儿逛到那儿只是想竭力忘记那些曾发生在我身上的伤心往事。”他迟疑了一下说：

“今天下午你就会听到了。”

“吃中饭的时候？”

“不，今天下午。我凑巧知道你约了贝克小姐准备喝茶。”

“你的意思是你爱上贝克小姐了？”

“不，老伙计，我没有。但是贝克小姐已经欣然同意了跟你就此事进行探讨。”

对于“此事”是什么我一无所知，与其说我对此感兴趣，倒不如说我为此感到烦恼。我请乔丹喝茶，并不是为了跟她讨论杰伊·盖茨比的事情。我敢肯定他这次的请求一定让人意想不到，有那么一会儿，我真有点后悔曾涉足他家那方宾客如云的草坪了。

他没再说一句话。随着我们离城市越来越近，他显得越来越拘谨。我们经过了罗斯福港，在那瞥见了一艘漆了一圈圈红道的远洋航船；又驶过了一片简陋的贫民窟，这里排列着一线昏暗的、仍然在开张营业的酒吧；那些酒吧估计是19世纪初在表面镀了金，现已退（褪）色。布满尘土的山谷在我们两侧延伸，当我们经过时，我还瞥见了威尔逊太太正气喘吁吁地卖力给人家的车加油。

随着汽车的挡板像翅膀一样张开，我们飞驰在半个纽约皇后区的阿斯托里亚街——只是半个，因为当我们在高架铁路的支柱间绕来绕去时，我听到了一阵熟悉的摩托车发出的“哒一哒一噼啪”声，随后便看到一个气急败坏的警察地追了上来，行驶在我们车旁。

“好吧。老伙计。”盖茨比喊道。我们减慢了速度。盖茨比从他的皮夹里掏出一张白色卡片，在这人的眼睛前晃了晃。

“好的，行了，”警察轻轻地碰一碰帽檐，满口应承道，“下次认识您了，盖茨比先生，请原谅。”

“那是什么？”我问道，“那张牛津的照片吗？”

“我曾经给警察局长帮过一次忙，随后他每年都给我寄一张圣诞贺卡。”

在大桥上，阳光射过桥的钢架照在一辆辆飞驰而过的车上，浮光掠影一般，河对面的城市，白色的建筑物像一块块方糖一样成堆地拔地而起，希望它们不是用充满铜臭味的钱建起来的。从皇后区大桥上眺望这座城市，看到的永远是它给人的第一印象，它似乎在向世人承诺率先为他们展示这个世界上所有的奇迹和美丽。

一辆装载着死人的灵车从我们车旁驶过，车上堆满鲜花，后面跟着两辆垂下车帘的送殡车，车里的气氛对送殡的亲友来说比较轻松。他们用忧郁的眼神看着我们，薄薄の上嘴唇表明他们是东南欧人，我很高兴盖茨比的豪华轿车能出现在他们这肃穆的送葬队伍里面。当我们穿过布莱克威尔岛^①时，一辆高级轿车超过了我们，司机是个白人，里面坐着三个打扮入时的黑人，两个小伙子一个姑娘。当他们用傲慢的挑衅眼光看着我们时，我大声笑了起来。

“一旦过了这桥，什么事情都有可能发生，”我暗想道，“任何事情都有可能……”

即使冒出了这样的盖茨比，也无需大惊小怪。

赤日炎炎的正午，在42号街一家电扇开得很大的地下餐厅里，我和盖茨比相约共进午餐。从外面光线明媚的街道走进来，我先眨了眨眼适应了一下，然后就在前厅模模糊糊地搜寻到了盖茨比，他正在跟谁说话。

“卡拉维先生，这是我的朋友沃尔夫山姆先生。”

一个身材矮小、塌鼻子的犹太人抬起他的大脑袋，仔细打量着我，我看到他的两个鼻孔里长着两撮浓密的鼻毛。过了一会儿，我才在半明半暗的光线中找到他的那双小眼睛。

“.....于是我瞧了他一眼，”沃尔夫山姆先生说道，一边跟我热情地握手，“你猜我做了什么？”

“做了什么事？”我有礼貌地问道。

但是很显然他这话不是对我说的，因为他随即就放开我的手，把他那富有表现力的鼻子对准了盖茨比。

“我把钱递给了凯兹堡，并说道：‘好吧，凯兹堡，一个子儿也别给他，直到他闭嘴为止。’然后他就闭嘴了。”

盖茨比两只胳膊一手挽着他，一手挽着我，走进了餐馆，当时沃尔夫山姆先生把刚想说的一句话又咽回去了，陷入了一种如梦似痴的游离状态。

“要加冰的威士忌饮料吗？”领班的侍者问道。

“这是间不错的餐馆，”沃尔夫山姆先生说道，一边还瞅着天花板上的长老会美女绘画。“但我更喜欢街对面那家！”“是的，要加冰的威士忌饮料！”盖茨比同意了，然后对沃尔夫山姆先生说，“去那边太热了。”

“又热又挤.....是的，”沃尔夫山姆先生说，“但是充满了回忆。”

“那是个什么地方？”我问道。

“老大都会。”

“老大都会，”沃尔夫山姆先生陷入了阴郁的沉思，“那儿充满了逝去的面孔，充满了永远离我们而去的朋友。我久久不能忘怀我亲眼目睹他们开枪杀死罗西·罗森塔尔的那个夜晚。当时我们六人坐在桌旁，罗西整晚都在大吃大喝。当天快亮时，侍者带着古怪的神情走近他身旁，说有人想让他出去跟他说话。罗西说‘好的’，然后他开始起身，但我一把把他推回椅子里。”

“如果这帮狗杂种想找你，就让他们进来，罗西，而不是你到外头去。”

“现在是凌晨四点了，如果我们拉起窗帘，就能看到外头的光亮。”

“他去了吗？”我天真地问。

“当然去了，”沃尔夫山姆先生怒气冲冲地朝我晃了晃鼻子，“他走到门边还回转身说：‘别让侍者拿走我的咖啡！’然后就走出去站在人行道上。他们朝他吃得鼓鼓的肚皮上开了三枪，就开车跑了。”

“他们当中四个人被处以电刑，”我记起来之后说道。

“五个，加上贝克。”他的鼻孔兴致勃勃地对准我。“我了解到你正在找关系做生意。”

这两句话放在一起说听起来令人颇感吃惊。盖茨比替我回答了：

“噢。不是的，”他大声喊道，“不是这个人。”

“不是？”沃尔夫山姆先生有点儿失望。

“这只是个朋友，我跟你说过改天再谈它。”

“请原谅，”沃尔夫山姆先生说，“我认错人了。”

一盘美味的肉末杂菜被端了上来，随后沃尔夫山姆先生忘记了老大都会令人伤感的陈年旧事，开始津津有味地享用美味。同时，他的眼睛开始慢慢地把餐馆四周看个遍，最后他看向坐正后方的那个人，整个扫描视线形成一个弧形。要不是我坐在那儿，我想，他没准儿会连我们桌子底下也要匆匆看一眼。

“我说，老伙计，”盖茨比向我凑近说道，“今天早上在车里的時候，我恐怕让你有点不高兴。”

然后他又露出那种招牌式的笑容，但这次我抵住了它的诱惑。

“我不喜欢打哑谜，”我回答说，“并且我不明白你为什么不能痛痛快快地告诉我你到底想要什么，为什么整件事情要经过贝克小姐？”

突然他看了一眼手表，站起身，急急忙忙离开餐馆，把我和沃尔夫山姆先生留在餐桌上。

“他得去打个电话，”沃尔夫山姆先生说道，同时目送他离开。“是个不错的人，对吗？长得英俊还是个完美的绅士。”

“是的。”

“他是纽津①人。”

“噢！”

“他曾上过英国的纽津大学，你听说过这所大学吗？”

“听说过。”

“它是世界上最著名的大学之一。”

“你认识盖茨比很长时间了吗？”我问道。

“很多年啦，”他自得地说道，“战后我就很有幸结识了他，当我跟他交谈了一个小时之后，我就知道此人十分有教养，我对自己说道：‘他是那种你乐意带回家，并介绍给你母亲和妹妹认识的人。’”突然他停下不讲了。“我发现你正看着我的袖扣。”

原本我没看它们，现在却反而在看了。它们是用象牙做的，看上去令人觉得很亲切。

“这是用精选的人的臼齿做的。”他告诉我说。

“这不错！”我仔细看着它们。“真是个很巧妙的主意。”

“是的。”他把衣袖轻轻往上缩，用外套遮住，“是的，盖茨比对女人很谨慎，对朋友的妻子，他都不会多瞧一眼。”

当人们凭直觉就信任的那个人回到餐桌旁坐下时，沃尔夫山姆先生迅速喝完他的咖啡，然后站起身。

“午餐吃得很愉快，”他说道，“在我被你们厌烦之前，我得赶紧离开你们这两个年轻人。”

“不用急，迈尔。”盖茨比毫无兴致地说道。沃尔夫山姆先生扬起手，做了个祝福的姿势。

“你们都很有礼貌，但我是属于另一个时代的人啦！”他一本正经地

说道，“你们坐在这儿可以聊聊你们的运动、你们的女朋友和你们的……”他扬了扬手，说了句让你自己去补充想象的话。“至于我嘛，已经五十岁的人啦，不想再硬夹在你们中间。”

当他跟我们握手离开时，他那伤感的鼻子在颤抖，我寻思着是不是刚才我说了什么冒犯他的话。

“他有时候会变得非常多愁善感，”盖茨比向我解释道，“今天就是他多愁善感日子中的一天，在纽约他也算是号人物——百老汇的常客。”

“他究竟是谁，一个演员吗？”

“不是。”

“一个牙医？”

“迈尔·沃尔夫山姆？不，他是个赌徒。”盖茨比迟疑了一下，接着轻描淡写地说了一句：“他就是1919年在幕后操纵世界职业棒球大赛的那个人。”

“操纵世界职业棒球大赛？”我重复了一句。

这件事让我大吃一惊。我当然记得1919年世界职业棒球大赛被幕后操纵这回事，但是如果我想起这件事，我也仅仅是把它当做一件发生过的事来看待，觉得它只是一连串事件产生的不可避免的后果。我从没想过一个人能把五千万人给耍了——就像是一个撬保险柜的夜贼，单枪匹马就大功告成。

“他是怎么做到的？”过了一会儿之后我问道。

“他只是瞅准了机会。”

“那怎么他没坐牢？”

“他们逮不住他，老伙计。他可太精了。”

我坚持账由我来付。当侍者给我找钱时，我看见汤姆·布坎南在这拥挤的餐馆对面。

“跟我来一会儿，”我说道，“我得跟一个人打声招呼。”

当他看见我们时，汤姆跳了起来，三步并两步就朝我们走了过来。

“你上哪儿去了？”他急切地追问道。“因为你老不来电话，黛西都要抓狂了。”

“布坎南先生，这位是盖茨比先生。”

他们敷衍地握了下手，这时，盖茨比脸上露出了一种罕见的、颇不自然的窘迫表情。

“你究竟过得怎么样啊？”汤姆向我追问道，“你怎么跑这么远来吃饭？”

“我正和盖茨比先生共进午餐。”

当我转向盖茨比先生时，发现他已经不见了。

1917年10月的一天——（下面这段话由乔丹·贝克讲述，那天下午，当时她正端坐在广场饭店茶室里一张椅背笔直的椅子上）——我正从这走到那，一会儿走在人行道上，一会儿走在草坪上。不过我更喜欢

走在草坪上，因为我正穿着一双从英国买的鞋子，鞋底橡胶颗粒嵌进柔软的草地，还穿着一条新的格子花呢裙，随风微微飘起。每当这时，各家各户门前红白蓝相间的彩旗就直挺挺地舒展开来，发出“啧啧一啧啧一”的声响，就好像看不惯似的。

最大的那面彩旗和最大的那方草坪属于黛西·费伊家。她那时才十八岁，比我大两岁，是在路易斯威尔所有年轻女孩中最受欢迎的一个。她穿一身白，开着一辆白色的敞篷小跑车，她家的电话整天响个不停。来自泰勒军营的那些年轻军官们一个个都兴奋得不得了，巴望着能获得晚上跟她约会的特权。“不管怎样，就一个小时总行吧！”

那天早上我来到她家门前，看到她把她的白色小跑车停在路边，正和一个我以前从未见过的中尉坐在里面，他们是如此地专注对方，以致我走到五英尺内才被她看见。

“你好，乔丹！”她出乎意料地跟我打招呼，“请到这来。”

她竟然想跟我说话，这实在太令我高兴了，因为在所有的比我大的女孩中，我最爱慕她。她问我是不是要到红十字会去做绷带。我说是的，然后我问她，是不是告诉那边的人她今天去不了了？当她在说话的时候，那个军官一直看着黛西，以一种所有年轻女孩都希望被异性注目的方式。当时那一刻显得如此浪漫，以至我到现在都记得那一幕。他的名字叫杰伊·盖茨比，但在接下来的整整四年，我都没有再见过他，甚至在长岛见到他之后，我都没认出他们是同一个人。

那是1917年。一直到第二年的这段时间，我也有了一些追求者，并且我开始参加比赛，所以就不经常跟黛西见面。她总跟一些年纪比她大的人交往——如果她在跟谁交往的话。关于她的流言蜚语漫天飞——什

么她母亲发现她在冬天的一个晚上收拾好行李准备去纽约跟一个即将被派往海外的军官道别。她被及时拦下来了，为此她好几个星期都没跟家人说话。从那以后，她就再也不跟军官出去了，只跟城里几个不能参军的、平脚板的近视的家伙交往。

第二年秋天，她又快乐起来了，一如既往地活跃。停战后她举办了第一场进入社交生活的舞会，并且在二月份就差不多跟一个来自新奥尔良的男人订婚。六月份她就嫁给了来自芝加哥的汤姆·布坎南，婚礼场面的奢华隆重在整个路易斯维尔前所未见。新郎带了一百来号人包了四辆私家车前来迎娶，又租下了莫尔巴赫饭店整个一层楼。在婚礼前夕还送给她一串价值高达35万美元的项链。

我做了她的伴娘。婚宴半个小时前，我走进她的房间，发现她正躺在床上，就像六月的晚上穿着她的花裙子一样可爱，同时也醉得像个猴子。她一只手拿着一瓶葡萄酒，另一只手拿着一封信。

“祝——贺我，”她咕哝着，“从没喝过酒的我，现在喝得多痛快呀。”

“出什么事了，黛西？”

我吓坏了，可以告诉你，我从没见一个女孩儿喝成那样。

“这个，亲爱的。”她在床上的一个废纸篓里摸索了一会儿，掏出了这串项链。“把它们拿到楼下，是谁的就还给他。告诉所有人黛西改变主意了，就说：‘黛西改变主意了！’”

她开始哭——不停地哭。我冲出去叫来了她母亲的女仆，我们锁上房门，给她冲了个冷水澡。她抓住那封信不放，把它一起带入浴缸，捏

成一个湿湿的纸团，直到看见它成了像雪花一样的碎片片，才让我把它放在肥皂碟里。

但她没再说任何一句话。我们让她闻了闻阿摩尼亚精油，把冰块敷在她的前额，然后又哄着她穿好衣服。半个小时后，我们走出了房间，那串项链又回到了她脖子上，这场风波总算过去了。第二天下午五点，她就跟没事儿人似地跟汤姆·布坎南结了婚，然后他俩就动身开始了长达三个月的南太平洋蜜月之旅。

当他们回来后，我在圣巴巴拉^①见到了他们。我觉得我从未见过一个女人如此迷恋她的丈夫。如果他离开房间一会儿，她就会心神不安地四下张望，说：“汤姆上哪去了？”然后就是一副心不在焉的表情，直到看到他走进门来。她常常坐在沙滩上，把他的头放在她怀里，一坐就是一个小时，还用手摩挲着他的眼睛，无比欣喜地深情凝望着他。看到他们深情相依的那一幕，你真会被感动，它会让你被深深吸引，安然会心地一笑。那是在八月份。一周以后我离开了圣巴巴拉。有一天晚上，汤姆在凡图拉公路开车时与一辆货车相撞，他车的前轮被撞掉了，跟他同在车里的一个姑娘也上了报纸，因为她的胳膊受伤了——她是圣巴巴拉酒店一个房间的清理员。

第二年春天，黛西生了个小女儿，然后他们去法国待了一年。有一年春天，我在戛纳^②见到了他们，后来又在多维尔^③见到过，之后他们回到芝加哥定居下来。如你所知，黛西在芝加哥很受欢迎，他们和一帮酒肉朋友来往，这些人个个年轻富有而又放荡不羁，但是她在外面的名声始终清清白白，也许是因为她不喝酒的缘故。在一群嗜酒如命的人群当中，不喝酒的人能占很大的优势。你可以缄默不言，甚至可以在其他人喝得烂醉如泥的时候，稍稍搞点小动作也无防，因为那时他们醉得要么目不能视，要么就满不在乎。也许黛西压根儿就没跟谁搞过风流韵

事，但是她说话的声音里却透出某种意味……

后来，大概六周前，她在这么多年后第一次听到了盖茨比这个名字。就是当时我问你的——你是否认识西埃格的盖茨比，你还记得吗？在你离开之后，她走进我的房间，把我摇醒，说：“哪个盖茨比？”当我半睡半醒地跟她描述完之后，她阴阳怪气地说这个人肯定是她曾经认识的那一个。直到这时，我才把这个盖茨比跟以前在她的白色小车里坐着的军官联系起来。

当乔丹·贝克结束这段故事的讲述，我们已经离开广场半个钟头，正乘着一辆四轮敞篷马车穿过中央公园。太阳已经落到西城区五十几号大街那一带电影明星居住的公寓后面，孩子们清脆的童音，就像聚集在草地蟋蟀的叫声一样此起彼伏，响起在炎热的暮色黄昏。

我是阿拉伯的酋长，

你的爱情归我所有。

深夜当你酣然入睡，

我悄悄爬进你的帐篷——

“这真是个奇怪的巧合！”我说道。

“可它根本就不是个巧合。”

“为什么不是？”

“盖茨比之所以买下那栋房子，是因为黛西就在海湾对面嘛。”

所以我现在明白，在六月的那个夜晚，他渴望的不仅仅是天上浩瀚

的繁星。对我而言，他一下子变得有血有肉了，仿佛突然从那毫无目的地恣意挥霍的生活里分娩出来，活生生地出现在我面前。

“他想知道，”乔丹继续说道，“你是否会在某天下午把黛西请到你府上，然后也让他过来坐一下。”

这个卑微的请求让我吃了一惊。他等待了五年，买下一栋豪宅，在那里把点点星光施予飞来过往的蛾儿，就是为了能在某天下午“过来坐一下”——在一个陌生人的花园。

“在他提出如此卑微的要求前，我得知道这一切吗？”

“他有点害怕，他等了太长时间了。他以为这会冒犯你，你知道的，他骨子里还是挺倔的。”

我还是有点担心。

“为什么他不让你安排这次见面呢？”

“噢！”

“我想他原本抱着一半的希望她哪天晚上会出现在他家的晚会上。”乔丹继续说道，“结果她一次也没来。于是他开始装作随意地向人们打听她的消息，我就是他第一个发现的认识黛西的人。就是在那天晚上的舞会上，他派人去请我，可惜你错过了听他如何费尽心思地切入主题的。当然，我立刻就建议在纽约安排一次正式的午宴，没想到他急得像快要发疯似的：

“我不想把事情做得太离谱！”他继续说，“我只想在隔壁见见她。”

“当我提到你是汤姆的一个特别好友时，他开始放弃整个计划。他并不十分了解汤姆，虽然他说他已经坚持阅读一份芝加哥报纸好几年了，只是为了能偶然瞥见上面有黛西的名字。”

天已经黑了，我们的马车走进一座小桥下面，我伸出胳膊搂住乔丹那晒得金黄的肩，把她拉近身旁，请她一起共进晚餐。突然间我不再想黛西和盖茨比了，只是关注着眼前这个清爽、健壮、不太有主见的女人，这个对一切都持怀疑态度的人，此刻却快活地偎依在我的臂弯里。这时，我的耳畔开始响起一句充满激情的警句名言：“立身处世，要么被别人追求，要么追求别人，要么忙忙碌碌，要么劳累不堪。”

“黛西应该在她一生中获得些什么。”乔丹轻轻对我说道。

“她想见盖茨比吗？”

“她还不知道这件事，盖茨比不想让她知道。你应该请她喝喝茶。”

我们穿过一片黑漆漆的树林，然后是第59号大街的街面，微弱的白光照进了公园。不像盖茨比和汤姆·布坎南，我没有情妇，也就没有哪位姑娘的面庞沿着漆黑的屋檐和令人炫目的招牌浮动，所以我把身边的女孩拉近了一些，搂得更紧了。她嘴角边露出一丝有气无力而又蔑视的微笑，于是我把她搂得更近了，这次贴到了我的脸。

第五章

那天晚上，当我回到西埃格的家时，有那么一会儿我担心我的房子是不是着火了。时间已经是深夜两点，半岛的整个一角华灯璀璨，灯光映照在灌木丛上，显得有点虚无缥缈，照在路边被拉伸的电线上，形成了一条条细长的闪光链。车子转过街角的时候，我才看见原来是盖茨比家，从塔楼到地窖都灯火通明。

起初我还以为这又是一次晚会，一次狂野纵情的交际狂欢，这次的玩儿法是“捉迷藏”或“罐头沙丁鱼”之类的游戏，整栋别墅的人都展开胸怀热切拥抱这项娱乐。但仔细一听，没有任何响声，只有树林里的风吹着电线，弄得灯光忽明忽暗，就像是整栋房子在对着漆黑的夜色眨眼。当载我回家的出租车哼哼唧唧开走时，我看见盖茨比正穿过草坪朝我走来。

“你家看上去就像个世界展览馆。”我说道。

“是吗？”他心不在焉地望向它。“我到几间房里瞅了瞅，咱俩到康尼岛去玩吧，老伙计，坐我的车去。”

“太晚了。”

“好吧，那到游泳池里游会儿泳怎么样？我整个夏天都没用它了。”

“可我得睡觉去了。”

“好吧。”

他等了一会儿，看着我，极力压抑住心底的那股热切之情。

“我跟贝克小姐谈过了。”过了一会儿我说道，“明天我会打电话给黛西，请她来这儿喝茶。”

“噢，那很好，”他漫不经心地说道，“希望没给你添麻烦。”

“你哪天方便？”

“应该是你哪天方便？”他飞快地纠正我说，“你知道的，我不想给你添任何麻烦。”

“后天怎么样？”

他想了一会儿，然后露出一副勉强的表情，说：“我想修剪一下草坪。”

我们都低头望向草坪，两家的草坪之间界限分明，在我那杂草丛生的草坪尽头，就是他那郁郁葱葱，修剪得整整齐齐的草坪，我猜他说的是我家的草坪。

“还有另一件小事，”他不确定地说道，迟疑了一下。

“你是不是更想把它往后推几天？”我问道。

“噢，不是关于那个，至少——”他搜肠刮肚，寻思着怎么说更好，“呃，我认为——呃，我说，老兄，你挣钱不多，对吧？”

“不是很多。”

这似乎打消了他的疑虑，于是他更有信心地接着说道：

“我料想你赚的不多，如果你原谅我的……你知道的，我附带做点小生意，作为一种副业，你明白的。于是我就想既然你赚的不多……你在推销债券，是吗，老伙计？”

“正尝试呢。”

“好吧，这会让你感兴趣的。它不会占用你很多时间，并且你可以赚一大笔钱，不过这件事得相当保密。”

我现在意识到，如果当时是另一种情况，那次谈话将成为我一生的转折点。但是，很明显，他的这个露骨的提议是为了报答我对他的帮助，我别无选择，只有立即打断他。

“我手头的工作很忙，”我说道，“对此我感激不尽，但我真的不能再接受任何工作了。”

“你不必跟沃尔夫山姆打任何交道。”显然他认为我是想躲避那天午餐提到的那种“关系”，但我让他明白他弄错了。他又等了一会儿，希望我开启另一个谈话，但是我的心思却专注在另一些事上，没有回应他，结果他只好不情愿地回家去了。

那晚让我很高兴，都有点飘飘然了。我想我一走进大门就开始呼呼大睡了。所以我不知道盖茨比是否去了康尼岛，或者他花了几个小时在他灯火通明的家“瞅了瞅几间屋子”。第二天早上我从办公室里打电话给了黛西，请她过来喝茶。

“别带汤姆来！”我提醒她。

“什么？”

“别带汤姆来。”

“谁是‘汤姆’？”她装作无辜地问。

约定的这天，下起了倾盆大雨。十一点的时候，一个身穿雨衣的男人拖着一辆割草机，敲了敲我家前门，说盖茨比先生让他来修剪我家的草坪。这提醒我我忘了叫我的芬兰女佣回来，所以我把车开进西埃格村，在两边刷着白石灰的浸满水的巷道里找到了她，并买了一些杯子、柠檬和鲜花。

买的鲜花是多余的，因为在两点的时候，盖茨比让人送了一温室的鲜花过来，数不清的盆器装着。一个小时过后，前门响起一阵急促的敲门声，盖茨比，身穿一件白色的法兰绒西装，一件银色衬衫，打着一条金色领带，匆匆忙忙进来了。他的脸色苍白，眼睛下面有两道深深的黑眼圈。

“都准备好了吗？”他立即问道。

“草坪看上去很不错，如果你是指这个的话。”

“什么草坪？”他茫然地问道。“噢，院子里的草坪。”他朝着草坪的方向望向窗外，但是，从他的表情判断，我不相信他看见了啥。

“看上去很好。”他含含糊糊地回应道。“有份报纸说雨大概在四点左右停，大概是《纽约日报》吧，喝——喝茶的东西都备齐了吗？”

我把他领进食品室，到了那儿，他略带挑剔地看了一眼芬兰女佣，然后我们一起把甜食店里买来的十二块柠檬蛋糕细细检查了一番。

“这些可以吗？”我问道。

“当然可以，当然可以！很不错！”随后他又木讷地加了一句：“……老兄。”

三点半的时候，雨渐渐地小了，变成一层湿雾，偶尔会有小水滴像露珠一样在里面飘荡。盖茨比神情茫然地翻阅着一本克莱的《经济学》，每当芬兰女佣踩着震动厨房的地板时，他就一惊，眼睛不时地望向模糊的窗外，好像外面正发生着一些既看不见又惊动人的事件。最后他站起身，用一种不确定的语气对我说，他要回家了。

“为什么回家？”

“太晚了，没人会来喝茶的！”他看着手表，好像别处有一些紧急事情等着他去处理。“我不能等一整天。”

“别傻了，还差两分钟到四点呢。”

他沮丧地坐了下来，好像我强按住他坐下似的。正在这时，传来一阵汽车拐进我家车道的声音。我俩都跳了起来，然后我自己也有些担心地朝院子里跑去。

在光秃秃的滴着水的丁香树下，一辆巨大的敞篷车沿着车道驶近，车子停了下来。黛西戴着一顶三角形的淡紫色的帽子，脸侧向一边，露出一抹灿烂的笑容，望着我。

“这确实确实是你住的地方吗，我最亲爱的？”

她那悠扬的嗓音在雨中听着让人感到心旷神怡。在弄明白她的话之前，我不得不先倾听这抑扬顿挫的声音一会儿。一绺湿漉漉的头发贴在她脸颊上，仿佛抹了一笔蓝色的颜料，在我扶着她的手走下车时，我看见她的手被晶莹的水珠打湿了。

“你是不是爱上我了？”她附在我耳边轻轻说道，“要不然你怎么会让我一个人来呢？”

“那是雷克兰特古堡①的秘密。让你的司机到别处去待一个小时再回来吧。”

“一小时之后再回来，费迪。”然后她一本正经地咕哝道，“他的名字叫费迪。”

“汽油味儿影响到了他的鼻子吗？”

“我想没有，”她不解地说道，“为什么这样问？”

我们走进屋。令我大吃一惊的是客厅空无一人。

“好吧，真是太滑稽了。”我大声喊道。

“什么事情很滑稽？”

这时，前门响起了一阵轻微的郑重其事的敲门声，黛西循声转过头去。我走出去开了门，是盖茨比，他的脸像死灰一样白，双手重重地揣在外衣口袋里，站在一滩水里，神色凄凉地看着我。

他大步从我身边跨过去，双手仍然插在外衣兜里，活像一个被牵线操控的木偶，猛地一转身，走进客厅就不见了。那样子看起来一点也不滑稽，我意识到我心跳的声音很大，赶紧拉上门挡住外面下得越来越大的雨。

片刻的功夫，一点声音也没有。随后我听见从客厅传来一阵压得低低的令人感到窒息的咕哝声，夹杂着一阵笑声，随后就是黛西清脆做作

的声音响起：“又能见到你，我当然真的感到很高兴。”

随后就是一阵很难令人忍受的沉寂。在大厅里我无事可做，所以我就走进了房间。

盖茨比仍然把双手放在口袋里，斜倚着壁炉架，勉强装出一副怡然自得的神态，甚至是一副厌倦的模样。他的头极力向后仰，碰到了壁炉架上一面被废弃不用的座钟的钟面，从这个位置，他那双意乱情迷的双眼向下凝视着黛西，此刻她正坐在一张硬背椅子的边缘，尽管因惊吓而神色慌张，姿势却仍很优雅。

“我们以前见过。”盖茨比轻声咕哝。他的眼睛即刻扫向我，咧开双唇想笑但没笑出来。很幸运的是，就在这时，座钟因为他头部的挤压向一边倾斜，摇摇欲坠，他赶紧转过身，颤抖着手扶住它，把它放回到原来的位置。然后他坐下，一本正经，把胳膊肘放在沙发扶手上，手托下巴。

“对不起，把钟碰了。”他说。

我的脸也涨得通红，感到热辣辣的。此刻我脑子里纵有千万句客套话，也说不出一句。

“这座钟很旧了。”我傻乎乎地告诉他们。

我想有那么一刻我们大家都相信这座钟已经在地上摔得粉碎了。

“我们很多年没见了，”黛西说道，尽量让自己听起来是在就事论事。

“到十一月就整整五年了。”

盖茨比不加思索地回答至少又让我们愣了好一分钟。我急中生智提出请他们帮我到厨房里准备茶水，他们已经站起来了，可就在这时，那可恶的芬兰女佣托着茶盘把茶点送了进来。

在一阵准备茶水、摆放糕点的忙乱着招待客人中，一种表面庄重客套的格局却建立起来了。盖茨比退到了一边，在我和黛西聊天时，一个劲地在我俩之间看来看去，目光忧郁，又显得很紧张。但是，保持平静不是这次喝茶的目的本身，所以一到合适的时机，我就找了个借口，起身离开了。

“你上哪去？”盖茨比立即警觉地追问道。

“我会回来的。”

“在你走之前我得跟你说个事。”

他发疯似地跟着我走进了厨房，关上门，然后痛苦地小声说道：“噢，上帝啊！”

“出什么事了？”

“这是个严重的错误，”他边说边来回摇头，“一个很严重、很严重的错误。”

“你只是有点窘罢了，没什么，”幸好我又补了一句，“黛西也很窘。”

“她也很窘吗？”他不相信地问道。

“和你一样窘！”

“别这么大声。”

“你做事就像个小孩，”我不耐烦地冒出一句，“不只如此，你还很没礼貌，竟然让黛西一个人坐那儿。”

他举起手阻止我继续说，带着令人难忘的责备神情看着我，然后谨慎地打开门，又回到了那间屋子里。

我从后门走了出去——就像半个小时前盖茨比紧张地在屋里兜了一个又一个圈，然后跑向一棵黑黢黢的长满节瘤的树，它的茂盛的树叶形成了一张挡风遮雨的帆布。天又一次下起了瓢泼大雨，我那毫不齐整的草坪，虽然经过盖茨比园丁的精心修剪，现在却到处是泥泞的水坑，像一片史前的沼泽地。从这棵树下望去，什么也看不到，除了盖茨比家那栋大宅子，于是我就盯着它看——就像是康德^①瞅着尖尖的教堂屋顶一样，足足看了有半个小时。这座房子是十年前一位酿酒商在那个“仿古热”初期建造的，有一个关于他的传闻，说他曾同意为所有邻近的别墅交五年赋税，只要这些房主在他们的屋顶上盖上稻草。也许是他们的拒绝使他完全没心思再进行他的“创建家业”计划——他很快就颓废了。他的孩子们卖掉了他的房子，门上还挂着吊唁的花圈。美国人虽然愿意，甚至是渴望去当农奴，但坚决不会去当乡巴佬的。

大约半个小时后，又重新拨云见日，杂货店老板的货车拐进了盖茨比的车道，为他的仆人们带来了做晚餐用的原料，至于晚餐，我敢肯定他甚至没吃上一勺。一个女佣开始打开楼上的窗户，打开每一扇窗户时，露一下脸，然后从正中的大窗户探出身子，若有所思地向花园里啐一口唾沫。我该回去了，雨仍然淅淅沥沥地下着，听起来就像是他们的窃窃私语，伴随着情感的起伏，不时地变得高亢有力。但又重新归入沉静，我感觉寂静降临了屋里每一处。

我走进屋里——尽可能地在厨房里弄出声响，就差没有掀翻炉子了——但我认为他们什么也没听到。他们各自坐在沙发的两头，互相看着对方好像要问什么问题，又没问出来，现在他们之间已没有一丝一毫的窘迫了。黛西脸上泪光点点，在我进去时，她跳了起来，赶紧走到一面镜子前用手绢把它擦掉。但是盖茨比身上却发生了一种令人费解的变化。他整个人简直是容光焕发了，虽然没说一句话或作出一个欣喜的手势，但他身上不时散发出的安乐气息却充盈了这个小小的房间。

“噢，老伙计！”他说道，好像很多年没见我似的。有那么一会儿，我还以为他要过来跟我握手哩。

“雨停了。”

“是吗？”当他意识到我说的话，又发觉屋里充满了一缕缕阳光时，他像气象预报员似地露出了笑容，又像一个欣喜若狂的光明守护神，把这个消息重复说给黛西听：“你觉得怎么样？雨停了。”

“我很高兴，杰伊。”她的声音听起来既优美又哀婉感人，可是她表露的只是她的惊喜之情。

“我想要你和黛西到我家去，”他说道，“我想领着她到处转转。”

“你确定也想要我去吗？”

“完全确定，老伙计。”

黛西上楼去洗脸，这时我才很惭愧地想到我那不太干净的毛巾，可惜已经太晚了，盖茨比和我在草坪上等她。

“我的房子看起来还不错，对吗？”他追问道，“你瞧它整个正面都

向阳。”

我同意房子确实很漂亮。

“是的，”他的眼睛把整个房子扫视了一遍，从每一道拱门到每一座方塔。“花了我三年的时间挣够买它的钱。”

“我原以为你的钱是继承得来的。”

“是的，老伙计，”他不假思索地说道，“但是我在大恐慌期间损失了大部分钱——战争引起的恐慌。”

我想他连自己在说什么都不知道，因为当我问他做什么生意时，他回答说：“这是我的事。”说完他才意识到这个回答很不得体。

“噢，我做过很多种生意。”他立马纠正措辞，“我做过药品生意，然后是石油生意，但我现在一个也没做了。”他更专注地望着我说，“你的意思是你重新考虑了那晚我的提议？”

在我回答他之前，黛西从屋里出来了，她衣服上两排铜扣在阳光中闪烁光芒。

“就是那边那栋大房子吗？”她边指边大声喊道。

“你喜欢它吗？”

“太喜欢了，但我不明白你是怎样一个人住在那里的。”

“我家里总是高朋满座，都是些很有意思的人，夜以继日，这些人总做些很有意思的事，是各界名流。”

我们没有沿着海边抄近路过去，而是走上大道从巨大的后门进去盖茨比的家。黛西轻声赞叹着那映衬着蓝天的中世纪城堡的轮廓影像，赞叹着花园里各种花儿的芬芳和娇艳：有长寿花那四溢的芳香，山楂花和梅花飘逸的淡淡清香，还有淡金色“吻别花”的清香。当我们踏上大理石台阶时，竟然没有发现从门口进进出出的身穿华服的人，除了树林里的鸟叫声，听不到其他一丝声音，这真令我们感到奇怪。

当我们走进屋里，在玛丽·安托瓦内特^①式的音乐厅和有着王政复辟^②时期建筑风格的客厅四处闲逛时，我似乎感觉到客人们都藏到了睡椅和桌子底下，在主人的命令下，屏住呼吸，保持沉默直到我们赏游完毕。当盖茨比关上“默顿学院图书室”^①的门时，我敢发誓我听到了那个戴着“猫头鹰眼”式眼镜的男人发出了一阵幽灵般的笑声。

我们到楼上去，穿过一间间古色古香的卧室，里面铺满了玫瑰色和淡紫色的缎带，摆满了各式各样新近采摘的鲜花，使房间显得活泼生动。又穿过更衣室、弹子房和装有地下浴池的浴室，我们还在不经意间闯进一间卧室，看到一个不修边幅、身穿睡衣的人正在地上做俯卧撑。那是“寄生虫”克利普斯普林格先生，有天早上我看见他在海滩垂头丧气地闲逛。最后我们来到盖茨比本人的套房——包括一间卧室、一间浴室和一个小书房，我们在那里坐下来，喝了一杯盖茨比从墙上壁橱里拿出的法国查特酒^②。

他一刻也不停地望着黛西，我想他是想从她那双迷人的双眼呈现出的反应来估量房中一切物品的价值。有时候，他也茫然地盯着四周的一切，好像除了黛西真实地、出人意料地降临在他跟前，其他一切都变得虚幻了，甚至有一次他还差点摔下楼梯。

他的卧室是所有卧室中最简约的一间——除了梳妆台上陈列着一副

纯金打造的梳妆用具。盖茨比坐下时，黛西欢快地拿起一把梳子顺了顺头发，惹得盖茨比捂住眼睛笑了起来。

“这真是太有意思了，老伙计，”他欣喜若狂地说道，“我不能.....每当我试图.....”

显然他的内心已经从刚才的两个状态正进入到第三个状态。从最初的窘迫不安，随即紧接着的是大喜若狂，此刻他正由于黛西突然在眼前的出现感到惊愕不已。这是他长年朝思暮想的，自始至终咬紧牙关苦等着的，一直梦寐以求这一时刻的到来，甚至可以说，执著热切到了一种令人难以相信的剧烈程度。现在，由于这种作用力的反应，他像一只上紧了发条过度工作后的闹钟，终于停下来了。

他平静了一会儿，然后为我们打开了两个由名牌厂家制作的庞大衣橱，里面装满了各式各样大量的西服、晨衣、领结和衬衣，一摞一摞码得像砖块一样，有十几层高。

“我在英国有专人负责为我选购衣服。他在每个春、夏两季的开端就给我选送一批东西过来。”

他拿出一堆衬衫，开始一件一件扔在我们面前，展示给我们看，这些衬衫的质地有薄麻布的、厚真丝的、细法兰绒的，全都散开，花花绿绿地铺满了整张桌子。当我们正欣赏时，他又继续抱来更多质地柔软的华丽衬衣，堆得越来越高——有条子的、花纹的、珊瑚色格子花呢的、苹果绿的、浅紫色的、浅橙色的，还有印着深蓝色组合字母的。突然，黛西发出了一声憋了很久的声响，猛地把头埋进衬衫里，开始号啕大哭起来。

“这些衬衫太漂亮了！”她呜咽着，声音因埋在厚厚的衣服层里显得

很沉闷。“我感到很伤心，因为我从来没见过这么——这么好看的衬衫。”

参观完房子后，我们本打算要去看看庭院、游泳池、水上飞机和仲夏怒放的鲜花，但是窗外又开始下起雨来，于是我们三人站成一排，看着雨中海湾水面上的波纹。

“要不是薄雾笼罩，我们就能望见海湾对面你的家，”盖茨比说道，“你家码头的尽头总有一盏绿灯通宵亮着。”

黛西突然挽上他的胳膊，但是他好像还沉浸在刚才的话语中。对他来说，那盏灯象征的巨大意义很可能已经永远消失了。与把他和黛西相隔的遥远距离相比，那盏灯似乎离黛西很近，近得几乎可以触摸到她，就好比一颗星星距离月亮一样近。现在它只是码头的一盏绿灯而已，他那视为神圣的物品又少了一件。

我开始在房间四处走动，在半明半暗中打量各式各样模模糊糊的物品。挂在他书桌正上方墙上的一张巨幅照片吸引了我，那上面是一个穿着游艇服的年过中年的男子。

“这是谁？”

“那个吗？那是丹·科迪先生，老兄。”

这个名字听起来有点熟。

“他现在去世了，很多年前他曾是我最好的朋友。”

办公桌上放着盖茨比本人的一张小相片，里面的他也穿着游艇服，头高傲地往后仰着，显然是在他十八岁左右照的。

“我真喜欢它，”黛西大喊道，“这种大背头发型。你从没告诉过我你留过大背头发型，也没跟我说过你有一艘游艇。”

“瞧这个，”盖茨比飞快地说道，“这是很多关于你的剪报。”

他们肩并肩站在一起欣赏着。正当我要求看看他收藏的红宝石时，电话响了，于是盖茨比拿起了听筒。

“是的……嗯，我现在说话不方便……我现在说话不方便，老兄……我说的是一个小城市……他应该明白什么是小城市……好吧，如果底特律就是他心目中的小城市，他对我们没什么用处……”

他挂了电话。

“快来这！”黛西在窗边大喊。

雨仍然在下着，但是西边上空的乌云已经散开，大海上空如巨浪般翻滚着一团团粉色的、金黄的泡沫般的云彩。“看那个，”她小声说道，过了一会儿又说道，“我想采下一朵粉红云彩，把你放在上面，推来推去。”

我想告辞离开，但他们说什么也不肯，好像有我的在场他们可以更心安理得地待在一起。

“我知道我们可以干点什么了，”盖茨比说道，“我们可以让克利普斯普林格为我们演奏钢琴。”

他边走出房间边大喊：“艾温！”一会儿之后，他回来了，身后跟着一个神情窘迫、略显憔悴的年轻人，戴着副玳瑁边框眼镜，一头稀稀疏疏的金发。他现在已穿戴整齐，身穿一件运动衫——领口开着，一双运

运动鞋和一条颜色模糊不清的帆布裤子。

“我们打扰到您锻炼身体了吗？”黛西有礼貌地问道。

“我在睡觉，”克利普斯普林格先生出于窘迫大声脱口而出，“我是说，我本来在睡觉，然后我起床了……”

“克利普斯普林格会弹钢琴，”盖茨比打断他的话说道，“对不对？艾温老兄？”

“我弹得不好，我不会……谈不上会弹，我已经很久没练……”

“我们上楼去，”盖茨比打断他的话，他摁了一下开关，房间变得灯火通明，刚才深灰的窗户瞬间消失了。

在音乐厅里，盖茨比只打开了钢琴边放着的一盏灯。然后颤抖着双手为黛西点着了烟，远远地跟她一道坐在屋子另一头的一张长沙发上，那里没有灯光，除了地板上微微闪耀着从大厅里反射进来的光芒。

当克利普斯普林格弹完了一曲《爱巢》之后，他朝沙发转过身，沮丧地在幽暗中寻找盖茨比。

“我完全没有练习过，你看，我告诉过你我不会弹，我完全没有练……”

“别多嘴，老伙计，”盖茨比命令道，“弹！”

“每天清晨，

每天夜晚，

我们玩得欢畅……”

外面风刮得很大，海湾上空隐隐地不断传来一阵雷鸣。此刻西半岛华灯璀璨，从纽约驶来的满载乘客的电车在雨中急急忙忙把他们往家送，电车上的人们大声叫喊着，这是人们发生深刻变化的时刻，兴奋激昂的情绪正在空气中酝酿。

“有一件事是千真万确，

富人生财，穷人生仔。

二者同时，

此时彼时……”

当我走上前去告别时，我看到一种惶惑的表情又回到盖茨比脸上，好像他对眼前的欢乐产生了一丝怀疑。将近五年啊！那天下午一定在某个时刻，他觉得眼前的黛西远不如梦中朝思暮想的那个黛西——这倒不是她本人有什么差错，而是他的幻想力实在过于强大了。这种幻想超越了她本身，超越了一切。他以一种创造性的激情把自己投入进去，不断地添色画彩，用飘荡在梦想之旅的每一根绚丽羽毛去装饰它。任何炽热的火焰或清新的活力都比不上一个人心中储藏起来的那种近乎疯狂的情愫。

当我注意他的时候，他显然调整了一下自己，手握住黛西的手，当她在她耳边低语什么过后，他立即情绪焕发地转向她。我想多半是她的声音迷住了他，那声音抑扬顿挫，充满令人狂热的温情，因为这种声音在梦中也难求——它是一首永恒的欢歌。

他们几乎把我给忘了，黛西倒是朝上瞥了一眼，伸出了手；盖茨比

现在根本觉察不到我的存在。我又一次看向他们，他们也回过头看着我，恍若隔世般，俩人都沉浸在强烈的感情之中。然后我就走出屋子，走下大理石台阶，步入雨中，留下他们在一起相偎相依。

第六章

大概在这一期间，有天早上，一名从纽约来的雄心勃勃的年轻记者来到盖茨比家门口，问他是否有什么要说的。

“是关于什么要说的呢？”盖茨比有礼貌地问道。

“嗯——发表一些言论吧。”

在进行了一个令人困惑的五分钟交谈后，事情的来龙去脉才被弄清楚。原来这名记者有次在办公室听到盖茨比这个名字，至于当时到底是什么情况，他不肯透漏，或者说，他也不很明白。今天刚好他休息，于是就很敬业地主动跑出城来“了解一下”。

至于能否查出点什么，要靠偶然的机遇，但是这名记者的本能是对的。盖茨比的名声在这个夏天变得越来越大，以至于差点就成新闻人物，这是那些曾经接受过他款待的成百上千的人替他宣扬的结果，他们俨然成了他过去经历的权威。当时的传言，像“通往加拿大的地下管道”之类的，说的就是他。还有一个流传了很久的谣言，说他压根儿就没住在一栋房子里，而是住在一条外观类似房子的船上，船顺着长岛海岸秘密地上下漂游。至于为什么来自北达科他州的詹姆士·盖茨会把这些谣言当做一种产生满足感的来源，还真不好说。

詹姆士·盖茨——这是他的真名，或者至少是他法律上的名字。他在十七岁的时候改了名，也就是见证他事业生涯正式开始的那个特殊时刻——那个时候他还叫詹姆士·盖茨。有次他看见丹·科迪驾驶着游艇

在苏必利尔湖①上那个最险恶的沙洲上抛锚，那天下午他正穿着一件破旧的绿运动衫和一条帆布裤在海滩闲逛。但是当他借了一条小船划到托洛美号游艇去警告科迪半个小时后他会遭遇暴风，并且船会被掀翻时，他就已经是杰伊·盖茨比了。

我猜他早就把这个名字想好了，即使是在那个时候。他的父母是日夜操劳却一事无成的庄稼人——在他的头脑中他从没真正把他们当做是自己的父母。事实是，这个长岛西埃格村的盖茨比彻彻底底地接受了柏拉图哲学思想。他认为自己是上帝的儿子，这个词意味着——如果它意有所指的话，意味着他必须继承父亲的宏志，致力于追求一种伟大的、世俗的、华而不实的美。于是他就发挥一个十七岁少年所具备的想象力，想出了杰伊·盖茨比这个名字，并且自始至终坚定地贯彻这个信念。

他在苏必利尔湖南部海岸打拼了一年多，有时候捞蛤蜊，有时候捕鲑鱼，总之，从事任何一种可以带给他温饱的生计。他那被晒得黝黑的、坚实的躯体自然地挺过了那段时而拼命时而闲散的鼓舞人心的劳作岁月。他很早就结识女人了，由于她们宠坏了他，他开始变得瞧不起女人。他瞧不起年轻的处女，认为她们很无知幼稚；他也瞧不起其他女人，因为她们通常会对事情变得歇斯底里，而这些事情从他那绝对的利己主义角度来说来说是理所当然的。

但是他的心一直躁动不安。每当夜晚躺进被窝里，他的脑子里就会出现各种稀奇古怪、怪诞不经的想法。每当脸盆架上的时钟在滴滴答答地走动，他胡乱散放在地上的衣服浸在如水一般的月光中时，他的脑海中就浮现出一个无法言说的美妙世界。每个夜晚他都会为他畅想的美景图添色画彩，直至睡意来临，让一个忘却的拥抱终止他这些生动鲜明的奇思妙想。他的这些幻想暂时为他的想象提供了一个发泄的出口，它们

提供了一个令人满意的线索，表明了现实的非现实性，并向人们承诺世界的基石是牢牢建立在仙女的翅膀上的。

几个月前，一种对未来怀有无限憧憬的本能促使他前往明尼苏达州南部，去往路德教会办的圣奥拉夫学院。他在那待了两周，一方面由于学校对他擂响的命运之鼓表现出无情的麻木冷漠，这令他感到很沮丧；另一方面他不屑于做看门人的活来维持生活。然后他就又辗转回到了苏必利尔湖，在他看到丹·科迪驾驶游艇在沿岸的浅滩放锚的那天，他仍然在找些什么活儿干。

科迪那时已经50岁了，是1875年以来每一次淘金热的幸运儿，从内华达州的银矿矿场到育空①的金矿矿场都能见到他的影子。在蒙大拿做的铜矿生意让他赚了好几百万，自此，他的身体虽然依然强健，脑子却开始糊涂；并且，很多女人察觉到这一点，试图把他的钱弄到手。有个名叫埃拉·凯的女记者，抓住他的弱点，扮演了德曼特农夫人②的角色，怂恿他驾游艇出海。她耍的这一点也不光彩的花招成了1902年杂志报纸浮夸报道的新闻。他已经沿岸航行五年了，中途受到沿岸居民的热情招待，当他抵达“少女湾”时，他成了盖茨比命运的转折点。

对于年轻的盖茨比来说，当他两手支在船桨上，抬头望着有栏杆围着的甲板时，那艘游艇成了世上所有美丽和魅惑之物的象征。我猜他当时正冲着科迪笑——他很可能已经发现了当他示以微笑时，人们就很喜欢他。不管怎样，科迪还是问了他一些问题（其中一个引出了新名字的由来），发现他是个头脑敏捷、充满抱负雄心的年轻人。几天之后他就把他带到了德鲁斯①，给他买了一件蓝色外套、六条白帆布裤子和一顶游艇帽。当托洛美号起程前往西印度群岛和巴巴平海岸②时，盖茨比也随之离开了。

他以一种不太明确的私人身份受雇于科迪，与科迪在一起时，他先后干过乘务员、助手、船长、秘书甚至是狱卒的工作——因为丹·科迪还是很清醒地知道当自己喝醉时什么奢侈无度的傻事都干得出来，所以为了预防为此事付出太高代价，他越来越信任盖茨比。这样的安排持续了五年，在这期间，这艘船环绕美洲大陆航行了三次。这种情况原本会无止境地持续下去，直到有天晚上埃拉·凯在波士顿上了船，一周以后，丹·科迪就人事不省地撒手人寰了。

我还记得他那副挂在盖茨比卧室的肖像，那是个头发灰白、面色红润的老人，面部表情坚毅而空洞——开拓者中的浪荡子，在美国社会生活的某个阶段把西部边疆的妓院和酒吧的那种野蛮放荡带到了东部海岸。可能是间接地由于科迪的缘故，盖茨比滴酒不沾。有时在狂欢的派对期间，女人们把香槟揉擦进他的头发里面，他自己则养成了不近酒水的习惯。

从科迪那儿他能继承到一笔钱——两万五千美元的遗产，但他最终没得到，这笔巨款被完整无缺地收入埃拉·凯的口袋里，他从来没弄明白人家是通过怎样的法律手段来对付他的，留给他的只是独特却又恰当的教育：杰伊·盖茨比的模糊的轮廓开始变得清晰起来，成为一个有血有肉的男子汉。

他是在很后来才告诉我所有这些，我把它写在这儿是想推翻之前关于他身世的一些疯狂的谣传，那些纯属无稽之谈。而且他是在我的头脑处于十分困惑的时期告诉我这些的，那个时候我要么相信关于他的一切传言，要么什么也不信。所以我利用了这个歇口气的短暂功夫，但是对于盖茨比，可以说，他屏住了气，澄清关于他的种种误传。

在我和他的来往中，这也是一个暂停。我已经有好几周没见到他或

者是在电话里听到他的声音了——大多数时候，我都在纽约，跟乔丹骑马四处闲逛，同时试图讨好她的那位高龄姑母。但是，最后我还是在一个周日的下午到他家拜访了，我还没在那待上两分钟，就有人带汤姆·布坎南进来喝上一杯。很自然，我吃了一惊，但是真正令人吃惊的事情是以前从未发生过的。

骑马同来的共有三人——汤姆和一个名叫斯隆的男人，还有一个身穿棕褐色女骑装的漂亮女人，她以前来过这儿。

“我很高兴见到你们，”盖茨比站在走廊上说道，“我很高兴你们光临。”

就好像他们真在乎他高兴不高兴，欢迎不欢迎似的！

“坐这儿。抽烟还是抽雪茄？”他飞快地在房中四处走动，忙着拉铃叫来仆人。“等会儿我让人给你们送点喝的来。”

汤姆的到来使他的情绪大受影响，但是，不管怎样，直到他张罗着拿出东西招待好了客人，他才不会一直局促不安。他隐隐约约地意识到他们此番前来只是为了歇歇脚。斯隆先生什么也没要，来杯柠檬水？不，谢谢。来点香槟？什么也不用，谢谢……很抱歉……

“你们骑马还开心吧？”

“这一带的路很好走。”

“我想路上的汽车……”

“是的。”

由于一股抑制不住的冲动，盖茨比转向汤姆，他还以为刚才的自我介绍，自己是作为一个陌生人哩。

“我想我们以前在哪见过，布坎南先生？”

“噢，是的。”汤姆粗声而有礼貌地说道，但是显然他并不记得这回事。“我们的确见过，我记得很清楚。”

“大约两周前。”

“对了，当时你跟尼克在一块儿。”

“我认识你太太，”盖茨比继续说道，几乎是以一种挑衅的口吻。

“是吗？”

汤姆转向我。

“你住在这儿附近，尼克？”

“住隔壁。”

“是吗？”

斯隆先生没有参与这次谈话，而是大模大样懒懒地仰躺在椅子上，那个女人也没说什么，但是在两杯加冰块威士忌饮料下肚后，她就出人意料地变得兴奋起来。

“盖茨比先生，我们都会来参加你的下一次聚会，”她提议道，“你觉得怎么样？”

“当然，我很高兴邀请你们。”

“好极了！”斯隆先生说道，但话中毫无感谢之意。“好啦……我想应该动身回家啦。”

“请别急着走。”盖茨比恳切地说道。现在他已能控制自己，并且想了解更多下汤姆。“你们为什么不——不留下来吃晚餐呢？我想还会有其他一些人从纽约来这儿。”

“还是你来我家吃晚餐吧，”她热切地说道，“你们俩都来。”

包括我在内。斯隆先生站了起来。

“走吧！”他说道——仅对着她一人说。

“我是说真的，”她坚持道，“能请到你们，我会很高兴的，我那儿有的是地方。”

盖茨比疑惑不定地看着我。他想去，但是又没看出斯隆先生已打定主意不想让他去。

“恐怕我不能去了。”我说。

“噢，那你来吧。”她恳切地说道，一心一意要盖茨比去。

斯隆先生附在她耳畔嘀咕着什么。

“如果我们现在动身，还不晚。”她执拗地大声说道。

“我没马骑。”盖茨比说，“过去在军队里的时候骑过，但没买上一匹。我会开车跟在你们后面，请原谅，等我一会儿。”

剩下我们仨走到门外的走廊，斯隆先生和那位女士开始在旁边怒气冲冲地交谈起来。

“天哪，我相信这家伙肯定会来了，”汤姆说道，“难道他不知道她不要他来么？”

“她说她想要他来。”

“她会举办一个大型的聚会，可他在那儿谁也不认识。”他皱了皱眉说，“我真好奇他是在哪儿见到黛西的，天知道。也许是我思想陈旧了，但我可看不惯这年头女人们到处乱跑，他们会遇到形形色色的怪人。”

突然斯隆先生和那位女士走下台阶并上了马。

“快点，”斯隆先生对汤姆说道，“我们已经晚了，我们得走了。”然后对我说：“告诉他我们不等了，好吗？”

汤姆跟我握了握手，其余的人只是冷冷地点头致意，随后他们便沿着车道策马飞奔，消失在八月茂密的树林里。就在这时，盖茨比从前门出来，手里拿着一顶帽子和一件薄外套。

汤姆显然不放心让黛西独自一人四处走动跟人交际，因为在接下来周六的晚上，他就陪同她一起来到盖茨比的聚会。也许是他的到来给晚会添上了一种特别的、令人压抑的氛围——在我的记忆中，它格外区别于盖茨比那个夏天举办的其他晚会。还是那些人，或者至少是同一类人，还是同样喝不完的香槟酒，同样的五花八门、各种基调的人声鼎沸，但是我能感觉到空气中有一种令人不愉悦的感觉，充斥着一种前所未有的不和谐。或者仅仅是我已经变得适应了它，习惯了把西埃格自身

当做一个完全独立的世界，它拥有自己的规格标准和重要人物，绝不逊色于任何东西，因为它已经不自觉地就是这样了。现在我通过黛西的眼睛，又在重新打量它了。通过新的眼光去重新看待那些你已经花了很大力气才适应的事物，总是不可避免地会使人难受。

他们于黄昏抵达，当我们信步走在衣光闪闪的人群中时，黛西又用起了她那套说话柔声细语的伎俩。

“这些事情太令我激动了，”她小声说道，“如果你今晚任何时候想亲吻我，尼克，让我知道就行，我会很高兴为你安排，只需提到我的名字，或者出示一张绿卡，我正散发着绿……”

“到四处看看。”盖茨比提议道。

“我正往四处看呢。我真开心极了……”

“你一定会看到许多你听说过的人物的面孔。”说话时汤姆那双傲慢自大的眼睛移向人群。

“我们不经常四处走动，”他说道，“事实上，我刚才正在想我在这儿连一个人都不认识。”

“也许你认识那位小姐。”盖茨比指向一位正端坐在一棵白梅树下的如花似玉的美人儿。汤姆和黛西盯着她看，很明显感到难以置信，他们认出这是位当前大红大紫的影视明星。

“她真可爱！”黛西说道。

“在她旁边弯着腰的是她的导演。”

他带着他们走到一波又一波的客人中，为他们做隆重的自我介绍。

“布坎南夫人.....这是布坎南先生。”稍稍迟疑了一下，他又补充道，“是位马球健将。”

“噢，不是的！”汤姆赶紧否认，“我不是。”

但是显然盖茨比很喜欢这个称呼，因为那晚接下来的时间汤姆都是“马球健将”。

“我从没有见过这么多名人，”黛西大喊道，“我喜欢那个人——叫什么来着？——鼻子有点发青的那个！”

盖茨比说出了那人的姓名，并补充说他是一个小制片人。

“好吧，我就是喜欢他。”

“我宁愿不做马球健将，”汤姆愉快地说道，“我宁愿默默无闻地看着所有这些名人。”

黛西和盖茨比跳起了舞。我记得当时我对他的优雅的老式狐步舞姿感到很惊讶——以前我从没见他跳过舞。随后他们闲逛到我家，在台阶上坐了半个小时，应黛西的请求，我在花园里替他们把风。“以防出现火灾或洪水啦，”黛西解释说，“或者是任何天灾嘛。”

我们坐下一起共进晚餐时，汤姆又从他的“默默无闻”中出现了。“你介意我到那边跟那几个人一起吃饭吗？”他说道，“有个家伙正在讲一些有趣的事情。”

“去吧，”黛西和颜悦色地回答，“如果你想记下谁的地址的话，这

有我的小金铅笔.....”过了一会儿，她朝四周看了看，对我说那个女孩“虽然俗气但很漂亮”，这时我才明白除了跟盖茨比单独待在一起的那半个小时，其他时间她都玩得不开心。

我们都醉得东倒西歪。这都是我的错——盖茨比被叫去接电话了，再加上两周前我跟这帮人一起玩过，但是当时带给我乐趣的东西现在变得令我恶心了。

“你感觉怎么样？贝达克小姐？”

我对这个姑娘说话时，她正试图倚靠在我肩上，但没靠成。听到问她她坐了起来，睁开了眼睛。

“什么？”

一个大块头、懒洋洋的女人，刚才本来一直在怂恿黛西明天到当地的俱乐部打高尔夫球，现在开始为贝达克小姐帮腔了：“噢，她现在很好，当她喝下五六杯鸡尾酒时，总会开始像这样大喊大叫，我告诉过她不要沾酒了。”

“我滴酒没沾。”被指责的人违心地辩解道。

“我们听见你一直在大喊大叫，于是我就跟这儿的希维特医生说：‘医生，这有人需要你的帮忙。’”

“我保证，她真是对您感激不尽，”她的另一个朋友毫不感激地说道，“但是当你把她的头按在水池里时，她的衣服都湿透了。”

“我就是讨厌别人把我的头按在水池里，”贝达克小姐咕哝道，“上次在新泽西州他们差点把我淹死。”

“那时你确实不应该喝酒嘛。”希维特医生反驳道。

“还是说你自己吧！”贝达克小姐猛地大叫。“你的手会抖，我才不会让你为我动手术哩！”

就是些诸如此类的事情。基本上我记得的最后一件事，就是我跟黛西站一块儿瞧着那位电影导演和他的“明星”。他们还在白梅树下，两个人的脸几乎就要挨到一起了，除了中间只隔着的一层淡淡的白月光。我想起来，那天晚上他都在不断慢慢地弯下腰以无限亲近她，甚至就在我瞅着他们时，我看见他终于俯下身，越过了最后的一点点距离，亲吻了她的脸颊。

“我喜欢她，”黛西说道，“我觉得她很可爱。”

但是剩下的一切让她很反感——这是不容争辩的，因为它不是一种姿态，而是一种情绪。她对西埃格感到十分厌恶，这是一个在长岛这个小渔岛上衍生出另一个“百老汇”的空前绝后的“去处”——厌恶它那原始的粗野在陈旧过时的温文尔雅下的蠢蠢欲动，厌恶它那突然逆转的命运指引着当地人沿着一条捷径白手起家，最后却仍然落得一无所有。在这些她不能明白的简单朴素事物中，她看见了某种可怕的东西。

当他们在等车来接时，我和他们一起坐在门前的台阶上，天色已变得黝黑，只有敞亮的门向黝黑的黎明投出十平方英尺的光亮。有时候楼上化妆间的百叶窗前会有一个人影闪过，接着又闪过另一个身影，那是不断有人在对着镜子涂脂抹粉。

“这个盖茨比究竟是谁？”汤姆突然追问道，“一个贩卖私酒的暴发户？”

“你是从哪听说的？”我问道。

“我没听谁说，自己瞎猜的。你知道的，很多新近富起来的人都是私酒贩卖之徒。”

“盖茨比不是。”我简短地说道。

他沉默了一会儿，车道上的鹅卵石被他的脚踩得吱吱作响。

“好吧，他肯定卯足了劲才把这些形形色色的家伙凑到一块儿。”

一阵微风吹动了黛西毛茸茸的灰皮领子。

“至少他们比我们认识的人有趣。”黛西努力插上一句。

“你看起来不是很感兴趣。”

“是吗？我挺感兴趣呀。”

汤姆笑着转向我。

“当那个女孩要她给自己冲冷水澡时，你有没有注意到黛西的表情？”

黛西开始跟着音乐和着节拍沙哑地低声吟唱，这歌声赋予每一个词一种以前从未听过以后也不会再有的特殊含义。当音调升高时，她的声音也温润地打开了一些，俨然一派女低音的唱腔，每一个声调的变换都一点一点地把她的脉脉温情糅杂在空气中。

“很多没有受到邀请的人也不请自来，”她突然说道，“那个女孩就没被邀请。他们仅仅只是强行进入，而他又太礼貌了不会去拒绝他

们。”

“我想知道他是谁，又是干什么营生的，”汤姆坚持道，“我想我得重点调查清楚这件事。”

“我立马就能告诉你，”黛西回应道，“他拥有好几家药店，很多药店都是他亲自创办的。”就在这时，姗姗来迟的豪华轿车沿着车道缓缓开上来了。

“晚安，尼克！”黛西说道。

她瞟了我一眼，接着就把目光移向台阶被灯光照亮的顶部，在那里《凌晨三点》——当年一支优雅的、略带忧伤的小华尔兹舞曲，正从敞开的门里飘扬出来。毕竟，只有在盖茨比轻松随意的舞会上才能找到一种完全不属于她的世界的可能的浪漫。那首似乎在召唤她回去的歌曲中究竟包含着什么呢？在这个昏暗的、无法预算的时刻又会发生什么呢？也许某位令人难以置信的客人会突然造访，也许是位千载难遇、令人惊艳、一位真正明艳的绝色佳人，她只要对盖茨比看上一眼，双方目光这一瞬间的神奇碰撞，将会把五年来对爱人的忠贞不贰抹擦得一干二净。那晚我待到很晚，盖茨比要我等到直到他闲下来，于是我就在花园闲逛，一直等到惯来游泳的客人们又冷又兴奋地从黑黢黢的海滩跑上来，一直等到楼上客人房间的灯都被熄灭。当他最后终于从台阶上走下来时，他脸上那晒得黝黑的皮肤异乎寻常地紧绷着，眼睛明亮却又疲倦。

“她不喜欢这个舞会。”他立即说道。

“她当然喜欢。”

“她不喜欢，”他坚持道，“她玩儿得一点也不开心。”

他沉默了，我猜出他有一种无法言说的压抑。“我感觉离她很远，”他说道，“但又很难令她明白这点。”

“你是说跳舞吗？”

“跳舞？”他打了一下响指，把所有他跳过的舞一笔勾销了。“老伙计，跳舞是无关紧要的。”

他对黛西的要求不过是想要她对汤姆说一句“我从没爱过你”。等她用这句话把过去四年的婚姻生活涂抹干净后，他们就能决定下一步采取哪些更实际的举措。其中之一就是，等她恢复自由身后，他们将回到路易斯维尔，让她从家里再嫁出一次——就像五年前一样。

“但是她不理解，”他说道，“她过去是能够理解的，我们一坐就是好几个钟头……”

他打住话头，开始在一条荒凉的小路上走来走去，小路上被扔满了果皮、丢弃的小礼物和被踩碎的鲜花。

“我不会对她要求太多，”我冒昧地说道，“你不能重温旧梦。”

“不能重温旧梦？”他不以为然地大声嚷道：“说的什么话，我当然能！”

他狂躁不安地四下张望，好像过去就在这里，潜藏在他房子投下的阴影中，只要他一伸手就能抓到。

“我会把一切恢复成以前的样子，”他毅然决然地点头说道，“她会看到的！”

他谈了很多过去的事情，于是我推测他可能想要恢复什么东西，也许是关于他自己的某种理念，使他相信自己是爱黛西的。从那时起，他的生活就已经一团糟，但是如果让他再一次回到原点，然后再慢慢地经历一遍，也许他就能找到那究竟是什么……

五年前一个秋日的夜晚，他们正沿着落叶飘飘的街道散步，随后来到一个没有树的地方，人行道上洒满了一层银白的月光。他们在这里停下来，彼此转过身面对着对方。那是一个凉爽的夜晚，是一年中季节更替的时刻，空气中充满了一种莫可名状的兴奋。家家户户静静亮着的灯仿佛在对着深黑的夜色燃尽最后一丝光亮，天上的点点繁星仿佛也在匆匆忙忙翻转滚动着。通过眼角的余光，盖茨比看到一段段的人行道仿佛组成了一架爬梯，延伸到树上某个神秘的地方，而且他能爬上去，并且如果他独自爬上去，就能立即吮吸到生命的乳汁，一口吞下那无与伦比的神奇的玉液琼浆。

当黛西白皙的脸庞凑近他的脸时，他的心跳越来越快。他知道当他亲吻这个女孩，并且把他无法言说的想象与她的温热的呼吸结合起来时，他的心思就再也不能和上帝的思想一样任意驰骋了。所以他等着，再倾听了一会儿那已经在一颗星上敲响的音叉，然后吻了她。一碰上他的嘴唇，她就像一朵鲜花般为他绽放了，于是这个理想的化身也完成了。

他倾诉的这一切，甚至是他流露出的多愁善感，使我想起了什么——很久以前，我在某个地方听到的一曲令人难以捉摸的旋律、一段片段化的零散的歌词。有那么一会儿，一句话快说出嘴，我的双唇像哑巴一样张开，仿佛除了一丝受惊的口气，还有什么正挣扎地要从嘴里出来，但最终嘴巴没有发出任何声响，于是我就要记起的东西永远也无法表达出来了。

第七章

就在人们对盖茨比的好奇达到顶点时，在一个周六的晚上，他家没有像往常一样灯火通明，于是，就像当初莫名其妙地开始，他作为古罗马特里马尔乔①的大宴宾客的生涯也莫名其妙地结束了。我逐渐注意到那些兴冲冲驶进他家车道的汽车停留了片刻之后就扫兴地离开了。我怀疑他是否生病了，于是我亲去查看一番——一个陌生的满脸凶相的男管家在门口满腹狐疑地斜着眼看我。

“盖茨比先生病了吗？”

“没有。”过了一会儿，他才缓缓地极不情愿地加了句“先生”。

“我没见他出来过，很担心他，请你转告他卡拉维先生来过。”

“谁？”他粗鲁地追问道。

“卡拉维。”

“卡拉维，好的，我会告诉他的。”

话刚说完就立即关上了门。

我的芬兰女佣告诉我说盖茨比一周以前就把家里所有的佣人都辞退了，换上了另外六个，这些人从不进西埃格村采买，也不接受商贩们的贿赂，只是通过电话订购适量的物品。杂货店的伙计说他家的厨房看上去像个猪圈，村里人普遍认为这些新来的人压根儿就不是仆人。

第二天盖茨比给我打了电话。

“要出去吗？”我问道。

“不，老伙计。”

“我听说你辞退了所有的佣人。”

“我想要雇用一些不会嚼舌根的人。黛西经常过来，都在下午。”

如此一来，整座大酒店就像纸房子一样轰然倒塌了，就只因为她的看不顺眼。

“他们是沃尔夫山姆想要帮助的人，他们都是哥们儿和姐们儿，过去经营一家小旅馆。”

“我明白了。”

他打电话是应黛西的要求——问我明天会不会去她家吃午餐？贝克小姐也会去。半个小时后，黛西亲自打电话过来了，好像因为我要来感到很欣慰。一定是出了什么事。并且我不能相信他们竟然选在那样一个场合来一场大闹——特别是上演一场盖茨比曾在花园勾勒过的令人十分尴尬的闹剧。

第二天酷热难当，尽管夏天就要到尽头了，然而这无疑是最热的一天。当我搭乘的火车驶出隧道进入阳光中时，只有全国饼干公司呼啸的汽笛声打破了中午闷热的寂静。车座上的草垫子热得简直要烧着了，坐我旁边的这个女人起先还斯文地任由汗水浸湿她的白衬衣。随着她手中的报纸都汗湿了，她颓然地长叹一声，绝望地往后一倒，钱包“啪”的一声掉到地下。

“噢，我的！”她气喘吁吁地说道。

我懒洋洋地弯下腰拾起钱包递给她，手尽量伸得很长，只捏着它的一个角，以表明我对她的钱包并没有非分之想，但是附近的每一个人，包括这个女人，依旧怀疑我。

“热啊！”售票员对着熟悉的面孔说，“什么鬼天气！热！……热！……热！……你觉得够热吗？热吗？不是吗？你觉得……？”

当我的月票回到手中时，上面留下了他手上黑色的汗渍。在这种酷热的天气还有谁会去在意他亲吻了谁的红唇，又是谁的头弄湿了他胸前的睡衣口袋！

布坎南家的大厅里吹起的一阵微风，带给了正在门口等候的盖茨比和我一阵电话铃声。

“主人的尸体？”男管家冲着话筒喊道，“很抱歉，太太，我们不能提供它，今天中午实在太热了，没法儿碰！”

但他真正说的是：“是的……是的……我会去看看。”

他放下电话，大汗淋漓地走向我们，接过我们的硬壳草帽。

“夫人在大厅等你们！”他大声叫道。没必要向我们指明方向，在这酷热无比的天气里，任何一个多余的动作都是对生命储备的浪费。

屋里，由于外面罩着遮阳篷，显得阴暗又凉爽。黛西和乔丹正躺在巨大的沙发上，像两座银白的雕塑，正用手压着她们的白衣裙以防被呼呼开着的电扇吹起来。

“我们动不了。”她们一起说道。

乔丹的手——晒黑的地方敷上了白粉，在我的手里放了一会儿。

“托马斯·布坎南先生①——我们的运动健将在哪呢？”我问道。这时我听到他的声音传来，正生硬、低低、沙哑地在大厅打电话。

盖茨比站在绯红色的地毯中央，饶有趣味地四处观看。黛西看着他，发出了甜美、撩人的笑声，从她胸前微微透出一股香粉气息，飘入空气中。

“据说，”乔丹小声说道，“电话那头是汤姆的情妇。”

我们都沉默了。大厅里的声音懊恼地提高了分贝：“就这样，好吧，我是不会把车卖给你的……我对你没有任何义务……你在我午餐的时间拿这个来烦我，这我绝对不能忍受！”

“挂着话筒说话呢！”黛西讽刺地说道。

“不，他没有，”我向她保证说，“的确有这笔交易，我碰巧知道这回事。”

汤姆猛地撩开门，硕大的身躯顿时就堵住了门口，然后急急忙忙走进房间。

“盖茨比先生！”他伸出宽大、平滑的手，很好地掩盖了对他的厌恶。“很高兴见到你，先生……尼克……”

“给我们弄点冷饮吧。”黛西大声说道。

当他再次离开屋子后，她站起身走到盖茨比跟前，扳起他的头，吻

了吻他的嘴。

“你知道我爱你。”她喃喃说道。

“你忘了还有一位女士在场呢。”乔丹说道。

黛西故意装傻地回过头。

“你也可以吻尼克。”

“真是个低级、粗俗的女孩！”

“我不介意！”黛西大声说道，同时在砖砌的壁炉前跳起舞来，随后她记起了炎热的天气，便难为情地在沙发上坐了下来。就在这时，一个收拾得很干净的保姆领着一个小女孩走进房间来。

“亲——爱的宝贝！”她嗲声嗲气地说道，同时伸出双臂。“到爱你的妈妈这儿来。”

保姆手一撒，这个孩子就从房间那头跑过来，羞答答地一头栽进她妈妈的衣裙里。

“亲——爱的宝贝！妈妈把香粉弄到你这黄黄的头发上没？现在站起身，然后跟大家说声‘您好’。”

盖茨比和我都弯下腰，拉了拉小孩极不情愿伸出的小手。随后，他一直惊讶地看着这个孩子，我想他以前从没相信她真实地存在着。

“我午餐前就穿好衣服了。”小孩急切地转向黛西说道。

“那是因为妈咪想要向大家炫耀你啊。”她把脸埋进孩子那雪白的小

脖子上细细的皱纹里。“你这个天使，你啊，你真是个小天使。”

“是的。”孩子认可道，显得很平静。“乔丹阿姨也穿了件白裙子。”

“你觉得妈妈的朋友们怎么样？”黛西把她转过身以便让她面对着盖茨比。“你觉得他们好看吗？”

“爸爸上哪去了？”

“她长得不像她爸爸，”黛西解释道，“她长得像我，头发和脸型都随我。”

黛西往后靠坐回沙发上，保姆上前一步，伸出了她的手。

“来吧，帕米。”

“再见，甜心！”

孩子不情愿地往后瞟了一眼，乖乖地牵上保姆的手，然后被拉出了门。就在这时，汤姆回来了，跟在他后面的佣人端着四杯杜松子利克酒，杯子里装满的冰块儿叮当作响。

盖茨比接过一杯酒。

“他们看上去的确很冰爽。”他说道，明显有点紧张。

我们大口大口、贪婪地喝着。

“我在哪读到过说太阳正一年比一年变得更热。”汤姆快活地说道，“又好像地球很快就会掉进太阳里去，或者，噢，等等，也许恰恰相反，是太阳正变得一年比一年冷。”

“到外边去吧，”他向盖茨比提议道，“我想领着你四处转转。”

我跟他们一起走到外面的阳台。在碧绿的海湾里，海水在酷热中静止不动，一条小帆船正慢慢驶向新的海域。盖茨比目视了它一会儿，然后举起手指着海湾对面。

“我就住你家对面。”

“的确如此。”

我们的目光掠过玫瑰花圃、晒得滚烫的草坪和海岸边在这三伏天里疯长的杂草丛。那只小船的白帆正慢慢驶向湛蓝清凉的天际，再往前就是碧波荡漾的海洋和星罗棋布的小岛。

“这是多好的运动啊，”汤姆点头说道，“我真想和那条船一起出去，玩儿上它半个小时再回来。”

我们在餐厅共进午餐，外面的炎热被挡住了，所以里面显得很阴凉，就着冰爽的啤酒，我们也把强颜欢笑喝下了肚。

“今天下午我们做点什么呢？”黛西大声说道，“还有明天呢，接下来的三十年呢？”

“别发神经了，”乔丹说道，“当秋高气爽的时候，生活又重新开始。”

“但是天太热了，”黛西执拗地说，差点要掉眼泪了，“一切都变得乱糟糟的，让我们都进城去吧！”

她的声音继续在热气中缭绕，拍打着它，把它的无知塑成某些形

状。

“我听说过有人把马厩改造成车库，”汤姆对盖茨比说，“但我才是把马厩改造成车库的第一人。”

“谁想进城去？”黛西执拗地问道。盖茨比的眼睛望向她。“啊，”她大声说道，“你看上去真酷。”

他们的目光相遇了，彼此紧盯着对方，无视周围的一切，随后她好不容易才把眼睛瞟向桌底。

“你总是这么酷！”她又重复了一遍。

她这已经是在跟他说她爱他了，这点汤姆也看出来，他很震惊，嘴巴微张着，看看盖茨比，又回头看看黛西，好像这时他才意识到她是盖茨比很久以前就认识了的人。

“你很像广告里的那个人，”她毫无察觉地继续说，“你知道广告里的那个人……”

“好吧，”汤姆飞快地打断她的话，“我很乐意到城里去。快点吧，我们都进城去。”

他站起身，眼睛仍然在盖茨比和他妻子之间游移，但谁都没动。

“快点啊！”他有点发脾气了。“到底怎么回事？如果我们要进城，现在就出发吧。”

他的手，因为极力控制自己有点发抖，他把杯中剩下的啤酒举到嘴边一饮而尽。黛西招呼我们起身，走到外面炽热的沙砾车道上去。

“我们就这样走吗？”她不以为然地说道，“就像这样？难道我们不应该先让大家抽根烟？”

“整个午餐期间大家都在抽烟啊。”

“噢，让我们玩儿得高兴点，”她央求他道，“天太热了，别大惊小怪的。”

他没回答。

“你自便吧，”她说道，“来吧，乔丹。”

他们上楼去准备，我们三个男人就站在那里用脚乱踢着路上的鹅卵石。一弯银月已悬在西天。盖茨比想说点什么，但立马改变了主意，但就在这时，汤姆转过身面对着他，等着他说点什么。

“你在这建了你的马厩吗？”盖茨比费劲地问道。

“大约在沿着这条路四分之一英里以外的地方。”

“噢。”

停顿了一会儿。

“我真搞不懂为什么要进城去！”汤姆突然粗声粗气地冒出一句。“女人们总是心血来潮……”

“我们带点什么喝的吗？”黛西在楼上窗旁大喊道。

“我去拿些威士忌酒。”汤姆回应道，随后走进了屋。

盖茨比挺直身子转向我说道：“在他家里我不能说什么，老伙计。”

“她说话很轻浮，”我评论道，“里面充满了——”我迟疑了。

“她的声音里充满了钱的味道。”他突然说。

确实是，我以前从未弄明白。它充满了钱的味道——这正是她抑扬顿挫的声音充满无穷魅力之所在，如铃儿一般叮当作响，像铙钹齐鸣一样歌唱.....好像高高端坐在白色王宫里的国王的女儿，金姑娘.....

汤姆从屋子里走出来，用毛巾包着一瓶一夸脱酒，后面跟着黛西和乔丹，俩人都戴着金属布做的又小又紧的帽子，手臂上搭着薄纱披肩。

“大家都坐我的车吧。”盖茨比提议。他摸了摸晒得滚烫的绿皮座位。“我本应该把它停在阴凉地儿的。”

“这车用的是标准排挡吗？”汤姆追问道。

“是的。”

“好吧，你开我的车，我再开你的车进城去。”

这个提议不合盖茨比的意。

“我认为汽油不多了。”他不以为然。

“汽油还很多，”汤姆嚷嚷道，他看了看油表，然后又说：“如果油用光了，我会找家杂货店，这年头你可以在杂货店买到你想要的任何东西。”

说完这句很明显没有任何意义的话后，出现了一个短暂的停顿，大

家都没吱声。黛西皱着眉头看着汤姆，这时，一种无法言说的表情掠过盖茨比的脸庞，既十分陌生又似曾相识，这种表情我好像只是听别人用言语描述过。

“来吧，黛西。”汤姆边说边用手把黛西推向盖茨比的车。“我将带着你坐这辆马戏团的大篷车。”

他打开车门，但是她的从他的臂弯里挣脱出来。

“你带着尼克和乔丹，我们开着车在后面跟着。”

她走近盖茨比，用手碰碰他的外衣。乔丹、汤姆和我坐进盖茨比车里前排的座位，汤姆尝试着扳了扳不熟悉的排挡，随后我们像出膛的子弹般驶进热浪中，把他们远远地甩在后面。

“你看到了吗？”汤姆追问道。

“看到什么？”

他机敏地看着我，意识到乔丹和我肯定已经知道了事情的全部。

“你们觉得我很傻，对不对？”他说道。“也许我是很傻，但是我几——几乎有第二视觉，有时候，它会告诉我做什么。也许你们不相信这个，但是科学……”

他停住没说了。眼前的紧急事件占据了他的头脑，把他从理论深渊的边缘拉了回来。

“我已经对这个家伙做了个小调查，”他继续说道，“早知道我本应该调查得更深入一些……”

“你是说你找了位巫师吗？”乔丹幽默地问道。

“什么？”我们都笑了起来，汤姆疑惑地盯着我们。“巫师？”

“关于盖茨比。”

“关于盖茨比！不，我才没有，我是说我已经小小地调查了一下他的过去。”

“然后你发现他在牛津上过学。”乔丹帮他说道。

“上过牛津！”他不以为然，“就凭他那样的家伙！还穿着一套粉色西装。”

“不管怎么说，他的确上过牛津。”

“牛津，是新墨西哥州的牛津镇吧，”汤姆喷着鼻息，轻蔑地说道，“或者类似的地方。”

“听着，汤姆。如果你这么势利，为什么还请他来吃午餐呢？”乔丹气恼地质问他。

“是黛西请他来的，她在我们结婚之前就认识他了，天知道在哪认识的！”

随着啤酒的酒劲慢慢消退，我们都开始变得烦躁起来，意识到这一点，于是我们就都沉默了，安静地开了一会儿车。然后当T.J.埃科尔堡大夫那双褪了色的眼睛在路前方出现时，我想起了盖茨比关于汽油不够的提醒。

“汽油足够我们开到城里。”汤姆说。

“但是就在这儿有一家车铺，”乔丹不以为然，“我可不想车子在这么热的鬼天气里突然没油了。”

汤姆不耐烦地踩了两边的刹车，随后我们就突然停在了威尔逊车铺的招牌前，车子扬起一阵灰尘。一会儿之后，老板从车铺里面出来，出现在我们眼前，那双深深陷进去的眼睛盯着汽车。

“给我们加些汽油，”汤姆粗声粗气地大声说道，“你认为我们停在这干嘛，欣赏这里的风景吗？”

“我生病了，”威尔逊一动也不动地说道，“病了一整天了。”

“出什么事了？”

“我的身体垮了。”

“那么，是要我自己动手吗？”汤姆反问道，“在电话里你听起来还挺精神的嘛！”

威尔逊费劲地离开门的倚靠，从阴凉处走出来，艰难地喘着气松开了汽车的油箱盖。在阳光下，他的脸色发青。

“我不是故意要打扰你吃午餐，”他说道，“但我确实是急需一笔钱，我想知道你愿不愿意把你那辆旧车卖给我。”

“你觉得这辆怎么样？”汤姆问道，“我上周买的。”

“很漂亮的一部黄色车！”威尔逊说道，同时握紧了加油的手把。

“想买它吗？”

“倒是个好机会，”威尔逊淡淡地一笑，“不想，但是我能在另一辆车上赚点钱。”

“你突然间想要钱干什么？”

“我在这待太久了，我想离开，我妻子和我想要到西部去。”

“你妻子想去吗？”汤姆吃惊地问道。

“十年以来她一直在说这件事。”他遮住眼睛，靠在油泵上休息了一会儿。“现在不管她想不想，她都要去了，我会带她走。”

有汽车飞掠过我们身旁，扬起一阵沙尘，然后车上的人冲我们挥了挥手。

“我得付你多少钱？”汤姆生硬地问道。

“就在这过去的两天我刚发现一些事情很蹊跷，”威尔逊说，“这就是为什么我要搬走，以及为那辆汽车的事打扰你的原因。”

“我得付你多少钱？”

“20美元。”

无情袭来的热浪开始搞得我头昏眼花，在那里，我有一阵儿感到很不舒服，然后我才意识到他的疑心还没有落到汤姆身上。他已经发现梅特尔在另外一个世界过着一种与他分离的生活，并且对此事的震惊使他的身体出毛病了。我看了看他，又看了看汤姆——不到一个小时前他也有同样的发现哩。突然间我觉得人与人之间无论是在智力还是在种族上的差别都没有病人和健康人之间的差别大。威尔逊病得这么重以至于看

起来像犯了什么罪似的——一种不可饶恕的罪，好像他已经让一个可怜的女孩怀孕了。

“我会把那辆车卖给你，”汤姆说道，“明天下午我会送它过来。”

那个地方总是令人隐隐约约感觉不安，即使是在艳阳高照的午后，现在我回转过头，好像有人警告我背后有什么东西。在灰堆的上方，是T.J.埃克尔堡大夫的那双巨大的眼睛在日夜守望，但是一会儿之后，我感觉到有另一双眼睛在不到二十英里以外的地方注视着我们。

在车铺上面的一个窗户旁，窗帘已经被撩到了旁边一点，梅特尔·威尔逊在注视着这辆车。她是如此专注以至于没有察觉别人对她的观察，一种接一种的表情爬上她的脸庞，好像物体在冲洗的底片上慢慢显影一样。她的表情熟悉得有点古怪——那是我在女人脸上经常看到的神情，但是这种表情在梅特尔·威尔逊的脸上出现，它似乎显得毫无缘故又令人不解，直到我从她那双因充满妒火而睁得大大的眼睛里看出，它们不是在瞧着汤姆，而是乔丹·贝克——被她误当成他妻子的人。

一个单纯的头脑一旦陷入困惑，就再也没比这更困惑的了。就在我们开车走的时候，汤姆感到一阵惊慌失措的灼热，就像鞭子在抽打一样。他的妻子和情人，一个小时前还是令他放心，从未被别人染指的，现在却猛地挣脱了他的控制。出于本能，他猛踩油门，一方面想追上黛西，另一方面想把威尔逊抛在脑后，于是我们以每小时五十英里的速度向阿斯托里亚飞驰而去。直到在高架铁路蜘蛛网一样的支架中，我们看见了那辆逍遥自在的蓝色小轿车。

“第50号大街附近那些大电影院很凉快，”乔丹提议道，“我喜欢当人们都离去后的夏日午后的纽约，它带给人一种具有美感的东西——熟

透的感觉，好像各种各样奇奇怪怪的水果就要落入你的手中。”

“美感”这个词更令汤姆感觉到不安，但是在他说出反对的话之前，那辆小车停下来了，黛西示意我们并排停下。

“我们去哪？”她大喊道。

“去电影院怎么样？”

“太热了，”她抱怨道，“你们去吧，我们开车在周围兜兜风，然后再跟你们碰头。”随后她好不容易想出几句俏皮话，“我们将会到某个角落见到你们，我将是那个抽着两根香烟的男人。”

“我们不能在这里讨论这件事情，”汤姆不耐烦地说道，这时后面一辆卡车发出了一阵刺耳的鸣笛。“你们跟着我开到中央公园的南边，广场前面。”

他好几次回过头去看看他们的小汽车，如果他们被交通堵住了，他就会慢下来等他们，直到他们又进入他的视线。我想他是在担心他们没准儿会沿着一条小巷子飞驰而去，永远地走出他的生活。

但他们没有，接下来我们做出了一个更难以解释的举动——租下了广场饭店一间套房的客厅。

那个冗长而喧嚣的争吵以我们一起走进那个房间告终，究竟吵了些什么，我也记不清了，虽然当时我的身体强烈地感觉到，在整个过程中，我的内裤像一条湿漉漉的蛇一直在我的两腿间缠来缠去；同时，断断续续渗出的汗珠沿着我的背部涔涔地滴下。黛西首先提议我们应该租下五个浴室冲个凉，然后形成了一个更切实的方案——“找个地方喝杯冰镇薄荷酒”。我们每个人都不断地说这是个“疯狂的主意”——我们都

异口同声地向一个左右为难的服务生讲话，并且认为，或者假装认为，我们这样做很有趣……

房间很大，也很闷，并且，虽然已经是午后四点了，打开窗户迎面而来的只是从公园的灌木林里涌过来的一股热浪。黛西走到镜子跟前，背对着我们，开始梳理她的头发。

“这真是个高级的套房。”乔丹满怀敬意地低声说道，随后大家都笑了。

“打开另一扇窗户。”黛西命令道，连头也不回。

“没有其他窗户了。”

“好吧，那我们只好打电话要一把斧子……”

“心静自然凉，”汤姆不耐烦地说道，“你这样喋喋不休地唠叨只会让事情更糟十倍。”

他拧开从毛巾里拿出的威士忌酒瓶，放在了桌上。

“为什么不随她去呢，老伙计？”盖茨比说道，“是你想进城来的呀。”

大家沉默了一会儿，电话簿从钉子上滑落下来，“啪”的一声掉到地上，于是乔丹低声说道：“对不起。”但是这次谁也没笑。

“我来捡。”我主动提出。

“我捡起来了。”盖茨比认真地察看了裂开的绳子，显示出有兴趣似地咕哝了一声，“哼！”，然后把电话簿扔在椅子上。

“那是你的口头禅吧，对不对？”汤姆尖刻地说道。

“什么？”

“动不动就说‘老兄’，你从哪儿学的？”

“现在看着我，汤姆，”黛西说道，一边从镜子那儿转过身来，“如果你要针对个人品头论足，那我一分钟也不会在这多待下去，打个电话要点冰块来做薄荷朱利酒。”

当汤姆拿起电话筒时，那被压缩的空气热浪中突然爆发出一阵声响，这时我们听到门德尔松①的华美庄严的旋律——《婚礼进行曲》从底下的舞厅里传上来。

“想想看，竟有人在这么热的天结婚！”乔丹气恼地嚷道。

“还是有的——我就是在六月中旬结的婚，”黛西回忆道，“路易斯维尔的六月！那时有人昏倒了，谁昏倒了来着，汤姆？”

“毕洛克西②。”他简短地答道。

“一个名叫毕洛克西的人。‘木头人’毕洛克西，并且他是做盒子的——这是事实——他又来自田纳西州的毕洛克西市。”

“他们把他带到我家，”乔丹补充说道，“因为我们住的地方离教堂仅两家之隔。随后他一待就是三个星期，直到爸爸告诉他他必须离开了。他走后第二天爸爸就过世了。”过了一会儿，她又加了句，“这两件事之间并没有什么联系。”

“我过去认识一个来自孟菲斯③的人叫比尔·毕洛克西。”我说道。

“那是他的堂兄。在他走之前我弄清了他的整个家族史，他送给了我一根铝质的高尔夫球轻击棒，今天我还用着呢。”

仪式开始时，音乐停下来了，这时从窗子里飘出一阵很长的欢呼声，接着是断断续续的“好—好啊—啊！”的叫喊声，最后突然一阵爵士乐曲声响起，跳舞开始了。

“我们老啦，”黛西说道，“如果我们还年轻，还可以起身舞起来。”

“别忘了毕洛克西，”乔丹提醒他，“你是在哪认识他的，汤姆？”

“毕洛克西吗？”他费力地集中了一下思想，“我不认识他，他是黛西的一个朋友。”

“不是，”黛西否认道，“我以前从未见过他，他是坐你包的专车过来的。”

“好吧，他说他认识你。他说他在路易斯威尔长大，阿莎·伯德在最后一分钟把他带来了，并问我们有没有位子给他坐。”

乔丹笑了笑。

“他多半是不花钱搭车回家，他告诉我说他在耶鲁的时候是你们班的班长。”

汤姆和我茫然地看着对方。

“毕洛克西吗？”

“首先，我们没有班长……”

盖茨比的脚闲不住地在地上敲了几下，汤姆突然注意到了他。

“顺便说一句，盖茨比先生，我听说你是牛津的学生。”

“不完全是。”

“噢，是的，我听说你曾上过牛津。”

“是的……我去过那儿。”

停了一会儿，然后汤姆充满怀疑又带有侮辱地说道：“你肯定是在毕洛克西去纽黑文的时候去那里的吧？”

又停了一会儿，一名服务生敲了敲门，拿着碾碎了的薄荷叶和冰块走了进来，但是沉默并没有被他的“谢谢”和轻轻的关门声打破。这个重大的细节终于要被澄清了。

“我告诉过你，我去过那儿。”盖茨比说道。

“我听说你去过，但我想知道你什么时候去的。”

“是在1919年，我只在那儿待了5个月，这就是为什么我不能称自己为真正的牛津人的原因。”

汤姆瞟了大家一眼，看是否我们也表示了跟他一样的怀疑，但我们都看着盖茨比。

“这是战争后他们给一些军官的一个机会，”他继续说道，“我们不能去英国或法国任何一所大学。”

我想站起身拍拍他的背，觉得又重新找到了对他完全信任的感觉，

就像我以前体验过的一样。

黛西站起身，微微笑着，走到桌边。

“打开威士忌，汤姆，”她命令道，“我来给你调一杯薄荷酒，然后你就不会看上去那么傻里傻气的……瞧瞧这些薄荷叶子！”

“等会儿，”汤姆猛地喝道，“我还想再问盖茨比先生一个问题！”

“问吧。”盖茨比礼貌地说。

“你来我家究竟要挑起什么是非？”

他们终于挑明了，这正中盖茨比下怀。

“他没挑什么是非，”黛西绝望地看看这个，又看看那个，“是你在挑是非，请稍微自控一下吧。”

“自控？”汤姆难以置信地重复她的话，“我想现在最流行的事就是像缩头乌龟一样，任由不知从哪里冒出来的阿猫阿狗跟你的老婆调情。好吧，如果这就是你们的歪主意，把我除外……这年头，人们都开始藐视家庭生活和家庭制度，下一步他们就会不顾一切，在白人和黑人之间通婚了。”

他情绪激动地胡言乱语，脸涨得通红，俨然把自己当成人类文明的最后一位捍卫者。

“我们这儿可都是白人。”乔丹咕哝了一句。

“我知道我不是很受欢迎，我不举办大型晚会，我想你为了交些朋友，就把家里弄得跟猪圈一样——在这个现代社会。”

虽然我跟大家一样很生气，但每当他一开口我就想笑，因为他竟然从一个放荡不羁的花花公子彻彻底底地变成一个一本正经的道学家。

“我有一些事情要告诉你，老伙计，”盖茨比开口道，但是黛西猜得出他的用意。

“请别这样，不要！”她无助地打断他的话，“让我们都回家吧，为什么不回家呢？”

“好主意，”我站起身说道，“走吧，汤姆，没人想喝酒。”

“我想知道盖茨比先生想告诉我什么。”

“你妻子不爱你，”盖茨比说道，“她从没有爱过你，她爱的是我。”

“你肯定是疯了吧！”汤姆不假思索地大声说道。

盖茨比猛地弹跳起来，显得很激动。

“她从没爱过你，听见没？”他大叫道，“她嫁给你只是因为我穷，她等得不耐烦了。这是个严重的错误，但是在她心里，她没有爱过任何一个人，除了我。”

听到这话，我跟乔丹试图想出去，但汤姆和盖茨比较上了劲，坚持要我们留下——好像他们谁也没有见不得人的事，又好像跟他们一起分享他们的情感事迹也是一种特殊的荣幸。

“坐下，黛西，”汤姆试图以一种父辈的口吻，但并未成功，“发生了些什么事？我想知道一切事情。”

“我已经告诉过你发生了什么，”盖茨比说道，“有五年了，你不知

道而已。”

汤姆猛地转向黛西。

“这五年你一直在跟这个家伙见面吗？”

“没见面，”盖茨比说道，“不，我们见不着。但是我们一直深爱着彼此，老伙计，而且你不知道，我过去有时候会笑”——但他眼里没有笑意——“想到你不知道这件事。”

“噢，就这些嘛。”汤姆像牧师一样把他的粗壮的手指轻轻一拍合拢在一起，然后往椅子上一靠。“你疯了！”他破口大骂，“我没法说五年前发生了什么事，因为那时候我还不认识黛西，而且我还真他妈地想不通你是怎样接近她的，除非你把杂货送到她家后门。至于其它的话全是他妈的扯淡。黛西嫁给我的时候是爱我的，并且她现在也爱我。”

“不。”盖茨比摆手否认道。

“她确实爱我，虽然有时候麻烦的是她脑子里会冒出一些愚蠢的念头，并且不知道自己在做些什么。”他点点头，一副英明的样子，“而且，我也爱黛西，虽然偶尔我也会胡闹，放纵一下自己，做些傻事，但是我会回头，而且我心里始终是爱着她。”

“你真令人讨厌。”黛西说道。她转向我，声音低了八度，使房间充满了一种令人毛骨悚然的轻蔑：“你知道我们为什么离开芝加哥吗？我很惊讶他们居然没有告诉你他的胡闹的事迹。”

盖茨比走过去站在她身旁。

“黛西，现在一切都结束了，”他诚挚地说道，“再也没关系了，就

告诉他事实吧——你从未爱过他，并且你们过去的生活将永远被一笔勾销。”

她茫然地看着他。“是啊——我怎么可能爱过他？”

“你从未爱过他。”

她迟疑了，求助的眼神落在乔丹和我身上，好像她终于意识到自己在做什么了——又似乎她原本就没打算做什么，但是现在却做了，太晚了。

“我从没爱过他。”黛西说道，明显听得出很勉强。

“在夏威夷凯皮奥兰尼时也没爱过吗？”汤姆突然质问道。

“没有。”

楼下的舞厅里，闷声闷气、令人窒息的曲子伴随着滚滚热浪飘上来。

“那天我担心你弄湿鞋子，把你从‘潘趣博’号游艇上抱下来的时候，也没爱过吗？”他的声音里包含着一种沙哑的温柔……“黛西？”

“别再说了。”她的声音冷冷的，但已经没有了敌意。她看着盖茨比。“唉，杰伊，”她说道——但是当她试图点着一根香烟，手却在抖，突然她把香烟和划燃的火柴往地毯上一扔。

“噢，你要求的太多了！”她向盖茨比叫道，“现在我爱你，这还不够吗？对过去的事情我爱莫能助。”她开始无助地啜泣，“我曾经确实爱过他，但我也爱过你呀。”

盖茨比的眼睛睁开又合上了。

“你也爱过我？”他重复道。

“连这个都是在扯谎，”汤姆恶狠狠地说道，“她都不知道你是否还活着，哼，黛西和我之间有些事情是你从不知道的，那些我俩永远不会忘的事。”

这些话好像深深地刺痛了盖茨比。

“我要和黛西单独谈谈，”他坚持道，“她现在太激动了……”

“即使是单独谈我也不会说我从未爱过汤姆，”她用一种悲悯的声调承认道，“这不会是真的。”

“当然不是。”汤姆附和道。

她转向她丈夫，说：“好像你在乎似的。”

“当然在乎，从今往后我要更好地照顾你。”

“你没弄明白，”盖茨比带着一丝惊慌说道，“你再也没有机会照顾她了。”

“我没有？”汤姆睁大眼睛笑了，现在他能够控制自己了。

“为什么？”

“黛西要离开你了。”

“胡说八道。”

“不过我确实要离开你。”她显然很费劲地说道。

“她不会离开我！”汤姆突然间朝盖茨比破口大骂，“她当然不会为一个去偷戒指戴在她手上的江湖骗子离开我。”

“我受不了啦！”黛西大叫道，“噢，请让我们出去吧！”

“你到底是什么货色？”汤姆爆出一句，“你不过是那群围着梅尔·沃尔夫山姆转的那帮人里的一个可怜虫——我碰巧知道了这一点，我已经对你的事情进行了一点小调查，明天我还会进一步调查。”

“悉听尊便，老伙计。”盖茨比沉稳地说道。

“我已经发现了你那些‘药店’是怎么回事。”他转向我们飞快地说道，“他和这个沃尔夫山姆在这里和芝加哥买下了许多小街上的药店，不用处方就把酒精卖给人家。这是他耍的小把戏里的一个，我第一次见他就认定他是个私酒贩子，看来我猜得八九不离十嘛。”

“这又怎么样呢？”盖茨比有礼貌地说道，“你的朋友瓦尔特·蔡斯并没有骄傲到不跟我们合伙嘛。”

“然后你们把他坑了，不是吗？你们让他在新泽西的监狱里待了整整一个月，天啊！你真应该听听瓦尔特数落你的那些话。”

“他入伙的时候是个穷光蛋，他很高兴能赚些钱，老伙计。”

“别叫我‘老伙计’！”汤姆嚷道。盖茨比什么没说。“瓦尔特本来可以告你违法赌博的，但是沃尔夫山姆对他进行了恐吓使他闭了嘴。”

盖茨比的脸上又一次出现了那种陌生而又似曾相识的表情。

“药店的生意只是小打小闹，”汤姆继续慢慢地说道，“现在你们干的事情瓦尔特都不敢告诉我。”

我瞟了一眼黛西，她正惊恐地眼睛一眨不眨地看着盖茨比，又看看她丈夫，再看看乔丹——她又开始稳住她下巴尖上看不见可是却吸引人的什么东西。然后我向后转向盖茨比，被他的表情吓了一跳。他看起来好像“杀了个人”似的——我说这话跟在他花园里流传的那些胡言乱语没有丝毫关系——有那么一会儿，他脸上的表情真的可以用这种荒唐的字眼来形容。

当这种表情褪去后，他开始激动地向黛西解释一切，否认一切，努力维护自己的名誉，抵制那些还未对他做出的控告。但是他说得越多，她就越往后缩，不愿面对，于是他就只好放弃解释，只剩下那个逝去的梦随着这个午后悄然离去在苦苦挣扎，拼命想要触摸到那种无影无形的东西，向着房间那头的静默无声痛苦但并不绝望地争取着。

这个声音又响起了，央求要走。

“求你了，汤姆！我再也受不了了。”

她惊恐的眼神显示，无论她曾经起过什么念头，无论她曾经鼓起什么勇气，现在都彻底消失殆尽了。

“你们两个动身回家吧，黛西，”汤姆说道，“坐盖茨比先生的车。”

她看着汤姆，惊慌失措，但他坚持要他俩走，以示他的轻蔑和宽宏大量。

“走吧，他不会让你苦恼，我想他意识到他那自以为是的小小调情已经结束了。”

他们一句话也没说就走了，倏忽而去，孤立无援，像一对鬼影，甚至还没得到我们的怜悯。

过了一会儿，汤姆站起身，开始把毛巾里未启瓶的威士忌酒重新包起来。

“想来点这个么？乔丹？……尼克？”

我没回答。

“尼克？”他又问了一遍。

“什么？”

“要来点吗？”

“不用了……我刚记起今天是我的生日。”

我三十岁了。在我面前衍生出了一条未来十年的布满荆棘、险象环生的人生道路。

当我们坐进汽车动身去长岛时，时间已经是七点了。汤姆兴高采烈地不停地讲着，笑着，但是他的声音在我和乔丹听来显得很遥远，就像是人行道上不相干的喧闹人声，又像是头顶上高架铁路轰隆隆的车声。人类的同情心是有限度的，于是我们也乐得让他们悲剧性的争执随着掠过的城市灯火一道逐渐消失。三十岁——等待我的可能又是一个孤寂的十年，可结交的单身汉益发减少，热情逐渐逝去，头发逐渐稀疏。但是有乔丹在我身边，不像黛西，她聪明睿智，不会把早已遗去的旧梦一年一年地在心中埋藏。当我们穿越黑黢黢的桥时，她的疲惫的脸懒洋洋地

靠在我肩上，手安心地放在我手中，驱散了三十岁带给我的可怕打击。

于是我们在渐渐凉爽的暮色中向死亡驶去。

那个年轻的希腊人米凯利斯在灰堆旁开了一家咖啡馆，他是后来审讯的主要目击证人。那天五点之后，熬过热浪的侵袭，他一觉醒来后向车铺慢慢踱去，发现乔治·威尔逊病倒在办公室——病得很重，脸色像他的白头发一样苍白，浑身颤抖。米凯利斯劝他到床上躺会儿，但威尔逊没同意，说如果那样做的话会错过很多生意。就在他的邻居试图劝服他的时候，楼上爆发出一阵激烈的吵闹声。

“我把我老婆锁上面了，”威尔逊平静地解释道，“她会在那里一直待到后天，随后我们就搬走。”

米凯利斯大吃一惊，他们做邻居已经四年了，威尔逊从来就不像是一个能说出这种话的人。通常他都无精打采的，不工作的时候，他就会拿把椅子坐在门边，瞅着沿路过往的行人和车辆。有人跟他说话时，他总是面无表情，好脾气地笑笑。对老婆一向言听计从，自己没有一点主张。

所以很自然的，米凯利斯试图想要弄清楚发生了什么事。但是威尔逊一句也不肯说，反而开始用一种古怪怀疑的眼光打量来访者，盘问他某些日子某个时间在干些什么。就在后者被他问得很不自在时，一群工人经过车铺门口，向他的餐馆走去，于是米凯利斯就趁着这个机会走了，想过会儿再回来。但是他没有，他猜兴许是忘了，反正就是这些。当他又出去时，大概是七点多一点，他才又想起了这次的谈话，因为他听到了威尔逊太太的声音，在楼下的车铺里又叫又骂。

“打我啊！”他听见她大喊，“把我撂在地上打我啊，你这个肮脏的

胆小鬼！”

一会儿之后，她冲进外面的暮色中，边挥手边大叫，在他还没来得及出门之前，惨祸就发生了。

这辆“肇事汽车”——报纸上这么称呼它，压根儿就没停，它从暮色渐浓的黑暗中驶出，撞人之后，车主惊慌失措地犹豫了一会儿，接着就消失在下一道拐弯口。马弗罗·米凯利斯甚至连车子的颜色都不能确定，他先告诉警察车子是浅绿色的。另一辆驶向纽约的车，司机在百码以外的地方停了下来，跑回到梅特尔·威尔逊的出事地点，她死得很惨，双膝跪地，发黑的浓血和尘土混在了一起。

米凯利斯和这个人最先到达她身旁，但是当他们在撕开她的衬裙时——仍被汗水浸得湿漉漉的。看见她左边的乳房已经松松垮垮地耷拉着，因此也就没有必要去听下面是否还有心跳了。她的嘴巴张得很大，嘴角被撕破了一点，好像她在释放储存了这么久的旺盛精力时，突然被哽住了一点点。

当我们离出事地还有一段距离时，就看见有三四辆汽车和一群人在围观。

“出事了！”汤姆说道，“很好嘛，威尔逊总算有点生意了。”

他放慢车速，但没有要停车的意图，直到我们走近了，看到车铺门口那帮人都屏息敛容，他才不由自主地踩了刹车。

“我们看看吧，”他犹疑地说道，“就看一眼。”

这时，我才听到车铺里不时传来一阵阵空洞的哀号声，当我们下车走向门口时，才听出这个声音是在一遍又一遍地、上气不接下气地哀

嚎“哦，我的上帝”这几个字。

“这儿出什么大乱子了？”汤姆激动地说。

他踮起脚掠过围观人群的头顶上向车铺里望去，里面只被一盏挂在头上、放在摇摇晃晃的铁罩里的昏黄的灯照耀着，梅特尔·威尔逊的尸体在了一层又一层的毯子里裹着，好像在这么炎热的晚上她还怕冷似的，此刻正被横放在墙边的一张工作台上。汤姆背对着我们，正弯着腰在看，一动也不动，站在他旁边的是一名交警，正在一个小本子上登记名字，还不停地涂涂改改。开始我还不知道在这空空的车铺里回荡着的高亢的呻吟声是从哪里传来的，然后我看见威尔逊站在他办公室高高的门槛上，身体前后晃动，双手紧紧地抓着门柱。有一个人在低声跟他说话，不时地想把一只手搭在他肩上，但威尔逊既听不见也看不见。他的眼睛从摇摇晃晃的灯慢慢移向墙边陈放着尸体的桌面，然后又猛地扭转头去看灯，接着不断地发出他那高亢、可怕的哀嚎：“噢，我的上——帝啊！噢，我的上帝——啊！噢，上——帝！噢，我的上帝——啊！”

过了一会儿，汤姆猛地抬起头来，然后用呆滞的目光扫视了车铺一圈，语无伦次地对警察咕哝着些什么。

“马弗——”警察在说，“奥——”

“不对，罗——”那人更正道，“马——弗——罗——”

“听我说！”汤姆恶狠狠地低声说道。

“罗——”警察说，“奥”。

“格——”

“格。”当汤姆的宽大的手猛地落在他的肩膀上时，他抬起头来问道：“你想干什么，伙计？”

“出什么事了？这就是我想知道的。”

“汽车撞上了她，当场毙命。”

“当场毙命，”汤姆重复了一句，呆住了。

“她跑到马路上，那狗娘养的连车都没停。”

“有两辆车，”米凯利斯说道，“一来一去，明白吗？”

“去哪儿？”警察机警地问道。

“一辆车去一个方向，嗯，她”——他的手朝毯子举起来，但半路就打住了，又缩回身边——“她跑到那儿，然后一辆纽约来的车刚好就撞上了她，车速大概每小时三十到四十英里。”

“这个地方叫什么名字？”警官追问道。

“还没名字呢。”

一个面色发白、穿着体面的黑人走近前来。

“那是辆黄色车，”他说道，“黄色大车，新的。”

“你看到事故的经过了吗？”警察问道。

“没有，但是那辆车从我身边开过，时速不只四十英里，有五六十英里。”

“到这儿来，我要记下你的名字，现在让开点，我要记下他的名字。”

这段对话中有几句肯定被威尔逊听见了——此刻他正站在办公室门口摇晃，因为在他急喘的哀嚎中夹杂了新的内容：“你不用告诉我那是辆什么车！我知道是什么样的车子！”

我瞧着汤姆，看见他衣服下肩后大块儿的肌肉紧绷起来。他飞快地走到威尔逊身边，站在他面前，一把抓住他的上手臂。

“你要镇定下来，”他生硬地说道，同时略带安慰。

威尔逊的眼睛落到汤姆身上，突然踉跄想站起来，要不是汤姆扶住了他，还差点跪在地上。

“听着，”汤姆说道，轻轻摇了一下他，“我刚从纽约到这儿，正要把我们谈论的那辆汽车带给你，今天下午我开的那辆黄色汽车不是我的，你听见了吗？之后整个下午我都没看见过它。”

只有我和那位黑人站得足够近能听到他说的话，但是警察听出了话里有玄机，他用凶狠的目光扫向我们这边。

“那究竟是怎么回事？”他质问道。

“我是他的一个朋友，”汤姆转过头，但手仍然牢牢地放在威尔逊身上。“他说他认识这辆肇事车……是辆黄色的车子。”

警察隐隐感觉事有蹊跷，怀疑地看着汤姆。

“你的车是什么颜色？”

“是一辆蓝色的小轿车。”

“我们刚从纽约过来。”我说道。

跟在我们后面开车的某个人证实了这一点，于是警察就转身走了。

“现在，让我再来核实一下这个名字……。”

汤姆像拎玩具一样把威尔逊带到办公室，让他坐在椅子上，然后就回来了。

“是否有人能过来陪他坐会儿？”他突然用命令似的口吻说道。他注视着人群，两个站得离他最近的人相互对视了一眼，然后很不情愿地走进了房间。他们一进去，汤姆就关上门，走下仅有的一级台阶，眼睛避免看那张桌子，当他走近我身旁时，低声说了句：“我们出去吧。”

在他那双铁臂的开路下，我们自觉地突围出了还在不断聚拢的人群，碰到一位手提医箱、匆匆赶来的医生，还是半个小时前抱着一丝希望被请来的。

汤姆开得很慢，直到我们驶出那个拐角处，他才重重地一踩油门，汽车便在夜色中飞驰。过了一会儿，我听到一阵低低、嘶哑的啜泣声，接着看到他泪流满面。

“该死的懦夫！”他哀嚎道，“他连车都没停下。”

布坎南的家忽然在黑黢黢、沙沙作响的树林中浮现在我们眼前。汤姆把车停在走廊边，抬头看着二楼，那有两扇窗户透过外面的葡萄藤模模糊糊射出灯光。

“黛西在家。”他说道。当我们从车里出来时，他瞟了我一眼，微微皱了下眉。

“我应该在西埃格的时候就让你下车，尼克，今晚我们没啥事可干。”

他身上发生了某种变化，说话严肃，语气果断。当我们穿过洒满月光的沙砾路走向门廊时，他几句话就干脆利落地把眼前的情况解决了。

“我会打电话叫一辆出租车送你回家，等的时候你最好和乔丹到厨房里去让他们给你们弄点吃的，如果你想吃点儿的话。”他打开门。“进来。”

“不，谢了，但是我很高兴你帮我安排一辆出租车，我在外面等吧。”

乔丹把手搭在我手臂上。

“你不进来吗，尼克？”

“不，谢谢。”

我感到有点难受，想单独待会儿，但是乔丹停留了一会儿。

“才九点半。”她说道。

我死也不进去，跟他们在一起待了一整天，我觉得受够了，突然间觉得跟乔丹也是。她肯定从我的表情中看出了这一点，因为她立马就转过身沿着门廊的台阶跑进了屋里。我把头埋在手心里坐了一会儿，直到我听见里面响起电话铃音，那是男管家在叫出租车。然后我就沿着车道慢

慢从房子前走开，想到门口去等。

我还没走二十码就听见有人叫我的名字，随后盖茨比就从两丛灌木中走出来，来到路上。我当时肯定神思恍惚，因为我现在什么也想不起来，除了记得他那套粉红西装在月亮下闪光。

“你在干什么？”我问道。

“就站在这儿，老伙计。”

不知为什么，他好像是要去干什么卑鄙的勾当，我满脑子想的是他一会儿会进去打劫这户人家。要是此刻我在他身后黑黢黢的灌木丛中看到一些狰狞的面孔——像“沃沃尔夫山姆这伙人”的面孔，我也不会感到吃惊。

“你在路上看到出了什么事吗？”一会儿之后他问道。

“是的。”

他迟疑了一下。

“她被撞死了么？”

“是的。”

“我就认为是这样，我就告诉黛西是这样。不过各种打击一块儿来也好，她隐忍得很好。”

他这样说，好像黛西的反应才是他唯一在乎的事。

“我抄小路去了西埃格，”他继续说道，“然后我把车停在了车库，

我认为没人看见我们，但是，当然，我也不确定。”

到此时我已经十分讨厌他，觉得没有必要再告诉他他错了。

“唉，我试图把方向盘扳过来……”他打住了，突然我猜到了事情的真相。

“是黛西在开车吗？”

“是的，”过了一会儿他才说道，“但是我当然会说是我在开车，你知道的，当我们离开纽约的时候，她很紧张，她认为开车会让她平静下来。就在我们避开一辆从对面驶来的车时，这个女人向我们冲过来，事故瞬间就发生了。但在我看来，她是想跟我们说话，好像我们是她认识的人。唉，开始黛西是把车子从那个女人那边闪开，向另一辆车冲去，随后她慌了手脚，又转了回去。当我的手一接触到方向盘，就感到一阵强烈的震动，肯定当场就把她撞死了。”

“把她撞得很惨……”

“别说了，老兄。”他害怕地退缩起来。“不管怎样，黛西拼命地踩油门，我试图让她停下，但她停不了，所以我赶紧拉紧急刹车闸，然后她就跌在我腿上，接着由我继续开。”

“她明天就会缓过来的，”过了一会儿他又说道，“我就在这等，看他是否会因为今天下午的不愉快找她麻烦。她已经把自己锁在房里了，如果他要对她采取什么粗暴的举动，她就会把灯关掉再开。”

“他不会碰她的，”我说道，“他现在想的不是她。”

“我信不过他，老伙计。”

“你准备等多久？”

“整个晚上，如果有必要的话。不管怎样，会等到他们都去睡了为止。”

我脑子里忽然蹦出一个新的想法，假设汤姆知道是黛西开的车，他也许会认为这里面必另有缘故，也许他会乱想一通。我看着房子，楼下有两三个亮着灯的窗户，从二楼黛西的房间透出粉红的光亮。

“你在这等着，”我说道，“我去看看是否有动粗的迹象。”

我沿着草坪的边缘绕回来，轻轻跨过石子路，踮起脚尖走上门廊的台阶。客厅的窗帘拉开着，我看见屋里是空的。我穿过三个月以前的那个六月的晚上我们共进过晚餐的阳台，来到一片小小的长方形灯面前，我猜那是食品储藏室的窗口。遮帘被拉上了，不过我在窗台上找到了一条缝隙。

黛西和汤姆面对面地坐在餐桌前，中间放着一盘冷炸鸡和两瓶啤酒。他在桌子的另一头正专注地跟她说话，并且还热切地把手盖在她手上，她偶尔抬头看看他，并赞许地点点头。

他们并不高兴，谁也没有碰鸡肉和啤酒，虽然如此，他们也没有不高兴。这幅画面真真切切地洋溢着一种自然亲密的氛围，任何人都会觉得他们正在谋划着什么。

当我踮着脚尖走下门廊时，我听到来接我的出租车正慢慢沿着黑漆漆的车道朝房子这边开过来。盖茨比正在车道上我跟他分手的地方等着。

“那上面一切都平静吗？”他焦急地问道。

“是的，一切平静，”我迟疑了一下，“你最好回家去睡会儿。”

他摇了摇头。

“我想在这儿一直等到黛西睡下。晚安，老伙计。”

他把双手插进外衣口袋里，急切地转过身去审查这座房子，好像我的在场妨碍了他守望的神圣，于是我就走开了，留下他站在月光中——守望空空。

第八章

整晚我都难以入睡，海湾上不断传来向船只发出浓雾信号的警报声，我像生病了一样在床上辗转反侧，游离于怪异的现实和残忍可怕的噩梦之间。天快亮的时候，我听到一辆出租车沿着盖茨比的车道开上去，我立即跳下床，开始穿衣服。我觉得我有一些话要跟他说，一些警告他的话，如果等到早上再说会太迟了。

穿过他家的草坪，我看见他家的前门仍然开着，他正倚靠在大厅的一张桌旁，因为沮丧或睡意而显得身心疲惫。

“什么事也没发生，”他有气无力地说道，“我一直等着，等到大约四点的时候她来到窗边，在那儿站了一会儿，然后就把灯关掉了。”

那天晚上，当我们穿梭于那些巨大的房间寻找香烟时，对我来说，他的家从来没有显得如此庞大。我们把帐篷式的门帘推到一边，摸索着几乎没有尽头、黑黢黢的墙壁寻找电灯开关，期间有一次，我被一架幽灵似的钢琴绊了一下，轰隆一声摔在琴键上。到处都是不知从哪儿来的灰尘，房间里充斥着一股股霉味，好像它们很多天都没被通过风了。我在一张不太熟悉的桌子上找到了一个雪茄盒，里面放着两根变了味的、干瘪瘪的香烟。我们把客厅的落地窗打开，坐下来对着黑暗吸起烟来。

“你应该离开，”我说道，“他们很有可能会追查你的车子。”

“现在走吗，老伙计？”

“到大西洋城①待上一周，或者北上到蒙特利尔②去。”

他不会考虑这样做，在得知黛西准备做什么之前，他不可能会离开。他正抱着最后一丝希望，我也不忍心叫他放手。

就在这个晚上，他跟我讲了他年轻的时候跟丹·科迪之间的离奇故事，他之所以告诉我是因为“杰伊·盖茨比”已经像玻璃一样被汤姆的恶意砸得粉碎，我想现在他什么事情都会承认了，毫无保留的，但他只想谈黛西。

他是他所认识的第一个“名门闺秀”。他曾经以各种未透漏的身份跟这样的名媛淑女交往过，但总是觉得他与她们之间隔着一道无形的铁丝网。他觉得她是最称心如意的一位。他到她家去，起先是跟泰勒军营的其他军官一起，然后就独自一人去了。她的家使他惊奇不已——他以前从未到过这么漂亮的家。但是是因为黛西的居住才使这里有了一种令人窒息的紧张氛围，这个家对于她，就像他待在军营的帐篷一样那么顺其自然、不足为奇。这里充斥着一种浓郁的神秘感，仿佛在暗示着楼上的卧室比其他卧室更漂亮、更凉爽，暗示着走廊上正进行着欢乐精彩的活动，暗示着各种风流韵事——不是那种发了霉的、用熏衣草保存起来的，而是鲜活的，生动芬芳的，使人联想到今年最闪亮时髦的汽车和鲜花还没凋残的舞会。许多男人爱过黛西，这点使他激动不已，这提高了她在他眼里的价值。他感觉到他们存在于她家的每一处角落，空气中遍布他们的身影，以及他们令人震颤的情感的回音。

但是他知道他到黛西家纯粹是出于一种偶然，不管他作为杰伊·盖茨比的前程会多么的锦绣辉煌，目前他只是一个经历寻常、身无分文的年轻人，并且任何时候他制服外面那套无形的斗篷都有可能会从他肩上滑落，将他彻底暴露。于是他就最大限度地利用他的时间，贪婪肆虐地攫取他能得到的一切，最终在一个寂静的十月的夜晚他占有了黛西，占有她，是因为 he 知道自己根本没有资格去碰她的手。

他也许应该鄙视自己，因为他是在一种欺骗和伪装下占有了她。我这样说并不是指他利用虚幻无存的百万家产来欺骗，而是指他故意给黛西营造一种安全感，让她相信他同她一样是来自同一社会阶层的人，所以他有充分的能力来照顾她。事实上，他毫无这种能力——他背后没有雄厚的家庭背景做支撑，只要无情的政府一声令下，他就有可能被调到世界的任何地方。

但是他并没有鄙视自己，事情也与他想象的不同。可能他原本只是想玩玩然后一走了之，但是现在他发现自己是在献身于对一种理想的追求。他知道黛西是与众不同的，但是他没意识到究竟一位“名门闺秀”会有多么的与众不同。她消失在她豪华的住宅里，退回到她富足充裕的生活中，留下盖茨比一人——一无所有。他感觉自己已经跟她结婚了，仅此而已。

两天后他们再次见面时，盖茨比紧张不已，似乎是他受骗了。她家的门廊沐浴在闪闪的星光中，显得明亮辉煌；当她转向他时，时髦的柳条长椅发出吱吱声，随后他吻上了她那奇妙、可爱的双唇。她着凉了，这使得她的声音比往常更沙哑、更动人，于是盖茨比深切地体会到富人拥有和保持的青春与神秘，体会到他们的各种华服是怎样的清新夺目，体会到黛西，像镀了一层白银一样，熠熠生辉，安然自得地高居于穷苦人激烈的生存斗争之上。

“我无法向你表达当我发现自己爱上她后有多惊讶，老伙计，有那么一会儿我甚至希望她甩了我，但她没有，因为她也同样爱着我。她认为我懂得很多，因为我知道的跟她不一样……唉，我就那样消磨了我的雄心壮志，每分每秒爱得越来越深，突然之间什么都不在乎了。如果我有更好的时机告诉她我将要做什么，做那些大事又有什么用呢？”

在他被派往国外的最后那个下午，他拥着黛西沉默地坐了很久。那是一个寒冷的秋日，屋里生起了火，她的脸颊绯红。她不时地动一下，然后他也轻轻地变换一下手臂的姿势，期间有一次他吻了吻她乌黑发亮的秀发。那天下午，他们安静地待了很久，好像要为次日即将到来的漫长的分别为彼此留下一个深深的回忆。就在她默默地用唇吻过他肩上的外衣时，就在他温柔地触碰她的指尖时，他们在这一个月来的相爱中从来没有比此刻更亲密，也没有和彼此更真挚地交心，仿佛她已经睡着了。

他在战争中表现很出色。上前线之前他已是一名上尉，阿贡战役之后他被晋升为少校，当上了师里机枪营部门的司令。停战之后，他迫不及待地要求回国，但是可能是由于种种复杂因素或是误会，他却被送到了牛津。他现在变得很担心——黛西的信中流露中一种强烈的绝望，她不明白为什么他不能回来，她正感受着外界的压力，她想要见他，真切地感觉到他在身边，让她相信她从头到尾做得都对。

黛西毕竟还年轻，她那个造作的世界周围充斥着兰花的芬芳以及上流社会令人欢欣愉悦的事物，还有管弦乐队奏出了那年的旋律，用新的乐调总结生活给予的悲伤和启示。整晚萨克斯管演奏着《比尔街爵士乐》忧郁的曲调，仿佛哀号一般，同时上百双金银舞鞋翩翩起舞，扬起闪亮的灰尘。每天晚茶时分，总有一些房间随着这种低沉而甜蜜的狂热不停地颤动，一张张光鲜的脸庞飘来飘去，好像是被幽怨的萨克斯管吹落在地的玫瑰花瓣。

在这个朦胧的尘世，黛茜随着社交季的到来又开始变得活跃了，突然之间，她一天要约会五六次，和五六个男人，直到黎明时分才沉沉地睡去，晚礼服被扔在床边的地板上，上面缀满的绸缎和珠子跟凋谢的兰花缠绕在一起。在这整个期间，她心中一直有件事急需她作出决定，她现在想要定下自己的终身大事，刻不容缓，并且这个决定要由某种外在

的力量来促成。爱情也好，金钱也罢，总之是实实在在、触手可及的东西。

那股力量随着那个春天的中旬汤姆·布坎南的到来成形了，他的体貌和地位都不错，黛西为此感到很得意。毫无疑问，她内心也有过挣扎，但又变得心安理得了。盖茨比还在牛津的时候就收到了她这封信。

长岛现在已经天亮了，于是我们四处走动打开楼下其他的窗户，使屋子里充满了由灰白转金黄的光线。一棵树影突然投落到露珠上，幽灵一样的鸟儿开始在蓝色树丛中唱歌。空气中流动着一股悠闲、令人愉悦的气息，说不上是风，这预示着凉爽、温和的一天。

“我不认为她爱过他，”盖茨比从一扇窗户旁转过身，挑衅地看着我说，“你得记住，老伙计，她今天下午很激动，他以一种吓唬她的方式告诉她这些事情，那让我看起来就像是那个一文不值的骗子，结果就是她几乎不知道自己在说些什么。”

他沮丧地坐下来。

“当然，她也许爱过他一会儿，在他们刚结婚的时候，但即便是那个时候，她依然更爱我，你知道吗？”

突然他冒出一句奇怪的话。

“不管怎样，”他说道，“这是我个人的事情。”

你还能从这句话中理解到什么呢？除了他对这件事的固执已经强烈到了无以复加的程度。

当汤姆和黛西还在进行他们的蜜月旅行时，盖茨比从法国回来了，

并且不可抑制地痛苦地花掉他最后的军饷去了一趟路易斯维尔。他在那待了一周，重走了他们当时在十一月的夜晚并肩慢行的街道，重游了他们开着她那辆白色汽车去过的那些偏僻地方。正如在他的眼里，黛西家的房子总是比别的房子更加神秘、欢乐，尽管她已经离开这里，他仍觉得这座城市本身遍布一种凄凉的美。

他离开的时候，一直觉得如果他更努力地找的话，他会找到她的——现在他却留下她，自己走了。硬座车厢很热——他现在身无分文了。他走到外面，来到连接车厢空旷的门廊上，坐在一张折叠椅上，望着车站一座座不熟悉的建筑物的背影一闪而过，向后退去。然后火车驶进春天的原野，在那和一辆黄色电车并肩行驶了一会儿，电车上的人，也许其中有谁曾在街上不经意间看到过她那张白皙的、动人的脸庞。

铁轨转了个弯，现在火车正背离阳光行驶，夕阳渐渐西落，洒满余晖，好像在为这个正渐渐消失、与黛西息息相关的城市祝福。他绝望地伸出手，似乎想要抓住一丝空气，保留这个地方的一个片段，这一切曾经因她的存在显得那么美好。但是在泪眼模糊中，现在这一切都在那么快地逝去，他知道，他已经永远地把最鲜活、最美好的那部分丢失了。

当我们吃完早饭时，已经九点了。一夜之间天气骤变，空气中有一股秋日的气息。那个园丁——盖茨比前一批仆人里的最后一个，来到台阶下。

“盖茨比先生，我今天会放掉游泳池里的水，树叶很快就要掉落了，到那个时候水管会堵的。”

“今天别放。”盖茨比回答道。然后他转向我，抱歉地说道：“你知道吗，老伙计，我整个夏天都没用过那个游泳池。”

我看看手表并站起身。

“还有二十分钟我的那列火车就要开了。”

我不想进城去，我也没心思做一点正经工作，但更重要的是——我不想离开盖茨比先生。在我能使自己离开之前，我错过了一辆火车，接着又错过了另一辆。

“我会打电话给你的。”最后我终于说道。

“一定要打，老伙计。”

“我会在临近中午的时候打给你。”

我们慢慢地走下台阶。

“我想黛西也会打电话来的。”他不安地看着我，似乎想得到我的确证。

“我想是这样。”

“好吧，再见。”

我们握了握手，然后我就动身走了。就在我快到树篱之前，我想起了什么，于是我转过身。

“他们全是一伙混蛋，”我在草坪那端喊道，“把他们捆在一起也比不上你。”

我后来一直很高兴我说了这句话，那是我对他说的唯一一句奉承话，虽然自始至终我都不赞成他。他先是礼貌地点了点头，然后脸上绽

放出灿烂会意的笑容，好像一直以来我们对于这个事实已经不谋而合、心意相通了。他那套华丽的粉色西装映衬着白色的台阶显得那么明亮耀眼，于是我想起了三个月前那个晚上，第一次来到他那栋古色古香的别墅时的情景，当时他的草坪和汽车道上挤满了人，大家纷纷猜测他的劣行，而他站在台阶上跟他们挥手告别时，心中蕴藏着他那高贵纯洁的梦想。

我对他的盛情款待表示感谢，我们——我和其他人，总是为那个而感谢他。

“再见，”我喊道，“我很满意你的早餐，盖茨比。”

进城之后，我试着整理了一会儿那数不清的股票行情表，后来就在我的转椅里睡着了。在临近中午时，电话铃声把我吵醒了，我惊跳起来，前额直冒汗珠。是乔丹·贝克打来的，她经常在这个时间给我打电话，因为她总是行踪不定，往返于各个旅馆、俱乐部和私家住宅之间，很难通过另一种方式找到她。通常她在电话里的声音都是清新温凉的，好像从绿茵茵的高尔夫球场削起的一块草皮缓缓飞进了办公室的窗口，但是今天早上听起来刺耳干涩。

“我已经离开黛西家了，”她说道，“我现在在亨普斯特德①，并且今天下午要到南安普敦②去。”

也许离开黛西家是很明智的，但她这种举动让我很不高兴，随后她下面一句话令我更窝火。

“你昨晚对我不怎么好。”

“在当时那种情况下，那又算得了什么呢？”

她沉默了一会儿，接着说道：“不管怎样……我想见你。”

“我也想见你。”

“要不我不去南安普敦了，今天下午进城来好不好？”

“不……我想今天下午不行。”

“好吧，随你的便。”

“今天下午真不可能，许多……”

我们就那样说了一会儿话，随后突然我们谁也不再说话了。我不知道是谁“啪”的一声挂了电话，我只知道我当时并不在乎。那天下午我实在不可能跟她面对面地在茶桌上聊天，即使她从此永远不再跟我说话。

几分钟之后，我打电话到盖茨比家，但是线路繁忙，于是我试了四次，最后，一个恼羞成怒的接线员告诉我那条线路正在等待来自底特律的长途电话。我拿出火车时刻表，在三点五十那趟车周围画上一个圈，然后往椅背上一靠，想整理一下思路，那时正值中午。

那天早上，当我乘火车经过灰土堆时，我特意穿到车厢的另一边去。我猜想那整天会围着一群好奇的围观者，还有小男孩们在尘土中寻找黑黑的血斑，以及某个多嘴多舌的家伙会翻来覆去地讲发生的事情，直到这件事对他自己都变得越来越失真，以致没法儿再继续说下去。于是梅特尔·威尔逊的悲惨结局也就被人们淡忘了。现在我要倒回去一点，说一下前天晚上我们离开车铺之后，那里发生的事情。

他们花了好大力气才找到她的妹妹——凯瑟琳。那天晚上她肯定打破了她不喝酒的原则，因为当她到达时，她已经喝得昏头昏脑，怎么也

无法明白救护车已经开往弗勒兴区了。当他们终于让她明白这一点时，她立即晕了过去，仿佛这是整件事中最不能令人忍受的部分。有个人，出于好心或是好奇，让她上了他的车，载着她跟在她姐姐的遗体后面。

直到午夜过去很久以后，还是有另一些人赶来看热闹，他们聚在车铺门前，同时乔治·威尔逊在里面的睡椅上前后晃动着。办公室的门开了一阵儿，每个走进车铺的人都不由自主地往里面瞟一眼，最后终于有人说这太不像话了，于是就把门关上了。起先，米凯利斯和其他几个男人陪着他，共有四五个人，后来只剩两三个，再后来米凯利斯不得不要求最后一位陌生人在那多待十五分钟，好让他趁这个当儿回家去煮壶咖啡。那之后，他就一人待在那陪着威尔逊直到天亮。

大概凌晨三点的时候，威尔逊不再语无伦次地不停嘀咕，他安静下来，开始谈到那辆黄色汽车。他宣称他有办法找出那辆黄色汽车的车主是谁，然后他突然脱口而出说两个月前有一次他妻子鼻青脸肿地从城里回来。

但是当他听到自己说这句话时，他畏缩了一下，然后又开始用他呻吟的声音哭喊：“噢，我的天哪！”米凯利斯笨拙地试图分散他的注意力。

“你结婚多长时间了，乔治？来吧，试着安安静静坐一会儿，回答我的问题，你结婚多久了？”

“十二年。”

“没有过孩子吗？来吧，乔治，坐好，我问你问题呢，你们有过小孩吗？”

棕色的硬甲壳虫不停地去撞昏黄的灯，米凯利斯每次只要听到外面的马路上有汽车驶过，就觉得那就是那辆几个小时前没停的肇事车。他没有走进车铺，因为工作台上放过尸体的地方被血渍玷污了一块儿，于是他就只好烦躁不安地在办公室周围乱转，还没天亮，他就把办公室里面的东西识记得清清楚楚了，还不时地坐到威尔逊身边，试图使他安静下来。

“你有一个可以去祷告的教堂吗，乔治？也许你很久没去过那了吧？也许我可以打电话到教堂请一位牧师过来，他可以跟你谈谈，好不好？”

“我不属于任何教堂。”

“你应该有个教堂可以去做做祷告，乔治，像现在这个时候就派上用场了。你曾经肯定去过教堂，难道你不是在教堂结的婚吗？听着，乔治，听我说，难道你不是在教堂结的婚吗？”

“那是很久以前的事了。”

因为要回答问题，打乱了他摇摆的节奏，他沉默了一会儿，接着那种和原先一样的半明了半迷惑的神情又回到了他暗淡无神的眼睛里。

“打开那个抽屉看看，”他说道，同时指着一张书桌。

“哪个抽屉？”

“那个抽屉，那个。”

米凯利斯打开了离手最近的那个抽屉。里面什么也没有，除了一条小小的、价格不菲的狗链，是用皮革和银线编织而成的，很明显还是新

的。

“这个吗？”他举起狗链子问道。

威尔逊盯着它点点头。“我是在昨天下午发现它的，她试图跟我解释它的来由，但我知道这事蹊跷。”

“你的意思是你老婆买了它？”

“她用薄纸包着放在梳妆台上。”

米凯利斯并没有从中看出任何怪异之处，于是他给威尔逊列举了一系列理由来解释他老婆为什么会买下这条狗链。但是威尔逊以前准从梅特尔那里听到过与这些相同的解释，因为他又开始低声说，“噢，我的天哪！”在他的安慰者说出其他解释之前，这些话被留在嘴里没说出来。

“然后他杀了她。”威尔逊说道，突然间他的嘴巴张得老大。

“谁杀了她？”

“我有办法查出来。”

“你在胡思乱想，乔治，”他朋友说道，“这件事给你的打击太大了，你都不知道自己在说什么。你最好试着平静下来，安安静静坐到明天早上。”

“他谋杀了她。”

“乔治，那只是场意外。”

威尔逊摇了摇头，眯起眼睛，嘴巴微微张开，还以一种不以为然的语调，轻轻“哼”了一声。

“我知道，”他确定无疑地说道，“我是个信任别人的人，也不想伤害谁，但只要我弄清楚了一件事，那就一定错不了。就是汽车里的那个男人，她跑过去跟他说话，但他却不肯停下来。”

米凯利斯也看到了这个场景，但是他怎么也想不到这其中有什么特殊的意义。他以为威尔逊太太只是想逃离她的丈夫，而不是要去截住某辆车。

“她怎么可能像是那样的人呢？”

“她是很有城府的人，”威尔逊说道，好像这样就回答了这个问题，“啊——哟——哟。”

他又开始摇了，米凯利斯站着扭转手里的狗链。

“也许你有什么朋友我可以打电话叫来帮帮忙，乔治。”

这是一个渺茫的希望——他几乎能确定威尔逊没什么朋友，他连自己的老婆都应付不了。一会儿之后，他很高兴注意到屋子里发生了变化，窗户边渐渐又有了蓝色的亮光，知道天就快亮了。大约五点的时候，外面天色更蓝，屋里的灯可以关掉了。

威尔逊呆滞的眼睛转向灰土堆，那里一小团一小团灰白的云朵呈现出奇形怪状，在拂晓的微风中到处飘。

“我跟她谈过了，”沉默了很长一段时间后，他咕哝道，“我告诉她，她也许欺骗了我，但她不能欺骗上帝。我把她带到窗边，”他吃力

地站起身，走到后面的窗户旁，把脸紧贴着窗户靠着，“然后我说：‘上帝知道你干了什么，知道你干的一切，你可以欺骗我，但你不能欺骗上帝！’”

米凯利斯正站在他身后，吃惊地看见他正看着T.J.埃克尔堡大夫的眼睛，那双眼睛刚刚从渐渐消散的夜色中显现出来，暗淡无光，硕大无比。

“上帝看到了一切。”威尔逊重复说道。

“那只是幅广告。”米凯利斯安慰他。什么东西促使他从窗边转过身，又看向屋里。但是威尔逊在那站了很久，他的脸贴近窗玻璃，朝着晨曦点点头。

等到六点钟的时候，米凯利斯已经筋疲力尽了，听到外面有一辆车子停下来的声音，他不由心生感激。那是昨天夜里一起陪护的人中的一个，许诺了会再回来，于是他做了三个人的早餐，他和另外一个人一起吃了。威尔逊现在比较安静了，于是米凯利斯就回家去睡觉。四小时之后当他醒来，急忙跑回车铺的时候，发现威尔逊已经不见了。

他的行踪——他一直在走路——事后追踪是先到了罗斯福港，然后又到了盖兹山，在那里他买了一份三明治，但没吃，还买了一杯咖啡。他肯定很疲倦了，所以走得很慢，一直到中午才抵达盖兹山。直到这里，解释他的时间行程也没有困难——有几个男孩说看到过一个“举止疯癫”的男人，还有几个开车的人说他当时站在路边神情古怪地盯着他们，之后三个小时，就一直不见他的行迹。警察依据他对米凯利斯说的话——说他“有办法查出来”，猜测他在那段时间走遍那附近的一家家车铺，挨个打听那辆黄色汽车的下落。可是另一方面，并没有哪家车铺的

人说看见过这么一个人，也许他有一种更便捷可靠的办法查出他想要的东西。到两点半的时候，他抵达西埃格，在那里他问了一个人去盖茨比家的路，所以在那个时候他就已经知道了盖茨比的名字。

两点的时候，盖茨比穿上泳衣，留话给男管家说要是有人打电话来，就到游泳池边给他捎个信。他先是去车库拿了一个充气的气垫——整个夏天它都供他的客人们玩乐，司机帮他把垫子打足了气，然后他吩咐司机在任何情况下那辆敞篷车都不能被开出去——这点很奇怪，因为这辆车前面右侧的挡泥板需要修理。

盖茨比扛起气垫向游泳池走去，中间有一次停下来稍微挪动了一下，于是司机问他需不需要他帮忙，但他摇摇头，一会儿的工夫就消失在黄色树丛中。

没有电话讯息传来，但是男管家也没午睡，一直等电话等到四点钟——等到即使有人打电话来，也没人接的时候，我想盖茨比自己也不相信会有电话来，也许他已经不在乎了。如果真是这样的话，他肯定感觉到他已经失去了往日那个温暖的世界，为这么久仅守着一个梦想过活。付出了太高的代价。他肯定曾经一度抬起头透过那可怕的树叶仰望那片陌生的天空，浑身战栗，正如他突然发现玫瑰花有多么丑恶，阳光照在刚刚新生的小草上有多么残酷时。这是一个物质的、虚幻的新世界，在这里，一群可怜的幽灵，呼吸着游丝一样的梦，四处飘荡……就像那个灰白诡异的身影，正穿过杂乱的树丛悄悄向他潜行过来。

那个司机——他是伍尔夫山姆的一个手下——听到了枪声，事后他只能说他压根就没多想。我从车站直接开车到盖茨比家中，在我不安地匆匆冲上前门的台阶时，才提醒每一个人确实是出事了。但我坚信，他们当时已经知道这件事了。几乎没说一句话，我们四个——司机、男管

家、园丁和我匆匆向游泳池跑去。

清水从游泳池的一端放进来，又匆忙地流向另一端的排水管，水面泛起一圈圈轻微的、几乎不易察觉的涟漪。随着水微微地波动，那只负重的气垫沿着泳池四处随意地飘着。一阵微风吹来，虽然不能吹皱水面，但却足以打乱它因偶然承载负重的不经意的航向。一堆落叶使它慢慢旋转，就好像经纬仪的指针一样，在水面上描画出一道细细的红圈。

在我们把盖茨比抬进屋里后，园丁在草丛里不远的地方发现了威尔逊的尸体，于是这场血腥屠杀就谢幕了。

第九章

两年过去了，我仍然记得出事那天接下来的情形，那天晚上以及第二天的情形。无数的警察、摄影师和新闻记者盖茨比家的大门进进出出。沿着正门拉出了一条绳子，一名警察站在旁边阻止好奇的人群进入，但是一些小男孩很快就发现他们可以从我的院子里进去，因此总有几个男孩惊得张大嘴巴聚在泳池边。有个人——也许是名侦探，煞有介事地，那天下午在检查威尔逊的尸体时用了“疯子”这个词，由于他说话的语气颇具权威的样子，第二天上午，各大报纸都纷纷采用他这个描述的基调。

大多数报道都把这件事描绘成一个噩梦——离奇古怪，添油加醋，狂热渲染而且不合事实。当米凯利斯接受审讯时，他的陈述透露出威尔逊怀疑他的妻子有外遇。我本以为整个故事很快就会被添油加醋地刊登在黄色小报上，供人们茶余饭后津津乐道，但是凯瑟琳——本应乱说一气的，一句话也没说。关于这件事，她表现出一种惊人的特性——描过的眉毛底下那双眼睛坚定地看着验尸官，发誓说她姐姐从未见过盖茨比，跟自己的丈夫也生活得很幸福，也从来没有品行不端过。她说话时千真万确的样子，连她自己都信了，还埋进手帕哭泣，好像这时候任何人的质疑都会使她无法忍受。于是，威尔逊就被定为一个“因悲伤过度导致神经错乱”的人，从而使案情简单明了，案子也就一锤定音了。

但是事情的这部分似乎偏离了问题的关键，并没抓住要害。发现自己是站在盖茨比这边的，并且是孤单一人。从我打电话报告西埃格惨案的那一刻起，任何一个对他的猜测，任何一个切实问题，都牵扯到我。

刚开始我很吃惊，也很疑惑，然后，当他躺在家里一动不动，不说话也不呼吸，这时我才意识到我要负起责任来，因为没人关心——关心，我指的是，每个人在死后或多或少都有权得到别人对他的强烈的关心。

在我们发现盖茨比的尸体半个小时后，出于本能，我毫不犹豫地打电话给了黛西，但是她和汤姆早在那天下午就出门了，还随身带了行李。

“没留下地址吗？”

“没有。”

“说了什么时候回来吗？”

“没有。”

“知道他们在哪吗？我怎么才能联系上他们？”

“我不知道，无可奉告。”

我真想给他找个人来，我想走进房间里到他躺着的地方安慰他：“我会给你找个人来的，盖茨比，别担心，相信我，我会为你找个人来的……”

梅尔·沃尔夫山姆的名字不在电话簿上。男管家给了我他曾在百老汇的地址，我又打到电话局问讯处，但是等我得到号码时，时间早就过了五点，没有人接电话了。

“请你再接一下好吗？”

“我已经接过三次了。”

“这很重要。”

“对不起，恐怕那里没有人。”

我回到客厅，屋子里突然挤满了官方人员。最初的一瞬间，我还以为他们是一些不速之客，但是，虽然他们掀开被单，用震惊的眼光看着盖茨比，他的抗议不停地在我脑畔回响：“我说，老兄，你一定得替我找个人来。你得努力尝试一下啊，我不能一个人孤零零地担起责任啊。”

有个人开始向我问问题，但我摆脱了他，跑到楼上急急忙忙翻看他的书桌上那些没上锁的抽屉，他从来没有明确地告诉我说他父母去世了。但里面什么也没有——只有一张丹·科迪的照片，那种被人遗忘的野蛮的象征，从墙上向下凝视着。

第二天上午，我差遣男管家到纽约去给沃尔夫山姆送一封信，信中向他询问了一些信息，并恳请他务必搭下一班火车过来。当我这样写的时候，那个请求完全是多此一举。我满以为他一看到报纸就会赶过来，正如我认为中午以前黛西肯定会拍电报过来——可是电报也没来，沃尔夫山姆先生也没到。没人来，除了越来越多的警察、摄影师和新闻记者。当男管家带回来沃尔夫山姆的回信时，我开始有一种蔑视一切的感觉，感到盖茨比和我可以团结起来，鄙视他们所有人。

亲爱的卡洛维先生：

这是我一生中听到的最令人震惊的消息，我几乎不敢相信这是真的。那个人干的这种疯狂的举动，值得我们深思。我现在无法赶过来，因为我正在办理一些非常重要的业务，目前不能被牵扯进这件事。倘若过些时候有什么我可以帮上忙的，请在信中通知我，派埃德加送过来。

听到这种事后，我简直不知自己身处何处，悲恸欲绝。

您真诚的梅尔·沃尔夫山姆

随后又在下面匆匆附笔：

请通知我葬礼有关事宜。又及，我根本不认识他家里人。

那天下午，当电话铃响起，长途台说芝加哥有电话来，我原以为黛西终于打电话来了，但一接通后，传来的却是一个男人的声音，听起来微弱又遥远。

“我是斯莱格……。”

“是吗？”这个名字听起来不熟。

“那封信很糟糕，不是吗？收到我的电报了吗？”

“没收到任何电报。”

“小帕克有麻烦了，”他说得很快，“他在柜台外做证券交易的时候被他们抓住了。就在五分钟以前，他们从纽约得到消息，告诉了他们号码，嘿，谁会料到这种事情呢？在乡下那种地方你压根不会知道……。”

“喂！喂！”我上气不接下气地打断他，“听着，我不是盖茨比先生，盖茨比先生死了。”

电话那头沉默了很久，接着是一声惊呼，然后“咔哒”一声，联系中断了。

我想大概是在第三天，从明尼苏达州的一个小城镇发来了一封署名

亨利·C·盖兹的电报。电报上说寄件人会马上启程，要求延迟举行葬礼，等他来了之后再办。

来的是盖茨比的父亲，一位表情严肃的老人，非常无助而又沮丧的样子，在这么暖和的九月天，他却裹着一件廉价的长外套。他激动得眼泪直流，在我接过他手中的行李包和伞时，他开始不断地去扯他那稀稀拉拉的灰白胡子，我费了好大劲才帮他脱下外套。他几乎要崩溃了，于是我把他带到音乐厅，让他坐下，同时吩咐人给他弄点吃的。但他什么也不吃，那杯牛奶从他颤抖的手中泼洒出来。

“我在芝加哥报上得知了这件事，”他说道，“芝加哥报纸全部登出来了，我看到后就立刻动了身。”

“我不知道怎么联系上您。”

他的眼睛不停地打量着房子的四周，却好像什么也没看见。

“那是个疯子，”他说道，“他肯定是疯了。”

“您不喝点咖啡吗？”我诚恳地对他说。

“我什么也不想吃，我现在好些了，你是.....”

“卡拉维。”

“哦，我现在好多了，他们把吉米放哪了？”

我把他领进客厅，到他儿子躺着的地方，然后留下他在那里。几个小男孩已经走上了台阶朝大厅里张望，当我告诉他们是谁来了，他们才不情愿地走开了。

一会儿工夫之后，盖兹先生打开门出来了，他嘴微张着，脸有点泛红，眼里断断续续地不时流下几滴眼泪。他已经到了死亡也不会让他大惊小怪的年龄，当他第一次开始打量他四周时，看见高大辉煌的大厅，富丽堂皇的房间向它敞开，通向其他的房间，于是他的悲伤中间掺进了一种敬畏和自豪。我把他扶到楼上的一间卧室，在他脱掉外套和汗衫时，我告诉他所有的安排都已推迟，就为等他来。

“我不知道您打算怎么办，盖茨比先生……”

“我的名字是盖兹。”

“……盖兹先生，我原以为你会把遗体运回西部。”

他摇了摇头。

“吉米一向更喜欢东部，他是在东部爬到今天的位子的，你是我孩子的朋友吗？先生……”

“我们是很好的朋友。”

“他有一个辉煌的前程，你知道的。他只是个年轻人，但是他这个地方很好使。”

他郑重其事地碰碰他的头，我点了点头。

“如果他还活着，他会成为一个伟大的人，就像詹姆斯.J.希尔^①那样，帮助建设国家。”

“确实是的。”我局促不安地说道。

他在绣花床罩上摸来摸去，想把它从床上拽下来，接着就直挺挺地

躺下去，很快就睡着了。

那天晚上有个人打电话过来，明显是被吓坏了，坚持要知道我是谁之后才肯报上姓名。

“我是卡拉维先生。”我说道。

“噢！”他听起来似乎放心了，“我是克里普斯普林格。”

我也感到宽慰，因为这似乎预示着盖茨比的墓前又会多一个朋友。我不想把葬礼消息登在报纸上，引来一大帮看客，所以我就自己打电话给了一些人，他们很难找。

“葬礼在明天举行，”我说道，“下午三点钟，就在此地他家里，我希望你能通知任何有意愿参加的人。”

“噢，我会的，”他急切地说道，“当然啦，我不大可能碰到任何人，但是如果我碰到的话我会的。”

他说话的语气引起了我的怀疑。

“你自己当然得来。”

“嗯，我肯定尽量，我打电话主要是为了……”

“等会儿，”我打断他的话，“先说说你来会怎么样？”

“好吧，事实是——事实是我现在正待在格林威治一个朋友家里，他们更希望我明天跟他们待在一起。事实上，明天会有一个野餐什么的，当然了，我会尽量让自己脱身。”

我忍不住“哼”了一声，他肯定听到了，因为他很紧张地往下说：

“我打电话来是为了我留在那的一双鞋子，我想是否可以麻烦管家帮我把它们寄过来，要知道，那是双网鞋，我没有了它简直是没办法，我的地址是B.F……”

我没听他说完那个名字就把电话给挂了。

那以后我为盖茨比感到羞愧——一个我打电话过去的先生竟然暗示他是罪有应得。不管怎样，是我错了，因为他曾是喝足了盖茨比的酒就大骂盖茨比的人当中的一个，我本应该识趣点不打电话给他。

举行葬礼的那天上午我去了纽约见了梅尔·沃尔夫山姆，似乎找不到其他方式见到他。在电梯工的指点下，我推开了一扇门，门上写着“万字控股公司”，可是起先里面好像并没有人。但是，当我徒然地大声喊几声“喂”以后，一块隔板后面突然传出争辩的声音，接着一个漂亮的犹太女人出现在里面的一个门口，用她那双充满敌意的黑眼睛打量我。

“里面没人，”她说道，“沃尔夫山姆先生到芝加哥去了。”

前面一句话显然不对，因为里面有人开始不成调地吹起了《玫瑰经》的曲子。

“请转达卡拉维先生要见他。”

“我又不能把他从芝加哥弄回来，不是吗？”

这时，从门的另一边响起一个声音，叫了一声“斯特拉！”，准确无误这是沃尔夫山姆的声音。

“把你的名字留在书桌上，”她飞快地说道，“当他回来后我会把你的名字给他。”

“但我知道他就在这。”

她向我走近一步，开始愤怒地把手沿着臀部上下滑动。

“你们这些年轻人总自以为是地认为可以随时闯进这里，”她责骂道，“我们都要疯掉了，我说他去了芝加哥，他就去了芝加哥。”

我提到了盖茨比。

“哦——哦！”她又打量了我一遍，“您可以稍等会儿吗……您叫什么名字？”

她消失了。一会儿之后，梅尔·沃尔夫山姆神色凝重地出现在门口，伸着两只手。他把我拉进他的办公室，用虔诚的口吻说这对于我们所有人来说都是一个令人难过的时刻，然后递给了我一支雪茄。

“我又记起我第一次见他的时候，”他说道，“他当时是一位刚离开部队的年轻少校，胸前挂满了他在战场上赢得的勋章。他手头很拮据，买不起便服，于是就一直穿着制服。我第一次见到他，是他走进43号街怀恩勃兰纳开的弹子房找工作的时候。他已经整整两天没吃任何东西了。‘过来跟我一起吃午饭吧，’我说，他在半个小时之内吃了四十多美元的东西。”

“是你帮他开始做生意的吗？”我问道。

“帮他！是我一手栽培了他。”

“哦。”

“我让他从一无所有开始慢慢往上升，帮他脱贫。我一眼就看出他是个仪表堂堂、有绅士派头的年轻人，当他告诉我他上过牛津时，我就知道他会派上大用场。我让他加入了美国退伍军人协会，他曾在那里身居要职。随后他立刻就到奥尔巴尼为我的一个客户办了件事，我们在任何事情上都亲密无间，就像这样”——他举起两个肥胖的手指头，“总在一起。”

我想知道这种搭档关系是否也包括策划1919年世界职业棒球大赛的那场幕后交易。

“现在他去世了，”过了一会儿我说道，“你是他最亲密的朋友，所以我知道你今天下午是否会去参加他的出殡。”

“我想来。”

“好啊，那就来吧。”

他鼻孔里面的鼻毛微微颤动了一下，当他摇头时，眼睛噙满了泪水。

“我不能这样做，我不能牵扯进这件事。”他说道。

“没什么事可牵扯进的，现在一切都结束了。”

“当一个人被杀后，我从不以任何方式掺和进来，我会置身事外。当我还是个年轻人时，我不这样——如果我的一个朋友死了，不管怎么死的，我总是和他们一起坚持到最后一刻。你也许会认为这是感情用事，可是我确实是这样的——一直拼到底。”

我看出因为某种个人原因，他不打算来参加葬礼了，于是我就站起身。

“你是个大大学生吗？”他突然问道。

有那么一会儿，我还以为他想提出“拉点什么关系”，但他只是点点头，跟我握了握手。

“咱们大家都应当学会在朋友活着的时候讲交情，而不要等到他死了之后，”他建议道，“在人去世后，我个人的原则是不管不顾。”

当我离开他办公室的时候，天色已经变得阴沉下来，于是我就冒着蒙蒙细雨回到了西埃格。换过衣服之后我走到隔壁去，看到盖兹先生正激动地在大厅里走来走去。他对他儿子和他儿子的财富的自豪感一直在不断增长，现在他有东西要给我看。

“吉米寄过这张照片给我，”他颤抖着双手掏出钱包，“瞧瞧。”

这是一张房子的照片，四个角破了，被很多手摸过，有点脏。他热切地给我指明每一处细节。“看那儿！”，想从我的眼搜寻些许赞许之意。他如此频繁地把它拿出来给人家看，以至于我认为这张照片对他来说比房子本身更真实了。

“杰米把它寄给我的，我觉得这是张很漂亮的照片，照得很清楚。”

“非常好。您最近见过他吗？”

“他两年前来看过我一次，给我买了我现在住着的房子。当然，他离家出走的时候，我们闹僵了，但现在我明白事情的原因了，他知道自己会有个大好前程，自从他发达之后对我很慷慨。”

他似乎不愿收起照片，在我跟前恋恋不舍地放手里捏了一会儿。然后他把钱包放回去，从口袋里掏出一本破破烂烂的旧皮书，书名是《牛仔卡西迪》①。

“你瞧，这是他还是孩子的时候就读的一本书，它能说明一切。”

他翻开书的封底，掉转过来给我看。在书皮最后一页上写着“时刻表”几个字，时期是1906年9月12日。内容如下：

上午6：00 起床

6：15-6：30 练哑铃体操和爬墙

7：15-8：15 学习电学等科目

8：50-下午4：30 工作

下午4：30-5：00 棒球及其他运动

5：00-6：00 练习演说和仪态

7：00-9：00 研究有用的发明

个人决心：

不再去沙夫特家或（另一个名字，字迹已经无法辨认）家浪费时间串门；

戒绝香烟和嚼烟；

每两天洗一次澡；

每星期读一本有益的书或杂志；

每周积攒五美元（涂掉）三美元；

更加孝顺父母。

“我是偶然发现这本书的，”老人说道，“它说明了一切，不是吗？”

“它的确说明了一切。”

“吉米注定会成功，他总是下一些这样那样的决心，你注意到他是怎样提高他的心智水平的吗？他在这方面很了不起，他曾对我说我吃东西的样子像猪，我还为这揍了他一顿。”

他不愿意合上书，大声读着每个条目，然后热切地看着我。我想他是巴不得我抄下这些条目以备一己之用。

快到三点的时候，路德教会的那位牧师从弗勒兴赶来了，我开始漫不经心地朝窗外看去，看有没有其他的车子来。盖茨比的父亲也是。随着时间慢慢过去，佣人都走进来站在大厅里等候，老人开始忧心忡忡地眨眼睛，同时又心忧不定地谈起了这场雨。牧师瞟了好几眼手表，于是我把他拉到一边，请他再等半个小时，但是一点用都没有，没一个人来。

五点钟左右，我们一行三辆车队抵达墓地，在细密的毛毛小雨中停在大门边，打头的是灵车，黑得怪难看的，湿透了，接着是盖兹先生、牧师和我乘坐的大型轿车，再后面一点是四五个佣人和来自西埃格的邮差乘坐的盖茨比的旅行车，大家都淋得湿透了。当我们穿过大门走进墓地时，我听到有一辆汽车停下来，有一个人踩着积满水的地在我们后面追。我回过头一看，是那个戴着“猫头鹰眼式”眼镜的男人，三个月前的

一个晚上，我曾看到过他对盖茨比图书室里的藏书赞叹不已。从那以后我就再没见过他。我不知道他是怎样打听到今天举行葬礼的，甚至还不知道他的名字。雨水顺着他的眼镜流下来，于是他就把眼镜摘下，擦去上面的雨水，看见盖茨比墓地上那块遮雨帆布已被卷起来了。

当时，我试图去回忆一下盖茨比，但是他已经太遥远了，我只记得黛西既没有发来吊唁，也没寄只花来，可我心中已无怨恨之意了。微微地我听到有人在咕哝，“愿雨中的逝者得到安息，”然后“猫头鹰眼镜”很响地说了声，“阿门。”

我们在雨中迅速散乱地跑向汽车，“猫头鹰眼”在大门旁对我说了一会儿话。

“我没能到他家里去。”他说道。

“别人也没有。”

“什么！”他大吃一惊，“为什么，我的上帝啊，他们过去可大批大批地去那儿。”

他摘下眼镜又里里外外地擦了擦。

“这家伙真他妈的可怜。”他说道。

我印象中最鲜活的记忆之一，就是从预备学校回到西部以及稍晚一些时候圣诞节回家的情景。那些到芝加哥以外的地方去的同学，会在12月的一个傍晚的六点聚集在昏暗的联合车站，和几位家来自芝加哥的同学匆匆话别，各自沉浸在节日的欢乐氛围中。我记得那些从东部这个或那个私立女校返回的女学生们的皮大衣，以及在寒冷的空气中叽叽喳喳的谈笑声，以及像见到老熟人时的挥手致意，还有互相比较彼此受到的

邀请：“你要到奥德威家去吗？赫西家？舒尔茨家？”还有我们手套里紧紧捏着的绿长票。最后还有站台门旁车轨上跑的芝加哥——密尔沃基——圣保罗铁路线的暗黄色汽车，它们看上去就像过圣诞节一样快乐。

当我们的列车缓缓驶进冬日的寒夜和茫茫的白雪中，雪花开始在我们两旁飘飘洒洒，迎着车窗闪闪发光。威斯康星小站上昏黄的灯光一闪而过，这时空气中突然吹来一股凛冽的寒风，令人精神为之一振。当我们穿过冰冷的门廊晚饭后走回家时，我们一路深深地呼吸着这寒气，在这奇妙的一个小时中，我们完美地融入这片土地之前，难以言表地体会到我们和这片土地合二为一。

这就是我的中西部——不是麦田，不是草原，也不是瑞典人居住的荒凉小镇，而是我年轻时候乘坐的令人激动人心的呼啸着返乡的火车，以及严寒冬日晚上的街灯、雪橇的铃声，还有冬青花环被窗内透出的亮光映射在雪上的影子。我是其中的一部分，对漫长的冬日怀有一种肃穆的情感，因从小在卡拉维家族长大，有点小得意。在我们居住的那个城市里，家宅仍世代被称为某姓的宅院。我现在才明白这归根到底是一个西部的故事——汤姆和盖茨比、黛西、乔丹和我，我们都是西部人，也许是我们拥有共同的缺点使得我们都微妙地不能适应东部的生活。

即使是在东部最令我兴奋的时候，即使我敏锐地觉察它相对俄亥俄河岸边的那些枯燥乏味、零乱、臃肿的城镇的优越性，那些城镇到处充斥着只有儿童和年迈的老人才可幸免的无休止的对别人隐私的窥探，即使是在那时，我也总觉得东部有种被扭曲了的特性，特别是西埃格，它仍然会出现在我的怪诞不经的梦里。我在梦中见到的这个小镇，就像埃尔·格列柯^①画的一幅夜景图：上百所房子，既保守又怪异，蜷缩在一片高悬阴沉的天空和一轮黯淡无光的月亮之下。在前景中，四位神情严

肃、身穿大礼服的男人抬着一副担架沿着人行道走着，上面躺着一个喝得醉醺醺的、身穿白色晚礼服的女人。她一只手在一边摇摆，闪耀着珠宝的寒光。那几个男人脸色凝重地拐进一间屋子——却走错了地方。但是没人知道这个女人的名字，也没有人关心。

盖茨比死以后，东部就像这样幽灵般萦绕在我的心头，扭曲到我的视力已无法矫正的程度。所以，当空气中飘荡起焚烧枯叶的蓝烟，寒风把晾在绳子上的湿衣服吹得硬邦邦的时候，我决定回家去。

在我离开之前还有一件事要做，一件既尴尬又令人不悦的事，这件事我本来应该听之任之的。但是我想把事情都打理得妥当有序，而不是寄希望于那片乐心助人而又不偏不倚的海水来把我的垃圾清扫掉。我去见了乔丹·贝克，详详细细谈到了我们俩之间发生的事，以及之后我的遭遇，而她则一动也不动地躺在一张大椅子上听着。

她穿着高尔夫球服，我记得当时我认为她看上去像极了一幅漂亮的插图，下巴神气地微翘着，头发呈秋天树叶的颜色，脸蛋跟她放在膝上的无指手套一样都是棕褐色。当我说完了，她没作任何评论，只是告诉我她跟另一个男人订婚了。我对此表示怀疑，虽然有很多男人追求她，只等她点头，但我还是故作惊诧，有一会儿，我在怀疑自己是否犯了个错误，然后我又飞快地通盘考虑了一遍，起身告辞。

“不管怎样，是你甩了我的，”乔丹突然冒出一句，“在电话里你就把我甩了，我现在对你毫不在意，但这件事对我来说倒是个新鲜体验，有好一阵子我还为此晕乎乎的呢。”

我们握了握手。

“噢，你还记得……”她又加上一句，“我们曾经聊过的关于开车的

话题？”

“怎么办呢.....不太记得了。”

“你不是说过一个蹩脚司机在遇上另一个蹩脚司机之前才安全的吗？唉，我就遇到了一个蹩脚司机，不是吗？我的意思是因为我的粗心作了这么一个错误的猜测，我原以为你是一个相当诚实、直率的人，我原以为你私下里引以为傲。”

“我已经三十了，”我说道，“要是我再年轻五岁，我就能自欺欺人，引以为傲。”

她没说话，令我很生气，带着对她的些许留恋和极大的悲伤，我转身走了。

10月下旬的一天下午，我见到了汤姆·布坎南。他正沿着第五大街在我前面走着，还是那样机警和不可一世的样子，他的双手稍微偏离他的身体，仿佛要击退对方的袭击一样，脑袋忽左忽右地转动，以适应他那双四处张望的眼睛。当我正要放慢脚步以免赶上他时，他停了下来，蹙着眉头望向一家珠宝店的橱窗里。突然，他看见了我，回转过身，向我伸出手。

“怎么回事，尼克？你不愿意跟我握手吗？”

“是的，你知道我对你的看法。”

“你疯了，尼克，”他赶紧说道，“彻底疯了，我不知道你到底怎么了。”

“汤姆，”我问他，“那天下午你对威尔逊说了些什么？”

他盯着我，一句话也不说，于是我就知道我没猜错在威尔逊消失的那几个小时发生了些什么。

“我跟他说了事实，”他说道，“我们刚要离开家，他就找上门来，然后我就让佣人传话给他说我们不在家，但他却想硬闯到楼上来。那时他已经疯了，如果我不告诉他那辆车的车主是谁，他就会杀了我。在我家的时候，他的手一刻都没离开过口袋里的左轮手枪.....”他不再说下去，突然变得恶狠狠的，“就算我告诉了他真相又怎么样呢？那家伙是自找的。他蒙蔽了你的眼睛，就像蒙蔽黛西的一样，他还是个硬心肠的家伙，碾死梅特尔就像碾死一条狗，事发后还不停车。”

我什么也不能说，除了那个非言语所能表达的事实，即那不是真的。

“你以为我就没遭受过痛苦吗，听着，当我去退掉那套公寓，看见那盒该死的狗饼干还放在餐具柜上时，我一下子瘫坐在地上，像个孩子似的号啕大哭起来。天哪，那种感觉真是太糟糕了.....”

我无法原谅他，也不会喜欢他，但我现在算明白了，对他来说，他自己做的事情永远都是正当有理的。整件事都是不负责任、混乱不堪之行。汤姆和黛西，他们都是不负责任的人——他们搞砸一切，然后就退回到他们的财富和毫不在意、麻木不仁里去，或者退回到任何把他们维系在一起的东西当中，让别人去收拾他们制造的烂摊子.....

我跟他握了握手，不握手未免显得我太傻气，因为我突然间觉得我像在跟一个小孩说话。然后他走进一家珠宝店，买一条珍珠项链或仅仅是一对袖扣什么的，把我这乡巴佬对他的吹毛求疵永远地抛诸脑后。

我离开时，盖茨比的房子仍然空着，他草坪上的草长得跟我的一样

长了。村里有一个出租车司机，每次拉客经过那个大门口时，总要停下来，对着里面指指点点，也许他就是事发当晚开车送黛西和盖茨比去东埃格的那个司机，也许他自己对这件事瞎编了一个故事。我不想听他讲他的故事，所以下火车时，我总尽量避开他。

周六晚上我都到纽约去过，因为盖茨比的那些光耀辉煌、令人眼花缭乱的晚会仍生动地浮现在我的脑际，以至于我似乎仍然能听到音乐声、笑声，微微地、持续不断地从他家花园里传出来，还有他家车道上来往上下汽车声。有天晚上，我确实在那听到一辆汽车的声音，看见它停在他家门前的台阶前，但我没上前去一探究竟，也许他是最后一位某个刚从天涯海角处归来的客人，不知道晚会已经结束了。

最后一个晚上，我已经打点好行李，车子也已经卖给了杂货店的老板，我走过去再去看一眼那栋庞大的、象征着失败的房子。在白色的台阶上，不知哪个男孩用一块砖头歪歪扭扭地写了一个下流词汇，映衬着月光显得格外醒目，于是我用鞋子在石头上擦来擦去，把它擦掉了。后来我又漫步到海边，四仰八叉地躺在海滩上。

现在大多数海滩别墅都已经关闭了，四周几乎没有任何亮光，除了航行在海面上的渡轮发出的隐隐绰绰、移动着的亮光。随着月亮越升越高，那些置身事外的别墅开始慢慢地消融在月色中，直到这时我才意识到这个古老的岛屿曾让荷兰水手的眼睛为之一亮，它是新世界清新稚嫩的胸膛。那些为修建盖茨比豪宅被砍掉而消失的树，曾经对人类最后一个最伟大的梦想诱人地轻声耳语，在像被施了魔法的短暂瞬间，人类面对这块大陆时一定凝神屏气，不由自主地陷入一种他既不能理解也不曾渴望的美学沉思，也是历史上最后一次面对与他对奇迹的想象能力相称的东西。

当我坐在那，念念不忘那个古老的、未知的世界无法自拔时，我想到了盖茨比第一次在黛西家码头的尽头发现那盏绿灯时感到的惊愕。他已经走了漫长的路才来到这片蓝色的草坪，他的梦想看起来如此之近以至于似乎触手可及。他不知道那个梦已经远远地落在他后面，落在这个城市以外某个地方的一片绵延不绝的朦胧之中，在那里，共和国的黑暗原野在夜色下滚滚向前。

盖茨比坚信那盏绿灯，它象征着一个美好的将来，一年一年在我们面前退却，然后同我们擦肩而过。但是没关系，明天我们将跑得更快，手臂伸得更远，去拥抱又一个美好的早晨……

所以我们继续向前划行，逆流而上的小舟，不停地被冲回过去的岁月。

Chapter 1

In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since.

"Whenever you feel like criticizing any one," he told me, "just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had."

He didn't say any more but we've always been unusually communicative in a reserved way, and I understood that he meant a great deal more than that. In consequence I'm inclined to reserve all judgments, a habit that has opened up many curious natures to me and also made me the victim of not a few veteran bores. The abnormal mind is quick to detect and attach itself to this quality when it appears in a normal person, and so it came about that in college I was unjustly accused of being a politician, because I was privy to the secret griefs of wild, unknown men. Most of the confidences were unsought—frequently I have feigned sleep, preoccupation, or a hostile levity when I realized by some unmistakable sign that an intimate revelation was quivering on the horizon—for the intimate revelations of young men, or at least the terms in which they express them are usually plagiaristic and marred by obvious suppressions. Reserving judgments is a matter of infinite hope. I am still a little afraid of missing something if I forget that, as my father snobbishly suggested, and I snobbishly repeat a sense of the fundamental decencies is parcelled out unequally at birth.

And, after boasting this way of my tolerance, I come to the admission that it has a limit. Conduct may be founded on the hard rock or the wet marshes but after a certain point I don't care what it's founded on. When I came back from the East last autumn I felt that I wanted the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever; I wanted no more riotous excursions with privileged glimpses into the human heart. Only Gatsby, the man who gives his name to this book, was exempt from my reaction—Gatsby who represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn. If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life, as if he were related to one of those intricate machines that register earthquakes ten thousand miles away. This responsiveness had nothing to do with that flabby impressionability which is dignified under the name of the "creative temperament"—it was an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again. No—Gatsby turned out all right at the end; it is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men.

My family have been prominent, well-to-do people in this middle-western city for three generations. The Carraways are something of a clan and we have a tradition that we're descended from the Dukes of Buccleuch, but the actual founder of my line was my grandfather's brother who came here in fifty-one, sent a substitute to the Civil War and started the wholesale hardware business that my father carries on today.

I never saw this great-uncle but I'm supposed to look like him—with special reference to the rather hard-boiled painting that hangs in Father's office. I graduated from New Haven in 1915, just a quarter of a century after my father, and a little later I participated in that delayed Teutonic migration known as the Great War. I enjoyed the counter-raid so thoroughly that I came back restless. Instead of being the warm center of the world the middle-west now seemed like the ragged edge of the universe—so I decided to go east and learn the bond business. Everybody I knew was in the bond business so I supposed it could support one more single man. All my aunts and uncles talked it over as if they were choosing a prep-school for me and finally said, "Why—ye-es" with very grave, hesitant faces. Father agreed to finance me for a year and after various delays I came east, permanently, I thought, in the spring of twenty-two.

The practical thing was to find rooms in the city but it was a warm season and I had just left a country of wide lawns and friendly trees, so when a young man at the office suggested that we take a house together in a commuting town it sounded like a great idea. He found the house, a weather beaten cardboard bungalow at eighty a month, but at the last minute the firm ordered him to Washington and I went out to the country alone. I had a dog, at least I had him for a few days until he ran away, and an old Dodge and a Finnish woman who made my bed and cooked breakfast and muttered Finnish wisdom to herself over the electric stove.

It was lonely for a day or so until one morning some man, more recently arrived than I, stopped me on the road.

"How do you get to West Egg village?" he asked helplessly.

I told him. And as I walked on I was lonely no longer. I was a guide, a pathfinder, an original settler. He had casually conferred on me the freedom of the neighborhood.

And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees—just as things grow in fast movies—I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer.

There was so much to read for one thing and so much fine health to be pulled down out of the young breath-giving air. I bought a dozen volumes on banking and credit and investment securities and they stood on my shelf in red and gold like new money from the mint, promising to unfold the shining secrets that only Midas and Morgan and Maecenas knew. And I had the high intention of reading many other books besides. I was rather literary in college—one year I wrote a series of very solemn and obvious editorials for the "Yale News"—and now I was going to bring back all such things into my life and become again that most limited of all specialists, the "well-rounded man." This isn't just an epigram—life is much more successfully looked at from a single window, after all.

It was a matter of chance that I should have rented a house in one of the strangest communities in North America. It was on that slender riotous island which extends itself due east of New York and where there are, among other natural curiosities, two unusual formations of land. Twenty miles from the city a pair of enormous eggs, identical in contour and separated only by a courtesy bay, jut out into the most domesticated body of salt water in the Western Hemisphere, the great wet barnyard of Long Island Sound. They are not perfect ovals—like the egg in the Columbus story they are both crushed

flat at the contact end—but their physical resemblance must be a source of perpetual confusion to the gulls that fly overhead. To the wingless a more arresting phenomenon is their dissimilarity in every particular except shape and size.

I lived at West Egg, the—well, the less fashionable of the two, though this is a most superficial tag to express the bizarre and not a little sinister contrast between them. My house was at the very tip of the egg, only fifty yards from the Sound, and squeezed between two huge places that rented for twelve or fifteen thousand a season. The one on my right was a colossal affair by any standard—it was a factual imitation of some Hôtel de Ville in Normandy, with a tower on one side, spanking new under a thin beard of raw ivy, and a marble swimming pool and more than forty acres of lawn and garden. It was Gatsby's mansion. Or rather, as I didn't know Mr. Gatsby it was a mansion inhabited by a gentleman of that name. My own house was an eye-sore, but it was a small eye-sore, and it had been overlooked, so I had a view of the water, a partial view of my neighbor's lawn, and the consoling proximity of millionaires—all for eighty dollars a month.

Across the courtesy bay the white palaces of fashionable East Egg glittered along the water, and the history of the summer really begins on the evening I drove over there to have dinner with the Tom Buchanans. Daisy was my second cousin once removed and I'd known Tom in college. And just after the war I spent two days with them in Chicago.

Her husband, among various physical accomplishments, had been one of the most powerful ends that ever played football at New Haven—a national figure in a way, one of those men who reach such an acute limited excellence

at twenty-one that everything afterward savors of anti-climax. His family were enormously wealthy—even in college his freedom with money was a matter for reproach—but now he'd left Chicago and come east in a fashion that rather took your breath away: for instance he'd brought down a string of polo ponies from Lake Forest. It was hard to realize that a man in my own generation was wealthy enough to do that.

Why they came east I don't know. They had spent a year in France, for no particular reason, and then drifted here and there unrestfully wherever people played polo and were rich together. This was a permanent move, said Daisy over the telephone, but I didn't believe it—I had no sight into Daisy's heart but I felt that Tom would drift on forever seeking a little wistfully for the dramatic turbulence of some irrecoverable football game.

And so it happened that on a warm windy evening I drove over to East Egg to see two old friends whom I scarcely knew at all. Their house was even more elaborate than I expected, a cheerful red and white Georgian Colonial mansion overlooking the bay. The lawn started at the beach and ran toward the front door for a quarter of a mile, jumping over sun-dials and brick walks and burning gardens—finally when it reached the house drifting up the side in bright vines as though from the momentum of its run. The front was broken by a line of French windows, glowing now with reflected gold, and wide open to the warm windy afternoon, and Tom Buchanan in riding clothes was standing with his legs apart on the front porch.

He had changed since his New Haven years. Now he was a sturdy, straw haired man of thirty with a rather hard mouth and a supercilious manner. Two shining, arrogant eyes had established dominance over his face and gave him

the appearance of always leaning aggressively forward. Not even the effeminate swank of his riding clothes could hide the enormous power of that body—he seemed to fill those glistening boots until he strained the top lacing and you could see a great pack of muscle shifting when his shoulder moved under his thin coat. It was a body capable of enormous leverage—a cruel body.

His speaking voice, a gruff husky tenor, added to the impression of fractiousness he conveyed. There was a touch of paternal contempt in it, even toward people he liked—and there were men at New Haven who had hated his guts.

"Now, don't think my opinion on these matters is final," he seemed to say, "just because I'm stronger and more of a man than you are." We were in the same Senior Society, and while we were never intimate I always had the impression that he approved of me and wanted me to like him with some harsh, defiant wistfulness of his own.

We talked for a few minutes on the sunny porch.

"I've got a nice place here," he said, his eyes flashing about restlessly.

Turning me around by one arm he moved a broad flat hand along the front vista, including in its sweep a sunken Italian garden, a half acre of deep pungent roses and a snub-nosed motor boat that bumped the tide off shore.

"It belonged to Demaine the oil man." He turned me around again, politely and abruptly. "We'll go inside."

We walked through a high hallway into a bright rosy-colored space, fragilely bound into the house by French windows at either end. The windows were ajar and gleaming white against the fresh grass outside that seemed to grow a little way into the house. A breeze blew through the room, blew curtains in at one end and out the other like pale flags, twisting them up toward the frosted wedding cake of the ceiling—and then rippled over the wine-colored rug, making a shadow on it as wind does on the sea.

The only completely stationary object in the room was an enormous couch on which two young women were buoyed up as though upon an anchored balloon. They were both in white and their dresses were rippling and fluttering as if they had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house. I must have stood for a few moments listening to the whip and snap of the curtains and the groan of a picture on the wall. Then there was a boom as Tom Buchanan shut the rear windows and the caught wind died out about the room and the curtains and the rugs and the two young women ballooned slowly to the floor.

The younger of the two was a stranger to me. She was extended full length at her end of the divan, completely motionless and with her chin raised a little as if she were balancing something on it which was quite likely to fall. If she saw me out of the corner of her eyes she gave no hint of it—indeed, I was almost surprised into murmuring an apology for having disturbed her by coming in.

The other girl, Daisy, made an attempt to rise—she leaned slightly forward with a conscientious expression—then she laughed, an absurd, charming little laugh, and I laughed too and came forward into the room.

"I'm p-paralyzed with happiness."

She laughed again, as if she said something very witty, and held my hand for a moment, looking up into my face, promising that there was no one in the world she so much wanted to see. That was a way she had. She hinted in a murmur that the surname of the balancing girl was Baker. (I've heard it said that Daisy's murmur was only to make people lean toward her; an irrelevant criticism that made it no less charming.)

At any rate Miss Baker's lips fluttered, she nodded at me almost imperceptibly and then quickly tipped her head back again—the object she was balancing had obviously tottered a little and given her something of a fright. Again a sort of apology arose to my lips. Almost any exhibition of complete self sufficiency draws a stunned tribute from me.

I looked back at my cousin who began to ask me questions in her low, thrilling voice. It was the kind of voice that the ear follows up and down as if each speech is an arrangement of notes that will never be played again. Her face was sad and lovely with bright things in it, bright eyes and a bright passionate mouth—but there was an excitement in her voice that men who had cared for her found difficult to forget: a singing compulsion, a whispered "Listen," a promise that she had done gay, exciting things just a while since and that there were gay, exciting things hovering in the next hour.

I told her how I had stopped off in Chicago for a day on my way east and how a dozen people had sent their love through me.

"Do they miss me?" she cried ecstatically.

"The whole town is desolate. All the cars have the left rear wheel painted black as a mourning wreath and there's a persistent wail all night along the North Shore."

"How gorgeous! Let's go back, Tom. Tomorrow!" Then she added irrelevantly, "You ought to see the baby."

"I'd like to."

"She's asleep. She's two years old. Haven't you ever seen her?"

"Never."

"Well, you ought to see her. She's——"

Tom Buchanan who had been hovering restlessly about the room stopped and rested his hand on my shoulder.

"What you doing, Nick?"

"I'm a bond man."

"Who with?"

I told him.

"Never heard of them," he remarked decisively.

This annoyed me.

"You will," I answered shortly. "You will if you stay in the East."

"Oh, I'll stay in the East, don't you worry," he said, glancing at Daisy and then back at me, as if he were alert for something more. "I'd be a God Damned fool to live anywhere else."

At this point Miss Baker said "Absolutely!" with such suddenness that I started—it was the first word she uttered since I came into the room. Evidently it surprised her as much as it did me, for she yawned and with a series of rapid, deft movements stood up into the room.

"I'm stiff," she complained, "I've been lying on that sofa for as long as I can remember."

"Don't look at me," Daisy retorted. "I've been trying to get you to New York all afternoon."

"No, thanks," said Miss Baker to the four cocktails just in from the pantry, "I'm absolutely in training."

Her host looked at her incredulously.

"You are!" He took down his drink as if it were a drop in the bottom of a glass. "How you ever get anything done is beyond me."

I looked at Miss Baker wondering what it was she "got done." I enjoyed looking at her. She was a slender, small-breasted girl, with an erect carriage which she accentuated by throwing her body backward at the shoulders like a young cadet. Her grey sun-strained eyes looked back at me with polite reciprocal curiosity out of a wan, charming discontented face. It occurred to me now that I had seen her, or a picture of her, somewhere before.

"You live in West Egg," she remarked contemptuously. "I know somebody there."

"I don't know a single——"

"You must know Gatsby."

"Gatsby?" demanded Daisy. "What Gatsby?"

Before I could reply that he was my neighbor dinner was announced; wedging his tense arm imperatively under mine Tom Buchanan compelled me from the room as though he were moving a checker to another square.

Slenderly, languidly, their hands set lightly on their hips the two young women preceded us out onto a rosy-colored porch open toward the sunset where four candles flickered on the table in the diminished wind.

"Why candles?" objected Daisy, frowning. She snapped them out with her fingers. "In two weeks it'll be the longest day in the year." She looked at us all radiantly. "Do you always watch for the longest day of the year and then miss it? I always watch for the longest day in the year and then miss it."

"We ought to plan something," yawned Miss Baker, sitting down at the table as if she were getting into bed.

"All right," said Daisy. "What'll we plan?" She turned to me helplessly. "What do people plan?"

Before I could answer her eyes fastened with an awed expression on her little finger.

"Look!" she complained. "I hurt it."

We all looked—the knuckle was black and blue.

"You did it, Tom," she said accusingly. "I know you didn't mean to but you did do it. That's what I get for marrying a brute of a man, a great big hulking physical specimen of a—"

"I hate that word hulking," objected Tom crossly, "even in kidding."

"Hulking," insisted Daisy.

Sometimes she and Miss Baker talked at once, unobtrusively and with a bantering inconsequence that was never quite chatter, that was as cool as their white dresses and their impersonal eyes in the absence of all desire. They were here—and they accepted Tom and me, making only a polite pleasant effort to entertain or to be entertained. They knew that presently dinner would be over and a little later the evening too would be over and casually put away. It was sharply different from the West where an evening was hurried from phase to phase toward its close in a continually disappointed anticipation or else in sheer nervous dread of the moment itself.

"You make me feel uncivilized, Daisy," I confessed on my second glass of corky but rather impressive claret. "Can't you talk about crops or something?"

I meant nothing in particular by this remark but it was taken up in an unexpected way.

"Civilization's going to pieces," broke out Tom violently. "I've gotten to

be a terrible pessimist about things. Have you read 'The Rise of the Coloured Empires' by this man Goddard?"

"Why, no," I answered, rather surprised by his tone.

"Well, it's a fine book, and everybody ought to read it. The idea is if we don't look out the white race will be—will be utterly submerged. It's all scientific stuff; it's been proved."

"Tom's getting very profound," said Daisy with an expression of unthoughtful sadness. "He reads deep books with long words in them. What was that word we——"

"Well, these books are all scientific," insisted Tom, glancing at her impatiently. "This fellow has worked out the whole thing. It's up to us who are the dominant race to watch out or these other races will have control of things."

"We've got to beat them down," whispered Daisy, winking ferociously toward the fervent sun.

"You ought to live in California——" began Miss Baker but Tom interrupted her by shifting heavily in his chair.

"This idea is that we're Nordics. I am, and you are and you are and——" After an infinitesimal hesitation he included Daisy with a slight nod and she winked at me again. "—and we've produced all the things that go to make civilization—oh, science and art and all that. Do you see?"

There was something pathetic in his concentration as if his

complacency, more acute than of old, was not enough to him any more. When, almost immediately, the telephone rang inside and the butler left the porch Daisy seized upon the momentary interruption and leaned toward me.

"I'll tell you a family secret," she whispered enthusiastically. "It's about the butler's nose. Do you want to hear about the butler's nose?"

"That's why I came over tonight."

"Well, he wasn't always a butler; he used to be the silver polisher for some people in New York that had a silver service for two hundred people. He had to polish it from morning till night until finally it began to affect his nose——"

"Things went from bad to worse," suggested Miss Baker.

"Yes. Things went from bad to worse until finally he had to give up his position."

For a moment the last sunshine fell with romantic affection upon her glowing face; her voice compelled me forward breathlessly as I listened—then the glow faded, each light deserting her with lingering regret like children leaving a pleasant street at dusk.

The butler came back and murmured something close to Tom's ear whereupon Tom frowned, pushed back his chair and without a word went inside. As if his absence quickened something within her Daisy leaned forward again, her voice glowing and singing.

"I love to see you at my table, Nick. You remind me of a—of a rose, an

absolute rose. Doesn't he?" She turned to Miss Baker for confirmation. "An absolute rose?"

This was untrue. I am not even faintly like a rose. She was only extemporizing but a stirring warmth flowed from her as if her heart was trying to come out to you concealed in one of those breathless, thrilling words. Then suddenly she threw her napkin on the table and excused herself and went into the house.

Miss Baker and I exchanged a short glance consciously devoid of meaning. I was about to speak when she sat up alertly and said "Sh!" in a warning voice. A subdued impassioned murmur was audible in the room beyond and Miss Baker leaned forward, unashamed, trying to hear. The murmur trembled on the verge of coherence, sank down, mounted excitedly, and then ceased altogether.

"This Mr. Gatsby you spoke of is my neighbor——" I said.

"Don't talk. I want to hear what happens."

"Is something happening?" I inquired innocently.

"You mean to say you don't know?" said Miss Baker, honestly surprised. "I thought everybody knew."

"I don't."

"Why——" she said hesitantly, "Tom's got some woman in New York."

"Got some woman?" I repeated blankly.

Miss Baker nodded.

"She might have the decency not to telephone him at dinner-time. Don't you think?"

Almost before I had grasped her meaning there was the flutter of a dress and the crunch of leather boots and Tom and Daisy were back at the table.

"It couldn't be helped!" cried Daisy with tense gayety.

She sat down, glanced searchingly at Miss Baker and then at me and continued: "I looked outdoors for a minute and it's very romantic outdoors. There's a bird on the lawn that I think must be a nightingale come over on the Cunard or White Star Line. He's singing away——"her voice sang"——It's romantic, isn't it, Tom?"

"Very romantic," he said, and then miserably to me: "If it's light enough after dinner I want to take you down to the stables."

The telephone rang inside, startlingly, and as Daisy shook her head decisively at Tom the subject of the stables, in fact all subjects, vanished into air. Among the broken fragments of the last five minutes at table I remember the candles being lit again, pointlessly, and I was conscious of wanting to look squarely at every one and yet to avoid all eyes. I couldn't guess what Daisy and Tom were thinking but I doubt if even Miss Baker who seemed to have mastered a certain hardy skepticism was able utterly to put this fifth guest's shrill metallic urgency out of mind. To a certain temperament the situation might have seemed intriguing—my own instinct was to telephone immediately for the police.

The horses, needless to say, were not mentioned again. Tom and Miss Baker, with several feet of twilight between them strolled back into the library, as if to a vigil beside a perfectly tangible body, while trying to look pleasantly interested and a little deaf I followed Daisy around a chain of connecting verandas to the porch in front. In its deep gloom we sat down side by side on a wicker settee.

Daisy took her face in her hands, as if feeling its lovely shape, and her eyes moved gradually out into the velvet dusk. I saw that turbulent emotions possessed her, so I asked what I thought would be some sedative questions about her little girl.

"We don't know each other very well, Nick," she said suddenly. "Even if we are cousins. You didn't come to my wedding."

"I wasn't back from the war."

"That's true." She hesitated. "Well, I've had a very bad time, Nick, and I'm pretty cynical about everything."

Evidently she had reason to be. I waited but she didn't say any more, and after a moment I returned rather feebly to the subject of her daughter.

"I suppose she talks, and—eats, and everything."

"Oh, yes." She looked at me absently. "Listen, Nick; let me tell you what I said when she was born. Would you like to hear?"

"Very much."

"It'll show you how I've gotten to feel about—things. Well, she was less than an hour old and Tom was God knows where. I woke up out of the ether with an utterly abandoned feeling and asked the nurse right away if it was a boy or a girl. She told me it was a girl, and so I turned my head away and wept. 'All right,' I said, 'I'm glad it's a girl. And I hope she'll be a fool—that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.'"

"You see I think everything's terrible anyhow," she went on in a convinced way. "Everybody thinks so—the most advanced people. And I know. I've been everywhere and seen everything and done everything." Her eyes flashed around her in a defiant way, rather like Tom's, and she laughed with thrilling scorn. "Sophisticated—God, I'm sophisticated!"

The instant her voice broke off, ceasing to compel my attention, my belief, I felt the basic insincerity of what she had said. It made me uneasy, as though the whole evening had been a trick of some sort to exact a contributory emotion from me. I waited, and sure enough, in a moment she looked at me with an absolute smirk on her lovely face as if she had asserted her membership in a rather distinguished secret society to which she and Tom belonged.

Inside, the crimson room bloomed with light. Tom and Miss Baker sat at either end of the long couch and she read aloud to him from the "Saturday Evening Post"—the words, murmurous and uninflected, running together in a soothing tune. The lamp-light, bright on his boots and dull on the autumn-leaf yellow of her hair, glinted along the paper as she turned a page with a flutter of slender muscles in her arms.

When we came in she held us silent for a moment with a lifted hand.

"To be continued," she said, tossing the magazine on the table, "in our very next issue."

Her body asserted itself with a restless movement of her knee, and she stood up.

"Ten o'clock," she remarked, apparently finding the time on the ceiling. "Time for this good girl to go to bed."

"Jordan's going to play in the tournament tomorrow," explained Daisy, "over at Westchester."

"Oh,—you're Jordan Baker."

I knew now why her face was familiar—its pleasing contemptuous expression had looked out at me from many rotogravure pictures of the sporting life at Asheville and Hot Springs and Palm Beach. I had heard some story of her too, a critical, unpleasant story, but what it was I had forgotten long ago.

"Good night," she said softly. "Wake me at eight, won't you."

"If you'll get up."

"I will. Good night, Mr. Carraway. See you anon."

"Of course you will," confirmed Daisy. "In fact I think I'll arrange a marriage. Come over often, Nick, and I'll sort of—oh—fling you together."

You know—lock you up accidentally in linen closets and push you out to sea in a boat, and all that sort of thing——"

"Good night," called Miss Baker from the stairs. "I haven't heard a word."

"She's a nice girl," said Tom after a moment. "They oughtn't to let her run around the country this way."

"Who oughtn't to?" inquired Daisy coldly.

"Her family."

"Her family is one aunt about a thousand years old. Besides, Nick's going to look after her, aren't you, Nick? She's going to spend lots of week-ends out here this summer. I think the home influence will be very good for her."

Daisy and Tom looked at each other for a moment in silence.

"Is she from New York?" I asked quickly.

"From Louisville. Our white girlhood was passed together there. Our beautiful white——"

"Did you give Nick a little heart to heart talk on the veranda?" demanded Tom suddenly.

"Did I?" She looked at me. "I can't seem to remember, but I think we talked about the Nordic race. Yes, I'm sure we did. It sort of crept up on us

and first thing you know——"

"Don't believe everything you hear, Nick," he advised me.

I said lightly that I had heard nothing at all, and a few minutes later I got up to go home. They came to the door with me and stood side by side in a cheerful square of light. As I started my motor Daisy peremptorily called "Wait!

"I forgot to ask you something, and it's important. We heard you were engaged to a girl out West."

"That's right," corroborated Tom kindly. "We heard that you were engaged."

"It's libel. I'm too poor."

"But we heard it," insisted Daisy, surprising me by opening up again in a flower-like way. "We heard it from three people so it must be true."

Of course I knew what they were referring to, but I wasn't even vaguely engaged. The fact that gossip had published the banns was one of the reasons I had come east. You can't stop going with an old friend on account of rumors and on the other hand I had no intention of being rumored into marriage.

Their interest rather touched me and made them less remotely rich—nevertheless, I was confused and a little disgusted as I drove away. It seemed to me that the thing for Daisy to do was to rush out of the house, child in arms—but apparently there were no such intentions in her head. As for Tom, the fact that he "had some woman in New York" was really less surprising

than that he had been depressed by a book. Something was making him nibble at the edge of stale ideas as if his sturdy physical egotism no longer nourished his peremptory heart.

Already it was deep summer on roadhouse roofs and in front of wayside garages, where new red gas-pumps sat out in pools of light, and when I reached my estate at West Egg I ran the car under its shed and sat for a while on an abandoned grass roller in the yard. The wind had blown off, leaving a loud bright night with wings beating in the trees and a persistent organ sound as the full bellows of the earth blew the frogs full of life. The silhouette of a moving cat wavered across the moonlight and turning my head to watch it I saw that I was not alone—fifty feet away a figure had emerged from the shadow of my neighbor's mansion and was standing with his hands in his pockets regarding the silver pepper of the stars. Something in his leisurely movements and the secure position of his feet upon the lawn suggested that it was Mr. Gatsby himself, come out to determine what share was his of our local heavens.

I decided to call to him. Miss Baker had mentioned him at dinner, and that would do for an introduction. But I didn't call to him for he gave a sudden intimation that he was content to be alone—he stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and far as I was from him I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward—and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of a dock. When I looked once more for Gatsby he had vanished, and I was alone again in the unquiet darkness.

Chapter 2

About half way between West Egg and New York the motor-road hastily joins the railroad and runs beside it for a quarter of a mile, so as to shrink away from a certain desolate area of land. This is a valley of ashes—a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and finally, with a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air. Occasionally a line of grey cars crawls along an invisible track, gives out a ghastly creak and comes to rest, and immediately the ash-grey men swarm up with leaden spades and stir up an impenetrable cloud which screens their obscure operations from your sight.

But above the grey land and the spasms of bleak dust which drift endlessly over it, you perceive, after a moment, the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg. The eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg are blue and gigantic—their retinas are one yard high. They look out of no face but, instead, from a pair of enormous yellow spectacles which pass over a nonexistent nose. Evidently some wild wag of an oculist set them there to fatten his practice in the borough of Queens, and then sank down himself into eternal blindness or forgot them and moved away. But his eyes, dimmed a little by many countless days under sun and rain, brood on over the solemn dumping ground.

The valley of ashes is bounded on one side by a small foul river, and

when the drawbridge is up to let barges through, the passengers on waiting trains can stare at the dismal scene for as long as half an hour. There is always a halt there of at least a minute and it was because of this that I first met Tom Buchanan's mistress.

The fact that he had one was insisted upon wherever he was known. His acquaintances resented the fact that he turned up in popular restaurants with her and, leaving her at a table, sauntered about, chatting with whomever he knew. Though I was curious to see her I had no desire to meet her—but I did. I went up to New York with Tom on the train one afternoon and when we stopped by the ash heaps he jumped to his feet and taking hold of my elbow literally forced me from the car.

"We're getting off!" he insisted. "I want you to meet my girl."

I think he'd tanked up a good deal at luncheon and his determination to have my company bordered on violence. The supercilious assumption was that on Sunday afternoon I had nothing better to do.

I followed him over a low white-washed railroad fence and we walked back a hundred yards along the road under Doctor Eckleburg's persistent stare. The only building in sight was a small block of yellow brick sitting on the edge of the waste land, a sort of compact Main Street ministering to it and contiguous to absolutely nothing. One of the three shops it contained was for rent and another was an all-night restaurant approached by a trail of ashes; the third was a garage—Repairs. GEORGE B. WILSON. Cars Bought and Sold—and I followed Tom inside.

The interior was unprosperous and bare; the only car visible was the dust-covered wreck of a Ford which crouched in a dim corner. It had occurred to me that this shadow of a garage must be a blind and that sumptuous and romantic apartments were concealed overhead when the proprietor himself appeared in the door of an office, wiping his hands on a piece of waste. He was a blonde, spiritless man, anaemic, and faintly handsome. When he saw us a damp gleam of hope sprang into his light blue eyes.

"Hello, Wilson, old man," said Tom, slapping him jovially on the shoulder. "How's business?"

"I can't complain," answered Wilson unconvincingly. "When are you going to sell me that car?"

"Next week; I've got my man working on it now."

"Works pretty slow, don't he?"

"No, he doesn't," said Tom coldly. "And if you feel that way about it, maybe I'd better sell it somewhere else after all."

"I don't mean that," explained Wilson quickly. "I just meant——"

His voice faded off and Tom glanced impatiently around the garage. Then I heard footsteps on a stairs and in a moment the thickish figure of a woman blocked out the light from the office door. She was in the middle thirties, and faintly stout, but she carried her surplus flesh sensuously as some women can. Her face, above a spotted dress of dark blue crepe-de-chine,

contained no facet or gleam of beauty but there was an immediately perceptible vitality about her as if the nerves of her body were continually smouldering. She smiled slowly and walking through her husband as if he were a ghost shook hands with Tom, looking him flush in the eye. Then she wet her lips and without turning around spoke to her husband in a soft, coarse voice:

"Get some chairs, why don't you, so somebody can sit down."

"Oh, sure," agreed Wilson hurriedly and went toward the little office, mingling immediately with the cement color of the walls. A white ashen dust veiled his dark suit and his pale hair as it veiled everything in the vicinity—except his wife, who moved close to Tom.

"I want to see you," said Tom intently. "Get on the next train."

"All right."

"I'll meet you by the news-stand on the lower level."

She nodded and moved away from him just as George Wilson emerged with two chairs from his office door.

We waited for her down the road and out of sight. It was a few days before the Fourth of July, and a grey, scrawny Italian child was setting torpedoes in a row along the railroad track.

"Terrible place, isn't it," said Tom, exchanging a frown with Doctor Eckleburg.

"Awful."

"It does her good to get away."

"Doesn't her husband object?"

"Wilson? He thinks she goes to see her sister in New York. He's so dumb he doesn't know he's alive."

So Tom Buchanan and his girl and I went up together to New York—or not quite together, for Mrs. Wilson sat discreetly in another car. Tom deferred that much to the sensibilities of those East Eggers who might be on the train.

She had changed her dress to a brown figured muslin which stretched tight over her rather wide hips as Tom helped her to the platform in New York. At the news-stand she bought a copy of "Town Tattle" and a moving-picture magazine and, in the station drug store, some cold cream and a small flask of perfume. Upstairs, in the solemn echoing drive she let four taxi cabs drive away before she selected a new one, lavender-colored with grey upholstery, and in this we slid out from the mass of the station into the glowing sunshine. But immediately she turned sharply from the window and leaning forward tapped on the front glass.

"I want to get one of those dogs," she said earnestly. "I want to get one for the apartment. They're nice to have—a dog."

We backed up to a grey old man who bore an absurd resemblance to John D. Rockefeller. In a basket, swung from his neck, cowered a dozen very recent puppies of an indeterminate breed.

"What kind are they?" asked Mrs. Wilson eagerly as he came to the taxi-window.

"All kinds. What kind do you want, lady?"

"I'd like to get one of those police dogs; I don't suppose you got that kind?"

The man peered doubtfully into the basket, plunged in his hand and drew one up, wriggling, by the back of the neck.

"That's no police dog," said Tom.

"No, it's not exactly a police dog," said the man with disappointment in his voice. "It's more of an airedale." He passed his hand over the brown wash-rag of a back. "Look at that coat. Some coat. That's a dog that'll never bother you with catching cold."

"I think it's cute," said Mrs. Wilson enthusiastically. "How much is it?"

"That dog?" He looked at it admiringly. "That dog will cost you ten dollars."

The airedale—undoubtedly there was an airedale concerned in it somewhere though its feet were startlingly white—changed hands and settled down into Mrs. Wilson's lap, where she fondled the weather-proof coat with rapture.

"Is it a boy or a girl?" she asked delicately.

"That dog? That dog's a boy."

"It's a bitch," said Tom decisively. "Here's your money. Go and buy ten more dogs with it."

We drove over to Fifth Avenue, so warm and soft, almost pastoral, on the summer Sunday afternoon that I wouldn't have been surprised to see a great flock of white sheep turn the corner.

"Hold on," I said, "I have to leave you here."

"No, you don't," interposed Tom quickly. "Myrtle'll be hurt if you don't come up to the apartment. Won't you, Myrtle?"

"Come on," she urged. "I'll telephone my sister Catherine. She's said to be very beautiful by people who ought to know."

"Well, I'd like to, but——"

We went on, cutting back again over the Park toward the West Hundreds. At 158th Street the cab stopped at one slice in a long white cake of apartment houses. Throwing a regal homecoming glance around the neighborhood, Mrs. Wilson gathered up her dog and her other purchases and went haughtily in.

"I'm going to have the McKees come up," she announced as we rose in the elevator. "And of course I got to call up my sister, too."

The apartment was on the top floor—a small living room, a small dining room, a small bedroom and a bath. The living room was crowded to the doors

with a set of tapestried furniture entirely too large for it so that to move about was to stumble continually over scenes of ladies swinging in the gardens of Versailles. The only picture was an over-enlarged photograph, apparently a hen sitting on a blurred rock. Looked at from a distance however the hen resolved itself into a bonnet and the countenance of a stout old lady beamed down into the room. Several old copies of "Town Tattle" lay on the table together with a copy of "Simon Called Peter" and some of the small scandal magazines of Broadway. Mrs. Wilson was first concerned with the dog. A reluctant elevator boy went for a box full of straw and some milk to which he added on his own initiative a tin of large hard dog biscuits—one of which decomposed apathetically in the saucer of milk all afternoon. Meanwhile Tom brought out a bottle of whiskey from a locked bureau door.

I have been drunk just twice in my life and the second time was that afternoon so everything that happened has a dim hazy cast over it although until after eight o'clock the apartment was full of cheerful sun. Sitting on Tom's lap Mrs. Wilson called up several people on the telephone; then there were no cigarettes and I went out to buy some at the drug store on the corner. When I came back they had disappeared so I sat down discreetly in the living room and read a chapter of "Simon Called Peter"—either it was terrible stuff or the whiskey distorted things because it didn't make any sense to me.

Just as Tom and Myrtle—after the first drink Mrs. Wilson and I called each other by our first names—reappeared, company commenced to arrive at the apartment door.

The sister, Catherine, was a slender, worldly girl of about thirty with a solid sticky bob of red hair and a complexion powdered milky white. Her

eyebrows had been plucked and then drawn on again at a more rakish angle but the efforts of nature toward the restoration of the old alignment gave a blurred air to her face. When she moved about there was an incessant clicking as innumerable pottery bracelets jingled up and down upon her arms. She came in with such a proprietary haste and looked around so possessively at the furniture that I wondered if she lived here. But when I asked her she laughed immoderately, repeated my question aloud and told me she lived with a girl friend at a hotel.

Mr. McKee was a pale feminine man from the flat below. He had just shaved for there was a white spot of lather on his cheekbone and he was most respectful in his greeting to everyone in the room. He informed me that he was in the "artistic game" and I gathered later that he was a photographer and had made the dim enlargement of Mrs. Wilson's mother which hovered like an ectoplasm on the wall. His wife was shrill, languid, handsome and horrible. She told me with pride that her husband had photographed her a hundred and twenty-seven times since they had been married.

Mrs. Wilson had changed her costume some time before and was now attired in an elaborate afternoon dress of cream colored chiffon, which gave out a continual rustle as she swept about the room. With the influence of the dress her personality had also undergone a change. The intense vitality that had been so remarkable in the garage was converted into impressive hauteur. Her laughter, her gestures, her assertions became more violently affected moment by moment and as she expanded the room grew smaller around her until she seemed to be revolving on a noisy, creaking pivot through the smoky air.

"My dear," she told her sister in a high mincing shout, "most of these fellas will cheat you every time. All they think of is money. I had a woman up here last week to look at my feet and when she gave me the bill you'd of thought she had my appendicitus out."

"What was the name of the woman?" asked Mrs. McKee.

"Mrs. Eberhardt. She goes around looking at people's feet in their own homes."

"I like your dress," remarked Mrs. McKee, "I think it's adorable."

Mrs. Wilson rejected the compliment by raising her eyebrow in disdain.

"It's just a crazy old thing," she said. "I just slip it on sometimes when I don't care what I look like."

"But it looks wonderful on you, if you know what I mean," pursued Mrs. McKee. "If Chester could only get you in that pose I think he could make something of it."

We all looked in silence at Mrs. Wilson who removed a strand of hair from over her eyes and looked back at us with a brilliant smile. Mr. McKee regarded her intently with his head on one side and then moved his hand back and forth slowly in front of his face.

"I should change the light," he said after a moment. "I'd like to bring out the modelling of the features. And I'd try to get hold of all the back hair."

"I wouldn't think of changing the light," cried Mrs. McKee. "I think it's

——"

Her husband said "Sh! " and we all looked at the subject again whereupon Tom Buchanan yawned audibly and got to his feet.

"You McKees have something to drink," he said. "Get some more ice and mineral water, Myrtle, before everybody goes to sleep."

"I told that boy about the ice." Myrtle raised her eyebrows in despair at the shiftlessness of the lower orders. "These people! You have to keep after them all the time."

She looked at me and laughed pointlessly. Then she flounced over to the dog, kissed it with ecstasy and swept into the kitchen, implying that a dozen chefs awaited her orders there.

"I've done some nice things out on Long Island," asserted Mr. McKee.

Tom looked at him blankly.

"Two of them we have framed downstairs."

"Two what?" demanded Tom.

"Two studies. One of them I call 'Montauk Point—the Gulls,' and the other I call 'Montauk Point—the Sea.' "

The sister Catherine sat down beside me on the couch.

"Do you live down on Long Island, too?" she inquired.

"I live at West Egg."

"Really? I was down there at a party about a month ago. At a man named Gatsby's. Do you know him?"

"I live next door to him."

"Well, they say he's a nephew or a cousin of Kaiser Wilhelm's. That's where all his money comes from."

"Really?"

She nodded.

"I'm scared of him. I'd hate to have him get anything on me."

This absorbing information about my neighbor was interrupted by Mrs. McKee's pointing suddenly at Catherine:

"Chester, I think you could do something with her," she broke out, but Mr. McKee only nodded in a bored way and turned his attention to Tom.

"I'd like to do more work on Long Island if I could get the entry. All I ask is that they should give me a start."

"Ask Myrtle," said Tom, breaking into a short shout of laughter as Mrs. Wilson entered with a tray. "She'll give you a letter of introduction, won't you, Myrtle?"

"Do what?" she asked, startled.

"You'll give McKee a letter of introduction to your husband, so he can do some studies of him." His lips moved silently for a moment as he invented. " 'George B. Wilson at the Gasoline Pump,' or something like that."

Catherine leaned close to me and whispered in my ear: "Neither of them can stand the person they're married to."

"Can't they?"

"Can't stand them." She looked at Myrtle and then at Tom. "What I say is, why go on living with them if they can't stand them? If I was them I'd get a divorce and get married to each other right away."

Doesn't she like Wilson either?"

The answer to this was unexpected. It came from Myrtle who had overheard the question and it was violent and obscene.

"You see?" cried Catherine triumphantly. She lowered her voice again. "It's really his wife that's keeping them apart. She's a Catholic and they don't believe in divorce."

Daisy was not a Catholic and I was a little shocked at the elaborateness of the lie.

"When they do get married," continued Catherine, "they're going west to live for a while until it blows over."

"It'd be more discreet to go to Europe."

"Oh, do you like Europe?" she exclaimed surprisingly. "I just got back from Monte Carlo."

"Really."

"Just last year. I went over there with another girl."

"Stay long?"

"No, we just went to Monte Carlo and back. We went by way of Marseilles. We had over twelve hundred dollars when we started but we got gypped out of it all in two days in the private rooms. We had an awful time getting back, I can tell you. God, how I hated that town!"

The late afternoon sky bloomed in the window for a moment like the blue honey of the Mediterranean—then the shrill voice of Mrs. McKee called me back into the room.

"I almost made a mistake, too," she declared vigorously. "I almost married a little kyke who'd been after me for years. I knew he was below me. Everybody kept saying to me: 'Lucille, that man's way below you!' But if I hadn't met Chester, he'd of got me sure."

"Yes, but listen," said Myrtle Wilson, nodding her head up and down, "at least you didn't marry him."

"I know I didn't."

"Well, I married him," said Myrtle, ambiguously. "And that's the difference between your case and mine."

"Why did you, Myrtle?" demanded Catherine. "Nobody forced you to."

Myrtle considered.

"I married him because I thought he was a gentleman," she said finally. "I thought he knew something about breeding, but he wasn't fit to lick my shoe."

"You were crazy about him for a while," said Catherine.

"Crazy about him!" cried Myrtle incredulously. "Who said I was crazy about him? I never was any more crazy about him than I was about that man there."

She pointed suddenly at me, and every one looked at me accusingly. I tried to show by my expression that I had played no part in her past.

"The only crazy I was was when I married him. I knew right away I made a mistake. He borrowed somebody's best suit to get married in and never even told me about it, and the man came after it one day when he was out. She looked around to see who was listening: " 'Oh, is that your suit?' I said. 'This is the first I ever heard about it.' But I gave it to him and then I lay down and cried to beat the band all afternoon."

"She really ought to get away from him," resumed Catherine to me. "They've been living over that garage for eleven years. And Tom's the first sweetie she ever had."

The bottle of whiskey—a second one—was now in constant demand by all present, excepting Catherine who "felt just as good on nothing at all."

Tom rang for the janitor and sent him for some celebrated sandwiches, which were a complete supper in themselves. I wanted to get out and walk eastward toward the park through the soft twilight but each time I tried to go I became entangled in some wild strident argument which pulled me back, as if with ropes, into my chair. Yet high over the city our line of yellow windows must have contributed their share of human secrecy to the casual watcher in the darkening streets, and I was him too, looking up and wondering. I was within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life.

Myrtle pulled her chair close to mine, and suddenly her warm breath poured over me the story of her first meeting with Tom.

"It was on the two little seats facing each other that are always the last ones left on the train. I was going up to New York to see my sister and spend the night. He had on a dress suit and patent leather shoes and I couldn't keep my eyes off him but every time he looked at me I had to pretend to be looking at the advertisement over his head. When we came into the station he was next to me and his white shirt-front pressed against my arm—and so I told him I'd have to call a policeman, but he knew I lied. I was so excited that when I got into a taxi with him I didn't hardly know I wasn't getting into a subway train. All I kept thinking about, over and over, was 'You can't live forever, you can't live forever.' "

She turned to Mrs. McKee and the room rang full of her artificial laughter.

"My dear," she cried, "I'm going to give you this dress as soon as I'm

through with it. I've got to get another one tomorrow. I'm going to make a list of all the things I've got to get. A massage and a wave and a collar for the dog and one of those cute little ash-trays where you touch a spring, and a wreath with a black silk bow for mother's grave that'll last all summer. I got to write down a list so I won't forget all the things I got to do."

It was nine o'clock—almost immediately afterward I looked at my watch and found it was ten. Mr. McKee was asleep on a chair with his fists clenched in his lap, like a photograph of a man of action. Taking out my handkerchief I wiped from his cheek the remains of the spot of dried lather that had worried me all the afternoon.

The little dog was sitting on the table looking with blind eyes through the smoke and from time to time groaning faintly. People disappeared, reappeared, made plans to go somewhere, and then lost each other, searched for each other, found each other a few feet away. Some time toward midnight Tom Buchanan and Mrs. Wilson stood face to face discussing in impassioned voices whether Mrs. Wilson had any right to mention Daisy's name.

"Daisy! Daisy! Daisy!" shouted Mrs. Wilson. "I'll say it whenever I want to! Daisy! Dai——"

Making a short deft movement Tom Buchanan broke her nose with his open hand.

Then there were bloody towels upon the bathroom floor, and women's voices scolding, and high over the confusion a long broken wail of pain. Mr. McKee awoke from his doze and started in a daze toward the door. When he

had gone half way he turned around and stared at the scene—his wife and Catherine scolding and consoling as they stumbled here and there among the crowded furniture with articles of aid, and the despairing figure on the couch bleeding fluently and trying to spread a copy of "Town Tattle" over the tapestry scenes of Versailles. Then Mr. McKee turned and continued on out the door. Taking my hat from the chandelier I followed.

"Come to lunch some day," he suggested, as we groaned down in the elevator.

"Where?"

"Anywhere."

"Keep your hands off the lever," snapped the elevator boy.

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. McKee with dignity, "I didn't know I was touching it."

"All right," I agreed, "I'll be glad to."

I was standing beside his bed and he was sitting up between the sheets, clad in his underwear, with a great portfolio in his hands.

"Beauty and the Beast...Loneliness...Old Grocery Horse...Brook'n Bridge...."

Then I was lying half asleep in the cold lower level of the Pennsylvania Station, staring at the morning "Tribune" and waiting for the four o'clock train.

Chapter 3

There was music from my neighbor's house through the summer nights. In his blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars. At high tide in the afternoon I watched his guests diving from the tower of his raft or taking the sun on the hot sand of his beach while his two motor-boats slit the waters of the Sound, drawing aquaplanes over cataracts of foam. On week-ends his Rolls-Royce became an omnibus, bearing parties to and from the city, between nine in the morning and long past midnight, while his station wagon scampered like a brisk yellow bug to meet all trains. And on Mondays eight servants including an extra gardener toiled all day with mops and scrubbing-brushes and hammers and garden-shears, repairing the ravages of the night before.

Every Friday five crates of oranges and lemons arrived from a fruiterer in New York—every Monday these same oranges and lemons left his back door in a pyramid of pulpless halves. There was a machine in the kitchen which could extract the juice of two hundred oranges in half an hour, if a little button was pressed two hundred times by a butler's thumb.

At least once a fortnight a corps of caterers came down with several hundred feet of canvas and enough colored lights to make a Christmas tree of Gatsby's enormous garden. On buffet tables, garnished with glistening hors-d'oeuvre, spiced baked hams crowded against salads of harlequin designs and pastry pigs and turkeys bewitched to a dark gold. In the main hall a bar with a

real brass rail was set up, and stocked with gins and liquors and with cordials so long forgotten that most of his female guests were too young to know one from another.

By seven o'clock the orchestra has arrived—no thin five-piece affair but a whole pitful of oboes and trombones and saxophones and viols and cornets and piccolos and low and high drums. The last swimmers have come in from the beach now and are dressing upstairs; the cars from New York are parked five deep in the drive, and already the halls and salons and verandas are gaudy with primary colors and hair shorn in strange new ways and shawls beyond the dreams of Castile. The bar is in full swing and floating rounds of cocktails permeate the garden outside until the air is alive with chatter and laughter and casual innuendo and introductions forgotten on the spot and enthusiastic meetings between women who never knew each other's names.

The lights grow brighter as the earth lurches away from the sun and now the orchestra is playing yellow cocktail music and the opera of voices pitches a key higher. Laughter is easier, minute by minute, spilled with prodigality, tipped out at a cheerful word. The groups change more swiftly, swell with new arrivals, dissolve and form in the same breath—already there are wanderers, confident girls who weave here and there among the stouter and more stable, become for a sharp, joyous moment the center of a group and then excited with triumph glide on through the sea-change of faces and voices and color under the constantly changing light.

Suddenly one of these gypsies in trembling opal, seizes a cocktail out of the air, dumps it down for courage and moving her hands like Frisco dances out alone on the canvas platform. A momentary hush; the orchestra leader

varies his rhythm obligingly for her and there is a burst of chatter as the erroneous news goes around that she is Gilda Gray's understudy from the "Follies." The party has begun.

I believe that on the first night I went to Gatsby's house I was one of the few guests who had actually been invited. People were not invited—they went there. They got into automobiles which bore them out to Long Island and somehow they ended up at Gatsby's door. Once there they were introduced by somebody who knew Gatsby and after that they conducted themselves according to the rules of behavior associated with amusement parks. Sometimes they came and went without having met Gatsby at all, came for the party with a simplicity of heart that was its own ticket of admission.

I had been actually invited. A chauffeur in a uniform of robin's egg blue crossed my lawn early that Saturday morning with a surprisingly formal note from his employer—the honor would be entirely Gatsby's, it said, if I would attend his "little party" that night. He had seen me several times and had intended to call on me long before but a peculiar combination of circumstances had prevented it—signed Jay Gatsby in a majestic hand.

Dressed up in white flannels I went over to his lawn a little after seven and wandered around rather ill-at-ease among swirls and eddies of people I didn't know—though here and there was a face I had noticed on the commuting train. I was immediately struck by the number of young Englishmen dotted about; all well dressed, all looking a little hungry and all talking in low earnest voices to solid and prosperous Americans. I was sure that they were selling something: bonds or insurance or automobiles. They

were, at least, agonizingly aware of the easy money in the vicinity and convinced that it was theirs for a few words in the right key.

As soon as I arrived I made an attempt to find my host but the two or three people of whom I asked his whereabouts stared at me in such an amazed way and denied so vehemently any knowledge of his movements that I slunk off in the direction of the cocktail table—the only place in the garden where a single man could linger without looking purposeless and alone.

I was on my way to get roaring drunk from sheer embarrassment when Jordan Baker came out of the house and stood at the head of the marble steps, leaning a little backward and looking with contemptuous interest down into the garden.

Welcome or not, I found it necessary to attach myself to someone before I should begin to address cordial remarks to the passers-by.

"Hello!" I roared, advancing toward her. My voice seemed unnaturally loud across the garden.

"I thought you might be here," she responded absently as I came up. "I remembered you lived next door to——"

She held my hand impersonally, as a promise that she'd take care of me in a minute, and gave ear to two girls in twin yellow dresses who stopped at the foot of the steps.

"Hello!" they cried together. "Sorry you didn't win."

That was for the golf tournament. She had lost in the finals the week

before.

"You don't know who we are," said one of the girls in yellow, "but we met you here about a month ago."

"You've dyed your hair since then," remarked Jordan, and I started but the girls had moved casually on and her remark was addressed to the premature moon, produced like the supper, no doubt, out of a caterer's basket. With Jordan's slender golden arm resting in mine we descended the steps and sauntered about the garden. A tray of cocktails floated at us through the twilight and we sat down at a table with the two girls in yellow and three men, each one introduced to us as Mr. Mumble.

"Do you come to these parties often?" inquired Jordan of the girl beside her.

"The last one was the one I met you at," answered the girl, in an alert, confident voice. She turned to her companion: "Wasn't it for you, Lucille?"

It was for Lucille, too.

"I like to come," Lucille said. "I never care what I do, so I always have a good time. When I was here last I tore my gown on a chair, and he asked me my name and address—inside of a week I got a package from Croirier's with a new evening gown in it."

"Did you keep it?" asked Jordan.

"Sure I did. I was going to wear it tonight, but it was too big in the bust and had to be altered. It was gas blue with lavender beads. Two hundred and

sixty-five dollars."

"There's something funny about a fellow that'll do a thing like that," said the other girl eagerly. "He doesn't want any trouble with anybody."

"Who doesn't?" I inquired.

"Gatsby. Somebody told me——"

The two girls and Jordan leaned together confidentially.

"Somebody told me they thought he killed a man once."

A thrill passed over all of us. The three Mr. Mumbles bent forward and listened eagerly.

"I don't think it's so much that," argued Lucille skeptically; "it's more that he was a German spy during the war."

One of the men nodded in confirmation.

"I heard that from a man who knew all about him, grew up with him in Germany," he assured us positively.

"Oh, no," said the first girl, "it couldn't be that, because he was in the American army during the war." As our credulity switched back to her she leaned forward with enthusiasm. "You look at him sometimes when he thinks nobody's looking at him. I'll bet he killed a man."

She narrowed her eyes and shivered. Lucille shivered. We all turned and looked around for Gatsby. It was testimony to the romantic speculation he

inspired that there were whispers about him from those who found little that it was necessary to whisper about in this world.

The first supper—there would be another one after midnight—was now being served, and Jordan invited me to join her own party who were spread around a table on the other side of the garden. There were three married couples and Jordan's escort, a persistent undergraduate given to violent innuendo and obviously under the impression that sooner or later Jordan was going to yield him up her person to a greater or lesser degree. Instead of rambling this party had preserved a dignified homogeneity, and assumed to itself the function of representing the staid nobility of the countryside—East Egg condescending to West Egg, and carefully on guard against its spectroscopic gayety.

"Let's get out," whispered Jordan, after a somehow wasteful and inappropriate half hour. "This is much too polite for me."

We got up, and she explained that we were going to find the host—I had never met him, she said, and it was making me uneasy. The undergraduate nodded in a cynical, melancholy way.

The bar, where we glanced first, was crowded but Gatsby was not there. She couldn't find him from the top of the steps, and he wasn't on the veranda. On a chance we tried an important-looking door, and walked into a high Gothic library, panelled with carved English oak, and probably transported complete from some ruin overseas.

A stout, middle-aged man with enormous owl-eyed spectacles was

sitting somewhat drunk on the edge of a great table, staring with unsteady concentration at the shelves of books. As we entered he wheeled excitedly around and examined Jordan from head to foot.

"What do you think?" he demanded impetuously.

"About what?"

He waved his hand toward the book-shelves.

"About that. As a matter of fact you needn't bother to ascertain. I ascertained. They're real."

"The books?"

He nodded.

"Absolutely real—have pages and everything. I thought they'd be a nice durable cardboard. Matter of fact, they're absolutely real. Pages and—Here! Let me show you."

Taking our skepticism for granted, he rushed to the bookcases and returned with Volume One of the "Stoddard Lectures."

"See!" he cried triumphantly. "It's a bona fide piece of printed matter. It fooled me. This fella's a regular Belasco. It's a triumph. What thoroughness! What realism! Knew when to stop too—didn't cut the pages. But what do you want? What do you expect?"

He snatched the book from me and replaced it hastily on its shelf

muttering that if one brick was removed the whole library was liable to collapse.

"Who brought you?" he demanded. "Or did you just come? I was brought. Most people were brought."

Jordan looked at him alertly, cheerfully without answering.

"I was brought by a woman named Roosevelt," he continued. "Mrs. Claud Roosevelt. Do you know her? I met her somewhere last night. I've been drunk for about a week now, and I thought it might sober me up to sit in a library."

"Has it?"

"A little bit, I think. I can't tell yet. I've only been here an hour. Did I tell you about the books? They're real. They're——"

"You told us."

We shook hands with him gravely and went back outdoors.

There was dancing now on the canvas in the garden, old men pushing young girls backward in eternal graceless circles, superior couples holding each other tortuously, fashionably and keeping in the corners—and a great number of single girls dancing individualistically or relieving the orchestra for a moment of the burden of the banjo or the traps. By midnight the hilarity had increased. A celebrated tenor had sung in Italian and a notorious contralto had sung in jazz and between the numbers people were doing "stunts" all over the garden, while happy vacuous bursts of laughter rose

toward the summer sky. A pair of stage "twins"—who turned out to be the girls in yellow—did a baby act in costume and champagne was served in glasses bigger than finger bowls. The moon had risen higher, and floating in the Sound was a triangle of silver scales, trembling a little to the stiff, tinny drip of the banjoes on the lawn.

I was still with Jordan Baker. We were sitting at a table with a man of about my age and a rowdy little girl who gave way upon the slightest provocation to uncontrollable laughter. I was enjoying myself now. I had taken two finger bowls of champagne and the scene had changed before my eyes into something significant, elemental and profound.

At a lull in the entertainment the man looked at me and smiled.

"Your face is familiar," he said, politely. "Weren't you in the Third Division during the war?"

"Why, yes. I was in the Ninth Machine-Gun Battalion."

"I was in the Seventh Infantry Battalion until June nineteen-eighteen. I knew I'd seen you somewhere before."

We talked for a moment about some wet, grey little villages in France. Evidently he lived in this vicinity for he told me that he had just bought a hydroplane and was going to try it out in the morning.

"Want to go with me, old sport? Just near the shore along the Sound."

"What time?"

"Any time that suits you best."

It was on the tip of my tongue to ask his name when Jordan looked around and smiled.

"Having a gay time now?" she inquired.

"Much better." I turned again to my new acquaintance. "This is an unusual party for me. I haven't even seen the host. I live over there——" I waved my hand at the invisible hedge in the distance, "and this man Gatsby sent over his chauffeur with an invitation."

For a moment he looked at me as if he failed to understand.

"I'm Gatsby," he said suddenly.

"What!" I exclaimed. "Oh, I beg your pardon."

"I thought you knew, old sport. I'm afraid I'm not a very good host."

He smiled understandingly—much more than understandingly. It was one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it, that you may come across four or five times in life. It faced—or seemed to face—the whole external world for an instant, and then concentrated on you with an irresistible prejudice in your favor. It understood you just so far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself and assured you that it had precisely the impression of you that, at your best, you hoped to convey. Precisely at that point it vanished—and I was looking at an elegant young rough-neck, a year or two over thirty, whose elaborate formality of speech just missed being absurd. Some time before he

introduced himself I'd got a strong impression that he was picking his words with care.

Almost at the moment when Mr. Gatsby identified himself a butler hurried toward him with the information that Chicago was calling him on the wire. He excused himself with a small bow that included each of us in turn.

"If you want anything just ask for it, old sport," he urged me. "Excuse me. I will rejoin you later."

When he was gone I turned immediately to Jordan—constrained to assure her of my surprise. I had expected that Mr. Gatsby would be a florid and corpulent person in his middle years.

"Who is he?" I demanded. "Do you know?"

"He's just a man named Gatsby."

"Where is he from, I mean? And what does he do?"

"Now you're started on the subject," she answered with a wan smile. "Well,—he told me once he was an Oxford man."

A dim background started to take shape behind him but at her next remark it faded away.

"However, I don't believe it."

"Why not?"

"I don't know," she insisted, "I just don't think he went there."

Something in her tone reminded me of the other girl's "I think he killed a man," and had the effect of stimulating my curiosity. I would have accepted without question the information that Gatsby sprang from the swamps of Louisiana or from the lower East Side of New York. That was comprehensible. But young men didn't—at least in my provincial inexperience I believed they didn't—drift coolly out of nowhere and buy a palace on Long Island Sound.

"Anyhow he gives large parties," said Jordan, changing the subject with an urbane distaste for the concrete. "And I like large parties. They're so intimate. At small parties there isn't any privacy."

There was the boom of a bass drum, and the voice of the orchestra leader rang out suddenly above the echolalia of the garden.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he cried. "At the request of Mr. Gatsby we are going to play for you Mr. Vladimir Tostoff's latest work which attracted so much attention at Carnegie Hall last May. If you read the papers you know there was a big sensation." He smiled with jovial condescension and added "Some sensation!" whereupon everybody laughed.

"The piece is known," he concluded lustily, "as 'Vladimir Tostoff's Jazz History of the World.' "

The nature of Mr. Tostoff's composition eluded me, because just as it began my eyes fell on Gatsby, standing alone on the marble steps and looking from one group to another with approving eyes. His tanned skin was drawn attractively tight on his face and his short hair looked as though it were

trimmed every day. I could see nothing sinister about him. I wondered if the fact that he was not drinking helped to set him off from his guests, for it seemed to me that he grew more correct as the fraternal hilarity increased. When the "Jazz History of the World" was over girls were putting their heads on men's shoulders in a puppyish, convivial way, girls were swooning backward playfully into men's arms, even into groups knowing that some one would arrest their falls—but no one swooned backward on Gatsby and no French bob touched Gatsby's shoulder and no singing quartets were formed with Gatsby's head for one link.

"I beg your pardon."

Gatsby's butler was suddenly standing beside us.

"Miss Baker?" he inquired. "I beg your pardon but Mr. Gatsby would like to speak to you alone."

"With me?" she exclaimed in surprise.

"Yes, madame."

She got up slowly, raising her eyebrows at me in astonishment, and followed the butler toward the house. I noticed that she wore her evening dress, all her dresses, like sports clothes—there was a jauntiness about her movements as if she had first learned to walk upon golf courses on clean, crisp mornings.

I was alone and it was almost two. For some time confused and intriguing sounds had issued from a long many-windowed room which

overhung the terrace. Eluding Jordan's undergraduate who was now engaged in an obstetrical conversation with two chorus girls, and who implored me to join him, I went inside.

The large room was full of people. One of the girls in yellow was playing the piano and beside her stood a tall, red haired young lady from a famous chorus, engaged in song. She had drunk a quantity of champagne and during the course of her song she had decided ineptly that everything was very very sad—she was not only singing, she was weeping too. Whenever there was a pause in the song she filled it with gasping broken sobs and then took up the lyric again in a quavering soprano. The tears coursed down her cheeks—not freely, however, for when they came into contact with her heavily beaded eyelashes they assumed an inky color, and pursued the rest of their way in slow black rivulets. A humorous suggestion was made that she sing the notes on her face whereupon she threw up her hands, sank into a chair and went off into a deep vinous sleep.

"She had a fight with a man who says he's her husband," explained a girl at my elbow.

I looked around. Most of the remaining women were now having fights with men said to be their husbands. Even Jordan's party, the quartet from East Egg, were rent asunder by dissension. One of the men was talking with curious intensity to a young actress, and his wife after attempting to laugh at the situation in a dignified and indifferent way broke down entirely and resorted to flank attacks—at intervals she appeared suddenly at his side like an angry diamond, and hissed "You promised!" into his ear.

The reluctance to go home was not confined to wayward men. The hall was at present occupied by two deplorably sober men and their highly indignant wives. The wives were sympathizing with each other in slightly raised voices.

"Whenever he sees I'm having a good time he wants to go home."

"Never heard anything so selfish in my life."

"We're always the first ones to leave."

"So are we."

"Well, we're almost the last tonight," said one of the men sheepishly. "The orchestra left half an hour ago."

In spite of the wives' agreement that such malevolence was beyond credibility, the dispute ended in a short struggle, and both wives were lifted kicking into the night.

As I waited for my hat in the hall the door of the library opened and Jordan Baker and Gatsby came out together. He was saying some last word to her but the eagerness in his manner tightened abruptly into formality as several people approached him to say goodbye.

Jordan's party were calling impatiently to her from the porch but she lingered for a moment to shake hands.

"I've just heard the most amazing thing," she whispered. "How long were we in there?"

"Why,—about an hour."

"It was—simply amazing," she repeated abstractedly. "But I swore I wouldn't tell it and here I am tantalizing you." She yawned gracefully in my face. "Please come and see me.... Phone book.... Under the name of Mrs. Sigourney Howard.... My aunt...." She was hurrying off as she talked—her brown hand waved a jaunty salute as she melted into her party at the door.

Rather ashamed that on my first appearance I had stayed so late, I joined the last of Gatsby's guests who were clustered around him. I wanted to explain that I'd hunted for him early in the evening and to apologize for not having known him in the garden.

"Don't mention it," he enjoined me eagerly. "Don't give it another thought, old sport." The familiar expression held no more familiarity than the hand which reassuringly brushed my shoulder. "And don't forget we're going up in the hydroplane tomorrow morning at nine o'clock."

Then the butler, behind his shoulder:

"Philadelphia wants you on the phone, sir."

"All right, in a minute. Tell them I'll be right there.... good night."

"Good night."

"Good night." He smiled—and suddenly there seemed to be a pleasant significance in having been among the last to go, as if he had desired it all the time. "Good night, old sport.... Good night."

But as I walked down the steps I saw that the evening was not quite over. Fifty feet from the door a dozen headlights illuminated a bizarre and tumultuous scene. In the ditch beside the road, right side up but violently shorn of one wheel, rested a new coupé which had left Gatsby's drive not two minutes before. The sharp jut of a wall accounted for the detachment of the wheel which was now getting considerable attention from half a dozen curious chauffeurs. However, as they had left their cars blocking the road a harsh discordant din from those in the rear had been audible for some time and added to the already violent confusion of the scene.

A man in a long duster had dismounted from the wreck and now stood in the middle of the road, looking from the car to the tire and from the tire to the observers in a pleasant, puzzled way.

"See!" he explained. "It went in the ditch."

The fact was infinitely astonishing to him—and I recognized first the unusual quality of wonder and then the man—it was the late patron of Gatsby's library.

"How'd it happen?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"I know nothing whatever about mechanics," he said decisively.

"But how did it happen? Did you run into the wall?"

"Don't ask me," said Owl Eyes, washing his hands of the whole matter. "I know very little about driving—next to nothing. It happened, and that's all

I know."

"Well, if you're a poor driver you oughtn't to try driving at night."

"But I wasn't even trying," he explained indignantly, "I wasn't even trying."

An awed hush fell upon the bystanders.

"Do you want to commit suicide?"

"You're lucky it was just a wheel! A bad driver and not even trying!"

"You don't understand," explained the criminal. "I wasn't driving. There's another man in the car."

The shock that followed this declaration found voice in a sustained "Ah-h-h!" as the door of the coupé swung slowly open. The crowd—it was now a crowd—stepped back involuntarily and when the door had opened wide there was a ghostly pause. Then, very gradually, part by part, a pale dangling individual stepped out of the wreck, pawing tentatively at the ground with a large uncertain dancing shoe.

Blinded by the glare of the headlights and confused by the incessant groaning of the horns the apparition stood swaying for a moment before he perceived the man in the duster.

"Wha's matter?" he inquired calmly. "Did we run out of gas?"

"Look!"

Half a dozen fingers pointed at the amputated wheel—he stared at it for a moment and then looked upward as though he suspected that it had dropped from the sky.

"It came off," some one explained.

He nodded.

"At first I din' notice we'd stopped."

A pause. Then, taking a long breath and straightening his shoulders he remarked in a determined voice:

"Wonder'ff tell me where there's a gas'line station?"

At least a dozen men, some of them little better off than he was, explained to him that wheel and car were no longer joined by any physical bond.

"Back out," he suggested after a moment. "Put her in reverse."

"But the wheel's off!"

He hesitated.

"No harm in trying," he said.

The caterwauling horns had reached a crescendo and I turned away and cut across the lawn toward home. I glanced back once. A wafer of a moon was shining over Gatsby's house, making the night fine as before and surviving the laughter and the sound of his still glowing garden. A sudden

emptiness seemed to flow now from the windows and the great doors, endowing with complete isolation the figure of the host who stood on the porch, his hand up in a formal gesture of farewell.

Reading over what I have written so far I see I have given the impression that the events of three nights several weeks apart were all that absorbed me. On the contrary they were merely casual events in a crowded summer and, until much later, they absorbed me infinitely less than my personal affairs.

Most of the time I worked. In the early morning the sun threw my shadow westward as I hurried down the white chasms of lower New York to the Probity Trust. I knew the other clerks and young bond-salesmen by their first names and lunched with them in dark crowded restaurants on little pig sausages and mashed potatoes and coffee. I even had a short affair with a girl who lived in Jersey City and worked in the accounting department, but her brother began throwing mean looks in my direction so when she went on her vacation in July I let it blow quietly away.

I took dinner usually at the Yale Club—for some reason it was the gloomiest event of my day—and then I went upstairs to the library and studied investments and securities for a conscientious hour. There were generally a few rioters around but they never came into the library so it was a good place to work. After that, if the night was mellow I strolled down Madison Avenue past the old Murray Hill Hotel and over Thirty-third Street to the Pennsylvania Station.

I began to like New York, the racy, adventurous feel of it at night and

the satisfaction that the constant flicker of men and women and machines gives to the restless eye. I liked to walk up Fifth Avenue and pick out romantic women from the crowd and imagine that in a few minutes I was going to enter into their lives, and no one would ever know or disapprove. Sometimes, in my mind, I followed them to their apartments on the corners of hidden streets, and they turned and smiled back at me before they faded through a door into warm darkness. At the enchanted metropolitan twilight I felt a haunting loneliness sometimes, and felt it in others—poor young clerks who loitered in front of windows waiting until it was time for a solitary restaurant dinner—young clerks in the dusk, wasting the most poignant moments of night and life.

Again at eight o'clock, when the dark lanes of the Forties were five deep with throbbing taxi cabs, bound for the theatre district, I felt a sinking in my heart. Forms leaned together in the taxis as they waited, and voices sang, and there was laughter from unheard jokes, and lighted cigarettes outlined unintelligible gestures inside. Imagining that I, too, was hurrying toward gayety and sharing their intimate excitement, I wished them well.

For a while I lost sight of Jordan Baker, and then in midsummer I found her again. At first I was flattered to go places with her because she was a golf champion and every one knew her name. Then it was something more. I wasn't actually in love, but I felt a sort of tender curiosity. The bored haughty face that she turned to the world concealed something—most affectations conceal something eventually, even though they don't in the beginning—and one day I found what it was. When we were on a house-party together up in Warwick, she left a borrowed car out in the rain with the top down, and then

lied about it—and suddenly I remembered the story about her that had eluded me that night at Daisy's. At her first big golf tournament there was a row that nearly reached the newspapers—a suggestion that she had moved her ball from a bad lie in the semi-final round. The thing approached the proportions of a scandal—then died away. A caddy retracted his statement and the only other witness admitted that he might have been mistaken. The incident and the name had remained together in my mind.

Jordan Baker instinctively avoided clever shrewd men and now I saw that this was because she felt safer on a plane where any divergence from a code would be thought impossible. She was incurably dishonest. She wasn't able to endure being at a disadvantage, and given this unwillingness I suppose she had begun dealing in subterfuges when she was very young in order to keep that cool, insolent smile turned to the world and yet satisfy the demands of her hard jaunty body.

It made no difference to me. Dishonesty in a woman is a thing you never blame deeply—I was casually sorry, and then I forgot. It was on that same house party that we had a curious conversation about driving a car. It started because she passed so close to some workmen that our fender flicked a button on one man's coat.

"You're a rotten driver," I protested. "Either you ought to be more careful or you oughtn't to drive at all."

"I am careful."

"No, you're not."

"Well, other people are," she said lightly.

"What's that got to do with it?"

"They'll keep out of my way," she insisted. "It takes two to make an accident."

"Suppose you met somebody just as careless as yourself."

"I hope I never will," she answered. "I hate careless people. That's why I like you."

Her grey, sun-strained eyes stared straight ahead, but she had deliberately shifted our relations, and for a moment I thought I loved her. But I am slow-thinking and full of interior rules that act as brakes on my desires, and I knew that first I had to get myself definitely out of that tangle back home. I'd been writing letters once a week and signing them: "Love, Nick," and all I could think of was how, when that certain girl played tennis, a faint mustache of perspiration appeared on her upper lip. Nevertheless there was a vague understanding that had to be tactfully broken off before I was free.

Every one suspects himself of at least one of the cardinal virtues, and this is mine: I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known.

Chapter 4

On Sunday morning while church bells rang in the villages along shore the world and its mistress returned to Gatsby's house and twinkled hilariously on his lawn.

"He's a bootlegger," said the young ladies, moving somewhere between his cocktails and his flowers. "One time he killed a man who had found out that he was nephew to von Hindenburg and second cousin to the devil. Reach me a rose, honey, and pour me a last drop into that there crystal glass."

Once I wrote down on the empty spaces of a time-table the names of those who came to Gatsby's house that summer. It is an old time-table now, disintegrating at its folds and headed "This schedule in effect July 5th, 1922." But I can still read the grey names and they will give you a better impression than my generalities of those who accepted Gatsby's hospitality and paid him the subtle tribute of knowing nothing whatever about him.

From East Egg, then, came the Chester Beckers and the Leeches and a man named Bunsen whom I knew at Yale and Doctor Webster Civet who was drowned last summer up in Maine. And the Hornbeams and the Willie Voltaires and a whole clan named Blackbuck who always gathered in a corner and flipped up their noses like goats at whosoever came near. And the Ismays and the Chrysties (or rather Hubert Auerbach and Mr. Chrystie's wife) and Edgar Beaver, whose hair they say turned cotton-white one winter

afternoon for no good reason at all.

Clarence Endive was from East Egg, as I remember. He came only once, in white knickerbockers, and had a fight with a bum named Etty in the garden. From farther out on the Island came the Cheadles and the O. R. P. Schraeders and the Stonewall Jackson Abrams of Georgia and the Fishguards and the Ripley Snells. Snell was there three days before he went to the penitentiary, so drunk out on the gravel drive that Mrs. Ulysses Swett's automobile ran over his right hand. The Dancies came too and S. B. Whitebait, who was well over sixty, and Maurice A. Flink and the Hammerheads and Beluga the tobacco importer and Beluga's girls.

From West Egg came the Poles and the Mulreadys and Cecil Roebuck and Cecil Schoen and Gulick the state senator and Newton Orchid who controlled Films Par Excellence and Eckhaust and Clyde Cohen and Don S. Schwartz (the son) and Arthur McCarty, all connected with the movies in one way or another. And the Catlips and the Bembergs and G. Earl Muldoon, brother to that Muldoon who afterward strangled his wife. Da Fontano the promoter came there, and Ed Legros and James B. ("Rot-Gut") Ferret and the De Jongs and Ernest Lilly—they came to gamble and when Ferret wandered into the garden it meant he was cleaned out and Associated Traction would have to fluctuate profitably next day.

A man named Klipspringer was there so often and so long that he became known as "the boarder"—I doubt if he had any other home. Of theatrical people there were Gus Waize and Horace O'Donovan and Lester Meyer and George Duckweed and Francis Bull. Also from New York were the Chromes and the Backhyssons and the Dennickers and Russel Betty and

the Corriganes and the Kellehers and the Dewars and the Scullys and S. W. Belcher and the Smirkes and the young Quinns, divorced now, and Henry L. Palmetto who killed himself by jumping in front of a subway train in Times Square.

Benny McClenahan arrived always with four girls. They were never quite the same ones in physical person but they were so identical one with another that it inevitably seemed they had been there before. I have forgotten their names—Jaqueline, I think, or else Consuela or Gloria or Judy or June, and their last names were either the melodious names of flowers and months or the sterner ones of the great American capitalists whose cousins, if pressed, they would confess themselves to be.

In addition to all these I can remember that Faustina O'Brien came there at least once and the Baedeker girls and young Brewer who had his nose shot off in the war and Mr. Albrucksburger and Miss Haag, his fiancée, and Ardita Fitz-Peters, and Mr. P. Jewett, once head of the American Legion, and Miss Claudia Hip with a man reputed to be her chauffeur, and a prince of something whom we called Duke and whose name, if I ever knew it, I have forgotten.

All these people came to Gatsby's house in the summer.

At nine o'clock, one morning late in July Gatsby's gorgeous car lurched up the rocky drive to my door and gave out a burst of melody from its three noted horn. It was the first time he had called on me though I had gone to two of his parties, mounted in his hydroplane, and, at his urgent invitation, made frequent use of his beach.

"Good morning, old sport. You're having lunch with me today and I thought we'd ride up together."

He was balancing himself on the dashboard of his car with that resourcefulness of movement that is so peculiarly American—that comes, I suppose, with the absence of lifting work or rigid sitting in youth and, even more, with the formless grace of our nervous, sporadic games. This quality was continually breaking through his punctilious manner in the shape of restlessness. He was never quite still; there was always a tapping foot somewhere or the impatient opening and closing of a hand.

He saw me looking with admiration at his car.

"It's pretty, isn't it, old sport." He jumped off to give me a better view. "Haven't you ever seen it before?"

I'd seen it. Everybody had seen it. It was a rich cream color, bright with nickel, swollen here and there in its monstrous length with triumphant hatboxes and supper-boxes and tool-boxes, and terraced with a labyrinth of windshields that mirrored a dozen suns. Sitting down behind many layers of glass in a sort of green leather conservatory we started to town.

I had talked with him perhaps half a dozen times in the past month and found, to my disappointment, that he had little to say. So my first impression, that he was a person of some undefined consequence, had gradually faded and he had become simply the proprietor of an elaborate roadhouse next door.

And then came that disconcerting ride. We hadn't reached West Egg

village before Gatsby began leaving his elegant sentences unfinished and slapping himself indecisively on the knee of his caramel-colored suit.

"Look here, old sport," he broke out surprisingly. "What's your opinion of me, anyhow?"

A little overwhelmed, I began the generalized evasions which that question deserves.

"Well, I'm going to tell you something about my life," he interrupted. "I don't want you to get a wrong idea of me from all these stories you hear."

So he was aware of the bizarre accusations that flavored conversation in his halls.

"I'll tell you God's truth." His right hand suddenly ordered divine retribution to stand by. "I am the son of some wealthy people in the middle-west—all dead now. I was brought up in America but educated at Oxford because all my ancestors have been educated there for many years. It is a family tradition."

He looked at me sideways—and I knew why Jordan Baker had believed he was lying. He hurried the phrase "educated at Oxford," or swallowed it or choked on it as though it had bothered him before. And with this doubt his whole statement fell to pieces and I wondered if there wasn't something a little sinister about him after all.

"What part of the middle-west?" I inquired casually.

"San Francisco."

"I see."

"My family all died and I came into a good deal of money."

His voice was solemn as if the memory of that sudden extinction of a clan still haunted him. For a moment I suspected that he was pulling my leg but a glance at him convinced me otherwise.

"After that I lived like a young rajah in all the capitals of Europe—Paris, Venice, Rome—collecting jewels, chiefly rubies, hunting big game, painting a little, things for myself only, and trying to forget something very sad that had happened to me long ago."

With an effort I managed to restrain my incredulous laughter. The very phrases were worn so threadbare that they evoked no image except that of a turbaned "character" leaking sawdust at every pore as he pursued a tiger through the Bois de Boulogne.

"Then came the war, old sport. It was a great relief and I tried very hard to die but I seemed to bear an enchanted life. I accepted a commission as first lieutenant when it began. In the Argonne Forest I took two machine-gun detachments so far forward that there was a half mile gap on either side of us where the infantry couldn't advance. We stayed there two days and two nights, a hundred and thirty men with sixteen Lewis guns, and when the infantry came up at last they found the insignia of three German divisions among the piles of dead. I was promoted to be a major and every Allied government gave me a decoration—even Montenegro, little Montenegro down on the Adriatic Sea!"

Little Montenegro! He lifted up the words and nodded at them—with his smile. The smile comprehended Montenegro's troubled history and sympathized with the brave struggles of the Montenegrin people. It appreciated fully the chain of national circumstances which had elicited this tribute from Montenegro's warm little heart. My incredulity was submerged in fascination now; it was like skimming hastily through a dozen magazines.

He reached in his pocket and a piece of metal, slung on a ribbon, fell into my palm.

"That's the one from Montenegro."

To my astonishment, the thing had an authentic look.

Orderi di Danilo, ran the circular legend, Montenegro, Nicolas Rex.

"Turn it."

Major Jay Gatsby, I read, For Valour Extraordinary.

"Here's another thing I always carry. A souvenir of Oxford days. It was taken in Trinity Quad—the man on my left is now the Earl of Dorchester."

It was a photograph of half a dozen young men in blazers loafing in an archway through which were visible a host of spires. There was Gatsby, looking a little, not much, younger—with a cricket bat in his hand.

Then it was all true. I saw the skins of tigers flaming in his palace on the Grand Canal; I saw him opening a chest of rubies to ease, with their crimson-lighted depths, the gnawings of his broken heart.

"I'm going to make a big request of you today," he said, pocketing his souvenirs with satisfaction, "so I thought you ought to know something about me. I didn't want you to think I was just some nobody. You see, I usually find myself among strangers because I drift here and there trying to forget the sad thing that happened to me." He hesitated. "You'll hear about it this afternoon."

"At lunch?"

"No, this afternoon. I happened to find out that you're taking Miss Baker to tea."

"Do you mean you're in love with Miss Baker?"

"No, old sport, I'm not. But Miss Baker has kindly consented to speak to you about this matter."

I hadn't the faintest idea what "this matter" was, but I was more annoyed than interested. I hadn't asked Jordan to tea in order to discuss Mr. Jay Gatsby. I was sure the request would be something utterly fantastic and for a moment I was sorry I'd ever set foot upon his overpopulated lawn.

He wouldn't say another word. His correctness grew on him as we neared the city. We passed Port Roosevelt, where there was a glimpse of red-belted ocean-going ships, and sped along a cobbled slum lined with the dark, undeserted saloons of the faded gilt nineteen-hundreds. Then the valley of ashes opened out on both sides of us, and I had a glimpse of Mrs. Wilson straining at the garage pump with panting vitality as we went by.

With fenders spread like wings we scattered light through half Astoria—only half, for as we twisted among the pillars of the elevated I heard the familiar "jug—jug—spat!" of a motor cycle, and a frantic policeman rode alongside.

"All right, old sport," called Gatsby. We slowed down. Taking a white card from his wallet he waved it before the man's eyes.

"Right you are," agreed the policeman, tipping his cap. "Know you next time, Mr. Gatsby. Excuse me!"

"What was that?" I inquired. "The picture of Oxford?"

"I was able to do the commissioner a favor once, and he sends me a Christmas card every year."

Over the great bridge, with the sunlight through the girders making a constant flicker upon the moving cars, with the city rising up across the river in white heaps and sugar lumps all built with a wish out of non-olfactory money. The city seen from the Queensboro Bridge is always the city seen for the first time, in its first wild promise of all the mystery and the beauty in the world.

A dead man passed us in a hearse heaped with blooms, followed by two carriages with drawn blinds and by more cheerful carriages for friends. The friends looked out at us with the tragic eyes and short upper lips of southeastern Europe, and I was glad that the sight of Gatsby's splendid car was included in their somber holiday. As we crossed Blackwell's Island a limousine passed us, driven by a white chauffeur, in which sat three modish

Negroes, two bucks and a girl. I laughed aloud as the yolks of their eyeballs rolled toward us in haughty rivalry.

"Anything can happen now that we've slid over this bridge," I thought, "anything at all...."

Even Gatsby could happen, without any particular wonder.

Roaring noon. In a well-fanned Forty-second Street cellar I met Gatsby for lunch. Blinking away the brightness of the street outside my eyes picked him out obscurely in the anteroom, talking to another man.

"Mr. Carraway this is my friend Mr. Wolfshiem."

A small, flat-nosed Jew raised his large head and regarded me with two fine growths of hair which luxuriated in either nostril. After a moment I discovered his tiny eyes in the half darkness.

"—So I took one look at him—" said Mr. Wolfshiem, shaking my hand earnestly, "—and what do you think I did?"

"What?" I inquired politely.

But evidently he was not addressing me for he dropped my hand and covered Gatsby with his expressive nose.

"I handed the money to Katspaugh and I sid, 'All right, Katspaugh, don't pay him a penny till he shuts his mouth.' He shut it then and there."

Gatsby took an arm of each of us and moved forward into the restaurant

whereupon Mr. Wolfshiem swallowed a new sentence he was starting and lapsed into a somnambulatory abstraction.

"Highballs?" asked the head waiter.

"This is a nice restaurant here," said Mr. Wolfshiem looking at the Presbyterian nymphs on the ceiling. "But I like across the street better!"

"Yes, highballs," agreed Gatsby, and then to Mr. Wolfshiem: "It's too hot over there."

"Hot and small—yes," said Mr. Wolfshiem, "but full of memories."

"What place is that?" I asked.

"The old Metropole.

"The old Metropole," brooded Mr. Wolfshiem gloomily. "Filled with faces dead and gone. Filled with friends gone now forever. I can't forget so long as I live the night they shot Rosy Rosenthal there. It was six of us at the table and Rosy had eat and drunk a lot all evening. When it was almost morning the waiter came up to him with a funny look and says somebody wants to speak to him outside. 'All right,' says Rosy and begins to get up and I pulled him down in his chair.

" 'Let the bastards come in here if they want you, Rosy, but don't you, so help me, move outside this room.'

"It was four o'clock in the morning then, and if we'd of raised the blinds we'd of seen daylight."

"Did he go?" I asked innocently.

"Sure he went,"—Mr. Wolfshiem's nose flashed at me indignantly—"He turned around in the door and says, 'Don't let that waiter take away my coffee!' Then he went out on the sidewalk and they shot him three times in his full belly and drove away."

"Four of them were electrocuted," I said, remembering.

"Five with Becker." His nostrils turned to me in an interested way. "I understand you're looking for a business connection."

The juxtaposition of these two remarks was startling. Gatsby answered for me:

"Oh, no," he exclaimed, "this isn't the man!"

"No?" Mr. Wolfshiem seemed disappointed.

"This is just a friend. I told you we'd talk about that some other time."

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. Wolfshiem, "I had a wrong man."

A succulent hash arrived, and Mr. Wolfshiem, forgetting the more sentimental atmosphere of the old Metropole, began to eat with ferocious delicacy. His eyes, meanwhile, roved very slowly all around the room—he completed the arc by turning to inspect the people directly behind. I think that, except for my presence, he would have taken one short glance beneath our own table.

"Look here, old sport," said Gatsby, leaning toward me, "I'm afraid I made you a little angry this morning in the car."

There was the smile again, but this time I held out against it.

"I don't like mysteries," I answered. "And I don't understand why you won't come out frankly and tell me what you want. Why has it all got to come through Miss Baker?"

"Oh, it's nothing underhand," he assured me. "Miss Baker's a great sportswoman, you know, and she'd never do anything that wasn't all right."

Suddenly he looked at his watch, jumped up and hurried from the room leaving me with Mr. Wolfshiem at the table.

"He has to telephone," said Mr. Wolfshiem, following him with his eyes. "Fine fellow, isn't he? Handsome to look at and a perfect gentleman."

"Yes."

"He's an Oggsford man."

"Oh!"

"He went to Oggsford College in England. You know Oggsford College?"

"I've heard of it."

"It's one of the most famous colleges in the world."

"Have you known Gatsby for a long time?" I inquired.

"Several years," he answered in a gratified way. "I made the pleasure of his acquaintance just after the war. But I knew I had discovered a man of fine breeding after I talked with him an hour. I said to myself: 'There's the kind of man you'd like to take home and introduce to your mother and sister.' " He paused. "I see you're looking at my cuff buttons."

I hadn't been looking at them, but I did now. They were composed of oddly familiar pieces of ivory.

"Finest specimens of human molars," he informed me.

"Well!" I inspected them. "That's a very interesting idea."

"Yeah." He flipped his sleeves up under his coat. "Yeah, Gatsby's very careful about women. He would never so much as look at a friend's wife."

When the subject of this instinctive trust returned to the table and sat down Mr. Wolfshiem drank his coffee with a jerk and got to his feet.

"I have enjoyed my lunch," he said, "and I'm going to run off from you two young men before I outstay my welcome."

"Don't hurry, Meyer," said Gatsby, without enthusiasm. Mr. Wolfshiem raised his hand in a sort of benediction.

"You're very polite but I belong to another generation," he announced solemnly. "You sit here and discuss your sports and your young ladies and your——" He supplied an imaginary noun with another wave of his hand

—"As for me, I am fifty years old, and I won't impose myself on you any longer."

As he shook hands and turned away his tragic nose was trembling. I wondered if I had said anything to offend him.

"He becomes very sentimental sometimes," explained Gatsby. "This is one of his sentimental days. He's quite a character around New York—a denizen of Broadway."

"Who is he anyhow—an actor?"

"No."

"A dentist?"

"Meyer Wolfshiem? No, he's a gambler." Gatsby hesitated, then added coolly: "He's the man who fixed the World's Series back in 1919."

"Fixed the World's Series?" I repeated.

The idea staggered me. I remembered of course that the World's Series had been fixed in 1919 but if I had thought of it at all I would have thought of it as a thing that merely happened, the end of some inevitable chain. It never occurred to me that one man could start to play with the faith of fifty million people—with the single-mindedness of a burglar blowing a safe.

"How did he happen to do that?" I asked after a minute.

"He just saw the opportunity."

"Why isn't he in jail?"

"They can't get him, old sport. He's a smart man."

I insisted on paying the check. As the waiter brought my change I caught sight of Tom Buchanan across the crowded room.

"Come along with me for a minute," I said. "I've got to say hello to someone."

When he saw us Tom jumped up and took half a dozen steps in our direction.

"Where've you been?" he demanded eagerly. "Daisy's furious because you haven't called up."

"This is Mr. Gatsby, Mr. Buchanan."

They shook hands briefly and a strained, unfamiliar look of embarrassment came over Gatsby's face.

"How've you been, anyhow?" demanded Tom of me. "How'd you happen to come up this far to eat?"

"I've been having lunch with Mr. Gatsby."

I turned toward Mr. Gatsby, but he was no longer there.

One October day in nineteen-seventeen——(said Jordan Baker that afternoon, sitting up very straight on a straight chair in the tea-garden at the Plaza Hotel) —I was walking along from one place to another half on the

sidewalks and half on the lawns. I was happier on the lawns because I had on shoes from England with rubber nobs on the soles that bit into the soft ground. I had on a new plaid skirt also that blew a little in the wind and whenever this happened the red, white and blue banners in front of all the houses stretched out stiff and said tut-tut-tut-tut in a disapproving way.

The largest of the banners and the largest of the lawns belonged to Daisy Fay's house. She was just eighteen, two years older than me, and by far the most popular of all the young girls in Louisville. She dressed in white, and had a little white roadster and all day long the telephone rang in her house and excited young officers from Camp Taylor demanded the privilege of monopolizing her that night, "anyways, for an hour!"

When I came opposite her house that morning her white roadster was beside the curb, and she was sitting in it with a lieutenant I had never seen before. They were so engrossed in each other that she didn't see me until I was five feet away.

"Hello Jordan," she called unexpectedly. "Please come here."

I was flattered that she wanted to speak to me, because of all the older girls I admired her most. She asked me if I was going to the Red Cross and make bandages. I was. Well, then, would I tell them that she couldn't come that day? The officer looked at Daisy while she was speaking, in a way that every young girl wants to be looked at sometime, and because it seemed romantic to me I have remembered the incident ever since. His name was Jay Gatsby and I didn't lay eyes on him again for over four years—even after I'd met him on Long Island I didn't realize it was the same man.

That was nineteen-seventeen. By the next year I had a few beaux myself, and I began to play in tournaments, so I didn't see Daisy very often. She went with a slightly older crowd—when she went with anyone at all. Wild rumors were circulating about her—how her mother had found her packing her bag one winter night to go to New York and say goodbye to a soldier who was going overseas. She was effectually prevented, but she wasn't on speaking terms with her family for several weeks. After that she didn't play around with the soldiers any more but only with a few flat-footed, short-sighted young men in town who couldn't get into the army at all.

By the next autumn she was gay again, gay as ever. She had a debut after the Armistice, and in February she was presumably engaged to a man from New Orleans. In June she married Tom Buchanan of Chicago with more pomp and circumstance than Louisville ever knew before. He came down with a hundred people in four private cars and hired a whole floor of the Seelbach Hotel, and the day before the wedding he gave her a string of pearls valued at three hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

I was bridesmaid. I came into her room half an hour before the bridal dinner, and found her lying on her bed as lovely as the June night in her flowered dress—and as drunk as a monkey. She had a bottle of sauterne in one hand and a letter in the other.

" 'Gratulate me," she muttered. "Never had a drink before but oh, how I do enjoy it."

"What's the matter, Daisy?"

I was scared, I can tell you; I'd never seen a girl like that before.

"Here, dearis." She groped around in a waste-basket she had with her on the bed and pulled out the string of pearls. "Take 'em downstairs and give 'em back to whoever they belong to. Tell 'em all Daisy's change' her mind. Say 'Daisy's change' her mind!'."

She began to cry—she cried and cried. I rushed out and found her mother's maid and we locked the door and got her into a cold bath. She wouldn't let go of the letter. She took it into the tub with her and squeezed it up into a wet ball, and only let me leave it in the soap dish when she saw that it was coming to pieces like snow.

But she didn't say another word. We gave her spirits of ammonia and put ice on her forehead and hooked her back into her dress and half an hour later when we walked out of the room the pearls were around her neck and the incident was over. Next day at five o'clock she married Tom Buchanan without so much as a shiver and started off on a three months' trip to the South Seas.

I saw them in Santa Barbara when they came back and I thought I'd never seen a girl so mad about her husband. If he left the room for a minute she'd look around uneasily and say "Where's Tom gone?" and wear the most abstracted expression until she saw him coming in the door. She used to sit on the sand with his head in her lap by the hour rubbing her fingers over his eyes and looking at him with unfathomable delight. It was touching to see them together—it made you laugh in a hushed, fascinated way. That was in August. A week after I left Santa Barbara Tom ran into a wagon on the

Ventura road one night and ripped a front wheel off his car. The girl who was with him got into the papers too because her arm was broken—she was one of the chambermaids in the Santa Barbara Hotel.

The next April Daisy had her little girl and they went to France for a year. I saw them one spring in Cannes and later in and then they came back to Chicago to settle down. Daisy was popular in Chicago, as you know. They moved with a fast crowd, all of them young and rich and wild, but she came out with an absolutely perfect reputation. Perhaps because she doesn't drink. It's a great advantage not to drink among hard-drinking people. You can hold your tongue and, moreover, you can time any little irregularity of your own so that everybody else is so blind that they don't see or care. Perhaps Daisy never went in for amour at all—and yet there's something in that voice of hers....

Well, about six weeks ago, she heard the name Gatsby for the first time in years. It was when I asked you—do you remember?—if you knew Gatsby in West Egg. After you had gone home she came into my room and woke me up, and said "What Gatsby?" and when I described him—I was half asleep—she said in the strangest voice that it must be the man she used to know. It wasn't until then that I connected this Gatsby with the officer in her white car.

When Jordan Baker had finished telling all this we had left the Plaza for half an hour and were driving in a Victoria through Central Park. The sun had gone down behind the tall apartments of the movie stars in the West Fifties and the clear voices of girls, already gathered like crickets on the grass, rose through the hot twilight:

I'm the Sheik of Araby,

Your love belongs to me.

At night when you're are asleep,

Into your tent I'll creep——

"It was a strange coincidence," I said.

"But it wasn't a coincidence at all."

"Why not?"

"Gatsby bought that house so that Daisy would be just across the bay."

Then it had not been merely the stars to which he had aspired on that June night. He came alive to me, delivered suddenly from the womb of his purposeless splendor.

"He wants to know——" continued Jordan "—if you'll invite Daisy to your house some afternoon and then let him come over."

The modesty of the demand shook me. He had waited five years and bought a mansion where he dispensed starlight to casual moths so that he could "come over" some afternoon to a stranger's garden.

"Did I have to know all this before he could ask such a little thing?"

"He's afraid. He's waited so long. He thought you might be offended. You see he's a regular tough underneath it all."

Something worried me.

"Why didn't he ask you to arrange a meeting?"

"He wants her to see his house," she explained. "And your house is right next door."

"Oh!"

"I think he half expected her to wander into one of his parties, some night," went on Jordan, "but she never did. Then he began asking people casually if they knew her, and I was the first one he found. It was that night he sent for me at his dance, and you should have heard the elaborate way he worked up to it. Of course, I immediately suggested a luncheon in New York—and I thought he'd go mad:

" 'I don't want to do anything out of the way!' he kept saying. 'I want to see her right next door.'

"When I said you were a particular friend of Tom's he started to abandon the whole idea. He doesn't know very much about Tom, though he says he's read a Chicago paper for years just on the chance of catching a glimpse of Daisy's name."

It was dark now, and as we dipped under a little bridge I put my arm around Jordan's golden shoulder and drew her toward me and asked her to dinner. Suddenly I wasn't thinking of Daisy and Gatsby any more but of this clean, hard, limited person who dealt in universal skepticism and who leaned back jauntily just within the circle of my arm. A phrase began to beat in my

ears with a sort of heady excitement: "There are only the pursued, the pursuing, the busy and the tired."

"And Daisy ought to have something in her life," murmured Jordan to me.

"Does she want to see Gatsby?"

"She's not to know about it. Gatsby doesn't want her to know. You're just supposed to invite her to tea."

We passed a barrier of dark trees, and then the facade of Fifty-ninth Street, a block of delicate pale light, beamed down into the park. Unlike Gatsby and Tom Buchanan I had no girl whose disembodied face floated along the dark cornices and blinding signs and so I drew up the girl beside me, tightening my arms. Her wan, scornful mouth smiled and so I drew her up again, closer, this time to my face.

Chapter 5

When I came home to West Egg that night I was afraid for a moment that my house was on fire. Two o'clock and the whole corner of the peninsula was blazing with light which fell unreal on the shrubbery and made thin elongating glints upon the roadside wires. Turning a corner I saw that it was Gatsby's house, lit from tower to cellar.

At first I thought it was another party, a wild rout that had resolved itself into "hide-and-go-seek" or "sardines-in-the-box" with all the house thrown open to the game. But there wasn't a sound. Only wind in the trees which blew the wires and made the lights go off and on again as if the house had winked into the darkness. As my taxi groaned away I saw Gatsby walking toward me across his lawn.

"Your place looks like the world's fair," I said.

"Does it?" He turned his eyes toward it absently. "I have been glancing into some of the rooms. Let's go to Coney Island, old sport. In my car."

"It's too late."

"Well, suppose we take a plunge in the swimming pool? I haven't made use of it all summer."

"I've got to go to bed."

"All right."

He waited, looking at me with suppressed eagerness.

"I talked with Miss Baker," I said after a moment. "I'm going to call up Daisy tomorrow and invite her over here to tea."

"Oh, that's all right," he said carelessly. "I don't want to put you to any trouble."

"What day would suit you?"

"What day would suit you?" he corrected me quickly. "I don't want to put you to any trouble, you see."

"How about the day after tomorrow?"

He considered for a moment. Then, with reluctance: "I want to get the grass cut," he said.

We both looked at the grass—there was a sharp line where my ragged lawn ended and the darker, well-kept expanse of his began. I suspected that he meant my grass.

"There's another little thing," he said uncertainly, and hesitated.

"Would you rather put it off for a few days?" I asked.

"Oh, it isn't about that. At least——" He fumbled with a series of beginnings. "Why, I thought—why, look here, old sport, you don't make much money, do you?"

"Not very much."

This seemed to reassure him and he continued more confidently.

"I thought you didn't, if you'll pardon my—you see, I carry on a little business on the side, a sort of sideline, you understand. And I thought that if you don't make very much—You're selling bonds, aren't you, old sport?"

"Trying to."

"Well, this would interest you. It wouldn't take up much of your time and you might pick up a nice bit of money. It happens to be a rather confidential sort of thing."

I realize now that under different circumstances that conversation might have been one of the crises of my life. But, because the offer was obviously and tactlessly for a service to be rendered, I had no choice except to cut him off there.

"I've got my hands full," I said. "I'm much obliged but I couldn't take on any more work."

"You wouldn't have to do any business with Wolfshiem." Evidently he thought that I was shying away from the "gonnegtion" mentioned at lunch, but I assured him he was wrong. He waited a moment longer, hoping I'd begin a conversation, but I was too absorbed to be responsive, so he went unwillingly home.

The evening had made me light-headed and happy; I think I walked into a deep sleep as I entered my front door. So I didn't know whether or not

Gatsby went to Coney Island or for how many hours he "glanced into rooms" while his house blazed gaudily on. I called up Daisy from the office next morning and invited her to come to tea.

"Don't bring Tom," I warned her.

"What?"

"Don't bring Tom."

"Who is 'Tom'?" she asked innocently.

The day agreed upon was pouring rain. At eleven o'clock a man in a raincoat dragging a lawn-mower tapped at my front door and said that Mr. Gatsby had sent him over to cut my grass. This reminded me that I had forgotten to tell my Finn to come back so I drove into West Egg Village to search for her among soggy white-washed alleys and to buy some cups and lemons and flowers.

The flowers were unnecessary, for at two o'clock a greenhouse arrived from Gatsby's, with innumerable receptacles to contain it. An hour later the front door opened nervously, and Gatsby in a white flannel suit, silver shirt and gold-colored tie hurried in. He was pale and there were dark signs of sleeplessness beneath his eyes.

"Is everything all right?" he asked immediately.

"The grass looks fine, if that's what you mean."

"What grass?" he inquired blankly. "Oh, the grass in the yard." He

looked out the window at it, but judging from his expression I don't believe he saw a thing.

"Looks very good," he remarked vaguely. "One of the papers said they thought the rain would stop about four. I think it was 'The Journal.' Have you got everything you need in the shape of—of tea?"

I took him into the pantry where he looked a little reproachfully at the Finn. Together we scrutinized the twelve lemon cakes from the delicatessen shop.

"Will they do?" I asked.

"Of course, of course! They're fine!" and he added hollowly, "...old sport."

The rain cooled about half-past three to a damp mist through which occasional thin drops swam like dew. Gatsby looked with vacant eyes through a copy of Clay's "Economics," starting at the Finnish tread that shook the kitchen floor and peering toward the bleared windows from time to time as if a series of invisible but alarming happenings were taking place outside. Finally he got up and informed me in an uncertain voice that he was going home.

"Why's that?"

"Nobody's coming to tea. It's too late!" He looked at his watch as if there was some pressing demand on his time elsewhere. "I can't wait all day."

"Don't be silly; it's just two minutes to four."

He sat down, miserably, as if I had pushed him, and simultaneously there was the sound of a motor turning into my lane. We both jumped up and, a little harrowed myself, I went out into the yard.

Under the dripping bare lilac trees a large open car was coming up the drive. It stopped. Daisy's face, tipped sideways beneath a three-cornered lavender hat, looked out at me with a bright ecstatic smile.

"Is this absolutely where you live, my dearest one?"

The exhilarating ripple of her voice was a wild tonic in the rain. I had to follow the sound of it for a moment, up and down, with my ear alone before any words came through. A damp streak of hair lay like a dash of blue paint across her cheek and her hand was wet with glistening drops as I took it to help her from the car.

"Are you in love with me," she said low in my ear. "Or why did I have to come alone?"

"That's the secret of Castle Rackrent. Tell your chauffeur to go far away and spend an hour."

"Come back in an hour, Ferdie." Then in a grave murmur, "His name is Ferdie."

"Does the gasoline affect his nose?"

"I don't think so," she said innocently. "Why?"

We went in. To my overwhelming surprise the living room was deserted.

"Well, that's funny!" I exclaimed.

"What's funny?"

She turned her head as there was a light, dignified knocking at the front door. I went out and opened it. Gatsby, pale as death, with his hands plunged like weights in his coat pockets, was standing in a puddle of water glaring tragically into my eyes.

With his hands still in his coat pockets he stalked by me into the hall, turned sharply as if he were on a wire and disappeared into the living room. It wasn't a bit funny. Aware of the loud beating of my own heart I pulled the door to against the increasing rain.

For half a minute there wasn't a sound. Then from the living room I heard a sort of choking murmur and part of a laugh followed by Daisy's voice on a clear artificial note.

"I certainly am awfully glad to see you again."

A pause; it endured horribly. I had nothing to do in the hall so I went into the room.

Gatsby, his hands still in his pockets, was reclining against the mantelpiece in a strained counterfeit of perfect ease, even of boredom. His head leaned back so far that it rested against the face of a defunct mantelpiece clock and from this position his distraught eyes stared down at Daisy who

was sitting frightened but graceful on the edge of a stiff chair.

"We've met before," muttered Gatsby. His eyes glanced momentarily at me and his lips parted with an abortive attempt at a laugh. Luckily the clock took this moment to tilt dangerously at the pressure of his head, whereupon he turned and caught it with trembling fingers and set it back in place. Then he sat down, rigidly, his elbow on the arm of the sofa and his chin in his hand.

"I'm sorry about the clock," he said.

My own face had now assumed a deep tropical burn. I couldn't muster up a single commonplace out of the thousand in my head.

"It's an old clock," I told them idiotically.

I think we all believed for a moment that it had smashed in pieces on the floor.

"We haven't met for many years," said Daisy, her voice as matter-of-fact as it could ever be.

"Five years next November."

The automatic quality of Gatsby's answer set us all back at least another minute. I had them both on their feet with the desperate suggestion that they help me make tea in the kitchen when the demoniac Finn brought it in on a tray.

Amid the welcome confusion of cups and cakes a certain physical

decency established itself. Gatsby got himself into a shadow and while Daisy and I talked looked conscientiously from one to the other of us with tense unhappy eyes. However, as calmness wasn't an end in itself I made an excuse at the first possible moment and got to my feet.

"Where are you going?" demanded Gatsby in immediate alarm.

"I'll be back."

"I've got to speak to you about something before you go."

He followed me wildly into the kitchen, closed the door and whispered: "Oh, God!" in a miserable way.

"What's the matter?"

"This is a terrible mistake," he said, shaking his head from side to side, "a terrible, terrible mistake."

"You're just embarrassed, that's all," and luckily I added: "Daisy's embarrassed too."

"She's embarrassed?" he repeated incredulously.

"Just as much as you are."

"Don't talk so loud."

"You're acting like a little boy," I broke out impatiently. "Not only that but you're rude. Daisy's sitting in there all alone."

He raised his hand to stop my words, looked at me with unforgettable reproach and opening the door cautiously went back into the other room.

I walked out the back way—just as Gatsby had when he had made his nervous circuit of the house half an hour before—and ran for a huge black knotted tree whose massed leaves made a fabric against the rain. Once more it was pouring and my irregular lawn, well-shaved by Gatsby's gardener, abounded in small muddy swamps and prehistoric marshes. There was nothing to look at from under the tree except Gatsby's enormous house, so I stared at it, like Kant at his church steeple, for half an hour. A brewer had built it early in the "period" craze, a decade before, and there was a story that he'd agreed to pay five years' taxes on all the neighboring cottages if the owners would have their roofs thatched with straw. Perhaps their refusal took the heart out of his plan to Found a Family—he went into an immediate decline. His children sold his house with the black wreath still on the door. Americans, while occasionally willing to be serfs, have always been obstinate about being peasantry.

After half an hour the sun shone again and the grocer's automobile rounded Gatsby's drive with the raw material for his servants' dinner—I felt sure he wouldn't eat a spoonful. A maid began opening the upper windows of his house, appeared momentarily in each, and, leaning from a large central bay, spat meditatively into the garden. It was time I went back. While the rain continued it had seemed like the murmur of their voices, rising and swelling a little, now and the, with gusts of emotion. But in the new silence I felt that silence had fallen within the house too.

I went in—after making every possible noise in the kitchen short of

pushing over the stove—but I don't believe they heard a sound. They were sitting at either end of the couch looking at each other as if some question had been asked or was in the air, and every vestige of embarrassment was gone. Daisy's face was smeared with tears and when I came in she jumped up and began wiping at it with her handkerchief before a mirror. But there was a change in Gatsby that was simply confounding. He literally glowed; without a word or a gesture of exultation a new well-being radiated from him and filled the little room.

"Oh, hello, old sport," he said, as if he hadn't seen me for years. I thought for a moment he was going to shake hands.

"It's stopped raining."

"Has it?" When he realized what I was talking about, that there were twinkle-bells of sunshine in the room, he smiled like a weather man, like an ecstatic patron of recurrent light, and repeated the news to Daisy. "What do you think of that? It's stopped raining."

"I'm glad, Jay." Her throat, full of aching, grieving beauty, told only of her unexpected joy.

"I want you and Daisy to come over to my house," he said, "I'd like to show her around."

"You're sure you want me to come?"

"Absolutely, old sport."

Daisy went upstairs to wash her face—too late I thought with

humiliation of my towels—while Gatsby and I waited on the lawn.

"My house looks well, doesn't it?" he demanded. "See how the whole front of it catches the light."

I agreed that it was splendid.

"Yes." His eyes went over it, every arched door and square tower. "It took me just three years to earn the money that bought it."

"I thought you inherited your money."

"I did, old sport," he said automatically, "but I lost most of it in the big panic—the panic of the war."

I think he hardly knew what he was saying, for when I asked him what business he was in he answered "That's my affair," before he realized that it wasn't the appropriate reply.

"Oh, I've been in several things," he corrected himself. "I was in the drug business and then I was in the oil business. But I'm not in either one now." He looked at me with more attention. "Do you mean you've been thinking over what I proposed the other night?"

Before I could answer, Daisy came out of the house and two rows of brass buttons on her dress gleamed in the sunlight.

"That huge place there?" she cried pointing.

"Do you like it?"

"I love it, but I don't see how you live there all alone."

"I keep it always full of interesting people, night and day. People who do interesting things. Celebrated people."

Instead of taking the short cut along the Sound we went down the road and entered by the big postern. With enchanting murmurs Daisy admired this aspect or that of the feudal silhouette against the sky, admired the gardens, the sparkling odor of jonquils and the frothy odor of hawthorn and plum blossoms and the pale gold odor of kiss-me-at-the-gate. It was strange to reach the marble steps and find no stir of bright dresses in and out the door, and hear no sound but bird voices in the trees.

And inside as we wandered through Marie Antoinette music rooms and Restoration salons I felt that there were guests concealed behind every couch and table, under orders to be breathlessly silent until we had passed through. As Gatsby closed the door of "the Merton College Library" I could have sworn I heard the owl-eyed man break into ghostly laughter.

We went upstairs, through period bedrooms swathed in rose and lavender silk and vivid with new flowers, through dressing rooms and poolrooms, and bathrooms with sunken baths—intruding into one chamber where a dishevelled man in pajamas was doing liver exercises on the floor. It was Mr. Klipspringer, the "boarder." I had seen him wandering hungrily about the beach that morning. Finally we came to Gatsby's own apartment, a bedroom and a bath and an Adam study, where we sat down and drank a glass of some Chartreuse he took from a cupboard in the wall.

He hadn't once ceased looking at Daisy and I think he revalued everything in his house according to the measure of response it drew from her well-loved eyes. Sometimes, too, he stared around at his possessions in a dazed way as though in her actual and astounding presence none of it was any longer real. Once he nearly toppled down a flight of stairs.

His bedroom was the simplest room of all—except where the dresser was garnished with a toilet set of pure dull gold. Daisy took the brush with delight and smoothed her hair, whereupon Gatsby sat down and shaded his eyes and began to laugh.

"It's the funniest thing, old sport," he said hilariously. "I can't—when I try to——"

He had passed visibly through two states and was entering upon a third. After his embarrassment and his unreasoning joy he was consumed with wonder at her presence. He had been full of the idea so long, dreamed it right through to the end, waited with his teeth set, so to speak, at an inconceivable pitch of intensity. Now, in the reaction, he was running down like an overwound clock.

Recovering himself in a minute he opened for us two hulking patent cabinets which held his massed suits and dressing-gowns and ties, and his shirts, piled like bricks in stacks a dozen high.

"I've got a man in England who buys me clothes. He sends over a selection of things at the beginning of each season, spring and fall."

He took out a pile of shirts and began throwing them, one by one before

us, shirts of sheer linen and thick silk and fine flannel which lost their folds as they fell and covered the table in many-colored disarray. While we admired he brought more and the soft rich heap mounted higher—shirts with stripes and scrolls and plaids in coral and apple-green and lavender and faint orange with monograms of Indian blue. Suddenly with a strained sound, Daisy bent her head into the shirts and began to cry stormily.

"They're such beautiful shirts," she sobbed, her voice muffled in the thick folds. "It makes me sad because I've never seen such—such beautiful shirts before."

After the house, we were to see the grounds and the swimming pool, and the hydroplane and the midsummer flowers—but outside Gatsby's window it began to rain again so we stood in a row looking at the corrugated surface of the Sound.

"If it wasn't for the mist we could see your home across the bay," said Gatsby. "You always have a green light that burns all night at the end of your dock."

Daisy put her arm through his abruptly but he seemed absorbed in what he had just said. Possibly it had occurred to him that the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever. Compared to the great distance that had separated him from Daisy it had seemed very near to her, almost touching her. It had seemed as close as a star to the moon. Now it was again a green light on a dock. His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one.

I began to walk about the room, examining various indefinite objects in

the half darkness. A large photograph of an elderly man in yachting costume attracted me, hung on the wall over his desk.

"Who's this?"

"That? That's Mr. Dan Cody, old sport."

The name sounded faintly familiar.

"He's dead now. He used to be my best friend years ago."

There was a small picture of Gatsby, also in yachting costume, on the bureau—Gatsby with his head thrown back defiantly—taken apparently when he was about eighteen.

"I adore it!" exclaimed Daisy. "The pompadour! You never told me you had a pompadour—or a yacht."

"Look at this," said Gatsby quickly. "Here's a lot of clippings—about you."

They stood side by side examining it. I was going to ask to see the rubies when the phone rang and Gatsby took up the receiver.

"Yes.... Well, I can't talk now.... I can't talk now, old sport.... I said a small town.... He must know what a small town is.... Well, he's no use to us if Detroit is his idea of a small town...."

He rang off.

"Come here quick!" cried Daisy at the window.

The rain was still falling, but the darkness had parted in the west, and there was a pink and golden billow of foamy clouds above the sea.

"Look at that," she whispered, and then after a moment: "I'd like to just get one of those pink clouds and put you in it and push you around."

I tried to go then, but they wouldn't hear of it; perhaps my presence made them feel more satisfactorily alone.

"I know what we'll do," said Gatsby, "we'll have Klipspringer play the piano."

He went out of the room calling "Ewing!" and returned in a few minutes accompanied by an embarrassed, slightly worn young man with shell-rimmed glasses and scanty blonde hair. He was now decently clothed in a "sport shirt" open at the neck, sneakers and duck trousers of a nebulous hue.

"Did we interrupt your exercises?" inquired Daisy politely.

"I was asleep," cried Mr. Klipspringer, in a spasm of embarrassment. "That is, I'd been asleep. Then I got up...."

"Klipspringer plays the piano," said Gatsby, cutting him off. "Don't you, Ewing, old sport?"

"I don't play well. I don't—I hardly play at all. I'm all out of prac——"

"We'll go downstairs," interrupted Gatsby. He flipped a switch. The grey windows disappeared as the house glowed full of light.

In the music room Gatsby turned on a solitary lamp beside the piano. He lit Daisy's cigarette from a trembling match, and sat down with her on a couch far across the room where there was no light save what the gleaming floor bounced in from the hall.

When Klipspringer had played "The Love Nest" he turned around on the bench and searched unhappily for Gatsby in the gloom.

"I'm all out of practice, you see. I told you I couldn't play. I'm all out of prac——"

"Don't talk so much, old sport," commanded Gatsby. "Play!"

In the morning,

In the evening,

Ain't we got fun——

Outside the wind was loud and there was a faint flow of thunder along the Sound. All the lights were going on in West Egg now; the electric trains, men-carrying, were plunging home through the rain from New York. It was the hour of a profound human change, and excitement was generating on the air.

One thing's sure and nothing's surer

The rich get richer and the poor get—children.

In the meantime,

In between time——

As I went over to say goodbye I saw that the expression of bewilderment had come back into Gatsby's face, as though a faint doubt had occurred to him as to the quality of his present happiness. Almost five years! There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams—not through her own fault but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything. He had thrown himself into it with a creative passion, adding to it all the time, decking it out with every bright feather that drifted his way. No amount of fire or freshness can challenge what a man will store up in his ghostly heart.

As I watched him he adjusted himself a little, visibly. His hand took hold of hers and as she said something low in his ear he turned toward her with a rush of emotion. I think that voice held him most with its fluctuating, feverish warmth because it couldn't be over-dreamed—that voice was a deathless song.

They had forgotten me, but Daisy glanced up and held out her hand; Gatsby didn't know me now at all. I looked once more at them and they looked back at me, remotely, possessed by intense life. Then I went out of the room and down the marble steps into the rain, leaving them there together.

Chapter 6

About this time an ambitious young reporter from New York arrived one morning at Gatsby's door and asked him if he had anything to say.

"Anything to say about what?" inquired Gatsby politely.

"Why,—any statement to give out."

It transpired after a confused five minutes that the man had heard Gatsby's name around his office in a connection which he either wouldn't reveal or didn't fully understand. This was his day off and with laudable initiative he had hurried out "to see."

It was a random shot, and yet the reporter's instinct was right. Gatsby's notoriety, spread about by the hundreds who had accepted his hospitality and so become authorities on his past, had increased all summer until he fell just short of being news. Contemporary legends such as the "underground pipeline to Canada" attached themselves to him, and there was one persistent story that he didn't live in a house at all, but in a boat that looked like a house and was moved secretly up and down the Long Island shore. Just why these inventions were a source of satisfaction to James Gatz of North Dakota, isn't easy to say.

James Gatz—that was really, or at least legally, his name. He had changed it at the age of seventeen and at the specific moment that witnessed

the beginning of his career—when he saw Dan Cody's yacht drop anchor over the most insidious flat on Lake Superior. It was James Gatz who had been loafing along the beach that afternoon in a torn green jersey and a pair of canvas pants, but it was already Jay Gatsby who borrowed a row-boat, pulled out to the Tuolomee and informed Cody that a wind might catch him and break him up in half an hour.

I suppose he'd had the name ready for a long time, even then. His parents were shiftless and unsuccessful farm people—his imagination had never really accepted them as his parents at all. The truth was that Jay Gatsby, of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic conception of himself. He was a son of God—a phrase which, if it means anything, means just that—and he must be about His Father's Business, the service of a vast, vulgar and meretricious beauty. So he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end.

For over a year he had been beating his way along the south shore of Lake Superior as a clam digger and a salmon fisher or in any other capacity that brought him food and bed. His brown, hardening body lived naturally through the half fierce, half lazy work of the bracing days. He knew women early and since they spoiled him he became contemptuous of them, of young virgins because they were ignorant, of the others because they were hysterical about things which in his overwhelming self-absorption he took for granted.

But his heart was in a constant, turbulent riot. The most grotesque and fantastic conceits haunted him in his bed at night. A universe of ineffable gaudiness spun itself out in his brain while the clock ticked on the wash-stand

and the moon soaked with wet light his tangled clothes upon the floor. Each night he added to the pattern of his fancies until drowsiness closed down upon some vivid scene with an oblivious embrace. For a while these reveries provided an outlet for his imagination; they were a satisfactory hint of the unreality of reality, a promise that the rock of the world was founded securely on a fairy's wing.

An instinct toward his future glory had led him, some months before, to the small Lutheran college of St. Olaf in southern Minnesota. He stayed there two weeks, dismayed at its ferocious indifference to the drums of his destiny, to destiny itself, and despising the janitor's work with which he was to pay his way through. Then he drifted back to Lake Superior, and he was still searching for something to do on the day that Dan Cody's yacht dropped anchor in the shallows along shore.

Cody was fifty years old then, a product of the Nevada silver fields, of the Yukon, of every rush for metal since Seventy-five. The transactions in Montana copper that made him many times a millionaire found him physically robust but on the verge of soft-mindedness, and, suspecting this an infinite number of women tried to separate him from his money. The none too savory ramifications by which Ella Kaye, the newspaper woman, played Madame de Maintenon to his weakness and sent him to sea in a yacht, were common knowledge to the turgid journalism of 1902. He had been coasting along all too hospitable shores for five years when he turned up as James Gatz's destiny at Little Girl Bay.

To the young Gatz, resting on his oars and looking up at the railed deck, the yacht represented all the beauty and glamor in the world. I suppose he

smiled at Cody—he had probably discovered that people liked him when he smiled. At any rate Cody asked him a few questions (one of them elicited the brand new name) and found that he was quick, and extravagantly ambitious. A few days later he took him to Duluth and bought him a blue coat, six pair of white duck trousers and a yachting cap. And when the Tuolomee left for the West Indies and the Barbary Coast Gatsby left too.

He was employed in a vague personal capacity—while he remained with Cody he was in turn steward, mate, skipper, secretary, and even jailor, for Dan Cody sober knew what lavish doings Dan Cody drunk might soon be about and he provided for such contingencies by reposing more and more trust in Gatsby. The arrangement lasted five years during which the boat went three times around the continent. It might have lasted indefinitely except for the fact that Ella Kaye came on board one night in Boston and a week later Dan Cody inhospitably died.

I remember the portrait of him up in Gatsby's bedroom, a grey, florid man with a hard empty face—the pioneer debauchee who during one phase of American life brought back to the eastern seaboard the savage violence of the frontier brothel and saloon. It was indirectly due to Cody that Gatsby drank so little. Sometimes in the course of gay parties women used to rub champagne into his hair; for himself he formed the habit of letting liquor alone.

And it was from Cody that he inherited money—a legacy of twenty-five thousand dollars. He didn't get it. He never understood the legal device that was used against him but what remained of the millions went intact to Ella Kaye. He was left with his singularly appropriate education; the vague

contour of Jay Gatsby had filled out to the substantiality of a man.

He told me all this very much later, but I've put it down here with the idea of exploding those first wild rumors about his antecedents, which weren't even faintly true. Moreover he told it to me at a time of confusion, when I had reached the point of believing everything and nothing about him. So I take advantage of this short halt, while Gatsby, so to speak, caught his breath, to clear this set of misconceptions away.

It was a halt, too, in my association with his affairs. For several weeks I didn't see him or hear his voice on the phone—mostly I was in New York, trotting around with Jordan and trying to ingratiate myself with her senile aunt—but finally I went over to his house one Sunday afternoon. I hadn't been there two minutes when somebody brought Tom Buchanan in for a drink. I was startled, naturally, but the really surprising thing was that it hadn't happened before.

They were a party of three on horseback—Tom and a man named Sloane and a pretty woman in a brown riding habit who had been there previously.

"I'm delighted to see you," said Gatsby standing on his porch. "I'm delighted that you dropped in."

As though they cared!

"Sit right down. Have a cigarette or a cigar." He walked around the room quickly, ringing bells. "I'll have something to drink for you in just a minute."

He was profoundly affected by the fact that Tom was there. But he would be uneasy anyhow until he had given them something, realizing in a vague way that that was all they came for. Mr. Sloane wanted nothing. A lemonade? No, thanks. A little champagne? Nothing at all, thanks.... I'm sorry

"Did you have a nice ride?"

"Very good roads around here."

"I suppose the automobiles——"

"Yeah."

Moved by an irresistible impulse, Gatsby turned to Tom who had accepted the introduction as a stranger.

"I believe we've met somewhere before, Mr. Buchanan."

"Oh, yes," said Tom, gruffly polite but obviously not remembering. "So we did. I remember very well."

"About two weeks ago."

"That's right. You were with Nick here."

"I know your wife," continued Gatsby, almost aggressively.

"That so?"

Tom turned to me.

"You live near here, Nick?"

"Next door."

"That so?"

Mr. Sloane didn't enter into the conversation but lounged back haughtily in his chair; the woman said nothing either—until unexpectedly, after two highballs, she became cordial.

"We'll all come over to your next party, Mr. Gatsby," she suggested. "What do you say?"

"Certainly. I'd be delighted to have you."

"Be very nice," said Mr. Sloane, without gratitude. "Well—think ought to be starting home."

"Please don't hurry," Gatsby urged them. He had control of himself now and he wanted to see more of Tom. "Why don't you—why don't you stay for supper? I wouldn't be surprised if some other people dropped in from New York."

"You come to supper with me," said the lady enthusiastically. "Both of you."

This included me. Mr. Sloane got to his feet.

"Come along," he said—but to her only.

"I mean it," she insisted. "I'd love to have you. Lots of room."

Gatsby looked at me questioningly. He wanted to go and he didn't see that Mr. Sloane had determined he shouldn't.

"I'm afraid I won't be able to," I said.

"Well, you come," she urged, concentrating on Gatsby.

Mr. Sloane murmured something close to her ear.

"We won't be late if we start now," she insisted aloud.

"I haven't got a horse," said Gatsby. "I used to ride in the army but I've never bought a horse. I'll have to follow you in my car. Excuse me for just a minute."

The rest of us walked out on the porch, where Sloane and the lady began an impassioned conversation aside.

"My God, I believe the man's coming," said Tom. "Doesn't he know she doesn't want him?"

"She says she does want him."

"She has a big dinner party and he won't know a soul there." He frowned. "I wonder where in the devil he met Daisy. By God, I may be old-fashioned in my ideas, but women run around too much these days to suit me. They meet all kinds of crazy fish."

Suddenly Mr. Sloane and the lady walked down the steps and mounted their horses.

"Come on," said Mr. Sloane to Tom, "we're late. We've got to go." And then to me: "Tell him we couldn't wait, will you?"

Tom and I shook hands, the rest of us exchanged a cool nod and they trotted quickly down the drive, disappearing under the August foliage just as Gatsby with hat and light overcoat in hand came out the front door.

Tom was evidently perturbed at Daisy's running around alone, for on the following Saturday night he came with her to Gatsby's party. Perhaps his presence gave the evening its peculiar quality of oppressiveness—it stands out in my memory from Gatsby's other parties that summer. There were the same people, or at least the same sort of people, the same profusion of champagne, the same many-colored, many-keyed commotion, but I felt an unpleasantness in the air, a pervading harshness that hadn't been there before. Or perhaps I had merely grown used to it, grown to accept West Egg as a world complete in itself, with its own standards and its own great figures, second to nothing because it had no consciousness of being so, and now I was looking at it again, through Daisy's eyes. It is invariably saddening to look through new eyes at things upon which you have expended your own powers of adjustment.

They arrived at twilight and as we strolled out among the sparkling hundreds Daisy's voice was playing murmurous tricks in her throat.

"These things excite me so," she whispered. "If you want to kiss me any time during the evening, Nick, just let me know and I'll be glad to arrange it for you. Just mention my name. Or present a green card. I'm giving out green _____"

"Look around," suggested Gatsby.

"I'm looking around. I'm having a marvelous——"

"You must see the faces of many people you've heard about."

Tom's arrogant eyes roamed the crowd.

"We don't go around very much," he said. "In fact I was just thinking I don't know a soul here."

"Perhaps you know that lady." Gatsby indicated a gorgeous, scarcely human orchid of a woman who sat in state under a white plum tree. Tom and Daisy stared, with that peculiarly unreal feeling that accompanies the recognition of a hitherto ghostly celebrity of the movies.

"She's lovely," said Daisy.

"The man bending over her is her director."

He took them ceremoniously from group to group:

"Mrs. Buchanan...and Mr. Buchanan——" After an instant's hesitation he added: "the polo player."

"Oh no," objected Tom quickly, "Not me."

But evidently the sound of it pleased Gatsby for Tom remained "the polo player" for the rest of the evening.

"I've never met so many celebrities!" Daisy exclaimed. "I liked that man

—what was his name?—with the sort of blue nose."

Gatsby identified him, adding that he was a small producer.

"Well, I liked him anyhow."

"I'd a little rather not be the polo player," said Tom pleasantly, "I'd rather look at all these famous people in—in oblivion."

Daisy and Gatsby danced. I remember being surprised by his graceful, conservative fox-trot—I had never seen him dance before. Then they sauntered over to my house and sat on the steps for half an hour while at her request I remained watchfully in the garden: "In case there's a fire or a flood," she explained, "or any act of God."

Tom appeared from his oblivion as we were sitting down to supper together. "Do you mind if I eat with some people over here?" he said. "A fellow's getting off some funny stuff."

"Go ahead," answered Daisy genially, "And if you want to take down any addresses here's my little gold pencil...." She looked around after a moment and told me the girl was "common but pretty," and I knew that except for the half hour she'd been alone with Gatsby she wasn't having a good time.

We were at a particularly tipsy table. That was my fault—Gatsby had been called to the phone and I'd enjoyed these same people only two weeks before. But what had amused me then turned septic on the air now.

"How do you feel, Miss Baedeker?"

The girl addressed was trying, unsuccessfully, to slump against my shoulder. At this inquiry she sat up and opened her eyes.

"What?"

A massive and lethargic woman, who had been urging Daisy to play golf with her at the local club tomorrow, spoke in Miss Baedeker's defence:

"Oh, she's all right now. When she's had five or six cocktails she always starts screaming like that. I tell her she ought to leave it alone."

"I do leave it alone," affirmed the accused hollowly.

"We heard you yelling, so I said to Doc Civet here: 'There's somebody that needs your help, Doc.' "

"She's much obliged, I'm sure," said another friend, without gratitude. "But you got her dress all wet when you stuck her head in the pool."

"Anything I hate is to get my head stuck in a pool," mumbled Miss Baedeker. "They almost drowned me once over in New Jersey."

"Then you ought to leave it alone," countered Doctor Civet.

"Speak for yourself!" cried Miss Baedeker violently. "Your hand shakes. I wouldn't let you operate on me!"

It was like that. Almost the last thing I remember was standing with Daisy and watching the moving picture director and his Star. They were still under the white plum tree and their faces were touching except for a pale thin

ray of moonlight between. It occurred to me that he had been very slowly bending toward her all evening to attain this proximity, and even while I watched I saw him stoop one ultimate degree and kiss at her cheek.

"I like her," said Daisy, "I think she's lovely."

But the rest offended her—and inarguably, because it wasn't a gesture but an emotion. She was appalled by West Egg, this unprecedented "place" that Broadway had begotten upon a Long Island fishing village—appalled by its raw vigor that chafed under the old euphemisms and by the too obtrusive fate that herded its inhabitants along a short cut from nothing to nothing. She saw something awful in the very simplicity she failed to understand.

I sat on the front steps with them while they waited for their car. It was dark here in front: only the bright door sent ten square feet of light volleying out into the soft black morning. Sometimes a shadow moved against a dressing-room blind above, gave way to another shadow, an indefinite procession of shadows, who rouged and powdered in an invisible glass.

"Who is this Gatsby anyhow?" demanded Tom suddenly. "Some big bootlegger?"

"Where'd you hear that?" I inquired.

"I didn't hear it. I imagined it. A lot of these newly rich people are just big bootleggers, you know."

"Not Gatsby," I said shortly.

He was silent for a moment. The pebbles of the drive crunched under his

feet.

"Well, he certainly must have strained himself to get this menagerie together."

A breeze stirred the grey haze of Daisy's fur collar.

"At least they're more interesting than the people we know," she said with an effort.

"You didn't look so interested."

"Well, I was."

Tom laughed and turned to me.

"Did you notice Daisy's face when that girl asked her to put her under a cold shower?"

Daisy began to sing with the music in a husky, rhythmic whisper, bringing out a meaning in each word that it had never had before and would never have again. When the melody rose, her voice broke up sweetly, following it, in a way contralto voices have, and each change tipped out a little of her warm human magic upon the air.

"Lots of people come who haven't been invited," she said suddenly. "That girl hadn't been invited. They simply force their way in and he's too polite to object."

"I'd like to know who he is and what he does," insisted Tom. "And I

think I'll make a point of finding out."

"I can tell you right now," she answered. "He owned some drug stores, a lot of drug stores. He built them up himself."

The dilatory limousine came rolling up the drive.

"Good night, Nick," said Daisy.

Her glance left me and sought the lighted top of the steps where "Three o'Clock in the Morning," a neat, sad little waltz of that year, was drifting out the open door. After all, in the very casualness of Gatsby's party there were romantic possibilities totally absent from her world. What was it up there in the song that seemed to be calling her back inside? What would happen now in the dim incalculable hours? Perhaps some unbelievable guest would arrive, a person infinitely rare and to be marvelled at, some authentically radiant young girl who with one fresh glance at Gatsby, one moment of magical encounter, would blot out those five years of unwavering devotion.

I stayed late that night. Gatsby asked me to wait until he was free and I lingered in the garden until the inevitable swimming party had run up, chilled and exalted, from the black beach, until the lights were extinguished in the guest rooms overhead. When he came down the steps at last the tanned skin was drawn unusually tight on his face, and his eyes were bright and tired.

"She didn't like it," he said immediately.

"Of course she did."

"She didn't like it," he insisted. "She didn't have a good time."

He was silent and I guessed at his unutterable depression.

"I feel far away from her," he said. "It's hard to make her understand."

"You mean about the dance?"

"The dance?" He dismissed all the dances he had given with a snap of his fingers. "Old sport, the dance is unimportant."

He wanted nothing less of Daisy than that she should go to Tom and say: "I never loved you." After she had obliterated three years with that sentence they could decide upon the more practical measures to be taken. One of them was that, after she was free, they were to go back to Louisville and be married from her house—just as if it were five years ago.

"And she doesn't understand," he said. "She used to be able to understand. We'd sit for hours——"

He broke off and began to walk up and down a desolate path of fruit rinds and discarded favors and crushed flowers.

"I wouldn't ask too much of her," I ventured. "You can't repeat the past."

"Can't repeat the past?" he cried incredulously. "Why of course you can!"

He looked around him wildly, as if the past were lurking here in the shadow of his house, just out of reach of his hand.

"I'm going to fix everything just the way it was before," he said, nodding

determinedly. "She'll see."

He talked a lot about the past and I gathered that he wanted to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps, that had gone into loving Daisy. His life had been confused and disordered since then, but if he could once return to a certain starting place and go over it all slowly, he could find out what that thing was....

One autumn night, five years before, they had been walking down the street when the leaves were falling, and they came to a place where there were no trees and the sidewalk was white with moonlight. They stopped here and turned toward each other. Now it was a cool night with that mysterious excitement in it which comes at the two changes of the year. The quiet lights in the houses were humming out into the darkness and there was a stir and bustle among the stars. Out of the corner of his eye Gatsby saw that the blocks of the sidewalk really formed a ladder and mounted to a secret place above the trees—he could climb to it, if he climbed alone, and once there he could suck on the pap of life, gulp down the incomparable milk of wonder.

His heart beat faster and faster as Daisy's white face came up to his own. He knew that when he kissed this girl, and forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would never romp again like the mind of God. So he waited, listening for a moment longer to the tuning fork that had been struck upon a star. Then he kissed her. At his lips' touch she blossomed for him like a flower and the incarnation was complete.

Through all he said, even through his appalling sentimentality, I was reminded of something—an elusive rhythm, a fragment of lost words, that I

had heard somewhere a long time ago. For a moment a phrase tried to take shape in my mouth and my lips parted like a dumb man's, as though there was more struggling upon them than a wisp of startled air. But they made no sound and what I had almost remembered was uncommunicable forever.

Chapter 7

It was when curiosity about Gatsby was at its highest that the lights in his house failed to go on one Saturday night—and, as obscurely as it had begun, his career as Trimalchio was over.

Only gradually did I become aware that the automobiles which turned expectantly into his drive stayed for just a minute and then drove sulkily away. Wondering if he were sick I went over to find out—an unfamiliar butler with a villainous face squinted at me suspiciously from the door.

"Is Mr. Gatsby sick?"

"Nope." After a pause he added "sir" in a dilatory, grudging way.

"I hadn't seen him around, and I was rather worried. Tell him Mr. Carraway came over."

"Who?" he demanded rudely.

"Carraway."

"Carraway. All right, I'll tell him." Abruptly he slammed the door.

My Finn informed me that Gatsby had dismissed every servant in his house a week ago and replaced them with half a dozen others, who never went into West Egg Village to be bribed by the tradesmen, but ordered

moderate supplies over the telephone. The grocery boy reported that the kitchen looked like a pigsty, and the general opinion in the village was that the new people weren't servants at all.

Next day Gatsby called me on the phone.

"Going away?" I inquired.

"No, old sport."

"I hear you fired all your servants."

"I wanted somebody who wouldn't gossip. Daisy comes over quite often—in the afternoons."

So the whole caravansary had fallen in like a card house at the disapproval in her eyes.

"They're some people Wolfshiem wanted to do something for. They're all brothers and sisters. They used to run a small hotel."

"I see."

He was calling up at Daisy's request—would I come to lunch at her house tomorrow? Miss Baker would be there. Half an hour later Daisy herself telephoned and seemed relieved to find that I was coming. Something was up. And yet I couldn't believe that they would choose this occasion for a scene—especially for the rather harrowing scene that Gatsby had outlined in the garden.

The next day was broiling, almost the last, certainly the warmest, of the summer. As my train emerged from the tunnel into sunlight, only the hot whistles of the National Biscuit Company broke the simmering hush at noon. The straw seats of the car hovered on the edge of combustion; the woman next to me perspired delicately for a while into her white shirtwaist, and then, as her newspaper dampened under her fingers, lapsed despairingly into deep heat with a desolate cry. Her pocket-book slapped to the floor.

"Oh, my!" she gasped.

I picked it up with a weary bend and handed it back to her, holding it at arm's length and by the extreme tip of the corners to indicate that I had no designs upon it—but every one near by, including the woman, suspected me just the same.

"Hot!" said the conductor to familiar faces. "Some weather! Hot! Hot! Hot! Is it hot enough for you? Is it hot? Is it...?"

My commutation ticket came back to me with a dark stain from his hand. That any one should care in this heat whose flushed lips he kissed, whose head made damp the pajama pocket over his heart!

Through the hall of the Buchanans' house blew a faint wind, carrying the sound of the telephone bell out to Gatsby and me as we waited at the door.

"The master's body!" roared the butler into the mouthpiece. "I'm sorry, madame, but we can't furnish it—it's far too hot to touch this noon!"

What he really said was: "Yes...yes...I'll see."

He set down the receiver and came toward us, glistening slightly, to take our stiff straw hats.

"Madame expects you in the salon!" he cried, needlessly indicating the direction. In this heat every extra gesture was an affront to the common store of life.

The room, shadowed well with awnings, was dark and cool. Daisy and Jordan lay upon an enormous couch, like silver idols, weighing down their own white dresses against the singing breeze of the fans.

"We can't move," they said together.

Jordan's fingers, powdered white over their tan, rested for a moment in mine.

"And Mr. Thomas Buchanan, the athlete?" I inquired.

Simultaneously I heard his voice, gruff, muffled, husky, at the hall telephone.

Gatsby stood in the center of the crimson carpet and gazed around with fascinated eyes. Daisy watched him and laughed, her sweet, exciting laugh; a tiny gust of powder rose from her bosom into the air.

"The rumor is," whispered Jordan, "that that's Tom's girl on the telephone."

We were silent. The voice in the hall rose high with annoyance. "Very well, then, I won't sell you the car at all.... I'm under no obligations to you at

all.... And as for your bothering me about it at lunch time I won't stand that at all!"

"Holding down the receiver," said Daisy cynically.

"No, he's not," I assured her. "It's a bona fide deal. I happen to know about it."

Tom flung open the door, blocked out its space for a moment with his thick body, and hurried into the room.

"Mr. Gatsby!" He put out his broad, flat hand with well-concealed dislike. "I'm glad to see you, sir.... Nick...."

"Make us a cold drink," cried Daisy.

As he left the room again she got up and went over to Gatsby and pulled his face down kissing him on the mouth.

"You know I love you," she murmured.

"You forget there's a lady present," said Jordan.

Daisy looked around doubtfully.

"You kiss Nick too."

"What a low, vulgar girl!"

"I don't care!" cried Daisy and began to clog on the brick fireplace. Then she remembered the heat and sat down guiltily on the couch just as a freshly

laundered nurse leading a little girl came into the room.

"Bles-sed pre-cious," she crooned, holding out her arms. "Come to your own mother that loves you."

The child, relinquished by the nurse, rushed across the room and rooted shyly into her mother's dress.

"The Bles-sed pre-cious! Did mother get powder on your old yellowy hair? Stand up now, and say How-de-do."

Gatsby and I in turn leaned down and took the small reluctant hand. Afterward he kept looking at the child with surprise. I don't think he had ever really believed in its existence before.

"I got dressed before luncheon," said the child, turning eagerly to Daisy.

"That's because your mother wanted to show you off." Her face bent into the single wrinkle of the small white neck. "You dream, you. You absolute little dream."

"Yes," admitted the child calmly. "Aunt Jordan's got on a white dress too."

"How do you like mother's friends?" Daisy turned her around so that she faced Gatsby. "Do you think they're pretty?"

"Where's Daddy?"

"She doesn't look like her father," explained Daisy. "She looks like me."

She's got my hair and shape of the face."

Daisy sat back upon the couch. The nurse took a step forward and held out her hand.

"Come, Pammy."

"Goodbye, sweetheart!"

With a reluctant backward glance the well-disciplined child held to her nurse's hand and was pulled out the door, just as Tom came back, preceding four gin rickeys that clicked full of ice.

Gatsby took up his drink.

"They certainly look cool," he said, with visible tension.

We drank in long greedy swallows.

"I read somewhere that the sun's getting hotter every year," said Tom genially. "It seems that pretty soon the earth's going to fall into the sun—or wait a minute—it's just the opposite—the sun's getting colder every year.

"Come outside," he suggested to Gatsby, "I'd like you to have a look at the place."

I went with them out to the veranda. On the green Sound, stagnant in the heat, one small sail crawled slowly toward the fresher sea. Gatsby's eyes followed it momentarily; he raised his hand and pointed across the bay.

"I'm right across from you."

"So you are."

Our eyes lifted over the rosebeds and the hot lawn and the weedy refuse of the dog days along shore. Slowly the white wings of the boat moved against the blue cool limit of the sky. Ahead lay the scalloped ocean and the abounding blessed isles.

"There's sport for you," said Tom, nodding. "I'd like to be out there with him for about an hour."

We had luncheon in the dining-room, darkened, too, against the heat, and drank down nervous gayety with the cold ale.

"What'll we do with ourselves this afternoon," cried Daisy, "and the day after that, and the next thirty years?"

"Don't be morbid," Jordan said. "Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall."

"But it's so hot," insisted Daisy, on the verge of tears, "And everything's so confused. Let's all go to town!"

Her voice struggled on through the heat, beating against it, moulding its senselessness into forms.

"I've heard of making a garage out of a stable," Tom was saying to Gatsby, "but I'm the first man who ever made a stable out of a garage."

"Who wants to go to town?" demanded Daisy insistently. Gatsby's eyes floated toward her. "Ah," she cried, "you look so cool."

Their eyes met, and they stared together at each other, alone in space. With an effort she glanced down at the table.

"You always look so cool," she repeated.

She had told him that she loved him, and Tom Buchanan saw. He was astounded. His mouth opened a little and he looked at Gatsby and then back at Daisy as if he had just recognized her as some one he knew a long time ago.

"You resemble the advertisement of the man," she went on innocently. "You know the advertisement of the man——"

"All right," broke in Tom quickly, "I'm perfectly willing to go to town. Come on—we're all going to town."

He got up, his eyes still flashing between Gatsby and his wife. No one moved.

"Come on!" His temper cracked a little. "What's the matter, anyhow? If we're going to town let's start."

His hand, trembling with his effort at self control, bore to his lips the last of his glass of ale. Daisy's voice got us to our feet and out on to the blazing gravel drive.

"Are we just going to go?" she objected. "Like this? Aren't we going to let any one smoke a cigarette first?"

"Everybody smoked all through lunch."

"Oh, let's have fun," she begged him. "It's too hot to fuss."

He didn't answer.

"Have it your own way," she said. "Come on, Jordan."

They went upstairs to get ready while we three men stood there shuffling the hot pebbles with our feet. A silver curve of the moon hovered already in the western sky. Gatsby started to speak, changed his mind, but not before Tom wheeled and faced him expectantly.

"Have you got your stables here?" asked Gatsby with an effort.

"About a quarter of a mile down the road."

"Oh."

A pause.

"I don't see the idea of going to town," broke out Tom savagely. "Women get these notions in their heads——"

"Shall we take anything to drink?" called Daisy from an upper window.

"I'll get some whiskey," answered Tom. He went inside.

Gatsby turned to me rigidly:

"I can't say anything in his house, old sport."

"She's got an indiscreet voice," I remarked. "It's full of——"

I hesitated.

"Her voice is full of money," he said suddenly.

That was it. I'd never understood before. It was full of money—that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals' song of it.... High in a white palace the king's daughter, the golden girl....

Tom came out of the house wrapping a quart bottle in a towel, followed by Daisy and Jordan wearing small tight hats of metallic cloth and carrying light capes over their arms.

"Shall we all go in my car?" suggested Gatsby. He felt the hot, green leather of the seat. "I ought to have left it in the shade."

"Is it standard shift?" demanded Tom.

"Yes."

"Well, you take my coupé and let me drive your car to town."

The suggestion was distasteful to Gatsby.

"I don't think there's much gas," he objected.

"Plenty of gas," said Tom boisterously. He looked at the gauge. "And if it runs out I can stop at a drug store. You can buy anything at a drug store nowadays."

A pause followed this apparently pointless remark. Daisy looked at Tom frowning and an indefinable expression, at once definitely unfamiliar and

vaguely recognizable, as if I had only heard it described in words, passed over Gatsby's face.

"Come on, Daisy," said Tom, pressing her with his hand toward Gatsby's car. "I'll take you in this circus wagon."

He opened the door but she moved out from the circle of his arm.

"You take Nick and Jordan. We'll follow you in the coupé."

She walked close to Gatsby, touching his coat with her hand. Jordan and Tom and I got into the front seat of Gatsby's car, Tom pushed the unfamiliar gears tentatively and we shot off into the oppressive heat leaving them out of sight behind.

"Did you see that?" demanded Tom.

"See what?"

He looked at me keenly, realizing that Jordan and I must have known all along.

"You think I'm pretty dumb, don't you?" he suggested. "Perhaps I am, but I have a—almost a second sight, sometimes, that tells me what to do. Maybe you don't believe that, but science——"

He paused. The immediate contingency overtook him, pulled him back from the edge of the theoretical abyss.

"I've made a small investigation of this fellow," he continued. "I could

have gone deeper if I'd known——"

"Do you mean you've been to a medium?" inquired Jordan humorously.

"What?" Confused, he stared at us as we laughed. "A medium?"

"About Gatsby."

"About Gatsby! No, I haven't. I said I'd been making a small investigation of his past."

"And you found he was an Oxford man," said Jordan helpfully.

"An Oxford man!" He was incredulous. "Like hell he is! He wears a pink suit."

"Nevertheless he's an Oxford man."

"Oxford, New Mexico," snorted Tom contemptuously, "or something like that."

"Listen, Tom. If you're such a snob, why did you invite him to lunch?" demanded Jordan crossly.

"Daisy invited him; she knew him before we were married—God knows where!"

We were all irritable now with the fading ale and, aware of it, we drove for a while in silence. Then as Doctor T. J. Eckleburg's faded eyes came into sight down the road, I remembered Gatsby's caution about gasoline.

"We've got enough to get us to town," said Tom.

"But there's a garage right here," objected Jordan. "I don't want to get stalled in this baking heat."

Tom threw on both brakes impatiently and we slid to an abrupt dusty stop under Wilson's sign. After a moment the proprietor emerged from the interior of his establishment and gazed hollow-eyed at the car.

"Let's have some gas!" cried Tom roughly. "What do you think we stopped for—to admire the view?"

"I'm sick," said Wilson without moving. "I have been sick all day."

"What's the matter?"

"I'm all run down."

"Well, shall I help myself?" Tom demanded. "You sounded well enough on the phone."

With an effort Wilson left the shade and support of the doorway and, breathing hard, unscrewed the cap of the tank. In the sunlight his face was green.

"I didn't mean to interrupt your lunch," he said. "But I need money pretty bad and I was wondering what you were going to do with your old car."

"How do you like this one?" inquired Tom. "I bought it last week."

"It's a nice yellow one," said Wilson, as he strained at the handle.

"Like to buy it?"

"Big chance," Wilson smiled faintly. "No, but I could make some money on the other."

"What do you want money for, all of a sudden?"

"I've been here too long. I want to get away. My wife and I want to go west."

"Your wife does!" exclaimed Tom, startled.

"She's been talking about it for ten years." He rested for a moment against the pump, shading his eyes. "And now she's going whether she wants to or not. I'm going to get her away."

The coupé flashed by us with a flurry of dust and the flash of a waving hand.

"What do I owe you?" demanded Tom harshly.

"I just got wised up to something funny the last two days," remarked Wilson. "That's why I want to get away. That's why I been bothering you about the car."

"What do I owe you?"

"Dollar twenty."

The relentless beating heat was beginning to confuse me and I had a bad moment there before I realized that so far his suspicions hadn't alighted on Tom. He had discovered that Myrtle had some sort of life apart from him in another world and the shock had made him physically sick. I stared at him and then at Tom, who had made a parallel discovery less than an hour before—and it occurred to me that there was no difference between men, in intelligence or race, so profound as the difference between the sick and the well. Wilson was so sick that he looked guilty, unforgivably guilty—as if he had just got some poor girl with child.

"I'll let you have that car," said Tom. "I'll send it over tomorrow afternoon."

That locality was always vaguely disquieting, even in the broad glare of afternoon, and now I turned my head as though I had been warned of something behind. Over the ashheaps the giant eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg kept their vigil but I perceived, after a moment, that other eyes were regarding us with peculiar intensity from less than twenty feet away.

In one of the windows over the garage the curtains had been moved aside a little and Myrtle Wilson was peering down at the car. So engrossed was she that she had no consciousness of being observed and one emotion after another crept into her face like objects into a slowly developing picture. Her expression was curiously familiar—it was an expression I had often seen on women's faces but on Myrtle Wilson's face it seemed purposeless and inexplicable until I realized that her eyes, wide with jealous terror, were fixed not on Tom, but on Jordan Baker, whom she took to be his wife.

There is no confusion like the confusion of a simple mind, and as we drove away Tom was feeling the hot whips of panic. His wife and his mistress, until an hour ago secure and inviolate, were slipping precipitately from his control. Instinct made him step on the accelerator with the double purpose of overtaking Daisy and leaving Wilson behind, and we sped along toward Astoria at fifty miles an hour, until, among the spidery girders of the elevated, we came in sight of the easygoing blue coupe.

"Those big movies around Fiftieth Street are cool," suggested Jordan. "I love New York on summer afternoons when every one's away. There's something very sensuous about it—overripe, as if all sorts of funny fruits were going to fall into your hands."

The word "sensuous" had the effect of further disquieting Tom but before he could invent a protest the coupé came to a stop and Daisy signalled us to draw up alongside.

"Where are we going?" she cried.

"How about the movies?"

"It's so hot," she complained. "You go. We'll ride around and meet you after." With an effort her wit rose faintly, "We'll meet you on some corner. I'll be the man smoking two cigarettes."

"We can't argue about it here," Tom said impatiently as a truck gave out a cursing whistle behind us. "You follow me to the south side of Central Park, in front of the Plaza."

Several times he turned his head and looked back for their car, and if the traffic delayed them he slowed up until they came into sight. I think he was afraid they would dart down a side street and out of his life forever.

But they didn't. And we all took the less explicable step of engaging the parlor of a suite in the Plaza Hotel.

The prolonged and tumultuous argument that ended by herding us into that room eludes me, though I have a sharp physical memory that, in the course of it, my underwear kept climbing like a damp snake around my legs and intermittent beads of sweat raced cool across my back. The notion originated with Daisy's suggestion that we hire five bathrooms and take cold baths, and then assumed more tangible form as "a place to have a mint julep." Each of us said over and over that it was a "crazy idea"—we all talked at once to a baffled clerk and thought, or pretended to think, that we were being very funny....

The room was large and stifling, and, though it was already four o'clock, opening the windows admitted only a gust of hot shrubbery from the Park. Daisy went to the mirror and stood with her back to us, fixing her hair.

"It's a swell suite," whispered Jordan respectfully and every one laughed.

"Open another window," commanded Daisy, without turning around.

"There aren't any more."

"Well, we'd better telephone for an axe——"

"The thing to do is to forget about the heat," said Tom impatiently. "You

make it ten times worse by crabbing about it."

He unrolled the bottle of whiskey from the towel and put it on the table.

"Why not let her alone, old sport?" remarked Gatsby. "You're the one that wanted to come to town."

There was a moment of silence. The telephone book slipped from its nail and splashed to the floor, whereupon Jordan whispered "Excuse me"—but this time no one laughed.

"I'll pick it up," I offered.

"I've got it." Gatsby examined the parted string, muttered "Hum!" in an interested way, and tossed the book on a chair.

"That's a great expression of yours, isn't it?" said Tom sharply.

"What is?"

"All this 'old sport' business. Where'd you pick that up?"

"Now see here, Tom," said Daisy, turning around from the mirror, "if you're going to make personal remarks I won't stay here a minute. Call up and order some ice for the mint julep."

As Tom took up the receiver the compressed heat exploded into sound and we were listening to the portentous chords of Mendelssohn's Wedding March from the ballroom below.

"Imagine marrying anybody in this heat!" cried Jordan dismally.

"Still—I was married in the middle of June," Daisy remembered, "Louisville in June! Somebody fainted. Who was it fainted, Tom?"

"Biloxi," he answered shortly.

"A man named Biloxi. 'Blocks' Biloxi, and he made boxes—that's a fact—and he was from Biloxi, Tennessee."

"They carried him into my house," appended Jordan, "because we lived just two doors from the church. And he stayed three weeks, until Daddy told him he had to get out. The day after he left Daddy died." After a moment she added as if she might have sounded irreverent, "There wasn't any connection."

"I used to know a Bill Biloxi from Memphis," I remarked.

"That was his cousin. I knew his whole family history before he left. He gave me an aluminum putter that I use today."

The music had died down as the ceremony began and now a long cheer floated in at the window, followed by intermittent cries of "Yea—ea—ea!" and finally by a burst of jazz as the dancing began.

"We're getting old," said Daisy. "If we were young we'd rise and dance."

"Remember Biloxi," Jordan warned her. "Where'd you know him, Tom?"

"Biloxi?" He concentrated with an effort. "I didn't know him. He was a friend of Daisy's."

"He was not," she denied. "I'd never seen him before. He came down in the private car."

"Well, he said he knew you. He said he was raised in Louisville. Asa Bird brought him around at the last minute and asked if we had room for him."

Jordan smiled.

"He was probably bumming his way home. He told me he was president of your class at Yale."

Tom and I looked at each other blankly.

"Biloxi?"

"First place, we didn't have any president——"

Gatsby's foot beat a short, restless tattoo and Tom eyed him suddenly.

"By the way, Mr. Gatsby, I understand you're an Oxford man."

"Not exactly."

"Oh, yes, I understand you went to Oxford."

"Yes—I went there."

A pause. Then Tom's voice, incredulous and insulting:

"You must have gone there about the time Biloxi went to New Haven."

Another pause. A waiter knocked and came in with crushed mint and ice but the silence was unbroken by his "Thank you" and the soft closing of the door. This tremendous detail was to be cleared up at last.

"I told you I went there," said Gatsby.

"I heard you, but I'd like to know when."

"It was in nineteen-nineteen, I only stayed five months. That's why I can't really call myself an Oxford man."

Tom glanced around to see if we mirrored his unbelief. But we were all looking at Gatsby.

"It was an opportunity they gave to some of the officers after the Armistice," he continued. "We could go to any of the universities in England or France."

I wanted to get up and slap him on the back. I had one of those renewals of complete faith in him that I'd experienced before.

Daisy rose, smiling faintly, and went to the table.

"Open the whiskey, Tom," she ordered. "And I'll make you a mint julep. Then you won't seem so stupid to yourself.... Look at the mint!"

"Wait a minute," snapped Tom, "I want to ask Mr. Gatsby one more question."

"Go on," Gatsby said politely.

"What kind of a row are you trying to cause in my house anyhow?"

They were out in the open at last and Gatsby was content.

"He isn't causing a row." Daisy looked desperately from one to the other. "You're causing a row. Please have a little self control."

"Self control!" repeated Tom incredulously. "I suppose the latest thing is to sit back and let Mr. Nobody from Nowhere make love to your wife. Well, if that's the idea you can count me out.... Nowadays people begin by sneering at family life and family institutions and next they'll throw everything overboard and have intermarriage between black and white."

Flushed with his impassioned gibberish he saw himself standing alone on the last barrier of civilization.

"We're all white here," murmured Jordan.

"I know I'm not very popular. I don't give big parties. I suppose you've got to make your house into a pigsty in order to have any friends—in the modern world."

Angry as I was, as we all were, I was tempted to laugh whenever he opened his mouth. The transition from libertine to prig was so complete.

"I've got something to tell you, old sport,——" began Gatsby. But Daisy guessed at his intention.

"Please don't!" she interrupted helplessly. "Please let's all go home. Why don't we all go home?"

"That's a good idea." I got up. "Come on, Tom. Nobody wants a drink."

"I want to know what Mr. Gatsby has to tell me."

"Your wife doesn't love you," said Gatsby. "She's never loved you. She loves me."

"You must be crazy!" exclaimed Tom automatically.

Gatsby sprang to his feet, vivid with excitement.

"She never loved you, do you hear?" he cried. "She only married you because I was poor and she was tired of waiting for me. It was a terrible mistake, but in her heart she never loved any one except me!"

At this point Jordan and I tried to go but Tom and Gatsby insisted with competitive firmness that we remain—as though neither of them had anything to conceal and it would be a privilege to partake vicariously of their emotions.

"Sit down Daisy." Tom's voice groped unsuccessfully for the paternal note. "What's been going on? I want to hear all about it."

"I told you what's been going on," said Gatsby. "Going on for five years—and you didn't know."

Tom turned to Daisy sharply.

"You've been seeing this fellow for five years?"

"Not seeing," said Gatsby. "No, we couldn't meet. But both of us loved

each other all that time, old sport, and you didn't know. I used to laugh sometimes—"but there was no laughter in his eyes, "to think that you didn't know."

"Oh—that's all." Tom tapped his thick fingers together like a clergyman and leaned back in his chair.

"You're crazy!" he exploded. "I can't speak about what happened five years ago, because I didn't know Daisy then—and I'll be damned if I see how you got within a mile of her unless you brought the groceries to the back door. But all the rest of that's a God Damned lie. Daisy loved me when she married me and she loves me now."

"No," said Gatsby, shaking his head.

"She does, though. The trouble is that sometimes she gets foolish ideas in her head and doesn't know what she's doing." He nodded sagely. "And what's more, I love Daisy too. Once in a while I go off on a spree and make a fool of myself, but I always come back, and in my heart I love her all the time."

"You're revolting," said Daisy. She turned to me, and her voice, dropping an octave lower, filled the room with thrilling scorn: "Do you know why we left Chicago? I'm surprised that they didn't treat you to the story of that little spree."

Gatsby walked over and stood beside her.

"Daisy, that's all over now," he said earnestly. "It doesn't matter any

more. Just tell him the truth—that you never loved him—and it's all wiped out forever."

She looked at him blindly. "Why,—how could I love him—possibly?"

"You never loved him."

She hesitated. Her eyes fell on Jordan and me with a sort of appeal, as though she realized at last what she was doing—and as though she had never, all along, intended doing anything at all. But it was done now. It was too late.

"I never loved him," she said, with perceptible reluctance.

"Not at Kapiolani?" demanded Tom suddenly.

"No."

From the ballroom beneath, muffled and suffocating chords were drifting up on hot waves of air.

"Not that day I carried you down from the Punch Bowl to keep your shoes dry?" There was a husky tenderness in his tone. "...Daisy?"

"Please don't." Her voice was cold, but the rancour was gone from it. She looked at Gatsby. "There, Jay," she said—but her hand as she tried to light a cigarette was trembling. Suddenly she threw the cigarette and the burning match on the carpet.

"Oh, you want too much!" she cried to Gatsby. "I love you now— isn't that enough? I can't help what's past." She began to sob helplessly. "I did love

him once—but I loved you too."

Gatsby's eyes opened and closed.

"You loved me too?" he repeated.

"Even that's a lie," said Tom savagely. "She didn't know you were alive. Why,—there're things between Daisy and me that you'll never know, things that neither of us can ever forget."

The words seemed to bite physically into Gatsby.

"I want to speak to Daisy alone," he insisted. "She's all excited now
——"

"Even alone I can't say I never loved Tom," she admitted in a pitiful voice. "It wouldn't be true."

"Of course it wouldn't," agreed Tom.

She turned to her husband.

"As if it mattered to you," she said.

"Of course it matters. I'm going to take better care of you from now on."

"You don't understand," said Gatsby, with a touch of panic. "You're not going to take care of her any more."

"I'm not?" Tom opened his eyes wide and laughed. He could afford to control himself now. "Why's that?"

"Daisy's leaving you."

"Nonsense."

"I am, though," she said with a visible effort.

"She's not leaving me!" Tom's words suddenly leaned down over Gatsby. "Certainly not for a common swindler who'd have to steal the ring he put on her finger."

"I won't stand this!" cried Daisy. "Oh, please let's get out."

"Who are you, anyhow?" broke out Tom. "You're one of that bunch that hangs around with Meyer Wolfshiem—that much I happen to know. I've made a little investigation into your affairs—and I'll carry it further tomorrow."

"You can suit yourself about that, old sport." said Gatsby steadily.

"I found out what your 'drug stores' were." He turned to us and spoke rapidly. "He and this Wolfshiem bought up a lot of side-street drug stores here and in Chicago and sold grain alcohol over the counter. That's one of his little stunts. I picked him for a bootlegger the first time I saw him and I wasn't far wrong."

"What about it?" said Gatsby politely. "I guess your friend Walter Chase wasn't too proud to come in on it."

"And you left him in the lurch, didn't you? You let him go to jail for a month over in New Jersey. God! You ought to hear Walter on the subject of

you."

"He came to us dead broke. He was very glad to pick up some money, old sport."

"Don't you call me 'old sport'!" cried Tom. Gatsby said nothing. "Walter could have you up on the betting laws too, but Wolfshiem scared him into shutting his mouth."

That unfamiliar yet recognizable look was back again in Gatsby's face.

"That drug store business was just small change," continued Tom slowly, "but you've got something on now that Walter's afraid to tell me about."

I glanced at Daisy who was staring terrified between Gatsby and her husband and at Jordan who had begun to balance an invisible but absorbing object on the tip of her chin. Then I turned back to Gatsby—and was startled at his expression. He looked—and this is said in all contempt for the babbled slander of his garden—as if he had "killed a man." For a moment the set of his face could be described in just that fantastic way.

It passed, and he began to talk excitedly to Daisy, denying everything, defending his name against accusations that had not been made. But with every word she was drawing further and further into herself, so he gave that up and only the dead dream fought on as the afternoon slipped away, trying to touch what was no longer tangible, struggling unhappily, undespairingly, toward that lost voice across the room.

The voice begged again to go.

"Please, Tom! I can't stand this any more."

Her frightened eyes told that whatever intentions, whatever courage she had had, were definitely gone.

"You two start on home, Daisy," said Tom. "In Mr. Gatsby's car."

She looked at Tom, alarmed now, but he insisted with magnanimous scorn.

"Go on. He won't annoy you. I think he realizes that his presumptuous little flirtation is over."

They were gone, without a word, snapped out, made accidental, isolated, like ghosts even from our pity.

After a moment Tom got up and began wrapping the unopened bottle of whiskey in the towel.

"Want any of this stuff? Jordan? ...Nick?"

I didn't answer.

"Nick?" He asked again.

"What?"

"Want any?"

"No...I just remembered that today's my birthday."

I was thirty. Before me stretched the portentous menacing road of a new decade.

It was seven o'clock when we got into the coupé with him and started for Long Island. Tom talked incessantly, exulting and laughing, but his voice was as remote from Jordan and me as the foreign clamor on the sidewalk or the tumult of the elevated overhead. Human sympathy has its limits and we were content to let all their tragic arguments fade with the city lights behind. Thirty—the promise of a decade of loneliness, a thinning list of single men to know, a thinning brief-case of enthusiasm, thinning hair. But there was Jordan beside me who, unlike Daisy, was too wise ever to carry well-forgotten dreams from age to age. As we passed over the dark bridge her wan face fell lazily against my coat's shoulder and the formidable stroke of thirty died away with the reassuring pressure of her hand.

So we drove on toward death through the cooling twilight.

The young Greek, Michaelis, who ran the coffee joint beside the ashheaps was the principal witness at the inquest. He had slept through the heat until after five, when he strolled over to the garage and found George Wilson sick in his office—really sick, pale as his own pale hair and shaking all over. Michaelis advised him to go to bed but Wilson refused, saying that he'd miss a lot of business if he did. While his neighbor was trying to persuade him a violent racket broke out overhead.

"I've got my wife locked in up there," explained Wilson calmly. "She's

going to stay there till the day after tomorrow and then we're going to move away."

Michaelis was astonished; they had been neighbors for four years and Wilson had never seemed faintly capable of such a statement. Generally he was one of these worn-out men: when he wasn't working he sat on a chair in the doorway and stared at the people and the cars that passed along the road. When any one spoke to him he invariably laughed in an agreeable, colorless way. He was his wife's man and not his own.

So naturally Michaelis tried to find out what had happened, but Wilson wouldn't say a word—instead he began to throw curious, suspicious glances at his visitor and ask him what he'd been doing at certain times on certain days. Just as the latter was getting uneasy some workmen came past the door bound for his restaurant and Michaelis took the opportunity to get away, intending to come back later. But he didn't. He supposed he forgot to, that's all. When he came outside again a little after seven he was reminded of the conversation because he heard Mrs. Wilson's voice, loud and scolding, downstairs in the garage.

"Beat me!" he heard her cry. "Throw me down and beat me, you dirty little coward!"

A moment later she rushed out into the dusk, waving her hands and shouting; before he could move from his door the business was over.

The "death car" as the newspapers called it, didn't stop; it came out of the gathering darkness, wavered tragically for a moment and then

disappeared around the next bend. Michaelis wasn't even sure of its color—he told the first policeman that it was light green. The other car, the one going toward New York, came to rest a hundred yards beyond, and its driver hurried back to where Myrtle Wilson, her life violently extinguished, knelt in the road and mingled her thick, dark blood with the dust.

Michaelis and this man reached her first but when they had torn open her shirtwaist still damp with perspiration, they saw that her left breast was swinging loose like a flap and there was no need to listen for the heart beneath. The mouth was wide open and ripped at the corners as though she had choked a little in giving up the tremendous vitality she had stored so long.

We saw the three or four automobiles and the crowd when we were still some distance away.

"Wreck!" said Tom. "That's good. Wilson'll have a little business at last."

He slowed down, but still without any intention of stopping until, as we came nearer, the hushed intent faces of the people at the garage door made him automatically put on the brakes.

"We'll take a look," he said doubtfully, "just a look."

I became aware now of a hollow, wailing sound which issued incessantly from the garage, a sound which as we got out of the coupé and walked toward the door resolved itself into the words "Oh, my God!" uttered over and over in a gasping moan.

"There's some bad trouble here," said Tom excitedly.

He reached up on tiptoes and peered over a circle of heads into the garage which was lit only by a yellow light in a swinging wire basket overhead. Then he made a harsh sound in his throat and with a violent thrusting movement of his powerful arms pushed his way through.

The circle closed up again with a running murmur of expostulation; it was a minute before I could see anything at all. Then new arrivals disarranged the line and Jordan and I were pushed suddenly inside.

Myrtle Wilson's body wrapped in a blanket and then in another blanket as though she suffered from a chill in the hot night lay on a work table by the wall and Tom, with his back to us, was bending over it, motionless. Next to him stood a motorcycle policeman taking down names with much sweat and correction in a little book. At first I couldn't find the source of the high, groaning words that echoed clamorously through the bare garage—then I saw Wilson standing on the raised threshold of his office, swaying back and forth and holding to the doorposts with both hands. Some man was talking to him in a low voice and attempting from time to time to lay a hand on his shoulder, but Wilson neither heard nor saw. His eyes would drop slowly from the swinging light to the laden table by the wall and then jerk back to the light again and he gave out incessantly his high horrible call.

"O, my Ga-od! O, my Ga-od! Oh, Ga-od! Oh, my Ga-od!"

Presently Tom lifted his head with a jerk and after staring around the garage with glazed eyes addressed a mumbled incoherent remark to the

policeman.

"M-a-v—" the policeman was saying, "—o—"

"No,—r—" corrected the man, "M-a-v-r-o—"

"Listen to me!" muttered Tom fiercely.

"r—" said the policeman, "o—"

"g—"

"g—" He looked up as Tom's broad hand fell sharply on his shoulder.
"What you want, fella?"

"What happened—that's what I want to know!"

"Auto hit her. Instantly killed."

"Instantly killed," repeated Tom, staring.

"She ran out ina road. Son-of-a-bitch didn't even stop his car."

"There was two cars," said Michaelis, "one comin', one goin', see?"

"Going where?" asked the policeman keenly.

"One goin' each way. Well, she—" His hand rose toward the blankets but stopped half way and fell to his side, "—she ran out there and the one comin' from New York knock right into her goin' thirty or forty miles an hour."

"What's the name of this place here?" demanded the officer.

"Hasn't got any name."

A pale, well-dressed Negro stepped near.

"It was a yellow car," he said, "big yellow car. New."

"See the accident?" asked the policeman.

"No, but the car passed me down the road, going faster'n forty. Going fifty, sixty."

"Come here and let's have your name. Look out now. I want to get his name."

Some words of this conversation must have reached Wilson swaying in the office door, for suddenly a new theme found voice among his gasping cries.

"You don't have to tell me what kind of car it was! I know what kind of car it was!"

Watching Tom I saw the wad of muscle back of his shoulder tighten under his coat. He walked quickly over to Wilson and standing in front of him seized him firmly by the upper arms.

"You've got to pull yourself together," he said with soothing gruffness.

Wilson's eyes fell upon Tom; he started up on his tiptoes and then would have collapsed to his knees had not Tom held him upright.

"Listen," said Tom, shaking him a little. "I just got here a minute ago, from New York. I was bringing you that coupé we've been talking about. That yellow car I was driving this afternoon wasn't mine, do you hear? I haven't seen it all afternoon."

Only the Negro and I were near enough to hear what he said but the policeman caught something in the tone and looked over with truculent eyes.

"What's all that?" he demanded.

"I'm a friend of his." Tom turned his head but kept his hands firm on Wilson's body. "He says he knows the car that did it... It was a yellow car."

Some dim impulse moved the policeman to look suspiciously at Tom.

"And what color's your car?"

"It's a blue car, a coupe."

"We've come straight from New York," I said.

Some one who had been driving a little behind us confirmed this and the policeman turned away.

"Now, if you'll let me have that name again correct——"

Picking up Wilson like a doll Tom carried him into the office, set him down in a chair and came back.

"If somebody'll come here and sit with him!" he snapped authoritatively. He watched while the two men standing closest glanced at each other and

went unwillingly into the room. Then Tom shut the door on them and came down the single step, his eyes avoiding the table. As he passed close to me he whispered "Let's get out."

Self consciously, with his authoritative arms breaking the way, we pushed through the still gathering crowd, passing a hurried doctor, case in hand, who had been sent for in wild hope half an hour ago.

Tom drove slowly until we were beyond the bend—then his foot came down hard and the coupé raced along through the night. In a little while I heard a low husky sob and saw that the tears were overflowing down his face.

"The God Damn coward!" he whimpered. "He didn't even stop his car."

The Buchanans' house floated suddenly toward us through the dark rustling trees. Tom stopped beside the porch and looked up at the second floor where two windows bloomed with light among the vines.

"Daisy's home," he said. As we got out of the car he glanced at me and frowned slightly.

"I ought to have dropped you in West Egg, Nick. There's nothing we can do tonight."

A change had come over him and he spoke gravely, and with decision. As we walked across the moonlight gravel to the porch he disposed of the situation in a few brisk phrases.

"I'll telephone for a taxi to take you home, and while you're waiting you and Jordan better go in the kitchen and have them get you some supper—if

you want any." He opened the door. "Come in."

"No thanks. But I'd be glad if you'd order me the taxi. I'll wait outside."

Jordan put her hand on my arm.

"Won't you come in, Nick?"

"No thanks."

I was feeling a little sick and I wanted to be alone. But Jordan lingered for a moment more.

"It's only half past nine," she said.

I'd be damned if I'd go in; I'd had enough of all of them for one day and suddenly that included Jordan too. She must have seen something of this in my expression for she turned abruptly away and ran up the porch steps into the house. I sat down for a few minutes with my head in my hands, until I heard the phone taken up inside and the butler's voice calling a taxi. Then I walked slowly down the drive away from the house intending to wait by the gate.

I hadn't gone twenty yards when I heard my name and Gatsby stepped from between two bushes into the path. I must have felt pretty weird by that time because I could think of nothing except the luminosity of his pink suit under the moon.

"What are you doing?" I inquired.

"Just standing here, old sport."

Somehow, that seemed a despicable occupation. For all I knew he was going to rob the house in a moment; I wouldn't have been surprised to see sinister faces, the faces of "Wolfshiem's people," behind him in the dark shrubbery.

"Did you see any trouble on the road?" he asked after a minute.

"Yes."

He hesitated.

"Was she killed?"

"Yes."

"I thought so; I told Daisy I thought so. It's better that the shock should all come at once. She stood it pretty well."

He spoke as if Daisy's reaction was the only thing that mattered.

"I got to West Egg by a side road," he went on, "and left the car in my garage. I don't think anybody saw us but of course I can't be sure."

I disliked him so much by this time that I didn't find it necessary to tell him he was wrong.

"Who was the woman?" he inquired.

"Her name was Wilson. Her husband owns the garage. How the devil

did it happen?"

"Well, I tried to swing the wheel——" He broke off, and suddenly I guessed at the truth.

"Was Daisy driving?"

"Yes," he said after a moment, "but of course I'll say I was. You see, when we left New York she was very nervous and she thought it would steady her to drive—and this woman rushed out at us just as we were passing a car coming the other way. It all happened in a minute but it seemed to me that she wanted to speak to us, thought we were somebody she knew. Well, first Daisy turned away from the woman toward the other car, and then she lost her nerve and turned back. The second my hand reached the wheel I felt the shock—it must have killed her instantly."

"It ripped her open——"

"Don't tell me, old sport." He winced. "Anyhow—Daisy stepped on it. I tried to make her stop, but she couldn't so I pulled on the emergency brake. Then she fell over into my lap and I drove on."

"She'll be all right tomorrow," he said presently. "I'm just going to wait here and see if he tries to bother her about that unpleasantness this afternoon. She's locked herself into her room and if he tries any brutality she's going to turn the light out and on again."

"He won't touch her," I said. "He's not thinking about her."

"I don't trust him, old sport."

"How long are you going to wait?"

"All night if necessary. Anyhow till they all go to bed."

A new point of view occurred to me. Suppose Tom found out that Daisy had been driving. He might think he saw a connection in it—he might think anything. I looked at the house: there were two or three bright windows downstairs and the pink glow from Daisy's room on the second floor.

"You wait here," I said. "I'll see if there's any sign of a commotion."

I walked back along the border of the lawn, traversed the gravel softly and tiptoed up the veranda steps. The drawing-room curtains were open, and I saw that the room was empty. Crossing the porch where we had dined that June night three months before I came to a small rectangle of light which I guessed was the pantry window. The blind was drawn but I found a rift at the sill.

Daisy and Tom were sitting opposite each other at the kitchen table with a plate of cold fried chicken between them and two bottles of ale. He was talking intently across the table at her and in his earnestness his hand had fallen upon and covered her own. Once in a while she looked up at him and nodded in agreement.

They weren't happy, and neither of them had touched the chicken or the ale—and yet they weren't unhappy either. There was an unmistakable air of natural intimacy about the picture and anybody would have said that they were conspiring together.

As I tiptoed from the porch I heard my taxi feeling its way along the dark road toward the house. Gatsby was waiting where I had left him in the drive.

"Is it all quiet up there?" he asked anxiously.

"Yes, it's all quiet." I hesitated. "You'd better come home and get some sleep."

He shook his head.

"I want to wait here till Daisy goes to bed. Good night, old sport."

He put his hands in his coat pockets and turned back eagerly to his scrutiny of the house, as though my presence marred the sacredness of the vigil. So I walked away and left him standing there in the moonlight—watching over nothing.

Chapter 8

I couldn't sleep all night; a fog-horn was groaning incessantly on the Sound, and I tossed half-sick between grotesque reality and savage frightening dreams. Toward dawn I heard a taxi go up Gatsby's drive and immediately I jumped out of bed and began to dress—I felt that I had something to tell him, something to warn him about and morning would be too late.

Crossing his lawn I saw that his front door was still open and he was leaning against a table in the hall, heavy with dejection or sleep.

"Nothing happened," he said wanly. "I waited, and about four o'clock she came to the window and stood there for a minute and then turned out the light."

His house had never seemed so enormous to me as it did that night when we hunted through the great rooms for cigarettes. We pushed aside curtains that were like pavilions and felt over innumerable feet of dark wall for electric light switches—once I tumbled with a sort of splash upon the keys of a ghostly piano. There was an inexplicable amount of dust everywhere and the rooms were musty as though they hadn't been aired for many days. I found the humidor on an unfamiliar table with two stale dry cigarettes inside. Throwing open the French windows of the drawing-room we sat smoking out into the darkness.

"You ought to go away," I said. "It's pretty certain they'll trace your car."

"Go away now, old sport?"

"Go to Atlantic City for a week, or up to Montreal."

He wouldn't consider it. He couldn't possibly leave Daisy until he knew what she was going to do. He was clutching at some last hope and I couldn't bear to shake him free.

It was this night that he told me the strange story of his youth with Dan Cody—told it to me because "Jay Gatsby" had broken up like glass against Tom's hard malice and the long secret extravaganza was played out. I think that he would have acknowledged anything, now, without reserve, but he wanted to talk about Daisy.

She was the first "nice" girl he had ever known. In various unrevealed capacities he had come in contact with such people but always with indiscernible barbed wire between. He found her excitingly desirable. He went to her house, at first with other officers from Camp Taylor, then alone. It amazed him—he had never been in such a beautiful house before. But what gave it an air of breathless intensity was that Daisy lived there—it was as casual a thing to her as his tent out at camp was to him. There was a ripe mystery about it, a hint of bedrooms upstairs more beautiful and cool than other bedrooms, of gay and radiant activities taking place through its corridors and of romances that were not musty and laid away already in lavender but fresh and breathing and redolent of this year's shining motor cars and of dances whose flowers were scarcely withered. It excited him too that

many men had already loved Daisy—it increased her value in his eyes. He felt their presence all about the house, pervading the air with the shades and echoes of still vibrant emotions.

But he knew that he was in Daisy's house by a colossal accident. However glorious might be his future as Jay Gatsby, he was at present a penniless young man without a past, and at any moment the invisible cloak of his uniform might slip from his shoulders. So he made the most of his time. He took what he could get, ravenously and unscrupulously—eventually he took Daisy one still October night, took her because he had no real right to touch her hand.

He might have despised himself, for he had certainly taken her under false pretenses. I don't mean that he had traded on his phantom millions, but he had deliberately given Daisy a sense of security; he let her believe that he was a person from much the same stratum as herself—that he was fully able to take care of her. As a matter of fact he had no such facilities—he had no comfortable family standing behind him and he was liable at the whim of an impersonal government to be blown anywhere about the world.

But he didn't despise himself and it didn't turn out as he had imagined. He had intended, probably, to take what he could and go—but now he found that he had committed himself to the following of a grail. He knew that Daisy was extraordinary but he didn't realize just how extraordinary a "nice" girl could be. She vanished into her rich house, into her rich, full life, leaving Gatsby—nothing. He felt married to her, that was all.

When they met again two days later it was Gatsby who was breathless,

who was somehow betrayed. Her porch was bright with the bought luxury of star-shine; the wicker of the settee squeaked fashionably as she turned toward him and he kissed her curious and lovely mouth. She had caught a cold and it made her voice huskier and more charming than ever and Gatsby was overwhelmingly aware of the youth and mystery that wealth imprisons and preserves, of the freshness of many clothes and of Daisy, gleaming like silver, safe and proud above the hot struggles of the poor.

"I can't describe to you how surprised I was to find out I loved her, old sport. I even hoped for a while that she'd throw me over, but she didn't, because she was in love with me too. She thought I knew a lot because I knew different things from her.... Well, there I was, way off my ambitions, getting deeper in love every minute, and all of a sudden I didn't care. What was the use of doing great things if I could have a better time telling her what I was going to do?"

On the last afternoon before he went abroad he sat with Daisy in his arms for a long, silent time. It was a cold fall day with fire in the room and her cheeks flushed. Now and then she moved and he changed his arm a little and once he kissed her dark shining hair. The afternoon had made them tranquil for a while as if to give them a deep memory for the long parting the next day promised. They had never been closer in their month of love nor communicated more profoundly one with another than when she brushed silent lips against his coat's shoulder or when he touched the end of her fingers, gently, as though she were asleep.

He did extraordinarily well in the war. He was a captain before he went to the front and following the Argonne battles he got his majority and the

command of the divisional machine guns. After the Armistice he tried frantically to get home but some complication or misunderstanding sent him to Oxford instead. He was worried now—there was a quality of nervous despair in Daisy's letters. She didn't see why he couldn't come. She was feeling the pressure of the world outside and she wanted to see him and feel his presence beside her and be reassured that she was doing the right thing after all.

For Daisy was young and her artificial world was redolent of orchids and pleasant, cheerful snobbery and orchestras which set the rhythm of the year, summing up the sadness and suggestiveness of life in new tunes. All night the saxophones wailed the hopeless comment of the "Beale Street Blues" while a hundred pairs of golden and silver slippers shuffled the shining dust. At the grey tea hour there were always rooms that throbbed incessantly with this low sweet fever, while fresh faces drifted here and there like rose petals blown by the sad horns around the floor.

Through this twilight universe Daisy began to move again with the season; suddenly she was again keeping half a dozen dates a day with half a dozen men and drowsing asleep at dawn with the beads and chiffon of an evening dress tangled among dying orchids on the floor beside her bed. And all the time something within her was crying for a decision. She wanted her life shaped now, immediately—and the decision must be made by some force—of love, of money, of unquestionable practicality—that was close at hand.

That force took shape in the middle of spring with the arrival of Tom Buchanan. There was a wholesome bulkiness about his person and his position and Daisy was flattered. Doubtless there was a certain struggle and a

certain relief. The letter reached Gatsby while he was still at Oxford.

It was dawn now on Long Island and we went about opening the rest of the windows downstairs, filling the house with grey turning, gold turning light. The shadow of a tree fell abruptly across the dew and ghostly birds began to sing among the blue leaves. There was a slow pleasant movement in the air, scarcely a wind, promising a cool lovely day.

"I don't think she ever loved him." Gatsby turned around from a window and looked at me challengingly. "You must remember, old sport, she was very excited this afternoon. He told her those things in a way that frightened her—that made it look as if I was some kind of cheap sharper. And the result was she hardly knew what she was saying."

He sat down gloomily.

"Of course she might have loved him, just for a minute, when they were first married—and loved me more even then, do you see?"

Suddenly he came out with a curious remark:

"In any case," he said, "it was just personal."

What could you make of that, except to suspect some intensity in his conception of the affair that couldn't be measured?

He came back from France when Tom and Daisy were still on their wedding trip, and made a miserable but irresistible journey to Louisville on the last of his army pay. He stayed there a week, walking the streets where their footsteps had clicked together through the November night and

revisiting the out-of-the-way places to which they had driven in her white car. Just as Daisy's house had always seemed to him more mysterious and gay than other houses so his idea of the city itself, even though she was gone from it, was pervaded with a melancholy beauty.

He left feeling that if he had searched harder he might have found her—that he was leaving her behind. The day-coach—he was penniless now—was hot. He went out to the open vestibule and sat down on a folding-chair, and the station slid away and the backs of unfamiliar buildings moved by. Then out into the spring fields, where a yellow trolley raced them for a minute with people in it who might once have seen the pale magic of her face along the casual street.

The track curved and now it was going away from the sun which, as it sank lower, seemed to spread itself in benediction over the vanishing city where she had drawn her breath. He stretched out his hand desperately as if to snatch only a wisp of air, to save a fragment of the spot that she had made lovely for him. But it was all going by too fast now for his blurred eyes and he knew that he had lost that part of it, the freshest and the best, forever.

It was nine o'clock when we finished breakfast and went out on the porch. The night had made a sharp difference in the weather and there was an autumn flavor in the air. The gardener, the last one of Gatsby's former servants, came to the foot of the steps.

"I'm going to drain the pool today, Mr. Gatsby. Leaves'll start falling pretty soon and then there's always trouble with the pipes."

"Don't do it today," Gatsby answered. He turned to me apologetically. "You know, old sport, I've never used that pool all summer?"

I looked at my watch and stood up.

"Twelve minutes to my train."

I didn't want to go to the city. I wasn't worth a decent stroke of work but it was more than that—I didn't want to leave Gatsby. I missed that train, and then another, before I could get myself away.

"I'll call you up," I said finally.

"Do, old sport."

"I'll call you about noon."

We walked slowly down the steps.

"I suppose Daisy'll call too." He looked at me anxiously as if he hoped I'd corroborate this.

"I suppose so."

"Well—goodbye."

We shook hands and I started away. Just before I reached the hedge I remembered something and turned around.

"They're a rotten crowd," I shouted across the lawn. "You're worth the whole damn bunch put together."

I've always been glad I said that. It was the only compliment I ever gave him, because I disapproved of him from beginning to end. First he nodded politely, and then his face broke into that radiant and understanding smile, as if we'd been in ecstatic cahoots on that fact all the time. His gorgeous pink rag of a suit made a bright spot of color against the white steps and I thought of the night when I first came to his ancestral home three months before. The lawn and drive had been crowded with the faces of those who guessed at his corruption—and he had stood on those steps, concealing his incorruptible dream, as he waved them goodbye.

I thanked him for his hospitality. We were always thanking him for that—I and the others.

"Goodbye," I called. "I enjoyed breakfast, Gatsby."

Up in the city I tried for a while to list the quotations on an interminable amount of stock, then I fell asleep in my swivel-chair. Just before noon the phone woke me and I started up with sweat breaking out on my forehead. It was Jordan Baker; she often called me up at this hour because the uncertainty of her own movements between hotels and clubs and private houses made her hard to find in any other way. Usually her voice came over the wire as something fresh and cool as if a divot from a green golf links had come sailing in at the office window but this morning it seemed harsh and dry.

"I've left Daisy's house," she said. "I'm at Hempstead and I'm going down to Southampton this afternoon."

Probably it had been tactful to leave Daisy's house, but the act annoyed

me and her next remark made me rigid.

"You weren't so nice to me last night."

"How could it have mattered then?"

Silence for a moment. Then—

"However—I want to see you."

"I want to see you too."

"Suppose I don't go to Southampton, and come into town this afternoon?"

"No—I don't think this afternoon."

"Very well."

"It's impossible this afternoon. Various——"

We talked like that for a while and then abruptly we weren't talking any longer. I don't know which of us hung up with a sharp click but I know I didn't care. I couldn't have talked to her across a tea-table that day if I never talked to her again in this world.

I called Gatsby's house a few minutes later, but the line was busy. I tried four times; finally an exasperated central told me the wire was being kept open for long distance from Detroit. Taking out my time-table I drew a small circle around the three-fifty train. Then I leaned back in my chair and tried to think. It was just noon.

When I passed the ashheaps on the train that morning I had crossed deliberately to the other side of the car. I suppose there'd be a curious crowd around there all day with little boys searching for dark spots in the dust and some garrulous man telling over and over what had happened until it became less and less real even to him and he could tell it no longer and Myrtle Wilson's tragic achievement was forgotten. Now I want to go back a little and tell what happened at the garage after we left there the night before.

They had difficulty in locating the sister, Catherine. She must have broken her rule against drinking that night for when she arrived she was stupid with liquor and unable to understand that the ambulance had already gone to Flushing. When they convinced her of this she immediately fainted as if that was the intolerable part of the affair. Someone kind or curious took her in his car and drove her in the wake of her sister's body.

Until long after midnight a changing crowd lapped up against the front of the garage while George Wilson rocked himself back and forth on the couch inside. For a while the door of the office was open and everyone who came into the garage glanced irresistibly through it. Finally someone said it was a shame and closed the door. Michaelis and several other men were with him—first four or five men, later two or three men. Still later Michaelis had to ask the last stranger to wait there fifteen minutes longer while he went back to his own place and made a pot of coffee. After that he stayed there alone with Wilson until dawn.

About three o'clock the quality of Wilson's incoherent muttering changed—he grew quieter and began to talk about the yellow car. He announced that he had a way of finding out whom the yellow car belonged to,

and then he blurted out that a couple of months ago his wife had come from the city with her face bruised and her nose swollen.

But when he heard himself say this, he flinched and began to cry "Oh, my God!" again in his groaning voice. Michaelis made a clumsy attempt to distract him.

"How long have you been married, George? Come on there, try and sit still a minute and answer my question. How long have you been married?"

"Twelve years."

"Ever had any children? Come on, George, sit still—I asked you a question. Did you ever have any children?"

The hard brown beetles kept thudding against the dull light and whenever Michaelis heard a car go tearing along the road outside it sounded to him like the car that hadn't stopped a few hours before. He didn't like to go into the garage because the work bench was stained where the body had been lying so he moved uncomfortably around the office—he knew every object in it before morning—and from time to time sat down beside Wilson trying to keep him more quiet.

"Have you got a church you go to sometimes, George? Maybe even if you haven't been there for a long time? Maybe I could call up the church and get a priest to come over and he could talk to you, see?"

"Don't belong to any."

"You ought to have a church, George, for times like this. You must have

gone to church once. Didn't you get married in a church? Listen, George, listen to me. Didn't you get married in a church?"

"That was a long time ago."

The effort of answering broke the rhythm of his rocking—for a moment he was silent. Then the same half knowing, half bewildered look came back into his faded eyes.

"Look in the drawer there," he said, pointing at the desk.

"Which drawer?"

"That drawer—that one."

Michaelis opened the drawer nearest his hand. There was nothing in it but a small expensive dog leash made of leather and braided silver. It was apparently new.

"This?" he inquired, holding it up.

Wilson stared and nodded.

"I found it yesterday afternoon. She tried to tell me about it but I knew it was something funny."

"You mean your wife bought it?"

"She had it wrapped in tissue paper on her bureau."

Michaelis didn't see anything odd in that and he gave Wilson a dozen

reasons why his wife might have bought the dog leash. But conceivably Wilson had heard some of these same explanations before, from Myrtle, because he began saying "Oh, my God!" again in a whisper—his comforter left several explanations in the air.

"Then he killed her," said Wilson. His mouth dropped open suddenly.

"Who did?"

"I have a way of finding out."

"You're morbid, George," said his friend. "This has been a strain to you and you don't know what you're saying. You'd better try and sit quiet till morning."

"He murdered her."

"It was an accident, George."

Wilson shook his head. His eyes narrowed and his mouth widened slightly with the ghost of a superior "Hm!"

"I know," he said definitely, "I'm one of these trusting fellas and I don't think any harm to nobody, but when I get to know a thing I know it. It was the man in that car. She ran out to speak to him and he wouldn't stop."

Michaelis had seen this too but it hadn't occurred to him that there was any special significance in it. He believed that Mrs. Wilson had been running away from her husband, rather than trying to stop any particular car.

"How could she of been like that?"

"She's a deep one," said Wilson, as if that answered the question. "Ah-h-h——"

He began to rock again and Michaelis stood twisting the leash in his hand.

"Maybe you got some friend that I could telephone for, George?"

This was a forlorn hope—he was almost sure that Wilson had no friend: there was not enough of him for his wife. He was glad a little later when he noticed a change in the room, a blue quickening by the window, and realized that dawn wasn't far off. About five o'clock it was blue enough outside to snap off the light.

Wilson's glazed eyes turned out to the ashheaps, where small grey clouds took on fantastic shape and scurried here and there in the faint dawn wind.

"I spoke to her," he muttered, after a long silence. "I told her she might fool me but she couldn't fool God. I took her to the window—" With an effort he got up and walked to the rear window and leaned with his face pressed against it, "—and I said 'God knows what you've been doing, everything you've been doing. You may fool me but you can't fool God!' "

Standing behind him Michaelis saw with a shock that he was looking at the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg which had just emerged pale and enormous from the dissolving night.

"God sees everything," repeated Wilson.

"That's an advertisement," Michaelis assured him. Something made him turn away from the window and look back into the room. But Wilson stood there a long time, his face close to the window pane, nodding into the twilight.

By six o'clock Michaelis was worn out and grateful for the sound of a car stopping outside. It was one of the watchers of the night before who had promised to come back so he cooked breakfast for three which he and the other man ate together. Wilson was quieter now and Michaelis went home to sleep; when he awoke four hours later and hurried back to the garage Wilson was gone.

His movements—he was on foot all the time—were afterward traced to Port Roosevelt and then to Gad's Hill where he bought a sandwich that he didn't eat and a cup of coffee. He must have been tired and walking slowly for he didn't reach Gad's Hill until noon. Thus far there was no difficulty in accounting for his time—there were boys who had seen a man "acting sort of crazy" and motorists at whom he stared oddly from the side of the road. Then for three hours he disappeared from view. The police, on the strength of what he said to Michaelis, that he "had a way of finding out," supposed that he spent that time going from garage to garage thereabouts inquiring for a yellow car. On the other hand no garage man who had seen him ever came forward—and perhaps he had an easier, surer way of finding out what he wanted to know. By half past two he was in West Egg where he asked someone the way to Gatsby's house. So by that time he knew Gatsby's name.

At two o'clock Gatsby put on his bathing suit and left word with the butler that if any one phoned word was to be brought to him at the pool. He stopped at the garage for a pneumatic mattress that had amused his guests during the summer, and the chauffeur helped him pump it up. Then he gave instructions that the open car wasn't to be taken out under any circumstances—and this was strange because the front right fender needed repair.

Gatsby shouldered the mattress and started for the pool. Once he stopped and shifted it a little, and the chauffeur asked him if he needed help, but he shook his head and in a moment disappeared among the yellowing trees.

No telephone message arrived but the butler went without his sleep and waited for it until four o'clock—until long after there was any one to give it to if it came. I have an idea that Gatsby himself didn't believe it would come and perhaps he no longer cared. If that was true he must have felt that he had lost the old warm world, paid a high price for living too long with a single dream. He must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunlight was upon the scarcely created grass. A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts, breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about...like that ashen, fantastic figure gliding toward him through the amorphous trees.

The chauffeur—he was one of Wolfshiem's proteges—heard the shots—afterward he could only say that he hadn't thought anything much about them. I drove from the station directly to Gatsby's house and my rushing anxiously up the front steps was the first thing that alarmed any one. But they

knew then, I firmly believe. With scarcely a word said, four of us, the chauffeur, butler, gardener and I, hurried down to the pool.

There was a faint, barely perceptible movement of the water as the fresh flow from one end urged its way toward the drain at the other. With little ripples that were hardly the shadows of waves, the laden mattress moved irregularly down the pool. A small gust of wind that scarcely corrugated the surface was enough to disturb its accidental course with its accidental burden. The touch of a cluster of leaves revolved it slowly, tracing, like the leg of compass, a thin red circle in the water.

It was after we started with Gatsby toward the house that the gardener saw Wilson's body a little way off in the grass, and the holocaust was complete.

Chapter 9

After two years I remember the rest of that day, and that night and the next day, only as an endless drill of police and photographers and newspaper men in and out of Gatsby's front door. A rope stretched across the main gate and a policeman by it kept out the curious, but little boys soon discovered that they could enter through my yard and there were always a few of them clustered open-mouthed about the pool. Someone with a positive manner, perhaps a detective, used the expression "mad man" as he bent over Wilson's body that afternoon, and the adventitious authority of his voice set the key for the newspaper reports next morning.

Most of those reports were a nightmare—grotesque, circumstantial, eager and untrue. When Michaelis's testimony at the inquest brought to light Wilson's suspicions of his wife I thought the whole tale would shortly be served up in racy pasquinade—but Catherine, who might have said anything, didn't say a word. She showed a surprising amount of character about it too—looked at the coroner with determined eyes under that corrected brow of hers and swore that her sister had never seen Gatsby, that her sister was completely happy with her husband, that her sister had been into no mischief whatever. She convinced herself of it and cried into her handkerchief as if the very suggestion was more than she could endure. So Wilson was reduced to a man "deranged by grief" in order that the case might remain in its simplest form. And it rested there.

But all this part of it seemed remote and unessential. I found myself on Gatsby's side, and alone. From the moment I telephoned news of the

catastrophe to West Egg village, every surmise about him, and every practical question, was referred to me. At first I was surprised and confused; then, as he lay in his house and didn't move or breathe or speak hour upon hour it grew upon me that I was responsible, because no one else was interested—interested, I mean, with that intense personal interest to which every one has some vague right at the end.

I called up Daisy half an hour after we found him, called her instinctively and without hesitation. But she and Tom had gone away early that afternoon, and taken baggage with them.

"Left no address?"

"No."

"Say when they'd be back?"

"No."

"Any idea where they are? How I could reach them?"

"I don't know. Can't say."

I wanted to get somebody for him. I wanted to go into the room where he lay and reassure him: "I'll get somebody for you, Gatsby. Don't worry. Just trust me and I'll get somebody for you——"

Meyer Wolfshiem's name wasn't in the phone book. The butler gave me his office address on Broadway and I called Information, but by the time I had the number it was long after five and no one answered the phone.

"Will you ring again?"

"I've rung them three times."

"It's very important."

"Sorry. I'm afraid no one's there."

I went back to the drawing room and thought for an instant that they were chance visitors, all these official people who suddenly filled it. But as they drew back the sheet and looked at Gatsby with unmoved eyes, his protest continued in my brain.

"Look here, old sport, you've got to get somebody for me. You've got to try hard. I can't go through this alone."

Some one started to ask me questions but I broke away and going upstairs looked hastily through the unlocked parts of his desk—he'd never told me definitely that his parents were dead. But there was nothing—only the picture of Dan Cody, a token of forgotten violence staring down from the wall.

Next morning I sent the butler to New York with a letter to Wolfshiem which asked for information and urged him to come out on the next train. That request seemed superfluous when I wrote it. I was sure he'd start when he saw the newspapers, just as I was sure there'd be a wire from Daisy before noon—but neither a wire nor Mr. Wolfshiem arrived, no one arrived except more police and photographers and newspaper men. When the butler brought back Wolfshiem's answer I began to have a feeling of defiance, of scornful

solidarity between Gatsby and me against them all.

Dear Mr. Carraway,

This has been one of the most terrible shocks of my life to me I hardly can believe it that it is true at all. Such a mad act as that man did should make us all think. I cannot come down now as I am tied up in some very important business and cannot get mixed up in this thing now. If there is anything I can do a little later let me know in a letter by Edgar. I hardly know where I am when I hear about a thing like this and am completely knocked down and out.

Your truly Meyer Wolfshiem

And then hasty addenda beneath:

Let me know about the funeral etc. do not know his family at all.

When the phone rang that afternoon and Long Distance said Chicago was calling I thought this would be Daisy at last. But the connection came through as a man's voice, very thin and far away.

"This is Slagle speaking...."

"Yes?" The name was unfamiliar.

"Hell of a note, isn't it? Get my wire?"

"There haven't been any wires."

"Young Parke's in trouble," he said rapidly. "They picked him up when he handed the bonds over the counter. They got a circular from New York

giving 'em the numbers just five minutes before. What d'you know about that, hey? You never can tell in these hick towns——"

"Hello!" I interrupted breathlessly. "Look here—this isn't Mr. Gatsby. Mr. Gatsby's dead."

There was a long silence on the other end of the wire, followed by an exclamation...then a quick squawk as the connection was broken.

I think it was on the third day that a telegram signed Henry C. Gatz arrived from a town in Minnesota. It said only that the sender was leaving immediately and to postpone the funeral until he came.

It was Gatsby's father, a solemn old man very helpless and dismayed, bundled up in a long cheap ulster against the warm September day. His eyes leaked continuously with excitement and when I took the bag and umbrella from his hands he began to pull so incessantly at his sparse grey beard that I had difficulty in getting off his coat. He was on the point of collapse so I took him into the music room and made him sit down while I sent for something to eat. But he wouldn't eat and the glass of milk spilled from his trembling hand.

"I saw it in the Chicago newspaper," he said. "It was all in the Chicago newspaper. I started right away."

"I didn't know how to reach you."

His eyes, seeing nothing, moved ceaselessly about the room.

"It was a mad man," he said. "He must have been mad."

"Wouldn't you like some coffee?" I urged him.

"I don't want anything. I'm all right now, Mr.——"

"Carraway."

"Well, I'm all right now. Where have they got Jimmy?"

I took him into the drawing-room, where his son lay, and left him there. Some little boys had come up on the steps and were looking into the hall; when I told them who had arrived they went reluctantly away.

After a little while Mr. Gatz opened the door and came out, his mouth ajar, his face flushed slightly, his eyes leaking isolated and unpunctual tears. He had reached an age where death no longer has the quality of ghastly surprise, and when he looked around him now for the first time and saw the height and splendor of the hall and the great rooms opening out from it into other rooms his grief began to be mixed with an awed pride. I helped him to a bedroom upstairs; while he took off his coat and vest I told him that all arrangements had been deferred until he came.

"I didn't know what you'd want, Mr. Gatsby——"

"Gatz is my name."

"—Mr. Gatz. I thought you might want to take the body west."

He shook his head.

"Jimmy always liked it better down East. He rose up to his position in

the East. Were you a friend of my boy's, Mr.—?"

"We were close friends."

"He had a big future before him, you know. He was only a young man but he had a lot of brain power here."

He touched his head impressively and I nodded.

"If he'd of lived he'd of been a great man. A man like James J. Hill. He'd of helped build up the country."

"That's true," I said, uncomfortably.

He fumbled at the embroidered coverlet, trying to take it from the bed, and lay down stiffly—was instantly asleep.

That night an obviously frightened person called up and demanded to know who I was before he would give his name.

"This is Mr. Carraway," I said.

"Oh—" He sounded relieved. "This is Klipspringer."

I was relieved too for that seemed to promise another friend at Gatsby's grave. I didn't want it to be in the papers and draw a sightseeing crowd so I'd been calling up a few people myself. They were hard to find.

"The funeral's tomorrow," I said. "Three o'clock, here at the house. I wish you'd tell anybody who'd be interested."

"Oh, I will," he broke out hastily. "Of course I'm not likely to see anybody, but if I do."

His tone made me suspicious.

"Of course you'll be there yourself."

"Well, I'll certainly try. What I called up about is——"

"Wait a minute," I interrupted. "How about saying you'll come?"

"Well, the fact is—the truth of the matter is that I'm staying with some people up here in Greenwich and they rather expect me to be with them tomorrow. In fact there's a sort of picnic or something. Of course I'll do my very best to get away."

I ejaculated an unrestrained "Huh!" and he must have heard me for he went on nervously:

"What I called up about was a pair of shoes I left there. I wonder if it'd be too much trouble to have the butler send them on. You see they're tennis shoes and I'm sort of helpless without them. My address is care of B. F.——"

I didn't hear the rest of the name because I hung up the receiver.

After that I felt a certain shame for Gatsby—one gentleman to whom I telephoned implied that he had got what he deserved. However, that was my fault, for he was one of those who used to sneer most bitterly at Gatsby on the courage of Gatsby's liquor and I should have known better than to call him.

The morning of the funeral I went up to New York to see Meyer Wolfshiem; I couldn't seem to reach him any other way. The door that I pushed open on the advice of an elevator boy was marked "The Swastika Holding Company" and at first there didn't seem to be any one inside. But when I'd shouted "Hello" several times in vain an argument broke out behind a partition and presently a lovely Jewess appeared at an interior door and scrutinized me with black hostile eyes.

"Nobody's in," she said. "Mr. Wolfshiem's gone to Chicago."

The first part of this was obviously untrue for someone had begun to whistle "The Rosary," tunelessly, inside.

"Please say that Mr. Carraway wants to see him."

"I can't get him back from Chicago, can I?"

At this moment a voice, unmistakably Wolfshiem's called "Stella!" from the other side of the door.

"Leave your name on the desk," she said quickly. "I'll give it to him when he gets back."

"But I know he's there."

She took a step toward me and began to slide her hands indignantly up and down her hips.

"You young men think you can force your way in here any time," she scolded. "We're getting sickantired of it. When I say he's in Chicago, he's in

Chicago."

I mentioned Gatsby.

"Oh—h!" She looked at me over again. "Will you just—what was your name?"

She vanished. In a moment Meyer Wolfshiem stood solemnly in the doorway, holding out both hands. He drew me into his office, remarking in a reverent voice that it was a sad time for all of us, and offered me a cigar.

"My memory goes back to when I first met him," he said. "A young major just out of the army and covered over with medals he got in the war. He was so hard up he had to keep on wearing his uniform because he couldn't buy some regular clothes. First time I saw him was when he come into Winebrenner's poolroom at Forty-third Street and asked for a job. He hadn't eat anything for a couple of days. 'Come on have some lunch with me,' I sid. He ate more than four dollars' worth of food in half an hour."

"Did you start him in business?" I inquired.

"Start him! I made him."

"Oh."

"I raised him up out of nothing, right out of the gutter. I saw right away he was a fine appearing, gentlemanly young man, and when he told me he was an Oggsford I knew I could use him good. I got him to join up in the American Legion and he used to stand high there. Right off he did some work for a client of mine up to Albany. We were so thick like that in everything—"

He held up two bulbous fingers "—always together."

I wondered if this partnership had included the World's Series transaction in 1919.

"Now he's dead," I said after a moment. "You were his closest friend, so I know you'll want to come to his funeral this afternoon."

"I'd like to come."

"Well, come then."

The hair in his nostrils quivered slightly and as he shook his head his eyes filled with tears.

"I can't do it—I can't get mixed up in it," he said.

"There's nothing to get mixed up in. It's all over now."

"When a man gets killed I never like to get mixed up in it in any way. I keep out. When I was a young man it was different—if a friend of mine died, no matter how, I stuck with them to the end. You may think that's sentimental but I mean it—to the bitter end."

I saw that for some reason of his own he was determined not to come, so I stood up.

"Are you a college man?" he inquired suddenly.

For a moment I thought he was going to suggest a "gonnegtion" but he only nodded and shook my hand.

"Let us learn to show our friendship for a man when he is alive and not after he is dead," he suggested. "After that my own rule is to let everything alone."

When I left his office the sky had turned dark and I got back to West Egg in a drizzle. After changing my clothes I went next door and found Mr. Gatz walking up and down excitedly in the hall. His pride in his son and in his son's possessions was continually increasing and now he had something to show me.

"Jimmy sent me this picture." He took out his wallet with trembling fingers. "Look there."

It was a photograph of the house, cracked in the corners and dirty with many hands. He pointed out every detail to me eagerly. "Look there!" and then sought admiration from my eyes. He had shown it so often that I think it was more real to him now than the house itself.

"Jimmy sent it to me. I think it's a very pretty picture. It shows up well."

"Very well. Had you seen him lately?"

"He come out to see me two years ago and bought me the house I live in now. Of course we was broke up when he run off from home but I see now there was a reason for it. He knew he had a big future in front of him. And ever since he made a success he was very generous with me."

He seemed reluctant to put away the picture, held it for another minute, lingeringly, before my eyes. Then he returned the wallet and pulled from his

pocket a ragged old copy of a book called "Hopalong Cassidy."

"Look here, this is a book he had when he was a boy. It just shows you."

He opened it at the back cover and turned it around for me to see. On the last fly-leaf was printed the word SCHEDULE, and the date September 12th, 1906. And underneath:

Rise from bed 6.00 A.M.

Dumbbell exercise and wall-scaling 6.15-6.30

Study electricity, etc. 7.15-8.15

Work 8.30-4.30 P.M.

Baseball and sports 4.30-5.00

Practise elocution, poise and how to attain it 5.00-6.00

Study needed inventions 7.00-9.00

GENERAL RESOLVES

No wasting time at Shafers or (a name, indecipherable)

No more smoking or chewing

Bath every other day

Read one improving book or magazine per week

Save \$5.00 (crossed out) \$3.00 per week

Be better to parents

"I come across this book by accident," said the old man. "It just shows you, don't it?"

"It just shows you."

"Jimmy was bound to get ahead. He always had some resolves like this or something. Do you notice what he's got about improving his mind? He was always great for that. He told me I et like a hog once and I beat him for it."

He was reluctant to close the book, reading each item aloud and then looking eagerly at me. I think he rather expected me to copy down the list for my own use.

A little before three the Lutheran minister arrived from Flushing and I began to look involuntarily out the windows for other cars. So did Gatsby's father. And as the time passed and the servants came in and stood waiting in the hall, his eyes began to blink anxiously and he spoke of the rain in a worried uncertain way. The minister glanced several times at his watch so I took him aside and asked him to wait for half an hour. But it wasn't any use. Nobody came.

About five o'clock our procession of three cars reached the cemetery and stopped in a thick drizzle beside the gate—first a motor hearse, horribly black and wet, then Mr. Gatz and the minister and I in the limousine, and, a little later, four or five servants and the postman from West Egg in Gatsby's station

wagon, all wet to the skin. As we started through the gate into the cemetery I heard a car stop and then the sound of someone splashing after us over the soggy ground. I looked around. It was the man with owl-eyed glasses whom I had found marvelling over Gatsby's books in the library one night three months before.

I'd never seen him since then. I don't know how he knew about the funeral or even his name. The rain poured down his thick glasses and he took them off and wiped them to see the protecting canvas unrolled from Gatsby's grave.

I tried to think about Gatsby then for a moment but he was already too far away and I could only remember, without resentment, that Daisy hadn't sent a message or a flower. Dimly I heard someone murmur "Blessed are the dead that the rain falls on," and then the owl-eyed man said "Amen to that," in a brave voice.

We straggled down quickly through the rain to the cars. Owl-Eyes spoke to me by the gate.

"I couldn't get to the house," he remarked.

"Neither could anybody else."

"Go on!" He started. "Why, my God! they used to go there by the hundreds."

He took off his glasses and wiped them again outside and in.

"The poor son-of-a-bitch," he said.

One of my most vivid memories is of coming back west from prep school and later from college at Christmas time. Those who went farther than Chicago would gather in the old dim Union Station at six o'clock of a December evening with a few Chicago friends already caught up into their own holiday gayeties to bid them a hasty goodbye. I remember the fur coats of the girls returning from Miss This or That's and the chatter of frozen breath and the hands waving overhead as we caught sight of old acquaintances and the matchings of invitations: "Are you going to the Ordways'? the Herseys'? the Schultzes'?" and the long green tickets clasped tight in our gloved hands. And last the murky yellow cars of the Chicago Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad looking cheerful as Christmas itself on the tracks beside the gate.

When we pulled out into the winter night and the real snow, our snow, began to stretch out beside us and twinkle against the windows, and the dim lights of small Wisconsin stations moved by, a sharp wild brace came suddenly into the air. We drew in deep breaths of it as we walked back from dinner through the cold vestibules, unutterably aware of our identity with this country for one strange hour before we melted indistinguishably into it again.

That's my middle west—not the wheat or the prairies or the lost Swede towns but the thrilling, returning trains of my youth and the street lamps and sleigh bells in the frosty dark and the shadows of holly wreaths thrown by lighted windows on the snow. I am part of that, a little solemn with the feel of those long winters, a little complacent from growing up in the Carraway house in a city where dwellings are still called through decades by a family's name. I see now that this has been a story of the West, after all—Tom and Gatsby, Daisy and Jordan and I, were all Westerners, and perhaps we

possessed some deficiency in common which made us subtly unadaptable to Eastern life.

Even when the East excited me most, even when I was most keenly aware of its superiority to the bored, sprawling, swollen towns beyond the Ohio, with their interminable inquisitions which spared only the children and the very old—even then it had always for me a quality of distortion. West Egg especially still figures in my more fantastic dreams. I see it as a night scene by El Greco: a hundred houses, at once conventional and grotesque, crouching under a sullen, overhanging sky and a lustreless moon. In the foreground four solemn men in dress suits are walking along the sidewalk with a stretcher on which lies a drunken woman in a white evening dress. Her hand, which dangles over the side, sparkles cold with jewels. Gravely the men turn in at a house—the wrong house. But no one knows the woman's name, and no one cares.

After Gatsby's death the East was haunted for me like that, distorted beyond my eyes' power of correction. So when the blue smoke of brittle leaves was in the air and the wind blew the wet laundry stiff on the line I decided to come back home.

There was one thing to be done before I left, an awkward, unpleasant thing that perhaps had better have been let alone. But I wanted to leave things in order and not just trust that obliging and indifferent sea to sweep my refuse away. I saw Jordan Baker and talked over and around what had happened to us together and what had happened afterward to me, and she lay perfectly still listening in a big chair.

She was dressed to play golf and I remember thinking she looked like a good illustration, her chin raised a little, jauntily, her hair the color of an autumn leaf, her face the same brown tint as the fingerless glove on her knee. When I had finished she told me without comment that she was engaged to another man. I doubted that though there were several she could have married at a nod of her head but I pretended to be surprised. For just a minute I wondered if I wasn't making a mistake, then I thought it all over again quickly and got up to say goodbye.

"Nevertheless you did throw me over," said Jordan suddenly. "You threw me over on the telephone. I don't give a damn about you now but it was a new experience for me and I felt a little dizzy for a while."

We shook hands.

"Oh, and do you remember—" she added, "——a conversation we had once about driving a car?"

"Why—not exactly."

"You said a bad driver was only safe until she met another bad driver? Well, I met another bad driver, didn't I? I mean it was careless of me to make such a wrong guess. I thought you were rather an honest, straightforward person. I thought it was your secret pride."

"I'm thirty," I said. "I'm five years too old to lie to myself and call it honor."

She didn't answer. Angry, and half in love with her, and tremendously

sorry, I turned away.

One afternoon late in October I saw Tom Buchanan. He was walking ahead of me along Fifth Avenue in his alert, aggressive way, his hands out a little from his body as if to fight off interference, his head moving sharply here and there, adapting itself to his restless eyes. Just as I slowed up to avoid overtaking him he stopped and began frowning into the windows of a jewelry store. Suddenly he saw me and walked back holding out his hand.

"What's the matter, Nick? Do you object to shaking hands with me?"

"Yes. You know what I think of you."

"You're crazy, Nick," he said quickly. "Crazy as hell. I don't know what's the matter with you."

"Tom," I inquired, "what did you say to Wilson that afternoon?"

He stared at me without a word and I knew I had guessed right about those missing hours. I started to turn away but he took a step after me and grabbed my arm.

"I told him the truth," he said. "He came to the door while we were getting ready to leave and when I sent down word that we weren't in he tried to force his way upstairs. He was crazy enough to kill me if I hadn't told him who owned the car. His hand was on a revolver in his pocket every minute he was in the house——" He broke off defiantly. "What if I did tell him? That fellow had it coming to him. He threw dust into your eyes just like he did in Daisy's but he was a tough one. He ran over Myrtle like you'd run over a dog

and never even stopped his car."

There was nothing I could say, except the one unutterable fact that it wasn't true.

"And if you think I didn't have my share of suffering—look here, when I went to give up that flat and saw that damn box of dog biscuits sitting there on the sideboard I sat down and cried like a baby. By God it was awful——"

I couldn't forgive him or like him but I saw that what he had done was, to him, entirely justified. It was all very careless and confused. They were careless people, Tom and Daisy—they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made....

I shook hands with him; it seemed silly not to, for I felt suddenly as though I were talking to a child. Then he went into the jewelry store to buy a pearl necklace—or perhaps only a pair of cuff buttons—rid of my provincial squeamishness forever.

Gatsby's house was still empty when I left—the grass on his lawn had grown as long as mine. One of the taxi drivers in the village never took a fare past the entrance gate without stopping for a minute and pointing inside; perhaps it was he who drove Daisy and Gatsby over to East Egg the night of the accident and perhaps he had made a story about it all his own. I didn't want to hear it and I avoided him when I got off the train.

I spent my Saturday nights in New York because those gleaming,

dazzling parties of his were with me so vividly that I could still hear the music and the laughter faint and incessant from his garden and the cars going up and down his drive. One night I did hear a material car there and saw its lights stop at his front steps. But I didn't investigate. Probably it was some final guest who had been away at the ends of the earth and didn't know that the party was over.

On the last night, with my trunk packed and my car sold to the grocer, I went over and looked at that huge incoherent failure of a house once more. On the white steps an obscene word, scrawled by some boy with a piece of brick, stood out clearly in the moonlight and I erased it, drawing my shoe raspingly along the stone. Then I wandered down to the beach and sprawled out on the sand.

Most of the big shore places were closed now and there were hardly any lights except the shadowy, moving glow of a ferryboat across the Sound. And as the moon rose higher the inessential houses began to melt away until gradually I became aware of the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailors' eyes—a fresh, green breast of the new world. Its vanished trees, the trees that had made way for Gatsby's house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams; for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder.

And as I sat there brooding on the old, unknown world, I thought of Gatsby's wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy's

dock. He had come a long way to this blue lawn and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it. He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night.

Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter—tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther.... And one fine morning——

So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.

1984

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目录

1984: 汉英对照

一
二
三
三
四
五
六
七
八
九
十
十一
十二
十三
十四
十五
十六
十七
十八
十九
二十
二十一
二十二
二十三
二十四
新话原则

NINE TEEN EIGHTY-FOER

I
II
III
IV
V
VI

[VII](#)

[VIII](#)

[IX](#)

[X](#)

[XI](#)

[XII](#)

[XIII](#)

[XIV](#)

[XV](#)

[XVI](#)

[XVII](#)

[XVIII](#)

[XIX](#)

[XX](#)

[XXI](#)

[XXII](#)

[XXIII](#)

[APPENDIX: The Principles of Newspeak](#)

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书名：1984：汉英对照

作者：（英）奥威尔（Orwell, G.）著；柳青译

出版方：吉林出版集团有限责任公司

出版时间：2013年2月

ISBN：9787553415253

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1984: 汉英对照

四月的一天，晴朗而寒冷，时钟敲过十三下，温斯顿·史密斯缩着身子溜进胜利大厦的玻璃门，他动作迅速，却还是慢了一些，风吹起沙土跟着他钻进了屋。

门厅里弥漫着煮白菜和旧垫子的味道，门厅尽头有一张并不适合放在室内的过于巨大的彩色宣传画。宣传画上只有一个一米多宽的庞大面孔。那是一张四十五岁左右的男人的脸，留着浓密的黑色胡须，粗犷而英俊。温斯顿走向楼梯，电梯是坐不上了，就算在最好的情况下，它也很少会开。为了配合仇恨周的节约运动，整个白天都停止供电。温斯顿的公寓在七层，三十九岁的他右脚踝上有一处因静脉曲张引起的溃疡，他只能慢慢地走，不时还要停下来歇一会儿。每层楼梯的平台处都在正对着电梯的墙上贴上了那张巨大的宣传画，画中人似乎在凝视着你，他的视线跟着人一起移动。而画的下方有这样一行字：老大哥在看着你。

公寓里，一个洪亮的声音正在念着和钢铁生产有关的数字。声音来自镶嵌在右墙上的一块类似毛玻璃镜子的长方形金属板中。温斯顿把声音调低，这个装置（被称为电屏）只能将声音调低，不能完全关上。温斯顿走到窗前，蓝色的党员制服让他瘦小的身材看起来愈发单薄。他的发色很浅，面庞红润，皮肤因长期使用劣质肥皂和钝剃须刀变得粗糙。寒冷的冬天才刚刚结束。

就算隔着紧闭的窗户，外面看上去仍然很冷。街道上，风裹挟着尘土和碎纸呼啸飞旋。虽然阳光明媚，天色湛蓝，所有的一切仍仿佛蜕去

了色彩，除了那些随处可见的宣传画。那张留着黑色胡子的脸从各个角落居高临下地看着。正对面的房子就贴了这样的宣传画，画上的人正用黑色的眼睛盯着温斯顿，“老大哥在看着你”。一张宣传画掉到了地上，它一角损破，被风吹动，发出啪啪的声响，一个单词时隐时现：英社。远远地，一架直升机在屋顶间飞过，像苍蝇一样在空中盘旋，又转了个弯飞走了。那是警察巡逻队正在窥视人们的窗户。但巡逻队并不让人畏惧，让人畏惧的是思想警察。

在温斯顿的身后，电屏还在没完没了地播放着关于钢铁产量及超额完成三个九年计划的报告。电屏可以同时接收和发送信息，温斯顿发出的任何声响只要比轻轻低语稍大一点，都将被电屏接收。而他不只会被听到，还能被看到，只要他待在这块金属板的特定范围内。当然，你没法知道某时某刻你的一言一行是否处在监视之下。你只能想象思想警察会以怎样的频率、怎样的标准接通某个人的线路，他们很有可能一刻不停地监视着所有人的线路。可以肯定，只要他们想，他们可以在任何时候接上你的线路。你不得不在这样的情况下生活——这就是生活，从习惯变成本能——设想一下，你发出的所有声音都将被监听，除非在黑暗中，你的每个举动都将被监视。

温斯顿保持着背对电屏的姿势，这样相对安全。但他清楚，就算背对电屏仍有可能泄露信息。一公里外就是他工作的地方——真理部，那是一幢高大的白色建筑，高高地耸立在一片脏兮兮的区域内。这里，他有些厌恶地想着——这就是伦敦，大洋国第三人口大省一号空降带的主要城市。他努力在记忆中搜寻关于童年的蛛丝马迹，难道伦敦一直是这样吗？到处都是19世纪的破房子，墙的侧面靠木架子支撑，窗户上钉着硬纸板，屋顶上铺着皱巴巴的铁皮，就连花园的围墙也已经东倒西歪？还有那些经历了空袭的地方，灰尘飞舞，野花在残砖断瓦间生长，许多

像鸡舍一样肮脏的木板房突然出现在爆炸后的空地上！但他的努力是徒劳的，他什么也想不起来，除了一片明亮的、背景难辨的、让人无法理解的画面，他的童年记忆里什么都没有。

真理部——用新话来说就是“真部”——和人们看到的所有建筑不同。它是幢金字塔结构的庞然大物，白色的水泥闪闪发亮。它一层一层地交叠着，高高耸起，足有三百多米。站在温斯顿所在的地方，刚好可以看到被人用漂亮字体写在白色墙壁上的三条党的标语：

战争即和平

自由即奴役

无知即力量

据说，真理部光是在地面上就有三千个房间，在地面下还有相应的附属建筑。整个伦敦只有三座外形和规模与之类似的大楼。这些大楼将它们周围的建筑映衬得渺小不堪。站在胜利大厦的顶部，可以同时看到这四座大楼，即四个部的所在地，政府的所有职能都分布在这四个部中。

真理部负责新闻、娱乐、教育、艺术；和平部负责战争；仁爱部负责法律和秩序；富足部负责经济。这四个部的名字若用新话来讲就是“真部”、“和部”、“爱部”和“富部”。其中，仁爱部是最令人战栗的一个，整幢大楼没有一扇窗户。温斯顿从来没有去过仁爱部，甚至不曾踏入距离它半公里的区域。这是一个非公莫入的地方，即使要进去，也要穿过遍布着铁丝网、设立着铁门和机关枪的道路。而在仁爱部外面的大街上，还有穿着黑色制服、带着警棍的警察，他们在街上巡逻，个个面目可怖。

温斯顿突然转过身来，换上一副心满意足的快乐表情，这是面对电屏时的明智之举。他穿过房间来到小厨房。在这个时间离开真理部，他无法在食堂吃午饭。而他也清楚，他的厨房里只有一块要留到明天早上作早餐的黑面包。于是，他从架子上拿起一个贴着白色标签的瓶子，瓶子里装着无色的液体：胜利杜松子酒。这种酒散发着令人恶心的汽油味，类似中国的白酒。温斯顿差不多倒了一茶杯，然后鼓足勇气，像喝药那样灌了下去。

他的脸立刻红了起来，泪水从眼角渗出。这东西的味道好像硝酸，喝的时候让人觉得后脑勺仿佛被橡皮棍狠狠地敲了一下。不过，过了一会儿，当胃里的灼烧感退去，世界看起来可爱多了。

温斯顿从印有“胜利香烟”字样的小匣子中抽出一根烟，不小心将它拿竖了，烟丝掉到地上，他只好再抽出一根，这次成功了。他回到起居室，在电屏左边的小桌子前坐下，从抽屉里拿出一根笔杆、一瓶墨水和一个四开大小的空白本子。本子的封皮是红色的，上面还压有大理石花纹。

通常电屏会被安装在房间最里面的墙上，方便监视整个房间，但不知为什么，温斯顿起居室的电屏却被装在了正对着窗户的较长的那面墙上。电屏的一边有个凹进去的地方，大概是建房子时计划留出来放书柜的，温斯顿就坐在这里，他尽可能地向后靠过去，让自己待在电屏的监视范围外。当然，他的声音还是可以被听到，但只要他待在现在这个位置，他就可以不被看到。这房子与众不同的格局让他想到了这点。

而他之所以要这样做还和他刚刚拿出的那个本子有关。这是个漂亮的本子。纸质细致而光滑，由于年代久远的关系——这种纸至少有四十年没再生产了——纸张有些泛黄。但他猜测这本子的年代很可能比四十

年还要长。他是在一间散发着臭味的小旧货店的橱窗里看到它的。这家店就坐落在一个破败的街区里（他也记不清具体是哪个区）。看到它的第一眼，他就遏制不住要拥有它的欲望。虽然党员不允许进入普通商店（即“自由市场的买卖”），但这个规定并没有被严格执行，因为有太多东西，比如鞋带和刮胡刀的刀片，不到这里就无法买到。他迅速地向街道两旁看了几眼，然后钻到店里，花了两块五毛钱将它买下，他还没想到要拿它来做什么。他将它收在公文包里，怀着惴惴不安的心情回了家，就算本子上一字未写，也可能引起怀疑。

他准备写日记，这件事并不违法（没有什么事会违法，因为不再有法律），但一旦被发现却有可能被处以死刑，或者至少被关到劳动营里服上二十五年徒刑。温斯顿将钢笔尖装到笔杆上，又在笔尖上舔了舔，清掉了上面的油。钢笔已经是古旧的东西，就算是签名也很少会用到，他私下里花了很大力气才弄到一支，而这样做仅仅因为他觉得只有用钢笔写字才配得上那漂亮、细致的纸张，他不能用蘸水笔在这样的纸上划抹。事实上，他并不习惯用手写字，除了一些便签，一般情况下他都是对着语音记录器口述事情，而他眼下要做的事当然不能用语音记录器。他拿起笔，在墨水里蘸了蘸，又迟疑了片刻。一种震颤的感觉充斥了他的身体，在纸上写上标题有着决定性的意义。他用纤小笨拙的字体写道：

一九八四年四月四日

他的身子向后靠去，整个人都被无助感吞噬。首先，他不能确定今

年是不是1984年，他能肯定的是他今年三十九岁，并且他知道自己是在1944年或1945年出生。但是现在要想准确地确认年份，没有一两年的误差是不可能的。

突然，他想起一个问题，他究竟为了什么写日记。为未来？为那些尚未出世的人？有那么一会儿，他的心思都放在了那令人生疑的年份上。他猛地想起新话中的一个名词“双重思想”。这是他第一次意识到自己正在做一件艰巨的事。人要如何和未来交流？这是不可能的。未来若和现在类似，未来不会听他说话；未来若和现在不同，他的预言就失去了意义。

有那么一会儿，他对着纸发呆。电屏里播着刺耳的军乐。奇怪的是，他看上去不只失去了表达自我的勇气，还忘记了他要表达的事情。过去的几个星期里，他一直在为这一刻做准备，他没有想过除了勇气他还需要什么。其实，写东西很容易，他只需要将多年以来一直盘桓在脑海里的那些没完没了的、焦躁的内心独白放到纸上就可以了。但在这一刻，这内心独白竟枯竭了。更何况脚上那静脉曲张引起的溃疡开始发作，痒得他难以忍受，他又不敢去抓，一抓就会红肿发炎。时间一点点地过去，面对着空空白纸，他只能感觉到脚上的瘙痒，电屏音乐的刺耳以及酒后的醉意。

突然，他慌张地写了起来，并不清楚自己究竟写了什么。他用孩子般幼小的字体在纸上肆意书写，先是忽略了大写字母，最后竟连标点也略过了：

1984年4月4日。昨晚看了电影，都是战争片。其中一部非常好看，一艘载着难民的轮船在地中海的某个地方遇到轰炸。看着胖男人在大海中拼命游泳试图逃脱追赶他的直升机，观众们非常开心。一开始，这男

人就像一头海豚在波涛中起伏，直升机上的人通过瞄准器发现了他，紧接着他的身上便布满枪眼，周围的海水也被他的血染成了粉红色，他的身体突然下沉，就好像海水从枪眼里灌了进去。在他下沉的时候，观众们哄堂大笑。之后人们看到一条满是孩子的救生艇待在盘旋着的直升机的下方。一个似乎是犹太裔的中年女人抱着三岁大的小男孩坐在船头。孩子吓坏了，号啕大哭，把头深深地埋进她的怀里，就好像要钻到她身体里，她则安慰着他，用双手将他环住，可她自己也因为恐惧面色发青。她以为她可以用手臂挡住子弹，保护她的孩子。直升机飞过来投下一颗二十公斤的炸弹，伴随着一道剧烈的光芒，小艇变成碎片。接下来的镜头非常清晰：孩子的手臂被炸得高高的，直升机前的摄影机一直追着它在拍。从党员的座位区传来一片掌声，群众区里却突然站出来一个女人，那女人嚷嚷着说这电影不应该放给孩子看，他们做得不对。直到警察赶来将她押了出去。我不觉得她会出什么事，没有人会关心群众说什么，群众的典型反应就是他们从来不……

温斯顿停下笔，一方面因为他感到肌肉在抽搐，他不知道为什么从他笔端倾泻的是这些垃圾。而奇怪的是，他忽然清楚地回想起一件毫不相关的事，他觉得自己完全有能力将这件事写出来。他想起来正是这件事让他突然萌生了回家写日记的念头。

假使这模模糊糊的事确实发生过，那它就发生在这天上午，在部里。

将近11点温斯顿工作的记录司为了给两分钟仇恨会做准备，大家纷纷将椅子从隔间里往外拉，直拉到大厅中央，正对着大型电屏。温斯顿刚要坐在中间一排的某个位置上，两个和他有点头之交的人出人意料地走了过来。其中一个是个女孩，经常和他在走廊里擦肩而过，他叫不出她的名字，只知道她可能在小说司工作，她经常满手油污地拿着扳手

——她负责为某个正在写长篇小说的部长维修写作机。她看上去胆子很大，大约二十七岁，有着一头浓密的黑发和长满雀斑的脸，她行动敏捷，就像运动员一样。她的腰间系着一条窄窄的鲜红色的饰带，那是青少年反性同盟的标志，饰带在她的工作服上绕了几圈，缠得刚刚好，巧妙地衬托出她臀部的线条。第一眼看到她，温斯顿就心生厌恶，他知道这是为什么。因为他努力制造出类似曲棍球场、冷水浴、集体远足那样排除杂念的氛围。几乎所有女人他都厌恶，特别是年轻貌美的。女人，尤其是年轻女人，总是盲目地追随着党，她们不假思索地接受党的口号，无偿地侦察那些异端思想。他觉得这个女孩比别的女人更加危险。一次，他们在走廊里相遇，她斜着眼睛迅速地打量了他一番，那眼神仿佛刺透了他的身体，瞬间将黑色的恐惧注入其中。他闪过一个念头：或许，她是思想警察。尽管这种可能性很小，接近她，仍会让他不舒服，而这不适感既包含敌意也包含恐惧。

另外一个是个男人，名叫奥布兰，是内党党员，有着重要且隐蔽的职务。温斯顿对他的职务只模模糊糊地知道个大概。看着这个身穿黑色制服的内党党员走过来，人群迅速安静下来。奥布兰是个大个子，体格壮实，他脖子短粗，面容粗糙、冷酷又幽默。尽管模样令人畏惧，举止却很有魅力。他有个小动作——推一推鼻梁上的眼镜，不知道为什么，这能让人放下对他的戒备——很难说清也很奇怪，这动作让人觉得他很文雅。若一直想下去，人们会联想到18世纪的贵族用鼻烟壶款待宾客。许多年来，温斯顿只见过奥布兰十几次，对他非常感兴趣，这不只因为奥布兰优雅的举止和拳击手般的外表反差强烈，而是温斯顿有个秘密的信念——也许还算不上信念，他多少希望奥布兰在政治方面不会那么正统。

奥布兰的表情让人不由自主地得出这个结论。也许，他脸上呈现的

不是“非正统”，而仅仅是“聪明”。但不管怎样，看着他的外表，你会萌生躲开电屏，和他单独聊聊的念头。温斯顿从来没有耗费半点力气证实这个猜测，事实上，他也没法去证实。奥布兰低头看了看手表，快11点了，显然他决定待在记录司直到两分钟仇恨会结束。他搬来一把椅子，坐在温斯顿那排，两人之间只隔了两个位子，夹在他们中间的是个淡茶色头发的身材矮小的女人，她就在温斯顿隔壁的办公室工作。至于那黑头发的女孩则刚好坐在他们的后面。

很快，大厅尽头的电屏里发出了可怕的演讲声，那声音非常难听，好像一台正在运作的大型机器在没有加油的情况下发出的噪音。这声音让人咬牙切齿，寒毛直立。仇恨会开始了。

像往常一样，屏幕上出现了人民公敌埃曼纽尔·高德斯坦因的脸。观众纷纷发出嘘声，淡茶色头发的女人还尖叫起来，叫声中混杂着恐惧与憎恶。高德斯坦因是叛徒，是堕落的人。很久以前（没有人记得究竟有多久）他是党的领导者，几乎和老大哥平起平坐。然后他参加了反革命活动，被判处死刑，但他又神秘脱逃，销声匿迹。两分钟仇恨会的内容每天都不一样，但每次都把高德斯坦因当做重中之重。他是头号叛徒，是最早玷污党纯洁性的人。后来的一切反党行为、一切破坏行动、一切异端思想和违规越轨的行为都是他教唆的。他仍然活着，仍在策划阴谋，他也许在国外，躲在外国人的庇护下，也许在国内，藏匿在某个地方——时不时就会传出这样的谣言。

温斯顿觉得自己的心脏正在缩紧。每当看到高德斯坦因的脸，他就心情复杂，这让他非常痛苦。高德斯坦因长着一张瘦削的犹太人的面孔，白发蓬松，还蓄着一小撮山羊胡——这是张聪明人的脸，但这脸又惹人生厌，鼻子又细又长，鼻梁上架着眼镜，看上去既衰老又愚蠢。他的脸让人想起绵羊，甚至连他的声音也和绵羊相似。高德斯坦因对党进

行攻击，他夸大其词，蛮不讲理，言辞恶毒，这套把戏就连孩子都能看穿，可听上去又有几分道理，人们不得不提高警惕。若头脑不够清醒，很容易就被他蛊惑。高德斯坦因辱骂老大哥，抨击党独裁，要求立即和欧亚国和谈，还要求言论自由、新闻自由、集会自由、思想自由。他情绪激动地叫喊着，说革命遭到了背叛——在讲这些话时，他语速极快，多使用多音节词。这分明是对党的演说风格的拙劣模仿，他甚至使用了新话——毫无疑问，比任何党员在日常生活中讲到的新话都要多。在他说话的时候，为了防止有人被他似乎有些道理的花言巧语蒙蔽，电屏上，他的脑袋后面可以看到数不清的欧亚国士兵正排着纵队前进——这些身材壮硕的士兵都长着典型的亚洲人的脸，都面无表情，他们一队接一队地走着，绵绵不断地出现在电屏上，每个人看起来都一样。他们用沉重又富有节奏感的脚步声衬托着高德斯坦因的那类似绵羊的喊叫。

仇恨会只进行了半分钟，房间里就有一半人按捺不住愤怒发出咆哮。那扬扬得意的绵羊脸以及这绵羊脸后欧亚国震慑人心的力量都让人无法忍受。另一方面，只要看到高德斯坦因的脸，或者仅仅是想象一下他的样子，人们就不禁恐惧、愤怒。相比欧亚国或东亚国，他更频繁地成为人们仇恨的对象，因为无论大洋国和这两国中的哪一个开战，通常，它都要和另一国保持和平。但奇怪的是，虽然所有人都仇恨、鄙视高德斯坦因，虽然他的理论每天甚至一天上千次地在讲台上、在电屏内、在报纸里、在书本中遭到批驳、攻击、嘲弄，被当做毫无价值的垃圾。他的影响似乎从未减弱过，总会有一些新的什么人上当受骗，每天思想警察都会抓到受他指使的破坏分子和间谍。他是影子部队的领导者，这支部队由试图推翻政府的阴谋者构成，是个庞大的地下网络，即传说中的“兄弟会”。此外，还有一种秘密的说法称有一本收录了各种异端邪说的可怕的书在暗中散发。这本书由高德斯坦因撰写，没有名字，人们提起它时只会说“那本书”。不过，这些都是道听途说，一般的党员

都尽可能不去提兄弟会和那本书。

仇恨会进行到两分钟时，人们陷入狂热。他们跳起来，在座位上尽情叫喊，试图盖过电屏里传来的发狂一般的羊叫声。那个浅茶色头发的矮个子女人涨红了脸，嘴像离开水的鱼一张一合。就连奥布兰也满面通红。他坐在椅子上，身体笔直，本就厚实的胸膛膨胀起来，像被电击一般颤抖不已。在温斯顿身后，黑头发的女人大喊着“猪猡！猪猡！猪猡！”还突然捡起厚厚的新话词典向电屏砸去。词典击中高德斯坦因的鼻子，又弹了起来，他的讲话没有受到丝毫影响，仍在继续。某个瞬间，温斯顿意识到自己和周围的人并无两样，他跟着大家一起叫喊，还用脚后跟使劲去踢椅子腿。这正是两分钟仇恨会的可怕之处，没有人被强迫着参加，但是没有人能避开它不参加。不出三十秒，人们就会抛开矜持。混杂着恐惧感和报复欲的快感，对杀戮、虐待、用大铁锤痛殴他人面部的渴望如电流一般通过人群，促使你背离自己的本意，变成一个面容扭曲、高声叫喊的疯子。但是，人体察到的这种愤怒只是一种抽象的、盲目的情绪，类似喷灯的火焰，可以从一个对象转移到另一个对象。因此，有那么一会儿，温斯顿不再仇恨高德斯坦因，而正相反，这仇恨之情转移到老大哥、党和思想警察上。在这一刻，他的心倒向了电屏上这个孤独的、被嘲笑的异端分子——他在这个充斥着谎言的世界里捍卫着真理和理智。但是，没过多久他又和周围的人融在一起，认为那些攻击高德斯坦因的话语都是正确的。此时，他对老大哥的厌恶又变成了崇拜，老大哥的形象愈发高大，他成了一个所向无敌、无所畏惧的保护者，宛若一块高高矗立的、与亚洲人对抗的巨石。而高德斯坦因虽然孤立无援，虽然连是否存在都尚存疑问，但他看上去就像个阴险的巫师，只需运用话语的力量就能让文明的结构毁坏殆尽。

有时，人能将仇恨的目标换来换去。温斯顿在转瞬之间就把对电屏

中人的仇恨之情转移到身后的黑发女子身上，其速度之快，其情之猛，就好像噩梦惊醒后猛地把头从枕头的一侧扭到另一侧。他的心中出现了“生动美丽”的幻觉：他会用橡皮棍将她打死，他要把她脱光了绑在木桩上，像处死圣·塞巴斯蒂恩那样，让她乱箭穿心。他还要强奸她，并在高潮时割断她的喉咙。他比从前更清楚，为什么自己那么恨她。他恨她，因为她年轻漂亮却不性感，他想和她上床却永远不会如意。她柔软的腰肢似乎在诱惑你伸出手臂搂住她，但上面围着的却是令人讨厌的红色腰带，一个咄咄逼人的贞节的象征。

仇恨达到顶点，高德斯坦因的声音真的变成了羊叫，而他的脸也一度变成羊脸。然后这羊脸又和欧亚国士兵融为一体。那士兵身材高大，样貌慑人，手中的冲锋枪正在咆哮，他似乎在冲锋，整个人好像要从电屏里跳出来。这吓坏了坐在第一排的人，一些人甚至开始向后靠去。但就在这一刻，电屏上，欧亚国的士兵变成了老大哥，他巨大的脸占满了整个屏幕——黑头发、黑胡子，面孔充满力量，安详沉稳。所有人都安下心来，没有人听见老大哥究竟说了什么。他仅有的鼓舞人心的话语被淹没在吵闹的战斗声里，难以听清，但他讲话本身就可以让人们恢复信心。在这之后，老大哥的脸隐去，电屏上出现用黑色粗体的大写字母写的三句标语：

战争即和平

自由即奴役

无知即力量

然而，老大哥的脸又在电屏上停留了几秒钟，也许它给人们的眼睛留下了太深的印象，以至于不能立即消失。浅茶色头发的女人扑在身前

的椅子背上，颤抖着轻声呼喊：“我的拯救者。”她向屏幕张开双手，接着又用双手捧起自己的脸。显然，她在做祷告。

这时，所有在场者都慢慢地、有节奏地、一遍又一遍地用低沉的声音喊着：“B—B！……B—B！”他们喊得很慢，第一个B和第二个B之间有长长的间隔。这低沉又模糊的声音很奇怪地带着野蛮的气息。在这样的背景下，人好像听到了赤脚踩地的声音和咚咚的鼓声。喊叫大约持续了30秒。在那些情绪盖过理智的时刻，人们常可以听到这样的叫声。在某种程度上，它是对老大哥英明和权威的赞颂，但更多的，它是一种自我催眠，人们故意用有节奏的声音来麻痹自己的意识。温斯顿由内而外地感到寒冷。两分钟仇恨会上，他无法控制住自己， he和大家一起陷入狂热。这非人的叫喊声“B—B！……B—B！”让他惊恐。

当然，他也和大家一起呼喊，他不可能不这么做。这是人的本能：隐藏自己的真实情感，控制自己的表情，别人怎么做你就怎么做。但有那么几秒钟，他的眼神可能出卖了他，就在这一刻，颇具意义的事情发生了——如果它的确发生过。

那一瞬间，他捕捉到奥布兰的目光。当时奥布兰站着，正准备用他特有的姿势将之前摘下的眼镜戴上。就在他们四目相交的不到一秒的时间里，温斯顿明白了——是的，他明白！——奥布兰和自己正思考着相同的事。一个不容置疑的信息传递过来，就好像两个人的大脑都敞开，彼此的思想借助目光传递到对方那里。“我和你一样，”奥布兰似乎在对着他说。“我完全清楚你的感受，我知道你蔑视什么、仇恨什么、厌恶什么，但别担心，我站在你这边。”之后这心意相通的时刻过去，奥布兰的表情又变得和其他人一样深不可测。

过程就是这样，温斯顿开始怀疑事情是否真的发生过。这样的事情

不会有后续，所有这些只不过让他保持信念、怀抱希望——除了他自己，还有人是党的敌人。也许关于庞大的地下网络的传言是真的，也许兄弟会真的存在。尽管诸如逮捕、招供、处决类的事一直在发生，但人们仍然没法确定兄弟会存在，有时温斯顿觉得它有，有时又觉得没有。没有任何证据，除了那些捕风捉影的东西，它们可能谕示着什么，也可能什么都不是：无意中听到的谈话，厕所墙上胡乱涂写的模糊语句，甚至陌生人相遇时所做的也许是“暗号”的小动作。统统这些全是猜测，很有可能都出自他的臆想。他又回到他的隔间去，没有再看到奥布兰。他几乎没想过继续和奥布兰那样接触。这太危险了，就算他知道怎样做，他也不能去做。他们只不过在一两秒的时间里混混沌沌地交换了目光，这就是事情的全部。而即便如此，对生活在自我隔绝中的孤独的人来说，它依然值得铭记。

温斯顿坐直了身子，打了个嗝，杜松子酒的味道从胃里泛了上来。他注视着本子，发现自己在胡思乱想的时候一直在写东西，就像自动动作。并且字迹也不同于以往的潦草。他的钢笔在光滑的纸上用大写字母整整齐齐地写着：

打倒老大哥

打倒老大哥

打倒老大哥

打倒老大哥

打倒老大哥

一遍又一遍，写满了半张纸。

他不由得一阵恐慌。其实毫无必要，因为这些字并不比写日记一事更加危险，有那么一会儿，他想把写了字的纸撕掉，就此放弃记日记。但他没有，他知道这毫无用处。不管他是不是写“打倒老大哥”，不管他是不是继续写日记，都没有什么不同。思想警察仍会抓住他。他已经触犯了——就算他没用笔写在纸上，他仍犯了——包含其他一切罪行的根本性的大罪，他们称它“思想罪”。

思想罪无处遁形，你可能成功地躲上一阵儿，甚至几年，但他们早晚会的抓到。

总是在夜里——抓捕总发生在夜里。他们突然将睡梦中的你惊醒，一面粗暴地抓着你的肩膀，一面用灯光直射你的眼睛，你的床边围绕着一堆凶恶的面孔。绝大多数情况下，不会有审讯，也不会有报道。总是在夜里人们消失了。你的名字将从登记簿上移除，你的所有记录都将被清除，你的存在遭到否定，接着你就会被遗忘。你被除掉了，被消灭了，人们通常将之称为“被蒸发”。

有那么一会儿，他变得歇斯底里，开始在纸上胡乱地涂写：

他们会枪毙我我不在乎，他们会在我的脖子后面开枪我不害怕打倒老大哥，他们总是在你的脖子后面开枪我不害怕打倒老大哥。

他向椅背靠去，稍稍觉得惭愧，放下了笔。突然他一惊：有人在敲门。

已经来了！他像老鼠似的一动不动，徒劳地祈祷不管是谁敲一会儿就离开。但是没有，敲门声又响了起来。不开门最糟糕了，他的心像鼓一样怦怦地跳着，不过，习惯成自然，他也许仍面无表情。他站起来，脚步沉重地向门走去。

二

握住门把手的瞬间，温斯顿发现日记还摊在桌子上，上面尽是“打倒老大哥”，字体大到站在房间的另一端都能看得一清二楚。这简直愚蠢透顶！但他知道，这是因为哪怕身处慌乱，自己也不想让未干的墨迹弄脏洁白的纸。

他吸了口气，将门打开，顿时放下心来，感到一阵温暖。门外站着的是一个面容憔悴的女人，她脸色苍白，头发稀疏，皱纹满面。

“哦，同志，”她用沉闷的声音说，“我听到你进门的声音，你可以帮我看下厨房的水池吗？它好像堵住了。”

原来是帕森斯太太，同层楼某个邻居的妻子。（党不大赞成使用“太太”这一称呼，认为对所有人都应称“同志”，但人们仍然会对某些女人使用这个词）她大概三十岁，看上去比实际年龄老得多，脸上的皱纹仿佛嵌着灰尘一般。温斯顿跟着她向走廊走去。这样的修理工作每天都有，让人心烦。胜利大厦是始建于1903年的老房子，已经摇摇欲坠。天花板和墙上的灰泥频繁剥落，天气一冷水管就开裂，一下雪屋顶就漏水，即使不是为了节约而将暖气完全关闭，也只会提供一半的热量。维修之事除非自己动手，否则必须经过高高在上的委员会的批准，可就连换玻璃这样的小事，委员会也会拖上两年才解决。

“汤姆刚好不在家。”帕森斯太太含含糊糊地说。

帕森斯的屋子比温斯顿的大一点，是另一种形式的阴暗。所有东西都像被殴打过一样，就好像刚才有猛兽闯了进来。地板上散落着各种体育用品，曲棍球棒、拳击手套、破足球、翻过来的汗渍斑斑的短裤。桌

上放着脏碟子和折了角的练习本，墙上贴着青年团和侦察队的红旗以及巨大的老大哥的画像。房间像这幢大楼的其他地方一样弥漫着煮白菜的气味，不仅如此，还有浓烈的汗臭味。随便是谁一闻就闻得出来，但不知为什么，这气味来自一个当时并不在场的人。而在另一个房间里，有人在吹用梳子和厕纸做成的喇叭，试图和上电屏里传出的军乐声。

“是孩子们。”帕森斯太太忧虑地向那扇房门看去，“今天他们没出去，当然——”

她有个习惯，话只说一半。厨房的水池里溢满了绿色的脏水，味道比煮白菜还难闻。温斯顿跪下来检查水管的拐弯处，他不愿意动手，也不愿意弯下身子，这会诱发他的咳嗽。帕森斯太太什么忙都帮不上，站在一旁观看。

“当然，如果汤姆在家，一会儿就能修好。”她说，“他喜欢做这个，他的手很巧，汤姆就是。”

帕森斯是温斯顿在真理部的同事。他胖胖的，人有点儿蠢，带着一腔愚钝的热情，在各方面都很活跃。他是那种不问为什么，有献身精神又劳劳碌碌的人，党要凭借他们维持稳定，他们的作用甚至超过了思想警察。帕森斯三十五岁，就在不久前刚刚不情愿地脱离了青年团，而在进入青年团之前，他曾不顾规定在少年侦察队多待了一年。他在真理部的职务是附属性的，对智力没有要求。但另一方面，他同时还在体育委员会和其他组织负责领导集体远足、自发游行、节约运动和义务劳动等活动。他会在抽烟斗的工夫用平静的语气颇为自豪地告诉你，在过去的四年里，他每天晚上都会去集体活动中心。而无论他走到哪里，他都会把汗味带过去，那汗味倒成了他精力充沛的证据。

“你有扳手吗？”温斯顿说，他正摸着水管接口处的螺帽。

“扳手，”帕森斯太太的声音有些犹疑，“不知道，说不定，也许孩子们——”

在一阵脚步和喇叭声后，孩子们冲进客厅。帕森斯太太拿来了扳手。温斯顿放掉脏水，忍着恶心将堵塞水管的一团头发取出。他用冰冷的自来水洗干净他的手，回到另一个房间。

“举起手来！”一个粗鲁的声音喊道。

有个九岁的男孩从桌子后面跳了出来，他很漂亮也很凶狠，正用一支玩具手枪对着他。比他小两岁的妹妹也用木棍对着温斯顿。两个孩子都穿着蓝色的短裤和灰色的衬衫，都戴着红领巾。这是侦察队的制服。温斯顿把手举过头，心神不宁，男孩的样子如此凶狠，不完全是在游戏。

“你这个叛徒！”男孩喊着，“你这个思想犯！你是欧亚国的间谍！我要枪毙你！我要消灭你！我要把你送到盐矿去！”

两个孩子突然围着他跳了起来。“叛徒！”“思想犯！”小女孩完全在模仿他的哥哥。这多少有些令人害怕，他们好像两只小虎崽，用不了多久就会成为吃人的野兽。男孩子眼神里写着狡猾和残忍，流露出要踢打温斯顿的意图，他清楚自己很快就会长到可以这样做的年纪了。温斯顿只能庆幸男孩手里拿的不是真枪。

帕森斯太太不安地看着孩子们，起居室的光线非常好，温斯顿发现她的皱纹里果真嵌着灰尘。

“他们真能闹，”她说，“没能看绞刑，他们很失望，所以才这样

闹。我太忙了，没时间带他们去，汤姆下班又晚。”

“为什么不能去看绞刑！”小男孩大声问。

“要看绞刑！要看绞刑！”小女孩一边叫着，一边蹦来蹦去。

温斯顿想起来，今天晚上公园里要对几个犯了战争罪的欧亚国罪犯执行绞刑。这种事每个月都有一次，大家都喜欢看。小孩子总是吵着嚷着让大人带他们去。他向帕森斯太太道完别就向门口走去。但他没走几步就被人用什么东西在脖子上重重打了一下，顿时他的脖子就像被烧红的铁丝刺进去那样，疼痛难忍。他转过身，看到帕森斯太太正抓着儿子往屋里拖，那男孩则把一个弹弓往口袋里塞。

“高德斯坦因！”在屋门关上的刹那，男孩喊道。温斯顿惊讶地发现帕森斯太太既无奈又恐惧。

回到自己的公寓后，他快步走向电屏，摸了摸脖子，在桌子旁坐下。电屏已经停止播放音乐，一名军方人士正一字一句地念着关于冰岛和法罗群岛间设置的新式浮动堡垒的事，这个堡垒不久前刚刚建成。

温斯顿心想，那女人一定为她的孩子担惊受怕。再过两年，他们就会没日没夜地监视她。几乎所有孩子都是可怕的。最糟糕的是侦察队已经将他们培养成肆意妄为的家伙，但同时他们又不会有任何违抗党的控制意向。恰恰相反，他们崇尚和党有关的一切。他们唱歌、列队前进、打起旗帜、远足、用木制步枪进行操练、高喊口号、崇拜老大哥——这在他们看来光荣而有趣。他们凶残的本性被激发出来，用在国家的敌人、外国人、叛徒、思想犯身上。超过三十岁的人普遍害怕自己的孩子。差不多每个星期《泰晤士报》都会看到关于偷听父母谈话的小暗探的报道——通常会称之为“小英雄”——偷听父母的危害性言论，然后向

思想警察报告。

弹弓造成的疼痛消退了。他漫不经心地拿起笔，思考是不是还要在日记上写些什么。突然，他又想起奥布兰。

究竟有多久了？大约七年前，他曾作过一个梦，梦到自己穿过漆黑的房间。当他走过时，有个人在他身侧说：“我们将在没有黑暗的地方相见。”声音很平静，不是命令。他继续向前走。奇怪的是，当时，梦中的这句话并没有给他留下多深的印象。直到后来这句话才渐渐有了意义。

他记不清第一次见到奥布兰是在做梦之前还是在做梦之后。他也记不清自己什么时候意识到说这句话的是奥布兰。但不管怎样，他确信，在黑暗中和他说话的就是奥布兰。

温斯顿一直无法确定奥布兰是敌是友，即便这天上午他注意到他闪烁的眼神。但这似乎并不重要。他们心意相通，这比友谊或同志感情更加重要。他说“我们将在没有黑暗的地方相见”。温斯顿不知道这话的含义，只单纯觉得它一定会通过某种方式实现。

电屏里的讲话声暂停下来，一声清亮的号响打破了沉寂。接着，刺耳的讲话声又出现了：

“注意！请大家注意！现在播放从马拉巴阡县发来的急电。我军在南印度取得了辉煌的胜利，战争即将结束。急电如下——”

坏消息来了，温斯顿想。果然，在描绘完欧亚国部队被惨烈歼灭的情形以及列举完一堆关于杀敌、俘虏的数字后，电屏里宣布从下星期开始巧克力的供应量由每天30克削减到每天20克。

温斯顿又打了一个嗝，酒劲几乎完全消退了，只留下泄气的感觉。也许为了庆祝胜利，也许为了让人们忘掉削减巧克力供应量的消息，电屏里传来铿锵有力的曲子《为了大洋国》。照规矩，在这个时候他应该立正。但电屏看不到他现在待的位置。在这首曲子后，电屏播起了轻音乐。温斯顿走到窗口，仍用后背对着电屏。天气依然那么寒冷、晴朗。远处，一枚火箭弹爆炸了，发出震耳欲聋的爆炸声。在伦敦，这种火箭弹一星期要落下二三十枚。

楼下的街道上，那张破损的宣传画被风吹得哗哗作响，“英社”二字时隐时现。英社，英社的神圣原则。新话，双重思想，变幻莫测的过去。他觉得自己正徜徉在海底森林里，他在这畸形的世界里迷失了，化身成怪兽。他独自一人。过去已经死了，未来不能想象。他如何确定究竟谁和他站在一起？他如何知道党的统治不会永远继续下去？真理部那白色墙壁上的标语再次引起他的注意，就像这些问题的答案：

战争即和平

自由即奴役

无知即力量

他从口袋里掏出一枚二角五分的硬币，硬币上也刻着这三句标语，字小而清晰。硬币的另一面是老大哥的头像。即使在硬币上，他的眼睛也紧盯着你。硬币上、邮票上、书籍的封面上、旗子上、烟盒上——他无处不在，而他的眼睛总是盯着你，他的声音总是环绕着你。不管你是睡着还是醒着，在工作还是在吃饭，在室内还是在室外，在浴室里还是在床上——你无处躲避。除了你脑袋里的几立方厘米，没有什么东西属于你。

太阳西斜，真理部的窗户因为没有阳光照射就像堡垒上的枪眼一样冰冷。在这金字塔状的庞然大物前，他感到恐惧。它太强大了，不可能被攻克，一千枚火箭弹也无法将它摧毁。他再次想起那个问题，他为谁写这日记。为未来，为过去——为了想象中的时代。可等待着他的不是死而是消灭。日记会被烧毁，他也将“消失”。只有思想警察能读到他写的东西，然后他们又会将关于它的记忆清除。当你存在的痕迹，哪怕你随意写在纸上的没有姓名的字句都被清除得一干二净，你要如何向未来呼喊呢？

电屏里的钟响了十四下。他必须在十分钟内离开，他要在14点30分上班。

奇怪的是，钟声让他振奋。他是孤独的幽灵，他说了谁也听不到的真理。只要他说出来，保持清醒和理智，你就承袭了人类的传统。他返回桌边，蘸了蘸墨水，写道：

为未来或过去，为思想自由、张扬个性且不孤独的时代——为真实的，不会抹杀清除过往之事的时代致敬！

从千篇一律的时代，从孤独的时代，从老大哥的时代，从双重思想的时代——致敬！

他想，他已经死了。对他而言，只有理清了自己的思绪，才算迈出决定性的一步。行动的后果就蕴涵在行动本身中。他写道：

思想罪不会让人死，思想罪本身就是死。

现在，既然他意识到自己已经死去，那么尽可能活得长便至关重要。他右手的两个指头沾上了墨水。没错，这样的小细节也会暴露你。

部里随便一个爱管闲事的人（可能是个女人，比如浅茶色头发的女人和黑色头发的女孩）也许会去打探为什么他会在中午吃饭时写东西，为什么他用的是老式钢笔，而他又在写些什么——然后向相关部门暗示一下。他到浴室里用一块粗糙的深褐色肥皂洗去墨迹。这肥皂擦在皮肤上就像用砂纸磨东西，很适合拿来清洗墨迹。

他把日记放进抽屉，把它藏起来是不可能的。不过他至少可以确定它是否被人发现。往里面夹头发太明显了，所以他用指尖蘸了一颗不容易发现的白色灰尘，放在日记本的封面上。若有人动了本子，它就会掉下来。

三

温斯顿梦见了他的母亲。

母亲失踪时，他不是十岁就是十一岁。她身材高大，轮廓优美，沉默寡言，动作缓慢，还有一头浓密美丽的金发。至于他的父亲，他就印象模糊了。只依稀记得他又黑又瘦，总是穿着整洁的深色衣服（温斯顿尤其记得父亲的鞋跟很薄），戴着一副眼镜。他们是在五十年代的第一次大清洗中“消失”的。

在梦中，他的母亲在距离他很远的一个很深的地方坐着，怀里抱着他的妹妹。他几乎记不起妹妹了，只记得她瘦小羸弱，非常安静，有一双机警的大眼睛。她们待在一个类似井底、墓穴的地方，一边抬着脑袋看着他，一边慢慢下沉。她们在一艘沉船的大厅里，透过漆黑的海水仰望他。大厅里有空气，他们都能看到彼此，她们在绿色的海水中下沉，很快就被淹没了。他在的地方有光，有空气，她们却被死亡卷走。她们之所以会在下面，是因为他在上面。他们都清楚这点。从她们的表情上，他看不到她们对他的责备，为了让他活下去，她们必须死，无可避免。

他不记得发生了什么。但在梦里，他明白，从某种角度讲，母亲和妹妹是为了他牺牲的。有时在梦里，人仍然能够进行思考。人在梦里意识到的事情，醒后再看，仍然意义匪浅。母亲去世快三十年了，温斯顿突然发现她的死是那么悲惨，这样的悲剧现在已经不存在了。他想悲剧只发生在遥远的过去，在那个时代，仍然存在着个人私事、存在着爱和友谊。在那个时代，一家人要相互支撑而无须问为什么。关于母亲的回忆深深刺痛了他的心，她为爱他而死，可当时年幼自私的他却不清楚要

如何来回报这种爱。不知道为什么，他记不清具体的情况，母亲出于对忠诚的信念牺牲了自己，而那忠诚只属于个人，不可改变。这样的事情在今天已不可能发生，今天世上充斥着恐惧、仇恨、痛苦，却没有情感的尊严，没有深深的、复杂的哀痛。

他从母亲和妹妹那大睁着的眼里看到这一切，她们在绿色的水里仰望他，她们在几百英尺下，继续下沉。

突然，一个夏日的傍晚，他站在了松软的草地上，夕阳的斜晖将土地染成了金黄色。这景象经常出现在他的梦里，以至于他不能确定此情此景是否真的存在于现实中。从睡梦中醒来，他把这叫做黄金乡。那里有一大片被野兔啃过的老草场，草场中间有一条被人踩出来的小径，上面到处可见鼯鼠的洞。草场对面是参参差差的树丛，榆树的枝条在微风中轻轻摇晃，它抖动着的茂密的树叶就像女人的长发。而在不远处还有一条清澈的小溪在缓缓流淌，溪中有鱼在游弋。

那个黑头发的女孩正穿过草场向他走来，猝不及防地脱掉了衣服，高傲地将它们丢到一边。她的身体光洁白皙，却挑不起他的欲望，事实上，他几乎没怎么看她。她扔掉衣服的姿态令他敬佩。她的动作中混杂着优雅和满不在乎的意味，就好像摧毁了整个文化、思想的体系，就好像不经意地挥一挥手，就能将老大哥、党、思想警察都扫荡干净。这动作同样属于遥远的过去，温斯顿喃喃地念着“莎士比亚”的名字，醒了过来。

电屏里传来了刺耳的哨音，一直持续了三十秒。此时是早上7点15分，这是办公室工作人员起床的时间。

温斯顿艰难地从床上爬起来——他浑身赤裸，作为外党党员他每年

只有三千张布票，一套睡衣就要花去六百张——他拎起挂在椅子上的背心和短裤，背心已经褪了颜色。再过三分钟就是体操时间。他忽然剧烈地咳嗽起来，咳得直不起身，每天起床，他都会咳上一阵，把肺咳清。之后，他仰着身子躺到床上，深深地喘几口气，恢复了呼吸。由于咳得过于用力，那静脉曲张形成的溃疡又痒了起来。

“三十岁到四十岁的一组！”一个尖利的女声响起。“三十岁到四十岁的一组！请大家站好，三十岁到四十岁的！”

温斯顿立即翻身下床，在电屏前站好。电屏上有一个年轻的女人，骨瘦如柴却肌肉发达，身着束腰外衣和运动鞋。

“屈伸手臂！”她喊道，“请跟我一起做。一、二、三、四！一、二、三、四！同志们，精神些！一、二、三、四！一、二、三、四！……”

咳嗽发作造成的痛感还没有驱走梦留下的印象，而这富有节奏感的运动又帮助温斯顿强化了梦的记忆。他一面机械地挥动着手臂，做出与做操相应的愉悦表情，一面回忆童年的情景。这非常困难，关于五十年代晚期的记忆已然褪去，找不到可供参考的资料，就连生活都变得模糊混沌。记忆中的重大事件也许根本就没发生过，就算你记住事情的细节，你也没法重塑那氛围。况且，还有相当长的一段时期是空白的，你根本想不起发生了什么。那时的一切都和现在不同。国家的名字、地图上的形状，都和现在大不一样。比如那时一号空降场叫英格兰、不列颠。不过伦敦倒一直都叫伦敦，对此温斯顿很有把握。

什么时候打仗，温斯顿记不清了。但在他童年时，倒是有很长一段时间都很和平。因为他记得，某次空袭让大家措手不及，或许就是科尔

彻斯特被原子弹袭击的那次。关于空袭本身，他没有记忆，但他能忆起父亲如何紧抓着他的手，带他前往一个位于地下的、很深的地方。他们沿着螺旋状的楼梯不停地走，一直走到他两腿发软开始哭闹。他的母亲失魂落魄地，慢慢地跟在后面，怀里抱着他的妹妹：他不能确定抱在她怀里的究竟是他的妹妹还是几条毯子，不能确定那个时候他的妹妹是否已经降生。他们最后来到一个喧闹拥挤的地方，一个地铁站。

地铁站的石板地上坐满了人，铁制铺位上也全都是人。温斯顿和家人找到一块空地，在他们身旁一个老头儿和老太太并肩坐着。老头儿穿着黑色套装，十分得体，后脑上还戴着黑布帽子，他头发花白，满脸通红，蓝色的眼睛里溢满泪水。他身上散发出浓烈的酒气，就好像从他皮肤中流出的不是汗而是酒，这忍不住让人猜想他眼睛里流出来的也是酒。他虽然醉了，却非常悲伤。温斯顿用他那幼小的心灵体会他的痛楚，一定发生了可怕的事，那一定是件不能被原谅又无法挽回的事。他觉得他知道这件事。老头儿深爱的——也许是他的小孙女，被杀死了。每隔几分钟老头儿就会说：

“我们不应该相信他们。我说过的，孩子他妈，是不是？这就是相信的结果。我一直这么说，我们不应该相信那些同性恋。”他们究竟不该相信谁？温斯顿忘记了。

自那之后战争不断。不过，严格地说，不是同一场战争。在他小时候，有几个月伦敦发生了巷战。有些巷战他印象深刻，可要叙述整个过程，说出某一时间交战的双方是谁，那就做不到了。因为没有任何相关资料、没有任何有关此事的只言片语，除了目前的国家联盟外也没有提到其他什么联盟。而现在，举个例子，1984年（如果真是1984年），大洋国和东亚国结盟，一起对抗欧亚国。但不管是在公开场合还是在私下的谈话里，都未承认这三大国曾有过不同的结盟。而温斯顿很清楚，仅

仅4年前，因为和东亚国交火，大洋国就曾和欧亚国结盟。只是这仅仅是由于记忆力失控才侥幸记住的片断。按照官方的说法，盟友关系从未发生过变化。大洋国和欧亚国交战，大洋国一直在和欧亚国交战。眼下的敌人是绝对邪恶的象征，这意味着无论过去还是未来，都不可能和它站在同一边。

他的肩膀尽可能地向后仰去（他用手托住屁股，做上半身的转体，据说这对背部肌肉有益）——打仗的事也许是真的，如果党能够控制过去，说某件事从未发生过——那不是比拷打和死刑更可怕吗？

竟说大洋国从来没和欧亚国结过盟。他，温斯顿却记得就在四年之前，大洋国还曾和欧亚国结盟。但这个常识立足何处呢？这常识只存在于他的思想里，而他的思想很快就会被消灭。如果其他人都接受了党强加的谎言——如果所有记录都这样说——那么这个谎言就会被载入史册成为真理。党有一句口号：“谁能控制过去谁就能控制未来；谁能控制现在谁就能控制过去。”而过去，尽管它的性质可以被篡改，但它却从未被改变过。什么东西现在是正确的，那它永远都是正确的。这非常简单，人只需要不停地、反复地战胜记忆。他们把这叫做“现实控制”，用新话来说就是“双重思想”。

“稍息！”女教练喊，语气温和了一些。

温斯顿放下手臂，缓缓地吸了口气。他陷落在双重思想的迷宫里。知还是不知，知晓全部情况却故意编造谎言，同时持有两种相互矛盾的观点。一方面明知二者的矛盾之处，一方面又对二者都确信无疑。用逻辑来反对逻辑，在否定道德的同时拥护道德，在声称不可能有民主的同时又声称党是民主的捍卫者。忘掉那些应当忘掉的事，再在需要的时候回忆起它们，然后再忘掉，最重要的是，要用同样的方法处理这过程本

身。这简直太妙了：有意识地进入无意识，然后继续，让人意识不到自己对自己进行了催眠。要了解“双重思想”，就要使用双重思想。

女教练命令大家立正。“现在看看谁能摸到自己的脚趾！”她热情洋溢，“弯腰，同志们，开始，一——二！一——二！……”

温斯顿最讨厌这节操，一阵剧烈的痛感从他的脚踝传到屁股，让他咳嗽起来，他从沉思中获得的快感消失殆尽。被修改的过去实际上被毁掉了。假使过去只存在于你的记忆中，除此之外别无证据，你拿什么证明哪怕是显而易见的事实呢？他试图想起他第一次听到老大哥这名字是在哪一年。大概是在六十年代，但无法确定。在党史里，老大哥在革命一开始就是领导者。他的功绩可以一直追溯到四十年代和三十年代。那时，资本家还戴着样子古怪的圆形礼帽，乘着锃亮的豪华汽车，或坐着带玻璃窗的马车穿梭在伦敦的街道上。没人知道这说法有几分真，几分假。温斯顿甚至记不起党建立的具体时间，在六十年代之前他似乎没有听说过“英社”一词，但它的旧话形态，即“英国社会主义”，可能在六十年代之前就出现了。每件事都面目模糊。有时，你很清楚哪些是谎言，比如党史中说飞机是党发明的，这不可能。因为他很小就知道飞机了。但你无法证明这点，没有任何证据。他人生之中只有一次掌握了确凿证据，证明某个历史事实是伪造的，那是——

“史密斯！”电屏里传来吼叫，“6079号温斯顿·史密斯！没错，就是你！再弯低些！你能做得更好。你没尽力，再低一些！好多了，同志！现在，全队稍息，看着我。”

温斯顿突然大汗淋漓。他的表情让人捉摸不定，永远不要流露出一不高兴的神色！千万不能表现出不满！转瞬间的一个眼神就会暴露自己。他站在那里看女教练举起双臂，她的姿势说不上优美，却很干净利落。

她弯下腰，将手指的第一关节垫在了脚下。

“就这样，同志们，我希望看到你们所有人都这样做。再看我做一遍。我三十九岁了，有四个孩子。可是瞧！”她再次弯下腰。“你们看，我的膝盖没有弯曲，如果你想你也可以做到。”她直起身子。“四十五岁以下的人都能碰到脚趾。不是所有人都能上前线打仗，可至少要保持身体健康。想想那些在马拉巴前线的战士！想想水上堡垒的水兵！想想他们都经历了什么。再来一次。好多了，同志，好多了。”她看着温斯顿，鼓励他。而他正用力向前弯下身体，膝盖笔直，双手碰触脚尖。数年来，他第一次做到这个程度。

四

温斯顿叹了口气，就算坐在电屏旁他也不能控制自己不在每天工作伊始叹气。他拉出语音记录器，吹掉话筒上的尘土，戴上眼镜，然后把从办公桌右侧气力输送管送出的四小卷纸铺开，夹在一起。

他隔间的墙上有三个小洞。在语音记录器右边的是传达书面指示的气力输送管；左边略大些的用来送报纸，而位于侧墙上温斯顿触手可及的用来处理废报纸的椭圆形洞口则被铁丝网罩住。像这样的洞口在大楼里有成千上万，到处都是，不只房间里有，就连走廊上也每隔一段距离就设置一个。出于某种原因，人们叫它记忆洞。当你要销毁某样文件时，当你看到废纸时，你能随手掀起离你最近的洞盖子将它们扔进去，它们会被一股温暖的气流卷走，卷到大楼隐蔽处的大型锅炉里。

温斯顿察看着那四张展开来的卷纸，每张纸上都有一两句指示，非新话，但包含大量新话词汇，这是内部行话的缩写。它们是：

泰晤士报 17. 3. 84 bb 讲话误报非洲矫正

泰晤士报 19. 12. 83 预报三年计划四季度83处误印核实现刊

泰晤士报 14. 2. 84 bb 富部误引巧克力数据修改

泰晤士报 3. 12. 83 bb 关于双倍增加不好的指示提到非人全部重写存档前上交

温斯顿感到一丝得意，他将第四项指示放到一旁，这件事非常复杂，且意义重大，最好留到最后再做。另外三则是例行公事，虽然第二件需要查阅大量数据，非常乏味。

温斯顿拨了电屏上的“过刊”号码，要来了相关日期的《泰晤士报》，没几分钟，报纸就被输送过来。

他收到的指示都和文章或新闻有关，出于某种原因，按照官方说法，它们必须被核正。举个例子，3月17日《泰晤士报》中提到，老大哥在前一天的讲话中预言南印度前线不会发生什么事情，欧亚国不久便会对北非发动进攻。事实上，欧亚国最高司令部没有理会北非，反而攻打南印度。这就需要人们对老大哥的预言进行修改，使之符合现实。再比如，12月19日的《泰晤士报》公布了1983年第四季度，即第九个三年计划的第六季官方对各类消费品产量的预测。而今天一期的《泰晤士报》刊登了实际产量。两相对比，之前的每项数字都错得离谱。对温斯顿来说，他的工作就是要改正之前的数字让它们和后来的相应。至于第三项指示，针对的是几分钟就能改好的小错误。

就在二月份，富部曾许诺（用官方的话说就是“绝对保证”）1984年内巧克力的供应量不会减少。实际上，温斯顿知道这星期一过完巧克力的供应量就要从三十克削减到二十克。因此，他要官方的诺言换成一句提醒式的话语“四月份可能会减少供应量”。

每完成一项指示，温斯顿就要把语音记录器记下的更正字条附在相应的《泰晤士报》上，一起送入气力输送管。然后他要尽可能自然地将发给他的指示和写好的草稿揉成一团，扔进记忆洞，让它们被烈火焚毁。他不知道气力输送管会通向哪里，那里是看不见的迷宫。但他了解大致情况。任何一期《泰晤士报》在被核正修改后，都将被重新印刷并存档，原有的则会被销毁。而这种情况不单适用于报纸，还适用于书籍、期刊、小册子、宣传画、传单、电影、录音、漫画、照片——一切可能承载政治思想或意识形态的文字、文件。

过去时时刻刻都在被修改，被要求和现况相符。如此，党的所有预言都是正确的，任何违背当前需要的东西都不允许留有记录，历史就像那种可以被反复重写的本子，只要需要，就可以涂涂抹抹。而一旦这项工作完成，人们就无法证明历史被伪造过。在记录司最庞大的处里，人们的主要工作就是回收、销毁一切不合时宜的书报文件，这个处要比温斯顿所在的大得多。

因为政治联盟的变化和老大哥的预言谬误，一些《泰晤士报》可能已被改写了十多次，它们仍按照原来的日期进行存档，至于原有的、与之冲突的版本则不会被留下。书籍也是一样，不止一次地被收回来重写，再发行时还拒绝承认做过修改。就连温斯顿处理后便销毁的书面指示也从未明言或暗示要伪造什么，它总是使用笔误、错误、误印或误引。

温斯顿一边修改富部的数字一边想，这连伪造都算不上，这不过是用一个谎言代替另一个谎言。人所处理的绝大部分材料都和现实世界毫不相关，甚至连显而易见的谎言与现实间的联系都没有。无论是修改前还是修改后，这些统计数字都荒诞不经。大部分时候，它们都是人凭空想象的。比如，富部预计该季度鞋子产量将达到一亿四千五百万双，而实际上只有六千二百万双。于是，温斯顿修改了预计的数字，将它减少为五千七百万，这样就可以说超额完成了任务。不过，六千二百万既不比一亿四千五百万真实，也不比五千七百万真实。实际上很可能一双鞋子都没生产。而更有可能的是没有人知道究竟生产了多少鞋子，也没有人关心这事。人们知道的是，每季度书面上都生产了天文数字般的鞋子，但大洋国里却有近一半人是光着脚的。所有被记录下来的事情无论大小皆是如此。每件事情都处在影子世界中，到最后，人们连今年是哪一年都说不清了。

温斯顿看了看大厅，一个名叫狄洛森的小个子就坐在大厅的另一端，温斯顿的对面。他下巴微黑，看上去精明谨慎，正不慌不忙地工作着。他的膝盖上放着一摞报纸，嘴巴靠近语音记录器，好像除了电屏，并不想让别人听到他的讲话。他抬起头，眼镜反了光，似乎充满敌意。

温斯顿并不了解狄洛森，不知道他负责什么工作。记录司的人都不喜欢谈论自己的工作。在没有窗户的长长的大厅两边是一个个小的办公隔间，翻动纸张发出的声音和对语音记录器讲话的嗡嗡声没完没了。其中一些人尽管每天都出现在走廊里，每天在两分钟仇恨会上挥舞双手，温斯顿却连名字也叫不上来。他知道在他隔壁，浅茶色头发的女人一天到晚忙碌不停，她的工作仅仅是在报纸上查找那些被蒸发的人们的名字，并将它们删去。这件事很适合她，就在几年前，她的丈夫才被蒸发掉。而在不远处的另一个小隔间，是他的同事安普福斯，他性格温和，有点窝囊，总是心不在焉，耳朵上还长着密密的毛。可他在运用押韵、格律上却有着惊人的天赋。他的工作就是修改那些违背官方意识形态却又不得不保留的诗歌——他们称之为“限定版”。

整个大厅有五十多个工作人员，这些人还只是处下的一个科，即记录司这庞杂机构的一个小细胞。在记录司里，从上至下，工作多得难以想象。在规模庞大的印刷车间里，有编辑、有校排、有制造假照片的设备精密的暗房。在电屏节目处，有工程师、有制片和各种擅长模仿他人声音的演员。此外，还有数目众多的资料核查员，忙着开列需要被回收的书籍、期刊的清单，还有不知姓名的领导们在制定政策，决定什么保留、什么伪造、什么销毁。司里有用来存放被修改的文本的大型仓库和用来焚毁文本原件的隐蔽的锅炉。

记录司不过是真理部的一个部门，事实上真理部的主要工作并不是改写历史，而是为大洋国的公民提供报纸、电影、教材、电屏节目、戏

剧、小说——从雕像到标语，从抒情诗到生物论文，从小孩的拼写书籍到新话词典——所有能够想到的信息、教育、娱乐。真理部不单要满足党的各种需求，还要制造一些低层次的东西满足无产阶级的需要。因此，它特地单辟了一些部门，生产除了体育、占星、罪案外别无他物的垃圾报纸以及五分钱一本的、内容刺激的小说和色情电影、伤感音乐——这些音乐都是用一种被称作谱曲机的特殊的搅拌机机械式地做出来的。不仅如此，它还有一个部门专门负责创作低级色情的文学——新话叫色情科。这些文学被密封发行，除了相关工作人员谁也不许看，就连党员也被禁止浏览。

又有三条指示从气力输送口传出来，所幸都是一些简单的事务。在两分钟仇恨会开始前，温斯顿就将它们处理完毕。仇恨会后，他回到他的小隔间，从书架上取下新话词典，把语音记录器推到一边。他擦了擦眼镜，开始处理当天上午的主要工作。

温斯顿生活中的最大乐趣便是工作。他的大部分工作都是常规性的，沉闷单调，但偶尔也会有非常困难的事情，会让你像解数学题一样忘掉自己，沉浸其中——那是些微妙复杂的伪造工作，你只能凭借对英社原则的了解和对党意图的揣测来完成。温斯顿颇擅长此事，有一次，他甚至受命用新话改写《泰晤士报》的头版文章。他将之前放在一旁的那份指示打开：

泰晤士报 3.12.83 bb 关于双倍增加不好的指示提到非人全部重写存档前上交。

用老话（或标准英语）即：

1983年12月3日《泰晤士报》所载的关于老大哥所下指示的报道非

常不妥，其中提到了不存在的人。全部重写，并在存档前交由上级过目。

温斯顿将这篇问题报道重新阅读了一遍。原来老大哥在里面表扬了一个名为FFCC的机构，该机构的主要职责是为水上堡垒的士兵提供香烟等物资的供给。在这篇报道中，内党要人威瑟斯受到了特别嘉奖，得到了一枚二等卓越勋章。谁料三个月后FFCC突然被解散，原因不明。尽管报纸和电屏都没有报道这件事，但可以肯定威瑟斯和他的同僚们失宠了。通常，政治犯不会被公开审判，也不会被公开批判。倒是在牵扯众多的大清洗中，叛徒和思想犯才会受到公判，他们可怜兮兮地坦白认罪，然后被处以死刑。但这几年才有一次。大多时候，令党头不满的人会悄无声息地消失，再也没有人见到他们，也不会有人知道在他们身上发生了什么，也许他们中的一些并没有死。在温斯顿认识的人里，有三十多人就这样消失了，其中还不包括他的父母。

温斯顿用纸夹轻轻擦了鼻子，在他对面，狄洛森仍在对着语音记录器说话，他抬起头，眼镜上又出现一道敌意的光。温斯顿不知道狄洛森的工作是不是和自己的一样，这样麻烦的工作不可能完全交给一个人，但另一方面，若把这事交给一个委员会去做就等于公开承认了伪造。因此，很有可能，修改老大哥讲话的工作由十几个人共同负责，他们要将各自的修改版上交，由内党的智囊首领选出一个加以编辑、核对。待一切进行完毕，这份被选中的谎言就会被载入档案，成为真理。温斯顿不清楚威瑟斯失宠的原因，也许因为腐败，也许因为失职，也许因为老大哥要铲除过于受人爱戴的下属，也许因为他和某个异议人士走得太近。也许——最有可能的理由是——清洗和蒸发都已是政府机制的必要组成。

指示里提到“不存在的人”，这是和威瑟斯下落有关的唯一一条线

索，它说明威瑟斯已经死了。不是所有人被逮捕都可以这样推测，有时人们会被释放，享受一两年的自由，然后才被处死。还有时，你认为已经死了的人会像鬼魂一样突然出现在公审大会上，他做的供词还会牵连数百个人，然后他才永远地销声匿迹。但这次不同，威瑟斯是“不存在的人”，这意味着他从未存在过。这让温斯顿觉得单单修改老大哥所讲话语的倾向性远远不够，最好是将它改成和原有话题毫无关联的事。

他可以将讲话改成常见的对叛徒和思想犯的斥责，但这太明显了。而如果他杜撰一场胜仗，抑或是第九个三年计划的超额完成，又过于复杂。最好的办法是完完全全凭空虚构。忽然，他的脑子里出现了奥吉维尔同志的形象，他刚刚在战场上牺牲，是个现成的例子。老大哥不时就会表扬低级别的普通党员，让他们的生死成为他人效仿的对象。今天老大哥应该纪念下奥吉维尔同志。实际上并不存在什么奥吉维尔，但这不要紧，只要印几行字，放上几张伪造的照片，他就“存在”了。

温斯顿思考片刻，将语音记录器拉出来，模仿起老大哥的讲话腔调，这腔调包含着军人和学者两种截然不同的风格，同时还有自己的套路——自问自答。（同志们，我们从这件事上得到了怎样的教训？教训，这是英社的基本原则，这……等等，等等）这很容易模仿。

奥吉维尔同志在三岁时除了鼓、轻机枪、直升机模型外，什么玩具都不要。六岁时就参加了侦察队，到九岁便当上队长，十一岁时他就将偷听到的他叔叔所讲的有犯罪倾向的话报告给思想警察。十七岁时他成为少年反性同盟的区域组织者。十九岁时，他设计的手榴弹被和平部采用，第一次试验便炸死了三十一个欧亚国俘虏。他二十三岁时在战场上牺牲。当时他正带着重要文件飞行在印度洋上空，敌人的喷气式飞机发现了他，紧追不舍。他将机枪捆在身上，跳出飞机，带着文件没入大海。老大哥认为这样的结局令人羡慕。老大哥还就奥吉维尔同志这纯洁

无瑕又忠诚可鉴的一生发表了感慨。他不抽烟，不喝酒，除了每天在健身房里锻炼的一个小时外，没有任何娱乐。他发誓要孤独一生，因为在他看来，婚姻和家庭会让人无法将一天二十四小时全部投入到工作中。除了英社的原则，他从不谈论其他话题，除了打击抓捕间谍、破坏分子、思想犯和叛国贼，他的生活没有其他目标。

温斯顿想了很久，要不要授予奥吉维尔同志卓越勋章，最后还是决定不授予，这样就少了很多核查工作。

他又看了看他对面隔间里的竞争对手，好像有什么东西告诉他，狄洛森正在做着和他一样的事情。他不知道最后会采纳谁的工作成果，但他觉得一定会是自己的。一个小时前还不存在什么奥吉维尔同志，现在他却成了事实。他有种奇妙的感觉，他造得出死人，却造不出活人。在现实中从未存在过的奥吉维尔同志，现在却存在于过去，当伪造之事被遗忘，他就会像查理大帝或恺撒大帝那样成为真实的存在，且有证据可以证明。

五

食堂设在深深的地下，天花板很低，领午餐的队伍慢慢地挪动着。这里到处是人，吵闹嘈杂。炖菜的腾腾蒸气从餐台的铁栏处钻出，泛着金属的酸味，它没能将杜松子酒的气味压住。在食堂的另一端有个小酒吧，小到仿若开在墙上的洞，只要一角钱就能买到一大杯杜松子酒。

“正在找你！”温斯顿背后传来一个人的声音。

他转过身，原来是在研究司上班的朋友赛姆。也许在眼下这个世界称其为“朋友”并不妥当，如今人们没有朋友，只有同志。不过和一些同志交往会比和另外一些更愉快些。赛姆是语言学家、新话学家，是编纂新话词典的众多专家中的一个。他的身材很小，比温斯顿还小，他的头发是黑色的，眼睛大大地突起，神情既悲伤又有几分嘲讽。和人讲话时，他习惯盯着人的脸，那双大眼睛仿佛在人的脸上搜寻着什么。

“你有刀片吗？”他说。

“一片也没有了。”温斯顿有点心虚，“我找遍了，都用完了。”

每个人都跑过来管你要刀片。实际上，温斯顿攒了两个刀片。过去几个月刀片一直短缺。在任何时候都会有一些必需品是党的商店里供不应求的。有时是扣子，有时是线，有时是鞋带，现在是刀片。人们只能偷偷摸摸地去“自由”市场购买。

“我的刀片已经用了六个星期了。”他又加了句假话。

队伍向前挪动了一点，人们停下时，他回头看着赛姆。俩人都从堆放在餐台上的油乎乎的盘子中取出了一个。

“昨天看绞刑了吗？”赛姆问。

“有工作要做，”温斯顿淡淡地说，“我可以在电影上看。”

“那可差远了。”赛姆说。

他用充满嘲弄意味的目光打量着温斯顿。“我了解你。”那眼神好像在说：“我已经看穿了你，我知道你为什么不去看绞刑。”作为一个知识分子，赛姆又正统又恶毒。他会幸灾乐祸地谈论直升机如何袭击敌人的村庄，谈论思想犯如何被审讯，如何招供，如何在仁爱部的地下室里遭受处决。这让人非常不快。和他说话，总要想办法岔开话题，如果可能，最好将话题引到关于新话的技术性问题上，他是这方面的权威，且兴趣浓厚。温斯顿将头扭到一边以便躲开他黑色的大眼睛。

“那绞刑很棒，”赛姆回忆，“就是把他们的脚绑起来不大好。我喜欢看他们的脚在空中乱踢。最重要的是，最后，他们的舌头会伸出来，颜色非常青。这些细节特别吸引我。”

“下一个！”一个系着白围裙，拿着勺子的人喊道。

温斯顿和赛姆将他们的盘子放到餐台的铁栏下，食堂的工作人员立即为他们盛好午饭——一盒灰粉色的炖菜，一块面包，一块干酪，一杯不加奶的胜利咖啡和一片糖精。

“电屏下面有张空桌，”赛姆说，“我们顺便买点儿酒。”

他们拿着装有杜松子酒的马克杯穿过拥挤的人群，来到了空桌前，把盘子放在铁制的桌面上。不知什么人在桌子的一角弄洒了菜，就像吐出来的一样让人恶心。温斯顿拿起酒杯愣了一会儿，然后鼓足勇气，将这带着油味的东西吞了下去。当眼泪流出来时，他感觉到饥饿，便一勺

一勺地吃起炖菜。菜炖得一塌糊涂，里面有些软塌塌的粉红色的东西，好像是肉。在把餐盒里的炖菜吃光前，他们谁也没有说话。而在温斯顿左边，一个声音又粗又哑的人像鸭子一样说个不停，在人声喧闹的餐厅里尤其刺耳。

“词典编得怎么样了？”温斯顿大声说，试图压过餐厅里的喧哗。

“很慢，”赛姆答，“我负责形容词，很有趣。”

说到新话，赛姆的精神就来了。他推开餐盒，用细长的手指拿起面包和干酪，因为不想大声喊话，他的身体向前倾斜。

“第十一版是定稿。”他说，“我们要搞定语言的最终形态——也就是说，除了这种语言，人们不能再说其他形式的语言。等这工作一完，像你这样的人就要重新开始学。我敢说，你一定以为我们的工作创造新词。不，完全不是。我们在消灭单词，几十几百地消灭，每天都是这样。我们让语言只剩下一副骨头。2050年前过时的词，十一版中一个都没有。”

他大口大口地吃着面包，然后带着学究式的热情又说了起来。他又黑又瘦的脸庞光彩焕发，那嘲弄的目光消失了，取而代之以梦呓般的神情。

“消灭单词真是妙不可言。动词和形容词有很多是多余的，名词也可以去掉好几百个，其中既有同义词也有反义词。总之，如果一个词表达的只是另一个词相反的意思，那它还有什么必要存在下去呢？就拿‘好’来说。有了这个字，为什么还需要‘坏’字？用‘不好’就可以了。这比用‘坏’要好，这正好表达了和‘好’相反的意思。再比如，你需要一个比‘好’语气要强一些的词，为什么要用诸如‘精彩’、‘出色’等意思含混又

没有用处的词呢？‘加倍好’就可以了。当然，我们已经在使用这些词了，在新话的最终版里，不会再有其他的词。要表达好和坏的意思只要六个词就够了——实际上只有一个词。温斯顿，你不觉得这很妙吗？这原本是老大哥的意思。”

听到老大哥，温斯顿的脸上立即现出崇敬的神色，但赛姆还是发现他不够热情。

“温斯顿，你还没体会到新话的好处。”他有点失落，“就算你用新话写东西，你还是在用老话想问题。我在《泰晤士报》上读过你的文章，很不错，但它们只是翻译，你仍然喜欢老话，尽管它们词义含混，不实用，差别小。你不知道消灭词汇的好处。新话可是世界上唯一一种词汇越来越少的语言。”

温斯顿当然不能体会，但他还是露出赞同的笑脸。赛姆又咬了口面包，说：

“你不明白新话的目的就是缩小思考范围吗？让每个人都不会再犯思想罪，因为找不到可用来表达的词汇。每一个必要的概念都只能用一个词来表达，这样它的意义就受到限制，它的次要意义就会被消除，被遗忘。第十一版和这个目的相距不远。但在我们死后，这件事还会继续下去，词汇的数量每年都减少，意识的范围也跟着变小。当然，即便在现在，也没有理由去犯思想罪，这是自律和实际控制的事。但最终，没有这个必要。什么时候语言完善了，什么时候革命就完成了。新话就是英社，英社就是新话。”他用一种神秘又满足的语气说，“温斯顿，你想过吗，最晚到2050年，没有哪个活人能听懂我们现在的谈话。”

“除了……”温斯顿想说什么，又停住了。

他想说的是群众，他按捺住自己，不能确定这句话算不算异端，不过赛姆已经猜到他的心思。

“群众不是人。”他说得很轻率，“到2050年，也许更早，所有和老话相关的知识都会消失。过去的所有文学也都要被摧毁，乔叟、莎士比亚、弥尔顿、拜伦——他们的作品将只有新话版本，不但会被改成完全不同的东西，甚至会改成和他们所阐述的意义完全相反的东西。甚至党的书籍、口号都会被修改。自由的概念都消失了，又怎么会有‘自由即奴役’？到时候整个思想的氛围都会发生改变。事实上，不再有我们今天说的这种思想，关于思想，正统的含义是——不想、无意识。”

温斯顿突然觉得，总有一天赛姆会被蒸发。他太聪明，看得太透彻又说得也太直白。党不会喜欢他。总有一天他会消失，这情形已经写在了他的脸上。

温斯顿吃完面包和干酪，侧了侧身子去喝咖啡。他左边的声音粗哑的人还在没完没了地说着。一个背对着温斯顿的年轻女人，大概是他的秘书，就坐在那里听他讲，看上去对他讲的东西颇为赞同。温斯顿间或听到她说：“你是对的，完全同意。”她的声音很年轻，也很蠢。但那人即使在她说话的时候，也不会停顿下来。温斯顿知道这男人，他在小说司里担任要职。他大概三十岁，口才了得。他的头微微后仰，由于角度关系，他的眼镜反着光，温斯顿只能看到两个眼镜片。而他喋喋不休地讲着，你却一个词都听不清楚。温斯顿只听清一句话：“完全地彻底地消灭高德斯坦因主义。”这话说得飞快，就像铸成一行的铅字，所有词浑然一体。至于其他的话，听上去就是一片叽叽呱呱的噪声。不过，你仍然可以了解大致的内容。他很可能是在叱责高德斯坦因，认为要对思想犯和破坏分子采取更严厉的惩治办法。他也可能是在谴责欧亚国军队，或者歌颂老大哥、马拉巴阡县的英雄。不管他说的是什么，可以肯

定的是，他讲的每个字都绝对正统，绝对英社。

这张没有眼睛的脸和一张一合的嘴巴让温斯顿感觉微妙。他不像是真人，他是假人。他用喉头说话，不是大脑。他在无意识状态下说出这些话，不能算真正的话，就像鸭子嘎嘎的叫声。

赛姆安静了片刻，拿着汤勺在桌子上的那摊菜上画着什么。尽管餐厅里很吵，仍能听到隔壁桌的男人叽里呱啦的讲话声。

“新话里有个词，”赛姆说，“我不清楚你是否知道，叫鸭话，就是像鸭子那样嘎嘎地叫。这词很有趣，它有两个截然相反的意思。用在对手身上是骂人，用在自己人身上却是夸奖。”

赛姆一定会消失的，温斯顿想，他有点难过。虽然他知道赛姆看不起自己，不喜欢自己，且只要他认为有理，他就会揭发温斯顿是思想犯。赛姆身上隐约有些问题。他不够谨慎，也不够超脱，不知道隐藏自己的弱点。不能说他不正统。他真诚而热烈地坚信英社原则、敬仰老大哥、憎恶异端，这都是普通党员做不到的。但他却不是能让人放心依靠的人，他总是说些不该说的话。他读的书太多了，总是跑到艺术家聚集的栗树咖啡馆去。没有哪条法律禁止人们去栗树咖啡馆，但那个地方却很危险。一些被清洗的党的领导者之前也很喜欢到那里去，传说很多年前高德斯坦因也去过那里。赛姆的结局不难揣测。但一旦他发现了温斯顿那些秘密的念头，哪怕只有三秒钟，他也会立即向思想警察报告。当然别人也会这样，但赛姆尤其如此。仅有一腔热忱是不够的，正统思想就是无意识。

赛姆抬起头，说：“帕森斯来了。”

他的声音里似乎有这样一层意味：“他是个讨厌的傻瓜。”帕森斯是

温斯顿在胜利大厦的邻居，他穿过大厅走了过来。他有些胖，身高中等，头发浅黄，有一张神似青蛙的脸。他不过三十五岁，脖子和腰上就堆着一团团脂肪，但他的动作却像小孩子一样敏捷，他看上去就好像发育得过猛的小男孩。他虽然穿着一般的制服，却仍让人觉得套在他身上的是侦察队的蓝短裤、灰衬衫、红领巾。每每想起他，眼前总会浮现出胖胖的膝盖和从卷起的袖管中露出的短粗手臂。事实上，帕森斯确实如此，只要是参加集体远足或其他什么体育运动，他就会穿上短裤。他兴高采烈地向温斯顿和赛姆打招呼：“你好！你好！”在他们的桌子旁坐下，一股浓烈的汗臭味立即弥漫开来。他粉红色的面庞上挂着汗珠，他出汗的能力令人震惊。在集体活动中心，只要看到湿乎乎的乒乓球拍，就知道他刚刚打完球。

赛姆拿出一张写有单词的纸，埋头研究。

“你看他吃饭时还在工作，”帕森斯推了推温斯顿，说，“真积极，哎？老伙计，你在看什么？这对我来说太高深了。史密斯，老伙计，我说说我为什么要找你，你忘记捐款了。”

“什么捐款？”温斯顿一边问一边掏钱。人们必须将工资的四分之一拿出来捐款，款项多得记不清。

“仇恨周捐款，你知道每家都要捐。我是咱们那区的会计。我们可要好好表现，我和你说，如果胜利大厦亮出的旗帜不是那条街上最多的，可别怨我。你说过你要给我两块钱。”

温斯顿将两张皱巴巴脏兮兮的钞票交给他。帕森斯用文盲才有的那种整齐的字体记在本子上。

“另外，老伙计，”他说，“我听说我家的小叫花子昨天拿弹弓打了

你，我狠狠地教训了他。我告诉他，如果他再这么做，我就把弹弓没收。”

“我想可能他没看到绞刑，不高兴了。”温斯顿说。

“对，这正是我要说的。他的想法是好的，不是吗？他们俩都很淘气，但他们都很积极。他们成天想的不是侦察队就是打仗。你知道上个星期六，我的小女儿在伯克汉姆斯德远足时做了什么吗？她带着另外两个女孩偷偷离开队伍去跟踪一个可疑的陌生人，整整一个下午！她们跟了他两个小时，穿过树林，直到阿默夏姆，她们把那人交给了巡逻队。”

“为什么？”温斯顿多少有些惊讶，帕森斯继续得意地说：

“我的孩子认定他是敌人的特务，举个例子，他有可能是空降下来的。问题的关键就在这里，老伙计，你知道是什么让她怀疑他的吗？她发现他的鞋子很奇怪，她从没看到有人穿这样的鞋子。因此，他很可能是外国人。七岁的孩子，多聪明，是不是？”

“后来呢？那人怎样了？”温斯顿问。

“这我就说不出了。不过，我不觉得惊讶，要是——”帕森斯做了一个用步枪瞄准的姿势，嘴里还模仿着射击的咔嚓声。

“好。”赛姆敷衍地说，仍埋头看他的小纸条。

“我们不能给他们制造机会。”温斯顿老实地表示赞同。

“我的意思是，现在还在打仗。”帕森斯说。这时，他们头顶上的电屏响起一阵号声，就好像要证明帕森斯的观点似的。但这次不是宣布打

了胜仗，而是颁布一个公告。

“同志们！”电屏里传来一个年轻人激昂振奋的声音。“注意，同志们！有个好消息要告诉大家。我们取得了生产大胜利！截止到现在，各类消费品的生产数字表明，过去的一年里，我们的生活水平提高了二十多个百分点。今天上午，大洋国各地都举行了自发的游行，工人们走出工厂、办公室，高举旗帜涌上街头，以表达对老大哥的感激之情，老大哥的英明领导缔造了我们崭新的幸福生活。这里有部分统计数字。食品……”

“我们崭新的幸福生活”出现了很多次，最近，富部很喜欢使用这个词。帕森斯的注意力被号声吸引走。他呆呆地听着，一本正经又目光空洞，由于似懂非懂，他露出厌倦的神情。他不理解这些数字的含义，但他知道它们令人满意。他拿出肮脏的烟斗，烟斗里已经装上了黑黑的烟草。每星期只能得到一百克烟草，很少能将烟斗装满。温斯顿抽的是胜利牌香烟，他小心翼翼地将香烟横着拿在手里。现在他只剩下四根烟，要买新的必须等到明天。他闭上眼睛，不再理会身旁的噪声，专心聆听电屏里的声音。有人为感谢老大哥将巧克力供应量提高到每星期二十克举行了游行。温斯顿心想，昨天才刚刚宣布要将供应量减少到每周二十克，不过二十四小时，他们怎么就完全接受了呢？没错，他们完全接受了这件事。帕森斯就很容易地接受了。他就像牲畜一样愚蠢，隔壁桌上看不见眼睛的家伙也接受了，还情绪狂热，怒气腾腾地要求将那些提到上星期定量是三十克的人揭发出来、逮捕起来、蒸发消灭。赛姆也接受了，他要复杂一些，运用了双重思想。这么说就只有他一人还记得这件事吗？

一连串不可思议的数字从电屏里源源不断地涌出。和去年相比，除了疾病、犯罪和精神病外，食物、服装、房屋、家具、饭锅、燃料、轮

船、直升机、书、婴儿——所有的一切都增加了。每一年，每一分钟，每个人，每件事，都在飞速发展。温斯顿拿起勺子，像赛姆那样蘸着桌子上那摊菜画了起来。他画了一条线，画出一幅图。他愤愤地寻思着他的物质生活。难道会一直这样下去吗？食物永远是这个味道？他放眼望去，低低矮矮的食堂里挤满了人，人们频繁地蹭着墙壁，把墙蹭成了黑色。破烂的铁制的桌椅排得紧紧密密，以至于人一坐下来，就会碰到别人的手肘。勺柄是弯的，铁盘变了形，马克杯粗糙不堪。每样东西都沾满油污，每一道缝隙都积满灰尘。劣质杜松子酒、劣质咖啡、金属味的炖菜和脏衣服的气味混杂在一起，充斥了整个空间。你有权拥有的东西被骗走了，你的肚子，你的皮肤，都在做着无声的抗议。的确，在他的记忆里，任何东西都和现在没有什么不同。无论何时，食物从未充足过，衣物总有破洞，家具总是破旧，房间里的暖气总也供应不足，地铁一直拥挤，房子从来歪歪斜斜；面包是黑色的，茶叶是稀少的，咖啡是低劣的，香烟是匮乏的——除了人造杜松子酒，没有哪样东西又丰沛又便宜。而随着你上了年纪，情况会越来越糟。但如果因为生活在肮脏贫乏的环境里会让你不快，如果你厌恶这冗长的冬天、破烂的袜子、停开的电梯，厌恶这冰冷的自来水、糙劣的肥皂、漏烟丝的香烟以及那难以下咽的食物。那不是说明，这样的状况是不正常的吗？若非如此，如果你没有关于旧时代的记忆，如果你不知道从前并非如此，你为什么还会觉得这些是难以忍受的？

他再一次环顾了食堂。几乎所有人都面目丑陋，那些没穿蓝色的工作服的也没好看到哪儿去。食堂的另一端，有个身材矮小、神似甲虫的人，一双鼠目东张西望，充满猜疑，他独自一人坐在一旁喝咖啡。温斯顿想，若没有四下观察，人们就很容易相信大部分小伙子都高大魁梧，大部分姑娘都胸脯丰满，大部分人都长着金黄色的头发，都有被太阳晒出来的健康肤色，都生机勃勃，无忧无虑——这正是党塑造的完美体

格。但实际上，一号空降场的大多数人都瘦小干黑，病病恹恹。此外，部里到处都是甲虫一般的人。他们过早发胖，四肢粗短，终日忙碌，行动敏捷。他们臃肿的脸上多镶了一双细小的眼睛，还总挂着令人捉摸不透的表情。在党的领导下，这样的人繁殖迅速。

富部的播报结束了，号声再次响了起来，之后又播起了音乐，声音很小。之前那密集的数字轰炸让帕森斯兴奋不已，他将烟斗从嘴上拿开。

“今年，富部干得不错。”他摇晃着脑袋，说，“顺便说下，史密斯伙计，我猜你也没有刀片借我吧？”

“一片都没有，”温斯顿说，“我的刀片用了六个星期了。”

“没关系，我就是问一下，老伙计。”

“抱歉。”温斯顿说。

富部播报时，隔壁桌叽叽呱呱的声音暂停了一下，现在它又像刚才一样吵。不知为何，温斯顿想起帕森斯太太，想起她稀疏的头发和嵌着灰尘的脸。不用两年，她的孩子就会向思想警察揭发她，她就会消失不见。赛姆也会消失，温斯顿也会消失，奥布兰同样会消失。但帕森斯不会，那个叽叽呱呱的家伙不会，各个部门里那些庸碌往来的甲虫们更不会。

还有那个黑头发的女孩、小说司里的姑娘——她永远都不会被蒸发。本能告诉他谁能活下去，谁会被消灭。但是究竟是什么能让人幸存下来就很难说了。

突然，他回到现实。邻桌的那个女孩正侧着身子看着他，她的目光

虽然是斜的却很专注。这让人十分困惑。当她发现温斯顿已经注意到自己，就把眼神挪开了。

温斯顿非常惊恐，后背还冒出了汗。但这感觉很快就过去了，只留下一抹不安。她为什么要看他？她为什么跟着他？他想不起她是否在他来之前就坐在那里。昨天的两分钟仇恨会，她坐在他身后，而她完全没必要这样。很有可能，她真正的意图是听听他喊得够不够响。

之前的想法又浮现在他脑海里：她不一定是思想警察，但就是业余警察才最危险。他不知道她看了他多久，也许五分钟。也许，他并没有控制好他的表情，在公众场合和在电屏跟前放纵思绪非常危险。任何微小的细节，如不自觉地抽搐，不经意地烦恼，自言自语的习惯——只要看起来不正常，都有可能暴露你。那些不恰当的表情，如听胜利公告时将信将疑，本身就是犯罪。关于这个，新话里还有一个名词：脸罪。

女孩又回过头来看他，可能她并非在监视他，可能连续两天都靠近他坐只是巧合。他的烟熄了，为了不让烟丝掉出来，他小心地将它放在桌边。隔壁桌的人可能是思想警察，也许不出三天，温斯顿就会被抓到仁爱部的地下室去。但香烟不能浪费，他可以在下班后继续抽它。赛姆将那张纸条折好，放进口袋。帕森斯又张开了嘴。

“还没和你说过，老伙计！”他的嘴里还叼着烟斗，“有一次，我的两个孩子在市场上把一个老太婆的裙子给烧了，因为他们看到她用老大哥的画像包香肠。他们偷偷绕到她背后，用了一盒火柴去烧她的裙子，可把她烧得够呛。那两个孩子真是积极啊！现在他们在侦察队里受到了一流的训练，比我当年要好得多。你知道他们发给孩子们什么吗？插在钥匙孔里的窃听器！我的小姑娘那天晚上带回来一个，还插在我们起居室的门上做实验，听到的声音比趴在钥匙孔上大一倍。别看这是个玩

具，却能让他们树立正确的思想，是不是？”

电屏里发出尖利的哨音，该去工作了。三个人都站起身争先恐后地去挤电梯，温斯顿香烟里的烟丝掉了出来。

六

温斯顿在日记里这样写道：

三年前的一个晚上，天很黑。火车站附近窄窄的街道上，她靠门站着，身旁是晦暗不明的街灯。她很年轻，脸上涂了厚厚的粉。吸引我的正是她的妆容，白白的，好像一个面具。还有她的红唇。女党员从不化妆。街上没有其他的人，也没有电屏，她说两块钱。我——

一时间，他很难写下去。他闭上眼睛，用手指摩挲眼皮，似乎要将那不断出现在脑际的画面给挤出来。他按捺不住思绪，想放开喉咙大声呼喊，骂几句脏话，或者用脑袋撞墙，踢翻桌子，将墨水瓶扔到窗外去。总之，大吵大闹也好，让身体疼痛也罢，他想做点什么忘记那些折磨他的事情。

人最大的敌人就是自己的神经系统。人内心的紧张随时可能清楚地流露出来。几周前，他在街上遇到一个人，一个党员，外表非常平凡，大约三四十岁，身材瘦长，手里拿着公文包。在二人相距数米时，那人的左颊突然抽搐了一下，两人擦肩而过时，那人又像按相机快门那样迅速地抖了一下。尽管一看就是习惯，温斯顿仍然断定，这可怜的家伙完蛋了。下意识的动作最可怕，防不胜防，而说梦话又是其中最致命的一种。

温斯顿吸了口气，又继续写道：

我和她一起进了门，穿过后院，来到地下室的厨房。那里有一张床，靠着墙放着，还有一张桌子，桌上是一盏昏暗的灯。她——

他咬牙切齿，想吐唾沫。和那女人共处时，他想起了他的妻子凯瑟琳。温斯顿结过婚，也许现在，他仍算得上已婚人士，因为他觉得他的妻子仍然活着。他好像又闻到了地下室里那种混杂着臭虫、脏衣服和廉价香水的特殊气味，那里燥热非常又十分诱人。女党员不用香水，没法想象她们用香水的样子。香水是群众用的，在温斯顿心中，香水的气味和私通交融一体，不可分割。

两年以来，这是他第一次做堕落的事。嫖妓是禁止的，但有时你会鼓起勇气反抗这一禁令。这很危险，却说不上生死攸关。若没有其他罪行，嫖妓被抓的只需在劳改营里待上五年。避免被抓现行并不困难。贫民区里到处是准备好出卖自己肉体的女人，有时你只需支付一瓶杜松子酒——群众不允许买这种酒。在私底下，党鼓励卖淫，如此无法被完全压制住的本能就有了发泄途径。只要偷偷地、了无乐趣地与卑微可鄙的下层女人发生关系，一时的放荡无关紧要。只有在党员之间，这种事才不可饶恕。不过很难想象它会在现实中发生，尽管每次大清洗所有被告都承认犯了这样的罪。

党不仅要防止男人和女人结成它难以控制的忠诚同盟，党更要将快感从性行为中剥离。而无论在婚姻中，还是婚姻外，与其说性欲是敌人，不如说爱欲才是敌人。党员若结婚则必须经过一个专门的委员会的批准，虽然该委员会从未明示过批准的原则，但假如两人给人留下了“肉体吸引”的印象，他们的申请就会遭到拒绝。唯一得到承认的婚姻的目的便是为党生育后代。

性交被当做类似灌肠的令人恶心的小手术。关于这点，虽然没有明确地提出过，却间接地，从孩童时期就向人灌输。不仅如此，还有类似反性同盟这样的组织，向男男女女宣扬独身生活的好处，并认为所有人都应该采取人工授精（新话称作‘人授’）的方式进行生育，生下的孩子

则要交由公家抚养。温斯顿明白，这并不意味着所有这些都要被严格执行，但它们却迎合了党的意识形态。党试图扼杀性的本能，就算不能完全扼杀，也歪曲它，丑化它。他不知道为什么要这样，但这似乎是自然而然的事。至少对女人们而言，党在这方面的努力没有白费。

他又回忆起凯瑟琳。他们大概有九年，十年——快十一年没在一起了。奇怪的是，他很少想起她。他甚至可以一连几天忘记自己曾经结过婚。他们相处的时间只有大约十五个月。党禁止离婚，但如果没有孩子却鼓励分居。

凯瑟琳有一头浅黄色的头发，身材高挑，举止优雅。她的脸轮廓分明，像鹰一样，若你没有察觉到藏在这张脸背后的空乏，你会觉得她是个高贵的人。和其他人相比他们有更多机会亲密接触，因此刚结婚，他就发现她是他所有认识的人里，最愚蠢、最庸俗、最无知的。她的脑子里只有口号，只有党灌输给她的蠢话，但凡是党提出的，她都悉数接受。他在心里给她起了个外号：人体录音带。不过，若不是因为那件事，他仍可以勉强和她生活下去。那件事就是性。

只要碰触到她，她就会躲开，而且全身绷紧。抱着她就像抱着木头人，甚至当她主动拥抱他时，她那绷紧的身体也让他觉得她正用尽浑身力气推开他。她紧闭双眼躺在那里，忍受着一切，不拒绝，也不合作，这让人非常尴尬，而随着时间的推移，这简直令人厌恶。另一方面，如果双方都同意禁欲，他还能和她过下去。问题是凯瑟琳不同意这样做。她说，只要可能，他们就必须生个孩子。因此，他们的性生活非常有规律，每个星期都要来一次，除非在她不可能受孕的时间。她甚至会在早上提醒他，把它当做一件当天晚上必须完成的任务。她称这件事为“制造孩子”、“对党的义务”（她的确这么说）。没过多久，只要规定的日期近了，他就感到恐惧。所幸，他们没能生出孩子。最后她同意放弃。

不久，他们就分居了。

温斯顿默默地叹了口气，拿起笔写道：

“她一头躺到床上，没有任何准备动作，用最粗野、最可怕的方式撩起裙子，我——”

他看到自己站在昏暗的灯前，鼻子里充满了臭虫和廉价香水的味道，他觉得自己被什么东西击败了，满心怨懣，而此时，这感觉又和对凯瑟琳的想念混杂在一起，她那白皙的肉体在被党催眠后，冻结了。为什么事情总是这个样子？为什么他不能拥有自己的女人以结束这种每隔一两年便不得不去做肮脏下流之事的生活？真正意义上的爱情几乎不能去想象。所有女党员都差不多，禁欲和对党的忠诚一样在她们心中根深蒂固。她们的天性被孩提时代的说教，被游戏和冷水浴，被学校、侦察队、青年团灌输的垃圾，被演讲、游行、歌曲、口号、军乐，清除得干干净净。理智告诉他一定存在例外，但他的内心却不肯相信。她们个个遵循党的要求，个个坚不可摧。对他而言，与其说他希望有女人来爱他，不如说他更想摧毁那道贞洁之墙，哪怕这一生只成功一两次也好。美妙的性活动本身就是反抗。欲望就是思想罪。尽管凯瑟琳是他的妻子，若他唤起她的欲望，就相当于诱奸。

他要把剩下的故事写完：

我拧亮灯，借着灯光看到她——

在黑暗中待得久了，煤油灯发出的光芒也显得格外明亮。他第一次看清了那个女人的样子。他向她靠近了一步，又停下来，欲望和恐惧占满了他的心。他意识到到这里来有多么危险，这让他十分痛苦。很有可能，他一出去，巡逻队就将他逮捕，也许他们此时已经守在门外了。可

如果没达到目的就走——

一定要老实地写下来。在灯光下，他看清了她，她上了年纪，她脸上的粉厚得就像快要折断的硬纸面具。她的头发已经泛白，而最可怕的是，她张开的嘴宛若一个黑洞，里面什么都没有，她没有牙。

他慌慌忙忙地写着，字迹潦草不堪：

借着灯光，我看清了她。她是个很老的女人，至少有五十岁。可我还是走上前做了那事。

他用手指压了压眼皮，终于把它写下来了。不过，也没有什么特殊的感觉。这个方法并不管用，想扯开嗓子说脏话的冲动比之前更强烈了。

七

即使希望存在，

温斯顿写道，

它就在群众身上。

假使有希望，它一定在群众身上。只有在那些被忽视的芸芸众生之间，在那些占大洋国人口85%的人们身上，才有可能酝酿出将党摧毁的力量。党不可能从内部崩陷，就算其中真有敌人，他们也无法聚集一起相互确认，传说中的兄弟会也是如此，它无力汇聚众人，只能三三两两地碰个头。对他们来说，反抗意味着一个眼神，一个声音中的变化，至多跑出一点传闻。但是群众不同，只要他们发现自己的力量，他们就没必要躲在暗中进行活动，若他们愿意，他们可以像马驱赶苍蝇那样站出来，到第二天早上，党就会被打得支离破碎。他们迟早会这样做的，不是吗？但——

他想起来，有次他正走在一条拥挤的街道上，突然从前方传来数百人的喧闹声——那是女人的声音，绝望而愤怒，铿锵而低沉，如钟声一般久久回荡：“噢——噢——噢——噢！”他的心剧烈地跳动起来。开始了！他想。暴乱！群众终于摆脱了羁绊！而抵达出事地点时，他看到的却是两三百个女人围在街边商摊的前面。她们神情凄恻，好像沉船上注定无法获救的乘客。之前那一整片的绝望已经碎裂成七零八落的争吵。原来有个卖劣质铁锅的突然停止出货，而不管什么品质的厨房用品总是很难买到。已经买到锅的女人被人群推搡，想快点离开，更多没买到的则围住摊位，指责摊贩看人下菜碟，囤货不卖。接着，又一阵吵闹声响

起，两个胖女人争抢一只锅子，一个人的头发披散开来，锅的把手也被弄掉了。看着她们，温斯顿感觉恶心。就在刚才，数百人的喊叫还凝聚成那样可怕的力量，可她们为什么不为真正重要的事情大吼呢？

他写道：

不到觉醒的时候，便不会起身反抗；不反抗，就不会有觉醒。

这句话就像从党的教科书上抄下来的一样。当然，党曾声明，是自己将群众从奴役中解放出来的。革命前，他们被资本家摧残，不仅忍饥挨饿，还要挨打受难，女人被迫到煤矿做工（实际上，现在女人仍在煤矿里做工），小孩六岁大就被卖到工厂里。但是，遵循双重思想的原则，党同时又说，群众天生就是下等人，必须让他们处在“服从”的地位上，他们要像动物一样受制于简单的规定。而实际上，人们对群众知之甚少，也没有必要知道太多。在他们看来，群众的活动除了工作和繁衍，其他无关紧要。他们自生自灭，像阿根廷平原上放养着的牛群。他们似乎过着返璞归真的生活，一种从远古时代流传下来的生活。他们降生，在街头长大。十二岁做工，经过短暂美丽有如鲜花绽放般的青春期后，在二十岁结婚，三十岁衰老，他们中的绝大部分在六十岁时死去。繁重的体力劳动，家人与孩子、与邻居的争吵、电影足球啤酒还有赌博，这就是他们的一切。控制他们并不困难。思想警察的特务在他们中间转来转去，一面散布谣言，一面跟踪并消灭那些有可能变成危险分子的家伙。但却从来没有尝试过向他们灌输党的思想。群众不需要有什么强烈的政治意识，党只要求他们拥有单纯的能够随时唤起的爱国之情，这有利于让他们接受更长的工作时间和更少的劳动所得。有时，他们也会不满，但这不满不会造成什么后果。因为他们不具备抽象思考的能力，他们只会对具体的细枝末节感到不满。那些罪大恶极的事情他们往往视而不见。他们中的大多数家里没有电屏，警察也很少去管他们的

事。伦敦的犯罪率非常高，就好像一个充斥着小偷、强盗、妓女、毒贩和骗子的世界，但由于罪行都发生在群众身上，这并不重要。党允许他们按照老规矩处理道德问题，也没有将禁欲主义强加给他们。他们可以乱交而无需担心处罚，离婚也相对容易。若有必要，他们甚至被允许信仰宗教。他们不值得怀疑，正如党的口号说的那样：“群众和动物是自由的。”

温斯顿把手伸下去，轻轻挠了挠脚踝上的溃疡，那里又痒起来。说到底还是那个问题，你不可能知道革命前的生活究竟是什么样子。他从抽屉里拿出从帕森斯太太那里借来的、写给小孩子看的历史课本，将其中的一段话抄在了日记本上。

在伟大的革命开始前，伦敦并不是今天人们看到的这般美丽。那时的它是个黑暗、肮脏、充满痛苦的地方，很少有人能吃饱肚子，成千上万的穷人没有鞋子，居无定所。那些孩子年纪还没有你们大，就不得不去为残暴的老板干活，他们一天要工作十二个小时，动作稍慢就会遭到鞭打，还只能就着白水吃已经不新鲜的面包皮。

但就是在这样贫苦的大环境下，却还能看到一些高大华丽的房子，它们都属于有钱人，这些人被称作资本家，拥有数十位仆人。他们个个肥胖丑陋，面容凶狠，参见下页插图。他们穿着黑色的礼服大衣，戴着像烟囱一样的高帽。这就是他们的制服，其他任何人都不允许穿。

世界上的所有东西都是资本家的，所有其他人都是他们的奴隶。他们拥有一切土地、一切房屋、一切工厂、一切金钱。谁不听他们的话，谁就会被抓入大牢，或者被剥夺工作，活活饿死。普通人和资本家说话，要鞠躬行礼，摘下帽子，称他们“先生”，资本家的首领被称作“国王”，而且——

剩下的内容他都清楚。接下来，会提到穿细麻布法衣的主教，提到穿貂皮法袍的法官，提到脚镣手铐、踏车之刑，提到鞭笞、市长的宴会、亲吻教皇脚尖以及拉丁文里的“初夜权”。也许小孩子的课本里不会有这个。所谓“初夜权”就是依照法律规定，资本家有权和其工厂中的女人睡觉。

你要如何判定其中的哪些是谎言呢？现在，人们的平均生活水平比革命前好了，这可能确是事实。唯一相反的证据来自于你骨子里的无声抗议，这是一种本能，你觉得你无法忍受当下的生活，认为之前的情况一定有所不同。他突然觉得，现代生活真正的特点并不在于它的残酷和缺乏安全感，而在于它的空洞、晦暗和了无生趣。看看现实中的生活，它和电屏中没完没了的谎言毫无共同之处，和党宣称的理想目标也毫无共同之处。哪怕对党员来说，生活也是中性的多，政治性的少，比如努力完成日常事务，在地铁里抢占座位，缝补破袜子，向别人要一片糖精，节省一个烟头……而党的理想却大而可怕，闪烁着耀眼的光芒：满世界都是钢筋水泥、大型机器和骇人的武器，到处都是勇猛的战士和狂热的信徒。大家团结一心，齐步前进，所有人都思想一致，所有人都喊着相同的口号，所有人都不知休息地工作着，战斗着，不停地打胜仗，不停地迫害他人——三亿人的脸都一模一样。但现实中的世界，却是城市破败，民皆饥色，人们饿着肚子穿着破鞋住着19世纪建造的几经修补的破房子，房子里还满是煮白菜和厕所的臭味。他好像看到了伦敦，那里庞大破败，有上百万垃圾桶，皱纹满面、头发稀疏的帕森斯太太也在其中，她对堵塞的水管束手无策。

他又伸手去挠他的脚脖子。电屏日以继夜地往人们的耳朵里塞统计数字，以证明今天的人们有更多的食物、更好的衣物、更结实的房子、更美妙的娱乐活动——人们比五十年前更长寿、更高大、更健壮、更快

乐、更聪明，劳动的时间更少，受教育的程度更高。而这其中没有一个词能被证明、被推翻。比如，党说今天在成年群众中，识字的占40%，在革命前这个数字只有15%。党说，今天婴儿的死亡率只有160‰，在革命前这个数字高达300‰，就好比包含着两个未知数的等式。历史书上的每个数字，包括那些人们确信无疑的事情，都完全有可能出自虚构。就他所知，可能从来没有“初夜权”这样的法律，从来没有资本家那样的人，从来没有高礼帽那样的服饰。

一切都隐遁到迷雾里。过去被清除，清除的行为本身也被遗忘，谎言成为真理。他有生以来只有一次掌握了伪造历史的确凿证据，就在那件事发生之后，这点非常重要。证据在他的手指间停留了三十秒钟之久。1973年，一定是在1973年，无论如何，它发生在他和凯瑟琳分居的时候。但真正的关键时刻，却比这还要早七八年。

这件事要从六十年代中期说起，即彻底消灭革命元老的大清洗时期。截至1970年，除老大哥外，其他人都被清除掉了。他们都被当做叛徒、反革命被揭发。高德斯坦因逃走了，藏了起来，没人知道他跑到了哪里；剩下的有一小部分失踪了，大部分在规模宏大的公审大会上坦陈罪行，遭到处决。最后活下来的人中有三个人值得一提，他们是琼斯、阿朗森和鲁瑟夫。他们在1965年被捕，像往常一样消失了一两年，生死未卜，之后又被突然带了出来，并按照惯例供认罪行。他们承认通敌（当时的敌人就是欧亚国），承认盗用公款，承认密谋杀害党的领导并在革命发生前就反对老大哥的领导。他们还称自己导演的破坏活动造成了成百上千人的死亡。不过在坦白了这些罪行后，他们得到了宽大处理，不仅恢复了党籍，还收获了听上去很重要实际很悠闲的职位。他们都在《泰晤士报》上写了长长的检讨书，检讨自己堕落的原因并保证改过自新。

温斯顿曾在栗树咖啡馆见到过他们三个，那是在他们获释后不久。他记得他观察他们，又吃惊又害怕。他们比他年长得多，来自旧世界，是党建立之初那段英雄岁月留下的最后几个大人物。他们身上隐隐地散发地下斗争和内战时期的风采。尽管事实和年代已经面目模糊，他仍有一种感觉，在知道老大哥前，他就知道他们了。他们是罪犯，是敌人，是不能接触的人，同时可以肯定不出一两年他们就会死掉。落在思想警察手里的，没有一个能逃过这样的结局。他们只是等着进坟墓的行尸走肉罢了。

他们周围的位子 is 空的，靠近他们很不明智。他们安静地坐在桌子旁，对着店里特制的丁香味杜松子酒。三人之中，鲁瑟夫给温斯顿的印象最深。他曾是远近闻名的漫画家，他的讽刺漫画在革命前和革命中都给了人们很大鼓舞，即便在今天，每隔一段时间，《泰晤士报》上就会刊登他的漫画，不过那些漫画只是他早期风格的模仿，既缺乏活力又没有说服力，还总是同一个老主题：贫民窟、饥饿的孩子、巷战、戴着高帽的资本家——甚至在巷战里，资本家也戴着高高的礼帽——他徒劳地尝试重现往日风采。他灰色的头发泛着油光，脸皮松弛，布满伤疤，嘴唇则厚得像黑人。从他高大的身材可以看出，他曾经一定健壮无比，但现在垮下来，发起胀，似乎会向各个方向散开。他就像一座即将倒塌的大山，就要在你的眼前破碎。

当时正值下午三点，人不多。温斯顿已经忘记自己去咖啡馆的理由。咖啡馆里几乎没有客人，电屏上播着轻柔的音乐。那三个人一动不动地坐在角落里，不发一言。服务生主动拿来杜松子酒。就在他们隔壁的桌子上有个棋盘，棋子已经码好，他们也没有去玩。大约一分半钟后，电屏里的音乐突然改变，变成难以形容的、刺耳响亮的歌曲，那声音带着几分嘲讽，温斯顿在心底称之为“黄色警报”，电屏里唱道：

在栗子树的绿茵下，
我出卖了你，你出卖了我；
他们躺在那儿，我们躺在这儿，
就在栗子树的绿荫下。

三个人听了，依然一动不动。温斯顿看了看鲁瑟夫那张已经毁掉的脸，发现他的眼睛里溢满泪水。他第一次注意到阿朗森和鲁瑟夫的鼻梁都断了，这让他胆战心惊，虽然他不知道自己为什么要胆战心惊。

这之后不久，三人又被抓走，说他们在被释放后依然从事阴谋活动。而在第二次受审时，他们不只重新交代了之前所有旧的罪行，还供认了一些新的罪行。这次，他们遭到了处决，他们的结局被写入党史以儆效尤。差不多五年后，即1973年，温斯顿从桌上那一大摞由气力输送管递出的文件中发现了一小片报纸。那显然是不小心夹在中间，忘掉拿走的。他将它打开，登时就意识到它意义重大。那是从十年前的某期《泰晤士报》上撕下来的，是报纸的上半页，注着日期。而在这片报纸上有一张在纽约举行的党大会的照片，照片上位于中间的正是琼斯、阿朗森和鲁瑟夫。一点没错，照片下的说明里还有他们的名字。

问题是，在两次审判中，三人招认，那一天他们全部都在欧亚国，正要从加拿大的某个秘密机场往西伯利亚的一处接头地点，与欧亚国总参谋部的人进行会面，将非常重要的军事机密透露给他们。温斯顿对那个日期印象极深，因为那天刚好是仲夏日，但是，在别的什么地方一定也有关于这件事的记录。所以只有一个可能：那些供词是谎言。

当然，这样的事情并不新鲜，就算在当时，温斯顿也不认为那些在

大清洗中被清除掉的人真的犯了指控的罪行。但这张报纸却是确凿的证据，是被抹杀了的过去的一个碎片。就好像一枚骨化石突然出现在它不该出现的地层里，致使地质学的某个理论被推翻。假使有办法将它公诸于世，让所有人都知道它的意义，就能让党灰飞烟灭。

他继续工作，看到这照片并明白它的意义后，他马上用一张纸将它盖住，所幸在打开它时，从电屏里看，它是上下颠倒的。

他将草稿本放在膝盖上，又把椅子往后拖了拖，尽可能地躲开电屏。控制好面部表情并不困难，只要花点工夫，连呼吸都能控制住，但你控制不了心跳的速度，而电屏却灵敏到连这也能接收到。大约有十分钟，他一直担心会有突发事件暴露自己。比如，突然吹过桌面的一阵风。之后，他没有再打开那张纸，而是将它和其他废纸一起丢到了记忆洞里。也许再过一分钟，它们就会被烧为灰烬。

这是十年，不，是十一年前的事了。若是在今天，他很可能会将那张照片留下来。奇怪的是，尽管现在这张照片和其他记录在案的事件都只存在于记忆中，他仍然觉得，拿过照片一事意义非浅。他想，这已然不在的证据毕竟曾存在过，党对过去的控制还是那么强吗？

然而，即使今天这照片从灰烬中复原，它也不可能成为证据。他发现照片时，大洋国已不再和欧亚国交战，而这三个死去的人都是东亚国的特务，都背叛了自己的祖国。自那之后，交战的对象已几经变化，究竟变化了两次还是三次，他也记不清了。供词很可能被反复重写，以至于原有的日期和事实真相都失去了意义。过去不仅被篡改，还被不断篡改。他从未仔细想过为什么要如此大张旗鼓地伪造过去，这个问题犹如可怕的噩梦让他饱受折磨。伪造的好处显而易见，但它深层的动机却让人困惑不解。他再次拿起笔，写道：

“我明白怎么做，我不明白为什么。”

很多次，他都怀疑自己是不是疯子。也许疯子就是指少数派。曾经人们认为相信地球绕着太阳转是发疯的征兆。但在今天，相信过去不会被篡改也是发疯的征兆。他可能是唯一一个会这样想的人。若真如此，那他就是个疯子。不过，想到这里他并不害怕，让他害怕的是，他的想法可能是错的。

他拣起那本写给小孩子的历史课本，看了看印在卷首的老大哥肖像。老大哥正用那双能将人催眠的眼睛看着他。一股巨大的力量压迫着你，好像有什么东西正刺穿你的头颅，直抵你的大脑，它恐吓你让你放弃信念，差不多要说服你否认你的感觉。最后党说二加二等于五，你也不得不相信，而他们无可避免地会这样做：他们的地位要求他们这样做。他们的哲学不仅会否认经验的有效性，还会否认现实的存在性。常识是异端中的异端。令人恐惧的不是你不想其所想便杀了你，而是他们有可能是对的。毕竟，我们要如何知道二加二等于四？我们又怎么知道地心引力的存在？怎么知道过去不可改变？若过去和客观世界都只存在于我们的意识里，意识又能被控制——那要如何是好？

但是，不！他的勇气突然迸发出来，没有特意去想，脑海中就浮现出奥布兰的脸。他比从前更加明确地知道，奥布兰就站在他的一边。对，他在为奥布兰写日记，就好像在写一封没有结尾，没人会读，却有特定接收对象的信。而他的文笔也因此变得生动。

党告诉你不要相信你的所见所闻，这是他们最终也是最本质的命令。他所面对的力量是何等庞大，党随便一个知识分子都可以轻轻松松将他驳倒，不要说去反驳那些狡猾的论点，光是理解它们，他就无法做到。一想到此，他的心就不禁一沉。但是，他是正确的，他必须去捍卫

那些明显的、朴素的、真实的东西！客观世界是存在的，它的规律无可更改。石头硬，水湿，没有支撑的物体会向地心坠落。他有一种感觉，他正在向奥布兰说话，正在阐述一个至关重要的道理，因此，他写道：

“自由就是可以说二加二等于四的自由。若它成立，其他一切皆是如此。”

八

一股咖啡的浓香从过道尽头飘来，直飘到大街上，那是真正的咖啡，不是胜利咖啡。温斯顿不禁停了下来，大概有两秒钟，他仿佛再次回到了几乎被他遗忘的童年时代。那香味就像声音，门砰地响了一声，将它生生截断。

他已经沿着街道走了好几公里，脚踝上静脉曲张导致的溃疡又痒了起来。这是他三个星期以来第二次没到集体活动中心去，考虑到去集体中心的次数会被仔细记录，这无疑是莽撞之举。从原则上说，党员没有空闲时间，除了上床睡觉，他永远不会独自一人。在工作、吃饭和睡觉时间之外，他必须参加某项集体活动。独自行动非常危险，包括独自散步。对此，新话还有个专门的名词“个人生活”，它意味着个人主义和孤僻怪异。但是今晚，他一走出真理部的大门就被四月那裹挟着香气的风吸引。天空如此湛蓝，今年头一回他感受到一丝暖意。他突然觉得中心里的夜晚是那样冗长喧闹，劳心耗力的游戏、令人厌烦的讲话，还有靠杜松子酒维系的同志关系，这一切通通都让人难以忍受。冲动之下，他从公共汽车站走开，步行穿过伦敦那迷宫一般的街街巷巷，先向南，再向东，最后又往北，最终迷失在不知名的街道上，随心所欲地走着。

他曾在日记中写：“假使希望存在，它就在群众身上。”这句话不断出现在他的脑际，昭示着神秘而荒谬的真理。他来到位于原圣潘克拉斯车站东北处的褐色贫民窟，在一条用鹅卵石铺就的小路上行走。路的两旁是矮小的双层楼房，它们破破烂烂的大门就立在人行道的旁边，很奇怪地让人联想起耗子洞。到处都是肮脏的积水，许许多多的人在黑洞洞的大门里进进出出，在狭窄的小巷里来来往往。女孩们宛若盛开的鲜花，涂着俗艳的口红，被男孩们追逐。身材臃肿的女人走起路来摇摇晃

晃，让你看到女孩们十年后的样子。还有迈着八字步、身形佝偻、慢慢移动的老人以及打着赤脚、穿着破烂、在污水坑里玩耍的孩子——他们一听到妈妈的呵斥就四散奔逃。

屋子上的玻璃窗差不多有四分之一都被打破，用木板钉起。大部分人都没有注意到温斯顿，只有几个人好奇又小心地看着他。两个彪悍的女人叉着砖红色的手臂在门口闲聊，走近她们时，温斯顿听到了她们的谈话。

“‘是’，她说，‘这样很好’。‘不过，如果你是我，你也会和我一样。评判别人总是很容易，’‘但我的麻烦你可没遇到。’”

“啊，”另一个女人说，“就是这样，问题就在这儿。”

两个尖利的声音突然安静下来，两个女人都用敌意的目光打量着正向她们走来的温斯顿。但准确地说那不是敌意，而是警觉，就好像人看到陌生的动物经过，产生暂时的紧张。这条街很少能看到党员的蓝色制服。对温斯顿来说，在这里被人看到并不明智，除非公务在身。若碰上巡逻队，一定会被他们拦住：“能出示下您的证件吗，同志？您在这里做什么？您什么时候下班的？这是您常走的回家的路吗？”诸如此类。并没有什么规定禁止人走其他的路回家，但如果被思想警察知道，就会引起他们的注意。

突然整条街都骚动起来，警报声此起彼伏。人们像兔子一样钻进了门，一个年轻的女人从门洞里蹿出来，一把拽过在水坑里玩耍的孩子，用围裙围住，又迅速地蹿了回去，所有动作一气呵成。同时，街道的一边突然出现了一个穿得像手风琴一样的黑衣男子，男子一边向温斯顿跑来，一边紧张兮兮地指着天空。

“汽船！”他大喊：“小心，先生！上面有炸弹，快趴下！”

群众不知为什么将火箭弹称作“汽船”。温斯顿立即扑倒。群众给你的警报通常是准确的。他们似乎有种直觉，虽然据说火箭弹的飞行速度已赶超音速，他们还是能在火箭弹袭击的数秒之前感应到它。温斯顿用双手护住头。就在这时，轰隆一声巨响，似乎要将整个街道掀起来，有什么东西雨点般地落到了他的背上，他爬起来一看，原来附近的一扇窗户震碎了，飞溅出玻璃碴儿。

他继续走，炸弹将前方两百米处的房屋炸得粉碎，一股浓黑的烟柱高悬天空，而在它下面灰尘形成的云雾腾空而起，人们纷纷涌向废墟。温斯顿身前的街道上堆着一小摊灰泥，一个鲜红色的东西落在那里。走近一看，原来是一只齐腕炸断的手，除了靠近手腕的地方血肉模糊，这只手惨白得好像石膏制品。

他将它踢进水沟，然后避开人群，拐入右边的小巷。三四分钟后，他已走出被轰炸的区域。肮脏的大街上人来人往，好像什么事都没发生过。快20点了，群众云集的小酒吧（他们称其为“酒馆”pubs）里客人盈门。黑乎乎的弹簧门不断地打开、关上，骚臭味和陈年啤酒以及碎木屑的气味混在一起从门内飘出来。一幢房子凸出来，形成了一个角落，角落里有三个人，站得很紧。中间的那人拿着折好的报纸，其他两人站在边上看。无须看清他们的表情，从他们的姿势上就能看出他们有多么专注。他们显然正在阅读一则重要新闻。就在温斯顿离他们只有几步远的时候，三个人突然分散开来，其中两人爆发了激烈地争执，有那么一会儿，他们几乎气炸了。

“你他妈的就不能好好听我说话吗？我告诉你，过去十四个月都没有末尾是7的数字赢过！”

“不，它赢过！”

“没赢过，从来没赢过！过去两年所有中奖号码我都记纸上了，就在我家放着呢，和表一样准。没有末尾是7的赢过——”

“不，7当然赢过！我差不多能说出来究竟是他妈的哪个数字。末尾不是4就是7，是在二月——二月的第二个星期。”

“二月你奶奶！我白纸黑字记下来的，我告诉你，没有一个号码——”

“嘎！住嘴！”第三个人说。

他们在谈论彩票。温斯顿走了三十米，又回头看了一眼，发现他们还在争吵。群众唯一关注的大事便是每周一次的大抽奖，奖金丰厚。对他们来说，彩票是支撑他们活下去的理由，是他们的乐趣所在、愚蠢所在，是刺激他们大脑的兴奋剂。看到彩票，原本连读写都不大顺利的人也开始进行复杂的运算，甚至连记性都变好了。还有些人干脆靠预测中奖号码、卖中奖秘籍和吉祥物为生。温斯顿和彩票运作无关，那是富部的事情，但他知道（实际上每个党员都知道），奖金在很大程度上是虚构出来的，中大奖的都是不存在的人，只有小奖才会发到中奖者手里。在大洋国地区间的信息交流十分不畅，安排这样的事并不困难。

然而，你必须坚信，假使有希望，它就在群众身上。将这句话记录下来，它合情合理。观察一下街上那些和你擦肩而过的人，它就会变成一种信仰。转弯后，他走上下坡的路，觉得自己之前曾来过这里，往前不久便是主干道，前方传来嘈杂的人声。这条街突然转了方向，走到了头，台阶的尽头是一条低陷的小巷。巷子里有几个小商贩，正在卖打了蔫的蔬菜。温斯顿突然意识到他身在何处，再转一个弯，不用五分钟，

就是他买日记本的那家旧货店。而这家店铺旁，还有个文具店，当初他就是在那里买的笔杆和墨水。

他在台阶上待了一会儿。小巷的对面有一家肮脏的小酒馆，酒馆的窗户上积满了灰尘，看上去就像结了一层霜。一个弯着腰的老人推开酒馆的弹簧门走了进去，他的胡子全白了，像虾须一样翘翘的，但动作依然矫健。温斯顿看着他，想，这老人至少有八十岁，在革命开始时他就已步入中年。他，以及其他一些人，是留下的极少数的能够联结已经消失了的资本主义世界的纽带。在党内，几乎没有谁的思想是在革命前定型的。绝大多数老一辈都在五六十年代的大清洗中被清除了，侥幸活下来的极个别人也已魂飞魄散，彻底在思想上投降。如果有哪个活下来的人能告诉你本世纪早期的真实情况，那他一定在群众中间。突然，他又想起他所摘抄的那段来自历史课本的文章，一个疯狂的念头萌生了，他可以走进酒馆，和那老头说说话，问他一些事情。他想问他：“您小的时候，生活是怎样的呢？和今天一样吗？哪些比现在好，哪些又比现在糟？”

他唯恐自己有时间害怕，所以急匆匆地走下台阶，穿过狭窄的巷子。他肯定是疯了，虽然没有明文规定他不许和群众交谈，不许进入群众的酒馆，但这样的举动很难不引起他人的注意。他想好了，若巡逻队来了，他就说他突然感到头晕，不过他们多半不会相信他。他推开门，一股可怕的劣质酸啤酒的气味扑面而来。他一走进酒馆，里面的说话声就小了一半，他可以感觉到每个人都在盯着他的蓝色制服，屋子里面玩飞镖的人足足停下来半分钟之久。他跟着那个老头来到吧台前，老头正为什么事和酒保争吵。酒保很年轻，人高马大，手臂粗壮。还有几个人端着酒杯看他们吵。

“我已经够礼貌了，不是吗？”老头非常生气地挺着肩膀说，“你的

意思是这鬼地方没有他妈一品脱的杯子？”

“什么他妈一品脱？”酒保的手指撑着柜台，身子向前倾着。

“听我说！一个酒保居然不知道什么是品脱？一品脱是半夸脱，四夸脱是一加仑。下次还得从A、B、C开始教你。”

“从来就没听过这些。”酒保说，“一升，半升，这儿全是这个卖法。杯子就在你前面的架子上。”

“我就喜欢说一品脱，”老头很固执，“你没那么容易让我不说品脱，我年轻时没有他妈的按升卖这回事。”

“你年轻的时候我们还在树上呢。”酒保一边说着，一边看了看其他人。

大家哈哈大笑，将温斯顿刚进来时的那种不安的气氛一扫而空。老头布满胡楂儿的脸变得通红。他嘟嘟囔囔地转过身，撞到了温斯顿。温斯顿轻轻搀住他的手臂。

“我可以请您喝一杯吗？”他问。

“真是个绅士，”老头再次挺起肩膀，似乎没有注意到温斯顿的蓝色制服。“品脱！”他向酒保喊，声音里有挑衅的意味。“一品脱猛的！”

酒保拿出两个厚玻璃杯，在吧台下的水桶里洗了洗，然后在两个杯子里分别倒了半升深棕色啤酒。在群众的酒馆里，你只能找到啤酒。群众不允许喝杜松子酒，不过他们很容易就能买到。人们暂时忘记了温斯顿，重新玩起了飞镖，谈起了彩票。温斯顿和老头在一张靠窗的桌子旁坐下，不用担心旁人听到他们的谈话。虽然这极其危险，但至少屋子里

没有电屏，打一进酒馆，他就注意到这点。

“别想让我说不说品脱，”老头抱怨着坐了下来，酒杯放在他眼前。“才半升，太少了，不够劲儿。一升又太多，会让我的膀胱忙个不停，更别说那价钱。”

“您年轻时一定和现在有很大变化。”温斯顿试探着说。

老头眨了眨淡蓝色的眼睛，目光从飞镖台移到吧台，又从吧台移到男厕所门口，似乎在这酒吧里寻找着变化。最后，他说：“啤酒更好，也更便宜。我年轻时，管淡啤酒叫汽酒，四便士一品脱。当然这是战前的事了。”

“哪次战争？”温斯顿问。

“所有战争，”老头含含糊糊地说，他拿起杯子，挺了挺肩膀，“祝你身体健康！”

他干瘦的喉咙上尖尖的喉结飞快地上下抖动着，啤酒喝光了。温斯顿走到吧台又拿回两杯啤酒，每杯都有半升多。老头好像忘记了他刚刚还在反对喝一整升啤酒。

“您比我年长多了，”温斯顿说，“您在我出生前就是个成年人了，您还记得革命前的那些老日子吗？我这个年纪的人对那时的情况一无所知。我们知道的都是从书上看到的，可书上写的又不一定是真的。我想听听您怎么看。历史书里说，革命前的日子和现在完全不一样。那时的压迫最严重，贫困不公，超出人的想象。就在伦敦，大部分人直到死都没吃过饱饭，他们中有一半以上的人没靴子穿，每天工作十二个小时，九岁就离开学校，十个人挤在一间屋子里。同时，只有很少人，差不多

几千个，是资本家。他们有钱有权，每样东西都是他们的财产，他们住着豪华的大房子，有三十多个仆人伺候着。他们坐着汽车、四个轮子的马车，出去喝香槟。他们戴着高高的礼帽——”

老头突然眼睛一亮。

“高礼帽！”他说，“真有趣，你会提起这个。我昨天还想到它了呢，不知道为什么，我想很多年都没见过高礼帽了，连影都见不着。最后一次看到它还是在很多年前，在我嫂子的葬礼上。那是在——好吧，我说不上具体的日期。但那怎么也得有五十年了，特地为葬礼租的帽子。”

“高礼帽不重要，”温斯顿说，“重点是那些资本家以及律师、牧师等靠他们生活的人——他们是这世界的主人，所有的一切都对他们有利。你，普通大众、工人——都是他们的奴隶，他们想怎么对你们就怎么对你们，他们可以把你们像运牛那样运到加拿大，若他们乐意，他们还可以和你们的女儿睡觉。他们使唤你们，拿一种叫九尾鞭的东西抽你们。每次你见到他们都不得不脱帽行礼。每个资本家都有一堆仆人——”

老头的眼睛又亮了起来。

“仆人！”他说，“现在居然还能听到这个词，我很久没听到它了。仆人！这让我回到了过去。也不知道是多少年前的事了。我常常在星期天的下午去海德公园听演讲，什么救世军、罗马天主教、犹太人、印度人——全都是这些事儿。我不能告诉你他的名字，但他很有魄力。‘奴才，’他说，‘中产阶级的奴才！统治阶级的走狗！’寄生虫——那是另外一个称呼他们的词，还有豺狼——他一定说过这话。当然，你知道，他

说的是工党。”

温斯顿觉得两个人各说各话。

“我想知道的正是这个。”他说，“您有没有觉得现在比过去更自由了？您终于活得像个人了？过去，有钱人，他们高高在上——”

“贵族院！”老头沉浸在回忆里。

“贵族院，随您高兴，他们看不起您，仅仅因为他们有钱而您很穷？是这样吗？在那种情况下，您叫他们‘先生’，看到他们您还得把您的帽子摘下来？”

老头陷入思考，他喝掉了四分之一的啤酒，然后回答：

“是的。”他说，“他们喜欢你摸摸帽子表示尊敬。我不赞成这样做，我指我自己，但我也没少这么做。可以这么说，你不得不这样。”

“它经常发生吗——单说从历史书里看到的——那些人和他们的仆人是不是经常把你从便道上推到水沟里？”

“只有一个人推过我，就一次，”老头说，“就像发生在昨天。划船比赛的晚上人们闹得吓人——我在夏福特伯里大街撞到了一个小伙子，他有点儿像绅士，穿着衬衫，黑外套，戴着高礼帽。在人行道上摇摇晃晃地走着，我大概没留神撞到了他。他说：‘你就不能看着点儿路吗？’我说：‘你以为把他妈的整条路都给买下了？’他说：‘你再这么无礼，我就把你脑袋拧下来。’我说：‘你醉了，等会儿再收拾你。’我这可不是瞎说。他冲过来用手推我的胸，我差点儿就被推到公交车的轮子下了。我那时很年轻，我正要教训他——”

温斯顿非常无奈，这老头的回忆里只有些垃圾一般的小事。整整一天的时间都拿来问他，也问不出所以然来。党所说的历史可能是真实的，甚至有可能完全是真实的。他要做最后一次尝试。

“也许我没讲清楚，”他说，“我的意思是，您活了很长时间，你有一半时间都是在革命前度过的。举个例子，1925年，您已经成年了。您能说说，在您的记忆中，1925年比现在好，还是差？如果您可以选择的话，您更喜欢生活在哪个时期，过去还是现在？”

老头默默地看了看飞镖靶，喝光了啤酒，喝的速度比刚才慢了不少。当他再次开口说话时，语调里有一种哲学家般的隐忍，啤酒让他沉静下来。

“我知道你希望我说什么。”他说，“你希望我说我很快又会年轻起来，如果你问他们，大多数人都会告诉你，他们最大的愿望就是变得年轻。人年轻时，身体好，有力气。可到了我这岁数，你的身体就没那么好了。我的脚有毛病，我的膀胱也很糟糕，每天晚上都得从床上爬起来六七次。但另一方面，人老了也有好处，你不会再为同一件事操心，也没有女人缠着你。这是件非常棒的事。不管你信不信，我差不多三十年没碰过女人了。我也不想。”

温斯顿靠着窗台坐着，没必要再继续了。他正准备再买点儿啤酒时，老头突然站了起来，拖着脚，快步走进位于酒吧另一端的小便处。多喝的半杯啤酒在他身上起了作用。温斯顿盯着空杯子，又多坐了一分钟，然后迷迷糊糊地走出了酒馆。他想，最多二十年，“革命前的生活比现在好吗？”这个最简单也是最关键的问题就永远不会有答案了。事实上，即使在今天也没有人能回答这个问题。旧时代的幸存者已经丧失了将一个时代和另一个时代对比的能力。他们记得上百万毫无价值的

事，工友间的争吵，丢失的自行车气筒，死去多时的姐妹，甚至七十年前某个冬天的早晨那将灰尘卷起的旋风，但与之相关的事实却不在他们的视野之内。他们就像蚂蚁，看得到小的，看不到大的。在这个记忆不可靠、文字被伪造的时代，人们只能接受党的说法，相信生活水平被提高，因为不存在任何可以拿来作参照的标准，这标准现在没有，以后也不会有，所有反对的观点都不能被证实。他突然停止思考，停下脚步四处张望。他正待在一条窄窄的街道上，街的两旁有不少光线昏暗的小铺子，和民房混在一起。三个褪了色的金属球就挂在温斯顿头顶上方，看起来曾镀过金。他好像知道这是哪儿了。没错！这正是他买日记本的那家店，他就站在它的外面。

他被恐惧击中了。到这里买日记本已经够鲁莽的了，他曾发誓再也不靠近这里。而就在他放纵思绪东想西想时，双脚却将他带回了这里。他之所以要记日记，就是为了警醒自己不要做这类受自杀性冲动驱使的事。同时，他发现尽管时间已接近晚上9点，这家店仍然在营业。相比在外闲逛，待在店子里倒没有那么引人注目。他走进店子，若是有人问起来，他就说他是来买剃须刀片的。

店主人将悬挂式的油灯点亮，油灯的气味虽然不大干净，却还算好闻。店主人大约六十岁，身体虚弱，弯腰驼背，他的鼻子偏长，看起来人很好，厚厚的眼镜片折射出他的目光，温雅和善。他的头发几乎全白了，可眉毛却依然乌黑浓密。他的眼镜、他轻柔利落的举止以及他黑色的绒质夹克，都为他增添了几分睿智，他看上去就像个文学家、音乐家。他的声音温柔无力，和大部分群众相比，他说话的腔调文雅得多。

“您在街上我就认出您了，”他说，“您就是那个买年轻女士的笔记本的先生。那种纸真漂亮，奶油色，以前人都这么叫。现在已经没有这样的纸了，我敢说五十年没生产了。”他的视线穿过镜架上端，“您想买

点什么？还是只随便转转？”

“我路过这儿，”温斯顿含含混混地说。“没有什么特别要买的东西，我就进来看看。”

“也好，”店主说，“反正我也没什么东西能卖给您了。”他摊了摊柔软的手，做了个抱歉的姿势。“您都看到了，可以说，这店已经空了。就咱俩说说，旧货生意算是做到头了，不再有人买，也不再有存货。家具、瓷器、玻璃制品，都慢慢地坏掉。金属制品也大多被收走熔化了，我已经很多年没见过黄铜质地的蜡烛台了。”

店里又挤又小，让人感觉很不舒服，也没有什么有价值的东西。靠墙处堆了很多积满灰尘的相框，让地板的空间愈发有限。橱窗里摆着不少螺钉螺母，一叠叠地摞起来，此外还有磨损严重的刻刀，豁了口的卷笔刀，失去光泽又走不动的表以及其他一些不能用的杂货。只有角落里的小桌子上还有些有趣的小物件，比如涂了漆的鼻烟壶、玛瑙做的胸针。温斯顿朝这桌子走去，一个圆而光滑的东西引起了他的注意。在小油灯的照射下，它散发出柔和的光。他将它拿了起来。

这是一块半球形的厚玻璃，一面是弧形，一面是平的，颜色和质地都像雨水般柔和。在它的中间，还有个粉红色的、形似海藻和玫瑰的东西，被玻璃的弧面放大。

“这是什么？”温斯顿问。

“里面那个是珊瑚，”老头说，“它一定是从印度洋来的。他们把它镶到玻璃里。这东西差不多有一百年了，从样子上看，似乎更久。”

“它真漂亮。”温斯顿说。

“它是很漂亮！”老头欣赏地说。

“现在已经没有什么东西能这么说了。”他咳嗽了一下。

“如果您真想买，就给四块钱吧。我记得，这样的东西从前能卖到八镑。唉，我算不出来，但那真是不少钱。可惜现在还有几个人会注意到老古董呢？况且也没有多少古董留下来。”

温斯顿马上掏出了四块钱买下了它，将它放到口袋里。吸引他的，并不是它的漂亮，而是它带来的那种感觉，它诞生的时代和今天截然不同。这块柔和的，像雨一样的玻璃和他所见过的任何玻璃都不一样。它尤其吸引他的正是它的没有用处，但话说回来，他推测，在过去它一定被人拿来当做镇纸。它让他的口袋沉甸甸的，所幸从外面看不算太鼓。作为一个党员，他不应该拥有它。任何老旧的，美丽的东西都会引人怀疑。老头收到四块钱后高兴多了，温斯顿觉得，就算给他两三块钱，他也会接受。

“楼上还有些房间，您可以看看，”他说，“里面没有什么东西，就几样。如果上楼，就带盏灯。”他另拿了一盏灯，然后弯着腰，步履缓慢地在前面带路。陡峭破旧的楼梯连接着狭窄的走廊，他们进入一个房间，房间正对着一个铺着鹅卵石的院子和一片树丛。温斯顿注意到房间里的家具，好像一直都有人住在这里。地板上铺着一小块地毯，墙壁上挂着一两幅画，壁炉的旁边还顶着一把脏兮兮的高背扶手椅。一个老式的十二格玻璃面时钟在壁炉上滴滴答答地走着。窗户下，一张带床垫的大床占据了屋内四分之一的面积。

“我妻子去世前，我们就住在这里，”老头说，“我正把家具一点点地卖了，那张床很漂亮，是红木做的，当然至少要把上面的臭虫清干

净。不过我猜您可能觉得它有点儿笨重了。”

他把灯高高地举起来，好照亮整个房间。在温暖昏暗的灯光下，房间散发出一种古怪的魅力。一个念头闪过温斯顿的大脑，如果他敢冒这个险，租下房子并不困难，每周只要花几块钱。尽管这念头太不现实，以至于刚一萌生他就放弃。但这房子却唤起了他的怀旧之情，唤起了他对往昔的回忆。他很清楚住在这样的房子里会是什么感觉，人坐在扶手椅里，面前是燃烧的炉火，人可以把脚放在挡炉板上，把壶放在铁架上。没有人监视你，也不会有声音来烦你，除了烧水声和钟表的滴答声，再没有别的声音，绝对的独自一人，绝对的安静。

“这儿居然没有电屏！”他不禁说出了声。

“啊，”老头说，“我从来就没装过这东西。太贵了。我从来都不觉得自己需要它。角落里的折叠桌不错，不过当然，如果您要用桌上的活板，您得换新的合叶。”

墙角处的小书架吸引了温斯顿，他走过去，发现上面没有什么有价值的东西。就算在群众间图书的查抄和销毁工作也像其他地方一样完成得相当彻底。在大洋国，人们几乎不可能找到1960年以前出版的图书。老头举着灯站在一幅画的前面，画镶在带有蔷薇纹样的画框里，就挂在壁炉旁边，正对着床的墙上。

“如果您对老版画有兴趣——”他小心地说。

温斯顿走上前，仔细察看了那幅画。那是一幅钢板版画，画上有嵌着长方形窗户的椭圆形建筑，建筑前方有个带栏杆的小塔。塔的后边，还有些雕像样的东西。温斯顿盯着画看了一会儿，他好像在哪看到过这建筑，又不记得什么地方有雕像。

“画框钉在墙上了，”老头说，“但我可以给您取下来。”

“我知道这建筑，”温斯顿说，“它已经被毁掉了，它就在正义宫外面的街道上。”

“对，它就在法院外面。它在很多年前被炸掉了。它曾是一座教堂，圣克莱门特教堂。”他抱歉地笑了笑，似乎意识到自己说了荒谬的话，“橘子和柠檬，圣克莱门特的大钟说。”

“什么？”温斯顿问。

“噢，橘子和柠檬，圣克莱门特的大钟说——我小时候经常念的押韵句子。后面的内容记不清了，但我记得结尾：蜡烛照着你睡觉，斧头把你头砍掉。这是一种舞，他们伸起手让你从下面钻过去，当他们唱到斧头把你头砍掉的时候，就用胳膊把你的头夹住。伦敦所有主要教堂，歌谣里都唱到了。”

温斯顿并不清楚这些教堂都是哪个世纪的产物，伦敦建筑的建造年代很难确定。所有高大华丽的建筑，只要外表尚新，都被说成革命后建造的，而所有明显的早期建筑都被纳入中世纪建筑的范畴。资本主义被认为在长达几个世纪的时间里没有生产过任何有价值的东西。人们从建筑上了解到的并不比书本上的多。雕像、碑文、纪念牌、街道名——所有能揭示过去的，都被更改了。

“真想不到它以前是教堂。”温斯顿说。

“很多教堂都留下来了，真的。”老头说，“不过，它们被用来做别的事了。那首歌怎么唱来着？啊，我想起来了！”

“橘子和柠檬，圣克莱门特教堂的大钟说。”

“你欠我三个法寻。圣马丁教堂的大钟说——

“我只记得这么多了。法寻就是那种小铜板，类似一分钱。”

“圣马丁教堂在哪儿？”温斯顿问。

“圣马丁教堂？它还在胜利广场，就在画廊那边。它前面有三角形的柱子，台阶又大又高。”

温斯顿对那里非常熟悉。现在，它成了博物馆，展出着各种宣传用的东西，比如火箭弹和水上堡垒的模型，用来表现敌人残酷性的蜡像等等。

“过去，圣马丁教堂的名字是田野圣马丁教堂。”老头补充道，“但我不记得那里有什么田野。”

温斯顿没有买下那幅画，和玻璃镇纸相比，它更不适合被买回家，而且也不可能将它带走，除非把它从画框中取出来。温斯顿在老头这里又多待了几分钟，和他说了些话。根据店外的题字，人们猜测他叫威克斯，但他不叫这个名字，他叫查林顿，是个鳏夫，今年六十三岁，在这里住了三十年。

三十年来，他一直想把橱窗上的名字改过来，可又一直没有改。和他交谈时，温斯顿的脑子里总是跑出那首歌谣。“橘子和柠檬。圣克莱门特教堂的大钟说。你欠我三个法寻。圣马丁教堂的大钟说。”念着念着他好像听到了钟声，这钟声属于失去的伦敦，那个伦敦仍留在某处，它改变了样貌，被人遗忘。他似乎听到那钟声从一个又一个鬼影幢幢的尖塔中传来，尽管记忆里，他从未在现实中听到教堂的钟声。

他告别了查林顿先生，一个人下了楼，他不想让老头看到他在出门前察看外面的街道。他决定，每隔一段时间，比如一个月，就冒险到这里看看，这也许要比从活动中心溜走危险得多。买日记本已经很愚蠢了，更别说他又来了一次，而且他还不知道那老头是不是值得信任，但是——

是的，他还会回来的。他还会买美丽而无用的东西。他会买下圣克莱门特教堂的版画，他会把它从画框中取出来，藏在制服里带回家。他要把那歌谣完整地、从查林顿先生的记忆中挖出来，他甚至要将楼上的房间租下来。这些疯狂的念头一度出现在他的脑际，持续了足有五秒钟，让他兴奋得忘乎所以，他没有隔着橱窗察看就走到了大街上。他还编了个曲子哼起了歌。

橘子和柠檬。圣克莱门特教堂的大钟说。

你欠我三个法寻，圣马丁——

突然，他整个人好像由内而外地冻结了。就在他前面不到十米的地方，一个穿着蓝色制服的人走了过来。是小说司里那个黑发女孩。光线很暗，却不妨碍他认出她。她直视他的脸，然后又迅速走着，好像没有看到他。

有那么几秒，温斯顿吓得一动不动。之后，他向右转去，步伐沉重地走开了，一时间竟没发现自己走错了路。他思考着要如何解决这个问题。毫无疑问，她正在监视他。她一定跟着他来到这里。他不能相信，在同一个晚上，他们同时出现在和党员所住地区相距甚远的街道上，仅仅是巧合。无论她是思想警察还是热忱过头的业余侦探，都无关紧要。只要她正在监视他，就足够了，也许她还看到他走进了那家小酒馆。

连走路都变得困难了。每走一步，口袋里的玻璃都要撞击他的大腿，他甚至想把它拿出来扔掉。最糟糕的是，他的肚子疼了起来，他觉得若不能马上找到厕所，他就会死掉。然而附近偏偏一间厕所都没有。过了一会儿，疼劲儿过去了，只留下隐隐的痛感。

这是一条死路。温斯顿停下来，站了几秒，不知如何是好。然后他转身沿原路返回。这时他突然想到，就在三分钟前，他才和那个女孩擦肩而过，若他跑起来，说不定能追上她。他可以跟着她，一直跟到僻静的地方，然后用石头打碎她的脑袋，口袋里的玻璃足够重了，完全能拿来一用。但他很快又打消了这个念头，因为单是想象所耗费的力气就让他难以忍受。他跑不动，也砸不动，她年轻力壮，她会出手还击。他想快点回到活动中心，并在那儿一直待到关门，然后把这当做晚上哪儿也没去的证据。但这不可能，要命的疲倦感抓住了他，他只想快点到家，好好静一静。当他回到公寓时，已过了晚上10点，到11点公寓的总闸就会关掉。他走进厨房吞下几乎满满一茶杯的胜利牌杜松子酒，然后回到桌子旁，坐下来，从抽屉里拿出日记本。他没有立即将日记本打开。电屏里，一个粗哑的女声正唱着爱国歌曲。他坐着，注视着日记本封面上的大理石花纹，他试图不去听那歌声，但他做不到。

他们会在夜里逮捕你，总是在夜里。对此正确的做法是，在他们到来之前自杀，有些人确是这么做的，很多失踪实际上都是自杀。但在这世上，人们不可能得到枪支，也不可能得到任何能迅速将人置于死地的毒药，自杀需要莫大的勇气。他意识到一个令人震惊的道理，疼痛和恐惧会带来生理上的无助感，越是到了需要特别用力的时候，身体就越是不听使唤地僵在那里。若他的动作够快，他就能将那个黑发女孩杀死，但正因为他的处境极其危险，他失去了行动的力量。面对危险，人要对付的不是外在的敌人，而是人自己的身体。即使现在喝下杜松子酒，腹

部的隐痛仍让他无法条理清楚地进行思考。他突然发现那些看上去英勇、悲壮的事情都不过如此。在战场上，在刑讯室中，在即将沉没的轮船里，你会忘记你所对抗的东西，因为身体将成为最大的问题，就算你没有被吓倒，没有痛苦哀号，生命仍要和饥饿、寒冷、失眠搏斗，要和胃疼、牙疼搏斗。

他翻开日记本，记下的内容非常重要。电屏里的女人唱起了新的曲子，尖利的声音像玻璃碴儿一样插进他的大脑。他努力回想奥布兰的样子，这日记为他而记，或者说就是给他写的。他开始想象在被思想警察带走后，他会有怎样的遭遇。被处死是意料之中，如果他们没有马上处死他就没关系，但在死前（虽然没人说过，大家却都知道）在认罪的过程中，他将不可避免地尝尽苦头：他会趴在地板上尖叫哀求，他的骨头将被打断，牙齿被打掉，头发被鲜血染红。

若它们都指向同一个结果，为什么要忍受这些呢？为什么不把你的生命缩短几天或几个星期呢？没有人能躲过侦查，也没有人能拒不认罪。一旦你犯下思想罪，你就注定要被处死。为什么他们要做那些恐怖的事儿，又起不到任何警示作用，难道是为了让未来记住吗？

他又尝试着想象奥布兰的样子，并成功了一点。“我们将在没有黑暗的地方相见。”奥布兰曾这样对他说过，他自认他明白这话的含义。没有黑暗的地方就是想象中的未来，人们永远不会看到。但是，若具备了预知的能力，就能秘密地分享它。电屏里传出的声音正骚扰着他的耳朵，让他无法顺着这个思路畅想下去。他叼起一支烟，有一半烟丝都掉了在他的舌头上，又苦涩又不容易吐出来。在他的意识里，老大哥的脸取代了奥布兰。就像几天前所做的那样，他从口袋里掏出一枚硬币，看着它。硬币上的那张脸注视着他，神情凝重、沉静又充满警惕，而他黑色的八字胡后面藏着的又是怎样的微笑？好像一个沉重的不祥之兆，他

又看到了那几句话：

战争即和平

自由即奴役

无知即力量

九

上午过去一半，温斯顿离开他的小隔间上厕所。

长长的走廊里亮堂堂的，从走廊的另一端走来一个人，是那个黑头发的女孩。自旧货店门口遇到她的那个晚上起，已经过去四天。当她走近时，他发现她的右臂吊着绷带，由于绷带的颜色和制服的相同，在远处看不出来。她也许是在操作那台大型搅拌机时弄伤的手，小说的情节雏形就是在这搅拌机里形成的。这种事故在小说司里非常常见。

二人相距大约四米时，女孩摔倒了，她几乎面朝下摔在地上，疼痛让她发出尖叫，一定是跌到了那条受伤的手臂上。温斯顿立刻停下脚步。女孩已经跪起来，她脸色蜡黄，嘴唇被衬得更红。她看着他的眼睛，那楚楚可怜的神情与其说是出于疼痛，不如说是出于害怕。一种奇怪的感情涌上温斯顿心头。在他眼前的是敌人，是想杀死他的人，但同时又是一个受了伤的、正忍受疼痛并有可能骨折的人。他本能地走过去帮助她，当他看到她刚好跌在缠着绷带的手臂上，他好像也疼了起来。

“你受伤了吗？”他问。

“没事。我摔到了手臂，过一会儿就好了。”她说，心跳得厉害，脸色明显变得苍白。

“没摔坏哪儿吧？”

“没，还好，疼一会儿就好了，没关系。”她将那只还能活动的手伸给他，他帮她站了起来，她气色恢复了一些，看起来好多了。

“我没事，”她说得很快，“就是手腕摔着了。谢谢，同志！”

说完，她就朝着之前的方向走了，她脚步轻盈，好像真的没事儿。整个过程不过半分钟。对温斯顿来说，不让感情呈现在脸上已经是一种本能，况且这事发生时，他们刚好站在电屏前。然而，他还是很难掩饰他的惊异，就在他将她扶起来的两三秒钟里，她迅速将一件东西塞在他手中。毫无疑问，她是故意的。那东西又小又扁。他从厕所门口经过，将它揣进口袋，又用手指摸了摸它。原来是一个折成方形的纸条。

他一边上厕所，一边摸捻着将它打开。很明显，里面一定写着某些信息。有那么一瞬，他忍不住要到马桶间里看它。但这太不明智了。正如他所知，没有哪个地方靠得住，电屏无时无刻不在监视人们。

他回到办公间，坐了下来，将这张纸随随便便地往桌上一放，放到了桌上的一堆纸中。他戴上眼镜，拉出语音记录器，“五分钟，”他对自己说，“至少等五分钟！”他的心怦怦地跳着，发出很大的声音。所幸他的工作只是例行公事，更改一堆数字并不需要耗费太多精力。

不管怎样，纸条上写的肯定和政治有关。他估计有两种可能，一种的可能性较大，即像他担心的那样，那姑娘真是思想警察。他想不通思想警察为什么要用这种方式传递信息。但也许他们有他们的原因。这纸片也许是威胁，也许是传票，也许是要他自杀的命令，也许是个圈套。而另一种可能虽然荒诞不经却总出现在他的大脑中，他试图将它压下去却徒劳无功。那就是，纸条根本不是思想警察送来的，它来自某个地下组织。或许真的有兄弟会！那女孩就是其中一员！毋庸置疑，这个想法的确荒唐，但纸条一触碰到他，他就萌生了这个念头。直到几分钟后，他才想到了更合理的解释。即使现在，理智告诉他这个信息也许正意味着死亡——他仍然对那个不合理的解释怀抱希望。他的心剧烈地跳着，在对语音记录器叙述数字时，他好容易才控制住自己不让声音颤抖。

他将已经完成的工作纸卷起来放进输送管。八分钟过去了。他把眼镜扶正，叹了口气，然后把另一堆工作材料拉到面前。那张纸就在上面，他将它铺平，上面歪歪扭扭地写着几个大字：

我爱你

他太吃惊了以至于忘记将这个称得上定罪证据的东西扔到记忆洞里。尽管他非常清楚，表现出太多兴趣相当危险，但在将它扔进记忆洞前，他还是忍不住又看了一遍，想确定上面是不是真的写着那几个字。上午剩下的时间，他已无心工作。要将精力集中在琐碎的工作上本已不易，在电屏前隐藏自己的情绪就更加困难。他觉得肚子里有火在烧。在吵闹闷热，拥挤得像罐头一样的食堂里就餐异常痛苦。他原打算吃午饭时一个人待会儿，但他的运气太差了，笨蛋帕森斯跑过来坐到他身旁，身上的汗味几乎将炖菜的铁皮味盖过，不仅如此，他还喋喋不休地说着仇恨周的筹备情况，他对女儿用硬纸板做了两米多宽的老大哥头部模型格外兴奋，这正是他女儿所在的侦察队为仇恨周准备的。让人烦躁的是，在喧闹的人声中，温斯顿几乎听不见帕森斯讲些什么，他不得不一再要求他重复那些蠢话。他只看见那女孩一次，她和其他两个女孩坐在食堂的另一端。她们似乎没有看到他，他也不再向她们张望。

下午要好过些。午饭刚过，他就收到了一项复杂的工作，要好几个小时才能完成，他不得不将其他事情暂时搁置。他要修改两年前的一批生产报告，以损害某个受到怀疑的内党要人的名誉。这是温斯顿最擅长的事，在两个多小时的时间里，他都将那女孩置之脑后。但很快，她的面容就又浮现在他的脑中，引起了无法按捺的强烈欲望，他很想单独待上一会儿。他必须独自待着才能将事情理出头绪。今晚他又要到活动中心去，他匆匆忙忙地在食堂里吃过无味的晚餐，然后赶往活动中心参加看似一本正经、实则愚蠢不堪的讨论组会议，他打了两场乒乓球，吞下

几杯杜松子酒，又听了半个小时《英社与象棋关系》的讲座。尽管烦得要命，但这是他第一次没有离开的冲动。看到“我爱你”后，他心里充满生存的渴望，为小事冒险愚不可及。直到晚上11点回到家，躺在了床上，他才开始好好思考问题。黑暗中，只要默然不语，就能躲开电屏的监视。

他要解决一个实际问题：如何和那姑娘保持联系、进行见面。他不再觉得她有设置陷阱，这不可能。当她递给他纸条时，她无疑情绪激动。显然，她吓坏了。他没想过拒绝她的示好。而就在五天前，他还想用石头砸烂她的脑袋。但这没关系，他想象着她赤裸年轻的肉体，一如梦中情景。他原以为她和别人一样脑袋里装满谎言和仇恨，肚子里一副铁石心肠。只要一想到有可能会失去她，他就一阵恐慌，那白皙的肉体很可能会从他手中溜走！而他最担心的，若不能马上联系到她，她也许会改变主意。只是安排见面困难重重。就好比在下象棋时，你已然被将死却仍想再走一步。无论面朝何方，都有电屏对着你。事实上看到那张纸条的五分钟内，他就想尽了所有办法。趁现在还有思考时间，他又一个一个地将它们检查了一遍，就好像把所有工具都摊在桌子上排成一排。

显然，今天上午的相遇无法再重来一遍。若她在记录司工作，事情就简单得多。他对大楼里小说司的分布情况印象模糊，他也没有借口到那里去。若他知道她的居住地点、下班时间，他还能想办法在她回家途中和她相遇。但跟在她身后可不安全，在真理部外面晃来晃去一定会引人注目。至于寄信给她，则完全办不到。因为所有信件在邮递时都会被拆开察看已不是秘密。事实上只有很少人还在写信。若必须传递什么消息，人们就用印有文字的明信片，只要将不合适的话划掉就行了。再说，他不知道女孩的名字，更别说她的地址。最后，他认为最安全的地

方就是食堂，若能在她独自一人时坐到她的桌旁——这张桌子必须在食堂中间，不能离电屏太近，周围还要很嘈杂——所有这些条件都具备了并持续三十秒，他就能和她说上几句。

此后的一个星期，生活如同令人焦虑的梦。第二天，她不在食堂，直到他要离开，她才现身。哨声响起。她似乎刚刚换了夜班，他们擦肩而过，没有看对方。第三天，她在老时间出现，却有三个女孩和她在一起，还都坐在电屏下。接着，连续三天她都没有来。他的身心备受煎熬，极度敏锐。他的每个举动、发出的每个声音，进行的每个接触，他说的以及听到的每句话，都无法掩饰，这让他痛苦万分。即使在梦中，他也无法逃开，不能不想她的样子。这些天他都没有碰日记，如果说有什么能让他放松一下，那就是工作，有时，他可以忘记自己一连工作十分钟。他不知道她发生了什么事，一点线索都没有。她可能蒸发了，可能自杀了，可能被调到大洋国的另一端——而最糟糕也最有可能的是，她也许只是改变主意，决定避开他。

第二天，她重新出现，手臂上已没有绷带，但手腕处却贴了膏药。看到她，他非常高兴，忍不住凝视了她好几秒。接下来的一天，他差点就和她说上了话。他走进食堂，她正坐在一张远离墙壁的桌子旁，只有她一人。时间很早，人不是很多。领餐的队伍缓缓移动，温斯顿快要挪到餐台前的时候，排在他前面的一个人突然抱怨没有领到糖精，耽搁了两分钟。好在那女孩仍然独自一人坐在那里。温斯顿领到饭菜，向她走去，一面假装漫不经心，一面打量她周围的桌子，寻找空位。他离她只有三米远了，再过两秒，他就能来到她身边。但就在这时，身后，突然有人喊他的名字“史密斯”，他假装没听见，那人又喊了一句“史密斯”，声音更大了。没用。他转身一看，原来是个金色头发、模样蠢笨的年轻人。他叫威舍尔，温斯顿对他并不熟悉。他面带微笑看着温斯顿，邀请

他坐在他旁边的空位上。拒绝是不安全的。在被人认出后，他不能单独和那个女孩坐在一起，否则就太引人注目了。因此，他带着友善的笑容坐下来。那个愚蠢的金发男孩也对他笑了笑。温斯顿恨不得用十字镐将他一劈为二。几分钟后，女孩所在的桌子旁也坐满了人。

但她肯定看到他向她走去，也许她能明白这个暗示。第二天，他早早来到食堂。果然，她就坐在几乎相同的位置，又是独自一人。这次排在温斯顿前面的是个身材矮小，动作迅速，长得像甲虫一样的男人。男人的脸很扁，细小的眼睛里充满怀疑。离开餐台时，温斯顿看到这个矮个子男人正径直向那女孩走去。他的希望再次落空。稍远些的地方还有空位，但从那男人的神情看，为了让自己舒服，他一定会选择人最少的桌子。温斯顿的心凉了下來。没用，除非他能和那女孩独处。而这时，就听“嚓”一声，矮个子男人四脚朝天摔倒了，托盘飞了出去，汤和咖啡流了一地。他爬起来，恶狠狠地瞪了温斯顿一眼，他怀疑温斯顿故意将他绊倒。但这无关紧要。五秒钟后，温斯顿心跳剧烈地坐到了女孩旁边。

他没看她，他将托盘放好，吃了起来。他要趁其他人到来之前赶快说几句话，这是最重要的，但他偏偏被巨大的恐惧占据。从她初次接近他算起已经一个星期了。她改变主意了，她一定改变主意了！这件事不可能成功，不可能发生在实际生活中。若不是看到安普福斯——就是那个耳朵上长着很多毛的诗人——正端着餐盘走来走去地寻找位置，他很可能会退缩，什么都不说。安普福斯对他隐约有些好感，若他发现他，肯定会坐到他桌旁。也许只有一分钟时间了，要马上开始行动。温斯顿和女孩慢吞吞地吃着，他们吃的炖菜其实就是菜豆汤，稀糊糊的。温斯顿低声说话，俩人都没抬头，不紧不慢地用勺子往嘴里送水拉拉的东西，吃的间隙，他们面无表情的轻声交谈。

“什么时候下班？”

“18点半。”

“我们在哪儿见面？”

“胜利广场，纪念碑旁边。”

“那儿到处是电屏。”

“人多就没事。”

“有暗号吗？”

“没有。别靠近我，除非你看到我在很多人中间。也别看我，在我附近就行了。”

“什么时间？”

“19点。”

“好。”

安普福斯没看到温斯顿，坐到了另一张桌子旁。他们没有再说话，只要两个人面对面地坐在同一张桌子前，就不能彼此相视。女孩吃完就走了，温斯顿待了一会儿，抽了支烟。

温斯顿在约定时间之前赶到了胜利广场。他在一个有凹槽的巨型圆柱的基座下走来走去，圆柱顶端的老大哥雕像凝视着南方的天空，他曾在那里，在一号空降场之战中，歼灭欧亚国的飞机（就在几年前，还是东亚国飞机）。这之前的街道上，还有个骑马者的雕像，应该是奥利弗

•克伦威尔。约定的时间已经过去五分钟，女孩还没有出现，恐惧抓住了温斯顿。她没来，她改变主意了！他慢慢地踱步到广场北边，认出了圣马丁教堂，一种淡淡的喜悦涌上心头。当它还有钟时，它敲出了“你欠我三个法寻”。之后，他看到了那个女孩，她就站在纪念碑的底座前看，或者说她正假装在看圆柱上的宣传画。她身边的人不多，就这样走过去不大安全，到处都装着电屏。但就在这时，左边的某个地方传来喧哗及重型汽车驶过的声音。突然间，所有人都跑过了广场。女孩轻盈地跳过位于纪念碑底座处的狮子雕像，钻进了人群里。温斯顿跟了过去，在他奔跑时，他从人们的喊叫声中得知，原来装着欧亚国俘虏的车队正在驶过。

密密麻麻的人群将广场的南边堵住。通常，在这种混乱的场合，温斯顿总会被挤到外面，但这次他却推推搡搡地向人群中挤去。很快，他和那女孩便只有一臂之遥，可偏偏一个大块头和一个女人挡在了他们中间，这女人大概是大块头的妻子，和他一样身材壮硕，他们构成一幢无法逾越的肉墙。温斯顿扭过身，用力一挤，设法将肩膀插在二人中间，有那么一会儿，他被两个肌肉结实的屁股夹住了，感觉自己的五脏六腑都被挤成了肉酱。最后他挤了出来，出了点汗。他来到女孩身边，俩人肩并肩地走着，目光动也不动地注视着前方。

一长队卡车缓缓地驶过街道，车上的每个角落都有面无表情、手执机枪、站得笔直的警卫。许多穿着草绿色旧军服的黄种人蹲在车厢里，紧紧地拥在一起。他们用悲伤的蒙古脸从卡车两侧向外张望，一幅漠不关心的样子。所有俘虏都戴着脚镣，不时卡车颠簸，就会听到金属撞击的叮当声。一辆又一辆的卡车载着神情凄恻的俘虏开过，温斯顿知道他们就在卡车里，但他只间或看上一眼。女孩的肩膀，还有她右肘以上的手臂都紧贴着他，她的脸颊和他如此接近，以至于他几乎可以感觉到她

的体温。就像在食堂里，她掌握了主动权，用和上次一样听不出情绪的声音讲话，嘴唇几乎不动，如此低低细语很容易就被嘈杂的人声和隆隆的卡车声掩盖。

“听得到我说话吗？”

“听得到。”

“星期天下午能调休吗？”

“能！”

“那你听好，记住。到帕丁顿车站——”

她将路线告诉给他，像制定军事计划那样清晰明了，让他大为惊讶。先坐半个小时火车，出车站向左拐，沿路走两公里，然后穿过没有横梁的大门，再穿过田野，经过一条长满荒草的小径和一条灌木丛里的小路，到了那儿会看到一棵长满青苔的死树。她的脑袋里好像有一张地图，最后，她低声地问：“都记住了吗？”

“是的。”

“先向左，再向右，最后再向左。大门上面没有横梁。”

“好的，什么时间？”

“大约15点。你可能要等一会儿。我会从另外一条路赶到那里。都记下了？”

“是的。”

“那，尽快离开我吧。”

她没必要和他说这个，但他们一时半会儿无法从人群中脱身。卡车仍在经过，人们仍在不知足地观看。人群中传来零星的嘘声，但那只是党员发出的，很快就停止了。对观看的人来说，好奇的情绪占了大部分。外国人，不管来自欧亚国还是东亚国，都是陌生的动物。除了俘虏，人们很少能看到，而就算是俘虏，也只能匆匆一瞥，况且，人们不知道这些俘虏的下场会怎样。他们中的一小部分会被当做战犯，被吊死，其他的就消失了，可能被送到劳动营里当苦力。在圆圆的蒙古脸之后，是类似欧洲人的肮脏憔悴、长满胡须的脸。他们的眼睛从长满胡楂儿的颧骨上方看着温斯顿，有时目光专注，但又很快闪过。车队过完了。在最后一辆卡车上，温斯顿看到一个上了年纪的人，他笔直地站着，双手交叉放在身前，好像习惯了它们被绑在一起，他斑白的头发披散着，挡住了脸。就要和女孩分手了。但在最后一刻，人群仍紧紧地包围着他们，她摸到了他的手，握了一会儿。

虽然不可能超过十秒，却好像握了很久。他有足够的时间去熟悉她手上的每个细节。他摸索着她长长的手指，椭圆形的指甲，长着茧子的掌心以及光滑的手腕。摸着它，好像眼睛也看到了。他想起来，他还不知道她眼睛的颜色，可能是棕色，不过黑头发的人有时也长着蓝色的眼睛。回头看她是愚蠢的。他们平静地望着前方，十指相扣，在拥挤的人群中不会被发现。代替那女孩注视他的，是那上了年纪的俘虏，他的眼睛在乱蓬蓬的头发后悲伤地看着他。

十

温斯顿谨慎地穿过树影斑驳的小路，阳光从树杈间洒下，在地上形成金黄色的洼。他左边的树林下开满了迷蒙的蓝铃花。微风轻吻着人的皮肤，这是五月的第二天，树林深处，传来斑鸠的咕咕声。

他来得有些早了。路上很顺利，那女孩显然经验丰富，这让他不用像平时那样担惊受怕。至于寻找安全的地方，她也许值得信赖。人们不能想当然地以为乡下一定比伦敦安全。乡下虽没有电屏，仍十分危险，不知道什么时候，你说的话就会被隐藏起来的窃听器记录辨认。不仅如此，独自出门的人还很难不被注意。一百公里内尚不需要在通行证上签注，但有时火车站旁的巡逻队会检查每一个过路党员的证件，还会问一些令人难堪的问题。然而那天巡逻队并没有出现。离开车站后，温斯顿小心翼翼地回头张望，确定没有人跟踪。天气温暖，火车里坐满了无产者，每个人都兴高采烈。他所搭的硬座车厢里，从掉光牙的老太太到刚满月的婴儿，挤满了一大家子。他们坦率地告诉他，他们要到乡下走亲戚，顺便弄些黑市黄油。

路逐渐开阔起来，很快他就来到女孩所说的小路上，这条被牛群踩出来的小路就藏在灌木丛里。他没有手表，但他知道还不到15点。他的脚下到处是蓝铃花，想不踩到都不可能。他蹲下来摘了一些，一方面为了打发时间，一方面他还有个模模糊糊的想法，想在和女孩见面时送给她。他摘了一大束，闻了闻那并不美妙的花香。突然，背后传来脚步声，什么人踩在了树枝上，这声响吓得他浑身僵硬，只好继续摘花。这是最好的做法。也许是那女孩，也许是跟踪他的人，回头看就意味着做贼心虚。他一朵接一朵地摘着，一只手轻轻地落在了他的肩上。

他抬起头，原来是那女孩。她摇摇头，提醒他别出声。之后，她拨开树丛，领着他沿小径向树林深处走去。她一定来过这里，她娴熟地避开那些泥坑，就好像习惯了一样。跟在后面的温斯顿仍握着那束花，起初他很放松，但当他看到她健壮苗条的身材，看到她红色腰带勾勒出的曼妙的臀部曲线，他自惭形秽。这感觉非常沉重。即使是现在，若她转身看他，她仍有可能完全退缩。甜美的风和绿油油的树叶都让他气馁。从火车站出来，五月的阳光让他觉得自己肮脏不堪，浑身苍白。他是生活在室内的人，身上的每个毛孔都塞满了伦敦的煤尘。他想，截至现在她可能从未在阳光之下见过他。他们来到她说的那棵枯树旁，女孩跃过树干，拨开灌木丛，看不出那儿有什么入口。温斯顿跟着她走进去，发现一片自然形成的空场，高高的小树就矗立在长满芳草的土墩旁，它们密密麻麻地将空场遮了起来。

女孩停住脚步，转过身说：“我们到了。”

他正对着她，和她只有几步之遥，却不敢靠近。

“路上，我不想说话，”她说，“万一哪个地方藏着话筒。我觉得不会，可的确有这个可能。那些猪难免有哪个能认出你的声音。我们在这里就没事了。”

他仍然没有胆量靠近她，只傻乎乎地重复着：“这里就没事了？”

“对，看这些树。”那是一些还未长大的白蜡树，它们曾被人砍掉，可它们又重新生长起来，长成一片树林。它们的枝干很细，都没有手腕粗。“这些树不够大，藏不起话筒。再说，我曾经来过这里。”

他们漫无目的地闲聊着。他靠近她，她直直地站在他眼前，脸上带着一丝嘲讽式的微笑，似乎不明白为什么他的行动如此迟缓。他手里的

蓝铃花散落了一地，就好像是它们自己掉下来的。他抓住她的手。

“你相信吗？”他说，“到现在我还不知道你的眼睛是什么颜色。”棕色的，他发现，它们是淡淡的棕色，附着浓黑的睫毛。“现在，你看清了我真实的样子，你受得了一直看着我吗？”

“能，这没什么难的。”

“我三十九岁了，有妻子，我不能摆脱她。我有静脉曲张，还有五颗假牙。”

“我不在乎。”女孩说。

接着，说不清是谁主动，她倒在了他的怀里。一开始除了不敢相信，他什么感觉也没有。她年轻的身体紧紧地依偎着他，她乌黑的头发就贴在他的脸上，太美妙了！她扬起了脸，他吻了那微张的红唇。她搂住了他的脖子，轻轻地叫他亲爱的、宝贝、爱人。他把她拉到地上，她没有抗拒，他可以对她做任何他想做的事。不过，事实上对温斯顿来说，他并没有感受到肉体的刺激，除了单纯的触碰，更多的是骄傲和惊讶。对这件事他很高兴，但他却没有肉体的欲望，所有的一切都发生得太快了。她年轻、美丽，让他害怕，他已经太久没和女人生活在一起。不知什么原因，女孩站了起来，摘下头发上的蓝铃花。她靠着他坐着，伸手环过他的腰。

“没关系，亲爱的，别急。我们有整整一个下午的时间。这是个很棒的藏身之所，是不是？我是在一次集体远足中发现的，当时我迷路了。如果有人过来，隔着一百米就能听见。”

“你叫什么？”温斯顿问。

“朱莉亚。我知道你叫什么。温斯顿——温斯顿·史密斯。”

“你怎么知道的？”

“我想，我比你更擅长调查事情。亲爱的，告诉我，在我把纸条交给你前，你觉得我怎么样？”

他一点儿都不想对她撒谎，一开始就把最糟糕的告诉她，也是一种爱的表现。

“看到你就觉得讨厌，”他说，“我曾想把你先奸后杀。就在两个星期前，我还想用石头砸烂你的脑袋。如果你真的想知道，我以为你和思想警察有什么联系。”

女孩开心地笑了，显然，她把这当成了对她伪装技巧的肯定。

“思想警察！你真是这么想的？”

“嗯，不完全是。但是从你的外表看，因为你年轻、有活力、又健康，我想，也许——”

“你觉得我是个好党员。语言和行为都很纯洁，旗帜、游行、标语、比赛、集体远足——总是这些事。你以为，只要有机会，我就会揭发你，说你是思想犯，把你杀了？”

“对，差不多就是这个。很多年轻女孩都是这样，你知道的。”

“都怪这东西，”她一边说着，一边将青少年反性同盟的红色腰带扯了下来，扔到了树枝上。她的手碰到了自己的腰，这似乎让她想起什么。她从外衣口袋里拿出一小块巧克力，一分为二，将其中一块递给温

斯顿。他还没有吃，就从香味上知道这巧克力很不常见。它黑得发亮，包在银纸里。而通常的巧克力都是深棕色，就像人们描绘的那样，那味道宛若烧垃圾时冒出的烟。不过，他吃过她给的这种巧克力。第一次闻到它的香味，他就隐约想起某种让人不安的、感觉强烈的记忆。

“你从哪儿弄到它的？”他问。

“黑市，”她淡淡地说，“我是那种女孩：我擅长比赛，当过侦察队的中队长，每星期都有三个晚上为青少年反性同盟做义工，还在伦敦城里张贴他们胡说八道的宣传品，每次游行我都会举起横幅。我看上去总是很快乐，做什么事都不会退缩，永远和大家一起呼喊口号。这就是我要说的，这是保护自己的唯一途径。”

在温斯顿的舌头上，一小片巧克力已经溶化，味道很棒。但是它唤起的记忆仍徘徊在他意识的边缘。他能强烈地感觉到它，但他又无法确定它的样子，这感觉就类似用眼角余光看到的东西。他将它搁置一边，只知道这是件让他无限后悔又无力挽回的事。

“你很年轻，”他说，“你比我小了十多岁。是什么让你看上了我这样的人？”

“你的脸上有吸引我的东西。我想我要冒下险，我很擅长发现哪些人不属于他们。我一看到你，就知道你抗拒他们。”

他们，她说的似乎是党，特别是内党。她嘲弄他们，并不掩饰对他们的憎恨，尽管温斯顿知道他们待的地方比任何地方都要安全，但她还是让他不安。他非常惊讶地发现她竟然满口脏话，按说党员是不能说脏话的，温斯顿自己也很少说，即使说，也不会那么大声。但朱莉亚一提到党，特别是内党，就一定会用街头巷尾中那种用粉笔写出来的话。关

于这点，他不是不喜欢，这只是她对党以及党的一些做法非常反感的表现，就像马闻到坏饲料打了喷嚏，又自然又健康。

他们离开空场，在斑驳的树影下徜徉，只要小径的宽度足够两个人并肩而行，他们就会搂住对方的腰。他发现，摘掉了腰带，她的腰软多了。他们轻声低语，朱莉亚说出空场后最好保持安静。很快他们就走到了小树林的边上，她让他停下。

“别出去。可能有人在看着呢。我们到树后去就好。”

他们站在榛子树的树荫下。阳光透过树叶照到他们脸上仍是热的。温斯顿向田野望去，一种奇怪的感觉涌了上来，他非常震惊，他认识这个地方。只看一眼，他就知道这儿曾经是个被动物咬得乱七八糟的牧场，一条蜿蜒的小路从中间穿过，到处都是鼯鼠的洞，牧场对面是高低低的灌木丛，丛中的榆树依稀可见，随风轻舞，它们繁茂颤动的枝叶犹如女人的长发。附近一定有一条小溪，尽管看不见，但一定有那么一个地方，池水碧绿，鲦鱼自在游动。

“附近有小溪吗？”他小声问。

“有，是有一条小溪。就在那块地的边上。溪里还有鱼，很大的鱼，它们就在柳树下的水潭里摇尾巴。”

“黄金乡，差不多就是黄金乡了。”他喃喃地说。

“黄金乡？”

“没什么，真的。那是在梦里看到的风景。”

“看！”朱莉亚轻声道。

一只画眉停在了五米开外的树枝上，那树枝刚好和他们的脸差不多高。但它似乎并没有注意到他们。它在阳光里，他们在树荫下。它张了张翅膀，又小心地将翅膀收起，仿佛和太阳行礼一般猛地低下了头。之后它开始歌唱，美妙的声音倾泻而出，在这寂静的下午，嘹亮得惊人。温斯顿和朱莉亚紧紧地靠在一起听得入了迷。时间一分一分地过去，它仍在鸣唱，声音婉转多变，没有一次重复，就好像特意展示自己精湛的歌唱技巧。有时，它也会停下几秒舒展下羽翼，但接着它又会挺一挺那带着斑点的胸脯继续放声歌唱。温斯顿怀着崇敬地心情看着它，它为谁而唱？又为什么要唱？没有配偶，也没有竞争对手，是什么让它在这孤寂的树林里停下来对着一片空旷引吭高歌？温斯顿不知道附近是否藏有窃听话筒。他和朱莉亚的说话声很小，话筒收不到，但却收得到画眉的鸣叫。或许在话筒的另一端某个形如甲虫的小个子正专心致志地听着——听着这些。不过，画眉的歌声将他从沉思中拉了出来。那声音宛若液体，和枝叶间倾洒下的阳光融在一起倒在他身上。他停止思考，感受着一切。在他的怀抱里，女孩的腰是那样柔软而温暖。他将她的身体转过来，让她面对着他。她的身体好像与他融为一体，无论他把手放在哪里，她都如水一般驯服。他们吻在一起，和之前那僵硬的吻大为不同。将脸挪开时，两个人都深深地叹了口气。那只鸟被惊到了，扑了下翅膀，飞走了。

温斯顿将嘴唇贴在她的耳畔，轻声道：“现在。”

“这里不行。”她悄声说，“回刚才那隐蔽的地方去，那里安全些。”

很快，他们便回到了那块空地，路上踩折了一些树枝。当他们走进那片被小树环绕的空场，她转过身来面对他。两个人的呼吸都急促起来，她的嘴角又浮现出笑容。她站在那里，端详了他一会儿，然后伸手拉开制服上的拉链。啊，就是这样！几乎和梦中的一样，就像他想象的

那样，她迅速地脱掉衣服，丢到一旁，姿态曼妙，似乎要将整个文化都摧毁殆尽。她的身体在阳光下泛着白色的光芒，但他并没有急着看她的身体，他注视着那张长着雀斑的放肆大笑的脸，被它深深吸引。他在她的面前跪下，抓住了她的手。

“你之前做过吗？”

“当然，好几百次了——好吧，几十次总有了。”

“和党员一起吗？”

“对，总是和党员一起。”

“和内党党员？”

“没和那些猪一起过，从来没有。不过，如果有机会，他们中不少人会愿意的。他们并不愿意像他们表现的那样正经。”

他的心剧烈地跳动起来。她已经做过几十次了，他希望有几百次，几千次。任何有堕落意味的事情都会让他充满希望。谁知道呢，也许党已经败絮其中，也许提倡奋斗自律只为了掩盖罪恶。他十分乐意让他们统统染上麻风病、梅毒，如果他有能力办到的话。他把她拉下来，面对面地跪坐着。

“听着，你有过的男人越多，我就越爱你。你明白吗？”

“明白，完全明白。”

“我恨纯洁，我恨善良！我不希望这世上有任何美德，我希望每个人都堕落到骨子里。”

“那么，我很适合你。我已经堕落到骨子里。”

“你喜欢这样做吗？我不是说我，我是说这件事本身。”

“我爱这件事。”

这正是他最希望听到的。不是爱某个人，而是爱这动物性的本能，单纯又人皆有之的欲望蕴涵着将党摧毁的力量。他将她压倒草地上，在散落的蓝铃花中间。这次没有什么困难。他们的胸脯起伏，慢慢地恢复了正常的呼吸，带着又愉快又无助的感觉彼此分开。阳光似乎更暖了，他们睡意朦胧。他伸手将丢在一旁的制服拉了过来盖在她身上。两个人很快睡着了，一直睡了近半个钟头。

温斯顿先醒了过来，他坐起身凝视着她那张长着雀斑的脸，她的头枕着手臂，平静地睡着。除了嘴唇，她说不上多漂亮，离近看，她的眼角还有一两道皱纹，她的黑色短发浓密柔软。他忽然想起来，他还不知道她姓什么，住在哪儿。

她年轻而健壮的身体正熟睡着，那无依无靠的样子唤起了他的怜爱和保护欲。但这不同于他在榛树下听画眉鸣唱时萌生的那种不假思索的柔情。他拉开她的制服，注视着她光滑白皙的肉体。他想，过去，男人看女人的肉体产生欲望就是故事的全部。但现在，单纯的爱和单纯的欲望都不复存在，不再有纯粹的感情，所有的一切都掺入了仇恨和恐惧。他们的拥抱是一场战斗，高潮是一次胜利。这是对党的打击，这是政治行为。

十一

“我们还能在这儿再来一次。”朱莉亚说，“随便哪个用来藏身的地方只用两次还是安全的。当然，一两个月内是不能用了。”

她一醒来就变了样，动作干净利落。她穿上衣服，系好红饰带，开始安排回去的路线。这件事似乎理所当然地要交由她做。她显然拥有温斯顿所欠缺的处理实际问题的能力，再说她看上去对伦敦周边的乡村十分了解，无数次的集体远足让她积累了经验。她安排的回程路线和他来时的大不相同，她要他从另一个火车站出去。她说：“回去的路永远不要和来时的一样。”就好像在阐述某个重要的原理。她先离开，半个小时后，温斯顿再离开。

她告诉他一个地方，四天后他们可以在下班后到那里相会。贫民区的某条街道上有个露天市场，那里总是人来人往，喧闹拥挤。她会在货摊之间转悠，假装找鞋带或缝衣线。如果她确定万无一失就在他走近时擤鼻子，否则他就装作不认识径直走过。运气好的话，他们可以在人群中平安无事地说上一刻钟的话，安排下次约会。

“我现在必须走了，”他一记住她的话，她就立即说道，“我要在19点30分回去，我得为青少年反性同盟花上两个小时，发发传单，或者做些其他什么事。这是不是很讨厌？能帮我梳下头吗？头发里有树枝吗？你确定没有？那么再见吧，亲爱的，再见！”

她扑到他怀里，狠狠地吻他。过了一会儿，她从那些小树中拨开一条路，没有一点声音地消失在树林里。而他依然不知道她姓什么，住在哪儿。但这无关紧要，因为他们既不可能在室内相会，也不可能用文字

交流。

实际上，后来他们再也没到树林中的那块空地。自此之后，整个五月他们只有一次真正做爱的机会，那是在朱莉亚告诉他的另一个隐蔽之所，一个废教堂的钟楼上。三十年前一颗原子弹曾轰炸过那里。它是个很好的藏身处，只要你走得到，通往那儿的路非常危险。在其他时间，他们只能在街上相会，每晚都在不同的地方，每次都不超过半小时。通常在街上，他们还能勉强说上些话。他们在拥挤的街道上毫无目的地走着，算不上并肩而行，也从不两两相望。他们用一种奇特的方式断断续续地交谈着，就好像时亮时灭的灯塔。每每遇到身穿党员制服的人或是接近电屏，他们就突然噤声，几分钟后再接着之前中断的地方讲下去。到了约定好的分手地点，谈话也会突兀中断，到第二天晚上再直接接上。这样的说话方式朱莉亚似乎习以为常，她管这叫“分期谈话”。她讲话时不动嘴唇，令人惊讶。而在近一个月的晚间约会中，俩人只接了一次吻。当时他们正默默无语地走在一条小巷子里（朱莉亚从不在主要街道以外的地方说话），突然传来一声巨响，大地颤抖，漫天黑烟。温斯顿侧着身子倒在地上，又疼又怕。一定是火箭弹落在附近。突然他发现朱莉亚的脸离他只有几厘米，她的脸色如死人一般苍白，就像涂了白粉，嘴唇也同样惨白。她死了！他紧紧地搂住她，发现自己亲吻的却是活人才有的温暖的脸庞，一些粉末样的东西跑到他嘴里。原来，两个人的脸上都落了一层厚厚的灰泥。

有几个晚上，他们来到约会的地点又不得不走开，连招呼都不能打，因为刚好有巡逻队从街角走来，或者正好有直升机在头顶转悠。即使不这么危险，他们也很难找到约会的时间。温斯顿一星期工作六十个小时，朱莉亚的工作时间更长，他们的休息日要根据工作的繁忙程度而定，经常凑不到一起。反正对朱莉亚来说，很少有哪个晚上是完全空闲

的，她将大量时间花费在听演讲、参加游行、散发青少年反性同盟传单、准备仇恨周旗帜、为节约运动募捐之类的事情上。她说这是伪装，如果你能在小事上循规蹈矩，你就能在大事上打破规矩。她甚至说服温斯顿拿出一个晚上的时间兼职军用品生产，很多表现积极的党员都义务参加了。因此，每个星期都有一个晚上，温斯顿要花四个小时待在昏暗通风的工作间里，在电屏的音乐和锤子的敲打声中做着令人烦闷的工作，他要用螺丝将金属零件拧在一起，那大概是炸弹的引爆装置。

在教堂钟楼约会时，他们将之前断断续续的谈话所造成的空隙填满。那是个炎热的下午，钟楼的小方房间里空气窒闷，充斥着鸽屎味。他们坐在尘土淤积、树枝遍布的地板上聊了好几个小时的天，每隔一段时间都要从窗户缝处向外看看，以确定没有人接近。

朱莉亚二十六岁，和三十多个女孩挤在一间宿舍里（“一直生活在女人的臭味里！我是多么恨女人！”她补充道），而正像他猜测的那样，她在小说司里负责写作机。她喜欢她的工作，她要发动并维护一台功率超大又极其复杂的马达。她并不“聪明”，但她乐于动手，和机器打交道让她感觉自在。从计划委员会提出总观点到最后改写队的修饰润色，她能描绘出小说制造的整个过程，但她对最终的成品没有兴趣。她说她不大喜欢读书，书和果酱、鞋带一样，无非是一种不得不生产的商品。六十年代初以前的事她已经想不起来了，在她认识的人里唯一经常谈到革命前情况的人就是她的爷爷，而他在她八岁时就消失了。上学时她当过曲棍球队的指挥，曾连续两年拿下体操比赛的奖杯。在参加青少年反性同盟前，她还做过侦察队的队长，青年团的支部书记。她的表现一贯优秀，她甚至入选小说司下的色情科（这是声誉良好的标志），那可是为群众生产低级的色情文学的地方。据她说，在那儿工作过的人管它叫“垃圾间”。她在那儿干了一年，协助生产诸如《刺激故事集》或

《女校一夜》这样装在密封套里的书。年轻的群众偷偷地买回去，给人留下买违禁品的印象。

“书里写了什么？”温斯顿好奇地问。

“哦，简直就是垃圾。真的很无聊。它们总共只有六种情节，来回来去转着圈地用。当然我只负责搅拌机。我从来没进过改写队，我不擅长写东西，亲爱的——我做不了这个。”

他很惊讶，他这才了解原来在色情科，除了领导，其他的工作人员都是女的。有种理论说，和女人相比，男人的性本能不容易控制，男人更有可能被自己制造的色情作品侵蚀。

“他们连结婚的女人都不愿意要，”她说，“人们总觉得女孩是纯洁的，但无论如何，我不是。”

她第一次做爱是在十六岁，对方是个六十岁的党员。为了不被逮捕，他自杀了。“他做得很好，”朱莉亚说，“否则，他一招供，他们就会知道我的名字。”自那之后，她又做过很多次。在她看来生活很简单。你想快乐，“他们”，也就是党，不让你快乐，那你就要尽己所能地打破他们的规矩。她似乎觉得“他们”剥夺你的快乐就像你要避免被抓一样，都是自然而然的事。她用最粗俗的语言说她恨党，但她却没有批评党。除非和她的生活相关，她对党的理论没半点兴趣。他注意到，刨去已经成为日常用语的几个单词，她从来不讲新话。她没听说过兄弟会，也拒绝相信它的存在。在她看来但凡和党作对的组织都愚蠢之至，因为它们注定会失败。聪明的做法是既打破规矩，又保住性命。温斯顿不知道多少年轻人会像她这样，这些年轻人都是在革命后长大的，什么情况都不了解，他们眼中的党就像天空一样，是本来就有的，不会改变的，

他们不会反抗它的权威，但他们却会像兔子躲避猎狗那样躲开它。

他们没有讨论有没有可能结婚，那太遥远了，不值得人去想。就算杀掉他的妻子凯瑟琳，也没有哪个委员会批准这样的婚姻。连做白日梦的希望都不存在。

“你妻子是怎样的人？”朱莉亚问。

“她是——你知道新话里有个词叫‘思想好’吗？那是指天生的正经人，完全没有坏思想。”

“我不知道这词，但我知道这种人，知道得够多了。”

他开始向她讲述他的婚后生活，很奇怪，她好像早就清楚这种生活的大致状况。她向他描述他如何一碰到凯瑟琳的身体她就变得僵硬，描述她如何紧紧抱住他却仍像使劲推开他一样，就好像她曾亲眼见过，亲身经历过。和朱莉亚说这些事情很容易。无论如何那些与凯瑟琳相关的回忆已不再痛苦，它们已经变得令人讨厌。

“如果不是因为一件事，我还是可以忍受下去的。”温斯顿说。他告诉她，每个星期凯瑟琳都会在同一晚上强迫他进行那没有感情的仪式。“她讨厌这事，但又没有什么能让她不做这事。她管这叫——你想都想不到。”

“我们对党的义务。”朱莉亚立即接道。

“你怎么知道？”

“亲爱的，我也上过学的。每个月学校都会对十六岁以上的女孩做一次性教育讲座，青年团也是。他们灌输你好几年，我敢说那对很多人

都起了作用。当然你也说不准，人总是虚伪的。”

她针对这个话题发起了感慨。就朱莉亚而言，性的欲望就是所有事情的出发点。无论以什么方式触及到这个问题，她都表现得极为敏锐。和温斯顿不同，她清楚党宣扬禁欲主义的深层原因。这不单因为性的本能会创造出专属于自己的，不受党操控的世界——所以必须尽可能地将它摧毁，更因为性压抑会造成歇斯底里，而这正是党希望的，因为它能够转化成对战争的狂热和对领袖的崇拜。她这样说：

“你会在做爱的时候花光力气，之后你感到快乐，什么事都不想抱怨。而这样的感觉是他们不能容忍的。他们要你每时每刻都精力充沛。像游行、欢呼、挥舞旗子之类的事都是变了味的发泄性欲的途径。要是你内心愉悦，你又怎么会为老大哥，为三年计划，为两分钟仇恨会这些乱七八糟的东西激动？”

他想她说的是真的，禁欲和政治正统有着直接而紧密的联系。除了压抑强烈的本能，还有什么办法能让党员们像党要求的那样将恐惧、仇恨、盲从保持在一个恰当的水平上吗？对党而言，性冲动是危险的，需要利用的。他们用类似的手段对付为人父母的本能。他们不可能摧毁家庭，于是他们一方面鼓励人们用老办法爱自己的孩子。另一方面，又有系统地教孩子如何与父母作对，他们让孩子监视父母的言行，揭发父母的偏差，让家庭成为思想警察的延伸。依照这个策略，每个人都清楚无论白天还是黑夜自己都在告密者的包围下，且这告密者还是十分接近的人。

突然，他又想起凯瑟琳。凯瑟琳太蠢了，她没有意识到他的观念不合正统，否则她一定会向思想警察揭发他。不过，让他想起凯瑟琳的却是那炎热的下午，天气太热了，他的头上冒出了汗。他开始向朱莉亚讲

述一件事，或者说是没有发生的事，那还是在十一年前，一个同样炎热的夏日午后。他们婚后三四个月的时候，在去肯特郡的集体远足中迷路了，只落后了其他人几分钟，就转错了弯。他们来到白垩矿场的边上，前面突然没了路，矿边距矿底有十几、二十几米深，下面还尽是大石块。附近找不到可以问路的人，而凯瑟琳一发现迷路就变得十分不安，哪怕只离开那群吵吵嚷嚷的人一会儿，她也觉得自己做错了事。她想快点顺原路返回，看看别的地方有没有认识路的。但就在这时温斯顿注意到脚下的石缝中有几簇野花，其中一簇有砖红和紫红两种颜色，还都长在同一条根上。温斯顿从来没有见过这样的花，就喊凯瑟琳过来看。

“看，凯瑟琳！看那些花，就是矿底旁边的那簇。你看到了吗？它们有两种不同的颜色。”

她已经转身走了，但她还是有些烦躁地回过头看了一眼。她从悬崖上探出身体，朝他指的地方张望。他就站在她后面一点儿，手扶着她的腰。这时他突然意识到他们有多么孤单，树叶是静止的，小鸟也好像睡着了，周围没有一个人影。这种地方不大可能藏着话筒，就算有，也只能记录下声音。这正是午后最炎热、最让人昏昏欲睡的时刻，炽热的阳光射在他们脸上，汗珠顺着他的脸颊流了下来。突然，他蹦出了一个念头……

“为什么不好好推她一把？”朱莉亚说，“若是我就会。”

“是的，亲爱的，你会的。若是现在的我，我也会，或者说可能会——我不能确定。”

“你后悔没推吗？”

“对，我后悔没推。”

他们肩靠着肩，坐在堆满灰尘的地板上。他把她拉近，她则将头枕在他的肩上，从她头发中散发的香气盖过了鸽子屎的臭味。在他看来，她还年轻，仍对生活充满期望，她不能理解，将一个麻烦的人从悬崖上推下去不能解决任何问题。

“事实上，没有什么不同。”他说。

“那你为什么又会后悔呢？”

“那仅仅因为相比消极，我更喜欢积极的东西。我们不可能在这场比赛中获胜，某些形式的失败会比其他形式的要好些。就是这样。”

他感到她的肩膀动了一下，她不大同意他的观点。每每说起这种话，她总是不同意。她不能接受“个人终究会失败”是自然规律。从某种角度说，她能想到自己已劫数难逃，思想警察迟早会抓住她、杀死她。但在心底的某个部分，她仍相信她能建立起一个秘密的、由她自己来执掌的世界。而她所需要的无非是运气、勇气和机智。她还不懂世上并不存在什么幸福，唯一的胜利在遥远的未来，在你死了很久之后。从向党宣战的那一刻开始，你就最好把自己当成一具尸体。

“我们是死人。”他说。

“我们还没死。”朱莉亚如实说。

“不是指肉体。半年，一年——五年，可以想象。我怕死，你年轻，可能比我更怕。当然我们会尽可能地推迟我们的死。但这没有丝毫不同，只要人仍拥有人性，死和生就是一样的。”

“哦，废话！一会儿你想和谁睡觉？我还是骷髅？你不喜欢活着吗？你不喜欢这种感觉吗？这是我，这是我的手，我的腿，我是真实

的，我是实实在在的，我是活着的！你难道不喜欢吗？”

她转过身，胸压着他。隔着制服，他能感觉到她那丰满坚挺的乳房。她似乎用身体将青春和活力注入到他的躯体中。

“没错，我喜欢。”他说。

“那就不要再说和死有关的东西了。现在听着，亲爱的，我们要商量下下次约会的时间。我们可以回树林那里，我们已经很久没有去过那儿了。但这次你必须从另外一条路走。我已经打算好了。你坐火车——你看，我给你画出来。”

她以她特有的务实作风扫出来一小堆土，然后又用从鸽子窝里拿出的树枝在地上画出一张地图。

十二

温斯顿环视了一下位于查林顿先生店铺上的那间简陋小屋。窗旁的大床已整理好，放着粗糙的毛毯和不带枕巾的枕头。壁炉上十二小时的老式座钟滴滴答答地走着。温斯顿上次来时买下的玻璃镇纸就摆在角落处的折叠桌上，在半明半暗的屋子里发着柔和的光。

壁炉的围栏中有一只破旧的铁油炉，一口锅和两个杯子，这都是查林顿先生提供的。温斯顿将炉子点着，煮起了水。他带来的信封里装满了胜利牌咖啡和糖精片。钟走到7点20分，确切地说是19点20分。而她会于19点30分到。

愚蠢，愚蠢。他在心里不停地说：这是自找的，毫无道理的，自杀一般的蠢事。在党员可能犯的所有罪行中，这是最难隐藏的。事实上，他看到玻璃镇纸倒映在折叠桌上的影子时，第一次萌生了这个想法。正如他所料，查林顿先生痛快地将房间租给了他，他很高兴这给自己带来了几块钱的收入。当他得知温斯顿为了和情人约会而租房时，竟一点都不吃惊，也没有表现出令人讨厌的心照不宣，相反，他看着远处泛泛而谈，样子微妙，就好像他的一部分已经隐遁。他说，独处非常重要，人人都想有个地方能时不时单独待上一会儿。若他们找到了地方，别人知道了也别说什么，这是最基本的礼貌。他告诉温斯顿房子有两个入口，一条穿过后院，一条连接着小巷，而他说这话时就像真的消失了一样。

窗户下，什么人正在唱歌。温斯顿躲在平纹布的窗帘后偷看着外面。六月的太阳高高地挂在天上，阳光洒满整个院子。一个像诺曼大圆柱般高壮的女人在洗衣盆和晾衣绳间走来走去。她强壮的手臂红彤彤的，她的腰上系着粗麻布的围裙，她正往绳子上夹着一些方形的白布，

温斯顿认出那是婴儿的尿布。只要嘴里没咬着夹子，她就用强有力的女低音唱：

不过是毫无希望的幻想，

消失得如此之快，像四月的日子。

但一个眼神，一句话，一个被他们唤起的梦！

都可将我心偷走！

过去的几个星期这首歌在伦敦颇为盛行。它是音乐司下属的某个部门为群众出版的诸多歌曲中的一首。它的歌词由作词机制作，不需要任何人力。但那女人的歌声是如此优美，这堆可怕的垃圾竟也变得动听起来。他听到女人的歌声，听到鞋子在石板路上的摩擦声，听到大街上孩子们的叫喊声，听到远处什么地方行人的往来声，可屋子里仍安静得出奇，谢天谢地没有电屏。

愚蠢，愚蠢，愚蠢！他再次想起。不能想象他们能如此频繁地约会几个星期都不被发现。但对他们来说，找到只属于他们自己的、隐秘的、在屋子里的且距离很近的地方的诱惑太大了。钟楼约会后有相当长时间他们都无法再安排见面。为了迎接仇恨周，他们的工作时间大大延长。尽管距离仇恨周还有一个多月，但庞大复杂的准备工作迫使每个人都不得不加班。他们好不容易才得以在同一个下午休息，原本计划再到那块林中空地去。而前一天晚上，他们在街上匆匆见了一面。像往常一样，在人群中相遇时，温斯顿不会去看朱莉亚的脸，但他迅速地瞥了她一眼，她的脸色好像比平时苍白得多。

“全完了。”一觉得安全，她就轻声说，“我是说明天。”

“怎么？”

“明天下午我不能来。”

“为什么？”

“哦，还是那个原因，这次来得比较早。”

他登时就发了脾气。认识她一个月了，对她的欲望性质已经发生了改变。开始，几乎没有什么真正的情欲，他们第一次做爱只是简单的意识性的活动。不过第二次之后就不同了。她头发的气味，嘴唇的味道，皮肤的感觉似乎都融入了他的身体，或者说融入了环绕他的空气。她已然是生理的必需，他不单想得到她，还觉得有权得到她。当她说她不能来时，他有种被欺骗的感觉。而就在这时，人群将他们挤到一起，他们的手无意中触碰到对方。她飞快地捏了下他的指尖，它激起的似乎不是情欲，而是爱意。这让他意识到和女人一起生活，这样的失望一定是正常的，会反复出现的。突然，对她，他感到从未有过的深情厚谊。他真希望他们是结了十年婚的夫妻，他真希望两个人能大大方方地走在街上，不用担惊受怕，聊些日常琐事，买些日用杂货。而他最希望的是能有一个地方让他们两人不受打扰地待在一起，不用觉得见面就要做爱。这之后的第二天，他萌生了向查林顿先生租房子的念头。他将这个想法告诉朱莉亚，没想到她立即同意了。他们都知道这很疯狂，两个人似乎都故意向坟墓靠近。他坐在床边等她，想起仁爱部的地下室。这很奇怪，命中注定的恐怖在人的意识里钻进钻出。它就待在未来的某个时刻，好比99一定在100之前一样，它注定发生在死亡降临之前。没有人能避开它，但也有可能将它推迟。只是偶尔在神志清醒的情况下，人会任性地缩短这段时间。

这时，楼梯上响起急促的脚步声。朱莉亚突然出现在屋子里，带着一个棕色的帆布工具包，就是他经常看到的她上下班时带着的那个。他走过去将她揽在怀里，她却急急忙忙地挣脱开，多少因为她还提着东西。

“就等半秒。”她说，“看看我给你带了些什么。你是不是带了垃圾胜利咖啡了？我想你带了，你可以把它扔掉了，我们不需要它，看这儿。”

她跪下来，打开包，将上面的扳手、螺丝刀一一拿开，露出包底下几个干干净净的纸包，她递给温斯顿的第一个纸包摸上去既熟悉又有点奇怪，装满了沉甸甸的沙子一般的東西，摸到哪儿哪就塌下去。

“是糖吗？”他问。

“真正的糖，不是糖精，是糖。这儿还有条面包，正经的白面包，不是咱们吃的那种劣质货——还有一小罐果酱。这是一听牛奶——但是，看！这才是让我得意的东西，我要把它包起来，因为——”

她不需要告诉他包起它的原因。整间屋子都弥漫着浓烈的香味，那味道似乎来自温斯顿的幼年。不过，就算在今天，偶尔仍能闻到。有时它在房门关上前飘出来，穿过走廊，有时在熙熙攘攘的大街上时隐时现。

“是咖啡，”他悄声道，“真正的咖啡。”

“这是内党的咖啡，这儿有整整一公斤呢。”她说。

“你怎么弄到这些东西的？”

“这些都是内党的东西，这些猪没有什么弄不到的。不过，侍者、服务员还有其他一些人可以偷拿一些，看这个，我还弄到了一小包茶。”

温斯顿在她身边蹲下，将纸包撕开一角。

“这是真正的茶叶，不是黑莓的叶子。”

“最近茶叶挺多的，他们占领了印度，还是哪儿。”她说得含含混混，“听着，亲爱的，转个身，背对着我，三分钟就好。去床那边坐吧，别太靠近窗口。我不喊你，就别转过来。”

温斯顿心不在焉地隔着布窗帘往外看。院子里，那个手臂通红的女人仍在洗衣盆和晾衣绳之间走来走去。她从嘴里取出两个夹子，充满感情地唱着：

他们说时间可以医治一切，

他们说你终究会忘记；

但这些年的笑与泪，

仍牵动着我的心弦。

她将这充斥着废话的歌词记在心底，她的歌声伴随着甜美的夏日空气飘扬直上，非常悦耳，还带着愉悦的忧伤。所有的一切都让人觉得假使六月的傍晚一直持续下去，假使要洗的衣服没完没了，那她就会心满意足地一面晒尿布，一面唱情歌，足足待上一千年。他突然想起来，他还从未见过哪个党员发自肺腑地独自歌唱。这有些奇怪，这样做就像自言自语，既怪异又危险。也许，人只有在濒临饿死的情况下才想放声歌

唱吧。

“现在，可以转过来了。”朱莉亚说。

他转过身，有那么几秒他几乎认不出她。他原以为他会看到她的裸体，但他没有。她的变化比赤身裸体还要让他惊讶。她化了妆。

她一定是在群众聚居区的什么店子里买了一整套化妆品。她的嘴唇涂得鲜红，脸颊扑了腮红，鼻子也打上了粉，而她在眼皮下涂的东西则将她的双眼衬得更加明亮。她的化妆技术说不上多纯熟，不过这方面温斯顿也没有太高要求。在此之前，他还从没看到过哪个女性党员往脸上抹化妆品。她的脸神采奕奕，令人吃惊。不过是在恰当的地方轻轻地拍上一点粉就让她漂亮了那么多，不仅如此，她的女人味也更浓了，她短短的头发和男子气的制服又强化了这点。他把她抱在怀里，闻到了一股人造紫罗兰的香味。他记起来，在地下室里那间昏暗的厨房，想起那女人黑洞洞的嘴。那女人用的香水和她的一样，但现在这似乎已无关紧要。

“还用了香水！”他说。

“没错，亲爱的，还用了香水。你知道接下来我要做什么吗？我要去弄一件真正的女式连衣裙，我要把它穿上，不再穿这讨厌的裤子了。我要穿丝袜，穿高跟鞋！在这个房间里，我要当女人，不当党员同志。”

他们脱掉衣服，爬到那巨大的红木床上。这是他第一次在她面前赤裸身体。之前他为自己那苍白消瘦的身体，那小腿上的静脉曲张以及脚踝处的疤痕感到羞愧。虽然没有床单，但垫在身下的旧毯子已经磨光了毛，十分光滑。床又大又有弹性，出乎他们的意料。“这里面肯定长满

臭虫，可谁在乎呢？”朱莉亚说。除非在群众家里，现在已看不到双人床。小时候，温斯顿偶尔会在双人床上睡觉，朱莉亚则记不起自己睡过。

他们睡了一会儿，温斯顿醒来时，时针已接近9点。他没动，因为朱莉亚正枕在他的手臂上熟睡。她脸上的化妆品大部分都蹭到了温斯顿的脸和枕头上，但颧骨上那抹浅浅的胭脂仍能凸显她的美丽。落日的余辉映到了床腿上，照亮了壁炉。锅里的水已经开了，院子里的女人也不再歌唱，但大街上孩子们的吵闹声仍隐隐可闻。他意识蒙眬，在夏日的夜晚，男人和女人不着衣衫地躺在这样的床上，想做爱就做爱，想说什么就说什么，不会觉得必须要起来，就那么静静地躺着聆听窗外的声音。不知道在被消除掉的过去，这样的事情算不算平常？朱莉亚醒了，她揉揉眼睛，用手肘撑起身子，望向煤油炉。

“水烧干一半了，”她说，“我这就起来煮咖啡。我们还有一个小时的时间，你的公寓几点熄灯？”

“23点30分。”

“宿舍里是23点，但你得早些回去。因为——嗨！滚开，你这脏东西！”她突然转身从地板上抓起一只鞋，像男孩子那样抬起胳膊朝房间的一角砸去，在上午的两分钟仇恨会上，他曾看到她向高德斯坦因扔字典，姿势一模一样。

“那是什么？”他惊讶地问。

“有只老鼠，我看到它从护墙板下面伸出鼻子。那儿有个洞。总之，我把它吓坏了。”

“老鼠！”温斯顿嘀咕，“就在这屋里！”

“它们哪儿都是。”朱莉亚躺下来，漠然地说，“我们宿舍的厨房也有。伦敦的一些地方到处都是老鼠。你知道吗？它们还会攻击小孩。真的，它们真的那样。在那些地方的大街上，当妈妈的不敢让孩子独自待着，两分钟都不行。就是那种褐色的、体型很大的老鼠。还有恶心的事儿呢，这些令人作呕的东西总是——”

“别说了！”温斯顿闭上眼睛。

“亲爱的！你怎么这么苍白。出什么事了？它们让你不舒服吗？”

“老鼠是世界上最可怕的东西！”

她贴紧他，四肢环住他，似乎要用她的体温来安抚他。他没有立即张开双眼。几分钟过去了，他觉得自己又回到了那挥之不去的梦魇中。梦中的情景总是一样的。他站在一堵黑色的墙前，墙的那端是令人无法忍受的东西，它是如此可怕以至于人不能面对。在梦里，他一直有种感觉，他总是在欺骗自己。他明明知道那黑色的墙后是什么。只要他拼尽全力，他完全可以将这东西拖出来，就好像从脑子里强行取出什么一样。但每次他都在弄清它之前醒来，某种程度上，这东西和他刚刚打断的朱莉亚说的话有关。

“抱歉，”他说，“没什么，我不喜欢老鼠，就这样。”

“别担心，亲爱的，我不会再让那恶心东西待在这儿。走之前，我会用布把洞堵住。下次来时，我再带些石灰，把它严严实实地塞起来。”

恐慌的感觉已褪去了一半。他多少有些不好意思，便靠着床头坐起

身。朱莉亚走下床，穿好衣服，做起了咖啡。一股浓郁的香味从锅里飘出来，刺激着人的感觉。他们关上窗户，不想引起外面人的注意，生怕他们寻根究底。加了糖的咖啡味道更好了，像丝绸般绵滑。吃了多年糖精的温斯顿几乎忘掉这种味道。朱莉亚一只手揣着口袋，一只手拿着抹了果酱的面包，在屋子里踱步而行，她瞥瞥书架，就折叠桌的修理方法发表看法。她用力坐了坐那把破扶手椅，看椅子是不是舒服，她又饶有兴致地查看了下那十二小时的座钟。她将玻璃镇纸拿到床上，以便在亮一点的地方看清楚它。但温斯顿却从她手里拿走了它，他被它那柔和如雨水的色泽深深吸引。

“你觉得它是什么？”朱莉亚问。

“我想它什么都不是——我的意思是，我觉得它从未派上过用场，这正是我喜欢它的原因。要是有人能读懂它，它就是他们忘记篡改的一段历史，是从一百年前传来的信息。”

“还有那边的画——”她冲着对面墙上的画点了下头。“它也有一百年的历史吗？”

“比那更早，大概有二百年了，我不敢确定，也没人说得清，今天，随便什么东西你都不可能知道它到底有多少年历史。”

她走过去看它。“就是这儿，老鼠从这儿伸出鼻子。”说着，她朝画下方的护墙板踹了一脚。“这是什么地方？我好像在什么地方看到过它。”

“是个教堂，至少以前是，叫圣克莱门特丹麦人。”他的脑海中再次浮现出查林顿先生教的那几句歌谣，他带着几分怀念之情唱起来：“橘子和柠檬，’圣克莱门特教堂的大钟说。”

让他吃惊的是，她竟然接着唱了下去。

“你欠我三个法寻。圣马丁教堂的大钟说。什么时候还给我，老贝利的大钟——”

“我想不起接下来怎么唱，但我好歹记得最后一句：蜡烛照着你睡觉，斧头把你头砍掉。”

就好像一个口令的两个部分。在“老贝利的大钟”后一定还有一段，也许只要给查林顿先生适当的提示，他就能将它从记忆中挖出来。

“谁教你的？”他问。

“我的爷爷，当我还是个小女孩时，他经常对我唱它。我八岁的时候，他被蒸发了，不管怎样，他不见了。我想知道柠檬是什么。”她随口说道，“我见过橘子，那是一种皮很厚的黄颜色的水果。”

“我还记得柠檬，”温斯顿说，“它在五十年代很常见。它很酸，闻一下都能把牙齿酸倒。”

“我打赌那画后面一定藏着臭虫。”朱莉亚说，“哪天有时间我要把它摘下来，好好打扫一番。咱们差不多该走了，我得把妆卸了。真烦人！等会儿我再把你脸上的唇膏擦掉。”

温斯顿又在床上躺了几分钟，屋子慢慢地变暗。他转身对着光凝视那块玻璃镇纸，让人爱不释手的不是那块珊瑚，而是玻璃的内部。它虽然厚，却像空气般透明，弧形的外表如同天空的穹顶，将一个小世界连同空气都包入其中。他觉得他能进到它里面，事实上他已经在它之中了，和红木制的大床、折叠桌、座钟、钢板版画以及镇纸本身都待在它之中。镇纸就是他所在的屋子，珊瑚就是他和朱莉亚的生命，他们被固

定在水晶中心，他们即永恒。

十三

赛姆消失了。一天早上，他没来上班。几个没脑子的人提到了他的旷工。到了第二天就再没人提起他。第三天，温斯顿到记录司的前厅看公告牌，其中一张公告上列着象棋委员会的委员名单，赛姆曾是其中之一。名单看起来和之前没什么不同——没有哪个人被划掉——但有一个名字消失了。这就够了，赛姆不存在了：他从未存在过。

天热得出奇，迷宫一般的部里没有一扇窗户，装着空调的房间尚保持着常温，但外面的人行道却热得烫脚。高峰时间的地铁里又挤又臭。仇恨周的筹备工作正进行得热烈非常。部里的所有工作人员都加班加点。游行、集会、阅兵、演讲、蜡像、展览、电影、电屏，都需要安排。看台要搭建，雕像要制造，标语要撰写，歌曲要创作，谣言要传播，照片要伪造。在小说司里，朱莉亚所在的部门已经中断了小说的制造，人们急匆匆赶制一批关于敌人暴行的小册子。至于温斯顿，除了日常工作，每天还要花很长时间检查已经过期的《泰晤士报》，对演讲中要用到的新闻进行修改、润饰。夜深了，许许多多的群众在街上闲逛，吵吵闹闹，整个城市都笼罩上怪异的狂热气氛。火箭弹的袭击更加频繁，不时便会从远处传来巨大的爆炸声。没有人说得清为什么，谣言纷纷兴起。

作为仇恨歌主题曲的新旋律（即《仇恨之歌》）已谱写完成，电屏里没完没了地播放着。确切地说，它算不上音乐，它曲调粗鲁，犹如野兽的嚎叫，和打鼓有些相像。几百个人和着行军步伐大声歌唱着，场面慑人。群众喜欢它，在午夜的街头它和仍然流行的《这不过是无望的单恋》交相呼应。帕森斯的孩子用梳子和卫生纸整日整夜地吹，让人难以忍受。对温斯顿来说，和以前相比，晚上的时间更紧张了。由帕森斯组

织的志愿者在大街上为仇恨周作准备。他们缝制条幅，张贴宣传画，在屋顶竖旗杆，还冒险在街道上吊起铁丝悬挂欢迎彩带。帕森斯吹嘘单是胜利大厦，亮出的旗帜就有四百多米长，他天性尽露，像百灵鸟一样兴奋。炎热的天气和体力工作让他有了在晚上穿短裤、开领衫的借口。他可以突然出现在任何地方，推拉锯锤，即兴地做点儿什么，用说教的语气激励他人。同时，他的身体还没完没了地散发着难闻的汗味。

突然之间，伦敦所有地方都贴上了新的宣传画。画上没有文字说明，只有一个三四米高的体型巨大的欧亚国士兵，他长着一张蒙古人的脸，面无表情地大步前进，脚上蹬着大号军靴，腰间挎着轻机枪。无论从什么角度看，依照透视原理放大的枪口都正对着你。每堵墙的空白处都贴上了这幅画，它的数量甚至多过老大哥的画像。通常，群众不关心战争，但此时他们却被激起周期性的狂热的爱国之情。似乎在呼应这普遍的情绪，死于火箭弹的人更多了。一枚炸弹掉在了斯坦普尼的一家拥挤的电影院里，将数百人埋在废墟之下。周边的居民纷纷出来参加葬礼，排起长长的送葬队伍。葬礼一直持续了几个小时，是充斥着愤怒的集会。还有一次，炸弹掉在了一块游戏用的空地上，将好几十个小孩炸成碎片。人们再次举行了愤怒的示威，焚烧起高德斯坦因的雕像，数百张画着欧亚国士兵的宣传画被撕下来扔到火里，混乱之中，一些商店遭到了抢劫。之后又有传言说，有间谍通过无线电操纵火箭弹的投放，于是一对老夫妇的房子被烧了，只因为他们被怀疑有外国血统，而他们本人也在大火中窒息而死。

只要可以去，在查林顿先生商店上的那个房间里，在敞开的窗下，朱莉亚和温斯顿并排躺在没有铺床单的大床上，为了凉快些，他们浑身赤裸。老鼠没有再来，因为天气炎热，臭虫的数量急剧增长。但这似乎无关紧要，脏也好，干净也罢，这屋子就是天堂。他们一到这里就将从

黑市上买来的胡椒粉撒得到处都是，他们脱掉衣服，大汗淋漓地做爱，然后沉沉睡去。醒来之后，发现臭虫们已重整旗鼓，正聚集一起准备反攻。

整个六月，他们一共约会了四次、五次、六次——七次。温斯顿已经戒掉了不时就喝杜松子酒的习惯。他看上去已经不需如此。他胖了，静脉曲张引起的溃疡也消失了，只在脚踝上留下一块棕色的瘢痕。早上起来，他不再咳嗽，日常生活不再令他难以忍受，他也不再会有冲电屏做鬼脸、骂脏话的冲动。现在他们有了固定而隐蔽的约会地点，就像一个家。即使不常见面，且每次约会也只是一两个小时的时间，他们仍不觉得辛苦。重要的是旧货铺上的屋子居然还在。知道它在哪里，无人打扰，自己也好像身处其中。这屋子就是一个世界，是过去时光的缩小版，已经绝种的动物在其中漫步。在温斯顿看来，查林顿先生就是一个“绝种”。有时，在上楼之前，他会停下来和查林顿先生聊上几分钟。这个老人看起来很少出门，或者说他从不出门，他的客人很少，他在阴暗窄小的商店和比商店更小的厨房之间过着幽灵般的生活。他在厨房里做饭，除了厨房里应有的东西，他还有一台老得让人不敢相信的带着大喇叭的唱机。他在那堆毫无价值的货品中走来走去，很高兴有机会和别人说话，他的鼻子又尖又长，架着一副厚镜片的眼镜，他的身上穿着天鹅绒的夹克，肩膀压得很低。与其说他是一个旧货商，不如说他更像一位收藏家。有时，他会带着几分深情抚摸某件破烂——瓷制的瓶塞、破鼻烟壶的彩盖、装着夭折了的婴孩头发的黄铜盒子——他从不要求温斯顿买下它们，只是说他应懂得欣赏。和他谈话，就像听老式八音盒的音乐。他从记忆深处挖出一些早已被人遗忘的歌谣的片段。比如二十四只黑画眉，弯角母牛，知更鸟之死等。“我刚好想起来，您可能会感兴趣。”每当他回忆起一个片段，他就会带着几分自嘲式的笑容说。但无论什么歌谣，他都只记得只言片语。

他们都清楚——或者说，他们从未忘记——这种状况不可能一直持续下去。有时，死神步步紧逼的感觉就像他们躺在床上一样真实。他们紧紧地贴在一起，肉欲中饱含绝望，好比一个堕入地狱的灵魂抓住最后五分钟时间去体会最后一点快感。但有时，他们也会萌生一种幻觉，他们不仅安全，且他们可以长久地这样下去。他们都觉得，只要他们真的待在这个房间里，就不会受到什么伤害。去这个房间困难重重又危险无比，但房间本身却是安全的。温斯顿注视着镇纸的中心，觉得自己有可能进入玻璃中的世界，一旦他真的进去了，时间就会停止。他们经常放纵自己沉浸在逃避现实的白日梦中，以为他们的好运会永远持续下去，以为在他们的余生里，他们可以一直像这样约会下去。或者凯瑟琳死了，温斯顿和朱莉亚通过某种狡猾的方式结婚。或者他们一起消失，改头换面，让人认不出来。他们可以模仿群众的说话腔调，到工厂做工并在某条街道的后面不为人知地过完一辈子。但他们清楚，这些都毫无意义，现实无处可逃。唯一可行的计划就是自杀，而他们无意如此。坚持一天是一天，坚持一个星期算一个星期。在看不到未来的情况下拖延时间似乎是无法压抑的本能，就好像只要有空气，人就会呼吸一样。

有时，他们也会讨论如何积极行动与党作对，但他们不知道要怎样走第一步。即使传说中的兄弟会真实存在，要找到并加入它们也十分困难。他告诉她，他对奥布兰有一种或者说似乎有一种微妙的亲近感，这让他偶尔会有到他面前宣称自己是党的敌人的冲动，他希望得到他的帮助。非常奇怪，她并不认为这过于冒失。她很擅长以貌取人，在她看来，温斯顿仅仅因为一个一闪而过眼神就认为奥布兰值得信赖是自然而然的。除此之外，她还理所当然地以为每个人、几乎每个人都痛恨着党，只要能保障安全，谁都想打破规矩。不过她不认为有组织且广泛的反抗活动是存在的，它们没有可能存在。她说，高德斯坦因及其秘密军队都只是党出于某种目的编造出来的胡言乱语，你只能假装相信。说不

清有多少次，在党员集会和示威活动中，她尽己所能地喊叫着要将那些她从来没听说过的人处以死刑，而她并不相信他们真的犯下了安在他们身上的罪名。公审举行时，她参加了青年团的队伍，他们将法庭团团围住，从早到晚，不时高喊“杀死卖国贼”。在两分钟仇恨会上，她总是大声咒骂高德斯坦因，比其他人还要激动。至于高德斯坦因究竟是什么人，持哪种主张，她并不了解。她在革命后长大，她太年轻了以至于一点都不记得发生在五六十年代的意识形态的斗争。诸如独立的政治运动之类的事已超出了她的想象范围。无论如何，党是战无不胜的，它会永远存在，永远保持一个样子。你能做的仅仅是秘密地反对它，至多通过孤立的暴力，比如杀死某个人或者炸掉某个东西来反抗它。

从某种角度说，她比温斯顿更敏锐，不轻易相信党的宣传。一次，他提起和欧亚国的战争，没想到她随口就说，依她来看，根本就没有什么战争，这让他非常吃惊。她说，伦敦每天都有火箭弹落下，而那些火箭弹很有可能是大洋国政府自己发射的，“只是为了让人民一直与恐惧为伴”。他从未想到过这一点。她说，在两分钟仇恨会上，对她来说最困难的便是忍住不笑，这多少激起了他的嫉妒。然而，她只有在党的教条触及到她的生活时，才对它们提出质疑。其他时候，她经常轻易相信官方的虚假宣传，这仅仅因为就她而言它们是真是假并不重要。例如，她相信正像她在学校里学到的那样飞机是党发明的。（温斯顿记得自己上学时是50年代后期，党只说自己是直升机的发明者。而十多年后，朱莉亚上学时，就变成了飞机。再过一代，党会说蒸气机也是党发明的）当他告诉她，在他出生之前，在革命爆发之前很久就已经有飞机存在时，她没有表现出一点兴趣。毕竟，究竟是谁发明飞机有什么关系呢？令他震惊的是，他偶然发现，她不记得就在四年前，大洋国还在和东亚国打仗，和欧亚国和平相处。没错，她觉得整个战争都是假的，但显然她并没有注意到敌人的名字已经发生了变化。“我想我们一直在和欧亚

国打仗。”她含混地说。这让他有些惊讶。飞机的发明是她出生前很久的事，但战争对象的改变却只有四年，发生在她长大成人后。为此，他和她争论了一刻钟，最终他让她恢复记忆，她模模糊糊地回想起来确有一段时间敌人是东亚国不是欧亚国。但她觉得这并不重要。“谁在乎？”她不耐烦地说，“一场战争接着一场战争，总是这样，每个人都知道新闻是骗人的。”

有几次他和她讲起记录司，说起那卑鄙的伪造工作。但这吓不倒她。即使想到谎言变成真理，她也感觉不到深渊就在她脚下打开。他告诉她琼斯、阿朗森和鲁瑟夫的事，还有那张在他手指中待过的意义重大的纸条。而这些都没给她留下什么印象。事实上，一开始，她还抓不住这些事的要点。

“他们是你的朋友吗？”她问。

“我从来都不认识他们。他们是内党党员，年纪也比我大得多。他们属于革命之前的时代。我只能认出他们的长相。”

“那么，还有什么可担心的？随时都有人被杀，不是吗？”

他试图让她明白。“这事非同一般，这不是什么人被杀的问题。你有没有意识到，从昨天往前推，过去实际上被消失了？就算有些东西幸存下来，也只存在于几个具体的物件上，还没有文字说明，就像那块玻璃。关于革命和革命之前的事，我们已经什么都不知道了。每条记录都遭到销毁、篡改，每本书都经过重写，每幅画都被人重画，每座雕像、每条街道、每个大楼都已改名换姓，连日期都被一一修改。且这种事日复一日，每分每秒都在发生。历史停止了。除了党是永远正确、永无终结的，其他任何东西都不复存在。我当然知道过去遭到了篡改。但我永

远都不可能证明这点，即使是我亲手篡改的。因为事情完成后，不会留下丁点证据。唯一的证据还在我的意识里，但我不知道其他人是否有和我一样的记忆。我整个生命中，只有那么一次，我居然在事情发生了多年之后掌握了切实的证据。”

“那有什么用吗？”

“没什么用，因为几分钟后我就把它扔掉了。如果今天发生了同样的事，我应该将它留下。”

“好吧，我不会这样！”朱莉亚说，“我做好了冒险的准备，但只是为那些值得的事，而不是为了几张旧报纸。就算你把它留下来，你又能怎样呢？”

“或许不能做什么，但它毕竟是证据。假如我敢把它拿给别人看，就可能在这里或那里播下怀疑之种。我不认为我们这辈子能改变什么。但可以想象，某个地方出现一小簇反抗力量，一小批人自发地汇集到一起，他们的数量渐渐增多，甚至留下一些记录，以便让下一代继续我们中断了的工作。”

“我对下一代不感兴趣，亲爱的。我只对我们感兴趣。”

“你只有腰部以下是反叛的。”他对她说。

她觉得这句话说得很巧，便高兴地伸出手搂住他。

她对党的理论的衍生物毫无兴趣，每当他开始谈论英社的原则、双重思想、过去的易变性和对客观现实的否认，每当他开始使用新话单词，她就感到厌倦和困惑，说她从未注意过这些事情。大家都知道这些是胡说八道，为什么还要为它们担忧呢？她知道什么时候欢呼，什么时

候发出嘘声，这就够了。若他坚持谈论这些，她就睡着了，这个习惯真让他无奈。她就是这种人，随时随地都能睡着。他发现和她讲话，不知正统为何又假装正统非常容易。从某种角度说，在灌输世界观上，对那些不能理解它含义的人，党做得最为成功。这些人能够接受公然违背现实的东西，因为他们从来意识不到针对自己的要求是蛮横无理的。他们对公众大事漠不关心，注意不到有事情发生。由于缺乏理解力，他们仍保持着头脑的清醒，对任何东西他们都能照单全收，由于什么都不会剩下，照单全收的东西也不能对他们产生危害，好比一颗谷物未经消化地通过了小鸟的身体。

十四

终于，事情发生了。他期待的消息来了，对他来说，他等这事已经等了一辈子。

当时他正走在部里长长的走廊上，在靠近朱莉亚给他纸条的那个地方，他发现身后跟着一个比他高大的人。那个人，不管是谁，轻轻地咳嗽了一下，显然是准备和他交谈。温斯顿猛地停了下来，转身一看。原来是奥布兰。

他们终于面对面了，而他似乎只有想要逃跑的冲动。他心跳剧烈，说不出话，奥布兰却仍以同样的速度走着，他友好地伸出手在温斯顿的手臂上搭了一会儿，这样他们就能并肩而行。和大多数内党党员不同，他开始用他那独特的彬彬有礼的方式说话。

“我一直希望有机会找您谈谈，”他说，“前几天我在《泰晤士报》上读到您关于新话的文章，我猜您对新话很有学术兴趣，是吧？”

温斯顿恢复了泰然自若的神情。“说不上学术兴趣，”他说，“仅仅是业余爱好，这不是我的专业。我也从来没有做过任何关于语言创作的实际工作。”

“但您的文章写得很精彩，”奥布兰说，“这不单是我个人的意见。最近刚刚和您的一位朋友聊过，他肯定是这方面的专家。一时半会儿想不起他叫什么。”

温斯顿的心再一次痛苦地抽搐起来。他在说赛姆，无法想象不是这样。然而赛姆不只死了，还被消失了，成了一个“非人”。任何有认同他

之嫌的东西都有可能带来致命危险。显然，奥布兰打算发出一个信号，一个暗号。一起犯下微小的思想罪好让两个人变成同谋。他们继续在走廊中闲逛，奥布兰突然停下脚步，推了推架在鼻梁上的眼镜，很奇怪，这个姿势让人产生一种亲近感。他继续道：

“我真正想说的是，在您的文章中，我注意到您使用了两个已废弃不用的词。不过，它们是最近才被弃用的。您有没有看第十版的新话词典？”

“没，”温斯顿答，“我想它还没有发行。我们在记录司使用的仍然是第九版。”

“第十版用不了几个月就会问世。不过，少部分先行版已经开始流通了。我自己就有一本。也许您有兴趣看看？”

“非常有兴趣。”温斯顿说，他立即领会了其中的意图。

“部分新发展很有独创性。动词的数目被削减。我想这点很吸引您。让我考虑一下，要不要派人将词典给您送去？可这样的事情我总是想不起来。也许，您能抽空到我住的地方来拿，您看合适吗？等等，我把地址告诉您。”

他们刚好站在电屏跟前。奥布兰多少有些心不在焉，他摸了摸他的两个口袋，掏出一个皮面小本和一支金色的墨水笔。考虑到他的位置，电屏那端的人可以清楚看到他写的是什麼，他将地址写好，撕下来，交给温斯顿。

“通常，我晚上都待在家里。”他说，“如果没有，我的服务人员会将词典带给您。”

他走了，留下温斯顿一个人站在那里，手里拿着那张纸。这次，他不需要将它藏起来，但他还是小心地记住上面的内容，几个小时后，将它和其他一大堆纸一起扔到记忆洞里。

两个人最多交谈了几分钟。整件事可能只有一个含义，即通过这种设计让温斯顿知道奥布兰的地址。这很有必要，因为除了直接询问，要知道某人住在哪里是不可能的，没有诸如通讯录之类的东西。“如果你想见我，可以到这里找我。”也许词典的某处藏着某个信息。不管怎样，有一件事可以确定。他所期待的阴谋是存在的，他已经碰触到它的边缘。

他知道，他早晚都要服从奥布兰的召唤。可能是明天，可能是很久之后——他不能确定。刚刚发生的事无非是多年之前就开始进行的事情的一个表现。第一步是秘密的、偶然萌生的念头。第二步是记日记，将思想变成文字。而现在又要将文字变成行动。至于最后一步则会发生在仁爱部中，他已然接受了这个结局，它就包含在开始之中。但这让人恐惧；或者确切地说，它就像预先品尝了死亡的味道，又少活了几天。即使在和奥布兰讲话的时候，当他完全领会了话中的含义，他仍感到一股寒意，不由得浑身颤抖，就好像踏入潮湿阴冷的坟墓。就算他明白坟墓一直等在那里，他也没有感觉好些。

十五

温斯顿醒来时，眼里噙满了泪。朱莉亚睡意蒙眬地靠近他，喃喃地说着，好像在问：“怎么了？”

“我梦见——”他欲言又止。这个梦太复杂了，无法用语言描述。除了梦本身，还有与梦有关的记忆。它们在他醒来后的几秒钟里浮现在他的脑海中。

他重新躺下，缓缓地闭上双眼，沉浸在梦的氛围里。这是一个壮阔、明亮的梦。他的人生就像夏夜的雨后风景呈现在眼前。所有的一切都发生在玻璃镇纸中。玻璃的表面宛若苍穹，在它之下每样东西都覆着温柔清澈的光，一眼望去无边无涯。这场梦可以用他母亲的手臂姿势概括，事实上它正是由他母亲手臂的某个动作构成的。三十年后，他在一部新上映的电影中看到一个犹太女人为了保护自己的孩子不被子弹射到做出了这个动作，而这之后她们仍被直升机炸得粉碎。

“你知道吗？”他说，“直到现在，我都觉得我的母亲是被我害死的。”

“你为什么要杀自己的母亲？”朱莉亚问，她差不多还是睡着的。

“我没杀她，这不是肉体意义上的。”

在梦里，他回忆起他看母亲的最后一眼，几分钟后，他醒了，和这情境相关的细微小事一簇簇地涌了上来。正是这个记忆，多少年来，他一直有意识地将它从意识中抹去。他无法确定具体的日期，但当时他至少有十岁，可能是十二岁。

他的父亲很早就失踪了，到底是什么时候，他记不清了。但他记得当时的环境艰难而痛苦：周期性的空袭让人惊恐不已，人们到地铁站里寻求庇护，到处都是残砖烂瓦，街角处贴着他无法理解的公告。少年们成群结队，穿着同样颜色的衣服，面包房前摆起了长龙，不时会有机枪声从远处传来。最重要的是，人们永远都吃不饱。他还记得一到下午，他就会花很长时间和其他男孩子一起在垃圾桶和废品堆里寻找卷心菜帮和马铃薯皮，有时还能翻出陈面包块，他们会非常小心地将上面的炉灰擦掉；他们清楚卡车的行驶路线，知道上面装着喂牛的饲料。他们等卡车开来，在经过那些坑洼不平的路段时，偶尔会从车上掉下几块油糕。

父亲失踪时，母亲并没有表现出强烈的惊讶或悲痛，不过，她就像变了一个人，看上去宛若行尸走肉。就连温斯顿也发现她在等一件她知道注定要发生的事。她烧饭、洗衣、缝纫、铺床、扫地、清理壁炉台上的灰尘，每件需要她做的事她都做了，但却做得很慢，也没有多余的动作，好比一架自动行走的艺术家的身体模型。她高挑匀称的身体似乎能自行静止，在床边一坐就是好几个小时，几乎一动不动地照顾他的妹妹，他的妹妹只有二三岁，弱小、多病、非常安静，脸瘦得像只猴子。偶尔，她会将温斯顿紧紧地搂在怀里，很久很久不发一言。尽管他很小，很自私，但他依然觉察到这和即将发生却从未被提起的事有关。

他还记得他们住的那间屋子，它阴暗、封闭，一张铺着白床单的床就差不多占了一半的空间。围炉中放着煤气灶和食品架，屋外的台阶上有个公用的棕色的陶瓷池子。他记得母亲在煤气灶前弯着雕塑般的身子搅动着锅里的东西。让他印象最深的是，他总觉得很饿，吃饭来就像打仗一样。他死死地缠着母亲，一遍又一遍地问为什么没有更多的食物，他还经常对她大吼大叫（他甚至还记得自己当时的声音，由于过早进入变声期，有时竟洪亮得出奇）。为了能多分到些吃的，他尝试着发

出可怜巴巴地啜泣，而母亲也愿意多分给他，认为“男孩”理应得到最多的一份。但不管分给他多少，他仍坚持更多。因此每到吃饭的时候，母亲总会央求他不要自私，不要忘了妹妹有病，需要食物，但这没有用。她一停止盛东西，他就愤怒地大声喊叫，还试图把她手里的锅和勺夺过来，或者从妹妹的盘子里抢过来一些。他知道他让她们挨了饿，但他无可奈何，他甚至觉得他有权这样做。他饿得咕咕叫的肚子就好像在为他的行为进行辩护。在两顿饭的间隔，若母亲不注意，他还经常会从架子上偷东西吃，尽管那里的食物少得可怜。

一天，定量供应的巧克力发了下来。过去的几个星期、几个月都没有发。他记得非常清楚，那是一小片巧克力，很珍贵。两盎司（那时仍使用盎司）一片，三个人分。按理，应该平均地分成三份。但突然，就好像受到了什么人的指示，温斯顿听到自己像打雷那样大喊要求将整块巧克力都分给自己。母亲要他别贪心。他们争执了很久，叫喊、哀诉、哭泣、抗议、乞求。他瘦小的妹妹用双手抱住母亲，像极了小猴子。她坐着，从母亲的肩膀处望过来，眼睛大而忧伤。最后，母亲将巧克力掰开，四分之三分给温斯顿，剩下的四分之一分给他的妹妹。小女孩拿着它发呆，也许不知道它是什么。温斯顿看了她一会儿，之后，他突然迅速地跳了起来，一把抢走妹妹手中的巧克力，冲向门外。

“温斯顿，温斯顿！”母亲在后面叫他，“快回来！把巧克力还给妹妹！”

他停下来，却没回去。母亲看着他的脸，目光里充满忧虑。即使现在他仍惦记着那件事，但就算它马上发生，他也不知道最后发生的究竟是什么。他的妹妹意识到东西被抢走，无力地哭了几下。母亲紧紧地抱住她，把她的脸贴在自己的胸口。这个姿势里有什么东西让温斯顿觉得妹妹就要死了。他转身跑下楼梯，手里的巧克力变得黏糊糊的。

他再也没看到他的母亲。在吞掉巧克力后，他有些惭愧。他在街上游荡了几个小时，直到饥饿驱使他回了家。当他回到家时，母亲已经失踪了。在当时这已经是正常现象。房间里什么都没丢，除了母亲和妹妹。他们没将衣服带走，没带走母亲的外套。今天他仍不敢确定母亲已经死了，很有可能她只是被送进劳改营。至于妹妹，也许像他一样，被送到收留无家可归的儿童的地方（他们称它为感化院），那里因内战而壮大。还有可能她和母亲一起被送进了劳改营，或者被丢到哪里，或者就那么死了。

这个梦在他的脑海里鲜活生动，尤其是用手臂围住什么的保护性的姿势，它似乎将整个梦的含义都容纳其中。他的思绪又回到两个月前的另一场梦上。那次母亲坐在一艘沉船中，看上去和坐在肮脏的铺着白色床单的床边一样，怀里的孩子紧紧贴着她的胸口，她在他下面很远的地方，每一分钟都在下沉，但她仍然透过越来越暗的海水望向他。

他将母亲失踪的事告诉朱莉亚。她闭着眼翻了个身，好让自己睡得更舒服。

“我猜那时的你就是头残忍的猪，”她嘟嘟囔囔地说，“所有的小孩都是猪。”

“没错，但这并不是这件事的真正含义——”

从她的呼吸来看，她又睡着了。他想继续讲他的母亲。回想记忆中的她，他不能说她是个不平凡的女人，她没别人聪明，但她却拥有高贵、纯洁的品质。她遵循着自己的行为准则，她有属于自己的情感，不会因为外界的什么东西发生改变。她从未想过无用之举无意义。若你爱某人，就去爱他，当你什么都不能给他时，你还可以给他爱。最后一块

巧克力被抢走了，母亲把孩子抱在怀里。这没用，什么都改变不了，她不能再多变出一块巧克力，也不能让自己和孩子逃脱死亡。但这对她而言，似乎自然而然。轮船上那个逃难的女人同样用手臂护住她的孩子，在抵御子弹上，她并不比一张纸有用多少。恐怖的是党的所作所为让你相信，仅凭冲动，仅凭感情什么都做不了。而同时它又将你身上所有能左右物质世界的力量剥除。一旦你落入党的掌控，不管你有没有感觉，不管你做一件事还是阻止一件事，都没有什么区别。你终究会消失，你和你做的事都不再被人听到。在历史的大潮中，你将被清除得一干二净。但对两代以前的人来说，这好像不怎么重要。因为他们没打算篡改历史。他们有自己的行为准则，他们遵循这准则，毫不怀疑。个人与个人的关系非常重要，那些无用的动作，一个拥抱，一滴眼泪，对濒死之人说的一句话，都有其价值所在。他突然想到，群众仍是如此，他们不为某个党效忠，也不为某个国家、某个思想效忠，他们忠诚于彼此。他有生以来第一次没有轻视群众，他第一次将他们当做早晚会被唤醒、会令世界重生的潜在力量。群众仍保留着人性，他们的内心尚未麻木。他们仍保留着最初的情感，而他自己却要通过努力重新学会这种情感。想到这里，他记起一件毫无关联的事，几个星期前，他在路边看到一只断手，他将它踢到沟里，就像踢一棵白菜帮。

“群众是人，”他大声说，“我们不是人。”

“为什么不是？”朱莉亚醒了，说。

他沉吟片刻。“你有没有想过，”他说，“在事情变糟之前，我们从这儿出去，再也不见面。”

“想过，亲爱的，想过很多次。但我仍然不想这么做。”

“我们很幸运，”他说，“但它不能持续多久了。你年轻，你看上去又自然又纯洁。如果你能避开我这种人，你可以再活上五十年。”

“不，这我都想过。你做什么，我就跟着你做什么。不要太灰心了，我很擅长生存。”

“我们能在一起六个月——一年——没人知道，最终我们一定会分开。你有没有意识到我们会处在怎样绝对的孤独中？一旦他们抓到我们，我们都没法为对方做任何事。如果我承认了，他们就会毙掉你。我拒绝承认，他们依然会毙掉你。无论我做什么，说什么，或者什么都不说，都不能把你的死推迟五分钟。我们谁也不会知道对方是死是活，我们会完全无能为力。有一件事非常重要，那就是我们不应出卖对方，尽管这样结果也不会有什么不同。”

“假如你指的是坦白，”她说，“我们还是会坦白的。没错，每个人都是这样。你挺不住。他们会拷打你。”

“我不是指坦白，坦白不是出卖。不管你说什么做什么都没关系：除了感情。如果他们让我停止爱你，那才真的是出卖。”

她想了想。“他们做不到，”最后她说，“这是唯一一件他们做不到的事。他们能让你说出任何事情——任何事情——但他们不能让你相信它。他们进不去你心里。”

“对，”他多了几分希望，“没错，这是事实。他们不能进入到你的心里。如果你觉得保留人性是值得的，就算它不会产生任何结果，你都战胜了他们。”

他想起电屏，想起它永无休止地监听。他们可以夜以继日地监视

你，但若保持清醒，你仍然能瞒骗过他们。他们都非常聪明，可他们仍然无法掌握挖出人们秘密思想的办法。也许当你真的落到他们手里后，情况就不同了。没人知道仁爱部里发生了什么，但人们猜得出来：拷打、下药、记录你神经反应的精密仪器、不让你睡觉，一点点地削弱你。把你关在单独囚室，没完没了地进行拷问。事实上，不管怎样，没有什么能隐藏起来。他们将通过问讯追查到底。但如果你的目的不是活着而是保留人性，那会有什么不同呢？他们不能改变你的情感，就算你自己也想改变。他们能让你所做所说所想的每个细节都暴露出来，除了你的内心。即使对你自己而言，你的内心仍然是神秘的、坚不可攻的。

十六

他们来了，他们终于来了！

他们站在一间长方形的光线柔和的屋子里。电屏的声音被调得很低，听不清楚。地上铺着华美的深蓝色地毯，很厚，人踩上去就像踩到了天鹅绒上。在屋子的另一端，奥布兰正坐在桌子旁，桌子上的台灯罩着绿色的灯罩，桌子两边放着一大摞文件。朱莉亚和温斯顿被带了进来，奥布兰没有抬头。

温斯顿的心剧烈地跳着，他怀疑自己是不是还能讲话。他只想到一件事：“他们来了，他们终于来了。”到这儿来简直太冒失了，更何况还是两个人一起，这更加愚蠢。尽管他们走的路线不同，且直到奥布兰家门口才碰面。但仅仅是到这种地方来就需要鼓足勇气。只有在极其偶然的情况下，你才有机会看到内党党员的住处到底是什么样子，或者说你才有机会穿过他们的居住区。公寓很大，非常气派，每样东西都富丽堂皇，食物和烟草散发着陌生的香味，电梯安安静静地上上下下，快得令人难以置信，穿着白色上衣的服务人员正忙忙碌碌——这一切都让人心生畏惧。虽然到这里的借口很巧妙，但他每走一步都会担心黑色制服的警卫会突然出现，管他要证件，将他赶走。但奥布兰的服务人员却毫不迟疑地允许他们进去。那是个小个子，一头黑发，穿着白色的上衣，长着一张菱形的脸，什么表情都没有，也许是中国人。他带着他们穿过走廊，地毯很软，墙壁上糊着奶油色的墙纸，护墙板刷成了白色，所有这些都干干净净，同样令人望而生畏。而温斯顿想不起来有哪堵墙没有被人蹭脏过。

奥布兰捏着一张纸条，好像正在专心研究。他的脸很大，头低着，

看得清他鼻子的轮廓，他的样子充满智慧，令人敬畏。大约有二十秒，他坐在那里一动不动。之后，他将语音记录器拉出来，用各部的混合行话说道：

“项目一逗号五逗号七批准句号六项包含的建议加倍荒唐接近思想罪取消句号未处理建设性付款加上满足预算机械装置一般费用句号结束消息。”

他特意从椅子上站起来，安静地穿过地毯走到他们面前。讲完那串新话，他的官威似乎放下了一些，但他的神情却比平时更加阴沉，好像不高兴被人打扰。温斯顿本来就很恐惧，此时这恐惧里又增添了几分尴尬，很有可能，这是个彻头彻尾的、愚蠢的错误。他有什么证据能证明奥布兰真的是那种政治密谋者呢？除了一闪即过的目光，一句模棱两可的话，他什么都没有。此外，他拥有的只是一些秘密的念头，而这又完全建立在幻想之上。他已无路可退，他甚至不能拿借词典当借口，因为这无法解释为什么朱莉亚也在场。奥布兰走到电屏前，好像突然想起什么，停下来，转身按下墙上的一个按钮。啪的一声，电屏里的声音停止了。

朱莉亚非常惊讶，轻轻地尖叫了一声。温斯顿虽然害怕，但他过于震惊以至于控制不住说出了口：

“您可以关掉它！”

“没错，”奥布兰说，“我们能关掉它。我们有特权。”

此时，他正对着他们。他身材魁梧，比他们高出很多，他的表情仍让人捉摸不透。他有些严厉地等着温斯顿说话。但他要说什么呢？即使是现在，你仍可以想象他很忙，他正生气地想他们为什么要打扰他。没

有人说话，自从电屏被关掉，房间里就死一般的寂静。时间一点点地过去，气氛压抑。温斯顿艰难地凝视着奥布兰的眼睛。突然，奥布兰那严峻的面孔上浮现出一丝笑容。他扶了扶眼镜，这是他特有的习惯性动作。

“我说，还是你说？”他问。

“还是我说吧，”温斯顿迅速地接道，“那个东西真的关上了？”

“是的，都关上了。这儿只有我们自己。”

“我们来是因为——”

他卡住了，他第一次意识到他的目的是如此晦暗不明。因为他没打算从奥布兰这里得到什么实际的帮助，所以说清自己为什么来并不容易。他继续说下去，虽然他发现他的话苍白无力又空洞非常：

“我相信一定存在某种密谋，一些秘密组织正在进行反党活动，而且你也参加了。我们也想参加，也想为它工作。我们是党的敌人，我们不相信英社原则。我们是思想犯、是通奸者。我之所以告诉你这些是因为我们想把自己完全交给你来安排，如果你希望我们用其他方式证明自己，我们也心甘情愿。”

他觉得身后的门开了，便停下来回头张望。果然，那个脸色发黄的小个子服务人员没有敲门就进来了。温斯顿看到他端着盘子，盘子上有一个酒瓶和几个玻璃杯。

“马丁是自己人，”奥布兰说着，神情淡漠，“把酒拿到这边来，马丁。把它们放在圆桌上。我们的椅子够了吗？我们最好坐下来，那样谈话会舒服些。把椅子搬过来，马丁。这是公事，接下来的十分钟你不用

做仆人了。”

小个子很自然地坐了下来，仍带着几分仆从的姿态，一个被特别对待的仆从的姿态。温斯顿用眼角余光打量着他，突然萌生一个想法，这个男人一生都在扮演着一个角色，即便只是暂时放下伪装，仍会感觉危险。奥布兰拿起酒瓶，往玻璃杯里倒入深红色的液体。让温斯顿模模糊糊地想起来，很久以前在墙上或在广告牌上看到的由电灯泡组成的大酒瓶上下移动，将瓶子里的东西倒进杯子里。从上看下去，那酒近乎黑色，但在酒瓶里，它却闪烁着如红宝石一般的光芒。它闻起来酸酸甜甜的。他看到朱莉亚拿起杯子，好奇地闻了闻。

“这是葡萄酒，”奥布兰微微一笑，“不用怀疑，你们在书上看到过的。不过，恐怕外党的人有的不多。”他又换上严肃的表情，拿起酒杯，“让我们为健康干杯，让我们为我们的领袖高德斯坦因干杯。”

温斯顿热切地举起了他的那杯酒，他曾在书上读到过葡萄酒，做梦都想尝一尝。和那块玻璃镇纸以及被查林顿先生忘了大半的歌谣一样，它们都属于已经消失的、充满浪漫情怀的过去。他偷偷地将过去称为“老时光”。出于某种原因，他一直认为葡萄酒是甜的，就像黑莓酱，还能让人立即醉倒。事实上，他一饮而尽后却非常失望。原来这些年他喝的都是杜松子酒，已经品不出葡萄酒的美味了。他将空了的酒杯放了下来。

“当真有高德斯坦因这人？”他问。

“是的，真有这么一个人，而且他还活着。只是我们不知道他在哪儿。”

“那么密谋——那个组织也是真的吗？不会是思想警察杜撰的吧。”

“是的，它们是真的。我们叫它兄弟会。你们至多知道它真实存在，你们是它的一员，其他的就别知道了。我一会儿再回来。”他看了看手表，“即使对内党党员而言，关电屏的时间超过三十分钟也是不明智的。你们不能再一起过来，并且你们要分头离开。你，同志——”他对朱莉亚点了下头，“你先离开。我们还有大约二十分钟的时间。你们要理解，我必须先问你们一些问题。总的来说，你们打算做什么？”

“任何事，只要是我们能做的。”温斯顿说。

奥布兰坐在椅子上，微微转了下身，以便让自己和温斯顿面对面。他几乎将朱莉亚忽略了，也许他想当然地觉得温斯顿可以代表她说活。他闭了会儿眼睛，然后开始用低沉的、没有感情的语气询问，就像在例行公事，大部分问题的答案他都知道。

“你们准备好交出你们的生命了么？”

“是的。”

“你们准备好去杀人了吗？”

“是的。”

“你们准备好进行破坏活动了吗？这可能会导致上百个无辜者送命。”

“是的。”

“你们准备好将祖国出卖给别的国家吗？”

“是的。”

“你们准备好欺骗、造假、恐吓了吗？准备好侵蚀孩子们的心灵、散发令人上瘾的药物、鼓励卖淫、散播性病了吗？——所有可以破坏道德风气、削弱党的力量的事你们都愿意去做吗？”

“是的。”

“那么，举个例子，假如朝一个孩子的脸上泼硫酸会对我们的利益有帮助——你们也愿意去做吗？”

“是的。”

“你们准备好隐姓埋名，余生去做服务生或码头工人吗？”

“是的。”

“你们准备好自杀了吗？如果我要你们这样做。”

“是的。”

“你们准备好，你们两个，从此分手再不相见吗？”

“不！”朱莉亚突然插进来。

温斯顿觉得自己过了很久才回答这个问题，有那么一会儿，他好像被剥夺了说话的能力，他的舌头在动，声音却发不出来，他摆出了发第一个单词第一个音的嘴型，又犹豫着摆另一个单词另一个音的，这样反复数次，自己也不知道要说哪个单词，最终，他说：

“不。”

“你们能告诉我这些很好，”奥布兰说，“我们需要了解每件事。”

他转过身和朱莉亚说话，声音里多了几分感情。

“你知道吗？就算他侥幸活了下来，他也可能是完全不同的人了。我们可能会给他一个全新的身份。他的脸，他的举止，他手部的形状，他头发的颜色——甚至是他的声音都会变得不同。而且，你也可能变成一个不同的人。我们的外科医生能够改变人的样子，让人认不出来。有些时候这是必须的，还有些时候我们甚至要切掉一个人的肢体。”

温斯顿不禁瞥了一眼马丁那张蒙古人的脸，看不出那上面有什么疤痕。朱莉亚的脸色变得苍白，雀斑显了出来，但她依然充满勇气地面对着奥布兰，她喃喃地说着什么，好像在表示同意。

“好。没问题了。”

桌子上有一盒银色包装的香烟，奥布兰心不在焉地将烟盒推给他们，他自己也拿了一根。之后，他站起身，踱来踱去，似乎站着思考更加方便。香烟很棒，很粗，卷得也很紧，还包着罕见的丝绸一般的纸。奥布兰又看了看手表。

“最好回你的餐具室去，马丁，”他说，“我会在一刻钟内打开电屏。走之前，你要好好看看这些同志的脸。你还会再见到他们的，我可能就不会了。”

和在门口时一样，这个黑眼睛的小个子打量着他们的脸，举止中没有一点友好的表现。他记住了他们的样子，对他们没有兴趣，至少表面上没有。温斯顿想，也许人工制造的脸无法改变的表情。马丁什么话都没说，什么问候都没留，就那么走了出去，出去之前，他轻轻地关上了

门。奥布兰在屋子里走来走去，一只手插在黑色制服的口袋里，一只手夹着香烟。

“你们明白，”他说，“你们将在黑暗中战斗。你们将永远身处黑暗。你们会收到命令、会服从命令，但你们不知道为什么。过些时候，我会给你们一本书，你们可以从中得知我们所生活的社会的真相，你们还能学到将之摧毁的策略。读完这本书，你们就是兄弟会的正式成员，但除了我们所奋斗的总目标和眼下的具体任务，你们不会知道任何东西。我只能告诉你们兄弟会真的存在，至于它到底有多少成员，是一百个还是一千万个，我都不能对你们说。从你们个人的经验来看，你们永远不会认识十个以上的会员。你们会有三四个联系人，每隔一段时间更新一次，原有的人就消失不见了。而这是你们的首次联系，会保持下去。你们接到的命令都将由我发出。若有需要，我们会通过马丁来联络你们。最后被抓到，你们会招供，这无可避免。但你们没什么能招的，只有你们自己做的那些事是例外。你们不可能出卖重要人物，也许你们连我也出卖不了。那时我可能已经死了，或者换上了不同的面孔。”

他继续在柔软的地毯上走来走去，虽然他身材魁梧，可他的举止却非常优雅。即使是将手放进口袋或拨弄香烟这样的小动作，也能反映出来。相比强硬有力，他给人留下的更深的印象是自信、体贴，且这体贴中有那么一丝嘲讽的意蕴。尽管他可能是认真的，但他身上并没有狂热分子专有的执拗。当他说谋杀、自杀、性病、断肢、换脸时，隐约带着嘲弄的神情。

“这无可避免，”听他的语气，好像在说，“这正是我们要做的，没有妥协的余地。但如果生命值得再来一次，我们就不会做它了。”对奥布兰，温斯顿有一种崇敬，甚至是崇拜的感情。一时间，他忘记了高德斯坦因那蒙眬的形象。看看奥布兰那强壮有力的肩膀，那坚毅的面孔，

如此丑陋又如此文雅，你不可能觉得他可以被击败的。没有什么战术他不能胜任，没有什么危险他不能预见。就连朱莉亚也像感动了，她专注地听着，香烟熄了都不知道。奥布兰继续说：

“你们会听到关于兄弟会的传闻，不要怀疑，对它，你们已经形成了自己的想法。你们可能把它想成一个巨大的密谋者的地下组织，在地下室召开秘密会议，在墙上张贴信息，用暗号或特殊的手势确认彼此的身份。这样的事情是不存在的。兄弟会的成员不能相互辨认，任何一个成员都只能接触到极少数的其他成员。就连高德斯坦因自己，若是落到了思想警察的手上，也不能向他们提供所有成员的名单或任何和这名单有关的信息。没有这种名单，兄弟会之所以不会被除掉就是因为它不是一般意义上的组织，是坚不可摧的信念将它凝聚起来，除此之外别无其他。同样的，你们只能仰仗信念，别的什么都依靠不了。没有同志间的友情作支撑，也得不到鼓舞激励。最后，你们被抓住，也不会有人来救你们。我们从来不会救助我们的成员。最多，在必须将某人灭口的情况下，我们有时会将刀片偷运进牢房。你们不得不适应这种没有结果，没有希望的境遇。你们会工作一段时间，会被逮捕，会招供，会死去。这是你们能看到的仅有的结果。我们活着的时候不会遇见任何明显的变化。我们是死人。我们唯一真正的生活在未来。我们将以几捧尘土，几副枯骨的姿态进入未来。没有哪个人知道未来还有多远，它也许是一千年。目前，我们能做的只能是一点点地扩大头脑清醒的人的范围。由于无法进行集体行动，我们能做的只能是传播我们的想法，从一个人到另一个人，从这一代到下一代。面对思想警察，你别无他法。”

他停下来，第三次看他的表。

“已经到了你回去的时间了。”他对朱莉亚说，“等等，还有半瓶酒。”

他将大家的杯子倒满并举起自己的那杯。

“这次是为什么而干杯呢？”他说，语调中仍有一丝嘲讽，“为了让思想警察慌乱？为了让老大哥死？为了人性？为了未来？”

“为过去。”温斯顿说。

“过去更加重要。”奥布兰庄重地表示同意。他们喝光了杯子中的酒，又待了一会儿，朱莉亚起身要走。奥布兰从柜子顶上取下一个小盒子，并从盒子里拿出一个白色的药片让她放在舌头上。这很重要，他说，出去后不要让别人闻到酒味，电梯员非常敏感。而她一关上门，他就像忘记她的存在一样，又在屋子里走了两步，然后停下来。

“还有些细节要解决，”他说，“我猜你应该有什么藏身的地方。”

温斯顿向他描述了查林顿先生商店上的那间屋子。

“现在还能用。过后我们会另外给你安排个地方。经常更换藏身之所是重要的。同时，我还要将那本书带给你——”温斯顿注意到奥布兰在提到“高德斯坦因的书”时加重了语气。“你清楚的，我会尽快给你，可能过几天才能拿到。书的数量很少，你能想象。思想警察发现它们、销毁它们的速度就像它们出版的速度一样快。但这不要紧。它是不会被摧毁的。哪怕最后一本也被带走，我们依然能一个字一个字地再印出来。你上班时带公文包吗？”他补充道。

“会带的。”

“什么样子的？”

“黑色的，非常旧，有两条带子。”

“黑色的，两条带子，非常旧——好的。最近几天——我给不了具体的日期——早上，你工作的时候会收到一个通知，里面有个字印错了，你务必要求重发。第二天上班时就不要带公文包了。路上会有人拍你的手臂，对你说‘我想你把公文包弄丢了’。他给你的公文包里就有高德斯坦因的书。你要在十四天内还回来。”

他们沉默了一会。

“再过几分钟你就得走了，”奥布兰说，“我们会再见面的——如果还有见面的机会——”

温斯顿看着他，有些犹豫地说：“在没有黑暗的地方？”

奥布兰点了点头，一点都不吃惊。“在没有黑暗的地方。”他说，就好像他明白它暗示的是什麼。“在离开前，还有什么想说的吗？有口信吗？有问题吗？”

温斯顿想了想，似乎没有想问的问题，也不觉得有必要讲一些高调的话。出现在他脑海中的并不是奥布兰或兄弟会，而是一幅意象复杂的画面，他母亲最后呆的那间黑暗的屋子，查林顿先生商店上的小房间、玻璃镇纸、带着玫瑰木框架的钢板画……他差不多是脱口而出：

“你听没听到过这样一首老歌，开头是橘子和柠檬。圣克莱门特教堂的大钟说。”

奥布兰点了点头，优雅而郑重地唱完了这段：

橘子和柠檬。圣克莱门特教堂的大钟说。

你欠我3个法寻。圣马丁教堂的大钟说。

你什么时候还？老百利教堂的大钟说。

等我发了财，肖尔迪奇的大钟说。

“你知道最后一句！”温斯顿说。

“没错，我知道最后一句。我恐怕你现在必须回去了。但等等，最好也给你一片药。”

当温斯顿起身的时候，奥布兰伸出了手。他用力握了握他的手，几乎将温斯顿的手掌都给捏碎了。走到门口时，温斯顿回头看了一眼，奥布兰似乎正要将他忘掉。他把手放在电屏的开关上，正等他离开。而在他的身后，温斯顿看到桌子上那罩着绿灯罩的台灯、语音记录器以及装满文件的铁篮子。他想，三十秒钟内，奥布兰就会重新开始刚刚中断的党的重要工作。

十七

温斯顿累得像一摊糨糊。糨糊，是个非常贴切的词，它自然而然地出现在他的脑海中。他的身体不仅像糨糊般瘫软，还像糨糊般透明，他觉得若他将手举起，甚至能看到光从手中透出来。高强度的工作几乎将他的血液和淋巴液都榨干了，只剩下由神经、骨骼、皮肤构成的脆弱的架子。所有的感觉都好像变得敏感起来，制服摩擦着肩膀，人行道让脚底发痒，就连手掌的张合都额外费力，关节也发出咔嚓的声响。

五天里，他已经工作了九十多个小时，部里的其他人也是如此。现在，工作都结束了，到明天上午之前，他无事可做，党什么工作都没给他安排。他可以在那秘密的藏身之处待上六个小时，再回自家的床上躺上9个小时。他漫步在午后的阳光下，沿着一条脏兮兮的巷子前往查林顿先生的商店，一路上他一直提防巡逻队。但同时，他又很不现实地认为在这样一个下午不会有被人打扰的危险。他的公文包很重，每走一步都会撞到他的膝盖，让他整条腿都觉得麻麻的。那本书就放在公文包里，已经6天了，他还没有将它打开，甚至没有看它一眼。

仇恨周已进行了六天，这六天里每天都充斥着游行、演讲、呐喊、歌唱、旗帜、宣传画、电影、蜡像，每天都有军鼓的轰响、小号的尖啸、正步前进的隆隆声，以及坦克的碾磨声、飞机的轰鸣声、枪炮的鸣响声。人们极度兴奋，颤抖着达到了高潮，对欧亚国恨得发狂，如果仇恨周最后一天公开绞死的两千名欧亚国战俘落到他们手上，毫无疑问会被撕成碎片。但就在这个时候，大洋国突然宣布，大洋国并没有和欧亚国打仗，大洋国在和东亚国交火，欧亚国是大洋国的盟友。

当然，没有哪个人承认有变化发生。突然之间，无论在什么地方，

所有人都知道敌人是东亚国不是欧亚国。这一切发生时温斯顿正在伦敦的中心广场参加示威游行。当时正值夜晚，白生生的人脸和绯红的旗帜都映着斑斓的灯。广场上挤了好几千人，包括一千多名身着少年侦察队制服的学生。在用红布装饰的舞台上一名内党党员正对着群众高谈阔论，那是一个身材瘦小的男人，胳膊长得不合比例，硕大的脑袋上只有几缕头发，活似神话中的侏儒怪。愤怒让他身体扭曲，他的一只手抓着话筒，另一只手——他的手臂很细，手掌却十分宽大——疯狂地在头顶上挥舞。他滔滔不绝地控诉着敌人的暴行，比如屠杀、流放、抢劫、强奸、虐待俘虏、轰炸平民，还有充斥着谎言的宣传、非正义的进攻和对条约的背叛。他的声音经过扩音器沾染上金属的味道，几乎没有人不相信他的话，也没有人不为他的话感到愤怒。每隔几分钟就众怒腾腾，他的声音即被淹没在数千人如野兽般不受控制的咆哮里，而最为粗野的咆哮来自学童。讲话大约进行到二十分钟，一名通讯员匆匆走上讲台，将一张纸条塞进他手里。他打开纸条，没有停止讲话，无论是声音还是讲话的样子都没有发生改变。但，突然名称变了。无须解释，就像一波海浪扫过人群，人们心领神会。大洋国是在和东亚国打仗！接着便是一阵可怕的混乱。广场上，那些旗帜、宣传画统统搞错了！它们中至少有一半画错了人物的脸。这是破坏！是高德斯坦因的人干的！人群中出现骚乱，人们撕下墙上的宣传画，将旗帜扯得粉碎，踩在脚下。少年侦察队表现非凡，他们爬上屋顶，剪断了挂在烟囱上的横幅。不过，在两分钟内，这些都结束了。演讲者肩膀前耸，一手抓着话筒，一手在头上挥舞，演讲仍在继续。一分钟后，人群中又会爆发愤怒的咆哮。除了仇恨对象的改变，仇恨周将一如既往地继续。

回想起来，最让温斯顿印象深刻的是演讲者竟然在讲到一半时变换了演讲的对象，可他不仅没有片刻停顿，还没有打乱句子的结构。但在当时，他正全神贯注地想着其他的事。就在人们撕毁宣传画的时候，一

个男人拍了拍他的肩膀，说：“对不起，我想你弄丢了你的公文包。”他没看清那人的长相，什么都没说，心不在焉地接过了公文包。他知道要过上几天他才有机会看看里面的东西。示威一结束他就返回了真理部，尽管时间已接近23点。部里的人都一样，电屏里传出命令，要大家回岗，不过，这根本就没有必要。

大洋国正在和东亚国打仗：大洋国一直都在和东亚国打仗。过去五年的大部分政治文件都作废了。各种报告、档案、报纸、书籍、小册子、电影、录音、照片——所有的一切都要闪电般地改好。虽然没有明确的命令，但大家都心知肚明。记录司的领导计划在一个星期内消除掉所有提到和欧亚国打仗、同东亚国结盟的东西。工作多得要将人淹没，再加上此事不能明说，工作就愈发艰巨。记录司的人每天都要工作十八个小时，睡眠被分成两次，每次三小时。从地下室搬出的床垫铺满了整个走廊。食物被放在手推车上由食堂的工作人员推过来，包括夹肉面包和胜利牌咖啡。每次睡觉前，温斯顿都尽可能将桌子上的工作做完，但当他睡眼惺忪、腰酸背痛地回来时，桌上的纸卷就又堆得像雪山一般了，不仅将大半个语音记录器埋了起来，还多得掉到了地上。因此，首先要做的就是将它们整理好，以腾出工作的空间。最糟糕的是，这些工作都并非全是机械性的，尽管大多时候只需要更换下名字，但一些详细叙述事件的文件就需要人特别仔细并发挥想象力。即使是将一场战争从世界的一个地区挪到另一个地区，你就需要相当多的地理知识。

到第三天，他的眼睛已疼得难以忍受，每隔几分钟就要擦擦眼镜。这就像在努力完成一件折磨人身体的力气活，你有权拒绝它，却又神经质地想尽快做完。他对语音记录器说下的每句话，他用墨水笔写下的每个字，都是深思熟虑的谎言，但据他回忆，他并没有为此感到不安。他像司里的其他人一样，都希望将谎言说得完美。到第六天早上，纸卷的

数量少了，有半个小时管道没有送出任何东西。之后，送来一个纸卷，再之后就没有了。几乎在同一时间，那里的工作都完成了。司里的人深深地、悄悄地叹了口气。这件不能提起的伟大的工作终于搞定了。现在，任何人都拿不出能够证明和欧亚国交过战的文件。12点，所有工作人员都出乎意料地收到了休息到明天早上的通知。温斯顿一直将装着那本书的公文包带在身边。工作时，他将它夹在两脚之间，睡觉时又将它压在身子底下。回家了，他刮了胡子，洗了澡，虽然水不暖，他还是差点在浴缸里睡着。

在查林顿先生的店铺里上楼梯时，他很享受关节吱吱作响的感觉。他很疲倦，但不想睡觉，他将窗户打开，点着了那脏兮兮的煤油炉，在上面放了一壶水，准备煮咖啡。朱莉亚一会儿就到，那本书就放在这里。他在那把肮脏的扶手椅上坐下来，松开了公文包的带子。

这是一本黑色的、厚厚的书，装订很差，封面上没有作者的名字，也没写书名。印刷的字体微微有些不同，书的页边磨损得厉害，一不小心就会散开，看起来这本书已经被很多人转手。书的扉页上印着：

《寡头集体主义的理论与实践》埃曼纽尔·高德斯坦因 著

温斯顿读了起来：

第一章 无知即力量

有史以来，大约从新石器时代结束开始，世界上就有三种人：上等人、中等人、下等人。按照不同的方式继续划分，他们有过很多名字。他们的相对人数以及对彼此的态度都因时而异，然而社会的基本结构却

没有发生改变。即使在经历了重大剧变和看起来不可挽回的变化后，依然能恢复其原有的格局，就好像无论向哪个方向推进，陀螺仪都能恢复平衡。

这三个阶层的目标完全无法协调……

温斯顿停了下来，仔细回味这件事，他正在读书，舒适而安全。他独自一人，没有电屏，也没有隔墙之耳，他无需紧张兮兮地向后张望，也无需慌张地将书合上，夏季的清风扑面而来，远处隐约传来孩子们的叫喊，屋子里只有座钟滴答作响。他深深地坐在扶手椅中，把脚放在壁炉的挡板上。这真是一种享受，永远不变。突然，就好比有时会知道最终要将书里的每个字都一读再读，他随便翻到某一页，刚好是第三章。他接着读了下去。

第三章 战争即和平

20世纪中期之前，便可以预见世界会分成三个超级大国。由于俄国吞并了欧洲，美国吞并了大英帝国，现有的三个大国中，有两个在当时就已经是切实的存在，即欧亚国和大洋国。第三个是东亚国，其在经过十年的混战后出现。三国的边界有些乃任意划定，有些则随战争的胜负情况变化，但总体而言，它们按照地理的界线进行划分。欧亚国包括整个欧亚大陆的北部，从葡萄牙到白令海峡。大洋国包括美洲、大西洋诸岛、不列颠各岛、澳大利亚和非洲南部。东亚国相对较小，西部边界未明，包括中国和中国以南各个国家、日本各岛及满洲、蒙古、西藏等广阔却边界不明的地区。

这三个超级大国总是联合一个攻打另一个，总是处于交战状态。过去的二十五年里，一直如此。但战争已经不再像20世纪初期那样不顾一切，你死我活。交战双方的冲突目标是有限的，谁都没有能力将对方摧毁，同时既没有重要的开战原因，也没有意识形态上的分歧。只是这并不意味着战争的方式、态度已不那么血腥，也并不意味着它多了几分正义。相反，非理性的好战情绪在各国国内都是长期的、普遍的存在，诸如强奸、抢劫、屠杀儿童、奴役人民、报复，甚至烹煮、活埋战俘等，都被当做理所当然，不仅如此，如果这些事情是自己而不是敌人所为，还会被认为值得称颂。其实战争只将极少数人卷入其中，他们大多是受过高级训练的专家，因此战争所造成的伤亡相对较少。战争通常发生在界线模糊的边境地区，人们只能揣测它的情况，或者发生在扼守海道的水上堡垒附近。在城市中心，战争的意义仅仅是消费品长期短缺和偶尔落下的火箭弹造成数十人死亡。实际上战争的特点已经改变。具体来说，战争爆发原因在重要性次序上有了变化。在20世纪初的战争中居于次要地位的战争动机如今已跃升为主导地位，被有意识地认可并执行。

为了理解当下战争的性质——尽管战争中的敌友关系每隔几年就要发生变化，但战争本身依然是那场战争。首先人们必须明白，它不可能有一个确定的结局。三个超级大国的任何一个都不可能彻底征服，甚至不可能被另外两国的联盟彻底征服，它们过于势均力敌，且彼此间的天然防线过于强大。欧亚国被辽阔的陆地所保护，大洋国依仗大西洋和太平洋，东亚国有勤劳而善于生产的民众。其次，已不存在让战争爆发的物质诱因。由于建立了自给自足的经济体制，消费和生产彼此配合。争夺市场已不再是战争的主要原因，争夺原材料也不再重要。无论如何，这三个大国的面积是如此辽阔，以至于它们都可以在本国国内找到差不多所有他们所需的原材料。如果说战争有什么直接的经济目的的话，那就是对劳动力的争夺。在三个大国中间有一块类似长方形的区

域，以丹吉尔、布拉柴维尔、达尔文港和香港为四角，住着全世界约五分之一的人口，没有任何一个国家能将该区域长期据为己有。为了争夺这块人口稠密的地区以及覆盖着冰雪的北部地区，三个大国争斗不休。而其实从未有哪个大国有能力控制所有争议地区。一些地区不断易手，致使结盟关系不断变化，因为各国只有通过突然的背信弃义才有机会夺取某块地方。

所有争议地区都蕴藏着珍贵的矿藏，其中一些还出产重要的植物产品，如橡胶。在较为寒冷的地区只能通过费用高昂的人工手段合成出来。但最为重要的是取之不尽的廉价的劳动力储备。不管是谁，只要有能力控制赤道非洲，或者中东地区、南印度、印度尼西亚群岛，就相当于拥有了亿万个价格低廉、工作勤力的苦力。这些地区的居民已或多或少沦为奴隶，不断地从一个征服者手里转到另一个征服者手里，他们就像煤和石油等消费品，被用来生产更多的军备、占据更多的土地、控制更多的劳力，再生产更多的军备、占据更多的土地、控制更多的劳力，周而复始，永不停止。不过应该注意的是，战争从来没有超过争议地区的边界。欧亚国的边界在刚果河盆地和地中海北岸游移，印度洋和太平洋的岛屿时而被大洋国占领，时而被东亚国占领。在蒙古，欧亚国和东亚国的边界线一直没有固定下来。而在北极地区，尽管三国都宣称自己才是其广袤土地的拥有者，可实际上这里既无人烟，也没有经过勘测。总之，三国始终保持着力量上的平衡，其中心地带都没有遭遇过侵犯。此外，赤道地区被剥削的民众的劳动力对世界经济而言也并非必不可少。他们不能为世界增添什么财富。不管他们生产了什么，都要被用于战争，而战争又总以“在发动另一场战争时居于更有利的地位”作为目的。凭借着这些被奴役人口的劳动力这场绵延不绝的战争的进行速度加快了。但，倘若他们不存在，全球社会的结构以及维持这种结构的形式也不会有本质的不同。

现代战争的主要目标（依照双重思想的原则，对这一目标，内党的智囊既承认又不承认）是消耗掉机器生产的产品而不提高总体的生活水平。从19世纪末开始，如何处理剩余消费品的问题就潜藏在工业社会内。现在，几乎没有人吃得饱饭，这个问题显然并不紧迫，就算不人为地销毁剩余消费品，该问题可能也不会迫切。今天的世界和1914年以前相比，贫乏、饥饿、破败，如果和那个时代的人所畅想的未来相比，则更是如此。20世纪早期，人们想象中的未来富足、安逸、有序、高效——那是一个由玻璃和洁白如雪的混凝土构建起的闪亮而清洁的世界——它是几乎每个有文化的人意识的一部分。当时，科技正迅猛发展，且看起来会一直这样发展下去。但这并未发生，一部分因为长时间的战争和革命造成了贫困，一部分因为科技的进步需要经验主义的思维习惯，这种习惯又无法在管制严格的社会中存在。总而言之，今天的世界比五十年前更加原始。一些落后的地区虽然有所发展，且一些设备——在某种程度上总和战争、警察的侦察活动有关——也有所进步，但大部分实验和发明都停止了。50年代核战造成的破坏从未恢复完全。机器蕴涵的危险仍然存在。从机器出现的那天起，所有有思考能力的人都以为，人类再不用做那些苦差事了，人与人之间的不平等也将在很大程度上消弭。如果当初有意识地站在这个立场上使用机器，那么饥饿、过劳、肮脏、文盲、疾病就可以在几代人之内消失。实际上，机器虽然没有以此为目的为人使用，但这种状况仍自然而然地发生了——由于有时机器生产的财富不得不被分配掉，在19世纪末到20世纪初的五十多年里，机器在客观上确实提高了人们总体的生活水平。

但同样明确的是，从某种意义上说，财富的全面增长的确会带来毁灭性的危险——对等级社会的毁灭。如果世界上每个人都只工作很短的时间就能填饱肚子，住上有浴室和冰箱的房子，拥有私人汽车甚至飞机，那么最显而易见也最重要的不平等形式可能就不复存在。若财富普

及开来，就不会有财富的差别。可能，毫无疑问，可以设想这样一个社会，在私人财产和奢侈品方面，财富平均分配，而权力仍把持在少数享有特权的人手里。只是，在现实中这种社会不可能保持长期的稳定。因为如果每个人都能拥有安逸且有保障的生活，那么原先因贫困而蒙昧的大多数人就可以成为有文化且能够独立思考的人。而一旦他们做到这点，则早晚会意识到少数特权阶层毫无用途，进而会将其清除。就长远来看，等级社会只能建立在贫困和无知的基础上。20世纪初部分思想家梦想回到过去的农业社会，这不能解决实际的问题。它和机械化的大趋势相冲，而后者几乎成了这个世界的发展本能。更何况，任何一个国家若在工业上落后了，其军事便无所依靠，它将或直接或间接地受制于比它先进的竞争对手。

用限制商品生产的办法让民众一直处在贫困之中，并不是令人满意的解决之道。资本主义末期，即大约1920年到1940年间，曾大范围地使用这一办法。很多国家坐视经济停滞，土地荒芜，并拒绝增加资本设备。以至于相当多的人找不到工作，只能靠政府救济艰难度日。而这也造成了军事上的疲软无力。由于限制生产所造成的贫困毫无必要，则注定遭到人们的反对。问题就在这里：人们要如何既确保经济的轮子持续转动，又不让这个世界的财富有所增加？必须生产商品，但商品不一定要分配出去。为此，切实可行的办法便是不停地进行战争。

战争最基本的行为就是毁灭，不一定要毁灭人的生命，还要毁灭人的劳动产品。物质很可能会让人的生活过于安逸，从长远而言亦会让人过于聪明，而战争就是将物质撕碎，或升腾成烟，或倾入深海的一种途径。即便在战争中，武器没有被销毁，其生产仍不失为既消耗劳动力又不生产任何消费品的便捷方式。举个例子，建造一座水上堡垒所耗费的劳动力可以制造出数百艘货轮。而它最终会因废弃被拆成废料，不会给

任何人带来任何物质利益。但这之后，还会用大量的劳动力建造另一个水上堡垒。原则上，战争总是努力计划将满足人们最低需求后可能产生的剩余物质消耗干净，现实中人们的需求又总被低估，导致有一半的生活必需品长期供不应求。但这却被认为是有益的，是经过审慎思考的政策，甚至一些利益团体也徘徊在困苦边缘，因为普遍的匮乏可以凸显小特权的重要性并扩大不同阶级的差别。用20世纪初的标准来衡量，即使是内党党员，其生活也称得上简朴，其工作也算得上繁重。然而，他却有为数不多的奢侈享受——设施完备又宽敞的住房、质地更好的衣服、质量更高的烟酒饮食、两三个仆人、私人汽车和直升机——这让他的生活和外党党员截然不同。与之类似，和被称作“群众”的大多数底层民众相比，外党党员又处在更有利的境地。社会就像一座封闭的城市，一块马肉就能体现出贫富之别，有即富，无则贫。同时，由于意识到正身处战争，人人自危，要想生存下去，就理所当然地要将所有权力都交给少部分人。

可以看出，战争摧毁了必须摧毁的东西，人们在心理上也能接受其所使用的方式。原则上，建庙宇、修金字塔，挖出一个坑再将它填上，或者将生产出的大量物品烧成灰烬，都可以消耗剩余劳力。但它只能为等级社会提供经济基础，提供不了感情基础。这里需要关心的不是群众的感情，只要群众不停止工作，他们的态度就无关紧要。真正需要关心的是党员的情绪。即便是地位最卑微的党员也被要求有能力、勤劳、在特定范围内头脑聪明，同时又必须具备轻信、盲从、狂热的特点，恐惧、仇恨、崇拜、狂喜应占据他情绪的主要部分。用另一种方式说，他的精神应该和战争两相呼应。战争是否真的发生了并不重要，考虑到不可能有决定性的胜利，战争进行得如何也没什么重要。重要的是在战争的氛围下，党员更容易做到党所要求的智力的分裂——这在现在已非常普遍，党员的地位越高，表现得就越明显。论起对战争的狂热和对敌人

的仇恨，内党的态度最为强烈。作为管理者，一个内党党员必须知道这条或那条和战争有关的消息并不真实，他可能经常发现整场战争都是捏造的，要么现在没有发生，要么其目的完全不是宣称的那样。但是，在双重思想的作用下，他所了解的很容易被消除。没有一个内党党员不坚信战争真实存在，他们那神秘的信念从不曾动摇，他们相信大洋国一定能取得最终胜利，成为这个世界无可争议的主宰者。

所有内党党员都坚信他们即将征服世界。这种征服要么通过不断地占领土地、树立压倒性的力量来实现，要么通过研发所向披靡的新式武器来实现。研发新式武器的工作持续不断地进行着，这是有创造力又擅长思考的人所能找到的为数不多的能发挥才智的活动之一。在今天的大洋国，传统学科已不复存在，新话中没有“科学”一词。过去的科学成就建立在以经验主义为基础的思维方法上，和英社的根本原则相违背。技术的进步只能发生在其产品将以某种方式限制人类自由的情况下。所有实用技术不是裹足不前，就是出现倒退。耕田要靠马拉犁，书籍要用机器写。但在重要问题上——即战争和警察的侦察活动——仍鼓励，或者至少允许使用经验的方法。党有两个目标：征服世界和彻底消灭独立思考。因此，党需要解决两个大问题。一个是如何违背一个人的意愿，知道他到底在想什么。另一个是，如何在几秒钟之内不加警告地杀死数亿人。科学活动之所以仍在进行，就是为了这两个题目。因此今天只存在两种科学家，一种集心理学家和审讯者于一身，对人的表情、姿态、声调所包含的意义作细致入微的研究，他们考察药物、休克疗法、催眠、严刑拷打在促使人吐露实情上所起到的作用；另一种是化学家、物理学家和生物学家，他们只关心自己专业中和杀人有关的东西。他们不知疲倦地工作在和平部那巨大的实验室里，工作在巴西密林的深处、澳大利亚的沙漠，以及人迹罕至的南极小岛上隐藏的实验站里。他们有的专注于制定未来战争的后勤计划；有的则执迷于设计越来越大的火箭

弹、越来越强的爆炸物和越来越厚的装甲板；有的在寻找更加致命的毒气，可以将地球上所有植物都杀死的、能够进行大规模生产的可溶性毒药，以及不惧任何抗生素的病菌；有的正致力于建造类似潜艇在水里行驶那样在地下穿梭的汽车和像帆船那样无需基地的飞机；还有的在研究遥不可及的东西，比如在数千公里外的太空中安置透镜，将太阳的光芒聚集起来，在地球中间开个孔人为地制造地震和海啸。

这些计划没有一个能够完成，三个超级大国也没有哪个有能力领先另外两个。三个大国都已拥有原子弹，它的威力比它们正在研发的任何武器都大得多。党总是习惯说自己是原子弹的发明者，而原子弹早在20世纪40年代就出现了，在大约十年后开始大规模使用。当时，数以百计的原子弹落在了工业中心，主要集中在俄国的欧洲部分、西欧和北美。它让所有国家的统治集团都意识到再扔几颗原子弹，有组织的社会就会完蛋，他们的权力就会随之终结。因此从此以后，虽然没有签署或暗示有什么正式协定，再也没有原子弹掉下来。三个大国仅仅是制造、储备原子弹，他们相信迟早有一天，他们要一决胜负。同时，在长达三四十年之久的时间里，各国在战术上几乎都没有取得进展。当然，相比从前，直升飞机使用得更加频繁，轰炸机在很大程度上已经被自动推进的炮弹取代，脆弱的军舰也让位给不易沉没的水上堡垒。但在其他方面就进步寥寥。坦克、潜艇、鱼雷、机枪，甚至步枪和手榴弹仍在被使用。尽管报纸和电屏都没完没了地播着和杀戮有关的报道，但早期战争中那种在几个星期里就杀死数十万，甚至数百万人的情况再未发生。

在战略部署上，三个超级大国都不敢冒失败的风险，其所有大规模军事行动通常都以对盟国的突然袭击为开始。三个大国的战略都一样，即通过战斗、谈判和时机掌握得刚刚好的背叛，夺取一批基地，将敌国包围起来。然后和该国签订友好条约，保持多年的和平关系，让对方放

下戒心，疏忽大意。再趁机将装有核弹头的火箭集中在所有战略要点，让它们在同一时间发射，给对方造成毁灭性打击，令对方失去反击能力。之后，再和剩下的国家签订友好条约，为下一次突袭作准备。这种计划简直不值一说，它无异于白日梦，没有丝毫实现的可能。不仅如此，在赤道及北极等争议地区外，还没有发生过战争，也没有哪个国家入侵过其他国家。这就解释了为什么超级大国之间的一些地区其界线是随意划定的。比如欧亚国可以轻而易举地拿下不列颠诸岛，后者从地理上看属于欧洲。而大洋国也可以将边界拓展到莱茵河，甚至维斯图拉河。但这样一来就违背了各国都遵守的不成文的文化完整原则，如果大洋国要占领曾被称作法兰西和德意志的地方，它要么将当地居民全部消灭，要么将大约一亿人同化成在技术方面和大洋国居民水平相当的人。这实施起来极其困难。对此，三个大国面临的问题都一样。除了和战俘、黑人奴隶进行有限的接触，他们的国家结构决定他们绝对不能和外国人有任何联系。即便是对正式的盟友，他们也总带着深深的怀疑。刨去战俘，普通的大洋国公民从来没有见过一个欧亚国或东亚国的公民，就连学习外语都遭到禁止。如果允许他和外国人接触，他会发现他们和自己一样，会知道他被告知的大部分和外国人有关的事情都是谎言。如此，他所生活的封闭世界就会被打破，他的信念，譬如恐惧、仇恨以及自以为是的正义都会蒸发消失。因此，三国都清楚，不管波斯、埃及、爪哇、锡兰怎样几经易手，除了炮弹，都不能越过其主要边界。

其中，有个事实虽未被大声提起，却会被三国默认并视为行为准则：三个大国的生活水平都差不多。大洋国盛行的哲学是英社原则，在欧亚国它叫新布尔什维主义，到了东亚国它有个中文名字，通常翻译成“崇死”，但也许译成“自我消除”更好。大洋国的公民禁止了解其他两国的哲学原则，却被教导要憎恨它们，将它们当作对道德、常识的野蛮践踏。其实这三种哲学难分你我，其所拥护的社会制度也是如此。

哪里都是金字塔式的建筑，哪里都有对宛若半神的领袖的崇拜，哪里都在用战争维系经济并让经济为战争服务。这就是为什么这三个超级大国都不能将对方征服的原因。此外，就算征服了也没什么利益可得。而相反，只要三个国家一直在打仗，就会像三束捆在一起的秸秆一般彼此支撑。通常来说，三国的统治集团对他们的所作所为既了解又不了解。他们为征服世界而活，但同时他们也明白战争必须永远进行下去，不能有胜利。而征服世界可能会使他们拒绝面对现实，但却不会对什么东西造成威胁。这正是英社及和它对立的另外两种思想体系的特点。在此，有必要重复一下之前说过的话，持续不断的战争已经从根本上改变了战争本身的性质。

在过去，以战争的定义来看，战争早晚会有结束的一天，要么胜利，要么失败，结果一清二楚。曾几何时，战争也是人类社会和客观世界保持联系的主要手段之一。每个时代的统治者都试图将虚假的世界观强加给他的追随者，但他们却不会鼓励那种有可能损害其军事效能的幻想。战败就意味着丧失独立，或者其他糟糕的事，因此必须认真地提前采取措施以确保胜利。客观现实不能被忽视。在哲学、宗教、伦理、政治等领域，二加二可能等于五。但在设计枪支或飞机时，二加二必须等于四。效益低下的民族迟早会被征服，幻想又无益于效益的提高。更何况，提高效益有必要向过去学习，这就意味着人们要对发生过的事有准确而公正的判断。当然，之前的报纸和历史书总不免带有主观色彩和偏见，但却不可能像今天这样伪造事实。战争确能让人保持清醒，对统治集团来说，它很可能是最重要的保持清醒的方式。战争也许会输，也许会赢，没有哪个统治集团能完全地置身事外。

但是，当战争确实变得没完没了时，它就不再危险，也不存在什么军事的需要。技术的进步可以停止，再明确的事实都可以忽视、否认。

正像我们看到的那样，尽管被称作“科学的”研究一直在为战争服务，但它们从本质上看无非是白日梦，没有成果也不要紧。效益，即便是军事效益，都不被需要。在大洋国，除了思想警察，没有哪件事能产生效益。三个超级大国都不会被征服，每个国家都是一个独立的小世界，几乎任何颠倒是非的观念都可以安然地于其中大行其道，现实的压力只表现在日常生活中的需求上——对吃喝的需求，对住房的需求，对服装的需求，以及对避免服毒、避免从高处坠落的需求。在生与死之间，在肉体的痛苦与快乐上，仍存在差别，但也仅仅是这样罢了。大洋国的公民就像生活在星际之间，他们与外界隔绝，与过去隔绝，不知自己身处何处。在这样的国家，统治者即独裁者，法老或恺撒都未曾如此。为避免对自己不利，他们不能让自己的人民饿死太多，也必须让自己的军事技术水平和对手的一样低。一旦这些条件得到最低限度的满足，他们就可以将现实扭曲成任何他们想要的样子。

因此，若我们用战争的传统定义来衡量现在的战争，后者就是假的，它就好像两头反刍动物间的争斗，其犄角的角度决定了它们不会让彼此受伤。但是，战争虽不真实，却仍有意义。它耗尽了剩余消费品，有助于保持等级社会所需的特殊的精神氛围。战争，就现在来看，完全成了内政。在过去，尽管各国的统治集团可能因为意识到他们的共同利益而对战争的破坏性加以限制，但他们依然会攻击对方，胜利者还总会失败者进行掠夺。而到我们生活的时代，国家之间不再相互争斗，统治集团对自己的国民发动战争，战争的目的既不是征服他国也不是保卫本国，而是确保社会结构的完整。因此，战争一词便会让人产生误解。确切地说，也许是这样，当战争变得没完没了，战争本身就不存在了。从新石器时代到20世纪早期人类所感受到的那种战争的压力已经消失，取而代之以完全不同的东西。倘若这三个大国不再交火，永远和平相处，且都不会侵犯对方边界，那结果也没有什么不同。因为在这种情况下

下，每个国家仍然是自给自足的小世界，外来的危险永远无法对它产生重大影响。这就是党的标语“战争即和平”的深层含义，绝大多数党员对它的了解都非常肤浅。

温斯顿放下书，停了一会儿。远处的某个地方火箭弹爆炸了，发出雷一般的响声。独自一人待在没有电屏的房间里读禁书的快感还没有消退。他用身体体会着孤独与安全，这种感觉又和肉体的疲惫、座椅的柔软及从窗外吹进的微风轻抚人脸时的感觉混杂在一起。书深深地吸引了他，更准确地说，它让他心安。从某种意义上看，它吸引他的就在于它没有讲什么新东西，它说出了他想说的，如果他能将头脑里的断章残片整理好的话。它的作者有着和他类似的想法，但却比他更加有力、更加系统，也更加无畏。在他看来，最好的书就是将你已经知道的东西告知给你。他刚刚将书翻回第一章，就听到朱莉亚上楼梯的声音。他从椅子上站起来接她。她将棕色的工具包往地上一扔，扑进他的怀里，他们已经有一个多星期没见面了。

“我拿到那本书了。”他松开她，说。

“噢，你拿到了？很好，”她并没有多大兴趣，一边说一边迅速地蹲了下去，在煤油炉旁煮起了咖啡。

他们在床上躺了半个小时，才重新说起这个话题。夜里很凉，他们拉起床罩盖在身上。楼下传来熟悉的歌声和靴子行走在石板路上的声音。温斯顿第一次来这里时看到的那个红胳膊的健壮女人似乎已成为这院中风景的一部分。白天，没有一个小时她不是在洗衣盆和晾衣绳中走来走去，她要么叼着晾衣夹，要么唱着欢快的歌。朱莉亚侧着身子躺着，看上去快要睡着了。他伸手拿起放在地板上的书，靠着床头坐起了身。

“我们必须读下它，”他说，“你也是。所有兄弟会的会员都要读。”

“你读吧，”她闭着眼睛说，“大点声读。这样最好了，你可以边读边解释给我听。”

时针指到6点，也就是18点，他们还有三四个小时的时间。他把书放在膝盖上，读了起来。

第一章 无知即力量

有史以来，大约从新石器时代结束开始，世界上就有三种人：上等人、中等人、下等人。按照不同的方式继续划分，他们有过很多名字。他们的相对人数以及对彼此的态度都因时而异，然而社会的基本结构却没有发生改变。即使在经历了重大剧变和看起来不可挽回的变化后，依然能恢复其原有的格局，就好像无论向哪个方向推进，陀螺仪都能恢复平衡。

“朱莉亚，你还醒着吗？”温斯顿问。

“是的，亲爱的，我听着呢，继续，写得真好。”

他继续读了下去：

这三个阶层的目标完全无法协调。上等人的目标是保住自己的地位。中等人的目标是和上等人调换地位。至于下等人，他们被欺压得太

厉害，生活太艰苦，以至于偶尔才能想起日常生活以外的事，这已成为他们的一大特点，若他们真有目标，那无外乎是消除一切差别，建立一个人人平等的社会。因此，纵观历史，类似的斗争总是一而再地上演，很长时间，上等人都看似坚固地把持着权力，但总有一天，他们要么不再相信自己，要么不再相信自己还能够进行统治，又或者二者皆有。之后，他们会被中等人推翻，中等人装出为自由和正义而战的样子，将下等人争取到自己的一边。但只要中等人达成目的，他们就会把下等人重新推回被奴役的地位，而他们自己则摇身变成上等人。不久，新的中等阶层又会从某一等人或某两等人中分化出来，这场斗争又再次开始。三等入中，只有下等人从未成功实现，哪怕是暂时实现过自己的目标。如果说历史上人们从来没有取得过实质性的进步，不免有些夸张。就算在今天，在这个衰败的时代，人们平均的物质生活水平也比几个世纪前要好。但无论是财富的增长，还是行为的文明程度，抑或是改革与革命，都没能让人类向平等前进一星半点。站在下等人的视角上，改朝换代无非是主宰者的名字发生变化而已。

19世纪晚期，很多观察家都注意到这种明显的反复情况。一些思想学派也由此产生，他们将历史诠释成一个循环发展的过程，并声称不平等是人类生活的永恒法则。这一理论一直都不乏拥护者，不过现在它的提出方式有了重大改变。在过去，社会需要分成三六九等的说法特别为上等人所强调，国王、特权者、教士、律师，以及其他寄生者们都在宣扬这一学说，通常，他们向人们承诺，人们可以在死后的世界里得到补偿，并以此来缓和等级间的矛盾。而中等人只要还在为权力进行斗争，就一定会鼓吹自由、正义、博爱，但是现在，人类皆兄弟的观点却遭到了暂未掌权、不久之后可能掌权的人的攻击。过去，中等人打着平等的旗号进行革命，在推翻专制后，建立新的专制。现在，新的中等人会事先声明他们就是要建立专制。19世纪初期出现了社会主义理论，该理论

是可以追溯到古奴隶反叛时代的思想链条中的最后一环，深受历代乌托邦思想的影响。不过，在1900年后出现的若干社会主义理论都越来越公开地摒弃关于建立自由与平等的社会的目标。本世纪中期出现了新的社会运动，在大洋国它是英社，在欧亚国它是新布尔什维主义，在东亚国则是崇死，它们都有明确的目标让不自由、不平等永远持续下去。它们都由旧运动发展而来，都趋向于保持原有的名字并对旧有的意识形态作口头宣传，都把阻挠进步、让历史在某一时刻冻结起来当作目的。众所周知的钟摆现象会再次发生，随后停止。像之前一样，上等人被中等人推翻，中等人成为上等人。只是这次由于采取了明智的策略，上等人将永远保持自己的地位。之所以出现新的学说，一部分因为历史知识的积累和历史意识的产生，这在19世纪之前几乎没有。今天，对历史的循环运动性，人们已有所了解，或者表面上是这样。而既然了解它，就可以改变它。但最主要最根本的原因却是早在20世纪初，人类的平等在技术上便成为可能。虽然人的天赋有高低，职责各不同，有些人就是要比其他人都强是事实，但已经没有让阶级存在差别、制造财富悬殊的必要。在早些时候，阶级的差别不仅不可避免，还是理所应当的。不平等是文明的代价。而随着机器大生产的发展，情况发生了变化。即便人们仍要从事不同的工作，他们也没有必要拥有不同的社会地位，没有必要生活在不同的经济水平下。因此，在那些即将夺取权力的人看来，他们用不着再为人类的平等进行奋斗，而是要避开危险。在更加久远的时代，当建立公正和平的社会行不通时，人们反倒更相信这种社会的存在。几千年来，人们一直梦想拥有一个人人亲如兄弟、没有法律也没有牲畜般艰苦劳动的人间天堂，一些人即使在每一次历史变革中都得到切实的好处，也仍抱有这种梦想。法、英、美等国大革命的继承者在一定程度上对自己所说的人权、言论自由、法律面前人人平等信以为真，甚至其行为业已在某种程度上受到影响。但是到了20世纪40年代，所有主流政治思想就都是独裁主义的了。人间天堂在即将实现的时候遭到了人们的怀

疑。所有新的政治理论，不管自称什么，都发生后退，主张等级化和组织化。大约在1930年的时候，在形势普遍严峻的情况下，一些长期弃用甚至几百年都没用过的做法，比如未经审讯的关押、把战俘当奴隶用、公开处决、严刑逼供、扣押人质、放逐大批人口等，不仅又成为寻常的做法，还得到了那些自认开明、进步的人的容忍、辩护。

英社及与它并立的政治理论得到贯彻执行还是在世界经历了长达十年的国际战争、内战、革命与反革命之后。不过，此前已有一些体制预见了它们的出现，这些体制通常被称作集权主义，出现在本世纪早些时候。世界的主要轮廓将在动乱之中浮现出来，是显而易见的，哪种人将掌控这个世界同样显而易见。新的特权阶层大部分由官僚、科学家、技师、工会组织者、宣传专家、社会学家、教师、记者、职业政客组成。他们出身于领工资的中产阶级和上层工人阶级。他们由垄断工业和中央集权政府下的贫瘠世界塑造、聚集。相较于过去，他们没那么贪婪，也没那么奢侈，但他们却更渴望拥有绝对的权力。更重要的是，他们对自己的所作所为有着更清醒的认识，在镇压反对者上更加坚决。后者是极其重要的，和今天相比，曾经的僭主政治既不彻底，又缺乏效率。其统治集团总不免受到自由主义思想的影响，心甘情愿地让该思想在所有地方都留下影迹，他们只关注那些明目张胆的行为，对国民的想法则不感兴趣。在今天看来，就连中世纪的教会都算得上宽容。这一部分因为，在过去没有哪个政府有能力将自己的公民置于不断地监控之下。但随着印刷术的发明，操纵公众意见变得更加容易，之后电影和无线电的发明又加剧了这一情形。电视业的发展以及用同一设备进行信息手法的技术的进步，终结了人们的私生活。所有公民，至少那些重要的、需要被关注的公民，可能一天24小时全部处在警察的监视之下和官方的宣传之中。其他的信息渠道通通被切断。至此，第一次，不仅所有公民都要完全屈服于国家意志，对任何问题，他们的看法还都将被统一起来。

在五六十年代的革命之后，像往常一样，社会重新划分成上等人、中等人、下等人。但新的上等人之前的并不相同，他们并非凭直觉行事，他们知道要确保地位的稳固需要做些什么。他们一早就意识到，对寡头政治而言最牢靠的基础便是集体主义。财富和特权若为集体所有，保护它们就最为容易。本世纪中期出现的所谓的“消灭私有制”运动，实际上意味着将财产集中到更少的人手中。不同的在于，新的财产所有者不是若干个人，而是一个集团。就个人而言，除了少得可怜的个人物品，党员什么财产都没有。但对集体来说，在大洋国，所有的一切都属于党，因为所有的一切都在它控制之下，它会按照它所认为合适的方式处理产品。革命后的几年里，党之所以能够未经任何反抗就占据统治地位，就是因为这一过程是以集体化的形式表现出来的。人们总会这样想，如果剥夺了资产阶级的所有权，社会主义必紧随而至。资产阶级的财产的确被剥夺了，工厂、矿山、土地、房屋、运输工具——他们拥有的一切都被夺走了。这些东西不再是私有财产，它们必然成为公有财产。英社诞生于早期社会主义运动，继承了后者的用词，也在事实上完成了社会主义纲领的主要部分，得到了将经济不平等永久化的结果。而这既是预见的，也是它有意为之。

但是等级社会的永久化却是更加深刻的问题。只有在四种情况下统治集团才会丧失权力：被外部势力征服，管理效率低下造成大众起义，一个强大的、心怀不满的中等阶层出现，它自己失去了统治信心和统治的意愿。四者都并非独自发生作用，某种程度上说，它们总是同时存在已成为一种规律。统治集团若能防止它们出现，就能长久地统治下去。最终起决定性作用的还是统治集团本身的精神状态。

本世纪中期以后，第一种危险已在现实生活中绝迹，三个超级大国瓜分了世界，除非通过人口的缓慢变化，其每一个都不可征服，但只要

其政府拥有广泛的权力，这点就很容易避免。第二种危险仅仅存在于理论中，人们从来不会自发地起来造反，从来不会只因为受压迫就揭竿而起。确实，只要没有比较标准，他们就意识不到他们正遭受压迫。之前频频发生的经济危机完全没有必要，而且也不许在现在发生。至于其他大范围的混乱就算有可能出现，也不会产生政治后果；因为没有能让不满的声音清晰地表达出来的途径。说起生产过剩的问题，自机械技术发展以来就一直潜伏在我们的社会中，可以依靠不断地进行的战争来解决（参见第三章），战争有利于将公众士气激励到必要的高度。按照我们当前统治者的观点，只有一个真正的危险，那就是从他们自己的阶层分化出一个有能力、有权欲、又没能充分发挥才干的新的集团，这会让他们之中出现自由主义和怀疑主义。也就是说，问题在于教育。要不断地加强领导集团以及其下关系紧密又人数众多的执行集团的觉悟，但对大众的觉悟就只需通过消极的方式加以影响。

即便一个人之前不清楚大洋国的主要结构，在了解了这一背景后，也可以将其推断出来。金字塔的顶端是老大哥。老大哥绝对正确，无所不能。所有成就，所有成功，所有胜利，所有科学发明，所有知识，所有智慧，所有幸福，所有美德都直接来自于他的领导和激励。没人见过老大哥。他是宣传栏上的一张脸，是电屏上的一个声音。我们确信他永远不会死，而他出生的时间则没人能确定。老大哥是党挑选出来向世界展示自我的一个形象，他的作用是充当热爱、恐惧、崇敬等情感的焦点。老大哥之下是内党，其人数限制在六百万之内，在大洋国人口中不到2%。内党之下便是外党，如果把内党形容成国家的大脑，外党就像国家的手。外党下面是愚笨的大众，我们习惯上将他们称作“群众”，他们大概占了总人口的85%。按照之前的社会分类方法划分，群众就是下等人，由于赤道一带被奴役的人总是从一个征服者手上转到另一个征服者手上，所以不能算作社会的固定组成或必要部分。

原则上说，这三等人的身份并不是世袭的。父母都是内党党员的孩子在理论上并非一出生就是内党党员。不管是加入内党还是外党，都需要在16岁时参加考试，不存在任何种族歧视，也不存在某个地区压制另一个地区的情况。人们可以在党的最高层中找到犹太人、黑人、纯印第安人血统的南美人，且每个地区的行政官员总是从当地居民中选拔出来。在大洋国没有哪个地方的居民觉得自己被殖民，也没有哪个地方的居民觉得自己被远方的首都所管理。大洋国没有首都，其元首只徒有其名，没人知道他在哪里。除了英语是通用语，新话是官方语外，在语言方面不存在任何形式的统一。这些统治者不是靠血缘联系在一起，而是靠共同的信仰。没错，我们的社会是分等级的，而且是严格的分级，一眼看过去好像是按世袭划分。不同阶层间的流动比资本主义或前工业时代的都要小得多。党的两个分支间存在一定数量的人员流动，但这只是为了剔除掉内党中的低能分子，并给外党里野心家以向上爬的机会，免得他们造成危害。无产者实际上是不允许入党的，他们中最有天分的很有可能成为不满情绪的核心，会引起思想警察的注意并遭到清除。但这种情况并非一成不变，也不是主要的原则问题。党在定义上已不是一个阶级，它不再以“将权力传给子女”作为目标，若没有其他办法让最能干的人留在党的最高层，它很乐意从无产者中征募一代新人。在关键时期，在消除反对力量上，党的这种非世袭性起到了很大作用。老一代的社会主义者一直接受反对阶级特权的训练，都以为非世袭的东西不可能永久存在。他们没看出来寡头政治的延续不一定需要什么实际的依托，也没有想到世袭贵族一向短命，倒是像天主教那样的组织方式有时竟可维持几百或几千年。寡头政治的关键不是父子相传，而是让一种由死者加诸于生者的特定的世界观、生活方式延续下去。只要能指派后继者，统治集团就永远是统治集团。党关心的不是血统的不朽，而是党本身的不朽。只要等级结构永恒不变，谁掌权并不重要。

我们时代的所有信念、习惯、兴趣、情感、思想状况都是设计好的，都是为了保持党的神秘性，避免什么人看穿当前社会的真相。造反，或者任何和造反有关的准备工作，在目前都不可能发生。不用担心无产阶级，随他们去，他们会一代又一代、一个世纪又一个世纪地劳作、繁衍、死亡，不仅不会有揭竿而起的冲动，也无法理解世界还可以有其他的样子。只有当工业技术发展需要为他们提供更高级的教育，他们才会成为危险分子。然而，由于军事竞争和商业竞争都已无足轻重，公众的教育水平实际上下降了。大众有见解，大众没见解，都没什么不同。他们之所以可以拥有思考的自由是因为他们根本没有思考能力。而对党员来说，即便在最不重要的事情上的最轻微的思想出轨，都不被容忍。

党员从生到死，都生活在思想警察的监视之中。就算独自一人，也永远不敢确定自己是否真是独自一人。无论在哪里，是睡着还是醒着，是工作还是休息，是泡在浴缸里还是躺在床上，他都有可能被人监视。而这监视不会有通知，也不会被察觉。他的所作所为都至关重要。他的友谊、他的娱乐、他对妻儿的态度、他独处时的表情、他沉睡时的梦呓、他特有的肢体动作都将受到谨慎而详细的检查。不要说确实有不检的行为，任何细小的乖张之举，任何习惯上的变化，任何神经质的怪癖——任何有可能反映内心争斗的征兆，都一定会被发现，对任何事情他都没有选择的自由。另一方面，他的行为并不受什么法律或什么明文规定的约束。大洋国没有法律。一些思想、行为，尽管没有被正式禁止，一旦被查到就意味着死，无休无止的清洗、逮捕、拷打、监禁、蒸发都并非是对所犯之罪进行的惩罚，而仅仅为了将那些有可能在未来犯罪的人清除。对一个党员来说，光有正确的思想还不够，他还要有正确的本能。至于他需要具备什么样的信念、态度则从未被清楚说明，因为要想在不暴露英社内在矛盾的情况下说明这些根本不可能。若他天生正统

（用新话说就是“思想好的人”），那他无须思考就知道什么是正确的信念，什么是应有的情感，且在任何情况下都是如此。无论如何，当他还是孩子时就接受了复杂的充斥着新话词语的思想训练，如停止犯罪、黑白、双重思想。这让他不愿意也没能力对问题有深刻的思考。

作为一个党员不应该有任何私人情感，其对党的热情不应有丝毫松懈。他应该生活在对内外敌人的疯狂的仇恨中，生活在对胜利的欢欣鼓舞中，并拜倒在党的英明和力量之下。他对贫乏又不尽如人意的生活的不满，被小心引导，宣泄出来，在两分钟仇恨会上消散得无影无踪。而那些有可能促发怀疑或反抗情绪的思想，则会被他早年接受的内心训练扼杀。用新话来说，这种训练的最初也是最简单的阶段便是“停止犯罪”，它被教授给幼小的孩子。所谓停止犯罪，即是指在危险思想即将萌生的时候，如本能一般，迅速地停止思考。它包括以下一些内容：无法进行类比、看不到逻辑的谬误、不能理解最简单的抨击英社的理论，以及对任何可能发展成异端的思想感到厌倦。概括地说，停止犯罪就意味着把愚蠢当成保护措施。但只有愚蠢还不够，相反，正统要求人像柔术师控制自己的身体那样控制自己的思路。大洋国社会的终极信仰是：老大哥无所不能，党永远正确。但因为在现实生活中，老大哥并非无所不能，党也并非永远正确，对待事实，人们就需要时刻保持灵活性，且不能有丝毫懈怠。对此，有一个关键词“黑白”，像很多新话词语一样，它包含两个相互矛盾的意思。用在敌人身上，就意味着肆无忌惮地、罔顾事实地说黑为白。用在党员身上，就意味着根据党的纪律要求，出于忠诚说黑是白，但它还意味着相信黑即是白的能力，还包括知道黑即是白并忘记自己曾经相信过相反的东西的能力。如此，无休无止地篡改过去就成了一种需要，而篡改过去只有通过一种的确能轻而易举包容一切的思想体系才能做到。用新话来说，便是双重思想。

篡改过去之所以必要有两个原因，一个是次要的，也可以说是预防性的，那就是党员之所以能像群众一样忍受当下的生活条件，部分由于他没有比较的标准。为了让他相信他比他的祖先生活得更好，为了让他相信平均的物质水平有在提高，就必须让他同过去断绝开来，就像将他同外国断绝开一样。而另一个原因则重要得多，即确保党永远正确。为了让党的预言在任何情况下都准确无误，要不断地修改过去的讲话、统计资料、各种记录，同时不能承认党的教义或大洋国的政治结盟情况发生过什么变化，因为承认这些就相当于承认自己有错。比如，今天的敌人是欧亚国或东亚国（不管是哪一国），那它就必须永远是敌人。如果事实与之矛盾，就必须篡改事实，历史因此不断被重写。由真理部负责的篡改工作每天都在进行，一如仁爱部要从事侦察和镇压的工作，这是维护政权稳定的必需。

过去变化无常是英社的中心原则。英社认为过去并不是客观的存在，它只存在于文字记录和人类的记忆里。只要记录和记忆一致，不管是什么，都是过去。党既有能力全面掌控所有记录，也有能力全面掌控党员的思想，党想让过去是什么样那它就是什么样。不过，与此同时，虽然过去可以被篡改，但就具体事件而言，过去从未被篡改，任何事件都是如此。因为，无论当时出于什么目的将过去改头换面，改后的新样子即是过去，不能存在与这个过去不同的过去。这种情况经常发生，当同样一件事在一年之内被篡改好几次且面目全非时，依然如此。党无时无刻不掌握着绝对真理，显然，既然是绝对真理就不可能和现在的情况有什么出入。由此可见，控制过去首先要仰仗于对记忆的训练，而确保所有文字记录都和当下的正统思想相吻合不过是一种机械式的行为，不仅如此，还需要记住事情是按照人的意愿发生的。如果重新安排记忆或篡改文字记录是必需的，那么忘记自己曾做过这样的事也是必需的。人们可以像学会其他思考方法一样学会这种思考方法，大部分党员都学会

了，更不要说那些又聪明又正统的人。在老话中，它被直白地称作“现实控制”，在新话里，它被称为“双重思想”，不过“双重思想”还包括其他一些东西。

双重思想意味着一个人的思想中同时存在两种相互矛盾的信念，且两种信念还都为这个人所接受。党的知识分子知道自己的记忆应该往哪个方向转变，因此他清楚自己在戏弄现实。但是通过实行双重思想，他会让自己相信现实没有受到损害。这一步必须是有意为之的，否则就不够精确，但它又必须是无意为之的，否则就会让人觉得虚假，并由此产生罪恶感。双重思想是英社的核心思想，因为保证目标坚定不移需要绝对的诚实，但在保证目标坚定不移的同时进行有意识地欺骗又是党的本质性行动。一方面有意说谎，一方面又对谎言信以为真，忘掉那些令人为难的事实，然后再在需要的时候，将它们从记忆深处拉出来；否认客观现实的存在，同时又考虑被否认的现实——所有这些都必不可少；甚至在使用双重思想一词时也必须用到双重思想。因为谁使用这个词谁就相当于承认篡改现实，而再用一次双重思想，就能将其所知的篡改行为抹去。如此循环，永不停止。最后，凭借着“双重思想”，党可以——也许正像我们所知道的那样，继续左右历史数千年——阻止历史的发展。

历史上所有的寡头体制都倒台了，这要么是因为其自身的僵化，要么是因为懦弱，它们不是因为愚蠢自大，不能适应环境的变化而被推翻，就是因为变得开明怯懦，在该使用武力时候选择妥协而被颠覆。它们的失败或者是有意识的，或者是无意识的。而党的成功恰恰在于它制造出一种能让两种情况同时并存的思想体系。除此之外，没有任何其他的思想基础能让党的统治永恒不变。如果哪个人要进行统治，且希望自己的统治持续下去，那他就必须具备让人的现实感发生错乱的能力，

因为统治的秘诀就是：将认为自己永远正确的信念和从过去错误中吸取到的教训结合起来。

不用说，双重思想最巧妙的实施者就是发明双重思想并深知它是一个强大的思想欺骗系统的人。在我们的社会中，对世界了解最多的人对世界最不了解。总而言之，理解得最透彻的，也是误解最深的，越是聪明就越是愚蠢。举个典型例子，越是社会地位高的人，对战争越歇斯底里。而对战争持理性态度的往往是那些身处争议地区的被统治的人。在他们看来，战争无非是一场持续性灾难，如海浪一般反复冲刷他们的身体。对他们来说，谁取得胜利都没有分别。就算统治者发生变化，他们也仍然要做和从前一样的工作，新统治者对待他们的方式也和旧统治者的别无二致。而被我们称作“群众”的工人地位稍高一些，他们只偶尔意识到战争的存在。必要的时候可以刺激他们，让他们陷入强烈的恐惧和仇恨，但如果不理他们，那他们很长时间都不会想起战争正在发生。真正的战争狂热存在于党的内部，尤其是内党，坚信世界可以被征服的正是那些知道这不可能的人。这种奇特的对立统一关系——知与无知，冷漠自私与狂热盲从——就是大洋国社会区别于其他社会的显著标志。官方的意识形态充满矛盾，就算没有什么客观需要也是如此。因此，早期社会主义运动的原则没有一个不遭到党的抵制和中伤，而且党还是打着社会主义的旗号这样做的。过去几个世纪都没有这样的例子，党号召人们看低工人阶级，又因为这一原则，党要求党员穿上曾经只有工人才穿的制服。党有条不紊地削弱家庭的凝聚力，但它又用能唤起家庭忠诚感的名字称呼党的领导；甚至统治我们的四个部的名字，在歪曲事实上也已达到厚颜无耻的地步。和平部负责战争，真理部负责说谎，仁爱部负责用刑，富部负责制造饥饿。这样的矛盾并非偶然，也不是由通常意义上的虚伪所致，它是故意运用双重思想的结果。因为只有协调好矛盾，才能确保权力千秋万代，要打破古老的循环也只有如此。若想人类

的平等永不实现，若上等人——我们所说的——要永远居于上等地位，那么就必须将社会的主流心理控制在一个疯狂的状态中。

不过，至此，我们差点忽略一个问题：为什么要避免人类平等？如果对以上这些方法的描述是正确的，那么如此声势浩大又深思熟虑地努力冻结某一时期的历史，又是出于什么样的动机呢？

此时我们已经触到最关键的秘密。正如我们所看到的，党是神秘的，尤其是内党，它的神秘性必要通过双重思想来实现。然而还有比这更深刻更原始的动机，即从未被质疑过的人的本能。是它导致了夺权的行动，是它带来了双重思想、思想警察、无止境的战争以及其他一些随之而来的东西，这个动机实际上包括……

温斯顿发现周围非常安静，就好像发现了一种新的声音。他觉得朱莉亚已经很长时间没动窝了。她侧身躺着，腰部以上都赤裸着，她的脸枕在手上，一缕黑发垂在她的眼睛上面，她的胸脯缓慢而规律性地起伏着。

“朱莉亚。”

没有回答。

“朱莉亚，你醒着吗？”

没有回答，她睡着了。他合上书，小心地放在地上，然后躺下身，拉起床罩，将两个人都盖了起来。

他仍然不知道那个最大的秘密是什么，他想。他清楚怎样做，却不知道这样做的原因。第一章和第三章一样，都没有告诉他他不知道的东西，都只是把他了解的系统化。但读过之后，他比之前更加确定他没有

疯。作为少数派，哪怕是只有一个人的少数派，也不能断定你是疯的。世上既有真理又有非真理，若你紧握真理，就算全世界都反对你，你也没有发疯。夕阳将黄色的光芒斜斜地照进窗户，照在枕头上。他闭上眼睛，洒在他脸颊上的阳光和紧贴着他的女孩的光滑的身体，让他产生一种强烈的、混杂着睡意的自信。他很安全，每件事都还好。他啜喝着“理智不是统计学上的”，睡着了，觉得这句话包含着深奥的智慧。

十八

温斯顿醒了过来，觉得自己睡了很长时间，他扫了眼老式座钟，发现只有20点30分。他又打了一会儿盹，窗下的院子里再度传来那熟悉、低沉的歌：

不过是毫无希望的幻想，

消失得如此之快，像四月的日子。

但一个眼神，一句话，一个被他们唤起的梦！

都可将我心偷走！

这首烂歌似乎一直很流行，比《仇恨之歌》流行的时间还长，你在哪儿都能听到它。朱莉亚被歌声吵醒，她舒服地伸了个懒腰，起身下床。

“我饿了，”她说，“我们再煮点儿咖啡吧。见鬼！炉子熄了，水也凉了。”她提起炉子摇了摇，“没油了。”

“可以管老查林顿要些，我猜。”

“真奇怪，我敢肯定炉子原来是满的。我得把衣服穿上，”她说，“好像变冷了。”

温斯顿也起来了，穿好了衣服。那声音不知疲倦地唱道：

他们说时间可以医治一切，

他们说你终究会忘记；

但这些年的笑与泪，

仍牵动着我的心弦。

他一面扎着工作服上的腰带，一面向窗户走去。太阳一定是落到房后去了，院子里不再有阳光。地上的石板湿乎乎的，就好像刚被冲洗过，他觉得天空也好像被洗过，从屋顶的烟囱间望去，能看到清新的暗蓝色天空。那个女人走来走去，没有一点疲惫的样子，她一会儿将衣夹衔在嘴里，一会儿又取出来，她一会儿大声歌唱，一会儿又默不作声，她没完没了地挂着尿布。温斯顿不知道她究竟是以洗衣为生，还是只单纯地为二三十个孙儿卖苦力。朱莉亚靠了过来，来到他身边，他们站在一起出神地看着下面那结实的身影。那个女人有一些独特的举止，他看着她，看见她将粗壮的手臂伸向晾衣绳，她的屁股壮得好像母马，他第一次意识到她很美。她的身体因生儿育女像充足了气一般巨大，又因为辛苦劳作变得粗糙强壮，宛若熟透的大萝卜。在此之前他从来都没想过，一个五十岁妇女的身体还会是美丽的，但她又的确很美。为什么不可以呢？他想，这壮实的、缺乏线条感的身体就像一块大理石，它和那红色的、粗糙的皮肤一起与少女的身体放在一处，就像玫瑰果与玫瑰花。为什么果实要比花朵逊色呢？

“她真美！”他喃喃地说。

“她的屁股至少有一米宽。”朱莉亚说。

“那正是她的美丽所在。”温斯顿说。

他用一只手就可以轻松地将朱莉亚的纤腰揽起来，她的身体从臀到

膝紧紧地贴着他。但他们两个人却不能生育孩子，且这件事他们永远都不能做。他们只能靠语言来交流思想，交换秘密。而楼下的那个女人则没有思想，她有的是强健的臂膀、温暖的心灵和多产的肚皮。他想知道她到底生了多少个孩子，可能最少有十五个。她曾拥有短暂的、花一般的年华，也许有那么一年，她像野玫瑰一样诱人，但之后就仿佛突然受精的果子，她变得强壮、红润、粗放。再之后，她就生活在洗衣、擦地、缝补、做饭、扫地、擦抹、修理上。先是为子女，然后为孙儿，三十年中从未间断，可到了最后，她依然在歌唱。温斯顿崇敬她，这感觉很神秘地和屋顶烟囱后那片清新无云的天空混杂在一起。很奇怪，对任何人来说，天空都是一样的，不管在欧亚国，还是在东亚国，抑或是这里。天空下的人也没什么不同——世界的每个角落都差不多，几亿或者几十亿的人都不知道彼此的存在。但是，虽然仇恨与谎言筑起的高墙将他们彼此隔绝，他们仍然大同小异——他们不知道该如何思考，但他们的心灵、他们的身体中、他们的肌肉里，却聚积着力量，且总有一天他们要用这种力量颠覆世界。如果有希望，它们就在群众身上！他无须将那本书读完，他知道那是高德斯坦因留下的最后讯息。未来属于群众。他能确定，在群众的时代，群众建立的世界不会和党建立的世界一样吗？他能确定他不会融不进那世界吗？能，他能确定，因为那至少会是一个神志健全的世界。哪里有平等，哪里就能拥有健全的神志。力量改变意识迟早会发生。群众不朽，只要看看院子里那无所畏惧的身影，你就不会怀疑。终有一天他们会觉醒，尽管这可能要用上一千多年，尽管生存下去需要克服各种不利条件，他们就像飞鸟，将生命的活力从一个躯体传递到另一个躯体，而党既没有这种活力，又无法将它扼杀。

“你记得吗？”他问，“约会的第一天，在树林边上对我们唱歌的画眉？”

“它没对我们唱歌，”朱莉亚说，“它唱歌是为了自己高兴，甚至不能这么说。它只是在唱歌罢了。”

鸟唱歌，群众唱歌，党不唱歌。综观世界，在伦敦，在纽约，在非洲，在巴西，在边境地区的神秘禁地，在巴黎、柏林的大街，在广袤的俄罗斯平原的村庄，在中国和日本的市集——到处都伫立着强健又不可战胜的身躯，这些身躯因工作和生儿育女变得庞大，从出生到死都辛劳不休，都唱个不停。总有一天，他们强壮有力的腹部将生出神志清醒的民族。你是死的，他们是未来。但是，如果你能像他们保持身体的生命力那样保持头脑的生命力，让诸如二加二等于四这样的秘密学说传递下去，那你也能分享到未来。

“我们是死人。”他说。

“我们是死人。”朱莉亚顺从地应和道。

“你们是死人。”从他们背后，传来一个冷酷的声音。

他们跳着分开了。温斯顿觉得自己的内脏都结成了冰。他能看到朱莉亚的眼珠四周已泛起了白色，她的脸变得蜡黄，衬得脸上的腮红更加显眼，就好像浮出了皮肤表面。

“你们是死人。”又是那个冷酷的声音。

“在画后面。”朱莉亚悄悄地说。

“在画后面。”那声音说，“站那儿别动，别动，直到命令你们动。”

开始了，终于开始了！他们什么都不能做，只能凝视着对方的眼睛。快逃命吧，快逃出房子，不然就太晚了——他们从未萌生这样的念

头，他们不敢违背墙里发出的冷酷声音，想都不敢想。只听“啪”的一声，好像有什么东西翻了过来，紧接着，又听到玻璃被打碎的声音，那幅画落到了地板上，露出了后面的电屏。

“现在他们能看见我们了。”朱莉亚说。

“现在我们可以看见你们。”那声音说，“站到屋子中间，背靠背，手放头上，不许接触对方。”

他们没有互相接触，但他好像可以感觉到朱莉亚的颤抖，也许是他自己在颤抖。他控制住牙齿，以免它们上下打战，但他却控制不住自己的膝盖。楼下传来皮靴声，屋里屋外都听得见。院子里也似乎站满了人。有东西拖过石板地，女人的歌声戛然而止。又有什么东西滚了过去，发出长长的声音，好像是洗衣盆翻过了院子，接着是混乱而愤怒的叫喊，最后是一阵痛苦的尖叫。

“房子被包围了。”温斯顿说。

“房子被包围了。”那声音说。

他听见朱莉亚咬紧牙齿。“我猜，我们还是说再见吧。”她说。

“你们还是说再见吧。”那声音说。之后，又传来一个截然不同的、细声细气的、文雅的声音，这声音温斯顿曾经听过。

“顺便说一句，在我们谈论这个话题的同时，这儿有一根蜡烛照你上床，这儿还有一把斧头砍你脑袋！”

有东西摔到了温斯顿身后的那张床上，一张梯子伸进窗户，压坏了窗框，有人顺着梯子爬进窗户。楼梯上再度响起皮靴的声音，满屋子都

是穿着黑色制服的彪形大汉，他们登着钉有铁掌的皮靴，手里抓着警棍。

温斯顿不再发抖了，眼珠也一动不动。只有一件事是重要的：待着别动，待着别动，不要给他们殴打你的理由！一个男人站在他前面，那人的下巴像拳击手一样平坦，嘴巴细成一条缝，他用食指和大拇指夹着警棍，好像在思考着什么。他看着温斯顿，让温斯顿有一种赤身裸体的感觉，由于手放在脑后，温斯顿的脸和身体完全暴露在他的面前，这简直让人难以忍受。那人伸出白色的舌尖，舔了舔嘴唇，走开了。这时又有东西被打破，有人拿起桌子上的玻璃镇纸，将它摔在壁炉的石头上，摔碎了。

珊瑚的碎片从毯子上滚了过去，它就像蛋糕上糖玫瑰花的花蕾，是一小片粉红色的皱巴巴的东西，它是如此地渺小，温斯顿想，它一直都是这样渺小。温斯顿的身后传来吸气的声音，接着砰的一声，他的脚踝被人狠狠地踹了一脚，几乎让他失去平衡。其中一个男人一拳打到朱莉亚的腹部，打得她像折尺那样弯下了身子，在地板上扭动，喘不上气。温斯顿连微微转下脑袋的胆子都没有，但偶尔他还是能从眼角看到她面色惨白、呼吸困难的样子。即便身处恐惧，他的身体也仿佛能体会到她的疼痛，但就算最致命的疼痛也比不上让她恢复呼吸这般紧要。他清楚这种感觉，这可怕的、令人提心吊胆的疼痛一直在那儿却又没法克服，因为呼吸才是最为重要的事。两个男人将朱莉亚抬了起来，他们拉着她的肩膀和膝盖，像抬麻袋似的将她抬出了屋。温斯顿瞥到她的脸，她的脸向上仰起，脸色发黄，她的五官扭曲着，双目紧闭，她的面颊上仍能看出腮红的痕迹。这就是他看到她的最后一眼。

他像死人般站在那里，还没有遭到殴打，他的脑海中自动浮现出好几种想法，但都毫无意义。他想知道他们是否抓住了查林顿先生，想知

道他们会怎样处理院子里的那个女人。他有点吃惊，自己竟很想撒尿，而就在两三个小时前，他才刚刚尿过。他注意到壁炉上的座钟指到了9点，即21点。可光线好像太强了些，难道8月的晚上，到了21点，天还不会黑吗？他怀疑他和朱莉亚把时间搞错了——他们睡了十二个小时，他们以为是20点30分，实际却是第二天早上8点30分。他没有再想下去，这没意义。

一阵较轻的脚步声从走廊里传来，查林顿先生走进屋子。穿黑制服的人突然变得恭顺起来。查林顿先生的样子发生了一些改变。他看了看玻璃镇纸的碎片。

“把碎片捡起来。”他厉声说。

一个男人按照他的命令弯下腰。查林顿先生的方言腔消失了，温斯顿突然意识到几分钟前他听到的电屏上的声音来自于谁。查林顿先生仍旧穿着那件旧天鹅绒夹克，但他近乎全白的头发现在却变成了黑色。他不再戴着眼镜，他目光凌厉地看了温斯顿一眼，似乎在确认他的身份，然后便不再注意他。温斯顿仍然认得他的样子，但他已是另一个人。他的身体伸直了，看起来变大了，脸的变化很微小，却令他完全改头换面，他的眉毛变少了，皱纹没了，整个脸的轮廓都不一样了，甚至鼻子也好像变短了。这是一张大约三十五岁的男人的脸，机警，冷酷。它让温斯顿意识到，这是他有生以来第一次在已知的情况下，看到一个思想警察。

十九

他不知道自己身在哪里，也许在仁爱部，但他没法确定。他待在有着高高天花板却没有窗户的牢房里，牢房的墙壁贴满了白色的瓷砖，隐蔽式电灯发出的冷光充满了整个房间。屋子里有一种微小的、没完没了的嗡嗡声，他猜可能和空气供给装置有关。沿墙安有板凳，或者说是木架，其宽度只够人将将坐下，板凳很长，只有门那里没有。而门的对面有一个没有坐圈的马桶。牢房有四个电屏，分别安装在四面墙上。

他的腹部隐隐作痛。自从他们将他扔进一辆封闭的货车带走以后，它就一直在疼。但同时他也很饿，是那种痛苦的、不健康的饥饿。他大概有24小时没吃东西了，也可能是36小时。他还是搞不清，他们究竟是在早上抓住的他，还是晚上，或许他永远无法弄清了。被捕后他就没吃过东西。他尽可能地静静地坐在长凳上，双手交叉放在膝上，他已学会一动不动地坐着。若他乱动，他们就会从电屏里向他大吼。但对食物的渴望愈发强烈，他很想吃上一片面包。他依稀记得在他制服的口袋里还有一点儿面包屑，可能还是很大的一块。有个东西不时就会碰到他的腿，让他觉得，口袋里也许还装着一块相当大的面包。最后，想一探究竟的心情战胜了恐惧，他悄悄地将手伸向口袋。

“史密斯！”电屏里的声音喊道，“6079号史密斯！在牢房里把手放在口袋外！”

他又一动不动地坐着，双手交叉放在膝上。在被带到这里之前，他曾被送去另一个地方，那里要么是普通监狱，要么是巡逻队的临时拘留所。他不知道在那里待了多长时间，怎么也有几个小时。那里没有钟没有阳光，要确定时间十分困难。那是个吵闹的，气味恶心的地方。他们

将他关进和现在这牢房差不多的牢房里，但那里脏得要命，总是关着十或十五个人。那些人大部分都是普通罪犯，其中只有少数几个政治犯。他沉默地靠墙而坐，被脏兮兮的人夹着。尽管他的心被恐惧和腹部的疼痛占据，以至于他并不关心周围的环境。但他仍然吃惊地发现党员囚犯和其他囚犯在举止上区别明显。党员囚犯总是一声不响，战战兢兢，普通囚犯好像对什么都无所谓。他们吼叫着辱骂看守，在财物被没收时拼命反抗。他们在地板上写下下流的单词，把食物藏在衣服里偷运进牢房吃掉，甚至在电屏试图维持秩序时，依然大声喧哗。另一方面，他们中的一些又似乎和看守关系很好，他们叫看守的绰号，从门上的监视孔往外塞香烟。相比之下，看守对普通囚犯也更加宽容，即使他们不得不粗暴地管理他们。由于大部分囚犯都要被送往劳改营，牢房里有很多这方面的讨论。按照温斯顿的推断，只要你知道规矩，搞好关系，劳改营也还不错。行贿、走后门、敲诈、同性恋、卖淫以及用土豆酿制非法的酒精饮品，那里都有。而在劳改营，只有普通罪犯能够得到信任，尤其是帮派分子和杀人犯，他们是监狱里的特权阶层。所有脏活儿都由政治犯包揽。

各种各样的犯人在监狱里来来往往：毒贩、小偷、强盗、黑市商贩、酒鬼、妓女。有些酒鬼是如此凶猛，其他犯人要联合起来才能将其制服。一个身材庞大的六十岁左右的女人被四个看守抓着四肢抬了进来。她硕大的乳房在胸前晃动，她盘起的浓密的白发因为挣扎而散落下来，她一边乱踢乱踹，一边大声喊叫。他们脱下她的靴子，将她扔到温斯顿的身上，几乎将后者的大腿骨压坏。女人坐起身，冲着看守的背影叫骂：“操，杂种！”之后，她注意到自己坐得不平，便从温斯顿的膝盖上滑下来，坐到长凳上。

“很抱歉，亲爱的，”她说。“若不是这些下贱东西推我，我是不会

坐在你身上的。他们不懂要如何对待女士。”她停下来，拍了拍胸口，打了个嗝。“抱歉，我不大舒服。”

她的身子向前倾去，她吐了，在地板上吐了好大一摊。

“好多了，”她边说边向后靠去，闭上了眼睛。“我的意思是，别忍着，趁你的胃还没开始消化，吐出来。”

她恢复过来，转过头看了看温斯顿，似乎立刻喜欢上了他，她用粗壮的手臂搂住温斯顿的肩膀，将他拉向自己，一股啤酒味和呕吐的气味扑到了温斯顿的脸上。

“你叫什么？亲爱的。”她问。

“史密斯。”温斯顿说。

“史密斯？”女人说，“这真有趣，我也叫史密斯。为什么会这样？”她的声音里多了几分感情，“也许，我是你的母亲！”

他想，她真有可能是他的母亲。她的年龄和体型都与他的母亲相符，人在劳动营里呆上二十年，外表很可能会发生变化。

再没有囚犯和他讲话。令人奇怪的是，普通囚犯对党员囚犯视若无睹。前者称呼后者为“党奴”，多少带着轻蔑。党员囚犯好像很怕和别人说话，特别害怕和人交流。只有一次，两个坐在长凳上的女党员被挤到了一起，他在一片嘈杂声中听到她们匆匆的交谈。她们的声音很轻，她们特别提到了“101号房”，温斯顿不明白这是什么意思。

大约两三个钟头前，他们将他带到这里。腹部的隐痛从未消退，时轻时重，他的思绪也随着这痛楚时而轻松，时而紧张。疼痛严重时，他

只想着疼痛本身，只为饥饿难过。疼痛减轻时，恐惧便充斥他的内心。每当他想到将要发生在自己身上的事，就仿佛身临其境，心跳厉害，呼吸困难。他感觉警棍打到他的手肘，钉着铁掌的皮靴踢到他的腿。他看到自己在地板上爬行，牙齿被打掉，尖叫着求饶。他几乎没想到朱莉亚。他不能将思绪集中在她身上。他爱她，不会背叛她，但这仅仅是一个事实，一件和他所知的数学规律一样的事实。他感觉不到对她的爱，也没想过她究竟会怎样。但他倒常常抱着一线希望想起奥布兰。奥布兰可能已经知道他被捕了。他说过兄弟会从来不会营救它的成员。但是他们有刮胡刀片，如果他们能将刀片送进来的话。在看守冲进牢房前，只要五秒就够了。刀片将带着灼热的冰冷感切入他的身体，拿着它的手指也会被割出骨头。所有感觉都重新回到他这病恹恹的身体上，哪怕是最轻微的疼痛也会让他蜷缩着身体抖个不停。即便有机会，他也不能确定他真的会用那个刀片。比这更理所当然的是活一天算一天，多活十分钟也好，哪怕最终将遭到毒打。

有时他试着去数墙上的瓷砖。这应该不难，但他总是忘记自己数了多少。而他更常思考的是他究竟身在何处，此时是什么时间。有次，他可以肯定外面是白天，但很快，他又觉得外面一定漆黑一片。在这里，直觉让他知道灯光永不熄灭。这个地方没有黑暗，现在他才明白为什么奥布兰看起来对这一隐喻心领神会。仁爱部没有窗户。他的牢房可能在大楼的中心，也可能对着外墙，可能在地下十层，也可能在地上三十层。他任思绪从一个地方转移到另一个地方，并尝试着根据身体的感觉确定自己是身处高空还是身处地下。

牢房外响起一阵皮靴走动的声音。铁制的大门打开了。一个年轻的官员敏捷地走了进来，他身着黑色的制服，整个人像擦亮的皮革一般光彩照人，他那苍白又线条分明的脸孔宛若蜡制的面具。他示意门外的看

守将犯人带进来。诗人安普福斯跌跌撞撞地走进牢房。之后，门又哐啷一声关上了。

安普福斯有些迟疑地挪动了一下，似乎觉得还有道门要进，然后他开始在牢房里踱起步来。他还没发现温斯顿的存在。他目光忧郁地盯着温斯顿头上一米处的墙。他没穿鞋，肮脏的脚趾从袜子的破洞处露出来。由于好几天都没刮胡子，胡楂儿布满他的脸颊，一直延伸到颧骨，赋予他一种凶狠的面貌。这面貌搭配上他那高大瘦弱的身体以及紧张兮兮的举止，让他看起来非常奇怪。

温斯顿很累，但还是稍稍振作下精神。他必须和安普福斯说上几句，哪怕冒着被电屏呵斥的危险，可以想象安普福斯就是送刀片的人。

“安普福斯。”他说。

电屏没有发出呵斥声。安普福斯停下脚步，有点吃惊。他慢慢地将目光聚焦到温斯顿身上。“啊，史密斯！”他说，“你也在这儿！”

“你怎么到这儿来了？”

“实话和你说——”他笨拙地在温斯顿对面的长凳上坐下来。“这儿只有一种罪名，不是吗？”

“你犯了这罪吗？”

“显然，我犯了。”

他将一只手放在额头，压了会儿太阳穴，好像在努力尝试记起什么。

“这事的确会发生，”他含糊地说。“我想起一个例子——一个可能发生的例子。不用怀疑，那就是粗心大意。我们正在出版吉卜林诗集的最终版本。我保留了其中一句诗的最后一个单词‘上帝’（god），我也没办法！”他抬起脸看着温斯顿，愤怒地补充道。“这行诗不可能改。它的韵脚是‘棍子’（rod），你知道所有词汇里只有十二个词符合这个韵脚。我绞尽脑汁想了好几天，想不出其他的词。”

他的表情发生了变化，恼怒的神情消失了，有那么一会儿他几乎是愉快的。他短而脏的毛发上闪烁着智慧的光芒，闪烁着书呆子发现没用的事实后的喜悦。

“你想过吗，”他说，“整个英国诗歌史都是由英语韵脚的稀少决定的？”

不，温斯顿从没想过这个问题。在这种情况下，他不觉得这个问题有多重要多有趣。

“你知道现在是什么时候吗？”他问。

安普福斯又吃了一惊。“这我倒没怎么想过，他们大约在两天前，也可能是三天前逮捕了我。”他的眼睛在墙上扫来扫去，似乎想在上面找到窗户。“这里的白天与黑夜没什么区别。我不认为有人能算出时间。”

他们东拉西扯地聊了几分钟，接着，电屏毫无预兆地发出呵斥，禁止他们讲话。温斯顿安静地坐着，双手交叉。安普福斯身材高大，在狭窄的长凳上坐得很不舒服，他焦躁地挪动着，瘦骨嶙峋的双手一会儿握在这个膝盖上，一会儿又握在另一个膝盖上。电屏冲着他大吼，让他待着别动。时间就这样过去了。二十分钟，一个小时——很难判断过了多

久，外面又响起皮靴的声音，温斯顿的心缩了起来。快了，就快了，也许五分钟，也许就是现在。皮靴的踩踏声意味着就要轮到他了。

门开了，那个表情冷酷的年轻官员走进牢房。他指着安普福斯做了个简洁的手势。

“101号房。”他说。

安普福斯被看守架着，踉踉跄跄地走了出去，脸上隐约有不安的神情，让人捉摸不透。

似乎过了很久。温斯顿的腹部又疼了起来。他精神萎靡，他的思绪在同一条思路上来来回回，就好像一个球一而再地落在同一个凹槽里。他能想到的只有6件事：肚子疼、一片面包、鲜血和尖叫、奥布兰、朱莉亚、刀片。他的内脏又抽搐起来，沉重的皮靴声越来越近。门打开时，一股浓烈的汗臭钻了进来。帕森斯走进牢房，他穿着卡其布短裤和运动衫。

这次，温斯顿惊讶得忘记了自己的存在。

“你怎么在这里！”他说。

帕森斯漠然地看了温斯顿一眼，一点不惊讶，眼神里只有痛苦。他不安地走来走去，停不下来。每当他伸直短粗的腿，膝盖那里就会哆嗦。他的眼睛张得大大的，凝视着什么，就好像不能不注视不远的前方。

“你因为什么进来的？”温斯顿说。

“思想罪！”帕森斯说，几乎是在抽泣。他说话的腔调表明他已经完

全承认了自己的罪行，但他又很震惊，不敢相信这个词居然会用在自己身上。他面冲温斯顿，停下脚步，急切地对他说：“你不认为他们会枪毙我吧，是吗，老兄？他们不会枪毙你的，只要你实际上什么事都没做，除了想一想，这你可控制不了，不是吗？我知道他们会给你一个公正的申诉机会。噢，我相信他们会这么做！他们了解我的表现，不是吗？你知道我的为人，我人不坏。没脑子是真，但我很热情。我努力为党做到最好，难道不是吗？我会被关上五年，你觉得呢？还是说十年？我这种人在劳改营很有用。他们不会因为我的一次过失就枪毙我吧？”

“你有罪吗？”温斯顿问。

“当然，我有罪！”帕森斯边哭边卑微地看了看电屏，“你不会以为党会逮捕无辜的人吧，对不对？”他青蛙一般的脸平静了一些，甚至还有几分神圣。“思想罪是可怕的，老兄，”他简洁地说，“它很阴险。它会在你不知道的情况下控制你。你知道它是怎样控制我的吗？在我睡觉的时候！没错，事实就是这样。我是这种人，努力工作，做什么事都尽自己的本分——从来都不知道自己的思想里有什么坏东西。后来我开始说梦话。你知道他们听到我说了什么吗？”

他压低声音，就像某些人出于医学方面的考虑而被迫说脏话一样。

“‘打倒老大哥！’是的，我是这么说的，似乎说了一遍又一遍。老兄，这话只有咱们两人知道，我很庆幸，他们在我得寸进尺之前抓住了我。你知道到了法庭上我会对他们说些什么吗？我要说‘谢谢你们，谢谢你们及时拯救了我。’”

“是谁揭发的你？”温斯顿问。

“我的小女儿，”帕森斯带着一种又伤心又自豪的神情说。“她从锁

孔里偷听到的。她听到我说了什么，第二天就向巡逻队告发了我。对一个七岁的孩子来说，她可真聪明，是不是？我一点儿也不怨她，事实上，我为她骄傲，不管怎样，这说明我用正确的思想教育了她。”

他又愚蠢地走来走去，他渴望地看了马桶好几眼，然后，他突然拉下裤子。

“不好意思，老兄，”他说，“我憋不住了，憋了好久了。”

他的大屁股猛地一下坐到了马桶上。温斯顿用手遮住了脸。

“史密斯！”电屏里传来吼叫声，“6079号史密斯！把脸露出来，牢房里不许遮脸。”

温斯顿把手挪开。帕森斯大声地、痛痛快快地用了马桶。然后才发现抽水装置不能用。牢房里令人恶心的臭气一连几个小时都挥之不去。

帕森斯被带走了，犯人们来来往往，非常神秘。一次，一个女犯人要被送往101号房。温斯顿注意到，她一听到这个词脸色就变了，人也缩了起来。当时——如果他是上午进来的，这件事就发生在下午；如果他是下午进来的，那就发生在半夜——牢房里有六个人，有男有女，所有人都一动不动地坐着。在温斯顿对面的，是一个没有下巴、牙齿外露的男人，长得很像一只巨大的无害的啮齿动物。他肥胖的双颊长满斑点，像袋子那样垂下来，那样子让人觉得他有在里面藏了吃的东西。他浅灰色的眼睛怯生生地扫视着别人，每当和人目光相交，他就会立刻将视线挪开。

门开了，又有犯人带进来，他的样子让温斯顿心下一寒。他的样子很普通，有些猥琐，他可能是个工程师，也可能是某种技师。但他的

脸却令人吃惊地消瘦，就像一个骷髅。由于消瘦，他的眼睛和嘴大得不成比例，且他的眼睛里还充满杀气，一种对某人或某物无法遏止的憎恨。

那人在温斯顿的附近坐了下来。温斯顿没再去看他，但在他的脑海中，那宛若骷髅的痛苦的脸却异常生动，似乎就摆在他眼前。他突然意识到这是怎么一回事。这个男人就要饿死了。牢房里的人几乎在同一时刻想到了这件事。长凳上出现一阵轻微的骚动。那个没有下巴的人一直在打量这个骷髅般的男人，他有些愧疚地移开目光，可之后他的目光又会被无法抗拒的吸引力拉回来。他开始坐不住了，终于他站起身，蹒跚地穿过牢房，他将一只手伸进制服的口袋，有些不好意思地拿出一片脏兮兮的面包，把它递给骷髅脸的人。

一个愤怒的、震耳欲聋的声音从电屏中传来，把没有下巴的人吓了一跳。骷髅脸的人立即将手背到身后，似乎向全世界证明他拒绝了这份礼物。

“巴姆斯蒂德！”电屏吼道，“2713号巴姆斯蒂德！把面包扔地上！”

没下巴的人将那片面包放到了地上。

“站那儿别动，”那声音说，“面朝门，不许动！”

没下巴的人照做了。他又大又鼓的双颊不受控制地颤抖起来。咣当一声，门开了。年轻的官员走进来站到一边，从他身后闪过一个矮胖的、有着粗壮臂膀的看守。他站在没下巴的人的对面，然后在官员的示意下，用尽全身力气，狠狠地在没有下巴的人的嘴上打了一拳，力量大到让后者飞了起来。没下巴的人倒在了牢房的另一边，马桶的底座截住了他。有那么一阵，他躺在那里昏了过去，嘴巴和鼻子都流出深色的

血。他不自觉地发出微弱地啜泣声，或者说是呻吟声。之后，他翻转过来，摇摇晃晃地用手和膝盖撑起身体，混着血和口水，吐出一副被打成两半的假牙。

犯人们仍一动不动地坐着，双手交叉放在膝上。没有下巴的人爬回原来的位置，他一边脸的下半部分开始发青。嘴巴也肿得失去了形状，变成一团樱桃色的中间有黑洞的东西。

不时有血滴到他胸前的制服上。他灰色的眼睛仍在打量别人的脸，目光比之前更加惊惶，就好像要弄明白因为这丢脸的行为其他人到底有多么瞧不起他。

门开了。那个官员向骷髅脸的人做了个不大的手势。

“101号房。”他说。

温斯顿的身边有人吸了口气，一阵不安。那个男人猛地跪倒在地板上，双手紧紧地握在一起。

“同志！长官！”他哭喊着，“别送我去那儿了！我已经将一切都告诉你们了，不是吗？你们还想知道什么？我都招了，什么都招了！只要告诉我你们想知道什么，我就把一切都告诉你们。把它们写下来，我会签字的——做什么都行！除了101号房！”

“101号房。”那个官员说。

此时，男人原本十分苍白的脸变成了温斯顿不敢相信的绿色，这点毫无疑问。

“对我做什么都行！”他大叫，“你们饿了我几个星期了。就饿死我

吧。枪毙我、吊死我、关我个二十五年。还需要我出卖谁吗？只要说出他是谁，我就把你们想知道的统统说出来。我不关心他是谁，也随便你们怎样对付他。我有妻子和三个孩子，最大的还不到六岁。你们可以把他们都带来，当着我的面割断他们的喉咙，我就站在这儿看。但是，千万别带我去101号房间！”

“101号房！”官员说。

那人疯子一般地扫视了其他的犯人，就好像要让什么人作他的替死鬼。他将目光停留在没有下巴的人那张被打成重伤的脸上。突然，他举起了瘦巴巴的手。

“应该带这个人走，不是我！”他大喊，“你们没听见他被打后说了什么。给我个机会吧，他说的每个字我都会告诉你们。反党的是他，不是我。”见看守向前迈了一步，那人尖叫起来。“你们没听见他说的话！”他重复道，“电屏出毛病了。他才是你们想要的人，带他走，不是我！”

两个身材健硕的看守弯下腰，抓住他的手臂。但就在这时，他扑倒在牢房的地板上，抓住靠墙而设的长凳的铁腿，像野兽那样号叫起来。看守揪扯着他的身子，想把他拽开。但他死死地抓着，力气大得惊人。大约有二十秒，他们一直在拉他。其他犯人都安静地坐着，双手交叉放于膝上，直视前方。号叫停止了，男人憋住呼吸，除了抓住板凳腿，他已没有力气做别的事。接着，他发出和之前截然不同的哭声。有个警卫用皮靴踢断了他的手指，他们将他拖了起来。

“101号房。”官员说。

男人被带走了，他低垂着头，步履蹒跚，护着那只被踢伤的手，不

再做任何抵抗。

很长时间过去了。若这形如骷髅的男子是在午夜时分被带走，那么现在便是早上。若他在早上被带走，现在就是下午。温斯顿已经有好几个小时都独自一人待在那里。狭窄的板凳硌得他很疼，他不时就要站起来走上一会儿，电屏倒没有因为这个呵斥他。那片面包仍然留在没下巴的人丢下它的地方。起初，他很难不去看它，但没过多久，饥饿就被干渴取代。他的嘴巴黏糊糊的，散发着臭味。嗡嗡的声响和单调的白色灯光让他感到几分眩晕，脑袋也变得空洞。由于无法忍受刻骨的疼痛，他想站起身，然而紧接着他又不得不坐下，他的头太晕了，以至于他无法立住脚跟。每当他稍稍控制住身体的感觉，恐惧之感就会卷土重来。有时，他有些侥幸地想着奥布兰的刀片。如果提供他吃的东西，可以想象它就藏在他的食物里。他昏昏沉沉地想起朱莉亚，也许她正在某个地方承受比他还要剧烈的痛苦。此时此刻，她很有可能疼得高声尖叫。他想：“若把我的痛苦增加一倍就可以解救朱莉亚，我会愿意吗？会的，我会。”但这仅仅是理智上的决定，因为他知道他应该这么做。而感觉上，他不想如此。在这里，除了疼痛，你别无他感。此外，当你实实在在地承受疼痛，不管原因如何，你有可能真心希望疼痛再增加一些吗？他还无法回答这个问题。

皮靴的声音又一次由远及近。门开了，奥布兰走了进来。

温斯顿跳了起来，震惊得将所有戒备都抛至脑后。这是许多年来，他第一次忘记电屏的存在。

“他们也抓到你了！”他叫道。

“他们很久以前就抓到我了。”奥布兰平静又多少有些遗憾地讽刺

道。他向旁边一闪，从他身后冒出一个胸部硕大、拎着黑色长棍的看守。

“你明白的，温斯顿，”奥布兰说。“不要再欺骗自己了。你明白的，你一直都明白。”

没错，现在他懂了，他一直都懂。但他没有时间考虑这些，他的眼里只有看守的警棍。它可能落在任何地方：他的头顶、他的耳朵尖、他胳膊的上端、他的肘关节——

是手肘！他猛地跪了下去，几乎瘫痪，用另一只手抱住了挨打的手肘。周围的一切都炸成了黄色的光。不可思议，简直不可思议，不过打了一下就疼成这样！视线逐渐清晰，他能看见还有两个人正俯视着他。看守嘲笑着他扭曲的身体。至少有一个问题有了答案。不管有怎样的理由，你都不会希望疼痛加剧。对疼痛，你只有一个念头：让它停止。世界上没有比肉体的疼痛更糟糕的事了。疼痛面前无英雄，无英雄。他一边反复想着，一边徒劳地抱着被打伤的左臂，在地板上翻滚。

二十

他躺在类似行军床又比行军床高一些的东西上，身体被绑住，动弹不得。光照着他的脸，比平时的要强烈一些。奥布兰站在他的一边，正低着头专注地看着他。他的另一边则站着一个穿着白大褂、拿着注射器的男人。

他睁开眼睛，逐渐看清周围的环境。他觉得自己好像是从一个完全不同的、深邃的海底世界里游进了这个房间。他不知道自己在这儿待了多久。从他们抓住他算起，他就没见过白天和黑夜。他的记忆断断续续，他的意识——有时死一般地停住，即便是在睡眠中也是如此，要经过一段空白时期才重新恢复。但这究竟需要几天、几星期，还是几秒，他就无从得知了。

自手肘遭到第一下重击后，他的噩梦就开始了。后来，他才明白当时发生的所有事情都仅仅是个前奏，是几乎所有囚犯都会经历的例行公事般的审讯。每个人都理所当然地要承认诸如间谍、破坏等范围甚广的罪行。招供无非是个形式，拷打却是实实在在的。他已经记不清被打了多少次、每次有多久。总会有五六个身穿黑色制服的男人同时殴打他，有时用拳头，有时用警棍，有时用钢条，有时用皮靴。有那么几次，他被打得满地翻滚，活像寡廉鲜耻的牲畜，他扭动着身体，试图躲开拳打脚踢，但没有用，相反还会招致更多的踢打。他们踢在他的肋骨上、肚子上、关节上、腰上、腿上、腹沟上、睾丸上、尾椎上。很多时候，他觉得最残酷、最邪恶、最不可原谅的，不是看守们没完没了的殴打，而是他居然无法令自己丧失意识。有时，他紧张到在遭到殴打前就大喊大叫地请求饶恕，单单是拳头后扬准备出击的动作就足够让他供出一堆或真或假的罪行。有时，他决定什么都不招，只在疼得吸气的时候被迫说

出只言片语。还有时，他想软弱地妥协，对自己说：“我会招供，但不是现在。我必须坚持到疼得无法忍受的时候。再踢上三脚，再踢上两脚，然后我再说他们想听的话。”有几次，他被打得站立不稳，像一袋土豆那样被扔到牢房的石头地板上，休息了几个小时，就又被带出去拷打。也有几次时间间隔得挺长，但他记忆模糊，因为他不是在睡梦中就是在昏迷中。他记得某间牢房里有一张木板床，一个安在墙上的架子和一个洗脸盆，他记得饭里有热汤和面包，偶尔还有咖啡。他记得有个粗声粗气的理发师给他刮了胡子，剪了头发，一些态度冷漠的、没有同情心的白衣人测试了他的脉搏、检查了他的反应、翻看了他的眼皮，用粗糙的手指在他身上摸来摸去查看他是否有骨折，还在他的胳膊上打了帮助他入睡的针。

拷打没有那么频繁了，它变成了一种威胁，一种只要他不能给出满意答案便随时会遭到殴打的恐惧。现在，审问他的已不再是身穿黑色制服的恶棍，而是党的知识分子，一群行动敏捷、戴着眼镜的矮胖子。他们隔一段时间换一次班——他想，他不能确定——有一班竟持续了十或十二个小时。这群拷问者不时便让他吃一些小苦头，但他们的目的并不是制造疼痛。他们抽打他的脸，拧他的耳朵，揪扯他的头发，让他用一条腿站着，不让他小便。他们用刺眼的光照射他的脸，直到他流出眼泪。但这不过是让他感到屈辱，摧毁他争辩、讲理的能力。他们真正的武器是一个小时接一个小时、毫不停歇地向他提问，让他说错话，让他堕入陷阱，歪曲他讲的每件事，证明他所讲的都是自相矛盾的谎言，直到他因为羞愧和精神疲惫失声痛哭。有时，一次审问他就要哭上六次。大多时候，他们都扯着喉咙辱骂他，只要他稍有迟疑，就威胁将他重新交给看守。但有时，他们也会突然改变腔调，称呼他“同志”，以英社和老大哥的名义祈求他，悲悲戚戚地问他是不是对党足够忠诚，想不想刷清自己的罪恶。在经过几个小时的审问后，他的精神已濒临崩溃，即便

是这样的祈求也能让他哭哭啼啼。最终，这些啰啰嗦嗦地问话比看守的拳脚更能将他彻底击垮。他成了简简单单一张嘴，要他说什么他就说什么，他成了简简单单一只手，让他签什么他就签什么。他只想知道他们究竟想让他供认什么，然后他就可以赶在恐吓到来之前，快速地供认出来。他承认他暗杀了党的杰出成员，他承认他散发了煽动性的小册子，他承认侵吞公款、出卖军事机密以及进行各式各样的破坏活动，还承认早在1968年，他就做了东亚国的间谍。他坦陈自己信仰宗教、杀害妻子——尽管他和审问他的人都明白，他的妻子还活着。他说他和高德斯坦因的私人往来以持续了很多年，他说自己是地下组织的成员，并说该组织吸纳了几乎所有他认识的人。坦白所有事情，连累所有的人，这些都相对容易。再说，从某种角度看，这的确是事实。他是党的敌人，在党眼中，思想上的敌人和行为上的没有差别。

他还有另外一种记忆，这些记忆断断续续地出现在他的脑海中，就像一幅幅被黑暗包围的图片。

他被关在一间牢房里，不知那里是开着灯，还是关着灯，因为除了一双眼睛，他什么都看不见。在他的手边，有一个滴答作响的、慢却准确的仪器。那双眼睛越来越大，越来越亮。突然，他从座位上飞了起来，坠到了眼睛里，被眼睛吞没。

他被绑在一张椅子上，椅子的周围布满了刻度盘。灯亮得刺眼，一个白衣男子看着刻度盘。门外响起了沉重的脚步声。门开了，那个长着蜡像脸的官员走了进来，身后还跟着两个看守。

“101号房。”官员说。

白衣服的人既没有转身，也没有看温斯顿，只一心盯着刻度盘。温

斯顿被推进一条足有一公里宽的、巨大的走廊，走廊里充满了灿烂金色光芒，他笑着，喊着，用最大的声音招了供。他什么都招，甚至把严刑之下都坚持不说的话都说出来了。他将他的整个人生都告诉给这些早就知晓一切的听众。看守、其他审讯人员、穿白衣服的人、朱莉亚、查林顿先生，都和他在一起，都在走廊里大声地喊叫着、笑着。一些潜藏于未来的可怕之事被跳了过去，未能发生。每件事都很顺利，痛苦不再，他生命中的所有细枝末节都赤裸裸地呈现出来，得到了理解和宽恕。

他从木板床起来，恍惚听到奥布兰的声音。虽然在整个审讯过程中，他都没有看到奥布兰，但他有种感觉，觉得奥布兰就在他的身边，只是看不见罢了。奥布兰正是指挥这些事情的人。他命令看守打他，又不让他们将他打死。是他，决定温斯顿什么时候应该疼得尖叫，什么时候需要恢复，是他，决定什么时候让他吃饭，什么时候让他睡觉，什么时候把药物注射到他的身体里。是他，提出问题并暗示答案。他是折磨者、是保护者、是审讯者，他也是朋友。一次——温斯顿想不起来是在药物的作用下睡去的，还是自然睡着的，也有可能根本就没有睡着——有人在他耳旁低语：“别怕，温斯顿；你正在我的照看下。我观察了你整整七年。现在到了转折点了。我要拯救你，我要让你变得完美。”他不能确定这是不是奥布兰的声音，但这和七年之前的那个梦里，对他说“我们将在没有黑暗的地方相见”的声音是一样的。

他一点都不记得审讯是怎样结束的。在经历了一段时间的黑暗后，他来到现在所在的牢房，或者说“房间”，他慢慢地看清了周围的景物。他一直仰面平躺着，不能移动。他身体的每个重要部位都被绑住了，甚至后脑勺都被什么东西紧紧地固定住。奥布兰严肃又忧伤地俯视着他。从下面看他的脸，会发现他皮肤粗糙，神情憔悴，他的眼睛下有眼袋，

因为疲惫从鼻子到下巴都长着皱纹。他比温斯顿想的要老，大概有四十八或五十岁。在他的手下，有一个带着控制杆的刻度盘，盘面上有一圈数字。

“我和你说过，”奥布兰说，“假如我们会再次相见，就是在这里。”

“是的。”温斯顿说。

奥布兰的手没有任何预兆地轻轻地动了一下，疼痛充斥了温斯顿的身体。这是一种令人感到恐惧的疼痛，因为他看不见到底发生了什么，只觉得自己受到了致命的伤害。他不知道伤害是真的造成了，还是电流造成的痛苦。他的身体扭曲得变了形，关节也被缓慢地扯开。疼痛让他的额头渗出汗珠，最糟糕的是，他担心自己的脊椎骨会断掉。他咬紧牙齿，艰难地用鼻子呼吸，尽可能地保持沉默。

“你怕了，”奥布兰说，他看着他的脸，“再过一会儿就会有东西断掉了。你特别害怕它发生在你的脊梁骨上。你可以很生动地想象你的脊椎爆裂，脊髓流淌。你是这样想的，不是吗？温斯顿？”

温斯顿没有回答。奥布兰把控制盘上的杆子拉了回来。疼痛很快便消失了，几乎和它来时一样快。

“只有40，”奥布兰说。“你能看见控制盘的数字最高是100。希望你整个谈话过程中都记得这点，任何时候，我都有能力折磨你，想让你多疼就让你多疼。如果你对我说谎，或者试图以任何方式搪塞我，又或者你的表现低于你平时的智力水平，你都会马上疼得叫出声来，你明白我的意思吗？”

“明白。”温斯顿说。

奥布兰的态度不再那么严厉。他一边思考着什么，一边正了正眼镜，来回走了一两步。再开口时，他的声音变得温和而有耐心。他表现出一种医生、教师甚至是牧师的气质，只想解释说服，不想惩罚。

“我真为你发愁，温斯顿，”他说，“因为你值得。你非常清楚你的问题在哪儿。很多年前你就知道了，但你不肯承认。你精神错乱，记忆方面有缺陷。你记不住真正发生的事，却说服自己记住没发生的事。幸运的是，这是可以治疗的，可你从来没想过将自己治好，因为你不愿意。只要在意志上稍微做些努力就可以，但你偏偏不准备这么做。即使是现在，我也清楚，你仍然坚持着这个毛病，还把它当成一种美德。现在，让我们举个例子吧。此刻，大洋国正在和哪个国家打仗？”

“我被抓的时候，大洋国在和东亚国交战。”

“东亚国，好的。大洋国一直在和东亚国打仗，是不是？”

温斯顿吸了一口气，他张开嘴巴想说点什么，但他什么都没说。他无法将目光从刻度盘上挪开。

“请说实话，温斯顿。你要说实话，告诉我，你觉得你记得什么？”

“我记得就在我被抓的一个星期前，我们还没有和东亚国交战。我们和他们结盟，在和欧亚国打仗。战争进行了四年。在这之前——”

奥布兰挥挥手，让他停下。

“再说个例子，”他说，“几年前，你的确产生过一个非常严重的幻觉。你认为有三个人，三个曾经的党员：琼斯、阿朗森和鲁瑟夫在彻底地坦白完罪行后以叛国和破坏罪被处死——你觉得他们并没有犯那些指控给他们的罪。你认为你看到了确凿无疑的证据，证明他们供认的东西

纯属捏造。你产生了一种幻觉，认为真的存在那么一张照片，还认为自己真的亲手摸到过它。就是这样的照片。”

奥布兰用手指夹起一张剪报。在温斯顿的视线中，它大约出现了五秒。那是一张照片，不用怀疑，就是那张照片，另一个版本的琼斯、阿朗森和鲁瑟夫出席纽约党大会的照片。他在十一年前碰巧看到过，还立即将它销毁。它在他眼前只出现了那么一瞬，紧接着就消失了。但他毕竟看到了它，没错，他看到了它！他努力忍受痛苦，不顾一切地扭动着，想让上半身挣脱开来。而不管往哪个方向动，他都不可能挪动一厘米。此刻，他几乎忘记了刻度盘。他只想再一次地抓住那张照片，至少再看上一眼。

“它存在！”他喊。

“不！”奥布兰说。

他穿过屋子，记忆洞就在对面的墙上。奥布兰将洞盖打开，不等温斯顿看到，那张薄纸就被一股温暖的气流卷走，被火焰烧尽。奥布兰从墙的那边转过身来。

“变成灰了，”他说，“甚至不是那种能够辨认出来的灰。它是尘埃，它不存在，它从来就没存在过。”

“但它存在过！它存在的！它存在在记忆里。我记得它，你记得它。”

“我不记得它。”奥布兰说。

温斯顿的心沉了下去。那是双重思想。他感到死一般的无助。如果他能确定奥布兰在说谎，那它也许就不重要了。但很有可能，奥布兰真

的把这张照片忘得一干二净。若是这样，那他也已经忘掉他曾否认他记得这张照片，进而忘记“忘记”这一行为。如此，你要怎样确定它只是个骗人的把戏呢？也许，他的精神真的出现了疯狂的错乱。他被这种想法击溃了。

奥布兰低下头看他，沉思着。和之前相比，他更像教师了，好像正辛苦地教授一个身在歧途又仍有希望的孩子。

“党有一句关于用控制的方法对待过去的口号，”他说，“如果可以，请重复一遍。”

“谁控制了过去，谁就控制了未来；谁控制了现在，谁就控制了过去，”温斯顿顺从地重复道。“谁控制了现在，谁就控制了过去，”奥布兰说，他点了点头表示赞许。“这是你的观点吗？温斯顿，过去真的存在吗？”

突然，温斯顿又一次有了无助的感觉。他快速地看了眼刻度盘，他不仅不知道要怎样回答才能使自己避免遭受痛苦，是“是”还是“不是”，他甚至不知道自己会相信哪个答案。

奥布兰微微一笑：“你不是玄学家，温斯顿，”他说。“直到现在你都没想过‘存在’意味着什么。让我说得更准确些。过去是有形地存在于空间中吗？在某个或是什么别的由物质所组成的世界里，过去仍在进行着？”

“不。”

“那么过去究竟存在于哪里呢？”

“档案里。它被写了下来。”

“档案里，还有呢？”

“在意识里。在人的记忆里。”

“在记忆里。非常好。那么，我们，党，掌控着所有的档案，且控制着所有记忆。那么我们就控制了过去，对不对？”

“但是，你们怎么能让人不去记住那些事情呢？”温斯顿喊了起来，又一次忘记了刻度盘。“它不由自主，它不受控制。你们怎么能控制人的记忆呢？你就没能控制我的记忆！”

奥布兰的样子又严厉起来。他将手放在刻度盘上。

“刚好相反，”他说。“是你没能控制住记忆，这就是为什么要把你带到这儿来。你到这儿来是因为你不谦卑，不自律，你的行为没能服从于理智。你更愿意当一个疯子、一个少数派。只有受过训练的头脑才能看得清何为真实，温斯顿。你相信现实就是客观的、外在的、按它自己的方式存在的东西。你还相信现实的性质不言而喻。当你被这种想法迷惑时，你就会以为你看到什么，别人也和你一样看到什么。但是，我告诉你，温斯顿。现实不是外在的。现实存在于人的意识里，除此它不存在于其他任何地方。然而，它不是存在于某个个体的意识里，因为个体会犯错误，且无论如何都会很快消失。现实只存在于党的意识里，党的意识又是集体的，不朽的。党主张的真理，不管是什么，都是真理。如果不用党的眼睛来看，你就不可能看到现实。你必须重新学习，温斯顿，这就是事实。它需要你摧毁自我，这是一种意志上的努力。你必须先让自己卑微起来，然后才能成为理智的人。”

他稍停片刻，以便对方能充分理解他所说的话。

“你还记得吗？”他继续说道，“你在日记中写‘自由就是可以说二加二等于四的自由’？”

“记得。”温斯顿说。

奥布兰举起左手，用手背对着温斯顿，将大拇指藏起，其余四指伸出。

“我举起了几根手指，温斯顿？”

“四根。”

“如果党说不是四而是五呢？——那么又有几根？”

“四根。”

话音未落，他就疼得喘息起来。刻度盘上的指针一下子指到了55。温斯顿大汗淋漓。吸入肺里的空气在呼出来时变成低沉地呻吟，就算他咬紧牙齿也无法令呻吟停止。奥布兰看着他，仍旧伸着四根手指。他拉回控制杆，疼痛只减轻了一点点。

“几根手指，温斯顿？”

“四根。”

指针指到60。

“几根手指，温斯顿？”

“四根！四根！还能说什么？四根！”

指针肯定升上去了，但他没往那里看。他只看到沉重而严厉的面孔和四根手指，这四根手指像四根又大又模糊的柱子一样竖立在他眼前，它们似乎在颤抖，但毫无疑问，就是四根。

“几根手指，温斯顿？”

“四根！停下，停下！你怎么可以继续下去？四根！四根！”

“几根手指，温斯顿？”

“五根！五根！五根！”

“不，温斯顿，这没用。你在说谎，你仍然觉得是四根。请问，几根手指？”

“四根！四根！四根！随你的便。只要让它停下，别让我疼！”

靠着奥布兰环在他肩膀上的手臂，他猛地坐了起来。有那么几秒，他似乎失去了意识。绑住他身体的带子松掉了。他觉得很冷，不禁浑身颤抖，牙齿也发出咔嗒咔嗒的声音，他的脸上布满泪水。有那么一会儿，他像小孩子一样抱住奥布兰，而抱着他厚实的肩膀让他有种奇怪的舒适感。他觉得奥布兰是他的保护者，疼痛是外来的，来自于别人，只有奥布兰才能将他从疼痛中拯救出来。

“你学得很慢，温斯顿。”奥布兰温和地说。

“我能怎么做呢？”他哭嚎着，“我要怎样才能看不到眼前的东西？二加二就是等于四。”

“有时是这样，温斯顿。有时，它等于五，有时它等于三，还有时

三、四、五都对，你必须再努力一些。变理智可不容易。”

他把温斯顿放到床上，温斯顿的四肢又被带子绑紧，但疼痛已经消退，颤抖也已停止，只剩下虚弱和寒冷的感觉。奥布兰用头向一个穿白色衣服的人示意，整个过程那人都一动不动地站着。白衣服的人弯下身，仔细看了看温斯顿的眼睛，又感觉了下他的脉搏，听了听他的心跳。他敲敲这儿，弄弄那儿，然后冲奥布兰点了下头。

“继续。”奥布兰说。

疼痛占据了温斯顿的身体，指针一定指到了70、75。这次他闭上了眼睛，他知道手指仍在那里，仍是四根。最重要的就是活下来，直到疼痛结束。他不再关心自己是不是哭了出来。疼痛又减退了。他睁开眼睛。奥布兰拉回了控制杆。

“几根手指，温斯顿？”

“四根。我猜是四根，如果我能，我希望看到五根，我试图看到五根。”

“你希望什么？是想说服我你看到了五根，还是真的看到五根？”

“真的看到五根。”

“继续。”奥布兰说。

指针可能指到了80—90。温斯顿一直都记得为什么会产生疼痛。在他紧闭的眼皮后，手指森林像跳舞一般地挪动着，它们伸进伸出，它们一会儿叠在一起，一会儿又彼此分开，一会儿被遮住消失，一会儿又重新出现。他尝试着数一数，记不清为什么，他知道仅靠数是数不清的，

这是由四与五之间的神秘特质决定的。疼痛再次减轻。他睁开眼睛，看到的仍然是相同的景象。数不清的手指就像移动的树木，仍朝着某个方向交叠、分开。他又闭上了眼睛。

“我举起了几根手指，温斯顿？”

“我不知道，我不知道，如果你再这样做，就杀了我吧。四、五、六——说实话，我不知道。”

“好点了。”奥布兰说。

一根针刺进温斯顿的手臂。差不多同时，一种幸福的、温暖的治愈感在他身上弥漫开来。疼痛几乎忘记了一半。他睁开眼睛，感激地看了看奥布兰。看到他深沉又线条分明的面孔，它如此丑陋又如此聪明，他心潮涌动，若他能动一动身体，他就伸出手，搭在奥布兰的胳膊上。他从来没有像现在这样深爱他，这不只因为他让疼痛停止。这感觉曾出现过现在又回来了，说到底，奥布兰是朋友还是敌人无关紧要。他是那种可以与之交谈的人。也许，相比被人所爱，一个人更希望被人了解。奥布兰将他折磨得几欲崩溃，而且有那么一瞬间，可以确定，他几乎将他置之死地。这没有什么不同。从某种角度说，他们的关系比友谊更深，他们是知己。或者这里，或者那里，虽然没有说出来，可总有一个地方能让他们见面聊聊。奥布兰俯视着他，他的表情说明在他心里可能也有同样的想法。他用一种轻松的聊天式的腔调说：

“知道你在哪儿么，温斯顿？”他问。

“不知道，但我猜得到，在仁爱部。”

“你知道自己在这儿待了多久了吗？”

“不知道，几天、几星期、几个月——我想是一个月。”

“你想一下，为什么我们要把人带到这个地方？”

“让他们招供。”

“不，不是这个原因，再想想。”

“惩罚他们。”

“不！”奥布兰叫了起来。他的声音不同平常，他的脸色也突然变得严肃、激动。“不对！不单要榨出供词，也不单要惩罚你们，要我告诉你，我们为什么把你带到这儿来吗？为了医治你！让你清醒！你能理解吗，温斯顿，被我们带到这儿的，没有一个不被治好就离开的。我们对你犯下的那些愚蠢的罪行毫无兴趣。党对表面的行为没兴趣，我们关心的是思想。我们不只要打败我们的敌人，我们还要改变他们。你能理解我的意思吗？”

他弯下腰，看了看温斯顿。由于距离很近，他的脸看起来很大，又因为从下往上看，这张脸丑得让人厌恶。不仅如此，它还呈现出一种兴奋的、疯狂的神情。温斯顿的心再度沉了下去。如果可能，他会钻到床底下去。他觉得奥布兰一定会没有节制地扭动控制杆。可就在这个时候，奥布兰转身了，他来来回回走了几步，继续说了起来，没有刚才那般激动：

“首先，你要知道，这里没有烈士。你应该读到过去曾有过宗教迫害。中世纪有宗教法庭，它失败了。它的出发点是清除异端，它的结果却是巩固异端。它每烧死一个异端，就会有几千个异端涌现出来。为什么会这样？因为宗教法庭公开杀死敌人，他们的敌人至死都没有悔改。

事实上，他们之所以要杀死他们就是因为他们不肯悔改，因为这些人不肯放弃他们真正的信仰。如此一来，所有的荣耀都自然而然地属于殉难者，所有的耻辱都自然而然地归于烧死这些人的宗教法庭。后来，到了20世纪，极权主义者出现了，他们被这样称呼。他们是德国纳粹，是俄国共产党。就迫害异端而言，俄国人比宗教法庭还要残酷。他们以为他们已经从过去的错误中取得了教训；他们明白，不管怎么说，一定不能制造烈士。他们在公开的审判上揭露他们的牺牲者，在这之前，故意摧毁他们的人格。他们通过拷打和单独禁闭打垮他们，直到他们成为卑劣的、畏畏缩缩的坏蛋，让他们承认什么，他们就承认什么。他们一边辱骂自己、攻击自己，一面又用辱骂、攻击别人的方式来保护自己，为寻求宽恕而哭泣。然而，过不了几年，同样的事情又发生了。死去的人成为烈士，他们堕落的一面被人遗忘。再说一次，为什么会这样？首先，他们的供词是被逼出来的，并不真实。我们不能再让这种错误重演。在这里所有的供词都绝对真实。我们想办法让它们真实。重要的是，我们不会让死者站起来反对我们。你千万别以为你的后代会为你申冤。温斯顿，后人永远不会知道你。你会在历史长河中消失得干干净净。我们要让你变成气体，将你倾入天空。你什么都留不下，登记簿上没有你的名字，活着的人的大脑里也没有关于你的记忆。过去也好，将来也罢，你被消灭了，你从来就没存在过。”

那又为什么要折磨我呢？温斯顿这样想着，刹那间心生怨恨。奥布兰停下脚步，就好像温斯顿大声说出了这个想法。他将大而丑陋的脸靠近他，将眼睛眯成一条缝。

“你在想事情，”他说，“我们要将你完完全全地消灭掉，你说的和你做的都不会产生什么结果——既然如此，为什么我们还要那么麻烦地审问你呢？你是这样想的吗？”

“是的。”温斯顿说。

奥布兰轻轻地笑了，“你是图片上的一点瑕疵，温斯顿，你是必须被清理掉的污点。我刚才不是告诉过你，我们和以往的迫害者不同吗？消极的服从不能让我们满意，甚至最卑微的屈从也不能让人满意。最终，你的屈服必须出自你的自由意志。我们消灭异端，不因为他反抗我们。只要他反抗，我们就不会将他消灭。我们要让他发生转变，征服他的思想并将他重新塑造。我们要烧掉他所有的邪恶和幻想。我们要将他拉到我们这边，不单是外表，精神、心灵、灵魂都要站在我们这边。我们要在杀死他之前将他变成我们的人。我们不能容忍世界上有错误的思想，不管它在哪里，也不管它有多么隐秘，多么微弱。一个人哪怕立即死掉，也不允许他有什么越轨的想法。过去，异端在走向火刑柱时仍是异端，仍在宣扬他的异端思想，并为此欣喜。即便是俄国大清洗中的受害者在步入刑场等候枪毙的时候，他封闭着的大脑里仍然存在着反抗的念头。但我们却要在爆掉这脑袋前将它变得完美。之前的独裁者要求‘你们不能做什么’，极权主义者要求‘你们要做什么’，我们则要求‘你们要是什么’。被我们带到这儿来的人没一个能站出来反对我们。每个人都被净化干净，就连你以为的那三个可怜的叛国者——琼斯、阿朗森和鲁瑟夫——到了最后也被我们击垮。我本人也参加了对他们的审讯。我亲眼看到他们慢慢地垮了下来，他们呜咽着，匍匐着，哭泣着——最终他们有的不是疼痛和恐惧，而是悔恨。审讯结束了，他们仅有一副躯壳，除了对所做之事的懊悔和对老大哥的热爱，什么都没剩下。看着他们这样热爱他，真的很感动。他们希望尽快被枪毙，以便在思想纯洁的时候死去。”

他的声音犹如梦呓，脸上仍有那种疯狂、激动的神色。温斯顿认为，他不是装模作样，他不是一个虚伪的人，他相信自己所说的每个

字。最让温斯顿压抑的是，他为自己的智商感到自卑。他看着这个厚重文雅的身体走过来走过去，这身体时而出现在他的视野中，时而消失在他的视野外。从各个方面说，奥布兰都比他强大。他曾经萌生的，或可能萌生的念头，没有一个不在奥布兰的预料之中，没有一个没被奥布兰研究过、驳斥过。他的头脑涵盖了温斯顿的头脑。然而既然如此，奥布兰疯了又怎么会是真实的呢？疯的人一定是温斯顿。奥布兰停下来，低头看着他，声音又严厉起来。

“别以为可以拯救自己，温斯顿，不管你是否彻头彻尾地屈服于我们。走上歧途的人没一个能幸免。即使我们选择让你活下去，活到底，你也永远别想从我们手里逃脱。在你身上发生的事会永远持续下去。你必须先明白这点。我们会将你击溃，让你无法回到原先的时间点。哪怕你活上一千年，也没法恢复原样，你不会再有一般人的情感，你内心的一切都将死去。你不能再拥有爱情、友情，或者生活的乐趣、欢笑、好奇、勇气和追求正直的心。你将成为空心人，我们会把你挤空，然后我们再用我们自己来填充你。”

他停下来，向白衣服的人示意。温斯顿明显感觉到一个很重的器械被放到自己的脑袋底下。奥布兰在床边坐下来，他的脸几乎和温斯顿的处在同一水平线上。

“3000，”他对温斯顿头后的那个白衣人说。

两块柔软的、稍微有些湿润的垫子夹住了温斯顿的太阳穴。他害怕了，一种完全不同的痛感向他袭来。奥布兰伸出一只手安慰他，几乎是温和地将手放在他手里。

“这次不会有伤害，”他说，“看着我。”

就在这时，突然发生了一场毁灭性的爆炸，或者说看起来像爆炸。虽然无法确定是否真的发出什么声响，但却一定有一道耀眼的闪光。温斯顿没有受伤，只是筋疲力尽了。爆炸发生时他已经平躺在那里，但他有种奇怪的感觉，觉得自己被什么东西撞到了这个位置。一种猛烈又不会使人疼痛的冲击将他翻倒。他的大脑也出了状况。视力恢复后，他能记起自己是谁，身在哪里，还认出了正盯着他看的那张脸。但说不清是哪儿却有一块很大的空白，就好像他的脑子被挖掉了一块。

“不会持续很久，”奥布兰说，“看着我的眼睛。大洋国和哪个国家打仗？”

温斯顿想了想。他知道大洋国是什么意思，知道自己是大洋国的公民，他仍然记得欧亚国和东亚国。但是他不知道大洋国在和谁打仗。实际上，他不知道有什么战争。

“我记不起来了。”

“大洋国在和东亚国打仗，现在你记起来了么？”

“记起来了。”

“大洋国一直在和东亚国打仗，从你生下来开始，从党成立开始，从有历史开始，战争就一直在进行，没有间断过，一直都是同一场战争。你记起来了么？”

“是的。”

“十一年前你编造了一个和三个因叛国罪被处死的人有关的传奇故事。你假装你看到了一张证明他们无罪的报纸。这样的报纸从来就没存在过。它是你凭空捏造的，后来，你还对它信以为真。现在你还记得你

第一次编造它时的情景吧？你还记得吗？”

“记得。”

“就在刚刚我冲你举起了手，你看到了五根手指，你记得吗？”

“记得。”

奥布兰举起了他的左手，将大拇指缩了起来。

“这里有五根手指，你能看到五根手指吗？”

“能。”

刹那间，在大脑中的景象发生变化前，他真的看到它们了。他看见五根手指，每根都很完整。之后，每件事都恢复了正常，先前的那些恐惧、怨恨、迷惘又重新涌了回来。有那么一会儿——他不知道有多久，大概是三十秒——他非常清醒，奥布兰给出的每个新的暗示都成为绝对的真理，填补了那块空白。如果有需要，二加二等于三就像二加二等于五一样容易。然而，在奥布兰将手放下前，这情形就消失了。他无法将它复原，但他记得住，好比一个人能真切地回忆起多年前的某段经历，而当时他实际上是完全不同的人。

“现在，你看，”奥布兰说，“不管怎样，这是可能的。”

“没错，”温斯顿说。

奥布兰站起身，整个人心满意足。温斯顿看到他左边那个穿白衣服的人打破了一支安瓿，将注射器的活塞往回抽。奥布兰笑着转向温斯顿，差不多和从前一样，正了正鼻梁上的眼镜。

“你还记得你在日记里写了什么吗？”他说，“我是敌是友无关紧要，因为我至少是个能理解你，能和你交谈的人。你说得没错。我喜欢和你讲话。你的思想吸引了我。它和我的很像，只不过你发了疯。在谈话结束前，要是你愿意，你可以问我几个问题。”

“我想问什么都可以？”

“任何问题都可以。”他发现温斯顿正在看着刻度盘。“它已经关上了。第一个问题是？”

“你们对朱莉亚做了什么？”温斯顿说。

奥布兰再次露出微笑。“她出卖了你，温斯顿。非常迅速——非常彻底。我很少看到哪个人这么快就改变了立场。如果你看见她，你很难能认出她来。她所有的反抗意识、欺骗手段、她的愚蠢、她的肮脏——全都消失得无影无踪，就像教科书那样完美。”

“你们拷问她了？”

奥布兰没有回答。“下一个问题，”他说。

“老大哥存在吗？”

“当然存在，党存在，老大哥就存在，他是党的化身。”

“他的存在方式和我的是一样的吗？”

“你不存在。”奥布兰说。

又是一阵无助的感觉。他知道，或者说他想象得出来，证明他不存在的理由是什么。但它们都是胡说八道，都不过是文字游戏。诸如“你

不存在”这样的话难道不包含逻辑上的漏洞吗？但这样说又有什么用呢？只要想到奥布兰会用无可辩驳的疯狂观点来驳斥他，他就感到无可奈何。

“我想我是存在的，”他疲惫地说，“我能意识到我自己，我出生了，我会死掉。我有胳膊有腿。我占据了一块特定的空间，同时没有什么实际的固体能占据我所在的空间。这么说的话，老大哥存在吗？”

“这不是什么重要的事，他存在。”

“老大哥会死吗？”

“当然不会死，他怎么能死呢？下一个问题。”

“兄弟会存在吗？”

“这个，温斯顿，你永远别想知道。我们结束掉对你的工作后就会把你放出去，即使你活到九十岁，你也永远不会知道这个问题的答案是‘是’还是‘否’。只要你活着，它就是你心里的一道迷。”

温斯顿安安静静地躺着，胸部的起伏比之前快了一些。他还没有问他最想问的问题，他必须问出来，然而他却完全没办法讲出来。奥布兰的脸上出现了一丝欣喜的迹象。他的眼镜片看起来也闪烁着嘲讽的光。他知道，温斯顿突然意识到，他知道我想问他什么！想到这里，他几乎脱口而出：

“101号房里有什么？”

奥布兰还是那副表情，他干巴巴地说：

“你知道101号房里有什么，温斯顿，每个人都知道101号房里有什么。”他向白衣服的人举起一根手指。显然，谈话结束了。一根针扎进温斯顿的手臂，他几乎马上便沉睡过去。

二十一

“你的改造有三个阶段，”奥布兰说，“分别是学习、理解和接受。现在你应该进入第二个阶段了。”

像之前一样，温斯顿平躺在床上。最近，带子绑得松了一些，虽然他们依旧将他固定在床上，但他的膝盖可以稍稍活动，脑袋可以转向两边，前臂也可以抬起来了。控制盘没那么吓人了。只要脑筋动得够快，他就能逃避惩罚。通常，只有在他表现愚蠢的情况下，奥布兰才会推动控制杆。有几次的谈话都没有用到过控制盘。他不记得他们的谈话进行了多少回，这个过程似乎拖得很长，没法确定有多久——可能有几个星期，且有时两次谈话间会隔上好几天，也有时只隔上一两个小时。

“当你躺在那里时，”奥布兰说，“你经常想知道，你甚至问过我——为什么仁爱部会在你身上花如此多的时间，费如此大的力。在你还自由的时候，基本上你也为同样的问题困扰。你抓住了你所生活的社会的运转规律，但你还不理解它的根本动机。你还记得你在日记上写的‘我明白怎么做，我不明白为什么’？每当你思考‘为什么’，你就会对自己的理智表示怀疑。你已经看过了高德斯坦因的书，或者，至少看了一部分。它有没有告诉你任何你从前不知道的东西？”

“你看过那书吗？”温斯顿问。

“那是我写的，也就是说，我参与了它的写作。你知道，没有哪本书是独自一人写出来的。”

“书里写的是真的吗？”

“作为一种描述，它是真实的。但它阐述的纲领都毫无意义。悄悄地积累知识——渐渐扩大启蒙的范围——最后促发群众的革命——将党推翻。看这书之前你就知道它会这么说。这都是胡说的。群众永远不会造反，再过一千年、一百万年都不会。他们不能这么做，我也不用告诉你原因，你已经知道了。如果你曾经对暴力革命抱有什么希望，你必须将它丢掉。没有任何方法能把党推翻，党的统治将永远持续下去。要把这个作为你思想的出发点。”

他向床走近了一些。“永远！”他重复道，“现在让我们回到这个问题‘怎样做’和‘为什么’。你已经足够了解党是怎样维系它的权力的。现在告诉我，我们为什么要牢牢地抓住权力？我们的动机是什么？为什么我们那么渴望权力？继续，说说吧。”见温斯顿没说话，他加了一句。

谁想温斯顿又沉默了一两分钟。疲惫的感觉将他淹没。奥布兰的脸上再一次隐约地现出狂热的激情。他已经预知到奥布兰会说些什么。党谋求权力并非为了自己，而是为了大多数人。它追求权力，因为大部分人都软弱怯懦，无力承受自由也不敢面对现实。所以必须要由更加强有力的人来统治他们，有计划地欺骗他们。人类要在自由和幸福之间做出选择，而大部分人都觉得选择幸福要好些。党永远都是弱者的监护者，一伙为了让好事光临而致力于行恶作恶的人，宁可为别人的幸福牺牲自我。这很可怕，温斯顿想，可怕的地方在于在说这些话时，奥布兰打心眼里相信它们是真的。你可以从他的脸上看到这点。奥布兰无所不知，比温斯顿强了一千倍，他知道世界的真实样貌，他知道大多数人的生活都潦倒不堪，他知道党通过谎言和残暴的手段让他们身处那种境况。他了解每件事，权衡每件事，但这不重要，为了终极目的的实现，这些都是合理的。温斯顿想，面对这样一个比你聪明的疯子，这样一个温和地聆听你的观点却坚持着自己疯狂的疯子，你还能做些什么呢？

“你们统治我们是为我们好。”他声音微弱。

“你们认为人类不适合自己的管理自己，所以——”

他几乎刚一开口就叫了起来，一阵剧痛穿过他的身体。奥布兰将控制盘上的杆子推到35。

“真蠢，温斯顿，真蠢！”他说，“你应该知道，你要说得更好才行。”

他将控制杆拉回来，继续道：

“现在让我告诉你这个问题的答案。答案是，党追求权力是为了它自己。我们对其他人的利益不感兴趣，我们只关心权力。不是财富，不是奢侈的生活，不是长生不老，不是幸福，而仅仅是权力，纯粹的权力。你很快就会知道什么叫‘纯粹的权力’。我们和以往所有的寡头统治者都不同，因为我们知道我们在做什么。而所有其他人，即使是那些和我们很像的人，也都是懦夫和虚伪的人。德国纳粹和俄国共产党有着和我们类似的管理方法，但他们从来都不敢承认他们的动机。他们假装，也许他们真的相信，他们并非自愿夺取权力，而是时间有限，不久就会发生转变，会出现一个人都自由平等的天堂。我们可不一样。我们明白，没有人出于放弃权力的目的夺取权力。权力不是手段，权力是目的。建立独裁政权不是为了捍卫革命，迫害的目的就是迫害，折磨的目的就是折磨，权力的目的就是权力。现在，你开始明白我的话了吧？”

温斯顿被震撼了，正如之前他看到奥布兰那疲惫的面孔后大感震撼一样。那是一张坚强、丰满、残酷的脸，又是一张充满智慧的、克制感情的脸。这张脸让他感到无助，这张脸又如此倦意弥漫。眼下有眼袋，双颊的皮肤松松垮垮。奥布兰侧了侧身，特意让自己那张憔悴的脸离他

近些。

“你在想，”他说，“你在想我的脸怎么这么老，这么疲倦。你在想，我可以畅谈权力，却不可以阻止自己身体的衰败。你还不明白吗？温斯顿，个体仅仅是一个细胞。一个细胞的衰败是保证机体生命力的前提。你会在剪指甲的时候死掉吗？”

他离开床，又来回地走了起来，将一只手揣在口袋里。

“我们是权力祭司，”他说，“上帝是权力。但目前对你而言权力只是一个单词。是时候让你领会一些权力的含义了。首先，你必须理解，权力属于集体。个人只有在不是‘个人’的情况下才能拥有权力。你知道党的口号是‘自由即奴役’。你曾经想过吗，这句话可以颠倒过来？奴役即自由。单独的、自由的人总会被击败。一定是这样，因为每个人都会死，这种失败是所有失败中最大的失败。但如果他能够完全地、绝对地服从，如果他能够从个体的身份中逃脱出来，如果他能够和党融为一体，以至于他就是党，那他就能无所不能，永生不朽。你要明白的第二件事是，权力是指对人的权力，凌驾于身体的，特别是凌驾于思想的权力。权力凌驾于物质——正如你所说的，外在的现实——这不重要。我们已经完全控制了物质。

温斯顿有一会儿没有注意控制盘了，他突然想抬起身子坐起来，但他只能痛苦地扭动身体。

“但是你们怎么能控制物质呢？”他立刻说道，“你们甚至不能控制气候和重力定律，还有疾病、疼痛、死亡——”

奥布兰晃了晃手，打住了他的话。“我们能够控制物质是因为我们控制了思想。现实存在于人的头脑里。你会一点一点地学到的，温斯

顿。没有我们做不到的。隐身、腾空——任何事。只要我想，我就能像肥皂泡那样从地板上飘起来，我不想，是因为党不希望我这么做。你要把19世纪那些关于自然规律的想法都抛开，我们才是制定自然规律的人。”

“但你们没有！你们深知不是这个星球的主人！欧亚国和东亚国呢？你们还没有征服它们。”

“这没什么重要的。我们会征服它们的，时机合适的话。就算我们不这么做，又有什么不同吗？我们能否认它们的存在。大洋国就是世界。”

“但世界无非是一颗灰尘。人类渺小而无助！人类才存在多久？几百万年前地球上还没有人呢。”

“胡扯！地球的年纪和我们的一样，它并不比我们老。它怎么可能比我们要老呢？除非经过人类的意识，否则没有什么能存在。”

“但岩石里满是已经灭绝的动物的骨头——我曾经听过，猛犸象、乳齿象以及巨大的爬行动物在人类出现前很久就存在了。”

“那你见过这些骨头吗，温斯顿？当然没有。它们是19世纪的生物学家捏造出来的。人类出现前什么都没有。在人类消失后——如果人类灭绝了——也什么都不存在了。人类之外别无他物。”

“可整个宇宙都在我们之外。看看星星！它们中的一些在一百万光年以外的地方。它们在我们永远都到达不了的地方。”

“星星是什么？”奥布兰漠然地说，“它们无非是几公里外的亮光。如果我们想，我们就能到那儿去。或者，我们可以把它们清理掉。地球

是宇宙的中心。太阳和星星都绕着地球转。”温斯顿抽动了一下。这次他没说什么话。奥布兰继续说了下去，好像在回答一个反对意见。

“出于某种目的，当然，那不是真的。当我们在大海上航行的时候，或者在我们预测日食和月食时，我们经常发现，假设地球绕着太阳转，星星在亿万公里之外会非常方便。可这又算得了什么？你以为创造两套天文体系超出我们的能力了吗？星星可以近，也可以远，按照我们的需要来。你以为我们的数学家做不到吗？你把双重思想忘掉了吗？”

床上，温斯顿缩起身子。不管他说什么，迅猛而来的答案都像棍子一样将他击倒。而他仍然知道，知道自己是对的。“在你的思想以外别无他物”的观念——一定有什么办法被证明是错误的吗？不是很久以前就被揭露说这是个谬论吗？它还有个名字，他忘了。奥布兰低头看着温斯顿，嘴角上出现一抹微笑。

“我和你说过的，温斯顿，”他说，“玄学不是你的强项。你尝试记起的那个词是唯我论。但你错了。这不是唯我论，这是集体唯我论。这可不是一回事，事实上，这是相反的事。这些都是题外话了。”他用一种不同的语调说。“真正的权力，我们整日整夜为之战斗的权力，不是凌驾于物体的权力，而是凌驾于人的权力。”他停了下来，有一会儿，他又换上了那副神情，好像一个老师在向一个有前途的学生提问：“一个人如何对另一个人施以权力，温斯顿？”

温斯顿思考了一下，“通过让他受苦。”他说。

“一点不错。通过让他受苦。只有服从是不够的，除非让他受苦，否则你要如何确定他是服从于你的意志，而不是他自己的？权力就是要让人处在痛苦和屈辱中。权力就是要将人类的意志撕成碎片，再按照你

想要的新的样子将它们重新粘起来。你是不是已经开始明白我们要创造一个怎样的世界？和过去那些改革家所畅想的愚蠢的、享乐主义的乌托邦世界刚好相反。这是一个被恐惧和背叛折磨的世界，一个充斥着践踏与被践踏的世界，一个越来越好也越来越残酷的世界。旧时代的文明自称其建立之基是爱与正义。而我们的文明则建立在仇恨之上。在我们的世界里，除了恐惧、愤怒、耀武扬威和自我贬低外，什么情感都不存在，我们会将它们统统毁灭。革命前幸存下来的思想习惯已经被我们消灭。我们割断了联结孩子和父母的纽带，割断了人与人、男人与女人的联系。没有人再敢相信妻子、孩子、朋友，且未来也不会有妻子和朋友。孩子一出生就要离开母亲，就好像从母鸡那里拿走鸡蛋。性本能将被彻底消灭，生殖将成为更新配给证一样一年一度的形式。我们要消除性兴奋。我们的神经学专家正在做这件事。除了对党的忠诚，没有其他的忠诚，除了对老大哥的爱，没有其他的爱，除了为击败敌人而笑，没有其他的笑。艺术、文学、科学都不会有了。当我们无所不能时，我们也就不再需要什么科学。美和丑也不再有区别。不再有好奇心，在生命的进程中也不再有喜悦。所有其他类型的欢乐都要被摧毁。但是，温斯顿，别忘了，对权力的迷醉将永远存在，且这种迷醉还会越来越强烈，越来越敏感。永远，每时每刻都会有取得胜利的狂喜以及践踏一个没有还手之力的敌人的激情。如果你把未来想成一幅画，那就想象一只皮靴正踩在一个人的脸上——永远都是如此。”

他停下来，好像在等温斯顿说些什么。温斯顿却又一次地想往床底下钻，他没说话，心脏就像结冰一般。奥布兰继续说：

“记住，永远都会这样。那张脸总会在那里让人踩踏。异端，还有社会的敌人，永远都会待在那里，你可以一次又一次地击败他们、侮辱他们。你落到我们手里后经历的每件事——都将持续下去，甚至比这更

坏。间谍活动、各种叛变、逮捕、虐待、处决、失踪，所有这些都不会停止。这既是个充斥着恐惧的世界，也是个充斥着狂喜的世界。党越强大，容忍度就越低，反抗的力度越弱，专制的程度就越强。高德斯坦因和他的异端说将永远存在。每一天，每一分钟，它们都会被攻击、被质疑、被嘲弄、被唾弃，然而它们又会一直留存下来。我和你在这七年里上演的这出戏会反反复复的，一代人接着一代人地演下去，但总的形式会更加巧妙。我们总是将异端带到仁爱部来，让他们因疼痛而叫喊，让他们精神崩溃，卑鄙可耻——最后翻然悔悟，拯救自己，心甘情愿地匍匐于我们脚下。这就是我们所准备的世界，温斯顿。这是一个胜利接着一个胜利的世界，是一个狂喜接着一个狂喜的世界，是无休无止的压迫着权力神经的世界。我能看出来，你开始明白了，意识到这世界将成为什么样子。而最后你不止会理解它，你还会接受它、欢迎它，成为它的一部分。”

温斯顿已经恢复得可以说话了。“你们不能！”他声音微弱。

“你这话是什么意思，温斯顿？”

“你们创造不出你刚才描绘的那个世界。这只是不可能实现的梦。”

“为什么？”

“因为不可能把文明建立在恐惧、仇恨和残忍上。这样不能持久。”

“为什么不能？”

“它没有生命力，它会解体，它一定会自己毁灭掉自己。”

“胡扯！你依然有这样的印象，觉得仇恨比爱更耗气力。为什么它应该这样呢？即使它真的这样了，又有什么不同吗？假设我们选择让自

己更加迅速地耗光力气，假设我们让人生的速度加快，让人一到30岁就衰老，这又能怎样呢？你还不明白吗？个人的死亡算不上死亡，党是永生的。”

温斯顿一如既往地奥布兰的说法打击得无可奈何，此外，他也害怕，害怕若继续坚持自己的意见，奥布兰会再次打开控制盘。但他依然无法保持沉默。除了对奥布兰所说的感到无法形容的恐惧外，他找不到支持他这么说的理由，在没有论据的情况下，他无力地进行了回击。

“我不知道——我不管。不管怎样你们都会失败。会有什么东西击败你们的，生活就会击败你们。”

“我们掌控生活，温斯顿，掌控它的全部。你对那个被称作‘人性’的东西心存幻想，这让你对我们的所作所为感到愤怒，并让你反对我们。但我们是人性的缔造者，人的可塑性是无限的。也许你又回到了你的老思路上去，觉得群众或者奴隶会起来推翻我们。快把这想法从你的脑子里拿出去吧。他们就像动物一样无助。党就是人性，其他的都是表面之物——不相干。”

“我不管，最后，他们会击败你们。他们早晚会看清你们，然后他们就会把你们撕成碎片。”

“你看到什么证据证明它正在发生吗？或者任何它会这样做的理由？”

“没有，但我相信会这样。我知道你们会失败。宇宙里有什么东西——我也说不清，某种精神，某种原则——你们永远不能战胜的东西。”

“你信上帝吗，温斯顿？”

“不信。”

“那么，那个会击败我们的原则是什么？”

“我不知道。是人的精神。”

“你确信你是人吗？”

“是的。”

“假如你是人，温斯顿，你就是最后一个人了。你这种人已经灭绝了。我们是后来的人。你没意识到你是孤单的吗？你身处历史之外，你是不存在的。”他的态度发生了变化，说起话来更严厉了，“你觉得你在道德上比我们要优越，因为我们又撒谎又残酷。”

“是的，我觉得我有这个优越感。”

奥布兰没说话，另外两个人说了起来。过了一会儿，温斯顿意识到其中一个人是他自己。那是他在兄弟会登记的那个晚上，和奥布兰谈话的录音。他听到自己正在承诺，他会撒谎、会偷盗、会造假、会杀人、会鼓励吸毒和卖淫、会去传播性病、会朝小孩子的脸上泼硫酸。奥布兰不耐烦地做了个小手势，就好像在说还不值得这样做。接着，他转了一下按钮，声音停止了。

“从床上起来。”他说。

绑住温斯顿的带子自己松开了，温斯顿下了床，晃晃悠悠地站在那里。

“你是最后一个人，”奥布兰说，“你是人类精神的守护者。你会看到你是怎样一幅尊容。把衣服脱了。”

温斯顿解开系工作服的带子。原本用来扣住衣服的拉链早就被扯下来了。他记不清在被捕之后有没有脱掉过衣服。工作服之下，他的身体上有些脏兮兮的淡黄色的碎布，隐约可以辨出那是内衣的碎片。就在他将衣服扔到地板上时，他看到屋子的尽头有一个三面镜。他向镜子走去，可没走多久就停下脚步，忍不住发出惊叫。

“继续走，”奥布兰说，“站在三扇镜子的中间，这样你还能看到你侧面的样子。”

他之所以要停下来是因为他害怕了。镜子里一个佝偻着的、灰白色的，犹如骷髅一般的东西正向他走来。这情形着实吓人，不仅因为他知道他面对的正是自己，他向镜子挪近，由于弯着身子，那家伙的脸看起来更突出了，那是一张绝望的囚犯的脸，高高的额角和被刮得干干净净的脑袋连在一起，鼻子弯弯的，颧骨好像被人打过，而颧骨上面则是一双目光凌厉又充满警惕的眼睛。他的脸颊上布满皱纹，嘴巴也陷了进去。毫无疑问，这就是他的脸，但它的变化似乎比他内心的变化还要大。这张脸表现出的情感和他真正感受到的并不一样。他有些秃顶了，一开始他觉得自己的头发变成了灰白色，但后来发现那原来是头皮的颜色。除了手和脸的周围，他整个身体都是灰白色的，覆满了肮脏的污垢。而在这些污垢下面，还长满了红色的伤疤。在他的脚踝旁那静脉曲张所导致的溃疡已经感染发炎，皮屑脱落。但真正可怕的是他身体的消瘦程度。他的肋骨细细的，像骷髅一般；他的腿瘦瘦的，甚至没有膝盖粗。现在，他终于明白为什么奥布兰让他看看自己的侧面。他的脊椎弯得让人害怕，他的肩膀如此羸弱向前耸出，致使胸口前形成一个空洞，他的脖子瘦骨嶙峋，几乎被头的重量压成对折。如果让他猜，他一定会

说这是一个六十岁的得了恶性疾病的老人的身体。

“有时，你会想，”奥布兰说，“我这张内党党员的脸看起来那么苍老憔悴。那么，你对你自己的脸又有什么看法呢？”

他抓住温斯顿的肩膀，把他转过来，让他正对着自己。

“看看你镜子里的样子！”他说，“看看你身上的污垢。看看你肮脏的脚趾中的灰尘。看看你腿上这令人恶心的伤口。你知道你臭得像头山羊吗？也许你已经注意不到这些了。看看你瘦了吧唧的样儿，看到了吗？我用大拇指和食指就能拢住你的胳膊，我掐断你的脖子就像掐一根胡萝卜。你知道吗，自从落到我们手里，你已经掉了二十五公斤的体重？就连头发都掉了一大把。看！”他在温斯顿的头上揪了一把，揪下来一大撮头发。“张开你的嘴，还有9、10、11颗牙，你到我们这儿来的时候有几颗？剩下的那几颗正从你的嘴里脱落。看这儿！”

他用大拇指和食指抓住温斯顿剩下的一颗门牙，用力一扳。温斯顿的上颚一阵剧痛。奥布兰把那颗牙连根扳了下来，扔到牢房的另一边。

“你正在腐烂，”他说，“你正变成碎片。你算什么呢？你是一堆垃圾。现在转过身去，再往镜子里看看。你看到面对着你东西吗？那就是最后一个人。如果你是人，那就是人性。现在把你的衣服穿起来吧。”

温斯顿艰难地、慢慢地穿上了衣服。直到现在，他好像都没注意到自己居然这样瘦弱。他只有一个想法：他在这里待的时间一定比他以为的要长。他将这些脏兮兮的破布裹在身上，突然可怜起自己这被摧毁的身体，并被这种感觉压倒。在意识到自己做什么之前他就崩溃了，他坐在床边的小凳子上放声大哭。他意识到自己丑陋至极，毫无廉耻，是被

肮脏的衣服包裹起来的正在明晃晃的灯光下哭泣的骨头。他不能控制自己。奥布兰温和地将一只手搭在他的肩膀上。

“不会永远这样的。”他说，“无论什么时候，你决定好了，你就可以从这里离开。所有的一切都取决于你自己。”

“你们做的！”温斯顿抽泣着说，“你让我落到了这个地步。”

“不，温斯顿，是你自己让自己落到这个地步的。在你决心和党作对时，你就接受了这样的命运。你最初的行为里就包含了这点。没有哪件事的发生是你没有预料到的。”

他停了一会儿，又继续说道：

“我们把你打败了，温斯顿。我们摧毁了你，你可以看到你的身体像什么样子，你的意识也是一样。我不认为你还有什么引以为豪的东西。你被踢过，被鞭打过，被羞辱过，你因为疼痛而尖叫。你在地板上，在你的血和呕吐物中翻滚，你祈求饶恕，你背叛了所有人所有事。你还能想到有哪件耻辱的事在你身上没发生过吗？”

温斯顿停止了哭泣，但仍有眼泪从他的眼睛里涌出来。他看着奥布兰。

“我没有背叛朱莉亚。”他说。

奥布兰低头看着他，沉思着。“是的，”他说，“是的，这完全是事实。你没有背叛朱莉亚。”

温斯顿的心里再次充满了对奥布兰的崇敬之情，似乎没有什么东西能将他摧毁。多么理智，他想，多么理智！奥布兰没有一次不理解他的

话。除了他，地球上任何一个人都会立即回答他，他已经背叛了朱莉亚。因为在拷打之下，他们还有什么没从他嘴里榨出来的呢？他将他所知道的关于她的每件事都告诉给他们。她的习惯，她的特点，她以往的人生；他还坦白了他们约会时发生的所有事情的所有细节，他们交谈的内容，他们在黑市上吃饭，他们通奸，他们模模糊糊的反党计划——所有的一切。但是，以他说话的意图来看，他没有背叛她。他没有停止爱她，他对她的感情始终如一。无须解释，奥布兰就明白了他的意思。

“告诉我，”他说，“还有多久会枪毙我？”

“也许要等上很长时间，”奥布兰说，“你的情况很麻烦，但别放弃希望。每个人都会被治好的，或早或晚。最后，我们会枪毙你。”

二十二

他好多了。每天，他都在变胖、变强壮，如果“每天”这个词说起来合适的话。

白色的灯光和嗡嗡的声音和之前的一样，但牢房却比他待过的要舒服一点儿。木板床上铺了床垫，放了枕头，床的边上还有凳子可以坐一坐。他们给他洗了澡，允许他不时便在锡质的盆子里冲洗一下。他们甚至给他温水供他梳洗，还给了他一套崭新的内衣和一身干净的工作服。他们在他静脉曲张引起的伤口上涂上镇痛药膏，拔掉了他剩下的牙齿，给他换上了假牙。

几个星期或者几个月过去了。只要他想，现在他可以算一算到底过去了多长时间，因为他们是定时送饭。据他推测，每二十四小时吃三顿饭，有时他不大清楚他到底是在晚上还是白天吃的饭。食物好得让人吃惊，每三顿中便有一顿是有肉的。一次，他甚至还得到了一包香烟。虽然他没有火柴，但给他送饭的那个总也不说话的看守却为他点了火。他尝试着抽了第一口烟，觉得很恶心，但他最终坚持了下来。这盒烟抽了很久，他总会在饭后抽上半根。

他们交给他一块白色的板子，板子的一角系着一根铅笔。一开始，他没管它。就算在清醒时，他也是一副无精打采的样子。他经常吃完一顿饭就躺下来，毫无活力地等着下一顿饭，有时睡着了，有时虽醒着却神情恍惚地在幻想，连眼皮都不愿意睁，他早就习惯睡觉时有强光打在脸上，这除了会让一个人的梦境更加清楚外，和关灯睡觉没什么不同。这段时间，他的梦很多，还总是让人快乐的梦。他梦见自己在黄金乡，坐在一个巨大的沐浴着阳光的废墟中，和母亲、朱莉亚及奥布兰在一起

——什么也不做，就那么坐着晒太阳，讲着寻常的话。在清醒时，他所想的也大多是他的梦。疼痛的刺激消失了，他看起来已经失去了理智思考的能力，不是厌倦，他只是不想说话，不想分心。他独自一人待着，不被殴打也不被审问，吃的东西够多，哪里都够干净，这真令人心满意足。

渐渐的，他花在睡觉上的时间少了，但他仍不愿意从床上起来。他想安安静静地躺着，好好感受身体里力量的蓄积。他喜欢用手摸摸这里，弄弄那里，以确定这不是幻觉，他的肌肉圆滚滚地增长着，皮肤也变得紧致。最后毫无疑问，他正在长胖。现在，他的大腿着实要比膝盖粗了。在这之后，他开始定期运动，起初有些勉强，用不了多久他就能走上三公里，这是用步测牢房得出的数据。他弯曲的肩膀正在挺直，他尝试着做复杂一些的体操，但他既惊讶又不好意思地发现，有些动作他做不到。他跑不起来，举不起板凳，只要单脚站立就会摔倒。他脚后跟着力，蹲下身去，谁想大腿和小腿都疼得让人忍耐不得，迫使他不得不再站起身来。他俯卧在地上，想用手臂撑起身体，结果连一毫米都撑不起来，无可奈何。不过，仅仅过了几天——或者说几顿饭的工夫——他就做成功了，有一回，他一下子就做了六次。他开始切切实实地为自己的身体自豪，有时他相信他的脸也变回了原来的样子。只有当他把手放在他光秃秃的脑袋上时，他才会想起那张从镜子里向他张望的布满皱纹又伤痕累累的脸。

他的意识活跃多了。他在木板床上坐着，背靠着墙，把那块板子放到了膝盖上，然后着手工作，认真地将重新教育自己作为任务目标。他同意，他投降了。事实上，正如他现在看到的那样，在做出投降的决定以前他很早就准备投降了。从他踏入仁爱部的那一刻开始，是的，甚至从他和朱莉亚无助地站在一起听电屏里那冷酷的声音告诉他们应该做什

么的那几分钟开始，他就已经明白，妄图凭一己之力与党的权力作对是多么肤浅、多么轻率。他现在知道了，七年以来思想警察观察他就像观察放大镜下的小甲虫。他的每一个肢体动作，每一句说出声的话，都被他们关注，没有他们推测不出来的想法。就连他夹在日记本中的那粒白色的灰尘也被他们仔仔细细地放回原位。他们给他放了录音，给他看了照片，其中一些照片中他和朱莉亚待在一起。是的，就算是.....他再也不能和党对抗了。此外，党是正确的。一定是这样。作为一个永生不死的集体的大脑，它又怎么会出错呢？而你又要用什么客观的标准来判断它是否正确呢？神志健全是一个统计学的概念，它仅仅意味着学会按他们的想法思考问题。只不过.....

手中的那支铅笔又粗又不好用，他开始将他的想法写下来，他先用大写字母笨拙地写下：

自由即奴役

紧接着他又在下面写道：

二加二等于五

但在这之后，他停了片刻。他的大脑似乎有意回避一些事情，好像无法集中精力。他知道接下来要写些什么，可一时半会儿又想不起来。当他想起来时，他发现那仅仅是他有意识地推理出来的，而非自然萌发的。他这样写道：

权力即上帝

他接受了一切。过去可以被篡改，过去从未被篡改。大洋国正在和东亚国打仗，大洋国一直在和东亚国打仗。琼斯、阿朗森和鲁瑟夫犯了

那些指控给他们的罪行。他从来都没有看到过能够推翻他们罪行的照片。它从来就没存在过，是他凭空捏造。他还记得他曾经记得一些和这相反的事，但那些记忆是虚假的，是自欺欺人的产物。所有这些是多么地轻而易举！只要一投降，一切问题就都解决了。这就好像逆着水流游泳，尽管你很努力地挣扎，你还是会被水流卷着一路后退。然而，突然你决定转过身来顺流而行。改变的只有你自己的态度，其他的什么都没变。不管怎样，已经注定的事总是会发生。他几乎不明白，曾经的他为什么要反抗。所有事都很容易，除了投降！

任何事情都可能是真的。所谓的自然规律无非是胡说八道，重力定律也是胡扯。奥布兰说过：“只要我想，我就能像肥皂泡那样从地板上飘起来。”温斯顿想明白了：“如果他认为他从地板上飘了起来，而我同时也认为我看到他这样做了，那这件事就发生了。”突然，好像残骸浮出水面那样，他突然萌生了一个想法：“它不是真的发生了，它是我们想象出来的，是幻觉。”他立即将这个想法压了下去，它明显是荒谬的。因为它预先假定了一个地方，一个游离于个人之外的上演着“真实”事件的“真实”世界。但是，这样的世界又怎么可能存在呢？我们所知道的一切事情不都是通过我们的大脑得来的吗？所有事情都发生在意识里。无论是什么，只要发生在了头脑里，就真的发生了。

处理掉这个谬论一点儿都不困难，对他，也不存在向谬论屈服的危险。但他仍然认为，他永远不该想起它。不管什么时候，只要危险思想出现了，人的意识就应该本能地开辟出一块盲点。用新话说，这叫“停止犯罪”。

他开始就停止犯罪进行练习。他向自己提出一个题目——“党说地球是平的”，“党说冰比水重”——然后训练自己不去看也不去了解与之矛盾的观点。这可不容易。这需要非常大的推理能力和即时反应的能

力。诸如“二加二等于五”这样的话都超出了他的理解水平。它同样需要大脑做一种运动，在某一时间要用逻辑处理最微妙的事件，但接下来又要忽略掉最明显的逻辑错误。愚蠢和理智一样必需，且一样难以掌握。

与此同时，他大脑中的一个部分仍在想要过多久他们才会枪毙他。奥布兰说过：“一切都取决于你。”但他知道他不能故意让这一天提早降临。可能在十分钟后，也可能在十年之后。他们可能一整年一整年地将他单独关押，可能把他送到劳动营去，还可能先释放他一段时间，他们有时会这么做。很有可能，他们会在枪毙他之前，将逮捕他、拷问他的这场戏完完整整重演一遍。有一件事可以确定，那就是死期无法预料。传统——未曾明说的传统是，尽管你从没有听说过，但你还是知道——他们会在你身后开枪，就在你沿着走廊从一间牢房走向另一间牢房时，在没有警告的情况下射向你的后脑，总是如此。

某天——但“某天”并非确切的说法，因为也有可能是在夜里。一次，他陷入了一种奇怪的、幸福的幻觉里。他在走廊里走着，等待着那颗子弹。他知道它马上就会过来。所有事情都解决了，没有了，妥协了。不再有怀疑，不再有争论，不再有痛苦，不再有恐惧。他的身体健康而强壮，他的步子非常轻快，他快乐地移动着，感觉正行走在阳光中。他再也不是走在仁爱部的白色走廊里，而是走在一条洒满阳光的、足有一公里宽的道路上。似乎因为药物的作用，他的精神极度亢奋。他在黄金乡里，正顺着一条布满脚印的小路穿过被兔子啃过的老牧场。他能感觉到脚下的小草短而柔软，能感受到阳光正温柔地照着他的脸。草场的边上有一些榆树，正轻轻地摆动着，远处的什么地方有一条小溪，鲦鱼在柳树下那绿色的池塘里游来游去。

猛然间，恐惧将他惊醒，脊骨上满是汗水。他听到自己在大喊：

“朱莉亚！朱莉亚！朱莉亚，我的爱！朱莉亚！”

一时间，他产生了幻觉，觉得她就在这里。她不仅出现在他身边，还进到了他的身体里，似乎就在他皮肤的纹理中。此时此刻，他更爱她了，比他们自由自在地在一起时还要爱。他也知道，在某个地方，她依然活着且需要他的帮助。他躺回床上，努力让自己镇定下来。他在做什么？一时的软弱会让这被人奴役的日子增加多少年啊？

又过了一会儿，他听到外面有皮靴的声音。他们不可能在你这样爆发后不对你做什么惩罚。若以前他们不知道，那现在他们知道了，他破坏了和他们的协议。他虽然对党俯首帖耳，但他仍然仇恨着党。过去的日子里，他将他的异端思想隐藏在他恭顺的外表下，现在他又退了一步。他在思想上投降了，但他仍希望保护好自己的内心。他知道自己错了，但他甘愿如此。他们会理解的——奥布兰会理解的，那声愚蠢的呼喊把什么都坦白了。他不得不重新来过，这可能会花上几年的时间。他伸出手，摸了摸脸，想熟悉下自己的新样子。他的脸颊上有深深的皱纹，他的颧骨突了出来，鼻子则塌了进去。此外，自从在镜子中看到自己的样子后，他们给他装了副崭新的假牙。在不知道自己的脸是什么样子的情况下，你很难让自己看起来高深莫测。总之，单是控制外表的样子还不够。他第一次意识到，如果你要把一个秘密隐藏起来，即便对你自己，你也得保密。你必须从头到尾都知道它在哪儿，但若非必须，你万万不能让它以任何叫得出名的样子出现在你的意识里。从今以后，他不仅要思想正确，还要感觉正确，梦得正确。整个过程中，他必须将他的仇恨锁在心里，就好像一个既是他身体的一部分又不和他身体的其他部分发生联系的圆球，一个囊肿。

他们终将决定到底在哪天将他枪毙，你不可能被告知这会在什么时候发生，但你可以提前几秒猜到。总是从你身后，当你在走廊上的时

候，枪毙你。只要十秒就够了。那时，他的内心世界会翻转过来。然后，突然，不用说任何话，不用停下脚步，也不用改变脸上的表情——突然，伪装撕下，紧接着，砰！他的仇恨像炮群开火那样猛然爆发，像熊熊烈焰将他烧毁。几乎在同时，砰！子弹来了，或者太晚，或者太早。在对他的的大脑进行改造前，他们就会将他轰成碎片。异端思想不受惩罚，不经悔改，永远都在他们的控制之外，就好比他们亲手在他们完美的身体上轰开一个洞。至死都恨着他们，这就是自由。他闭上眼睛，这比接受某个思想原则还要困难。这是个自己侮辱自己，自己残虐自己的问题，他会堕入最肮脏的污秽中。什么事最为可怕，最令人作呕？他想到老大哥。他那张巨脸（由于他经常在宣传画上看到它，他一直觉得这张脸有一米宽）蓄着浓密的黑色胡须，他的眼睛总是跟着人的身影转来转去。这些都自动地在他的意识里浮现出来。他对老大哥的真实感情又是怎样的呢？

楼道里响起沉重的皮靴声。铁门哐当一声开了。奥布兰走进牢房，身后跟着那个蜡像脸的官员和穿着黑色制服的看守。

“起来，”奥布兰说，“过来。”

温斯顿站在他面前。奥布兰用强壮的双手抓住温斯顿的肩膀，近距离地看着他。

“你曾想欺骗我，”他说，“这很愚蠢，站直，看着我的脸。”

他停了一会儿，然后用较温和的语气说：

“你有进步。在思想上已经没什么问题了。只是在感情上没有长进。告诉我，温斯顿——记住，不能说谎，你知道我总是能发现谎言——告诉我，你对老大哥的真实感觉。”

“我恨他。”

“你恨他，好的。接下来你要进入最后一个阶段。你必须爱大哥，服从他还不够，你必须爱他。”

他松开温斯顿，将他推给看守。

“101号房间。”他说。

二十三

刑期的每个阶段他都清楚——或者说他好像很清楚——他究竟在这没有窗户的大楼里的哪个地方。也许因为不同地方气压略有不同。他被看守殴打时所在的牢房位于地下，他被奥布兰审问的那个房间临近楼顶。而现在这个地方应该深入地下好几米，已经深到不能再深的地步了。

这间牢房比他待过的所有牢房都要大，但他几乎没有关注四周的环境，只注意到他的面前摆着两张铺着绿呢布的小桌子。一张桌子离他只有一两米，另一张则靠着门，距离稍远。他被绑到了一张椅子上，很紧，以至于他一动都没法动，脑袋都转不了。一种软垫从后面夹住了他的脑袋，迫使他只能朝着正前方看。

他在屋子里单独待了一会儿，之后，门开了，奥布兰进来了。

“你曾经问过我，”奥布兰说，“101号房里有什么，我告诉你，你早就知道答案。每个人都知道，101号房里的东西是世界上最可怕的。”门又开了，一个看守走了进来，手里拿着一个用铁丝编成的盒子，或者说是篮子一类的东西，将它放在了较远的桌子上，因为奥布兰就站在那里。温斯顿认不出那是什么东西。

“世界上最可怕的事，”奥布兰说，“每个人都有每个人的看法。可能是活埋，可能是被火烧死，可能是溺水而亡，还有可能是被钉死，或者别的五十几种死法。也有时，最可怕会是一些十分琐碎的，并不致命的事。”

他向旁边挪了一点儿，温斯顿终于可以看清桌上放的到底是什么。

那是一个长方形的铁笼子，顶端有一个把手，方便人将它提起。笼子前端还装着一个类似击剑面罩的东西，有个向外的凹面。尽管这东西离他有三四米远，但他仍然可以看到它被竖着分成两个部分，每个部分都关着什么动物。原来，是老鼠。

“对你来说，”奥布兰说，“世界上最可怕的就是老鼠。”

看到这笼子的第一眼，尽管还不确定笼子里究竟有什么，他就有了一种不好的预感，浑身震颤，恐惧非常。此时，他突然明白装在笼子前端的那个形似面罩的东西有何目的。他觉得自己好像吓得失禁了。

“你不能那么做！”他尖声惊叫着。

“你不能，你不能！这不可能。”

“你还记得吗，”奥布兰说，“你梦中的恐怖时刻？你面前有一堵黑色的墙，你听到动物的低吼。墙的另一边有着某种可怕的东西。你知道自己明白那是什么，但你没有胆量把它们亮出来。墙的那边就是老鼠。”

“奥布兰！”温斯顿说，他竭力控制住自己的声音。“你知道没这个必要，你想让我做什么？”

奥布兰没有直接回答他。他说话时，又换上了那副老师的神态，他已经好几次这样装腔作势了。他沉思地看着远方，就好像在和温斯顿身后的什么听众说话一样。

“就疼痛本身来说，”他说，“还远远不够。有时候人是可以和疼痛对抗的，即使疼得濒临死亡。但每个人都有些无法忍受的事——一些连想都不能想的东西。这和勇敢或怯懦无关。如果你从高处跌落，抓住绳

子不算怯懦，如果你从深水中浮出头，往肺里猛灌空气不算怯懦。这仅仅是一种本能，你无法将它消灭。老鼠也是一样。对你而言，它们让人无法忍受。它们是一种你无力抵抗的压力，哪怕你希望自己能抵抗得住。需要你做什么，你就会做什么。”

“但那是什么？究竟是什么？我不知道要做什么，又怎么去做呢？”

奥布兰将笼子提了起来，带到离温斯顿较近的桌子，小心翼翼地把它放在了绿呢制的桌布上。温斯顿听到血液在耳朵里轰鸣的声音，觉得自己被完全孤立了，就像待在一个巨大荒芜的平原里，一个洒满阳光的沙漠中，那些声音从极度遥远的地方穿过平原沙漠向他袭来。事实上，装着老鼠的笼子离他不到二米。它们体形硕大，口鼻那里又平又钝，模样凶狠，且都长着棕色而不是灰色的毛。

“老鼠，”奥布兰仍然是一副对着看不见的听众说话的样子，“虽然是啮齿动物，但也是吃肉的。你明白。你一定听说过发生在这儿的贫民区中的事情。在一些街道，女人不敢把婴儿独自一人留在屋子里，即使只有五分钟。因为老鼠一定会袭击他，只需一会儿，它们就会把孩子的骨头啃出来。它们还会袭击生病的和将死的人。它们智力惊人，知道人什么时候是无助的。”

铁笼子里突然迸发出吱吱声，好像从很远的地方传到温斯顿这里。老鼠们在打架，它们试图穿过分隔它们的东西到另一边去。他听到一种绝望的、低沉的呻吟声，似乎也从他的身外传来。

奥布兰提起笼子，并在提起的同时，按了里面的什么东西。温斯顿听到尖锐的啪嗒声，他疯狂地试图从椅子上挣脱开来，但毫无办法。他身体的每个部分，就连他的脑袋，都被绑得动弹不得。奥布兰又把笼子

挪近了一些，它和温斯顿的脸只有不到一米的距离了。

“我已经按下第一个控制杆，”奥布兰说，“你清楚这笼子的构造。面罩和你的头正合适，不会留下空隙。当我按下第二个控制杆的时候。笼子的门就会打开。这些饥饿的牲畜会像子弹那样冲出来，你有没有看到过老鼠跳到空中的样子？它们会跳到你的脸上，一直往里钻。有时，它们首先会攻击你的眼睛。有时，它们会钻进你的脸颊，吞掉你的舌头。”

笼子越来越近，越来越近。温斯顿听到一阵持续的尖叫声从他的脑袋上方发出来，但他还在激烈地和恐惧对抗。想一想，想一想，哪怕只剩下半秒——想，是唯一的希望。突然，一股牲畜的霉味直扑他的鼻子，强烈地冲击着他，让他肚子里翻江倒海。他几乎失去了意识，眼前一片漆黑。一时间他疯了，成了一只惊叫着的动物。他抱着一个想法从黑暗中挣扎出来。有一个办法，只有一个办法能让他拯救自己。他必须将另一个人，另一个人的身体插进他和老鼠之间。

面罩的边缘足够大，大到将他视野里的一切其他事物遮挡住。铁丝制的笼门和他的脸只有一两个巴掌那么远。老鼠们知道会遇见什么，其中一只正上蹿下跳，还有一只阴沟里的家伙老得掉了毛，它直立着，用粉红色的爪子扒着铁丝，使劲地嗅着什么。温斯顿能够看到它的胡须和黄色的牙齿。黑色的恐惧再一次抓住了他，他什么都看不见，他无能为力，他的大脑一片空白。

“在中华帝国，这是常见的惩罚。”奥布兰一如既往进行说教。

面罩贴近他的脸，铁丝碰到他的脸颊。接着——不，那不能解除什么，只是希望，一丝细弱的希望。太晚了，也许太晚了，但他突然明

白，整个世界他只能把惩罚转移到一个人身上——只有一个人的身体能够插在他和老鼠间，他疯狂地喊了起来，一遍又一遍：

“咬朱莉亚！咬朱莉亚！别咬我！朱莉亚！随你们怎么对她。撕开她的脸，咬她的骨头，别咬我！朱莉亚！别咬我！”

他向后倒了下去，堕入巨大的深渊，远离老鼠。他仍然被绑在椅子上，但他已穿过地板，穿过大楼的墙壁，穿过地球，穿过海洋，穿过大气层，堕入太空，堕入银河——远远地，远远地，远远地离开了老鼠。他在若干光年之外，但奥布兰依旧站在他的身边，冰冷的铁丝依旧触碰着他的脸。然而从包裹着他的黑暗里，他听到金属的撞击声，他知道笼子的门咔嚓一声关上了，没有打开。

二十四

栗树咖啡馆几乎空无一人。一道金黄色的阳光从窗户里斜斜地射进来，落在积满灰尘的桌面上。15点的咖啡馆孤单单的。电屏里传来微弱的音乐声。

温斯顿坐在他常坐的那个角落里，凝视着一只空玻璃杯。他不时便抬头看看对面墙上那张巨大的脸。那上面有个标题：老大哥在看着你。侍者自动过来为他倒满胜利牌杜松子酒，又从另外一个有着软木塞的瓶子里摇出几颗豆子。那是栗树咖啡馆特有的丁香味糖精。

温斯顿正在收听电屏，此刻里面只有音乐，但和平部的特别公告随时可能出现。非洲前线的状况令人极其不安。为此，每天他无时无刻不在担心。一支欧亚国大军（大洋国正在和欧亚国打仗，大洋国一直在和欧亚国打仗）正迅速地向南方移动。中午的公报没有提任何具体地点，但战场很有可能已经转移到刚果河口。布拉柴维尔和利奥波德维尔已经岌岌可危。这不仅仅是丢掉非洲中部的问题，这场战争让大洋国的领土第一次受到威胁。

某种强烈的情感在他心中燃起，说恐惧并不确切，那是一种无法言说的激动，但它很快就褪去了。他不再想和战争有关的事。这段时间，对任何事他都无法集中思想超过个把分钟。他拿起杯子，一饮而尽。一如往常，杜松子酒让他浑身颤抖，甚至有点儿恶心。这味道真是可怕，丁香和糖精的味道都足够令人作呕，却还是压不住酒的油味儿。最糟糕的莫过于无论白天黑夜，他的身上都沾着浓浓的杜松子酒味儿，在他的意识里，这酒味和某种气味牢牢地纠缠在一起，那是——

他从来不说明它们是什么，哪怕它们只存在于他的头脑里，他尽可能地不去想它们的样子。而只模模糊糊地想到它们逼近他的脸，其气味扑鼻而来，杜松子酒在他的肚子里翻滚，他用紫色的嘴唇打了一个嗝。自从他们释放了他之后，他就长胖了，气色也得以恢复——事实上，比之前的还要好。他变得强壮了，鼻子和脸颊上的皮肤泛起粗糙的红色，就连秃顶处也变成了粉红色。侍者再一次不经招呼拿来棋盘和新出的《泰晤士报》，还将报纸翻到有象棋题目的那一页。之后，他发现温斯顿的酒杯空了，就端来盛满杜松子酒的酒瓶为他斟满。不需要提什么要求，他们知道他的习惯。棋盘总会为他备好，这个角落里的位子也会为他留着，就算客人满员也是如此，因为没有人愿意被看到和他离得很近。他从来都懒得数自己喝了多少杯。过一会儿，他们就会递给他一张肮脏的纸条说是账单，但在他的印象中，他们总是算少了账。而即使反过来，多算了他的钱，也没什么分别。如今，他的钱总是够花，他甚至还有了工作，一个挂名职务，收入要比他之前的工作高得多。

电屏里的音乐停止了，响起说话的声音。温斯顿扬起头听着，但却不是前线的公报，而仅仅是富部的一条短通知。上个季度第十个三年计划鞋带产量超额完成了九十八个百分点。

他研究了一下棋局并摆上棋子。棋的结局很有欺骗性，要用到一对马。“白棋先走，两步将死。”温斯顿看了看老大哥的画像。白棋总是将死，他有一种蒙眬而神秘的感觉。总是这样，没有例外，都是被安排好的。自世界伊始，没有一盘棋黑棋能得胜。这难道不是一个永恒的象征吗？象征善良会战胜邪恶？那张巨大的脸正盯着他看，镇定又充满力量，白棋总是将死对方。

电屏上，声音暂停了一会儿，接着一个更为严肃的声音说：“大家注意，15点30分有重要通知，请做好收听准备。15点30分有非常重要的

新闻，不要错过。15点30分。”之后，叮的一声，音乐又响了起来。

温斯顿心里很乱。那会是来自前线的公报。本能告诉他那是个坏消息。整整一天他都有些激动，大洋国在非洲大败的情景不时便出现在他的脑海里。他似乎真的看到了欧亚国大军势如破竹地通过那从未被攻克边界，如一大队的蚂蚁涌入非洲南端。为什么不能从侧面包抄他们呢？西非海岸的轮廓生动地浮现在他的脑海中。他拿起白棋的马在棋盘上移动起来，正好走到合适的位置。就算在看到乌泱泱的大军向南部挺进时，他也看到了另一支大军神秘地集合起来，突然插入他们的后方，切断了他们的海陆联系。他觉得，凭借臆想，他正将另一支大军带入现实。只是行动一定要快。如果让他们控制了整个非洲，如果让他们得到了好望角的机场和潜艇基地，大洋国就会被一分为二。这意味着一切：战败、崩溃、重新瓜分世界以及党的覆灭！

他深深地吸了一口气，一种复杂而奇怪的感觉——准确地说并不是百感交集，而是一种多层次的感觉，他说不清在他内心最深处搅动的究竟是哪个层次的感觉。

一阵心潮澎湃后。他把白棋的马放回原位，但此时他已无法安定下来认真思考象棋的问题。他又漫无目的地想了起来。差不多是下意识地用手指在桌面上的灰尘中写道：

2+2=5

她曾说过：“他们进不去你心里。”但他们能。奥布兰说的：“在你身上发生的事会永远持续下去。”这是事实。你永远无法恢复一些事情，一些行为。在你的胸膛里，有什么东西被杀死，被烧光，被腐蚀。

他见过她，还和她说了话。这不会有什么危险。他本能地知道现在

他们对他的所作所为几乎没有兴趣。若他们两人中有一人愿意，他就可以安排和她再约会一次。事实上，那次见面只是偶然。那是在公园里，在三月的一个寒冷的天气很糟糕的日子里，地冻得像铁一样，草看上去也都死掉了，除了几株被风吹得支离破碎的番红花，看不到一支花骨朵。当他发现他和她的距离不过十米时，他正双手冰冷，流着眼泪，急匆匆地行走着。他一看到她就被打击到了，她变了，又说不清哪里变了。他们一个招呼都没打，擦肩而过。接着，他转过身，并不是特别急切地跟在她身后。他知道这儿没有危险，没人会对他们产生兴趣。她没说话，斜穿过草坪，好像在试图避开他，后来又似乎听任他待在她身边。不一会儿，他们就来到了粗糙的光秃秃的灌木丛中间，那里既避不住人，又躲不开风。他们停下脚步。天气太冷了，风打着哨穿过树枝，蹂躏着脏兮兮的番红花。他伸出手环住她的腰。

这里没有电屏，但多半藏着话筒，此外，他们还很有可能被人看见。但这不重要，一点都不重要。若他们想，他们大可以躺倒在地做那事。一想到这里，他就吓得浑身僵硬。而她则对他的拥抱没有丁点儿反应，甚至没有试图挣脱。现在他终于知道她发生了什么变化。她的气色很不好，脸上还有一条长长的疤痕，疤痕被头发遮住了一部分，从前额一直延续到太阳穴。但他感觉到的变化并不是这个。她的腰变粗了，很奇怪，也变硬了。记得有一次，在火箭弹爆炸之后，他帮忙将一具尸体从废墟里拖出来，他惊讶地发现尸体不仅重得让人难以置信，还非常僵硬，极难处理，就好像一块石头而非血肉之躯。她的身体就像那个尸体。他不禁觉得她皮肤的样子也可能和从前大不相同了。

他没有尝试去吻她，他们什么话都没有讲。当他们穿过草地往回走时，她第一次直视他的脸。那只是稍纵即逝的一眼，充满了轻蔑与厌恶。他不知道这厌恶究竟是单纯地源于往事，还是源于他那浮肿的脸和

被风吹得淌着泪水的眼睛。他们肩并肩地在两把铁制的椅子上坐下来，并没有靠得很紧。她想说什么，她将笨重的鞋子挪开了几厘米，还故意踩断了一根树枝。他注意到，她的脚好像变宽了。

“我背叛了你。”她直截了当地说。

“我背叛了你。”他说。

她又厌恶地快速看了他一眼。

“有几次，”她说，“他们用你无法忍受的想都不能想的东西威胁你。然后你就会说‘别这么对我，对别人这么做吧，对某人这么做吧’。你也许可以假装这是权宜之计，它不是你的本意，你只想让他们停下来。但这不是真的。事情发生时，你就是这个意思。你认为没有别的方法能救你，你希望它发生在其他人的身上。你并不在乎那人要承受什么，你只关心你自己。”

“你只关心你自己。”他附和道。

“之后，你对那个人的感觉再也不一样了。”

“不一样了，”他说，“你感觉不一样了。”

好像再没有别的话好说。风将他们单薄的工作服吹得贴近他们的身体。差不多同时，他们觉得默默无语地坐在那里很尴尬，更何况就这么坐着也太冷了。她说她有事要赶地铁，起身要走。

“我们一定会再见面的。”他说。

“是的，”她说，“我们一定会再见面。”

他有些犹豫地又跟了她一小段距离，在她身后，保持半步之遥。他们都没有再说话。她不是真的想把他甩掉，只是她的速度刚好可以避免和他并肩而行，他决定陪着她一直走到地铁站，但突然，他又觉得在如此寒冷的天气里一路跟下去既毫无意义又很难受。于是，他强烈地想离开朱莉亚，返回栗树咖啡馆，后者似乎还从未像现在这样吸引他。他想念角落里的那张桌子，想念那里的报纸、棋盘以及一直会被斟满的杜松子酒，最重要的是那里一定很温暖。接着，并非完全出于偶然，他任由一小群人插进他和朱莉亚中间，他心不在焉地追赶她，没多久便放慢脚步，转身向相反的方向走去。走了五十米后，他又回过头看了一眼。街上的人还不算多，但已经看不清她了。她可能就在十多个形色匆忙的人当中，也许他已经不能从后面认出她那厚实、僵硬的身体了。

“事情发生时，”她说过，“你就是这个意思。”他的确如此。他不仅这么说了，他还这么希望。他真的想他们应该把她而不是他，送上去

有什么东西让电屏中原本舒缓的音乐发生了变化，出现了一个尖利又充满嘲弄的音调，一个警报式的音调。然后——也许并没有真的发生，也许仅仅是和声音有关的记忆——有个声音唱道：

在栗子树的绿茵下，

我出卖了你，你出卖了我。

泪水从他的眼睛里涌了出来。一个侍者走过来，注意到他的杯子空了，就拿来杜松子酒。他举杯闻了闻，虽然这东西一口比一口难喝，但他已沉溺其中。它是他的生命，他的死亡，他的复生。是杜松子酒让他在夜晚酩酊大醉，又是杜松子酒让他在上午恢复活力。他很少在11点前

醒来，醒时眼睛犹如被胶水粘住睁不开，嘴里也仿佛有火烧一般。他的后背弯得像折断了一样，若不是前一天晚上在床边放了酒和茶杯，他甚至不可能爬起身来。在中午的几个小时里，他都神情呆滞地坐在那里收听电屏，手边还会放着一瓶酒。作为栗树咖啡馆的常客，他会从15点一直坐到打烊。没人在意他在做什么，电屏也不会呵斥他。有时，大概一周两次，他会去位于真理部的一间满是灰尘、被人遗忘的办公室里做点工作，或者说做一些所谓的工作。他被指派到一个委员会的下属委员会，其中前者是处理编纂第十一版新话词典细节问题的若干委员会中的一个。他们被雇来制定一个叫中期报告的东西，但他从来都不清楚这报告写的是什麼，好像和逗号是写在括号里还是括号外的問題有关。委员会的其他四名成员都是和他类似的人。有时他们因为开会聚在一起，会一开完，马上就分开，彼此都坦率地承认其实没有什么事好做。但在另一些日子里，他们也会坐下来几乎是热切地工作，尽可能地表现自己，他们登记纲要，起草长长的从来没有完成过的备忘录——每当有争论，他们就会把争论变得极其深奥复杂，对定义吹毛求疵，将话题无限扯远，吵闹着相互威胁，甚至说要向上级汇报。然而，突然，他们又都没了气力，围坐在桌旁面面相觑，好像听见公鸡打鸣便隐去的鬼魂。

电屏安静了一会儿，温斯顿再一次将头抬了起来。公报！但，不是，他们仅仅是换了下音乐。他眼前就有一幅非洲地图。军队的行动用图表的方式表示出来，一个黑色的箭头直指南方，一个白色的箭头横躺着指着东方，并穿过了黑色箭头的尾部。似乎是为了寻求安慰，他抬眼看了下画像上那张沉着的脸，怎么能认为第二个箭头是不存在的呢？他的兴趣又消失了。他喝了一口杜松子酒，拿起白棋的马，试探性地走了一步。将军。但显然这步棋下错了，因为他毫无理由地想起了一段往事。他想起一间点着蜡烛的屋子，屋子里有一张铺着白色床单的大床，还有他自己。他是一个九岁或十岁的男孩，正坐在地板上摇着一个骰子

盒，兴奋地哈哈大笑。他的母亲坐在他的对面，也在笑着。

这一定是她失踪前的一个月。那时，他们已经和好，他忘记了没完没了的饥饿感，对她也暂时恢复了小时候的爱恋。他记得很清楚，那是大雨滂沱的一天，雨水顺着窗框倾泻而下，屋子里的光线太暗了，无法看书。待在阴暗狭窄的卧室里，让两个孩子十分无聊。温斯顿一面抱怨，一面大发脾气，徒劳地要着吃的。他非常焦躁，将屋子里的所有东西都扯了出来，还大踢墙板直到邻居敲打墙壁以示抗议，与此同时比他小的那个孩子不时便号啕大哭。最后，他的母亲说：“乖乖的，我去给你买玩具。一个可爱的玩具——你会喜欢它的。”然后，她就冒着大雨出去了，附近仍有几个店子开张营业。她带回来一个硬纸箱，纸箱里装着一副蛇梯棋。他仍然记得硬纸板那潮湿的气味。棋做得很差劲，棋盘裂开了缝，木质的小骰子切坏了，以至于几乎不能躺平。温斯顿闷闷不乐地看着它，一点儿兴趣都没有。但他的母亲却点亮了一支蜡烛，之后，他们便坐在地板上玩了起来。过了一会儿，他便非常兴奋，又叫又笑，那个小棋子很有希望地爬到梯子顶，可接下来又一下子掉回了起点。他们玩了八次，各赢四次。他的妹妹太小了，还不明白他们在玩什么，她靠着长枕坐在那里，他们笑，她也跟着笑。整个下午，他们都待在一起很是快乐，一如他的幼年时代。

他将这幅景象从意识里赶走。这记忆是虚假的。这虚假的记忆经常让他感到烦恼。不过，只要人知道它们的虚假本质，它们就不再重要。一些事情发生过，一些没有。他重新注意起象棋，再次拿起白棋的马。而几乎同时棋子啪的一声掉在了棋盘上。他吓了一跳，就像被针扎到了一样。

一个尖利的喇叭声刺破了空气。是公报！胜利！喇叭声在新闻前出现就意味着胜利的消息。咖啡馆就像通了电一般激动，就连侍者也惊呆

了，竖起了耳朵。

喇叭声引起了巨大的噪音。电屏里传出充满激情的声音，喋喋不休地说着什么，可外面庆祝式的吼叫声却几乎将它淹没。消息像变戏法那样在街上传开。他能够从电屏上听到一切都如他所料。一支海军舰队秘密地集合起来突袭了敌军后方，白色箭头穿过了黑色箭头的尾部。透过喧嚣，他断断续续地听到一些胜利的短语：“大规模的展览调动——完美的——配合——彻底击溃——五十万俘虏——完全丧失士气——控制整个非洲——战争的最终胜利可以预测——人类历史的伟大胜利——胜利，胜利，胜利！”

桌子底下，温斯顿的脚抽筋式地抖动着。他定定地坐在那里，但在他的意识里，他却在奔跑，飞快地奔跑，和外面的人群一起，欢呼得耳朵都要聋了。他又抬头看了看老大哥的画像。这个驾驭世界的巨人！他是将亚洲之众撞得晕头转向的巨石！他想起，就在十分钟之前——没错，仅仅十分钟之前——就在他思考前线会传来胜利还是战败的消息的时候，他还满心困惑。啊，灭亡的岂止是一支欧亚国大军！从进入仁爱部的第一天起，他已发生了很大的变化，但是直到此刻，他才发生了最终的、不能缺少的、治愈性的改变。

电屏中的声音仍滔滔不绝地讲着俘虏、战利品和屠杀，外面的喊叫声已经减弱了一些。侍者们又回去工作了，他们中的一个拿来杜松子酒。温斯顿沉浸在美好的梦境中，没有注意到酒杯已被斟满。他不再奔跑欢呼，他重新回到仁爱部，所有事情都得到了原谅，他的灵魂洁白似雪。他站在公开的被告席上坦白了所有事情，牵连了所有的人。他走在铺着白色瓷砖的走廊里，就像走在阳光中，身后跟着携着枪的看守。期待已久的子弹射穿了他的脑袋。

他凝望着那张巨大的面孔。四十年了，他终于领会那隐藏在黑色胡须下的微笑意味着什么。哦，这是残酷又毫无必要的误会！哦，倔强任性的，从那充满慈爱的胸膛里自我流放的人！两颗混着杜松子酒味的眼泪顺着他的鼻梁流了下来。但这也好，一切都很好，斗争结束了。他战胜了自己，他爱老大哥。

新话原则

新话是大洋国的官方语言，也是应英社，即英国社会主义的意识形态而生的一种语言。到1984年为止，还没有人能將新话作为唯一的交流用语，演讲和写作都是如此。《泰晤士报》的社论是用新话书写的，但那是只能由专家写就的经典。预计要到2050年，新话才能最终将老话（或者用我们的话说“英语”）取代。与此同时，它正逐步扩大自己的影响力，所有党员都倾向使用新话，且越来越多地在日常生活中运用新话词汇及新话语法。1984年使用的版本以及第九版和第十版的新话词典所体现的新话原则都是临时性的，其中包括大量冗余词汇和过时的词形，所有这些都会在未来予以废止。最终也是最完美的版本，是第十一版新话词典。在这里，我们所关注的即该版的新话词典。

新话的目的不单是为英社的拥护者提供一种表达世界观和思想习惯的媒介，更是为了让其他所有的思维模式都成为不可能。它的职责是在新话被采用，且所有人都将老话遗忘后，异端思想——也就是那些违背英社原则的思想——从字面上来说，就不可能被想到，至少在思想依赖于词汇的情况下是这样。新话词汇之所以采用这样的构建方式，是为了让党员能够准确且微妙地表达出他们的正确意图，同时将其他含义和通过间接途径获得这些含义的可能性全部排除在外。要达到这个目的，部分是靠新词汇的创造，但主要是靠废除不合适的词汇以及清除残留下来的词的非正统的意义，尽最大可能地取缔它们的另一层含义。举个简单的例子，“free”在新话中仍然存在，但它只能用在以下一些语句中。如“This dog is free from lice.”（这条狗的身上没有跳蚤）或者“This field is free from weeds.”（这块田里没有杂草）而不能用在“politically free”（政治自由）或“intellectually free”（学术自由）上。因为政治自由

和学术自由即使作为概念都已不再存在，所以必须不能被冠以名称。而不止要禁止使用确实包含异端思想的词，词汇的数量也被认为是为了减少而减少。但凡可以被省略的词都不允许存在。新话的目的不是扩大词的思想范围，而是将词的思想范围缩小，通过将可供选择的词的数量削减到最少，间接地达到这一目的。

新话的基础就是今天为我们掌握的英语，尽管一些新话句子，即使不包括新创造的词汇，对现在正使用英语的人而言也很难理解。新话词汇包括三大类，即A类词汇、B类词汇（也称复合词）、C类词汇。分别讨论这三类词汇相对简单，至于该语言的语法特点可以归入A类词汇的讨论中，因为这三类词汇都是用相同的语法规则。

A类词汇。

A类词汇包括日常生活用词，例如吃、喝、工作、穿衣、上下楼、乘车、种花、烹饪等。几乎全部由我们现有的单词组成，例如打、跑、狗、树、糖、房子、田野等。但和今天的英语词汇相比，其数量已十分稀少，含义也被严格限定。所有模棱两可、含混不清的意义都被清除。只要可以，该类别的新话词汇都表达的是单一而明确的概念，可以被简单地看做一种不连贯的声音。使用A类词汇进行文学创作或讨论政治、哲学是完全不可能的。它只起到表达单纯而目的明确的思想的作用，通常只涉及具体的事物或身体动作。

新话语法有两个特点。第一个特点是，不同的词性几乎可以互相替换。任何一个单词（原则上，甚至适用于像“if”或“when”这样非常抽象的词）都可以既作动词，又作名词、形容词或副词。若词根相同，动词与名词就不存在形式上的区别，该规则使得若干旧词形被废止。如“thought”（思想）一词，在新话中就不再存在，被“think”（思考）取

而代之，后者既可以充当名词又可以充当动词。在这里人们无须遵循语源学的原则：某些情况下保留原有的名词，某些情况下又保留原有的动词。即便意思相近的动词与名词之间没有语源上的联系，它们中的一个也会被弃而不用。譬如不会有“cut”（切、割），因为“knife”（刀）包含了它的意思。在名词兼动词的词后面加“ful”就能将该词变成形容词的词形，在名词后加“wise”就能得到该词的副词形态。比

如“speedful”是“rapid”（迅速的）的意思，“speedwise”就是“quickly”（迅速地）的意思。如今，我们所使用的形容词，

如“good”（好）、“strong”（强

壮）、“big”（大）、“black”（黑）、“soft”（柔软）都保留了下来，但数量很少。人们几乎不需要用到它们，因为差不多任何一个形容词都可以通过在名词兼动词的词后面加“ful”获得。除了极个别本来就

以“wise”作词尾的词，所有副词都被取消：所有副词一律以“wise”作结尾。比如“well”（好，副词）便被“goodwise”取代。

此外，所有单词——原则上适用于每一个单词——都能通过加“un”的前缀表示否定，或者通过加“plus”的前缀加重语气、加“doubleplus”的前缀进一步强调词意。比如“uncold”（不冷）的意思就是“warm”（暖和），“pluscold”的意思是“very cold”（很冷），“doublepluscold”的意思是“superlatively cold”（极冷）。一如当代英语可以通过“anti”、“post”、“up”、“down”等前缀来更改一个词的含义。使用这一方法可以让词汇的数量大为减少。例如有了单词“good”（好），就没必要有单词“bad”（坏）了，因为“ungood”即可以表示相同的含义——这样确实更好些。任何本来就词义相对的两个词，都需要决定到底要废止其中的哪一个。比如“dark”（黑暗）可以被“unlight”（不亮）取代，“light”（明亮）也可以用“undark”（不暗）取代，就看你更喜欢用哪个了。

新话语法的第二个明显特点是它的规律性。除了以下提到的个别情况，所有词形都按照同一规则变化。因此，所有动词的过去式和过去分词都用“ed”作结尾。“steal”（偷）的过去式就是“stealed”，“think”（思考）的过去式是“thinked”，新话中都是如此。而所有诸如“swam”（“swim”的过去式）、“gave”（“give”的过去式）、“brought”（“bring”的过去式与过去分词）、“spoke”（“speak”的过去式）、“taken”（“take”的过去分词）等都被废止。所有复数都根据情况加“s”或“es”的后缀。“man”（人）、“ox”（公牛）、“life”（生物）的复数形式分别为“mans”、“oxes”、“lives”。形容词比较级全部加“er”的后缀，最高级加“est”的后缀，如“good”、“gooder”、“goodest”，像“more”和“most”这样的不规则的结构变化都被取消。

只有代词、关系形容词、指示形容词和助动词仍可进行不规则变化。除了“whom”因被认为是多余的而被取消，“shall”、“should”等时态被“will”、“would”代替，所有这些词都沿用旧有的使用方法。同时，一些不规则的形态变化是为了确保讲话便捷。倘一个词很难发音或极易被人听错，那么依照事实，它将被当做一个坏单词，出于悦耳的考虑，有时需要在该词中增加几个字母或保留它旧有的词形。但这种情况主要出现在B类词汇中。而为什么发音会如此重要，接下来的段落将对此做出解释。

B类词汇。

B类词汇都是为了政治目的特意创造出来的，也就是说，不只每个单词都包含政治意味，且创造这些单词的目的就是为了确保使用者能够具备令当局满意的思想态度。若对英社的了解不够多，则很难使用这些单词。有时，它们可以被翻译成老话，甚至是A类词汇，但这通常需要附上大段的解释并总是会漏掉一些言外之意。B类词汇是一种非书面的

简要的表达方式，常用少数几个音节表达若干个含义，比一般的语言更精确、更有力。

B类词汇都是复合词。它们由两个或两个以上的单词，或者几个单词的部分，按照非常容易发音的形式组合起来。其结果便是得出了遵循一般变化规则的，且动、名词兼用的混合词。譬如“goodthink”（好思想）大致可看作“orthodoxy”（正统）的意思，如果用作动词，即指“以正统的方式思考”。而它的形态变化是：名词兼动词“goodthink”，过去式和过去分词“goodthinked”，现在分词“goodthinking”，形容词“goodthinkful”，副词“goodthinkwise”、动名词“goodthinker”。

B类词汇并非按照词源学构建，任何词性的单词都可以成为它的构成部分，且可以采取任何排列顺序，按任何一种方式进行修改，既要便于发音，又要说明来历。比如“crimethink”（思想罪）一词，“think”放在了后面，而在“thinkpol”（思想警察）一词中，它又放在了前面，同时后面的“pol”又是“police”（警察）略去第二个音节的结果。由于要让单词读起来悦耳并不容易，B类词汇中的不规则词形要比A类词汇的多。譬如“Minitrue”（真理部）、“Minipax”（和平部）、“Miniluv”（仁爱部）的形容词分别是“Minitruthful”、“Minipeaceful”、“Minilovely”，单纯因为若改为“-trueful”、“-paxful”、“-lovelful”发起音来有点难，所以才不予采用。从原则上说，所有B类词汇都可以变化，且变化的方式完全相同。

一些B类词汇的含义十分微妙，任何没能完全掌握这种语言的人都难以理解。以《泰晤士报》头条文章中的典型句子为例：“Olethinkers unbellyfeel Ingsoc”用老话翻译，最短的也是“Those whose ideas were formed before the Revolution cannot have a full emotional understanding of the principles of English Socialism.”（那些思想在革命前成形的人不可能

在感情上对英国社会主义的原则有充分的理解）但这并没有将句子的意思完全译出来。首先，为了彻底理解新话写就的句子的含义，一个人必须清楚“**Ingso**c”（英社）的概念。此外，只有对英社有了相当程度的了解，一个人才能真的体会到“**bellyfeel**”一词的全部力量，它的意思是一种盲目的如今以难以想象的狂热的接受。“**oldthink**”也是一样，该单词已经和邪恶、堕落密不可分。但是，在新话中一些单词有特殊的作用，“**oldthink**”就是其中之一，这类词并不是要表达某个意思，而是要将该意思消灭。这些词的数量很少，却非常必要，它们的含义被引申直到囊括进一堆单词，由于这些单词的含义都被包含在一个综合性的术语里，它们自己便可以被遗忘、被丢弃了。对新话的编纂者而言，最大的困难不是创造新词，而是在创造它们之后明确它们的含义，即在创造出它们后，确定到底该有哪类范围的词被取消。

正如我们在“**free**”（自由）一词上看到的一样，有时一些曾包含异端意味的词为了方便被保留下来，但只有在清除掉它身上那些不当的含义之后，才能如此。像“**honour**”（荣誉）、“**justice**”（正义）、“**morality**”（道德）、“**internationalism**”（国际主义）、“**democracy**”（民主）、“**science**”（科学）、“**religion**”（宗教）等词都不存在了。它们被少数几个概括性的词的词义所覆盖，进而遭到废弃。比如所有和自由平等有关的词都被“**crimethink**”（思想罪）包括，所有和客观、理性有关的词都被包含进“**oldthink**”（旧思想）当中。若再精确一些就有危险了。党员的观点应该和古希伯来人的类似，后者被认为不应该知道太多，只需知道其他民族的人都崇拜伪神就够了。至于这些神祇是“**Beal**”（古凯尔特人太阳神）、“**Osiris**”（埃及神话中的地狱之神）、“**Moloch**”（古腓尼基人的火神）、“**Ashtaroth**”（古腓尼基人的守护女神），他们就没必要了解了。也许，照正统看来，他们知道得越少越好。由于他知道耶和华的戒律，所以他清楚所有其他名字和其他性质

的神都是伪神。党员也是一样，党员知道什么是正确的行为，也非常模糊地笼统地知道哪些行为是离经叛道。例如他的性生活被两个词约束，“sexcrime”（性犯罪）和“goodsex”（好的性）。“sexcrime”涵盖了所有性方面的不端行为，包括乱伦、通奸、同性恋及其他堕落的行为，同时也包括了正常的为了性交而性交的行为。没必要对它们加以区分，它们都算犯罪，且原则上说，都要被处以死刑。C类词汇里，即由科学和技术方面的单词所构成的词，可能需要赋予某些反常的性行为以特殊的名称，但一般的公民是不需要这些词汇的。他知道“goodsex”是什么，即发生在男人和他妻子之间的正常的性行为，该性行为的唯一目的便是生儿育女，且女方没有生理上的快感。除此之外，其他的性行为都是“sexcrime”。新话里很少会有在察觉到某种想法为异端时仍继续思考下去的可能，因为除了可以意识到其为异端，其他思考所需的词都不存在。

B类词汇中没有哪个词在意识形态上是中立的。很多词都属委婉语。举个例子，“joycamp”（乐趣营）实际上是强制性劳动营。“Minipax Ministry of Peace”（和平部）实际是战争部，词的含义与字面意思几乎恰好相反。而另一方面，一些词又直白地表现出对大洋国真实情况的蔑视。比如“prolefeed”便是指党提供给群众的低级娱乐和虚假新闻。还有一些词同时包含着相互矛盾的含义，用在党的身上就是“好”，用在敌人身上就是“坏”。此外很多词，乍看无非是缩写，但其意识形态不来自于它的含义，而恰恰来自于它的结构。

只要得到精心的安排，所有有政治意义或可能拥有政治意义的词都适合纳入B类词汇中。一切组织、团体、学说、国家、机构、公共建筑的名字都毫无例外地被缩减成为人熟知的词形：一个容易发音，音节最少且保持原有词源的单词。比如在真理部，温斯顿·史密斯的记录司

（the Record Department）被称作“Recdep”；小说司（the Fiction Department）被称作“Ficdep”；电屏节目司（the Teleprogrammes Department）被称作“Teledep”。这样做并非简单地为了节省时间。事实上早在20世纪初，缩略语就已然成为政治语言的特点之一。人们注意到极权国家和极权组织，明显倾向使用这种缩略语。比如：“Nazi”（纳粹）、“Gestapo”（盖世太保）、“Comintern”（共产国际）、“Agitprop”（宣传鼓动）。一开始这只是本能的作法，但在新话中，它却是有意为之了。人们发现，通过将某个名字进行缩略，可以减少其中大部分惹人联想的意思，将其含义狭隘化，使其发生微妙的变化。比如“Communist International”（共产主义国际组织）会让人想象一幅由亲如兄弟的人类、红旗、街垒、卡尔·马克思和巴黎公社共同构成的画面。但“Comintern”就只意味着一个严密的组织和一个明确完备的主义。它所涉及的就像桌椅一样容易区分、目的有限。“Comintern”一词几乎可以脱口而出。而Communist International多少要想想才能说出口。同样的，“Minitrue”产生的联想不仅要比“Ministry of Truth”少，也比“Ministry of Truth”更容易控制。这既可以解释只要有机会便使用缩略语的习惯因何而来，还可以解释为什么人们要想尽办法让词更容易发音。

新话中，除了词义精确外，发音悦耳也被充分考虑。若有需要，语法规则也可为此牺牲。这是理所当然的，也是必须的，出于政治上的考虑，干脆简短、语义明确的单词能够很快说出来，带给人的心灵上的回响也最为有限。事实上，B类词汇甚至因为彼此类似，而更有力量。它们常常只有两三个音节，且重音均匀地落在第一个和最后一个音节上。如“goodthink”、“Minipax”、“prolefeed”、“sexcrime”、“joycamp”、“Ingsc使用这些词汇可以让说话的腔调变得急促而含糊，断断续续又单调乏味，这正是它的目的所在，它能让讲话——特别是面对意识形态并非中立的话题时——尽可能地脱离意识。在日常生活里，人们无疑需要，或

者说有时候需要在说话前想一想。但党员在发表政治或道德上的看法时，就被要求像机关枪发射子弹一样，不假思索地迸发出正确的见解。他所接受的训练让他适应这一要求，新话这工具又让他在这方面几乎万无一失。由于这些词的结构、刺耳的读音以及某些丑陋不堪的地方都符合了英社的精神，凭借着它们，他甚至可以做得更好。

事实上，人们能够选择的单词的范围非常小。和如今人们所使用的语言相比，新话的词汇量非常少，且时常便会出现减少词汇量的新方法。新话，的确，它和其他语言的区别就在于它的词汇量是逐年减少而不是逐年增多。每减少一点，就多一点收获，因为可供选择的词的范围变小，思考对人的诱惑也跟着变小。最后，它希望无须使用较高级的大脑中枢，就可以清楚地从喉咙里发出声音。新话的“*duckspeak*”一词就坦率地承认了这点，它的意思是“像鸭子一样叫”。和B类词汇中的绝大多数单词一样，“*duckspeak*”既可以是贬义的，也可以是褒义的。若人所说的是正统观点，那么，对此它除了赞美就没有别的什么含义了。当《泰晤士报》说某个演说家是“*doubleplusegood duckspeaker*”时，它即是在对该演说家表示热情而珍贵的赞赏。

C类词汇。

C类词汇是对其他两类词汇的补充，完全由科技术语组成，和今天我们使用的科技术语相似，由相同的词根构成，但通常都被阉割定义，且剔除掉了不合适的含义。在语法规则方面，C类词汇和其他两类词汇相同。日常交谈或政治演说都极少会用到C类词汇。而所有科学工作者或技术人员都能在与其专业相对应的专用词汇表中找到所有他需要用到的词。至于其他单词表上的词汇，他就知之甚少。只有极少数单词是所有词汇表所共有的，也没有哪个词汇拥有将科学作为思想习惯或思想方法进行表述的功能，对此，任何科学分支都一样。事实上根本没

有“Scuebce”(科学)这个单词，因为“Ingsoc”已经将它所有可能拥有的含义都包括在内了。

综上所述，可以看出，在新话中，非正统的观点要想得到高级一点的表述则完全不可能。当然，异端邪说很可能以非常粗鲁的方式讲出来。比如“Big Brother is ungood”（老大哥不好）。但这在正统的耳朵里听起来仅仅是不言而喻的荒谬，不可能有充分的理由证明它是对的，因为找不到论证所需的单词。不利于英社的观点只能以一种模糊的无法言说的方式存在，且只能用十分笼统的术语为其命名。这些笼统的词汇囊括了各种异端邪说，无须为它们做什么定义，就对它们进行了谴责。实际上，一个人只有将这些词非法地翻译成老话，才能实现“用新话表示非正统的思想”的目的。比如，用新话也可能说出“All mans are equal”（人人平等）这样的句子，但它却和老话里的“All men are redhaired”（人人都是红头发）是同类型的句子。它没有语法错误，但它表述的却是一看即知的谎言——即所有人都有着相同的身高、体重或力量。政治平等的概念已不再存在，因为它的次要含义已经从“equal”一词中剔除。在1984年，老话仍是自然而然的交流方式，从理论上说，还存在着这样的危险：人们在使用新话时仍记得它们原有的含义。但站在实践的角度，任何精于双重思想的人都很容易避开这点，而再过一两代，甚至连这方面的失误也将消失。把新话作为唯一语言成长起来的人是不会知道“equal”一词曾经有过“政治平等”的次要含义的，也不会知道“free”有过“思想自由”的次要含义，一如从来没有听说过象棋的人不会了解“后”和“车”的次要含义。很多罪行和错误都超出了人的能力范畴，它们都没有名字，也无法被想象出来。可以预见，随着时间的推移，新话的特征将愈发明显——词汇的数量越来越少，含义越来越严格，将其用于非正常的目的的可能性越来越小。

当老话成为过去并完全被取代后，人们和过去世界的最后一点联系也被切断了。历史被重新书写，但和过去有关的文献的碎片并没有遭到彻底的检查，仍会在这里或那里出现，只要人们还保留着和老话有关的知识，就仍有可能阅读这些碎片。但到了未来，即使这些碎片得以幸存，人们也很难理解它、翻译它，除非它只涉及某项技术进步或非常简单的日常行为，再不就是它已经倾向正统（用新话讲就是“goodthinkful”）。事实上，1960年之前的书没有一本能完完整整地翻译成新话，革命前的文献只能做意识形态上的翻译，也就是说既改变文字又改变意义。如《独立宣言》中众所周知的一段话：

我们认为以下真理是不言而喻的。人人生而平等，造物主赋予他们若干不可让渡的权利，包括生命权、自由权和追求幸福的权利。为保障这些权利，人们才在他们中间设立了政府，政府的正当权力是经被治理者的同意产生的。任何形式的政府对这些目标起破坏作用，人们就有权利更换或推翻它，以建立一个新的政府……

要想用新话翻译出这段话的原意是根本不可能的。最贴合原意的做法就是用一个单词“crimethink”来概括这段话。因此完整的翻译只能是意识形态上的翻译，将杰斐逊的这段话翻译成对拥有绝对权力的政府的赞颂。

没错，大量过去的文献都用这种方法改写过。考虑到自己的声望，有必要保留关于某些历史人物的记忆，并让他们的成就和英社的哲学相呼应。因此诸如莎士比亚、弥尔顿、斯威夫特、拜伦、狄更斯以及其他一些作家的作品都正在被翻译。什么时候翻译完了，什么时候他们原先的作品还有所有残留下来的过去的文献，都将被毁灭。这些翻译进展得非常慢，还很艰难，21世纪的前一二十年大概完成不了。此外，还有为数不少的实用性的文献——不可或缺的技术手册之类——也要如此处

理。正是考虑到要留出时间进行“翻译此前文献”的工作，新话的最终采用时间才被推迟到2050年。

NINE TEEN EIGHTY-FOER

I

It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen. Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his breast in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions, though not quickly enough to prevent a swirl of gritty dust from entering along with him.

The hallway smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats. At one end of it a coloured poster, too large for indoor display, had been tacked to the wall. It depicted simply an enormous face, more than a metre wide: the face of a man of about forty-five, with a heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features. Winston made for the stairs. It was no use trying the lift. Even at the best of times it was seldom working, and at present the electric current was cut off during daylight hours. It was part of the economy drive in preparation for Hate Week. The flat was seven flights up, and Winston, who was thirty-nine and had a varicose ulcer above his right ankle, went slowly, resting several times on the way. On each landing, opposite the lift-shaft, the poster with the enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures which are so contrived that the eyes follow you about when you move. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption beneath it ran.

Inside the flat a fruity voice was reading out a list of figures which had something to do with the production of pig-iron. The voice came from an oblong metal plaque like a dulled mirror which formed part of the surface of the right-hand wall. Winston turned a switch and the voice sank somewhat, though the words were still distinguishable. The instrument (the telescreen, it

was called) could be dimmed, but there was no way of shutting it off completely. He moved over to the window: a smallish, frail figure, the meagreness of his body merely emphasized by the blue overalls which were the uniform of the party. His hair was very fair, his face naturally sanguine, his skin roughened by coarse soap and blunt razor blades and the cold of the winter that had just ended.

Outside, even through the shut window-pane, the world looked cold. Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and the sky a harsh blue, there seemed to be no colour in anything, except the posters that were plastered everywhere. The blackmoustachio'd face gazed down from every commanding corner. There was one on the house-front immediately opposite. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption said, while the dark eyes looked deep into Winston's own. Down at streetlevel another poster, torn at one corner, flapped fitfully in the wind, alternately covering and uncovering the single word INGSOC. In the far distance a helicopter skimmed down between the roofs, hovered for an instant like a bluebottle, and darted away again with a curving flight. It was the police patrol, snooping into people's windows. The patrols did not matter, however. Only the Thought Police mattered.

Behind Winston's back the voice from the telescreen was still babbling away about pig-iron and the overfulfilment of the Ninth Three-Year Plan. The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it, moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the

metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to. You had to live -- did live, from habit that became instinct -- in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized.

Winston kept his back turned to the telescreen. It was safer, though, as he well knew, even a back can be revealing. A kilometre away the Ministry of Truth, his place of work, towered vast and white above the grimy landscape. This, he thought with a sort of vague distaste -- this was London, chief city of Airstrip One, itself the third most populous of the provinces of Oceania. He tried to squeeze out some childhood memory that should tell him whether London had always been quite like this. Were there always these vistas of rotting nineteenth-century houses, their sides shored up with baulks of timber, their windows patched with cardboard and their roofs with corrugated iron, their crazy garden walls sagging in all directions? And the bombed sites where the plaster dust swirled in the air and the willow-herb straggled over the heaps of rubble; and the places where the bombs had cleared a larger patch and there had sprung up sordid colonies of wooden dwellings like chicken-houses? But it was no use, he could not remember: nothing remained of his childhood except a series of bright-lit tableaux occurring against no background and mostly unintelligible.

The Ministry of Truth -- Minitrue, in Newspeak* -- was startlingly

different from any other object in sight. It was an enormous pyramidal structure of glittering white concrete, soaring up, terrace after terrace, 300 metres into the air. From where Winston stood it was just possible to read, picked out on its white face in elegant lettering, the three slogans of the Party:

WAR IS PEACE

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

The Ministry of Truth contained, it was said, three thousand rooms above ground level, and corresponding ramifications below. Scattered about London there were just three other buildings of similar appearance and size. So completely did they dwarf the surrounding architecture that from the roof of Victory Mansions you could see all four of them simultaneously. They were the homes of the four Ministries between which the entire apparatus of government was divided. The Ministry of Truth, which concerned itself with news, entertainment, education, and the fine arts. The Ministry of Peace, which concerned itself with war. The Ministry of Love, which maintained law and order. And the Ministry of Plenty, which was responsible for economic affairs. Their names, in Newspeak: Minitrue, Minipax, Miniluv, and Miniplenty.

The Ministry of Love was the really frightening one. There were no windows in it at all. Winston had never been inside the Ministry of Love, nor within half a kilometre of it. It was a place impossible to enter except on official business, and then only by penetrating through a maze of barbed-wire

entanglements, steel doors, and hidden machine-gun nests. Even the streets leading up to its outer barriers were roamed by gorilla-faced guards in black uniforms, armed with jointed truncheons.

Winston turned round abruptly. He had set his features into the expression of quiet optimism which it was advisable to wear when facing the telescreen. He crossed the room into the tiny kitchen. By leaving the Ministry at this time of day he had sacrificed his lunch in the canteen, and he was aware that there was no food in the kitchen except a hunk of dark-coloured bread which had got to be saved for tomorrow's breakfast. He took down from the shelf a bottle of colourless liquid with a plain white label marked VICTORY GIN. It gave off a sickly, oily smell, as of Chinese rice-spirit. Winston poured out nearly a teacupful, nerved himself for a shock, and gulped it down like a dose of medicine.

Instantly his face turned scarlet and the water ran out of his eyes. The stuff was like nitric acid, and moreover, in swallowing it one had the sensation of being hit on the back of the head with a rubber club. The next moment, however, the burning in his belly died down and the world began to look more cheerful. He took a cigarette from a crumpled packet marked VICTORY CIGARETTES and incautiously held it upright, whereupon the tobacco fell out on to the floor. With the next he was more successful. He went back to the living-room and sat down at a small table that stood to the left of the telescreen. From the table drawer he took out a penholder, a bottle of ink, and a thick, quarto-sized blank book with a red back and a marbled cover.

For some reason the telescreen in the living-room was in an unusual

position. Instead of being placed, as was normal, in the end wall, where it could command the whole room, it was in the longer wall, opposite the window. To one side of it there was a shallow alcove in which Winston was now sitting, and which, when the flats were built, had probably been intended to hold bookshelves. By sitting in the alcove, and keeping well back, Winston was able to remain outside the range of the telescreen, so far as sight went. He could be heard, of course, but so long as he stayed in his present position he could not be seen. It was partly the unusual geography of the room that had suggested to him the thing that he was now about to do.

But it had also been suggested by the book that he had just taken out of the drawer. It was a peculiarly beautiful book. Its smooth creamy paper, a little yellowed by age, was of a kind that had not been manufactured for at least forty years past. He could guess, however, that the book was much older than that. He had seen it lying in the window of a frowsy little junk-shop in a slummy quarter of the town (just what quarter he did not now remember) and had been stricken immediately by an overwhelming desire to possess it. Party members were supposed not to go into ordinary shops ('dealing on the free market', it was called), but the rule was not strictly kept, because there were various things, such as shoelaces and razor blades, which it was impossible to get hold of in any other way. He had given a quick glance up and down the street and then had slipped inside and bought the book for two dollars fifty. At the time he was not conscious of wanting it for any particular purpose. He had carried it guiltily home in his briefcase. Even with nothing written in it, it was a compromising possession.

The thing that he was about to do was to open a diary. This was not

illegal (nothing was illegal, since there were no longer any laws), but if detected it was reasonably certain that it would be punished by death, or at least by twenty-five years in a forced-labour camp. Winston fitted a nib into the penholder and sucked it to get the grease off. The pen was an archaic instrument, seldom used even for signatures, and he had procured one, furtively and with some difficulty, simply because of a feeling that the beautiful creamy paper deserved to be written on with a real nib instead of being scratched with an ink-pencil. Actually he was not used to writing by hand. Apart from very short notes, it was usual to dictate everything into the speak-write which was of course impossible for his present purpose. He dipped the pen into the ink and then faltered for just a second. A tremor had gone through his bowels. To mark the paper was the decisive act. In small clumsy letters he wrote:

April 4th, 1984.

He sat back. A sense of complete helplessness had descended upon him. To begin with, he did not know with any certainty that this was 1984. It must be round about that date, since he was fairly sure that his age was thirty-nine, and he believed that he had been born in 1944 or 1945; but it was never possible nowadays to pin down any date within a year or two.

For whom, it suddenly occurred to him to wonder, was he writing this diary? For the future, for the unborn. His mind hovered for a moment round the doubtful date on the page, and then fetched up with a bump against the Newspeak word doublethink. For the first time the magnitude of what he had undertaken came home to him. How could you communicate with the future? It was of its nature impossible. Either the future would resemble the present,

in which case it would not listen to him: or it would be different from it, and his predicament would be meaningless.

For some time he sat gazing stupidly at the paper. The telescreen had changed over to strident military music. It was curious that he seemed not merely to have lost the power of expressing himself, but even to have forgotten what it was that he had originally intended to say. For weeks past he had been making ready for this moment, and it had never crossed his mind that anything would be needed except courage. The actual writing would be easy. All he had to do was to transfer to paper the interminable restless monologue that had been running inside his head, literally for years. At this moment, however, even the monologue had dried up. Moreover his varicose ulcer had begun itching unbearably. He dared not scratch it, because if he did so it always became inflamed. The seconds were ticking by. He was conscious of nothing except the blankness of the page in front of him, the itching of the skin above his ankle, the blaring of the music, and a slight booziness caused by the gin.

Suddenly he began writing in sheer panic, only imperfectly aware of what he was setting down. His small but childish handwriting straggled up and down the page, shedding first its capital letters and finally even its full stops:

April 4th, 1984. Last night to the flicks. All war films. One very good one of a ship full of refugees being bombed somewhere in the Mediterranean. Audience much amused by shots of a great huge fat man trying to swim away with a helicopter after him, first you saw him wallowing along in the water like a porpoise, then you saw him through the helicopters gunsights, then he

was full of holes and the sea round him turned pink and he sank as suddenly as though the holes had let in the water, audience shouting with laughter when he sank. then you saw a lifeboat full of children with a helicopter hovering over it. there was a middle-aged woman might have been a jewess sitting up in the bow with a little boy about three years old in her arms. little boy screaming with fright and hiding his head between her breasts as if he was trying to burrow right into her and the woman putting her arms round him and comforting him although she was blue with fright herself, all the time covering him up as much as possible as if she thought her arms could keep the bullets off him. then the helicopter planted a 20 kilo bomb in among them terrific flash and the boat went all to matchwood. then there was a wonderful shot of a child's arm going up up up right up into the air a helicopter with a camera in its nose must have followed it up and there was a lot of applause from the party seats but a woman down in the prole part of the house suddenly started kicking up a fuss and shouting they didnt oughter of showed it not in front of kids they didnt it aint right not in front of kids it aint until the police turned her turned her out i dont suppose anything happened to her nobody cares what the proles say typical prole reaction they never

Winston stopped writing, partly because he was suffering from cramp. He did not know what had made him pour out this stream of rubbish. But the curious thing was that while he was doing so a totally different memory had clarified itself in his mind, to the point where he almost felt equal to writing it down. It was, he now realized, because of this other incident that he had suddenly decided to come home and begin the diary today.

It had happened that morning at the Ministry, if anything so nebulous

could be said to happen.

It was nearly eleven hundred, and in the Records Department, where Winston worked, they were dragging the chairs out of the cubicles and grouping them in the centre of the hall opposite the big telescreen, in preparation for the Two Minutes Hate. Winston was just taking his place in one of the middle rows when two people whom he knew by sight, but had never spoken to, came unexpectedly into the room. One of them was a girl whom he often passed in the corridors. He did not know her name, but he knew that she worked in the Fiction Department. Presumably -- since he had sometimes seen her with oily hands and carrying a spanner she had some mechanical job on one of the novel-writing machines. She was a bold-looking girl, of about twenty-seven, with thick hair, a freckled face, and swift, athletic movements. A narrow scarlet sash, emblem of the Junior Anti-Sex League, was wound several times round the waist of her overalls, just tightly enough to bring out the shapeliness of her hips. Winston had disliked her from the very first moment of seeing her. He knew the reason. It was because of the atmosphere of hockey-fields and cold baths and community hikes and general clean-mindedness which she managed to carry about with her. He disliked nearly all women, and especially the young and pretty ones. It was always the women, and above all the young ones, who were the most bigoted adherents of the Party, the swallowers of slogans, the amateur spies and nosers-out of unorthodoxy. But this particular girl gave him the impression of being more dangerous than most. Once when they passed in the corridor she gave him a quick sidelong glance which seemed to pierce right into him and for a moment had filled him with black terror. The idea had even crossed his mind that she might be an agent of the Thought Police. That,

it was true, was very unlikely. Still, he continued to feel a peculiar uneasiness, which had fear mixed up in it as well as hostility, whenever she was anywhere near him.

The other person was a man named O'Brien, a member of the Inner Party and holder of some post so important and remote that Winston had only a dim idea of its nature. A momentary hush passed over the group of people round the chairs as they saw the black overalls of an Inner Party member approaching. O'Brien was a large, burly man with a thick neck and a coarse, humorous, brutal face. In spite of his formidable appearance he had a certain charm of manner. He had a trick of resettling his spectacles on his nose which was curiously disarming -- in some indefinable way, curiously civilized. It was a gesture which, if anyone had still thought in such terms, might have recalled an eighteenth-century nobleman offering his snuffbox. Winston had seen O'Brien perhaps a dozen times in almost as many years. He felt deeply drawn to him, and not solely because he was intrigued by the contrast between O'Brien's urbane manner and his prize-fighter's physique. Much more it was because of a secretly held belief -- or perhaps not even a belief, merely a hope -- that O'Brien's political orthodoxy was not perfect. Something in his face suggested it irresistibly. And again, perhaps it was not even unorthodoxy that was written in his face, but simply intelligence. But at any rate he had the appearance of being a person that you could talk to if somehow you could cheat the telescreen and get him alone. Winston had never made the smallest effort to verify this guess: indeed, there was no way of doing so. At this moment O'Brien glanced at his wrist-watch, saw that it was nearly eleven hundred, and evidently decided to stay in the Records Department until the Two Minutes Hate was over. He took a chair in the

same row as Winston, a couple of places away. A small, sandy-haired woman who worked in the next cubicle to Winston was between them. The girl with dark hair was sitting immediately behind.

The next moment a hideous, grinding speech, as of some monstrous machine running without oil, burst from the big telescreen at the end of the room. It was a noise that set one's teeth on edge and bristled the hair at the back of one's neck. The Hate had started.

As usual, the face of Emmanuel Goldstein, the Enemy of the People, had flashed on to the screen. There were hisses here and there among the audience. The little sandy-haired woman gave a squeak of mingled fear and disgust. Goldstein was the renegade and backslider who once, long ago (how long ago, nobody quite remembered), had been one of the leading figures of the Party, almost on a level with Big Brother himself, and then had engaged in counter-revolutionary activities, had been condemned to death, and had mysteriously escaped and disappeared. The programmes of the Two Minutes Hate varied from day to day, but there was none in which Goldstein was not the principal figure. He was the primal traitor, the earliest defiler of the Party's purity. All subsequent crimes against the Party, all treacheries, acts of sabotage, heresies, deviations, sprang directly out of his teaching. Somewhere or other he was still alive and hatching his conspiracies: perhaps somewhere beyond the sea, under the protection of his foreign paymasters, perhaps even -- so it was occasionally rumoured -- in some hiding-place in Oceania itself.

Winston's diaphragm was constricted. He could never see the face of Goldstein without a painful mixture of emotions. It was a lean Jewish face, with a great fuzzy aureole of white hair and a small goatee beard -- a clever

face, and yet somehow inherently despicable, with a kind of senile silliness in the long thin nose, near the end of which a pair of spectacles was perched. It resembled the face of a sheep, and the voice, too, had a sheep-like quality. Goldstein was delivering his usual venomous attack upon the doctrines of the Party -- an attack so exaggerated and perverse that a child should have been able to see through it, and yet just plausible enough to fill one with an alarmed feeling that other people, less level-headed than oneself, might be taken in by it. He was abusing Big Brother, he was denouncing the dictatorship of the Party, he was demanding the immediate conclusion of peace with Eurasia, he was advocating freedom of speech, freedom of the Press, freedom of assembly, freedom of thought, he was crying hysterically that the revolution had been betrayed -- and all this in rapid polysyllabic speech which was a sort of parody of the habitual style of the orators of the Party, and even contained Newspeak words: more Newspeak words, indeed, than any Party member would normally use in real life. And all the while, lest one should be in any doubt as to the reality which Goldstein's specious claptrap covered, behind his head on the telescreen there marched the endless columns of the Eurasian army -- row after row of solid-looking men with expressionless Asiatic faces, who swam up to the surface of the screen and vanished, to be replaced by others exactly similar. The dull rhythmic tramp of the soldiers' boots formed the background to Goldstein's bleating voice.

Before the Hate had proceeded for thirty seconds, uncontrollable exclamations of rage were breaking out from half the people in the room. The self-satisfied sheep-like face on the screen, and the terrifying power of the Eurasian army behind it, were too much to be borne: besides, the sight or even the thought of Goldstein produced fear and anger automatically. He was

an object of hatred more constant than either Eurasia or Eastasia, since when Oceania was at war with one of these Powers it was generally at peace with the other. But what was strange was that although Goldstein was hated and despised by everybody, although every day and a thousand times a day, on platforms, on the telescreen, in newspapers, in books, his theories were refuted, smashed, ridiculed, held up to the general gaze for the pitiful rubbish that they were in spite of all this, his influence never seemed to grow less. Always there were fresh dupes waiting to be seduced by him. A day never passed when spies and saboteurs acting under his directions were not unmasked by the Thought Police. He was the commander of a vast shadowy army, an underground network of conspirators dedicated to the overthrow of the State. The Brotherhood, its name was supposed to be. There were also whispered stories of a terrible book, a compendium of all the heresies, of which Goldstein was the author and which circulated clandestinely here and there. It was a book without a title. People referred to it, if at all, simply as the book. But one knew of such things only through vague rumours. Neither the Brotherhood nor the book was a subject that any ordinary Party member would mention if there was a way of avoiding it.

In its second minute the Hate rose to a frenzy. People were leaping up and down in their places and shouting at the tops of their voices in an effort to drown the maddening bleating voice that came from the screen. The little sandy-haired woman had turned bright pink, and her mouth was opening and shutting like that of a landed fish. Even O'Brien's heavy face was flushed. He was sitting very straight in his chair, his powerful chest swelling and quivering as though he were standing up to the assault of a wave. The dark-haired girl behind Winston had begun crying out 'Swine! Swine! Swine!' and

suddenly she picked up a heavy Newspeak dictionary and flung it at the screen. It struck Goldstein's nose and bounced off; the voice continued inexorably. In a lucid moment Winston found that he was shouting with the others and kicking his heel violently against the rung of his chair. The horrible thing about the Two Minutes Hate was not that one was obliged to act a part, but, on the contrary, that it was impossible to avoid joining in. Within thirty seconds any pretence was always unnecessary. A hideous ecstasy of fear and vindictiveness, a desire to kill, to torture, to smash faces in with a sledge-hammer, seemed to flow through the whole group of people like an electric current, turning one even against one's will into a grimacing, screaming lunatic. And yet the rage that one felt was an abstract, undirected emotion which could be switched from one object to another like the flame of a blowlamp. Thus, at one moment Winston's hatred was not turned against Goldstein at all, but, on the contrary, against Big Brother, the Party, and the Thought Police; and at such moments his heart went out to the lonely, derided heretic on the screen, sole guardian of truth and sanity in a world of lies. And yet the very next instant he was at one with the people about him, and all that was said of Goldstein seemed to him to be true. At those moments his secret loathing of Big Brother changed into adoration, and Big Brother seemed to tower up, an invincible, fearless protector, standing like a rock against the hordes of Asia, and Goldstein, in spite of his isolation, his helplessness, and the doubt that hung about his very existence, seemed like some sinister enchanter, capable by the mere power of his voice of wrecking the structure of civilization.

It was even possible, at moments, to switch one's hatred this way or that by a voluntary act. Suddenly, by the sort of violent effort with which one

wrenches one's head away from the pillow in a nightmare, Winston succeeded in transferring his hatred from the face on the screen to the dark-haired girl behind him. Vivid, beautiful hallucinations flashed through his mind. He would flog her to death with a rubber truncheon. He would tie her naked to a stake and shoot her full of arrows like Saint Sebastian. He would ravish her and cut her throat at the moment of climax. Better than before, moreover, he realized why it was that he hated her. He hated her because she was young and pretty and sexless, because he wanted to go to bed with her and would never do so, because round her sweet supple waist, which seemed to ask you to encircle it with your arm, there was only the odious scarlet sash, aggressive symbol of chastity.

The Hate rose to its climax. The voice of Goldstein had become an actual sheep's bleat, and for an instant the face changed into that of a sheep. Then the sheep-face melted into the figure of a Eurasian soldier who seemed to be advancing, huge and terrible, his sub-machine gun roaring, and seeming to spring out of the surface of the screen, so that some of the people in the front row actually flinched backwards in their seats. But in the same moment, drawing a deep sigh of relief from everybody, the hostile figure melted into the face of Big Brother, black-haired, black-moustachio'd, full of power and mysterious calm, and so vast that it almost filled up the screen. Nobody heard what Big Brother was saying. It was merely a few words of encouragement, the sort of words that are uttered in the din of battle, not distinguishable individually but restoring confidence by the fact of being spoken. Then the face of Big Brother faded away again, and instead the three slogans of the Party stood out in bold capitals:

WAR IS PEACE

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

But the face of Big Brother seemed to persist for several seconds on the screen, as though the impact that it had made on everyone's eyeballs was too vivid to wear off immediately. The little sandy-haired woman had flung herself forward over the back of the chair in front of her. With a tremulous murmur that sounded like 'My Saviour!' she extended her arms towards the screen. Then she buried her face in her hands. It was apparent that she was uttering a prayer.

At this moment the entire group of people broke into a deep, slow, rhythmical chant of 'B-B! ... B-B!' -- over and over again, very slowly, with a long pause between the first 'B' and the second--a heavy, murmurous sound, somehow curiously savage, in the background of which one seemed to hear the stamp of naked feet and the throbbing of tom-toms. For perhaps as much as thirty seconds they kept it up. It was a refrain that was often heard in moments of overwhelming emotion. Partly it was a sort of hymn to the wisdom and majesty of Big Brother, but still more it was an act of self-hypnosis, a deliberate drowning of consciousness by means of rhythmic noise. Winston's entrails seemed to grow cold. In the Two Minutes Hate he could not help sharing in the general delirium, but this sub-human chanting of 'B-B! ... B-B!' always filled him with horror. Of course he chanted with the rest: it was impossible to do otherwise. To dissemble your feelings, to control your face, to do what everyone else was doing, was an instinctive reaction.

But there was a space of a couple of seconds during which the expression of his eyes might conceivably have betrayed him. And it was exactly at this moment that the significant thing happened -- if, indeed, it did happen.

Momentarily he caught O'Brien's eye. O'Brien had stood up. He had taken off his spectacles and was in the act of resettling them on his nose with his characteristic gesture. But there was a fraction of a second when their eyes met, and for as long as it took to happen Winston knew -- yes, he knew! -- that O'Brien was thinking the same thing as himself. An unmistakable message had passed. It was as though their two minds had opened and the thoughts were flowing from one into the other through their eyes. 'I am with you,' O'Brien seemed to be saying to him. 'I know precisely what you are feeling. I know all about your contempt, your hatred, your disgust. But don't worry, I am on your side!' And then the flash of intelligence was gone, and O'Brien's face was as inscrutable as everybody else's.

That was all, and he was already uncertain whether it had happened. Such incidents never had any sequel. All that they did was to keep alive in him the belief, or hope, that others besides himself were the enemies of the Party. Perhaps the rumours of vast underground conspiracies were true after all -- perhaps the Brotherhood really existed! It was impossible, in spite of the endless arrests and confessions and executions, to be sure that the Brotherhood was not simply a myth. Some days he believed in it, some days not. There was no evidence, only fleeting glimpses that might mean anything or nothing: snatches of overheard conversation, faint scribbles on lavatory walls -- once, even, when two strangers met, a small movement of the hand which had looked as though it might be a signal of recognition. It was all

guesswork: very likely he had imagined everything. He had gone back to his cubicle without looking at O'Brien again. The idea of following up their momentary contact hardly crossed his mind. It would have been inconceivably dangerous even if he had known how to set about doing it. For a second, two seconds, they had exchanged an equivocal glance, and that was the end of the story. But even that was a memorable event, in the locked loneliness in which one had to live.

Winston roused himself and sat up straighter. He let out a belch. The gin was rising from his stomach.

His eyes re-focused on the page. He discovered that while he sat helplessly musing he had also been writing, as though by automatic action. And it was no longer the same cramped, awkward handwriting as before. His pen had slid voluptuously over the smooth paper, printing in large neat capitals

DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER

DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER

DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER

DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER

DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER

over and over again, filling half a page.

He could not help feeling a twinge of panic. It was absurd, since the

writing of those particular words was not more dangerous than the initial act of opening the diary, but for a moment he was tempted to tear out the spoiled pages and abandon the enterprise altogether.

He did not do so, however, because he knew that it was useless. Whether he wrote DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER, or whether he refrained from writing it, made no difference. Whether he went on with the diary, or whether he did not go on with it, made no difference. The Thought Police would get him just the same. He had committed -- would still have committed, even if he had never set pen to paper -- the essential crime that contained all others in itself. Thoughtcrime, they called it. Thoughtcrime was not a thing that could be concealed for ever. You might dodge successfully for a while, even for years, but sooner or later they were bound to get you.

It was always at night -- the arrests invariably happened at night. The sudden jerk out of sleep, the rough hand shaking your shoulder, the lights glaring in your eyes, the ring of hard faces round the bed. In the vast majority of cases there was no trial, no report of the arrest. People simply disappeared, always during the night. Your name was removed from the registers, every record of everything you had ever done was wiped out, your one-time existence was denied and then forgotten. You were abolished, annihilated: vaporized was the usual word.

For a moment he was seized by a kind of hysteria. He began writing in a hurried untidy scrawl:

theyll shoot me i don't care theyll shoot me in the back of the neck i dont care down with big brother they always shoot you in the back of the neck i

dont care down with big brother

He sat back in his chair, slightly ashamed of himself, and laid down the pen. The next moment he started violently. There was a knocking at the door.

Already! He sat as still as a mouse, in the futile hope that whoever it was might go away after a single attempt. But no, the knocking was repeated. The worst thing of all would be to delay. His heart was thumping like a drum, but his face, from long habit, was probably expressionless. He got up and moved heavily towards the door.

II

As he put his hand to the door-knob Winston saw that he had left the diary open on the table. DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER was written all over it, in letters almost big enough to be legible across the room. It was an inconceivably stupid thing to have done. But, he realized, even in his panic he had not wanted to smudge the creamy paper by shutting the book while the ink was wet.

He drew in his breath and opened the door. Instantly a warm wave of relief flowed through him. A colourless, crushed-looking woman, with wispy hair and a lined face, was standing outside.

'Oh, comrade,' she began in a dreary, whining sort of voice, 'I thought I heard you come in. Do you think you could come across and have a look at our kitchen sink? It's got blocked up and-'

It was Mrs Parsons, the wife of a neighbour on the same floor. ('Mrs' was a word somewhat discountenanced by the Party -- you were supposed to call everyone 'comrade' -- but with some women one used it instinctively.) She was a woman of about thirty, but looking much older. One had the impression that there was dust in the creases of her face. Winston followed her down the passage. These amateur repair jobs were an almost daily irritation. Victory Mansions were old flats, built in 1930 or thereabouts, and were falling to pieces. The plaster flaked constantly from ceilings and walls, the pipes burst in every hard frost, the roof leaked whenever there was snow, the heating system was usually running at half steam when it was not closed

down altogether from motives of economy. Repairs, except what you could do for yourself, had to be sanctioned by remote committees which were liable to hold up even the mending of a window-pane for two years.

'Of course it's only because Tom isn't home,' said Mrs Parsons vaguely.

The Parsons' flat was bigger than Winston's, and dingy in a different way. Everything had a battered, trampled-on look, as though the place had just been visited by some large violent animal. Games impedimenta -- hockey-sticks, boxing-gloves. a burst football, a pair of sweaty shorts turned inside out -- lay all over the floor, and on the table there was a litter of dirty dishes and dog-eared exercise-books. On the walls were scarlet banners of the Youth League and the Spies, and a full-sized poster of Big Brother. There was the usual boiled-cabbage smell, common to the whole building, but it was shot through by a sharper reek of sweat, which-one knew this at the first sniff, though it was hard to say how was the sweat of some person not present at the moment. In another room someone with a comb and a piece of toilet paper was trying to keep tune with the military music which was still issuing from the telescreen.

'It's the children,' said Mrs Parsons, casting a half-apprehensive glance at the door. 'They haven't been out today. And of course-'

She had a habit of breaking off her sentences in the middle. The kitchen sink was full nearly to the brim with filthy greenish water which smelt worse than ever of cabbage. Winston knelt down and examined the angle-joint of the pipe. He hated using his hands, and he hated bending down, which was always liable to start him coughing. Mrs Parsons looked on helplessly.

'Of course if Tom was home he'd put it right in a moment,' she said. 'He loves anything like that. He's ever so good with his hands, Tom is.'

Parsons was Winston's fellow-employee at the Ministry of Truth. He was a fattish but active man of paralysing stupidity, a mass of imbecile enthusiasms -- one of those completely unquestioning, devoted drudges on whom, more even than on the Thought Police, the stability of the Party depended. At thirty-five he had just been unwillingly evicted from the Youth League, and before graduating into the Youth League he had managed to stay on in the Spies for a year beyond the statutory age. At the Ministry he was employed in some subordinate post for which intelligence was not required, but on the other hand he was a leading figure on the Sports Committee and all the other committees engaged in organizing community hikes, spontaneous demonstrations, savings campaigns, and voluntary activities generally. He would inform you with quiet pride, between whiffs of his pipe, that he had put in an appearance at the Community Centre every evening for the past four years. An overpowering smell of sweat, a sort of unconscious testimony to the strenuousness of his life, followed him about wherever he went, and even remained behind him after he had gone.

'Have you got a spanner?' said Winston, fiddling with the nut on the angle-joint.

'A spanner,' said Mrs Parsons, immediately becoming invertebrate. 'I don't know, I'm sure. Perhaps the children -'

There was a trampling of boots and another blast on the comb as the children charged into the living-room. Mrs Parsons brought the spanner.

Winston let out the water and disgustedly removed the clot of human hair that had blocked up the pipe. He cleaned his fingers as best he could in the cold water from the tap and went back into the other room.

'Up with your hands!' yelled a savage voice.

A handsome, tough-looking boy of nine had popped up from behind the table and was menacing him with a toy automatic pistol, while his small sister, about two years younger, made the same gesture with a fragment of wood. Both of them were dressed in the blue shorts, grey shirts, and red neckerchiefs which were the uniform of the Spies. Winston raised his hands above his head, but with an uneasy feeling, so vicious was the boy's demeanour, that it was not altogether a game.

'You're a traitor!' yelled the boy. 'You're a thought-criminal! You're a Eurasian spy! I'll shoot you, I'll vaporize you, I'll send you to the salt mines!'

Suddenly they were both leaping round him, shouting 'Traitor!' and 'Thought-criminal!' the little girl imitating her brother in every movement. It was somehow slightly frightening, like the gambolling of tiger cubs which will soon grow up into man-eaters. There was a sort of calculating ferocity in the boy's eye, a quite evident desire to hit or kick Winston and a consciousness of being very nearly big enough to do so. It was a good job it was not a real pistol he was holding, Winston thought.

Mrs Parsons' eyes flitted nervously from Winston to the children, and back again. In the better light of the living-room he noticed with interest that there actually was dust in the creases of her face.

'They do get so noisy,' she said. 'They're disappointed because they couldn't go to see the hanging, that's what it is. I'm too busy to take them. and Tom won't be back from work in time.'

'Why can't we go and see the hanging?' roared the boy in his huge voice.

'Want to see the hanging! Want to see the hanging!' chanted the little girl, still capering round.

Some Eurasian prisoners, guilty of war crimes, were to be hanged in the Park that evening, Winston remembered. This happened about once a month, and was a popular spectacle. Children always clamoured to be taken to see it. He took his leave of Mrs Parsons and made for the door. But he had not gone six steps down the passage when something hit the back of his neck an agonizingly painful blow. It was as though a red-hot wire had been jabbed into him. He spun round just in time to see Mrs Parsons dragging her son back into the doorway while the boy pocketed a catapult.

'Goldstein!' bellowed the boy as the door closed on him. But what most struck Winston was the look of helpless fright on the woman's greyish face.

Back in the flat he stepped quickly past the telescreen and sat down at the table again, still rubbing his neck. The music from the telescreen had stopped. Instead, a clipped military voice was reading out, with a sort of brutal relish, a description of the armaments of the new Floating Fortress which had just been anchored between Iceland and the Faroe Islands.

With those children, he thought, that wretched woman must lead a life of terror. Another year, two years, and they would be watching her night and

day for symptoms of unorthodoxy. Nearly all children nowadays were horrible. What was worst of all was that by means of such organizations as the Spies they were systematically turned into ungovernable little savages, and yet this produced in them no tendency whatever to rebel against the discipline of the Party. On the contrary, they adored the Party and everything connected with it. The songs, the processions, the banners, the hiking, the drilling with dummy rifles, the yelling of slogans, the worship of Big Brother -- it was all a sort of glorious game to them. All their ferocity was turned outwards, against the enemies of the State, against foreigners, traitors, saboteurs, thought-criminals. It was almost normal for people over thirty to be frightened of their own children. And with good reason, for hardly a week passed in which The Times did not carry a paragraph describing how some eavesdropping little sneak -- 'child hero' was the phrase generally used -- had overheard some compromising remark and denounced its parents to the Thought Police.

The sting of the catapult bullet had worn off. He picked up his pen half-heartedly, wondering whether he could find something more to write in the diary. Suddenly he began thinking of O'Brien again.

Years ago -- how long was it? Seven years it must be -- he had dreamed that he was walking through a pitch-dark room. And someone sitting to one side of him had said as he passed: 'We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness.' It was said very quietly, almost casually -- a statement, not a command. He had walked on without pausing. What was curious was that at the time, in the dream, the words had not made much impression on him. It was only later and by degrees that they had seemed to take on significance.

He could not now remember whether it was before or after having the dream that he had seen O'Brien for the first time, nor could he remember when he had first identified the voice as O'Brien's. But at any rate the identification existed. It was O'Brien who had spoken to him out of the dark.

Winston had never been able to feel sure -- even after this morning's flash of the eyes it was still impossible to be sure whether O'Brien was a friend or an enemy. Nor did it even seem to matter greatly. There was a link of understanding between them, more important than affection or partisanship. 'We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness,' he had said. Winston did not know what it meant, only that in some way or another it would come true.

The voice from the telescreen paused. A trumpet call, clear and beautiful, floated into the stagnant air. The voice continued raspingly:

'Attention! Your attention, please! A newsflash has this moment arrived from the Malabar front. Our forces in South India have won a glorious victory. I am authorized to say that the action we are now reporting may well bring the war within measurable distance of its end. Here is the newsflash -'

Bad news coming, thought Winston. And sure enough, following on a gory description of the annihilation of a Eurasian army, with stupendous figures of killed and prisoners, came the announcement that, as from next week, the chocolate ration would be reduced from thirty grammes to twenty.

Winston belched again. The gin was wearing off, leaving a deflated feeling. The telescreen -- perhaps to celebrate the victory, perhaps to drown

the memory of the lost chocolate -- crashed into 'Oceania, 'tis for thee'. You were supposed to stand to attention. However, in his present position he was invisible.

'Oceania, 'tis for thee' gave way to lighter music. Winston walked over to the window, keeping his back to the telescreen. The day was still cold and clear. Somewhere far away a rocket bomb exploded with a dull, reverberating roar. About twenty or thirty of them a week were falling on London at present.

Down in the street the wind flapped the torn poster to and fro, and the word INGSOC fitfully appeared and vanished. Ingsoc. The sacred principles of Ingsoc. Newspeak, doublethink, the mutability of the past. He felt as though he were wandering in the forests of the sea bottom, lost in a monstrous world where he himself was the monster. He was alone. The past was dead, the future was unimaginable. What certainty had he that a single human creature now living was on his side? And what way of knowing that the dominion of the Party would not endure for ever? Like an answer, the three slogans on the white face of the Ministry of Truth came back to him:

WAR IS PEACE

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

He took a twenty-five cent piece out of his pocket. There, too, in tiny clear lettering, the same slogans were inscribed, and on the other face of the coin the head of Big Brother. Even from the coin the eyes pursued you. On

coins, on stamps, on the covers of books, on banners, on posters, and on the wrappings of a cigarette Packet -- everywhere. Always the eyes watching you and the voice enveloping you. Asleep or awake, working or eating, indoors or out of doors, in the bath or in bed -- no escape. Nothing was your own except the few cubic centimetres inside your skull.

The sun had shifted round, and the myriad windows of the Ministry of Truth, with the light no longer shining on them, looked grim as the loopholes of a fortress. His heart quailed before the enormous pyramidal shape. It was too strong, it could not be stormed. A thousand rocket bombs would not batter it down. He wondered again for whom he was writing the diary. For the future, for the past -- for an age that might be imaginary. And in front of him there lay not death but annihilation. The diary would be reduced to ashes and himself to vapour. Only the Thought Police would read what he had written, before they wiped it out of existence and out of memory. How could you make appeal to the future when not a trace of you, not even an anonymous word scribbled on a piece of paper, could physically survive?

The telescreen struck fourteen. He must leave in ten minutes. He had to be back at work by fourteen-thirty.

Curiously, the chiming of the hour seemed to have put new heart into him. He was a lonely ghost uttering a truth that nobody would ever hear. But so long as he uttered it, in some obscure way the continuity was not broken. It was not by making yourself heard but by staying sane that you carried on the human heritage. He went back to the table, dipped his pen, and wrote:

To the future or to the past, to a time when thought is free, when men

are different from one another and do not live alone -- to a time when truth exists and what is done cannot be undone:

From the age of uniformity, from the age of solitude, from the age of Big Brother, from the age of doublethink -- greetings!

He was already dead, he reflected. It seemed to him that it was only now, when he had begun to be able to formulate his thoughts, that he had taken the decisive step. The consequences of every act are included in the act itself. He wrote:

Thoughtcrime does not entail death: thoughtcrime IS death.

Now he had recognized himself as a dead man it became important to stay alive as long as possible. Two fingers of his right hand were inkstained. It was exactly the kind of detail that might betray you. Some nosing zealot in the Ministry (a woman, probably: someone like the little sandy-haired woman or the dark-haired girl from the Fiction Department) might start wondering why he had been writing during the lunch interval, why he had used an old-fashioned pen, what he had been writing -- and then drop a hint in the appropriate quarter. He went to the bathroom and carefully scrubbed the ink away with the gritty dark-brown soap which rasped your skin like sandpaper and was therefore well adapted for this purpose.

He put the diary away in the drawer. It was quite useless to think of hiding it, but he could at least make sure whether or not its existence had been discovered. A hair laid across the page-ends was too obvious. With the tip of his finger he picked up an identifiable grain of whitish dust and

deposited it on the corner of the cover, where it was bound to be shaken off if the book was moved.

III

Winston was dreaming of his mother.

He must, he thought, have been ten or eleven years old when his mother had disappeared. She was a tall, statuesque, rather silent woman with slow movements and magnificent fair hair. His father he remembered more vaguely as dark and thin, dressed always in neat dark clothes (Winston remembered especially the very thin soles of his father's shoes) and wearing spectacles. The two of them must evidently have been swallowed up in one of the first great purges of the fifties.

At this moment his mother was sitting in some place deep down beneath him, with his young sister in her arms. He did not remember his sister at all, except as a tiny, feeble baby, always silent, with large, watchful eyes. Both of them were looking up at him. They were down in some subterranean place -- the bottom of a well, for instance, or a very deep grave -- but it was a place which, already far below him, was itself moving downwards. They were in the saloon of a sinking ship, looking up at him through the darkening water. There was still air in the saloon, they could still see him and he them, but all the while they were sinking down, down into the green waters which in another moment must hide them from sight for ever. He was out in the light and air while they were being sucked down to death, and they were down there because he was up here. He knew it and they knew it, and he could see the knowledge in their faces. There was no reproach either in their faces or in their hearts, only the knowledge that they must die in order that he might remain alive, and that this was part of the unavoidable order of things.

He could not remember what had happened, but he knew in his dream that in some way the lives of his mother and his sister had been sacrificed to his own. It was one of those dreams which, while retaining the characteristic dream scenery, are a continuation of one's intellectual life, and in which one becomes aware of facts and ideas which still seem new and valuable after one is awake. The thing that now suddenly struck Winston was that his mother's death, nearly thirty years ago, had been tragic and sorrowful in a way that was no longer possible. Tragedy, he perceived, belonged to the ancient time, to a time when there was still privacy, love, and friendship, and when the members of a family stood by one another without needing to know the reason. His mother's memory tore at his heart because she had died loving him, when he was too young and selfish to love her in return, and because somehow, he did not remember how, she had sacrificed herself to a conception of loyalty that was private and unalterable. Such things, he saw, could not happen today. Today there were fear, hatred, and pain, but no dignity of emotion, no deep or complex sorrows. All this he seemed to see in the large eyes of his mother and his sister, looking up at him through the green water, hundreds of fathoms down and still sinking.

Suddenly he was standing on short springy turf, on a summer evening when the slanting rays of the sun gilded the ground. The landscape that he was looking at recurred so often in his dreams that he was never fully certain whether or not he had seen it in the real world. In his waking thoughts he called it the Golden Country. It was an old, rabbit-bitten pasture, with a foot-track wandering across it and a molehill here and there. In the ragged hedge on the opposite side of the field the boughs of the elm trees were swaying very faintly in the breeze, their leaves just stirring in dense masses like

women's hair. Somewhere near at hand, though out of sight, there was a clear, slow-moving stream where dace were swimming in the pools under the willow trees.

The girl with dark hair was coming towards them across the field. With what seemed a single movement she tore off her clothes and flung them disdainfully aside. Her body was white and smooth, but it aroused no desire in him, indeed he barely looked at it. What overwhelmed him in that instant was admiration for the gesture with which she had thrown her clothes aside. With its grace and carelessness it seemed to annihilate a whole culture, a whole system of thought, as though Big Brother and the Party and the Thought Police could all be swept into nothingness by a single splendid movement of the arm. That too was a gesture belonging to the ancient time. Winston woke up with the word 'Shakespeare' on his lips.

The telescreen was giving forth an ear-splitting whistle which continued on the same note for thirty seconds. It was nought seven fifteen, getting-up time for office workers. Winston wrenched his body out of bed -- naked, for a member of the Outer Party received only 3,000 clothing coupons annually, and a suit of pyjamas was 600 -- and seized a dingy singlet and a pair of shorts that were lying across a chair. The Physical Jerks would begin in three minutes. The next moment he was doubled up by a violent coughing fit which nearly always attacked him soon after waking up. It emptied his lungs so completely that he could only begin breathing again by lying on his back and taking a series of deep gasps. His veins had swelled with the effort of the cough, and the varicose ulcer had started itching.

'Thirty to forty group!' yapped a piercing female voice. ' Thirty to forty

group! Take your places, please. Thirties to forties!'

Winston sprang to attention in front of the telescreen, upon which the image of a youngish woman, scrawny but muscular, dressed in tunic and gym-shoes, had already appeared.

'Arms bending and stretching!' she rapped out. 'Take your time by me. One, two, three, four! One, two, three, four! Come on, comrades, put a bit of life into it! One, two, three four! One two, three, four! . . .'

The pain of the coughing fit had not quite driven out of Winston's mind the impression made by his dream, and the rhythmic movements of the exercise restored it somewhat. As he mechanically shot his arms back and forth, wearing on his face the look of grim enjoyment which was considered proper during the Physical Jerks, he was struggling to think his way backward into the dim period of his early childhood. It was extraordinarily difficult. Beyond the late fifties everything faded. When there were no external records that you could refer to, even the outline of your own life lost its sharpness. You remembered huge events which had quite probably not happened, you remembered the detail of incidents without being able to recapture their atmosphere, and there were long blank periods to which you could assign nothing. Everything had been different then. Even the names of countries, and their shapes on the map, had been different. Airstrip One, for instance, had not been so called in those days: it had been called England or Britain, though London, he felt fairly certain, had always been called London.

Winston could not definitely remember a time when his country had not been at war, but it was evident that there had been a fairly long interval of

peace during his childhood, because one of his early memories was of an air raid which appeared to take everyone by surprise. Perhaps it was the time when the atomic bomb had fallen on Colchester. He did not remember the raid itself, but he did remember his father's hand clutching his own as they hurried down, down, down into some place deep in the earth, round and round a spiral staircase which rang under his feet and which finally so wearied his legs that he began whimpering and they had to stop and rest. His mother, in her slow, dreamy way, was following a long way behind them. She was carrying his baby sister -- or perhaps it was only a bundle of blankets that she was carrying: he was not certain whether his sister had been born then. Finally they had emerged into a noisy, crowded place which he had realized to be a Tube station.

There were people sitting all over the stone-flagged floor, and other people, packed tightly together, were sitting on metal bunks, one above the other. Winston and his mother and father found themselves a place on the floor, and near them an old man and an old woman were sitting side by side on a bunk. The old man had on a decent dark suit and a black cloth cap pushed back from very white hair: his face was scarlet and his eyes were blue and full of tears. He reeked of gin. It seemed to breathe out of his skin in place of sweat, and one could have fancied that the tears welling from his eyes were pure gin. But though slightly drunk he was also suffering under some grief that was genuine and unbearable. In his childish way Winston grasped that some terrible thing, something that was beyond forgiveness and could never be remedied, had just happened. It also seemed to him that he knew what it was. Someone whom the old man loved -- a little granddaughter, perhaps had been killed. Every few minutes the old man kept

repeating:

'We didn't ought to 'ave trusted 'em. I said so, Ma, didn't I? That's what comes of trusting 'em. I said so all along. We didn't ought to 'ave trusted the buggers.

But which buggers they didn't ought to have trusted Winston could not now remember.

Since about that time, war had been literally continuous, though strictly speaking it had not always been the same war. For several months during his childhood there had been confused street fighting in London itself, some of which he remembered vividly. But to trace out the history of the whole period, to say who was fighting whom at any given moment, would have been utterly impossible, since no written record, and no spoken word, ever made mention of any other alignment than the existing one. At this moment, for example, in 1984 (if it was 1984), Oceania was at war with Eurasia and in alliance with Eastasia. In no public or private utterance was it ever admitted that the three powers had at any time been grouped along different lines. Actually, as Winston well knew, it was only four years since Oceania had been at war with Eastasia and in alliance with Eurasia. But that was merely a piece of furtive knowledge which he happened to possess because his memory was not satisfactorily under control. Officially the change of partners had never happened. Oceania was at war with Eurasia: therefore Oceania had always been at war with Eurasia. The enemy of the moment always represented absolute evil, and it followed that any past or future agreement with him was impossible.

The frightening thing, he reflected for the ten thousandth time as he forced his shoulders painfully backward (with hands on hips, they were gyrating their bodies from the waist, an exercise that was supposed to be good for the back muscles) -- the frightening thing was that it might all be true. If the Party could thrust its hand into the past and say of this or that event, it never happened -- that, surely, was more terrifying than mere torture and death?

The Party said that Oceania had never been in alliance with Eurasia. He, Winston Smith, knew that Oceania had been in alliance with Eurasia as short a time as four years ago. But where did that knowledge exist? Only in his own consciousness, which in any case must soon be annihilated. And if all others accepted the lie which the Party imposed -if all records told the same tale -- then the lie passed into history and became truth. 'Who controls the past,' ran the Party slogan, 'controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.' And yet the past, though of its nature alterable, never had been altered. Whatever was true now was true from everlasting to everlasting. It was quite simple. All that was needed was an unending series of victories over your own memory. 'Reality control', they called it: in Newspeak, 'doublethink'

'Stand easy!' barked the instructress, a little more genially.

Winston sank his arms to his sides and slowly refilled his lungs with air. His mind slid away into the labyrinthine world of doublethink. To know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them, to use logic

against logic, to repudiate morality while laying claim to it, to believe that democracy was impossible and that the Party was the guardian of democracy, to forget whatever it was necessary to forget, then to draw it back into memory again at the moment when it was needed, and then promptly to forget it again: and above all, to apply the same process to the process itself. That was the ultimate subtlety: consciously to induce unconsciousness, and then, once again, to become unconscious of the act of hypnosis you had just performed. Even to understand the word 'doublethink' involved the use of doublethink.

The instructress had called them to attention again. 'And now let's see which of us can touch our toes!' she said enthusiastically. 'Right over from the hips, please, comrades. One-two! One-two! ...'

Winston loathed this exercise, which sent shooting pains all the way from his heels to his buttocks and often ended by bringing on another coughing fit. The half-pleasant quality went out of his meditations. The past, he reflected, had not merely been altered, it had been actually destroyed. For how could you establish even the most obvious fact when there existed no record outside your own memory? He tried to remember in what year he had first heard mention of Big Brother. He thought it must have been at some time in the sixties, but it was impossible to be certain. In the Party histories, of course, Big Brother figured as the leader and guardian of the Revolution since its very earliest days. His exploits had been gradually pushed backwards in time until already they extended into the fabulous world of the forties and the thirties, when the capitalists in their strange cylindrical hats still rode through the streets of London in great gleaming motor-cars or horse

carriages with glass sides. There was no knowing how much of this legend was true and how much invented. Winston could not even remember at what date the Party itself had come into existence. He did not believe he had ever heard the word Ingsoc before 1960, but it was possible that in its Oldspeak form-'English Socialism', that is to say -- it had been current earlier. Everything melted into mist. Sometimes, indeed, you could put your finger on a definite lie. It was not true, for example, as was claimed in the Party history books, that the Party had invented aeroplanes. He remembered aeroplanes since his earliest childhood. But you could prove nothing. There was never any evidence. Just once in his whole life he had held in his hands unmistakable documentary proof of the falsification of an historical fact. And on that occasion

'Smith!' screamed the shrewish voice from the telescreen. '6079 Smith W.! Yes, you! Bend lower, please! You can do better than that. You're not trying. Lower, please! That's better, comrade. Now stand at ease, the whole squad, and watch me.'

A sudden hot sweat had broken out all over Winston's body. His face remained completely inscrutable. Never show dismay! Never show resentment! A single flicker of the eyes could give you away. He stood watching while the instructress raised her arms above her head and -- one could not say gracefully, but with remarkable neatness and efficiency -- bent over and tucked the first joint of her fingers under her toes.

'There, comrades! That's how I want to see you doing it. Watch me again. I'm thirty-nine and I've had four children. Now look.' She bent over again. 'You see my knees aren't bent. You can all do it if you want to,' she

added as she straightened herself up. 'Anyone under forty-five is perfectly capable of touching his toes. We don't all have the privilege of fighting in the front line, but at least we can all keep fit. Remember our boys on the Malabar front! And the sailors in the Floating Fortresses! Just think what they have to put up with. Now try again. That's better, comrade, that's much better,' she added encouragingly as Winston, with a violent lunge, succeeded in touching his toes with knees unbent, for the first time in several years.

IV

With the deep, unconscious sigh which not even the nearness of the telescreen could prevent him from uttering when his day's work started, Winston pulled the speakwrite towards him, blew the dust from its mouthpiece, and put on his spectacles. Then he unrolled and clipped together four small cylinders of paper which had already flopped out of the pneumatic tube on the right-hand side of his desk.

In the walls of the cubicle there were three orifices. To the right of the speakwrite, a small pneumatic tube for written messages, to the left, a larger one for newspapers; and in the side wall, within easy reach of Winston's arm, a large oblong slit protected by a wire grating. This last was for the disposal of waste paper. Similar slits existed in thousands or tens of thousands throughout the building, not only in every room but at short intervals in every corridor. For some reason they were nicknamed memory holes. When one knew that any document was due for destruction, or even when one saw a scrap of waste paper lying about, it was an automatic action to lift the flap of the nearest memory hole and drop it in, whereupon it would be whirled away on a current of warm air to the enormous furnaces which were hidden somewhere in the recesses of the building.

Winston examined the four slips of paper which he had unrolled. Each contained a message of only one or two lines, in the abbreviated jargon -- not actually Newspeak, but consisting largely of Newspeak words -- which was used in the Ministry for internal purposes. They ran:

times 17.3.84 bb speech malreported africa rectify

times 19.12.83 forecasts 3 yp 4th quarter 83 misprints verify current
issue

times 14.2.84 miniplenty malquoted chocolate rectify

times 3.12.83 reporting bb dayorder doubleplusungood refs unpersons
rewrite fullwise upsub antefiling

With a faint feeling of satisfaction Winston laid the fourth message aside. It was an intricate and responsible job and had better be dealt with last. The other three were routine matters, though the second one would probably mean some tedious wading through lists of figures.

Winston dialled 'back numbers' on the telescreen and called for the appropriate issues of The Times, which slid out of the pneumatic tube after only a few minutes' delay. The messages he had received referred to articles or news items which for one reason or another it was thought necessary to alter, or, as the official phrase had it, to rectify. For example, it appeared from The Times of the seventeenth of March that Big Brother, in his speech of the previous day, had predicted that the South Indian front would remain quiet but that a Eurasian offensive would shortly be launched in North Africa. As it happened, the Eurasian Higher Command had launched its offensive in South India and left North Africa alone. It was therefore necessary to rewrite a paragraph of Big Brother's speech, in such a way as to make him predict the thing that had actually happened. Or again, The Times of the nineteenth of December had published the official forecasts of the output of various classes

of consumption goods in the fourth quarter of 1983, which was also the sixth quarter of the Ninth Three-Year Plan. Today's issue contained a statement of the actual output, from which it appeared that the forecasts were in every instance grossly wrong. Winston's job was to rectify the original figures by making them agree with the later ones. As for the third message, it referred to a very simple error which could be set right in a couple of minutes. As short a time ago as February, the Ministry of Plenty had issued a promise (a 'categorical pledge' were the official words) that there would be no reduction of the chocolate ration during 1984. Actually, as Winston was aware, the chocolate ration was to be reduced from thirty grammes to twenty at the end of the present week. All that was needed was to substitute for the original promise a warning that it would probably be necessary to reduce the ration at some time in April.

As soon as Winston had dealt with each of the messages, he clipped his speakwritten corrections to the appropriate copy of The Times and pushed them into the pneumatic tube. Then, with a movement which was as nearly as possible unconscious, he crumpled up the original message and any notes that he himself had made, and dropped them into the memory hole to be devoured by the flames.

What happened in the unseen labyrinth to which the pneumatic tubes led, he did not know in detail, but he did know in general terms. As soon as all the corrections which happened to be necessary in any particular number of The Times had been assembled and collated, that number would be reprinted, the original copy destroyed, and the corrected copy placed on the files in its stead. This process of continuous alteration was applied not only to

newspapers, but to books, periodicals, pamphlets, posters, leaflets, films, sound-tracks, cartoons, photographs -- to every kind of literature or documentation which might conceivably hold any political or ideological significance. Day by day and almost minute by minute the past was brought up to date. In this way every prediction made by the Party could be shown by documentary evidence to have been correct, nor was any item of news, or any expression of opinion, which conflicted with the needs of the moment, ever allowed to remain on record. All history was a palimpsest, scraped clean and reinscribed exactly as often as was necessary. In no case would it have been possible, once the deed was done, to prove that any falsification had taken place. The largest section of the Records Department, far larger than the one on which Winston worked, consisted simply of persons whose duty it was to track down and collect all copies of books, newspapers, and other documents which had been superseded and were due for destruction. A number of *The Times* which might, because of changes in political alignment, or mistaken prophecies uttered by Big Brother, have been rewritten a dozen times still stood on the files bearing its original date, and no other copy existed to contradict it. Books, also, were recalled and rewritten again and again, and were invariably reissued without any admission that any alteration had been made. Even the written instructions which Winston received, and which he invariably got rid of as soon as he had dealt with them, never stated or implied that an act of forgery was to be committed: always the reference was to slips, errors, misprints, or misquotations which it was necessary to put right in the interests of accuracy.

But actually, he thought as he re-adjusted the Ministry of Plenty's figures, it was not even forgery. It was merely the substitution of one piece of

nonsense for another. Most of the material that you were dealing with had no connexion with anything in the real world, not even the kind of connexion that is contained in a direct lie. Statistics were just as much a fantasy in their original version as in their rectified version. A great deal of the time you were expected to make them up out of your head. For example, the Ministry of Plenty's forecast had estimated the output of boots for the quarter at 145 million pairs. The actual output was given as sixty-two millions. Winston, however, in rewriting the forecast, marked the figure down to fifty-seven millions, so as to allow for the usual claim that the quota had been overfulfilled. In any case, sixty-two millions was no nearer the truth than fifty-seven millions, or than 145 millions. Very likely no boots had been produced at all. Likelier still, nobody knew how many had been produced, much less cared. All one knew was that every quarter astronomical numbers of boots were produced on paper, while perhaps half the population of Oceania went barefoot. And so it was with every class of recorded fact, great or small. Everything faded away into a shadow-world in which, finally, even the date of the year had become uncertain.

Winston glanced across the hall. In the corresponding cubicle on the other side a small, precise-looking, dark-chinned man named Tillotson was working steadily away, with a folded newspaper on his knee and his mouth very close to the mouthpiece of the speakwrite. He had the air of trying to keep what he was saying a secret between himself and the telescreen. He looked up, and his spectacles darted a hostile flash in Winston's direction.

Winston hardly knew Tillotson, and had no idea what work he was employed on. People in the Records Department did not readily talk about

their jobs. In the long, windowless hall, with its double row of cubicles and its endless rustle of papers and hum of voices murmuring into speakwrites, there were quite a dozen people whom Winston did not even know by name, though he daily saw them hurrying to and fro in the corridors or gesticulating in the Two Minutes Hate. He knew that in the cubicle next to him the little woman with sandy hair toiled day in day out, simply at tracking down and deleting from the Press the names of people who had been vaporized and were therefore considered never to have existed. There was a certain fitness in this, since her own husband had been vaporized a couple of years earlier. And a few cubicles away a mild, ineffectual, dreamy creature named Ampleforth, with very hairy ears and a surprising talent for juggling with rhymes and metres, was engaged in producing garbled versions -- definitive texts, they were called -- of poems which had become ideologically offensive, but which for one reason or another were to be retained in the anthologies. And this hall, with its fifty workers or thereabouts, was only one sub-section, a single cell, as it were, in the huge complexity of the Records Department. Beyond, above, below, were other swarms of workers engaged in an unimaginable multitude of jobs. There were the huge printing-shops with their sub-editors, their typography experts, and their elaborately equipped studios for the faking of photographs. There was the tele-programmes section with its engineers, its producers, and its teams of actors specially chosen for their skill in imitating voices. There were the armies of reference clerks whose job was simply to draw up lists of books and periodicals which were due for recall. There were the vast repositories where the corrected documents were stored, and the hidden furnaces where the original copies were destroyed. And somewhere or other, quite anonymous, there were the directing brains who co-ordinated the whole effort and laid

down the lines of policy which made it necessary that this fragment of the past should be preserved, that one falsified, and the other rubbed out of existence.

And the Records Department, after all, was itself only a single branch of the Ministry of Truth, whose primary job was not to reconstruct the past but to supply the citizens of Oceania with newspapers, films, textbooks, telescreen programmes, plays, novels -- with every conceivable kind of information, instruction, or entertainment, from a statue to a slogan, from a lyric poem to a biological treatise, and from a child's spelling-book to a Newspeak dictionary. And the Ministry had not only to supply the multifarious needs of the party, but also to repeat the whole operation at a lower level for the benefit of the proletariat. There was a whole chain of separate departments dealing with proletarian literature, music, drama, and entertainment generally. Here were produced rubbishy newspapers containing almost nothing except sport, crime and astrology, sensational five-cent novelettes, films oozing with sex, and sentimental songs which were composed entirely by mechanical means on a special kind of kaleidoscope known as a versificator. There was even a whole sub-section -- Pornosec, it was called in Newspeak -- engaged in producing the lowest kind of pornography, which was sent out in sealed packets and which no Party member, other than those who worked on it, was permitted to look at.

Three messages had slid out of the pneumatic tube while Winston was working, but they were simple matters, and he had disposed of them before the Two Minutes Hate interrupted him. When the Hate was over he returned to his cubicle, took the Newspeak dictionary from the shelf, pushed the

speakwrite to one side, cleaned his spectacles, and settled down to his main job of the morning.

Winston's greatest pleasure in life was in his work. Most of it was a tedious routine, but included in it there were also jobs so difficult and intricate that you could lose yourself in them as in the depths of a mathematical problem -- delicate pieces of forgery in which you had nothing to guide you except your knowledge of the principles of Ingsoc and your estimate of what the Party wanted you to say. Winston was good at this kind of thing. On occasion he had even been entrusted with the rectification of The Times leading articles, which were written entirely in Newspeak. He unrolled the message that he had set aside earlier. It ran:

times 3.12.83 reporting bb dayorder doubleplusungood refs unpersons
rewrite fullwise upsub antefiling

In Oldspeak (or standard English) this might be rendered: The reporting of Big Brother's Order for the Day in The Times of December 3rd 1983 is extremely unsatisfactory and makes references to non-existent persons. Rewrite it in full and submit your draft to higher authority before filing.

Winston read through the offending article. Big Brother's Order for the Day, it seemed, had been chiefly devoted to praising the work of an organization known as FFCC, which supplied cigarettes and other comforts to the sailors in the Floating Fortresses. A certain Comrade Withers, a prominent member of the Inner Party, had been singled out for special mention and awarded a decoration, the Order of Conspicuous Merit, Second Class.

Three months later FFCC had suddenly been dissolved with no reasons given. One could assume that Withers and his associates were now in disgrace, but there had been no report of the matter in the Press or on the telescreen. That was to be expected, since it was unusual for political offenders to be put on trial or even publicly denounced. The great purges involving thousands of people, with public trials of traitors and thought-criminals who made abject confession of their crimes and were afterwards executed, were special show-pieces not occurring oftener than once in a couple of years. More commonly, people who had incurred the displeasure of the Party simply disappeared and were never heard of again. One never had the smallest clue as to what had happened to them. In some cases they might not even be dead. Perhaps thirty people personally known to Winston, not counting his parents, had disappeared at one time or another.

Winston stroked his nose gently with a paper-clip. In the cubicle across the way Comrade Tillotson was still crouching secretively over his speakwrite. He raised his head for a moment: again the hostile spectacle-flash. Winston wondered whether Comrade Tillotson was engaged on the same job as himself. It was perfectly possible. So tricky a piece of work would never be entrusted to a single person: on the other hand, to turn it over to a committee would be to admit openly that an act of fabrication was taking place. Very likely as many as a dozen people were now working away on rival versions of what Big Brother had actually said. And presently some master brain in the Inner Party would select this version or that, would re-edit it and set in motion the complex processes of cross-referencing that would be required, and then the chosen lie would pass into the permanent records and become truth.

Winston did not know why Withers had been disgraced. Perhaps it was for corruption or incompetence. Perhaps Big Brother was merely getting rid of a too-popular subordinate. Perhaps Withers or someone close to him had been suspected of heretical tendencies. Or perhaps -- what was likeliest of all -- the thing had simply happened because purges and vaporizations were a necessary part of the mechanics of government. The only real clue lay in the words 'refs unpersons', which indicated that Withers was already dead. You could not invariably assume this to be the case when people were arrested. Sometimes they were released and allowed to remain at liberty for as much as a year or two years before being executed. Very occasionally some person whom you had believed dead long since would make a ghostly reappearance at some public trial where he would implicate hundreds of others by his testimony before vanishing, this time for ever. Withers, however, was already an unperson. He did not exist: he had never existed. Winston decided that it would not be enough simply to reverse the tendency of Big Brother's speech. It was better to make it deal with something totally unconnected with its original subject.

He might turn the speech into the usual denunciation of traitors and thought-criminals, but that was a little too obvious, while to invent a victory at the front, or some triumph of over-production in the Ninth Three-Year Plan, might complicate the records too much. What was needed was a piece of pure fantasy. Suddenly there sprang into his mind, ready made as it were, the image of a certain Comrade Ogilvy, who had recently died in battle, in heroic circumstances. There were occasions when Big Brother devoted his Order for the Day to commemorating some humble, rank-and-file Party member whose life and death he held up as an example worthy to be

followed. Today he should commemorate Comrade Ogilvy. It was true that there was no such person as Comrade Ogilvy, but a few lines of print and a couple of faked photographs would soon bring him into existence.

Winston thought for a moment, then pulled the speakwrite towards him and began dictating in Big Brother's familiar style: a style at once military and pedantic, and, because of a trick of asking questions and then promptly answering them ('What lessons do we learn from this fact, comrades? The lesson -- which is also one of the fundamental principles of Ingsoc -- that,' etc., etc.), easy to imitate.

At the age of three Comrade Ogilvy had refused all toys except a drum, a sub-machine gun, and a model helicopter. At six -- a year early, by a special relaxation of the rules -- he had joined the Spies, at nine he had been a troop leader. At eleven he had denounced his uncle to the Thought Police after overhearing a conversation which appeared to him to have criminal tendencies. At seventeen he had been a district organizer of the Junior Anti-Sex League. At nine teen he had designed a hand-grenade which had been adopted by the Ministry of Peace and which, at its first trial, had killed thirty-one Eurasian prisoners in one burst. At twenty-three he had perished in action. Pursued by enemy jet planes while flying over the Indian Ocean with important despatches, he had weighted his body with his machine gun and leapt out of the helicopter into deep water, despatches and all -- an end, said Big Brother, which it was impossible to contemplate without feelings of envy. Big Brother added a few remarks on the purity and single-mindedness of Comrade Ogilvy's life. He was a total abstainer and a nonsmoker, had no recreations except a daily hour in the gymnasium, and had taken a vow of

celibacy, believing marriage and the care of a family to be incompatible with a twenty-four-hour-a-day devotion to duty. He had no subjects of conversation except the principles of Ingsoc, and no aim in life except the defeat of the Eurasian enemy and the hunting-down of spies, saboteurs, thoughtcriminals, and traitors generally.

Winston debated with himself whether to award Comrade Ogilvy the Order of Conspicuous Merit: in the end he decided against it because of the unnecessary cross-referencing that it would entail.

Once again he glanced at his rival in the opposite cubicle. Something seemed to tell him with certainty that Tillotson was busy on the same job as himself. There was no way of knowing whose job would finally be adopted, but he felt a profound conviction that it would be his own. Comrade Ogilvy, unimagined an hour ago, was now a fact. It struck him as curious that you could create dead men but not living ones. Comrade Ogilvy, who had never existed in the present, now existed in the past, and when once the act of forgery was forgotten, he would exist just as authentically, and upon the same evidence, as Charlemagne or Julius Caesar.

V

In the low-ceilinged canteen, deep underground, the lunch queue jerked slowly forward. The room was already very full and deafeningly noisy. From the grille at the counter the steam of stew came pouring forth, with a sour metallic smell which did not quite overcome the fumes of Victory Gin. On the far side of the room there was a small bar, a mere hole in the wall, where gin could be bought at ten cents the large nip.

'Just the man I was looking for,' said a voice at Winston's back.

He turned round. It was his friend Syme, who worked in the Research Department. Perhaps 'friend' was not exactly the right word. You did not have friends nowadays, you had comrades: but there were some comrades whose society was pleasanter than that of others. Syme was a philologist, a specialist in Newspeak. Indeed, he was one of the enormous team of experts now engaged in compiling the Eleventh Edition of the Newspeak Dictionary. He was a tiny creature, smaller than Winston, with dark hair and large, protuberant eyes, at once mournful and derisive, which seemed to search your face closely while he was speaking to you.

'I wanted to ask you whether you'd got any razor blades,' he said.

'Not one!' said Winston with a sort of guilty haste. 'I've tried all over the place. They don't exist any longer.'

Everyone kept asking you for razor blades. Actually he had two unused ones which he was hoarding up. There had been a famine of them for months

past. At any given moment there was some necessary article which the Party shops were unable to supply. Sometimes it was buttons, sometimes it was darning wool, sometimes it was shoelaces; at present it was razor blades. You could only get hold of them, if at all, by scrounging more or less furtively on the 'free' market.

'I've been using the same blade for six weeks,' he added untruthfully.

The queue gave another jerk forward. As they halted he turned and faced Syme again. Each of them took a greasy metal tray from a pile at the end of the counter.

'Did you go and see the prisoners hanged yesterday?' said Syme.

'I was working,' said Winston indifferently. 'I shall see it on the flicks, I suppose.'

'A very inadequate substitute,' said Syme.

His mocking eyes roved over Winston's face. 'I know you,' the eyes seemed to say, 'I see through you. I know very well why you didn't go to see those prisoners hanged.' In an intellectual way, Syme was venomously orthodox. He would talk with a disagreeable gloating satisfaction of helicopter raids on enemy villages, and trials and confessions of thought-criminals, the executions in the cellars of the Ministry of Love. Talking to him was largely a matter of getting him away from such subjects and entangling him, if possible, in the technicalities of Newspeak, on which he was authoritative and interesting. Winston turned his head a little aside to avoid the scrutiny of the large dark eyes.

'It was a good hanging,' said Syme reminiscently. 'I think it spoils it when they tie their feet together. I like to see them kicking. And above all, at the end, the tongue sticking right out, and blue a quite bright blue. That's the detail that appeals to me.'

'Nex', please!' yelled the white-aproned prole with the ladle.

Winston and Syme pushed their trays beneath the grille. On to each was dumped swiftly the regulation lunch -- a metal pannikin of pinkish-grey stew, a hunk of bread, a cube of cheese, a mug of milkless Victory Coffee, and one saccharine tablet.

'There's a table over there, under that telescreen,' said Syme. 'Let's pick up a gin on the way.'

The gin was served out to them in handleless china mugs. They threaded their way across the crowded room and unpacked their trays on to the metal-topped table, on one corner of which someone had left a pool of stew, a filthy liquid mess that had the appearance of vomit. Winston took up his mug of gin, paused for an instant to collect his nerve, and gulped the oily-tasting stuff down. When he had winked the tears out of his eyes he suddenly discovered that he was hungry. He began swallowing spoonfuls of the stew, which, in among its general sloppiness, had cubes of spongy pinkish stuff which was probably a preparation of meat. Neither of them spoke again till they had emptied their pannikins. From the table at Winston's left, a little behind his back, someone was talking rapidly and continuously, a harsh gabble almost like the quacking of a duck, which pierced the general uproar of the room.

'How is the Dictionary getting on?' said Winston, raising his voice to overcome the noise.

'Slowly,' said Syme. 'I'm on the adjectives. It's fascinating.'

He had brightened up immediately at the mention of Newspeak. He pushed his pannikin aside, took up his hunk of bread in one delicate hand and his cheese in the other, and leaned across the table so as to be able to speak without shouting.

'The Eleventh Edition is the definitive edition,' he said. 'We're getting the language into its final shape -- the shape it's going to have when nobody speaks anything else. When we've finished with it, people like you will have to learn it all over again. You think, I dare say, that our chief job is inventing new words. But not a bit of it! We're destroying words -- scores of them, hundreds of them, every day. We're cutting the language down to the bone. The Eleventh Edition won't contain a single word that will become obsolete before the year 2050.'

He bit hungrily into his bread and swallowed a couple of mouthfuls, then continued speaking, with a sort of pedant's passion. His thin dark face had become animated, his eyes had lost their mocking expression and grown almost dreamy.

'It's a beautiful thing, the destruction of words. Of course the great wastage is in the verbs and adjectives, but there are hundreds of nouns that can be got rid of as well. It isn't only the synonyms; there are also the antonyms. After all, what justification is there for a word which is simply the

opposite of some other word? A word contains its opposite in itself. Take "good", for instance. If you have a word like "good", what need is there for a word like "bad"? "Ungood" will do just as well -- better, because it's an exact opposite, which the other is not. Or again, if you want a stronger version of "good", what sense is there in having a whole string of vague useless words like "excellent" and "splendid" and all the rest of them? "Plusgood" covers the meaning, or "doubleplusgood" if you want something stronger still. Of course we use those forms already. but in the final version of Newspeak there'll be nothing else. In the end the whole notion of goodness and badness will be covered by only six words -- in reality, only one word. Don't you see the beauty of that, Winston? It was B.B.'s idea originally, of course,' he added as an afterthought.

A sort of vapid eagerness flitted across Winston's face at the mention of Big Brother. Nevertheless Syme immediately detected a certain lack of enthusiasm.

'You haven't a real appreciation of Newspeak, Winston,' he said almost sadly. 'Even when you write it you're still thinking in Oldspeak. I've read some of those pieces that you write in The Times occasionally. They're good enough, but they're translations. In your heart you'd prefer to stick to Oldspeak, with all its vagueness and its useless shades of meaning. You don't grasp the beauty of the destruction of words. Do you know that Newspeak is the only language in the world whose vocabulary gets smaller every year?'

Winston did know that, of course. He smiled, sympathetically he hoped, not trusting himself to speak. Syme bit off another fragment of the dark-coloured bread, chewed it briefly, and went on:

'Don't you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it. Every concept that can ever be needed, will be expressed by exactly one word, with its meaning rigidly defined and all its subsidiary meanings rubbed out and forgotten. Already, in the Eleventh Edition, we're not far from that point. But the process will still be continuing long after you and I are dead. Every year fewer and fewer words, and the range of consciousness always a little smaller. Even now, of course, there's no reason or excuse for committing thoughtcrime. It's merely a question of self-discipline, reality-control. But in the end there won't be any need even for that. The Revolution will be complete when the language is perfect. Newspeak is Ingsoc and Ingsoc is Newspeak,' he added with a sort of mystical satisfaction. 'Has it ever occurred to you, Winston, that by the year 2050, at the very latest, not a single human being will be alive who could understand such a conversation as we are having now?'

'Except-' began Winston doubtfully, and he stopped.

It had been on the tip of his tongue to say 'Except the proles,' but he checked himself, not feeling fully certain that this remark was not in some way unorthodox. Syme, however, had divined what he was about to say.

'The proles are not human beings,' he said carelessly. ' By 2050 earlier, probably -- all real knowledge of Oldspeak will have disappeared. The whole literature of the past will have been destroyed. Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Byron -- they'll exist only in Newspeak versions, not merely changed into something different, but actually changed into something contradictory of what they used to be. Even the literature of the Party will change. Even the

slogans will change. How could you have a slogan like "freedom is slavery" when the concept of freedom has been abolished? The whole climate of thought will be different. In fact there will be no thought, as we understand it now. Orthodoxy means not thinking -- not needing to think. Orthodoxy is unconsciousness.'

One of these days, thought Winston with sudden deep conviction, Syme will be vaporized. He is too intelligent. He sees too clearly and speaks too plainly. The Party does not like such people. One day he will disappear. It is written in his face.

Winston had finished his bread and cheese. He turned a little sideways in his chair to drink his mug of coffee. At the table on his left the man with the strident voice was still talking remorselessly away. A young woman who was perhaps his secretary, and who was sitting with her back to Winston, was listening to him and seemed to be eagerly agreeing with everything that he said. From time to time Winston caught some such remark as 'I think you're so right, I do so agree with you', uttered in a youthful and rather silly feminine voice. But the other voice never stopped for an instant, even when the girl was speaking. Winston knew the man by sight, though he knew no more about him than that he held some important post in the Fiction Department. He was a man of about thirty, with a muscular throat and a large, mobile mouth. His head was thrown back a little, and because of the angle at which he was sitting, his spectacles caught the light and presented to Winston two blank discs instead of eyes. What was slightly horrible, was that from the stream of sound that poured out of his mouth it was almost impossible to distinguish a single word. Just once Winston caught a phrase-'complete and

final elimination of Goldsteinism'- jerked out very rapidly and, as it seemed, all in one piece, like a line of type cast solid. For the rest it was just a noise, a quack-quack-quacking. And yet, though you could not actually hear what the man was saying, you could not be in any doubt about its general nature. He might be denouncing Goldstein and demanding sterner measures against thought-criminals and saboteurs, he might be fulminating against the atrocities of the Eurasian army, he might be praising Big Brother or the heroes on the Malabar front-it made no difference. Whatever it was, you could be certain that every word of it was pure orthodoxy, pure Ingsoc. As he watched the eyeless face with the jaw moving rapidly up and down, Winston had a curious feeling that this was not a real human being but some kind of dummy. It was not the man's brain that was speaking, it was his larynx. The stuff that was coming out of him consisted of words, but it was not speech in the true sense: it was a noise uttered in unconsciousness, like the quacking of a duck.

Syme had fallen silent for a moment, and with the handle of his spoon was tracing patterns in the puddle of stew. The voice from the other table quacked rapidly on, easily audible in spite of the surrounding din.

'There is a word in Newspeak,' said Syme, 'I don't know whether you know it: duckspeak, to quack like a duck. It is one of those interesting words that have two contradictory meanings. Applied to an opponent, it is abuse, applied to someone you agree with, it is praise.'

Unquestionably Syme will be vaporized, Winston thought again. He thought it with a kind of sadness, although well knowing that Syme despised him and slightly disliked him, and was fully capable of denouncing him as a

thought-criminal if he saw any reason for doing so. There was something subtly wrong with Syme. There was something that he lacked: discretion, aloofness, a sort of saving stupidity. You could not say that he was unorthodox. He believed in the principles of Ingsoc, he venerated Big Brother, he rejoiced over victories, he hated heretics, not merely with sincerity but with a sort of restless zeal, an up-to-dateness of information, which the ordinary Party member did not approach. Yet a faint air of disreputability always clung to him. He said things that would have been better unsaid, he had read too many books, he frequented the Chestnut Tree Café, haunt of painters and musicians. There was no law, not even an unwritten law, against frequenting the Chestnut Tree Café, yet the place was somehow ill-omened. The old, discredited leaders of the Party had been used to gather there before they were finally purged. Goldstein himself, it was said, had sometimes been seen there, years and decades ago. Syme's fate was not difficult to foresee. And yet it was a fact that if Syme grasped, even for three seconds, the nature of his, Winston's, secret opinions, he would betray him instantly to the Thought police. So would anybody else, for that matter: but Syme more than most. Zeal was not enough. Orthodoxy was unconsciousness.

Syme looked up. 'Here comes Parsons,' he said.

Something in the tone of his voice seemed to add, 'that bloody fool'. Parsons, Winston's fellow-tenant at Victory Mansions, was in fact threading his way across the room -- a tubby, middle-sized man with fair hair and a froglike face. At thirty-five he was already putting on rolls of fat at neck and waistline, but his movements were brisk and boyish. His whole appearance

was that of a little boy grown large, so much so that although he was wearing the regulation overalls, it was almost impossible not to think of him as being dressed in the blue shorts, grey shirt, and red neckerchief of the Spies. In visualizing him one saw always a picture of dimpled knees and sleeves rolled back from pudgy forearms. Parsons did, indeed, invariably revert to shorts when a community hike or any other physical activity gave him an excuse for doing so. He greeted them both with a cheery 'Hullo, hullo!' and sat down at the table, giving off an intense smell of sweat. Beads of moisture stood out all over his pink face. His powers of sweating were extraordinary. At the Community Centre you could always tell when he had been playing table-tennis by the dampness of the bat handle. Syme had produced a strip of paper on which there was a long column of words, and was studying it with an ink-pencil between his fingers.

'Look at him working away in the lunch hour,' said Parsons, nudging Winston. 'Keeness, eh? What's that you've got there, old boy? Something a bit too brainy for me, I expect. Smith, old boy, I'll tell you why I'm chasing you. It's that sub you forgot to give me.'

'Which sub is that? said Winston, automatically feeling for money. About a quarter of one's salary had to be earmarked for voluntary subscriptions, which were so numerous that it was difficult to keep track of them.

'For Hate Week. You know -- the house-by-house fund. I'm treasurer for our block. We're making an all-out effort -- going to put on a tremendous show. I tell you, it won't be my fault if old Victory Mansions doesn't have the biggest outfit of flags in the whole street. Two dollars you promised me.'

Winston found and handed over two creased and filthy notes, which Parsons entered in a small notebook, in the neat handwriting of the illiterate.

'By the way, old boy,' he said. 'I hear that little beggar of mine let fly at you with his catapult yesterday. I gave him a good dressing-down for it. In fact I told him I'd take the catapult away if he does it again.'

'I think he was a little upset at not going to the execution,' said Winston.

' Ah, well -- what I mean to say, shows the right spirit, doesn't it? Mischievous little beggars they are, both of them, but talk about keenness! All they think about is the Spies, and the war, of course. D'you know what that little girl of mine did last Saturday, when her troop was on a hike out Berkhamsted way? She got two other girls to go with her, slipped off from the hike, and spent the whole afternoon following a strange man. They kept on his tail for two hours, right through the woods, and then, when they got into Amersham, handed him over to the patrols.'

'What did they do that for?' said Winston, somewhat taken aback. Parsons went on triumphantly:

'My kid made sure he was some kind of enemy agent -- might have been dropped by parachute, for instance. But here's the point, old boy. What do you think put her on to him in the first place? She spotted he was wearing a funny kind of shoes -- said she'd never seen anyone wearing shoes like that before. So the chances were he was a foreigner. Pretty smart for a nipper of seven, eh?'

'What happened to the man?' said Winston.

'Ah, that I couldn't say, of course. But I wouldn't be altogether surprised if-' Parsons made the motion of aiming a rifle, and clicked his tongue for the explosion.

'Good,' said Syme abstractedly, without looking up from his strip of paper.

'Of course we can't afford to take chances,' agreed Winston dutifully.

'What I mean to say, there is a war on,' said Parsons.

As though in confirmation of this, a trumpet call floated from the telescreen just above their heads. However, it was not the proclamation of a military victory this time, but merely an announcement from the Ministry of Plenty.

'Comrades!' cried an eager youthful voice. 'Attention, comrades! We have glorious news for you. We have won the battle for production! Returns now completed of the output of all classes of consumption goods show that the standard of living has risen by no less than 20 per cent over the past year. All over Oceania this morning there were irrepressible spontaneous demonstrations when workers marched out of factories and offices and paraded through the streets with banners voicing their gratitude to Big Brother for the new, happy life which his wise leadership has bestowed upon us. Here are some of the completed figures. Foodstuffs-'

The phrase 'our new, happy life' recurred several times. It had been a favourite of late with the Ministry of Plenty. Parsons, his attention caught by the trumpet call, sat listening with a sort of gaping solemnity, a sort of edified

boredom. He could not follow the figures, but he was aware that they were in some way a cause for satisfaction. He had lugged out a huge and filthy pipe which was already half full of charred tobacco. With the tobacco ration at 100 grammes a week it was seldom possible to fill a pipe to the top. Winston was smoking a Victory Cigarette which he held carefully horizontal. The new ration did not start till tomorrow and he had only four cigarettes left. For the moment he had shut his ears to the remoter noises and was listening to the stuff that streamed out of the telescreen. It appeared that there had even been demonstrations to thank Big Brother for raising the chocolate ration to twenty grammes a week. And only yesterday, he reflected, it had been announced that the ration was to be reduced to twenty grammes a week. Was it possible that they could swallow that, after only twenty-four hours? Yes, they swallowed it. Parsons swallowed it easily, with the stupidity of an animal. The eyeless creature at the other table swallowed it fanatically, passionately, with a furious desire to track down, denounce, and vaporize anyone who should suggest that last week the ration had been thirty grammes. Syme, too-- in some more complex way, involving doublethink, Syme swallowed it. Was he, then, alone in the possession of a memory?

The fabulous statistics continued to pour out of the telescreen. As compared with last year there was more food, more clothes, more houses, more furniture, more cooking-pots, more fuel, more ships, more helicopters, more books, more babies -- more of everything except disease, crime, and insanity. Year by year and minute by minute, everybody and everything was whizzing rapidly upwards. As Syme had done earlier Winston had taken up his spoon and was dabbling in the pale-coloured gravy that dribbled across the table, drawing a long streak of it out into a pattern. He meditated

resentfully on the physical texture of life. Had it always been like this? Had food always tasted like this? He looked round the canteen. A low-ceilinged, crowded room, its walls grimy from the contact of innumerable bodies; battered metal tables and chairs, placed so close together that you sat with elbows touching; bent spoons, dented trays, coarse white mugs; all surfaces greasy, grime in every crack; and a sourish, composite smell of bad gin and bad coffee and metallic stew and dirty clothes. Always in your stomach and in your skin there was a sort of protest, a feeling that you had been cheated of something that you had a right to. It was true that he had no memories of anything greatly different. In any time that he could accurately remember, there had never been quite enough to eat, one had never had socks or underclothes that were not full of holes, furniture had always been battered and rickety, rooms underheated, tube trains crowded, houses falling to pieces, bread dark-coloured, tea a rarity, coffee filthy-tasting, cigarettes insufficient - - nothing cheap and plentiful except synthetic gin. And though, of course, it grew worse as one's body aged, was it not a sign that this was not the natural order of things, if one's heart sickened at the discomfort and dirt and scarcity, the interminable winters, the stickiness of one's socks, the lifts that never worked, the cold water, the gritty soap, the cigarettes that came to pieces, the food with its strange evil tastes? Why should one feel it to be intolerable unless one had some kind of ancestral memory that things had once been different?

He looked round the canteen again. Nearly everyone was ugly, and would still have been ugly even if dressed otherwise than in the uniform blue overalls. On the far side of the room, sitting at a table alone, a small, curiously beetle-like man was drinking a cup of coffee, his little eyes darting

suspicious glances from side to side. How easy it was, thought Winston, if you did not look about you, to believe that the physical type set up by the Party as an ideal-tall muscular youths and deep-bosomed maidens, blond-haired, vital, sunburnt, carefree -- existed and even predominated. Actually, so far as he could judge, the majority of people in Airstrip One were small, dark, and ill-favoured. It was curious how that beetle-like type proliferated in the Ministries: little dumpy men, growing stout very early in life, with short legs, swift scuttling movements, and fat inscrutable faces with very small eyes. It was the type that seemed to flourish best under the dominion of the Party.

The announcement from the Ministry of Plenty ended on another trumpet call and gave way to tinny music. Parsons, stirred to vague enthusiasm by the bombardment of figures, took his pipe out of his mouth.

'The Ministry of Plenty's certainly done a good job this year,' he said with a knowing shake of his head. 'By the way, Smith old boy, I suppose you haven't got any razor blades you can let me have?'

'Not one,' said Winston. 'I've been using the same blade for six weeks myself.'

'Ah, well -- just thought I'd ask you, old boy.'

'Sorry,' said Winston.

The quacking voice from the next table, temporarily silenced during the Ministry's announcement, had started up again, as loud as ever. For some reason Winston suddenly found himself thinking of Mrs Parsons, with her

wispy hair and the dust in the creases of her face. Within two years those children would be denouncing her to the Thought Police. Mrs Parsons would be vaporized. Syme would be vaporized. Winston would be vaporized. O'Brien would be vaporized. Parsons, on the other hand, would never be vaporized. The eyeless creature with the quacking voice would never be vaporized. The little beetle-like men who scuttle so nimbly through the labyrinthine corridors of Ministries they, too, would never be vaporized. And the girl with dark hair, the girl from the Fiction Department -- she would never be vaporized either. It seemed to him that he knew instinctively who would survive and who would perish: though just what it was that made for survival, it was not easy to say.

At this moment he was dragged out of his reverie with a violent jerk. The girl at the next table had turned partly round and was looking at him. It was the girl with dark hair. She was looking at him in a sidelong way, but with curious intensity. The instant she caught his eye she looked away again.

The sweat started out on Winston's backbone. A horrible pang of terror went through him. It was gone almost at once, but it left a sort of nagging uneasiness behind. Why was she watching him? Why did she keep following him about? Unfortunately he could not remember whether she had already been at the table when he arrived, or had come there afterwards. But yesterday, at any rate, during the Two Minutes Hate, she had sat immediately behind him when there was no apparent need to do so. Quite likely her real object had been to listen to him and make sure whether he was shouting loudly enough.

His earlier thought returned to him: probably she was not actually a

member of the Thought Police, but then it was precisely the amateur spy who was the greatest danger of all. He did not know how long she had been looking at him, but perhaps for as much as five minutes, and it was possible that his features had not been perfectly under control. It was terribly dangerous to let your thoughts wander when you were in any public place or within range of a telescreen. The smallest thing could give you away. A nervous tic, an unconscious look of anxiety, a habit of muttering to yourself - anything that carried with it the suggestion of abnormality, of having something to hide. In any case, to wear an improper expression on your face (to look incredulous when a victory was announced, for example) was itself a punishable offence. There was even a word for it in Newspeak: facecrime, it was called.

The girl had turned her back on him again. Perhaps after all she was not really following him about, perhaps it was coincidence that she had sat so close to him two days running. His cigarette had gone out, and he laid it carefully on the edge of the table. He would finish smoking it after work, if he could keep the tobacco in it. Quite likely the person at the next table was a spy of the Thought Police, and quite likely he would be in the cellars of the Ministry of Love within three days, but a cigarette end must not be wasted. Syme had folded up his strip of paper and stowed it away in his pocket. Parsons had begun talking again.

'Did I ever tell you, old boy,' he said, chuckling round the stem of his pipe, 'about the time when those two nippers of mine set fire to the old market-woman's skirt because they saw her wrapping up sausages in a poster of B.B.? Sneaked up behind her and set fire to it with a box of matches.

Burned her quite badly, I believe. Little beggars, eh? But keen as mustard! That's a first-rate training they give them in the Spies nowadays -- better than in my day, even. What d'you think's the latest thing they've served them out with? Ear trumpets for listening through keyholes! My little girl brought one home the other night -- tried it out on our sitting-room door, and reckoned she could hear twice as much as with her ear to the hole. Of course it's only a toy, mind you. Still, gives 'em the right idea, eh?'

At this moment the telescreen let out a piercing whistle. It was the signal to return to work. All three men sprang to their feet to join in the struggle round the lifts, and the remaining tobacco fell out of Winston's cigarette.

VI

Winston was writing in his diary:

It was three years ago. It was on a dark evening, in a narrow side-street near one of the big railway stations. She was standing near a doorway in the wall, under a street lamp that hardly gave any light. She had a young face, painted very thick. It was really the paint that appealed to me, the whiteness of it, like a mask, and the bright red lips. Party women never paint their faces. There was nobody else in the street, and no telescreens. She said two dollars. I

For the moment it was too difficult to go on. He shut his eyes and pressed his fingers against them, trying to squeeze out the vision that kept recurring. He had an almost overwhelming temptation to shout a string of filthy words at the top of his voice. Or to bang his head against the wall, to kick over the table, and hurl the inkpot through the window -- to do any violent or noisy or painful thing that might black out the memory that was tormenting him.

Your worst enemy, he reflected, was your own nervous system. At any moment the tension inside you was liable to translate itself into some visible symptom. He thought of a man whom he had passed in the street a few weeks back; a quite ordinary-looking man, a Party member, aged thirty-five to forty, tallish and thin, carrying a brief-case. They were a few metres apart when the left side of the man's face was suddenly contorted by a sort of spasm. It happened again just as they were passing one another: it was only a twitch, a

quiver, rapid as the clicking of a camera shutter, but obviously habitual. He remembered thinking at the time: That poor devil is done for. And what was frightening was that the action was quite possibly unconscious. The most deadly danger of all was talking in your sleep. There was no way of guarding against that, so far as he could see.

He drew his breath and went on writing:

I went with her through the doorway and across a backyard into a basement kitchen. There was a bed against the wall, and a lamp on the table, turned down very low. She

His teeth were set on edge. He would have liked to spit. Simultaneously with the woman in the basement kitchen he thought of Katharine, his wife. Winston was married -- had been married, at any rate: probably he still was married, so far as he knew his wife was not dead. He seemed to breathe again the warm stuffy odour of the basement kitchen, an odour compounded of bugs and dirty clothes and villainous cheap scent, but nevertheless alluring, because no woman of the Party ever used scent, or could be imagined as doing so. Only the proles used scent. In his mind the smell of it was inextricably mixed up with fornication.

When he had gone with that woman it had been his first lapse in two years or thereabouts. Consorting with prostitutes was forbidden, of course, but it was one of those rules that you could occasionally nerve yourself to break. It was dangerous, but it was not a life-and-death matter. To be caught with a prostitute might mean five years in a forced-labour camp: not more, if you had committed no other offence. And it was easy enough, provided that

you could avoid being caught in the act. The poorer quarters swarmed with women who were ready to sell themselves. Some could even be purchased for a bottle of gin, which the proles were not supposed to drink. Tacitly the Party was even inclined to encourage prostitution, as an outlet for instincts which could not be altogether suppressed. Mere debauchery did not matter very much, so long as it was furtive and joyless and only involved the women of a submerged and despised class. The unforgivable crime was promiscuity between Party members. But -- though this was one of the crimes that the accused in the great purges invariably confessed to -- it was difficult to imagine any such thing actually happening.

The aim of the Party was not merely to prevent men and women from forming loyalties which it might not be able to control. Its real, undeclared purpose was to remove all pleasure from the sexual act. Not love so much as eroticism was the enemy, inside marriage as well as outside it. All marriages between Party members had to be approved by a committee appointed for the purpose, and -- though the principle was never clearly stated -- permission was always refused if the couple concerned gave the impression of being physically attracted to one another. The only recognized purpose of marriage was to beget children for the service of the Party. Sexual intercourse was to be looked on as a slightly disgusting minor operation, like having an enema. This again was never put into plain words, but in an indirect way it was rubbed into every Party member from childhood onwards. There were even organizations such as the Junior Anti-Sex League, which advocated complete celibacy for both sexes. All children were to be begotten by artificial insemination (artsem, it was called in Newspeak) and brought up in public institutions. This, Winston was aware, was not meant altogether seriously,

but somehow it fitted in with the general ideology of the Party. The Party was trying to kill the sex instinct, or, if it could not be killed, then to distort it and dirty it. He did not know why this was so, but it seemed natural that it should be so. And as far as the women were concerned, the Party's efforts were largely successful.

He thought again of Katharine. It must be nine, ten -- nearly eleven years since they had parted. It was curious how seldom he thought of her. For days at a time he was capable of forgetting that he had ever been married. They had only been together for about fifteen months. The Party did not permit divorce, but it rather encouraged separation in cases where there were no children.

Katharine was a tall, fair-haired girl, very straight, with splendid movements. She had a bold, aquiline face, a face that one might have called noble until one discovered that there was as nearly as possible nothing behind it. Very early in her married life he had decided -- though perhaps it was only that he knew her more intimately than he knew most people -- that she had without exception the most stupid, vulgar, empty mind that he had ever encountered. She had not a thought in her head that was not a slogan, and there was no imbecility, absolutely none that she was not capable of swallowing if the Party handed it out to her. 'The human sound-track' he nicknamed her in his own mind. Yet he could have endured living with her if it had not been for just one thing -- sex.

As soon as he touched her she seemed to wince and stiffen. To embrace her was like embracing a jointed wooden image. And what was strange was that even when she was clasping him against her he had the feeling that she

was simultaneously pushing him away with all her strength. The rigidity of her muscles managed to convey that impression. She would lie there with shut eyes, neither resisting nor co-operating but submitting. It was extraordinarily embarrassing, and, after a while, horrible. But even then he could have borne living with her if it had been agreed that they should remain celibate. But curiously enough it was Katharine who refused this. They must, she said, produce a child if they could. So the performance continued to happen, once a week quite regularly, whenever it was not impossible. She even used to remind him of it in the morning, as something which had to be done that evening and which must not be forgotten. She had two names for it. One was 'making a baby', and the other was 'our duty to the Party' (yes, she had actually used that phrase). Quite soon he grew to have a feeling of positive dread when the appointed day came round. But luckily no child appeared, and in the end she agreed to give up trying, and soon afterwards they parted.

Winston sighed inaudibly. He picked up his pen again and wrote:

She threw herself down on the bed, and at once, without any kind of preliminary in the most coarse, horrible way you can imagine, pulled up her skirt. I

He saw himself standing there in the dim lamplight, with the smell of bugs and cheap scent in his nostrils, and in his heart a feeling of defeat and resentment which even at that moment was mixed up with the thought of Katharine's white body, frozen for ever by the hypnotic power of the Party. Why did it always have to be like this? Why could he not have a woman of his own instead of these filthy scuffles at intervals of years? But a real love

affair was an almost unthinkable event. The women of the Party were all alike. Chastity was as deep ingrained in them as Party loyalty. By careful early conditioning, by games and cold water, by the rubbish that was dinned into them at school and in the Spies and the Youth League, by lectures, parades, songs, slogans, and martial music, the natural feeling had been driven out of them. His reason told him that there must be exceptions, but his heart did not believe it. They were all impregnable, as the Party intended that they should be. And what he wanted, more even than to be loved, was to break down that wall of virtue, even if it were only once in his whole life. The sexual act, successfully performed, was rebellion. Desire was thoughtcrime. Even to have awakened Katharine, if he could have achieved it, would have been like a seduction, although she was his wife.

But the rest of the story had got to be written down. He wrote:

I turned up the lamp. When I saw her in the light

After the darkness the feeble light of the paraffin lamp had seemed very bright. For the first time he could see the woman properly. He had taken a step towards her and then halted, full of lust and terror. He was painfully conscious of the risk he had taken in coming here. It was perfectly possible that the patrols would catch him on the way out: for that matter they might be waiting outside the door at this moment. If he went away without even doing what he had come here to do -- !

It had got to be written down, it had got to be confessed. What he had suddenly seen in the lamplight was that the woman was old. The paint was plastered so thick on her face that it looked as though it might crack like a

cardboard mask. There were streaks of white in her hair; but the truly dreadful detail was that her mouth had fallen a little open, revealing nothing except a cavernous blackness. She had no teeth at all.

He wrote hurriedly, in scrabbling handwriting:

When I saw her in the light she was quite an old woman, fifty years old at least. But I went ahead and did it just the same.

He pressed his fingers against his eyelids again. He had written it down at last, but it made no difference. The therapy had not worked. The urge to shout filthy words at the top of his voice was as strong as ever.

VII

If there is hope, wrote Winston, it lies in the proles.

If there was hope, it must lie in the proles, because only there in those swarming disregarded masses, 85 per cent of the population of Oceania, could the force to destroy the Party ever be generated. The Party could not be overthrown from within. Its enemies, if it had any enemies, had no way of coming together or even of identifying one another. Even if the legendary Brotherhood existed, as just possibly it might, it was inconceivable that its members could ever assemble in larger numbers than twos and threes. Rebellion meant a look in the eyes, an inflexion of the voice, at the most, an occasional whispered word. But the proles, if only they could somehow become conscious of their own strength. would have no need to conspire. They needed only to rise up and shake themselves like a horse shaking off flies. If they chose they could blow the Party to pieces tomorrow morning. Surely sooner or later it must occur to them to do it? And yet-!

He remembered how once he had been walking down a crowded street when a tremendous shout of hundreds of voices women's voices -- had burst from a side-street a little way ahead. It was a great formidable cry of anger and despair, a deep, loud 'Oh-o-o-o-oh!' that went humming on like the reverberation of a bell. His heart had leapt. It's started! he had thought. A riot! The proles are breaking loose at last! When he had reached the spot it was to see a mob of two or three hundred women crowding round the stalls of a street market, with faces as tragic as though they had been the doomed passengers on a sinking ship. But at this moment the general despair broke

down into a multitude of individual quarrels. It appeared that one of the stalls had been selling tin saucepans. They were wretched, flimsy things, but cooking-pots of any kind were always difficult to get. Now the supply had unexpectedly given out. The successful women, bumped and jostled by the rest, were trying to make off with their saucepans while dozens of others clamoured round the stall, accusing the stall-keeper of favouritism and of having more saucepans somewhere in reserve. There was a fresh outburst of yells. Two bloated women, one of them with her hair coming down, had got hold of the same saucepan and were trying to tear it out of one another's hands. For a moment they were both tugging, and then the handle came off. Winston watched them disgustedly. And yet, just for a moment, what almost frightening power had sounded in that cry from only a few hundred throats! Why was it that they could never shout like that about anything that mattered?

He wrote:

Until they become conscious they will never rebel, and until after they have rebelled they cannot become conscious.

That, he reflected, might almost have been a transcription from one of the Party textbooks. The Party claimed, of course, to have liberated the proles from bondage. Before the Revolution they had been hideously oppressed by the capitalists, they had been starved and flogged, women had been forced to work in the coal mines (women still did work in the coal mines, as a matter of fact), children had been sold into the factories at the age of six. But simultaneously, true to the Principles of doublethink, the Party taught that the proles were natural inferiors who must be kept in subjection, like animals, by

the application of a few simple rules. In reality very little was known about the proles. It was not necessary to know much. So long as they continued to work and breed, their other activities were without importance. Left to themselves, like cattle turned loose upon the plains of Argentina, they had reverted to a style of life that appeared to be natural to them, a sort of ancestral pattern. They were born, they grew up in the gutters, they went to work at twelve, they passed through a brief blossoming-period of beauty and sexual desire, they married at twenty, they were middle-aged at thirty, they died, for the most part, at sixty. Heavy physical work, the care of home and children, petty quarrels with neighbours, films, football, beer, and above all, gambling, filled up the horizon of their minds. To keep them in control was not difficult. A few agents of the Thought Police moved always among them, spreading false rumours and marking down and eliminating the few individuals who were judged capable of becoming dangerous; but no attempt was made to indoctrinate them with the ideology of the Party. It was not desirable that the proles should have strong political feelings. All that was required of them was a primitive patriotism which could be appealed to whenever it was necessary to make them accept longer working-hours or shorter rations. And even when they became discontented, as they sometimes did, their discontent led nowhere, because being without general ideas, they could only focus it on petty specific grievances. The larger evils invariably escaped their notice. The great majority of proles did not even have telescreens in their homes. Even the civil police interfered with them very little. There was a vast amount of criminality in London, a whole world-within-a-world of thieves, bandits, prostitutes, drug-peddlers, and racketeers of every description; but since it all happened among the proles themselves, it was of no importance. In all questions of morals they were allowed to follow

their ancestral code. The sexual puritanism of the Party was not imposed upon them. Promiscuity went unpunished, divorce was permitted. For that matter, even religious worship would have been permitted if the proles had shown any sign of needing or wanting it. They were beneath suspicion. As the Party slogan put it: 'Proles and animals are free.'

Winston reached down and cautiously scratched his varicose ulcer. It had begun itching again. The thing you invariably came back to was the impossibility of knowing what life before the Revolution had really been like. He took out of the drawer a copy of a children's history textbook which he had borrowed from Mrs Parsons, and began copying a passage into the diary:

In the old days (it ran), before the glorious Revolution, London was not the beautiful city that we know today. It was a dark, dirty, miserable place where hardly anybody had enough to eat and where hundreds and thousands of poor people had no boots on their feet and not even a roof to sleep under. Children no older than you had to work twelve hours a day for cruel masters who flogged them with whips if they worked too slowly and fed them on nothing but stale breadcrusts and water.

But in among all this terrible poverty there were just a few great big beautiful houses that were lived in by rich men who had as many as thirty servants to look after them. These rich men were called capitalists. They were fat, ugly men with wicked faces, like the one in the picture on the opposite page. You can see that he is dressed in a long black coat which was called a frock coat, and a queer, shiny hat shaped like a stovepipe, which was called a top hat. This was the uniform of the capitalists, and no one else was allowed to wear it. The capitalists owned everything in the world, and everyone else

was their slave. They owned all the land, all the houses, all the factories, and all the money. If anyone disobeyed them they could throw them into prison, or they could take his job away and starve him to death. When any ordinary person spoke to a capitalist he had to cringe and bow to him, and take off his cap and address him as 'Sir'. The chief of all the capitalists was called the King. and

But he knew the rest of the catalogue. There would be mention of the bishops in their lawn sleeves, the judges in their ermine robes, the pillory, the stocks, the treadmill, the cat-o'-nine tails, the Lord Mayor's Banquet, and the practice of kissing the Pope's toe. There was also something called the *jus primae noctis*, which would probably not be mentioned in a textbook for children. It was the law by which every capitalist had the right to sleep with any woman working in one of his factories.

How could you tell how much of it was lies? It might be true that the average human being was better off now than he had been before the Revolution. The only evidence to the contrary was the mute protest in your own bones, the instinctive feeling that the conditions you lived in were intolerable and that at some other time they must have been different. It struck him that the truly characteristic thing about modern life was not its cruelty and insecurity, but simply its bareness, its dinginess, its listlessness. Life, if you looked about you, bore no resemblance not only to the lies that streamed out of the telescreens, but even to the ideals that the Party was trying to achieve. Great areas of it, even for a Party member, were neutral and non-political, a matter of slogging through dreary jobs, fighting for a place on the Tube, darning a worn-out sock, cadging a saccharine tablet, saving a

cigarette end. The ideal set up by the Party was something huge, terrible, and glittering -- a world of steel and concrete, of monstrous machines and terrifying weapons -- a nation of warriors and fanatics, marching forward in perfect unity, all thinking the same thoughts and shouting the same slogans, perpetually working, fighting, triumphing, persecuting -- three hundred million people all with the same face. The reality was decaying, dingy cities where underfed people shuffled to and fro in leaky shoes, in patched-up nineteenth-century houses that smelt always of cabbage and bad lavatories. He seemed to see a vision of London, vast and ruinous, city of a million dustbins, and mixed up with it was a picture of Mrs Parsons, a woman with lined face and wispy hair, fiddling helplessly with a blocked waste-pipe.

He reached down and scratched his ankle again. Day and night the telescreens bruised your ears with statistics proving that people today had more food, more clothes, better houses, better recreations -- that they lived longer, worked shorter hours, were bigger, healthier, stronger, happier, more intelligent, better educated, than the people of fifty years ago. Not a word of it could ever be proved or disproved. The Party claimed, for example, that today 40 per cent of adult proles were literate: before the Revolution, it was said, the number had only been 15 per cent. The Party claimed that the infant mortality rate was now only 160 per thousand, whereas before the Revolution it had been 300 -- and so it went on. It was like a single equation with two unknowns. It might very well be that literally every word in the history books, even the things that one accepted without question, was pure fantasy. For all he knew there might never have been any such law as the *jus primae noctis*, or any such creature as a capitalist, or any such garment as a top hat.

Everything faded into mist. The past was erased, the erasure was forgotten, the lie became truth. Just once in his life he had possessed -- after the event: that was what counted -- concrete, unmistakable evidence of an act of falsification. He had held it between his fingers for as long as thirty seconds. In 1973, it must have been -- at any rate, it was at about the time when he and Katharine had parted. But the really relevant date was seven or eight years earlier.

The story really began in the middle sixties, the period of the great purges in which the original leaders of the Revolution were wiped out once and for all. By 1970 none of them was left, except Big Brother himself. All the rest had by that time been exposed as traitors and counter-revolutionaries. Goldstein had fled and was hiding no one knew where, and of the others, a few had simply disappeared, while the majority had been executed after spectacular public trials at which they made confession of their crimes. Among the last survivors were three men named Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford. It must have been in 1965 that these three had been arrested. As often happened, they had vanished for a year or more, so that one did not know whether they were alive or dead, and then had suddenly been brought forth to incriminate themselves in the usual way. They had confessed to intelligence with the enemy (at that date, too, the enemy was Eurasia), embezzlement of public funds, the murder of various trusted Party members, intrigues against the leadership of Big Brother which had started long before the Revolution happened, and acts of sabotage causing the death of hundreds of thousands of people. After confessing to these things they had been pardoned, reinstated in the Party, and given posts which were in fact sinecures but which sounded important. All three had written long, abject

articles in The Times, analysing the reasons for their defection and promising to make amends.

Some time after their release Winston had actually seen all three of them in the Chestnut Tree Café. He remembered the sort of terrified fascination with which he had watched them out of the corner of his eye. They were men far older than himself, relics of the ancient world, almost the last great figures left over from the heroic days of the Party. The glamour of the underground struggle and the civil war still faintly clung to them. He had the feeling, though already at that time facts and dates were growing blurry, that he had known their names years earlier than he had known that of Big Brother. But also they were outlaws, enemies, untouchables, doomed with absolute certainty to extinction within a year or two. No one who had once fallen into the hands of the Thought Police ever escaped in the end. They were corpses waiting to be sent back to the grave.

There was no one at any of the tables nearest to them. It was not wise even to be seen in the neighbourhood of such people. They were sitting in silence before glasses of the gin flavoured with cloves which was the speciality of the café. Of the three, it was Rutherford whose appearance had most impressed Winston. Rutherford had once been a famous caricaturist, whose brutal cartoons had helped to inflame popular opinion before and during the Revolution. Even now, at long intervals, his cartoons were appearing in The Times. They were simply an imitation of his earlier manner, and curiously lifeless and unconvincing. Always they were a rehashing of the ancient themes -- slum tenements, starving children, street battles, capitalists in top hats -- even on the barricades the capitalists still seemed to cling to

their top hats an endless, hopeless effort to get back into the past. He was a monstrous man, with a mane of greasy grey hair, his face pouched and seamed, with thick negroid lips. At one time he must have been immensely strong; now his great body was sagging, sloping, bulging, falling away in every direction. He seemed to be breaking up before one's eyes, like a mountain crumbling.

It was the lonely hour of fifteen. Winston could not now remember how he had come to be in the café at such a time. The place was almost empty. A tinny music was trickling from the telescreens. The three men sat in their corner almost motionless, never speaking. Uncommanded, the waiter brought fresh glasses of gin. There was a chessboard on the table beside them, with the pieces set out but no game started. And then, for perhaps half a minute in all, something happened to the telescreens. The tune that they were playing changed, and the tone of the music changed too. There came into it -- but it was something hard to describe. It was a peculiar, cracked, braying, jeering note: in his mind Winston called it a yellow note. And then a voice from the telescreen was singing:

Under the spreading chestnut tree

I sold you and you sold me:

There lie they, and here lie we

Under the spreading chestnut tree.

The three men never stirred. But when Winston glanced again at Rutherford's ruinous face, he saw that his eyes were full of tears. And for the

first time he noticed, with a kind of inward shudder, and yet not knowing at what he shuddered, that both Aaronson and Rutherford had broken noses.

A little later all three were re-arrested. It appeared that they had engaged in fresh conspiracies from the very moment of their release. At their second trial they confessed to all their old crimes over again, with a whole string of new ones. They were executed, and their fate was recorded in the Party histories, a warning to posterity. About five years after this, in 1973, Winston was unrolling a wad of documents which had just flopped out of the pneumatic tube on to his desk when he came on a fragment of paper which had evidently been slipped in among the others and then forgotten. The instant he had flattened it out he saw its significance. It was a half-page torn out of The Times of about ten years earlier -- the top half of the page, so that it included the date -- and it contained a photograph of the delegates at some Party function in New York. Prominent in the middle of the group were Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford. There was no mistaking them, in any case their names were in the caption at the bottom.

The point was that at both trials all three men had confessed that on that date they had been on Eurasian soil. They had flown from a secret airfield in Canada to a rendezvous somewhere in Siberia, and had conferred with members of the Eurasian General Staff, to whom they had betrayed important military secrets. The date had stuck in Winston's memory because it chanced to be midsummer day; but the whole story must be on record in countless other places as well. There was only one possible conclusion: the confessions were lies.

Of course, this was not in itself a discovery. Even at that time Winston

had not imagined that the people who were wiped out in the purges had actually committed the crimes that they were accused of. But this was concrete evidence; it was a fragment of the abolished past, like a fossil bone which turns up in the wrong stratum and destroys a geological theory. It was enough to blow the Party to atoms, if in some way it could have been published to the world and its significance made known.

He had gone straight on working. As soon as he saw what the photograph was, and what it meant, he had covered it up with another sheet of paper. Luckily, when he unrolled it, it had been upside-down from the point of view of the telescreen.

He took his scribbling pad on his knee and pushed back his chair so as to get as far away from the telescreen as possible. To keep your face expressionless was not difficult, and even your breathing could be controlled, with an effort: but you could not control the beating of your heart, and the telescreen was quite delicate enough to pick it up. He let what he judged to be ten minutes go by, tormented all the while by the fear that some accident -- a sudden draught blowing across his desk, for instance -- would betray him. Then, without uncovering it again, he dropped the photograph into the memory hole, along with some other waste papers. Within another minute, perhaps, it would have crumbled into ashes.

That was ten -- eleven years ago. Today, probably, he would have kept that photograph. It was curious that the fact of having held it in his fingers seemed to him to make a difference even now, when the photograph itself, as well as the event it recorded, was only memory. Was the Party's hold upon the past less strong, he wondered, because a piece of evidence which existed

no longer had once existed?

But today, supposing that it could be somehow resurrected from its ashes, the photograph might not even be evidence. Already, at the time when he made his discovery, Oceania was no longer at war with Eurasia, and it must have been to the agents of Eastasia that the three dead men had betrayed their country. Since then there had been other changes -- two, three, he could not remember how many. Very likely the confessions had been rewritten and rewritten until the original facts and dates no longer had the smallest significance. The past not only changed, but changed continuously. What most afflicted him with the sense of nightmare was that he had never clearly understood why the huge imposture was undertaken. The immediate advantages of falsifying the past were obvious, but the ultimate motive was mysterious. He took up his pen again and wrote:

I understand HOW: I do not understand WHY.

He wondered, as he had many times wondered before, whether he himself was a lunatic. Perhaps a lunatic was simply a minority of one. At one time it had been a sign of madness to believe that the earth goes round the sun; today, to believe that the past is inalterable. He might be alone in holding that belief, and if alone, then a lunatic. But the thought of being a lunatic did not greatly trouble him: the horror was that he might also be wrong.

He picked up the children's history book and looked at the portrait of Big Brother which formed its frontispiece. The hypnotic eyes gazed into his own. It was as though some huge force were pressing down upon you --

something that penetrated inside your skull, battering against your brain, frightening you out of your beliefs, persuading you, almost, to deny the evidence of your senses. In the end the Party would announce that two and two made five, and you would have to believe it. It was inevitable that they should make that claim sooner or later: the logic of their position demanded it. Not merely the validity of experience, but the very existence of external reality, was tacitly denied by their philosophy. The heresy of heresies was common sense. And what was terrifying was not that they would kill you for thinking otherwise, but that they might be right. For, after all, how do we know that two and two make four? Or that the force of gravity works? Or that the past is unchangeable? If both the past and the external world exist only in the mind, and if the mind itself is controllable what then?

But no! His courage seemed suddenly to stiffen of its own accord. The face of O'Brien, not called up by any obvious association, had floated into his mind. He knew, with more certainty than before, that O'Brien was on his side. He was writing the diary for O'Brien -- to O'Brien: it was like an interminable letter which no one would ever read, but which was addressed to a particular person and took its colour from that fact.

The Party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears. It was their final, most essential command. His heart sank as he thought of the enormous power arrayed against him, the ease with which any Party intellectual would overthrow him in debate, the subtle arguments which he would not be able to understand, much less answer. And yet he was in the right! They were wrong and he was right. The obvious, the silly, and the true had got to be defended. Truisms are true, hold on to that! The solid world

exists, its laws do not change. Stones are hard, water is wet, objects unsupported fall towards the earth's centre. With the feeling that he was speaking to O'Brien, and also that he was setting forth an important axiom, he wrote:

Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows.

VIII

From somewhere at the bottom of a passage the smell of roasting coffee -- real coffee, not Victory Coffee -- came floating out into the street. Winston paused involuntarily. For perhaps two seconds he was back in the half-forgotten world of his childhood. Then a door banged, seeming to cut off the smell as abruptly as though it had been a sound.

He had walked several kilometres over pavements, and his varicose ulcer was throbbing. This was the second time in three weeks that he had missed an evening at the Community Centre: a rash act, since you could be certain that the number of your attendances at the Centre was carefully checked. In principle a Party member had no spare time, and was never alone except in bed. It was assumed that when he was not working, eating, or sleeping he would be taking part in some kind of communal recreation: to do anything that suggested a taste for solitude, even to go for a walk by yourself, was always slightly dangerous. There was a word for it in Newspeak: *ownlife*, it was called, meaning individualism and eccentricity. But this evening as he came out of the Ministry the balminess of the April air had tempted him. The sky was a warmer blue than he had seen it that year, and suddenly the long, noisy evening at the Centre, the boring, exhausting games, the lectures, the creaking camaraderie oiled by gin, had seemed intolerable. On impulse he had turned away from the bus-stop and wandered off into the labyrinth of London, first south, then east, then north again, losing himself among unknown streets and hardly bothering in which direction he was going.

'If there is hope,' he had written in the diary, 'it lies in the proles.' The words kept coming back to him, statement of a mystical truth and a palpable absurdity. He was somewhere in the vague, brown-coloured slums to the north and east of what had once been Saint Pancras Station. He was walking up a cobbled street of little two-storey houses with battered doorways which gave straight on the pavement and which were somehow curiously suggestive of ratholes. There were puddles of filthy water here and there among the cobbles. In and out of the dark doorways, and down narrow alley-ways that branched off on either side, people swarmed in astonishing numbers -- girls in full bloom, with crudely lipsticked mouths, and youths who chased the girls, and swollen waddling women who showed you what the girls would be like in ten years' time, and old bent creatures shuffling along on splayed feet, and ragged barefooted children who played in the puddles and then scattered at angry yells from their mothers. Perhaps a quarter of the windows in the street were broken and boarded up. Most of the people paid no attention to Winston; a few eyed him with a sort of guarded curiosity. Two monstrous women with brick-red forearms folded across their aprons were talking outside a doorway. Winston caught scraps of conversation as he approached.

' "Yes," I says to 'er, "that's all very well," I says. "But if you'd of been in my place you'd of done the same as what I done. It's easy to criticize," I says, "but you ain't got the same problems as what I got." '

'Ah,' said the other, 'that's jest it. That's jest where it is.'

The strident voices stopped abruptly. The women studied him in hostile silence as he went past. But it was not hostility, exactly; merely a kind of wariness, a momentary stiffening, as at the passing of some unfamiliar

animal. The blue overalls of the Party could not be a common sight in a street like this. Indeed, it was unwise to be seen in such places, unless you had definite business there. The patrols might stop you if you happened to run into them. 'May I see your papers, comrade? What are you doing here? What time did you leave work? Is this your usual way home?' -- and so on and so forth. Not that there was any rule against walking home by an unusual route: but it was enough to draw attention to you if the Thought Police heard about it.

Suddenly the whole street was in commotion. There were yells of warning from all sides. People were shooting into the doorways like rabbits. A young woman leapt out of a doorway a little ahead of Winston, grabbed up a tiny child playing in a puddle, whipped her apron round it, and leapt back again, all in one movement. At the same instant a man in a concertina-like black suit, who had emerged from a side alley, ran towards Winston, pointing excitedly to the sky.

'Steamer!' he yelled. 'Look out, guv'nor! Bang over'ead! Lay down quick!'

'Steamer' was a nickname which, for some reason, the proles applied to rocket bombs. Winston promptly flung himself on his face. The proles were nearly always right when they gave you a warning of this kind. They seemed to possess some kind of instinct which told them several seconds in advance when a rocket was coming, although the rockets supposedly travelled faster than sound. Winston clasped his forearms above his head. There was a roar that seemed to make the pavement heave; a shower of light objects pattered on to his back. When he stood up he found that he was covered with

fragments of glass from the nearest window.

He walked on. The bomb had demolished a group of houses 200 metres up the street. A black plume of smoke hung in the sky, and below it a cloud of plaster dust in which a crowd was already forming around the ruins. There was a little pile of plaster lying on the pavement ahead of him, and in the middle of it he could see a bright red streak. When he got up to it he saw that it was a human hand severed at the wrist. Apart from the bloody stump, the hand was so completely whitened as to resemble a plaster cast.

He kicked the thing into the gutter, and then, to avoid the crowd, turned down a side-street to the right. Within three or four minutes he was out of the area which the bomb had affected, and the sordid swarming life of the streets was going on as though nothing had happened. It was nearly twenty hours, and the drinking-shops which the proles frequented ('pubs', they called them) were choked with customers. From their grimy swing doors, endlessly opening and shutting, there came forth a smell of urine, sawdust, and sour beer. In an angle formed by a projecting house-front three men were standing very close together, the middle one of them holding a folded-up newspaper which the other two were studying over his shoulder. Even before he was near enough to make out the expression on their faces, Winston could see absorption in every line of their bodies. It was obviously some serious piece of news that they were reading. He was a few paces away from them when suddenly the group broke up and two of the men were in violent altercation. For a moment they seemed almost on the point of blows.

'Can't you bleeding well listen to what I say? I tell you no number ending in seven ain't won for over fourteen months!'

'Yes, it 'as, then!'

'No, it 'as not! Back 'ome I got the 'ole lot of 'em for over two years wrote down on a piece of paper. I takes 'em down reg'lar as the clock. An' I tell you, no number ending in seven-'

'Yes, a seven 'as won! I could pretty near tell you the bleeding number. Four oh seven, it ended in. It were in February -- second week in February.'

'February your grandmother! I got it all down in black and white. An' I tell you, no number-'

'Oh, pack it in!' said the third man.

They were talking about the Lottery. Winston looked back when he had gone thirty metres. They were still arguing, with vivid, passionate faces. The Lottery, with its weekly pay-out of enormous prizes, was the one public event to which the proles paid serious attention. It was probable that there were some millions of proles for whom the Lottery was the principal if not the only reason for remaining alive. It was their delight, their folly, their anodyne, their intellectual stimulant. Where the Lottery was concerned, even people who could barely read and write seemed capable of intricate calculations and staggering feats of memory. There was a whole tribe of men who made a living simply by selling systems, forecasts, and lucky amulets. Winston had nothing to do with the running of the Lottery, which was managed by the Ministry of Plenty, but he was aware (indeed everyone in the party was aware) that the prizes were largely imaginary. Only small sums were actually paid out, the winners of the big prizes being non-existent

persons. In the absence of any real intercommunication between one part of Oceania and another, this was not difficult to arrange.

But if there was hope, it lay in the proles. You had to cling on to that. When you put it in words it sounded reasonable: it was when you looked at the human beings passing you on the pavement that it became an act of faith. The street into which he had turned ran downhill. He had a feeling that he had been in this neighbourhood before, and that there was a main thoroughfare not far away. From somewhere ahead there came a din of shouting voices. The street took a sharp turn and then ended in a flight of steps which led down into a sunken alley where a few stall-keepers were selling tired-looking vegetables. At this moment Winston remembered where he was. The alley led out into the main street, and down the next turning, not five minutes away, was the junk-shop where he had bought the blank book which was now his diary. And in a small stationer's shop not far away he had bought his penholder and his bottle of ink.

He paused for a moment at the top of the steps. On the opposite side of the alley there was a dingy little pub whose windows appeared to be frosted over but in reality were merely coated with dust. A very old man, bent but active, with white moustaches that bristled forward like those of a prawn, pushed open the swing door and went in. As Winston stood watching, it occurred to him that the old man, who must be eighty at the least, had already been middle-aged when the Revolution happened. He and a few others like him were the last links that now existed with the vanished world of capitalism. In the Party itself there were not many people left whose ideas had been formed before the Revolution. The older generation had mostly

been wiped out in the great purges of the fifties and sixties, and the few who survived had long ago been terrified into complete intellectual surrender. If there was any one still alive who could give you a truthful account of conditions in the early part of the century, it could only be a prole. Suddenly the passage from the history book that he had copied into his diary came back into Winston's mind, and a lunatic impulse took hold of him. He would go into the pub, he would scrape acquaintance with that old man and question him. He would say to him: 'Tell me about your life when you were a boy. What was it like in those days? Were things better than they are now, or were they worse?'

Hurriedly, lest he should have time to become frightened, he descended the steps and crossed the narrow street. It was madness of course. As usual, there was no definite rule against talking to proles and frequenting their pubs, but it was far too unusual an action to pass unnoticed. If the patrols appeared he might plead an attack of faintness, but it was not likely that they would believe him. He pushed open the door, and a hideous cheesy smell of sour beer hit him in the face. As he entered the din of voices dropped to about half its volume. Behind his back he could feel everyone eyeing his blue overalls. A game of darts which was going on at the other end of the room interrupted itself for perhaps as much as thirty seconds. The old man whom he had followed was standing at the bar, having some kind of altercation with the barman, a large, stout, hook-nosed young man with enormous forearms. A knot of others, standing round with glasses in their hands, were watching the scene.

'I arst you civil enough, didn't I?' said the old man, straightening his

shoulders pugnaciously. 'You telling me you ain't got a pint mug in the 'ole bleeding boozzer?'

'And what in hell's name is a pint?' said the barman, leaning forward with the tips of his fingers on the counter.

'Ark at 'im! Calls 'isself a barman and don't know what a pint is! Why, a pint's the 'alf of a quart, and there's four quarts to the gallon. 'Ave to teach you the A, B, C next.'

'Never heard of 'em,' said the barman shortly. 'Litre and half litre -- that's all we serve. There's the glasses on the shelf in front of you.'

'I likes a pint,' persisted the old man. 'You could 'a drawed me off a pint easy enough. We didn't 'ave these bleeding litres when I was a young man.'

'When you were a young man we were all living in the treetops,' said the barman, with a glance at the other customers.

There was a shout of laughter, and the uneasiness caused by Winston's entry seemed to disappear. The old man's whitestubbed face had flushed pink. He turned away, muttering to himself, and bumped into Winston. Winston caught him gently by the arm.

'May I offer you a drink?' he said.

'You're a gent,' said the other, straightening his shoulders again. He appeared not to have noticed Winston's blue overalls. 'Pint!' he added aggressively to the barman. 'Pint of wallop.'

The barman swished two half-litres of dark-brown beer into thick glasses which he had rinsed in a bucket under the counter. Beer was the only drink you could get in prole pubs. The proles were supposed not to drink gin, though in practice they could get hold of it easily enough. The game of darts was in full swing again, and the knot of men at the bar had begun talking about lottery tickets. Winston's presence was forgotten for a moment. There was a deal table under the window where he and the old man could talk without fear of being overheard. It was horribly dangerous, but at any rate there was no telescreen in the room, a point he had made sure of as soon as he came in.

"E could 'a drawed me off a pint,' grumbled the old man as he settled down behind a glass. 'A 'alf litre ain't enough. It don't satisfy. And a 'ole litre's too much. It starts my bladder running. Let alone the price.'

'You must have seen great changes since you were a young man,' said Winston tentatively.

The old man's pale blue eyes moved from the darts board to the bar, and from the bar to the door of the Gents, as though it were in the bar-room that he expected the changes to have occurred.

'The beer was better,' he said finally. 'And cheaper! When I was a young man, mild beer -- wallop we used to call it -- was fourpence a pint. That was before the war, of course.'

'Which war was that?' said Winston.

'It's all wars,' said the old man vaguely. He took up his glass, and his

shoulders straightened again. "Ere's wishing you the very best of 'ealth!"

In his lean throat the sharp-pointed Adam's apple made a surprisingly rapid up-and-down movement, and the beer vanished. Winston went to the bar and came back with two more half-litres. The old man appeared to have forgotten his prejudice against drinking a full litre.

'You are very much older than I am,' said Winston. 'You must have been a grown man before I was born. You can remember what it was like in the old days, before the Revolution. People of my age don't really know anything about those times. We can only read about them in books, and what it says in the books may not be true. I should like your opinion on that. The history books say that life before the Revolution was completely different from what it is now. There was the most terrible oppression, injustice, poverty worse than anything we can imagine. Here in London, the great mass of the people never had enough to eat from birth to death. Half of them hadn't even boots on their feet. They worked twelve hours a day, they left school at nine, they slept ten in a room. And at the same time there were a very few people, only a few thousands -- the capitalists, they were called -- who were rich and powerful. They owned everything that there was to own. They lived in great gorgeous houses with thirty servants, they rode about in motor-cars and four-horse carriages, they drank champagne, they wore top hats-'

The old man brightened suddenly.

'Top 'ats!' he said. 'Funny you should mention 'em. The same thing come into my 'ead only yesterday, I dono why. I was jest thinking, I ain't seen a top 'at in years. Gorn right out, they 'ave. The last time I wore one was at my

sister-in-law's funeral. And that was -- well, I couldn't give you the date, but it must'a been fifty years ago. Of course it was only 'ired for the occasion, you understand.'

'It isn't very important about the top hats,' said Winston patiently. 'The point is, these capitalists -- they and a few lawyers and priests and so forth who lived on them -- were the lords of the earth. Everything existed for their benefit. You -- the ordinary people, the workers -- were their slaves. They could do what they liked with you. They could ship you off to Canada like cattle. They could sleep with your daughters if they chose. They could order you to be flogged with something called a cat-o'-nine tails. You had to take your cap off when you passed them. Every capitalist went about with a gang of lackeys who-'

The old man brightened again.

'Lackeys!' he said. 'Now there's a word I ain't 'eard since ever so long. Lackeys! That reg'lar takes me back, that does. I recollect oh, donkey's years ago -- I used to sometimes go to 'Yde Park of a Sunday afternoon to 'ear the blokes making speeches. Salvation Army, Roman Catholics, Jews, Indians -- all sorts there was. And there was one bloke -- well, I couldn't give you 'is name, but a real powerful speaker 'e was. 'E didn't 'alf give it 'em! "Lackeys!" 'e says, "lackeys of the bourgeoisie! Flunkies of the ruling class!" Parasites -- that was another of them. And 'yenas -- 'e definitely called 'em 'yenas. Of course 'e was referring to the Labour Party, you understand.'

Winston had the feeling that they were talking at cross-purposes.

'What I really wanted to know was this,' he said. 'Do you feel that you have more freedom now than you had in those days? Are you treated more like a human being? In the old days, the rich people, the people at the top-'

'The 'Ouse of Lords,' put in the old man reminiscently.

'The House of Lords, if you like. What I am asking is, were these people able to treat you as an inferior, simply because they were rich and you were poor? Is it a fact, for instance, that you had to call them "Sir" and take off your cap when you passed them?'

The old man appeared to think deeply. He drank off about a quarter of his beer before answering.

'Yes,' he said. 'They liked you to touch your cap to 'em. It showed respect, like. I didn't agree with it, myself, but I done it often enough. Had to, as you might say.'

'And was it usual -- I'm only quoting what I've read in history books -- was it usual for these people and their servants to push you off the pavement into the gutter?'

'One of 'em pushed me once,' said the old man. 'I recollect it as if it was yesterday. It was Boat Race night -- terribly rowdy they used to get on Boat Race night -- and I bumps into a young bloke on Shaftesbury Avenue. Quite a gent, 'e was -- dress shirt, top 'at, black overcoat. 'E was kind of zig-zagging across the pavement, and I bumps into 'im accidental-like. 'E says, "Why can't you look where you're going?" 'e says. I say, "Ju think you've bought the bleeding pavement?" 'E says, "I'll twist your bloody 'ead off if you get fresh

with me." I says, "You're drunk. I'll give you in charge in 'alf a minute," I says. An' if you'll believe me, 'e puts 'is 'and on my chest and gives me a shove as pretty near sent me under the wheels of a bus. Well, I was young in them days, and I was going to 'ave fetched 'im one, only-

A sense of helplessness took hold of Winston. The old man's memory was nothing but a rubbish-heap of details. One could question him all day without getting any real information. The party histories might still be true, after a fashion: they might even be completely true. He made a last attempt.

'Perhaps I have not made myself clear,' he said. 'What I'm trying to say is this. You have been alive a very long time; you lived half your life before the Revolution. In 1925, for instance, you were already grown up. Would you say from what you can remember, that life in 1925 was better than it is now, or worse? If you could choose, would you prefer to live then or now?'

The old man looked meditatively at the darts board. He finished up his beer, more slowly than before. When he spoke it was with a tolerant philosophical air, as though the beer had mellowed him.

'I know what you expect me to say,' he said. 'You expect me to say as I'd sooner be young again. Most people'd say they'd sooner be young, if you arst' 'em. You got your 'ealth and strength when you're young. When you get to my time of life you ain't never well. I suffer something wicked from my feet, and my bladder's jest terrible. Six and seven times a night it 'as me out of bed. On the other 'and, there's great advantages in being a old man. You ain't got the same worries. No truck with women, and that's a great thing. I ain't 'ad a woman for near on thirty year, if you'd credit it. Nor wanted to, what's more.'

Winston sat back against the window-sill. It was no use going on. He was about to buy some more beer when the old man suddenly got up and shuffled rapidly into the stinking urinal at the side of the room. The extra half-litre was already working on him. Winston sat for a minute or two gazing at his empty glass, and hardly noticed when his feet carried him out into the street again. Within twenty years at the most, he reflected, the huge and simple question, 'Was life better before the Revolution than it is now?' would have ceased once and for all to be answerable. But in effect it was unanswerable even now, since the few scattered survivors from the ancient world were incapable of comparing one age with another. They remembered a million useless things, a quarrel with a workmate, a hunt for a lost bicycle pump, the expression on a long-dead sister's face, the swirls of dust on a windy morning seventy years ago: but all the relevant facts were outside the range of their vision. They were like the ant, which can see small objects but not large ones. And when memory failed and written records were falsified -- when that happened, the claim of the Party to have improved the conditions of human life had got to be accepted, because there did not exist, and never again could exist, any standard against which it could be tested.

At this moment his train of thought stopped abruptly. He halted and looked up. He was in a narrow street, with a few dark little shops, interspersed among dwelling-houses. Immediately above his head there hung three discoloured metal balls which looked as if they had once been gilded. He seemed to know the place. Of course! He was standing outside the junk-shop where he had bought the diary.

A twinge of fear went through him. It had been a sufficiently rash act to

buy the book in the beginning, and he had sworn never to come near the place again. And yet the instant that he allowed his thoughts to wander, his feet had brought him back here of their own accord. It was precisely against suicidal impulses of this kind that he had hoped to guard himself by opening the diary. At the same time he noticed that although it was nearly twenty-one hours the shop was still open. With the feeling that he would be less conspicuous inside than hanging about on the pavement, he stepped through the doorway. If questioned, he could plausibly say that he was trying to buy razor blades.

The proprietor had just lighted a hanging oil lamp which gave off an unclean but friendly smell. He was a man of perhaps sixty, frail and bowed, with a long, benevolent nose, and mild eyes distorted by thick spectacles. His hair was almost white, but his eyebrows were bushy and still black. His spectacles, his gentle, fussy movements, and the fact that he was wearing an aged jacket of black velvet, gave him a vague air of intellectuality, as though he had been some kind of literary man, or perhaps a musician. His voice was soft, as though faded, and his accent less debased than that of the majority of proles.

'I recognized you on the pavement,' he said immediately. 'You're the gentleman that bought the young lady's keepsake album. That was a beautiful bit of paper, that was. Cream-laid, it used to be called. There's been no paper like that made for -- oh, I dare say fifty years.' He peered at Winston over the top of his spectacles. 'Is there anything special I can do for you? Or did you just want to look round?'

'I was passing,' said Winston vaguely. 'I just looked in. I don't want

anything in particular.'

'It's just as well,' said the other, 'because I don't suppose I could have satisfied you.' He made an apologetic gesture with his softpalmed hand. 'You see how it is; an empty shop, you might say. Between you and me, the antique trade's just about finished. No demand any longer, and no stock either. Furniture, china, glass it's all been broken up by degrees. And of course the metal stuff's mostly been melted down. I haven't seen a brass candlestick in years.'

The tiny interior of the shop was in fact uncomfortably full, but there was almost nothing in it of the slightest value. The floorspace was very restricted, because all round the walls were stacked innumerable dusty picture-frames. In the window there were trays of nuts and bolts, worn-out chisels, penknives with broken blades, tarnished watches that did not even pretend to be in going order, and other miscellaneous rubbish. Only on a small table in the corner was there a litter of odds and ends -- lacquered snuffboxes, agate brooches, and the like -- which looked as though they might include something interesting. As Winston wandered towards the table his eye was caught by a round, smooth thing that gleamed softly in the lamplight, and he picked it up.

It was a heavy lump of glass, curved on one side, flat on the other, making almost a hemisphere. There was a peculiar softness, as of rainwater, in both the colour and the texture of the glass. At the heart of it, magnified by the curved surface, there was a strange, pink, convoluted object that recalled a rose or a sea anemone.

'What is it?' said Winston, fascinated.

'That's coral, that is,' said the old man. 'It must have come from the Indian Ocean. They used to kind of embed it in the glass. That wasn't made less than a hundred years ago. More, by the look of it.'

'It's a beautiful thing,' said Winston.

'It is a beautiful thing,' said the other appreciatively. 'But there's not many that'd say so nowadays.' He coughed. 'Now, if it so happened that you wanted to buy it, that'd cost you four dollars. I can remember when a thing like that would have fetched eight pounds, and eight pounds was -- well, I can't work it out, but it was a lot of money. But who cares about genuine antiques nowadays even the few that's left?'

Winston immediately paid over the four dollars and slid the coveted thing into his pocket. What appealed to him about it was not so much its beauty as the air it seemed to possess of belonging to an age quite different from the present one. The soft, rainwatery glass was not like any glass that he had ever seen. The thing was doubly attractive because of its apparent uselessness, though he could guess that it must once have been intended as a paperweight. It was very heavy in his pocket, but fortunately it did not make much of a bulge. It was a queer thing, even a compromising thing, for a Party member to have in his possession. Anything old, and for that matter anything beautiful, was always vaguely suspect. The old man had grown noticeably more cheerful after receiving the four dollars. Winston realized that he would have accepted three or even two.

'There's another room upstairs that you might care to take a look at,' he said. 'There's not much in it. Just a few pieces. We'll do with a light if we're going upstairs.'

He lit another lamp, and, with bowed back, led the way slowly up the steep and worn stairs and along a tiny passage, into a room which did not give on the street but looked out on a cobbled yard and a forest of chimney-pots. Winston noticed that the furniture was still arranged as though the room were meant to be lived in. There was a strip of carpet on the floor, a picture or two on the walls, and a deep, slatternly arm-chair drawn up to the fireplace. An old-fashioned glass clock with a twelve-hour face was ticking away on the mantelpiece. Under the window, and occupying nearly a quarter of the room, was an enormous bed with the mattress still on it.

'We lived here till my wife died,' said the old man half apologetically. 'I'm selling the furniture off by little and little. Now that's a beautiful mahogany bed, or at least it would be if you could get the bugs out of it. But I dare say you'd find it a little bit cumbersome.'

He was holding the lamp high up, so as to illuminate the whole room, and in the warm dim light the place looked curiously inviting. The thought flitted through Winston's mind that it would probably be quite easy to rent the room for a few dollars a week, if he dared to take the risk. It was a wild, impossible notion, to be abandoned as soon as thought of; but the room had awakened in him a sort of nostalgia, a sort of ancestral memory. It seemed to him that he knew exactly what it felt like to sit in a room like this, in an arm-chair beside an open fire with your feet in the fender and a kettle on the hob; utterly alone, utterly secure, with nobody watching you, no voice pursuing

you, no sound except the singing of the kettle and the friendly ticking of the clock.

'There's no telescreen!' he could not help murmuring.

'Ah,' said the old man, 'I never had one of those things. Too expensive. And I never seemed to feel the need of it, somehow. Now that's a nice gateleg table in the corner there. Though of course you'd have to put new hinges on it if you wanted to use the flaps.'

There was a small bookcase in the other corner, and Winston had already gravitated towards it. It contained nothing but rubbish. The hunting-down and destruction of books had been done with the same thoroughness in the prole quarters as everywhere else. It was very unlikely that there existed anywhere in Oceania a copy of a book printed earlier than 1960. The old man, still carrying the lamp, was standing in front of a picture in a rosewood frame which hung on the other side of the fireplace, opposite the bed.

'Now, if you happen to be interested in old prints at all -' he began delicately.

Winston came across to examine the picture. It was a steel engraving of an oval building with rectangular windows, and a small tower in front. There was a railing running round the building, and at the rear end there was what appeared to be a statue. Winston gazed at it for some moments. It seemed vaguely familiar, though he did not remember the statue.

'The frame's fixed to the wall,' said the old man, 'but I could unscrew it for you, I dare say.'

'I know that building,' said Winston finally. 'It's a ruin now. It's in the middle of the street outside the Palace of Justice.'

'That's right. Outside the Law Courts. It was bombed in -- oh, many years ago. It was a church at one time, St Clement's Danes, its name was.' He smiled apologetically, as though conscious of saying something slightly ridiculous, and added: 'Oranges and lemons, say the bells of St Clement's!'

'What's that?' said Winston.

'Oh-"Oranges and lemons, say the bells of St Clement's." That was a rhyme we had when I was a little boy. How it goes on I don't remember, but I do know it ended up, "Here comes a candle to light you to bed, Here comes a chopper to chop off your head." It was a kind of a dance. They held out their arms for you to pass under, and when they came to "Here comes a chopper to chop off your head" they brought their arms down and caught you. It was just names of churches. All the London churches were in it -- all the principal ones, that is.'

Winston wondered vaguely to what century the church belonged. It was always difficult to determine the age of a London building. Anything large and impressive, if it was reasonably new in appearance, was automatically claimed as having been built since the Revolution, while anything that was obviously of earlier date was ascribed to some dim period called the Middle Ages. The centuries of capitalism were held to have produced nothing of any value. One could not learn history from architecture any more than one could learn it from books. Statues, inscriptions, memorial stones, the names of streets -- anything that might throw light upon the past had been

systematically altered.

'I never knew it had been a church,' he said.

'There's a lot of them left, really,' said the old man, 'though they've been put to other uses. Now, how did that rhyme go? Ah! I've got it!

"Oranges and lemons, say the bells of St Clement's,

You owe me three farthings, say the bells of St Martin's

-- "there, now, that's as far as I can get. A farthing, that was a small copper coin, looked something like a cent.'

'Where was St Martin's?' said Winston.

'St Martin's ? That's still standing. It's in Victory Square, alongside the picture gallery. A building with a kind of a triangular porch and pillars in front, and a big flight of steps.'

Winston knew the place well. It was a museum used for propaganda displays of various kinds -- scale models of rocket bombs and Floating Fortresses, waxwork tableaux illustrating enemy atrocities, and the like.

'St Martin's-in-the-Fields it used to be called,' supplemented the old man, 'though I don't recollect any fields anywhere in those parts.'

Winston did not buy the picture. It would have been an even more incongruous possession than the glass paperweight, and impossible to carry home, unless it were taken out of its frame. But he lingered for some minutes

more, talking to the old man, whose name, he discovered, was not Weeks-as one might have gathered from the inscription over the shop-front -- but Charrington. Mr Charrington, it seemed, was a widower aged sixty-three and had inhabited this shop for thirty years. Throughout that time he had been intending to alter the name over the window, but had never quite got to the point of doing it. All the while that they were talking the half-remembered rhyme kept running through Winston's head. Oranges and lemons say the bells of St Clement's, You owe me three farthings, say the bells of St Martin's! It was curious, but when you said it to yourself you had the illusion of actually hearing bells, the bells of a lost London that still existed somewhere or other, disguised and forgotten. From one ghostly steeple after another he seemed to hear them pealing forth. Yet so far as he could remember he had never in real life heard church bells ringing.

He got away from Mr Charrington and went down the stairs alone, so as not to let the old man see him reconnoitring the street before stepping out of the door. He had already made up his mind that after a suitable interval -- a month, say -- he would take the risk of visiting the shop again. It was perhaps not more dangerous than shirking an evening at the Centre. The serious piece of folly had been to come back here in the first place, after buying the diary and without knowing whether the proprietor of the shop could be trusted. However-!

Yes, he thought again, he would come back. He would buy further scraps of beautiful rubbish. He would buy the engraving of St Clement Danes, take it out of its frame, and carry it home concealed under the jacket of his overalls. He would drag the rest of that poem out of Mr Charrington's

memory. Even the lunatic project of renting the room upstairs flashed momentarily through his mind again. For perhaps five seconds exaltation made him careless, and he stepped out on to the pavement without so much as a preliminary glance through the window. He had even started humming to an improvised tune

Oranges and lemons, say the bells of St Clement's, You owe me three farthings, say the

Suddenly his heart seemed to turn to ice and his bowels to water. A figure in blue overalls was coming down the pavement, not ten metres away. It was the girl from the Fiction Department, the girl with dark hair. The light was failing, but there was no difficulty in recognizing her. She looked him straight in the face, then walked quickly on as though she had not seen him.

For a few seconds Winston was too paralysed to move. Then he turned to the right and walked heavily away, not noticing for the moment that he was going in the wrong direction. At any rate, one question was settled. There was no doubting any longer that the girl was spying on him. She must have followed him here, because it was not credible that by pure chance she should have happened to be walking on the same evening up the same obscure backstreet, kilometres distant from any quarter where Party members lived. It was too great a coincidence. Whether she was really an agent of the Thought Police, or simply an amateur spy actuated by officiousness, hardly mattered. It was enough that she was watching him. Probably she had seen him go into the pub as well.

It was an effort to walk. The lump of glass in his pocket banged against

his thigh at each step, and he was half minded to take it out and throw it away. The worst thing was the pain in his belly. For a couple of minutes he had the feeling that he would die if he did not reach a lavatory soon. But there would be no public lavatories in a quarter like this. Then the spasm passed, leaving a dull ache behind.

The street was a blind alley. Winston halted, stood for several seconds wondering vaguely what to do, then turned round and began to retrace his steps. As he turned it occurred to him that the girl had only passed him three minutes ago and that by running he could probably catch up with her. He could keep on her track till they were in some quiet place, and then smash her skull in with a cobblestone. The piece of glass in his pocket would be heavy enough for the job. But he abandoned the idea immediately, because even the thought of making any physical effort was unbearable. He could not run, he could not strike a blow. Besides, she was young and lusty and would defend herself. He thought also of hurrying to the Community Centre and staying there till the place closed, so as to establish a partial alibi for the evening. But that too was impossible. A deadly lassitude had taken hold of him. All he wanted was to get home quickly and then sit down and be quiet.

It was after twenty-two hours when he got back to the flat. The lights would be switched off at the main at twenty-three thirty. He went into the kitchen and swallowed nearly a teacupful of Victory Gin. Then he went to the table in the alcove, sat down, and took the diary out of the drawer. But he did not open it at once. From the telescreen a brassy female voice was squalling a patriotic song. He sat staring at the marbled cover of the book, trying without success to shut the voice out of his consciousness.

It was at night that they came for you, always at night. The proper thing was to kill yourself before they got you. Undoubtedly some people did so. Many of the disappearances were actually suicides. But it needed desperate courage to kill yourself in a world where firearms, or any quick and certain poison, were completely unprocurable. He thought with a kind of astonishment of the biological uselessness of pain and fear, the treachery of the human body which always freezes into inertia at exactly the moment when a special effort is needed. He might have silenced the dark-haired girl if only he had acted quickly enough: but precisely because of the extremity of his danger he had lost the power to act. It struck him that in moments of crisis one is never fighting against an external enemy, but always against one's own body. Even now, in spite of the gin, the dull ache in his belly made consecutive thought impossible. And it is the same, he perceived, in all seemingly heroic or tragic situations. On the battlefield, in the torture chamber, on a sinking ship, the issues that you are fighting for are always forgotten, because the body swells up until it fills the universe, and even when you are not paralysed by fright or screaming with pain, life is a moment-to-moment struggle against hunger or cold or sleeplessness, against a sour stomach or an aching tooth.

He opened the diary. It was important to write something down. The woman on the telescreen had started a new song. Her voice seemed to stick into his brain like jagged splinters of glass. He tried to think of O'Brien, for whom, or to whom, the diary was written, but instead he began thinking of the things that would happen to him after the Thought Police took him away. It would not matter if they killed you at once. To be killed was what you expected. But before death (nobody spoke of such things, yet everybody

knew of them) there was the routine of confession that had to be gone through: the grovelling on the floor and screaming for mercy, the crack of broken bones, the smashed teeth, and bloody clots of hair.

Why did you have to endure it, since the end was always the same? Why was it not possible to cut a few days or weeks out of your life? Nobody ever escaped detection, and nobody ever failed to confess. When once you had succumbed to thoughtcrime it was certain that by a given date you would be dead. Why then did that horror, which altered nothing, have to lie embedded in future time?

He tried with a little more success than before to summon up the image of O'Brien. 'We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness,' O'Brien had said to him. He knew what it meant, or thought he knew. The place where there is no darkness was the imagined future, which one would never see, but which, by foreknowledge, one could mystically share in. But with the voice from the telescreen nagging at his ears he could not follow the train of thought further. He put a cigarette in his mouth. Half the tobacco promptly fell out on to his tongue, a bitter dust which was difficult to spit out again. The face of Big Brother swam into his mind, displacing that of O'Brien. Just as he had done a few days earlier, he slid a coin out of his pocket and looked at it. The face gazed up at him, heavy, calm, protecting: but what kind of smile was hidden beneath the dark moustache? Like a leaden knell the words came back at him:

WAR IS PEACE

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

IX

It was the middle of the morning, and Winston had left the cubicle to go to the lavatory.

A solitary figure was coming towards him from the other end of the long, brightly-lit corridor. It was the girl with dark hair. Four days had gone past since the evening when he had run into her outside the junk-shop. As she came nearer he saw that her right arm was in a sling, not noticeable at a distance because it was of the same colour as her overalls. Probably she had crushed her hand while swinging round one of the big kaleidoscopes on which the plots of novels were 'roughed in'. It was a common accident in the Fiction Department.

They were perhaps four metres apart when the girl stumbled and fell almost flat on her face. A sharp cry of pain was wrung out of her. She must have fallen right on the injured arm. Winston stopped short. The girl had risen to her knees. Her face had turned a milky yellow colour against which her mouth stood out redder than ever. Her eyes were fixed on his, with an appealing expression that looked more like fear than pain.

A curious emotion stirred in Winston's heart. In front of him was an enemy who was trying to kill him: in front of him, also, was a human creature, in pain and perhaps with a broken bone. Already he had instinctively started forward to help her. In the moment when he had seen her fall on the bandaged arm, it had been as though he felt the pain in his own body.

'You're hurt?' he said.

'It's nothing. My arm. It'll be all right in a second.'

She spoke as though her heart were fluttering. She had certainly turned very pale.

'You haven't broken anything?'

'No, I'm all right. It hurt for a moment, that's all.'

She held out her free hand to him, and he helped her up. She had regained some of her colour, and appeared very much better.

'It's nothing,' she repeated shortly. 'I only gave my wrist a bit of a bang. Thanks, comrade!'

And with that she walked on in the direction in which she had been going, as briskly as though it had really been nothing. The whole incident could not have taken as much as half a minute. Not to let one's feelings appear in one's face was a habit that had acquired the status of an instinct, and in any case they had been standing straight in front of a telescreen when the thing happened. Nevertheless it had been very difficult not to betray a momentary surprise, for in the two or three seconds while he was helping her up the girl had slipped something into his hand. There was no question that she had done it intentionally. It was something small and flat. As he passed through the lavatory door he transferred it to his pocket and felt it with the tips of his fingers. It was a scrap of paper folded into a square.

While he stood at the urinal he managed, with a little more fingering, to

get it unfolded. Obviously there must be a message of some kind written on it. For a moment he was tempted to take it into one of the water-closets and read it at once. But that would be shocking folly, as he well knew. There was no place where you could be more certain that the telescreens were watched continuously.

He went back to his cubicle, sat down, threw the fragment of paper casually among the other papers on the desk, put on his spectacles and hitched the speakwrite towards him. 'five minutes,' he told himself, 'five minutes at the very least!' His heart bumped in his breast with frightening loudness. Fortunately the piece of work he was engaged on was mere routine, the rectification of a long list of figures, not needing close attention.

Whatever was written on the paper, it must have some kind of political meaning. So far as he could see there were two possibilities. One, much the more likely, was that the girl was an agent of the Thought Police, just as he had feared. He did not know why the Thought Police should choose to deliver their messages in such a fashion, but perhaps they had their reasons. The thing that was written on the paper might be a threat, a summons, an order to commit suicide, a trap of some description. But there was another, wilder possibility that kept raising its head, though he tried vainly to suppress it. This was, that the message did not come from the Thought Police at all, but from some kind of underground organization. Perhaps the Brotherhood existed after all! Perhaps the girl was part of it! No doubt the idea was absurd, but it had sprung into his mind in the very instant of feeling the scrap of paper in his hand. It was not till a couple of minutes later that the other, more probable explanation had occurred to him. And even now, though his

intellect told him that the message probably meant death -- still, that was not what he believed, and the unreasonable hope persisted, and his heart banged, and it was with difficulty that he kept his voice from trembling as he murmured his figures into the speakwrite.

He rolled up the completed bundle of work and slid it into the pneumatic tube. Eight minutes had gone by. He re-adjusted his spectacles on his nose, sighed, and drew the next batch of work towards him, with the scrap of paper on top of it. He flattened it out. On it was written, in a large unformed handwriting:

I love you.

For several seconds he was too stunned even to throw the incriminating thing into the memory hole. When he did so, although he knew very well the danger of showing too much interest, he could not resist reading it once again, just to make sure that the words were really there.

For the rest of the morning it was very difficult to work. What was even worse than having to focus his mind on a series of niggling jobs was the need to conceal his agitation from the telescreen. He felt as though a fire were burning in his belly. Lunch in the hot, crowded, noise-filled canteen was torment. He had hoped to be alone for a little while during the lunch hour, but as bad luck would have it the imbecile Parsons flopped down beside him, the tang of his sweat almost defeating the tinny smell of stew, and kept up a stream of talk about the preparations for Hate Week. He was particularly enthusiastic about a papier-maché model of Big Brother's head, two metres wide, which was being made for the occasion by his daughter's troop of

Spies. The irritating thing was that in the racket of voices Winston could hardly hear what Parsons was saying, and was constantly having to ask for some fatuous remark to be repeated. Just once he caught a glimpse of the girl, at a table with two other girls at the far end of the room. She appeared not to have seen him, and he did not look in that direction again.

The afternoon was more bearable. Immediately after lunch there arrived a delicate, difficult piece of work which would take several hours and necessitated putting everything else aside. It consisted in falsifying a series of production reports of two years ago, in such a way as to cast discredit on a prominent member of the Inner Party, who was now under a cloud. This was the kind of thing that Winston was good at, and for more than two hours he succeeded in shutting the girl out of his mind altogether. Then the memory of her face came back, and with it a raging, intolerable desire to be alone. Until he could be alone it was impossible to think this new development out. Tonight was one of his nights at the Community Centre. He wolfed another tasteless meal in the canteen, hurried off to the Centre, took part in the solemn foolery of a 'discussion group', played two games of table tennis, swallowed several glasses of gin, and sat for half an hour through a lecture entitled 'Ingsoc in relation to chess'. His soul writhed with boredom, but for once he had had no impulse to shirk his evening at the Centre. At the sight of the words I love you the desire to stay alive had welled up in him, and the taking of minor risks suddenly seemed stupid. It was not till twenty-three hours, when he was home and in bed -- in the darkness, where you were safe even from the telescreen so long as you kept silent -- that he was able to think continuously.

It was a physical problem that had to be solved: how to get in touch with the girl and arrange a meeting. He did not consider any longer the possibility that she might be laying some kind of trap for him. He knew that it was not so, because of her unmistakable agitation when she handed him the note. Obviously she had been frightened out of her wits, as well she might be. Nor did the idea of refusing her advances even cross his mind. Only five nights ago he had contemplated smashing her skull in with a cobblestone, but that was of no importance. He thought of her naked, youthful body, as he had seen it in his dream. He had imagined her a fool like all the rest of them, her head stuffed with lies and hatred, her belly full of ice. A kind of fever seized him at the thought that he might lose her, the white youthful body might slip away from him! What he feared more than anything else was that she would simply change her mind if he did not get in touch with her quickly. But the physical difficulty of meeting was enormous. It was like trying to make a move at chess when you were already mated. Whichever way you turned, the telescreen faced you. Actually, all the possible ways of communicating with her had occurred to him within five minutes of reading the note; but now, with time to think, he went over them one by one, as though laying out a row of instruments on a table.

Obviously the kind of encounter that had happened this morning could not be repeated. If she had worked in the Records Department it might have been comparatively simple, but he had only a very dim idea whereabouts in the building the Fiction Department lay, and he had no pretext for going there. If he had known where she lived, and at what time she left work, he could have contrived to meet her somewhere on her way home; but to try to follow her home was not safe, because it would mean loitering about outside

the Ministry, which was bound to be noticed. As for sending a letter through the mails, it was out of the question. By a routine that was not even secret, all letters were opened in transit. Actually, few people ever wrote letters. For the messages that it was occasionally necessary to send, there were printed postcards with long lists of phrases, and you struck out the ones that were inapplicable. In any case he did not know the girl's name, let alone her address. Finally he decided that the safest place was the canteen. If he could get her at a table by herself, somewhere in the middle of the room, not too near the telescreens, and with a sufficient buzz of conversation all round -- if these conditions endured for, say, thirty seconds, it might be possible to exchange a few words.

For a week after this, life was like a restless dream. On the next day she did not appear in the canteen until he was leaving it, the whistle having already blown. Presumably she had been changed on to a later shift. They passed each other without a glance. On the day after that she was in the canteen at the usual time, but with three other girls and immediately under a telescreen. Then for three dreadful days she did not appear at all. His whole mind and body seemed to be afflicted with an unbearable sensitivity, a sort of transparency, which made every movement, every sound, every contact, every word that he had to speak or listen to, an agony. Even in sleep he could not altogether escape from her image. He did not touch the diary during those days. If there was any relief, it was in his work, in which he could sometimes forget himself for ten minutes at a stretch. He had absolutely no clue as to what had happened to her. There was no enquiry he could make. She might have been vaporized, she might have committed suicide, she might have been transferred to the other end of Oceania: worst and likeliest of all, she might

simply have changed her mind and decided to avoid him.

The next day she reappeared. Her arm was out of the sling and she had a band of sticking-plaster round her wrist. The relief of seeing her was so great that he could not resist staring directly at her for several seconds. On the following day he very nearly succeeded in speaking to her. When he came into the canteen she was sitting at a table well out from the wall, and was quite alone. It was early, and the place was not very full. The queue edged forward till Winston was almost at the counter, then was held up for two minutes because someone in front was complaining that he had not received his tablet of saccharine. But the girl was still alone when Winston secured his tray and began to make for her table. He walked casually towards her, his eyes searching for a place at some table beyond her. She was perhaps three metres away from him. Another two seconds would do it. Then a voice behind him called, 'Smith!' He pretended not to hear. 'Smith!' repeated the voice, more loudly. It was no use. He turned round. A blond-headed, silly-faced young man named Wilsher, whom he barely knew, was inviting him with a smile to a vacant place at his table. It was not safe to refuse. After having been recognized, he could not go and sit at a table with an unattended girl. It was too noticeable. He sat down with a friendly smile. The silly blond face beamed into his. Winston had a hallucination of himself smashing a pick-axe right into the middle of it. The girl's table filled up a few minutes later.

But she must have seen him coming towards her, and perhaps she would take the hint. Next day he took care to arrive early. Surely enough, she was at a table in about the same place, and again alone. The person immediately

ahead of him in the queue was a small, swiftly-moving, beetle-like man with a flat face and tiny, suspicious eyes. As Winston turned away from the counter with his tray, he saw that the little man was making straight for the girl's table. His hopes sank again. There was a vacant place at a table further away, but something in the little man's appearance suggested that he would be sufficiently attentive to his own comfort to choose the emptiest table. With ice at his heart Winston followed. It was no use unless he could get the girl alone. At this moment there was a tremendous crash. The little man was sprawling on all fours, his tray had gone flying, two streams of soup and coffee were flowing across the floor. He started to his feet with a malignant glance at Winston, whom he evidently suspected of having tripped him up. But it was all right. Five seconds later, with a thundering heart, Winston was sitting at the girl's table.

He did not look at her. He unpacked his tray and promptly began eating. It was all-important to speak at once, before anyone else came, but now a terrible fear had taken possession of him. A week had gone by since she had first approached him. She would have changed her mind, she must have changed her mind! It was impossible that this affair should end successfully; such things did not happen in real life. He might have flinched altogether from speaking if at this moment he had not seen Ampleforth, the hairy-eared poet, wandering limply round the room with a tray, looking for a place to sit down. In his vague way Ampleforth was attached to Winston, and would certainly sit down at his table if he caught sight of him. There was perhaps a minute in which to act. Both Winston and the girl were eating steadily. The stuff they were eating was a thin stew, actually a soup, of haricot beans. In a low murmur Winston began speaking. Neither of them looked up; steadily

they spooned the watery stuff into their mouths, and between spoonfuls exchanged the few necessary words in low expressionless voices.

'What time do you leave work?'

'Eighteen-thirty.'

'Where can we meet?'

'Victory Square, near the monument.'

'It's full of telescreens.'

'It doesn't matter if there's a crowd.'

'Any signal?'

'No. Don't come up to me until you see me among a lot of people. And don't look at me. Just keep somewhere near me.'

'What time?'

'Nineteen hours.'

'All right.'

Ampleforth failed to see Winston and sat down at another table. They did not speak again, and, so far as it was possible for two people sitting on opposite sides of the same table, they did not look at one another. The girl finished her lunch quickly and made off, while Winston stayed to smoke a cigarette.

Winston was in Victory Square before the appointed time. He wandered round the base of the enormous fluted column, at the top of which Big Brother's statue gazed southward towards the skies where he had vanquished the Eurasian aeroplanes (the Eastasian aeroplanes, it had been, a few years ago) in the Battle of Airstrip One. In the street in front of it there was a statue of a man on horseback which was supposed to represent Oliver Cromwell. At five minutes past the hour the girl had still not appeared. Again the terrible fear seized upon Winston. She was not coming, she had changed her mind! He walked slowly up to the north side of the square and got a sort of pale-coloured pleasure from identifying St Martin's Church, whose bells, when it had bells, had chimed 'You owe me three farthings.' Then he saw the girl standing at the base of the monument, reading or pretending to read a poster which ran spirally up the column. It was not safe to go near her until some more people had accumulated. There were telescreens all round the pediment. But at this moment there was a din of shouting and a zoom of heavy vehicles from somewhere to the left. Suddenly everyone seemed to be running across the square. The girl nipped nimbly round the lions at the base of the monument and joined in the rush. Winston followed. As he ran, he gathered from some shouted remarks that a convoy of Eurasian prisoners was passing.

Already a dense mass of people was blocking the south side of the square. Winston, at normal times the kind of person who gravitates to the outer edge of any kind of scrimmage, shoved, butted, squirmed his way forward into the heart of the crowd. Soon he was within arm's length of the girl, but the way was blocked by an enormous prole and an almost equally enormous woman, presumably his wife, who seemed to form an impenetrable wall of flesh. Winston wriggled himself sideways, and with a violent lunge

managed to drive his shoulder between them. For a moment it felt as though his entrails were being ground to pulp between the two muscular hips, then he had broken through, sweating a little. He was next to the girl. They were shoulder to shoulder, both staring fixedly in front of them.

A long line of trucks, with wooden-faced guards armed with sub-machine guns standing upright in each corner, was passing slowly down the street. In the trucks little yellow men in shabby greenish uniforms were squatting, jammed close together. Their sad, Mongolian faces gazed out over the sides of the trucks utterly incurious. Occasionally when a truck jolted there was a clank-clank of metal: all the prisoners were wearing leg-irons. Truck-load after truck-load of the sad faces passed. Winston knew they were there but he saw them only intermittently. The girl's shoulder, and her arm right down to the elbow, were pressed against his. Her cheek was almost near enough for him to feel its warmth. She had immediately taken charge of the situation, just as she had done in the canteen. She began speaking in the same expressionless voice as before, with lips barely moving, a mere murmur easily drowned by the din of voices and the rumbling of the trucks.

'Can you hear me?'

'Yes.'

'Can you get Sunday afternoon off?'

'Yes.'

'Then listen carefully. You'll have to remember this. Go to Paddington Station-'

With a sort of military precision that astonished him, she outlined the route that he was to follow. A half-hour railway journey; turn left outside the station; two kilometres along the road: a gate with the top bar missing; a path across a field; a grass-grown lane; a track between bushes; a dead tree with moss on it. It was as though she had a map inside her head. 'Can you remember all that?' she murmured finally.

'Yes.'

'You turn left, then right, then left again. And the gate's got no top bar.'

'Yes. What time?'

'About fifteen. You may have to wait. I'll get there by another way. Are you sure you remember everything?'

'Yes.'

'Then get away from me as quick as you can.'

She need not have told him that. But for the moment they could not extricate themselves from the crowd. The trucks were still filing past, the people still insatiably gaping. At the start there had been a few boos and hisses, but it came only from the Party members among the crowd, and had soon stopped. The prevailing emotion was simply curiosity. Foreigners, whether from Eurasia or from Eastasia, were a kind of strange animal. One literally never saw them except in the guise of prisoners, and even as prisoners one never got more than a momentary glimpse of them. Nor did one know what became of them, apart from the few who were hanged as war-

criminals: the others simply vanished, presumably into forced-labour camps. The round Mogol faces had given way to faces of a more European type, dirty, bearded and exhausted. From over scrubby cheekbones eyes looked into Winston's, sometimes with strange intensity, and flashed away again. The convoy was drawing to an end. In the last truck he could see an aged man, his face a mass of grizzled hair, standing upright with wrists crossed in front of him, as though he were used to having them bound together. It was almost time for Winston and the girl to part. But at the last moment, while the crowd still hemmed them in, her hand felt for his and gave it a fleeting squeeze.

It could not have been ten seconds, and yet it seemed a long time that their hands were clasped together. He had time to learn every detail of her hand. He explored the long fingers, the shapely nails, the work-hardened palm with its row of callouses, the smooth flesh under the wrist. Merely from feeling it he would have known it by sight. In the same instant it occurred to him that he did not know what colour the girl's eyes were. They were probably brown, but people with dark hair sometimes had blue eyes. To turn his head and look at her would have been inconceivable folly. With hands locked together, invisible among the press of bodies, they stared steadily in front of them, and instead of the eyes of the girl, the eyes of the aged prisoner gazed mournfully at Winston out of nests of hair.

X

Winston picked his way up the lane through dappled light and shade, stepping out into pools of gold wherever the boughs parted. Under the trees to the left of him the ground was misty with bluebells. The air seemed to kiss one's skin. It was the second of May. From somewhere deeper in the heart of the wood came the droning of ring doves.

He was a bit early. There had been no difficulties about the journey, and the girl was so evidently experienced that he was less frightened than he would normally have been. Presumably she could be trusted to find a safe place. In general you could not assume that you were much safer in the country than in London. There were no telescreens, of course, but there was always the danger of concealed microphones by which your voice might be picked up and recognized; besides, it was not easy to make a journey by yourself without attracting attention. For distances of less than 100 kilometres it was not necessary to get your passport endorsed, but sometimes there were patrols hanging about the railway stations, who examined the papers of any Party member they found there and asked awkward questions. However, no patrols had appeared, and on the walk from the station he had made sure by cautious backward glances that he was not being followed. The train was full of proles, in holiday mood because of the summery weather. The wooden-seated carriage in which he travelled was filled to overflowing by a single enormous family, ranging from a toothless great-grandmother to a month-old baby, going out to spend an afternoon with 'in-laws' in the country, and, as they freely explained to Winston, to get hold of a little blackmarket butter.

The lane widened, and in a minute he came to the footpath she had told him of, a mere cattle-track which plunged between the bushes. He had no watch, but it could not be fifteen yet. The bluebells were so thick underfoot that it was impossible not to tread on them. He knelt down and began picking some partly to pass the time away, but also from a vague idea that he would like to have a bunch of flowers to offer to the girl when they met. He had got together a big bunch and was smelling their faint sickly scent when a sound at his back froze him, the unmistakable crackle of a foot on twigs. He went on picking bluebells. It was the best thing to do. It might be the girl, or he might have been followed after all. To look round was to show guilt. He picked another and another. A hand fell lightly on his shoulder.

He looked up. It was the girl. She shook her head, evidently as a warning that he must keep silent, then parted the bushes and quickly led the way along the narrow track into the wood. Obviously she had been that way before, for she dodged the boggy bits as though by habit. Winston followed, still clasping his bunch of flowers. His first feeling was relief, but as he watched the strong slender body moving in front of him, with the scarlet sash that was just tight enough to bring out the curve of her hips, the sense of his own inferiority was heavy upon him. Even now it seemed quite likely that when she turned round and looked at him she would draw back after all. The sweetness of the air and the greenness of the leaves daunted him. Already on the walk from the station the May sunshine had made him feel dirty and etiolated, a creature of indoors, with the sooty dust of London in the pores of his skin. It occurred to him that till now she had probably never seen him in broad daylight in the open. They came to the fallen tree that she had spoken of. The girl hopped over and forced apart the bushes, in which there did not

seem to be an opening. When Winston followed her, he found that they were in a natural clearing, a tiny grassy knoll surrounded by tall saplings that shut it in completely. The girl stopped and turned.

'Here we are,' she said.

He was facing her at several paces' distance. As yet he did not dare move nearer to her.

'I didn't want to say anything in the lane,' she went on, 'in case there's a mike hidden there. I don't suppose there is, but there could be. There's always the chance of one of those swine recognizing your voice. We're all right here.'

He still had not the courage to approach her. 'We're all right here?' he repeated stupidly.

'Yes. Look at the trees.' They were small ashes, which at some time had been cut down and had sprouted up again into a forest of poles, none of them thicker than one's wrist. 'There's nothing big enough to hide a mike in. Besides, I've been here before.'

They were only making conversation. He had managed to move closer to her now. She stood before him very upright, with a smile on her face that looked faintly ironical, as though she were wondering why he was so slow to act. The bluebells had cascaded on to the ground. They seemed to have fallen of their own accord. He took her hand.

'Would you believe,' he said, 'that till this moment I didn't know what colour your eyes were?' They were brown, he noted, a rather light shade of

brown, with dark lashes. 'Now that you've seen what I'm really like, can you still bear to look at me?'

'Yes, easily.'

'I'm thirty-nine years old. I've got a wife that I can't get rid of. I've got varicose veins. I've got five false teeth.'

'I couldn't care less,' said the girl.

The next moment, it was hard to say by whose act, she was in his arms. At the beginning he had no feeling except sheer incredulity. The youthful body was strained against his own, the mass of dark hair was against his face, and yes! actually she had turned her face up and he was kissing the wide red mouth. She had clasped her arms about his neck, she was calling him darling, precious one, loved one. He had pulled her down on to the ground, she was utterly unresisting, he could do what he liked with her. But the truth was that he had no physical sensation, except that of mere contact. All he felt was incredulity and pride. He was glad that this was happening, but he had no physical desire. It was too soon, her youth and prettiness had frightened him, he was too much used to living without women -- he did not know the reason. The girl picked herself up and pulled a bluebell out of her hair. She sat against him, putting her arm round his waist.

'Never mind, dear. There's no hurry. We've got the whole afternoon. Isn't this a splendid hide-out? I found it when I got lost once on a community hike. If anyone was coming you could hear them a hundred metres away.'

'What is your name?' said Winston.

'Julia. I know yours. It's Winston -- Winston Smith.'

'How did you find that out?'

'I expect I'm better at finding things out than you are, dear. Tell me, what did you think of me before that day I gave you the note?'

He did not feel any temptation to tell lies to her. It was even a sort of love-offering to start off by telling the worst.

'I hated the sight of you,' he said. 'I wanted to rape you and then murder you afterwards. Two weeks ago I thought seriously of smashing your head in with a cobblestone. If you really want to know, I imagined that you had something to do with the Thought Police.'

The girl laughed delightedly, evidently taking this as a tribute to the excellence of her disguise.

'Not the Thought Police! You didn't honestly think that?'

'Well, perhaps not exactly that. But from your general appearance -- merely because you're young and fresh and healthy, you understand -- I thought that probably-'

'You thought I was a good Party member. Pure in word and deed. Banners, processions, slogans, games, community hikes all that stuff. And you thought that if I had a quarter of a chance I'd denounce you as a thought-criminal and get you killed off?'

'Yes, something of that kind. A great many young girls are like that, you

know.'

'It's this bloody thing that does it,' she said, ripping off the scarlet sash of the Junior Anti-Sex League and flinging it on to a bough. Then, as though touching her waist had reminded her of something, she felt in the pocket of her overalls and produced a small slab of chocolate. She broke it in half and gave one of the pieces to Winston. Even before he had taken it he knew by the smell that it was very unusual chocolate. It was dark and shiny, and was wrapped in silver paper. Chocolate normally was dull-brown crumbly stuff that tasted, as nearly as one could describe it, like the smoke of a rubbish fire. But at some time or another he had tasted chocolate like the piece she had given him. The first whiff of its scent had stirred up some memory which he could not pin down, but which was powerful and troubling.

'Where did you get this stuff?' he said.

'Black market,' she said indifferently. 'Actually I am that sort of girl, to look at. I'm good at games. I was a troop-leader in the Spies. I do voluntary work three evenings a week for the Junior Anti-Sex League. Hours and hours I've spent pasting their bloody rot all over London. I always carry one end of a banner in the processions. I always look cheerful and I never shirk anything. Always yell with the crowd, that's what I say. It's the only way to be safe.'

The first fragment of chocolate had melted on Winston's tongue. The taste was delightful. But there was still that memory moving round the edges of his consciousness, something strongly felt but not reducible to definite shape, like an object seen out of the corner of one's eye. He pushed it away

from him, aware only that it was the memory of some action which he would have liked to undo but could not.

'You are very young,' he said. 'You are ten or fifteen years younger than I am. What could you see to attract you in a man like me?'

'It was something in your face. I thought I'd take a chance. I'm good at spotting people who don't belong. As soon as I saw you I knew you were against them.'

Them, it appeared, meant the Party, and above all the Inner Party, about whom she talked with an open jeering hatred which made Winston feel uneasy, although he knew that they were safe here if they could be safe anywhere. A thing that astonished him about her was the coarseness of her language. Party members were supposed not to swear, and Winston himself very seldom did swear, aloud, at any rate. Julia, however, seemed unable to mention the Party, and especially the Inner Party, without using the kind of words that you saw chalked up in dripping alley-ways. He did not dislike it. It was merely one symptom of her revolt against the Party and all its ways, and somehow it seemed natural and healthy, like the sneeze of a horse that smells bad hay. They had left the clearing and were wandering again through the chequered shade, with their arms round each other's waists whenever it was wide enough to walk two abreast. He noticed how much softer her waist seemed to feel now that the sash was gone. They did not speak above a whisper. Outside the clearing, Julia said, it was better to go quietly. Presently they had reached the edge of the little wood. She stopped him.

'Don't go out into the open. There might be someone watching. We're all

right if we keep behind the boughs.'

They were standing in the shade of hazel bushes. The sunlight, filtering through innumerable leaves, was still hot on their faces. Winston looked out into the field beyond, and underwent a curious, slow shock of recognition. He knew it by sight. An old, closebitten pasture, with a footpath wandering across it and a molehill here and there. In the ragged hedge on the opposite side the boughs of the elm trees swayed just perceptibly in the breeze, and their leaves stirred faintly in dense masses like women's hair. Surely somewhere nearby, but out of sight, there must be a stream with green pools where dace were swimming?

'Isn't there a stream somewhere near here?' he whispered.

'That's right, there is a stream. It's at the edge of the next field, actually. There are fish in it, great big ones. You can watch them lying in the pools under the willow trees, waving their tails.'

'It's the Golden Country -- almost,' he murmured.

'The Golden Country?'

'It's nothing, really. A landscape I've seen sometimes in a dream.'

'Look!' whispered Julia.

A thrush had alighted on a bough not five metres away, almost at the level of their faces. Perhaps it had not seen them. It was in the sun, they in the shade. It spread out its wings, fitted them carefully into place again, ducked its head for a moment, as though making a sort of obeisance to the sun, and

then began to pour forth a torrent of song. In the afternoon hush the volume of sound was startling. Winston and Julia clung together, fascinated. The music went on and on, minute after minute, with astonishing variations, never once repeating itself, almost as though the bird were deliberately showing off its virtuosity. Sometimes it stopped for a few seconds, spread out and resettled its wings, then swelled its speckled breast and again burst into song. Winston watched it with a sort of vague reverence. For whom, for what, was that bird singing? No mate, no rival was watching it. What made it sit at the edge of the lonely wood and pour its music into nothingness? He wondered whether after all there was a microphone hidden somewhere near. He and Julia had spoken only in low whispers, and it would not pick up what they had said, but it would pick up the thrush. Perhaps at the other end of the instrument some small, beetle-like man was listening intently -- listening to that. But by degrees the flood of music drove all speculations out of his mind. It was as though it were a kind of liquid stuff that poured all over him and got mixed up with the sunlight that filtered through the leaves. He stopped thinking and merely felt. The girl's waist in the bend of his arm was soft and warm. He pulled her round so that they were breast to breast; her body seemed to melt into his. Wherever his hands moved it was all as yielding as water. Their mouths clung together; it was quite different from the hard kisses they had exchanged earlier. When they moved their faces apart again both of them sighed deeply. The bird took fright and fled with a clatter of wings.

Winston put his lips against her ear. 'Now,' he whispered.

'Not here,' she whispered back. 'Come back to the hide- out. It's safer.'

Quickly, with an occasional crackle of twigs, they threaded their way back to the clearing. When they were once inside the ring of saplings she turned and faced him. They were both breathing fast. but the smile had reappeared round the corners of her mouth. She stood looking at him for an instant, then felt at the zipper of her overalls. And, yes! it was almost as in his dream. Almost as swiftly as he had imagined it, she had torn her clothes off, and when she flung them aside it was with that same magnificent gesture by which a whole civilization seemed to be annihilated. Her body gleamed white in the sun. But for a moment he did not look at her body; his eyes were anchored by the freckled face with its faint, bold smile. He knelt down before her and took her hands in his

'Have you done this before?'

'Of course. Hundreds of times -- well scores of times anyway 'With Party members.'

'Yes, always with Party members.'

'With members of the Inner Party?'

'Not with those swine, no. But there's plenty that would if they got half a chance. They're not so holy as they make out.'

His heart leapt. Scores of times she had done it: he wished it had been hundreds -- thousands. Anything that hinted at corruption always filled him with a wild hope. Who knew, perhaps the Party was rotten under the surface, its cult of strenuousness and self-denial simply a sham concealing iniquity. If he could have infected the whole lot of them with leprosy or syphilis, how

gladly he would have done so! Anything to rot, to weaken, to undermine! He pulled her down so that they were kneeling face to face.

'Listen. The more men you've had, the more I love you. Do you understand that?'

'Yes, perfectly.'

'I hate purity, I hate goodness! I don't want any virtue to exist anywhere. I want everyone to be corrupt to the bones.'

'Well then, I ought to suit you, dear. I'm corrupt to the bones.'

'You like doing this? I don't mean simply me: I mean the thing in itself?'

'I adore it.'

That was above all what he wanted to hear. Not merely the love of one person but the animal instinct, the simple undifferentiated desire: that was the force that would tear the Party to pieces. He pressed her down upon the grass, among the fallen bluebells. This time there was no difficulty. Presently the rising and falling of their breasts slowed to normal speed, and in a sort of pleasant helplessness they fell apart. The sun seemed to have grown hotter. They were both sleepy. He reached out for the discarded overalls and pulled them partly over her. Almost immediately they fell asleep and slept for about half an hour.

Winston woke first. He sat up and watched the freckled face, still peacefully asleep, pillowed on the palm of her hand. Except for her mouth, you could not call her beautiful. There was a line or two round the eyes, if

you looked closely. The short dark hair was extraordinarily thick and soft. It occurred to him that he still did not know her surname or where she lived.

The young, strong body, now helpless in sleep, awoke in him a pitying, protecting feeling. But the mindless tenderness that he had felt under the hazel tree, while the thrush was singing, had not quite come back. He pulled the overalls aside and studied her smooth white flank. In the old days, he thought, a man looked at a girl's body and saw that it was desirable, and that was the end of the story. But you could not have pure love or pure lust nowadays. No emotion was pure, because everything was mixed up with fear and hatred. Their embrace had been a battle, the climax a victory. It was a blow struck against the Party. It was a political act.

XI

'We can come here once again,' said Julia. 'It's generally safe to use any hide-out twice. But not for another month or two, of course.'

As soon as she woke up her demeanour had changed. She became alert and business-like, put her clothes on, knotted the scarlet sash about her waist, and began arranging the details of the journey home. It seemed natural to leave this to her. She obviously had a practical cunning which Winston lacked, and she seemed also to have an exhaustive knowledge of the countryside round London, stored away from innumerable community hikes. The route she gave him was quite different from the one by which he had come, and brought him out at a different railway station. 'Never go home the same way as you went out,' she said, as though enunciating an important general principle. She would leave first, and Winston was to wait half an hour before following her.

She had named a place where they could meet after work, four evenings hence. It was a street in one of the poorer quarters, where there was an open market which was generally crowded and noisy. She would be hanging about among the stalls, pretending to be in search of shoelaces or sewing-thread. If she judged that the coast was clear she would blow her nose when he approached; otherwise he was to walk past her without recognition. But with luck, in the middle of the crowd, it would be safe to talk for a quarter of an hour and arrange another meeting.

'And now I must go,' she said as soon as he had mastered his

instructions. 'I'm due back at nineteen-thirty. I've got to put in two hours for the Junior Anti-Sex League, handing out leaflets, or something. Isn't it bloody? Give me a brush-down, would you? Have I got any twigs in my hair? Are you sure? Then good-bye, my love, good-bye!'

She flung herself into his arms, kissed him almost violently, and a moment later pushed her way through the saplings and disappeared into the wood with very little noise. Even now he had not found out her surname or her address. However, it made no difference, for it was inconceivable that they could ever meet indoors or exchange any kind of written communication.

As it happened, they never went back to the clearing in the wood. During the month of May there was only one further occasion on which they actually succeeded in making love. That was in another hiding-place known to Julia, the belfry of a ruinous church in an almost-deserted stretch of country where an atomic bomb had fallen thirty years earlier. It was a good hiding-place when once you got there, but the getting there was very dangerous. For the rest they could meet only in the streets, in a different place every evening and never for more than half an hour at a time. In the street it was usually possible to talk, after a fashion. As they drifted down the crowded pavements, not quite abreast and never looking at one another, they carried on a curious, intermittent conversation which flicked on and off like the beams of a lighthouse, suddenly nipped into silence by the approach of a Party uniform or the proximity of a telescreen, then taken up again minutes later in the middle of a sentence, then abruptly cut short as they parted at the agreed spot, then continued almost without introduction on the following day.

Julia appeared to be quite used to this kind of conversation, which she called 'talking by instalments'. She was also surprisingly adept at speaking without moving her lips. Just once in almost a month of nightly meetings they managed to exchange a kiss. They were passing in silence down a side-street (Julia would never speak when they were away from the main streets) when there was a deafening roar, the earth heaved, and the air darkened, and Winston found himself lying on his side, bruised and terrified. A rocket bomb must have dropped quite near at hand. Suddenly he became aware of Julia's face a few centimetres from his own, deathly white, as white as chalk. Even her lips were white. She was dead! He clasped her against him and found that he was kissing a live warm face. But there was some powdery stuff that got in the way of his lips. Both of their faces were thickly coated with plaster.

There were evenings when they reached their rendezvous and then had to walk past one another without a sign, because a patrol had just come round the corner or a helicopter was hovering overhead. Even if it had been less dangerous, it would still have been difficult to find time to meet. Winston's working week was sixty hours, Julia's was even longer, and their free days varied according to the pressure of work and did not often coincide. Julia, in any case, seldom had an evening completely free. She spent an astonishing amount of time in attending lectures and demonstrations, distributing literature for the junior Anti-Sex League, preparing banners for Hate Week, making collections for the savings campaign, and such-like activities. It paid, she said, it was camouflage. If you kept the small rules, you could break the big ones. She even induced Winston to mortgage yet another of his evenings by enrolling himself for the part-time munition work which was done voluntarily by zealous Party members. So, one evening every week, Winston

spent four hours of paralysing boredom, screwing together small bits of metal which were probably parts of bomb fuses, in a draughty, ill-lit workshop where the knocking of hammers mingled drearily with the music of the telescreens.

When they met in the church tower the gaps in their fragmentary conversation were filled up. It was a blazing afternoon. The air in the little square chamber above the bells was hot and stagnant, and smelt overpoweringly of pigeon dung. They sat talking for hours on the dusty, twig-littered floor, one or other of them getting up from time to time to cast a glance through the arrowslits and make sure that no one was coming.

Julia was twenty-six years old. She lived in a hostel with thirty other girls ('Always in the stink of women! How I hate women!' she said parenthetically), and she worked, as he had guessed, on the novel-writing machines in the Fiction Department. She enjoyed her work, which consisted chiefly in running and servicing a powerful but tricky electric motor. She was 'not clever', but was fond of using her hands and felt at home with machinery. She could describe the whole process of composing a novel, from the general directive issued by the Planning Committee down to the final touching-up by the Rewrite Squad. But she was not interested in the finished product. She 'didn't much care for reading,' she said. Books were just a commodity that had to be produced, like jam or bootlaces.

She had no memories of anything before the early sixties and the only person she had ever known who talked frequently of the days before the Revolution was a grandfather who had disappeared when she was eight. At school she had been captain of the hockey team and had won the gymnastics

trophy two years running. She had been a troop-leader in the Spies and a branch secretary in the Youth League before joining the Junior Anti-Sex League. She had always borne an excellent character. She had even (an infallible mark of good reputation) been picked out to work in Pornosec, the sub-section of the Fiction Department which turned out cheap pornography for distribution among the proles. It was nicknamed Muck House by the people who worked in it, she remarked. There she had remained for a year, helping to produce booklets in sealed packets with titles like Spanking Stories or One Night in a Girls' School, to be bought furtively by proletarian youths who were under the impression that they were buying something illegal.

'What are these books like?' said Winston curiously.

'Oh, ghastly rubbish. They're boring, really. They only have six plots, but they swap them round a bit. Of course I was only on the kaleidoscopes. I was never in the Rewrite Squad. I'm not literary, dear -- not even enough for that.'

He learned with astonishment that all the workers in Pornosec, except the heads of the departments, were girls. The theory was that men, whose sex instincts were less controllable than those of women, were in greater danger of being corrupted by the filth they handled.

'They don't even like having married women there,' she added. Girls are always supposed to be so pure. Here's one who isn't, anyway.

She had had her first love-affair when she was sixteen, with a Party member of sixty who later committed suicide to avoid arrest. 'And a good job

too,' said Julia, 'otherwise they'd have had my name out of him when he confessed.' Since then there had been various others. Life as she saw it was quite simple. You wanted a good time; 'they', meaning the Party, wanted to stop you having it; you broke the rules as best you could. She seemed to think it just as natural that 'they' should want to rob you of your pleasures as that you should want to avoid being caught. She hated the Party, and said so in the crudest words, but she made no general criticism of it. Except where it touched upon her own life she had no interest in Party doctrine. He noticed that she never used Newspeak words except the ones that had passed into everyday use. She had never heard of the Brotherhood, and refused to believe in its existence. Any kind of organized revolt against the Party, which was bound to be a failure, struck her as stupid. The clever thing was to break the rules and stay alive all the same. He wondered vaguely how many others like her there might be in the younger generation people who had grown up in the world of the Revolution, knowing nothing else, accepting the Party as something unalterable, like the sky, not rebelling against its authority but simply evading it, as a rabbit dodges a dog.

They did not discuss the possibility of getting married. It was too remote to be worth thinking about. No imaginable committee would ever sanction such a marriage even if Katharine, Winston's wife, could somehow have been got rid of. It was hopeless even as a daydream.

'What was she like, your wife?' said Julia.

'She was -- do you know the Newspeak word goodthinkful? Meaning naturally orthodox, incapable of thinking a bad thought?'

'No, I didn't know the word, but I know the kind of person, right enough.'

He began telling her the story of his married life, but curiously enough she appeared to know the essential parts of it already. She described to him, almost as though she had seen or felt it, the stiffening of Katharine's body as soon as he touched her, the way in which she still seemed to be pushing him from her with all her strength, even when her arms were clasped tightly round him. With Julia he felt no difficulty in talking about such things: Katharine, in any case, had long ceased to be a painful memory and became merely a distasteful one.

'I could have stood it if it hadn't been for one thing,' he said. He told her about the frigid little ceremony that Katharine had forced him to go through on the same night every week. 'She hated it, but nothing would make her stop doing it. She used to call it -- but you'll never guess.'

'Our duty to the Party,' said Julia promptly.

'How did you know that?'

'I've been at school too, dear. Sex talks once a month for the over-sixteens. And in the Youth Movement. They rub it into you for years. I dare say it works in a lot of cases. But of course you can never tell; people are such hypocrites.'

She began to enlarge upon the subject. With Julia, everything came back to her own sexuality. As soon as this was touched upon in any way she was capable of great acuteness. Unlike Winston, she had grasped the inner

meaning of the Party's sexual puritanism. It was not merely that the sex instinct created a world of its own which was outside the Party's control and which therefore had to be destroyed if possible. What was more important was that sexual privation induced hysteria, which was desirable because it could be transformed into war-fever and leader-worship. The way she put it was:

'When you make love you're using up energy; and afterwards you feel happy and don't give a damn for anything. They can't bear you to feel like that. They want you to be bursting with energy all the time. All this marching up and down and cheering and waving flags is simply sex gone sour. If you're happy inside yourself, why should you get excited about Big Brother and the Three-Year Plans and the Two Minutes Hate and all the rest of their bloody rot?'

That was very true, he thought. There was a direct intimate connexion between chastity and political orthodoxy. For how could the fear, the hatred, and the lunatic credulity which the Party needed in its members be kept at the right pitch, except by bottling down some powerful instinct and using it as a driving force? The sex impulse was dangerous to the Party, and the Party had turned it to account. They had played a similar trick with the instinct of parenthood. The family could not actually be abolished, and, indeed, people were encouraged to be fond of their children, in almost the old-fashioned way. The children, on the other hand, were systematically turned against their parents and taught to spy on them and report their deviations. The family had become in effect an extension of the Thought Police. It was a device by means of which everyone could be surrounded night and day by informers

who knew him intimately.

Abruptly his mind went back to Katharine. Katharine would unquestionably have denounced him to the Thought Police if she had not happened to be too stupid to detect the unorthodoxy of his opinions. But what really recalled her to him at this moment was the stifling heat of the afternoon, which had brought the sweat out on his forehead. He began telling Julia of something that had happened, or rather had failed to happen, on another sweltering summer afternoon, eleven years ago.

It was three or four months after they were married. They had lost their way on a community hike somewhere in Kent. They had only lagged behind the others for a couple of minutes, but they took a wrong turning, and presently found themselves pulled up short by the edge of an old chalk quarry. It was a sheer drop of ten or twenty metres, with boulders at the bottom. There was nobody of whom they could ask the way. As soon as she realized that they were lost Katharine became very uneasy. To be away from the noisy mob of hikers even for a moment gave her a feeling of wrongdoing. She wanted to hurry back by the way they had come and start searching in the other direction. But at this moment Winston noticed some tufts of loosestrife growing in the cracks of the cliff beneath them. One tuft was of two colours, magenta and brick-red, apparently growing on the same root. He had never seen anything of the kind before, and he called to Katharine to come and look at it.

'Look, Katharine! Look at those flowers. That clump down near the bottom. Do you see they're two different colours?'

She had already turned to go, but she did rather fretfully come back for a moment. She even leaned out over the cliff face to see where he was pointing. He was standing a little behind her, and he put his hand on her waist to steady her. At this moment it suddenly occurred to him how completely alone they were. There was not a human creature anywhere, not a leaf stirring, not even a bird awake. In a place like this the danger that there would be a hidden microphone was very small, and even if there was a microphone it would only pick up sounds. It was the hottest sleepest hour of the afternoon. The sun blazed down upon them, the sweat tickled his face. And the thought struck him ...

'Why didn't you give her a good shove?' said Julia. 'I would have.'

'Yes, dear, you would have. I would, if I'd been the same person then as I am now. Or perhaps I would -- I'm not certain.'

'Are you sorry you didn't?'

'Yes. On the whole I'm sorry I didn't.'

They were sitting side by side on the dusty floor. He pulled her closer against him. Her head rested on his shoulder, the pleasant smell of her hair conquering the pigeon dung. She was very young, he thought, she still expected something from life, she did not understand that to push an inconvenient person over a cliff solves nothing.

'Actually it would have made no difference,' he said.

'Then why are you sorry you didn't do it?'

'Only because I prefer a positive to a negative. In this game that we're playing, we can't win. Some kinds of failure are better than other kinds, that's all.'

He felt her shoulders give a wriggle of dissent. She always contradicted him when he said anything of this kind. She would not accept it as a law of nature that the individual is always defeated. In a way she realized that she herself was doomed, that sooner or later the Thought Police would catch her and kill her, but with another part of her mind she believed that it was somehow possible to construct a secret world in which you could live as you chose. All you needed was luck and cunning and boldness. She did not understand that there was no such thing as happiness, that the only victory lay in the far future, long after you were dead, that from the moment of declaring war on the Party it was better to think of yourself as a corpse.

'We are the dead,' he said.

'We're not dead yet,' said Julia prosaically.

'Not physically. Six months, a year -- five years, conceivably. I am afraid of death. You are young, so presumably you're more afraid of it than I am. Obviously we shall put it off as long as we can. But it makes very little difference. So long as human beings stay human, death and life are the same thing.'

'Oh, rubbish! Which would you sooner sleep with, me or a skeleton? Don't you enjoy being alive? Don't you like feeling: This is me, this is my hand, this is my leg, I'm real, I'm solid, I'm alive! Don't you like this?'

She twisted herself round and pressed her bosom against him. He could feel her breasts, ripe yet firm, through her overalls. Her body seemed to be pouring some of its youth and vigour into his.

'Yes, I like that,' he said.

'Then stop talking about dying. And now listen, dear, we've got to fix up about the next time we meet. We may as well go back to the place in the wood. We've given it a good long rest. But you must get there by a different way this time. I've got it all planned out. You take the train -- but look, I'll draw it out for you.'

And in her practical way she scraped together a small square of dust, and with a twig from a pigeon's nest began drawing a map on the floor.

XII

Winston looked round the shabby little room above Mr Charrington's shop. Beside the window the enormous bed was made up, with ragged blankets and a coverless bolster. The old-fashioned clock with the twelve-hour face was ticking away on the mantelpiece. In the corner, on the gateleg table, the glass paperweight which he had bought on his last visit gleamed softly out of the half-darkness.

In the fender was a battered tin oilstove, a saucepan, and two cups, provided by Mr Charrington. Winston lit the burner and set a pan of water to boil. He had brought an envelope full of Victory Coffee and some saccharine tablets. The clock's hands said seventeen-twenty: it was nineteen-twenty really. She was coming at nineteen-thirty.

Folly, folly, his heart kept saying: conscious, gratuitous, suicidal folly. Of all the crimes that a Party member could commit, this one was the least possible to conceal. Actually the idea had first floated into his head in the form of a vision, of the glass paperweight mirrored by the surface of the gateleg table. As he had foreseen, Mr Charrington had made no difficulty about letting the room. He was obviously glad of the few dollars that it would bring him. Nor did he seem shocked or become offensively knowing when it was made clear that Winston wanted the room for the purpose of a love-affair. Instead he looked into the middle distance and spoke in generalities, with so delicate an air as to give the impression that he had become partly invisible. Privacy, he said, was a very valuable thing. Everyone wanted a place where they could be alone occasionally. And when they had such a

place, it was only common courtesy in anyone else who knew of it to keep his knowledge to himself. He even, seeming almost to fade out of existence as he did so, added that there were two entries to the house, one of them through the back yard, which gave on an alley.

Under the window somebody was singing. Winston peeped out, secure in the protection of the muslin curtain. The June sun was still high in the sky, and in the sun-filled court below, a monstrous woman, solid as a Norman pillar, with brawny red forearms and a sacking apron strapped about her middle, was stumping to and fro between a washtub and a clothes line, pegging out a series of square white things which Winston recognized as babies' diapers. Whenever her mouth was not corked with clothes pegs she was singing in a powerful contralto:

It was only an 'opeless fancy.

It passed like an Ipril dye,

But a look an' a word an' the dreams they stirred!

They 'ave stolen my 'eart awye!

The tune had been haunting London for weeks past. It was one of countless similar songs published for the benefit of the proles by a subsection of the Music Department. The words of these songs were composed without any human intervention whatever on an instrument known as a versificator. But the woman sang so tunefully as to turn the dreadful rubbish into an almost pleasant sound. He could hear the woman singing and the scrape of her shoes on the flagstones, and the cries of the children in the

street, and somewhere in the far distance a faint roar of traffic, and yet the room seemed curiously silent, thanks to the absence of a telescreen.

Folly, folly, folly! he thought again. It was inconceivable that they could frequent this place for more than a few weeks without being caught. But the temptation of having a hiding-place that was truly their own, indoors and near at hand, had been too much for both of them. For some time after their visit to the church belfry it had been impossible to arrange meetings. Working hours had been drastically increased in anticipation of Hate Week. It was more than a month distant, but the enormous, complex preparations that it entailed were throwing extra work on to everybody. Finally both of them managed to secure a free afternoon on the same day. They had agreed to go back to the clearing in the wood. On the evening beforehand they met briefly in the street. As usual, Winston hardly looked at Julia as they drifted towards one another in the crowd, but from the short glance he gave her it seemed to him that she was paler than usual.

'It's all off,' she murmured as soon as she judged it safe to speak. 'Tomorrow, I mean.'

'What?'

'Tomorrow afternoon. I can't come.'

'Why not?'

'Oh, the usual reason. It's started early this time.'

For a moment he was violently angry. During the month that he had

known her the nature of his desire for her had changed. At the beginning there had been little true sensuality in it. Their first love-making had been simply an act of the will. But after the second time it was different. The smell of her hair, the taste of her mouth, the feeling of her skin seemed to have got inside him, or into the air all round him. She had become a physical necessity, something that he not only wanted but felt that he had a right to. When she said that she could not come, he had the feeling that she was cheating him. But just at this moment the crowd pressed them together and their hands accidentally met. She gave the tips of his fingers a quick squeeze that seemed to invite not desire but affection. It struck him that when one lived with a woman this particular disappointment must be a normal, recurring event; and a deep tenderness, such as he had not felt for her before, suddenly took hold of him. He wished that they were a married couple of ten years' standing. He wished that he were walking through the streets with her just as they were doing now but openly and without fear, talking of trivialities and buying odds and ends for the household. He wished above all that they had some place where they could be alone together without feeling the obligation to make love every time they met. It was not actually at that moment, but at some time on the following day, that the idea of renting Mr Charrington's room had occurred to him. When he suggested it to Julia she had agreed with unexpected readiness. Both of them knew that it was lunacy. It was as though they were intentionally stepping nearer to their graves. As he sat waiting on the edge of the bed he thought again of the cellars of the Ministry of Love. It was curious how that predestined horror moved in and out of one's consciousness. There it lay, fixed in future times, preceding death as surely as 99 precedes 100. One could not avoid it, but one could perhaps postpone it: and yet instead, every now and again, by a conscious, wilful act,

one chose to shorten the interval before it happened.

At this moment there was a quick step on the stairs. Julia burst into the room. She was carrying a tool-bag of coarse brown canvas, such as he had sometimes seen her carrying to and fro at the Ministry. He started forward to take her in his arms, but she disengaged herself rather hurriedly, partly because she was still holding the tool-bag.

'Half a second,' she said. 'Just let me show you what I've brought. Did you bring some of that filthy Victory Coffee? I thought you would. You can chuck it away again, because we shan't be needing it. Look here.'

She fell on her knees, threw open the bag, and tumbled out some spanners and a screwdriver that filled the top part of it. Underneath were a number of neat paper packets. The first packet that she passed to Winston had a strange and yet vaguely familiar feeling. It was filled with some kind of heavy, sand-like stuff which yielded wherever you touched it.

'It isn't sugar?' he said.

'Real sugar. Not saccharine, sugar. And here's a loaf of bread proper white bread, not our bloody stuff -- and a little pot of jam. And here's a tin of milk -- but look! This is the one I'm really proud of. I had to wrap a bit of sacking round it, because-'

But she did not need to tell him why she had wrapped it up. The smell was already filling the room, a rich hot smell which seemed like an emanation from his early childhood, but which one did occasionally meet with even now, blowing down a passage-way before a door slammed, or

diffusing itself mysteriously in a crowded street, sniffed for an instant and then lost again.

'It's coffee,' he murmured, 'real coffee.'

'It's Inner Party coffee. There's a whole kilo here, she said.

'How did you manage to get hold of all these things?'

'It's all Inner Party stuff. There's nothing those swine don't have, nothing. But of course waiters and servants and people pinch things, and -- look, I got a little packet of tea as well.'

Winston had squatted down beside her. He tore open a corner of the packet.

'It's real tea. Not blackberry leaves.'

'There's been a lot of tea about lately. They've captured India, or something,' she said vaguely. 'But listen, dear. I want you to turn your back on me for three minutes. Go and sit on the other side of the bed. Don't go too near the window. And don't turn round till I tell you.'

Winston gazed abstractedly through the muslin curtain. Down in the yard the red-armed woman was still marching to and fro between the washtub and the line. She took two more pegs out of her mouth and sang with deep feeling:

They say that time 'eals all things,

They say you can always forget;

But the smiles and the tears across the years

They twist my heart-strings yet!

She knew the whole drivelling song by heart, it seemed. Her voice floated upward with the sweet summer air, very tuneful, charged with a sort of happy melancholy. One had the feeling that she would have been perfectly content, if the June evening had been endless and the supply of clothes inexhaustible, to remain there for a thousand years, pegging out diapers and singing rubbish. It struck him as a curious fact that he had never heard a member of the Party singing alone and spontaneously. It would even have seemed slightly unorthodox, a dangerous eccentricity, like talking to oneself. Perhaps it was only when people were somewhere near the starvation level that they had anything to sing about.

'You can turn round now,' said Julia.

He turned round, and for a second almost failed to recognize her. What he had actually expected was to see her naked. But she was not naked. The transformation that had happened was much more surprising than that. She had painted her face.

She must have slipped into some shop in the proletarian quarters and bought herself a complete set of make-up materials. Her lips were deeply reddened, her cheeks rouged, her nose powdered; there was even a touch of something under the eyes to make them brighter. It was not very skilfully done, but Winston's standards in such matters were not high. He had never

before seen or imagined a woman of the Party with cosmetics on her face. The improvement in her appearance was startling. With just a few dabs of colour in the right places she had become not only very much prettier, but, above all, far more feminine. Her short hair and boyish overalls merely added to the effect. As he took her in his arms a wave of synthetic violets flooded his nostrils. He remembered the half-darkness of a basement kitchen, and a woman's cavernous mouth. It was the very same scent that she had used; but at the moment it did not seem to matter.

'Scent too!' he said.

'Yes, dear, scent too. And do you know what I'm going to do next? I'm going to get hold of a real woman's frock from somewhere and wear it instead of these bloody trousers. I'll wear silk stockings and high-heeled shoes! In this room I'm going to be a woman, not a Party comrade.'

They flung their clothes off and climbed into the huge mahogany bed. It was the first time that he had stripped himself naked in her presence. Until now he had been too much ashamed of his pale and meagre body, with the varicose veins standing out on his calves and the discoloured patch over his ankle. There were no sheets, but the blanket they lay on was threadbare and smooth, and the size and springiness of the bed astonished both of them. 'It's sure to be full of bugs, but who cares?' said Julia. One never saw a double bed nowadays, except in the homes of the proles. Winston had occasionally slept in one in his boyhood: Julia had never been in one before, so far as she could remember.

Presently they fell asleep for a little while. When Winston woke up the

hands of the clock had crept round to nearly nine. He did not stir, because Julia was sleeping with her head in the crook of his arm. Most of her make-up had transferred itself to his own face or the bolster, but a light stain of rouge still brought out the beauty of her cheekbone. A yellow ray from the sinking sun fell across the foot of the bed and lighted up the fireplace, where the water in the pan was boiling fast. Down in the yard the woman had stopped singing, but the faint shouts of children floated in from the street. He wondered vaguely whether in the abolished past it had been a normal experience to lie in bed like this, in the cool of a summer evening, a man and a woman with no clothes on, making love when they chose, talking of what they chose, not feeling any compulsion to get up, simply lying there and listening to peaceful sounds outside. Surely there could never have been a time when that seemed ordinary? Julia woke up, rubbed her eyes, and raised herself on her elbow to look at the oilstove.

'Half that water's boiled away,' she said. 'I'll get up and make some coffee in another moment. We've got an hour. What time do they cut the lights off at your flats?'

'Twenty-three thirty.'

'It's twenty-three at the hostel. But you have to get in earlier than that, because -- Hi! Get out, you filthy brute!'

She suddenly twisted herself over in the bed, seized a shoe from the floor, and sent it hurtling into the corner with a boyish jerk of her arm, exactly as he had seen her fling the dictionary at Goldstein, that morning during the Two Minutes Hate.

'What was it?' he said in surprise.

'A rat. I saw him stick his beastly nose out of the wainscoting. There's a hole down there. I gave him a good fright, anyway.'

'Rats!' murmured Winston. 'In this room!'

'They're all over the place,' said Julia indifferently as she lay down again. 'We've even got them in the kitchen at the hostel. Some parts of London are swarming with them. Did you know they attack children? Yes, they do. In some of these streets a woman daren't leave a baby alone for two minutes. It's the great huge brown ones that do it. And the nasty thing is that the brutes always-'

'Don't go on!' said Winston, with his eyes tightly shut.

'Dearest! You've gone quite pale. What's the matter? Do they make you feel sick?'

'Of all horrors in the world -- a rat!'

She pressed herself against him and wound her limbs round him, as though to reassure him with the warmth of her body. He did not reopen his eyes immediately. For several moments he had had the feeling of being back in a nightmare which had recurred from time to time throughout his life. It was always very much the same. He was standing in front of a wall of darkness, and on the other side of it there was something unendurable, something too dreadful to be faced. In the dream his deepest feeling was always one of self-deception, because he did in fact know what was behind

the wall of darkness. With a deadly effort, like wrenching a piece out of his own brain, he could even have dragged the thing into the open. He always woke up without discovering what it was: but somehow it was connected with what Julia had been saying when he cut her short.

'I'm sorry,' he said, 'it's nothing. I don't like rats, that's all.'

'Don't worry, dear, we're not going to have the filthy brutes in here. I'll stuff the hole with a bit of sacking before we go. And next time we come here I'll bring some plaster and bung it up properly.'

Already the black instant of panic was half-forgotten. Feeling slightly ashamed of himself, he sat up against the bedhead. Julia got out of bed, pulled on her overalls, and made the coffee. The smell that rose from the saucepan was so powerful and exciting that they shut the window lest anybody outside should notice it and become inquisitive. What was even better than the taste of the coffee was the silky texture given to it by the sugar, a thing Winston had almost forgotten after years of saccharine. With one hand in her pocket and a piece of bread and jam in the other, Julia wandered about the room, glancing indifferently at the bookcase, pointing out the best way of repairing the gateleg table, plumping herself down in the ragged arm-chair to see if it was comfortable, and examining the absurd twelve-hour clock with a sort of tolerant amusement. She brought the glass paperweight over to the bed to have a look at it in a better light. He took it out of her hand, fascinated, as always, by the soft, rainwatery appearance of the glass.

'What is it, do you think?' said Julia.

'I don't think it's anything-I mean, I don't think it was ever put to any use. That's what I like about it. It's a little chunk of history that they've forgotten to alter. It's a message from a hundred years ago, if one knew how to read it.'

'And that picture over there' -- she nodded at the engraving on the opposite wall-'would that be a hundred years old?'

'More. Two hundred, I dare say. One can't tell. It's impossible to discover the age of anything nowadays.'

She went over to look at it. 'Here's where that brute stuck his nose out,' she said, kicking the wainscoting immediately below the picture. 'What is this place? I've seen it before somewhere.'

'It's a church, or at least it used to be. St Clement's Danes its name was.' The fragment of rhyme that Mr Charrington had taught him came back into his head, and he added half-nostalgically: "Oranges and lemons, say the bells of St Clement's!"

To his astonishment she capped the line:

'You owe me three farthings, say the bells of St Martin's,

When will you pay me? say the bells of Old Bailey -- '

'I can't remember how it goes on after that. But anyway I remember it ends up, "Here comes a candle to light you to bed, here comes a chopper to chop off your head!"

It was like the two halves of a countersign. But there must be another line after 'the bells of Old Bailey'. Perhaps it could be dug out of Mr Charrington's memory, if he were suitably prompted.

'Who taught you that?' he said.

'My grandfather. He used to say it to me when I was a little girl. He was vaporized when I was eight -- at any rate, he disappeared. I wonder what a lemon was,' she added inconsequently. 'I've seen oranges. They're a kind of round yellow fruit with a thick skin.'

'I can remember lemons,' said Winston. 'They were quite common in the fifties. They were so sour that it set your teeth on edge even to smell them.'

'I bet that picture's got bugs behind it,' said Julia. 'I'll take it down and give it a good clean some day. I suppose it's almost time we were leaving. I must start washing this paint off. What a bore! I'll get the lipstick off your face afterwards.'

Winston did not get up for a few minutes more. The room was darkening. He turned over towards the light and lay gazing into the glass paperweight. The inexhaustibly interesting thing was not the fragment of coral but the interior of the glass itself. There was such a depth of it, and yet it was almost as transparent as air. It was as though the surface of the glass had been the arch of the sky, enclosing a tiny world with its atmosphere complete. He had the feeling that he could get inside it, and that in fact he was inside it, along with the mahogany bed and the gateleg table, and the clock and the steel engraving and the paperweight itself. The paperweight

was the room he was in, and the coral was Julia's life and his own, fixed in a sort of eternity at the heart of the crystal.

XIII

Syme had vanished. A morning came, and he was missing from work: a few thoughtless people commented on his absence. On the next day nobody mentioned him. On the third day Winston went into the vestibule of the Records Department to look at the notice-board. One of the notices carried a printed list of the members of the Chess Committee, of whom Syme had been one. It looked almost exactly as it had looked before -- nothing had been crossed out -- but it was one name shorter. It was enough. Syme had ceased to exist: he had never existed.

The weather was baking hot. In the labyrinthine Ministry the windowless, air-conditioned rooms kept their normal temperature, but outside the pavements scorched one's feet and the stench of the Tubes at the rush hours was a horror. The preparations for Hate Week were in full swing, and the staffs of all the Ministries were working overtime. Processions, meetings, military parades, lectures, waxworks, displays, film shows, telescreen programmes all had to be organized; stands had to be erected, effigies built, slogans coined, songs written, rumours circulated, photographs faked. Julia's unit in the Fiction Department had been taken off the production of novels and was rushing out a series of atrocity pamphlets. Winston, in addition to his regular work, spent long periods every day in going through back files of *The Times* and altering and embellishing news items which were to be quoted in speeches. Late at night, when crowds of rowdy proles roamed the streets, the town had a curiously febrile air. The rocket bombs crashed oftener than ever, and sometimes in the far distance there were enormous explosions which no

one could explain and about which there were wild rumours.

The new tune which was to be the theme-song of Hate Week (the Hate Song, it was called) had already been composed and was being endlessly plugged on the telescreens. It had a savage, barking rhythm which could not exactly be called music, but resembled the beating of a drum. Roared out by hundreds of voices to the tramp of marching feet, it was terrifying. The proles had taken a fancy to it, and in the midnight streets it competed with the still-popular 'It was only a hopeless fancy'. The Parsons children played it at all hours of the night and day, unbearably, on a comb and a piece of toilet paper. Winston's evenings were fuller than ever. Squads of volunteers, organized by Parsons, were preparing the street for Hate Week, stitching banners, painting posters, erecting flagstaffs on the roofs, and perilously slinging wires across the street for the reception of streamers. Parsons boasted that Victory Mansions alone would display four hundred metres of bunting. He was in his native element and as happy as a lark. The heat and the manual work had even given him a pretext for reverting to shorts and an open shirt in the evenings. He was everywhere at once, pushing, pulling, sawing, hammering, improvising, jollying everyone along with comradely exhortations and giving out from every fold of his body what seemed an inexhaustible supply of acrid-smelling sweat.

A new poster had suddenly appeared all over London. It had no caption, and represented simply the monstrous figure of a Eurasian soldier, three or four metres high, striding forward with expressionless Mongolian face and enormous boots, a submachine gun pointed from his hip. From whatever angle you looked at the poster, the muzzle of the gun, magnified by the

foreshortening, seemed to be pointed straight at you. The thing had been plastered on every blank space on every wall, even outnumbering the portraits of Big Brother. The proles, normally apathetic about the war, were being lashed into one of their periodical frenzies of patriotism. As though to harmonize with the general mood, the rocket bombs had been killing larger numbers of people than usual. One fell on a crowded film theatre in Stepney, burying several hundred victims among the ruins. The whole population of the neighbourhood turned out for a long, trailing funeral which went on for hours and was in effect an indignation meeting. Another bomb fell on a piece of waste ground which was used as a playground and several dozen children were blown to pieces. There were further angry demonstrations, Goldstein was burned in effigy, hundreds of copies of the poster of the Eurasian soldier were torn down and added to the flames, and a number of shops were looted in the turmoil; then a rumour flew round that spies were directing the rocket bombs by means of wireless waves, and an old couple who were suspected of being of foreign extraction had their house set on fire and perished of suffocation.

In the room over Mr Charrington's shop, when they could get there, Julia and Winston lay side by side on a stripped bed under the open window, naked for the sake of coolness. The rat had never come back, but the bugs had multiplied hideously in the heat. It did not seem to matter. Dirty or clean, the room was paradise. As soon as they arrived they would sprinkle everything with pepper bought on the black market, tear off their clothes, and make love with sweating bodies, then fall asleep and wake to find that the bugs had rallied and were massing for the counter-attack.

Four, five, six -- seven times they met during the month of June. Winston had dropped his habit of drinking gin at all hours. He seemed to have lost the need for it. He had grown fatter, his varicose ulcer had subsided, leaving only a brown stain on the skin above his ankle, his fits of coughing in the early morning had stopped. The process of life had ceased to be intolerable, he had no longer any impulse to make faces at the telescreen or shout curses at the top of his voice. Now that they had a secure hiding-place, almost a home, it did not even seem a hardship that they could only meet infrequently and for a couple of hours at a time. What mattered was that the room over the junk-shop should exist. To know that it was there, inviolate, was almost the same as being in it. The room was a world, a pocket of the past where extinct animals could walk. Mr Charrington, thought Winston, was another extinct animal. He usually stopped to talk with Mr Charrington for a few minutes on his way upstairs. The old man seemed seldom or never to go out of doors, and on the other hand to have almost no customers. He led a ghostlike existence between the tiny, dark shop, and an even tinier back kitchen where he prepared his meals and which contained, among other things, an unbelievably ancient gramophone with an enormous horn. He seemed glad of the opportunity to talk. Wandering about among his worthless stock, with his long nose and thick spectacles and his bowed shoulders in the velvet jacket, he had always vaguely the air of being a collector rather than a tradesman. With a sort of faded enthusiasm he would finger this scrap of rubbish or that -- a china bottle-stopper, the painted lid of a broken snuffbox, a pinchbeck locket containing a strand of some long-dead baby's hair -- never asking that Winston should buy it, merely that he should admire it. To talk to him was like listening to the tinkling of a worn-out musical-box. He had dragged out from the corners of his memory some more fragments of

forgotten rhymes. There was one about four and twenty blackbirds, and another about a cow with a crumpled horn, and another about the death of poor Cock Robin. 'It just occurred to me you might be interested,' he would say with a deprecating little laugh whenever he produced a new fragment. But he could never recall more than a few lines of any one rhyme.

Both of them knew-in a way, it was never out of their minds that what was now happening could not last long. There were times when the fact of impending death seemed as palpable as the bed they lay on, and they would cling together with a sort of despairing sensuality, like a damned soul grasping at his last morsel of pleasure when the clock is within five minutes of striking. But there were also times when they had the illusion not only of safety but of permanence. So long as they were actually in this room, they both felt, no harm could come to them. Getting there was difficult and dangerous, but the room itself was sanctuary. It was as when Winston had gazed into the heart of the paperweight, with the feeling that it would be possible to get inside that glassy world, and that once inside it time could be arrested. Often they gave themselves up to daydreams of escape. Their luck would hold indefinitely, and they would carry on their intrigue, just like this, for the remainder of their natural lives. Or Katharine would die, and by subtle manoeuvrings Winston and Julia would succeed in getting married. Or they would commit suicide together. Or they would disappear, alter themselves out of recognition, learn to speak with proletarian accents, get jobs in a factory and live out their lives undetected in a back-street. It was all nonsense, as they both knew. In reality there was no escape. Even the one plan that was practicable, suicide, they had no intention of carrying out. To hang on from day to day and from week to week, spinning out a present that

had no future, seemed an unconquerable instinct, just as one's lungs will always draw the next breath so long as there is air available.

Sometimes, too, they talked of engaging in active rebellion against the Party, but with no notion of how to take the first step. Even if the fabulous Brotherhood was a reality, there still remained the difficulty of finding one's way into it. He told her of the strange intimacy that existed, or seemed to exist, between himself and O'Brien, and of the impulse he sometimes felt, simply to walk into O'Brien's presence, announce that he was the enemy of the Party, and demand his help. Curiously enough, this did not strike her as an impossibly rash thing to do. She was used to judging people by their faces, and it seemed natural to her that Winston should believe O'Brien to be trustworthy on the strength of a single flash of the eyes. Moreover she took it for granted that everyone, or nearly everyone, secretly hated the Party and would break the rules if he thought it safe to do so. But she refused to believe that widespread, organized opposition existed or could exist. The tales about Goldstein and his underground army, she said, were simply a lot of rubbish which the Party had invented for its own purposes and which you had to pretend to believe in. Times beyond number, at Party rallies and spontaneous demonstrations, she had shouted at the top of her voice for the execution of people whose names she had never heard and in whose supposed crimes she had not the faintest belief. When public trials were happening she had taken her place in the detachments from the Youth League who surrounded the courts from morning to night, chanting at intervals 'Death to the traitors!' During the Two Minutes Hate she always excelled all others in shouting insults at Goldstein. Yet she had only the dimmest idea of who Goldstein was and what doctrines he was supposed to represent. She had grown up since the

Revolution and was too young to remember the ideological battles of the fifties and sixties. Such a thing as an independent political movement was outside her imagination: and in any case the Party was invincible. It would always exist, and it would always be the same. You could only rebel against it by secret disobedience or, at most, by isolated acts of violence such as killing somebody or blowing something up.

In some ways she was far more acute than Winston, and far less susceptible to Party propaganda. Once when he happened in some connexion to mention the war against Eurasia, she startled him by saying casually that in her opinion the war was not happening. The rocket bombs which fell daily on London were probably fired by the Government of Oceania itself, 'just to keep people frightened'. This was an idea that had literally never occurred to him. She also stirred a sort of envy in him by telling him that during the Two Minutes Hate her great difficulty was to avoid bursting out laughing. But she only questioned the teachings of the Party when they in some way touched upon her own life. Often she was ready to accept the official mythology, simply because the difference between truth and falsehood did not seem important to her. She believed, for instance, having learnt it at school, that the Party had invented aeroplanes. (In his own schooldays, Winston remembered, in the late fifties, it was only the helicopter that the Party claimed to have invented; a dozen years later, when Julia was at school, it was already claiming the aeroplane; one generation more, and it would be claiming the steam engine.) And when he told her that aeroplanes had been in existence before he was born and long before the Revolution, the fact struck her as totally uninteresting. After all, what did it matter who had invented aeroplanes? It was rather more of a shock to him when he discovered from

some chance remark that she did not remember that Oceania, four years ago, had been at war with Eastasia and at peace with Eurasia. It was true that she regarded the whole war as a sham: but apparently she had not even noticed that the name of the enemy had changed. 'I thought we'd always been at war with Eurasia,' she said vaguely. It frightened him a little. The invention of aeroplanes dated from long before her birth, but the switchover in the war had happened only four years ago, well after she was grown up. He argued with her about it for perhaps a quarter of an hour. In the end he succeeded in forcing her memory back until she did dimly recall that at one time Eastasia and not Eurasia had been the enemy. But the issue still struck her as unimportant. 'Who cares?' she said impatiently. 'It's always one bloody war after another, and one knows the news is all lies anyway.'

Sometimes he talked to her of the Records Department and the impudent forgeries that he committed there. Such things did not appear to horrify her. She did not feel the abyss opening beneath her feet at the thought of lies becoming truths. He told her the story of Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford and the momentous slip of paper which he had once held between his fingers. It did not make much impression on her. At first, indeed, she failed to grasp the point of the story.

'Were they friends of yours?' she said.

'No, I never knew them. They were Inner Party members. Besides, they were far older men than I was. They belonged to the old days, before the Revolution. I barely knew them by sight.'

'Then what was there to worry about? People are being killed off all the

time, aren't they?'

He tried to make her understand. 'This was an exceptional case. It wasn't just a question of somebody being killed. Do you realize that the past, starting from yesterday, has been actually abolished? If it survives anywhere, it's in a few solid objects with no words attached to them, like that lump of glass there. Already we know almost literally nothing about the Revolution and the years before the Revolution. Every record has been destroyed or falsified, every book has been rewritten, every picture has been repainted, every statue and street and building has been renamed, every date has been altered. And that process is continuing day by day and minute by minute. History has stopped. Nothing exists except an endless present in which the Party is always right. I know, of course, that the past is falsified, but it would never be possible for me to prove it, even when I did the falsification myself. After the thing is done, no evidence ever remains. The only evidence is inside my own mind, and I don't know with any certainty that any other human being shares my memories. Just in that one instance, in my whole life, I did possess actual concrete evidence after the event -- years after it.'

'And what good was that?'

'It was no good, because I threw it away a few minutes later. But if the same thing happened today, I should keep it.'

'Well, I wouldn't!' said Julia. 'I'm quite ready to take risks, but only for something worth while, not for bits of old newspaper. What could you have done with it even if you had kept it?'

'Not much, perhaps. But it was evidence. It might have planted a few doubts here and there, supposing that I'd dared to show it to anybody. I don't imagine that we can alter anything in our own lifetime. But one can imagine little knots of resistance springing up here and there -- small groups of people banding themselves together, and gradually growing, and even leaving a few records behind, so that the next generations can carry on where we leave off.'

'I'm not interested in the next generation, dear. I'm interested in us.'

'You're only a rebel from the waist downwards,' he told her.

She thought this brilliantly witty and flung her arms round him in delight.

In the ramifications of party doctrine she had not the faintest interest. Whenever he began to talk of the principles of Ingsoc, doublethink, the mutability of the past, and the denial of objective reality, and to use Newspeak words, she became bored and confused and said that she never paid any attention to that kind of thing. One knew that it was all rubbish, so why let oneself be worried by it? She knew when to cheer and when to boo, and that was all one needed. If he persisted in talking of such subjects, she had a disconcerting habit of falling asleep. She was one of those people who can go to sleep at any hour and in any position. Talking to her, he realized how easy it was to present an appearance of orthodoxy while having no grasp whatever of what orthodoxy meant. In a way, the world-view of the Party imposed itself most successfully on people incapable of understanding it. They could be made to accept the most flagrant violations of reality, because they never fully grasped the enormity of what was demanded of them, and

were not sufficiently interested in public events to notice what was happening. By lack of understanding they remained sane. They simply swallowed everything, and what they swallowed did them no harm, because it left no residue behind, just as a grain of corn will pass undigested through the body of a bird.

XIV

It had happened at last. The expected message had come. All his life, it seemed to him, he had been waiting for this to happen.

He was walking down the long corridor at the Ministry and he was almost at the spot where Julia had slipped the note into his hand when he became aware that someone larger than himself was walking just behind him. The person, whoever it was, gave a small cough, evidently as a prelude to speaking. Winston stopped abruptly and turned. It was O'Brien.

At last they were face to face, and it seemed that his only impulse was to run away. His heart bounded violently. He would have been incapable of speaking. O'Brien, however, had continued forward in the same movement, laying a friendly hand for a moment on Winston's arm, so that the two of them were walking side by side. He began speaking with the peculiar grave courtesy that differentiated him from the majority of Inner Party members.

'I had been hoping for an opportunity of talking to you,' he said. 'I was reading one of your Newspeak articles in The Times the other day. You take a scholarly interest in Newspeak, I believe?'

Winston had recovered part of his self-possession. 'Hardly scholarly,' he said. 'I'm only an amateur. It's not my subject. I have never had anything to do with the actual construction of the language.'

'But you write it very elegantly,' said O'Brien. 'That is not only my own opinion. I was talking recently to a friend of yours who is certainly an expert.'

His name has slipped my memory for the moment.'

Again Winston's heart stirred painfully. It was inconceivable that this was anything other than a reference to Syme. But Syme was not only dead, he was abolished, an unperson. Any identifiable reference to him would have been mortally dangerous. O'Brien's remark must obviously have been intended as a signal, a codeword. By sharing a small act of thoughtcrime he had turned the two of them into accomplices. They had continued to stroll slowly down the corridor, but now O'Brien halted. With the curious, disarming friendliness that he always managed to put in to the gesture he resettled his spectacles on his nose. Then he went on:

'What I had really intended to say was that in your article I noticed you had used two words which have become obsolete. But they have only become so very recently. Have you seen the tenth edition of the Newspeak Dictionary?'

'No,' said Winston. 'I didn't think it had been issued yet. We are still using the ninth in the Records Department.'

'The tenth edition is not due to appear for some months, I believe. But a few advance copies have been circulated. I have one myself. It might interest you to look at it, perhaps?'

'Very much so,' said Winston, immediately seeing where this tended.

'Some of the new developments are most ingenious. The reduction in the number of verbs -- that is the point that will appeal to you, I think. Let me see, shall I send a messenger to you with the dictionary? But I am afraid I

invariably forget anything of that kind. Perhaps you could pick it up at my flat at some time that suited you? Wait. Let me give you my address.'

They were standing in front of a telescreen. Somewhat absentmindedly O'Brien felt two of his pockets and then produced a small leather-covered notebook and a gold ink-pencil. Immediately beneath the telescreen, in such a position that anyone who was watching at the other end of the instrument could read what he was writing, he scribbled an address, tore out the page and handed it to Winston.

'I am usually at home in the evenings,' he said. 'If not, my servant will give you the dictionary.'

He was gone, leaving Winston holding the scrap of paper, which this time there was no need to conceal. Nevertheless he carefully memorized what was written on it, and some hours later dropped it into the memory hole along with a mass of other papers.

They had been talking to one another for a couple of minutes at the most. There was only one meaning that the episode could possibly have. It had been contrived as a way of letting Winston know O'Brien's address. This was necessary, because except by direct enquiry it was never possible to discover where anyone lived. There were no directories of any kind. 'If you ever want to see me, this is where I can be found,' was what O'Brien had been saying to him. Perhaps there would even be a message concealed somewhere in the dictionary. But at any rate, one thing was certain. The conspiracy that he had dreamed of did exist, and he had reached the outer edges of it.

He knew that sooner or later he would obey O'Brien's summons. Perhaps tomorrow, perhaps after a long delay -- he was not certain. What was happening was only the working-out of a process that had started years ago. The first step had been a secret, involuntary thought, the second had been the opening of the diary. He had moved from thoughts to words, and now from words to actions. The last step was something that would happen in the Ministry of Love. He had accepted it. The end was contained in the beginning. But it was frightening: or, more exactly, it was like a foretaste of death, like being a little less alive. Even while he was speaking to O'Brien, when the meaning of the words had sunk in, a chilly shuddering feeling had taken possession of his body. He had the sensation of stepping into the dampness of a grave, and it was not much better because he had always known that the grave was there and waiting for him.

XV

Winston had woken up with his eyes full of tears. Julia rolled sleepily against him, murmuring something that might have been 'What's the matter?'

'I dreamt-' he began, and stopped short. It was too complex to be put into words. There was the dream itself, and there was a memory connected with it that had swum into his mind in the few seconds after waking.

He lay back with his eyes shut, still sodden in the atmosphere of the dream. It was a vast, luminous dream in which his whole life seemed to stretch out before him like a landscape on a summer evening after rain. It had all occurred inside the glass paperweight, but the surface of the glass was the dome of the sky, and inside the dome everything was flooded with clear soft light in which one could see into interminable distances. The dream had also been comprehended by -- indeed, in some sense it had consisted in -- a gesture of the arm made by his mother, and made again thirty years later by the Jewish woman he had seen on the news film, trying to shelter the small boy from the bullets, before the helicopter blew them both to pieces.

'Do you know,' he said, 'that until this moment I believed I had murdered my mother?'

'Why did you murder her?' said Julia, almost asleep.

'I didn't murder her. Not physically.'

In the dream he had remembered his last glimpse of his mother, and

within a few moments of waking the cluster of small events surrounding it had all come back. It was a memory that he must have deliberately pushed out of his consciousness over many years. He was not certain of the date, but he could not have been less than ten years old, possibly twelve, when it had happened.

His father had disappeared some time earlier, how much earlier he could not remember. He remembered better the rackety, uneasy circumstances of the time: the periodical panics about air-raids and the sheltering in Tube stations, the piles of rubble everywhere, the unintelligible proclamations posted at street corners, the gangs of youths in shirts all the same colour, the enormous queues outside the bakeries, the intermittent machine-gun fire in the distance -- above all, the fact that there was never enough to eat. He remembered long afternoons spent with other boys in scrounging round dustbins and rubbish heaps, picking out the ribs of cabbage leaves, potato peelings, sometimes even scraps of stale breadcrust from which they carefully scraped away the cinders; and also in waiting for the passing of trucks which travelled over a certain route and were known to carry cattle feed, and which, when they jolted over the bad patches in the road, sometimes spilt a few fragments of oil-cake.

When his father disappeared, his mother did not show any surprise or any violent grief, but a sudden change came over her. She seemed to have become completely spiritless. It was evident even to Winston that she was waiting for something that she knew must happen. She did everything that was needed -- cooked, washed, mended, made the bed, swept the floor, dusted the mantelpiece -- always very slowly and with a curious lack of

superfluous motion, like an artist's lay-figure moving of its own accord. Her large shapely body seemed to relapse naturally into stillness. For hours at a time she would sit almost immobile on the bed, nursing his young sister, a tiny, ailing, very silent child of two or three, with a face made simian by thinness. Very occasionally she would take Winston in her arms and press him against her for a long time without saying anything. He was aware, in spite of his youthfulness and selfishness, that this was somehow connected with the never-mentioned thing that was about to happen.

He remembered the room where they lived, a dark, closesmelling room that seemed half filled by a bed with a white counterpane. There was a gas ring in the fender, and a shelf where food was kept, and on the landing outside there was a brown earthenware sink, common to several rooms. He remembered his mother's statuesque body bending over the gas ring to stir at something in a saucepan. Above all he remembered his continuous hunger, and the fierce sordid battles at mealtimes. He would ask his mother naggingly, over and over again, why there was not more food, he would shout and storm at her (he even remembered the tones of his voice, which was beginning to break prematurely and sometimes boomed in a peculiar way), or he would attempt a snivelling note of pathos in his efforts to get more than his share. His mother was quite ready to give him more than his share. She took it for granted that he, 'the boy', should have the biggest portion; but however much she gave him he invariably demanded more. At every meal she would beseech him not to be selfish and to remember that his little sister was sick and also needed food, but it was no use. He would cry out with rage when she stopped ladling, he would try to wrench the saucepan and spoon out of her hands, he would grab bits from his sister's plate. He

knew that he was starving the other two, but he could not help it; he even felt that he had a right to do it. The clamorous hunger in his belly seemed to justify him. Between meals, if his mother did not stand guard, he was constantly pilfering at the wretched store of food on the shelf.

One day a chocolate-ration was issued. There had been no such issue for weeks or months past. He remembered quite clearly that precious little morsel of chocolate. It was a two-ounce slab (they still talked about ounces in those days) between the three of them. It was obvious that it ought to be divided into three equal parts. Suddenly, as though he were listening to somebody else, Winston heard himself demanding in a loud booming voice that he should be given the whole piece. His mother told him not to be greedy. There was a long, nagging argument that went round and round, with shouts, whines, tears, remonstrances, bargainings. His tiny sister, clinging to her mother with both hands, exactly like a baby monkey, sat looking over her shoulder at him with large, mournful eyes. In the end his mother broke off three-quarters of the chocolate and gave it to Winston, giving the other quarter to his sister. The little girl took hold of it and looked at it dully, perhaps not knowing what it was. Winston stood watching her for a moment. Then with a sudden swift spring he had snatched the piece of chocolate out of his sister's hand and was fleeing for the door.

'Winston, Winston!' his mother called after him. 'Come back! Give your sister back her chocolate!'

He stopped, but did not come back. His mother's anxious eyes were fixed on his face. Even now he was thinking about the thing, he did not know what it was that was on the point of happening. His sister, conscious of

having been robbed of something, had set up a feeble wail. His mother drew her arm round the child and pressed its face against her breast. Something in the gesture told him that his sister was dying. He turned and fled down the stairs, with the chocolate growing sticky in his hand.

He never saw his mother again. After he had devoured the chocolate he felt somewhat ashamed of himself and hung about in the streets for several hours, until hunger drove him home. When he came back his mother had disappeared. This was already becoming normal at that time. Nothing was gone from the room except his mother and his sister. They had not taken any clothes, not even his mother's overcoat. To this day he did not know with any certainty that his mother was dead. It was perfectly possible that she had merely been sent to a forced-labour camp. As for his sister, she might have been removed, like Winston himself, to one of the colonies for homeless children (Reclamation Centres, they were called) which had grown up as a result of the civil war, or she might have been sent to the labour camp along with his mother, or simply left somewhere or other to die.

The dream was still vivid in his mind, especially the enveloping protecting gesture of the arm in which its whole meaning seemed to be contained. His mind went back to another dream of two months ago. Exactly as his mother had sat on the dingy whitequilted bed, with the child clinging to her, so she had sat in the sunken ship, far underneath him, and drowning deeper every minute, but still looking up at him through the darkening water.

He told Julia the story of his mother's disappearance. Without opening her eyes she rolled over and settled herself into a more comfortable position.

'I expect you were a beastly little swine in those days,' she said indistinctly. 'All children are swine.'

'Yes. But the real point of the story-'

From her breathing it was evident that she was going off to sleep again. He would have liked to continue talking about his mother. He did not suppose, from what he could remember of her, that she had been an unusual woman, still less an intelligent one; and yet she had possessed a kind of nobility, a kind of purity, simply because the standards that she obeyed were private ones. Her feelings were her own, and could not be altered from outside. It would not have occurred to her that an action which is ineffectual thereby becomes meaningless. If you loved someone, you loved him, and when you had nothing else to give, you still gave him love. When the last of the chocolate was gone, his mother had clasped the child in her arms. It was no use, it changed nothing, it did not produce more chocolate, it did not avert the child's death or her own; but it seemed natural to her to do it. The refugee woman in the boat had also covered the little boy with her arm, which was no more use against the bullets than a sheet of paper. The terrible thing that the Party had done was to persuade you that mere impulses, mere feelings, were of no account, while at the same time robbing you of all power over the material world. When once you were in the grip of the Party, what you felt or did not feel, what you did or refrained from doing, made literally no difference. Whatever happened you vanished, and neither you nor your actions were ever heard of again. You were lifted clean out of the stream of history. And yet to the people of only two generations ago this would not have seemed all-important, because they were not attempting to alter history.

They were governed by private loyalties which they did not question. What mattered were individual relationships, and a completely helpless gesture, an embrace, a tear, a word spoken to a dying man, could have value in itself. The proles, it suddenly occurred to him, had remained in this condition. They were not loyal to a party or a country or an idea, they were loyal to one another. For the first time in his life he did not despise the proles or think of them merely as an inert force which would one day spring to life and regenerate the world. The proles had stayed human. They had not become hardened inside. They had held on to the primitive emotions which he himself had to re-learn by conscious effort. And in thinking this he remembered, without apparent relevance, how a few weeks ago he had seen a severed hand lying on the pavement and had kicked it into the gutter as though it had been a cabbage-stalk.

'The proles are human beings,' he said aloud. 'We are not human.'

'Why not?' said Julia, who had woken up again.

He thought for a little while. 'Has it ever occurred to you,' he said, 'that the best thing for us to do would be simply to walk out of here before it's too late, and never see each other again?'

'Yes, dear, it has occurred to me, several times. But I'm not going to do it, all the same.'

'We've been lucky,' he said 'but it can't last much longer. You're young. You look normal and innocent. If you keep clear of people like me, you might stay alive for another fifty years.'

'No. I've thought it all out. What you do, I'm going to do. And don't be too downhearted. I'm rather good at staying alive.'

'We may be together for another six months -- a year -- there's no knowing. At the end we're certain to be apart. Do you realize how utterly alone we shall be? When once they get hold of us there will be nothing, literally nothing, that either of us can do for the other. If I confess, they'll shoot you, and if I refuse to confess, they'll shoot you just the same. Nothing that I can do or say, or stop myself from saying, will put off your death for as much as five minutes. Neither of us will even know whether the other is alive or dead. We shall be utterly without power of any kind. The one thing that matters is that we shouldn't betray one another, although even that can't make the slightest difference.'

'If you mean confessing,' she said, 'we shall do that, right enough. Everybody always confesses. You can't help it. They torture you.'

'I don't mean confessing. Confession is not betrayal. What you say or do doesn't matter: only feelings matter. If they could make me stop loving you -- that would be the real betrayal.'

She thought it over. 'They can't do that,' she said finally. 'It's the one thing they can't do. They can make you say anything -- anything -- but they can't make you believe it. They can't get inside you.'

'No,' he said a little more hopefully, 'no; that's quite true. They can't get inside you. If you can feel that staying human is worth while, even when it can't have any result whatever, you've beaten them.'

He thought of the telescreen with its never-sleeping ear. They could spy upon you night and day, but if you kept your head you could still outwit them. With all their cleverness they had never mastered the secret of finding out what another human being was thinking. Perhaps that was less true when you were actually in their hands. One did not know what happened inside the Ministry of Love, but it was possible to guess: tortures, drugs, delicate instruments that registered your nervous reactions, gradual wearing-down by sleeplessness and solitude and persistent questioning. Facts, at any rate, could not be kept hidden. They could be tracked down by enquiry, they could be squeezed out of you by torture. But if the object was not to stay alive but to stay human, what difference did it ultimately make? They could not alter your feelings: for that matter you could not alter them yourself, even if you wanted to. They could lay bare in the utmost detail everything that you had done or said or thought; but the inner heart, whose workings were mysterious even to yourself, remained impregnable.

XVI

They had done it, they had done it at last!

The room they were standing in was long-shaped and softly lit. The telescreen was dimmed to a low murmur; the richness of the dark-blue carpet gave one the impression of treading on velvet. At the far end of the room O'Brien was sitting at a table under a green-shaded lamp, with a mass of papers on either side of him. He had not bothered to look up when the servant showed Julia and Winston in.

Winston's heart was thumping so hard that he doubted whether he would be able to speak. They had done it, they had done it at last, was all he could think. It had been a rash act to come here at all, and sheer folly to arrive together; though it was true that they had come by different routes and only met on O'Brien's doorstep. But merely to walk into such a place needed an effort of the nerve. It was only on very rare occasions that one saw inside the dwelling-places of the Inner Party, or even penetrated into the quarter of the town where they lived. The whole atmosphere of the huge block of flats, the richness and spaciousness of everything, the unfamiliar smells of good food and good tobacco, the silent and incredibly rapid lifts sliding up and down, the white-jacketed servants hurrying to and fro -- everything was intimidating. Although he had a good pretext for coming here, he was haunted at every step by the fear that a black-uniformed guard would suddenly appear from round the corner, demand his papers, and order him to get out. O'Brien's servant, however, had admitted the two of them without demur. He was a small, dark-haired man in a white jacket, with a diamond-

shaped, completely expressionless face which might have been that of a Chinese. The passage down which he led them was softly carpeted, with cream-papered walls and white wainscoting, all exquisitely clean. That too was intimidating. Winston could not remember ever to have seen a passageway whose walls were not grimy from the contact of human bodies.

O'Brien had a slip of paper between his fingers and seemed to be studying it intently. His heavy face, bent down so that one could see the line of the nose, looked both formidable and intelligent. For perhaps twenty seconds he sat without stirring. Then he pulled the speakwrite towards him and rapped out a message in the hybrid jargon of the Ministries:

'Items one comma five comma seven approved fullwise stop suggestion contained item six doubleplus ridiculous verging crimethink cancel stop unproceed constructionwise antegetting plusfull estimates machinery overheads stop end message.'

He rose deliberately from his chair and came towards them across the soundless carpet. A little of the official atmosphere seemed to have fallen away from him with the Newspeak words, but his expression was grimmer than usual, as though he were not pleased at being disturbed. The terror that Winston already felt was suddenly shot through by a streak of ordinary embarrassment. It seemed to him quite possible that he had simply made a stupid mistake. For what evidence had he in reality that O'Brien was any kind of political conspirator? Nothing but a flash of the eyes and a single equivocal remark: beyond that, only his own secret imaginings, founded on a dream. He could not even fall back on the pretence that he had come to borrow the dictionary, because in that case Julia's presence was impossible to

explain. As O'Brien passed the telescreen a thought seemed to strike him. He stopped, turned aside and pressed a switch on the wall. There was a sharp snap. The voice had stopped.

Julia uttered a tiny sound, a sort of squeak of surprise. Even in the midst of his panic, Winston was too much taken aback to be able to hold his tongue.

'You can turn it off!' he said.

'Yes,' said O'Brien, 'we can turn it off. We have that privilege.'

He was opposite them now. His solid form towered over the pair of them, and the expression on his face was still indecipherable. He was waiting, somewhat sternly, for Winston to speak, but about what? Even now it was quite conceivable that he was simply a busy man wondering irritably why he had been interrupted. Nobody spoke. After the stopping of the telescreen the room seemed deadly silent. The seconds marched past, enormous. With difficulty Winston continued to keep his eyes fixed on O'Brien's. Then suddenly the grim face broke down into what might have been the beginnings of a smile. With his characteristic gesture O'Brien resettled his spectacles on his nose.

'Shall I say it, or will you?' he said.

'I will say it,' said Winston promptly. 'That thing is really turned off?'

'Yes, everything is turned off. We are alone.'

'We have come here because-'

He paused, realizing for the first time the vagueness of his own motives. Since he did not in fact know what kind of help he expected from O'Brien, it was not easy to say why he had come here. He went on, conscious that what he was saying must sound both feeble and pretentious:

'We believe that there is some kind of conspiracy, some kind of secret organization working against the Party, and that you are involved in it. We want to join it and work for it. We are enemies of the Party. We disbelieve in the principles of Ingsoc. We are thought-criminals. We are also adulterers. I tell you this because we want to put ourselves at your mercy. If you want us to incriminate ourselves in any other way, we are ready.'

He stopped and glanced over his shoulder, with the feeling that the door had opened. Sure enough, the little yellow-faced servant had come in without knocking. Winston saw that he was carrying a tray with a decanter and glasses.

'Martin is one of us,' said O'Brien impassively. 'Bring the drinks over here, Martin. Put them on the round table. Have we enough chairs? Then we may as well sit down and talk in comfort. Bring a chair for yourself, Martin. This is business. You can stop being a servant for the next ten minutes.'

The little man sat down, quite at his ease, and yet still with a servant-like air, the air of a valet enjoying a privilege. Winston regarded him out of the corner of his eye. It struck him that the man's whole life was playing a part, and that he felt it to be dangerous to drop his assumed personality even for a moment. O'Brien took the decanter by the neck and filled up the glasses with a dark-red liquid. It aroused in Winston dim memories of something seen

long ago on a wall or a hoarding -- a vast bottle composed of electric lights which seemed to move up and down and pour its contents into a glass. Seen from the top the stuff looked almost black, but in the decanter it gleamed like a ruby. It had a sour-sweet smell. He saw Julia pick up her glass and sniff at it with frank curiosity.

'It is called wine,' said O'Brien with a faint smile. 'You will have read about it in books, no doubt. Not much of it gets to the Outer Party, I am afraid.' His face grew solemn again, and he raised his glass: 'I think it is fitting that we should begin by drinking a health. To our Leader: To Emmanuel Goldstein.'

Winston took up his glass with a certain eagerness. Wine was a thing he had read and dreamed about. Like the glass paperweight or Mr Charrington's half-remembered rhymes, it belonged to the vanished, romantic past, the olden time as he liked to call it in his secret thoughts. For some reason he had always thought of wine as having an intensely sweet taste, like that of blackberry jam and an immediate intoxicating effect. Actually, when he came to swallow it, the stuff was distinctly disappointing. The truth was that after years of gin-drinking he could barely taste it. He set down the empty glass.

'Then there is such a person as Goldstein?' he said.

'Yes, there is such a person, and he is alive. Where, I do not know.'

'And the conspiracy -- the organization? Is it real? It is not simply an invention of the Thought Police?'

'No, it is real. The Brotherhood, we call it. You will never learn much

more about the Brotherhood than that it exists and that you belong to it. I will come back to that presently.' He looked at his wrist-watch. 'It is unwise even for members of the Inner Party to turn off the telescreen for more than half an hour. You ought not to have come here together, and you will have to leave separately. You, comrade' -- he bowed his head to Julia -- 'will leave first. We have about twenty minutes at our disposal. You will understand that I must start by asking you certain questions. In general terms, what are you prepared to do?'

'Anything that we are capable of,' said Winston.

O'Brien had turned himself a little in his chair so that he was facing Winston. He almost ignored Julia, seeming to take it for granted that Winston could speak for her. For a moment the lids flitted down over his eyes. He began asking his questions in a low, expressionless voice, as though this were a routine, a sort of catechism, most of whose answers were known to him already.

'You are prepared to give your lives?'

'Yes.'

'You are prepared to commit murder?'

'Yes.'

'To commit acts of sabotage which may cause the death of hundreds of innocent people?'

'Yes.'

'To betray your country to foreign powers?'

'Yes.'

'You are prepared to cheat, to forge, to blackmail, to corrupt the minds of children, to distribute habit-forming drugs, to encourage prostitution, to disseminate venereal diseases -- to do anything which is likely to cause demoralization and weaken the power of the Party?'

'Yes.'

'If, for example, it would somehow serve our interests to throw sulphuric acid in a child's face -- are you prepared to do that?'

'Yes.'

'You are prepared to lose your identity and live out the rest of your life as a waiter or a dock-worker?'

'Yes.'

'You are prepared to commit suicide, if and when we order you to do so?'

'Yes.'

'You are prepared, the two of you, to separate and never see one another again?'

'No!' broke in Julia.

It appeared to Winston that a long time passed before he answered. For a moment he seemed even to have been deprived of the power of speech. His tongue worked soundlessly, forming the opening syllables first of one word, then of the other, over and over again. Until he had said it, he did not know which word he was going to say. 'No,' he said finally.

'You did well to tell me,' said O'Brien. 'It is necessary for us to know everything.'

He turned himself toward Julia and added in a voice with somewhat more expression in it:

'Do you understand that even if he survives, it may be as a different person? We may be obliged to give him a new identity. His face, his movements, the shape of his hands, the colour of his hair -- even his voice would be different. And you yourself might have become a different person. Our surgeons can alter people beyond recognition. Sometimes it is necessary. Sometimes we even amputate a limb.'

Winston could not help snatching another sidelong glance at Martin's Mongolian face. There were no scars that he could see. Julia had turned a shade paler, so that her freckles were showing, but she faced O'Brien boldly. She murmured something that seemed to be assent.

'Good. Then that is settled.'

There was a silver box of cigarettes on the table. With a rather absent-minded air O'Brien pushed them towards the others, took one himself, then stood up and began to pace slowly to and fro, as though he could think better

standing. They were very good cigarettes, very thick and well-packed, with an unfamiliar silkiness in the paper. O'Brien looked at his wrist-watch again.

'You had better go back to your Pantry, Martin,' he said. 'I shall switch on in a quarter of an hour. Take a good look at these comrades' faces before you go. You will be seeing them again. I may not.

Exactly as they had done at the front door, the little man's dark eyes flickered over their faces. There was not a trace of friendliness in his manner. He was memorizing their appearance, but he felt no interest in them, or appeared to feel none. It occurred to Winston that a synthetic face was perhaps incapable of changing its expression. Without speaking or giving any kind of salutation, Martin went out, closing the door silently behind him. O'Brien was strolling up and down, one hand in the pocket of his black overalls, the other holding his cigarette.

'You understand,' he said, 'that you will be fighting in the dark. You will always be in the dark. You will receive orders and you will obey them, without knowing why. Later I shall send you a book from which you will learn the true nature of the society we live in, and the strategy by which we shall destroy it. When you have read the book, you will be full members of the Brotherhood. But between the general aims that we are fighting for and the immediate tasks of the moment, you will never know anything. I tell you that the Brotherhood exists, but I cannot tell you whether it numbers a hundred members, or ten million. From your personal knowledge you will never be able to say that it numbers even as many as a dozen. You will have three or four contacts, who will be renewed from time to time as they disappear. As this was your first contact, it will be preserved. When you

receive orders, they will come from me. If we find it necessary to communicate with you, it will be through Martin. When you are finally caught, you will confess. That is unavoidable. But you will have very little to confess, other than your own actions. You will not be able to betray more than a handful of unimportant people. Probably you will not even betray me. By that time I may be dead, or I shall have become a different person, with a different face.'

He continued to move to and fro over the soft carpet. In spite of the bulkiness of his body there was a remarkable grace in his movements. It came out even in the gesture with which he thrust a hand into his pocket, or manipulated a cigarette. More even than of strength, he gave an impression of confidence and of an understanding tinged by irony. However much in earnest he might be, he had nothing of the single-mindedness that belongs to a fanatic. When he spoke of murder, suicide, venereal disease, amputated limbs, and altered faces, it was with a faint air of persiflage. 'This is unavoidable,' his voice seemed to say; 'this is what we have got to do, unflinchingly. But this is not what we shall be doing when life is worth living again.' A wave of admiration, almost of worship, flowed out from Winston towards O'Brien. For the moment he had forgotten the shadowy figure of Goldstein. When you looked at O'Brien's powerful shoulders and his blunt-featured face, so ugly and yet so civilized, it was impossible to believe that he could be defeated. There was no stratagem that he was not equal to, no danger that he could not foresee. Even Julia seemed to be impressed. She had let her cigarette go out and was listening intently. O'Brien went on:

'You will have heard rumours of the existence of the Brotherhood. No

doubt you have formed your own picture of it. You have imagined, probably, a huge underworld of conspirators, meeting secretly in cellars, scribbling messages on walls, recognizing one another by codewords or by special movements of the hand. Nothing of the kind exists. The members of the Brotherhood have no way of recognizing one another, and it is impossible for any one member to be aware of the identity of more than a few others. Goldstein himself, if he fell into the hands of the Thought Police, could not give them a complete list of members, or any information that would lead them to a complete list. No such list exists. The Brotherhood cannot be wiped out because it is not an organization in the ordinary sense. Nothing holds it together except an idea which is indestructible. You will never have anything to sustain you, except the idea. You will get no comradeship and no encouragement. When finally you are caught, you will get no help. We never help our members. At most, when it is absolutely necessary that someone should be silenced, we are occasionally able to smuggle a razor blade into a prisoner's cell. You will have to get used to living without results and without hope. You will work for a while, you will be caught, you will confess, and then you will die. Those are the only results that you will ever see. There is no possibility that any perceptible change will happen within our own lifetime. We are the dead. Our only true life is in the future. We shall take part in it as handfuls of dust and splinters of bone. But how far away that future may be, there is no knowing. It might be a thousand years. At present nothing is possible except to extend the area of sanity little by little. We cannot act collectively. We can only spread our knowledge outwards from individual to individual, generation after generation. In the face of the Thought Police there is no other way.'

He halted and looked for the third time at his wrist-watch.

'It is almost time for you to leave, comrade,' he said to Julia. 'Wait. The decanter is still half full.'

He filled the glasses and raised his own glass by the stem.

'What shall it be this time?' he said, still with the same faint suggestion of irony. 'To the confusion of the Thought Police? To the death of Big Brother? To humanity? To the future?'

'To the past,' said Winston.

'The past is more important,' agreed O'Brien gravely.

They emptied their glasses, and a moment later Julia stood up to go. O'Brien took a small box from the top of a cabinet and handed her a flat white tablet which he told her to place on her tongue. It was important, he said, not to go out smelling of wine: the lift attendants were very observant. As soon as the door had shut behind her he appeared to forget her existence. He took another pace or two up and down, then stopped.

'There are details to be settled,' he said. 'I assume that you have a hiding-place of some kind?'

Winston explained about the room over Mr Charrington's shop.

'That will do for the moment. Later we will arrange something else for you. It is important to change one's hiding-place frequently. Meanwhile I shall send you a copy of the book' -- even O'Brien, Winston noticed, seemed

to pronounce the words as though they were in italics- 'Goldstein's book, you understand, as soon as possible. It may be some days before I can get hold of one. There are not many in existence, as you can imagine. The Thought Police hunt them down and destroy them almost as fast as we can produce them. It makes very little difference. The book is indestructible. If the last copy were gone, we could reproduce it almost word for word. Do you carry a brief-case to work with you?' he added.

'As a rule, yes.'

'What is it like?'

'Black, very shabby. With two straps.'

'Black, two straps, very shabby -- good. One day in the fairly near future-I cannot give a date -- one of the messages among your morning's work will contain a misprinted word, and you will have to ask for a repeat. On the following day you will go to work without your brief-case. At some time during the day, in the street, a man will touch you on the arm and say "I think you have dropped your brief-case." The one he gives you will contain a copy of Goldstein's book. You will return it within fourteen days.'

They were silent for a moment.

'There are a couple of minutes before you need go,' said O'Brien. 'We shall meet again -- if we do meet again-'

Winston looked up at him. 'In the place where there is no darkness?' he said hesitantly.

O'Brien nodded without appearance of surprise. 'In the place where there is no darkness,' he said, as though he had recognized the allusion. 'And in the meantime, is there anything that you wish to say before you leave? Any message? Any question?.'

Winston thought. There did not seem to be any further question that he wanted to ask: still less did he feel any impulse to utter high-sounding generalities. Instead of anything directly connected with O'Brien or the Brotherhood, there came into his mind a sort of composite picture of the dark bedroom where his mother had spent her last days, and the little room over Mr Charrington's shop, and the glass paperweight, and the steel engraving in its rosewood frame. Almost at random he said:

'Did you ever happen to hear an old rhyme that begins "Oranges and lemons, say the bells of St Clement's"?''

Again O'Brien nodded. With a sort of grave courtesy he completed the stanza:

'Oranges and lemons, say the bells of St Clement's,

You owe me three farthings, say the bells of St Martin's,

When will you pay me? say the bells of Old Bailey

When I grow rich, say the bells of Shoreditch.'

'You knew the last line!' said Winston.

'Yes, I knew the last line. And now, I am afraid, it is time for you to go.

But wait. You had better let me give you one of these tablets.'

As Winston stood up O'Brien held out a hand. His powerful grip crushed the bones of Winston's palm. At the door Winston looked back, but O'Brien seemed already to be in process of putting him out of mind. He was waiting with his hand on the switch that controlled the telescreen. Beyond him Winston could see the writing-table with its green- shaded lamp and the speakwrite and the wire baskets deep- laden with papers. The incident was closed. Within thirty seconds, it occurred to him, O'Brien would be back at his interrupted and important work on behalf of the Party.

XVII

Winston was gelatinous with fatigue. Gelatinous was the right word. It had come into his head spontaneously. His body seemed to have not only the weakness of a jelly, but its translucency. He felt that if he held up his hand he would be able to see the light through it. All the blood and lymph had been drained out of him by an enormous debauch of work, leaving only a frail structure of nerves, bones, and skin. All sensations seemed to be magnified. His overalls fretted his shoulders, the pavement tickled his feet, even the opening and closing of a hand was an effort that made his joints creak.

He had worked more than ninety hours in five days. So had everyone else in the Ministry. Now it was all over, and he had literally nothing to do, no Party work of any description, until tomorrow morning. He could spend six hours in the hiding-place and another nine in his own bed. Slowly, in mild afternoon sunshine, he walked up a dingy street in the direction of Mr Charrington's shop, keeping one eye open for the patrols, but irrationally convinced that this afternoon there was no danger of anyone interfering with him. The heavy brief-case that he was carrying bumped against his knee at each step, sending a tingling sensation up and down the skin of his leg. Inside it was the book, which he had now had in his possession for six days and had not yet opened, nor even looked at.

On the sixth day of Hate Week, after the processions, the speeches, the shouting, the singing, the banners, the posters, the films, the waxworks, the rolling of drums and squealing of trumpets, the tramp of marching feet, the grinding of the caterpillars of tanks, the roar of massed planes, the booming

of guns -- after six days of this, when the great orgasm was quivering to its climax and the general hatred of Eurasia had boiled up into such delirium that if the crowd could have got their hands on the 2,000 Eurasian war-criminals who were to be publicly hanged on the last day of the proceedings, they would unquestionably have torn them to pieces -- at just this moment it had been announced that Oceania was not after all at war with Eurasia. Oceania was at war with Eastasia. Eurasia was an ally.

There was, of course, no admission that any change had taken place. Merely it became known, with extreme suddenness and everywhere at once, that Eastasia and not Eurasia was the enemy. Winston was taking part in a demonstration in one of the central London squares at the moment when it happened. It was night, and the white faces and the scarlet banners were luridly floodlit. The square was packed with several thousand people, including a block of about a thousand schoolchildren in the uniform of the Spies. On a scarlet-draped platform an orator of the Inner Party, a small lean man with disproportionately long arms and a large bald skull over which a few lank locks straggled, was haranguing the crowd. A little Rumpelstiltskin figure, contorted with hatred, he gripped the neck of the microphone with one hand while the other, enormous at the end of a bony arm, clawed the air menacingly above his head. His voice, made metallic by the amplifiers, boomed forth an endless catalogue of atrocities, massacres, deportations, lootings, rapings, torture of prisoners, bombing of civilians, lying propaganda, unjust aggressions, broken treaties. It was almost impossible to listen to him without being first convinced and then maddened. At every few moments the fury of the crowd boiled over and the voice of the speaker was drowned by a wild beast-like roaring that rose uncontrollably from thousands

of throats. The most savage yells of all came from the schoolchildren. The speech had been proceeding for perhaps twenty minutes when a messenger hurried on to the platform and a scrap of paper was slipped into the speaker's hand. He unrolled and read it without pausing in his speech. Nothing altered in his voice or manner, or in the content of what he was saying, but suddenly the names were different. Without words said, a wave of understanding rippled through the crowd. Oceania was at war with Eastasia! The next moment there was a tremendous commotion. The banners and posters with which the square was decorated were all wrong! Quite half of them had the wrong faces on them. It was sabotage! The agents of Goldstein had been at work! There was a riotous interlude while posters were ripped from the walls, banners torn to shreds and trampled underfoot. The Spies performed prodigies of activity in clambering over the rooftops and cutting the streamers that fluttered from the chimneys. But within two or three minutes it was all over. The orator, still gripping the neck of the microphone, his shoulders hunched forward, his free hand clawing at the air, had gone straight on with his speech. One minute more, and the feral roars of rage were again bursting from the crowd. The Hate continued exactly as before, except that the target had been changed.

The thing that impressed Winston in looking back was that the speaker had switched from one line to the other actually in midsentence, not only without a pause, but without even breaking the syntax. But at the moment he had other things to preoccupy him. It was during the moment of disorder while the posters were being torn down that a man whose face he did not see had tapped him on the shoulder and said, 'Excuse me, I think you've dropped your brief-case.' He took the brief-case abstractedly, without speaking. He

knew that it would be days before he had an opportunity to look inside it. The instant that the demonstration was over he went straight to the Ministry of Truth, though the time was now nearly twenty-three hours. The entire staff of the Ministry had done likewise. The orders already issuing from the telescreen, recalling them to their posts, were hardly necessary.

Oceania was at war with Eastasia: Oceania had always been at war with Eastasia. A large part of the political literature of five years was now completely obsolete. Reports and records of all kinds, newspapers, books, pamphlets, films, sound-tracks, photographs -- all had to be rectified at lightning speed. Although no directive was ever issued, it was known that the chiefs of the Department intended that within one week no reference to the war with Eurasia, or the alliance with Eastasia, should remain in existence anywhere. The work was overwhelming, all the more so because the processes that it involved could not be called by their true names. Everyone in the Records Department worked eighteen hours in the twenty-four, with two three-hour snatches of sleep. Mattresses were brought up from the cellars and pitched all over the corridors: meals consisted of sandwiches and Victory Coffee wheeled round on trolleys by attendants from the canteen. Each time that Winston broke off for one of his spells of sleep he tried to leave his desk clear of work, and each time that he crawled back sticky-eyed and aching, it was to find that another shower of paper cylinders had covered the desk like a snowdrift, halfburying the speakwrite and overflowing on to the floor, so that the first job was always to stack them into a neat enough pile to give him room to work. What was worst of all was that the work was by no means purely mechanical. Often it was enough merely to substitute one name for another, but any detailed report of events demanded care and imagination.

Even the geographical knowledge that one needed in transferring the war from one part of the world to another was considerable.

By the third day his eyes ached unbearably and his spectacles needed wiping every few minutes. It was like struggling with some crushing physical task, something which one had the right to refuse and which one was nevertheless neurotically anxious to accomplish. In so far as he had time to remember it, he was not troubled by the fact that every word he murmured into the speakwrite, every stroke of his ink-pencil, was a deliberate lie. He was as anxious as anyone else in the Department that the forgery should be perfect. On the morning of the sixth day the dribble of cylinders slowed down. For as much as half an hour nothing came out of the tube; then one more cylinder, then nothing. Everywhere at about the same time the work was easing off. A deep and as it were secret sigh went through the Department. A mighty deed, which could never be mentioned, had been achieved. It was now impossible for any human being to prove by documentary evidence that the war with Eurasia had ever happened. At twelve hundred it was unexpectedly announced that all workers in the Ministry were free till tomorrow morning. Winston, still carrying the briefcase containing the book, which had remained between his feet while he worked and under his body while he slept, went home, shaved himself, and almost fell asleep in his bath, although the water was barely more than tepid.

With a sort of voluptuous creaking in his joints he climbed the stair above Mr Charrington's shop. He was tired, but not sleepy any longer. He opened the window, lit the dirty little oilstove and put on a pan of water for coffee. Julia would arrive presently: meanwhile there was the book. He sat

down in the sluttish armchair and undid the straps of the brief-case.

A heavy black volume, amateurishly bound, with no name or title on the cover. The print also looked slightly irregular. The pages were worn at the edges, and fell apart, easily, as though the book had passed through many hands. The inscription on the title-page ran:

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF OLIGARCHICAL
COLLECTIVISM

by

Emmanuel Goldstein

Winston began reading:

Chapter I Ignorance is Strength

Throughout recorded time, and probably since the end of the Neolithic Age, there have been three kinds of people in the world, the High, the Middle, and the Low. They have been subdivided in many ways, they have borne countless different names, and their relative numbers, as well as their attitude towards one another, have varied from age to age: but the essential structure of society has never altered. Even after enormous upheavals and seemingly irrevocable changes, the same pattern has always reasserted itself, just as a gyroscope will always return to equilibrium, however far it is pushed one way or the other.

The aims of these groups are entirely irreconcilable...

Winston stopped reading, chiefly in order to appreciate the fact that he was reading, in comfort and safety. He was alone: no telescreen, no ear at the keyhole, no nervous impulse to glance over his shoulder or cover the page with his hand. The sweet summer air played against his cheek. From somewhere far away there floated the faint shouts of children: in the room itself there was no sound except the insect voice of the clock. He settled deeper into the arm-chair and put his feet up on the fender. It was bliss, it was eternity. Suddenly, as one sometimes does with a book of which one knows that one will ultimately read and re-read every word, he opened it at a different place and found himself at Chapter III. He went on reading:

Chapter III

War is Peace

The splitting up of the world into three great super-states was an event which could be and indeed was foreseen before the middle of the twentieth century. With the absorption of Europe by Russia and of the British Empire by the United States, two of the three existing powers, Eurasia and Oceania, were already effectively in being. The third, Eastasia, only emerged as a distinct unit after another decade of confused fighting. The frontiers between the three super-states are in some places arbitrary, and in others they fluctuate according to the fortunes of war, but in general they follow geographical lines. Eurasia comprises the whole of the northern part of the European and Asiatic land-mass, from Portugal to the Bering Strait. Oceania comprises the Americas, the Atlantic islands including the British Isles, Australasia, and the southern portion of Africa. Eastasia, smaller than the others and with a less definite western frontier, comprises China and the countries to the south of it,

the Japanese islands and a large but fluctuating portion of Manchuria, Mongolia, and Tibet.

In one combination or another, these three super-states are permanently at war, and have been so for the past twenty-five years. War, however, is no longer the desperate, annihilating struggle that it was in the early decades of the twentieth century. It is a warfare of limited aims between combatants who are unable to destroy one another, have no material cause for fighting and are not divided by any genuine ideological difference. This is not to say that either the conduct of war, or the prevailing attitude towards it, has become less bloodthirsty or more chivalrous. On the contrary, war hysteria is continuous and universal in all countries, and such acts as raping, looting, the slaughter of children, the reduction of whole populations to slavery, and reprisals against prisoners which extend even to boiling and burying alive, are looked upon as normal, and, when they are committed by one's own side and not by the enemy, meritorious. But in a physical sense war involves very small numbers of people, mostly highly-trained specialists, and causes comparatively few casualties. The fighting, when there is any, takes place on the vague frontiers whose whereabouts the average man can only guess at, or round the Floating Fortresses which guard strategic spots on the sea lanes. In the centres of civilization war means no more than a continuous shortage of consumption goods, and the occasional crash of a rocket bomb which may cause a few scores of deaths. War has in fact changed its character. More exactly, the reasons for which war is waged have changed in their order of importance. Motives which were already present to some small extent in the great wars of the early twentieth century have now become dominant and are consciously recognized and acted upon.

To understand the nature of the present war -- for in spite of the regrouping which occurs every few years, it is always the same war -- one must realize in the first place that it is impossible for it to be decisive. None of the three super-states could be definitively conquered even by the other two in combination. They are too evenly matched, and their natural defences are too formidable. Eurasia is protected by its vast land spaces. Oceania by the width of the Atlantic and the Pacific, Eastasia by the fecundity and industriousness of its inhabitants. Secondly, there is no longer, in a material sense, anything to fight about. With the establishment of self-contained economies, in which production and consumption are geared to one another, the scramble for markets which was a main cause of previous wars has come to an end, while the competition for raw materials is no longer a matter of life and death. In any case each of the three super-states is so vast that it can obtain almost all the materials that it needs within its own boundaries. In so far as the war has a direct economic purpose, it is a war for labour power. Between the frontiers of the super-states, and not permanently in the possession of any of them, there lies a rough quadrilateral with its corners at Tangier, Brazzaville, Darwin, and Hong Kong, containing within it about a fifth of the population of the earth. It is for the possession of these thickly-populated regions, and of the northern ice-cap, that the three powers are constantly struggling. In practice no one power ever controls the whole of the disputed area. Portions of it are constantly changing hands, and it is the chance of seizing this or that fragment by a sudden stroke of treachery that dictates the endless changes of alignment.

All of the disputed territories contain valuable minerals, and some of them yield important vegetable products such as rubber which in colder

climates it is necessary to synthesize by comparatively expensive methods. But above all they contain a bottomless reserve of cheap labour. Whichever power controls equatorial Africa, or the countries of the Middle East, or Southern India, or the Indonesian Archipelago, disposes also of the bodies of scores or hundreds of millions of ill-paid and hard-working coolies. The inhabitants of these areas, reduced more or less openly to the status of slaves, pass continually from conqueror to conqueror, and are expended like so much coal or oil in the race to turn out more armaments, to capture more territory, to control more labour power, to turn out more armaments, to capture more territory, and so on indefinitely. It should be noted that the fighting never really moves beyond the edges of the disputed areas. The frontiers of Eurasia flow back and forth between the basin of the Congo and the northern shore of the Mediterranean; the islands of the Indian Ocean and the Pacific are constantly being captured and recaptured by Oceania or by Eastasia; in Mongolia the dividing line between Eurasia and Eastasia is never stable; round the Pole all three powers lay claim to enormous territories which in fact are largely uninhabited and unexplored: but the balance of power always remains roughly even, and the territory which forms the heartland of each super-state always remains inviolate. Moreover, the labour of the exploited peoples round the Equator is not really necessary to the world's economy. They add nothing to the wealth of the world, since whatever they produce is used for purposes of war, and the object of waging a war is always to be in a better position in which to wage another war. By their labour the slave populations allow the tempo of continuous warfare to be speeded up. But if they did not exist, the structure of world society, and the process by which it maintains itself, would not be essentially different.

The primary aim of modern warfare (in accordance with the principles of doublethink, this aim is simultaneously recognized and not recognized by the directing brains of the Inner Party) is to use up the products of the machine without raising the general standard of living. Ever since the end of the nineteenth century, the problem of what to do with the surplus of consumption goods has been latent in industrial society. At present, when few human beings even have enough to eat, this problem is obviously not urgent, and it might not have become so, even if no artificial processes of destruction had been at work. The world of today is a bare, hungry, dilapidated place compared with the world that existed before 1914, and still more so if compared with the imaginary future to which the people of that period looked forward. In the early twentieth century, the vision of a future society unbelievably rich, leisured, orderly, and efficient -- a glittering antiseptic world of glass and steel and snow-white concrete -- was part of the consciousness of nearly every literate person. Science and technology were developing at a prodigious speed, and it seemed natural to assume that they would go on developing. This failed to happen, partly because of the impoverishment caused by a long series of wars and revolutions, partly because scientific and technical progress depended on the empirical habit of thought, which could not survive in a strictly regimented society. As a whole the world is more primitive today than it was fifty years ago. Certain backward areas have advanced, and various devices, always in some way connected with warfare and police espionage, have been developed, but experiment and invention have largely stopped, and the ravages of the atomic war of the nineteen-fifties have never been fully repaired. Nevertheless the dangers inherent in the machine are still there. From the moment when the machine first made its appearance it was clear to all thinking people that the

need for human drudgery, and therefore to a great extent for human inequality, had disappeared. If the machine were used deliberately for that end, hunger, overwork, dirt, illiteracy, and disease could be eliminated within a few generations. And in fact, without being used for any such purpose, but by a sort of automatic process -- by producing wealth which it was sometimes impossible not to distribute -- the machine did raise the living standards of the average human being very greatly over a period of about fifty years at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.

But it was also clear that an all-round increase in wealth threatened the destruction -- indeed, in some sense was the destruction -- of a hierarchical society. In a world in which everyone worked short hours, had enough to eat, lived in a house with a bathroom and a refrigerator, and possessed a motor-car or even an aeroplane, the most obvious and perhaps the most important form of inequality would already have disappeared. If it once became general, wealth would confer no distinction. It was possible, no doubt, to imagine a society in which wealth, in the sense of personal possessions and luxuries, should be evenly distributed, while power remained in the hands of a small privileged caste. But in practice such a society could not long remain stable. For if leisure and security were enjoyed by all alike, the great mass of human beings who are normally stupefied by poverty would become literate and would learn to think for themselves; and when once they had done this, they would sooner or later realize that the privileged minority had no function, and they would sweep it away. In the long run, a hierarchical society was only possible on a basis of poverty and ignorance. To return to the agricultural past, as some thinkers about the beginning of the twentieth century dreamed of doing, was not a practicable solution. It conflicted with

the tendency towards mechanization which had become quasi-instinctive throughout almost the whole world, and moreover, any country which remained industrially backward was helpless in a military sense and was bound to be dominated, directly or indirectly, by its more advanced rivals.

Nor was it a satisfactory solution to keep the masses in poverty by restricting the output of goods. This happened to a great extent during the final phase of capitalism, roughly between 1920 and 1940. The economy of many countries was allowed to stagnate, land went out of cultivation, capital equipment was not added to, great blocks of the population were prevented from working and kept half alive by State charity. But this, too, entailed military weakness, and since the privations it inflicted were obviously unnecessary, it made opposition inevitable. The problem was how to keep the wheels of industry turning without increasing the real wealth of the world. Goods must be produced, but they must not be distributed. And in practice the only way of achieving this was by continuous warfare.

The essential act of war is destruction, not necessarily of human lives, but of the products of human labour. War is a way of shattering to pieces, or pouring into the stratosphere, or sinking in the depths of the sea, materials which might otherwise be used to make the masses too comfortable, and hence, in the long run, too intelligent. Even when weapons of war are not actually destroyed, their manufacture is still a convenient way of expending labour power without producing anything that can be consumed. A Floating Fortress, for example, has locked up in it the labour that would build several hundred cargo-ships. Ultimately it is scrapped as obsolete, never having brought any material benefit to anybody, and with further enormous labours

another Floating Fortress is built. In principle the war effort is always so planned as to eat up any surplus that might exist after meeting the bare needs of the population. In practice the needs of the population are always underestimated, with the result that there is a chronic shortage of half the necessities of life; but this is looked on as an advantage. It is deliberate policy to keep even the favoured groups somewhere near the brink of hardship, because a general state of scarcity increases the importance of small privileges and thus magnifies the distinction between one group and another. By the standards of the early twentieth century, even a member of the Inner Party lives an austere, laborious kind of life. Nevertheless, the few luxuries that he does enjoy his large, well-appointed flat, the better texture of his clothes, the better quality of his food and drink and tobacco, his two or three servants, his private motor-car or helicopter -- set him in a different world from a member of the Outer Party, and the members of the Outer Party have a similar advantage in comparison with the submerged masses whom we call 'the proles'. The social atmosphere is that of a besieged city, where the possession of a lump of horseflesh makes the difference between wealth and poverty. And at the same time the consciousness of being at war, and therefore in danger, makes the handing-over of all power to a small caste seem the natural, unavoidable condition of survival.

War, it will be seen, accomplishes the necessary destruction, but accomplishes it in a psychologically acceptable way. In principle it would be quite simple to waste the surplus labour of the world by building temples and pyramids, by digging holes and filling them up again, or even by producing vast quantities of goods and then setting fire to them. But this would provide only the economic and not the emotional basis for a hierarchical society.

What is concerned here is not the morale of masses, whose attitude is unimportant so long as they are kept steadily at work, but the morale of the Party itself. Even the humblest Party member is expected to be competent, industrious, and even intelligent within narrow limits, but it is also necessary that he should be a credulous and ignorant fanatic whose prevailing moods are fear, hatred, adulation, and orgiastic triumph. In other words it is necessary that he should have the mentality appropriate to a state of war. It does not matter whether the war is actually happening, and, since no decisive victory is possible, it does not matter whether the war is going well or badly. All that is needed is that a state of war should exist. The splitting of the intelligence which the Party requires of its members, and which is more easily achieved in an atmosphere of war, is now almost universal, but the higher up the ranks one goes, the more marked it becomes. It is precisely in the Inner Party that war hysteria and hatred of the enemy are strongest. In his capacity as an administrator, it is often necessary for a member of the Inner Party to know that this or that item of war news is untruthful, and he may often be aware that the entire war is spurious and is either not happening or is being waged for purposes quite other than the declared ones: but such knowledge is easily neutralized by the technique of doublethink. Meanwhile no Inner Party member wavers for an instant in his mystical belief that the war is real, and that it is bound to end victoriously, with Oceania the undisputed master of the entire world.

All members of the Inner Party believe in this coming conquest as an article of faith. It is to be achieved either by gradually acquiring more and more territory and so building up an overwhelming preponderance of power, or by the discovery of some new and unanswerable weapon. The search for

new weapons continues unceasingly, and is one of the very few remaining activities in which the inventive or speculative type of mind can find any outlet. In Oceania at the present day, Science, in the old sense, has almost ceased to exist. In Newspeak there is no word for 'Science'. The empirical method of thought, on which all the scientific achievements of the past were founded, is opposed to the most fundamental principles of Ingsoc. And even technological progress only happens when its products can in some way be used for the diminution of human liberty. In all the useful arts the world is either standing still or going backwards. The fields are cultivated with horse-ploughs while books are written by machinery. But in matters of vital importance -- meaning, in effect, war and police espionage -- the empirical approach is still encouraged, or at least tolerated. The two aims of the Party are to conquer the whole surface of the earth and to extinguish once and for all the possibility of independent thought. There are therefore two great problems which the Party is concerned to solve. One is how to discover, against his will, what another human being is thinking, and the other is how to kill several hundred million people in a few seconds without giving warning beforehand. In so far as scientific research still continues, this is its subject matter. The scientist of today is either a mixture of psychologist and inquisitor, studying with real ordinary minuteness the meaning of facial expressions, gestures, and tones of voice, and testing the truth-producing effects of drugs, shock therapy, hypnosis, and physical torture; or he is chemist, physicist, or biologist concerned only with such branches of his special subject as are relevant to the taking of life. In the vast laboratories of the Ministry of Peace, and in the experimental stations hidden in the Brazilian forests, or in the Australian desert, or on lost islands of the Antarctic, the teams of experts are indefatigably at work. Some are concerned simply with

planning the logistics of future wars; others devise larger and larger rocket bombs, more and more powerful explosives, and more and more impenetrable armour-plating; others search for new and deadlier gases, or for soluble poisons capable of being produced in such quantities as to destroy the vegetation of whole continents, or for breeds of disease germs immunized against all possible antibodies; others strive to produce a vehicle that shall bore its way under the soil like a submarine under the water, or an aeroplane as independent of its base as a sailing-ship; others explore even remoter possibilities such as focusing the sun's rays through lenses suspended thousands of kilometres away in space, or producing artificial earthquakes and tidal waves by tapping the heat at the earth's centre.

But none of these projects ever comes anywhere near realization, and none of the three super-states ever gains a significant lead on the others. What is more remarkable is that all three powers already possess, in the atomic bomb, a weapon far more powerful than any that their present researches are likely to discover. Although the Party, according to its habit, claims the invention for itself, atomic bombs first appeared as early as the nineteen-forties, and were first used on a large scale about ten years later. At that time some hundreds of bombs were dropped on industrial centres, chiefly in European Russia, Western Europe, and North America. The effect was to convince the ruling groups of all countries that a few more atomic bombs would mean the end of organized society, and hence of their own power. Thereafter, although no formal agreement was ever made or hinted at, no more bombs were dropped. All three powers merely continue to produce atomic bombs and store them up against the decisive opportunity which they all believe will come sooner or later. And meanwhile the art of war has

remained almost stationary for thirty or forty years. Helicopters are more used than they were formerly, bombing planes have been largely superseded by self-propelled projectiles, and the fragile movable battleship has given way to the almost unsinkable Floating Fortress; but otherwise there has been little development. The tank, the submarine, the torpedo, the machine gun, even the rifle and the hand grenade are still in use. And in spite of the endless slaughters reported in the Press and on the telescreens, the desperate battles of earlier wars, in which hundreds of thousands or even millions of men were often killed in a few weeks, have never been repeated.

None of the three super-states ever attempts any manoeuvre which involves the risk of serious defeat. When any large operation is undertaken, it is usually a surprise attack against an ally. The strategy that all three powers are following, or pretend to themselves that they are following, is the same. The plan is, by a combination of fighting, bargaining, and well-timed strokes of treachery, to acquire a ring of bases completely encircling one or other of the rival states, and then to sign a pact of friendship with that rival and remain on peaceful terms for so many years as to lull suspicion to sleep. During this time rockets loaded with atomic bombs can be assembled at all the strategic spots; finally they will all be fired simultaneously, with effects so devastating as to make retaliation impossible. It will then be time to sign a pact of friendship with the remaining world-power, in preparation for another attack. This scheme, it is hardly necessary to say, is a mere daydream, impossible of realization. Moreover, no fighting ever occurs except in the disputed areas round the Equator and the Pole: no invasion of enemy territory is ever undertaken. This explains the fact that in some places the frontiers between the superstates are arbitrary. Eurasia, for example, could easily

conquer the British Isles, which are geographically part of Europe, or on the other hand it would be possible for Oceania to push its frontiers to the Rhine or even to the Vistula. But this would violate the principle, followed on all sides though never formulated, of cultural integrity. If Oceania were to conquer the areas that used once to be known as France and Germany, it would be necessary either to exterminate the inhabitants, a task of great physical difficulty, or to assimilate a population of about a hundred million people, who, so far as technical development goes, are roughly on the Oceanic level. The problem is the same for all three super-states. It is absolutely necessary to their structure that there should be no contact with foreigners, except, to a limited extent, with war prisoners and coloured slaves. Even the official ally of the moment is always regarded with the darkest suspicion. War prisoners apart, the average citizen of Oceania never sets eyes on a citizen of either Eurasia or Eastasia, and he is forbidden the knowledge of foreign languages. If he were allowed contact with foreigners he would discover that they are creatures similar to himself and that most of what he has been told about them is lies. The sealed world in which he lives would be broken, and the fear, hatred, and self-righteousness on which his morale depends might evaporate. It is therefore realized on all sides that however often Persia, or Egypt, or Java, or Ceylon may change hands, the main frontiers must never be crossed by anything except bombs.

Under this lies a fact never mentioned aloud, but tacitly understood and acted upon: namely, that the conditions of life in all three super-states are very much the same. In Oceania the prevailing philosophy is called Ingsoc, in Eurasia it is called Neo-Bolshevism, and in Eastasia it is called by a Chinese name usually translated as Death-Worship, but perhaps better rendered as

Obliteration of the Self. The citizen of Oceania is not allowed to know anything of the tenets of the other two philosophies, but he is taught to execrate them as barbarous outrages upon morality and common sense. Actually the three philosophies are barely distinguishable, and the social systems which they support are not distinguishable at all. Everywhere there is the same pyramidal structure, the same worship of semi-divine leader, the same economy existing by and for continuous warfare. It follows that the three super-states not only cannot conquer one another, but would gain no advantage by doing so. On the contrary, so long as they remain in conflict they prop one another up, like three sheaves of corn. And, as usual, the ruling groups of all three powers are simultaneously aware and unaware of what they are doing. Their lives are dedicated to world conquest, but they also know that it is necessary that the war should continue everlastingly and without victory. Meanwhile the fact that there is no danger of conquest makes possible the denial of reality which is the special feature of Ingsoc and its rival systems of thought. Here it is necessary to repeat what has been said earlier, that by becoming continuous war has fundamentally changed its character.

In past ages, a war, almost by definition, was something that sooner or later came to an end, usually in unmistakable victory or defeat. In the past, also, war was one of the main instruments by which human societies were kept in touch with physical reality. All rulers in all ages have tried to impose a false view of the world upon their followers, but they could not afford to encourage any illusion that tended to impair military efficiency. So long as defeat meant the loss of independence, or some other result generally held to be undesirable, the precautions against defeat had to be serious. Physical facts

could not be ignored. In philosophy, or religion, or ethics, or politics, two and two might make five, but when one was designing a gun or an aeroplane they had to make four. Inefficient nations were always conquered sooner or later, and the struggle for efficiency was inimical to illusions. Moreover, to be efficient it was necessary to be able to learn from the past, which meant having a fairly accurate idea of what had happened in the past. Newspapers and history books were, of course, always coloured and biased, but falsification of the kind that is practised today would have been impossible. War was a sure safeguard of sanity, and so far as the ruling classes were concerned it was probably the most important of all safeguards. While wars could be won or lost, no ruling class could be completely irresponsible.

But when war becomes literally continuous, it also ceases to be dangerous. When war is continuous there is no such thing as military necessity. Technical progress can cease and the most palpable facts can be denied or disregarded. As we have seen, researches that could be called scientific are still carried out for the purposes of war, but they are essentially a kind of daydreaming, and their failure to show results is not important. Efficiency, even military efficiency, is no longer needed. Nothing is efficient in Oceania except the Thought Police. Since each of the three super-states is unconquerable, each is in effect a separate universe within which almost any perversion of thought can be safely practised. Reality only exerts its pressure through the needs of everyday life -- the need to eat and drink, to get shelter and clothing, to avoid swallowing poison or stepping out of top-storey windows, and the like. Between life and death, and between physical pleasure and physical pain, there is still a distinction, but that is all. Cut off from contact with the outer world, and with the past, the citizen of Oceania is like a

man in interstellar space, who has no way of knowing which direction is up and which is down. The rulers of such a state are absolute, as the Pharaohs or the Caesars could not be. They are obliged to prevent their followers from starving to death in numbers large enough to be inconvenient, and they are obliged to remain at the same low level of military technique as their rivals; but once that minimum is achieved, they can twist reality into whatever shape they choose.

The war, therefore, if we judge it by the standards of previous wars, is merely an imposture. It is like the battles between certain ruminant animals whose horns are set at such an angle that they are incapable of hurting one another. But though it is unreal it is not meaningless. It eats up the surplus of consumable goods, and it helps to preserve the special mental atmosphere that a hierarchical society needs. War, it will be seen, is now a purely internal affair. In the past, the ruling groups of all countries, although they might recognize their common interest and therefore limit the destructiveness of war, did fight against one another, and the victor always plundered the vanquished. In our own day they are not fighting against one another at all. The war is waged by each ruling group against its own subjects, and the object of the war is not to make or prevent conquests of territory, but to keep the structure of society intact. The very word 'war', therefore, has become misleading. It would probably be accurate to say that by becoming continuous war has ceased to exist. The peculiar pressure that it exerted on human beings between the Neolithic Age and the early twentieth century has disappeared and been replaced by something quite different. The effect would be much the same if the three super-states, instead of fighting one another, should agree to live in perpetual peace, each inviolate within its own

boundaries. For in that case each would still be a self-contained universe, freed for ever from the sobering influence of external danger. A peace that was truly permanent would be the same as a permanent war. This -- although the vast majority of Party members understand it only in a shallower sense -- is the inner meaning of the Party slogan: War is Peace.

Winston stopped reading for a moment. Somewhere in remote distance a rocket bomb thundered. The blissful feeling of being alone with the forbidden book, in a room with no telescreen, had not worn off. Solitude and safety were physical sensations, mixed up somehow with the tiredness of his body, the softness of the chair, the touch of the faint breeze from the window that played upon his cheek. The book fascinated him, or more exactly it reassured him. In a sense it told him nothing that was new, but that was part of the attraction. It said what he would have said, if it had been possible for him to set his scattered thoughts in order. It was the product of a mind similar to his own, but enormously more powerful, more systematic, less fear-ridden. The best books, he perceived, are those that tell you what you know already. He had just turned back to Chapter I when he heard Julia's footstep on the stair and started out of his chair to meet her. She dumped her brown tool-bag on the floor and flung herself into his arms. It was more than a week since they had seen one another.

'I've got the book,' he said as they disentangled themselves.

'Oh, you've got it? Good,' she said without much interest, and almost immediately knelt down beside the oilstove to make the coffee.

They did not return to the subject until they had been in bed for half an

hour. The evening was just cool enough to make it worth while to pull up the counterpane. From below came the familiar sound of singing and the scrape of boots on the flagstones. The brawny red-armed woman whom Winston had seen there on his first visit was almost a fixture in the yard. There seemed to be no hour of daylight when she was not marching to and fro between the washtub and the line, alternately gagging herself with clothes pegs and breaking forth into lusty song. Julia had settled down on her side and seemed to be already on the point of falling asleep. He reached out for the book, which was lying on the floor, and sat up against the bedhead.

'We must read it,' he said. 'You too. All members of the Brotherhood have to read it.'

'You read it,' she said with her eyes shut. 'Read it aloud. That's the best way. Then you can explain it to me as you go.'

The clock's hands said six, meaning eighteen. They had three or four hours ahead of them. He propped the book against his knees and began reading:

Chapter I

Ignorance is Strength

Throughout recorded time, and probably since the end of the Neolithic Age, there have been three kinds of people in the world, the High, the Middle, and the Low. They have been subdivided in many ways, they have borne countless different names, and their relative numbers, as well as their attitude towards one another, have varied from age to age: but the essential

structure of society has never altered. Even after enormous upheavals and seemingly irrevocable changes, the same pattern has always reasserted itself, just as a gyroscope will always return to equilibrium, however far it is pushed one way or the other

'Julia, are you awake?' said Winston.

'Yes, my love, I'm listening. Go on. It's marvellous.'

He continued reading:

The aims of these three groups are entirely irreconcilable. The aim of the High is to remain where they are. The aim of the Middle is to change places with the High. The aim of the Low, when they have an aim -- for it is an abiding characteristic of the Low that they are too much crushed by drudgery to be more than intermittently conscious of anything outside their daily lives - - is to abolish all distinctions and create a society in which all men shall be equal. Thus throughout history a struggle which is the same in its main outlines recurs over and over again. For long periods the High seem to be securely in power, but sooner or later there always comes a moment when they lose either their belief in themselves or their capacity to govern efficiently, or both. They are then overthrown by the Middle, who enlist the Low on their side by pretending to them that they are fighting for liberty and justice. As soon as they have reached their objective, the Middle thrust the Low back into their old position of servitude, and themselves become the High. Presently a new Middle group splits off from one of the other groups, or from both of them, and the struggle begins over again. Of the three groups, only the Low are never even temporarily successful in achieving their aims. It

would be an exaggeration to say that throughout history there has been no progress of a material kind. Even today, in a period of decline, the average human being is physically better off than he was a few centuries ago. But no advance in wealth, no softening of manners, no reform or revolution has ever brought human equality a millimetre nearer. From the point of view of the Low, no historic change has ever meant much more than a change in the name of their masters.

By the late nineteenth century the recurrence of this pattern had become obvious to many observers. There then rose schools of thinkers who interpreted history as a cyclical process and claimed to show that inequality was the unalterable law of human life. This doctrine, of course, had always had its adherents, but in the manner in which it was now put forward there was a significant change. In the past the need for a hierarchical form of society had been the doctrine specifically of the High. It had been preached by kings and aristocrats and by the priests, lawyers, and the like who were parasitical upon them, and it had generally been softened by promises of compensation in an imaginary world beyond the grave. The Middle, so long as it was struggling for power, had always made use of such terms as freedom, justice, and fraternity. Now, however, the concept of human brotherhood began to be assailed by people who were not yet in positions of command, but merely hoped to be so before long. In the past the Middle had made revolutions under the banner of equality, and then had established a fresh tyranny as soon as the old one was overthrown. The new Middle groups in effect proclaimed their tyranny beforehand. Socialism, a theory which appeared in the early nineteenth century and was the last link in a chain of thought stretching back to the slave rebellions of antiquity, was still deeply

infected by the Utopianism of past ages. But in each variant of Socialism that appeared from about 1900 onwards the aim of establishing liberty and equality was more and more openly abandoned. The new movements which appeared in the middle years of the century, Ingsoc in Oceania, Neo-Bolshevism in Eurasia, Death-Worship, as it is commonly called, in Eastasia, had the conscious aim of perpetuating unfreedom and inequality. These new movements, of course, grew out of the old ones and tended to keep their names and pay lip-service to their ideology. But the purpose of all of them was to arrest progress and freeze history at a chosen moment. The familiar pendulum swing was to happen once more, and then stop. As usual, the High were to be turned out by the Middle, who would then become the High; but this time, by conscious strategy, the High would be able to maintain their position permanently.

The new doctrines arose partly because of the accumulation of historical knowledge, and the growth of the historical sense, which had hardly existed before the nineteenth century. The cyclical movement of history was now intelligible, or appeared to be so; and if it was intelligible, then it was alterable. But the principal, underlying cause was that, as early as the beginning of the twentieth century, human equality had become technically possible. It was still true that men were not equal in their native talents and that functions had to be specialized in ways that favoured some individuals against others; but there was no longer any real need for class distinctions or for large differences of wealth. In earlier ages, class distinctions had been not only inevitable but desirable. Inequality was the price of civilization. With the development of machine production, however, the case was altered. Even if it was still necessary for human beings to do different kinds of work, it was

no longer necessary for them to live at different social or economic levels. Therefore, from the point of view of the new groups who were on the point of seizing power, human equality was no longer an ideal to be striven after, but a danger to be averted. In more primitive ages, when a just and peaceful society was in fact not possible, it had been fairly easy to believe it. The idea of an earthly paradise in which men should live together in a state of brotherhood, without laws and without brute labour, had haunted the human imagination for thousands of years. And this vision had had a certain hold even on the groups who actually profited by each historical change. The heirs of the French, English, and American revolutions had partly believed in their own phrases about the rights of man, freedom of speech, equality before the law, and the like, and have even allowed their conduct to be influenced by them to some extent. But by the fourth decade of the twentieth century all the main currents of political thought were authoritarian. The earthly paradise had been discredited at exactly the moment when it became realizable. Every new political theory, by whatever name it called itself, led back to hierarchy and regimentation. And in the general hardening of outlook that set in round about 1930, practices which had been long abandoned, in some cases for hundreds of years -- imprisonment without trial, the use of war prisoners as slaves, public executions, torture to extract confessions, the use of hostages, and the deportation of whole populations-not only became common again, but were tolerated and even defended by people who considered themselves enlightened and progressive.

It was only after a decade of national wars, civil wars, revolutions, and counter-revolutions in all parts of the world that Ingsoc and its rivals emerged as fully worked-out political theories. But they had been foreshadowed by the

various systems, generally called totalitarian, which had appeared earlier in the century, and the main outlines of the world which would emerge from the prevailing chaos had long been obvious. What kind of people would control this world had been equally obvious. The new aristocracy was made up for the most part of bureaucrats, scientists, technicians, trade-union organizers, publicity experts, sociologists, teachers, journalists, and professional politicians. These people, whose origins lay in the salaried middle class and the upper grades of the working class, had been shaped and brought together by the barren world of monopoly industry and centralized government. As compared with their opposite numbers in past ages, they were less avaricious, less tempted by luxury, hungrier for pure power, and, above all, more conscious of what they were doing and more intent on crushing opposition. This last difference was cardinal. By comparison with that existing today, all the tyrannies of the past were half-hearted and inefficient. The ruling groups were always infected to some extent by liberal ideas, and were content to leave loose ends everywhere, to regard only the overt act and to be uninterested in what their subjects were thinking. Even the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages was tolerant by modern standards. Part of the reason for this was that in the past no government had the power to keep its citizens under constant surveillance. The invention of print, however, made it easier to manipulate public opinion, and the film and the radio carried the process further. With the development of television, and the technical advance which made it possible to receive and transmit simultaneously on the same instrument, private life came to an end. Every citizen, or at least every citizen important enough to be worth watching, could be kept for twentyfour hours a day under the eyes of the police and in the sound of official propaganda, with all other channels of communication closed. The possibility of enforcing not

only complete obedience to the will of the State, but complete uniformity of opinion on all subjects, now existed for the first time.

After the revolutionary period of the fifties and sixties, society regrouped itself, as always, into High, Middle, and Low. But the new High group, unlike all its forerunners, did not act upon instinct but knew what was needed to safeguard its position. It had long been realized that the only secure basis for oligarchy is collectivism. Wealth and privilege are most easily defended when they are possessed jointly. The so-called 'abolition of private property' which took place in the middle years of the century meant, in effect, the concentration of property in far fewer hands than before: but with this difference, that the new owners were a group instead of a mass of individuals. Individually, no member of the Party owns anything, except petty personal belongings. Collectively, the Party owns everything in Oceania, because it controls everything, and disposes of the products as it thinks fit. In the years following the Revolution it was able to step into this commanding position almost unopposed, because the whole process was represented as an act of collectivization. It had always been assumed that if the capitalist class were expropriated, Socialism must follow: and unquestionably the capitalists had been expropriated. Factories, mines, land, houses, transport -- everything had been taken away from them: and since these things were no longer private property, it followed that they must be public property. Ingsoc, which grew out of the earlier Socialist movement and inherited its phraseology, has in fact carried out the main item in the Socialist programme; with the result, foreseen and intended beforehand, that economic inequality has been made permanent.

But the problems of perpetuating a hierarchical society go deeper than this. There are only four ways in which a ruling group can fall from power. Either it is conquered from without, or it governs so inefficiently that the masses are stirred to revolt, or it allows a strong and discontented Middle group to come into being, or it loses its own self-confidence and willingness to govern. These causes do not operate singly, and as a rule all four of them are present in some degree. A ruling class which could guard against all of them would remain in power permanently. Ultimately the determining factor is the mental attitude of the ruling class itself.

After the middle of the present century, the first danger had in reality disappeared. Each of the three powers which now divide the world is in fact unconquerable, and could only become conquerable through slow demographic changes which a government with wide powers can easily avert. The second danger, also, is only a theoretical one. The masses never revolt of their own accord, and they never revolt merely because they are oppressed. Indeed, so long as they are not permitted to have standards of comparison, they never even become aware that they are oppressed. The recurrent economic crises of past times were totally unnecessary and are not now permitted to happen, but other and equally large dislocations can and do happen without having political results, because there is no way in which discontent can become articulate. As for the problem of overproduction, which has been latent in our society since the development of machine technique, it is solved by the device of continuous warfare (see Chapter III), which is also useful in keying up public morale to the necessary pitch. From the point of view of our present rulers, therefore, the only genuine dangers are the splitting-off of a new group of able, under-employed, power-hungry

people, and the growth of liberalism and scepticism in their own ranks. The problem, that is to say, is educational. It is a problem of continuously moulding the consciousness both of the directing group and of the larger executive group that lies immediately below it. The consciousness of the masses needs only to be influenced in a negative way.

Given this background, one could infer, if one did not know it already, the general structure of Oceanic society. At the apex of the pyramid comes Big Brother. Big Brother is infallible and all-powerful. Every success, every achievement, every victory, every scientific discovery, all knowledge, all wisdom, all happiness, all virtue, are held to issue directly from his leadership and inspiration. Nobody has ever seen Big Brother. He is a face on the hoardings, a voice on the telescreen. We may be reasonably sure that he will never die, and there is already considerable uncertainty as to when he was born. Big Brother is the guise in which the Party chooses to exhibit itself to the world. His function is to act as a focusing point for love, fear, and reverence, emotions which are more easily felt towards an individual than towards an organization. Below Big Brother comes the Inner Party. its numbers limited to six millions, or something less than 2 per cent of the population of Oceania. Below the Inner Party comes the Outer Party, which, if the Inner Party is described as the brain of the State, may be justly likened to the hands. Below that come the dumb masses whom we habitually refer to as 'the proles', numbering perhaps 85 per cent of the population. In the terms of our earlier classification, the proles are the Low: for the slave population of the equatorial lands who pass constantly from conqueror to conqueror, are not a permanent or necessary part of the structure.

In principle, membership of these three groups is not hereditary. The child of Inner Party parents is in theory not born into the Inner Party. Admission to either branch of the Party is by examination, taken at the age of sixteen. Nor is there any racial discrimination, or any marked domination of one province by another. Jews, Negroes, South Americans of pure Indian blood are to be found in the highest ranks of the Party, and the administrators of any area are always drawn from the inhabitants of that area. In no part of Oceania do the inhabitants have the feeling that they are a colonial population ruled from a distant capital. Oceania has no capital, and its titular head is a person whose whereabouts nobody knows. Except that English is its chief lingua franca and Newspeak its official language, it is not centralized in any way. Its rulers are not held together by blood-ties but by adherence to a common doctrine. It is true that our society is stratified, and very rigidly stratified, on what at first sight appear to be hereditary lines. There is far less to- and-fro movement between the different groups than happened under capitalism or even in the pre-industrial age. Between the two branches of the Party there is a certain amount of interchange, but only so much as will ensure that weaklings are excluded from the Inner Party and that ambitious members of the Outer Party are made harmless by allowing them to rise. Proletarians, in practice, are not allowed to graduate into the Party. The most gifted among them, who might possibly become nuclei of discontent, are simply marked down by the Thought Police and eliminated. But this state of affairs is not necessarily permanent, nor is it a matter of principle. The Party is not a class in the old sense of the word. It does not aim at transmitting power to its own children, as such; and if there were no other way of keeping the ablest people at the top, it would be perfectly prepared to recruit an entire new generation from the ranks of the proletariat. In the crucial years, the fact

that the Party was not a hereditary body did a great deal to neutralize opposition. The older kind of Socialist, who had been trained to fight against something called 'class privilege' assumed that what is not hereditary cannot be permanent. He did not see that the continuity of an oligarchy need not be physical, nor did he pause to reflect that hereditary aristocracies have always been shortlived, whereas adoptive organizations such as the Catholic Church have sometimes lasted for hundreds or thousands of years. The essence of oligarchical rule is not father-to-son inheritance, but the persistence of a certain world-view and a certain way of life, imposed by the dead upon the living. A ruling group is a ruling group so long as it can nominate its successors. The Party is not concerned with perpetuating its blood but with perpetuating itself. Who wields power is not important, provided that the hierarchical structure remains always the same.

All the beliefs, habits, tastes, emotions, mental attitudes that characterize our time are really designed to sustain the mystique of the Party and prevent the true nature of present-day society from being perceived. Physical rebellion, or any preliminary move towards rebellion, is at present not possible. From the proletarians nothing is to be feared. Left to themselves, they will continue from generation to generation and from century to century, working, breeding, and dying, not only without any impulse to rebel, but without the power of grasping that the world could be other than it is. They could only become dangerous if the advance of industrial technique made it necessary to educate them more highly; but, since military and commercial rivalry are no longer important, the level of popular education is actually declining. What opinions the masses hold, or do not hold, is looked on as a matter of indifference. They can be granted intellectual liberty because they

have no intellect. In a Party member, on the other hand, not even the smallest deviation of opinion on the most unimportant subject can be tolerated.

A Party member lives from birth to death under the eye of the Thought Police. Even when he is alone he can never be sure that he is alone. Wherever he may be, asleep or awake, working or resting, in his bath or in bed, he can be inspected without warning and without knowing that he is being inspected. Nothing that he does is indifferent. His friendships, his relaxations, his behaviour towards his wife and children, the expression of his face when he is alone, the words he mutters in sleep, even the characteristic movements of his body, are all jealously scrutinized. Not only any actual misdemeanour, but any eccentricity, however small, any change of habits, any nervous mannerism that could possibly be the symptom of an inner struggle, is certain to be detected. He has no freedom of choice in any direction whatever. On the other hand his actions are not regulated by law or by any clearly formulated code of behaviour. In Oceania there is no law. Thoughts and actions which, when detected, mean certain death are not formally forbidden, and the endless purges, arrests, tortures, imprisonments, and vaporizations are not inflicted as punishment for crimes which have actually been committed, but are merely the wiping-out of persons who might perhaps commit a crime at some time in the future. A Party member is required to have not only the right opinions, but the right instincts. Many of the beliefs and attitudes demanded of him are never plainly stated, and could not be stated without laying bare the contradictions inherent in Ingsoc. If he is a person naturally orthodox (in Newspeak a goodthinker), he will in all circumstances know, without taking thought, what is the true belief or the desirable emotion. But in any case an elaborate mental training, undergone in childhood and grouping

itself round the Newspeak words crimestop, blackwhite, and doublethink, makes him unwilling and unable to think too deeply on any subject whatever.

A Party member is expected to have no private emotions and no respites from enthusiasm. He is supposed to live in a continuous frenzy of hatred of foreign enemies and internal traitors, triumph over victories, and self-abasement before the power and wisdom of the Party. The discontents produced by his bare, unsatisfying life are deliberately turned outwards and dissipated by such devices as the Two Minutes Hate, and the speculations which might possibly induce a sceptical or rebellious attitude are killed in advance by his early acquired inner discipline. The first and simplest stage in the discipline, which can be taught even to young children, is called, in Newspeak, crimestop. Crimestop means the faculty of stopping short, as though by instinct, at the threshold of any dangerous thought. It includes the power of not grasping analogies, of failing to perceive logical errors, of misunderstanding the simplest arguments if they are inimical to Ingsoc, and of being bored or repelled by any train of thought which is capable of leading in a heretical direction. Crimestop, in short, means protective stupidity. But stupidity is not enough. On the contrary, orthodoxy in the full sense demands a control over one's own mental processes as complete as that of a contortionist over his body. Oceanic society rests ultimately on the belief that Big Brother is omnipotent and that the Party is infallible. But since in reality Big Brother is not omnipotent and the party is not infallible, there is need for an unwearying, moment-to-moment flexibility in the treatment of facts. The keyword here is blackwhite. Like so many Newspeak words, this word has two mutually contradictory meanings. Applied to an opponent, it means the habit of impudently claiming that black is white, in contradiction of the plain

facts. Applied to a Party member, it means a loyal willingness to say that black is white when Party discipline demands this. But it means also the ability to believe that black is white, and more, to know that black is white, and to forget that one has ever believed the contrary. This demands a continuous alteration of the past, made possible by the system of thought which really embraces all the rest, and which is known in Newspeak as doublethink.

The alteration of the past is necessary for two reasons, one of which is subsidiary and, so to speak, precautionary. The subsidiary reason is that the Party member, like the proletarian, tolerates present-day conditions partly because he has no standards of comparison. He must be cut off from the past, just as he must be cut off from foreign countries, because it is necessary for him to believe that he is better off than his ancestors and that the average level of material comfort is constantly rising. But by far the more important reason for the readjustment of the past is the need to safeguard the infallibility of the Party. It is not merely that speeches, statistics, and records of every kind must be constantly brought up to date in order to show that the predictions of the Party were in all cases right. It is also that no change in doctrine or in political alignment can ever be admitted. For to change one's mind, or even one's policy, is a confession of weakness. If, for example, Eurasia or Eastasia (whichever it may be) is the enemy today, then that country must always have been the enemy. And if the facts say otherwise then the facts must be altered. Thus history is continuously rewritten. This day-to-day falsification of the past, carried out by the Ministry of Truth, is as necessary to the stability of the regime as the work of repression and espionage carried out by the Ministry of Love.

The mutability of the past is the central tenet of Ingsoc. Past events, it is argued, have no objective existence, but survive only in written records and in human memories. The past is whatever the records and the memories agree upon. And since the Party is in full control of all records and in equally full control of the minds of its members, it follows that the past is whatever the Party chooses to make it. It also follows that though the past is alterable, it never has been altered in any specific instance. For when it has been recreated in whatever shape is needed at the moment, then this new version is the past, and no different past can ever have existed. This holds good even when, as often happens, the same event has to be altered out of recognition several times in the course of a year. At all times the Party is in possession of absolute truth, and clearly the absolute can never have been different from what it is now. It will be seen that the control of the past depends above all on the training of memory. To make sure that all written records agree with the orthodoxy of the moment is merely a mechanical act. But it is also necessary to remember that events happened in the desired manner. And if it is necessary to rearrange one's memories or to tamper with written records, then it is necessary to forget that one has done so. The trick of doing this can be learned like any other mental technique. It is learned by the majority of Party members, and certainly by all who are intelligent as well as orthodox. In Oldspeak it is called, quite frankly, 'reality control'. In Newspeak it is called doublethink, though doublethink comprises much else as well.

Doublethink means the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them. The Party intellectual knows in which direction his memories must be altered; he therefore knows that he is playing tricks with reality; but by the exercise of doublethink he

also satisfies himself that reality is not violated. The process has to be conscious, or it would not be carried out with sufficient precision, but it also has to be unconscious, or it would bring with it a feeling of falsity and hence of guilt. Doublethink lies at the very heart of Ingsoc, since the essential act of the Party is to use conscious deception while retaining the firmness of purpose that goes with complete honesty. To tell deliberate lies while genuinely believing in them, to forget any fact that has become inconvenient, and then, when it becomes necessary again, to draw it back from oblivion for just so long as it is needed, to deny the existence of objective reality and all the while to take account of the reality which one denies -- all this is indispensably necessary. Even in using the word doublethink it is necessary to exercise doublethink. For by using the word one admits that one is tampering with reality; by a fresh act of doublethink one erases this knowledge; and so on indefinitely, with the lie always one leap ahead of the truth. Ultimately it is by means of doublethink that the Party has been able -- and may, for all we know, continue to be able for thousands of years -- to arrest the course of history.

All past oligarchies have fallen from power either because they ossified or because they grew soft. Either they became stupid and arrogant, failed to adjust themselves to changing circumstances, and were overthrown; or they became liberal and cowardly, made concessions when they should have used force, and once again were overthrown. They fell, that is to say, either through consciousness or through unconsciousness. It is the achievement of the Party to have produced a system of thought in which both conditions can exist simultaneously. And upon no other intellectual basis could the dominion of the Party be made permanent. If one is to rule, and to continue ruling, one

must be able to dislocate the sense of reality. For the secret of rulership is to combine a belief in one's own infallibility with the Power to learn from past mistakes.

It need hardly be said that the subtlest practitioners of doublethink are those who invented doublethink and know that it is a vast system of mental cheating. In our society, those who have the best knowledge of what is happening are also those who are furthest from seeing the world as it is. In general, the greater the understanding, the greater the delusion; the more intelligent, the less sane. One clear illustration of this is the fact that war hysteria increases in intensity as one rises in the social scale. Those whose attitude towards the war is most nearly rational are the subject peoples of the disputed territories. To these people the war is simply a continuous calamity which sweeps to and fro over their bodies like a tidal wave. Which side is winning is a matter of complete indifference to them. They are aware that a change of overlordship means simply that they will be doing the same work as before for new masters who treat them in the same manner as the old ones. The slightly more favoured workers whom we call 'the proles' are only intermittently conscious of the war. When it is necessary they can be prodded into frenzies of fear and hatred, but when left to themselves they are capable of forgetting for long periods that the war is happening. It is in the ranks of the Party, and above all of the Inner Party, that the true war enthusiasm is found. World-conquest is believed in most firmly by those who know it to be impossible. This peculiar linking-together of opposites -- knowledge with ignorance, cynicism with fanaticism-is one of the chief distinguishing marks of Oceanic society. The official ideology abounds with contradictions even when there is no practical reason for them. Thus, the Party rejects and vilifies

every principle for which the Socialist movement originally stood, and it chooses to do this in the name of Socialism. It preaches a contempt for the working class unexampled for centuries past, and it dresses its members in a uniform which was at one time peculiar to manual workers and was adopted for that reason. It systematically undermines the solidarity of the family, and it calls its leader by a name which is a direct appeal to the sentiment of family loyalty. Even the names of the four Ministries by which we are governed exhibit a sort of impudence in their deliberate reversal of the facts. The Ministry of Peace concerns itself with war, the Ministry of Truth with lies, the Ministry of Love with torture and the Ministry of Plenty with starvation. These contradictions are not accidental, nor do they result from ordinary hypocrisy; they are deliberate exercises in doublethink. For it is only by reconciling contradictions that power can be retained indefinitely. In no other way could the ancient cycle be broken. If human equality is to be for ever averted -- if the High, as we have called them, are to keep their places permanently -- then the prevailing mental condition must be controlled insanity.

But there is one question which until this moment we have almost ignored. It is; why should human equality be averted? Supposing that the mechanics of the process have been rightly described, what is the motive for this huge, accurately planned effort to freeze history at a particular moment of time?

Here we reach the central secret. As we have seen. the mystique of the Party, and above all of the Inner Party, depends upon doublethink. But deeper than this lies the original motive, the never-questioned instinct that first led to

the seizure of power and brought doublethink, the Thought Police, continuous warfare, and all the other necessary paraphernalia into existence afterwards. This motive really consists ... Winston became aware of silence, as one becomes aware of a new sound. It seemed to him that Julia had been very still for some time past. She was lying on her side, naked from the waist upwards, with her cheek pillowed on her hand and one dark lock tumbling across her eyes. Her breast rose and fell slowly and regularly.

'Julia.

No answer.

'Julia, are you awake?'

No answer. She was asleep. He shut the book, put it carefully on the floor, lay down, and pulled the coverlet over both of them.

He had still, he reflected, not learned the ultimate secret. He understood how; he did not understand why. Chapter I, like Chapter III, had not actually told him anything that he did not know, it had merely systematized the knowledge that he possessed already. But after reading it he knew better than before that he was not mad. Being in a minority, even a minority of one, did not make you mad. There was truth and there was untruth, and if you clung to the truth even against the whole world, you were not mad. A yellow beam from the sinking sun slanted in through the window and fell across the pillow. He shut his eyes. The sun on his face and the girl's smooth body touching his own gave him a strong, sleepy, confident feeling. He was safe, everything was all right. He fell asleep murmuring 'Sanity is not statistical,'

with the feeling that this remark contained in it a profound wisdom. When he woke it was with the sensation of having slept for a long time, but a glance at the old-fashioned clock told him that it was only twenty-thirty. He lay dozing for a while; then the usual deep-lunged singing struck up from the yard below;

'It was only an 'opeless fancy,

It passed like an Ipril dye,

But a look an' a word an' the dreams they stirred

They 'ave stolen my 'eart awye!'

The driveling song seemed to have kept its popularity. You still heard it all over the place. It had outlived the Hate Song. Julia woke at the sound, stretched herself luxuriously, and got out of bed.

'I'm hungry,' she said. 'Let's make some more coffee. Damn! The stove's gone out and the water's cold.' She picked the stove up and shook it. 'There's no oil in it.'

'We can get some from old Charrington, I expect.'

'The funny thing is I made sure it was full. I'm going to put my clothes on,' she added. 'It seems to have got colder.'

Winston also got up and dressed himself. The indefatigable voice sang on:

'They sye that time 'eals all things,

They sye you can always forget;

But the smiles an' the tears acrorss the years

They twist my 'eart-strings yet!'

As he fastened the belt of his overalls he strolled across to the window. The sun must have gone down behind the houses; it was not shining into the yard any longer. The flagstones were wet as though they had just been washed, and he had the feeling that the sky had been washed too, so fresh and pale was the blue between the chimney-pots. Tirelessly the woman marched to and fro, corking and uncorking herself, singing and falling silent, and pegging out more diapers, and more and yet more. He wondered whether she took in washing for a living or was merely the slave of twenty or thirty grandchildren. Julia had come across to his side; together they gazed down with a sort of fascination at the sturdy figure below. As he looked at the woman in her characteristic attitude, her thick arms reaching up for the line, her powerful mare-like buttocks protruded, it struck him for the first time that she was beautiful. It had never before occurred to him that the body of a woman of fifty, blown up to monstrous dimensions by childbearing, then hardened, roughened by work till it was coarse in the grain like an over-ripe turnip, could be beautiful. But it was so, and after all, he thought, why not? The solid, contourless body, like a block of granite, and the rasping red skin, bore the same relation to the body of a girl as the rose-hip to the rose. Why should the fruit be held inferior to the flower?

'She's beautiful,' he murmured.

'She's a metre across the hips, easily,' said Julia.

'That is her style of beauty,' said Winston.

He held Julia's supple waist easily encircled by his arm. From the hip to the knee her flank was against his. Out of their bodies no child would ever come. That was the one thing they could never do. Only by word of mouth, from mind to mind, could they pass on the secret. The woman down there had no mind, she had only strong arms, a warm heart, and a fertile belly. He wondered how many children she had given birth to. It might easily be fifteen. She had had her momentary flowering, a year, perhaps, of wild-rose beauty and then she had suddenly swollen like a fertilized fruit and grown hard and red and coarse, and then her life had been laundering, scrubbing, darning, cooking, sweeping, polishing, mending, scrubbing, laundering, first for children, then for grandchildren, over thirty unbroken years. At the end of it she was still singing. The mystical reverence that he felt for her was somehow mixed up with the aspect of the pale, cloudless sky, stretching away behind the chimney-pots into interminable distance. It was curious to think that the sky was the same for everybody, in Eurasia or Eastasia as well as here. And the people under the sky were also very much the same -- everywhere, all over the world, hundreds of thousands of millions of people just like this, people ignorant of one another's existence, held apart by walls of hatred and lies, and yet almost exactly the same -- people who had never learned to think but who were storing up in their hearts and bellies and muscles the power that would one day overturn the world. If there was hope, it lay in the proles! Without having read to the end of the book, he knew that

that must be Goldstein's final message. The future belonged to the proles. And could he be sure that when their time came the world they constructed would not be just as alien to him, Winston Smith, as the world of the Party? Yes, because at the least it would be a world of sanity. Where there is equality there can be sanity. Sooner or later it would happen, strength would change into consciousness. The proles were immortal, you could not doubt it when you looked at that valiant figure in the yard. In the end their awakening would come. And until that happened, though it might be a thousand years, they would stay alive against all the odds, like birds, passing on from body to body the vitality which the Party did not share and could not kill.

'Do you remember,' he said, 'the thrush that sang to us, that first day, at the edge of the wood?'

'He wasn't singing to us,' said Julia. 'He was singing to please himself. Not even that. He was just singing.'

The birds sang, the proles sang. the Party did not sing. All round the world, in London and New York, in Africa and Brazil, and in the mysterious, forbidden lands beyond the frontiers, in the streets of Paris and Berlin, in the villages of the endless Russian plain, in the bazaars of China and Japan -- everywhere stood the same solid unconquerable figure, made monstrous by work and childbearing, toiling from birth to death and still singing. Out of those mighty loins a race of conscious beings must one day come. You were the dead, theirs was the future. But you could share in that future if you kept alive the mind as they kept alive the body, and passed on the secret doctrine that two plus two make four.

'We are the dead,' he said.

'We are the dead,' echoed Julia dutifully.

'You are the dead,' said an iron voice behind them.

They sprang apart. Winston's entrails seemed to have turned into ice. He could see the white all round the irises of Julia's eyes. Her face had turned a milky yellow. The smear of rouge that was still on each cheekbone stood out sharply, almost as though unconnected with the skin beneath.

'You are the dead,' repeated the iron voice.

'It was behind the picture,' breathed Julia.

'It was behind the picture,' said the voice. 'Remain exactly where you are. Make no movement until you are ordered.'

It was starting, it was starting at last! They could do nothing except stand gazing into one another's eyes. To run for life, to get out of the house before it was too late -- no such thought occurred to them. Unthinkable to disobey the iron voice from the wall. There was a snap as though a catch had been turned back, and a crash of breaking glass. The picture had fallen to the floor uncovering the telescreen behind it.

'Now they can see us,' said Julia.

'Now we can see you,' said the voice. 'Stand out in the middle of the room. Stand back to back. Clasp your hands behind your heads. Do not touch one another.'

They were not touching, but it seemed to him that he could feel Julia's body shaking. Or perhaps it was merely the shaking of his own. He could just stop his teeth from chattering, but his knees were beyond his control. There was a sound of trampling boots below, inside the house and outside. The yard seemed to be full of men. Something was being dragged across the stones. The woman's singing had stopped abruptly. There was a long, rolling clang, as though the washtub had been flung across the yard, and then a confusion of angry shouts which ended in a yell of pain.

'The house is surrounded,' said Winston.

'The house is surrounded,' said the voice.

He heard Julia snap her teeth together. 'I suppose we may as well say good-bye,' she said.

'You may as well say good-bye,' said the voice. And then another quite different voice, a thin, cultivated voice which Winston had the impression of having heard before, struck in; 'And by the way, while we are on the subject, "Here comes a candle to light you to bed, here comes a chopper to chop off your head"!'.

Something crashed on to the bed behind Winston's back. The head of a ladder had been thrust through the window and had burst in the frame. Someone was climbing through the window. There was a stampede of boots up the stairs. The room was full of solid men in black uniforms, with iron-shod boots on their feet and truncheons in their hands.

Winston was not trembling any longer. Even his eyes he barely moved.

One thing alone mattered; to keep still, to keep still and not give them an excuse to hit you! A man with a smooth prize-fighter's jowl in which the mouth was only a slit paused opposite him balancing his truncheon meditatively between thumb and forefinger. Winston met his eyes. The feeling of nakedness, with one's hands behind one's head and one's face and body all exposed, was almost unbearable. The man protruded the tip of a white tongue, licked the place where his lips should have been, and then passed on. There was another crash. Someone had picked up the glass paperweight from the table and smashed it to pieces on the hearth-stone.

The fragment of coral, a tiny crinkle of pink like a sugar rosebud from a cake, rolled across the mat. How small, thought Winston, how small it always was! There was a gasp and a thump behind him, and he received a violent kick on the ankle which nearly flung him off his balance. One of the men had smashed his fist into Julia's solar plexus, doubling her up like a pocket ruler. She was thrashing about on the floor, fighting for breath. Winston dared not turn his head even by a millimetre, but sometimes her livid, gasping face came within the angle of his vision. Even in his terror it was as though he could feel the pain in his own body, the deadly pain which nevertheless was less urgent than the struggle to get back her breath. He knew what it was like; the terrible, agonizing pain which was there all the while but could not be suffered yet, because before all else it was necessary to be able to breathe. Then two of the men hoisted her up by knees and shoulders, and carried her out of the room like a sack. Winston had a glimpse of her face, upside down, yellow and contorted, with the eyes shut, and still with a smear of rouge on either cheek; and that was the last he saw of her.

He stood dead still. No one had hit him yet. Thoughts which came of their own accord but seemed totally uninteresting began to flit through his mind. He wondered whether they had got Mr Charrington. He wondered what they had done to the woman in the yard. He noticed that he badly wanted to urinate, and felt a faint surprise, because he had done so only two or three hours ago. He noticed that the clock on the mantelpiece said nine, meaning twenty-one. But the light seemed too strong. Would not the light be fading at twenty-one hours on an August evening? He wondered whether after all he and Julia had mistaken the time -- had slept the clock round and thought it was twenty-three when really it was nought eight-thirty on the following morning. But he did not pursue the thought further. It was not interesting.

There was another, lighter step in the passage. Mr Charrington came into the room. The demeanour of the black-uniformed men suddenly became more subdued. Something had also changed in Mr Charrington's appearance. His eye fell on the fragments of the glass paperweight.

'Pick up those pieces,' he said sharply.

A man stooped to obey. The cockney accent had disappeared; Winston suddenly realized whose voice it was that he had heard a few moments ago on the telescreen. Mr Charrington was still wearing his old velvet jacket, but his hair, which had been almost white, had turned black. Also he was not wearing his spectacles. He gave Winston a single sharp glance, as though verifying his identity, and then paid no more attention to him. He was still recognizable, but he was not the same person any longer. His body had straightened, and seemed to have grown bigger. His face had undergone only tiny changes that had nevertheless worked a complete transformation. The

black eyebrows were less bushy, the wrinkles were gone, the whole lines of the face seemed to have altered; even the nose seemed shorter. It was the alert, cold face of a man of about five-and-thirty. It occurred to Winston that for the first time in his life he was looking, with knowledge, at a member of the Thought Police.

XVIII

He did not know where he was. Presumably he was in the Ministry of Love, but there was no way of making certain. He was in a high-ceilinged windowless cell with walls of glittering white porcelain. Concealed lamps flooded it with cold light, and there was a low, steady humming sound which he supposed had something to do with the air supply. A bench, or shelf, just wide enough to sit on ran round the wall, broken only by the door and, at the end opposite the door, a lavatory pan with no wooden seat. There were four telescreens, one in each wall.

There was a dull aching in his belly. It had been there ever since they had bundled him into the closed van and driven him away. But he was also hungry, with a gnawing, unwholesome kind of hunger. It might be twenty-four hours since he had eaten, it might be thirty-six. He still did not know, probably never would know, whether it had been morning or evening when they arrested him. Since he was arrested he had not been fed.

He sat as still as he could on the narrow bench, with his hands crossed on his knee. He had already learned to sit still. If you made unexpected movements they yelled at you from the telescreen. But the craving for food was growing upon him. What he longed for above all was a piece of bread. He had an idea that there were a few breadcrumbs in the pocket of his overalls. It was even possible -- he thought this because from time to time something seemed to tickle his leg -- that there might be a sizeable bit of crust there. In the end the temptation to find out overcame his fear; he slipped a hand into his pocket.

'Smith!' yelled a voice from the telescreen. '6079 Smith W.! Hands out of pockets in the cells!'

He sat still again, his hands crossed on his knee. Before being brought here he had been taken to another place which must have been an ordinary prison or a temporary lock-up used by the patrols. He did not know how long he had been there; some hours at any rate; with no clocks and no daylight it was hard to gauge the time. It was a noisy, evil-smelling place. They had put him into a cell similar to the one he was now in, but filthily dirty and at all times crowded by ten or fifteen people. The majority of them were common criminals, but there were a few political prisoners among them. He had sat silent against the wall, jostled by dirty bodies, too preoccupied by fear and the pain in his belly to take much interest in his surroundings, but still noticing the astonishing difference in demeanour between the Party prisoners and the others. The Party prisoners were always silent and terrified, but the ordinary criminals seemed to care nothing for anybody. They yelled insults at the guards, fought back fiercely when their belongings were impounded, wrote obscene words on the floor, ate smuggled food which they produced from mysterious hiding-places in their clothes, and even shouted down the telescreen when it tried to restore order. On the other hand some of them seemed to be on good terms with the guards, called them by nicknames, and tried to wheedle cigarettes through the spyhole in the door. The guards, too, treated the common criminals with a certain forbearance, even when they had to handle them roughly. There was much talk about the forced-labour camps to which most of the prisoners expected to be sent. It was 'all right' in the camps, he gathered, so long as you had good contacts and knew the ropes. There was bribery, favouritism, and racketeering of every kind, there was

homosexuality and prostitution, there was even illicit alcohol distilled from potatoes. The positions of trust were given only to the common criminals, especially the gangsters and the murderers, who formed a sort of aristocracy. All the dirty jobs were done by the politicals.

There was a constant come-and-go of prisoners of every description: drug-peddlers, thieves, bandits, black-marketeers, drunks, prostitutes. Some of the drunks were so violent that the other prisoners had to combine to suppress them. An enormous wreck of a woman, aged about sixty, with great tumbling breasts and thick coils of white hair which had come down in her struggles, was carried in, kicking and shouting, by four guards, who had hold of her one at each corner. They wrenched off the boots with which she had been trying to kick them, and dumped her down across Winston's lap, almost breaking his thigh-bones. The woman hoisted herself upright and followed them out with a yell of 'F-- bastards!' Then, noticing that she was sitting on something uneven, she slid off Winston's knees on to the bench.

'Beg pardon, dearie,' she said. 'I wouldn't 'a sat on you, only the buggers put me there. They dono 'ow to treat a lady, do they?' She paused, patted her breast, and belched. 'Pardon,' she said, 'I ain't meself, quite.'

She leant forward and vomited copiously on the floor.

'Thass better,' she said, leaning back with closed eyes. 'Never keep it down, thass what I say. Get it up while it's fresh on your stomach, like.'

She revived, turned to have another look at Winston and seemed immediately to take a fancy to him. She put a vast arm round his shoulder

and drew him towards her, breathing beer and vomit into his face.

'Wass your name, dearie?' she said.

'Smith,' said Winston.

'Smith?' said the woman. 'Thass funny. My name's Smith too. Why,' she added sentimentally, 'I might be your mother!'

She might, thought Winston, be his mother. She was about the right age and physique, and it was probable that people changed somewhat after twenty years in a forced-labour camp.

No one else had spoken to him. To a surprising extent the ordinary criminals ignored the Party prisoners. 'The polits,' they called them, with a sort of uninterested contempt. The Party prisoners seemed terrified of speaking to anybody, and above all of speaking to one another. Only once, when two Party members, both women, were pressed close together on the bench, he overheard amid the din of voices a few hurriedly-whispered words; and in particular a reference to something called 'room one-oh-one', which he did not understand.

It might be two or three hours ago that they had brought him here. The dull pain in his belly never went away, but sometimes it grew better and sometimes worse, and his thoughts expanded or contracted accordingly. When it grew worse he thought only of the pain itself, and of his desire for food. When it grew better, panic took hold of him. There were moments when he foresaw the things that would happen to him with such actuality that his heart galloped and his breath stopped. He felt the smash of truncheons on

his elbows and iron-shod boots on his shins; he saw himself grovelling on the floor, screaming for mercy through broken teeth. He hardly thought of Julia. He could not fix his mind on her. He loved her and would not betray her; but that was only a fact, known as he knew the rules of arithmetic. He felt no love for her, and he hardly even wondered what was happening to her. He thought oftener of O'Brien, with a flickering hope. O'Brien might know that he had been arrested. The Brotherhood, he had said, never tried to save its members. But there was the razor blade; they would send the razor blade if they could. There would be perhaps five seconds before the guard could rush into the cell. The blade would bite into him with a sort of burning coldness, and even the fingers that held it would be cut to the bone. Everything came back to his sick body, which shrank trembling from the smallest pain. He was not certain that he would use the razor blade even if he got the chance. It was more natural to exist from moment to moment, accepting another ten minutes' life even with the certainty that there was torture at the end of it.

Sometimes he tried to calculate the number of porcelain bricks in the walls of the cell. It should have been easy, but he always lost count at some point or another. More often he wondered where he was, and what time of day it was. At one moment he felt certain that it was broad daylight outside, and at the next equally certain that it was pitch darkness. In this place, he knew instinctively, the lights would never be turned out. It was the place with no darkness: he saw now why O'Brien had seemed to recognize the allusion. In the Ministry of Love there were no windows. His cell might be at the heart of the building or against its outer wall; it might be ten floors below ground, or thirty above it. He moved himself mentally from place to place, and tried to determine by the feeling of his body whether he was perched high in the

air or buried deep underground.

There was a sound of marching boots outside. The steel door opened with a clang. A young officer, a trim black-uniformed figure who seemed to glitter all over with polished leather, and whose pale, straight-featured face was like a wax mask, stepped smartly through the doorway. He motioned to the guards outside to bring in the prisoner they were leading. The poet Ampleforth shambled into the cell. The door clanged shut again.

Ampleforth made one or two uncertain movements from side to side, as though having some idea that there was another door to go out of, and then began to wander up and down the cell. He had not yet noticed Winston's presence. His troubled eyes were gazing at the wall about a metre above the level of Winston's head. He was shoeless; large, dirty toes were sticking out of the holes in his socks. He was also several days away from a shave. A scrubby beard covered his face to the cheekbones, giving him an air of ruffianism that went oddly with his large weak frame and nervous movements.

Winston roused himself a little from his lethargy. He must speak to Ampleforth, and risk the yell from the telescreen. It was even conceivable that Ampleforth was the bearer of the razor blade.

'Ampleforth,' he said.

There was no yell from the telescreen. Ampleforth paused, mildly startled. His eyes focused themselves slowly on Winston.

'Ah, Smith!' he said. 'You too!'

'What are you in for?'

'To tell you the truth -- ' He sat down awkwardly on the bench opposite Winston. 'There is only one offence, is there not?' he said.

'And have you committed it?'

'Apparently I have.'

He put a hand to his forehead and pressed his temples for a moment, as though trying to remember something.

'These things happen,' he began vaguely. 'I have been able to recall one instance -- a possible instance. It was an indiscretion, undoubtedly. We were producing a definitive edition of the poems of Kipling. I allowed the word "God" to remain at the end of a line. I could not help it!' he added almost indignantly, raising his face to look at Winston. 'It was impossible to change the line. The rhyme was "rod". Do you realize that there are only twelve rhymes to "rod" in the entire language? For days I had racked my brains. There was no other rhyme.'

The expression on his face changed. The annoyance passed out of it and for a moment he looked almost pleased. A sort of intellectual warmth, the joy of the pedant who has found out some useless fact, shone through the dirt and scrubby hair.

'Has it ever occurred to you,' he said, 'that the whole history of English poetry has been determined by the fact that the English language lacks rhymes?'

No, that particular thought had never occurred to Winston. Nor, in the circumstances, did it strike him as very important or interesting.

'Do you know what time of day it is?' he said.

Ampleforth looked startled again. 'I had hardly thought about it. They arrested me -- it could be two days ago -- perhaps three.' His eyes flitted round the walls, as though he half expected to find a window somewhere. 'There is no difference between night and day in this place. I do not see how one can calculate the time.'

They talked desultorily for some minutes, then, without apparent reason, a yell from the telescreen bade them be silent. Winston sat quietly, his hands crossed. Ampleforth, too large to sit in comfort on the narrow bench, fidgeted from side to side, clasping his lank hands first round one knee, then round the other. The telescreen barked at him to keep still. Time passed. Twenty minutes, an hour -- it was difficult to judge. Once more there was a sound of boots outside. Winston's entrails contracted. Soon, very soon, perhaps in five minutes, perhaps now, the tramp of boots would mean that his own turn had come.

The door opened. The cold-faced young officer stepped into the cell. With a brief movement of the hand he indicated Ampleforth.

'Room 101,' he said.

Ampleforth marched clumsily out between the guards, his face vaguely perturbed, but uncomprehending.

What seemed like a long time passed. The pain in Winston's belly had revived. His mind sagged round and round on the same trick, like a ball falling again and again into the same series of slots. He had only six thoughts. The pain in his belly; a piece of bread; the blood and the screaming; O'Brien ; Julia; the razor blade. There was another spasm in his entrails, the heavy boots were approaching. As the door opened, the wave of air that it created brought in a powerful smell of cold sweat. Parsons walked into the cell. He was wearing khaki shorts and a sports-shirt.

This time Winston was startled into self-forgetfulness.

'You here!' he said.

Parsons gave Winston a glance in which there was neither interest nor surprise, but only misery. He began walking jerkily up and down, evidently unable to keep still. Each time he straightened his pudgy knees it was apparent that they were trembling. His eyes had a wide-open, staring look, as though he could not prevent himself from gazing at something in the middle distance.

'What are you in for?' said Winston.

'Thoughtcrime!' said Parsons, almost blubbing. The tone of his voice implied at once a complete admission of his guilt and a sort of incredulous horror that such a word could be applied to himself. He paused opposite Winston and began eagerly appealing to him: 'You don't think they'll shoot me, do you, old chap? They don't shoot you if you haven't actually done anything -- only thoughts, which you can't help? I know they give you a fair

hearing. Oh, I trust them for that! They'll know my record, won't they? You know what kind of chap I was. Not a bad chap in my way. Not brainy, of course, but keen. I tried to do my best for the Party, didn't I? I'll get off with five years, don't you think? Or even ten years? A chap like me could make himself pretty useful in a labour-camp. They wouldn't shoot me for going off the rails just once?'

'Are you guilty?' said Winston.

'Of course I'm guilty!' cried Parsons with a servile glance at the telescreen. 'You don't think the Party would arrest an innocent man, do you?' His frog-like face grew calmer, and even took on a slightly sanctimonious expression. 'Thoughtcrime is a dreadful thing, old man,' he said sententiously. 'It's insidious. It can get hold of you without your even knowing it. Do you know how it got hold of me? In my sleep! Yes, that's a fact. There I was, working away, trying to do my bit -- never knew I had any bad stuff in my mind at all. And then I started talking in my sleep. Do you know what they heard me saying?'

He sank his voice, like someone who is obliged for medical reasons to utter an obscenity.

"Down with Big Brother!" Yes, I said that! Said it over and over again, it seems. Between you and me, old man, I'm glad they got me before it went any further. Do you know what I'm going to say to them when I go up before the tribunal? "Thank you," I'm going to say, "thank you for saving me before it was too late."

'Who denounced you?' said Winston.

'It was my little daughter,' said Parsons with a sort of doleful pride. 'She listened at the keyhole. Heard what I was saying, and nipped off to the patrols the very next day. Pretty smart for a nipper of seven, eh? I don't bear her any grudge for it. In fact I'm proud of her. It shows I brought her up in the right spirit, anyway.'

He made a few more jerky movements up and down, several times, casting a longing glance at the lavatory pan. Then he suddenly ripped down his shorts. 'Excuse me, old man,' he said. 'I can't help it. It's the waiting.'

He plumped his large posterior into the lavatory pan. Winston covered his face with his hands.

'Smith!' yelled the voice from the telescreen. '6079 Smith W! Uncover your face. No faces covered in the cells.'

Winston uncovered his face. Parsons used the lavatory, loudly and abundantly. It then turned out that the plug was defective and the cell stank abominably for hours afterwards.

Parsons was removed. More prisoners came and went, mysteriously. One, a woman, was consigned to 'Room 101', and, Winston noticed, seemed to shrivel and turn a different colour when she heard the words. A time came when, if it had been morning when he was brought here, it would be afternoon; or if it had been afternoon, then it would be midnight. There were six prisoners in the cell, men and women. All sat very still. Opposite Winston there sat a man with a chinless, toothy face exactly like that of some large,

harmless rodent. His fat, mottled cheeks were so pouched at the bottom that it was difficult not to believe that he had little stores of food tucked away there. His pale-grey eyes flitted timorously from face to face and turned quickly away again when he caught anyone's eye.

The door opened, and another prisoner was brought in whose appearance sent a momentary chill through Winston. He was a commonplace, mean-looking man who might have been an engineer or technician of some kind. But what was startling was the emaciation of his face. It was like a skull. Because of its thinness the mouth and eyes looked disproportionately large, and the eyes seemed filled with a murderous, unappeasable hatred of somebody or something.

The man sat down on the bench at a little distance from Winston. Winston did not look at him again, but the tormented, skull-like face was as vivid in his mind as though it had been straight in front of his eyes. Suddenly he realized what was the matter. The man was dying of starvation. The same thought seemed to occur almost simultaneously to everyone in the cell. There was a very faint stirring all the way round the bench. The eyes of the chinless man kept flitting towards the skull-faced man, then turning guiltily away, then being dragged back by an irresistible attraction. Presently he began to fidget on his seat. At last he stood up, waddled clumsily across the cell, dug down into the pocket of his overalls, and, with an abashed air, held out a grimy piece of bread to the skull-faced man.

There was a furious, deafening roar from the telescreen. The chinless man jumped in his tracks. The skull-faced man had quickly thrust his hands behind his back, as though demonstrating to all the world that he refused the

gift.

'Bumstead!' roared the voice. '2713 Bumstead J.! Let fall that piece of bread!'

The chinless man dropped the piece of bread on the floor.

'Remain standing where you are,' said the voice. 'Face the door. Make no movement.'

The chinless man obeyed. His large pouchy cheeks were quivering uncontrollably. The door clanged open. As the young officer entered and stepped aside, there emerged from behind him a short stumpy guard with enormous arms and shoulders. He took his stand opposite the chinless man, and then, at a signal from the officer, let free a frightful blow, with all the weight of his body behind it, full in the chinless man's mouth. The force of it seemed almost to knock him clear of the floor. His body was flung across the cell and fetched up against the base of the lavatory seat. For a moment he lay as though stunned, with dark blood oozing from his mouth and nose. A very faint whimpering or squeaking, which seemed unconscious, came out of him. Then he rolled over and raised himself unsteadily on hands and knees. Amid a stream of blood and saliva, the two halves of a dental plate fell out of his mouth.

The prisoners sat very still, their hands crossed on their knees. The chinless man climbed back into his place. Down one side of his face the flesh was darkening. His mouth had swollen into a shapeless cherry-coloured mass with a black hole in the middle of it.

From time to time a little blood dripped on to the breast of his overalls. His grey eyes still flitted from face to face, more guiltily than ever, as though he were trying to discover how much the others despised him for his humiliation.

The door opened. With a small gesture the officer indicated the skull-faced man.

'Room 101,' he said.

There was a gasp and a flurry at Winston's side. The man had actually flung himself on his knees on the floor, with his hand clasped together.

'Comrade! Officer!' he cried. 'You don't have to take me to that place! Haven't I told you everything already? What else is it you want to know? There's nothing I wouldn't confess, nothing! Just tell me what it is and I'll confess straight off. Write it down and I'll sign it -- anything! Not room 101!'

'Room 101,' said the officer.

The man's face, already very pale, turned a colour Winston would not have believed possible. It was definitely, unmistakably, a shade of green.

'Do anything to me!' he yelled. 'You've been starving me for weeks. Finish it off and let me die. Shoot me. Hang me. Sentence me to twenty-five years. Is there somebody else you want me to give away? Just say who it is and I'll tell you anything you want. I don't care who it is or what you do to them. I've got a wife and three children. The biggest of them isn't six years old. You can take the whole lot of them and cut their throats in front of my

eyes, and I'll stand by and watch it. But not Room 101!

'Room 101,' said the officer.

The man looked frantically round at the other prisoners, as though with some idea that he could put another victim in his own place. His eyes settled on the smashed face of the chinless man. He flung out a lean arm.

'That's the one you ought to be taking, not me!' he shouted. 'You didn't hear what he was saying after they bashed his face. Give me a chance and I'll tell you every word of it. He's the one that's against the Party, not me.' The guards stepped forward. The man's voice rose to a shriek. 'You didn't hear him!' he repeated. 'Something went wrong with the telescreen. He's the one you want. Take him, not me!'

The two sturdy guards had stooped to take him by the arms. But just at this moment he flung himself across the floor of the cell and grabbed one of the iron legs that supported the bench. He had set up a wordless howling, like an animal. The guards took hold of him to wrench him loose, but he clung on with astonishing strength. For perhaps twenty seconds they were hauling at him. The prisoners sat quiet, their hands crossed on their knees, looking straight in front of them. The howling stopped; the man had no breath left for anything except hanging on. Then there was a different kind of cry. A kick from a guard's boot had broken the fingers of one of his hands. They dragged him to his feet.

'Room 101,' said the officer.

The man was led out, walking unsteadily, with head sunken, nursing his

crushed hand, all the fight had gone out of him.

A long time passed. If it had been midnight when the skull-faced man was taken away, it was morning: if morning, it was afternoon. Winston was alone, and had been alone for hours. The pain of sitting on the narrow bench was such that often he got up and walked about, unreprieved by the telescreen. The piece of bread still lay where the chinless man had dropped it. At the beginning it needed a hard effort not to look at it, but presently hunger gave way to thirst. His mouth was sticky and evil-tasting. The humming sound and the unvarying white light induced a sort of faintness, an empty feeling inside his head. He would get up because the ache in his bones was no longer bearable, and then would sit down again almost at once because he was too dizzy to make sure of staying on his feet. Whenever his physical sensations were a little under control the terror returned. Sometimes with a fading hope he thought of O'Brien and the razor blade. It was thinkable that the razor blade might arrive concealed in his food, if he were ever fed. More dimly he thought of Julia. Somewhere or other she was suffering perhaps far worse than he. She might be screaming with pain at this moment. He thought: 'If I could save Julia by doubling my own pain, would I do it? Yes, I would.' But that was merely an intellectual decision, taken because he knew that he ought to take it. He did not feel it. In this place you could not feel anything, except pain and foreknowledge of pain. Besides, was it possible, when you were actually suffering it, to wish for any reason that your own pain should increase? But that question was not answerable yet.

The boots were approaching again. The door opened. O'Brien came in.

Winston started to his feet. The shock of the sight had driven all caution

out of him. For the first time in many years he forgot the presence of the telescreen.

'They've got you too!' he cried.

'They got me a long time ago,' said O'Brien with a mild, almost regretful irony. He stepped aside. From behind him there emerged a broad-chested guard with a long black truncheon in his hand.

'You know him, Winston,' said O'Brien. 'Don't deceive yourself. You did know it -- you have always known it.'

Yes, he saw now, he had always known it. But there was no time to think of that. All he had eyes for was the truncheon in the guard's hand. It might fall anywhere; on the crown, on the tip of the ear, on the upper arm, on the elbow-

The elbow! He had slumped to his knees, almost paralysed, clasping the stricken elbow with his other hand. Everything had exploded into yellow light. Inconceivable, inconceivable that one blow could cause such pain! The light cleared and he could see the other two looking down at him. The guard was laughing at his contortions. One question at any rate was answered. Never, for any reason on earth, could you wish for an increase of pain. Of pain you could wish only one thing: that it should stop. Nothing in the world was so bad as physical pain. In the face of pain there are no heroes, no heroes, he thought over and over as he writhed on the floor, clutching uselessly at his disabled left arm.

XIX

He was lying on something that felt like a camp bed, except that it was higher off the ground and that he was fixed down in some way so that he could not move. Light that seemed stronger than usual was falling on his face. O'Brien was standing at his side, looking down at him intently. At the other side of him stood a man in a white coat, holding a hypodermic syringe.

Even after his eyes were open he took in his surroundings only gradually. He had the impression of swimming up into this room from some quite different world, a sort of underwater world far beneath it. How long he had been down there he did not know. Since the moment when they arrested him he had not seen darkness or daylight. Besides, his memories were not continuous. There had been times when consciousness, even the sort of consciousness that one has in sleep, had stopped dead and started again after a blank interval. But whether the intervals were of days or weeks or only seconds, there was no way of knowing.

With that first blow on the elbow the nightmare had started. Later he was to realize that all that then happened was merely a preliminary, a routine interrogation to which nearly all prisoners were subjected. There was a long range of crimes -- espionage, sabotage, and the like -- to which everyone had to confess as a matter of course. The confession was a formality, though the torture was real. How many times he had been beaten, how long the beatings had continued, he could not remember. Always there were five or six men in black uniforms at him simultaneously. Sometimes it was fists, sometimes it was truncheons, sometimes it was steel rods, sometimes it was boots. There

were times when he rolled about the floor, as shameless as an animal, writhing his body this way and that in an endless, hopeless effort to dodge the kicks, and simply inviting more and yet more kicks, in his ribs, in his belly, on his elbows, on his shins, in his groin, in his testicles, on the bone at the base of his spine. There were times when it went on and on until the cruel, wicked, unforgivable thing seemed to him not that the guards continued to beat him but that he could not force himself into losing consciousness. There were times when his nerve so forsook him that he began shouting for mercy even before the beating began, when the mere sight of a fist drawn back for a blow was enough to make him pour forth a confession of real and imaginary crimes. There were other times when he started out with the resolve of confessing nothing, when every word had to be forced out of him between gasps of pain, and there were times when he feebly tried to compromise, when he said to himself: 'I will confess, but not yet. I must hold out till the pain becomes unbearable. Three more kicks, two more kicks, and then I will tell them what they want.' Sometimes he was beaten till he could hardly stand, then flung like a sack of potatoes on to the stone floor of a cell, left to recuperate for a few hours, and then taken out and beaten again. There were also longer periods of recovery. He remembered them dimly, because they were spent chiefly in sleep or stupor. He remembered a cell with a plank bed, a sort of shelf sticking out from the wall, and a tin wash-basin, and meals of hot soup and bread and sometimes coffee. He remembered a surly barber arriving to scrape his chin and crop his hair, and businesslike, unsympathetic men in white coats feeling his pulse, tapping his reflexes, turning up his eyelids, running harsh fingers over him in search for broken bones, and shooting needles into his arm to make him sleep.

The beatings grew less frequent, and became mainly a threat, a horror to which he could be sent back at any moment when his answers were unsatisfactory. His questioners now were not ruffians in black uniforms but Party intellectuals, little rotund men with quick movements and flashing spectacles, who worked on him in relays over periods which lasted -- he thought, he could not be sure -- ten or twelve hours at a stretch. These other questioners saw to it that he was in constant slight pain, but it was not chiefly pain that they relied on. They slapped his face, wrung his ears, pulled his hair, made him stand on one leg, refused him leave to urinate, shone glaring lights in his face until his eyes ran with water; but the aim of this was simply to humiliate him and destroy his power of arguing and reasoning. Their real weapon was the merciless questioning that went on and on, hour after hour, tripping him up, laying traps for him, twisting everything that he said, convicting him at every step of lies and self-contradiction until he began weeping as much from shame as from nervous fatigue. Sometimes he would weep half a dozen times in a single session. Most of the time they screamed abuse at him and threatened at every hesitation to deliver him over to the guards again; but sometimes they would suddenly change their tune, call him comrade, appeal to him in the name of Ingsoc and Big Brother, and ask him sorrowfully whether even now he had not enough loyalty to the Party left to make him wish to undo the evil he had done. When his nerves were in rags after hours of questioning, even this appeal could reduce him to snivelling tears. In the end the nagging voices broke him down more completely than the boots and fists of the guards. He became simply a mouth that uttered, a hand that signed, whatever was demanded of him. His sole concern was to find out what they wanted him to confess, and then confess it quickly, before the bullying started anew. He confessed to the assassination of eminent Party

members, the distribution of seditious pamphlets, embezzlement of public funds, sale of military secrets, sabotage of every kind. He confessed that he had been a spy in the pay of the Eastasian government as far back as 1968. He confessed that he was a religious believer, an admirer of capitalism, and a sexual pervert. He confessed that he had murdered his wife, although he knew, and his questioners must have known, that his wife was still alive. He confessed that for years he had been in personal touch with Goldstein and had been a member of an underground organization which had included almost every human being he had ever known. It was easier to confess everything and implicate everybody. Besides, in a sense it was all true. It was true that he had been the enemy of the Party, and in the eyes of the Party there was no distinction between the thought and the deed.

There were also memories of another kind. They stood out in his mind disconnectedly, like pictures with blackness all round them.

He was in a cell which might have been either dark or light, because he could see nothing except a pair of eyes. Near at hand some kind of instrument was ticking slowly and regularly. The eyes grew larger and more luminous. Suddenly he floated out of his seat, dived into the eyes, and was swallowed up.

He was strapped into a chair surrounded by dials, under dazzling lights. A man in a white coat was reading the dials. There was a tramp of heavy boots outside. The door clanged open. The waxed-faced officer marched in, followed by two guards.

'Room 101,' said the officer.

The man in the white coat did not turn round. He did not look at Winston either; he was looking only at the dials.

He was rolling down a mighty corridor, a kilometre wide, full of glorious, golden light, roaring with laughter and shouting out confessions at the top of his voice. He was confessing everything, even the things he had succeeded in holding back under the torture. He was relating the entire history of his life to an audience who knew it already. With him were the guards, the other questioners, the men in white coats, O'Brien, Julia, Mr Charrington, all rolling down the corridor together and shouting with laughter. Some dreadful thing which had lain embedded in the future had somehow been skipped over and had not happened. Everything was all right, there was no more pain, the last detail of his life was laid bare, understood, forgiven.

He was starting up from the plank bed in the half-certainty that he had heard O'Brien's voice. All through his interrogation, although he had never seen him, he had had the feeling that O'Brien was at his elbow, just out of sight. It was O'Brien who was directing everything. It was he who set the guards on to Winston and who prevented them from killing him. It was he who decided when Winston should scream with pain, when he should have a respite, when he should be fed, when he should sleep, when the drugs should be pumped into his arm. It was he who asked the questions and suggested the answers. He was the tormentor, he was the protector, he was the inquisitor, he was the friend. And once -- Winston could not remember whether it was in drugged sleep, or in normal sleep, or even in a moment of wakefulness -- a voice murmured in his ear: 'Don't worry, Winston; you are in my keeping.'

For seven years I have watched over you. Now the turning-point has come. I shall save you, I shall make you perfect.' He was not sure whether it was O'Brien's voice; but it was the same voice that had said to him, 'We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness,' in that other dream, seven years ago.

He did not remember any ending to his interrogation. There was a period of blackness and then the cell, or room, in which he now was had gradually materialized round him. He was almost flat on his back, and unable to move. His body was held down at every essential point. Even the back of his head was gripped in some manner. O'Brien was looking down at him gravely and rather sadly. His face, seen from below, looked coarse and worn, with pouches under the eyes and tired lines from nose to chin. He was older than Winston had thought him; he was perhaps forty-eight or fifty. Under his hand there was a dial with a lever on top and figures running round the face.

'I told you,' said O'Brien, 'that if we met again it would be here.'

'Yes,' said Winston.

Without any warning except a slight movement of O'Brien's hand, a wave of pain flooded his body. It was a frightening pain, because he could not see what was happening, and he had the feeling that some mortal injury was being done to him. He did not know whether the thing was really happening, or whether the effect was electrically produced; but his body was being wrenched out of shape, the joints were being slowly torn apart. Although the pain had brought the sweat out on his forehead, the worst of all was the fear that his backbone was about to snap. He set his teeth and

breathed hard through his nose, trying to keep silent as long as possible.

'You are afraid,' said O'Brien, watching his face, 'that in another moment something is going to break. Your especial fear is that it will be your backbone. You have a vivid mental picture of the vertebrae snapping apart and the spinal fluid dripping out of them. That is what you are thinking, is it not, Winston?'

Winston did not answer. O'Brien drew back the lever on the dial. The wave of pain receded almost as quickly as it had come.

'That was forty,' said O'Brien. 'You can see that the numbers on this dial run up to a hundred. Will you please remember, throughout our conversation, that I have it in my power to inflict pain on you at any moment and to whatever degree I choose? If you tell me any lies, or attempt to prevaricate in any way, or even fall below your usual level of intelligence, you will cry out with pain, instantly. Do you understand that?'

'Yes,' said Winston.

O'Brien's manner became less severe. He resettled his spectacles thoughtfully, and took a pace or two up and down. When he spoke his voice was gentle and patient. He had the air of a doctor, a teacher, even a priest, anxious to explain and persuade rather than to punish.

'I am taking trouble with you, Winston,' he said, 'because you are worth trouble. You know perfectly well what is the matter with you. You have known it for years, though you have fought against the knowledge. You are mentally deranged. You suffer from a defective memory. You are unable to

remember real events and you persuade yourself that you remember other events which never happened. Fortunately it is curable. You have never cured yourself of it, because you did not choose to. There was a small effort of the will that you were not ready to make. Even now, I am well aware, you are clinging to your disease under the impression that it is a virtue. Now we will take an example. At this moment, which power is Oceania at war with?

'When I was arrested, Oceania was at war with Eastasia.

'With Eastasia. Good. And Oceania has always been at war with Eastasia, has it not?'

Winston drew in his breath. He opened his mouth to speak and then did not speak. He could not take his eyes away from the dial.

'The truth, please, Winston. Your truth. Tell me what you think you remember.'

'I remember that until only a week before I was arrested, we were not at war with Eastasia at all. We were in alliance with them. The war was against Eurasia. That had lasted for four years. Before that -- '

O'Brien stopped him with a movement of the hand.

'Another example,' he said. 'Some years ago you had a very serious delusion indeed. You believed that three men, three one-time Party members named Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford men who were executed for treachery and sabotage after making the fullest possible confession -- were not guilty of the crimes they were charged with. You believed that you had

seen unmistakable documentary evidence proving that their confessions were false. There was a certain photograph about which you had a hallucination. You believed that you had actually held it in your hands. It was a photograph something like this.'

An oblong slip of newspaper had appeared between O'Brien's fingers. For perhaps five seconds it was within the angle of Winston's vision. It was a photograph, and there was no question of its identity. It was the photograph. It was another copy of the photograph of Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford at the party function in New York, which he had chanced upon eleven years ago and promptly destroyed. For only an instant it was before his eyes, then it was out of sight again. But he had seen it, unquestionably he had seen it! He made a desperate, agonizing effort to wrench the top half of his body free. It was impossible to move so much as a centimetre in any direction. For the moment he had even forgotten the dial. All he wanted was to hold the photograph in his fingers again, or at least to see it.

'It exists!' he cried.

'No,' said O'Brien.

He stepped across the room. There was a memory hole in the opposite wall. O'Brien lifted the grating. Unseen, the frail slip of paper was whirling away on the current of warm air; it was vanishing in a flash of flame. O'Brien turned away from the wall.

'Ashes,' he said. 'Not even identifiable ashes. Dust. It does not exist. It never existed.'

'But it did exist! It does exist! It exists in memory. I remember it. You remember it.'

'I do not remember it,' said O'Brien.

Winston's heart sank. That was doublethink. He had a feeling of deadly helplessness. If he could have been certain that O'Brien was lying, it would not have seemed to matter. But it was perfectly possible that O'Brien had really forgotten the photograph. And if so, then already he would have forgotten his denial of remembering it, and forgotten the act of forgetting. How could one be sure that it was simple trickery? Perhaps that lunatic dislocation in the mind could really happen: that was the thought that defeated him.

O'Brien was looking down at him speculatively. More than ever he had the air of a teacher taking pains with a wayward but promising child.

'There is a Party slogan dealing with the control of the past,' he said. 'Repeat it, if you please.'

"Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past," repeated Winston obediently.

"Who controls the present controls the past," said O'Brien, nodding his head with slow approval. 'Is it your opinion, Winston, that the past has real existence?'

Again the feeling of helplessness descended upon Winston. His eyes flitted towards the dial. He not only did not know whether 'yes' or 'no' was the

answer that would save him from pain; he did not even know which answer he believed to be the true one.

O'Brien smiled faintly. 'You are no metaphysician, Winston,' he said. 'Until this moment you had never considered what is meant by existence. I will put it more precisely. Does the past exist concretely, in space? Is there somewhere or other a place, a world of solid objects, where the past is still happening?'

'No.'

'Then where does the past exist, if at all?'

'In records. It is written down.'

'In records. And- ?'

'In the mind. In human memories.'

'In memory. Very well, then. We, the Party, control all records, and we control all memories. Then we control the past, do we not?'

'But how can you stop people remembering things?' cried Winston again momentarily forgetting the dial. 'It is involuntary. It is outside oneself. How can you control memory? You have not controlled mine!'

O'Brien's manner grew stern again. He laid his hand on the dial.

'On the contrary,' he said, 'you have not controlled it. That is what has brought you here. You are here because you have failed in humility, in self-

discipline. You would not make the act of submission which is the price of sanity. You preferred to be a lunatic, a minority of one. Only the disciplined mind can see reality, Winston. You believe that reality is something objective, external, existing in its own right. You also believe that the nature of reality is self-evident. When you delude yourself into thinking that you see something, you assume that everyone else sees the same thing as you. But I tell you, Winston, that reality is not external. Reality exists in the human mind, and nowhere else. Not in the individual mind, which can make mistakes, and in any case soon perishes: only in the mind of the Party, which is collective and immortal. Whatever the Party holds to be the truth, is truth. It is impossible to see reality except by looking through the eyes of the Party. That is the fact that you have got to relearn, Winston. It needs an act of self-destruction, an effort of the will. You must humble yourself before you can become sane.'

He paused for a few moments, as though to allow what he had been saying to sink in.

'Do you remember,' he went on, 'writing in your diary, "Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four"?"'

'Yes,' said Winston.

O'Brien held up his left hand, its back towards Winston, with the thumb hidden and the four fingers extended.

'How many fingers am I holding up, Winston?

'Four.'

'And if the party says that it is not four but five -- then how many?'

'Four.'

The word ended in a gasp of pain. The needle of the dial had shot up to fifty-five. The sweat had sprung out all over Winston's body. The air tore into his lungs and issued again in deep groans which even by clenching his teeth he could not stop. O'Brien watched him, the four fingers still extended. He drew back the lever. This time the pain was only slightly eased.

'How many fingers, Winston?'

'Four.'

The needle went up to sixty.

'How many fingers, Winston?'

'Four! Four! What else can I say? Four!'

The needle must have risen again, but he did not look at it. The heavy, stern face and the four fingers filled his vision. The fingers stood up before his eyes like pillars, enormous, blurry, and seeming to vibrate, but unmistakably four.

'How many fingers, Winston?'

'Four! Stop it, stop it! How can you go on? Four! Four!'

'How many fingers, Winston?'

'Five! Five! Five!'

'No, Winston, that is no use. You are lying. You still think there are four. How many fingers, please?'

'Four! five! Four! Anything you like. Only stop it, stop the pain!'

Abruptly he was sitting up with O'Brien's arm round his shoulders. He had perhaps lost consciousness for a few seconds. The bonds that had held his body down were loosened. He felt very cold, he was shaking uncontrollably, his teeth were chattering, the tears were rolling down his cheeks. For a moment he clung to O'Brien like a baby, curiously comforted by the heavy arm round his shoulders. He had the feeling that O'Brien was his protector, that the pain was something that came from outside, from some other source, and that it was O'Brien who would save him from it.

'You are a slow learner, Winston,' said O'Brien gently.

'How can I help it?' he blubbered. 'How can I help seeing what is in front of my eyes? Two and two are four.'

Sometimes, Winston. Sometimes they are five. Sometimes they are three. Sometimes they are all of them at once. You must try harder. It is not easy to become sane.'

He laid Winston down on the bed. The grip of his limbs tightened again, but the pain had ebbed away and the trembling had stopped, leaving him merely weak and cold. O'Brien motioned with his head to the man in the white coat, who had stood immobile throughout the proceedings. The man in

the white coat bent down and looked closely into Winston's eyes, felt his pulse, laid an ear against his chest, tapped here and there, then he nodded to O'Brien.

'Again,' said O'Brien.

The pain flowed into Winston's body. The needle must be at seventy, seventy-five. He had shut his eyes this time. He knew that the fingers were still there, and still four. All that mattered was somehow to stay alive until the spasm was over. He had ceased to notice whether he was crying out or not. The pain lessened again. He opened his eyes. O'Brien had drawn back the lever.

'How many fingers, Winston?'

'Four. I suppose there are four. I would see five if I could. I am trying to see five.'

'Which do you wish: to persuade me that you see five, or really to see them?'

'Really to see them.'

'Again,' said O'Brien.

Perhaps the needle was eighty -- ninety. Winston could not intermittently remember why the pain was happening. Behind his screwed-up eyelids a forest of fingers seemed to be moving in a sort of dance, weaving in and out, disappearing behind one another and reappearing again. He was trying to count them, he could not remember why. He knew only that it was

impossible to count them, and that this was somehow due to the mysterious identity between five and four. The pain died down again. When he opened his eyes it was to find that he was still seeing the same thing. Innumerable fingers, like moving trees, were still streaming past in either direction, crossing and recrossing. He shut his eyes again.

'How many fingers am I holding up, Winston?'

'I don't know. I don't know. You will kill me if you do that again. Four, five, six -- in all honesty I don't know.'

'Better,' said O'Brien.

A needle slid into Winston's arm. Almost in the same instant a blissful, healing warmth spread all through his body. The pain was already half-forgotten. He opened his eyes and looked up gratefully at O'Brien. At sight of the heavy, lined face, so ugly and so intelligent, his heart seemed to turn over. If he could have moved he would have stretched out a hand and laid it on O'Brien arm. He had never loved him so deeply as at this moment, and not merely because he had stopped the pain. The old feeling, that at bottom it did not matter whether O'Brien was a friend or an enemy, had come back. O'Brien was a person who could be talked to. Perhaps one did not want to be loved so much as to be understood. O'Brien had tortured him to the edge of lunacy, and in a little while, it was certain, he would send him to his death. It made no difference. In some sense that went deeper than friendship, they were intimates: somewhere or other, although the actual words might never be spoken, there was a place where they could meet and talk. O'Brien was looking down at him with an expression which suggested that the same

thought might be in his own mind. When he spoke it was in an easy, conversational tone.

'Do you know where you are, Winston?' he said.

'I don't know. I can guess. In the Ministry of Love.'

'Do you know how long you have been here?'

'I don't know. Days, weeks, months -- I think it is months.'

'And why do you imagine that we bring people to this place?'

'To make them confess.'

'No, that is not the reason. Try again.'

'To punish them.'

'No!' exclaimed O'Brien. His voice had changed extraordinarily, and his face had suddenly become both stern and animated. 'No! Not merely to extract your confession, not to punish you. Shall I tell you why we have brought you here? To cure you! To make you sane! Will you understand, Winston, that no one whom we bring to this place ever leaves our hands uncured? We are not interested in those stupid crimes that you have committed. The Party is not interested in the overt act: the thought is all we care about. We do not merely destroy our enemies, we change them. Do you understand what I mean by that?'

He was bending over Winston. His face looked enormous because of its

nearness, and hideously ugly because it was seen from below. Moreover it was filled with a sort of exaltation, a lunatic intensity. Again Winston's heart shrank. If it had been possible he would have cowered deeper into the bed. He felt certain that O'Brien was about to twist the dial out of sheer wantonness. At this moment, however, O'Brien turned away. He took a pace or two up and down. Then he continued less vehemently:

'The first thing for you to understand is that in this place there are no martyrdoms. You have read of the religious persecutions of the past. In the Middle Ages there was the Inquisition. It was a failure. It set out to eradicate heresy, and ended by perpetuating it. For every heretic it burned at the stake, thousands of others rose up. Why was that? Because the Inquisition killed its enemies in the open, and killed them while they were still unrepentant: in fact, it killed them because they were unrepentant. Men were dying because they would not abandon their true beliefs. Naturally all the glory belonged to the victim and all the shame to the Inquisitor who burned him. Later, in the twentieth century, there were the totalitarians, as they were called. There were the German Nazis and the Russian Communists. The Russians persecuted heresy more cruelly than the Inquisition had done. And they imagined that they had learned from the mistakes of the past; they knew, at any rate, that one must not make martyrs. Before they exposed their victims to public trial, they deliberately set themselves to destroy their dignity. They wore them down by torture and solitude until they were despicable, cringing wretches, confessing whatever was put into their mouths, covering themselves with abuse, accusing and sheltering behind one another, whimpering for mercy. And yet after only a few years the same thing had happened over again. The dead men had become martyrs and their

degradation was forgotten. Once again, why was it? In the first place, because the confessions that they had made were obviously extorted and untrue. We do not make mistakes of that kind. All the confessions that are uttered here are true. We make them true. And above all we do not allow the dead to rise up against us. You must stop imagining that posterity will vindicate you, Winston. Posterity will never hear of you. You will be lifted clean out from the stream of history. We shall turn you into gas and pour you into the stratosphere. Nothing will remain of you, not a name in a register, not a memory in a living brain. You will be annihilated in the past as well as in the future. You will never have existed.'

Then why bother to torture me? thought Winston, with a momentary bitterness. O'Brien checked his step as though Winston had uttered the thought aloud. His large ugly face came nearer, with the eyes a little narrowed.

'You are thinking,' he said, 'that since we intend to destroy you utterly, so that nothing that you say or do can make the smallest difference -- in that case, why do we go to the trouble of interrogating you first? That is what you were thinking, was it not?'

'Yes,' said Winston.

O'Brien smiled slightly. 'You are a flaw in the pattern, Winston. You are a stain that must be wiped out. Did I not tell you just now that we are different from the persecutors of the past? We are not content with negative obedience, nor even with the most abject submission. When finally you surrender to us, it must be of your own free will. We do not destroy the

heretic because he resists us: so long as he resists us we never destroy him. We convert him, we capture his inner mind, we reshape him. We burn all evil and all illusion out of him; we bring him over to our side, not in appearance, but genuinely, heart and soul. We make him one of ourselves before we kill him. It is intolerable to us that an erroneous thought should exist anywhere in the world, however secret and powerless it may be. Even in the instant of death we cannot permit any deviation. In the old days the heretic walked to the stake still a heretic, proclaiming his heresy, exulting in it. Even the victim of the Russian purges could carry rebellion locked up in his skull as he walked down the passage waiting for the bullet. But we make the brain perfect before we blow it out. The command of the old despotisms was "Thou shalt not". The command of the totalitarians was "Thou shalt". Our command is "Thou art". No one whom we bring to this place ever stands out against us. Everyone is washed clean. Even those three miserable traitors in whose innocence you once believed -- Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford -- in the end we broke them down. I took part in their interrogation myself. I saw them gradually worn down, whimpering, grovelling, weeping -- and in the end it was not with pain or fear, only with penitence. By the time we had finished with them they were only the shells of men. There was nothing left in them except sorrow for what they had done, and love of Big Brother. It was touching to see how they loved him. They begged to be shot quickly, so that they could die while their minds were still clean.'

His voice had grown almost dreamy. The exaltation, the lunatic enthusiasm, was still in his face. He is not pretending, thought Winston, he is not a hypocrite, he believes every word he says. What most oppressed him was the consciousness of his own intellectual inferiority. He watched the

heavy yet graceful form strolling to and fro, in and out of the range of his vision. O'Brien was a being in all ways larger than himself. There was no idea that he had ever had, or could have, that O'Brien had not long ago known, examined, and rejected. His mind contained Winston's mind. But in that case how could it be true that O'Brien was mad? It must be he, Winston, who was mad. O'Brien halted and looked down at him. His voice had grown stern again.

'Do not imagine that you will save yourself, Winston, however completely you surrender to us. No one who has once gone astray is ever spared. And even if we chose to let you live out the natural term of your life, still you would never escape from us. What happens to you here is for ever. Understand that in advance. We shall crush you down to the point from which there is no coming back. Things will happen to you from which you could not recover, if you lived a thousand years. Never again will you be capable of ordinary human feeling. Everything will be dead inside you. Never again will you be capable of love, or friendship, or joy of living, or laughter, or curiosity, or courage, or integrity. You will be hollow. We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you with ourselves.'

He paused and signed to the man in the white coat. Winston was aware of some heavy piece of apparatus being pushed into place behind his head. O'Brien had sat down beside the bed, so that his face was almost on a level with Winston's.

'Three thousand,' he said, speaking over Winston's head to the man in the white coat.

Two soft pads, which felt slightly moist, clamped themselves against Winston's temples. He quailed. There was pain coming, a new kind of pain. O'Brien laid a hand reassuringly, almost kindly, on his.

'This time it will not hurt,' he said. 'Keep your eyes fixed on mine.'

At this moment there was a devastating explosion, or what seemed like an explosion, though it was not certain whether there was any noise. There was undoubtedly a blinding flash of light. Winston was not hurt, only prostrated. Although he had already been lying on his back when the thing happened, he had a curious feeling that he had been knocked into that position. A terrific painless blow had flattened him out. Also something had happened inside his head. As his eyes regained their focus he remembered who he was, and where he was, and recognized the face that was gazing into his own; but somewhere or other there was a large patch of emptiness, as though a piece had been taken out of his brain.

'It will not last,' said O'Brien. 'Look me in the eyes. What country is Oceania at war with?'

Winston thought. He knew what was meant by Oceania and that he himself was a citizen of Oceania. He also remembered Eurasia and Eastasia; but who was at war with whom he did not know. In fact he had not been aware that there was any war.

'I don't remember.'

'Oceania is at war with Eastasia. Do you remember that now?'

'Yes.'

'Oceania has always been at war with Eastasia. Since the beginning of your life, since the beginning of the Party, since the beginning of history, the war has continued without a break, always the same war. Do you remember that?'

'Yes.'

'Eleven years ago you created a legend about three men who had been condemned to death for treachery. You pretended that you had seen a piece of paper which proved them innocent. No such piece of paper ever existed. You invented it, and later you grew to believe in it. You remember now the very moment at which you first invented it. Do you remember that?'

'Yes.'

'Just now I held up the fingers of my hand to you. You saw five fingers. Do you remember that?'

'Yes.'

O'Brien held up the fingers of his left hand, with the thumb concealed.

'There are five fingers there. Do you see five fingers?'

'Yes.'

And he did see them, for a fleeting instant, before the scenery of his mind changed. He saw five fingers, and there was no deformity. Then

everything was normal again, and the old fear, the hatred, and the bewilderment came crowding back again. But there had been a moment -- he did not know how long, thirty seconds, perhaps -- of luminous certainty, when each new suggestion of O'Brien's had filled up a patch of emptiness and become absolute truth, and when two and two could have been three as easily as five, if that were what was needed. It had faded but before O'Brien had dropped his hand; but though he could not recapture it, he could remember it, as one remembers a vivid experience at some period of one's life when one was in effect a different person.

'You see now,' said O'Brien, 'that it is at any rate possible.'

'Yes,' said Winston.

O'Brien stood up with a satisfied air. Over to his left Winston saw the man in the white coat break an ampoule and draw back the plunger of a syringe. O'Brien turned to Winston with a smile. In almost the old manner he resettled his spectacles on his nose.

'Do you remember writing in your diary,' he said, 'that it did not matter whether I was a friend or an enemy, since I was at least a person who understood you and could be talked to? You were right. I enjoy talking to you. Your mind appeals to me. It resembles my own mind except that you happen to be insane. Before we bring the session to an end you can ask me a few questions, if you choose.'

'Any question I like?'

'Anything.' He saw that Winston's eyes were upon the dial. 'It is

switched off. What is your first question?

'What have you done with Julia?' said Winston.

O'Brien smiled again. 'She betrayed you, Winston. Immediately-unreservedly. I have seldom seen anyone come over to us so promptly. You would hardly recognize her if you saw her. All her rebelliousness, her deceit, her folly, her dirty-mindedness -- everything has been burned out of her. It was a perfect conversion, a textbook case.'

'You tortured her?'

O'Brien left this unanswered. 'Next question,' he said.

'Does Big Brother exist?'

'Of course he exists. The Party exists. Big Brother is the embodiment of the Party.'

'Does he exist in the same way as I exist?'

'You do not exist,' said O'Brien.

Once again the sense of helplessness assailed him. He knew, or he could imagine, the arguments which proved his own nonexistence; but they were nonsense, they were only a play on words. Did not the statement, 'You do not exist', contain a logical absurdity? But what use was it to say so? His mind shrivelled as he thought of the unanswerable, mad arguments with which O'Brien would demolish him.

'I think I exist,' he said wearily. 'I am conscious of my own identity. I was born and I shall die. I have arms and legs. I occupy a particular point in space. No other solid object can occupy the same point simultaneously. In that sense, does Big Brother exist?'

'It is of no importance. He exists.'

'Will Big Brother ever die?'

'Of course not. How could he die? Next question.'

'Does the Brotherhood exist?'

'That, Winston, you will never know. If we choose to set you free when we have finished with you, and if you live to be ninety years old, still you will never learn whether the answer to that question is Yes or No. As long as you live it will be an unsolved riddle in your mind.'

Winston lay silent. His breast rose and fell a little faster. He still had not asked the question that had come into his mind the first. He had got to ask it, and yet it was as though his tongue would not utter it. There was a trace of amusement in O'Brien's face. Even his spectacles seemed to wear an ironical gleam. He knows, thought Winston suddenly, he knows what I am going to ask! At the thought the words burst out of him:

'What is in Room 101?'

The expression on O'Brien's face did not change. He answered drily:

'You know what is in Room 101, Winston. Everyone knows what is in

Room 101.'

He raised a finger to the man in the white coat. Evidently the session was at an end. A needle jerked into Winston's arm. He sank almost instantly into deep sleep.

XX

'There are three stages in your reintegration,' said O'Brien. 'There is learning, there is understanding, and there is acceptance. It is time for you to enter upon the second stage.'

As always, Winston was lying flat on his back. But of late his bonds were looser. They still held him to the bed, but he could move his knees a little and could turn his head from side to side and raise his arms from the elbow. The dial, also, had grown to be less of a terror. He could evade its pangs if he was quick-witted enough: it was chiefly when he showed stupidity that O'Brien pulled the lever. Sometimes they got through a whole session without use of the dial. He could not remember how many sessions there had been. The whole process seemed to stretch out over a long, indefinite time -- weeks, possibly -- and the intervals between the sessions might sometimes have been days, sometimes only an hour or two.

'As you lie there,' said O'Brien, 'you have often wondered you have even asked me -- why the Ministry of Love should expend so much time and trouble on you. And when you were free you were puzzled by what was essentially the same question. You could grasp the mechanics of the Society you lived in, but not its underlying motives. Do you remember writing in your diary, "I understand how: I do not understand why"? It was when you thought about "why" that you doubted your own sanity. You have read the book, Goldstein's book, or parts of it, at least. Did it tell you anything that you did not know already?'

'You have read it?' said Winston.

'I wrote it. That is to say, I collaborated in writing it. No book is produced individually, as you know.'

'Is it true, what it says?'

'A description, yes. The programme it sets forth is nonsense. The secret accumulation of knowledge -- a gradual spread of enlightenment -- ultimately a proletarian rebellion -- the overthrow of the Party. You foresaw yourself that that was what it would say. It is all nonsense. The proletarians will never revolt, not in a thousand years or a million. They cannot. I do not have to tell you the reason: you know it already. If you have ever cherished any dreams of violent insurrection, you must abandon them. There is no way in which the Party can be overthrown. The rule of the Party is for ever. Make that the starting-point of your thoughts.'

He came closer to the bed. 'For ever!' he repeated. 'And now let us get back to the question of "how" and "why". You understand well enough how the Party maintains itself in power. Now tell me why we cling to power. What is our motive? Why should we want power? Go on, speak,' he added as Winston remained silent.

Nevertheless Winston did not speak for another moment or two. A feeling of weariness had overwhelmed him. The faint, mad gleam of enthusiasm had come back into O'Brien's face. He knew in advance what O'Brien would say. That the Party did not seek power for its own ends, but only for the good of the majority. That it sought power because men in the

mass were frail cowardly creatures who could not endure liberty or face the truth, and must be ruled over and systematically deceived by others who were stronger than themselves. That the choice for mankind lay between freedom and happiness, and that, for the great bulk of mankind, happiness was better. That the party was the eternal guardian of the weak, a dedicated sect doing evil that good might come, sacrificing its own happiness to that of others. The terrible thing, thought Winston, the terrible thing was that when O'Brien said this he would believe it. You could see it in his face. O'Brien knew everything. A thousand times better than Winston he knew what the world was really like, in what degradation the mass of human beings lived and by what lies and barbarities the Party kept them there. He had understood it all, weighed it all, and it made no difference: all was justified by the ultimate purpose. What can you do, thought Winston, against the lunatic who is more intelligent than yourself, who gives your arguments a fair hearing and then simply persists in his lunacy?

'You are ruling over us for our own good,' he said feebly. 'You believe that human beings are not fit to govern themselves, and therefore-'

He started and almost cried out. A pang of pain had shot through his body. O'Brien had pushed the lever of the dial up to thirty-five.

'That was stupid, Winston, stupid!' he said. 'You should know better than to say a thing like that.'

He pulled the lever back and continued:

'Now I will tell you the answer to my question. It is this. The Party seeks

power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others ; we are interested solely in power. Not wealth or luxury or long life or happiness: only power, pure power. What pure power means you will understand presently. We are different from all the oligarchies of the past, in that we know what we are doing. All the others, even those who resembled ourselves, were- cowards and hypocrites. The German Nazis and the Russian Communists came very close to us in their methods, but they never had the courage to recognize their own motives. They pretended, perhaps they even believed, that they had seized power unwillingly and for a limited time, and that just round the corner there lay a paradise where human beings would be free and equal. We are not like that. We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means, it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship. The object of persecution is persecution. The object of torture is torture. The object of power is power. Now do you begin to understand me?'

Winston was struck, as he had been struck before, by the tiredness of O'Brien's face. It was strong and fleshy and brutal, it was full of intelligence and a sort of controlled passion before which he felt himself helpless; but it was tired. There were pouches under the eyes, the skin sagged from the cheekbones. O'Brien leaned over him, deliberately bringing the worn face nearer.

'You are thinking,' he said, 'that my face is old and tired. You are thinking that I talk of power, and yet I am not even able to prevent the decay of my own body. Can you not understand, Winston, that the individual is

only a cell? The weariness of the cell is the vigour of the organism. Do you die when you cut your fingernails?'

He turned away from the bed and began strolling up and down again, one hand in his pocket.

'We are the priests of power,' he said. 'God is power. But at present power is only a word so far as you are concerned. It is time for you to gather some idea of what power means. The first thing you must realize is that power is collective. The individual only has power in so far as he ceases to be an individual. You know the Party slogan: "Freedom is Slavery". Has it ever occurred to you that it is reversible? Slavery is freedom. Alone -- free -- the human being is always defeated. It must be so, because every human being is doomed to die, which is the greatest of all failures. But if he can make complete, utter submission, if he can escape from his identity, if he can merge himself in the Party so that he is the Party, then he is all-powerful and immortal. The second thing for you to realize is that power is power over human beings. Over the body but, above all, over the mind. Power over matter -- external reality, as you would call it -- is not important. Already our control over matter is absolute.'

For a moment Winston ignored the dial. He made a violent effort to raise himself into a sitting position, and merely succeeded in wrenching his body painfully.

'But how can you control matter?' he burst out. 'You don't even control the climate or the law of gravity. And there are disease, pain, death-'

O'Brien silenced him by a movement of his hand. 'We control matter because we control the mind. Reality is inside the skull. You will learn by degrees, Winston. There is nothing that we could not do. Invisibility, levitation -- anything. I could float off this floor like a soap bubble if I wish to. I do not wish to, because the Party does not wish it. You must get rid of those nineteenth-century ideas about the laws of Nature. We make the laws of Nature.'

'But you do not! You are not even masters of this planet. What about Eurasia and Eastasia? You have not conquered them yet.'

'Unimportant. We shall conquer them when it suits us. And if we did not, what difference would it make? We can shut them out of existence. Oceania is the world.'

'But the world itself is only a speck of dust. And man is tiny helpless! How long has he been in existence? For millions of years the earth was uninhabited.'

'Nonsense. The earth is as old as we are, no older. How could it be older? Nothing exists except through human consciousness.'

'But the rocks are full of the bones of extinct animals -- mammoths and mastodons and enormous reptiles which lived here long before man was ever heard of.'

'Have you ever seen those bones, Winston? Of course not. Nineteenth-century biologists invented them. Before man there was nothing. After man, if he could come to an end, there would be nothing. Outside man there is

nothing.'

'But the whole universe is outside us. Look at the stars! Some of them are a million light-years away. They are out of our reach for ever.'

'What are the stars?' said O'Brien indifferently. 'They are bits of fire a few kilometres away. We could reach them if we wanted to. Or we could blot them out. The earth is the centre of the universe. The sun and the stars go round it.'

Winston made another convulsive movement. This time he did not say anything. O'Brien continued as though answering a spoken objection:

'For certain purposes, of course, that is not true. When we navigate the ocean, or when we predict an eclipse, we often find it convenient to assume that the earth goes round the sun and that the stars are millions upon millions of kilometres away. But what of it? Do you suppose it is beyond us to produce a dual system of astronomy? The stars can be near or distant, according as we need them. Do you suppose our mathematicians are unequal to that? Have you forgotten doublethink?'

Winston shrank back upon the bed. Whatever he said, the swift answer crushed him like a bludgeon. And yet he knew, he knew, that he was in the right. The belief that nothing exists outside your own mind -- surely there must be some way of demonstrating that it was false? Had it not been exposed long ago as a fallacy? There was even a name for it, which he had forgotten. A faint smile twitched the corners of O'Brien's mouth as he looked down at him.

'I told you, Winston,' he said, 'that metaphysics is not your strong point. The word you are trying to think of is solipsism. But you are mistaken. This is not solipsism. Collective solipsism, if you like. But that is a different thing: in fact, the opposite thing. All this is a digression,' he added in a different tone. 'The real power, the power we have to fight for night and day, is not power over things, but over men.' He paused, and for a moment assumed again his air of a schoolmaster questioning a promising pupil: 'How does one man assert his power over another, Winston?'

Winston thought. 'By making him suffer,' he said.

'Exactly. By making him suffer. Obedience is not enough. Unless he is suffering, how can you be sure that he is obeying your will and not his own? Power is in inflicting pain and humiliation. Power is in tearing human minds to pieces and putting them together again in new shapes of your own choosing. Do you begin to see, then, what kind of world we are creating? It is the exact opposite of the stupid hedonistic Utopias that the old reformers imagined. A world of fear and treachery is torment, a world of trampling and being trampled upon, a world which will grow not less but more merciless as it refines itself. Progress in our world will be progress towards more pain. The old civilizations claimed that they were founded on love or justice. Ours is founded upon hatred. In our world there will be no emotions except fear, rage, triumph, and self-abasement. Everything else we shall destroy everything. Already we are breaking down the habits of thought which have survived from before the Revolution. We have cut the links between child and parent, and between man and man, and between man and woman. No one dares trust a wife or a child or a friend any longer. But in the future there will

be no wives and no friends. Children will be taken from their mothers at birth, as one takes eggs from a hen. The sex instinct will be eradicated. Procreation will be an annual formality like the renewal of a ration card. We shall abolish the orgasm. Our neurologists are at work upon it now. There will be no loyalty, except loyalty towards the Party. There will be no love, except the love of Big Brother. There will be no laughter, except the laugh of triumph over a defeated enemy. There will be no art, no literature, no science. When we are omnipotent we shall have no more need of science. There will be no distinction between beauty and ugliness. There will be no curiosity, no enjoyment of the process of life. All competing pleasures will be destroyed. But always -- do not forget this, Winston -- always there will be the intoxication of power, constantly increasing and constantly growing subtler. Always, at every moment, there will be the thrill of victory, the sensation of trampling on an enemy who is helpless. If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face -- for ever.'

He paused as though he expected Winston to speak. Winston had tried to shrink back into the surface of the bed again. He could not say anything. His heart seemed to be frozen. O'Brien went on:

'And remember that it is for ever. The face will always be there to be stamped upon. The heretic, the enemy of society, will always be there, so that he can be defeated and humiliated over again. Everything that you have undergone since you have been in our hands -- all that will continue, and worse. The espionage, the betrayals, the arrests, the tortures, the executions, the disappearances will never cease. It will be a world of terror as much as a world of triumph. The more the Party is powerful, the less it will be tolerant:

the weaker the opposition, the tighter the despotism. Goldstein and his heresies will live for ever. Every day, at every moment, they will be defeated, discredited, ridiculed, spat upon and yet they will always survive. This drama that I have played out with you during seven years will be played out over and over again generation after generation, always in subtler forms. Always we shall have the heretic here at our mercy, screaming with pain, broken up, contemptible -- and in the end utterly penitent, saved from himself, crawling to our feet of his own accord. That is the world that we are preparing, Winston. A world of victory after victory, triumph after triumph after triumph: an endless pressing, pressing, pressing upon the nerve of power. You are beginning, I can see, to realize what that world will be like. But in the end you will do more than understand it. You will accept it, welcome it, become part of it.'

Winston had recovered himself sufficiently to speak. 'You can't!' he said weakly.

'What do you mean by that remark, Winston?'

'You could not create such a world as you have just described. It is a dream. It is impossible.'

'Why?'

'It is impossible to found a civilization on fear and hatred and cruelty. It would never endure.'

'Why not?'

'It would have no vitality. It would disintegrate. It would commit suicide.'

'Nonsense. You are under the impression that hatred is more exhausting than love. Why should it be? And if it were, what difference would that make? Suppose that we choose to wear ourselves out faster. Suppose that we quicken the tempo of human life till men are senile at thirty. Still what difference would it make? Can you not understand that the death of the individual is not death? The party is immortal.'

As usual, the voice had battered Winston into helplessness. Moreover he was in dread that if he persisted in his disagreement O'Brien would twist the dial again. And yet he could not keep silent. Feebly, without arguments, with nothing to support him except his inarticulate horror of what O'Brien had said, he returned to the attack.

'I don't know -- I don't care. Somehow you will fail. Something will defeat you. Life will defeat you.'

'We control life, Winston, at all its levels. You are imagining that there is something called human nature which will be outraged by what we do and will turn against us. But we create human nature. Men are infinitely malleable. Or perhaps you have returned to your old idea that the proletarians or the slaves will arise and overthrow us. Put it out of your mind. They are helpless, like the animals. Humanity is the Party. The others are outside -- irrelevant.'

'I don't care. In the end they will beat you. Sooner or later they will see

you for what you are, and then they will tear you to pieces.'

'Do you see any evidence that that is happening? Or any reason why it should?'

'No. I believe it. I know that you will fail. There is something in the universe -- I don't know, some spirit, some principle -- that you will never overcome.'

'Do you believe in God, Winston?'

'No.'

'Then what is it, this principle that will defeat us?'

'I don't know. The spirit of Man.'

'And do you consider yourself a man?.'

'Yes.'

'If you are a man, Winston, you are the last man. Your kind is extinct; we are the inheritors. Do you understand that you are alone? You are outside history, you are non-existent.' His manner changed and he said more harshly: 'And you consider yourself morally superior to us, with our lies and our cruelty?'

'Yes, I consider myself superior.'

O'Brien did not speak. Two other voices were speaking. After a moment Winston recognized one of them as his own. It was a sound-track of the

conversation he had had with O'Brien, on the night when he had enrolled himself in the Brotherhood. He heard himself promising to lie, to steal, to forge, to murder, to encourage drug-taking and prostitution, to disseminate venereal diseases, to throw vitriol in a child's face. O'Brien made a small impatient gesture, as though to say that the demonstration was hardly worth making. Then he turned a switch and the voices stopped.

'Get up from that bed,' he said.

The bonds had loosened themselves. Winston lowered himself to the floor and stood up unsteadily.

'You are the last man,' said O'Brien. 'You are the guardian of the human spirit. You shall see yourself as you are. Take off your clothes.'

Winston undid the bit of string that held his overalls together. The zip fastener had long since been wrenched out of them. He could not remember whether at any time since his arrest he had taken off all his clothes at one time. Beneath the overalls his body was looped with filthy yellowish rags, just recognizable as the remnants of underclothes. As he slid them to the ground he saw that there was a three-sided mirror at the far end of the room. He approached it, then stopped short. An involuntary cry had broken out of him.

'Go on,' said O'Brien. 'Stand between the wings of the mirror. You shall see the side view as well.'

He had stopped because he was frightened. A bowed, grey-coloured, skeleton-like thing was coming towards him. Its actual appearance was

frightening, and not merely the fact that he knew it to be himself. He moved closer to the glass. The creature's face seemed to be protruded, because of its bent carriage. A forlorn, jailbird's face with a nobby forehead running back into a bald scalp, a crooked nose, and battered-looking cheekbones above which his eyes were fierce and watchful. The cheeks were seamed, the mouth had a drawn-in look. Certainly it was his own face, but it seemed to him that it had changed more than he had changed inside. The emotions it registered would be different from the ones he felt. He had gone partially bald. For the first moment he had thought that he had gone grey as well, but it was only the scalp that was grey. Except for his hands and a circle of his face, his body was grey all over with ancient, ingrained dirt. Here and there under the dirt there were the red scars of wounds, and near the ankle the varicose ulcer was an inflamed mass with flakes of skin peeling off it. But the truly frightening thing was the emaciation of his body. The barrel of the ribs was as narrow as that of a skeleton: the legs had shrunk so that the knees were thicker than the thighs. He saw now what O'Brien had meant about seeing the side view. The curvature of the spine was astonishing. The thin shoulders were hunched forward so as to make a cavity of the chest, the scraggy neck seemed to be bending double under the weight of the skull. At a guess he would have said that it was the body of a man of sixty, suffering from some malignant disease.

'You have thought sometimes,' said O'Brien, 'that my face -- the face of a member of the Inner Party -- looks old and worn. What do you think of your own face?'

He seized Winston's shoulder and spun him round so that he was facing him.

'Look at the condition you are in!' he said. 'Look at this filthy grime all over your body. Look at the dirt between your toes. Look at that disgusting running sore on your leg. Do you know that you stink like a goat? Probably you have ceased to notice it. Look at your emaciation. Do you see? I can make my thumb and forefinger meet round your bicep. I could snap your neck like a carrot. Do you know that you have lost twenty-five kilograms since you have been in our hands? Even your hair is coming out in handfuls. Look!' He plucked at Winston's head and brought away a tuft of hair. 'Open your mouth. Nine, ten, eleven teeth left. How many had you when you came to us? And the few you have left are dropping out of your head. Look here!'

He seized one of Winston's remaining front teeth between his powerful thumb and forefinger. A twinge of pain shot through Winston's jaw. O'Brien had wrenched the loose tooth out by the roots. He tossed it across the cell.

'You are rotting away,' he said; 'you are falling to pieces. What are you? A bag of filth. Now turn around and look into that mirror again. Do you see that thing facing you? That is the last man. If you are human, that is humanity. Now put your clothes on again.'

Winston began to dress himself with slow stiff movements. Until now he had not seemed to notice how thin and weak he was. Only one thought stirred in his mind: that he must have been in this place longer than he had imagined. Then suddenly as he fixed the miserable rags round himself a feeling of pity for his ruined body overcame him. Before he knew what he was doing he had collapsed on to a small stool that stood beside the bed and burst into tears. He was aware of his ugliness, his gracelessness, a bundle of bones in filthy underclothes sitting weeping in the harsh white light: but he

could not stop himself. O'Brien laid a hand on his shoulder, almost kindly.

'It will not last for ever,' he said. 'You can escape from it whenever you choose. Everything depends on yourself.'

'You did it!' sobbed Winston. 'You reduced me to this state.'

'No, Winston, you reduced yourself to it. This is what you accepted when you set yourself up against the Party. It was all contained in that first act. Nothing has happened that you did not foresee.'

He paused, and then went on:

'We have beaten you, Winston. We have broken you up. You have seen what your body is like. Your mind is in the same state. I do not think there can be much pride left in you. You have been kicked and flogged and insulted, you have screamed with pain, you have rolled on the floor in your own blood and vomit. You have whimpered for mercy, you have betrayed everybody and everything. Can you think of a single degradation that has not happened to you?'

Winston had stopped weeping, though the tears were still oozing out of his eyes. He looked up at O'Brien.

'I have not betrayed Julia,' he said.

O'Brien looked down at him thoughtfully. 'No,' he said; 'no; that is perfectly true. You have not betrayed Julia.'

The peculiar reverence for O'Brien, which nothing seemed able to

destroy, flooded Winston's heart again. How intelligent, he thought, how intelligent! Never did O'Brien fail to understand what was said to him. Anyone else on earth would have answered promptly that he had betrayed Julia. For what was there that they had not screwed out of him under the torture? He had told them everything he knew about her, her habits, her character, her past life; he had confessed in the most trivial detail everything that had happened at their meetings, all that he had said to her and she to him, their black-market meals, their adulteries, their vague plottings against the Party -- everything. And yet, in the sense in which he intended the word, he had not betrayed her. He had not stopped loving her; his feelings towards her had remained the same. O'Brien had seen what he meant without the need for explanation.

'Tell me,' he said, 'how soon will they shoot me?'

'It might be a long time,' said O'Brien. 'You are a difficult case. But don't give up hope. Everyone is cured sooner or later. In the end we shall shoot you.'

XXI

He was much better. He was growing fatter and stronger every day, if it was proper to speak of days.

The white light and the humming sound were the same as ever, but the cell was a little more comfortable than the others he had been in. There was a pillow and a mattress on the plank bed, and a stool to sit on. They had given him a bath, and they allowed him to wash himself fairly frequently in a tin basin. They even gave him warm water to wash with. They had given him new underclothes and a clean suit of overalls. They had dressed his varicose ulcer with soothing ointment. They had pulled out the remnants of his teeth and given him a new set of dentures.

Weeks or months must have passed. It would have been possible now to keep count of the passage of time, if he had felt any interest in doing so, since he was being fed at what appeared to be regular intervals. He was getting, he judged, three meals in the twenty-four hours; sometimes he wondered dimly whether he was getting them by night or by day. The food was surprisingly good, with meat at every third meal. Once there was even a packet of cigarettes. He had no matches, but the never-speaking guard who brought his food would give him a light. The first time he tried to smoke it made him sick, but he persevered, and spun the packet out for a long time, smoking half a cigarette after each meal.

They had given him a white slate with a stump of pencil tied to the corner. At first he made no use of it. Even when he was awake he was

completely torpid. Often he would lie from one meal to the next almost without stirring, sometimes asleep, sometimes waking into vague reveries in which it was too much trouble to open his eyes. He had long grown used to sleeping with a strong light on his face. It seemed to make no difference, except that one's dreams were more coherent. He dreamed a great deal all through this time, and they were always happy dreams. He was in the Golden Country, or he was sitting among enormous glorious, sunlit ruins, with his mother, with Julia, with O'Brien -- not doing anything, merely sitting in the sun, talking of peaceful things. Such thoughts as he had when he was awake were mostly about his dreams. He seemed to have lost the power of intellectual effort, now that the stimulus of pain had been removed. He was not bored, he had no desire for conversation or distraction. Merely to be alone, not to be beaten or questioned, to have enough to eat, and to be clean all over, was completely satisfying.

By degrees he came to spend less time in sleep, but he still felt no impulse to get off the bed. All he cared for was to lie quiet and feel the strength gathering in his body. He would finger himself here and there, trying to make sure that it was not an illusion that his muscles were growing rounder and his skin tauter. Finally it was established beyond a doubt that he was growing fatter; his thighs were now definitely thicker than his knees. After that, reluctantly at first, he began exercising himself regularly. In a little while he could walk three kilometres, measured by pacing the cell, and his bowed shoulders were growing straighter. He attempted more elaborate exercises, and was astonished and humiliated to find what things he could not do. He could not move out of a walk, he could not hold his stool out at arm's length, he could not stand on one leg without falling over. He squatted down

on his heels, and found that with agonizing pains in thigh and calf he could just lift himself to a standing position. He lay flat on his belly and tried to lift his weight by his hands. It was hopeless, he could not raise himself a centimetre. But after a few more days -- a few more mealtimes -- even that feat was accomplished. A time came when he could do it six times running. He began to grow actually proud of his body, and to cherish an intermittent belief that his face also was growing back to normal. Only when he chanced to put his hand on his bald scalp did he remember the seamed, ruined face that had looked back at him out of the mirror.

His mind grew more active. He sat down on the plank bed, his back against the wall and the slate on his knees, and set to work deliberately at the task of re-educating himself.

He had capitulated, that was agreed. In reality, as he saw now, he had been ready to capitulate long before he had taken the decision. From the moment when he was inside the Ministry of Love -- and yes, even during those minutes when he and Julia had stood helpless while the iron voice from the telescreen told them what to do -- he had grasped the frivolity, the shallowness of his attempt to set himself up against the power of the Party. He knew now that for seven years the Thought police had watched him like a beetle under a magnifying glass. There was no physical act, no word spoken aloud, that they had not noticed, no train of thought that they had not been able to infer. Even the speck of whitish dust on the cover of his diary they had carefully replaced. They had played sound-tracks to him, shown him photographs. Some of them were photographs of Julia and himself. Yes, even ... He could not fight against the Party any longer. Besides, the Party was in

the right. It must be so; how could the immortal, collective brain be mistaken? By what external standard could you check its judgements? Sanity was statistical. It was merely a question of learning to think as they thought. Only!

The pencil felt thick and awkward in his fingers. He began to write down the thoughts that came into his head. He wrote first in large clumsy capitals:

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

Then almost without a pause he wrote beneath it:

TWO AND TWO MAKE FIVE

But then there came a sort of check. His mind, as though shying away from something, seemed unable to concentrate. He knew that he knew what came next, but for the moment he could not recall it. When he did recall it, it was only by consciously reasoning out what it must be: it did not come of its own accord. He wrote:

GOD IS POWER

He accepted everything. The past was alterable. The past never had been altered. Oceania was at war with Eastasia. Oceania had always been at war with Eastasia. Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford were guilty of the crimes they were charged with. He had never seen the photograph that disproved their guilt. It had never existed, he had invented it. He remembered remembering contrary things, but those were false memories, products of

self-deception. How easy it all was! Only surrender, and everything else followed. It was like swimming against a current that swept you backwards however hard you struggled, and then suddenly deciding to turn round and go with the current instead of opposing it. Nothing had changed except your own attitude: the predestined thing happened in any case. He hardly knew why he had ever rebelled. Everything was easy, except!

Anything could be true. The so-called laws of Nature were nonsense. The law of gravity was nonsense. 'If I wished,' O'Brien had said, 'I could float off this floor like a soap bubble.' Winston worked it out. 'If he thinks he floats off the floor, and if I simultaneously think I see him do it, then the thing happens.' Suddenly, like a lump of submerged wreckage breaking the surface of water, the thought burst into his mind: 'It doesn't really happen. We imagine it. It is hallucination.' He pushed the thought under instantly. The fallacy was obvious. It presupposed that somewhere or other, outside oneself, there was a 'real' world where 'real' things happened. But how could there be such a world? What knowledge have we of anything, save through our own minds? All happenings are in the mind. Whatever happens in all minds, truly happens.

He had no difficulty in disposing of the fallacy, and he was in no danger of succumbing to it. He realized, nevertheless, that it ought never to have occurred to him. The mind should develop a blind spot whenever a dangerous thought presented itself. The process should be automatic, instinctive. Crimestop, they called it in Newspeak.

He set to work to exercise himself in crimestop. He presented himself with propositions -- 'the Party says the earth is flat', 'the party says that ice is

heavier than water' -- and trained himself in not seeing or not understanding the arguments that contradicted them. It was not easy. It needed great powers of reasoning and improvisation. The arithmetical problems raised, for instance, by such a statement as 'two and two make five' were beyond his intellectual grasp. It needed also a sort of athleticism of mind, an ability at one moment to make the most delicate use of logic and at the next to be unconscious of the crudest logical errors. Stupidity was as necessary as intelligence, and as difficult to attain.

All the while, with one part of his mind, he wondered how soon they would shoot him. 'Everything depends on yourself,' O'Brien had said; but he knew that there was no conscious act by which he could bring it nearer. It might be ten minutes hence, or ten years. They might keep him for years in solitary confinement, they might send him to a labour-camp, they might release him for a while, as they sometimes did. It was perfectly possible that before he was shot the whole drama of his arrest and interrogation would be enacted all over again. The one certain thing was that death never came at an expected moment. The tradition -- the unspoken tradition: somehow you knew it, though you never heard it said--was that they shot you from behind; always in the back of the head, without warning, as you walked down a corridor from cell to cell.

One day -- but 'one day' was not the right expression; just as probably it was in the middle of the night: once -- he fell into a strange, blissful reverie. He was walking down the corridor, waiting for the bullet. He knew that it was coming in another moment. Everything was settled, smoothed out, reconciled. There were no more doubts, no more arguments, no more pain, no

more fear. His body was healthy and strong. He walked easily, with a joy of movement and with a feeling of walking in sunlight. He was not any longer in the narrow white corridors in the Ministry of Love, he was in the enormous sunlit passage, a kilometre wide, down which he had seemed to walk in the delirium induced by drugs. He was in the Golden Country, following the foot-track across the old rabbit-cropped pasture. He could feel the short springy turf under his feet and the gentle sunshine on his face. At the edge of the field were the elm trees, faintly stirring, and somewhere beyond that was the stream where the dace lay in the green pools under the willows.

Suddenly he started up with a shock of horror. The sweat broke out on his backbone. He had heard himself cry aloud:

'Julia! Julia! Julia, my love! Julia!'

For a moment he had had an overwhelming hallucination of her presence. She had seemed to be not merely with him, but inside him. It was as though she had got into the texture of his skin. In that moment he had loved her far more than he had ever done when they were together and free. Also he knew that somewhere or other she was still alive and needed his help.

He lay back on the bed and tried to compose himself. What had he done? How many years had he added to his servitude by that moment of weakness?

In another moment he would hear the tramp of boots outside. They could not let such an outburst go unpunished. They would know now, if they had not known before, that he was breaking the agreement he had made with

them. He obeyed the Party, but he still hated the Party. In the old days he had hidden a heretical mind beneath an appearance of conformity. Now he had retreated a step further: in the mind he had surrendered, but he had hoped to keep the inner heart inviolate. He knew that he was in the wrong, but he preferred to be in the wrong. They would understand that- O'Brien would understand it. It was all confessed in that single foolish cry.

He would have to start all over again. It might take years. He ran a hand over his face, trying to familiarize himself with the new shape. There were deep furrows in the cheeks, the cheekbones felt sharp, the nose flattened. Besides, since last seeing himself in the glass he had been given a complete new set of teeth. It was not easy to preserve inscrutability when you did not know what your face looked like. In any case, mere control of the features was not enough. For the first time he perceived that if you want to keep a secret you must also hide it from yourself. You must know all the while that it is there, but until it is needed you must never let it emerge into your consciousness in any shape that could be given a name. From now onwards he must not only think right; he must feel right, dream right. And all the while he must keep his hatred locked up inside him like a ball of matter which was part of himself and yet unconnected with the rest of him, a kind of cyst.

One day they would decide to shoot him. You could not tell when it would happen, but a few seconds beforehand it should be possible to guess. It was always from behind, walking down a corridor. Ten seconds would be enough. In that time the world inside him could turn over. And then suddenly, without a word uttered, without a check in his step, without the

changing of a line in his face -- suddenly the camouflage would be down and bang! would go the batteries of his hatred. Hatred would fill him like an enormous roaring flame. And almost in the same instant bang! would go the bullet, too late, or too early. They would have blown his brain to pieces before they could reclaim it. The heretical thought would be unpunished, unrepented, out of their reach for ever. They would have blown a hole in their own perfection. To die hating them, that was freedom.

He shut his eyes. It was more difficult than accepting an intellectual discipline. It was a question of degrading himself, mutilating himself. He had got to plunge into the filthiest of filth. What was the most horrible, sickening thing of all? He thought of Big Brother. The enormous face (because of constantly seeing it on posters he always thought of it as being a metre wide), with its heavy black moustache and the eyes that followed you to and fro, seemed to float into his mind of its own accord. What were his true feelings towards Big Brother?

There was a heavy tramp of boots in the passage. The steel door swung open with a clang. O'Brien walked into the cell. Behind him were the waxen-faced officer and the black-uniformed guards.

'Get up,' said O'Brien. 'Come here.'

Winston stood opposite him. O'Brien took Winston's shoulders between his strong hands and looked at him closely.

'You have had thoughts of deceiving me,' he said. 'That was stupid. Stand up straighter. Look me in the face.'

He paused, and went on in a gentler tone:

'You are improving. Intellectually there is very little wrong with you. It is only emotionally that you have failed to make progress. Tell me, Winston - and remember, no lies: you know that I am always able to detect a lie -- tell me, what are your true feelings towards Big Brother?'

'I hate him.'

'You hate him. Good. Then the time has come for you to take the last step. You must love Big Brother. It is not enough to obey him: you must love him.'

He released Winston with a little push towards the guards.

'Room 101,' he said.

XXII

At each stage of his imprisonment he had known, or seemed to know, whereabouts he was in the windowless building. Possibly there were slight differences in the air pressure. The cells where the guards had beaten him were below ground level. The room where he had been interrogated by O'Brien was high up near the roof. This place was many metres underground, as deep down as it was possible to go.

It was bigger than most of the cells he had been in. But he hardly noticed his surroundings. All he noticed was that there were two small tables straight in front of him, each covered with green baize. One was only a metre or two from him, the other was further away, near the door. He was strapped upright in a chair, so tightly that he could move nothing, not even his head. A sort of pad gripped his head from behind, forcing him to look straight in front of him.

For a moment he was alone, then the door opened and O'Brien came in.

'You asked me once,' said O'Brien, 'what was in Room 101. I told you that you knew the answer already. Everyone knows it. The thing that is in Room 101 is the worst thing in the world.'

The door opened again. A guard came in, carrying something made of wire, a box or basket of some kind. He set it down on the further table. Because of the position in which O'Brien was standing. Winston could not see what the thing was.

'The worst thing in the world,' said O'Brien, 'varies from individual to individual. It may be burial alive, or death by fire, or by drowning, or by impalement, or fifty other deaths. There are cases where it is some quite trivial thing, not even fatal.'

He had moved a little to one side, so that Winston had a better view of the thing on the table. It was an oblong wire cage with a handle on top for carrying it by. Fixed to the front of it was something that looked like a fencing mask, with the concave side outwards. Although it was three or four metres away from him, he could see that the cage was divided lengthways into two compartments, and that there was some kind of creature in each. They were rats.

'In your case, said O'Brien, 'the worst thing in the world happens to be rats.'

A sort of premonitory tremor, a fear of he was not certain what, had passed through Winston as soon as he caught his first glimpse of the cage. But at this moment the meaning of the mask-like attachment in front of it suddenly sank into him. His bowels seemed to turn to water.

'You can't do that!' he cried out in a high cracked voice. 'You couldn't, you couldn't! It's impossible.'

'Do you remember,' said O'Brien, 'the moment of panic that used to occur in your dreams? There was a wall of blackness in front of you, and a roaring sound in your ears. There was something terrible on the other side of the wall. You knew that you knew what it was, but you dared not drag it into

the open. It was the rats that were on the other side of the wall.'

'O'Brien!' said Winston, making an effort to control his voice. 'You know this is not necessary. What is it that you want me to do?'

O'Brien made no direct answer. When he spoke it was in the schoolmasterish manner that he sometimes affected. He looked thoughtfully into the distance, as though he were addressing an audience somewhere behind Winston's back.

'By itself,' he said, 'pain is not always enough. There are occasions when a human being will stand out against pain, even to the point of death. But for everyone there is something unendurable -- something that cannot be contemplated. Courage and cowardice are not involved. If you are falling from a height it is not cowardly to clutch at a rope. If you have come up from deep water it is not cowardly to fill your lungs with air. It is merely an instinct which cannot be destroyed. It is the same with the rats. For you, they are unendurable. They are a form of pressure that you cannot withstand, even if you wished to. You will do what is required of you.'

'But what is it, what is it? How can I do it if I don't know what it is?'

O'Brien picked up the cage and brought it across to the nearer table. He set it down carefully on the baize cloth. Winston could hear the blood singing in his ears. He had the feeling of sitting in utter loneliness. He was in the middle of a great empty plain, a flat desert drenched with sunlight, across which all sounds came to him out of immense distances. Yet the cage with the rats was not two metres away from him. They were enormous rats. They

were at the age when a rat's muzzle grows blunt and fierce and his fur brown instead of grey.

'The rat,' said O'Brien, still addressing his invisible audience, 'although a rodent, is carnivorous. You are aware of that. You will have heard of the things that happen in the poor quarters of this town. In some streets a woman dare not leave her baby alone in the house, even for five minutes. The rats are certain to attack it. Within quite a small time they will strip it to the bones. They also attack sick or dying people. They show astonishing intelligence in knowing when a human being is helpless.'

There was an outburst of squeals from the cage. It seemed to reach Winston from far away. The rats were fighting; they were trying to get at each other through the partition. He heard also a deep groan of despair. That, too, seemed to come from outside himself.

O'Brien picked up the cage, and, as he did so, pressed something in it. There was a sharp click. Winston made a frantic effort to tear himself loose from the chair. It was hopeless; every part of him, even his head, was held immovably. O'Brien moved the cage nearer. It was less than a metre from Winston's face.

'I have pressed the first lever,' said O'Brien. 'You understand the construction of this cage. The mask will fit over your head, leaving no exit. When I press this other lever, the door of the cage will slide up. These starving brutes will shoot out of it like bullets. Have you ever seen a rat leap through the air? They will leap on to your face and bore straight into it. Sometimes they attack the eyes first. Sometimes they burrow through the

cheeks and devour the tongue.'

The cage was nearer; it was closing in. Winston heard a succession of shrill cries which appeared to be occurring in the air above his head. But he fought furiously against his panic. To think, to think, even with a split second left -- to think was the only hope. Suddenly the foul musty odour of the brutes struck his nostrils. There was a violent convulsion of nausea inside him, and he almost lost consciousness. Everything had gone black. For an instant he was insane, a screaming animal. Yet he came out of the blackness clutching an idea. There was one and only one way to save himself. He must interpose another human being, the body of another human being, between himself and the rats.

The circle of the mask was large enough now to shut out the vision of anything else. The wire door was a couple of hand-spans from his face. The rats knew what was coming now. One of them was leaping up and down, the other, an old scaly grandfather of the sewers, stood up, with his pink hands against the bars, and fiercely sniffed the air. Winston could see the whiskers and the yellow teeth. Again the black panic took hold of him. He was blind, helpless, mindless.

'It was a common punishment in Imperial China,' said O'Brien as didactically as ever.

The mask was closing on his face. The wire brushed his cheek. And then -- no, it was not relief, only hope, a tiny fragment of hope. Too late, perhaps too late. But he had suddenly understood that in the whole world there was just one person to whom he could transfer his punishment -- one body that he

could thrust between himself and the rats. And he was shouting frantically, over and over.

'Do it to Julia! Do it to Julia! Not me! Julia! I don't care what you do to her. Tear her face off, strip her to the bones. Not me! Julia! Not me!'

He was falling backwards, into enormous depths, away from the rats. He was still strapped in the chair, but he had fallen through the floor, through the walls of the building, through the earth, through the oceans, through the atmosphere, into outer space, into the gulfs between the stars -- always away, away, away from the rats. He was light years distant, but O'Brien was still standing at his side. There was still the cold touch of wire against his cheek. But through the darkness that enveloped him he heard another metallic click, and knew that the cage door had clicked shut and not open.

XXIII

The Chestnut Tree was almost empty. A ray of sunlight slanting through a window fell on dusty table-tops. It was the lonely hour of fifteen. A tinny music trickled from the telescreens.

Winston sat in his usual corner, gazing into an empty glass. Now and again he glanced up at a vast face which eyed him from the opposite wall. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption said. Unbidden, a waiter came and filled his glass up with Victory Gin, shaking into it a few drops from another bottle with a quill through the cork. It was saccharine flavoured with cloves, the speciality of the café.

Winston was listening to the telescreen. At present only music was coming out of it, but there was a possibility that at any moment there might be a special bulletin from the Ministry of Peace. The news from the African front was disquieting in the extreme. On and off he had been worrying about it all day. A Eurasian army (Oceania was at war with Eurasia: Oceania had always been at war with Eurasia) was moving southward at terrifying speed. The mid-day bulletin had not mentioned any definite area, but it was probable that already the mouth of the Congo was a battlefield. Brazzaville and Leopoldville were in danger. One did not have to look at the map to see what it meant. It was not merely a question of losing Central Africa: for the first time in the whole war, the territory of Oceania itself was menaced.

A violent emotion, not fear exactly but a sort of undifferentiated excitement, flared up in him, then faded again. He stopped thinking about the

war. In these days he could never fix his mind on any one subject for more than a few moments at a time. He picked up his glass and drained it at a gulp. As always, the gin made him shudder and even retch slightly. The stuff was horrible. The cloves and saccharine, themselves disgusting enough in their sickly way, could not disguise the flat oily smell; and what was worst of all was that the smell of gin, which dwelt with him night and day, was inextricably mixed up in his mind with the smell of those-

He never named them, even in his thoughts, and so far as it was possible he never visualized them. They were something that he was half-aware of, hovering close to his face, a smell that clung to his nostrils. As the gin rose in him he belched through purple lips. He had grown fatter since they released him, and had regained his old colour -- indeed, more than regained it. His features had thickened, the skin on nose and cheekbones was coarsely red, even the bald scalp was too deep a pink. A waiter, again unbidden, brought the chessboard and the current issue of *The Times*, with the page turned down at the chess problem. Then, seeing that Winston's glass was empty, he brought the gin bottle and filled it. There was no need to give orders. They knew his habits. The chessboard was always waiting for him, his corner table was always reserved; even when the place was full he had it to himself, since nobody cared to be seen sitting too close to him. He never even bothered to count his drinks. At irregular intervals they presented him with a dirty slip of paper which they said was the bill, but he had the impression that they always undercharged him. It would have made no difference if it had been the other way about. He had always plenty of money nowadays. He even had a job, a sinecure, more highly-paid than his old job had been.

The music from the telescreen stopped and a voice took over. Winston raised his head to listen. No bulletins from the front, however. It was merely a brief announcement from the Ministry of Plenty. In the preceding quarter, it appeared, the Tenth Three-Year Plan's quota for bootlaces had been overfulfilled by 98 per cent.

He examined the chess problem and set out the pieces. It was a tricky ending, involving a couple of knights. 'White to play and mate in two moves.' Winston looked up at the portrait of Big Brother. White always mates, he thought with a sort of cloudy mysticism. Always, without exception, it is so arranged. In no chess problem since the beginning of the world has black ever won. Did it not symbolize the eternal, unvarying triumph of Good over Evil? The huge face gazed back at him, full of calm power. White always mates.

The voice from the telescreen paused and added in a different and much graver tone: 'You are warned to stand by for an important announcement at fifteen-thirty. Fifteen-thirty! This is news of the highest importance. Take care not to miss it. Fifteen-thirty!' The tinkling music struck up again.

Winston's heart stirred. That was the bulletin from the front; instinct told him that it was bad news that was coming. All day, with little spurts of excitement, the thought of a smashing defeat in Africa had been in and out of his mind. He seemed actually to see the Eurasian army swarming across the never-broken frontier and pouring down into the tip of Africa like a column of ants. Why had it not been possible to outflank them in some way? The outline of the West African coast stood out vividly in his mind. He picked up the white knight and moved it across the board. There was the proper spot.

Even while he saw the black horde racing southward he saw another force, mysteriously assembled, suddenly planted in their rear, cutting their communications by land and sea. He felt that by willing it he was bringing that other force into existence. But it was necessary to act quickly. If they could get control of the whole of Africa, if they had airfields and submarine bases at the Cape, it would cut Oceania in two. It might mean anything: defeat, breakdown, the redivision of the world, the destruction of the Party! He drew a deep breath. An extraordinary medley of feeling-but it was not a medley, exactly; rather it was successive layers of feeling, in which one could not say which layer was undermost struggled inside him.

The spasm passed. He put the white knight back in its place, but for the moment he could not settle down to serious study of the chess problem. His thoughts wandered again. Almost unconsciously he traced with his finger in the dust on the table: $2+2=$

'They can't get inside you,' she had said. But they could get inside you. 'What happens to you here is for ever,' O'Brien had said. That was a true word. There were things, your own acts, from which you could never recover. Something was killed in your breast: burnt out, cauterized out.

He had seen her; he had even spoken to her. There was no danger in it. He knew as though instinctively that they now took almost no interest in his doings. He could have arranged to meet her a second time if either of them had wanted to. Actually it was by chance that they had met. It was in the Park, on a vile, biting day in March, when the earth was like iron and all the grass seemed dead and there was not a bud anywhere except a few crocuses which had pushed themselves up to be dismembered by the wind. He was

hurrying along with frozen hands and watering eyes when he saw her not ten metres away from him. It struck him at once that she had changed in some ill-defined way. They almost passed one another without a sign, then he turned and followed her, not very eagerly. He knew that there was no danger, nobody would take any interest in him. She did not speak. She walked obliquely away across the grass as though trying to get rid of him, then seemed to resign herself to having him at her side. Presently they were in among a clump of ragged leafless shrubs, useless either for concealment or as protection from the wind. They halted. It was vilely cold. The wind whistled through the twigs and fretted the occasional, dirty-looking crocuses. He put his arm round her waist.

There was no telescreen, but there must be hidden microphones: besides, they could be seen. It did not matter, nothing mattered. They could have lain down on the ground and done that if they had wanted to. His flesh froze with horror at the thought of it. She made no response whatever to the clasp of his arm ; she did not even try to disengage herself. He knew now what had changed in her. Her face was sallow, and there was a long scar, partly hidden by the hair, across her forehead and temple; but that was not the change. It was that her waist had grown thicker, and, in a surprising way, had stiffened. He remembered how once, after the explosion of a rocket bomb, he had helped to drag a corpse out of some ruins, and had been astonished not only by the incredible weight of the thing, but by its rigidity and awkwardness to handle, which made it seem more like stone than flesh. Her body felt like that. It occurred to him that the texture of her skin would be quite different from what it had once been.

He did not attempt to kiss her, nor did they speak. As they walked back across the grass, she looked directly at him for the first time. It was only a momentary glance, full of contempt and dislike. He wondered whether it was a dislike that came purely out of the past or whether it was inspired also by his bloated face and the water that the wind kept squeezing from his eyes. They sat down on two iron chairs, side by side but not too close together. He saw that she was about to speak. She moved her clumsy shoe a few centimetres and deliberately crushed a twig. Her feet seemed to have grown broader, he noticed.

'I betrayed you,' she said baldly.

'I betrayed you,' he said.

She gave him another quick look of dislike.

'Sometimes,' she said, 'they threaten you with something something you can't stand up to, can't even think about. And then you say, "Don't do it to me, do it to somebody else, do it to So-and-so." And perhaps you might pretend, afterwards, that it was only a trick and that you just said it to make them stop and didn't really mean it. But that isn't true. At the time when it happens you do mean it. You think there's no other way of saving yourself, and you're quite ready to save yourself that way. You want it to happen to the other person. You don't give a damn what they suffer. All you care about is yourself.'

'All you care about is yourself,' he echoed.

'And after that, you don't feel the same towards the other person any

longer.'

'No,' he said, 'you don't feel the same.'

There did not seem to be anything more to say. The wind plastered their thin overalls against their bodies. Almost at once it became embarrassing to sit there in silence: besides, it was too cold to keep still. She said something about catching her Tube and stood up to go.

'We must meet again,' he said.

'Yes,' she said, 'we must meet again. '

He followed irresolutely for a little distance, half a pace behind her. They did not speak again. She did not actually try to shake him off, but walked at just such a speed as to prevent his keeping abreast of her. He had made up his mind that he would accompany her as far as the Tube station, but suddenly this process of trailing along in the cold seemed pointless and unbearable. He was overwhelmed by a desire not so much to get away from Julia as to get back to the Chestnut Tree Café, which had never seemed so attractive as at this moment. He had a nostalgic vision of his corner table, with the newspaper and the chessboard and the ever-flowing gin. Above all, it would be warm in there. The next moment, not altogether by accident, he allowed himself to become separated from her by a small knot of people. He made a halfhearted attempt to catch up, then slowed down, turned, and made off in the opposite direction. When he had gone fifty metres he looked back. The street was not crowded, but already he could not distinguish her. Any one of a dozen hurrying figures might have been hers. Perhaps her thickened,

stiffened body was no longer recognizable from behind.

'At the time when it happens,' she had said, 'you do mean it.' He had meant it. He had not merely said it, he had wished it. He had wished that she and not he should be delivered over to the-

Something changed in the music that trickled from the telescreen. A cracked and jeering note, a yellow note, came into it. And then -- perhaps it was not happening, perhaps it was only a memory taking on the semblance of sound -- a voice was singing:

'Under the spreading chestnut tree

I sold you and you sold me '

The tears welled up in his eyes. A passing waiter noticed that his glass was empty and came back with the gin bottle.

He took up his glass and sniffed at it. The stuff grew not less but more horrible with every mouthful he drank. But it had become the element he swam in. It was his life, his death, and his resurrection. It was gin that sank him into stupor every night, and gin that revived him every morning. When he woke, seldom before eleven hundred, with gummed-up eyelids and fiery mouth and a back that seemed to be broken, it would have been impossible even to rise from the horizontal if it had not been for the bottle and teacup placed beside the bed overnight. Through the midday hours he sat with glazed face, the bottle handy, listening to the telescreen. From fifteen to closing-time he was a fixture in the Chestnut Tree. No one cared what he did any longer, no whistle woke him, no telescreen admonished him.

Occasionally, perhaps twice a week, he went to a dusty, forgotten-looking office in the Ministry of Truth and did a little work, or what was called work. He had been appointed to a sub-committee of a sub-committee which had sprouted from one of the innumerable committees dealing with minor difficulties that arose in the compilation of the Eleventh Edition of the Newspeak Dictionary. They were engaged in producing something called an Interim Report, but what it was that they were reporting on he had never definitely found out. It was something to do with the question of whether commas should be placed inside brackets, or outside. There were four others on the committee, all of them persons similar to himself. There were days when they assembled and then promptly dispersed again, frankly admitting to one another that there was not really anything to be done. But there were other days when they settled down to their work almost eagerly, making a tremendous show of entering up their minutes and drafting long memoranda which were never finished -- when the argument as to what they were supposedly arguing about grew extraordinarily involved and abstruse, with subtle haggling over definitions, enormous digressions, quarrels threats, even, to appeal to higher authority. And then suddenly the life would go out of them and they would sit round the table looking at one another with extinct eyes, like ghosts fading at cock-crow.

The telescreen was silent for a moment. Winston raised his head again. The bulletin! But no, they were merely changing the music. He had the map of Africa behind his eyelids. The movement of the armies was a diagram: a black arrow tearing vertically southward, and a white arrow horizontally eastward, across the tail of the first. As though for reassurance he looked up at the imperturbable face in the portrait. Was it conceivable that the second

arrow did not even exist?

His interest flagged again. He drank another mouthful of gin, picked up the white knight and made a tentative move. Check. But it was evidently not the right move, because

Uncalled, a memory floated into his mind. He saw a candle-lit room with a vast white-counterpaned bed, and himself, a boy of nine or ten, sitting on the floor, shaking a dice-box, and laughing excitedly. His mother was sitting opposite him and also laughing.

It must have been about a month before she disappeared. It was a moment of reconciliation, when the nagging hunger in his belly was forgotten and his earlier affection for her had temporarily revived. He remembered the day well, a pelting, drenching day when the water streamed down the window-pane and the light indoors was too dull to read by. The boredom of the two children in the dark, cramped bedroom became unbearable. Winston whined and grizzled, made futile demands for food, fretted about the room pulling everything out of place and kicking the wainscoting until the neighbours banged on the wall, while the younger child wailed intermittently. In the end his mother said, 'Now be good, and I'll buy you a toy. A lovely toy -- you'll love it'; and then she had gone out in the rain, to a little general shop which was still sporadically open nearby, and came back with a cardboard box containing an outfit of Snakes and Ladders. He could still remember the smell of the damp cardboard. It was a miserable outfit. The board was cracked and the tiny wooden dice were so ill-cut that they would hardly lie on their sides. Winston looked at the thing sulkily and without interest. But then his mother lit a piece of candle and they sat down on the floor to play. Soon

he was wildly excited and shouting with laughter as the tiddly-winks climbed hopefully up the ladders and then came slithering down the snakes again, almost to the starting- point. They played eight games, winning four each. His tiny sister, too young to understand what the game was about, had sat propped up against a bolster, laughing because the others were laughing. For a whole afternoon they had all been happy together, as in his earlier childhood.

He pushed the picture out of his mind. It was a false memory. He was troubled by false memories occasionally. They did not matter so long as one knew them for what they were. Some things had happened, others had not happened. He turned back to the chessboard and picked up the white knight again. Almost in the same instant it dropped on to the board with a clatter. He had started as though a pin had run into him.

A shrill trumpet-call had pierced the air. It was the bulletin! Victory! It always meant victory when a trumpet-call preceded the news. A sort of electric drill ran through the café. Even the waiters had started and pricked up their ears.

The trumpet-call had let loose an enormous volume of noise. Already an excited voice was gabbling from the telescreen, but even as it started it was almost drowned by a roar of cheering from outside. The news had run round the streets like magic. He could hear just enough of what was issuing from the telescreen to realize that it had all happened, as he had foreseen; a vast seaborne armada had secretly assembled a sudden blow in the enemy's rear, the white arrow tearing across the tail of the black. Fragments of triumphant phrases pushed themselves through the din: 'Vast strategic manoeuvre --

perfect co-ordination -- utter rout -- half a million prisoners -- complete demoralization -- control of the whole of Africa -- bring the war within measurable distance of its end victory -- greatest victory in human history -- victory, victory, victory!'

Under the table Winston's feet made convulsive movements. He had not stirred from his seat, but in his mind he was running, swiftly running, he was with the crowds outside, cheering himself deaf. He looked up again at the portrait of Big Brother. The colossus that bestrode the world! The rock against which the hordes of Asia dashed themselves in vain! He thought how ten minutes ago-yes, only ten minutes -- there had still been equivocation in his heart as he wondered whether the news from the front would be of victory or defeat. Ah, it was more than a Eurasian army that had perished! Much had changed in him since that first day in the Ministry of Love, but the final, indispensable, healing change had never happened, until this moment.

The voice from the telescreen was still pouring forth its tale of prisoners and booty and slaughter, but the shouting outside had died down a little. The waiters were turning back to their work. One of them approached with the gin bottle. Winston, sitting in a blissful dream, paid no attention as his glass was filled up. He was not running or cheering any longer. He was back in the Ministry of Love, with everything forgiven, his soul white as snow. He was in the public dock, confessing everything, implicating everybody. He was walking down the white-tiled corridor, with the feeling of walking in sunlight, and an armed guard at his back. The longhoped-for bullet was entering his brain.

He gazed up at the enormous face. Forty years it had taken him to learn

what kind of smile was hidden beneath the dark moustache. O cruel, needless misunderstanding! O stubborn, self-willed exile from the loving breast! Two gin-scented tears trickled down the sides of his nose. But it was all right, everything was all right, the struggle was finished. He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother.

APPENDIX: The Principles of Newspeak

Newspeak was the official language of Oceania and had been devised to meet the ideological needs of Ingsoc, or English Socialism. In the year 1984 there was not as yet anyone who used Newspeak as his sole means of communication, either in speech or writing. The leading articles in *The Times* were written in it, but this was a tour de force which could only be carried out by a specialist. It was expected that Newspeak would have finally superseded Oldspeak (or Standard English, as we should call it) by about the year 2050. Meanwhile it gained ground steadily, all Party members tending to use Newspeak words and grammatical constructions more and more in their everyday speech. The version in use in 1984, and embodied in the Ninth and Tenth Editions of the Newspeak Dictionary, was a provisional one, and contained many superfluous words and archaic formations which were due to be suppressed later. It is with the final, perfected version, as embodied in the Eleventh Edition of the Dictionary, that we are concerned here.

The purpose of Newspeak was not only to provide a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits proper to the devotees of Ingsoc, but to make all other modes of thought impossible. It was intended that when Newspeak had been adopted once and for all and Oldspeak forgotten, a heretical thought -- that is, a thought diverging from the principles of Ingsoc -- should be literally unthinkable, at least so far as thought is dependent on words. Its vocabulary was so constructed as to give exact and often very subtle expression to every meaning that a Party member could properly wish to express, while excluding all other meanings and also

the possibility of arriving at them by indirect methods. This was done partly by the invention of new words, but chiefly by eliminating undesirable words and by stripping such words as remained of unorthodox meanings, and so far as possible of all secondary meanings whatever. To give a single example. The word free still existed in Newspeak, but it could only be used in such statements as 'This dog is free from lice' or 'This field is free from weeds'. It could not be used in its old sense of 'politically free' or 'intellectually free' since political and intellectual freedom no longer existed even as concepts, and were therefore of necessity nameless. Quite apart from the suppression of definitely heretical words, reduction of vocabulary was regarded as an end in itself, and no word that could be dispensed with was allowed to survive. Newspeak was designed not to extend but to diminish the range of thought, and this purpose was indirectly assisted by cutting the choice of words down to a minimum.

Newspeak was founded on the English language as we now know it, though many Newspeak sentences, even when not containing newly-created words, would be barely intelligible to an English-speaker of our own day. Newspeak words were divided into three distinct classes, known as the A vocabulary, the B vocabulary (also called compound words), and the C vocabulary. It will be simpler to discuss each class separately, but the grammatical peculiarities of the language can be dealt with in the section devoted to the A vocabulary, since the same rules held good for all three categories.

The A vocabulary. The A vocabulary consisted of the words needed for the business of everyday life -- for such things as eating, drinking, working,

putting on one's clothes, going up and down stairs, riding in vehicles, gardening, cooking, and the like. It was composed almost entirely of words that we already possess words like hit, run, dog, tree, sugar, house, field -- but in comparison with the present-day English vocabulary their number was extremely small, while their meanings were far more rigidly defined. All ambiguities and shades of meaning had been purged out of them. So far as it could be achieved, a Newspeak word of this class was simply a staccato sound expressing one clearly understood concept. It would have been quite impossible to use the A vocabulary for literary purposes or for political or philosophical discussion. It was intended only to express simple, purposive thoughts, usually involving concrete objects or physical actions.

The grammar of Newspeak had two outstanding peculiarities. The first of these was an almost complete interchangeability between different parts of speech. Any word in the language (in principle this applied even to very abstract words such as if or when) could be used either as verb, noun, adjective, or adverb. Between the verb and the noun form, when they were of the same root, there was never any variation, this rule of itself involving the destruction of many archaic forms. The word thought, for example, did not exist in Newspeak. Its place was taken by think, which did duty for both noun and verb. No etymological principle was followed here: in some cases it was the original noun that was chosen for retention, in other cases the verb. Even where a noun and verb of kindred meaning were not etymologically connected, one or other of them was frequently suppressed. There was, for example, no such word as cut, its meaning being sufficiently covered by the noun-verb knife. Adjectives were formed by adding the suffix-ful to the noun-verb, and adverbs by adding -wise. Thus for example, speedful meant

'rapid' and speedwise meant 'quickly'. Certain of our present-day adjectives, such as good, strong, big, black, soft, were retained, but their total number was very small. There was little need for them, since almost any adjectival meaning could be arrived at by adding-ful to a noun-verb. None of the now-existing adverbs was retained, except for a very few already ending in-wise: the -wise termination was invariable. The word well, for example, was replaced by goodwise.

In addition, any word -- this again applied in principle to every word in the language -- could be negated by adding the affix un- or could be strengthened by the affix plus-, or, for still greater emphasis, doubleplus-. Thus, for example, uncold meant 'warm', while pluscold and doublepluscold meant, respectively, 'very cold' and 'superlatively cold'. It was also possible, as in present-day English, to modify the meaning of almost any word by prepositional affixes such as ante-, post-, up-, down-, etc. By such methods it was found possible to bring about an enormous diminution of vocabulary. Given, for instance, the word good, there was no need for such a word as bad, since the required meaning was equally well -- indeed, better -- expressed by ungood. All that was necessary, in any case where two words formed a natural pair of opposites, was to decide which of them to suppress. Dark, for example, could be replaced by unlight, or light by undark, according to preference.

The second distinguishing mark of Newspeak grammar was its regularity. Subject to a few exceptions which are mentioned below all inflexions followed the same rules. Thus, in all verbs the preterite and the past participle were the same and ended in-ed. The preterite of steal was

stealed, the preterite of think was thinked, and so on throughout the language, all such forms as swam, gave, brought, spoke, taken, etc., being abolished. All plurals were made by adding-s or-es as the case might be. The plurals of man, ox, life, were mans, oxes, lifes. Comparison of adjectives was invariably made by adding-er,-est (good, gooder, goodest), irregular forms and the more, most formation being suppressed.

The only classes of words that were still allowed to inflect irregularly were the pronouns, the relatives, the demonstrative adjectives, and the auxiliary verbs. All of these followed their ancient usage, except that whom had been scrapped as unnecessary, and the shall, should tenses had been dropped, all their uses being covered by will and would. There were also certain irregularities in word-formation arising out of the need for rapid and easy speech. A word which was difficult to utter, or was liable to be incorrectly heard, was held to be ipso facto a bad word: occasionally therefore, for the sake of euphony, extra letters were inserted into a word or an archaic formation was retained. But this need made itself felt chiefly in connexion with the B vocabulary. Why so great an importance was attached to ease of pronunciation will be made clear later in this essay.

The B vocabulary. The B vocabulary consisted of words which had been deliberately constructed for political purposes: words, that is to say, which not only had in every case a political implication, but were intended to impose a desirable mental attitude upon the person using them. Without a full understanding of the principles of Ingsoc it was difficult to use these words correctly. In some cases they could be translated into Oldspeak, or even into words taken from the A vocabulary, but this usually demanded a long

paraphrase and always involved the loss of certain overtones. The B words were a sort of verbal shorthand, often packing whole ranges of ideas into a few syllables, and at the same time more accurate and forcible than ordinary language.

The B words were in all cases compound words.

They consisted of two or more words, or portions of words, welded together in an easily pronounceable form. The resulting amalgam was always a noun-verb, and inflected according to the ordinary rules. To take a single example: the word goodthink, meaning, very roughly, 'orthodoxy', or, if one chose to regard it as a verb, 'to think in an orthodox manner'. This inflected as follows: noun-verb, goodthink; past tense and past participle, goodthinked; present participle, good- thinking; adjective, goodthinkful; adverb, goodthinkwise; verbal noun, goodthinker.

The B words were not constructed on any etymological plan. The words of which they were made up could be any parts of speech, and could be placed in any order and mutilated in any way which made them easy to pronounce while indicating their derivation. In the word crimethink (thoughtcrime), for instance, the think came second, whereas in thinkpol (Thought Police) it came first, and in the latter word police had lost its second syllable. Because of the great difficulty in securing euphony, irregular formations were commoner in the B vocabulary than in the A vocabulary. For example, the adjective forms of Minitrue, Minipax, and Miniluv were, respectively, Minitruthful, Minipeaceful, and Minilovely, simply because-trueful,-paxful, and-loveful were slightly awkward to pronounce. In principle, however, all B words could inflect, and all inflected in exactly the same way.

Some of the B words had highly subtilized meanings, barely intelligible to anyone who had not mastered the language as a whole. Consider, for example, such a typical sentence from a Times leading article as Oldthinkers unbellyfeel Ingsoc. The shortest rendering that one could make of this in Oldspeak would be: 'Those whose ideas were formed before the Revolution cannot have a full emotional understanding of the principles of English Socialism.' But this is not an adequate translation. To begin with, in order to Compound words such as speakwrite, were of course to be found in the A vocabulary, but these were merely convenient abbreviations and had no special ideological colour.

grasp the full meaning of the Newspeak sentence quoted above, one would have to have a clear idea of what is meant by Ingsoc. And in addition, only a person thoroughly grounded in Ingsoc could appreciate the full force of the word bellyfeel, which implied a blind, enthusiastic acceptance difficult to imagine today; or of the word oldthink, which was inextricably mixed up with the idea of wickedness and decadence. But the special function of certain Newspeak words, of which oldthink was one, was not so much to express meanings as to destroy them. These words, necessarily few in number, had had their meanings extended until they contained within themselves whole batteries of words which, as they were sufficiently covered by a single comprehensive term, could now be scrapped and forgotten. The greatest difficulty facing the compilers of the Newspeak Dictionary was not to invent new words, but, having invented them, to make sure what they meant: to make sure, that is to say, what ranges of words they cancelled by their existence.

As we have already seen in the case of the word free, words which had once borne a heretical meaning were sometimes retained for the sake of convenience, but only with the undesirable meanings purged out of them. Countless other words such as honour, justice, morality, internationalism, democracy, science, and religion had simply ceased to exist. A few blanket words covered them, and, in covering them, abolished them. All words grouping themselves round the concepts of liberty and equality, for instance, were contained in the single word crimethink, while all words grouping themselves round the concepts of objectivity and rationalism were contained in the single word oldthink. Greater precision would have been dangerous. What was required in a Party member was an outlook similar to that of the ancient Hebrew who knew, without knowing much else, that all nations other than his own worshipped 'false gods'. He did not need to know that these gods were called Baal, Osiris, Moloch, Ashtaroth, and the like: probably the less he knew about them the better for his orthodoxy. He knew Jehovah and the commandments of Jehovah: he knew, therefore, that all gods with other names or other attributes were false gods. In somewhat the same way, the party member knew what constituted right conduct, and in exceedingly vague, generalized terms he knew what kinds of departure from it were possible. His sexual life, for example, was entirely regulated by the two Newspeak words sexcrime (sexual immorality) and goodsex (chastity). Sexcrime covered all sexual misdeeds whatever. It covered fornication, adultery, homosexuality, and other perversions, and, in addition, normal intercourse practised for its own sake. There was no need to enumerate them separately, since they were all equally culpable, and, in principle, all punishable by death. In the C vocabulary, which consisted of scientific and technical words, it might be necessary to give specialized names to certain

sexual aberrations, but the ordinary citizen had no need of them. He knew what was meant by goodsex -- that is to say, normal intercourse between man and wife, for the sole purpose of begetting children, and without physical pleasure on the part of the woman: all else was sexcrime. In Newspeak it was seldom possible to follow a heretical thought further than the perception that it was heretical: beyond that point the necessary words were nonexistent.

No word in the B vocabulary was ideologically neutral. A great many were euphemisms. Such words, for instance, as joycamp (forced-labour camp) or Minipax Ministry of Peace, i. e. Ministry of War) meant almost the exact opposite of what they appeared to mean. Some words, on the other hand, displayed a frank and contemptuous understanding of the real nature of Oceanic society. An example was prolefeed, meaning the rubbishy entertainment and spurious news which the Party handed out to the masses. Other words, again, were ambivalent, having the connotation 'good' when applied to the Party and 'bad' when applied to its enemies. But in addition there were great numbers of words which at first sight appeared to be mere abbreviations and which derived their ideological colour not from their meaning, but from their structure.

So far as it could be contrived, everything that had or might have political significance of any kind was fitted into the B vocabulary. The name of every organization, or body of people, or doctrine, or country, or institution, or public building, was invariably cut down into the familiar shape; that is, a single easily pronounced word with the smallest number of syllables that would preserve the original derivation. In the Ministry of Truth, for example, the Records Department, in which Winston Smith worked, was

called Recdep, the Fiction Department was called Ficdep, the Teleprogrammes Department was called Teledep, and so on. This was not done solely with the object of saving time. Even in the early decades of the twentieth century, telescoped words and phrases had been one of the characteristic features of political language; and it had been noticed that the tendency to use abbreviations of this kind was most marked in totalitarian countries and totalitarian organizations. Examples were such words as Nazi, Gestapo, Comintern, Inprecorr, Agitprop. In the beginning the practice had been adopted as it were instinctively, but in Newspeak it was used with a conscious purpose. It was perceived that in thus abbreviating a name one narrowed and subtly altered its meaning, by cutting out most of the associations that would otherwise cling to it. The words Communist International, for instance, call up a composite picture of universal human brotherhood, red flags, barricades, Karl Marx, and the Paris Commune. The word Comintern, on the other hand, suggests merely a tightly-knit organization and a well-defined body of doctrine. It refers to something almost as easily recognized, and as limited in purpose, as a chair or a table. Comintern is a word that can be uttered almost without taking thought, whereas Communist International is a phrase over which one is obliged to linger at least momentarily. In the same way, the associations called up by a word like Minitrue are fewer and more controllable than those called up by Ministry of Truth. This accounted not only for the habit of abbreviating whenever possible, but also for the almost exaggerated care that was taken to make every word easily pronounceable.

In Newspeak, euphony outweighed every consideration other than exactitude of meaning. Regularity of grammar was always sacrificed to it

when it seemed necessary. And rightly so, since what was required, above all for political purposes, was short clipped words of unmistakable meaning which could be uttered rapidly and which roused the minimum of echoes in the speaker's mind. The words of the B vocabulary even gained in force from the fact that nearly all of them were very much alike. Almost invariably these words -- goodthink, Minipax, prolefeed, sexcrime, joycamp, Ingsoc, bellyfeel, thinkpol, and countless others -- were words of two or three syllables, with the stress distributed equally between the first syllable and the last. The use of them encouraged a gabbling style of speech, at once staccato and monotonous. And this was exactly what was aimed at. The intention was to make speech, and especially speech on any subject not ideologically neutral, as nearly as possible independent of consciousness. For the purposes of everyday life it was no doubt necessary, or sometimes necessary, to reflect before speaking, but a Party member called upon to make a political or ethical judgement should be able to spray forth the correct opinions as automatically as a machine gun spraying forth bullets. His training fitted him to do this, the language gave him an almost foolproof instrument, and the texture of the words, with their harsh sound and a certain wilful ugliness which was in accord with the spirit of Ingsoc, assisted the process still further.

So did the fact of having very few words to choose from. Relative to our own, the Newspeak vocabulary was tiny, and new ways of reducing it were constantly being devised. Newspeak, indeed, differed from most all other languages in that its vocabulary grew smaller instead of larger every year. Each reduction was a gain, since the smaller the area of choice, the smaller the temptation to take thought. Ultimately it was hoped to make articulate

speech issue from the larynx without involving the higher brain centres at all. This aim was frankly admitted in the Newspeak word *duckspeak*, meaning 'to quack like a duck'. Like various other words in the B vocabulary, *duckspeak* was ambivalent in meaning. Provided that the opinions which were quacked out were orthodox ones, it implied nothing but praise, and when *The Times* referred to one of the orators of the Party as a *doubleplusgood duckspeaker* it was paying a warm and valued compliment.

The C vocabulary. The C vocabulary was supplementary to the others and consisted entirely of scientific and technical terms. These resembled the scientific terms in use today, and were constructed from the same roots, but the usual care was taken to define them rigidly and strip them of undesirable meanings. They followed the same grammatical rules as the words in the other two vocabularies. Very few of the C words had any currency either in everyday speech or in political speech. Any scientific worker or technician could find all the words he needed in the list devoted to his own speciality, but he seldom had more than a smattering of the words occurring in the other lists. Only a very few words were common to all lists, and there was no vocabulary expressing the function of Science as a habit of mind, or a method of thought, irrespective of its particular branches. There was, indeed, no word for 'Science', any meaning that it could possibly bear being already sufficiently covered by the word *Ingsoc*.

From the foregoing account it will be seen that in Newspeak the expression of unorthodox opinions, above a very low level, was well-nigh impossible. It was of course possible to utter heresies of a very crude kind, a species of blasphemy. It would have been possible, for example, to say *Big*

Brother is ungood. But this statement, which to an orthodox ear merely conveyed a self-evident absurdity, could not have been sustained by reasoned argument, because the necessary words were not available. Ideas inimical to Ingsoc could only be entertained in a vague wordless form, and could only be named in very broad terms which lumped together and condemned whole groups of heresies without defining them in doing so. One could, in fact, only use Newspeak for unorthodox purposes by illegitimately translating some of the words back into Oldspeak. For example, All mans are equal was a possible Newspeak sentence, but only in the same sense in which All men are redhaired is a possible Oldspeak sentence. It did not contain a grammatical error, but it expressed a palpable untruth-i.e. that all men are of equal size, weight, or strength. The concept of political equality no longer existed, and this secondary meaning had accordingly been purged out of the word equal. In 1984, when Oldspeak was still the normal means of communication, the danger theoretically existed that in using Newspeak words one might remember their original meanings. In practice it was not difficult for any person well grounded in doublethink to avoid doing this, but within a couple of generations even the possibility of such a lapse would have vaished. A person growing up with Newspeak as his sole language would no more know that equal had once had the secondary meaning of 'politically equal', or that free had once meant 'intellectually free', than for instance, a person who had never heard of chess would be aware of the secondary meanings attaching to queen and rook. There would be many crimes and errors which it would be beyond his power to commit, simply because they were nameless and therefore unimaginable. And it was to be foreseen that with the passage of time the distinguishing characteristics of Newspeak would become more and more pronounced -- its words growing fewer and fewer, their meanings more

and more rigid, and the chance of putting them to improper uses always diminishing.

When Oldspeak had been once and for all superseded, the last link with the past would have been severed. History had already been rewritten, but fragments of the literature of the past survived here and there, imperfectly censored, and so long as one retained one's knowledge of Oldspeak it was possible to read them. In the future such fragments, even if they chanced to survive, would be unintelligible and untranslatable. It was impossible to translate any passage of Oldspeak into Newspeak unless it either referred to some technical process or some very simple everyday action, or was already orthodox (goodthinkful would be the NewsPeak expression) in tendency. In practice this meant that no book written before approximately 1960 could be translated as a whole. Pre-revolutionary literature could only be subjected to ideological translation -- that is, alteration in sense as well as language. Take for example the well-known passage from the Declaration of Independence:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of those ends, it is the right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government...

It would have been quite impossible to render this into Newspeak while keeping to the sense of the original. The nearest one could come to doing so would be to swallow the whole passage up in the single word crimethink. A

full translation could only be an ideological translation, whereby Jefferson's words would be changed into a panegyric on absolute government.

A good deal of the literature of the past was, indeed, already being transformed in this way. Considerations of prestige made it desirable to preserve the memory of certain historical figures, while at the same time bringing their achievements into line with the philosophy of Ingsoc. Various writers, such as Shakespeare, Milton, Swift, Byron, Dickens, and some others were therefore in process of translation: when the task had been completed, their original writings, with all else that survived of the literature of the past, would be destroyed. These translations were a slow and difficult business, and it was not expected that they would be finished before the first or second decade of the twenty-first century. There were also large quantities of merely utilitarian literature -- indispensable technical manuals, and the like -- that had to be treated in the same way. It was chiefly in order to allow time for the preliminary work of translation that the final adoption of Newspeak had been fixed for so late a date as 2050.

George Orwell

Animal Farm 动物庄园



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北方文艺出版社

目录

动物庄园（英汉双语版）

第一章

第二章

第三章

第四章

第五章

第六章

第七章

第八章

第九章

第十章

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

VII

VIII

IX

X

版权信息

书名：动物庄园（英汉双语版）

作者：乔治·奥威尔

出版社：北方文艺出版社

出版时间：2013.11

ISBN：9787531731962

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动物庄园（英汉双语版）

第一章

故事发生在曼纳庄园的一个平常夜晚里。庄园的主人琼斯先生，拖着醉醺醺的身体，只锁好了鸡棚，却忘记了关好那些里面的小门。他颤颤巍巍地提着摇曳的马灯，穿过漆黑的庭院。走进后门，机械地甩掉了臭皮靴，拿起洗碗间的酒桶里的最后一杯啤酒，一饮而尽。这才终于摸进卧房，倒在了鼾声雷动的琼斯夫人身旁。

当卧室陷入黑暗的一瞬间，立刻有一阵扑棱棱的声音响彻在庄园的上空。在白天里，这件事就在庄园里传得沸沸扬扬，就是那头获得“中级白鬃毛”奖荣誉的公猪老少校，决定把自己前一天夜里做的一个奇异的梦，讲给其他的动物听。

大家商量着，当琼斯先生把自己灌醉绝对不会再来谷仓的时候，就立刻集合所有的动物到大谷仓内。老少校（虽然当年他获奖的时候用的是“威灵顿帅哥”这个名字，但是大家习惯这么叫他）一直是庄园里最受尊敬的动物，所以能够听他讲事情，即使失去一个小时的睡眠时间，大家还是满心欢喜的。

少校早已安坐在大谷仓隆起的台子上，在他头顶上方，一盏马灯从房梁上垂下，身底的垫子下铺着厚厚的干草。他已经十二岁了，虽然最近微微发福，但依然是一只仪表英俊的猪。不要去在意他从来没有长出犬牙来，他依然呈现出一副慈爱聪慧的智者模样。很快，其他的动物陆陆续续地走进谷仓，根据自己不同的喜好坐下来。首先是三条分别叫

作“蓝铃铛”“杰西”和“钳子”的狗进场，马上台子前面的稻草上就被几头猪给占领了。窗台上母鸡们咕咕叫着，房梁上鸽子们扑腾着翅膀。羊和牛悄悄地躺在猪的身后，开始了今天的反刍。拳师和苜蓿是拉两轮货车的两匹马，他们并肩走进来，茸毛包裹的马蹄总是轻轻稳稳地落下每一步，好像生怕踩到藏匿在干草堆里的一些小动物。苜蓿是一只中年母马，健壮而又温婉，在经历过四次生育之后，就再也无法恢复往昔的体态形貌。拳师则是高大威猛，将近六英尺（1英尺=0.3048米，后同）高的个头，结实得赛过两匹普通的马。但是，那道从鼻梁生出来的白毛，给他的威猛打了折扣，看上去有少许傻气。他的确没有异于常人的高智商，但是他执着坚强的性格和吃苦耐劳的工作表现，获得了庄园里的普遍赞誉。紧接着，山羊穆尔丽和被称为本杰明的驴子也出现了。本杰明是庄园里年岁最大的动物，性格乖戾，总是缄默不语，一旦他要发表言论，总是说些不温不火的奇谈怪论。例如，他总说尽管上帝赐给他尾巴是为了驱赶该死的苍蝇，但是他宁愿两者都不要。他是庄园里最严肃、最不知道分享欢乐的动物。一旦有人追究他冷漠的原因，他会一本正经地说没有什么新奇引起激动的事情。但是，大家都能看得出来，唯一令他佩服和尊敬的就是拳师。你总会在星期天，看到他们两个在果园远处的一片牧场上，默默不语地并肩吃着青草。

让我们言归正传。当拳师和苜蓿刚刚趴下的时候，一群没有妈妈的小鸭子呼呼啦啦地进了大谷仓，一边无力地叫，一边左看右看地想要找一个不被踩踏的地方。很快他们发现了一个好地方，那就是苜蓿那犹如一堵墙一样的前腿所围成的一小块安身之所，于是他们就依偎在苜蓿给他们制造的这一小块天地里进入了梦乡。就在会议快要开始时又进来一匹白母马，虽然漂亮但是却很愚蠢，她就是给琼斯先生拉双轮轻便车的莫丽。只见她嘴里嚼着一块方糖，一摇一摆娇滴滴地走进来，找了个靠前的位置，刚站好就开始试图通过抖动她白色的鬃毛把大家的眼光吸引

到那些扎在鬃毛上的红丝带上。最后一个来的是猫，她硬是挤进了拳师和苜蓿的中间，她对这个热乎的地方很是满意，因为在少校演说时她根本一个字都没听进去，只在那里兀自发出咕噜咕噜的声音。

少校看了看，发现除了那只驯化了的乌鸦摩西（此刻他正在庄主院后门背后的横木架上睡觉），所有的动物都到场了，并且都全神贯注地等着他发言，于是他清了清嗓子开始说：

“同志们，我想我昨晚做了个怪梦的事情你们已经都听说了。但是，我们暂且不说那个梦，让我给你们讲点别的。同志们，很遗憾，恐怕我的时日不长了。在我去世之前，我想把我所获得的智慧传于你们，我认为这是我自己应该尽的义务。我想要给你们讲的是什么呢？我能够说的是什么呢？是我用我漫长的一生，花了大量的躺在圈里的时间去沉思，最终参悟出一个哲理——那就是活在世上本应该是什么样的。

“同志们，我们应该正视这个问题，直到如今我们是怎么生活的？让我们看看这个显而易见的事实：从我们出生开始，仅仅能得到勉强维持生活的食物，吃不饱还要被强迫着去干活，直到最后把气力消耗殆尽。当我们一失去使用价值，我们就会被残忍地杀掉。在英格兰，没有动物是有自由的，我们在满周岁后何曾享受过幸福或休闲？我们动物的这一生是多么凄惨、短促和备受奴役啊！

“难道我们这凄惨的一生是上天注定的吗？难道所有居住在这里的我们的兄弟姐妹不能过上体面的生活是因为英格兰是穷山恶水的地方吗？不！完全不！我们这里是物产丰富的地方，有肥沃的地，宜人的气候，能够养活比现在要多得多的生物。单单我们生活的这个庄园，就足以将十二匹马、二十头牛和数百只羊养活得令我们无法想象的舒适和体面呢。然而看看我们现在为什么却过着这种惨兮兮的日子？同志们，你

们想过罪魁祸首是谁吗？是人啊！他们把我们所有的劳动成果窃取了，是他们导致了我们的饥饿和过度劳累，人才是我们过不上好日子的真正仇敌。

“在所有的生灵当中，只有人类不劳而获，他们没有产奶的技能，也没有下蛋的本事，拉不动犁吧，跑得比兔子还慢。然而，那些没用的人类却是所有动物的主人，他榨取我们的绝大部分劳动所得，回报我们的却仅仅是能填饱肚子。我们辛勤地耕耘着，就连粪便也奉献给了这片土地，可是我们得到的除去身上的这张皮就一无所有啦。你们，对，就是我面前的奶牛们，你们去年整整一年产的奶呢？那几千加仑的本可以哺育很多健壮的牛犊的奶去哪里了呢？它们一滴不剩地流进了我们仇敌的肚子里了。母鸡们，你们产的蛋呢？那么多的蛋有多少孵了小鸡？没孵化的蛋都去了市场为琼斯和他的伙计们换取了大把的钞票！还有你，可怜的苜蓿，你的那四个孩子呢，那本应是你晚年依靠的孩子去哪了呢？他们早在一岁的时候就被卖掉了。你四次分娩，一贯的勤劳苦干为你换回的只有勉强糊口的饲料和一间马厩，除此就别无所有啦！

“即便已经这样悲惨了，能得善终却也是一种奢望吧。我算是运气好的，我就不抱怨了。我过的12年算是猪合乎自然的生活，我有四百多个孩子了。但是我们终逃不掉那残忍的一刀。不要说我们猪的不到一年的短暂生命最后会在尖声惊叫中从木架上消失，你们牛、鸡、羊也难以逃脱这种恐怖的厄运。当然，马和狗不在例外里。拳师啊，你的肌肉有一天也会失去强健的力量，那时，琼斯就会把你卖给专门屠宰废马的贩子，宰完煮熟了喂猎狐犬。还有狗，琼斯会等到他们老了，没有牙的时候在脖子上绑块砖沉到最近的池塘里。

“那么，你们明白了吗，同志们，我们的苦难就是人类的暴虐统治所造成的，这一点毋庸置疑！只有推翻了人类的统治，我们才会富足和

自由，也许就在一夜之间。所以，我要告诉你们的就是：造反！同志们，这个目标一定要牢记，而且要一代一代传下去。我不知道会在什么时候造反，也许一周内，也许百年后，但是正是因为正义一定会得到伸张，这样正如我脚边的干稻草一样坚定不移的道理让我坚信，未来的动物们会前赴后继地完成这个理想。

“要牢记，人是永远不会考虑其他生灵的，他们只会为了自己的利益，我们决不能相信他们的谎言。什么人与动物有着共同的利益，什么人的兴盛就是动物的兴盛，那全是花言巧语。所有的动物，我们是同志，我们要建立纯粹的友谊，我们必须团结一致，与所有的人为敌。”

正在这时，几只狗看见了蹲坐在那儿听演讲的四只大如斗的老鼠，要不是他们及时地窜回洞里，恐怕性命难保，少校举起前蹄平息了这场骚动。

他接着说道：“同志们，这个意外就需要我们弄清楚一点，老鼠和兔子这种非家养的动物应该算在哪一列里？同志，还是仇敌？我们现在就通过大会来表决。”

除了三条狗和一只猫投了反对票，其他的动物都同意把老鼠作为同志。事后发现，猫既投了反对票也投了赞成票。少校继续说道：

“除此之外我只想再强调一下，对待人类及其他他们的行为我们必须抱着不共戴天、他们必亡的信念，这是我们的重任。如何划分敌我我来定一下，两条腿行走的就是仇敌，四条腿或者长翅膀的就是我们的同志。我们须谨记一条，我们决不能效仿我们的仇敌，无论是反抗中还是成功后，他们的恶习我们坚决摒弃，因为那些习惯是邪恶的。他们的房间我们决不能住进去，我们不准睡床，不准穿衣喝酒和抽烟，并且从事

交易和接触货币也是严令禁止的。哦，我们不能像人类一样残暴地对待我们自己，不论瘦弱还是强壮，不论聪明还是愚蠢，我们是同志，是兄弟，我们之间是平等的，我们要相亲相爱，不能相互屠杀。

“好了，现在该是我们讲讲我昨晚那个梦的时候了。与其说是梦，不如说是一个梦想，一个关于未来的，人类消亡之后的世界的梦想。那是无法用言语描述的一个梦啊。它让我想起了被我遗忘了很久的一些事情。那首歌，那首在我还是小猪时，母亲和其他母猪就会经常哼哼的老歌，虽然她们只会哼个曲调和头三句。那时候对这首老歌我就很熟悉了，即使后来忘记了，但是昨晚的梦让我立刻就想了起来。更妙的是，梦中连歌词都出来了。那是失传了很久的歌词，即使很久很久之前动物们经常唱。我年纪大了，嗓音也不好了，我现在把这首歌唱给你们听，等你们学会了，你们肯定能唱得比我好听，这首歌就叫《英格兰的畜牧》。”

老少校清了清嗓子，但出口的声音仍是很沙哑，即使嗓音不尽如人意，仍是唱得慷慨激昂，旋律有点介于《克莱门汀》和《拉酷酷拉恰》之间。歌词是这样的：

英格兰兽，爱尔兰兽，

普天之下的兽，

倾听我喜悦的佳音，

金色的未来里那可喜的佳音。

这一天终将会到来，
暴虐的人类终将消灭，
富饶的英格兰大地，
将只留下我们的足迹。

我们的鼻中不再扣环，
我们的背上不再配鞍，
橛子和马刺会永远锈蚀，
不再有残酷的鞭子噼啪作响。

那就连在梦中都难以出现的富裕生活，
小麦、大麦、干草、燕麦，
苜蓿、大豆还有甜菜，
那一天将全归我所有。

那一天我们将自由解放，

阳光普照英格兰大地，

水会更清纯，

风也更醉人。

哪怕我们活不到那一天，

但为了那一天我们岂能等闲，

牛、马、鹅、鸡，

为自由必须流血汗。

英格兰兽、爱尔兰兽，

普天之下的兽，

倾听我喜悦的佳音，

金色的未来里那可喜的佳音。

听着这激昂的歌唱，动物们进入了空前的亢奋状态，他们跟着老少校开始学唱，没一会儿，那些聪明一些的猪狗就把整首歌都学会了，就连最愚笨的动物都学会了些曲调和几句歌词。几番尝试下来，突然间歌声响彻整个庄园，惊人的一致，母牛哞哞叫，狗汪汪地吠，羊咩咩地

配合，马的嘶鸣声和鸭子的嘎嘎声也恰到好处，动物们太激动了，以至于连着唱了五遍还没有停下来的意思。

但遗憾的是声音太大了，大到把琼斯先生给吵醒了。他以为是狐狸来光临农舍了，所以他跳下床，拿起放在卧室角落的那杆枪，对黑暗处放了一枪，于是这次聚会就在这枚6号子弹射进大谷仓的墙上后匆匆结束了。顷刻间整个庄园就鸦雀无声了，家畜卧倒在干草堆里，家禽跳上了栖木架。

第二章

在那聚会的三天后，老少校就安详地睡着了，那时正值三月初，他的遗体被埋在果园脚下。

在接下来的三个月之中，这种秘密聚会接二连三举行过几次。动物们一直在琢磨老少校的话，他的预言不知道什么时候能发生，在他们的有生之年是不是还能赶上造反，那种全新的生活观念已经渗进了那些有点头脑的动物中了。所以，他们开始准备，因为那好像是种义务。猪被认为是最聪明的动物，理所当然教育和组织其他动物的工作就落在了他们的身上，而其中两头公猪本是琼斯养着用来卖的，但却是最为优秀和卓越的，名叫雪球和拿破仑。拿破仑是庄园里仅有的一只伯克夏种猪，他长相凶狠、个头庞大，不择手段就是他惯用的手段。相比之下，雪球就没有他那么深的城府，但是很活跃，伶牙俐齿，点子也多。还有一只很显眼的胖猪，脸胖得鼓鼓的，眼珠子骨碌骨碌的，名叫声响器，因为他善于演说，所以在动物中名声很大，别的动物都说他的话啊，能把黑白都颠倒了。他的动作灵巧，声音尖细，尤其在论证某些难以讲解清楚的论点时，他就会一边摆着尾巴，然后边讲解边来回地蹦个不停，这是一个不知为什么就令人信服的绝招。

这三头较为突出的猪认真仔细地研究了老少校的那一番话，把它加以整理，总结成为一套名为动物主义的思想体系。每周几次的秘密会议照常举行（当然是在琼斯先生睡了之后），主要就是向动物们传授这套

思想体系。俗话说，万事开头难嘛，那三头猪没少费力气。起初，一些动物还是战战兢兢，改变不了那些传统的思想，他们还将琼斯先生当成主人，觉得对他还存在着可笑的忠诚的义务，同时他们还提出了一些非常幼稚的想法，比如“琼斯先生给我们饭吃，他要是走了，我们会不会饿死”，还有“如果这是我们死后的事，那和我们有什么关系？”或者“如果造反是一定会发生的，那我们关不关心，出不出力不是没有区别嘛”。

三头猪不厌其烦地向动物们解释说他们的那些愚蠢的想法是背离兽主义精神的。但是那头名叫莫丽的白母马着实愚蠢得让人头疼。她问雪球：“造反后，我还有糖吃吗？”

雪球不假思索地说：“那是不可能的，因为庄园里是无法制糖的，再说了，到时候你会拥有更多的燕麦和草料，那时你就会把糖忘得干干净净。”

“那这些丝带我还能继续扎在我的鬃毛上吗？”莫丽又问。

“这是奴隶的象征啊，难道你还想继续被奴役吗？自由是最有价值的，这点你好好思考一下吧。”

雪球盯着莫丽说完后，莫丽犹豫着表示同意，她还是没想明白，她觉得那番说辞貌似并不能让她完全赞同。

乌鸦摩西，那是个令人讨厌的家伙。因为摩西是琼斯喜欢的宠物，他喜欢散布谣言，搬弄是非，还不劳动，这是让动物们生厌的主要原因。摩西声称有一个叫蜜饯山的地方，那里每周七天都是周日，一年都有新鲜的苜蓿，方糖和亚麻子饼就长在树篱上，那么美好而神秘的地方就在天空中云层上面的不远的某处。尽管讨厌摩西，但是一些动物还是

相信他的话，认为那是动物们死后的归宿。猪们费尽口舌，他们必须让这些愚蠢的动物明白世界上是不可能有这样的地方的。

拳师和苜蓿无疑是最忠诚的，猪们一直是这么认为的，因为以马的智商想要弄明白任何问题都不太可能，他们是一根筋的动物，既然认定猪是老师，那么凡是猪教的道理，他们就理解吸收，并且还会稍加论证传达给其他动物。大谷仓的集会他俩从不缺席，临近结束时唱的《英格兰兽》也会由他俩起头。

造反就在大家觉得还没准备好的时候开始了，并且一次成功了。话说那段时间琼斯先生时运不佳，因为一场官司赔了钱，郁郁寡欢，拼命酗酒，整天待在厨房，靠在他那把温莎靠椅上懒懒地坐着，除了看报纸，喝酒，就是偶尔喂摩西一点被啤酒泡了的干面包片。琼斯的萎靡连带着他的伙计们也游手好闲，造成了田地长满野草，窝棚顶失修漏雨，篱笆无人修剪，动物们食不果腹。其实之前的琼斯先生虽然刻薄，但是很能干，算得上是一个称职的农场主。

也许琼斯想不到，他的变化让一个新时代有了崛起的机会。那天是六月底的一个星期六，在施洗约翰节（6月24日）的前夕，本是收割牧草的时节，但是琼斯先生却在威灵登的红狮子酒吧喝得烂醉，第二天中午才回家。因为他不在家，他的伙计们根本不会尽心工作，早早挤完奶就跑出去打野兔了，完全忘记了给动物们添加草料。琼斯先生根本没有心情管庄园里的任何事，他一回来就躺在沙发上，把一张《世界新闻报》盖在脸上开始睡觉，直到天黑。动物们饿得实在是忍不住了，一头母牛率先用角顶开了饲料棚的门，于是所有的动物蜂拥地挤进去开始抢食食物。刚醒的琼斯先生本能地和他的四个伙计拿着鞭子赶到饲料棚对动物们进行抽打。动物们忍无可忍了，即便没有事先商量，他们惊人一致地朝虐待他们的人类冲去。他们用角顶，用蹄踢，不一会儿局面就扭

转了。琼斯他们哪曾见过这样的阵势，他们一直认为动物们是可以随意鞭打和虐待的，现在他们被吓得六神无主，除了逃跑，他们已经想不到其他办法了。他们五个沿着通往大路的车道拼命地奔跑，后面的动物们乘胜追击。

这庄园的另一个主人，琼斯夫人通过卧室的窗子将刚才的一切尽收眼底，她匆匆忙忙地将一些细软收拾到一个毛毡手提包里，从另一个通道溜出了庄园，乌鸦摩西还是个恋主的家伙，从木架子上蹿起来，拍打着翅膀，呱呱乱叫着追随琼斯夫人。随着关上大门的那“砰”的一声，造反就正式成功了，虽然他们还没有完全回过神来。他们拴上了五道门闩后就意味着，琼斯被驱逐了，曼纳庄园完全由他们说了算。

他们或许还是不相信自己成功了，直到他们兴奋地沿着庄园的地界奔跑了一圈，确认了在庄园里是真的没有人类存在了。接着，他们马上回到窝棚中，销毁了一切有关人类文明的东西，他们撞开了马厩尽头的那间农具棚，将里面的嚼子、鼻环、狗链，以及用来阉割猪马牛羊的刀子统统扔进了井里。同时，将缰绳、笼头、眼罩还有有损尊严的吊在马嘴下的饲料袋同其他的垃圾一起焚烧了，当然不会少了那让所有动物都感到屈辱的鞭子。火堆噼啪作响，动物们欢呼雀跃。

“饰带，是人类的标志，如同衣服一样，所有的动物都要与人区别开来，我们应该赤身裸体。”说完，雪球就把饰带扔进了火堆。

拳师听完雪球的话，便把他夏天戴的那顶草帽拿出来，这顶草帽本是防止虫蝇钻入耳朵的，他把它和其他一些东西一起扔进了火堆里。

就这样没用多长时间，关于琼斯先生的东西，凡是动物们能想起来的，就全部被销毁了。接下来，动物们回到饲料棚，拿破仑给他们发了

双份的饲料，给狗发了双份的饼干。他们在睡前将《英格兰兽》完完整整高歌了七遍，之后安安稳稳地睡了一夜，这样的睡眠是他们从来不曾有过的。

他们习惯性地黎明时醒来，但转而想起了昨天发生的事情，昨天的壮举立刻使他们兴奋起来，他们全都跑出了窝棚，奔着大牧场就去了，在通往牧场的路上有一个小山包，动物们冲到顶上，在清新的晨曦中注视着大半个庄园，景色一览无余啊。是的，这是他们的——凡是他们目光所能到达的地方都是属于他们的了。这样的念头一发芽，他们就止不住狂喜，他们蹦啊，跳啊，压抑不住极度的兴奋，他们猛地蹿到空中。他们在露珠上打滚，咀嚼着鲜美的牧草，踢起一块块黝黑的田土，使劲嗅着泥块中浓郁的香味。然后，他们逛了整个庄园一周，在无声的赞美中巡视了耕地、牧场、果树园、池塘和树丛，好似是头一次见这些东西般。并且，直到此刻，他们还是无法相信这些完全是他们的了。

后来，他们列队向庄园的窝棚走去，却在琼斯的房子外静静地站住了，这已经不属于琼斯了，是他们的了，但是他们还是惶恐地不敢进去。好一会儿，还是雪球和拿破仑带头用肩撞开了门，动物们才全部涌进了房子，他们小心翼翼地走着，生怕把什么弄乱了。他们掂着蹄子尖一间房一间房地查看，个个缄口结舌，出于一种敬畏，聚精会神地盯着这些难以置信的奢华，盯着镜子、马鬃沙发和那些人类用过的羽绒填充的被褥，还有布鲁塞尔地毯，以及放在客厅里的壁炉架子上的维多利亚女王的石印肖像。他们看得差不多了就走下了楼梯，转身却并没有找到莫丽，返回去楼上，才发现她还在一间最好的卧室里，拿着一条原是琼斯夫人梳妆台上的蓝色丝带，对着镜子傻呵呵地臭美。在大家的严词厉色下，她才不情愿地走了出去。挂在厨房里的火腿都拿去埋了，搁在洗碗室的啤酒桶也让拳师给踢了个洞。除此之外，房间的其他东西倒是没

有动。一项决议马上就在这通过了，大家一致同意把这间农场主的住房保存起来作为博物馆，任何动物都不得进去居住。

早餐后，雪球和拿破仑再次把大家召集起来。

“同志们，”雪球说，“现在是六点半，长长的一天才刚刚开始，所以今天我们要开始收割牧草。不过，还有另外一件事要先商量一下。”

这时，大家才知道在过去的三个月，猪们在垃圾堆里翻出了一本琼斯孩子们用过的书，他们从那本书上学习了阅读和书写。拿破仑要来几桶黑漆和白漆，带着大伙来到面向大路的五间大门。接着，雪球开始了他擅长的活，只见他用蹄子的两个趾夹起了刷子，蘸了白漆将门顶木牌上的“曼纳庄园”涂掉，又蘸了黑漆在那上面写上了“动物庄园”。庄园的名字就此而定了。写完后，大家伙回到窝棚那里，雪球和拿破仑向他们解释道，过去的三个月，经过他们的深思熟虑，他们把动物主义简练地概括为“七诫”，这是动物们必须遵守的法律，庄园里所有的动物都必须遵循它生活，“七诫”就写在大谷仓的墙上。说完，雪球就开始费力地爬之前拿过来的梯子，因为猪在梯子上可不好把握平衡，所以，费了好大劲雪球才爬上去，声响器提着油漆桶站在稍低几格的地方配合，雪球拿着大刷子在涂过柏油的墙上，用无比巨大的三十码外就能看见的白色字母书写“七诫”，内容如下：

七 诫

1. 凡靠两条腿行走者皆为仇敌；
2. 凡靠四肢行走者，或者长翅膀者，皆为朋友；

3. 任何动物不得着衣；
4. 任何动物不得睡床；
5. 任何动物不得饮酒；
6. 任何动物不得杀害其他动物；
7. 所有动物一律平等。

巨大的字迹中透着潇洒，除了把朋友“friend”写成了“freind”，还有其中一个“S”写反了外，其余都是准确无误的。写完后，雪球负责给动物们大声地朗读了一遍，其间动物们频频点头表示完全赞同，较为聪明的一些动物立刻开始背诵了。

“此刻，同志们，”雪球扔下刷子喊道，“到牧场去，我们要争口气，我们要争取比琼斯他们人类更快地收完牧草。”

这时，早就不自在好一会儿的三头母牛开始哞哞地大叫，原来已经有二十四小时没有人挤她们的奶了，她们的奶子快要胀破了。猪稍加思考，就命部下拿来奶桶，成功地给母牛们挤了奶，他们的蹄子干这个活还挺适合的。很快，五个桶就都装满了漂着乳沫的牛奶，很多动物饶有兴趣地看着这些奶桶里的奶。

“怎样处理它们呢？”一个动物提了出来。

一只母鸡接着说：“以前琼斯先生会在我们的饲料中掺一些牛奶的。”

但是站在奶桶边的拿破仑马上打断了大家的谈话，他说：“同志们，我们当务之急是收割牧草，牛奶先放在一边，会被妥善处理的。你们现在马上跟着雪球同志去收割牧草，我随后就到，前进，同志们！牧草等着你们呢！”

于是，响应号召的动物们成群结队地走向牧场，开始了一天的劳动。当他们晚上收割回来后，发现牛奶已经不见了踪影。

第三章

动物们这次真是干劲十足，流了大把的汗水，终于换回了大丰收，这次收获的牧草比他们预计的要多得多。

其实，动物们在干活中遇到了不少难题，干起来也是费力的，因为那些工具是为人设计的，动物们最大的劣势就是不能两条腿站立操作那些工具。不过，猪们总是有办法，即便他们实际上并不干活，只是负责指挥和监督，算起来他们算是学识最出众的，所以理所应当地被所有动物认作了领导。马呢，因为常年在这片土地上劳作，对这里的一尺一寸都是熟悉的，其实说起对于割草和耕地的精通程度，琼斯和他的伙计是比不得的。所以，拳师和苜蓿非常自觉地套上了割草机和马拉耙机（是没有嚼子和缰绳的，因为已经焚毁了），他俩的步伐稳健，坚定地一圈一圈行进，猪跟在他俩后面，一边绕，一边嘴里吆喝着“驾，加油，朋友！”，一会儿又是“吁，停下，同志！”。其他的动物也没闲着，都参与到了搬运和堆积牧草的紧张工作中，就连鸡和鸭子也不辞辛劳地在太阳光的焦灼下用嘴衔起一小撮牧草来回地奔波。他们卖力地干活换回了大丰收，这是庄园从未曾有过的大丰收啊，并且比以前琼斯和他伙计们的时候整整提前了两天。动物们都很自觉，没有偷吃一口，并且也没有落下一根草秆草叶，这全靠了眼尖的鸡和鸭子。

一整个夏天，庄园里的一切都井井有条，没有丝毫混乱。动物们过上了前所未有的幸福日子，这之前都不敢奢望啊，食物完全属于他们，

为了自己的食物所以自己生产，并不是为了曾经主人的施舍，这让他们真真正正体验到当家做主的感觉，以前吃饭是为了活命，而现在的食物带给他们的则是享受。自从那次暴动成功，驱赶了琼斯那些寄生虫般的人，即便动物们没什么经验，但是也有了更多的食物和更多的时间休息。一切仿佛都是那么顺利，即便动物们遇到了很多麻烦，但是一件件地都迎刃而解。比如，下半年收完谷物，就要脱粒，但是庄园里没有脱粒机，于是那种最原始的方法被搬了出来，动物们齐上阵，把谷子揪下来，再用嘴把壳吹掉。对于这些困难出力最多的就是猪和拳师了，猪出的是脑力，拳师出的是体力。拳师一直都是勤劳勤奋的，即便是在琼斯时期也是如此，从不偷懒，现在更是卖力，一个顶仨。哪里工作最艰苦，哪里就有他的身影。有一段时间，基本上庄园里所有活都落在了拳师的肩上，从早到晚，他不停歇地推呀拉呀。为了能多干点活（不在他范围内的活），他早就跟一只小公鸡约定了，每天提前半小时叫醒他，他对所干的活唯一挑剔的就是必须看起来是最累最出力的，他的座右铭就定为了“我要更加努力工作”，这句话在每当遇见挫折和困难的时候就会被他念出来。

但是，每个动物都必须量力而行，比如鸡和鸭，他们单就是捡拾那些遗落的谷粒，就为大家增加了一百八十升的粮食。现在大家很团结，不会有人偷吃，该多少就多少，大家不会为了粮食份额争来争去，再也不见了以往的钩心斗角，争吵打斗。大家都勤勤恳恳，几乎没有动物偷懒，但是例外是不可避免的，莫丽就很不愿意早起，她还常常借故蹄子里夹了石头为由，扔下工作溜走了。猫也表现得与众不同，大家也渐渐发现，每当有活干的时候就不见了她的踪影，直到开饭或者大家收工后她才会若无其事地出现，但是她总有理由为自己辩解，咕噜咕噜说着貌似有理的原因，但偏就是真诚得让大家没办法怀疑她良好的动机。那头老驴本杰明对待这次造反的态度很不明朗，因为他在起义前后没有什么

太大的变化，他一直是慢条斯理，本本分分干着属于自己的活，既不多干，也不少干，但从不旷工。也有多事的动物问本杰明是不是比以前好，但他没有正面回答，只是说：“驴子都是长寿的动物，你们谁见过死驴吗？”对于这神秘的答案，动物们也就作罢了。

星期天主要是休息的，不用干活，早餐也比平时晚一个小时，吃过早餐，就要完成一系列的仪式，而且每周如此。首先就是升旗，旗子是用琼斯夫人的旧的绿桌布做成的，是雪球从农具室翻出来的，他在上面用白漆画上了一只蹄子和一只犄角，之后这面旗就会在每个星期天早上在庄主院子内花园的旗杆上升起。对于旗子的含义，雪球是这样讲解的，绿色代表了整个英格兰田野，白色的蹄子和犄角象征了未来的动物共和国，这个共和国会在人类被彻底铲除后诞生。升旗之后，所有动物排着队依次进入大谷仓，参加名为碰头会的全体大会。会议的主要内容就是下一周的工作安排和关于各项提议的讨论和结果。猪是提案的主力军，其他的动物只有表决的份，但他们对这毫不介意。拿破仑和雪球总是最显眼的，但大家都瞧得出来，他俩不合，只要其中一个赞成什么，另外一个就反对什么。即便是已经通过的议案，他俩也会揪住其中的问题而争执不休，比如之前有个议案，是把果园后面的一小片牧场留给过了劳动年龄的动物们作为养老地，大家对这个方案都没有反对，但是在退休年龄上，双方又各执己见，激烈不已啊。会议的最后就是演唱那首《英格兰兽》。下午的时间留给大家自行娱乐。

农具室被猪指定为他们的指挥部，他们把里面的农具倒腾到了其他地方。每到晚上，他们就会来到这里，要么学习打铁，要么学习木工，或者其他生活中经常能用到的技艺，当然他们一定要参照琼斯留下来的那些书本。雪球一直在忙着组织他的“动物委员会”机构，对此他尽心尽力，尽管累得半死，但是依然乐此不疲。他之前为动物做过很多这样的

事，但几乎都不幸地失败了，比如属于母鸡的“产蛋委员会”，属于牛的“清洁尾巴社”，有为羊发起的“羊毛增白运动”，还有专为驯化老鼠和野兔的“野生同志再教育委员会”。就如那个驯化野生动物的努力很快就被宣布是白费的，那些个野生动物的行为几乎没什么变化，要是对他们不计较的话，他们就明目张胆地钻空子。猫也参加了这个委员会，她倒是在这里找到了乐趣。有动物看见她曾经有一天站在窝棚顶与她够不着的一些麻雀聊天。她对麻雀们说，现在动物们都是同志了，所以，只要麻雀们愿意，就可以站到她的爪子上来，但是麻雀们却照样对她能离多远就离多远。

但是，有一个机构却带来了很大的效益，那就是读写班。到了秋风吹起的时候，庄园里的动物们都不同程度地有了点文化，至少不是文盲了。

读和写对于猪这种聪明的动物来说太容易了。狗对阅读掌握得也不错，但是他们只对“七诫”有兴趣。山羊穆尔丽跟狗比起来还略胜一筹，因为她时常在傍晚从垃圾堆里翻出报纸碎片念给其他动物听。驴子本杰明的阅读水平甚至可以和猪匹敌，但是他不以为意，他说还没有什么是值得阅读的。苜蓿学会了二十六个字母，但是却不会拼成单词。拳师只能记住A、B、C、D，他会用大蹄子在沙地上写完这四个字母，然后就会目不转睛，偶尔抖一下额毛，冥思苦想下一个字母，却怎么都想不起来。当然他也学过E、F、G、H，但是会了这几个，A、B、C、D却忘了。于是他最后决定就只记住前四个吧，为了能记得更牢，他每天都会写上一两遍。莫丽只会那五个能拼出她名字的字母Mollie，不是智商不够，是她根本不学其他的。她会用几根细嫩的树枝，很灵巧地把她的名字拼出来，然后再用几朵鲜花稍加装饰，再绕着走几圈，不住地赞叹。

庄园里的其他动物大都不能越过A字母。有些智商很低的动物就

连“七诫”也记不住，比如羊、鸡和鸭子。鉴于这种情况，雪球经过反复研究，为这些动物量身定做了一句话——“四条腿好，两条腿坏”，这句话是从“七诫”里提炼出来的，它涵盖了兽主义的精髓，一旦掌握了它，人类的威胁就会被免除了。但是鸟类、家禽类就不愿意了，因为两条腿不好，他们只有两条腿，对于这，雪球给了他们一个看似合理的解释。

雪球说：“禽鸟们，你觉得你们只有两条腿吗？你觉得你们和人类没有区别吗？这种想法是错误的。你们的翅膀，是推进行进的器官，并不是用来操控的，所以它们的功能就是腿。而人类的手是作恶多端的器官。”

禽鸟们对于这番解释并不是很明白，但是他们还是接受了。于是，所有智商都不太够用的动物都一丝不苟地去记这个简单的新准则。这条新准则也被写在大谷仓的墙上，“七诫”的上面，甚至字要更大一些。绵羊们对这句短小精悍的准则无比上心，很快他们就记住了，以后每当他们躺在地上，就会连续不断地重复着“四条腿好，两条腿坏”，可以一叫就是几个小时，对此，他们从不觉得厌烦。

对于雪球做的这些建立委员会的工作，拿破仑不屑一顾。他觉得目前最重要的事情应该是对年轻一代的教育问题。赶巧的是收割牧草之后不久，杰西和蓝铃铛一共产下了九只健壮的小狗仔，这些小狗断奶的那天，拿破仑就把他们带走了，说是为了他们的教育，把他们带到了一间仅能用曾经放在农具室里的那架梯子爬上去的阁楼，方便他们与外界隔离，不出意外，庄园里的动物们很快就遗忘了这九只小狗的存在。

之前消失了的牛奶，原来是放进了猪每天的饲料里。果园里有很多早熟的苹果被吹落在了草坪上，动物们原本认为会分给大家享用，但是一条新指令击碎了他们天真的想法。指令要求凡是被吹落的苹果一定要

收集起来，储藏在农具室里，供猪们食用。动物们对此很是不满，他们嘟嘟囔囔地抱怨，但是无济于事，奇怪的是，那两头凡事都是死对头的猪在这件事上竟然没有争执。声响器马上发挥他的特长，去向那些动物作些必要的解释。

“同志们，”声响器大声地叫道，“你们会觉得我们猪这么做是很自私，滥用权力吗？其实不是的，完全不是。你们千万不要这么想。其实啊，我们中有很多猪都是不喜欢吃苹果和牛奶的，比如我就很不喜欢。但是我们为什么要食用呢？那其实是为了保证我们的身体健康。科学研究表明，牛奶和苹果中含有对猪来说必不可少的营养物质。你们想啊，我们猪是从事脑力劳动的，庄园里的所有工作都需要我们去管理，去组织，我们没日没夜地为大家操劳，所以，为了不因缺乏营养而生病，为了不因生病而耽误工作，我们猪才去吃那些苹果，喝那些牛奶的。我们都是为了大家好，你们想，如果我们病倒了，将会发生多么严重的事啊，那个时候，琼斯一定会卷土重来的！一定会的！太可怕了！这是真的，同志们！”声响器用着他百试不厌的绝招，一边蹦来蹦去，一边摇头晃脑，用恳求的语气冲着动物们大声喊道，“我说的都是真的，想必你们也不愿意看到琼斯回来吧？”

一提到琼斯可能会因为这个卷土重来，动物们都不再反对了，因为大家实在是不想让那个事情真的发生，经过声响器这么一说，大家也就觉得让猪们保持健康是抵抗琼斯的必要条件。因此，大家一致同意了：牛奶和吹落的苹果（还包括成熟苹果中的绝大部分）应当作为猪们独享的食物。

第四章

到了夏天快要结束的时候，动物庄园的伟大壮举就被广为传唱了，至少大半个英格兰都知道了这些事。鸽子在信息传播中起了至关重要的作用，每天，拿破仑和雪球都会命令好几群鸽子去向附近的农场里的动物讲述造反的经过，并且教他们唱《英格兰兽》。

这段时期，琼斯先生很是郁闷啊，他花了大把的时间在威灵登的红狮子酒吧里，只要有人愿意听，他就向他们讲述他的冤屈——竟然被一群畜生撵出了自己的家园。

别的庄主起初仅仅是对琼斯表示同情，但是并没有给予实质性的帮助。因为他们都在心里打起了小算盘，想要为自己捞点好处。幸而，临近的两个庄园主的关系一直都很差。一个是面积很大的老式庄园，叫作福科斯伍德，但是庄园主皮尔金顿先生对这个庄园不怎么上心，他这个乡绅经常干的事不是打理农场，而是根据季节的变换或者钓鱼或者打猎，所以整个庄园的牧场基本荒芜了，树篱根本无人修剪，放眼望去满目萧瑟。另一个平彻菲尔德庄园与之相比虽然面积小了点，但是要整洁得多，这个庄园的主人叫弗雷德里克，是个奸诈不讲理的人，就因为锱铢必较已经身陷好几个官司了。这两个农场主谁也看不惯谁，双方就连在有共同利益的事情上都很难达成协议。

不过他俩倒是做了一件相同的事，那就是阻止隔壁庄园动物造反的消息传给自己庄园的动物，因为这事确实让他俩吓得不轻。起初知道这

个消息的时候，他俩对动物们自己管理庄园的想法不屑一顾，觉得这场闹剧最多两个星期就会过去了。他俩四处散布谣言，内容是曼纳庄园（他们不能忍受动物庄园这个名字，依旧坚持称为曼纳庄园）里的动物们快要饿死了，为了争抢食物不停地打斗。然而一段时间过去了，那个庄园里的动物们显然没有饿死，这两个农场主不得不继续编造其他的谎话，说那里的动物们染上了可怕的邪气，他们吃同类的肉，用烧得通红的马蹄铁作为武器互相拷打折磨，还共同占有他们的雌性动物。两个农场主言之凿凿，这些就是造反带来的恶果。

然而，这样的传言是不被任何生物所相信的。另一个完全相悖的消息却广为流传：动物们建立了自己的动物庄园，他们赶走了人类，他们完全靠自己打理一切事务。虽然出现了不同版本，内容也不尽相同，但是主要宗旨是相同的。那一整年里，全国范围掀起了一股股大小不一的造反风波：一向温顺的公牛，突然就撒了野；羊糟蹋完苜蓿，还撞坏了树篱；母牛踢翻了奶桶；猎马奔跑到栅栏边突然停住从而把骑手成功地甩了出去。更让人不可思议的是，《英格兰兽》不论是调子还是歌词都以惊人的速度被广为传颂。人类虽然假装对这首歌表示轻蔑，但是怎么也掩饰不了他们的愤怒。他们说，他们不明白自己庄园里的动物怎么能如此堕落到去唱这种下流的歌。所以，但凡被发现唱这个歌的动物都会遭到一顿鞭打。尽管挨打也不能阻止这首歌被传唱，树篱上乌鸦从嘴里冒出的是《英格兰兽》，榆树上蹲着的鸽子发出的也是这个调子，铁匠铺里有这个调子，教堂的钟鸣里还有这个调子。人们仿佛被这个调子包围了，每当耳边响起这个调子，人们就不禁战栗，仿佛听到了他们即将要面临的厄运的预言。

时间很快到了十月，这时候谷子已经收割并且堆放好了，甚至一些已经脱了粒。一天，原本应该在外面的一群鸽子突然返回来，神色慌张

都飞进了庄园的院子。之后很快就看见琼斯带着他的伙计们，还有五六个隔壁福科斯伍德庄园和平彻菲尔德庄园的人，闯进了五间大门，沿着通向庄园的大道朝着庄园快步走来，他们人人手拿武器，琼斯拿了一支猎枪，其他人拿着棍棒，显而易见，他们是来夺回庄园的。

动物们异常冷静，因为他们早就料到了会有这一天，早就作好了完全的准备。雪球曾经在农场主的屋里翻出过一本描写凯撒大帝征战的旧书，算是军事战略系列吧，所以这次的指挥理所应当地落在雪球的肩上，只见他沉着地做出一个个决定，不出两分钟，动物们全部各就各位。

第一轮的攻击随着雪球的一声令下就开始了，此时这伙人刚刚接近庄园的窝棚。先是所有的鸽子飞到了这群人的头上，三五十只一起盘旋，从半空中一起拉屎。人们忙着躲避空袭，不料树篱后面突然冲出了一大群鹅，狠狠地啄他们的小腿肚子。人们握着手里的棍棒毫不费力地赶走了这群鹅，其实这只是战斗的前奏，目的就是让人类晕头转向。紧接着雪球带领动物发起了又一次的攻击，他率领着本杰明、穆尔丽和所有的羊冲进人群里，横冲直撞，对这伙突袭者又顶又戳，本杰明也使出了拿手招——炮蹶子。尽管动物们竭尽全力，这些手握凶器，连脚上也穿着带钉子的鞋的人还是让他们不容小觑。突然，动物们都听到了雪球发出了一声代表撤退的叫声，动物们很听话地掉头退回到院子里。

这些人类看到退回院子的动物，很自负地欢呼雀跃，于是他们没有经过思考就决定乘胜追击。这就是雪球给他们下的套。只见他们刚进到院子，之前藏匿在牛棚里的三匹马、三头牛，还有所有的猪就突然从他们身后冒了出来，顺便切断了他们所有的退路。伴随着雪球的又一声进攻信号，激烈的战斗正式打响，雪球带头身体力行地扑向琼斯，琼斯条件反射地举枪就射，子弹擦着雪球的背部飞过去，虽不致命，但是依旧

在雪球的背上留下很深的几道血口子，不幸的是一头羊被射中毙命了。说时迟，那时快，雪球又撞了过去，两百多斤的身体仅仅碰了一下琼斯的腿，琼斯就倒在了一个粪堆上，猎枪很配合地也飞了出去。最惊心动魄的场景是拳师制造的，他就像一匹没被阉割过的成年种马，后腿发力撑起了整个身子，两只钉着铁掌的前蹄横扫一切，第一下就准确无误地击倒了来自福科斯伍德庄园的一个马夫，是打在了脑袋上，这个人倒在了泥坑里就不再动弹了。一看到有同伴没了气息，这些人吓坏了，忙不迭地扔掉棒子，转身就跑。但是深深的恐惧让他们丧失了方向感，所有的动物齐上阵，追着他们围着院子跑。这些人在混乱中被顶撞，撕咬，踢踹，踩踏，凡是动物们能使出来的招式他们全尝遍了，就连猫也不例外地从房顶上蹿下来，抓着一个放牛人的肩膀，用锋利的爪子狠狠地刺进他的脖子，放牛人疼得大声喊叫，声音透着凄惨的气息。就在他们快要绝望的时候，他们突然看到大门那里并没有动物，他们即刻抓住了这一丝生还的机会，夺路冲出院子，迅速朝着大路的方向狂奔，一路上伴着鹅群的啄咬，驱逐，终于成功地消失在了路尽头。就这样，为时不过五分钟的偷袭就在人类的败逃结局下结束了。

还有一个人类留在了院子里，就是之前被拳师打倒在地的马夫。回到院子，拳师用蹄子扒拉一下那个人，想把他翻过来，脸朝上，但是很失败。

拳师得出一个结论：“他死了。这不是我本意，我忘了我戴着马蹄铁了。你们相信我不是故意的吗？”

“这不是感性的时候，同志！”伤口还在流血的雪球大声说道，“战斗就是如此，只有死人才是好人。”

“但是我从没想过会杀生，对人依然如此。”拳师反复地重申，眼里

还含着泪水。

不知是谁叫了一声：“莫丽怎么不见了？”

莫丽确实不知所踪。顿时，一种恐惧感油然而生，动物们开始担心是不是人类设计伤害了她，或者已经把她抢走了。结果大家却在她的马棚里找到了她，那时她正把头钻到了马槽里的草料中。原来刚才枪一响，她就躲了回来。刚才那个倒在泥坑里的马夫并没有死，而是晕倒了，他苏醒的时候动物们正在找莫丽，他就趁机溜掉了。

动物们重新聚集在院子里，战斗胜利带来的喜悦和兴奋使他们久久不能平静，每一个动物都扯着嗓子诉说自己刚刚在战斗中的表现。当下，他们就举办了一场庆功会。升起了代表动物庄园的旗帜，反复颂唱《英格兰兽》，接着为那只在战斗中牺牲的羊举行了庄重的葬礼，并在他的墓前栽种了一棵山楂树。雪球在葬礼上作了简短的讲话，意思主要是，动物们应该随时为庄园贡献自己的生命，在需要的时候。

在动物们的强烈提议下，他们决定设立军功勋章，“一级动物英雄”的勋章和称号当即授予了雪球和拳师，那是一枚铜质奖章（是在农具室里翻出来的很旧的装饰），被授权可在星期天和节假日里佩戴。还有一枚“二级动物英雄”勋章及称号被迫认给了那只死去的羊。

大家纷纷为这次战争的称呼出谋划策，最后一致通过定为“牛棚战役”，因为就是在那里发动了至关重要的袭击。他们还找到了琼斯落下的枪，并且在原庄主的房子里翻出了备用的子弹。于是这杆枪有了新的用途，它被放在旗杆脚下作为礼炮，在两个纪念日里鸣枪，一个是十月十二日的牛棚战役纪念日，一个是施洗约翰节起义纪念日。

第五章

随着冬天不知不觉地到来，大家越来越不喜欢莫丽。不只是讨厌她总是在干活的时候来得最晚，还总是以睡过点作为借口，她还常常嘟囔一些奇怪的病痛。不过，这些并不影响她吃饭，一口都不会少吃。她经常以种种借口不干活，自己躲到饮水池边，呆呆地凝视着自己在水中的倒影。甚至还有一些传言比这更为严重的。有一天，莫丽一边晃着她的长尾巴，一边嚼着草根，慢悠悠地遛到院子里，苜蓿把她拉到一边。

“莫丽，”她说，“我要跟你说一件很严肃的事情。今天早上，在你查看我们庄园和福科斯伍德庄园隔着的那段树篱时，有一个皮尔金顿先生的手下就在树篱的那一边。尽管我离得远，但我还是看见他跟你说话了，他还抚摸了你的鼻子。出了什么事，莫丽？”

“不可能！他没有摸我！我也没让他摸！这是不可能发生的！”莫丽大声地反驳着，同时她的蹄子不安地扒拉着地上的土。

“莫丽！直视我，你敢用名誉保证，那个人没有摸过你的鼻子吗？”

“这不是真的！”莫丽反复说道，但是却不敢抬头看苜蓿。然后，她就朝着田野跑去了，显然是想逃避。

突然一个念头在苜蓿心中闪过。她没有和其他动物商量，立刻径直跑到莫丽的厩棚，在干草堆里翻了翻，很快，露出了一小堆方糖和几束各种颜色的饰带。

三天后，莫丽不见了，接连几个星期都下落不明。直到后来从几个鸽子口中才得到一点关于她的消息。鸽子说见到她的时候是在威灵登的另外一边酒吧外，当时她的身上正套着一辆红黑色的双轮马车。嘴里还吃着酒吧老板喂给她的方糖，鼻子还享受着酒吧老板的抚摸，酒吧老板是一个穿着格子马裤和高筒橡胶靴的红脸胖子。貌似她的毛发被修剪一新，一条鲜红的饰带作为装饰绑在她的额头上。鸽子们说莫丽对现状很是满意，脸上洋溢着骄傲。从那以后，动物们就再也没有提过莫丽。

很快到了一月份，天气很是恶劣。泥土冻得邦邦硬，地里的活都停了。但是大谷仓里的会议却比以往多了起来，猪们忙于筹划下一个季度的工作。大伙都已认同由动物们中智商最高的猪来决定庄园里的大政方针，即便他们的决策最后还是要在大多数同意的情况下才能执行。雪球和拿破仑还是一如既往地为所有的安排争吵，致使一切都不是很顺利。每一个能发生争执的地方，他俩都没错过。假如一个提出应该播种更大面积的麦子，另一个就一定要求用更大的面积播种燕麦；如果一个说某某地方非常适合种植卷心菜，那另一个肯定就说那里只是一块只能长活根茎作物的烂地。他俩的追随者旗鼓相当，一些激烈的辩论不可避免。在每周的例会上，雪球侃侃而谈，绝大多数动物都很赞同他的观点。而拿破仑擅长于利用会议的中间休息时间用游说的方式为自己拉票。绵羊对于这种方式尤为支持。在以后的不论何时何地，绵羊们都会经常高呼“四条腿好，两条腿坏”，故意在大会上捣乱。并且，大家渐渐发现，尤其在雪球发言的高潮阶段，更容易听见他们咩咩地叫喊“四条腿好，两条腿坏”。雪球曾经看过一些过了期的《农场主与畜牧业》杂志，当然是从农场主的屋里找到的，他对此进行了深入的钻研，学习使他的脑袋里有了很多的新点子和改革的设计。他一谈起农田排水，饲料保鲜还有碱性煤渣这些术语什么的，就滔滔不绝啊。此外，他还设计出了方便施肥的系统，这个系统很复杂，但是很方便，可以把动物们随时随地排

放的粪便直接通到农田，省了再用马运输的劳力。拿破仑虽然没有实质性的贡献，但并不妨碍他继续跟雪球作对，他说雪球的这套方案听起来天花乱坠，但其实根本达不到最后的效果。看来，他是等着看雪球的好戏了。在他们俩所有的争吵中，最激烈的还数关于风车一事的争辩。

庄园里的窝棚距离那狭长的大牧场不远，大牧场那儿有一个能俯瞰整个庄园的小山包。雪球经过实地考察后得出结论，那是建造风车的绝佳之地。风车可以带动发电机，发电机发了电可以为整个农场供电。电可以为窝棚照明，也可以在天冷的时候用来取暖，还可以用在一切先进的电器上为生产带来方便，比如电锯、铡草机、切片机，还有电动挤奶器等等。动物们之前从没有听说过这些名词（因为这是一个有年头的庄园了，机械都是最原始的）。雪球绘声绘色地给动物描绘有了这些先进机器之后的生活场景，动物们很快就把自己想象进去了：他们只需要悠闲地在地里吃草，或者阅读谈天，做自己想做的事情，一边的机器可以帮他们干所有的活。

雪球在短短的几个星期中就拿出了风车的设计方案。原本属于琼斯先生的三本书：《实用家居一千条》《自己动手建房舍》和《电工入门》给了雪球很多机械设计方面的参考。曾经存放孵卵器的那间屋子现在是雪球的工作室，因为里面铺了木质地板，很光滑，很适合画图。他常常把自己关在那里，一干就是好几个小时。他把书本打开用石块压好，用蹄子上的两趾夹住粉笔，绘几下图，看一眼书，还会来回地走上两圈用于思考，偶尔发出些兴奋的哼唧声。整个设计图已经进入到最复杂的阶段，大量的曲柄和齿轮要错综复杂地连接到一起，大半个地板被图占据了，其他动物虽然看不明白，但是留给他们的印象还是很深刻的。动物们每天都来看雪球画的图，一天最少来一次。鸡和鸭也不例外，他们还很自觉地不去踩踏那些粉笔画的线。只有拿破仑从不关心雪

球这边的进展，他甚至从来都没有来看过图。他最初就反对制造风车。出乎意料的是，一天拿破仑竟然来到雪球的办公室查看设计图。他肥胖笨重的身子在屋子里转过来绕过去，设计图上的每一处都被他看了个仔细，还用鼻子凑上去使劲地嗅了嗅，完了他眯着眼站在图边沉思了一下。突然就抬起后腿，在图上撒了泡尿，但是并没说什么就走了。

在风车这件事上庄园内部产生了严重的分歧。雪球从一开始就不否认风车是个大项目，制造起来会很麻烦的，要筑墙就得采石头，还需要制造风车的那个翼板，还得准备发电机和电缆（但是如何得到这些东西，雪球只字没提）。虽然面临诸多困难，雪球依然信心满满，他宣称不用一年就能建好风车，工程完成后就能给大家带来很多福利，肯定会节省大量的劳动力，这样，动物们只需每周工作三天就行了。对立面的拿破仑很快就反驳了，他认为现在最应该做的是多生产食物，如果把精力都放在制造风车上了，生产怎么办？食物不够，大家怎么活命？于是两个派别应景而生，一派打着的口号是“拥护雪球和每周三天工作日”，另一派的口号是“拥护拿破仑和食物满槽制”。唯一的中立者是本杰明，因为他谁的话也不信，他认为食料不会有量的增加，风车也不会像雪球说的那么神通广大，所以有还是没有，于他来说没有关系，日子继续像以往一样过，有不如意在所难免。

风车的事情大家依旧争执不下，但是庄园的防御也是问题。虽说牛棚战役动物们大胜，但是琼斯先生他们逃走了，他们打了败仗的消息传遍了整个英格兰，使他们颜面尽失，其他庄园的动物得到这个消息后更加难以驾驭了，种种状况表明，人类有理由，有充足的理由，有可能，完全有可能发动一场更为惨烈的反攻来帮助琼斯复辟庄园。就连防御的问题解决方式，拿破仑和雪球也不出意外地意见不合。拿破仑认为应该武装保卫，多弄一些武器，进行训练学习，自己保护自己，否则就等于

坐以待毙。而雪球则觉得应该放出更多的鸽子，散播更多关于动物庄园的消息，让更多的动物反抗造反，使当前的形势更加风起云涌，自卫就不需要了。动物们在这个问题上摇摆不定，分不清哪个对哪个错，他们觉得好像谁的话都有道理。后来他们发现，只要谁在讲话，他们就相信谁。

雪球的设计图终于完成了。于是关于是否建造风车的议案顺理成章地又被正式搬上了星期天的碰头会上。动物们集合完毕，会议正式开始。首先雪球开始作陈述，他把建造风车的好处一条一条摆出来，尽管中间被羊发出的咩咩声打断了n多次，但是他对要建造风车的态度还是很坚定的。接着，拿破仑提出了反对意见，他旁敲侧击地说风车只可能是幻想，大家不能当真，不要拥护这个华而不实的议案。说完他就坐下了，丝毫不关心群众的反应，前后不过半分钟。雪球一见拿破仑结束了发言，就迫不及待地站起来，制止住还要咩咩叫的羊，开始再次慷慨激昂地陈述自己的态度，呼吁大家要支持建造风车。本来之前大家分成了两派，分别支持两头领袖，但现在被雪球的一番话语弄得纷纷倒戈。雪球用他带有魔力的话语带领着动物们进入到了美好的憧憬里——庄园里，动物们会因为有了风车摆脱了又脏又累的生活，此刻不仅仅是有铡草机、萝卜切片机了，还会因有了电而使脱粒机、犁、耙、碾子、收割机还有捆扎机依次运作起来。电还能使生活更为舒适，会为窝棚照明，提供冷热水，天冷还能用电暖气取暖。等他带着大伙畅想完了，表决会何去何从已经很明显了。就在这个当口，拿破仑站起身来，丢给雪球一个奇怪的眼神后，发出了一声前所未闻的尖叫。

突然，会场外响起一阵令人毛骨悚然的咆哮声。随即，蹿进来九只强壮的狗，个个都戴着铜式项圈，瞅着雪球就扑了过去。雪球条件反射地跳开了，勉强躲过了被撕咬的厄运，但是不容他反应，九只狗又扑过

来，雪球只能奔出门外，九只狗依旧穷追不舍。动物们被这突如其来的状况搞傻了，除了惊恐，就只会站在门口观望这场追逐。雪球一路飞奔过狭长的牧场，朝着大道跑去，他拼了命地奔跑，狗们紧追不舍，突然他很不幸地滑倒了，就在这千钧一发的时刻，求生的欲望爆发了，雪球重新爬了起来，继续更加拼命地跑，狗们又一次逼近了，其中一只狗差点咬到了他的尾巴，幸而他甩开了。接着他一个奋力冲刺，赶在狗嘴碰到他之前，从树篱的一个豁口蹿了出去，转眼就消失了。好险，就差几英寸，最后雪球算是犬口余生。

动物们心惊胆战地回到大谷仓，没有人敢出声。不一会儿，那些狗叫嚷着跑了回来。起初，大家谁也想不明白这些狗是从哪冒出来的，但很快大家就想起来了，那就是杰西和蓝铃铛产的那九只狗崽子，一直被拿破仑偷偷养着。这九只狗虽然还未完全长大，但个头和成年的相差无几，个个面相凶狠，犹如饿狼。大家还发现，他们始终紧挨着拿破仑，对着他摇头摆尾，那姿态让大家想起了琼斯时代的狗模样。

九只狗拥护着拿破仑站在了昔日老少校发表演说的那个突起的台子，然后他宣布，以后取消每周日早晨的碰头会，他解释说，这是完全在浪费时间的会议，根本毫无意义。他会组织一个委员会，当然委员全都是猪，他会亲自统管这个组织，而以后庄园里的大小议题都由这个委员会来决定。猪们会在私下讨论议题，然后再将决策传达给动物们。而星期天动物们还是需要在清晨的时候聚集在一起，要向庄园的旗帜致敬，唱《英格兰兽》，接受下一周的工作任务。生活依旧，唯一不同的是，再也没有了辩论。

雪球的被驱逐给大家带来了不小的震惊，但是拿破仑刚才的一系列决定更加让动物们无比震撼。有一些动物想要抗议，但是没有找到合适的辩词。拳师立起了耳朵，又甩了甩前额，努力地想要理清些头绪，结

果依然是迷糊，最后也没说出什么话。倒是几头猪出了声，那是前排的四只小猪，他们不满地尖叫，想要跳起来发言。立刻就见那几只大狗冲着小猪们龇牙咆哮，小猪们顿时没了声音，乖乖地坐了下去。羊们马上开始了咩咩的“四条腿好，两条腿坏”，叫声响亮，持续了一刻钟，于是，讨论的所有机会就在羊们的叫声中彻底失去了。

后来，肩负使命的声响器巡视了一圈庄园后，就新的安排对动物们给予了解释。

“伙伴们，”声响器叫道，“我相信在场的每一个兄弟姐妹都会对拿破仑同志这种勇于担当额外劳动的行为而深感敬佩和感激。当领导不是你们想象的那么简单，享受根本谈不上，每天都有沉甸甸的责任和任务压在肩膀。拿破仑同志也愿意让大家为自己的事情做主，他一直坚信众生平等嘛，但是一旦你们失策了，后果将不堪设想。你们想，要是你们头脑一热相信了雪球的关于风车的鬼话，结局会怎么样？据我们目前所知，说雪球是坏蛋一点也不为过。”

“可是雪球在牛棚战役中表现很英勇啊。”一个动物立马说道。

声响器很快作出了回答：“你认为只有英勇就够了吗？不是的。最重要的是忠诚和服从。牛棚战役中，雪球是有所表现，但是在不久的将来你们就会发现他的作用被过度地夸大了。如今，我们的口号是纪律，铁一般的纪律。我们才刚刚起步，走错一步都是非常危险的，琼斯，我们的敌人就会回来继续奴役我们。你们谁也不希望是这样的结果吧？”

很显然，每次一提到琼斯，动物们都会立刻同意领袖们的意见，他们无论如何也是不愿意让琼斯回来的；如果辩论会导致琼斯回来，那么取消星期天早上的碰头会就必须执行。声响器的那番论证于是又成了不

容怀疑的真理了。拳师静静地站在那里思考了很久，然后用一句话表达了他当时的感受，“既然是拿破仑同志说的话，就肯定不会错的”。从此，他的座右铭又多了一句补充，那就是“拿破仑同志永远正确”。

随着天气渐渐暖和起来，春耕开始了。之前作为雪球工作室的那间屋子依旧被封着，至于画在地上的风车的设计图，大家都觉得肯定被擦掉了。他们听从拿破仑的决定，在每个星期日的上午十点，集合在大谷仓里，领取他们这一周的工作任务。老少校的脑壳风干后从果园里挖了出来，被放在旗杆下面的木桩上，和猎枪并排。每周的升旗仪式结束后，动物们按照规定恭恭敬敬走过脑壳，算是瞻仰吧，最后才能进入大谷仓。现在大家的会议座次可不像以前那么随便了，拿破仑进行了新的安排。前台坐着拿破仑和一个叫小不点的猪，小不点在作诗谱曲方面有着惊人的天赋。围在他们外边的是那九只还没成年的狗，呈半圆形坐着。其他的猪坐在后面。剩余的动物面朝他们坐在大谷仓中间。拿破仑的作风一贯是类似军人的粗暴，他给每个动物安排完工作，仅仅唱了一遍《英格兰兽》，就宣布解散了会议。

距离雪球被赶出去已有三个星期了，这个星期天，动物们听到了一个让他们都格外震惊的消息，那就是拿破仑宣布要建造风车。拿破仑在会上并没有解释为什么他会改变主意，只是简单地警告大家，这是额外的工作，并且将会非常艰辛，也许还会缩减他们的食物。原来过去的三周，委员会里的所有猪都在为风车做着准备工作，包括筹划以及一些细微的部分都统统被考虑到了，整个项目被安排得很妥当，他们预计要花两年的时间来建造风车和进行其他项目的改进。

声响器当天晚上就向动物们透露了一个消息，拿破仑从来没有反对过建造风车。事实上，最先提倡建造风车的就是拿破仑。至于雪球，他其实是个剽窃者，那幅画在孵卵室地板上的风车结构图本是拿破仑创

作，只不过他画在了自己的笔记上，而雪球把它抄画在了地板上。对于声响器说的那个消息，有的动物提出了疑问：“那为什么拿破仑起初强烈反对风车计划？”声响器圆滑地回答了他，他说，这是拿破仑同志使用的一个计谋，聪明机灵的拿破仑同志很早就发现了雪球有不良的企图，是个危险分子，最早反对修建风车就是为了将雪球赶出去。现在雪球已经被驱赶了，当然计划就能进行了，不会再有干扰了。声响器说，这就是谋略。他一边蹦蹦跳跳，一边晃动着尾巴，嘴巴里又重复了好多遍：“谋略，同志们，谋略啊！”其间还夹杂着欢快的笑声。动物们不大能明白他的话，他讲得如此有说服力，三条狗一直伴在他的身边，配合着他狂叫，令人无比惊恐。动物们原本的疑问就这么搁下了，算是认可了声响器的解释。

第六章

接下来的一年里，动物们拼了命地干活，即便像奴隶，流血流汗甚至牺牲，他们都乐在其中。因为他们明白，他们不是为那群压榨他们，奴役他们，无所事事的败类人类效力，而是为了他们自己以及子孙后代的利益而劳作，他们心甘情愿。

自打开春起，动物们每周的工作时间达到了六十个小时，这种情况持续到夏季结束。到了八月，拿破仑提出了新规定，以后星期天的下午也要继续劳动。虽然他把星期天下午的劳动定性为义务劳动，不强迫完全自愿，但是如果谁不参加的话，将被扣除一半的口粮。即便这样，大伙还是发现，有的任务没办法完成。不光收成比去年差了一些，还有两块地由于没有及时耕犁，初夏时就没有种上根茎作物。不难想象，这个冬季会有多么难熬了。

风车工程甚至比想象中还要艰难。按说建造风车的材料算是准备得差不多了，庄园里本就有一处质地很好的石灰矿，加上在一个棚子里找到的大量沙子和水泥。问题出现了：石头体积太大，不符合建造的规格，但是动物们不知道怎么把它打造成尺寸合适的碎块。动物们因为碍于不能直立，所以那些工具他们没办法使用。他们在浪费了几个星期的体力后，总算是想出了一个好主意。原理可以简单地说成是利用地心引力。实践起来是这样的：动物们用绳子绑住大石头，然后集体上阵，牛、马、羊及所有能拽住绳子的动物，有时，猪也会来帮一把，他们慢

慢地拉着石头，直到把它拖到矿顶，最后就是奋力把石头推下崖。显然，等石头着地就会碎开。接下来的工作就是运送摔碎的石块，这些体积小的，运送起来要方便得多。装得满满的货车由马来拉，单块的由羊来拖，母山羊穆尔丽和驴子本杰明合伙拉一辆两轮旧车，这个装得要少一些。日日地积累，直到夏天快要过去了，才算是达到了预计的数量。紧接着，猪就开始指挥大家开始了建造工作。

整个采石过程中的艰辛是无法想象的，进度也是出乎意料的慢。动物们要花费整整一天的时间，耗尽身上的每一分气力，才能把一块原石弄到矿顶，但是还会出现懊恼的事，那就是石头从崖上滚落却没有摔碎。拳师成了中流砥柱，他一个的力气是剩下所有动物力气之和，如果没有他，估计很多工作都无法完成。动物们经常会被原石拖着往山下滚，他们除了无助地哭喊别无他法，每每此刻，总是拳师出手奋力拉紧绳索致使石头停止下滑。拳师的拼命是动物们都亲眼所见的，他步履艰难地吃力爬坡，呼吸越来越快，蹄子尖紧紧地抠住地面，汗水完全浸透了他巨大的身躯，动物们对他无不敬佩和称赞。苜蓿时常告诫他要小心身体，不要劳累过度。但是拳师从来不上心，他总是用那两句口头禅来回答任何问题，“我要更加努力工作”，“拿破仑同志永远正确”对他来说足够了。他与那只小公鸡修改了一下协议，把每天清晨提前半小时叫醒他，定为提前三刻钟。即便现在的业余时间被减到很少了，但他仍然把他争取来的这点时间，花在了运送石块上，他独自一个去采石场，没有伙伴帮忙，自己捡碎石，自己装车，并且装得满满的，再独自一个拉到已经定好的风车的建造地点。

这个夏天过得很辛苦，动物们都不停地干活，虽然他们得到的食物不比琼斯给的少，但是也没有多到哪去，整体生活还算过得去。因为不用再供养那五个胡作非为的混蛋人类，只需要养活自己，这相比得来的

优势使得他们暂时忘记了他们遇到的挫折和磨难。在干活的很多方面，动物们还是有自己的优势的，能节省劳动力，提高了不少效率。比如锄草这方面的活，动物们就比人类手拿把掐得多了。还有现在动物们团结一致，没有了小偷小摸，牧场和耕地就没必要再隔开了，这样撤掉了栅栏和树篱，动物们就省去了保养这个工作。但是一帆风顺的日子从来就不会太长，到了夏末，一些问题就接踵而来。生活正常物品的短缺越来越不得被重视，煤油、线绳、狗食饼干还有钉在马掌上的蹄铁，还有种子和人造化肥，以及后来需要的各类工具、建造风车所用的机械设备等等，这些是庄园里无法生产的物品，至于怎么弄到它们，动物们都表示束手无策。

又是一个星期天，早上动物们按照惯例来到大谷仓接受任务。这天，拿破仑宣布了一项新决议：动物庄园以后将要同附近的其他庄园做些交易。他说他这么做并不是有什么商业目的，完全是为了获取那些生活必需品，并且要不惜一切代价拿到建造风车的部件。暂时决定要卖掉的是一垛干草和一部分当年收获的小麦，如果以后还需要钱，就要从鸡蛋下手了，因为在威灵登鸡蛋总是受欢迎的。拿破仑又说了，鸡们应该为此感到骄傲，因为他们将要对风车的建造做出特殊贡献。

动物们这次又感觉到了迷茫。动物主义里是有这几条的：永远不跟人类交往，永远不从事交易，永远不使用钱币，这不是在反抗成功后的第一次会议上就通过了的决议吗？那时候的场景可都没忘呢，甚至可以说是记忆犹新。这时，那四只小猪，就是曾经想反对拿破仑废除碰头会的小猪们又准备发言，同样的，被那几只恶狗的吼叫，把话给生生地咽回去了，继续保持沉默。接着，又是羊们打破了沉默的气氛，他们咩咩地大叫着“四条腿好，两条腿坏”，尴尬的局面就这么被对付过去了。最后，拿破仑抬起前蹄示意大家安静下来，他说他已作好了万全的打算，

为了不让动物们中的任何一个去干与人打交道的事，也为了庄园的发展，他要牺牲自己，将所有的压力重担自己挑。他已经联系了一个中介人，他是住在威灵登的一位律师，叫作温普尔，他答应了做动物庄园和外部世界的联络人，会在每周一上午来拜访庄园，捎些信息。不例外的，拿破仑最后是在动物庄园万岁的呼喊声中结束讲话的。同样不例外的，动物们在唱完一遍《英格兰兽》后就匆匆离场了。

声响器又在这个新决议提出后，来到动物当中说出一些话来使他们安心。他言之凿凿地保证，根本就没有“不准从事交易和使用钱币”这样的决议，更何谈已经通过了呢？之所以会有疑问，那就是一种猜测嘛，凭空想象的，如果追根究底，可能是当初雪球那个坏家伙的一个谎言吧。有些动物还是半信半疑的，狡猾的声响器就问他们：“你们敢确定这不是你们梦里的事情？你们有这些决议的记录吗？记载在哪了呢？”当然，这些是从来没被记录的。动物们因此也就觉得是自己弄错了。

就如决议里定的，温普尔在每周一都要来庄园。这个人长着络腮胡子，身材矮小，但是丝毫不影响他的外表透出狡诈的气息。他经办的范围很小，但他人精明得过分，他早就意识到了动物庄园会需要中介人，并且作为头一人，佣金将非常可观。他在动物们面前走来走去，动物们对他还是畏惧的，所以尽量躲得远一点。不过，在这些四条腿的动物看到他们的领袖拿破仑同志用两条腿站立着向温普尔发号施令，他们的心里还是没来由地骄傲了一下，之前对新决议的抵触情绪也得到了很大程度的缓解。目前动物们和人类的关系已经今非昔比了，但是在人类那一方，动物庄园多一分繁荣，他们就对动物们多一分憎恶，甚至于到了仇视的最大值。每一个人类都坚持一个信条：动物庄园的下场就是破产，那个建造风车的项目毫无疑问是会失败的。这些消息大都从酒馆里传出

来，因为人类常常聚在酒馆里谈论动物庄园的事情，用图表论证了风车倒塌的必然性，或者是建起来后的风车也不会运转等等带有嘲笑意味的谈话。但是出现了一个比较有意思的迹象，那就是在谈话中，人类对于动物们自己把庄园管理得比较井井有条，而或多或少地对他们刮目相看，主要表现就是，人类在提到庄园的名称时，已经默认了动物庄园，而不再说是曼纳庄园。而琼斯也基本已经不再受到其他人的支持，他自己成天萎靡不振，也放弃了反击，最后干脆搬到了国内的另外一个地方生活去了。动物庄园能和外界联系，还真是多亏了这个温普尔，但是出现了小道消息，还不断升级，内容是拿破仑还会选择跟两个邻居庄园的农场主——福科斯伍德的皮尔金顿先生或平彻菲尔德的弗雷德里克先生，签订一个商业性质的合同，不过需要强调的是，不会同时跟两家签合同。

大概就在那个节骨眼上，猪们突然入住了庄园主的房子，也就是琼斯以前住的地方。动物们再次感到很不舒服，他们记得之前是有通过这样一条禁止住人类房子的决议。可是声响器再次让他们认识到自己思想的不准确性。他说，作为首领、领袖（近来，他在提到拿破仑时开始用领袖称谓），找个安静的地方，方能好好休息，况且身份比以前尊贵，理应住到比猪圈更能符合身份的房屋里。还让动物们充满疑问的事情是猪们不但在厨房里进食还在客厅里娱乐，最后竟然睡在床上。拳师倒是没有什么表示，他只说了他的经典句子“拿破仑同志永远正确”。苜蓿就纳闷了，因为她记得有一条规定不许睡床的决议啊，她不甘心地跑到大谷仓尽头盯着墙上的七诫，反复地看，想要从中找到答案，但是遗憾的是，她不识字，连个字母都忘了。她只好找来山羊穆尔丽帮忙。

“穆尔丽，”她说，“你帮我把《七诫》中的第四条读一下吧，是不是有永远不许睡在床上的字眼？”

穆尔丽聚精会神地盯着墙上看了半天，费劲地拼出来。

她是这么给苜蓿念的：“墙上写的是‘任何动物都不准睡床铺被单’。”

苜蓿更加迷茫了，她完全不记得戒律里有提到被单，但是它怎么会写在墙上的？那么原来就有它吧。此刻，身旁围着两三条狗的声响器赶巧来到这里，他总是能从不一般的角度来对问题进行剖析。

“看来，同志们，你们已经知道我们猪在庄主床上睡觉的事了？这有什么问题吗？你们不是又找出一条反对在床上睡觉的戒律吧？床的功能只是睡觉，没有那么多的意义。能睡觉的地方都可以叫作床，比如窝棚里的那堆干草。为什么这条戒律针对被单呢？因为被单是人类的产物。我们只是睡在床上，覆盖在床上的被单早就被我们全都撤掉了，我们睡在毯子里。这也是舒适的床，床的形式太多了。同志们，我告诉你们，我们付出了大量的脑力，所有的脑力工作都是我们干的，所以现在的舒适程度远远跟我们的付出不成正比。同志们，你们不会残忍到连我们的休息权都剥夺吧？你们不会想让我们过于劳累而失职吧？你们不会想让琼斯趁着我们失职的时候回来吧？”

一提到琼斯会趁机回来，动物们立刻就消除了声响器的疑虑。他们从此后再也没有谈论任何有关猪睡在庄主床上的事了。没过几天，一项新决议从猪委员会里诞生了，那就是以后每天早上猪可以晚起一个小时，其他动物正常，对此，大家都没有什么抱怨。

一直到秋天，动物们都在累得要死，却还算快乐的矛盾中徘徊。说起来也已经一年了，这一年他们不停地辛苦干活，但是准备过冬的饲料依旧不宽裕，因为他们卖掉了部分的干草和谷物。如今风车工程差不多

建了一半了，算是可以补偿这一切。动物们在秋收后，趁着天气好，持续晴朗无雨，铆足了劲地干活，比以前还要卖力。他们整天不辞辛劳地拖着石块，来回奔波。他们通过加倍的劳作使墙在一天之内可以增高一英尺，对此，他们无比欣慰，认为所有的付出都是值得的。拳师甚至在夜间也会时常出来，借着月光干上一两个小时。动物们喜欢在工作空闲时在建了一半的风车外绕来绕去，赞叹着墙体的坚固和笔直，其实就是在为自己能建造这样规模宏大的工程感到惊喜。老本杰明在风车的事情上一直保持着冷淡的情绪，他依旧像以前那样，说了句驴子的寿命都很长这样神秘的话后，就保持沉默了。

十一月夹杂着西南风来到了。随之而来的就是停工，因为湿度太大了，水泥没法搅拌。天气越来越恶劣，终于在一个夜晚达到上限，那晚狂风大作，吹得庄园里的窝棚连地基都开始摇晃了，还卷走了大谷仓顶棚的瓦片。鸡群在睡梦中被一声枪响给惊醒，他们恐惧得只知道咯咯乱叫。第二天一早，从窝棚里走出来的动物们就发现庄园里一片狼藉，旗杆被吹倒横在地上，果园里的大榆树被连根拔起，更让他们不可思议的是，风车被摧毁了，成了一堆碎片，他们看到了这一幕可怕的场景，抑制不住发出了绝望的号叫。

动物们在没有号召的情况下集体冲向风车，很少外出的拿破仑率先跑到了队伍的最前面。在那里，他们的奋斗成果倒了，他们千方百计不辞辛劳弄碎拉到这里又砌上的石头，此刻四下里散落着。动物们沮丧极了，他们盯着倒塌下来的碎石块，表示默哀。拿破仑一句话也没说，他来回检查着，不时闻闻地面上的味道，尾巴开始变得坚硬，还会伴随着剧烈的来回抽动，他这样的表现说明他现在的心理活动高度紧张。突然，他好像想到了什么办法，就停在那儿不动了。

然后，他平静地说：“你们知道这是谁干的吗？你们想过会是谁半

夜潜进来毁掉了我们的风车吗？是雪球！”他的声调突然提高了八度用近乎咆哮的语气吼道，“这是雪球干的坏事！这个用心险恶的叛徒，他早就计划好了，他摸黑钻进来偷偷跑到这里，就是为了来摧毁我们这一年的劳动成果。他就是要阻挠我们的计划，他报复我们当年驱逐他，真是太可耻了！所以我宣布，要将雪球处死。谁要是能把他就地正法，就颁发给谁‘二级动物英雄’勋章，还有十八升苹果的物质奖励。谁要是能活捉他，就能得到三十六升的苹果。”

动物们被拿破仑的一番话惊得不知所以，他们对于雪球会犯下如此深重的罪孽感到十分愤慨，他们在互相发泄了一通之后，开始思考怎么在雪球再次来袭时抓住他。基本同步的是，动物们在离小山包不远的草地上，发现了几只脚印，仅仅几码远就消失了踪迹，但很显然，那是一只猪留下来的，他似乎是去了树篱上的一个缺口。拿破仑对脚印仔细地嗅，得出了结论：脚印就是雪球留下的。按照他的思考得来的结论，雪球很可能是从福科斯伍德庄园那边来的。

拿破仑在判断完蹄印后，就对着动物们大声地说道：“同志们，伙伴们，我们不能再犹豫了，不能再迟疑了，我们还要去干很多的工作，就从今天开始，从现在开始，我们重整旗鼓，不论晴天还是雨天，不论天寒还是地冻，我们要把满腔的热情投入到重新建造风车的工作中去。我们要让叛徒雪球见识一下我们的战斗力，我们不能让他得逞，不能让他易如反掌地把我们的伟大成果给毁了。伙伴们，牢记我们的计划，不能因为雪球的破坏就使它有任何的变动，相反我们一定会如期完成的。同志们，前进！风车万岁！动物庄园万岁！”

第七章

那个冬天极其寒冷。狂风暴雨刚停，冰雨夹着暴雪就降临了，接着就是天寒地冻。这样恶劣的天气一直持续到二月，这期间，动物们一直都没有松懈，一直都在尽心尽力地为风车的重建劳作着，他们知道外界一直都在注视着他们，如果不能按期完成风车的重建，一定会让那些人类耻笑的。

不怀好意的人类放话说他们不相信是雪球毁掉了风车，而使风车倒塌的真正原因是墙壁太薄了。但是动物们并不认同人类的断言。虽然嘴上说不认同，但是他们却把墙砌得足有三英尺厚，整整是以前厚度的两倍之多。可想而知，这样建下来就需要更多的石头，动物们就需要继续去采集石头。但是因为长时间下雪，采石场的地面全被雪覆盖了，什么事都不能干。后来，天气变得干燥了，但是依然寒冷，动物们才能出门干一些活，但是对他们来说是痛苦不堪的工作，动物们已经不像以前那么满怀希望了。饥饿和寒冷困扰着他们。只有拳师和苜蓿还没有气馁。声响器时不时地就会发表一番精彩的演说，内容无外乎是劳动的乐趣和劳动的神圣，但是真正让动物们产生动力的却是拳师的表现，他像往常一样的勤劳还有他经常说出来勉励自己的那句嘶鸣：“我要更加努力工作。”

食物从一月份开始就匮乏了。因为谷物饲料的需求量大，耗费得多，没办法维持以后的生活，动物们不得不考虑用土豆来填充一部分对

谷物的需求。但是很不幸的，不久他们发现地窖上面没有盖上足够厚的土，导致很大一部分土豆冻了，并且冻得发黑，有的已经发软坏掉了，仅剩下一小部分可以食用。动物们毫无办法，只能吃谷糠和萝卜充饥，已经没有其他的食物能提供给他们，这样的日子持续了很长时间。看来挨饿的日子离他们越来越近了。

目前，关乎他们生死的唯一要做的事情就是对外界掩盖他们的真实现状。人类因为风车事故而重新振作了，他们到处散布谣言，各种版本的，内容离奇的，但全是和动物庄园有关的。对于动物庄园的现状，外面已经传疯了，说动物们已经面临饥荒和瘟疫，生死一线，并且还起了内讧，不断地自相残杀，严重到吞食幼仔才能勉强度日的程度。这样的传言让拿破仑不得不下决心利用温普尔，因为外界一旦知道了粮食的真实状况，那产生多么可怕的后果都不为怪，现下只能通过温普尔让外界对庄园里的情况产生相反的印象。之前，温普尔每周到庄园里来，动物们都是能躲便躲，绝不与之有接触。而如今，一小部分动物被有意识地挑选出来去接触他，这一小部分动物里绵羊居多，他们被命令待在距离温普尔先生不远的地方，并且让他们之间看似闲聊的谈话有意无意地传到他的耳朵里，谈话的内容也被设定为饲料很丰富或者饲料已经增加等等。此外，拿破仑还命令动物们把已经空空如也的堆在饲料棚里的那几个大箱子装上满满的沙子，用仅剩的饲料覆盖在沙子上，伪造成粮满仓。然后找了个合适的时机让温普尔在穿过饲料棚时看见，这个做法看来天衣无缝，温普尔信以为真，他出了庄园就向外界宣传，动物庄园里不可能发生过粮食短缺的现象。

即便骗过了外界，但问题依旧存在，并且越来越严重，维持到了一月底，就不得不想办法从别的地方搞到粮食。拿破仑在这些天里基本上没露过面，他整天待在庄主的院里，每一道门都有凶神恶煞的狗蹲守

着。他出来的方式也是很正规的，六条狗组成队簇拥着他，不允许任何动物靠近，一旦靠近，狗们就龇牙狂吠以示警告。现在每个星期天早上，拿破仑也不轻易露面了，一般是通过另一头猪来传达他的命令，一般这个殊荣就落在了声响器头上。

又一个星期天早上，声响器传达了这样一个消息，所有的母鸡，下的蛋都要上缴。原因是拿破仑同温普尔签订了一个合同，合同规定每周由庄园提供四百枚鸡蛋。当然换回的钱要购买足够的谷物和粗粉，用于维持动物们的基本生活直至夏季的到来，那时，情况就会得以改善。

这个命令一传达完，母鸡们的抗议声就炸开了锅。即使之前给她们打过这样的“预防针”，会有一些牺牲，但是那时的她们根本不相信真的会有这一天的到来。这个时候，她们刚刚准备好一窝蛋用于开春孵化小鸡，她们认为现在拿走这些蛋，无疑为图财害命。为了让拿破仑收回这道命令，三只年轻的米诺卡小黑鸡带领母鸡们作出了反抗，方法是飞到椽子上产蛋，后果是鸡蛋全都落在了地上，摔碎了。面对自驱逐琼斯一役以来的第一次带有造反意味的举动，拿破仑毫不留情地作出了一道新指令，停止母鸡们的饲料供应，并且如果有接济发生，哪怕只是一粒玉米，也会对接济者处以死刑，执行者由狗负责担任。这样的对抗仅仅只持续了五天，母鸡们就败下阵了，她们乖乖地回到她们的窝里产蛋。九只母鸡在这次反抗活动中死去了，尸体被埋在了果园里，死亡原因被要求说成是感染球虫病。这次风波没让温普尔知道半点，一辆食品专用敞篷车每周准时出现在庄园，拉走规定好的鸡蛋。

雪球消失了，这一段时间动物们都没有再见过他。听说是躲到了附近的那两个庄园里的一家，或者在福科斯伍德庄园，或者在平彻菲尔德庄园。这段时间，动物庄园和周围几个庄园的关系有所缓和。碰巧庄园里有一堆木材，温普尔建议拿破仑把它们用作交易。因为木材是十年前

整理完桦树林后留在那儿的，现在已完全风干，非常耐用，两个庄园的庄主皮尔金顿先生和弗雷德里克先生都有意向买下这批木材。拿破仑因此犹豫不定。他的态度一直不明朗，奇怪的是外界关于雪球的传言也在不断地变化，拿破仑有意跟弗雷德里克先生签约时，传言就说雪球躲在福科斯伍德庄园，而他改变主意与皮尔金顿先生洽谈时，传言马上就变成雪球一定在平彻菲尔德庄园。

又一个让大家炸开了锅的消息在初春时节突然传出来。雪球常常在夜半时分溜回庄园，更可恶的是他是回来搞破坏的。谷子少了，牛奶桶被打翻了，鸡蛋也被打破了，苗圃惨遭践踏，就连果树皮也被啃咬了。这一切在动物们看来，毫无疑问都是雪球干的，他们吓得躲在窝棚里夜不能寐。从此后，雪球成了一切搞破坏的代名词，但凡有一点小差错，那根本不用思考，第一反应肯定是雪球所为。如果有一扇玻璃窗子被打破了，或者有一个排水沟堵住了，马上就会有动物跳出来指认是雪球在半夜干的。当饲料棚的钥匙找不到了，动物们也无比坚信地认为是雪球把它扔进了井里，即便后来钥匙被在一袋面粉底下找到了，动物们还是深信依然是雪球干的。母牛们对外指责雪球半夜溜进牛棚，趁她们睡着了吸走了她们的奶。因为老鼠们异常猖獗，雪球被认定又多一个种族的同伙。

调查雪球的行动在万众瞩目中由拿破仑同志亲力亲为。几条狗组成的护卫队跟随他对庄园里的窝棚开始了一番仔细的巡查，其他的动物恭恭敬敬地保持着几步的距离跟随着他。走几步拿破仑就会俯下身子对着地面嗅一嗅，看是否有雪球留下的气味，他说他能够凭气味辨别出雪球留下的脚印。他保持着这个步调嗅完了整个庄园的窝棚，一个角落也不放过，大谷仓，牛棚，鸡舍，还有菜园无一例外都发现了雪球来过的痕迹。只见他的嘴拱到地上，狠狠吸上几口气，然后发出一种暗含惊讶的

高调声音：“这里，雪球来过这里，我保证，我准确无误地嗅出了！”只要一听到“雪球”这个代名词，狗们立刻像条件反射似的张开血盆大口，冲着拿破仑闻过的地方狂吠不止，那声音让动物们都惊恐不已。

大家让这次的调查搞得失魂落魄，他们觉得雪球无处不在，就像一种看不见的势力，围绕在他们身边，随时能让他们遭受各种各样的威胁。晚上，声响器把神色慌张的大家紧急召集到一起，大家不免猜测是不是有重大的事情发生了。

果不其然，声响器神经质地跳来跳去，大声地叫道：“同志们，我们发现了一件极其恐怖的事情，雪球，那个叛徒现在正在平彻菲尔德庄园，他和弗雷德里克正在策划一场阴谋，他们要偷袭我们，妄图夺走我们的庄园。战争一开始，雪球就会给他们领路。更让我们不可思议的是我们低估雪球了，原本我们以为他造反是想要满足他的野心和狂妄自大，但是错了，那不是主要原因。同志们，你们知道真正的原因是什么吗？我来告诉你们，雪球从一开始就跟琼斯是狼狈为奸的！他是潜伏在我们队伍里的间谍。我们就是从刚刚找到的他留下来的没能及时带走的文件中论证这一点的。同志们，这完全能解释很多问题了，不是吗？牛棚战役中，你们不是亲眼见证了他是如何想让我们战败和毁灭的吗？值得庆幸的是，我们并没有让他的阴谋得逞。”

动物们听完声响器的话后全都震惊了。雪球这样的罪行与破坏风车相比，那就是不可饶恕的罪孽。他们面对声响器控诉的雪球的罪行，还是迟疑了好大一会儿。他们记得，貌似是记得的，在牛棚一战中，雪球是冲在最前面的，带领大家，并且给予大家莫大的鼓励和安慰，即使被琼斯的子弹伤到了脊背，他也没有停下战斗的脚步。动物们首先就很不理解这一点，他这么做怎么能是支持琼斯的呢？此刻就连拳师也困惑不已，他以前几乎不问为什么的。他躺了下去，把两个前腿压在身子底

下，闭着眼睛开始费力地思考这个问题。

半晌，他说：“这个事情我不相信。我亲眼看见雪球在牛棚战役中英勇善战，不畏牺牲。而且，战争结束后，我们不是还授予了他‘一级战斗英雄’的勋章吗？”

“那是我们犯的错误，”声响器回答道，“我们现在不是弄明白了吗，同志们，他当时那么做的目的是想诱惑我们走向毁灭。他在他的文件中记录得清清楚楚，他没带走是他的不幸，但对我们来说是万幸。”

“但是他受了伤，并且流了血还在继续战斗。”拳师继续提出疑问。

“这很容易解释，那根本就是他早就安排好了的。”声响器叫嚷道，“琼斯是故意用子弹擦破雪球的一点皮的。你可以看看他留下的文件，你要是识字就可以看。他们之前商量好的就是让雪球在关键时刻发出撤退信号，这样就可以把庄园拱手送人了。他就差一点成功的时候，我们的领袖——英勇的拿破仑同志，及时出现了，我甚至可以说，要不是拿破仑先生，他们的阴谋就得逞了。你们仔细回忆一下，当时雪球在看见琼斯和他的伙计们冲进院子的一瞬间，转身就往回跑，你们中的好多也跟着他往回逃，恐慌迅速蔓延。就在那个紧要关头，我们就快沦陷的时刻，拿破仑同志挺身而出，他在大喊了一声‘消灭人类！’后立即冲上去死死地咬住了琼斯的一条腿，这样的场景你们忘了吗？同志们，这样的场景怎么能忘了呢？你们不会忘的，对吧？”声响器又使出他的拿手好戏，一边左右蹦来跳去，一边大声地叫喊。

动物们听着声响器绘声绘色地描述当时的那个场景，他们好像还真就想起了那样的画面，至少，他们还记得雪球确实在那一仗的紧要关头往回跑过。但是拳师还是觉得哪里不对劲，很不安心。

他思索了很久，还是开了口：“我还是不相信，至少不相信雪球从开始就是个叛徒。至于他后来的那些作为，我不否认。我认为他在牛棚战役的时候还是一个好同志的。”

对于拳师的话，声响器只是用非常缓慢而又极其坚定的话语算是给他的回应：“我们的领袖，拿破仑先生已经明确地——明确地，同志们——认定，雪球自始至终都是琼斯的奸细。嗯，是的，追溯到还没有谁想到要造反之前就是了。”

“哦，那就是另外一个事情了！”拳师回答，“只要是拿破仑同志说的，就一定不会是错的。”

“这样的态度才正确嘛，同志们！”声响器满意地叫道。即便如此，还是有动物发现他用他闪闪发亮的小眼睛狠狠地瞥了拳师一眼。他转过身的同时停顿了一下，用更重一点的语气补充了一句：“我好心提醒你们一下，睁大你们的双眼。我们有理由相信，雪球还有同伙潜伏在我们中间。”

在四天后的下午，动物们得到了拿破仑的命令全都聚集在了院子里。拿破仑等到所有的动物都到齐了，才佩戴着他的两枚勋章（因为他最近刚授予自己一枚“一级动物英雄”勋章和一枚“二级动物英雄”勋章）从屋里走出来，那九只高大凶猛的狗一直紧紧地围绕在他身边，发出让所有动物都不寒而栗的阵阵狂吠。大伙都默默地蜷缩在自己的位子上，空气中的气压很低，预示着一场暴风骤雨即将来临。

拿破仑站住后，脸色挂着严厉的表情，他扫视了一圈他的听众，然后发出了一声尖叫。狗们听到这声尖叫后立刻冲上前去，咬住了四只猪的耳朵就把他们往外拖。不管猪发出多么惊恐的哀嚎和求救，不顾猪的

耳朵鲜血直流，狗们一路把这四只猪拖到了拿破仑脚下。尝到血腥味的狗，一时之间兴奋得要发了疯。更让每个动物吃惊的是，有三条狗竟然扑向了拳师。拳师当机立断伸出一只巨掌，把还在半空中的一只狗抓住后，按在地上。那条狗哀叫着告饶，另外两只狗吓得灰溜溜地退了回去。拳师用眼神征求拿破仑的意见，想知道如何处理这只狗，是踩死还是放掉。拿破仑看到这场面后，脸色陡然就变了，他厉声喝令拳师放掉狗。拳师抬起蹄子，那只狗哀嚎着负伤跑了回去。

吵闹声马上停止了。那四头猪浑身发抖，挤作一团，等待着对他们的审判，他们就是之前曾经抗议过拿破仑废除星期天早上碰头会的四只小猪，此刻他们脸上的每一道纹理仿佛都刻满了他们的罪状。拿破仑厉声要求他们自己坦白罪行。不等进一步的逼问，他们便开口一一交代了：自从雪球被驱逐后，他们之间一直保持着秘密的来往，最初的摧毁风车，是他们协助雪球完成的，并且还和他达成了一项协议，准备把动物庄园送给弗雷德里克先生。还有就是雪球一直都是琼斯的间谍，这是雪球曾经偷偷透露给他们的。他们刚一坦白完毕，狗们没给他们丝毫喘息的时间，就扑过去撕裂了他们的喉咙。完事之后，拿破仑用冰冷的声音问在场的其他动物，还有谁，还有什么要坦白的。

在鸡蛋事件上带头反抗的那三只母鸡走上前去，供认了雪球在她们梦里指示她们违抗拿破仑的命令。她们被执行了死刑。一只鹅也走上前坦白了他曾经在去年收割时私藏了6穗谷子，在深夜拿出偷吃了。随后一只绵羊也交代了雪球强迫她在饮水池中撒尿。后来又有两只羊坦白了他们曾经杀害了一位拿破仑的忠心追随者——一只老山羊，杀害的手段就是趁他患病咳嗽时，围着火堆追赶他，使他一直绕来绕去。这些交代完罪行的动物都被就地正法了。一个接一个的坦白，一个接一个的死刑，拿破仑的脚边很快就堆起来数不清的尸体，空气中到处都是浓郁的

血腥味，这样的情形很久没出现了，自从琼斯走后。

一切坦白和杀戮结束后，剩下的动物们惶惶地互相挤着离开了，只有狗和猪还留在原地。动物们胆战心惊地想要分清楚，到底哪件事情带给他们的震惊更为巨大一些，是雪球和外人的勾结背叛，还是刚刚亲眼所见的对待背叛的残忍的惩罚。琼斯还在的时候，这样的屠宰经常发生，但是远不如这次给他们带来的震撼大，如今的情况糟糕极了，因为这是发生在自己同志之间的。琼斯离开之后，一直都没有发生过杀戮，就连一只小老鼠都不曾遭到过杀害。动物们漫无目的地走着，此时他们已经走到了小山包上，已经建好一半的风车矗立在那里。他们挤在一起趴了下来，像是要相互取暖。这些动物里有苜蓿、穆尔丽、本杰明、牛、羊还有一群鸡和鹅，唯独没有看见那只猫。其实在拿破仑宣布集合的时候，那只猫就不见了踪影。大家都闭嘴不语地卧着，只有拳师烦躁不安地走来走去，他的那条长长的黑色尾巴不断地抽打着他自己的肚皮。他实在难以接受，一丝低低的嘶鸣声泄露了他的心情。最后，他忍不住开了口：

“我还是难以理解，我怎么也想不到我们庄园里会发生这样的事，造成这样的原因一定是我们犯了某些过失。依我看来，只有更加努力的工作才是解决这个问题的最好办法。所以，从今天起，我决定，以后我要提前整整一个小时起床。”

说完，他迈着沉重的步子朝着采石场那边走去。走到那儿，他一口气装了两车石头，直到把石头全都卸到了风车工地上，他才回马厩里睡觉。

其他的动物一直躺在小山包上，他们一直默默地围在苜蓿身边。在这里可以看到整个乡村的景色，绝大部分庄园也能收入眼里：那能一直

延至大路的狭长的牧场，已经被耕犁过的地里长着茂盛碧绿的麦苗，草料地，灌木丛，饮水池，庄园里红色的屋顶上，烟囱里现在冒出了袅袅的炊烟。现在是春天的傍晚，万里无云，夕阳把它金色的余光涂上了茂密的草地和葱郁的树林，使它们闪着金子般的光芒。此时此景，刺激到了动物们，他们突然意识到了这是他们的家园，每一寸土地都是属于他们的，是他们的共有财产。这一刻呈现在动物们眼前的正是他们魂牵梦萦，一直向往的地方。苜蓿的双眼饱含着泪水注视着下面的山坡。给她一个用言语表达想法的机会的话，她一定会说，现在的状况已背离了以前的目标，几年前他们制定的为推翻人类而努力奋斗的目标不是这样的，老少校第一次鼓动他们造反，那晚所热情期盼可不是现在这样恐怖的杀戮的惨状。对于未来的唯一畅想就是能有一个这样的社会：摆脱饥饿，不受鞭子的折磨，动物们相互平等，在劳动中尽其所能，有能力的保护弱小的，就如当初老少校演讲的晚上，她用前腿保护那些失去了妈妈的小鸭子一样。现在的她无比困惑，从什么时候起他们不再敢表达自己的真实想法了。那些凶残的狗就在她面前咆哮，并且残忍地撕碎了交代了吓人罪行的同伴，她只能眼睁睁地瞅着却一点办法也没有，她的大脑里甚至连反抗的念头都没有。但是，她还是知道，这样的局势也要比原来琼斯在的时候强多了，再说了，防止人类卷土重来应该是他们眼下最为重要的事情。她就是这样，无论发生了什么样的事情，都对拿破仑同志忠心耿耿，接受他下达的任务，然后勤勤恳恳，努力完成。但是，这毕竟不是她和其他动物所曾殷切期盼的并为之努力工作的生活，他们积极努力地建造风车，被破坏了之后又加大力度重建，不畏生死地坦然面对琼斯的枪林弹雨，并不是想要过如今的这种生活。她只能把她的想法表达成这样，虽然她觉得还是不够准确。

苜蓿想了想，觉得什么都不能够准确表达出她现在心中的想法，只能换作唱歌了，她带头唱起了《英格兰兽》。围在她身边的动物们也跟

着她开始唱，他们一遍又一遍地演唱，唱得缓慢而忧伤，但是配合得非常和谐，音调悦耳，他们在此之前从来没有这样演唱过这支歌。

当他们唱完第三遍，声响器就带着两条狗跑来阻止他们继续演唱，从他的脸上就可以看出要有重大的事情宣布。果不其然，他奉了拿破仑的特别旨意来通知他们，《英格兰兽》被废除了。从今以后，禁止再唱这首歌。

动物们被这个命令惊呆了。

穆尔丽第一个反应过来，随即她大声问道：“这是为什么？”

“因为不再需要了，”声响器冷冷地回答她，“《英格兰兽》这首歌是造反歌，我们造反已经成功了，今天下午处决完那群叛徒就象征着我们彻底地造反成功。我们已经把外部和内部的敌人都打垮了。《英格兰兽》所表达的是我们对未来社会的美好渴望和期盼，我们现在已经建立了这样的社会了，这首歌的目的达到后就没有价值了。”

动物们即便很惊恐，但还是不能接受，他们刚要抗议，绵羊们就大声咩咩地叫嚷开来：“四条腿好，两条腿坏”，这个老调子总是在关键的时候出现，这样持续了几分钟，关于这首歌要不要继续唱的争议也就这样不见了。

《英格兰兽》就这样被取缔了，随之由诗人小不点写的一首歌取而代之，它的开头是这样的：

动物庄园，动物庄园，

我坚决不能让你受伤！

在这之后的每个星期天早上，升旗之后演唱的就是这首歌。不知是什么原因，动物们就是觉得不论是曲调还是歌词，这首歌都赶不上原来的《英格兰兽》。

第八章

直到几天以后，动物们对那种成批杀害同伴引起的恐慌差不多快要完全退去时才想起，或者应该说自己认为记得，戒律中第六条有规定：“凡动物一律不准杀害其他动物”。他们觉得之前发生的杀戮事件违背了戒律所传达的精神，但是再提及这个话题时，他们却不希望被猪和狗听到。苜蓿请求本杰明念第六条戒律给她听，本杰明像往常一样，对待此类问题的态度依然是拒绝掺和。没办法，苜蓿只能又找到穆尔丽。穆尔丽是这样给她念的：“凡动物一律不准杀害其他动物毫无缘由。”动物们对后面的几个字，似乎不知道为什么没有一点印象。如果依照戒律上所写的，那么处死那些与雪球沆瀣一气的叛徒是有理由的，完全没有违反戒律。

与前些年相比，动物们在这一年干得更为辛苦。又要重建风车，又不能丢下庄园里的那些常规工作，更艰巨的是，重建风车不但要加厚墙体，并且是原来的两倍，还要在原先规定的日期内，这样动物们背负的任务可想而知是多么艰巨。动物们已经多次感觉到，与琼斯时代相比，现在的劳动时间长，而且吃也不比那时好。声响器在每个星期天早上出现，他用蹄子夹着一张长长的纸条，纸条上写着各类食物产量增加的数据，根据种类的不同，有的增加了百分之二百，有的增加了百分之三百，他把这些信息传达给动物们，动物们找不到怀疑他的理由，也就相信了，反正他们现在也已经记不清楚造反前是个什么样的状况了。即便不否认这些数据，但是对于动物们来说，如果能多给他们分点吃的，他

们宁愿那些数字能减少些。

拿破仑现在露面的次数越来越少，动物们两个星期能见他一面就算不错了，他让声响器和另外一头猪传达他所有的命令。他现在每次出现，都会有一只小黑公鸡排在队伍的最前面来开道，主要充当号手的角色，他先要响亮地啼叫一遍“喔—喔—喔”，用来提醒大家拿破仑要发言了。据说拿破仑所住的地方，就是在庄主院子里，也是单独住在套房里，跟别的猪是分开的。他单独用餐，通常他使用的餐具是那些陈列在客厅玻璃橱柜里的带有英国王冠标志的德比瓷器，并且在他用餐的时候，有两条狗会在旁边侍奉着。他还宣布了一个命令，就是每年在他生日那天，也要像另外两个纪念日一样，鸣枪以示庆祝。

如今的拿破仑，就连称谓也有所改变，在任何时候谈到他时不能再随随便便简单直呼为“拿破仑”了，而是要在他的名字前面加上“我们的领袖”，以示对他的尊敬，其他的猪给他赋予了很多光鲜的头衔，例如“动物之父”“人类克星”“羊的保护神”“鸭子的亲朋”等。声响器在每次的演讲里都满怀深情地向动物们传达着拿破仑的种种：他的智慧是多么卓越超群，他的心肠是如何仁慈善良，他是在多么用心地爱着每个动物，尤其是对那些仍在别的庄园里忍受人类奴役和歧视的不幸动物，他倾注了更多的爱。在庄园里有了一项新的惯例，不管是新得了一个什么成就，或者是发生新的什么幸事，大家都会不约而同地把荣誉归功于拿破仑。庄园里随处都可以听见这样一些谈话，一只母鸡对另外一只母鸡说：“在我们的领袖拿破仑同志的领导下，我六天产了五只蛋”，或者在池边饮水的两只牛突然感慨道：“这水真甜，这全是拿破仑同志的英明领导所导致的。”综合了庄园里现在动物们的普遍表现和充分感受，小不点创作出了一首名为《拿破仑同志》的诗，全诗如下：

孤儿的亲朋！

幸福的源泉！

恩赐食物的上帝！

您那镇定威仪的双眼

犹如天上的太阳，

每当我仰望着您

啊！我心中满怀激情

拿破仑同志！

是您赐予

您那一切生灵的挚爱，

每日饱餐两顿，

还有那洁净的干草可以打滚，

所有的生灵不论大小，

都能在窝棚中安然入睡，

仰仗您的守护，

拿破仑同志！

我若有一头襁褓中的小猪，
不等他长大，
哪怕他才奶瓶般大，擀面杖般长，
他就应该懂得
永远对您忠心耿耿，
对，
他发出的第一声尖叫一定是
——“拿破仑同志！”

这首诗让拿破仑感到前所未有的满意，他命令手下把它同样刻在大谷仓墙上，“七诫”的对面。在诗的正上方，声响器用白漆描绘了一幅拿破仑的侧身肖像画。

这个时期，那堆木材仍旧堆在院子里，虽然温普尔极力从中牵线，拿破仑还是迟迟不作决定，继续和弗雷德里克及皮尔金顿周旋谈判。相较于皮尔金顿，弗雷德里克更急于得到这批木材，但是他又想占便宜，不愿意出合理的价钱。一个谣言又在这个时期出现：雪球就藏身在于彻菲尔德庄园，弗雷德里克先生伙同他的伙计正在计划一个偷袭动物庄园并且再次摧毁风车的阴谋，因为风车的建造让他们心生妒火。在仲夏的

一天，三只鸡主动交代了一个让所有动物再次震惊的罪行，他们曾在雪球的教唆下，密谋过要杀害拿破仑同志。毫无疑问，这三只鸡被立刻处决了。在这之后，一系列的为了拿破仑同志的安全的新防范措施被执行，首先在夜里，他的每个床脚边都有一只狗守卫着，其次为了防止食物被下毒，一只名为红眼睛的小猪负责在拿破仑用餐前，品尝他要享用的每一道食物。

差不多也是在这个时候，动物们得到消息，拿破仑终于决定把那堆木材销售给皮尔金顿先生，同时他还打算同福科斯伍德庄园就某些产品签订一项长期的交换协议。温普尔先生在这次的双方交易中出了很大的力，拿破仑先生和皮尔金顿先生的关系也差不多变得相当友好了。但是动物们因为皮尔金顿是人类，怎么也不能对他产生信任，但是弗雷德里克更让他们不信任，对于这个人，动物们又怕又恨，所以，相比之下，与皮尔金顿打交道是他们更好的选择。风车工程一直都在紧张有序地进行着，随着夏末的来临，风车的建造也接近了尾声，那个关于要发生突袭的传言也愈演愈烈。传言说弗雷德里克买通了地方的官员和警察，要率领二十个完全武装的人类来袭击动物庄园，这样一旦袭击成功，他就能拿到动物庄园的地契，并且那些官员和警察也不会管的。除此以外，还有更为恐怖的信息不时地从平彻菲尔德庄园传出。弗雷德里克那个冷酷无情的人类用他的动物们来进行各种各样残忍至极的实验：他活活地鞭笞死了一匹衰老的马；他故意不喂他的牛，让他们忍受饥饿；还把一条狗扔进火炉里，致使他活活烧死了；他把剃刀刀片绑在公鸡的爪子上，让他们互相打斗以供他取乐。动物们在听到这些让他们震惊的消息后，怒火中烧，根本无法忍受他们的同伴、同类竟然遭受如此的迫害，愤怒的情绪使他们斗志昂扬，他们不停地叫嚷着，想要全体出动去进攻平彻菲尔德庄园，拯救他们的伙伴，惩罚那里那些可恶的人类，把他们统统撵走。但是声响器此刻冷静地告诫大家，要充分相信拿破仑同志

的智谋策略，万不可草率行动。

但是动物们高涨的战斗热情并没有因此而消退下去，反对弗雷德里克的热潮一浪高过一浪。拿破仑终于在一个星期天早上出现在了大谷仓，他向动物们解释了他曾经的想法，他保证说从来都没有过把木材卖给弗雷德里克的想法，因为他早知道那个人是无赖，和无赖交易会有损他的尊严。他还说为了鸽子们的安全，以后出外散播造反消息时，禁止在福科斯伍德庄园的任何地方落脚。他们以前的“打倒人类”的口号现在正式更改为“干掉弗雷德里克”。到了夏季的尾声，收获小麦的时候，动物们发现了雪球干的又一件坏事，他曾在某个夜晚偷偷潜回庄园，在粮种里掺进了杂草的种子，致使杂草混迹于收获的小麦中。一只公鹅向声响器坦白了他曾是这个阴谋的参与者，之后他就立刻吞噬剧毒浆果自杀身亡了。关于雪球的那个至今他们还相信的“一级动物英雄”的荣誉，现在动物们更进一步地了解到，那就是一个神话故事，那是雪球自己在牛棚战役后散布的假消息。真实的事情其实是雪球在战争中表现得很懦弱，遭到了大伙的谴责，这个家伙压根就没有被授予过任何勋章。一些动物们再次表现出疑惑，但是声响器又再次使他们打消了这些疑虑，使他们相信是他们自己的记忆出了问题。

随着秋天的到来，庄稼开始了收割，动物们只有更加努力工作，因为风车的建造不能中断，风车在动物们竭尽全力的拼搏下终于完工了。但是建成的只是风车的主体结构部分，接下来还需要有机器的设备，温普尔现在正在为设备的购买与人四处谈判。风车这项伟大的工程历经了多么坎坷的过程，所走过来的每一步都是那么艰辛，他们的经验是如此匮乏，设备是如此简陋，运气又是那么不好，还有雪球在其中捣乱，但是最后，它终于还是在动物们的集体努力下竣工了，并且是如期的，没有晚一天一刻。动物们殚精竭虑地完成风车后，满怀着无比喜悦和骄傲自

豪的心情一圈一圈围着风车转，这是他们倾注了满腔的热情，挥洒了无尽的汗水取得的劳动成果，在建造的过程中数不清战胜了多少困难和挫折，此时的风车在他们眼里比第一次建成后更加好看了，也更加牢固了，因为墙体加固了一倍以上的厚度，除非使用炸药，否则谁也不能摧毁它了。此刻他们幻想着在装完所有的设备后，他们的生活就会伴随着风车翼板带动发电机运转后而发生翻天覆地的变化。他们越想越兴奋，疲劳感顿时烟消云散，抑制不住的激动使他们连连发出胜利的呐喊，他们止不住地围着风车转圈圈。拿破仑又以他的标准队形亲临了风车现场，他以他个人的名义对为风车贡献力量的动物们表示了祝贺，并且宣布，风车命名为“拿破仑风车”。

过了两天，拿破仑命令全体动物在大谷仓集合，他给大家开了一个特别的会议。会上，他正式宣布把木材卖给了弗雷德里克，并且，明天弗雷德里克就会带领车队来这把木材拉走。动物们被这个决定震惊了，大家惊讶得说不出一句话。他们被告知，其实在这段时间，拿破仑只是在表面上同皮尔金顿非常友好，其实在私底下一直同弗雷德里克来往密切，并且早就跟他达成了秘密的协议。

这样一来，就与福科斯伍德庄园断绝了一切来往，随后，他们就发出很多侮辱性的信件给皮尔金顿。那些散播信息的鸽子再次被提醒这次要避开的是平彻菲尔德庄园，还有就是把“干掉弗雷德里克”的口号换成了“干掉皮尔金顿”。拿破仑又向动物们作了保证，那个据说动物庄园会遭受到袭击的消息完全是子虚乌有的，此外，谣传弗雷德里克虐待动物是完全无限夸张了的说法，捏造这些传言的很有可能就是雪球与他的同伙们。总之，雪球一直躲在福科斯伍德庄园里，他压根就没有去过平彻菲尔德庄园，更别说躲在那里了。他早就是皮尔金顿门下的一个名副其实的食客，在那里过着骄奢淫逸的生活。

拿破仑表面上看起来对皮尔金顿非常友好，这样迫使急切想买木材的弗雷德里克提高了十二英镑的报价，猪们对拿破仑的这个精明的计谋感到无比崇拜。声响器还说，拿破仑真正精明的是他对每个人类都不信任，即便是对弗雷德里克也是如此，原本弗雷德里克准备要用一个叫作支票的纸质东西来支付木材的钱，其实就是一张纸上写着类似保证会付款之类的承诺，但是英明的拿破仑同志岂能被这样的把戏骗了，他要求弗雷德里克用真正的面额是五英镑的钞票来支付货款，而且必须是先交钱，然后才能把货拉走。现在弗雷德里克先生已经交清了所有的货款，这些货款正好够买风车所需要的所有设备。

很快木材就被拉走了。大家在木材被全部拉走后又聚集在大谷仓开了一场会议，这次的会议很特别，只是单纯地让动物们检阅那些弗雷德里克支付的钞票。会议期间，拿破仑面带笑容，满心欢喜地端坐在那个平台上的一张草垫子上，他的胸前佩戴着他的两枚勋章，钱就整齐地码放在他身边的一个从庄主院子里的厨房拿来的瓷盘子上。动物们列队依次缓缓地走过，目不转睛地盯着，仿佛要一次看个够。拳师还伸过脑袋，用鼻子使劲嗅了嗅那堆钞票，那些轻薄的白色花纸片在他呼出的气体的搅动下，发出轻微的哗哗声。

三天后，这次温普尔的到来引发了一场可怕的骚乱。只见他脸色苍白，如死人般，老远就看见他骑着自行车沿着小路一路飞奔，到了庄园把自行车一扔，就急忙跑进拿破仑的屋子。不大一会儿，一阵仿佛要窒息的狂怒的吼叫声从拿破仑的房间里传出来，响彻了整个庄园。关于出事的消息就如无法控制的野火迅速蔓延了整个庄园。钞票是假的！就是说弗雷德里克没有花费一分一毫就拉走了所有的木材。

拿破仑立刻把所有的动物召集来，用极度可怕的声音给弗雷德里克判处了死刑。他命令动物们，只要抓住了弗雷德里克，就把他活活地煮

死。同时，他还发出了警告，在这次背信弃义的欺骗事件之后，那个奸诈的弗雷德里克很可能会随时伙同其他无耻同伴发动对动物庄园的蓄谋已久的袭击。因此，在他的部署下，每个通向庄园的路口都已经布下了岗哨。此外，一封和好信由四只鸽子送去了福科斯伍德庄园，希望能与皮尔金顿先生和好如初。

敌人的进攻就在第二天清晨开始了。那时正是动物们吃早餐的时间，一个哨兵飞奔着来报告，说弗雷德里克带领着他的伙计们已经走进了五间大门。动物们听到汇报后立刻起身去应对战斗，毫不畏惧。这次这些人一共来了十五个，带着六支枪，动物们在这次战斗中可没有像在牛棚战役中那么轻易取胜，在他们相距还有五十码的时候就遭到了射击，可怕的枪声还有密如雨点的子弹让他们无力抵挡，拿破仑和拳师不得不努力让他们重新聚集在一起，可是很快随着更多的动物负伤，他们又被击退了。没办法他们只能退回到庄园的窝棚里躲避起来，从墙缝和木板的结疤孔里向外小心翼翼地张望着。此刻整个大牧场包括风车在内都落入了那伙人手里。拿破仑这时也有点慌神了，他默不作声，来回地踱着步子，尾巴僵直着还不停地抽搐。大家都用期盼的眼神遥望着福科斯伍德庄园，只要皮尔金顿能率人前来援助，今天就很可能转败为胜。那四只在前一天被派去送信的鸽子在这时回来了，却只带回了一张皮尔金顿亲自用铅笔写的小纸条，上面只有四个字：“你们活该。”

与此同时，再看向大牧场那里，弗雷德里克那一群人已经停在了风车周围。动物们一边窥视着那边的动静，一边惊慌绝望地小声议论着。只见那群人中有两个拿出了一根钢钎和一把大铁锤。看那架势，他们是要准备拆除风车。

拿破仑大声地安慰大家说：“他们那么做是徒劳的，我们把风车的墙体建得足够厚了，一个星期内也休想拆了它。同志们，都勇敢点。”

那两个人拿着大锤和铁钎在风车靠近底部的墙面上凿着孔。本杰明一直全神贯注地盯着那些人的一举一动。看到最后，他的神态已经开始带有戏弄的表情，且还慢慢悠悠地上下摆动着他的长长的嘴巴。

然后他开口了：“我早就猜到他们会这么干，你们知道他们正在做什么吗？不一会儿，他们就会把炸药塞进那些他们凿好的小孔里。”

动物们吓坏了，但是他们没有好的办法，现在冒着生命危险冲出窝棚不太可能，只能静观其变。很快就见那些人四下跑开了，随之而来的就是一声几乎击穿耳膜的爆炸声。震得鸽子们立刻飞上了天，除了拿破仑，其他的动物都立刻卧倒了，把脸藏了起来。过了一会儿，他们爬起来，再次看向大牧场时，只见原来风车的位置上笼罩着一团巨大的黑色烟雾。微风慢慢吹淡了烟雾后，露出了空旷，风车已经消失了！

这一幕深深地刺激了动物们，这种可耻的行为使他们狂怒不已，立刻热血沸腾，之前感到的所有胆怯和绝望，此刻完全被勇气淹没了。突然，一阵复仇的呐喊声响起，在没有命令的情况下，动物们已经等不及了，不约而同地朝敌人们径直扑过去。此次，枪林弹雨挡在他们前面，他们也不再理会，不再退缩，任由那些无情的子弹擦着他们的脑袋呼啸而去。这场战斗残酷，惨烈。动物们冒着冰雹般密集的子弹冲到了他们眼前，他们就开始用棍棒一通乱舞，同时还用沉重的靴子猛踢。动物们几乎都挂了彩，拿破仑也不例外，即使他一直在后方指挥作战，他的尾巴尖也被子弹削去一小截，还有一头牛、三只羊和两只鹅壮烈牺牲了。人也不是毫发无损，他们中有三个人被拳师的蹄铁踢破了脑袋；还有一个人被一头牛用犄角顶破了肚皮；另外还有一个人差点被杰西和蓝铃铛扯掉了裤子。拿破仑命令他那九只贴身狗护卫，利用树篱的掩护迂回包抄，敌人被突然出现在他们右翼的这群狗吓了一跳，他们气势汹汹的狂吠更是把人们吓得魂都飞了。人类开始发现快要被包围了，有危险，弗

雷德里克下令同伙们趁现在还有退路，就开始撤退了。贪生怕死的敌人很快溃不成军，他们纷纷逃命。动物们一路穷追不舍，一直追到地界边上，最后还在人类慌不择路的情况下越过那片荆棘树篱时，狠狠地踹了他们几脚。

即使这场战争最后以动物们取胜为结局，但是他们个个鲜血淋漓，精疲力竭。他们一瘸一拐地往回挪着步子，路过草地，看到横躺在地上气绝了的同伴，有的动物悲伤得泪流满面。他们在风车的位置不由自主地停住了脚步，大家表情肃穆。原本矗立的风车不见了，是的，一点痕迹都没有了，那是他们艰辛拼搏才得来的成果，现在就连地基也被破坏了一部分。现场都没有落石，炸药的威力把它们不知送到了几百码外，这一次要想重建，可不像上次那么简单了，没有坍塌的石头利用了。现在风车的位置就像从未曾有过风车一般。

动物们哀叹完之后继续往庄园走，快要进庄园时，莫名其妙在战争中消失的声响器此时兴高采烈地一蹦一蹦地前来迎接他们。此时此刻，他的脸上挂着满意的微笑，他不停地晃着他的尾巴，与此同时，从窝棚那边传来一阵庄重的鸣枪声。

“开枪做什么？”拳师不解地问。

“当然是庆祝我们的胜利啊！”声响器欢快地叫道。

“胜利？什么胜利？”拳师继续问。他的膝盖还在流血，一个马蹄铁也在战斗中丢失了，他的蹄子裂开了一道大口子，他的后腿挨了足足十二颗子弹。

“什么胜利？难道我们不是刚刚把侵略者赶出了我们的地盘——神圣的动物庄园吗？同志们！”

“可是我们辛辛苦苦建造了两年的风车被他们毁了，整整两年的劳动成果就这么没了！”

“这有关系吗？只要我们愿意，我们就可以建造一座，六座都没有问题。你们还没有意识到我们干的这件事是多么伟大啊！得益于拿破仑同志的英明领导，我们脚下的这些曾经被侵略的土地再次被我们一寸一寸夺回来了！”

“可是我们夺回来的只不过原先就是我们的。”拳师说。

“这就是胜利，毫无疑问！”声响器说。

他们一瘸一拐地进到了院子里。拳师的那条挨了枪子的腿剧烈地疼痛着。但是他还在想着重建风车，他明确地知道摆在他面前的工作，这次要从打地基开始，又将是一场耗心耗力的艰苦劳动，他想象着为这项任务迅速作好了准备。但是他第一次考虑到他已经十一岁了，身体虽然还强壮，但是依旧不能与当年相提并论了。

即便刚才与声响器争论了这次战争的意义，但是在动物们看到迎风飘扬的绿旗，听到了再度响起的猎枪声，这次足足响了七下，又得到了拿破仑领袖表彰他们英勇行为的贺词后，他们似乎接受了，这场战争他们毕竟还是取得了重大的胜利。大伙为在战争中壮烈牺牲的同伴们举行了一个隆重的葬礼。拿破仑亲自走在送葬队伍的最前面，拉着灵车的是苜蓿和拳师，灵车是临时改装的四轮运货车。对胜利的庆祝活动整整持续了两天，其中包括歌咏，演讲，以及必不可少的鸣枪等。每个动物都给予了食物奖励，也算是特别的礼物，家禽类的是两盎司谷子，每只狗发的是三块饼干，剩下的每个动物被赐予的是美味的苹果。这场战争，拿破仑把它命名为“风车战役”，同时创立了一个新勋章——“绿旗勋

章”，并把它颁发给了自己。就这样，钞票事件带来的不幸早就被战争胜利带来的兴奋给掩埋了。

猪们在庆祝完胜利的几天后，无意间在庄园主的地下室里发现了一箱威士忌，在他们刚入住这里的时候可是没有搜索到。当天晚上，令每一个动物都感到惊奇的是，一阵嘹亮的歌声从庄园主的院子里传了出来，并且还有《英格兰兽》的调子。大概是九点半的时候，拿破仑被有的动物发现戴着一顶旧的圆顶礼帽从后门走出来，然后飞快地围着院子跑了一圈后又闪进了门内消失了。第二天的庄主院子里静悄悄的，没有一头猪走动，直到九点多的时候，只有声响器出现了，他看起来状态不怎么好，步履缓慢，神情呆滞，垂头丧气，浑身上下就连尾巴也有气无力地耷拉着，整个一个病入膏肓的样子。他召集了所有的动物，悲哀且沉痛地告诉了它们一个不幸的消息——拿破仑同志病危了！

哀悼的哭声立即响起来。动物们无比关心拿破仑同志的身体状况，庄园主院子的门外铺着干草，它们经过时都踮起了蹄尖。它们的双眼饱含着泪花，大家互相询问，万一伟大的拿破仑领袖不在了，它们可怎么办？之前雪球要谋害拿破仑的消息此刻又传开了，这次他费尽心机却是成功地把毒药掺在了拿破仑的食物里。十一点，声响器作为拿破仑的发言人，代他宣布了他在弥留之际的最后一项措施，也是一道神圣的法令：饮酒者必须处以死刑。

好在到了晚上，拿破仑的病情就有了好转，到了第二天早上，声响器就告慰大家，拿破仑正在康复的过程中，很顺利的是，到了晚上，拿破仑的身体就正常了，并且能开始工作了。又过了一天，有动物透露，拿破仑曾指示温普尔到威灵登购买一些关于蒸馏及酿造酒类方面的小册子。过了一个星期，拿破仑下令，把苹果园那边的小牧场加以翻耕，但是之前是把这个小牧场定为退休动物的放牧场的。现在拿破仑说那个牧

场的地力已经耗尽了，需要重新翻种，没过多久，拿破仑的真实目的被揭晓了，他其实想在那里种大麦。

在这期间，在一个月明星稀的夜晚，发生了一件怪事：大概是在夜里的十二点多了，一声巨响，听着应该是什么物体跌落的声音，动物们纷纷冲出自己的窝棚来寻找声音的发源地，他们不可思议地看到声响器昏迷不醒地倒在地上，他的旁边横着一张断成了两半的梯子，离他很近的大谷仓墙上，写着“七诫”，他手边上放着一盏马灯，一把油漆刷子，还有一罐泼了一地的白漆。几条狗看到此景后立刻把声响器包围了起来，等到他能够自己走路了，就护送他回到了庄主的院子里。动物们对这是什么情况迷糊不解，只有老本杰明上下摆动着他的长嘴，一副心知肚明的样子，似乎那其中的秘密他早就领会了，但是他就是这样，什么都不会说出来。

穆尔丽在几天后自己给自己读七诫时发现，原来还有一条戒律她之前记错了，其他的动物也都记错了，他们原本记得第五条中写的是“凡动物一律不准饮酒”，其实真的戒律要多出两个字，应该是“凡动物一律不准饮酒过量”。

第九章

过了这么久，拳师的蹄子还是没有好，那个裂口依然在愈合中。风车的新一轮重建工作在庆祝活动结束的第二天就开始了。拳师更加卖命地干活，他一天都不休息，绝不闲着，而且为了荣誉，他忍着伤痛干活，都不让其他的动物察觉到。但是到了晚上，他偷偷地告诉苜蓿，他的蹄子疼痛得难以忍受了，苜蓿只好把草药嚼碎了敷在他的蹄子上。苜蓿和本杰明都劝他不要再这么拼命了，苜蓿告诉他：“一个马的肺是不能这样长期持续下去的。”但是这些劝告对他来说根本没用，他说能够在他退休的时候看到风车顺利地运转起来，是他现在唯一的一个尚未实现的真切的志向。

最近关于退休的讨论越来越多，当初在第一次制定动物庄园律法的时候，对退休的年龄给出了规定：猪和马是十二岁，牛十四岁，狗九岁，羊七岁，鸡和鹅五岁。并且律法里还包括了要发放充足的养老津贴，虽然直到现在也没有真正靠养老津贴生活的动物，据说养老津贴很丰厚，每匹马的是每天五磅谷子，到了冬天为每天十五磅干草，而且公告节假日还会额外发一根胡萝卜，或者有机会得到一个苹果，拳师在明年夏天就能正式退休了。可是现在，苹果园那边的本来作为退休休息地的牧场现在已经空出来作为大麦地了，有传言说会在大牧场的一角围起来建立一个退休动物的放牧场。

那个冬天跟去年一样难熬，同样寒冷，而且食物更加短缺。所有的

动物都被削减了食物份额，这里面不包含猪和狗。声响器不论在什么情况下都能向动物们证明，他们的粮食并没有短缺，即使现在对粮食的供应上有了一些调整（他不承认这是“减少”，只说是“调整”），这也是暂时的。他说，在食物分配上过分教条平均是违反了兽主义的原则的。他发出尖细的嗓音拖出一连串的数字，有力地证明了现在和琼斯时代的差距，那是进步了一大截啊，现在他们拥有更多的燕麦，更多的干草和更多萝卜，而且现在的工作时间比以前短，饮用的水质更好了，动物们的寿命也长了，后代的存活率也升上去了，窝棚有了更多的干草，所以更加舒适了，就连跳蚤也明显减少了对他们的侵扰。他说了这么多的话，动物们都没有感到怀疑，琼斯时代是什么样子已经基本上从他们的记忆中抹去了。他们如今的生活其实常常食不果腹，饥寒交迫，眼睛一睁就开始干活，一直干到睡觉。但是他们乐意相信以前的日子比这更糟糕，更窘迫。最后声响器永远不会忘了指出一点，至关重要的一点，就是现在他们是自由的，是不受奴役的。

秋天的时候，四头母猪基本上同时产了崽，加起来一共是三十一个小猪崽，所以现在需要饲养的动物更多了。拿破仑是院子里唯一的种猪，小猪们清一色的都是小花斑，他们的身世就不难猜测了。公告已经出来了，动物们都知道再过一段时间，把砖头和木材买齐后，就专门给小猪们盖一间教室，位置在庄园主院子的花园里。目前拿破仑在院子的厨房里亲自教导他们，他们平时被勒令禁止同别的年幼的动物玩耍，活动区域基本是在花园里，主要就是健身。一条新的规定在这个时候出台了：当一头猪在路上与别的动物碰上了，那么其他的动物就必须站到路边，还有，猪们不论身份地位，都享有一项特权——在星期天能在尾巴上系饰带。

今年的收成不错，但是依然筹不到足够的资金。因为要用钱的地方

很多，盖教室要花钱买砖头、石灰和沙子，此外，风车所需的机械设备也需要资金，现在就得慢慢积攒了。还有一些零碎的钱要花，比如只有庄主院子里才需要的灯油和蜡烛，还有拿破仑自己才能享用的糖（他说会发胖，所以严禁别的猪吃），除此以外，还有很多日常使用的易耗品，诸如工具、钉子、绳子、煤、铁丝、铁块和狗食饼干等等，这些东西看起来不起眼，一个也不值几个钱，但是仔细算起来也是不小的开支。已经卖掉了一个干草垛和一部分收回来的土豆，而且每周鸡蛋的供应数量从之前的四百枚涨到了六百枚，但是这样造成了这一年中，所孵出的小鸡数量没有办法使鸡的总数量保持原来的标准。动物们继去年十二月份减过一次口粮后，二月份又遭到了一次削减，为了省下买灯油的钱，窝棚里早就不允许点灯了。但是那些措施根本没怎么影响猪们，他们过得似乎还是挺滋润的，而且体重还在增加。二月末的一天下午，隔着院子就能闻到一股无比诱惑的香味从厨房边上的酿酒坊里飘出来，只是早在琼斯时代那间房子就被弃用了。动物们从来没有闻到过这样的香味，有的动物说只有蒸煮大麦才会发出这样的味道。他们一边贪婪地猛吸这股香气，一边猜测期盼着他们的晚餐就是一锅已经熬好的热乎乎的大麦糊糊。结果不但猜测错误，大麦糊糊没有出现，而且就在那个星期天，新的通告使他们得知，从今往后所有的大麦都得储存起来留给猪们。在此之前，那片苹果园旁边的小牧场早就种上了大麦。不久，就又有消息传出来，现在每头猪每天都能分到一品脱啤酒，拿破仑则会把啤酒装在有英国王冠标志的带盖汤碗里，足有半加仑之多。

动物们现在要忍受的艰难困苦越来越多，但是他们只要一想到现在生活的高贵和自由，他们似乎觉得忍受还是可以继续的，都能说得过去。如今拿破仑颁发又一项新指令，每周举行一次名义上自发的游行，目的单纯就是为了庆祝动物庄园的斗争和胜利，这样一来，歌声多了，演讲多了，游行也多了。一到指定时间，所有的动物都必须放下手头的

工作，拿破仑带领着他们，以军队的队形绕着庄园的地界齐步前进，队形是精心排列的，那只小黑公鸡昂首在前面开路，后面理所应当是猪带头，然后是马，其次是牛，再往后是羊，最后是家禽类的。狗永远都在队伍的两边。苜蓿和拳师经常要一边一个用嘴叼着那面标记着蹄子和犄角的绿旗，现在上面又多了一条标语——“拿破仑同志万寿无疆！”等大家围着庄园转完圈后，下一个活动是赞颂拿破仑同志的诗歌朗诵，接着声响器就会把最新的粮食增产数据报告给大家，偶尔还要鸣枪表示庆贺。如果有动物抱怨了，比方说认为这是纯属浪费时间，或者长时间站在寒风中表示出了不满的情绪等等（在没有狗和猪在附近的时候，有个别的动物会这样），绵羊们此刻就会表现出他们是游行活动的忠实拥护者，他们会爆发出气势凶猛的叫声堵住那些动物的嘴，“四条腿好，两条腿坏”被他们重复了一遍又一遍。其实在大部分时候，动物们对这些庆祝活动还是很感兴趣的，毕竟这些活动能让他们真正有了翻身做主人的感觉，他们还是满心欢喜的，他们所付出的，所要忍受的一切是为他们自己争利益，这让他们多少心理平衡些。在闹哄哄的活动中，嘹亮的歌声，浩浩荡荡的队伍，声响器列举的一系列数字，不断的鸣枪庆贺，黑公鸡的啼叫，迎风飘扬的绿旗，参与这一切，看到听到这一切，动物们就暂时忽略了肚子中其实还空空如也，至少部分时间是这样的。

到了四月，动物庄园宣布成立为共和国，那么选举一位总统是当务之急，领袖拿破仑当选是众望所归的，因为候选人只有他一个。就在同一天，一些能够进一步揭露雪球与琼斯相互勾结细节的文件被翻了出来，从这些证据来看，雪球不仅仅是动物们原先所想象的那么单纯了，不单是利用恶毒的诡计妄想输掉牛棚战役及与人类狼狈为奸，公然背离动物主义，与他们为敌。他真正的身份是那支人类队伍的首领，高呼着“人类万岁”可耻地与动物们混战，至于他背上的那道伤痕，有些动物

还是记得的，其实是拿破仑同志不顾个人安危咬的。

很快就又到了仲夏时节，消失了数年的乌鸦摩西竟又突然出现在了庄园里。这么多年过去了，他依旧一成不变，不干活，蹲在一根树桩子上，扑棱棱地拍打着他的黑翅膀，要是谁愿意听，就用同以前一样的语气给动物们讲蜜钱山的故事，一旦讲起来，就止不住了。他一脸郑重且煞有介事地说：“看那里，同志们！”还配合动作，他的大嘴朝着天空那里一指，接着继续，“就是那儿，你们看得见的那团乌云的另一边——那座蜜钱山就在那里。那是个幸福的国度，那会是我们的最后归宿，只有在那里，我们这些可怜的动物才能永远地摆脱辛苦的劳作。”他甚至还声称自己去过那里，源于一次机缘巧合的高空飞翔，他说他看见了那里的苜蓿永远那么鲜嫩，还看见了亚麻籽饼和方糖长在树篱上。很多动物对摩西的说法抱着宁愿相信的态度，因为他们现在的生活太苦了，经常饥肠辘辘，疲惫不堪，所以有那么一个比这里要好得多的地方也是合情合理的。只是猪们对待摩西的态度让其他的动物揣测不明，虽然他们对摩西的话报以嘲笑的态度，认为蜜钱山的说法是一派胡言，但是他们却允许他继续留在庄园，可以不用干活，并且还每天给他发放七分之一升的啤酒作为补贴。

拳师比以前更加卖力地工作，在此期间他已经把蹄掌上的伤口养好了。在这一年中，动物们真实的生活就是像奴隶一样辛苦劳作，除了日常大大小小的事情和风车重建工程以外，在三月份，他们又多了个新的工程，就是给小猪们建造教室。他们很多次饿着肚子还要继续长时间工作，有时真的难以忍受，但是拳师从来没有表现出来，他的步伐从来不会蹒跚踉跄。他的言行举止也没有表现出他的气力有所下降，但是细心观察不难发现：他的皮毛没有以前那样光亮，曾经粗壮的臀部和大腿上部如今也松垮收缩了。动物们也发现了这一点，他们有的说，“拳师会

在春草长出来后再强壮起来的”，但是，到了春天，他们说的话却没有成真。他通常会独自一个把一块石头沿着斜坡往矿顶上拉，拼尽全身的力气去承受整个巨石压在他身上的力量，此刻他的嘴唇会一动一动，仿佛在说他的那句座右铭：“我要更加努力工作”，这应该就是支撑着他坚持下去的力量，除此之外，他更多的就是沉默不语。他对待苜蓿和本杰明的“保重身体”的劝告仍然持置之不理的态度。眼看着他的十二岁生日就要来临，这时他更是一门心思地想要在退休之前攒足够的石头，别的事情都不放在心上。

没过多久，拳师就出事了，那是在一个夏天的傍晚，动物得知这个不幸的消息时，天色已经暗下来了，在这之前，有动物看见他又独自一个走出马厩，拉着一车石头去了风车那里。仅仅几分钟，两只鸽子风风火火地飞回来，证实了之前的消息是千真万确的：“拳师倒下了！他侧躺在那里，无法站立起来！”

一大半的动物们不等听完就冲了出去，直奔着建造风车的那个小山包。他们飞跑着来到拳师身边，他就躺在那儿，身子卡在了两根车辕之间，他虚弱得连头都抬不起来，只伸着脖子，低垂的双眼呈现呆滞迷离的目光，汗水浸透了他的整个腹部，一股细流状的鲜血从他的嘴角不断溢出。苜蓿哭泣着跪倒在他身边。

“拳师！你怎么啦？”苜蓿哭喊着。

“没有什么要紧的，应该只是我的肺不行了。”拳师有气无力地回答道，“我明白我最多还有一个月的时间了，我一直盼着能退休，这是我的实话。即使我不在了，我想，我已经攒了不少备用的石头了，你们到时候一定能建成风车。本杰明也老了，也许我们可以做个伴一起退休，如果他们愿意的话。”

苜蓿快速地反应过来：“快，谁去都行，快去告诉声响器，这里出事了，我们必须马上得到救援！”

苜蓿和本杰明留下来照看拳师，其他的动物即刻都跑去院子里找声响器汇报这个紧急的情况。本杰明默默地躺在拳师身边，甩动他的长尾巴来为拳师驱赶苍蝇。过了大概一刻钟的时间，声响器就怀着关心和同情来到了出事现场，他说拿破仑同志也知道了这件事，而且立刻开始着手安排威灵登的医院，把拳师送过去治疗，所以现在他没有过来，就由声响器代表他表达对拳师这样一位最忠诚的朋友遭受如此不幸而感到伤心难过。动物们忐忑不安，除了莫丽和雪球外，他们谁也没有离开过庄园，况且，他们无法相信人类，不愿他们已经受伤的伙伴落入人类的控制中。声响器又开始了他的说服工作，他说庄园里没有兽医，只能在威灵登找到这样的医生来医治拳师，这样才能更快地将他治好，动物们也就这么相信了。半个小时后，拳师稍稍缓过一点劲，吃力地支撑起他虚弱不堪的身体，挣扎着挪回他的马厩，苜蓿和本杰明已经为他铺好了柔软的稻草床。

拳师在以后的两天内一直躺在稻草上，连棚子都没出去过。猪们在浴室的药柜里翻出了一大瓶红色的药片，送来让苜蓿每天两次在饭后喂给拳师吃。到了晚上，苜蓿和本杰明就陪着拳师，苜蓿陪他聊聊天，本杰明则为他驱赶苍蝇。拳师在交谈中提到他并不感到后悔，即使他的身体已经这样。倘若他能完全康复，就希望自己能继续活上三年，在那专为退休员工准备的大牧场的一角里静静地过完余下的日子，那时候，他就第一次真正有空闲时间来学习知识，增强心智。他还说，他一定会穷尽他最后所有的精力学会字母表上除了A、B、C、D以外的二十二个英文字母。

苜蓿和本杰明只有在工作之余才能陪伴拳师。一天中午，动物们正

在萝卜地里除草，猪在一边监工，突然，就看见本杰明从棚子那边狂奔过来，嘴里还在大吼大叫，动物们都很吃惊，他们从没有见过本杰明这样激动，事实上这是头一次，就连他奔跑也是动物们第一次见。他扯着嗓子喊叫：“快，快，快来呀！拳师要被他们拉走了！”动物们一听，也顾不得听猪下命令了，大家匆忙扔下手里的活往窝棚那边赶。到了院子里，果然见到一辆大篷货车，车身上写着字，有两匹马拉着，一个头戴低檐圆礼帽的男人坐在驾驶的位置上，他的脸上写满了奸诈狡猾，此时，拳师的窝棚已经空了。

动物们纷纷围到车的四周，异口同声地对着车里喊道：“再见，拳师，再见了！”

本杰明气愤地叫道：“笨蛋！一群笨蛋！”他绕着动物们急得又蹦又跳，又用蹄子不断地踩着地面撒气，“你们没看见车上的字吗？简直蠢透了！”

动物们一下子安静了，场面冷了下来，大家都开始关注车上面的字。穆尔丽开始拼读那些字。但是本杰明着急地一把把他推开，他的声音划开了死寂的气氛：“‘威灵登镇，阿尔弗雷德·西蒙兹，屠马商兼煮胶商，皮革和骨粉的供应商。’你们难道还不明白吗？他们要把拳师拉到屠马场去！”

顿时，动物们都开始号啕大哭，场面一度失控。这时，那个坐在马车上的人突然狠狠地一抽马鞭，那两匹马拉着大篷车轻松地就向外面跑去。全体动物跟在车后面，边掉眼泪边呼喊。苜蓿竭力地挤到最前面。车子开始加速，苜蓿试图跟上马车的车轮，但是她看似粗壮的四肢奋力狂奔也只是达到了慢跑的速度，苜蓿绝望地哭喊着：“拳师！拳师！拳师！拳师！”拳师在这个时候应该是听到了外面的吵闹，他的面孔出现

在大篷车后面的一个小窗户上，他的脸上有一道顺着鼻梁生出的白毛。

“拳师！”苜蓿看到他，更加急切地哭喊，声音凄厉，“出来！拳师，你快出来！他们是拉你去送命的！”

所有的动物也都跟着苜蓿哭喊，“出来，拳师，快出来！”大篷车在不断加速，眼见动物们就与大篷车拉开了距离。他们不能判定拳师是否听见了并且懂了苜蓿和他们喊叫的意思。但是不一会儿，拳师的脸色从窗户上消失了，紧接着一阵马蹄蹬踏的声音从车内传了出来。没猜错的话，他是想要以此踢出一条生路来。可是天啊，他早已没了往昔的威风，想当初，只需几下，他就可以把这辆车踢成碎片，碎得可以跟火车杆子相比了，现在尽管他用尽了全力，但是大篷车没有一点损坏，马蹄的蹬踏声越来越弱，最终消失了。绝望的动物们转而去哀求那两匹拉车的马，祈求它们能停下来，“兄弟们，同志们！求求你们了，别把你的兄弟拉去送死啊！”但是不管动物们已经多么声嘶力竭，那两匹愚蠢的家伙根本对将要发生的事情一无所知，只是一味地向后抵起耳朵加速奔跑。拳师的面孔再也没有出现在那扇小窗户上。有的动物想起去关五间大门，但是为时晚矣，瞬间大篷车就冲出了大门，扬起了一路的尘土。就这样，他们把拳师拉走了，从此，拳师就再也没有出现过。

三天后，动物们从通告中得知，拳师在威灵登医院去世了。声响器告诉大家，在拳师弥留之际他一直守在一边，拳师得到的照顾是作为一匹马能够得到的精细入微的最好照料了。

他边说边用一只蹄子擦去挂在眼角的一滴泪，“那是我所见过的最感动的一幕了，我一直在他的床边守着，直到他闭上双眼，在他生命的最后一刻，他虚弱得几乎连说话的力气都没有，但是他还是拼尽全力，在我的耳边说了几句话，对，那应该算是临终的遗言吧，他说他唯一的

遗憾就是没能坚持把风车建完。他说：‘前进，同志们！以造反的名义前进，动物庄园万岁！伟大领袖拿破仑万岁！拿破仑同志永远是对的！’”

话说到这里，声响器突然住了口，脸色立刻变得严肃起来，他先是沉默了一小会儿，用他的闪着精光的小眼睛在动物中扫视了一圈，又接着他的发言。

他说，他了解到，关于拳师去镇里治疗有另一个版本的谣传，这个谣传荒唐可笑，用意歹毒。动物们看到了大篷货车上有“屠马商”的标志，就妄加断言拳师被送到了屠马场。他气愤地跳来跳去，还一边甩动着他的尾巴，他说，他难以相信有的动物会这么愚蠢糊涂，根本不用大脑思考。他指责动物们，说仅凭这一点，就说明动物们根本不能真正了解他们敬爱的领袖拿破仑同志。事情的真相是这样的，那辆车以前的确是一个屠马商的，但是现在被兽医院买下来了，他们还没来得及把车身上的字涂改掉，这才造成了大家的误解，是个误会。

听完声响器的这番解释，动物们那颗一直难过的心终于平静了，长长地舒了一口气。接着声响器又讲了很多关于拳师临终前的细节，比如他在医院都受到了怎样无微不至的照顾，以及拿破仑同志是怎样地大方，怎样地不考虑价格给他用贵重的药品。动物们多少心里好受了一点，他们之前一直对拳师的死耿耿于怀，现在听到他是这么安详地走，就感到心宽了许多，所以对于声响器的话没有丝毫的怀疑了。

那个星期天早上的会议，拿破仑竟然亲自出席了，他宣读了一篇哀悼拳师的简短的悼词。之后他对动物们解释说，因为某些原因，拳师同志的遗体已经不能拉回来安葬在庄园里了。但是根据他的指示，已经用庄园主院子里的月桂花编成了一个大花圈，放在拳师的墓前。猪们还准

备就在这几天专门给拳师开一个追悼宴会。最后，拿破仑引用了拳师生前的座右铭结束了他的讲话，“我要更加努力工作”和“拿破仑同志永远是对的”，他希望所有的动物都把这两句话当成是自己的座右铭，激励自己，并认真贯彻落实。

到了已经确定好的追悼宴会的那天，庄主的院子里又来了一辆从威灵登驶来的马车，这次是杂货商送来了一个大木箱。到了晚上，院子里又传出了闹哄哄的歌声，之后，还伴随着激烈的吵架声音，一直持续到夜里十一点多，在一阵玻璃破碎的可怕声音后，归于平静。第二天到了中午，庄主院子里还是一片沉寂。与此同时，一个小道消息快速地传出来，猪们不知道从哪又搞到一笔钱，买了一箱威士忌给他们自己享用。

第十章

恍惚间几个年头就过去了。时光流逝，岁月穿梭，现如今，还能记住造反前的那些旧日子的只剩下苜蓿、本杰明、乌鸦摩西和一些猪，那些寿命短的动物早已经被岁月带走了。

我们熟识的那些动物中，穆尔丽死了，蓝铃铛、杰西还有钳子都死了。就连琼斯也死在了别的地方，据说是国内的另外一个地方的一个酒鬼家中。雪球再也没被提起，拳师也被遗忘了，现在只有零星几个曾经与他们交好的动物还会记得他们。如今的苜蓿到了老年，身材胖得走了样，关节僵硬，一团眼屎总是挂在眼角。其实，她都超过退休年龄两岁了，但是依然还在工作，事实是，没有任何一个动物真正退休。关于那个留给退休动物大牧场的一角以供休养的议题早就不被提起。拿破仑现在已经达到了三百多磅，是一头成年的公猪了。声响器的眼睛被脸上的赘肉挤得快要睁不开了。只有老本杰明，似乎没什么变化，只是他鼻子和嘴旁边的毛比以前灰了点，他在拳师死后，更加不喜言语，对事情更加漠不关心。

虽然涨幅没有当时预算的那么大，但是庄园里现在的畜生数量还是比以前多了。现在造反对于后来出生的这些年轻的动物来说，就像一个传说，只是口口相传，模糊不清；至于那些买进的动物，他们来到这个庄园前，压根就没有听说过造反的事。庄园里现在除了苜蓿外，还有三匹马，只是这三匹马太愚蠢，没有一个能认识字母表中B以后的字母，

但是就劳动来说，他们还是不错的，他们的身姿健壮挺拔，温顺又积极能干，是大家普遍赞许的好同志。他们对苜蓿格外敬重，近乎是那种孝顺的方式。对于造反和动物主义的说法，只要是他们能够得到的信息，他们几乎全盘接受，特别是出自苜蓿之口的。但是有一个问题，对于这些信息，他们是否能够理解，就不得而知了。

综观现在的动物庄园，一派繁荣的景象，更为有效的组织也在某些动物的谋划下建立起来了。动物们又从皮尔金顿先生手里买来了两块地，扩大了自己的领土范围，风车也终于在大家的努力和期盼下建造起来了，但是却并不是用来发电的，而是被用来碾磨谷物，为庄园带来了不少的收入。他们还购买了属于他们自己的一台脱粒机和一台草料升降机，此外他们也新建了不少各种各样的建筑物。就连温普尔也为他自己置办了一辆轻便的双轮马车，以方便他来庄园。动物们现在正在致力于建造一架新的风车，据说这架风车会被用来发电。但是雪球当年曾经提及的那种奢华的生活——有电灯和具备冷热水的窝棚，每周只用工作三天，如今不会再被提起，因为拿破仑曾经批评过这样的想法，说它与动物主义精神是相互抵触的，动物主义倡导纯粹的幸福，而纯粹的幸福是要从勤奋的工作和简朴的生活中获得的。

整个庄园看似已经很富裕了，但是不知是什么原因，在动物们身上仿佛一点也体现不出来，当然这里是不包括猪和狗的。也许其中会有一小点原因是因为有那么多的猪和狗吧。动物们富不起来，并不是他们不劳动，相反，他们总是没完没了地干活，以他们自己的方式劳动，就如声响器反反复复说的那样，他在庄园的监督和组织方面有数不尽的活要干。他说的那些工作，很多的动物都理解不了，他解释说是因为很多动物太过无知了。比如，声响器说，猪们每天会花大把的精力放在处理那些所谓的“档案”“报告”“会议记录”还有“备忘录”诸如此类的神秘事务

上。那些大片大片的纸张，上面必须写上满满的字，等到写满了字以后，又得把它们扔进火炉里烧掉。声响器一直强调他们所做的那些对庄园的幸福安康起到至关重要的作用。其实直到现今，无论是猪还是狗，都没有在生产劳动中到前线贡献出一点力量，生产一粒粮食；但他们的数量众多，胃口也出奇地好。

其他的动物，他们的生活在他们看来还是没有变化，经常忍饥挨饿，还是睡在草里，喝着池塘里的水，在田地里忙碌劳作；夏天要忍受蚊蝇的侵袭，到了冬天也不能幸免于寒冷的侵袭。他们当中那些年老的动物会经常在回忆中搜索关于早期造反的那些日子，就是琼斯刚被驱逐的那段时间，那时的情况和现在相比，是好，还是糟呢？但是时间过去得太久了，他们怎么也想不起来了。现在的生活水平没有什么可以拿来参照的，只有声响器时不时地给他们报告一些数字，通过这些数字，声响器一直不变地告诉他们，他们的生活是越来越好的，肯定是越来越好的。动物们对于这些表现得难以理解，但是大多时候，他们没有时间仔细揣摩这些事情，活儿太多了。只有老本杰明说他能记起过往发生的所有事情，他还说他知道过去的那些事物不会有多好，现在的也不会，将来更不会有多好，但也不会差到哪去。他告诉大家说，饥饿、痛苦、磨难、失望是现实生活中无法改变的法则。

动物们依然有他们自己的念想，更准确地说，他们依然有那种作为动物庄园里一员的那种自身优越感，这种荣誉让他们为之骄傲自豪。因为他们的庄园在英格兰这个国家里是独一无二的，是由他们动物自己来管理的，对于这一点，所有的动物，连最年轻的，还有那些从外面买进来的，来自十英里甚至二十英里以外的新成员，都沾沾自喜，钦佩有加。猎枪的声音一旦响起，那种自豪就荡漾在他们的心中，再看到象征动物主义的绿旗在旗杆上飘扬时，那种激动的感觉就难以言表了。此

时，他们一定会把话题转向往昔的辉煌岁月，经过时间的沉淀，或许我们该称为史诗。从起初的琼斯遭到驱逐，再到“七诫”的镌刻，然后是那几场与人类的胜利作战。他们的信仰一直在，没有改变过，他们的那些梦想从来一个都没有忘记过，当年老少校预言的“动物共和国”，以及那时人类的足迹将消失在所有的英格兰的绿色原野上，这些一直都是他们不曾忘却的，他们相信这些预言终将成为现实，也许在不久的将来，也许现在的动物们有生之年都等不来这一天了，但是它一定会实现的。现在庄园里的每一个动物都知道它是一个事实，《英格兰兽》这支曲子已经又在动物们中悄悄传唱开了，虽然是小声地哼唱，偷偷地，不敢高歌，但是这是个事实。他们现在的生活仍旧困苦，并且他们抱有的希望依旧没有全部实现，但是有个信念在他们心中支撑着他们，他们知道他们跟别的动物是不一样的，虽然没有足够的食物来填饱他们的肚子，但是那也不是因为食物进了人类的肚子；虽然还要辛苦地劳动，但是这些劳动是为了他们自己，并不是人类。他们都是四条腿的动物，没有主仆之分，他们所有的动物都是平等的。

初夏的一天，声响器把绵羊群带了出去，他领着他们来到庄园的另一头，那里是一片荒地，地里遍布着新鲜的桦树苗。声响器在一边监督，绵羊们在那里足足啃了一整天的树叶。到了傍晚，声响器对他们说，天气暖和了，就可以留在那里过夜了。就这样，声响器自己回到了庄园里。他对其他的动物解释说，绵羊们正在学习一首新歌，需要他秘密教授。于是，整整一个星期，绵羊们都不见一丝踪影，声响器在白天也是不照面的。

在一个愉快的傍晚，绵羊们回到了庄园。那时，动物们刚刚结束了一天辛苦的劳作往庄园里走，突然一声透着惊恐的狗的嘶鸣在院子中响起，动物们吓得止住了脚步，有的动物听出那是苜蓿的声音，又一声嘶

鸣响起，动物们立刻焦急地往院子里狂奔过去，然后，他们也目睹了苜蓿眼见的那一幕：

一头猪正在用他的两条后腿走路。

是的，那是声响器。他似乎还没有习惯用两条腿支撑他那肥硕的身体，虽然看起来很笨拙，但还是能保持着平衡的，此刻他正溜达着要穿过院子。不大一会儿，排成一长队的猪从庄园主院子门口走过，他们都是用两条后腿在走路，其中有的猪走得还不错，有的走得还不够稳当，看起来他们应该需要一根棍子支撑着。不过，他们都算成功地绕着院子走了一圈。伴着那只小黑公鸡尖细的啼叫声和那群狗可怕的吠声，拿破仑同志粉墨登场，他的那些贴身侍卫又蹿又跳地围在他周围，他则挺直着身子，带着一种强大威风的气场，用那饱含傲慢的小眼神在全场中扫视了一圈。

一根鞭子被夹在他的蹄趾中。

此刻的院子气压极低，动物们吓得大气不敢喘一下，四周静悄悄的，惊讶夹杂着恐惧弥漫在动物们中间，他们下意识地挤在一起，看着猪们排着长长的队伍在院子中缓慢地行走。现在的情形仿佛是世界已经被颠倒了。动物们在刚刚经历了惊讶—恐惧—困惑这一系列的心理活动后，稍稍地缓过神来，然后他们顾不得那么多，就要开始发出抗议，要知道在以前，他们会顾及对狗的恐惧，还有他们长年累月养成的不抱怨任何事、从不批评任何做法的习惯，但是现在，他们真的要不顾一切了。然而，绵羊们仿佛就在此时接到了信号似的，赶在动物们抗议之前，猛然爆发了气势汹汹的叫喊声：

“四条腿好，两条腿更好！四条腿好，两条腿更好！四条腿好，两

条腿更好！”

这叫声冲天的咩咩声持续了长达五分多钟，等到绵羊们安静下来后，那些排成长队的猪早已经走回了庄园主的房子里了，表示抗议的机会也就随之流产了。

苜蓿用她的鼻子碰了碰本杰明的肩膀，本杰明感觉到后，回过头去，他看见苜蓿的本就昏花的双眼比以前更加灰暗，苜蓿轻轻拽着他的鬃毛，把他拉到了写着“七诫”的大谷仓的那一头，一路上没有言语。他们面对着涂过柏油的墙壁站着，静静地凝视着墙上用白漆写下的字。

一两分钟过后，还是苜蓿先开了口：“我的眼睛越来越昏花了，虽然我以前也认不全这墙上的字，但现在我还是觉得这上面的字跟以前不一样了，本杰明，你看看这墙上的‘七诫’和以前一样吗？”

这一次，本杰明没有拒绝，和以往真不一样，他把墙上的字念给苜蓿听，如今的那面墙上只剩下一条戒律，其他的全不见了。那条戒律是这样写的：

凡动物一律平等

但有些动物比其他动物更加平等

第二天，那些负责庄园监督工作的猪，个个的蹄子上都夹着一根鞭子，由于明白了那条戒律，动物们在面对猪们的做法时也就不会再大惊小怪。听说，猪们买了一台无线电供他们自己使用，并开始着手准备安

装一部电话，此外，对于他们还订阅了《约翰牛报》《花边新闻报》和《每日镜报》，动物们也不觉得奇怪；看到拿破仑嘴里叼着烟斗，在庄园主院子里的花园里漫步，动物们也不稀奇。还有，猪们穿着从庄主屋子里的衣柜里翻出来的琼斯先生的衣服；拿破仑也公然将一件黑上衣和一条猎装裤套在了自己身上，还绑上了皮绑腿；一头深得他宠爱的母猪也穿上了曾经琼斯太太仅在星期天才舍得穿上的一件波纹绸连衣裙。面对如今猪们种种的行为，动物们都选择了接受。

很多轻便的双轮马车在一周后的某个下午驶进了庄园的大门。原来这是一个应邀来参观考察的代表团，成员是邻近的一些庄园主。他们被带领着参观了庄园的每一个地方。他们对所参观到的这些地方都给予了极高的评价，尤其是风车。动物们一直都在萝卜地里拔草，他们尽量把头低下去，几乎碰到了地面，根本无法猜测他们这么做是害怕猪呢，还是更害怕那些来参观的人，但是，这些不影响他们认真而卖力地工作。

到了晚上，一阵阵的欢声笑语和热闹的唱歌声从庄园主的院子里传出来。动物们也被这突然来到的混杂的声音所吸引，这是人类和动物首次在和平的关系下聚在一起，究竟会发生什么事情呢？好奇心驱使他们不约而同地朝着庄园主院子的花园溜去，并且是以极轻的脚步走过去的。

一直走到门口，或许是因为害怕，他们都停下了脚步，苜蓿大着胆子带头走进去，其他的动物在后面小心地跟着，他们踮着蹄尖走到了房子边上，一些个头大点的动物就能透过餐厅窗户看见屋子里面的情形。那里面，六个庄园主和六头地位显赫的猪围坐在一张长桌边，那个桌子顶端代表东道主的位子上毫无疑问坐着的是拿破仑。猪们以一副相当悠闲自在的姿态坐在椅子上。他们应该是饶有兴趣地在玩牌类的游戏，中间偶尔会暂停，显然是为了干杯，他们之间在不停地传着一把大酒壶，

酒壶里盛着啤酒，然后啤酒又被不断地斟满每个杯子。他们太过于专注，以至于根本没有发现窗外一张张惊愕的面孔。

首先举着杯子站起来的是福科斯伍德庄园的皮尔金顿先生。他说，此时此刻，他有必要说几句话，然后再跟在座的诸位干上一杯。

他说，他现在被一种巨大的欢喜之感充斥着胸中，他相信，其他的诸位现在肯定也是同样的感觉。

长期以来的种种猜疑和误解现在都已经结束了。曾经的一个时期，他们这些作为尊敬的动物庄园所有者的人类邻居，当然包括他自己还有在座的任何一位，都不会认同那些一定程度上的猜忌，他们不愿意承认那是敌视。屡次发生过不幸的事件，也曾流行过错误的观念。他们觉得一个归猪管理的庄园，多多少少都会不正常，还很有可能会给周边的庄园带来不安全的因素。所以，为数众多的庄园主在还没有进行充分的考证前就肆意下了定论：这样的庄园，里面肯定是恣意妄为的歪风邪气。这样的状况也肯定会影响到自己庄园里的动物们甚至影响到雇员，使他们惶惶不安。但是，在今天他和他的朋友们参观完这个庄园之后，所有的怀疑都荡然无存，他们亲眼考察了庄园里的每一个角落，他们有了巨大的发现，这些发现是：这里的操作方法是最现代的，并且纪律很严明，大家井然有序地进行自己的工作，这在其他的庄园看来一定是楷模。还有一点他认为是完全正确的，那就是动物庄园里的下层动物们吃的跟全国的动物来比是最少的，而干的活却比全国任何动物都要多得多。很显然，在看到了庄园里的这些情况后，他们打算尽快地把这些富有特色的东西引进到他们自己的庄园里去。

在他准备结束他的讲话之前，他再次重申了他们要继续将这份曾经存在于动物庄园和其他相邻庄园之间的友好感情维持下去。没有一种利

害关系存在于猪和人之间，以前不曾有过，以后就更不可能有。他们所面临的困难和奋斗的目标都是一样的，还有劳工问题，这在任何地方难道不都是一样的吗？讲到这里，皮尔金顿先生显然是想说出一句俏皮话，因为他自己都忍俊不禁致使他强忍了一会儿，呈多层状的下巴都憋成紫色的了，终于这句精心准备的话被他说出来了，他说：“如果你们有你们的下层动物需要对付，我们同样有我们的下层阶级。”这是一句名言警句啊，在座的各位被这句话引得哄堂大笑。之后，对于在庄园看见的饲料供应量少，工作时间长，而动物们普遍没有松懈疲沓的现状，皮尔金顿先生再次对猪们表示祝贺。

最后，皮尔金顿先生说到，请各位把各自的酒杯斟得满满的，然后集体起立，“先生们”，他说，“我最后敬你们一杯，先生们，为动物庄园的繁荣兴旺干杯！”

说完，爆发了一片热烈的喝彩声和跺脚声。拿破仑同志是最兴奋的，他激动地离开了自己的座位，绕到桌子的另一边——皮尔金顿先生面前，和他碰了杯，然后一饮而尽。之后，完全靠双脚站立的拿破仑同志在等到喝彩声平静下来后，表示他也要说上几句。

他如之前的每次演讲一样，开门见山，直奔主题，并且语句简明扼要。他说，对于那个对动物庄园误解的时代的结束，他也感到非常开心，至于那些长时间流传的谣言，他有证据显示是一些居心不良的仇敌散播的，那些谣言是不可信的，说在他自己和同事们的观念中，有某种东西是带颠覆性甚至革命性的。还有他们被误解为企图煽动周围庄园的动物一起来造反。但是，真相总会大白的，谎言是遮盖不了真相的。其实，他们唯一的愿望就是与他们的所有邻居和平共处，保持正常的贸易，这个愿望从没变过，过去是，现在是，未来仍是。他还补充到，现在这家庄园是合作性质的企业，他有幸在这里监管，那张地契由他亲自

保管，但是归所有的猪共有。

他还说，任何的旧的猜忌都会消失，他相信不会残留的。为了更进一步地增加彼此的信任，在前不久，他们还专门对庄园里的规章制度作了一些修订。庄园里还有一个长期养成的愚蠢的习惯，那就是动物们之间互称“同志”，这个要被禁止了。此外还有一个陋习，很奇怪，但是已经无从考证它的由来了，那就是每个星期天早上必须列队向一个头盖骨致敬，这个头盖骨之前钉放在花园里的一个木桩上，当然，这个也要取消。头盖骨已经被埋掉了。这些参观者如果有留意到旗杆顶上迎风飘扬的绿旗，他们应该就会发现原先旗子上标记的白色蹄掌和犄角已经不见了，今后整个旗子就是全绿色的。

他说，刚才皮尔金顿先生的演讲很精彩也很亲切，但有一处错误需要指出，当然这不怪皮尔金顿先生，因为他不可能知道，他之前一直提到的“动物庄园”，从今后就不会再说，拿破仑宣布，并且是第一次宣布，今后，庄园将被称为“曼纳庄园”——他相信，这应该才是庄园的真正名字。

最后，他对他的发言作了总结：“先生们，我将给你们同以前一样的祝词，但是这次的方式是不同的，你们先把酒杯斟满。先生们，我的祝词是：为曼纳庄园的繁荣兴旺干杯！”

同刚才一样，拿破仑的话音刚落，又一阵衷心而热烈的喝彩声响起，酒被他们一饮而尽。此刻，我们看看站在外面的动物们，他们凝视着屋里的这一幅情景时，他们似乎觉得发生了什么怪事。好像是猪的面孔起了什么变化吗？苜蓿用她那昏花的双眼从一张面孔掠到另一张面孔。他们那些家伙中，有的有着五个下巴，有四个的，还有三个的。但是再继续观察，还是觉得有什么东西正在逐渐消失和发生变化，但是究

竟是什么？这时，屋里的喝彩声渐渐低到没了，他们又开始围着桌子，拿着扑克牌，继续刚才被打断的游戏，外面的动物们悄无声息地离开了。

但是他们还没走出二十码的路程，就被庄园主院子里传来的大吵大闹吓得猛地停住了脚步。动物们再一次回到院子里，透过窗子向里面张望。没错，屋子里的确是在争吵，而且很激烈，既有大吵大闹的，还有愤怒拍桌子的，有犀利的满是怀疑的眼光，也有矢口否认的。造成争吵的原因好像是拿破仑同皮尔金顿同时打出了一张黑桃A。

十二个嗓门一齐怒气冲天地吼叫，他们是多么相似。现在，终于明白了猪的面孔上发生了什么变化。窗外的动物们还在向里面张望，他们的目光从人转到猪，又从猪转到人，再从人转到猪；现在，已经不可能分得清哪张脸是猪的，哪张脸是人的了。

I

Mr. Jones, of the Manor Farm, had locked the hen-houses for the night, but was too drunk to remember to shut the popholes. With the ring of light from his lantern dancing from side to side, he lurched across the yard, kicked off his boots at the back door, drew himself a last glass of beer from the barrel in the scullery, and made his way up to bed, where Mrs. Jones was already snoring.

As soon as the light in the bedroom went out there was a stirring and a fluttering all through the farm buildings. Word had gone round during the day that old Major, the prize Middle White boar, had had a strange dream on the previous night and wished to communicate it to the other animals. It had been agreed that they should all meet in the big barn as soon as Mr. Jones was safely out of the way. Old Major (so he was always called, though the name under which he had been exhibited was Willingdon Beauty) was so highly regarded on the farm that everyone was quite ready to lose an hour's sleep in order to hear what he had to say.

At one end of the big barn, on a sort of raised platform, Major was already ensconced on his bed of straw, under a lantern which hung from a beam. He was twelve years old and had lately grown rather stout, but he was still a majestic-looking pig, with a wise and benevolent appearance in spite of

the fact that his tushes had never been cut. Before long the other animals began to arrive and make themselves comfortable after their different fashions. First came the three dogs, Bluebell, Jessie, and Pincher, and then the pigs, who settled down in the straw immediately in front of the platform. The hens perched themselves on the window-sills, the pigeons fluttered up to the rafters, the sheep and cows lay down behind the pigs and began to chew the cud. The two cart-horses, Boxer and Clover, came in together, walking very slowly and setting down their vast hairy hoofs with great care lest there should be some small animal concealed in the straw. Clover was a stout motherly mare approaching middle life, who had never quite got her figure back after her fourth foal. Boxer was an enormous beast, nearly eighteen hands high, and as strong as any two ordinary horses put together. A white stripe down his nose gave him a somewhat stupid appearance, and in fact he was not of first-rate intelligence, but he was universally respected for his steadiness of character and tremendous powers of work. After the horses came Muriel, the white goat, and Benjamin, the donkey. Benjamin was the oldest animal on the farm, and the worst tempered. He seldom talked, and when he did, it was usually to make some cynical remark, for instance, he would say that God had given him a tail to keep the flies off, but that he would sooner have had no tail and no flies. Alone among the animals on the farm he never laughed. If asked why, he would say that he saw nothing to laugh at. Nevertheless, without openly admitting it, he was devoted to Boxer; the two of them usually spent their Sundays together in the small paddock beyond the orchard, grazing side by side and never speaking.

The two horses had just lain down when a brood of ducklings, which had lost their mother, filed into the barn, cheeping feebly and wandering from

side to side to find some place where they would not be trodden on. Clover made a sort of wall round them with her great foreleg, and the ducklings nestled down inside it and promptly fell asleep. At the last moment Mollie, the foolish, pretty white mare who drew Mr. Jones's trap, came mincing daintily in, chewing at a lump of sugar. She took a place near the front and began flirting her white mane, hoping to draw attention to the red ribbons it was plaited with. Last of all came the cat, who looked round, as usual, for the warmest place, and finally squeezed herself in between Boxer and Clover; there she purred contentedly throughout Major's speech without listening to a word of what he was saying.

All the animals were now present except Moses, the tame raven, who slept on a perch behind the back door. When Major saw that they had all made themselves comfortable and were waiting attentively, he cleared his throat and began:

"Comrades, you have heard already about the strange dream that I had last night. But I will come to the dream later. I have something else to say first. I do not think, comrades, that I shall be with you for many months longer, and before I die, I feel it my duty to pass on to you such wisdom as I have acquired. I have had a long life, I have had much time for thought as I lay alone in my stall, and I think I may say that I understand the nature of life on this earth as well as any animal now living. It is about this that I wish to speak to you.

"Now, comrades, what is the nature of this life of ours? Let us face it: our lives are miserable, laborious, and short. We are born, we are given just so much food as will keep the breath in our bodies, and those of us who are

capable of it are forced to work to the last atom of our strength; and the very instant that our usefulness has come to an end we are slaughtered with hideous cruelty. No animal in England knows the meaning of happiness or leisure after he is a year old. No animal in England is free. The life of an animal is misery and slavery: that is the plain truth.

"But is this simply part of the order of nature? Is it because this land of ours is so poor that it cannot afford a decent life to those who dwell upon it? No, comrades, a thousand times no! The soil of England is fertile, its climate is good, it is capable of affording food in abundance to an enormously greater number of animals than now inhabit it. This single farm of ours would support a dozen horses, twenty cows, hundreds of sheep, and all of them living in a comfort and a dignity that are now almost beyond our imagining. Why then do we continue in this miserable condition? Because nearly the whole of the produce of our labour is stolen from us by human beings. There, comrades, is the answer to all our problems. It is summed up in a single word-Man. Man is the only real enemy we have. Remove Man from the scene, and the root cause of hunger and overwork is abolished for ever.

"Man is the only creature that consumes without producing. He does not give milk, he does not lay eggs, he is too weak to pull the plough, he cannot run fast enough to catch rabbits. Yet he is lord of all the animals. He sets them to work, he gives back to them the bare minimum that will prevent them from starving, and the rest he keeps for himself. Our labour tills the soil, our dung fertilises it, and yet there is not one of us that owns more than his bare skin. You cows that I see before me, how many thousands of gallons of milk have you given during this last year? And what has happened to that milk

which should have been breeding up sturdy calves? Every drop of it has gone down the throats of our enemies. And you hens, how many eggs have you laid in this last year, and how many of those eggs ever hatched into chickens? The rest have all gone to market to bring in money for Jones and his men. And you, Clover, where are those four foals you bore, who should have been the support and pleasure of your old age? Each was sold at a year old-you will never see one of them again. In return for your four confinements and all your labour in the fields, what have you ever had except your bare rations and a stall?

"And even the miserable lives we lead are not allowed to reach their natural span. For myself I do not grumble, for I am one of the lucky ones. I am twelve years old and have had over four hundred children. Such is the natural life of a pig. But no animal escapes the cruel knife in the end. You young porkers who are sitting in front of me, every one of you will scream your lives out at the block within a year. To that horror we all must come-cows, pigs, hens, sheep, everyone. Even the horses and the dogs have no better fate. You, Boxer, the very day that those great muscles of yours lose their power, Jones will sell you to the knacker, who will cut your throat and boil you down for the foxhounds. As for the dogs, when they grow old and toothless, Jones ties a brick round their necks and drowns them in the nearest pond.

"Is it not crystal clear, then, comrades, that all the evils of this life of ours spring from the tyranny of human beings? Only get rid of Man, and the produce of our labour would be our own. Almost overnight we could become rich and free. What then must we do? Why, work night and day, body and

soul, for the overthrow of the human race! That is my message to you, comrades: Rebellion! I do not know when that Rebellion will come, it might be in a week or in a hundred years, but I know, as surely as I see this straw beneath my feet, that sooner or later justice will be done. Fix your eyes on that, comrades, throughout the short remainder of your lives! And above all, pass on this message of mine to those who come after you, so that future generations shall carry on the struggle until it is victorious.

"And remember, comrades, your resolution must never falter. No argument must lead you astray. Never listen when they tell you that Man and the animals have a common interest, that the prosperity of the one is the prosperity of the others. It is all lies. Man serves the interests of no creature except himself. And among us animals let there be perfect unity, perfect comradeship in the struggle. All men are enemies. All animals are comrades."

At this moment there was a tremendous uproar. While Major was speaking four large rats had crept out of their holes and were sitting on their hindquarters, listening to him. The dogs had suddenly caught sight of them, and it was only by a swift dash for their holes that the rats saved their lives. Major raised his trotter for silence.

"Comrades," he said, "here is a point that must be settled. The wild creatures, such as rats and rabbits-are they our friends or our enemies? Let us put it to the vote. I propose this question to the meeting: Are rats comrades?"

The vote was taken at once, and it was agreed by an overwhelming majority that rats were comrades. There were only four dissentients, the three dogs and the cat, who was afterwards discovered to have voted on both sides.

Major continued:

"I have little more to say. I merely repeat, remember always your duty of enmity towards Man and all his ways. Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy. Whatever goes upon four legs, or has wings, is a friend. And remember also that in fighting against Man, we must not come to resemble him. Even when you have conquered him, do not adopt his vices. No animal must ever live in a house, or sleep in a bed, or wear clothes, or drink alcohol, or smoke tobacco, or touch money, or engage in trade. All the habits of Man are evil. And, above all, no animal must ever tyrannise over his own kind. Weak or strong, clever or simple, we are all brothers. No animal must ever kill any other animal. All animals are equal.

"And now, comrades, I will tell you about my dream of last night. I cannot describe that dream to you. It was a dream of the earth as it will be when Man has vanished. But it reminded me of something that I had long forgotten. Many years ago, when I was a little pig, my mother and the other sows used to sing an old song of which they knew only the tune and the first three words. I had known that tune in my infancy, but it had long since passed out of my mind. Last night, however, it came back to me in my dream. And what is more, the words of the song also came back-words, I am certain, which were sung by the animals of long ago and have been lost to memory for generations. I will sing you that song now, comrades. I am old and my voice is hoarse, but when I have taught you the tune, you can sing it better for yourselves. It is called Beasts of England."

Old Major cleared his throat and began to sing. As he had said, his voice was hoarse, but he sang well enough, and it was a stirring tune, something

between Clementine and La Cucaracha. The words ran:

Beasts of England, beasts of Ireland,

Beasts of every land and clime,

Hearken to my joyful tidings

Of the golden future time.

Soon or late the day is coming,

Tyrant Man shall be o'erthrown,

And the fruitful fields of England

Shall be trod by beasts alone.

Rings shall vanish from our noses,

And the harness from our back,

Bit and spur shall rust forever,

Cruel whips no more shall crack.

Riches more than mind can picture,

Wheat and barley, oats and hay,

Clover, beans, and mangel-wurzels

Shall be ours upon that day.

Bright will shine the fields of England,

Purer shall its waters be,

Sweeter yet shall blow its breezes

On the day that sets us free.

For that day we all must labour,

Though we die before it break;

Cows and horses, geese and turkeys,

All must toil for freedom's sake.

Beasts of England, beasts of Ireland,

Beasts of every land and clime,

Hearken well and spread my tidings

Of the golden future time.

The singing of this song threw the animals into the wildest excitement. Almost before Major had reached the end, they had begun singing it for themselves. Even the stupidest of them had already picked up the tune and a

few of the words, and as for the clever ones, such as the pigs and dogs, they had the entire song by heart within a few minutes. And then, after a few preliminary tries, the whole farm burst out into Beasts of England in tremendous unison. The cows lowed it, the dogs whined it, the sheep bleated it, the horses whinnied it, the ducks quacked it. They were so delighted with the song that they sang it right through five times in succession, and might have continued singing it all night if they had not been interrupted.

Unfortunately, the uproar awoke Mr. Jones, who sprang out of bed, making sure that there was a fox in the yard. He seized the gun which always stood in a corner of his bedroom, and let fly a charge of number 6 shot into the darkness. The pellets buried themselves in the wall of the barn and the meeting broke up hurriedly. Everyone fled to his own sleeping-place. The birds jumped on to their perches, the animals settled down in the straw, and the whole farm was asleep in a moment.

II

Three nights later old Major died peacefully in his sleep. His body was buried at the foot of the orchard.

This was early in March. During the next three months there was much secret activity. Major's speech had given to the more intelligent animals on the farm a completely new outlook on life. They did not know when the Rebellion predicted by Major would take place, they had no reason for thinking that it would be within their own lifetime, but they saw clearly that it was their duty to prepare for it. The work of teaching and organising the others fell naturally upon the pigs, who were generally recognised as being the cleverest of the animals. Pre-eminent among the pigs were two young boars named Snowball and Napoleon, whom Mr. Jones was breeding up for sale. Napoleon was a large, rather fierce-looking Berkshire boar, the only Berkshire on the farm, not much of a talker, but with a reputation for getting his own way. Snowball was a more vivacious pig than Napoleon, quicker in speech and more inventive, but was not considered to have the same depth of character. All the other male pigs on the farm were porkers. The best known among them was a small fat pig named Squealer, with very round cheeks, twinkling eyes, nimble movements, and a shrill voice. He was a brilliant talker, and when he was arguing some difficult point he had a way of skipping from side to side and whisking his tail which was somehow very

persuasive. The others said of Squealer that he could turn black into white.

These three had elaborated old Major's teachings into a complete system of thought, to which they gave the name of Animalism. Several nights a week, after Mr. Jones was asleep, they held secret meetings in the barn and expounded the principles of Animalism to the others. At the beginning they met with much stupidity and apathy. Some of the animals talked of the duty of loyalty to Mr. Jones, whom they referred to as "Master," or made elementary remarks such as "Mr. Jones feeds us. If he were gone, we should starve to death." Others asked such questions as "Why should we care what happens after we are dead?" or "If this Rebellion is to happen anyway, what difference does it make whether we work for it or not?", and the pigs had great difficulty in making them see that this was contrary to the spirit of Animalism. The stupidest questions of all were asked by Mollie, the white mare. The very first question she asked Snowball was: "Will there still be sugar after the Rebellion? "

"No," said Snowball firmly. "We have no means of making sugar on this farm. Besides, you do not need sugar. You will have all the oats and hay you want."

"And shall I still be allowed to wear ribbons in my mane?" asked Mollie. "Comrade," said Snowball, "those ribbons that you are so devoted to are the badge of slavery. Can you not understand that liberty is worth more than ribbons? "

Mollie agreed, but she did not sound very convinced.

The pigs had an even harder struggle to counteract the lies put about by Moses, the tame raven. Moses, who was Mr. Jones's especial pet, was a spy and a tale-bearer, but he was also a clever talker. He claimed to know of the existence of a mysterious country called Sugarcandy Mountain, to which all animals went when they died. It was situated somewhere up in the sky, a little distance beyond the clouds, Moses said. In Sugarcandy Mountain it was Sunday seven days a week, clover was in season all the year round, and lump sugar and linseed cake grew on the hedges. The animals hated Moses because he told tales and did no work, but some of them believed in Sugarcandy Mountain, and the pigs had to argue very hard to persuade them that there was no such place.

Their most faithful disciples were the two cart-horses, Boxer and Clover. These two had great difficulty in thinking anything out for themselves, but having once accepted the pigs as their teachers, they absorbed everything that they were told, and passed it on to the other animals by simple arguments. They were unfailing in their attendance at the secret meetings in the barn, and led the singing of Beasts of England, with which the meetings always ended.

Now, as it turned out, the Rebellion was achieved much earlier and more easily than anyone had expected. In past years Mr. Jones, although a hard master, had been a capable farmer, but of late he had fallen on evil days. He had become much disheartened after losing money in a lawsuit, and had taken to drinking more than was good for him. For whole days at a time he would lounge in his Windsor chair in the kitchen, reading the newspapers, drinking, and occasionally feeding Moses on crusts of bread soaked in beer.

His men were idle and dishonest, the fields were full of weeds, the buildings wanted roofing, the hedges were neglected, and the animals were underfed.

June came and the hay was almost ready for cutting. On Midsummer's Eve, which was a Saturday, Mr. Jones went into Willingdon and got so drunk at the Red Lion that he did not come back till midday on Sunday. The men had milked the cows in the early morning and then had gone out rabbiting, without bothering to feed the animals. When Mr. Jones got back he immediately went to sleep on the drawing-room sofa with the News of the World over his face, so that when evening came, the animals were still unfed. At last they could stand it no longer. One of the cows broke in the door of the store-shed with her horn and all the animals began to help themselves from the bins. It was just then that Mr. Jones woke up. The next moment he and his four men were in the store-shed with whips in their hands, lashing out in all directions. This was more than the hungry animals could bear. With one accord, though nothing of the kind had been planned beforehand, they flung themselves upon their tormentors. Jones and his men suddenly found themselves being butted and kicked from all sides. The situation was quite out of their control. They had never seen animals behave like this before, and this sudden uprising of creatures whom they were used to thrashing and maltreating just as they chose, frightened them almost out of their wits. After only a moment or two they gave up trying to defend themselves and took to their heels. A minute later all five of them were in full flight down the cart-track that led to the main road, with the animals pursuing them in triumph.

Mrs. Jones looked out of the bedroom window, saw what was happening, hurriedly flung a few possessions into a carpet bag, and slipped

out of the farm by another way. Moses sprang off his perch and flapped after her, croaking loudly. Meanwhile the animals had chased Jones and his men out on to the road and slammed the five-barred gate behind them. And so, almost before they knew what was happening, the Rebellion had been successfully carried through: Jones was expelled, and the Manor Farm was theirs.

For the first few minutes the animals could hardly believe in their good fortune. Their first act was to gallop in a body right round the boundaries of the farm, as though to make quite sure that no human being was hiding anywhere upon it; then they raced back to the farm buildings to wipe out the last traces of Jones's hated reign. The harness-room at the end of the stables was broken open; the bits, the nose-rings, the dog-chains, the cruel knives with which Mr. Jones had been used to castrate the pigs and lambs, were all flung down the well. The reins, the halters, the blinkers, the degrading nosebags, were thrown on to the rubbish fire which was burning in the yard. So were the whips. All the animals capered with joy when they saw the whips going up in flames. Snowball also threw on to the fire the ribbons with which the horses' manes and tails had usually been decorated on market days.

"Ribbons," he said, "should be considered as clothes, which are the mark of a human being. All animals should go naked."

When Boxer heard this he fetched the small straw hat which he wore in summer to keep the flies out of his ears, and flung it on to the fire with the rest.

In a very little while the animals had destroyed everything that reminded

them of Mr. Jones. Napoleon then led them back to the store-shed and served out a double ration of corn to everybody, with two biscuits for each dog. Then they sang Beasts of England from end to end seven times running, and after that they settled down for the night and slept as they had never slept before.

But they woke at dawn as usual, and suddenly remembering the glorious thing that had happened, they all raced out into the pasture together. A little way down the pasture there was a knoll that commanded a view of most of the farm. The animals rushed to the top of it and gazed round them in the clear morning light. Yes, it was theirs-everything that they could see was theirs! In the ecstasy of that thought they gambolled round and round, they hurled themselves into the air in great leaps of excitement. They rolled in the dew, they cropped mouthfuls of the sweet summer grass, they kicked up clods of the black earth and snuffed its rich scent. Then they made a tour of inspection of the whole farm and surveyed with speechless admiration the ploughland, the hayfield, the orchard, the pool, the spinney. It was as though they had never seen these things before, and even now they could hardly believe that it was all their own.

Then they filed back to the farm buildings and halted in silence outside the door of the farmhouse. That was theirs too, but they were frightened to go inside. After a moment, however, Snowball and Napoleon butted the door open with their shoulders and the animals entered in single file, walking with the utmost care for fear of disturbing anything. They tiptoed from room to room, afraid to speak above a whisper and gazing with a kind of awe at the unbelievable luxury, at the beds with their feather mattresses, the looking-

glasses, the horsehair sofa, the Brussels carpet, the lithograph of Queen Victoria over the drawing-room mantelpiece. They were just coming down the stairs when Mollie was discovered to be missing. Going back, the others found that she had remained behind in the best bedroom. She had taken a piece of blue ribbon from Mrs. Jones's dressing-table, and was holding it against her shoulder and admiring herself in the glass in a very foolish manner. The others reproached her sharply, and they went outside. Some hams hanging in the kitchen were taken out for burial, and the barrel of beer in the scullery was stove in with a kick from Boxer's hoof, otherwise nothing in the house was touched. A unanimous resolution was passed on the spot that the farmhouse should be preserved as a museum. All were agreed that no animal must ever live there.

The animals had their breakfast, and then Snowball and Napoleon called them together again.

"Comrades," said Snowball, "it is half-past six and we have a long day before us. Today we begin the hay harvest. But there is another matter that must be attended to first."

The pigs now revealed that during the past three months they had taught themselves to read and write from an old spelling book which had belonged to Mr. Jones's children and which had been thrown on the rubbish heap. Napoleon sent for pots of black and white paint and led the way down to the five-barred gate that gave on to the main road. Then Snowball (for it was Snowball who was best at writing) took a brush between the two knuckles of his trotter, painted out MANOR FARM from the top bar of the gate and in its place painted ANIMAL FARM. This was to be the name of the farm from

now onwards. After this they went back to the farm buildings, where Snowball and Napoleon sent for a ladder which they caused to be set against the end wall of the big barn. They explained that by their studies of the past three months the pigs had succeeded in reducing the principles of Animalism to Seven Commandments. These Seven Commandments would now be inscribed on the wall; they would form an unalterable law by which all the animals on Animal Farm must live for ever after. With some difficulty (for it is not easy for a pig to balance himself on a ladder) Snowball climbed up and set to work, with Squealer a few rungs below him holding the paint-pot. The Commandments were written on the tarred wall in great white letters that could be read thirty yards away. They ran thus:

THE SEVEN COMMANDMENTS

1. Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy.
2. Whatever goes upon four legs, or has wings, is a friend.
3. No animal shall wear clothes.
4. No animal shall sleep in a bed.
5. No animal shall drink alcohol.
6. No animal shall kill any other animal.
7. All animals are equal.

It was very neatly written, and except that "friend" was written "freind" and one of the "S's" was the wrong way round, the spelling was correct all the way through. Snowball read it aloud for the benefit of the others. All the animals nodded in complete agreement, and the cleverer ones at once began to learn the Commandments by heart.

"Now, comrades," cried Snowball, throwing down the paint-brush, "to the hayfield! Let us make it a point of honour to get in the harvest more quickly than Jones and his men could do."

But at this moment the three cows, who had seemed uneasy for some time past, set up a loud lowing. They had not been milked for twenty-four hours, and their udders were almost bursting. After a little thought, the pigs sent for buckets and milked the cows fairly successfully, their trotters being well adapted to this task. Soon there were five buckets of frothing creamy milk at which many of the animals looked with considerable interest.

"What is going to happen to all that milk?" said someone.

"Jones used sometimes to mix some of it in our mash," said one of the hens.

"Never mind the milk, comrades!" cried Napoleon, placing himself in front of the buckets. "That will be attended to. The harvest is more important. Comrade Snowball will lead the way. I shall follow in a few minutes. Forward, comrades! The hay is waiting."

So the animals trooped down to the hayfield to begin the harvest, and when they came back in the evening it was noticed that the milk had disappeared.

III

How they toiled and sweated to get the hay in! But their efforts were rewarded, for the harvest was an even bigger success than they had hoped.

Sometimes the work was hard; the implements had been designed for human beings and not for animals, and it was a great drawback that no animal was able to use any tool that involved standing on his hind legs. But the pigs were so clever that they could think of a way round every difficulty. As for the horses, they knew every inch of the field, and in fact understood the business of mowing and raking far better than Jones and his men had ever done. The pigs did not actually work, but directed and supervised the others. With their superior knowledge it was natural that they should assume the leadership. Boxer and Clover would harness themselves to the cutter or the horse-rake (no bits or reins were needed in these days, of course) and tramp steadily round and round the field with a pig walking behind and calling out "Gee up, comrade!" or "Whoa back, comrade!" as the case might be. And every animal down to the humblest worked at turning the hay and gathering it. Even the ducks and hens toiled to and fro all day in the sun, carrying tiny wisps of hay in their beaks. In the end they finished the harvest in two days' less time than it had usually taken Jones and his men. Moreover, it was the biggest harvest that the farm had ever seen. There was no wastage whatever; the hens and ducks with their sharp eyes had gathered up the very last stalk.

And not an animal on the farm had stolen so much as a mouthful.

All through that summer the work of the farm went like clockwork. The animals were happy as they had never conceived it possible to be. Every mouthful of food was an acute positive pleasure, now that it was truly their own food, produced by themselves and for themselves, not doled out to them by a grudging master. With the worthless parasitical human beings gone, there was more for everyone to eat. There was more leisure too, inexperienced though the animals were. They met with many difficulties, for instance, later in the year, when they harvested the corn, they had to tread it out in the ancient style and blow away the chaff with their breath, since the farm possessed no threshing machine, but the pigs with their cleverness and Boxer with his tremendous muscles always pulled them through. Boxer was the admiration of everybody. He had been a hard worker even in Jones's time, but now he seemed more like three horses than one; there were days when the entire work of the farm seemed to rest on his mighty shoulders. From morning to night he was pushing and pulling, always at the spot where the work was hardest. He had made an arrangement with one of the cockerels to call him in the mornings half an hour earlier than anyone else, and would put in some volunteer labour at whatever seemed to be most needed, before the regular day's work began. His answer to every problem, every setback, was "I will work harder!"—which he had adopted as his personal motto.

But everyone worked according to his capacity. The hens and ducks, for instance, saved five bushels of corn at the harvest by gathering up the stray grains. Nobody stole, nobody grumbled over his rations, the quarrelling and biting and jealousy which had been normal features of life in the old days had

almost disappeared. Nobody shirked-or almost nobody. Mollie, it was true, was not good at getting up in the mornings, and had a way of leaving work early on the ground that there was a stone in her hoof. And the behaviour of the cat was somewhat peculiar. It was soon noticed that when there was work to be done the cat could never be found. She would vanish for hours on end, and then reappear at meal-times, or in the evening after work was over, as though nothing had happened. But she always made such excellent excuses, and purred so affectionately, that it was impossible not to believe in her good intentions. Old Benjamin, the donkey, seemed quite unchanged since the Rebellion. He did his work in the same slow obstinate way as he had done it in Jones's time, never shirking and never volunteering for extra work either. About the Rebellion and its results he would express no opinion. When asked whether he was not happier now that Jones was gone, he would say only "Donkeys live a long time. None of you has ever seen a dead donkey," and the others had to be content with this cryptic answer.

On Sundays there was no work. Breakfast was an hour later than usual, and after breakfast there was a ceremony which was observed every week without fail. First came the hoisting of the flag. Snowball had found in the harness-room an old green tablecloth of Mrs. Jones's and had painted on it a hoof and a horn in white. This was run up the flagstaff in the farmhouse garden every Sunday morning. The flag was green, Snowball explained, to represent the green fields of England, while the hoof and horn signified the future Republic of the Animals which would arise when the human race had been finally overthrown. After the hoisting of the flag all the animals trooped into the big barn for a general assembly which was known as the Meeting. Here the work of the coming week was planned out and resolutions were put

forward and debated. It was always the pigs who put forward the resolutions. The other animals understood how to vote, but could never think of any resolutions of their own. Snowball and Napoleon were by far the most active in the debates. But it was noticed that these two were never in agreement: whatever suggestion either of them made, the other could be counted on to oppose it. Even when it was resolved—a thing no one could object to in itself to set aside the small paddock behind the orchard as a home of rest for animals who were past work, there was a stormy debate over the correct retiring age for each class of animal. The Meeting always ended with the singing of Beasts of England, and the afternoon was given up to recreation.

The pigs had set aside the harness-room as a headquarters for themselves. Here, in the evenings, they studied blacksmithing, carpentering, and other necessary arts from books which they had brought out of the farmhouse. Snowball also busied himself with organising the other animals into what he called Animal Committees. He was indefatigable at this. He formed the Egg Production Committee for the hens, the Clean Tails League for the cows, the Wild Comrades' Re-education Committee (the object of this was to tame the rats and rabbits), the Whiter Wool Movement for the sheep, and various others, besides instituting classes in reading and writing. On the whole, these projects were a failure. The attempt to tame the wild creatures, for instance, broke down almost immediately. They continued to behave very much as before, and when treated with generosity, simply took advantage of it. The cat joined the Re-education Committee and was very active in it for some days. She was seen one day sitting on a roof and talking to some sparrows who were just out of her reach. She was telling them that all animals were now comrades and that any sparrow who chose could come and

perch on her paw; but the sparrows kept their distance.

The reading and writing classes, however, were a great success. By the autumn almost every animal on the farm was literate in some degree.

As for the pigs, they could already read and write perfectly. The dogs learned to read fairly well, but were not interested in reading anything except the Seven Commandments. Muriel, the goat, could read somewhat better than the dogs, and sometimes used to read to the others in the evenings from scraps of newspaper which she found on the rubbish heap. Benjamin could read as well as any pig, but never exercised his faculty. So far as he knew, he said, there was nothing worth reading. Clover learnt the whole alphabet, but could not put words together. Boxer could not get beyond the letter D. He would trace out A, B, C, D, in the dust with his great hoof, and then would stand staring at the letters with his ears back, sometimes shaking his forelock, trying with all his might to remember what came next and never succeeding. On several occasions, indeed, he did learn E, F, G, H, but by the time he knew them, it was always discovered that he had forgotten A, B, C, and D. Finally he decided to be content with the first four letters, and used to write them out once or twice every day to refresh his memory. Mollie refused to learn any but the six letters which spelt her own name. She would form these very neatly out of pieces of twig, and would then decorate them with a flower or two and walk round them admiring them.

None of the other animals on the farm could get further than the letter A. It was also found that the stupider animals, such as the sheep, hens, and ducks, were unable to learn the Seven Commandments by heart. After much thought Snowball declared that the Seven Commandments could in effect be

reduced to a single maxim, namely: "Four legs good, two legs bad." This, he said, contained the essential principle of Animalism. Whoever had thoroughly grasped it would be safe from human influences. The birds at first objected, since it seemed to them that they also had two legs, but Snowball proved to them that this was not so.

"A bird's wing, comrades," he said, "is an organ of propulsion and not of manipulation. It should therefore be regarded as a leg. The distinguishing mark of man is the hand, the instrument with which he does all his mischief."

The birds did not understand Snowball's long words, but they accepted his explanation, and all the humbler animals set to work to learn the new maxim by heart. "four legs good, two legs bad," was inscribed on the end wall of the barn, above the Seven Commandments and in bigger letters. When they had once got it by heart, the sheep developed a great liking for this maxim, and often as they lay in the field they would all start bleating "Four legs good, two legs bad! Four legs good, two legs bad!" and keep it up for hours on end, never growing tired of it.

Napoleon took no interest in Snowball's committees. He said that the education of the young was more important than anything that could be done for those who were already grown up. It happened that Jessie and Bluebell had both whelped soon after the hay harvest, giving birth between them to nine sturdy puppies. As soon as they were weaned, Napoleon took them away from their mothers, saying that he would make himself responsible for their education. He took them up into a loft which could only be reached by a ladder from the harness-room, and there kept them in such seclusion that the rest of the farm soon forgot their existence.

The mystery of where the milk went to was soon cleared up. It was mixed every day into the pigs' mash. The early apples were now ripening, and the grass of the orchard was littered with windfalls. The animals had assumed as a matter of course that these would be shared out equally; one day, however, the order went forth that all the windfalls were to be collected and brought to the harness-room for the use of the pigs. At this some of the other animals murmured, but it was no use. All the pigs were in full agreement on this point, even Snowball and Napoleon. Squealer was sent to make the necessary explanations to the others.

"Comrades!" he cried. "You do not imagine, I hope, that we pigs are doing this in a spirit of selfishness and privilege? Many of us actually dislike milk and apples. I dislike them myself. Our sole object in taking these things is to preserve our health. Milk and apples (this has been proved by Science, comrades) contain substances absolutely necessary to the well-being of a pig. We pigs are brainworkers. The whole management and organisation of this farm depend on us. Day and night we are watching over your welfare. It is for your sake that we drink that milk and eat those apples. Do you know what would happen if we pigs failed in our duty? Jones would come back! Yes, Jones would come back! Surely, comrades," cried Squealer almost pleadingly, skipping from side to side and whisking his tail, "surely there is no one among you who wants to see Jones come back?"

Now if there was one thing that the animals were completely certain of, it was that they did not want Jones back. When it was put to them in this light, they had no more to say. The importance of keeping the pigs in good health was all too obvious. So it was agreed without further argument that the

milk and the windfall apples (and also the main crop of apples when they ripened) should be reserved for the pigs alone.

IV

The late summer the news of what had happened on Animal Farm had spread across half the county. Every day Snowball and Napoleon sent out flights of pigeons whose instructions were to mingle with the animals on neighbouring farms, tell them the story of the Rebellion, and teach them the tune of Beasts of England.

Most of this time Mr. Jones had spent sitting in the taproom of the Red Lion at Willingdon, complaining to anyone who would listen of the monstrous injustice he had suffered in being turned out of his property by a pack of good-for-nothing animals. The other farmers sympathised in principle, but they did not at first give him much help. At heart, each of them was secretly wondering whether he could not somehow turn Jones's misfortune to his own advantage. It was lucky that the owners of the two farms which adjoined Animal Farm were on permanently bad terms. One of them, which was named Foxwood, was a large, neglected, old-fashioned farm, much overgrown by woodland, with all its pastures worn out and its hedges in a disgraceful condition. Its owner, Mr. Pilkington, was an easy-going gentleman farmer who spent most of his time in fishing or hunting according to the season. The other farm, which was called Pinchfield, was smaller and better kept. Its owner was a Mr. Frederick, a tough, shrewd man, perpetually involved in lawsuits and with a name for driving hard bargains.

These two disliked each other so much that it was difficult for them to come to any agreement, even in defence of their own interests.

Nevertheless, they were both thoroughly frightened by the rebellion on Animal Farm, and very anxious to prevent their own animals from learning too much about it. At first they pretended to laugh to scorn the idea of animals managing a farm for themselves. The whole thing would be over in a fortnight, they said. They put it about that the animals on the Manor Farm (they insisted on calling it the Manor Farm; they would not tolerate the name "Animal Farm") were perpetually fighting among themselves and were also rapidly starving to death. When time passed and the animals had evidently not starved to death, Frederick and Pilkington changed their tune and began to talk of the terrible wickedness that now flourished on Animal Farm. It was given out that the animals there practised cannibalism, tortured one another with red-hot horseshoes, and had their females in common. This was what came of rebelling against the laws of Nature, Frederick and Pilkington said.

However, these stories were never fully believed. Rumours of a wonderful farm, where the human beings had been turned out and the animals managed their own affairs, continued to circulate in vague and distorted forms, and throughout that year a wave of rebelliousness ran through the countryside. Bulls which had always been tractable suddenly turned savage, sheep broke down hedges and devoured the clover, cows kicked the pail over, hunters refused their fences and shot their riders on to the other side. Above all, the tune and even the words of Beasts of England were known everywhere. It had spread with astonishing speed. The human beings could not contain their rage when they heard this song, though they pretended to

think it merely ridiculous. They could not understand, they said, how even animals could bring themselves to sing such contemptible rubbish. Any animal caught singing it was given a flogging on the spot. And yet the song was irrepressible. The blackbirds whistled it in the hedges, the pigeons cooed it in the elms, it got into the din of the smithies and the tune of the church bells. And when the human beings listened to it, they secretly trembled, hearing in it a prophecy of their future doom.

Early in October, when the corn was cut and stacked and some of it was already threshed, a flight of pigeons came whirling through the air and alighted in the yard of Animal Farm in the wildest excitement. Jones and all his men, with half a dozen others from Foxwood and Pinchfield, had entered the five-barred gate and were coming up the cart-track that led to the farm. They were all carrying sticks, except Jones, who was marching ahead with a gun in his hands. Obviously they were going to attempt the recapture of the farm.

This had long been expected, and all preparations had been made. Snowball, who had studied an old book of Julius Caesar's campaigns which he had found in the farmhouse, was in charge of the defensive operations. He gave his orders quickly, and in a couple of minutes every animal was at his post.

As the human beings approached the farm buildings, Snowball launched his first attack. All the pigeons, to the number of thirty-five, flew to and fro over the men's heads and pelted upon them from mid-air; and while the men were dealing with this, the geese, who had been hiding behind the hedge, rushed out and pecked viciously at the calves of their legs. However, this was

only a light skirmishing manoeuvre, intended to create a little disorder, and the men easily drove the geese off with their sticks. Snowball now launched his second line of attack. Muriel, Benjamin, and all the sheep, with Snowball at the head of them, rushed forward and prodded and butted the men from every side, while Benjamin turned around and lashed at them with his small hoofs. But once again the men, with their sticks and their hobnailed boots, were too strong for them; and suddenly, at a squeal from Snowball, which was the signal for retreat, all the animals turned and fled through the gateway into the yard.

The men gave a shout of triumph. They saw, as they imagined, their enemies in flight, and they rushed after them in disorder. This was just what Snowball had intended. As soon as they were well inside the yard, the three horses, the three cows, and the rest of the pigs, who had been lying in ambush in the cowshed, suddenly emerged in their rear, cutting them off. Snowball now gave the signal for the charge. He himself dashed straight for Jones. Jones saw him coming, raised his gun and fired. The pellets scored bloody streaks along Snowball's back, and a sheep dropped dead. Without halting for an instant, Snowball flung his fifteen stone against Jones's legs. Jones was hurled into a pile of dung and his gun flew out of his hands. But the most terrifying spectacle of all was Boxer, rearing up on his hind legs and striking out with his great iron-shod hoofs like a stallion. His very first blow took a stable-lad from Foxwood on the skull and stretched him lifeless in the mud. At the sight, several men dropped their sticks and tried to run. Panic overtook them, and the next moment all the animals together were chasing them round and round the yard. They were gored, kicked, bitten, trampled on. There was not an animal on the farm that did not take vengeance on them after his own

fashion. Even the cat suddenly leapt off a roof onto a cowman's shoulders and sank her claws in his neck, at which he yelled horribly. At a moment when the opening was clear, the men were glad enough to rush out of the yard and make a bolt for the main road. And so within five minutes of their invasion they were in ignominious retreat by the same way as they had come, with a flock of geese hissing after them and pecking at their calves all the way.

All the men were gone except one. Back in the yard Boxer was pawing with his hoof at the stable-lad who lay face down in the mud, trying to turn him over. The boy did not stir.

"He is dead," said Boxer sorrowfully. "I had no intention of doing that. I forgot that I was wearing iron shoes. Who will believe that I did not do this on purpose?"

"No sentimentality, comrade!" cried Snowball from whose wounds the blood was still dripping. "War is war. The only good human being is a dead one."

"I have no wish to take life, not even human life," repeated Boxer, and his eyes were full of tears.

"Where is Mollie?" exclaimed somebody.

Mollie in fact was missing. For a moment there was great alarm; it was feared that the men might have harmed her in some way, or even carried her off with them. In the end, however, she was found hiding in her stall with her head buried among the hay in the manger. She had taken to flight as soon as the gun went off. And when the others came back from looking for her, it was

to find that the stable-lad, who in fact was only stunned, had already recovered and made off.

The animals had now reassembled in the wildest excitement, each recounting his own exploits in the battle at the top of his voice. An impromptu celebration of the victory was held immediately. The flag was run up and Beasts of England was sung a number of times, then the sheep who had been killed was given a solemn funeral, a hawthorn bush being planted on her grave. At the graveside Snowball made a little speech, emphasising the need for all animals to be ready to die for Animal Farm if need be.

The animals decided unanimously to create a military decoration, "Animal Hero, First Class," which was conferred there and then on Snowball and Boxer. It consisted of a brass medal (they were really some old horse-brasses which had been found in the harness-room), to be worn on Sundays and holidays. There was also "Animal Hero, Second Class," which was conferred posthumously on the dead sheep.

There was much discussion as to what the battle should be called. In the end, it was named the Battle of the Cowshed, since that was where the ambush had been sprung. Mr. Jones's gun had been found lying in the mud, and it was known that there was a supply of cartridges in the farmhouse. It was decided to set the gun up at the foot of the Flagstaff, like a piece of artillery, and to fire it twice a year-once on October the twelfth, the anniversary of the Battle of the Cowshed, and once on Midsummer Day, the anniversary of the Rebellion.

V

As winter drew on, Mollie became more and more troublesome. She was late for work every morning and excused herself by saying that she had overslept, and she complained of mysterious pains, although her appetite was excellent. On every kind of pretext she would run away from work and go to the drinking pool, where she would stand foolishly gazing at her own reflection in the water. But there were also rumours of something more serious. One day, as Mollie strolled blithely into the yard, flirting her long tail and chewing at a stalk of hay, Clover took her aside.

"Mollie," she said, "I have something very serious to say to you. This morning I saw you looking over the hedge that pides Animal Farm from Foxwood. One of Mr. Pilkington's men was standing on the other side of the hedge. And I was a long way away, but I am almost certain I saw this he was talking to you and you were allowing him to stroke your nose. What does that mean, Mollie?"

"He didn't! I wasn't! It isn't true!" cried Mollie, beginning to prance about and paw the ground.

"Mollie! Look me in the face. Do you give me your word of honour that that man was not stroking your nose?"

"It isn't true!" repeated Mollie, but she could not look Clover in the face, and the next moment she took to her heels and galloped away into the field.

A thought struck Clover. Without saying anything to the others, she went to Mollie's stall and turned over the straw with her hoof. Hidden under the straw was a little pile of lump sugar and several bunches of ribbon of different colours.

Three days later Mollie disappeared. For some weeks nothing was known of her whereabouts, then the pigeons reported that they had seen her on the other side of Willingdon. She was between the shafts of a smart dogcart painted red and black, which was standing outside a public-house. A fat red-faced man in check breeches and gaiters, who looked like a publican, was stroking her nose and feeding her with sugar. Her coat was newly clipped and she wore a scarlet ribbon round her forelock. She appeared to be enjoying herself, so the pigeons said. None of the animals ever mentioned Mollie again.

In January there came bitterly hard weather. The earth was like iron, and nothing could be done in the fields. Many meetings were held in the big barn, and the pigs occupied themselves with planning out the work of the coming season. It had come to be accepted that the pigs, who were manifestly cleverer than the other animals, should decide all questions of farm policy, though their decisions had to be ratified by a majority vote. This arrangement would have worked well enough if it had not been for the disputes between Snowball and Napoleon. These two disagreed at every point where disagreement was possible. If one of them suggested sowing a bigger acreage with barley, the other was certain to demand a bigger acreage of oats, and if

one of them said that such and such a field was just right for cabbages, the other would declare that it was useless for anything except roots. Each had his own following, and there were some violent debates. At the Meetings Snowball often won over the majority by his brilliant speeches, but Napoleon was better at canvassing support for himself in between times. He was especially successful with the sheep. Of late the sheep had taken to bleating "Four legs good, two legs bad" both in and out of season, and they often interrupted the Meeting with this. It was noticed that they were especially liable to break into "Four legs good, two legs bad" at crucial moments in Snowball's speeches. Snowball had made a close study of some back numbers of the Farmer and Stockbreeder which he had found in the farmhouse, and was full of plans for innovations and improvements. He talked learnedly about field drains, silage, and basic slag, and had worked out a complicated scheme for all the animals to drop their dung directly in the fields, at a different spot every day, to save the labour of cartage. Napoleon produced no schemes of his own, but said quietly that Snowball's would come to nothing, and seemed to be biding his time. But of all their controversies, none was so bitter as the one that took place over the windmill.

In the long pasture, not far from the farm buildings, there was a small knoll which was the highest point on the farm. After surveying the ground, Snowball declared that this was just the place for a windmill, which could be made to operate a dynamo and supply the farm with electrical power. This would light the stalls and warm them in winter, and would also run a circular saw, a chaff-cutter, a mangel-slicer, and an electric milking machine. The animals had never heard of anything of this kind before (for the farm was an old-fashioned one and had only the most primitive machinery), and they

listened in astonishment while Snowball conjured up pictures of fantastic machines which would do their work for them while they grazed at their ease in the fields or improved their minds with reading and conversation.

Within a few weeks Snowball's plans for the windmill were fully worked out. The mechanical details came mostly from three books which had belonged to Mr. Jones-One Thousand Useful Things to Do About the House, Every Man His Own Bricklayer, and Electricity for Beginners. Snowball used as his study a shed which had once been used for incubators and had a smooth wooden floor, suitable for drawing on. He was closeted there for hours at a time. With his books held open by a stone, and with a piece of chalk gripped between the knuckles of his trotter, he would move rapidly to and fro, drawing in line after line and uttering little whimpers of excitement. Gradually the plans grew into a complicated mass of cranks and cog-wheels, covering more than half the floor, which the other animals found completely unintelligible but very impressive. All of them came to look at Snowball's drawings at least once a day. Even the hens and ducks came, and were at pains not to tread on the chalk marks. Only Napoleon held aloof. He had declared himself against the windmill from the start. One day, however, he arrived unexpectedly to examine the plans. He walked heavily round the shed, looked closely at every detail of the plans and snuffed at them once or twice, then stood for a little while contemplating them out of the corner of his eye; then suddenly he lifted his leg, urinated over the plans, and walked out without uttering a word.

The whole farm was deeply pided on the subject of the windmill. Snowball did not deny that to build it would be a difficult business. Stone

would have to be carried and built up into walls, then the sails would have to be made and after that there would be need for dynamos and cables. (How these were to be procured, Snowball did not say.) But he maintained that it could all be done in a year. And thereafter, he declared, so much labour would be saved that the animals would only need to work three days a week. Napoleon, on the other hand, argued that the great need of the moment was to increase food production, and that if they wasted time on the windmill they would all starve to death. The animals formed themselves into two factions under the slogan, "Vote for Snowball and the three-day week" and "Vote for Napoleon and the full manger." Benjamin was the only animal who did not side with either faction. He refused to believe either that food would become more plentiful or that the windmill would save work. Windmill or no windmill, he said, life would go on as it had always gone on-that is, badly.

Apart from the disputes over the windmill, there was the question of the defence of the farm. It was fully realised that though the human beings had been defeated in the Battle of the Cowshed they might make another and more determined attempt to recapture the farm and reinstate Mr. Jones. They had all the more reason for doing so because the news of their defeat had spread across the countryside and made the animals on the neighbouring farms more restive than ever. As usual, Snowball and Napoleon were in disagreement. According to Napoleon, what the animals must do was to procure firearms and train themselves in the use of them. According to Snowball, they must send out more and more pigeons and stir up rebellion among the animals on the other farms. The one argued that if they could not defend themselves they were bound to be conquered, the other argued that if rebellions happened everywhere they would have no need to defend

themselves. The animals listened first to Napoleon, then to Snowball, and could not make up their minds which was right; indeed, they always found themselves in agreement with the one who was speaking at the moment.

At last the day came when Snowball's plans were completed. At the Meeting on the following Sunday the question of whether or not to begin work on the windmill was to be put to the vote. When the animals had assembled in the big barn, Snowball stood up and, though occasionally interrupted by bleating from the sheep, set forth his reasons for advocating the building of the windmill. Then Napoleon stood up to reply. He said very quietly that the windmill was nonsense and that he advised nobody to vote for it, and promptly sat down again; he had spoken for barely thirty seconds, and seemed almost indifferent as to the effect he produced. At this Snowball sprang to his feet, and shouting down the sheep, who had begun bleating again, broke into a passionate appeal in favour of the windmill. Until now the animals had been about equally pided in their sympathies, but in a moment Snowball's eloquence had carried them away. In glowing sentences he painted a picture of Animal Farm as it might be when sordid labour was lifted from the animals' backs. His imagination had now run far beyond chaff-cutters and turnip-slicers. Electricity, he said, could operate threshing machines, ploughs, harrows, rollers, and reapers and binders, besides supplying every stall with its own electric light, hot and cold water, and an electric heater. By the time he had finished speaking, there was no doubt as to which way the vote would go. But just at this moment Napoleon stood up and, casting a peculiar sidelong look at Snowball, uttered a high-pitched whimper of a kind no one had ever heard him utter before.

At this there was a terrible baying sound outside, and nine enormous dogs wearing brass-studded collars came bounding into the barn. They dashed straight for Snowball, who only sprang from his place just in time to escape their snapping jaws. In a moment he was out of the door and they were after him. Too amazed and frightened to speak, all the animals crowded through the door to watch the chase. Snowball was racing across the long pasture that led to the road. He was running as only a pig can run, but the dogs were close on his heels. Suddenly he slipped and it seemed certain that they had him. Then he was up again, running faster than ever, then the dogs were gaining on him again. One of them all but closed his jaws on Snowball's tail, but Snowball whisked it free just in time. Then he put on an extra spurt and, with a few inches to spare, slipped through a hole in the hedge and was seen no more.

Silent and terrified, the animals crept back into the barn. In a moment the dogs came bounding back. At first no one had been able to imagine where these creatures came from, but the problem was soon solved: they were the puppies whom Napoleon had taken away from their mothers and reared privately. Though not yet full-grown, they were huge dogs, and as fierce-looking as wolves. They kept close to Napoleon. It was noticed that they wagged their tails to him in the same way as the other dogs had been used to do to Mr. Jones.

Napoleon, with the dogs following him, now mounted on to the raised portion of the floor where Major had previously stood to deliver his speech. He announced that from now on the Sunday-morning Meetings would come to an end. They were unnecessary, he said, and wasted time. In future all

questions relating to the working of the farm would be settled by a special committee of pigs, presided over by himself. These would meet in private and afterwards communicate their decisions to the others. The animals would still assemble on Sunday mornings to salute the flag, sing Beasts of England, and receive their orders for the week; but there would be no more debates.

In spite of the shock that Snowball's expulsion had given them, the animals were dismayed by this announcement. Several of them would have protested if they could have found the right arguments. Even Boxer was vaguely troubled. He set his ears back, shook his forelock several times, and tried hard to marshal his thoughts; but in the end he could not think of anything to say. Some of the pigs themselves, however, were more articulate. Four young porkers in the front row uttered shrill squeals of disapproval, and all four of them sprang to their feet and began speaking at once. But suddenly the dogs sitting round Napoleon let out deep, menacing growls, and the pigs fell silent and sat down again. Then the sheep broke out into a tremendous bleating of "Four legs good, two legs bad!" which went on for nearly a quarter of an hour and put an end to any chance of discussion.

Afterwards Squealer was sent round the farm to explain the new arrangement to the others.

"Comrades," he said, "I trust that every animal here appreciates the sacrifice that Comrade Napoleon has made in taking this extra labour upon himself. Do not imagine, comrades, that leadership is a pleasure! On the contrary, it is a deep and heavy responsibility. No one believes more firmly than Comrade Napoleon that all animals are equal. He would be only too happy to let you make your decisions for yourselves. But sometimes you

might make the wrong decisions, comrades, and then where should we be? Suppose you had decided to follow Snowball, with his moonshine of windmills-Snowball, who, as we now know, was no better than a criminal?"

"He fought bravely at the Battle of the Cowshed," said somebody.

"Bravery is not enough," said Squealer. "Loyalty and obedience are more important. And as to the Battle of the Cowshed, I believe the time will come when we shall find that Snowball's part in it was much exaggerated. Discipline, comrades, iron discipline! That is the watchword for today. One false step, and our enemies would be upon us. Surely, comrades, you do not want Jones back?"

Once again this argument was unanswerable. Certainly the animals did not want Jones back; if the holding of debates on Sunday mornings was liable to bring him back, then the debates must stop. Boxer, who had now had time to think things over, voiced the general feeling by saying: "If Comrade Napoleon says it, it must be right." And from then on he adopted the maxim, "Napoleon is always right," in addition to his private motto of "I will work harder."

By this time the weather had broken and the spring ploughing had begun. The shed where Snowball had drawn his plans of the windmill had been shut up and it was assumed that the plans had been rubbed off the floor. Every Sunday morning at ten o'clock the animals assembled in the big barn to receive their orders for the week. The skull of old Major, now clean of flesh, had been disinterred from the orchard and set up on a stump at the foot of the flagstaff, beside the gun. After the hoisting of the flag, the animals were

required to file past the skull in a reverent manner before entering the barn. Nowadays they did not sit all together as they had done in the past. Napoleon, with Squealer and another pig named Minimus, who had a remarkable gift for composing songs and poems, sat on the front of the raised platform, with the nine young dogs forming a semicircle round them, and the other pigs sitting behind. The rest of the animals sat facing them in the main body of the barn. Napoleon read out the orders for the week in a gruff soldierly style, and after a single singing of Beasts of England, all the animals dispersed.

On the third Sunday after Snowball's expulsion, the animals were somewhat surprised to hear Napoleon announce that the windmill was to be built after all. He did not give any reason for having changed his mind, but merely warned the animals that this extra task would mean very hard work, it might even be necessary to reduce their rations. The plans, however, had all been prepared, down to the last detail. A special committee of pigs had been at work upon them for the past three weeks. The building of the windmill, with various other improvements, was expected to take two years.

That evening Squealer explained privately to the other animals that Napoleon had never in reality been opposed to the windmill. On the contrary, it was he who had advocated it in the beginning, and the plan which Snowball had drawn on the floor of the incubator shed had actually been stolen from among Napoleon's papers. The windmill was, in fact, Napoleon's own creation. Why, then, asked somebody, had he spoken so strongly against it? Here Squealer looked very sly. That, he said, was Comrade Napoleon's cunning. He had seemed to oppose the windmill, simply as a manoeuvre to get rid of Snowball, who was a dangerous character and a bad influence. Now

that Snowball was out of the way, the plan could go forward without his interference. This, said Squealer, was something called tactics. He repeated a number of times, "Tactics, comrades, tactics!" skipping round and whisking his tail with a merry laugh. The animals were not certain what the word meant, but Squealer spoke so persuasively, and the three dogs who happened to be with him growled so threateningly, that they accepted his explanation without further questions.

VI

All that year the animals worked like slaves. But they were happy in their work; they grudged no effort or sacrifice, well aware that everything that they did was for the benefit of themselves and those of their kind who would come after them, and not for a pack of idle, thieving human beings.

Throughout the spring and summer they worked a sixty-hour week, and in August Napoleon announced that there would be work on Sunday afternoons as well. This work was strictly voluntary, but any animal who absented himself from it would have his rations reduced by half. Even so, it was found necessary to leave certain tasks undone. The harvest was a little less successful than in the previous year, and two fields which should have been sown with roots in the early summer were not sown because the ploughing had not been completed early enough. It was possible to foresee that the coming winter would be a hard one.

The windmill presented unexpected difficulties. There was a good quarry of limestone on the farm, and plenty of sand and cement had been found in one of the outhouses, so that all the materials for building were at hand. But the problem the animals could not at first solve was how to break up the stone into pieces of suitable size. There seemed no way of doing this except with picks and crowbars, which no animal could use, because no

animal could stand on his hind legs. Only after weeks of vain effort did the right idea occur to somebody-namely, to utilise the force of gravity. Huge boulders, far too big to be used as they were, were lying all over the bed of the quarry. The animals lashed ropes round these, and then all together, cows, horses, sheep, any animal that could lay hold of the rope-even the pigs sometimes joined in at critical moments-they dragged them with desperate slowness up the slope to the top of the quarry, where they were toppled over the edge, to shatter to pieces below. Transporting the stone when it was once broken was comparatively simple. The horses carried it off in cart-loads, the sheep dragged single blocks, even Muriel and Benjamin yoked themselves into an old governess-cart and did their share. By late summer a sufficient store of stone had accumulated, and then the building began, under the superintendence of the pigs.

But it was a slow, laborious process. Frequently it took a whole day of exhausting effort to drag a single boulder to the top of the quarry, and sometimes when it was pushed over the edge it failed to break. Nothing could have been achieved without Boxer, whose strength seemed equal to that of all the rest of the animals put together. When the boulder began to slip and the animals cried out in despair at finding themselves dragged down the hill, it was always Boxer who strained himself against the rope and brought the boulder to a stop. To see him toiling up the slope inch by inch, his breath coming fast, the tips of his hoofs clawing at the ground, and his great sides matted with sweat, filled everyone with admiration. Clover warned him sometimes to be careful not to overstrain himself, but Boxer would never listen to her. His two slogans, "I will work harder" and "Napoleon is always right," seemed to him a sufficient answer to all problems. He had made

arrangements with the cockerel to call him three-quarters of an hour earlier in the mornings instead of half an hour. And in his spare moments, of which there were not many nowadays, he would go alone to the quarry, collect a load of broken stone, and drag it down to the site of the windmill unassisted.

The animals were not badly off throughout that summer, in spite of the hardness of their work. If they had no more food than they had had in Jones's day, at least they did not have less. The advantage of only having to feed themselves, and not having to support five extravagant human beings as well, was so great that it would have taken a lot of failures to outweigh it. And in many ways the animal method of doing things was more efficient and saved labour. Such jobs as weeding, for instance, could be done with a thoroughness impossible to human beings. And again, since no animal now stole, it was unnecessary to fence off pasture from arable land, which saved a lot of labour on the upkeep of hedges and gates. Nevertheless, as the summer wore on, various unforeseen shortages began to make them selves felt. There was need of paraffin oil, nails, string, dog biscuits, and iron for the horses' shoes, none of which could be produced on the farm. Later there would also be need for seeds and artificial manures, besides various tools and, finally, the machinery for the windmill. How these were to be procured, no one was able to imagine.

One Sunday morning, when the animals assembled to receive their orders, Napoleon announced that he had decided upon a new policy. From now onwards Animal Farm would engage in trade with the neighbouring farms: not, of course, for any commercial purpose, but simply in order to obtain certain materials which were urgently necessary. The needs of the

windmill must override everything else, he said. He was therefore making arrangements to sell a stack of hay and part of the current year's wheat crop, and later on, if more money were needed, it would have to be made up by the sale of eggs, for which there was always a market in Willingdon. The hens, said Napoleon, should welcome this sacrifice as their own special contribution towards the building of the windmill.

Once again the animals were conscious of a vague uneasiness. Never to have any dealings with human beings, never to engage in trade, never to make use of money-had not these been among the earliest resolutions passed at that first triumphant Meeting after Jones was expelled? All the animals remembered passing such resolutions: or at least they thought that they remembered it. The four young pigs who had protested when Napoleon abolished the Meetings raised their voices timidly, but they were promptly silenced by a tremendous growling from the dogs. Then, as usual, the sheep broke into "Four legs good, two legs bad!" and the momentary awkwardness was smoothed over. Finally Napoleon raised his trotter for silence and announced that he had already made all the arrangements. There would be no need for any of the animals to come in contact with human beings, which would clearly be most undesirable. He intended to take the whole burden upon his own shoulders. A Mr. Whymper, a solicitor living in Willingdon, had agreed to act as intermediary between Animal Farm and the outside world, and would visit the farm every Monday morning to receive his instructions. Napoleon ended his speech with his usual cry of "Long live Animal Farm!" and after the singing of Beasts of England the animals were dismissed.

Afterwards Squealer made a round of the farm and set the animals' minds at rest. He assured them that the resolution against engaging in trade and using money had never been passed, or even suggested. It was pure imagination, probably traceable in the beginning to lies circulated by Snowball. A few animals still felt faintly doubtful, but Squealer asked them shrewdly, "Are you certain that this is not something that you have dreamed, comrades? Have you any record of such a resolution? Is it written down anywhere?" And since it was certainly true that nothing of the kind existed in writing, the animals were satisfied that they had been mistaken.

Every Monday Mr. Whymper visited the farm as had been arranged. He was a sly-looking little man with side whiskers, a solicitor in a very small way of business, but sharp enough to have realised earlier than anyone else that Animal Farm would need a broker and that the commissions would be worth having. The animals watched his coming and going with a kind of dread, and avoided him as much as possible. Nevertheless, the sight of Napoleon, on all fours, delivering orders to Whymper, who stood on two legs, roused their pride and partly reconciled them to the new arrangement. Their relations with the human race were now not quite the same as they had been before. The human beings did not hate Animal Farm any less now that it was prospering; indeed, they hated it more than ever. Every human being held it as an article of faith that the farm would go bankrupt sooner or later, and, above all, that the windmill would be a failure. They would meet in the public-houses and prove to one another by means of diagrams that the windmill was bound to fall down, or that if it did stand up, then that it would never work. And yet, against their will, they had developed a certain respect for the efficiency with which the animals were managing their own affairs.

One symptom of this was that they had begun to call Animal Farm by its proper name and ceased to pretend that it was called the Manor Farm. They had also dropped their championship of Jones, who had given up hope of getting his farm back and gone to live in another part of the county. Except through Whymper, there was as yet no contact between Animal Farm and the outside world, but there were constant rumours that Napoleon was about to enter into a definite business agreement either with Mr. Pilkington of Foxwood or with Mr. Frederick of Pinchfield-but never, it was noticed, with both simultaneously.

It was about this time that the pigs suddenly moved into the farmhouse and took up their residence there. Again the animals seemed to remember that a resolution against this had been passed in the early days, and again Squealer was able to convince them that this was not the case. It was absolutely necessary, he said, that the pigs, who were the brains of the farm, should have a quiet place to work in. It was also more suited to the dignity of the Leader (for of late he had taken to speaking of Napoleon under the title of "Leader") to live in a house than in a mere sty. Nevertheless, some of the animals were disturbed when they heard that the pigs not only took their meals in the kitchen and used the drawing-room as a recreation room, but also slept in the beds. Boxer passed it off as usual with "Napoleon is always right!", but Clover, who thought she remembered a definite ruling against beds, went to the end of the barn and tried to puzzle out the Seven Commandments which were inscribed there. Finding herself unable to read more than individual letters, she fetched Muriel.

"Muriel," she said, "read me the Fourth Commandment. Does it not say

something about never sleeping in a bed?"

With some difficulty Muriel spelt it out.

"It says, 'No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets,'" she announced finally.

Curiously enough, Clover had not remembered that the Fourth Commandment mentioned sheets; but as it was there on the wall, it must have done so. And Squealer, who happened to be passing at this moment, attended by two or three dogs, was able to put the whole matter in its proper perspective.

"You have heard then, comrades," he said, "that we pigs now sleep in the beds of the farmhouse? And why not? You did not suppose, surely, that there was ever a ruling against beds? A bed merely means a place to sleep in. A pile of straw in a stall is a bed, properly regarded. The rule was against sheets, which are a human invention. We have removed the sheets from the farmhouse beds, and sleep between blankets. And very comfortable beds they are too! But not more comfortable than we need, I can tell you, comrades, with all the brainwork we have to do nowadays. You would not rob us of our repose, would you, comrades? You would not have us too tired to carry out our duties? Surely none of you wishes to see Jones back?"

The animals reassured him on this point immediately, and no more was said about the pigs sleeping in the farmhouse beds. And when, some days afterwards, it was announced that from now on the pigs would get up an hour later in the mornings than the other animals, no complaint was made about

that either.

By the autumn the animals were tired but happy. They had had a hard year, and after the sale of part of the hay and corn, the stores of food for the winter were none too plentiful, but the windmill compensated for everything. It was almost half built now. After the harvest there was a stretch of clear dry weather, and the animals toiled harder than ever, thinking it well worth while to plod to and fro all day with blocks of stone if by doing so they could raise the walls another foot. Boxer would even come out at nights and work for an hour or two on his own by the light of the harvest moon. In their spare moments the animals would walk round and round the half-finished mill, admiring the strength and perpendicularity of its walls and marvelling that they should ever have been able to build anything so imposing. Only old Benjamin refused to grow enthusiastic about the windmill, though, as usual, he would utter nothing beyond the cryptic remark that donkeys live a long time.

November came, with raging south-west winds. Building had to stop because it was now too wet to mix the cement. Finally there came a night when the gale was so violent that the farm buildings rocked on their foundations and several tiles were blown off the roof of the barn. The hens woke up squawking with terror because they had all dreamed simultaneously of hearing a gun go off in the distance. In the morning the animals came out of their stalls to find that the flagstaff had been blown down and an elm tree at the foot of the orchard had been plucked up like a radish. They had just noticed this when a cry of despair broke from every animal's throat. A terrible sight had met their eyes. The windmill was in ruins.

With one accord they dashed down to the spot. Napoleon, who seldom moved out of a walk, raced ahead of them all. Yes, there it lay, the fruit of all their struggles, levelled to its foundations, the stones they had broken and carried so laboriously scattered all around. Unable at first to speak, they stood gazing mournfully at the litter of fallen stone Napoleon paced to and fro in silence, occasionally snuffing at the ground. His tail had grown rigid and twitched sharply from side to side, a sign in him of intense mental activity. Suddenly he halted as though his mind were made up.

"Comrades," he said quietly, "do you know who is responsible for this? Do you know the enemy who has come in the night and overthrown our windmill? Snowball!" he suddenly roared in a voice of thunder. "Snowball has done this thing! In sheer malignity, thinking to set back our plans and avenge himself for his ignominious expulsion, this traitor has crept here under cover of night and destroyed our work of nearly a year. Comrades, here and now I pronounce the death sentence upon Snowball. 'Animal Hero, Second Class,' and half a bushel of apples to any animal who brings him to justice. A full bushel to anyone who captures him alive!"

The animals were shocked beyond measure to learn that even Snowball could be guilty of such an action. There was a cry of indignation, and everyone began thinking out ways of catching Snowball if he should ever come back. Almost immediately the footprints of a pig were discovered in the grass at a little distance from the knoll. They could only be traced for a few yards, but appeared to lead to a hole in the hedge. Napoleon snuffed deeply at them and pronounced them to be Snowball's. He gave it as his opinion that Snowball had probably come from the direction of Foxwood Farm.

"No more delays, comrades!" cried Napoleon when the footprints had been examined. "There is work to be done. This very morning we begin rebuilding the windmill, and we will build all through the winter, rain or shine. We will teach this miserable traitor that he cannot undo our work so easily. Remember, comrades, there must be no alteration in our plans: they shall be carried out to the day. Forward, comrades! Long live the windmill! Long live Animal Farm!"

VII

It was a bitter winter. The stormy weather was followed by sleet and snow, and then by a hard frost which did not break till well into February. The animals carried on as best they could with the rebuilding of the windmill, well knowing that the outside world was watching them and that the envious human beings would rejoice and triumph if the mill were not finished on time.

Out of spite, the human beings pretended not to believe that it was Snowball who had destroyed the windmill: they said that it had fallen down because the walls were too thin. The animals knew that this was not the case. Still, it had been decided to build the walls three feet thick this time instead of eighteen inches as before, which meant collecting much larger quantities of stone. For a long time the quarry was full of snowdrifts and nothing could be done. Some progress was made in the dry frosty weather that followed, but it was cruel work, and the animals could not feel so hopeful about it as they had felt before. They were always cold, and usually hungry as well. Only Boxer and Clover never lost heart. Squealer made excellent speeches on the joy of service and the dignity of labour, but the other animals found more inspiration in Boxer's strength and his never-failing cry of "I will work harder! "

In January food fell short. The corn ration was drastically reduced, and it was announced that an extra potato ration would be issued to make up for it. Then it was discovered that the greater part of the potato crop had been frosted in the clamps, which had not been covered thickly enough. The potatoes had become soft and discoloured, and only a few were edible. For days at a time the animals had nothing to eat but chaff and mangels. Starvation seemed to stare them in the face.

It was vitally necessary to conceal this fact from the outside world. Emboldened by the collapse of the windmill, the human beings were inventing fresh lies about Animal Farm. Once again it was being put about that all the animals were dying of famine and disease, and that they were continually fighting among themselves and had resorted to cannibalism and infanticide. Napoleon was well aware of the bad results that might follow if the real facts of the food situation were known, and he decided to make use of Mr. Whymper to spread a contrary impression. Hitherto the animals had had little or no contact with Whymper on his weekly visits: now, however, a few selected animals, mostly sheep, were instructed to remark casually in his hearing that rations had been increased. In addition, Napoleon ordered the almost empty bins in the store-shed to be filled nearly to the brim with sand, which was then covered up with what remained of the grain and meal. On some suitable pretext Whymper was led through the store-shed and allowed to catch a glimpse of the bins. He was deceived, and continued to report to the outside world that there was no food shortage on Animal Farm.

Nevertheless, towards the end of January it became obvious that it would be necessary to procure some more grain from somewhere. In these

days Napoleon rarely appeared in public, but spent all his time in the farmhouse, which was guarded at each door by fierce-looking dogs. When he did emerge, it was in a ceremonial manner, with an escort of six dogs who closely surrounded him and growled if anyone came too near. Frequently he did not even appear on Sunday mornings, but issued his orders through one of the other pigs, usually Squealer.

One Sunday morning Squealer announced that the hens, who had just come in to lay again, must surrender their eggs. Napoleon had accepted, through Whymper, a contract for four hundred eggs a week. The price of these would pay for enough grain and meal to keep the farm going till summer came on and conditions were easier.

When the hens heard this, they raised a terrible outcry. They had been warned earlier that this sacrifice might be necessary, but had not believed that it would really happen. They were just getting their clutches ready for the spring sitting, and they protested that to take the eggs away now was murder. For the first time since the expulsion of Jones, there was something resembling a rebellion. Led by three young Black Minorca pullets, the hens made a determined effort to thwart Napoleon's wishes. Their method was to fly up to the rafters and there lay their eggs, which smashed to pieces on the floor. Napoleon acted swiftly and ruthlessly. He ordered the hens' rations to be stopped, and decreed that any animal giving so much as a grain of corn to a hen should be punished by death. The dogs saw to it that these orders were carried out. For five days the hens held out, then they capitulated and went back to their nesting boxes. Nine hens had died in the meantime. Their bodies were buried in the orchard, and it was given out that they had died of

coccidiosis. Whymper heard nothing of this affair, and the eggs were duly delivered, a grocer's van driving up to the farm once a week to take them away.

All this while no more had been seen of Snowball. He was rumoured to be hiding on one of the neighbouring farms, either Foxwood or Pinchfield. Napoleon was by this time on slightly better terms with the other farmers than before. It happened that there was in the yard a pile of timber which had been stacked there ten years earlier when a beech spinney was cleared. It was well seasoned, and Whymper had advised Napoleon to sell it; both Mr. Pilkington and Mr. Frederick were anxious to buy it. Napoleon was hesitating between the two, unable to make up his mind. It was noticed that whenever he seemed on the point of coming to an agreement with Frederick, Snowball was declared to be in hiding at Foxwood, while, when he inclined toward Pilkington, Snowball was said to be at Pinchfield.

Suddenly, early in the spring, an alarming thing was discovered. Snowball was secretly frequenting the farm by night! The animals were so disturbed that they could hardly sleep in their stalls. Every night, it was said, he came creeping in under cover of darkness and performed all kinds of mischief. He stole the corn, he upset the milk-pails, he broke the eggs, he trampled the seedbeds, he gnawed the bark off the fruit trees. Whenever anything went wrong it became usual to attribute it to Snowball. If a window was broken or a drain was blocked up, someone was certain to say that Snowball had come in the night and done it, and when the key of the store-shed was lost, the whole farm was convinced that Snowball had thrown it down the well. Curiously enough, they went on believing this even after the

mislaid key was found under a sack of meal. The cows declared unanimously that Snowball crept into their stalls and milked them in their sleep. The rats, which had been troublesome that winter, were also said to be in league with Snowball.

Napoleon decreed that there should be a full investigation into Snowball's activities. With his dogs in attendance he set out and made a careful tour of inspection of the farm buildings, the other animals following at a respectful distance. At every few steps Napoleon stopped and snuffed the ground for traces of Snowball's footsteps, which, he said, he could detect by the smell. He snuffed in every corner, in the barn, in the cow-shed, in the henhouses, in the vegetable garden, and found traces of Snowball almost everywhere. He would put his snout to the ground, give several deep sniffs, and exclaim in a terrible voice, "Snowball! He has been here! I can smell him distinctly!" and at the word "Snowball" all the dogs let out blood-curdling growls and showed their side teeth.

The animals were thoroughly frightened. It seemed to them as though Snowball were some kind of invisible influence, pervading the air about them and menacing them with all kinds of dangers. In the evening Squealer called them together, and with an alarmed expression on his face told them that he had some serious news to report.

"Comrades!" cried Squealer, making little nervous skips, "a most terrible thing has been discovered. Snowball has sold himself to Frederick of Pinchfield Farm, who is even now plotting to attack us and take our farm away from us! Snowball is to act as his guide when the attack begins. But there is worse than that. We had thought that Snowball's rebellion was caused

simply by his vanity and ambition. But we were wrong, comrades. Do you know what the real reason was? Snowball was in league with Jones from the very start! He was Jones's secret agent all the time. It has all been proved by documents which he left behind him and which we have only just discovered. To my mind this explains a great deal, comrades. Did we not see for ourselves how he attempted-fortunately without success-to get us defeated and destroyed at the Battle of the Cowshed?"

The animals were stupefied. This was a wickedness far outdoing Snowball's destruction of the windmill. But it was some minutes before they could fully take it in. They all remembered, or thought they remembered, how they had seen Snowball charging ahead of them at the Battle of the Cowshed, how he had rallied and encouraged them at every turn, and how he had not paused for an instant even when the pellets from Jones's gun had wounded his back. At first it was a little difficult to see how this fitted in with his being on Jones's side. Even Boxer, who seldom asked questions, was puzzled. He lay down, tucked his fore hoofs beneath him, shut his eyes, and with a hard effort managed to formulate his thoughts.

"I do not believe that," he said. "Snowball fought bravely at the Battle of the Cowshed. I saw him myself. Did we not give him 'Animal Hero, first Class,' immediately afterwards?"

"That was our mistake, comrade. For we know now it is all written down in the secret documents that we have found that in reality he was trying to lure us to our doom."

"But he was wounded," said Boxer. "We all saw him running with

blood."

"That was part of the arrangement!" cried Squealer. "Jones's shot only grazed him. I could show you this in his own writing, if you were able to read it. The plot was for Snowball, at the critical moment, to give the signal for flight and leave the field to the enemy. And he very nearly succeeded, I will even say, comrades, he would have succeeded if it had not been for our heroic Leader, Comrade Napoleon. Do you not remember how, just at the moment when Jones and his men had got inside the yard, Snowball suddenly turned and fled, and many animals followed him? And do you not remember, too, that it was just at that moment, when panic was spreading and all seemed lost, that Comrade Napoleon sprang forward with a cry of 'Death to Humanity!' and sank his teeth in Jones's leg? Surely you remember that, comrades?" exclaimed Squealer, frisking from side to side.

Now when Squealer described the scene so graphically, it seemed to the animals that they did remember it. At any rate, they remembered that at the critical moment of the battle Snowball had turned to flee. But Boxer was still a little uneasy.

"I do not believe that Snowball was a traitor at the beginning," he said finally. "What he has done since is different. But I believe that at the Battle of the Cowshed he was a good comrade."

"Our Leader, Comrade Napoleon," announced Squealer, speaking very slowly and firmly, "has stated categorically, comrades, that Snowball was Jones's agent from the very beginning, yes, and from long before the Rebellion was ever thought of."

"Ah, that is different!" said Boxer. "If Comrade Napoleon says it, it must be right."

"That is the true spirit, comrade!" cried Squealer, but it was noticed he cast a very ugly look at Boxer with his little twinkling eyes. He turned to go, then paused and added impressively: "I warn every animal on this farm to keep his eyes very wide open. For we have reason to think that some of Snowball's secret agents are lurking among us at this moment! "

Four days later, in the late afternoon, Napoleon ordered all the animals to assemble in the yard. When they were all gathered together, Napoleon emerged from the farmhouse, wearing both his medals (for he had recently awarded himself "Animal Hero, First Class," and "Animal Hero, Second Class"), with his nine huge dogs frisking round him and uttering growls that sent shivers down all the animals' spines. They all cowered silently in their places, seeming to know in advance that some terrible thing was about to happen.

Napoleon stood sternly surveying his audience; then he uttered a high-pitched whimper. Immediately the dogs bounded forward, seized four of the pigs by the ear and dragged them, squealing with pain and terror, to Napoleon's feet. The pigs' ears were bleeding, the dogs had tasted blood, and for a few moments they appeared to go quite mad. To the amazement of everybody, three of them flung themselves upon Boxer. Boxer saw them coming and put out his great hoof, caught a dog in mid-air, and pinned him to the ground. The dog shrieked for mercy and the other two fled with their tails between their legs. Boxer looked at Napoleon to know whether he should crush the dog to death or let it go. Napoleon appeared to change countenance,

and sharply ordered Boxer to let the dog go, whereat Boxer lifted his hoof, and the dog slunk away, bruised and howling.

Presently the tumult died down. The four pigs waited, trembling, with guilt written on every line of their countenances. Napoleon now called upon them to confess their crimes. They were the same four pigs as had protested when Napoleon abolished the Sunday Meetings. Without any further prompting they confessed that they had been secretly in touch with Snowball ever since his expulsion, that they had collaborated with him in destroying the windmill, and that they had entered into an agreement with him to hand over Animal Farm to Mr. Frederick. They added that Snowball had privately admitted to them that he had been Jones's secret agent for years past. When they had finished their confession, the dogs promptly tore their throats out, and in a terrible voice Napoleon demanded whether any other animal had anything to confess.

The three hens who had been the ringleaders in the attempted rebellion over the eggs now came forward and stated that Snowball had appeared to them in a dream and incited them to disobey Napoleon's orders. They, too, were slaughtered. Then a goose came forward and confessed to having secreted six ears of corn during the last year's harvest and eaten them in the night. Then a sheep confessed to having urinated in the drinking pool—urged to do this, so she said, by Snowball—and two other sheep confessed to having murdered an old ram, an especially devoted follower of Napoleon, by chasing him round and round a bonfire when he was suffering from a cough. They were all slain on the spot. And so the tale of confessions and executions went on, until there was a pile of corpses lying before Napoleon's feet and the air

was heavy with the smell of blood, which had been unknown there since the expulsion of Jones.

When it was all over, the remaining animals, except for the pigs and dogs, crept away in a body. They were shaken and miserable. They did not know which was more shocking—the treachery of the animals who had leagued themselves with Snowball, or the cruel retribution they had just witnessed. In the old days there had often been scenes of bloodshed equally terrible, but it seemed to all of them that it was far worse now that it was happening among themselves. Since Jones had left the farm, until today, no animal had killed another animal. Not even a rat had been killed. They had made their way on to the little knoll where the half-finished windmill stood, and with one accord they all lay down as though huddling together for warmth. Clover, Muriel, Benjamin, the cows, the sheep, and a whole flock of geese and hens, everyone, indeed, except the cat, who had suddenly disappeared just before Napoleon ordered the animals to assemble. For some time nobody spoke. Only Boxer remained on his feet. He fidgeted to and fro, swishing his long black tail against his sides and occasionally uttering a little whinny of surprise. Finally he said:

"I do not understand it. I would not have believed that such things could happen on our farm. It must be due to some fault in ourselves. The solution, as I see it, is to work harder. From now onwards I shall get up a full hour earlier in the mornings."

And he moved off at his lumbering trot and made for the quarry. Having got there, he collected two successive loads of stone and dragged them down to the windmill before retiring for the night.

The animals huddled about Clover, not speaking. The knoll where they were lying gave them a wide prospect across the countryside. Most of Animal Farm was within their view-the long pasture stretching down to the main road, the hayfield, the spinney, the drinking pool, the ploughed fields where the young wheat was thick and green, and the red roofs of the farm buildings with the smoke curling from the chimneys. It was a clear spring evening. The grass and the bursting hedges were gilded by the level rays of the sun. Never had the farm and with a kind of surprise they remembered that it was their own farm, every inch of it their own property-appeared to the animals so desirable a place. As Clover looked down the hillside her eyes filled with tears. If she could have spoken her thoughts, it would have been to say that this was not what they had aimed at when they had set themselves years ago to work for the overthrow of the human race. These scenes of terror and slaughter were not what they had looked forward to on that night when old Major first stirred them to rebellion. If she herself had had any picture of the future, it had been of a society of animals set free from hunger and the whip, all equal, each working according to his capacity, the strong protecting the weak, as she had protected the lost brood of ducklings with her foreleg on the night of Major's speech. Instead, she did not know why they had come to a time when no one dared speak his mind, when fierce, growling dogs roamed everywhere, and when you had to watch your comrades torn to pieces after confessing to shocking crimes. There was no thought of rebellion or disobedience in her mind. She knew that, even as things were, they were far better off than they had been in the days of Jones, and that before all else it was needful to prevent the return of the human beings. Whatever happened she would remain faithful, work hard, carry out the orders that were given to her, and accept the leadership of Napoleon. But still, it was not for this that

she and all the other animals had hoped and toiled. It was not for this that they had built the windmill and faced the bullets of Jones's gun. Such were her thoughts, though she lacked the words to express them.

At last, feeling this to be in some way a substitute for the words she was unable to find, she began to sing Beasts of England. The other animals sitting round her took it up, and they sang it three times over, very tunefully, but slowly and mournfully, in a way they had never sung it before.

They had just finished singing it for the third time when Squealer, attended by two dogs, approached them with the air of having something important to say. He announced that, by a special decree of Comrade Napoleon, Beasts of England had been abolished. From now onwards it was forbidden to sing it.

The animals were taken aback.

"Why?" cried Muriel.

"It's no longer needed, comrade," said Squealer stiffly. "Beasts of England was the song of the Rebellion. But the Rebellion is now completed. The execution of the traitors this afternoon was the final act. The enemy both external and internal has been defeated. In Beasts of England we expressed our longing for a better society in days to come. But that society has now been established. Clearly this song has no longer any purpose."

Frightened though they were, some of the animals might possibly have protested, but at this moment the sheep set up their usual bleating of "Four legs good, two legs bad," which went on for several minutes and put an end

to the discussion.

So Beasts of England was heard no more. In its place Minimus, the poet, had composed another song which began:

Animal Farm, Animal Farm,

Never through me shalt thou come to harm!

And this was sung every Sunday morning after the hoisting of the flag. But somehow neither the words nor the tune ever seemed to the animals to come up to Beasts of England.

VIII

A few days later, when the terror caused by the executions had died down, some of the animals remembered-or thought they remembered-that the Sixth Commandment decreed "No animal shall kill any other animal." And though no one cared to mention it in the hearing of the pigs or the dogs, it was felt that the killings which had taken place did not square with this. Clover asked Benjamin to read her the Sixth Commandment, and when Benjamin, as usual, said that he refused to meddle in such matters, she fetched Muriel. Muriel read the Commandment for her. It ran: "No animal shall kill any other animal without cause." Somehow or other, the last two words had slipped out of the animals' memory. But they saw now that the Commandment had not been violated; for clearly there was good reason for killing the traitors who had leagued themselves with Snowball.

Throughout the year the animals worked even harder than they had worked in the previous year To rebuild the windmill, with walls twice as thick as before, and to finish it by the appointed date, together with the regular work of the farm, was a tremendous labour. There were times when it seemed to the animals that they worked longer hours and fed no better than they had done in Jones's day. On Sunday mornings Squealer, holding down a long strip of paper with his trotter, would read out to them lists of figures proving that the production of every class of foodstuff had increased by two

hundred per cent, three hundred per cent, or five hundred per cent, as the case might be. The animals saw no reason to disbelieve him, especially as they could no longer remember very clearly what conditions had been like before the Rebellion. All the same, there were days when they felt that they would sooner have had less figures and more food.

All orders were now issued through Squealer or one of the other pigs. Napoleon himself was not seen in public as often as once in a fortnight. When he did appear, he was attended not only by his retinue of dogs but by a black cockerel who marched in front of him and acted as a kind of trumpeter, letting out a loud "cock-a-doodle-doo" before Napoleon spoke. Even in the farmhouse, it was said, Napoleon inhabited separate apartments from the others. He took his meals alone, with two dogs to wait upon him, and always ate from the Crown Derby dinner service which had been in the glass cupboard in the drawing-room. It was also announced that the gun would be fired every year on Napoleon's birthday, as well as on the other two anniversaries.

Napoleon was now never spoken of simply as "Napoleon." He was always referred to in formal style as "our Leader, Comrade Napoleon," and the pigs liked to invent for him such titles as Father of All Animals, Terror of Mankind, Protector of the Sheep-fold, Ducklings' Friend, and the like. In his speeches, Squealer would talk with the tears rolling down his cheeks of Napoleon's wisdom the goodness of his heart, and the deep love he bore to all animals everywhere, even and especially the unhappy animals who still lived in ignorance and slavery on other farms. It had become usual to give Napoleon the credit for every successful achievement and every stroke of

good fortune. You would often hear one hen remark to another, "Under the guidance of our Leader, Comrade Napoleon, I have laid five eggs in six days"; or two cows, enjoying a drink at the pool, would exclaim, "Thanks to the leadership of Comrade Napoleon, how excellent this water tastes!" The general feeling on the farm was well expressed in a poem entitled Comrade Napoleon, which was composed by Minimus and which ran as follows:

Friend of fatherless!

Fountain of happiness!

Lord of the swill-bucket! Oh, how my soul is on

Fire when I gaze at thy

Calm and commanding eye,

Like the sun in the sky,

Comrade Napoleon!

Thou art the giver of

All that thy creatures love,

Full belly twice a day, clean straw to roll upon;

Every beast great or small

Sleeps at peace in his stall,
Thou watchest over all,
Comrade Napoleon!
Had I a sucking-pig,
Ere he had grown as big
Even as a pint bottle or as a rolling-pin,
He should have learned to be
Faithful and true to thee,
Yes, his first squeak should be
"Comrade Napoleon!"

Napoleon approved of this poem and caused it to be inscribed on the wall of the big barn, at the opposite end from the Seven Commandments. It was surmounted by a portrait of Napoleon, in profile, executed by Squealer in white paint.

Meanwhile, through the agency of Whymper, Napoleon was engaged in complicated negotiations with Frederick and Pilkington. The pile of timber was still unsold. Of the two, Frederick was the more anxious to get hold of it, but he would not offer a reasonable price. At the same time there were

renewed rumours that Frederick and his men were plotting to attack Animal Farm and to destroy the windmill, the building of which had aroused furious jealousy in him. Snowball was known to be still skulking on Pinchfield Farm. In the middle of the summer the animals were alarmed to hear that three hens had come forward and confessed that, inspired by Snowball, they had entered into a plot to murder Napoleon. They were executed immediately, and fresh precautions for Napoleon's safety were taken. Four dogs guarded his bed at night, one at each corner, and a young pig named Pinkeye was given the task of tasting all his food before he ate it, lest it should be poisoned.

At about the same time it was given out that Napoleon had arranged to sell the pile of timber to Mr. Pilkington; he was also going to enter into a regular agreement for the exchange of certain products between Animal Farm and Foxwood. The relations between Napoleon and Pilkington, though they were only conducted through Whymper, were now almost friendly. The animals distrusted Pilkington, as a human being, but greatly preferred him to Frederick, whom they both feared and hated. As the summer wore on, and the windmill neared completion, the rumours of an impending treacherous attack grew stronger and stronger. Frederick, it was said, intended to bring against them twenty men all armed with guns, and he had already bribed the magistrates and police, so that if he could once get hold of the title-deeds of Animal Farm they would ask no questions. Moreover, terrible stories were leaking out from Pinchfield about the cruelties that Frederick practised upon his animals. He had flogged an old horse to death, he starved his cows, he had killed a dog by throwing it into the furnace, he amused himself in the evenings by making cocks fight with splinters of razor-blade tied to their spurs. The animals' blood boiled with rage when they heard of these things

being—done to their comrades, and sometimes they clamoured to be allowed to go out in a body and attack Pinchfield Farm, drive out the humans, and set the animals free. But Squealer counselled them to avoid rash actions and trust in Comrade Napoleon's strategy.

Nevertheless, feeling against Frederick continued to run high. One Sunday morning Napoleon appeared in the barn and explained that he had never at any time contemplated selling the pile of timber to Frederick; he considered it beneath his dignity, he said, to have dealings with scoundrels of that description. The pigeons who were still sent out to spread tidings of the Rebellion were forbidden to set foot anywhere on Foxwood, and were also ordered to drop their former slogan of "Death to Humanity" in favour of "Death to Frederick." In the late summer yet another of Snowball's machinations was laid bare. The wheat crop was full of weeds, and it was discovered that on one of his nocturnal visits Snowball had mixed weed seeds with the seed corn. A gander who had been privy to the plot had confessed his guilt to Squealer and immediately committed suicide by swallowing deadly nightshade berries. The animals now also learned that Snowball had never—as many of them had believed hitherto received the order of "Animal Hero⁷ First Class." This was merely a legend which had been spread some time after the Battle of the Cowshed by Snowball himself. So far from being decorated, he had been censured for showing cowardice in the battle. Once again some of the animals heard this with a certain bewilderment, but Squealer was soon able to convince them that their memories had been at fault.

In the autumn, by a tremendous, exhausting effort for the harvest had to

be gathered at almost the same time the windmill was finished. The machinery had still to be installed, and Whympers was negotiating the purchase of it, but the structure was completed. In the teeth of every difficulty, in spite of inexperience, of primitive implements, of bad luck and of Snowball's treachery, the work had been finished punctually to the very day! Tired out but proud, the animals walked round and round their masterpiece, which appeared even more beautiful in their eyes than when it had been built the first time. Moreover, the walls were twice as thick as before. Nothing short of explosives would lay them low this time! And when they thought of how they had laboured, what discouragements they had overcome, and the enormous difference that would be made in their lives when the sails were turning and the dynamos running-when they thought of all this, their tiredness forsook them and they gambolled round and round the windmill, uttering cries of triumph. Napoleon himself, attended by his dogs and his cockerel, came down to inspect the completed work; he personally congratulated the animals on their achievement, and announced that the mill would be named Napoleon Mill.

Two days later the animals were called together for a special meeting in the barn. They were struck dumb with surprise when Napoleon announced that he had sold the pile of timber to Frederick. Tomorrow Frederick's wagons would arrive and begin carting it away. Throughout the whole period of his seeming friendship with Pilkington, Napoleon had really been in secret agreement with Frederick.

All relations with Foxwood had been broken off; insulting messages had been sent to Pilkington. The pigeons had been told to avoid Pinchfield Farm

and to alter their slogan from "Death to Frederick" to "Death to Pilkington." At the same time Napoleon assured the animals that the stories of an impending attack on Animal Farm were completely untrue, and that the tales about Frederick's cruelty to his own animals had been greatly exaggerated. All these rumours had probably originated with Snowball and his agents. It now appeared that Snowball was not, after all, hiding on Pinchfield Farm, and in fact had never been there in his life: he was living in considerable luxury, so it was said at Foxwood, and had in reality been a pensioner of Pilkington for years past.

The pigs were in ecstasies over Napoleon's cunning. By seeming to be friendly with Pilkington he had forced Frederick to raise his price by twelve pounds. But the superior quality of Napoleon's mind, said Squealer, was shown in the fact that he trusted nobody, not even Frederick. Frederick had wanted to pay for the timber with something called a cheque, which, it seemed, was a piece of paper with a promise to pay written upon it. But Napoleon was too clever for him. He had demanded payment in real five-pound notes, which were to be handed over before the timber was removed. Already Frederick had paid up; and the sum he had paid was just enough to buy the machinery for the windmill.

Meanwhile the timber was being carted away at high speed. When it was all gone, another special meeting was held in the barn for the animals to inspect Frederick's bank-notes. Smiling beatifically, and wearing both his decorations, Napoleon reposed on a bed of straw on the platform, with the money at his side, neatly piled on a china dish from the farmhouse kitchen. The animals filed slowly past, and each gazed his fill. And Boxer put out his

nose to sniff at the bank-notes, and the flimsy white things stirred and rustled in his breath. Three days later there was a terrible hullabaloo. Whymper, his face deadly pale, came racing up the path on his bicycle, flung it down in the yard and rushed straight into the farmhouse. The next moment a choking roar of rage sounded from Napoleon's apartments. The news of what had happened sped round the farm like wildfire. The banknotes were forgeries! Frederick had got the timber for nothing!

Napoleon called the animals together immediately and in a terrible voice pronounced the death sentence upon Frederick. When captured, he said, Frederick should be boiled alive. At the same time he warned them that after this treacherous deed the worst was to be expected. Frederick and his men might make their long-expected attack at any moment. Sentinels were placed at all the approaches to the farm. In addition, four pigeons were sent to Foxwood with a conciliatory message, which it was hoped might re establish good relations with Pilkington.

The very next morning the attack came. The animals were at breakfast when the look-outs came racing in with the news that Frederick and his followers had already come through the five-barred gate. Boldly enough the animals sallied forth to meet them, but this time they did not have the easy victory that they had had in the Battle of the Cowshed. There were fifteen men, with half a dozen guns between them, and they opened fire as soon as they got within fifty yards. The animals could not face the terrible explosions and the stinging pellets, and in spite of the efforts of Napoleon and Boxer to rally them, they were soon driven back. A number of them were already wounded. They took refuge in the farm buildings and peeped cautiously out

from chinks and knot-holes. The whole of the big pasture, including the windmill, was in the hands of the enemy. For the moment even Napoleon seemed at a loss. He paced up and down without a word, his tail rigid and twitching. Wistful glances were sent in the direction of Foxwood. If Pilkington and his men would help them, the day might yet be won. But at this moment the four pigeons, who had been sent out on the day before, returned, one of them bearing a scrap of paper from Pilkington. On it was pencilled the words: "Serves you right."

Meanwhile Frederick and his men had halted about the windmill. The animals watched them, and a murmur of dismay went round. Two of the men had produced a crowbar and a sledgehammer. They were going to knock the windmill down.

"Impossible!" cried Napoleon. "We have built the walls far too thick for that. They could not knock it down in a week. Courage, comrades!"

But Benjamin was watching the movements of the men intently. The two with the hammer and the crowbar were drilling a hole near the base of the windmill. Slowly, and with an air almost of amusement, Benjamin nodded his long muzzle.

"I thought so," he said. "Do you not see what they are doing? In another moment they are going to pack blasting powder into that hole."

Terrified, the animals waited. It was impossible now to venture out of the shelter of the buildings. After a few minutes the men were seen to be running in all directions. Then there was a deafening roar. The pigeons

swirled into the air, and all the animals, except Napoleon, flung themselves flat on their bellies and hid their faces. When they got up again, a huge cloud of black smoke was hanging where the windmill had been. Slowly the breeze drifted it away. The windmill had ceased to exist!

At this sight the animals' courage returned to them. The fear and despair they had felt a moment earlier were drowned in their rage against this vile, contemptible act. A mighty cry for vengeance went up, and without waiting for further orders they charged forth in a body and made straight for the enemy. This time they did not heed the cruel pellets that swept over them like hail. It was a savage, bitter battle. The men fired again and again, and, when the animals got to close quarters, lashed out with their sticks and their heavy boots. A cow, three sheep, and two geese were killed, and nearly everyone was wounded. Even Napoleon, who was directing operations from the rear, had the tip of his tail chipped by a pellet. But the men did not go unscathed either. Three of them had their heads broken by blows from Boxer's hoofs; another was gored in the belly by a cow's horn; another had his trousers nearly torn off by Jessie and Bluebell. And when the nine dogs of Napoleon's own bodyguard, whom he had instructed to make a detour under cover of the hedge, suddenly appeared on the men's flank, baying ferociously, panic overtook them. They saw that they were in danger of being surrounded. Frederick shouted to his men to get out while the going was good, and the next moment the cowardly enemy was running for dear life. The animals chased them right down to the bottom of the field, and got in some last kicks at them as they forced their way through the thorn hedge.

They had won, but they were weary and bleeding. Slowly they began to

limp back towards the farm. The sight of their dead comrades stretched upon the grass moved some of them to tears. And for a little while they halted in sorrowful silence at the place where the windmill had once stood. Yes, it was gone; almost the last trace of their labour was gone! Even the foundations were partially destroyed. And in rebuilding it they could not this time, as before, make use of the fallen stones. This time the stones had vanished too. The force of the explosion had flung them to distances of hundreds of yards. It was as though the windmill had never been.

As they approached the farm Squealer, who had unaccountably been absent during the fighting, came skipping towards them, whisking his tail and beaming with satisfaction. And the animals heard, from the direction of the farm buildings, the solemn booming of a gun.

"What is that gun firing for?" said Boxer.

"To celebrate our victory!" cried Squealer.

"What victory?" said Boxer. His knees were bleeding, he had lost a shoe and split his hoof, and a dozen pellets had lodged themselves in his hind leg.

"What victory, comrade? Have we not driven the enemy off our soil-the sacred soil of Animal Farm? "

"But they have destroyed the windmill. And we had worked on it for two years!"

"What matter? We will build another windmill. We will build six windmills if we feel like it. You do not appreciate, comrade, the mighty thing

that we have done. The enemy was in occupation of this very ground that we stand upon. And now, thanks to the leadership of Comrade Napoleon, we have won every inch of it back again!"

"Then we have won back what we had before," said Boxer.

"That is our victory," said Squealer.

They limped into the yard. The pellets under the skin of Boxer's leg smarted painfully. He saw ahead of him the heavy labour of rebuilding the windmill from the foundations, and already in imagination he braced himself for the task. But for the first time it occurred to him that he was eleven years old and that perhaps his great muscles were not quite what they had once been.

But when the animals saw the green flag flying, and heard the gun firing again-seven times it was fired in all and heard the speech that Napoleon made, congratulating them on their conduct, it did seem to them after all that they had won a great victory. The animals slain in the battle were given a solemn funeral. Boxer and Clover pulled the wagon which served as a hearse, and Napoleon himself walked at the head of the procession. Two whole days were given over to celebrations. There were songs, speeches, and more firing of the gun, and a special gift of an apple was bestowed on every animal, with two ounces of corn for each bird and three biscuits for each dog. It was announced that the battle would be called the Battle of the Windmill, and that Napoleon had created a new decoration, the Order of the Green Banner, which he had conferred upon himself. In the general rejoicings the unfortunate affair of the banknotes was forgotten.

It was a few days later than this that the pigs came upon a case of whisky in the cellars of the farmhouse. It had been overlooked at the time when the house was first occupied. That night there came from the farmhouse the sound of loud singing, in which, to everyone's surprise, the strains of Beasts of England were mixed up. At about half past nine Napoleon, wearing an old bowler hat of Mr. Jones's, was distinctly seen to emerge from the back door, gallop rapidly round the yard, and disappear indoors again. But in the morning a deep silence hung over the farmhouse. Not a pig appeared to be stirring. It was nearly nine o'clock when Squealer made his appearance, walking slowly and dejectedly, his eyes dull, his tail hanging limply behind him, and with every appearance of being seriously ill. He called the animals together and told them that he had a terrible piece of news to impart. Comrade Napoleon was dying!

A cry of lamentation went up. Straw was laid down outside the doors of the farmhouse, and the animals walked on tiptoe. With tears in their eyes they asked one another what they should do if their Leader were taken away from them. A rumour went round that Snowball had after all contrived to introduce poison into Napoleon's food. At eleven o'clock Squealer came out to make another announcement. As his last act upon earth, Comrade Napoleon had pronounced a solemn decree: the drinking of alcohol was to be punished by death.

By the evening, however, Napoleon appeared to be somewhat better, and the following morning Squealer was able to tell them that he was well on the way to recovery. By the evening of that day Napoleon was back at work, and on the next day it was learned that he had instructed Whymper to

purchase in Willingdon some booklets on brewing and distilling. A week later Napoleon gave orders that the small paddock beyond the orchard, which it had previously been intended to set aside as a grazing-ground for animals who were past work, was to be ploughed up. It was given out that the pasture was exhausted and needed re-seeding; but it soon became known that Napoleon intended to sow it with barley.

About this time there occurred a strange incident which hardly anyone was able to understand. One night at about twelve o'clock there was a loud crash in the yard, and the animals rushed out of their stalls. It was a moonlit night. At the foot of the end wall of the big barn, where the Seven Commandments were written, there lay a ladder broken in two pieces. Squealer, temporarily stunned, was sprawling beside it, and near at hand there lay a lantern, a paint-brush, and an overturned pot of white paint. The dogs immediately made a ring round Squealer, and escorted him back to the farmhouse as soon as he was able to walk. None of the animals could form any idea as to what this meant, except old Benjamin, who nodded his muzzle with a knowing air, and seemed to understand, but would say nothing.

But a few days later Muriel, reading over the Seven Commandments to herself, noticed that there was yet another of them which the animals had remembered wrong. They had thought the Fifth Commandment was "No animal shall drink alcohol," but there were two words that they had forgotten. Actually the Commandment read: "No animal shall drink alcohol to excess."

IX

Boxer's split hoof was a long time in healing. They had started the rebuilding of the windmill the day after the victory celebrations were ended. Boxer refused to take even a day off work, and made it a point of honour not to let it be seen that he was in pain. In the evenings he would admit privately to Clover that the hoof troubled him a great deal. Clover treated the hoof with poultices of herbs which she prepared by chewing them, and both she and Benjamin urged Boxer to work less hard. "A horse's lungs do not last for ever," she said to him. But Boxer would not listen. He had, he said, only one real ambition left—to see the windmill well under way before he reached the age for retirement.

At the beginning, when the laws of Animal Farm were first formulated, the retiring age had been fixed for horses and pigs at twelve, for cows at fourteen, for dogs at nine, for sheep at seven, and for hens and geese at five. Liberal old-age pensions had been agreed upon. As yet no animal had actually retired on pension, but of late the subject had been discussed more and more. Now that the small field beyond the orchard had been set aside for barley, it was rumoured that a corner of the large pasture was to be fenced off and turned into a grazing-ground for superannuated animals. For a horse, it was said, the pension would be five pounds of corn a day and, in winter, fifteen pounds of hay, with a carrot or possibly an apple on public holidays.

Boxer's twelfth birthday was due in the late summer of the following year.

Meanwhile life was hard. The winter was as cold as the last one had been, and food was even shorter. Once again all rations were reduced, except those of the pigs and the dogs. A too rigid equality in rations, Squealer explained, would have been contrary to the principles of Animalism. In any case he had no difficulty in proving to the other animals that they were not in reality short of food, whatever the appearances might be. For the time being, certainly, it had been found necessary to make a readjustment of rations (Squealer always spoke of it as a "readjustment," never as a "reduction"), but in comparison with the days of Jones, the improvement was enormous. Reading out the figures in a shrill, rapid voice, he proved to them in detail that they had more oats, more hay, more turnips than they had had in Jones's day, that they worked shorter hours, that their drinking water was of better quality, that they lived longer, that a larger proportion of their young ones survived infancy, and that they had more straw in their stalls and suffered less from fleas. The animals believed every word of it. Truth to tell, Jones and all he stood for had almost faded out of their memories. They knew that life nowadays was harsh and bare, that they were often hungry and often cold, and that they were usually working when they were not asleep. But doubtless it had been worse in the old days. They were glad to believe so. Besides, in those days they had been slaves and now they were free, and that made all the difference, as Squealer did not fail to point out.

There were many more mouths to feed now. In the autumn the four sows had all littered about simultaneously, producing thirty-one young pigs between them. The young pigs were piebald, and as Napoleon was the only

boar on the farm, it was possible to guess at their parentage. It was announced that later, when bricks and timber had been purchased, a schoolroom would be built in the farmhouse garden. For the time being, the young pigs were given their instruction by Napoleon himself in the farmhouse kitchen. They took their exercise in the garden, and were discouraged from playing with the other young animals. About this time, too, it was laid down as a rule that when a pig and any other animal met on the path, the other animal must stand aside: and also that all pigs, of whatever degree, were to have the privilege of wearing green ribbons on their tails on Sundays.

The farm had had a fairly successful year, but was still short of money. There were the bricks, sand, and lime for the schoolroom to be purchased, and it would also be necessary to begin saving up again for the machinery for the windmill. Then there were lamp oil and candles for the house, sugar for Napoleon's own table (he forbade this to the other pigs, on the ground that it made them fat), and all the usual replacements such as tools, nails, string, coal, wire, scrap-iron, and dog biscuits. A stump of hay and part of the potato crop were sold off, and the contract for eggs was increased to six hundred a week, so that that year the hens barely hatched enough chicks to keep their numbers at the same level. Rations, reduced in December, were reduced again in February, and lanterns in the stalls were forbidden to save Oil. But the pigs seemed comfortable enough, and in fact were putting on weight if anything. One afternoon in late February a warm, rich, appetising scent, such as the animals had never smelt before, wafted itself across the yard from the little brew-house, which had been disused in Jones's time, and which stood beyond the kitchen. Someone said it was the smell of cooking barley. The

animals sniffed the air hungrily and wondered whether a warm mash was being prepared for their supper. But no warm mash appeared, and on the following Sunday it was announced that from now onwards all barley would be reserved for the pigs. The field beyond the orchard had already been sown with barley. And the news soon leaked out that every pig was now receiving a ration of a pint of beer daily, with half a gallon for Napoleon himself, which was always served to him in the Crown Derby soup tureen.

But if there were hardships to be borne, they were partly offset by the fact that life nowadays had a greater dignity than it had had before. There were more songs, more speeches, more processions. Napoleon had commanded that once a week there should be held something called a Spontaneous Demonstration, the object of which was to celebrate the struggles and triumphs of Animal Farm. At the appointed time the animals would leave their work and march round the precincts of the farm in military formation, with the pigs leading, then the horses, then the cows, then the sheep, and then the poultry. The dogs flanked the procession and at the head of all marched Napoleon's black cockerel. Boxer and Clover always carried between them a green banner marked with the hoof and the horn and the caption, "Long live Comrade Napoleon! " Afterwards there were recitations of poems composed in Napoleon's honour, and a speech by Squealer giving particulars of the latest increases in the production of foodstuffs, and on occasion a shot was fired from the gun. The sheep were the greatest devotees of the Spontaneous Demonstration, and if anyone complained (as a few animals sometimes did, when no pigs or dogs were near) that they wasted time and meant a lot of standing about in the cold, the sheep were sure to silence him with a tremendous bleating of "Four legs good, two legs bad!"

But by and large the animals enjoyed these celebrations. They found it comforting to be reminded that, after all, they were truly their own masters and that the work they did was for their own benefit. So that, what with the songs, the processions, Squealer's lists of figures, the thunder of the gun, the crowing of the cockerel, and the fluttering of the flag, they were able to forget that their bellies were empty, at least part of the time.

In April, Animal Farm was proclaimed a Republic, and it became necessary to elect a President. There was only one candidate, Napoleon, who was elected unanimously. On the same day it was given out that fresh documents had been discovered which revealed further details about Snowball's complicity with Jones. It now appeared that Snowball had not, as the animals had previously imagined, merely attempted to lose the Battle of the Cowshed by means of a stratagem, but had been openly fighting on Jones's side. In fact, it was he who had actually been the leader of the human forces, and had charged into battle with the words "Long live Humanity!" on his lips. The wounds on Snowball's back, which a few of the animals still remembered to have seen, had been inflicted by Napoleon's teeth.

In the middle of the summer Moses the raven suddenly reappeared on the farm, after an absence of several years. He was quite unchanged, still did no work, and talked in the same strain as ever about Sugarcandy Mountain. He would perch on a stump, flap his black wings, and talk by the hour to anyone who would listen. "Up there, comrades," he would say solemnly, pointing to the sky with his large beak-"up there, just on the other side of that dark cloud that you can see-there it lies, Sugarcandy Mountain, that happy country where we poor animals shall rest for ever from our labours!" He even

claimed to have been there on one of his higher flights, and to have seen the everlasting fields of clover and the linseed cake and lump sugar growing on the hedges. Many of the animals believed him. Their lives now, they reasoned, were hungry and laborious; was it not right and just that a better world should exist somewhere else? A thing that was difficult to determine was the attitude of the pigs towards Moses. They all declared contemptuously that his stories about Sugarcandy Mountain were lies, and yet they allowed him to remain on the farm, not working, with an allowance of a gill of beer a day.

After his hoof had healed up, Boxer worked harder than ever. Indeed, all the animals worked like slaves that year. Apart from the regular work of the farm, and the rebuilding of the windmill, there was the schoolhouse for the young pigs, which was started in March. Sometimes the long hours on insufficient food were hard to bear, but Boxer never faltered. In nothing that he said or did was there any sign that his strength was not what it had been. It was only his appearance that was a little altered; his hide was less shiny than it had used to be, and his great haunches seemed to have shrunk. The others said, "Boxer will pick up when the spring grass comes on"; but the spring came and Boxer grew no fatter. Sometimes on the slope leading to the top of the quarry, when he braced his muscles against the weight of some vast boulder, it seemed that nothing kept him on his feet except the will to continue. At such times his lips were seen to form the words, "I will work harder"; he had no voice left. Once again Clover and Benjamin warned him to take care of his health, but Boxer paid no attention. His twelfth birthday was approaching. He did not care what happened so long as a good store of stone was accumulated before he went on pension.

Late one evening in the summer, a sudden rumour ran round the farm that something had happened to Boxer. He had gone out alone to drag a load of stone down to the windmill. And sure enough, the rumour was true. A few minutes later two pigeons came racing in with the news: "Boxer has fallen! He is lying on his side and can't get up!"

About half the animals on the farm rushed out to the knoll where the windmill stood. There lay Boxer, between the shafts of the cart, his neck stretched out, unable even to raise his head. His eyes were glazed, his sides matted with sweat. A thin stream of blood had trickled out of his mouth. Clover dropped to her knees at his side.

"Boxer!" she cried, "how are you?"

"It is my lung," said Boxer in a weak voice. "It does not matter. I think you will be able to finish the windmill without me. There is a pretty good store of stone accumulated. I had only another month to go in any case. To tell you the truth, I had been looking forward to my retirement. And perhaps, as Benjamin is growing old too, they will let him retire at the same time and be a companion to me."

"We must get help at once," said Clover. "Run, somebody, and tell Squealer what has happened."

All the other animals immediately raced back to the farmhouse to give Squealer the news. Only Clover remained, and Benjamin who lay down at Boxer's side, and, without speaking, kept the flies off him with his long tail. After about a quarter of an hour Squealer appeared, full of sympathy and

concern. He said that Comrade Napoleon had learned with the very deepest distress of this misfortune to one of the most loyal workers on the farm, and was already making arrangements to send Boxer to be treated in the hospital at Willingdon. The animals felt a little uneasy at this. Except for Mollie and Snowball, no other animal had ever left the farm, and they did not like to think of their sick comrade in the hands of human beings. However, Squealer easily convinced them that the veterinary surgeon in Willingdon could treat Boxer's case more satisfactorily than could be done on the farm. And about half an hour later, when Boxer had somewhat recovered, he was with difficulty got on to his feet, and managed to limp back to his stall, where Clover and Benjamin had prepared a good bed of straw for him.

For the next two days Boxer remained in his stall. The pigs had sent out a large bottle of pink medicine which they had found in the medicine chest in the bathroom, and Clover administered it to Boxer twice a day after meals. In the evenings she lay in his stall and talked to him, while Benjamin kept the flies off him. Boxer professed not to be sorry for what had happened. If he made a good recovery, he might expect to live another three years, and he looked forward to the peaceful days that he would spend in the corner of the big pasture. It would be the first time that he had had leisure to study and improve his mind. He intended, he said, to devote the rest of his life to learning the remaining twenty-two letters of the alphabet.

However, Benjamin and Clover could only be with Boxer after working hours, and it was in the middle of the day when the van came to take him away. The animals were all at work weeding turnips under the supervision of a pig, when they were astonished to see Benjamin come galloping from the

direction of the farm buildings, braying at the top of his voice. It was the first time that they had ever seen Benjamin excited-indeed, it was the first time that anyone had ever seen him gallop. "Quick, quick!" he shouted. "Come at once! They're taking Boxer away!" Without waiting for orders from the pig, the animals broke off work and raced back to the farm buildings. Sure enough, there in the yard was a large closed van, drawn by two horses, with lettering on its side and a sly-looking man in a low-crowned bowler hat sitting on the driver's seat. And Boxer's stall was empty.

The animals crowded round the van. "Good-bye, Boxer!" they chorused, "good-bye!"

"Fools! Fools!" shouted Benjamin, prancing round them and stamping the earth with his small hoofs. "Fools! Do you not see what is written on the side of that van?"

That gave the animals pause, and there was a hush. Muriel began to spell out the words. But Benjamin pushed her aside and in the midst of a deadly silence he read:

" 'Alfred Simmonds, Horse Slaughterer and Glue Boiler, Willingdon. Dealer in Hides and Bone-Meal. Kennels Supplied.' Do you not understand what that means? They are taking Boxer to the knacker's! "

A cry of horror burst from all the animals. At this moment the man on the box whipped up his horses and the van moved out of the yard at a smart trot. All the animals followed, crying out at the tops of their voices. Clover forced her way to the front. The van began to gather speed. Clover tried to

stir her stout limbs to a gallop, and achieved a canter. "Boxer!" she cried. "Boxer! Boxer! Boxer!" And just at this moment, as though he had heard the uproar outside, Boxer's face, with the white stripe down his nose, appeared at the small window at the back of the van.

"Boxer!" cried Clover in a terrible voice. "Boxer! Get out! Get out quickly! They're taking you to your death!"

All the animals took up the cry of "Get out, Boxer, get out!" But the van was already gathering speed and drawing away from them. It was uncertain whether Boxer had understood what Clover had said. But a moment later his face disappeared from the window and there was the sound of a tremendous drumming of hoofs inside the van. He was trying to kick his way out. The time had been when a few kicks from Boxer's hoofs would have smashed the van to matchwood. But alas! his strength had left him; and in a few moments the sound of drumming hoofs grew fainter and died away. In desperation the animals began appealing to the two horses which drew the van to stop. "Comrades, comrades!" they shouted. "Don't take your own brother to his death! " But the stupid brutes, too ignorant to realise what was happening, merely set back their ears and quickened their pace. Boxer's face did not reappear at the window. Too late, someone thought of racing ahead and shutting the five-barred gate; but in another moment the van was through it and rapidly disappearing down the road. Boxer was never seen again.

Three days later it was announced that he had died in the hospital at Willingdon, in spite of receiving every attention a horse could have. Squealer came to announce the news to the others. He had, he said, been present during Boxer's last hours.

"It was the most affecting sight I have ever seen!" said Squealer, lifting his trotter and wiping away a tear. "I was at his bedside at the very last. And at the end, almost too weak to speak, he whispered in my ear that his sole sorrow was to have passed on before the windmill was finished. 'Forward, comrades!' he whispered. 'Forward in the name of the Rebellion. Long live Animal Farm! Long live Comrade Napoleon! Napoleon is always right.' Those were his very last words, comrades."

Here Squealer's demeanour suddenly changed. He fell silent for a moment, and his little eyes darted suspicious glances from side to side before he proceeded.

It had come to his knowledge, he said, that a foolish and wicked rumour had been circulated at the time of Boxer's removal. Some of the animals had noticed that the van which took Boxer away was marked "Horse Slaughterer," and had actually jumped to the conclusion that Boxer was being sent to the knacker's. It was almost unbelievable, said Squealer, that any animal could be so stupid. Surely, he cried indignantly, whisking his tail and skipping from side to side, surely they knew their beloved Leader, Comrade Napoleon, better than that? But the explanation was really very simple. The van had previously been the property of the knacker, and had been bought by the veterinary surgeon, who had not yet painted the old name out. That was how the mistake had arisen.

The animals were enormously relieved to hear this. And when Squealer went on to give further graphic details of Boxer's death-bed, the admirable care he had received, and the expensive medicines for which Napoleon had paid without a thought as to the cost, their last doubts disappeared and the

sorrow that they felt for their comrade's death was tempered by the thought that at least he had died happy.

Napoleon himself appeared at the meeting on the following Sunday morning and pronounced a short oration in Boxer's honour. It had not been possible, he said, to bring back their lamented comrade's remains for interment on the farm, but he had ordered a large wreath to be made from the laurels in the farmhouse garden and sent down to be placed on Boxer's grave. And in a few days' time the pigs intended to hold a memorial banquet in Boxer's honour. Napoleon ended his speech with a reminder of Boxer's two favourite maxims, "I will work harder" and "Comrade Napoleon is always right", maxims, he said, which every animal would do well to adopt as his own.

On the day appointed for the banquet, a grocer's van drove up from Willingdon and delivered a large wooden crate at the farmhouse. That night there was the sound of uproarious singing, which was followed by what sounded like a violent quarrel and ended at about eleven o'clock with a tremendous crash of glass. No one stirred in the farmhouse before noon on the following day, and the word went round that from somewhere or other the pigs had acquired the money to buy themselves another case of whisky.

X

Years passed. The seasons came and went, the short animal lives fled by. A time came when there was no one who remembered the old days before the Rebellion, except Clover, Benjamin, Moses the raven, and a number of the pigs.

Muriel was dead; Bluebell, Jessie, and Pincher were dead. Jones too was dead—he had died in an inebriates' home in another part of the country. Snowball was forgotten. Boxer was forgotten, except by the few who had known him. Clover was an old stout mare now, stiff in the joints and with a tendency to rheumy eyes. She was two years past the retiring age, but in fact no animal had ever actually retired. The talk of setting aside a corner of the pasture for superannuated animals had long since been dropped. Napoleon was now a mature boar of twenty-four stone. Squealer was so fat that he could with difficulty see out of his eyes. Only old Benjamin was much the same as ever, except for being a little greyer about the muzzle, and, since Boxer's death, more morose and taciturn than ever.

There were many more creatures on the farm now, though the increase was not so great as had been expected in earlier years. Many animals had been born to whom the Rebellion was only a dim tradition, passed on by word of mouth, and others had been bought who had never heard mention of

such a thing before their arrival. The farm possessed three horses now besides Clover. They were fine upstanding beasts, willing workers and good comrades, but very stupid. None of them proved able to learn the alphabet beyond the letter B. They accepted everything that they were told about the Rebellion and the principles of Animalism, especially from Clover, for whom they had an almost filial respect; but it was doubtful whether they understood very much of it. The farm was more prosperous now, and better organised: it had even been enlarged by two fields which had been bought from Mr. Pilkington. The windmill had been successfully completed at last, and the farm possessed a threshing machine and a hay elevator of its own, and various new buildings had been added to it. Whymper had bought himself a dogcart. The windmill, however, had not after all been used for generating electrical power. It was used for milling corn, and brought in a handsome money profit. The animals were hard at work building yet another windmill; when that one was finished, so it was said, the dynamos would be installed. But the luxuries of which Snowball had once taught the animals to dream, the stalls with electric light and hot and cold water, and the three-day week, were no longer talked about. Napoleon had denounced such ideas as contrary to the spirit of Animalism. The truest happiness, he said, lay in working hard and living frugally.

Somehow it seemed as though the farm had grown richer without making the animals themselves any richer, except, of course, for the pigs and the dogs. Perhaps this was partly because there were so many pigs and so many dogs. It was not that these creatures did not work, after their fashion. There was, as Squealer was never tired of explaining, endless work in the supervision and organisation of the farm. Much of this work was of a kind

that the other animals were too ignorant to understand. For example, Squealer told them that the pigs had to expend enormous labours every day upon mysterious things called "files," "reports," "minutes," and "memoranda." These were large sheets of paper which had to be closely covered with writing, and as soon as they were so covered, they were burnt in the furnace. This was of the highest importance for the welfare of the farm, Squealer said. But still, neither pigs nor dogs produced any food by their own labour; and there were very many of them, and their appetites were always good.

As for the others, their life, so far as they knew, was as it had always been. They were generally hungry, they slept on straw, they drank from the pool, they laboured in the fields; in winter they were troubled by the cold, and in summer by the flies. Sometimes the older ones among them racked their dim memories and tried to determine whether in the early days of the Rebellion, when Jones's expulsion was still recent, things had been better or worse than now. They could not remember. There was nothing with which they could compare their present lives: they had nothing to go upon except Squealer's lists of figures, which invariably demonstrated that everything was getting better and better. The animals found the problem insoluble; in any case, they had little time for speculating on such things now. Only old Benjamin professed to remember every detail of his long life and to know that things never had been, nor ever could be much better or much worse—hunger, hardship, and disappointment being, so he said, the unalterable law of life.

And yet the animals never gave up hope. More, they never lost, even for an instant, their sense of honour and privilege in being members of Animal

Farm. They were still the only farm in the whole county in all England!- owned and operated by animals. Not one of them, not even the youngest, not even the newcomers who had been brought from farms ten or twenty miles away, ever ceased to marvel at that. And when they heard the gun booming and saw the green flag fluttering at the masthead, their hearts swelled with imperishable pride, and the talk turned always towards the old heroic days, the expulsion of Jones, the writing of the Seven Commandments, the great battles in which the human invaders had been defeated. None of the old dreams had been abandoned. The Republic of the Animals which Major had foretold, when the green fields of England should be untrodden by human feet, was still believed in. Some day it was coming: it might not be soon, it might not be within the lifetime of any animal now living, but still it was coming. Even the tune of Beasts of England was perhaps hummed secretly here and there: at any rate, it was a fact that every animal on the farm knew it, though no one would have dared to sing it aloud. It might be that their lives were hard and that not all of their hopes had been fulfilled; but they were conscious that they were not as other animals. If they went hungry, it was not from feeding tyrannical human beings; if they worked hard, at least they worked for themselves. No creature among them went upon two legs. No creature called any other creature "Master." All animals were equal.

One day in early summer Squealer ordered the sheep to follow him, and led them out to a piece of waste ground at the other end of the farm, which had become overgrown with birch saplings. The sheep spent the whole day there browsing at the leaves under Squealer's supervision. In the evening he returned to the farmhouse himself, but, as it was warm weather, told the sheep to stay where they were. It ended by their remaining there for a whole

week, during which time the other animals saw nothing of them. Squealer was with them for the greater part of every day. He was, he said, teaching them to sing a new song, for which privacy was needed.

It was just after the sheep had returned, on a pleasant evening when the animals had finished work and were making their way back to the farm buildings, that the terrified neighing of a horse sounded from the yard. Startled, the animals stopped in their tracks. It was Clover's voice. She neighed again, and all the animals broke into a gallop and rushed into the yard. Then they saw what Clover had seen.

It was a pig walking on his hind legs.

Yes, it was Squealer. A little awkwardly, as though not quite used to supporting his considerable bulk in that position, but with perfect balance, he was strolling across the yard. And a moment later, out from the door of the farmhouse came a long file of pigs, all walking on their hind legs. Some did it better than others, one or two were even a trifle unsteady and looked as though they would have liked the support of a stick, but every one of them made his way right round the yard successfully. And finally there was a tremendous baying of dogs and a shrill crowing from the black cockerel, and out came Napoleon himself, majestically upright, casting haughty glances from side to side, and with his dogs gambolling round him.

He carried a whip in his trotter.

There was a deadly silence. Amazed, terrified, huddling together, the animals watched the long line of pigs march slowly round the yard. It was as

though the world had turned upside-down. Then there came a moment when the first shock had worn off and when, in spite of everything-in spite of their terror of the dogs, and of the habit, developed through long years, of never complaining, never criticising, no matter what happened-they might have uttered some word of protest. But just at that moment, as though at a signal, all the sheep burst out into a tremendous bleating of-

"Four legs good, two legs better! Four legs good, two legs better! Four legs good, two legs better!"

It went on for five minutes without stopping. And by the time the sheep had quieted down, the chance to utter any protest had passed, for the pigs had marched back into the farmhouse.

Benjamin felt a nose nuzzling at his shoulder. He looked round. It was Clover. Her old eyes looked dimmer than ever. Without saying anything, she tugged gently at his mane and led him round to the end of the big barn, where the Seven Commandments were written. For a minute or two they stood gazing at the tatted wall with its white lettering.

"My sight is failing," she said finally. "Even when I was young I could not have read what was written there. But it appears to me that that wall looks different. Are the Seven Commandments the same as they used to be, Benjamin?"

For once Benjamin consented to break his rule, and he read out to her what was written on the wall. There was nothing there now except a single Commandment. It ran:

all animals are equal

but some animals are more equal than others

After that it did not seem strange when next day the pigs who were supervising the work of the farm all carried whips in their trotters. It did not seem strange to learn that the pigs had bought themselves a wireless set, were arranging to install a telephone, and had taken out subscriptions to John Bull, TitBits, and the Daily Mirror. It did not seem strange when Napoleon was seen strolling in the farmhouse garden with a pipe in his mouth, no, not even when the pigs took Mr. Jones's clothes out of the wardrobes and put them on, Napoleon himself appearing in a black coat, ratcatcher breeches, and leather leggings, while his favourite sow appeared in the watered silk dress which Mrs. Jones had been used to wear on Sundays.

A week later, in the afternoon, a number of dogcarts drove up to the farm. A deputation of neighbouring farmers had been invited to make a tour of inspection. They were shown all over the farm, and expressed great admiration for everything they saw, especially the windmill. The animals were weeding the turnip field. They worked diligently hardly raising their faces from the ground, and not knowing whether to be more frightened of the pigs or of the human visitors.

That evening loud laughter and bursts of singing came from the farmhouse. And suddenly, at the sound of the mingled voices, the animals were stricken with curiosity. What could be happening in there, now that for the first time animals and human beings were meeting on terms of equality? With one accord they began to creep as quietly as possible into the farmhouse

garden.

At the gate they paused, half frightened to go on but Clover led the way in. They tiptoed up to the house, and such animals as were tall enough peered in at the dining-room window. There, round the long table, sat half a dozen farmers and half a dozen of the more eminent pigs, Napoleon himself occupying the seat of honour at the head of the table. The pigs appeared completely at ease in their chairs. The company had been enjoying a game of cards but had broken off for the moment, evidently in order to drink a toast. A large jug was circulating, and the mugs were being refilled with beer. No one noticed the wondering faces of the animals that gazed in at the window.

Mr. Pilkington, of Foxwood, had stood up, his mug in his hand. In a moment, he said, he would ask the present company to drink a toast. But before doing so, there were a few words that he felt it incumbent upon him to say.

It was a source of great satisfaction to him, he said-and, he was sure, to all others present-to feel that a long period of mistrust and misunderstanding had now come to an end. There had been a time, not that he, or any of the present company, had shared such sentiments, but there had been a time when the respected proprietors of Animal Farm had been regarded, he would not say with hostility, but perhaps with a certain measure of misgiving, by their human neighbours. Unfortunate incidents had occurred, mistaken ideas had been current. It had been felt that the existence of a farm owned and operated by pigs was somehow abnormal and was liable to have an unsettling effect in the neighbourhood. Too many farmers had assumed, without due enquiry, that on such a farm a spirit of licence and indiscipline would prevail. They

had been nervous about the effects upon their own animals, or even upon their human employees. But all such doubts were now dispelled. Today he and his friends had visited Animal Farm and inspected every inch of it with their own eyes, and what did they find? Not only the most up-to-date methods, but a discipline and an orderliness which should be an example to all farmers everywhere. He believed that he was right in saying that the lower animals on Animal Farm did more work and received less food than any animals in the county. Indeed, he and his fellow-visitors today had observed many features which they intended to introduce on their own farms immediately.

He would end his remarks, he said, by emphasising once again the friendly feelings that subsisted, and ought to subsist, between Animal Farm and its neighbours. Between pigs and human beings there was not, and there need not be, any clash of interests whatever. Their struggles and their difficulties were one. Was not the labour problem the same everywhere? Here it became apparent that Mr. Pilkington was about to spring some carefully prepared witticism on the company, but for a moment he was too overcome by amusement to be able to utter it. After much choking, during which his various chins turned purple, he managed to get it out: "If you have your lower animals to contend with," he said, "we have our lower classes!" This bon mot set the table in a roar; and Mr. Pilkington once again congratulated the pigs on the low rations, the long working hours, and the general absence of pampering which he had observed on Animal Farm.

And now, he said finally, he would ask the company to rise to their feet and make certain that their glasses were full. "Gentlemen," concluded Mr.

Pilkington, "gentlemen, I give you a toast: To the prosperity of Animal Farm!"

There was enthusiastic cheering and stamping of feet. Napoleon was so gratified that he left his place and came round the table to clink his mug against Mr. Pilkington's before emptying it. When the cheering had died down, Napoleon, who had remained on his feet, intimated that he too had a few words to say.

Like all of Napoleon's speeches, it was short and to the point. He too, he said, was happy that the period of misunderstanding was at an end. For a long time there had been rumours-circulated, he had reason to think, by some malignant enemy-that there was something subversive and even revolutionary in the outlook of himself and his colleagues. They had been credited with attempting to stir up rebellion among the animals on neighbouring farms. Nothing could be further from the truth! Their sole wish, now and in the past, was to live at peace and in normal business relations with their neighbours. This farm which he had the honour to control, he added, was a co-operative enterprise. The title-deeds, which were in his own possession, were owned by the pigs jointly.

He did not believe, he said, that any of the old suspicions still lingered, but certain changes had been made recently in the routine of the farm which should have the effect of promoting confidence still further. Hitherto the animals on the farm had had a rather foolish custom of addressing one another as "Comrade." This was to be suppressed. There had also been a very strange custom, whose origin was unknown, of marching every Sunday morning past a boar's skull which was nailed to a post in the garden. This,

too, would be suppressed, and the skull had already been buried. His visitors might have observed, too, the green flag which flew from the masthead. If so, they would perhaps have noted that the white hoof and horn with which it had previously been marked had now been removed. It would be a plain green flag from now onwards.

He had only one criticism, he said, to make of Mr. Pilkington's excellent and neighbourly speech. Mr. Pilkington had referred throughout to "Animal Farm." He could not of course know, for he, Napoleon, was only now for the first time announcing it, that the name "Animal Farm" had been abolished. Henceforward the farm was to be known as "The Manor Farm"-which, he believed, was its correct and original name.

"Gentlemen," concluded Napoleon, "I will give you the same toast as before, but in a different form. Fill your glasses to the brim. Gentlemen, here is my toast: To the prosperity of The Manor Farm!"

There was the same hearty cheering as before, and the mugs were emptied to the dregs. But as the animals outside gazed at the scene, it seemed to them that some strange thing was happening. What was it that had altered in the faces of the pigs? Clover's old dim eyes flitted from one face to another. Some of them had five chins, some had four, some had three. But what was it that seemed to be melting and changing? Then, the applause having come to an end, the company took up their cards and continued the game that had been interrupted, and the animals crept silently away.

But they had not gone twenty yards when they stopped short. An uproar of voices was coming from the farmhouse. They rushed back and looked

through the window again. Yes, a violent quarrel was in progress. There were shoutings, bangings on the table, sharp suspicious glances, furious denials. The source of the trouble appeared to be that Napoleon and Mr. Pilkington had each played an ace of spades simultaneously.

Twelve voices were shouting in anger, and they were all alike. No question, now, what had happened to the faces of the pigs. The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which.

老人与海

THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA

[美] 海明威 著
陈加雄 译

武汉出版社
WUHAN JIANGJING BOOKS

目录

[老人与海\(最新修订版\)\(附英文原版\)\(套装共2册\)](#)

[The Old Man and The Sea](#)

版权信息

书名：老人与海(最新修订版)(附英文原版)(套装共2册)

作者：海明威

出版方：武汉出版社

出版时间：2019.1

ISBN：9787543054301

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老人与海(最新修订版)(附英文原版)(套装共2册)

◇影响世界历史的百部经典之一

◇美国历史上里程碑式的32本书之一

◇1953年获普利策奖

◇1954年，本书作者获诺贝尔文学奖

◇1986年法国读书杂志推荐的理想藏书

◇因为他精通于叙事艺术，突出地表现在其近著老人与海之中：同时也因为他对当代文体风格的影响。

——诺贝尔文学奖颁奖词摘选

◇《老人与海》是一部异常有力、无比简洁的作品，具有一种无可抗拒的美。

——瑞典文学院院士 霍尔斯陶穆

◇老人与海是一首田园诗，大海就是大海，不是拜伦式的，不是麦尔维尔式的，好比荷马的手笔，行文又沉着又动人，犹如荷马的诗。真正的艺术家既不象征化，也不寓言化——海明威是一位真正的艺术家——但是任何一部真正的艺术品都能散发出象征和寓言的意味，这一部

短小但并不渺小的杰作也是如此。

——美国艺术史家 贝瑞孙

◇海明威有着一一种强烈的愿望，他试图把自己对事物的看法强加于我们，以便塑造出一种硬汉的形象……当他在梦幻中向往胜利时，就必定出现完全的胜利、伟大的战斗和圆满的结局。

——美国作家 索尔·贝娄

◇时间会显示这是我们当中任何一个人（我指的是他和我的同时代人）所能写出的最最优秀的单篇作品。

——福克纳

◇人可以失败，但不可以被击败，外在的肉体可以接受折磨，但是内在的意志却是神圣不可侵犯的，这是《老人与海》一再强调的论点。真正的大师都是用最简单的语言来表达最深刻的道理，真正的好作品都是用生命的历练做题材，《老人与海》所刻画出来的正是海明威一辈子最好的画像，正如海明威所说，“我一直读过200多遍，每读一次，我就多一份收获，好像我最后得到了我这一生辛苦工作所欲得到的东西”。

——台湾学者 陈人孝

◇『我一开始写作的时候，对我影响更大的还是海明威。海明威对我有过刻骨铭心的影响。海明威是我写作方面的启蒙老师，他给我的影响要超过其他所有作家。』

——著名作家 叶兆言

◇“是这一辈子所能写的最好的一部作品”。

——海明威

◇只有精神的胜利才能使我们感动，为其悲壮而落泪。

在墨西哥湾暖流里的一条小船上，有这么一个独自捕鱼的老人，他在刚刚过去的八十四天里，连一条鱼都没有捕到。原本在头四十天里，还有个机灵的小男孩跟在他左右。但是当整整四十天仍没有见到一条鱼的影子时，小男孩的父母命令儿子离开了这个走上霉运的老人，登上了另一条船。果然时来运转，小男孩在上船头一个星期里就逮到了三条不错的鱼。看到老人每天依旧一无所获地出海归来，小男孩心里很不是滋味。他总是跑下岸去帮老人拿起已经卷好的钓线、渔钩和渔叉，或是收卷缠绕在桅杆上的船帆。破烂的船帆擦着用面粉袋缝制成的补丁，使得这张帆收拢起来就好似一面旗子——仿佛永远代表着失败的旗子。

老人瘦骨嶙峋的样子看起来异常憔悴和干瘪，他脖颈上的皱纹已经很深很深，鼓起的沟回像是蠕动的蚯蚓。也许是常年生活在热带海面上的缘故，老人的两腮生有许多良性的皮肤癌变。这些褐色的瘤是太阳光在海面上反射的光线带来的，并且从他的脸侧一直延伸到了脖颈。他的双手也由于常年拽拉大鱼的缘故，被勒下很深的伤疤。但是这些伤疤却没有一块是新生成的，它们古老得如同无鱼可打的沙漠中被狂风侵蚀的地方一样久远。

他的全身都像手上的疤痕一样古老，但只有那双海水般蔚蓝的眼睛例外，因为它们永远闪烁着欢快和永不言败的光芒。

“圣地亚哥，”他们俩将小船系好，爬上岸时，小男孩对他说，“我又能跟你一起出海了，因为我家赚到了一些钱。”

是老人手把手教会了小男孩捕鱼，所以小男孩爱他。

“不，”但此刻老人拒绝了小男孩的要求，“你运气好，遇到了一条可以交好运的船，还是继续跟着他们下海吧。”

“不，圣地亚哥，你总该记得，我们曾经连着八十七天都一无所获，但又在接踵而至的三个星期里，每天都捕到大鱼。”

“当然，”老人说，“我知道，你离开我并不代表着你对我失去信心。”

“我爸爸让我走的。我只是个孩子，总不能违背他的意思。”

“我明白，”老人说道，“这确实是情理之中的。”

“他没有多少把握。”

“嗯，”老人说，“但我们两个有，不是吗？”

“对，”小男孩说，“走，我请你到露台饭店喝杯啤酒，然后咱们再把渔具带回去，好吧？”

“那当然好了，”老人说，“我们都是渔夫嘛。”

当他们来到饭店，坐在露台上后，很多渔夫开始开起老人的玩笑，老人也没有表示不悦。也有一些年纪更长的渔夫直望着他，替他感到难受。不过他们并没有把这种难受之情溢于言表，只是轻轻地谈着暖流，谈着他们将钓线伸到了多深的海面下，好天气又是怎样的稳定，以及他们的见闻等等。当天走了运捕到鱼的渔夫们已经回来，他们剖开大马林鱼，将一整片儿摆到两块木板上。鱼很大很重，这样就使得每块木板的一端都要由两个人抬着，摇摇晃晃地送到收鱼站，在那等待冷藏车到来后把它们运往哈瓦那的市场。而捕获的鲨鱼则被人们送到了海湾对面的鲨鱼加工厂，吊在带钩的复合滑车上，接着，它们的肝脏被除去，鱼鳍被割掉，外皮被剥除，鱼肉也被切成条状以备腌制。

东风刮起的时候，隔着海湾，鲨鱼加工厂仍然能够吹来一股腥味儿，但今天却几乎闻不到，因为风转成了北风，并渐渐地停了，露台上阳光和煦，令人舒适。

“圣地亚哥。”小男孩唤道。

“嗯。”老人应道。他握着酒杯，正在回忆多年以前的往事。

“我去给你弄点明天用的沙丁鱼吧？”

“别，不用，快打棒球去吧！我还划得动船，罗赫略可以帮我撒网。”

“我非常想去。即使不能跟你去捕鱼，我也很想帮你做点什么。”

“你给我买了杯啤酒，”老人说，“你已经是个大人了。”

“你第一次带我上船时我多大？”

“五岁，那天我拖上一条活蹦乱跳的鱼，它上蹿下跳，差点儿把船撞碎，你也差点儿没命。还记得吗？”

“我记得那条鱼的尾巴噗嗒噗嗒地拍打得非常厉害，船上的座板都被撞裂了，这声音里还夹杂着你用棍子打鱼的声音。我还记得你把我猛地推向船头，那里堆着一卷卷湿淋淋的钓线卷儿。我什么也看不到，只是感觉仿佛整条船都在颤抖，听到你像砍树一样用棍子啪啪打鱼的声音，然后我满身都是新鲜的带着甜甜气息的鱼腥味。”

“你是真的记得，还是听我什么时候跟你说过？”

“自从我们第一次一同出海，一点一滴我都记得清清楚楚。”

老人爱怜地看着他，用那双常遭阳光照晒，但目光平和坚定的眼睛。

“如果你是我儿子，我一定带你出去闯荡闯荡，”他说，“可你却是你爸妈的儿子，并且你又在一条运气很好的船上。”

“我去弄点沙丁鱼来吧？我还知道在哪儿能弄到四条鱼饵。”

“我今天的还没用完，我把剩下的放到盒子里腌起来了。”

“我给你弄四条新鲜的来吧？”

“一条就够了。”老人说。他的希望和信心从来都不曾消失过，现在变得更加的清新，就像微风刚刚吹起时的那般美好。

“两条吧。”小男孩说。

“那就两条吧，”老人同意了，“你不会去偷吧？”

“我倒是想，”小男孩说，“不过这些是我买的。”

“谢谢你了！”老人说。他心地纯净，不会去思考自己何时开始如此谦卑的状态了。可他却知道自己此时正是这种状态，也知道这并不丢脸，也无损于真正的自尊心。

“看这海流就知道明儿准是个好天。”他说。

“你要上哪儿？”小男孩问。

“驶到远方，等风向转了再回来。我想天不亮就出发。”

“我想办法让船主人驶到远方，”小男孩说，“那么，要是你逮到一条大鱼的话，我们可以赶过去帮忙。”

“他可不会喜欢把船开得很远。”

“确实，”小男孩说，“不过我能看见一些他看不见的东西，比如说有只鸟正在捕食，我看到后自会想办法叫他去追赶鳅。”

“他的眼睛就这么差劲吗？”

“和睁眼瞎根本就没有多少差别。”

“真是怪事，”老人说，“他从来不捕海龟，那才是伤眼睛的家伙。”

“但你在莫斯基托海岸外捕了多年海龟，视力却仍然好得很。”

“我是个和别人不太一样的老头儿。”

“可是，你现在的力气还能够对付一条真正的大鱼吗？”

“没问题，并且我可是掌握不少诀窍的。”

“我们把打鱼的东西带回家吧，”小男孩说，“这样我就可以拿了渔网去逮沙丁鱼了。”

他们从船上取下所有需要的工具。老人用肩扛着桅杆，小男孩提着木箱，里面放着缠绕得结结实实的褐色的钓线，还拿着渔钩和带着手柄的渔叉。装着鱼饵的盒子和一根棍子，一起放在小船的船艙下面。当大鱼被拖到船边时，那根棍子是可以用来揍晕它们的。没有人会偷老人的东西，不过还是把桅杆和那些粗钓线收回去比较稳妥，因为露水会侵蚀这些东西，并且，尽管老人坚信当地人绝不会来偷他的东西，但他却觉得，也没有必要故意将渔钩和渔叉留在船上，那样确实会引起不必要的诱惑。

他们顺着大路一起走到老人的窝棚前，从敞开的门走进去。老人将缠绕着船帆的桅杆倚靠在墙上，小男孩把木箱和其他东西堆到了旁边。桅杆几乎和这个单间的窝棚一样长。窝棚是用一种被当地人称作“海鸟粪”的大椰子树的坚韧外壳盖成的，屋里摆着一张床、一张桌子、一把椅子以及一块用木炭烧饭的泥地。褐色的墙面是纤维结实的“海鸟粪”展开铺平叠盖而成的，上面有一幅带彩的耶稣圣心图和一幅科布莱圣母图。这都是他妻子生前的东西。曾经墙上还一直挂着一张他妻子的着色

照，后来越看越觉得形只影单，就把它取下来了，现今放到了屋角的一个架子上面，一件干净的衬衫底下。

“总要吃些什么东西吧？”

“一锅鱼煮黄米饭，你也来吃点儿吧？”

“不用，我回家吃。需要给你生火吗？”

“不用，待会儿我自个儿生，或者干脆就吃冷饭得了。”

“我可以把渔网拿走吗？”

“当然可以。”

实际上根本就没有什么渔网，小男孩甚至还记得这网是哪天卖掉的。然而他们每天都要把这样的鬼话像模像样地胡扯一番。当然，提到的一锅鱼煮黄米饭也是子虚乌有的，这一点儿小男孩也知道。

“八十五是一个吉祥的数字，”老人说，“你想不想看到我逮一条去掉了内脏还有一千多磅重的大鱼？”

“我拿渔网捞沙丁鱼去了。你就待在门口晒晒太阳怎样？”

“好的。这里有张昨天的报纸，我要看看关于棒球的新闻。”

小男孩不清楚“昨天的报纸”是否也是随口编造的，但是老人却从床底下取出了一份报纸。

“佩里科在杂货铺里给我的。”他解释道。

“我捕到沙丁鱼就回来。我要把咱们两个的鱼放到一起都拿冰镇着，明天早上咱们就可以分着用了。等会儿我回来，你跟我讲讲关于棒球的新闻。”

“扬基队肯定是不不会输的。”

“可是我担心克利夫兰印第安人队会赢。”

“相信扬基队吧，孩子。它们可是有伟大的迪马吉奥。”

“我还担心底特律老虎队，还担心克利夫兰印第安人队。”

“放松点儿，要不然连辛辛那提红队和芝加哥白短袜队你都要担心了。”

“你仔细瞧瞧，等我回来讲给我听。”

“你说我们是不是该去买张末尾两位数是八五的彩票？明天是第八十五天。”

“当然可以，”小男孩说，“不过为什么不弄一张八七的，你上次的记录可是八十七天。”

“那样的事儿不会有第二次了。你看能不能弄到一张末尾是八五的彩票？”

“我可以预订一张。”

“一张要两块五，我们上哪里筹措这笔钱？”

“这个好办。两块五毛钱我总能借得到的。”

“我看说不定我也能借得到，不过我不想借钱。借钱容易还钱难，接下来就要讨饭喽！”

“穿暖和点儿，别冻着，老大爷，”小男孩说，“别忘了，现在是九月天了。”

“正是捕捉大鱼的大好月份，”老人说，“如果在五月，人人都能做个好渔夫。”

“我现在去弄沙丁鱼了。”小男孩说。

小男孩回来的时候，老人正熟睡在椅子上，太阳也已经西沉了，小男孩从床上拿起一条旧军毯，展开搭在椅背上，盖在老人的肩膀上。老人的肩膀也奇怪得很，身躯年迈已是不可改变的事实，但肩膀却仍然孔武有力，脖子也是如此，老人睡着且脑袋向前耷拉着的时候，连皱纹也不大能看得出。他衬衫上的补丁根本就数不过来，样子颇似他的那张破帆，在日光的曝晒下，这些补丁都被晒得褪成了许多深浅不一的颜色。老人的面部非常苍老，眼睛一旦闭上，脸上就看不到一丁点儿好气色和光泽了。报纸摊着，斜盖在他的膝盖上，被晚风吹得簌簌作响，幸好靠他胳膊压着才没被风吹走。他的脚光着。

小男孩是轻轻地从老人身边走的，等他回来时，老人仍在熟睡。

“醒醒吧，老大爷。”小男孩说着，将手轻轻放在老人膝盖上。

老人睁开了眼睛，神志仍然不清，过了一会儿仿佛才从遥远的地方回过神来，然后他笑了。

“你带什么回来了？”他问道。

“晚饭，”小男孩说，“我们开餐吧。”

“我还不饿。”

“行了，还是吃吧。你不能只打鱼，不吃饭。”

“我不是没这样做过。”老人边说边站了起来，收起报纸折好，接着动手叠毯子。

“把毯子裹身上吧，”小男孩说，“只要我还活着，就不能让你不吃饭就去打鱼。”

“那就祝你长命百岁吧，照顾好自己，”老人说，“我们吃什么？”

“黑豆饭、油炸香蕉和一些炖菜。”

小男孩是用双层饭盒把饭菜从露台饭店提过来的，他的衣服里装着两副刀叉和汤匙，每一副都用了一块餐巾纸包裹着。

“谁给的这些东西？”

“叫‘马丁’的那个船老板。”

“我得向他表示感谢。”

“我已经谢过了，”小男孩说，“你就不用再去谢了。”

“我回头一定要给他一块大鱼肚子上的肉，”老人说，“他已经不止一次地这样接济我们了吧？”

“好像是这样的。”

“那除了鱼肚子的好肉外，我还得送他点儿比那更好的东西。他总是这么关心我们。”

“他还送了两瓶啤酒。”

“我喜欢罐装的啤酒。”

“我知道。不过这些是瓶装的，阿图埃牌啤酒，喝完我还得还瓶子回去。”

“你很细心，”老人说，“我们开始吃饭吧。”

“我一直在叫你吃呢，”孩子轻声说道，“如果你没准备好，我是不会打开饭盒的。”

“我准备好了，”老人说，“我只需要洗洗就行了。”

他该到哪儿去洗呢？小男孩想。村里的供水站在大路那头，要走两条街才能到。小男孩想，我应该打点水过来供他洗漱用的，还应该带一块肥皂和一条比较像样的毛巾来的。怎么我这么粗心大意呢？我还应该弄件衬衫和过冬的夹克，最好还弄双鞋子和一条毯子来。

“这炖菜味道真不赖。”老头夸赞道。

“给我讲讲棒球赛吧。”孩子请求道。

“正如我所说过的那样，在美国联赛中，扬基队是其中的翘楚。”老人说得兴高采烈。

“可是今天他们却输了。”孩子告诉他。

“这没什么，伟大的迪马吉奥雄威重振。”

“他们队里还有不少好手呢！”

“那当然，不过他的地位可是与众不同的。另一个联赛中，布鲁克林队跟费拉德尔菲亚队，我一直认为布鲁克林队一定是最后的赢家。不过，我却也仍然记得迪克·西勒斯以及他在老公园里打的那几记漂亮球。”

“再没人能打出那么精彩的球了。他是我见过击球可以击出最远的一个。”

“你还记得过去他经常光顾露台饭店吗？那时候我想邀他一同出海捕鱼可是没好意思开口。让你去说，结果你也不敢。”

“我知道，那真是严重地失策了。如果开口了，他倒是极有可能跟我们一同出海的。那样一来，足够我们终生回味的。”

“我非常想跟伟大的迪马吉奥一同去捕鱼，”老人说，“有人说他父亲也是一个渔夫。说不定当初他也像我们这么穷，能理解我们心意和诚意的。”

“不过伟大的西勒斯的父亲可从来没有过穷日子，像我这么大的时候他父亲就已经在联赛里打球了。”

“我像你这么大的时候就已经成为一名普通水手了，当时在一条驶向非洲的横帆船上，傍晚时分我还见过狮子在沙滩上出没。”

“我记得，你告诉过我。”

“咱们谈非洲还是谈棒球？”

“我觉得还是棒球吧，”小男孩说，“给我讲讲那个伟大的约翰·J·麦格劳吧。”他把“J”念成了“何塔”。

“以前有段时间他也常到露台饭店来。可他一喝酒就耍酒疯，态度蛮横不讲理，出言不逊，难以相处。他脑子不仅装着棒球，还装着赛马。至少他的口袋里总也少不了赛马的名单，电话里也时常念叨一些马儿的名字。”

“他是个出色的经理，”小男孩说，“我爸爸认为他是最出色的。”

“那是由于他来这儿的次数最多，”老人说，“要是多罗彻持续年年来这儿，你爸爸一定会认为他是最出色的经理。”

“老实说，卢克和迈克·冈萨雷斯，谁才是最出色的经理？”

“我觉得他们不相伯仲。”

“最出色的渔人是你。”

“不，我知道有许多人都比我强。”

“哪能呢！”小男孩说，“好渔人有很多，了不起的也有不少。但你是出类拔萃的。”

“谢谢你，你说得我很高兴。希望不要被我碰到一条超大而叫我对付不了的大鱼，那就证明我们都错啦！”

“不会有这种鱼的，只要你的身体还像你讲的那么壮实。”

“也许我已没有我想象的那样壮实了，”老人说，“不过我还掌握不少诀窍，并且还有决心。”

“你该睡了，这样你明天早上起来时才会有足够的气力。我还得把这些东西送回露台饭店去。”

“那就祝你晚安，明天早上我去叫你。”

“你就是我的闹钟啊。”孩子说。

“我的闹钟是年龄，”老人说，“为什么人一老就特别容易早醒？难道是为了度过更长的白昼吗？”

“我不知道，”小男孩说，“我只知道年轻人睡得迟，懒得起。”

“我不会忘记的，”老人说，“我会按时叫你起床的。”

“我不愿意让船主人叫我起床，好像我不如他似的。”

“我知道。”

“晚安，老大爷。”

孩子走出去了。他们没点灯就在桌子上吃完了饭。老人脱了裤子，摸黑上了床。他把裤子卷起来当枕头，把那张报纸塞进里面。他用毯子将身子裹得严严实实，躺在了铺有其他旧报纸的弹簧垫上睡了。

不一会儿他就进入了梦乡，梦见孩提时代见过的非洲，那长长的金色沙滩和白色沙滩，亮得耀眼，还有那高大陡峭的海岬和褐色的大山。现在一到夜里他都要梦回那一带海岸边，听着隆隆拍打海岸的潮声，看着土人驾船在海浪中穿梭而行。睡梦中他闻到甲板上柏油和麻絮的味

道，还闻到清早陆地上微风吹来的非洲气息。

每当他闻到陆地上吹来的微风就会醒来，穿好衣服就去叫小男孩。不过今晚陆地上吹来的风来得太早，睡梦中他知道时间尚早，便继续将梦做下去，在梦中看到海面上升起了群岛的白色尖峰，紧接着又看到了加那利群岛的各个不同的港湾和抛锚处。

他再也没有梦到风涛，没有梦到女人，也没有梦到震动四方的遭遇，没有梦到大鱼、搏斗、角力，甚至也没有再梦到他的妻子。他现今的梦里经常出现的是某些地方和沙滩上嬉戏的狮子。幽幽的暮色里，它们像小猫一样嬉闹着，他爱它们，正如爱那个小男孩一般。但小男孩的身影却从未在他的梦中出现过。他梦着梦着就那样醒了，透过敞开的门看着外面的月亮，把当作枕头的长裤摊开穿上了。他先在窝棚外撒了尿，接着便顺着大路走过去叫小男孩。清早的寒气使他抖个不停，但他知道，哆嗦一阵能让自己暖和一点儿，再过一会儿他就要把船划入海了。

小男孩住的房子没有上锁，只是虚掩着，他轻轻推开门，光着脚悄悄走了进去。在外间的一张帆布床上，小男孩睡得正酣，透过外面残月射来的月光，老人看得很清楚。他轻轻抓着小男孩的一只小脚丫，直到小男孩醒来，转身望着他。老人点了点头，小男孩便抓起床边椅子上的裤子，坐在床沿上穿了上去。

老人走出门去，小男孩跟在他屁股后面。他仍然沉浸在混沌之中，老人搂着他的肩膀说：“不好意思。”

“哪里！”小男孩扬了扬仍旧昏睡的头，“男人嘛！”

两人沿着大路朝老人的窝棚走去，天空仍然黑的，不过有些男人却

光着脚，扛着船上的桅杆走动着。

两人走进老人的窝棚，小男孩拿起篮子里的钓线卷儿、渔叉还有渔钩，老人则将缠绕着船帆的桅杆扛在了肩上。

“想喝点咖啡吗？”小男孩问他。

“我们先把打鱼的家伙放到船上，然后再去喝点吧。”

在一家一大早就面向打鱼人营业的小饭馆里，两人就着炼乳罐头喝着咖啡。

“您休息得好吗，老大爷？”小男孩问道。虽然完全挣脱瞌睡虫的控制不是件容易的事，但他现在总算清醒过来了。

“非常不错，马诺林，”老人说，“我对今天信心十足。”

“我也是，”小男孩说，“现在我得去取咱俩需要用的沙丁鱼了，还有给你的新鲜鱼饵。我们那条船的船主总是自己拿打鱼的家伙，死都不愿别人伸手帮忙。”

“咱们与他不一样，”老人说，“你刚五岁的时候我就让你帮忙拿东西了。”

“我记得，”小男孩说，“我马上就回来。你来一杯吧，在这里我们可以赊账的。”

他走了，光着脚丫踩在珊瑚石砌成的路上，朝存放鱼饵的冰窖走去。

老人慢悠悠地喝着咖啡，这点东西是他今儿一整天的食物，他知道

他得把它喝掉。很长时间以来，他对吃饭感到恶心，因此他从来不带午饭出海。船头放了一瓶水，这个就够他一整天的需要了。

小男孩带回来沙丁鱼和两份包在报纸里的鱼饵，然后他们沿着小路向小船走去，踩着沙地里的鹅卵石，他们将小船抬起，顺势推到水里。

“祝你好运，老大爷！”

“同样祝你好运。”老人说。他把桨绳系在桨栓上，俯身用劲，凭借桨片在水中的阻力，夜色朦胧中将船划出港去。老人听到其他沙滩上也有桨落水和划动的声音，尽管这个时候已经没有月光，他还看不清，但他还是知道在那些沙滩上也有其他船只正在准备出海。

偶尔也能听到有的船上有人在说话，但是除了“刷刷”的桨声外，大多数船只都悄无声息。一出港口，这些船只就四散开来各奔东西，驶向梦想能捕到鱼的福地。老人知道，自己的福地在远方，直往前划，慢慢将陆地抛在了后面，驶进清早海洋的清新空气中。看着有果囊马尾藻发出的磷光时，他划过了被渔夫们称为“大井”的一片水域。之所以被叫做“大井”，是因为那里突然有一个深达七百英寻的大坑，海水湍急，洋流撞击海底深渊的峭壁，形成猛烈的旋涡，形色各异的鱼儿都往那里聚集。在深不见底的海底洞穴中，汇集了海虾和可以充作鱼饵用的仔鱼，还有成群结队的柔鱼。夜里它们飘荡在海面下，便成为了其间经过的鱼类的中夜美餐。

老人在黑暗中划着船，已经感觉到清晨将要到来。他一边划船，一边听着飞鱼振尾出水的啪啪声，还有它们黑暗中振翅高飞的嘶嘶声。他是很喜欢飞鱼的，因为它们是他在海洋航行中最亲密无间的伙伴。他也替鸟儿们觉得失落，特别是那些娇弱的小黑燕鸥，它们总是不停地飞

翔，不停地寻觅食物，但大多数时候是一无所获的。他想，或许除了那些凶猛而又强悍的大鸟外，鸟儿活得比我们还要辛苦。既然海洋有时候是这样的残酷，为什么海燕那样的鸟儿却生的那么柔弱与纤细？大海是仁慈的，也非常的美丽。但是她有时竟能如此残暴，如此突然，这些飞翔着并从空中点水觅食的鸟儿，哀怜地发着轻轻叫声，天生一副难以在海上维持生计的样子！

在他的思想里，大海就是“俏佳人”La mar,这是西班牙语中表示人们对海洋抱有好感时的叫法。有时候，喜爱大海的人们也说她的坏话，不过总的说来是把大海当成女性来看待的。有些打鱼的年轻小伙子，用浮标当钓线上的浮子，贩卖鲨鱼肝赚得许多钱并买了汽艇，他们都管大海叫“帅小伙”Le mar。他们都把大海视为竞争对手或者某个地方，甚至看成仇敌。但是老人却总是把大海想象得女性化，有时她泽被苍生，有时又置若罔闻，纵使她一时任意狂躁，胡作非为，那也是事出有因，身不由己。他想，月亮能够影响着她，就像对一个女人的吸引一样。

他徐徐地划着船，并不使出多么大的力气，因为他将速度均匀地控制在了自己能够轻松驾驭的范围之内。海面平坦无波，除了水流时不时打个旋儿而已。海流的动力帮他分流了三分之一的工作量，当太阳渐渐升起的时候，他发现自己已经比预期的划得远了。

“我在深海区寻找了一个礼拜，可是连个小鱼仔都没捞到，”他想，“今儿个无论如何我要找到那些鲭鱼和长鳍金枪鱼群的藏身之处，没准儿一条大鱼就在里面呢。”

天刚蒙蒙亮，他便撒出去许多鱼饵。当海洋推着小船漂移的时候，鱼饵们都已经下到海里了。有一个鱼饵下沉在四十英寻的地方，第二个停在了七十五英寻的地方，第三个和第四个各自停在了一百英寻和一百

二十五英寻的湛蓝色的海水中。鱼饵是用新鲜的沙丁鱼做成的，头朝下，钓钩的钩身穿进小鱼的身子，捆绑得严严实实的，弯钩和尖端，以及钓钩所有突出的部分都被鱼肉包裹在内。钓钩穿过每条沙丁鱼的双眼，使得鱼身在突出的钢钩上形成半个环形。钓钩的任何一个地方对于大鱼来说，都是香喷喷、美滋滋的。

最深的那两根钓线上像坠子一样挂着的，是小男孩送给他的小金枪鱼，也叫长鳍金枪鱼。另外两根上，挂着从前用过的一条蓝和一条黄，但保存得依旧非常好，并且还有新鲜的沙丁鱼为它们增加香味和诱惑力。每根钓线都像是大铅笔那么粗，一头被缠在一根深绿色的钓竿上。这样，只要咬着饵的鱼轻轻地那么一拽或者一碰，就能拽着钓竿沉入海里。每个钓索上都有四十英寻长的线，需要的话还可以牢牢地接到另外备用的钓索上，如此一来，等到必要之时，一条鱼可以拽出的钓线能拉出三百多英寻长。

此刻，老人一边死死地盯着从小船边伸出的钓竿，看有没有什么动静，一边慢慢划着船，保持钓线垂直地停留在水下的某一恰当的位置。天已大明，太阳随时都会升起。

太阳慵懒地从海面上爬出来，老人看见那些低贴水面、离岸不远的渔船横穿洋流四散开去。紧接着太阳精神起来，水面上映射着刺眼的光芒。随后太阳从海平面上完全跳跃出来，平坦的海面如同一面镜子，阳光照射到海面上，反射到他的眼睛里，引起一阵剧烈的疼痛。因此他只顾划着，不敢对着太阳。他低下头，凝视着水里那几根一直下沉到深不见底的某处的钓线。他的钓线比任何人的都要垂直，这样，即使是在深不见底的洋流深处的不同深度，每一个鱼饵也会在他预想的位置上等待周围游动的鱼类自投罗网。有的渔夫的钓线随着海流起伏，当他们自以为在一百英寻的时候，其实也不过是在六十英寻的地方。

“可是，”他想，“每一次我都将它们放到了最恰当的地方，只不过我不走运。天晓得！也许今天就会时来运转，每一天都是一个崭新的日子。走好运固然好，不过我宁愿一丝不苟地做到位。这样，运气到来的时候，你就已经准备好了。”

已经过去了两个小时，现在的太阳越发的高了，向东看的时候也没有那么刺眼了。而此时只看得见三条船，显得非常低矮，游弋在近岸的海面上。

“初升的太阳总是刺痛我的双眼，我这一生都不能放过它们，”他想，“不过眼睛却还是好好的。日落时，虽然就要下山的太阳光线还是比较强，但是我却能够直接对视太阳而不会产生眼前发黑的感觉。不过当早上来临时却着实让人难熬。”

就在这时，他看见前头有只黑色军舰鸟鼓扇着长长的黑色翅膀在空中盘旋。它双翅斜着掠在身后，倏地俯冲，继而盘旋起来。

“它逮着什么了吧，”老人大声说道，“它绝不仅仅只是看看。”

他缓缓地荡着桨，往鸟儿盘旋的地方划去。他神色从容，仍将钓线一直保持着上下垂直的姿势。不过他已经稍稍靠近了海流，这样一来，尽管他利用黑鸟指路走得快了许多，但其章法还是一丝不苟地保持着。

这只黑军舰飞在空中，时而高飞，时而盘旋，双翅却纤毛未动。突然一个转身，疾速俯冲下来，老人只看见飞鱼从水下跃出，在海面上没命似地滑出。

“鳅！”老人大声说道，“大鳅！”

他收起船桨，从船头下面取出一根细钓线。钓线上挂着一段铁丝和

一只中号钓钩。他在钓钩上安放了一条沙丁鱼，安好后，把钓线的一头拴在了船艏的带环的螺栓上，并从船舷边上放了下去。接着他又把另一根钓线上的鱼饵安好，放到了船头的背阴处。然后他又划起船来，凝视着那只现在正低掠在海面上觅食的长翅膀黑军舰。

他屏气凝神地注视着，这只鸟儿忽然又要向下落。它翅膀斜着俯冲，疯了似地直追飞鱼身后，然而徒劳无功。在那些仓促逃命的鱼儿后面，老人看见那些大鳀紧紧跟着，汹涌起伏的潮流将海面弄得峰峦一样起伏。鳀们紧跟在飞起的海鱼下面，乘风破浪，等待飞鱼一旦落水，便迅猛地扎进水中。这着实是一个不小的鳀群，他想。他们铺得很开，飞鱼实在难逃虎口。那只黑鸟却没什么机会分一杯羹，对它来说，这些飞鱼个头大得根本难以捉到，并且速度惊人。

他看着飞鱼不时钻出水面，看着那只黑鸟徒劳无益的行动。鳀群也已经离我远去了，他想。它们游得太快，已经远走。不过没准儿还有那么一条掉队的被我逮到，也没准儿我企望的大鱼就在这群鳀附近游着呢。我的大鱼肯定在某个地方。

此刻远远望去，只见陆地上空的云朵仿佛连绵高耸的山峰一样上升着，海岸也抽成了一条狭长的绿色的线，岸背后隐约是些淡青色的小山冈。此刻的海水呈现出深蓝色，深得简直发紫。他低头朝海水看去，只见点点红色的浮游生物在深蓝色的海水中穿梭游走，这时水中的阳光幻化出奇异的光彩。他目不转睛地盯着那几根钓线，看着它们直直地浸入到看不见的深处。看到大量的浮游生物分散在这里，他很高兴，这说明鱼儿们就在这一带。这时太阳的屁股翘得好高，神气十足，阳光透过海水焕发出奇异的光彩，再加上陆地上空云朵的形状，一切都表明了天气晴朗的这个事实。这时那只海鸟也远飞得看不清楚了，几乎变作了一个黑点儿。水面上非常空旷，几乎没有什么东西，只看见有几片黄色马尾

藻，被太阳晒得发了白。还有一只僧帽水母，正紧贴着船舷浮动。它的紫色胶质浮囊已经成形，闪烁着彩虹般的七彩之光。它时而将身子歪向一边，时而又竖了起来，兴高采烈地浮动着，犹如一个大气泡。它那紫色的致命毒触须拖在身后足足有一码长。

“水母，海水被弄脏了，”老人说，“你这该死的婊子！”

他一边轻轻荡着桨，一边顺着荡桨的地方俯身往下看，看到一些小鱼，它们的颜色同那些拖在水中的触须是一样的，在触须之间和浮囊在浮动时形成的小片阴影中游着。水母的毒素对它们没有任何作用，但对人却不同。有一次老人拉上一条鱼来后，钓线上缠绕着不少触须，紫色的黏液像毒蛇的馋涎一般附着在上面。接触之后他的胳膊和手上就出现了疤痕和脓疮，跟碰了毒漆藤或栎叶毒漆树一样。只不过水母的毒素发作得更快，痛得就像鞭子抽在身上。

这些闪烁着彩虹般七彩的大气泡确实非常漂亮，不过正是由于这层美丽的画皮，使它们成为海里最具欺骗性的东西，所以老人很喜欢欣赏大海龟吃掉它们的样子。海龟一旦发现它们，就会直接从正面进攻，在前进的同时闭上双眼。如此一来，海龟从头到脚都处在坚硬似铁的龟壳的保护之下，然后就把水母连同触须一股脑儿全吞入肚中。老人很喜欢欣赏海龟的表演，喜欢在暴风骤雨过后的沙滩上遇到它们，喜欢听长着老茧的脚踩在龟背上发出的啪啪爆裂的声音。

他对青色的海龟和玳瑁怀有美好的感情，因为它们优美的姿态，惊人的速度，还有不菲的价值。不过他对那些大而无用的蠓龟怀有的是还算友好的不屑。它们有着黄色的龟壳，诡异的交配姿势，并且喜欢紧闭双眼兴高采烈地吞食僧帽水母。

虽然他也曾捕龟多年，但却不是由于对海龟有着什么神秘主义的想法。所有的海龟都令他感到伤心，甚至包括那些跟他的小船一样长、重量称起来能达到一吨的大梭龟。大部分人都对海龟很残酷无情，因为海龟被剖杀之后，心脏仍然能够突突地跳动几个小时。不过老人却想，我也有这样一颗心脏，我的手脚也跟它们的一样。因此为了使身子强壮有力，他也常常吃白色的海龟蛋。整个五月都以它们为食，这样获得了九十月份的好身体，能够有足够的力气去捕真正的大鱼。

很多渔夫的棚屋中都有一只存放鲨鱼肝油的大圆桶，桶就放在那儿，谁想喝都可以，老人每天都会去舀一杯喝。渔夫们大都十分讨厌这种油的味道，不过这实在比摸黑早起要舒服得多，并且它还能有效地防治一切伤风流感，对眼睛也有保护作用。

这时老人抬头往前看，看到那只黑鸟又在空中盘旋了。

“它找到鱼啦！”他大声说道。这时没有瞧见有一只飞鱼跃出水面，也没有瞧见小鱼纷纷四散奔逃的场景。不过，正当老人望着水里的時候，突然，一条小金枪鱼箭一般冲向空中，快速将身子转了个个儿，头朝下一个猛子扎进了水里。在阳光的照射下，金枪鱼的鳞闪烁出银白色的光，它刚回到水里，又有一条金枪鱼腾空跃起，接着一条又一条，纷纷跳出，朝向四面八方，搅得这片海域仿佛开了锅的沸水一般。它们跳很远去捕食小鱼，小鱼被围得团团转，它们冲过去，驱赶着，包围着。

要是这群金枪鱼游得再慢一点儿，我就可以冲到它们里面去捕食了，老人想。他凝视着由于群鱼翻搅而泛起的阵阵白沫，还凝视着那只黑军舰，只见它这时一个猛子扎下来，一头扎向鱼群，而这群鱼则在惊慌失措中，被迫浮出了水面。

“这只鸟可真是个好帮手。”老人说。就在这时，他的脚感觉到船艏那根细钓线越绷越紧，缠得生疼，原来在他脚上已绕了一圈。于是他放下桨，死死抓住钓线，用力往回拉。他感到钓线上的小金枪鱼在一抖一抖地往外拽，拽得力量还不小。他越使劲往回拉，钓线就抖得越厉害。这时他看到水中露出了蓝色的鱼背和金色的两侧，然后用力将挂着鱼的钓线甩过船舷，掉到船上。阳光照射下，可以看出，这条外形长得有点像颗子弹的鱼身子非常结实，瞪着一双呆傻的大眼睛，尾巴动作倒是干净利落，噼里啪啦又快又猛地拍打着船板，随着砰砰几声，它的力气也逐渐耗尽。老人善意地在它头部猛烈击打了一下，将它抖动着的身体一脚踢到了船艏背阴的地方。

“长鳍金枪鱼，”他大声说道，“倒是钓大鱼的良饵，这个头儿足有十磅重吧。”

不知从什么时候，他开始在没人陪伴的时候高声自言自语了。前几年他试过在独自一人时唱歌，那是他在小渔船和捕海龟的小船上值班的时候，每当夜深人静，他便一人哼唱。也不记得是不是小男孩离开他后，他一个人待着时才开始自言自语的。但他带着小男孩一起逮鱼的时候，他们是很少开口说话的。他们说话的时候一般是夜阑人静时分，或者是因为坏天气而被暴风雨困在海上的日子里。如不是十分必要，他们不在海上交谈，这已是大家公认的应有的品德。老人也不例外，因此他从来都不违背这点。不过现在旁边也没有什么人会受到他的打扰，他也就多次开口说出了自己的心声。

“如果别人听到我大声地自言自语，一定会认为我疯了，”他大声说道，“不过反正我正常得很，那就不用理会了，他们想说就说吧。有钱的人可以在船上听收音机，能了解到棒球赛的最新消息。”

现在能且只能想那件我与生俱来要做的事，怎么能净考虑棒球呢，他想。在那个鱼群附近很可能游荡着一条大鱼，我逮住的，也仅仅是正在捕食的金枪鱼群中的一条散兵游勇。不过它们正快速地向远方行进着，今天所有在海面上露头的，每一个都朝东北方疾速地游着。难道每天的这个时候都一定会这样吗？或者这根本就是我所不知的关于天气的预兆？

现在，连海岸上那一道绿色也消逝在眼前，只是朦朦胧胧地看到青山山巅上像是覆盖着白雪的山峰，以及山峰上空仿佛高耸着雪山的云彩。海水的颜色很深，进入海水中的阳光被幻化出彩虹般的七彩。无数星星点点的浮游生物也都在艳阳高照下消失得无影无踪。浩瀚的蓝色海洋中，老人只看到海水深处幻化成的巨大的七色光带，以及他那笔直延伸到一英里深的钓线。

渔人们将所有这种同类的鱼都统称为金枪鱼，只有在将它们拿去出售，或者用来换鱼饵时，才使用它们独有的名字以示区分。它们此刻再次下沉。这时的阳光很毒，老人觉得脖子上灼热难耐，他一边划着船，背上一边一滴滴地流着汗。

我本可以任船随意地在海上漂，他想，管它呢，先睡一觉，把钓线拴到脚趾上，一有动静我也就醒了。不过，毕竟今天是第八十五天了，我应该拿出全部精力来好好钓一整天鱼。

他目不转睛地盯着钓线，突然，一根伸出水面的绿色钓竿往下一沉。

“上啦，”他说，“上啦！”说着抽下双桨，船平稳未动。他把钓线夹在拇指和食指中间，然后去拉。他没有感到钓线多紧，也没觉得有多

重，很轻松地抓在手里。为了试探，他再次拉了一下，拉得不紧也不重，这下他彻底清楚是怎么回事了。原来在水下一百英寻的深处，就在手工制作的钓钩从小金枪鱼头部穿出来的地方，一条大马林鱼正在吃包裹着钓钩的沙丁鱼。

老人轻巧地拉着钓线，用左手轻轻将钓线从竿子上解下来。现在他可以让钓线在手指间轻松穿梭划动，而不会让鱼有被拉动的感觉。

“距离岸边这么远，又是在这个月份，这条鱼绝对小不了，”他想，“吃鱼饵吧，鱼儿啊。吃吧，请你吃吧。在这深达六百英尺的地方，在这漆黑冰冷的水底，鱼儿呀，为了这新鲜的饵料，在黑暗中绕个圈，拐回来将它们吃掉吧！”

他感觉到钓线上有了轻轻的拉力，紧接着又是重重的一下，猜一定是有沙丁鱼的鱼头被拽下来。随后就悄无声息了。

“上来吧，”老人大声说道，“再转回到这里来啊，你们闻闻这些鱼饵哟！还不赶快享用它们，不够还有条金枪鱼呢。鱼肉绝对肥硕结实，清爽可口。千万别和我客气，乖鱼儿，吃吧。”

老人拇指和食指之间夹着钓线正襟待命。他的眼睛不只盯着这根，还有那几根钓线也在他视线之内，说不定这鱼正在一个未知的地方忽上忽下，接着又是一次轻轻巧巧的拉动。

“它会上钩的，”老人大声说道，“求上帝保佑它上钩吧！”

很遗憾，它并没上钩，而是游走了。老人的手里再也没有丝毫动静。

“它不会游走的，”他说，“上帝知道，它绝不可能游走的。它只是

在兜圈子呢，说不定以前它上过钩，现在脑子里还有印象。”

接着手中的钓线轻轻动弹了一下，他很高兴。

“刚才它只不过兜了个圈子呢，”他说，“它一定会上钩的。”

随着这一下轻轻的一拉，他高兴起来，紧接着手中的钓线又遭遇了一下猛烈的拉动，力量很重，重得简直难以置信。这股重力来源于鱼本身的重量，然后他松了松手，让钓线一直顺着往下溜，并将两卷备用钓线卷儿中的一卷放了出去。钓线从老人手指之间轻轻滑下水中的时候，他仍能感受到巨大的重量，尽管拇指和食指施加的压力微乎其微。

“多么有力量的一条鱼啊，”他说，“它正用嘴斜叼着鱼饵游走呢。”

“它一会儿就会转过身来并吞下鱼饵的。”他不做声，只默默地合计着。因为他知道，好事说出口，该来也会走。他对这条鱼的分量已经有了把握，甚至他已可以想象到它在黑暗中，用嘴斜叼着金枪鱼游走的样子。此刻他察觉不到什么动静了，它好像在按兵不动，但分量仍然没变。紧接着分量一点一点地增加着，他便将钓线再放出一点儿。有一阵子他拇指和食指间加大了劲儿，钓线上的重量也随之增加了，这重量直接来自水中深处。

“它上钩啦，”他说，“那我就让它美餐一顿吧。”

他让钓线在指缝间往下滑着，一面往下伸出左手，解开两个备用钓线卷儿的头，系在另外两个备用钓线卷儿上。现在，一切都已准备妥当，除了正在用着的钓线卷儿，还有三卷四十英寻长的备用钓线。

“再多吃一点儿吧，”他说，“尽情地享受吧。”

“吃吧，好让钩尖儿直接穿进你的心脏，将你弄死，”他想，“轻松地游上来吧，我将用渔叉刺穿你的身子。好吧，你准备好了吗？你填饱肚子了没有？”

“来吧！”他大声说道，双手用力猛拉钓线。收回了一码，接着一劲儿接着一劲儿地猛力拉扯，抡圆胳膊，全身用劲儿，两臂轮换着奋力往上拉。

一点儿用也没有。那鱼只顾悠悠游走，老人却没有办法再将它拉近一英寸。他的钓线非常结实，专门为了钓大鱼而做的。他把钓线拽到背后用力猛拉，绷紧钓线，水珠四溅。接着钓线在水中慢慢发出被拖长的嘶嘶声，但他仍然紧紧握着它，依靠座板奋力撑住了自己的身子，同时身子后仰来顶住大鱼的拉力。就这样，小船往西北方慢慢漂去。

这鱼不停地向前游，平静的水面上，鱼和船都缓缓前行。其他的几个鱼饵仍然静静地躺在水中，不需要分心照顾。

“那孩子也在这里就好了，”老人低声念道，“现在我这样被一条鱼拖着前进，和系纤绳的柱子还有什么差别。我倒是可以把钓线绑在船舷上，可是这样的话，船舷就完蛋了。我无论如何也得拉住它，在需要的时候还得继续放出长线。谢天谢地，还好它是在朝前游，没有往水底钻。”

“要是它奋力往水底沉，我怎么办？我不知道。要是它往水底钻，死在那里，我该怎么办？我不知道。但是我得想点对策做点什么。我还有很多事情要做。”

他抓紧了深陷到后背里的钓线，死死地盯着它斜伸向水中。这时的小船，仍然一刻不停地朝西北方游去。

“这样准保它会完蛋，”老人想，“它不可能一直这么游下去的。”然而已经过去四个小时了，大鱼仍然拽着小船，一刻不停地游向大海深处。而老人，则依然用力抓着深陷到后背里的钓线。

“它是在中午上钩的，”他说，“不过我却仍然没有见过它。”

鱼上钩之前，老人拉下草帽紧扣在脑袋上，而这时被勒得脑门生疼。他还觉得口渴得很，于是双膝跪倒，小心翼翼地，避免晃动了钓线。然后尽量往船头爬去，伸手去拿水瓶。他拧开瓶盖，喝了一点儿水，倚在船头上稍事休息。坐在桅杆和船帆上，尽量什么都不想，只是耐心熬着。

他向后张望时，发现已经看不见陆地了。他想：“无论如何我都能借着哈瓦那的灯光回去的，这没什么。离太阳下山还有两个小时，没准儿在那之前大鱼就浮上来了。再不行就等月亮出来再上来。要是还没有，或许再等太阳出来再上来。我没抽筋，手脚还很灵活，身子骨儿也壮实得很，而它的嘴却是结结实实地上了钩了。不过这将会是一条多大的鱼啊，拉力竟然如此惊人。它算是和钢钩死命地挂在了一起。我倒是想看看我的对手长什么样，一眼也成。”

根据夜观星斗，老人发现那鱼竟然整整一夜都没有改变路线，也没有改变方向。自从太阳落山后，天也变得冷了起来，老人背上、胳膊上和腿上的汗水都已经干了，感到浑身发冷。白天的时候，他曾取出盖在鱼饵盒子上的麻袋，铺在太阳底下晒干了。太阳下山后，他就把麻袋系在了脖子上，披在背上，并且小心翼翼地把它塞到了正勒在肩上的钓线下面。现在钓线下面垫着麻袋，他都已能弯腰靠到船头上了，如此一来，简直舒服极了。其实这个姿势也只能略微好受一点儿而已，可他却以为简直舒服极了。

“我降服不了它，它也降服不了我，”他想，“如果它总是这么游下去的话，那我们谁也降服不了谁。”

有一次他站起来，往船舷外头撒尿，顺便仰望星辰，查对一下航行的方向。这时钓线从他肩膀上像一道磷光一般直伸进水中，鱼和船的速度顿时都慢了下来。哈瓦那的灯光看来也暗了很多，他知道了，一定是海流将它们正在往东方推送。“要是现在连哈瓦那的灯光都看不到的话，我们一定朝东走得很远了，”他想，“如果这条鱼一直朝着这个方向游的话，那我肯定还能有几个小时看得见灯光。今天的棒球大联赛的结果也不知道怎么样，”他想，“干我们这行的，有个收音机就是神仙过的日子了。”马上他又想，“总惦记这些东西，想想你现在在干吗吧，你可决不能干蠢事。”

接着他大声说道：“真希望那个小男孩就在身边啊！不仅可以给我帮下忙，还能开阔一下眼界。这真是难得的场景啊！”

“上了年纪的人就不该单独待着了，”他想。“可这也是难免的。趁金枪鱼没坏时我就必须把它吃掉，否则体力难以持续。一定要记住，哪怕多不愿意吃，也得在早上把它消灭干净。一定要记住。”他自言自语道。

到了夜里有两条海豚游到了小船附近，他听见它们翻滚和喷水的声音。在这喷水的声音里，老人就能听出门道来，雄海豚喷水闹腾得很，而雌海豚喷水却像叹息。

“真不错，”他说，“它们嬉笑玩耍，打打闹闹，相亲相爱。和飞鱼一样，它们是我们的兄弟。”

接着他对这条被他钓住的大鱼渐渐心生怜悯了。“它真是既了不起

又稀有，想必年岁也一定很大，”他想，“我从来都没有钓过这么力大又特别的鱼。或许它太过狡猾，不想跳出水来。只要跳出水来乱冲乱撞一番，它就能把我摧毁。不过，或许它上钩次数很多，与人搏斗非常在行。它恐怕也没料到这次碰到的对手只是个独自一人的老头儿。不过，这得是多大的一条鱼啊，要是鱼肉还不错的话，在市场上可就值钱啦。从它咬饵的动作上来看像是条雄鱼，从拽拉钓线的行动上来看也是，与人搏斗时也从容得很。不知道它葫芦里卖的什么药，或者其实和我一样，反正横竖都豁出去了。”

他还记得，有一次遇到两条大马林鱼并逮到了其中一条。雄鱼总是让雌的先吃东西，所以雌鱼上钩了。雌鱼一上钩，便惊慌失措，发了狂似的拼命挣扎，不一会儿就筋疲力尽了。而雄鱼却自始至终都陪在它身边，在钓线边上蹿下跳，与它一起在水面上打转。雄鱼离得钓线并不远，老人非常担心它用尾巴将钓线割断，它的尾巴锋利得像把大镰刀，并且和大镰刀差不多大，外形也非常像。老人用钩子把雌鱼拉上来，抓住边似砂纸、状如细剑的长嘴，用木棍对着它头顶不断打击，最后打得颜色变得与镜子背面的红色差不多了，再由小男孩帮着一起把它拖上船。在这段过程中，雄鱼一直游走在小船附近。随后，老人解下钓线，刚刚拿起渔叉的时候，雄鱼猛地冲出水面，冲得很高，寻觅雌鱼的踪迹。接着掉下来，扎进深水中，他那张开的淡紫色的胸鳍，仿佛伸展的翅膀，露出身子上所有的淡紫色的宽条纹。老人记得，它非常美丽，而且它始终在附近游弋，不肯离去。

“这是我见过的最令人伤心的场景。”老人想。小男孩也很伤心，于是在请求了雌鱼的原谅后，当即把它宰掉了。

“真希望小男孩也能在这里。”他大声说道。船头有块木板，外围已被磨圆了，老人将身子靠在上面。肩上的钓线勒得很紧，老人能感受到

这条大鱼的力量是多么巨大。眼下它正按自己的方向稳稳地游着。

“我使用了欺骗的伎俩，它也做出了自己的抉择。”老人想。

“它选择留在黑暗的深水中，任何圈套、陷阱和诡计它都远远地躲开。我选择到没有人去过的地方去找它，到这世上没人到过的地方。从中午开始，我跟它就拴在一起了，现在还是如此。并且，我们都孤军作战。”

“或许我不该成为一名渔夫，”他想，“不过这却是我命中注定的行当。我一定得记住了，天一亮就吃了那条金枪鱼。”

临近天亮不久的某个时刻，他身后的一个鱼饵被什么东西咬了一下。“啪”的一声，钓竿折了，钓线便顺着船舷往外滑走。黑暗中他拔出鞘中的刀子，左肩承受着大鱼所有的拉力，同时身子后仰，在船舷的木头上割断了钓线。接着又割断了离他最近的那根钓线，摸着黑把备用的还没放出的两个钓线卷儿的断头系在一起。他一只手熟练地完成着这一切，并且在牢牢打结的同时，用一只脚踩在钓线卷儿上，防止晃动。眼下手头上有六卷备用的钓线了，再有大鱼咬钩的那根线上的两卷，现在都接到一起了。

他想：“等天亮了，无论如何我都要回到那根深入水下四十英寻的钓线边，把它割断，接在备用钓线卷儿上。这样一来，我将损失两百英寻优质的卡塔卢尼亚钓线，还有渔钩和接线。但这些都是可以再备齐的，要是别的鱼上了钩而丢了这条大鱼，那能到哪里再找寻呢？我不知道刚才是什么鱼在咬饵，或许是条大马林鱼，也有可能是剑鱼，也有可能是鲨鱼。我根本没有时间去思考，我必须当即将它甩开。”

他大声说道：“真希望小男孩也能在这儿。”

“但是小男孩并不在这儿，”他想。“现在你只是孤身一人，你最好无论如何都要回到最边上的那根钓线边上，甭管天黑不黑，把它割断，接上那两个备用的钓线卷儿。”

想着想着也就起身干了。黑灯瞎火地干活真不容易，有一次那条大鱼一个翻身，将他掀倒在地，头朝下，脸抢地，眼睛下面被划开了一道口子。鲜血从脸颊上滚下来，还没到下巴就开始凝结，干在上面了。然后他扭动着身子，移到船头，倚在木船舷上喘了口气。他收拾好麻袋，在肩膀上将钓线挪了挪位置，然后，用肩膀将它固定好，小心翼翼地抓着钓线拽了拽，感受一下大鱼现在的拉力，接着手伸到水中测量小船行驶的速度。

不清楚为什么刚才这家伙突然晃动了一下，很可能是钓线划到了它高高隆起的后背。“它的后背再痛，也没我的痛。不过它力气总不会大到永远拽着小船游吧。而我现在所有横生枝节的可能都解决了，并且还有很多可以备用的钓线，一个人还有什么需要的呢？”

“鱼啊，”他轻声说道，“我愿意奉陪你，直到死亡。”

“我觉得，它也愿意奉陪我直到死亡的，”老人想。他等待着白天的到来。现在正是天将放明的时候，冷风刺骨，他的身子紧紧地倚靠在木船舷上，以此来获取些许的温暖。“它能坚持多长时间，我也能坚持多长时间，”他想。天渐渐有点亮光了，照见伸展的钓线直插入水下。小船仍旧稳稳地游走着，早上的太阳刚刚露头儿，阳光直直地射在老人的右肩上。

“它在向北边游啊，”老人说，“海流可能会把我们送往遥远的东方。希望它顺着海流的方向而转向吧，那就表明它已渐渐累了。”

太阳的屁股撅得更高了，老人也知道，并没有迹象表明大鱼转累了，仅仅有一个迹象是有利的，那就是钓线的倾斜度表明了现在它正游走在比先前较浅的地方。这虽然不能表明它一定会跳出水面，但也难说不会发生这种情况。

“上帝啊，让它使劲儿往上跳吧，”老人说，“我的钓线足够长，完全有能力应付它。”

“我应该稍稍收紧一下钓线，让它感到疼痛，或许就会跳出来了，”他想，“既然天都已经亮了，就让它往上跳，如果跳出来的话，沿着后背的那些液囊就会充满空气，那么它就不能再沉到深水里去死了。”

他试着更加用力地拉扯钓线，不过自打这条鱼咬钩以来，钓线就已经绷得快要断了。他奋力朝后压着身子去拉扯钓线，感觉到线已经紧到无法再用力了。“无论如何我都不能突然使劲拉线，”他想，“每猛拉一次，钓钩划出的口子就会被拉得更宽，要是它猛地跳那么一下的话，钓钩很可能就脱掉了。不管怎么说，太阳出来我就舒服得多了，这下我不拿眼睛正对着太阳看了。”

钓线上挂着黄色的海藻，这样会给鱼增加不少拉力，一想到这些老人就很高兴。而夜间看到的强烈的磷光，也是由这种黄色的果囊马尾藻所赐。

“鱼儿，”他说，“我爱你，也非常敬重你。但是，今天天黑之前，我一定要把你干掉。”

“希望能够做到，”他想。

在北方，有一只小鸟正在向小船这里飞来。这是一只莺鸟，在水面低低地飞着。老人发觉，它已经非常疲倦了。

小鸟落在船艄上，在那儿喘了口气。然后，绕着老人的头低旋了一周，停在那根钓线上，它觉得那里更加舒服一些。

“你多大了？”老人问小鸟，“头一次飞得这么远吧？”

他说话的时候，小鸟看着他。疲倦至极的小鸟，还没仔细看呢，小巧的爪子就紧紧地将钓线抓住了，在上面晃晃悠悠。

“钓线很牢靠的，”老人对它说，“非常牢靠，夜里一点儿风都没有，纹丝不动。你怎么疲倦成这个样子啊，现在的小鸟怎么这么弱不禁风啊？”

“还有跑到海上来要抓它们的鹰，”他想。不过他没跟小鸟讲，反正讲了它也听不懂，并且要不了多久就能领略老鹰的招数了。

“好好休息休息吧，小鸟，”他说，“然后就出征大海，像人，或者是鸟，或者是鱼一样，去碰碰运气吧。”

挺了一夜的后背变得很僵，现在疼痛难忍，靠着说话还能提提气。

“小鸟啊，如果你喜欢的话可以待在我家，”他说，“现在有风，我不能扯起帆来借着顺风送你回去，实在是抱歉。不过现在我总有个伙计相伴了。”

就是这时，大鱼突然身子斜向一边，将老人甩到船头。若不是他此刻及时稳住身体并放出钓线，只怕就被鱼拖到海里了。

钓线猛地一动，小鸟就飞走了，老人连它走都没看见。他小心翼翼地用右手摸了摸钓线，发现手正在流血。

“看来有什么东西把鱼给伤着了。”他大声说道。他试着用力往回拉着钓线，看看能否让鱼掉转身子。当拉到就要绷断的时候，他就稳稳地抓紧了钓线，身子奋力向后仰，以此来平衡钓线上的拉力。

“现在你感到痛了吧，鱼啊，”他说，“上帝明鉴，我也是一样。”

他回过头来寻找刚才的那只小鸟，因为希望它能够与他为伴。可是小鸟飞走了，无影无迹。

“你也没待多长时间啊，”老人想，“可是除非你飞到岸上，要不然你去的 place 风卷浪滚，比这里要凶险得多。为什么那鱼只是一拉，我就划破手了？如今我一定是越来越笨了。再者，也有可能是因为我只顾盯着那只小鸟看，心里盘算着它的事儿了。现在我得认真干自己的活儿了，一会儿得吃掉那条金枪鱼，以保存体力。”

“真希望那个小男孩能在这里，再有，我手头有点儿盐也好。”他大声说道。

他把钓线的重压移到左肩上，小心地跪好，在海水里洗起手来。他将手伸到海水里，泡了有一分多钟，血液从水中扩散开来，随着船的移动，海水稳稳地拍打在他手臂上。

“它游得比先前慢多了。”他说。

老人急切地想将手继续浸泡在盐水中，但又担心那鱼再猛地歪上一歪。于是强打起精神，站起身来，将手对着太阳高举着。受伤的地方不过是被钓线勒了一下，划破了肉，但这却恰恰是手上用劲儿的地方。他

清楚地知道，要做成这件事儿，必须用这只手来实现，动手之前手先挂彩实非他所愿。

“现在，”手慢慢晒干了，他说，“该是吃小金枪鱼的时候了。我可以用拉钩钩过来，在这里舒舒服服地享用。”

他跪了下来，用拉钩摸索到了那条金枪鱼，然后十分小心地——以防碰到那几卷钓线——把它钩到自己这边来了。他再次用左肩背住了钓线，在座板上用左手和胳膊支撑着，从渔钩上拿下金枪鱼，然后把拉钩放回原处。他单腿跪压在鱼身上，把他从脖颈到尾部纵向割开，割成一条条深红色的鱼肉，都是呈楔形的肉条。他首先从脊骨边动刀，直条条划到腹部。他割下了六条，把他们铺排在船头木板上，然后把刀子在裤子上蹭了蹭，提起鱼尾巴，将鱼骨头扔向水中。

“我想这样的一条肉超出了我的胃口。”说着，将其中的一条鱼肉，用刀切成了两半。钓线一直紧绷着，他厌恶地盯着自己的左手，而此时，它正紧紧抓着那根粗壮的钓线。

“这破手！”他说，“愿意抽你就抽吧，直接变成一只鸟爪子得了。看对你能有什么好处。”

“快点吧，”他边想边低头往下看，黑暗的深水中，钓线斜插其中，“快点吃了它吧，吃了手就有力气了。这只手实在也没做错什么，别忘记你已经和鱼周旋了好几个小时了。但是你一定能和它坚持到底的。现在就把金枪鱼吃了吧。”

他捡起半条鱼肉，塞到嘴里，慢慢地咀嚼着。也并不是特别难吃。

“好好嚼嚼，”他想，“连汁带水都吞下去。要是再能佐一点儿酸橙

或者柠檬或者食盐什么的，也许就成了美味了。”

“觉得怎么样了，手啊？”他问那只抽筋的左手，现在它硬得和僵尸差不多，“为了你，我就再多吃一点儿。”

接着，他把那条鱼肉的另一半也放到了嘴里，他细细地咀嚼着，然后吐出了鱼皮。

“手啊，现在怎么样了？是不是现在还不好说？”

他又捡起一整条鱼肉，慢慢咀嚼起来。

“这条鱼真是壮实，而且血气很足，”他想，“幸好我抓到的是它，而不是鳅，鳅太甜了。而这鱼一点甜味都没有，精气神全藏在里头。”

“不过，现在最有价值的就是实干了，其他的都没用，”他想，“真希望我能有点儿盐，我不知道剩下的鱼肉会不会被太阳晒坏或者晒干了，所以还是吃光为妙，虽然这会儿一点儿都不饿。现在，这条大鱼还很平静，也很安稳。要是我把这些鱼肉都吃光了，就有充足的力气对付它了。”

“忍着点儿吧，手啊，”他说，“为了你我才这么吃东西的。”

“我倒真希望也能喂喂这条大鱼，”他想，“它是我的兄弟，但是我却不得不杀死它，我需要保存体力来完成这件事。”他慢慢地，认真地，吃光了所有的楔形的鱼肉条。

他伸直腰板儿，在裤子上擦了擦手。

“好了，”他说，“你松开钓线吧，手啊，我将只用右手来对付这条

大鱼，除非你不再胡闹了。”他用左脚踩住刚刚用左手紧紧抓着的粗壮钓线，同时身子奋力向后仰，用后背来顶住钓线的强大拉力。

“上帝保佑，快别让这手再抽筋了，”他说，“因为我实在不清楚这条鱼将会有多大的动作。”

“可是它看起来非常平静，”他想，“并且在照着自己的意图行走。不过它在打什么算盘呢，我又在盘算什么呢？它个头儿那么大，所以我一定要应机而动，根据它的举动来制定自己的计划。只要它跳出水面，我就能杀死它。可是它却一直停留在下面，死活不上来。那么我也只好奉陪到底了。”

他在裤子上擦了擦抽筋的左手，想活动一下手指，可是手仍然蜷缩着不能张开。“或许等太阳出来了，它也就能张开了，”他想，“或许等这条强壮的金枪鱼消化后，它也就能张开了。要是我非用这只手不可，那么我将不惜一切代价把它掰开。然而现在我却不想强行把它掰开。让它自己慢慢张开，自动恢复原样吧。毕竟由于昨天夜里不得不解开每条钓线，并接到一起，已经把这只手使用过度了。”

他望着辽阔的大海，感到自己是如此孤零零的一个人。可是，他能看到黑暗的深水中晃动着的如彩虹般的七彩光，看得到钓线一直延伸下去，看得到平静的海面上那粼粼的微波。这时，风吹得云层堆积在一起。他朝前眺望，看到一群野鸭纷纷从水面上飞起，它们与天空的映衬相得益彰，接着影影绰绰，尔后又清晰可辨。老人感到自己的孤单之情得到了缓解，即使是一个人在海上。

他联想到，有些驾着小船航海的人，是惧怕来到一眼不见陆地的地方的。他知道，在天气会突然变坏的几个月里，他们害怕也是情有可原

的。现在虽说正是飓风肆虐的月份，但是若飓风不来，这个月也恰恰是一年中天气最好的月份。

要是真有飓风降临，你若正在海上的话，是无论如何都可提前几天从天空看出征兆的。“岸上的人们是看不到的，因为他们根本不清楚要看什么，”他想，“其实陆地上也一定会出现诡异的景象，比如云朵的形状会有变化。不过现在是没有飓风的。”

他望着天空，看见白色的云朵堆积成团，外形像一堆堆诱人的冰激淋。而在更加高远的上空，在九月的高爽天空的掩映下，云朵卷卷的像一缕缕白色的羽毛。

“微风，”他说，“天气是站在我这边的，鱼啊。”

他的左手仍旧抽着筋，不过他正缓缓地努力将它撑开。

“我讨厌抽筋，”他想，“抽筋就是在背叛自己的身体。如果因为食物中毒导致拉肚子或者呕吐的话，那确实也很丢人。但是抽筋，在西班牙语中简直就是对自己的侮辱，尤其是孤身一人的时候。”

“如果小男孩在这里的话，他一定会帮我按摩按摩的，从前臂开始往下按摩，”他想，“当然这手早晚会张开的。”

然后，当他还没察觉到钓线在水里的斜度发生变化时，摸钓线的右手已经感觉到上面拉力的变化了。紧接着，当他弯下腰，对着钓线，用左手快速拍打大腿的时候，他分明看见了倾斜的钓线正在慢慢升起。

“它就要上来了！”他说，“快张开吧，手啊，请你快点儿吧！”

这时，随着钓线缓缓而又稳健地上升，小船前面的海面逐渐隆起，

大鱼总算是出水了！它一点一点不停地往上钻，身子将两边的海水迅疾地排开。在阳光的照射下，它闪闪发光，清晰可见头颅和后背那发黑的深紫色，两侧的条纹在阳光的照射下显得非常宽阔，显现出的却是和后背不一样的淡紫色。它的嘴从上到下，由粗到细，状如轻剑，而且长度惊人，约有棒球棒那么长。只见它从头到尾刚刚露出水面，就“滋溜”一声像潜水员似的潜入水中。老人眼瞅着它巨型镰刀一样的尾巴进入水中，钓线开始疾速往外滑。

“它比我这小船还长两英尺。”老人说。滑向水中的钓线虽然速度很快，但却非常平稳，说明大鱼并没有受到惊吓。老人双手拉住钓线，用的力气恰到好处，既能将大鱼拽住，又保证线不会被它扯断。他知道，如果他不能稳稳地让它慢下来，这条大鱼就有可能连钓线全部拽走，还会将其绷断。

“它确实是一条大鱼，我一定要将它收服，”他想，“我决不能让它知道它的力量究竟有多大，天知道要是它疾速奔逃的话，会发生什么意想不到的事情。如果我是它，现在我就攒足全身的劲儿，疯狂奔跑，直到绷断什么东西为止。谢天谢地，尽管它们比我们更高尚，力量更强大，但它们却没我们这些要杀死它们的人聪明。”

老人对大鱼并不陌生，超过一千磅的也见过不少，上半辈子还收获过两条那样的大家伙，但从来都不是孤身一人做到的。此刻，他一个人，在被陆地远远抛开的海里，却和一条他听所未听，闻所未闻的大鱼捆绑在一起，甚至，他的左手仍如同紧握的鹰爪子一般紧缩着。

“不过很快就会好的，”他想，“它肯定能好起来，并与我的右手共同作战。有三样东西是兄弟：这条大鱼、我的左手和右手。这只手一定会好起来的。真是可恶，这当头儿它竟抽筋！”鱼的速度又慢下来了，

用平时的速度继续游着。

“实在搞不明白它刚才为什么会跳出来那么一下，”老人想，“它的跳跃，仿佛是为了让我知道他有多大个儿。不管怎么样，我现在也确实知道了。真希望我也能让它看看我是一个怎样的人。然而这就会让它看到这只抽筋的手了。还是让它误以为我其实比现在要更强健吧，不过我也不是做不到那样。真希望我现在变成那条鱼，”他想，“利用它的所有力量，来对付的仅仅是我的意志和智慧。”

他悠然自得地倚在木船舷上，疼痛发作了便忍着。大鱼稳稳地移动着，带领着小船穿越深色的海水慢慢前行。在东风的吹拂下，海面上泛起阵阵微浪，中午的时候，老人抽筋的左手终于伸展开来，恢复正常了。

“鱼啊，这对你可不是好消息啊。”他说着，把肩上的钓线在麻袋上移了下位置。

他觉得舒爽，不过也很痛苦，但是他却拒不承认是痛苦。

“我不信教，”他说，“不过如果能让我逮到这条大鱼，我情愿念十遍《天主经》和十遍《圣母经》。并且我还许愿，如果能让我逮住它，我一定朝拜科布莱的圣母。我许愿。”

他呆板地念起祷告来。当太疲乏而无法背诵出祷文来的时候，他就加快速度，让字句能够脱口而出。“《圣母经》比《天主经》好念。”他想。

“万福玛利亚，尊享天恩者，主与你同在。众女汝独尊，汝子名耶稣，同享圣尊宠。圣母玛利亚，为我等罪孽，祈祷沐圣恩，从今至死

后。阿门，”说完，他又补充说道，“万福童贞圣母，为这条鱼的死亡祈祷吧，尽管它是那么的了不起。”

念完了祷告，他顿时觉得舒服了很多，但刚才的疼痛依旧，并没有消失，甚至是更严重了一些。于是，他倚靠在船头的木船舷上，机械地活动起左手的手指来。

虽然这会儿正吹着温柔的微风，但阳光却仍旧很热。

“那些船艙的细钓线还是再重新装上钓饵比较好，”他说，“要是这条大鱼还打算周旋一夜的话，我得多吃些东西，况且，瓶里的水也快完了。看样子，在这里要逮也只能逮到鳅。不过，趁着新鲜享用鳅，味道倒也不错。要是今天夜里船上能跳来条飞鱼就好了，遗憾的是我没有灯光，实在没什么吸引力。生吃飞鱼的感觉棒极了，并且不需要动手切它们。现在对我来说最重要的是一定要保存所有的体力。上帝啊，这条鱼竟有这么大，我可做梦也没有想到。”

“但是我还是要宰掉它了，”他说，“无论它有多么了不起，有多么神气。”

“当然这不公平，”他想，“但是我就是要让它明白，一个人的能量有多大，一个人的耐力有多强。”

“我跟那个小男孩说起过，我是个和别人不太一样的老头儿，”他说，“现在是证明这话的时候了。”

他已经上千次的证明过，但那都不算什么了。现在他还得再一次地证明自己。每一次都是新的开始，每次要这么做的时候，他绝不会去思考过去的丰功伟绩。

“真希望它进入梦乡，那么我也能进入梦乡，梦到狮子，”他想，“实在搞不清楚，为什么现在的梦境中出现的大都是狮子？”“别琢磨了，老头儿，”他自言自语道，“现在，你最好轻轻地倚着木船舷喘口气休息休息，别的什么都不要考虑。它正忙得热火朝天呢，而你则少活动为妙。”

已经到了下午时分，小船仍然一停不停地慢慢稳稳地游走着。不过由于东风的吹拂，小船阻力增加，老人在细浪的作用下悠悠地漂流着，后背上的钓线勒得也没那么紧了，变得舒服而又柔和多了。

下午有那么一次，钓线再次上升。不过大鱼仅仅是在水下往稍微高一点的地方继续移动而已，并没露出水面。太阳光投射在老人的左臂、左肩和后背上，显而易见，大鱼又转而往东北方游走了。

既然老人与这大鱼有过一面之缘，那他可以想象得出它游水的样子，张着像翅膀一样阔大的胸鳍，竖着的大尾巴划破幽深的海水。“不清楚在那样深的海水里，它到底能看得见多少东西，”老人想，“它有一双比马眼大得多的眼睛，不过马的眼睛在黑暗中也能看得见东西。以前我在黑暗中也能看得清东西，当然不是在伸手不见五指的地方，简直能做得与猫没有分别。”

在阳光的照射下，再加上他手指的不断活动，那只抽筋的左手现在彻底恢复正常了。于是他将钓线的拉力转移一些给左手，同时耸了耸肩上的肌肉，把钓线换了个位置，让勒疼的地方休息休息。

“要是你仍然不觉得累的话，鱼啊，”他大声说道，“那真是令人难以置信的。”

现在他已经非常疲惫，他知道夜幕就要降临了，所以尽量不想这件

事。他联想到棒球的两大联赛，就是他用西班牙语所说的Gran Ligas，他知道纽约市的扬基队正在与底特律的老虎队交锋。

“联赛已经举行了两天了，但我不知道比赛结果到底怎样。可是无论如何我对自己都要保持信心，一定也对得起伟大的迪马吉奥。他就算脚后跟儿上长了骨刺，疼痛难忍，也一定会将事情完成得尽善尽美。”“骨刺是什么东西？”他问自己。“西班牙语叫做un espuela de hueso。我们不长这种东西。如果脚后跟儿长了骨刺，会和脚后跟儿踩上斗鸡脚上装的距铁刺一样疼痛吗？我想我难以忍受这种痛苦，也不能像斗鸡那样，一只眼睛甚至两只被啄瞎后仍然战斗不止。跟那些了不起的鸟兽相比，人真的什么也不是。我宁可去做那只待在黑暗的海水深处的家伙。”

“除非有鲨鱼驾到，”他大声说道，“要是鲨鱼驾到，祈求上帝可怜可怜它和我吧。”

“你觉得伟大的迪马吉奥能像我这样守着一一条鱼吗，像我守得这儿长久？”他想，“我敢肯定他能，甚至更加长久，因为他正年富力强，并且他的父亲还打过鱼。不过，骨刺的疼痛会不会折腾得他难以忍受？”

“我无法回答，”他大声说道，“我从没长过那个鬼东西。”

太阳下山了，为了给自己鼓劲儿打气，他回忆起和人较手劲的比赛。那是在卡萨布兰卡的一家酒店里，有一个来自西恩富戈斯的大个子黑人，被称为那个码头上力气最大的人。整整一天一夜，两人将手肘儿撑在桌面的一道粉笔线上，胳膊朝上伸直，两只手紧握着。两人竭尽全力，意图将对方的手压到桌面上。许多看热闹的都在下注赌两人的胜负，室内煤油灯的掩映下，人头攒动，进进出出。他盯着这个黑大个儿

的胳膊、手，还有他的脸。八个小时过去后，便每四个小时更换一次裁判员，以使裁判员得以轮流睡觉。两人的指甲缝里都渗出了血，他们四目相对，互相凝视着对方的手和胳膊。打赌的人们进进出出，坐在靠墙的高高的椅子上观看比赛。灯光将两人的影子投射到墙壁上，墙壁是木头做的，还上着鲜艳的蓝漆。黑人的影子硕大无比，吊灯在微风的吹拂下摇来晃去，他的影子也随之摇来晃去。

整整一宿，优势在两人之间不停变换着，人们服侍黑人享用朗姆酒，并且替他点烟。朗姆酒果然使黑人更有力地拼起命来，连吃奶的劲儿都使上了。有那么一下把老人——那时他还不老，而是有名的“冠军”圣地亚哥——的手扳下去将近三英寸，但老人挽回了颓势，继续保持相持相争的状况。当时他相信这个优秀的、了不起的运动健将不是自己的敌手，他有这个把握。天亮时，打赌的人们要求他们算做平局，裁判员不愿同意，这时老人押上全身的力气，只见在如此的重压下，黑人的手慢慢地、慢慢地向下靠，最终挨着了桌面。这场比赛开始于某一个星期天的早上，一直持续到星期一的早上才结束。那些刚刚希望他们平局的打赌者，等他们比赛结束后还得到码头上做工，把一袋袋的糖装上船，或者去哈瓦那煤矿公司干活。若非如此，每个人都会要求比赛坚持到底，都会一看究竟的。不过不管怎样，他结束了比赛，并且去做工的时间不比任何人晚。

从那之后相当长的一段时间，人人都叫他“冠军”。第二年春天又举办了一场比赛，不过这次赌注并不很大，他也轻松夺冠，因为在第一场比赛中就打垮了那个来自西恩富戈斯的黑人，所以信心十足。在这之后，他又参加过几次比赛，后来就金盆洗手了。他认为，只要他一心一意地去努力，他就一定能够战胜任何一个人，同时他还认为，参加这种比赛对右手不好，而他是用这只手来钓鱼的。他也曾尝试用左手锻炼了

几次，可是左手一直背叛，根本不听从他的使唤，他也实在对它不信任。

“现在，太阳能把手晒得热乎乎的，”他想，“除非夜里冷得异常，否则它应该不会再抽该死的筋了。谁又能知晓今天夜里会发什么呢。”

一架正飞往迈阿密的飞机从他头顶掠过，他看到成群结队的飞鱼被飞机的影子惊起，掠向空中。

“飞鱼可真不少，里面应该就有鳅。”他一边说，一边拽着钓线朝后仰着身子，希望能把鱼拉近一些。可是没有效果，钓线依旧绷得很紧，上面的水珠颤抖不止，仿佛将要迸裂。小船慢慢地朝前移动着，他目不转睛地望着远去的飞机，一直到它飞出视线为止。

“在飞机里待着肯定感觉不是很正常，”他想，“如果从那么高的地方向下看，不知道会看到什么样的大海。只要不是飞得特别高，他们一定能够清清楚楚地看到这条大鱼。真希望我能够非常缓慢地飞翔在两百英寻的高空，从那里去看看这条鱼。当年在捕海龟的时候，我站在桅杆顶上的横桁上，虽然那里非常高，但却看到了很多东西。从那里往下看，鳅显得更绿，还看得清它们身上的条纹和紫色斑点，也可以看到它们成群结队地游走。不清楚为什么，在黑暗的水流中快速游走的鱼背都呈紫色，并且往往还都有紫色的条纹或者斑点。水里的鳅看上去当然是绿色的，因为他们本来就是金黄色的。不过当他们饥饿难耐，四处觅食的时候，便和大马林鱼似的，紫色条纹就会出现在身子两侧。出现这样的条纹，到底是出于愤怒，还是因为游得太快？”

天将黑未黑的时候，小船穿过一大片马尾藻，马尾藻在几乎没有海浪的海面上不停地摇摆着，就好像在黄色毯子的覆盖下，大海在同什么

东西交配着似的。这时，有条鳅上了那根细钓线上的钩。他第一次看到它的时候，它的模样仿佛被最后一道阳光刷上了一道金色，并且蜷着身子气急败坏地乱扑乱打。惊慌失措中，像玩杂技表演般一次次跳出水面。而他，则不慌不忙地回到船艄蹲下，用右手和右臂将粗钓线紧紧抓住，用左手使劲儿把鳅拽上船，光着的左脚紧紧地一点一点踩住收回来的钓丝。终于，这条金光闪闪并隐映着暗紫色斑纹的鱼被拉到船艄边，它对自己的生命大约不抱希望了，但仍然乱窜乱跳，老人探身将它拎到船艄。被钓钩钩住的鱼嘴猛烈抽搐着，速度急促地一上一下地咬着钓钩，同时，变长的身子连同脑袋和尾巴一同用力地击打着船板，直到他用木棍猛击了一下它那金光闪闪的脑袋，它才抽搐了一下便安静了。

老人把鱼嘴里的钓钩拔了出来，重新做了一个沙丁鱼的饵，顺手扔到海里。随后便慢慢地将身体挪回到船头。他洗了洗左手，在裤子上擦擦。然后，他把右手中的粗钓线换到了左手，又在海水里洗了洗右手，看着太阳掉到大海的腹中，看着粗粗的钓线斜斜地插在水中。

“这鱼仍旧没有改变，还是一样。”他说着，同时观察着海水拍打在手上的样子，他感到船游走的速度明显慢了许多。

“我把这两根桨交叉着绑到船艄，这么一来，它非得在夜里慢下来不可，”他说，“它能熬夜，我也可以。”

“待会儿我就把这鳅开膛，否则鲜血就全流失了，”他想，“我晚一会儿再做，现在最重要的是先扎好双桨，拖在水里来增加它的阻力。现在最好让鱼儿安静地待会儿，太阳落山的时候不要过多地去打扰它。在太阳落山的时候，不论是什么鱼，都会非常难熬的。”

他举起手来待它慢慢晾干，随后紧紧抓住钓线，身子靠在木船舷

上，尽可能地放松，任由自己被拖着往前走，如此一来，船就承担了同自己一样大的拉力，甚至更大一些。

“我开始明白该怎么做了，”他想，“至少在做这件事情的时候。别忘了，自打它上钩以来还没再吃过东西，况且它又是个很能吃的庞然大物。而我已经吃掉了整整一条金枪鱼，明天我将把那条‘黄金’吃掉——他把鳅称作‘黄金’。或许开膛的时候我就得吃上一点儿，它比金枪鱼可要难吃多了。当然话说回来，做什么事是容易的呢？”

“鱼儿，你感觉如何？”他大声说道，“我感觉很不赖，我不仅左手得到了恢复，还有足够一宿和明天白天吃的食物。鱼啊，你就拽着船走吧！”

其实他过得也不是那么好，因为背上钓线拉扯的疼痛已经不再是普通的疼痛，而是一种令他担忧的发麻的感觉。“不过，比这更坏的情况我也是经历过的，”他想，“我只不过是一只手被划破了一点儿，另一只手已不再抽筋了，我的双腿还很好使，何况在占有食物方面我可得意得多啦。”

天已经黑下来了，九月的日子里，太阳一落山，天便很快就会黑下来。他倚靠在船头磨损的木板上，尽可能地休息，以恢复精力。夜空中出来了一些星星，他最先看到了猎户座左脚的那颗，虽然他不知道它叫参宿七，但只要看到它，其他星星就会很快出现。他又多了一群遥远的朋友做伴了。

“这条鱼也是我的朋友，”他大声说道，“我从来没有见过或听说过这样的鱼，可是我不得不杀死它。我很庆幸，我们不用杀死那些星星。”

“试着想想，假如人每天都不得不去杀死月亮的话，那就真是糟透了，”他想，“月亮是会逃的。但如果再想想，假如人每天都不得不去杀死太阳的话，那将会是什么情况？”“还好，我们天生就是幸运的。”他在心里默念道。

接着他又为这条大鱼感到伤心，要可怜它连东西都不能吃，不过伤心归伤心，这丝毫没有减弱他要杀死它的决心。“它可以供多少人吃啊，”他想，“但是他们配吃它吗？不配，当然不配。以它的行为举止、身材风度和它高傲的尊严，谁也不配吃它。”

“我不清楚这些事情，”他想，“不过只要不必去杀死太阳或月亮或星星，就是好事情了。为了在海上讨生活，要把我们真正的兄弟杀死，这已经够让人难受了。”

“此时此刻，”他想，“得想想那些拖在水里的碍事的东西了。这东西有利有弊。假如鱼奋力往外挣脱，而那双桨还在原处不断地形成阻力，使小船不像之前那么轻巧的话，我的钓线就可能让鱼给拽走不少，最终它就会逃脱了。让船身保持轻巧，会增加我们双方痛苦的时间，但却能使我安全，因为这条鱼可以游得飞快，这本领它还隐藏着没施展开来。无论发生什么事，我都必须将这鳅内脏收拾干净，以免鱼肉腐败掉，而且吃一点儿来增加力气。”

“现在我要歇息一个小时，等觉察到这鱼稳当下来了，再到船艄去做这件事，然后再做决定。同时我还可以看看它有什么行动，会不会发生什么变化。放两把船桨是个好策略，不过现在已经到了该稳当行事的时候了。大鱼仍然非常勇猛，我看到它含着钓钩的嘴巴闭得紧紧的，钓钩对它的折磨并不是最重要的，而受到饥饿的煎熬，以及对对手的不了解，才是它最大的麻烦。休息会儿吧，老头儿，让它做它自己的事儿，

等轮到你做的时候的再上场吧。”

他揣测着自己也许已经休息了两个小时了，一时半会儿月亮也不会升上来，现在他无法推测时间。其实他休息得并不好，但好歹也算是歇了一下。大鱼的巨大拉力仍然拉拽着他的肩膀，不过他把左手压在船头的舷上，可以让小船来承担更多对抗大鱼拉力的重担。

“如果把钓线拴紧，事情将会变得多么轻松啊，”他想，“不过那样的话，只要鱼轻轻地歪上一歪，就能把钓线绷断。所以我必须用自己的身体来缓冲钓线的拉力，并且双手时刻准备着放出一些钓线。”

“可是老头儿，你还没有睡过觉呢！”他大声说道，“已经熬过了半个白天加一个黑夜了，如今又是一个白天，但是你却一直没能睡觉。你最好想点儿办法，趁它安稳的时候睡一会儿。要是你不睡觉，脑袋就会变得糊涂。”

“我的脑袋还是很清醒的，”他又想，“非常清醒，跟我的星星兄弟一样清醒。但我还是必须得睡觉。它们都睡觉，月亮睡觉，太阳睡觉，甚至当风息浪静，平坦无波的时候，连海洋都会睡觉。”

“睡觉是件大事不能忘记，”他心里提醒着自己，“硬逼着自己睡觉是大事，但此刻还得想出点简易稳妥的对付钓线的办法来。现在到船艙去收拾收拾那条鳅吧。假如非要睡觉的话，水里拖着桨可是非常危险的。”

“我不睡觉倒也不碍事，”他自言自语道，“但是这确实十分危险。”

他跪着，手膝并用地爬回船艙，小心翼翼地防止发出什么动静惊动了那条大鱼。“或许它正睡意将散呢，”他想，“不过我很希望他能一直

拖着钓线不要歇着，一直到死。”

回到船艄后，他一转身，左手紧紧抓住肩上的钓线，右手从刀鞘中拔出刀子。这时的星星很亮，他能十分清楚地看清那条鳅。他把刀插进鱼头，从船艄上将鱼拽了下来。又一只脚将其踩住，然后“嚯”的一声，从鱼的肛门直划到下颌的尖端。接着他放下刀子，把内脏掏了出来，掏得干干净净，同时连同鱼鳃也一同扯掉。他觉得托在手上的鱼胃沉甸甸、滑溜溜的，便从中间将它剖开。只见里面露出两条新鲜结实的小飞鱼，他把它们并排放下，将内脏和鱼鳃统统丢到水里。它们扎进水里，泛起一道磷光。鳅非常冰凉，在星光的环绕中，灰白得仿佛麻风病患者。老人一边用右脚踩着鱼头，一边剥下半边鱼皮。然后把鱼翻了个身，顺势将另一半边的鱼皮也扯了下来，当即割下了从头到尾的鱼身子两边的肉。

他轻轻将鱼骨扔到船舷外面，仔细瞧着它是否在水里打旋。不过只看到一道随着它慢慢下沉而显现出来的缓缓移动的磷光。接着他一转身，把两条小飞鱼夹在两块鱼肉之间，收刀入鞘，缓缓地将身子挪回到船头。在钓线的重压下，他弯着腰，右手拿着鱼肉。

回到船头后，他把两块鱼肉和飞鱼并排放在船板上。随后又将肩上的钓线换了换位置，同时左手紧紧抓着钓线，把手靠在船舷上。然后倚着船舷，在水里随便洗了洗飞鱼，并观测着水流冲击手的速度。他的手因为剥鱼皮也显现出磷光，他凝神观察水流拍打他手的样子，发现水流比先前弱了许多。然后他在船板上擦着手的侧面，只见闪闪发光的磷光斑点浮散开去，慢慢漂向船艄后面。

“它不是越来越累了，就是正在休息，”老人说，“现在我来吃光这条鳅，然后也休息一下，睡一小会儿吧。”

星光照耀下，他在冰冷十足的寒夜中，吃掉了半块鳅肉和一条掏除内脏去掉脑袋的飞鱼。

“把鳅煮熟了吃味道才是美呢！”他说，“生吃可真是遭罪。下回如果忘记带盐巴和酸酸的橙子，我可不愿意再上船了。”

“我要是能聪明点的话，就应该每天在船头上淋上点儿海水，水被晒干了不就有盐了么，”他想，“可是回想当时，这条鳅上钩的那会儿太阳就要落山了。是我自己大意，遗漏了这些准备工作。但如今我全都细嚼慢咽吞了下去，也还没至于恶心反胃。”

东方的天空渐渐布满了云层，他所认识的星星也一颗颗地隐没了下去。如今好像正进入到一个云层包裹的大峡谷。风已经停了。

“三四天内天气就会转坏，”他说，“不过今晚到明天应该还没问题。现在来安顿一下，老头儿，趁着这鱼还比较安稳的时候，睡上一觉。”

他用右手紧紧攥住钓线，同时大腿顶在右手后面，将全身的重量都压在船头的木板上。紧接着他又移动了一下肩上钓线的位置，用左手撑着。

“如果将钓线撑紧了，右手就能把它握住，”他想，“要是我睡着的时候它松了，滑下外面，我的左手也会弄醒我的。这样的话右手非常吃力，不过它习惯了。就算我只能睡上半个小时，甚至只是二十分钟，那也非常好了。”他将身子向前，用整个身子夹住钓线，右手支撑着全身的重量，然后就这样睡着了。

这次他没有梦见狮子，而是梦到了一大群海豚，蜿蜒八到十英里。

此时正是交配的时节，它们高高跳到空中，旋即落回跳跃时水中形成的水涡里。

然后他梦见回到了村子里，躺在自己的床上，北风呼呼地刮着，他觉得非常寒冷。右臂麻木了，因为头枕在了胳膊上，而不是枕头上。

之后，他又梦见长长的黄色沙滩，看到傍晚时分第一头狮子来到沙滩上，不多时其他狮子也来了。抛了锚的船停泊在海边，在晚风轻扬中，他把下巴放到船头的木板上，等着看还有没有更多的狮子到来，心情非常愉快。

月亮出来好长时间了，不过他仍然静静地睡着，大鱼稳稳地拖着小船前行，小船驶进了云层包裹的大峡谷里。

突然，他的右拳狠狠地揍了一下他熟睡的脸，钓线火辣且迅速地从右手里脱落，这一下把他惊醒了。他立即用右手死死地拽着滑落的钓线，因为左手此刻已经像木头一样失去了知觉。不过钓线还是一刻不停地往下滑。好在他的左手最后终于抓住了钓线，随即他把身子后仰，拼命将钓线往后拽，这使得后背和左手被钓线死死勒着，灼热难耐，而全部的拉力都集中在勒得生疼的左手上。他回过身，只见那些钓线卷儿正溜溜地一圈圈减少。就在这时，大鱼突然一个向上猛跃，硬生生将海面迸开了一个大口子，随后又重重落了下去。之后它就这样一次又一次地重复着，拖拽着小船疾速前进，而钓线依旧疾速地向外滑出。老人紧紧拉着钓线，眼看钓线一次次地濒临绷断。大鱼巨大的拉力使他只能紧紧倚靠在船头上，脸庞不留空隙地贴在切下的鳃肉上，他就定在那里一动不动。

“我终于等到了这一刻，”他想，“让我来好好对付它吧。”

“拖拉钓线的代价就让它尝尝吧，”他默念道，“让它为了这个付出代价吧。”

眼前景象混乱，水汽朦胧，他无法看到鱼在跳跃，只能听到鱼猛跃而产生的海面的迸裂声，和鱼落水时发出的重重的水花四溅的声音。同时疾速向外脱落的钓线勒得手生疼，幸好他早就知道这个情况不可避免，于是尽量让钓线勒在手上有茧子的地方，避免勒到手心或者手指头上。

“要是那个小男孩在这里的话，他会把这些钓线卷儿用水打湿的，”他再次默念，“是啊，要是小男孩在这里的话，要是小男孩在这里的话。”

钓线依旧往外滑着，滑着，滑着，只是现在越发缓慢了，他正在让鱼每拖走一英寸都付出代价。此刻，他从木船板上的那块被他脸颊挤烂的鱼肉上面抬起头来，接着又跪了下去，随后又慢慢站了起来。他仍在往外放着钓线，不过越放越慢，越放越慢。黑暗中，他缓缓挪了挪身子，挪到可以用脚碰到他看不见的那一个个钓线卷儿的地方。钓线还有不少，现在这鱼不得不带着这些摩擦力更大的新钓线在水里游走了。

“是啊，”他想，“现在它已经跳了不少于十二次了，只要空气填满了后背上的那些液囊，它就没办法再潜到深水中继而死到那里了。如果死到深水里，我还真没办法捞它上来。很快它就会转圈，我必须得想点法子来对付它。不清楚为什么它总是突然跳出来，莫非由于饥饿的困扰而忘记了生命的危险，还是在夜间游走受到了什么东西的惊吓？难道它也突然有些害怕了？可它是如此沉着冷静、健壮非凡的一条大鱼啊，是那么无所畏惧且信心十足的。这真是有点儿诡异。”

“如果你能勇往直前而且信心百倍，那就最好了，老头儿，”他说，“它眼下要开始转圈了，你确实又拖住了它，不过却没有办法将钓线收回。”

这时，老人并用肩和左手拉住了它，然后俯身下去，右手舀水，将粘在脸上被挤烂的鳅鱼肉洗净。他担心这东西会让他反胃恶心致使自己丧失体力。把脸擦洗干净后，他又在船舷外的水里涮洗了一下右手，接着在盐水里浸泡了一会儿，同时凝视着初升的太阳刚刚露出来的光芒。“它几乎是往正东方游走的，”他想，“这说明它已经有些疲惫了。潮水再流动一阵子，它就得开始打转了，那时我们的战斗才真正打响。”

他盘算着右手在水中泡的时间差不多了，便抽上来看。

“情况良好，”他说，“对一个真正的男子汉来说，疼痛根本算不了什么。”

他小心翼翼地紧紧抓着钓线，以防它不小心滑向新勒破的任何一道伤痕上，同时将身体挪蹭到小船的另一头去，好使左手也能待在海水里。

“你这不争气的东西，好歹还不是没用，”他对左手说，“不过有那么一段时间，你竟不能给我任何帮助。”

“怎么我天生就不能拥有两只又结实又好使的手呢？”他想，“说不定这事赖我，是我没有让这只手得到良好的锻炼。可是它有过多少学习的绝好机会，上帝看得真真切切的！总的来说它今天夜里做得还可以，只是抽了一次筋。如果它再抽筋的话，就让钓线把它勒成两段吧！”

想到这些，他知道自己脑袋已不是非常清醒，觉得该再吃点儿鳅了。“不过我不吃，”他自言自语道，“我宁可头昏脑涨，目乱神迷，也不愿意由于恶心反胃而丧失体力。我知道这一点，因为我的脸贴它上面过了。即使我吃到肚子里也维持不了多久。以防万一，我还是把它先留着，直到它腐烂了为止吧。现在要想依靠补充营养来增强体力，为时已晚了。”“你是个笨蛋，”他又自言自语，“把另外那条飞鱼吃了不就行了吗？”

那条飞鱼干干净净地躺在那里，可以直接入口，他用左手捡起来塞进嘴里，慢慢咀嚼着鱼骨头，从头到尾吃了个遍。

“几乎没有什么鱼的营养价值能超过它，”他想，“最起码它能提供给我所需要的力气。现在我已经做好充分的准备了，鱼啊，打起转来吧，让我们直接交锋吧！”

自出海以来，这已经是第三次看到太阳升起了。就在这时，大鱼打起转来了！

单从钓线的斜度上来看，现在还没发现鱼打转的迹象。一切似乎还早点。但他能感到钓线上的拉力在稍稍放松，于是就用右手轻轻往回拽。同往常一样，钓线又绷紧了，不过拽到濒临绷断的时候却可以慢慢往回收。他把肩膀和头上的钓线卸了下来，平稳而又缓慢地往回收。两只手大幅度地将钓线一把一把往回拉拽，同时将全身包括双腿的力量也都用上。随着老腿和肩膀的转动，钓线被他一把一把地往回拉着。

“这个圈子倒宽得很，”他说，“不过它终于转起来了。”

这时钓线已经不适合往回收了，他使劲拉着，看见阳光的照射下钓线弹出了水珠儿。随即钓线开始往外滑，老人跪倒在地，他实在不愿意

看着钓线慢慢回到深水中去，因为这表明他刚才做的一切都是徒劳。

“现在它正绕到圈子的最外圈，”他说。“我拼了命也要往回拉，”他想，“往回拉，拉出的圈子一次比一次小。说不定再有一个小时我就能看到它了。现在最重要的是先稳住它，不要将它激怒，相信不久它就是我手下的败将，我一定让它活不下去。”

可是这条鱼只是持续不断地划着圈子，两个小时过去了，老人汗流浹背，累得骨头都要散架了。而这时的圈子已经变得小了许多，根据钓线斜度来判断，这鱼在边游边往上升。

老人眼前发黑，这状况已经持续了一个多小时了，汗水中的盐分腌染着他的眼睛，腌染着眼睛上方和额头上的伤疤。眼前发黑他倒并不感到害怕，如此神情紧张地奋力拉拽着钓线，眼前发黑也是很正常的。害怕的是他已经有两回感到头昏脑涨、目乱神迷了。

“我决不能意志消沉，命丧在一条鱼的手中，”他说，“既然我已经让它潇洒地浮了上来，就求上帝保佑我坚持下去吧。我要念一百遍《天主经》和一百遍《圣母经》。可是现在却不能念。”

“就当我已经念过这些了吧，”他想，“回头我会补上的。”

正在这时，他感到双手紧紧抓住的钓线突然被猛烈撞击、拉拽了一下。力量来势凶猛，异常强劲，沉重非凡。

“它的长剑嘴总撞着铁丝接线，”他想，“这是没有办法的，它一定会这么做。不过这样下去它可就要跳出来啦，我觉得它继续转着才好呢，它总得要跳出水面呼吸一阵子新鲜空气。可是再这么撞下去，钓钩所扎的伤口会随着它跳跃次数的增加，而加宽裂痕，如此下去钓钩迟早

会被它甩掉。”

“鱼啊，别跳！”他说，“快停下吧。”

大鱼并不理会，又撞击了几次铁丝接线。每次鱼甩头去撞的时候，老人都会放出一些钓线。

“我最好别老让它在—个地方疼痛，”他想，“我疼不疼倒不碍事，因为我自己能够控制。但如果它要疼痛的话，就会疯掉。”

过了一小会儿，这鱼不再甩头撞击铁丝，转而又缓缓地划起圈来。老人随即开始不断地往回收钓线，但是他此刻又感到头晕眼花了。他用左手舀起一点儿海水，浇到脑袋上。觉得不满足，又浇了一点儿，然后揉了揉脖颈。

“我没抽筋，”他说，“它很快就会浮出水面，我坚持得住。它肯定坚持不下去，这毋庸置疑。”

他一边将身子倚着船头，一边跪着，把钓线又背到身上。“现在我得休息一下，就趁它往外打转的时候。”他打定主意等它转回来的时候就起来对付它。

他多希望就这样靠在船头，再多休息一会儿，让这鱼爱转几圈转几圈，而不用收回一点点钓线。不过钓线此刻又有了松动的迹象，这说明鱼已经转向小船的方向回游了，老人只得站了起来，重复起之前的左右手轮流拉拽的动作，之前他都是这么拽的。

“我几乎没有什么时候像这样劳累，”他想，“现在风刮起来了，很好，这有助于把鱼拖回去，真是一场及时的风啊！”

“等它下次往外转圈的时候，我还得休息一下，”他说，“我现在感觉舒服多了。再转两三个圈子，我就能逮住它了。”

他的草帽还戴在后脑勺儿上，刚想歇歇，只觉得鱼在翻身，在钓线的拉扯下，便一屁股坐到了船头上。

“鱼啊，你忙你的吧，”他想，“你转过身来的时候我再收拾你。”

海浪大了起来，不过天气晴朗，这是微风吹拂的作用，他还得依靠这微风和海浪回陆地呢。

“我只要朝着西南方向走就能回家，”他说，“一个人在海上是不能迷失方向的，况且这只是一个狭长的岛屿。”

当鱼转到第三圈的时候，他终于看到了它，并且是第一次清晰地看到。

最初只是一个黑黑的影子，它从船底穿过得花那么长的时间，这鱼长度惊人，若非亲眼所见，真的让人难以置信。

“不可能，”他说，“怎么会那么大呢？！”

但是它确实有那么大。这一圈转到最后，它浮到离小船只有三十码远的水面上。老人看到它浮出水面的尾巴，比一把大镰刀的刀身还要高，在深蓝色海面的掩映下，呈现出淡淡的紫色。它的尾巴往后倾斜，鱼紧贴水面在水下游走的时候，老人看得到它巨大的身躯和浑身的紫色花纹。它耷拉着巨大的背鳍，张着巨大的胸鳍。

这次当鱼转圈回来的时候，老人看到了它的眼睛，它身边还游动着两条灰白色的小鱼。它们时而贴在大鱼的身上，时而快速地游开，时而

就躲在大鱼的阴影里逍遥自在地游着。它们每条都至少有三英尺长，游的速度都极快，快得可以赶上鳗鱼了，且快速游时浑身上下都激烈地抖动。

此刻，老人汗水涔涔，不过不只是由于太阳的直晒，还有别的缘故。每当鱼稳当平静地转回来的时候，他都往回收一点儿钓线。所以他相信，只要它再转上两个圈子，就有机会把鱼叉扎到鱼身上。

“但是我必须得把它拉得更近，更近，更近，”他想，“我一定得扎到它的心脏上，扎在鱼头上没用。”

“镇定点，鼓足劲儿，老头儿。”他说。

大鱼又转了一圈，后背就露出来了，可是距离小船仍旧太远了些。又一圈，还是太远，不过它浮出水面的部分是越来越高了。老人确信，再往回收进一些钓线，就能把它拽到船边上来了。

他早早地把渔叉都准备妥当，系叉的那卷钓线放到一只圆形的篮子里，另一端系在船头的柱子上。

这时，大鱼正转着圈子回到前面来，除了大尾巴晃动以外，其他都显得从容不迫且美丽优雅。老人奋力把它往回拉。有一下鱼身子稍微转了一点儿，接着又挺直了身子，继续转起圈子来。

“我拉动它了，”老人说，“我刚才拉动它了。”

他再次感到头晕，不过他仍然尽全力拉住了大鱼。“我拉动它了，”他想，“说不定这一次我能拉它过来。手，拉呀，”他心里喊着，“腿，站稳当了。头，为了我坚持下去吧，坚持下去吧，你可从来没有晕倒过。这一次我一定拉它过来。”

可是，当他使出浑身的力气，准备在鱼还没来到船边之前就动手时，那鱼却斜着一半身子，随后挺直游走了。

“鱼啊，”老人说，“鱼，不管怎样你都死定了，难道你非得连我也害死吗？”

“这样下去可是毫无结果的。”他想。他现在口干舌燥地连话都说不出来，可是却不能取水喝。“这一次我一定要把它拽到船边来，”他想，“如果它再这么转下去，没有几圈我就不行了。”“不，你行，”他鼓励着自己，“你永远都行。”

就在大鱼转下一圈的时候，他差点就把它拉过来了。但是这鱼又挺直了身子，缓缓地游开。

“你真想把我害死啊，鱼，”老人想，“不过你有权这么做。我从来没有见过比你更庞大、更美丽，更冷静或更伟大的东西，兄弟。来吧，整死我吧，我不在乎我们谁杀死谁。”

“你现在脑子又开始犯浑了，”他提醒自己，“你必须保持头脑清醒，必须像个真正的男人一样知道如何忍受痛苦，或者，就像一条鱼一样。”

“清醒清醒吧，脑子啊，”他说道，不过声音小得几乎连自己都听不见，“清醒清醒吧。”

鱼转了两圈，仍旧是老样子。

“我实在搞不清楚。”老人想。每一次他都觉得自己快要支撑不下去了。“我实在搞不清楚，但无论如何我都要再尝试一下。”

他又尝试了一次，等他拉得鱼就要转过来时，他感到自己简直就要撑不下去了。可那鱼挺直了身子，伴随着大尾巴在海面上摇摆着，又缓缓地游走了。

“我还要尝试一次。”老人许愿说。尽管这时的双手已经软弱无力，眼睛也只能一阵一阵地看清点儿东西。

他又尝试了一次，可情况依旧没有改变。“总是这样，”他想，“还没动手就已经觉得支撑不下去了，我还得再尝试一次。”

他强忍着所有的剧痛，拼上了残余体力，重拾起几乎失去的威风，又来对付这垂死挣扎的鱼。终于，它老老实实在地游到了他的身边，它的嘴差不多就要碰着小船的船帮。它开始从船的旁边游过去，又长又高又宽的身子上，紫色的条纹映衬在银白色的底子上，在水中看起来仿佛没有边际地延展开来。

老人放下钓线并一脚踩住，拼命举高渔叉，竭尽全力，和刚刚鼓起的士气，奋力将渔叉向下直扎进鱼身的一侧，恰恰扎到高高翘起、与老人胸膛齐高的大胸鳍后面一点儿的地方。他感到铁尖扎了进去，然后把身子靠在上面使劲儿，利用全身的重量往下压，以使能扎得更深一点儿。

然后，大鱼开始翻江倒海，虽然临近死亡，但依然跳出水面，跳到半空，全部暴露出那巨大的身躯以及摄人心魄的力量和美丽。这一刹那，它如同漂浮在半空中，漂浮在老人头顶上面。接着，“啪”的一声落入水中，浪花打起巨大的浪花，浪花打到老人身上，打到整条船上。

老人觉得头昏昏沉沉的，恶心反胃，眼睛也不太看得清东西。不过他知道松开渔叉上的线，让它在划破了皮的双手之间缓缓滑了下去。当

眼睛又能看得清东西的时候，他看到大鱼仰天躺着，露出银白色的肚皮。鱼肩上斜斜地插着渔叉，柄露在外面。鱼心脏的血汨汨冒出，染红了海水。刚开始的时候，这血还是黑乎乎的，就像一块蓝色海水中的礁石，紧接着如同云朵一样扩散开来。银白色的鱼再也没有半点动静，只是随着波浪而浮沉。

眼前一阵清晰一阵模糊，在清晰的当口，老人凝视着一切。然后，他把渔叉上的绳子往船头的缆柱上绕了两圈，低头趴在手上。

“脑袋啊，一定要保持清醒啊！”他倚在船头的木板上说，“我已经是一个筋疲力尽的老头儿了，不过我把这条大鱼给杀掉了，它可是我的兄弟。现在我得再辛苦辛苦，还有活儿要干呢。”

“现在我得把套索和绳子准备好，在船边把鱼给绑好了，”他想，“就算这里有两个人，就算我们把船装满了水，同时将鱼拉到船上，然后再把船里的水舀出去，这条小船也肯定装不了它。我得把一切都收拾妥当了，再把它拉过来绑得结结实实的，然后把桅杆立起来，张开船帆回家喽！”

他动起手来，打算把鱼拉到船边，然后就可以给它穿根绳子，从鳃里进去，从嘴里拉出来，把它的脑袋牢牢地绑在船头上。“我真想瞧瞧它长得是个什么模样，”他想，“还想碰碰它，抚摸一下。它是我的财富，不过我想抚摸它倒不是为了这个理由。我第二次把渔叉插进它身体的时候，我想我应该已经碰到它的心脏了。现在我得把它拽过来，捆得结结实实的，尾巴上拴上一根套索，腰部再拴上一根，一定要把它牢牢地绑在小船上。”

“开始行动吧，老头儿，”他边说着，边喝了一小口水，“战斗虽然

已经结束了，但是更多的活儿还在后头呢。”

他仰起头，看了看天空，接着又看了看绑在船边的鱼。他认真地看着太阳。“现在才刚刚过了正午，”他想，“不过风已经刮起来了。现在所有的这些钓线都已经用不上了。等回家后我再跟小男孩一起把绳子接好。”

“过来吧，鱼啊。”他说。不过这鱼没有过来，反而仰面朝天地在海面上翻滚着。老人把小船划到了它的身边。

他和鱼现在并排在一起，看到靠在船头边上的鱼头，他简直不敢相信这条鱼的个头儿竟然如此庞大。他解下缆柱上渔叉柄上的绳子，从鱼鳃里穿过去，从鱼嘴里拽出来，在长剑嘴上缠绕了一圈，又从另一个鱼鳃里穿出去，再在长剑嘴上缠绕了一圈，接着把两股绳子打了一个结，牢牢地绑在了船头的缆柱上。然后，他割下一小段绳子，到船艄来固定住鱼尾巴。鱼的颜色也发生了变化，原来是紫银色，现在变成了纯银色。身上的条纹，同尾巴一样呈现出淡紫色。条纹很宽，比人张开五指的手更宽。它的眼睛深情冷漠，仿佛潜望镜里的反射镜，又仿佛仪轨庄严的宗教游行队伍中的圣徒画像。

“也只有这么做才能杀死它。”老人说。喝了点水后，他感觉舒服多了，知道自己不会倒下去，头脑也非常清醒。“看来它得有一千五百多磅重，”他想，“说不定比这还要更重一些。假设去头去尾，开膛洗净后的净重有三分之二，如果一磅合三毛钱，得是多少？”

“要算清楚，我得需要一枝铅笔，”他说，“我的脑袋可没有那么清楚。可是我想，伟大的迪马吉奥一定对今天的我感到骄傲。我没有长骨刺，但是双手和后背疼得要命。”“不清楚骨刺到底是个什么东西，”他

想，“也说不定我们每人身上都长着呢，但就是自己不知道罢了。”

他把鱼牢牢地拴到了船头、船艄和中间的座板上。它大得惊人，挨在小船旁边，仿佛一只比小船还要大得多得多的船。他割下一段钓线，用线将鱼的下巴和上颚牢牢地捆在了一起，把鱼嘴固定住使它不能张开，这样小船就能够利利索索地顺利前行了。然后，他竖起桅杆，装上上桁和下桁，上桁用那根当鱼钩用的棍子代替，然后把打满补丁的船帆撑开，小船动起来了，载着半躺在船艄的他，往西南方游去。

没有罗盘的指引他也知道西南方在哪里。他只要凭着风吹拂在身上的感觉和船帆飘摆的方向就能判断。“我最好往水里投一根细钓线来钓些什么东西，我需要吃点东西，好润润唇舌。”不过他的沙丁鱼都腐臭了，就放一个勺形的假饵吧。可是现在他连勺形的假饵也找不到了，因此当船航行的时候，他趁机用鱼钩钩上一堆黄色的马尾藻，使劲儿抖了抖，上面的小虾掉到了小船船板上。小虾一共有十几只，蹦蹦跳跳的，像跳蚤一样地甩着尾巴。老人用拇指和食指把虾头掐掉，壳也没剥，尾也没去，便整个儿地咀嚼着吃了下去。它们个头儿不大，不过他知道它们营养价值很高，并且味道也不赖。

老人瓶里的水还剩两口，吃完虾后喝了半口。在现有的不利条件下，小船行驶得已经算不错了。老人用胳膊窝紧紧把舵柄夹好，稳稳地掌好舵。鱼就在看得见的地方。他只要瞅瞅自己的双手，后背倚在船艄上感受着疼痛，就知道这是实实在在发生的事情，绝不是黄粱一梦。之前有那么一段时间，眼瞅着事情好像要泡汤，他觉得非常难受，以为这也许不过是一场梦吧。可后来当他看到鱼从水里跃出，跳到最高点还没落下时，那一动不动地在半空中悬浮的刹那，他就坚信这里面绝对有什么稀奇古怪的地方，让他难以置信。虽然现在他和平常一样看得清东西了，但那时却看不清。

现在他确信这条鱼就在眼前，他的双手和后背都那么的疼痛，这不是梦里出现的幻觉。“手很快就能恢复正常的，”他想，“它们留了很多血，不过海水能治好它们。地道的海湾深处的黑黑的海水是世上最好的疗伤妙药。我只需要让头脑保持清醒就可以了。双手已经尽了最大能力，而且我们航行得很好。大鱼的嘴巴紧紧闭着，尾巴竖得直直的，我们像亲哥俩似的并排走着。”然后，他的脑子开始有点儿迷糊了，他竟然在思考，“到底是它带着我走，还是我带着它走呢？要是它被我拖在船后面，那就不会有这个问题了。要是这鱼威严扫地，被弄到了小船上，那也没什么问题了。”不过他们是绑在一起，肩并肩并排前进的，于是老人想，“就算是它把我带回家去的吧，只要它高兴。我只是多用了点心眼儿才胜过它的，要知道它并没有伤害我的意思。”

他们游走得非常顺利，老人把手伸到海水中，尽力使自己保持头脑清醒。天空中堆砌着积云，上面还有层层卷起的云朵，老人看了看天，知道整整一宿风都不会停了。他又不时望望船边的大鱼，确信这一切真的发生过。此刻，离第一条鲨鱼来袭还有一个小时。

鲨鱼的出现并非偶然。那一大片暗红的血往一英里深的海水里沉降并且扩散的时候，它闻风而来。它来的速度惊人，完全不顾忌什么，横冲直撞地划破了蔚蓝色的水面，出现在太阳底下。然后它落入海中，随着所嗅到的血腥气味向着小船和大鱼的方向游去。

偶尔，鲨鱼也闻不到血腥味，不过它总有办法再嗅到，或者即使嗅到一丁点儿，它都会像箭一般地奋力直追。它是一条个头很大的灰色鯖鲨，天生就是个运动健将，与海里最快的鱼的速度不相上下，除了上下颚之外，它的全身都非常漂亮。它的后背很蓝，如同剑鱼一般，腹部呈现银白色，光滑的鱼皮非常漂亮。除了那张紧紧闭着的大嘴，它长得也和剑鱼差不多。现在它在水下游走的速度非常快，高高耸起的背鳍仿佛

一把锋利的刀子，毫不颤抖地将水面轻松划破。在它紧紧闭着的大嘴里，八排牙齿全都向里面倾斜着。这和大多数其他鲨鱼都不一样，因为其他鲨鱼的牙齿一般都是金字塔形的，如同人蜷曲起来的手指的模样。它的牙齿和老人的手指差不多长，两边锋利异常，如同刀片。这种鱼游得极快，体格健壮，拥有良好的武器，所向披靡，海里所有的鱼天生就是它的食物。它一嗅到这醉人的血腥味，便加快速度横冲直撞，用那蓝色的背鳍破水疾行。

老人看到了鲨鱼，并眼睁睁看着它向小船逼近，很明显，这条鲨鱼一点儿也不愿撤退，并且决意随心所欲。他一边准备好渔叉，系好绳子，一边目不转睛地盯着往前游过来的鲨鱼。绳子有些短，因为刚才他绑鱼的时候割下来了一截。

现在老人头脑非常清醒冷静，他下定了决心，虽然并不是抱有十足的把握。“好景总不长。”他想。他紧紧地盯着鲨鱼，它正逐渐逼近，时不时还瞄一眼绑在船上的大鱼。“真真地就像做了一场梦，”他想，“我不能阻止它的进攻，不过没准儿我能干掉它。”“尖嘴利鳃的家伙，”他默默诅咒着，“你他妈死定了！”

鲨鱼闪电般逼近船艏袭击大鱼，老人看到它张开血盆大口，并鼓着一双诡异的眼睛。它一口咬住大鱼尾巴上方，咬得嘎吱嘎吱生响。它的脑袋已经钻出水面，正当后背也要冒出来的时候，老人听到了大鱼皮肉被撕裂的声音，他当即手举渔叉猛地扎向这鲨鱼的脑袋，正好扎到了它两眼之间的直线与从鼻子直接通到脑后的直线的交叉点上，当然这两条线只是虚构的，真实存在的是那颗沉重而尖锐的蓝色脑袋，以及两只硕大的眼睛和嘎吱乱响、意图吞噬一切的突出的两颚。不过那里正是脑子，老人奋力向下猛扎。他用沾满鲜血的双手使尽全身的力气，把渔叉狠狠扎进它身子里。其实他这样做时并没有完全的把握，但怀着满腔决

心和十足的恶意。

鲨鱼翻了个身，从它眼睛里，老人看出它已经没有什么生机了。接着它又翻了个身，自己给自己缠上了两道绳子。老人知道，这条鲨鱼虽临近死亡，但却仍然不肯服输。这时只见它肚皮朝天，尾巴胡乱扑腾，两颚咬得嘎吱直响，像极了一条浮在水面上的快艇。水面因它尾巴的拍打而泛起白沫，此时它四分之三的身体已露在水面上，身上的绳子绷得很紧，只奋力一抖，就“啪”地断了。它在水上静静地漂了一会儿，接着便缓缓地沉了下去。这个过程老人一直死死盯着。

“它几乎吃掉了四十磅鱼肉。”老人大声说道。“它连我的渔叉和绳子也都带走了，”他想，“而现在这条鱼又流血了，别的鲨鱼也该来了。”

他不忍心再多看这条鱼一眼，因为它已经被鲨鱼咬得面目斑驳了。当鱼被袭击的时候，他觉得就像是自己在被鲨鱼撕咬一样难受。

“不过我把这条袭击我们的鲨鱼给干掉了，”他想，“并且它是我见过的最大的尖嘴利鳃的鲭鲨。上帝知道，大个儿的鲨鱼我也见过不少。”

“能把好事撑下去才好，”他想，“我真希望这只是一场梦，我压根儿就没有钓到过鱼，现在正一个人躺在垫着破报纸的床上。”

“不过，人生来不是为了寻求失败的，”他说，“一个人可以被消灭，但不能被打败。”“可是杀了这条鱼我很伤心，”他想，“现在霉运来了，但我手中连渔叉都没有了。这条尖嘴利鳃的鲭鲨虽然残忍凶暴，但却聪明伶俐，精明强干。不过我比它更聪明，或许也不是，或许我只是拥有比它强大的武器而已。”

“别胡思乱想了，老头儿！”他大声说道，“按照现在的航线继续前行，兵来将挡，水来土掩。”

“不过我肯定还是要想的，”他想，“因为我现在只剩下这件事情可以做做了。这个，当然还有棒球。我刚才那样一下击中鲨鱼的脑子，不知道伟大的迪马吉奥看了是否高兴呢？这也不是什么伟大的事迹，所有人都可以办到。不过，你觉得我受伤的手和骨刺是否都是很不利的条件呢？我没办法知道。我的脚后跟儿也从没出过什么毛病，就是有一次游泳的时候踩了一条海鳐鱼，被扎了一下，小腿都麻了，疼得厉害。”

“想想高兴的事儿吧，老头儿，”他说，“每走一分钟，你就离家近了一分钟。少了四十磅鱼肉，小船游得可以更加轻快。”

他知道小船驶进海流中间的时候将要发生什么事情，但他没有任何办法。

“不，有办法！”他突然大声说道，“我可以把刀子绑到船桨柄上。”

然后他用胳膊窝夹紧舵柄，一脚踩住了帆脚索，迅速把刀子绑到了船桨柄上。

“好了，”他说，“我依旧是个老头儿，但我现在也不是赤手空拳了。”

这时风吹得更加厉害些了，小船很顺当地往前行驶着。他看着大鱼露在外面的上半截身子，又生起了一些希望。

“傻子才不抱希望呢，”他想，“不过，我觉得这真是一桩罪过。不想了，不想了，什么罪过不罪过，”他想，“烦心事已经一大堆了，何况我压根儿就不明白这个。”

“我压根儿就不明白这个，也无法说清楚我到底相不相信。或许杀死这条鱼就是一桩罪过。我想应该是的，虽然我不只是为了养活自己，还为了供给很多人食物才这么做的。但话说回来，什么事不是罪过呢？别想什么罪过了。再者现在再想这些也为时已晚了，还有很多人是领了钱琢磨罪过的呢。就让他们去琢磨吧。你天生就是个打鱼的，就和那鱼天生就是一条鱼一样。圣彼得罗是个打鱼的，伟大的迪马吉奥的父亲也是。”

不过，老人喜欢一切跟他有关的事情，并且由于没有书报可以读，也没有收音机可以听，他就想得更多，还继续想着关于罪过的事情。“你杀死它不只是为了养活自己、把鱼卖了买吃的，”他想，“你杀死它还为了你的自尊心，因为你是一个渔夫。它活着的时候你爱它，它死了你还是爱它。要是你爱它的话，杀死它就不能算是罪过了。或许，是更大的罪过吧？”

“你想些什么呢，老头儿！”他大声喝斥自己。

“不过杀死那条尖嘴利鳃的鲭鲨你倒是很高兴，”他又想，“它也是靠吃鱼活着，和你一样。它不是食腐动物，也不像有些鲨鱼似的，游来游去只为了填满肚子。它是美丽的，也是崇高的，毫无畏惧。”

“我杀掉它仅仅是为了自卫，”老人提高了嗓门，“杀得干净利索。”

“还有，从某种角度上说，此物总是要杀死彼物的，只不过各自追求不同的方式罢了。捕鱼养活了我，同时也快害死我了。那个小男孩能够让我活得下去，”他想，“我不能太过自欺欺人。”

他将身子探出船外，从被鲨鱼咬过的地方撕下一块鱼肉。他咀嚼

着，感觉肉质很好，味美香甜。肉很结实，汁水也多，和牲口的肉差不多，只不过不是红色罢了。没有一点儿筋，他知道这在市场上能卖最高的价钱。但是目前没有任何办法能阻止它的气味散布到水里去，他明白马上就要到最最糟糕的时刻了。

风不停地吹着。风向稍稍转向了东北方，他知道这意味着风不会停了。他望向前方，看不到一个船帆，也看不到一只船身，更看不到有烟冒出。只看得到飞鱼从他船头跃起，往两边逃走，只看得到一堆堆黄色的马尾藻。此外连一只鸟的影子都看不到。

他已经行驶了两个小时了，此刻来到船艏休息，时不时从大鱼身上撕下一点鱼肉来咀嚼，尽力地休息，以保持体力。这时他看到两条鲨鱼，其中一条已露出了头。

“Ay！”他大声叫着。这个词儿根本没办法解释出来，或许仅仅是一声叫喊吧，就像有人觉得双手被钉子穿过去被钉到木头上时，不由自主发出的叫声一样。

“花花绿绿的家伙！”他大吼道。这时，又一个鳍紧接前一个浮出水面，出现在他的面前。这家伙长着褐色的三角形鳍，尾巴还摇来摆去的，可以判定它们正是铲鼻鲨。它们也嗅到了血腥味，兴奋异常，由于饿昏了脑袋，心情激动，时而感觉不到腥味，时而又能嗅到。不过它们总归渐渐靠近了。

老人很快将帆脚索系结实，把舵柄卡好。接着把那把绑着刀子的桨抄在手中。他尽可能地轻轻往上举，因为他的双手疼得不听使唤了。然后他张开双手，轻轻抓着桨，让手松快松快。他把两手紧紧地交叉到一起，确保它们在巨大的痛楚下还能撑开，然后紧紧盯着朝前过来的鲨

鱼。这时，可以清楚地看见它们宽宽扁扁的像铲子一样的脑袋，以及有着白色的尖儿且宽阔的胸鳍。这些鲨鱼不讨人喜欢，臭气熏天，不只戕害其他的活鱼类，连腐烂的死鱼也嚼得津津有味。当它们饿得厉害的时候，就算是船桨或者舵都会咬上几口。这些家伙，经常趁海龟在水面上睡觉的时候把它们腿脚咬掉。饿急了还会袭击水里的人，就算是人身上并没有鱼血或者黏液的腥味。

“Ay！”老人又吼道，“花花绿绿的家伙，来吧，狗杂种！”

它们过来了，不过它们过来的方式与灰鯖鲨不一样。其中一条鲨鱼翻转了下身子，一个猛子钻到了小船底下不见了，老人知道它正用嘴撕扯着大鱼，并能感觉到小船在摇摇晃晃。另一条则用一双线状的黄眼睛一边紧紧盯着老人，一边箭一般地游了过来，张开半圆形的大嘴，一口咬向鱼身上被咬过的地方。它褐色的头顶以及后背上脑子跟脊髓相连的纹路十分明显，老人用绑在船桨上的刀子狠狠地扎向那个交叉点，接着拔出来，又扎进了它那黄不拉几的像猫眼一样的眼睛里。鲨鱼顿时松开了嘴里咬着的大鱼，身子往下出溜，临死前竟还吞下了刚才咬下的鱼肉。

那条正忙着咬大鱼的鲨鱼，此时把小船弄得摇摇晃晃。老人将帆脚索放松一些，让小船横过来，这样鲨鱼就从船底下暴露出来了。他一看看到鲨鱼，便靠到船边探出身子，一桨戳了下去。不过他只是戳到了肉上，鲨鱼皮绷得很紧，刀子是很难深戳进去的。这一下把他的双手和肩膀震得生疼。可是鲨鱼不给他休息的机会，很快又冒出水面，露出了脑袋，老人就趁它的鼻子刚刚浮出水面碰到大鱼的时候，准确地朝着它扁平的脑袋中间扎了下去。接着老人拔出刀子，又在同一地方狠扎了一下。可这时它仍然紧闭着双唇，死死地咬着大鱼不松口，老人又戳了它的左眼一下，它仍然悬挂在那里。

“够了没有？”老人一边说着，一边把刀子捅进鲨鱼的脊骨和脑子中间的部位。这次没费什么劲，他觉得它的软骨好像是断裂了。老人倒转船桨，又是一刀，扎向鲨鱼的两颞之间，想撬开它的嘴。他搅动着刀子，鲨鱼终于松开了嘴然后乖乖地溜走了。他说，“快点滚吧，花花绿绿的家伙，滚到一英里深的水底下去吧！去找你的朋友，没准儿那是你的亲妈呢。”

老人擦拭了几下刀子，然后把桨放下了。接着他摸到帆脚索，扬起风帆，小船又顺着原来的航线驶去。

“它们一定啃走了四分之一的鱼肉，而且都是顶好的肉，”他大声说道，“但愿这只是一场梦，我根本没有钓上它。鱼啊，对于这件事我真是抱歉得很。现在一切都乱了套了。”他顿下来，此刻不忍再看鱼了。它的血已流干，被海水冲刷后，看起来就像是镜子背面镀的那层银，身上的条纹还清晰可见。

“我本不应该出这么远的海。鱼啊，”他说，“这对你对我都没有好处。我真的很抱歉，鱼啊。”

“算了，”他自言自语，“得赶紧瞅瞅绑刀子的绳子断了没有，最好赶快让你的手恢复正常，因为还会有鲨鱼来的。”

“真希望可以有一块磨刀石，”老人仔细查看了一下绑在桨上的刀子后，感慨地说，“我本应该带块磨刀石来的。”“你应该带的东西多着呢，”他想，“可是你却没有带来啊，老头儿。现在不是考虑没带什么东西的时候了，还是好好想想能利用手头的东西做点儿什么吧。”

“你一直在教训我，给我忠告，”他大声说道，“我早听烦了！”

他用胳膊窝夹紧舵柄，把双手泡到水中。这时，小船向前驶去。

“上帝知道，最后的那条鲨鱼咬了我多少鱼肉，”他说，“眼下这小船可是轻快多了。”他实在不愿意去想那被鲨鱼咬得面目全非的鱼肚子。他明白鲨鱼的每次猛烈进攻，都能够扯掉一大块鱼肉，他还明白现在鱼身上留下了一条可供其他鲨鱼跟踪的臭迹，宽得就像横穿海面的一条公路。

“这条鱼真的很大，如果一个人吃的话，够吃上整整一个冬天的，”他想，“算了，别胡思乱想了，还是先歇会儿吧，把手弄利索点儿，好生守护余下的这些鱼肉吧。跟水里的血腥气味比起来，我手上这点儿算不了什么，再者，本来手上也没出多少血。划破点也没有什么大碍，说不定出出血还能让我抽筋的左手恢复正常呢。”

“现在我还有什么事情可以做？”他想，“什么都没有。我最好什么都不要去想，静静地等着下一条鲨鱼。”“真希望这确实只是一场梦，”他默念，“不过天晓得，没准儿结果并不赖。”

接着，一条独自行动的铲鼻鲨疯狂地来了。瞧它横冲直撞的架势，如同一头奔向饲料槽的饿极的猪，当然猪没有如此巨大的能吞掉你脑袋的嘴。它一口咬住了鱼，老人趁它咬鱼时奋力将绑在桨上的刀子猛地扎进它的脑子，可是它死命向後一扭，滚了个个儿，“啪”的一声，刀子被挣断了。

老人默默坐定，稳稳地掌着舵。他不用去看也能知道，那条大鲨鱼正慢慢地沉到水底，最初是那么巨大，接着逐渐变小，最后就剩下一个小粒儿。以前这种场景老人都非常爱看，看得着迷，不过这次，他却连瞧都没瞧一眼。

“现今它们终于把我战胜了，”他想，“我已经很老了，用棍子也打不死鲨鱼了。不过，只要船桨、短棍和舵柄在我手里，我就永不放弃。”

然后，他又把双手泡到了水里。午时逐渐过去，傍晚逼近，他现在什么也看不到，视野里仅有大海和天空。空中的风刮得比刚才更强劲了，他只希望不久就能够看到陆地。

“你累了，老头儿，”他说，“你从里到外都累透顶了。”

日落将至，又有鲨鱼来袭了。

老人看到两片褐色的鳍向小船游来，它们一定是沿着大鱼在水里留下的带有腥味的血迹寻来的。可恶的家伙竟然不四处寻找血迹，就朝着小船笔直地并肩而来。

他撑住了舵，把帆脚索系紧，伸手到船艄下面拿棍子。这本来是个桨柄，当初从一只断桨上锯下来的，长约两英尺半。他只能用一只手使这家伙，因为上面还有个把手极其妨碍。于是他用右手攥紧，曲手抓在上面，同时死盯着鲨鱼冲向这边。两条花花绿绿的家伙，都是加拉诺鲨。

“怎么样也得等到第一条鲨鱼牢牢咬住了才打它的鼻尖儿，”他想，“要不就直接揍它的头顶。”

两条鲨鱼一起猛冲过来，当离他较近的那条张开大嘴一口咬进大鱼银白色的腹部时，他便高高举起棍子，狠狠地拍了下去，“啪”地一声打在鲨鱼宽大的头顶上。这一棍下去，他感觉如同拍打在坚韧的橡胶上一样，同时感觉触到了硬邦邦的骨头。接着，鲨鱼从鱼身上往下开溜，他

又趁势狠狠地打了它鼻尖儿一下。

另一条鲨鱼刚游过来没多会儿就游走了。这会儿又把嘴巴张得大大的往鱼上直扑，一口咬住鱼身，紧闭两颚，只见一块块白色的鱼肉就从它嘴角流了出去。老人举起棍子奋力朝它打去，却只打中了脑袋，鲨鱼瞅了他两眼，然后一口撕下了咬在嘴里的鱼肉。正当它溜开想把肉吞下去的时候，老人趁机又举起棍子一棍打下，可也只打到了结实而又坚韧的同橡胶差不多的地方。

“来吧，花花绿绿的东西，”老人说，“再过来啊！”

鲨鱼又径直向前冲来，这次待它刚刚合上嘴巴时，老人立即高举棍子狠狠给了一下。这次可是实实在在地敲中了，他觉得打到了那家伙脑袋后边的头盖骨上，紧接着他又在同一地方猛敲一下。晕晕乎乎的鲨鱼迅速把咬在嘴里的鱼肉撕下，从大鱼的一边溜下水去。

老人守护着大鱼，望着周围，生怕那家伙还会回来，不过两条鲨鱼始终没有出现。后来他看到有一条在水面上转圈儿游着，却没有看到另外一条。

“我不能指望干掉它们了，”他想，“当年我年轻体壮的时候干掉它们没问题的。不过我好歹让它俩受了重伤，任何一条都不会有多好受。如果我双手抓的是一根棒球棒的话，第一条肯定被我打死了。就算是现在人老力疲也没问题，他想。”

他不愿再看那条大鱼，他知道它至少有一半被咬得乱七八糟。而他刚才同鲨鱼搏斗的时候，已经日落了。

“天就要黑下来了，”他说，“应该就能看得到哈瓦那的灯光了。要

是我东行得太远，我就能看到一个新开辟的沙滩的灯光。”

“现在我距离陆地应该不是太远了，”他想，“希望不要有人为此担心。话说回来，也只有小男孩会担心。不过我知道他也一定满怀信心。很多老渔夫也会担心的，应该还有不少其他的人，我生活在一个不错的镇子里啊。”

他已不再跟大鱼说话，因为它被咬得一塌糊涂。他只想起一件事。

“半条了，”他说，“原来你可是全须全尾的。对不住得很，我出海出得太远了，我让咱俩都玩儿完了。但是咱们干掉了很多鲨鱼，咱们一起，还打伤了不少。乖鱼儿，你以前干掉过多少？你那把像剑一样的长嘴，可不是白长的啊！”

他喜欢想这条鱼，想着要是它自由自在地在海里游的时候，会怎么对付鲨鱼呢。“我应该砍下这个像剑一样的长嘴，拿来对付那些鲨鱼，”他想，“可是没有斧子，后来又把刀子都给弄丢了。”

“不过，要是我真能砍下它，然后绑到桨柄上，那将是一把多好的利器啊！那样就真是我们一起与鲨鱼战斗了。如果它们夜里袭击。你如何对付？你又有什么高招？”

“跟它们斗，”他说，“我要与它们战斗到死。”

可是，现在一片漆黑，看不到一点光亮，也看不到灯火，只有不停息的风，还有被风拉扯着的船帆，他觉得自己也许已经死了。他双手合拢，碰碰掌心。这双手并没有死，他只要双手合拢一下，就能从痛楚中感受到它们还活着。他后背倚在船艙上，清楚自己还活着。肩膀告诉了他。

“我许过愿，要是能捉到这条大鱼，即便念多少遍祷文都可以。可是现在我实在累得没有什么气力去说话了。还不如将麻袋拿过来披到我的肩膀上。”

他躺在船艄掌着舵，凝视夜空，等待天边反射出光亮来。“我还有半条鱼，”他暗想，“或许我运气不错，能把前半条带回去。好歹我总归得走点儿运吧。”“不”，他说，“你出海出得太远了，好运都跑了。”

“别瞎琢磨了，”他大声说道，“保持头脑清醒，稳稳地掌好舵，没准儿你还能有不小的好运呢。”

“如果好运也有地方卖的话，我还真想买一点儿。”他说。

“我还能用什么来买呢？”他问自己，“难道用一支丢失了的渔叉、一把折了的刀子和一双受了伤的手吗？”

“没准儿也能，”他说，“曾经你还想过利用在海上的八十四天来买点儿运气，你也差一点儿就买到了。”

“我不要胡乱寻思了，”他想，“好运这个东西，总是以不同的模式出现，谁认得准呢。不过管它什么样的好运气，我都愿意买上一点儿，开价多少也行。”“真希望我能看到灯火的反射光，”他想，“我想要的还真不少，现在最想要的就剩下这个了。”他尽可能地坐得舒服一点儿，竭力掌好舵，他知道自己还好好活着，因为还能感受到疼痛。

夜里十点左右，他看到了城里的灯火映在天边的反射光。这光起初仅能依稀可辨，如同月亮升起前天上的微弱光亮。之后渐渐地清晰了。现在，风越来越大，波涛汹涌，反光也似乎被隔在波涛对面。他驶进反光的圈子里，想着很快就能到达暖流的边缘了。

“现在终于结束了，”他想，“或许它们还会再来袭击我，可是，黑夜中只身一人，赤手空拳，该怎么与它们搏斗？”

这时他感到身子硬邦邦的，疼痛异常。寒风刺骨的夜晚，伤口以及身上所有用力过猛的部位都疼得厉害。“但愿不用再搏斗了，”他想，“但愿不用再搏斗了。”

可是到了半夜，他又开始了搏斗，这一次，他心里清楚，无论如何都是徒劳的了。它们成群结队而来，直冲向大鱼。当他看到它们的鳍在水上划出的一道道线，以及它们身上闪闪发出的磷光时，便拿起短棍猛力击向它们的脑袋，只听到“啪”的一声短棍被两颚咬住，还听到它们在船下咬住大鱼晃动小船的声音。他什么也看不清，只是凭感觉和声音竭力抡棍往下打，不顾死活的打，突然短棍被什么东西给咬住了，就只好丢了。

搏斗并未停止，他猛地把舵柄扭下，双手紧握，拿它当武器一次次乱劈乱砍。但是现在它们都游到船头边上，走马灯似的一条接着一條往上蹿，然后成群结队地一起上，咬下一块块的鱼肉。当他们转身再来进攻的时候，这些鱼肉在水下闪闪发光。

当最后一条鲨鱼扑向鱼头的时候，他知道这下完了。好在大鱼的两颚肥硕厚实不好咬，鲨鱼的嘴卡在那里，于是他趁机抡起舵柄砸向鲨鱼脑袋。一下，两下，又一下。只听到“啪”的一声，舵柄断了，他就用断了的把手扎向鲨鱼。他觉得舵柄扎了进去，知道它非常锋利，就再用力往下扎。鲨鱼终于松开嘴，翻了个身游走了。这是这个鲨鱼群中的最后一条，因为实在也没什么东西可以供它们吃的了。

老人此时已气喘吁吁，他感到嘴里的味道非常奇怪，带有铜腥味，

还甜里吧唧的。他担心了好一阵子，不过幸好这股味道还并不很重。

他朝海里啐了一口，说：“把这吃了，花花绿绿的加拉诺鲨！做个梦吧，梦到你杀死了一个人。”

他知道现在他终于被打败了，而且一败涂地。他回到船艙，发现虽然舵柄的断头参差不齐，呈锯齿形，不过倒还可以插到舵槽里，凑合着还可以掌舵。他把麻袋围在肩膀上，让小船沿着原先的路向前行着。这会儿他驾驶得很轻松，不再去想些什么，也没有乱七八糟的感觉。现在他已超越了这一切，只盼望着尽可能稳稳当当地驾着小船回到家乡的港口。夜里有些鲨鱼又来袭击大鱼的残骸，就和人从桌子上捡面包沫子似的。它们爱怎样怎样，老人现在除了好好掌舵，什么都不愿理会。他只是感受到，小船丢掉沉重的东西以后，现在行驶得多么轻松愉快。

“船还是不错的，”他想，“除了那个舵柄，它完好无损，并且那个东西换一个很容易。”

他觉得已经驶进了暖流，能够看到沿岸住户中的灯光了。他知道现在已经到了哪里，回家的路近在眼前。

“无论怎么样，风总归是我们的朋友，”他想，接着他又补充一句，“有时候是。”“还有大海，海里有我们的朋友，也有我们的敌人。还有床，”他想，“床是我的朋友，只要床，床是件伟大的发明，打败了上床，就会非常舒服，我从来不知道有这么舒服。”“那什么将你打败的？”他又问自己。

“什么也没有，”他大声说道，“怪就怪我出海出得太远了。”

当他驶进小港湾的时候，露台饭店的灯光已经全部熄灭了，他知道

大家都已经睡了。风越刮越大，现在异常猛烈。不过港湾里非常安静，他一直驶到岩石下一小片卵石沙滩前。没有人来帮忙，他只能尽力把小船划到紧靠岸边的地方。然后他迈出船来，抽身把小船系在岩石上。

他又卸下桅杆，卷起船帆并收好。接着扛起桅杆，开始往岸上爬。到现在他才知道自己已疲惫到了什么程度。他稍微休息了一下，回头看了看，在街灯的反光中，只见大鱼直挺挺竖在船艄后边。不过他只看清那如同一条白线般的裸露脊骨，和那伸着长嘴的黑乎乎的鱼脑袋，除此之外空空如也。

他继续往上爬，到了顶上摔倒在地，就势躺了一会儿，桅杆仍然挂在肩上。他挣扎着想站起身来，但是身子如同沉石，无法动弹。于是他就扛着桅杆坐在地上，望着大路。这时从路对面走过一只猫，只顾去忙自己的事，老人盯着它。接着他又只望着大路。

最后，他放下桅杆，摇晃着站起身来。再将桅杆举到肩上，径直沿大路往前走去。回到窝棚前，他不禁边走边歇了五次。

走进窝棚后，他把桅杆倚在墙上，摸黑找到一只水瓶，喝了一口水后就倒在床上了。他拉起毯子把肩膀盖好，又裹好后背和两条腿，然后俯身躺在报纸上，脸朝着下面，手掌朝上，胳膊直挺挺地伸着。

早上他睡得正香时，小男孩站在门外，向里张望着。风刮得非常厉害，漂网渔船今天不能开出海了，所以小男孩多睡了一会儿。起来后，他像往常那样来到老人的窝棚前。他听到老人沉重的鼻息，便向里望去，一看到老人的那双手就大哭起来。他默默地走出去打算弄些咖啡，一路上仍止不住地哭着。

已有很多渔夫围在小船边，盯着绑在船边上的东西。其中一个卷着

裤腿站在水中，用一根钓线在丈量大鱼骨骼的长度。

小男孩没有下水，他已经去过了，有一个渔夫帮他看着小船。

“他现在怎样了？”其中一个渔夫大声喊道。

“在睡觉！”小男孩喊道。他不管人家看没看到他在哭，“谁也不要打扰他。”

“这个大家伙从鼻子到尾巴有十八英尺长。”丈量大鱼的渔夫大声喊道。

“我相信。”小男孩说。

他来到露台饭店，打算要一罐咖啡。

“要热一些，多放点儿牛奶和糖。”

“还要点儿什么吗？”

“不要了，待会儿我看看他想吃点儿什么吧。”

“好大的鱼啊，”饭店老板说，“我从来没有见过这么大的鱼。昨天你逮的那两条也很好。”

“我的鱼，见鬼去吧！”小男孩一边说着，一边又哭了起来。

“你要喝点儿什么饮料吗？”老板问。

“不要，”小男孩说，“别让他们打搅圣地亚哥，我很快就回来。”

“告诉他我非常伤心。”

“谢谢。”小男孩说。

小男孩拿着那罐热咖啡一直走进老人的窝棚，坐在他身旁，看着他等他醒来。有一次看起来好像要醒过来了，可是又昏睡过去。小男孩穿过大路借来些木柴火，把咖啡又热了热。

老人总算醒来了。

“躺着，别坐起来，”小男孩往一只玻璃杯里倒了些咖啡，说，“先喝了吧。”

老人接过来仰头喝了。

“它们打垮了我，马诺林，”他说，“它们千真万确地打垮了我。”

“那条鱼没有打垮你，它可没有。”

“是的，确实。是后来遭遇了鲨鱼。”

“佩德里科正在小船和其他东西那儿。那个鱼头你想怎么处置？”

“给佩德里科，让他把它绞碎了用作鱼饵吧。”

“那个长长的尖嘴呢？”

“你想要就拿走吧。”

“我要，”小男孩说，“现在还有其他的事情要安排。”

“他们找过我吗？”

“当然找过，海岸警卫队和飞机都出动了。”

“海洋那么大，小船又小得很，想看见是很难的。”老人说。他觉得能够跟人聊上一会儿，而不是自言自语或者对着大海叨咕，实在是愉快非常！“我一直挂念着你，”他说，“你们逮到些什么？”

“第一天一条，第二天一条，第三天两条。”

“真不赖！”

“如今我们又能够在一起捕鱼了。”

“算了，我运气不好。我的好运到头了。”

“管他好不好运，”小男孩说，“我能带来好运。”

“你家人该怎么说呢？”

“我不管。昨天我收获了两条鱼，可是现在我们要一同去捕鱼，我还有很多东西要在你这儿学。”

“我们得准备一支锋利得能扎死鱼的好长矛，就放在船上备着。你可以从旧福特汽车上卸下钢板做个矛头。咱们可以拿到瓜那巴科亚去把它磨得又快又锋利，为防止断裂，不用淬火。我的刀子就已经断了。”

“我得去找把刀子来，再把钢板好好磨上一磨。这大风还要刮多久？”

“三天吧，说不定还要更久。”

“我要把事情统统都安排妥当，”小男孩说，“你把双手养好，老大爷。”

“我知道该如何去调理。昨天夜里我吐了些稀奇古怪的玩意儿，总觉得胸口里好像有什么东西碎了似的。”

“那就把那里也好好养养，”小男孩说，“躺下吧，老大爷，我去帮你找件干净衬衫过来，顺便弄点吃的。”

“还有我这些日子没能看到的报纸，你也给我找来。”老人说。

“你快快好起来吧，因为我还有不少东西要向你学习，什么你都可以教给我的。你受了不少苦吧？”

“确实不少。”老人说。

“我把报纸和食物给你拿来，”小男孩说，“再歇会儿吧，老大爷。我去趟药店，给你弄点治手伤的药过来。”

“记得告诉佩德里科，那个鱼头给他了。”

“嗯，我不会忘的。”

小男孩走出门，沿着那条破烂的珊瑚石路，一边走又一边大哭起来。

当天下午，露台饭店来了一群游客，他们中间有个女人望着海水时，在空啤酒罐和死掉的梭子鱼当中，看到了一条又粗又长的白花花的脊骨，后面还连着一一条庞大的尾巴，东风不停地把港外的海水掀得波涛汹涌，那尾巴就随着潮水上来下去地摆动着。

“那是什么东西？”她指着那条大鱼的长长的脊骨向侍者问道。现在那不过是一堆废物，只是等着被潮水冲走。

“Tiburon¹，”侍者说道，“Eshark²。”他想对她解释一下事情的始末。

“我从来都不知道鲨鱼有这么漂亮的尾巴，样子还如此的特别。”³

“我也不知道。”她旁边的男伴说。

大路的另一头，老人在窝棚里又睡着了。他依旧脸朝下躺着，小男孩坐在旁边守护着他。老人做着梦，梦里还是那些狮子。

¹西班牙语。鲨鱼的意思。

²侍者想用英语讲“鲨鱼”（shark），但读错了发音，前边照西班牙语习惯加了一个元音。

³其实侍者想解释这是被鲨鱼吃剩的大马林鱼残骸，但没等他说完，这位女士就误以为这是鲨鱼骨骼了。

The Old Man and The Sea

He was an old man who fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf Stream and he had gone eighty-four days now without taking a fish. In the first forty days a boy had been with him. But after forty days without a fish the boy's parents had told him that the old man was now definitely and finally *salao*, which is the worst form of unlucky, and the boy had gone at their orders in another boat which caught three good fish the first week. It made the boy sad to see the old man come in each day with his skiff empty and he always went down to help him carry either the coiled lines or the gaff and harpoon and the sail that was furled around the mast. The sail was patched with flour sacks and, furled, it looked like the flag of permanent defeat.

The old man was thin and gaunt with deep wrinkles in the back of his neck. The brown blotches of the benevolent skin cancer the sun brings from its reflection on the tropic sea were on his cheeks. The blotches ran well down the sides of his face and his hands had the deep-creased scars from handling heavy fish on the cords. But none of these scars were fresh. They were as old as erosions in a fishless desert.

Everything about him was old except his eyes and they were the same color as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated.

"Santiago, " the boy said to him as they climbed the bank from where the skiff was hauled up. "I could go with you again. We've made some money."

The old man had taught the boy to fish and the boy loved him.

“No, ”the old man said. “You’re with a lucky boat. Stay with them.”

“But remember how you went eighty-seven days without fish and then we caught big ones every day for three weeks.”

“I remember, ”the old man said.“I know you did not leave me because you doubted.”

“It was papa made me leave. I am a boy and I must obey him.”

“I know, ”the old man said. “It is quite normal.”

“He hasn’t much faith.”

“No, ”the old man said. “But we have. Haven’t we? ”

“Yes, ”the boy said. “Can I offer you a beer on the Terrace and then we’ll take the stuff home.”

“Why not? ”the old man said. “Between fishermen.”

They sat on the Terrace and many of the fishermen made fun of the old man and he was not angry. Others, of the older fishermen, looked at him and were sad.

But they did not show it and they spoke politely about the current and the depths they had drifted their lines at and the steady good weather and of what they had seen. The successful fishermen of that day were already in and had butchered their marlin out and carried them laid full length across two

planks, with two men staggering at the end of each plank, to the fish house where they waited for the ice truck to carry them to the market in Havana. Those who had caught sharks had taken them to the shark factory on the other side of the cove where they were hoisted on a block and tackle, their livers removed, their fins cut off and their hides skinned out and their flesh cut into strips for salting.

When the wind was in the east a smell came across the harbour from the shark factory; but today there was only the faint edge of the odour because the wind had backed into the north and then dropped off and it was pleasant and sunny on the Terrace.

“Santiago, ” the boy said.

“Yes, ” the old man said. He was holding his glass and thinking of many years ago.

“Can I go out to get sardines for you for tomorrow? ”

“No. Go and play baseball. I can still row and Rogelio will throw the net.”

“I would like to go. If I cannot fish with you, I would like to serve in some way.”

“You bought me a beer, ” the old man said. “You are already a man.”

“How old was I when you first took me in a boat? ”

“Five and you nearly were killed when I brought the fish in too green

and he nearly tore the boat to pieces. Can you remember? ”

“I can remember the tail slapping and banging and the thwart breaking and the noise of the clubbing. I can remember you throwing me into the bow where the wet coiled lines were and feeling the whole boat shiver and the noise of you clubbing him like chopping a tree down and the sweet blood smell all over me.”

“Can you really remember that or did I just tell it to you? ”

“I remember everything from when we first went together.”

The old man looked at him with his sun-burned, confident loving eyes.

“If you were my boy I’d take you out and gamble, ” he said. “But you are your father’s and your mother’s and you are in a lucky boat.”

“May I get the sardines? I know where I can get four baits too.”

“I have mine left from today. I put them in salt in the box.”

“Let me get four fresh ones.”

“One, ”the old man said. His hope and his confidence had never gone. But now they were freshening as when the breeze rises.

“Two, ”the boy said.

“Two, ”the old man agreed. “You didn’t steal them? ”

“I would, ”the boy said. “But I bought these.”

“Thank you, ”the old man said. He was too simple to wonder when he had attained humility. But he knew he had attained it and he knew it was not disgraceful and it carried no loss of true pride.

“Tomorrow is going to be a good day with this current, ” he said.

“Where are you going? ” the boy asked.

“Far out to come in when the wind shifts. I want to be out before it is light.”

“I’ll try to get him to work far out, ” the boy said. “Then if you hook something truly big we can come to your aid.”

“He does not like to work too far out.”

“No, ” the boy said. “But I will see something that he cannot see such as a bird working and get him to come out after dolphin.”

“Are his eyes that bad? ”

“He is almost blind.”

“It is strange, ” the old man said. “He never went turtle-ing. That is what kills the eyes.”

“But you went turtle-ing for years off the Mosquito Coast and your eyes are good.”

“I am a strange old man.”

“But are you strong enough now for a truly big fish? ”

“I think so. And there are many tricks.”

“Let us take the stuff home, ” the boy said. “So I can get the cast net and go after the sardines.”

They picked up the gear from the boat. The old man carried the mast on his shoulder and the boy carried the wooden box with the coiled, hard-braided brown lines, the gaff and the harpoon with its shaft. The box with the baits was under the stern of the skiff along with the club that was used to subdue the big fish when they were brought alongside. No one would steal from the old man but it was better to take the sail and the heavy lines home as the dew was bad for them and, though he was quite sure no local people would steal from him, the old man thought that a gaff and a harpoon were needless temptations to leave in a boat.

They walked up the road together to the old man’s shack and went in through its open door. The old man leaned the mast with its wrapped sail against the wall and the boy put the box and the other gear beside it. The mast was nearly as long as the one room of the shack. The shack was made of the tough budshields of the royal palm which are called guano and in it there was a bed, a table, one chair, and a place on the dirt floor to cook with charcoal. On the brown walls of the flattened, overlapping leaves of the sturdy fibered guano there was a picture in color of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and another of the Virgin of Cobre. These were relics of his wife. Once there had been a tinted photograph of his wife on the wall but he had taken it down because it made him too lonely to see it and it was on the shelf in the corner

under his clean shirt.

“What do you have to eat? ” the boy asked.

“A pot of yellow rice with fish. Do you want some? ”

“No. I will eat at home. Do you want me to make the fire? ”

“No. I will make it later on. Or I may eat the rice cold.”

“May I take the cast net? ”

“Of course.”

There was no cast net and the boy remembered when they had sold it. But they went through this fiction every day. There was no pot of yellow rice and fish and the boy knew this too.

“Eighty-five is a lucky number, ” the old man said. “How would you like to see me bring one in that dressed out over a thousand pounds? ”

“I’ll get the cast net and go for sardines. Will you sit in the sun in the doorway? ”

“Yes. I have yesterday’s paper and I will read the baseball.”

The boy did not know whether yesterday’s paper was a fiction too. But the old man brought it out from under the bed.

“Perico gave it to me at the bodega, ” he explained.

“I’ll be back when I have the sardines. I’ll keep yours and mine together on ice and we can share them in the morning. When I come back you can tell me about the baseball.”

“The Yankees cannot lose.”

“But I fear the Indians of Cleveland.”

“Have faith in the Yankees my son. Think of the great DiMaggio.”

“I fear both the Tigers of Detroit and the Indians of Cleveland.”

“Be careful or you will fear even the Reds of Cincinnati and the White Sox of Chicago.”

“You study it and tell me when I come back.”

“Do you think we should buy a terminal of the lottery with an eighty-five? Tomorrow is the eighty-fifth day.”

“We can do that, ”the boy said. “But what about the eighty-seven of your great record? ”

“It could not happen twice. Do you think you can find an eighty-five? ”

“I can order one.”

“One sheet. That’s two dollars and a half. Who can we borrow that from? ”

“That’s easy. I can always borrow two dollars and a half.”

“I think perhaps I can too. But I try not to borrow. First you borrow. Then you beg.”

“Keep warm old man, ” the boy said. “Remember we are in September.”

“The month when the great fish come, ” the old man said. “Anyone can be a fisherman in May.”

“I go now for the sardines, ” the boy said.

When the boy came back the old man was asleep in the chair and the sun was down. The boy took the old army blanket off the bed and spread it over the back of the chair and over the old man’s shoulders. They were strange shoulders, still powerful although very old, and the neck was still strong too and the creases did not show so much when the old man was asleep and his head fallen forward. His shirt had been patched so many times that it was like the sail and the patches were faded to many different shades by the sun. The old man’s head was very old though and with his eyes closed there was no life in his face. The newspaper lay across his knees and the weight of his arm held it there in the evening breeze. He was barefooted.

The boy left him there and when he came back the old man was still asleep.

“Wake up old man, ” the boy said and put his hand on one of the old man’s knees.

The old man opened his eyes and for a moment he was coming back

from a long way away. Then he smiled.

“What have you got? ” he asked.

“Supper, ” said the boy. “We’re going to have supper.”

“I’m not very hungry.”

“Come on and eat. You can’t fish and not eat.”

“I have, ” the old man said getting up and taking the newspaper and folding it. Then he started to fold the blanket.

“Keep the blanket around you, ” the boy said. “You’ll not fish without eating while I’m alive.”

“Then live a long time and take care of yourself, ” the old man said. “What are we eating? ”

“Black beans and rice, fried bananas, and some stew.”

The boy had brought them in a two-decker metal container from the Terrace. The two sets of knives and forks and spoons were in his pocket with a paper napkin wrapped around each set.

“Who gave this to you? ”

“Martin. The owner.”

“I must thank him.”

“I thanked him already, ” the boy said. “You don’t need to thank him.”

“I’ll give him the belly meat of a big fish, ” the old man said. “Has he done this for us more than once? ”

“I think so.”

“I must give him something more than the belly meat then. He is very thoughtful for us.”

“He sent two beers.”

“I like the beer in cans best.”

“I know. But this is in bottles, Hatuey beer, and I take back the bottles.”

“That’s very kind of you, ” the old man said. “Should we eat? ”

“I’ve been asking you to, ” the boy told him gently. “I have not wished to open the container until you were ready.”

“I’m ready now, ” the old man said. “I only needed time to wash.”

Where did you wash? The boy thought. The village water supply was two streets down the road. I must have water here for him, the boy thought, and soap and a good towel. Why am I so thoughtless? I must get him another shirt and a jacket for the winter and some sort of shoes and another blanket.

“Your stew is excellent, ” the old man said.

“Tell me about the baseball, ” the boy asked him.

“In the American League it is the Yankees as I said, ” the old man said happily.

“They lost today, ” the boy told him.

“That means nothing. The great DiMaggio is himself again.”

“They have other men on the team.”

“Naturally. But he makes the difference. In the other league, between Brooklyn and Philadelphia I must take Brooklyn. But then I think of Dick Sisler and those great drives in the old park.”

“There was nothing ever like them. He hits the longest ball I have ever seen.”

“Do you remember when he used to come to the Terrace? I wanted to take him fishing but I was too timid to ask him. Then I asked you to ask him and you were too timid.”

“I know. It was a great mistake. He might have gone with us. Then we would have that for all of our lives.”

“I would like to take the great DiMaggio fishing, ” the old man said. “They say his father was a fisherman. Maybe he was as poor as we are and would understand.”

“The great Sisler’s father was never poor and he, the father, was

playing in the Big Leagues when he was my age.”

“When I was your age I was before the mast on a square rigged ship that ran to Africa and I have seen lions on the beaches in the evening.”

“I know. You told me.”

“Should we talk about Africa or about baseball? ”

“Baseball I think, ” the boy said. “Tell me about the great John J. McGraw.” He said Jota for J.

“He used to come to the Terrace sometimes too in the older days. But he was rough and harsh-spoken and difficult when he was drinking. His mind was on horses as well as baseball. At least he carried lists of horses at all times in his pocket and frequently spoke the names of horses on the telephone.”

“He was a great manager, ” the boy said. “My father thinks he was the greatest.”

“Because he came here the most times, ” the old man said. “If Durocher had continued to come here each year your father would think him the greatest manager.”

“Who is the greatest manager, really, Luque or Mike Gonzalez? ”

“I think they are equal.”

“And the best fisherman is you.”

“No. I know others better.”

“Qué va, ” the boy said. “There are many good fishermen and some great ones. But there is only you.”

“Thank you. You make me happy. I hope no fish will come along so great that he will prove us wrong.”

“There is no such fish if you are still strong as you say.”

“I may not be as strong as I think, ” the old man said. “But I know many tricks and I have resolution.”

“You ought to go to bed now so that you will be fresh in the morning. I will take the things back to the Terrace.”

“Good night then. I will wake you in the morning.”

“You’re my alarm clock, ” the boy said.

“Age is my alarm clock, ” the old man said. “Why do old men wake so early? Is it to have one longer day? ”

“I don’t know, ” the boy said. “All I know is that young boys sleep late and hard.”

“I can remember it, ” the old man said. “I’ll waken you in time.”

“I do not like for him to waken me. It is as though I were inferior.”

“I know.”

“Sleep well old man.”

The boy went out. They had eaten with no light on the table and the old man took off his trousers and went to bed in the dark. He rolled his trousers up to make a pillow, putting the newspaper inside them. He rolled himself in the blanket and slept on the other old newspapers that covered the springs of the bed.

He was asleep in a short time and he dreamed of Africa when he was a boy and the long golden beaches and the white beaches, so white they hurt your eyes, and the high capes and the great brown mountains. He lived along that coast now every night and in his dreams he heard the surf roar and saw the native boats come riding through it. He smelled the tar and oakum of the deck as he slept and he smelled the smell of Africa that the land breeze brought at morning.

Usually when he smelled the land breeze he woke up and dressed to go and wake the boy. But tonight the smell of the land breeze came very early and he knew it was too early in his dream and went on dreaming to see the white peaks of the Islands rising from the sea and then he dreamed of the different harbours and roadsteads of the Canary Islands.

He no longer dreamed of storms, nor of women, nor of great occurrences, nor of great fish, nor fights, nor contests of strength, nor of his wife. He only dreamed of places now and of the lions on the beach. They played like young cats in the dusk and he loved them as he loved the boy. He never dreamed about the boy. He simply woke, looked out the open door at the moon and unrolled his trousers and put them on. He urinated

outside the shack and then went up the road to wake the boy. He was shivering with the morning cold. But he knew he would shiver himself warm and that soon he would be rowing.

The door of the house where the boy lived was unlocked and he opened it and walked in quietly with his bare feet. The boy was asleep on a cot in the first room and the old man could see him clearly with the light that came in from the dying moon. He took hold of one foot gently and held it until the boy woke and turned and looked at him. The old man nodded and the boy took his trousers from the chair by the bed and, sitting on the bed, pulled them on.

The old man went out the door and the boy came after him. He was sleepy and the old man put his arm across his shoulders and said, "I am sorry."

"Qué va." the boy said. "It is what a man must do."

They walked down the road to the old man's shack and all along the road, in the dark, barefoot men were moving, carrying the masts of their boats.

When they reached the old man's shack the boy took the rolls of line in the basket and the harpoon and gaff and the old man carried the mast with the furled sail on his shoulder.

"Do you want coffee? " the boy asked.

"We'll put the gear in the boat and then get some."

They had coffee from condensed milk cans at an early morning place that served fishermen.

“How did you sleep old man? ” the boy asked. He was waking up now although it was still hard for him to leave his sleep.

“Very well, Manolin, ” the old man said. “I feel confident today.”

“So do I, ” the boy said. “Now I must get your sardines and mine and your fresh baits. He brings our gear himself. He never wants anyone to carry anything.”

“We’re different, ” the old man said. “I let you carry things when you were five years old.”

“I know it, ” the boy said. “I’ll be right back. Have another coffee. We have credit here.”

He walked off, bare-footed on the coral rocks, to the ice house where the baits were stored.

The old man drank his coffee slowly. It was all he would have all day and he knew that he should take it. For a long time now eating had bored him and he never carried a lunch. He had a bottle of water in the bow of the skiff and that was all he needed for the day.

The boy was back now with the sardines and the two baits wrapped in a newspaper and they went down the trail to the skiff, feeling the pebbled sand under their feet, and lifted the skiff and slid her into the water.

“Good luck old man.”

“Good luck, ” the old man said. He fitted the rope lashings of the oars onto the thole pins and, leaning forward against the thrust of the blades in the water, he began to row out of the harbour in the dark. There were other boats from the other beaches going out to sea and the old man heard the dip and push of their oars even though he could not see them now the moon was below the hills.

Sometimes someone would speak in a boat. But most of the boats were silent except for the dip of the oars. They spread apart after they were out of the mouth of the harbour and each one headed for the part of the ocean where he hoped to find fish. The old man knew he was going far out and he left the smell of the land behind and rowed out into the clean early morning smell of the ocean. He saw the phosphorescence of the Gulf weed in the water as he rowed over the part of the ocean that the fishermen called the great well because there was a sudden deep of seven hundred fathoms where all sorts of fish congregated because of the swirl the current made against the steep walls of the floor of the ocean. Here there were concentrations of shrimp and bait fish and sometimes schools of squid in the deepest holes and these rose close to the surface at night where all the wandering fish fed on them.

In the dark the old man could feel the morning coming and as he rowed he heard the trembling sound as flying fish left the water and the hissing that their stiff set wings made as they soared away in the darkness. He was very fond of flying fish as they were his principal friends on the ocean. He was sorry for the birds, especially the small delicate dark terns that were always flying and looking and almost never finding, and he thought, “The birds

have a harder life than we do except for the robber birds and the heavy strong ones. Why did they make birds so delicate and fine as those sea swallows when the ocean can be so cruel? She is kind and very beautiful. But she can be so cruel and it comes so suddenly and such birds that fly, dipping and hunting, with their small sad voices are made too delicately for the sea.”

He always thought of the sea as *la mar* which is what people call her in Spanish when they love her. Sometimes those who love her say bad things of her but they are always said as though she were a woman. Some of the younger fishermen, those who used buoys as floats for their lines and had motorboats, bought when the shark livers had brought much money, spoke of her as *le mar* which is masculine. They spoke of her as a contestant or a place or even an enemy. But the old man always thought of her as feminine and as something that gave or withheld great favours, and if she did wild or wicked things it was because she could not help them. The moon affects her as it does a woman, he thought.

He was rowing steadily and it was no effort for him since he kept well within his speed and the surface of the ocean was flat except for the occasional swirls of the current. He was letting the current do a third of the work and as it started to be light he saw he was already further out than he had hoped to be at this hour.

I worked the deep wells for a week and did nothing, he thought. Today I'll work out where the schools of bonito and albacore are and maybe there will be a big one with them.

Before it was really light he had his baits out and was drifting with the

current. One bait was down forty fathoms. The second was at seventy-five and the third and fourth were down in the blue water at one hundred and one hundred and twenty-five fathoms. Each bait hung head down with the shank of the hook inside the bait fish, tied and sewed solid and all the projecting part of the hook, the curve and the point, was covered with fresh sardines. Each sardine was hooked through both eyes so that they made a half garland on the projecting steel. There was no part of the hook that a great fish could feel which was not sweet smelling and good tasting.

The boy had given him two fresh small tunas, or albacores, which hung on the two deepest lines like plummets and, on the others, he had a big blue runner and a yellow jack that had been used before; but they were in good condition still and had the excellent sardines to give them scent and attractiveness. Each line, as thick around as a big pencil, was looped onto a green-sapped stick so that any pull or touch on the bait would make the stick dip and each line had two forty-fathom coils which could be made fast to the other spare coils so that, if it were necessary, a fish could take out over three hundred fathoms of line.

Now the man watched the dip of the three sticks over the side of the skiff and rowed gently to keep the lines straight up and down and at their proper depths. It was quite light and any moment now the sun would rise.

The sun rose thinly from the sea and the old man could see the other boats, low on the water and well in toward the shore, spread out across the current. Then the sun was brighter and the glare came on the water and then, as it rose clear, the flat sea sent it back at his eyes so that it hurt sharply and he rowed without looking into it. He looked down into the water

and watched the lines that went straight down into the dark of the water. He kept them straighter than anyone did, so that at each level in the darkness of the stream there would be a bait waiting exactly where he wished it to be for any fish that swam there. Others let them drift with the current and sometimes they were at sixty fathoms when the fishermen thought they were at a hundred.

But, he thought, I keep them with precision. Only I have no luck any more. But who knows? Maybe today. Every day is a new day. It is better to be lucky. But I would rather be exact. Then when luck comes you are ready.

The sun was two hours higher now and it did not hurt his eyes so much to look into the east. There were only three boats in sight now and they showed very low and far inshore.

All my life the early sun has hurt my eyes, he thought. Yet they are still good. In the evening I can look straight into it without getting the blackness. It has more force in the evening too. But in the morning it is painful.

Just then he saw a man-of-war bird with his long black wings circling in the sky ahead of him. He made a quick drop, slanting down on his back-swept wings, and then circled again.

“He’s got something, ” the old man said aloud. “He’s not just looking.”

He rowed slowly and steadily toward where the bird was circling. He did not hurry and he kept his lines straight up and down. But he crowded the current a little so that he was still fishing correctly though faster than he

would have fished if he was not trying to use the bird.

The bird went higher in the air and circled again, his wings motionless. Then he dove suddenly and the old man saw flying fish spurt out of the water and sail desperately over the surface.

“Dolphin, ” the old man said aloud. “Big dolphin.”

He shipped his oars and brought a small line from under the bow. It had a wire leader and a medium-sized hook and he baited it with one of the sardines. He let it go over the side and then made it fast to a ring bolt in the stern. Then he baited another line and left it coiled in the shade of the bow. He went back to rowing and to watching the long-winged black bird who was working, now, low over the water.

As he watched the bird dipped again slanting his wings for the dive and then swinging them wildly and ineffectually as he followed the flying fish. The old man could see the slight bulge in the water that the big dolphin raised as they followed the escaping fish. The dolphin were cutting through the water below the flight of the fish and would be in the water, driving at speed, when the fish dropped. It is a big school of dolphin, he thought. They are wide spread and the flying fish have little chance. The bird has no chance. The flying fish are too big for him and they go too fast.

He watched the flying fish burst out again and again and the ineffectual movements of the bird. That school has gotten away from me, he thought. They are moving out too fast and too far. But perhaps I will pick up a stray and perhaps my big fish is around them. My big fish must be somewhere.

The clouds over the land now rose like mountains and the coast was only a long green line with the gray blue hills behind it. The water was a dark blue now, so dark that it was almost purple. As he looked down into it he saw the red sifting of the plankton in the dark water and the strange light the sun made now. He watched his lines to see them go straight down out of sight into the water and he was happy to see so much plankton because it meant fish. The strange light the sun made in the water, now that the sun was higher, meant good weather and so did the shape of the clouds over the land. But the bird was almost out of sight now and nothing showed on the surface of the water but some patches of yellow, sun-bleached Sargasso weed and the purple, formalized, iridescent, gelatinous bladder of a Portuguese man-of-war floating close beside the boat. It turned on its side and then righted itself. It floated cheerfully as a bubble with its long deadly purple filaments trailing a yard behind it in the water.

“Agua mala, ” the man said. “You whore.”

From where he swung lightly against his oars he looked down into the water and saw the tiny fish that were coloured like the trailing filaments and swam between them and under the small shade the bubble made as it drifted. They were immune to its poison. But men were not and when some of the filaments would catch on a line and rest there slimy and purple while the old man was working a fish, he would have welts and sores on his arms and hands of the sort that poison ivy or poison oak can give. But these poisonings from the agua mala came quickly and struck like a whiplash.

The iridescent bubbles were beautiful. But they were the falsest thing in the sea and the old man loved to see the big sea turtles eating them. The

turtles saw them, approached them from the front, then shut their eyes so they were completely carapaced and ate them filaments and all. The old man loved to see the turtles eat them and he loved to walk on them on the beach after a storm and hear them pop when he stepped on them with the horny soles of his feet.

He loved green turtles and hawks-bills with their elegance and speed and their great value and he had a friendly contempt for the huge, stupid loggerheads, yellow in their armour-plating, strange in their love-making, and happily eating the Portuguese men-of-war with their eyes shut.

He had no mysticism about turtles although he had gone in turtle boats for many years. He was sorry for them all, even the great trunk backs that were as long as the skiff and weighed a ton. Most people are heartless about turtles because a turtle's heart will beat for hours after he has been cut up and butchered. But the old man thought, I have such a heart too and my feet and hands are like theirs. He ate the white eggs to give himself strength. He ate them all through May to be strong in September and October for the truly big fish.

He also drank a cup of shark liver oil each day from the big drum in the shack where many of the fishermen kept their gear. It was there for all fishermen who wanted it. Most fishermen hated the taste. But it was no worse than getting up at the hours that they rose and it was very good against all colds and gripes and it was good for the eyes.

Now the old man looked up and saw that the bird was circling again.

“He’s found fish, ” he said aloud. No flying fish broke the surface and there was no scattering of bait fish. But as the old man watched, a small tuna rose in the air, turned and dropped head first into the water. The tuna shone silver in the sun and after he had dropped back into the water another and another rose and they were jumping in all directions, churning the water and leaping in long jumps after the bait. They were circling it and driving it.

If they don’t travel too fast I will get into them, the old man thought, and he watched the school working the water white and the bird now dropping and dipping into the bait fish that were forced to the surface in their panic.

“The bird is a great help, ” the old man said. Just then the stern line came taut under his foot, where he had kept a loop of the line, and he dropped his oars and felt the weight of the small tuna’s shivering pull as he held the line firm and commenced to haul it in. The shivering increased as he pulled in and he could see the blue back of the fish in the water and the gold of his sides before he swung him over the side and into the boat. He lay in the stern in the sun, compact and bullet shaped, his big, unintelligent eyes staring as he thumped his life out against the planking of the boat with the quick shivering strokes of his neat, fast-moving tail. The old man hit him on the head for kindness and kicked him, his body still shuddering, under the shade of the stern.

“Albacore, ” he said aloud. “He’ll make a beautiful bait. He’ll weigh ten pounds.”

He did not remember when he had first started to talk aloud when he was by himself. He had sung when he was by himself in the old days and he had sung at night sometimes when he was alone steering on his watch in the smacks or in the turtle boats. He had probably started to talk aloud, when alone, when the boy had left. But he did not remember. When he and the boy fished together they usually spoke only when it was necessary. They talked at night or when they were storm-bound by bad weather. It was considered a virtue not to talk unnecessarily at sea and the old man had always considered it so and respected it. But now he said his thoughts aloud many times since there was no one that they could annoy.

“If the others heard me talking out loud they would think that I am crazy, ” he said aloud. “But since I am not crazy, I do not care. And the rich have radios to talk to them in their boats and to bring them the baseball.”

Now is no time to think of baseball, he thought. Now is the time to think of only one thing. That which I was born for. There might be a big one around that school, he thought. I picked up only a straggler from the albacore that were feeding. But they are working far out and fast. Everything that shows on the surface today travels very fast and to the northeast. Can that be the time of day? Or is it some sign of weather that I do not know?

He could not see the green of the shore now but only the tops of the blue hills that showed white as though they were snow-capped and the clouds that looked like high snow mountains above them. The sea was very dark and the light made prisms in the water. The myriad flecks of the plankton were annulled now by the high sun and it was only the great deep prisms in the blue water that the old man saw now with his lines going straight down into

the water that was a mile deep.

The tuna, the fishermen called all the fish of that species tuna and only distinguished among them by their proper names when they came to sell them or to trade them for baits, were down again. The sun was hot now and the old man felt it on the back of his neck and felt the sweat trickle down his back as he rowed.

I could just drift, he thought, and sleep and put a bight of line around my toe to wake me. But today is eighty-five days and I should fish the day well.

Just then, watching his lines, he saw one of the projecting green sticks dip sharply.

“Yes, ” he said. “Yes, ” and shipped his oars without bumping the boat. He reached out for the line and held it softly between the thumb and forefinger of his right hand. He felt no strain nor weight and he held the line lightly. Then it came again. This time it was a tentative pull, not solid nor heavy, and he knew exactly what it was. One hundred fathoms down a marlin was eating the sardines that covered the point and the shank of the hook where the hand-forged hook projected from the head of the small tuna.

The old man held the line delicately, and softly, with his left hand, unleashed it from the stick. Now he could let it run through his fingers without the fish feeling any tension.

This far out, he must be huge in this month, he thought. Eat them, fish. Eat them. Please eat them. How fresh they are and you down there six

hundred feet in that cold water in the dark. Make another turn in the dark and come back and eat them.

He felt the light delicate pulling and then a harder pull when a sardine's head must have been more difficult to break from the hook. Then there was nothing.

"Come on, " the old man said aloud. "Make another turn. Just smell them. Aren't they lovely? Eat them good now and then there is the tuna. Hard and cold and lovely. Don't be shy, fish. Eat them."

He waited with the line between his thumb and his finger, watching it and the other lines at the same time for the fish might have swum up or down. Then came the same delicate pulling touch again.

"He'll take it, " the old man said aloud. "God help him to take it."

He did not take it though. He was gone and the old man felt nothing.

"He can't have gone, " he said. "Christ knows he can't have gone. He's making a turn. Maybe he has been hooked before and he remembers something of it."

Then he felt the gentle touch on the line and he was happy.

"It was only his turn, " he said. "He'll take it."

He was happy feeling the gentle pulling and then he felt something hard and unbelievably heavy. It was the weight of the fish and he let the line slip down, down, down, unrolling off the first of the two reserve coils. As it

went down, slipping lightly through the old man's fingers, he still could feel the great weight, though the pressure of his thumb and finger were almost imperceptible.

"What a fish, " he said. "He has it sideways in his mouth now and he is moving off with it."

Then he will turn and swallow it, he thought. He did not say that because he knew that if you said a good thing it might not happen. He knew what a huge fish this was and he thought of him moving away in the darkness with the tuna held crosswise in his mouth. At that moment he felt him stop moving but the weight was still there. Then the weight increased and he gave more line. He tightened the pressure of his thumb and finger for a moment and the weight increased and was going straight down.

"He's taken it, " he said. "Now I'll let him eat it well."

He let the line slip through his fingers while he reached down with his left hand and made fast the free end of the two reserve coils to the loop of the two reserve coils of the next line. Now he was ready. He had three forty-fathom coils of line in reserve now, as well as the coil he was using.

"Eat it a little more, " he said. "Eat it well."

Eat it so that the point of the hook goes into your heart and kills you, he thought. Come up easy and let me put the harpoon into you. All right. Are you ready? Have you been long enough at table?

"Now! " He said aloud and struck hard with both hands, gained a

yard of line and then struck again and again, swinging with each arm alternately on the cord with all the strength of his arms and the pivoted weight of his body.

Nothing happened. The fish just moved away slowly and the old man could not raise him an inch. His line was strong and made for heavy fish and he held it against his back until it was so taut that beads of water were jumping from it. Then it began to make a slow hissing sound in the water and he still held it, bracing himself against the thwart and leaning back against the pull. The boat began to move slowly off toward the North-West.

The fish moved steadily and they travelled slowly on the calm water. The other baits were still in the water but there was nothing to be done.

“I wish I had the boy, ” the old man said aloud. “I’m being towed by a fish and I’m the towing bitt. I could make the line fast. But then he could break it. I must hold him all I can and give him line when he must have it. Thank God he is travelling and not going down.”

What I will do if he decides to go down, I don’t know. What I’ll do if he sounds and dies I don’t know. But I’ll do something. There are plenty of things I can do.

He held the line against his back and watched its slant in the water and the skiff moving steadily to the North-West.

This will kill him, the old man thought. He can’t do this forever. But four hours later the fish was still swimming steadily out to sea, towing the skiff, and the old man was still braced solidly with the line across his back.

“It was noon when I hooked him, ” he said. “And I have never seen him.”

He had pushed his straw hat hard down on his head before he hooked the fish and it was cutting his forehead. He was thirsty too and he got down on his knees and, being careful not to jerk on the line, moved as far into the bow as he could get and reached the water bottle with one hand. He opened it and drank a little. Then he rested against the bow. He rested sitting on the unstepped mast and sail and tried not to think but only to endure.

Then he looked behind him and saw that no land was visible. That makes no difference, he thought. I can always come in on the glow from Havana. There are two more hours before the sun sets and maybe he will come up before that. If he doesn't maybe he will come up with the moon. If he does not do that maybe he will come up with the sunrise. I have no cramps and I feel strong. It is he that has the hook in his mouth. But what a fish to pull like that. He must have his mouth shut tight on the wire. I wish I could see him. I wish I could see him only once to know what I have against me.

The fish never changed his course nor his direction all that night as far as the man could tell from watching the stars. It was cold after the sun went down and the old man's sweat dried cold on his back and his arms and his old legs. During the day he had taken the sack that covered the bait box and spread it in the sun to dry. After the sun went down he tied it around his neck so that it hung down over his back and he cautiously worked it down under the line that was across his shoulders now. The sack cushioned the line and he had found a way of leaning forward against the bow so that he was almost comfortable. The position actually was only somewhat less intolerable; but

he thought of it as almost comfortable.

I can do nothing with him and he can do nothing with me, he thought. Not as long as he keeps this up.

Once he stood up and urinated over the side of the skiff and looked at the stars and checked his course. The line showed like a phosphorescent streak in the water straight out from his shoulders. They were moving more slowly now and the glow of Havana was not so strong, so that he knew the current must be carrying them to the eastward. If I lose the glare of Havana we must be going more to the eastward, he thought. For if the fish's course held true I must see it for many more hours. I wonder how the baseball came out in the grand leagues today, he thought. It would be wonderful to do this with a radio. Then he thought, think of it always. Think of what you are doing. You must do nothing stupid.

Then he said aloud, "I wish I had the boy. To help me and to see this." No one should be alone in their old age, he thought. But it is unavoidable. I must remember to eat the tuna before he spoils in order to keep strong. Remember, no matter how little you want to, that you must eat him in the morning. Remember, he said to himself.

During the night two porpoises came around the boat and he could hear them rolling and blowing. He could tell the difference between the blowing noise the male made and the sighing blow of the female.

"They are good, " he said. "They play and make jokes and love one another. They are our brothers like the flying fish."

Then he began to pity the great fish that he had hooked. He is wonderful and strange and who knows how old he is, he thought. Never have I had such a strong fish nor one who acted so strangely. Perhaps he is too wise to jump. He could ruin me by jumping or by a wild rush. But perhaps he has been hooked many times before and he knows that this is how he should make his fight. He cannot know that it is only one man against him, nor that it is an old man. But what a great fish he is and what will he bring in the market if the flesh is good. He took the bait like a male and he pulls like a male and his fight has no panic in it. I wonder if he has any plans or if he is just as desperate as I am?

He remembered the time he had hooked one of a pair of marlin. The male fish always let the female fish feed first and the hooked fish, the female, made a wild, panic-stricken, despairing fight that soon exhausted her, and all the time the male had stayed with her, crossing the line and circling with her on the surface. He had stayed so close that the old man was afraid he would cut the line with his tail which was sharp as a scythe and almost of that size and shape. When the old man had gaffed her and clubbed her, holding the rapier bill with its sandpaper edge and clubbing her across the top of her head until her colour turned to a colour almost like the backing of mirrors, and then, with the boy's aid, hoisted her aboard, the male fish had stayed by the side of the boat. Then, while the old man was clearing the lines and preparing the harpoon, the male fish jumped high into the air beside the boat to see where the female was and then went down deep, his lavender wings, that were his pectoral fins, spread wide and all his wide lavender stripes showing. He was beautiful, the old man remembered, and he had stayed.

That was the saddest thing I ever saw with them, the old man thought. The boy was sad too and we begged her pardon and butchered her promptly.

“I wish the boy was here, ” he said aloud and settled himself against the rounded planks of the bow and felt the strength of the great fish through the line he held across his shoulders moving steadily toward whatever he had chosen.

When once, through my treachery, it had been necessary to him to make a choice, the old man thought.

His choice had been to stay in the deep dark water far out beyond all snares and traps and treacheries. My choice was to go there to find him beyond all people. Beyond all people in the world. Now we are joined together and have been since noon. And no one to help either one of us.

Perhaps I should not have been a fisherman, he thought. But that was the thing that I was born for. I must surely remember to eat the tuna after it gets light.

Some time before daylight something took one of the baits that were behind him. He heard the stick break and the line begin to rush out over the gunwale of the skiff. In the darkness he loosened his sheath knife and taking all the strain of the fish on his left shoulder he leaned back and cut the line against the wood of the gunwale. Then he cut the other line closest to him and in the dark made the loose ends of the reserve coils fast. He worked skillfully with the one hand and put his foot on the coils to hold them as he drew his knots tight. Now he had six reserve coils of line. There were two

from each bait he had severed and the two from the bait the fish had taken and they were all connected.

After it is light, he thought, I will work back to the forty-fathom bait and cut it away too and link up the reserve coils. I will have lost two hundred fathoms of good Catalan cordel and the hooks and leaders. That can be replaced. But who replaces this fish if I hook some fish and it cuts him off? I don't know what that fish was that took the bait just now. It could have been a marlin or a broadbill or a shark. I never felt him. I had to get rid of him too fast.

Aloud he said, "I wish I had the boy."

But you haven't got the boy, he thought. You have only yourself and you had better work back to the last line now, in the dark or not in the dark, and cut it away and hook up the two reserve coils.

So he did it. It was difficult in the dark and once the fish made a surge that pulled him down on his face and made a cut below his eye. The blood ran down his cheek a little way. But it coagulated and dried before it reached his chin and he worked his way back to the bow and rested against the wood. He adjusted the sack and carefully worked the line so that it came across a new part of his shoulders and, holding it anchored with his shoulders, he carefully felt the pull of the fish and then felt with his hand the progress of the skiff through the water.

I wonder what he made that lurch for, he thought. The wire must have slipped on the great hill of his back. Certainly his back cannot feel as badly as

mine does. But he cannot pull this skiff forever, no matter how great he is. Now everything is cleared away that might make trouble and I have a big reserve of line; all that a man can ask.

“Fish, ” he said softly, aloud, “I’ll stay with you until I am dead.”

He’ll stay with me too, I suppose, the old man thought and he waited for it to be light. It was cold now in the time before daylight and he pushed against the wood to be warm. I can do it as long as he can, he thought. And in the first light the line extended out and down into the water. The boat moved steadily and when the first edge of the sun rose it was on the old man’s right shoulder.

“He’s headed north, ” the old man said. The current will have set us far to the eastward, he thought. I wish he would turn with the current. That would show that he was tiring.

When the sun had risen further the old man realized that the fish was not tiring. There was only one favorable sign. The slant of the line showed he was swimming at a lesser depth. That did not necessarily mean that he would jump. But he might.

“God let him jump, ” the old man said. “I have enough line to handle him.”

Maybe if I can increase the tension just a little it will hurt him and he will jump, he thought. Now that it is daylight let him jump so that he’ll fill the sacks along his backbone with air and then he cannot go deep to die.

He tried to increase the tension, but the line had been taut up to the very edge of the breaking point since he had hooked the fish and he felt the harshness as he leaned back to pull and knew he could put no more strain on it. I must not jerk it ever, he thought. Each jerk widens the cut the hook makes and then when he does jump he might throw it. Anyway I feel better with the sun and for once I do not have to look into it.

There was yellow weed on the line but the old man knew that only made an added drag and he was pleased. It was the yellow Gulf weed that had made so much phosphorescence in the night.

“Fish, ” he said, “I love you and respect you very much. But I will kill you dead before this day ends.”

Let us hope so, he thought.

A small bird came toward the skiff from the north. He was a warbler and flying very low over the water. The old man could see that he was very tired.

The bird made the stern of the boat and rested there. Then he flew around the old man’s head and rested on the line where he was more comfortable.

“How old are you? ” the old man asked the bird. “Is this your first trip? ”

The bird looked at him when he spoke. He was too tired even to examine the line and he teetered on it as his delicate feet gripped it fast.

“It’s steady, ” the old man told him. “It’s too steady. You shouldn’t be

that tired after a windless night. What are birds coming to? ”

The hawks, he thought, that come out to sea to meet them. But he said nothing of this to the bird who could not understand him anyway and who would learn about the hawks soon enough.

“Take a good rest, small bird, ” he said. “Then go in and take your chance like any man or bird or fish.”

It encouraged him to talk because his back had stiffened in the night and it hurt truly now.

“Stay at my house if you like, bird, ” he said. “I am sorry I cannot hoist the sail and take you in with the small breeze that is rising. But I am with a friend.”

Just then the fish gave a sudden lurch that pulled the old man down onto the bow and would have pulled him overboard if he had not braced himself and given some line.

The bird had flown up when the line jerked and the old man had not even seen him go. He felt the line carefully with his right hand and noticed his hand was bleeding.

“Something hurt him then, ” he said aloud and pulled back on the line to see if he could turn the fish. But when he was touching the breaking point he held steady and settled back against the strain of the line.

“You’re feeling it now, fish, ” he said. “And so, God knows, am I.”

He looked around for the bird now because he would have liked him for company. The bird was gone.

You did not stay long, the man thought. But it is rougher where you are going until you make the shore. How did I let the fish cut me with that one quick pull he made? I must be getting very stupid. Or perhaps I was looking at the small bird and thinking of him. Now I will pay attention to my work and then I must eat the tuna so that I will not have a failure of strength.

“I wish the boy were here and that I had some salt, ” he said aloud.

Shifting the weight of the line to his left shoulder and kneeling carefully he washed his hand in the ocean and held it there, submerged, for more than a minute watching the blood trail away and the steady movement of the water against his hand as the boat moved.

“He has slowed much, ” he said.

The old man would have liked to keep his hand in the salt water longer but he was afraid of another sudden lurch by the fish and he stood up and braced himself and held his hand up against the sun. It was only a line burn that had cut his flesh. But it was in the working part of his hand. He knew he would need his hands before this was over and he did not like to be cut before it started.

“Now, ” he said, when his hand had dried, “I must eat the small tuna. I can reach him with the gaff and eat him here in comfort.”

He knelt down and found the tuna under the stern with the gaff and drew

it toward him keeping it clear of the coiled lines. Holding the line with his left shoulder again, and bracing on his left hand and arm, he took the tuna off the gaff hook and put the gaff back in place. He put one knee on the fish and cut strips of dark red meat longitudinally from the back of the head to the tail. They were wedge-shaped strips and he cut them from next to the back bone down to the edge of the belly. When he had cut six strips he spread them out on the wood of the bow, wiped his knife on his trousers, and lifted the carcass of the bonito by the tail and dropped it overboard.

“I don’t think I can eat an entire one, ” he said and drew his knife across one of the strips. He could feel the steady hard pull of the line and his left hand was cramped. It drew up tight on the heavy cord and he looked at it in disgust.

“What kind of a hand is that, ” he said. “Cramp then if you want. Make yourself into a claw. It will do you no good.”

Come on, he thought and looked down into the dark water at the slant of the line. Eat it now and it will strengthen the hand. It is not the hand’s fault and you have been many hours with the fish. But you can stay with him forever. Eat the bonito now.

He picked up a piece and put it in his mouth and chewed it slowly. It was not unpleasant.

Chew it well, he thought, and get all the juices. It would not be bad to eat with a little lime or with lemon or with salt.

“How do you feel, hand? ” he asked the cramped hand that was

almost as stiff as rigor mortis. “I’ll eat some more for you.”

He ate the other part of the piece that he had cut in two. He chewed it carefully and then spat out the skin.

“How does it go, hand? Or is it too early to know? ”

He took another full piece and chewed it.

“It is a strong full-blooded fish, ” he thought. “I was lucky to get him instead of dolphin. Dolphin is too sweet. This is hardly sweet at all and all the strength is still in it.”

There is no sense in being anything but practical though, he thought. I wish I had some salt. And I do not know whether the sun will rot or dry what is left, so I had better eat it all although I am not hungry. The fish is calm and steady. I will eat it all and then I will be ready.

“Be patient, hand, ” he said, “I do this for you.”

I wish I could feed the fish, he thought. He is my brother. But I must kill him and keep strong to do it. Slowly and conscientiously he ate all of the wedge-shaped strips of fish.

He straightened up, wiping his hand on his trousers.

“Now, ” he said. “You can let the cord go, hand, and I will handle him with the right arm alone until you stop that nonsense.” He put his left foot on the heavy line that the left hand had held and lay back against the pull against his back.

“God help me to have the cramp go, ” he said. “Because I do not know what the fish is going to do.”

But he seems calm, he thought, and following his plan. But what is his plan, he thought. And what is mine? Mine I must improvise to his because of his great size. If he will jump I can kill him. But he stays down forever. Then I will stay down with him forever.

He rubbed the cramped hand against his trousers and tried to gentle the fingers. But it would not open. Maybe it will open with the sun, he thought, Maybe it will open when the strong raw tuna is digested. If I have to have it, I will open it, cost whatever it costs. But I do not want to open it now by force. Let it open by itself and come back of its own accord. After all I abused it much in the night when it was necessary to free and unite the various lines.

He looked across the sea and knew how alone he was now. But he could see the prisms in the deep dark water and the line stretching ahead and the strange undulation of the calm. The clouds were building up now for the trade wind and he looked ahead and saw a flight of wild ducks etching themselves against the sky over the water, then blurring, then etching again and he knew no man was ever alone on the sea.

He thought of how some men feared being out of sight of land in a small boat and knew they were right in the months of sudden bad weather. But now they were in hurricane months and, when there are no hurricanes, the weather of hurricane months is the best of all the year.

If there is a hurricane you always see the signs of it in the sky for days ahead, if you are at sea. They do not see it ashore because they do not know what to look for, he thought. The land must make a difference too, in the shape of the clouds. But we have no hurricane coming now.

He looked at the sky and saw the white cumulus built like friendly piles of ice cream and high above were the thin feathers of the cirrus against the high September sky.

“Light brisa, ” he said. “Better weather for me than for you, fish.”

His left hand was still cramped, but he was unknotting it slowly.

I hate a cramp, he thought. It is a treachery of one’s own body. It is humiliating before others to have a diarrhoea from ptomaine poisoning or to vomit from it. But a cramp, he thought of it as a calambre, humiliates oneself especially when one is alone.

If the boy were here he could rub it for me and loosen it down from the forearm, he thought. But it will loosen up.

Then, with his right hand he felt the difference in the pull of the line before he saw the slant change in the water. Then, as he leaned against the line and slapped his left hand hard and fast against his thigh he saw the line slanting slowly upward.

“He’s coming up, ” he said. “Come on hand. Please come on.”

The line rose slowly and steadily and then the surface of the ocean bulged ahead of the boat and the fish came out. He came out unendingly and

water poured from his sides. He was bright in the sun and his head and back were dark purple and in the sun the stripes on his sides showed wide and a light lavender. His sword was as long as a baseball bat and tapered like a rapier and he rose his full length from the water and then re-entered it, smoothly, like a diver and the old man saw the great scythe-blade of his tail go under and the line commenced to race out.

“He is two feet longer than the skiff, ” the old man said. The line was going out fast but steadily and the fish was not panicked. The old man was trying with both hands to keep the line just inside of breaking strength. He knew that if he could not slow the fish with a steady pressure the fish could take out all the line and break it.

He is a great fish and I must convince him, he thought. I must never let him learn his strength nor what he could do if he made his run. If I were him I would put in everything now and go until something broke. But, thank God, they are not as intelligent as we who kill them; although they are more noble and more able.

The old man had seen many great fish. He had seen many that weighed more than a thousand pounds and he had caught two of that size in his life, but never alone. Now alone, and out of sight of land, he was fast to the biggest fish that he had ever seen and bigger than he had ever heard of, and his left hand was still as tight as the gripped claws of an eagle.

It will uncramp though, he thought. Surely it will uncramp to help my right hand. There are three things that are brothers: the fish and my two hands. It must uncramp. It is unworthy of it to be cramped. The fish had

slowed again and was going at his usual pace.

I wonder why he jumped, the old man thought. He jumped almost as though to show me how big he was. I know now, anyway, he thought. I wish I could show him what sort of man I am. But then he would see the cramped hand. Let him think I am more man than I am and I will be so. I wish I was the fish, he thought, with everything he has against only my will and my intelligence.

He settled comfortably against the wood and took his suffering as it came and the fish swam steadily and the boat moved slowly through the dark water. There was a small sea rising with the wind coming up from the east and at noon the old man's left hand was uncramped.

"Bad news for you, fish, " he said and shifted the line over the sacks that covered his shoulders.

He was comfortable but suffering, although he did not admit the suffering at all.

"I am not religious, " he said. "But I will say ten Our Fathers and ten Hail Marys that I should catch this fish, and I promise to make a pilgrimage to the Virgin de Cobre if I catch him. That is a promise."

He commenced to say his prayers mechanically. Sometimes he would be so tired that he could not remember the prayer and then he would say them fast so that they would come automatically. Hail Marys are easier to say than Our Fathers, he thought.

“Hail Mary full of Grace the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary. Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen. ”Then he added, “Blessed Virgin, pray for the death of this fish. Wonderful though he is.”

With his prayers said, and feeling much better, but suffering exactly as much, and perhaps a little more, he leaned against the wood of the bow and began, mechanically, to work the fingers of his left hand.

The sun was hot now although the breeze was rising gently.

“I had better re-bait that little line out over the stern, ” he said. “If the fish decides to stay another night I will need to eat again and the water is low in the bottle. I don’t think I can get anything but a dolphin here. But if I eat him fresh enough he won’t be bad. I wish a flying fish would come on board tonight. But I have no light to attract them. A flying fish is excellent to eat raw and I would not have to cut him up. I must save all my strength now. Christ, I did not know he was so big.”

“I’ll kill him though, ” he said. “In all his greatness and his glory.”

Although it is unjust, he thought. But I will show him what a man can do and what a man endures.

“I told the boy I was a strange old man, ” he said. “Now is when I must prove it.”

The thousand times that he had proved it meant nothing. Now he was

proving it again. Each time was a new time and he never thought about the past when he was doing it.

I wish he'd sleep and I could sleep and dream about the lions, he thought. Why are the lions the main thing that is left? Don't think, old man, he said to himself. Rest gently now against the wood and think of nothing. He is working. Work as little as you can.

It was getting into the afternoon and the boat still moved slowly and steadily. But there was an added drag now from the easterly breeze and the old man rode gently with the small sea and the hurt of the cord across his back came to him easily and smoothly.

Once in the afternoon the line started to rise again. But the fish only continued to swim at a slightly higher level. The sun was on the old man's left arm and shoulder and on his back. So he knew the fish had turned east of north.

Now that he had seen him once, he could picture the fish swimming in the water with his purple pectoral fins set wide as wings and the great erect tail slicing through the dark. I wonder how much he sees at that depth, the old man thought. His eye is huge and a horse, with much less eye, can see in the dark. Once I could see quite well in the dark. Not in the absolute dark. But almost as a cat sees.

The sun and his steady movement of his fingers had uncramped his left hand now completely and he began to shift more of the strain to it and he shrugged the muscles of his back to shift the hurt of the cord a little.

“If you’re not tired, fish, ” he said aloud, “you must be very strange.”

He felt very tired now and he knew the night would come soon and he tried to think of other things. He thought of the Big Leagues, to him they were the Gran Ligas, and he knew that the Yankees of New York were playing the Tigres of Detroit.

This is the second day now that I do not know the result of the juegos, he thought. But I must have confidence and I must be worthy of the great DiMaggio who does all things perfectly even with the pain of the bone spur in his heel. What is a bone spur? he asked himself. Un espuela de hueso. We do not have them. Can it be as painful as the spur of a fighting cock in one’s heel? I do not think I could endure that or the loss of the eye and of both eyes and continue to fight as the fighting cocks do. Man is not much beside the great birds and beasts. Still I would rather be that beast down there in the darkness of the sea.

“Unless sharks come, ” he said aloud. “If sharks come, God pity him and me.”

Do you believe the great DiMaggio would stay with a fish as long as I will stay with this one? he thought. I am sure he would and more since he is young and strong. Also his father was a fisherman. But would the bone spur hurt him too much?

“I do not know, ” he said aloud. “I never had a bone spur.”

As the sun set he remembered, to give himself more confidence, the

time in the tavern at Casablanca when he had played the hand game with the great negro from Cienfuegos who was the strongest man on the docks. They had gone one day and one night with their elbows on a chalk line on the table and their forearms straight up and their hands gripped tight. Each one was trying to force the other's hand down onto the table. There was much betting and people went in and out of the room under the kerosene lights and he had looked at the arm and hand of the negro and at the negro's face. They changed the referees every four hours after the first eight so that the referees could sleep. Blood came out from under the fingernails of both his and the negro's hands and they looked each other in the eye and at their hands and forearms and the bettors went in and out of the room and sat on high chairs against the wall and watched. The walls were painted bright blue and were of wood and the lamps threw their shadows against them.

The negro's shadow was huge and it moved on the wall as the breeze moved the lamps.

The odds would change back and forth all night and they fed the negro rum and lighted cigarettes for him. Then the negro, after the rum, would try for a tremendous effort and once he had the old man, who was not an old man then but was Santiago El Campeón, nearly three inches off balance. But the old man had raised his hand up to dead even again. He was sure then that he had the negro, who was a fine man and a great athlete, beaten. And at daylight when the bettors were asking that it be called a draw and the referee was shaking his head, he had unleashed his effort and forced the hand of the negro down and down until it rested on the wood. The match had started on a Sunday morning and ended on a Monday morning. Many of

the bettors had asked for a draw because they had to go to work on the docks loading sacks of sugar or at the Havana Coal Company. Otherwise everyone would have wanted it to go to a finish. But he had finished it anyway and before anyone had to go to work.

For a long time after that everyone had called him The Champion and there had been a return match in the spring. But not much money was bet and he had won it quite easily since he had broken the confidence of the negro from Cienfuegos in the first match. After that he had a few matches and then no more. He decided that he could beat anyone if he wanted to badly enough and he decided that it was bad for his right hand for fishing. He had tried a few practice matches with his left hand. But his left hand had always been a traitor and would not do what he called on it to do and he did not trust it.

The sun will bake it out well now, he thought. It should not cramp on me again unless it gets too cold in the night. I wonder what this night will bring.

An airplane passed over head on its course to Miami and he watched its shadow scaring up the schools of flying fish.

“With so much flying fish there should be dolphin, ” he said, and leaned back on the line to see if it was possible to gain any on his fish. But he could not and it stayed at the hardness and water-drop shivering that preceded breaking. The boat moved ahead slowly and he watched the airplane until he could no longer see it.

It must be very strange in an airplane, he thought. I wonder what the

sea looks like from that height? They should be able to see the fish well if they do not fly too high. I would like to fly very slowly at two hundred fathoms high and see the fish from above. In the turtle boats I was in the cross-trees of the mast-head and even at that height I saw much. The dolphin look greener from there and you can see their stripes and their purple spots and you can see all of the school as they swim. Why is it that all the fast-moving fish of the dark current have purple backs and usually purple stripes or spots? The dolphin looks green of course because he is really golden. But when he comes to feed, truly hungry, purple stripes show on his sides as on a marlin. Can it be anger, or the greater speed he makes that brings them out?

Just before it was dark, as they passed a great island of Sargasso weed that heaved and swung in the light sea as though the ocean were making love with something under a yellow blanket, his small line was taken by a dolphin. He saw it first when it jumped in the air, true gold in the last of the sun and bending and flapping wildly in the air. It jumped again and again in the acrobatics of its fear and he worked his way back to the stern and crouching and holding the big line with his right hand and arm, he pulled the dolphin in with his left hand, stepping on the gained line each time with his bare left foot. When the fish was at the stern, plunging and cutting from side to side in desperation, the old man leaned over the stern and lifted the burnished gold fish with its purple spots over the stern. Its jaws were working convulsively in quick bites against the hook and it pounded the bottom of the skiff with its long flat body, its tail and its head until he clubbed it across the shining golden head until it shivered and was still.

The old man unhooked the fish, rebaited the line with another sardine and tossed it over. Then he worked his way slowly back to the bow. He washed his left hand and wiped it on his trousers. Then he shifted the heavy line from his right hand to his left and washed his right hand in the sea while he watched the sun go into the ocean and the slant of the big cord.

“He hasn’t changed at all, ” he said. But watching the movement of the water against his hand he noted that it was perceptibly slower.

“I’ll lash the two oars together across the stern and that will slow him in the night, ” he said. “He’s good for the night and so am I.”

It would be better to gut the dolphin a little later to save the blood in the meat, he thought. I can do that a little later and lash the oars to make a drag at the same time. I had better keep the fish quiet now and not disturb him too much at sunset. The setting of the sun is a difficult time for all fish.

He let his hand dry in the air then grasped the line with it and eased himself as much as he could and allowed himself to be pulled forward against the wood so that the boat took the strain as much, or more, than he did.

I’m learning how to do it, he thought. This part of it anyway. Then too, remember he hasn’t eaten since he took the bait and he is huge and needs much food. I have eaten the whole bonito. Tomorrow I will eat the dolphin. He called it dorado. Perhaps I should eat some of it when I clean it. It will be harder to eat than the bonito. But, then, nothing is easy.

“How do you feel, fish? ” he asked aloud. “I feel good and my left hand is better and I have food for a night and a day. Pull the boat, fish.”

He did not truly feel good because the pain from the cord across his back had almost passed pain and gone into a dullness that he mistrusted. But I have had worse things than that, he thought. My hand is only cut a little and the cramp is gone from the other. My legs are all right. Also now I have gained on him in the question of sustenance.

It was dark now as it becomes dark quickly after the sun sets in September. He lay against the worn wood of the bow and rested all that he could. The first stars were out. He did not know the name of Rigel but he saw it and knew soon they would all be out and he would have all his distant friends.

“The fish is my friend too, ” he said aloud. “I have never seen or heard of such a fish. But I must kill him. I am glad we do not have to try to kill the stars.”

Imagine if each day a man must try to kill the moon, he thought. The moon runs away. But imagine if a man each day should have to try to kill the sun? We were born lucky, he thought.

Then he was sorry for the great fish that had nothing to eat and his determination to kill him never relaxed in his sorrow for him. How many people will he feed, he thought. But are they worthy to eat him? No, of course not. There is no one worthy of eating him from the manner of his behaviour and his great dignity.

I do not understand these things, he thought. But it is good that we do not have to try to kill the sun or the moon or the stars. It is enough to live on

the sea and kill our true brothers.

Now, he thought, I must think about the drag. It has its perils and its merits. I may lose so much line that I will lose him, if he makes his effort and the drag made by the oars is in place and the boat loses all her lightness. Her lightness prolongs both our suffering but it is my safety since he has great speed that he has never yet employed. No matter what passes I must gut the dolphin so he does not spoil and eat some of him to be strong.

Now I will rest an hour more and feel that he is solid and steady before I move back to the stern to do the work and make the decision. In the meantime I can see how he acts and if he shows any changes. The oars are a good trick; but it has reached the time to play for safety. He is much fish still and I saw that the hook was in the corner of his mouth and he has kept his mouth tight shut. The punishment of the hook is nothing. The punishment of hunger, and that he is against something that he does not comprehend, is everything. Rest now, old man, and let him work until your next duty comes.

He rested for what he believed to be two hours. The moon did not rise now until late and he had no way of judging the time. Nor was he really resting except comparatively. He was still bearing the pull of the fish across his shoulders but he placed his left hand on the gunwale of the bow and confided more and more of the resistance to the fish to the skiff itself.

How simple it would be if I could make the line fast, he thought. But with one small lurch he could break it. I must cushion the pull of the line with my body and at all times be ready to give line with both hands.

“But you have not slept yet, old man, ” he said aloud. “It is half a day and a night and now another day and you have not slept. You must devise a way so that you sleep a little if he is quiet and steady. If you do not sleep you might become unclear in the head.”

I’m clear enough in the head, he thought. Too clear. I am as clear as the stars that are my brothers. Still I must sleep. They sleep and the moon and the sun sleep and even the ocean sleeps sometimes on certain days when there is no current and a flat calm.

But remember to sleep, he thought. Make yourself do it and devise some simple and sure way about the lines. Now go back and prepare the dolphin. It is too dangerous to rig the oars as a drag if you must sleep.

I could go without sleeping, he told himself. But it would be too dangerous.

He started to work his way back to the stern on his hands and knees, being careful not to jerk against the fish. He may be half asleep himself, he thought. But I do not want him to rest. He must pull until he dies.

Back in the stern he turned so that his left hand held the strain of the line across his shoulders and drew his knife from its sheath with his right hand. The stars were bright now and he saw the dolphin clearly and he pushed the blade of his knife into his head and drew him out from under the stern. He put one of his feet on the fish and slit him quickly from the vent up to the tip of his lower jaw. Then he put his knife down and gutted him with his right hand, scooping him clean and pulling the gills clear. He felt the maw heavy

and slippery in his hands and he slit it open. There were two flying fish inside. They were fresh and hard and he laid them side by side and dropped the guts and the gills over the stern. They sank leaving a trail of phosphorescence in the water. The dolphin was cold and a leprous gray-white now in the starlight and the old man skinned one side of him while he held his right foot on the fish's head. Then he turned him over and skinned the other side and cut each side off from the head down to the tail.

He slid the carcass overboard and looked to see if there was any swirl in the water. But there was only the light of its slow descent. He turned then and placed the two flying fish inside the two fillets of fish and putting his knife back in its sheath, he worked his way slowly back to the bow. His back was bent with the weight of the line across it and he carried the fish in his right hand.

Back in the bow he laid the two fillets of fish out on the wood with the flying fish beside them. After that he settled the line across his shoulders in a new place and held it again with his left hand resting on the gunwale. Then he leaned over the side and washed the flying fish in the water, noting the speed of the water against his hand. His hand was phosphorescent from skinning the fish and he watched the flow of the water against it. The flow was less strong and as he rubbed the side of his hand against the planking of the skiff, particles of phosphorus floated off and drifted slowly astern.

“He is tiring or he is resting, ” the old man said. “Now let me get through the eating of this dolphin and get some rest and a little sleep.”

Under the stars and with the night colder all the time he ate half of one

of the dolphin fillets and one of the flying fish, gutted and with its head cut off.

“What an excellent fish dolphin is to eat cooked, ” he said. “And what a miserable fish raw. I will never go in a boat again without salt or limes.”

If I had brains I would have splashed water on the bow all day and drying. it would have made salt, he thought. But then I did not hook the dolphin until almost sunset. Still it was a lack of preparation. But I have chewed it all well and I am not nauseated.

The sky was clouding over to the east and one after another the stars he knew were gone. It looked now as though he were moving into a great canyon of clouds and the wind had dropped.

“There will be bad weather in three or four days, ” he said. “But not tonight and not tomorrow. Rig now to get some sleep, old man, while the fish is calm and steady.”

He held the line tight in his right hand and then pushed his thigh against his right hand as he leaned all his weight against the wood of the bow. Then he passed the line a little lower on his shoulders and braced his left hand on it.

My right hand can hold it as long as it is braced, he thought. If it relaxes in sleep my left hand will wake me as the line goes out. It is hard on the right hand. But he is used to punishment. Even if I sleep twenty minutes or a half an hour it is good. He lay forward cramping himself against the line with all of his body, putting all his weight onto his right hand, and he was

asleep.

He did not dream of the lions but instead of a vast school of porpoises that stretched for eight or ten miles and it was in the time of their mating and they would leap high into the air and return into the same hole they had made in the water when they leaped.

Then he dreamed that he was in the village on his bed and there was a norther and he was very cold and his right arm was asleep because his head had rested on it instead of a pillow.

After that he began to dream of the long yellow beach and he saw the first of the lions come down onto it in the early dark and then the other lions came and he rested his chin on the wood of the bows where the ship lay anchored with the evening off-shore breeze and he waited to see if there would be more lions and he was happy.

The moon had been up for a long time but he slept on and the fish pulled on steadily and the boat moved into the tunnel of clouds.

He woke with the jerk of his right fist coming up against his face and the line burning out through his right hand. He had no feeling of his left hand but he braked all he could with his right and the line rushed out. Finally his left hand found the line and he leaned back against the line and now it burned his back and his left hand, and his left hand was taking all the strain and cutting badly. He looked back at the coils of line and they were feeding smoothly. Just then the fish jumped making a great bursting of the ocean and then a heavy fall. Then he jumped again and again and the boat was going fast

although line was still racing out and the old man was raising the strain to breaking point and raising it to breaking point again and again. He had been pulled down tight onto the bow and his face was in the cut slice of dolphin and he could not move.

This is what we waited for, he thought. So now let us take it.

Make him pay for the line, he thought. Make him pay for it.

He could not see the fish's jumps but only heard the breaking of the ocean and the heavy splash as he fell. The speed of the line was cutting his hands badly but he had always known this would happen and he tried to keep the cutting across the calloused parts and not let the line slip into the palm nor cut the fingers.

If the boy was here he would wet the coils of line, he thought. Yes. If the boy were here. If the boy were here.

The line went out and out and out but it was slowing now and he was making the fish earn each inch of it. Now he got his head up from the wood and out of the slice of fish that his cheek had crushed. Then he was on his knees and then he rose slowly to his feet. He was ceding line but more slowly all the time. He worked back to where he could feel with his foot the coils of line that he could not see. There was plenty of line still and now the fish had to pull the friction of all that new line through the water.

Yes, he thought. And now he has jumped more than a dozen times and filled the sacks along his back with air and he cannot go down deep to die where I cannot bring him up. He will start circling soon and then I must work

on him. I wonder what started him so suddenly? Could it have been hunger that made him desperate, or was he frightened by something in the night? Maybe he suddenly felt fear. But he was such a calm, strong fish and he seemed so fearless and so confident. It is strange.

“You better be fearless and confident yourself, old man, ” he said. “You’re holding him again but you cannot get line. But soon he has to circle.”

The old man held him with his left hand and his shoulders now and stooped down and scooped up water in his right hand to get the crushed dolphin flesh off of his face. He was afraid that it might nauseate him and he would vomit and lose his strength. When his face was cleaned he washed his right hand in the water over the side and then let it stay in the salt water while he watched the first light come before the sunrise. He’s headed almost east, he thought. That means he is tired and going with the current. Soon he will have to circle. Then our true work begins.

After he judged that his right hand had been in the water long enough he took it out and looked at it.

“It is not bad, ” he said. “And pain does not matter to a man.”

He took hold of the line carefully so that it did not fit into any of the fresh line cuts and shifted his weight so that he could put his left hand into the sea on the other side of the skiff.

“You did not do so badly for something worthless, ” he said to his left hand. “But there was a moment when I could not find you.”

Why was I not born with two good hands? He thought. Perhaps it was my fault in not training that one properly. But God knows he has had enough chances to learn. He did not do so badly in the night, though, and he has only cramped once. If he cramps again let the line cut him off.

When he thought that he knew that he was not being clear-headed and he thought he should chew some more of the dolphin. But I can't, he told himself. It is better to be light-headed than to lose your strength from nausea. And I know I cannot keep it if I eat it since my face was in it. I will keep it for an emergency until it goes bad. But it is too late to try for strength now through nourishment. You're stupid, he told himself. Eat the other flying fish.

It was there, cleaned and ready, and he picked it up with his left hand and ate it chewing the bones carefully and eating all of it down to the tail.

It has more nourishment than almost any fish, he thought. At least the kind of strength that I need. Now I have done what I can, he thought. Let him begin to circle and let the fight come.

The sun was rising for the third time since he had put to sea when the fish started to circle.

He could not see by the slant of the line that the fish was circling. It was too early for that. He just felt a faint slackening of the pressure of the line and he commenced to pull on it gently with his right hand. It tightened, as always, but just when he reached the point where it would break, line

began to come in. He slipped his shoulders and head from under the line and began to pull in line steadily and gently. He used both of his hands in a swinging motion and tried to do the pulling as much as he could with his body and his legs. His old legs and shoulders pivoted with the swinging of the pulling.

“It is a very big circle, ” he said. “But he is circling.”

Then the line would not come in any more and he held it until he saw the drops jumping from it in the sun. Then it started out and the old man knelt down and let it go grudgingly back into the dark water.

“He is making the far part of his circle now, ” he said. I must hold all I can, he thought. The strain will shorten his circle each time. Perhaps in an hour I will see him. Now I must convince him and then I must kill him.

But the fish kept on circling slowly and the old man was wet with sweat and tired deep into his bones two hours later. But the circles were much shorter now and from the way the line slanted he could tell the fish had risen steadily while he swam.

For an hour the old man had been seeing black spots before his eyes and the sweat salted his eyes and salted the cut over his eye and on his forehead. He was not afraid of the black spots. They were normal at the tension that he was pulling on the line. Twice, though, he had felt faint and dizzy and that had worried him.

“I could not fail myself and die on a fish like this, ” he said. “Now that I have him coming so beautifully, God help me endure. I’ll say a hundred

Our Fathers and a hundred Hail Marys. But I cannot say them now.”

Consider them said, he thought. I’ll say them later.

Just then he felt a sudden banging and jerking on the line he held with his two hands. It was sharp and hard-feeling and heavy.

He is hitting the wire leader with his spear, he thought. That was bound to come. He had to do that. It may make him jump though and I would rather he stayed circling now. The jumps were necessary for him to take air. But after that each one can widen the opening of the hook wound and he can throw the hook.

“Don’t jump, fish, ” he said. “Don’t jump.”

The fish hit the wire several times more and each time he shook his head the old man gave up a little line.

I must hold his pain where it is, he thought. Mine does not matter. I can control mine. But his pain could drive him mad.

After a while the fish stopped beating at the wire and started circling slowly again. The old man was gaining line steadily now. But he felt faint again. He lifted some sea water with his left hand and put it on his head. Then he put more on and rubbed the back of his neck.

“I have no cramps, ” he said. “He’ll be up soon and I can last. You have to last. Don’t even speak of it.”

He kneeled against the bow and, for a moment, slipped the line over

his back again. I'll rest now while he goes out on the circle and then stand up and work on him when he comes in, he decided.

It was a great temptation to rest in the bow and let the fish make one circle by himself without recovering any line. But when the strain showed the fish had turned to come toward the boat, the old man rose to his feet and started the pivoting and the weaving pulling that brought in all the line he gained.

I'm tireder than I have ever been, he thought, and now the trade wind is rising. But that will be good to take him in with. I need that badly.

"I'll rest on the next turn as he goes out, " he said. "I feel much better. Then in two or three turns more I will have him."

His straw hat was far on the back of his head and he sank down into the bow with the pull of the line as he felt the fish turn.

You work now, fish, he thought. I'll take you at the turn.

The sea had risen considerably. But it was a fair-weather breeze and he had to have it to get home.

"I'll just steer south and west, " he said. "A man is never lost at sea and it is a long island."

It was on the third turn that he saw the fish first.

He saw him first as a dark shadow that took so long to pass under the boat that he could not believe its length.

“No, ” he said. “He can’t be that big.”

But he was that big and at the end of this circle he came to the surface only thirty yards away and the man saw his tail out of water. It was higher than a big scythe blade and a very pale lavender above the dark blue water. It raked back and as the fish swam just below the surface the old man could see his huge bulk and the purple stripes that banded him. His dorsal fin was down and his huge pectorals were spread wide.

On this circle the old man could see the fish’s eye and the two gray sucking fish that swam around him. Sometimes they attached themselves to him. Sometimes they darted off. Sometimes they would swim easily in his shadow. They were each over three feet long and when they swam fast they lashed their whole bodies like eels.

The old man was sweating now but from something else besides the sun. On each calm placid turn the fish made he was gaining line and he was sure that in two turns more he would have a chance to get the harpoon in.

But I must get him close, close, close, he thought. I mustn’t try for the head. I must get the heart.

“Be calm and strong, old man, ” he said.

On the next circle the fish’s back was out but he was a little too far from the boat. On the next circle he was still too far away but he was higher out of water and the old man was sure that by gaining some more line he could have him alongside.

He had rigged his harpoon long before and its coil of light rope was in a round basket and the end was made fast to the bitt in the bow.

The fish was coming in on his circle now calm and beautiful looking and only his great tail moving. The old man pulled on him all that he could to bring him closer. For just a moment the fish turned a little on his side. Then he straightened himself and began another circle.

“I moved him, ” the old man said. “I moved him then.”

He felt faint again now but he held on the great fish all the strain that he could. I moved him, he thought. Maybe this time I can get him over. Pull, hands, he thought. Hold up, legs. Last for me, head. Last for me. You never went. This time I’ll pull him over.

But when he put all of his effort on, starting it well out before the fish came alongside and pulling with all his strength, the fish pulled part way over and then righted himself and swam away.

“Fish, ” the old man said. “Fish, you are going to have to die anyway. Do you have to kill me too? ”

That way nothing is accomplished, he thought. His mouth was too dry to speak but he could not reach for the water now. I must get him alongside this time, he thought. I am not good for many more turns. Yes you are, he told himself. You’re good for ever.

On the next turn, he nearly had him. But again the fish righted himself and swam slowly away.

You are killing me, fish, the old man thought. But you have a right to. Never have I seen a greater, or more beautiful, or a calmer or more noble thing than you, brother. Come on and kill me. I do not care who kills who.

Now you are getting confused in the head, he thought. You must keep your head clear. Keep your head clear and know how to suffer like a man. Or a fish, he thought.

“Clear up, head, ” he said in a voice he could hardly hear. “Clear up.”

Twice more it was the same on the turns.

I do not know, the old man thought. He had been on the point of feeling himself go each time. I do not know. But I will try it once more.

He tried it once more and he felt himself going when he turned the fish. The fish righted himself and swam off again slowly with the great tail weaving in the air.

I’ll try it again, the old man promised, although his hands were mushy now and he could only see well in flashes.

He tried it again and it was the same. So, he thought, and he felt himself going before he started; I will try it once again.

He took all his pain and what was left of his strength and his long gone pride and he put it against the fish’s agony and the fish came over onto his side and swam gently on his side, his bill almost touching the planking of the skiff and started to pass the boat, long, deep, wide, silver and

barred with purple and interminable in the water.

The old man dropped the line and put his foot on it and lifted the harpoon as high as he could and drove it down with all his strength, and more strength he had just summoned, into the fish's side just behind the great chest fin that rose high in the air to the altitude of the man's chest. He felt the iron go in and he leaned on it and drove it further and then pushed all his weight after it.

Then the fish came alive, with his death in him, and rose high out of the water showing all his great length and width and all his power and his beauty. He seemed to hang in the air above the old man in the skiff. Then he fell into the water with a crash that sent spray over the old man and over all of the skiff.

The old man felt faint and sick and he could not see well. But he cleared the harpoon line and let it run slowly through his raw hands and, when he could see, he saw the fish was on his back with his silver belly up. The shaft of the harpoon was projecting at an angle from the fish's shoulder and the sea was discolouring with the red of the blood from his heart. First it was dark as a shoal in the blue water that was more than a mile deep. Then it spread like a cloud. The fish was silver and still and floated with the waves.

The old man looked carefully in the glimpse of vision that he had. Then he took two turns of the harpoon line around the bitt in the bow and laid his head on his hands.

"Keep my head clear, " he said against the wood of the bow. "I am a

tired old man. But I have killed this fish which is my brother and now I must do the slave work.”

Now I must prepare the nooses and the rope to lash him alongside, he thought. Even if we were two and swamped her to load him and bailed her out, this skiff would never hold him. I must prepare everything, then bring him in and lash him well and step the mast and set sail for home.

He started to pull the fish in to have him alongside so that he could pass a line through his gills and out his mouth and make his head fast alongside the bow. I want to see him, he thought, and to touch and to feel him. He is my fortune, he thought. But that is not why I wish to feel him. I think I felt his heart, he thought. When I pushed on the harpoon shaft the second time. Bring him in now and make him fast and get the noose around his tail and another around his middle to bind him to the skiff.

“Get to work, old man, ” he said. He took a very small drink of the water. “There is very much slave work to be done now that the fight is over.”

He looked up at the sky and then out to his fish. He looked at the sun carefully. It is not much more than noon, he thought. And the trade wind is rising. The lines all mean nothing now. The boy and I will splice them when we are home.

“Come on, fish, ” he said. But the fish did not come. Instead he lay there wallowing now in the seas and the old man pulled the skiff up onto him.

When he was even with him and had the fish’s head against the bow he could not believe his size. But he untied the harpoon rope from the bitt,

passed it through the fish's gills and out his jaws, made a turn around his sword then passed the rope through the other gill, made another turn around the bill and knotted the double rope and made it fast to the bitt in the bow. He cut the rope then and went astern to noose the tail. The fish had turned silver from his original purple and silver, and the stripes showed the same pale violet colour as his tail. They were wider than a man's hand with his fingers spread and the fish's eye looked as detached as the mirrors in a periscope or as a saint in a procession.

"It was the only way to kill him, " the old man said. He was feeling better since the water and he knew he would not go away and his head was clear. He's over fifteen hundred pounds the way he is, he thought. Maybe much more. If he dresses out two-thirds of that at thirty cents a pound?

"I need a pencil for that, " he said. "My head is not that clear. But I think the great DiMaggio would be proud of me today. I had no bone spurs. But the hands and the back hurt truly." I wonder what a bone spur is, he thought. Maybe we have them without knowing of it.

He made the fish fast to bow and stern and to the middle thwart. He was so big it was like lashing a much bigger skiff alongside. He cut a piece of line and tied the fish's lower jaw against his bill so his mouth would not open and they would sail as cleanly as possible. Then he stepped the mast and, with the stick that was his gaff and with his boom rigged, the patched sail drew, the boat began to move, and half lying in the stern he sailed south-west.

He did not need a compass to tell him where south-west was. He only

needed the feel of the trade wind and the drawing of the sail. I better put a small line out with a spoon on it and try and get something to eat and drink for the moisture. But he could not find a spoon and his sardines were rotten. So he hooked a patch of yellow gulf weed with the gaff as they passed and shook it so that the small shrimps that were in it fell onto the planking of the skiff. There were more than a dozen of them and they jumped and kicked like sand fleas. The old man pinched their heads off with his thumb and forefinger and ate them chewing up the shells and the tails. They were very tiny but he knew they were nourishing and they tasted good.

The old man still had two drinks of water in the bottle and he used half of one after he had eaten the shrimps. The skiff was sailing well considering the handicaps and he steered with the tiller under his arm. He could see the fish and he had only to look at his hands and feel his back against the stern to know that this had truly happened and was not a dream. At one time when he was feeling so badly toward the end, he had thought perhaps it was a dream. Then when he had seen the fish come out of the water and hang motionless in the sky before he fell, he was sure there was some great strangeness and he could not believe it. Then he could not see well, although now he saw as well as ever.

Now he knew there was the fish and his hands and back were no dream. The hands cure quickly, he thought. I bled them clean and the salt water will heal them. The dark water of the true gulf is the greatest healer that there is. All I must do is keep the head clear. The hands have done their work and we sail well. With his mouth shut and his tail straight up and down we sail like brothers. Then his head started to become a little unclear and he

thought, is he bringing me in or am I bringing him in? If I were towing him behind there would be no question. Nor if the fish were in the skiff, with all dignity gone, there would be no question either. But they were sailing together lashed side by side and the old man thought, let him bring me in if it pleases him. I am only better than him through trickery and he meant me no harm.

They sailed well and the old man soaked his hands in the salt water and tried to keep his head clear. There were high cumulus clouds and enough cirrus above them so that the old man knew the breeze would last all night. The old man looked at the fish constantly to make sure it was true. It was an hour before the first shark hit him.

The shark was not an accident. He had come up from deep down in the water as the dark cloud of blood had settled and dispersed in the mile deep sea. He had come up so fast and absolutely without caution that he broke the surface of the blue water and was in the sun. Then he fell back into the sea and picked up the scent and started swimming on the course the skiff and the fish had taken.

Sometimes he lost the scent. But he would pick it up again, or have just a trace of it and he swam fast and hard on the course. He was a very big Mako shark built to swim as fast as the fastest fish in the sea and everything about him was beautiful except his jaws. His back was as blue as a sword fish's and his belly was silver and his hide was smooth and handsome. He was built as a sword fish except for his huge jaws which were tight shut now as he swam fast, just under the surface with his high dorsal fin knifing through the water without wavering. Inside the closed double lip of his jaws

all of his eight rows of teeth were slanted inwards. They were not the ordinary pyramid-shaped teeth of most sharks. They were shaped like a man's fingers when they are crisped like claws. They were nearly as long as the fingers of the old man and they had razor-sharp cutting edges on both sides. This was a fish built to feed on all the fishes in the sea, that were so fast and strong and well armed that they had no other enemy. Now he speeded up as he smelled the fresher scent and his blue dorsal fin cut the water.

When the old man saw him coming he knew that this was a shark that had no fear at all and would do exactly what he wished. He prepared the harpoon and made the rope fast while he watched the shark come on. The rope was short as it lacked what he had cut away to lash the fish.

The old man's head was clear and good now and he was full of resolution but he had little hope. It was too good to last, he thought. He took one look at the great fish as he watched the shark close in. It might as well have been a dream, he thought. I cannot keep him from hitting me but maybe I can get him. Dentuso, he thought. Bad luck to your mother.

The shark closed fast astern and when he hit the fish the old man saw his mouth open and his strange eyes and the clicking chop of the teeth as he drove forward in the meat just above the tail. The shark's head was out of water and his back was coming out and the old man could hear the noise of skin and flesh ripping on the big fish when he rammed the harpoon down onto the shark's head at a spot where the line between his eyes intersected with the line that ran straight back from his nose. There were no such lines. There was only the heavy sharp blue head and the big eyes and the clicking,

thrusting all-swallowing jaws. But that was the location of the brain and the old man hit it. He hit it with his blood mused hands driving a good harpoon with all his strength. He hit it without hope but with resolution and complete malignancy.

The shark swung over and the old man saw his eye was not alive and then he swung over once again, wrapping himself in two loops of the rope. The old man knew that he was dead but the shark would not accept it. Then, on his back, with his tail lashing and his jaws clicking, the shark plowed over the water as a speed-boat does. The water was white where his tail beat it and three-quarters of his body was clear above the water when the rope came taut, shivered, and then snapped. The shark lay quietly for a little while on the surface and the old man watched him. Then he went down very slowly.

“He took about forty pounds, ” the old man said aloud. He took my harpoon too and all the rope, he thought, and now my fish bleeds again and there will be others.

He did not like to look at the fish anymore since he had been mutilated. When the fish had been hit it was as though he himself were hit.

But I killed the shark that hit my fish, he thought. And he was the biggest dentuso that I have ever seen. And God knows that I have seen big ones.

It was too good to last, he thought. I wish it had been a dream now and that I had never hooked the fish and was alone in bed on the newspapers.

“But man is not made for defeat, ” he said. “A man can be destroyed but not defeated.” I am sorry that I killed the fish though, he thought. Now the bad time is coming and I do not even have the harpoon. The dentuso is cruel and able and strong and intelligent. But I was more intelligent than he was. Perhaps not, he thought. Perhaps I was only better armed.

“Don’t think, old man, ” he said aloud. “Sail on this course and take it when it comes.”

But I must think, he thought. Because it is all I have left. That and baseball. I wonder how the great DiMaggio would have liked the way I hit him in the brain? It was no great thing, he thought. Any man could do it. But do you think my hands were as great a handicap as the bone spurs? I cannot know. I never had anything wrong with my heel except the time the sting ray stung it when I stepped on him when swimming and paralyzed the lower leg and made the unbearable pain.

“Think about something cheerful, old man, ” he said. “Every minute now you are closer to home. You sail lighter for the loss of forty pounds.”

He knew quite well the pattern of what could happen when he reached the inner part of the current. But there was nothing to be done now.

“Yes there is, ” he said aloud. “I can lash my knife to the butt of one of the oars.”

So he did that with the tiller under his arm and the sheet of the sail under his foot.

“Now, ” he said. “I am still an old man. But I am not unarmed.”

The breeze was fresh now and he sailed on well. He watched only the forward part of the fish and some of his hope returned.

It is silly not to hope, he thought. Besides I believe it is a sin. Do not think about sin, he thought. There are enough problems now without sin. Also I have no understanding of it.

I have no understanding of it and I am not sure that I believe in it. Perhaps it was a sin to kill the fish. I suppose it was even though I did it to keep me alive and feed many people. But then everything is a sin. Do not think about sin. It is much too late for that and there are people who are paid to do it. Let them think about it. You were born to be a fisherman as the fish was born to be a fish. San Pedro was a fisherman as was the father of the great DiMaggio.

But he liked to think about all things that he was involved in and since there was nothing to read and he did not have a radio, he thought much and he kept on thinking about sin. You did not kill the fish only to keep alive and to sell for food, he thought. You killed him for pride and because you are a fisherman. You loved him when he was alive and you loved him after. If you love him, it is not a sin to kill him. Or is it more?

“You think too much, old man, ” he said aloud.

But you enjoyed killing the dentuso, he thought. He lives on the live fish as you do. He is not a scavenger nor just a moving appetite as some sharks are. He is beautiful and noble and knows no fear of anything.

“I killed him in self-defense, ” the old man said aloud. “And I killed him well.”

Besides, he thought, everything kills everything else in some way. Fishing kills me exactly as it keeps me alive. The boy keeps me alive, he thought. I must not deceive myself too much.

He leaned over the side and pulled loose a piece of the meat of the fish where the shark had cut him. He chewed it and noted its quality and its good taste. It was firm and juicy, like meat, but it was not red. There was no stringiness in it and he knew that it would bring the highest price in the market. But there was no way to keep its scent out of the water and the old man knew that a very bad time was coming.

The breeze was steady. It had backed a little further into the north-east and he knew that meant that it would not fall off. The old man looked ahead of him but he could see no sails nor could he see the hull nor the smoke of any ship. There were only the flying fish that went up from his bow sailing away to either side and the yellow patches of gulf-weed. He could not even see a bird.

He had sailed for two hours, resting in the stern and sometimes chewing a bit of the meat from the marlin, trying to rest and to be strong, when he saw the first of the two sharks.

“Ay, ” he said aloud. There is no translation for this word and perhaps it is just a noise such as a man might make, involuntarily, feeling the nail go through his hands and into the wood.

“Galanos.” he said aloud. He had seen the second fin now coming up behind the first and had identified them as shovel-nosed sharks by the brown, triangular fin and the sweeping movements of the tail. They had the scent and were excited and in the stupidity of their great hunger they were losing and finding the scent in their excitement. But they were closing all the time.

The old man made the sheet fast and jammed the tiller. Then he took up the oar with the knife lashed to it. He lifted it as lightly as he could because his hands rebelled at the pain. Then he opened and closed them on it lightly to loosen them. He closed them firmly so they would take the pain now and would not flinch and watched the sharks come. He could see their wide, flattened, shovel-pointed heads now and their white-tipped wide pectoral fins. They were hateful sharks, bad smelling, scavengers as well as killers and when they were hungry they would bite at an oar or the rudder of a boat. It was these sharks that would cut the turtles’ legs and flippers off when the turtles were asleep on the surface, and they would hit a man in the water, if they were hungry, even if the man had no smell of fish blood nor of fish slime on him.

“Ay, ” the old man said. “Galanos. Come on Galanos.”

They came. But they did not come as the Mako had come. One turned and went out of sight under the skiff and the old man could feel the skiff shake as he jerked and pulled on the fish. The other watched the old man with his slitted yellow eyes and then came in fast with his half circle of jaws wide to hit the fish where he had already been bitten. The line showed clearly on the top of his brown head and back where the brain joined the spinal cord and

the old man drove the knife on the oar into the juncture, withdrew it, and drove it in again into the shark's yellow cat-like eyes. The shark let go of the fish and slid down, swallowing what he had taken as he died.

The skiff was still shaking with the destruction the other shark was doing to the fish and the old man let go the sheet so that the skiff would swing broadside and bring the shark out from under. When he saw the shark he leaned over the side and punched at him. He hit only meat and the hide was set hard and he barely got the knife in. The blow hurt not only his hands but his shoulder too. But the shark came up fast with his head out and the old man hit him squarely in the center of his flat-topped head as his nose came out of water and lay against the fish. The old man withdrew the blade and punched the shark exactly in the same spot again. He still hung to the fish with his jaws hooked and the old man stabbed him in his left eye. The shark still hung there.

“No? ” the old man said and he drove the blade between the vertebrae and the brain. It was an easy shot now and he felt the cartilage sever. The old man reversed the oar and put the blade between the shark's jaws to open them. He twisted the blade and as the shark slid loose he said, “Go on, galano. Slide down a mile deep. Go see your friend, or maybe it's your mother.”

The old man wiped the blade of his knife and laid down the oar. Then he found the sheet and the sail filled and he brought the skiff onto her course.

“They must have taken a quarter of him and of the best meat, ” he said aloud. “I wish it were a dream and that I had never hooked him. I'm sorry

about it, fish. It makes everything wrong.” He stopped and he did not want to look at the fish now. Drained of blood and awash he looked the color of the silver backing of a mirror and his stripes still showed.

“I shouldn’t have gone out so far, fish, ” he said. “Neither for you nor for me. I’m sorry, fish.”

Now, he said to himself. Look to the lashing on the knife and see if it has been cut. Then get your hand in order because there still is more to come.

“I wish I had a stone for the knife, ” the old man said after he had checked the lashing on the oar butt. “I should have brought a stone.” You should have brought many things, he thought. But you did not bring them, old man. Now is no time to think of what you do not have. Think of what you can do with what there is.

“You give me much good counsel, ” he said aloud. “I’m tired of it.”

He held the tiller under his arm and soaked both his hands in the water as the skiff drove forward.

“God knows how much that last one took, ” he said. “But she’s much lighter now.” He did not want to think of the mutilated under-side of the fish. He knew that each of the jerking bumps of the shark had been meat torn away and that the fish now made a trail for all sharks as wide as a highway through the sea.

He was a fish to keep a man all winter, he thought. Don’t think of that. Just rest and try to get your hands in shape to defend what is left of him. The

blood smell from my hands means nothing now with all that scent in the water. Besides they do not bleed much. There is nothing cut that means anything. The bleeding may keep the left from cramping.

What can I think of now? He thought. Nothing. I must think of nothing and wait for the next ones. I wish it had really been a dream, he thought. But who knows? It might have turned out well.

The next shark that came was a single shovel-nose. He came like a pig to the trough if a pig had a mouth so wide that you could put your head in it. The old man let him hit the fish and then drove the knife on the oar down into his brain. But the shark jerked backwards as he rolled and the knife blade snapped.

The old man settled himself to steer. He did not even watch the big shark sinking slowly in the water, showing first life-size, then small, then tiny. That always fascinated the old man. But he did not even watch it now.

“I have the gaff now, ” he said. “But it will do no good. I have the two oars and the tiller and the short club.”

Now they have beaten me, he thought. I am too old to club sharks to death. But I will try it as long as I have the oars and the short club and the tiller.

He put his hands in the water again to soak them. It was getting late in the afternoon and he saw nothing but the sea and the sky. There was more wind in the sky than there had been, and soon he hoped that he would see

land.

“You’re tired, old man, ” he said. “You’re tired inside.”

The sharks did not hit him again until just before sunset.

The old man saw the brown fins coming along the wide trail the fish must make in the water. They were not even quartering on the scent. They were headed straight for the skiff swimming side by side.

He jammed the tiller, made the sheet fast and reached under the stern for the club. It was an oar handle from a broken oar sawed off to about two and a half feet in length. He could only use it effectively with one hand because of the grip of the handle and he took good hold of it with his right hand, flexing his hand on it, as he watched the sharks come. They were both galanos.

I must let the first one get a good hold and hit him on the point of the nose or straight across the top of the head, he thought.

The two sharks closed together and as he saw the one nearest him open his jaws and sink them into the silver side of the fish, he raised the club high and brought it down heavy and slamming onto the top of the shark’s broad head. He felt the rubbery solidity as the club came down. But he felt the rigidity of bone too and he struck the shark once more hard across the point of the nose as he slid down from the fish.

The other shark had been in and out and now came in again with his jaws wide. The old man could see pieces of the meat of the fish spilling white

from the corner of his jaws as he bumped the fish and closed his jaws. He swung at him and hit only the head and the shark looked at him and wrenched the meat loose. The old man swung the club down on him again as he slipped away to swallow and hit only the heavy solid rubberiness.

“Come on, galano, ” the old man said. “Come in again.”

The shark came in a rush and the old man hit him as he shut his jaws. He hit him solidly and from as high up as he could raise the club. This time he felt the bone at the base of the brain and he hit him again in the same place while the shark tore the meat loose sluggishly and slid down from the fish.

The old man watched for him to come again but neither shark showed. Then he saw one on the surface swimming in circles. He did not see the fin of the other.

I could not expect to kill them, he thought. I could have in my time. But I have hurt them both badly and neither one can feel very good. If I could have used a bat with two hands I could have killed the first one surely. Even now, he thought.

He did not want to look at the fish. He knew that half of him had been destroyed. The sun had gone down while he had been in the fight with the shark.

“It will be dark soon, ” he said. “Then I should see the glow of Havana. If I am too far to the eastward I will see the lights of one of the new beaches.”

I cannot be too far out now, he thought. I hope no one has been too

worried. There is only the boy to worry, of course. But I am sure he would have confidence. Many of the older fishermen will worry. Many others too, he thought. I live in a good town.

He could not talk to the fish anymore because the fish had been ruined too badly. Then something came into his head.

“Half fish, ” he said. “Fish that you were. I am sorry that I went too far out. I ruined us both. But we have killed many sharks, you and I, and ruined many others. How many did you ever kill, old fish? You do not have that spear on your head for nothing.”

He liked to think of the fish and what he could do to a shark if he were swimming free. I should have chopped the bill off to fight them with, he thought. But there was no hatchet and then there was no knife.

But if I had, and could have lashed it to an oar butt, what a weapon. Then we might have fought them together. What will you do now if they come in the night? What can you do?

“Fight them, ” he said. “I’ll fight them until I die.”

But in the dark now and no glow showing and no lights and only the wind and the steady pull of the sail he felt that perhaps he was already dead. He put his two hands together and felt the palms. They were not dead and he could bring the pain of life by simply opening and closing them. He leaned his back against the stern and knew he was not dead. His shoulders told him.

I have all those prayers I promised if I caught the fish, he thought. But

I am too tired to say them now. I better get the sack and put it over my shoulders.

He lay in the stern and steered and watched for the glow to come in the sky. I have half of him, he thought. Maybe I'll have the luck to bring the forward half in. I should have some luck. No, he said. You violated your luck when you went too far outside.

"Don't be silly, " he said aloud. "And keep awake and steer. You may have much luck yet."

"I'd like to buy some if there's any place they sell it, " he said.

What could I buy it with? He asked himself. Could I buy it with a lost harpoon and a broken knife and two bad hands?

"You might, " he said. "You tried to buy it with eighty-four days at sea. They nearly sold it to you too."

I must not think nonsense, he thought. Luck is a thing that comes in many forms and who can recognize her? I would take some though in any form and pay what they asked. I wish I could see the glow from the lights, he thought. I wish too many things. But that is the thing I wish for now. He tried to settle more comfortably to steer and from his pain he knew he was not dead.

He saw the reflected glare of the lights of the city at what must have been around ten o'clock at night. They were only perceptible at first as the light is in the sky before the moon rises. Then they were steady to see across

the ocean which was rough now with the increasing breeze. He steered inside of the glow and he thought that now, soon, he must hit the edge of the stream.

Now it is over, he thought. They will probably hit me again. But what can a man do against them in the dark without a weapon?

He was stiff and sore now and his wounds and all of the strained parts of his body hurt with the cold of the night. I hope I do not have to fight again, he thought. I hope so much I do not have to fight again.

But by midnight he fought and this time he knew the fight was useless. They came in a pack and he could only see the lines in the water that their fins made and their phosphorescence as they threw themselves on the fish. He clubbed at heads and heard the jaws chop and the shaking of the skiff as they took hold below. He clubbed desperately at what he could only feel and hear and he felt something seize the club and it was gone.

He jerked the tiller free from the rudder and beat and chopped with it, holding it in both hands and driving it down again and again. But they were up to the bow now and driving in one after the other and together, tearing off the pieces of meat that showed glowing below the sea as they turned to come once more.

One came, finally, against the head itself and he knew that it was over. He swung the tiller across the shark's head where the jaws were caught in the heaviness of the fish's head which would not tear. He swung it once and twice and again. He heard the tiller break and he lunged at the shark with

the splintered butt. He felt it go in and knowing it was sharp he drove it in again. The shark let go and rolled away. That was the last shark of the pack that came. There was nothing more for them to eat.

The old man could hardly breathe now and he felt a strange taste in his mouth. It was coppery and sweet and he was afraid of it for a moment. But there was not much of it.

He spat into the ocean and said, "Eat that, Galanos. And make a dream you've killed a man."

He knew he was beaten now finally and without remedy and he went back to the stern and found the jagged end of the tiller would fit in the slot of the rudder well enough for him to steer. He settled the sack around his shoulders and put the skiff on her course. He sailed lightly now and he had no thoughts nor any feelings of any kind. He was past everything now and he sailed the skiff to make his home port as well and as intelligently as he could. In the night sharks hit the carcass as someone might pick up crumbs from the table. The old man paid no attention to them and did not pay any attention to anything except steering. He only noticed how lightly and how well the skiff sailed now there was no great weight beside her.

She's good, he thought. She is sound and not harmed in any way except for the tiller. That is easily replaced.

He could feel he was inside the current now and he could see the lights of the beach colonies along the shore. He knew where he was now and it was nothing to get home.

The wind is our friend, anyway, he thought. Then he added, sometimes. And the great sea with our friends and our enemies. And bed, he thought. Bed is my friend. Just bed, he thought. Bed will be a great thing. It is easy when you are beaten, he thought. I never knew how easy it was. And what beat you, he thought.

“Nothing, ” he said aloud. “I went out too far.”

When he sailed into the little harbor the lights of the Terrace were out and he knew everyone was in bed. The breeze had risen steadily and was blowing strongly now. It was quiet in the harbour though and he sailed up onto the little patch of shingle below the rocks. There was no one to help him so he pulled the boat up as far as he could. Then he stepped out and made her fast to a rock.

He unstepped the mast and furled the sail and tied it. Then he shouldered the mast and started to climb. It was then he knew the depth of his tiredness. He stopped for a moment and looked back and saw in the reflection from the street light the great tail of the fish standing up well behind the skiff’s stern. He saw the white naked line of his backbone and the dark mass of the head with the projecting bill and all the nakedness between.

He started to climb again and at the top he fell and lay for some time with the mast across his shoulder. He tried to get up. But it was too difficult and he sat there with the mast on his shoulder and looked at the road. A cat passed on the far side going about its business and the old man watched it. Then he just watched the road.

Finally he put the mast down and stood up. He picked the mast up and put it on his shoulder and started up the road. He had to sit down five times before he reached his shack.

Inside the shack he leaned the mast against the wall. In the dark he found a water bottle and took a drink. Then he lay down on the bed. He pulled the blanket over his shoulders and then over his back and legs and he slept face down on the newspapers with his arms out straight and the palms of his hands up.

He was asleep when the boy looked in the door in the morning. It was blowing so hard that the drifting-boats would not be going out and the boy had slept late and then come to the old man's shack as he had come each morning. The boy saw that the old man was breathing and then he saw the old man's hands and he started to cry. He went out very quietly to go to bring some coffee and all the way down the road he was crying.

Many fishermen were around the skiff looking at what was lashed beside it and one was in the water, his trousers rolled up, measuring the skeleton with a length of line.

The boy did not go down. He had been there before and one of the fishermen was looking after the skiff for him.

"How is he? " one of the fishermen shouted.

"Sleeping, " the boy called. He did not care that they saw him crying. "Let no one disturb him."

“He was eighteen feet from nose to tail, ” the fisherman who was measuring him called.

“I believe it, ” the boy said.

He went into the Terrace and asked for a can of coffee.

“Hot and with plenty of milk and sugar in it.”

“Anything more? ”

“No. Afterwards I will see what he can eat.”

“What a fish it was, ” the proprietor said. “There has never been such a fish. Those were two fine fish you took yesterday too.”

“Damn my fish, ” the boy said and he started to cry again.

“Do you want a drink of any kind? ” the proprietor asked.

“No, ” the boy said. “Tell them not to bother Santiago. I’ll be back.”

“Tell him how sorry I am.”

“Thanks, ” the boy said.

The boy carried the hot can of coffee up to the old man’s shack and sat by him until he woke. Once it looked as though he were waking. But he had gone back into heavy sleep and the boy had gone across the road to borrow some wood to heat the coffee.

Finally the old man woke.

“Don’t sit up, ” the boy said. “Drink this.” He poured some of the coffee in a glass.

The old man took it and drank it.

“They beat me, Manolin, ” he said. “They truly beat me.”

“He didn’t beat you. Not the fish.”

“No. Truly. It was afterwards.”

“Pedrico is looking after the skiff and the gear. What do you want done with the head? ”

“Let Pedrico chop it up to use in fish traps.”

“And the spear? ”

“You keep it if you want it.”

“I want it, ” the boy said. “Now we must make our plans about the other things.”

“Did they search for me? ”

“Of course. With coast guard and with planes.”

“The ocean is very big and a skiff is small and hard to see, ” the old man said. He noticed how pleasant it was to have someone to talk to instead

of speaking only to himself and to the sea. “I missed you, ” he said. “What did you catch? ”

“One the first day. One the second and two the third.”

“Very good.”

“Now we fish together again.”

“No. I am not lucky. I am not lucky anymore.”

“The hell with luck, ” the boy said. “I’ll bring the luck with me.”

“What will your family say? ”

“I do not care. I caught two yesterday. But we will fish together now for I still have much to learn.”

“We must get a good killing lance and always have it on board. You can make the blade from a spring leaf from an old Ford. We can grind it in Guanabacoa. It should be sharp and not tempered so it will break. My knife broke.”

“I’ll get another knife and have the spring ground. How many days of heavy brisa have we? ”

“Maybe three. Maybe more.”

“I will have everything in order, ” the boy said. “You get your hands well old man.”

“I know how to care for them. In the night I spat something strange and felt something in my chest was broken.”

“Get that well too, ” the boy said. “Lie down, old man, and I will bring you your clean shirt. And something to eat.”

“Bring any of the papers of the time that I was gone, ” the old man said.

“You must get well fast for there is much that I can learn and you can teach me everything. How much did you suffer? ”

“Plenty, ” the old man said.

“I’ll bring the food and the papers, ” the boy said. “Rest well, old man. I will bring stuff from the drugstore for your hands.”

“Don’t forget to tell Pedrico the head is his.”

“No. I will remember.”

As the boy went out the door and down the worn coral rock road he was crying again.

That afternoon there was a party of tourists at the Terrace and looking down in the water among the empty beer cans and dead barracudas a woman saw a great long white spine with a huge tail at the end that lifted and swung with the tide while the east wind blew a heavy steady sea outside the entrance to the harbour.

“What’s that? ” she asked a waiter and pointed to the long backbone of the great fish that was now just garbage waiting to go out with the tide.

“Tiburon, ” the waiter said. “Eshark.” He was meaning to explain what had happened.

“I didn’t know sharks had such handsome, beautifully formed tails.”

“I didn’t either, ” her male companion said.

Up the road, in his shack, the old man was sleeping again. He was still sleeping on his face and the boy was sitting by him watching him. The old man was dreaming about the lions.



—— 福克纳诺贝尔奖精品文集 ——

八月之光

LIGHT IN AUGUST

—— 美——威廉·福克纳——著
霍彦京——译

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William Faulkner

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目录

[八月之光](#)

[导读](#)

[序言](#)

[当最初的美好遇上残酷的现实](#)

[1](#)

[2](#)

[3](#)

[4](#)

[5](#)

[6](#)

[7](#)

[8](#)

[9](#)

[10](#)

[11](#)

[12](#)

[13](#)

[14](#)

[15](#)

[16](#)

[17](#)

[18](#)

[19](#)

[20](#)

[21](#)

版权信息

书名：八月之光

作者：(美)威廉·福克纳著；霍彦京译

出版方：北方文艺出版社

出版时间：2016.9

ISBN：9787531736950

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八月之光

导读

这套文集一共收录了福克纳先生的三部著作，分别为：《八月之光》《我弥留之际》和《喧哗与骚动》。

这三部作品，都绝对堪称美国文学史乃至世界意识流文学史上的三朵奇葩。但是，作为二十世纪上半叶的美国文学作品，我们中国当代的读者们阅读起来，想必会有或多或少的隔阂与不解。有鉴于此，笔者才略将这三部作品看了几遍，斗胆写下这篇导读，也算和大家分享一条捷径。

这三部书中，我推荐大家先读一读《八月之光》。原因很简单，这种章回式的叙述方式，我们中国读者相对更加习惯。然而需要注意的是，这本书的叙述并未完全按照时间轴的顺序来写，它穿插着主角克里斯默斯的种种回忆。这也是福克纳作品中常见的表现形式。同时《八月之光》的篇幅也比较长，故事内容非常丰富，很值得品读。

但是从故事的趣味性和体例创新上说，《我弥留之际》才是最为耀眼的一部。大家在阅读中需要注意，书名中的“我”和正文里的“我”，并不是一个人。正文每一章的小标题都是书中的人物，每一章中的“我”，就是以标题人物为角度的第一人称视角的叙述。最值得注意的是，其中有一个叙述人——瓦达曼，是一个傻子，大家阅读的时候，须注意甄别。

而《喧哗与骚动》则将福克纳老前辈的率性和才华展现得酣畅淋漓、“丧心病狂”。书中分别以四个人物的独白展现出一个大家族的兴衰故事，充分地将意识流文学汪洋恣肆的形态发挥出来。这还不算什

么，书中的第一个独白人班吉，与《我弥留之际》中的瓦达曼一样，也是个心智不健全的人（班吉很可能是孤独症）。班吉甚至于没有语言能力，但是其内心独白却很清晰，与瓦达曼的心痴嘴快形成了一种对比。

尽管说，大家或许在进入到真正的阅读阶段依旧会遇到一些理解上的困难，比如晦涩难懂，甚至觉得凌乱枯燥，想要放弃，但是请一定不要厌烦，这或许也是阅读意识流文学的一种乐趣所在。如果单纯从这个角度上说，笔者简略的导读，倒有些煮鹤焚琴、清泉濯足般的“煞风景”了。还请见谅。在阅读的路上，大家共勉。

序言

当最初的美好遇上残酷的现实

—浅析《八月之光》

明明已经是十一月，我却单单看上了一部书，名叫《八月之光》。这本书是美国文学家福克纳的代表作之一，出版于1932年。此时的福克纳已经走向了成熟期，风格已经成形。在创作这部书的时候，福克纳“对小说文本的无限可能性进行了前卫性的试验”，堪称美国意识流文学的典范。而福克纳本人，也称得上是美国意识流文学的先行者。

提到美国文学，我们首先想到的会是马克·吐温、海明威、杰克·伦敦、欧·亨利等等，实际上，福克纳在美国文学史上的地位丝毫不逊于上述诸位。1949年，福克纳因为“对当代美国小说做出了强有力的和艺术上无与伦比的贡献”而获得诺贝尔文学奖，而海明威获得诺贝尔奖，则是在1954年。从这点上说，若海明威见到福克纳，还得叫一声“前辈”呢。

其实说起来，福克纳也是个传奇，他是个典型的美国南方人（1897—1962），出生在密西西比州的一个小地主家庭。他的曾祖父是个让他骄傲的南北战争时期南方军的上校。这点上，他还真是继承了曾祖父的本事，曾祖父在战争结束后就写过不少小说，而且有的还卖得不错。在福克纳的书中，一个叫沙多里斯的上校就是以其曾祖父为原型的。

结束了充满田园乐趣的童年后，福克纳在青年时期开始了他的传奇。起初，和他青梅竹马的初恋跟人跑了，情敌是个校级军官，他则是个不务正业的小职员。可能为了逆袭，后来凭借编故事加入了加拿大的

英国空军，退伍回来后就开始吹嘘自己的战斗经历。据说，就是在这反复的编故事和自吹自擂中，他的思维变得越来越广，欢乐也越来越多。

无心插柳柳成荫，没多久福克纳开始尝试靠“编故事”赚稿费生活了，经历了一系列有各种束缚的作品后，《八月之光》这部汪洋恣肆、空前前卫的意识流小说问世了。

笔者是个地地道道的皖南人，从小生活在白墙黑瓦之间。正如我所在的地域一样，我更倾向于古典东方的口味。相比而言，《八月之光》这类的近现代西方文学著作（而且还是很前卫的），对我来说更是一种调剂。抱着吃惯了徽菜的人也会去吃肯德基的心态，我开始了阅读。

但是，当我把这部书读完之后，我对福克纳的敬仰，真真如黄河之水一发而不可收。这本书没有我想的那么简单。

《八月之光》的故事是有原型的。

就在福克纳十一岁那年，也就是1908年，一名叫勒尔斯·伯顿的黑人因杀死一名白人妇女，而被一群清教徒冲进监狱杀害。不仅如此，愤怒的清教徒们还掠夺了这名黑人的尸体，百般“虐待”这个死去的可怜人。他们割掉了尸体的耳朵，阉割了尸体的睾丸，最后清教徒们用绳子吊着他的脖子，在大街上一直拖行到法院，就这样赤裸裸地挂在了法院门前的大树上。一切仿佛一场神秘的仪式，但是实际上，清教徒又是基督教中最反对仪式化的派别之一。

对于像福克纳这样一个信仰清教的人来说，这个新闻对于他们实在是相当“痛的领悟”！

福克纳出生在美国南部，虽说当时南北战争早就结束了，但是种族

歧视、南北矛盾就像诅咒一样依然笼罩在整个二十世纪上半叶。直到1957年，美国还发生了小石城事件。当时要不是美国中央政府动用陆军的101空降师控制了整个小石城，并且和城中的一万多名国民警卫队对峙，到现在很多州的黑人小孩在美国上不了公办高中。甚至可以说，当时差点爆发了第二次南北战争。五十年代尚且如此，在三十年代的美国南方可想而知。

老爷子生于斯，长于斯，曾祖父还是个失败的蓄奴主义者，而他小时候家里还有个勤劳勇敢的黑人保姆，一直含辛茹苦地照顾着他。在这样的环境下，他对美国南方当时的种族歧视和南北分歧有着清醒的认识。阴暗浮躁的现实与他自身对种族平等观念的理智之间满是矛盾与纠葛，就这样，这部《八月之光》诞生了。

这本书并没有直接进入主题，而是先展开了一幅诗一样的画卷，描绘着美国南方乡村生活的美好。美丽的丽娜，伴随着丽娜的场景通常都是阳光明媚的。她挺着大肚子，天真地认为只要到了杰弗逊镇就可以找到孩子的父亲——一个负心汉，不负责任的“卢卡斯·伯奇”。

丽娜天真得有点傻气。但是因为天真，她又给人以安全可信的感觉，加之美丽的外表，一路上得到了不少人的帮助。整个故事，似乎很温情，一切都沉浸在一种美丽祥和的气氛中。但是当丽娜到达目的地之后，我们才知道，丽娜的故事只是整本书的一个小小的调剂，真正的主角，是克里斯默斯。

克里斯默斯是一个非婚生的孩子，完全不知道自己的父亲是谁。他的父亲也仅仅只是可能有黑人血统，就因此被克里斯默斯的外祖父杀了。克里斯默斯依然饱受歧视，也被自己的家人视为异类，甚至在他的母亲生他的时候，外祖父拒绝让医生救治，这让他的母亲死于难产，年

幼的克里斯默斯彻底沦为孤儿。这位外祖父，正是一个整天把“上帝”挂在嘴边的清教徒。整个故事由绮丽的乡村风光坠入到地狱，由种族压迫和宗教狂热产生的地狱。宗教一旦狂热，它的意义不再是改变地狱，而是让人间变得和地狱一样，让地狱变得像炼狱一样。

而这个人物的名字也很有意思，克里斯默斯（Christmas），也就是圣诞的意思，那么他是不是出生在圣诞节呢？如同咱们中国人的国庆、春节？显然是这样。出生在圣诞节，而又没有父亲，想必是身为基督徒的福克纳对那些残忍迫害黑人的白人清教徒的讽刺——圣子耶稣，正是出生在圣诞节，又没有父亲。克里斯默斯有家等于没家，被送进了孤儿院。但是他的外公依然不满足，依然执着地对克里斯默斯继续加以迫害。他让孤儿院的孩子们都认为克里斯默斯是个黑鬼，孤立他、歧视他。之后，五岁的克里斯默斯被领养，可怜的是，领养这个孩子的家庭依然是清教徒家庭。只要稍微背错长老会的教义，可怜的孩子就会被毒打一顿。在这样压抑的环境下，克里斯默斯的内心扭曲地成长，他反感清教徒，更反感对自己种族的歧视。最后不仅杀了养父，甚至在怀疑自己的初恋女友对自己有歧视之后，他再次以谋杀的方式结束了这段来之不易的感情。

克里斯默斯就是南方种族歧视下产生的悲剧。如果不是被家中怀疑有黑人血统，他不会被家人遗弃，更不会被人骂成黑杂种、黑鬼。他长得比白人还白人，却被白人歧视；跟黑人生活在一起，却发现更不适应。他游离在社会之外，承受了他的生命不能承受的一切。在压力下，他杀了养父和初恋女友。然而，如果没有南北分歧（本质上还是种族歧视），喜欢他的姑娘不会孤独半生，乃至对他产生依赖。没有这种依赖，一向不愿意合群甚至害怕人群的克里斯默斯也不会对这个人生最后的归宿动了杀机。克里斯默斯最后没有善终，实在是可怜可叹、可悲可

恨。

如果只有这一条故事线，我只能说福克纳是个冷血的作者，就像一个黑暗料理界的大师，做出让人难以言喻的苦涩，却又让人无法拒绝的黑暗美食。

故事还有个分线，那就是默默旁观这些事情，甚至在不自觉中参与进去的丽娜，她让我们在窒息的压迫感中看到了希望。丽娜的善良、单纯、坦然，加上拜伦的无私和柏拉图式的爱情观，使整个故事的结尾充满了希望。

有意思的是，克里斯默斯死去的时候，丽娜的孩子也恰好出生。隐约之中，暗含了不尽的寓意。丽娜最终没有找到孩子的父亲，正如圣母玛利亚受圣灵感应而怀孕。而那个在镇上一直陪伴着她，帮助着她，最后与她一起浪迹天涯的拜伦，亦正像玛利亚的丈夫、耶稣的养父约瑟一样。

正如我们知道的，福克纳老爷子也是基督徒。福克纳的矛盾，在于社会上的宗教狂热、种族偏见和他自己的理智认识。如果社会能够放下偏见，保持清醒，一切的一切就可以回到原点，“回到最初的美好”。

实际上，这本书原本不叫《八月之光》，而叫《黑屋子》，但是这个书名让福克纳颇为不满。就在八月初的一天黄昏，他坐在门廊上与妻子一起饮酒。妻子看着庭院的风景，突然问道：“比尔，你有没有想到过八月的光线跟一年里任何别的时候都不一样？”不经意的一句话，让福克纳灵光一闪，回到办公桌前，将书名改为《八月之光》。“1954年，当有人就这个书名发问时，福克纳答曰：故乡‘八月之初有那么几天，阳光柔和得像圣灵降临……’”（引自惠民《福克纳故乡的八月之

光》)

是不是我们可以理解，一切回到最初，回到最本真的美好，一切都可以如同圣灵般柔和？人生若只如初见，是不是有太多太多的悲剧可以避免？我们本不必制造出越来越多的克里斯默斯，而是可以成全更多的丽娜与拜伦。

傲慢只能制造隔离，偏见只能产生怨念，狂热只能带来仇恨。如果有一天，你我遇上了诸多事情，失去了理智，无论是傲慢、偏见还是狂热，你我都不如摸着自己的胸口，回想一下我们曾经的那一颗“初心”。

何志浩

2013年9月书于安徽

丽娜坐在路边，望着马车爬上山坡，向她驶来。丽娜想：“我已经离开了亚拉巴马州，好远。一路从阿拉巴马出发，真远。”虽然我上路的时间还不到一个月，但现在已经到了密西西比州，我从来没有离家这么远过。从十二岁到现在，我从没有离多恩厂这么远过。

尽管丽娜每年都要去镇上六七次，但直到父母去世前，她从未去过多恩厂。那时，丽娜每周六都会坐着马车，穿上邮购的裙子，光脚丫踩在车厢里，鞋子用纸包好放在旁边的座位上。马车抵达小镇前，她会跟鞋穿上。长大后，她总会让父亲把车停在镇子边上，然后下车步行。丽娜没有告诉父亲为什么喜欢步行而不去乘车。父亲以为她想感受一下平坦的街道和人行道。实际上，丽娜觉得这样做能让所有看到、遇到她的人以为她也生活在这里。

十二岁那年的夏天，丽娜的父母相继去世。他们死在一座只有三间小房、一个厅堂、没有纱窗的木屋里，那是一间蚊虫绕着油灯乱飞的房间，长期的光脚行走已经把地板磨得如同旧银器一样光滑。丽娜是家里活下来的孩子中最小的一个。她的母亲先离开了这个世界，临终前，母亲告诉丽娜：“照顾好你爸。”丽娜答应了母亲。后来的一天，父亲说：“你和麦金利去多恩厂吧。收拾好，等他来了你就走。”说完，他也离开了人世。哥哥麦金利驾着马车回到了家里。那天下午，兄妹俩把父亲埋葬在村中教堂后面的墓地，用松树立了一块墓碑。第二天早晨，丽娜和麦金利乘着马车永远地离开了家乡，向着多恩厂出发，虽然可能那时她并不知道自已再也不会回到这里。马车是借来的，哥哥答应人家要在天黑前把车还回去。

哥哥在多恩厂干活儿。村里的男人们都在厂里干活儿或者为厂子服务。这是一家砍伐松木的厂子，开办已有七年，再有七年多将会把周围所有的木材砍光。然后，部分机器、大多数工人、以机器为生和为机器服务的人们，都会被装车运走。不过，由于新的机器可以通过分期付款方式购置，所以还有一些机器会被留在原地——残垣断壁间、杂草丛生中兀自矗立的机轮已停止转动，一派令人惊诧、衰败刺目的景象；空膛的锅炉依旧茫然而倔强地支撑着锈迹斑斑、熄火的烟囱，俯视着田野里的树桩、无边的寂静和荒凉；久已无人耕种的土地经过绵绵秋雨的漫长浸润和春分时节暴风雨的侵蚀，渐渐被冲刷成淤滞的红色沟渠。于是，这个即使在鼎盛时期都无法出现在邮局地名册上的村落便被人遗忘了，到现在就连那些罹患十二指肠病的后世子孙也记不清这个村子，他们推倒房舍，当作炉灶和壁炉里取暖烧饭的柴火。

丽娜来到这里时，村里大约有五户人家，一条铁路，一个车站，每天会有一趟客货混编列车刺耳地呼啸着驶过村庄。火车看到挥动的红旗一般都会停下来，但它通常都会像鬼魅一样突然从荒凉的村庄里钻出来，像女妖一样哭号着，穿过像从珠串上遗落的珠子般大小的村庄。哥哥比她大二十岁。她去哥哥家居住的时候几乎已经记不起他的模样。哥哥和他总是在生养孩子的妻子住在一栋没漆过、有四间房的屋子里。每年几乎有大半时间，嫂子不是在生孩子，就是在坐月子。每到这个时候，丽娜就承担了全部家务，同时还要照料其他几个孩子。后来，丽娜告诉自己：“我想，这就是我为什么会很快就有孩子的原因吧。”

她睡在屋后一间单坡顶的房子里。这间屋子有扇窗户，丽娜学会了如何摸黑把它静静地打开、关上。起初，和她同住这里的是她的大侄儿，后来又来了老二，再后来便是三个侄儿。丽娜在这里住了八年后第一次打开了这扇窗户，但在窗户被开关数十次后，丽娜才发现自己压根

儿不该去碰它。她告诉自己：“或许命中注定吧。”

嫂子告诉了哥哥。于是，哥哥麦金利发现丽娜的身体正在发生变化，他本应该很早就发现。麦金利非常严厉。汗水冲走了他的温柔和亲切，尽管他才刚刚四十岁，但青春气息早已荡然无存，只剩近乎绝望的刚毅和固执，以及对百无一用的祖传血统的自豪。麦金利骂丽娜是荡妇，并且痛斥那个男人（麦金利是对的，因为村里没几户人家，年轻的单身汉或满身锯木屑的浪荡子更少）。虽然那个男人半年前就已经逃之夭夭，但丽娜还是不肯认输。她执拗地重复着：“他会来接我，他说过会来接我。”她对此坚信不疑，像只小绵羊似的耐心而忠贞地等待，卢卡斯·伯奇之类正是相信并利用了这一点。然而，即使在真正需要他们的时候，这类人也不会露面。两个星期后，丽娜又一次从窗户爬了出来。这一次稍微有点儿困难。她想：“要是当初爬出来的时候就这么困难的话，我现在肯定就不会爬窗户了。”她本可以在大白天从门口走出去，谁也不会阻拦她，也许她心里也明白这一点。但她还是选择在晚上从窗户爬出去。她带了一把棕榈叶做的扇子，和一个用印花大手帕包得很紧的小包裹，里面装着零散的东西和三十五分钱的硬币。她穿着一双男人的鞋子，是哥哥给她的，这双鞋子没怎么穿过，因为男人们在夏天都不穿鞋子。走在尘土飞扬的土路上时，她把鞋子脱下，拿在手里。

丽娜这样走着已近四个星期。过去的四周里，远方的召唤就像一条宁静的走廊一样一直通向前方，没有任何标志，支撑它的只有沉稳的信念和那些善良的不知名的面庞和声音：卢卡斯·伯奇？我不认识。我没听说附近有谁叫这个名字。这条路？它通往博卡红塔斯。或许他在那儿吧。这是很有可能的。这儿正好有辆马车顺道去那儿，它可以把你带到那里。此刻，在她身后延伸着一条漫长而单调的道路，平静而没有任何变化，从早到晚，从晚到早，不断重复着。在通往前方的整条路上，她

坐过的马车几乎一模一样，没有任何特色，慢吞吞地前行，车轮嘎吱嘎吱作响，马耳朵了无生机地耷拉着，就像古瓮上永不止步但又没有任何进展的画面。

一辆马车爬上山，朝丽娜驶来。在刚才走过大约一英里的路上，她曾经遇到过这辆车。当时，马车停在路边，套着缰绳的骡马正在打盹儿，脑袋正冲丽娜前进的方向。她看到了这辆马车，围栏外的畜棚旁还蹲着两个男人，她又看了他们一眼，而这一瞥却已将一切尽收眼底，匆匆掠过，纯粹而深远。她没有停下脚步，很可能围栏旁的那两个人并没有注意到这个女人曾经看过马车一眼，也看了他们一眼。丽娜也没有再回头，她继续向远方走去，慢慢地走着，鞋带并没有系好，松松地搭在脚踝处。她爬上一英里外的山顶，然后在水渠边坐下，脱下鞋子，双脚放到浅浅的水渠里。不一会儿，她又听到了马车的声音，听了一会儿后，就看到马车爬上了山坡。

马车的木轴和铁架久未上油，经年累月的风化让它在行进中不断发出尖厉的“咔嗒咔嗒”声，缓慢而刺耳，一连串枯燥而迟缓的声音将八月午后炎热而哀怨的寂静传递至半英里之外。尽管骡子像被施了催眠术一样，拖着沉重的步子辛勤地走着，但马车似乎并没有往前挪一步，仿佛被永远地悬在了半路，因为前进的每一步都是那么令人难以觉察，就像一颗破旧的珠子串在远方那条红线般的道路上一样。看着这幅慵懒的景象，丽娜的视线逐渐模糊，神志也渐渐恍惚，二者融为一体，再也看不到马车的踪影；而这条路在白天和黑夜单调而无声的转换间像被事先丈量好的一段线一样，再次被绕到线轴上。总之，马车声仿佛从地球外某个不被人注意的角落传来的声音一样，缓慢、刺耳却毫无意义，好像一个幽灵超脱了半英里外的形骸独自游荡。丽娜心想：“这声音好像挺远，虽然我能听得见但还是看不到。”她边想边觉得自己仿佛已经再次

坐上马车上路。她想：这样的话，在我坐上马车之前，在马车到达我停留的地方前，我好像已经搭车走了半英里；而等我下了马车，它继续赶路的时候，我也仍旧可以像搭车一样又走半英里路。此刻的丽娜并没有去看那辆马车，只是等着，任思绪迅速而流畅地自由飞扬，眼前浮现出一张张陌生而善良的面孔，耳畔响起温和的声音：卢卡斯·伯奇？你说你已经在波卡洪塔斯找过了？这条路？是去斯普林韦尔的。你就在这儿等着，一会儿就有马车来，它到哪儿，就能把你带到哪里。丽娜想：“如果卢卡斯·伯奇一路走到了杰弗逊镇，那他肯定在见到我之前就能听到马车的声音。他能听见马车声，但不会知道车上的人是谁。那样，他能听见却看不见我的到来。等他见到我时，他肯定非常激动。这样，没等他想清楚，他的眼前就会出现两个人了。”

阿姆斯蒂德和温特伯顿两人靠着温特伯顿的马棚外墙，蹲在阴凉处，望着丽娜从路上走过。他们一眼就看出年轻的丽娜是个外乡人，还怀有身孕。温特伯顿说道：“不知道她在哪里怀上的。”

阿姆斯蒂德说：“也不知道她腆着大肚子走了多远。”

“我想，她肯定是去路那头看望谁了吧。”温特伯顿说。

“我觉得不是。要是的话，我准知道。况且那边也没什么人，要有的话，我肯定听说过。”

温特伯顿说：“我估计她肯定知道自己要去哪儿，看她走路的样子，她应该知道。”

“再走不了多远，她肯定就会有伴儿啦。”阿姆斯蒂德说。这个大肚子女人正缓慢地继续往前走，谁都能看出她的肚子里是什么累赘。丽娜身穿破旧的、褪色的蓝衣裙，手里拿着棕榈叶扇子和一个小布包。当她

从他俩身边走过时，他们都没有注意到丽娜瞥了他们一眼。“她应该不是从附近什么地方来的。”阿姆斯蒂德说，“看她那费劲儿的样子，她可能已经走了好长时间，而且还得走很远。”

温特伯顿说：“她可能是来这儿找什么人吧。”

“要是那样的话我早听说了。”阿姆斯蒂德说。那个女人继续向前走去。她头也没回地爬上那条路，消失在他们的视线里：臃肿的身体，缓慢、沉稳的步子，就像漫长的下午时光一样不慌不忙，从容不迫。她消失在他们的谈话中，或许也消失在他们的思绪中。因为不一会儿阿姆斯蒂德就回到了正题上。为了这件事，他已经驾着马车来过两次，每次都是跑五英里的路，然后就蹲在温特伯顿的畜棚外，在阴凉处拐弯抹角地聊天，吐着唾沫，不慌不忙地一蹲就是三个小时。他的目的就是想买温特伯顿打算出手的那台耕地机。终于，阿姆斯蒂德看了看太阳，讲出了那个三天前睡在床上就已经决定好了的价钱。他说：“我知道，照我这个价格能在杰弗逊镇上买到这种机器。”

“我看那你就去那儿买吧，”温特伯顿说，“听起来是笔好买卖。”

“行，”阿姆斯蒂德说着，又吐了一口唾沫。他抬头又看了看太阳，站起来，说，“好吧，我看我该回去了。”

阿姆斯蒂德钻进马车，喊醒骡子。或者说，他让骡子动了起来，因为只有黑人才知道骡子什么时候醒着，什么时候睡着。温特伯顿跟着他走到栅栏边，胳膊撑在栏杆高处。“是，哥们儿，”他说，“那个价钱我也应该买的。如果你不买，我要是再不买的话就是猪脑子了。我想那个家伙肯定有一大群骡子要卖吧，五美元一头，对吧？”

“没错。”阿姆斯蒂德答道。他赶着车往前走，马车开始慢慢地走

着，发出一英里外都能听得到的嘎吱嘎吱声。他没回头，显然也没朝前看，因为直到马车快到山顶时，他才注意到那个女人正坐在大路旁的水渠边上。这一眼的工夫，他并不知道这个穿蓝衣服的女人是否注意过马车。当然，也没人知道他是否曾经看过她一眼，两个人都没有要搭话的迹象，但他俩慢慢地越走越近。马车艰难地向她走去，缓慢的节奏让人昏昏欲睡，马车在扬起的红色尘土中不紧不慢地移动着，每走一步马具上的铃铛都会叮叮当当地响个不停，大野兔耳朵似的骡耳朵软软地上下摆动着，阿姆斯特德吆喝骡子停下时，它们仍旧一副恹恹欲睡的神情。

丽娜戴了一顶褪色的蓝色遮阳帽，帽子褪色不是由于肥皂水的洗涤，而是因为近期的风吹日晒。丽娜从帽子下抬起头来，平静而愉快地看着阿姆斯特德——这是一张年轻而快活的脸，真诚、友好而机灵。丽娜一动不动地坐在那里，穿着同样也是褪了色的蓝裙子，早已走样的身子稳稳地端坐在那里，膝盖上放着扇子和包裹。丽娜没有穿袜子，光着的脚丫子一起伸进浅沟里，那双笨重的男鞋沾满了灰尘，无精打采地躺在她身边。马车停下来，阿姆斯特德驼着背坐在车上，两眼茫然无神，他看见那把扇子的边缘整整齐齐地镶着一圈和衣帽一样褪了色的蓝布。

他问：“还要走多远？”

“我打算天黑前再走一段。”丽娜回答道。她站起来，拿着鞋子，小心翼翼地缓缓爬上那条路，走到马车前，阿姆斯特德并没有下车去帮她，只是在她笨重地爬上马车，把鞋放在车座上时，牢牢地拽住缰绳。马车继续向前行驶。丽娜说道：“谢谢您，步行好累啊。”

显然，阿姆斯特德从始至终都没有好好地打量过她，不过已经注意到丽娜并没有戴结婚戒指。就算是此刻，他也没有看丽娜一眼，马车再次发出缓慢的嘎吱声。他问道：“你从哪儿来？”

丽娜长出一口气。她并不是叹息，只是平静地吐了一口气，仿佛有种淡淡的惊诧。“现在看来我已经走了好远，我从亚拉巴马州来。”

“亚拉巴马州？就你这样儿？你的家人呢？”

丽娜头也没抬地说：“我想，顺这条路走就能见到他。说不准你认识他，他的名字叫卢卡斯·伯奇。来的路上有人跟我说他在杰弗逊镇，在一家刨木厂工作。”

“卢卡斯·伯奇。”阿姆斯蒂德的语调几乎和她的一样。他们并排坐在座位上，座位下的弹簧已经坏了，塌陷下去。阿姆斯蒂德从眼角瞥见了她放在膝头的双手和遮阳帽下的侧脸。而丽娜似乎正从骡子耷拉的耳朵间注视着伸向远方的道路。“你这一路就靠步行，就你自己一个人来找他？”

丽娜并没有立即回答。过了一会儿，她说：“乡亲们都是好人。他们对我真的很好。”

“女人们也是吗？”阿姆斯蒂德用眼角瞟着她的侧面，心想：不知道玛莎会说什么。我猜，我知道玛莎会怎么说。我知道女人们应该心地善良，但不一定会很热心，男人们倒有可能。不过，只有坏心眼的女人才可能对另一个需要帮助的女人表现得非常热心。嗯，我知道，我完全了解玛莎会说什么。

丽娜往前坐了一点儿，仍然非常平静。她的侧面和脸颊都是那么平静。“真是件怪事。”她说。

“你的意思是，乡亲们看见像你这样体形的陌生年轻女人走在路上，怎么知道她的老公离开她了？”丽娜坐在那儿没有动。漫长的午

后，马车走在炙热的路上，没有上油的木车轴发出有节奏的声音。“你打算从这儿上路去找他？”

丽娜静静地坐在车上。显然，她正从骡子的两耳间望着缓缓伸向远方的道路，这段距离或许只是有限的一段路程而已。“我想我能找到他，这并不难。凡是众人聚集的地方，只要有玩笑嬉闹的地方，就会有伯奇。他一向喜欢人多热闹。”

阿姆斯特蒂德粗鲁地咕哝了一声，恶狠狠地呵道：“喂儿，驾！”他若有所思地自言自语道：“我知道她能找到。我知道，那个家伙准会发现自己在阿肯萨斯州甚至得克萨斯州落脚是非常严重的错误。”

夕阳开始西沉，再过一个小时，太阳就会落到地平线下，夏日的夜幕将迅速来袭。前面大路上分出一条小道，比大路还要安静。阿姆斯特蒂德说：“我们到了。”

丽娜立即行动起来。她俯身找到鞋子，很显然她甚至不愿因穿鞋让马车停留太久。“太感谢您了，”她说，“您真的帮了我一个大忙。”

马车再次停下来。丽娜正准备下车时，阿姆斯特蒂德说：“就算你在太阳下山前赶到瓦尔纳店铺，到杰弗逊镇还有十二英里路。”

丽娜一只手笨拙地抓起鞋子、包裹和扇子，腾出另一只手好让自己更容易下车。她说：“我想，我该继续赶路。”

阿姆斯特蒂德没有去扶她。“你下来，在我家住一晚，”他说，“女人会.....要是你一走吧。我明天一早就送你去瓦尔纳店铺，然后你搭车去镇上。星期六那里肯定会有人去镇上。那个人不会一夜间就溜掉的。要是他真在杰弗逊镇的话，明天他还会在那儿。”

丽娜坐着没有说话，手里拿着行李准备下车。她目视前方，望着蜿蜒的道路上光影交错，一直伸向远方。“我想我还有几天时间吧。”

“当然，你有的是时间，不过肯定会有个不会走路的小家伙随时来陪你。你跟我回家吧。”没等她说话，阿姆斯特蒂德就赶着骡子走开了。马车拐进巷子，这是一条昏暗的小道。尽管丽娜又靠后坐了一点，手里依旧拿着扇子、包裹和鞋子。

“我不想欠别人，”她说道，“我不想给别人添麻烦。”

“行，”阿姆斯特蒂德说，“你跟我来。”骡子一反常态，不约而同地迅速跑起来。他又说：“闻到玉米味儿了。”阿姆斯特蒂德心想：女人就这个样儿。好端端一个姑娘自找苦吃，大庭广众之下一点儿都不觉得羞愧，因为她知道村里人都会帮她。她根本没必要担心女人们。没有哪个女人把她害成这个样子，她自己都不觉得这才是麻烦。是，哥们儿。你只要和她们中的任何一个人结了婚，或者惹了麻烦却不结婚，那你立马就会发现这个女人从此脱离了她的群体，放弃平静的生活，一门心思和男人们混在一起，正是这样，她们才吸鼻烟、抽烟，还想参选。

马车绕过阿姆斯特蒂德家，朝畜棚走去。他的妻子正站在前门口看着他俩。阿姆斯特蒂德没有朝那个方向看，他根本没必要朝那边看，妻子肯定在那儿。他把骡子赶进敞开门的畜棚里，心里懊悔地自嘲道：“我完全知道她要说什么。”马车停下来，阿姆斯特蒂德不需要回头就知道妻子这时没有看他们，而是在厨房等着他们。他把马车停好，对丽娜说：“进屋吧。”说着，他早已下了马车，丽娜也正慢慢地往下爬，不时惦记着肚子。阿姆斯特蒂德说：“你要是见着什么人，那肯定是玛莎。我喂完骡子就进去。”他并没有看着丽娜穿过院子走进厨房，没必要这么做。他在心里跟着丽娜一步一步走进厨房，遇到了那个女人，她像刚才

在门口看着马车经过一样盯着厨房门。阿姆斯蒂德心想：“我能猜到她要啥。”

阿姆斯蒂德给骡子卸下马具，饮了水，喂了草料，把它们赶进畜棚，又从牧场把母牛也赶进棚里。然后，他也去了厨房，妻子还在那里。玛莎头发花白，长着一张冷酷暴躁的面孔。她六年间生了五个孩子，一手把儿女们拉扯大。她没有闲着的时候，阿姆斯蒂德没有去看她，而是走到水池边，从桶里舀了水倒在盆里，卷起袖子，说道：“她姓伯奇，至少她说自己要找的那个家伙叫卢卡斯·伯奇。路上有人告诉她那个人正在杰弗逊镇。”说着，阿姆斯蒂德背对着她开始洗脸。“她大老远从亚拉巴马州过来，她说自己是一个人走路来的。”

阿姆斯蒂德太太只顾忙着准备晚饭，头也没抬地说：“等她再回到亚拉巴马州以前会有好一阵子不再孤单了。”

“我看那个叫伯奇的家伙也不会孤独了。”阿姆斯蒂德忙着在水池边擦肥皂，他能感觉到妻子的目光，她正看着自己的后脑勺，看着因汗渍浸透而褪色的衬衣下的肩膀。“她说萨姆逊那边有人告诉她，有个叫伯奇什么的人在杰弗逊镇上的刨木厂干活儿。”

“她指望能在那儿找到那个人，那个人也会等在那里，还把房子、家具什么的都准备好了。”

阿姆斯蒂德无法从妻子的语气中判定她是否还在看自己。他用一块破麻袋布把脸上的水擦干，说：“说不准她真是这样想的。要是那家伙想过要躲开她的话，我想他马上就会发现自己犯了个严重的错误，他在跨过密西西比河之前不该停步。”这时，阿姆斯蒂德清楚妻子正注视着他。阿姆斯蒂德太太头发花白，不胖也不瘦，像男人一样坚毅，而且吃

苦耐劳，她穿着一件便于干活儿的灰色衣服，显得粗鲁而莽撞。她的双手搭在髀骨上，脸上一副将军战败了的神情。

玛莎说道：“你们这些男人！”

“你打算怎么办？把她赶出去？要么让她睡在谷仓里？”

“你们这些男人，”她说道，“该死的男人们。”

阿姆斯特德夫妇一起走进厨房。不过，阿姆斯特德太太走在前面，她径直走向炉灶。丽娜站在门里边，摘下了头巾，头发梳得光洁整齐。就连那件蓝衣服也显得鲜艳而平整。阿姆斯特德太太在炉灶旁边叮叮咚咚地打开铁炉门，像男人一样用力把柴火塞进去。丽娜说：“我来帮您吧。”

阿姆斯特德太太没有抬头，继续粗暴地拨弄着炉灶门。“一边儿待着去。这会儿歇一歇，说不准还要走很久才能再歇脚呢。”

“要是能让我帮您就好了。”

“待在那儿。这种活儿一天三次，我已经干了三十年了。要别人帮忙的时候早过去了。”玛莎忙着烧火，头也没回地说，“阿姆斯特德说你姓伯奇。”

“是的。”丽娜回答道。这时，她的声音异常平静而严肃。她静静地坐在那里，双手一动不动地放在膝头。阿姆斯特德太太也没有回头看她，因为她正在炉灶旁忙活着。玛莎似乎必须使出浑身力气才能搞定炉火，又好像在照看一块贵重的手表一样全神贯注地伺候着这把火。

“你已经姓伯奇了？”阿姆斯特德太太说。

年轻的丽娜并没有立即回答。虽然阿姆斯特德太太这会儿已经不再捅炉子，但她始终还是背对着丽娜。过了一会儿，阿姆斯特德太太转过身来。她俩互相对视了一眼，刹那间两人毫不掩饰地注视着彼此：年轻女人坐在椅子上，头发整整齐齐地梳着，双手懒懒地放在膝盖上；而另一个稍年长的女人刚刚转过身来，一动不动地站在炉灶旁，长着一张石雕一样生硬的脸，花白的头发简单地在脑后盘了个发髻。不久，年轻的丽娜开口说道：“刚才没跟您说实话，我不姓伯奇。我叫丽娜·格罗夫。”

两个人望着对方。阿姆斯特德太太的口吻不冷不热，根本听不出什么味道来。“所以你想追上他，好早点儿姓伯奇，是吗？”

此时，丽娜低下头，似乎正在端详放在膝盖上的双手。虽然她的声音还是那么平静，但平静里透着安详和固执。“我想我不需要卢卡斯的任何承诺，只不过是很不巧，他不得不离开。后来，他又没能按计划回来接我。我觉得我俩之间不需要任何语言的许诺。那天晚上，他发现自己非走不可时，他一——”

“哪天晚上？你告诉他怀孕的那个晚上？”

丽娜停顿了一会儿没有说话。她的面容像石头一样沉静，但并不冰冷。丽娜的固执中透着一丝温柔、一种内心的澄明和宁静，不理智中透着一种超然。阿姆斯特德太太凝视着她，而丽娜却只顾说话，并没有注意到她。“在那之前，他就得知自己可能得离开，只不过他没有早点儿告诉我，因为他不想让我担心。起初，他得知非走不可时，他就明白离开最好，在其他地方可能会过得更好一些，工头也不会刁难他。可是，他一拖再拖没有走，到后来因为这事儿，我们再也无法拖下去了。工头总是欺负他，因为他不喜欢卢卡斯。卢卡斯年轻有活力，而且工头想把

卢卡斯的活儿派给他堂弟。可卢卡斯并不打算告诉我，他怕我担心。自从出了这事儿，我们没法再等了。是我让他走的，他说只要我让他留下，不管工头待他如何，他一定不会离开。可我让他走了，即使在那个时候，他也从没想过要离开。但我坚持要他走，等他准备好让我去时，给我捎个口信就好。可惜，后来总是没能按他计划的那样及时让我去。像他这样的年轻人出门在外，置身陌生人中间，得费些时候才能安顿好。他离开时绝对没有想到得那么久才能安顿下来，比他预想的还要长。尤其像卢卡斯这样生龙活虎的年轻人，喜欢乡亲们，喜欢热闹，而乡亲们也喜欢他。他并不知道时间会比计划的要久，他这么年轻，又是讲笑话的能手，乡亲们也都喜欢和他在一起，这样无形中就会打扰他的工作。因为他从不愿伤害别人的感情。我也想让他好好享受最后的快乐时光，因为结婚对于年轻人、一个天性活泼的年轻男人，和对一个女人来说，是不同的。他需要很长时间才能接受。您不觉得吗？”

阿姆斯特德太太没有作声，只是看着坐在椅子上的这个女人——头发梳得光溜溜的，双手放在膝头，还有那张温柔沉静的脸。“说不准，他已经给我捎过信儿了，不过在半道丢了。从亚拉巴马州到这儿走了这么远，可我还没到杰弗逊镇。我跟他说过，我不需要他给我写信，因为他不擅长写作。要是他准备好了，给我带个口信就好，我跟他说明我会等他。他刚走那会儿，我也有点儿担心，因为我还没有跟他姓伯奇。我哥哥和他一家人都不像我这样了解他。他们怎么能知道他呢？”丽娜脸上慢慢泛起柔柔的惊诧，那么明显，仿佛她刚想起一件自己以前并没有意识到的事情。“您想啊，他们怎么能理解呢？但他必须先安顿好，到了陌生的环境，他得处理好各种麻烦，这个时候我不能给他添麻烦，我只要等他就可以。可过了些时候，我成天忙于关注肚里的这个小家伙，没有工夫考虑自己的姓氏和乡亲们的想法。但我和卢卡斯之间不需要任何言语的承诺，或许发生了什么没预料到的事情，或者他给我捎的信丢

了。所以，有一天我决定不再干等，就上路了。”

“你出发时怎么知道要走哪条路呢？”

丽娜盯着自己的手——双手全神贯注地卷折着衣角。这个动作并不是缺乏自信的羞怯表现，显然只是双手下意识的动作。“我一路不断打听。卢卡斯是个活泼开朗的年轻人，很容易和朋友们打成一片。我知道不管走到哪儿，人们都会记住他。所以，我一直打听，而且乡亲们也非常热心。不出所料，两天前我在路上就听说他在杰弗逊镇的一家刨木厂干活儿。”

阿姆斯特德太太望着这张低垂的脸。阿姆斯特德太太的双手搭在髀骨上，用轻蔑的眼神冷冷地注视着这个年轻女人。“你以为等你赶到时，他就在那里。就算他真的在那儿，等他知道你俩在同一个镇上时，他会在太阳落山前还在那里等着你！”

丽娜低俯的面庞凝重而平静。此刻，她的双手停止了摩挲。她用平静而富有穿透力的声音倔强地说道：“我觉得小孩子出生时，全家应该团聚，尤其是生第一个孩子。我想上帝会保佑我们的。”

阿姆斯特德太太粗暴而刻薄地说：“我想上帝应该会的。”阿姆斯特德躺在床上，稍稍抬起些脑袋，越过床尾挡脚板看见妻子仍旧穿着衣服，在梳妆台的灯影里弯着腰，使劲在抽屉里翻找。她摸出一个铁盒子，用挂在脖子上的钥匙打开，从里面掏出一个布包，然后解开布包，取出一只小瓷公鸡，鸡背上有一道塞硬币的口。阿姆斯特德太太轻轻一摇，里面的硬币便发出哗啦哗啦的声音。她把公鸡反过来，在梳妆台上用力摇晃，硬币从缝隙里陆续掉下来。阿姆斯特德躺在床上望着妻子。

“大半夜的你拿这些卖鸡蛋的钱干吗？”他问。

“我自己的钱，想干吗就干吗。”她在灯光里弯着腰，面容严厉而尖刻，“上帝知道，这钱是我辛辛苦苦攒下的。你从没搭过一把手。”

“那当然，”阿姆斯蒂德说，“村里除了黄鼠狼和蛇以外，谁敢动你的那些鸡。这只公鸡钱罐也一样！”这时，阿姆斯蒂德太太突然俯下身，扯下一只鞋子，朝瓷公鸡猛地一击。阿姆斯蒂德斜倚在床上，看着妻子从碎瓷片中捡起硬币，连同刚才抖出来的几枚一起放进布袋里，然后用力打了三四个结。

“把这个给她，”阿姆斯蒂德太太说，“明天太阳出来，你就套上骡子带她离开这儿。要是你愿意的话，可以把她一直送到杰弗逊镇。”

阿姆斯蒂德回答道：“我看她可以在瓦尔纳店铺搭顺车去。”

天还没亮，阿姆斯蒂德太太就已经起床，开始准备早饭。阿姆斯蒂德挤完奶回来时，桌上已经摆好了早餐。阿姆斯蒂德太太说：“叫她来吃饭吧。”阿姆斯蒂德和丽娜回到厨房的时候，玛莎已经离开了。丽娜朝屋里扫了一眼，目光在门口稍稍停留了一下，脸上就已泛起了发自内心的微笑。阿姆斯蒂德明白她想开口，讲出心中早已准备好的话。然而，她什么都没有说，只是稍微愣了一下。

“咱们吃吧，吃了上路，”阿姆斯蒂德说道，“你还有好远的路要走。”他一直看着丽娜吃饭的样子，还是昨天晚餐时那般娴静、端庄，不过现在有些客气，几乎可以说是过分拘谨。接着，他把打了结的布袋递给丽娜。丽娜并没有感到太意外，欢喜地接过袋子。

“噢，阿姆斯蒂德太太真是太好了，”她说道，“不过我用不着它，我马上就快到家了。”

“我看你最好收下。我想你已经看出来了吧，玛莎不喜欢别人和她对着干。”

丽娜答道：“她是个好人。”说着，她把钱放进自己的包裹里，戴上太阳帽。马车等在外面。他们驾着马车穿过小道，路过屋舍时，丽娜回头看了一眼，说道：“你们俩对我太好了。”

“这是她做的，”阿姆斯特德说，“我可没资格接受夸奖。”

“不管怎么样，你们都是好人。请你代表我向她问好。我本打算自己和她道别的，不过……”

“行，”阿姆斯特德说，“我想她挺忙的，或者有别的什么事儿要做。我会转告她。”

他们在初升的太阳中驾着马车来到瓦尔纳店铺。男人们吐着痰，蹲在被脚后跟蹭得掉了皮的门廊里，望着丽娜小心翼翼地从小座上拿起行李和扇子，缓缓地走下马车。这次，阿姆斯特德还是没有去扶她。他坐在车上说：“这是伯奇女士。她想去杰弗逊镇。要是今天有人去那儿的话，顺便捎她一程，她会非常感谢你们的。”

丽娜那双笨重的、沾满灰尘的鞋子踩在了地上。她抬起头，安详而平静地说：“太感谢你了。”

“不用谢，”阿姆斯特德说道，“我看你这会儿能去镇里了。”他低头看着丽娜，舌头不断搜索着字句，可思绪却平静地疾驰而去。男人，所有的男人，都会为了多管闲事儿错过做一百次好买卖的机会。即使这件事根本不需要他去管，他也会错失所有机遇，发财的机会，做好事，甚至作恶的机会。可无论怎样，他永远也不会丢掉多管闲事的机会。他倾

听着，终于，舌头找到了想要说的话，此时的他或许有点像丽娜一样为自己所说的话感到惊诧，“不过，要是我的话，我不会抱太大希望……”说着，他心想，她什么都听不进去。要是她能听到的话就不会腆着肚子，拿着扇子，拎着包袱走下马车了。她一个人朝一个从未去过的地方出发，去找一个再也见不到的男人，一个见一次面就已经够多了的男人。“你要是回来的话，明天或者今晚……”

“我觉得肯定没问题，”丽娜说道，“他们说伯奇就在那儿。”

阿姆斯特蒂德调转马车往回赶。他眯着眼睛，弯腰驼背地坐在松松垮垮的座椅上，心想：说啥也没用。别人说的话，她自己听到的，她都不会相信，就像她不相信周围人的想法一样。她说现在已经走了四个星期，现在的她什么都不考虑，什么都不相信。她准是坐在最高的一级台阶上，双手放在膝盖上，那群男人蹲在那儿，在她面前朝大路上吐痰，而且不等别人开口，她就能主动开口，说起那个该死的家伙。她好像从没有什么不可告人的事情，即使朱迪·瓦尔纳告诉她刨木厂干活儿的那个人叫邦奇，不是伯奇，她都不会发愁。我看她比玛莎都坚信，就像她昨晚告诉玛莎的那样，上帝一定会保佑她全家团聚的。

丽娜坐在最高层台阶上，膝头放着扇子和包袱。不出一两个问题，她就会像个撒谎的孩子一样，耐心而平淡地开始再次讲起她的故事。那些身穿工装裤的男人蹲在门廊里静静地听着。

“那家伙叫邦奇。”瓦尔纳说道，“他在刨木厂已经干了七年啦。你怎么知道伯奇也在那里？”

丽娜的目光投向去往杰弗逊镇的大路。她面容沉静，期待的眼神有些迷离，但并不困惑。“我想伯奇肯定在那里，就在那家刨木厂。卢卡

斯总是喜欢热闹，从来不愿平静地待着，所以，多恩厂对他来说并不合适。所以，嗯，我们决定换个地方，能挣钱又热闹的地方。”

“为了钱，为了热闹，”瓦尔纳说，“卢卡斯不是第一个扔下该做的事，抛下依靠他的人，去挣钱、去寻开心的年轻人。”

然而，丽娜并没有听进去。她静静地坐在高层台阶上，望着空荡荡的大路蜿蜒着伸向杰弗逊镇。那些靠墙蹲着的男人静静地看着她安静的面容，产生了和阿姆斯特德、瓦尔纳一样的想法：她正在思念一个抛弃了她、让她陷入困境的无赖。他们知道丽娜再也见不到这个家伙了，或许最多给她瞅见他逃跑时的上衣后摆。“也许她正在回忆那个叫斯罗恩或伯恩的工厂吧。”瓦尔纳心想，“我看，就算是傻子，也用不着大老远从密西西比州出来，最后发现自己逃离的那个地方和现在所处的环境没什么不同，即使家里有个反对妹妹深夜干什么见不得人勾当的哥哥，也不会糟糕到哪里去。”我要是她哥哥的话，也会反对，当父亲的也一样。她没有母亲，父亲出于心疼和自尊，肯定痛恨这种事情，可母亲虽然因爱生恨，但还是会和她住在一起。

而丽娜却根本没有想这些。她只是在想手中包裹里装着的硬币。她想起了早饭。这会儿可以去店里买些奶酪和饼干，如果她愿意，甚至还可以买些沙丁鱼。她在阿姆斯特德家里只喝了一杯咖啡，吃了一块玉米面包。尽管阿姆斯特德劝她多吃点，可她别的什么也没有吃，丽娜心想：“我吃饭时挺有礼貌的。”她的双手放在布包上，清楚里面有钱。她又想起了那杯咖啡，还有那一小块怪味面包，心中便一阵自豪：“我像优雅的女士一样吃饭，像她们一样旅行。可现在如果我愿意的话，我还可以买沙丁鱼吃。”

丽娜似乎沉浸在起伏的道路上，而那群蹲着的男人正慢慢吐着痰，

偷偷望着她，以为她正在思念那个男人和即将出世的“小麻烦”。实际上，丽娜的脑海中正经历着一场并不激烈的斗争，她在和那片热衷的土地所赐予的谨慎做斗争。这次，她胜利了。她站起来，认真而又略显笨拙地走着，在男人们灼灼的目光中走进店铺，店员跟在后面。丽娜心想“我要买”。就是在点奶酪和甜点时，她都在想“我要买”。丽娜大声喊道：“一盒沙丁鱼。”她把沙丁鱼说成了“酸丁鱼”。“五分钱一盒的。”

店员回答道：“我们没有五分钱的酸丁鱼。”“酸丁鱼十五分钱一盒。”他也把沙丁鱼说成了酸丁鱼。

丽娜沉默了一阵，又问：“你们有什么五分钱一罐的东西吗？”

“别的没有，只有黑鞋油。我想你是不会要的。那也不能吃。”

“那我就买十五分钱的吧。”说着，丽娜解开包袱和扎紧的布袋。想解开袋子上的那些结可得费些工夫，可她还是耐心地把它们挨个儿解开了。丽娜付了账，又把袋子和包袱系好，拿起买好的沙丁鱼。当她出现在门廊处时，一辆马车停在台阶下，座位上坐着一个男人。

“这辆马车要去镇上。”人们告诉她，“他会带你去那儿。”

马车慢慢走着，稳稳地行驶在洒满阳光的广袤而寂寥的大地上，仿佛这一切都与匆匆的时光无关。从瓦尔纳店铺到杰弗逊镇有十二英里。丽娜问道：“我们能在晚饭前赶到吗？”

车夫啐了一口，说道：“说不准。”

显然，车夫从没瞧过她一眼。即使在她上车时也没有去看她。同样，丽娜也没有留意他。这时，丽娜仍然头也没抬：“我猜，您常去杰弗逊镇。”

车夫答道：“有时候去。”马车嘎吱嘎吱地走着。田野和树林似乎总是悬在半空，时静时动，海市蜃楼般迅速变换着。不过，马车还是走了出去。

“我想您不知道杰弗逊镇上有个叫卢卡斯·伯奇的人吧？”

“伯奇？”

“我正要去那儿见他。他在一家刨木厂工作。”

“不知道，”车夫说道，“我不认识他。不过，杰弗逊镇有好多人我都不认识。或许他在那儿。”

“说实话，我希望他在那里。旅行真是一件烦人的事儿啊。”

车夫头也没抬地说：“你走了多远来找他？”

“我从亚拉巴马州来。挺远的。”

车夫没有看她，只是漫不经心地问：“你怀着孩子，家人怎么能让你出门？”

“我父母过世了。我和哥哥生活在一起。是我自己决定出来的。”

“明白了。他带信儿让你来杰弗逊镇的吧。”

丽娜没有回答。车夫从遮阳帽下看到了她沉静的侧面。马车不停地缓缓向前行驶，红色的道路在骡子沉闷的步子下，在嘎吱嘎吱的车轮下，不紧不慢地向前延伸。太阳高高地挂在头顶，遮阳帽的影子落在她的膝盖上。丽娜抬起头看着太阳，说：“我想这会儿该吃饭了。”车夫瞟

见她取出奶酪、饼干和沙丁鱼。丽娜把食物递给车夫。

车夫说：“我什么都不想吃。”

“您别嫌弃，跟我一起吃吧。”

“我不想吃，你自己吃吧。”

丽娜开始吃起来。她一口一口慢慢地吃着，津津有味地吮吸着手指上的沙丁鱼油。过了一会儿，她也不吃了。虽说不是突然停住的，却也是静静地停止不动了。正在咀嚼的下颌也不动了，手里拿着咬了一口的饼干，脸庞略微向下，两眼空洞，仿佛她听到了远方的什么声音，这声音又似乎来自体内。她面无血色，全身奔腾的血液似乎都已流尽。她静静地坐在车上，侧耳倾听，感受着古老大地的躁动，没有丝毫的恐惧和紧张。她唇齿未启，心中暗想：“至少是双胞胎。”阵痛过后，她继续吃起来。马车并未止步，时间也未停脚。马车爬上最后一座山，两人望见了炊烟。

车夫说：“杰弗逊镇。”

“哦，我想说，”丽娜说道，“我们快到了，是吗？”

这会儿，车夫却没有去听她在说什么。他目视前方，越过山谷，朝对面山岭的城镇望去。顺着他用鞭子指示的方向，丽娜看见两道烟柱：一道是从高耸的烟囱中冒出的滚滚浓烟，另一道高高的黄色烟柱显然是从城镇那边的一片树林中升起的。“那儿有房子着火了，”车夫说，“看见没？”

这下轮到丽娜充耳不闻了。“噢，噢，”她说，“我上路才四个星期，这会儿就已经到了杰弗逊镇。天哪，我可真能走啊！”

邦奇记得，那件事发生在三年前的一个星期五的早上，一群正在刨木棚里干活的男人抬起头，看见一个陌生人站在那儿望着他们。他们不知道这个人来了多久，看起来他像个流浪汉，但又不像流浪汉。他的鞋子沾满了灰尘，裤子上也满是泥土，不过裤子却是质地考究的哗叽料子，笔直的裤缝，衬衫上虽然也有不少灰尘，可还能辨认出这是一件白衬衫。他还系了一条领带，一项崭新的硬边草帽骄傲而邪恶地耸立在脑袋上，帽子下面是一张面无表情的脸。即使衣着破烂，看上去他也还是不像个地道的流浪汉。不过，他绝对无依无靠，没有哪个城镇属于他，没有一条街道、一堵墙、一寸土地是他的家。而且，他也时刻牢记着这一点，似乎已经把它们打造成了自己冷酷、孤傲的标志。正如人们后来所说：“他好像刚刚倒霉，而且又不愿继续倒霉下去，可他又不愿去思考到底怎样才能重新站起来。”他是个年轻人。拜伦看见他站在那儿，端详着工人们身穿被汗水浸透的工作服。他嘴角叼着香烟，阴沉着的脸上满是不屑的神情，脑袋稍稍歪向一边，以便避开香烟冒出的烟雾。过了一会儿，他手也没抬就把香烟从嘴里吐了出来，转身朝工厂办公室走去。身穿工装裤的工人们一脸困惑，愤懑地望着他的背影。“咱得把他扔进刨床里，”工头说，“说不定那样就会刨掉他脸上那股劲儿。”

工人们并不知道他是谁。以前也没有人见过他，“给别人使那样的脸色可是件冒险的事。”有人说道，“要是忘了这一点，遇到不喜欢看的人可就麻烦了。”不一会儿，工人们放过了他，至少不再谈及他。他们回到呼呼转动的皮带和刺啦刺啦的车杠间。然而，不到十分钟，工厂总管走进来，身后跟着那个陌生人。

“给他派活儿，”总管告诉工头，“他说他会用铲子，那就派他去木屑堆干活吧。”

工棚里的工人虽然都没有停下手中的活儿，但都在观察这个陌生人——他身上那身城里人穿的衣服已沾满泥土，阴沉的脸上露出一副忍无可忍的表情，看上去冷漠而不可一世。工头迅速扫了他一眼，眼神和大家一样冰冷。“就穿这身衣服干活儿？”

“那是他的事儿，”总管说道，“我又没雇他的衣服。”

“好吧，你不介意他穿什么的话，我也无所谓。”工头说道，“好了，先生，去那儿拿把铁锹，跟大伙儿铲木屑吧。”

新来的家伙一声不吭地转过身。众人看着他走过去，消失在木屑堆旁。过了一会儿，他拿起铁锹开始干活儿。工头和总管站在门口聊天儿。他们分开后，工头回来说：“他叫克里斯默斯。”

有人问：“叫什么？”

“克里斯默斯。”

“是个外地人吗？”

“你以前听说过有白人男的叫克里斯默斯吗？”工头问道。

“从没听过有谁叫这个名儿。”另一个人回答道。

拜伦记得这是他第一次明白：要是别人能及时领悟的话，名字不只是代号而已，还能预示一个人的将来。在他看来，大家听到这个名字前，谁都没有特别注意过这个陌生人。可一旦听见他的名字，仿佛这个

声音里有些东西在努力暗示人们该对他有所期待。而且他自身就带着一种无法逃避的警示，就像花朵会散发香气，响尾蛇会发出声响一样，只不过没人有足够的智力去领会这一点。人们发现，他在那个星期五的其余时间里一直打着领带，戴着草帽，穿着笔挺的裤子。人们猜测他那个地方的人就是穿成这样干活儿的。不过，也有人说：“他今晚会上换衣服的。明早来上工时就不会穿这种节日盛装了。”

星期六早上，迟来的工人们在开工哨声吹响前赶了过来，急忙问道：“那家伙在哪儿？”另外一些人用手一指。新来的那个人正独自站在木屑堆下，身边放着铁锹。他还穿着昨天那身衣服，戴着那顶盛气凌人的帽子，抽着香烟。“我们来的时候他已经在那儿了，”早些时候赶到的工人说，“就像现在那样站着，甚至好像一宿没睡。”

陌生人没和任何人说话，而工人们也没打算理会他。不过，人们都注意到他站在那里，踏实的背影稳稳地挥动着胳膊。（他心怀不满却又极力克制，干得还不错。）中午时分，除了拜伦外，其他人今天都没带午饭，都开始收拾东西准备下工，等到星期一再来。拜伦拿着饭盒独自一人走向水泵房，这是工人们平时吃饭的地方，拜伦坐下来。接着，什么东西吸引了他的眼球。他抬起头，看见不远处那个新来的工人正斜靠着一根柱子，抽着烟。拜伦知道，从他进门那一刻开始，这个人就一直站在那里，而且也没打算走开。更糟糕的是，他可能故意站在那里，却无视拜伦的存在，仿佛拜伦也不过是一根柱子而已。拜伦问道：“你难道不准备歇一会儿吗？”

这个人喷出一口烟，盯着拜伦。他面容枯槁，脸色像一张硬邦邦、铺得平整的羊皮纸。不是说他的皮肤像羊皮纸，而是他本身就像把头扔进了死板、规整的模子里，然后又放在熊熊燃烧的火炉里烘烤锻造过似的。这个人问：“加班多少钱？”这下，拜伦明白了，难怪他会穿着节日

礼服干活儿，而且昨天和今天都没有带午饭，中午也没和大伙儿一起收工。对此，拜伦确信无疑，就像这个人亲口说了一样，他口袋里没有半分钱，这两三天就全靠抽烟挨日子。这时，拜伦的想法完全体现在了他的动作上——把饭盒递了过去。然而，没等他完成这个动作，那个男人仍旧懒散、轻蔑地转过脸去，从香烟弥散的烟雾中瞟了一眼递上的饭盒，说：“我不饿！留着那脏东西你自己吃吧！”

星期一早上，拜伦证明了自己的猜测是对的。那个人穿着崭新的工作服，拎着一袋食物。不过，中午的时候，他并没有和其他人一样蹲在水泵房里，他的脸上仍旧是那副神情。“甭管他，”工头说，“西蒙没有雇他的衣服，更没有雇他的脸色。”

拜伦心想：西蒙也没有雇他的舌头。至少，克里斯默斯没有这么想，当然也没有说话。他没有和任何人说话，甚至六个月后他仍然是一声不吭。没有人知道下班后他在干什么。偶尔在晚饭后，他的工友们会在镇中心广场碰到他，但克里斯默斯却像从来都不认识对方一样。每当这时，他总是头戴崭新的帽子，下身穿笔挺的裤子，嘴角叼着香烟，脸前烟雾缭绕。没有人知道他住在哪里，晚上在哪里过夜。不过，偶尔有人会看见他沿城边一条经过密林的小道走着，似乎他住在那条路的附近。

这些不是拜伦现在对他的了解，那时他就知道，而且都是他亲耳所闻，亲眼所见。当时，没有人知道克里斯默斯的住所，只知道他在刨木厂里干些黑人才干的活儿，谁也不知道他背地里到底在干什么。如果不是另一个陌生人布朗的出现，也许一直都没人能解开这个谜。然而，一旦布朗提到克里斯默斯，便会有十几个人承认，在这两年多的时间里，都曾经向他买过威士忌酒，而且都是在深夜单独去树林中找的他，见面地点距镇子两英里，在一座殖民地时期的古老庄园后面。庄园里住着一

位名叫伯顿的中年未婚女人，然而，即便是那些向他买过酒的人也不知道，克里斯默斯其实就住在伯顿小姐的庄园后面，那里有间专供黑人住的小木屋，而且他已经住了两年多。

当时是大约半年前的一天，工厂里来了一位和克里斯默斯一样找工作的陌生人。这个人身材高大，也是个年轻人，穿着一件工作服，看上去这件衣服已经穿在身上有些日子了，而且他似乎也没带什么行李。拜伦看着他，心想：这个人挺机灵，长相还不错，嘴角有一道小小的白色伤疤，仿佛他为此在镜子面前还费了不少工夫。他常常快速地甩头，从肩膀上朝后瞥去，就像骡子走在汽车前面扭头时的样子。然而，拜伦觉得他这样做并不是出于警惕，而是他自信和勇敢的表现。他似乎在不断坚持和重申，自己不会畏惧背后发生的任何事情。拜伦相信，当工头穆尼看见这位新手时，他和自己的看法一样。穆尼说：“嗨，西蒙雇了这家伙，算是什么都没捞着，连条大短裤都没有。”

“就是，”拜伦说，“他让我想起大街上乱跑的汽车，车里装着收音机，你却听不清它在说什么。那辆车也没什么特定目标。要是走近一瞅，里面连个人都没有。”

“对，”穆尼说，“他让我想起了马。这匹马不是差劲儿，而是根本没用。在牧场里看上去还不错，可等你拿着缰绳走到牧场门口时，它却赖在泉水边的低洼里不走了。它跑得挺快，可一到关键时刻，蹄子却派不上用场了。”

拜伦又说：“可说不准母马会喜欢它。”

“那倒是，”穆尼说，“我想他甚至不会给母马造成任何永久性伤害。”

新来的工人和克里斯默斯在木屑堆旁一起干活儿。他是个闲不住的人，逢人便说自己是谁，到过哪里。他说话时的语调和方式足以反映他的本性——胡编乱造、撒谎成性。因此，拜伦觉得根本没有人会相信他的名字和他说的话。人们没有理由说他不应该叫“布朗”，不过只要看他一眼，你就会明白，一旦他在生活中因为自己的愚蠢惹上了麻烦后，他就会改名换姓，还会因为改叫了“布朗”而满心欢喜，仿佛这个名字是个大发明似的。实际上，他没有理由非得叫什么名字，也没有必要非得有个名字，没有人关心这件事。正如拜伦所认为的那样，没有人（至少穿工装裤的工人们都不会）关心他来自哪里，要去哪里，会在这里逗留多久。因为不管他来自何方，去往何处，谁都知道他就像一只蝗虫一样，只会依靠这片土地为生，而且似乎这种状态他已经保持了很久。现在，他整个人像散了架一样，只剩轻飘飘的透明的躯壳了，没有目标，任凭风儿把它吹向哪里。

他是在干活，不过有些敷衍。拜伦觉得他身上连点儿高明的偷懒技巧都没有。因为要想偷懒的话，就连装病逃班也得有过人的本领。做其他任何事情都一样，甚至杀人越货都是这样。他必须有明确的特定目标，并要为此而努力，拜伦知道布朗不是这种人。大伙儿听说他来厂里第一个星期六的晚上就去了赌场，输掉了整整一个星期的工钱。拜伦对穆尼说：“真奇怪。我以为他别的干不了，掷骰子总该在行吧。”

“他？”穆尼说，“他连铲木屑这样简单的活儿都做不了，你怎么能指望他擅长干坏事儿呢？使铲子那样容易的事儿他都笨手笨脚的，掷骰子糊弄人那么难，他就更别说了。”穆尼又继续说道：“我估计没人会为他的一无是处感到难过。因为至少他什么事儿都干不了，这一点比克里斯默斯强。”

“是啊，”拜伦答道，“我想，对于懒人来说，什么都不做是最容易

办到的事。”

“我看他学坏倒是挺快，”穆尼说，“只要有人教就行。”

拜伦说：“嗯，迟早他会遇到那个人的。”穆尼和拜伦一起转过身，朝布朗和克里斯默斯所在的木屑堆看了一眼：一个人默默想着心事，粗暴地干着活儿；另一个高高扬起胳膊，有气无力地挥着铁锹，这样的动作连他自己也糊弄不了。

“我想也是，”穆尼又说，“不过，就算我想学坏，也绝不会跟他搭伴儿。”

和克里斯默斯一样，布朗来干活儿时也是穿着逛街才会穿的衣服。不过，和克里斯默斯不同的是，他好久没换衣服了。“也许哪个星期六晚上他会在赌场赢不少钱，足够买套新衣服，还能剩五十个硬币在口袋里叮叮当当响个不停。”穆尼说，“而且到星期一早上，我们就再也找不到他的踪影了。”然而，这个时候，布朗还是穿着那身来杰弗逊镇时就穿的工装裤和衬衫。星期六晚上他要么输个精光，要么赢点小钱，然后冲谁都傻傻地打招呼，就连和那些定期骗他钱的人都是有说有笑。后来有一天，他们听说布朗赢了六十美元。有人说：“这下好啦，这是咱最后一次见他了。”

“不一定，”穆尼说，“六十美元这个数不合适。要是十美元或五百美元的话，那你说对了。但六十的话应该不会。现在，他只会觉得能在这里混下去了，自己这一周总算没白干。”果然，他星期一来上工时，还是穿着那件工作服。工友们瞧见布朗和克里斯默斯站在木屑堆旁。打从布朗来这里干活那天起，他们就一直观察着他俩。克里斯默斯干活很卖力，慢慢将铁锹稳稳地插进木屑堆，仿佛他正在劈断一条埋在地里的

蛇（用穆尼的话说就是“或者是在砍人”），而布朗正斜靠着铲子，显然他正在给克里斯默斯讲述奇闻趣事，因为很快他就哈哈大笑起来，笑得前仰后合，可身边的克里斯默斯却一声不吭，不紧不慢地使着蛮力。过了一会儿，布朗想起了手中的工作，再次和克里斯默斯一起迅速开始干活，不过，他铲得却越来越少，到最后飞起的铁锹连木屑都没沾上。不一会儿，他又靠在了铁锹上，很明显他要把方才的故事讲完；而克里斯默斯似乎根本没有听到他在说什么。拜伦心想，这场景仿佛布朗远在一英里之外，又好像他正在用克里斯默斯完全听不懂的语言讲述。有时，星期六的晚上，人们会看到他俩一起结伴到镇上。克里斯默斯穿着整洁庄重的哗叽料裤子和白衬衫，戴一顶草帽，布朗则穿着他的新西装（这是一件褐色西装，上面还有红色的十字花纹，里面搭了一件色彩艳丽的衬衫，头上的帽子和克里斯默斯的一样，不过上面多了一根彩带）。布朗一路上有说有笑，大嗓门响彻云霄，回声飘荡在整个广场上，有点像教堂里从各个角落发出的那种毫无意义的声音。拜伦认为，布朗之所以这样做，似乎是想让每个人都知道他和克里斯默斯是好朋友。这时，克里斯默斯就会转过身，带着呆板、阴沉的表情，摆脱布朗干巴巴的说笑和招来的围观者。布朗紧随其后，仍旧不停地边笑边说。每到这个时候，其他工人就会说：“哦，下星期一他就不会回来上班了。”然而，每星期一他都照样回到工厂。而第一个不上班的人却是克里斯默斯。

克里斯默斯在工厂干了大约三年，在一个星期六的晚上不声不响地离开了，由布朗把这个消息带给了大家。工人们的年龄不等，已婚的、单身的，他们的宗教生活各不相同，但每个星期一的早上，他们都会认真甚至稍有些严肃地回到工作中。他们中的年轻人会在星期六晚上酗酒、赌博，甚至还不时地去孟菲斯寻欢作乐。然而，到了星期一早上，他们都会穿着干净的工装裤和衬衫平静而庄重地回到工作中，静静地等候开工哨响，然后开始静静地干活儿，仿佛他们仍然沉浸在安息日的气

氛中。于是，无论一个人在安息日做过什么，都会在星期一的早晨安静、整洁地回来干活，这已经成为人们共同遵守的合理信条。

这就是人们口中的布朗。星期一早上，他很可能还是穿着上周那身脏衣服，胡子拉碴地出现在大家面前。而且他会比以往更能唠叨，嗓门也更大，还会搞一些十来岁孩子才会玩的恶作剧。对于那些严肃的工人来说，这有些不像话，仿佛他是赤身裸体或酒气熏天地来干活一样不正常。布朗就是这样的形象。他在这个星期一的早上将会向大家宣布克里斯默斯辞工不干的新闻。布朗来得很晚，不过没关系；他没有刮胡子，这也不要紧。可他非常安静，有好一阵子，大家都没有注意到他的存在。要是以往早就有一半的人开始咒骂他了，有些人甚至是一本正经地骂他。上工哨声吹响时，布朗露面了。他径直走向木屑堆开始干活。他没有和任何人说话，甚至有人跟他打招呼，他都没有理会。后来，人们发现他独自一人站在那里，身边没有他的伙伴克里斯默斯。工头过来时，有人对他说：“哦，我看你少了个烧炉工的学徒。”

穆尼瞧了布朗一眼，看见他好像在铲鸡蛋一样慢吞吞地铲着木屑。穆尼啐了一口痰，干脆利落地说：“嗯，他发财太快了。这种芝麻小活儿留不住他。”

“发财？”另一个人问道。

“他俩中有一个发了财，”穆尼继续盯着布朗说道，“昨天我看见他俩开了一辆新车，他一”说着，穆尼朝布朗扬了一下头，“一开的车，那倒没什么奇怪的。奇怪的是今天竟然还会有一个回来干活儿。”

“呃，我想这个时候西蒙找人来代替他没什么困难。”另一个人说。

“他啥时候找人都不难。”穆尼答道。

“我看那家伙干得不错。”

“哦，”穆尼说，“我明白了，你说的是克里斯默斯。”

“那你在说谁？难道布朗也说不干了吗？”

“你以为他会一直待在这里干活，而另一个人成天开着那辆新车在镇上兜风？”

“哦，”另一个人看着布朗说，“搞不清楚他们从哪儿弄来的那辆车。”

“我不知道，”穆尼回答，“我想知道布朗是在中午辞工还是等到六点再走。”

“呃，”拜伦说道，“我要是能在这儿发财买辆车的话，我也会辞掉这份工作的。”

另外一两个人看着拜伦微微一笑。一个人说：“他们绝不是在这里发的财。”拜伦看了他一眼。另一个人又说：“我看拜伦只顾自己做好人，离大家伙儿越来越远了。”他们一起注视着拜伦。“布朗可能是你说的那种勤务员，克里斯默斯经常让人们跑到伯顿小姐家后面的树林里，还是在晚上。现在布朗直接给他们把东西带进城里。我还听说只要知道暗号，星期六晚上在任何一个巷子里，谁都能买到布朗从衣服里掏出的一品脱威士忌酒。”

“暗号是啥？”另一个人问，“六个马嚼子？”

拜伦一一望着他们：“真的吗？他们真在干那种事儿？”

“起码布朗在做。我不知道克里斯默斯在干啥。我不敢保证，但布朗绝对离克里斯默斯不远。老话常说的臭味相投嘛。”

“说得对，”另一个说，“我们没法儿知道克里斯默斯在哪儿，他不会像布朗一样穿着大短裤到处闲逛。”

穆尼望着布朗说道：“他用不着那样儿。”

穆尼说对了。他们发现布朗一直独自站在木屑堆下，直到中午收工哨声吹响，大伙儿都拿着自己的饭盒蹲在水泵房里开始吃午饭。布朗闷闷不乐地走进来，那副郁闷的表情像个受伤的小孩一样。他蹲在大家中间，双手悬在两膝间。布朗今天没有带午饭。

“你不打算吃饭吗？”有人问。

“脏兮兮的猪油桶里的冷饭？”布朗问道，“天刚刚亮就开工，像个黑鬼一样当牛做马累一天。中午休息一个小时，捧着铁罐里的冷猪食吃？”

“哼，有些人可能像老家的黑鬼一样干活呢。”穆尼说，“不过，黑鬼可不像白人干这种活儿一样能挨到中午哨声响起。”

然而，布朗似乎并没有听到穆尼在说什么，或者他压根儿没有去听。他阴沉着脸，双手下垂，蹲在那里。他好像什么都听不到，只有自己的声音在响：“傻子，那样干的人才是傻子。”

“那把铁锹又没拴住你。”穆尼说。

“你还真说对了。”布朗答道。

不一会儿，哨声又响起来。大家都回去干活儿了。人们注意到布朗也回到了木屑堆旁。他先挖了一会儿，然后渐渐放慢了速度，越来越慢，到最后简直像拿着一根赶车的马鞭一样紧紧地握着铁锹。人们发现他在跟自己讲话。有人说：“因为那儿没人跟他说话，他只好自言自语喽。”

“那倒不是，”穆尼说，“他是还没有说服自己。他没完全信服。”

“相信什么？”

穆尼回答：“相信他比我想的还要傻呀！”

第二天早晨，布朗没有露面。有人说：“今后找他就得上理发店了。”

“也说不准是理发店后面的巷子里。”另一个人说。

“我想咱还能见到他。”穆尼说，“他会来这里领他昨天的工钱。”

布朗的确来了。十一点左右，他出现了。他穿了一套新西服，头戴一顶草帽，走到工棚前停了下来，像三年前的克里斯默斯一样站在那里注视着工人们。他没有意识到自己仿佛被师傅附体一般，像个乖巧的弟子一样用心领悟了师傅的真传。不过，师傅当年是阴沉着脸，静静地像条蛇一样死命地盯着大家，而布朗却努力向四处张望，神气活现地摆着空架子，用快活而响亮的声音咬牙切齿地说道：“累死你们这群受罪的杂种！”

穆尼看了布朗一眼。这时，布朗收回了张牙舞爪的样子。“你没说我，”穆尼问道，“是吧？”

布朗那张善变的脸立即变换成一副众人熟悉的表情。拜伦心想：这张脸松松垮垮的，轻飘飘地长在他身上，变化起来当然易如反掌了。布朗回答：“我没跟你说话。”

“哦，我知道。”穆尼的语调非常轻快，“你说他们是杂种。”

立马又一个声音传来：“你是在说我吗？”

“我只是在跟自己说话。”布朗回答。

“嗨，你这辈子总算说了一次真话，”穆尼说道，“是说了一半的真话。要不要我凑到你耳朵跟前儿，说出另一半？”

这是人们最后一次在工厂见到布朗。不过，拜伦现在知道、也记得，那辆新车不久就被撞坏了挡泥板，而且经常在城里漫无目的地转悠。布朗懒洋洋地手握方向盘，一副闲散放荡、招摇过市的架势，惹人生厌。克里斯默斯偶尔和他在一起，不过不太常见。而且，现在他们在干什么勾当已经不再是秘密。年轻的男人们，甚至连小男孩中间都在疯传：只要看见布朗，就能搞到威士忌酒。全镇都在期待，有朝一日布朗从雨衣里掏出一瓶酒卖给密探时，将会被当场抓获。人们还不能确定克里斯默斯是否与这种勾当有关，不过没人相信仅凭布朗一个人的头脑就能赚钱，就算是贩私酒这营生都难。而且，有些人还知道，克里斯默斯和布朗都住在伯顿庄园那儿的小木屋里。不过，就算这些人不清楚伯顿小姐是否知道此事，即便她不知情，他们也不会告诉她。伯顿小姐是位中年妇女，独自一人住在一幢大房子里。自从出生起，她就一直住在那里，不过仍然算是陌生人、异乡人，因为她的先辈是在南北战争后的重建时期从北方迁来的。她是一个支持黑人的美国佬。她的祖父和兄弟支持黑奴在州政府拥有选举权，因此被一位前农奴主所杀害。尽管现在距

他们当年在广场遇害已经过了六十年，但至今镇里镇外仍在谈论着她与黑人之间的奇怪关系。而且，历史的阴霾依然笼罩着她和她的住所：那是一个阴暗、怪异、令人恐怖的地方。尽管她只不过是一介女流，她的祖先也只不过是镇上的先民们有理由或自认为有理由憎恨和惧怕过的人，可阴影却无法消退，双方的后人都摆脱不了彼此先人鬼魂的缠绕，他们之间充斥着鲜血淋漓的古老幽灵，以及昔日的恐惧和愤怒。

假如曾经爱过，无论男女都会说拜伦·邦奇已经将爱情遗忘，或者更像是这么回事儿：她——爱情忘记了邦奇。这个小个子男人已经度过了三十个年头，在那家刨木厂工作了七年，每星期工作六天。他的工作是往刨木床里塞木料。星期六下午他也在那里，独自一人干活儿。其他工人都穿着节日礼服，系着领带去镇上，漫无目的地尽情享受劳动之余的休闲时光。

在这样的星期六下午，他因为无法独自操作刨木床，只好将刨好的木料装上货车，一直干到想象中的收工哨声响起。其他工人，镇上的人，或者镇上其他能记起、想起他的人都以为他是为了多赚钱才加班。或许这也是原因，人们通常对自己的伙伴都知之甚少。在每个人眼中，其他人正在做的事情是自己只有发疯时才会做的。事实上，镇上唯一一个人可以笃定地谈及邦奇，而且镇上的人们也不知道这个人和邦奇有来往，因为他们只在晚上见面交谈。此人名叫海托华。二十五年前，他是当地主要教堂之一、也许是最重要的教堂的牧师。只有他才知道，每周六晚上邦奇在想象中的收工哨声响起（或是邦奇那块大银表的指针指在哨声响起的那一刻）后的去向。比尔德太太是邦奇的房东，她只知道每星期六晚上，邦奇会在刚过六点的时候进屋，洗澡，换上一身廉价的哗叽料西服，吃过晚饭后到屋后自己亲手盖的畜棚里套上骡子，然后骑上骡子离开。但比尔德太太并不清楚邦奇去了哪里，只有海托华牧师知道

邦奇赶着骡子去了三十英里外的一座乡村教堂。他会在星期日为那里的唱诗班领唱，唱诗活动要持续一整天，然后在午夜左右，他会再次套上骡子，整夜慢悠悠地骑着骡子稳稳地赶回杰弗逊镇。星期一早晨，上工哨声吹响时，他会穿着干净的工装裤和衬衫出现在刨木厂。比尔德太太只知道每周六晚饭后到周一早晨这段时间内，邦奇的房间和他亲手盖的畜棚都是空的。只有海托华清楚邦奇的去向和行踪，因为邦奇每周都会拜访海托华。这位昔日的牧师独自一人住在一座小屋里，这座没有漆过的房子狭小而昏暗，毫不起眼。房间里充满了男人的气息和臭味，镇上的人们认为它很不体面。他俩坐在牧师的书房里，静静地交谈着：一个身材瘦小，长相普通，全然不知自己在工友眼中是谜一样的人物；另一个五十多岁的男人早已被自己的教会所抛弃。

后来，拜伦谈恋爱了。然而，他的爱情违背了严苛、善妒的村民的传统，因为他的爱人并不是贞洁少女。事情发生在一个星期六的下午，拜伦一个人待在刨木厂，两英里外的一座房屋还在燃烧，滚滚黄烟像地平线上耸立的擎天柱一样直冲天际。中午时，浓烟从树林上空升起，收工哨声还没有吹响，工人们也还没有离开。他们看到远处着火时，说道：“我看邦奇今天也要收工了，那儿有场大火可以免费看喽。”

“真是场大火啊，”另一个人说道，“什么着火了？除了伯顿小姐家的房子，我真想不起哪里有什么能烧这么大的火。”

“说不定就是，”又有人说道，“我爸说过，他记得五十年前大伙儿就说那房子该烧，用小块儿肥嘟嘟的人肉引火更好。”

“说不准是你爸溜进去放的火呢。”另一个人说道。众人哈哈大笑起来。接着他们又开始干活儿。等候哨声的同时，他们还不时停下来瞅瞅那根大烟柱。过了一会儿，一辆满载原木的卡车驶进来，他们向这位从

镇里来的卡车司机打听消息。

“伯顿，”司机说道，“是，是这个名字。镇上有人说警察已经去了。”

“哦，我估计瓦特·肯尼迪喜欢看着火，即便必须得佩戴徽章去他也乐意。”一个人说道。

“从广场的火情来看，他想抓谁都不难。”

午间哨声响起，其他人都已离开。拜伦正在吃午饭，旁边放着打开的银表，指针指到一点时，他开始继续干活。拜伦独自站在堆满木料的棚里，肩上铺着一块折叠的麻袋片当垫肩，垫肩上扛了一摞木板，要是换了别人准会说抬不起、扛不动，而拜伦却稳稳当当地在木料棚和卡车间不停地忙碌着。这时，丽娜·格罗夫从他身后走进来，脸上挂满了沉静而期待的微笑。她已经张开了嘴，一个名字呼之欲出。拜伦听到丽娜进来的声音，转过身来，看见她脸上的表情逐渐退却，就像一颗石子投入了清泉，涟漪慢慢散开。

“你不是他。”丽娜的笑容消失了，像小孩子一样惊讶而郑重地说道。

“是的，夫人，”拜伦停下脚步，平稳地扛着木板半转过身子说道，“我想我不是。您要找哪位？”

“卢卡斯·伯奇。人们告诉我——”

“卢卡斯·伯奇？”

“人们告诉我说可以在这儿找到他。”丽娜平静地表露了自己的疑

虑，目不转睛地注视着拜伦，仿佛认定这个人在骗自己，“我快到小镇时，人们一直在说邦奇而不是伯奇，可我只是以为他们念错了，要不就是我自己没听清。”

“是的，夫人，”拜伦说，“没错，是邦奇，拜伦·邦奇。”拜伦仍然稳稳地扛着那摞木板，望着丽娜，望着她膨胀的身子，臃肿的腰腹，还有脚上那双满是泥土的笨重男鞋。“您是伯奇太太吧？”

丽娜没有立即回答。她站在门口，急切地注视着拜伦，没有一丝惊恐。她眼神里略带些困惑，还有些怀疑。丽娜长着一双碧蓝的眼睛，然而，眼里却映出她在怀疑对方欺骗她的影子。“一路上他们都说卢卡斯在杰弗逊镇的刨木厂干活儿。好多人都这样告诉我。我来了杰弗逊镇后，他们又告诉了我刨木厂的地址。我在镇上打听卢卡斯的消息，人们都说‘也许你说的是邦奇’，可我以为他们只是把名字念错了。这不要紧。即使人们说这个人的皮肤不怎么黑，我还是觉得没关系。你不会说不知道这儿有个叫卢卡斯·伯奇的人吧？”

拜伦放下肩上的木板，整整齐齐地码到一块儿，便于再次扛起。“是的，夫人，这儿没有。卢卡斯·伯奇不在这里。凡在这儿干活儿的人我都认识，说不定他在镇上的其他地方干活儿，或者在别的刨木厂。”

“镇上还有其他刨木厂吗？”

“不，夫人。倒是有些锯木厂，而且还不少。”

丽娜望着拜伦：“一路上人们告诉我伯奇在一家刨木厂工作。”

“我在这儿没听说有谁叫这个名字的，”拜伦说，“我叫邦奇，我也

不记得有谁叫邦奇。”

丽娜依旧看着拜伦，她的神情表明她并不关心未来，只是怀疑眼前这个人。过了一会儿，她吐了一口气，这不是叹息，只是平静地做了一次深呼吸。“好吧。”她说。丽娜环视四周，看见了锯好的木材和整齐堆放的木板，“我想我得休息一会儿。镇里那些街道不好走，真累。从镇上到这儿好像比我离开亚拉巴马州这一路都要累。”说着，她朝低矮的木板堆走去。

“等一下。”拜伦说道。他几乎是冲上前去，同时把肩上的麻布垫取下来。这个女人正要坐下时，拜伦把麻布铺在木板上说道：“这样坐着舒服些。”

“啊，您真是太好了。”丽娜坐下来说道。

拜伦说：“我觉得这样会舒服些。”他从口袋里掏出银表看了一眼，然后在木板堆的另一头也坐了下来。“我看就算五分钟吧。”

“休息五分钟？”

“从你进来到现在算五分钟，好像那会儿我就没有干活儿。每周六傍晚我自己计时。”

“每停一分钟您都要记下来吗？别人怎么知道您停工了呢？歇息几分钟不会有什么影响，不是吗？”

“我认为休息就不能拿工钱，”拜伦说道，“你说你从亚拉巴马州来？”

这回轮到丽娜讲给他听了。丽娜笨重的身子坐在麻布垫上，面容沉

静而安详。拜伦静静地望着她。她告诉拜伦的远比自己知道的还要多。因为这四个星期以来，她像季节变换一样不慌不忙、无忧无虑地向陌生人不断重复着自己的故事。而在拜伦脑海里也出现了一个惨遭背叛和抛弃的年轻女人的形象，不过这个女人甚至还不明白自己已被抛弃，而且不知道自己实际上并不姓伯奇。

“不，我想我不认识他。”终于，拜伦说道，“总之，今天傍晚，这里除了我没有别人。其他人好像都在那边看大火。”说着，拜伦指了指树林那边静静地冲天耸立的黄色烟柱。

“没到镇上前，我们在马车上就看见了。”丽娜说，“火势真够大的。”

“着火的是一幢老房子。很久以前房子就在那儿啦，里面没有别人，只有一个女人独自住着。我想现在镇上肯定会有人说这是她的报应。她是个北方佬，她家人在南方重建时搬到这里来煽动黑鬼。她家有两个人还因为这事儿送了命。人们说到现在她还和黑鬼混在一起，他们生病时，她也去看望，好像那些人也是白人似的。她不需要厨师，因为她得找个黑人厨子。大伙儿都不愿去她那儿，除了一个人之外。”丽娜看着拜伦，静静地听着。此时，拜伦没有看丽娜，而是稍稍朝旁边望去。“听人说也可能是两个人，但愿他俩在那儿能及时帮她搬出家具。说不定他们早就帮忙了。”

“也许谁在那里？”

“两个叫乔的人。他们住在那边的某个地方。乔·克里斯默斯和乔·布朗。”

“乔·克里斯默斯？好奇怪的名字。”

“他本人也很奇怪。”拜伦的视线再次从她那张专注的脸上移开，“他的搭档叫布朗，也挺有意思。他以前也在这里干活儿，不过现在他俩都不干了。我想这对谁来说都没什么损失。”

丽娜坐在麻布垫上，安详地听着，非常入神。他们好像那种在安息日下午身着节日盛装的两个人一样，在村舍前绿油油的草地上，坐在藤椅里聊着天儿。“他的朋友也叫乔？”

“没错，夫人。是叫乔·布朗。我倒觉得他叫这名字挺合适。一听到有人叫乔·布朗，你立马就能想到一个整天喋喋不休的家伙，爱说爱笑，嗓门还挺大。所以，我看这名字不错。虽然乔·布朗念起来太快、太简单，不像个真名儿。不过我看他就叫乔·布朗，准没问题。要是靠嘴赚钱的话，这会儿他早就成这个厂子的老板了。大伙儿好像都喜欢他，他也和克里斯默斯相处得不错。”

丽娜注视着拜伦。她还是那么沉静，不过现在更加庄重了，她的眼神是那么严肃，那么认真。“他和另一个现在做什么呢？”

“我猜没干啥他们不该干的事。至少，他们还没有被抓住。布朗以前在这里干活儿，成天说笑，多少算干了点活儿。不过，克里斯默斯走得早。他们一起住在那边，就是房子着火的那边。我也听说了他们靠什么为生，可那跟我没关系，况且别人的传言也不一定是真的，所以我觉得我也不比别人知道得多。”

丽娜望着拜伦，眼睛都不眨一下。“那他说自己叫布朗。”这句话本来听起来像个问题，可她并没有等对方给出答案。“你听说了他们的什么故事？”

“我可不想说别人的坏话。”拜伦说，“我觉得我不应该说太多。说

实话，一个人一旦不工作了，肯定会学坏。”

“是什么呢？”丽娜问道。她坐在那里没有动，声音也是那么安静，不过拜伦早已爱上了她，虽然他自己还没有意识到。拜伦虽然没有看她，但已经感受到丽娜正用严肃而执着的眼神凝视着自己的脸和嘴。

“有人说他们在贩卖威士忌，就藏在着火的那个房子里。而且还有人说，有个星期六的晚上，布朗在镇中心喝得烂醉，差点把不该说的给秃噜出来，说什么他和克里斯默斯有天晚上在孟菲斯或是在快到孟菲斯的一条黑漆漆的路上，带着一支枪，也许是两支。幸亏克里斯默斯及时赶到，才制止了布朗，把他带走了。总之，那是克里斯默斯不想让别人知道的事，布朗要不是因为喝醉也不至于糊涂到说出来。这就是我所听说的，我自己根本不在场。”拜伦刚抬起头来，不等和丽娜的目光相遇就赶紧低下头。他似乎早已预感到一件不可逆转、不可改变的事，他本以为星期六的下午，自己一个人待在刨木厂里，不会有伤害别人的机会找上门来。

丽娜问：“那个人长什么样？”

“克里斯默斯？喔——”

“我不是说克里斯默斯。”

“噢，布朗。是，他是个高高大大的年轻小伙儿，皮肤黝黑；女人们都说他长得帅，我听好多人都这样说。他爱说笑，喜欢热闹，喜欢和大伙儿开玩笑。不过，我……”突然，他停止了说话，他不敢抬头看她，但能够感觉到她那冷静的目光稳稳地投射在他的脸上。

“乔·布朗，”丽娜说，“是不是他的嘴角有一小块白色的伤疤？”

拜伦不敢抬头看她，只是坐在木板堆上：为时已晚，他恨不得把自己的舌头咬成两段。

他从书房窗户望出去，可以看见那条街道。街道不算远，因为草坪并不宽，这是一块小小的草坪，上面种有几株低矮的枫树。他的褐色房子没有刷过漆，也只是一座毫不起眼的小平房而已。花繁叶茂的紫薇花、紫丁香和蜀葵几乎遮住了整个屋子，好在书房窗户那里还有一处空隙，可以让他望见街道。屋子如此隐蔽，以至于街角处的灯光都很难照到它。

从窗口望出去，他还能看到那个被自己称为纪念碑的招牌。招牌并不高，立在院子的角落里，正对街道。这块招牌有三英尺宽，十八英寸高，是一块规则的长方形牌子，正面朝向来往的行人，背面则对着他。不过，他用不着念上面的字，因为招牌是他自己亲手用斧头和锯子整整齐齐地做成的，他还工工整整地上面书写了自己的辉煌业绩。那是在他意识到自己必须开始为衣食住行赚钱时做的。他离开神学院时，手头还有一小笔父亲留下的钱，不过自从他在教会工作后，每季度一收到支票就立马捐给孟菲斯的一家少女感化院。后来，他丢掉了教会的职务，也失去了宗教信仰。而在他看来，这辈子所经历过的最痛苦的事情莫过于给她们写信，说自己从此以后只能捐赠以往金额的一半，这件事远比丢掉工作、蒙受耻辱更加痛苦。

这样一来，他只好将一半的收入继续捐给那些女孩。其实，整笔收入也不过够他勉强糊口而已。当时他说：“幸好我还能干别的。”因此，他亲手精心制作并书写了招牌，巧妙地将碎玻璃混在油漆里，于是一到晚上，在街灯的照射下，招牌上的字迹便熠熠生辉，仿佛圣诞夜闪烁的光芒一般。

盖尔·海托华牧师，神学博士

主讲艺术课

手绘圣诞卡&周年纪念卡

冲洗底片

然而，这已是多年前的事了。海托华并没有招到艺术学生，也没有做多少圣诞卡片，更没有冲洗过几张底片，就连那些碎玻璃也早已从褪色的字迹上掉了下来。虽然字迹依稀可辨，但镇上的人们和海托华一样，都用不着去辨认它们。不过，偶尔有黑人女仆领着她照看的白人小孩在那里闲逛时，百无聊赖、目不识丁的她会像个白痴一样大声地拼读这些字母；有时碰巧会有陌生人闯进这条僻静、人迹罕至的街巷，停下脚步来念一念这块招牌，抬起头来看一看这座褐色的、隐匿的小屋，然后再继续赶路；有时，陌生人会跟镇上的熟人提及这块招牌。“哦，是的，”他的朋友会说，“海托华。他一个人住在那里。他作为长老会¹的牧师来到这里，可他的妻子给他造成了不好的影响，她经常溜到孟菲斯去鬼混。那是大约二十五年前，就是他刚到这里的时候，有些人说他知道这件事，是他自己无能或不愿满足妻子才造成的，还说他清楚妻子的所作所为。后来，在一个星期六的晚上，那个女人在孟菲斯的住处或是什么地方让人给杀了。各家报纸都报道了这件事，所以他不得不辞掉教会的工作，但他出于某种原因并没有离开杰弗逊镇。为了他，为了杰弗逊镇，也为了教会，大家都想让他离开。你瞧，这件事对教会的影响真的非常糟糕：外地人来了都会听说此事，可他又拒绝离开。可他就是不想走。他独自一个人住的那个地方以前可是条主要街道，现在的地位起码没那么重要了。就这么回事儿。不过，后来他没有再给任何人添麻烦，我想绝大多数人也已经把他给忘了。他自己做家务。我不记得这二

十五年里谁进过他的屋子。我们都不明白他为什么要留在这里。可是无论哪个黄昏或傍晚，你经过这里时都能看到他坐在窗前。就坐在那儿。除了偶尔看见他在花园里干活儿以外，人们很难见到他。”

因此，他亲手制作、亲笔书写的那块招牌对他的意义远不如对整个杰弗逊的重要。他已经不再觉得那是一块标识、一条信息。除了黄昏时坐在书房的窗前看到这块牌子外，他简直已经忘记了它的存在，即便是那个时候，在他看来也不过是一块熟悉的低矮的长方形板子，低低地站在街道尽头窄窄的草坪上，此外没有任何意义。或许，它跟那些低矮的枫树、灌木丛一样，都生长在这块悲凉而又无法逃离的大地上，也都没有得到海托华的任何恩泽，也没有遭受过什么迫害。他现在甚至都不会去瞧它一眼，就像他对那些树一样视而不见。尽管他会透过树丛，望着那条街道，等候夜幕的降临，等待夜晚来临的那一刻。他身后的房屋、书房都逐渐暗下来，他在等待那一瞬间，一切光线都将消失在天幕。暗夜来临，只剩下白天储存好能量的树叶和小草勉强地发出一丝丝微光，为被黑暗主宰的大地闪耀一丝光芒。此刻，马上，海托华心想，马上就好。他默默想着：生命中依然存在荣耀和自豪。

七年前，拜伦第一次来到杰弗逊镇，看到了那块写有 盖尔·海托华 D.D.2教授艺术课程、制作圣诞卡片、冲洗底片 的招牌，心中纳闷：D.D.是什么意思？于是他向别人请教，得到的答案是“倒霉透顶”。人们告诉他，盖尔·海托华的确在杰弗逊镇倒了大霉。海托华离开神学院后，拒绝任何职位的邀请，直奔杰弗逊镇。为了能来杰弗逊镇，他动用了各方关系。他和年轻的妻子一下火车，就早已按捺不住兴奋的心情，向教会的支柱型人物，那些年长的男男女女，诉说自从决定做牧师起就一心想来杰弗逊镇；他还兴高采烈地谈及联络各关系所写的书信，为生怕不能来此工作而产生的担心，以及为了能来这里所动用的各种影响。

在镇上的人听来，他就像一个贩马商人，在捞到一笔好生意后扬扬得意地炫耀着。或许在那些长老心里也是这样，他们心怀疑虑，冷漠而惊诧地听着他那滔滔不绝的讲述，仿佛他关心的只是在这个小镇上安家，而不是为教会以及教会成员服务；仿佛他也并不在意那些人，那些活生生的人，是否乐意接受他。他太年轻了，那些老头、老太太就告诉他一些教会中严肃的事情、教会的职责和他肩负的责任，想以此浇灭他不知天高地厚的喜悦之情。拜伦还得知那位年轻的牧师在工作六个月后仍然兴奋不已，依旧不停地絮叨着内战和他的祖父——一个在战争期间被杀害的骑兵，以及格兰特将军³的军需物资被烧的故事，直到后来听众都觉得索然无味时，他还在喋喋不休。人们告诉拜伦，这个人在讲道坛上也是这样的说话方式，也是这般疯狂不羁，仿佛宗教如梦似幻一样。虽说不是噩梦，但比诵读《圣经》内容还要快，像一阵呼啸而过的旋风，无须触碰现实的土壤。他如此的表现，那些年长的会众当然不会喜欢。

海托华似乎将宗教、飞奔的骑兵和在奔驰的马上被射死的祖父混在了一起，即使在布道时也无法解开它们纠结的关系。或许在他家里，在他的个人生活中，这些事情也还是一团糟。拜伦心想，也许他根本就没打算弄清楚这些事情，以为对待作为男人的附属品的女人就该那样，因此，女人必须坚强，决不能为自己和男人们一起做的事、为男人们付出的一切心生责难，因为上帝知道做妻子是一桩非常难应付的任务。听人们说，他的妻子是一位身材瘦小、平静而安详的姑娘，刚来到这里时，人们都觉得她不爱说话。不过，镇上的人们都觉得如果海托华是一个足以依靠的男人，是真正的牧师的话，她也会安然无恙的。然而，海托华不是那样的人，他活了三十年，却像只活了一天，就是他祖父在奔驰的马上被射死的那一天。邻居们经常会在下午或深夜听到他妻子在自己的牧师宅子里哭泣，他们知道海托华对此束手无策，因为他根本不明白哪里出了问题。有时，她甚至不去丈夫布道的那个教堂，哪怕是星期天她

都不会去。人们望着讲坛上的他，不知道他心里是否清楚妻子不在场，是不是已经忘记他还有妻子。海托华站在布道坛上，手舞足蹈地宣讲教义，而内容却是飞奔的骑兵、战败与光荣，就像他当初在街上跟人们谈及战马时一样，他再次将战马、赦罪和尚武的六翼天使⁴所唱的赞美诗混淆在一起。于是，无怪乎年长的会众认为，在上帝的安息日，站在上帝的圣坛上，他所宣讲的一切近乎亵渎神明。

人们还告诉拜伦，大约在海托华到达杰弗逊镇一年后，他妻子的面容开始冷若冰霜。教会女士去他家拜访时，只有海托华一人独自出来接待她们，而且他身上只穿一件衬衫，没有戴牧师领圈，神色慌张，有好一阵子似乎想不起她们为何而来，不知道自己应该做什么。过了一会儿，他才请她们进来，然后自己又抱歉地转身离开。屋里鸦雀无声，女士们身着节日盛装，面面相觑地坐在那里，环顾四周，即使竖起耳朵也听不到任何声音。然后，他才会穿上外套，戴上领圈坐下来，和她们一起谈论教区和病人。女士们愉快而平静地应答着，同时也在仔细地倾听屋里的动静，也许她们在观察房门，也许在揣度海托华是否相信自己已经知晓的事情。

于是，妇女们便不再去他家了。很快，她们甚至再没看见他妻子出现在街上，而他仍然装出若无其事的样子。后来，她常常外出一两天，人们看见她登上早班列车，面容逐渐消瘦憔悴，一副永远都没有吃饱过的样子，她脸上冰冷的表情似乎说明她眼里看不到任何东西。而海托华却说妻子去本州的某个地方探亲了，直到有一天，正是她不在的时候，杰弗逊镇上有位妇女到孟菲斯购物时看到她行色匆匆地走进一家旅馆。那是一个星期六，这名妇女回家后说了这件事。不过，第二天，海托华站在讲坛上，依然稀里糊涂地将宗教和奔跑的骑兵混为一谈。星期一，他的妻子回到镇上。接下来的星期天，她再次来到教堂，这是她六七个

月来第一次露面。她独自一人坐在教堂的后排。此后，有一阵子，她每个星期天都会来教堂。后来，她又走了，这次离开是在一周当中的某一天（是在炎热的七月）。海托华说她又去看望亲人了，可能是去了凉爽的乡间。而教会的老者们，不论男女都盯着他，猜测他会不会相信自己所说的一切，年轻人也在背地里议论揣测。

然而，人们始终不能确定他是否在意，是否相信自己告诉别人的一切——纠缠不清的宗教和飞驰的马上被射死的祖父，仿佛那天晚上祖父传给他的生命的种子也留在了马背上，也已同归于尽，时间在那时那地也一起停止。从此以后，生命的种子消失了，再没有发生任何事情，就连他自己也已经死去。

他的妻子在星期日之前回来了。那天天气非常热，老人们说那是镇上有史以来最炎热的天气。星期天她来到教堂，独自坐在后面的长凳上。布道中途，她突然从凳子上一跃而起，大声朝讲道坛叫嚷，挥舞着双手。而她的丈夫站在讲坛上也早已停止说教，举着双手靠在讲坛上一动不动。周围的人想拉住她，但她和众人扭打了起来。人们告诉拜伦，当时她已经站在了过道上，冲丈夫所在的讲坛挥舞手臂、尖叫着，她的丈夫仍然举着手靠在那里，激情澎湃的比喻还没有讲完，一张狂热的脸也被定住了。人们不知道她究竟是在朝丈夫还是在向上帝挥拳头。后来，他走下讲坛，走到她身边，而她也停止了扭打，跟在他身后走了出去。人们一直看着他们往外走，直到主持人让风琴师演奏为止。当天下午，长老们秘密召开了一次会议。人们不知道长老们说了什么，只知道海托华返回来，走进教区委员会，关上门。

然而，人们并不知道发生了什么事情，只知道教会凑了一笔钱，把他妻子送到了——一个机构——一家疗养院。海托华把她送到那里后返回镇上，在下一个星期天一如既往地布道。数月没有去过他家的一些女人、

邻居都很关心他，不时地给他送些饭菜。回来后告诉彼此、告诉丈夫，说牧师家里一团糟，像牲畜一样生活——饿了才吃，有啥吃啥。海托华每隔两周去疗养院看望妻子一次，但他总是一天左右就会回来，星期天再继续布道，仿佛这一切都没有发生过一样。出于好奇和关心，人们会问起他妻子的健康状况，他都向他们表示感谢。到了星期日，他又会站在讲坛上，挥舞着双手，发出狂热而急切的叫喊声，上帝、救世军、奔驰的战马、死去的祖父都像幽灵一样在这个声音里轰隆隆地咆哮着。坐在台下的长老、会众们都困惑不已，极度愤怒。秋天的时候，他妻子回到家里，看上去好了许多，好像还胖了一些。她的变化不止于此。或许她受了惩戒，至少清醒了许多。不管怎样，现在的她变得有点像女士们一直希望见到的样子了，像她们认为的牧师妻子应有的样子。她按时去教堂、按时参加祷告。女士们会拜访她，她也会去回访她们，即使在自己家里，她都是安静、谦恭地坐着，女士们教她如何持家，如何穿着，如何为丈夫准备饭菜。

甚至可以说人们原谅了她。实际上，人们并没有给她定过什么罪名，也没有真正惩罚过她。不过，镇上的人们并不相信女士们已经忘记了她先前去往孟菲斯的神秘之旅，而且人们都对她的旅行目的心知肚明。尽管没有人用言语表达出来，没有大声讲出来，因为全镇都相信品行良好的妇女不会轻易忘掉好的、坏的事情，唯恐良心的味蕾无法尽情享受和感知宽恕别人时的快感。因为全镇人都相信女士们了解实情，认为坏女人会被邪恶蒙蔽了心智，她们不得不花心思不让别人怀疑自己。然而，好女人却不会被邪恶所愚弄，因为她们自身德行高洁，自不必为自己或别人的品行操心，于是，她们有充足的时间搜寻别人的邪恶。因此，人们相信德行可以误导好女人对邪恶的判断，而邪恶本身却永远无法愚弄她们。所以，四五个月后，牧师的妻子再次出访，牧师又一次解释说妻子去探亲，而此时，镇上的人们确信这次就连他自己心里都跟明

镜儿似的。不过，她又回来了。而海托华也像什么事都没有发生过一样，照常布道、拜访会众、看望病人、谈论教区。然而，他的妻子却不再去教堂。很快，女士们也不再拜访她，不再踏进她家一步，就连左邻右舍也再没有看见她在自家附近出现。不久，她好像已经离开了那里，似乎大家一致认为她从来没有到过那里，牧师也从未娶妻。海托华依旧在每个星期天布道，而且也不再告诉别人妻子在探亲。镇上的人们觉得，或许他喜欢这样，或许他为不必再撒谎而感到开心。

于是，没人看见她星期五上了火车，也许是星期六，就在那天出事了。人们在星期日的报纸上得知，她于星期六晚上从孟菲斯一家旅馆的窗户跳了下来或者是掉下来，摔死了。房间中和她在一起的还有一个醉醺醺的男人。他被抓了起来。他俩用假名冒充夫妻登记入住了这家旅馆。警察发现了一些碎纸片，上面有她亲笔写的真实姓名，纸条被她撕碎后扔进废纸篓里。报纸报道了这则消息，并附上了这张纸条：盖尔·海托华神父的妻子，家住密西西比州杰弗逊镇。报道中还提到该报社在凌晨两点拨通了她丈夫的电话，而他却说无可奉告。星期日早晨，人们赶到教堂时，院子里挤满了孟菲斯来的记者。他们纷纷给他的住所拍照。后来，海托华来了。记者们企图拦住他，但他却从中间穿了过去，走进教堂，登上讲坛。上了年纪的男女会众早已坐在教堂里，令他们震惊和愤怒的不是孟菲斯事件，而是现场的记者们。可当海托华走进来，真真切切地站在讲坛上时，他们连记者也忘在了脑后。起初，妇女们先起身离席，接着男人们也站起来，到最后教堂里空无一人，只剩下站在讲坛上的牧师，他抬起头，身子微微向前倾，面前放着打开的《圣经》，双手撑在讲坛两边，孟菲斯来的记者也已随他进入教堂，坐在后排的长凳上。他们说他们并没有注意到会众的离去，他什么都没有看到。

人们告诉拜伦，牧师最后小心翼翼地合上《圣经》，走到空空如也

的教堂中，穿过通道，再没有瞧记者们一眼，像会众一样径直离去。一些摄影师架起摄像机，脑袋伸进黑布里等候为他拍照。牧师走出教堂时用一本《赞美诗》遮住了脸，显然他早已料到会这样。不过摄影师更是早有准备，因为这其实是他们设好的圈套。人们告诉拜伦，很可能海托华不熟悉这一套。牧师根本没有注意到一个摄影师在旁边早已架好机器，等他发现时已经晚了，他只是挡住了前方的摄像机。等到第二天早上，报纸就登出了从他侧面拍摄的照片，牧师站在台阶中央，手中举着《赞美诗》挡在脸前。从诗集后面可以看到他向后撇着嘴，仿佛在微笑，但他牙关紧闭，那副表情宛若旧书上画的撒旦。第二天，他把妻子运回来，埋葬了。镇上的人们都参加了葬礼，不过那不算葬礼，他并没有把尸体运到教堂，而是直接送到了墓地。正当他准备亲自诵读《圣经》的时候，另一位牧师走过来，从他手中夺过《圣经》。许多人，尤其是年轻人，在他和其他人离开后，仍旧留在那里望着坟墓。

后来，就连其他教堂的会众都得知他所在的教堂要求他辞职，但他拒绝了。下一个星期天到来时，许多人从其他教区赶来，想看一看到底会发生什么事情。海托华走进教堂，会众不约而同地站起身走了出去，只留下牧师和赶来看热闹的其他教堂的人们。于是，他开始像往常一样为这些人布道。他仍旧带着一副众所周知的痴迷和狂暴的神情，其他教区的人们也都以为他精神失常了。

海托华不愿辞职，长老们要求教区委员会召回他，但自从丑闻发生，报纸上刊登了那些照片后，没有哪个教区愿意接受他。虽然他们都说并非针对他本人，他只是很不幸，命中注定的不幸。后来，人们不再去教堂，就连那些一度为看热闹而来的其他教区的人也不再来了，因为他不再被人关注，而成了招人憎恨的目标。不过，每个星期天，他依旧会在往常的时间里去教堂，站在布道坛上。这时，会众都会起身离去，

无业游民之类的人就会站在外面的街道上，听他一个人站在空荡荡的教堂里布道、祈祷。到了下一个星期天，他来到教堂时，发现门被上了锁。游手好闲的人们看到他想试着去开门，然后又放弃了。他昂首站在那里，街上围满了从不去教堂的人们，小孩们虽然不知原委，但觉得肯定发生了什么，所以都停下来，瞪大眼睛望着他，看他呆若木鸡地站在紧锁的大门前。第二天，镇上的人们听说他找到长老们，为了教会的利益辞职了。

于是，全镇都为此庆幸也为他惋惜，因为人们有时会对那些被迫屈从于他们意愿的人们表示抱歉。人们以为这下他的离去会顺理成章，教堂也凑了一笔钱以资助他去别的地方安家，但他拒绝离开杰弗逊镇。人们告诉拜伦，当大家得知他在后街买了一幢小屋，就是他迄今为止一直居住的那所房子时，惊恐万分，简直出离了愤怒。长老们又召开了一次会议，因为人们说资助他离开杰弗逊镇的那笔钱被他挪作他用，他是冒名领了钱。他们找到海托华分辨此事，海托华请求大家原谅，然后回到房间拿出原先那笔钱，原原本本一分未动，并且坚持要他们把钱拿回去。然而，人们拒绝了。他不肯说出那笔买房子的钱是从哪里得来的。于是，第二天就有人说他给妻子买过人身保险，后来又雇人杀了她。不过，所有人都知道事实并非如此，就连那些编造、重复这些谣言的人和听的人也知道这不是真的。

但他绝不会离开杰弗逊镇。后来的一天，人们注意到他亲手制作并油漆了一块小招牌，就立在他家前院里。于是，人们明白他决定要留下来。他依旧雇佣着那个厨师，是个黑人妇女，她一直受雇于海托华。可是人们告诉拜伦，他的妻子刚刚去世时，似乎人们才立马发现那个黑人厨子是个女的，他成天和那个女人独自待在一起。他妻子在寒碛的坟墓里尸骨未寒，人们就开始在背后窃窃私语，说他妻子被他逼得无路可

走，才选择了自杀，因为他算不上一个真正的丈夫，一个纯粹的男人，而那个黑人妇女就是罪魁祸首。这就是整个事件，缺乏真相的事件。拜伦静静地听着，心想哪里的人们都一样，但似乎要在这样一个小城镇作恶难上加难。在这里想守住隐私并不容易，人们可以假借别人的名义编造一切。因为只需一个点子，一个无事生非的字眼，便可吹入人们的心扉。有一天，黑人厨娘辞职了。听说有天夜里，一帮人胡乱蒙了面闯进牧师家里，命令他解雇这个女人；也有人说第二天那个女人声称是自己主动不干的，因为主人要求她做的事违背了上帝的意愿，也有违常理；还有人说她是在蒙面人的恐吓下才辞职的，因为她是皮肤深棕色的混血女人，据说镇上有两三个男人也反对她做那些自知悖逆上帝和常理的事情。正如一些年轻人所说，要是是一个黑人妇女都觉得那件事有违上帝和自然的意愿，那它定是十恶不赦的事情。不管怎样，牧师再也雇不到女厨子了。或许就在那天晚上，那些人威胁了所有的黑人妇女，因此有好一阵子，他需要自己做饭。直到有一天，听说他找来了一个黑人男厨，这下他彻底完了。当天晚上，就闯进来几个没有戴面具的男人，把这个黑人厨子带到外面暴抽一顿。第二天早晨，海托华醒来时发现他的书房窗户被砸坏了，地上扔着一块砖头，上面还系着一张纸条，警告他在太阳下山前离开杰弗逊镇，上面还署了3K党5的名字。然而，海托华并没有离开。第三天早晨，有人在离镇一英里外的树林里发现了，他被绑在树上打得不省人事。

他拒绝说出是谁干的。人们都明白他不应该那么做，一些人来找他，再次想劝说他离开杰弗逊镇，要为自己的安全考虑，说不定下次就会有人杀了他。但他拒绝离开，甚至不愿提起挨打事件，就连人们提议要严惩凶手时，他都只字不提。他什么都不说，也不愿离开。后来，就像一阵邪风刮过，整个事件仿佛突然一下烟消云散了，好像大家最终都已明白海托华将成为整个城镇的一部分，直到他死去，而且双方最好互

不干涉。拜伦心想，整个事件好像是一大群人在演戏，现在大家终于都演完了分配给自己的角色，此时该相安无事了。人们不再理会牧师。人们看见他有时在院里或花园里，有时看见他胳膊上挎着篮子走在街上或店铺里，大伙儿也会跟他打招呼。他们知道他自己做饭、做家务。过了一段时间，邻居开始再次给他送些饭菜，虽然是那种送给穷苦工人吃的饭，但好歹也算是食物，而且都是出于好意。正如拜伦所想，二十年里人们会忘记许多事情。“不过，”拜伦心想，“杰弗逊镇上没有人知道他每天从黄昏到天黑一直坐在窗前，也不知道他的房间里是什么样子，只有我知道。而且他们也不知道我了解这些，否则很可能会把我俩带出去，再暴打一顿，因为人们的记忆时间似乎比遗忘时间要长。”拜伦来杰弗逊镇生活后，通过自己的观察了解到一件事情，所以才有了这样的想法。

海托华博览群书。拜伦曾经进过海托华的书房，四周的书架上摆满了各类他闻所未闻的书籍：宗教、历史、科学。拜伦满怀崇敬，暗自惊诧地审视这些书籍。大约四年前的一天，一个黑人男子跑进牧师家里，说妻子要临盆了。他们住在牧师家后面紧靠镇边的小木屋里。海托华家没有电话，于是他告诉黑人到隔壁家打电话请医生来。他看着黑人男子走到邻居家大门口却没有进去，只是在那里站了一会儿，然后继续步行向镇里走去。海托华知道这个男人不会去求助白人妇女帮他打电话，他会一直走到镇里，照他那种黑人式的没完没了的磨蹭劲儿，得三十多分钟才能联系到医生。海托华走到厨房门口，听见不远处的小木屋里传来那个女人的哭号声。他没有再等下去。他跑进小木屋里，不知道为什么那个女人从床上滚了下来，双手和膝盖撑在地上，哭叫着努力想回到床上。他把她扶到床上，告诉她躺在那里不要动，并且警告她要听从自己的话。然后，他跑回家里，从书架上的书里取出剃刀和一些绳子，然后又跑回小木屋为产妇接生。然而，孩子生下来就死了，医生赶到时说肯

定是海托华发现她滚下床时憋坏了孩子。医生赞同海托华的处理方法，而她的丈夫也表示满意。

“尽管这两件事情隔了十五年，”拜伦心想，“但它们太相像了。”因为不出两天，就有人说那个孩子是海托华的，是他故意让孩子死去。可拜伦明白，即便是那些造谣的人也无法相信自己说的话。他知道镇上的人们总是习惯于给牧师抹黑，即使他们自己不相信谣传，但也控制不住自己说瞎话。“因为，通常来讲，”拜伦想，“一旦形成习惯，它将想方设法远离事实和真相。”拜伦记得有一天傍晚，他和海托华聊天时，海托华说道：“他们都是好人。他们必须坚持自己所相信的，尤其我曾经一度做过他们信仰上的导师和仆人。因此，我没有理由触犯他们的信仰，你也没有理由说他们是错的，因为所有人都希望被允许平静地生活在同伴中。”这是在拜伦听到传闻、开始在夜幕下造访海托华书房后不久，海托华说的一番话。拜伦仍然不明白为什么牧师要留在杰弗逊镇，教堂已经驱逐了他，可他还执意在教会的视线和听觉范围内出现。一天晚上，拜伦向海托华提出了这个疑问。

“星期六下午，别人都去镇上寻开心了，你为什么还留在刨木厂干活儿？”海托华问他。

“我不知道，”拜伦回答，“我想这就是我的生活。”

海托华说：“所以，我想这也是我的生活。”

“不过，我现在知道原因了，”拜伦心想，“他是怕到了新环境后惹的麻烦比已经出现过的还要糟糕。他宁愿死守习惯了的困境，也不愿冒险去改变。是的，人常说要逃离生者，却不知是死者给他造成了伤害。那些死去的人静静地躺在地下，并无意打扰他们，只不过是自己无法逃

脱罢了。”

所有的一切都像轰隆隆的雷声一样远去，静静地坠落在黄昏里，夜晚已经到来。然而，海托华依旧坐在书房的窗户前，身后的房间一片漆黑。街角的路灯闪烁着刺眼的光芒。没有风，枫树支离破碎的影子仿佛轻轻地靠在八月的夜幕上。远处传来十分微弱但又十分清晰的声音，他听得出那是教堂里会众响亮的声浪：声音简朴而饱满，卑微而自豪，时而高亢，时而沉寂，宛如和谐的声浪荡漾在寂静的夏夜里。

不一会儿，他看见一个人沿着街道走过来。在平日的夜里，他会辨认出这个人的身材、体形、他的马车和他的步子。但这是在星期天的晚上，马蹄幽灵般的回声静静地响彻整个幽暗的书房。他平静地凝视着这个瘦小、没有骑马的身影走过来，带着动物靠后脚保持平衡的危险和投机耍滑的巧劲儿移动着，人类这种动物还愚蠢地为此而感到自豪，殊不知会经常败在诸如引力和冰雪之类的自然法则面前；黑暗中，面对他们自己发明的摩托和家具之类的外来物种时也是不堪一击；连自己扔在地板上、街道上的食物都会为难他们。海托华静静地想着，祖先将马作为国王和武士的象征和标志是多么明智啊。这时，他看到街上那个人绕过低矮的招牌，拐进他的大门，走近屋子。于是，他往前坐了一点，望着那个人走在黑暗中，朝黑乎乎的门口走来，他听到那个人蹒跚地踏上伸手不见五指的第一级台阶。“拜伦·邦奇。”他说道，“星期日晚上在镇上，拜伦·邦奇星期天还在镇上。”

1长老会：又称长老宗，基督教更正教的一派，源于十六世纪的西欧改革运动。

2D.D.是英文Doctor of Divinity的缩写，也可曲解为Down Damned，意为“遭到诅咒，倒霉”。

3南北战争期间，联邦军队的格兰特将军遭到南方同盟军范·多恩将军的袭击，军需物资被烧。

4“六翼天使”出自《圣经》中以赛亚书第六章第二节，是所有天使九阶中的最高位，即赞美上帝的天使，共有三对翅膀。在天使群中极富威严和名誉，被称为“爱和想象力的精灵”。

53K党（Ku Klux Klan，缩写为 KKK），是美国历史上和现在的一个奉行白人至上主义的民间组织，也是美国种族主义的代表性组织，是美国最悠久、最庞大的恐怖主义组织。

他们面对面坐在书桌的两边。此时，桌上一盏带有绿色灯罩的台灯被点亮，照亮了整个书房。海托华坐在台灯后面的一把老式转椅里，拜伦坐在对面的直背椅上。两人恰好没有被灯罩里泻下的灯光直射在脸上。窗户敞开，飘来了远处教堂里唱歌的声音。拜伦的话音单调而平和。

“真是件怪事。我当时正想，要想找到一个没有坏事打扰的地方，那准是在星期六傍晚的刨木厂。那会儿那幢房子着了火，可以说就在我对面。我好像正在吃晚饭，时不时地抬头看看那股烟柱，我就想‘哦，今晚总算没人来了，起码晚上不会有人打扰我’。然后，我刚一抬头，就看见她站在那里，满脸堆笑，正要从口中说出那个人的名字，但发现我并不是她要找的人。也不知怎么回事儿，我也不知道怎么回事，就把所有的事情抖了出来。”说着，拜伦隐约做了个奇怪的表情，但不是笑容。他的上嘴唇只是瞬间一翘，脸皮刚皱起立马就消失了。“当时我甚至都没怀疑过，自己不知道的事情还不是最糟糕的。”

“能让拜伦·邦奇在星期天留在杰弗逊镇真是件怪事。”海托华说，“但她是来找那个人的，而你又帮她找到了他。难道你做的不正是她所希望的吗？她从亚拉巴马州一路来到这里不就是为此事吗？”

“我觉得跟她说那些事情，本来没错。这没什么问题。她腆着大肚子坐在那里盯着我。那种眼神让人即使想撒谎都张不开嘴了。我就一直没完没了地讲，那边的大火正好看得清清楚楚，就像在那里警告我要留神自己的嘴巴，可我蠢得都没反应过来。”

“哦，”海托华说道，“昨天着火的那座房子啊。不过我没发现这两件事之间有什么关系——那是谁的房子？我自己也看见那股烟了，我还问了过路的一个黑人，可他也不知道。”

拜伦看着海托华，说：“就是伯顿家的老房子。”两人同时望着对方。海托华是一个身材高大的男人，有一段时间很瘦，不过现在不瘦了。他的肤色像面粉口袋的颜色，上半身也像一个松松垮垮的装满面粉的口袋，支撑着从枯瘦的肩膀到膝盖的所有重量。接着，拜伦继续说道：“你还不知道吧。”海托华看着他，他若有所思地说道，“又该我说了。两天之内分别和两个人说一些他们不愿听，也本不应该听说的事情。”

“是什么事情你觉得我不想听？我没听说过的什么事情？”

“不是说大火。”拜伦说，“他们都从大火里跑了出来，都没事儿。”

“他们？据我所知伯顿小姐一个人住在那里。”

拜伦又盯着海托华看了一会儿，但海托华只有满脸的严肃和关切。拜伦说：“是布朗和克里斯默斯。”海托华仍旧是刚才那副表情。“你连这个也没听说吧。”拜伦继续说，“他们住在那里。”

“住在那里？他们寄宿在那座房子里？”

“不是，是房子后面黑人住过的小木屋。三年前，克里斯默斯把它修盖好，从那以后一直在那儿住，可大伙儿都还纳闷儿他晚上在哪里过夜呢。后来，他和布朗合伙了，就让布朗也搬到那里了。”

“哦，”海托华说，“不过我还是不明白……要是他们在那儿住得舒服，伯顿小姐也没有——”

“我觉得他们相处得还不错。两人一起贩卖威士忌酒，那个老房子就是老窝，很隐蔽。我看伯顿小姐并不知道这件事，也不知道威士忌。起码，大家不确定她是不是清楚这事儿。人们说克里斯默斯三年前是自己单干，只卖给一些老主顾，这些人互不相识。可当他拉布朗和他一起贩酒后，我想布朗是想扩大生意，他把半品脱酒藏在衣襟下，走到哪儿卖到哪儿，逢人就卖。他从不喝自己卖的那些酒，而且我觉得他们搞到威士忌的渠道经不起盘查。因为自打布朗从刨木厂辞工后，开着新车兜风便成了正事儿。过了两个星期，他在一个星期六的晚上在镇中心喝得烂醉，还跟理发店里的一群人吹嘘，说他和克里斯默斯有天晚上曾经在孟菲斯或是紧靠孟菲斯的一条路上做过什么事，说他们开着那辆新车藏在灌木丛后面，克里斯默斯手里还拿着一把枪，还有一大堆关于卡车、一百加仑什么事情，后来克里斯默斯及时赶到，把他从椅子上揪了出去。克里斯默斯用安静低沉的嗓音不温不火地对他说：‘小心点，杰弗逊镇的生发油喝多了会变傻！这会儿嘴也漏了吧！’他一手揪起布朗，一手猛抽耳光。看上去他下手并不重，但在克里斯默斯举手抽打的间隙，人们看到布朗的脸颊附近一片通红。‘出来呼吸点新鲜空气吧，’克里斯默斯又说，‘你在这儿大家都没法工作。’”拜伦沉思了一阵，然后又说，“她坐在那堆木板上望着我，望着我把整件事一股脑全倒给她听，她一直盯着我，然后又问：‘他的嘴角这儿是不是有一块小小的白色伤疤？’”

“所以，布朗就是她要找的人。”海托华说道。他一动不动地坐在那里，安静而诧异地望着拜伦，没有咄咄逼人，也没有义愤填膺，仿佛在听异族人的故事。“哦，她的丈夫是个贩私酒的。”不过，拜伦能从他脸上看到某种隐藏的东西即将暴露出来，而海托华自己却并没有意识到。他体内有种东西正试图警告他或让他做好准备。然而，拜伦却认为这只

是自己早已经历过的一种反应，而且是他将要讲述的。

“因此，在我明白过来之前就已告诉了她一切。那时，即便我明白事实的确如此，我真恨不得把舌头咬成两段。”此刻，拜伦并没有看海托华。透过窗户，传来了远处教堂里风琴和歌声混在一起的和音，在静谧的夜晚虽然微弱却很清晰。拜伦心想：我怀疑他是不是也能听见，或许长久以来他听得太多了，所以再也听不到了。“整个傍晚我工作的时候，她一直坐在那里。那场大火终于灭了，我一直在挖空心思琢磨该告诉她些什么，该怎么办。她想立刻去找他，让我给她指路。当我告诉她那个地方大约两英里远的时候，她只是微微一笑，仿佛觉得我是个小孩子什么的。她说：‘我从亚拉巴马州走了这么远，我想再走两英里没什么好担心的。’然后我又告诉她……”拜伦停住了，似乎正盯着脚下的地板出神。他抬起头说：“我想我没说实话，不过从另一方面来看，这也不算欺骗。因为我知道好多人在那里看大火，而她要去那里找他。我自己也不确定，也不知道那个人在哪里，以后会发生什么事，最糟糕的事情又会是什么。于是，我告诉她，那个人正忙着干活儿，找他的最佳时机是六点后到镇中心。事实的确如此。因为我知道他把那种勾当，那种把冰冷的小瓶子紧贴胸口的事情叫作工作。要是他离开了广场，那他只是刚刚钻进了一条巷子，或者是晚出来了一小会儿。所以，我劝她坐在那里等一会儿，而我一边继续干活儿，一边想着该怎么办。现在想来，毫不知情是多么让人着急。这会儿，我了解了全部情况，似乎当时根本没有必要担心。今天一整天我都在想，要是能回到昨天，事情就好办多了，也就不会像当时有那么多担心。”

“我还是不明白你有什么可担心的。”海托华说，“他是什么人，她成了什么样子，这些都不是你的错。你已经尽力，做到了陌生人力所能及的事。除非……”海托华也停住不说话了。所有的语言都随着音调的

变化消失得无影无踪，好像无聊的思索已经变成了推测，甚至于关切之类的东西。对面的拜伦坐在那里没有动，他低下头，神色凝重。拜伦对面的海托华还没有联想到“爱情”。他只记得拜伦还很年轻，单身，努力工作。尽管拜伦坚持认为对她只是同情而已，但通过他的讲述，海托华觉得这个素未谋面的女人有一种令人不安的特质。此刻，他密切关注着拜伦，既不冷漠也不热情，而拜伦还是用平稳的语调继续诉说，到了六点他仍然不知道该怎么办，甚至当他和丽娜走到广场时，他仍然没有任何想法。拜伦平静地说，到达广场后，他决定带丽娜去比尔德太太家。此时，海托华困惑的神情开始转变为退缩，他有一种预感。拜伦静静地讲述、思索、回味着：那天傍晚，仿佛有什么东西弥散到了空气里，让所有熟悉的面孔都变得陌生；而他自己还没有听人说起，也不必知道是什么让他陷入了孩子般无知的两难境地，然而，用不着弄清楚这一切，他就知道绝不能让丽娜听到这些。他甚至不需要别人亲口告诉他，他已经确信自己找到了失踪的卢卡斯·伯奇。他现在明白，自己愚蠢至极，先前竟然没有意识到。他似乎现在才明白，天空中那道滚滚的黄色烟柱便是命运、环境给了他整整一天的警示，他却如此愚蠢，竟然完全没有读懂。所以，他不能让别人泄露，不能让空气中弥漫的闲言碎语飞到她的耳朵里。也许当时他也清楚，她迟早会知道、会听说，无论如何她都有权利知道。只不过他似乎觉得只要带她走过广场，走进某所房屋，他便算尽了自己应尽的责任。这不是对邪恶负责，而是作为上天选出的杰弗逊镇的代表，在邪恶发生的同时，和这个身无分文、步行跋涉三十天来到这里的丽娜待了整个下午。他不希望、也没打算逃避这个责任，只不过是想让自己和丽娜有足够的时间来缓冲惊诧和冲击罢了。拜伦低下头平静地说着，有些结巴，语调平稳，没有一丝变化。坐在桌子对面的海托华仍旧带着退缩和拒绝的神情注视着他。

拜伦和丽娜终于来到他寄宿的比尔德太太家，走进屋里。他们走到

大厅时，似乎丽娜也有某种预感，她望着拜伦，第一次开口问道：“那些人想跟你说什么？那座着火的房子怎么了？”

“啥事都没有，”拜伦的声音听起来非常枯燥，那么没有说服力，“就是说伯顿小姐在大火中受了伤。”

“怎么受伤的？严重吗？”

“我想不严重，说不定根本没受伤，不过是人们猜测罢了，他们老这样。”拜伦不敢看她，压根儿不敢看她的眼睛。不过，他能感觉到丽娜正在望着他，而且他仿佛听到无数个声音：那些声音，那些谈论杰弗逊镇、谈论他匆忙领着她穿过广场的窃窃私语声，人们在熟悉、安全的灯光下交谈。整个屋子似乎也充斥着熟悉的声音，但声音里满是慵懒、十分拖沓的味道，他望着昏暗的大厅，心想：她怎么还不出来？她怎么还不来啊？终于，比尔德太太露面了。她是一个愉快、恬静的女人，红色的手臂，散乱的灰白色头发。“这是伯奇夫人，”拜伦瞪大眼睛，迫不及待地介绍道，“她从亚拉巴马州刚到杰弗逊镇，想见她的丈夫。不过，他还没来。所以，在她还没有被镇上的热闹劲儿搞晕前，我把她带回这里歇一歇。她还没去过镇上，也没和谁说过话，所以我想您或许可以给她安排个住的地方，免得她听到些……”拜伦没有继续往下说，但沉默中已经包含了所有的急切和请求。这时，他觉得比尔德太太已经明白了他的意思。后来他得知，并非由于他的请求使得比尔德太太没有说出自己听到的事，而是她早已注意到丽娜有孕在身，没必要让她知道太多。比尔德太太打量着丽娜，就像这四个星期以来所有的陌生妇女那样，从头到脚看了她一遍。

“她打算待多久？”比尔德太太问道。

“就一两晚，”拜伦说，“也许就今晚。她是来这儿找她丈夫的。她刚来，也没时间去打听——”他的声音依旧是那么饱含深意。这时，比尔德太太开始注意拜伦。他以为比尔德太太仍然在努力理解他的意思，但实际上她是在琢磨拜伦为什么欲言又止，她相信（或者是即将相信）拜伦吞吞吐吐一定另有原因。接着，她又开始打量丽娜，眼神不至于冷漠，但也算不上温和。

“我看她现在也没必要去哪儿吧？”比尔德太太说。

“我也觉得是，”拜伦非常急切，迅速答道，“她好久没见过那么嘈杂热闹的阵势，现在或许得忍受……要是今晚您这儿人多的话，我想她可以用我的房间。”

“行，”比尔德太太马上说道，“反正你一会儿就走。你想让她住在你的房间，一直等到星期一早上你回来？”

“今晚我不走了，”拜伦没有看别处，“这回我不走。”拜伦直面着比尔德太太那双冰冷、怀疑的眼睛，看着她反过来想去读懂他的眼神，相信她已明白了他的用意，而不是妄加臆断。人们常说老练的骗子才能骗人，但那些习惯于骗人的老骗子只能骗得了自己，正是那些一辈子都老实巴交的人撒了谎才会立刻有人相信。

“哦，”比尔德太太又看着丽娜问道，“难道她在杰弗逊镇就没有别的朋友？”

“她在这儿谁都不认识，”拜伦回答，“离开亚拉巴马州后就没一个熟人。也许明天早晨伯奇先生就会出现。”

“哦，”比尔德太太问道，“那你睡哪儿？”不过，还没等对方回答，

她就说：“我想，要是她不反对的话，今晚我可以在我房间里给她搭一个简易床。”

“太好了，”拜伦说，“真是太好了。”

晚饭铃声响起时，拜伦早已做好准备。他找了个和比尔德太太单独说话的机会。他从没有花那么多时间去编谎话，实际上根本用不着，因为他努力去掩盖的东西正是最自然的保护。“到时候男人们在饭桌上肯定会提到那件事，”比尔德太太说，“我想，她挺着个大肚子（比尔德太太嘲讽地想：这个时候还得去找一个叫伯奇的丈夫）没必要听男人们瞎扯。你过一会儿再带她来，等那些人吃完饭后再来。”拜伦照比尔德太太交代的去做了。丽娜再一次津津有味地吃着，依然那样端庄、优雅，几乎还没吃完就已昏昏欲睡。

“旅行，可真累啊！”丽娜解释说。

比尔德太太说：“你到客厅坐会儿，我给你铺床。”

“我来帮您吧。”丽娜说道。不过，就连拜伦也看得出她根本帮不上忙，因为她困得要命。

“我不敢留她一个人在那里。”拜伦说。海托华坐在桌子对面，没有动。“我们坐在那里，当时在镇中心警长的办公室里一切都真相大白了，布朗交代了所有的事情，包括他、克里斯默斯和威士忌在内的一切。不过，威士忌对人们来说并不算新闻，在布朗参与前就已经不算什么秘密了。我估计大家最想知道的事情就是克里斯默斯为什么会选中布朗，也许这就是人们所说的物以类聚吧，想躲都躲不开。不过就算是蛇鼠一窝，也还是各不相同。克里斯默斯胆敢触犯法律去赚钱，而布朗犯法却是因为他压根儿不知道自己干了些什么。就像那天晚上在理发店一

样，他醉醺醺地在那儿吹牛，直到克里斯默斯跑来才把他拖走。麦克西先生说：‘你觉得他很快就会抖出他和那个家伙的什么事情？’麦克兰登上尉说：‘我没想过。’麦克西先生又说：‘你没觉得他们实际上可能是在劫持运酒车吗？’而麦克兰登说：‘当你听说克里斯默斯那家伙一辈子没做好事时，你会觉得奇怪吗？’

“那就是布朗昨晚招认的一切，可这些谁都知道。好长时间，人们一直在说应该去告诉伯顿小姐。可我觉得没人愿意去和她说，因为没人知道会发生什么事情。我想有好多自打出生起都没见过她，而且我自己也不想去老房子那儿。没有人见过她，或许除了有人乘马车路过时，偶尔能看见她站在院里，穿着长裙，戴着遮阳帽，我估计连黑人妇女都不愿意她那样打扮。或者，她也许早就知道。她是个北方佬，说不定她根本不介意。所以，去找她的话，谁也不知道会发生什么事情。

“所以，她上床睡觉前我不敢留她一个人在那儿。昨晚我就打算马上来见您，可我又不敢撇下她。那里的房客在大厅里来回走动，我不知道什么时候就会有人突然走进来跟她聊起来，把整个事情给抖出来。我在走廊就已经听见他们在谈论，而且她还一直盯着我，又问我关于那场大火的事，所以我不敢离开她。我们坐在客厅，她困得几乎快睁不开眼睛了，我告诉她可以帮她找到那个人，不过我得出来跟一位我认识的牧师说说这件事，好帮助她联系上那个人。我跟她说话的时候，她正闭着眼睛，不知道我已经明白她和那个家伙根本没有结婚。她以为自己骗过了所有人。她问我要跟谁说起她的事，我告诉她了，可她还是闭着眼睛。最后我说：‘我说的话你一个字也没听。’她稍微坐起身，不过还是没有睁开眼睛，说道：‘他能帮人主持婚礼吗？’我问：‘什么？他能做什么？’她说：‘他还能像牧师一样给人主持婚礼吗？’”

海托华仍旧坐着没动。他挺直身板坐在桌前，两条胳膊平行放在转

椅扶手上，没有戴牧师领圈，也没有穿外套。他的面容瘦削而松弛，仿佛有两张脸皮，一张叠在另一张上面，一双无神的眼睛从镜片后面张望，苍白的秃顶上长着一圈灰白色的头发。他露在桌面以上的上半身已经变形，由于长期久坐，松松垮垮、肥肥大大的身子有些畸形。他僵直地坐在那里，脸上浮现出的拒绝和飘忽不定的神情此时变得非常明确。“拜伦，”他说，“拜伦，你究竟要跟我说什么？”

拜伦没有说话。他平静地看着对方，一脸同情和怜悯，说道：“我早知道你还没听说过，我也知道该由我来告诉你。”

两个人互相望着彼此。“我还没听说过什么？”

“关于克里斯默斯。昨天发生的事和克里斯默斯的事。克里斯默斯是个混血儿。关于他、布朗和昨天的事情。”

“混血儿。”海托华重复道。他的声音轻盈而细碎，像一朵蓟毛花无声地融进寂静里，轻得没有一点分量。他坐着没有动，好一会儿他都没有动弹一下。后来，似乎他的整个身子都有了拒绝和退缩的反应，体内的各个部位都像面部一样活动起来。而且，拜伦还看到他那张松弛死板的大脸突然变得油光可鉴，上面满是汗珠。他问：“克里斯默斯、布朗和昨天的什么事情？”

远处传来的音乐早已停止。现在，除了一贯的虫鸣声和拜伦单调的话音外，整个房间鸦雀无声。桌子对面的海托华笔直地端坐在那里，双手掌心平行地向下放着，下半身被桌子遮住了，像极了一尊东方偶像。

“事情发生在昨天早上。一个乡下人赶着马车带着家人来到镇上。是他发现了那场大火。不，他是第二个赶到那里的人，因为他说在他破门而入后发现屋里已经有人了。他说自己看到了那幢房子，并对妻子说

那儿的厨房冒出好大的烟，后来马车继续往前走，他的妻子说：‘房子着火了。’我估计：他可能停下马车坐在车上望着那股烟看了一会儿，然后他才说：‘好像是。’而且我觉得是他妻子让他下车去看看。‘他们不知道着火了，’妻子说，‘你去告诉他们。’于是，乡下人下了马车，走到门廊处，站在那里喊了一阵‘喂，喂’。他说当时还能听见屋里毕毕剥剥着火的声音，然后他用肩膀把门撞开，进去以后看见第一个发现火情的人。这个人正是布朗。不过乡下人并不知道。他只是说大厅里站着一个醉汉，好像刚从楼梯上摔下来一样。当时乡下人并不清楚那个人醉到了什么程度，还说：‘先生，你家房子着火了。’他说那个醉汉一直强调楼上没人，反正楼上到处是火，没必要上去救什么东西。

“可那个乡下人知道楼上不会有那么大的火，因为火全是从后面的厨房冒出来的。再说了，那个人醉得那么厉害，什么都不知道。他还说从醉汉极力阻止他上楼的举动来看，肯定有什么不对劲。于是，他开始上楼，喝醉了的家伙想把他拉回来，他一把甩开那个家伙径直上了楼。他说醉汉想跟上他，还一直说楼上什么都没有。可当他跑下楼，想起那个醉汉时，那个人已经不见了。不过，我想他肯定是过了一会儿才想起布朗的。因为他跑到楼上后，又开始叫喊，打开好几扇房门后，才打开伯顿小姐所在的房门。”

拜伦又停住了。此时，房间里除了虫鸣没有任何声音。敞开的窗户外面，执着的昆虫拍打着翅膀，盘旋跳动着，发出无数令人昏昏欲睡的声音。“发现了她。”海托华说，“他发现了伯顿小姐。”他还是坐着没有动。拜伦也没有朝他看，或许说话的时候，他正在盯着膝盖上的双手暗自思忖。

“她躺在地板上，脑袋已经快被割下来了，是一位头发刚刚变白的女士。乡下人说他站在那里，还能听到燃烧的声音，他所在的房间也有

烟，好像是跟着他窜进来的一样。他不敢扶她，也不敢抱她下楼，因为担心她的脑袋会掉下来。后来，他又跑下楼梯，跑到门外，甚至没有注意到醉汉早已不见踪影。他跑到路上告诉妻子，让她赶着马车到最近的地方打电话报警。然后他又绕到屋后的水池边去取一桶水，这时他才明白这个举动是多么愚蠢，因为屋后已经一片火海。于是，他又跑回屋里，上了楼，冲进房间，从床上扯下床单，把她包好，然后抓起床单的四个角，像背面粉似的甩到背上，扛出屋外，放到一棵树下。他说最可怕的事情终于发生了。床单打开后，她侧身朝一边躺着，脑袋干净利落地转了个圈，好像从身后看着自己的身体一样。乡下人说要是她活着的时候能朝后看的话，现在也不至于有这样的结局了。”

拜伦说完后又看了一眼桌子后面的那个人。海托华还是没有动，眼镜片后面那双无神的眼睛周围一直在静静地冒汗。“接着，警长来了，消防队也来了，可是谁来都于事无补。因为水管里没水。那幢老房子烧了整个傍晚，我在刨木厂能看到那股烟，她来的时候我还指给她看了。因为那时我不知道这些关系。他们把伯顿小姐运到城里，银行里有她的一份文件，上面有关于她死后如何处理的内容。文件中说她有一个侄子在北方，她的老家和亲人都在那里。于是，他们给他的侄子发了电报。不到两个小时，他的侄子就回复说愿意出一千美元悬赏捉拿凶手。

“克里斯默斯和布朗都不见了。警长发现有人曾经在小木屋里住过，接着所有人立马说起克里斯默斯和布朗的事，他们私下早知道要么是他俩合伙，要么是其中一个人杀害了伯顿小姐。但到昨晚为止，没人能找到他们。乡下人并不知道他在屋里看到的醉汉就是布朗。人们觉得也许布朗和克里斯默斯一起逃跑了。不过，昨晚布朗露面了，而且他当时很清醒。大约八点的时候，他来到广场疯狂地喊叫，说是克里斯默斯杀了伯顿小姐，并且声称他应该得到那一千美元的赏金。人们告诉了警

长，把他带到警长办公室。他们告诉他只要他抓到克里斯默斯，并且证明确实是克里斯默斯干的，赏金就可以归他。于是，布朗开始讲述。他说克里斯默斯和伯顿小姐已经像夫妻一样同居了三年，直到布朗和他合伙为止。布朗说当时他搬出来，和克里斯默斯一起住到小木屋时，克里斯默斯说自己一直都睡在木屋里。接着，布朗又讲起，有一天晚上他还没睡着，听见克里斯默斯翻身起床，在他的简易床前站了一会儿，好像在倾听什么，然后踮着脚尖走到门口，悄悄打开门走了出去。布朗说他也下了床，跟在克里斯默斯后面，看见克里斯默斯走到那幢大房子前，从后门进去，仿佛那扇门是为他而留，或者他有钥匙，然后布朗又返回小木屋上了床。但他说自己一直想笑怎么也睡不着，觉得克里斯默斯自以为聪明。他躺在床上，不到一小时，克里斯默斯回来了。布朗说自己当时实在憋不住就笑了，还对克里斯默斯说了一句‘你这老混蛋’。那时，克里斯默斯在黑暗中怔住了。可他自己却躺在那里笑个不停，说克里斯默斯这种手段并不高明，嘲弄克里斯默斯竟然和一个头发花白的老女人鬼混，还说要是克里斯默斯让他去的话，他愿意和克里斯默斯一个星期轮一次，就可以免掏房租。

“布朗又说，就在那天晚上，他发现克里斯默斯迟早要杀了伯顿小姐或其他什么人。他说自己笑着躺在那里，以为克里斯默斯也许会再回到床上，但克里斯默斯却点燃了一根火柴。布朗说他止住笑，躺在那儿，望着克里斯默斯点亮灯笼，放在布朗床边的盒子上。布朗说自己没有再笑，只是躺在床上，克里斯默斯站在床边低头看着自己。‘这回你算搞到了个好笑话，’克里斯默斯说，‘明天晚上去理发店宣传一下，让你笑个够。’布朗说自己并不知道克里斯默斯生气了，自己还和他顶了几句，但并没想过要惹怒克里斯默斯。克里斯默斯用他特有的说话方式冷冷地说道：‘你还没睡够，醒的时候太多。也许你应该多睡会儿。’布朗问：‘睡多久？’克里斯默斯说：‘也许从现在就睡。’布朗说那时他才

明白克里斯默斯发火了，那不是取笑他的时候。他说：‘咱不是哥们儿吗？我怎么会跟别人说一些跟自己无关的事？你难道信不过我吗？’克里斯默斯回答：‘我不知道，我也不在乎。不过你可以相信我。’他看着布朗问：‘你难道不相信我？’布朗回答：‘相信。’

“然后，他又说自己害怕克里斯默斯会在哪天晚上杀了伯顿小姐。警长问他为什么从没有报告过他的恐惧。布朗说他以为自己待在那里，不必惊动警方就能阻止事件的发生。警官哼了一声说他想得可真周全，要是伯顿小姐知道的话，一定会很感激他。我想，那个时候轮到布朗明白自己也有可疑之处了。因为他说到伯顿小姐给克里斯默斯买了那辆车，他想劝克里斯默斯不要再卖私酒，以免让他们陷入麻烦。警察盯着他，他越说越快，越说越多。他还说自己星期六早上一醒来，看见克里斯默斯天不亮就起床出去了。布朗知道克里斯默斯要去哪里。大约七点的时候，克里斯默斯回到小木屋，站在那里看着布朗，说道：‘我做完了。’布朗问：‘做什么了？’克里斯默斯说：‘去那幢房子里看看。’布朗说当时他很害怕，但他绝对没想到是那种事，起初他以为克里斯默斯只是打了她一顿什么的，然后克里斯默斯转身就走了。于是，布朗起床穿好衣服，正要生火做早饭时，不经意间抬头往门外一瞧，发现那幢大房子的厨房着火了。

“‘什么时候？’警长问。

“‘我想是八点左右。’布朗说，‘人们一般都在这个时间起床，除非是有钱人。上帝知道我没钱。’

“‘可直到十一点才有人报告那场大火，’警长说，‘到下午三点时房子还在燃烧。你的意思是一幢古老的木头房子，就算是一幢大楼房，得六个小时才能烧完？’

“布朗坐在那里左顾右盼，警察在他四周围了一个圈，打量着他。‘我说的都是实话，’布朗说，‘都是你们要求的。’他还是左瞧瞧右瞅瞅，突然头一扭，大声叫嚷道：‘我怎么知道是几点。你以为在刨木厂做黑鬼才干的营生，他能有钱买得起表吗？’

“‘你有六个星期没有在刨木厂或其他地方干活了，’典狱长说，‘一个买得起新车，成天在街上兜风的人，完全可以随时路过法院门口看看那里的时钟，弄清楚时间。’

“‘我说了，那不是我的车！’布朗说，‘那是他的。是那个女人买给他的，是那个被他杀死的女人送给他的。’

“‘这不重要，’警长说，‘把话说完。’

“于是，布朗继续往下讲，声音越来越高，速度也越来越快，好像他竭力想撇开乔·布朗和克里斯默斯事件的关系，以便让他有机会捞到那千元赏金。我真搞不懂，有人竟然以为捞钱是一种可以不讲规则的游戏。布朗说直到他看到大火，他也万万没料到伯顿小姐还在房里，更没想到她已经死了。他说自己压根儿没有想到要进屋里查看，只是一门心思想着怎么灭火。

“‘要按你说的，这个时候是八点左右，’警长说，‘汉普·瓦勒的妻子快到十一点时才报警。你花了好长时间才发现自己赤手空拳没法灭火。’布朗坐在警察中间（他们把门锁上了，但外面围了一圈人，窗玻璃上贴满了一张张脸），仍然东张西望的，噘起的上嘴唇离牙齿好远。‘汉普说他破门进屋后，已经有人在屋里了，’警长说，‘而且那个人还设法阻止他上楼。’布朗被警察围在中间，两眼不知道往哪里看才好。

“我想那个时候他一定非常绝望，眼睁睁看着那一千美金离他越来越远，而且即将被别人拿走。我觉得他好像是眼睁睁看着自己手中的钱被别人给花了。他们说布朗好像专门留了一些话没说，就等这个时候派上用场；他好像早知道如果到了关键时刻，这些话会救他。此刻，对他来说，即便承认不得不承认的事情比被指控杀人更糟糕，他也会展示藏好的这一手。‘好啊，’他说，‘来吧，控告我，控告一个用自己所知道的一切去帮你们的白人。控告这个白人，却让那个黑鬼逍遥法外。抓住白人放跑黑鬼。’

“‘黑鬼？’警长问，‘黑鬼？’

“当时他好像觉得自己抓住了他们的把柄，他们会相信他干的事情不会比他所告发的人犯下的罪行更恶劣。‘你们真棒，’他说，‘镇上的人们自以为聪明，结果被他骗了三年，三年中都以为他是外国人。我见过他三天就知道他根本不是什么外国人。没等他亲口告诉我，我就知道。’这时，他们看了看布朗，又看着彼此，面面相觑。

“‘小心自己说的话。要是你说的是个白人，’警长说，‘我可不管他是不是凶手。’

“‘我说的是克里斯默斯，’布朗说道，‘那个家伙在全镇人的眼皮子底下和一个白种女人同居，然后又杀了她，你们却让这个家伙越走越远，还控告一个知道他底细，可以帮你们找到他的家伙。他身体里流着黑人的血，我第一次见他就知道。可你们这群人，你们这些聪明的警长还都不知道。有一次他甚至跟我承认自己是个混血儿。说不准他喝醉了才说的，我不知道。反正，他告诉我这些的第二天早上，他对我说（此时，布朗又开始加快语速，瞪着眼睛，龇牙咧嘴地挨个儿看着他们）：‘昨晚我犯了个错误。你可别犯同样的错误。’我问：‘你说什么

错误？”他说：“你好好想想。”我想起前一晚我俩在孟菲斯的事儿。我知道要是我冲撞了他，我就完蛋了。于是，我就说：“我想我懂你的意思。我才不会拿跟我无关的事嚼舌头。绝不会！我保证！”换了你们，也会那样说。’布朗说，‘离镇上那么远，和他独自待在小木屋里，就算你喊破嗓子也没人能听见。你们也会害怕。本来没犯啥事，等到你想帮助的人出现了，他们反倒控告你杀了人。’布朗坐在那里，眼睛不住地看着，房间里的人们也盯着他，贴在玻璃上的那些脸也望着他。

“‘黑鬼，’警长重复道，‘我一直觉得那个家伙有些奇怪。’

“接着，警长又继续和布朗谈话。‘你就是因为这个拖到今晚才说出来？’

“布朗坐在他们中间，咧着嘴，嘴角的小伤疤像颗爆米花一样白。‘你们给我找出能有其他办法的人来。’他说，‘我就要求这一点。你们指给我看啊，谁能和他住在一起，像我一样了解他，又有不一样的办法对付他！’

“‘好啦，’警长说，‘我相信你终于说实话了。现在你跟巴克走吧，好好睡一觉。我来处理克里斯默斯。’

“‘我想你说的是监狱吧，’布朗说，‘我估计你会把我关进监狱，自己跑去领赏。’

“‘闭上你的嘴，’警长说道，不过他并没有生气，‘如果奖金该是你的，我保证你能得到。巴克，带他走。’

“典狱长走过来拍了拍布朗的肩膀，他站了起来。他们出门的时候，一直在外面看热闹的人们围了上来：‘巴克，抓住了吗？是他干的

吗？’

“‘不知道，’巴克说，‘都回去吧，回去睡觉。’”

拜伦停住了，他那平稳单调、唱歌似的乡村语调沉静下来。他抬起头，满怀同情和困惑，静静地看着坐在桌子对面的海托华。海托华闭着眼睛，脸上的汗水像泪珠一样往下淌。他说：“确定他有黑人血统吗？证实了吗？想一想，拜伦。那意味着什么，人们——要是他们抓住了……可怜的人，可怜的人类。”

“布朗是那么说的，”拜伦平静而固执地说，他对此深信不疑，“就算是骗子在受到恐吓后也会说实话，同样，老实人受了折磨也会撒谎。”

“是的，”海托华说道，他闭着眼睛，直挺挺地坐在那里，“但他们还没有抓到他，还没抓住吧？拜伦。”

拜伦没有看他：“还没有。据我所知还没有。他们今天带了猎犬出去，不过我听到的最后的消息是还没有抓到。”

“布朗呢？”

“布朗，”拜伦说，“他？他跟着大家一起去了。也许他曾经帮克里斯默斯干过那事，不过我不知道。我想，放火已经是他的底线。要真是他放的火，我想就连他自己也不知道为什么要这么做。除非，他或许以为大火烧光就没事了。他和克里斯默斯就又能开着那辆新车在镇上闲逛。我估计他以为克里斯默斯不是犯罪，只是犯错而已。”说着，拜伦若有所思地低下头，然后带着嘲讽和疲惫的神情，又低声说道，“我想他够安全。只要他没有和警长带着警犬一起出去，她想什么时候找他都

能找到。你瞧，他的头上悬着一千美金，他才不会逃跑。我看他比任何人都想抓到克里斯默斯。他和警察一起出去搜捕。他们把他从监狱里带出来，领着他一起走，等回到镇上的时候，再把他关起来。真滑稽，好像杀人犯想把自己抓住好领赏一样。他似乎并不介意，不过他总是抱怨他们闲坐着浪费时间，而不出去追捕。对，我明天就告诉她。我就说他目前和两条狗关在一起。或许我会领着她到镇上去看他们。警察拉着他和两条狗，它们拽着铁链，使劲汪汪乱叫。”

“你还没有告诉她？”

“没有。也没有告诉他。因为他也许又要逃跑，管它赏金不赏金。要是他能抓住克里斯默斯，拿到赏金的话，或许到时候他会和她结婚。不过她还不知道，也不比昨天在广场上走下马车时知道得多。她挺着大肚子，慢慢从那辆陌生的马车上走下来，走在陌生人中间，平静而惊奇地自言自语。不过，我不觉得那有什么可奇怪的，因为她一路慢慢走着，习惯性地告诉自己：‘哦，天哪，我从亚拉巴马州一路走来，现在总算到了杰弗逊镇了，真的到了。’”

此时已过午夜。尽管克里斯默斯已经在床上躺了两个小时，但还是没有睡着。他还没看见布朗，就已经听到了他的动静。他听见布朗走到门口，跌跌撞撞闯了进来，门里显出他直挺挺地靠在门框上的身影。布朗呼吸沉重，两条胳膊扶住门框，开始带着鼻音用甜蜜的男高音唱起来，拖长的高音中似乎还散发着威士忌的味道。“闭嘴！”克里斯默斯说道。他躺在床上没有动，嗓门也不高。但布朗的歌声立刻停止了。他在门口站了片刻，直直地站着，然后离开门口，克里斯默斯听见他踉踉跄跄走进来，不一会儿又撞倒了什么东西，发出一阵重重的急促的喘息声，接着，“砰”的一声巨响，布朗摔倒在地上，磕在克里斯默斯躺着的床上，屋里顿时回荡着一阵响亮的傻笑声。

克里斯默斯从床上坐起来，看不见床下的布朗。布朗躺在地板上，仍然在哈哈大笑，也并不打算爬起来。“闭嘴！”克里斯默斯又呵斥道。布朗仍旧笑个不停，克里斯默斯从布朗身上跨过去，伸出手想摸到当桌子用的箱子，箱子上面有灯笼和火柴。可是他没有找到箱子，接着他想起布朗倒地时打碎灯笼的声音。克里斯默斯弯下腰，跨在布朗身上，摸到他的衣领，一把揪起他，从床底下拉了上来，拎起他的脑袋，开始用宽厚的巴掌抽起来，又快又狠又重，直到打得布朗笑不出来为止。

布朗像堆泥一样软瘫在那里。克里斯默斯托起他的头，像密谈一样低声咒骂他，接着又把布朗拖到另一张床边，仰面朝天地扔在床上。布朗又开始大笑，克里斯默斯把手掌按到布朗的嘴上和鼻子上，用左手合上他的下颌，用右手再次又狠又重地慢慢抽打布朗，好像打的同时还在计数一样。布朗不笑了，奋力挣扎着。他在克里斯默斯手掌的按压下几

乎说不出话来，只是扭动着发出咯、咯的声音。克里斯默斯掐住他，直到他无法动弹，渐渐安静下来。然后，克里斯默斯的手稍微松了一点。“现在能安静了吗？”他问，“能吗？”

布朗又挣扎起来：“把你那只黑手拿开，你这该死的黑鬼——”克里斯默斯再次用力扼住布朗的下巴，又用另一只手朝布朗的面部狠狠地抽打。布朗又一次停止挣扎，一动不动地躺在那里，克里斯默斯又松开了手。过了好一会儿，布朗压低声音，狡黠地说：“你是个黑鬼，明白吗？是你自己说的，你告诉我的。不过，我是个白人，我是白——”克里斯默斯的手又勒紧了。布朗在他的手底下奋力挣扎，发出低低的喘息声，口水留在克里斯默斯的手指间。等到他不再动弹时，克里斯默斯的手放松了些。布朗喘不过气来，一动不动地躺在床上。

“现在能闭嘴了吗？”克里斯默斯问道。

“能，”布朗说道。他喘着粗气说，“让我喘口气，我闭嘴，让我喘口气。”

克里斯默斯松了手，但手并没有拿开。他站在黑暗中，手下是侧卧着的布朗。布朗呼出的气忽冷忽热，喷到他的手指上。他静静地想着：要出事了，我要动手了。他不必拿开捂在布朗脸上的左手，伸出右手就能取出枕头下面那把五英寸长的剃刀。不过，他没有这样做。也许，思绪早已走远，渐渐变暗，并且告诉他这样做是不对的。不管怎样，他总算没去拿剃刀。过了一会儿，他把手从布朗的脸上挪开，但他没有走，仍旧站在床边。克里斯默斯的呼吸平静而沉稳，甚至连他自己都听不到；黑暗中，布朗的呼吸也平静了些。过了一会儿，克里斯默斯走过来，坐在床上，从墙上挂着的裤子里摸出香烟和火柴。借着火柴的光亮，他看清了布朗。点燃香烟前，克里斯默斯举起火柴，望着布朗，布

朗蜷缩着躺在床上，一只胳膊垂到地板上，嘴巴大张。克里斯默斯望着他，他已经开始打呼噜了。

克里斯默斯点燃香烟，把火柴朝门外扔去，看着火光在半空中熄灭。此时，熄灭的火柴掉在地板上时，发出轻微、琐细的声音，仿佛他真的听见了似的。屋里一片漆黑，他坐在床上，仿佛听到无数低低的声音——沙沙的树声，黑暗的潺潺声，大地的低语，人的声音（这是他自己的声音）；还有其他能唤起许多名字、时间和地点的声音——这些是他一辈子都能感知到的声音，而他却没有意识到，这就是他的人生，他以为：上帝和我一样不明白。他觉得这句话和 上帝也爱我 一样成了铅印的字句，真真切切地写在那里，却早已没有任何意义，就像去年那块褪色、残损的布告牌上的字迹：上帝也爱我。

克里斯默斯一直叼着烟，直到抽完他都没用手碰一下。他“啪”地把烟头朝门口扔去。不过烟头不像火柴，并没有在半空中熄灭，他望着烟头闪烁着火星蹿出门外。他躺在床上，枕着双手，像并不希望入睡的人一样，思索着：自从十点我就开始躺在床上，到现在都没有睡着。我虽然不知道现在是什么时候，但肯定已经过了午夜，可我还没有睡着。“因为她开始替我祷告了。”克里斯默斯说道。在一片漆黑的房间里，他的说话声显得那么突然，那么洪亮，盖过了布朗醉酒后的鼾声。“没错，是因为她在为我祈祷。”

他从床上坐起来，穿着内衣，光脚站在黑暗中，没有发出任何声音。睡在另一张床上的布朗仍然在打鼾。克里斯默斯站了一会儿，扭头看了看熟睡的布朗。然后，他朝门口走去，光着脚，穿着内衣离开了小木屋。门外略微亮了些。头顶的群星缓缓移动，这些星星他已经认识了三十年，不过没有一个能叫上名的；况且，它们的形状、亮度、方位对他来说不具任何意义。前方，茂密的树林中耸立着一根烟囱和一座房子

的山墙。黑乎乎的房子看不大清楚。他走近房子，站在她卧室的窗户下，屋里没有任何亮光或声音。他心想：要是她也睡了，要是她也睡着了。房间的门从来不上锁，从夜晚到黎明，只要他愿意，就能进入房间，轻车熟路地走到她的床前，有时，她醒着等他，还会叫出他的名字；有时，他会用他粗大的手把她硬生生地弄醒；有时，不等她完全清醒，他就野蛮粗鲁地占有了她。

这些都是两年前的事了，事情已经过去两年。他想：也许愤怒就源于此。也许我明白了她愚弄、欺骗了我。她没有说出她的真实年龄，也没有告诉我女人到了一定年龄会发生什么。他独自在黑暗中站在漆黑一片的窗户下，大声说道：“她不应该为我祈祷。如果她不为我祈祷，她就能平安无事。随着年龄增大而变得不中用，这不是她的错，错在她应该通情达理些，而不是为我祈祷。”克里斯默斯开始诅咒她，站在黑魑魑的窗户下，用最脏的言语慢慢地骂着她。他没有抬头看窗户。昏暗的夜色中，他似乎在审视自己的身体，仿佛看到自己像一具尸体，在浓稠的黑色淤泥池中溺水一样，慢慢地漂浮在嘶嘶作响的污泥沟里。他用扁平的手掌抚摸着自已，紧紧地摸着内衣下的身体，从腹部移动到胸部。内衣只有领口处扣着一颗纽扣，他曾经穿过纽扣齐全的衣服，是一个女人给他缝上的。然而只有那么一段时间，只在那段时间里。随后，那样的日子一去不复返。后来，不等她洗好、缝上丢掉的纽扣，他便从洗衣房里偷偷把衣服拿走。她让他有了挫败感后，他专门坐下来努力回想哪些扣子是遗失后被她缝上的，然后他从口袋里拿出小刀，像外科医生一样冷酷无情地剪掉她刚刚缝上的扣子。

他的右手像刀刃一样锋利，迅速滑到衣领处，从侧面飞快地将唯一的一颗纽扣轻轻一拽。内衣滑下的一刹那，夜风吹拂着他的身体，平静地滑向他的双腿，他感觉到了黑夜冰冷的嘴唇，凉爽柔软的舌头。继续

前行，他能感受到夜凉如水，还有以前从未体会过的脚下的露珠。他穿过破败的大门，在路边停下来。八月的野草长得齐腰高，草叶和草茎上积满了一个月来马车路过时扬起的尘土。大路在他面前延伸，比起黑黝黝的树林和黑暗的大地来略显苍白。路的一端通往杰弗逊镇，另一端通往山上。过了一会儿，山那边逐渐亮起一道光，照出山的轮廓。接着，他听到了汽车的声音。他站在那里没有动，双手垂在两胯上，赤身裸体，沾满尘土的野草没过了大腿。汽车翻过山头，渐渐逼近，车灯照亮了他的全身。他注意到自己的身体就像从药水里浸泡出来的柯达底片一样，慢慢由黑变白。汽车驶过身边时，他直直地盯着车头灯。车里传出女人的一声尖叫“白杂种！”他大骂道：“这又不是你这贱货第一次看……”不过，车已走远，没有人听见，也没有人去听。汽车走了，卷起飞扬的尘土，带走了刺目的灯光，还有白种女人的尖叫声。这时，克里斯默斯感到有些冷，似乎他只是为了在最后一刻才出现在这里的。现在，最后的时刻已经到来，他重新获得了自由。他返回伯顿小姐的房前，在漆黑的窗户下停下脚步，四处寻找他的内衣，找到后又重新穿上。这会儿，衣服上没有一颗纽扣，因此，在返回小木屋的路上他不得不一直揪着衣服。很快，他已经能听到布朗的鼾声了。他在门外站了一会儿，一动不动，静静地倾听布朗拖长了的、刺耳的鼾声，每次长短不一的呼吸声最后都伴着梗塞的哧、哧声。“我肯定把他的鼻子打得够呛，”他心想，“王八羔子！”他走进木屋，走到床边打算上床睡觉。正要躺下时，他停住了，半躺半坐地定在那里。也许一想到自己要和一个鼾声如雷的醉汉在黑暗中一直躺到天亮，其间还不断伴随着各种声音，他便无法忍受。他坐起来，在床下静静地摸索着，找到鞋子，穿上后，他又从床上扯了半条棉布毯，这是他的铺盖卷儿，然后离开了小木屋。屋外约三百码的地方有一个破败不堪的马厩，已经有三十年没有养过马了，但他还是朝马厩走去，走得非常迅速。此刻，他一边琢磨一边大声说道：“我到底为什么要来闻马的臭味？”接着，他又咕哝道：“因为它

们不是女人。就连母马也是爷们儿。”

他睡了不到两小时，醒来时天刚亮。他躺在那条毯子上，毯子下面是松散的厚木板，木板上是塌陷下去的黑洞。陈年的草料上积满了薄薄的尘土，散发着刺鼻的味道，废弃的马厩里隐约透出令人窒息的霉味，透过东墙上没有窗板的窗户，他能看到泛黄的天空，以及盛夏里苍白遥远的星辰。

他觉得自己精力充沛，好像一觉睡了八个小时一样。真是一场意外的睡眠，因为他根本没有料到自己竟然能够睡着。他再次穿上没有系鞋带的鞋子，腋下夹着折叠的毯子，走下陡峭的楼梯，双脚感受着看不见的腐朽的横档，一手扶着旋转式扶手，一级一级地慢慢往下走。走进苍茫泛黄的黎明中，他深深地吸了一口清冷的空气。

此时，东方渐渐变亮，木屋在它的映衬下是那么显眼，伯顿小姐的房子掩映在树丛中，只露出一根烟囱。蒿草上沾满了沉甸甸的露珠，即刻便将他的鞋子打湿，双脚感觉到了皮革的冰冷，赤裸的双腿被湿漉漉的草叶像湿滑的冰条一样抽打着。布朗的鼾声已经停止。借着东窗射进来的光线，克里斯默斯进屋时看到了布朗。现在，他平稳地呼吸着。“酒醒了，”克里斯默斯想，“清醒了，他还不知道发生过什么。可怜的家伙。”他望着布朗。“可怜的家伙。等他醒来时发现自己清醒了会发疯的，他还得花整整一个小时才能让自己再次烂醉如泥。”克里斯默斯放下毯子，开始穿衣服。他穿上哗叽料裤子和沾了点灰尘的白衬衫，戴上领结，开始抽烟。墙上钉着一块残破的镜子。打领结的时候，他从破碎的镜子中看到自己那张模糊不清的脸。钉子上挂着硬挺边草帽，他没有取下来，而是从另一颗钉子上摘下一顶布帽，从床下的地板上取出一本杂志，这种杂志的封面上会画一些身穿内衣的年轻女人，或者是拿着手枪正要射击对方的男人。然后，他又从枕头下拿出剃刀、牙刷和一

块剃须皂，一起装进口袋。

克里斯默斯离开木屋时，天已大亮。鸟儿尽情地欢唱。这回，他背对着伯顿小姐的房子，经过马厩，走进那边的牧场。灰色的露水立刻打湿了他的鞋子和裤腿，他停下脚步，小心翼翼地把裤子卷到膝盖上继续前行。走出牧场，便是树林。这里的露水没有刚才的那么重，他又把裤管放下。过了一会儿，他来到一处小山谷，这里有一汪清泉。他放下杂志，捡了些树枝和干柴，生起火，坐下来。他背靠一棵树，双脚朝向火堆。很快，他的湿漉漉的鞋子开始冒气，他感觉到蒸汽一直蹿上了腿。后来他突然睁开眼，发现太阳已经高高升起，火堆早已燃尽，他明白自己刚才睡着了。“他妈的，怎么睡着了，”他心想，“他妈的，又睡了一觉。”

这一次，他睡了两个多小时。因为阳光倾泻在泉水上，照着不断涌动的水流波光粼粼。他站起来，伸了伸发麻发硬的脊背，唤醒酸痛肌肉。他从口袋里掏出剃刀、牙刷和香皂。蹲在水边，把水面当成镜子，在皮鞋上磨了磨又长又亮的剃刀，开始刮胡子。

他把剃须工具和杂志藏在灌木丛中，又把领结系上。他离开水边时，离伯顿小姐的房子已经很远了。等他走上大路时，离那座房子大约半英里。不远处有家小商店，门外立着一个汽油泵。他走进店里，向女店员买了一些饼干和一听肉罐头。然后，他又回到泉边和熄灭的火堆旁。

他靠在树上吃着早餐，边吃边阅读杂志。以前他读过这本书，不过只读了一个故事，现在开始读第二个，他像读小说一样从头到尾地读起来。偶尔，他会抬起头，一边咀嚼食物，一边端详那些洒满阳光的树叶遮掩着的沟渠。“说不准我已经做了，”他想，“现在用不着再等了。”他

仿佛看到黄天白日在眼前静静地舒展开来，像一条长廊，一条挂毯，明暗交织中不紧不慢地延伸着。他坐在那里，仿佛在炎炎夏日的炙烤下，自己变成一只昏昏欲睡的黄猫一样困倦地趴在那里。接着，他继续阅读杂志，不快不慢地翻动着书页，不过有时好像会在某一页、某一行或许某个字上停留。这时，他不再抬头，一动不动地盯着，显然他被某个字深深地吸引了，或许这个字他还没完全理解，整个人都被琐碎的字母组合吊足了胃口。在静谧的阳光下，他被静静地悬挂起来，轻飘飘地悬着，似乎在见证时光的缓缓流逝，心里想：我想要的只是安宁，她不该开始为我祈祷。

当读到最后一个故事时，他停了下来，开始数剩下的页数，然后继续阅读。此时，他像一个人走在街上，边走边数人行道上的拼接缝一样，一直读到最后一页，最后一个字。这时，他站起来，划了一根火柴点燃杂志，耐心地翻转着，直到杂志烧成灰烬。他把剃须用具揣进口袋，走下沟渠。

走了一会儿，沟渠变宽了：沟底是平坦的银白色细沙，陡峭的岩壁从顶部、侧面逼来，岩壁上长满了荆棘和灌木。树木在头顶交织成拱形状，一侧岩壁上有个洞穴，里面是枯死的灌木，填满了整个洞穴。他开始把树枝撇到一边，清理完洞穴，露出一把短柄铁锹。他拿着铁锹开始挖灌木丛遮蔽下的沙地，挖出六个带螺旋盖的铁罐。他没有拧开盖子，而是把它们侧放在地上，然后用铁锹的利刃刺穿铁罐。威士忌喷溅出来时，铁罐下的泥土都被染成了黑色，在这阳光灿烂的僻静之处，空气里弥漫着酒精的芳香。他不慌不忙地把铁罐彻底倒干净，冷酷的表情几乎像戴了一副面具。他把威士忌都倒光后，又把铁罐草草地埋起来，用灌木枝盖上，又把铁锹藏好。灌木能遮挡威士忌的痕迹，却掩盖不了酒香。他又抬起头看了看太阳，此刻已是下午时分。

晚上七点，他来到镇上，走进沿街一家餐馆里吃晚饭。他坐在一张没有靠背的凳子上，在打磨得光滑的木制柜台边开始吃晚饭。

九点时，他站在理发店外面，透过窗户望着店里的搭档。他不动声色地站在那里，双手插在裤兜里，香烟的烟气在他毫无表情的脸上缭绕。头上戴的布帽像硬边帽一样歪着，一副傲慢、邪恶的气势。他凶狠而冷酷地站在店外，店里灯火通明，弥漫着浓重的香波和肥皂味，布朗身穿脏兮兮的红条纹裤子和彩色衬衣，用沙哑的音调边说边比画，说到一半时突然抬起头，醉眼惺忪地看着玻璃窗外那个男人的眼睛。克里斯默斯是那么冷峻而邪恶，一个吹口哨的黑人小伙慢悠悠地走在街上看到他的侧影时，立即停住哨声，绕道从他身后溜掉了，然后才转过脸从肩膀上瞧了一眼。不过，克里斯默斯自己也走开了，仿佛他在那里的停留只是为了让布朗看到他。

他离开广场继续慢慢前行。这条路终日寂静，此时更是杳无人烟。从这里下行，穿过黑人聚居的弗里德曼区就到了车站。七点的时候，他能碰到许多人，白人和黑人都有，他们都奔着广场和电影而去；到了九点半，这些人会往家走。不过现在电影还没开始，这条街上只有他一个人。他继续往前走，静静地穿过白人住宅区，走过一盏又一盏的街灯，橡树和枫树叶浓密的阴影像斑驳的黑天鹅丝绒一样盖在他白色的衬衫上。再没有什么比一个大男人走在空旷的街道上更显孤寂。尽管他不魁梧，也不算高大，但不知为什么，他看起来比荒原上孤零零的电线杆还要孤苦无依。在这条宽广空旷、浓影密布的街道上，他像一个幻影、一个幽灵，游离在自己的世界之外，迷失了自我。

接着，他找到了方向。不知不觉间街道开始倾斜，等他意识到时，自己已经来到了弗里德曼区。这儿看不到黑人，却弥漫着黑人在夏夜的气息和声音。他似乎被这些无形的声音包围了，他们操着陌生的语言窃

窃私语，有说有笑。他好像身在黑暗的深渊，被模糊不清的木屋和煤油灯包围着，于是街灯显得更加遥远，好像黑人的生活、黑人的气息混成了呼吸的空气，无数的声音、游走的身体和光线都开始一点一滴慢慢融合、流动，与此时凝重的夜色组成了不可分割的整体。

此刻，他静静地站在那里，呼吸非常困难。他瞪大眼睛环顾四周，模糊而狂热的煤油灯光照着暗夜里黑色的小木屋。看不见的黑人妇女在四周，甚至他自己的体内发出了圆润、生命力极强的喃喃低语，仿佛他和周围所有男性的生命都退回到混沌湿热的原始母系生活状态中。他睁大眼睛、咬紧牙关开始奔跑，口干舌燥的他倒抽着冷气，向下一站街灯跑去。街灯下面是一条狭窄凹陷的小巷，拐上去后是一条与之平行的街道，这样就脱离了黑人聚居的低地。他拐进小巷继续奔跑，奋力爬上陡峭的斜坡，心跳加速的他终于跑到高处的街区。他停下来，瞪大眼睛喘着粗气，心脏咚咚地加速跳动，似乎不敢相信自已已经呼吸到了白人居住区冰冷坚硬的空气。

过了一会儿，他平静下来，黑人的气息、黑人的声音都已抛在身后，留在下边的低地里。他的左边是广场，簇簇灯光闪耀着，像银光闪闪的鸟儿一样展翅低飞，颤巍巍地悬在半空。他的右边有一排向前延伸的街灯，无动于衷的电线杆子每隔一段距离便矗立在那里。他继续缓步前行，背对着广场再次走在白人住所间。走廊里、草坪的椅子上都是人，但他能够平静地走入其间，不时地还能看到他们脑袋的侧影，穿着白衣的身形；明亮的阳台上四个人围坐在牌桌前，白色的面孔在低矮的灯下显得清晰而专注，白人妇女裸露的胳膊在纷繁的纸牌上晃动，闪烁出白皙柔滑的光芒。“这就是我想要的，”他想，“这一切似乎并不过分。”

这条街也开始倾斜，但坡度平缓。宽阔的广场将自己的影子投向老

远，在八月的星空下显得格外庞大，他稳稳晃动的白色衬衫和缓慢前行的黑黢黢的双腿渐渐消失其中：一幢棉花仓库，一只平放的圆柱体油箱，像被削了脑袋的庞然大物，又像拉了一列货车。他跨过铁道，铁轨在信号灯的照射下短暂地发出两道绿光，然后又消失了。过了铁路便是树林，但他准确无误地找到了那条小路。小路在林间向上延伸，横穿铁路经过的山谷。不过他一直爬上山顶才回头看去。此时，他看到了城镇，看到了广场上一盏盏街灯辐射出来的亮光。他看到脚下来时的街道，还有那条几乎让他暴露身份的街道；更远处呈直角的地方，是城镇灯火通明的城墙，以及他心跳加速、龇牙咧嘴地逃离的黑人低地区。那个地方没有灯光，在这里闻不到它的气息和味道。它只是躺在那里，漆黑一片，无法触及，周围却是八月摇曳的灯光编织的花环。也许它本身就是石坑，就是深渊。

虽然周围是树林，伸手不见五指，但他非常确定自己所走的路。就算是在看不见的环境下，他都未曾迷路。密林延伸了一英里远后，他终于走上一条大路，双脚满是泥土。此时，他的眼前是模糊的视野和绵延的地平线，到处都是隐约闪着亮光的窗户，但多数小木屋却是一片漆黑。然而，他的血液又开始奔腾、喧闹。伴着跳动的脉搏，他疾步向前，似乎意识到无声无影的周围有一群黑人，甚至他们在死寂的尘埃中还未进入他模糊的视线时，他已经感到了他们的存在。他们一行有稀稀拉拉的五六人，却又模模糊糊地成双成对走着。他又一次听到高过自己血液奔流的喧闹声，以及女人们叽叽喳喳的低语。他径直朝他们走去，步伐飞快，这些人也看到了他，给他让出半边路，喧闹声戛然而止。于是，他也改变了方向，好像故意要压制他们一样，从他们中间穿了过去。女人们也仿佛接到指示或听到一声令下一样后退绕开，跟他保持足够安全的距离。一个男人跟在女人们身后似乎在驱赶她们，当克里斯默斯经过时，他回头看了一眼。另外两个男人面对克里斯默斯停在路中

间，克里斯默斯也停下脚步。双方似乎都没有走动，但彼此却渐渐逼近，像两团阴影飘了过来。克里斯默斯闻到了黑人的气息、廉价的衣料味以及汗臭味。那个黑人的头比他高出许多，好像背靠天空，从空中压近一样，俯下身。“是个白人，”黑人头也没回，平静地说，“白人兄弟，你想干啥？你在找人吗？”他的声音既不盛气凌人，也没有奴颜婢膝的味道。

“过这儿来，朱普。”跟在女人们身后的那个人说道。

“兄弟，你在找谁？”黑人又问。

“朱普，”一个女人略微抬高了声音说，“嗨，快过来。”

过了好久，一黑一白两个脑袋好像悬在黑暗中冲彼此呼吸一样。然后，好像从什么地方袭来一阵凉风，黑人的头似乎飘走了。克里斯默斯缓缓转过身来，望着他们渐渐散去，再次消失在苍茫的大路上。他发现自己手中早已握着那把剃刀，不过没有打开，他这样做并非出于恐惧。“杂种，”他大声骂道，“狗杂种！”

一阵风刮过，阴暗而清冷；就连吹进鞋里的灰尘都是那么凛冽。“他妈的，我到底怎么了？”他把剃刀装进口袋，站在那里点燃香烟。他舔了几下嘴唇才叼住香烟。借着火柴的亮光，他看到自己的双手在颤抖。“这一切的麻烦，”他心想，“该死的麻烦事儿。”他一边走，一边大声骂道。他仰望天空，看了看满天繁星，心想：“这会儿应该快十点了。”正在这时，他听到两英里外的法院传来了钟声，悠扬的钟声缓缓地敲了整整十下。他再次停下脚步，站在空旷孤寂的大路上，细数每一声钟响。“十点，”他想，“昨晚，我也听到十点的钟声。十一点，十二点，可我没有听到一点钟的声音。说不定风向变了。”

今晚，当他听到十一点的钟声时，他正靠在破门里的一棵树上，身后还是那幢淹没在树林中的黑乎乎的房子。今晚他没有再思考她可能也没有睡着。现在他什么都没有想，思绪还没有飘动，心中的声音也没有响起。他只是站在那里，一动不动，直到过了一会儿听到两英里外的钟敲了十二下，他站起身来开始朝那幢房子走去，他的步子不算快，甚至也没有思考要出事了，我要动手了。

记忆的领悟早于认知的顿悟，久于理解，甚至比认知能够猜测到的还要早。记忆中一直有一条走廊。走廊在一幢长期处于混乱、冷清状态的大房子里，房里回音不绝于耳；房子外暗红色的砖墙被烟囱以及周围更多的烟囱熏得乌黑、惨淡；屋外铺满炉渣的空地寸草不生，这些炉渣来自邻近地区那些冒烟的工厂，工厂被一圈十英尺高的铁丝网围起来，恍若一座监狱或动物园；这里偶尔会响起飘忽不定的声浪，记忆里回荡着孩子们欢呼雀跃的声音，孤儿们身穿统一的蓝色粗棉布制服。然而，这些记忆总是像晦暗的墙壁、凄凉的窗户一样清晰地进入认知；经年累月毗邻的烟囱吹来的煤灰落到窗户上，雨水将窗玻璃上的煤灰冲刷成一道道黑色的泪痕。

空荡荡、静悄悄的走廊里，在午后安静的时刻，一个男孩像影子一样认真安静地飘着。虽然他已经五岁了，但个子非常瘦小。即使走廊里还有一个人，那他也说不清小男孩什么时候从哪里消失，走进了哪扇门、哪个房间。不过，这个时候，走廊里不会再有别人。小孩知道这一点。自从他偶然发现营养师使用的牙膏那天开始，将近一年的时间里，他总会在这个时间出现在走廊。

一次，他走进房间，光着脚丫悄无声息地径直走向盥洗台，找到那支牙膏。他望着粉色的牙膏像蠕虫一样冰凉光滑地在他羊皮纸色的手指上缓缓缠绕，走廊里突然传来了脚步声，而且声音就在门外。也许他已经听出是营养师的声音。总之，不等弄清楚他们是否只是经过门口，他便拿着牙膏，仍旧像影子一样赤脚穿过房间，溜到房间里遮挡角落的布帘后面。他蹲在这里，置身精美的鞋子和悬挂的女士柔软的服饰间。他

蜷缩在那里，听到营养师和她的同伴走进房间。

他对营养师毫无概念，只是机械地将她和吃饭、食品、食堂以及木桌边的仪式联系在一起；营养师不时出现在他的视野范围内，但没有对他产生任何影响，不过能和快乐沾点边儿，看见她就会开心——年轻丰腴、柔滑白嫩，这些会令他想起食堂，嘴巴像吃到黏糊糊的甜食一样，也是粉嘟嘟、神秘的味道。第一次在营养师的房间里发现牙膏的那天，他就是径直走到那里的；他以前从未听说过牙膏，可他好像早已明白营养师会拥有这类东西，而且他会找到它。他也听出了她同伴的声音。这个人是乡村医院来的年轻实习生，是教区医生的助手，也是这所房子的常客，而且还说不上是敌人。

躲在帘子后面的他现在算是安全的。等他们一走，他就会把牙膏放回原处，然后也会离开。于是，他蹲在布帘后面倾听外面的动静，全然听不到那个女人紧张的低语声：“别，别在这里！这会儿不行。人们会抓到咱们。有人会——不，查理！请别这样！”那个男人说的话他更听不懂。在他看来，那个男声也很低，就像所有男人的声音那般冷酷无情。他太小，只能待在女人的世界，但此时他急切盼望逃回那里，哪怕只有片刻，他都愿意回到那样的世界，直到死去的最后一刻。他还听到了一些自己并不理解的声音：拖着脚走路的声音，钥匙在门锁里转动的声音。“不，查理！查理，请别这样！别，查理！”那个女人低声乞求道。他又听到了别的声音，窸窣的沙沙声，飒飒的声音，不过不是说话声。他并没有辨别这些声音，只是静静地等着，并没有特殊兴趣或刻意思索这个时间上床睡觉有些怪异。薄薄的帘子外再次传来女人微弱的低语声：“我害怕！快！快！”

他蹲在弥漫着温柔的女人气息的衣饰和鞋靴中。此时，他仅凭直觉就发现原本鼓鼓的牙膏被糟蹋了。虽然没有看到，但味觉告诉他那条凉

爽的隐形虫子像先前蜷曲在手指上一样，正自动爬进自己的嘴里，甜甜地刺激着嘴巴。平时，他只是含上一小口就把它放回原处，然后离开房间。即使他年仅五岁，但也明白不能贪心。也许是那条蠕虫在警告他，吃多了会生病；也许是人的本性警告他，贪多会让营养师发现牙膏在变少。这是他第一次吞了这么多。凭感觉他能感觉到牙膏在慢慢消失。他开始冒汗，接着，他发现自己流汗已经很久了，而且他什么都没做，汗水一个劲儿地往下淌。此时此刻，他什么也听不见，就算帘子外面有枪响，他可能也听不到。他的注意力似乎转到了自己身上，看着自己流汗，看着自己吞下肠胃并不愿意接受的另一条虫子。果然，虫子不再往下钻。一动不动，完全静默的他像化学家蹲在实验室一样等候着。没等多久，吞下的牙膏便立刻从体内直往上涌，企图退回到凉爽的空气中。这时的牙膏不再甜涩。他蹲在隐约散发着年轻女人气息的布帘后面，粉色的泡沫溢了出来，静静地听着体内的动静，带着令人惊讶的宿命论等待即将发生在他身上的一切。一切正如所料。他彻底输了，自言自语道：“喔，我完了。”

帘子突然拉开时，他没有抬头。一双手将正在呕吐的他粗暴地拽出来，他并没有反抗。他被那双手吊着，软弱无力地垂着，下巴耷拉着，呆呆地看着那张不再光滑粉嫩的脸蛋，上面堆满了蓬乱的头发。那些平整的发卷曾经让他想起过糖果。“小东西！”一个细弱愤怒的声音歇斯底里地骂道，“你这个讨厌的家伙，竟然监视我！你这个小黑杂种！”

营养师二十七岁，这是一个大胆去爱的成熟年龄，但毕竟还年轻，她更加关心会不会被人抓住，而不是爱情。她也极其愚蠢，以为一个五岁的小孩不仅能从声音推断她所干的一切，而且还会像成年人一样张扬此事。于是，在接下来的两天里，无论走到哪里，看到哪里，她都觉得孩子像动物一样，深邃而专注地审视着她，她越来越执拗地认为这个孩

子像个成年人：她相信他不仅打算说出去，而且还故意拖延时间让她受更多的折磨。她从没有想过那个孩子以为自己犯了大错，却迟迟未受惩罚，他的内心正备受折磨，因此才有意出现在她面前，以便挨一顿鞭打好抵消罪过，最终能息事宁人。

第二天，她完全陷入了绝望。她彻夜难眠，多数时间都是紧张兮兮地躺在床上，咬牙切齿地握紧拳头，又气又怕地喘着粗气，更糟糕的是她懊悔万分，无名的怒火在心中燃烧，她恨不得时间能倒退一小时，哪怕一秒钟也好。此时，就连爱情也被她抛到了九霄云外。现在，年轻医生在她心目中的地位甚至都比不过那个孩子，他只是自己灾难的诱因，更谈不上有所帮助。她不知道自己到底更恨谁，甚至连自己是睡是醒都不清楚。因为在她的眼皮子底下，视网膜上，无时无刻不闪现着那张羊皮纸色的脸，用寂静而严肃、让人无处可逃的眼神望着她。

到了第三天，她摆脱了梦魇般的昏迷状态，大白天里也不再昏昏欲睡；扎进人堆时也无须再绷紧神经戴上固定不变的痛苦面具。这一天，她开始采取行动。她毫不费力地找到了男孩，还是在走廊里，在晚饭后静悄悄的时候，空荡荡的走廊里找到了他。他站在那里什么也没做。或许他是尾随她而来。没有人知道他是不是在那里等候她。但她对此却不觉得有丝毫异样。他听到声音后，转过身，看到她也不觉得有什么奇怪。就这样，两张面孔对视着，一张脸不再柔滑，不再白里透红；另一张脸严肃而庄重，清醒的眼神里除了等待别无他意。他心想：“这下好办了。”

她说：“听着。”她没有往下说，只是盯着他，仿佛自己不知道接下来要说什么。孩子静静地等着，一动也不动。渐渐地，他后背的肌肉慢慢变得紧张起来，僵硬地绷展了，像块木板一样。她问：“你打算说出去吗？”

孩子没有回答，他觉得谁都能明白，他绝对不愿将牙膏事件和呕吐的丑事说出去。他没有看她的脸，只是静静地等待着，望着她的双手。她的一只手呈拳头状放在裙子口袋里。透过裙布，他能看到那只手紧紧地攥着。他从未挨过拳头，更没有为了接受惩罚而等待三天。当他看到那只手从口袋里掏出来时，他以为自己要挨揍了。然而，她没有这样做，她只是在男孩的眼皮底下伸开手掌，掌心里躺着一美元硬币。尽管走廊里只有他们两个人，她还是急忙细声细语地说道：“整整一美元。你可以拿它买好多东西。”虽然他早就听说过美元，但以前从未见过。他盯着硬币，像渴望啤酒瓶光闪闪的瓶盖一样希望得到它。但他不相信营养师会给他，因为如果这是他的钱，他肯定不舍得给营养师。他一直在等着挨抽，可最后却被释放了。她又着急又紧张，语速飞快，继续说道：“整整一美元呢，看见没有？你能买多少东西呀。每天吃都够你吃一个星期。说不定下个月我会再给你一个。”

孩子一声不吭，静静地像个雕塑大玩偶一样站在那里：安静、瘦小，圆圆的脑袋，圆圆的眼睛，穿着一件罩衫。他非常惊讶，目瞪口呆地站在那里一动不动，内心涌起一阵愤怒。看着那一美元硬币，他仿佛看到一管一管的牙膏像捆扎的木头一样源源不断地涌出来，令他十分恐惧。他情绪激动，非常厌恶地将整个身子都蜷曲起来。“我什么都不需要，”他说。“我再也不那样做了。”他心想。

这时，他甚至不敢看她的脸。他能感受到她的存在，听到她的声音和她悠长而战栗的呼吸声。他立刻闪过一念，这下我要挨揍了。可她甚至都没动他一下，只是用力抓住他，也没有去摇晃他一下，好像她的手并不知道接下来该怎么做。营养师的脸离他那么近，呼出的气息喷在他的脸颊上。他不必抬头就能知道她的脸此刻是什么样子。“说去吧！”她呵斥道，“随你说！你这个小黑杂种！”

这就是第三天发生的一切。到了第四天，她变得非常安静，她完全被气疯了，不再盘算什么，接下来只按照自己的预测来采取行动。那些不安的白天和难眠的夜晚里，她似乎躲在冷静的面具后看护着自己的恐惧和怒火，女人的本能让她很自然地领悟了邪恶的准确含义，并且融入了心灵。

此时，她非常平静，甚至暂时摆脱了急迫的状态。她似乎开始有时时间去观察和筹划，观察周围的情形，瞬间将心思和想法全部一股脑地放在了锅炉房门口的看门人身上。她没有推断或盘算过，只是好像坐在车内的乘客偶尔朝车窗外望去一样，很自然地看到一个邋遢的小个子男人。他坐在烟熏火燎的门口的藤椅里，正透过钢架眼镜阅读放在膝头的一本书。这个人简直像个固定摆设，她认识他已经五年了，却从没有真正看过他一眼，就算走在街上，她也认不出他来。尽管他也是个人，可即便从他身边经过，她也会视而不见。此时此刻，她的人生就像一条走廊一样笔直而简单，而他就坐在走廊的尽头。于是，她立即向他走去，没等意识到自己开始走路时，就已经踏上了那条肮脏的小道。

他坐在门口的藤椅里，膝上放着一本打开的书。她走近时，看到那是一本《圣经》。不过，她只是像看到落在他膝头的一只苍蝇一样瞅了一眼。“你也恨他，”营养师说，“你已经观察他很久了，我知道，你别不承认。”看门人将眼镜掀到眉梢，抬头望着她。这个人不算老，和他现在干的差事并不相称。他表情冷峻，正值壮年；他本应该过一种积极、勤快的生活，可天时、地利仿佛都遗忘了他，把一个身强体健、心智健康的四十五岁的男人扔进一潭死水，一种适合六十岁或六十五岁的人的境地。“你清楚，”她说，“在其他孩子叫他黑鬼之前你就知道了。你和他差不多同时来的这里。圣诞节晚上查理在门口台阶上发现了他，一个月后，你来这里干活儿了。对吧？”看门人长着圆圆的脸，略有些

松弛，胡子拉碴的脸特别脏。他的眼睛非常清澈，灰色的眼睛露出冷酷而疯狂的光芒，但这个女人却没有注意到。或许在她看来，他的眼神算不上疯狂。于是，他们站在积满煤灰的门口，用疯狂的眼睛望着彼此，用愤怒的声音互相交流。他们两个像密谋者一样沉着冷静，干净利落地交谈着。“我已经观察你五年了。”她对自己的话深信不疑。“你就坐在这张椅子上，一直注意着他。只有孩子们到户外时，你才会坐在这里。他们一出来，你就把椅子搬到这里坐下，这样你就能观察他们了。你盯着他，听别的孩子叫他黑鬼。我知道，你就是这么做的。你来这里就是为了观察他、痛恨他，他来的时候你就打算来了。说不准就是你把他带到这里，扔在台阶上的。总之，你心知肚明，而且我也知道。他一旦说出去，我就会被解雇。查理也许——会——告诉我。现在就告诉我真相。”

“哦，”看门人说，“我早知道，上帝决定要惩罚时，他就会把你们抓住。我早就知道。我知道是谁叫他躲在那里的，这是预兆，是对淫贱的诅咒。”

“对，他就藏在帘子后面，就像你和我这么近。你现在就告诉我真相。在你看他的时候，我读懂了你的眼神。我一直在注意你。五年了。”

“我知道，”他说，“我明白什么是邪恶。难道是我让邪恶站起来行走在上帝的世界里？是我让它污秽了上帝的颜面？上帝从没有阻止小孩子们说出来。你也听过他们叫喊。我绝对没有叫他们那样喊过，喊出他的本性，喊出受诅咒的名字。他们早就知道。有人告诉了他们，但不是我。我只是等待，等待上帝选择合适的时机，向他的芸芸众生揭露的时机。现在时机已到。这就是预兆，再次表现在女人的罪恶和淫贱上。”

“是，可我该怎么办呢？告诉我。”

“等待，像我这样等着。我已经等了五年，等上帝采取行动表明他的意志。他确实这样做了。你也等吧。等上帝准备好时，他就会向有权威的人表明意志。”

“对，有权威的人。”他们冷冷地看着对方，不过依然能保持平静的心态。

“女总管。上帝准备好了就会向她透露。”

“你是说，要是女总管知道了，就会把他送走？不错，可我等不了。”

“所以，你也不能催促上帝。我不是等了五年吗？”

她轻轻拍了一下手掌。“可你没看见吗？这也许是上帝的意志。让你来告诉我，因为你知道。也许上帝让你告诉我，再让我说给女总管听。”她那双疯狂的眼睛变得十分平静，凶狠的声音也非常耐心和冷静，只不过她的双手仍然在动个不停。

“你得等，像我这样等，”他说，“你已经尝到了上帝让人悔恨的力量，有三天了吧。我在他的手下生活了五年，观察、等待着他认为合适的时机，因为我的罪恶比你重得多。”尽管看门人在直视她的脸，但似乎根本没有看见她。他的眼睛没有看她，这双眼睛像瞎了一样睁得老大，冷冰冰的眼神露着狂热。“比起我的罪过和为赎罪而受的苦难，你做的一切和受的折磨不过是一把烂泥而已。我已经忍了五年，你算老几，敢为你那女人的淫荡去催促全能的上帝？”

她立即转过身。“行了。用不着你说，我知道，我早就知道他是个混血的黑鬼。”说着，她向楼房走去，走得不快，一路哈欠连天。“我只

需要想个办法，让女总管相信就行，这个人不会告诉她，他不会帮我。”她又长长地打了个呵欠，面无表情的她一直在打呵欠，接着呵欠也消失了，她刚想起些什么事。以前她没考虑过，但她觉得自己肯定想过，而且一直都知道，因为这个点子似乎还不错：他不仅会被赶出去，还会因为给我制造恐惧和麻烦受到惩罚。“他们会把他送到黑人孤儿院。”她想，“那当然，他们非这样做不可。”

她甚至都没有立刻去见女总管。她开始本来是要往那里去的，但没有进办公室。她发现自己经过办公室，然后继续爬楼梯。她好像是跟在自己后面，看自己到底要去哪里。此时，她走进寂静无人的走廊，又打了一个呵欠，让自己尽情放松。她回到自己的房间，锁上房门，脱掉衣服，躺在床上。窗帘已经拉上，屋里的光线也过了半明半暗的程度。她躺在床上，闭上眼睛，光滑的脸上没有任何表情。过了一会儿，她伸开双腿，又慢慢合拢，感受着身体下面的床单凉爽地滑过，然后又变得暖和而平滑。她已经三宿没睡了。此刻，思绪仿佛悬在失眠与昏昏欲睡之间，她舒展身体，像迎接一个男人一样去迎接睡眠。她想：“我只需要让女总管相信就行。”接着她又想：他在一群黑崽儿中间，活像咖啡豆里的小豌豆。

那是下午的事。晚上九点，她又要脱衣服睡觉时，听到看门人进了走廊，来到她门口。刚开始的时候，她不知道，也不可能知道门外有谁，她只听到一阵踏实的脚步声，接着是一阵敲门声。她还没来得及跳到门口，门马上就要被推开了。她没有叫喊，只是冲向门口，使出全身力气抵住门，紧紧顶着。她明白是谁在门外了，她愤怒地轻声说道：“我没穿衣服！”看门人没说话，使劲往里推着那扇快要打开的门，门缝越来越宽。“你别进来！”她叫起来，可声音却比悄悄话还低。她开始喘气，声音越来越弱，绝望地说道：“难道你不知道他们……”看门人

还是没有说话。她试图顶住房门，并阻止它继续向里打开。“让我穿上衣服再出来，行吗？”她的声音越来越低，语调柔弱无力，像同一个顽劣的小孩或精神失常的人徒劳无功地讲话一样，不断安慰、诱哄道：“你等等。听见没？等一下行吗？”他还是没有说话。房门依旧不可抗拒地慢慢打开。她身上只穿了一件内衣，紧紧靠在门上，活像个木偶在表演遭劫和无力招架的滑稽剧。她紧贴门板，低着头，一动不动地似乎陷入了沉思，好像木偶在表演过程中大脑处于混沌状态一样。突然，她一转身，迅速冲到床边，看都没看一眼就抓起一件衣服，然后又转身朝向门口，抓着衣服挡在胸前，蜷缩成一团。看门人早已走进房间，显然，他一直在注视她晕头转向，仓皇地乱抓乱扯的整个过程，等候着。

他还是穿着工作服，这会儿还戴了一顶帽子。他没有脱帽，那双冷酷、狂暴的灰眼睛似乎并没有看她，也根本不屑于瞧她一眼。“要是上帝亲自来到你这种人的房间，”他说，“你会认为他要跟你耍流氓吗？”他继续说道：“你告诉女总管了？”

这个女人坐在床上，手里抓着衣服，身子好像慢慢往里陷，脸色苍白地望着他。“告诉她？”

“她打算怎么处理？”

“处理？”她望着看门人：明亮而沉静的眼睛似乎并没有把她看在眼里，却已经把她包围了。她像个傻瓜一样瞠目结舌地看着他。

“他们要把他送到哪里？”她没有回答。“别跟我扯谎，别骗上帝。他们会把他送到一家黑人孤儿院。”她闭上了嘴，好像终于理解了这个人 在说什么。“哦，我明白了。他们要把他送到黑人孤儿院。”她仍然没有说话，而是开始观察他。惊魂未定的眼睛里露出诡秘的神色，心中暗

自盘算。而看门人望着她，目光好像聚焦在她整个人身上。“回答我，贱货！”他喊道。

“嘘——”她说，“是的，他们只能那样做，当他们发现……”

看门人说了一句：“喔。”他那尖锐的目光渐渐退却，放开了她，随后又将她困住。她望着那双眼睛，好像看到自己一文不值，像一截树枝飘荡在池塘里一样渺小。接着，他的目光里差不多开始有了人性，开始环视这个女人的房间，似乎以前从没有见过一样：私密、温暖、零乱，还有女人的香粉味。“污秽的女人，”他说，“在上帝面前。”他转身走出去。过了一会儿，那个女人才站起来。她抓着衣服一动不动地站在那里，像个傻瓜一样望着敞开的房门，好像自己不知道接下来要干什么。然后，她跑到门口，把门狠狠地关上，锁好，靠在门上大口喘着气，双手紧握房门的钥匙。

第二天早饭时间，看门人和那个孩子都不见了。人们没有发现他们的一点蛛丝马迹，于是立即报了警。他们发现一扇侧门被打开了，而看门人正好有这扇门的钥匙。

“因为他知道，”营养师告诉女总管。

“知道什么？”

“那个孩子，圣诞夜里来的那个孩子是个黑鬼。”

“什么？”女总管猛地跌回椅子上，望着这个年轻的女人，问道，“一个黑——我不相信！”她叫起来，“我不相信！”

“你可以不相信。”营养师说，“可他知道，所以他偷偷把那个孩子带走了。”

女总管五十多岁，面颊松弛，露出温柔、和善却又十分沮丧的神色。她说：“我不信！”可到了第三天，她又把营养师叫来。女总管一副没睡好的样子，相反，营养师却精神焕发，十分镇定。当女总管告诉她那个看门人和孩子都被找到时，她仍然镇静自若。“在小石城¹。”女总管说，“他企图把那个孩子送进一家孤儿院。人们觉得他像个疯子，就把他抓住了，一直等到警察来。”她看着年轻女人，问道：“你告诉过我.....那天你说.....你怎么知道的？”

营养师目不斜视地回答道：“我不知道，我一点都不懂。当然，其他孩子叫他黑鬼时，并没有什么别的意思。”

“黑鬼？”女总管重复道，“其他孩子？”

“他们叫他黑鬼已经好多年了。有时候，我觉得孩子们有着你我成年人不具备的理解力。孩子们，还有和他——那个老头——差不多年纪的人们都有那种理解力。所以，孩子们在院里玩耍的时候，他总是坐在门口，观察那个孩子。也许他从别的孩子叫他黑鬼中发现了什么。不过，可能他早就知道。你还记得吧，他们差不多是同时来的这儿。就在那晚之前——你没忘了吧，圣诞节——查——他们发现门口台阶上有个孩子，差不多一个月后，他来干活儿了。”她不紧不慢地说着，望着女总管眯缝起眼睛，困惑地看着自己，好像无力挪开一样。营养师的目光温和而单纯，继续说道，“所以，有一天我俩聊天时，他想告诉我关于那个孩子的一些事情。他想告诉我或者别人，最后他或许因为害怕没有说，我就走了。我当时压根就没想这件事，早把它抛到九霄云外了，等到——”她没有往下说，看着女总管。她的脸上浮现出一种恍然大悟的表情，像突然醒悟一样；谁也说不清这个表情是不是装出来的。“哦，所以——哦，我现在知道他们离开、失踪的前一天到底发生了什么。那天，我俩正好

聊过，他不愿告诉我原本想讲的事。我在走廊里走着，正要回自己的房间，他突然出现在我面前拦住了我。当时，我觉得好滑稽，因为我从没有在楼里见过他。他开口说话——声音有些狂躁，人也显得狂躁。他挡在走廊里，我怕了，吓得不敢动弹——他说：‘你告诉她了吗？’我就问：‘告诉谁？告诉什么？’后来我才明白他指的是你；他想知道我是不是跟你说了他想告诉我关于孩子的事。可我不知道他想让我跟你说什么事，所以我想叫喊。接着他又问：‘要是她知道了会怎么做？’当时我不知道该说什么，也不知道怎么才能摆脱他。他又说：‘用不着你说，我知道她会怎么做。她会把那孩子送到黑鬼孤儿院。’”

“黑鬼？”

“我不明白，为什么这么久咱都没发现。你现在瞧瞧他那张脸、那双眼睛和那头发。天哪，这太可怕了。可是我想，那是他该去的地方。”

女总管的眼镜后面是一双脆弱不安的眼睛，露出饱受折磨、焦灼的神色，仿佛她正强迫自己的眼睛超越极限努力睁大。“可他为什么要把孩子带走呢？”

“哦，假如你能理解我的想法，我觉得他是疯了。要是你像我一样，那晚——白天走廊里见过他，你也会这么认为的。当然，那孩子真可怜，跟白人在一起这么久，却要被送到黑鬼孤儿院。他是什么种族，并不是他的错。可也不是我们的错啊——”她停住了，望着女总管。老太太镜片后的眼睛仍旧那么困惑、迷茫，看不到一丝希望；她的嘴巴像要讲话一样颤抖着，她说出的每句话也是那么毫无希望，却掷地有声，果断而决绝。

“我们得处理他，立即处理他。我们有什么申请表？你把文件给我递过来……”

孩子醒来时发现自己被人扛着。伸手不见五指的寒夜里，有人小心翼翼地扛着他，悄悄走下楼梯。他和扛他的那条胳膊间紧压着些软东西，他知道那是自己的衣服。他没有大声呼叫，也没有弄出任何声音。通过气味和空气，他知道自己正在后楼梯，楼梯直通侧门；自他记事起，房间里就摆着他和其他四十个孩子的床。从气味上，他还辨别出背他的人是个男的。但孩子没有说话，像睡觉一样安静、轻松地趴着，高高地骑在看不见的胳膊上，随着那个人慢慢地向下移动，朝着通向活动场所的侧门走去。

他不知道是谁扛着自己，他也懒得去想，因为他觉得自己知道在往哪里走，知道这是在干吗。他也懒得关心会去哪里。时光回到两年前，那时他三岁。一天，他们中有个叫爱丽丝的十二岁女孩不见了。他一直喜欢她，把她当妈妈一样，或许这就是喜欢她的原因。而且，在他眼里，爱丽丝像成年女人一样成熟、高大，但不同的是，那些女人常常命令他吃饭、洗漱、睡觉，可爱丽丝却不会这么做，也不会成为他的敌人。一天晚上，爱丽丝把他叫醒，跟他告别，可他却不明白。他太困了，有点不高兴，还没有完全清醒，因为她一向对他很好。他并不知道爱丽丝在哭，因为他不知道成年人也会哭，等到他懂得时，早已忘记了爱丽丝。他一边对她心生不满，一边又进入梦乡。第二天早上，爱丽丝不见了。她就这样消失了，没有留下一丝痕迹，连件衣服都没有找到，就连她睡过的那张床也已经被新来的一个男孩占了。他永远都不会知道爱丽丝的下落。那天，一些帮爱丽丝准备过行装的年龄稍大的女孩在窃窃私语，也是在这样隐秘安静的气氛中，六个年轻女孩在帮第七个人准备婚礼。他听到她们说起新衣服、新鞋子以及接走爱丽丝的那辆马

车。这时，他才明白爱丽丝穿过铁丝网中间的大铁门，再也不会回来。他仿佛看见她在大门哐啷一声锁上的那一瞬间，变得那么豪迈，像夕阳一样壮阔地融入不可名状的灿烂辉煌中。一年多以后，他才知道爱丽丝不是第一个，也不会是最后一个，身穿新衣服或新罩衫，手拿鞋盒子般大小的布包，消失在紧锁的大门外。他相信，此刻，这样的事情在他自己身上发生了；他知道她们是如何设法不留任何痕迹地离开这里。他相信她们也像他一样，是在死寂的夜里被人带走的。

现在，他觉得快走到门口了，而且这会儿距离门非常近；他准确地知道还剩多少级看不见的楼梯，背着他的那个男人将会小心翼翼地把她悄悄放下。他的脸颊上可以感受到那个人安静、急促地呼出的热气；他的身子下面是紧绷结实的臂膀，卷成一堆的是他摸黑抓起的衣服。那个人停了下来。他蹲下的时候，孩子也顺势滑落到地上，脚趾触碰到冰冷的木地板时突然缩了回来。这个人第一次开口说话。“站起来。”他说。这下，孩子知道这个人是谁了。

他立刻认出了这个人，一点都不觉得惊讶。要是女总管知道他竟然和这个人这么熟悉，反倒会大吃一惊。他不知道这个人叫什么，尽管他是个活生生的人，可是三年中他们连一百个字都没说过。然而，这个人在他的生活中却占据着一定的分量，包括爱丽丝在内无人能比。即便他只有三岁，他也知道他俩之间有种默契。他知道，每当他在活动场所出现时，这个人没有一刻不坐在锅炉房门口的椅子上望着他，看得那么认真，那么全神贯注。如果孩子稍大点，他也许会想，这个人对我又恨又怕，因此，片刻都不敢让我离开他的视线。像他这样的年龄，如果懂得更多的词语，也许他会认为，这就是我的与众不同之处，因为他总是在看着我。他接受这一切。因此，当他发现是这个人将他从熟睡中，从床上背下楼梯时，他一点都不觉得奇怪。漆黑的寒夜里，他站在门口，那

个男人帮他穿上衣服，他也许会觉得，这个人这么恨我，甚至于要极力阻止即将发生在我身上的事情。

孩子冻得直打哆嗦，以最快的速度顺从地穿起衣服，两人摸索着总算把两件小衣服穿在他身上。“你的鞋，”这个人用几乎听不见的声音跟他耳语道，“在这儿。”孩子坐在冰凉的地板上穿好鞋子。这时，那个人并没有碰他，可孩子还是能听到、感觉到那个人也正弯腰忙活着什么。他心想他也在穿鞋。孩子没有系好鞋带，他还没学会自己系鞋带，但他没有告诉那个男人自己没有系鞋带。他压根儿没吭气，只是站在那里，然后便被一件大衣服完全包裹起来——从衣服的气味上他辨别出这是那个男人的衣服——接着他又被扛起来。门轻轻开了。清冷的空气扑进来，街灯也照进来，他能够看到灯光和工厂光秃秃的墙壁，还有星空下没有冒烟的烟囱。在街灯的映衬下，铁丝围栏像一排排饥肠辘辘的士兵站在那里。他们穿过空旷的活动场所，他那双悬垂的脚丫子随着那个人迈开的大步有节奏地摇晃着，没系鞋带的鞋子脱到了脚踝处。他们穿过了大铁门。

没等多久，电车就来了。假如他再大一些，他定会称赞这个人会掌握时间。可他并没有想这些，或者压根儿没有注意。他们站在街角，孩子穿着没有系鞋带的鞋子站在那个男人身边，包着他的大衣服直拖到脚踝，双眼圆睁，安详的小脸上睡意全无。电车发出尖厉的刺啦声停下来，他们上车时一排排窗户还在嗡嗡地震颤。刚过凌晨两点，车内几乎空空荡荡的。这时，男人发现孩子没有系鞋带，于是就帮他系好。孩子静静地坐在位子上，两腿直直地伸到男人面前，看着他系鞋带。他以前坐过电车，知道离车站还有很远一段距离。所以等他们到站时，他已经睡着了。等他醒来时，天已大亮，而且他们已经在火车上坐了很久。他以前从未坐过火车，也没有人跟他提起过。他像乘电车一样安静地坐

着，全身裹在男人的衣服里，只有脑袋和双脚露在外面。村庄——山岭、树木、奶牛等等——在他眼前都一一闪过，他以前从未见过这些。男人看见他醒了，便拿出用报纸包着的食物，里面是面包夹火腿。“给，”男人说。孩子接过面包，一边吃一边看着窗外。

孩子一声不吭，没有表现出任何诧异，甚至到第三天警察来带走他俩时，他还是这样。他们现在所处的地方和那晚离开的地方没什么两样——同样是孩子，只是姓名不同而已；同样是成年人，只是气味不同。他不明白为什么要离开原来的地方，也不明白为什么不继续待在那里。然而，当人们过来叫他起床、穿衣服，却不告诉他原因和去向时，他也不觉得奇怪。也许他知道自己要回去了，也许凭着孩子异常的洞察力，他一直就知道不会住在这里，也不可能长久住下去，可那个人却不明白这一点。他再一次坐上火车，望着同样的山岭、树木和牛群，不过是在火车的另一边，另一个方向。警察给了他吃的，还是面包夹火腿，但不是从报纸里取出来的。他注意到了，不过什么都没说，也许他根本没想这些。

于是，他又回家了。或许他以为回来后会受到惩罚，但为什么惩罚，惩罚的确切理由是什么，他并不期望弄清楚，因为他早已经明白，尽管孩子们认为大人就是大人，可大人却不把孩子当大人看。他也已经把牙膏事件忘在了脑后。现在，他像一个月前巴望着见到营养师一样，急切地避免和她碰面。他忙于回避她，竟然忘了回避的原因；很快他也忘了那次旅行，因为他从来不知道二者之间有什么关系。偶尔，他会隐隐约约想起来，但也只限于朝锅炉房门口看时，才会想起有人曾经坐在那里看着他，可那个男人现在却不见了，消失得无影无踪，甚至那把藤椅也没有放在门口，就像那些离去的人一样销声匿迹。对于他的去向，孩子根本没有想过，没有考虑过。

一天晚上，人们在教室找到他。当时正好是圣诞节的前两周。两个年轻女人——营养师不在其中——带他去了浴室，给他洗澡，梳理湿漉漉的头发，穿上干净的罩衫，把他领到女总管的办公室。办公室里坐着一个陌生的男人。他一看到这个人，没等女总管开口就已经明白了。也许是记忆让他明白，明白后便开始回想；或许还会让他有所期待，因为五岁的孩子太小，没有经历太多绝望，便不会有太多希望。或许，他突然记起了火车和面包，因为记忆只能追溯到那个时候。“约瑟夫，”女总管问，“你愿意跟善良的人们去乡下过日子吗？”

孩子穿着硬挺的新罩衫，站在那里听陌生人说话，耳朵和脸蛋被粗糙的肥皂和毛巾擦得火辣辣、红扑扑的。孩子看了陌生人一眼，这个人相当壮实，蓄着浓密的棕色胡子，一头短发理了有些日子了。他的头发和胡子都很坚硬，一副生机勃勃的样子，没有夹杂一丝银白，虽然从脸上看，他有四十多岁，但似乎年龄不会影响色素。浅色的眼珠看上去有些冷漠。他身穿一套笔挺、体面的黑色西装，一只干净的大手抓着一顶黑色的帽子紧紧扣在膝上，就连握着软帽边的手指也握成了一只拳头。一条沉重的银表链横跨在马甲上。手工擦出来的厚实的黑皮鞋闪耀着光泽，并排踩在地上。就算孩子只有五岁，但也能看出他不抽烟，而且也不会容忍别人抽烟。孩子不敢看他，就因为他的那双眼睛。

可是，孩子知道那个人正盯着自己，全神贯注地观望，眼神冷峻却并非故意表现得严酷。只要他事先确信会出毛病，或有意要购买，他会以同样的眼神去审视一匹马或一张二手的犁。这个人说话很谨慎，话不多，却非常沉闷；这样的声音要求听众不必专心倾听，却一定要安静。“你没办法弄清楚，也不愿告诉我关于他父母的更多事情。”

女总管没有抬头。显然，镜片后的眼睛已经皱成了一堆，起码现在如此。她立刻回话，甚至有点太过急切地说：“我们绝不会查证孩子的

父母。像我以前跟你说过的，圣诞节前夜他被扔在这里的台阶上，再过两周就五年了。如果孩子的父母对你很重要的话，你最好别收养孩子。”

“我不全是这个意思。”陌生人又说，这时，他的语调稍有些缓和，想立即致歉却又不愿退让，“我觉得应该先和阿特金小姐（营养师的名字）联系一下，因为我一直在和她通信。”

几乎没等他说完，女总管便又急忙冷冷地说道：“不管是这个或是哪个孩子，也许我能给你阿特金小姐知道的一切，因为她在这里的工作仅限于厨房和食堂。不过是碰巧让她热心地充当了我和你通信的秘书而已。”

“没关系，”陌生人说，“没关系，我只是想……”

“想干吗？我们不会强迫任何人领养我们的孩子；只要孩子们的愿望合情合理，我们也不会强迫他们违背自己的意愿。关键是双方自己商量，我们只是建议。”

“哦，”陌生人又说，“我刚才说过了，没关系。我不怀疑他是个合适人选。他会发现，跟我和麦克依琴太太生活在一起是个很好的归宿。我们现在也不年轻了，喜欢安静地过日子。他不会过什么锦衣玉食、游手好闲的生活，但绝不会干什么不利于身心的活儿。虽然不清楚他的身世，但我相信，跟我们在一起，他长大后敬畏上帝，憎恨懒惰和虚荣。”

就这样，两个月前的那个下午，他以一支牙膏签下的约定终于解除了。这位至今仍然稀里糊涂的签约人正被裹在一条干净的毯子里，小小的身子，一动不动地缩成一团，随着轻便马车颠簸，穿过十二月的夕

阳，驶上一条满是冰辙的小巷。他们走了整整一天，中午的时候，这个男人给孩子从车座下的纸箱里取出三天前做好的农家食物，直到这个时候，男人才开始同他讲话。他戴着露指手套，握着马鞭，指了指小路前方暮霭中露出一丝光亮，只说了一个字——“家”。孩子没有吭声。男人低头看了他一眼。为了抵御严寒，男人裹得严严实实的蹲在那里，庞大臃肿的身形宛若大石块般岿然不动，与其说他没有绅士风度，还不如说是冷酷无情。“我说那是你的家。”孩子还是没有吭气。他从来没见过家，所以他不知道要说什么。况且他还小，还没学会说空话套话。“你会发现有饭吃，有地儿住，还有基督信徒的照顾。”男人说，“力所能及的活儿可以防止你顽劣。因为我马上就会让你懂得懒惰和虚荣是两大罪恶，劳动和敬畏上帝是两大美德。”孩子还是没有说话。他从没有劳动过，也没有敬畏过上帝。他对上帝的了解还不及对劳动的概念。他见过男人们每周扛着铁锹和耙子劳动六天，而上帝却只在周日出现。而且在这天——除了伴随有折磨人的整洁穿戴外，还会有悦耳的音乐和根本不会骚扰耳朵的字句——虽然有些无聊，可总的来说还是非常愉快的。孩子什么都没说。马车继续颠簸，精心饲养的膘肥体壮的马儿急速奔向畜棚，奔向家园。

他直到后来才想起一件事情，这时的记忆已经不再接受他的面容，不再接受回忆的表象。当时，他们正在女总管的办公室。孩子一动不动地站在那里，任凭陌生人的目光落在他身上，他没有去看，只是等待那个人说出眼神里的想法。接着，男人开口说道：“克里斯默斯。一个异教徒的名字，亵渎神明，我得改改。”

“那是你的合法权利，”女总管说，“我们不关心他叫什么，只在乎你们怎么对他。”

但陌生人却并没有听任何人说话，也没有向某个人宣布：“从今以

后，他就叫麦克依琴。”

“不错，”女总管说，“让他跟你姓。”

“他要吃我家的饭，信仰我的宗教，”陌生人说，“怎么能不跟我姓呢？”

孩子什么都没有听见。他不关心，也不是特别在乎。即使天气不热，但这个人却非说热的话，孩子也不会在意。他甚至都懒得对自己说：我不叫麦克依琴，我叫克里斯默斯。而且现在没必要管这些，有的是时间。

“对啊，怎么不能？”女总管说。

[1](#)小石城（Little Rock），美国阿肯色州首府和最大的城市、河港。

记忆中有这么一天，二十年后记忆仍然无法忘记，这一天我成年了。干净的斯巴达式1房间里充满了礼拜日的氛围。微风轻轻吹拂窗户上织补过的干净窗帘，送来新翻的泥土和野果的味道。房间里放着一架仿橡木制的黄色手风琴，风琴踏板上垫着磨损的旧地毯，上面放着一只水果坛子，里面插满了飞燕草。男孩坐在桌子旁边的一张直背椅里，桌上放着一盏镍制油灯和一本大部头的《圣经》，《圣经》还配了黄铜钩、铰链和锁扣。他穿着一件干净的无领白衬衫，一条崭新的粗布黑裤子。脚上的皮鞋最近刚刚擦过，但八岁的他在擦鞋时难免笨手笨脚，到处都是斑点，尤其是脚后跟处的鞋油还没有擦匀。他的面前有一本《长老教会2要理》摆在桌子上。

麦克依琴站在桌边。他穿着一件干净光亮的衬衣，黑色的裤子，第一次和孩子见面时穿的就是这条裤子。他那润泽的头发依然没有银丝，整洁而硬挺地立在脑袋上。他的胡须也修理得那么有光泽。“你没有用心去记。”他说。

孩子没有抬头，也没有动弹。但麦克依琴的脸色变得更加严苛。“我用心了。”

“那再记一次，我再给你一个小时。”麦克依琴说着，从口袋里掏出一块厚银表，表面朝上放在桌上，又拉来一张直背椅，在桌边坐下。一双干净的手放在膝盖上，笨重的皮鞋擦得光亮，整齐地踩在地上，鞋上没有鞋油涂抹不匀的任何迹象，但昨天晚饭时确实有斑点，孩子还为此挨了一顿抽打。当时，孩子已经脱了衣服准备上床睡觉，后来只穿了件衬衫又把它们擦了一遍。孩子坐在桌子旁边，面无表情地低下头，一动

也不动。春意盎然的微风轻轻吹进黯淡整洁的房间。

这是上午九点，他们从八点起就在那里了。附近有教堂，不过长老派的教堂在五英里之外，乘马车得一个小时才能到达。九点半的时候，麦克依琴太太走进来。她已经穿戴完毕，一身黑衣，戴着一顶软帽——她个子不高，有点驼背，长着一张饱经风霜的脸，怯懦地走进来。她看上去比粗壮、精力充沛的丈夫要老十五岁。她没有完全走进屋里，只是在门边站了一会儿。她头戴软帽，身上的黑衣服虽然已经褪色，但总是被她洗得很干净。她的手里拿着一把雨伞和一把棕榈叶扇子。她的眼神有些古怪，好像无论看到什么或听到什么，总是要通过男人的身子或声音来直接接收，好像她只是中介，强壮冷酷的丈夫却是操纵器。他或许听到了她进门的声音，但并没有抬头，也没有搭理她。麦克依琴太太转身离开了。

刚好一个小时的时限到了，麦克依琴抬起头，问道：“现在记住了吗？”

男孩没有挪动，回答道：“没有。”

麦克依琴像早有准备一样，不急不躁地站起来。他拿起银表，合上表盖，放回口袋，把表链穿过吊带，在胸前又绕了一圈。“来，”他头也不回地说道。男孩跟在身后，昂首挺胸，沉默不语地穿过大厅，朝后院走去。他俩倔强的身影那么相似，仿佛有血缘关系一样。麦克依琴太太在厨房里，还是戴着帽子，拿着雨伞和扇子。她看着他们经过时，叫了一声：“他爸。”他俩都没有朝她看一眼。他们或许没有听见，或许她根本不该开口。他们继续一前一后稳步向前走去，两人挺直的腰板显示出互不妥协的味道，就算是真的父子亲缘关系也不可能有这么相似。他们穿过后院，继续前行，进了马厩。麦克依琴打开栅栏门站在旁边，男孩

进了栅栏。麦克依琴从墙上取下马鞭。这条马鞭和他的皮鞋一样，都是不新不旧、干干净净的，而且它的气味和主人身上的一样：干净倔强的刚性皮子的味道。他低头看着男孩。

“书在哪儿？”他问。男孩从容地站在他面前，纹丝不动，光滑的羊皮纸脸色略显苍白。“你没带书，”麦克依琴说，“回去取来。”他的声音不算刻薄，但简直没有一丝人情味儿，冷冰冰的不留一点余地，像书面或印刷的字迹一样不可更改。孩子转身走出去。

当他到家时，麦克依琴太太正站在厅堂中。“乔。”她叫了一声。孩子没有说话，甚至没有看她，没有看她的脸，也没有注意到她的手伸出一半后僵硬地停在那里，这本来是人类可以做出的最温柔的动作，而她却那么僵硬滑稽。他板着脸，快步从她身边走过。他生硬的表情里透着骄傲，或许有些心灰意冷，或者说是一种虚荣，是男人愚蠢的虚荣心在作祟。他从桌上拿了《长老教会要理》，返回马厩。

麦克依琴握着马鞭还等在那里。“放下。”孩子便把书放到地上。“不是这儿，”麦克依琴冷冰冰地说，“你以为马厩的地上，牲畜踩踏的地方，适合放上帝的教义？为这个，我也要让你明白。”他亲自拿起书，放到壁架上。“脱掉裤子。”他说道，“我们不要把它弄脏。”

于是，孩子站在那里，把裤子脱到脚面，单薄的衬衫下露出两条腿。他直直地站在那里，一副弱不禁风的样子。皮鞭落在身上时，他没有退缩，脸上也没有露出颤动的表情。他直视前方，全神贯注，像照片中的僧侣一样沉静。麦克依琴的抽打很有条理，铆足了劲慢慢抽下去，还是那样不急不躁。很难说哪张脸更加专注，更加沉着，更加自信。

他抽了十下后停了下来。“拿着书，”他说道，“别提裤子。”他把

《长老教会要理》递给男孩。孩子接过书，还是直挺挺地站着，傲慢地昂着头，捧着书。要是穿上牧师的白袍，他准会像天主教唱诗班的孩童，朦胧晦暗的栅栏就是中央殿堂，粗木板墙壁外充满氨气味和草料味，卑微的牲畜不时地发出鼻息声和慵懒沉闷的蹄声。麦克依琴端坐在草料箱上，双膝伸展，一手搭在膝头，一手握着银表，他那张留着胡子的脸像石雕般坚定，冰冷无情的眼神中透着仁慈。

就这样，他们又待了一个小时。此前，麦克依琴太太到过后门一次，但她什么都没说，只是站在那里，看着马厩。她依旧戴着帽子，拿着雨伞和扇子。后来，她又回了屋里。

这回，麦克依琴又是分秒不差地将怀表装进口袋。“这会儿懂了吗？”他又问。孩子直挺挺地站着没有说话，手捧翻开的书。麦克依琴从他手中拿过书，否则孩子站在那里根本不会动。“重复一遍教义。”麦克依琴说道。孩子直直地盯着面前的那堵墙，尽管他的皮肤本就光滑白嫩，但此刻却十分惨白。麦克依琴小心翼翼地把书放到壁架上，再次拿起皮鞭。他抽了十下。抽完后，孩子木然地站了好久。他还没有吃早饭，他俩都没有吃早饭。接着，孩子摇晃了，要是没人抓住他的胳膊，扶他一把的话，他准会摔倒。“来，”麦克依琴想把他领到饲料箱边，说道，“坐这儿。”

“不，”孩子说着，猛地把胳膊从大人手里拉出来。麦克依琴放开了他。

“没事儿吧？是不是病了？”

“不。”孩子回答道。他的声音很虚弱，脸色惨白。

“拿着书，”麦克依琴说着，把书塞到孩子手里。马厩窗户外，麦克

依琴太太从房里走出来。现在，她换了一件褪色的宽大长罩衣，戴了一顶遮阳帽，提着柏木桶。她经过窗户时没朝栅栏看一眼，就消失了。过了一会儿，他们听到井边辘轳发出缓缓的咯吱声，不经意间打破了安息日的气氛。接着，麦克依琴太太又出现在窗边，使劲保持手中水桶的平衡，再次回到屋里，还是没有看马厩。

又到了一个小时。麦克依琴的视线从表上挪开，问道：“记住了吗？”孩子不说话，也不动弹。麦克依琴走近时，发现他根本没有看书，两眼空洞地盯着书出神。当他把手放在书上时，孩子像抓绳子或棍子一样，紧紧地抓住那本书，麦克依琴用力抽出书来，孩子扑通一声全身倒地，再不能动弹一下。

等他醒过来时，已经是傍晚了。阁楼里，他躺在自己的床上。楼顶很低，房间却十分安静，这时房间里洒满了夕阳。他觉得舒服些了，静静地望着头顶倾斜的天花板，在床上躺了一会儿，后来才意识到有人坐在床边，是麦克依琴。现在，他换上了平日里穿的衣服，不是下地干活时的工作服，而是一件褪色的干净的无领衬衫，还有整洁的咔叽裤子。“你醒了，”说着，他把手伸过来，掀开了被子，“过来。”

孩子没有动，“你又要打我吗？”

“过来，”麦克依琴说，“起来。”男孩从床上爬起来，穿着单薄、难看的棉布内衣站在那里。麦克依琴肌肉僵硬地走着，像用尽全身力气一样，笨重地挪动着臃肿的身子。男孩带着小孩毫无兴趣的表情，看着这个男人慢慢地跪在床边，非常吃力。“跪下，”麦克依琴说。孩子跟着跪下，两人跪在狭小昏暗的房间里：小个子穿着用大人衣服改制的内衣，无情的大个子男人永远不明白什么是怜悯，也不会对自己产生任何质疑。麦克依琴开始祷告，祷告了很长时间，他的声音慵懒而单调，让人

昏昏欲睡。他请求上帝宽恕，因为他冒犯了安息日，动手打了一个孩子、一个孤儿、一个上帝疼爱的人。他还祈求孩子可以在被他所嘲弄和抗拒的人的引导下，倔强的心灵可以变柔软；上帝可以宽恕孩子不服管束的罪过；恳请全能的主以慈悲为怀，能像他一样宽宏大量。

祷告完毕，他又吃力地站起来。孩子依旧跪着，一动不动。但他始终睁着眼睛（他一直没有掩面或低头），而且他的面容十分沉着、冷静，简直有些不可思议。他听见那个男人在放着油灯的桌上摸索着。男人擦亮一根火柴，喷出火光，火苗稳稳地点燃灯芯，球形灯罩下麦克依琴的手好像在血里浸泡过似的。灯影摇曳了几下后不动了。麦克依琴从桌上的油灯旁拿起《长老教会要理》。他有着高耸的鼻梁，凸出的脸颊，胡楂儿蔓延至戴着眼镜的深邃的眼窝处。他低头看着孩子说道：“拿着书。”

星期日早饭前这件事情就开始了。他还没有吃早餐，可能他俩都没有想到这事儿。尽管麦克依琴到过餐桌边，请求上帝免除他渴望食物以及非吃不可的罪责，但实际上并没有吃饭。午饭时，筋疲力尽的他已经睡着了。晚饭时，他们谁都没有想到食物。孩子甚至不明白自己出了什么问题，为什么会那么虚弱和安静。

他躺在床上思索着。此时，屋里依然亮着油灯，外面一片漆黑。事情已经过了许久，可他觉得一扭头仍能看到他俩跪在床边的情景，或者说至少能想象出地毯上留下的两对膝盖的印迹。甚至连空气中还弥漫着沉闷的声音，像梦中呓语，祈祷、恳请，和某种灵气争论着，而这种灵气却没有在真真切切的地毯上留下任何虚幻的痕迹。

他双手交叉放在胸口，像陵墓雕像一样躺着。这时，他又听见狭窄的楼梯上响起了脚步声，脚步声不是那个男人的。他听到过麦克依琴驾

着马车在黄昏离去，赶往三英里外的教堂，但不是长老会的教堂，他要
去那里为上午的事件赎罪。

不用扭头，孩子就听出是麦克依琴太太吃力地爬楼梯的声音。她走
近床边，孩子没有抬眼，过了一会儿，她的身影映在了墙上，他看见麦
克依琴太太手里端着什么东西，那是一盘食物。她把托盘放在床上，可
他还是没有看她一眼，也没有动弹一下。“乔，”她叫道。孩子没有
动。“乔，”她又叫了一声。她看见孩子睁着眼睛，却没有碰他。

“我不饿。”他说。

麦克依琴太太站着没动，双手交叉搭在围裙上，似乎也没有盯着
他，仿佛只是对着床那边的墙说话：“我知道你在想什么，不是你想的
那样。他没有让我给你拿吃的，是我自己的想法，他不知道。这吃的不是
他送给你的。”孩子还是不为所动，抬起头望着倾斜的木条天花板，
面容像石雕一样沉静。“你已经一天没吃东西了，起来吃吧。他没有让
我给你送饭，他不知道。他走了我才亲自给你做的。”

这时，他坐起来。她看着他从床上起身，拿起托盘，走到墙角，将
托盘里的碗碟和食物全部倒在地板上。然后，他回到床边，像捧着圣体
匣一样端着空盘子。他身上穿的白色内衣，原本是买给大人穿的，后来
改小给他做了内衣。麦克依琴太太站着没有动，双手仍然搭在围裙上，
但这会儿她不再望着他。他回到床上，再次躺下，睁大眼睛望着天花
板。他能看到麦克依琴太太一动不动的身影，模糊的轮廓，还有点驼
背。不久，影子消失了。他没有看一眼，但他听见她走到墙角，将打碎
的碗盘放进托盘。然后，她离开了房间。这时，房间陷入了沉静。油灯
的灯芯稳稳地燃着，墙上飞蛾盘旋的影子像飞鸟一样大。透过窗户，他
能嗅到夜的漆黑，闻到春天和泥土的气息。

那时，他刚刚八岁。多年后，记忆才让他想起这一切；那一夜过后的好几年，他才记起一小时后他翻身下床，走到墙角跪下，但姿势不是跪在地毯上的那种。他跪在那堆受了凌辱的食物旁，像野人，像狗一样，用手抓着吃。

此时，薄暮冥冥，离家还有几英里。尽管他在星期六下午有空闲时间，但他从没有在这这么晚的时间里，离家这么远过。等他回了家，他会挨鞭子的，不过与他在外边有没有干什么坏事无关。即使他没有干坏事，回到家后，准会挨一顿打，就像麦克依琴发现他做过坏事一样抽他。

然而，或许他还不明白自己本来没打算干坏事。黄昏，他们五个人悄悄守在废弃的刨木棚附近，躲在塌陷的门道里，看到一百码外有个黑人女孩走进去，她回头看了一眼便不见了。这是年纪稍大点的一个男孩事先安排好的，他第一个跟了进去。其他男孩抽签决定进去的顺序。他们穿着相同的工装，住在方圆三英里之内；他们和名叫乔·麦克依琴的男孩一样，从十四五岁起就像大人一样犁地、挤奶、劈柴。也许乔从没有想过他在作恶，因为对于十四岁的男孩来说，最严重的错误是被人公开定义为处男。直到想起有人等候在家里时，他才意识到了错误。

轮到乔了。他走进刨木棚，里面黑乎乎的。他立刻觉得仓皇袭来，十分恐惧，体内有什么东西想要冲出来，这让他想起牙膏在胃里的感觉。可他不能马上就走，只能站在那里，闻着女人的气味，他立刻辨别出那是黑人的味道。他被黑人女孩的气味包围着，被急促驱赶着，不得不等在那里，等她开口：这种声音不是什么特殊字眼，而是一种浑然不知的召唤。这时，他仿佛看见了她——像什么东西可怜地伏在那里，或许是那双卑微的眼睛。他俯下身，仿佛看到一口漆黑的深井，井底的两道亮光像死亡星球的折光。接着，他又一次碰到了她，因为他在踢打她。

他用力地踢打，女孩发出惊恐的哀号。她开始尖叫，男孩抓住她的胳膊，猛地把她拉起来，狂暴地一顿乱揍，也许他是冲着声音去的，反正总能打在她的皮肉上。他被女人的气息和张皇失措包围着。

接着，她从他的拳头下逃了出来。其他人一窝蜂扑在他身上，摸黑和他扭打起来，他只好往后退，愤怒而绝望地喘着粗气，奋力还击。这时，他闻到了男性的气味，是他们的味道；而那个女孩也叫喊着，不知逃到了什么地方。他们几个拳打脚踢，不管是手还是身体，只要能摸到就打，直到众人扭成一团，把他压在最下面。但他还在挣扎，边哭边反抗。这会儿，那个女孩早已消失得无影无踪。他们只顾打架，好像刮来一阵强风，狠狠地把他们吹倒在地。他们按住他，让他无力反击。“这下服输了吧？我们抓住你了。承认输了吧。”

他气喘吁吁地扭动着，答道：“不。”

“认输吧，乔。你打不过我们的。再说，大伙儿不想跟你打。”

“不。”他喘着粗气，挣扎着说。此刻，众人扭成一团，分不清你我，他们已经将女孩儿忘得一干二净；即使原来明白为何而打架，现在也记不得了。对于那四个孩子而言，这种举动纯属无意识的自然反应，出于男性好斗的自发冲动，为了那个刚才与他或者正要同他交媾的女孩。可他们谁也不明白他为什么会打她。他们把他按倒在地，用紧张的声音悄悄地商量着。

“你们几个先散开。剩下的人同时一起撒手。”

“谁抓着他？我手里抓的谁？”

“嗨，松手。等一下：他在这儿。我和——”他们再次乱作一团，互相

扭打着，然后他又被按住了。“这下抓住他了。你们全都散开，往出跑，给我腾个地方。”

两个人站起来，迅速退到门外。另外两个好像突然从地上，从晦暗的刨木棚里腾空而起，一溜烟地跑了。他们一松手，乔立马还击，可他们早已跑远。他躺在地上，看着他们四个在薄暮中奔跑，慢慢地转身往回看。他站起来，出了刨木棚。他站在门口拍拍身上的泥土，同样这也纯属无意识的动作；而在不远处，那四个男孩静静地站在一起，转过头来望着他。他没有看他们一眼，继续往前走。暮色中，他的工装也成了暗色。天色已晚，满天的繁星像盛开的茉莉花一样。他径直向前走，没有回头。他一直往前走，像幽灵一样渐渐远去；远处观望的孩子们静静地挤在一起，在昏暗的夜色中露出四张苍白的小脸。突然，人群中响亮地冒出一声：“嘿！”他没有回头。又有一个声音传来，平静而清晰：“乔，明天教堂见。”他没有回答，继续往前走，还不时地用手机机械地拍拍身上的工装。

当他快到家时，西边的光亮已经全部消失了。畜棚后边的牧场有条清泉，黑暗中他能听到、闻到一片垂柳，却看不到。当他走近时，小青蛙的歌声戛然而止，像许多琴弦同时被剪刀剪断一样。他跪在水边，天色太暗，简直看不清脑袋的轮廓。他洗了洗脸和肿胀的眼睛，然后继续往前走。他穿过牧场，朝厨房的灯光走去。灯光像只眼睛一样注视他，带着恫吓召唤他。

当走到空地上的栅栏附近时，他停了下来，望着厨房窗户透出的灯光，靠着栅栏站了一会儿。热闹的草丛中，蟋蟀活蹦乱跳地鸣唱；露珠剔透的苍茫大地上，黑压压的树丛中，萤火虫上下飞舞，自由闪烁。屋子旁边有一棵树，一只知更鸟在枝头歌唱。在他身后是隔着泉水的树林，两只夜莺在说悄悄话。再往远处，好像到了夏夜的终极地平线，一

只猎犬在狂吠。然后，他穿过栅栏，看到有人静静地坐在马厩门口，马厩里有两头母牛还等着他去挤奶。

他认出那是麦克依琴，似乎并不觉得奇怪，仿佛整个事件都十分合乎逻辑，都在情理之中，逃也逃不掉。也许，他当时正在思考自己和这个人之间素来了解彼此，也依赖彼此，只有那个女人让人捉摸不透。也许他对受惩罚并无异议，即使他没有犯下麦克依琴认为他可能会犯的大罪，那结果也和他已经犯罪没什么区别。麦克依琴没有起身，他依旧坐在那里，像块岩石一样冷漠，他的白色衬衫在晦暗的门缝处变得模糊不清。“我已经挤过奶，喂过饲料了。”他说道。说完，他站起来，似乎早有准备。或许，男孩明白他已经拿好了皮鞭，鞭子有条不紊地起起落落，并且他还有意边打边数，平静地报出数字。孩子的身体也许会变成木头、石块，会变成一根柱子、一座塔楼，上面有知觉的部分会像隐士一样冥思苦想，远离欣喜若狂，远离自我受难。

他俩肩并肩走向厨房。当窗户上的灯光照在他们身上时，麦克依琴停下脚步，转过身，弯下腰盯着他。“打架了，”他说，“为啥？”

男孩没有回答。他非常镇静，脸色安详。过了一会儿，他才开口，声音平静而冷漠。“没啥。”

他们站在那里。“你的意思是，你不知道还是不愿意说？”孩子没有回答。他没有低头，也没有看任何东西。“那你要是不知道的话，你就是个傻子。要是你不愿意说的话，那你就是个流氓。你乱搞女人了？”

“不是。”孩子说道。他说话时一副若有所思的样子，麦克依琴望着他。

“你从没有跟我撒过谎。我知道，我相信你没有。”他看着孩子静静

的侧影。“跟谁打架了？”

“好几个呢。”

“哦，”麦克依琴说，“你揍他们了，是吧？”

“不知道，我想是的。”

“嗯，”麦克依琴说，“去洗洗，晚饭已经做好了。”

那天晚上，当他躺在床上时，他已下定决心要逃走。他觉得自己是只雄鹰：上进，有实力、有潜质，他有强大的内心，永不后悔。但这个想法一闪而过，尽管当时他还不明白，作为一只鹰，他的肉身和所处的环境仍然是一座牢笼。

麦克依琴丢失那头小母牛实际上还不到两天。后来，他发现了藏在畜棚里的一套新衣服。经过检查，他确定衣服还没有穿过。中午前他就发现了衣服，但他对此只字未提。晚上他走进畜棚，乔正在挤奶。乔坐在矮凳上，低头顶着母牛的侧腹。现在，这个孩子至少在身高上和大人一样了，但麦克依琴并没有注意到。如果说他注意到了什么，那就是一个小孩，一个只有五岁的孤儿。十二年前最后一个月的某天夜里，他带着动物一样的警觉、淡漠和消极，安静地坐在自己的马车里。“我没看到你的小母牛，”麦克依琴说。乔没有回答，只顾俯在奶桶上，看着牛奶啾啾地往下流。麦克依琴站在他身后，低头看着他。“我说，你的小母牛没回来。”

“我知道，”乔说，“我估计她正在河边，我会照顾好她的，她属于我。”

“喔，”麦克依琴说，他的音调并不高，“对于一头价值五十美元的

母牛来说，夜里的小溪边可不是什么好地方。”

“那将是我的损失，”乔说，“她原本就是我的。”

“原本？”麦克依琴重复道，“你刚才说原本是你的？”

乔没有抬头，手中的牛奶源源不断地流进桶里。他听到麦克依琴在他身后走动，但他没有张望，直到牛奶不再流出时，他才转过身来。麦克依琴坐在门口一块木头上，说：“你最好先把牛奶放进屋里去。”

乔站起身，手中的奶桶摇晃着。他的声音虽然很平静，却透着顽固。“明天早上我就把她找回来。”

“把牛奶提到屋里，”麦克依琴说，“我在这儿等你。”

乔又站了一阵，然后才走开。他出了畜棚，走向厨房。他正要把奶桶放到桌上时，麦克依琴太太走进来。“晚饭做好了，”她说，“麦克依琴还没进屋吗？”

乔背对着房门，转身离开。“他一会儿就来。”他说。乔能感觉到这个女人正注视着他。麦克依琴太太有些担心，试探性地说：“你赶紧洗洗吃饭吧。”

“我们马上就来。”说着，他又回到畜棚。麦克依琴太太走到门口，望着他。天色还没完全暗下来，她看见丈夫坐在畜棚门口。她没有喊他，只是站在那里，望着那两个男人站在一起，却听不到他们在说什么。

“你说，她会在小溪边。”麦克依琴说。

“我说她可能会去。那里的牧场很大。”

“喔，”麦克依琴说，“你觉得她会去哪里？”他俩的声音都非常平静。

“我不知道，我又不是奶牛。我不知道她会去哪里。”

麦克依琴站起身，说道：“我们去看看。”他们一前一后进了牧场。小溪在大约四分之一英里远的地方，它穿过黑黢黢的丛林，萤火虫在其中飞舞闪烁。他们走进树林，林间的沼泽灌木长得水泄不通，就算在白天也很难通过。“叫她，”麦克依琴说，乔没有作声，也没有动弹。他们望着彼此。

“她是我的母牛。”乔说，“你把她给我了。我把她从小牛犊养大，你把她给了我，就是我的了。”

“不错，”麦克依琴说，“我把她给了你，是让你懂得占有、拥有财产的责任和所有权，而这种责任是在上帝的恩赐下才拥有的；我想让你学会深谋远虑，累积财富。叫她。”

他们面对面站了好长时间，也许他们都在盯着彼此。然后，乔转身继续沿沼泽前行，麦克依琴跟在后边。“你怎么不叫她？”他问道。乔不回答，似乎他根本没有将沼泽和小溪看在眼里。相反，他正注视着房屋的标志性灯光，他不时抬头看看，好像在丈量自己与它的距离一样。他们走得不算快，但还是到了标志着牧场边缘的围栏处。此时，天色完全暗下来了。乔走到栅栏处转过身停下来，看着麦克依琴。他俩又一次面对面站在一起。麦克依琴说：“你把小母牛怎么处理了？”

“卖了。”乔回答。

“唔，你把她卖了。那我能问问，你卖了她买了什么吗？”

这会儿，他们已经分辨不出彼此的面容，只显出轮廓，他俩几乎一般高，但麦克依琴更壮些。麦克依琴模糊的白衬衫上那颗脑袋像内战纪念碑上的一颗大理石炮弹一样。“她是我的小母牛，”乔说，“如果不是我的，你咋说她是我的？你干吗给我？”

“你说得完全正确。她是你的，我没有为你卖她而责备你，只要你卖个好价钱。即使你这笔买卖吃亏了，像你这样十八岁的孩子也在所难免，我不会为这个骂你。虽然你本应该跟年长的人请教人情世故，你得像我以前那样学习。我问的是你把钱存放哪里了？”乔没吭气。他们望着对方。“你把钱让你养母保管起来了，是吗？”

“是的，”乔答道。他的嘴撒了谎。他根本没打算这样说。他听到嘴巴说出这两个字时，大吃一惊，想收回已经来不及了。“我让她帮我存起来了。”他说。

“哦，”麦克依琴叹着气说道。这一声意味深长，充满了胜利和满足。“那么，我在阁楼里发现的那套新衣服，肯定是养母给你买的。你所能犯的每一桩罪过都暴露无遗了：懒惰、忘恩负义、不恭不逊、亵渎神明。现在，我还要补充两条罪状：撒谎和好色。如果不是为了约女人，你干吗要买新衣服？”这时，他明白十二年前领养的孩子已经长大成人。两人面对面针锋相对，他冲乔打了一拳。

也许是习惯使然，也许有些突然，乔挨了前两拳，但他能感觉到麦克依琴的拳头砸在自己脸上，比平时狠得多。于是，他向后退去躲开了，蹲下身舔着嘴角的血，气喘吁吁地看着麦克依琴的脸，说道：“别打了！”

后来，乔冷漠僵硬地躺在阁楼的床上，听见他们说话的声音从楼下沿着狭窄的楼梯传上来。

“是我给他买的！”麦克依琴太太说，“我买的！我用我的黄油钱买的。你说过我可以.....可以花——西蒙！西蒙！”

“你这个差劲的骗子，还不如他呢。”麦克依琴说出的每一字每一句听起来都那么冷漠，沿着狭窄的楼梯传到乔躺着的床上。他并没有故意去听。“跪下，跪下，跪下，你这个女人。乞求上帝的仁慈和宽恕，别求我。”

从十二年前十二月的第一夜开始，她一直都在努力好好待他。马车驶到门口时，她正等在门廊处——一只逆来顺受、饱经沧桑的动物，除了整齐地扎着的灰白头发和裙子外，全然没有性别的标志。她被那个冷酷无情、心胸狭窄的男人慢慢地宰割和倾轧，超出了他的预想和她的理解，她像一块迟钝、任由锻造的金属一样，已经被他顽固地敲打得越来越薄，毫无希望、心灰意冷的她现在成了一撮苍白、暗淡的死灰。

马车停下来的时候，她像事先准备、排练好一样迎出门来：她要把孩子从座位上抱下来，然后再抱回屋里。小孩从会走路那么大开始，从没有让女人抱过。他扭动着下了车，自己走进屋里，小小的身子被大衣裹得看不清样子。她跟在后面，左右忙活。她让孩子坐下，紧张兮兮地照顾他，困惑而机警地注意着，等待突然冲上来扶他一把，随时准备上演已经练习好的场景。她跪在他面前想帮他脱鞋，等他明白过来时，他推开她的手，自己脱了鞋，但没有往地板上放，而是拿在手里。她给他脱了袜子，然后端来一盆热水。她端得那么迅速，除了孩子外，任何人都明白这是早准备好的，而且可能已经等了一整天。这时，他第一次开口说话：“我昨天刚洗过脚。”

她没有回答。她跪在他面前，他望着她的头顶，看她有些笨手笨脚地摸索着给他洗脚。这下，他不再打算帮她了，他不知道她在干什么，直到他坐好把冰凉的双脚放进热水盆里时，他还是不明白。他不知道这就是洗热水脚，因为这种感觉太舒服了。他等着接下来要发生的事情，无论什么事，哪怕是不愉快也无所谓。他从没有过这样的感觉。

后来，她把他扶上床。两年来，他几乎都是自己穿衣服、脱衣服，除了偶尔爱丽丝会帮他一把外，没人关心，没人帮助。他太困了，但又无法立刻入睡。此时的他有些迷惑，有些紧张，只想等她离开后自己再睡觉。可她没有出去，反而拉了一把椅子在床边坐下来。房间里没有生火，非常冷。她的肩膀上披了一块围巾，全身缩在围巾里，呼吸时冒出的雾气好像抽烟一样。现在，他睡意全无，一心等着什么不好的事情降临，无论什么事，无论他做过什么。他不知道这便是一切，这是他从未有过的体验。

一切始于那天晚上。他相信这样的事会伴随他一生。十七岁时，他回顾长期以来她所做的琐碎、拙劣、徒劳的努力，认为这些都源自她失意、愚笨的天性：她暗自为他准备的食物，坚持让他接受并偷偷吃下，而他却不愿领受，实际上麦克依琴也不会在意；就像今晚这样的情况，她总想夹在他与受惩之间，不管是否值得，是否公正，都是人力不可为的；他和那个男人都认为这样的事情非常自然，而且无法避免，可她却偏要插进来，让人觉得讨厌，索然无味。

有时，他想单独跟她讲出真相，让无助的她既不必警觉也无须忽视。她知道后肯定会向那个急迫的男人隐瞒，而他的反应也可以预见，他会抹掉他们之间的这个事实，而且永远不再出现。悄悄告诉她是为了暗中回报她偷偷摸摸给予自己的饭菜：“听着，他说他养了一个褻渎神明、忘恩负义的家伙。你敢不敢告诉他真相？他在自己家里养了一个黑

鬼，坐在他的饭桌旁，吃着他的饭。”

她一向待他很好。那个严苛、较真儿、无情的男人只是指望他能按照某种方式行事，接受某种奖惩，仿佛他很清楚那个男人会为自己所做的事、犯的错做出某种反应。然而，这个女人用女性的亲和力和保密的本能，为最琐碎、最单纯的行为蒙上了邪恶阴影。他的阁楼间里有一块松动的墙板，她在那里藏了一铁盒子钱，数目很小。显然，她只瞒着她丈夫，乔相信她丈夫根本不关心这些。但对于他来说，这从来不是秘密。还在他是小孩子的时候，她便像顽童一样领着他，热切而神秘地爬上阁楼，把稀少的几枚分分角角的硬币塞进钱盒子里（撒小谎，耍小聪明的成果，全世界都知道她丈夫对此了如指掌）。他瞪圆眼睛严肃地注视着她把硬币塞进盒子里，但他并不知道那些钱的价值。她信任他，坚持要相信他，就像坚持要让他吃饭一样：私密，隐蔽，把原本显而易见的信任神秘化。

他憎恨的不是艰苦的劳动，也不是惩罚和不公正的待遇。他早在认识他们之前就已经习以为常了。他没有什么期待，因此他既不愤怒，也不震惊。只有这个女人，她的温柔和善良让他相信自己注定将永远成为受害者；他对她的恨意比那个冷酷决绝的男人还要强烈。“她千方百计想把我弄哭。”他心想。他浑身冰冷、僵硬地躺在床上，头枕着双手，月光倾泻在他身上，那个男人絮絮叨叨的低语声从楼梯直往上蹿。“她想尽办法让我流泪。那样她以为他们就能控制我。”

[1](#)斯巴达式（spartan），斯巴达源自八世纪左右古希腊奴隶制最大的城邦国之一，以严酷的鞭笞和格斗为主，养成坚韧、勇猛、残暴和服从的品质。

[2](#)长老教会（Presbyterian）即长老宗，也称归正宗，是基督教新教

主要宗派之一，以加尔文（Jean Calvin 1509—1564）的宗教思想为依据，亦称加尔文宗，产生于十六世纪宗教改革时期，与安立甘宗和路德宗并称新教三大主流派别。

他蹑手蹑脚地去藏绳子的地方取出绳子。绳子的一头早已在窗户里结好，可以方便迅速攀爬。现在，他毫不费力就能下到地面并再次爬上来；一年的练习让他能够徒手攀爬，身影像猫一样矫健，根本不必依附墙壁。他靠在窗口，让绳子的一端悄悄地自由抛下，月光下的绳索像蛛丝一样纤细。接着，他把鞋子捆在一起，插进身后的皮带里，像影子一样从老两口的卧室窗口滑过。绳子笔直地悬在窗口，他把绳子拉到一边绷紧，贴着屋子固定好。然后，他继续在月光中穿梭，进了马厩，爬上阁楼，取出藏在那里的新西装。西装被他小心翼翼地包在纸里，他用手摩挲着纸包的褶皱。“他发现了。”他大声叫起来，然后又窃窃私语道，“王八蛋，狗娘养的。”

他摸黑迅速穿好衣服。现在已经迟了，因为小母牛事件的咆哮后，他得等两个老人睡着才能走；本来争吵已经结束，可她偏要搅和进来，好在已经晚上了。他的包袱里放着一件白衬衫，一条领带。他把领带装进兜里，穿上外套，以免月光下的白色衬衫太显眼。他下了楼走进马厩。穿过经常清洗的柔软工作服后，他觉得新衣服华丽而粗硬。月光下的房子黑黢黢地蹲在那里，意味深长，还有些神秘莫测。月光中的房子好像有了阴险、狡诈的性格。他经过房子，走进小巷。他从口袋里掏出一块一美元的手表，这是他三天前买的，但他以前从来没戴过表，所以他忘记了上发条。可不用手表提醒，他也知道自己迟到了。

小巷笔直地在月光下延伸，路两旁的树枝投下浓密的阴影，像在轻柔的尘埃中浓墨重染的几笔。他飞快地走着，甩开身后的房子，渐渐走出了房子的视野范围。小巷不远处的前方就是公路。他无时无刻不在期

待那辆汽车驶过，因为他跟她说过要是自己没有等在巷口，那就在举办舞会的校舍见面。可是，没有一辆汽车经过，他走在公路上，什么都听不见。空旷的夜，寂寞的路。他想：“她可能早走了。”他又掏出那块彻底停了的手表，因为他没时间上发条。他们耽搁了时间，他没法上发条，所以他不清楚自己是早是晚。黑暗的小巷那边是看不见的房子，那个女人睡着了，她一直忙活着拖延他的时间。他朝那条路的小巷望去；他停下来边看边思索，思绪和身体仿佛同时转换了，他相信自己已经在小巷那边的树影里看到有人在移动。接着，他又觉得自己没看见，或许是自己的想法像影子一样折射在墙壁上。“可我倒希望是他，”他说，“我希望是他，希望是他跟着我，看见我钻进那辆车。我希望他能千方百计跟着我们，希望他会设法阻拦我。”不过，他在小巷里什么都没看到。空空荡荡的小巷只有恍惚的影子在不时地晃动。过了一会儿，他听见通往城镇的那条路上远远地传来汽车的声音。他盯着那条路，立刻看见了闪烁的车灯。

镇上后街有一家昏暗狭小的餐馆，她是那里的女招待。成年人随便一瞟就知道她已经有三十多岁了。但在乔看来，她可能也不过十七岁，因为她个子那么小。她不仅个子矮，而且还瘦弱，简直像个孩子。可是，成年人能看出来她的瘦小不是什么苗条，而是内心的萎靡：不是年轻人的苗条，周身的曲线没有曾经年轻过的痕迹。她长着黑色的头发，颧骨高高突起，总是低着头，脑袋和脖子不在一条直线上，好像生就那么个样子。她的眼睛像玩具动物的纽扣眼：既不结实，也不坚定。

正因为她瘦小，他才对她有所期待，似乎她的瘦小可以保护她，不受大多数男人的垂涎和如狼似虎的眼神，才给他留有更好的机会。要是她身材高挑，他也不敢有任何想法。他也许会想：“白费力气。她也许早有伴了，有男人了。”

事情始于他十七岁那年的秋天，发生在一周中间的某一天。通常他们去镇上都是在星期六，带着吃的——冷饭，装在专门盛饭的篮子里——准备在那里过一天。这次，麦克依琴是去拜访一位律师，打算办完事后赶在晚饭前回家。不过，他走到乔等候的那条街上时，已经快十二点了。他看了看怀表，然后看了看法院塔楼上的钟，又看了看太阳，一脸愤怒和不满。他好像第一次审视这个孩子，打量着自己一手从孩童培养大的孩子。然后，他转过身来。“快点，”他说，“现在没时间了。”

这个城镇是铁路交会点。就算是工作日，街上也有好多男人，空气里弥漫着匆匆过往的阳刚气。这里的男人们只有休息日或节假日才在家——这群男人行踪诡秘，真实身份罕有人知晓，他们间歇性地回家，就像剧场赞助人偶尔出现在剧场一样。

乔永远也忘不了麦克依琴带他去的地方。那是后街的一家餐馆——邋遢的两扇窗户夹着狭窄昏暗的门廊。起初，他并不知道这是一家餐馆。门外没有任何标志，他闻不到饭菜的味道，听不到烹调的声音。他所看到的只是一条长长的木柜台，一排无背矮凳；柜台附近的雪茄橱柜后面有个金发的大个子女人，柜台另一头有一群男人，他们在那里干坐着。麦克依琴和乔走进来时，他们转过头，透过烟雾缭绕齐刷刷地看着他俩，好像呼吸伴着谈话一起停止了，就连香烟都不再燃烧，任由烟气漫无目的地飘散。那些男人戴着帽子，没有穿工作服，他们都是一样的面孔：不年轻也不老，不是农民也不是城里人。他们看起来像一群刚下火车的旅客，明天又要离开，行踪不定。

他俩在柜台前的无背矮凳上找了两个座位坐下。乔迅速吃着，因为麦克依琴吃得很快。乔身边的这个男人连吃饭时都挺直腰板，好像窝着一肚子火气。麦克依琴点了些简单的食物：做得快，吃得快。乔知道他不是吝啬。或许他是因为节俭才选择了这家餐馆，但乔知道是想要迅速

离开的想法让麦克依琴点了这样的食物。他放下刀叉，马上就说：“走。”说话间，他已经离开了凳子。雪茄柜台前，麦克依琴给黄头发女人付了账。这个女人永远一副漠然的表情，气势汹汹而又冷若冰霜。从他们进门到麦克依琴付账，这个女人始终都没有多看他们一眼。给麦克依琴找钱时，她还是没有抬头，几乎没等麦克依琴付账，她就准确无误地把零钱迅速扔在玻璃柜台上；她自己躲在油光可鉴的假发、假面孔后，像一尊母石狮看门护院，摆出的那副尊容像一块盾牌，为那些成群结伙、游手好闲的可疑男人做掩护，以便他们歪戴帽子、眼斜嘴歪地叼着烟卷儿。麦克依琴数完零钱出了门，走到街上。他又看了乔一眼，说道：“我要你记住这个地方。这个世界上有些地方男人去得，可是，孩子，像你这个年纪的年轻人不能去。那个餐馆就是这样的地方。也许你本不应该去那儿，可你必须亲眼看了才能懂得如何避开。或许有我陪着你亲眼见过，给你解释了，会让你提高警惕，这样也好。不过，那儿的饭菜确实便宜。”

“它有什么不对劲儿吗？”乔问。

“那是城镇的问题，和你无关。你只需记住我说的话：你再不许到这种地方，除非我和你来。这种事不会再有了。我们下次自己带饭，不管迟早。”

这就是那天他坐在麦克依琴旁边快速扒拉饭时的情景：麦克依琴挺直腰板、静静地生着闷气；他俩独自坐在长凳中间，一头是黄头发女人，另一头是那群男人，女招待低着头，一副娴静的样子，两只大手，特别大的手摆放着杯碟，她站在柜台一边，像个大孩子一样高。然后，他和麦克依琴离开了餐馆。他没打算再回去，这并不是出于麦克依琴的禁令，而是他自己并不认为这辈子还会有机会再到那里去。他好像告诉自己：“他们和我不是一类人。我看见他们了，可我不知道他们在做什么。”

么，或者为什么要那样。我能听见他们说话，可我不知道他们在说什么，为什么那么说，在跟谁说话。我知道除了食物和吃饭以外还有别的，可我不知道那是什么，而且我永远也不会明白。”

于是，这件事情就这么轻轻掠过心头。接下来的半年时间里，他经常去镇上，可是他再没有见过或路过那家餐馆。他本来可以去，但他没有想过要去，或许他没必要去那里。更多时候，他知道也许自己的脑海里会突然涌起一幅画卷，渐渐成形：长长的柜台沉闷而无趣，甚至有些可疑。一个头发怪异、冷若冰霜的女人一动不动地站在柜台一端，好像在看护柜台一样；另一端的男人们缩着脑袋，不停地抽烟、点烟、扔烟头；女招待的个子不比孩子高多少，双手端着沉重的饭菜，来回穿梭在厨房和柜台间。每当她从男人们身边经过时，他们歪戴帽子，在烟雾缭绕中跟她搭茬儿，略带欣喜地咕哝着，而她却面色沉静，一本正经地低着头，好像什么都听不见。他心想：“我甚至不知道他们在跟她说什么。”他想，我甚至不知道他们对她说的话是男人们不会对过往的孩子说的，他相信，我还不知道为什么一闭上眼睛，眼里就是她沉思、忧郁的年轻面容，悲伤、难过的表情；她的脸上永远停留着年轻人的欲望，模糊无形。萌发爱情种子的土壤早已形成：这种晕晕乎乎的想法现在终于让我明白，三年前我为什么会摸索那个黑人女孩，她自己也肯定明白，为此她还有些得意，骄傲地等着。

于是，他不再期待再次见到她，因为年轻人的爱情不需要多少希望就可以生长。他很可能会对自己的行为感到震惊，震惊的程度绝不亚于麦克依琴发现后的反应。这次还是在星期六。现在是春天，他已经十八岁了。麦克依琴又要去看望那位律师，但这次他做好了准备。“我去一个小时，”他说，“你可以在镇里四处看看。”说着，他又严肃地看了乔一眼，略带烦躁地打量着他，像一个人迫不得已要在公平和决断间做出

取舍一样。“拿好，”说着，他打开钱包取出一枚硬币，是一角硬币。“只要你发现有人想拿走它时，你就尽量不要那么快把它丢掉。”他烦躁不安地看着乔，说道，“不过好像一个人要是不先学会浪费，那他就不会明白金钱的价值。你可以在那里待一个小时。”

他接过那枚硬币，径直去了那家餐馆，甚至都没有把硬币装进口袋。他并没有计划或盘算过，几乎没有经过脑子，仿佛是他的双脚下达了行动的命令，而不是大脑在指挥。他拿着硬币，像小孩子一样把那枚小钱币攥得热乎乎的。他笨拙地走进纱门，差点儿被绊倒。黄头发女人站在雪茄橱柜后面（好像这半年里她一直站在那里没有动，鲜艳的黄头发好像一根都没有变过，就连衣服都没换）盯着他。柜台那一端有一群男人，歪戴帽子，斜叼着烟卷，浑身带着理发店的味道。他们在观察他。老板也坐在他们中间。他第一次注意到，第一次看见老板。这个人和其他男人一样，也戴着帽子，叼着香烟。他个子不高，不比乔高多少，用嘴角叼着香烟，以免影响谈话。他一直都没用手碰一下嘴角的香烟，直到香烟燃尽，他一口啐到地上，用脚跟踩灭；歪着的脑袋，烟气升腾的背后是那张冷漠的脸，乔即将从它那里领悟属于自己的举止，但不是在这个时候，是在后来，那时生活便开始加速，接受取代了认知和信服。此刻，他只是看着站在里面、斜倚着柜台的那个男人。男人系着一条脏兮兮的围裙，就像拦路强盗临时戴着假胡子一样。接受是后来学会的，伴随着最初的满腔愤怒到后来的轻易上当受骗：这两口子开了这么一家吃饭的店，雇了一个又一个女孩笨手笨脚地端来简单的饭菜，价格倒也合适；而他就像一匹年轻的成年公马一样，闯进一片隐蔽的牧场，这里栖息着一群疲惫而又老到的母马；他自己在这样简短而不平静的假日里接受、吸收了这些东西，反过来成为无数无名无姓的男人的牺牲品。

不过，那是后来的事。这时，他攥着那枚钱币走到柜台前。他相信所有男人都停止说话，一起注视着他，因为他的耳朵里没有任何话音，只有从房门那边传来刺耳的煎炸声。他心想，她就在后边，所以我看不到她。他在矮凳上坐下，知道他们都在看他，雪茄橱柜后面的黄头发女人也一定在看他，老板也在看他，他面前的烟雾也安静下来，懒得再升腾。这时，老板冒出两个字。乔知道他没有动，也没有碰嘴角那根香烟。他说：“鲍比。”

这是男人的名字。用不着思考，一个念头迅速闪过，他完全明白了，她不在了。他们又雇了一个人顶替她的工作。就像麦克依琴说的那样，我白花钱了。可他知道现在不能走，要是他走了，那个黄头发女人会拦住他。他知道后面的男人们都会明白，也会嘲笑他。于是，他静静地坐在凳子上，低着头，手里握着硬币。他一直没有抬头，直到一双手出现在对面的柜台，进入他的视线，这双手非常大。他可以看到她裙子上的图案，以及围裙的上边儿，关节粗大的双手一动不动地搁在柜台上，好像是她刚刚从厨房里端出来的食物。“我要咖啡和馅饼。”他说。

她索然无味地低声说道：“柠檬椰汁巧克力。”

说话的她长着一双大手，与身材根本不成比例。“嗯。”乔说。

那双大手没有移开，声音也没有消失。“柠檬椰汁巧克力，哪种？”别人看他们肯定觉得非常奇怪。隔着满是油腻、磨得光滑的黑乎乎的柜台，他们望着彼此，有点像在祈祷：年轻男子长着一张乡下人的脸，衣着整洁而严谨，尴尬的神情让他显得木讷而单纯；对面的女人低眉垂眼，静静地候在那里，瘦小的身材让她也露出和他一样机械的神情。瘦骨嶙峋的她颧骨突起，没有一点肉，眼眶四周乌青，下眼睑下似乎没有深度，甚至好像根本无法折射看见的东西，狭窄的下巴似乎还包

不住两排牙齿。

“椰汁。”乔说。他嘴上说了，但马上又想收回。他只有一枚硬币。他一直紧紧地攥着硬币，还没有意识到它只是一角钱，那只握着硬币的手满是汗水。他觉得那些男人都在看他，又一次嘲笑他。他听不见他们说什么，也不敢抬头，但他知道他们一定在嘲弄他。那双手消失了，过了一会儿，端着杯盘再次出现在他的面前。他看了她一眼，看着她的脸问道：“馅饼多少钱？”

“馅饼一角。”她隔着柜台站在他对面，一双大手再次搁在邋遢的木柜台上，疲惫地等待。她还从没看过他一眼。乔充满了绝望，低声说道：“我想我不要咖啡了。”

她站了一阵没有动，然后伸出一只大手把咖啡拿走；杯子和大手都不见了。他怔住了，也开始垂头丧气地等着。过了一会儿，有人来了，但不是老板，而是雪茄橱柜后面的那个女人。“怎么了？”她问。

“他不想要这杯咖啡。”女招待回答。她说得很流畅，好像根本不用在这个问题上多加思考。她的声音平淡而安静，另一个女人的声音也很平静。

“他不是叫了咖啡吗？”她问道。

“没有。”女招待语调平稳，边说边走，“我搞错了。”

当他走出餐馆时，卑微和悔恨吞噬着他的灵魂；经过雪茄橱后面的女人面前时，内心恨不得找个地缝钻进去，他相信自己再也不会、再也不可能见到她了。他觉得自己再没脸见她，再不能看这条街道，肮脏的门廊，甚至再无法远远望一眼。他还没有想到，年轻好可怕。真的好可

怕，好可怕。以后每到星期六，他总会找借口，编织理由不去镇上，麦克依琴虽然没有真的开始怀疑他，但还是在留心观察着他的举动。他终日埋头苦干，十分辛苦；麦克依琴倒是有些怀疑他干活儿的情况，可没有发现任何线索，或者推导出什么结论。工作对他很慷慨，所以他每晚都能睡好，因为他太累了，根本不会失眠。随着时间的流逝，就连绝望、懊悔和羞愧都日渐消退。然而，它已经渐渐磨平，就像留声机唱片一样，就算偶尔想起，也是由于磨损的纹理淡化了音色。过了许久，麦克依琴接受了这个事实。他说：

“我最近一直在观察你，现在一切都正常，只是我怀疑自己眼睛看错罢了，或许我该相信你终于开始接受上帝委派给适合你的一切了。不过，不要因为我夸你，你就能忘乎所以。你有的是时间和机会（我不怀疑你还有这个倾向）让我为自己的话感到后悔。可是，奖励和惩罚对每个人都适合。看见那边的小母牛了吗？从今天起，它就是你的了。希望不要让我为此后悔。”

乔谢过他，然后看着小母牛大声说：“它归我了。”于是，他望着小母牛，迅速闪过一念，那不是礼物，甚至也不是承诺，而是一种威胁。他心想：“我可没跟他索要，是他给我的，我没要求过。”他相信，上帝知道，这是我自己赚来的。

一个月过去了。一个星期六早上，麦克依琴说：“我估计你不再喜欢去镇上了。”

“我觉得再去一趟也没什么不好。”乔回答道。他口袋里有半美元，是麦克依琴太太给的。他本来想要五分镍币，可她坚持让他拿着半美元，于是他接受了，握在手里，一脸冷漠和鄙夷。

“倒也没什么不好。”麦克依琴说，“你干得也非常卖力，不过对于一个还在努力打拼的人来说，去镇上可不是什么好习惯。”

他无须悄悄溜进城里，即使他有可能会那样做，甚至不惜采用暴力手段。不过，麦克依琴没让事情变得那么复杂。他迅速走向餐馆，这次进门时他没有踌躇。女招待不在里面，也许他看了一眼，发现她不在。他走到雪茄柜台前，停下脚步，那个女人坐在柜台后面。他把半美元放在柜台上说：“我欠五分钱，上次那杯咖啡钱。我点了咖啡和馅饼，不过我不知道馅饼是一角，我欠你们五分钱。”他没往后看，那些男人坐在那里，歪戴帽子，叼着烟卷儿。老板也在其中；乔站在那里等着。终于，系着脏围裙的老板叼着烟说话了：

“咋了？他要啥？”

“他说他欠鲍比五分钱。”那个女人说，“他想还鲍比五分钱。”她说话时很平静，老板的声音也非常平静。

“嗯，是的。”乔说。他觉得整个屋子都竖起了耳朵，他没有去听却听到了；没有去看却已知晓。然后，他朝门口走去，把那半美元留在了柜台上。就连后边的老板也看见了柜台上的硬币，他问了一句：“那是干吗？”

“他说他欠一杯咖啡钱。”那个女人说道。

乔几乎已经到了门口。“拿着，杰克。”老板说道。但乔没有停步。“把钱给他。”老板站着没动，他的声音很平静，香烟的烟气盘旋在脸前，没有受外界任何影响。“把钱还给他。”老板说，“我不知道他在耍什么花招，但我这儿不吃这一套。把钱还他。尊贵的客人，回你的农场去，说不准在那儿你可以花五分钱去泡妞。”

此时，乔走在街上，手汗浸泡了硬币，硬币沾湿了手掌，他觉得这枚硬币比一美元都大。他走在嘲笑中，经过门口的笑声，那群男人的笑声。笑声将他席卷到街上，然后开始越过他，渐渐放开他，让他踏实地走在街道上。他和女招待碰面了。她穿着黑衣裙，戴着帽子，只顾低头快走，没能立刻看见他。当她停下脚步时，还是没有抬头，但早已把他看在了眼里，看得一清二楚，就像把咖啡和馅饼放在柜台上时那样清楚。她说：“喔，你回去给我送钱了。当着他们的面。他们取笑你了。嗨，真是的。”

“我怕你会垫钱，自己垫钱，我想——”

“哦，别说了。行吗？现在。”

他们面对面站在那里，却没有对视。在别人眼里，他们或许像一对僧侣在冥思的时刻，在花园小径偶遇了。“我只是想……”

“你住哪里？”她问，“乡下？哦，嗯，你叫什么名字？”

“我不叫麦克依琴。”他说，“我叫克里斯默斯。”

“克里斯默斯？那是你的名字？克里斯默斯，哦，好吧。”

青春期开始以后的每个星期六，四五个男孩一起打猎、捕鱼。他只有在礼拜日的教堂才能看到女孩。她们总是和礼拜日、教堂联系在一起。所以，他根本不会注意到她们。而且这样做，就连他自己都会认为这是触犯他所信仰的宗教的大忌。不过，他会和其他男孩谈起女孩子。也许他们中有人——比如，那天下午安排黑人女孩的那个家伙——了解女孩。“她们都想干，”他告诉他们，“可有时候不行。”其他人都不懂这些。他们不明白为什么所有女孩都想做，更不懂为什么有时候却不能。

他们虽有不同想法，但要是承认不知道女孩有时候不行，就等于承认自己还没明白她们都想干。所以他们只是听那个男孩讲。“她们每个月都会有一次。”他描述着自己对这种生理仪式的了解。或许他知道，总之他讲得绘声绘色，足以让人信服。假如他只把它描述成一种心理感觉，那只有他自己相信，别人都不会听的。但他描绘了一幅图画，真真切切地可以用嗅觉和视觉让人辨别。他们都被说动了：短暂的无可奈何，干着急没办法的可怜相；光滑美好的形体里满含欲望，注定摆脱不了周期性的污秽。这就是那个男孩讲的一切，另外五个静静地听着，看着彼此，暗自怀揣疑问。接下来的星期六，乔没有和他们一起去打猎。麦克依琴以为他早走了，因为家里没有猎枪的影子。然而，乔躲在了谷仓，在那里待了一整天。下一个星期六，他去打猎了，不过是自己一个人去的，走得很早，没等别的孩子叫他。下午稍晚些时候，他在离家不到三英里的地方射死一只羊。他在隐蔽的山沟里发现了一群羊，于是尾随其后，用猎枪射死其中一只。接着，他跪在地上，垂死的动物在淌血，他把双手放进还有温度的鲜血里，浑身打哆嗦，口干舌燥，头晕目眩。过了一会儿，他才缓过劲儿来。他没忘记那个男孩说的话，他听进去了。他发现自己能够忍受，能够忍受泡进血里。他好像在说话，语无伦次，却又极其平静。没事儿，原来是这么回事。不过，我不会这样做，别出现在我的生活、我的爱情里。这些事情发生在三四年前，他早已忘记，一旦思维坚持这件事真假难辨，那这件事情就会被淡忘。

那个星期六，他试图为那杯咖啡付账。接下来的星期一晚上，他和那个女招待见面了。那时，他还没有那根绳子，他从窗口爬出来，十英尺高的窗口掉到地上，步行五英里去了镇里。他压根没有想过事后要如何回到房间。

他赶到镇上，去了她要他等候的那个角落。这是一个安静的角落，

他很早就来了，心想，我得记住。让她告诉我应该做什么，怎么做，什么时候该做。可又不能让她发现我不懂，我必须通过她，让自己弄明白。

他在那里等了一个多小时，她才出现。他来得太早了。女招待走过来，从黑暗中走出来，站在他面前，瘦小的身材，低着头，沉着地期待着。“你来了。”她说。

“我一有机会就出来了。我得等他们睡着了。我担心自己会迟到。”

“你等了很久吗？多久？”

“我不知道，我是跑来的，大多数时候都在跑。我怕自己会迟到。”

“跑来的？三英里的路？”

“是五英里，不是三英里。”

“哦，好吧。”然后他们不说话了，只是站在那里，两个影子面对面站着。一年多以后，想到那个夜晚，她说的那声“哦”，突然间他才明白她似乎是在等我碰她。

这时，他开始有些发抖，他能够闻到她的气息，是期待的味道：一动不动，清醒中透着一点倦意；他心想，她在等我先动手，可我不知道该怎么做。他的声音在自己听起来都那么可笑：“我想现在晚了。”

“晚了？”

“我想她们可能在等你，等到你.....”

“等.....等.....”她的声音渐渐听不见了。她说话时一动不动，两人

像两个影子一样站在那里：“我和玛米、马科斯住在一起。你知道的，就在那家餐馆。你肯定记得他们，你还去付过一镍币……”说着，她笑起来。干巴巴的笑声中没有什么高兴的意味。“我一想起那件事，一想起你去那儿，拿着那枚硬币，”这时，她不笑了。停顿中也没有任何快乐的感觉。她低着头，平静而卑微的声音传到他耳朵里。“今晚我犯了一个错误。我忘了一件事。”或许，她正等着他开口询问。但他没有问。他只是站在那里，听着平静、低沉的声音在耳畔消失。他已经忘记了那只被射死的山羊。那个男孩告诉他的事情已经过去太久。杀死山羊的事让他不再相信男孩那番话，这些事到现在都过了那么久。所以，起初他听不懂她在说什么。他们站在角落里，这个角落位于小镇边缘，街道变成一条大道，不再通向整齐修剪的草坪，两旁成了随意建造的小房子和荒地——这些廉价的小房子成了城镇的边界。她说：“听着，今晚我生病了。”他没听明白，什么都没说。也许他没必要听懂，也许他早就预料到注定会有什么不顺心的事发生，心想：“不管怎么样，想得太完美、太不真实了。”他还没来得及思考，心想，她马上就会离开。她不会在这里的。然后我就回家，上床，像从没离开家一样。她继续说道：“那天告诉你星期一晚上见面时，我把这件事给忘了。我想是你让我感到太突然了，星期六在街上那次。总之，我忘了时间。直到你走后我才想起。”

他的声音和她的一样平静：“严重吗？家里有什么可以吃的药吗？”

“有什么……”她不说话了。“哦，好吧，”接着她突然又开口说，“太晚了，你还得走四英里路。”

“我已经走过来了，现在就在这儿。”他平静的声音里充满了绝望和坦然，“我想现在太晚了。”他说。过了一会儿，他发生了些变化。她没有看他，光从他冷酷的声音里就能感觉到。“你得了什么病？”

她没有立刻回答。接着，她低头静静地说道：“你还没有情人吧。我打赌你还没有。”他没有说话。“有过吗？”他还是没有回答。她动了一下，第一次碰了他。她走上前，用双手轻轻托起他的胳膊。他低下头可以看到那个低着头的黑色身影，好像她的脖颈和脑袋生来就有些错位。她吞吞吐吐地说着，或许用她所知道的、有限的一些字眼去给他解释。不过，他以前就听过，思绪早已飞回过去，掠过被射杀的山羊，那是为了拒绝而付出的代价；记忆回到坐在河边的那个下午，他感到伤痛、震惊，还有愤怒。于是，他甩开被她抓住的胳膊。她并不认为他是在故意打她；事实上她认为另有原因。可结果都一样。他的身形、身影渐渐消失在那条大路上，她相信他在奔跑。她已经看不见他的身影了，但有一阵子还能听到他的脚步声。她没有马上离开。她还像他刚离开时那样站着，一动不动地低着头，好像在等待刚才那样的一击。

他并没有快跑，但他的脚步飞快，朝着离家更远的方向走去。他从窗户爬出来后，就已经走了五英里远，现在还没有打算回去。他迅速走下那条路，拐了弯跳过围栏，奔进一片犁过的地里。犁沟里种着庄稼，田地旁边是树林。他跑进树林，置身坚硬的树桩间，树影静静洒在身上，朦胧间，摸得着、闻得到的都是坚硬。他好像身处漆黑的陌生洞穴一样，好像在月光下看到一排娴静的古瓮，闪烁着灰白色的光芒。可是没有一只是完美的，每个都有残损，每个缺口都会溢出一些液体，蒙上死亡的颜色，散发着恶臭。他摸索着找到一棵树，用胳膊撑在上面，望着月光下一排排的瓮，他吐了。

等到下一个星期一的晚上，他就有了那根绳子。他还是等在那个街角里，依旧来得很早。过了一会儿，他看见她来了。她朝他站的地方走过来。“我以为你不会再来了。”她说。

“真的吗？”他抓住她的胳膊，拉起她朝大路跑下去。

她问：“我们要去哪儿？”他没有回答，一直拉着她往前跑，她只好跟着他小跑起来。她趑趄趑趄地一路小跑，像一头动物被什么羁绊着一样，正是这些东西让她和动物有所区别：她的鞋子、衣服和矮小的身材。他拉着她离开大路，朝一周前他翻过的围栏跑去。“等一下。”她的嘴里刚刚蹦出几个字，“围栏——我过不——”她弯腰从铁丝中间穿过时，衣裙被铁丝钩住了，而他早已跨过围栏，转身靠过来猛地一拉，裙子“刺啦”一声撕破了。

他说：“我给你再买一件。”她什么也没说，任由自己被半背半拉地拖到庄稼地，犁沟里，进了树林。

他把绳子整齐地缠绕起来，藏在阁楼间松动的木板后面，这儿也是麦克依琴太太藏她那分分角角硬币的地方，不同之处在于他把绳子远远地扔进了麦克依琴太太摸不到的地方。这是他跟麦克依琴太太学来的。有时，楼下那对老夫妻打鼾时，他会静静地取出绳索，觉得真是自相矛盾。有时，他想告诉她，指给她看他隐藏罪恶工具的地方，告诉她藏匿的主意和地点都是跟她学的。可是，他知道，那样的话，她只会想办法帮他隐藏；她巴不得他去犯罪，好让自己替他遮掩；最后，她会发出一些毫无意义的嘀咕和信号，让麦克依琴开始疑神疑鬼。

接着，他开始偷，从藏钱的地方偷钱。很可能那个女人从没有向他暗示过，也没有跟他提过钱。也许他都不知道自己是在花钱找乐子。这几年，他一直在观察麦克依琴太太，看着她把钱藏在某个地方。后来，他自己也有必要藏一些东西了，他把绳子放在自认为最安全的地方。每次，他在藏绳子或取绳子的时候，都能看到装钱的那个铁罐子。

第一次，他拿了五十美分。他在五十分和二十五分之间徘徊、斗争着。然后，他拿了五十美分，因为这个数目正是他所需要的。他用这笔

钱买了一盒锈迹斑斑的过期糖果。而这盒糖是另一个人在店里玩打弹游戏时获得的战利品，价值十美分。他买来送给了女招待。这是他送她的第一件礼物，仿佛此前没有人想过要送她礼物一样。她用那双大手捧着俗气、劣质的盒子，表情有些奇怪。当时，她正坐在自己卧室的床上。她和名叫玛米和马科斯的一男一女一起住在这幢房子里。大约一周前的一个晚上，那个男人走进她的卧室。她坐在床边脱衣服，正要脱袜子时，他走了进来，靠在衣柜上，叼着烟。

“找了个有钱的农民，”他说，“牛棚里钻出了约翰·雅各布·奥斯塔¹。”

她披了条床单遮住身子，静静坐在床边，低头说道：“他给我钱了。”

“什么钱？难道他还没花掉那一镍币？”他盯着她说道，“这儿是为乡巴佬开的吗？我把你从孟菲斯带到这儿就为了这个！我干脆免费提供饭食好了。”

“我又没占用你的时间。”

“行，我阻止不了你。我讨厌见到你。一个毛头小子，这辈子从来没见过完完整整的一美元。这个镇上到处都是能赚大钱的小伙子，他们才是合适人选。”

“可能我喜欢他，也许你还没想到吧。”

他看着她，看着她静静埋着的头顶。她坐在床上，双手放在膝头。他靠在衣柜上抽着烟，叫道：“玛米！”过了一会儿，他又叫了一句：“玛米，快进来。”墙壁不厚，大个子黄头发女人很快就进来了。他

们都能听到她的声音，她走进来。“听见没，”男的说，“她说她可能非常喜欢他。真是罗密欧和朱丽叶呀，我的天哪！”

黄头发女人看着女招待乌黑的发顶：“那又怎样？”

“没事儿，挺好，马科斯·康福瑞为鲍比·爱伦小姐献上了青春爱侣。”

“出去。”黄头发女人说。

“好啊，我把她带到这里就为了一镍币。”说着，马科斯走了出去。女招待坐着没有动。黄头发女人走到衣柜前，靠在上面，看着她低下头。

“他以前给过你钱？”她问。

女招待没有动。“是的，给过。”

黄头发女人看着她，像马科斯刚才那样靠在衣柜上。“一路从孟菲斯来到这儿。费了那么大劲儿又要放弃。”

女招待还是没有动：“我没想伤害马科斯。”

黄头发女人看了看她垂下的脑袋，然后，转过身走到门口。“希望你不会，”她说，“这件事不会长久。这些小镇不会容忍这样的事情。我知道，我就来自这样的小镇。”

女招待坐在床上，手里拿着廉价、花哨的糖果盒，还像黄头发女人跟她说话时的坐姿一样。然而，现在靠在衣柜上，望着她的人换成了乔。她笑起来。她一边笑，一边用关节粗大的双手捧着俗气的糖果盒。

乔望着她，看着她站起来，低头从他身边经过。她出门叫了一声“马科斯”。除了在餐馆见到马科斯系着脏围裙，戴着帽子外，乔还从没有见过他。马科斯没有抽烟，走进来，伸出手说：“你好，罗密欧。”

乔还没认出他便和他握起手来。“我叫乔·麦克依琴。”他说。黄头发女人也走进来。除了在餐馆，这也是乔第一次见她。他看着她走进屋里，注视着她，看着女招待打开盒子，递了过去。

“乔给我带来的。”她说。

黄头发女人看了一眼盒子，连手都没伸一下，说道：“谢谢。”那个男人也看了一下盒子，同样也没有伸手。

“嗨，嗨，嗨，”他说，“有时候圣诞节会延续好长时间。是吧，罗密欧？”乔从衣柜旁边稍稍挪了一点。他以前从没有进过这所房子。他虽然不觉得恐慌，但还是稍稍松了一口气，困惑地望着马科斯那张捉摸不透的僧侣面孔。不过，他什么都没说，倒是女招待开口了。

“要是不喜欢，你们可以不吃。”他望着马科斯，审视着那张脸，耳边响起女招待的声音；她低着头说道：“不会对你、对任何人造成伤害.....不会占用他的时间.....”乔没有看她，也没有看黄头发女人。他坦然地注视着马科斯，虽然有些茫然但并不恐慌。黄头发女人正在说话，仿佛他们当着乔的面，用一种他们知道他听不懂的语言谈论着。

“出来吧。”黄头发女人说。

“上帝啊，”马科斯说，“我正要请罗密欧喝一杯呢。”

“他愿意喝吗？”黄头发女人问。即使她在直接问乔的时候，还是好像在和马科斯说话，“你要来一杯吗？”

“不要因为他过去的行为难为人家。告诉他是免费的。”

“我不知道，”乔说，“我从没碰过。”

“从没碰过这儿的任何东西，”马科斯说，“上帝啊。”自他进屋以来，再没有瞧过乔一眼，好像他们正谈论他，用的却是一种他完全听不懂的语言。

“走吧，”黄头发女人又说，“快走吧。”

他们走出去时，黄头发女人压根没看他一眼，马科斯也没看他，却一直在喋喋不休。最后，他们都走了。乔站在衣柜旁边。女招待站在原地，低着头，手里捧着打开的糖果盒。狭小的房间里散发着霉味。乔从没进来过。他没想过自己会进来。窗帘已经拉上，唯一的灯泡系在一根电线的末端，用别针固定着一页杂志当灯罩，长久的灼烧已经使纸页发黄。“好了，”他说，“好了。”她没有回答也没有动弹。他想起屋外漆黑一片，想起他们以前单独待在外面的夜晚。“咱走吧。”他说。

“走？”她重复道。乔望着她，“去哪儿？”她问，“为什么？”乔还不明白她的意思。他看着她走到衣柜前，把糖果盒放在上面。这时，她开始脱衣服，解开衣服，扔到地上。

他说：“这，这儿？”这是他第一次看到赤身裸体的女人，尽管他已经做了她一个月的情人，但直到此时，他甚至都不知道还会发生什么意料之外的事。

那个晚上，他们一直在聊天。黑暗中，他们躺在床上说着话，或者说是他在说话。他一直在想“天哪，天哪，原来如此”。他也赤裸裸地躺在她旁边，用手抚摸她，谈论她。谈话的内容不是关于她打哪儿来，干

过什么，而是她的身体，好像他从没有这样做过似的，无论是对她还是对别人。他像个孩子一样，用语言表达着对女人身体的理解。她跟他讲了第一次见面那晚所得的病，但此时这件事已不足以让他吃惊。和赤裸的肉体一样，虽然以前从没遇到过，但也不再令他震惊。他反而给她讲了他所知道的一切。他还讲了三年前那个下午，和那个黑人女孩在锯木棚里的事情。他躺在她身边，抚摸着她，平静地讲给她听。也许他并不清楚女招待是否在听他说话。然后，他又说：“你注意到我的皮肤和头发了吗？”他慢慢地摩挲着她的身体，等着她回答。

她说话的声音也很低：“是的，我以为你可能是个外国人，肯定不是从附近来的。”

“不仅如此，不光是外国人，你猜。”

“什么？还有什么不同？”

“你猜。”

他们的话音都很低，非常平静。此时，夜已深，她没有兴趣和欲望再猜下去。“猜不出来，你是什么人？”

他的手缓慢平静地滑过她看不见的肋骨。他没有马上回答，好像在挑逗她一样，似乎他根本没打算继续说下去。她又问了一句，他才告诉她：“我的身体里流着黑人的血。”

这时，她一动不动地躺在那里，这种安静与刚才的截然不同。然而，他好像并没有注意到。他也静静地躺着，他的手仍然继续抚摸着她的肋部。她问：“你说什么？”

“我觉得我身上有黑人的血。”他闭上眼睛，仍旧慢慢地用手抚摸

她。“我不知道，我相信我有。”

她还是没有动，立刻说道：“你在撒谎。”

“行啊。”他不动声色地说着，手继续抚摸。

“我不信。”黑暗中传来她的声音。

“随你便。”他一边说，一边不停地抚摸。

下个星期六，他从麦克依琴太太藏钱的地方又拿了半美元，给了女招待。过了一两天，他相信她发现钱变少了，而且怀疑是他偷了钱。因为她一直躺着，等麦克依琴不会打扰他们时，她才说：“乔。”他停下脚步，望着她，知道她不会看自己。她没有抬头，平静地说：“我知道年轻人在成长的过程中需要钱。你爸——麦克依琴给你的不够……”他一直望着她，直到她停下来。显然，他在等她说完。然后，他说：

“钱？我要钱干吗？”

下一个星期六，他帮邻居劈柴赚了两美元。他要去哪里，去过哪里，干过什么，这些他都没有和麦克依琴说实话。他把钱给了女招待。麦克依琴发现了他劈柴的事，或许他认为乔把钱藏了起来。也许，麦克依琴太太是这么告诉他的。

每周，乔和女招待可能有两个晚上一起待在她的房间里。起初，他并不知道其他人也这样做过。或许他相信这是老天对他的格外恩赐。很可能直到最后他依然相信马科斯和玛米虽然不赞成他们在一起的事实，但碍于他在场，不得不表现得随和些。不过，他再没有看见他们出现在屋里，虽然他知道他们就在那里，但他不确定他们是不是知道那晚的糖果事件后他又回去过，还在那里留宿了。

通常，他俩都在外面相会，去某个地方或者在通往她住地的路上溜达。也许直到最后他都相信那是他的意思。后来，有一天晚上，她没有在他等候的地方出现。他一直等到法院的钟声敲了十二下，然后径直去了她住的地方。他以前从没有这样做过，尽管那时他还不确定她不和自己在一起的时候是否允许他去那里。但在那晚，他还是去了，以为黑灯瞎火的房里，众人都已入睡。房间倒是漆黑一片，但里面的人却没有睡着。他知道，黑乎乎的窗帘后有人没有睡，而且不止她一个人。他也不知道自己怎么会这样想，他也不愿承认自己所知道的一切。“那是马科斯。”其实他自己比谁都清楚，他知道房间里有个男人和她在一起。两周里他没有再见她，尽管他知道她在街角等自己。后来的一个晚上，她出现在角落里，他也去了。没有任何警告，他便打了她，打在她的身体上。他甚至还知道一些自己不愿相信的事情。“啊，”她叫起来。他又打了她一下。“别在这儿！”她轻声乞求，“别在这儿！”这时，他发现自己正在流泪。自打记事起，他还从没有哭过。他边哭边骂，还在继续打她。她一把抱住他，于是打她的原因便不复存在。“好了，好了，”她说，“好了，好了。”

当晚，他们没有离开那个角落，没有继续散步或离开大路。他们坐在倾斜的草坪上聊天。这次是她在讲给他听，但没有多说。此刻，他恍然大悟，自己早就发现了餐馆里那群无聊的男人，一边叼着烟一边和她说话，而她来来回回不停地走着，可怜兮兮地低着头。耳畔响着她的声音，他好像闻到了那群无名男人的烟味儿和臭气。她说话时一直低着头，一双大手放在膝上。当然他看不清楚，但他用不着看清。“我以为你知道。”她说。

“不，”他说，“我不知道。”

两周以后，他开始抽烟，在烟雾中眯着眼睛。他还学会了喝酒，他会同马科斯和玛米整晚待在一起，有时和三四个男人在一起，通常都会有一两个女人在旁边，有时是从镇上来的，但大多数是从孟菲斯来的陌生女人，她们会待上一个星期或一个月，站在餐馆柜台后面充当女招待，无聊的男人们成天聚在那里。他通常都不知道他们的名字，但会像他们一样歪戴帽子；到了晚上，在马科斯拉上帘子的餐厅里歪戴帽子，和别人聊起那个女招待，甚至当着她的面，醉醺醺地用年轻、高亢的声音说她是自己的婊子。他还经常开着马科斯的车带她到乡下跳舞，但总是小心翼翼地不让麦克依琴听到任何风声。“我不知道他会被什么气疯。”他对她说，“被你还是被舞会。”有时，人们实在没办法，只好把他送到一个做梦都不会想到的地方去睡觉。第二天早上，女招待开车赶在天亮前把他送回家，以免被人发现。到了白天，麦克依琴非常严厉，愤怒地望着他。

“不过，你还有充足的时间让我为给你那头小母牛而懊悔。”麦克依琴说道。

[1](#)约翰·雅各布·奥斯塔（1763—1848），美国房地产巨头及皮毛交易商，位列《福布斯》评出的迄今为止美国十五大富豪第四位，预计资产为 1101 亿美元。

麦克依琴躺在床上，房间一片漆黑，但他无法入睡。他躺在麦克依琴太太旁边，确信她已经睡着了，他努力地快速回想着：“衣服已经穿过了，可在什么时候呢，不可能是白天，因为他每天都在我眼皮底下，除了星期六下午。可星期六下午他都会去畜棚，可能会脱下我要求他穿的那件合身的衣服，藏起来。然后换上他想穿，而且必须穿上才能干坏事的那身衣服。”这时，他似乎恍然大悟，仿佛有人告诉了他一样。这么说来，他肯定是偷偷摸摸穿上那身衣服的，而且很可能是在晚上。如果真是这样，他真的不愿相信这个孩子是在干什么淫荡之事。他自己从没有犯过淫贱的事，也从不去听别人谈论这类事情。三十分钟全神贯注的思考让他彻底想清楚了乔的一切行踪，就像乔亲口告诉他一样，除了不知道那些人的名字和活动场所。很可能即使乔亲口说了这些，他也不会相信。因为他这种人总是执拗地认定自己对善恶已有的看法。他认为固执和洞察力是一回事，只不过固执的变化要缓慢些。而此时，乔正顺着绳子，像影子一样迅速掠过敞开的洒满月光的窗户。麦克依琴躺在里面，没有立刻认出乔。或许即使看清了绳索，他也仍然不敢相信自己的眼睛。当他起身走到窗前时，乔早已收回绳索，急速朝畜棚走去。麦克依琴站在窗口注视着他，内心极度愤怒，就像法庭上的法官眼睁睁看着一个死刑犯靠在法警身上，朝他的袖口吐唾沫一样。

麦克依琴躲在房子和大路之间的小道里，他在阴影中看到乔站在路口。他听到了汽车的声音，看见有辆汽车驶过来停下，乔钻了进去。或许他甚至都不在意车里还有谁，或许他早已知晓，他的目的只是为了看清车子前进的方向。也许他也相信自己早就知道，因为道路四通八达，那辆汽车可以开往任何地方。接着，麦克依琴转身朝屋子走去，脚步飞

快，仍然像刚才那样怒火中烧，好像只要有更加伟大、更加高洁的愤怒的指引，便无须怀疑个人的能力。他穿着室内男拖鞋，没戴帽子，把睡衣塞进裤子里，悬着背带，像支离弦的箭一样奔向马厩，跨上那匹高大健壮的白色老马，返回小道，快马加鞭奔驰在大路上；他从马厩出来时，麦克依琴太太还在厨房门口喊了他一声。老马稳稳地载着他上了大路，人和马僵硬地前倾，仿佛被什么强大的力量主宰着一路飞奔，实际上却并没有那样的速度，似乎他们都十分冷静，笃定地相信自己有超自然的洞察力，知道目的地在哪里，速度并不重要。

麦克依琴骑着马径直去了自己要追寻的地方，走了大半夜，几乎走遍了半个村子才找到，但其实并没有那么远。他走了不到四英里就听到了乐声，看到路旁有座一间房的校舍亮着灯。他早就知道有这么个地方，但从没想过里面会举办舞会。不过，他骑着马直接奔了过去，走到随意停放的汽车、轻便马车的影子间。备好马鞍的骡马也被拴在学校周围的小树林间。还没等马停下，他便翻身下马，甚至都没有系好缰绳。他的脚一着地，便穿着那双室内拖鞋，任由背带飘舞。圆圆的脑袋，怒发冲冠地跑向敞开的门窗。屋里传来了音乐声，煤油灯下人影幢幢。

如果他真的思考过的话，他也许会相信自己一直被指引着，现在又在勇武的大天使米迦勒¹的驱使下走进房间。显然，即便灯光突然照射，人头攒动，他的眼睛片刻都没有受到干扰。他在人群中推搡着，引来一阵惊讶和骚动。他直接奔向那个自己心甘情愿领养的年轻人，他一直试图用自认为正确的方式养育这个人。乔和女招待正在跳舞，并没有看见麦克依琴。女招待只见过他一次，但可能还记得，或许此时的面孔就足以让她难忘。因为她突然不跳了，脸上露出近乎害怕的表情，乔见状也转过身来。当他转身的时候，麦克依琴正站在他们面前。麦克依琴也只见过那个女人一面，而且很可能当时他还没有留意，因为他一向拒

绝听到男人们谈及通奸的事。但他直接逼近女招待，一时竟然忘记了乔的存在。“滚开，烂货！”他骂道。他的声音雷鸣般响彻惊骇的房间，回荡在煤油灯下一张张惊愕的面庞中，融入戛然而止的音乐，飘进初夏宁静的月夜里。“滚开，娼妇！”

也许他似乎并不知道自已疾步如飞，声音那么洪亮。很可能他以为自己坚如磐石，不急不躁地站在那里，而周围男盗女娼者像是见到了复仇者的代表一样，早已惊恐万分，乱作一团。也许他觉得扇出耳光的那双手不属于自己，挨揍的年轻人是他从孩童一直养育、庇护、供吃穿、长大成人的那个家伙；也许那张脸躲过一击后，再次扬起时，已经不再是那张孩子脸。不过，他也并不感到震惊，因为他觉得那张脸已经不是自己所关爱的孩子脸，而是他熟悉的撒旦的面孔。他盯着那张脸，举起拳头继续稳稳地逼近，像一位殉难者一样满腔愤怒，如梦似幻地凛然迎向乔冲他的脑袋砸来的椅子。他的脑子一片空白。也许正是这空白让他震惊，不过震惊不大，也没有持续多久。

这时，乔觉得一切都已结束，喧嚣沉寂下来，只留下他一个人站在地板中央，手里紧紧抓着残损的椅子。他低头望着他的养父，麦克依琴躺在地上，此时看起来那么安详，好像睡着了一样：桀骜不驯的头颅也沉静下来，前额的鲜血静静地流淌着。

乔的呼吸非常急促。他能听见自己的喘息和其他什么声音，尖细而遥远。他似乎听了好长时间才明白那是人声，是女人的声音。他看见两个男人抓着她，她在扭动挣扎，头发朝前狂甩，惨白的脸上涂着低劣的脂粉，斑驳的面孔露出丑陋又痛苦的表情，嘴巴像锯齿样的小洞，不断发出尖叫：“叫我娼妇！”她一边尖叫，一边扭打抓她的男人。“这个老杂种！放开我！放开我！”接着，她不再骂骂咧咧，只是一个劲儿地尖叫。她扭打推搡着，试图去咬抓她的那个男人的手。

乔朝她走去，手里仍旧抓着那把破椅子。其他人靠墙蜷缩成一团，望着他：女孩们穿着紧绷的掉色的衣服和邮购的鞋袜；小伙子们穿着做工极差的纸板一样的衣服，也是邮购回来的。他们的双手经过磨损变得十分粗糙，眼睛里透着长期注视无尽的犁沟和缓慢移动的骡屁股所留下的痕迹。乔挥舞着破椅子跑起来，喊道：“放开她！”她立刻停止了挣扎，开始朝他愤怒地尖叫，好像刚刚才看见他，才意识到他也在场。

“还有你！你把我带到这儿来。狗杂种。他妈的，你们都是狗娘养的东西！把那个从来没见过的家伙引到我——”乔似乎并没有专门朝谁奔跑，他的那张脸在举起的椅子下显得非常沉着。其他人放开女招待，都向后退去，但她似乎还没有意识到，仍旧在扭打。

“滚开！”乔大喊道。他挥舞着椅子，但面容却非常沉静。“向后退！”他又说道，虽然谁都没有朝他走去。人们都吓呆了，像地上躺着的那个人一样安静。他挥舞着椅子，朝门口退去。“往后！我说过总有一天我会杀了他！我告诉过他！”他挥动着椅子，脸色沉稳，往门口退。“你们谁也别动！”他一边说，一边不住地看着一张张面具般的脸。然后，他扔下椅子，转身跳出门外，跑进柔和斑驳的月光里。他赶上女招待，她正要钻进他们来时开的那辆汽车里。他喘着粗气，声音却依然沉稳：一张麻木的脸，发出沉重的呼吸声。“开回镇上，”他说，“我一会儿就到那里，我……”显然他没有意识到自己在说什么，也不知道发生了什么；女招待在车门处突然转过身，开始猛抽他的脸，他一动不动，声音也没有变：“对，好的。我马上就去，因为我——”说着，他转身就跑。可她还在揍他。

他不知道麦克依琴把马拴在哪里，也不确定那匹马是否在那里。然而，他像养父一样自信，相信自己对事物的判断力准确无误。他直接跑到马跟前，翻身上马，掉转马头奔上大路。那辆车早已上路，他望着汽

车的尾灯渐渐消失。

剽悍的农家老马从容地慢跑着回了家。年轻人稳坐在马背上，身子前倾，像当时狂喜的浮士德²一样，忘却一切规约，终于获得自由，不再受名誉和法律的约束。马儿在行进中累得直冒汗，甜涩的汗水发出硫黄的味道；一阵风无影无形地刮过。他大声叫道：“我干了！干了！我告诉过他们，我会干的！”

他骑马上了小道，在月光中很快就到家了。他以为这时家中会漆黑一片，其实不然。他片刻未停，精心藏匿的绳索是他过去生活的一部分，并且成了荣耀和希望的一种象征；那位疲惫的老妇人在十三年中曾被她视为敌人，此时她还没有休息，依旧在等他。她和麦克依琴的卧室还亮着灯，她站在门口，睡衣上披着一条围巾。她问了一声：“乔？”他快速穿过门廊，他的表情和当时椅子砍下去时麦克依琴看到的一模一样。也许她还没有看清楚。“怎么了？”她问，“你爸骑着马刚出去。我听见……”这时，她看清了他的脸，但已经来不及后退。他没有打她，只是用手轻轻地碰了她的胳膊，他走得太急，而她正挡了他的路，于是他将她推到门外，像掀门帘一样把她甩在一旁。

“他在舞会上，”他说，“老婆子，走开。”她转过身，往后退时一手抓着围巾，一手扶着门板，看着他穿过房间，开始爬上楼梯，进了自己的阁楼。他一直没有停步，只是扭头看了一眼。这时，借着灯光，她才看清他露出牙齿在笑。“在舞会上，听见没？不过他没有跳舞。”他在灯光中大笑，扭过头，一边笑一边跑上楼梯，慢慢消失在黑暗中，从上到下地渐渐消失，仿佛是他的脑袋先笑着跑了进去，然后被什么东西吞噬掉，像擦掉黑板上的粉笔画一样消失了。

她跟在后面吃力地爬楼梯。他经过她身边时，她就开始跟着，仿佛

丈夫离开时无法缓解的紧迫感像乔肩上的斗篷一样，从他身上传给了她。她费力地攀爬着狭窄的楼梯，一只手紧紧抓住扶手，另一只手还抓着围巾。她一声不吭，没有喊他，好像幽灵一样服帖地听命于隐形的主人。乔没有点灯，但房间里洒满了月光，即使没有月光，她也依然知道他在做什么。她扶着墙壁让自己站起来，在墙根里摸索，直到摸到他的床，一屁股坐下去。这倒费了番工夫，因为当她抬头看那些松动的木板时，他早已逼近床边。月光直直地泻下来，她眼睁睁看他把钱罐倒在床上，席卷起一小堆硬币和散乱的钞票，塞进衣兜里。只有这个时候，他才看见她正坐在那里，有些驼背，一只手撑在床上，一只手抓住围巾。“我没跟你要，”他说，“你记住。我没要，因为我怕你会主动给我，所以我就拿了。记住！”话音未落，他早已转过身。她看着他走上煤油灯照着的楼梯，下了楼，很快便消失在她的视线中，但她依然能听见他的声音。她听见他再次飞快地穿过门廊；然后，她又听见了马蹄声；又过了一会儿，马蹄声也消失了。

乔快马加鞭穿过城镇主干道，听到什么地方传来一点的钟声。这时，老马喘着粗气，可乔还是挥动着大棍子有节奏地敲打着它的臀部，强迫它快点跑。这不是根鞭子，而是一段扫把柄，麦克依琴太太把它插进花坛中好让藤蔓能攀爬生长。尽管老马还在不停地挪动，但它的速度不比步行快多少。棍子也困了，起起落落的速度慢下来，马背上的年轻人身体前倾，好像他不知道老马已经筋疲力尽；他仿佛在生拉硬拽地驱赶这匹疲惫不堪的动物，洒满银辉的空旷街头，有节奏地回响着老马空洞缓慢的蹄声。此情此景——骑马人和马——带上了梦幻般的奇怪色彩，像电影中的慢镜头，随着马蹄拖沓地行进在街头，一步步朝着他习惯性地等待的街角处走去，看似不那么急迫，但心情却没有丝毫松懈，更多的是年轻人的急躁。

此时，老马连慢步前行都已经非常困难了，四蹄僵硬，呼吸拖长，喘着粗气，每次呼吸都是一声呻吟。棍子却依然会落在它身上；只要老马放慢速度，棍子就会相应加快速度。可老马实在走不快了，终于倒向一边。乔勒住它的脑袋，抽打它，可它还是慢慢倒下来，不再动弹。老马投下斑驳的影子，耷拉着脑袋，不住地打战，像人一样呻吟着。然而，骑马人仍旧坐在马鞍上，身子前倾，一副飞奔的架势，同时还在挥着棍子抽打马的臀部。若不是棍子的起落和老马的喘息，这种情景简直恍若一尊骑马雕像，脱离了底座，精疲力竭地倒在月影横斜的空阔街道。

乔下了马，用力去拉马头，好像只要用尽全身力气就能把它拉起来，然后便可以飞身上马。老马却没有任何反应。他只好罢手，似乎往马跟前靠了一点。他们都不再动弹：疲惫不堪的老马和年轻人，头对头，面对面，俨然一尊或倾听，或祈祷，抑或是商讨的雕像。过了一会儿，乔又举起了棍子，抽打不再动弹的马头。他不断抽打马头，直到把棍子打断才住手。他继续拿着还没胳膊长的半截棍子继续敲打。不过，或许他已经意识到再怎么打马都不会动弹，或许他的胳膊终于累了，所以他把棍子扔到一边，转过身，旋风一样迈着大步离开了。他头也没回，渐渐消失在月影中，白色的衬衫一起一伏，若隐若现，他彻底忘却了老马，仿佛它根本没有存在过一样。

他来到曾经等待过的街角。假如他真的注意到或思索过的话，他必定会说：上帝啊，这么久了，那是多久前的事啊。蜿蜒的街道通向石子路。他大约还有一英里路要走，所以他跑得并不快，只顾认真地一步一步往前赶。他稍稍低下头，似乎在思索脚下被踩踏的小道，胳膊肘在两侧摆动，好似训练有素的运动员走路一样。弯弯曲曲的道路被月光照得灰白，两旁稀稀落落地分布着低矮杂乱的小房子，小得可怜，住在里面

的人们常常是前一天来，第二天就走，行踪不定，他们齐聚在城镇的边缘。所有的房屋都是一片漆黑，只有他奔向的小屋还亮着灯。

他从路上跑下来，到了房前，夜深人静，脚步声清晰而响亮。也许他早已看到了女招待，穿着出行的黑衣裙，戴着帽子，拿着包裹，等在那里。（为何要离开，去向何处，如何离开，这些或许他从没有想过。）马科斯和玛米也在场，可能他们都已经脱衣服打算睡觉了，马科斯没穿外套，只穿了件内衣，玛米穿着浅蓝色的睡袍——两个人在喧嚣、热闹的送别路上挤来挤去。实际上，他什么都没想，因为他根本没有告诉女招待准备离开。或许他以为自己告诉过她，或者她应该知道，因为他最近的行为和未来的计划似乎是那么简单，每个人都能明白。或许他甚至相信在女招待上车时，自己告诉过她要回家取钱。

他跑进走廊。即使是他在这所房子里春风得意的日子里，他也总是从路上溜进走廊的阴影里，尽可能不引人注目地快速走进有人等待的屋子里，直到现在也是。他敲了敲门，不出他所料，她的房间亮着一盏灯，走廊尽头亮着另一盏灯。房间拉着窗帘，里面传出说话声，是好几个人的声音，他能辨别出这是急切而不是快活的声音，这也在他的预料之中。他想，也许他们以为我不会来了，那匹该死的马，该死的马！他又敲了敲门，声音很大。接着，他又抓住把手晃了几下，把脸紧贴在前门拉上帘子的玻璃上。里面的人不再说话，然后，屋里再没有一点动静。她房间里的灯罩，门口昏暗的帘子，全都被那两盏灯照得清清楚楚。好像在随着他摇晃门把手，屋里所有的人突然都死了。他再次敲门，连续不断地敲着；正当他还在敲门时（帘子上没有映出任何影子，门口也没有任何脚步声），房门在他敲打的手指下突然悄无声息地打开了。他像贴在门板上一样，随之跌进门槛里，马科斯从门后面出来挡在门口。马科斯已经穿戴整齐，甚至还戴了帽子。“哦，哦，哦，”他说

道。他的声音不高，好像是他把乔迅速拽进屋里，然后又关上门锁好，乔还没明白自己已经在屋里了。马科斯还在说话，声音还是那样含糊不清，虽然是从心底发出的声音，但听起来却索然无味，没有一丝快乐的味道。他像拿着一只贝壳什么的東西，放在面前，透过它来观察乔一样，这使得乔在过去总是带着介于困惑和愤怒的眼神来看他。“罗密欧终于来了，”他说，“比尔街上的花花公子。”接着，他又提高嗓门，响亮地喊了一句：“罗密欧。进来，跟大伙儿见个面。”

乔一进门就奔向他所熟悉的房门；如果说之前他曾停过脚步的话，那现在可以说他是又跑起来了。他没有听见马科斯在说什么，也从未听过什么比尔街。这条大街贯穿孟菲斯城里的三四个街区，与之相比，哈莱姆³只不过是电影场景而已。乔自进屋就始终没有抬头看一眼。突然，他看到黄头发女人站在走廊后边，他进来的时候那个地方并没有人。这时，她却突然出现在那里，而且已经穿戴整齐，身上穿着黑衣裙，手里拿一顶帽子。他旁边昏暗的门口还放着一堆行李，几个行包。他可能没有注意到它们，或许他也瞟了一眼，目光比大脑转得都要快，我没想到她会有那么多行李。或许，这时他才第一次想到旅行没必要带东西，心想，我怎么能拿得动那么多。不过，他没有驻足，早已转向熟悉的房门。直到他把手放在门上时，他才意识到屋里鸦雀无声。十八岁的他那时才明白，寂静的屋里不止一个人。然而，他还是没有停步，也许他没有意识到走廊里再次空无一人，没有察觉那个黄头发女人消失了。

他打开房门，立刻跑进来，仿佛一个人在静止不动中超越了自我和意识。女招待坐在床边，他无数次地见过这样的场景。她穿着黑衣裙，戴着帽子，一切正如他所预料的一样。她一直低着头，房门打开时，她也没有抬头；她的手也一动不动，指间夹着一支烟，静止的香烟在黑衣

服的映衬下显得有些畸形和怪异。就在这一刹那，他看到屋里还有一个男人，他以前从来没有见过这个人。不过，此时他并没有意识到这一点，只是后来才记起这个，也记起了思绪比目光转动敏捷时，发现的那堆行李。

陌生人也在床边坐着，同样也在抽烟。他歪戴着帽子，帽檐的影子落到嘴上。他不算老，但看起来也不怎么年轻。他和马科斯说不准还是兄弟，因为两个白人男子要是突然窜进非洲村落，对于那里的人来说，这两个人肯定就是弟兄了。灯光照在他木然不动的脸上，下巴上。乔并不知道陌生人有没有在注视自己。他听到了他俩的交谈，但听不懂他们在说什么，甚至都没有去听。

他怎么知道的。也许他听到了这些字，但可能没有听懂。这些声音也许都比不上紧闭的窗户外昆虫窸窣窸窣的声音重要，或许也没有他视而不见的行李包更有意义。鲍比说他后来就消失了。鲍比说他可能知道。至少让咱们弄明白逃跑的恰当理由。

虽然，打从进门他就没动弹过，但他仍然在“奔跑”。马科斯碰到他肩膀时，他转过身来，仿佛大跨步时被人叫住一样。他甚至没有注意到马科斯也在房间里。他带着一丝愤怒，扭头望着马科斯。“小子，给咱说说，”马科斯说，“怎么回事？”

“什么怎么回事？”乔问。

“那个老家伙。你确定自己砸死他了吗？说白了吧，你不想把鲍比也拉进监狱吧。”

“鲍比。”乔重复道，心里全是她。鲍比，鲍比。他转过身，思绪继续奔跑。这时，马科斯抓住了他的肩膀，不过没用力。

“说吧，”马科斯说，“咱不是朋友吗？你砸死他了吗？”

“砸死他？”乔说道。他说话时焦躁不安，强忍愤怒，好像自己正被一个小孩子拉扯着问东问西一样。

陌生人开口问道：“你拿椅子砸了那个家伙，他死了吗？”

“死？”乔盯着陌生人，重复道。这时，他又看到了女招待，思绪似乎又开始跑了起来。他确实开始挪动了，全然将这两个人从脑海中抹掉。他走到床边，扯着口袋，扬扬得意，脸上露出了胜利的表情。女招待却没有看他。从他进门开始，她连一眼都没有瞧过，或许他完全忘记了这一点。女招待一动不动地坐着，手里的香烟还在燃烧，那只僵化了的手像一块熟肉一样硕大、惨白。这时，又有人抓了他的肩膀，是那个陌生人。陌生人和马科斯肩并肩站在一起盯着乔。

“别磨磨叽叽的，”陌生人说道，“要是你砸死了那家伙，你就直说。瞒不了多久，到下个月外头的人都会知道。”

“我跟你讲，我不知道！”乔答道。他不耐烦地看着他俩，但没有发火。“我打了他，他倒在地上。我告诉过他，总有一天我会那么干的。”乔朝那两张死板、几乎一模一样的面孔望去，他开始奋力挣脱陌生人抓着的肩膀。

马科斯说：“那你来这儿干吗？”

“干吗——”乔说，“我来干吗……”乔的话音中带着渐渐变弱的惊愕，虽然愤怒却仍旧耐心克制，他一一看着这两张脸。“我来干吗？我来接鲍比。你们以为我——我辛苦跑回家，就是要取钱结婚的——”他又一次彻底忘记了他们的存在，挣脱拉拽，转向那个女人，他的脸上还是那副忘

乎所以、扬扬得意的神情。当时，很可能那两个男人像两片纸一样完全被刮得无影无踪了。马科斯走到门口喊了一声，不一会儿黄头发女人便走进来，或许他甚至都没有注意到这些。女招待低头静静地坐在床边，他俯下身，从口袋里掏出皱皱巴巴的钞票和硬币，放在她的膝上和床边。“这儿！你看，看，我有钱了，看见没？”

这时，又一阵风刮过，像三小时前在校舍一样，置身瞠目结舌的人群，而当时的情形他早已没有了印象。他静静地站在那里，像做梦一样直挺挺地站着；而一直坐着的女招待“腾”地站起来，撞在他身上。女招待站起身，抓起零乱的钱币猛地一掷；他静静地看着她那张扭曲的面孔，嘴巴大张，厉声尖叫，那双眼睛也令人触目惊心。在场的人中似乎只有他一人能保持镇静、沉着，只有他一人的声音平静地在耳边响起。“你意思是不愿意？”他问，“你意思是不愿意？”

此情此景和刚才在校舍中的一幕非常相似：她被人拉着，不断地尖叫、挣扎，摇头晃脑，头发蓬乱；跟散乱的头发比起来，她的脸，甚至连嘴巴都像死人的嘴脸一样苍白。“杂种！狗娘养的！想害我，亏我还一直把你当白人，白人！”

然而，可能对他来说，这也不过是噪声而已，没有任何其他意思：只是一阵吹了很久的风。他盯着她，盯着那张从未见过的脸，悄悄对自己说话（他也不清楚自己到底有没有发出声音），渐渐变得惊讶起来：为什么，我为她杀了人，甚至为她去偷钱。他好像刚刚才被告知了自己曾经的所作所为，他听进去了，开始思考。

这时，她好像第三张纸片一样被大风刮出了他的世界。他开始挥舞手臂，仿佛手中仍然抓着那把破椅子。黄头发女人已经在房里待了一阵子，他刚刚才看到，不过一点都不惊讶，显然她像是突然出现在稀薄的

空气中，一动不动地站在那里；她的脸像金刚石一般坚硬而平静，像警察举起的白手套般一丝不苟，带着不可抗拒的沉着和敬畏。现在，她为旅行穿了黑色衣服，外面又套了一件浅蓝色晨衣。她平静地说：“拉开他，咱们走。警察马上就会来，他们知道在哪儿能找见他。”

或许，乔根本没有听到她在说什么，也没有听到女招待的尖叫：“他亲口告诉我，他自己是个黑鬼，狗娘养的！我白让黑崽子睡了，还差点在乡巴佬舞会上，被他连累让警察抓了！”也许，他只听见不断刮着的风声，仍旧像抓着椅子一样挥舞着手臂，冲向那两个人。很可能他还没明白他们已经朝自己扑了过来。他带着和养父一样的傲慢劲儿，正好撞在陌生人的拳头上。尽管在他倒地之前，陌生人朝他脸上揍了两拳，但他可能都没有感觉到。他仰面躺在地上，一动不动地，就像曾经被他打倒的那个男人一样。然而，他没有晕过去，因为他还正睁着眼睛，平静地看着他们。他的眼睛一片空洞，没有痛苦，没有惊诧。不过，很显然，他无法动弹；他若有所思地躺在那里，抬起眼皮盯着那两个男人，还有纹丝不动的黄头发女人。此时，那个女人像一座完成抛光的雕塑一样矗立在那里。也许他什么声音都没有听到；也许他听到了，但在他听来，那些声音再次如同窗外昆虫不断发出的干巴巴的嗡嗡嘤嘤声，没有任何意义：

破坏了我梦寐以求的美好盘算

他应该远离那群婊子

他无法自拔，他注定摆脱不了她们

他真是黑鬼吗？看上去不像

一天晚上他把这些告诉了鲍比。但我猜她跟他一样不清楚他的身

份。这些乡下杂种什么可能性都有。

我们会弄明白。我们要看看他的血到底是不是黑的。

乔安静地躺在地上，没有动弹。他望着陌生人俯下身，从地板上托起他的脑袋，又冲他的脸揍了一拳，这次是更加迅速的猛抽。过了一会儿，他舔了舔嘴唇，有点像小孩舔饭勺那样。他看着陌生人收回拳头，没有再落下来。

够了，咱们去孟菲斯吧。

再打一拳。乔静静地躺着，望着那只手。这时，陌生人旁边的马科斯也弯下腰来。咱们还需要放点儿血才能弄清楚。

当然，他不用担心，这一拳也是白送的。

拳头并没有落下来。黄头发女人也站在那里。她抓住陌生人举起的手臂。我说过这就够了。

[1](#)大天使米迦勒，《圣经》中他有着凡人所没有的勇气与无可比拟的威力，性情勇猛果敢，虽然好战，但是充满慈悲心，对于罪恶的事抱着绝对的否定与无情的歼灭，是“绝对正义”的化身，绝不掺杂一丝黑暗。

[2](#)浮士德，相传他为了追求知识和新生活，把灵魂抵押给魔鬼，而魔鬼会满足他一切要求。

[3](#)哈莱姆，黑人聚居区。

悲伤的心情无法记住上千条荒凉孤寂的街道，但领悟的能力可以做到。这些街道从那天晚上开始延伸。当时，他躺在地上，听到最后脚步声响起，接着是最后的关门声（他们甚至都没有关灯）；他静静地躺在那里，睁开双眼，头顶上悬挂的灯泡一直发出刺痛眼睛的光线，仿佛屋里所有的人都已死去。他不知道自己躺了多久，压根也没有去想，他不觉得有什么痛苦。也许，他意识到在身体里的什么地方，意志力和知觉的线头已被切断，还没有接通，现在正等待再次被接好，重新搭建起来，他才能动弹。那些人早已做好了离开的准备，只需从他身上跨过去，就像人们打算永远腾空房子时，跨过那些决定要丢弃的物品。嘿鲍比嘿孩子，这是你的钱你忘带了。这是罗密欧的积蓄，上帝啊他肯定掠夺了主日学校的钱一路拿来给了他的鲍比。你难道没看见他此时正把钱给了鲍比？你难道没看见他慷慨赠送的样子？好的捡起来孩子，你可以留着当礼物或其他什么。她怎么不愿意接受？太糟糕了事情难办了，不过我们不能让它留在地上，否则它会把地板蚀个洞，它已经帮助腐蚀了一个特别大的洞—对任何尺寸来说都是大洞。嘿鲍比嘿孩子，我要替鲍比留着，见鬼！我是说给鲍比留一半，你们这些杂种让它扔在那里想干吗？它属于他上帝啊他要它干什么，他不花钱不需要钱，问鲍比他要钱吗？他们给了他，我们中的其他人得付出代价。把它放那里，我说过了他妈的这不是我的钱，给鲍比它也不是你的，除非你他妈的对我说他欠你钱他背着我跟你睡觉。我说过把钱留下赶快走，它不过五六块钱。接着，黄头发女人站在他旁边俯下身。他平静地注视着她，她掀起裙子，从袜子口取出一摞折叠平整的钞票，抽出一张，停了一下没动，然后塞进他的裤子外兜里，接着便转身离开了。快点离开这里，你自己还没有

收拾好，你应该穿上那件晨衣，合上行李箱，脸上再抹点粉带上我的行李和帽子现在就走。你带上鲍比和其他行李钻进汽车，等一下，我和马科斯你以为我会让你们哪个留下来去偷他那一张？现在就走离开这里。

很快，他们都走了：最后的脚步声，最后的关门声。接着，他听到发动汽车的声音淹没了昆虫的噪声。汽车开上大路，驶向平坦的远方，向更低处驶去，于是只剩昆虫的叫声。他躺在灯光下，仍然无法动弹；他能睁开眼睛，却什么都看不清，能听见却听不清说什么；他静静地躺着，两根切断的线头还没有连接起来，他不时地像个孩子一样舔舔嘴唇。

过了一会儿，两根线头接通了。他并不知道接通的确切时刻，不过是突然间感觉到脑袋在嗡嗡作响，他慢慢坐起来，发现自己还活着。他站起来，头晕目眩，房间像思维一样缓慢平稳地旋转，看来思维正告诉他还不行。不过，他还是没感觉到疼痛，甚至当他靠着衣柜，从镜子里打量自己，还用手摸了摸肿胀流血的脸，这个时候他都没觉得疼。“天哪，”他说道，“他们真把我暴打了一顿。”他还没来得及思考，也没达到思考的水平。我想我还是离开这里为好，我想我还是离开好。他朝门口走去，像盲人或夜游者一样伸开双臂摸索。他不记得自己曾经穿过房门走到大厅，发现自己已经站在了另一间卧室里，或许他虽然不相信，但仍旧希望自己是朝前门移动。这间卧室也不算大，但整个房间似乎仍旧充斥着黄头发女人的气息，单薄、粗糙的墙壁向外凸出，金刚石般坚硬的墙面像激进分子一样令人生畏。空荡荡的衣柜上只有一只一品脱的酒瓶，好像装的是威士忌。他慢慢地喝着，丝毫没有感到火辣辣的酒劲，身子靠着衣柜，直挺挺地站在那里。威士忌酒像糖浆一样凉飕飕地经过喉部，味道淡如白水。喝完酒，他把酒瓶放下。他靠着衣柜，低下头，大脑一片空白，或许在茫然地等待，或许都不是在等待。过了一会

儿，威士忌开始在他体内燃烧，他的脑袋渐渐开始左摇右晃，思维与不断灼烧的内脏渐渐合二为一：“我得离开这里。”他再次走进大厅。这时，他的脑袋清醒了，可身体却不听他使唤。他顺着大厅慢慢挪动，沿着一堵墙朝前门滑动，心想：“快点，振作起来，我得离开这儿。”想着，只要我能走到外边，呼吸到空气，清爽的空气，凉爽的夜晚。他注视着自己的双手朝前门摸索，想尽量帮助自己的双手，哄着身子听由自己控制。“不管怎么说，他们总算没有把我关起来，”他想，“上帝啊，要不然到了明早我才能出去，我可没办法打开窗户爬出去。”他终于把门打开了，走出去后又把门关上，可他的身子却懒得去关门，于是他还在和它争论，强迫它关上空无一人的房门。屋里还亮着两盏灯，发出死寂的光芒，它们并不知道屋子已经空空荡荡的，丝毫不在意，不在意屋里的寂静和破败，就像不在意人们过去常常在这里粗暴地饮酒，廉价地行苟且之事一样。这时，他的身子勉强温顺了一点。他从漆黑的门廊走到月光下，流着血的脑袋和空空的肚子在威士忌的作用下狂暴地燃烧，这使得他勇敢地走到大街上。这条路一走就是十五年。

威士忌的酒劲适时消退了，接着又重新涌起，然后再次消失，而那条街道却一直在延伸。从那一夜开始，上千条道路如出一辙：无法预知的角落，变换的景色，不时地央求搭车或偷偷蹭车。他坐过火车、汽车以及乡村马车，不管是二十岁、二十五岁，还是三十岁时，他总是带着那副冷酷、平静的表情，一身城里人打扮（即使满身尘土，衣衫破旧）；车夫不知道这位乘客是谁，从事何种职业，也没有人敢打听。这条街道一直延伸到俄克拉荷马州和密苏里州，南至墨西哥州，然后北上至芝加哥和底特律，接着又回到南方，最终抵达密西西比州。这条路他走了十五年：道路穿行在石油城镇简陋搭建的临时木板店铺前，他一直穿着那身哗叽料衣服，轻便的鞋子也被油泥染成了黑色。他会花十美元、十五美元吃一顿劣质的罐装饭，用厚厚的一卷钞票付账，钞票上同

样沾满了油泥，像产出的黑金子一样宝贵。这条路穿过金色的麦田，他曾在热辣辣的太阳下辛苦劳作，也曾伴着九月清冷的明月星辉在草垛上艰难入睡。他接连当过苦力，做过矿工、勘探工，兜售过赌马票；他进过部队，服役四个月做了逃兵，但他没有被抓住。这条路总是穿过城市，一模一样的城市，几乎交替出现的街区，记不清名字的城市。在漆黑、模糊的半夜里，他会随便在拱门里和女人们过夜，有钱时会付钱，没钱时也要睡，醒来便告诉她们自己是黑人。有段时间，这个办法还算奏效，那是他在南方的时候。这个方法简单易行，通常他最多挨女人或老鸨一顿臭骂，虽然有时候他会被其他嫖客打得不省人事，苏醒时发现自己正躺在街上或是被关在监狱里。

那时，他还在相对而言算是南方的地方。一天晚上，这个方法不起作用了。他从床上起身，告诉那个女人自己是个黑人。“是吗？”女人说，“我以为你也许只是一个意大利移民。”她望着他，没有表现出任何特殊的兴趣。接着，她清楚地从他脸上看出了些什么，说道：“那有什么关系？你看起来很正常啊。你应该见过在你之前被我赶出去的那家伙了吧。”她盯着他，非常平静地继续说道：“喂，你以为这鬼地方是什么？里茨酒店¹吗？”接着，她闭上嘴巴不再说话，一边端详他的脸，一边开始慢慢向后退。她盯着他，大惊失色，张开嘴准备叫喊。接着，她真的叫起来，叫喊声引来两个警察将他制伏。起初，人们以为那个女人已经被杀害了。

之后，他便病了。直到那时，他才明白有些白种女人愿意接受黑皮肤的男人。他病了两年，有时他会想起自己曾经欺骗或戏弄过白种男人，让他们骂他是黑鬼，以便挑起打斗，或者打倒他们，或者被他们打倒。而现在，他却开始揍那些称他为白人的黑人。此时，他来到了北方，先去芝加哥，后来又去了底特律。他和黑人一起生活，躲避白人。

他和他们一同吃饭，一同睡觉，但无法交流，说不准什么时候就会打起来。他和一个活像黑檀木雕的女人过着夫妻一样的生活。晚上，他躺在她身边，睡不着的时候开始用力深呼吸。他是故意这么做的，注视着自己白色的胸脯在肋骨间逐渐越陷越深，慢慢体会，甚至要努力吸进黑人的味道，吸进黑人深不可测的思想和性格，而每一次呼气又将白人的血液、思维和特质竭力吐出去。整个过程中，他的鼻孔绷得发白，努力将气味吸收转化，随着肉体的不满和精神的抵触，他的身体不断奋力挣扎着。

他以为自己想逃避的只是寂寞而不是自我。然而，那条街道一直向前延伸：悄无声息。对他来说，每条街道都一样，但没有一处是安静的。这条路任由自己的性子和节奏延伸，总是空无一人：他也许看到自己置身无数角色中，注定要寂寞地漂泊，被与日俱增的绝望所驱使，屡屡受挫却又鼓起勇气。这时，他已经三十三岁。

一天下午，他已经来到了密西西比州的一条乡村大路上。他从一辆向南行驶的货车上被赶下来。附近有个小镇，他不知道这个小镇的名字，也不在乎它叫什么。总之，他甚至都没有瞧一眼。他沿着树林绕城而行，上了大路后左右张望。这不是条石子路，但看上去踩踏的人相当多。他看到沿途零散分布着几间黑人小木屋；接着，在半英里远处有一座大房子，房子掩映在小树林中。显然，这里曾经是显赫一时的地方。但是现在，树木需要修剪，房屋也多年没有粉刷，不过他知道这里有人居住，而且他已经一天一夜没吃东西了。他想：“或许到那儿能吃上。”

不过，他并没有马上靠近房子。尽管下午时分已迫近，他反而转身朝反方向走去，穿着邋遢的白衬衫，破旧的哗叽裤子，脚上那双城里人穿的鞋子咯吱作响，满是泥土，一顶布帽傲慢地立在头上，他已经三天没有刮胡子了。但即使这样，他看起来仍然不像个流浪汉；至少，刚刚

碰到的黑人男孩不认为他是流浪汉。他把这个晃晃悠悠地提着锡铁桶的小孩子叫住，问道：“后面的大房子里住着谁？”

“那是伯顿小姐的住处。”

“伯顿先生和伯顿夫人？”

“不，先生。没有伯顿先生。那儿除了伯顿小姐没有别人。”

“哦，我猜是个老太太吧。”

“不，先生。伯顿小姐不老，也不年轻。”

“她一个人住在那儿。她不害怕吗？”

“在这镇上谁会去伤害她呢？附近的有色乡亲们会照顾她的。”

“有色乡亲们照看她？”

小男孩仿佛立刻关上了自己和问话人之间的那道门。“我觉得在这儿没人会伤害她。她也没伤害过谁。”

“我猜也不会，”克里斯默斯说道，“从这条路到下一个镇子有多远？”

“听说大概有三十英里。你不会打算走着去吧？”

“不。”克里斯默斯回答道。说完，他便转身继续赶路。孩子看了看他的背影，然后也转身继续往前走，腰间摇晃着的锡铁桶渐渐模糊了。走了几步，他又扭头看了一眼，询问过他的那个人还在走路，他的步伐虽然不快却一直在走。孩子接着又往前走，身上那件褪色的罩衫打满了

补丁，脚上没有穿鞋。很快，他便开始放慢脚步，红色的尘土在他瘦弱的深褐色小腿和破旧的小罩衫下四周飞扬；他开始哼唱，尽管只有一个音调，听起来不太和谐，但动听而富有节奏：

你说没有没有

谁没有谁不想

那个黄毛丫头

你想往哪儿藏

克里斯默斯躺在距那座房子一百码远的灌木丛中，听到远处钟声敲了九点，过了一阵又响起十点的钟声。他眼前的那幢房子在树林中显得非常庞大。楼上有一扇窗户里亮着一盏灯，房间的窗帘还没有拉上，他能看得出那是一盏煤油灯，而且时不时地还有个移动的人影在里面的那堵墙上晃动。不过，他一直没有看到那个人。过了一会儿，灯灭了。

这时，房子黑魑魑的，他也不再观察。他躺在杂草中，趴在地上。树丛中伸手不见五指，寒夜穿透衬衫和裤子，让他感到寒气逼人，还有些潮湿的闷气，仿佛太阳从没有照射过这片灌木丛覆盖的领地。他觉得从未晒过太阳的地气穿过衣服慢慢向他袭来，将他吞噬：腹股沟、臀部、腹部、胸口和手臂。他的手臂交叉着枕在脑后，肥沃的黑土地散发出馥郁的潮湿气息，充斥着他的鼻孔。

他没有再去看黑暗中的那座房子。在灌木丛中十分安静地躺了一个多小时后，他站起身走出丛林。他迈开大步，朝房子走去。他没有鬼鬼祟祟地走向房子，也没有刻意留心自己的行动，只是没有出声而已，好像他本来就是这么走路的；此刻，房子的轮廓已经看不到了，他绕过房

子朝屋后走去，那儿应该有厨房。他像猫一样悄悄地停下脚步，在昨晚亮灯的窗户下面站了一会儿。脚下的草丛里，蟋蟀随着他的走动也停止了鸣叫。于是，在他周围行成了一个寂静的小岛，像是琐细的虫鸣声投下的晕圈，蟋蟀随着他突然警觉的驻足和举步而忽哑忽鸣。屋后建有一层偏房。“那肯定是厨房，”他心想，“没错，肯定是。”他静静地在虫鸣声骤停的小岛里移动着。这时，他从厨房外墙上看见一扇门，要是他试着推门的话，他一定能发现房门没锁，但他没有那么做。他绕过厨房，在窗户下停下脚步。正要爬窗户时，他想起楼上刚才亮灯的那扇窗户没有窗帘。

甚至连窗户都没有关，只用一根棍子支撑着。他暗自琢磨：“你有什么想法呢。”他站在窗边，双手放在窗台上，静静地呼吸着，不慌不忙，对周围的一切充耳不闻，仿佛天地间没有任何事情值得慌张。“哦，哦，哦，你明白了吧，嗨，嗨，嗨。”于是，他便爬进窗户，好像水流一样流进了黑暗的厨房：一个影子毫无阻力地悄悄退回晦暗漆黑的母体里。或许他想起了另一扇窗户，他曾经凭借一根绳子在那扇窗户爬出爬进，也或许他并没有想到这些。

很可能没有想，因为他像一只猫，不会记起另一扇窗户；但他却像猫一样游走在黑暗中，能够准确无误地找到自己需要的食物，仿佛他早知道吃的就在那里，又或者是有人早知他要来，替他备好了一切。他用看不见的手指从看不见的盘子里取了看不见的食物。他并不在意吃的是什么，下颌猛然间停止咀嚼时，他才明白或者才品出味道来。思绪回到二十五年前的那条街道，掠过街角，以及那里所有痛苦的失败和艰难的胜利；还有五英里之遥的那个角落——在可悲的初恋时期，他曾经在那里等候过一个人，而他早已忘记了她的名字；思绪甚至飞出五英里外。我马上就能想起这是什么了，我以前在哪里吃过。马上就能想起。记忆叩

问着感知，看见了，看见了，不仅看见，而且听见了。我看见自己低着头，耳边是单调沉闷的说教，我相信它永远不会停息，我窥探到了不服输的子弹形状的脑袋，整洁粗硬的胡子，它们都弯了下来，我纳闷他怎么会不饿呢？没等我的眼睛尝到盘子里冒出的热气我就闻到了嘴巴和舌头流出的咸咸的口水。“是豌豆，”他大声说道，“天哪，糖浆煮紫花豌豆。”

不光思绪飘远，就连他自己也不知跑到了哪里；他本应该早就听见动静的，因为无论是谁，都不会像他那样小心翼翼地不让自己弄出任何声音。或许他听见了，但没有挪动，耳畔传来脚上穿着拖鞋发出的轻柔的声音，从房子那边慢慢逼近厨房。当他终于突然转身时，两眼瞬间一亮，早已看见通往房屋的门口渐渐露出微弱的灯光。他的手边就是敞开的窗户：几乎只需一步就能跨出去，但他还是没有动，甚至都没有放下盘子，更没有停止咀嚼。于是，当房门打开，那个女人进来时，他也只是站在房间中央，拿着盘子继续咀嚼。这个女人穿着一件褪色的睡衣，手里拿着一支蜡烛，高高举起的蜡烛照在她的脸上：她的面容平静而严肃，没有一丝恐惧。她站在门口，柔和的烛光里，她看起来不过三十来岁。两个人几乎以同样的姿势对视了一分多钟：他托着盘子，她举着蜡烛。这时，他停止了咀嚼。

“如果你只是想要吃的，那你肯定能找到。”她平静地说着，声音冷酷而低沉。

[1](#)里茨酒店，瑞士企业家里茨在世界各地经营的豪华旅馆。

烛光下，她看起来不过三十多岁，柔柔的烛光照在身穿宽松睡衣、准备睡觉的女人身上。到了白天时，他发现这个女人比三十五岁都大。后来，她说自己四十多岁。他心想：“听她的口气，可能是四十一岁，也可能是四十九岁。”然而，她讲的就这么多，不光是第一个晚上，此后的每个晚上也都如此。

总之，她对他说得很少。他们间的交流也非常少，即便当他成为她的枕边情人后，他们也只是偶尔才说几句。有时，他几乎认为两人根本没有说过话，他对她一无所知。好像这个世界上有两个她：一个是在白天偶尔碰到的人，聊天时会看一眼，但也不会讲多少，也没打算说多少；另一个是夜里和他睡在一起的人，他们不会观察对方，也不会有任何交流。

即使一年以后（那时他在刨木厂干活儿），他在白天见到她时还是这个样子。星期六下午、星期天或者他去房里找食物的时候，她会给他备好食物放在厨房的餐桌上。偶尔，她会去厨房，不过不会在他吃饭的时候逗留。有时，他们会在后廊相遇，那是他住在楼房下面的小木屋的前四五个月的时候。他们会停留一会儿，几乎像陌生人一样搭几句讪。他们总是站着：她穿一件干净的印花家居服，显然她有无数这样的衣服，有时她像农妇一样戴一顶遮阳布帽；现在，他又穿上了干净的白衬衫和每周都会熨烫得笔挺的哗叽料裤子。他们从来没有坐着说过话，他从没见她坐下过。唯独有一次，他从楼下走过时，透过窗户看见她在房里，坐在书桌旁写字。他对她收发大量信件已司空见惯，每日午前的一段时间里，她总会到楼下那些闲置的、摆设很少的房间中的一间，坐在

一张斑驳破旧的盒盖书桌前，不停地写着。一年以后，他仍然不知道她收到的都是公、私信函，盖着五十个不同的邮戳；她寄出的都是回复——寄给经理、员工和委托人的关于商业、金融、宗教的建议，还有给南方几所黑人院校女学生或校友的切实可行的私人劝诫。有时，她会出远门，每次离家三四天。尽管那时只要他愿意，就可以在任何夜晚去找她，但一年以后他才明白，她不在家的日子都是在亲自访问那些学校，和师生们谈话。她生意上的事务都由孟菲斯的一位黑人律师打理，这个人也是其中一所学校的委托人。在他的保险箱里，放着她的遗嘱，和一份关于她死后尸体如何处理的书面说明（是她亲笔写的）。当他得知这一切后，他才理解了镇上人们对她的态度，虽然他知道那些人对她的了解还不如自己的多。他暗自说道：“我可不想在这儿找麻烦。”

一天，他意识到自己从没有真正受到过她的邀请进入那幢房子里。他到过的地方最远也没超过厨房，而他早已可以随心所欲地在那里出入。他一边想，一边说道：“她不可能把我拒之门外。我猜她也明白这一点。”他从不在白天进入厨房，除了去取那些她为他准备好、放在桌上的食物。夜晚进入楼房时，就像他第一天晚上闯进厨房一样：他觉得自己像个小偷、强盗，甚至当他爬上楼梯，走进她等候的卧室时，他一直都是这样的想法。就连一年以后，他还是这样的感觉，好像每次都是偷偷摸摸地重新掠夺她的贞操一样。每当夜晚降临时，他都会再次面对偷窃已经到手的东西——也许他从未得到，永远也无法得到。

他有时会抱有这样的想法，想起她那种冷酷的，几乎是男人气概的屈服，没有眼泪，没有自怜。这种长久的精神封闭状态，让自我保护的本能沦为它的牺牲品，她的身体状况也像男人般有力而坚毅。她拥有双重性格：首先是第一晚举着蜡烛的女人（或者是穿着拖鞋悄悄走近的声音）出现在他面前，像迅速射向地面的闪电一样，在接触地平线后，即

使没有快感，也要保证肉体的接触；另一个则是男人的力量，男人的思维，这是遗传和环境所赋予她的，也是他必须要与之斗争到底的。她没有女性的游移不定，没有欲望最终暴露时的羞怯。他仿佛是在和另一个男人搏斗，争抢一件对双方而言都没有价值的东西，一切只是按规则争夺而已。

等他下次见到她时，他心想：“上帝啊，我以为自己很了解女人，没想到一无所知。”就在第二天，当他再次见到她，跟她搭话时，不到十二小时前真真切切发生过的事情好像无论如何都不可能发生过似的。他心想，被衣服遮住的那个她根本不会干那种事。当时，他还没到刨木厂干活儿，成天待在她让他住的木屋里，躺在跟她借来的简易床上，叼着烟，头枕着胳膊。“上帝啊，”他想，“好像我是个女人，她倒是个男人。”可这也不对，因为她一直反抗到最后了，不过不是女性的反抗，要是真想反抗，任何男人都无法取胜。因为女人在身体的搏斗中是不遵守任何规则的，可她的抵挡却合情合理，不管抵抗有没有结束，她都遵循一个原则——在某种紧急情况下必须服输。那天晚上，他一直等到厨房的灯熄灭，然后她的房间里亮起来。他朝楼房走去，一边不紧不慢地走着一边独自生闷气，大声说道：“我要让她知道。”他根本没打算压低声音。他大胆地走进房中，爬上楼梯；她马上便听到了他的声音。“谁？”她问道，但声音中却没有一丝惊恐。他一声不吭地爬上楼梯，走进房间，她还没脱衣服，转过身看着他走进来。不过，他没和他说话，只是看着他走到桌边，吹灭煤油灯。他心想：“这下，她要逃跑了。”于是，他一个箭步冲到门口去阻止她。可她并没有逃走。他发现她还是方才的姿势，站在熄灯时的那个地方。他开始撕扯她的衣服，用紧张而低沉的声音严厉地对她说：“我要让你明白，你这个婊子！”她没有抵抗，反而几乎像在帮他一样，为了帮他，自己还会稍稍改变肢体的姿势。而在他的手下，这个身子仿佛是一具还未僵硬的女尸。不过，他

没有放弃，虽然他的双手有些急躁、粗鲁，不过全是因为情绪激动，“至少我终于让她明白了什么是女人，”他心想，“现在她该恨我了。我总算让她明白了。”

第二天，他又在小木屋的简易床上躺了一天，没有吃任何东西，甚至都没有去厨房看她是否给自己留了食物。他一直等到太阳落山，夜幕降临。“到那会儿我就走，”他心想。他并不期望再次见到她。“我最好一走了之，”他想，“不给她把我赶出木屋的机会。总之，那样太没面子。白种女人还没有对我那样做过，只有黑种女人跟我发脾气，会把我赶走。”于是，他躺在简易床上，一边抽烟，一边等着太阳落山。透过敞开的门，他看见太阳西斜，拖长了影子，最后变成了金灿灿的黄铜色。接着，黄铜色渐渐落入暮色。这时，他听见了蛙鸣声，萤火虫开始在门框飞旋，随着暮色变暗，萤火虫更加闪亮。他站起身，除了剃刀外，他一无所有。当他把剃刀装进口袋时，不管远近，无论那条不可预知的路伸向何处，他都做好了准备。不过，当他开始行动时，却朝那幢房子所在的地方走去，似乎他一发现自己的脚有意走向那里时，他便顺水推舟地任由双脚的摆布，想着，好吧，好吧，飘飘荡荡地穿过夜色，飘向楼房，进了后廊，即将走进那扇永远不会锁上的门。可当他把手放在门板上时，门没有开。或许当时他的手和信念都不敢相信；他仿佛不假思索地看着自己的手用力推门，听着里边的门闷哗啦啦作响。他一言不发地转身离开了，但他没有生气。他去了厨房，以为那里也会锁门，可是等到他发现门没锁时，他意识到这正是自己所希望的。当他发现门开着的时候，他觉得这好似一种侮辱，仿佛自己拼尽全力去打击敌人时，而对方却顽固地站在那里，毫发无损，别有深意地藐视他，让他难以忍受。他走进厨房，并没有走向通往楼房的那扇门。他第一次见到她的那个夜晚，举着蜡烛的她正是出现在这个门口。他径直走向饭桌，那里有她备好的饭菜。他不需要看，双手就能感觉到；饭菜尚有余温，他

心想，给黑鬼准备的，给黑鬼的。

他仿佛在远距离观察自己的手一样，看着手拿起一只盘子，上下晃动，深深地吸了一口气，慢慢嗅着。他听见自己像玩游戏一样大声叫道：“腌肉。”然后，他继续看着自己一挥手，把盘子砸向看不见的墙壁，等待破碎的声音消失。一切归于平静后，他又拿起另一盘菜。他稳稳地端着盘子，嗅着饭味。辨认这一盘花了点工夫。“豆子还是青菜？”他说道，“豆子还是菠菜？……好啦，就算是豆子吧。”说完，他重重地把盘子甩出去，等待咣当声停止。他端起第三盘菜，说道：“放了洋葱。”他心想，有意思，我以前怎么没想到呢？“女人的垃圾。”说着，他又狠狠地扔了出去，慢慢地等着盘子打碎的声音。这时，他听到了别的声音：屋里的脚步声渐渐传到门口，心想：“她这次还会拿着一盏灯。”想着，要是我看一眼，准能看见门缝下的灯光。他继续来回挥动手臂。这会儿，她快到门口了，他最后一次做出判断，终于说道：“马铃薯。”他没有转身张望，甚至当他听到门闩的响声，看见房门朝里打开，灯光照在他身上时，他依然站在那里稳稳地端着盘子。“是，是马铃薯。”他像个孩子一样浑然不觉，玩得正兴起。他能看见，也能听到盘子打碎。接着，灯光消失了，他再次听见关门的声音，箍上门闩的声音。他还是没有回头，拿起另一只盘子。“甜菜，”他说，“我可不喜欢甜菜。”

第二天是星期五，他去刨木厂干活。自从星期三晚上开始，他一直没吃东西。直到星期六晚上超时干活后，到了晚上他才拿到工钱，到镇中心一家餐馆吃饭，这是他三天以来第一次吃饭。他没有回楼房。有一段时间，不管是出门还是回到小木屋，他都不曾朝楼房瞟一眼。半年后，他在小木屋和刨木厂之间踏出了一条属于他自己的小道。这条路十分笔直，避开所有的房屋，很快就能到达树林，走得日子长了，他便可

以准确无误地直接到达干活儿的木屑堆。他总是在五点三十下工哨声吹响后沿这条小路走回小木屋，换上白衬衫和有折痕的黑裤子，接着再走两英里的路去镇上吃晚饭。他似乎觉得穿着工装没面子，或者不是没面子，尽管除了说不是以外，他很可能也说不出是什么原因。

他不再故意避开看那幢房子，但也不会专门去看。有一段时间，他相信她会来找他。他心想：“她会先做出表示的。”然而，她并没有这样做。后来，他相信自己不再对此有所期盼。可当他第一次重新特意朝楼房望去时，血液上下奔涌，令人震惊；接着，他明白自己一直害怕见到她，害怕她一贯的对自己赤裸裸的鄙视；他觉得自己像是出了一身冷汗，经历了一场严峻的考验。“结束了，”他想，“现在都结束了。”所以，有一天当他真的见到她时，他并不感到震惊，也许他早有准备。总之，当他抬起头，意外地发现她时，血液并没有沸腾。他看见她站在后院，穿着灰色的衣裙，戴着遮阳帽。他不知道她是不是一直在观察自己，也不知道是否已经看见了他，或者正在注视着他。他心想：“你不搭理我，我也不会招惹你。”想着，我一定是做了个梦，根本不可能发生那种事。她那衣服下什么都没有，所以根本不可能。

春天的时候，他去干活了。九月的一个傍晚，他回到家里，走进小木屋。他完全被惊呆了，迈出的脚步也停了下来。她正坐在简易床上望着他。她没戴帽子，以前他从没有见过她不戴帽子的样子，尽管黑暗中感受过她把头发散开，披在枕头上，但并不凌乱。不过，他从没有亲眼见过她的头发。当她注视他的时候，他站在那里正研究她的头发；他正要再次举步的瞬间，他突然告诉自己：“她正在努力。我早料到她有白头发了，她正在努力做女人，她自己都不知道该怎么办。”他终于想清楚了，她是来跟我谈话的，两个小时过去了，她还在讲话。他们在黑暗的小木屋里并排坐在床上。她说自己四十一岁了，就出生在那边的房子

里，而且一直在那里生活。无论何时，她离开杰弗逊镇的时间从没有超过半年，而且每次出行间隔的时间都很长，都是在思乡情浓的时候，思念那里的一屋一瓦，一土一木，那里是她的故乡，是她和家人的异国热土；她的生命已经留在了那里，即使四十年后的现在，她的口音里还是带着含糊的辅音和平实的元音，她和那些从未离开过新英格兰的亲人们一样，言语中都清晰地带着新英格兰口音。四十年里，她可能只回过那里三次。屋里一片漆黑，他们坐在简易床上。他坐在她的旁边，屋内光线全无，而她却一直滔滔不绝，像男人们一样亮起嗓门说个没完。克里斯默斯心想：“她和其他女人们一样，无论十七岁还是四十七岁，最终还是投降了，都归于喋喋不休的唠叨。”

加尔文·伯顿的父亲是一位牧师，名叫纳撒尼尔·波克林顿。家中十个孩子，他最小，十二岁时，他从家里跑出来，上了一条船，那时他连自己的名字都不会写（也许他会写，就像他父亲认为的那样）。他绕着合恩角航行到了加利福尼亚州，成为一名天主教徒；他在隐修院里住了一年。十年后，他从西部来到密苏里州，过了三周，他便结婚了，妻子是一个胡格诺派[1](#)教徒的女儿。她家人从卡罗莱纳州取道肯塔基州，移民到了密苏里州。婚礼的第二天，他说：“我觉得我最好在这里住下来。”从那天开始，他便在那里定居了。婚礼庆典还没有结束，他的第一步便是正式否认效忠天主教会，他在酒店里完成了这项任务。他执意要求在场的每一个人倾听他讲话，并且要说出反对意见；尽管没有人反对，他却坚持要听。直到他被朋友们领走时，仍然没有谁提出反对。第二天，他说那是他的真实想法，他不愿置身于一个满是吃青蛙的蓄奴者的教会。当时是在圣路易斯，他在那里买了一幢房子。满一年后，他做了父亲。这时，他说自己一年前否定天主教就是为了儿子的灵魂；差不多孩子一出生，他便开始着手为孩子灌输新英格兰祖辈所信仰的宗教。那里没有一神教的礼拜堂，伯顿也不会读《圣经》，但他在加利福尼亚

时曾经跟一位牧师学过用西班牙语诵读。于是，孩子刚学会走路时，伯顿（现在他叫自己伯顿，因为他根本不会拼写，牧师辛苦地教他写字，但他的手却更适合握绳索、枪托以及刀柄等，而不是握笔）开始用西班牙语给孩子诵读《圣经》，这本书从他在加利福尼亚开始就一直带在身边。他用外语诵读优美、宏大的神秘教义，不时地还会插入沙哑的即兴演讲：一半来自记忆中父亲所作的单调枯燥的说教，他会参加新英格兰永无止境的礼拜日活动；另一半来自卫理公会教派²每个乡村巡回牧师，他们对自己演讲的内容引以为豪——堕入地狱后所受的炙烤和苦难。父子俩单独待在房间里：高大憔悴的父亲是北欧人的后代，黝黑活泼的小孩子遗传了母亲的身材和肤色，两人仿佛来自截然不同的两个种族，男孩五岁时，伯顿因蓄奴制和别人发生了口角，并且将对方杀死，所以他不得不举家搬迁，离开圣路易斯。他们一路向西，用他的话说是“为了躲避民主党人”。

他迁居的地方有一家商店，一个铁匠铺，一座教堂和两家酒馆。在这里，伯顿的大量时间用来谈论政治，用沙哑的大嗓门咒骂奴隶制和奴隶主。随之，他便名声在外，人们知道他有一把枪。总之，他的观点毫无异议地被大家接受了。有时，尤其在星期六晚上，他回到家里，一肚子烈性的威士忌酒，还要继续激情澎湃地进行他的演说，然后他用粗重的大手把孩子推醒（这时，孩子的母亲已经去世，家里有三个女儿，都长着蓝色的眼睛）。“我要让你学会恨两件事，”他说，“要不然我会揍扁你。那就是地狱和奴隶主。听见没？”

“嗯，”孩子会告诉他，“我怎么敢不听你的话呢，让我回床上睡觉吧。”

他不会劝人改变信仰，他也不是传教士。他随身携带着手枪，除了偶尔发生过一段小插曲外，倒也从没造成什么致命影响，他把所有精力

都放在孩子们身上。“让那些人全都堕入黑暗的地狱吧，”他对孩子们说，“但只要我可以举起手臂，我就要把慈爱的上帝刻在你们心中。”每到星期日，孩子们便会梳洗干净，穿上印花布或斜纹棉布衣服，父亲则穿着绒呢大衣，遮住后兜里鼓鼓的手枪。每周六，大女儿都像她过世的母亲那样，替他洗熨好身上那件无领条纹衬衫。他们聚在干净简陋的客厅里，伯顿开始诵读那本曾经镀金并饰有纹章的《圣经》，但孩子们根本听不懂他的语言。他一直坚持这种做法，直到儿子也像他一样离家出走为止。

儿子名叫纳撒尼尔，从家里逃走时才十四岁。他离家十六年，其间家人得到过两次关于他的口信。第一次捎口信时他正在科罗拉多州，第二次是在旧墨西哥，无论在哪里，对于他在做什么，从来只字不提。“我走的时候，他还不错。”捎口信人说。这是第二个捎信人。当时是1863年，这个人正在厨房里用早餐，彬彬有礼，快速吞咽饭食。三个女儿在旁边伺候，两个大点的几乎已经长大成人了。她们身穿干净整洁的粗布衣服，温和地咧嘴微笑，端着正待客人享用的饭菜，站在粗糙的饭桌旁。父亲坐在捎信人的对面，一条胳膊支着脑袋。两年前，他在堪萨斯战斗中失去了另一条胳膊，当时他是游击骑兵团的一员。他的头发和胡子现在都已花白，不过他仍然精力充沛，翘起的绒呢大衣仍然罩着后兜里沉重的手枪。“他惹了点小麻烦，”捎信人说，“不过，我最后一次听人说起他时，没事啦。”

“麻烦？”父亲问。

“他杀了一个指控他偷马的墨西哥人。你也知道西班牙人对白人的态度，即使他们没有杀墨西哥人，结果也一样。”捎信人一边喝咖啡，一边说道，“不过，我想他们不得不严厉些，因为全国到处都是外地人。——谢谢你。”他说话时，大女儿又给他的盘子里夹了几块玉米

饼，“好，来一点，我够得着香甜的饼子。——人们都说那不可能是墨西哥人的马，那个人根本买不起马。但我想西班牙人只能严厉，因为东部人在西部的名声不好。”

父亲哼了一声。“我就知道。哪儿有麻烦，哪儿准和他有关系。你告诉他，”父亲粗暴地说，“要是他任由那些懦夫牧师欺骗他，我会像枪毙犹太人一样杀了他。”

“您应该告诉他马上回家，”大女儿说，“这才是您应该告诉他的。”

“是，是，”捎信人说，“我当然会告诉他，我先往东去一趟印第安纳州。不过，我一回去就会见他，我肯定会告诉他。哦，对了，差点忘了。他要我转告你们，女人和孩子都很好。”

“谁的女人和孩子？”父亲问。

“他的。”捎信人回答，“我要再次感谢你们。再见各位。”

家人再一次见到纳撒尼尔之前，还听人说起过他一次。后来有一天，尽管离门口还有一段距离，但他们早已听见他在房前大声喊叫。那是1866年的时候，全家再次搬迁，到了向西一百英里的地方。儿子驾着四轮马车，来回奔波在堪萨斯州和密苏里州之间，车座下像扔旧鞋子一样放着两皮袋金沙、铸币和珠宝原料，他花了两个月时间才找到家人。他发现了一座盖着茅草的房子。于是，他一边赶着马车奔过来，一边大声叫喊。一个男人坐在门前的椅子上。“那是父亲，”纳撒尼尔对身旁座椅上的女人说，“看见没？”尽管父亲还不到六十岁，但视力已经开始减退。他没有认出儿子的脸，直到马车停下来，姐妹们尖叫着，一股脑涌到门口。这时，加尔文才站起来，长长地吼了一声。“好啦，”纳撒尼尔说，“我们回来了。”

加尔文一句完整的话都没有说，只是叫喊咒骂。“我要扒了你的皮！”他咆哮着说道，“女儿们！范吉！贝克！萨拉！”女儿们早已涌出门外，鼓鼓胀胀的裙子像几只气球，她们在门口像沸腾了一样，不过，父亲的咆哮和怒吼声淹没了她们的尖叫声。只见父亲敞开衣服——星期天穿的体面的，或者说是过时的绒呢大衣——在腰间摸索着，这个姿势和他掏枪时的动作一样，不过，他唯一的一只手从腰间摸出的只是一条皮带。父亲挥着皮带，推开叽叽喳喳尖叫的女儿们。“我还是要教训你！”他吼道，“为你逃跑揍你！”皮带在纳撒尼尔身上落下两次，然后两人便扭在一起。

这个情形某种程度上像是一种游戏，可怕的游戏，认真的幽默：两头狮子在打闹，说不定会在谁身上留下印迹。他们扭成一团，抓住皮带，面对面，胸对胸地站着：老头儿的面孔瘦削苍老，上面长着一双灰色的新英格兰式眼睛；年轻人长得一点都不像他，鹰钩鼻，咧嘴笑着，露出洁白的牙齿。“别打了，”纳撒尼尔说，“你难道没有看见马车那边谁在看咱们吗？”

此前，他们谁都没有朝马车看一眼。车上坐着一个女人和一个十二岁左右的男孩。父亲瞧了那个女人一眼，便觉得没有必要看那个孩子了。他盯着那个女人，下巴拉得老长，像见了鬼似的。“伊万杰琳！”他叫道。她长得太像自己去世的妻子了，简直像她的妹妹。儿子差不多根本记不得母亲的样子，所以娶了一个几乎和母亲一模一样的女人做妻子。

“这是乔安娜，”他说，“跟她在一起的是加尔文。我们回家来结婚。”

晚饭后，女人和孩子上床睡觉了。纳撒尼尔开始和大家聊天。他们

坐在灯下：父亲，姐妹们，还有刚回家的儿子。他解释说那边没有牧师，只有神父和天主教徒。“所以，当我俩发现她怀孕时，她就开始不停地说要找个神父，况且我也不愿让伯顿家生出个异教徒来，所以我开始寻找，想满足她的要求。可事情一件接着一件地发生了，我没法去找神父；后来，孩子出世了，没必要再着急。可她还是担心，想找神父什么的。过了一两年，有一天我听说能在圣菲找见白人牧师。于是，我们收拾行李，动身去了圣菲，可我们只赶上了牧师的马车卷起的尘土。我们就在那儿等着，又过了两年，我们在得克萨斯州得到了一个机会，可这次又碰上我要帮几个骑警处理些麻烦事，一群人把一位代理人困在了舞厅里。所以，事情一了结，我们就决定马上回家结婚，于是我们就回来了。”

瘦削的父亲坐在灯下，头发灰白，神情严肃。他一直在听，若有所思的表情中露出一一种安静的思索和无名的怒火。“伯顿家又出了个黑杂种，”他说，“乡亲们都会以为我养的儿子是个该死的奴隶贩子，现在他又生了这么个东西来。”儿子一声不吭地听着，甚至都没打算告诉父亲那个女人不是南方的叛徒，而是西班牙人。“该死，低贱的黑鬼：上帝沉重的愤怒将他们压垮，人类固有的罪恶把他们的血肉染成了黑色。”他凝视的眼神虽然模糊却充满了狂热的自信。“不过，我们现在给了他们自由，黑人和白人是一样的，他们会褪白的，一百年以后，他们也会成为白人。那时候，我们会让他们重新回到美国。”他陷入了沉思，一动不动地坐在那里，内心燃烧着一团火焰。“上帝保佑，”他突然说，“尽管他有黑人的肤色，但他总会成为男人。上帝保佑，他将像他的祖父一样魁梧，不会像他瘦小的父亲。尽管他是个黑崽子，黑长相，但他会长大的。”

小木屋里没有一丝亮光。他们坐在简易床上，她把这些告诉了克里

斯默斯。一个多小时里，他们没有挪动一下。此时，他根本看不清她的脸，似乎自己正坐在一只漂荡的小船上，轻轻摇摆，漂在她的声音上，仿佛陷入无边无际、令人恹恹欲睡的宁静中，一时间什么都记不起来，也听不到任何声音。“他和祖父一样，也叫加尔文。尽管肤色像外祖母一样黝黑，像他的母亲，但他像祖父一样高大。她不是我的母亲：他是我同父异母的哥哥。祖父是兄弟十个中最小的一个，父亲是弟兄两个中最小的，加尔文是家中的独子。”他刚过二十岁，因为黑人选举权问题，在离镇上两英里的地方被杀害了，凶手是一名前奴隶主、同盟军士兵，名叫萨多里斯。

她跟克里斯默斯提到了墓地——哥哥的，祖父的，父亲的，还有父亲两个妻子的——在离楼房半英里远的牧场里，一片长满雪松的山坡上。克里斯默斯一边听一边想：“哦，她要带我去看墓地，我只好去喽。”可她并没有那么做。自从那晚告诉他墓地的事后，她再也没有向他提起过。她说要是他想去看的话，可以自己去瞧瞧。“你可能找不见他们，”她说，“因为他们把祖父和加尔文运回来的那个傍晚，父亲等到天黑以后才安葬了他们，并且掩盖了坟墓，摊平了坟头，上面盖了些树枝类的东西。”

“掩盖起来？”克里斯默斯问道。

她的声音里没有一丝女性的温柔和哀思。“那样，人们就找不见他们，不怕把他们挖出来，也不怕被戮尸了。”她继续往下讲，有些不耐烦地解释道，“这儿的人们痛恨我们。我们是外乡人，北方佬，比外乡人更可怕：是敌人，是战争后的投机商。战争——南北战争——依旧历历在目，受伤的人们非常敏感，他们说我们煽动黑人杀人劫掠，威胁了白人至高无上的地位。所以，我想萨多里斯上校便成了全镇的英雄，因为他用一支手枪和两发子弹，杀死了一位独臂老人和一个未曾投下第一张选

票的孩子。或许他们是对的，我也不知道。”

“喔，”克里斯默斯说，“他们真会那么干吗？他们已经被杀死了，还要被挖出来？留着不同血液的人们什么时候才能不再互相仇恨？”

“什么时候？”她停顿了一下，继续说，“我不知道，我也不知道他们会不会挖出他们来。那时我还没出世，加尔文被害十四年后我才出生。我不知道那时人们会怎么做。但父亲觉得他们会那么做，所以他才把坟墓遮掩起来。后来，加尔文的母亲死了，他把她也葬在了那里，所以，不知不觉中，那儿就成了我家的墓地。或许我父亲没打算要把她埋在那里。加尔文的母亲死后不久，父亲便迎娶了我的母亲。母亲来自新罕布什尔州，我们的亲人至今还住在那里。你知道，当时只剩下他一个人了。我想要不是加尔文和祖父葬在那边，他早就离开了。我记得母亲跟我说过，加尔文的母亲去世后，父亲曾经打算再次搬家。但她死的时候正是夏天，天气太热，没办法把她运回墨西哥，交给她的家人。于是，他只好把她埋在那里。也许这是他决定留下来的原因，或许是因为当时他年纪太大，参加过内战的人也都老了，也没有人指控过黑人抢劫杀人。总之，他把她葬在那里，并且还把她的坟墓遮了起来，因为他怕万一有人看见了，碰巧又想起加尔文和祖父的事来。就算那时一切都已结束，他仍旧不敢冒险。第二年，他给我们在新罕布什尔的亲友们写信说：‘我五十岁了，拥有她需要的一切，给我找个好女人做妻子吧。我不在乎她是什么人，只要她是持家能手，至少有三十五岁就行。’他随信还附了火车票钱。两个月后，我的母亲便来了，当天他们就举行了婚礼。对他来说，这一次可算是迅速的婚礼。上一次婚姻，他花了十二年才完成。那次回到堪萨斯州后，他和加尔文、加尔文的妈妈费了好大劲才找到祖父。他们在那一周的中间到家，可一直等到星期日才举行了婚礼。他们的婚礼在户外的小河边举行，烧烤了一头小公牛，备了一大桶

威士忌酒，所有收到邀请和听到消息的人都来了。客人们星期六上午就到了，可牧师在晚上才来。那天，父亲的姐妹们忙活着为加尔文的妈妈做礼服和头纱，他们用面袋子做礼服，用蚊帐做头纱。酒店老板曾经把这顶蚊帐钉在柜台后面的一幅画上，她们跟老板借了蚊帐，甚至还给加尔文做了一套西装样的礼服。那时，他十二岁，大家想让他做捧戒指的人，可他不愿意。前一天晚上，他发现人们打算让他捧戒指。第二天大伙儿起床吃过早饭，但苦于找不到加尔文，本来准备早晨六七点举行的婚礼只好推迟。最后，他们找到了加尔文，让他穿上那身衣服，然后才举行了婚礼。加尔文的妈妈穿着家庭自制的礼服，戴着蚊帐头纱；父亲的头上抹了熊油，油光可鉴，脚上穿着从西班牙带回来的皮靴。祖父应当把新娘交到新郎手里，可在大家寻找加尔文的时候，他却不住地走向酒桶。所以，等到该由他把新娘交给新郎的时候，他却开始演讲，扯到了奴隶制，还问在场的人们谁敢说林肯、黑人、摩西³和以色列子孙不一样，还说红海里流的都是血，必须流干，好让黑人跨过去进入‘应许之地’⁴。人们折腾了半天才让他停止演讲，婚礼才得以继续。婚礼结束后，他们住了大约一个月。后来有一天，父亲和祖父向东出发去了华盛顿，并且接受了政府的委任，去那里帮助获得解放的黑奴。他们来到杰弗逊镇，只有父亲的姐妹们没有来。她们中有两个已经结了婚，最小的那个跟一个姐姐住在一起。祖父、父亲、加尔文和他的妈妈来到这里，买了这幢房子。后来，他们一直担心的可能发生的事情发生了，于是只剩父亲孤身一人，直到我的母亲从新罕布什尔州来到这儿。他们以前从来没有见过彼此，连张照片都没见过。母亲抵达的当天，他们便举行了婚礼，两年后生下了我。父亲以加尔文母亲的名字‘乔安娜’给我取名，我并不认为他还想要个儿子。我对他的记忆并不深刻，他给我唯一的印象是那次领着我去看加尔文和祖父的墓地。那是在春天里阳光明媚的一天，我记得自己非常不愿意去那里，也不知道要去什么地方。我不想进那片雪松林，也不知道为什么不愿意去。那时我只有四岁，根本不可能

知道那里有什么。即使我知道，也不会吓坏一个孩子。我想那是和父亲有关的什么东西，从雪松林里通过父亲传给我。我觉得那肯定是他事先放在雪松林里的，我一旦走进，林子就会传给我，从此我再也无法忘记。我搞不清楚。但他执意要让我进去，我们两个站在那里，他说：‘记住这个。你的祖父和哥哥躺在那里，他们不是被白人杀害的，而是在你的祖父、哥哥、你或者我没有意识到之前，上帝降给整个种族的诅咒，注定要永远成为白人因犯罪而受到诅咒的一部分。记住。他的厄运和他的诅咒，永远不要忘记，我的，你妈妈的，还有你自己的，就算你是个孩子也照样会有。每个出生的和将要出生的白人孩子都会受到诅咒，没有人可以逃脱。’我问：‘我也不能吗？’他说：‘你也不可以，尤其是你。’从我记事起，我就见过、了解黑人。以前，我看见他们就像见到下雨、家具、食物或者睡觉一样平常。但从那以后，我好像第一次觉得他们不是人，而是一件东西，一个影子，它们存在于我、我们、所有白人、所有其他人的生活里。我觉得所有降临在这个世界上的白人孩子，在他们呼吸之前就已经笼罩在这个影子当中了。而且我好像看见那个黑影呈现出十字架的形状，白人婴儿仿佛还没呼吸，就开始挣扎，想摆脱那个将他们上上下下罩住的黑影，他们不断挥舞着手臂，仿佛被钉在了十字架上。我看见所有的小婴儿，已经出世的和没有出世的都排成一列，伸开双臂，都被钉在黑色的十字架上。我不知道当时自己是看到了，还是在做梦，对我来说可怕极了。我常常在夜里哭泣，最后我告诉了父亲，努力给他讲我的想法。我想告诉他我必须逃脱，逃离笼罩着的黑影，否则我会死掉。‘你必须斗争，站起来。为了站起来，你必须把黑影一同举起。不过你永远也无法将它举到和你一样的高度。我现在明白了，在我来到这里后我才明白。你根本不可能逃脱，对黑人的诅咒是上帝施加的。但白人所受的诅咒来自黑人，他们是上帝自己选出来的。因为上帝曾经诅咒过他们。’”她不说话了。敞开的长方形门口，朦胧地飘过了萤火虫。最后，克里斯默斯说道：

“我本来想问你一件事，不过我估摸着现在我有答案了。”

她纹丝不动，声音也非常平静。“什么事？”

“你的父亲为什么不杀了那个家伙——叫什么来着？萨多里斯。”

“喔。”她应了一声，然后又是一阵沉默，萤火虫在门外飞来飞去，“你会那么做，是吧？”

“是。”他不假思索地立即答道。接着，他便知道她正循着自己的声音看过来，好像她能看清自己似的。此时，她的声音简直非常温柔，非常平静、沉着。

“你一点儿都不知道你的父母是谁吗？”

假如她真能看清他的脸，那她肯定会看到他浮现出忧郁、沉思的表情。“只知道他们有人是混血儿，像我以前告诉你的那样。”

她依旧看着他，从她的声音里能听出来。她的声音平静而冷漠，有兴趣却不好奇。“你怎么知道的？”

他沉默了好久，然后说道：“我不知道。”说完，他又停住了；从他的声音里，她知道他在看别处，目光正转向门口。他一脸阴郁，十分沉静。接着，他动了一下，又开口了；这时，他的声音别有意味，严肃而讥讽，一本正经却又满含自嘲：“如果我不是的话，真他妈的浪费时间了。”

这下似乎轮到她默默沉思，一声不吭，屏住呼吸，但声音中还是没有任何自怜或追思的意味：“我也想过，为什么父亲不杀了萨多里斯上

校，我想是因为他的身上流着法国人的血。”

“法国人的血？”克里斯默斯问道，“要是法国人的父亲和儿子在同一天被杀，他难道不会发疯？我猜你的父亲肯定信仰了什么宗教，成了布道者，很有可能。”

许久，她都没有说话。萤火虫在门外飞舞，什么地方传来了狗叫，柔柔的哀叫显得十分遥远。“我想过这件事，”她说，“无论是身穿军装挥舞旗帜的杀戮，还是不穿军装，没有摇旗呐喊的仇杀，一切都已结束。不管是过去，还是现在，杀戮都没有任何好处。我们是外乡人，陌生入，未经当地人同意便进入他们的领地，心里想的和他们想的不一样。父亲是法国人，半个法国人，却足以尊重别人对出生地和同胞们的热爱，懂得要按照自己出生的那片土地所教育的那样去行事。我想这就是原因。”

[1](#)胡格诺派，16、17世纪法国新教徒形成的一个派别，受 1530 年代约翰·加尔文思想的影响，在政治上反对君主专制。

[2](#)卫理公会，由英国人约翰·斯理创立，主张圣洁生活和改善社会，注重在群众中进行传教活动。

[3](#)摩西是纪元前十三世纪的犹太人先知，《旧约·圣经》前五本书的执笔者。带领在埃及过着奴隶生活的以色列人，到达神所预备的流着奶和蜜之地 — 迦南（巴勒斯坦的古地名，在今天约旦河与死海的西岸一带）。

[4](#)应许之地：《旧约·创世纪》记载以色列人祖先亚伯拉罕由于虔敬上帝，上帝与之立约，其后裔将拥有“流奶与蜜之地” — 迦南，成为后来的以色列王国。现在基督徒们相信，旧约中的“应许之地”就是今天的

三教圣城耶路撒冷。

第二阶段就这样开始了。他好像掉进了阴沟，过上了另一种生活，他回顾她第一次服软是多么不易，像征服男人一样艰难，真是可怕；好似一具精神骷髅轰然倒地，骨骼断裂的声音几乎人耳都能听到。因此，这种屈服真是令人扫兴，如同一位将军在最后的战役中战败，第二天刮了胡子，穿上拭去战场尘土的靴子，向军事委员会献上军刀以示投降。

阴沟里的水只在夜晚流动。他们在白天的活动一切照旧。早晨六点半他去上工，离开小木屋时，他不会瞧楼房一眼。晚上六点回来的时候也不曾看过楼房。清洗完毕后，他会换上白衬衫，穿上有折痕的黑裤子去厨房，找到放在桌上静候他享用的晚饭。然后，他便坐下开始吃饭。此时，她仍然没有出现，但他知道，她就在房中，古老的墙壁中即将来临的黑暗正在击碎某些东西，使它在等待中腐烂。他知道她在白天是如何度过的，她的白天和往常没有什么不同，好像她的生活中还有另一个她存在。一整天，他都在想象：她在做家务；在同一时间里坐在斑驳的书桌前，和黑人妇女谈话或倾听她们的声音，这些人从大路两头赶来，沿着房子周围多年踩踏出来的呈车轮状辐射的小径来到这里。他不知道她们谈了些什么，虽然他见过她们走近楼房，谈不上诡秘却也有明确的目的，通常她们都是单独前往，不过有时候也会三三两两结伴而来。她们系着围裙，包着破头巾，来回出现在辐射状的小路上，不紧不慢地走着。她们在他的脑海中一闪而过，他心想，这会儿她在做这个，这会儿她在做那个。想她个人的时候并不多。他相信她在白天惦记他的时候并不比他想她的时候多。即便到了晚上，她也是坚持要将一天中无聊的琐事讲给他听，反过来还坚持要他讲述他的一天，宛若一对贪得无厌的恋

人，迫切地要求对方将白天的细枝末节诉诸语言，而实际上根本没有倾听或讲述的必要。吃过晚饭后，他会去她等待的地方找她。通常，他都不着急。随着时间的流逝，第二阶段的新奇感渐渐消失，成为习惯，他站在厨房门口，望着夜幕降临，也许预感和警觉早已发现一条荒凉孤寂的道路正等着他，这是他自己的选择。他想，这不是我的生活，我不属于这里。

起初，他感到震惊，恍如新英格兰冰川那可悲的愤怒突然遇上新英格兰神圣的地狱之火。也许他意识到了其中的自我放弃：强烈的急迫感掩盖了无法改变的历史和真切的灰心与绝望。她似乎想在每个夜晚得到补偿，仿佛她相信每一夜都将是世间最后一夜，她不仅要活在罪恶甚至误会中，而且她会永远堕入祖先所诅咒的地狱。她贪婪地追求象征性的禁忌语；他和自己嘴里发出的那些声音，对她来说似乎永远都听不够。她像个孩子一样，对禁忌物品和话题显示出强烈的好奇心，像外科医生一样对人体及其可能性怀有不知疲倦、专注而超然的兴趣。白天，他会看见一张男人样沉着、冷酷的脸，这个中年妇女独自生活在黑人聚居地中孤零零的楼房里，全然没有女性的恐惧。每天，她都会安详地在桌边坐一段时间，平静地为年轻人和老者写信，身兼教师、银行家和训练有素的护士，为他们送上切实可行的建议。

在那段时间里（无法称作蜜月），克里斯默斯见证了恋爱中的女人在每一阶段的化身。很快，她不仅让他吃惊，而且惊呆了，简直搞得他晕头转向。她甚至莫名其妙地醋意大发。她以前根本不可能有这样的经历，没有任何场合或可能的对手让她这样：他知道她自己 also 对此心知肚明。为了让这场戏更加逼真，她好像故意导演了这一切。然而，她却深信不疑，煞有介事地雷霆大怒。第一次时，他以为她只是产生了错觉。第三次时，他觉得她疯了。她展示了自己能够出人意料地设计完美计策

的本能。她执意要找一个地方藏匿便条和书信，地点定在废弃马厩下的一根空心栏杆里。他从没有见过她往那儿放过什么，可她坚持要他每天去那里寻找；他去的时候，那儿果然有封信；要是不去还骗她的话，他会发现她早已设下了拆穿他谎言的圈套，然后她便哭天抹泪地闹腾一番。

有时，纸条上的内容会告诉他到某个特定时候才可以进入那座楼房。多年来，除他之外，从没有任何一个白人进过那幢房子。二十年来，她一直独自过夜；整整一个星期，她逼着他爬窗户去见她，他只好照做。有时，他得找遍整座阴暗的楼房，才能发现她躲在空旷的房间衣橱里，气喘吁吁地等他出现，那双眼睛像猫眼一样在黑暗中闪着光芒。有时，她约他在附近某个树丛中幽会，然后他会发现她赤身裸体，或者把自己的衣服撕成条，陷入狂热地渴望男性的痛苦中。她慢慢扭动身体，像比亚兹莱¹式画家笔下描绘的佩特罗尼乌斯²时期的人物，做出各种挑逗的动作和姿势。这时，她开始变得狂野无比。狭小闷热的丛林里，半明半暗没有墙壁的遮挡，她甩着狂野的头发，每一缕都像章鱼的触角般活跃，狂热地挥舞双手，发出喘息声：“黑人！黑人！黑人！”

六个月里她完全堕落了，但并不能说是他毁了她。他自己的生活中曾与许多无名女性发生过关系，但都合情合理，通常都是一种健康正常的过错。他对堕落的根源比她都觉得更加难以理解。事实上，更像是她凭空制造了堕落，并侵蚀了她自己。他开始恐惧，但又说不清恐惧什么。他开始从远处观察自己，觉得自己像被无底的深渊吞噬了一样，但他还没有仔细思考过。此刻，他所看到的还是那条寂静、荒芜、凄凉的道路。是的，凄凉。他一边思索，有时还会大声说出来：“我得离开，我最好离开这里。”

然而，什么东西困住了他，就像宿命论者常常受困一样，好奇、悲

观、单纯的惰性阻挡了他的道路。与此同时，游戏还在继续。他越来越被那些夜晚里专横的不顾一切的浪潮所淹没，或许他明白自己已经无法逃脱。总之，他留下来了，看着她身体内两个不同的生物搏斗，它们像两个黑影交替着角色，在残月下泥潭的表面挣扎。起初，她是第一阶段里安静、冷漠、保守的样子，尽管已经腐化堕落，但还是牢不可摧，无懈可击；到了第二个阶段，她就像换了个人似的，狂暴地否定自己的牢不可破，并且竭力堕入自掘的深渊，贞操保持太久便会毫无价值。有时，这两个人会浮出泥潭的表面，缠绕在一起，黑水会将它们冲走。于是，整个世界将归于平静：房间、墙壁以及夏日窗外传来的无数祥和的虫鸣声。四十年来，那里一直有昆虫在盘旋。这时，她变得狂躁而绝望，像陌生人一样盯着他；他望着她暗自思忖：“她想祈祷，但又不知道该说什么。”

她开始逐渐变胖。

像第一阶段那样，这一阶段的结束既不突然，也不是高潮，而是缓缓地转入了第三阶段。他也说不清上一阶段的结束时间，也不知道这一阶段是在什么时候开始的。时节已经到了夏末秋初，就像夕阳西下前的影子一样，秋天的凉意不可抗拒地提前投射到了夏天。秋天里即将逝去的夏日像块即将燃尽的煤块，闪烁着最后的光芒。就这样，两年过去了。他依旧在刨木厂干活，同时开始少量地贩威士忌酒。他办事明智，只卖给几个谨慎的顾客，而且顾客之间并不认识。虽然他把酒藏在房子后边，和顾客在牧场那边见面，但她毫不知情。很可能即便知道了，她也不会反对。不过，现在他没有把这件事告诉她，也许和当初瞒着麦克依琴太太藏绳子的原因一样。他想起了麦克依琴太太和绳子，还有那个女招待，他从没有说过给她的钱是从哪里来的；对于现在的情人，他也没有告诉她威士忌酒的事情，他几乎相信他卖酒不是为钱，而是命中注

定他要对身边的女人们有所隐瞒。这时，他偶尔会在白天远远地打量她，看到她清晰的身影在走动，她穿着干净庄重的衣服，不曾朝小木屋或他那边瞧一眼，脸上洋溢着腐朽的陶醉，活像生长在沼泽里的什么东西，一碰就会烂掉。一想起仿佛有另一种人格存在于阴暗之中时，他似乎就觉得自己此刻在白天看到的她只是一个幽灵，一到晚上，它就会被另一个自己所杀害，现在正漫无目的地在古老的宁静中游荡，连哀伤的能力都被剥夺了。

当然，第二阶段的首度狂热不可能维持太久。起初，它只是一股激流，现在成了起起落落的潮水。涨潮时，他们都被愚弄了。她似乎并不知道那只是一股潮水，很快便会退去，于是便会产生更加狂暴的怒火和凶猛的否认，随之击退奔涌的潮水，也让他觉得一切不过是冲动使然，是纯想象的尝试，结果双方都陷入不知所措的尴尬中。她好像已经明白时间不多了，秋天已迫近，但她不知道秋天的确切含义，似乎这只是她本能的一种预感：肉体的本能，本能地否定了虚度的光阴，接着，潮水退去。就像西北风刮过一样，两人心力交瘁地在令人生厌的沙滩上搁浅，满眼失望和责备，像陌生人一样望着彼此：他觉得疲惫，她感到绝望。

然而，秋天的阴影还是落在了她身上。她开始谈起孩子，似乎本能已经告诫她现在该是她替自己辩护或赎罪的时候了。于是，她在退潮时说到孩子。起初，每晚总以涨潮开始，仿佛白天的时光和分离足以筑起一道堤坝，至少能暂时维系白天耗费的光阴所形成的激流，但用不了多久，水流会变得非常细小，更加无能为力。于是，他很不情愿地去见她，像陌生人一样开始回望来时的路，像陌生人一样在她阴暗的卧室里留坐片刻，听她谈论第三个陌生人，然后便起身离去。现在，他发现一切好像早有预谋似的，他们总是在卧室见面，俨然一对夫妻。他不再满

屋子寻找她，在黑暗的房中或废弃花园的灌木丛中搜寻她，找到气喘吁吁、赤身裸体的她，这样的日子已经逝去，像畜棚下空心的柱子一样安静下来。

一切都已烟消云散：那些场景、完美的表演、诡秘的愉悦和荒谬的醋意。然而，如果现在她有所耳闻的话，那真的有理由吃醋了。他每周都要出门，告诉她是去办事。她并不知道这些所谓的事情把他带到了孟菲斯。他在那里背叛了她，花钱和别的女人鬼混。对此，她毫不知情。也许，身处这一阶段的她不会相信，不会听那些证词，也根本不会关心这些事情，因为她早已习惯在夜里的大部分时间清醒地躺在床上，下午再去补觉。她没有生病，不是身体的问题。她从没有这么健康过，她的食欲大增，比这辈子最重的时候还要重三十磅。她失眠的原因不在此，而在于漆黑的户外、大地以及即将逝去的夏天。这些都会令她恐惧，虽然本能告诉她保证不会受伤害；她会被打败，将她完全暴露，但不会受到任何伤害，反而会获得拯救，生活依然会继续，甚至会更好，恐惧也会更少。但糟糕的是，她并不想得到拯救。“我还没有做好祈祷的准备。”她平静地大声说道。寂静的夜晚，她直挺挺地躺在床上，双眼大睁，月光泻进窗户，洒满整个房间，急躁地传递着冰冷和无法挽回的懊悔。“别让我去祈祷，亲爱的上帝，让我受诅咒的时间更长一些、久一些吧。”她仿佛看到了自己过去的生活，如饥似渴的岁月像一条灰色的隧道，遥远而无法改变的另一端是无法磨灭的耻辱。三年的时间转瞬即逝，当初她曾因胸脯赤裸感到贞操受辱，气愤的她像被钉在十字架上一样痛苦。“时间还没到，亲爱的上帝。时间还没到，亲爱的上帝。”

所以，他现在来找她时，表现得消极而冷漠，似乎完全是出于习惯而敷衍她。她开始说起孩子，起初，她像局外人一样谈论着孩子，也许只是女性本能的娇羞和拐弯抹角，也许不是。总之，一段时间后，他才

惊奇地发现她在讨论这件事的可能性，那是一个实际的想法。他立刻拒绝了。

“为什么不？”她一边说，一边揣测地望着他。他飞快地思考着，心想，她想结婚，肯定是，她不比我更想要孩子。“这是个阴谋，”他心想，“我早该知道，早该料到会如此。我两年前就该一走了之。”但他害怕说出这些话后，会让“结婚”清清楚楚地立在他们中间。他想：“也许她还没想到这个，那样我只会把这个想法装进她的大脑。”她盯着他问道：“为什么不？”这时，一个想法闪过他的心头，为什么不？那将意味着后半生的安逸、安全，你不必再漂泊，和她结婚也不错。可他又一想：“不，要是我现在让步，那就是否定我三十年来的生活，否定我自己选的路。”他说：

“要是我们想要的话，我猜两年前就该有了。”

“当时我们并不想要啊。”

“那现在也不想。”他答道。

当时是在九月。圣诞节刚过，她说自己怀孕了。几乎还没等她说完，他就认定她在撒谎，这时他发现自己三个月来一直等她说出这句话，可是当他看到那张脸时，明白她没有说谎。他相信她也知道自己没说谎。他心想：“终于来了。现在她会要求结婚，不过，至少我还能先离开这里。”

但她并没有那么说，只是静静地坐在床上，双手放在膝头，还是那张老女人的脸：颧骨凸出，细长脸，简直像个男人；相比之下，肥胖的身子比以前更像一头肥腻的动物。平静的新英格兰面孔低垂，若有所思，她冷漠而洒脱地说：“无所谓。就算生个黑崽子也没关系。我很乐

意看到父亲和加尔文那样的脸。要是你想跑的话，这会儿正是离开的好时机。”不过，她好像并没有听见自己在说什么，也没想过要传达什么确切的意思：倔强的夏日挣扎着做最后一搏，而半苏醒的秋天早已在不知不觉间降临了。“完了，”她平静地思索着，“结束了。”剩下的只有等待，再过一个多月就会确定；她从黑人妇女那里早已得知，通常只有过两个月才能证实。她将盯着日历再等一个月。她在上面做了标记，那样就不会弄错了，透过卧室窗户，她明白一个月已经过去。霜冻来临，一些树叶已经开始变黄。标记的日期来了又去；她又给了自己一周的时间以更加确信这个事实。一切都在意料之中，所以她并没有欣喜若狂。“我怀孕了。”她平静地说出声来。

就在当天，他对自己说：“我明天就走。”“星期天走，”他心想，“等我拿上这一星期的工钱就走。”他开始期待星期六，盘算着要到哪里去。他整整一个星期都没有去见她，他希望她来找自己。出入小木屋时，他都可以不去看那幢房子，就像在这里居住的第一个星期那样，他一直没有见她。偶尔，他看到黑人妇女为抵御秋天的寒冷穿着不伦不类的衣服，来回行走在经常踩踏的小道上，在那幢房子里进进出出。但也仅此而已。星期六来了，但他没有走。“说不准还能多赚点钱，”他想，“要是她不急着赶我走，我才不会走呢。下个星期六再走。”

他留了下来。天气依然明媚而清冷。现在，他回到四面透风的木屋，爬上床钻进棉毯时，会想起楼房里的卧室，生着炉火，充足的被褥，还是棉绒被。他从未如此接近自怜自艾的状态，心想：“或许，至少她会再送我一条毯子。”或者自己再买一条，但他没有买，她也没有送他。他一直等待，等到自己都觉得过了好久。后来，二月的一个傍晚，他回到木屋，发现简易床上有她留下的一张便条，内容很简单，像下达命令一样指示他晚上到楼房去。他丝毫不觉得奇怪，他从没有见过

哪个女人没了男人到一定时候还不会自动送上门来。这时，他觉得自己明天就得走。“我肯定一直都在等这一天，”他心想，“等待证明自己的判断是正确的。”他换好衣服，剃了胡子，却在无意中把自己打扮成了新郎的装束。他像往常一样去了厨房，找到桌上为他备好的晚饭；在没有见面的日子里，她依旧为他准备饭菜。他吃过饭不慌不忙地上了楼。“我们有整晚的时间，”他想，“明天晚上，后天晚上，等她发现木屋空了，她会琢磨的。”她正坐在壁炉前等他。当他进屋时，她连头都没有扭一下。“搬把椅子过来。”她说道。

第三阶段就这样开始了，比起前两阶段，这次让他愈发困惑。他以为她很急迫，还会巧妙地向他道歉；或者不急于道歉，而是默默地等他屈身求爱。他甚至做好了这样的准备，然而，当他最终陷入极度迷惘，走上前去碰她的时候，他发现自己简直像不认识这个女人一样。她以男人般的沉着和坚毅推开他的手。“好啦，”他说，“要是你想跟我说什么的话，咱一般都是在完事儿后才会聊得更愉快。你要是担心孩子的话，你放心，不会伤着他的。”

她只用了一句话便把他留下了。他第一次认真地看着她：那是一张冷酷、陌生而狂躁的脸。“你有没有意识到，”她说，“自己在虚度生命？”他像块石头一样呆呆地望着她，仿佛不敢相信自己的耳朵一样。

过了好久，他才理解她的意思。她全然没有看他一眼，只是望着炉火，若有所思的面容冰冷而沉静，像对待陌生人一样跟他讲话；他愤怒而惊讶地听着。她想让他接管自己和黑人学校的所有事务，包括通信和定期出访。她煞费苦心做了计划，并详细讲给他听，可他却越听越惊讶，怒火直往上蹿。他将全权管理，而她会成为他的秘书、助理：他们将一起参观学校，走访黑人家庭；他愤怒地听着，觉得这个计划简直是胡说八道。她那沉静的侧影一直笼罩在宁静的火光中，宛若相框里的肖

像画一样庄重。离开时，他记得她压根没有提及怀孕一事。

他不相信她有什么不正常，认为这只是怀孕的缘故，他相信这也是她不让自己碰她的原因。他试图和她争辩，但这就好似在和一棵树争论；她甚至没想过去拒绝，只是安静地听着，然后再次以平淡冰冷的语调继续往下说，仿佛他根本不曾开口一样。等他最后站起来走出去的时候，他甚至不清楚她是否意识到了他的离开。

接下来的两个月里，他只见过她一次。他按部就班地完成每天的日程，但再也没有靠近那幢楼房。就像第一次去刨木厂干活时那样，他又开始去镇中心吃晚饭了。不过，刚去刨木厂干活那阵子，他在白天根本没必要去考虑她；他几乎从没想过她。现在，他却无法自己。她不断出现在他的脑海中，简直就像他正在房间里望着她一样。她耐心地等待着，发了疯似的，让他无处可逃。第一阶段时，他好似站在屋外的冰天雪地里，竭力想进入屋内；第二阶段，他又像身处黑暗闷热的坑底；而现在，他仿佛站在空荡荡的平原中央，没有房屋、没有风雪。

这时，他开始害怕，到现在为止，他已经有了不好的预感。现在，他有了生意上的伙伴。早春的一天，一个名叫布朗的陌生人出现在刨木厂，他是来找工作的。他看出这个人并不聪明，但最初他心想：“至少这个人还有脑子，能按我说的去做，不会自己瞎琢磨。”后来他才明白：“现在我才知道，傻子甚至连对自己有利的建议都听不懂。”他接纳了布朗。因为布朗是个陌生人，性格活泼，对他毫不设防，而且这个人没有太大的胆量，他很清楚在精明的人手下干事，胆小鬼在自己的限度内对任何人都十分有利，除了对他自己。

不过，他担心布朗也许会知道那幢房子里的女人，并且害怕布朗因为无法预知的愚蠢做出不可挽回的事情。他尽量避开那个女人，因为怕

她会想起要在某天晚上去木屋找他。自从二月开始，他只见过她一次。他专门去找她，对她说布朗要和自己同住。那是一个星期天，他把她约了出来。于是，她走到他所在的后廊里，静静地听他讲话。“你用不着那么做。”她说。当时他没明白她的意思，直到后来，他再次回想时，一个完整的念头闪过，像铅印的字句一样清晰：她以为我是为了躲避她才带布朗来的。她相信我认为布朗在那儿，她就不敢去小木屋，那样她就再不能打扰我了。

他相信是自己让她产生了这样的想法，所以他害怕她会做出什么事来。他深信既然她已经想到了，那么布朗的存在不仅不会打消她的念头，反而会刺激她来小木屋找他。到现在已经过去一个多月了，她却什么都没做，没有任何行动。他相信她什么事都干得出来，现在他也开始彻夜难眠。但他一直在想：“我得行动了，我该采取行动了。”

于是，他开始耍花招避开布朗，自己先回到木屋。每次，他都以为会看见她等在那儿，可回去后却发现里面空无一人。自己徒劳地扯谎、匆忙赶回家，而她却终日独自在房中无所事事，只想着是该立即放弃他还是再折磨他久一些。想到这些，他便怒不可遏，却又无可奈何。通常来说，他不应该介意布朗是否知道他和她之间的关系。他的性格中并无对女性唯命是从的骑士精神，他追求实际，只讲物质。假如整个杰弗逊镇都知道她是她的情人，他也毫不在意：他在意的是不能让任何人对他那里的私生活起疑，因为那里藏着他的威士忌酒，每周他都能靠它们赚三四十美元。这是原因之一。另一个原因是他的虚荣心，他宁愿自杀或被杀都不愿意让任何人、另一个男人知道他和她之间的状况：她不仅彻底改变了她自己的生活，而且还企图改变他的生活，并想把他变成介于隐士和黑人传教士之间的一个人。他相信如果布朗知道了一个原因，必定会不可避免地知道另一个，因此，他需要撒谎，匆忙赶回小木屋。当

他把手放在门板上时，想起自己的匆忙，刹那间觉得一切都是徒劳，可又不敢不防，于是对她顿生恨意，咬牙切齿却又无计可施。后来的一天晚上，他打开门，发现简易床上有张纸条。

他一进门就看见了那张纸条，方方正正、干干净净的纸条摆放在黑毯子上，显得神秘莫测。他甚至都不用想，就相信自己知道其中的内容和意思。他一点儿都不着急，反而觉得释然。“结束了，”没等拿起那张折叠的纸条，他便想，“一切都已回到从前。再不用谈什么黑人和孩子。她终于想通，把另一个自己赶跑了，她知道自己的想法根本行不通。现在，她明白自己想要的、需要的只是一个男人，晚上陪她的男人。他在白天干些什么无关紧要。”这时，他本应该想明白自己没有离开的原因，应该明白那张四四方方的小纸条静静地躺在那里未曾打开过，却已似一把锁和一条链子将他紧紧捆绑起来。然而，他只是再一次想到了迫近的希望和喜悦，这时一切都会更加平静。双方都希望如此，而且这下他将占据优势地位。“真是愚蠢，”他捏着没有展开的纸条，心想，“该死的愚蠢，她还是她，我也还是我。该死！经历那些愚蠢的事情后，现在一切都已经恢复原样。”他想着今晚两个人都会一笑了之，然后就是窃笑低语的时候：嘲弄整个事情，笑她，也笑自己。

他没有打开纸条，而是把它放在一边，然后就去洗脸、刮胡子、换衣服，同时还在吹口哨。他还没收拾好，布朗就进来了。“嘿，嘿，嘿。”布朗叫道。克里斯默斯没有搭理他，只顾对着钉在墙上的一面破镜子打领结。布朗站在地板中央。布朗是一个瘦瘦高高的年轻人，穿着邋遢的工作服，长了一张黝黑清秀的面孔和一双好奇的眼睛，嘴角有一条细长的白色伤疤，像挂着一缕唾沫。过了一会儿，布朗说：“看样子，你要出门。”

“是吗？”克里斯默斯头也没回地说道。他的口哨声单调而清晰，是

一支微微透着忧伤的黑人小曲。

“我想我没必要收拾什么。”布朗说，“看你差不多已经准备好了。”

克里斯默斯回头看着他，问道：“准备干吗？”

“你不是要进城吗？”

“我说过吗？”克里斯默斯一边问一边又转向镜子。

“喔，”布朗看着克里斯默斯的后脑勺说，“我猜你是去办私事。”他观察着克里斯默斯，“晚上躺在潮湿的地板上，身子底下只有一条薄毯子，真够冷的。”

“是啊，那又怎么样呢？”克里斯默斯答道。他专注而悠闲地打着口哨，转身拿起外套穿上，布朗还在打量他。克里斯默斯走到门口说：“明早见。”他离开时没有关门。他知道布朗正在那里目送他远去。不过，他没打算有所遮掩，径直向楼房走去，“让他看吧，”心想，“想来就跟上。”

厨房的餐桌上早已摆上给他备好的晚餐。他先从口袋里掏出没有打开的纸条，放在盘子旁边，然后才坐下来。纸条摊开了，是自己展开的，仿佛在坚持邀请他看一眼，可他并没有看。克里斯默斯开始吃饭，不慌不忙地吃着。快要吃完的时候，他听到了什么动静，突然抬起头来。接着，他起身走向自己进来时的那道门，像只猫一样悄无声息地走过去，猛地拉开门。布朗正站在外面，脸凑到门口，或者说刚才是在紧贴门板。灯光照在他的脸上，照出孩子般全神贯注的表情，被克里斯默斯看到时，好奇的表情变成了惊讶。然后，布朗缓过神来，平静了些。他的话音愉快而安静，谨慎而狡黠，仿佛他早已在自己和克里斯默斯之

间建立起了惺惺相惜的同盟。或是出于对搭档的忠诚，或是对作为所有女人对立面的男人有极其透彻的理解，因此他们无须询问也无须等待，便知分晓。“喔，喔，喔，”他说，“原来这儿就是你每晚鬼混的地方，就在咱门前，你会说——”

克里斯默斯什么都没说，直接给了他一拳，这一拳并不重，因为布朗早就窃笑着向后退去，一副天真快活的样子。这一拳打断了他的话音，他迅速往后跳，离开灯光照到的地方，消失在黑暗中。接着，他又开始讲话，声音不高，好像直到现在他都不愿妨碍搭档的好事儿。不过，他的声音变得紧张起来，警觉而惊讶地说：“你想打我！”他比克里斯默斯高一些，对方一声不吭，步步紧逼。他向后跌了个趔趄，瘦长的身影早已在仓皇逃窜中滑稽地解体，好像在倒地的瞬间摔成了碎片。接着，他又开始说话，高亢的声音充满了警告和乏力的恐吓：“你敢打我！”正当他转身之际，肩上又挨了一击，于是布朗撒腿就跑，跑到一百码远时，他才放慢脚步回过头来。这时，他停下来转过身，骂道：“该死的胆小鬼！”他猛地一甩头，试探性地骂了一句，似乎这次嗓门更高，比他原想的还要响亮，但楼房里没有任何动静。厨房门再次关上，又暗下来。清冷的夜里，他转身回到小木屋，一路上独自骂骂咧咧。

克里斯默斯回到厨房，连放在餐桌上的那张未曾阅读的纸条都没有瞧一眼。他穿过通往楼房的那道门，准备上楼。他开始爬楼梯，速度并不快，一步一步往上走。这时，他看到了卧室房门，门缝下有一道光，是炉火发出的光。他把手放在门板上。门开了，他却怔住了。灯下，她坐在桌子旁边。他看见了这个熟悉的身影，熟悉的衣服——一件看上去像是为男人缝制而且已经穿旧了的衣服。衣服上面有一颗脑袋，刚刚开始变白的头发被她随意向后收拢，草草地盘了一个丑陋的发髻，活像病树

上的树瘤。她抬起头看着他。这时，他注意到她戴了一副自己从没有见过的钢架眼镜。他站在门口，那只手一动不动地抓着把手，好像真真切切地听见自己体内发出一个声音：你应该看那张便条。你应该先看一看。心想：“我必须行动。我要行动了。”

他站在桌子旁边，依旧能听到那个声音。桌上散乱堆放着书纸公文，她坐在桌前没有起身。冷酷、沉静的声音传达出无比沉着、坚定的意味，他的嘴巴跟着她重复着那些字句。他低头望着零乱而神秘的纸张和文件，思绪平稳而无聊地飘荡，不明白这一页页纸张的含义。“上学。”他的嘴巴说道。

“是的，”她说，“他们会接受你，随便哪家都会要你，记在我账上，你可以挑一所你想去的学校。我们甚至都不用花钱。”

“上学，”他的嘴巴重复道，“黑人学校。我。”

“是的，然后你就可以去孟菲斯，到皮布尔斯事务所学习法律。以后你就可以负责一切法律事务，所有事务，他的，皮布尔斯的。”

“然后去一家黑人律师事务所去学法律。”他的嘴巴跟着说道。

“是的，然后我会把所有的事务都交给你，所有的钱。一切。这样，等你需要钱的时候，你可以.....你会知道该怎么做，律师懂得如何操作.....你可以帮助他们摆脱黑暗，谁也无法控告或指责你，就算他们发现.....即使你不还钱.....但你有能力还钱，没有人会知道.....”

“不过是黑人学校，黑人律师。”他说着，平静的声音甚至没有丝毫异议，似乎只是在重复一种提示。他们谁都没有看对方一眼；自从他进屋，她一直没有抬头。

她又说：“告诉他们。”

“告诉黑人，我也是黑人？”这时，她注视着他，面容十分沉静，完全是一张老妇人的脸。

“是的，你必须那样做。那样，他们才不会跟你收费，记在我账上。”

这时，他仿佛突然对自己的嘴巴发号施令一样：“别再胡扯了！让我说！”他俯下身，她没有动。两张脸相距不到一英尺：一张脸冷酷而痴狂，死一般的苍白；另一张羊皮纸色的脸上，噘起的嘴唇冷酷无言地做出咆哮的形状。他低声说道：“你老了，我以前从没注意到。你这个老女人，头发都白了。”她立即用扁平的手掌给了他一记耳光，身体的其他部分却没有动。这一掌掴发出了平淡的声音，接着是克里斯默斯的还击，像前一巴掌发出的回声一样紧凑。他用的是拳头，好似一阵大风呼啸而过。他猛地把她从椅子上拽起来，抓到他脸前；她没有任何反抗，平静的脸上也没有任何变化。这时，他才恍然大悟。“你根本没有怀孕，”他说，“你从没有过孩子，根本没那回事，是你自己老了。你不过是老了，时候到了，没用了。这才是你全部的问题。”他放开手，又重重地给了她一拳。她倒在床上盯着他，蜷缩成一团。他又冲她的脸给了一拳，居高临下地对她讲话。她曾经喜欢听到从他嘴里说出的那些话，还总说她能够感受到那些字句的味道，污秽的喃喃低语轻轻拂过。“没别的，是你没本事，再也没用了。你这个没用的老女人。”

她侧身躺在床上，扭头看着他。她的嘴角在流血，说道：“或许我们都死了会好些。”

他一打开门就看到了毯子上的便条。他走上前，拿起纸条并展开。

现在，他一想到空心栏杆就会觉得那是自己听到的传闻，是发生在自己另一次生命中的经历。因为纸条、墨迹、形式、样子还是像往常一样，它们向来不长，现在也不长。不过，现在的纸条再也不能唤起无言的期许，再没有洋溢着不言自明的兴奋，它们比墓志铭更简单，比命令更扼要。

他的第一反应是不去，他也相信自己敢这么做。接着，他也明白他不敢不去。这次，他没有再换衣服，就穿着那件浸满汗渍的工作服，踏着五月的黄昏，走进厨房。现在，桌子上再也没有为他准备好的食物，有时经过饭桌，他会看一眼，心想：“上帝啊，我还曾经在这里平静地吃过饭。”他已经记不清了。

他走进楼房，上了楼梯。他早已听见她的声音，越往上走，声音越响。他走到卧室门口，门没开，是锁着的，里边传来持续单调的声音。他听不清那是什么内容，只是无休止的单音调。他不敢去琢磨那些字句，也不敢去想她在干什么。于是，他站在那里一直等着，过了一会儿，里面的声音停止了；她走过来打开房门，他走了进去。他经过床边时，附近的地板上似乎还能依稀辨认出双膝跪过的痕迹，他仿佛看见死神一般迅速移开自己的视线。

也许，她没打算要点灯，他们没有坐下，像两年前那样，还是站着说话。昏暗中，她的声音还在重复同样的内容：“.....不去学校，那么要是你不想去.....不去的话.....你的灵魂。救赎.....”他无动于衷，静静等着她把话说完：“.....地狱.....永远，永远.....”

他说：“不。”她很平静。他知道她不会被说服，她也知道他不会接受。双方都不会认输，更糟糕的是他们不会让对方得到安宁；他甚至不会离开。他们还会在黄昏中站更久，仿佛从他们的腰间密密麻麻地窜出

无数逝去的罪恶和欢乐的鬼魂。他们望着彼此坚定而逐渐模糊的面孔，筋疲力竭却又不愿服输。

然后，他便转身离去。没等房门关上，插上门闩，他又听到了单调、冷静、透着绝望的声音，说了些什么或在说给谁听，他不敢问也不敢想。三个月后，他坐在废弃花园的阴凉处，听到两英里外法院的钟声敲了十下、十一下，他平静地相信自己成了命运的奴仆，然而他又自相矛盾地认为自己并不相信宿命论一说。他告诉自己，我早该动手了。他其实早有此意，我早该动手了，她自己也这样说过。

前两晚之前，她说了那番话。他看见纸条就去找她。上楼梯时，乏味的声音越来越高，比往常更加响亮清晰。他一上楼便明白了。这次，门是开着的。他走进去的时候，她跪在床边没有起身。她没有动，声音也没有停。她高傲地昂着头，仰着脸，那副可怜相也成了高傲的一部分。暮霭中传来她那沉稳、平静的声音，透着自我克制的味道。祈祷告一段落，她才意识到他已经站在屋里了。这时，她转过头，说道：“和我跪下。”

“不。”他说。

“跪下，”她说，“你不需要亲自和上帝交流，只要跪下就行，只要迈出第一步。”

“不，”他说，“我要走。”

她没有动，抬起头望着他。“乔，”她问，“可以留下来吗？能做到吗？”

“可以，”他说，“我留下来，不过得快点。”

她继续祈祷。她的声音很低，带着卑微的傲气，必要时，她会用到一些象征性的词语，这是他教给她的，她毫不迟疑地脱口而出，向上帝做忏悔，好像上帝就在房中，和另外两个人在一起。她像谈及另外两个人一样讲述着自己和他的故事，平静而单调的声音中不带一丝情欲。祈祷完毕，她静静地站起来。两个人面对面站在黄昏中。这次，她甚至都没有问，他也不必作答。过了一会儿，她平静地说：“那么，还剩一件事要做。”

“还有一件事要做。”他重复道。

他坐在灌木丛投下的浓密树影里，听到远处钟声敲完最后一响。他静静地想着：“现在一切都完了，都已经结束。”两年前，他曾经在某个痴狂的夜晚，追逐她、寻找她。然而，那是另一段时间，另一种生活，现在一切都已沉寂，归于平静，肥沃的土地发出悲凉的叹息，黑暗中充满无数声音，来自他所熟知的所有岁月，仿佛一切过往都是单调的模式，这种模式还在继续：明天晚上，所有的明天都将归于这种模式，永无止境地继续下去，不会有任何变化，因为过往和即将，未来和曾经都属于同一模式。时间到了。钟声远去，时间到了。

他站起身，从树影中走出来，绕过楼房，走进厨房。楼房一片漆黑。自从离开小木屋，他便再没有回去过，他不知道她是否给他留了纸条，有没有在等他。他还是没打算不弄出任何动静，好像他没想过这是休息的时间，也没想过她是否已经入睡。他稳步登上楼梯，走进卧室，刚一进屋，床上立刻传来她的声音。“把灯点上。”

“用不着点灯，”他说。

“点灯。”

“不。”他说道，他站在床边，手握剃刀，不过没有打开刀子，但她并没有再说什么。这时，他不由自主地走到桌旁，放下剃刀，找到油灯，划着火柴。她正坐在床上，背靠床头，睡衣上披了一条围巾，搭在胸前，双臂交叉抱在围巾前，没有露出手来。他站在桌子旁，两个人望着彼此。

“你愿意和我一起跪下吗？”她说，“我不逼你。”

“不。”他说。

“我不逼你。你记住，不是我在逼你，和我一起跪下。”

“不。”他拒绝了。这时，他看见她伸开胳膊，右手从围巾下抽出来，手里握着一把老式的单响撞针手枪，差不多有小型来复枪那么长，不过要比来复枪笨重些。手枪、胳膊和手映在墙上的影子纹丝未动，枪影和手影阴森森的，翘起的撞针恐怖地向后扬起，像扬起的蛇头一样恶毒地摆好姿势，一动不动。她的眼睛都没眨一下，像枪口黑色的圆形管圈一样坚定，眼睛里没有热情也没有怒火，像所有的怜悯、绝望、信念那样沉稳，令人震惊。不过，他没有注意到这双眼睛，只顾盯着墙上的枪影；正在这时，墙上翘起的撞针影子轻轻弹开了。

克里斯默斯站在路中央，朝迎面驶来的灯光举起右手。实际上，他没有料到汽车会停下来，但车确实停了，发出尖厉的声音猛地扑过来，样子有些滑稽。这是一辆小汽车，又破又旧。当他走近时，车灯照出两张年轻的面孔，满脸惊愕，恍如飘过两只浅色的气球：近一点的是个姑娘，惊恐无力地向后缩成一团。不过，当时克里斯默斯并没有注意到，他问：“可以搭我一程吗？你们去哪儿我就到哪儿。”这两个人一句话都说不出来，目瞪口呆地看着他，可他却没有注意到他们的惊讶和恐惧。

于是，他打开车门，坐到后座上。

这时，姑娘捂着嘴开始呜呜咽咽地哭起来，恐惧愈强，哭声便愈高。汽车早已开动，似乎是在向前跳跃，小伙子紧握方向盘，头也没回地小声制止姑娘：“闭嘴！嘘！这是咱唯一的机会，你能安静点吗？”克里斯默斯连这些也没听见。他坐在后面，完全没有意识到坐在正前方的那个人处于极度惊恐中。他只是在一瞬间对汽车产生了兴趣，为什么这辆小汽车在狭窄的乡村小道上竟然开得这么快，速度简直快得惊人。

“这条路还有多远？”他问。

小伙子告诉了他。这里正是三年前黑人小孩告诉他的城镇名。当时的下午，他初到杰弗逊镇。小伙子的声音干巴巴的，轻轻问道：“老大，你要去那里吗？”

“行，”克里斯默斯答道，“是的，去那儿就行，正合我意。你们也是去那里吗？”

“是的，”小伙子轻柔地低声回答道，“你说去哪儿就去哪儿。”旁边的姑娘又开始抽泣，像只小动物一样低声啼哭，小伙子又发出“嘘——”的一声示意她安静。他一直板着脸目视前方，小车飞速向前跳跃：“嘘！嘘——嘘！”然而，克里斯默斯还是没有注意到。车灯下，他只看到两个年轻人的脑袋，僵硬地直视前方，乡村小道像条带子一样飘动着，消失在他们身后。不过，他对人和路都没有兴趣，甚至没有注意到小伙子先前已经跟他聊了好久，他不知道他们走了多远，或者现在到了哪里。这时，小伙子放慢语速，仿佛每个字都像经过刻意挑选一样，清清楚楚地说给这个外乡人听，他一字一句地说：“听我说，老大。我要转弯上坡，这是条近路。近路好走。我要走近路。上了近路，路就好走。这

样，咱们能快点到那儿，明白吗？”

“行。”克里斯默斯说。汽车继续飞速跳跃，在拐弯处晃了几下后，爬上山坡，然后又向下飞奔而去，仿佛大地都被抛在了下面。车灯迅速照亮路旁柱子上的邮箱，然后便一闪而过。偶尔，他们还会路过漆黑的房子。小伙子又开口说道：

“这儿，就是我才说的近路。就在这儿。我要拐进去，但不是说我要离开大路，只不过我要绕段近路，上一条更好走的路，明白吗？”

“行，”克里斯默斯说道。不一会儿，他莫名其妙地说：“你们肯定就住附近吧。”

这时，姑娘说话了。她在座位上稍稍挪动了一下，苍白的小脸上写满了焦虑、恐惧、无措和绝望。“是的！”她哭着说，“我们都是！就在那边！还有我父亲和几个兄弟——”她突然停住不说了，克里斯默斯看到小伙子用手捂住她的下巴，她用手抓着他的手腕，被手捂住的嘴巴还在支支吾吾地说着。克里斯默斯往前坐了坐。

“这儿，”他说，“我在这儿下车，你就把我放在这儿吧。”

“你干吗呢！”小伙子也叫起来，微弱的声音也充满了绝望的怒火，“你要是能安静些——”

“停车，”克里斯默斯说，“我不想伤害你们，我只想下车。”汽车再次猛地停下来，但发动机还在工作，没等克里斯默斯站稳，汽车就又向前冲去；他只好向前跟着跑了几步，然后才找到平衡。这时，什么东西重重地撞到了他的肋骨。汽车继续疾驰，迅速远去，车里仍然传出姑娘尖厉的哭声。很快，汽车便消失了。黑暗和看不见的尘土再次弥漫在宁

静的夏日星空里。这时，刚才撞在身上的那个东西又着实给了他一击，他才发现那个东西就挂在自己的右手上。他举起手，发现那是一把笨重的老式手枪。枪就在自己手里，但他全然不记得自己拿了手枪，也不知道为什么要那么做。然而，它就在自己手上。“我用右手朝汽车打的手势，”他心想，“难怪她……他们……”他反转手臂，手枪回到了原位。然后，他停下脚步，划燃一根火柴，借着即将熄灭的微弱火光，他打量着手枪。火柴燃尽后熄灭了，但他仍然能够看见这把装了子弹的老式双膛手枪：其中一膛的撞针早已落下，但没有引爆火药；另一膛的撞针没有放下，但已经做好了准备。他说：“一枪为她，一枪为我。”他收回胳膊，用力一扔，听到手枪“嗖嗖”地穿过丛林。然后，周围又归于平静。“为她，为我。”

[1](#)画家比亚兹莱，作品简洁，一般只有黑白两色；同时又很繁复，精心的线条细碎的花纹，内容多为表情诡异的妖冶男女，充满了嘲讽、颓废，甚至色情、邪恶。

[2](#)佩特罗尼乌斯（396— 455），罗马贵族，在晚年发动宫廷政变，当上西罗马帝国皇帝（455），旋即被杀。

乡下人发现大火的五分钟内，人们开始聚集，其中有些人正在驾车去城里度周末的路上，他们也停了下来，另一些人从附近步行而来。这一带稀疏地分布着黑人的小木屋，土地非常贫瘠，即使侦探卫队也很难梳理出十个人来，不管男女老幼。而现在仿佛从天而降一样，半个小时里，成群结队地涌出不少人来，有独自一人来的，有全家出动的，还有一些从镇里飞快地驱车赶来凑热闹的人。其中还包括本镇的警长——一个身体肥胖、平易近人的男子，意志坚定，头脑精明，和蔼可亲——他推开围观的人群，这些人带着孩子般的好奇，傻傻地看着尸体，像成年人对着自己的画像在冥思苦想一样。人群中有闲散的北方佬，穷苦的白人，甚至还有曾在北方短暂居住过的南方人。他们都深信这是黑人干的匿名凶杀案，凶手不是一个黑人，而是整个黑人种族；他们认定、确信并且希望她还被强奸过：至少在割断喉管之前有一次，之后又一次。警长走上前，亲自察看后命人把尸体抬走，不让可怜的尸体暴露在众目睽睽之下。

这样便没什么可看了，只剩下曾经摆放尸体的地方，还有那场大火。很快，没人能够记得放置床单的确切位置，以及它遮住的土地。于是，只剩下大火可供观看。众人目光呆滞，一齐望着大火，惊讶的表情来自恶臭难闻的古老洞穴，那是认知能力的发源地。他们好像从没见过死亡一样，第一次观看大火。消防车很快就赶来了，一路鸣笛摇铃，雄赳赳地呼啸而来。这是一辆新车，刷着红漆，描着金边，手动报警器和金色铃铛发出清脆而傲慢的声音，车上的男人和年轻人没有戴头盔，他们抓着扶手站在车上。消防车疾驰而过，全然不顾飞行规律的制约。消防车上配有机械云梯，用手按下按钮，便可以伸到惊人的高度，像一顶

折叠式大礼帽，不过现在没必要展示它的高度。车上整齐地盘着从没用过的水管，让人联想起大众期刊上电话托拉斯的广告；可是软管没有吊钩，管里也没水。那些没戴头盔的男人们纷纷跳下车，其中还有拉响报警器的人，他们刚刚放下柜台上、桌上的工作赶来。他们凑过来，跟着指引看了几处放过床单的地方，几个兜里拿枪的人开始排查凶手。

然而，没有凶手可以查找。她一直过着宁静的生活，专注于自己的事务。她在这个镇上出生、生活，直到死去都是外乡人、局外人，临终馈赠给小镇的只有惊诧和愤怒。尽管她最终为人们提供了激动人心的大火盛宴，几乎可算作罗马假日盛会，但人们不会原谅她，不会让她平静、安宁地死去。绝对不会。安宁不是经常有的。于是，他们推推搡搡聚在一起，都相信大火中这具淌血的尸体在三年前就已死去，现在又重新活过来，叫嚣着要报复，他们不相信平静的火焰和僵硬的尸体足以表明不会对任何人造成伤害。他们不相信！因为他们有精彩的解释，正如货架柜台上堆满了熟悉的商品，不是因为卖家心仪、眼馋，或是为了收获拥有的快感，而是为了以捞便宜来诱哄其他人来购买，卖家还必须不时地考虑那些尚未售出的货品，还有那些有购买能力却没有购买的人，他们不仅感到不满，或许还会气愤甚至绝望。同样，在发霉的事务所里，律师置身老奸巨猾的贪婪和欺骗的幽灵中，等待客户自动上门；又如医生手握锋利的手术刀和强效药物，说服病人要相信他，无须到处求医问药。这些人从始至终忙个不停，最终落得个无所事事。女人们也来了，无聊的她们衣着鲜艳，有的穿着匆忙赶制的衣服，神采奕奕的脸上浮现出神秘而兴奋的表情，内心的沮丧（她们更乐意看到死亡而不是宁静）化成无数踏实的小碎步和不断的窃窃私语：谁干的？谁干的？也许还夹杂着没抓到他吗？是吗？是吗？

因此，现场没有什么可调查。警长也愤怒而吃惊地凝视着火焰，他

还没想到自己的沮丧源于人类的代表，那就是大火。他似乎觉得这场火是为了能达到最终目的而自发燃烧的，和罪犯沆瀣一气，似乎正因如此，很早就有前辈从事了这一职业，延续到他本人。于是，警长继续狂躁、迷茫地踱着步，观察着象征希望和灾难的大火，直到副手跑来报告说在楼房那边发现了一座小木屋，里面有最近住过人的痕迹。这时，发现大火的乡下人还没有进城，自从两小时前从车上下来，他的马车也没有再前进一步。此刻，他走在人群中，头发乱蓬蓬的，一边说一边比画，声音沙哑，几乎听不到，呆板疲惫的脸上露出义愤填膺的神情。他立刻回想起当他破门而入时，曾经在房中见过一个人。

“一个白人？”警长问。

“是的，先生。他好像刚从楼梯上滚下来，极力阻止我上楼，还说 he 早就上去过，上面根本没人。等我下来时，他已经不见了。”

警长扫了他俩一眼。“谁住在小木屋里？”

“我不知道以前有谁住在这里，”助手说道，“我猜是黑人。听别人说，她可能和黑人一起住在那幢房子里。真奇怪，过了这么久，才有黑人对她下手。”

“给我找个黑鬼来，”警长命令道。助手和另外两三个警员找来一个黑鬼。警长问：“谁在小木屋住过？”

“我不知道，瓦特先生。”黑人答道，“我没注意过，我也不知道谁在那里住过。”

“把他带到那儿去。”警长说。

人们围在警长、助手和黑人周围，脸上露出一致的表情，无尽的大

火让他们感觉索然无味，贪婪的眼神开始逐渐消退，仿佛每个人的五官都凝结为一种视觉器官，空气和风里传达出一种语言：是他吗？是他干的吗？警长抓住他了。警长已经把他逮住了。警长看着他们，说道：“散了吧，你们都走吧。看火去。如果有需要的话，我会叫你们的，大家都走吧。”他转身，带领手下走向小木屋。警长身后被驱散的人们聚成一团，望着他们三个白人、一个黑人走进小木屋，关上门。人群背后，快要熄灭的大火又升腾起来，弥漫在空气中，声音虽然不高，却一直烧个不停。上帝啊，他要真是凶手的话，那我们还站在这里干吗？一个黑杂种杀了一位白人女人。他们谁都没有进过那幢楼房。她活着的时候，他们都不愿意让妻子来拜访她。他们年轻的时候、小的时候（他们的父辈中也曾有人这样做过）就曾在街上追着她喊：“爱黑鬼！爱黑鬼！”

小木屋里，警长重重地跌在简易床上，叹了一口气——他像一只水桶，满满装了一桶懒肉。警长说：“现在，你告诉我谁住在小木屋里。”

“我说过我不知道。”黑人答道。他有些不高兴，内心却非常警觉。他注视着警长，身后站着两个白人警员，不过他看不到。他没有回头，甚至都没瞟一眼。他看着警长的脸，好像在照镜子。也许他像照镜子一样看到自己将要挨揍了；也许他没有，因为即使警长有什么变化，那也只是瞬间在脸上闪过而已。可是黑人没有回头看，皮鞭落在背上，他的面部猛地剧烈抽搐了一下，嘴角突然迅速翘起，短暂地露出几颗牙齿，像在咧嘴微笑一样，接着，他又平静下来，露出神秘的表情。

“我猜你还没有认真想过。”警长说。

“我想不起来，因为我不知道。”黑人说，“我压根不住这里，你应该知道我住哪儿，白人哥们儿。”

“巴福特先生说你就住路那边。”警长说。

“好多人都住在路那边，巴福特先生知道我住哪里。”

“他在说谎。”助手说道。这位助手就叫巴福特，挥鞭子的人正是他，皮鞭的一头朝外打弯，他紧紧握着鞭子，观察警长的脸色，像一只西班牙猎犬一样，等待主人一声令下便会纵身跳入水中。

“有可能，但也可能他没有。”警长说道。他疑虑重重地望着黑人，庞大的身子一动不动，懒懒地堆在简易床的弹簧上。“我看他还是没明白，我没跟他开玩笑，别以为外面的乡亲们不进监狱，他就不会进，要是他还不愿想起什么的话，把他送进去毫不费事。”也许警长给了暗示，眼睛发出了信号；也许没有。也许黑人看见了；也许没看见。反正鞭子又落下来，卷曲的皮带抽在黑人的背上，警长问：“想起来了么？”

“是两个人，白人，男的，”黑人说道，冷漠的声音里没有一点气愤，非常平淡，“我不知道他们是谁，也不知道他们是干啥的。这不关我的事。我从没见过他们，只是听说两个白人男的住在那里，我不关心他们是谁，我就知道这些。你就算把我打死，我也就知道这么多。”

警长又叹了口气，说道：“够了，和我猜的一样。”

警长要回镇上了。人们意识到警长要离开时，开始大批散开，好像现在也没什么可供观看的，尸体被运走了，警长现在也要走。警长仿佛随身携带着秘密，在那一堆沉思的肥肉里藏着什么秘密：这个秘密如同希望那样，在脑满肥肠、慵懒倦怠的日子之余，触动、唤醒了每个人。于是，除了大火，此刻再没有什么可看。现在他们都已经看惯了，不再新鲜；大火已经成为他们生活和经历的一部分，他们站在垂直的烟柱下，烟柱比纪念碑还要高，坚不可摧的气势随时可能转向。因此，当警

长的车队抵达镇上时，有些像灵车通过时的傲慢和神气，警长的车开在前面，其他车辆紧随其后，在所有汽车扬起的尘土中一路鸣笛。在广场附近的交叉路口，为避让一辆乡村马车，车队只好暂时停下来。一位乘客从马车上走下来，警长朝车外望去，看见一个年轻女人带着即将生产的笨拙与谨慎，小心翼翼地从小马上缓缓走下来。接着，马车停在了一边，车队继续向前行驶，穿过广场。这时，银行出纳已经从保险柜里取出死者曾经寄存在他这里的一个信封，上面写着：我死后再打开 乔安娜·伯顿。警长走进办公室时，银行出纳带着信封和信件正等在那里。信封里只有一页纸，上面的笔迹和信封上面的出自同一人之手。通知皮布尔斯律师—比尔街，孟菲斯市，田纳西州；通知纳撒尼尔·柏林顿—圣·埃克斯特市。这就是全部内容。

“这个皮布尔斯是位黑人律师。”出纳说。

“就这些吗？”警长问。

“是的，您需要我怎么做？”

“我觉得你最好按照这张纸说的去做。”警长说，“我看还是我来做比较好。”他发了两份电报。半小时内就收到了来自孟菲斯的回复，两小时后收到了另一封。十分钟之内，全镇都传开了：伯顿小姐在新罕布什尔州的侄子悬赏一千美金捉拿杀害她的凶手。晚上九点，乡下人从前门破门而入时看到的那个男人出现了。他们不知道他就是那个人，他也没告诉他们。大家只知道这个人在城里落脚的时间还不长，是个叫布朗的私酒贩子，还不能算是名副其实的走私犯。他在到处寻找警长，兴奋之情溢于言表。就这样，案情的碎片开始被慢慢拼凑起来。警长知道布朗和另一个叫克里斯默斯的人有关系。尽管这个人在杰弗逊镇住了三年，但人们对他的了解还没有对布朗的多。直到现在，警长才知道克里

斯默斯一直住在伯顿小姐家后面的小木屋里。布朗有好多话想说，他坚持要说下去，迫不及待地高声说着。明眼人一眼就知道他这样做的目的就是为了那一千美元的赏金。

“你想当证人？”警长问他。

“我啥也不想做，”布朗回答道，他的声音尖厉而沙哑，脸上浮现出一丝暴躁。“我知道是谁干的，等拿到赏金，我就说。”

“你抓到那个凶手了就会拿到赏金。”警长说。于是，他们出于安全考虑，把布朗关进了监狱。“不过我想没必要这么做，”警长说，“我猜只要他能嗅到一千美金的味道，你们赶都赶不走他。”

布朗被带走时，仍旧扯着嗓子，一边比画一边愤愤不平地叫喊。警长给邻近城镇打了电话，向他们借了两只警犬。警犬第二天乘早班火车便可到达镇上。

星期日，凄凉的拂晓，萧条的站台，火车进站了。三四十人等在那里，亮着灯的车窗一闪而过，发出刺耳的声音，火车临时停下来。这是辆快车，通常不在杰弗逊镇停靠。这次的停车时间也只够卸下两条警犬：一只价格不菲、制作精良、闪着奇异光泽的金属笼子，哐当一声从车上被抬下来，站台随即陷入几近诧异的沉寂，人群中一阵骚动，笼子里放出两条幽灵般顺从的瘦狗，它们耷拉着耳朵，温和、悲凄地瞪着那些神情倦怠、面容苍白的人们。他们从前一夜就没睡好，脑子一片混沌：恐怖的命案亟待侦破却又毫无头绪，仿佛谋杀的残忍行径一发不可收拾，导致了一系列矛盾而怪异的事件，这些事件本身就荒谬至极，有违天理。

太阳刚刚升起，烧焦的楼房里余烬已经冷却，搜查人员赶到楼房后

面的小木屋里。两条警犬或许是从太阳暖暖的光照里获得了勇气，抑或是受警员绷紧的兴奋神经所感染，开始在木屋周围狂吠。它们粗声粗气地嗅着，不约而同地上了一条路，拉着拽绳子的人往前走。它们并排跑到一百码远处停了下来，开始猛烈地刨土，地上露出一个坑，有人刚刚在里面埋过空罐头盒。他们费了好大劲才把警犬拉开，拉到离木屋好远的地方才开始新一轮的搜索。不一会儿，两条狗不安分地呜咽了一阵，接着又跑起来，伸出长长的舌头，口水直流，拽着骂骂咧咧的警员们全速跑回小木屋。然后，它们像脚下生根一样，仰起头，眼珠滴溜溜地转着，朝门口狂吠，好像两个男中音歌唱家在纵情歌唱意大利歌剧。警员们开车把警犬送回镇上，给它们喂了食。警车穿过广场时，教堂响起宁静、平缓的钟声，盛装的人们手捧《圣经》和赞美诗，撑着阳伞走在路上。

当晚，一名乡下小伙子和他的父亲来找警长。小伙子讲述了上周五晚开车回家的路上，在距谋杀现场一两英里外的地方有一男子持枪将他拦住。他以为自己会遭劫或被杀，他说自己本打算哄骗那个人，把车直接开回自家前院，然后停车，跳下来呼救。可那个男人起了疑心，强迫他停车并下了车。父亲想知道那一千美金中他们能领到多少。

警长告诉他们：“等你们抓住他再说。”于是，他们又把狗弄醒，装进另一辆车里，年轻人指给他们看了那个人下车的地点。他们放开狗，两条狗立刻冲进树林，凭着对金属准确无误的判断力，马上找到了那只装满弹药的老式双膛手枪。

“这是内战时的撞针式旧手枪，”助手说，“一根撞针已经扳下，但是没点着火药。你觉得他会用这把枪来干吗？”

“把狗放开，”警长说，“也许皮带勒得它们不舒服。”他们照做了。

现在，警犬获得了自由，半小时后便消失得无影无踪了，不是警员找不到它们，而是它们把警员弄丢了。警员和警犬隔着一条小溪和一道山脉，警员能清清楚楚地听到狗叫，不过，此时它们的叫声不再充满骄傲和自信，甚至是喜悦，或者是发出拖长的、绝望的哭号声。警员不断呼唤它们，可是显然这两只动物听不见。人声和犬吠很容易区别，但钟声般的哀鸣却好似由同一喉咙发出，仿佛两只动物正并排趴在地上一样。过了一会儿，警员们找到了警犬，发现它们果然趴在沟里。当时，它们简直像孩子一样在呜咽。警员们也只好蹲在那里，一直等到天亮，才找到返回汽车旁边的路。就这样，星期一来临了。

星期一，气温开始上升。星期二晚上，炎热的白天过后，夜晚沉闷而死寂，十分压抑。拜伦一进屋，浓烈的霉味和男人持家的气息就让他得鼻孔绷得发白。海托华走近时，肥胖的身体因为不洗澡、不换衣服散发出阵阵味道——慵懒久坐、静止不动的臃肿身子不常清洗的气味——着实令人无法忍受。拜伦走进来，像往常一样思忖着：“那是他的权利，或许那不是我的生活方式，可那属于他，是他的权利。”他记起自己一度似乎有了灵感或预感，找到了答案：“这是美德的味道，当然邪恶和有罪的人才会觉得难闻。”

拜伦和海托华再次面对面坐在书房里，中间摆着书桌和亮着的灯。拜伦仍旧坐在硬椅子上，静静地低着头。他的声音严肃而执拗，似乎在讲述一件极不愉快又令人难以置信的事情。“我要给她再找一个地方，更加只属于她一个人的地方，她可以……”

海托华端详着他垂下的脸庞。“为什么她要搬走呢？她在那儿不是挺舒服吗？身边随时有个女人可以帮忙。”拜伦没有回答。他一动不动地坐在那里，眼睛向下看，固执的脸上一片平静。海托华望着这张脸，心想：“因为发生了太多事情，太多了。这就是原因。总有人惹是生

非，超出了他的容忍限度。于是他才发现自己可以忍受一切，是的。真是太可怕了。人可以承受一切。”他注视着拜伦，又问，“比尔德太太是她离开的唯一原因吗？”

拜伦还是没有抬头，话音里仍然透着固执，平静地说：“她需要一个家一样的地方。她没有太多时间了。比尔德太太的家里绝大多数房客是男人.....临产时她需要待在安静的房间里，而不是那种该死的马夫和陪审人在大厅里来回走动的房子.....”

“我明白了，”海托华说道。他看着拜伦，“你想把她带到我这里来。”拜伦想说话，可对方还在讲。海托华的声音冷漠而平淡：“不可以，拜伦。要是这屋里还住着别的女人还好些，可惜这里空有这么多安静的房间。我是替她着想，你明白吗？不是为我自己。我不在乎别人怎么说怎么想。”

“我不是求你这个事。”拜伦没有抬头。他能够感受到对方正看着自己。他心想，他知道我也不是这个意思。他明白。他只是那么一说。我想我没有什么理由要求他和别人有不同的想法，就算对我也是如此。“我猜你应该能想到。”也许海托华的确知道。但拜伦还是没有抬头看他。他继续埋着脸，用单调呆板的声音说着；桌子那边的海托华坐得更直了，打量着对方这张瘦削、沧桑而疲惫的面孔。“我没打算把你牵扯进来，这个不关你的事。你没见过她，而且我想你永远也不会见到她。也许你都没见过那个家伙，也不知道他的一切。我只是想，或许.....”他没往下说。桌子对面的神父端坐在那里，没打算对他施以援手，只等他继续往下说。“要是一件无关紧要的事，我想我自己就可以拿主意。可要是重要的事，我觉得最好尽量听听各方的意见。不过你放心，我不会让你陷进去，也不会让你为此事担心。”

“我想我明白了。”海托华回答道。他看着拜伦低垂的脸。“我现在与世无争，”他心想，“所以即便我想插手干涉也没有用，就算我设法去干涉了，他和那个男人、那个女人（还有那个小孩）一样不会听我的话，重视我说的。”“可你告诉我说她知道那个人在这儿。”

“是的，”拜伦若有所思地说道，“当时，我没想到伤害男人、女人或孩子的事情竟然会落到我头上。可几乎在她刚到杰弗逊镇时，我就把整个事情说漏了。”

“我说的不是这个。当时你自己也不知道，我是指其他事情。关于他和.....已经三天了，她肯定知道了。不管你有没有告诉她，她到现在肯定都已经听说了。”

“克里斯默斯。”拜伦没有抬头，继续说道，“自从她问起嘴角的白色小伤疤后，我就再没多嘴。那天晚上去镇里的路上，我还一直担心她会问我。我努力琢磨些其他的话题跟她聊，这样她就没有机会再问我那件事情。我一直在想办法避免让她知道，那个家伙不仅让她陷入麻烦后溜之大吉，而且还改名换姓不让她找到。现在，等她终于要找见他时，他却成了个私酒贩子。她早知道会这样，早就明白他这个人不怎么样。”拜伦面露惊诧，一边思索一边说道，“我根本没必要向她隐瞒，面不改色地跟她扯谎。她好像早就知道我要说什么，好像知道我要对她说谎，好像她自己早就想过，即使我说了，她也不会相信。她觉得这个很正常，不过，她知道一部分真相，我是无论如何也瞒不了她的.....”拜伦笨嘴拙舌地说着，端坐在桌子对面的那个人一直盯着他，没有打算向他提供帮助，“好像她是两部分组成的，一部分明白他是个无赖，而另一部分却相信到孩子出生时，上帝会保佑他们在适当的时候全家团聚，似乎上帝在守护女人，不让她们受到男人们的伤害。如果上帝认为两部分该合体，并且可以加以比较的话，那我也用不着为这事操心了。”

“胡说。”海托华说道。他望着桌子对面那张苦行僧般固执而平静的面孔，这个人像一位隐士，久居风沙弥漫的旷野。“她要做的，唯一要做的是回到亚拉巴马州，去找她的亲人。”

“我不这样认为。”拜伦反驳道。他立即打断海托华，干脆而决绝，仿佛他一直在等对方说出这番话。“她不需要那么做。我想她用不着那么做。”不过，这时虽然他还没有抬头，但能够感受到对方的凝视。

“布—布朗知道她在杰弗逊镇吗？”

拜伦几乎在一瞬间露出了笑容。他的嘴角上扬，细微的动作像影子一样不带任何快活的意味。“他一直很忙，忙着追那一千美金。真够滑稽，就像一个不会演奏的人在用力吹喇叭一样，巴不得马上就能奏出音乐来。每隔十二或十五个小时，他就会戴上手铐，呆滞地穿过广场，很可能就算人们放出警犬赶他，他都不会离开。他的星期六晚上是在监狱度过的，他一直喋喋不休地说人家想污蔑他是克里斯默斯的帮凶，不让他得到那一千美元赏金。直到巴克·康纳来到监狱，警告布朗要是再不闭嘴、不让其他犯人睡觉的话，他就要用东西把他的嘴堵上。这下，他才不说话了。星期日晚上，警员要牵着狗出去，他不停地吵闹，人们只好把他放出来，让他跟着一起去。可是那两条狗却一直不走，他就朝两条狗大声叫喊，不停地咒骂，甚至还想揍它们，因为它们找不到一点蛛丝马迹。他又开始唠叨，说最先举报克里斯默斯的是他，他只想受到公正的待遇，直到警长把他拉到一旁，跟他说话时，他才住嘴。人们不知道警长跟他说了什么，或许是威胁要把他关进监狱里，下次不再带他出去之类的。总之，他安静了许多，搜查才得以继续。他们一直到星期一半夜才回到镇上，他仍旧十分安静，也许他实在太累了，他好长时间没有睡觉。他们说他一直想方设法跑在警犬前面，警长最后吓唬说要把他铐起来，交给助手看管他，这样他才变乖了，警犬才能在他身旁嗅出

点味道来。布朗早就需要刮脸了，他们上个星期六把他关起来的时候就该刮了，现在更是非刮不可，我猜他肯定比克里斯默斯看起来更像杀人犯。这会儿，他正在咒骂克里斯默斯，仿佛是克里斯默斯太抠门，故意不让他得到那一千美元。当晚，他们把他带回监狱，又锁了起来。今天早上，他们出去时又带着他，他们领着警犬一起出去搜索新的线索。乡亲们说，他们离开镇上之前，一直听见他又骂又叫。”

“你是说，她不知道这件事。你的意思是你一直瞒着她。你宁愿她相信他是个无赖，而不是个傻瓜，是吗？”

拜伦的脸又平静下来，一本正经，非常严肃。“我不知道，那是上周日晚上，我跟你聊天后回了家。我以为她已经睡了，可她还在客厅里坐着。她问我：‘怎么了？发生什么事了？’我没有看她，可我知道她正看着我。我告诉她，有个黑人杀了一个白人妇女。我没骗她。我猜当时我很开心，因为用不着和她撒谎。我想都没想就说‘还放火烧了她家的房子’。等我明白过来时已经晚了。我曾经指给她看过那股烟柱，我还告诉过她有两个叫布朗和克里斯默斯的家伙住在那里。当时，我能感觉到她正盯着我，就像我知道你正在看我一样，她又问：‘那个黑人叫什么名字？’那就像上帝安排他们不必问就可以从别人的谎言中找到想要的答案一样，他们不会发现自己不想要的信息，甚至他们根本不明白自己毫不知情。所以，我不确定她知道什么，不知道什么。我只知道自己没有告诉她，正是她一直寻找的那个男人揭发了凶手，现在男人被关在监狱里，除了有时候和两条狗一起跑出去，追踪那个曾经收留他的朋友外，他一直待在监狱里。我向她隐瞒了这些。”

“那你打算怎么做？她想搬到哪里去？”

“她想去那儿等他。我对她说那个人出去为警长办事了，所以我没

说谎。她早就问我那个人住在哪里，我也告诉过她。她说那里才是她应该去的地方，她要等他回来，因为那儿是他的家。她说这是他希望她做的。我不能告诉她实情，其实小木屋是这个世界上他最不愿让她看见的地方。今晚，我从刨木厂一回家，她就想去那儿。她已经收拾好包袱，拿了遮阳帽，等我回家。‘刚才我想自己去，’她说，‘但我不确定自己能不能找见路。’我说可以，不过今天太晚了，我们明天再去。她说：‘离天黑还有一个小时。到那儿不过两英里，不是吗？’我又说咱们等等，因为我得先去问一问。她就又问我：‘问谁？难道那里不是卢卡斯房子吗？’我能感觉到她的眼神，她说：‘我想你说过卢卡斯就住在那里。’她一直注视着我，说道：‘你总是和那个牧师谈论我，他是谁？’”

“你打算让她去那儿住下？”

“最好是这样。她会一个人待在那里，远离闲言碎语，直到事情了结。”

“你的意思是，她已经下定决心去那里，而且你也不会阻拦。你不想阻止她。”

拜伦没有抬头：“从某种意义上来说，那里可以算是他的房子。我猜那是他拥有的最能算得上家的地方。而他又是她的……”

“她一个人住在那里，即将生孩子。最近的几座黑人小木屋也有半英里远。”海托华看着拜伦的脸说道。

“我想过了。可以想其他办法，做点别的……”

“做什么？去了那儿你怎么保护她？”

拜伦没有马上回答，也没有抬头。他每次开口，声音都很固

执。“尊敬的牧师，一个人可以做些隐秘但不邪恶的事。不管乡亲们会怎么看。”

“拜伦，不管乡亲们怎么看，我知道你不会做非常邪恶的事。可是你怎么知道邪恶距邪恶的表象有多远？邪恶的表象和实质的分界在哪里？”

“不，”拜伦说道，他稍稍动弹了一下，好像自己正逐渐清醒过来，“我不希望如此。我想我正努力按照自己的想法做正确的事。”——“而这，”海托华心想，“是他跟我撒的第一个谎。以前，他从来没有对任何人说过谎，男人、女人，包括他自己，都没有。”他望着桌子对面的那张脸，拜伦至今都没有抬头，表情倔强而严肃。“也许还不能算是谎言，因为他自己都不知道那是谎言。”海托华想。

海托华装出一副恍然大悟的样子，说道：“喔。”不过，拉长的下巴和暗淡的眼神早已把他出卖了。“这下，事情就解决了。你把她带到那儿，带到他住的地方去，你能保证她过得舒服，没人打扰她，直到事情了结。那时，你会告诉那个人——伯奇，布朗——她在这儿。”

“那样他就会溜掉。”拜伦说。他还是没有抬头，不过他的体内好像激荡着一种胜利的狂喜，他还没有来得及阻止或掩饰这种情绪，等他想去阻止时，已经晚了。他暂时还没打算压制内心的激动之情。他背靠硬邦邦的椅子，脸上洋溢着自信和勇敢，第一次抬起头望着神父，而神父也坦然地迎接着他的凝视。

“这就是你希望他做的吗？”海托华问，他们坐在灯光下，敞开的窗户外面是炎热、沉闷、无边无际的夜晚，“想想你在做什么。你正企图插足夫妻间的事务。”

拜伦回过神来，胜利的表情荡然无存。但他仍旧直直地盯着这位年长的神父。也许他想试着寻找自己的声音，但他没有做到。“他们还没成为名正言顺的夫妻。”拜伦说道。

“她是那样想的吗？你相信她会那么说吗？”海托华和拜伦望着彼此，“哦，拜伦，拜伦。当着上帝、坚定的女人和孩子的面，别再自欺欺人了。”

“喔，他可能不会逃跑，要是他拿到那笔赏金，那笔钱的话，很可能一千美元足够他喝得烂醉，可以让他做一切事情，甚至结婚。”

“噢，拜伦，拜伦。”

“那你认为我们——我该怎么做呢？你有什么建议呢？”

“离开，离开杰弗逊镇。”他们面面对。“不，”海托华说，“你并不需要我的帮助。你已经有比我更加强有力的人在帮忙了。”

拜伦沉默了一会儿。他们目不转睛地看着对方。“谁在帮我？”

“魔鬼。”海托华回答。

“而且魔鬼也在照料他。”海托华心想。他走在回家的半路上，手臂上挎着装得满满的购物筐。“他也是，他也是。”海托华边走边想。天气非常热，身材高大的他穿着衬衣，黑色的裤子里是两条细长的腿，他长着瘦胳膊、瘦肩膀，却有一个肥大的肚子，像怀了个怪胎。衬衫是白色的，不过不是新的；衬衫领满是油腻，胡乱地系了白色的领结，胡子有两三天没刮了。他的巴拿马式帽子也很脏，帽子下面，帽子和脑袋之间露出一块隔热的脏手帕的边角。他刚去镇里进行了每周一次的购物。这个瘦高个、身材不协调的男人留着一头灰白色的短发，戴着碍事儿的

黑框眼镜，双手的指缝污黑，浑身散发出慵懒、不讲卫生的恶臭。他走进气味难闻的杂货店，他是这里的老顾客，通常都是现金结账。

“噢，他们终于找到那个黑鬼的行踪了。”老板说道。

“黑鬼？”海托华问。他正要把找给他的零钱放进口袋，一下子被惊呆了。

“那个杂—家伙，凶手。我一直都说他不正常。他不是个白人，有点不对劲。可是你又不能跟乡亲们说，直到—”

“找到他了？”海托华问。

“你说对了。哦，那傻瓜压根没想过逃出这个地方。警长全城通电捉拿他，那个黑杂种—他妈的一直就在他的鼻子底下。”

“他们已经……”他身子前倾，靠在柜台上，满满的购物筐放在下边。他感到柜台沿儿坚实而牢固地顶着他的肚子，可大地却像在微微发颤，而且正要移动。很快，大地似乎开始移动，有什么东西开始慢慢释放，不慌不忙地慢慢变化着，动作如此巧妙，连视觉都被欺骗了。昏暗的货架上，污渍斑斑的罐头，柜台后面的老板，这些其实根本没有挪动，真是令人气愤的幻觉。他心想：“不会！不会的！我不会受影响！我付出过，付出了！”

“他们还没抓到他，”老板继续说道，“不过一定会的。今天早上天不亮，警长就带着警犬去了教堂。他们和他间隔不到六小时，该死的傻瓜，那么没脑子……这说明他就是个黑鬼，就算没别的……”老板又问：“今天就要这些？”

“什么？”海托华问，“要什么？”

“这是你要买的吗？”

“是，是，买……”他开始在口袋里摸索，老板打量着他。他的手伸出后还在摸索，然后慌慌张张地压在柜台上，撒下一把硬币。老板拦住正要滚下柜台的两三枚硬币。

“这是干吗？”老板问。

“为……”海托华的手在装满东西的筐里一边摸索，一边说，“为一——”

“你已经付过钱啦。”老板诧异地望着他，“那是我找你的钱，我刚给你的。一美元剩下的零钱。”

“哦。”海托华说，“是的。我……我刚——”老板收拢硬币，递给海托华。他的手刚碰到海托华的手，就感到一阵冰凉。

“天气太热，”老板又说，“真能让人虚脱。你回家前要不要坐会儿？”可海托华显然没有听到他在说什么。老板看着他往门口挪动。他走出门外，走上大街，胳膊上挎着篮子，机械地移动，如履薄冰般小心翼翼地走着。天气炎热，热气从柏油路上蒸腾起来，氤氲罩在广场熟悉的建筑物上，形成一副明暗交替的生动画面。路人跟他打招呼，他也充耳不闻。他只顾往前走，心想，也在照料他，照料他。此刻，他走得飞快，所以当他最终拐过弯，走进自己那座死气沉沉的小空屋所在的街道时，周围死寂而空旷，他几乎已经气喘吁吁了。“是天气太热。”他的第一感觉不断向他重申、解释。可是，即使走进那条至今无人驻足、浏览、回味的街巷，他的屋子，他的避难所，早已映入眼帘，他的第一感觉仍在自欺欺人地抚慰他。“不会的，不会的，我不会受影响。”这时，好像声音更加响亮，不断耐心地申辩：“我付出过，没有讨价还价。没

人可以说我的不是。我只想要安宁；我没跟他们纠缠就付了账。”整条街道似乎都泛着波光；他一直在出汗，现在是午后，连这时的空气都让他觉得寒冷。汗水、热气、幻觉最终融合，淹没了一切合理的边界，像一场大火一样吞噬了一切：不会！不会的！

天色刚刚暗下来，海托华坐在书房里，从窗口看见拜伦走进街灯的光照里，然后又走出光影。这时，他坐在椅子上突然向前倾，这并不是因为在那个时间看到拜伦的出现而惊奇。最初，当他认出那个身影时，心想啊。我早就料到他今晚来。他无法容忍体内邪恶的存在。正在这时，他开始往前坐了一点，借着充足的灯光，他辨出了正在走过来的身影，他立刻明白自己的想法是错误的，而他一直以为自己不会错。那个人不是别人，正是拜伦。因为他早已拐进大门来。

今晚，拜伦完全变了个人，他的步伐、举止说明了这一点。海托华的身子前倾，自言自语，好像他已经学会了傲慢，或者反抗。拜伦昂首挺胸，快步走来；海托华突然大声说道：“他已经做完了。他迈出了第一步。”海托华靠在昏暗的窗口，舌头啧啧地惊叹着，望着那个身影迅速穿过窗外的灯光，朝门廊走来，走到门口。接下来的一刻，海托华听到了他的脚步声和敲门声。“他没有对我讲，”海托华心想，“我得听一听，让他自己说吧。”说着，他穿过房间，在桌子旁边停下来，点亮灯，然后朝前门走去。

“是我，牧师。”拜伦说。

“我知道是你。”海托华说，“尽管这次你踏上第一级台阶时，没有踌躇。你每周日晚上都会来我这里，拜伦，但只有今晚，你进屋时没有在第一级台阶上犹豫。”拜伦的拜访总以这样的方式开场：海托华语调略带傲慢，但轻松又温暖，让拜伦感觉十分舒服；而拜访者迟缓、淳朴

的拘谨正显示出他的彬彬有礼。有时，海托华似乎觉得拜伦好像披着风帆一样，只需他一口气就可以将拜伦吸入屋内。

然而，这次还没等海托华说完，拜伦早已走进屋来。拜伦带着新生的、介于自信和傲慢的神情，立刻走进来。“我猜，比起往日，今天毫不迟疑的我会令你更加生厌。”拜伦说道。

“这是期盼还是威胁，拜伦？”

“哦，我没想让它成为一种威胁。”拜伦回答。

“啊，”海托华说，“换句话说，你不给他以任何希望。哦，至少我早有警觉。你一出现在街灯里时，我便有了预感。不过，就算以前觉得不合适开口，幸好你要来跟我讲你做了些什么。”说着，两人走向书房门口。拜伦停下脚步，转头仰望着对方。

“那么，你知道了。”他说，“你已经听说了。”这时，尽管他的头没有动，但他已经不再望着对方的脸。“喔，”他说，“哦，每个人都有说话的自由。女人也一样。但我想知道是谁告诉了你。我不觉得羞耻，我也无意向你隐瞒。能说的时候我就来亲口跟你说了。”

书房里亮着灯，他们站在门外。这时，海托华发现拜伦的胳膊上挎着几个包裹，看起来里面装着杂货。“什么？”海托华说，“你要来告诉我什么？——先进来。或许我确实早就知道了，但我想看你亲口讲出来时的表情。我也先警告你，拜伦。”他们走进亮灯的房间。包裹里面的确是杂货：海托华自己也买过许多这类东西，所以他很清楚那是什么。他说：“坐吧。”

“不了，”拜伦说，“我不能待太久。”他严肃地站在那里，满怀心

事，仍然一副悲天悯人的表情，坚定却不敢肯定，自信却没有把握：这种表情好像一个人将要做什么事情，对他来说很重要的人却无法理解，也不赞成，但他明白自己是对的，就像他明白朋友永远不会那么想。他说：“你不会喜欢的，但没办法。我希望你也能这样想，不过我猜你不会，而且我觉得只能这么做。”

两个人又在书桌旁坐下来。海托华严肃地望着拜伦，问道：“你做了什么？拜伦。”

拜伦的声音与以往不同：简略、扼要，每个字都有深意，毫不含糊。“今天傍晚我把她带到那里。我已经收拾好，并且打扫干净，她已经住下来了。她希望这样。这是他拥有的和将来拥有的最像家的地方。所以我想她有权利使用，尤其主人现在也不再使用了。你或许会说他被拘留在什么地方。我知道你不喜欢这样。你能说出多种理由，恰当的理由。你会说那不是他的木屋，不能让她住。也许是这么回事，但这个镇上，无论男女，没人可以说她不能住那里。你会说按她现在的状况，身边应该有个女的。对，那儿有一个黑人妇女，上了年纪，有见识，距她不到二百码远。她不用从床上或椅子上起身就能叫她。你会说可她不是个白种女人。我想知道她能从杰弗逊镇的白种女人那里得到什么。孩子马上要出生，她来杰弗逊镇落脚不到一周，没等和女人们聊十分钟，人家就会知道她还没结婚。只要那个该死的无赖待在她能经常听人说起他的地方，她就结不了婚。那时她又能从白人太太那里得到多少帮助？她们会让她有床睡，有墙壁遮风挡雨吗？我没别的意思。我觉得要是有人说她落到这个地步活该，那也没错。可孩子不能选择。即使选择了，我敢说任何可怜的孩子都得面对这个世界，应该得到——更多——更好——但我猜你明白我的意思。我想，你甚至也会这么说。”桌子对面的海托华注视着拜伦，他语调平稳，极力克制自己的情绪，除了谈到陌生、模糊的

事外，他没有一次卡壳或忘词。“第三个理由。一个白种女人孤身在外，你不喜欢这样，那是你最不喜欢的。”

“噢，拜伦，拜伦。”

拜伦的声音变得固执起来，但他仍旧静静地昂着头。“我没有和她共处一室。我有帐篷，离她不近也不远。她需要时，我就能听见。我还给她上了门闩。她们随时可以出入，并且能看见我在帐篷里。”

“噢，拜伦，拜伦。”

“我知道你和大多数人想得不一樣。你在思考。我知道你更能明白，就算她不一——就算不是为——我知道你那样说是因为你知道别人会有看法。”

海托华又一次像一尊东方偶像般端坐在那里，胳膊平行放在椅子的扶手上。“去吧，拜伦，去吧。现在，马上，离开这里，离开这个可怕的地方，糟糕的地方。你可以说你已经学会了去爱；但我要告诉你，你刚刚才懂得了希望。对，希望。对于希望而言，对象是谁并不重要，甚至对于你自己都不重要。最终只有一种结果，你选择的道路只有一种结果：罪恶或婚姻。你将拒绝邪恶。上帝啊，宽恕我吧。你终将结婚或孤身一人。你会坚持要和她结婚，还要说服她。也许你已经这么做了，只要她知道就会接受；否则，她不会安然待在这里，而不是想办法去见她专程来找的那个男人。我不能告诉你去选择罪恶，因为你不会那么做，只会恨我，并且还会把恨意传递给她。所以我说，拜伦，现在就走，马上就走。现在转过你的脸去，不要回头。不要像现在这样。拜伦。”

他们望着对方。“我早知道你不喜欢我这样做。”拜伦说，“我觉得我没像客人那样坐下来是对的。可我没料到会这样。你竟然也会反对一

个遭受不公待遇和背叛的女人——”

“有孩子的女人是不会遭遇背叛的；给一个母亲做丈夫，不管是不是父亲，总归是妻子的不忠。至少给你自己十分之一的机会，拜伦，如果你非要结婚，有的是单身女人，姑娘和女孩。这样不公平，你竟然牺牲自己，为一个已经做过选择并且现在要推翻那个选择的女人。这是不对的，不公平。上帝安排婚姻时，并没有这么打算。什么安排？明明是女人在掌控婚姻。”

“牺牲？牺牲我自己？在我看来，牺牲——”

“不是为她。对于丽娜·格罗夫来说，世界上有两种男人，他们数不胜数：卢卡斯·伯奇和拜伦·邦奇。但是丽娜不可以，所有女人都不可以拥有两个男人。没有谁可以。有许多好女人受到酒鬼之类凶狠的男人的摧残，但不管好女人还是坏女人，她们遭受的摧残能和男人被好女人折磨一样吗？告诉我，拜伦。”

他俩像早已在潜意识里排斥对方意见一样，没有气愤，反而平静地交流着，给对方思考彼此话语的余地。“我想你是对的。”拜伦说，“至少，我不能说你不对。不过你也不能说我是错的，即使我不对。”

“不。”海托华说。

“即使我错了，”拜伦说，“所以，我觉得我该说晚安了。”他又轻声说了一句：“从这儿得走很远。”

“是的，”海托华说，“我自己也走着去过那儿，偶尔去，大概有三英里。”

“两英里，”拜伦说，“哦。”他转过身去。海托华坐着没有动。拜伦

重新提了提至今都没有放下的包袱。“我得说晚安了，”他一边说一边朝门口走去，“我会回来看你的，很快。”

“好的，”海托华说，“有什么我可以做的吗？你需要什么？床单之类的东西？”

“谢谢，我想她有好多。那儿已经有些了。谢谢。”

“要是发生什么事情，你会告诉我吗？如果孩子——你找好医生了吗？”

“我会安排的。”

“可你找到了吗？预约了吗？”

“我会安排好一切。我也会告诉你。”

说完，他便走了。海托华又在窗口望着拜伦走出去，走上那条街道，朝小镇边缘走去。他拿着纸袋包装的食物，踏上两英里的步行路。拜伦大步流星地走出了海托华的视线，这样的步伐对于风烛残年、久坐不动的老人来说，简直望尘莫及。海托华靠在窗口，在八月的暑气中全然不知自己室内的味道。这种气味毫无生机，像一个即将走向坟墓的人，肥胖的躯体散发出干燥、陈腐的亚麻布味道——他侧耳倾听着脚步声，明知已经听不见了，可他仿佛仍然能听到——心想：“上帝保佑他。上帝帮助他吧。”心想，年轻吧，年轻吧，没有什么可以比得上年轻，世上再没有什么可以像年轻一样有活力。他暗自思忖道：“我不能丢掉祈祷的习惯。”这时，他听不见脚步声了，只听见无数连续的虫鸣声。他靠在窗口，想起自己在年轻的时候，年少的他热爱黑暗，喜欢深夜在树林中漫步或独坐。那时，大地和树干变得真切而荒凉，令人惊喜而恐

惧，又喜又怕。他感到害怕，他恐惧却又热衷于恐惧。后来有一天，他进了神学院，发现自己不再恐惧。仿佛那里的一扇门已经关上，他不再害怕黑暗。他只是憎恨，想逃离黑暗，逃到围墙中，人造的光亮中。“是的，”他思索着，“我不应该让自己丢掉祈祷的习惯。”他在窗口转过身来，站在书架前不断寻找，直到找见一本想要的书。这是丁尼生¹的作品，书角已经卷曲，他在神学院时就已经拥有了这本书。他坐在灯下，打开书。没过多久，优美的语言开始涌动，枯木开始焕发生机，干涸的心田开始滋润，宁静而迅速。这种感觉胜过祈祷时搜肠刮肚的思索，好似在大教堂倾听阉伶的吟唱，能否听得懂对他来说并不重要。

¹丁尼生是英国维多利亚时代最受欢迎及最具特色的诗人。

“小木屋里有人，”助手对警长说，“不是藏那儿，是住那里的。”

警长说：“去看看。”

助手走了又回来。

“是个女人。年轻女人。看上去她要决定在那儿住一段时间。拜伦·邦奇睡在野外的一顶帐篷里，距小木屋就像邮局到这儿那么远。”

“拜伦·邦奇？”警长说，“那个女人是谁？”

“我不知道。是个陌生人，一个年轻女人。她跟我说了好多。我刚进门，她就开始说话，像发表演讲一样。她好像经常诉说，都已经成了一种习惯。我估计她是从亚拉巴马州的什么地方来的，到这儿来找她的丈夫。那个人先来这儿找工作，好像过了一段时间，她才出来找的他。路上的乡亲们告诉她说他在这儿。正说着，拜伦进来了，说他可以告诉我一切，说他本打算来告诉你的。”

“拜伦·邦奇。”警长重复道。

“是，”助手说，“她快生孩子了。很快。”

“孩子？”警长问。他看了一眼助手。“从亚拉巴马州来？从哪儿来都行。你别告诉我跟拜伦·邦奇有关。”

“我没想多说。”助手说，“我没说那是拜伦的。至少拜伦没说那是他的孩子。我只是给你讲他告诉我的一切。”

“哦，”警长说，“我明白了。那她为什么在那儿？是其中一个家伙的。克里斯默斯的，是吗？”

“不，拜伦是那么说的。为了不让那个女人听见，他把我领到外边去说话。他说他本打算来向你报告的。那是布朗的孩子。不过，他的名字不叫布朗，叫卢卡斯·伯奇。拜伦说布朗或伯奇把她丢在亚拉巴马州，说等他安顿好了就去接她。可她快生了，还没有他的一点消息，也不知道他在哪儿，在干吗。于是她决定不再等他。她步行出发，一路打听有没有人知道有个叫卢卡斯·伯奇的家伙。她随处搭车，逢人就问人家是不是认识他。过了一段时间，有人告诉她，在杰弗逊镇的刨木厂里有个叫伯奇或邦奇什么的。于是，她搭了辆马车到了这里。当时是星期六，我们正在处理那件凶杀案。她去了刨木厂，发现那个人是邦奇而不是伯奇。拜伦说他无意中说出她丈夫就在杰弗逊镇。后来，在她的追问下，他只好说了布朗的住所，但他没有说布朗或者邦奇在这个谋杀案件中和克里斯默斯纠缠不清。他只说布朗外出办事了，我想这也能算是在办事。我从没见过有人比他更想得到那一千美元，并且愿意为此遭那么多罪。后来，她说布朗的房子肯定就是卢卡斯·伯奇答应为她准备的住所，所以她决定搬到那里去等，等布朗忙完了会去找她的。拜伦说他没办法阻拦她，因为他不想说出有关布朗的真相。从说话方式来看，他已经跟她撒了谎。他说他原本打算早点来告诉你，可你发现得太快，他还没把她安顿好。”

“卢卡斯·伯奇？”警长说道。

“我自己也觉得有些奇怪，”助手说，“你打算怎么办？”

“不知道，”警长说，“我估计他们在那儿也没什么坏处，而且那也不是我的房子，不能叫她搬出去。就像拜伦跟她说的，伯奇、布朗

或什么的，他将有很长一段时间会忙个不停了。”

“你打算跟布朗说她的事吗？”

“我想不会。”警长说，“不关我的事。我没有兴趣关心他扔在亚拉巴马州或什么地方的妻子们。我关心的是，他好像自打来了杰弗逊镇，就找到他的‘丈夫’了。”

助手开始狂笑。“我猜也是这么回事。”他边说边认真地思索，“要是拿不到那笔钱，他准会气死。”

“我相信他不会。”警长说。

星期三凌晨三点，一个黑人骑着没装马鞍的骡子进了城。他来到警长家里，叫醒警长。他从二十英里外的一座黑人教堂直接赶来，那儿正在举行晚间布道会。之前的傍晚，大家正在唱赞美诗，突然从教堂后面传来一声巨响，会众转身看见门口站着一个男人。门没锁，或者即使关上过，显然也已被人抓住门闩猛地把门摔在了墙上。于是，这一巨响像枪声一样冲进会众的齐声高唱中。接着，这个人迅速走进过道，唱诗即刻停止。他朝布道坛走去，牧师正靠在那里，举着手张着嘴。这时，会众发现那个人是白人。昏暗拥挤的教堂里点着两盏灯，这更加剧了膨胀的感觉，人们无法立即辨认出他。直到他走在过道中间时，他们才发现他的肤色并不黑，一个女人开始尖叫，后面的人们立刻起身，开始往门口跑。坐在忏悔席上的另一个女人早已处于歇斯底里的状态，她突然站起来转身，翻着白眼，尖叫道：“魔鬼！是撒旦！”说完，她开始奔跑，没头没脑地乱撞，正好撞到他身上。他把她推倒在地，但他并没有止步，而是踏着她继续向前走去，把一张张目瞪口呆、厉声尖叫的面孔甩在身后，他径直走上布道坛，一把抓住了牧师。

“直到那会儿，都没人敢阻拦，”报信人说，“事情发生得太突然，没人知道他是谁，他想干吗，大家一无所知。女人们大喊大叫，他奔上讲坛，扼住彼登伯雷兄弟的咽喉，想把他拖下讲坛。我们看见彼登伯雷兄弟正和他说着什么，想安抚他平静下来，可他一把推开彼登伯雷兄弟，开始扇耳光。女人们大喊大叫，你根本听不见彼登伯雷兄弟在说什么，光能看见他一直没有还手，任由那个人抽打。后来，一些老执事走上前去，想劝他，于是，他放开彼登伯雷兄弟，猛地转过身把七十岁的汤普森老爹干脆利落地推进了忏悔席。然后，他弯腰抓起椅子，朝众人挥舞，直到人们给他让出一条道来。乡亲们还在尖叫，试图跑出教堂。于是，他转过身，又跑到讲台上，彼登伯雷兄弟刚从另一边爬出来。那个家伙站在那里——他浑身是泥，裤子和衬衫上都是泥，黑乎乎的下巴长满了胡子——像牧师一样举起双手，开始咒骂，朝乡亲们大声叫喊，他咒骂上帝的声音比女人们的尖叫都响亮。这时，一些人想拦住罗兹·汤普森，他是汤普森老爹的外孙，个子有六英尺高，手里拿着明晃晃的剃刀大叫：‘我要杀了他，放开我，乡亲们，他推倒了我外祖父。我要杀了他，放开我，请让我走！’乡亲们都在努力往外冲，奔跑着涌到走廊，挤在门口。那个人站在布道坛上还在咒骂上帝，男人们一直往后拽罗兹·汤普森，可罗兹还在一个劲儿地祈求人们放开他。不过，大伙儿还是把罗兹拉了出去，我们退回到灌木丛中，那个人还在布道坛上大喊大叫。过了一会儿，他停了下来，我们看见他走到门口，站在那里。人们不得不又一次拉住罗兹。他肯定听到了大伙儿拉扯罗兹的嘈杂声，因为他开始哈哈大笑。他站在门口放声大笑，接着又开始咒骂。我们看见他抓起一条板凳腿，朝后扔过去。我们听见第一盏灯咣当一声碎了，教堂暗下来，接着另一盏灯也碎了，教堂全都黑了。我们再也看不见他了。拼命拉着罗兹的人们一阵骚动，他们叫嚷道：‘拦住他！拦住他！抓住他！抓住他！’接着，有人喊：‘他跑了！’我们听见罗兹跑回教堂，瓦因执事对我说：‘罗兹会杀了他的，赶快骑上骡子去找警长。把你看到的

一切告诉他。’长官，没人招惹他，”黑人继续说，“我们压根儿不知道他叫什么名字。以前从来没见过他。我们想把罗兹拉回来，可罗兹太高了，那个人撞倒了罗兹七十岁的外祖父，罗兹手里拿着明晃晃的剃刀，根本不在乎会伤着谁，只想杀出一条路，冲回那个白人所在的教堂。上帝作证，我们真的尽力拉罗兹了。”

这就是黑人所说的一切，因为他只知道这些。他说完就马上离开了；他并不知道，就在他讲述的时候，黑人罗兹的脑袋被砸伤了，正不省人事地躺在附近的一座小木屋里。当时他冲回教堂，里面一片漆黑。克里斯默斯正站在门口，用一条凳腿砸向他的脑袋。克里斯默斯听不见奔跑的脚步声，非常残忍地用力砸下去，那个刚冲进门口的黑影还没来得及停步，便倒在打翻的长凳中间，再也不能动弹。克里斯默斯一刻不停地冲出去，站在外面，轻松而镇静，他的手里还抓着一一条凳腿，十分冷酷，连呼吸都那么轻微。他非常冷静，没有一点汗，冰冷的夜色照在他身上。教堂的院子是一块坚硬的新月形土地，四周围满了灌木丛和树林。他知道灌木丛里全是黑人，他能感觉到那些眼睛。“看什么看，”他心想，“难道不知道你们看不见我吗？”他深吸一口气，发现自己正好奇地掂量着凳腿，好像在找平衡一样，仿佛以前从没接触过这个东西。“明天我得刻个记号，”他一边想，一边小心翼翼地把凳腿靠在身旁的墙上，然后从衬衣里掏出一支香烟和一根火柴。他把火柴划着时停住了，黄色的火焰微微跳动着，他站在那里，脑袋稍稍转了一下，他听到了马蹄声，他清清楚楚地听见马蹄声正在迅速消失。“是骡子，”他说道，声音不高，“要给镇上带去好消息了。”他点着香烟，扔掉火柴，站在那里开始抽烟，他能感觉到黑人们的眼睛正盯着香烟细小的火光。尽管他一直站在那里，直到抽完那根烟，可他一直都很警觉。他背靠墙，右手再次拿起凳腿。他把香烟彻底抽完，然后把闪烁的烟头用力朝灌木丛扔去，他能感觉到黑人们正蜷缩在那里。“抽根烟屁股吧，崽子

们。”他说道。寂静的夜里，他的声音突然而响亮。蹲在灌木丛中的黑人们观察着烟头一闪一闪地落在地上，燃烧了一阵儿。但当他离开时，人们并没有看见，也不知道他上了哪条路。

第二天早晨八点，警长带着队员和警犬赶了过来。他们立刻展开搜捕，但警犬什么都没找到。教堂里一片狼藉，看不到一个黑人。警员们走进教堂，静静地看着残局。然后，他们走出来，警犬马上闻到了什么，不过没等他们行动，一个助手发现教堂侧面的木板缝里塞着一张纸。显然，这是用手塞进去的，助手打开纸条，这是把空烟盒撕开、铺平的一片纸。纸片的干净一面上有铅笔写的字句，不规则的笔迹像是出自一只不常写字的手，或是摸黑写成的，内容并不长。纸条是写给警长的，指名道姓、不堪入耳——一个短语——没有署名。“我没有告诉过你吗？”队伍中有人说道。这个人也没有刮胡子，浑身是泥，反倒像他们至今还没捕获的猎物一样。他板着脸，略有些狂躁、绝望，还有些愤怒，声音沙哑，似乎最近一直在兀自叫喊，说个不停。“我一直都在跟你说！我说过的！”

警长平淡而冷漠地问：“跟我说什么？”他手里捏着铅笔字纸条，冷冷地盯着说话人，“你什么时候说过？说什么？”这个人望着警长，非常气愤，简直到了容忍的极限。助手看着他，心想：“要是他得不到那笔赏金的话，准会气死。”布朗张大嘴巴，却说不出话来，带着迷茫而难以置信的表情盯着警长。“我也警告过你，”警长的声音单调而沉着，“要是你不喜欢我的追踪方式，你大可回镇里去等。那儿有你待的好地方。凉快，你大可不必在这儿烤太阳。我没跟你说过吗？你说！”

布朗闭上嘴，转过脸去，好像很努力才做到；他好像费了好大劲儿，才挤出干巴巴的一句“嗯”。

警长迟缓地转过身，把纸条揉成一团。“要是你还能有点记性的话，”他说，“那你最好别忘了。”初升的太阳下，他们安静而专注地围成一圈。“你们谁想知道的话，只有上帝才知道。”有人马上笑了一声。“闭嘴，”警长喝道，“继续搜。巴菲，带上狗出发。”

两条狗跑开了，脖子上还套着皮带。它们很快就找到了线索。因为有露水，所以很容易找到踪迹。显而易见，逃亡者并没打算要掩盖这些痕迹，警长一行甚至能看见他跪在泉边喝水时手和膝盖的印迹。“我还没见过哪个杀人犯比追踪他的人更精明，”助手说，“不过，这该死的蠢货绝没有想到我们会使用警犬。”

“自从星期天开始，我们每天都放出警犬找他，”警长说，“可到现在都没抓到他。”

“那是踪迹不明显，我们到今天才找到新鲜的踪迹，但他最终还是露出了马脚，我们今天就能抓他。说不定中午前就能。”

“我估计得等着瞧啦。”警长说。

“你瞧，”助手说，“这个踪迹笔直地通向一条铁路，差不多我自己跟着就能找到。看这儿，你甚至都能看见他的脚印。该死的笨蛋甚至都没想过要上那条路，走在人们踩踏的尘土中，那样警犬就嗅不出他的味道啦。不到十点，两条狗就会找到最终的脚印。”

警犬的确找到了。这时，脚印猛地向右拐去。他们顺着脚印来到一条路上，跟在急切搜索的两条警犬后面。走了不远，两条狗冲向路旁的一条小道，这条小道从附近棉花田里的棉花房延伸下来，警犬开始扯着绳子，一边转圈一边狂叫，声音响亮而柔和，一边狂吠，一边还兴奋地跳跃。“嗨，该死的傻瓜！”助手说，“他坐在这儿休息过，这是他的脚

印：胶皮鞋跟儿。他正在前方不到一英里处的地方。伙计们，跟上！”一行人继续前进，警犬绷紧皮带一路狂叫。警员们开始小跑。警长转身看着没刮胡子的布朗。

“这会儿该是你冲到前面抓他的时候，然后你就能得到那一千美元啦。”他说，“你怎么不去？”

布朗没有说话。他俩都没力气说话了，尤其他们跟在两条狗后面跑了一英里后。两条狗还在拉紧绳子叫着，从大路上拐下来，顺着一条上山的小路爬了四分之一的时候，进了玉米地。这时，两条狗不再叫唤，但一有风吹草动便会更加急迫；现在，追踪的人们开始奔跑。高过头顶的玉米地那边有座黑人小木屋。“他在那儿，”警长一边说，一边掏出手枪，“注意，伙计们。他手里有枪。”

抓捕行动巧妙而妥帖：房子周围埋伏着拿枪的警员，警长身后跟着助手。他虽然肥胖，但却能敏捷而迅速地紧贴着木屋的墙壁，从任何窗口都看不到他。他一直贴着墙根儿绕过拐角，一脚踹开房门，举起手枪冲进木屋。屋里有一个黑人小孩，孩子赤条条地坐在灶台的冷灰上吃着东西，看上去屋里只有孩子一个人。但过了一会儿，一个女人出现在里屋门口，瞠目结舌，手里的铁锅正要往下掉。她穿了一双男鞋，搜查队员一眼就认出那是逃犯的鞋子。她告诉他们，天快亮时，她在路上碰到一个白人男子，要跟她换鞋子。当时，她正穿着她丈夫的一双翻毛短靴。警长听完后问道：“就在棉花房那边，是吗？”她说是的。警长回到他的队员身边，走近拴着皮带的狂躁的警犬。他低头看着两条狗，队员正要张嘴问他，却没有说话，只是看着他。他们看到警长把手枪放回口袋，转身重重地踢了每只狗一脚，说道：“把这些该死的东西带回镇里。”

然而，警长毕竟有经验。他和手下都清楚必须回到棉花房去，他相信克里斯默斯一直藏在那里，尽管他知道等他们回去时，克里斯默斯就不在那里了。他们花了好长时间才把警犬从木屋旁拉开，所以，在炎热的十点钟，他们谨慎地围在棉花房周围，悄悄拔出手枪，准备给对方出其不意的打击。他们这样做只是按规矩办事，并没有抱任何特别的希望，最后发现木屋里只有一只惊恐万分的田鼠。警长让手下把狗拖走，它们刚才拒不靠近棉花房，现在它们又不愿离开大路，绷紧皮带、倚着项圈，一齐掉头朝向刚被拉开的通往木屋的大路。两个人用尽全力才把它们拉回来，可一松开皮带，它们马上就一齐绕过棉花房，穿过逃犯在棉花房阴影里，沾满露水的高草中留下的足迹，奔回大路，后面的两个人被拽着跑了足足有五十码远，才总算把皮带绕到一棵小树上，将警犬拴牢。这回，警长倒没有踢它们。

搜捕的警报和嘈杂声、喧嚣与骚动终于平息了，消失在他的耳畔。正如警长所料，人和狗经过时，他不在棉花房里。他只在那里停留了系鞋带的工夫：那双黑皮鞋，带黑人味道的黑皮鞋，看上去像是用钝斧头劈开的铁矿石。他低头打量着这双粗糙笨拙的鞋子，难看而且有些变形。他从牙缝中蹦出一句“哈”，好像看见自己最终被追捕的白人逼近了黑暗的深渊，而这个深渊等了他三十年，一直想把他吞噬。现在他终于进来了，上涨的水流已经无可避免地没过了他的脚踝。

黎明时分，天刚刚亮，苍白孤寂的短暂时刻被鸟儿轻柔、试探性的鸣叫所唤醒。吸入体内的空气像一泓清泉。他慢慢地深吸一口气，每次呼吸都与晦暗和苍白融在一起，变成一种孤寂和宁静，从来不曾愤怒或绝望过。“这才是我想要的，”他心中开始暗自惊讶，“就是这样，三十年了，似乎三十年来我的要求并不高。”

从星期三开始，他就没怎么睡过觉。又一个星期三来了，又走了，

但他并不知道。当他想到时间时，仿佛三十年来他的生活一直井然有序，像栅栏一样有名有数。一天晚上，他睡着了。醒来后，发现自己站在栅栏外面。从星期五晚上开始逃亡时，他还习惯性地数着日子。有一次，他在草垛里躲了一整夜，醒来时正好看到农舍的苏醒。天还没亮，厨房里慢慢亮起黄色的灯光。接着，在灰蒙蒙的暗夜里，他听到了斧头缓缓劈柴的声音，还有其他动静，男人的动静和附近畜棚里牛群苏醒的声音混在一起。然后，他又闻到了炊烟的气息，热腾腾的饭食，他开始一遍一遍地自言自语：我一直没吃东西自从我一直没吃东西自从.....试图去回忆，自打星期五在杰弗逊镇的饭店吃过晚饭后，过了多少天。他一直躺在那里，等到那个男人吃过饭去地里干活儿。这时，星期几似乎比食物更重要。因为当男人们终于离开，他从草垛上下来，走在平和的淡黄色阳光中，走进厨房时，他根本没有讨要食物。他本打算要口饭吃，也能感觉到鲁莽的语言在脑海里打转，就在他的嘴边。这时，一个瘦削、坚韧的妇女走到门口望着他，他能看出她眼中的震惊、恐惧和认出他的眼神。他心想，她认得我，也听到消息了。他听见自己的嘴巴平静地问道：“你能告诉我今天星期几吗？我只想知道今天星期几。”

“星期几？”她和他一样面容憔悴，身材瘦削，一脸不知疲倦、迫不得已的神情。她说：“你给我滚开！今天星期二！滚开！要不然我就叫我男人了！”

门“砰”的一声关上时，他轻声说了一句“谢谢”。然后，他拔腿就跑。他不记得自己为什么要跑，想了一会儿，他觉得是为了奔向某个目的地而奔跑的，奔跑太突然了，以至于脑海里觉得根本没必要去回想原因。就连迈开大步时，他都觉得双脚仿佛在缓缓飘移，踩在地上也没有坚硬的感觉，有心无力地飘离地面，直到跌倒为止。他没有被什么东西绊倒，只是全身倒地，好一阵子他都以为自己的双脚仍然踩在地上，一

直在跑。然而，他倒下了，仰面朝天躺在犁过的地头的浅沟里。这时，他突然说道：“我想我最好还是起来。”当他坐起身时，发现太阳已经升到了半空，阳光从相反的方向照在他身上。起初，他相信自己只是转了个身，接着他才意识到现在已是傍晚时分，而他奔跑倒地是在早晨。尽管他似乎觉得自己是立马坐起来的，但实际上现在已经傍晚了。“我肯定睡着了，”他心想，“我已经睡了六个多小时。我肯定是不知不觉地跑着跑着就睡着的。一定是这样。”

他丝毫不觉得奇怪。时间和明暗交替的空间早已失去了规律。现在既可以是白天，也可以是晚上，似乎一切都在转瞬之间，眼皮开合之间，毫无征兆。他永远也不知道二者过渡的时间，他发现自己睡着了，却不记得曾经躺下过；他发现自己正在行走，却不记得什么时候醒来过。有时，他似乎觉得，无论在草垛、沟渠，还是在废弃的屋顶下，一夜睡眠后随之而来的都是另一个夜晚，不曾间隔一个白昼，也不曾看见光线流逝；白天一个接一个地飞速流转，不曾间隔一个夜晚或停歇片刻，仿佛太阳从未落下，也未曾落到地平线找到来时的路，就已经升在了半空中。当他在行走中睡去，或在泉边喝水入睡时，他永远也不知道眼睛是否会在下一次的阳光或星光中睁开。

有一段时间，他一直处于饥饿状态。他搜集腐烂、虫蛀的水果来充饥；有时他会爬进地里，掰些成熟的玉米棒来啃，像土豆打磨机一样用力咀嚼。他一直想着吃饭，想象饭菜和食物。他会想到三年前厨房餐桌上为他准备的饭菜，他会重新回味，当时故作镇静地向后挥舞手臂，将一盘盘饭菜砸向墙壁，顿觉揪心的懊恼、沉痛的悔恨。后来有一天，他不再感到饥饿。这一天平静而突然地来临，他觉得清爽而宁静，但他知道自己必须吃东西。他捡拾烂水果充饥，索然无味地咀嚼硬邦邦的玉米棒。他会吃一大堆这样的东西，然后会出现严重的腹泻和拉血的后果，

但是他很快就会重新陷入对食物的需求和渴望中。他不是渴望食物，而是急需进食。他努力回想最后一顿香喷喷的热饭，他能想起、感受到某个地方的房子或是小木屋，白人或是黑人：他记不清了。然后，他会静静地坐在那儿，憔悴、病态、满是胡楂儿的脸上浮现出一种专注而困惑的神情，他能嗅出黑人的味道。他一动不动地坐在泉边，背靠一棵树，头向后仰，双手放在大腿上，面容疲惫而安详。他闻到、也看见了黑人的饭菜，黑人的食物。那是在一间屋子里，他记不清自己怎么到了那儿，但整个房间迅速充满了惊愕，仿佛人们突然感到了恐惧，所以刚刚逃走。他坐在桌子旁边等待，脑子一片空白，周围只剩下逃走后的寂静。接着，食物突然出现在他面前，好像有一双长长的黑手，灵活地放下饭菜后也迅速消失了。他好像能听到，周围有黑人在惊恐、悲痛地哀号，交织着咀嚼和吞咽的声音，但又比叹息声还要低沉。“当时是在一间小木屋里，”他回忆着，“人们十分害怕，害怕他们的兄弟。”

当晚，他的脑海涌动着奇怪的东西。他躺下正准备睡觉，却毫无睡意，似乎根本没有睡觉的必要，就像胃口里默许要进食，可它却又不愿或不想吃。奇怪的是，他找不出理由和动机，也想不明白。他发现自己正在努力计算这个星期的时间，仿佛现在他终于有了真实而迫切的需要，为了某个目的、某个特定的日子或行为，一定要弄清楚过了多少天，以免功亏一篑或行动过头。他陷入昏迷的状态，睡觉成了大脑的一种需要。当他在黎明苍白的露珠中醒来时，一切都很明确，不再有任何异样。

黎明时分，天刚刚亮。他站起身，蹲在泉边，从兜里掏出剃刀、牙刷和肥皂。不过，现在天色太暗，看不清自己的脸在水中的倒影，于是他坐在泉边，一直等到能看清为止。然后，他才耐心地把冰冷坚硬的水扑在脸上。他的手在颤抖，尽管急需刮脸，可手上却软弱无力。于是，

他只好强迫自己振作起来。剃刀不够锋利，他试着在靴帮上磨了磨，但露水浸湿的靴皮像生铁一样坚硬。他勉强开始刮脸，手却一直在颤抖，刮得十分艰难，他把自己割伤了三四回。因此，他只好用冷水来止血。然后，他收好剃须工具，开始往前走。他选择了笔直的线路向前走去，而没有选择好走的山路。走了不远，他便来到一条大路上，在路边坐下来。这条路非常安静，路的两头都很安静，灰白的尘土中只有罕见的车辙和骡马的蹄印，偶尔还有人的脚印，他坐在路旁，没有穿外套，一度洁白的衬衫和有折痕的裤子也都沾满泥点，憔悴的脸上残留着簇簇胡楂儿和斑斑血渍。太阳升起来，暖暖地照在他身上，身心疲惫的他感到一阵寒冷，微微打着寒战。两个黑人小孩从路的拐弯处走过来。他们根本没看到克里斯默斯，直到他开口说话时，两个孩子被惊呆了，翻着白眼望着他。他又问道：“今天星期几？”孩子们一言不发，死死地瞪着他。他摇了摇头，说：“去吧。”于是，孩子们赶紧离开了。他坐在那里没有看他们一眼，显然他在盯着孩子们站过的地方发呆，好像他们刚从躯壳里钻出来一样。他并没有注意到，孩子们早已吓得飞奔起来。

过了一会儿，太阳渐渐温暖了他，他坐在那里不知不觉地睡了一觉。因为当他有意识时，听到了木头和金属发出的嘈杂的叮叮当当声，还有嘚嘚的马蹄声。他一睁眼，便看见马车正快速转过弯，车上的人回头望着他，马夫起起落落地挥动着鞭子，马车很快便不见踪影了。“他们也认出了我，”他心想，“他们，白种女人，那天给我饭吃的黑鬼们。要是他们愿意，谁都可以抓住我。他们都希望我被抓住，可他们都先跑开了。他们都想抓到我，那到时候我就站出来说我在这儿，是的，我会说我就在这儿我已经厌倦了厌倦逃亡厌倦像拎鸡蛋一样提着性命过日子。他们都跑了。似乎抓我还得遵守什么规定，而且要是那样抓我，就不合规矩了。”

于是，他又返回灌木丛中。这次，他十分警惕，没等马车出现，他便听见了声音，他没有露面，直到马车出现在他面前时，他才出来。这时，他走上前说了一句“嘿！”马车猛地停下来，黑人车夫大惊失色，脑袋也猛地晃了一下；他的脸上浮现着认出他的恐惧，克里斯默斯问：“今天星期几？”

黑人目瞪口呆地说道：“你——你说什么？”

“今天星期几？星期四？星期五？几？星期几？我不会伤害你。”

“星期五，”黑人答道，“喔，上帝，今天星期五。”

“星期五，”克里斯默斯重复道。他又扬了一下头，说：“去吧。”马鞭落下来，马车向前冲去。随着鞭子的起落，马车拼了命似的向前飞奔而去。然而，克里斯默斯早已转身，又钻进了灌木丛中。

这次，他的方向又像测量员的路线一样笔直，全然不顾山岭、峡谷甚至沼泽的崎岖难行。不过，他走得不慌不忙，好像一个人知道自己身在哪里，将要去往何处，要走多久，甚至精确到分钟；好像这还是他第一次，也是最后一次想要将这片热土看遍。他在这片土地上长大成人，像一个不会游泳的海员，还没有用心感知这里的真实状况和感情，他的形体和思维早已被迫铸成。整整一周，他潜伏在隐蔽的地方。他爬来爬去，但对于这片土地上必须遵守的、不可更改的法规而言，他却仍然是个异乡人。有时，他迈着踏实的步子，他认为看见的便是一切——这些能带给他平和、从容、安宁，直到真正的答案突然揭晓，他像脱水一样轻飘飘的。“再也用不着费力地寻找食物了，”他心想，“原来如此。”

中午时，他已经走了八英里。现在，他来到一条宽阔的碎石路上，这是一条公路。这次，当他举起手时，马车静静地停了下来。年轻的黑

人车夫既没有惊讶，也没有浮现认出他的表情，克里斯默斯问：“这条路通向哪儿？”

“摩兹镇，我去那儿。”

“摩兹镇。你也去杰弗逊镇吗？”

年轻人摇摇头：“我不知道那个地方，我要去摩兹镇。”

“哦，”克里斯默斯说，“我明白了。你家不在附近。”

“不在，先生。我住在两个县以外的地方。我已经走了三天，要去摩兹镇接我爸买的一头小牛犊，你也要去摩兹镇吗？”

“是的，”克里斯默斯答道。他登上马车，坐在年轻人身旁，马车开始前进。“摩兹镇，”他暗自思忖。杰弗逊镇距那里只有二十英里远。“现在我可以轻松一会儿了。”他心想，“我已经七天没有轻松过了，我猜我要休息一会儿。”他坐在晃晃悠悠的马车上，也许开始昏昏欲睡。可他并没有睡着，他不瞌睡、不饿，甚至都不累。他悬在这几种状态中，没有思维、没有感觉，只是随着马车摇晃。他忘记了时间，忘记了距离；也许过了一个小时，也许三个小时。年轻人说：“摩兹镇。这儿就是。”

他看见拐角那边有烟雾低低地浮在空中，他再次走进那条延伸了三十年的街道。在这条铺好的路上，行人本可以快步行走，可它却围成一个圈，他始终没有走出去。过去的一个星期里，他没有走过一条铺砌的道路，但他行走的路程比过去三十年走的所有路程都要远。然而，他还在那个圈子里。“我这七天的行程远比三十年的还要长，”他心想，“可我从没有走出过那个圈子。我从没有打破自己建造，而且永远无法改变

的圈子。”他坐在座位上，静静地思索着，面前的挡泥板上放着鞋子，那双散发着黑人气息的黑皮靴。黑色的潮水留在脚踝上，注定无法逃避的标记随着死亡的来临，从脚下悄悄爬上小腿。

星期五，克里斯默斯到了摩兹镇北部。这个镇上住着一对名叫海因斯的老夫妇。他们都上了年纪，住在黑人聚居区的小平房里；镇上一般人都不知道他们靠什么为生，因为穷困潦倒，却终日无所事事。据大家所知，二十五年来，海因斯什么都不做，也没有稳定的工作。

三十年前，他们来到摩兹镇。一天，镇上的人们发现有个女人住在了那幢小房子里，从此便一直住在那里。后来的五年里，海因斯每个月才回家一次，在家度过每个周末。很快，人们就得知他在孟菲斯有份工作，但没人知道他具体在干什么。那时他就是个神秘人物，看上去他既像三十五岁，又像五十岁，目光冷峻而极其狂热，还略带些癫狂，对任何事情都不感兴趣。镇上的人们觉得他俩有些不正常——孤独、苍白，个子比大多数男女都要矮，好像他们属于另一个族类，另一个种群——即便如此，在海因斯来到摩兹镇，和他妻子在那里安顿好后的五六年时间里，镇上的人们会雇佣他干一些他们认为他力所能及的零活儿。可是，他很快便连那些活儿也不愿干了。大伙儿好长时间都纳闷他们究竟在靠什么维持生活，后来大家也把这件事情忘记了，因为人们听说海因斯长期步行去乡下，为黑人教堂做布道，经常还有黑人妇女们从老两口居住的后门进去，一眼就看出他们手里拎的是饭菜，出来时却两手空空。人们惊奇了一段时间，后来也很快不再记得。最终，人们也许是忘记，也许是宽恕了他们，因为海因斯年事已高，与人无害，如果是年轻人干出这样的事，乡亲们绝对不会任由其发展。大家只是说：“他们疯了，对黑人的事儿真着迷，说不定他们是北方佬。”然后，这件事便不了了之。或许人们所宽恕的，不是老头儿自我献身于黑人灵魂的救赎，而是公众对他们从黑人手中接过施舍的事实不予理睬，因为抛弃良心所不愿

接纳的东西会令他们心情愉悦。

于是，二十五年中，老夫妻俩没有任何明显的生活来源，镇上的人们对黑人妇女和她们遮盖住的锅碗视而不见，即便有些锅碗完全有可能是从她们的白人雇主的厨房中原封不动地端出来的，那也无关紧要。也许这也是他们脑海中要摒弃的一部分。总之，镇上的人们没有看见，到如今已经二十五年，老两口一直孤独地生活在波澜不惊的死水中，仿佛他们是从北极走失的麋牛，又像是从冰河时期遗留下来的两只无家可归的动物。

老太太几乎从来不出现，而老头——人称博士大叔——却是广场的固定风景：一个邋遢的小老头，长了一张曾经或勇敢或凶恶的面孔——不是空想家便是极端利己主义者——他身穿无领的脏牛仔服，手里拄一根沉重的人工打磨的山桃木拐杖，手柄像胡桃木一样乌黑，玻璃般光滑。他刚开始在孟菲斯工作时，每月回家都会三言两语地提到自己的工作，自信自己不仅独立，而且还有其他资质，仿佛在他的人生中一度过着比自力更生还要好的生活，并且就在不久前。没什么能击倒他，反而是自信改变了他的人生，这种自信好像是一个人掌控着几个手下；他自愿改变，而且他相信没有人会质疑改变的原因，也没人能理解。然而，当他谈论起自己、自己的职业时，虽然明显很流畅，但其实毫无意义。于是，人们相信他在那个时候就已经有些不正常。人们之所以有这样的想法，并非由于他看似极力顾左右而言他，而是他的言语和内涵与听众认为的一个人应有的活动范围极不相符。有时，他们认定他曾经做过牧师，有时他又会含糊其辞，神气十足地谈论孟菲斯，仿佛他这一辈子一直供职于某个重要却至今没有名目的市政办公室。“当然，”摩兹镇的人们背着他议论道，“他做过铁路监管员，火车驶过时，他拿着一面红旗站在路中央，”或者说，“他是个报业巨头，从公园长椅下捡报纸。”他们没有当

着他的面这么说，就连最大胆的人，以说话最不靠谱而出名的人也不敢那么做。

后来，他丢了孟菲斯的工作，或者说他主动辞了工作。一个周末，他回到家里，到星期一时还没有走。之后，他便终日待在镇中心广场上，一言不发，蓬头垢面，露出不与人来往的愤怒眼神。人们都以为他疯了：凶恶已耗尽，细若游丝；狂热像渐渐降温、几近熄灭的余烬，有点像狂热的布道者，只剩下四分之一偏执的信念和四分之三顽强的体魄。因此，当人们听说他在城中闲逛，经常步行到黑人教堂布道时，并不觉得有什么奇怪；甚至一年后，他们听说布道的内容后也没有惊诧。这个白人老头全靠黑人的施舍和恩赐为生，单枪匹马进入偏远的黑人教堂，走上讲坛打断会众的仪式，用沙哑、死板的语调，有时还会夹杂非常猥琐的语言，劝诫黑人要对浅肤色的人谦卑有礼，鼓吹白种人的优越性，神志不清地狂发悖论，宣称自己是他们的头号代表。黑人相信他受到了上帝的惩罚，才会如此疯狂，或者他曾经触犯过上帝。他们可能并没有去听，甚至不大明白他说的内容，也许他们把他当成了上帝。因为对他们而言，上帝就是白人，而且上帝的行为也有些令人费解。

那天下午，克里斯默斯的名字传遍大街小巷，他正好在镇中心，大人、小孩——商人、职员、闲人、好事者，还有占多数的、穿工装的乡下人——都开始跑起来。海因斯也跟着他们跑，但他跑不快。他跑了过去，却因为个子不高，越不过人头攒动的看客们。然而，他很努力，像在场的人们一样勇猛而专注，仿佛先前留在他脸上的衰朽和狂暴开始重唤生机，企图在喧闹的人群中挤出一条路来。他抓着人们的后背，甚至最后开始用拐杖来击打众人，直到人们转过身认出他时，才将他抓住。他一边挣扎，一边用沉重的拐杖打他们。“克里斯默斯？”他大声叫道，“他们说的是克里斯默斯吗？”

“是克里斯默斯！”人群中抓着他的一个人大声回答道。这个人也紧绷着脸，瞪大眼睛说：“克里斯默斯！那个白脸黑鬼上个星期在杰弗逊镇杀了人！”

海因斯目瞪口呆地望着这个人，他的牙齿已经掉光了，嘴边唾沫星飞溅。接着，他又开始挣扎，狂暴地咒骂着。虚弱的小老头长着一副虚弱的小孩身板，想借拐杖为自己打拼自由，扫清通往人群中心的道路，满脸流血的被捕者就站在那里。“这儿，博士大叔！”他们拦着海因斯说，“这儿，博士大叔，他们抓到他啦。他跑不了啦。这儿，这儿！”

可海因斯还在挣扎、反抗、咒骂，他的声音尖细而沙哑，嘴角还在流口水。拉扯他的人们也很吃力，仿佛他们正拦着一根无法承受太大水压的软管。整个人群中唯一镇静的只有被捕者。他们抱住骂骂咧咧的海因斯，虚弱的老骨头和纤细的青筋霎时涌动着饱满的愤怒。海因斯挣脱人们向前猛冲，扒开缝隙钻进去，终于和凶手面对面站在一起。人们完全怔住了，没等他们再次拉回海因斯，他早已举起拐杖打了凶手一下，正要再打时，人们正好将他控制住了。他动弹不得，但仍旧气愤得口吐飞沫，人们没法让他住嘴。“杀了那个杂种！”海因斯大声叫喊着，“杀了他！杀了他！”

半小时后，两个男人开车把海因斯送回家。其中一人驾车，另一个抓着海因斯，坐在后面的座位上。此时，他紧闭双眼，胡须和污垢下的面容变得更加苍白。他们把他整个人从车里抬出来，扶着他穿过大门，走上通向台阶，由碎砖、碎水泥片铺就的过道。这时，他睁开眼睛，但双眼空洞无神，眼珠内翻，最后只留下混沌的浅蓝色眼白。可他依然十分虚弱无力，他们正要走进过道时，前门开了，他的妻子走出来关上门，站在那里望着他们。他们知道这就是他的妻子，因为大家都知道这是海因斯的家，而她正是从那里走出来的。其中一个人虽然是镇上的居

民，却从未见过她。“怎么啦？”她问。

“没事儿，”第一个男人答道，“我们刚才在镇中心太过激动，天气又热，他有点儿受不了。”海因斯太太站在门口，好像要挡住他们进屋的去路——忧郁的小老太太身材肥胖，长着圆圆的脸盘，像一块没有烘焙的脏面团，稀疏的头发紧紧地绑在一起。“上周在杰弗逊镇杀了白人女士的黑鬼刚被抓住，”那个男人继续说道，“博士大叔有点儿受不了。”

海因斯太太早已转过身，好像正要推门进去。正如第一个男人后来对他同伴讲的那样，她转身时停了下来，仿佛有人朝她轻轻扔了一枚石子。她问：“抓住谁了？”

“克里斯默斯，”男人说，“黑鬼凶手，叫克里斯默斯。”

海因斯太太面色灰暗、沉寂，站在走廊边上，低头望着他们。“她好像早知道我会告诉她，”那个男人在返回车里时，和他的同伴说道，“好像她还想让我再告诉她，凶手是那个黑鬼，但又不是他。”

她问：“他长什么样？”

“我没太注意，”那个男人答道，“人们抓住他肯定要教训他一顿，他是个年轻人，长得还没我像黑人。”老太太低头看着他们，夹在人群中的海因斯现在能自己站起来了，仿佛刚睡醒一样咕哝着。那个男人又问：“你想让我们怎么安排博士大叔？”

她没有说话。正如那个男人后来告诉同伴的那样，她好像根本没有认出她的丈夫。她说：“他们打算怎么处置他？”

“他？”那个男人又说，“噢，黑鬼啊。那得杰弗逊镇的人说了算。他是那儿的人。”

她面色苍白，一动不动地俯视着他们，思绪早已飘到了远方。“他们在等杰弗逊镇派人来吗？”

“他们？”男人答道，“噢，我估计杰弗逊镇离这儿也不远。”他说着，换了一下抓着老头胳膊的手，“你想让我们把他放哪儿？”这时，老太太才开始走过来。她从台阶上下来，走到他们面前。“我们帮你把他扶进屋里吧。”男人继续说。

海因斯太太说：“我扶得动他。”她和海因斯身高差不多，但她更重一些。她双手扶在他的腋下。“尤菲斯，”她低声叫道，“尤菲斯。”她平静地对那两个男人说：“松手吧，我来扶他。”他们松开手。老头儿现在能走几步了，他们看到她扶着他走上台阶，进了门。她始终没有回头看一眼。

“她都没有谢谢咱们。”第二个男人说，“也许咱应该把他带回去，扔进监狱和那个黑鬼关在一起，因为他似乎对黑鬼很了解。”

“尤菲斯，”第一个男人说，“尤菲斯。十五年了我一直不知道他叫什么名字。尤菲斯。”

“走吧，咱回去吧。说不定咱错过了什么呢。”

第一个男人望着那幢房子，还有那扇关上的门。老两口就是进了那扇门。“她也认识黑鬼。”

“认识谁？”

“黑鬼，克里斯默斯。”

“走吧，”他们回到车上，“你怎么看那个该死的家伙？他一路跑到镇上，离他作案不到二十英里的地方，在主干路上晃悠，直到被人认出来。我倒希望是我认出了他，那样我就能得到那一千赏金。可我从来没那么幸运。”汽车开动了，第一个男人还在回头望着那扇紧闭的房门，那是老两口消失的地方。

老两口站在小房子里，昏暗狭小的客厅像山洞一样散发着难闻的恶臭。老头虚弱的状况稍微比昏厥强些，妻子把他扶到椅子上坐下，似乎这只是出于关心的权宜之计。虽然并没有返回去锁门的必要，但海因斯太太还是那么做了。她走过来，低头看了他一会儿。起初，她好像只是在焦急地观察他。这时，如果有第三个人在场的话，便能看见她正在剧烈地颤抖，一句话也说不出。她之所以把他扶到椅子上，也许是为了之后将他扔到地板上，也许是为把他像犯人一样控制住。她俯下身。身材矮胖的她脸色惨白，像溺水者的面孔。当她开口说话时，声音发颤，虽然极力克制，但还是不住地颤抖。老头儿半躺在椅子上，她双手抓住椅子扶手，强忍颤音，说道：“尤菲斯。听我说。你得听我说。我以前从没给你添过麻烦。三十年来，我从来没麻烦过你。但现在我要问。我想知道，你也必须告诉我。你到底把米莉的孩子怎么了？”

整个漫长的下午，他们聚在广场周围。职员、闲人、穿工装的乡下人围在监狱外面，他们都在谈论。镇上到处议论纷纷，消息好像一阵风、一场火一样此起彼伏。直到太阳拉长了影子，乡下人们才驾着马车，开着尘土飞扬的汽车离开，镇上的人们也开始回家吃晚饭。于是，讨论再一次爆发，瞬间令人振奋起来。无论是亮着电灯的房间，还是偏远山区的木屋里，人们都在饭桌上跟妻子和家人谈论。第二天是悠闲、快乐的乡村星期天，人们穿着漂亮的背带裤，安详地叼着烟斗，蹲在乡村教堂周围，或者是房前阴凉的院落里，栅栏边上拴着访客的马匹，停

放着他们的车辆；女人们在厨房里，一边准备晚饭一边开始谈论：“他长得还没我像黑人呢。可他肯定有黑人的血统。他好像是故意出去让人们抓他的，就像有人专门外出讨老婆一样。他整整消失了一个星期，要是他不放火烧那幢房子，人们或许一个月都不会发现这个案子。要是没那个名叫布朗的家伙，人们不会怀疑到他。他以前假装成白人贩卖威士忌酒，他想把贩酒和杀人的事都推到布朗身上，布朗这才说出真相来。

“昨天上午，他在大白天就来了摩兹镇，正好是星期六，乡亲们都在。他像个白人一样走进白人理发店，因为他看起来像个白人，所以人们没有怀疑他。给他擦皮鞋的人看见他脚上那双二手短靴大得有些不合脚，可还是没有起疑心。他们为他刮脸、理发，他付了账，走出去，径直去了一家商店，买了崭新的衬衫、领带和草帽。那些钱正是从被他杀了的女人手里拿的。光天化日之下，他走在街上，好像镇子都是他的。他来来回回走在街上，人们经过十来次都没发现，直到哈利迪看见他，跑上前去抓住他问：‘你是克里斯默斯吗？’那黑鬼回答说是。他没有否认，也没有反抗，很坦然。这让乡亲们非常抓狂，作为一个杀人犯，他本应该缩头缩脑躲进丛林、沼泽，浑身是泥地到处逃窜，可他却穿戴一新，大摇大摆地走在镇上，仿佛以为没人敢碰他一样；好像他从来不知道自己杀了人，更不知道自己是个黑鬼。

“于是，想到那一千美金，哈利迪便激动万分，冲黑鬼的脸打了两拳。黑鬼第一次表现得像个黑鬼，挨打的时候一声不吭：他静静地板着脸，任凭血往下流。哈利迪一边抓住他，一边大声喊叫。这时，人称博士大叔海因斯的老头走上前来，开始用手杖猛揍黑鬼，直到最后来了两个人才拦住他，开车把他送回家。没人敢断定他是不是真的认识黑鬼，他只是跌跌撞撞地尖叫着：‘他叫克里斯默斯吗？你说的是克里斯默斯吗？’他一边叫一边往里钻，他挤进去，瞅了黑鬼一眼，然后开始用手

杖打他。海因斯好像有些神志不清之类的，大家只好拦着他。他连眼珠子都翻出了蓝色，口角流涎，用拐杖见啥砍啥，直到他突然倒在地上才作罢。后来，有两个家伙把他扶上车送回了家。他老婆出来把他扶进屋里，然后那两个人马上回到镇里。他们不知道为什么海因斯听到黑鬼被捕后那么激动，不过，他们认为海因斯现在没什么事。可不到半个小时，他就又回了镇上。现在，他可纯粹是疯了，站在街角，冲路人大声叫喊，骂人家是胆小鬼，因为他们不敢把黑鬼从监狱拉出来，立刻就地绞死他，管他杰弗逊不杰弗逊镇的。他的脸上露出疯狂的表情，像刚从疯人院逃出来，而且知道用不了多久便会被抓回去。乡亲们说他以前也做过牧师。

“他说他有权利处死那个黑鬼，但他没说原因。他太过着急、暴躁，就算有人拦住他问他问题，他也完全听不懂。当时，好大一群人围着他，他大喊大叫，声称自己最有权利决定黑鬼的死活。于是，乡亲们开始认为，也许他适合跟黑鬼一起被关进监狱。这时，他妻子出现了。

“有好多乡亲在摩兹镇住了三十年，可从来没有见过她。当时，他们并不知道她就是海因斯太太，直到她跟他说话时才认出来。因为有人曾经见过她，她经常在黑人聚居区的小屋子那边活动，有人见过她头戴丈夫的旧帽子，身穿女式宽大罩衫。不过，她现在却精心打扮了一番，身穿紫色的丝质衣裙，头戴一顶插了鸡毛的帽子，手里拿着一把雨伞。她走向人群，老头儿正在那儿大喊大叫。她叫了一声‘尤菲斯’。海因斯停止叫喊，望着她，手里仍然举着手杖，下巴耷拉着直流口水。她上前拉住他的胳膊。大多数乡亲因为害怕海因斯的手杖，一直没敢靠近他。他或许都不知道自己打了人，或许也可能是有意为之。但她却径直走到拐杖前，抓住他的胳膊，把他领到一家店铺门口，在椅子上坐下来。她说：‘你待在这儿等我回来。现在别动，也不许再叫喊。’

“海因斯照做了，真的照做了。他遵照她的安排坐在那里，她也没有回头看一眼。人们一直盯着他俩，或许是因为乡亲们除了在他家附近见过她外，她总待在家里。而他是那种有点凶巴巴的小老头儿，不管谁经过他身边都得心里掂量着点儿。总之，人们十分诧异，他们绝对没想过他会听命于人。他好像被老太太抓住了把柄，不得不服从。当她告诉他坐在那把椅子上不要叫喊，不要大声说话时，他双手颤抖地握着大手杖，口水从嘴里流出来，一直流到衬衫上。

“她直接去了监狱。监狱外面围着好多人，因为杰弗逊镇人捎来口信，说他们正在赶往押解黑鬼的路上。她穿过人群，走进监狱，对梅特卡夫说：‘我想见见他们抓住的那个人。’

“梅特卡夫问她‘你见他干吗？’

“‘我不会打扰他，’她说，‘我就想看看他。’

“梅特卡夫说好多人人都想见他，他知道她不会协助他逃跑，可是他只是个狱警，没有警长的命令，他不能让任何人进去。她一动不动地站在那里，穿着紫色的衣裙，帽子上的羽毛也纹丝不动。她问：‘警长在哪儿？’

“‘他也许在办公室，’梅特卡夫说，‘你找到他，得到他的允许，我就让你见那个黑鬼。’梅特卡夫以为这件事就这样过去了。他看着她转身离开，从监狱前面围观的人群中走过，返回通往广场的街道。这时，帽子上的羽毛开始摇晃。梅特卡夫看见羽毛沿着栏杆上方一路晃动。接着，她穿过广场，走进法院。人们不知道她要干什么，因为梅特卡夫没时间告诉他们监狱里发生了什么。大伙儿只看见她走进了监狱。后来，拉塞尔说他在办公室，一抬头正好看见桌子对面的窗外有一顶插羽毛的

帽子，他不知道她在那里站了多久，一直在等他抬头。他说她的身高刚好够柜台那么高，所以她看起来好像根本没有身子，就像有人溜进来，放了一只绘有人脸的玩具气球，上面扣了一顶帽子，就像漫画书上的捣蛋鬼一样。她说：‘我想见警长。’

“‘他不在这儿，’拉塞尔说，‘我是他的助手，我能为您做什么？’

“他说她站在那里一直没有说话。后来她才说：‘我能在哪儿见到他？’

“‘说不定在家，’拉塞尔说，‘这周他非常忙。有时他为了帮杰弗逊镇的官员们，会一直忙到深夜。说不准他现在正在家小睡呢。不过，也许我可以——’他说，这个时候老太太早已不见了。他从窗外望去，看见她又走过广场，拐弯朝警长家走去。他说他一直考虑她到底是什么人。

“‘她没找到警长。总之，当时已经很晚了，警长就在监狱里，只不过梅特卡夫没告诉她，而且没等她离开监狱多远，杰弗逊镇官员就开着两辆汽车来了监狱。他们来得很快，进监狱也是匆匆忙忙的。可他们抵达摩兹镇的消息早已经传开了，二百多男女老少聚集在监狱前，两位警长走到门廊处，咱们的警长开始讲话，要求乡亲们尊重法律，他和杰弗逊的警长都保证，黑鬼很快就会受到公正的审判。这时，人群中有人说：‘公正？见鬼去吧！他给白种女人公正了吗？’于是，众人开始叫嚷，再次涌过来，好像他们在为死去的女人喊冤，而不是冲警长叫喊。不过，警长仍旧心平气和地给他们解释，说从民众选举他那天起，他就一直信守诺言。‘我对黑人凶手不会抱更多同情，黑人、白人都一样。’他说，‘那是我的誓言，上帝作证，我一直信守誓言。我不喜欢找麻烦，但我也不会逃避麻烦。大家最好冷静一会儿。’哈利迪当时也在场，和两位警长站在一起。他最理智，而且不会自讨没趣。‘哟，’有人

抱怨，‘我们猜你不想给他处以私刑吧。但对我们来说，他不值一千美元。他连一千根用过的火柴棍都不如。’这时，警长马上回答：‘要是哈利迪不想让他死呢？难道我们所希望的不一样吗？摩兹镇的一位居民将得到赏金，这笔钱要花在摩兹镇。想想看，如果是杰弗逊镇的人得到这笔钱呢？公平吗？乡亲们，合理吗？’他的声音很低，像玩偶发出的声音，仿佛乡亲们不喜欢他讲的东西，而且有违乡亲们差不多已经定型的想法时，大人物就是这样的讲话方式。

“不管怎么样，这番话好像还是说服了他们。即便乡亲们知道那笔钱将归摩兹镇而不是其他地方，即便哈利迪要花那笔钱，可总是奏效了。乡亲们真可笑，他们不会坚持某种思维方式或做事方法，除非他们找到了坚持的新理由。当他们一旦有了新的理由，就会改变。所以，他们不再反驳，仿佛先前人们是由内而外地散去，而现在却开始从外边聚拢。警长们明白，正如他们所料，这件事不会持续太久。他们迅速回到监狱后又出来，几乎没等人们转过身，他们就出来了，中间夹着那个黑人，后面跟着五六个助手。他们肯定早已安排好黑人等在监狱门后面，因为他们几乎马上就出来了。黑鬼铁青着脸，双手被铐了起来，由杰弗逊镇的警长牵着。人群中发出一阵‘噢，噢，噢——’

“他们在人群中走出一条直通街道的巷子，那儿停着杰弗逊镇来的第一辆汽车。汽车引擎已经发动，司机也已手握方向盘，警长们马不停蹄地走过去。这时，她又出现了，还是那个女人，海因斯太太。她从人群中挤出来，因为个子太低，所以大伙儿只看见那根羽毛在慢慢向前颠簸，好像即使没有任何阻拦，它也走不快；又像一辆拖拉机，谁也无法阻挡。她挤过乡亲们排成的街巷，总算站在了两位警长的面前。于是，他们只好停下来，生怕把她踩倒。她的脸像一块油灰，帽子歪在一边，羽毛垂在眼前。她必须把羽毛推后，才能看见，可她没有这么做。她只

是站在那里，盯着黑鬼，死死挡在他们面前足有一分钟。她始终都没有说一句话，仿佛这就是她所希望的，一直缠着别人想得到的，仿佛这就是她盛装来到镇里的原因——就为来瞧黑鬼一眼。然后，她便转身再次钻进人群。两辆汽车载着黑鬼和杰弗逊镇的司法人员开走时，人们四处寻找，发现她已经不见了。接着，人们回到广场，博士大叔也早已离开那把她让他坐着等待的椅子。不过，不是所有人都回了广场，好多人还待在原地望着监狱，仿佛刚刚离开的只是黑鬼的影子。

“大家以为她带着博士大叔回家了。达拉店铺的椅子还在门口，达拉说围观的人们还没回到街上时，海因斯太太先回来了。他说博士大叔一直没动，静静地坐在她离开时的椅子上，仿佛被施了催眠术，直到她走过来碰了碰他的肩膀，他才站起来。他俩在达拉的注视中一起走了出去。达拉说，从博士大叔脸上的表情来看，他应该是回家了。

“可她没有领他回家。过了一会儿，乡亲们看见她并没有领他去什么地方，他俩好像有同一件事情要做——相同的事情不同的理由。他们好像都明白各自的理由并不相同，如若一方如愿，势必对另一方不利。他俩不必言说，彼此心知肚明，互相警惕，都明白出发的决定权在她。

“他们径直去了萨蒙租车的车库，由她来搞价。她说他们要去杰弗逊镇。他们也许做梦都没想到，萨蒙的收费会每人超出二十五美分。因为当萨蒙说出三美元时，她又问了一遍，好像她不敢相信自己的耳朵似的。‘三美元。’萨蒙说，‘不能再少了。’他们站在那里，博士大叔没有插嘴，只是一直等在旁边，好像这件事和他毫无关系，好像他知道根本没必要操心，她会把他们带到那儿。

“她说：‘我付不起那么多钱。’

“‘不能再便宜了，’萨蒙说，‘除非去坐火车，每人五十二美分就够啦。’没等他说完，她早走了，博士大叔像条狗一样跟在后面。

“那会儿大约四点。大家看见他们坐在法院空地的长椅上，一直坐到六点。他们没有说话：好像两人都不知道对方就在身边。他们并排坐在那儿，海因斯太太穿着节日盛装，也许正在自我陶醉，可以穿上漂亮的衣服在镇中心度过整个星期六晚上；也许她觉得这就跟别人在孟菲斯待一整天一样。

“他们一直坐到六点的钟声敲响。然后，他们站起来。乡亲们说她始终没和他说一个字，但他俩同时站了起来，像两只鸟儿同时飞离枝头一样，没人说得清是他们中的哪一个发出了信号。他俩走在路上，博士大叔稍稍靠后。他们就这样走过广场，拐进通向车站的街道。乡亲们知道三个小时内不会有火车，他们正纳闷老两口是不是真要坐火车去什么地方。没等他们弄清楚，老两口就做出了更让他们吃惊的举动——他俩去了车站附近的餐馆吃晚饭。自从他们来到摩兹镇，没人见过他俩一起出现在大街上，更别说在餐馆吃饭。可她的确把他带到了那里，也许他们担心回镇中心吃饭会误了火车。不到六点半，他们就进了餐馆，坐在柜台旁边的两张小凳上，吃着没有征求博士大叔的意见便点好的饭菜。她向店员打听去杰弗逊镇的火车，店员告诉她凌晨两点半有车。‘今晚杰弗逊镇可热闹啦，’他说，‘你们可以从镇中心找车，四十五分钟就能到，用不着一直等到两点半再坐火车。’他以为他们也许是外地人，还给她指了指进城的路。

“但她什么都没说。吃完饭，她从雨伞里掏出一个扎好的布袋子，一次一枚地掏出五分和一角。她结账时，博士大叔一脸茫然地等着，好像在梦游。结了账，他们走出饭店。店员以为他们会听取他的建议，去镇上乘汽车。可当他往外瞧时，却看见他俩跨过铁轨岔道，朝车站走

去。他想过要喊他们一声，但他没那么做。‘我猜是我没明白她的意思，’他说自己琢磨过，‘也许他们想坐九点那辆火车，往南走。’

“他们坐在候车室的长椅上，乡亲们、推销员、游民等各类人群开始走进来，买那辆南行列车的车票。售票员说，他七点半吃过晚饭后进来时，发现候车室有人，但没什么可奇怪的。后来，海因斯太太走到售票窗口前，询问开往杰弗逊镇的车什么时候开。他说当时自己很忙，只是抬头瞟了一眼，并没有停下手里的工作，说了一句‘明天’。他又说，过了一会儿，有什么东西吸引了他。他抬起头，看见一张圆脸正盯着他，窗口还有一根羽毛。海因斯太太说：

“‘我买两张去杰弗逊镇的车票。’

“售票员说：‘那辆火车明早两点才到。’当时，他也没有认出她来。‘要是你们想早点赶到杰弗逊镇的话，最好去镇上租辆车。你们知道去镇上的路吗？’可她只是站在那里，五分、一角地数着从打结的布袋里掏出的钱。他递给她两张票，从窗口看见她身旁的博士大叔。这时，他才明白她的身份。他说他们坐在那里，南行的乡亲们走进来，火车到站后又驶出车站。他们一直坐在长椅上。他说博士大叔看起来像睡着了，或是吃了药什么的。火车离开时，有的乡亲们没有回镇上，他们待在那里，不时地在候车室进进出出，看见博士大叔和他的妻子坐在长椅上，直到售票员关掉候车室的灯。

“之后，候车室还剩下一些人。他们从窗口看见老两口坐在黑暗中。也许他们看见了羽毛和博士大叔的白头发。过了一会儿，博士大叔开始清醒。当他发现自己在候车室时，没有表现出丝毫诧异，对自己身处不乐意待的地方也不觉得奇怪。他站起身，仿佛迷糊了太久，现在该是重焕活力的时候了。老头正要开口说话时，她发出‘嘘，嘘——’的声音

制止他。他俩一直坐在那里，直到售票员把灯打开，告诉他们两点的火车快到了。她像抚慰婴儿一样，对他说着‘嘘，嘘—’，博士大叔却不停在骂‘可恶！淫贱！’”

拜伦的敲门声没有得到回应。他从走廊出来，绕房子转了一圈，走进狭小的后院。他立刻就看到了桑树下的那把椅子。这是一把修理过的、松弛、褪色的折叠式帆布躺椅，海托华长期的坐压使它即使在空着的时候，也似乎仍然可怕地保留着主人肥胖的不成型的身子，拜伦思索着走到椅子旁。这张无声的椅子能让人想到弃置、懒散、陈旧、远离尘世等字眼，它是海托华的象征，也是海托华自己的境遇。“我又要打扰他了。”拜伦轻启嘴唇，心想，又一次？比起以往的打扰，现在他会觉得那根本不算什么打扰。有时在星期日。不过，我觉得这个星期天会让他很恼火，乡亲们把星期天搞成了这样。

拜伦走到椅子后面，低头望去，海托华正在熟睡。他穿着一件干净的新衬衫，隆起的肚皮像气球一样撑开白衬衫，露出破旧的黑裤子。他的肚子上扣着一本翻开的书，双手叠放在书本上，神情安详、和蔼，活像一位罗马主教。衬衣的款式已经过时，配有胡乱熨烫的褶皱胸饰。他没有带领圈，嘴巴大张，松弛的肌肉从嘴角垂下来，露出牙渍斑斑的下齿，岁月唯一没有改变的只有尚且还算高耸的鼻梁。拜伦俯视这张没有知觉的面孔，仿佛这个人的身体已经脱离了鼻子，只有鼻梁像废弃的城堡上一面被人遗忘的旗子，依然倔强地维护被懒惰击败的骄傲和勇气。桑叶遮蔽的天空透出几缕阳光，投射在他的眼镜片上，闪烁着耀眼的光芒。因此，拜伦很难判断海托华的眼睛什么时候会睁开。他只看见海托华闭上了嘴巴，叠放的双手稍稍动了一下，海托华坐了起来。“噢，”他说道，“是谁？—噢，拜伦。”

拜伦低头望着他那张极其冷峻的面孔，此时更是没有一丝同情的意

味，说不上那是一种什么表情，只让人觉得十分冷静、坚定。拜伦平淡地说：“昨天他被抓住了。我估计你只听说过杀人，还没听到这个。”

“抓住了？”

“克里斯默斯。在摩兹镇。他去了那个镇子。据我所知，他大摇大摆地走在街上，直到被人认出来。”

“抓到他了。”海托华说着，直起身坐在椅子上。“你来告诉我说他们——他们已经……”

“不，还没人想把他怎样。他没死。他在监狱里，没事儿。”

“没事。你说他没事。拜伦说他没事——拜伦·邦奇帮助那个女人的情人，为了一千美元出卖朋友，还说没事。他把那个女人藏起来，不让孩子的父亲见她——我可以说，另一个情人，拜伦？我可以那么说吗？拜伦·邦奇隐瞒了真相，所以我也该克制？”

“如果公众的讨论可以成为真相，那我想这就是真相。尤其当他们发现我把他俩都关进了监狱。”

“他们？”

“布朗也在里面。尽管我估计大多数乡亲认为布朗没有能力杀人或协助杀人，就像他在抓捕中没本事抓到或协助抓捕克里斯默斯一样。不过，人们完全可以说，拜伦·邦奇现在已经将他安全地关进了监狱。”

“啊，不错。”海托华的声音微微颤动，高亢而尖细地说，“拜伦·邦奇，公众福祉和道义的守护者、获胜者和受益者，因为现在他要迎娶那个配不上他的妻子——我可以这么说吗？那么我也理解拜伦的意思

啦？”说着，身形庞大、松弛的海托华坐在塌陷的椅子上，开始大叫起来。“我不是那么个意思。你知道我不是，但你不应该来打扰我，让我烦心，而我已经——我已经学会不问世事——在别人的教导下远离一切——这件事竟然找上门来，在我上了年纪，习惯于接受别人一切想法的时候——”拜伦曾经见过他坐在那里满脸汗如雨下，可现在却看到他松弛的脸颊上泪如雨下。

“我知道。很抱歉让你忧心，真的很抱歉。我不知道，我不知道为什么要迈出第一步，或许我不应该……可你是牧师，你不能逃避这一点。”

“我不是牧师，并不是我不愿做。记住，不是我自己不愿再做牧师，那是别人的意愿，更是命令。你，她，监狱里的他，还有那些将自己的意愿强加于他的人们，你们用同样的方法对待我和他。对上帝创造的同一个人群施以侮辱和暴力，强迫他们去做事，但现在又转身不愿承认自己曾经的所作所为。不是我选择放弃。你记住。”

“我懂。因为一个人没有那么多选择，可在此之前你自己已经做了选择。”海托华望着拜伦，“我出生之前你就做出了选择，在我、她或他出生之前你已经选择了。我觉得无论善恶，人总要为自己的选择遭受苦难。她、他、我都要受苦。其他人，另一个女人也一样。”

“另一个女人？又一个女人？难道五十年后，我的生活还要被侵犯，我的安宁还要被破坏，就为了两个堕落的女人，拜伦？”

“这个女人没有堕落。她困惑了三十年，但她现在清醒了。她是他的外祖母。”

“谁的外祖母？”

“克里斯默斯的。”海托华答道。

海托华在漆黑的书房窗口静静等待，望着街道和大门，听到远处音乐开始响起。他不知道自己期盼这个音乐，每星期三和星期日晚上，他都会站在昏暗的窗口，等待音乐开始。不必借助手表或钟表，他几乎能精确地知道音乐开始的那一刻。他什么都不需要。二十五年来，他一直未曾使用过钟表，他的生活与机械时间无关。但正因如此，他很清楚每个时刻，仿佛他的潜意识中自然凝成了一些惯例，这些惯例曾将他在尘世中逝去的生命管理得井然有序。没有钟表，思绪停留的那一刻，他照样能知道在固定的两个时间段里，昔日的他正要去哪里，要做什么，这些时间段便是星期日的早、晚礼拜，以及星期三晚上的祷告仪式。那时，他会走进教堂，他会结束祷告或布道。因此，黄昏还未退去之前，他会自言自语，说起星期日晚上的祷告会。现在，他们开始聚集，沿着街道慢慢走近，转身进来，互相打招呼：成群结队，三三两两，孤身一人。他们会在教堂小声闲聊一会儿，女士们一个劲儿地扇扇子，发出咿咿的声音，还会向走在过道的朋友们点头致意。卡鲁斯小姐（她是风琴手，去世已近二十年）便是其中之一，很快她便会站起身，走进风琴间。他似乎总觉得那是人类最接近上帝的时候，比七天中任何时候都要近。在所有的教堂聚会中，只有这个时刻是宁静的。这才是教会的期盼和宗旨。这时，思想和心灵得到了净化，假如真能净化的话；在早礼拜仪式庄严肃穆的浓重氛围中，过去一周的所有灾难都已结束，都已累加起来得到了救赎；无论下一个星期会做什么，厄运都尚未出现，信念和希望如凉风般温柔地拂过。此时，内心暂时获得了平静。

海托华坐在暗夜的窗口，似乎看见那些人。现在，他们开始聚集，进了门。他们几乎全都到了那里。接着，他略微前倾，开始说“开始，开始”；于是，音乐仿佛一直在等他发出信号一样开始演奏起来。盛夏

的夜晚，弦乐清晰而洪亮，响亮的声音夹杂着卑微与高尚，好像自由的噪音随着音量的提升，正慢慢形成受难者的形象和表情，陶醉、严肃、深邃。然而，和所有的宗教音乐一样，即便这时，它仍然有一种严厉、不可饶恕的味道，如献祭般有意而为，并且冷酷无情。这是一种恳请和祈求，不是为爱、为生命而拒绝任何人拥有它，而是以响亮的音调祈求死亡，仿佛死亡是一种恩赐。接受这种音乐的人们似乎发出一浪高过一浪的赞美声，正是这种音乐的赞颂和象征意义塑造了他们，所以他們要以赞美的方式回报它。海托华静静地倾听着，仿佛在乐声中听到自己的过去、当时所处的环境以及体内循环的血液都已固化：他生于斯、长于斯的土地上的人们永远无法获得欢乐，无法承受灾难，也无法安然躲过这一切。他们似乎无法承受快乐和喜悦：他们只会从暴力、酗酒、斗殴以及祈祷中找到宣泄；对于灾难也是如此，同样的暴力手段，同样显而易见地无法逃避。那为什么他们的宗教不强迫他们受难和彼此折磨呢？他思索着，似乎能在乐声中听到他们的宣言和努力，因为他们知道明天必须采取行动。过去的一周好似激流奔涌而去，明天开始的新一周如深渊般降临。此刻，在瀑布的边缘，奔腾的水流已经汇成一种响亮、尖厉的叫喊声，这种叫喊并非出于正义，而是俯冲前的绝唱；也不是对任何神灵的祷告，而是在向监牢中的死囚诉说。这个人能听到他们的歌声，也能听到另外两座教堂的乐声。在他受刑时，人们也会为他竖起十字架。海托华站在晦暗的窗口自言自语，“他们也很乐意这么做”。他感到嘴唇和下巴的肌肉因为有所预感而变得紧张起来，这种预感甚至比嘲笑更可怕。“因为同情他就意味着承认自我怀疑。他们自己也希望、也需要同情。他们会很乐意这么做，非常乐意。这就是它的可怕之处，可怕，恐怖。”这时，他往前靠了一点，看见三个人走过来，拐进大门，街灯的阴影映出他们的侧影。他早已认出那是拜伦，而且他身后还跟着两个人。他知道那是一男一女，但除了一个人穿着女裙外，几乎很难分辨清他俩：一样的身高，一样的胖瘦，他们比普通男女胖两倍，像两头

熊一样。他忍俊不禁，“要是拜伦头上也戴一块手帕，再配一副耳环的话。”他一边想，一边暗自发笑，努力想止住笑，以便等拜伦进门时，好到门口迎接他们。

拜伦领着他们走进书房——一个矮胖的女人穿着紫色的衣服，帽子上插着一根羽毛，手里拿着一把雨伞，面无表情；那个男人脏得有些不可思议，衰老得令人难以置信，蓄着烟气十足的山羊胡，眼睛里露出疯狂的目光。他们进屋时毫不羞怯，反而像两个玩偶被拙劣的弹簧操纵着。两人当中，女人显得更加自信些，或者说至少更为清醒。尽管她懒得走动，刻板而机械地挪着每一步，但她此行的目的非常明确，至少可以说是抱有模糊的希望。然而，海托华一眼就看出，那个男人有些神志不清，看似漠不关心，毫不在意身在何处，但同时又矛盾地具备了一种痴迷而警觉的潜质，这种潜质随时会爆发。

“这就是她，”拜伦低声说，“这是海因斯太太。”

他们一动不动地站在那里：女人仿佛在长途跋涉后终于抵达目的地，此时正置身陌生的面孔和环境中，像冰川一样冷淡，像石砌彩绘一样冷静地等着；邋遢的老头儿沉着而痴迷，但随时都可能勃然大怒。这两个人的好奇心若有似无，好像都没怎么瞧海托华。海托华指了指椅子。拜伦领着手拿雨伞的海因斯太太小心翼翼地坐下来。老头儿自己也一屁股坐在椅子上。海托华拉了一把椅子坐在桌子对面，问：“她想跟我说什么？”

海因斯太太坐着没动。显然，她没有听见。她好像依靠信念的力量刚刚完成一次艰难的旅行，现在终于停下来，开始静静地等待。“这是他，”拜伦说，“这是海托华牧师。告诉他。告诉他你想对他说的。”她面无表情地望着正在说话的拜伦。如果她真有隐情，也早已被刻板的面

孔掩盖了；如果她真有任何愿望或祈求，那张脸也没表现出任何迹象。“告诉他，”拜伦又说，“告诉他，你为什么来，为什么要来杰弗逊镇。”

“因为——”她突然开口了，声音虽然不高却低沉而尖厉，好像她自己也没料到说话时声音会这么嘈杂；她怔住了，仿佛被自己的声音吓了一跳，依次望着另外两张脸。

“说吧，”海托华说，“尽量说给我听。”

“因为我……”她再次欲言又止，声音虽然不高，却好似受惊一般戛然而止，好像这三个字自动设置了障碍，以至于她的声音无法逾越；他们几乎都能看出她为此所做的努力。“自从他学会走路后，我再也没见着他，”她说，“不只是三十年没有见，一次都没见过他走路，没叫过他一声名字——”

“淫贱！可恨！”老头儿突然开口骂道，高亢而尖厉的声音充满力量，“淫贱！可恨！”然后，他不说话了。极度愤怒的他像先知一样，迅速从梦魇般的状态中突然迸发出这四个字。海托华看了他一眼，又看了看拜伦。拜伦平静地说：

“他是他们女儿的孩子。他——”拜伦稍稍扬了一下头，指了指老头儿，老头儿两眼放光，正狂躁地瞪着海托华，“——孩子一出生便被他抱走了。她不知道他如何处置了孩子，甚至从来不知道孩子是生是死，直到——”

老头儿又一次令人惊诧地突然打断拜伦。不过，这次他没有叫喊：他的声音像拜伦的一样沉着，富有逻辑性。他以清晰的语调讲述着，只不过略有些急躁：“是的，老海因斯博士把他带走了，这是上帝赐予海

因斯的机会，所以老海因斯同样也以机会回赠了上帝。于是，上帝从小孩口中传达了祂的意愿。小孩子在上帝和人类的耳畔一起朝祂大声叫着‘黑鬼！’‘黑鬼！’，充分彰显着上帝的意愿。老海因斯博士向上帝祈祷‘这还不够。孩子们之间叫的比黑鬼更难听’，上帝说‘你等着瞧，因为我没有时间可以浪费在处理这个世界的放荡和淫贱上。我已经在祂身上留下了印迹，现在我要让他明白。我派你到那儿观察和维护我的意愿。该你去照管和监督了’。”海因斯没有往下说，语调也丝毫没有降低，只是声音突然间消失了，就像有人不想听唱机，把唱片的唱针提起来，音乐声突然停止了一样。海托华的目光从他身上移到拜伦那里，几乎也是瞪大了眼睛，问道：

“怎么了？怎么了？”

“我本想安排她来和你见面谈话，不让他跟着来，”拜伦说，“但他没有地方去，她说她必须看管好他。他昨天在摩兹镇就一直撺掇人们，要把克里斯默斯处以私刑，他自己都不明白自己做了些什么。”

“把他处以私刑？”海托华说，“把他的外孙处以私刑？”

“她就是这么说的，”拜伦淡淡地回答道，“她说这就是他来找这儿的目。所以她必须和他待在一起，才能阻止他。”

海因斯太太又开始讲话。也许她刚才一直在倾听，但她还是刚进屋时那样的面无表情；她板着脸，像老头儿一样突然开口，死气沉沉地说道：“五十年来，他一直是这个样子。五十年多了，但我已经忍受了五十年。甚至在我们结婚前，他都一直在打架。米莉出生的那天晚上，他因为打架被关在监狱。这就是我一直以来所忍耐和遭受的。他说他必须打，因为他比大部分人要矮，不打就会被人欺负。这是他的虚荣

和骄傲在作怪。我告诉他那是他身体里有魔鬼，总有一天，魔鬼会来找他，等他明白过来就已经晚了。到那时，魔鬼会说‘尤菲斯，我是来讨债的’。这是米莉出生第二天时，我对他说的。当时，他刚从监狱出来。我对他说，上帝适时地给他发出了信号和警告：就在女儿出生的那个时刻，他被关进了监狱。那是上帝意愿的明示，上天认为他不配养育女儿。上帝给他的信号表明那个镇子对他不利。当时他在铁路上干活，是一名制动器检修工。这时，他自己也明白了那是警示，于是我们搬出那个镇子。过了不久，他成了锯木厂的工头，干得也不错。因为那时他还没开始骄傲自负地借上帝的名义，为自己身上的魔鬼辩解并请求宽恕自己。一天晚上，勒蒙·布什的马车从马戏团出来，经过我家门口，却没有停车让米莉下来。尤菲斯回到家，把抽屉翻了个底朝天，直到最后找到那把手枪。我对他说：‘尤菲斯，现在让你着急的不是米莉的安危，而是魔鬼。’他说：‘什么魔鬼不魔鬼，什么魔鬼不魔鬼的。’说着，他把我推倒在床上，我眼睁睁地看着他——”海因斯太太没往下说。不过，她的声音是慢慢传来的，仿佛唱片机播到一半却没了电。海托华的目光又从她身上移到拜伦身上，还是那副瞠目结舌的惊讶表情。

“我也听过这些，”拜伦说，“起初，我也很难理解。他们住在阿肯萨斯州的一家锯木厂，他是那里的工头。女孩当时约莫有十八岁。一天晚上，马戏团途经锯木厂要去镇上。那是十二月的一天，下着瓢泼大雨，一辆马车在锯木厂附近的一座桥上翻了车，车上的人去他家把他叫醒，向他们借用木滑轮，想把马车吊出来——”

“那是上帝所憎恨的女人的肉体！”老头儿突然叫起来。接着，他的声音缓缓降下来，好像他只想吸引别人的注意力一样。接着，他又加快语速，花言巧语、模棱两可地用第三人称狂热地谈到自己。“他知道。老海因斯博士知道。他早在她身上发现了女人的肉体的印迹，那是上帝

所憎恶的，就在她的衣服下面。所以，当他穿上雨衣，打着灯笼出去又回来时，她早已穿好雨衣站在门口。他告诉她：‘回去睡觉。’她却说：‘我也想去。’然后他又说：‘回房间上床睡觉去。’她转身回去以后，他便直接去锯木厂取了大滑轮，把马车拉了出来。他一直干到天亮，相信她遵从了父亲的命令和上帝的意愿。然而，他应该明白，应该明白上帝憎恨的女人的肉体。他本应该看出可恶的淫贱早已成形，开始玷污上帝的眼睛。老海因斯博士很清楚他是个西班牙人。老海因斯博士从他脸上看到了万能的上帝对黑鬼的诅咒。告诉他——”

“什么？”海托华问，他大声叫起来，好像他早就料到，必须增大音量才能淹没对方的声音，“怎么回事？”

“是马戏团的一个家伙，”拜伦说，“海因斯逮住他女儿时，她说那个家伙是墨西哥人。也许是那家伙告诉她的，但——”拜伦又指了指老头儿，“——知道那个人身上有黑人的血统。也许马戏团的人们告诉了他，我不清楚。他也没说过他是怎么知道的，好像谁说的无关紧要。我觉得也是。因为第二天晚上后发生了一些事情。”

“第二天晚上？”

“我猜马戏团滞留的那晚她就溜出去了。他是那么说的。要是她没有出去过的话，他也不会那么做。因为第二天她和邻居去了马戏团，他允许她去。当时，他不知道前天晚上她就没有待在家里。他没有产生任何怀疑，甚至当她穿着节日盛装出门，钻进邻居的马车里时，他都没有起疑心。可是当天晚上，他一直等待马车回来，倾听马车的动静。马车上路了，经过他家时却似乎没打算停下来让他女儿下车。于是他跑出去叫喊，邻居停下马车，而米莉却不在里面。邻居说在马戏团的表演场里她就离开了，整晚和住在大约六英里外的另一个女孩待在一起。邻居

觉得奇怪，海因斯怎么不知道这件事。因为女孩上车时，手里拎着包。可海因斯却没有看见。而且她——”这次，拜伦指了指板着脸的老太太，“她也许听到了拜伦的声音，也许没有。她说是魔鬼在牵引他。她说当时他和她都不知道米莉去了哪里，可海因斯冲进屋里，拿出手枪。当她试图阻拦时，他还把她打倒在床上。她说他抄了一条他能走的唯一一条近路，一条能够追上他们的路。但他绝对不可能知道他们走的是哪条路。然而，他选对了，也找见他们了，好像他一直就知道他们去了哪里，好像他和女儿声称的墨西哥人已经约好要在那里见面，好像他全都知晓。甚至在伸手不见五指的黑夜里，当他追上一辆轻便马车时，他都无法断定它就是自己要找的那辆马车。但他紧紧跟着那辆车，他所见到的第一辆马车。他骑着马在马车右侧行进，一声不吭地走在漆黑的夜里。他俯下身，连马都没有停下就一把抓住了那个男人。这个人也许是陌生人，也许是邻居，因为他看不到，也听不出来。海因斯一手抓住那个人，一手拿枪对准他并且将他击毙。之后，他把女儿带上身后的马背回了家。他把那辆马车和那个男人一起留在大路上。这时又开始下雨了。”

拜伦没有继续往下说。那个女人立马接过话茬儿，仿佛她一直在非常耐心地等待拜伦停下来。她还是刚刚那样僵硬、平淡的语调，两个单调的声音此起彼伏，两个无形的声音梦呓般地讲述，冷酷无情的人在狭小的空间里上演的一幕：“我躺在床上，听到他走出去，骑着马从畜棚里出来，刚走过门口就开始飞驰。我穿着衣服躺在床上，望着油灯，火苗越来越小。过了一会儿，我坐起来，拿着灯去了厨房。我把油灯添满油，挑亮灯芯。油灯一直亮着，我脱了衣服躺在床上。外面一直在下雨，非常冷。过了一会儿，我听见骡马回了院里，在门廊处停下来。我坐起来，披上围巾，听见他们走进来。我能听出尤菲斯和米莉的脚步声，他们走进客厅。米莉站在那里，满脸雨水，头发和新衣服上全都是

泥水。她闭着眼睛，尤菲斯把她打倒在地，她躺在那里的表情和站起来时没什么两样。尤菲斯浑身是泥，湿漉漉地站在门口，说道：‘你说过我在给魔鬼干活。好啊，我把魔鬼的收成给你带回来啦。你问问她肚子里装的啥？你问她！’我当时又冷又困，就问：‘出什么事了？’他说：‘你过那边，低头看看那脏东西里有什么。他也许能骗她说是墨西哥人，可他骗不了我。他也骗不了她，用不着骗。因为你说过总有一天魔鬼会来找我收账，对，他来了。我老婆给我生了个娼妓。不过，还好，他来收债的时候给我指明了一条路，帮我端稳了手枪。’

“所以，有时候我会想魔鬼怎么战胜了上帝。因为我们发现米莉快要生孩子了，尤菲斯开始寻找可以处理掉孩子的医生。我相信他能找到，有时候我觉得要是还想活下去，这样也好。有时我希望他能找到。经历过这些折磨后，我太累了。马戏团的老板来告诉我们，那个家伙真是混血的黑鬼，根本不是什么墨西哥人。一切如尤菲斯一直说的那样，好像魔鬼跟他说过那个家伙是黑鬼。尤菲斯又拿出手枪，说要么去找一个医生回来，要么就杀一个。他每次一走就是一个星期，乡亲们都知道这件事，我劝尤菲斯搬家，因为只有马戏团老板说他是黑人，也许他也不确定。而且他已经死了，我们再也不可能见到他。可尤菲斯不愿离开，米莉生产的日子也快到了，尤菲斯还是拿着枪出去找能处理孩子的医生。后来，我听说他又进了监狱；他到过好多地方的教堂和祈祷会去找医生。一天晚上，他在祈祷会中途站起来，走向布道坛开始说教，大骂黑鬼，让白人合力将黑鬼全部杀死。教堂里的乡亲们让他住嘴，不允许他在上面。他掏出手枪威胁他们，直到警察赶来将他制伏，他当时像个疯子似的。人们发现他已经在另一个镇上打伤一名医生，在被抓之前就跑了。因此，当他从监狱出来回到家时，米莉已经快生了。我以为他看到了上帝最终的意愿，能够放弃自己的想法，因为他在家里非常安静。一天，他发现了我和米莉瞒着他准备好的小衣服时，他什么都没

说。他每天都会问，我们以为他已经放弃了，也许去教堂或进监狱把他驯服了，就像米莉出生的那天一样。于是，米莉生产的日子到了。一天晚上，米莉把我叫醒，说她快生了。我穿好衣服，告诉尤菲斯去找医生。他穿上衣服走了出去。我把一切收拾妥当，只等尤菲斯和医生回来。时间一点点过去了，尤菲斯还没有回来。我一直等到医生本应该很快就能赶到时，走到门廊处一看，尤菲斯正坐在最高一级台阶上，膝上放着一支猎枪。他说：‘滚回家里，养娼妇的贱人。’我叫了一声‘尤菲斯’。他举起猎枪说：‘进去。让魔鬼自己来收拾：这是他自己种下的。’我想办法从后面跑了出去，尤菲斯听到我的脚步声后，手持猎枪绕着房子追赶我，还用枪托打了我。我只好回到家里。他站在客厅门口，眼睁睁看着米莉死去。然后，他走到床边，看了婴儿一眼，他抱起婴儿，高高举起，举得比灯还要高，好像是在等着看魔鬼和上帝谁是赢家。我软瘫了，坐在床边，看着墙上映出的影子，他的，手臂的，还有高高举起的襁褓。当时，我以为上帝胜利了。但现在我仍然不明白。因为他把婴儿放回米莉身边就走了。我听见他走出前门，我站起来，点燃炉火，热了些奶。”说到这里，她突然停住，刺耳的嗡嗡声消失了。海托华坐在桌子对面望着她：这个面容僵硬的女人穿着紫色的衣裙，自打进屋坐下后就一直没动。接着，她又开始讲述，还是没有动，嘴唇几乎都没有动一下，好像她是一具玩偶，而她的声音像是另一个房间发出的口技表演。

“尤菲斯走了。锯木厂的老板不知道他去了哪里，又找了一个新的工头，不过允许我在那幢房子里多住些日子，因为我们都不知道尤菲斯去了哪儿。冬天来了，我得照料孩子。我和格尔曼先生一样，都不知道尤菲斯的去向，直到他寄来一封信。这封信是从孟菲斯寄来的，信里有张汇款单，只有这些。所以我一直不明白。后来在十一月的时候，我又收到一张汇款单，里面还是没有信什么的。我当时非常疲惫。圣诞节的

前两天，我到后院劈柴，回来时发现孩子不见了。我离开卧室不到一小时。要是他回来或离开我都能看到，可我什么也没看见。我只发现了尤菲斯留在枕头上的一封信。这个枕头是我放在孩子和床边以防婴儿滚下床的。我非常累，只能等待。圣诞节后，尤菲斯回到家里，什么都没跟我说，只说我们要搬家，我以为他已经把婴儿安顿在那里后才回来接我的。他不告诉我要搬到哪里，只说很快就搬。我快急疯了，担心我们没到那里的时候孩子怎么办。可他还是什么都不说，而且好像我们又没法走了。后来，我们搬家了，可婴儿却不在那里。我说：‘你告诉我，你把乔怎么啦。你必须告诉我。’他看着我，和那晚看着米莉躺在床上死去时的表情一样。他说：‘那是上帝痛恨的。我是他的意愿的执行者。’第二天，他离开了家，但我不知道他去了哪儿。他又寄了一张汇款单。下一个月，他回家后对我说他在孟菲斯干活。我知道，他把乔藏在了孟菲斯的某个地方，我觉得肯定是这么回事。如果那样的话，即使我不在，他也可以照看乔。我明白我得等尤菲斯愿意让我知道时他才会说。每次，我都以为下一次他会带我去孟菲斯。于是，我就等，我给乔缝制好衣服，等尤菲斯回家时，我会试着让他告诉我，乔穿这些衣服是不是合适，他好不好。可尤菲斯什么都不说。他坐在那里大声朗读《圣经》，除了我之外再没有其他听众，他大声喊出《圣经》的内容，好像他知道我不会相信《圣经》所说的一样。五年来，他一直都没有告诉我，我也不知道他有没有把那些衣服带给乔。我不敢问，怕他不高兴。因为即使我不问，他在的地方多少也和乔有些关系。五年后的一天，他回家对我说：‘我们要搬家。’我以为是时候了，我们也付出了代价，甚至我也原谅了尤菲斯。因为我想我们这次终于要去孟菲斯了。可是，我们去的地方并不是孟菲斯，而是摩兹镇。我们要经过孟菲斯，我恳请他。那是我第一次恳求他，可我还是求了：就一分钟，一秒钟；我不会碰孩子，不会和他说话，我什么都不做。可尤菲斯没有同意。我们一直没有离开车站。我们下了火车，一步都没离开车站，等了七个小时。直

到下一辆火车进站，我们去了摩兹镇。尤菲斯再没有回孟菲斯干活儿。过了一段时间，我叫了他一声‘尤菲斯’，他看着我。我说：‘我等了五年，我从没麻烦过你，你能不能就告诉我一次，他还活着吗？’他告诉我：‘死了。’我问：‘是对我来说死了，还是对于这个世界？哪怕只对我一个人而言呢。就告诉我这些行吗？五年来我从来没有打扰过你。’他说：‘他永远永远地死了，对你，我，对上帝，还有上帝的整个世界。’”

海因斯太太没有往下说。海托华一声不吭地坐在桌子对面，不胜惊讶。拜伦稍稍低下头，也没有动。他们三个像退潮后留在沙滩上的三块岩石一样安静，只有老头儿例外。他一直在听，几乎是全神贯注地在听，他那充耳不闻的注意力和恍若昏厥的沉思瞬息交替。他艰难地瞪大双眼，仿佛正在用力掰开眼睛一样。他突然哈哈大笑起来，响亮又疯狂；他开始说话，表现出令人难以置信的老气横秋和出奇的恶劣。“那是上帝，他就在那里。老海因斯博士用机会来报答上帝。上帝吩咐老海因斯如何去做，老海因斯便会照办。上帝告诉老海因斯博士‘现在你瞧，我的意愿已经实现’。老海因斯观察并倾听从上帝疼爱的无父无母的孩子嘴里说出的每句话。上帝自己的语言和想法通过孩子们的嘴巴表达出来。虽然孩子们没有犯过罪，也不明白那是什么意思，小女孩们甚至都不明白什么是罪恶和淫贱，天真无邪的她们都在喊黑鬼！黑鬼！‘记得我跟你说过什么吗？’上帝对老海因斯博士说，‘现在，我的意愿已经起作用，我要走了。这里没有足够的罪恶值得我忙碌。我倒也关心那个荡妇的奸情，那也是我的一部分意图。’老海因斯博士问‘荡妇的奸情怎么也是您的部分意图呢？’上帝回答说：‘你等着瞧。我让那个年轻医生圣诞节夜里发现门口台阶上的毯子里包裹着我所憎恨的东西，你以为纯属偶然吗？你以为那晚女总管不在孤儿院，给了那两个年轻人私通的机会，让他们亵渎我的儿子¹，以克里斯默斯给那个小东西命名，也是巧合吗？我现在要离开，因为我已经让我的意愿开始奏效，我安排

你在这里继续观察。’于是老海因斯博士等啊，看啊。在上帝安排的锅炉房里监视孩子们，观察魔鬼的种子不为人知地行走在他们中间，带着对他的辱骂玷污整个大地。因为他从来没有和其他孩子一起玩耍。只是一个人待着，一动不动地站在那里。后来，老海因斯博士明白，他正在倾听上帝私密的判决和警告。老海因斯问他：‘你怎么不像以前一样和其他孩子玩？’他没有回答。老海因斯博士又问：‘是不是因为他们都叫你黑鬼？’他还是不吭气。老海因斯博士说：‘你也认为上帝在你的脸上留下了印迹，是个黑鬼？’他问：‘上帝也是黑鬼吗？’老海因斯博士回答道：‘他是愤怒的主宰者，他的意愿会实现。不是你的，也不是我的，因为你和我只是他意愿和复仇的一部分。’他听完就走了。老海因斯注意到他正在倾听，听到了上帝复仇的旨意。后来，老海因斯发现自己正在盯着黑鬼在院里干活儿，于是就尾随他来到院里。黑鬼终于开口问他：‘老头儿，你为什么老盯着我？’老海因斯就问他：‘你怎么是黑鬼？’黑鬼就问：‘谁跟你说我是黑鬼，你这个小个子白种废物。’老海因斯说：‘我不是黑鬼。’黑鬼又说：‘你比黑鬼还糟糕。你都不知道自己是谁。更糟糕的是，你永远都不会知道。你到死都不会知道。’海因斯说：‘上帝可不是黑鬼。’黑鬼回答：‘我估计你得弄明白上帝是谁，因为除了上帝没人知道你是谁。’可是上帝用不着回答，因为他的意愿已经实现，还留下老海因斯博士去看护他的意愿。从第一个晚上起，上帝选择儿子的生日作为执行意愿的开始，他派老海因斯博士去照管。那天晚上天气很冷，老海因斯博士站在漆黑的墙角后，在那里他能看见台阶，看到上帝的意志得到实现。年轻的医生淫荡、好色，他停下脚步，捡起上帝所憎恨的包袱，抱回屋里。老海因斯博士尾随其后，耳闻目睹了一切。他看到年轻的娼妇正在亵渎上帝神圣的诞生日，她们趁女总管不在，拿出蛋酒和威士忌酒，解开毯子。上帝的工具，医生的情人吉萨贝尔说道：‘我们就叫他克里斯默斯吧。’另一个说：‘什么克里斯默斯？克里斯默斯什么？’上帝对老海因斯说：‘告诉她们。’她们浑身散发出肮脏

的气味，望着老海因斯叫嚷道：‘喔，是博士大叔，来看看圣诞老人给我们往台阶上放了什么东西，博士大叔。’老海因斯说：‘他叫约瑟夫。’她们不再大笑，望着老海因斯，吉萨贝尔问：‘你怎么知道？’老海因斯说：‘上帝说的。’接着，她们又开始笑起来，大声叫着《圣经》上如是说：‘克里斯默斯，乔的儿子。乔，乔的儿子。乔·克里斯默斯’。她们说‘为乔·克里斯默斯干杯’，她们想让老海因斯喝酒，为上帝所憎恨的东西喝酒，可他把酒杯放在了一边。他一边观察一边等待，等待上帝的绝佳时机，等到邪恶的衍生。医生的情人吉萨贝尔从淫荡的卧室跑出来，依旧带着罪恶和恐惧说，‘他躲在床后’。老海因斯说，‘你用了能够让你毁灭的芳香肥皂，激起上帝的痛恨和愤怒，活该’。她说，‘你和他谈一谈，我见过你和他说话，你去劝劝他’。老海因斯说，‘我和上帝一样不会操心你们的私通’。她说，‘他如果说出来的话，我会被解雇，那我还怎么见人呢’。当时，她浑身散发出贪婪淫荡的臭味，站在老海因斯面前。那一刻，上帝的意愿在她身上开始起作用，她在上帝为无父无母的孩子准备的居所里暴跳如雷。‘你无计可施。’老海因斯说，‘你和所有的荡妇，都是执行上帝愤怒意愿的工具，谁都躲不过。你是上帝的工具，和乔·克里斯默斯、老海因斯一样。’她转身离开了，老海因斯望着她离去，一直等在那里。过了不久，她又返回来，像沙漠中的一头困兽一样说道，‘我把他搞定了’，老海因斯问，‘搞定啦’？没有老海因斯不知道的事情，因为上帝从来不向他选择的工具隐瞒任何意图。老海因斯说，‘你已经完成了上帝既定的意愿，可以走啦。你可以在安宁中憎恨上帝，直到那一天到来’。她像荒郊野外的一头动物一样，饥不择食地放声大笑，充满恶臭的嘴巴发出对上帝的讥讽。不久，有人过来把他带走了。老海因斯博士目送他坐在轻便马车上离开，然后返回来等待上帝。上帝进来对老海因斯博士说：‘你也可以走了。你已经完成了我交代的工作，这里再没有邪恶，只有女人的罪恶，不值得我亲选的工具来监视。’老海因斯博士听从上帝的安排也走了。可他一直和上帝保持联

系。到了晚上，他会说：‘上帝啊，那个杂种呢？’上帝告诉他‘他还行走在我的土地上’。老海因斯博士和上帝一直联系着，一到晚上他便说：‘上帝啊，那个杂种呢？’上帝说：‘他还行走在我的土地上。’老海因斯博士一直与上帝有联系。一天晚上，他辗转反侧，挣扎着大声叫喊：‘那个杂种，上帝！我感觉到了！我感觉到了魔鬼的獠牙！’上帝说：‘是那个杂种，你还没有完成任务。他可憎地玷污了我的土地。’”

远处教堂的乐声早已停止。从敞开的窗户飘进了夏夜里无数祥和的声音。海托华坐在桌子对面，比以前更像一只狼狈不堪、遭到愚弄的动物，像遭人算计、深陷其中却欲逃不能。另外三个人像审判长一样坐在他对面。两个男人岿然不动，老妇人面容坚硬，像一块石头一样耐心等待着。老头儿筋疲力尽，像一根蜡烛的火焰被突然熄灭，只剩下烧焦的灯芯。只有拜伦似乎还有些生机，他低着头，好像在对膝盖上的一只手沉思，大拇指和食指慢慢摩擦、揉捏，他聚精会神地注视着手指的运动。海托华说话时，拜伦很清楚他不是在跟自己讲话，也不是对房间里的任何人讲。“他们想让我干吗？”他说，“他们觉得我能做什么？他们希望我做什么？相信我能做什么呢？”

接着，房间一片寂静。显然，老头儿和老太太都没听见。拜伦也没期待老头儿会听到。‘他不需要任何帮助。’他心想，‘用不着。他只想设置阻碍。’拜伦想起，十二个小时前见面时，这个老头儿无论走到哪里，都比老妇人靠后一些，一副恍惚、疯狂的昏迷状态。‘他需要的是障碍。我看他这么无助，对乡亲们倒是件好事。’拜伦一边看着海因斯太太，一边温和地低声说道：“说吧，告诉他你需要什么。他想知道你需要他做什么。告诉他。”

海因斯太太说：“我想，或许——”她的话音没有一丝颤动，与其说是踌躇不定，不如说是笨嘴拙舌，仿佛要被迫试着大声说出某种只能感知

的东西。“邦奇先生说，也许——”

“什么？”海托华问，他不耐烦地高声说了出来；他也没有挪动，还是背靠椅子，双手搭在扶手上，“什么？是什么？”

“我想……”海因斯太太没有往下说。窗户外面，昆虫一直在飞旋。海因斯太太接着又开始往下说，没有任何语调。她坐在那里，稍稍低下头，仿佛她也在平静专注地倾听自己的声音：“他是我的外孙，我女儿的小孩。我只是想如果我可以……要是他……”拜伦一边静静地听她说话，一边思索。真可笑，人们以为他们曾经在什么地方做过交易，却原来是他有个黑鬼外孙正等着受绞刑。海因斯太太的声音还在继续。“我知道不应该来打扰陌生人。可你很幸运，是个单身汉，一个单身男人，而且不会对爱产生绝望。但我估计，即使我说出来你也不会明白。我只是想也许有那么一天，可以像什么都没有发生过一样，好像乡亲们都不知道他杀……”声音又停止了。她没有动，仿佛她听到了自己闭嘴，如同她静待自己开口一样，依旧那么专注，那么平心静气。

“继续，”海托华不耐烦地高声说道，“继续说。”

“从他会走路，会说话开始，我再没有见过他。三十多年了，我从来没有见过他一面。我不是说他没有干过人们说他做的那些事，不应该像那些爱过、失去过的人那样受折磨。可是，如果乡亲们可以给他一天的时间，像什么事情都没发生过，仿佛这个世界也从没针对过他一样。那么，他就像刚刚旅行归来，长大成人一样。要是能有那么一天该多好。以后，我再也不会干涉，要是他能那样，我再也不会阻碍他接受任何惩罚。只需要一天，你明白吗？仿佛从来没有人反对他，他只是刚刚旅行归来，给我讲旅行的故事。”

“喔，”海托华的声音尖厉而响亮。尽管他坐着没动，握着扶手的关节绷得发白，衣服下面的身体禁不住开始慢慢颤抖。“啊，是的，”他说，“原来如此。简单，简单。”很明显，他无法控制自己不去这么说，“简单，简单。”他的声音一直很低，现在他开始提高音调。“他们想让我做什么？我该怎么办？拜伦！拜伦？这是什么？他们现在要我做什么？”拜伦早已站起来，站在桌子旁边，双手扶在桌上，望着海托华。海托华依然坐着没动，只不过肥胖的身子开始越来越颤抖。“啊，是的。我早就应该明白。这是拜伦提出的要求，我早就应该知道。那是我和拜伦的事。行，说啊，快说啊。你现在怎么犹豫啦？”

拜伦低头看着桌子，双手放在桌上。“事情不好办，不好办。”

“啊，同情？过了这么久，同情我？还是同情你自己？快点，说啊。你想让我做什么？那是你的主意，我知道。我一直都知道。啊，拜伦，拜伦。你真是个伟大的戏剧家。”

“或者你可以说我是推销员、代理人、销售员，”拜伦说，“事情不好办。我知道。你不说我也知道。”

“可我不像你一样有千里眼。你似乎早就知道我会说什么，但你不打算说出你的想法。那你到底想让我干吗？让我为凶手的罪责辩护？是吗？”

拜伦的脸微微露出一丝苦相，转瞬即逝。他带着嘲讽的意味，疲惫而不开心地说：“我想差不多。”他沉下脸，十分严肃地继续说，“让我难以启齿。上帝很清楚我知道这一点。”他全神贯注地看着自己的手在桌面上轻缓地挪动，“我记得曾经对你说过，善恶的代价相同：都得付出。该来的时候，好人也无法赖账，不能因为无力偿还就可以拒绝支

付。就像老实人赌博一样。恶人却能抵赖，所以没人指望他们可以当场或在其他时候付账；可好人却不能，也许因为行善而付出代价的时间要比作恶的代价更久些。而且一旦发生，就不会像你没做过，没付出过一样。它只会比以前更加糟糕。”

“继续说，继续，我该怎么做？”

拜伦看着自己的手一直在慢慢移动，陷入了沉思。“他一直都没有承认杀了她。所有对他不利的证据只是来自布朗的证词，如同没有证据一样。你可以说那天晚上他和你待在一起。布朗说每个晚上都会看见他朝大房子走去，然后进入那幢楼房。乡亲们相信你。至少，他们相信你说的。他们宁愿相信你，也不愿相信他和她像夫妻一样生活在一起，然后又把她杀死。现在你已经上了年纪，他们不会再伤害你。而且，我想你也习惯了他们所能做到的一切。”

“哦，”海托华说，“啊，是，是。他们会相信。事情非常好办，很好。对大家都好。然后他会回到曾经因他受苦的人们之间，布朗就得不到那笔赏金，而且还害怕让她的孩子合法，所以会再次逃脱，这次是永远地离开。那样就只剩下她和拜伦啦。我已经是个老头子了，非常幸运，可以免除对爱产生绝望。”他抬起头，气得瑟瑟发抖。灯光下，他的脸看起来很光滑，好像涂了油似的。痛苦而扭曲的脸在灯下闪闪发光；洗得发黄的衬衫是今早刚换的，现在已经被汗水湿透。“不是因为我不能，不是我不敢，”他说，“是因为我不愿意！我不愿意！因为我不愿做！”说着，他从扶手上抬起胳膊。“是因为我不想那么做！”拜伦站在那里没动，桌上缓缓移动的手停了下来。他望着海托华，心想，他不是冲我喊。他似乎知道，比我离他更近的人才需要被说服。海托华大声叫喊：“我不会做！不会！”他攥紧拳头，高高举起，满脸是汗，嘴唇张开，露出老化的牙齿紧紧咬合在一起，油灰色的脸庞松弛而无力。突

然，他的声音变得更加响亮。“滚出去！”他尖叫道，“滚出我的房子！”说完，他身子前倾，趴在桌子上，脑袋夹在伸开的双臂和握紧的拳头之间。老两口走在拜伦前面，拜伦走到门口，回头看了他一眼。海托华没有动，光秃秃的脑袋，紧握的拳头，伸开的双臂，全部落在灯罩下的光圈里。敞开的窗户外，虫鸣声恒久未变，一直没有停歇。

[1](#)耶稣之子出生之夜称为圣诞，英文Christmas，也即克里斯默斯的名字。

那是星期天晚上的事。第二天早晨，丽娜的孩子出生了。天刚刚亮，拜伦勒住奔跑的骡马，停在刚离开不到六小时的房前。他刚跳下马就开始跑，跑上通往黑暗门廊的步行小道。他似乎在转身审视自己的匆忙，冷静而严肃地思索着：“拜伦·邦奇有了一个孩子。要是两星期前我看到这些，我肯定不会相信自己的眼睛，我会说他们在撒谎。”

六小时前，他离开牧师家，此时窗户已经暗下来。他一边跑，一边回想海托华光秃秃的头顶、攥紧的拳头，还有肥胖的身子向前趴在桌上。“不过，我估计他没睡多久，”他心想，“即使他不去——不去做——”他想不出“助产师”这个词。他知道海托华会用这个词。“我想我用不着考虑这个，”他思考着，“就像一个人逃离或冲向枪口时，根本没时间去操心是勇敢还是怯懦。”

房门没锁。显然，他知道门会开着。他摸索着进入客厅，不是轻手轻脚地走路，他没打算那么做。他从没有进过比那间书房更深远的地方。上次，他在那里见到房子的主人趴在桌子上，灯光满满地洒在他身上。拜伦直接找到了自己要找的那扇门，好像他知道门在哪里，或者能看见，或者有人在指引他。“他准会用那个词，”拜伦一边思考，一边在黑暗中匆匆摸索着，“而且她也会说。”他指的是躺在小木屋那边的丽娜，她已经开始分娩了。“只不过他们对助产人的叫法不同。”还没进屋，拜伦就听见了海托华的鼾声。拜伦心想：“毕竟，他好像不那么沮丧了。”接着，他很快想道：“不，不对。不公平。我不相信。我知道，他在睡觉而我却醒着，那是因为他老了，没我能熬。”

他走近床边，仍然看不清床上鼾声如雷的人。他的鼾声中有一种宏

大而彻底屈服的意味，不是疲惫不堪，而是彻底服输，似乎海托华已经完全放弃了，放弃紧握的由骄傲、希望、虚荣和恐惧凝聚成的力量，这力量是胜败只能取其一的顽强劲头，是强烈的自我意识，放弃它通常意味着死亡。拜伦站在床边继续思索。可怜的人，可怜的人。对他而言，现在去把海托华从梦中叫醒似乎是最痛苦的伤害，他从未这样做过。“但不是我在等他，”拜伦心想，“上帝知道。因为上帝和其他人一样，最近也在观察我，观察我的下一步行动。”

他碰了碰正在睡觉的人，动作不粗鲁却很坚定。海托华不再打鼾；拜伦手底下的庞大身躯突然坐起来，问道：“嗯？谁？是谁？谁在那儿？”

“是我，”拜伦答道，“又是拜伦。您现在醒了吗？”

“哦。什么——”

“嗯，”拜伦说，“她说她快生了，时间快到了。”

“她？”

“请告诉我灯在哪里——海因斯太太，她在那边，我正要去请医生，但要花些时间。所以你可以骑我的骡子先去那儿。我估计你能骑到那里。你还需要带那本书吗？”

海托华的床随着他的挪动咯吱作响。“书？我的书？”

“黑人小孩出生时你拿的那本书。万一你要随身携带，我只是提醒一下。骡子就在大门外。它认识道儿。我要步行去镇上请医生。我会尽快赶回去。”说完，拜伦转身穿过房间，听到海托华坐在床上。他在房间停留了足够时间，摸到垂下的灯线绳把灯打开。电灯亮起时，他早已

走到门口，没有回头。身后的海托华冲他叫道：

“拜伦！拜伦！”拜伦没有停步，也没有答应。

天色越来越亮。稀疏的街灯逐渐不再耀眼，虫子还在灯下飞旋扑打。拜伦大步流星地走在空旷的街道上。白天即将来临；当他来到广场时，东方已经大亮。他很快想到自己没有早点预约医生，他一边走一边骂自己，像一个真正的年轻父亲一样，纠结于愤怒和恐惧中。他认定自己愚钝至极，由于疏忽大意，犯下不可饶恕的罪过。但这又不完全是一个准父亲的焦虑，背后还有其他东西，直到后来他才明白那是什么，好像一直潜藏在心底，仍旧被匆忙的需求所遮掩，正要跳出来控制他。然而，他的想法是：“我得快点做决定。人们说他给黑人小孩接生时干得不错，可这次不同。我上个星期就应该提前约好医生，而不是死等，到最后一分钟还得解释半天，挨门逐户去寻找一个愿意相信我不得不说的谎言，愿意跟我去那儿。我现在随便撒个谎，无论男女都会相信。我要是看起来不像最近说了不少谎话的人才怪呢！可看起来我又不像撒谎的人，我估计是我不擅长，做不好吧。”他飞快地走在街上，不知不觉中他已做出决定。对他来说，做这样的决定既不矛盾也不可笑，它早已迅速潜入他的脑海，并且在他没有意识到的情况下稳稳扎了根；他的脚步早已听命于这个决定，把他带到那位曾经给黑人小孩接生的医生家里。那时，医生迟到了，是海托华用他的刀片和书代行了医生的职责。

这次，医生去得更晚。拜伦必须等他穿好衣服。医生现在已经上了年纪，爱发脾气，在这个时候被人叫醒更是不高兴。接着，他又得找汽车钥匙，钥匙放在一个坚固的小铁盒里，铁盒的钥匙一时半会儿又找不见，可他又不允许拜伦撬锁。因此，当他们最终到达小木屋时，东方已经发出淡黄色的光芒，夏天喷薄的太阳呼之欲出。在小木屋再次见面时，这两个男人都已经老了，职业医生又输给了业余接生员。医生进门

时，里面传出了婴儿的啼哭。医生烦躁地看着牧师。“哦，大夫，”他说，“我巴不得拜伦早点告诉我已经请了你，那样的话，我这会儿还在睡觉呢。”他从牧师身边挤过去，走进屋里。“这次比上次咱俩商量时要走运。不过，看起来这会儿是你需要一位医生或者一杯咖啡吧。”海托华说了几句，但医生没有停下来听他说话，只顾往前走。他走进房间，里面有一个他从没见过的年轻女人，虚弱地躺在狭窄的简易床上，一个陌生的老妇人穿着紫色的衣裙，抱着婴儿放在膝头，在暗处还有一个老头儿睡在另一张床上。医生一边看，一边心中暗想，这个老头看上去就跟死人一样，睡得那么沉，那么安静。不过医生没有马上注意到海因斯。他走到抱孩子的老妇人面前。“噢，噢，”他说，“拜伦准是太兴奋了。他从没告诉我这儿有这么一大家子在身边，还有爷爷奶奶。”老妇人抬起头望着他。医生心想：“她看起来比老头儿更有生气，至少她坐着。不过她好像没有足够的精力去做一个母亲，更别说做祖母了。”

“是的，”老妇人答道。她抬起头看了医生一眼，弯腰护着孩子。接着，他注意到她的脸并不愚蠢也不茫然。这时，他看到这张脸上浮现出的安详和恐怖仿佛消失已久，现在又获得了新生。不过，他立刻注意到她的神情更像一块岩石和一只蹲伏的动物。她扭头看着老头儿；医生第一次完全看清，老头儿睡在另一张简易床上。她马上变得狡黠而紧张，恐惧也慢慢退去：“我骗了他，我说你这次会从后门进来。我骗了他。不过现在你来了，去看看米莉吧。我来照顾乔。”说完，她又回到面无表情样子。医生亲眼看到生机和活力突然从她脸上转瞬即逝，这张脸看起来太过僵硬，太过死板，根本不可能有刚才那样的表情；此刻，她正瞠目结舌地审视着医生，茫然无措地俯身去护住孩子，好像医生要从她手里抢夺孩子一样。也许是她的动作刺激了婴儿，他马上哭起来。这时，她脸上的茫然也随之消失，像影子一样缓缓退去。她低头看着孩子，木然的面容陷入沉思，显得滑稽而可笑。“这是乔，是我的米莉的

小宝贝。”

医生进屋时，拜伦在门口停下来。他就是在这里听到了哭喊，觉得可怕的事情即将发生。海因斯太太在帐篷外喊他，声音里传递出某种信息，让他几乎是在奔跑中穿好了裤子。海因斯太太站在木屋门口，她还没有脱衣服准备睡觉，海托华从她身边经过跑进屋里。海因斯太太站在他旁边跟他说话；也许他也应答了几句。不管怎样，他跨上骡子就朝镇上狂奔而去。他似乎还能看见她，看见她两手撑在床上时的面孔，她低头看着床单下的身体，带着恐惧和无助大声痛哭。这一幕一直在他眼前浮现，直到他把海托华叫醒、催促医生出发。在他内心的某个地方潜藏着什么东西，可是思维过快使他无暇考虑。一定是这样。大脑高速运转，他根本没时间考虑，一直到他和医生到达小木屋。这时，他停下脚步站在木屋外面，婴儿的一声啼哭让他觉得可怕的事情还是发生了。

现在，他终于明白，在他忘记预约、穿过空旷的广场去找医生的路上，一直潜藏、让他揪心的东西是什么了。他现在明白自己为什么会忘记提前预约医生，那是因为直到海因斯太太在帐篷外喊他时，他才相信他（她）需要一位医生。整整一个星期，他的眼睛好像接受了她的肚子，可他的内心却并不相信。“可我知道，”他心想，“我肯定知道，我做了那么多：东奔西跑，撒谎骗人，对乡亲们提心吊胆。”然而，他现在明白自己一直没有相信，直到他从海因斯太太身边经过，朝小木屋望了一眼。他在睡梦中听到第一声叫唤时，他已经明白发生了什么事情；他起身穿上衣服，匆匆套上工装，深知必须马上就去，知道自己期待五个晚上的事情要发生了，但他还是不愿相信。现在，他明白，当他跑到木屋往里瞧时，本以为她会坐在床上，或者跟他在门口平静地相遇一样，还是老样子，好像什么事情都没有发生过。然而，即便当他的手碰到门板，听到从未听过的声音时，他一直都是那样的想法。她在呻吟，

哭号，声音不高却带着急切而可悲的意味，似乎在用他或任何男人能听懂的语言诉说着什么。接着，他从门口的海因斯太太身边经过，看见她躺在简易床上。他以前从未见她在床上躺着，他相信，即使他看见躺着的她时，她也会紧张或警觉，也许在彻底认出他时还会微微一笑。可是当他进屋时，她没有看他一眼，甚至好像没有意识到房门已经打开，房间里除了她还有什么人或什么东西，也不知道自己其实是在用男人们听不懂的语言哭诉。她把床单拉到她的下巴处，双臂支撑着上半身，耷拉着脑袋，头发散乱，双眼像两个黑洞，嘴唇没有血色，像背靠的枕头一样惨白。她似乎正用这种惊恐、难以置信的愤怒审视着床单遮住的身体，发出响亮而凄惨的哭喊声。海因斯太太弯腰站在她身边。她扭过头，海因斯太太紫色的肩膀上露出她僵硬的面孔。“去，”她说，“去找医生。到时间了。”

拜伦全然不记得自己去过马厩，但他确实从那里牵出他的骡子，拖出马鞍，“啪”地放在骡背上。他的动作非常麻利，可思维却转得很慢。现在他才找到原因，他才明白当时自己正在慢慢盘算，就像风暴来临前海面上的油污在慢慢散开。“要是我当初就知道，”他心想，“如果我早知道，如果当时就能想清楚。”他的内心充满惊骇、绝望和懊悔，静静地思索着。“对。我本应该转身朝另一个方向骑。我估计要是我跑了，也永远不会有人知道或记得我。”可他并没有那么做。他骑上骡子快速经过小木屋，思绪渐渐平静下来，他也不知道这是为什么。“如果我只是路过，不去听她喊叫，”他想，“要是我能在她喊叫前就离开。”就这样，他骑着骡子上了大路，健壮的小骡子加快了速度，思绪像油一样平缓均匀地散开：“我该先去找海托华，把骡子留给他，还得提醒他带上那本当医生的书。我可不能忘了这件事。”思绪像油一样飘远，没等骡子停稳，他便跳下地，冲进海托华的屋子。这时，他想起了别的事。“这下好啦。”就算我找不到正规医生也不怕。拜伦带着这样的想法

来到广场，接着他又背离了这个想法；他感觉到自己已经被内心潜藏的东西牢牢抓住。即便我找不到正规医生也没关系。因为我从不相信我得找个医生，我不相信。这个想法一直萦绕在他心头，时间紧迫，他却不得不帮老医生寻找开铁盒的钥匙，然后才能拿到汽车钥匙。矛盾的心情将他紧紧抓牢。他们终于找到了钥匙，一时间手忙脚乱地发动汽车，在空旷的黎明中加速行驶在空荡荡的道路上一或者说，他已经向现实低了下头，像其他人一样对站在身边的医生充满了绝望和恐惧。拜伦总算回到了小木屋。他们从车上下来，走到门口，木屋里还亮着灯。奔跑的最后间隙，他刚得到片刻安宁，打击便随之而来，张牙舞爪地从身后袭来并且将他制伏。这时，屋里传出婴儿的哭声，他这下才明白过来。天很快就亮了，他静静地站在清冷的安宁中，清醒而平静—琐细，无以言表，任何人都很难再次拥有这种感受。现在，他明白一直阻止他相信的是自己的信念，是他坚持的信念阻止了他。他坚定而严肃，心中十分惊诧。好像直到我听见海因斯太太在外面叫我的声音，然后看到她的那张脸，我才明白那个时刻拜伦·邦奇一文不值，我才意识到她已经不再是处女。拜伦觉得非常可怕，但令他恐惧的又不止这些，还有其他东西。他昂着头，一动不动地站在天已大亮的晨曦中，静静地思索。正如海托华牧师所说，这个也应该由我来承担。我现在必须告诉那个人。我必须告诉卢卡斯·伯奇。这时，拜伦觉得非常奇怪，像是对青春产生可怕、无法挽回的绝望。为什么，到现在我才相信他的存在。我，她，所有被卷进来的其他人，我们只是一堆没有任何意义的词语，甚至我们连自己都不是。我们一直生活着，甚至从没想过那些缺失的词语。是的，直到现在，我才相信他是卢卡斯·伯奇，确实有个人叫卢卡斯·伯奇。

“走运，”海托华说，“走运。我不知道我是不是走运。”不过医生已经走进木屋。海托华向后瞟去，看到简易床边围着的人们，听见了医生快活的声音。老妇人静静地坐在那里，但回想不久前，他还似乎在和她

争夺婴儿，生怕她一言不发，勃然大怒之余会将孩子扔在地上。然而，她并没有因为沉默而少显一分暴怒，当婴儿从母体出来时，她一边高高举起婴儿，一边望着简易床上熟睡的老头儿，像熊一样笨重的身子还是一副卑躬屈膝的样子。海托华进来时，老头儿正在睡觉，好像连呼吸都没有；简易床边的老妇人蜷缩在椅子上，简直像块即将滚下悬崖的石头。海托华一时间以为，她杀了他，这次她先下手为强了。接着，他便开始忙碌，没有注意到胳膊肘旁边的老妇人，直到她夺过还没来得及呼吸的婴儿时，他才发现她把孩子高高举起，虎视眈眈地瞪着另一张简易床上的老头儿。然后，婴儿有了呼吸，开始大哭。老妇人似乎在回应，还是用那种听不懂的语言，粗鲁而难掩喜悦之情。海托华担心她会吧婴儿扔在地上，从她手里抢过孩子时，她一脸狂躁。“瞧！”他说，“看看！他很安静，这次他不会把孩子带走。”但她还是一声不吭，像野兽一样盯着海托华，仿佛听不懂他口中的英语。可是，她脸上的狂乱和喜悦的表情都已经消失了。她发出嘶哑的抱怨声，想从海托华手里抢过婴儿。“小心，”他说，“能小心点吗？”海托华应允她可以抱孩子，她嘟嘟囔囔地接过孩子，轻轻地抱起婴儿，非常稳当。她坐在椅子上，把孩子放在膝头，迟到的医生站在简易床边，一边忙着手中的活儿，一边快活地抱怨着。海托华转身走出去，小心翼翼地俯下身子，朝破败的台阶坐下去，像老年人一样坐在泥地上，大腹便便的身体里好像放了诸如定时炸弹一样的高端致命物体。此时，黎明已过，清晨来临，太阳已经升起。他环视四周，停下来喊了一声“拜伦”，却没有人回答。这时，他发现自己拴在附近栅栏上的骡子不见了。他叹了一口气，“好吧，”他心想，“我遭到拜伦亲手制造的、最无礼的轻视，我必须步行两英里才能回家。他没必要记恨，不值得这么做，不过我们通常的所作所为也是没必要的，没价值的。”

海托华慢慢走回镇上一憔悴，臃肿的男人，头戴满是尘土的巴拿马

式帽子，粗棉布睡衣的衣襟塞进黑色裤子里。“幸好，我还有时间穿了鞋子，”他心想，“我累了。”他觉得有些烦躁。“我这么累，肯定睡不着。”他焦躁地一边想，一边拖着疲惫的步子走进大门。太阳现在已经升得老高，镇子也已苏醒；他闻到了早饭的炊烟味。“他才不会给我做早餐，”海托华心想，“既然他没把骡子留给我，那他肯定不会提前骑着骡子回来给我生火做饭。他会觉得早饭前走两英里路会让我胃口大开。”

海托华走进厨房，笨手笨脚地把炉火慢慢生好；过了二十五年他还像第一天尝试生火一样，然后他把咖啡放在火炉上。“这下，我该上床睡觉了，”他心想，“不过，我知道我睡不着。”然而，他发现自己的想法听起来像在发牢骚，好像一个爱唠叨的女人正在平静地絮叨，根本不知道自己在说什么；这时，他发现自己正在准备早餐，像往常一样丰盛。他停下来，一动不动地站在那里，舌头啧啧地似乎在表示不满。他心想：“我应该感觉更糟糕才对啊。”可他不得不承认，自己并没有这种感觉。他孤零零地站在空荡荡、乱糟糟的厨房里，身材高大臃肿，手里拎着平底铁锅，锅里残留的油腻被煎得毕毕剥剥作响。他突然闪过一个念头，内心激起一阵浪花，涌动着一股胜利的暖流。“我做给他们看了！”他心想，“他们迟到的时候，是老人迎接了新生命。正如拜伦所说，他们是去做收尾工作的。”然而，这只是海托华的虚荣和徒劳的骄傲。不过，缓缓消退的兴奋之情并不在意，不仅无动于衷，而且还得寸进尺。“那又怎样？就算我感觉到了又怎样？胜利和骄傲？那又怎样？”暖流和兴奋之情显然都不需要任何赞同，也不会被诸如橘子、鸡蛋和面包之类的实际需求所浇熄。他低下头，看着桌上的脏盘子，大声说道：“上帝啊，我现在不想洗盘子。”他没有回卧室睡觉，而是走到门口，朝屋里看了一眼，露出骄傲的眼神，还透着些许期待，心想：“现在，我要是个女人，女人才会那么做，才会上床睡觉。”他好像有明确

的目标一样，走向书房。二十五年来，他从早到晚无所事事。这次，他没有选择丁尼生的书，而是男人的精神食粮——《亨利四世¹》。他走进后院，躺在桑树下塌陷的帆布椅上，重重地跌进椅子里。“我肯定睡不着，”他想，“拜伦马上就会来叫醒我。不过，或许值得一醒，说不定他又会想到什么事让我去做。”

他很快便睡着了，几乎很快就开始打鼾。凡是路过的人只需低头瞧一眼，就能看见天空倒映在闪光的一对眼镜片里，眼镜后面的面孔淳朴、安详而自信。不过没有人来。尽管过了六个小时他才醒来，却似乎相信是被人叫醒的。他突然坐起来，身子下面的椅子发出吱呀吱呀的声音。“嗯？”他说，“嗯？谁？”不过，院里并没有别人。海托华环视四周许久，表情坚定而自信，静静地倾听、等待着，而且兴奋之情也丝毫没有减退。“尽管我希望睡一觉就能忘掉，”他立刻想道，“不，我不是希望，而是担心。这么说来，我也屈服了。”他静静地思考着，开始搓手，起初动作温和，略带些不安。“我也已经屈服了，而且是我自己愿意。是的，或许我该这么做。”这时，他一边自言自语，一边琢磨，我接生的孩子，还没有人和我同名。我知道母亲心怀感激，会用助产医生的名字为孩子命名。不过，这次有拜伦，当然先要轮他了。她还会生孩子，生好多。他想起她年轻健壮的身体，即使在分娩时也闪烁着平静无畏的光芒。好多孩子。还会有好多。那是她的生活，她的命。善良的人们平静、温顺地为美丽的土地繁衍后代，这些健壮的躯体从容地养育一代又一代的母亲和女儿。不过，下一个应该是拜伦的。可怜的孩子，即便他让我一路走回家。

海托华进了屋，刮了脸，脱下睡衣，穿上昨天穿的那件衬衫，戴上领圈和麻布领带，还有那顶巴拿马式帽子，很快便去了小木屋。尽管步行穿过丛林很费劲，但路上花的时间倒没有早晨回家那么久。他

想：“我必须经常这么做。”太阳断断续续地照在身上，热气蒸腾起来，荒凉而肥沃的土地散发出阵阵味道。丛林里是广阔无垠的寂静。“我本不应该丢掉这个习惯，但是如果它不同于祈祷的话，那它们都会恢复的。”

海托华穿过树林，来到木屋后面的牧场，看到木屋那边有一片树林。树林里曾经矗立着一座房子，现已经被大火烧毁，不过从这里看不到无声的灰烬和烧焦的房梁。“可怜的女人，”他想，“可怜的没有生育过的女人。要是再多活一个星期，就能等到幸运重新回归这里，幸运和活力就会重回这片贪婪废弃的土地。”他似乎能看到、感受到周围的沃土，充满活力的黑人聚居在这里，圆润的声音，多产的女人，门前的土地上成群光屁股的孩子在玩耍；那幢大房子也再次喧闹起来，三代人其乐融融地生活在里面。他到了木屋前，没有敲门；他一边推门，一边心情愉悦地大声叫起来，简直震耳欲聋：“医生可以进来吗？”

木屋里没别人，只有母亲和孩子。她靠在简易床上，怀里的孩子正在吃奶，她正要拉起床单遮住裸露的胸脯。她望着门口，毫不惊恐，却又十分警觉。她的表情安详而热切，仿佛正要露出笑容。不过，海托华看到这种表情正在消失。“我以为——”她说。

“你以为是誰？”海托华的声音像隆隆的雷声。他走到简易床边，低头看着她，看了看婴儿皱巴巴的赤色小脸，仿佛婴儿没有身子，正悬在母亲胸口睡觉。她又把床单往近拉了点，谦逊而平静，憔悴、臃肿的秃顶男人站在她身旁，温和而快乐，脸上还洋溢着胜利的喜悦。她低头看着自己的孩子。

“他好像老得我抱着。我以为他又睡着了，就把他放下来，可他又开始大哭，我又得把他抱起来。”

“你不应该一个人待在这里，”海托华环视四周后，说道，“他们——”

“她也走了，去了镇里，她没说，但肯定是去那儿。他是偷偷溜出去的，她醒来时问我，老头儿去哪儿了。我说他出门了，她就跟着出去了。”

“去镇上？溜出去？”接着，他又低声说了一句“喔”。他的表情变得严肃起来。

“她成天盯着他，他也在监视她。我看得出来。他是假装睡觉的，她以为他睡着了。晚饭后，她有些松懈。她每晚都睡不好，所以晚饭后她坐在椅子上开始打盹。他一直在观察她，他悄悄地从另一张床上坐起来，歪着头跟我眨眼睛。他走到门口时还扭头跟我示意，然后就蹑手蹑脚地出去了。我没想过要阻止他，也没想把她叫醒。”她看着海托华，非常认真，眼睛大睁，“我害怕。他说话很奇怪，看我的眼神也奇怪。他冲我挤眉弄眼好像不是让我去叫醒她，而是在警告我那样做会有什么后果。我很害怕，所以就一直和孩子躺在床上。不一会儿，她突然醒了。我知道她没打算睡觉。她一醒来就朝那张床跑过去，在床上摸来摸去，好像觉得他压根儿没跑。她站在床边，来回翻那块毯子，好像他钻进了毯子一样。然后，她又看了我一眼，不过没有挤眉弄眼，可我倒希望她会那么做。她问我，我告诉了她。然后她就戴上帽子出去了。”她看着海托华，继续说道，“她走了，我挺高兴。我知道不该这么说，毕竟她很帮忙，可……”

海托华站在床边，好像两只眼睛什么都看不到。他的神情十分严峻，简直像老了十岁。或许，现在的表情才是他本来的样子，而进屋时的他却是个陌生人。过了一会儿，他的眼睛好像清醒过来，又能看清了。“喔，现在做什么都无济于事，”他说，“而且，镇上的人们，正常

的.....那儿的人们——她走了，你为什么高兴？”

丽娜低下头，两只手没有触碰婴儿，只是在婴儿头上来回晃动。这是一种本能，本不需要那么做，显然这是下意识的动作。“她人很好，非常好，帮我抱孩子好让我睡觉。她想一直抱着他坐在椅子上——请您原谅，一直没请您坐下。”她看到海托华把椅子拉到床边坐下来，“——坐在椅子上监视床上的老头儿，看着他睡觉。”她望着海托华，专注的眼神里透着疑惑，“她一直叫孩子‘乔’，可他不叫乔。而她一直.....”丽娜困惑地看着海托华，充满疑虑。“她一直在说——她自己糊涂，有时候听着听着我也糊涂了，不得不.....”她的眼神和话语中充满了摸索和试探的语气。

“糊涂？”

“她不停地谈起他，好像他的爸爸是那个——那个监狱里的克里斯默斯先生。她一直那样说，我也给弄糊涂了，好像有时候我也不能——似乎我也糊涂了，也以为孩子的爸爸就是那个——克里斯默斯先生——”丽娜望着海托华，好像她说出这番话需要费好大劲。“可是我知道不是那么回事。我知道那很荒唐。她一直说个不停，或许我身子还弱，所以我也糊涂了。可我害怕.....”

“怕什么？”

“我不想被弄糊涂，我怕她会把我弄糊涂，就像人们说的那样，你要是成了斗鸡眼，就再也好不了.....”丽娜低下头，静静地坐在那里，她能感觉到海托华正看着自己。

“你说孩子不叫乔。那他叫什么？”

许久，丽娜都没有看海托华一眼。然后，她抬起头，立即不假思索地说：“我还没给他取名字。”

海托华知道这是为什么。自从他进屋，好像这是他第一次看她，第一次发现她刚刚梳过头发，整个人也有了精神。他看见床单下半遮半露地放着把梳子和一块破镜片，似乎是在他进屋时被匆匆忙忙塞进去的。“我进门时，你好像在期待，不是我。你在期待谁？”

她没有看别处，既不装无辜，也不掩饰；既不慌张也不平静。“期待？”

“你是在等拜伦·邦奇吗？”她依然没有转过脸去。海托华面容温和而坚定，但透着一种无情和冷酷。她在一些善良人的脸上见过这种表情，通常是她所不认识的男人们脸上才会有。他的身子略微前倾，把手放在她抱孩子的手上，说道：“拜伦是个好人。”

“我想我知道，和大家想的一样。比大多数人还要了解他。”

“你也是个好女人，将会是个好女人。我不是说——”他的语速很快，停顿了一下，继续说道，“我不是说——”

“我猜我明白。”她说道。

“不，不是这个，跟这个没关系。这个不算什么，关键在于以后你会怎么做。对你自己，对别人。”海托华盯着她，她还是没有转过脸去，“放开他，让他走吧。”他们俩望着彼此。“孩子，让他走吧。你还没他一半的年龄大，但你的经历却是他的两倍多。他永远无法超过你，赶上你，他一无所有，这些像你一样都是无法重来的。他永远不可能重新来过，你也不可能回头，像什么事都没发生过一样。你已经有了一个

男孩，但不是他的，是另外一个男人的。你会将两个男人强加于他的生活中，只有三分之一个女人，你将让他一无所获的三十五年受到侵犯，即使侵犯不可避免，但也无须两个见证人吧。”

“这个不由我。他是自由的。你问他，我从没有想过要拦住他。”

“是的。如果你真那么做，你拦不住他。这样做是对的。要是你早知道怎么做的話，要是你早知道，那你现在就不会坐在这张床上，抱着你的孩子。你不会让他离开？会不会对他说出那些话？”

“该说的我已经说了，五天前我就拒绝了他。”

“拒绝？”

“他要我嫁给他，不要再等了。我说了‘不’。”

“那你现在还会说‘不’吗？”

她目不转睛地盯着海托华：“是的，我现在也会那么说。”

身形庞大臃肿的海托华叹了一口气，表情松弛下来，一副疲惫的样子。“我相信你，你还会那么说，直到你见到——”他又看了丽娜一眼，眼神专注而犀利，“拜伦在哪儿？”

丽娜看着他，过了一会儿才平静地说：“我不知道。”她看着他，突然间脸上一片空白，好像曾经给予她坚定和力量的东西正在悄然消逝，不留任何掩饰、警惕和谨慎的痕迹。“今天早上十点左右，他回来过但没有进屋。他走到门口，站在那里看了我一眼。自从昨晚我再没见过他，他也没有看孩子一眼。我说：‘进来看看他吧。’他站在门口看着我，说：‘我来是想知道，你什么时候想见他？’我问：‘见谁？’他说：‘他们

也许会派助手跟着他，但我会说服肯尼迪让他来的。’我又问：‘让谁来？’他说：‘卢卡斯·伯奇。’我说：‘好。’他问：‘今晚？可以吗？’我说可以。然后他就走了。他站了一会儿就走了。”说完，丽娜便哭起来。海托华像所有的男人一样，面对女人的眼泪时束手无策。她坐直身子，把孩子抱在胸前。她并没有掩面而泣，哭声不亮，情绪也不激动，但充满了绝望和无助。“你怕我不会拒绝他，现在我已经拒绝了他，你还一直担心，一直问我。现在他走了，我再也见不到他了。”海托华坐在那里，她终于低下了头。他起身站在她身旁，一只手搭在她低垂的头上，心想，感谢上帝，上帝保佑我。感谢上帝，上帝保佑我。

他发现了克里斯默斯曾经开辟的那条路，穿过树林可以去刨木厂。他不知道那儿有路，可当他发现这条路去向时，欣喜地认为，对他而言，这是一个预兆。他相信她所说的，但他想加以证实，只为了能再次听到并感受一番欣慰。刚过四点，他来到刨木厂，向办公室的人打听。

“邦奇？”会计说，“他不在这儿，今天早晨辞工不干了。”

“我知道，我知道。”海托华说。

“他在厂里待了七年，星期六都会上工。今天早晨过来说要辞工，没说原因。不过，乡下人总是这么办事。”

“哦，哦，”海托华又说，“不过他们都是好人，善良的男女。”然后，他也离开了办公室，经过邦奇曾经干活儿的刨木棚。他认识工头穆尼，于是停下脚步，说：“我听说邦奇不跟着你干了。”

“嗯，”穆尼说，“他是今天早上走的。”可海托华并没有听见他说什么；穿工装的工人望着这个衣衫破旧、长相奇怪、不常出现的人——他正欣喜地对墙壁、木板和神秘的机器产生了兴趣，可他丝毫不知道、也不

了解它们的用途。“你要是想见他，”穆尼说，“我估计可以去镇里的法院找他。”

“法院？”

“是的，先生。大陪审团今天开会。特别会议，起诉杀人凶手。”

“喔，喔，”海托华说，“所以他去了那儿。好。多好的年轻人。再见，再见，先生们。再见。”说完，海托华继续向前走去。穿工装裤的人们一直目送他的背影远去，他静静地把双手背在身后，边走边思考，平静而又略带悲伤：“可怜的人，可怜的家伙。任何人都不该、也没有任何正当理由去决定一个人的生死，就算是得到授权的官员、宣誓效忠大众的公仆也不可以。当选的官员自己未曾遭遇受害者所经历过的苦楚，受害者姓甚名谁并不重要，在公开审判时，我们又怎能期待一个自认为深受其苦的人去控制自己呢？”他一直往前走，来到属于自己的街道上。很快，他看见了自己的栅栏和广告牌，然后是房子，掩映在八月枝繁叶茂的丛林中。所以，他没有跟我打招呼就走了。毕竟他为我做过事，带过消息。啊，是给我的，专门为我。似乎这件事也是专门为我准备的。一定是这样。

然而，事情远未结束，还有一件事情在等着他。

[1](#)亨利四世，又称亨利大帝，波旁王朝的建立者，英明果断，是法国最著名的君主之一。

拜伦到了镇上，发现到中午才能见到警长，警长一上午都在忙大陪审团的特别会议。人们告诉他：“你得等着。”

“是的，”拜伦说，“我知道该怎么做。”

“知道做什么？”拜伦没说话。他离开警长办公室，站在广场上面朝南的柱廊下。浅浅的石砌平台上立着呈拱门状的石柱，常年风吹日晒，上面还有一代一代人们在那里随意抽烟留下的污渍。廊柱下经常有人表情严肃却又漫无目的地站着。（四处站着闲谈的人们，有年轻人，城里人，拜伦知道他们中有职员、年轻的律师，还有商人，他们都是清一色的表情，好像是神气活现的便衣警察，却又不在于那身便装能否遮住警察身份。）穿工装乡下人，表情宛若修道院的僧侣们，低声聊着收入和庄稼，偶尔还会平静地看看头顶的天花板。大陪审团关起门来，正准备剥夺一个人的生命，因为他杀了一个女人。他们中认识他的人不多，那个女人就更没人认识了。他们进城时驾的马车、尘土飞扬的汽车都已经整齐地停靠在广场上，街道上、店铺内外，全是一群群来镇里的妻子、女儿，她们像牛群和云朵一样，漫无目的缓慢地走着。拜伦一动不动地站了一会儿，没有靠任何东西——一个小个子男人在镇上住了七年，知道他姓名和习惯的人还没有认识杀人犯或受害者的多。

拜伦没有意识到这些。他现在也不在乎，要是放在一周前的话他会有不同的反应，那样他也不会站在这里，任凭别人盯着他，甚至认出他来：拜伦·邦奇帮别人种下的种子锄草，最后半分没捞着。他帮着照顾别人的婊子，而那家伙自己却忙着赚一千赏金，他却一无所获。拜伦极力维护她的好名声，可她却把拥有的好名声给了那个男人，两人都不顾

廉耻，还有了那个家伙的小崽子，拜伦花自己的钱悄无声息地帮她顺利生产，婴儿的一声啼哭就是给他的报酬。他什么都没得到，还答应让那个家伙一拿到钱就领着他来看她。那时的拜伦将毫无价值，拜伦·邦查。“现在，我可以走了，”他一边想，一边深吸一口气。他能感觉到自己在深呼吸，好像他在每次吸气时，都害怕下一次呼吸无法达到这次的深度，而且会发生什么可怕的事情。他一直低头观察自己的呼吸、自己的胸部，却根本没什么动静，就像炸弹刚被引燃，此刻正在聚集能量准备爆炸，爆炸，爆炸。拜伦呆头呆脑的，从外表上看没什么变化，过路人盯着他也看不出什么不同。对于这样的小个子男人来说，你绝不会看他第二眼，你也不会相信他所做的一切，更不可能拥有和他一样的感觉。他曾经相信，星期六下午在刨木厂，他一个人在那里干活，厄运不会降临他的头上。

他走在人群中间，心想：“我要去个地方。”他边走边想：“我要去个地方。”他一直带着这个想法，直到回到他的寄宿宿舍时，他还在说这句话。他的房间面朝大街，他下意识地朝它看去，然后又转移了视线，心想：“或许我会看见有人在窗边读书或抽烟。”他走进客厅。一上午都站在阳光明媚中，进屋后一时间竟然什么都看不见了。他能闻到潮湿的油地毯和肥皂的味道。“还是星期一，”他心想，“我已经忘了，或许是又一个星期一。看样子应该是。”他什么都没说。过了一会儿，他能看清了，听到客厅后面或是厨房里有拖地的声音。后门开着，射进长方形的光线。他看见比尔德太太先探出头来，然后是她的整个侧影，正朝客厅走来。

“噢，”她说，“是拜伦·邦奇先生。拜伦·邦奇先生。”

“是，是。”他一面回答，一面琢磨：“她只是一个胖太太，她的麻烦还没有一只拖地桶的多……”这时，他又想不起要用哪个词，海托华

知道那个词，而且会不假思索地脱口而出。“好像没了他的掺和，我就什么事都干不成。没他帮忙，我连个词都想不出来。”——“是，是。”说完，他便站在那里，连告别的话都说不出来。“也许不是，”他心想，“我估计一个家伙在一个房间里住了七年，不可能一天就搬走。我只是不想影响她出租那个房间。”——“我想我还欠您一些房租。”他说。

比尔德太太坚强和善，一点都不刻薄。她看着拜伦，问道：“什么房租？我以为你已经安顿好，决定要在帐篷里过夏了。”她一直看着他，然后又温和、善解人意地对他说：“我已经收过那个房间的房租了。”

“喔，”拜伦说，“是，我明白，是的。”他平静地抬起头，望着擦过的、铺着油地毡的楼梯，自己的脚曾经踩在上面。三年前，新油毡铺上时，他是第一个上楼的房客。“哦，”他说，“哦，我想我应该……”

她立刻和蔼地回答道：“我都弄好了，我把你留下的所有东西都打包起来，放在我房间里。你还要不要上楼再看看？”

“不啦，我想您已经把一切……噢，我想我……”

比尔德太太望着拜伦。“你们这些男人，”她说，“难怪女人们会对你们失去耐心。你连自己干坏事的能力有多大都不知道。我估摸着连针尖大点本事都没有，要不是有些女人插手帮忙，不到十岁就都号叫着完蛋了。”

“我猜没有谁跟您说她坏话吧。”拜伦说。

“没有，我才没那个必要呢，别的女人们也用不着。我不是说女人们没有嚼舌头。可你要是再多点见识，你就会知道女人们说的都是废

话，男人们才是正儿八经地说话。没有哪个女人看不惯你和她。因为她们知道她没有啥理由对你不好，就算生个孩子也没啥。男人们也不会说三道四。她用不着。莫非不是你、牧师还有其他认识她的人帮了她的忙？她咋还不往正路上走？你说。”

“是。”拜伦没有看比尔德太太，说道，“我来是想……”

没等他说完，比尔德太太立马又说：“我猜你很快就要离开我们了。”她望着拜伦，“今天上午他们在法院干吗呢？”

“我不知道，到现在还没完。”

“我就知道。他们会尽量拖延时间，制造麻烦，花公众的钱，我们女人在星期六花十分钟就能办好这种事。他们真蠢。杰弗逊镇人才不会想念他，人们没了他也不会过不下去。他可真够傻的，以为杀了一个女人就对一个男人有好处，其实还不如女的杀了男的好。我估计他们快把他放出来了吧？”

“是，是，我也这么觉得。”

“有一段时间，他们认为是他帮的忙，所以会给他一千美元表示心意。然后他俩就能结婚，看样子不错，是吗？”

“是，是。”拜伦能感受到她正温和地看着自己。

“我猜你要离开我们了，你觉得在杰弗逊镇待烦了，是吧？”

“有点儿，我想我可能要搬走。”

“喔，杰弗逊镇是个不错的地方。虽然不怎么好，但对于你这样自

由自在的人来说，到哪里都会有无数怪事和麻烦事让你忙个不停……要是你愿意，可以先把行李放这儿，等准备走的时候再拿。”

他一直等到中午以后，才确定警长用过了正餐。于是，他去了警长家，但没有进屋，一直等到警长出门——肥胖的男人长了一双机智的小眼睛，像肉乎乎的脸上镶了一对云母。他和警长走到院里的树荫下，那里没有座椅，他们也没有蹲在脚后跟上，通常他们都会那么做（他俩都在村里长大）。警长静静地听这个男人讲话，这个安静的小个子男人在镇上住了七年，一直是个小小的神秘人物，而在七天之内却激起了公愤，遭人唾弃。

“我明白，”警长说，“你认为现在是他们结婚的时候了。”

“我不知道。那是他俩的事，但我觉得他应该出来去见见她，而且现在是时候了。你可以派助手跟着他。我告诉过她，今天傍晚他会去看她。到时候他们会做什么，那是他和她的事，我管不着。”

“当然，”警长说，“那跟你没关系。”他看着拜伦的侧面，继续说：“你现在有什么打算，拜伦？”

“我不知道。”拜伦看着自己的脚在地上慢慢挪动，“两年了，我一直想去孟菲斯。说不准会去那儿。这些小地方没什么意思。”

“是，对于喜欢城市生活的人来说，孟菲斯是个不错的地方。当然，你没有家室拖累。我猜我要是十年前的单身汉的话，我也会去那儿。经济水平也不错。我估计你正打算马上就走。”

“我想我很快就走。”拜伦抬起头，又低下去，说道：“今天早上我辞了刨木厂的活儿。”

“喔，”警长说，“我想你不是从十二点开始走过来的，也没打算在一点回去。噢，看样子——”他没往下说。他知道大陪审团晚上会对克里斯默斯起诉，布朗——或者说是伯奇——会获得自由，不过要在下个月出庭作证。但他不是绝对得去，因为克里斯默斯并没有否认，警长相信他为了逃避绞刑会认罪。“倒也没什么坏处。让那个该死的家伙学会敬畏上帝，哪怕一辈子就这么一次也行。”他说，“我想事情就这么定了。当然，就像你说的，我会派助手去，即使为了那笔钱他不打算逃跑，我也要派人跟着。不过，他去那儿之前，不要让他知道是去见谁。他还不知道吧？”

“不知道。”拜伦说，“他不知道这件事，也不知道她在杰弗逊镇。”

“那么，我想我会派助手押送他过去，不告诉他原因，只说要把他带到那儿，除非你自己想带他去。”

“不，”拜伦说，“不，不。”他非常坚定，站着一直没动。

“我这就去办。可能到时候你就走了。我估计派助手四点钟和他过去，怎么样？”

“很好，谢谢您，您太好了。”

“当然。自打她来了杰弗逊，除了我之外，镇上好多人都对她不错。好啦，我不跟你说再见，说不准哪天你就又回来了。我还没听说过，有人在这里住过一段时间后就不再回来，除了监狱里那个家伙可能会那么做。不过，我想为了不受绞刑，他会认罪的。杰弗逊镇总算可以安宁了。对那个自认为是他外祖母的老太婆来说有些苛刻。我回家时，老头儿正在镇里咆哮，骂人们是胆小鬼，说他们不敢把他拉出监狱处以私刑。”说着，警长开始哈哈大笑，“他得小心点，否则珀西·格林姆会

派人把他抓起来。”他的表情变得严肃起来，“对她来说真的很残酷。女人们真不容易。”他看着拜伦的侧脸，继续说，“对我们来说都不容易。好啦，很快，说不准哪天你就会回来。也许，杰弗逊镇下次会对你好些。”

下午四点，拜伦躲了起来。他看见一辆汽车开过来，停在木屋前。一名警官和名叫布朗的那个家伙从车里出来，走近木屋。这时的布朗没有戴手铐，助手把布朗向前一推就进了屋。接着，房门在布朗身后关上，警官坐在台阶上，从兜里拿出一包烟。拜伦站起身，“我现在可以走了。”他心想，“现在就可以走了。”他一直躲在草场的灌木丛中，那里曾经是被烧的楼房所在地。他把骡子拴在对面的树丛中，从大路和木屋那个方向都看不到。破旧的马鞍后面捆扎着一个磨损的黄色箱子，不过不是皮革质地。他跨上马，头也没回地上了大路。

宁静的下午，夕阳西下，略微发红的道路一直延伸至山坡上。“哦，我可以翻山越岭。”他心想，“我可以，男子汉能够做到。”他熟悉这里的一切，在这里生活了七年，没有任何变化。“似乎男人可以承受一切，甚至能够承受他前所未有的一切，承受自己以为无法承受的东西。如果让他就此放手，大哭一场，他也能接受。他可以忍着不去回头，即便回头与否对他来说并不会有什么影响。”

山势起伏，直至山顶。他从未见过大海。于是，他心想：“大海应该就像是这样的无边无际吧，好像我一旦跨进去便再也不存在了。那时，树木似乎不再是树木，而是其他名字或其他东西；人也不再被叫作乡亲，而是其他名字或东西；拜伦·邦奇再不必是拜伦·邦奇。他和他的骡子没有任何阻挡，急速下落，直到他们就像海托华牧师说过的那样，山石迅速滚落时会碰撞出火花，然后开始燃烧，落到地面时连一丝灰烬都不会留下。”

然而，他知道山峰那边起伏的景象：树还是树，极其沉闷的距离还要凭他的血肉之躯无尽地走下去，永远要走在无情的大地上，走在两个无法逃避的地平线之间。这一切慢慢出现在他面前，毫无征兆却也无所畏惧。“不知道，不在乎，”他心想，好像它们在说，好吧。你说你痛苦，好吧。可我们首先听到的是你苍白无力的词语，其次你只说你是拜伦·邦奇，再者你只在今天、现在、这一刻说你是拜伦·邦奇.....好吧，他心想，如果真是这样，我想我也会为不必再回头而感到高兴，他勒住骡子，在马鞍上转了一下身子。

他没有注意到自己走了这么远，山峰这么高。他的脚下是广阔的地域，像一只浅浅的碗，七十年前这里曾经是一片种植园。夹在他和对面的山脊中间的是杰弗逊镇。不过，种植园现在已经被随意分布的黑人小木屋、菜地和废弃的荒地所分割，水土流失后裸露出密密麻麻遍布其中的锌矿石、黄樟树皮、柿子树和石楠。不过，在建房时，这里的中心位置就种植了橡树林。时至今日，楼房已经不见了，但橡树依然矗立其中。拜伦从这里看不出大火留下的创伤；如果不是橡树、废弃的马厩以及映入眼帘的小木屋，他甚至无法辨别楼房曾经的位置。小木屋完全沐浴在午后的阳光里，静悄悄的简直像个玩具；坐在木屋台阶上的警官也像玩具。这时，拜伦看到一个人魔术般地出现在木屋后面，想要从那里逃脱，而毫无戒备之心的押送人却依然一动不动地坐在台阶上。拜伦自己也坐在马鞍上怔了许久，才开始转了转身子，注视着那个小小的身影越过屋后光秃秃的斜坡，朝树林里逃窜而去。

这时，一阵冰冷、强劲的风刮过，猛烈而平静，如同吹走糠壳、垃圾、败叶一样，将一切欲望、失望、绝望、伤感以及空想都刮得一干二净。在这阵疾风的推动下，他似乎又被吹回到空虚的状态，没有任何想法，又回到两周前没有见到她时的样子。此时，心愿不单单是心愿，而

是一种平静而坚定的信念；他自己还没有意识到，大脑已经给他的手发出了指令，他骑着骡子从大路奔向山脊，正和逃跑的男人在树林中的路线并行。他甚至都没有对自己说出那个男人的名字，也不去推断他要逃到哪里，为什么要逃。虽然他曾经预言过，但他的脑海中从没有布朗再次逃跑的想法。如果他真的考虑过，那他多半会相信布朗订婚了，用自己独特的方式，和丽娜一起完成合法的程序并且已经离开。可他什么都没想，甚至根本没有想到丽娜；丽娜完全不在他的大脑里，仿佛他从没有见过她的脸，听过她的声音。他只是在想：“我帮他照顾他的女人，为他的孩子接生，现在我还可以为他做一件事情。我不能为他们主持婚礼，因为我不是牧师。我不可能追上他，因为他先我一步逃走了。我也不可能抽他一顿，因为他比我高大。但我可以试一试，我可以试着去那么做。”

助手在监狱叫他时，布朗立马就问他们要去哪里。助手说是去拜访。布朗犹豫了，那副英俊、伪装勇敢的面孔紧紧地盯着助手，说道：“我哪儿也不去，我在这儿是个陌生人。”

“你到哪儿都是陌生人，”助手说，“就算在家也是。快点。”

“我是美国公民，”布朗说，“我认为我有权利，即使我的吊带裤上没有挂星形勋章。”

“当然，”助手说，“我现在做的，就是要帮助你获得应有的权利。”

布朗的脸上神采奕奕：像闪电一样闪过一道光芒。“他们已经——他们要付钱——”

“赏金？当然。我现在就带你走，要是你该得的都可以拿到。”

布朗一脸严肃，站着没有动，依旧满怀狐疑地看着助手。“这种方式真奇怪。”他说。

“那群王八蛋一直把我关在监狱里，还想靠我弄清真相。”

“我估计想依靠你的王八蛋还没生出来。”助手说，“快点，他们都在等着呢。”

他们从监狱里出来。布朗在阳光下眨巴眨巴眼睛，东瞧瞧西望望，然后猛地昂起头，像马儿一样扭头看了一眼。汽车停在路边。布朗瞅了瞅汽车，然后又看了看押送他的助手。“我们坐车去哪儿？”他问，“对我来说，今早走到法院又不算远。”

“瓦特派车去帮你把奖赏领回来，”助手说，“上车。”

布朗嘀咕道：“他突然这么关心我，让我坐车，还不戴手铐，他妈的只派一个人跟着防止我逃跑。”

“我可不是来防你逃跑的，”助手说。他正要发动汽车时停下来：“你现在想跑吗？”

布朗目光炯炯地盯着他，阴沉的眼神里充满了怀疑和愤怒。“我知道，”他说，“这是他的诡计，骗我逃跑，然后自己去捞赏金。他答应给你多少钱？”

“我？和你的一样，一分不少。”

布朗盯着他看了好久，不着边际地咒骂着，声音不高却很难听。“走啊，”他说，“要走就走。”

他们开车去了发生火灾和谋杀的地点。布朗不时地回头看看，像一头自由的骡子跑在狭窄的路上，后面跟着一辆汽车。“我们去那儿干吗？”

“去给你领赏啊。”警官回答。

“去哪儿领？”

“去那边的小木屋，东西在那儿等着你呢。”

布朗向四周张望，曾经的楼房只剩黑乎乎的灰烬，单调的小木屋静静地太阳下慢慢褪色，他曾经在里面住了四个月。他的表情非常严峻，非常警觉。“这件事情有些不对劲。就因为肯尼迪戴了他妈的一小块星形徽章，他就以为能践踏我的权利吗……”

“快点，”警官说，“要是你不想要奖赏，你愿意的话，我随时都可以带你回监狱。”说着，他把布朗推向前面的小木屋，打开门，把他推进去，关上门，然后自己坐在台阶上。

布朗听到木屋的门在身后关上了。他一直往前挪动。这时，他的眼睛似乎迫不及待地想看清这里，在他迅速、急切的一瞥中，屋内的一切尽收眼底，他突然完全不动弹了。丽娜坐在简易床上，看着他嘴角的白色伤疤彻底消失不见了，好像血液突然消退顺便揭掉了伤疤，如同从晾衣绳上扯下布条一般。她一句话都没说，只是躺在那里，靠在枕头上，清醒地望着布朗，眼睛里却一无所有——欢乐、惊奇、责备、爱意都没有——而布朗的脸上却拂过了震惊、诧异和愤怒，然后便是显而易见的恐惧，这些神情轮番嘲弄着他，从白色的小伤疤上体现出来。他那双痛苦、孤注一掷的眼睛不停地在空荡荡的屋子里扫来扫去。丽娜看见他强迫自己的目光聚集在一起，像驱赶两头惊恐的动物一样，迫使自己的眼

睛去迎接丽娜的目光。“噢，噢，”他说，“喔，喔，喔，是丽娜呀。”丽娜一直注视着他，他的眼睛像两只即将挣脱的动物一样，被他死死地拽回来，生怕一旦跑掉便再也追不回来，他自己也会溜掉。她几乎能看穿他的心思——不断左摇右摆，内心充满痛苦和恐惧，费尽心思搜寻嗓子、舌头可以说出的词语。“怎么可能不是丽娜呢。哦，亲爱的，你收到我的口信了吧。上个月我一到这儿就给你带了口信。我安顿好，以为口信被丢了——我不知道那个家伙叫啥，可他说会帮我带口信——他看起来就不可靠，可我又不得不相信他。我给了他十块钱做你的盘缠，我想……”他的声音消失在绝望的眼神中，可她仍然能看出他的心思还在不顾一切地四处冲撞。她用冷峻、坚定、令人无法承受的眼神凝视他，看着他神色仓惶、无处躲藏的神情，直至他脸上残留的一切骄傲、徒劳的辩解荡然无存，最终赤裸裸地暴露在她面前。这时，她第一次开口说话，声音平静、从容而淡漠。

“过这儿来，”丽娜说，“过来。我又不会让他咬你。”她看到他轻飘飘地挪了过来。不过，丽娜这会儿没有再观察他。她很清楚，正如她自己料想的那样，他正带着笨拙和羞怯的敬畏心，站在她和熟睡的孩子旁边。她知道，这种情形下，他甚至对孩子都视而不见；她能看到、感受到他的思绪正在横冲乱闯。他正设法让自己表现得并不害怕。她心想，他丝毫不觉得羞愧，也不会为忐忑而撒谎，就像他不会因撒谎而忐忑一样。

“喔，喔，”布朗说，“在这儿，当然好啊。”

“是，”丽娜说，“你能坐下来吗？”海托华先前拉过来的椅子还在床边放着，布朗早已经注意到了，心想，她老早就给我准备了椅子 布朗又开始暗自咒骂，表情烦躁而愤怒。那帮杂种，杂种。不过，他坐下时，表情却非常平静。

“是啊，亲爱的，我们又见面了，和我预计的一样。我本想都替你安顿好，可我最近一直很忙。这让我想起——”突然，他又像骡马一样朝后扭了一下头。丽娜头也没抬地说：

“这儿有位牧师，他刚来看过我。”

“很好。”布朗的声音洪亮而热情，但这热情和声音如同字词一样短暂，消失得无影无踪，甚至没有在耳边、在心中留下一丝明确的痕迹。“很好，等我办完事——”他猛地抽出胳膊，看着她，隐隐约约做出拥抱的姿势。他的眼神冷漠、机警、诡秘，但眼神后依旧潜藏着烦恼和绝望。不过，她并没有注意到。

“你现在干什么活儿？在刨木厂吗？”

布朗望着她，说道：“不，我辞了。”他没有看她，好像那双眼睛不是他的，和他的其他部位没有任何关系，跟他的言行也无关。“成天像该死的黑鬼一样干十个小时。我现在有挣钱的门道，用不着挣每小时十五分的小钱。等我办好了，把细枝末节都处理好，那时咱俩就能……”布朗的眼神专注而神秘，紧紧地盯着她，盯着她低头的侧影。她又听见布朗猛地抬头往后看时发出轻微而突然的声音。“我想起——”

她坐着没动，说道：“卢卡斯，什么时候能安排好？”这时，她能听到、也能感觉到屋里鸦雀无声，一片沉寂。

“啥时候安排啥？”

“嗯，就像你说的，回家。以前我觉得挺好，一点儿都不介意，可现在不同，我认为我有必要担心了。”

“哦，那个。”他说，“那个。你别担心。等我处理完这些事儿，拿

到那笔钱。我肯定能拿到。他们那帮龟孙子一个都别想——”他提高声音却没往下说，好像刚才忘了自己在哪里，只顾瞎想。他压低声音，说道：“交给我好啦。啥也别担心。我从来不会让你有任何后顾之忧，知道吗？对吧。”

“是的，我从不担心。我知道我能依靠你。”

“你当然知道这一点。这儿的那帮杂种——杂种——这儿的——”说着，他早已从椅子上站起来，“这倒让我想起——”

丽娜没有抬头也没有说话；布朗站在她身旁，满眼焦躁、绝望和急切，仿佛是她故意把他拴在这里。现在，她又出于自己的意愿，故意要把他放走。

“我估计你现在很忙。”

“实际上，我的确很忙。那帮杂种老是麻烦我——”这时，丽娜望着布朗。他正看着后墙上的窗户，又看了看身后闭紧的房门。接着，他看着丽娜，看着她那张严肃的面孔，似乎一片茫然，却又如洞若观火。他压低声音说，“我在这儿有对头，他们不想让我拿到我应得的。所以，我打算——”这次她好像又控制了他，强迫他试着最后一次撒谎，可怜的骄傲开始反抗；她没有用棍棒或绳索阻拦他，是他的谎言像树叶或垃圾一样四处飘飞，阻挡了他的去路。然而，她什么都没有说，眼睁睁望着他鬼鬼祟祟地走到窗口，无声无息地打开窗户。这时，他看了她一眼。也许他以为此时已经安然，可以在她伸手拉回他之前便可钻出窗户。也许，刚刚还十分骄傲的他现在略有惭愧。因为一看她，他便又像被扒光一样，又要谎话连篇了。他的声音还没耳语响亮：“外边有人，正在前面等我呢。”说完，他如一条长蛇般蠕动着穿出窗户。她听到窗外微微

传来了逃跑声。这时，她才动了动身子，发出深深的叹息。

她大声说：“现在我又得动身了。”

布朗从树林里钻出来，跑到铁道旁时，已经气喘吁吁。尽管他在过去的二十分钟里跑了几乎两英里，而且一路也不好走，但他还没到走不动的地步。或者说，他像一头逃跑的动物呼哧呼哧地喘着气。他站在空旷的路上向两旁张望，像独自落跑的动物一样，不愿接受同伴的协助，执意要靠自己的体格；他停下脚步换气时，憎恨进入他视线的每一棵树，似乎它们都是活生生的敌人；甚至憎恨它休憩的每一寸土地，憎恨必须吸入的每一口空气。

他抵达的铁路距目的地不足几百码远，是一段上坡路的顶点。北上的货车慢慢往上走，慢得跟爬似的，还不如人走得快。在他前面不远处，两条光闪闪的铁轨像被剪刀剪开一样。

他站在铁路旁边的树林里躲了一会儿，像在深思熟虑，急切地盘算什么，仿佛在琢磨，败局已定的游戏中还有最后一招可以使用。他站在那里听了许久，转身又开始跑起来，沿和铁路平行的路线在树林中穿梭。他似乎明确知道自己的去向，很快就上了一条小路，沿着这条路一直往前跑，最后来到一片空地。这里有一座黑人小木屋。快到木屋时，他是走着过去的。走廊处有一位黑人老妇正叼着烟斗，头上包着一块白头巾。布朗虽然没有跑，但呼吸还是很急促。他平静了一下，然后说道：“嗨，大婶，谁在那儿住？”

黑人老太太挪开烟斗，说：“我住这儿，你想找谁？”

“我想往镇里捎个信儿，挺着急的。”他努力让急促的呼吸平静下来，“我给钱，这儿没人想要钱吗？”

“要是那么急的话，你最好自己去送信。”

“我说了，我给钱！”他有些暴躁，不耐烦地控制着自己的音量，呼吸放缓，“要是他跑得快，我给一块钱。难道这儿没人想挣这一块钱吗？没什么男孩子吗？”

老太太一边抽烟一边观察他。这张苍老、神秘的黑脸打量着布朗，好像上帝一样超然，但没有一丝和蔼。“一块钱？”

他莫名其妙地做出一个急迫、恼火甚至略带绝望的动作。正要转身时，黑人老妇又开口说道：“这儿除了我和两个小孩没别人。我估计他们太小。”

布朗转过身，问：“多大？我只需要有人能快点给警长带个便条就行。——”

“警长？那你走错地方了。我们可不想在警长身边胡闹。我听说，有个黑人以为他跟警长很熟，就打算去拜访他，后来再没回来。你去别处找找吧。”

没等她说完，布朗早走了。他没有跑，还没想好要再跑；一时间，他竟然满脑子空白，愤怒和无助让他迷茫。面对始料未及的挫折，他似乎正在思考万无一失的良方，仿佛他坚信会有百试不爽的办法，这让他消极、失望之余有所振奋。因此，黑女人喊了他两次，他才听见，转过身来。她什么都没说，一动不动地坐在那里，一个劲儿地喊着。她说：“这儿有个人能帮你。”

木屋门口站着一个黑人，似乎是突然从稀薄的空气里冒出来的，像低能的成年人，又像愚笨的年轻人。他又呆又黑，还十分让人摸不透。

他俩站在那里望着彼此，或者确切地说，是布朗盯着黑人。他不知道黑人有没有在看自己。这样似乎也太过完美了：他的最后一线希望竟然寄托在一个蠢货身上，显然他都没有足够的推断能力去镇上，更别说要找到其中的某一个人了。布朗又做出一个神秘的难以形容的动作，急得几乎要朝走廊跑过去，一只手还在衬衣口袋里摸索着。“我想让你给镇上带个口信，完了再给我带个回话。”他说，“你能吗？”不过，他没有听对方答复，直接从口袋里掏出一张皱巴巴的纸片和一段铅笔头，弯腰蹲在门口，匆匆忙忙地写着，显得非常费劲。黑女人在旁边看他写道：

瓦特·肯尼迪先生，亲爱的先生，请将我抓杀人凶手克里斯默斯的赏金用纸包好交给来人。

他没有署名，匆匆写好看了一眼，黑女人在一旁看着他。他瞪着肮脏无辜的纸条、潦草费劲的铅笔字迹。这一刻，他成功地将自己的灵魂和生命都倾注其中。接着，他又啪地放下纸条，继续写，不署名你知道是谁。然后，他把纸条折叠好，递给黑人：“交给警长，不要给任何人。你确定你能找到他吗？”

“要是警长没有先找到他的话，”黑人老妇说，“给他吧。只要警长活着，他肯定能找到。你把钱给他。走吧，孩子。”

黑人走开了，又停下来，站在那里，什么也不说，什么也不看。黑人老太太坐在门口抽着烟，低头看着白人那张虚弱、凶恶的面孔：这是一张英俊、柔和的脸，由于疲惫，不光是身体的疲倦，现在又戴上了精疲力竭、诡计多端的面具。“我看你很着急。”她说。

“是的，”布朗一边说，一边从口袋里取出一枚硬币，“给你，你要是能在一个小时里给我带回口信，我再给你五块。”

“去吧，黑小子。”女的说，“等不了一天。你要把口信带回这儿？”

布朗看了她好久。然后，他身上所有的警惕和羞愧又不见了。“不，不是这儿。去那边的坡顶。往那儿走，我会叫你，也会一直看着你。别忘了，听见没？”

“用不着担心。”女的说，“要是没别的事情耽搁，他会回来的，会给你回信。去吧，孩子。”

黑人走了。不过，没走半英里，他就被拦下了，是另一个牵骡子的白人。

“在哪儿？”拜伦问，“你在哪儿看见他了？”

“刚才，屋子那边。”白人牵着骡子继续往前走。黑人望着他的背影，他没有给白人看纸条，因为这个人也没说要看。也许白人没看纸条是因为不知道他有纸条；也许黑人正这么想着，因为他的脸上瞬间露出了可怕、隐匿的表情。接着，这种表情消失了，他大声喊叫起来，白人停下来转过身。“他这会儿不在那儿。”黑人大声说，“他说他去铁道那边的坡顶等。”

“谢谢你。”白人说。黑人继续赶路。

布朗回到铁路上，一边走一边自言自语：“他办不成，办不成，我知道他找不到警长，肯定办不成，也拿不回来。”他没说是谁，也没想起谁。对他来说，他们好像只是一些棋子——黑鬼，警长，赏金，所有的一切——它们会被对手随意摆放到各处，无法预知。这位对手可以在他举棋之前便能知晓他的意图，而且还会自发地制定规则，他必须遵守这些规则，但对手却可以不受约束。他从铁路拐进坡顶附近的矮树林里，现

在总算暂时摆脱了绝望。他不慌不忙地走着，丈量每一步的距离，仿佛除此之外，世界上或他的生命中再无其他事可做。他找了个地方坐下，隐蔽起来，但他能够看见铁道那边的景象。

“我就知道他办不成。”他一个人琢磨着，“我甚至都没抱什么希望。要是看见他手里拿着钱回来，我都不会相信。那钱不归我，我知道。我知道那是个错误，我会告诉他：‘往前走，你要找的是别人，不是我。你不是在找卢卡斯·伯奇。不是，先生。’卢卡斯·伯奇不该得那笔钱，那笔赏金。他什么都没做不能拿钱。不能，先生。”想到这里，他开始哈哈大笑。他静静地蹲在地上，面容疲惫，低下头笑起来。“是的，先生。卢卡斯·伯奇希望得到公正的待遇，只想要公正。要不是他把凶手的名字告诉那群杂种，告诉他们该去哪里找，可他们没尝试去找。他们一直不去试，因为那样的话他们就必须把赏金交给卢卡斯·伯奇。是公正。”接着，他用刺耳、委屈的声音大声说道：“公正。就是。我只想要自己的权利。那群戴星形徽章的杂种，还曾发誓说要保护每一个美国公民。”疲惫的他愤怒而绝望，几乎声泪俱下地说道：“这样不把人逼成布尔什维克¹，我就是狗。”因此，他什么都听不到，直到拜伦在他身后喊道：

“站起来！”

他俩的对峙不会持续太久。拜伦深知自己坚持不了多久，但他毫不犹豫地一直往上爬，直到看见对方毫无戒备地蹲在那里，他才停下来。“你比我高。”拜伦心想，“可我不在乎。你比我各方面都强，可我一点都不怕。你在九个月内抛弃了她两次，可那是我三十五年都没有得到的东西。现在，就算你把我打死，我都不在乎。”

搏斗没有持续多久。布朗甚至利用了自己的吃惊，迅速转过身来。

他简直不敢相信，有谁遇到自己的敌人坐在那里时，竟然还会给对方留机会站起来，即便敌人快有自己两个那么大，谁都不会那么做。他自己绝不会那么做。事实上，那个小个子男人本不该那么做，可他却那么做了，真是奇耻大辱。于是，他给予了更加狂暴猛烈的攻击，像陷入绝境的饿狼不顾一切地狂轰乱揍。如果拜伦没有提前警告他，直接就扑到他背上，结果也不至于如此。

搏斗持续了不到两分钟，拜伦便静静地躺在被蹂躏、踩踏的树丛中，脸上静静地淌着血；他听到灌木丛被压倒，声音渐渐消失，然后陷入一片寂静，最后只剩他一个人在那里。此时，他并不觉得特别痛，而且他感觉还不错，不必急着做什么，也不用忙着去哪里。他静静地躺在那里流着血，知道过不了多久他便会再次回到这个世界，感受时间的流逝。

他甚至没有思考布朗去了哪里，现在也用不着考虑他。他的脑海里再次装满了童年时废弃、残破的玩具，胡乱堆放在被人遗忘的壁橱里，积满了灰尘——布朗、丽娜·格罗夫、海托华、拜伦·邦奇——仿佛他们从来都没有生命。他在童年时代玩过这些玩具后，残缺不齐后被他抛到了脑后。他躺在树丛中，听到了半英里外的火车汽笛声。

汽笛声将他唤醒；他又回到了时空中。他试着慢慢坐起来。“还好，我没有坏掉什么东西，”他心想，“我的意思是，他没有把属于我的什么东西打坏。”这会儿有些晚了：时间、空间都在流转。“是的，我该走了，现在该动身去找点事做。”火车越来越近。火车开始爬坡，撞击铁轨的咔嚓声变得短促而沉重；很快，他便看见火车冒出的烟气。他想从口袋里找一块手帕，但没有找到，于是他从衬衫衣襟上撕了一片，一边轻轻地擦拭自己的脸，一边倾听机车奋力上坡时发出的短促的轰鸣声。他慢慢挪动到树丛边上，看着铁轨。此时，车头已经在他眼前，伴

随着间歇性的轰隆声和滚滚浓烟，火车几乎向他迎面开来。然而，火车又像根本没有动一样，可它确实在移动，非常缓慢地爬上斜坡。拜伦站在树丛边缘，望着火车向他驶来，然后又弃他而去，费力地向远处爬去；他像小孩一样出神地沉浸在（也许是在怀念）乡村生活中。火车的车头已经远去；他的眼睛仍然随着一节节爬坡的车厢慢慢移动。这时，他在那个下午第二次看到一个男人凭空出现了，而且还是奔跑的姿势。

即便在那个时候，他还是没有意识到那是布朗。他在宁静和孤寂中沉思得太久了，眼睁睁看着布朗奔向火车，纵身一跃，攀住车厢尾部的铁梯，向上一跳便像消失在真空中一样不见踪影。火车开始加速；他注视着布朗消失的那节车厢在他眼前驶过。这节车厢从他身边经过，紧紧地和后面的车厢连在一起。布朗站在这两节车厢之间，探出头来望了望矮树丛。刹那间，两人看到了彼此：两张脸，一张温和的脸，血迹斑斑，无以言状；另一张瘦削、狂躁、扭曲的脸，绝望的喊叫声淹没在火车的轰鸣中。两张脸像行驶在不同轨道上的魑魅鬼影一样擦肩而过。拜伦依然没有想到那是布朗。“全能的上帝啊，”他露出孩子般痴迷、惊诧的表情，说道，“他真懂怎么爬火车，肯定以前就干过。”他完全没有想到那是布朗，仿佛一列列肮脏的车厢是一堵堤坝，堤坝那边等待他的是另一个世界的时间、不可思议的愿望、无可争议的事实，不过还有稍多点儿的宁静。总之，最后一节车厢驶过后，这个世界像洪水猛浪般飞速向他冲过来。

这个世界太广阔，时空也太急速，来时的路无法重溯。拜伦牵着骡子走了好久，才想起要骑上去，仿佛他早已超越自己，在小木屋里等着自己追上去，然后走进屋里。那时，我站在那儿，我会.....他又试着重说：那时，我站在那里，我要.....但他总也说不下去。此刻，他站在大路中央，一辆从镇里赶回家的马车渐渐向他驶来。这会儿大约六点。然

而，他并没有放弃。即便我好像不知道怎么往下说：当我打开门，走进来，站在那里，我会，看着她。看着她。看着她——耳边又响起一个声音：

“——我猜你很兴奋。”

“什么？”拜伦问。马车停下来，就在他旁边，骡子也停了下来。马车上坐着的人又开始说话，用平板的声音抱怨道：

“真不巧，正赶上我得马上回家。我已经晚了。”

“兴奋？”拜伦重复道，“兴奋什么？”

车上的男人看着他，说道：“谁看见你那张脸，都会觉得你有些兴奋。”

“我摔了一跤，”拜伦说，“今晚镇上有什么兴奋的事吗？”

“我估计你可能没听说。大约一个小时前，那个黑鬼，克里斯默斯，人们把他干掉了。”

[1](#)布尔什维克是Bolshevik的音译词，是列宁创建的俄国马克思主义政党，也被某些人认为是激进分子。

周一晚上，人们在饭桌边开始谈论。令他们感到奇怪的不是克里斯默斯是如何逃跑的，而是为什么他会在逃跑之后，到那个地方藏身。他必然知道藏在那儿一定会被找到，可为什么被发现之后，他既不投降也不反抗，似乎他已经计划了一场被动的自杀。

关于他最后逃到海托华家的原因和想法众说纷纭。想起关于这位牧师的掌故，最直接、最简单的说法便是“物以类聚”；也有人觉得这纯属偶然；其他人则认为克里斯默斯展示了他的智慧，因为要不是有人看见他穿过牧师家的后院跑进厨房，没人会怀疑他藏在那里。

然而加尔文·史蒂文斯对此却持有不同的意见。他是地方检察官，毕业于哈佛大学，是美国大学优等生联谊会的一员。他身材高大，经常潇洒地叼着一只烟斗，一头铁灰色头发乱蓬蓬的，穿着松松垮垮、没有熨烫的深灰色衣服。他的家族很早就定居在了杰弗逊镇，他的祖上有自己的奴隶，他爷爷认识伯顿小姐的爷爷和哥哥，同时也憎恨他们，还在他们死后公开向沙多里斯上校表示祝贺，他以一种随和的方式和乡亲们、选民、陪审团平静地相处着。人们时不时地能够看见，他在夏日的整个午后和工人们一起蹲在乡村商店的游廊上，用他们的土话同他们漫无目的地瞎扯。

这个星期一，从九点钟的南行列车上下来一位州立大学教授。他在邻近州的大学工作，是史蒂文斯在哈佛的校友，专程赶来同史蒂文斯一起度假。从火车上下来的时候，他一眼就认出了史蒂文斯，以为史蒂文斯是来接他的，后来他才看见史蒂文斯正忙着送一对奇怪的老夫妇上车。教授看到那个老头儿身材矮小、邋遢，留着短山羊胡子，好像陷入

了强制性昏厥，另一个人无疑是他的妻子——一个矮胖的妇人，那张脸藏在低垂而肮脏的白羽毛下，像块白面团一样。她身穿过时的丝绸裙子，看不出什么身材来，衣服的颜色庄重却了无生趣。教授一时惊呆了，看着史蒂文斯将两张火车票放入妇人手中，就像交给小孩一样。教授一直往前走，可史蒂文斯还是没有注意到。旗手将两位老人送入火车时，他听到史蒂文斯最后扼要地说道：“是，是。”他的声音像是在抚慰，“他明天早上就上火车。这事就交给我。你们只要安排好葬礼和墓地就行。你带老爷爷回家，安顿他上床休息。我明早会把那男孩送上火车。”

火车开动了，史蒂文斯转身看见了教授。他们一坐上返回镇里的车，他就开始讲，一直到坐在史蒂文斯家的走廊上时才结束。他简明扼要地说：“我认为，我知道他为什么最后会跑到海托华家里躲起来，那是他外祖母的主意。他被再次带回法庭时，就是她陪他待在监狱里。她和他外祖父——那个矮小的疯老头想动私刑干掉他——从摩兹镇赶到这里来。我不觉得老太太来的时候抱有救他的希望，至少没有实质性的想法。我认为她只是希望他‘体面地’死去，就像她说的那样，被军警遵照法律执行绞刑，而不是被烧死、砍死或是被牲口拖拽而死。我认为，她到这儿来仅仅就是为了看着老头儿，因为她不敢让他离开自己的视线，以免他掀起风浪。你知道，并不是说她怀疑克里斯默斯是她的外孙。她只是绝望，不知道希望在哪里。我想过了三十年之久，希望的机器重新运行不是二十个小时就能实现的。

“但我相信，还没等她明白过来，就被疯疯癫癫的老头儿搅和着推到这儿来了。他们坐最早的火车过来，大概是星期天凌晨两点半的那趟。她没打算见克里斯默斯，可能她只是为了看着老头儿。至少我是这种感觉。我不认为她的希望在那时就开始重生了。直到今天早晨婴儿出生，可以说是在她面前出生，并且又是一个男孩时，她的希望之火才又

重新被点燃。她以前从没见过孩子的父亲，她的外孙长大后她也再没见过。所以对她来说，孩子的哭声阻隔了三十年，现在那三十年再也不复存在。

“这一切来得太快。太多的事实让她的双手和双眼无法否认；太多的事实必须理所当然地接受，虽然双手和双眼又无法证实；太多费解的事实无法证明，却要双手和双眼必须突然间接受。三十年后，这种感觉就像长久独居的人突然闯进了一个满是陌生人的房间。他们都在讲话，她急切地在她的限度内，寻找力所能及的合理行为，好让她可以保持理智。直到婴儿出生，她才找到了可以独当一面的途径，像可以机械发声的模具一样被两轮马车拖拽着。在他把她带到海托华博士那里时，由邦奇发号施令操纵她。

“你看，她还在摸索，试图寻找让她相信、让她承认的事实。显然，三十年来她从来不曾动过脑子。我认为她在海托华那儿找到了，第一次找到了可以倾诉的对象，愿意倾听她的人。很可能这是她第一次对别人讲，而且很可能自从她知道这件事后，跟海托华讲了以后，她才和海托华同时相信了事情的完整性和真实性，因为小屋里并没有这三十年的过往——她从没见过婴儿和他的父亲，还有她自婴儿时期就再没见过的外孙，外孙的父亲对她来说也从未存在过，一切都混在了一起。所以，我觉得她那时搞不清孩子和他的身世，也没什么可奇怪的。当她真的开始燃起希望时，她立即转身去了牧师家，带着对这位自愿献身、誓言要为祈祷服务的牧师的庄重和无限信仰去了他家。

“那是他今天在监狱里同克里斯默斯说的话。就在那个时候，老头儿瞅准机会从她身边溜走了，然后她就跟着进了镇里，又在街角找到了他。他疯疯癫癫的，声音已经完全嘶哑，扬言要对克里斯默斯处以私刑，告诉人们说他养了魔鬼的产物，至今他都坚信不疑。也许，当时她

正在去监狱看他的路上。总之，当她看见他的听众只是抱着看热闹的想法时，她将那老头儿一个人丢在那里，独自去找警长。警长刚吃过晚饭回来，有好一阵子，他都不明白她想要干什么。她的声音听起来肯定有些不正常，还有她讲的故事，穿的那身尊贵得有些不可思议的衣服，以及她计划越狱的模样。不过，他还是让助手跟她去了监狱。我相信就是在监狱里，她提到了海托华，海托华不仅可以救他，而且正打算要救他。

“当然，我不知道她对他讲了些什么。我不认为谁能重现当时的场景。我觉得她根本不了解自己，也没筹划过要说什么。因为早在她生下他母亲的时候，就已经写下那些话，并且还念给她听过。事情过去太久，以至于她忘记了一切，也忘记了这些话。也许这就是他立刻相信她，并且没有质疑的原因。我是说，因为她不担心要说什么，也不担心他是否会相信她所说的。在某个地方，那个被罢黜的牧师的形象、住所或者其他什么的都成了避难所，不仅是官员和民众不可侵犯它，就连无法改变的过去也是神圣的；无论是什么罪行塑造了现在的他，将他困在放眼望去都是刽子手的高墙铁栅里，海托华那里都是神圣的殿堂。

“他相信了她。我认为与其说是她的话给了他勇气，不如说是给了他耐心，让他屈从忍受、找准时机，并且抓住唯一的机会从广场拥挤的人群中戴着镣铐逃跑。然而，奔跑的随从太多，步步紧跟，跟在身后的并不是追捕者，而是他自己——岁月，行为，疏漏，犯错，紧紧跟随着他的每一步、每一次呼吸、每一次心跳，同他共享同一颗心脏。她不仅对那三十年一无所知，更不知道三十年来前前后后的一切，直到生命的污点污染了他的黑人血液或白人血液，不管是否愿意，就是这个污点杀死了他。不过，他总是怀着信任和希望跑了一阵，但他的血液无法得到安静，需要他去解救。然而，不论是白人血液还是黑人血液，都无法拯救

他，只有他自己的身体才能做到。因为他体内的黑人血液首先将他驱赶进黑人小屋，然后白人血液又将他赶了出来；正如他体内的黑人血液促使他抓起了手枪，而他体内的白人血液却不让他开枪。白人的血液将他送到牧师面前，在他生命的最后时光中涌起，使他背离了一切理性和现实，陷入了妄想中，那是对《圣经》中读到的某些东西的盲目信仰。我想，后来白人血液又在瞬间抛弃了他。仅仅一秒，一个闪光的瞬间，就让这个黑人在生命的最后时光里奋起反抗。正是基于黑人的血液，他才假设了自己被救赎的希望。黑人的血液将他的欲望置于任何人的帮助之上，将他从生命枯竭的黑丛林中卷起来，在心脏停止跳动、死神贪欲得到实现前，他欣喜若狂。然后，就像他一生中每次遭遇危机那样，黑人的血液再次失败。他没有杀掉牧师，只是用枪敲了他的脑袋，跑到桌子后面蹲下，就像他三十年来一直做的那样，最后一次蔑视黑人的血液。他蹲在那张掀翻的桌子后面，任凭他们将他射杀。他的手枪上了膛，但他却没有扣下扳机。”

当时，镇上住着一个叫珀西·格林姆的年轻人。他大概25岁，是州国民警卫队的队长。他出生在这个镇上，除了夏日露营之外一直住在那里。他太年轻，无法参加欧洲战争。直到1921年或1922年他才意识到这一点，他永远无法原谅他的父母将他生得这么晚。他的父亲是一名五金商人，不理解他的想法。他认为孩子非常懒惰，很有可能还会一文不值。事实上，孩子正在遭受可怕的悲剧：他不单单是出生太晚，而是不够晚，没有让他错过那些岁月的一手资料，在他虚度的岁月里，他本应该是男人而不是个孩子。现在，那种歇斯底里的日子已经过去，即使在歇斯底里中呼声最高的那些人，甚至是曾经落难、服役的英雄，也开始用略带怀疑的眼光看待彼此，他们找不到任何人来敞开心扉讲述自己的感觉。事实上，他第一次激烈的打斗是和一个退伍军人，那个人大放厥词，说如果可以从头再来，他这次会站在德国这边攻打法国。格林姆立

刻接过话茬儿，问：“也打美国？”

“要是美国也蠢得去帮法国的话。”退伍兵说道。格林姆立刻打了他；他那时候还年轻，个子比退伍兵要矮。结果可想而知。尽管格林姆料到结果会是这样，但是他一直不服输，直到士兵请求旁观者把他拉开。他骄傲地带着这次打斗留下的伤疤，就像他后来穿上盲目打斗得来的制服一样骄傲。

新的民兵法案救了他。他像是长期陷入沼泽和黑暗中的人一样，不仅无法看见前方的路，而且知道前方无路可走。接着，他的生命突然变得明确而清晰。虚度的岁月里，他在学校无法施展才华，被认为是懒惰、叛逆，没有雄心壮志，这些都被他抛在身后，统统忘却。如今，他可以看见生命在他面前展开，犹如一条毫不复杂、无法逃避的走廊，空无一人。现在，他完全不用费心去思考或做出决定，他所肩负的职责和他的铜肩章一样，亮闪闪，轻飘飘，充满了勇武的气概。这是对于血气之勇的绝对信仰和盲目服从，相信白种人优于其他人种，相信美国人优于世上所有白种人，相信美国军人优于所有人，坚信自己为了这些信仰和特权甘愿付出他的生命。在任何可以和军队沾边的国家假日里，他总要穿上自己的上尉制服去镇中心。人们一看到他佩戴着闪闪发光的神射手（他的枪法很准）徽章和徽条，像个孩子一样带着好战和害羞的神情，昂首阔步地走在平民中间，就会想起他和那个军人的打斗。

他并不是美国退伍军人协会的一员，那是父母的错，并不能怪他。但在那个周日的下午，克里斯默斯被从摩兹镇抓回来时，他已经去见了该协会在本地的长官。他的想法和话语都相当简单和直接。“我们必须维持秩序，”他说，“我们必须让法律得到弘扬。有法才有国。谁都没有权力判处另一个人死刑，这应该由我们这些杰弗逊的士兵来处理。”

“你怎么知道有人在计划别的事儿？”长官问道，“你听说什么了？”

“我不知道，我也没听说。”他没有撒谎。他似乎觉得民众会说什么无关紧要，用不着撒谎。“这不是问题。重要的是，我们这些穿制服的士兵是否在第一时间表明自己的立场，重要的是我们能否立刻告诉他们，政府和国家在这些事上的立场。他们根本没有必要讨论。”他的计划也很简单。他想把军团编成一个排，自己做指挥。“但是如果他们不想让我指挥的话，那也完全可以。他们要是同意，我就做副指挥，中士或下士也行。”他非常诚恳，他要的并不是虚荣。他是那么真诚，没有一点儿开玩笑的味道，以至于军团指挥官也只好收回了即将做出的轻率的否决。

“我仍然觉得没这个必要。即便有，我们也只能像平民那样。我不能让军团那么做，毕竟，我们现在不是士兵了。即便能这么做，我也不会做。”

格林姆没有生气，好像盯着臭虫一样看着他。“可你曾经穿过军装，”他耐着性子说，“我想你不会利用职权阻止我同他们交谈吧？以个人身份可以吗？”

“不会，我没有权力那么做。但请注意只能是以你个人身份，你不能以我的名义做任何事。”

格林姆用自己的理由回击了他：“我才不会那么做。”说完，他就走了。那是星期六下午四点左右的时候。下午余下的时间里，他跑遍了协会成员工作的办公室和店铺。到了黄昏时分，他掌握了足足可以组成一个团的人员。他不知疲倦，强有力地克制着自己；他像预言家一样令人无法抗拒。然而，新成员同指挥官坚持一样的观点：决不能以协会的官

方任命为旗号。于是，他毫无预谋地实现了自己的初衷：他成了指挥。他让所有的人在晚饭前集合，将他们分成小队，任命了几个军官和一名参谋；年轻人和没有去过法国的人都变得激动起来。他的发言简短而又冷淡：“.....规则.....司法程序.....让人们看看，我们已经身着美利坚合众国的军装.....还有一件事。”这时，他变得平易近人，像一个熟悉每个士兵姓氏的指挥官一样，“我把机会交给你们，我听你们的。我想，在这事儿完成之前我最好一直穿着军装。那样他们才会明白‘山姆大叔’[1](#)不仅仅是一种精神存在。”

“但他没来，”有人马上说道，这个人和不在场的指挥官持有相同的想法，“这不是政府的麻烦，肯尼迪可能并不关心。这是杰弗逊镇的麻烦，不是华盛顿的。”

“那就让他关心一下。”格林姆说道，“如果不是为了保护美国和美国人民的话，那你的协会代表什么？”

“不，”另一个人说，“我认为我们不应该大肆宣扬。没有这个我们也可以做想做的事，甚至做得更好。难道不是吗，弟兄们？”

“好吧，”格林姆说道，“我会照你们说的做，但每个人都需要一把手枪。一小时后来这里检查武器。每个人都要来报到。”

“肯尼迪会对持枪有什么意见呢？”一个人说道。

“这事儿交给我。”格林姆说道，“一小时之后准时来报到，带上随身武器。”他解散了士兵，穿过安静的广场来到警长办公室。人们告诉他警长在家里。“在家？”他重复道，“现在？他现在在家干吗呢？”

“我估计他在吃饭吧。像他那样体格的人，一天要吃很多顿饭。”

“在家，”格林姆又重复道。他的眼神里没有愤怒，脸上又浮现出他看着指挥官时的那种表情，冷淡而又超脱。“吃饭。”说完，他走了出去。他加快脚步，再次穿过了空空的广场。在这个平静的国度，平静的城镇，人们平静地坐在晚饭桌前，广场上一片寂静。他去了警长家，但警长立刻拒绝了他的要求。

“十几个或二十几个人在广场上晃悠，裤子上别着手枪？不，不行。那可行不通。我不能让这件事发生。那绝对行不通。这件事由我们来处理。”

格林姆盯着警长看了一会儿。然后，他转过身，又快步走开了。“好吧，”他说，“如果你想这样的话，我不打扰你，你也别管我。”这话听起来不像是威胁，声音平淡而绝对，更没有一丝怒火。他继续往前走，速度很快。警长看着他，叫了一声。格林姆转过身。

“你也要把你的武器放在家里，”警长说，“听见没？”格林姆没有回答。他只顾往前走。警长眉头紧锁，看着他消失在视线里。

那天晚饭后，警长回到镇中心——除了执行紧急的或是无法逃避的公务外，他已经几年没有这么做了。他在监狱外看到了格林姆的一个纠察队，在法院看到了另一队。在广场和邻近的街道上看到了巡逻的第三队。他们告诉警长，其他后援人员在格林姆受雇的棉花厂的办公室，他们把那儿当成了和平队的连部办公室。警长在街上看见了格林姆，他正在巡逻检查。“过来，哥们儿，”警长说。格林姆停了下来，但没有走过来；警长朝他走去。他用肥胖的手拍了拍格林姆的屁股，说：“我告诉过你，把武器放在家里。”格林姆没吭气，直直地盯着警长。警长叹了口气，说道：“好吧，如果你不这么做的话，我任命你为特别助手。但是没有我的同意，你绝对不能让别人看见你的枪。听见了吗？”

“当然不会，”格林姆说，“当然，如果我觉得没有必要，你也不会让我拔枪。”

“我的意思是，我让你用你再用。”

“当然，”格林姆说，他没发火，很耐心，迅速说道，“我们的意思一样。你别担心。我会在那儿的。”

夜幕降临，镇子安静下来，电影院空了，杂货店也一家家地关了门，格林姆的队员开始犯困。他没有表示不满，冷冷地看着他们；他们变得有点怯懦，开始固守。不知不觉中，他又打出一张王牌。因为他们都有些胆怯了，觉得自身缺乏格林姆身上那种冷酷的狂热，如果是为了展示给他看，他们明天还会回来。少数人留了下来。毕竟，现在已经是星期六的晚上，有些人搬来椅子开始玩牌。他们玩了一宿，但格林姆没有玩，也不让仅次于他的另一个指挥官玩，这个人是队伍里唯一相当于有军衔的人。格林姆时不时地派一个小队去广场上巡逻。这次，夜间的巡警也成了他们的一员，但他没有玩牌。

周日是安静的。扑克游戏静静地继续，只是会被阶段性的巡逻打断，安静的教堂响起了钟声，会众身着夏日绚烂的服装聚集起来。广场上早有消息说大陪审团明天会碰面。不知为什么，这几个词有揭秘的力量，令人无法抗拒，甚至还有些暗藏的、无所不知的眼睛在警惕人们的一举一动，这让格林姆一伙人更加坚定了自己虚构的判断。人们无法预料，自己在不经意间竟然被格林姆影响了，他们不知道自己正在思考，全镇人带着尊敬，或许还有点敬畏和一些真切的信念和自信，接受了格林姆，仿佛他对镇子的远见卓识、热情和自豪竟然莫名其妙地比他们自身的更加敏锐、更加真实。总之，他的队员欣然接受了这一切；他们一夜未眠，在假日绷紧神经，臣服于他。如果情况需要的话，甚至到了可

以为他卖命的地步。如今，他们庄严地行进着，令人肃然起敬。他们的神情和身上的卡其色军装一样显眼。格林姆希望他们穿上军装，似乎他们每次回到办公室，格林姆都希望他们能穿着庄重、简朴的军装，那是他梦寐以求的。

巡逻一直延续到周日晚上，人们还在玩扑克。现在，一直以来那种隐秘、警惕的氛围已经退去，坚定和自信让他们显得有些狂妄自大。今晚，当他们听到巡警走上台阶的脚步声时，有人说道：“我们是宪兵队的。”霎时，他们用冷酷、明亮而又蛮勇的眼神望着彼此。然后，又有人大声说：“把那个狗杂种扔出去。”另一个人紧闭嘴唇，发出了奇怪的声音。于是，到了第二天，也就是星期一早晨，当第一批从乡下赶来的汽车和马车开始聚集的时候，格林姆的团队又开始整装待发，着装统一，不同的是他们的面孔。他们中的大多数人年龄相仿，经历相似，是同一代人。不仅如此，他们深沉、冷酷地站在混乱的人群中，眼神空洞而阴凉，庄重、超脱地看着眼前慢慢移动的人群。这些人看得见、摸得着，却没有任何感觉，他们的脸围成一圈，像牛一样空洞、入神。他们来了又走，不断被新近围上的人群所替代。整个上午，嘈杂声时起时伏，有问有答：“他在那儿。那个拿着自动手枪的年轻人。他是他们的头儿，是州长的特派员。他是整个事儿的头儿。今天，警长没话说了。”

出事之后，说什么也都晚了。格林姆告诉警长：“你要是听我的就好了。让我带一队人把他带出监狱，而不是让助手带着他穿过广场，连手铐都不给他戴。人群里，该死的布福德连枪都不敢开，虽然他开了也可能只会击中畜棚的门。”

“我怎么知道到他打算逃跑，我怎么知道他会要在那个时候、那个地方逃跑呢？”警长说，“那时，史蒂文斯刚告诉我，说他要服罪并且接

受无期徒刑。”

然而，为时已晚。一切都已结束。广场中央、人行道和法院大楼之间，熙熙攘攘的人群像赶集似的你拥我挤。警长的助手向天空开了两枪，格林姆是第一个知道出问题的人。他当时正在法院，立刻就明白发生了什么事情。他的反应明确而又直接。他回头冲已经尾随他两天两夜，既是助手又是勤务兵的人喊道：“打开火警！”说着，他早已向开枪的地方跑去。

“火警？”助手问，“什么——”

“打开火警！”格林姆冲他喊道，“人们的想法并不重要，他们只要知道发生了什么事情……”他没有说完就走了。

他穿梭在奔跑的人群中，追上又超过他们，因为他有目标而这些人却没有；他们只是乱跑，笨重的黑色自动手枪像一张犁一样，给他开辟出了一条道路。人们看着他那张年轻的面孔，神色紧张而坚毅；他们脸色煞白，目瞪口呆，发出长长的叹息声：“那儿，他往那儿跑了……”但格林姆已经看见了警长的助手，他正拿着枪在追赶。格林姆向四周瞥了一眼，又向前冲去；广场上，在追逐警长助手和逃犯的人群中，有一个穿着西部联合电报公司制服的年轻人，身形笨重的他像牵着一头温顺的母牛一样，推着自行车为自己开道。格林姆把枪塞进枪托，将男孩推到一边，跳上自行车，一下都没停，就冲了出去。

自行车没有喇叭也没有铃铛，但人们不知怎的还是感觉到格林姆来了，也给他让了路。这样，他似乎更加确信，盲目、平静地坚信自己的做法绝对正确。当他追上奔跑的助手时，他放慢了速度。助手扭过头，大汗淋漓，边跑边喊：“他拐弯儿了，进了那条小巷……”

“我知道，”格林姆说，“他戴手铐了吗？”

“戴了！”助手说道。格林姆骑着自行车飞奔而去。

“那他跑不快，”格林姆心想，“他很快就会躲起来。无论如何也要离开这儿的开阔地带。”他很快就拐进了小巷。小巷在两栋房子之间蜿蜒，一旁还有木板栅栏。那一刻，火警第一次响起来，很快变成了一种缓慢、持续的尖叫，最后仿佛超出了人们的听觉范围，那种感觉好像是一种无声的振动。格林姆的脑子在迅速转动，很有逻辑地思考着，带着一种狂热和拘谨的快感。“他想做的第一件事就是逃出人们的视线。”格林姆一边想一边向四周张望。小巷的一边围着六英尺高的围栏，另一边什么都没有。巷子的一端被一扇木门所切断，门外是牧场，牧场那边是一条深深的水渠，这条水渠是镇子的地标性建筑。木门后面的树木刚刚高过水渠沿儿；军团可以藏在那里部署兵力。“啊！”他大声叫起来。但他没停车也没减速，只是调转车头，顺着巷子骑回了他曾经停过的那条街道。警报的哀号已经渐渐减弱，回到了听觉范围以内。他慢慢停下自行车，匆匆扫了奔跑的人群一眼，看见一辆汽车向他开过来。尽管他一直在骑车，但那辆车还是追上了他；车里的人们探出身子，冲着他那张固执、向前看的脸大喊：“上车！”他们喊着，“上车！”他没有回答，也没有看他们。车子超过他，又慢下来；现在，他一言不发，敏捷地匀速向前骑着，并且超过了那辆汽车；汽车又加快速度超过了他，车里面的人探出身子朝前看去。他骑得太快了，默不作声地如幽灵般轻巧、迅速，像世界的主宰或命运之神一样坚定。他身后又传来警报愈来愈高亢的哀号。当车里的人再次回头看这时，他已经消失得无影无踪了。

他早已全力冲进另一条巷子。他的脸如石头般坚硬，闪烁着平静、满足的光芒，透着庄严和鲁莽的喜悦。这条巷子更深，里面的车辙也更多。小巷最终延伸到一处贫瘠的圆丘，自行车跃上土丘又掉下来。他在

山顶正俯视镇子边缘沟壑的全貌时，视线突然被镇边的两三间黑人小屋所阻断。他独自一动不动地站在那里，简直像地标一样举足轻重。在他身后，镇里的警报声又开始降下来。

这时，他发现了克里斯默斯。他看见他了。由于离得远，克里斯默斯显得很渺小，从水沟里出来，他的手被铐在一起。格林姆看到太阳照在手铐上，逃犯的手上如同计日器一般熠熠生辉。他似乎觉得，在这儿就能听见没有获得自由的克里斯默斯在喘息，绝望地呼吸着。接着，瘦小的身影又跑了，消失在距离最近的黑人小屋后。

现在，格林姆也开始跑起来。他跑得很快，但这对他来说不费吹灰之力。他没有想过报复，既不生气也不愤怒。克里斯默斯也看见了格林姆。因为有一瞬间他们几乎是面对面地看着彼此。当时，格林姆奔跑着正要绕过小木屋；克里斯默斯神奇地从后窗跳出来，戴着手铐的手高高举起，仿佛在燃烧一般闪闪发光。他们对视了一眼：一个人刚刚跳出来，正要蹲下，另一个迈开大步正在奔跑，眼看就要顺势拐弯了。在这一瞬间，他看到克里斯默斯拿着一把沉重的镀镍手枪。格林姆迅速转身，又冲回屋角，掏出了自动手枪。

他飞快而冷静地思考着，心中暗喜：“他有两件事情可以做。他可以试着再回水渠里躲着，或者他会躲在那所房子附近，直到我俩有一人中枪。”水渠在他所在的房子那边，他立刻做出判断和应对。他全速跑回刚刚转过的弯，仿佛有魔法，或是有神助一般，又好像他知道克里斯默斯不会拿着手枪等在那儿一样。他很快拐了弯，一步都没停。

此刻，他就在水渠旁边。他停下来，一动不动。在那把笨重、冰冷的自动手枪上方，他的脸上浮现出平静、神秘的表情，像教堂窗户上的天使一样超然。没等停下来，他便又动了起来，行动迅速，像棋盘上的

棋子盲目地依赖着棋手。他朝水渠跑去，但当他刚跳进沟里时，就发现里面的灌木丛阻挡了陡坡，他只好往上爬。这时，他看见了高出地面约两英尺的小木屋。他跑得太快，之前一直没注意到这座小屋。他现在明白自己忽略了这一点，克里斯默斯一直在房子下方注视着他移动的双腿。他说了一句：“好家伙。”

刚才那一跳让他跑了一段距离，然后才爬出来。他看起来不知疲倦，好像不是血肉之躯，派他打头阵的棋手也发现他还有呼吸。他一刻不停，勇猛地从沟里再次爬出来，又开始奔跑。他一拐过小木屋，就看见克里斯默斯正要跨过三百码以外的栅栏。他没有开枪，因为克里斯默斯正穿过一个小花园，径直朝着一所房子跑去。格林姆一边跑，一边看到克里斯默斯跳上房子后面的台阶，跑了进去。“哈，”格林姆说，“牧师家。海托华的家。”

尽管他突然转了弯，绕过房子跑到了那条街上，但他没有减速。那辆超过他但又没跟上他的汽车又开了回来，正合棋手之意。格林姆没有打手势，汽车便停了下来，三个男人从车上下来。格林姆一句话都没说，转身穿过院子，跑进遭贬谪的牧师独居的房子里。那三个男人跟在格林姆后面，跑进走廊后才停下来，将刚刚远离的夏日暴晒的味道带入这所与世隔绝、陈腐昏暗的房子里。

阳光照射在他们身上，他们带着阳光：无耻无畏。他们弯下腰，从地上扶起满脸淌血的海托华时，他们的脸好像无形地悬在光圈中一样。克里斯默斯从这里跑到走廊，举起戴着镣铐的双手，手里拿着枪，如闪电一般刺眼。他恍如有仇必报的愤怒之神，宣布世界末日的到来，将海托华击倒在地。他们把年老的海托华扶起来。

“在哪间屋子？”格林姆摇动着海托华，问道：“哪间屋子，老头

儿？”

“先生！”海托华说。然后他又说道：“你们！你们！”

格林姆大喊：“在哪间屋子里，老头儿？”

他们扶着海托华站起来。他们刚从阳光下走出来，看到海托华光秃秃的脑袋和血迹斑斑的惨白的大脸，在昏暗的走廊里显得非常可怕。“大伙儿！”他喊道，“听我说。那天晚上他在这儿，杀人的那天晚上和我待在这儿。我对上帝发誓——”

“天哪！”格林姆喊道，他声音清亮而愤怒，就像一个年轻的牧师。“难道杰弗逊的每一个牧师和老处女都和那个胆小的狗杂种有私交吗？”他撇下海托华便跑了。

格林姆仿佛只等棋手再次移动他一样，凭着无尽的信念，他径直向厨房跑去，一进门他就开枪了；格林姆还没看清立在屋角的掀翻的桌子，也没看清克里斯默斯蹲在桌子后面，闪光的双手放在桌子的边缘，他就将枪膛里的所有子弹全部射向桌子。后来，有人用一块折叠的手帕盖住了桌上的五个弹孔。

然而，棋手并没有走完这盘棋。其他人赶到厨房时，看到桌子翻倒在一旁，格林姆俯身蹲在克里斯默斯身旁。他们走过去看格林姆时，发现克里斯默斯还没死。当他们看到格林姆的举动时，有人哽咽着叫起来，跌跌撞撞跑到墙边开始呕吐。格林姆也随即跳开，把血淋淋的屠刀扔在身后，说道：“现在，你再不能骚扰白人妇女了，即便在地狱里也不可以。”然而，躺在地上的克里斯默斯早已不能动弹，只是躺在那儿，睁着眼睛，眼神空洞，只有残存的意识和嘴角的阴影。有好一阵子，他平静地抬起眼皮望着他们，他的眼神深不可测，让人无法忍受。

接着，他的脸、他的身体，所有的一切似乎都轰然倒塌。撕裂的外衣下面，从胯和腰间涌出了淤积的黑色血液，像呼吸一样畅快。苍白的身体喷出的血液如同火箭在上升中喷射出的火苗一样；克里斯默斯好像从这奔涌的黑泉上升起来一样，永远地钻进了他们的记忆。他们将无法摆脱它，不论是在多么宁静的山谷，还是在多么平静安宁的古老溪边，或是在任何一个孩子光滑如镜的脸上，他们都想到昔日的灾难和更新的希望。这样的情景会一直存在，沉思静想，坚定不移，永不消退，永不退去，虽不具威胁性，却独自沉静，独自欢喜。镇上再次传来汽笛尖厉的长鸣，尽管有墙壁的阻隔，但它还是越过墙壁，愈来愈高亢，甚至超出了听觉的极限。

[1](#)山姆大叔 Uncle Sam，美国政府的绰号。

这会儿，午后的铜色余晖终于消散，种着低矮枫木、挂着广告牌的街道已经准备就绪，空旷的街道被窗户围起来，像浑然天成的舞台一样。

他依然记得，年轻时离开神学院，初到杰弗逊镇时的情景。那时渐渐消逝的铜色余晖仿佛依稀可闻，就像黄色的喇叭发出微弱的声音，慢慢地流向沉寂和等待，很快又重新奏响。号角声停止之前，他仿佛听到了雷声，它在空气中还没有耳语和密谈响亮。

但他从未告诉过任何人，甚至包括她在内。那时，他们还是花前月下的爱侣，耻辱和分歧尚未到来；后来，她知道了他为何愿意坐在窗前，等待夜幕降临，等待降临的一瞬间，她开始和他产生分歧，开始懊悔，甚至绝望，她再也无法忘记这一切。他没告诉过她，没告诉过任何女人。当时的她。女人（而不是神学院，虽然他曾经这么以为）：上帝创造了这些无名、消极的生物，并不仅仅是接受他的精液，还有他的精神思想——这是真理，或者说是他敢于触碰的最接近真理的东西。

他是家中唯一的孩子，出生时他父亲已经五十岁，而他母亲也已经抱恙二十年。长大后，他认为，那是母亲在内战最后一年所吃的食物造成的。也许这的确是原因。尽管那时他的祖父还在蓄奴，但父亲没有奴隶。他本来也可以有。尽管在那个年代，蓄奴会降低土地的经营成本，他出生、成长、生活在这片土地上，但他不愿吃黑人奴隶种植和烹饪的食物，也不愿睡黑人奴隶铺好的床。因此，内战期间他不在家时，妻子没有种植园，只能靠自己维持温饱或邻居们有限的接济度日。丈夫甚至都不允许妻子接受这些帮助，因为他们无法以同样的方式偿还。“上帝

会赐予的。”他说。

“赐予什么？蒲公英还是沟杂草？”

“即便如此，他也会赐给我们能消化它们的肠胃。”

他是一位牧师。曾经整整一年，他总在每周日早晨很早就离家（那时他还没结婚），父亲都不知道他去了哪里。尽管父亲支持圣公会，但在儿子的记忆里，他从未跨进过任何一间教堂。后来，父亲发现刚满二十一岁的儿子每周日都会骑马到十六英里外的山里，在一个长老会小教堂里布道。父亲笑他。儿子觉得这样的笑声如同吼叫和咒骂，他表现得冷若冰霜，敬而远之，一声不吭。下一个星期日，他还会去那里。

战争爆发时，儿子并非第一批参战的人，最后一批里也没有他。他在部队待了四年，没有开过一枪，没有穿过军装，只穿双排扣长礼服，这套衣服是他为结婚而准备的，他在布道时也穿着它。1865年返乡时，他仍然穿着这件衣服。然而，自从马车停在门前的石阶处，两个人将他抬到屋内，放在床上之后，他再没穿过这件衣服。他的妻子帮他脱下衣服，收在阁楼的箱子里。二十五年过去了，直到有一天，他的儿子打开箱子，将它拿出来，抚平上面当初小心翼翼叠好的折痕，可收拾衣服的人早已逝去。

现在，他记起了这些事情。他坐在安静的书房窗户前，在昏暗中等待黄昏的消逝，等待黑夜和疾行的马蹄声。这会儿，铜色余晖已经完全消失，世界悬浮在一片绿色中，它的色泽和质地恍若光芒透过彩色玻璃。很快，就该到说很快的时候了。快了，“我当时八岁，”他想到，“正下着雨。”他好像还能闻到雨的味道，闻到十月大地的潮湿和伤感，还有箱子打开时的霉味。然后，他看到了那件礼服和上面整齐的折

痕。当时，他并不知道那是什么，因为刚拿到衣服时，他被吓坏了，似乎死去的母亲还在用手抚摸折痕。接着，他慢慢展开衣服。对他这样一个小孩来说，礼服大得不可思议，仿佛专为巨人所制，而且刚从巨人身上脱下来，衣服上还留着幽灵的特质；炮声隆隆，硝烟弥漫，战旗撕扯的背景下隐约现出惊人的英雄气概。至今，这些仍然出现在他清醒而混沌的生活中。

礼服上满是补丁，几乎已经无法辨认原来的样子。针脚粗糙的皮补丁，灰色的南部联盟布标，经过风吹日晒都变成了褐色，还有一块令他触目惊心的补丁——补丁是蓝色的，深蓝色，美利坚联邦制服的蓝色。男孩看着补丁，看着沉默不语的没有主人的衣服。这个孩子出生于父母青春不再、急需别人精心照料的时期，他即将静静地承受恐慌的倾轧，令他无法承受。

那天的晚饭，他无法下咽。年近六十的父亲抬起头看着他，发现孩子一直在看他，眼神中充满了恐惧、敬畏和其他什么感情。于是，父亲问：“你在想什么？”孩子没说话，也说不出来，稚嫩的脸上流露出深不可测的表情。夜里躺在床上，男孩儿无法入睡，僵硬地躺在床上，甚至都没有颤动一下，只是躺在黑暗中的床上。父亲，作为他唯一的亲人，和他隔着几个房间。他们之间隔着的不仅是几十年的距离，甚至在相貌上都找不到接近的地方。第二天，孩子感到肠胃不适，但他不会说出来，甚至也不会告诉家里身兼母亲和保姆双重角色的黑人女奴。他会慢慢恢复体力的。然后，有一天，他又会偷偷溜进阁楼，重新打开箱子，拿出礼服，害怕而兴奋地抚摸上面的蓝色补丁，暗自揣测是不是父亲杀死了那个穿蓝色礼服的人。他越想越怕，可越怕越想知道。可到了第二天，当他知道他父亲去镇里探望病人，或许在天黑之前不会回来时，他会跑到厨房，对那个黑人女奴说：“再跟我说说祖父吧。他杀死了多少

美国佬？”这时，他听着却并不觉得可怕，甚至都不是欢欣，而是骄傲。

祖父是他儿子心中唯一的刺。但是，儿子不多说，心里却明白，就像每个人都希望自己的父亲是另一个人，而做父亲的同样也希望拥有一个不一样的儿子。他俩倒也相安无事：儿子冷漠、严肃，对父亲敬而远之；父亲直率、豪爽地讲些笑话，却没什么意义，更不会蕴藏什么智慧。他们和睦地住在镇里的一座二层楼房里。黑人女奴一手将这个孩子拉扯大，可过了些时候，他却平静而执拗地拒绝吃黑人女奴做的食物。于是，在黑人女奴的极度愤怒中，他开始自己做饭，然后当着父亲的面在桌前把饭吃掉，父亲总是拘谨地给他倒一杯波本威士忌，但儿子从未碰过，也从未品尝过。

儿子结婚的那天，父亲让出了房子。新郎新娘到达时，他等在走廊上，手里拿着房子钥匙。他头戴帽子，身披斗篷，周围堆满了行李，身后站着两个黑奴：黑人厨娘和他的“男仆”——一个比他还老的秃头男人，是厨娘的丈夫。父亲并非农场主，而是一名律师，他学法律的经历就像儿子学医的过程，用他的话说就是“因为主赐予了力量，魔鬼的慷慨和自己的运气”。他已经在两里外的乡下给自己买了一栋小房子，他的四轮马车和马匹也等在走廊前。他将帽子向后倾斜，叉开腿站在那里——鼻子通红，留着土匪头子式的胡子，显得精神矍铄却又虚张声势——儿子和素未谋面的儿媳从大门向他走来。当他弯腰向她致礼时，她闻到了威士忌和雪茄的味道。“我想你会是个好媳妇。”他说，鲁莽的眼神虽然有点儿吓人，却很慈祥，“毕竟，假装老实的那个家伙只不过是想着长老会里唱赞美诗的女低音去找，可就连仁慈的主自己都不会唱半点儿音乐。”

他驾着装饰有流苏的四轮马车，带着属于他自己的东西——衣服、瓶

瓶罐罐和黑奴。黑奴厨娘甚至都没留下来给那对新人做第一顿饭。没人要求，她也就没必要拒绝。从此，父亲再没踏进过儿子的家。要是他回来，肯定会受到欢迎的。尽管谁也没说，但父子俩都明白。儿媳的父母都是有教养的人，她还有好几个兄弟姐妹，家里生活并不富足，但似乎能在教堂找到一些家里餐桌上没有的东西。她用自己小心谨慎的方式，悄悄爱着丈夫，对他充满了崇拜：他的高谈阔论，他的虚张声势，还有他对朴素信仰的执着追求。尽管他搬走了，但儿子和儿媳仍然能得到他的消息。就在搬去乡下的第二年夏天，他闯进了一个在附近树林举行的复兴教会的户外延时活动，强行把活动变成了为期一周的业余赛马会。面对日益减少的会众，骨瘦如柴、义愤填膺的乡村牧师站在简陋的布道台上大声诅咒他，咒骂他的昏庸和健忘，不知悔改的秉性。他不去儿子和儿媳家的原因很明确：“你们觉得我太沉闷，而我也觉得你们太无聊。谁知道呢？该死的家伙说不准会腐化我，让我在这把年纪赶紧上天堂。”其实，这个并非真正的原因。儿子知道不是那么回事，因为这番话无论从谁的口中说出来，都会遭到对方的驳斥。老头儿的行为和思想其实都是非常细腻的。

在废奴主义的情绪诉诸语言并从北方传出来之前，儿子就已经成了废奴主义者。尽管他得知共和党的确已经为这种情绪定了名称，他也彻底更改了信条的名称，但他丝毫没改掉他的处事原则和行为。尽管当时他还不到三十岁，但作为懒惰、贪杯人的后代，他却有着超乎年纪、斯巴达式的勇猛和清醒的头脑。或许那也是直到战后他才有孩子的原因，因为战争改变了他，或许他死去的父亲会说，他被“荡涤”了些许圣洁。参军四年，他从未开过枪，只在星期天早上替军队祈祷和布道。当他带着伤回到家，养好伤并当上医生时，他只负责诊治外伤和经营药房，那都是他在前线帮助医生给自己的朋友或敌人医治时学到的本领。或许，在他的众多所作所为中，这才是他令父亲最高兴的：他的儿子在那些侵

略和破坏自己国家的人身上学会了一样谋生的本领。

轮到儿子的儿子考虑时，认为“‘圣洁’这个词并不适合他”。他坐在黑暗的窗户前，看着外面的世界悬在墨绿中，然后渐渐暗下去。“祖父会是第一个站出来反对任何用这个词来形容他的人。”思绪拉回刚刚过去不久的艰难但并非完全无望的岁月里。那时，这个国家的人们没有多余的东西可以用来浪费，也没有时间可以用来虚度，每个人都必须守卫和保护少得可怜的所得，以防遭到大自然或同伴的破坏。他们一辈子都得凭着坚毅和不屈来奋斗，不敢有须臾的懈怠。这便是他反对蓄奴的地方，也是他反对那位精力充沛却亵渎神灵的父亲的根本原因。他站在与自己的原则相悖的一方，主动参与这场派系之争，他看不出其中的矛盾之处，反而真切地证明了他拥有两个既独立又统一的自我，其中一个靠明朗的原则度日，却生活在一个不真实的世界。

但是，另一个自我却生活在现实中，跟其他人一样生活，甚至比很多人过得还要好。他平和地生活在自己的原则下。战争爆发时，他将这些原则搬入战场，依旧坚持这些原则；安宁的星期一到，他便会去安静的树林里布道，不需要携带任何辅助工具，只要有意志、执着的信仰和他在平时学到的一切就已经足够；在炮火中救治伤员，他也无须任何正规器材，责无旁贷地承担起医治的责任，他靠的只是自己的力量、勇气以及平时的积累。战争失败后，其他人都纷纷返乡，倔强的眼神不愿接受逝去的现实，但他选择往前看，充分利用他在战争中学到的实用技能，成了一名医生。他的第一批患者中就包括他的妻子，或许是他让她重获新生。至少，他让她得以孕育新的生命，尽管他们的儿子降生时，他已经五十岁，而她也已经四十多岁了。儿子与幽灵为伴，在幻影中长大成人。

这些幻影包括他的父亲、母亲和一个黑人老妇。父亲曾经是没有教

堂的牧师，没有敌人的士兵。战争失败之后，他变成了牧师和战士的合体，成了一名医生，一名外科医生。似乎正是由于冷峻、坚定的信念一直支撑着他，使得他不仅没有被打败，没有丧失信心，而且变得更加睿智，介于清教徒和骑士二者的身份之间。炮火和硝烟中呈现出一种幻影，仿佛有一双手在向他一字一句地陈述这种信念。他好像突然开始相信，基督的旨意是只有他的灵魂需要治愈，肉体不值得拥有，更不必救赎。这是幻影之一。第二个幻影是他的母亲。母亲留给他的最初印象、也是最终印象，就是瘦削的面容和大大的眼睛，枕头上散开的黑色头发，青紫色的一双手骨瘦如柴，一动不动地搭在床上。在她死的那天，如果有人告诉他，他曾经在别的地方见过她，而不是躺在床上，那他是不相信的。后来，他的记忆里呈现出的是不同的画面：他确实记起了她在房子里忙来忙去，操持家务的样子。但是，八岁到十岁那段时间里，他一直以为她是沒有腿脚的，仿佛只有那张瘦削的脸和两只日渐睁大的眼睛，好像要竭力看清一切，看清所有的生命。然而，她的最后一瞥里却满是挫败、苦难和预知。当最后这一刻降临，他能听到，能听到一个声音，像是在哭泣。在她过世之前，他就已经从每堵墙里嗅出了幻影的味道。他们就是整个房子：他住在房子里，住在他们幽暗、包罗万象、孱弱的幻影中。他和她像两只脆弱的野兽一样住在里面，住在兽穴里。父亲不时地走进来——那个人对他俩来说都好陌生，就像一个外人，甚至就像一个威胁：身体状况竟能让一个人的灵魂变化如此快。他不只是陌生人，更是敌人。他身上的气味跟他们的不同，说话的声音也跟原来不一样，甚至操着不同的语言，仿佛他通常都住在不同的环境、不同的世界中；孩子蜷缩在床边，可以感受到父亲的粗鲁和健硕，无意识的轻蔑充斥了整个房间，他也跟那些幻影一样无助和挫败。

第三个幻影是那个黑人女奴。儿子和新娘回家的那个清晨，她坐着马车离开了。她离开时是奴隶，1866年回来时仍然是奴隶，不过是自己

走回来的——她身形庞大，表情易怒而又沉着——黑人在场景变换时会换上不同的悲情面具。主人死后，她终于确信再也见不到她的主人或她的丈夫——那个“男仆”曾经跟随主人一起奔赴战场，一起没有返乡——她拒绝离开主人在乡下购置的房子。主人当初在离开时，曾经将房子全权交给她打理。父亲死后，儿子去乡下锁了房子，搬出父亲的个人财产，并提出要供给她生活所需。但她拒绝了，并且拒绝离开那座房子。她搭起一个小小的厨房花园，一个人住在里面，等候丈夫归来。她不愿相信丈夫的死讯，认为那只是流言，不可相信：主人在范·多恩骑士团突袭杰弗逊的格兰特的军需仓库时丧命，她的黑人丈夫伤心不已。一天夜里，他溜出营地。很快，就有传言说一个疯狂的黑人在靠近敌营的地方被联盟哨兵拦住。他疯疯癫癫地重复主人被美国佬绑架索取赎金的故事。别人甚至不敢说一句他的主人很可能已经死了的话。“不可能，先生，”他会说，“不可能是盖尔老爷。我的主人不可能死。他们不敢对海托华家的人下手，他们不敢。他们只是把主人藏起来了，逼他说出我俩把夫人的咖啡壶和金器藏在哪儿了。他们就想知道这个。”黑人总想逃走。后来有一天，盟军那边又传出消息，一个黑人用铁锹袭击了一名北方军官，军官为了自保，开枪打死了那个黑人。

黑人妇女很长时间无法接受这件事。“他不会那么傻。”她说，“他只是不知道那样做不对。用铁锹打美国佬，他不知道那样是不对的。”她这么说了大概有一年多。后来突然有一天，她出现在主人儿子家的门口，拎着一个方巾包，里面装着她的随身物品。十年前，她从这边走出去，而且从那之后就再没踏进过那个家门。她走进来，说：“我来了。筐里的柴火够做晚饭不？”

“你现在自由了。”主人的儿子告诉她。

“自由？”她重复了一句，平静中透着淡淡的忧伤，嘲讽道，“自

由？除了杀死盖尔老爷，让波普成为最蠢的家伙，自由能干吗？上帝都阻止不了，自由？别跟我谈自由。”

这就是第三个幻影。孩子（那时，他比幻影好不到哪里去。此刻，坐在天色渐昏的窗边，陷入回忆的还是当年那个孩子）跟这个幻影谈及鬼魂。他们不厌其烦地谈论着：孩子说得全神贯注，又害怕又兴奋；老女人陷入沉思，极其悲伤却又非常骄傲。但对孩子来说，他也只是兴奋得颤抖。听到祖父杀死了“数百”人，黑人波普临死前还试图再杀一个人，他相信这些，但丝毫不感到恐怖。他不害怕，因为那些都只是鬼魂，他从未亲眼见过他们，他们只是简单、温暖的英雄形象；然而，他认识和惧怕的父亲却是永远不会死去的幻影。“怪不得，”他想，“我跳过了一代。怪不得我没有父亲，我在二十年前的一个夜里就已经死了。我唯一的救赎机会是必须回到我最开始死去的地方。在那里，我的生命还没开始，就已经死去。”

刚来小镇时，他经常去神学院，经常思考如何告诉那些前辈，那些崇高的、献身教堂的人，他们决定着教堂的命运，而他已经欣然臣服于这个教堂。他会去跟他们诉说：“听我说，上帝必须召我去杰弗逊镇，因为我是在那里死去的。二十年前，我还没出生时就已经死去。我骑着战马奔驰在杰弗逊街道上，中弹身亡从马背上摔了下来。”起初，他觉得他可以那么说，他相信人们能理解。他去了神学院，将神职作为他的职业，将杰弗逊镇作为他的目的地。但他相信的远不止那些。他还信奉教堂，信奉教堂衍生和激发出的一切。他平静而欢愉地认为，若世上真有一个可以遮风避雨的避难所，那它一定是教堂；若真相可以毫无畏惧、毫不羞愧地被说出来，那倾诉它的地方一定是神学院。当他认为他已经听到了上帝的召唤时，他觉得自己看见的未来生活，就像一只完美、尊贵的花瓶，未经污染、完整且神圣。在那儿，灵魂可以逃脱粗鄙

的生死，平静地得以重生，只留一把腐朽的尘埃，任凭远风吹拂。那就是神学院的含义：平静、安全的城墙内，被束缚的、为衣食而劳碌的灵魂可以重新获得宁静，毫不畏惧、毫不掩饰地陷入沉思。

“但是，天上地下，并非只有真相，还有很多。”他安静地想着，一点都不觉得好笑，他很严肃；但同时，他又觉得很好笑，很幽默。坐在渐暗的黄昏里，他那缠着白色绷带的脑袋看起来更大，也更鬼魅。他想：“确实，还有更多。”比如，当一个人面临危机时，就会幻化出各种形状和声音，保护他免受真实的伤害。至少，他有一件事不后悔。他没告诉那些前辈他本来打算说的事。在神学院住了不到一年，他就学会了更多，更多，但更糟糕：他没丢掉先前获得的东西，而是学会了别的，学会了这些，他也学会了逃避。他的收获为爱情的面貌和形状涂上了颜色。

她是神学院里一名授课牧师的女儿。和他一样，她也是独生子。他确信她非常美丽，因为早在见她之前，他就听过她的名字。当他们真的见面时，他看到的并不是她，因为他早已经在心中刻画好了她的面容。他不相信，她一直生活在这个地方会长得不美。三年来，他都没有见过那张脸。而那时，他们已经在空心树洞里给对方留纸条有两年的时间了。如果他相信这一切，那他就认定这个点子完全是他俩自发的，而非哪一方先说出来或琢磨出来的。但实际上，这个想法既不是来自于他自己，也不是来自于她，而是来自一本书。不过，他从来没看见过她的脸，也没看到一张椭圆的小脸和一个急剧削尖的下巴，还有永不满足的欲望（她可能比他大一两岁，或者是三岁，他不清楚，也从没想过要弄清楚）。三年来，他从来没看到过那双一直打量着他的眼睛，仿佛狂躁的赌徒的眼睛。

后来的一天晚上，他终于正视她了。他盯着她，因为她突然粗鲁地

提出要结婚。他们之间从未谈及过这个话题。他甚至从未想过结婚这件事、这个词。他接受了，因为身边的人基本上都结婚了。但是，对他来说，婚姻并不意味着男人和女人正式宣布要有亲密的身体接触，而是像被捆绑在一条影子锁链上的两个影子，将停滞不前的关系推入下一个阶段，继续维持下去。他已经习以为常，他在鬼魂的陪伴下逐渐长大。后来，一天傍晚，她又突然疯狂地说起这件事来。当他最终明白她所说的逃离现在生活的意思时，他并不惊讶。他太天真了。“逃离？”他问，“逃离什么？”

“这里！”她说。他第一次看着她的脸庞，这张脸看起来就像一个掩盖欲望和恨意的面具：扭曲、盲目、激动。但她并不愚蠢，只是盲目得有些不顾一切，甚至是疯狂。“这里的一切！一切！一切！”

他并不感到奇怪，而且很快就觉得她没错，只是他理解不深。当时，他立刻就意识到，自己对神学院的信仰原来一直都是错的，并非错得离谱，但真的是错了，是不对的。或许，他早已经开始对自己产生了怀疑，但直到现在他才发觉。或许，那就是他没告诉长者们他一定要去杰弗逊的原因。一年前，他曾经对她说过他的想法和非去不可的原因，也说了他想把原因告诉长者们。当时，她用那双他还没有认真看过的眼睛盯着他。“你的意思是，”他说，“他们不会送我去？不会安排我去？我的要求不合理？”

“当然不会。”她说。

“可是，为什么呢？那是真的呀！或许有点儿傻，但是，是真的。再说，教堂如果不能帮助那些虽然愚蠢，但希望了解真理的人，那教堂存在的意义是什么呢？他们为什么不让我去？”

“啊，如果我是他们，而你的原因又是那个的话，我就不会让你去。”

“噢，”他说，“我明白了。”可他并没有完全明白。他相信自己可能错了，她是对的。所以，一年之后，当她突然跟他说起结婚和逃离时，他并不惊讶，也不觉得难受。他只是静静地想：“原来这就是爱。我明白了。我对爱情的看法也是错的。”他的想法还和以前一样，以后也一样，跟所有男人看待婚姻的想法都一样：当遭遇现实生活时，即便最深邃的书也错得离谱。

他彻底改变了想法。他们计划结婚。现在，他知道了，原来他那时一直都看到了她眼里深思熟虑后的绝望。“或许，将爱情写进书里是对的，”他安静地想，“或许，爱情在其他地方无处安放，只能在书里。”虽然他们依旧绝望，但现在至少有了明确的计划，定下了日子，他们感到安宁了些，可以好好筹划一番。他们可以谈他的神职授任，到时候他就可以去杰弗逊了。她说：“我们最好现在就开始准备。”他告诉她，他从四岁起就已经开始做准备；或许，他只是开玩笑，闹着玩儿而已。她激动而严肃地将这些抛在一边，毫不在意，就像自说自话似的。她说起要拜访的那些人的名字，或许会低声下气地忍受，或许要受到他们的危言恐吓，她给他描绘出了卑躬屈膝的蓝图。听到这里，他露出了淡淡的笑容，古怪、嘲弄、甚至绝望从未离开他的面孔。他一边听她说，一边说：“是，是，我明白，我懂了。”他好像在说是的，我明白，我现在明白了。这就是付出和收获的规则，我现在明白了。

起初，他们卑躬屈膝地造谣撒谎，在教会神职人员中间以请求和建议的形式软硬兼施。最后，他终于获得了杰弗逊镇的职位。一时间，他竟然忘记了自己是如何得到这个职位的。直到后来，他才想起来。那是他在杰弗逊镇落脚后，而绝不是在通向人生顶点的列车驶入最后一段路

程的时候。这段路程像极了他的出生地，但是，它看起来又不太一样。尽管他知道不同之处并非来自外面，而是在车窗内。他像孩子一样把脸紧贴在车窗上，妻子坐在身旁，脸上露出如饥似渴的表情。他一毕业就结婚了，距现在已有六个月。自结婚以来，他从没有在她脸上看到过这样赤裸裸的绝望，但也再没有见到她热情洋溢的样子。他又一次陷入了安静的思索中，不带一丝惊讶，或许也不觉得有任何伤痛：我明白了，这就是婚姻。是的，我现在明白了。

火车疾速向前驶去。他靠着车窗，窗外的田野飞快地向后退去，他用孩子般明快的声音说道：“我本可以早点来杰弗逊，什么时候都可以，可我没来。我本可以想来的时候就来。你知道，临时工和待命士兵是不一样的。待命士兵？唉，那是种绝望的自由。少数人（他不是一个军官——我认为那是父亲和老辛瑟说法唯一一致的地方：祖父从来不带军刀，不带任何武器，策马冲在军队前面）的举动就像小学生一样轻率，太过有勇无谋，就连与他们对峙四年的敌军都不敢相信他们竟然会那么做。沿途每个树林、每个村落都有北方佬安营扎寨，他策马奔腾在百里乡间，闯进敌人重兵把守的小镇——我知道他们闯进去、跑出来的那条街道。尽管我从未见过，但我清楚地知道它的样子。我们总有一天会在那条街上拥有一座房子，并且生活其中，我非常清楚它会是什么样子。当然不可能一到那里就能有房子，得等一段时间，得先住在牧师公馆里，但用不了多久，我们很快就会有的。我们将站在窗边看着窗外的街道，或许还能看到他们的脚印和留在空中的身影。因为即便尘土都已飘散，但空气是不变的——饥饿、荒凉、喧嚣、放火烧毁对方精心守备的军需物资，然后骑马离开。他们可不是要打劫，甚至不会停下来系鞋带，抽根烟。我跟你讲，他们不是蜜罐和荣耀里泡大的男人；他们是为了生活奋起反抗，站在风口浪尖的勇士。这就是原因，多棒。你听，试着去想象：永远年轻的面孔和纯粹的英雄梦想成就了他们的身姿。正因为如

此，他们的英雄举动看似有些不可思议，难怪他们的行为就像硝烟中枪炮的火光。在生命的最后一刻，他们的事迹被口口相传，以防被似是而非的谣传所亵渎。这是辛瑟告诉我的。我相信。我知道，故事太美，毋庸置疑。简单英勇的事迹不是白人能想象到的。或许黑人可以。即便是辛瑟编的，那我也相信。因为，事实没那么精彩。我不知道祖父的骑兵是不是失散了，不过我认为没有。我觉得他们是故意的，就像一群壮士去烧敌人的粮仓，不会拿别人的一针一线，却可能在飞奔时停下来从邻居或朋友家偷几个苹果。有一点需要注意：他们很饿，食不果腹已经三年了。或许，他们都已经习惯了饿肚子。总之，尽管那时并没有命令说不能抢劫，他们只放火烧了成吨的食物、衣服、烟草和酒水，没带走任何东西。他们转身而去，只留下身后的惊慌失措和熊熊大火；天空肯定也被烧得通红。你能看到，也能听到那些叫喊声、枪炮声、胜利的欢呼、恐惧的呼喊、鼓点般的马蹄声。火光映衬下的树木也似乎被吓得不敢动弹，房屋的山墙在爆炸后像锯齿一样尖利，最终也被夷为平地。这时的场面是封闭的，你可以感受到，可以在黑暗中听到马蹄的奋力跳跃，武器交锋，高呼的声浪，粗重的呼吸声以及胜利的欢呼。在他们的背后，其余部队正纵马朝军号声奔来。你肯定能听到，能感觉到，然后，你就可以看到。兵戎相接之前，你可以看到突然亮起的红色火焰，战马睁大双眼，马头攒动，呼吸沉重；兵戈闪烁着寒光，骨瘦如柴的人们苍白而憔悴，从他们记事以来，就没吃饱过；或许，他们中有些人已经翻身下马，或许会有一两个人进了鸡舍。在交战之前，你可以看到这一切。然后，一切又陷入黑暗，只响起了一声枪响。‘当然，他正好被打中了，’辛瑟说，‘他在偷鸡。一个成年男子，留下已经成婚的儿子，投入战争，唯一的目的是杀死美国佬，但却在别人的鸡舍被杀死，手里还攥着一把鸡毛，成了偷鸡贼。’他像个孩子似的，高亢而尖厉地说。他妻子早已抓住他的胳膊：嘘！人们都盯着你看呢！但是，他好像完全没听到，消瘦的、病恹恹的脸庞和眼睛，似乎都散发着某种光芒。

一定是这样的。他们不知道是谁开的枪。一直都不知道。也没人尝试弄明白。可能是一个女人，非常可能是一个盟军士兵的妻子。我认为她，极有可能是她。战争如火如荼，任何士兵都可能被敌人杀死，被战争裁决者和游戏规则制定者认定可用于战争的武器杀死；或者，被卧室里的一个女人杀死。但绝不可能在鸡舍里，被打鸟的枪杀死，那是用来捕猎野兽的。所以，若说这个世界实际上是由死人组成的，有什么奇怪的？当然，上帝环顾四周，看到他们的后辈时，他必须和我们一起承受。”

“别说了！嘘！人们都在看我们！”

火车慢慢地驶进镇里；昏暗的郊区渐渐消失在窗外。他仍然盯着外面——一个瘦削的、不太整洁的男人，浑身都闪耀着召唤和天命赋予的光辉——安静地包裹、收拢、保卫着自己焦急的心灵，安静地沉思。老天肯定会给某座村庄、某座小山、某座房子特定的颜色和形状，这样，它的信徒们才能指着某处说，这是我的。火车停了下来。他走下车，向外张望，长长的走廊里到处都是严肃、端庄、认真的人们，喧闹声中有喃喃低语，零零散散的只言片语，虽然出于善意但也绝非妄加判断，也不带任何（直说就是）偏见。“我承认，”他心想，“我相信我能接受。但或许，那就是我这些年来所做的一切。请上天宽恕。”天色已经暗得几乎看不到任何东西，现在也几乎进入了夜晚。他缠满绷带的脑袋看不出形状，恍惚间一动不动地悬在两个模糊不清的白点上，那是他搭在打开的窗户边缘的手臂。他身子前倾。他早已感觉到自己触碰到了两个瞬间：一个是他的全部生命，它在每个白天和黑夜交接的时候重生；还有一个就是悬浮的瞬间，很快就要来临。当他还很年轻，没有耐心等待的时候，他有时会自欺欺人，认为自己可以在时间到来前听到它的降临。

他心想：“或许这就是我做过的事。”他还想起了那些脸庞：那是老

人们的脸。他们将教会交到他手中时，很自然地质疑并嫉妒他的年轻，就像父亲将新娘交到新郎手上一样。老人们的脸上刻下了失望和质疑的皱纹，可这些皱纹的另一面是他们精神矍铄、受人尊重的岁月。——顺便提一句，这方面是画面中的主角和主人不容忽视，无法视而不见的。“他们尽了自己的职责，他们按规则行事。”他想，“是我违反了教规，我错了。也许是最严重的社会罪行，也可能是道德罪行。”思绪静静地流淌，慢慢地成形，但它不是独断专横的，也没有任何特别的遗憾。他视自己为影子群里的一个影子，总带着不真实的盲目乐观和自我主义，相信自己能在教堂会众的盲目热情和手舞足蹈中，在欢呼雀跃和恍惚犯错中，找到自己在与世隔绝、独立于世的教堂中找不到的东西。他似乎一直都明白，破坏教会的并非内部成员的对外探索，也非外部人员的对内窥探，而是那些控制教会，并且摘除塔顶钟表的神职人员。他好像能看到无数杂乱排布的教堂，清冷空荡，徒有虚表。它们高耸入云，却没有任何欣喜和激情，只给人们以冷酷和厄运的威胁。他好像觉得世上的教堂如同一座座堡垒，宛若中世纪时期用削尖的坚固栅栏筑起的路障，它将真理与安宁挡在外边，而人类正是在犯罪与被原谅之间平静地生活。

“我接受，”他心想，“我勉强能接受。不，我更糟糕，这是我造成的。我利用它来满足一己私欲。我来到这里，这里的人们一脸困惑，饱受饥饿，焦急地盼望我的到来，希望信赖我；可我却忽视了他们。我只带着一种信任，或许也是最初的信任，在信仰上帝之前我就已经相信；我以为许诺和信任一文不值，全然不知自己已经接受了这一切。如果那一切是我给她造成的，那我还期望什么呢？除了让上帝蒙羞、失望，让他羞愧地背过身去，我还能期盼什么呢？或许在那一刻，我不仅向她表露了我的渴望，而且还表明了她永远也不可能参与到平息我的渴望中；或许，那时的我就成了骗子，成了凶手，一手操纵了她的耻辱和死亡。

毕竟，总有一些事情，我们不能责怪上帝，不能让他负责。总有一些事。”他的思绪渐渐放缓，就像车轮开进了沙地，但它前进的车轴、车身和发动机都还没意识到。

他好像看到自己被一群人围得水泄不通，就像看到自己站在教堂深处的布道台上，又或者，他好像是缸里的一条鱼。不仅如此，那些面孔就像镜子一样，他从镜中看到了自己。他认识这些镜子；他能在镜中看到自己的一举一动。他似乎看到镜中反射出来一个小丑般的人物，略有些疯癫，全然不顾自己所站的位置，江湖术士般吹嘘着比异端邪说糟糕的内容。他没有给人们传递悲悯慈爱的受难者形象，反而讲述了一个爱吹牛、无节操的亡命之徒，在杀人为乐的间隙里，被人用猎枪杀死在平静的鸡舍里。思绪的车轮慢慢减速。现在，车轴意识到了，但车子本身却仍然不清楚。

他看到周围的面孔浮现出震惊和迷茫，又变成了愤怒，尔后转为害怕，仿佛他们看穿了他疯癫的滑稽表演，看穿了他，看不起他。现在，他自己却没有察觉到，最后那张高贵的受难者的面孔，变得冰冷而可怕，因为那张脸上露出了无所不知的超然。他知道，他们看到的远不止那些。他们看到他辜负了他们的信任，而信任现在变成了对他的惩罚。这时，他似乎在跟最后那张脸说话：“或许，我接受的远超出了我的能力。可那就是罪恶吗？我应为此受到惩罚吗？我应为我力所不及的事情负责吗？”那张脸说：“你接受她并不是为了达到圆满，而是为了利用她来实现你的私愿。你视她为工具，帮你取得回到杰弗逊的委派；你回到那里并不是为了传播我的意志，而是为你自己。”

“真的吗？”他暗自想道，“那是真的吗？”羞愧袭来，他又看到了自己。他记起事发之前，他早已经明白，只不过被他掩藏在了心底。他看到自己强忍懦弱，保全尊严，像烈士一样离开布道台。他以为赞美诗集

可以掩护他的安全，在记者按下快门的一瞬间，他的面孔背叛了他，胜利和拒绝跃然脸上。

他似乎看到自己警觉而耐心地表演着，技艺娴熟的他很有心机。他装出被逼无奈却逆来顺受的样子，当时他并没有承认，那是他进入神学院之前就已经有了的梦想。他还在不停地施以小恩小惠，仿佛在朝猪群扔烂果子一样：他继续将父亲留下的微薄资产分出一部分给孟菲斯的少女感化院；他任由自己被迫害，在夜里被人从被窝里拖到树林里遭受树棍的抽打。他毫不羞愧，将镇里的所见所闻记在心里，怀着殉道者的隐忍和自傲，展示出过人的气度和举止，上帝啊，都这么久了啊！直到他重新回到房里，锁上门，他才带着胜利的喜悦，舒服地摘下面具：哈。现在都结束了。过去了。一切都已经还清了。

“但那时候我还年轻，”他想，“我也只能做我了解的事情，而非我能做的事情。”思绪已经变得越来越沉重；他应该知道，也感觉得到。可车子本身仍然没意识到要去往哪里。“而且，不管怎么说，我也已经偿还清了那些债。我买下了我的灵魂，即便是用生命换来的。谁能阻止我那么做？任何人都有权自我毁灭，只要不伤及无辜，只要他愿意独来独往……”他突然停下来，凝神屏息，惊慌失措马上就要变成真真切切的恐惧。现在，他意识到自己进了沙地，内心好像聚集了巨大的能量。思绪虽然还在前进，但他已经无法辨别刚刚过去的一切，就像碾压过的沙子残留在翻转的车轮上，然后又像雨水一样地落回地面。此前，他本应该有所警觉：“……向妻子坦露渴望和自负……我造成了她的失望和耻辱……”他还来不及思考，一个句子清清楚楚地挂在他的脑海中，映入眼帘：我不愿想这些，我不能想。我不敢想。他坐在窗前，双手一动不动，头枕在上面，开始流汗，像鲜血一样奔涌着倾泻而下。思绪的车轮沾满沙子继续向前，慢慢忍受着中世纪酷刑的无情折磨，在破碎扭曲

的心灵下生活着：“那么，如果真是这样，如果我造成了她的绝望和死亡，那么，同样我也是别人的工具。我知道，五十年来我从不是真实的：我只是黑暗的瞬间。这一瞬间，只有奔驰的战马和一声枪响。如果我在祖父死去的瞬间成了他，那我的妻子，也就是他的孙媳……诱惑并谋杀了我的孙媳，因为我不能决定孙子的生死……”

摆脱束缚的车轮似乎发出一声长长的叹息飞奔而去。他仍旧心有余悸地坐在那里，一动不动地冷汗淋漓。车轮继续转动。车子又快又稳地前行，因为它现在没有负担，没有车身，没有车轴，没有任何约束。夜幕即将融入凝滞悬浮的八月。轻轻摇曳的八月闪烁着淡淡的光晕，似乎要将自己包围起来。光晕里都是面孔。那些脸上没有苦难，没有任何表情：没有恐惧和苦痛，甚至没有耻辱。他们很平静，仿佛脱离现实，羽化成仙一般；他自己的脸也在其中。实际上，这些面孔看起来都有点相似，是他见过的所有脸的组合。但是，他能一一分辨出来：妻子，镇民，反对他的会众，曾经焦急而渴望地在车站接他的会众，拜伦·邦奇，抱孩子的那个女人，还有那个叫克里斯默斯的人。只有这张脸不清楚，比其他任何一张脸都模糊，仿佛它在宁静地挣扎，无法挣脱最近这一切混乱。过了一会儿，他看到好像有两张脸在争执（并非它们自己在争抢：他明白，是车轮的转动和欲望造成的），轮流挣脱对方，然后又渐渐融合在一起。但他现在看清了，另一张脸并不是克里斯默斯的。“啊，那是……”他心想，“我见过的，最近才见过……啊，是那个……那个男孩。他总拿着一把黑色手枪，人们管那叫自动手枪。就是那个……闯进厨房……杀死了，开枪……”然后，他觉得内心的洪水冲破了最后的防线，喷涌而出。他仿佛眼睁睁地看着它奔涌，感受自己与大地失去接触，身子越来越轻，空荡荡地飘浮在空中。“我要死了，”他想，“我应该祈祷。至少，我应该尽力尝试祈祷。”但他没有祈祷，也没有尝试。“空气和天空弥漫着哭声，那些人曾经活过、迷失过，就像走

丢的孩子在冰冷、恐惧的星空下无助地恸哭……我想要的如此之少。我要求的如此之少。就好像……”车轮开始转动。它开始旋转，越来越慢，不再转动，好像被他心中最终释放的洪水冲乱了方向，只剩一个躯壳，比一片被人遗忘的树叶还要轻，比一件耗尽的废物还一文不名。他还在靠着窗台，胳膊没有支撑，双手没有重量。于是，这一刻来临了。此刻。

似乎他们一直在等，等他松一口气，然后在胜利和渴望中重新出发，带着仅存的荣耀和骄傲重生。他听到心头传来越来越密集的轰鸣和阵阵鼓声。起初，那些声音就像一阵风穿过林间，然后跃入视野，此刻又出现在幻影尘土的云端。他们坐在马背上，身子前倾，挥舞双臂，手执缰绳，策马扬鞭，疾驰而去。在喧嚣和无声的吼叫中，他们像浪潮一样奔涌而过，奔腾的战马好似奔涌的潮头，闪光的兵戈仿佛火山喷发的红色火焰。他们疾驰而过，奔向远方，卷起漫天尘土，慢慢消逝于无边的夜幕。然而，他倚在窗口，两只手臂搭在窗棂上，缠着绷带的脑袋枕着胳膊，显得硕大无比。他好像依然能听到那些声音：嘹亮的军号、铮铮的军刀、雷鸣般的马蹄声渐行渐远。

这个州的东部有一位家具修理工兼经销商，最近通过书信去田纳西州购置了一些家具。他驾着卡车（车尾有开着车门、供人居住的车厢）开始了这次旅行。这是一辆新车，所以他不愿以十五英里的时速驾车。他的车上还有宿营装备，所以也不必住宾馆。他一回家就给妻子讲了路上的一次经历，当时他觉得十分有趣、好笑，因此值得再讲一遍。也许他觉得有意思，觉得重提时他可以讲得更动听，那是因为他们两口子都还年轻，而且他离家已经一个多星期了（那是由于中速行驶的缘故，他认为那是明智的做法）。这个故事和他途中搭载的两个乘客有关。故事发生在密西西比州的一个镇上，当时他还没到田纳西州：

“我决定去加油，就把车慢慢开进加油站。我看见一个年轻女人站在拐角处，长得挺和善，好像在等什么人来顺路捎她一程，手里还拿着些什么。起初，我没看清那是什么，直到那个家伙走上前和我说话时，我才注意到他。刚开始，我以为先前没有看清是因为他没有和她站在一起，后来我才发现，他要是单独站在空旷的混凝土水池里，照样很难被人发现。

“他走上前，我急忙说：‘要是你们想去孟菲斯的话，我不去那儿。我要经过杰弗逊，去田纳西州。’

“‘好啊，正合我们的意，希望您能帮忙。’他说。

“‘你俩想去哪儿？’他看着我，就像一个不常撒谎的家伙正在努力编造谎言，他自己早就明白没人会信他。我问：‘你们是随便逛逛吗？’

“‘是的，’他说，‘是的，我们正在旅行，不管你把我们带到哪儿，都是帮我们大忙了。’

“于是，我让他们上车。‘我猜你们不会打劫后谋杀我吧。’他走过去把她叫过来。这时，我才看见她抱着的是个婴儿，刚出生没多久的婴儿。他扶她坐在后面的车厢里。我说：‘你俩为什么没人上这儿来坐？’他们商量以后，女的出来坐在前面的座位上，他返回加油站，取了一个皮革样的纸箱子，放进车厢，然后他又钻进车厢。我们就这样上路了。女的坐在座位上，怀抱婴儿，不时回头看看，生怕他会掉下去什么的。

“刚开始我以为他们是夫妻，也没多想，只是纳闷像她这样精力旺盛的女孩怎么会看上他。他倒也没什么毛病，看起来是个老实人，是那种踏实肯干，同一种工作会干很久的人，而且不会麻烦别人给他涨工资，只要让干，他就会一直干下去。他看上去就是这么个人。除了干活儿外，他呆头呆脑的。我无法想象，有谁、有哪个女人会和他睡觉，更不用说当着乡亲们的面干什么啦。”

你不害臊啊？妻子问他，跟一位女士这么说话。他们在黑暗中交谈着。

反正我看不见你的脸。他继续往下讲：“等我们当晚要宿营的时候，我才发现不对劲。她坐在我旁边的位子上，我像男人们通常做的那样，跟她聊起来。过了一会儿，我才知道他们从亚拉巴马州来。她一直说‘我们来自’，所以我以为她说的是她和后面那个家伙。她说起他们在路上走了八个星期。‘你的孩子还没八个星期大吧，’我说，‘要是我没看错的话。’她说孩子是在杰弗逊镇出生的，刚刚三个星期大。我说：‘喔，那儿处死了一个黑鬼。你们当时肯定在那儿。’她马上闭嘴

了，好像他曾经告诉过她不要谈论这件事。我知道肯定是那样。所以，我们就一直往前开。后来，天快黑了。我说：‘咱们马上就进城了，我不住那儿。不过，要是你们明天还和我一起走的话，我明早六点半回旅馆接你们。’她坐着没动，好像一直在等他开口。过了一会儿，他说：‘我想，你后面有车厢，用不着担心住旅馆。’

“我啥也没说，一直往镇上开。他问：‘这个镇子大吗？’

“‘我不知道，’我说，‘但我猜那里会有住宿之类的地方。’

“他又说：‘我想那里可能有游客露营的地方。’我一直没吭气。他说：‘可以租到帐篷。对出门在外的人来说，住旅馆太贵，尤其又是走远路的乡亲们。’他们一直没说要去哪里，好像他们自己也不清楚，只等着到哪儿算哪儿。不过，我知道他想让我开口，不愿直接求我，好像上帝要我说我就说，上帝如果打算让他住三美元一间的旅馆，他也会去。

“于是，我说：‘喔，今晚天气暖和，要是你们不怕蚊子，不介意睡在卡车的光板上的话。’

“‘当然，那样不错。你要是能让她住的话就太好了。’这时，我注意到他说到她时候的样子。开始，我觉得可笑，他有些紧张，像一个人决定要做一件想做又不敢做的事。我不是说他害怕自己会出什么事，而像是到死都不想那么做，除非万不得已。那会儿我还不明白，只是不清楚到底怎么回事。要不是那天晚上发生的事情，恐怕到他们在杰弗逊镇下车时我还是啥也不知道。”

他到底想干吗？妻子问。

等我说到那儿，你就能明白了。他接着讲：“我们在一家商店门口停下来。没等卡车停稳，他就跳下车，好像怕我会打听一样。他满脸兴奋，好像小孩子担心你答应过他什么事又会反悔，于是竭力地讨好你。他小跑着进了商店，出来时抱了好多袋东西，简直挡住了他的视线。所以我心里想：‘瞧瞧，好家伙。你打算要在这里长住过日子呀。’然后，我们很快就到了一个看似还不错的地方。我把卡车从大路上开进几棵树中间，他跳下车，跑过去扶她下了车，就跟她和孩子是玻璃或鸡蛋做的一样。他还是那副表情，就像他差不多已经下定决心了，只要我或她不事先阻止，只要她没注意到他那副豁出去的样子，他就会去做迫不得已才做的事。可即便那个时候，我还是不明白。”

那是什么？妻子问。

我刚跟你说过，等会儿我就告诉你，行吗？

我想你不说也没啥。可我还是不明白这有什么好笑。他为啥一直跑来跑去，要干吗？

因为他们还没结婚。丈夫答道，孩子也不是他的，可我当时不知道。直到当天晚上听到他们说的话，我才明白。我猜他们不知道我听到了。他一路上尽心尽力，可我觉得他做得够好了。我猜他想给她最后一次机会。男人继续说：“他忙前忙后，帮着搭帐篷，最后我都被弄紧张了：他啥都想干，可又不知道从哪儿开始，要做啥。所以我就让他去捡些柴火。我拿出毯子，铺在车里。当时，我有些恼火，自己怎么落到这么个地步，要睡在地上，身子底下啥都没有，双脚靠火堆才能取暖。我估计那会儿我有点儿着急、暴躁，来回不停地走着，安顿好一切。她背靠一棵树，披着披肩，正在给孩子喂奶。她一直在说不好意思，给我添麻烦了，还说她打算就在火堆边坐着过夜，因为她一天啥都没干，就是

在车上坐着，一点都不累。过了一会儿，他抱回好多柴火，足够烤一头小公牛。她让他去车里取东西。他拿出箱子，打开后取出一条毯子。这下有意思了。他俩就像经常登在滑稽小报上的两个法国佬一样，你争我抢地要睡在地上，好像一路从家里出来，吹牛夸大就为了抢先睡在地上。有一阵，我真想说：‘好吧，你们想睡地上，那就睡吧。我他妈的才不愿意呢。’我估计你会说，到最后我肯定赢了，或者说是我和他赢了。正像我们一直想的那样，他抢着把他们的毯子铺在卡车里，我俩把我的毯子铺到火堆旁。我猜他早知道结果会是那样。要是真像她说的，他们一路从南边的亚拉巴马州赶来。我想那就是他抱回那么多柴火就为烧一壶咖啡、热几个罐头的原因。接着，我们吃了饭。这时，我终于发现了。”

发现什么？他想干吗？

还没到呢。我觉得她比你有耐心。他接着又说：“我们吃完饭，我躺在毯子上。我太累了，我得舒展身体才觉得舒服。我不是故意要听，也没打算要装睡，是他们要搭我的车，又不是我坚持要他们上我的车。要是他们觉得合适，不用管有没有人听见，那可无关我的事。可是，我这才发现他们正在找人，正在跟踪，或是打算跟踪那个人。或者说是她要那么做。突然，我心里说：‘啊哈，有一个彻夜狂欢的女孩，她妈要等到星期天才能去问牧师啦。’他们从没提起那个人的名字，也不知道他朝哪条路跑了。我知道即使他们知道他的去向，那也不是逃跑人犯的错。我很快就明白了。我听见他跟她说，也许这辈子都要像这样一辆一辆地搭车，从一个州到另一个州，到头来还是没有他的半点儿音讯。她坐在木头上，抱着孩子，像石头一样安静地听，像石头一样开心，像要被打动或说服一样。我心里嘀咕：‘嗨，哥们儿。我猜这次旅行可不是从她坐在我车上、你坐在后面、垂着两只脚开始的。’不过，我啥也没

说，只是躺在那里。他们一直在说话，不如说是他在说。他说话声音不高，也没有提到结婚，可他说的就是那个意思，她平静安详地听着，好像以前就听过一样，知道自己不必回答‘是’或‘不’。她略带微笑，可他看不见。

“后来，他没再说，从原木上站起来走了。他转身时，我看见他的脸，知道他并没有放弃，只是想再给她一次机会。现在，他特别绝望，甚至有些孤注一掷。我看得出，他正在下决心，要做自己早就该做的事。我真想告诉他，你早就想这么做了，这时才做决定。可我知道，他有自己的原因。总之，他走进黑暗的树林里，留下她坐在那儿。她略微低下头，但还是挂着微笑。她一直没有看他一眼，也许她明白，他独自走开是要做她一直建议他做的事。她从来都没说出来。她没有直说，女人通常都不会那么做，就算来自周末狂欢家庭的女人也不会。

“不过，我觉得还不止这些。或者是时间和地点不合适，更别再说有人在场了。过了一会儿，她站起来看了我一眼，可我一直没动。她走到卡车前爬进去。过了一会儿，我听见车厢里没动静了，我知道她收拾好已经打算睡觉了。我躺在那儿——现在睡意全无——清醒了好久。但我知道他就在附近，也许在等火灭了或者我睡熟了再过来。果然，火一灭，我就听见他走过来的声音，像猫一样轻手轻脚站在我面前，低头看着我，仔细地听我的动静。我一下都没动，或许我还故意打了一两声呼噜给他听。总之，他朝卡车走过去，像脚下踩着鸡蛋一样蹑手蹑脚。我躺在那儿，一边观察他一边跟自己说：‘哥们儿，要是你今晚那么做的话，我敢说明天我就把你送到往南六十英里的地方。要是前天晚上干过这种事，我估计连瞧都不想瞧你一眼。’这时，我开始担心。我倒不担心他会伤害她，勉强她。实际上，我是担心那个小个子。真的。她要是叫起来的话，我不知道我该怎么办。我觉得她肯定会叫喊，要是我跳起来跑

到卡车那里，肯定会吓坏他；如果我不跑过去，他会知道我一直没睡着，在监视他，那他更要吓个半死。不过，我用不着担心，从第一眼看见他俩，我早就应该知道根本用不着担心。”

我猜，你认为用不着担心，是因为你已经知道万一出事，她会怎么做。妻子说。

当然，丈夫说，没想到你能猜出来。是的，老婆。我还以为你猜不出来呢。

好啦，往下说。发生了什么？

她是个年轻力壮的大个子女人，他又没事先提醒。可怜的小个子，他好像已经到了忍耐的极限，你猜他会像婴儿一样哇哇大哭吗？他继续往下讲：“她没有大声喊叫什么的。我看着他轻松地爬进卡车，慢慢不见了。什么事情都没有发生。过了大约有慢数十五个数那么久，我听见她醒来了，发出令人吃惊的声音，好像她只觉得有些不可思议，有些生气，但没有被吓到。她低声说：‘为什么，邦奇先生，你难道不觉得羞愧吗？你会吵醒孩子的。’接着，他从后门爬出来，慢慢走下车，仿佛两条腿不是自己的。她像拎孩子一样把他拉起来推出去，如果那孩子有六岁的话。我亲眼所见，没法不相信。‘你出去躺一会儿，我们明天还有好远的路要走。’

“好吧，我看他都觉得脸红，要让他知道竟然有人耳闻目睹了这件事，那他会更难为情。我要是不想找个地缝和他一起钻进去的话，我就是小狗。真的。火早就灭了，他站在她让他下车的地方，我几乎看不到他。但我知道，我如果是他，站在那里会是什么滋味，我准会低下头，等待法官一声令下：‘把他拖出去，迅速绞死。’我没出声。过了一会

儿，我听见他走了，扒开灌木丛，好像在树林里瞎撞。天亮时，他还没回来。

“嗯，我啥也没说，我也不知道该说什么。我一直相信他会出现，不管有没有脸见人，他都会从树林里出来。于是，我开始生火做早饭。不一会儿，我听见她从车上下来。她站在那里似乎在东张西望。也许，她在观察火堆和我的毯子，想弄清楚他在哪里。我什么都没说，她也没说话。我想收拾东西准备上路，我也知道不能把她扔在半道上。要是我老婆听说我和一个漂亮的乡下姑娘一起旅行，还带着一个三周大的婴儿，即便她声称自己是在寻找丈夫，现在该是两个丈夫，那我也没什么好结果。吃完饭，我说：‘喔，我还有好长的路要走，我想最好现在就走。’她一句话都没说。我抬起头，看见她还像昨天那么平静、沉稳。要是她有一点吃惊什么的，我就是狗。我很奇怪，不知道该怎么对她。可她早已收拾好东西，甚至还用桉树枝打扫了卡车，然后把纸箱放进车里，把毯子折成垫子一样的东西，放在车尾。我寻思，难怪你能一直往前走。每次他们爬起来跑了，你就会把人家留下的东西收拾好，接着再走。——‘我想我就坐后面吧。’她说。

“‘那样，孩子会颠簸得不舒服。’我说。

“‘我会抱好他的。’她说。

“‘随你便。’我说。就这样，我们上路了，我还探出身子朝后看了看，希望他在我们拐弯之前能出现。可他没有。人们常说有个家伙在车站被逮了，手里还抱着别人的孩子。现在，我自己就和一个陌生女人在一起，还有个婴儿。我担心每一辆从后面赶上来的车，载满了丈夫和妻子，更不用说是警长喽。快到田纳西州州界的时候，我就下定决心开车去大城市的妇女救济院，把她送到那儿。我还不时地回头看看，希望他

能徒步跟在我们后面，她却像教堂一样安静，怀里抱着的孩子既不受颠簸，又能吃到奶。我真拿他们没办法。”他躺在床上，笑着说：“真的，老婆。你要是有办法，我就是小狗。”

后来呢？她后来怎么样？

没事儿。一直坐着，在车上朝外看，就跟她这辈子没见过村子一样一道路，树木，田地，电线杆。她压根儿没看见他，最后是他自己绕到卡车后门的。她用不着看，只要等着就行。她很清楚这一点。

他？

是啊。他就站在大路一边。我们转弯时，他就在那儿站着，管他有脸没脸的。他一副垂头丧气的样子，却很坚定，很平静，好像最后一次努力之后，已经绝望到家了。现在 he 知道自己再也用不着那么做了。丈夫又开始讲：“他没有看我一眼。我刚停车，他就已经朝她坐的后面跑了过去。他绕过去，站在那里，可她一点儿都不觉得奇怪。‘我已经走了这么远，’他说，‘现在放弃的话，我就不是人。’她看着他，好像她一早就知道他在做什么，可他却不知道自己做了些什么，而且不管做什么，都不是他的本意。

“她说：‘谁也没让你放弃。’”他躺在床上一直笑个不停，“真的，老婆，真拿女人没办法。你知道我在想什么吗？我想她只是在旅行。我觉得她并不在乎自己在找谁，她似乎从来都没有目标，只不过她没有跟他说而已。我估计她这辈子第一次离家那么远，以前太阳下山前就能回家。她一路挺顺，乡亲们也照顾她。我觉得她只想走远些，尽可能多看些风景。我想她这次要是安定下来的话，这辈子就这么过了。这就是我的想法。她坐在卡车后面，他坐在她旁边。婴儿一直在吃奶，这顿早饭

吃了有十英里那么久，好像火车上的餐车一样一直供餐。她看着车外的电线杆和栅栏，好像马戏团的游行队伍一样。过了一会儿，我说：‘这儿是沙斯伯雷。’

“她说：‘什么？’

“‘田纳西州的沙斯伯雷。’我说。我往后一瞧，看见她的脸，好像已经做好了表示吃惊的准备，正要吃惊，而且她好像很享受吃惊的感觉。她果然很惊讶，表情也很自然。因为她说：‘哦，天哪。人可真能走。从亚拉巴马州出发不过两个月，现在就到田纳西州了！’”



—— 福克纳诺贝尔奖精品文集 ——

我弥留之际

AS I LAY DYING

—— 威廉·福克纳 —— 著
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William Faulkner

AS I LAY DYING

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目录

[我弥留之际](#)

[序言](#)

[《水浒传》一样的《西游记》](#)

[达尔](#)

[科拉](#)

[达尔](#)

[朱尔](#)

[达尔](#)

[科拉](#)

[杜威·戴尔](#)

[塔尔](#)

[安斯](#)

[达尔](#)

[皮博迪](#)

[达尔](#)

[瓦达曼](#)

[杜威·戴尔](#)

[瓦达曼](#)

[塔尔](#)

[达尔](#)

[卡什](#)

[瓦达曼](#)

[塔尔](#)

[达尔](#)

[卡什](#)

[达尔](#)

[瓦达曼](#)

[达尔](#)

[安斯](#)

[达尔](#)

[安斯](#)

[萨姆森](#)

[杜威·戴尔](#)

[塔尔](#)

[达尔](#)

[塔尔](#)

[达尔](#)
[瓦达曼](#)
[塔尔](#)
[达尔](#)
[卡什](#)
[科拉](#)
[安迪](#)
[怀特菲尔德](#)
[达尔](#)
[阿姆斯特德](#)
[瓦达曼](#)
[莫斯利](#)
[达尔](#)
[瓦达曼](#)
[达尔](#)
[瓦达曼](#)
[达尔](#)
[瓦达曼](#)
[达尔](#)
[卡什](#)
[皮博迪](#)
[麦高恩](#)
[瓦达曼](#)
[达尔](#)
[杜威·戴尔](#)
[卡什](#)

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书名：我弥留之际

作者：(美)威廉·福克纳著；余莉译

出版方：北方文艺出版社

出版时间：2016.9

ISBN：9787531736974

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我弥留之际

序言

《水浒传》一样的《西游记》

——“我”弥留之际的旅行

美国意识流文学大师福克纳（1897—1962）身为1949年诺贝尔文学奖得主，对美国文学尤其是美国意识流文学的贡献可以说是丰碑式的。

福克纳出身于美国南方一个破落的地主家庭，曾祖父曾经是南北战争时期南军的校级军官，退伍后还成了作家。福克纳也充分继承和发扬了曾祖父的文学天赋，在青年时代反复的漂泊和吹牛中锻炼出了写作的功夫。

相比较他青年时代入伍加拿大空军的传奇和游历欧洲的风流，他早年的生涯虽然谈不上历经坎坷，但也称得上是世态炎凉。那些年在南方的生活，以及南方没落家族的耳濡目染，给了他无穷无尽的创作素材。而他，也费尽心血虚构了一个位于密西西比州北部的约克纳帕塔法县和杰弗逊镇作为他小说故事情节的背景。在他三十多年创作生涯的十九部长篇和上百个短篇小说中，足足十五部长篇与绝大多数短篇的故事都发生在这个虚构的约克纳帕塔法县及杰弗逊镇。这当中，就包括这部《我弥留之际》。

按照福克纳本人的说法，这部书是他的小说中最最简单的一部，最易懂的一部，甚至可以作为研究福克纳的入门。

除了微笑，没有任何语言能够描述我对这个观点的看法。

我经常说，我更喜欢东方的美感，甚至喜欢陶醉于纯粹中式的意境

中。或许，我的眼光和视角也更加趋向于东方式的古典，所以这部书对我来说，竟然非常晦涩，虽然冥冥之中感觉得出福克纳想告诉我什么，却又不敢肯定。无数条线路交织在我的脑海，它们纠结着，甚至刻意地扭动着，让你捋不出一个像样的头绪。但是大师的文字却又充满了诱惑，让你不得不深入下去，在充斥着一团乱麻的死水中，努力地享受畅游的乐趣。

这部书的表现方式很新颖，或许很多中文读者都会不适应。这部作品一共五十九个章节，每个章节实际上就是标题所写人物的一段独白，他们各自站在自己的角度去看待或经历故事。这就够我喝一壶了，因为文中不同章节的“我”并不是一个人。

如果说，仅仅这样也就算了，但是书中还有个叫瓦达曼的人物，我直到看到他的那一句“我妈妈是条鱼”的时候，才缓过神来，哦，原来这孩子不是个傻子就是个小孩。总之，这孩子说的话从逻辑上根本不能用成人的思维去考量。

没有接触过福克纳的读者朋友们，你们是幸运的，这套书出版的时候有我这个排头兵告诉你们状况。我直接看的是编辑给我的初稿，注释都没有。足足看了十几章节才明白怎么回事！当然，编辑也表示为难，不仅编辑为难，连当时负责校对的工作人员都惊呆了！

主要的难点也就这两个，了解了这些，故事倒也不复杂。甚至于站在欣赏中国古典小说的角度去看待这部作品，依然非常适宜。在我看来，这部书，就是一部《水浒传》一样的《西游记》。

故事再简单不过了，一个贫苦的美国南方农家失去了伟大的母亲，父亲为了承诺，带着一家把灵柩带到母亲的老家。虽然一路上历经了千

辛万苦，但是一家人终于把母亲安葬了。

有点像《西游记》，不是吗？一个领头的父亲就像唐僧，带着自己的儿女完成一个心愿，或者说承诺。有个情节甚至让我这个“西游粉”会心一笑——他们在一条湍急的河流中失去了他们拉车的骡子。我不知道福克纳是不是看了《西游记》，然后在“蛇盘山诸神暗佑，鹰愁涧意马收缰”这一回取得的灵感。

当然这是句玩笑话，福克纳那时候，《西游记》或许还没有英文版，有了福克纳也未必看过，看过了也未必借鉴，因为他最爱的小说是《堂吉珂德》。但是我们不妨从这个思路出发去分析分析这几个参与“西天取经”的人物。

父亲安斯无疑是坚定的，但是却又和唐僧有着很明显的区别。他们同样执着但是懦弱，或者说胆怯，遇到事情不愿意独自承受。但是，相比较唐僧普度众生的理想，安斯更加虚伪，这也是我用《水浒传》来比喻的原因之一，后面我会说到。

二儿子达尔是个另类，他仿佛什么都知道，甚至另类得有些诡异。他最后被妹妹戴尔告发，送到了精神病院。但是不得不说，与其说他是精神病人，倒不如说他是思想者。他思考问题远远超过了他的父亲和兄弟姐妹，换句话说，超越了他所在的阶级局限性。只有他知道母亲最疼爱的朱尔是私生子，只有他知道妹妹戴尔想趁着机会到城镇偷偷地堕胎。他从一开始就考虑到了这个计划的荒谬。但是他最终毁于自己的鲁莽，因为企图焚烧棺木阻止这个计划而被认为是个疯子。在属于他的章节中甚至出现了一段旁白，可见作者对这个人物倾注的心血。

倾注了心血，那么他是孙悟空吗？可惜，他不是。

朱尔这个儿子则非常特殊，他是个不那么见得了光的角色。他不是安斯的孩子，是他母亲“偷汉子”出生的，要命的是他自己和二哥达尔还知道，所以他和兄弟们格格不入。但是他也是最能干的，靠自己的努力赚钱买了一匹马。我觉得，这在当时的美国南部农村应该不亚于买辆高档摩托了。所以一路上他都坐在马上使劲烧包。但是他对母亲的感情有目共睹，不仅为了母亲的遗体赴汤蹈火（真的是水火之中），还对企图焚烧母亲遗体的达尔恨之入骨。为了母亲能够安葬在故乡，在骡子被水淹死后，他还奉献了自己心爱的马来换取拉车的骡子。微微地有那么点小白龙的味道，不是吗？

任劳任怨的大儿子卡什总是让我联想到沙和尚。他对母亲有着很深的孝心，但是不善于表达。他表达的方式就是在母亲弥留之际不停地、耐心地、认真地帮母亲打造一副棺材。在去母亲家乡的路上，为了保护灵车而导致了腿骨的骨折——甚至在家人自作主张用水泥帮他固定骨架的时候，他都能忍着钻心的疼痛与严重的灼伤！面对困难和痛苦，他总是一副不以为意的样子。隐忍内向的性格，退让的生活态度是他的最大特点。或许他也知道朱尔不是父亲安斯的骨肉，或许他也知道达尔的做法有其正确性，但是他不愿意表达，甚至不想去表达，只想看看大家的意见。在是否送弟弟达尔去疯人院的事情上，他一声不吭，并且自我安慰着。他真的对困难和痛苦不以为意吗？我相信，他只是做出这样而已。在整部书中，他的煎熬是最长的（从做棺材开始），他的痛苦是最大的（腿伤），表现出的却是一副不以为意的姿态，越发让人同情和不平。

女儿戴尔和小儿子瓦达曼加在一起就是个活脱脱的猪八戒。戴尔一路上都存有私心，她甚至希望母亲尽快去世，好让她去城里偷偷地堕胎。最后不仅没堕成胎，还稀里糊涂地被一个冒牌妇科医生给侮辱了，男友给她堕胎的钱也稀里糊涂地被老爸弄走了。

瓦达曼则是猪八戒憨厚可爱一面的无限放大，他的视角很独特，只能用个字“纯”来形容。他不知道死亡的意义，为了让母亲能在棺材里呼吸竟然还在棺材上打洞，结果害得母亲的遗体上留下了伤口，还是在脸上。后来他只得始终暗示自己，妈妈是一条鱼，像那条被家里杀了吃的鱼一样，不存在了。一路上，因为母亲尸体发出腐臭而引来的秃鹰在他眼里却非常有趣，不停地数着它们的数量。这与二哥达尔的聪明形成了对比，一路上两人匪夷所思的对话也让我们这些凡人读者摸不着头脑。而在二哥被所有人厌恶而送到疯人院的时候，唯独他表现出依依不舍的感情，反复地在默念“达尔。达尔是我的哥哥。达尔。达尔。”他最傻，也最善良，拥有一种让人无限怜悯的可爱。

既然两者如此相像，为什么没有一个孙悟空一样的人物呢？因为这不是一个《西游记》一样的喜剧，而是一个《水浒传》一样的闹剧，甚至带着些悲剧的色彩。没有孙悟空出来摆平困难，困难是无法战胜和逃避的，更没有普度众生传经东土的高尚目标。旅程的意义，只在于满足老爹安斯的一种近乎偏执的虚荣心。那么，老爹安斯这形象是不是又有点像宋江呢？宋江为了所谓的忠义牺牲自己的战友兄弟，换取所谓的英名。安斯为了成功履行承诺的虚荣，让自己的儿女付出了惨痛的代价。

出发前，他一再和朋友们提及，什么承诺啦，什么信仰啦。实际上呢？他真的对妻子安迪有那么深的感情，甚至于需要忍受磨难而完成她的遗愿？

但是在妻子安迪生病时安斯的那段独白中，我们可以知道，他没有请医生，至少书里头没有提到。相比较花钱请医生了解妻子的病情，他更关心自己的假牙是不是该换了，以便于以后吃更好的粮食。书中穿插了他们的故事，虽然是一对夫妻从相识到别离的经过，但是丝毫称不上爱情故事。安斯是个孤儿，妻子也是个孤儿，但是两人在一起后依然是

孤独的。这种孤独困扰着妻子安迪，最终让她对生活、对爱情失去了信心和兴趣。与牧师偷情生下了朱尔后，又始终陷入罪恶感中不能自拔。她只得把感情寄托于最疼爱的儿子朱尔，并且为了洗刷罪恶感又为安斯生了两个孩子——戴尔和瓦达曼。

安斯真的对妻子有那么深的感情吗？甚至于子女在他看来都不算什么。在家中，他就以身体有病，出汗就会死这个荒唐而又不可抗拒的理由来逃避劳作，将重活儿全部交给儿子们。真的出汗就会死吗？那么他汗衫上明显因为汗渍导致的褪色又怎么解释呢？

那么在路上，为了省钱甚至不惜将自己的大儿子卡什的腿伤当作牲畜来治疗，导致了卡什的痛苦甚至残疾；达尔反对他的计划，被他借机送到了疯人院；女儿戴尔拿来堕胎的钱也被他夺取；这些行为也都可以解释了，因为安斯的自私自利，已经到了疯狂的地步。

最后，每个子女都有所失去，甚至有了终身的阴影。然而，安斯却以一种“鬼鬼祟祟却也自得满满”的可笑姿态出现了。他用女儿的医疗费换了一副崭新的假牙和手杖，焕然一新的面貌甚至让阴影中的孩子们都差点认不出他了。最可恶的是，他身后竟然还有一个帮他拿箱子的艳丽女人。本书最后一句话，就是安斯对卡什、朱尔、瓦达曼、戴尔说的：“来，见过本德伦太太。”形成了一个绝佳的讽刺——孩子们的努力，除了满足母亲的遗愿外，都是在帮父亲造势。他们一个个要死要活，父亲却迎来了人生第二春。

没有什么对结发妻子的承诺，没有什么对糟糠之妻的感情。整个过程都是一场秀，这就不难理解为何他甚至还拒绝了一些帮助。他只想做成自己的事，作好这场秀，牺牲子女的利益甚至未来都在所不惜。

此外，整部书对世态炎凉、人情冷漠的现实描写，与《水浒传》也颇有些神似。而多个人物逐渐汇成一线的叙事方式，更是与《水浒传》的结构有异曲同工之妙。

然而，或许还不止这么简单。福克纳作品的高超之处，或许就在于让你了解了世界的残酷之后还存有美好的希望。无论如何，安迪完成了遗愿。当我们因为安斯的自私而气愤失望的时候，也能为安迪有这些爱她的子女而欣慰。我想，这就是为什么最后一章是卡什平平淡淡的描述，而不是安斯得意洋洋的炫耀。

何志浩

2013年9月书于安徽

达尔

朱尔和我从田里上来，我们一前一后地在路上走着。虽然我走在他前面十五英尺¹处，可是人们从棉坊里看我们，都能看到他那顶磨破的草帽足足高出我一个头。

如铅垂线一般笔直的道路，被踩得很平滑，再经七月骄阳的炙烤，就变得和砖头一样硬了。它从成排的绿棉间，穿梭至田中央的棉坊，在那里转过弯，沿着平缓的四角绕了屋子一圈，然后继续穿向棉田。

棉坊由原木搭建而成，木材间还有长长的裂缝。这是一座周正的房子，单独建在一块土地上，屋顶已经破损。棉坊倾斜着，其下并无支撑，它在阳光中闪闪发亮。两面正对着的墙上各有一扇巨大的窗户，窗户朝着路的方向。我们走到棉坊时，我转了个弯，沿着屋子四周的路

走，而在我身后十五英尺的朱尔，则径直直行，一大步跨过窗户。之后，他还是一直朝前，那暗淡的眼睛，就像木头一般镶嵌在他木然的脸上。他四个大步迈过屋面，步伐铿锵，就如同从臀部以下被赋予了生命的、穿着打补丁外套的雪茄店的印第安人。接着，他又一大步跨过对面的窗户，再次走到了路上，这时我也刚拐过路角。我们又一前一后地走着，中间相隔五英尺，朱尔走在前面。我们沿路朝着悬崖脚下走去。

塔尔的马车停在小溪旁，套在围栏上，缰绳缠到了座位的支柱处。车厢里有两张椅子。朱尔在小溪旁停下，他从柳枝上取下葫芦打水喝。我从他身旁走过，沿着道路往上走，然后就听到了卡什锯木的声音。

我走到上面时，他已经停止了锯木。他站在木屑中，正在将两块木板合拢。木板两边都是阴影，衬托之下，木板呈现出金黄色，就像软黄金，闪着光泽的斧刃在木板侧面留下了均匀的纹理——卡什真是个好木匠。他把木板放在支架上，然后将它们的沿边对准做好的木匣。接着，他跪下来，顺着木板边缘眯眼斜视了一会儿，然后再放下木板，拿起扁斧，不愧是一个好木匠。对安迪·本德伦来说，躺在这样的棺材里再好不过了。这能让她自信起来，能让她感到舒服。接着，我继续朝屋子走去，身后是扁斧的声音：

恰克 恰克 恰克

[1](#)一英尺等于 0.3048 米。

科拉

于是我攒了些鸡蛋，昨天就用它们来烤蛋糕。烤出来的蛋糕非常棒。我们就靠这些鸡了，虽然经过负鼠和诸如此类动物的袭击后，剩下

的已经不多，可它们都是下蛋能手。到了夏天，还有蛇出没，蛇破坏鸡圈的速度可比什么都快。这样一来，养鸡的成本就远远超出了塔尔先生所预想的，然而，我向他保证，鸡蛋的数量增加，就能够弥补超出的成本。从此以后我就得格外小心了，因为，关于是否养鸡，这是我最后一次说了算。当时我们本打算养些便宜的鸡种，可是劳温顿小姐劝我养优良品种时，我已经答应了，因为塔尔先生自己也承认，优质的猪牛品种才能带来长效收益。所以，我们丢了这么多鸡以后，鸡蛋就不能留着自己吃了，是我说要养鸡的，我可不想让塔尔先生责怪我。于是，当劳温顿小姐说起蛋糕一事时，我就想，可以把鸡蛋做成蛋糕来卖，这样一次性多赚点就可以提高鸡群的净产值。而且，一次只捡一个鸡蛋，也没什么损失。恰好那个星期鸡下蛋很勤奋，我攒下的鸡蛋不仅够我们卖，够我们烤蛋糕，甚至连买面粉、糖和柴火的钱也省了。接下来，就在昨天，我用鸡蛋烤了蛋糕，我可是专心到了极致，烤出来的蛋糕自然不在话下。可是，今天早上，劳温顿小姐告诉我们，夫人改变主意了，她不开派对了。

“再怎么讲，她也该买下这些鸡蛋呀。”凯特说。

“唉，”我说，“我估计她现在一点都用不着它们了。”

“那她也该买下它们，”凯特说，“不过话说回来，这些有钱的太太就爱朝令夕改。可怜了我们这些人哪。”

有钱人可不敢与上帝面对面，因为他会看穿人的心思。“不如，我星期六把它们拿到集市去卖。”我说，因为蛋糕的质量可真是没话说。

“一块蛋糕可以卖两美元。”凯特说。

“那么，算起来，我好像也没什么损失。”我说。接下来，我用一打

蛋糕换了些糖和面粉。做蛋糕并没怎么亏，因为塔尔先生自己也知道，我攒下的鸡蛋比我们计划要拿去卖的还要多，所以，多出的鸡蛋就像是我们捡到的，或是别人送给我们的。

“她既然答应了你，就应该买下那些鸡蛋的。”凯特说。上帝能看穿人的心思。不同的人对诚信的理解各不相同——如果这是上帝的意愿，那么也轮不到我来质疑他的命令。

“我估计她压根儿就没打算用到它们。”我说。而且，它们真的不错。

尽管天气炎热，她还是把棉被盖到了下巴处，只露出双手和脸。她靠在枕头上，探出头来，看着窗外。每一次他拿起扁斧或锯子，我们都能听到声音。即便是聋子，也能通过看她的脸，来听他的声音，甚至看到他。她那憔悴的脸上，骨头无力地支撑着皮肤，勾勒出苍白的轮廓。她的眼睛就像两支蜡烛，你眼看着它们渐渐熄灭，然后消失进铁烛台里。然而，那永恒不灭的救赎与慈悲还未能降临到她的身上。

“它们真的不错，”我说，“可是，相比安迪烤的，还是有所不同。”你看看那只枕套，要真是熨烫过的话就能见识她闺女的本事了。她躺在那儿，任凭四个男人和一个野丫头摆布，被他们服侍着，这也恰恰表明了她对闺女的盲目信任。“这一带，没有谁烤蛋糕的手艺能和安迪·本德伦相提并论，”我说，“要是她能下床动手，我们的蛋糕恐怕一块都卖不出去了。”她躺在被窝里，隆着身体，样子堪比秧鸡。你只能通过褥子的聒噪声来判断她还在呼吸，哪怕女儿还站在身旁给她扇扇子，她脸颊上的头发竟一丝都没有动弹。我们就这样看着她的双手换来换去，一刻不停。

“她睡着了吗？”凯特小声问道。

“她只是看着卡什在那边锯木。”女儿回答说。我们也能听到他锯木的声音，那声音就像某人在打鼾一样。她的项链和她那红色的帽子配极了，你想都想不到，它只花了二十五美分。

我本可以好好来用这笔钱。可是，除了烤蛋糕外，我好像并没有付出什么代价。我可以跟他说，人人都会犯错，但不是所有人都能从错误中全身而退，我就这么跟他说着。她抬起手，轻轻擦了一下汗珠，然后理了理头发。她见我正看着她，眼神就变得空洞起来。

达尔

爹和弗农一起坐在后廊上。爹歪着身子，把壶盖夹在拇指和食指间往后拉，一边倒着鼻烟壶，一边用下唇吸着。我走过后廊时，他们扭头看了看我，然后用葫芦打水喝。

“朱尔呢？”爹问。我打小就知道，水在杉木桶里放一放，喝起来味道要好得多。尝一口，温暖中透着凉意，那种微妙的感觉，就像在炎热的七月，杉林里吹过凉爽的风。水至少要放上六个小时，还要用葫芦喝。绝不能用金属容器舀来喝。

最好是在晚上。我常常躺在走廊的草垫上，听着周围的动静，等大家都睡着，我就起身来，朝水桶走去。一切都是黑色的，隔板是黑色的，连水面上都有一个虚无的圆孔，在我用勺子搅动水面之前，或许还能在桶里看到一两颗星星，又或许，在我还没有将水喝下去之前，能在勺子里看到一两颗星星。随后，我长大了一些，也更加强壮了。到了那时，我总会等到他们都睡着，然后衣角上挽，躺在那里，听他们睡觉时

发出的声音，用心感受自己，感受着清凉的沉寂吹上身来，想象着那边的卡什是否也在黑暗中做着同样的事，或许，在我想要或是能够这样做的两年前，他就已经这样了。

爹的外八字很严重，他的脚趾要么抽筋，要么就弯曲着，有的甚至变了形，小脚趾上的指甲已经没有了，都是因为他从小就穿着自制的鞋子在湿地里干重活。爹的短靴就放在凳子旁边，它们看上去就像是用钝斧将生铁砍凿而成的。弗农去了城里。我从未见过他穿罩衣进城。他们说，这都是他妻子的缘故。她还教过书哩。

我将勺子里的沉淀物甩在地上，然后用袖子擦了擦嘴。天亮之前是要下雨了。也许不到天亮就要下起来。“去牲口棚吧，”我说，“给马群套上马具。”

他还在那边逗马。他就要穿过牲口棚，走进牧场。那匹马也会不见：只见他一个人站在松树苗间，感觉冷飕飕的。这时，朱尔就会吹响口哨，只一声尖厉，就听得马儿喷响鼻子，然后朱尔就会看见它在蓝色的阴影中一闪而过。朱尔又吹一声，马儿就跃下斜坡，它四肢紧绷，竖起的耳朵快速扇打着，一双不对称的眼睛骨碌碌地转动，接着，它又纵身一跃，在二十英尺远的地方停下，侧着身子，然后扭头看向朱尔，一副嬉耍而又警觉的模样。

“马兄弟，快过来。”朱尔说。它还真的抬起脚，像风一样飞驰而来，身上的毛都竖起来，像无数的火舌在打转。它甩着尾巴，摆起鬃毛，转溜着眼睛，又一次短冲，然后停下，腿脚合拢，看着朱尔。朱尔从容地向它走去，双手放在两侧。若是不看朱尔那移动的双脚，阳光下的他们，还真像两座野人雕像。

就在朱尔快要碰到马时，马突然后脚站立，向朱尔扑去，紧接着，一阵纷乱的马蹄让朱尔眼花缭乱，就像不断扇动翅膀时产生的幻觉。此时的朱尔，在马儿高昂的胸部下方，像蛇一样灵巧而迅速地躲闪。眼看马儿就要踩上朱尔的手臂，只见他腾空而起，与地齐平，然后如蛇一般灵巧地躲闪，最后终于牵住马儿的鼻子，落到地上。然后，他们就那样僵持着，一动不动，看起来十分凶狠，接着，马儿往后一拉，把缰绳绷得更紧了，它头往下低，双腿还在打战；朱尔则站稳脚跟，一手挡住马儿的鼻息，一手快速拍打着它的颈背，一边爱抚它，一边责骂它野蛮不羁。

他们就这样一动不动地站着，马儿一边颤抖一边呻吟。接着，朱尔如旋涡一般，一转而上，骑上马背，动作快如鞭策，而且身在半空就已经摆好了骑马的姿势。马儿也随即低下头，叉腿而立，准备出发。马儿一路跳下山，马背前后耸动着，朱尔像蚂蟥一样贴在马肩隆上，走到栅栏处时，马儿突然四脚合拢，又一下子刹住。

“好了，”朱尔说，“闹够了，就别折腾了。”

到了牲口棚时，马儿还没停下，朱尔就从马背上滑下。接着，马儿走进了畜栏，朱尔也跟着走进去。马儿头也不回，就朝他踢去，将一只蹄子蹬进墙里，“砰”的一声，犹如枪响。朱尔往它肚子上一踢，马儿扭转头，一副咬牙切齿的模样；这时，朱尔一挥拳头，从它的脸上打过，却不小心跌进食槽，然后又站了上去。他抓住干草架，埋下头，穿过畜栏顶部和门缝往外窥探。路上什么也没有；这里甚至听不到卡什锯木的声音。他从草架上拖下一抱干草，塞进食槽里。

“吃吧，”他说，“一逮着机会就把这鬼东西消灭光吧，你这饱食终日的东西。你个贱种。”他说。

朱尔

因为他就待在外面，就在窗下，在那该死的棺材上又锤又锯。在那里，她能看见他。在那里，她的每一次呼吸里，满是他敲木和锯木的声音。她似乎看到他在说话。他说，看我（把棺材）给你做得多好。我也曾让他到别处去。我说，天哪，你想看她躺在里面吗？似乎在他很小的时候，她说过，如果有肥料，她会养一些花，于是他就拿着烤面包的锅，去马棚里装了满满一锅马粪回来。

此刻，还有其他人坐在里面，他们就像一群兀鹰。他们一边等，一边扇着扇子。我说，你能不能不要这样成天锯啊钉啊的，让人觉都睡不好。她的双手搭在被子上，像两只被挖出来的老根，怎么洗也洗不干净。我能看见扇子和杜威·戴尔的一只手臂。我说，能不能就让她一个人待着。锯啊，敲啊，扇子扇得空气在她脸上迅速流动，她那么累，还怎么呼吸，更何况那该死的扁斧还总是敲个没完。敲个没完。敲个没完。敲个没完。结果每一个路过的人都会停下来看看，然后夸他是个好木匠。如果从教堂上摔下来的是我，而不是卡什，如果那满载木头的车是压在我身上，而不是爹的身上，那么村子里的那些浑蛋就不会都来盯着她看了，如果有上帝，那么这会儿，他干什么去了呢？仿佛只有我和她在一座高山上，我们将岩石滚下山，砸在他们的脸上，我们搬起岩石，砸向他们的脸和牙齿，以及其他一切上帝创造的部位，直到她安静下来，而且那该死的扁斧也不再敲个没完。再敲一下，我们就清净了。

达尔

我们看见他转过角落，走上台阶。他也不看我们，就说：“你们准备好了吗？”

“把马套好了吗？”我说。我又说：“等一下。”于是他停了下来，看着爹。弗农站着不动，吐了一口痰。他做出一副得体的模样，故意往走廊下的灰尘里吐去。爹用手轻轻地揉着膝盖。他往山崖外望去，看向远处的平野。朱尔看了他一眼，又走到水桶那里，喝水去了。

“我可不喜欢扭扭捏捏。”爹说。

“那可是三美元哪。”我说。爹的驼背处，汗衫已经褪了色，颜色看起来比其他地方浅。他的汗衫上没有汗迹。我也从没见他的汗衫上有过汗迹。他二十二岁那年，在太阳下干活，晒出病来了，于是他就对人们说，他要是出汗，就会死。我想他一直也都是这么认为的。

“可要是她等不到你回来怎么办，”他说，“她会失望的。”

弗农往灰尘里吐着痰。天亮之前就要下雨了。

“她可是盼着呢，”爹说，“她巴不得立刻就起程。我是知道她的。我答应过她让大家在这儿准备好，她可是盼着呢。”

“那样一来，我们就一定要那三美元了。”我说。他往远处的山野望去，双手在膝盖上轻轻地揉着。他的牙齿已经脱落，吸鼻烟的时候，嘴唇就不断往里边抿。他的下巴长了胡楂，看起来就像一只老狗。“你最好快做决定，我们也能快点过去，赶在天黑之前装进去。”我说。

“妈的病还没那么严重，”朱尔说，“闭嘴，达尔。”

“没错，”弗农说，“一个星期以来，她就数今天的精神最好了。等到你和朱尔回来，没准她就可以站起来了。”

“你要知道，”朱尔说，“你来看她已经够频繁了。你也是，你们大

家都是。”弗农看着他。朱尔的眼睛就像灰白的木头，嵌在那涨红的脸上。他比我们所有人都高出了一个头，他总是比所有人高出一个头。我对他们说，正因如此，妈打他和宠他的时候才更多一些。因为他在屋子里转悠的时候更多。所以他的名字才叫朱尔¹，我是这么对他们说的。

“闭嘴，朱尔。”爹说，不过，爹好像也没听得多认真。他望着远处的平野，双手揉着他的膝盖。

“要是她等不到我们回来，”我说，“你可以借用弗农的牲口，我们能赶上你。”

“啊，闭上你的臭嘴。”朱尔说。

“她想跟我们一起走，”爹揉着膝盖说，“没有什么比这更让人心烦了。”

“她就在那儿躺着，看着卡什削那该死的……”朱尔说。他说这话时，样子刻薄又凶狠，可最终却没有说出那个词。就像一个小男孩，在黑夜里拼命使出勇气，却突然被自己的吵闹声吓了一跳，于是噤住声。

“她想坐我们自己的马车，”爹说，“知道是自己的东西，她躺着都要舒坦些。她以前也是个惯用自家东西的女人。这点，你最清楚不过了。”

“那么，就让她坐我们自己的车吧，”朱尔说，“可谁又说得准——”他看着爹的后脑，眼睛像灰白的木头。

“呸，”弗农说，“她能撑到一切都准备好的，她的时辰还没到。再说，现在的路也好走了，你们很快就能送她到镇上。”

“这天定是要下雨了，”爹说，“我运气不好，一直都不好。”他双手揉着膝盖说，“都怪那个医生，他还撒谎说随时都可以来。这么晚了，也没见他来个信儿。如果他明天来，告诉她时间已经近了，她可是不会再等了。我是知道她的。不管马车有没有准备好，她都不会再等了。到那时，她会难过的，我可不想她还活在人世时，让她难过。她妈家的墓地在杰弗逊，她的亲人们就在那里等着她，她已经迫不及待要赶去了。我答应过她，我和孩子们会尽快赶着骡子载她去那儿，好让她安息。”他双手揉着膝盖，说，“没有什么比这更让人心烦了。”

“好像有谁在赶着把她送去那儿似的，”朱尔又用那刻薄而凶狠的语气说道，“卡什还整天在窗前，又锤又锯——”

“那是她自己希望的，”爹说，“你不喜欢她，对她也不好。你就从来没对她好过。我们可不想欠任何人的情，我和她一样。她知道是自己的骨肉在为她锯木板、钉钉子，心里会踏实些。她一向不愿别人来为她收拾摊子。”

“那可是三美元哪，”我说，“你希望我们去还是不去呢？”爹揉着膝盖说：“我们明天天黑之前就会赶回来。”

“唉——”爹说，他头发蓬乱，凝望着远处的平野，一边慢慢地吸着鼻烟。

“说呀。”朱尔说。他说着走下了台阶。弗农又往灰尘里吐痰。

“好吧，明天天黑之前就回来，”爹说，“我不会让她再等了。”

朱尔往回一瞥，然后转过房子去。我朝大厅走去，还没走到门口，就听到了声音。我们的房子是顺着山势往下倾斜的，所以，随时都有微

风斜向上吹过大厅。要是一片羽毛落到前门边，便会被吹起来，随风掠过天花板，然后斜着向后飘，飘到后门，再遇到下转的风——声音也是这样。所以，当你走到大厅时，那声音听起来，就像有谁在头顶用空气交流。

¹朱尔的英文 Jewel 一词有“宝贝”的意思。——译者注

科拉

这是我见过的最动人的场景，就好像他知道再也见不到她了一样，安斯·本德伦将他从妈的终榻前赶走，让他再也见不到她。我总说，达尔和别人不一样。还说，他是唯一一个继承了他母亲的特点、天生就有恻隐之心的人。不是朱尔，不是那个她辛苦生下来，又如此娇惯和宠爱，最后却对她乱发脾气甚至怨骂她的儿子，他不断做坏事来折磨她，到头来，还得我随时站出来阻止他。他是不会来和她告别的。他不会放过任何机会赚取那额外的三美元，哪怕要以不能和母亲吻别为代价。他才是彻彻底底的本德伦家的孩子，谁也不爱，什么也不在意，只希望贪便宜。塔尔先生说，达尔要他们再等等。他说，达尔差点就跪下来，求他们不要逼他在这个时候离开他妈。可这并不管用，安斯和朱尔一定要赚那三美元。但凡认识安斯的人，都不指望他会改变主意，大家只是寄希望于那个将她多年的牺牲和偏爱付之东流的儿子朱尔——他们可别想蒙我：塔尔先生竟然说本德伦太太最不喜欢的就是朱尔，但是，我可比他还清楚呢。我知道她偏心他，因为他身上有着与她相似的性格特点，正是因为这种性格，她才得以忍受安斯·本德伦。塔尔先生说，她应该毒死他的——为了三美元，竟然不来参加垂死的妈的吻别仪式。

我为什么要这样做，连续三个星期来，我只要一有时间就过来，没

有时间也会抽时间过来，将我自己的家庭和担子丢在一边，只是为了让她在咽气时能有个人陪着，为了留一张熟脸在身边，为她打气，不让她独自去面对那伟大的未知世界。这也没什么，因为我就是这么希望的。可是，谢天谢地，我希望留在身边的是我自己的家人，我的骨肉，因为只有我的丈夫和儿子们才能给我最好的祝福，尽管他们有时候也很麻烦。

她是一个孤独的女人，孤高自傲，还在人前装样子，隐瞒着他们令她感到痛苦的事实。她的尸体在棺材里还没有冷却，他们就要把她运往四十英里以外的地方埋葬，这是违背上帝意志的。还不让她和本德伦家的人躺在同一片土地上。

“可是她想去，”塔尔先生说，“和娘家人躺在一起，是她的愿望。”

“那她活着的时候为什么不去呢？”我说，“没有人会阻挡她，即便她的小儿子也不会拦她，他差不多已经长大，就像其他几个儿子一样，变得自私，而且铁石心肠。”

“那是她自己的意思，”塔尔先生说，“我听安斯说过，那是她自己的意思。”

“你当然会相信安斯了，”我说，“像您这样的人就会相信他。你还别说。”

“我相信他，是因为，这件事他说不说都不会对我有什么影响。”塔尔先生说。

“你还别说，”我说，“不管是活着还是死后，女人就该与丈夫和孩子待在一起。你希望我死的时候离开你和女儿们，去亚拉巴马州，背弃

与你们同甘共苦、至死不渝的意愿吗？”

“唉，人和人是不一样的。”他说。

我也希望如此。为了表示我对基督徒丈夫的敬爱，为了不让他操心，也为了体现我对基督徒孩子们的爱和尊重，我希望过上上帝和人类眼中的正确生活。因此，当我怀着责任感躺下时，被爱人的面孔围绕就是我所得的回报，每一个我爱的人都献给我送别之吻，这就是对我的回报。不像安迪·本德伦一样，孤独地死去，还要将她的骄傲和破碎的心隐藏起来。死了也好。她躺在这里，支撑着头，看着卡什做棺材，生怕他偷工减料似的，而其他几个男人，什么也不关心，只想着是否来得及赶在下雨涨水之前赚那额外的三美元。如果他们决定去拉最后一趟车，那么，就会将她裹在被子里，先用马车拉她过河，再停下来，让她以基督教的方式死去。

达尔不一样。这是我见过的最动人的场景了。我曾一度对人性失去信念；怀疑让我甚是苦恼。可是，上帝将我的信念归还给我，还向我揭示了他对生灵的博爱。不是朱尔，不是那个她一贯宠爱的儿子，不是他。他还惦念着那额外的三美元。是达尔，是人们口中那个奇怪、懒惰，和安斯差不多、成天混日子的儿子；而卡什，则是一个好木匠，他总有做不完の木活；朱尔呢，净做些捞钱的活儿，要么就总是惹人闲话；还有那个接近赤裸的丫头，总是拿着一把扇子，站在安迪身后，只要一有人来和她说话或者宽慰她，她就立刻抢过话，好像不让别人靠近她似的。

还是达尔。他走到门口，就站在那儿，看着他垂死的母亲。他只是看着她，这让我再一次感受到了上帝的博爱和仁慈。我知道，她对朱尔，只是装装样子，而她和达尔之间，才有着真正的理解和关爱。他只

是看着她，也不进去，不让她看见他，见了也伤心，他知道安斯要将他从母亲的终榻上拉开，他再也见不到她了。他什么也不说，只是看着她。

“你想怎么样，达尔？”杜威·戴尔一边摇着扇子一边说道，声音大而急促，似乎连他也不让靠近。而他也只是看着垂死的母亲，再多的话也只能埋在心里。

杜威·戴尔

这是我第一次和莱夫一起下棉田。爹不能出汗，因为如果出汗，他就会死，所以，大家都赶来帮忙。而朱尔则什么也不管，他和我们不亲，我们并不相亲相爱。卡什则似乎要把那些漫长而炎热、糟糕又暗淡的日子锯成板条，然后装订成什么东西。爹以为，邻居们总会相互帮忙，却没发现自己总是让人家来帮忙。我也不指望达尔能来帮忙，他坐在那超级大的桌子旁，他的眼睛里已经不是食物和台灯，而是脑海里那一片深掘的土地，土地之外，还有一些遥远的坑洞。

我们下到棉田，一路摘着棉花，树木之间的间隔越来越小，于是形成了秘密的树荫，我和莱夫各自拿着麻袋，躲在秘密的树荫下摘棉花。麻袋半满的时候，我就开始问自己要不要继续摘，因为我说过，如果走到树荫处，麻袋就满了，那可怪不得我。我说过，要是走到树荫处，麻袋还没有满，就说明我不是摘棉花的料，就还要转到下一排摘，可要是麻袋已经满了，我也就没办法了。我们一路摘着朝树荫处走去，目光会一起落在他的手或者我的手上，而我什么也没有说。我说：“你在干什么？”他说：“我在往你的麻袋里摘。”因此，当我们摘到这一排结束的时候，我的麻袋已经满了，而我又有什么办法呢。

所以，这件事不能怪我，我也没有办法。就在那时，就在我看见朱尔的那一刻，他已经明白过来。他也不开口，就“说”¹他已经明白了，就像他对我“说”妈就要死了一样，我知道他是明白的，因为，如果他开口说自己明白，我就不会相信他在那儿看到过我们。可是，他“说”他已经明白了，而我也不开口，就“说”“你要告诉爹，让他伤心死吗？”他也不开口，“说”，“何苦呢？”我之所以能和他这般既能相互领会又心生厌恶地谈话，是因为他能够明白。

他就站在门口，看着她。

“你想怎样，达尔？”我“说”。

“她就要死了。”他“说”。塔尔这个老蠢蛋正在赶来，看她死了没，而我可以糊弄他们。

“她什么时候会死？”我“说”。

“在我们回来之前。”他“说”。

“那你为什么带朱尔来呢？”我“说”。

“我要让他帮我装货。”他“说”。

¹这里加引号的“说”，并不是指开口说，而是神情传递信息，是我和朱尔之间的相互领会。

塔尔

安斯不停地揉着他的膝盖。他的外衫已经褪了色；一只膝盖上还打着补丁，补丁上的哗叽布片是从他星期天穿的裤子上剪下的，已经磨

得像铁一般光亮。“没人比我更讨厌这样了。”他说。

“人时不时也该往前看，”我说，“可是，不管迟早，都免不了有害处。”

“她想即刻就动身，”他说，“再怎么，杰弗逊也够远的。”

“可是，现在路也好走了。”我说。今晚铁定会下雨。他的家人埋在纽霍普¹，离这儿不到三英里。可他就娶了这么一个女人，从她家到这儿，骑马快也要一天，而她还偏偏死在他之前。

他望向远方的平野，揉着他的膝盖。“没人比我更讨厌这样了。”他说。

“他们回来还有一会儿呢。”我说，“免不了让人担心。”

“那可是三美元哪。”他说。

“说不定，他们根本不用急着赶回来呢，根本不需要，”我说，“我是这么希望的。”

“她快不行了，”他说，“她已经打定主意了。”

事实上，对于一个女人来说，这样的生活无比艰难。至少对某些女人来说是这样。我宁愿妈活到七十多岁。她不管日晒雨淋，每天不间断地劳作；自打最小的孩子出生后，她就从没有生过一天病，直到有一天，她四处望了望，然后走进屋去，拿出一件装饰着蕾丝的晚礼服穿上，这件裙子，她可珍藏了四十五年，从未体面地穿出来过。接着，她躺在床上，拉起罩子，闭上了眼睛。“你们要照顾好你们的爹，”她说，“我可是累了。”

安斯双手揉着膝盖。“这是上帝所赐。”他说。这时，我们还可听到卡什在角落外又锤又锯的声音。

没错。再没有比这更真的了。“上帝所赐。”我说。

那个男孩走上山来。他扛着一条足有他那么长的鱼。他把鱼挂起来，像大人一样，口中一声哼响，转身吐了一口痰。鱼足有他那么高。

“那是什么？”我说，“是猪吗？你从哪里弄来的？”

“在桥下，”他说着把那东西翻过来，这一面，打湿的地方，灰尘已经结了块，凸起的鱼眼睛也糊上了灰尘。

“你要把它放在这儿吗？”安斯说。

“我要给妈看。”瓦达曼说着朝门的方向看去。我们可以听到风中的说话声。卡什也还在那儿又锤又锯。“有人在里面呢。”他说。

“那是我的亲戚，”我说，“他们见到这鱼也会很高兴的。”

他什么也没说，只是看着门口。接下来，他用脚把鱼翻了过来，用脚趾戳它鼓起的眼晴，还一边往里面抠。安斯还是望着远处的平野。瓦达曼一会儿看着安斯的脸，一会儿又转眼看看门口。然后，他转身朝房子的角落走去，这时，安斯头也不回地叫住了他。

“你把那条鱼洗干净。”安斯说。

瓦达曼停下来。“为什么不让杜威·戴尔来洗呢？”他说。

“我叫你洗。”安斯说。

“啊，爹。”瓦达曼说。

“你来洗。”安斯说。他也没有回头。瓦达曼只好退回来，拿起鱼。这鱼从他的手中滑落，将打湿的灰尘弄在他身上，然后掉在地上，又弄了自己一身灰尘，它嘴大张着，瞪着眼睛，就像羞于死去一般，急匆匆地又躲回到尘埃里。瓦达曼咒骂着它。他像个大人一样，叉腿骑在它的身上。安斯仍然没有转过头。瓦达曼再次拿起它，像抱木柴一样，两手抱着它，绕过屋子去。它从头到尾搭在他身上，足有他的身体那么大。

安斯的手腕从袖子里露出来，甩动着：我长这么大还从未见过他穿什么衣服看起来像是自己的，都像是朱尔穿旧了给他的。然而，那并不是朱尔的。他虽瘦削，手臂倒是很长。不同的是，他衣服上没有汗迹。仅凭这一点，就可判定这是安斯的衣服，错不了。他的眼睛就像烧焦的煤炭，嵌在脸上，两眼望着远处的平野。

当阴影漫上台阶时，他说：“五点了。”

就在我起身时，科拉走到门口，说该起程了。安斯伸手拿过鞋。“好了，本德伦先生，”科拉说，“你还不打算起来吗。”他开始穿鞋，一脚踩进鞋里，他做任何事都是这个样子，好像希望自己真就不能做，也就真的不用费力去做。当我们走上大厅时，只听得他步伐沉重，鞋子像铁鞋一般在地板上拖过。他走到她的门口，眨着眼睛，似乎越过了眼前所见，仿佛看到她坐在椅子上，或是正在扫地，他看向门内，却每一次都吃惊地发现她躺在床上，而杜威·戴尔还在给她扇扇子。于是他就站在那儿，似乎再也不打算动弹什么的。

“好了，我想我们最好出发了，”科拉说，“我还要去喂鸡。”这天肯定是要下雨了。那样的云是骗不了人的，而有了那些棉花，每一天才好

似上帝赐予的。那对他来说有别样的意义。这时，卡什还在修理木板。“需不需要我们帮忙？”科拉说。

“如果需要帮忙，安斯会告诉我们的。”我说。

安斯并没有看我们。他四处看了看，非常惊讶地眨着眼睛，好像看到妈躺在床上有多么吃惊似的。要是卡什在帮我修葺牲口棚的时候有那么认真就好了。

“我对安斯说过，他们不用急着赶回来，”我说，“我是这样希望的。”

“她已经打定主意了，”他说，“我想她是一定要走的。”

“每个人都会遇到这样的事，”科拉说，“愿上帝宽慰你。”

“至于那些玉米……”我说。我对他说过，她现在病着，家里忙得不可开交，我可以过来帮忙。和四邻的人们一样，我也帮了他不少，现在想不帮都不行了。

“或许她能撑到你忙完农活呢。”我说。

“除非那是上帝的旨意。”他说。

“愿上帝宽慰你。”科拉说。

要是卡什帮我修葺牲口棚的时候有那么认真就好了。我们走过时，他抬起头说：“别指望我这个星期就给你弄好。”

“不急，”我说，“什么时候都可以。”

然后我们上了马车。科拉把蛋糕盒放在膝盖上。这天是肯定要下雨了。

“我不知道他能做些什么，”科拉说，“真的不知道。”

“可怜的安斯，”我说，“她督促他干活都有三十年了。我估计她也累了。”

“我倒想她再督促他三十年，”凯特说，“若没有她，他也会在摘棉花之前再找一个的。”

“我想卡什和达尔可以结婚了。”埃拉说。

“那可怜的孩子，”科拉说，“可怜的小家伙。”

“朱尔呢？”凯特说。

“他也可以了。”埃拉说。

“嗯，”凯特说，“我想他快了。我是这么想的。我希望这里不止一个女孩不愿看着朱尔被束缚。不过，他们根本不用担心。”

“为什么呀，凯特！”科拉说。这时，马车开始吱嘎地向前摇去。“可怜的小家伙。”科拉说。

今晚肯定要下雨了。是的。马车之所以会吱嘎作响，是因为天气太干燥，这可还是伯赛尔家造的马车啊。但是，它会好的。一定会好的。

“她既然说过，就应该买下那些蛋糕的。”凯特说。

[1](#)New Hope，字面意思为“新希望”。——译者注

安斯

这该死的路。还有，这天肯定是要下雨了。我站在这儿，仿佛有千里眼一般，能看到天幕就像一堵墙，横在他们身后，横在他们和我的承诺之间。我竭尽全力，集中精神去做每一件事，可是那些作孽的孩子。

路就横在那儿，一直通向我家门口，凡是霉运，总能找准那道门，进进出出。我对安迪说过，路过时，总希望好运就住在路上，而她则以妇人的眼界说：“那你就干脆起来，到外面去。”可是我告诉她，这根本和运气无关，因为上帝造路，就是用来行走的——不然，为什么他要让它们平铺在这土地之上呢。每当他打算让什么东西一直移动，他就会造出横躺的东西，像一条路、一匹马或是一辆马车；而他要想让什么东西静止不动，他就会造出竖直的东西，像一棵树或是一个人。所以，他从不让人们住在路上，我说，是先有路还是先有房子呢？你见过他把路建在房子边上吗？从没见过吧，我说。现在的人总喜欢把房子建在一些地方：凡是有人坐马车经过，都能将口水吐在门口。人们总是孜孜不倦，总想着去到别的地方，而他则希望人们像一棵树，或是一排玉米那样站着。因为，如果他要人们一直移动，或是去什么地方，那他不得让他们腹部贴在地上，像蛇一般前行啊？他可是有理由这样做的。

可如今，路修在这儿，所有的霉运都能悄悄找着道，径直来到我的家门口，还以它的名义给我扣上各种税。也不知卡什从哪儿得了要学木匠的想法，还要我们在他身上花钱，若是没有路，他可想不到这方面去；还害得我从教堂上摔下来，一连六个月手都抬不起来，如果他学成木匠，这一带也少不了活计，不过，我和安迪就得做牛做马了。

还有达尔。总是叫我不要管他。这群不争气的儿子。我也不是害怕干活；我能养活自己和家人，还给了他们一个遮风避雨的地方：他眼里全是那块地，他要去做自己的事，我可就少了帮手。我对他们说，一开始他眼里全是那块地，这没有错，因为土地上的路是竖直的；然后，直到那条路被横转过来，他的眼里依旧全是那块地，于是他们就开始逼我不要管他，还以法令的名义让我少了帮手。

还要让我出钱。她本来是一个无病无痛、身体健壮的女人，可是自从有了那条路后，一切都变了。她倒下了，就躺在床上，什么也顾不得。“你病了吗，安迪？”我说。

“我没有病。”她说。

“你只管躺下休息，”我说，“我知道你没病。你只是累了。你只管躺下休息。”

“我没病，”她说，“我会起来的。”

“躺好休息，”我说，“你只是累了。明天就可以起来了。”而她就躺在那儿，那个曾经无病无痛、身体健壮的女人，自从有了那条路后，一切都变了。

“我可没请过你来啊，”我说，“你要做证，我可从来没请过你。”

“我知道你没请过我，”皮博迪说，“我肯定你没请我。她呢？”

“她在床上躺着呢，”我说，“她只是有点累了，可是——”

“你出去一下，安斯，”他说，“到走廊里坐一会儿。”

到头来，还要我出钱给她医病，而我的牙齿已经落光，只盼着有一天能有些结余，让我去补补牙，这样也能像正常人一样吃上帝赐予的粮食。再说，直到那天前，她都和地方上的其他女人一样，无病无痛、身体健壮。硬要赚那三美元是要付出代价的。孩子们不得不出去赚它，这也是要付出代价的。此刻，我又仿佛有千里眼一般，看到一帘雨幕横在我和孩子们中间，它像一个无赖，从那条路上来，好像这大千之地，就没有别家的房子让它去淋似的。

我以前也听到人们抱怨自己运气不好，那也是该得的，因为他们本来就有罪。可我不认为自己是被诅咒了，因为我没做错什么，自然也没什么可诅咒的。我承认，自己并不虔诚。可是我心存和平，这我是知道的。比起那些虚伪的人来说，我做事一向不好不坏。我知道老天爷会眷顾我，就像眷顾一只掉落的麻雀¹。说起来，一个缺衣少食的人竟然会被一条路难倒，这也够悲哀的。

瓦达曼绕过屋子来，膝盖以上都是血淋淋的，脏得像头猪，肯定是用斧头砍了那条鱼，没准还把它扔掉，然后撒谎说是被狗吃了。罢了，他也没比那几个年长的哥哥好到哪里去。他走了过来，看了看屋子，然后坐在台阶上，一句话也不说。“哟，”他说，“我是彻底累喽。”

“去洗洗手吧。”我说。不管是小时候，还是长大以后，哪个女人能像安迪那样含辛茹苦地抚养他们。这点我可要为她说话。

“这鱼的血和内脏多得就像猪一样。”他说。这鬼天气让我费尽了精力，我可是什么也上不了心。“爹，”他说，“妈的病情又加重了吗？”

“去洗你的手吧。”我说。可我就是上不了心。

¹ 《圣经·马太福音》第十章第二十九节，“两只麻雀不是卖一分银

子吗？若是你们的父不许，一个也不能掉在地上，就是你们的头发也都被数过了。所以，不要惧怕，你们比许多麻雀还贵重。”——译者注

达尔

这周，他去了镇上。他颈背上的头发剪得很短，发线与太阳晒到的地方之间露出一道白杠，仿佛白骨的接缝。他一次都没有回头看。

“朱尔。”我说。坐在马车上，仿佛路在往后退，骡子快速扇动的两耳之间，似乎形成一条隧道，路也如丝带一般消失在马车之下，而马车的前轮则像一个线轴。“朱尔，你知道吗，她就要死了？”

两个人生了你，而其中一个就要死了。世界就是这样完蛋的。

我对杜威·达尔说：“你希望她快点死，这样你就可以去镇上了，是吗？”尽管我们俩都心知肚明，可是她不会说出来。“你之所以不说，就连说给自己听也不愿意，那是因为，一旦你说了，你就会意识到那是真的，是吗？可现在，你已经知道那是真的了。为什么不说呢，就算是对自己说？”她当然不会说。她只是一直说着，你要告诉爹，让他伤心死吗？“你不能相信那是真的，因为你无法相信杜威·戴尔，杜威·戴尔·本德伦运气这么差，是吗？”

夕阳已在水平线上徘徊了一个小时，那姿态宛若血红的鸡蛋停靠在一团积雨云上；阳光已呈紫铜色，眼前是一片不祥之兆，鼻下弥漫着如硫黄一般的闪电气息。皮博迪到来时，他们就得用绳子了。他吃了冷的青菜，肚子胀满了气。他们用绳子把他从路上拖起来，像气球一样晃荡在充满硫黄味的空气里。

“朱尔，”我说，“你知道安迪·本德伦就要死了吗？安迪·本德伦就要死了？”

皮博迪

安斯最终还是来请我了，我说：“他终于把她折腾得不行了。”我说，这也未必是坏事，最开始我也不愿意去，因为那时我兴许还能做点什么，将她从死亡的边缘拉回来，上帝啊。我想，天堂里或许也有医学院那一套愚蠢的道德观，或许来请我的还是弗农·塔尔，他总是掐准了时间来，弗农总能掐准时间，他总能为安斯把钱用到好处，就像花自己的钱一样。可是，等到天色稍晚，我就知道，来请我的只能是安斯了。我知道，在这样的暴风天气里，需要请医生的，也只能是那个倒霉的男人。我还知道，当安斯最终意识到需要请医生的时候，一切已经晚了。

我走到山泉处，下了马车，拴好马，太阳已经沉到一片黑云之后，那黑云宛若上下倒置的山脉，又如一车煤渣倒在那里，四下里也不见风影。还没走到那里，我就听到卡什在一英里以外锯木的声音。安斯则立在路尽头的悬崖边上。

“马呢？”我说。

“朱尔带走了，”他说，“除了朱尔，也没人能驯得住它。我想，你得走上去了。”

“我可重二百二十五磅，要我走上去？”我说，“要我从那该死的崖壁上爬上去？”他就站在那儿，在一棵树旁。上帝让树长根，却让安斯·

本德伦生脚，这可真是大错特错。要是他能把他们交换一下，那么这个村子就不必担心森林有一天被砍伐殆尽了，甚至连其他村子都不用担心了。“你要我来做什么呢？”我说，“要我待在这儿，在云散风起时，被吹到别的村子去吗？”即便是有马骑，我也得花十五分钟，穿过牧场，爬到山顶，然后来到房前。这路就像弯曲的四肢，被风吹起，撞在悬崖上。安斯已经十二年没有进过城了。他的母亲是怎么爬上去把他生下来的呢，他也不愧是他母亲的孩子。

“瓦达曼去拿绳子。”他说。

不一会儿，瓦达曼就拿着绳子出现了。他把绳子的一头交到安斯手上，一边沿路往下走，一边放着绳子。

“你拉紧点，”我说，“我已经把这次出诊记在账本上了，所以不管我去还是没去，都要收你的钱。”

“知道了，”安斯说，“你能爬上来的。”

我也不明白自己为什么不转身回去，真是见鬼了。一个七十多岁的人，重二百多磅，还要被绳子拉着在一座该死的山上爬上爬下。我想，大概是因为我一定要凑齐那五万美元死账，才肯收手。“你的妻子在搞什么鬼，”我说，“偏偏病倒在这该死的山上？”

“真是不好意思。”他一边放开绳子，一边说道。绳子就被他丢在原地，而他转身朝房子走去。这时，还可见一些天光，如硫黄火柴一般。木板也像一根根火柴。卡什并没有回头。弗农·塔尔说他每一块木板拿到窗前给安迪看，让她来选。那孩子快赶上我们了。这时，安斯回过头看着他。“绳子呢？”他说。

“你不是把它扔那儿了吗，”我说，“不过，还是先别管绳子。我等会儿还要下山去呢。我可不想待在这儿，让暴风雨袭击。一旦被吹走，不知要吹多远呢。”

那丫头还站在床边，给她打扇子。我们进去时，她扭头看着我们。近十天来，她就像死人一般。我想，她长久以来离不开安斯，甚至都无法去改变了，如果死亡是一次改变的话。我还记得，小时候总以为死亡是一种生理现象；如今我知道，那不过是意识的功能——而意识是指遭受丧亲之痛的人的意识。虚无主义者说，死亡就是结束；而信奉正统基督教的人则认为，死亡是开始；事实上，死亡不过是让那些单身住客或是一家子住客搬离他们的住所或者镇子。

她看着我们。只有一对眼睛看起来还在动着。那眼睛仿佛触碰着我们，不是触碰我们的视觉，也不是触碰我们的感觉，而是如水管里冒出的一股水，那一瞬间，就好像从喷嘴里分离出来了，仿佛根本没经过水管。她也不看安斯一眼。只是看着我，然后看了看那孩子。她躺在被子里，如同一根腐烂的棍子。

“安迪太太。”我说。这时，丫头仍没有停下来，还在打着扇子。“感觉怎么样，我的姐妹？”我说。她的头搭在枕头上，面容憔悴，她看着那孩子，说：“你可是选对了时候把我送走，连暴风雨都引来了。”接下来，我叫安斯和那孩子出去。她看着那孩子走出屋子。她一动也不动，除了那双眼睛。

我出去的时候，他和安斯在走廊里，那孩子就坐在台阶上，安斯则站在一根柱子旁，他甚至都没有靠在上面，他的手臂悬吊着，头发立了起来，缠结在头上，就像一只丧气的公鸡。他转过头，朝我眨了眨眼。

“为什么不早一点来请我呢？”我说。

“一会儿有这样事，一会儿又有那样事，”他说，“那些玉米和孩子们也要忙着应付，杜威·戴尔在好好照顾她，乡亲们也来帮忙，于是我就想……”

“该死的钱，”我说，“你什么时候听说过我因为别人没付钱就难为人家？”

“也不是因为钱，”他说，“我只是在想……她要去了，是吗？”那个小家伙还坐在最高一级台阶上，他的身形，在硫黄色的光线中，看起来比任何时候都小。这个村子有一个麻烦：所有的事，天气，不管什么，都停留得太久。就像我们的河流和我们的陆地：迟钝、缓慢，又猛烈；这样一来就形成或是创造了一种无法改变的、令人不安的生活景象。“我知道她，”安斯说，“我一直都知道。她已经打定主意了。”

“可这也不是坏事，”我说，“无妨——”他坐在最高的台阶上，穿着褪色的外衫，面无表情。我走出来时，他看着我，然后看了看安斯。可现在，他也没有看我们，只是坐在那儿。

“你告诉她了吗？”安斯问道。

“告诉她什么？”我说，“为什么要告诉她？”

“她迟早会知道的。我知道，她一看见你，就该知道了，比白纸黑字还真实。你也不必告诉她了。她的心意——”

那丫头在我们身后说：“她的手在动。”于是我看着她，看向她的脸。

“你最好快点。”我说。

当我们走进屋子时，她就看着门口。然后，她看着我，眼光就像提灯熄灭前的残光。“她要你出去。”那丫头说。

“安迪，”安斯说，“他可是大老远从杰弗逊赶来给你看病的。”她只是看着我，我能感觉到她的目光。就好像她在用目光推我一样。我以前也在别的女人身上看到过这样的目光。它们把那些带着同情与怜悯来帮助她们的人拒之门外，死守着那些没用的畜生，而对于那些畜生来讲，她们却连牛马都不如。也许，这就是所谓的无法理解的爱吧：就是自尊，和那种想要遮盖赤裸之身的强烈愿望。我们本是赤裸着来到这个世界，赤裸着进入手术室，最后又倔强而猛烈地带着赤裸之身回归土地。于是，我出去了。卡什在门廊后有规律地锯着木板。大约一分钟后，她叫着他的名字，她的声音尖锐而响亮。

“卡什，”她说，“你来，卡什！”

达尔

爹就站在床后。瓦达曼在他的屁股后面偷窥，他的头圆圆的，眼睛也圆鼓鼓的，嘴巴正要张开。她看着爹，她那奄奄一息的生命似乎都流进了眼睛里，急促而又无可奈何。“她要见朱尔。”杜威·达尔说。

“为什么，安迪？”爹说，“他和达尔又去拉货了。他们以为还来得及。以为你会等他们，那三美元，还有……”他说着把手放在她身上。不一会儿，她看着他，并没有责怪，也没有任何动作或是表情，仿佛只有一双眼睛在听着他那戛然而止的声音。接着，她坐起身来，她已经十天没有动过了。杜威·戴尔弯下身去，用手托着她的背。

“妈，”她说，“妈。”

这时，她看着窗外，看着卡什弯着身子，在暮光中不慌不忙地锯着木板，他一直劳动到天黑，好像锯木这个动作能自行照明，而且木板与锯子都带有能量似的。

“你，卡什，”她喊道，声音尖锐、响亮，而且饱满，“你，卡什！”

他抬起头，在黄昏中，看着窗前那张枯槁的面容。这是他从小就看到大的一张拼画。他放下锯子，举起木板给她看，他看了看窗口那张一动不动的脸，又拿出一块木板放好，把它们斜拼起来，然后朝着地上的木板比手形，比出棺材的最终形状。她用那张拼画一般的脸又看了看他，她的神情，既不带责备，也没有认可。接下来，那张脸就消失在窗口。

她又躺了回去，都没有稍微扭一下头，看爹一眼。她看着瓦达曼；她的眼睛里突然充满了生气，就像两簇火焰，燃定了一会儿，后又熄灭，好像有人弯身去将它们吹灭了。

“妈，”杜威·戴尔喊道，“妈！”她靠在床上，双手微微抬起，扇子就像前面十天那样，一如既往地扇动着。接着，她开始恸哭。她的声音饱满而年轻、颤抖又清晰，音色与音量自顾凝神，扇子仍上下均匀地摇动着，在那无用的空气里沙沙作响。她张开双臂，扑在安迪·本德伦的膝盖上，抱紧她，然后使劲摇她，最后干脆展开四肢，一下子倒在安迪·本德伦那把老骨头上，压得整张床上只听见被褥的叽吱声。她两手张开，一只手中的扇子还在朝着被子无力地扇动。

瓦达曼躲在爹的屁股后偷窥，他的嘴大张着，整个脸上的血色似乎都集中到了嘴上，就好像他将牙齿咬进自己的脸上，吸干了里面的血。

他慢慢地从床边往后退，一双眼睛圆圆的，苍白的脸庞湮没在黄昏中，就像糊在坍塌墙上的一张纸，他就这样走出了屋子。

黄昏中，爹靠在床上，他那佝偻的身影，呈现出一种猫头鹰般羽毛蓬乱、怒气于心的意象，其中暗藏着一种哪怕只是一想，也会觉得深刻而沉静的智慧。

“那些个不孝子。”他说。

朱尔，我说。日头平稳，天色灰蒙，暗云如长矛，遮住了日光。骡子在雨中轻轻冒汗，被泥巴溅了一身黄，在下方的那只被马索斜拉着到路边，路的下面就是水沟。斜倾的木板发出沉闷的黄光，又因在水里泡过，变得像铅一样重，它斜着陡然栽进水沟里，轮子都摔坏了，一股黄色的漩流，从散落一地的辐条和朱尔脚踝流过，那既不是水，也不是尘埃，它顺着那既非土、也非水的黄色道路弯曲而下，在山下溶成一团深绿色的流，其颜色既不是土地的颜色，也不是天空的颜色。朱尔，我说。

这时，卡什来到了门口，他手里还拿着锯子。爹站在床后，佝偻着背，双手悬吊着。他转过头，一副衣衫褴褛的样子，他吸鼻烟时，下巴在发抖。

“她走了。”卡什说。

“她被带走了，丢下了我们。”爹说。卡什并没看他。“你做得怎么样了？”他也没回答，只是拿着锯子，走进屋。“我想你最好还是去接着做，”爹说，“那些孩子不在，你要尽量做好。”卡什看着她的脸。他并没有听爹说话，也没有走近床边。他走到屋子中央就停了下来，把锯子放在腿上。那冒汗的手臂上粘了些许锯木屑，他的表情很镇定。“如果

你来不及，他们明天回来，或许可以帮你，”爹说，“弗农会帮你的。”卡什并没有听。他只是看着她那平静而僵硬的脸湮没在暮色中，好像黑暗就是终极世界的先兆，直到最终，那张脸看上去就像是浮在上面，轻如枯叶的剪影。“都是信基督的，能帮到你。”爹说。可是，卡什并没有听。一会儿后，他转过身，出去了，仍然没有看爹一眼。接着，锯子的声音又响起来。“他们会帮我们驱散悲伤。”爹说。

锯子的声音平稳有力、不急不躁，仿佛搅动着天色，以至于锯子每拉动一下，她的脸就好似微微苏醒一般，露出聆听或是等待的神情，好像她在数着锯木的节奏。爹看向她的脸，又看看杜威·戴尔那乱糟糟的黑发、她张开的手臂和她握着的扇子，那扇子正有气无力地朝被子扇着。“我想你最好还是去做晚饭。”他说。

杜威·戴尔并没有动。

“起来，做饭去，”爹说，“我们得保持体力啊。我想，这一路赶来，皮博迪医生也快饿得不行了。卡什也需要快点吃饭，吃完好回去干活，赶着做好它。”

于是杜威·戴尔起身，站在地上。她看着她的脸。就像一件褪色的铜器放在枕头上，只有双手还有些生命的迹象：蜷曲、粗糙，没有生气；耗尽了力气，却依然警觉，而疲劳与痛苦尚未退去，好像在怀疑真正的安息日是否来临，她带着长着角一般的、轻微的警惕，防备着终止日，他们知道，这个日子不会持续太长。

杜威·戴尔弯下身，把被子拉到她的下巴处，把它弄平整。然后，她也不看爹一眼，就绕过床，出去了。

她要去皮博迪那里，那样她就能站在黄昏中，带着此般表情看着他

的背影，他感觉到她的目光，于是转过头说：这下我就不用这么痛苦了。她上了年纪，又生了病。她的痛苦我们是不能体会的。她是好不了了。瓦达曼也长大了，有你照顾他们所有人。我可不会那么痛苦了。我想你还是去做晚饭吧。也不要做太多。可他们总得吃饭，她看着他，说，如果你愿意，也可以帮到我很多。要是你明白就好了。我是我，你是你，我知道，而你不知道，如果你愿意，可以帮到我很多，如果你愿意，我就告诉你，这样一来，除了你、我和达尔，就没人知道了。

爹站在床前，吊着手臂，佝着背，面无表情。他抬起手，放到头上，抹着头发，听着锯木声。他走近些，在大腿上搓着手，手心搓了又搓手背，然后把手放在她的脸上，再放在被子隆起的地方，她的手就放在那儿。他学着杜威·戴尔的样子理了理被子，试着把它弄平整，拉到下巴处，结果却弄得乱糟糟。接着，他又开始整理自己弄出的褶皱，动作笨拙，像爪子一样，结果褶皱越来越多，像故意和他作对似的，于是最后他只好停下来，手垂在一边，又开始在大腿上搓着，手心搓了搓手背。卡什锯木的声音均匀地传进屋里。爹吸着鼻烟，他的呼吸很安详，却发出一种令人焦躁的声音。“上帝的旨意要实现了，”他说，“那我也可以去补牙了。”

朱尔的帽子在头上无力地垂下，把水都引到了他拴在肩膀上的湿透的麻袋里，口袋也已被浸湿，他的脚踝没在水沟里，他用一根腐木做支点，正在用一根湿滑的木板撬动轮轴，这木板有二英寸厚，四英寸宽。朱尔，我说，她死了，朱尔。安迪·本德伦死了。

瓦达曼

于是我开始跑。我朝后面跑去，跑到走廊边上，就停下了。接

着，我开始哭。我能感觉到那条鱼就在灰尘里的某个地方。它已经被宰成块，不成鱼样了，而溅在我手上和外衣上的也不像是血了。可，才不是这样的。刚才还不是这个样子。可是，现在她已经在我前面太远，我追也追不上了。

那些树就像是竖起羽毛躲进凉尘里的鸡。如果我从走廊上跳下去，就可以找到那条鱼，可是它已经被宰成块，不成鱼样了。我能听到床那边传来的声音，还能想起她的脸，听到大家的声音，每当他走在上面，我还能感觉到地板在摇动。他走进来，做了那件事。她本来都好好的，可是他走进来，做了那件事。

“那个胖杂种。”

我从走廊上跳了下去，然后开始跑。牲口棚的棚顶在黄昏中立了出来。如果我跳上去，就可以像马戏团的粉红女郎一样，穿过它，不用等，就掉进暖融融的气味中。我双手抓着灌木丛；脚下的石块和尘土纷纷往下掉。

接着，在那暖融融的气味中，我又可以呼吸了。我走进畜栏，试着摸一下它，这样我就可以哭了，我就可以尽情地倾吐眼泪。一旦它走进来踢我，我就可以哭了，就可以哭了。

“是他害死了她。他害死了她。”

它的生命在皮肤下奔跑，在我的手下奔跑，跑过了斑痕，涌进我的鼻子里，一个不对劲，就开始哭了，我尽情地哭，然后我就可以好好呼吸了。我呼吸时，还会发出噪声。我仿佛能闻到生命从我的手下跑过，然后跑上我的手臂，接下来，我就离开畜栏了。

我找不到它。在黑暗中，在灰尘里，顺着墙，我都找不到它。我的哭声太吵闹。我希望它小点声。然后，我在马车棚里找到了它，它满身灰尘，接下来，我跑过空地，来到了路上。那枯柴在我的肩膀上颠颠晃晃。

它们见我跑上去，就猛地往后一退，眼睛瞪得圆鼓鼓的，还喷着鼻息，扯着缰绳使劲往后退。于是我开始打。我能听到棍子打上去的声音；我看到棍子打在它们的头上，打在它们的胸口，它们一会儿抬身，一会儿俯身，我偶尔也失手，不过打得很开心。

“是你杀了我妈！”

这时，棍子断了，它们一会儿抬身，一会儿又俯身，它们的腿在地上大声蹬；声音之所以这么大，是因为要下雨了，空气很虚。不过棍子还是足够长，我这边打了，又跑到那边去打，它们就往后退，把缰绳绷得很紧。

“你们害死了她！”

我打它们，打啊，它们就大步地转圈，马车就以两个轮子为支撑点，随之转动，也没有其他动作，就像被钉在地上一一般。马儿们也没有其他动作，好像被牢牢钉在转盘的中心。

我在灰尘中奔跑。我什么也看不见，我在下落的灰尘里奔跑，两个轮子上翘的马车也消失在灰尘中。我打，棍子打在地上，又反弹回来，打在灰尘里，接着又打在空气中，灰尘在路上飞扬，比车开过时还落得快。我看着棍子，这时，我就可以哭了。棍子快断到我的手边，已经变得比生火用的柴还短，它本来是一根很长的棍子。于是，我把棍子丢在一边，我就可以哭了，这一次，哭声不是很吵闹。

奶牛立在牲口棚的门口，在嚼着什么东西。她看见我走上空地，就开始哞哞叫，她嘴里翻着青草，舌头不停地转动。

“我可不会给你挤奶，我什么也不会帮他们干。”

我走过时，听见她转过身。而当我转身时，她已经在我身后了，她的呼吸甜蜜、温热而生硬。

“我不是告诉过你吗，我不会挤的？”

她轻轻地碰了碰我，喷着鼻息。她闭着嘴巴，深深地呻吟一声。我抽手，像朱尔一样咒骂她。

“进去，快。”

我手向下伸，然后朝她冲过去。她跳回去，转开几步，又停下来，看着我。她又呻吟着。然后走到路上，就站在那儿，看向路的尽头。

牲口棚里光线很暗，却暖融融的，有股熟悉的味道，周围还很安静。我一边看着山顶，这下我可以悄悄地哭了。

这时，卡什来到山上，他从教堂跌下去摔伤的地方还有些不利索。他看着山泉，接着往上看了看路，又回去看牲口棚。他动作僵硬地走到路上，看着被挣断的缰绳，再看看路上的尘土，然后走到路上，那里的灰尘已经不见了。

“我希望他们已经过了塔尔的地盘了。我是这么希望的。”

“他真该死。他看见我了。真该死。”

此时我已经不哭了。我什么也不是。杜威·戴尔上山来，她在叫我

的名字。瓦达曼。我什么也不是。我很安静。叫你呢，瓦达曼。这下我可以悄悄地哭了，还能感受到、听到自己的泪水。

“那时也只是想。那时还没发生那事呢。它当时还躺在地上。现在她就要煮了它。”

天色暗下来，我能听到木头的声音，还能听出周围的寂静：我熟悉这一切。可那不是活物的声音，也不是它。好像这黑暗要把它融化成一些毫不相关的组成部分——喷鼻声、蹬脚声；闻起来有种逐渐冷却的肉体和带尿臊味的马毛的味道；还让人产生一种幻觉，以为那长斑的毛皮和结实的骨架完全不协调，它们相互分离、神秘而又熟悉，在这样的构造中，“存在”与我理解的“存在”是不一样的。我看着它融化——它的腿、那圆滚滚的眼睛、那有如冰冷火焰一般的花哨斑点——看着它的溶液逐渐消散，漂浮在黑暗之中；所有的部分融为一个整体，却又不是同一个部分；这样的整体，包含了所有的部分，却又什么都不是。我听见一片纷乱声向它逼近，抚摸着它、塑造着它那生硬的轮廓——丛毛、屁股、肩膀和头，还有气味和声音。我并不害怕。

“煮来吃了。煮来吃了。”

杜威·戴尔

如果他愿意，便可以帮到我不少。他能为我做一切事。对于我来说，好像世界上的一切事物都在一个装满内脏的桶里，以至于你会想，哪里还有地方放得下其他重要的东西。他是一个装满内脏的大桶，而我是一个装满内脏的小桶，就连大桶里都装不下其他重要的东西，更何况是小桶里呢。可我知道，地方是有的，因为在有什么不好的事发生之前，上帝会给女人发出信号。

因为我总是孤单一人。如果我能感应到那个信号就好了，那样一来我也就不会孤单了。可如果我不是孤单一人，每一个人也都知道那个信号了。他能帮到我不少，那样我就不会孤单了。那样一来，我就算孤单也无所谓了。

我会让他站在我和莱夫中间，就像达尔进来，站在我和莱夫中间一样，这样一来，莱夫也变得孤单了。他是莱夫，而我是杜威·戴尔，如果妈死了，我就不得不站在我、莱夫和达尔之外的立场来哀悼，因为他能帮到我不少，可他自己却不知道。就连他自己也不知道。

从后边的门廊，我可以望见牲口棚。接着，卡什锯木的声音也从那个方向传来。就像门外的一条狗，不管你从哪道门，都能看到它来来回回绕着屋子，就等着进屋来。他说我比你更发愁，而我说，你还不知道什么是发愁，于是我也不能发愁了。我也试着发愁，可是我想不到那么多，也愁不起来。

我点燃了厨房的提灯。那条鱼已经被宰成块，在锅里静静地渗着血。我迅速把它放进食物柜里，听着大厅里的动静，听着。她拖了十天才要死去或者她根本不知道自己要死了。或许她要等到卡什做好棺材才肯死去。又或者她要等到朱尔回来。我把装着青菜的盘子从柜子里拿出来，又从冷却的炉子上拿来烤面包的锅，然后，我停了下来，看着门口。

“瓦达曼呢？”卡什说。他那沾满木屑的手臂在灯光中看起来就像是沙做的。

“我不知道，我没看见他。”

“皮博迪的牲口跑了。看你能不能找到瓦达曼。那马儿或许愿意让

他靠近。”

“哦。先叫他们来吃饭。”

我看不到牲口棚。我说，我不知道怎样发愁，也不知道该怎样哭。我试着哭过，可是哭不出来。不一会儿，锯木的声音又响起来，沿着灰暗的地面传过来。接着，我看见他了，他拿着木板上锯下锯。

“你快回来吃饭了，”我说，“叫一下他。”他能为我做一切事情。而他却不知道。他在他的肚子里，我在我的肚子里。而我又在莱夫的肚子里。就是这样。我不知道他为什么不待在镇上。我们是乡下人，和城里人没法比。我不知道他为什么不待在镇上。这会儿，我能看到牲口棚的棚顶了。那头奶牛站在路脚下，哞哞叫着。当我转过身时，卡什已经不见了。

我把酪乳提了进来。爹和卡什已经坐在桌前了。

“那家伙捉的鱼呢，丫头？”他说。

我把牛奶放在桌上，说：“我没有时间煮。”

“要我这样壮的人，吃些简单的萝卜菜，太小气了。”他说。卡什已经开始吃了。他帽子上的汗水已经沾到头发上。他的汗衫也满是汗渍。他就连手和胳膊都没有洗。

“你该花点时间把鱼煮了，”爹说，“瓦达曼呢？”

我朝门口走去，说：“我没找到他。”

“过来吧，丫头，”他说，“别管那鱼了。留着以后吃吧。过来坐

下。”

“我倒不是想着鱼，”我说，“我要赶在下雨之前去挤奶。”

爹先给自己夹了菜，又把盘子传给其他人。可是，他并没有动嘴吃。他放在盘子两侧的双手半握着，他的头微微低下，那蓬乱的头发在灯光中立起来。看上去就像被木桩击打的犍牛，它已经没有生命，却不知道自已已经死了。

但卡什在吃，医生也在吃。“你最好吃点东西，”他看着爹说，“像我和卡什一样，你也需要吃点东西。”

“是啊，”爹说着站起身来，就像一头跪在池子里的犍牛，你朝它跑去，它就立马站起来，“她也不会怪你。”

走到看不见房子的地方，我就加快了脚步。奶牛还在悬崖脚下哞哞叫。她把鼻子凑向我，吸着气，然后呼出一阵甜蜜而温热的气息，那气息穿过我的裙子，扣在我那热乎乎的身体上，她还一边呻吟着。“再等一会儿，我才有空管你。”她跟着我走进牲口棚，我把桶放好。她朝桶里呼着气，还一边呻吟。“我跟你说过，你还要等会儿。我现在没空管你。”牲口棚里的光线很暗。我从她身边走过，她就往墙上踢了一脚。我继续朝前走着，破碎的木板就像一块直立的白板。这下，我可以看见山坡了，还能感到空气再次流上我的脸，渐渐地，天色稍亮一点，我却什么也看不见，松树丛遍布山坡，神秘兮兮的，像是在等待着什么。

黑暗中的奶牛靠着门，紧挨着黑暗中的桶，呻吟着。

接下来，我穿过畜栏。眼看我就要走过了，却听见他良久才说出那个词，生怕来不及说出来。我感到我的身体、骨头和血肉开始分离，然

后朝着孤独张开，这次，那种即将到来的不孤独感，让我感到害怕。莱夫。莱夫。莱夫。莱夫。莱夫。我身子稍微往前倾，一只脚伸出去，却定在原地。我感到黑暗穿过我的胸口，穿过奶牛；于是我开始追逐着黑暗，可是奶牛挡在前面，于是我停了下来，黑暗穿过她呻吟时发出的甜蜜气息，那满是草木味安详的气息。

“瓦达曼，叫你呢，瓦达曼。”

他走出畜栏。“你个鬼鬼祟祟的东西！你个鬼鬼祟祟的东西！”

他并没有反抗；最后一抹黑暗沙沙地流走。“什么？我什么也没做啊。”

“你个鬼鬼祟祟的东西！”我用手使劲摇他。也许我也没办法让双手停下来。我也不知道它们竟摇得这么猛烈。它们摇动了我们两个人，摇动着。

“我什么也没做，”他说，“我没有碰过它们。”

我的双手停了下来，可是仍抓着他不放。“那你在这儿干什么？我叫你的时候怎么不答应呢？”

“我什么也没有做。”

“那就回家去吃饭。”

他抽身回去。我抓着他。“你放开，让我自己走。”

“你在这下面干什么？你不会是来偷窥我的吧？”

“我没有。没有。你快放开我，我又不知道你在下面。你让我自己

走。”

我抓着他，弯下身看着他的脸，用眼神感受着它。眼看他就要哭了，我说：“快走，我把晚饭放在桌子上了，我挤完奶很快就回来。你最好在把饭吃光之前回去。我希望那畜生是跑回杰弗逊去了。”

“他害死了她。”他说着开始哭。

“嘘。”

“她又没有害过他，他却来害死她。”

“嘘。”他挣扎着。我抓着他，说：“嘘。”

“他害死了她。”奶牛在我们身后跟上来，还一边呻吟着。我又开始摇他。

“你快住口，马上住口。你这样肯定要弄出病来的，到时候就不能进城了。你快回去吃你的饭。”

“我不想吃饭。我不想进城。”

“那我们就把你留在这儿。你不听话，我们就把你留下。快去，不然那吃素的老饭桶要把你那份也吃光了。”于是他回去了，渐渐消失在山中。山尖、树木和房顶屹立在天空下。奶牛向我凑近，一边呻吟着。“你再等一会儿。尽管你也是母的，可是你奶子里面的可比不得我肚子里的。”于是她一边跟着我，一边呻吟。然后，那死气沉沉的、燥热而苍白的空气又吹上我的脸庞。如果他愿意，便能处理得非常好。可是他却不知道。他能为我做一切事——如果他知道就好了。奶牛在我的屁股和背后呼吸，她的气息温热而甜蜜，像打鼾一样，她还一边呻吟着。

天空平躺在斜坡上、在那秘密的树丛之上。山的那边，一片闪电腾起，又暗下来。死气沉沉的空气在这死气沉沉的黑暗里，勾勒出那死气沉沉的土地的形状，而不仅仅是观望它。它死死地压住我、温暖着我，并且穿透我的衣服，触碰着我的肉体。我说，你不知道发愁是什么。我也不知道那是什么。我不知道自己是不是在发愁。不知道能与不能。我不知道自己能不能哭出来。我也不知道自己是否试着发过愁。我感到自己就像一颗湿润的种子，在燥热而隐秘的土地上蠢蠢欲动。

瓦达曼

他们把那东西做好后，就要把她放进去，那样一来，我就很久都说不出那个词了。我看见那团黑影爬上来，又飞快旋着走开，我说：“你们要把她钉在里面吗，卡什，卡什，卡什？”我被困在食槽里，因为新修的门太重了，它关上后，我推也推不动，我在里面无法呼吸，因为耗子把所有的空气都吸走了。我说：“你要把她钉在里面吗？钉在里面？钉在里面？”

爹来回走着，他的影子也来回走着，它盖在卡什身上，卡什正上下拉着锯子，锯那该死的木板。

杜威·戴尔说，我们可以弄一些香蕉来。火车就停在玻璃窗外，它是红色的。火车跑过时，铁轨会一闪一闪地发光。爹说，面粉、糖和咖啡太贵了。因为我是一个乡下孩子，城里也有的是孩子。还有自行车。为什么对于我这个乡下孩子来说，面粉、糖和咖啡就太贵了呢？“不如买些香蕉吧？”香蕉也没有了，吃完了。没有了。火车开动的时候，铁轨又开始发光了。“为什么我不是城里的孩子呢，爹？”我说。我真该死。我可没让上帝把我安排在乡下。既然他能造火车，为什么不为了面

粉、糖和咖啡的缘故把他们都安排在城里呢。“要香蕉好吗？”

他来回走着。他的影子也来回走着。

那不是她。我就在那儿，看着呢。我看见了。我以为是她，可那并不是她。那不是我妈。她走了，躺在她床上、拉起被子的是另一个人。她已经走了。“她去了和城里一样远的地方吗？”“她去了比城里还远的地方。”“这些兔子和负鼠都去了比城里还远的地方吗？”是上帝造了这些兔子和负鼠。也是他造了火车。如果她就像兔子，那么他为什么要让它们去另外的地方呢。

爹来回走着。他的影子也来回走着。锯子好似沉睡一般发出声音。

这样一来，如果卡什将那匣子钉起来，她就不是兔子了。如果她不是兔子，我在食槽里都无法呼吸，那她在那匣子里也不能呼吸，卡什却还要把她钉在里面。

它不是她，因为它躺在那边的尘土里。如今它已经被宰碎了。是我把它宰碎的。它现在正躺在厨房里，在该死的煎锅里，等着被煮了来吃。这样一来，它不是她，而她才是她，而现在，它是它，她不是它。明天它就会被煮来吃了，她就会变成他、爹、卡什和杜威·戴尔，匣子里什么也没有，她就可以呼吸了。它还躺在那边的尘土里。我可以找到弗农。他就在那儿，他也看见了，我们两个人都看见了，它就是它，而它又将不是它。

塔尔

他把我们叫醒时已经快半夜了，那时，雨也开始下了。一场暴风

雨已经在酝酿，那是一个令人不安的夜晚；一个人喂饱家畜，回到家，吃过晚饭，躺在床上，这时，雨已经开始下了，而在这之前，什么事都有可能发生。皮博迪的马跑上来，身上冒着汗，它们拖着破损的马具，颈轭夹在下面那匹马的两腿之间。科拉说“是安迪·本德伦。她终于走了”。

“皮博迪可能给附近这一带的十几户人看病，”我说，“再说，你怎么就知道这是皮博迪的马？”

“难道不是吗？”她说，“你赶快起来。”

“干什么？”我说，“就算她真的走了，我们也得明天早上才能帮上忙。而且，这天肯定是要下暴风雨的。”

“那是我的职责，”她说，“你把马拉进来。”

可我不会照做。“因为，如果他们需要我们帮忙，就会派人来请我们。再说，你都不知道她是不是真的已经走了。”

“为什么，难道你不知道那是皮博迪的马吗？你敢说吗？好了，快起来。”可我还是不去。我发现，当人们需要某个人帮忙时，最好等到他们派人来请他。“那是我作为基督徒应尽的职责，”科拉说，“你要拦着我履行我的职责吗？”

“如果你想，你明天在那儿待一天都行。”我说。

当科拉叫醒我时，雨已经开始下了。我点上灯朝门口走去，灯光映在玻璃上，他可以看到我来开门，可即便是这样，他也没有停止敲门。他敲门的声音不大，而且很平稳，好像他敲着敲着就要睡着了，而我竟然没有注意到，他敲在门上的位置是那么低，直到我打开门，什么也没

看见。我把灯举高，水花溅在上面，科拉的声音从身后的大厅里传来：“谁呀，是弗农吗？”可是，一开始我什么也没看见，于是我把灯放低，往地下看。

他看上去就像一只落水的小狗，他穿着外套，没有戴帽子，他在泥浆中走了四英里，泥浆已溅到了他的膝盖处。“啊，天哪。”我说。

“是谁呀，弗农吗？”科拉说。

他看着我，脸中央一双眼睛又圆又黑，就像把一束光投在猫头鹰的脸上所见到的样子。“你还记得那条鱼吗？”他说。

“进屋来，”我说，“怎么啦？是你妈——”

“弗农。”科拉叫道。

他绕进来站在门后的黑暗中。风吹着雨打在灯上，发出嘶嘶的声音，以至于每一分钟我都在担心它会爆炸。“当时你也在，”他说，“你也看见了。”

这时，科拉走到了门口。“你快进来，别淋着。”她说着他拉进来，而他只是看着我。他看上去就像一只落水的小狗。“我就说嘛，”科拉说，“我就说有什么事发生吧。你快去拴马。”

“可他不是还没说——”我说。

他看着我，身上的雨滴落在地板上。“他会把地毯弄脏的，”科拉说，“你去拴马，我带他去厨房。”

可是他又退回去，身上滴着水，他用那双眼睛看着我，说：“你在

那儿，你看见它躺在那儿。卡什一定要把她钉在里面，它就躺在那边的地上。你见过的。你见过那东西在尘土里。我来这儿之前，雨势还没增大。我们本可以赶回去的。”

老实说，还真是吓着我了，即便我还什么也不知道。但科拉知道。“你快把那牲口拉进来，”她说，“他已经痛苦得神志不清了。”

老实说，还真是吓着我了。人时不时还是要想想。想想这世界的所有悲伤和痛苦；它们如何能像闪电一般，从四面八方袭来。我寻思着，一个人要对上帝坚信不疑，才能保护自己，尽管有时候，我觉得科拉太过谨慎，好像她要把其他人都挤下去，让自己挨近上帝。可是，一旦发生这样的事，我就觉得她是对的，你就得照着做，所以我觉得，有她这么一个一心向善的妻子，是我的造化，她也是这么说的。

一个人时不时也得想想。但是，不用老是去想什么才是好的。因为上帝是要他付诸实践，而不是花太多时间去思考，因为他的大脑就像一个机器零件，经不起太多折腾。最好是一切照旧，每天干同样的活儿，不让某一个部件超出负荷。我以前说过，现在又要说一遍，达尔的问题一直都存在：他一个人想得太多了。科拉说，他只是需要一个妻子来管管他，这一点没错。而每当我想到这里，我就会想，如果只有结婚才能帮助一个男人，那么他也没救了。可我想，科拉也是对的，她说上帝之所以创造女人，是因为在他看来，男人们不懂得为自己好。

我牵着马进来时，他们已经在厨房了。她在睡衣外边套上衣服，用围巾裹着头，用油布包着《圣经》和雨伞，他坐在一个倒放的桶上，桶扣在垫炉子的锌片上，是科拉给他放上去的，他身上的雨水滴落到地板上。“除了那条鱼，我从他嘴里什么也问不出来，”她说，“那是他的报应。我认为上帝把手伸向这个孩子，是对安斯·本德伦的报应和警告。”

“雨是我出门以后才开始下的，”他说，“那时我已经走了。已经在路上了。它就在尘土里。你也看见了。卡什一定要把她钉在里面，可你是看见了。”

我们到那儿时，雨已经下大了，他就坐在我们之间的凳子上，裹着科拉的围巾。他一句话也不说，只是坐在那儿，科拉把伞举在他的头顶。科拉时而也会停止唱诗，说：“那是安斯·本德伦的报应。希望能让他看清自己正走上罪孽之路。”然后，她又开始唱，他就坐在我们俩之间，身子稍微向前倾，好像骡子赶不上他似的。

“它就躺在那边，”他说，“可是我走以后，雨就下起来了。所以我就可以去把窗户打开，因为卡什还没有把她钉进去。”

当我们把最后一颗钉子钉好时，半夜已经过了很久，而当我回到家，把马牵出来，再回去睡觉时，天已经蒙蒙亮了，科拉的睡帽还放在枕边。即便那会儿，我仿佛仍可听到科拉在唱诗；可以感觉到那孩子就在我们中间，前倾着身子，好像骡子赶不上他似的；还可看到卡什拿着锯子上锯下锯；安斯像个稻草人一样站在那里，又如一条犍牛站在一个深及膝盖的池塘里，即便这时有路人抓起池塘的一边，把它掀翻，他也浑然不觉。

当我们钉好最后一颗钉子，把棺材抬进屋时，天已经快亮了，她就躺在床上，窗户打开着，雨又打在她的身上。这又是他打开的，他睡得死死的，科拉说他的脸看起来就像是被埋了不久、又被挖出的圣诞节面具。最后，他们终于把她装进棺材，钉好钉子。这一来，他就再也没法帮她打开窗户了。第二天早上，他们发现他卷起衣角躺在地上，像一头倒下的犍牛。棺材的顶上满是洞眼，卡什钻开最后一个洞，刚把他的新螺旋钻抽出来。当他们揭开棺盖的时候，发现有两个洞都钻到了她的脸

上。

如果说这是报应，也未免太过了。因为上帝要做的事还有很多。他注定要做那么多事。因为安斯·本德伦唯一的负担还是他自己。每当大家说他坏话的时候，我就在想，他或许并没有那么不堪，不然，他怎能容忍自己那么久呢。

这样的报应未免太过了。一点都不合适。因为他说过，让小孩子到我这里来¹，可即便如此，这样做也不合适。科拉说：“我为你生的孩子，是上帝派给我的。我临盆的时候既不害怕也不恐惧，因为我对上帝的信念非常坚定，这种信念鼓舞着我、支撑着我。即便你没有儿子，那也是上帝明智的裁决。我的生命曾经而且一直，是一本面向众生打开的书，因为我对上帝的信念坚定不移，所以我应该得到回报。”

我想她是对的。我想，如果说这个世界上有哪个人，能让他一动不动就改变或者消除他的意志，那么这个人就是科拉。我想，她还会把他的意志进行一些改动，不管他是如何驾驭这意志的。而且，我还认为，这意志经过她的一番改动，对人类是有好处的。无论如何，我们都得喜欢它。无论如何，我们的日子都得过下去。

¹《圣经·马太福音》，让小孩子到我这里来，不要禁止他们，因为在天国的，正是这样的人。——译者注

达尔

提灯就放在树桩上，它已经生了锈，油膏发出难闻的气味，灯罩也裂了缝，油烟从灯罩的一边往上冒。它将那微弱而沉闷的光投射到支架、木板和邻近的地上。木屑散落在黑暗的地面，像是软白漆随意涂抹

在黑色的油布上。木板就像又长又光滑的破布条，从黑暗中穿过，然后颠倒着出来。

卡什正朝着支架使劲，他来回移动着，举起木板又放下，发出咔嗒的回声，这声音在死气沉沉的空气中持续不断，好像我们是在一处看不见的井底将它们举起又扔下，它又总是戛然而止，好像任何动作都能让它们立刻停止回响。他又开始锯木了，他的手肘慢慢地拉动着，一道细微的火花沿着锯齿闪现，卡什每长拉一下锯子，火花就冒出来，上端的熄灭了，下端的又冒出来，这样一来，锯子就好像有六英尺长，它仿佛是从爹那衣衫褴褛、漫无目的影子里拉进拉出。“把那块木板递给我，”卡什说，“不，是另一块。”他放下锯子，走过来，捡起他说的那一块，那平展的木板发出一道长长的晃光，仿佛将爹扫到一边。

空气中有股硫黄的味道。它们的阴影投射在模糊不清的空气平面，就像映在墙上，那影子仿佛如空气一般，落下时并未飘远，只是凝结片刻，似乎在进行短暂的冥思。卡什继续干活，他的半个身子没入微弱的光线中，大腿和一只纤细如杆的胳膊在使力，接着，他的脸又滑入灯光中，那不知疲倦的手肘透露出一种专注而动态的平稳。天空之下，闪电如页，似在打瞌睡；树木原是一动不动，风吹过，所有的枝叶泛起来，好像瞬间就有了朝气。

天开始下雨了。第一阵猛烈、稀疏而匆忙的雨滴刷过叶丛和地面，发出一阵长叹，好像从那无法忍受的悬停中解脱出来。雨滴如子弹一般大，热烘烘的，像是刚从枪管里面射出；它们扫过提灯，发出邪恶的嘶嘶声。爹抬起头，耷拉着嘴巴，一圈黑色的鼻烟紧紧贴在他的牙龈根部；他那松弛的脸上带着惊讶的表情，他在这表情之下冥思，却又似乎在时间之外冥思，思考着那极大的愤恨。卡什看了看天，又看着灯。他手中的锯子并没有停下来，那迟延的锯齿上的流光也没有间断。

爹回屋去了。雨突然倾盆而下，没有雷声，也没有任何警示；爹被扫到走廊边上，顷刻间，卡什就已经全身湿透了。然而，锯子的动作仍然没有停下，好像它和胳膊受了一种宁静信念的驱使，雨对它们来说，只不过是意识的幻觉。过了一会儿，他放下锯子，走过去，弯身挡住了提灯，他的背倾斜着，透过淋湿的汗衫，可见他骨瘦如柴，好像突然被翻了个里朝外，露出瘦瘠的骨架，汗衫什么的都被翻了出来。

爹又出来了。这会儿，他穿上了朱尔的雨衣，手里还拿着杜威·戴尔的。卡什还蹲在提灯旁，他伸手从后面拿了四根棍子，将它们插在地上，然后从爹手里接过杜威·戴尔的雨衣，将它铺在棍子上，为提灯搭了一个篷。爹看着他。“我不知道你怎么办，”他说，“达尔把他的雨衣带走了。”

“就淋湿呗。”卡什说。他又拿起了锯子；它又开始上上下下，在那不慌不忙的、不透水的木板中进进出出，就像机油里的活塞；卡什浑身湿透了，骨瘦如柴的他似乎永远不知疲倦，他那单薄的身体好像小孩的身体或是老人的。爹看着他，一边眨着眼，雨水从他脸上滴落；他又带着那无声、沉郁却如同自我开罪般的愤恨看着天空，仿佛这一切都在他的预料之中；他时不时动弹一下，满脸憔悴，身上还滴着水。他捡起一块木板，或是一件工具，然后又把它放下。这时，弗农·塔尔也在那里，卡什穿着塔尔太太的雨衣，他和弗农正在找锯子。不一会儿，他们发现锯子就在爹的手上。

“你为什么不回屋去呢，别在这儿淋雨。”卡什说。爹看着他，雨珠从他脸上缓缓滴下。他的脸像是某个野蛮不羁的漫画家勾勒出来的，一副荒诞的模样，那是所有遭受丧亲之痛的人都会有的表情。“你进去吧，”卡什说，“我和弗农就能做好。”

爹看着他们。朱尔的衣服袖子对他来说太短了。雨水从他的脸上流过，慢慢地就像冷却的甘油。“我又不是不愿意为她淋雨。”他说。他又动起手来，弯下身去捡木板，捡起来，又小心地放下去，好像它们是玻璃一般。接着，他走到提灯前，拉扯着那撑起的雨衣，却不小心将它拉倒，这时，卡什走过去，重新搭好它。

“你回屋去吧。”卡什说着扶爹回屋，又拿着雨衣回来，把它折起来，放在遮住提灯的“篷子”里。弗农并没有停下来。他抬起头，还一边拉动着锯子。

“你早该这样做了，”他说，“你明知道会下雨。”

“他是头脑发热。”卡什说着看向木板。

“嗨，”弗农说，“不管怎么说，他都会出来。”

卡什眯眼看看木板。雨水从木板的侧面缓缓流下，一波接一波，密密实实。“我要刨一下它。”他说。

“那就要花更多时间了。”弗农说。卡什将木板侧放着；不一会儿，弗农看着他，然后把木板递给他。

弗农稳稳地按着木板，卡什小心翼翼地刨着板边，像宝石匠那样不厌其烦、丝丝入扣。塔尔太太来到走廊边上喊弗农：“你们还要做多久？”

弗农并没有抬头：“要不了多久，还有一些。”

她看着卡什在木板前弯下腰，他移动的时候，提灯发出浮胀而野蛮的光，在雨衣上溜滑。“你去牲口棚拿些木板，赶快做完，进屋来，”她

说，“不然，你们俩都会没命的。”可是，弗农却动也不动。“弗农。”她说。

“我们要不了多久了，”他说，“我们一会儿就做好了。”塔尔太太看了他们一会儿，然后又回到屋里。

“要是来不及，我们就去拿那些板子吧，”弗农说，“之后，我会帮你补上。”

卡什停下手中的刨子，顺着木板斜眼看去，还一边用手掌擦着木板。“再给我一块。”他说。

黎明将至，雨就停下了。可是，卡什在众人的目光中钉完最后一颗钉子，硬生生地站在那里，低头看着做好的棺材时，天还没有亮。他的脸在提灯中显得很平静，一副若有所思的样子；他的手以一种慎重而镇定、似乎下定决心一般的姿势慢慢拍打在被雨衣覆盖的大腿上。接着，他们四个——卡什、爹、弗农和皮博迪——用肩膀把棺材抬进屋。这棺材很轻，可他们却走得很慢；这棺材是空的，可他们却抬得小心翼翼；这棺材没有生命，可是他们边走边小声对话，好像它此刻是在轻睡，不久就会醒来。他们的脚步在黑暗的地板上笨拙地挪动，好像它们已经很久没有落地似的。

他们把棺材放在床边。皮博迪小声地说：“我们先吃点东西吧。天就快亮了。卡什呢？”

他又回到了支架那里，在那微暗的灯光中，他再一次弯下身，拿起他的工具，用抹布小心翼翼地把它们擦干净，然后将它们放进一个拴着皮带子的工具箱里。接着，他拿起工具箱、提灯和雨衣，回到屋里，他走上台阶，那朦胧的影子，映在东方苍白的天空下。

在一个陌生的屋子里，你必须放空自己，才能入睡。而在你放空自己睡下之前，你是什么呢。若你为了入睡而放空自己，其实你并没有真正放空。当你睡意正浓时，其实你根本没有这么困。我不知道我是谁，也不知道自己是否存在。朱尔知道他自己是谁，因为他不知道自己竟然不知道自己是否存在。他无法放空自己，无法入睡，因为他不是他，他成了不是自己的人。在没有灯光照及的墙外，我能听到雨打在我们的马车上，勾勒出马车的轮廓，车上的货物虽然还在，但是它们已不属于那些把它们伐倒锯下的人，不属于那些买下它们的人，当然，也不属于我们，只有风雨为尚未入眠的朱尔和我勾勒出它们的轮廓。因为睡眠不存在，雨和风也只是曾经存在，所以木材也是不存在的。而马车是存在的，因为如果马车曾经存在，那么安迪·本德伦将不会存在了。朱尔是存在的，所以安迪·本德伦一定存在。那么，我也就一定存在，不然我就不能放空自己，不能在陌生的屋子里入睡。而如果没有放空自己，那么我就是存在的。

曾经多少个雨夜，我躺在陌生的屋子里，想念着家乡。

卡什

我 把它们做成斜面相接的。这样一来钉子控制的面积就更大。

每一个接合面的面积就增大两倍。

雨水就得斜着渗进棺材。水在上面随意流动，横竖无阻。

屋子里的人有三分之二的时间都是直立的。因此，接合面和连接点都被做成垂直的。因为力是垂直作用的。

人们在床上的时候总是躺着的，因此，接合面和连接点都被做成水平的，因为力是水平作用的。

但是——

身体并不像枕木那样方正。

还有动物磁力的关系。

动物尸体的磁力，使得力斜向起作用，这样一来，棺材的接合面和连接点就被做成斜面相交。

从古老的坟墓你可以看出，地面往往是斜向塌陷的。

在天然形成的洞穴中，塌陷处都是在正中，力是垂直作用的。

因此，我把它做成斜面相交的。

这样做起来，就更加匀整了。

瓦达曼

我妈是一条鱼。

塔尔

我回到家，把皮博迪的牲口拴在马车背后，就已经十点了。他们已经把马车拉上来了，先是奎科发现马车底朝天横在离山泉一英里以外的水沟里。它是从山泉那边被拉到路上去的，差不多有十几辆马车在那里出过事。是奎科发现的。他说当时河水已经上涨，而且还不见停。他

还说河水已经漫过了河栏上他所见过的最高水线。“那座桥经不起这么大的水，”我说，“有没有人告诉安斯·本德伦？”

“我对他说过，”奎科说，“可是他说，他以为孩子们已经听说了，而且卸了货，这会儿正往回赶呢。他说他们可以装上棺材过桥的。”

“他得赶快把她埋在纽霍普，”阿姆斯蒂德说，“那座大桥年岁太久。我可不是瞎说。”

“他已经打定主意要送她去杰弗逊了。”奎科说。

“那他只好尽快赶去那里。”阿姆斯蒂德说。

安斯到门口迎接我们。他刮了胡子，可刮得并不好，下巴上拉了好长一道口子。他穿着星期天穿的裤子，还穿了一件白色汗衫，领圈扣得严严实实。汗衫贴在他的驼背上，显得驼背更大了，好像白色汗衫就有这样的作用，而他的脸上也带着与往常不同的表情。此刻，他看着大家的眼睛，一副庄严的模样，他脸上的表情悲伤而沉着。我们上了走廊，一边打整鞋，他走过来和我们握手，我们穿着星期天的衣服，动起来窸窣窸窣，有些不自在，他迎过来的时候，我们甚至都没有正眼看他。

“这是上帝的旨意。”我们说。

“上帝的旨意。”

那孩子并不在这儿。按皮博迪所说，他看见科拉在煮那条鱼，就对着她又喊又抓，于是杜威·戴尔只好把他关在牲口棚里。“我的牲口还好吗？”皮博迪说。

“好得很，”我对他说，“我今天早上喂过它饲料。你的马车也丝毫

无损。”

“不是谁在搞鬼吧，”他说，“我只想知道我的马儿挣脱的时候，那孩子在哪儿。”

“要是什么地方坏了，我帮你修好。”我说。

女人们去了屋里。我们听得见他们的谈话声和扇子的声音。扇子呼呼，呼呼，呼呼。只听得扇子的呼呼声，以及他们的谈话声，那声音就像蜜蜂在水桶里嗡嗡叫。男人们就留在走廊里，偶尔说几句话，也不互相看一眼。

“你好啊，弗农，”他们说，“你好啊，塔尔。”

“这天看上去还要下雨。”

“没错。”

“是啊，伙计。还要下雨。”

“这雨是说下就下。”

“去的时候又是慢吞吞的。准没错。”

我绕到屋子后面。卡什正在填补他在棺材上打的洞。他正在削木塞，一次削一个，可是木料已经打湿了，削起来也不方便。他本可以割开一个锡罐，把洞填上，这样也没有谁会发现什么。再说，没人会在意这个。我还曾见他花一个小时来削一块楔形塞子，好像是在雕刻玻璃似的，他本来可四处捡些棍子，把它们插进洞里，这样就行了。

干完活后，我就回到前边。男人们已经离屋子稍远一些了，他们坐

在木板的末端，有的坐在锯架上，昨晚我们就是在这上面做的棺材，我们有的坐在上面，有的蹲在地上。怀特菲尔德还没有来。

他们看着我。眼睛好似在询问。

“就快好了，”我说，“他就要把它钉上了。”

他们正要起身时，安斯来到门口，看着我们，于是我们又回到走廊上。我们又开始仔仔细细地打整鞋子，在门口磨磨蹭蹭，谁也不愿意先进去。安斯就站在门口，一副庄严而镇定的样子。他招手示意我们进去，然后自己走在前面。

每一个连接点和接合面都用刨子精心刨过，像鼓一样密实，像针线篮一样整洁。他们把她从头到脚放进去，这样一来，就不会把她的裙子弄皱。那是她结婚时穿的裙子，裙摆蓬开，他们把她从头到脚放进去，这样一来，她的裙子就能够展开。另外，他们还用蚊帐给她做了一块头纱，遮住她脸上的洞。

我们出去时，怀特菲尔德来了。他走进来，下半身全湿了，还沾满了泥浆。“上帝会安慰这一家人的，”他说，“我来迟了，因为桥被冲走了，我走到下面的浅滩，骑马蹚水过来的，多亏上帝保佑我。他的恩泽也会惠及这一家人的。”

我们又回到了放支架和木头节的地方，有的坐着，有的蹲下。

“我就知道它会被冲走。”阿姆斯特德说。

“那桥也有些年头了。”奎科说。

“你是说，是上帝让它在那儿的，”比利叔叔说，“据我所知，二十

五年来，没人动过一锤一凿去修理它。”

“它在那儿有多久了，比利叔叔？”奎科问道。

“是多少年修建的呢……让我想想……是1888年，”比利叔叔说，“我还记得那是生乔迪的时候，皮博迪来我家，他是第一个过桥的人。”

“要是你妻子每生产一次，我就过来一次，那这桥早就塌了，比利。”皮博迪说。

我们笑了，时而笑得很大声，突然又安静下来，稍微偏过脸互相看一眼。

“有多少走过这座桥的人，今后任何桥都过不了了。”豪斯顿说。

“没错，”里特约翰说，“就是这样。”

“他答应过她，”我说，“这是她的想法。她是从那儿来的。她已经打定主意要回那儿去。”

“安斯也打定主意了。”奎科说。

“唉，”比利叔叔说，“他就是这样一个人，一辈子放任自流地过日子，突然决定要做一件事，就会给所有认识的人带来大麻烦。”

“哎，现在只能让上帝带她过河了，”皮博迪说，“安斯可做不到。”

“我想他会的吧，”奎科说，“到目前为止，他已经照顾安斯好长一段时间了。”

“没错。”里特约翰说。

“依我看，他就像在座的各位一样，”比利叔叔说，“照顾他太久，到现在想放弃也难了。”

说到这儿，卡什出来了。他换上了一件干净的T恤；那淋湿的头发，搭在眉毛上方，梳得很顺溜，那头发又黑又顺，仿佛是他漆在头上的。他在我们中间动作僵硬地蹲下来。我们就看着他。

“你对这天气有反应，对吗？”阿姆斯特德说。

“骨头折断的人一般都会有反应，”里特约翰说，“骨折的人能预示天气。”

“幸好卡什只摔断了一条腿，”阿姆斯特德说，“不然他就得一辈子躺在床上了。你是从多高摔下来的，卡什？”

“大概二十八英尺四点五英寸高。”卡什说。我凑到他那边。

“人站在湿木板上一不留神就会滑倒。”奎科说。

“真是太糟糕了，”我说，“可是你又有什么办法呢。”

“都是那些没用的娘们儿，”他说，“我做得正合适，我是为她量身打造的。”

要是人们站在湿木板上就会滑倒，那么在这鬼天气过去之前，不知道还有多少人会滑倒呢。

“你也拿它没办法。”我说。

我才不关心人们是否滑倒。我关心的只有棉花和玉米。

皮博迪也不关心是否有人滑倒。对吧，医生？

没错。地面会被冲得干干净净。就好像免不了要发生什么事似的。

当然啰。正因为这样庄稼才值钱。要是没个三灾两难，每家人都大获丰收，你觉得种粮食还有意义吗？

罢了，可是，鬼才希望看到自己辛辛苦苦种出来的东西被大水冲走。

是啊。只有自己能够呼风唤雨的人才不在乎看着庄稼被水冲走。

那么，谁又能呼风唤雨呢？他眼珠子里哪儿还有颜色呢？

啊。是上帝让庄稼生长，也是他让它被水冲走。他什么时候觉得合适，就让大水把它冲走。

“你又有什么办法呢？”我说。

“都是那些没用的娘们儿。”他说。

女人们在屋子里唱歌。我们听到第一句歌声响起来，接着，等她们唱开来，歌声就开始变大，于是我们站起身，朝门口走去，我们摘下帽子，吐掉嘴里嚼的东西。可是，我们并没有走进去。我们在台阶上停了下来，发出笨重的脚步声，攥着帽子的手要么垂在身前，要么搭在背后。我们低着头，双脚一前一后地站着，不时左右看一眼，又或是看看手中的帽子，再看看脚下的土地，偶尔抬头看看天空，以及彼此那沉重而镇定的脸。

歌声结束了；那声音一路颤抖着，浑厚落幕。这时怀特菲尔德开始了。他的声音比他自己还大。就好像两者不是同一体。好像他是他，声音是声音，它们骑在两匹并排的马上，涉水而来，冲进屋子，其中一个溅了一身泥浆，而点水不沾的那一个摆出一副得意扬扬而又悲伤的样子。屋里有人开始哭了。那哭声听起来就好像她的眼睛和声音都被翻到里边去了，好像也在听着；这时我们开始动了，我们把重心转移到另外一只脚上，我们的眼神碰到一起，却假装什么也没看见。

怀特菲尔德最终停下来了。女人们又开始唱歌了。她们的声音好像是从这浓浊的空气中传来，循着悲伤而令人慰藉的调子，一起飘荡。它们停下来，却并未飘远，好像只是消失在空气中，只要我们一动，就能再次将它们从空气中解放出来，那悲伤而令人慰藉的曲调。等到她们唱完歌，我们就戴上帽子，我们的动作很僵硬，就好像之前从未戴过帽子似的。

回去的路上，科拉还在唱歌。“我正在靠近我的上帝和我的福报。”她坐在马车上唱着，肩上搭着披肩，尽管雨已经停了，可是她仍然把伞撑在头上。

“她总算得到福报了，”我说，“不管她去了哪里，只要摆脱了安斯·本德伦就算是福报了。”

她在那棺材里躺了三天，等着达尔和朱尔回家，拿着新轮子，再到马车出事的地方去。“用我的马车吧，安斯。”我说。

我们还是等自己的马车吧，他说。她是这么希望的。她总是个不一样的女人。

等到第三天，他们回来，把她装上马车出发了，可是已经太晚了。

你们得绕路去走萨姆森那座桥了。到那儿也要花一天时间，再说，那儿离杰弗逊还有四十英里。用我的马车吧，安斯。

我们还是等自己的马车吧。她是这么希望的。

我们在离房子大概一英里的地方看到他，他坐在一个泥塘的边上。据我所知，这泥塘里从来就没有过一条鱼。他扭头看我们，一双眼睛瞪得圆圆的，显得很镇静，脸上脏兮兮的，他将钓竿横放在膝盖上。这时科拉还在唱歌。

“今天可不是钓鱼的好天气，”我说，“你跟我们回家去，明天一早我带你去河边钓。”

“这里面有一条鱼，”他说，“杜威·戴尔看见过它。”

“你和我们一起回去。河里才是钓鱼的好去处。”

“它就在这里面，”他说，“杜威·戴尔看见过它。”

“我正在靠近我的上帝和我的福报。”科拉唱道。

达尔

“死的又不是你的马，朱尔。”我说。他坐在凳子上，身子稍微往前倾，背打得很直，就像木板一样。他的帽檐已经打湿，有两处从帽顶上垂下来，挡在他那木然的脸上，于是他低着头，穿过这两处往外看，就像透过头盔的帽舌往外看一样，他的眼睛越过山谷，远眺着悬崖下的牲口棚，眼眸里出现一匹看不见的马的轮廓。“看到它们了吗？”我说。它们悬在房子的上方，在那厚重的苍穹之下，就像一圈圈逐渐缩小的圆。从这里看，它们不过是一些既仇恨难平又百般隐忍的、不祥的黑

点。“可是，死的又不是你的马。”

“你这该死的，”他说，“你这该死的。”

我不能爱我妈，因为我没有妈。朱尔的妈妈是一匹马。

那只高大的兀鹰，一动不动地，以盘旋之态停留在空中，流云滚滚，它也仿佛在往后退似的。

他一动也不动，背就像木头一样，脸上也是一副木然的表情，他想象马儿也长了一个硬生生的驼背，像勾着翅膀的鹰一般。他们在等着我们，等着我们抬起棺材，等着他。他走进畜栏，等着它踢他，这样一来，他就能溜过去，上到食槽那里，然后停下来，通过畜栏顶端的缝隙窥看那空旷的小路，然后爬到放干草的阁楼上。

“他真该死。他真该死。”

卡什

“这样就不稳了。如果你想搬运它，还要稳住，那么我们就要——”

“抬起来。你这该死的，我叫你抬起来。”

“我跟你讲，这样不方便搬运，载着也不稳，除非——”

“抬起来！抬起来，你这该死的牛鼻子见鬼去啦，抬起来！”

可是，它不稳。他们要是想搬运它，还要稳住，就得——

达尔

他和我们一起在棺材旁边弯着腰，八只手里就有两只是他的。血潮一阵一阵涌上他的脸，每退去一阵，就露出他那铁青的脸，像奶牛反刍过的食物一样，光溜、厚实、青白；他的脸憋着气，一副愤愤的样子，嘴唇也咧开来。“抬起来！”他说，“抬起来，你这该死的牛鼻子鬼！”

他使劲往上举，突然把棺材的一头整个举起来，于是我们赶紧使力举起另一头，以保持平衡，免得他把它彻底掀翻。一开始，它好像有意志一般，抵抗了一会儿，好像她那纤细如杆的身体在里面拼命抓着，为了多少给自己留点尊严，她好像试图掩盖一件不得已弄脏的衣服，尽管她已经死了。不一会儿，棺材松动了，突然升起来，好像她那消瘦的身体给这木板增加了浮力，又好像她看到那件衣服就要被撕破，于是她倒转过来，突然冲出去，全然无视它本身的意愿和需要。朱尔的脸突然变得铁青，我还能听到他牙齿的声音。

我们将它搬出大厅，我们在地板上艰难而笨拙地拖着步子，穿过大门。

“稳住一分钟，快。”爹说着就放开了手。他转身去关了门，还上了锁，可是朱尔不愿意等。

“快，”他憋着气说，“快呀。”

我们小心地把棺材抬下石阶。我们慢慢地移动，使它保持平衡，好像那是极为珍贵的东西，我们转过脸，屏住鼻息，气流从齿间呼出。我们往下朝山坡走去。

“我们最好等一下，”卡什说，“我跟你说过它这会儿不稳。要走过

那山坡，我们还需要一个人手。”

“你松手就好了。”朱尔说。他可不愿意停下。卡什开始掉队了，晃晃悠悠地跟在后面，急促地呼吸着；过一会儿，他离我们就有一段距离了，朱尔一个人就将整个前端抬起来，走到倾斜的路段，它就开始滑向空中，就像雪橇在看不见的雪上滑行，一路顺畅地排着空气，还留下棺材的幻影。

“等等，朱尔。”我说，可是他才不愿意等。他现在几乎是在跑了，卡什被落在后边。这时候，对于我来说，我抬着的那一头，好像失去了重力，好像它是一根急着冲出去的稻草，漂浮在朱尔那愤怒而绝望的思潮之上。我甚至没有碰到它，他就扭过身，让它晃晃悠悠地越过他，再让它停下，将它送入车厢，然后顺势回头看着我，他的脸上充满了愤怒与绝望。

“你真该死。真该死。”

瓦达曼

我们正在进城的路上。杜威·戴尔说它不会被卖掉，因为它是属于圣诞老人的，他把它收回去，要到明年圣诞节才拿出来。那它又回到橱窗的玻璃后了，它发着光，等待着。

爹和卡什正在下山的路上，朱尔却去了牲口棚。“朱尔。”爹叫道。可是朱尔并没有停下。“你要去哪里？”爹说。可是朱尔并没有停下。“你就把那匹马留在这儿吧。”爹说。这时，朱尔停下来，看着爹。朱尔的眼睛看起来就像大理石。“就把那匹马留在这儿，”爹说，“我们全都坐马车和你妈一块儿去，就依她的。”

可是，我妈是一条鱼。弗农也见过的。当时，他就在那儿。

“朱尔的妈是一匹马。”达尔说。

“那我妈也是一条鱼，对吧达尔？”我说。

朱尔是我的哥哥。

“那我妈也是一匹马了。”我说。

“为什么？”达尔说，“如果爹是你的爹，那为什么朱尔的妈是一匹马，你的妈就必须是一匹马呢？”

“为什么？”我说，“为什么呀，达尔？”

达尔也是我的哥哥。

“那你妈又是什么呀，达尔？”我说。

“我没有妈，”达尔说，“就算有，也只是过去有。如果过去有，就不是现在有。不是吗？”

“是。”我说。

“那我就没有妈，”达尔说，“对吧？”

“不对。”我说。

我有。达尔又是我的哥哥。

“可是你有，达尔。”我说。

“我知道，”达尔说，“所以我并不是 现在有，如果 有 的话，一个女人怎么能生那么多孩子呢。”

卡什正搬着他的工具箱。爹看着他。“我回来的时候要在塔尔家停一下，”卡什说，“要把牲口棚的顶修好。”

“这可是不敬，”爹说，“这不是故意无视她和我吗？”

“你要他大老远走路到这儿，拿着工具，再去达尔家吗？”达尔说。爹看着达尔，他嘴里正嚼着什么东西。现在爹每天都会刮胡子，因为我妈是一条鱼。

“这可使不得。”爹说。

杜威·戴尔手里拿着一包东西。她还带着我们的晚餐篮子。

“那是什么？”爹问。

“是塔尔太太的蛋糕，”杜威·戴尔一边上马车一边说，“我要帮她带去城里。”

“那可使不得，”爹说，“那是对死者的不敬。”

它就在那儿。她说，圣诞节一到，它就在那儿，在轨道上闪闪发光。她说他是不会把它卖给城里的孩子的。

达尔

他一路朝牲口棚走去，走进谷仓，背挺得很直，就像木板一样。

杜威·戴尔将篮子挎在胳膊上，另一只手拿着什么东西，还用报纸包着。她的脸显得冷静而阴郁，她的眼睛哀伤又警觉；从她的眼睛里，我看到皮博迪的背影就如针箍里的两粒豌豆：或许皮博迪的背上有两条蠕虫，它们鬼鬼祟祟、从容不迫地穿过你的身体，再从前面出来，使你突然从睡梦中惊醒，或是本来醒着又被惊吓一阵，而你脸上的表情也变得急促而担忧。她将篮子放在马车上，自己也爬上去，她双脚从紧绷的裙子里长伸出来——那可是撬起地球的杠杆；是测量生命长宽的标尺。她坐在瓦达曼旁边的座位上，将包裹放在膝盖下。

接着，他走进牲口棚。他并没有回头看。

“那可使不得，”爹说，“他为她做这点事也不算什么吧。”

“走吧，”卡什说，“他不想去就让他留下吧。他在这儿也好。或许他会去塔尔家待着呢。”

“他会追上我们的，”我说，“他会抄近路，在塔尔家的那条路上和我们会合。”

“他还想骑那匹马呢，”爹说，“要是我不阻止他的话。那只长斑的畜生比流浪猫还野。那可是故意对你妈和我不敬。”

马车开始动了；骡子的耳朵也开始摆动。在我们身后，房子的上面，那兀鹰一动不动地高耸着，如一个个圆圈，逐渐缩小，然后消失不见。

安斯

我跟他说过，不要骑那匹马，那是对他死去的妈的不敬，这真是

不像话，他倒好，神气地骑在马戏团的畜生身上，可他妈希望我们全部血亲都和她一起待在马车里，可是，我们还没走到塔尔家的小路上，达尔就开始笑了。他和卡什一起坐在后边的板凳上，他在笑，而他死去的妈就躺在他脚边的棺材里。我都不知道跟他说过多少次，他这样做，会给人们留下话柄。我说我还是很在意人们对我的亲生骨肉说三道四，就算你不在乎，就算我养了这群不争气的孩子，你这样做，引得人们对你议论纷纷，这也会连带你妈的。我说，我倒无所谓，我是一个男人，我可受得了；你得顾及家里的女人们，你妈和你妹妹的感受。我转过头看着他，他就坐在那儿，笑着。

“我倒不指望你尊重我，”我说，“可是你的亲妈在棺材里，还没冷透呢。”

“看那边。”卡什说着猛然把头转向小路。那匹马离我们还有一段距离，它正一路向我们飞奔而来，不用问都知道马背上坐着的是谁。我只是回头看了看达尔，他还坐在那儿笑。

“我可是尽力了，”我说，“我尽力满足了她的心愿。上帝会理解我，并且宽恕孩子们的行为，这也是他赐予我的。”达尔就坐在她的棺材上方，笑个不停。

达尔

他匆匆走上小路，拐到路上时，泥浆在挥舞的马蹄下飞溅，那时，我们离路口只有三百码远。于是他稍微慢了下来，在马鞍上自在地挺着身板，马儿在泥泞路上不自在地踏步。

这时，塔尔在他家的院子里。他看见我们，就扬起手。我们继续朝

前走去，马车发出吱呀的声音，泥浆也在车轮下嗒嗒作响。弗农还站在那儿。朱尔骑马过去时，他看着他，那匹马抬高了腿，步伐轻快地踏过去，在我们后面三百码。我们也朝前走着，一路昏昏欲睡、如梦如幻，顾不上走了多远，仿佛在我们之间流逝的是时间，而不是空间。

小道峰回路转，上个星期天的车轮痕迹已经不见了。一条平缓的矿渣路蜿蜒地通向松林间；一张白色的路牌，上面的字迹已经脱落，却依稀可见：纽霍普教堂，三英里。马车一路跟进，像一只一动不动的手，高举在深寂的海洋之上；身后那条红色的道路宛若车轮的辐条，而安迪·本德伦就是那辐条的镶边。马车开过，一路轻快无阻，连车痕也未留下，那白色的路牌也转过来，不见了那脱落而安宁的字迹。卡什静静地看着路面，我们经过路牌时，他像鹰一样别过头，脸上的表情显得很镇定。爹佝着背，径直看向前方。杜威·戴尔也看了看路面，然后转头看我，她的眼神警惕又带着排斥，片刻也不曾有过卡什那般疑问的眼神。不一会儿，路牌不见了；马车开过，一路无痕。于是杜威·戴尔转过头。马车又开始吱呀作响。

卡什朝车轮外吐了一口痰。“再等两天就要发臭了。”他说。

“你该跟朱尔说。”我说。

此刻，他已经走到了会合路口，他坐在马背上，一动不动，背挺得很直，他看着我们，其镇定不输于那背对着他的路牌。

“棺材不稳，走不了长路。”卡什说。

“那告诉他啊。”我说。马车发出吱呀的声音。

马车行了一英里远，他走在了我们前面，马儿弓着身子，突然被缰

绳一扯，一只脚迅速提起来。他轻轻坐在马鞍上，表情镇定，背挺直，一副木然的样子，那破损的帽子斜向一方，摇摇欲坠。他一溜烟就超过了我们，也没有看我们一眼，马儿一路飞奔，马蹄在泥浆中嘶嘶作响。一块泥浆被马蹄带起，往后啪嗒一声打在棺材上。卡什身子向前倾，然后从工具箱里拿出一块物件，小心翼翼地刮去泥块。走到怀特里夫时，路旁的柳条垂落，他折下一枝，用柳条的湿叶子擦拭棺材上的污迹。

安斯

要在这里生存可不容易；这是个苦地方。他一路走过八英里，身上的汗全都流进上帝的土壤里，而这正是上帝的意思。在这个作孽的世界，辛苦干活的老实人哪儿还捞得到好处。在城里开店，也不用干出汗的活，哪儿还会流汗。辛苦干活的人——农民们可不能和他们比。有时候我也在想，我们为什么还要干活。或许因为在那儿我们就能得到补偿吧，城里人可不可能把汽车什么的都带去。在那里，每个人都是平等的，上帝会把有钱人的东西分给穷人。

可是，那不知道要等多久。一个人非得对自己和死去的亲人不敬才能获得做好事应有的回报，多可悲。我们一天都在赶路，黄昏时分到了萨姆森家，可是那座桥也被水冲走了。他们从没见过河水涨这么高，而且雨已经停了。就连老人们记忆中也见过，甚至没听说过涨这么大的水。我是上帝所选，他要对钟爱的子民予以鞭打。¹可是，见鬼，他的方式也太奇怪了，要我说。

不过，现在我可以安假牙了。这样或许能给我些许安慰吧。会的。

¹ 《圣经·希伯来书》第十二章第六节。——译者注

萨姆森

太阳就快落山了。我们坐在走廊上，马车载着他们五个从路的那边赶来，后面还跟着一个骑马的。他们当中，有一个人在挥手，可是他们一路穿过店铺，并没有停下来。

“那是谁呀？”麦卡勒姆说，我想不起他的名字了，是莱夫的双胞胎兄弟；就是其中一个。

“是本德伦，从下边纽霍普来的，”奎科说，“朱尔骑的是斯诺普斯卖出的马。”

“我不知道他们还剩了那样一匹马，”麦卡勒姆说，“我以为你们那儿的人最后会硬把它们弄走呢。”

“你倒是去骑一下那匹马看看。”奎科说。这时马车还在继续向前。

“我敢打赌，农老爹是不会把那匹马白给他的。”我说。

“当然不会，”奎科说，“他是从帕普那里买来的。”马车仍然继续向前开着。“他们一定是还没有听说桥被水冲走的事吧。”

“那他们上这边来干什么呢？”麦卡勒姆说。

“我想他是打算把妻子埋了以后，去度假吧，”奎科说，“看样子是要去城里，可是塔尔家那边的桥也没了。我在想，他们会不会还没有听说桥被冲垮的事啊。”

“那样一来，他们只好飞过去了，”我说，“从这儿到伊莎塔瓦河口，怕是没有别的桥了吧。”

马车上好像还装了什么东西。可是奎科三天前才去过葬礼，我们倒也没多想什么，只知道他们很晚才从家里出发，大概还没听说桥被冲垮的事。“你最好叫住他们。”麦卡勒姆说。见鬼，我都快叫出他的名字了。可是奎科却叫起来，于是他们停下了，他正朝马车那边走，要去告诉他们桥的事。

他带着他们回来了。“他们要去杰弗逊，”他说，“塔尔家那边的桥也被冲垮了。”他脸上的表情非常滑稽，尤其是鼻孔周围那一圈，就好像我们不知道似的。可是，他们就坐在那儿，本德伦，他的女儿，和那个小家伙坐在凳子上，卡什和老二，就是人们常常议论的那个儿子，坐在横搭在后挡板上的木块上，另一个儿子则骑在那匹长斑的马上。我想他们这会儿都已经习惯了，因为当我对卡什说他们得再绕回纽霍普，并告诉他最好怎样时，他只是回了一句：

“我想我们能到那儿。”

我并没有过多地干涉他们。各人走各人的路吧，我说。可是当我和拉奇尔说起他们时，才意识到他们当中没有一个合格的人来料理她，而且这又是在七月，等等。于是我下去牲口棚，试着和本德伦说说这事。

“我答应过她，”他说，“她已经打定主意了。”

这下我可是见识到了，一个讨厌行动的懒汉，一旦开始做某件事，是如何决心行动到底的，就像他决心不动那样，好像他讨厌的并不是行动本身，而是这行动的开始和结束。又好像，倘若发生什么事，让这开始和结束变得艰难，他倒是会乐颠一阵。他就坐在马车里，佝着背，眨着眼睛，听我们讲着桥如何一下子就被冲走，水涨得有多高，他听到这些后，得意得很，鬼才骗你，好像是他自己让水涨那么高似的。

“你说你从没见过水涨这么高？”他说，“可是，上帝的意愿总是要实现的。”“我看，到明天早上，水也不见得会消下去多少。”他说。

“你今晚最好待在这儿，”我说，“明天一早再去纽霍普。”我只是可怜那些骨瘦如柴的骡子。我对拉奇尔说：“外面那么黑，你该不会要把他们拒之门外吧，他们家离这儿还有八英里哟。我还能怎么做呢，”我说，“也就只有一个晚上，他们会把马车留在牲口棚，天一亮肯定就会走。”于是我说：“你们今晚就留在这儿吧，明天一早再回纽霍普去。我这儿也有的是工具，吃完晚饭后，孩子们如果想，就可动手挖坑。”这时，我发现那个女孩正看着我。如果她的眼睛是一把手枪，那我早就不在这儿说话了。她的眼睛在朝我喷火，骗你我就是条狗。我去牲口棚时，从他们身旁走过，我上去的时候，她正在说话，根本就没注意到我。

“你答应过她的，”她说，“要是你没有答应她，她也不会安心去。她以为自己可以信任你。你要是做不到，会遭天谴的。”

“谁说我不履行承诺啦，”本德伦说，“我心里对谁都没有鬼。”

“我才不管你心里怎样。”她说。她仿佛是在说悄悄话，语速也很快，“你答应过她，就得做到。你——”接下来，她看到了我，便没再说下去，就站在那儿。如果她的眼睛是手枪，那我早就不站在这儿说话了。所以，我和他说话时，他说：“我答应过她的。她已经打定主意了。”

“可是在我看来，她倒是宁愿把她妈埋在附近，这样她就可以——”

“我说的是安迪，”他说，“她已经打定主意了。”

于是我叫他把马车赶进牲口棚，因为看样子又要下雨了，晚饭也已

经准备好了。不过，他们还不愿意进来。

“我谢谢你，”本德伦说，“可是，我们不能给你添麻烦。我们篮子里带了点东西。可以应付一下。”

“可是，”我说，“你尊重你们家的女人，我也尊重我们家的女人。到了饭点，要是有人在我们家停下，却不上桌吃饭，我妻子就会以为这是看不起她。”

于是，那丫头就去厨房帮拉奇尔。接下来，朱尔也和我一起进了牲口棚。

“嗨，”我说，“阁楼上的干草尽管用。喂骡子的时候也喂喂你的马吧。”

“我宁愿付钱给你。”他说。

“付什么钱？”我说，“我可不会勉强别人喂马。”

“我倒宁愿付钱给你，”他说，“我想他说的是多出的。”

“多出的什么？”我说，“它不吃干草，还是不吃玉米？”

“就是多吃的粮草，”他说，“我要多喂它一些，而且我不想让它欠任何人。”

“我这儿可不卖粮草，孩子。”我说，“它要是把阁楼上的草都吃干净了，明天一早我把牲口棚里的给你装马车上。”

“它从来不欠任何人的，”他说，“我宁愿付钱给你。”

我想说，要是按照我的想法，你也不可能站在这儿。可是，我只是说：“那就从现在开始让它欠着吧。你从我这儿是买不到粮草的。”

拉奇尔把晚餐端上桌后，便和那丫头一起去铺床了。可是，他们谁也没有进来。“她已经死了这么长时间，该不会硬要我们守那些愚蠢的规矩吧。”我说。因为，她还活着的时候，我都很尊敬她，就算她死了，你们也该尊敬她啊，而对于一个已经在棺材里躺了四天的女人，对她最大的尊敬，就是尽快让她入土为安。可他们却不这么做。

“这可使不得，”本德伦说，“当然，要是孩子们想去睡觉，我就在这儿守着她。为了她，我这点苦还是能吃的。”

因此，当我回到那儿时，他们所有人围着马车蹲在地上。“要不，让那个小家伙进屋睡会儿吧。”我说。“你也最好进来。”我对那丫头说。我并不是要管他们的事，据我所知，我从没和她有过什么瓜葛。

“他已经睡着了。”本德伦说。他们把他放进一个空畜栏的食槽里。

“那你们就进来吧。”我对她说。可她还是一句话都不说。他们就那样蹲在原地。你几乎都看不清楚他们。“孩子们，你们呢？”我说，“明天还有一整天时间呢。”过了一会儿，卡什说：“谢谢你。不过，我们可以应付的。”

“我们不想欠人情，”本德伦说，“我真心地感谢你。”

于是我走开了，他们还蹲在那里。我想，都四天了，他们可能已经习惯了。可是拉奇尔不答应。

“真气人，”她说，“真气人。”

“他又有什么办法呢？”我说，“他都已经答应她了。”

“谁在说他？”她说，“谁会理他呀？”她哭着喊道，“你和他，和世界上所有的男人，你们在我们活着的时候折磨我们，死了又不尊重我们，还拖着我们在村子里到处走，我只希望——”

“好了，好了，”我说，“别生气了。”

“别碰我！”她说，“你别碰我！”

男人总是对她们无语。我和这个女人一起生活了十五年，可还是摸不透她。我也曾想象我们之间有很多问题，可是我怎么也没想到，问题会是因这个死了四天的女人的尸体而起。话说回来，她们可真能折腾自己，不像男人一样，能够逆来顺受。

于是我躺在床上，听着雨下起来，想着那边的他们，蹲在马车旁，雨水打在车篷上，想着拉奇尔还在那边哭，甚至于过了一会儿，她都已经睡着了，我似乎还能听到她的哭声，还能闻到她哭泣的气息，尽管我知道自己不可能闻到。我都分不清自己那个时候是不是能闻到，又或者，我并不只是知道能闻到就是能闻到。

所以，第二天早上，我并没有下去。我听到他们套马的声音，知道他们就要起程了，于是我走到前边，一路向桥的方向走去，然后我听到马车从院子里出来，朝纽霍普赶去。这以后，我回到家，拉奇尔就冲着我吼，怪我没留下他们吃早饭。你是永远都摸不透她们的。就算你刚开始认定她们是某个意思，到最后也会改变想法，搞得好像你根本没有鞭策自己去揣摩她们的意思似的。

可是，我好像还能闻到它。于是我认定并不是我真的闻到了它，而

是我知道它就在那儿，就像你时不时也会被捉弄一样。可是，当我走到牲口棚时，就不这么认为了。走到一半时，我就发现了什么。我进去的时候，它盘坐在那里，一开始我以为他们谁还没走，走近一看才发现，那是一只兀鹰。它四处看了看，一看见我就往过道那边去，它两腿叉开，翅膀外勾，一边走一边扭头看我，一会儿向左，一会儿向右，活像一个秃顶的老头儿。它走到门口，就飞了起来。空气浓浊，像是大雨漫天，它飞了好长时间，才飞进空中。

如果他们执意要去杰弗逊，我想他们已经绕过弗农山了，像麦卡勒姆一样。他骑马回来，大概后天就能到家了。这会儿，他们离城里还有十八英里。可或许这座桥也被冲走了，他才会明白这是上帝的旨意和对他的惩罚。

至于麦卡勒姆，他跟我一起做生意，断断续续也有十二年了。小时候我就认识他；我知道自己名字的时候，就知道他的名字了。可是见鬼，我却什么也说不出来。

杜威·戴尔

——一个路牌出现在我们的视线中。它此刻正看着大路，因为它等得起。上面写着：纽霍普，三英里。纽霍普，三英里。纽霍普，三英里。过了路牌，大路就蜿蜒进前面的树林，等也是白等，上面说，到纽霍普还有三英里。

我听说我妈死了。我希望我有时间等她死去。我希望我有时间去希望。只是因为在这片被激怒的蛮荒之地上，一切都太快太快太快了。不是我之前不希望，也不是现在不希望，只是一切都太快太快太快了。

现在，上面也写着了。纽霍普，三英里。纽霍普，三英里。人们所谓的时间的孕育过程，不过是骨骼扩张时的痛苦与绝望，是那硬邦邦的腰带箍住时间那被激怒的内脏。我们走近路牌时，卡什慢慢地扭着头，他那空洞而悲伤、镇定又充满疑问的脸，随着空旷的红色路面扭动；朱尔骑着马，在后轮旁边，眼睛直勾勾地盯着前方。

土地从达尔的眼睛里蔓延出来；它们找准了位置，汇成一点。它们从我的脚下，沿着我的身体，窜到我的脸上，接着，我的裙子不见了：我赤裸着坐在凳子上，在那不慌不忙的骡子上方，在那分娩的阵痛之上。假如我让他们掉头。他会照我的话做。你知道吗，他会照我说的做？我曾经一觉醒来，就感觉一片漆黑在身下快速流过。可是我看不见它。我只看见瓦达曼站起来，走到窗前，拿着刀子向那条鱼捅去，鲜血瞬间迸出来，像河水一样哗哗流动，可是我却看不见。他会照我说的做。他总是这样。我能说服他做任何事。你知道我可以的。假如我说在这儿掉头。那还是我上次死过去的事了。假如我说了。我们就会去纽霍普。我们就不用进城了。我站起来，从那哗哗流血的鱼身上拔出刀子，杀了达尔。

以前我常常和瓦达曼一起睡觉有一回我做了一场噩梦我以为自己醒了可是我看不见也感觉不到我感觉不到身下的床我想不起我是谁想不起我的名字甚至想不起来我是一个女孩我连想也不会想了我甚至想不到自己想要醒来也想不起与醒来相反的东西是什么要是我知道就可以那样做了可是我只知道什么东西穿了过去我甚至想不起时间我突然知道那是什么东西了那是风在朝着我吹好像那风要把我吹向它来的地方我并没有搅动风屋子和瓦达曼已经沉睡一切又回到我的身下就像一条清凉的绸带滑过我赤裸的双腿

凉风在松林间吹拂，风声均匀而悲伤。纽霍普，是三英里。是三英

里。我信仰上帝，我信仰上帝。

“我们为什么不去纽霍普，爹？”瓦达曼说，“萨姆森先生说我们要去那里，可是我们却走过了那条路。”

达尔说：“瞧呀，朱尔。”可是他并没有看我。他看着天空。那兀鹰一动不动，好像是被钉在那儿的。

我们转向了塔尔家的小路。我们经过了牲口棚，然后继续朝前走，车轮在泥浆里发出细碎的声音，我们穿过碧绿的棉田，弗农那小小的身影，在田间把着犁。我们经过时，他扬起手，站在那儿，看了我们好久。

“瞧呀，朱尔。”达尔说。朱尔坐在马背上，好像他和马儿都是木头做的，他的眼睛直勾勾地看向前方。

我信仰上帝，上帝。上帝，我信仰上帝。

塔尔

他们走过去后，我牵出骡子，挽好绳子，跟了上去。他们把马车停在桥头的土坡末端。安斯就坐在那儿，往桥的方向看，桥身已经落进河里，只能看见桥的两端。他看着桥，好像他一直都以为人们跟他说桥被水冲走是骗他的，又好像他一直希望这是真的。他看上去带着吃惊般的满意，他穿着星期天穿的裤子坐在马车里，嘴里还嘟哝着什么。看起来就像一匹没梳过毛却经过一番打扮的马——我也说不清。

那孩子看着桥身没入河中，原木漂浮在水面上，摇晃着，抖动着，好像这一切分分钟都有可能消失，他睁大了眼睛看着它，就好像在看马

戏表演。那丫头也往桥上看。我走上土坡时，她转头看着我，她的眼睛在喷火，忽而又变得冷硬，好像我要碰她似的。然后，她看了看安斯，又转头看着河水。

两岸的河水都涨得有土坡那么高，周围的土地都被水淹没了，除了我们所站的地方，它像桥的舌头一样伸出桥外，又没入水中。要不是知道大路和桥以前的样子，谁也分不清哪里是河，哪里是岸。周围是一片混乱的黄色，土坡还不及刀背那么宽，我们挤在土坡上，有的坐在马车里，有的骑在马上，有的坐在骡子上。

达尔正看着我，接着卡什也转过头来看着我，他眼里的表情就像那晚为他母亲测量木板时一样，仿佛他在心里进行着测量，并不让你发表意见，即便你说了什么，他也不会做出在听的样子，虽然他并没有不听。朱尔并没有动。他就骑在马上，身子稍微向前倾，脸上的表情就像他和达尔昨天回来接她、经过房子时的表情一样。

“如果只是涨水就好了，我们就能赶车过去，”安斯说，“我们就可以对准了赶车过去。”

偶尔会有一根原木被推出水面，漂浮着，然后开始翻滚，我们看见它一路折腾到原来的浅滩。它也会慢下来，然后反向打旋，戳出水面停留一会儿，这样你就可以看出原来的浅滩在什么地方。

“可那也说明不了什么，”我说，“也有可能是一堆流沙。”我们看着原木。接着，那丫头又看着我。

“怀特菲尔德先生都过去了。”她说。

“他是骑马过去的，”我说，“再说，那是三天以前了。那以后，河

水又涨了五英尺。”

“要只是涨水就好了。”安斯说。

那原木又冒出来，然后往前漂去。河里有许多垃圾和泡沫，你还能听到水声。

“可是它被淹了。”安斯说。

卡什说：“小心一点，还是可以坐在木板和原木上过去。”

“可是你就别想搬东西了，”我说，“很可能，你刚踏上去，它就沉了。你怎么看，达尔？”

他正看着我。可是他什么也没有说；只是用那惹人纷议的奇怪眼神看着我。我总说，别人议论他，倒不是因为他做了什么事或者说了什么话，而是因为他看人的眼神。从某种程度上说，他就像要钻进你的心里。好像你从他的眼睛里看到了你自己和你的所作所为。然后，我能感觉到那丫头看着我就好像我要碰她似的。她对安斯说着什么。“……怀特菲尔德先生……”她说。

“我当着上帝的面答应过她，”安斯说，“依我看，没什么可担心的。”

可他还是没有驱赶骡子。我们就那样停在水上。又一根原木冒出来，向前漂去；我们看着它在原来的浅滩上左右折腾一阵，然后慢慢摇晃一会儿。接着，它又漂出去。

“今晚又要下雨了，”我说，“如果不走，你们又要多耽搁一天。”

这时，朱尔在马上侧过身。之前，他一点都没动过，这会儿他转过身看着我。他的脸色一阵青一阵红。“滚回去犁你的田吧，”他说，“谁他妈叫你跟着我们的？”

“我可没有坏心眼。”我说。

“闭嘴，朱尔。”卡什说。于是朱尔又看着水面，脸上一副咬牙切齿的表情，脸色一阵青一阵红。“那好，”过了一会儿，卡什说，“你想干什么？”

安斯一句话也不说。他佝着背坐在那儿，嘴里咕哝着什么。“如果只是涨水就好了，我们可以赶车过去。”他说。

“走吧。”朱尔说着赶起了马。

“等等。”卡什说。他看着被淹没的桥。我们都看着他，除了安斯和那丫头。他俩看着水面。“杜威·戴尔和瓦达曼，还有爹最好从桥上走着过去。”卡什说。

“弗农可以帮帮他们，”朱尔说，“我们还可以把他的骡子拴在我们的马车前面。”

“你别想让我的骡子下水。”我说。

这时，朱尔看着我。他的眼睛就像盘子的碎片，“用了你那该死的骡子，我会付钱给你。我现在就可以把它买下来。”

“我的骡子可不会下水。”我说。

“朱尔都用上他的马了，”达尔说，“你为什么就不能冒险用一下你

的骡子呢，弗农？”

“闭嘴，达尔，”卡什说，“你和朱尔都闭嘴。”

“我可不会让我的骡子下到那水里去。”我说。

达尔

他骑在马上，瞪眼看着弗农，那张消瘦的脸上，怒气涨到甚至越过了他那暗淡僵硬的眼睛。十五岁那年的夏天，睡魔找上了他。一天早上，我去牛棚喂骡子和奶牛的时候，就听到爹回屋去叫他。我们回家吃早饭时，他从我们身边走过，提着奶桶，一路跌跌撞撞地走着，就像喝醉了酒一样，当我们给骡子套上犁，准备牵到田里去时，他还在挤奶，于是我们没有等他。我们都去了一个多小时，他还没有来。杜威·戴尔给我们送午饭来的时候，爹叫她回去找朱尔。他们回去，看见他还在牛棚里，他坐在凳子上，睡着了。

从那以后，每天早上爹都会进去把他叫起来。他在饭桌上也能睡着，而且一吃完饭就上床睡觉，我上床去的时候，他已经睡得像死人一样了。然而，爹每天早上还是得去叫他起床。爹去叫他，他倒是起来了，可却好像一大半魂儿都丢掉了似的——任凭爹怎么唠叨和抱怨，他一句话也不说，拿起奶桶就往牲口棚去。有一次，我发现他在奶牛旁边睡着了，奶桶放在地上，装了半桶牛奶，他的手从手腕以下都泡在牛奶里，他的脑袋还搭在奶牛的侧腹上。

从那以后，挤牛奶的事就交给杜威·戴尔了。爹去叫他的时候，他也还是起来，我们叫他做什么他也还是昏昏沉沉地去做。好像他已经尽力去做了一样；又好像他和大家一样都不知所以。

“你生病了吗？”妈说，“你没事吧？”

“没事，”朱尔说，“我没事。”

“他就是懒，存心跟我过不去呢。”爹说。而朱尔就站在那儿，好像站着都睡着了。“是不是？”爹又把朱尔叫醒。

“不是。”朱尔说。

“你把衣服换了，今天就待在家里吧。”妈说。

“还有一整块地没打整出来，你就不去了？”爹说，“你说你没病，那是怎么回事？”

“没什么，”朱尔说，“我没事。”

“没事？”爹说，“你这会儿站着都能睡着。”

“没有，”朱尔说，“我没事。”

“我今天想让他待在家。”妈说。

“我需要他帮忙，”爹说，“就算我们所有人都去干活，人手也不怎么够。”

“那你和卡什和达尔能干多少就干多少吧，”妈说，“我今天想让他待在家里。”

可是他不听。“我没事。”他说着跟我们一起出了门。可是，他并不是什么事也没有。大家都看见的。他在掉肉呢，一点点瘦下去，我还看见他锄着锄着就睡着了；我看着他手中的锄头一上一下，越来越慢，挥

舞的弧度也越来越小，最终停下来，他则顶着火热的太阳，一动不动地靠在锄头上。

妈想去请医生，可是，不到万不得已的时候，爹舍不得花钱，而朱尔呢，除了日渐消瘦、随时随地都能睡着外，其他也没什么大碍。他吃得可真多，只是，他对着盘子也能睡着，那时他还拿着一块面包，正要送到嘴边，嘴里还在嚼动。都这样了，他还说自己没事。

是妈让杜威·戴尔去挤牛奶的，多少给她一些钱，至于朱尔在晚饭之前要做的其他事，她也想方设法让杜威·戴尔和瓦达曼做了。爹不在场的时候，她还会自己动手。那也是我第一次发现，安迪·本德伦还会遮掩她做过的事，她可是一直教导我们，欺骗罪大恶极，以至于在欺骗的世界里，无所谓好坏轻重，贫穷更不值一提。有好几次，我上床睡觉的时候，都看见她坐在朱尔的旁边，在黑暗中，朱尔则在床上睡着了。我也知道，她讨厌欺骗别人，他也讨厌朱尔，因为她爱他，所以不得不为了他去欺骗别人。

一天晚上，她身体不舒服，我去牲口棚套好马，准备赶车去塔尔家，可是，却没找着灯。我记得昨天晚上还看见它挂在钉子上的，现在已经半夜了，它却不在这儿。于是我摸着黑把马拴好，就这样出发，天刚亮，我就把塔尔太太接过来了。这时，我发现灯又挂在钉子上了，我记得它是挂在那里的，可昨晚却不在。接下来，一天早上，我看见朱尔从牲口棚后面墙上的洞里钻进来，手里提着灯。

我把这事儿告诉了卡什，卡什和我相互看了一眼。

“发情了。”卡什说。

“是吧，”我说，“可是他为什么要提着灯呢？而且每天晚上都去。

难怪他会掉肉了。要不你找他说说？”

“说了也没什么好处。”卡什说。

“可他这样做也没什么好处啊。”

“我知道。可要他自己明白才行。我们就省省，给他点时间，让他自己去发现，将来的路还长，他会没事的。我谁也不会说的。”

“没错，”我说，“我已经叫杜威·戴尔别说出去了。不管怎么样，都别告诉妈。”

“嗯，不告诉妈。”

自那以后，我发现这事儿很搞笑：他整天一副迷迷糊糊、昏昏欲睡的样子，好像做什么都心甘情愿似的，瘦得像根竹竿，还以为自己干得多好。我就是在想那个女孩是谁。我把有可能的人都想了个遍，仍然没个结果。

“或许不是女孩，”卡什说，“是哪里的已婚女人呢。年轻女孩可没那么大胆子，也没耐性。这正是我不喜欢的地方。”

“为什么？”我说，“对他来说，已婚女人可比年轻女孩安全，她们更能拿主意。”

他看着我，眼光飘忽不定，他说的话也零零散散：“对于世界上安全的东西，人们往往——”

“你是说，安全的东西往往并不是最好的？”

“是啊，最好的，”他说着眼神又开始飘忽不定，“那不是最好的

事，对于他那么一个年轻的小子来说，好的事……人总是讨厌看到……陷入别人的泥潭……”那就是他想说的。当出现某些新鲜耀眼的事物时，它所处的状态，就不应该仅仅是安全而已，因为安全的事，人们已经做了这么久，可是，那些老掉牙的行为，却无法让人称之为空前绝后。

所以，我们并没有说出去，哪怕过了一会儿后，他突然就出现在我们旁边的田里，开始干活，连回家的时间都没有，也不装出整晚都在的样子。他还要跟妈说他早上不饿，或是去牵牲口时已经吃过一块面包了。可是，我和卡什都知道，那些晚上，他根本就不在，而且我们到田里时，他就会从林子里出来。可是，我们并没有说出去。等到夏天差不多快完了；我们知道，夜开始凉了，她撑得住才怪哩。

可是，秋天到来，夜开始变长时，唯一的不同就是，他总是在床上等着爹去叫他，然后在最初那种半愚蠢的状态下起床来，和最开始一样，而且状态比熬夜还糟糕。

“她可真能撑，”我对卡什说，“以前我还只是佩服她，可现在我是佩服得五体投地。”

“不是女的。”他说。

“你知道啊。”我说。而他则看着我。“那是什么？”

“我正要去探一探。”他说。

“你要是愿意，就整晚跟着他到林子里去呗，”我说，“我可不去。”

“我才不是跟踪他。”他说。

“那你怎么办？”

“我不是要跟踪他，”他说，“不是那个意思。”

在那之后，又过了几个晚上，一天，我听到朱尔起床，爬到窗子边，接着卡什也起来，跟着他。第二天，我走到牲口棚时，卡什已经在那里了，他已经喂了骡子，在帮杜威·戴尔挤奶。我看到他的时候，就明白他已经知道了。我时不时发现他用奇怪的眼神看着朱尔，好像他知道朱尔去了哪里、干了什么，让他不能理解似的。不过，他的表情并不是担忧；他在家干着朱尔的活，可是爹却以为是朱尔在干，而妈则以为是杜威·戴尔在干时，他也是这样的表情。于是，我什么也没问，我相信等他心里想通了，就会告诉我。可是他却一直没有告诉我。

一天早上——当时已是十一月，从一开始已经有五个月了——朱尔没在床上，也没有和我们一起去看田里。那也是妈第一次觉察到不对劲。于是她叫瓦达曼去找朱尔，过了一会儿，她也去找。好像，任凭欺骗行为这样悄无声息地进行，我们所有人要么是不知不觉被欺骗，要么就是由于怯懦，因为所有人都是胆小鬼，他们从本质上宁愿被欺骗，因为欺骗本身有一个温柔的外表。可是如今好像我们所有人一面对害怕时有一种心有灵犀——像掀被子一样将这一切揭开，而我们都赤裸着站在那里，相互对看着，说：“这就是真相。他没有回家。他肯定是出了什么事。我们没看好他，让他出事了。”

过了一会儿，我们看见他了。他骑着马从水沟那边过来，一转身穿过田野。它的鬃毛和尾巴随之摆动，好像这一摇一摆是在炫耀身上的花斑；他看上去就像架在一个巨大的纸风车上，马背上也没有马鞍，他只拿了一根绳子充当缰绳，头上也没戴帽子。那是弗雷姆·斯诺普斯于二十五年前从得克萨斯带回来的矮种马的后代，他当时以两美元一头的价

格卖出，如今只有老朗·奎科将那马带回了家，现在还留有一些血统，因为他不得转手。

他策马飞驰而来，在我们面前刹住，他的脚跟搭在马肋上，那马跳动着，打着转，好像它的鬃毛和尾巴，以及身上的花斑都与它体内的骨肉无关，而他只是站在那儿，看着我们。

“你从哪儿得来的那匹马？”爹说。

“买的，”朱尔说，“从奎科那里买来的。”

“买来的？”爹说，“用什么买的？以我的名义赊来的吗？”

“是我的钱，”朱尔说，“我自己赚的。你不用担心。”

“朱尔，”妈说，“朱尔。”

“没错，”卡什说，“是他自己赚的钱。他把奎科于去春划出来的四十亩新地打整出来了。他晚上一个人打着灯干完的。所以，我知道那匹马没花任何人一分钱，全都是朱尔一手得来的。我想我们用不着担心。”

“朱尔，”妈说，“朱尔——”接着她又说：“你回家去睡会儿觉。”

“先不忙，”朱尔说，“我来不及了。我还要去找马鞍和缰绳。奎科先生说他——”

“朱尔，”妈看着他说，“我要给……给……给……”接着她开始哭。她哭得很伤心，也不遮住脸，就站在那儿，穿一身褪色的外衣，看着他。他则骑在马上，俯看着她，他的脸色渐渐变得冷漠，看上去略呈病

态，他突然迅速别开脸，这时卡什走过来，伸手碰了碰她。

“你回家去吧，”卡什说，“这田里太湿了，不适合你待。你快回去。”她把双手放在脸上，跟着犁田的痕迹，一路摇摇晃晃地往回走。可是很快，她又打直了身子，朝前走去。她并没有回头看，走到水沟那里时，她停下来，叫着瓦达曼的名字。那时，他正看着马，好像在跟着马的节奏跳上跳下。

“让我骑一下，朱尔。”他说，“让我骑一下，朱尔。”

朱尔看着他，然后又移开了视线，还一边把缰绳往后拉。爹看着他，嘴里嘀咕着什么。

“这么说，你买了一匹马，”他说，“你背着我买了一匹马。你从来没跟我商量过；你明知道我们人手有多紧，还要买匹马来让我喂。你付出血汗，就为了买一匹马。”

朱尔看着爹，他的脸比任何时候都要苍白。“它绝不会吃你一口东西，”他说，“一口都不会吃。它要吃，我会先杀了它。你就别担心了。根本不用担心。”

“让我骑一下，朱尔。”瓦达曼说，“让我骑一下，朱尔。”他的声音就像草丛里的一只小蚰蚰儿，一只小小的蚰蚰儿。“让我骑一下，朱尔。”

那晚，我发现妈坐在他的旁边，在黑暗中，而他，在床上睡着。她哭得很伤心，也许是因为她只能这样无声地哭泣；也许，她此刻的感受，就像自己骗了人那样，她讨厌骗人，也讨厌他，因为她不得不为了他骗人。接下来我就知道了我所知道的事情。就像在那个一样平常的日

子，我知道了杜威·戴尔的事情一样。

塔尔

他们最后还是让安斯说出了他的想法，他和那丫头，和那孩子也走下了马车。可是，我已经在桥上时，安斯还不住地往回看，好像他以为自己一旦走下马车，所有的事就会爆发，他发现自己又在那边的土地上了，而她也还躺在屋里，等着死去，一切又会重新来过。

“你该让他们用你的骡子。”他说。而此时，在我们脚下摇摇晃晃的桥，没入那骚动的河水里，好像直接穿过了地球的另一端，而桥的这一端则从水中伸出去，好像它们根本就不是同一座桥，而他们从没入水中的那一端走上来，就像是从地底走来。但它们却是一个整体；你判断的依据是，当这一端摇晃的时候，另一端却丝毫不动：就像其他的树和对面的堤岸慢慢地前后荡动，像一个大钟的钟摆。那些原木在沉没的那一段星星点点、跌跌撞撞，一头翘起，直接冲出水面，然后朝浅滩翻滚去，等待着、灵巧地旋转着，起了泡沫。

“那样做有什么用呢？”我说，“要是你的马不能找到浅滩，奔过去，三头骡子，哪怕是十头骡子又有什么用呢？”

“我不是要你这样做，”他说，“我一直都能照顾好自己和家人。我不是要让你的骡子去冒险。又不是你家死了人，我也没有怪你。”

“他们应该返回去，等一下，明天再走。”我说。河水冰凉冰凉的。水流之大，就像融化的碎冰。只是，看起来就像有生命一般。你心里的一部分知道那不过就是水，就是那长期以来从这座桥下流过的东西，可是，当那些原木喷上水面，你也不觉惊讶，好像它们也是水的一部分，

等待着，威胁着。

好像令我感到惊讶的，反而是我们能走出水面，再次踏上坚实的陆地。好像我们没料到桥会通向对岸，会通向我们以前涉足且熟知的，那如坚实大地一般温顺的东西。好像站在这儿的并不是我，因为我不笨到去做刚才做的事。当我回头看对岸时，我看到我的骡子站在我之前站立的地方，我想我得想方设法再过去一趟，但我知道那不可能，因为我想不起有什么能让我再次走过那座桥。然而，我站在这儿，而那个能让自己两次走过那座桥的人不是我，即便是科拉的命令，也没有用。

那个男孩。我说“这儿，你最好抓紧我的手”。于是，他等了一会儿，抓住了我的手。好像他是专程回来接我的，不是这样才怪；好像他在说，什么也不能伤害你。好像他在说着一个好地方，在那里，一年有两个圣诞节，从感恩节一直过到冬天，再到春天，再到夏天，好像只要我和他待在一起，就什么事也没有似的。

当我回头看我的骡子时，它就好像一副小望远镜，我看到它站在那儿，就好像看到那一整片广阔的土地和我挥汗如雨建起的房子，仿佛流的汗水越多，那片土地就越广阔；流的汗越多，房子就越牢固，因为牢固的房子才能留住科拉，留住科拉，就好像在泉水里放一壶牛奶：你要么有一个牢固的壶，要么有一口水源充沛的泉，所以，你既有了一个大的泉眼，为什么还想要一个牢固而精美的壶呢，因为那就是你的牛奶，不管它是否发酸，因为你宁愿要会发酸的牛奶，也不愿要不会发酸的牛奶，因为你是一个男人。

他就抓着我的手，他的手炙热而沉着，因此我很想说：看这儿。你看见那边的骡子了吗？它到这儿也没什么用，所以它没有过来，倒不是因为它只是一只骡子。因为一个人时不时会发现，小孩子比他们更有领

悟力，可是，直到他们长胡子之前，他都不会向他们承认这点。他们长出胡子后，就变得很忙，因为他们不知道自己是否还能回到长胡子之前那个有领悟力的时候，于是你也不在乎向人们承认，你自己正在担心着一些不值得担心的东西。

接下来，我们过了河，我们就站在那儿，看着卡什掉转马车。我们看着他们沿路往回走去，眼看他们就要转到路的尽头。过了一会儿，马车看不见了。

“我们最好下到浅滩那里，准备帮他们一把。”我说。

“我答应过她的，”安斯说，“那是神圣的诺言。我知道你不愿意，可是，她在天上会保佑你的。”

“在转弯，”他说，“转弯的时候可碰不上什么好运气。”

他就站在那儿，佝着背，嘴里嘟哝着什么，他看着摇晃的桥面之外那空旷的道路。那丫头也站在那里，一只手挎着午饭篮子，一只手挎着包裹。是要进城了。一定要去。他们跋山涉水、赴汤蹈火，只为了吃一麻袋香蕉。“你应该多留一天再走，”我说，“到明天早上，河水会消退一些。今晚不会下雨，河水也不会再涨高。”

“我答应过她的，”他说，“她可是盼着呢。”

达尔

我们的面前，浊流滚滚。汨汨之声，仿佛在往上与我们对话，那声音永无休止、千变万化，黄色水面向下凹陷，形成颜色稍浅的巨大漩涡，那漩涡在水面转流一阵，悄无声息、短暂而意味深远，好像这表面

之下有什么庞然大物从慵懒而又警觉的轻睡中苏醒片刻，后又睡去。

河水在辐条之间、在骡子的膝盖上下汨汨有声，黄色的水面泛起浮渣，还有大团夹杂着泥土的泡沫，好像被驱赶的马儿在出汗。河水流过矮树丛，发出阵阵哀怨声，那是沉思的声音；从缠绕中松开的藤条和树苗斜立在水中，仿佛一阵微风吹过，它们便左右摇摆，却没有倒影，好像是从头顶的树枝上，通过看不见的线，攀爬而下。它们立在那无边无际的水面上一树、藤茎、藤蔓——它们与土地分离，无根可依，像鬼魅一般，飘荡在极大而又有限的凄凉之上，是河水那荒芜而凄切的声音营造了这番凄凉的意境。

卡什和我坐在马车里。朱尔骑在马上，在马车的后轮旁边。马儿在发抖，它的眼睛转得飞快，那红色的长脸也变成了浅蓝色，它喘着气呼吸，像是在呻吟。他挺直背坐在那里，一动不动，看上去安静又沉着。接着，他左看看右看看，表情镇定而警觉，脸色略显苍白。卡什的脸色也是严肃而镇定。他和我相互久久地看一眼，像是在探寻着什么，我们的眼神直入对方眼帘，并通过它们穿到一个终极密地，片刻之间，卡什和达尔就明目张胆、满不在乎地蹲在了那里，周围弥漫着原先的恐惧和对不祥之兆的预知，他们警觉、神秘，而且不知羞愧。我们开口说话，可是却没有声音，我们的声音都被散去了。

“我们还没走到尽头，是吧？”

“塔尔砍倒了那两棵白橡树。我听说以前涨大水的时候，他们就用这白橡树来判断浅滩的位置。”

“我想他是两年前在这儿将它们砍倒的。我想他是以为再没有人会从这浅滩过河了。”

“我想也是。没错，就是那个时候。他从这里砍了木材，我还听说他用卖的钱还清了抵押债呢。”

“就是，就是，我也是这么想的。而且我觉得弗农也干过。”

“没错。在这里砍树的人，大多数都是需要一个得力的农场来支撑起锯木厂。或者是一个店铺。我觉得弗农肯定干过。”

“我想也是。他可是有的看。”

“唉。弗农是有的看。对，路肯定还在这儿。他要是没把那条老路打整好，是不可能把木材运出去的。我想我们还在那条路上。”他安静地四处看了看，看着树的位置，这边偏一下，又偏向那边，他沿着那条没有面的路往回看，只能凭借被砍倒的树的位置，在水面以上，依稀划出路的轮廓，好像这条路也脱离了地面，泡在水中，又浮出水面，要在那鬼魅般的景象中留下遗迹，以营造比我们所站的地方更加凄凉的意境，我们则站在这里谈论着昔日的安全问题和大小琐事。朱尔看看他，然后又看看我，他脸上的表情转为安静的询问，因为当前的情形让他手足无措，与此同时，那匹马在他的两腿下安静地发抖。

“他应该慢慢朝前面走，凭感觉，把路找出来。”

“是啊。”卡什也不看我，应声道。他朝前看着朱尔一点点向前移动，我只能看到他的侧脸。

“他不会分不清河与路的，”我说，“只要他往前看五十码，就能分清。”

卡什并不看我，只留下一个侧脸。“要是我早料到，上周就会到这儿看看了。”

“那时桥还在。”我说。他也不看我。“怀特菲尔德那时还骑马过去了。”

朱尔又看了看我们，他的表情冷峻、警觉而又顺从。他的声音很平静，他说：“你们说我该怎么做呢？”

“我上个星期真应该来看看。”卡什说。

“那时我们也不知道啊，”我说，“再说，我们也没法知道。”

“我骑马走在前面，”朱尔说，“你跟着我走就是了。”他说着扯起马儿。马儿往后缩了一下，弓着身；他往马儿身上靠，对它说了些什么，几乎是用自己的身体又将它提起，它则小心翼翼地踏进水里，水花轻溅，它全身打战，呼吸困难。他对它小声说着什么。“走啊，”他说，“我不会让你受到伤害的。快走。”

“朱尔。”卡什说。朱尔并没有回头看。他又提着马往前走。

“他会游泳。”我说，“要是他给那匹马一点时间，不管怎么说……”他刚出生后的那一段日子并不好过。当年，妈坐在灯光中，在膝盖上放一个枕头，就把他搁在枕头上。我们醒来后，就会看到这样的场景。他们没有发出任何声音。

“枕头比他还要长。”卡什说。他身子稍微向前倾。“我上个星期该下来看看的，我该来的。”

“没错，”我说，“那时，他的头和脚都够不到枕头边。你又怎么会知道要涨水呢。”我说。

“我该来看看的。”他说着拉起缰绳。接下来，骡子开始动了，它们跟着朱尔走过的痕迹走；车轮碾过河水，发出活泼的吱呀声。他回头往下看着安迪。“没放稳。”他说。

最后，树丛打开了；朱尔骑着马走在开阔的河面上，我们可以看见他的半个身子，马儿的肚子还没在水中。我们看到弗农、爹、瓦达曼和杜威·戴尔在河的对岸。弗农在等着我们，他站在水流中向我们招手。

“我们这里的水太深了。”卡什说。弗农还在那边喊，可是水声太大，我们听不清他在喊什么。到这里，水流很深，也很平稳，它并不间断，也不给人流动的感觉，直到一根原木漂过来，慢慢地转动，我们才知道它在流动。“看。”卡什说。于是我们看着它摇摇晃晃，然后悬停一会儿，水流在它后面堆起一波大浪，将它淹没，过了一会儿，那原木又冲出水面，然后摇摇晃晃往前漂去。

“就是这儿了。”我说。

“唉，”卡什说，“就是这儿。”我们又看向弗农。此刻，他正上下摇摆着手臂。于是我们走下水去，走得又慢又小心，还一边看着弗农。他把手放了下来。“就是这里了。”卡什说。

“好了，他妈的，我们快过河吧。”朱尔说着赶起了马儿。

“你等等。”卡什说。于是朱尔又停了下来。

“那，是上帝——”他说。卡什看了看水面，然后回头看看安迪。“没放稳。”他说。

“那就返回那该死的桥上，再走过去，”朱尔说，“你和达尔都返回去。让我来拉马车。”

卡什并不理会他。“棺材没放稳。”他说，“好的，哥们儿，我们看着点它。”

“看着点，天哪，”朱尔说，“你下车，让我来。天哪，要是你害怕把它弄翻的话……”他眼睛苍白，脸上就像镶了两块褪色的碎片。卡什正看着他。

“我们会过去的，”他说，“你按我说的做。你把车赶回去，走着过桥，到了那一头，再拿绳子过来接应我们。弗农会把你的马带回家，照顾好，等着我们回来。”

“去你的吧。”朱尔说。

“你拿着绳子，到岸边做好准备，”卡什说，“两个人也不比三个人差——一个赶车，一个扶稳。”

“去你的。”朱尔说。

“让朱尔抓紧绳子的一头，将我们拉到上游。”我说，“怎么样，朱尔？”

朱尔看着我，他眼神冷酷。接着，他迅速看了卡什一眼，又看着我，他的眼神警觉而冷酷。“我倒是没什么。只要我们能做点什么。总比坐在这儿，他妈的连手都不能抬一下……”

“那就这样吧，卡什。”我说。

“我看就这样。”卡什说。

河面本身还不足一百码宽，那寂寥的荒凉以一种可怕的姿势从右偏

左斜立着，好像我们到达了某个地方，在那里，荒凉的世界在最终掉进悬崖之前加快了速度，我们视线所到之处，只有爹、弗农、瓦达曼和杜威·戴尔不在这景象之内。可是，他们变得越来越小。好像我们之间的距离是时间，是不能改变的东西。又好像时间并不是在我们面前呈直线逐渐缩短，而是像一根被解开的绳子，与我们并行，于是距离就变成了绳子延伸的长度，而不是我们之间的空隙。两只骡子立在水里，它们的前蹄已经直不起来，臀部高翘着。它们的呼吸此刻已变成深沉的吟叫；它们一度回过头来，视线扫过我们时，眼里带着一种狂乱又悲伤、绝望而意味深长的神情，好像它们已经在那浓浊的水里看到了灾难的影子，可是它们不能开口，而我们却看不见。

卡什掉头回到马车里。他把手平放在安迪身上，轻轻摇了摇她。他平静的脸向下耷拉着，心里掂量着什么，一副忧心忡忡的样子。他举起他的工具箱，往前推，把它挤进座位下；然后我们一起推安迪，把她推到工具箱和车座之间。接着，他看着我。

“不行，”我说，“我看我还是留下吧。没准要两个人才行。”

他从工具箱中拿出一圈绳索，在座位的支柱上缠了两圈，却没有打结，而是把绳子的一头交给我。然后，他把另一头给朱尔，朱尔就在鞍角上绕了一圈。

他必须把马儿逼进水里。马儿挪动着，腿高高抬起，弓着颈子，一副不耐烦又恼怒的样子。朱尔骑在马背上，身子稍微前倾，膝盖轻轻抬起；他那敏锐、警觉，又平静的目光再次扫过我们，然后看向别处。他让马下了水，低声说着什么，似在安慰它。不料马儿打了滑，水没到了马鞍处，它又奋力站起来，水流冲击着朱尔的大腿。

“你自己小心。”卡什说。

“我找到路了，”朱尔说，“你可以走前面去了。”

于是卡什抓起缰绳，小心又熟练地把牲口赶下水。

我感到水流在带着我们走，于是我知道我们已经在浅滩上了，只有通过这样打着滑与浅滩接触，我们才能判断自己是在动。原先平展的地面，如今已成为一连串丘谷，在我们脚下起起落落，推撞着我们，嘲弄着我们——它只是轻微而慵懒地触碰我们，我们脚下片刻的稳固也如虚如幻。卡什回头看我，那时我就知道我们完蛋了。可直到我看见原木，才明白绳子的用途。那原木冲出水面，停留片刻，像基督那样立于这凄凉之上。[1](#)下车，让水流把你带到河湾处，卡什说，你没问题的。不，我说，那样一来，我也会像这样浑身弄湿的。

原木突然出现在两个波谷之间，好像突然从水底喷发出来。原木的末端有一长堆泡沫，就像老人或者山羊的胡子。卡什和我说话时，我知道他一直都在看着，看着它，看着我们前面十英尺远的朱尔。“放开绳子。”他说。他的另一只手往下摸，解开缠在座架上的绳子。“骑过去，朱尔，”他说，“看看能不能拉着我们绕过原木。”

朱尔朝着马大喊；他又一次使劲将马拉起。他刚好在浅滩的最高处，马儿机械地往前移动，半个身子露在水面上，闪着湿漉漉的光泽，它不停地向前蹿着，动作之快令人难以想象；这下子，朱尔最后发现绳子松开了，因为我看见他一点一点将绳子往回收，他歪着头，原木一头翘起，远远地冲过来，压在骡子的身上。他们也看见了；有一瞬间，它们也还冒出了水面，发出黑油油的光泽。接着，下边那只骡子不见了，并且将另外一只一起拖下水；马车横着过来，在浅滩的高处停稳，这

时，原木撞了它一下，它便又斜着往前漂去。卡什转过半身，缰绳在他手上绷得紧紧的，可又突然消失在水里，他的另一只手往后伸向安迪，按住她，并把她往马车高出水面的那边推。“跳下去，”他平静地说，“离骡子远一点，别逆水。水流会把你荡到河湾处的。”

“你也下来。”我说。这时，弗农和瓦达曼正沿着河岸跑，爹和杜威·戴尔则站在那儿，看着我们，杜威·戴尔手臂上一边挎着篮子，一边挎着包裹。朱尔试着将马赶回去。突然，一只骡子的头露出了水面，眼睛大睁着。它回头看了我们一眼，发出一种类人的声音。不一会儿，它的头又不见了。

“回来，朱尔。”卡什喊道，“回来，朱尔。”过了一会儿，我看见他靠在倾斜的马车上，他的手往后护着安迪和他的工具；我看到那仿佛长了胡子的原木的那一头再次撞了上来，这时，朱尔还在后面拉起马，他四处扭着头，还一边用拳头捶马儿的头。我从马车上跳下来，往下游那边跳去。我又一次在一个波谷中看到那两头骡子。它们不断冒出水面，整个身体翻转过来，它们的腿离开了大地，僵直地伸着。

[1](#)基督曾在海面上行走。——译者注

瓦达曼

卡什用尽了全身力气可她还是落进了水里，卡什号叫着抓住她我也一边跑一边叫一边叫一边跑杜威·戴尔则冲着我喊瓦达曼瓦达曼瓦达曼弗农超过了我因为他看见她浮了起来可是她又钻进水里达尔也没能抓住她

他钻出水面想看看怎么回事于是我冲着他喊达尔抓住她达尔抓住她

因为她在水里比男人还跑得快达尔不得不趴下来伸手去摸她所以我知道他能抓住她因为他是摸鱼的高手就算骡子挡在中间而且它们又一次冒出水面腿叉开并且僵直地伸着然后又沉下去这会儿它们的背也露了出来达尔也不得不再试一次因为她在水中比男人和女人跑得都快然后我超过了弗农他是不会下水帮达尔的他不会和达尔一起去抓她他知道可他不会帮忙

这时骡子又冒了出来它们的腿僵直地伸着它们那僵直的腿一上一下然后达尔也一会儿冒出来一会儿钻进去我还在喊达尔抓住她抓住她再把她领到岸上达尔和弗农不会来帮忙达尔绕过了骡子他在水里抓住了她把她往岸边带可是他们走得很慢因为她在水里不肯出来可是达尔力气大所以她也慢慢跟着过来于是我知道他抓住了她因为他走得很慢于是我下到水里帮忙我不停地喊着因为达尔力气大而且在水里稳稳地抓着她即便她再怎么挣扎他也不会放开她他看见我了他会抓住她的终于没事了终于没事了终于没事了

接着他钻出了水面。他慢吞吞地游了过来可是他背过去的手还没露出水面可是他会抓住她的所以我还能接受。接着他的手也露了出来然后他整个身子都露出了水面。我停不下来。我来不及停下。如果能停下来我就会停的可是他露出水面的手却是空的连手上的水都流走了。

“妈呢，达尔？”我说，“你没有抓住她吗？你知道她是一条鱼可你还是让她溜走了。你没有抓住她。达尔。达尔。达尔。”我开始沿着河边跑，一边跑一边看着骡子慢慢冒出水面，然后又沉下去。

塔尔

我向科拉描述着当时的场景：达尔跳下马车，留下卡什坐在里面

守着，可是马车突然翻了，这边，朱尔都快走到岸边了，还在将马儿往回赶，但那匹马倒是聪明，它偏不回去。这时，她说：“你也和其他人一样认为达尔很古怪，说他不聪明，可他却是那里面唯一一个足够聪明跳下车的。我发现安斯才精明，他连坐都不坐上去。”

“就算他在里面，也起不了什么作用，”我说，“他们一开始蛮顺利的，要不是那根原木，他们会过去的。”

“原木，才怪呢，”科拉说，“那是上帝的手。”

“那你怎么说他们笨呢？”我说，“没人能抵抗上帝之手。那可是亵渎神灵。”

“那他们又怎么敢呢？”科拉说，“你倒是说说。”

“安斯没有，”我说，“你不就是为了这一点骂他吗。”

“他就该待在那儿，”科拉说，“他要是个男人，就该待在那儿，而不是让他的儿子做他都不愿意做的事。”

“那我就不知道你是是什么意思了，”我说，“你一会儿说他们过河是在与上帝之手作对，一会儿又骂安斯，说他不和他们待在一起。”接下来，她又开始唱诗了，一边唱一边在洗衣盆边干活，她唱歌的表情，就好像自己已经超越了人们，以及他们的一切蠢行，好像自己正唱着歌升向天堂。

马车停留了好一阵，水流往车后激荡，将它推下浅滩，卡什的身体越来越斜，他使劲撑起棺材，不让它滑下去，以免马车打翻。等到马车彻底翻转，水流自己就可以收拾它，原木就只好漂走了。它围着马车绕了一圈，然后漂走，就像游泳的人那样娴熟。就好像有人派它来完成一

项任务，它完成后就走了。

那两头骡子最终踢开挡着它们的东西，这时，有那么一分钟，好像卡什能救回棺材似的。好像他和棺材都一动不动，只有朱尔在将马儿往马车那里赶。接着，那孩子超过了我，他一边跑一边冲着达尔叫，而那丫头试图抓住他，然后我看到那两头骡子慢慢冒出水面，它们像是被掀翻一样，两腿叉开并且僵直地伸着，接着又一起一落淹进水里。

然后马车就翻了，然后马车、朱尔、马都搅在了一起。卡什还撑着棺材，却忽然不见了，接着我就什么也看不清楚了，因为马儿在扑腾、在踏水。我想卡什大概没能守住棺材，正游过去抓它呢，我还一边朝着朱尔大喊，叫他快回来，接着，他和马都沉进水里了，那时我以为他们全都被冲走了。我知道那匹马也被拖下了浅滩，那匹野蛮的、溺水的马和那辆马车，还有那滑掉的棺材，情况糟透了，而我就站在那儿，膝盖跪在水里，朝着我身后的安斯吼道：“看看你们都干了什么？看看你们都干了什么？”

那匹马又冒了出来。它昂着头，此刻正往岸边移动，这时，我看见他们中有一个抓住了下游那边的马鞍，于是我开始沿着岸边跑，想找到卡什，因为他不会游泳，我一边跑还一边朝朱尔大叫，卡什在哪里，像个傻瓜一样，傻得就像下边岸上的那个孩子，他也边跑边朝着达尔大叫。

于是我下到水里，这样一来我还能多少抓住点泥浆，这时，我看见了朱尔。他身子已经被淹了一半，于是我知道，不管怎么说他已经在浅滩上了，他斜着身子拼命往上蹭，然后我看到了绳子，接下来，我就看到他吧马车稳在浅滩下，河水正往那里聚集。

这么看起来，是卡什抓住了马，马儿正踏着水往岸上爬，还像人一样呻吟着。我走近时，它正在将卡什抓着马鞍的手踢开。然后，卡什又滑进水里，他滑下的时候，脸上扬了一下。他的脸灰白灰白的，眼睛闭着，一道长长的泥迹横在他的脸上。接着他放开了手，翻进水里。他看上去就像一堆旧衣服，一进一退地往岸边靠。又好像脸朝下躺在那里，上下荡动，还一边看着水底的什么东西。

我们看到绳子落进水里，还能感受到马车的重量懒懒地撞过来，乐悠悠的感觉，那落进水里的绳子就像生硬的铁棒。我们仿佛还能听到它冒出嘶嘶声，就像被烧红了。好像它笔直地插进水底，而我们握着它的另一头，马车懒懒地进退，推撞着我们，好像它专程绕过来，躲在我们身后，懒懒的样子，就像这决定做得多么愉快似的。突然，一只小猪从旁边漂过，像气球一样鼓鼓的——那是朗·奎科养的斑点猪。它碰在绳子上，像一根铁棒，然后弹开，继续向前漂去，我们就这样看着绳子斜斜地落进水中。就这样看着。

达尔

卡什躺在地上，头下垫着裹起的衣物。他的眼睛闭着，脸色灰白，头发粘在一起，顺溜溜地横搭在额前，好像是用油漆刷刷上去的。他的脸有些下凹，从那瘦瘠的眼眶到鼻子，再到牙龈都凹了下去，好像被水打湿后，紧致的皮肤变得松弛了；此外，他那嵌在发白牙龈上的牙齿微微分开，像是在微笑。他穿着湿衣服躺在那里，瘦得像根竹竿，他一阵轻微的呕吐，吐在了脑袋旁，他来不及转开头，于是一道黏液从嘴角流到脸颊，杜威·戴尔就用裙摆帮他擦干净。

这时，朱尔走了过来。他手里拿着刨子。“弗农刚刚找到了直角

尺。”他说。然后他看着卡什，身上还在滴水，“他还没有开口说话吗？”

“他当时拿着他的锯子、锤子、线斗和尺子，”我说，“我就知道这些。”

于是朱尔放下直角尺。爹看着他。“它们也没被冲走多远，”爹说，“都是在一起的。还有谁比我更倒霉呢。”

朱尔并没有看爹。“你最好把瓦达曼叫回来。”他说。他看着卡什，然后转过身走开了。“尽快让他开口说话，”他说，“也好让我们知道其他东西在哪儿。”

我们又回到河边。马车已经停稳了，车轮卡在洪水边上（我们都来帮忙了：大家都很卖力；就好像我们熟悉的、那破烂又迟钝的马车还余留着某种力量，某种一触即发的潜在力量，也正是这股力量杀死了一个小时前还拖着马车的两头骡子）。棺材卧在车厢深处，长长的木板已经打湿，却还是黄灿灿的，但是，已不如之前那般晃眼，就像透过水看金子，只是上面还有两道长长的污迹。我们从马车旁经过，继续朝岸边走去。

绳子的一头紧紧地拴在一棵树上。河水最浅处也没及膝盖，瓦达曼就站在浅水里，他的身子稍微前倾，他全神贯注地看着弗农。这时，他已经不再叫了，而他的腋窝以下都已经湿透。弗农在绳子的另一端，他的胳膊都没进了水里，他正回头看着瓦达曼。“再退回去一点，”他说，“你退到树那里去，给我抓住绳子，别让它滑掉。”

于是瓦达曼顺着绳子退回去，退到树下，他一边看着弗农，一边呆呆地往后退。当我们走上去时，他又一次看了看我们，他那圆圆的眼睛

里装着一副茫然的神情。接着，他又全神贯注地看着弗农。

“我捞到锤子了，”弗农说，“按理说我们应该能找到线斗的，它应该会浮起来才对。”

“直接漂走了还差不多，”朱尔说，“它是找不到了。不过，锯子应该能找到。”

“我想也是。”弗农说。他朝水里看去，“还有线斗。他当时还拿了什么东西？”

“他还没开口说话呢。”朱尔说完就顺着绳子钻进水里。绳子在我手里很活跃，它呈拉长的弧形微微拱起，还会产生共振。弗农正看着我。

“你最好走开，”他说，“最好到那边去。”

“趁它们还没被冲走，看看我们能找到些什么吧。”我说。

我们抓住绳子，水流在我们肩膀上打转。可是在这温柔的假象之下，它真正的力量正懒懒地向我们拍打而来。我没想到七月的河水会是这般冰冷。好像许多只手正戳着我们的每一根骨头。

“你看绳子能承受我们这么多人吗？”他说。我们也回过头，眼睛盯着那生硬的绳条，看着它从河里升到树干上，瓦达曼在它的旁边微微蹲下，看着我们。“希望我的那两头骡子不会自己跑回家去。”弗农说。

“走吧，”朱尔说，“我们先离开这儿。”

接着，我们手攀着绳子，一个接一个手拉手沉入水中，此时，冰冷的水墙在我们脚下，将倾斜的泥浆往后、往上游吸，这样一来，我们就

如同悬浮在水中，还一边沿着冰冷的水底摸索。就连泥浆也不可靠。它带着消沉与冷漠的气息，好像我们脚下的大地也在动似的。我们相互触碰，甚至胡乱摸索着对方伸开的手臂，并借着绳子小心翼翼地走着；或者，反过来，依次站起来，看着河水卷进翻出，而另外两个人还在水下摸索。这时，爹也到岸边来了，他看着我们。

弗农上来了，他身上滴着水，还一边嘬起嘴往上吐气，使得脸也凹下来。他的嘴唇呈浅蓝色，像一圈风化的橡胶。他手里拿着尺子。

“他知道了会很高兴的，”我说，“那还是新的呢。是他上个月刚从商店里买来的。”

“要是我们能确定还有别的什么该多好，”弗农说着扭过头，然后把脸别向朱尔消失的地方，“他是比我先下去的吗？”

“不知道，”我说，“我想是吧，是的，是的，他比你先下去。”

我们看着那旋转的水面，河水慢慢转着涡离我们远去。

“用绳子拉他一下。”弗农说。

“他在你那边。”我说。

“可是我这边没人哪。”他说。

“那就把绳子收过来。”可是他已经收起来了，已经把绳子的一头拉出了水面；接下来，我们看见了朱尔。他在十码外；他吹着气游上来了，他看着我们，脑袋猛然一甩，把长头发甩到身后，接着，他看向岸边；我们看到他的肺已经胀饱了。

“朱尔。”弗农叫道。他的声音并不大，可在水里却饱满又清晰，专横而又婉转。“那些东西会冲到这儿来的，你最好还是回来。”

于是朱尔又潜下水去了。我们就站在那儿，身体抵挡着水流，看着他消失进水里，我们俩则紧紧抓住那死死的绳子，像抓住灭火水龙带的喷嘴一样，等着水喷出来。突然，杜威·戴尔出现在我们身后的水中。“你让他回来，”她说，“朱尔！”他又冒出来了，把遮住眼睛的头发往后甩。他此刻正游向岸边，水流从斜后方将他往下游冲。“你，朱尔！”杜威·戴尔喊道。我们就站在那里，抓着绳子，看他找到岸，爬上来。他从水里上来的时候，弯下腰捡起了什么东西。他沿着河岸上来。他找到了线斗。他站在我们对面，看样子是在找什么东西。爹走下河岸，他又要回去看那两头骡子，它们那圆鼓鼓的身子浮在水面上，在河湾处，水流平缓的地方相互摩擦着。

“你拿锤子做什么，弗农？”朱尔问。

“我给他了。”弗农说着把脑袋偏向瓦达曼。瓦达曼又看着爹。然后他看着朱尔。

“你离开这儿。”我说。她什么也没有说，只是看着朱尔和弗农。

“锤子呢？”朱尔问。瓦达曼赶忙上岸去拿。

“它比锯子还重。”弗农说。朱尔把线斗的一头拴在锤柄上。

“这锤子大部分都是木头。”朱尔说。他和弗农面对面站着，看着朱尔的手。

“也更平整些，”弗农说，“它的漂浮速度可比锯子快两倍。试试那刨子。”

朱尔看着弗农。弗农也是高个子。两个又瘦又高的人相互对视着站在那里，湿透的衣服紧贴在身上。朗·奎科只要看天上的云，就能说出十分钟以后的天气。我说的是老奎科，而不是小奎科。

“你还在水里干什么？”我说。

“它不会像锯子一样漂浮。”朱尔说。

“它的浮力和锯子差不多，锤子比不上它。”弗农说。

“你敢打赌吗？”朱尔说。

“我才不跟你打赌。”弗农说。

他们就站在那儿，看着朱尔那一动不动的手。

“见鬼，”朱尔说，“快拿刨子来。”

于是他们拿来了刨子，把它拴到线斗上，又钻进水里。爹沿着河岸走上来。他停了一会儿，看着我们，耸肩躬身，一副凄切的样子，就像一头跌倒的公牛，或是一只高大的老鸟。

这时，弗农和朱尔回来了，他们背顶着水流。“让开，”朱尔对杜威·戴尔说，“别在水里。”

于是她朝我这边挤了一下，好让他们过去，朱尔把刨子高高举起来，好像它是什么容易腐坏的东西，那蓝色的绳子从他的肩膀往后搭。他们从我们身旁走过然后停下来；他们争论了一番也没能争出马车到底是在哪儿翻的。

“达尔应该知道的。”弗农说。他们看着我。

“我不知道，”我说，“我没漂那么远。”

“见鬼。”朱尔说。于是他们继续向前，小心翼翼地走着，背顶着水流，双脚一步一步在浅滩上摸索。

“你抓住绳子了吗？”弗农说。朱尔并没有回答。他往回瞥着河岸，暗自打量着什么，接着又看向水里。他把刨子扔出去，让绳子从他的指尖滑过，绳子滑过的地方都变青了。

“这会儿最好让我走开。”弗农说。他并没有回头看。朱尔还是不说话；我们看着他沉入水下。

“朱尔。”杜威·戴尔带着呜咽声喊道。

“那里也不是很深。”弗农说。他并没有回答。只是看着水里朱尔消失的地方。

朱尔钻出水面时，手里拿着锯子。

我们从马车旁边经过时，爹就站在那里，他正抓起一把叶子擦那两道泥迹。在丛林的映衬下，朱尔的马就像晾在线上的一床拼花被。

卡什没有移动过。我们站在他的身边，拿着刨子、锯子、锤子、直角尺、尺子和线斗，杜威·戴尔蹲下来扶起卡什的头。“卡什，”她喊道，“卡什。”

他睁开眼睛，深深凝视着我们颠倒的面孔。

“还有谁比我更倒霉的呢。”爹说。

“看，卡什，”我们说着拿起工具给他看，“你还丢了什么？”

他试着说话，可却转开脑袋，闭上了眼睛。

“卡什，”我们叫他，“卡什。”

他是转过头去吐了。杜威·戴尔用她的湿裙摆帮他擦了擦嘴；然后，他就能说话了。

“还有他的锯架，”朱尔说，“是买尺子的时候新买的。”他动了动，又转开了。弗农还是蹲在那儿看着他。接着，他起身跟着朱尔一起下到水里。

“还有谁比我更倒霉的吗。”爹说。我们蹲在地上，他赫然出现在我们头顶；他看起来就像酒醉的漫画家用硬木雕刻而成的人像。“这是一次审判，”他说，“可我并没有因此怪她。谁也不能说我怪她。”这时，杜威·戴尔已经把卡什的头放回去，她还特意绕了一下，避开呕吐物。他的工具就放在身旁。“断的刚好是从教堂上掉下来摔断的那只腿，或许这也算幸运，”爹说，“可我并不怪她。”

朱尔和弗农又下到水里了。从这儿看，他们并没有搅动水面。好像水流一下就将他们两人切开，两副躯干慢慢在水面移动着，他们小心到了极点，那样子十分好笑。水面看似平静，就像你看着一台机器，听它的声音久了，也就没感觉了。好像你这个凝块已经融进那永无休止的原动力中，什么也看不见，什么也听不见了；河水的骚动安静中带着沉闷。杜威·戴尔蹲在那里，她打湿的衣裙为三个盲眼男人坏掉的眼睛塑造出哺乳动物的可笑特征，也就是大地的水平线和山谷。

卡什

棺材并没有放稳。我告诉他们要想稳当地把它搬运过去，就得——

科拉

那一天，我们在谈话。在宗教信仰方面，她从来都不虔诚，即便是在那年夏天的野营集会后，当时怀特菲尔德兄弟还和她进行了思想的搏击，单独把她挑出来，与她的凡心进行一番斗争，我也不止一次对她说：“上帝赐予你子女，以慰藉你艰难的命运，这也是他自身苦与爱的经历，你也是因为爱而怀孕生子。”我之所以那样说是因为她太把上帝的爱和他对他的责任当回事儿了，而这样的结果是上帝不愿看到的。我说“他赐予我们天赋，使我们能扬声赞美他”。因为我说过，在天堂里，对一个有罪之人的欢呼声，要超过对一百个无罪之人的欢呼。而她说“我活着就是为了认罪和赎罪”。我说“你是谁呀，你知道什么是有罪，什么是无罪吗？上帝的责任就是对它进行裁决；而我们的责任就是赞美他的仁慈和神圣之名，让凡夫俗子听见，因为只有他才能看透人心，因为不能说一个女人的生活在男人的眼里是正确的，就说自己内心无罪，她都还没对上帝敞开心扉，没有接受他的拥抱呢”。我说“仅仅因为你是一个忠贞的妻子，也不能说明你心里就没有罪。正因为你生活过得艰难，上帝才拥抱你，宽恕你的罪行”。而她说“我清楚自己的罪行。我知道我罪有应得。我不怪谁”。我说“正因为你自负，才会僭越上帝，去判断罪孽与救赎。我们的凡尘命运就是受苦和扬声赞美他，是他判定我们是否有罪，并通过审判我们、让我们受苦，来为我们救赎。即便是怀特菲尔德兄弟，那个与上帝同声共气的绝世圣人，为你祷告，对你进行专门的思想洗礼，你也无动于衷”。

因为，在上帝的眼里，我们不能判定是否有罪，也不知道什么才是有罪。她的生活无比艰难，可是，但凡女人，没有一个生活不艰难的。

可是，从她说话时的语气来看，好像自己再清楚不过自己的罪行和救赎，比上帝还清楚，比那些与人世间的罪行做斗争的人还清楚似的。她承认的唯一的罪行就是偏向朱尔，那个从不爱她的儿子，这也是罪有应得，在我们凡夫俗子的眼里，偏向那个爱她，但却被上帝之手触碰过的达尔，反倒有些奇怪。“这就是你的罪行。也是你的报应。朱尔是你的报应。可是你的救赎又在哪里呢？生命已经够短暂了，”我说，“要赢得永恒的恩泽。上帝也有嫉妒之心。判定和施与是他的职责；不是你的。”

“我知道，”她说，“我一”她说到这儿就停下了，我又说：

“知道什么？”

“没什么。”她说，“他是我的痛苦，也将会是我的救赎。他会救我于水火之中。即便我放弃了生命，他也会救我。”

“你怎么知道，你都还没有向他敞开心扉，还没有扬声赞美他呢！”我说。这时我才意识到她口中的“他”并不是指上帝。我意识到她因为内心自负而说着亵渎神圣的话。我乞求她跪下，敞开心扉，让“自负是恶魔”和“上帝是仁慈的”这两种观点照进她的内心。可是她不会。她只是坐在那儿，迷失在她的自负和骄傲中，致使她向上帝关上了心门，将那个自私的凡尘俗子置于上帝的位置。我跪在那儿为她祷告。我为那可怜的盲妇祈祷，就像为自己和家人祈祷一样。

安迪

那天下午放学后，最后一个学生也抽着脏兮兮的小鼻子离开了，我没有回家，而是走下山，来到泉眼边，我可以在那儿安静地待会儿，

还可以尽情地讨厌他。我在那儿安静地待着，泉水冒出来，又散开，阳光静静地斜照在树上，潮湿的枯叶和新土发出恬静的味道；尤其是在早春，这种味道分外浓烈。

我还记得父亲常说，活着的原因就是为长久的死去做好准备。我一天天看着他们，他们每个人都有自己的秘密和私念，每个人身上都流着不一样的血，和我的也不一样，我在想，这大概就是我做好准备死去的唯一途径，我甚至恨我父亲生下我。我会想象他们犯了错，那样我就可以用鞭子打他们。鞭子落下时，我感觉就像打在我自己的身上；每当留下伤疤，或是肿起，快速流动的仍是我的血液，鞭子每挥动一下，我就会想：你们现在知道我的厉害了吧！如今我在你们那隐秘而自私的生活中也有一席之地了吧，我用自己的血，在你们的血液中留下了永恒的印记。

然后，我嫁给了安斯。我曾看见他从校舍旁过了三四次，后来我才知道，他是赶着车走了四英里才到这儿的。那时我就注意到，他的背开始驼了——当时他还是个高大的年轻人——所以他坐在马车上时，看上去就像一只在寒冬里弓着背的高脚鸟。他经过校舍时，马车发出慢悠悠的吱嘎声，马车经过时，他慢慢扭头看校舍的门口，一直到转弯处，然后转过弯就不见了。一天，他经过时，我走到门口，就站在那儿。他看到我以后，迅速把头转开，就再也没有回头。

早春时节，这味道最为浓烈。有时候，我以为自己忍受不了，夜晚，躺在床上，大雁往北飞去，在这凄凉的黑暗中，它们的叫声时而微弱，时而高亢，时而狂野，到了白天的时候，好像我等不到最后一个孩子离开，就要到泉边去。于是，一天，我抬头的时候看见安斯穿着他的星期天衣服站在那儿，手里拿着帽子转了一圈又一圈，我说：

“既然你家里有女人，为什么她们不让你把头发剪了？”

“我家没有。”他说。接着，他突然看向我，就像两只猎犬在陌生的园林里，“我来找你就是为了这事儿。”

“为什么不让你把肩膀挺起来，”我说，“你家没有吗？可是你有房子啊。他们说你有房子，还有一个不错的农场。你不会一个人住在那儿，自己打理吧？”他只是看着我，转着手里的帽子。“还是新房子，”我说，“你是要结婚了吗？”

他盯着我的眼睛，又说：“我来找你正是为了这事儿。”

之后，他告诉我：“我家里没人。所以你不用担心。我想你不一样吧。”

“嗯。我家里有人，在杰弗逊。”

他的脸稍微沉下来。“嗯，我有一点家产。我向来节俭；我名声不错，我知道城里人是什么样子，可是他们要是一和我说话，估计——”

“他们可以听，”我说，“可要他们开口说话就难了。”他看着我的脸。“他们在墓地里。”

“可还有活着的亲戚呢，”他说，“他们不一样了吧。”

“是吗？”我说，“我也不知道。我没有其他亲戚了。”

于是我嫁给了安斯。当我知道怀了卡什的时候，我就知道生活很可怕了，这就是答案。那时我就知道语言没什么好处；话一出口，意思就变了。他出生后，我就知道母爱是一个不得不为它发明一个词的人发明

的，因为有孩子的人是不会在乎是否有一个词来表示它的。我还知道，恐惧是一个从未经历恐惧的人发明的；至于骄傲，谁没有骄傲呢。我知道，并不是因为他们的鼻子脏，而是因为我们不得不借用语言相互利用，就像蜘蛛用吐丝的嘴从梁木上吊下来，晃荡着，缠绕着，从不相碰，只有通过鞭子的起落，我的血液和他们的血液才能融成一股。我知道，并不是我的孤独感非要一再被侵扰，而是直到卡什出生后，它才开始。就连安斯在夜里也不曾侵扰它。

他也有一个词。他把它叫作“爱”。不过，我长久以来对词都很熟悉。我知道那个词和其他词没什么两样：只是一种填补空缺的框架；当时机来临，你也就不需要这个词了，就像不需要骄傲和恐惧一样。卡什不需要对我说这个词，我也不需要对他说，我会说，安斯喜欢，就让他用吧。所以是安斯，还是“爱”；是“爱”还是安斯，有什么关系呢。

就算和他一起躺在黑暗中，卡什在摇篮里熟睡，我的手还摇着摇篮，我也会这样想。然后我以为我会杀了安斯。好像他捉弄了我，他藏在一个词后面，就像藏在一个纸屏幕后一样，还通过它从背后袭击我。可是，后来，我意识到自己是被比安斯和“爱”还古老的词捉弄了，同样的词也捉弄了安斯，而我的报复方式就是他永远不知道我是在报复。达尔出生时，我要安斯答应在我死后，要把我送回杰弗逊，因为我知道，父亲是对的，即便他再也不可能知道自己是对的，而我却知道自己错了。

“别胡说，”安斯说，“你和我还没生够呢，才两个孩子。”

那时，他不知道他已经死了。有时候，我会在黑暗中，坐在他的身旁，聆听着那片如今已是我血肉的土地，我就会想：安斯。为什么是安斯呢。为什么是你安斯。我会想着他的名字，直到过了一会儿，我看到

那个词就像一个框架、一个容器，我看到他溶解了流进去，像冰冷的磨拉石从黑暗中飞来，飞进那容器里，直到它装满，一动也不动了——那是一个巨大的、没有生命的框架，像一个空空的门框；然后，我就会发现，自己竟忘了那个容器的名字。我会想：当我还是一个处女时，我身体的框架就像一个我想不起来的什么安斯，记不起安斯。倒不是我想象自己不再是处女，因为我现在是三个人了。当我像那样想着卡什和达尔，直到他们的名字消散，然后凝固成框架，再散去时，我会说，好极了。有什么关系呢。不管他们叫他们什么都没有关系。

当科拉·塔尔对我说我不是一个真正的母亲时，我会想，那些词是怎么沿着细线直飞上去的，而且又快又不麻烦，还有那些可怕的行为又是怎样在大地上行走，怎样贴着它，以至于过不了一会儿，两条线就分得好远，同一个人没法从一根跨到另一根了；那些个罪孽、爱和恐惧都是那些没有造过孽、没有爱过，或是没有恐惧过的人的声音，他们从来没有这样的经历，也不能有这样的经历，甚至到最后忘了这些词。

她还告诉我，我欠了孩子们、安斯和上帝什么。我给安斯生了孩子。我没有请求他们到来。我甚至没有向他要求过他本该给予我的东西：没有向安斯要过。那是我对他的责任，不求什么，只是尽我的责任。我就是我；我会让他成为他的词的框架和回声。他甚至都没要求过，因为他不能那样要求，安斯就是安斯，竟然用这样一个词。

然后他死了。他不知道他已经死了。我会在黑夜里躺在他的身旁，聆听黑暗之土与上帝的爱，以及他的美丽和罪孽对话；聆听那无声的黑暗，在这黑暗里，语言就是行为，而其他不是行为的语言，则是人们缺乏的空当，它们就像昔日那些可怕的夜里，大雁在荒凉的黑暗中哀鸣，它们摸索着那些行为，就像在人群中指两张面孔给孤儿，告诉他，一个是你的父亲，一个是你的母亲。

我相信我找到了它。我以为原因就是対活着的人的责任，対那可怕的血、那沸腾着穿过大地的红色的痛苦之血的责任。我想到罪孽，就如同想到我们在世人面前都会穿的衣服，如同必须要有的谨慎，因为他是他我是我；那是更加彻底和可怕的罪孽，因为他是创造了罪孽、又要救赎他所创造的罪孽的上帝指定的工具。我在树林里等他，等着他发现我，我想象中，他穿着罪孽之衣。我也会想，他也想到我穿着罪孽之衣，只是他想象中的要漂亮些，因为他用来交换罪孽的衣服是神圣化的。我把罪孽看成一件衣物，我们为了把可怕的血液赶进高高飘荡在上空的死亡之词的凄凉回声中，就要脱去这件衣服。然后，我又和安斯躺在一起——我并没有对他撒谎，我只是拒绝，就像卡什和达尔喝得差不多了，我就拒绝给他们喂奶一样——聆听着黑暗，无声地交流。

我从不掩饰什么事情。我也没有存心骗过谁。我不在乎。我之所以那般谨慎，只是因为他的缘故，而不是为了我自身的安全，就好像我在世人面前要穿衣服一样。我会想，科拉和我谈话的时候，那些高调的死亡之词的死气沉沉的声音，好像连意义都失去了。

然后，一切都过去了。这里的过去，也就是他走了，我知道，虽然我还能见到他，但我再也不能见他在树林里急着悄悄向我走来，他穿着罪孽的外衣，仿佛那是一件华丽的衣服，他疾步而来，这衣服就被风吹到一边。

但是，对我来说，事情还没有过去。我指的“过去”，是有开始，有结束的“过去”。因为，对于我来说，在那个时候，任何事物都没有开始，也没有结束。我还让安斯节欲，不只是不让他唱退场赞美诗，甚至好像我和他都不曾发生过什么。我的孩子是属于我一个人，属于那在大地上一路澎湃的疯狂的血液，属于我和所有活着的人；要么谁也不属于，要么属于全部。然后我发现我怀上了朱尔。当我清醒过来，记起这

件事时，他已经走了两个月了。

我父亲常说，活着就是为永远的死去做好准备。如今我终于明白他的意思了，我还知道，那个时候，他自己都不明白自己说的话是什么意思，因为一个男人是不会懂得打扫屋子之类的事情的。于是，我把屋子打整干净了。自从有了朱尔——我躺在灯旁边，撑起头，看着他把那里缝好才开始呼吸——那疯狂而澎湃的血液流走了，它的声音也终止了。如今只剩下奶水，温暖和平静，我静静地躺在那里，准备打扫屋子。

我生下安斯·杜威·戴尔来克制朱尔。然后又生下瓦达曼来补偿我从他那里夺走的孩子。如今，他有了三个孩子，他们属于他，却不属于我。然后，我就可以准备死去了。

那天，我和科拉谈话。她为我祷告，因为她以为我看不见自己的罪孽，她还想让我也跪下祷告，因为，对于那些认为罪孽只是言语问题的人来说，救赎也不过是言语问题。

怀特菲尔德

那晚，他们告诉我她快不行了，于是我与撒旦进行了整夜的斗争，我最终胜利了。我从深重的罪孽中惊醒；我终于见到了真正的光，于是我跪下来向上帝忏悔，乞求他指引我，并顺着他的指引。“起来，去弥补那家人吧，你曾生生向他们许下谎言，你曾和他们一道，违背了我的旨意；大声忏悔你的罪过吧。为了他们，为了那个被骗的丈夫能原谅你而不是我。”于是我就去了。我听说塔尔家的桥被冲走了；于是我说“哦，感谢上帝，我万能的主”。因为通过这些危险和困难，我明白了，他不曾抛弃我；我还明白，他那神圣的和平与爱再度接纳我，让这些考验也变得愈发甜美。“我要去向那个我曾经背叛过的人忏悔，乞求

他的原谅，在此之前，请别让我暴死，”我这样祈祷着，“请让我及时赶到；别让我和她的谣言从她的嘴里说出来，让我来说吧。那时她说过，永远不会说出去，可是永远是个可怕的东西，我自己不也和撒旦进行了一番扭打吗？别再让她破了誓言的罪过加诸我灵魂之上。让我在伤害过的人面前洗净了灵魂，再用你圣洁的怒火包围我吧。”

是他的手将我安然托起于水面之上，他保护我度过水上的危险。原木和连根翻起的大树朝着我渺小的身躯冲过来，我的马受了惊，我自己的心也不受我控制。但我的灵魂却没事，我一次又一次看到原木和大树在最后一瞬间偏离了方向，于是我扬起声音，盖过洪水的喧嚣：“哦，我赞美您，万能的主和圣王。这样一来，我就能洗净我的灵魂，重新回到你那永恒的爱之怀抱。”

那时我便知道，我得到了宽恕。洪水和危险已经过去，当我骑着马，重新踏上坚实的大地，而我的客西马尼¹场景一步步逼近时，我便开始准备要说的话。我会走进屋子；我要在她说话之前阻止她；我要对她的丈夫说：“安斯，我有罪。任凭你处置。”

事情好像已经完结了。我的灵魂更加自在了，它数年来都未如此平静过；我骑着马向前走，仿佛再次置身于那永恒的平静之中。左右都是上帝的手，我在心里还能听到他的声音：“别害怕。我和你在一起。”

然后，我走到了塔尔家。我经过的时候，他的小女儿出来和我打招呼。她告诉我她已经死了。

哦，上帝，我已经犯下了罪过。你最明白不过我有多么悔恨，最清楚我心灵的意愿。不过，他是仁慈的；他愿意接受我对这件事的心意，他知道虽然安斯不在场，但我是以安斯为对象，去准备那些认罪的话

的。当那些爱她、信任她的人围在她的终榻边时，是他以那无边的智慧阻止她，不让那谣言从她垂死的唇间说出来；而我又在另一方借助他上帝之手的力量对抗水上的磨难。我赞美您。赞美您慷慨全能的爱。哦，赞美您。

我走进这丧亲之家，这简陋的房子里还躺着另一个犯过错的凡人，她的灵魂正面临着严峻而无法回避的审判，愿她的遗体永得安宁。

“让上帝的恩泽降临到这个家庭吧。”我说。

[1](#)客西马尼：耶稣被出卖受难前祷告的地方。语见《圣经·新约·马太福音》。

达尔

他骑着马去阿姆斯特德家，又骑着马回来，还牵回了阿姆斯特德的两头骡子。我们把马车套好，将卡什放在安迪的上面。我们扶他躺下时，他又吐了，不过，这一次，他及时把头伸出了车外。

“他肚子也被踢了一脚。”弗农说。

“可能那匹马还踢了他肚子一脚吧。”我说，“它踢过你的肚子没有，卡什？”

他正要开口说什么。杜威·戴尔又给他擦了擦嘴。

“他怎么说？”弗农说。

“你说什么啊，卡什？”杜威·戴尔说着弯下身去。“他要他的工具呢。”她说。然后，弗农把它们拿起来，放进马车里。杜威·戴尔就扶起

卡什的头，好让他看看。我们驾着马车，往前走去，杜威·戴尔和我坐在卡什的身边，稳住他，他则骑着马走在前面。弗农站在那儿看了我们一会儿，然后转身朝桥的方向走去。他小心翼翼地走着，边走边甩着那打湿了的袖子，就好像是刚打湿的一样。

他让马在门前停住。阿姆斯特德在门口等着。我们把马车停下，这时，他也下了马，然后我们把卡什抬下车，搬到屋里去，阿姆斯特德太太已经把床铺好了。我叫她和杜威·戴尔把卡什的衣服脱下。

我们随着爹出来，到马车那里。他上了马车，然后驾着往前走去，我们就走路跟在后面，一直走到空地那儿。滚了水倒还帮了我们的忙，因为阿姆斯特德说：“欢迎你们进屋。东西就放在那儿好了。”他也牵着他的马跟在后面，站在马车旁边，手里还握着缰绳。

“谢谢你了，”爹说，“我们用那边的牲口棚就好了。我也知道给你添麻烦了。”

“欢迎你们进屋来。”阿姆斯特德说。他脸上又浮现出那种木然的神情：恍惚中带着凶狠，戾气中透着呆滞，仿佛他的脸和眼睛是两种不同木头的颜色，说深不深，说浅不浅。他的衬衫开始干了，可是他一动，衬衫还是会贴在身上。

“她会感谢你的。”爹说。

我们解开骡子，把马车放进牲口棚。它的一边是开着的。

“那里雨水是进不去的，”阿姆斯特德说，“可你们要是愿意的话……”

那棚子的最里边有几块生锈的铁皮。我们拿出两张，搭在棚子的开

口处。

“欢迎你们进去歇息。”阿姆斯特德说。

“我谢谢你了，”爹说，“不过，要是你能拿些吃的给他们，就太好了。”

“没问题，”阿姆斯特德说，“卢拉把卡什安顿舒坦后，就去做饭。”这时，他已经回到马的旁边，正在拆马鞍，他一动，衬衫就贴在他的身上。

爹不愿意进屋去。

“进来吃饭吧，”阿姆斯特德说，“就快做好了。”

“我什么也吃不下，”爹说，“谢谢你了。”

“你们大伙儿进来把衣服弄干，再吃点东西吧，”阿姆斯特德说，“在我家就别客气了。”

“都是为了她，”爹说，“因为她我才吃东西的。我的牲口也没了，什么都没有了。不过，她会感谢你们大家的。”

“当然，”阿姆斯特德说，“你们都进来把衣服烘干吧。”

等到阿姆斯特德敬了爹一杯酒，爹感觉好多了，于是我们就进屋去。但卡什没有和我们一起进去。我回过头，正好看见他把马牵进牲口棚。爹已经说起再买一对牲口的事了，好像到了吃晚饭的时候，他就已经买下了似的。我看见他在牲口棚里，轻巧地穿过迎面而来的气流，将马牵进畜栏。他爬上食槽，扯下一些干草，然后走开了，最后他找回了

梳刷。于是他返回来，马儿朝他狠踢过来，他迅速躲开，来到马的旁边，这里它反而踢不到。他一边梳理马毛，一边在马蹄踢不到的范围内躲来躲去，就像杂技演员那般敏捷，还一边打情骂俏似的骂着马儿。它的脑袋猛然往后一扯。一副龇牙咧嘴的模样。他用梳刷的背面敲打马儿，马儿的眼睛在灰暗中转动，好像两颗大理石做成的弹珠在一块漂亮的天鹅绒上滚动。

阿姆斯特德

我又给他倒了一点威士忌，晚饭也快做好了，这时，他已经向别人赊了一对牲口。那时，他就开始挑三拣四了，他还说自己根本就不喜欢这对牲口，说他不愿意花钱向谁买一件毫无用处的东西，哪怕是一只鸡笼也不愿意买。

“不如你去问问斯诺普斯，”我说，“他养了三四对牲口呢。没准儿你能挑到一对称心的。”

然后，他又开始嘟哝起来，并用一种奇怪的眼神看着我，好像我拥有整个县上唯一一对牲口，却不愿意卖给他似的。于是我终于明白，能帮他们走出这片空地的牲口只能是我家这对了。不过，我不知道的是，要是有了这对牲口，他们会用来做什么呢。我听里特约翰说过，哈利低地那里的堤坝被冲了两英里，因此，要去杰弗逊，唯一的办法就是绕道从莫森那里过。不过，这是安斯的事。

“和他打交道可不容易。”他说，还一边嘟哝着什么。可是，晚饭后，我又给他倒了一杯酒，他喝过之后，情绪也高涨了一些。他要回到牲口棚去和她待在一起。或许他还以为，只要他在那儿随时准备出发，圣诞老人就会送给他一对牲口呢。“不过，我想，我可以说服他，”他

说，“只要他身体里还有一滴基督徒的血，就不会见死不救。”

“当然，我也乐意把我的牲口借给你。”我说，但我也知道他对这句话有几分相信。

“我谢谢你，”他说，“可是她想要坐我们自己的。”他也知道我对这句话有几分相信。

晚饭过后，朱尔骑马去湾里接皮博迪。我听说他今天去了瓦尔纳家。朱尔到半夜时分才回来。皮博迪下到英弗里斯的什么地方去了，但比利叔叔跟着朱尔回来了，他还背着他的兽医包。正如他所说，人与马和骡子也没有什么区别，只是骡子和马要聪明一些。“你又出什么事了，小子？”他看着卡什说。“给我拿一块垫子、一把椅子和一瓶威士忌来。”他说。

然后，他让卡什喝了威士忌，接着让安斯出去。“幸亏他摔断的刚好是去年夏天摔断的那条腿，”安斯说，还一边嘟哝着、眨着眼睛，“总算是好的。”

我们用垫子把卡什的两条腿裹起来，然后把椅子放在垫子上，我和朱尔坐在椅子上，那丫头提着灯，比利叔叔先是往嘴里放了一片烟叶，然后开始医。卡什好一阵挣扎，最后昏过去了。然后，他就静静地躺在那里，冒起大颗汗珠，汗珠停在脸上，好像它们一冒出来就停下等他似的。

卡什醒过来以后，比利叔叔已经收拾好东西走了。他嘴里不停地说着什么，直到那丫头弯下身给他擦嘴巴。“他要他的工具。”她说。

他又试着说话；她靠身下来。“他要看它们。”她说。于是达尔把它

们拿来，让他看。他们把工具放在床脚，等他好转一些，就可以伸手去摸。第二天一早，安斯骑着那匹马去湾里见斯诺普斯。他先是和朱尔站在地里聊了几句，然后骑着马走了。我估计这可能是朱尔第一次让别人骑他的马，安斯走了以后，他便气呼呼地在屋子里走来走去，眼睛随时盯着那条路，好像在盘算要不要追上安斯，把马儿牵回来。

快到九点时，天气热了起来。这时，我看见了第一只兀鹰。我想是泡了水的缘故吧。总之，我是白天才看见它们的。幸亏有风把味道从屋子里吹散，所以它们是到了白天才来的。可是，一看到它们，我就好像在一英里以外的田地里也能闻到那味道了，它们不断地盘旋，这样一来，县里所有人都知道我家牲口棚里放的是什么了。

我离家只有半英里多点，就听到那个小家伙大喊大叫。我还以为他掉到井里去了还是怎么的，所以就快马赶到那边。

我走到时，看见十几只兀鹰停在牲口棚的屋脊上，那小家伙还在空地上追赶着一只，而那兀鹰为了不被他抓住，只是飞起几步，然后又扑棱着翅膀飞到牲口棚的屋顶上去了，刚才，那家伙就是在这里发现那只兀鹰的，它当时正蹲在棺材上方。天热了起来，不错，风也停了，或是转了风向，又或是别的什么，然后，我找到了朱尔，可是这时，卢拉出来了。

“你千万要想想办法，”她说，“这像什么话呀。”

“我正在想呢。”我说。

“太不像话了，”她说，“他这样对她，应该受到法律的制裁。”

“他已经尽力让她入土为安了。”我说。然后，我找到了朱尔，问他

要不要骑骡子去湾里看看安斯。可是，他什么也不说。就那样看着我，他下巴变得枯白，眼睛也是惨白惨白的，然后，他走开去喊达尔。

“你打算怎么做？”我说。

他并不回答。这时，达尔出来了。“过来。”朱尔说。

“你准备怎么做？”达尔说。

“去搬马车。”朱尔扭过头说。

“别傻了，”我说，“我没别的意思，你也是没办法。”达尔还在犹豫不定，朱尔却怎么也不肯罢休。

“闭上你的臭嘴。”他说。

“总要有地方放才好，”达尔说，“爹一回来，我们就往外搬。”

“你不来帮我吗？”朱尔说，他那惨白的眼睛像是在喷火，他的脸也像是在打冷战。

“不，”达尔说，“我不要。还是等爹回来再说吧。”

于是，我们就站在门口，看着他把马车拖来拖去。马车停在斜坡上，有那么一会儿，我还以为他要把牲口棚后面的墙撞破呢。可就在这时候，吃午饭的铃声响起来。我叫他，他也不回头。“还是先吃午饭吧，”我说，“叫你小兄弟一声。”可是，他并不理我，于是我只好吃饭去了。那丫头去找小家伙了，可是没找着。我们吃到一半时，又听见他在大喊大叫了，他要把兀鹰赶走。

“真是不像话，”卢拉说，“不像话。”

“安斯已经尽力了，”我说，“跟斯诺普斯打交道，半个小时怎么够啊。他俩在那儿讨价还价，不在树荫下待上一下午才怪。”

“尽力？”她说，“尽力？谁不知道他是怎样尽力的。”

我想他也确实是这样。可问题是，他不卖，我们就要卖了。他是没法从谁手里买到一对牲口的，更别说是斯诺普斯了，因为他也没什么可抵押的，甚至想不出来还有什么是没有抵押出去的。因此，当我回到地里，看着我的那对骡子时，实际上已经在跟它们进行告别了。那晚，我回到家，牲口棚已经被太阳晒了整整一天，我也不确定自己会不会后悔。

我出去，到走廊那里时，他骑着马上来了，他们大家也都在那里。他看上去有些好笑：好像比之前更猥琐了，还有些骄傲呢。好像他做了什么自以为很漂亮的事，可是不确定别人会怎么看似的。

“我买了一对牲口。”他说。

“你从斯诺普斯那里买了一对牲口？”我说。

“我看，这一带做生意的也不止斯诺普斯一个吧。”他说。

“那是。”我说。他正看着朱尔，他的表情非常滑稽，可是朱尔已经下了走廊，正朝马儿走去。我琢磨着他是要看看安斯把它怎么了。

“朱尔。”安斯叫他。于是朱尔回过头。“过来。”安斯说。朱尔往回走了几步，又停下了。

“你要干什么？”他说。

“这么说你从斯诺普斯那里买了一对牲口？”我说，“我想今晚他就会把它们送过来吧？你们走莫森那边，路那么远，得赶早起程啊。”

接下来，他的神情可不像刚才那样了。他又摆出以往那般纠结的样子，嘴里不停地嘟哝着什么。

“我可是尽力了，”他说，“上帝做证，世界上再没有比我还苦，比我还委屈的人了。”

“能在买卖上占斯诺普斯上风的人，应该会感觉很好吧。”我说，“你给他什么了，安斯？”

他并不看我。“我把动产抵押给他了，就是我的耕耘机和播种机。”他说。

“可那也值不了四十美元哪。换作是你，有一对价值四十美元的牲口，要怎么才肯交出去？”

这会儿，他们都看着我，都很安静，动也不动一下。朱尔正要去马儿那边，可是走到一半，又停下了。“我还给了他别的东西。”安斯说着，又开始嘟哝，他站在那儿，好像等着谁来揍他，而他也决定不还手似的。

“给了什么？”达尔说。

“你也真是，”我说，“用我的牲口，用完还我就是了。我会设法应付的。”

“怪不得你昨天晚上去翻卡什的衣服呢。”达尔说。他说这话时，如同在念报纸。好像无论发生什么都与他无关似的。朱尔这会儿走回来

了，他站在那儿，用他那双大理石弹珠般的眼睛看着安斯。“那笔钱，卡什打算用它从苏拉特那里买那种会说话的机器。”达尔说。

安斯站在那儿，嘴里嘟哝着什么。朱尔看着他，眼睛很久都不眨一下。

“可也只是多了八美元哪。”达尔说。那声音听起来就好像他只是个旁听者，什么都不与他相干似的。“这点钱也不够买骡子啊。”

安斯迅速看了朱尔一眼，一双眼睛朝旁边瞥了一眼，然后视线继续下垂。“上帝做证，世上再没有比我还倒霉的人了。”他说。大家还是一句话也不说。他们只是看着，等着，而他也只是两眼扫过他们的脚，至多看到腿上，不敢再往上了。“还有那匹马。”他说。

“哪匹马？”朱尔问。安斯只是站在那儿。真该死，一个人要是连自己的儿子都驾驭不了，他就该把他赶出家门，不管他有多大。要是这点都办不到，那他就滚吧。换作我，就要这么做。“你是说，你要用我的马和他交换？”朱尔说。

安斯站在那里，两只胳膊甩动着。“十五年来，我嘴里连一颗牙齿都没有，”他说，“上帝也是知道的，他知道，十五年来，我都没好好吃上一顿粮食，他本是要人们吃了粮食长力气的，我东省省西省省，为了不让家人受苦，也为了买一副假牙，好吃上帝指定的食物。可是，我把那钱也掏出来了。我以为，我可以不吃粮食，我的儿子也就可以不骑马。天知道我是这么想的。”

朱尔双手贴在大腿上，看着安斯。然后，他移开视线。他看向外面的田地，他的脸僵硬如岩石，好像是别人在谈论另一个人的马，而他连听都懒得听似的。然后，他慢慢吐了一口痰，说了声“该死”，便转身走

到门口，解开马，坐了上去。他坐上马鞍时，它就开始动了，等到他坐上去，他俩就一路气势汹汹地飞驰，好像有人在后面追捕他们一样。他们就那样消失在我们的视线里，他们看起来就像一阵花斑旋风。

“看吧，”我说，“你用我的牲口不就好了吗。”可他偏不要。他们甚至都不愿再待下去，那小子一整天都在烈日下轰赶着兀鹰，他也差不多和其他几个一样疯狂了。“不管怎么说，都要把卡什留在这儿吧。”我说。可是他们偏不。他们为他铺了一个小床，也就是把被子铺在棺材上，然后把他放在上面，再把他的工具放在旁边。然后我们套上我的那对牲口，将马车往前赶了差不多一英里。

“要是在这儿还给你添麻烦，”安斯说，“你尽管说就是。”

“当然，”我说，“这儿还不错。也还安全。现在我们回去吃晚饭吧。”

“我谢谢你了，”安斯说，“我们篮子里还有些吃的。可以凑合一下。”

“哪儿来的吃的？”我说。

“从家里带来的。”

“可是现在恐怕已经馊了，”我说，“还是去吃点热的粮食吧。”

可他们还是不来。“我想我们能凑合的。”于是我就没管他们，他们围着一小堆火蹲在那里，等待着。天知道是在等什么。

我往家里走去。心里一直想着他们，想着那个骑马跑掉的小子。这也许是他们见他的最后一面了。我会怪他才怪呢。我并不是说他舍不得

他的马，而是他摆脱了安斯这个大傻瓜。

我当时就是那么想的。因为，像安斯这样讨厌的家伙，不弄出点事，让人去帮衬他才怪，即便他知道自己下一分钟就会恨不得踢自己一脚。这不，第二天吃过早饭后大约一个小时，那个帮斯诺普斯干活的尤斯塔斯·格里姆就牵了一对骡子来找安斯了。

“我还以为他和安斯没谈成呢。”我说。

“当然做成了，”尤斯塔斯回答说，“他们全都喜欢那匹马。就像我对斯诺普斯先生说的那样，这两头骡子五十美元他都会卖，因为要是他的叔叔福莱姆还留着当初从得克萨斯弄来的那批马，那么，安斯也就不可能——”

“你说那匹马？”我问，“可是安斯的儿子昨晚把它骑走了，说不定现在快到得克萨斯州了，但是安斯——”

“我也不知道是谁送来的，”尤斯塔斯说，“我也没见人。只是我今早去喂牲口的时候，看到那匹马在牲口棚里，我跟斯诺普斯先生说了，他就让我把这两头骡子送过来。”

嗯，那是他们见他的最后一面了，准没错。我估计，圣诞节一到，他们或许还会收到他从得克萨斯寄来的明信片呢。如果朱尔不走，我想我都要走了；我好像总是欠他什么似的。安斯可真能使唤人，这一点不假。他可真是个奇葩。

瓦达曼

现在一共有七只，它们在天上盘旋，就像一个个黑圈。

“哎，达尔，”我说，“你看到了吗？”

他抬起头。我们看着那高高在上的小黑圈，仿佛它们一动不动。

“昨天都才只有四只呢。”我说。

其实，昨天，牲口棚上方的兀鹰不止四只。

“它们要是还落在马车上，你知道我会干什么吗？”我说。

“干什么？”达尔说。

“我是不会让它们停在她身上的，”我说，“我也不会让它们停在卡什身上。”

卡什病了。他病了，还躺在棺材上面。但，我妈是一条鱼。

“到了莫森，一定得买些药，”爹说，“我看，我们得想办法弄点药。”

“你感觉怎么样，卡什？”达尔问。

“没什么大碍。”卡什说。

“要不帮你把腿架高一些？”达尔说。

卡什摔断了腿。他已经断过两次了。他躺在棺材上方，头下枕着裹起的被子，膝盖下垫着一块木头。

“我觉得，我们最好还是把他留在阿姆斯特德家。”爹说。

我从来都没有摔断过腿，爹也没有，达尔也没有。“不过有些肿

块，没什么大不了的，”卡什说，“这样一晃一晃，就成为一个肿块了，没什么事。”朱尔走了。他是在吃晚饭的时候骑着马走的。

“全都是因为她不让我们欠别人的人情，”爹说，“上帝做证，我已经尽力了。”因为朱尔的妈妈是一匹马吗，达尔？我说。

“要不我把绳子拉紧一点。”达尔说。所以我和朱尔都待在牲口棚里，而她在马车里，因为马是住在牲口棚里的，我还要不停地把那些兀鹰赶走。

“随便你吧。”卡什说。杜威·戴尔没摔断过腿，我也没有。卡什是我的哥哥。

我们停了下来。达尔松了绳子，卡什就开始冒汗了。他齙着牙齿。

“疼吗？”达尔问。

“我看你最好把它放回去。”卡什说。

于是达尔把绳子放了回去，他使劲地拉着。卡什齙着牙齿。

“疼吗？”达尔又问。

“不碍事。”卡什说。

“要不叫爹赶慢点？”达尔说。

“不，”卡什说，“没时间等了。不碍事。”

“我们得去莫森弄点药，”爹说，“我看不买药是不行的。”

“叫他继续赶车。”卡什说。于是我们继续向前。杜威·戴尔往后靠，给卡什擦着脸。卡什是我的哥哥。可朱尔的妈是一匹马。我妈是一条鱼。达尔说再遇到水的时候我们就能见着她，可是杜威·戴尔说，她在棺材里；那她怎么出来呢？从我打的洞里钻出来，钻进水里，等我们再到水边我就能见到她了。我妈不在棺材里。我妈没有那样的味道。我妈是一条鱼。

“我们到杰弗逊的时候，那些蛋糕可就有的看了。”达尔说。

杜威·戴尔并没有回头看。

“你最好在莫森就把它卖了。”达尔说。

“我们什么时候到莫森，达尔？”我问。

“明天吧，”达尔说，“要是这对牲口没有散架的话。斯诺普斯可是给它们喂的锯木。”

“为什么他要给它们喂锯木啊，达尔？”我问。

“你瞧，”达尔说，“看到了吗？”

现在又有九只了，它们高高在上，围成小小的黑圈。

我们走到山脚下时，爹停了下来，达尔、杜威·戴尔和我都下了马车。卡什不能动，因为他摔断了腿。“上来，骡子们。”爹说。那两头骡子艰难地走着；马车吱嘎作响。达尔、杜威·戴尔和我走在马车后面，往山上走去。我们走到山顶时，爹停下了，我们又回到马车里。

现在又有十只了。高高在上，围成小黑圈。

莫斯利

我碰巧抬头，看见她在窗外，正往屋里看。她并没有靠近窗玻璃，也没有特别看什么东西；只是站在那儿，头转向这边，她的眼睛正对着我，眼里却好像全是空白，好像在等着什么信号似的。等我再次抬起头，她就朝店铺门口走去了。

她在门口绊了一下，然后走了进来，乡下人就是这样。她那硬边的草帽不偏不倚地扣在头上，手里拿着一包用报纸包着的東西。我估计她身上只有两毛五分钱，最多也就一块钱，等她转一圈，没准儿最后只会买一把便宜的梳子，或是一瓶给黑人用的花露水，所以，我也懒得花时间去搭理她。不过，我看，虽然她脸色阴阴的，动作也不伶俐，可模样长得还算好看，她就这样，穿着格布裙子，也没怎么打扮，肯定比她买了决定要买的東西，或是说出她要买的東西之后还好看。我知道，她还没进来，就想好要买什么东西了。不过，你得让她慢慢来。于是我继续忙手头的事，本想等阿尔伯特空了过来招呼她，就在这时，阿尔伯特回来了。

“那个女的，”他说，“你最好去看看她要买什么。”

“她要什么？”我问。

“我不知道，她什么也不说，还是你过去吧。”

于是，我绕过柜台走出来。只见她光着脚，脚趾张开，自然地站在地板上，好像她习惯了光着脚似的。她正看着我，盯着不放，手里还拿着一包东西。她长着一双全世界最黑的眼睛，我不认识她。我不记得在莫森看到过她。“要买点什么？”我问她。

她还是什么都不说。只是盯着我看，眼睛一眨不眨。接着，她扭头去看冷饮柜那边的客人。然后，她的眼光掠过我，看向店铺后边。

“你是要买化妆品吗？”我问，“还是买药？”

“对。”她说。她又迅速转眼看向冷饮柜。所以我想，准是她妈或是谁让她来买妇科药，而她不好意思开口。我见她气血不错，不会是自己用，更何况她年纪这么小，不过刚懂得点事儿，怎么会用这种药。真气人，这些乡下女人就是不爱惜自己。但你还是要卖这种药，不然，在这里就没生意可做了。

“哦，”我说，“你要用来做什么呢？我们这儿有一”她又看着我，几乎是在说“嘘”，然后看着店铺后边。

“我想去后面说。”她说。

“好吧。”我说。你得依着她们，这样也省事儿。于是我跟着她来到店铺后边。她把手放在门上。“里面只有处方箱，其他什么也没有了，”我说，“你到底要买什么？”她停下来，看着我。好像她从自己脸上、眼睛上揭下了一层盖。她的眼睛有些呆滞，又怀有希望，那阴郁的神情，好像同时也做好了失望的准备。可是，她总是遇上了什么麻烦；我看得出来。“你遇到什么事了？”我问，“跟我说说你要什么。我可忙得很哪。”我并不是要催她，可是我们就不像他们那样闲得慌。

“是关于女人的问题。”她说。

“哦，”我说，“就这样？”我想她比表面上看起来还要年轻，或许是月经初潮让她吓坏了，又或许是月经失调，小姑娘都是这样的。“你妈呢？”我问，“你有没有妈？”

“在外面的马车上。”她说。

“那为什么不先问问她，再来买药呢，”我说，“凡是妇女都能帮你。”她看着我，我又看着她说，“你多大了？”

“十七。”她说。

“哦，”我说，“我还以为你……”她又看着我。可那时，光看她们的眼睛，仿佛她们都没有年纪，还什么都知道似的。“是太规律了，还是不规律呢？”

这时，她并不看我，也没有动。“是的，”她说，“我想是这样。”

“那，是哪种情况呢？”我问，“你不清楚吗？”那是罪孽，也是丢脸的事；可毕竟她们还是要从别人那里买。她站在那儿，并不看我。“你想买止住它的药？”

“不，”她说，“是这样，它已经停了。”

“那——”她的脸微微垂下，一动不动，她们跟男人们打交道的时候都是这样，所以你拿不准下一次闪电会从什么方向劈来。“你还没结婚，是吧？”我问。

“没有。”

“哦，”我说，“停了有多久，有五个月吗？”

“就两个月。”她说。

“嗯，可是我店里没有你要买的东西，”我说，“只有奶嘴。我劝你还是回家跟你爹说，让他想办法让那个人给你一张结婚证书，如果你有

爹的话。还有别的事吗？”

但她只是站在那儿，也不看我。

“我付得起钱。”她说。

“是你自己的，还是他给你的，如果他还算个男人的话？”

“他给我的。十美元。他说这就够了。”

“就算你给一千美元在我店里也买不到，再说十美元是不够的，”我说，“你还是听我的劝，回家找你爹或是你哥哥，要是你有哥哥的话，不然就去找你在路上遇到的第一个男人。”

但她并没有动。“莱夫说我可以在药店里买到药的。他说，只要跟你说我和他不会告诉任何人是你卖药给我们。”

“我只希望你的宝贝莱夫能亲自来一趟；我就这么想的。我不知道：那会儿，我是有点佩服他了——说不定他现在正在去得克萨斯的路上呢，也不是没可能。我可是有名声的药剂师，我在镇上开药店养家糊口，五十六年来，一直是虔诚的基督徒。要是我能打听出你的家长是谁，我真想亲自去告诉他们。”

这会儿，她又看着我。神情和模样又变成我一开始见她在窗外时那样空洞。“我本来也不知道，”她说，“是他说可以在药房买到药的。他还说，可能别人不愿意卖给我，可是，只要我有钱，而且保证不说出去……”

“他说的肯定不是这家药店，”我说，“他要是说了我的名字，就得拿出证据来。他要敢再说一次，我就拉他去找法律讨个公道，你大可原

封不动回去跟他这么说。”

“没准儿别的药店愿意卖呢。”她说。

“我可不想知道。居然找到我这里来了，真是——”这会儿，我看了她一眼，不过，这乡下人的生活还真是不容易；男人有时候……要说沉沦罪孽可以有借口的话——当然，这绝对是不行的。可是，人生在世，活得也够无聊的：也不可能到死都规规矩矩。“你听着，”我说，“你就打消了这个念头吧。你身体里的东西是上帝给的，即便他是借恶魔之手；要是他想取走它，也得他自己动手。你去找你的莱夫，用这十块钱和他把婚结了吧。”

“可是莱夫说，我在药店买得到的。”她说。

“那你就到别的地方去买，”我说，“在我这儿是买不到的。”

然后她就拿着手里的东西走了。她的脚在地板上擦出轻微的嘶嘶声。她又在门口绊了一下，然后出去了。透过玻璃，我看见她走下了街道。

剩下的事是阿尔伯特告诉我的。他说，马车停在格鲁梅特的五金店门口，从街上过的女人们都用手帕捂着鼻子，一群不怕臭的男人和孩子围在马车四周，听警长和那男人争吵。他坐在马车上，是个又瘦又高的男人，他说这是公共街道，他和别人一样有权经过，而警察让他快点过去；人们可受不了这气味。已经死了八天了，阿尔伯特说。他们是从约克纳帕塔法县的什么地方来的，要赶去杰弗逊。就像一块腐臭的奶酪，用那嘎吱作响的马车载着，要被搬去一个蚁窝，阿尔伯特说人们害怕它还没离开镇上就散架了，上面装着自己做的棺材，还有一个摔断腿的家伙躺在棺材上，老爹和小儿子还坐在里边，警长要他们快点过去。

“那是公共街道，”那男人说，“我觉得我们还可以停下来买些东西，和其他人一样。我们有钱，也没有法律规定，不能花钱买东西吧。”

他们停下来是要买水泥。另一个儿子在格鲁梅特的店铺里，他想让格鲁梅特拆开一包，他只买十美分的，最后，格鲁梅特只好拆开来，打发他出去。他们是要用水泥去补那家伙摔断的腿。

“这怎么可以，你会害死他的，”警长说，“你会让他失去这条腿的。你还是带他去看医生吧，还有，尽快把这东西给埋了。你们不知道危害公共健康是要坐牢的吗？”

“我们已经尽力了。”那老爹说。接下来，他讲了好长一番故事，说着他们是如何等着马车回来，桥是怎么被冲走，他们又是怎样走了八英里到达另一座桥，没想到那座桥也被冲走了，于是他们只好回来，从浅滩上涉水过河，结果，骡子又溺水了，然后他们又买了一对，却又发现路被冲走了，所以他们只能绕道从莫森过。接着，那个买水泥的人回来了，他叫他闭嘴。

“我们马上就走。”他对警长说。

“我们没想要给别人添麻烦。”爹说。

“你带他去看医生。”警长对那个买水泥的说。

“我想他没事的。”他说。

“倒不是我们铁石心肠。”警长说，“你们自己也很清楚是什么情况。”

“当然，”另一个人说，“等杜威·戴尔回来，我们就走。她去寄包裹了。”

于是他们站在那儿，周围的人们用手帕捂着脸，过了一会儿，那丫头回来了，手里拿着那包裹着报纸的东西。

“走吧，”买水泥的那个人说，“我们耽搁太久了。”于是他们上了马车继续赶路。吃晚饭的时候，我好像还能闻到那股味道。第二天，我碰到了警长，我吸了吸鼻子问：

“你闻到什么了吗？”

“我想他们这会儿已经到杰弗逊了吧。”他说。

“或是在监狱里。哦，谢天谢地，不是在我们这里的监狱。”

“可不是嘛。”他说。

达尔

“就是这里了。”爹说，他把骡子拉上去，坐在那儿，看着那边的人家。“我们可以去那边打点水。”

“没错，”我说，“你得向他们借一只桶，杜威·戴尔。”

“天知道，”爹说，“我是不愿意欠别人的，天知道。”

“要是见到大小合适的罐子，就把它带过来。”我说。杜威·戴尔从马车上下来，手里拿着包裹。“要在莫森卖这些蛋糕，怎么有这么多麻烦。”我说。我们的生命怎么就闯进了这没有风也没有声音的、疲倦地

重复的疲倦姿态中，成为昔日那没有手在没有弦上的弹拨的回声。黄昏时分，我们陷入慌乱的姿态，那是玩偶们僵死时的姿态。卡什摔断了腿，锯木正在往外流。他的血都快要流干了。

“我是不愿意欠别人情分的，”爹说，“天知道。”

“那你自己去打点水吧，”我说，“我们可以用卡什的帽子舀水。”

杜威·戴尔回来的时候，一个男人跟着她出来。他在那边停下，她走过来了。他就站在那儿，过了一会儿，他回屋去了，站在走廊上，看着我们。

“我们还是别把他抬下来的好，”爹说，“我们就在这儿给他治吧。”

“你想下来吗，卡什？”我说。

“我们明天能到杰弗逊吗？”他说。他看着我们，眼中带着质问的神情，专注又哀伤，“我撑得住。”

“那样会舒坦一点，”爹说，“不让它们碰到一起。”

“我撑得住，”卡什说，“不就一天吗，没什么大不了的。”他看着我们，他的眼睛在那张灰瘦的脸上大睁着，一副询问的模样。“已经接上一点了。”他说。

“买都已经买了。”爹说。

我在罐子里和水泥，将水缓缓倒入，再一圈圈搅动那稠厚的水泥。我把罐子拿到马车旁，让卡什看。他平躺着，瘦削的轮廓映衬在天空下，他的表情痛苦而深远。“看起来怎么样？”我问他。

“你别放太多水，不然起不了作用。”他说。

“这样算多吗？”

“你可以放些沙子进去，”他说，“大不了就是一天，我还撑得住。”

瓦达曼沿着我们来时的路往回走，去河边拿了些沙子回来，慢慢地倒进那稠厚的水泥中。我又拿到马车旁边。

“这下好了吧？”

“差不多了，”卡什说，“我还可以再撑一会儿。没什么大不了的。”

我们小心翼翼地拆开夹板，慢慢把水泥倒在他脚上。

“小心点，”卡什说，“别弄到棺材上了。”

“知道了。”我说。杜威·戴尔从她的包裹上扯下一块纸，水泥从卡什身上滴下来的时候，她就用纸擦掉。

“感觉怎么样？”

“挺好的，”他说，“凉丝丝的，挺好的。”

“希望能让你好过些，”爹说，“你要原谅我。我也没想到会是这样。”

“挺好的。”卡什说。

要是你能闯过这一关就好了。那就好了，要是你能闯过这一关。

我们又把夹板放好，还缠上绳子，拉紧，这样一来，那淡青色的、

稠厚的水泥就慢慢从绳子的缝隙中渗出，卡什静静地看着我们，一副深深疑问的表情。

“这样就把腿固定住了。”我说。

“是啊，”卡什说，“我很感谢你们。”

我们坐在马车上，扭头看他¹。他在我身后跟上来，脊背僵直，一脸木然，只有臀部以下在移动。他一路走上来，一句话也不说，他那苍白而呆滞的眼睛嵌在那颧骨突出的、阴沉的脸上，他上了马车。

“这里是上坡，”爹说，“我看你们要下来走几步了。”

¹指朱尔。——译者注

瓦达曼

达尔、朱尔、杜威·戴尔和我正在往坡上走，我们跟在马车后面。朱尔回来了。他走上路来，进了马车。他在走路。朱尔再也没有马了。朱尔是我的哥哥。卡什也是我的哥哥。卡什的腿摔断了。我们把卡什的腿接上，他就不会疼了。卡什是我的哥哥。朱尔也是我的哥哥，只是他的腿没有摔断。

现在只有五只了，高高在上，围成小小的黑圈。

“它们晚上待在哪里呢，达尔？”我问，“我们晚上停在牲口棚时，它们在哪儿待着呢？”

坡路直通天上。太阳从山坡背后升起来，骡子、马车和爹在太阳下赶路。他们在太阳底下慢悠悠地往前赶，你都无法看他们。杰弗逊的橱

窗里有红色的火车轨道。那轨道闪着光一圈又一圈地跑。这是杜威·戴尔说的。

今晚，我要看看，当我们停在牲口棚时，它们在哪儿。

达尔

“朱尔，”我问，“你是谁的儿子啊？”

风从牲口棚吹起，于是我们把她放在苹果树下，在那里，月光照着苹果树，在那浅睡的木板上投下斑驳的阴影，而木板里面不时会传来她的阵阵絮语。我们走上去时，一只猫从棺材上跳下，逃走了，那银色的爪子和银色的眼，在树影中一闪而过。

“你妈是一匹马，可谁又是你爹呢，朱尔？”

“你这个该死的杂种。”

“别叫我杂种。”我说。

“你这个杂种。”

“别那样叫我，朱尔。”在高高照下的月光中，他的眼睛如同两块白纸贴在高高掷起的足球上。

晚饭过后，卡什开始轻轻冒汗。“有一点热了，”他说，“我估计是太阳晒了一整天的缘故吧。”

“你要在上面浇点水吗？”我们问他，“或许那样要舒服些。”

“那我感谢你们，”卡什说，“我估计是太阳晒的缘故。我早该想到

盖着它的。”

“我们才该想到，”我们说，“你是料不到的。”

“我竟没注意它在发热，”卡什说，“我应该小心点的。”

于是我们淋了些水在上面。他裹在水泥里的腿和脚看上去像是被煮熟了一样。“好些了吗？”我们问他。

“感谢你们了，”卡什说，“好些了。”

杜威·戴尔用裙摆帮他擦脸。

“看你能不能睡一会儿吧。”我们说。

“好啊，”卡什说，“真是谢谢了。我现在感觉好点了。”

朱尔，我说，你爹是谁啊，朱尔？

该死的。该死的。

瓦达曼

她在苹果树下，达尔和我在月亮下穿行，一只猫从棺材上跳下来，逃走了，我们听到它在棺材里发出声音。

“听到了吗？”达尔说，“竖起耳朵听。”

我竖起耳朵，听到了她的声音。只是，我听不清她在说些什么。

“她在说什么，达尔？”我问，“她在和谁说话？”

“她在和上帝说话，”达尔说，“她在求他帮助她。”

“她要他做什么？”我问。

“她要他把她藏起来，不让男人们看见。”达尔说。

“为什么她要藏起来，不让男人们看见？”

“为了能安息。”达尔说。

“她为什么想安息啊，达尔？”

“听。”达尔说。我们听到了她的声音。我们听到她翻过身来。“听啊。”达尔说。

“她在翻身，”我说，“她在透过木头看我。”

“是呀。”达尔说。

“她怎么能透过木头看呢，达尔？”

“过来，”达尔说，“我们得让她安静下来，来。”

“她看不见我们，因为洞在棺材顶上呢。”我说，“她怎么看得见呢，达尔？”

“我们去看看卡什吧。”达尔说。

我看到了一些事，杜威·戴尔让我不要跟别人说。

卡什的腿受伤了。我们今天下午给他接上了，可他又开始痛了。于是我们把水淋在他的腿上，然后他就好些了。

“我感觉好些了，”卡什说，“谢谢你们了。”

“试着睡一觉吧。”我们说。

“我好些了，”卡什说，“真是谢谢你们。”

我看见了一些事，杜威·戴尔叫我不要跟别人说。不是关于爹的，也不是关于卡什的，不是关于朱尔的，也不是关于杜威·戴尔的，更不是关于我的。

杜威·戴尔和我今晚就睡在硬板小床上。小床在走廊后方，我们在那儿可以看见牲口棚，月光照耀着床的一半，我们半身躺在光明中，半身躺在黑暗里，月光洒在我们的腿上。于是我要去看看，晚上当我们在牲口棚时，它们究竟待在哪里。今晚，我们没有在牲口棚，但我能看到牲口棚，所以今晚我就要看看它们究竟待在哪里。

我们躺在小床上，月光照耀着我们的双腿。

“看哪，”我说，“我的腿看上去是黑色的，你的腿也是。”

“去睡觉。”杜威·戴尔说。

杰弗逊是个宁远之地。

“杜威·戴尔。”

“什么？”

“现在不是圣诞节，它怎么会在那儿？”

它发着光跑了一圈又一圈。然后，那火车轨道也发着光跑了一圈又

一圈。

“你说什么在那儿？”

“火车呀。在窗子那里。”

“你睡觉吧，要是它在那儿的话，你明天也可以看到。”

或许圣诞老人不会知道他们是城里的孩子。

“杜威·戴尔。”

“你睡觉吧。他不会让那些城里的孩子得去的。”

它们就在窗子后面，红色的轨道，发着光跑了一圈又一圈。看得我心痛。然后爹、朱尔、达尔和吉利斯皮先生家的儿子来了。小吉利斯皮的腿肚都露出来了。月光照耀下，他的腿显得毛茸茸的。他们绕过屋子，朝苹果树走去。

“他们要干什么，杜威·戴尔？”

他们绕过屋子朝苹果树走去了。

“我闻到她的气味了，”我说，“你闻到了吗？”

“嘘，”杜威·戴尔说，“风的方向改变了。快睡了吧。”

所以，很快我就会知道它们晚上待在哪里了。他们绕过屋子，然后借着月光穿过院子，把她抬了起来。他们把她搬到下面的牲口棚去，月光静静地、水平地照在她身上。然后，他们就回来了。吉利斯皮先生家孩子的腿毛茸茸的。然后我就等着，我说，杜威·戴尔？我等着，然后

跑出去找它们，看看它们晚上待在哪里，我看到了一些东西，可是杜威·戴尔叫我不要跟别人说。

达尔

他靠在黑暗的门上，仿佛也是黑暗的化身，他穿着内衣，瘦得就像一匹赛马，最初的火光照着他。他突然跳到地上，脸上带着愤怒而不敢相信的表情。他甚至都不转一下头或是眼睛，就看见了我，他的眼睛里，就像火焰喷出红光。“过来。”他说着跳下斜坡朝牲口棚走去。

一时间，他奔跑在月光之下，犹如一条银带。突然，牲口棚的整个阁楼起了火，像是塞了火药一般，突然一阵无声的爆炸后，他就像用铁片剪成的扁平的人像一般弹了出来。

在前边，有着方形孔的圆锥形雕花门，被那像立体派昆虫那样搭在锯木架上的又方又扁的棺材挤破了。爹、吉利斯皮、马克和杜威·戴尔在我身后赶了过来。

他在棺材那里停下，然后弯腰看着我，他的脸上带着愤怒的表情。头顶的火焰如雷鸣闪电；一股冷风从我们身旁穿过，风里一点热气都没有，一撮儿干草突然冲出来，又迅速飞到畜栏那里，还有一匹马在畜栏里长嘶。“快，”我说，“救马。”

他瞪眼看了我一会儿，然后又看向头上的屋顶，然后跳到畜栏里的马儿身旁。它又踹又踢，发出的撞击声被吸进火焰声中，然后，那声音听起来就像一列无限长的火车开过一座无限长的大桥。吉利斯皮和马克从我身边过去，他们穿着齐膝的睡衣，他们大喊着，声音尖锐而高亢、意味无穷，同时又狂野而悲伤：“……奶牛……畜栏……”吉利斯皮的睡

衣被风吹到了前面，并像气球一样在他多毛的大腿上鼓起。

畜栏的门一下子关上了。朱尔用屁股把门撞开，然后弓着背，进去拉着马的头把它往外拖，他的肌肉在衣服底下鼓了起来。火焰中，他转动着的眼睛也像是一团柔和、迅疾，而又狂野的乳白色的火苗；它到处挣扎的时候，肌肉鼓起来，将朱尔扯离了地面。他慢慢地、小心翼翼地拽着它往前走；他又扭过头，愤怒地扫了我一眼。即便他们走出了牲口棚，马儿还在挣扎，还在往后奔，直到吉利斯皮从我身边过去，他一路把这匹疯马打了出去。他用睡衣包着骡子的头，自己裸着身子。

这时，朱尔跑着回来了；他又看了棺材一眼，继续朝前走去。“母牛呢？”他从我身旁走过时，吼道。我跟着他。马克在畜栏里和另一头骡子周旋。它的头映入火焰中时，我看见他的眼睛也在狂野地转动着，可却没有声音。它就站在那儿，扭头看着马克，一旦他走近，就用后蹄踢他。他回头看着我们，他的眼睛和嘴巴，就像脸上的三个洞，而母牛的花斑则像盘子里的英国豌豆。他的声音尖锐、高亢而遥远……

“我没辙了……”好像声音从他的唇边被扫开了，好像他是在一个遥远到声音穿过来都会枯竭的地方和我们说话。朱尔从我们身边溜过去；骡子一边旋动，一边踢脚，可是他已经抓住了它的头。我对马克说：

“睡衣。裹住它的头。”

马克瞪了我一眼，然后把睡衣脱了，套在骡子的头上，它立马就安静下来了。朱尔在朝着他喊：“奶牛呢？奶牛呢？”

“在后面，”马克喊道，“在最后边那个畜栏里。”

我们进去时，奶牛盯着我们。她在角落后方，低着头，嘴里还快速

嚼着什么东西。可她一动不动。朱尔停了下来，往上瞧了瞧，突然，我们看到通往阁楼的路都没了，都变成了火焰；小小的火花如雨一般落下。他四处看了看。食槽下面还有一根挤奶时用的三条腿的凳子。于是他捡起来，朝后墙的板子砸去。他砸开了一块板子，然后两块，三块；我们赶过去把那些砸开的板子的碎片拿开。我们弯着身走到砸开的口子那里时，什么东西在背后向我们冲过来。是那头奶牛；她一口气从我们中间穿过，跑到外边的火光中，她那僵直的尾巴就像被钉在尾椎骨上的一把笤帚。

朱尔转身要进牲口棚。“这里，”我说，“朱尔！”我抓着他；他把我的手打落。“你这个笨蛋，”我说，“你没看到那边过不去吗？”墙那边的路看上去就像探照灯照在雨里。“来，”我说，“走这边。”

我们从缺口中穿过去，他就开始跑。“朱尔。”我边跑边叫他。他跑过每一个角落，眼看我到这个角落时，他已经跑到另一个角落去了，他跑在火焰中，就像用铁片剪成的人形。爹、吉利斯皮和马克远在一边，他们站在黑暗中，看着牲口棚，那时，月光已经退去。“抓住他！”我喊道，“让他停下！”

我走到前边时，他正和吉利斯皮扭在一起，一个穿着睡衣，一个赤裸着。他们就像希腊饰带上的两幅人像，被那红色的火焰隔绝在一切事实之外。我还没追上他，他就把吉利斯皮打倒在地，回到牲口棚去了。

此时，大火的声音已变得格外平静，就像河水的声音一样。朱尔跑到棺材最里边的那一头，弯下身，我们看着门口那逐渐熔化的台口。干草燃烧起来，火星往下落，像燃烧的珠帘，他往上看了一眼，然后透过珠帘看了看我们，我看到他的口型好像是在叫我的名字。

“朱尔！”杜威·戴尔喊道，“朱尔！”这一喊，在我听来，好像累积了她最后五分钟的声音，爹和马克抓着她时，我还听到她扭打挣扎的声音。她尖声叫着“朱尔！朱尔！”可他不再看着我们。我们看见他把棺材倒立起来，只手托起，让它从锯架上滑下。想不到那棺材竟有那么高，把他都挡住了。若不是亲眼看见，我才不会相信安迪·本德伦需要这么大的空间才能舒服地躺下。过了一会儿，棺材立起来，火星落在上面又迸溅开，似又迸溅出更多火星。接着，棺材渐渐往前倒，越来越快，这时，朱尔出现了，火星同样落在他的身上然后迸溅开，他看上去就像被一层薄薄的火晕围住。棺材也不停下，又立了起来，然后顿了一下，往前撞，穿过了珠帘。这时，朱尔骑在它上面，抓着它，直到它往下冲，将他往前带了出来，然后马克往前跳进一股淡淡的肉烧焦的味道里，他拍打着朱尔内衣上那些红边的洞，它们就像盛开的鲜花。

瓦达曼

我去找它们晚上待在哪儿时，看到了一些东西。他们说：“达尔呢？达尔去了哪里？”

他们又把她抬回苹果树下。

牲口棚一片红色，但它此刻已经不再是牲口棚了。它已经塌了，那团红色向上旋起。牲口棚变成了红色的碎片向上旋起，冲击着天空和天上的星星，以至于星星都向后退去了。

然后卡什醒了。他扭着头，左看看右看看，脸上还冒着汗。

“你还要再浇点水吗，卡什？”杜威·戴尔说。

卡什的腿脚都变成黑的了。我们拿着提灯去看变黑的地方。

“你的脚看上去就像黑鬼的脚，卡什。”我说。

“我看我们得把水泥打碎。”爹说。

“你们怎么会用水泥包腿脚呢，真该死。”吉利斯皮先生说。

“我以为多少可以固定住，”爹说，“我只是想帮他。”

他们拿来了扁铁和锤子。杜威·戴尔提着灯。他们不得不使劲砸。接下来，卡什睡过去了。

“他已经睡着了，”我说，“睡着就不会痛了。”

可它只是裂了缝，就是不掉下来。

“皮都要揭下来，”吉利斯皮先生说，“你们为什么要涂水泥，就没人想到先在他腿上打上油膏吗？”

“我也只是想帮帮他，”爹说，“是达尔涂上去的。”

“达尔呢？”他们说。

“难道你们个个都没有头脑吗？”吉利斯皮先生说，“我本以为达尔还稍微有些头脑。”

朱尔头朝下躺着。他的背是红色的。杜威·戴尔在往上面擦药。那药是用黄油和油烟做成的，用来治疗烧伤的。然后，他的背就变成黑色的了。

“痛吗，朱尔？”我问。“你的背就像黑鬼的背，朱尔。”我说。卡什的腿和脚看起来也像是黑鬼的。然后，他们把它敲碎了。卡什的腿流血

了。

“你回去躺下，”杜威·戴尔说，“你该睡觉了。”

“达尔呢？”他们问。

他出去了，在苹果树那里和她待在一起，躺在她上方。他在那儿，猫就不会回来。我说：“你要把猫赶走吗，达尔？”

月光也洒在他的身上。在她上面是一动不动，可在他身上，却上下跳动着。

“你不必哭，”我说，“朱尔把她救出来了。你不必哭了，达尔。”

牲口棚一片红色。它曾经比这还要红。然后，它往上旋起，让星星都退回去了，免得掉下来。它就像那火车一样让我心痛。

我去找它们晚上待在哪儿时，看到了一些东西，杜威·戴尔要我不准跟别人说。

达尔

到目前为止，我们经过了一个接一个挂着招牌的商店，有杂货店、服装店、成药店、车库和咖啡馆。随着我们的临近，英里标示牌上显示的里程也在一点点减少，变得越来越简单了：三英里。两英里。我们又坐上了马车，从小山顶上俯视而下，可见烟雾贴着低平的地面，在这无风的下午似乎静止不动了。

“那是吗，达尔？”瓦达曼说，“那是杰弗逊镇吗？”他也日渐消瘦了；像我们一样，脸上表情紧张，神色恍惚，面容憔悴。

“是的。”我说。他抬起头，看着天空。在天穹之上，云朵环绕交缠成圈，正渐渐收缩，像烟雾一样，经过形成和发展引发的外形变化相似，但没有运动的迹象，向前伸展或向后收缩。我们再次爬上马车的时候，卡什正躺在箱子上，腿上绑着的水泥块已经碎裂，发出噼噼啪啪的声音。两头枯瘦的骡子精神萎靡，拖着马车霍霍有声、哐当哐当向着山下去了。

“我们得带他去看医生。”爹说，“我想也没其他法子了。”朱尔的衬衫背后紧贴肉的地方慢慢泛出来油腻的黑印。山谷中生意盎然。它把旧时的恐惧、私欲和绝望一扫而光，都吹到小山丘上去了。这也就是为何你一定要徒步爬山，这样你就可以乘车下来了。

杜威·戴尔坐在车座上，报纸包起来的包裹放在她的膝上。山脚下的道路平坦，两边是围墙似的茂密的树林。当我们抵达这里时，她开始悄悄环视四周，从路的一侧看到另一侧。最后，她说：“我要停一下。”

爹看向她，他的侧面轮廓瘦削，神情中带着早已料到又厌烦的意味。他并没有勒住骡子。“去做什么？”

“我要到那边的灌木丛去一下。”杜威·戴尔说。

爹没有勒住骡子。“你难道不能等等，到我们进了城再说吗？现在只有不到一英里的路了。”

“停一下，”杜威·戴尔说，“我要到灌木丛那边去一下。”

爹停在路中间，我们看杜威·戴尔拿着包裹下了车。她没有回头看。

“为什么不把你的蛋糕留下呢？”我说，“我们会看着的。”

她继续向下面去了，不理睬我们。

“如果等到我们进了城，她又怎么知道到哪儿去方便呢？”瓦达曼说，“如果在城里，你会去哪儿方便呢，杜威·戴尔？”

她把包裹放下，转身消失在灌木丛和树木中。

“不要再耽误时间了。”爹说，“我们没时间可浪费了。”她没有回答。过了一会儿，我们甚至都听不到她的声音了。“我们就应该像阿姆斯特德和吉利斯皮说的，捎信到城里去，叫人把坑挖好准备着。”他说。

“那你为什么不这样做呢？”我说，“你本可以打电话的。”

“何必呢？”朱尔说，“谁不能在地上挖个洞呢？”

一辆汽车从山上开来。它开始摁喇叭了，一边把速度降下来。它换了低挡沿着路边下来了，外侧的车轮都进了沟里，经过我们往前方去了。瓦达曼一直看着它，直到它在视线中消失。

“现在还有多远，达尔？”他说。

“不远了。”我说。

“我们应该那样办的。”爹说，“只是除了她的骨肉，我就不想再麻烦别人了。”

“谁不能在地上挖个坑呢？”朱尔说。

“你这样说她的墓穴，这是大不敬。”爹说，“你们都不明白这是怎

么一回事。你们从来没有真正爱过她，你们没有。”朱尔默然以应，他直挺挺地坐着，显得有些生硬，弓着腰板使衬衫突出一大截。他那涨得通红的下巴支了出来。

杜威·戴尔回来了。我们看着她从树丛中出来，拿着包裹，爬上马车。她现在穿着星期天才穿的、最好的衣服，戴着珠链，还有皮鞋和长袜。

“我记得我告诉过你把这些衣服留在家里。”爹说。她不搭理，也不看我们。她先把包裹放上马车，接着就坐上来了。马车继续向前进发。

“现在前面还有几座小山丘，达尔？”瓦达曼说。

“就一座了。”我说，“下一座山就直通镇上了。”

这座山是红沙质的，山的两边和连片的黑人小木屋相接；前方天空下，电话线交错纵横，往来不绝。法院的时钟悬挂在树林间，隐约可见。车轮碾过沙子，发出沙沙的声音，仿佛整片大地都在嘘声迎我们入境。随着山势开始升高，我从马车上下来。

我们跟着马车，沙沙作响的车轮，走过一间间小木屋。这时，一张张面孔突然凑到门口来，露出一对对眼白。我们突然听到惊喊声。朱尔原本从这一边看向另一边；现在他的头转向前方，我可以看到他的耳朵气得通红。三个黑人在我们前面，沿着路边走着；他们前面十英尺处是一个行进中的白人。当我们经过那几个黑人时，他们的头猛地转过来，脸上带着震惊和本能的愤怒。“伟大的上帝啊，”一个说，“他们的马车上放的是什么？”

朱尔旋转头。“狗娘养的。”他骂道。此时，与他并排而立的是那个

白人。这样，他也就停下了脚步。朱尔就像那一瞬间突然瞎了眼一般，因为他是转头时朝着白人骂的。

“达尔！”卡什在马车上惊道。我抓住朱尔。白人已经向后退了一步，他仍然显得目瞪口呆，接着他的下巴收紧，牙关紧咬。朱尔俯身欺上去，他的下巴肌肉变白了。

“你说什么来着？”他说。

“嘿，”我说，“先生，他不是存心的。朱尔。”当我上前去拦他时，他正朝那个男子扑过去。我抓住他的手臂，我们纠缠在一起。朱尔根本就不向我看。他正奋力挣脱他的手臂。当我再次看向那个男子时，他的手里已经拿着一把打开的小刀了。

“别动手，先生。”我说，“我会拦住他的。朱尔。”

“以为自己是个城里人就这么嚣张。”朱尔说着气喘吁吁，猛地要挣开我。“狗娘养的。”他骂道。

那个男子走过来。他开始贴近我的身体，一边看着朱尔，小刀低放靠着他的胁腹。“没人敢这样骂我。”他说。爹从车上下来，杜威·戴尔抱着朱尔，把他往边上推。我松开他，转头面向那个男子。

“等一下。”我说，“他不是那个意思。他是生病了；昨晚在大火中烧伤了，他精神不正常。”

“不管火不火的，”他说，“没有人胆敢这样骂我。”

“他以为你说了他什么。”我说。

“我压根就没和他说过话，此前我都没见过他。”

“上帝啊，”爹说，“上帝啊。”

“我知道，”我说，“他不是存心的。他会收回自己的话的。”

“那么，让他收回。”

“收好你的刀。他会有的。”

男子先看了看我，又看了看朱尔。朱尔现在平静了。

“把你的刀收起来。”我说。

那个男子把小刀折起来。

“上帝保佑。”爹说，“上帝保佑。”

“告诉他，你不是存心的，朱尔。”我说。

“我以为他骂了我。”朱尔说，“就是因为他——”

“好了。”我说，“告诉他，你不是存心的。”

“我不是存心的。”朱尔说。

“他最好不是，”他说，“骂我——”

“你以为他会怕吗？”我说。

男子看着我。“我可没有这样说过。”他说。

朱尔说：“想都不要想。”

“闭嘴，”我说，“走吧。继续走吧，爹。”

马车开动。那个男子站在那儿看着我们。朱尔没回头看。“朱尔差点就揍了他一顿。”瓦达曼说。

我们临近山顶，那里街道畅通，汽车往来不息；骡子把马车拉上了山顶，行驶在街道上。爹叫我们停了下来。前面街道延伸到了通向广场和法院门前的交会处，法院门前矗立着一座纪念碑。当街上攒动的人头一例用我们熟知的表情看过来时，我们就又再次登上马车出发了。只有朱尔没有。即便在马车开动的时候，他也没有爬上车来。“上来，朱尔，”我说，“走吧，我们离开这儿。”但他还是没上来，反而把自己的脚放在后轮的转轴上，一手抓支柱，脚下踩着平稳转动的转轴，接着他又抬起另一只脚放在上面，蹲在那里，直直地盯着前方，一动不动，瘦削的身形，脊背直挺，仿佛镶嵌其间的半尊人像。

卡什

没有别的法子了。要么送他去精神病院，要么吉利斯皮就会起诉我们，因为他知道了一点达尔放火的事情了。我不知道他是怎么得知的，但他确实知道了。瓦达曼看着他干的，不过他发誓他不会告诉任何人，除了杜威·戴尔，她也叫他别告诉任何人。但吉利斯皮知道了。他迟早猜到的。就凭那天夜里他看到达尔的奇怪举动，他也会猜到的。

所以爹说：“我想的确没有其他法子了。”接着朱尔说：

“你现在要收拾他？”

“收拾他？”爹说。

“把他抓住，接着绑起来。”朱尔说，“该死的。你们是想等到他放火把牲口和马车一起烧了？”

但这根本没必要。“根本就没这必要啊。”我说，“我们可以等到把她安葬了再说。”一个人即将在桎梏中度过他的余生，他应该在此之前享受一下可以得到的乐趣。

“我想他到时应该到场。”爹说，“天知道，这是对我的惩罚啊。似乎，厄运一来，就没完没了了。”

有时，我拿不准谁有权利说一个人疯还是没疯。有时，我觉得我们都并非纯粹的疯狂，抑或纯粹的理智，直到我们找到的平衡成为评判标准。似乎，一个人的所作所为本身无关紧要，而大多数人的看法才至为关键。

因为朱尔对他太残酷了。当然啦，是朱尔的马换的钱才把她送到离镇上这么近的地方。就此而言，达尔是在试图把他的马的价值给毁了。但在我们过河之前和之后，我想过许多次，如果让她从我们手中掉落，以某种清洁的方式埋葬，那就真是神明保佑了。而对我来说，朱尔如此费尽力气，把她从河里弄出来，似乎是在和上帝作对。接着，当达尔明白似乎需要有人做点事的时候，我基本相信他的所作所为是对的。不过，我认为放火烧别人的谷仓，差点儿烧死别人的牲口，使他的财产蒙受损失，这是不合道理的。这就是我认为他的确疯了的依据。这就是为何他不能和大家想到一块去。我认为除了认同大多数人的说法外，也没别的办法了。

但在某种程度上说，这是耻辱。大家似乎摆脱了过去正确的教义，说是把钉子钉进去，把边缘修整好，就像供自己使用，让自己舒服的一

样。就像有些人有光滑、漂亮的木板建造法院，而其他人只有适合建造鸡舍的粗糙木料。不过，建造一个严实的鸡舍总比粗制滥造的法院好，不过反正他们无论造工粗劣或优质，都不会太过影响到一个人的心情。

于是我们沿着大街朝着广场去了。他说：“我们最好先带卡什去看医生。我们把他留在那儿，再回来接他。”这就是了。因为我和他出生时间紧挨着，几乎早了随后陆续出生的朱尔和杜威·戴尔和瓦达曼十年。我觉得和他们亲近，不过我说不清是怎么回事。我作为最长的哥哥，早就想通了他的心事——我也说不清这是怎么回事。

爹看着我，然后又看着他，嘴里不停地嘟哝着。

“走吧，”我说，“我们得先把这件事办了。”

“她希望我们都能在场。”爹说。

“让卡什先去看医生吧，”达尔说，“她会等的，她都已经等了九天。”

“你们都不明白，”爹说，“要是你和一个人年轻时就在一起，她看着你变老，你看着她变老。看着晚年就这么来了，等到有一天，你却听到一个人说那根本无所谓，就知道了这是源于这个残酷的世界的真相，就明白了一个人所有的悲痛和考验。你们都不明白。”

“我们还得把墓穴挖好。”我说。

“阿姆斯特德和吉利斯皮都跟你说过，叫你提前捎信。”达尔说，“难道你现在不想去皮博迪大夫那里吗，卡什？”

“走吧，”我说，“腿现在好多了。还是先把其他事都做了。”

“如果现在去挖，”爹说，“我们也忘记拿铁锹了。”

“没错。”达尔说，“我会去五金店。我们得买一把。”

“挺贵的呢。”爹说。

“你吝惜为她花这点钱吗？”达尔说。

“走吧，买一把铁锹来。”朱尔说，“嘿，给我钱。”

但是爹并没有就此消停。“我想，我们可以借到铁锹，”他说，“我料想这里总有好心人的。”于是达尔坐在原地，我们去了。还有朱尔蹲在后挡板上注视着达尔的脑后部。他看起来就像那类斗牛犬，从来不叫，绷紧牵狗绳半蹲着，随时会扑向盯着的猎物。

我们待在本德伦太太的房前，他一直都这样，听着音乐，用他那白色的、冷酷的眼睛注视着达尔的脑后部。

房子里播放着音乐。用的是格拉弗风留声机中的一种。播放出来很自然，就像乐队在演奏。

“你想去皮博迪大夫那里吗？”达尔说，“他们可以在这里等，然后告诉爹，我可以驾车送你到皮博迪大夫那里，接着回来找他们。”

“不。”我说。让她先下葬更好，现在我们离目标如此近了，只要等着爹借来铲子就好了。他驱车沿着街道行驶，直到我们听到了音乐。

“也许他们在这里借到了一把。”他说。他把马车停在本德伦夫人的屋前。好像他已经知道一样。有时我想，如果一个劳动的人在眼前就可以找到事做，一个懒人同样可以偷懒。于是，他像是预先知道一样，停

在那栋小白屋前，那里播放着音乐。我们在那里听着音乐等候。我相信，可以通过讨价还价，花五美元从苏拉特先生那里买到一把。享受音乐是一件令身心舒爽的事情。“也许他们在这里借到了一把。”爹说。

“你想要朱尔去，”达尔说，“还是我去好些呢？”

“我想还是我自己去吧。”爹说。他跳下马车，沿着小路绕过那座房子往后面去了。音乐停了，接着又再次响起。

“他也会借到的。”达尔说。

“唉。”我说。这就像他已经料到，犹如他能看穿墙壁和预知接下来十分钟发生的事情一样。

只是比十分钟多出了几分钟而已。音乐停了下来，以后就再也没出现过好的曲调了。房子的后面爹和她正在交谈。我们在车上等着。

“你让我带你去皮博迪大夫那里吧。”达尔说。

“不。”我说，“我们得先让她下葬。”

“要是他能回来，才行。”朱尔说。他开始咒骂。他起身从马车上下去了。“我要走了。”他说。这时，我们看到爹回来了。他拿着两把铁锹，绕过那栋房子。他把铁锹放上车，我们就走了。音乐再也没有响起。爹回头看着那座房子。他把手举起来一点点，接着我看见窗户里的帘子撩开了一点，里面露出她的脸。

不过，最古怪的是杜威·戴尔。让我吃惊不已。我很久以前就明白为什么大家会说达尔奇怪，不过那都不是个人恩怨。就像达尔也身不由己，和你一样，你却为此感到愤怒，这不就无异于你踩进泥坑，污泥溅

到身上，然后你就恼恨泥坑吗。然后，我总有些怀疑他和杜威·戴尔之间有些事情心照不宣。如果我说，在我们这些兄弟姐妹中，她有更偏爱的人，那就是达尔。我们把土填上，盖好。随后，马车驶出墓园门，转入小巷，有两个人已经在那儿等着了。当他们走过来朝他走去之时，他猛地向后躲，在朱尔还没顾得上动手的时候，杜威·戴尔就已经扑到了他身上。然后，我相信我已经明白吉利斯皮是怎么得知自己谷仓着火的了。

她没有说一句话，甚至没有看他。但是当老乡们把来意告诉他，说要带走他时，他往后面躲。接着，她像只野猫一样跳到他身上，其中一个家伙不得不腾出手来拉她，不让她像野猫那样抓他，挠他，而另外一个家伙则和爹、朱尔把他绊倒，按在地上让他背靠着地，仰面看着我。

“我以为你会告诉我的。”他说，“我从来没有想过你会瞒着我。”

“达尔。”我说。但他再次反抗，他和朱尔与那个人纠缠在一起，还有另外一个拦住杜威·戴尔，瓦达曼大呼小叫，朱尔嘴里却在念叨：

“杀了他。杀了这个狗娘养的。”

事情弄得这样糟糕。真是糟糕。人不能逃脱自己的罪责。他不能。我试图告诉他，但他只是说：“我想你会告诉我的。并不是我想.....”接着他大笑起来。另一个家伙把朱尔从他身上拉下来，他坐在地上，大笑着。

我试图告诉他。如果我可以移动，甚至是站起来就好了。但是当我想和他说清楚的时候，他不再笑了，只是看着我。

“你希望我去吗？”他说。

“这对你来说更好。”我说，“去那儿，一切都会平静下来，没有人会打扰之类的。对你更好，达尔。”

“更好。”他说。他又开始笑起来。“更好。”他说。因为在笑，他都说不出话来。他坐在地上，我们看着他，笑了又笑。真糟糕啊。太糟糕了。如果我觉得有什么可笑的，我就会遭受责难。因为故意破坏一个人挥洒汗水建立并倾注精力才获得的成果是毫无正义可言的。

但我也确定是否一个人有权利界定什么是疯狂，什么不是。似乎每个人心中都有一个家伙区分着理智或精神错乱，用同样的恐怖和惊讶注视着那个人的疯狂和理智的行为。

皮博迪

我说：“我认为，一个人处于困境之中，才会让比尔·瓦纳把自己当成一头该死的骡子那样治。但我敢断定，如果让本德伦·安斯用水泥生料来治，那绝对就是多两条腿的畜生了。”

“他们只不过是想缓解一下。”他说。

“想，见鬼吧。”我说，“阿姆斯特德怎么这么笨，让他们把你放在马车上？”

“腿眼看就要一点点好起来了。”他说，“我们根本没时间等。”我只是看着他。“我也不难受。”他说。

“你不是在说谎吗？腿断了，又在马车上摇摇晃晃连续颠簸了六天，还跟我说你不难受。”

“我是没觉得嘛。”他说。

“你的意思是，没让安斯难受吧。”我说。“他把那个可怜的家伙扔在众目睽睽的大街上，让他戴上镣铐，犹如该死的杀人犯，这与之相比也差不多吧。别跟我说。别跟我说揭去六十多平方英寸的皮肤，把那块混凝土取下来，你不感觉疼。别告诉我，下半辈子你得跛着脚，靠一只短腿撑着四处奔波（假设你能再次正常走路），你不感觉难受吗？用水泥。”我说，“全能的上帝啊，为什么安斯没把你带到最近的锯木厂，锯掉你的腿呢？这样它就好了。然后，你们就可以把他的头按到锯子下面，整个家庭就好了……不管怎样，安斯去哪里了？他又干什么去了？”

“他正把借来的铁锹还回去呢。”他说。

“这是对的，”我说，“当然，他要借一把铁锹，安葬他的妻子。除非他可以在地上借个洞。你们没把他也埋进去，太遗憾了……这样疼吗？”

“没什么。”他说着，汗滴像弹珠一般顺着他的脸滚落，他的脸色苍白，如吸墨纸。

“当然没什么，”我说，“大概明年夏天，你就可以用这条腿蹦蹦跳跳到处走了。那时，你就不会觉得难受了，更不用说……如果你有什么可以称为运气的，那就是这回弄断的就是上回弄断的那条腿。”

“爹就是这么说的。”他说。

麦高恩

当我在处方柜后面，正在倒一点巧克力酱时，乔迪到后面来说：“嗨，斯基特。前面有一个女的想看医生，我问她你想看什么医生。她说，她希望看在这里应诊的医生。我说这里没有任何医生应诊。她就站在那里，向后面这儿看。”

“什么样的女人？”我说，“告诉她去楼上奥尔福德的办公室。”

“乡下女人。”他说。

“打发她到法院去看热闹去，”我说，“告诉她，所有的医生都已经到孟菲斯去参加医生大会了。”

“好吧。”他说着，一边向外走去。“她是一个看起来很不错的乡下姑娘。”他说。

“等一下。”我说。他在那儿等着。我走向前去，从门缝往外看。不过我只能看到，灯光下她有一双很漂亮的腿。“她很年轻，你说呢？”我说。

“对于乡下女孩而言，她看起来像一个漂亮的辣妈。”他说。

“拿着这个。”我说着，一边把巧克力递给他。我脱下围裙，走上前去。她看起来相当不错。那双黑色的眼睛，一只看上去就像一把刀。只要你背叛了她，它就能立刻戳进你心里。她看起来相当漂亮。店里没有其他人，现在是中饭时间。

“我能为你做什么呢？”我说。

“你是医生吗？”她说。

“当然。”我说。她不再看我，而是环顾四下。

“我们能不能去后面那边呢？”她说。

现在才十二点一刻。不过，我还是去告诉乔迪帮我望望风，如果那个老头出现了，就吹哨鸣警，因为他从不在一点以前回来。

“你最好打消这念头，”乔迪说，“免得还没等你眨眼的工夫，他就把你踢出去了。”

“他从来没在一点前回来过，”我说，“你会看到他走进邮局去取信的。现在，一刻也别眨眼，到时就给我一个哨子。”

“你想干什么？”他说。

“你用眼睛小心盯着。以后我会告诉你的。”

“难道你不打算要我做帮手吗？”他说。

“你以为这是什么？”我说，“种马场？你小心提防着。我进去和她谈谈。”

于是，我往后边走去。我在镜子前停下来，捋了捋我的头发，接着我就向处方柜背后去了。她在那里等着。她正在看药柜，然后，她看向我。

“好了，小姐，”我说，“你有什么烦恼呢？”

“是女人的毛病。”她说，一边看着我。“我带了钱。”她说。

“哦，”我说，“你有了女人的毛病，或者女人的毛病现在还没来？”

如果是这样，你找对了医生。”他们这些乡下人。一半的时候，他们不知道他们想要什么；另一半的时候，他们不会告诉你。时钟显示十二点二十。

“不是。”她说。

“不是什么？”我说。

“我的那个不来了，”她说，“就是这样。”她看着我。“我带了钱。”她说。

所以我明白了她在说什么。

“哦，”我说，“你的肚子里有了你不想要的东西。”她看着我。“你是希望保住，还是打掉呢，嗯？”

“我带了钱，”她说，“他说我可以在药店拿点东西，把它解决掉。”

“谁说的？”我说。

“他说的。”她说，眼睛看着我。

“你不想说出名字吧，”我说，“那个在你肚子里下种的人？是他告诉你的吗？”她一言不答。“你没结婚，是吗？”我说，我没看到她的戒指。不过，他们多半没听说过新婚夫妻使用戒指这回事。

“我带了钱。”她说。她向我展示用她手帕包起来的钱：十美元现金。

“我确信你有钱，”我说，“他给你的？”

“是的。”她说。

“哪一个？”我说。她看着我。“他们谁给你的？”

“就只有一个。”她说。她看向我。

“算了吧。”我说。她保持沉默。酒窖的麻烦是不止一条出路，后面就是向上的内部楼梯。时钟显示到一点还差二十五分钟。“像你这样漂亮的女人。”我说。

她看着我。她开始把钱用手帕捆扎起来。“稍等一下。”我说。我绕过处方柜。“你听说那个家伙把耳朵扭上了吗？”我问，“从那以后，打嗝声他都听不见了。”

“你最好在老头回来之前，让她从后面出来。”乔迪说。

“如果你在这里守着，也就是他出工钱让你待的地方，他就只可能逮到我了。”我说。

他慢慢向前面走去了。“你在对她做什么，斯基特？”他说。

“我不能告诉你，”我说，“反正不会和她讲大道理。你去那里小心看着。”

“说吧，斯基特。”他说。

“哎，去吧，”我说，“除了配药，我什么都没做。”

“他也许不会因为后面那个女人怎么样，但如果他发现你在他的处方柜那儿瞎搞，他会把你从酒窖楼梯踢下去。”

“比他更厉害的浑蛋我也见过，”我说，“快回去，小心看着。”

于是我向后走去。时钟显示到一点还有十五分钟。她正把钱用手帕捆扎起来。“你不是医生。”她说。

“我当然是。”我说。她注视着我。“是不是因为我看起来太年轻了，还是我太帅了吗？”我说。“我们这儿过去有一堆水货老医生，”我说，“杰弗逊过去曾是老医生之家。但乡亲身体一直良好，业务开始下滑。直到有一天，他们发现妇女不可能永远不生病。于是，他们把所有老医生都赶走，让我们年轻的、俊俏的医生来，这样妇女就会欢喜了，然后妇女们又开始得病了，所以生意有了起色。全国上下都在这么干呢。你没听说过吗？也许是因为你以前从不需要看医生吧。”

“我现在需要一个医生。”她说。

“你来找对人了，”我说，“我已经告诉过你了。”

“你有那种药吗？”她说，“我带了钱。”

“这个嘛，”我说，“当然，一个医生在学搓甘汞球的时候，什么都会学点，指不定什么时候用得着呢。但你的毛病就难说了。”

“他告诉我，我可以买点药。他告诉我，在药店可以拿到。”

“他有没有告诉你它的名称呢？”我说，“你最好回去问问他。”

她不再看着我，把攥在手帕中的手帕稍微打开。“我得想点法子。”她说。

“你是不是很急，所以要想点法子呢？”我说。她又看着我。“当

然，医生什么都懂点，人们都不知道他懂得那么多。但他不会把自己知道的所有东西都说出来。这是违法的。”

乔迪在前面说：“斯基特。”

“稍等一下。”我说。我走到前面去。“你看到他了吗？”我说。“你是不是已经做了？”他说，“你最好到前面这儿来，小心盯着，让我去做咨询。”

“也许你可以下个蛋。”我说。我返回去。她正看着我。“当然，你很清楚，帮了你，我就要坐牢的，”我说，“我会失去我的执照，然后我就只好去做苦工了。你明白吗？”

“我只有十美元，”她说，“也许，我可以把剩下的下个月带来。”

“哼，”我说，“十美元？你看，我不能贱卖我的知识和技术。这张微不足道的十美元纸币肯定不够。”

她看着我，眨都不眨。“那你想要什么呢？”

时钟显示到一点还有四分钟。所以我决定最好让她走了。“先猜三次，然后我会告诉你。”我说。

她眼睛一眨不眨。“我得做点什么。”她说。她向身后看去，又环顾周围，接着她又朝前面看去。“先把药给我。”她说。

“你的意思是，你现在就准备好了？”我说，“这里？”

“先给我药。”她说。

于是，我拿起一个量杯，稍微背转过身来，再拣出一瓶外形不错的

药。因为不管怎样，随意将毒药存放在一个没有标签的瓶子里的人会被关进监狱。它闻起来像松脂。我倒了一些到量杯里，然后递给她。她闻了一下，一边隔着量杯看着我。

“这闻起来像松脂。”她说。

“没错，”我说，“这仅仅是治疗的开始。你今晚十点钟再回到这里，我会给你剩余的部分，还要给你做手术。”

“手术？”她说。

“它不会弄疼你的。以前你做过相同手术。听说过以毒攻毒吗？”

她看着我。“有用吗？”她说。

“当然有用。只要你回到这里，做了手术。”

于是，她面不改色，把它喝了下去，接着走出去了。我向前面走去。

“难道你没得逞？”乔迪说。

“什么？”我说。

“啊，拜托，”他说，“我并不想浪费你的时间。”

“哦，她的时间，”我说，“她只是想要一点药。她得了痢疾，情况不妙。陌生人在场的时候，她又有点害羞，不敢开口。”

反正今晚是属于我的。于是，我帮老浑蛋检查了一下，我帮他戴上帽子，让他在八点半走出了药店。我陪他一直走到拐角处，看着他走过

两个路灯，淡出我的视线。然后，我才回到药店。等到九点半，把前灯关上，锁上了门。只留下后面一盏灯亮着，接着我向后走去，把一些爽身粉放进六个胶囊里，清理了一下地窖的地板，然后就一切就绪，只待东风了。

正好十点的时候，她走进来了，那时时钟整点的打响还未完。我让她进来，她就快步走进来了。我往门外看了看，不过除了一个穿着工作服的小男孩坐在路边，就没有任何人了。“你要点什么？”我说。他什么也不说，只是看着我。我锁上门，关了灯，向后走去。她在那儿等着我。现在她并不看我。

“药在哪儿？”她说。

我把装着胶囊的盒子给她。她把盒子拿在手里，看着胶囊。

“你确信它有用吗？”她说。

“当然，”我说，“不过，你要接受余下的手术。”

“在哪里做？”她说。

“在下面的地窖里。”我说。

瓦达曼

现在变得更加宽阔，更加明亮了，但商店都一片黑暗，因为他们都回家去了。虽然商店漆黑一片，但当我们经过的时候，灯光会透过窗户照射进去。灯光都在法院周围的树木里。它们栖息在树上，不过法院却笼罩在黑暗中。其上的时钟从四面八方都看得见，因为它并不暗。月

亮也不暗。不是很暗。达尔他去了杰克逊，他是我的哥哥。达尔是我的哥哥啊。只有月亮那样高悬着，照耀在轨道上。

“我们走那条路吧，杜威·戴尔。”我说。

“为什么？”杜威·戴尔说。窗户边上的轨道闪烁着，轨道上停着红红的小火车。但是她说，他不会把它卖给城里的男孩。“但到了圣诞节，它就会到这儿来了。”杜威·戴尔说，“你必须等着，到那时他就把它带回来了。”

达尔去了杰克逊。人们都不去那儿。达尔是我哥哥。我哥哥去了杰克逊。

我们一边走，栖息在树上的灯光也跟着向四周照射。四面如一。

它们绕过法院，然后就看不见了。但是你可以从上面黑色的窗户里看到。它们都已经回家睡觉了，除了我和杜威·戴尔。

坐上火车去杰克逊。我的哥哥。

远在后方有一个店里亮着灯。在窗里有两个装着苏打水的大玻璃杯，红色的和绿色的。两个人都喝不完。两头骡子喝不完。两头牛也喝不完。达尔。

一个男人来到门前。他看向杜威·戴尔。

“你在外面等等。”杜威·戴尔说。

“我为什么不能进去？”我说，“我也要进去。”

“你在外面等着。”她说。

“好吧。”我说。

杜威·戴尔走了进去。

达尔是我的哥哥。达尔疯了。

坐在地上比走路舒服多了。他在敞开的门里。他看着我。

“你想要点什么？”他说。他的头发油光发亮。朱尔的头有时也是如此。卡什的头就不是这样了。达尔他去了杰克逊。我的哥哥达尔在大街上，他吃了个香蕉。难道你不想吃香蕉吗？杜威·戴尔说。等到了圣诞节，它就会在那里了。然后你就可以看到它了。所以，我们要去吃些香蕉。我们将装上满满一袋，我和杜威·戴尔。他锁上门。杜威·戴尔在里面。接着灯光熄灭了。

他去了杰克逊。他疯了，去了杰克逊。人们都没疯。爹和卡什，朱尔，杜威·戴尔，加上我都没有发疯。我们从来没发过疯。我们也不去杰弗逊。达尔。

很长一段时间我听到牛在大街上嘀嗒作响的脚步声。然后她进入了广场。她经过广场，低着头，脚下嘀嗒作响。她哞哞长鸣。在此之前，广场上一干二净，但它并不空虚。现在有了她的长哞，广场就显得空荡荡的了。她继续向前，踩踏出嘀嗒之声。她哞哞而鸣。

我的哥哥是达尔，他坐着火车去了杰克逊。他上火车不是去发疯。他在我们的马车上疯了。达尔。

她在里面已经有很长一段时间了。那头牛也走了。很长一段时间。她一直待在里面比牛出现的时间还长。但不像空荡荡的时间那样漫长。达尔是我哥哥。我的哥哥是达尔。

杜威·戴尔出来了。她看向我。

“现在我们朝那条路绕过去。”我说。

她看着我。“没用的，”她说，“这狗娘养的。”

“什么没用，杜威·戴尔？”

“我就知道没用。”她说，她没看任何东西。“我就知道。”

“我们走那条路吧。”我说。

“我们得回旅馆。现在已经很晚了。我们得快些走回去。”

“不管怎样，我们就不能走走看看吗？”

“你难道不想吃香蕉吗？你难道不想吗？”

“好吧。”我的哥哥他疯了，去了杰克逊。杰克逊比疯狂离得更远。

“那行不通，”杜威·戴尔说，“我就知道它行不通。”

“什么行不通？”我说。他不得不坐上火车去杰克逊。我一直没坐过火车，但达尔已经在火车上了。达尔。达尔是我哥哥。达尔。达尔。

达尔

达尔已经去杰克逊了。他们把他放在火车上，他大笑着，顺着长长的车大笑。他经过的时候，攒动的人头转过来就像猫头鹰的头一样。“你笑什么？”我说。

“是是是是是。”

两名男子把他架上火车。他们穿着不相称的大衣，右臀部的口袋鼓了起来。他们的脖颈那儿黑白分明，好像不久前给他们同时理发的理发师有一根像卡什的粉笔线。“你是在笑手枪吗？”我说，“你为什么要笑？是不是因为你讨厌笑声？”

他们把两个座位拉在一起，让达尔可以靠窗坐着笑。其中一人坐在他身旁，另一个坐在他对面的座位，向后靠着。其中一人不得不向后靠着，因为国家的货币有两面，每面都有背面，他们用国家的钱坐的车，这是乱伦。一张五分镍币一面有一个女人，另一面是头水牛；两个面，没有背面。我不知道那是怎么回事。达尔有一个小望远镜，是他在法国的战争中得到的。里面有一个女人和一只猪，两个背面却没有正面。我知道那是怎么回事。“这就是你为什么笑吗，达尔？”

“是是是是是是。”

马车停在广场上，拴住了。骡子一动不动，缰绳缠绕在弹簧座椅上。马车的后背朝着法院。看起来它和其他一百辆马车没有什么不同；朱尔站在旁边，像那天镇上任何其他一人一样，望着街上，然而，有一些与众不同和独特之处。火车确认即将出发的空气弥漫着，也许是由于杜威·戴尔和瓦达曼坐在座位上，卡什则在货板上，他们都从一个纸袋里拿出香蕉来吃，若无其事。“这就是为什么你笑吗，达尔？”

达尔是我们的兄弟，我们的兄弟达尔。我们的兄弟达尔在杰克逊的一个笼子里，他污秽的双手轻轻地放在安静的空隙中，向外看着吐着口沫。

“是是是是是是是是。”

杜威·戴尔

当他看到钱，我说：“这不是我的钱，它不属于我。”

“那是谁的呢？”

“是科拉·塔尔的钱。这是塔尔夫人的钱。我卖蛋糕挣的。”

“两个蛋糕十美元？”

“你别碰它。这不是我的。”

“你永远都不会有那样的蛋糕。这是在说谎。那个包里装的是你最好的衣服。”

“你别碰它！如果你拿了，你就是个小偷。”

“我自己的女儿指责我是一个小偷。我自己的女儿啊。”

“爹。爹。”

“我抚养你，庇护你，我给你疼爱 and 关怀，但我自己的女儿，死去妻子的女儿，在她母亲的坟墓之上叫我小偷。”

“我跟你讲，这不是我的。如果是我的，天知道，你可以拿去。”

“你从哪儿得来的十块钱？”

“爹。爹。”

“你不会告诉我的，这钱来得可耻，所以你不敢吗？”

“我跟你说，这不是我的。难道你不明白吗？”

“我又不是不还，可她叫自己的父亲小偷。”

“我不能给你。我跟你说，我跟你说。这不是我的钱。天知道，那是我的钱，你就可以拿去。”

“我不会拿的。我的女儿吃了我十七年的粮食，却不愿意借我十美元。”

“这不是我的。我不能给你。”

“是谁的呢？”

“这是给我买点东西的。”

“买什么？”

“爹。爹。”

“这只是向你借的。天知道，我痛恨我骨肉至亲辱骂我，但我给予他们的却毫不吝惜。我为此感到高兴，毫不吝惜。而现在，他们拒绝我。安迪。幸亏你死了，安迪。”

“爹。爹。”

“天知道。”

他拿着钱，走了出去。

卡什

于是，当我们停在那里借铁锹时，听到房子里格拉弗风留声机播放着音乐。于是，当用铁锹把事做完时，爹说：“我看我最好还是把它们还回去。”

因此，我们又回到了那座房前。“我们最好把卡什带到皮博迪大夫那里。”朱尔说。

“这不用一分钟。”爹说。他从马车上爬下去。现在没有音乐播放。

“让瓦达曼去吧，”朱尔说，“他只要用你一半的时间，就行了。或者在这里，你让我——”

“我想我最好自己去做吧，”爹说，“毕竟是我借的。”

于是我们坐在马车里，但现在没有音乐播放。我认为这不错，我们不必为此不快。我觉得我永远都不会再闲得无聊，而去听它了。我不知道，是否有关于最美好的东西的小段音乐。就像，当他累了一晚上，没有比倾听一小段音乐更能让他舒坦了。它可以让他放松，伴他入眠。我已经看到过它们可以合起来，像一个握力器，机身上有个手柄，这样就可以随身携带着，到任何他想去的地方去。

“你认为他在做什么？”朱尔说，“到目前为止，我已经拿着铁锹来来回回走上十次了。”

“随他去吧，”我说，“记住，他不像你那样年轻力壮。”

“那他为什么不让我去还呢？接着，我们就可以去医生那儿把你的腿固定好。所以，明天我们可以起程回家了。”

“我们还有很多时间，”我说，“我想知道是不是可以分期付款。”

“什么分期付款？”朱尔说，“你要买什么？”

“总有办法的，”我说，“我相信，可以从苏拉特那儿，花五美元买一个。”

这样，爹回来了，我们往皮博迪大夫那里去了。当我们到了那儿时，爹说他要去做理发，刮一下胡子。那天晚上，他说他有一些事情要办，他说的时候把目光从我们身上移开，他的头发打湿了，梳理得整齐光滑，带着一股甜美的香水味道，但我说随他去吧。我愿意多听听那段音乐。

于是第二天早上，他又走了，然后他回来告诉我们他要结婚，并准备搬出来。他们走的时候，他说：“我以为你们还有钱。”

“皮博迪大夫那里给我的钱只够支付酒店的费用，”我说，“我们不需要其他的了，不是吗？”

“是的，”爹说，“不需要了。我们不需要花钱了。”他站在那里，没有看我。

“如果还需要的话，我觉得也许可以从皮博迪大夫那里——”我说。

“不，”他说，“没别的什么花销了。你们都到拐角处等我。”

于是，朱尔驾着车来接我，他们把我固定在马车的托盘上。我们驱车穿过广场，向着爹说的拐角来了。我们坐在马车上等着。当我们看到他们从街道上走来时，杜威·戴尔和瓦达曼正吃着香蕉。爹突然一副那种小人得志却鬼鬼祟祟的样子，好像摊上了什么事情一样，他知道自己

做了惹得妈妈不高兴的事情时就是这样的。他手里拿着一个箱子，朱尔说：“那是谁？”

然后，我们明白并非那个手柄使他看上去变化很大，而是他的脸，朱尔说：“他换上了假牙。”

没错。这使他看起来高了一英尺，把他的头抬高了几分，鬼鬼祟祟却也自得满满。然后，我们看到她跟在他身后，手里拿着另一个提箱——是个穿着艳丽的鸭形女人，有双厉害的金鱼眼，仿佛被她一盯上就没人敢说话了。我们坐在那儿看着他们，杜威·戴尔和瓦达曼的嘴半张着，半咬着手里的香蕉。她从爹身边走出来，看着我们，就像在回瞪某个男人一样。接着，我发现她手里拿着的就是那种小格拉弗风留声机。没错，闭合着就像一张漂亮的图片，每一次邮购到一张新唱片，我们就可以在冬天的屋子里待着，听它播放音乐了。我想到达尔不能享受到这种乐趣实在遗憾。不过，这样对他更好。这个世界不是他的世界，这种生活也不是他的生活。

“这是卡什、朱尔、瓦达曼，还有杜威·戴尔。”爹说，带着那种卑躬屈膝却也志得意满的神情，他的牙齿全部补齐了，即使他不看我们。“来，见过本德伦太太。”他说。



——福克纳诺贝尔奖精品文集——

喧哗与骚动

THE SOUND AND THE FURY

【美】威廉·福克纳——著
余蔚——译

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William Faulkner

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目录

[喧哗与骚动](#)

[序言](#)

[《三国》一样的《红楼》](#)

[1928年4月7日](#)

[1910年6月2日](#)

[1928年4月6日](#)

[1928年4月8日](#)

[附录](#)

[康普生家族1699-1945](#)

版权信息

书名：喧哗与骚动

作者：(美)威廉·福克纳著；余莉译

出版方：北方文艺出版社

出版时间：2016.9

ISBN：9787531736981

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喧哗与骚动

序言

《三国》一样的《红楼》

—以真性情演绎的喧哗、骚动

一、“喧哗与骚动”

《三国》是一群假性情的人演绎一个真实的必然兴亡故事，《红楼》是一群真性情的人演绎一个虚拟的偶然兴衰故事。福克纳的这本《喧哗与骚动》，则是一群假性情的人演绎一个虚拟的必然兴衰故事。

毫无疑问，这部作品集中了作者非常大的心力与经历，其笔端之细腻，刻画之精准，无不让人惊叹。如果我们再来回顾一下作者的生平，不难发现，这部作品几乎是作者本人对生平的一次另类回想。这一点上，还真跟《红楼》颇有些神似。“红学”家们通常喜欢琢磨曹雪芹的生平，现在我们的不妨看看福克纳老人家的经历。

二、喧哗与骚动

1897年，福克纳出生在美国南方一个破落地主家庭，正如本书中的班吉、加迪、昆汀等人一样。他的家族在他的曾祖父手上达到顶峰，他曾祖父不仅是南北战争时期的战斗英雄，官至上校，还经营铁路、农场甚至从政。当时福克纳家族可谓良田千顷，黑奴成群。本书中康普生家族的祖上所谓的州长、将军，曾经拥有的众多的田地和黑奴，简直就是福克纳家族光辉历史的放大版。

到了福克纳父亲那一辈，家族已经没落。他的父亲甚至难以找到一份稳定的工作。相反，福克纳的母亲却是一个非常要强的人。在福克纳

的童年，母亲对他的教育非常严格，经常让他在“软弱”和“坚强”中做出选择。这种分裂的痛苦，似乎在这本书中也有体现——当昆汀面对妹妹加迪有辱门风的事实，那种本性的软弱、家族责任感带来的勇气之间的激烈斗争，与当时福克纳的心境必然是有某种联系的。

在福克纳五岁那年，祖父不得不变卖家产，以支持福克纳的父亲莫里去牛津发展。就这样，他们一家来到了牛津，忠心耿耿的黑人女仆（有点像书中的黛西）和祖父、父亲一起支撑着这个摇摇欲坠的破落家庭。

在牛津的生活平淡无奇，家庭、邻居、学校，充斥着他貌似幸福的生活。在祖父的福荫下，小福克纳不仅有白富美邻家小妹，还有一个属于他们家的剧院，可以免费观看各类戏剧。由于天资聪慧，学校的老师也对他青睐有加。

可惜自古以来，文士们似乎都走不出一个“文能穷人”的怪圈，往往被逼上绝路，愤而从事创作。随着年龄的增长，对文学日益感兴趣的福克纳将大量的时间花在了他钟爱的写作和邻家小妹身上。学习成绩下降，当然不可避免。

进入青年时代，福克纳开始接触一些文艺圈的人，甚至包括他后来的经纪人，都是在这个时期结识的。此时他依然不改纨绔的习气，经常穿着豪华的服饰冒充土豪，混迹于密西西比大学的各类活动。但是，就在这时，当初的白富美邻家小妹却嫁给了别人——一个成功人士，当时已经成为上校军官的密西西比大学学长。

这个打击搁一般人身上我想都是不同凡响的，何况是一个破落户公子哥。福克纳进入了迷茫期，先是沉浸在诗与画的意境中，后来又壮志

雄心起，想去参加一战成为英雄。凭借高超的编故事技能和广阔的人脉，他成功突破了身高与年龄的限制，成为了光荣的英国皇家空军的飞行员——但是还没等他学会开飞机，一战就结束了。

文能穷人，没法子，老天就是要把你逼上绝路。

回乡但没衣锦的福克纳只得再次凭借编故事的技能来博得别人的刮目相看，他甚至故意走路一瘸一拐，谎称自己在一战的空战中受伤落下了残疾。最后不论是在学校还是在职场，福克纳都因为桀骜不驯的个性和对诗歌文章的狂热痴迷而遭遇挫折。

但是正是这样反复的不如意和编故事，让福克纳最终走上了创作的道路。1925年，他的第一部长篇小说《士兵的报酬》出版，随后一发不可收，可谓著作等身，生活也顺风顺水。1928年，这本《喧哗与骚动》的初稿问世。

这本书的书名还是个典故——莎士比亚名作《麦克白》中麦克白的台词：“人生犹如痴人说梦，充满了喧哗与骚动，却没有任何意义。”这个富有深意的书名，是不是也是创作此书时的福克纳对自己过往人生的一种自嘲呢？他从出生到走上文学道路，不正是充满着喧哗与骚动吗？

本节最后插一句嘴，后来当初的邻家小妹跟高富帅离婚了，被福克纳成功逆袭。1949年，福克纳还获得了一个文学大奖，就是2012年莫言得的那个奖——诺贝尔文学奖。福克纳也因此拥有了美国乃至世界意识流文学一代宗师的不朽称号。

三、《喧哗与骚动》

让我们回到这部作品。

这本书中，福克纳再一次把地点定位在密西西比州北部的虚拟小镇约克纳帕塔法镇，通过康普生家族的三个儿子和一个女黑奴的内心独白，展现了康普生家族几代的兴衰历程。

首先出场的“我”是班吉，康普生家的小儿子，甚至可以说是书中唯一一个自始至终真性情的形象。为什么会这样呢？因为这个人物有着近乎诡异的特殊性。在旁人看来，他33岁的时候依然只有3岁的智商，甚至于没有语言能力，只能用哭来表达自己的情绪。

在福克纳作品中，利用傻子独白展现故事内容并不少见。在《我弥留之际》中，那个瓦达曼就是个傻子。但是，作者在写瓦达曼的独白时，也是站在一个傻子的角度去描写，出现了诸如“我妈是一条鱼”之类的让人啼笑皆非的话语。但是班吉则不是，虽然时空观念错乱，思维也非常之跳跃，但是他对身边事物有着如常人一样甚至超乎常人的感知能力，只是不知道合理地表达自己的思想。说得潮一点，与其说班吉是一个傻子的形象，倒不如说是人类文学史上塑造的第一个成功的严重孤独症患者形象。

正如很多评论家所说的，班吉的哭给全书一种颓废败落的气氛。同时，没有语言能力的他也让所有人对他没有戒备，在他面前都能展示真实的自己。而他的傻，我倒更愿意用“痴”来形容——都云班吉痴，谁解其中味。

但是就是这样的一个痴人，作者却利用他的视角，将角色一一展开。比如说，中心人物加迪和班吉的母亲卡罗琳。

在班吉面前，加迪的天真善良与母亲的冷血高傲形成鲜明的对比。作为班吉的亲生母亲，卡罗琳太太并没有给人丝毫母爱温存的感觉。她

念念不忘自己“高贵”的身份（其实也是个破落户小姐），对班吉的嫌弃近乎癫狂。不仅自己对班吉漠不关心，唯恐避之不及，甚至看到自己的女儿加迪对班吉亲近都会觉得不妥。甚至班吉的生日那天，班吉因为伸手去摸燃烧的柴火被烫伤而哭泣，她除了感慨自己不得安生日子和咒骂之外，什么都没表示。

相反，作为姐姐的加迪却像母亲一样照顾着班吉。如果说去掉女仆黛尔西这个外人，加迪可以说是家中唯一有女性风采的人物（至于卡罗琳太太，只能用蛇蝎妇人来形容）。这点通过班吉对加迪的依恋就可以知晓。班吉的独白中不止一次地提到加迪身上的香气，让班吉难以忘怀的大树般的香气。一旦加迪说离开，或者表达出离开的意思，都会让班吉痛不欲生。当加迪不在的时候（联系后文，应该是出嫁了），他站在大门口，看着背着书包的女学生。似乎是想起了姐姐加迪，他第一次尝试着喊住她们，试着说话。可是，先天的缺陷却让他只能对着女孩的背影再一次地哭泣。读到这里，想必每个人都会为之动容。

但是在下一个出场的“我”——昆汀的眼中，中心人物加迪却成为了一个巨大的包袱。因为身为“南方贵族”的“大家闺秀”，加迪竟然失去了贞操，怀了两个月的身孕。作为家族的继承人，昆汀难以接受这个现实，加上颓废的父亲带给他的悲观情绪，让他陷入了极度的抑郁。

在人前，他是哈佛学生，家族继承人；在人后，他一方面对接手父亲的烂摊子（实际上几乎就没有摊子）而担忧，一方面为加迪丢尽了家族的脸面而焦虑。在人前，他很勇敢，甚至敢于去和妹妹加迪的情人决斗以捍卫家族尊严；在人后，他不知所措，竟然荒唐到跟父亲谎称自己和加迪乱伦（姜是老的辣，父亲康普生一眼就看穿了谎言），决斗的时候甚至还非常羞耻地失利……

这里，加迪有点像过头的杜丽娘，为了爱情抛开世俗但是过了头。原本班吉眼中那个温存可爱的加迪，渐行渐远。抑或加迪依旧是当初的加迪，这一切又正是我们身为男性与昆汀一样的傲慢偏见所带来的主观色彩呢？

但是我更愿意同昆汀一样相信，是这个畸形的家庭导致了这一切。父亲的颓废，母亲的孤傲，整个家庭没有一点温存，除了善良的加迪。这样，兄弟们对于加迪的依赖可想而知。而昆汀手忙脚乱的乱伦谎言，是不是一种另类的俄狄浦斯情结在作怪呢？

换个角度说，父母的消极情绪，让原本就内心软弱的继承人昆汀没有执掌家族的信心和勇气；而父母的冷漠，让青春靓丽的加迪在爱情中迷失了方向和价值观。当这两者结合到一起，昆汀对家族事业绝望，加迪则对这个行尸走肉的哥哥感到失望。最终，昆汀只能用结束自己的生命来求得内心的安宁，以躲避充满喧哗与骚动的人生。

然而这一切，又都和接下来的“我”——杰生似乎关系不大。杰生出场后一句话就显示了他的秉性——“当过婊子，就一直是婊子”。

杰生是家中次子，用咱中国人的俗话说，就是最不讨人喜欢的小二子。有人说，杰生是家中唯一健全的男性，却不去拯救自己的家族，不去拯救自己的哥哥和妹妹。确实，昆汀有抑郁症，班吉有孤独症，相比而言，也就杰生是个心智健全之人。福克纳为自己塑造了这么个人物而感到非常自豪，正如他所说：杰生是一个最最邪恶的形象。有评论家更是有鼻子有眼地指出了杰生的六宗罪：自私、刻薄、贪婪、欺诈、仇恨心理和冷酷无情。其实早在班吉独白的时候，就已经可以看出杰生的冷漠与自私。

这段独白里头自然也少不了加迪的戏份。加迪生了个私生女，取名叫昆汀（多么大的讽刺啊），寄养在杰生家中。但是这个奇葩竟然借着加迪对女儿的思念敲诈勒索，一百块只让加迪见女儿一分钟。最气人的是，还仅仅是女儿在车上，让她透过车窗这么一瞥。也就是说，这个人身上体现的不仅仅是一种对金钱的强烈欲望和迷恋，更有一种想要利用别人的索求来折磨人的变态思想。这样的例子，在书中比比皆是。而我想说的是，这个可恨之人身上，也有太多的可怜之处。

前面我说过，杰生相比而言是家中心智最健全的儿子。但是，也只是相比而言。首先，他身为次子，上有家族继承人昆汀，下有有辱门风的妹妹和痴弟弟班吉，加上父母本身的冷漠态度，家中对他关怀之少可想而知。当家人把钱拿去给哥哥上学，忙着拿钱让加迪赶紧嫁人的时候，也确实让他感受到了前所未有的冷漠。而对家中最最温存的加迪而言，哥哥昆汀是长子，弟弟班吉又那么脆弱，在感情的给予上，无论怎么说杰生都是欠缺的。

在前面的独白中我们就能知道，自幼年起，杰生就是个另类。父母时不时地争吵，这时候母亲总是以杰生为骄傲。相反，父亲则总是将错误归咎于杰生。这样，母亲的孤傲自然而然地灌输给了杰生，抑或杰生生来就遗传了母亲的性格。母亲这种口头上的、碰撞中无奈的赞许，竟然成为了杰生童年的美好记忆。这样，儿时杰生几乎成了母亲的监视者，让兄弟姐妹们都几乎活在随时被杰生告发的担心之下。这样的成长环境，长大了不变态才叫奇怪。

但是，这样的变态心理真的是杰生最真实的内心吗？福克纳作为一代文豪，如果仅仅是创作出一个十恶不赦的恶人，那么绝对有失他文豪的身份。在父亲康普生逝世后，家里的担子落在了杰生身上。这时候，家里已经一贫如洗，哥哥去哈佛，妹妹嫁人，都花去了不少的费用，而

他则一个子儿都没见到。虽然充满了牢骚，但是他依然守护着这个家。虽然带着不情愿，但他还是抚养了小昆汀和班吉，尽管他嫌弃妹妹的沉沦，尽管他嫌弃班吉是个傻子（母亲卡罗琳也不愿意完全放弃这个孩子，直到她去世，杰生才将班吉送到精神病院）。

或许他真的像有些评论家说的那样，自私、刻薄、贪婪、欺诈、仇恨心理和冷酷无情。但是，这些也都是在成长和压力中被逼出来的，或者说没有这些，他们一家真的就得流落街头了。但是，杰生依旧没能挽回这个家族，可能也是他有意而为之。杰生没有后代，他和昆汀共同成为了家族荣光下的最后一代——小昆汀成年后，也远走高飞了。

至于黑奴黛西，我倒更想把她当作福克纳的一次致敬，向千千万万淳朴的劳动人民致敬。回想福克纳的生平，当他家迁居牛津之时，也有一个忠心耿耿的女黑奴与他的父亲、祖父一起撑起整个家。

可能会有人觉得我这样说有点“土”。但是不得不说，黛西是整部书中，最能给人宁静安详之感的形象。黛西为康普生家族服务数十年，看惯了风生水起，看淡了人生离合。她虔诚地信仰基督教，充满爱心和同情。同时她也是整个故事中除了加迪之外对班吉最好的，在有些方面甚至有过之而无不及。

如果只有冷酷的杰生而没有热心的黛西，康普生家族或许连这最后一代都撑不下去。关于黛西更多关键点，我更希望把她留到下一节去说。

故事还有个附录，是时隔十六年之后福克纳添加的。这里头，福克纳通过单独阐述加迪的沦落，渲染了整个故事的主旨。

既然都说到这了，那么这个故事，究竟要告诉我们什么呢？

四、喧哗与骚动！

“人生犹如痴人说梦，充满了喧哗与骚动，却没有任何意义。”

按照福克纳本人的说法，《喧哗与骚动》是一个关于“失落的天真”的故事。但是很多人却说仅仅一个“失落的天真”并不能概括这本书的主题。

对这些人，我只想说，拜托，福克纳才是原作者可好？

何谓“失落的天真”？我对基督教不了解，但是透过书中的细节，隐约可以感到这句话富含了一些基督教思想。但是，如果我们跳出基督教文化这个窠臼，去思考麦克白的那句台词和这句“失落的天真”，难道就不会领悟到一丝禅机吗？

佛教说，人生八苦：生、老、病、死、爱别离、求不得、怨长久、放不下。如此一看，充满着“喧哗与骚动”的康普生一家把人生八苦占齐了。而他们家族的破落，更是一个偶然的必然。说偶然，是因为畸形破落家庭教育出了性格扭曲的子女；说必然，是因为大势所趋，这样的庄园主家庭是必然湮没于历史潮流中的，出现康普生夫妇这样的畸形夫妻也存在着必然。

因因果果，果果因因。

既然话都说到这份儿上了，我们不妨更深入地以中国文化的角度去思考这本书。如果说，人本性是善良的，这个善良的本性，或许就是所谓的天真。在这样的一个潮流下，无数的因，造就了天真失落的果。

这又正如儒家亚圣孟子的“性善论”，我们每个人都可以成为尧舜一样的圣贤，因为我们每个人都有善良的天性。人皆有恻隐之心，人皆

有羞恶之心，人皆有恭敬之心，人皆有是非之心。恻隐之心是仁的端倪，羞恶之心是义的端倪，恭敬之心是礼的端倪，是非之心是智的端倪。

正如刻薄的杰生也抚养了小昆汀（恻隐），沉沦的加迪也用取名的方式纪念了保守的昆汀（羞恶），软弱的昆汀也对家族的荣光念念不忘（恭敬），孤傲的母亲也不愿意让班吉离开家去精神病院（是非）。

或许这样类比有些牵强，但是，孟子还有一句对“性善论”的补充，则能与福克纳的“失落的天真”相对应。孟子说：“学问之道无他，求其放心而已矣。”意思就是说，儒家的学问没什么其他的，就是找到“放心”罢了。何谓“放心”？“放心”，就是指“迷失的善心”。迷失的善心，失落的天真，要我说，就是一个意思。

既然我们每个人生来就是善良（天真）的，那为什么会有迷失的善心，失落的天真？就像书中的人物一样，杰生刻薄寡恩，加迪甘心沦落，昆汀软弱怯懦？

东方的孔子告诉我们，“性相近也，习相远也。”（人的天性是相近的，但是后天的影响导致了人们的善恶差异。）而福克纳，则用这个故事告诉我们，正是后天的人生充满了喧哗与骚动，让我们失落了原本的天真。唯独心智三岁的班吉，恰恰因为封闭保留了几乎最原始的天真，并且成为了一面“道德的镜子”，让故事中的每个人都能展现最接近真实的自己。正所谓一都云班吉痴，谁解其中味！

让我们再回过头来，为什么书中的黛西依旧善良和蔼？为什么似乎只有她这个普普通通的黑奴才能远离人生的喧哗与骚动？她并没有班吉的自我封闭，也经历了康普生家族的风风雨雨。我认为，这其中的原因

就在于一信仰。

书中不止一次地提到了黛西对于基督教的信仰，也不止一次地暗示了康普生家族成员对信仰的迷失。这方面的细节，就留给读者们自己去慢慢挖掘和思索吧。

或许，福克纳并不是一个虔诚的基督徒，这本书也当然不是宣扬基督教，而是告诉我们，拥有一个良好的信仰，才能摆脱人生的喧哗与骚动，不让自己的天真失落善心迷失。正如《心经》上所说的：“依般若波罗蜜多故，心无挂碍，无挂碍故，无有恐怖，远离颠倒梦想，究竟涅槃。”

五、喧哗与骚动？

回到我们今天的现实，信仰迷失也正是转型中的中国面临的问题之一。读者们，你们的生活，是否充满了喧哗与骚动呢？

何志浩

2013年9月书于安徽

1928年4月7日

穿过栅栏，透过盘绕的花枝，我看见他们正在打球。他们朝插着旗子的方向走来，我沿着栅栏往前走。卢斯特在开着花的树下的草地找着什么东西。这时，他们把旗子拔出来，开始打球了。然后，他们又把旗子插回去，走到高地上，这个打一下，那个打一下。然后他们继续往前走，而我也沿着栅栏走，他们停下，我也停下，我透过栅栏往外看，卢斯特则在草丛里寻找着什么东西。

“看这边，加迪1。”他打了一下。然后他们穿过草地。而我，就那样贴在栅栏上，看着他们走远。

“你听听，你听听，”卢斯特说，“你真能耐啊，都三十岁了，还那副模样，害得我大老远跑去城里给你买蛋糕。闭嘴，别哼唧了。你还不快来帮我找钱，我今晚可是要用它去看表演的。”

他们穿过草地时，还会偶尔打两下。我沿着栅栏往回走，走到插旗子的地方。那旗子在明亮的草地和树木之上迎风招展。

“来，”卢斯特说，“这儿已经找过了。他们暂时也不会回来。走，我们下河去，赶在那帮黑鬼之前找到它。”

那红红的旗子在草地上方飘荡。然后，一只鸟儿从斜方向飞过来停在上面，这时，卢斯特扔了块东西过去。旗子在明亮的草地与树丛之上迎风招展。而我紧紧贴着栅栏。

“别吵了，”卢斯特说，“他们不到这边来，我也没办法呀。你要不闭嘴，妈就不给你过生日了。你要是不闭嘴，知道我会怎么样吧。我要把蛋糕全部吃光，连蜡烛也一起吃了。走，我们去河边，我要去找我的钱。说不定我们还能在那儿捡到球呢。这儿，他们在这儿呢。在那边，你看。”他走到栅栏边上，伸手指着，“看见他们了吧。他们不会回这儿来了。走吧。”

于是我们沿着栅栏走，走到花园的栅栏边，我们的影子映在栅栏上，在那上面，我的影子要比卢斯特的高。我们走到口子上，然后穿了过去。

“等一下，”卢斯特说，“你又挂到钉子了。你哪一次从这儿钻过不

挂在钉子上啊。”

加迪把我的衣服解了下来，然后我们就钻过去了。“莫里舅舅交代过，不能让别人看见我们，所以我们最好弯着腰走。”加迪说，“弯下去啊，班吉。像这样，看。”然后，我们弯下身，穿过了花园，花儿从我们身上刮过，沙沙作响，土地硬邦邦的。我们从栅栏上翻过去，几只猪在那里胡乱嗅着，发出哼哼的声音。“我想它们是因为其中的一个伙伴被宰了，在那儿伤心呢。”加迪说，“土地硬邦邦的，是被翻过的，还看得到土块呢。”

“把手放进包里，不要拿出来。”加迪说，“不然它们就会被冻僵。你也不想它们在圣诞节冻僵吧。”

“外面太冷了，”弗什说，“你不要出去了。”

“什么事？”妈妈说。

“他想出去。”弗什说。

“那就让他去吧。”莫里舅舅说。

“太冷了，”妈妈说，“他最好待在屋里。本杰明，别帮他说话了。”

“他冻不坏的。”莫里舅舅说。

“你，本杰明，”妈妈说，“如果你再这样，就到厨房去。”

“妈妈说今天不让他进厨房，”弗什说，“她还说要把所有过节用的东西都做出来。”

“让他去吧，卡罗琳，”莫里舅舅说，“我看，你都快为他操心出病

来了。”

“我知道，”妈妈说，“有时候我也在想，他就是老天派来惩罚我的。”

“好了，好了，”莫里舅舅说，“你要打起精神来。我去给你做点儿棕榈酒。”

“这有多烦人，”妈妈说，“你难道还不知道吗？”

“就会好的。”莫里舅舅说，“把他裹严实些，再带他出去待上一时半会儿吧。”

于是，莫里舅舅走了，弗什也走了。

“求你别吵了，”妈妈说，“我们已经准备尽快带你出去了。我可不想你生病。”

弗什穿上我的套鞋和外衣，又拿起我的帽子，和我们一道出去了。这时，莫里舅舅正在将瓶子放进餐厅的餐柜里。

“就让他在外面待上半小时吧，小子，”莫里舅舅说，“看住他，别让他跑出院子。”

“好的，先生。”弗什说，“我们绝不会让他跑出去的。”

说着我们出了门。屋外的阳光有些冰冷，却也明亮。

“你要去哪儿呢？”弗什说，“不会想要去镇上吧。”

我们一路穿过沙沙作响的树叶，走到冰冷的大门口。

“你最好把手放进兜里。”弗什说，“放在门上会冻坏的，到时候看你怎么办。不过，你为什么乖乖在屋里等他们呢？”他说着把我的手放进兜里。我能听到他踩过落叶时发出的窸窣声，还可以闻到那沁凉的寒气，连门也是冰冷冰冷的。

“这里有山核桃。哇哦，什么东西蹿到树上去了？快看，是一只松鼠，班吉。”

我已经不觉得大门有多冷，却依然能闻到明晃晃的冷气。

“你最好把手放进兜里。”

我听到加迪的脚步声。接着，她跑了起来，任凭书包在背后晃动。

“你好啊，班吉。”加迪招呼道。然后，她推开大门走进来，弯下身子。加迪身上有一种叶子般的味道。“你是来接我的吗？”她说，“你是来接加迪的吗？你怎么能让他把手冻得这么冷呢，弗什？”

“我让他把手放进兜里，可他就是不听，”弗什说，“偏偏要扒在门上。”

“你是来接加迪的吗？”她搓着我的手说，“你要对加迪说些什么呢？”加迪的身上有树木的味道，她告诉他们我们已经睡了的时候，我也会闻到这种味道。

“你在发什么牢骚呢？”卢斯特说，“我们走到分岔口就又能看到他们了。来，给你一枝曼陀罗。”说着，他递给我一枝花。接着，我们径直穿过栅栏，朝空地走去。

“什么？”加迪说，“你要跟加迪说些什么？他们知道他出来了吗，

弗什？”

“他们拿他没办法，”弗什说，“他不停地折腾，他们只好让他出来，然后他就直接来这儿，往门外边望。”

“想对我说什么呢，”加迪说，“你是不是以为我放学回家那天就是圣诞节？是这样想的吧。后天才是圣诞节。圣诞老人，班吉。圣诞老人。来，我们一起跑回家，暖暖身。”她说着拉起我的手，我们一路踩过那些明亮的树叶，发出窸窣声。我们跑上台阶，从明亮的冷气，跑进阴暗的冷气里。这时，莫里舅舅还在往餐柜里放瓶子。他招呼过加迪。

加迪说：“带他去烤烤火，弗什。班吉，跟弗什一起去。”她说，“我马上就来。”

于是，我们来到火炉旁。

妈妈说：“他冷吗，弗什？”

“不。”弗什说。

“把他的外衣和套鞋都脱了，”妈妈说，“我给你说过多少次，不要让他穿着套鞋进屋。”

“知道了。”弗什说，“好，站好了。”于是他脱下我的套鞋，然后帮我解开外衣。

这时，加迪又说：“等一下，弗什。妈妈，让他再出去一下吧。我想带他出去。”

“最好还是留他在这儿。”莫里舅舅说，“他今天已经在外面待了很

久。”

“依我看，你们最好都留在家里，”妈妈说，“黛西说，天气越来越冷了。”

“哦不，妈妈。”加迪说。

“不要紧，”莫里舅舅说，“她整天待在学校，也需要点儿新鲜空气。去吧加达斯²。”

“就让他去嘛，妈妈，”加迪说，“求你了，你也知道，不然他会哭的。”

“你也知道他会哭，为什么还要在他面前提起呢。”妈妈说，“你进来干什么，就是为了让他在再有理由让我操心吗？你也在外面待得差不多了。我看你还是坐在这儿陪他玩吧。”

“就让他去吧，卡罗琳，”莫里舅舅说，“一点小小的寒冷伤不到他的。记住，你可别把自己累坏了。”

“我知道，”妈妈说，“可是，没有人知道我多么害怕圣诞节。谁也不知道。我可不是天生就能吃苦耐劳的人。为了杰生和孩子们，我也希望自己能更加坚强。”

“你一定要彻底放宽心，别让他烦扰你，”莫里舅舅说，“去吧，你们两个。可这一次不要待得太久。不然，你们的妈妈会担心。”

“知道了，叔叔。”加迪说，“走吧，班吉，我们又要出去咯。”她说着帮我扣好扣子，然后我们一起朝门外走去。

“套鞋都没穿，你就要把小家伙带出去吗？”妈妈说，“你是要把他弄生病，让全家人不得安宁吗？”

“我忘了，”加迪说，“我以为他穿着鞋呢。”

于是我们又走回去。

“你想想，”妈妈说，“有一天我不在了，你就要为他操心了。”她边说边给我穿好了鞋。而在妈妈给我穿鞋的同时，弗什站在旁边也跟着说：“好，站好了……抬脚……”

“过来亲亲妈妈，本杰明。”妈妈唤我。

加迪把我带到妈妈的椅子前，妈妈捧起我的脸，然后将我的脸贴在她身上。

“我可怜的孩子，”她说着放开我，“你和弗什要照顾好他，亲爱的。”

“知道了。”加迪说。

然后我们就又出去了。

加迪冲弗什说：

“你就不用去了，弗什，我会看着他。”

“那好吧，”弗什说，“外面太冷了，出去也没意思。”于是他走开了。

我们则在大厅里停下来。加迪跪下身，双手环住我，将她冰冷而明

亮的脸贴在我的脸上。她闻起来，有股树叶的味道。

“你才不是可怜的孩子呢，对吧。你还有你的加迪呢，是吧。”

“别在那儿喋喋不休了，”卢斯特说，“吵吵闹闹的，都不觉得害臊。”这时，我们已经走到马车房，马车就停在里面，它还换上了一个新轮子。

“快，上车，上去坐着别动，等你妈妈来，”黛西说着将我推进马车里。T.P.则拉着缰绳。“我简直不明白，为什么杰生不买一辆新马车，”黛西说，“总有一天，要是你们都坐上去，这东西没准儿就会散架。看看那些破轮子。”

这时，妈妈出来了，她将面纱放下来，遮住脸，还戴了几朵花。

“罗斯库司去哪儿了？”她说。

“他的手臂今天动弹不得，”黛西说，“T.P.也驾得不错。”

“这可说不准，”妈妈说，“你们每个星期给我换车夫都做得出来。天知道，我可是没怎么过问。”

“卡罗琳太太，您也知道，罗斯库司的风湿病很严重，干不了什么活。”黛西说，“您先上车来吧。T.P.驾车也不比罗斯库司差。”

“我可不放心，”妈妈说，“还带着孩子呢。”

黛西走上台阶去：“您说他还是孩子，”她说拉着妈妈的手，“他都有T.P.那么大了。您要走，就快点上来。”

“我还是不放心。”妈妈一边说着，一边被黛西扶着上了马车，“不

过，话说回来，或许出个什么事对我们大家都好。”妈妈说。

“您怎么能这么说呢，快别瞎说了，”黛西说，“你知道一个十八岁的黑人要驱动这‘小马后’有多不容易吗？他和班吉加起来都没有‘她’那么大。可别让‘小马后’给挣脱了，听见了吗，T.P.？要是你驾车不能让卡罗琳太太满意，我就要让罗斯库司来教训你了。他可是还动弹得了的。”

“知道了。”T.P.说。

“我就知道要出点什么事。”妈妈说，“本杰明，别闹。”

“给她一枝花，让她拿着，”黛西说，“她就想要那个。”于是她把手伸了过去。

“不，不，”妈妈说，“你会把它们糟蹋了的。”

“您拿好了，”黛西说，“我抽出一枝给他。”她给了我一枝花，然后把手缩回去。

“走吧，不然昆汀看了也会跟着去的。”黛西说。

“他在哪儿？”妈妈说。

“他在家陪卢斯特玩，”黛西说，“出发吧，T.P.，按照罗斯库司嘱咐你的那样来驾车。”

“好的，”T.P.说，“驾，‘小马后’。”

妈妈说：“不让昆汀去？”

“当然。”黛西说。

马车一路颠簸而行。“我不放心把昆汀留下，”妈妈说，“我看我最好还是不要去了，T.P。”我们穿过大门，马车也不再颠簸。T.P.用鞭子敲着“小马后”。

“在跟你说话呢，T.P。”妈妈说。

“要让她跑起来，”T.P.说，“别等到我们还没有返回车棚，她就睡着了。”

“掉头，”妈妈说，“我不放心把昆汀留下。”

“这里不能掉头。”T.P.说。过会儿，马车就开上了宽敞的路面。

“这里总可以掉头了吧，”妈妈说。

“那好吧。”T.P.说。于是我们开始掉头。

“T.P.，你小心！”妈妈抓着我的手说。

“不管怎么说，我还是掉转头了。”T.P.一声“吁，小马后”，我们就停了下来。

“我看你是要把我们掀翻。”妈妈说。

“接下来，您想怎么样呢。”T.P.说。

“你那样掉头，我很害怕。”妈妈说。

“起来，小马后。”T.P.说。于是我们又继续前行了。

“我就知道，我走以后，黛西不会照看好昆汀，”妈妈说，“我们必须快点回去。”

“快，驾。”T.P.说着用鞭子打着“小马后”。

“T.P.，你……”妈妈抓着我。我听见“小马后”蹄踏的声音，那明晃晃的身形从我们身边稳稳地滑过，它们的影子也在“小马后”的背上扫过。它们像车轴那明亮的顶部一样，向后移动。接着，一边的景色不动了，那里是一个竖着大兵像的岗亭，而另外一边景色还在平稳滑过，只是速度慢了下来。

“你们要去干什么？”杰生问。他双手插在兜里，耳朵上还夹着一支铅笔。

“到公墓去。”妈妈说。

“好吧，”杰生说，“我又没有不让你们去，对不对？你就是为这来找我，没别的事了啊？”

“我知道你不想去，”妈妈说，“可要是你也一起去的话，我就放心多了。”

“你有什么不放心的呀，”杰生说，“爸爸和昆汀都不能伤害你了。”

只见妈妈把手帕伸到面纱之下。“别这样了，妈妈。”杰生说，“难道你想让这个大傻瓜当众大吼大闹吗？赶车吧，T.P。”

“走咯，‘小马后’。”T.P.说。

“我这是造了什么孽啊。”妈妈说，“反正，过不了多久，我也随你

爸爸去了。”

“好了。”杰生说。

“吁——”T.P.说。

杰生又说：“莫里舅舅用你的名义开了五十块的支票，你要怎么办？”

“别问我，”妈妈说，“我还能说什么呢。我只是不想给你和黛西添麻烦。很快我就不在了，就该轮到你了。”

“快走吧，T.P。”杰生说。

“走咯，‘小马后’。”T.P.说。

车两边的形体又再往后滑动，明晃晃的，动作快而平稳，就像加迪说“我们就要睡着了”时的场景一样。

“你个臭小子，成天只知道哭。羞不羞啊。我们穿过牲口棚，畜栏的门都是敞开的。这会儿，你可不能骑小花马咯，”卢斯特说，“这泥土地还算干燥，上面还有许多尘土。屋顶也垮了下来。倾斜的窗户上满是蛛网丝。你干吗要从这边走呀，是想让球飞过来砸你的脑袋吗？”

“把你的手放在衣兜里。”加迪说，“不然它们会被冻僵的，你可不想你的手在圣诞节被冻僵，对吧。”

我们绕过牲口棚走。那头大奶牛和牛犊都站在门口，我们可以听见“小王子”“小马后”和“阿梦”在牲口棚里踏步。“如果不是这么冷，我们会骑‘阿梦’。”加迪说，“但今天太冷了，在马上也抓不稳。”

这时，我们可以看见小河沟，在冒着烟的那里。“那是他们杀猪的地方。”加迪说，“我们回去时可以走那边。”我们说着走下山坡。

“你想带上那封信。”加迪说，“你可以带上它。”她把信从她的衣兜里拿出来，并放进我的衣兜。“这是圣诞节礼物。”加迪说，“莫里舅舅想用它给帕特森夫人一个惊喜。我们必须把信带给她，不让其他人知道。现在把手乖乖放进衣兜里。”我们来到了小河边。

“真冷啊。”加迪说，“看。”她打碎水面的冰，捡起一块贴在我的脸上。“是冰。足以说明天气有多冷。”她带着我穿过去，我们爬上了山坡。“连爸爸妈妈也不能让他们知道，你知道我是怎么想的对吧。我想这对爸爸妈妈和帕特森先生来说都是惊喜，帕特森先生还给过你糖果呢。你还记得帕特森先生去年夏天给你糖果吃吗？”

一道篱笆出现在我们面前。上面的藤蔓都干枯了，被风吹得嘎吱作响。

“只是，我不明白莫里舅舅为什么不派弗什来送信。”加迪说，“弗什也不会说的。”帕特森夫人正在窗口向外看着。“你在这里等着。”加迪说，“现在就在这里等着。我几分钟后就回来。把信给我吧。”她从我的衣兜里拿出信。“把你的手放在衣兜里。”她手中拿着信翻过篱笆，走过嘎吱作响的棕黄色花丛。帕特森夫人走到门口，打开门站在那儿。

帕特森先生正在绿色的花丛中劈柴，他停下来看着我。帕特森夫人
跑着穿过花园。我一看到她的眼睛，就哭了起来。“你这个傻瓜，”帕特
森夫人说，“我告诉过他别再让你一个人过来。快把它给我吧。”帕特森
先生拿着锄头快步过来。帕特森夫人弯身搭在篱笆上，把手伸向她，她
试着翻过篱笆。“把它给我，”她说，“把它给我。”这时，帕特森先生

爬过篱笆，拿到了信。帕特森夫人的裙子被篱笆挂住了。我又一次看到了她的眼睛，然后我跑下了山坡。

“那边除了房子什么也没有。”卢斯特说，“我们下到小河里。”

他们在小河里洗衣服。其中一个人在唱歌。我能闻到拍打衣服和炊烟飘过小河的味道。

“他想要干什么。”

“他不知道他想要干什么。”卢斯特说，“他以为自己想去他们打球的地方。你在这里坐好，玩你的曼陀铃。看他们在小河里玩，如果你可以看到的话。你怎么就不能和其他人一样呢。”我在河岸边坐下，他们在这里洗衣服，河边飘起了蓝色的烟雾。

“你在下面看到25分硬币之类的东西吗？”卢斯特说。

“什么25分？”

“早上我在这儿的时候还有呢。”卢斯特说，“也不知在哪儿弄丢了。从我衣兜里的洞掉出去了。要是找不到，今晚就没法看演出了。”

“你在哪里拿到25分的，小子？趁白人不注意的时候去他们的衣兜里掏来的吧。”

“是从该得的地方得来的。”卢斯特说，“那里还有好多呢。不过，我要去找那25分。你们看到过吗？”

“我对那25分没兴趣。我还有我自己的事要做。”

“过来。”卢斯特说，“帮我找找看。”

“就算他能看到，也认不出来那是25分吧。”

“他也只能帮着到处找找。”卢斯特说，“你们晚上都会去看演出吧。”

“别跟我提演出的事。洗完这些衣服，手都抬不起来了。”

“我打赌你会去的。”卢斯特说，“我打赌昨晚你也在那儿。我打赌帐篷打开的时候你们都在那儿。”

“除了我还有很多黑鬼，就是昨晚。”

“依我看，黑鬼的钱和白人的钱一样值钱。”

“白人给黑鬼钱，是因为他们早就知道，白人乐队一来就能把钱全都捞回去，这样一来，黑鬼们为了多赚一点，就会去干活了。”

“又没人叫你看。”

“是没有，不过，我估计是他们还没想起来吧。”

“你为什么要和白人过不去呢？”

“没有和他们过不去。我走我的路，他们走他们的。我对那演出没兴趣。”

“乐队里有人能用锯子演奏，就跟拉班卓琴一样。”

“你昨晚去过。”卢斯特说，“如果我能找到弄丢的25美分我今晚就去。”

“你该带上他一起去，我认为。”

“我？”卢斯特说，“你认为我还会在什么地方都跟他一起吗，只要他吼一声？”

“他开始吼的时候你怎么办？”

“我会抽他。”卢斯特说，他坐下来卷起工作服。他们在小河里玩。

“你们找到什么东西了吗？”卢斯特说。

“你说话怎么那么傲慢。你最好别让你奶奶听到你那样说话。”

卢斯特走进小河，他们在里面玩。他沿着河岸在水里寻找。

“早上我们在这儿的时候钱还在。”卢斯特说。

“你在哪里弄丢的？”

“就从我衣兜里的洞掉的。”卢斯特说。他们在小河里寻找。然后他们都快速站起来并停下了，接着水花四溅，他们打了起来。卢斯特拿到了钱，他们蹲坐在水里，目光穿过灌木丛，往山坡上望过去。

“他们在哪儿？”卢斯特说。

“还看不到。”

卢斯特把钱放进衣兜。他们从山坡上走下来。

“看到一个球飞过来了吗？”

“应该是掉到水里了，你们谁看到或者听到了吗？”

“没有听到什么掉水里啊。”卢斯特说，“倒是听见有东西撞到了那边的树。不知道往哪边去了。”

他们往小河里看去。

“噫。沿着河找。它下来这里了，我看到的。”

他们沿着小河寻找，然后回到山坡上。

“你们有没有捡到那个球？”一个男孩说。

“我要那个干什么。”卢斯特说，“我没见过球。”

那个男孩走进水里，继续寻找。他转过身来，再一次看着卢斯特，又往下继续寻找。

一个人在山坡上叫“加蒂”，那个男孩便从水里出来向山坡上走去。

“你看你又开始闹了，”卢斯特说，“别闹了。”

“他现在在喊什么。”

“天知道啊。”卢斯特说，“他一开始就那样，他整个早上都如此。我想是因为今天是他生日的缘故吧。”

“他多大？”

“三十三。”卢斯特说，“今天早上刚满三十三。”

“你是说，有三十岁吗？他的样子看起来倒像是三岁。”

“我听姥姥说的。”卢斯特说，“我不知道。不论怎样，会有三十三

根蜡烛插在蛋糕上。蛋糕很小，差点就插不下那些蜡烛。别张扬。到这里来。”他走过来抓住我的手臂，“你这个老疯子。”他说，“你想让我抽你是吗？”

“我打赌你不敢。”

“又不是没抽过。安静，马上。”卢斯特说，“难道我没有告诉过你不能去那里？他们会用球打你的脑袋。到这里来。”他在背后推了推我，“坐下。”我坐下来，脱掉鞋并卷起裤子。“现在，到水里去玩，看看你还吵不吵闹不闹。”

我安静下来，然后下到了水里。

罗斯库司来了，说该去吃晚饭了，可是，加迪说，还没到晚饭时间，我不去。

她浑身湿漉漉的。我们之前在小河里玩，加迪蹲下来弄湿了裙子，弗什说：“你把裙子弄湿了，你妈会打你的。”

“她才不会呢。”加迪说。

“你怎么知道的。”昆汀说。

“据我所知是这样。”加迪说，“你又怎么知道会呢。”

“她说过她会。”昆汀说，“再说，我年纪比你大。”

“我七岁了。”加迪说，“也该知道了。”

“我比你大。”昆汀说，“我都上学了，对吧，弗什。”

“我明年也要上学了，”加迪说，“到那个时候我也就上学了，对吧，弗什？”

“你知道，如果你弄湿了裙子她就会打你的。”弗什说。

“裙子没湿。”加迪说，她从水里站起来，看着她的裙子，“我把它脱下来，过一会儿就干了。”

“我打赌你不会的。”昆汀说。

“我一定会。”加迪说。

“我想你最好不要。”昆汀说。

加迪向我和弗什走过来，然后转过身去。

“帮我把扣子解开，弗什。”她说。

“你真要这么做吗，弗什？”昆汀说。

“这又不是我的衣服。”弗什说。

“你快解开扣子，弗什，”加迪说，“否则我就告诉黛西你昨天做的事。”弗什便解开了扣子。

“你脱掉裙子。”昆汀说。于是加迪脱掉了裙子，扔到岸上。现在她的身上除了内衣和内裤，什么也没有了。昆汀去拍她，她便滑倒跌进水里了。当她站起来后，就开始把水往昆汀身上泼，昆汀也往加迪身上泼。有些水溅到弗什和我的身上，弗什扶起我并把我弄到岸上。他说要去告加迪和昆汀的状，于是昆汀和加迪开始朝弗什泼水。他只好躲在灌木丛后面。

“我要去向妈妈告你们两个的状。”弗什说。

昆汀爬上河岸想要抓住弗什，但没有抓住，因为弗什跑开了。昆汀回到河里之后，弗什停下来又叫喊着要去告状。加迪告诉他，如果他不告状，她们就让他回来。于是弗什说他不告了，她们也就让他回来了。

“你现在满意了吧。”昆汀说，“我们两个都会挨打了。”

“我不在乎。”加迪说，“我会跑掉的。”

“你会逃走。”昆汀说。

“我会跑掉，不再回来。”加迪说。

我开始哭起来。加迪转过身来说“安静”，于是，我安静下来。接着他们在河里玩。杰生也一起玩。他一个人在下游更远的地方。弗什从灌木丛里过来，又把我带到河里。加迪身上全湿了，满是泥。

我哭起来，她走过来，蹲在水里。“别哭了。”她说，“我不会跑掉的。”于是我安静下来。加迪闻起来有股雨中树木的味道。

“你怎么了？”卢斯特说，“你就不能像其他人那样，好好在水里玩吗？”

“为什么你不让他待在家呢，难道他们没有告诉你别把他带出那个地方吗？”

“他还以为这草地也是他们家呢，”卢斯特说，“从房子那边也看不见这里。”

可我们看到了。谁愿意看见傻子呀。看见了都得倒霉。

罗斯库司来了，说该去吃晚饭了，但加迪说现在还没有到晚饭时间。

“现在就是了。”罗斯库司说，“黛西说你们都回去。带上他们，弗什。”奶牛在山坡上叫，他走了上去。

“也许我们回去的时候身上就干了。”昆汀说。

“全是你的错。”加迪说，“我看我们要挨打了。”她穿上了裙子，弗什帮忙扣上扣子。

“他们不会知道你弄湿了，”弗什说，“除非我或者杰生告状，不然是不看出来的。”

“你会告状吗，杰生？”加迪说。

“告谁？”杰生说。

“他不会告状的，”昆汀说，“对吧，杰生。”

“我打赌他会告状的，”加迪说，“他会告诉达姆迪3。”

“他不能告诉她，”昆汀说，“她病了。如果我们走慢点，他们就不会看见，因为天已经黑了。”

“我不在乎他们会不会看见，”加迪说，“我会自己告诉他们的。你把他带到山坡上吧，弗什。”

“杰生不会告状的，”昆汀说，“记得我给你做的弓和箭吗，杰生？”

“都坏了。”杰生说。

“让他去告状吧，”加迪说，“我一点儿也不在乎，把莫里背上山坡，弗什。”于是，弗什蹲下身来，我爬上了他的背。

“我们晚上看演出时见，”卢斯特说，“来吧，过来。我们要找到那25美分。”

“要是我们慢慢走，到家的时候天就已经黑了。”昆汀说。

“我不会慢慢走。”加迪说。我们走上了山坡，但昆汀还没来。他还在下面我们之前玩的小河里，我们已经走到可以闻到猪味道的地方。猪在角落里打呼噜，抽鼻子。杰生跟在我们后面来了，他把手放在衣兜里。罗斯库司在牲口棚门口给奶牛挤奶。

奶牛从牲口棚里跳出来了。

“又在叫了，”T.P.说，“再叫几声。我自己都想叫了。哎哟——”昆汀又踢了T.P.一脚。他把T.P.踢进猪吃食的水槽，T.P.躺在那儿。“好家伙。”T.P.说，“他就是这样欺负我的。你们看到那个白人踢我了吗？哎哟——”

我没有哭，只是脚步停不下来。我没有哭，只是地面不平坦了，然后我就哭出来了。地面一直往上倾斜，奶牛都向山坡上跑。T.P.想要站起来，但他又一次摔倒了。奶牛又向山坡下跑。昆汀牵着我的手，我们向牲口棚跑去。但它并不在那儿，我们不得不等它回来。我没有看见它回来。它跟在我们后面，昆汀把我放进牛吃食的水槽里。我抓着它。它还在走，我抓住它。奶牛又穿门而出往山下跑去。我的脚步停不下来。昆汀和T.P.来到山坡上，他们打起来了。T.P.掉下山去，昆汀把他拉上

来。昆汀打了T.P.。我的脚步停不下来。

“站起来。”昆汀说，“你待在这里，我回来之前别走开。”

“我和班吉要回去参加婚礼。”T.P.说，“哎哟！”

昆汀又打了T.P.。接着他开始把T.P.按在墙上，并对着他猛打，T.P.却在笑。

每次昆汀按着他猛打的时候，他都想叫“哎哟”，但却笑得说不出来。我不想哭了，只是停不下来。T.P.倒在我身上，牲口棚的门都掉下来了。门掉下山坡，T.P.被自己打到又倒下来。他仍然在笑，我也停不下来，我想要站起来，但还是倒下了，而我停不下来。弗什说：“你们别叫了。闭嘴，别叫了。”

T.P.还在笑。他摔在门上，笑起来。“哎哟，”他说，“我和班吉要回去参加婚礼。沙普拉4。”T.P.说。

“安静，”弗什说，“你在哪里得到它的？”

“地窖里拿的。”T.P.说，“哎哟。”

“安静下来，”弗什说，“地窖哪里？”

“某个地方，”T.P.说，他笑得更厉害了，“有一百多瓶呢，有一百万多瓶。小心啦，黑鬼，我要叫了。”

昆汀说：“把他扶起来。”

于是弗什把我扶了起来。

“喝掉这个，班吉。”昆汀说。杯子很烫。“立马安静下来，”昆汀说，“喝掉它。”

“沙普拉，”T.P.说，“让我来喝吧，昆汀先生。”

“你给我闭嘴。”弗什说，“昆汀先生要抽你了。”

“抓住他，弗什。”昆汀说。

他们抓住我。我的下巴和衣服都很烫。“喝！”昆汀说。他们抓住我的头。我的身体里很烫，我又开始叫了。我哭了起来，我感觉身体里有些不对劲，于是哭得更厉害了，他们按着我，直到肚子不对劲的感觉停了下来，然后我就安静了。那感觉仍没有消散，紧接着出现了些人影。弗什打开门。他们走得很慢，还在地板上把空的袋子铺开。他们加快了速度，差不多够快了。快，跟上他。他们继续走，走得不快不慢。我听到T.P.在笑。我和他们一起走，爬上明亮的山坡。

走到山顶上，弗什把我放下来。“到这儿来，昆汀。”他往回向山下叫道。昆汀还站在小河边。他在往覆盖着阴影的小河沟扔石子。

“让这个倔小子待在这儿。”加迪说。她牵起我的手，我们继续穿过牲口棚和门。一只青蛙蹲在砖石铺成的人行道中间。加迪跨过它并用力拉了拉我。

“过来，莫里。”她说。青蛙会一直蹲在那儿，直到杰生用脚趾头踢到它。

“他会在你身上弄一个疣。”弗什说。青蛙跳走了。

“快过来，莫里。”加迪说。

“今晚他们有客人了。”弗什说。

“你怎么知道。”加迪说。

“因为灯都亮了，”弗什说，“每一扇窗子里都有灯光。”

“我认为没有客人我们也可以把所有灯都打开，如果我们想这么做的话。”加迪说。

“我打赌是客人，”弗什说，“你们最好都从后门进，悄悄溜上楼。”

“我才不在乎呢，”加迪说，“我会从他们所在的客厅正中走进去。”

“我打赌如果你这么做，你爸爸会打你的。”弗什说。

“我不在乎，”加迪说，“我会从客厅正中走。我会直接走进餐厅去吃晚餐。”

“你坐哪里？”弗什说。

“我会坐在达姆迪的椅子上，”加迪说，“她在床上吃饭。”

“我饿了。”杰生说。他超过我们，跑上了人行道。他把手放在衣兜里，然后摔倒了。弗什走过去，把他扶起来。

“你把手从衣兜里拿出来，就可以站稳了，”弗什说，“你这么胖，永远不能及时把手拿出来扶住你自己。”

爸爸在厨房的台阶上站着。

“昆汀在哪里？”他说。

“他正在回来的路上。”弗什说。昆汀走得很慢。他的T恤看上去白蒙蒙的一片。

“噢。”爸爸说。光从阶梯上照下来，落在他身上。

“加迪和昆汀相互泼水。”杰生说。

我们等待着。

“是吗？”爸爸说。昆汀来了，爸爸接着说：“你们今晚在厨房里吃晚饭。”他停下来带上我，光线也照在了我身上，而我可以看见加迪、杰生、昆汀和弗什在下面。爸爸转向台阶：“不过你们必须保持安静。”他说。

“为什么我们要安静，爸爸？”加迪说，“我们有客人吗？”

“是的。”爸爸说。

“我就跟你说家里有客人吧。”弗什说。

“你没有，”加迪说，“是我说的有客人，是我说的。”

“别出声！”爸爸说。他们安静下来，爸爸打开门，我们穿过后门廊进到厨房。黛西也在那儿，爸爸把我放在椅子上，弄好围裙并拉到放晚餐的桌子上。饭菜还冒着热气。“黛西，你现在看好他们。”爸爸说，“别让他们再乱发出声音了，黛西。”

“好的，先生。”黛西说。爸爸走开了。

“记住了，现在要听黛西的话。”他在我们身后说。我把头靠在晚餐旁边，热气往我的脸上冒。

“让他们今晚听我的吧，爸爸。”加迪说。

“我不要，”杰生说，“我要听黛西的。”

“不要也得要，如果爸爸同意了，”加迪说，“让他们听我的吧，爸爸。”

“我才不，”杰生说，“我不会听你的。”

“安静，”爸爸说，“你们都要听加迪的。等他们吃完，就把他们从后面带上楼，黛西。”

“好的，先生。”黛西说。

“看吧，”加迪说，“我想你们都要听我的了。”

“你们现在都别闹，”黛西说，“你们今晚必须安静。”

“为什么我们今晚必须安静？”加迪喃喃自语。

“不关你的事。”黛西说，“到时候会让你们知道的。”她拿起我的碗。热气冒起来，弄得我的脸很痒。

“过来，弗什。”黛西说。

“什么时候，黛西？”加迪说。

“就是星期天，”昆汀说，“这你都不懂。”

“安静点，”黛西说，“没听到先生说你们要安静吗？好了，快吃饭。来，弗什，把他的勺子拿过来。”

弗什拿过来勺子，把勺子伸进碗里。勺子放到我的嘴边。热气痒痒地进入我的嘴里，这时候大家都停了下来，安静地面面相觑，之后我们又听到了声音，我哭了起来。

“那是什么？”加迪说。她把手放到我的手上。

“是妈妈。”昆汀说。勺子来了，我吃起来，然后又哭起来。

“安静。”加迪说。但我并没有安静下来，她走过来用手抱住我。黛西走过去关上了门，我们就听不见了。

“我叫你安静！”加迪说。于是我安静下来吃饭。昆汀没有吃，但杰生在吃。

“那就是妈妈。”昆汀说着，站了起来。

“你给我坐下，”黛西说，“他们有客人在那儿。你们的衣服上全是泥，不能去，加迪，你也快吃饭。”

“她在哭。”昆汀说。

“是有人在唱歌，”加迪说，“对吧，黛西？”

“你们都快吃你们的饭，听杰生先生的话。”黛西说，“上帝会让你们知道的。”

加迪说着走向她的椅子那里。“我说过了，那是聚会。”她说。

弗什说：“他已经吃完了。”

“把他的碗拿过来。”黛西说。碗已经不见了。

“黛西，”加迪说，“昆汀不吃他的晚餐了。他不是要听我的吗？”

“吃你的饭，昆汀，”黛西说，“你们都快吃完，然后离开我的厨房。”

“我不想吃了。”昆汀说。

“我叫你吃你就得吃，”加迪说，“对吧，黛西。”碗里的热气往我的脸上冒，弗什的手拿着勺子放进去，热气冒进我的嘴里，弄得我很痒。

“我一点儿也不想吃了，”昆汀说，“达姆迪生病的时候他们怎么能聚会呢？”

“他们会在楼下聚会，”加迪说，“她可以到楼梯上偷看。我穿上睡衣后也要这么做。”

“妈妈在哭，”昆汀说，“难道不是吗，黛西？”

“别来烦我了，小子。”黛西说，“你们吃完晚餐后我还要给其他人做。”

过了一会儿，连杰生也吃完了，他哭起来。

“你们几个轮着哭是吧。”黛西说。

“自从达姆迪生病而他不能和她一起睡之后，他每天晚上都这样。”加迪说。

“真是爱哭的孩子。”

“我要告你们的状。”杰生说，他哭了。

“你已经告过了，”加迪说，“现在你没有什么能告状的了。”

“你们都要准备上床睡觉了。”黛西说，她走过来，把我放下来，用热毛巾擦了擦我的脸和手，“弗什，你能把他们安静地带上楼梯吗？杰生，你快闭嘴别哭了。”

“现在上床睡觉还太早了，”加迪说，“我们从没有这么早上床睡觉过。”

“今晚就会了，”黛西说，“你们的爸爸告诉你们吃完饭就到楼上去，你们可是听到了的。”

“他说要听我的。”加迪说。

“我不会听你的。”杰生说。

“你必须听，”加迪说，“快，就是现在，你们必须照我说的做。”

“让他们安静，弗什，”黛西说，“你们都必须给我安静。”

“为什么要我们今晚这么安静？”加迪说。

“你们的妈妈不舒服，”黛西说，“你们都跟弗什上楼去，现在就去。”

“我说过妈妈在哭。”昆汀说。弗什带上我，打开通往后门廊的门。我们走出去之后弗什把门关上。我能闻到弗什的味道并感受到他。我们现在都很安静。我们不会上楼去。杰生先生要你们上楼去。他说你们都要听我的。我并不要让你们听我的。但他说你们都要。不是吗，昆汀。我可以感觉到弗什的头。我可以听见大家的出气声。不是吗，弗什。没

错，正是如此。之后我让大家到门外去一会儿。弗什打开门，我们走了出来。

我们走下台阶。

“我想我们最好到弗什家去，那样他们就听不到我们的声音了。”加迪说。弗什把我放下来，加迪牵起我的手，我们沿着砖石人行道向下走去。

“快过来，”加迪说，“青蛙不见了。到现在它已经跳进花园里了。也许我们会发现另外一只。”这时，罗斯库司提着牛奶桶走过来。他往前走去了。昆汀没有和我们一起来。他坐在厨房外的台阶上。我们往弗什家的房子走去。我喜欢弗什家房子的味道。

屋子里面生着火，T.P.裹着他的衬衫蹲在火前，他加着柴，烈火熊熊燃烧。

之后我起来了，T.P.给我穿上衣服，我们到厨房里吃饭。黛西在唱歌，我哭起来，于是她停下来。

“别让他进这屋子，现在就带走他。”黛西说。

“我们不能去那边。”T.P.说。

我们一起在小河里玩。

“我们不能在那里到处走，”T.P.说，“难道你不知道妈妈说我们不能去吗？”

黛西在厨房里唱歌，我开始哭起来。

“安静。”T.P.说，“好吧，我们去牲口棚。”罗斯库司在牲口棚挤奶。

他一边用一只手挤奶，一边抱怨。几只停在牲口棚门上的鸟看着他。一只鸟飞下来，和奶牛一起吃起来。T.P.在给“小马后”和“王子”喂食，同时，我看着罗斯库司挤奶。小牛在猪圈里。它紧紧靠着金属围栏，用鼻子擦着铁丝网，发出响声。

“T.P。”罗斯库司说。T.P.在牲口棚里回答：“什么事，爸爸。”

“阿梦”把它的头都伸到门外去了，因为T.P.还没有来喂它。“快来，”罗斯库司说，“你来挤奶，我的右手不听使唤了。”

T.P.过来开始挤奶。

“你为什么不去看医生？”T.P.说。

“医生也没办法，”罗斯库司说，“在这里不行。”

“这里怎么不行？”T.P.说。

“这里交不到好运，”罗斯库司说，“如果你喂完了，就去喂那头小牛。”

这里交不到好运，罗斯库司说。火焰在他和弗什身后忽起忽落，滑过他和弗什的脸。黛西已经把我放到床上。床的味道闻起来就像T.P.，我喜欢这个味道。

“你知道些什么，”黛西说，“你犯傻了。”

“这关犯傻什么事，”罗斯库司说，“难道这不是躺在那张床上的征

兆吗？难道这不是十五年来人们在这里所见的征兆吗？”

“就当它是吧，”黛西说，“这对你和你的东西没有任何伤害，不是吗？弗什干活，弗洛尼出嫁，T.P.也足够大了，如果你让风湿给弄垮，他就可以代替你的位置。”

“现在已经两个人了，”罗斯库司说，“多了一个人。我看到征兆了，你也是。”

“那晚我听到一只蜷缩的猫头鹰在叫，”T.P.说，“丹也不敢去吃他的晚餐。不敢从牲口棚那儿过。天黑后就开始叫。弗什听见了的。”

“多了一个人，”黛西说，“告诉我那个人怎样才不会死去，上帝保佑。”

“死亡还算是好的了。”罗斯库司说。

“我知道你在想什么，”黛西说，“念那个名字也不能给他们带来好运，除非你在他哭泣的时候让他坐起来。”

“在这个地方他们不会有好运的，”罗斯库司说，“我从一开始就看出来了，他们给他换名字的时候我已经知道了。”

“闭上你的嘴，”黛西说。她把床罩拉起来。床罩闻起来就像T.P.的味道。“你们现在都闭嘴，让他睡觉。”

“我看见征兆了。”罗斯库司说。

“征兆，T.P.会为你们干完所有的活。”黛西说，“T.P.带上他和昆汀去下面的房子，让他们和卢斯特一起玩，弗洛尼也能在那儿看着他们，

T.P.去帮帮你的爸爸。”

我们吃完了。T.P.带上昆汀，我们往T.P.的房子走去。卢斯特在玩泥巴。T.P.把昆汀放下，她也玩泥巴。卢斯特有一些线轴，他和昆汀打起来，昆汀抢到了线轴。卢斯特哭起来，弗洛尼走过来，给了卢斯特一个可以玩的罐头，于是我把线轴拿了过来，昆汀打了我，我哭了。“安静，”弗洛尼说，“你不害臊吗？抢一个小孩的玩具。”他把线轴从我手上拿走，还给了昆汀。

“好了，别闹了，”弗洛尼说，“别闹，我来告诉你。”

“快安静，”弗洛尼说，“你真该挨打了，你就欠打。”她带上卢斯特和昆汀，“到这儿来。”她说。我们去牲口棚。T.P.在挤奶。罗斯库司坐在一个箱子上。

“他现在怎么了？”罗斯库司说。

“你现在必须让他待在这儿，”弗洛尼说，“他又打了这些小孩。让他们玩东西。现在和T.P.一起留在这儿，看看你能不能安静一会儿。”

“现在把奶头洗干净，”罗斯库司说，“去年冬天你把那头年轻奶牛的奶都挤干了。如果再把这头挤干，它们不会再有奶了。”

黛西在唱歌。

“别去那里，”T.P.说，“难道你不知道妈妈说你不能在这儿到处走吗？”

他们在唱歌。

“过来，”T.P.说，“让我们去找昆汀和卢斯特玩，来吧。”

昆汀和卢斯特在T.P.的房子前玩泥巴。房子里有一堆火，忽起忽落。罗斯库司坐在火堆对面。

“那是三个人，感谢上帝，”罗斯库司说，“两年前我就告诉过你。在这个地方他们不会有好运的。”

“那你怎么不出去，”黛西说，她正在给我脱衣服，“你的晦气话都让弗什有去孟菲斯的想法了。这样你该满意了。”

“如果那是弗什全部的噩运。”罗斯库司说。

这时，弗洛尼进来了。

“你们的事都干完了吗？”黛西说。

“T.P.结束了，”弗洛尼说，“卡布林小姐让你们把昆汀弄上床。”

“我正尽快过来，”黛西说，“她这个时候应该知道我没有翅膀。”

“这正是我要说的，”罗斯库司说，“他们连一个小孩的名字都不能说，在这个地方他们不会有好运气。”

“好了，”黛西说，“你想把他吵醒，让他又开始哭吗？”

“养大一个小孩而他却不知道自己的名字。”罗斯库司说。

“你不要想她的事，”黛西说，“我把他们都养大，我认为我还能多养一个。安静了。如果他睡得着就让他睡。”

“你们就直接说好了，”弗洛尼说，“他不知道任何人的名字。”

“你倒是说说看，看他懂不懂，”黛西说，“他睡觉的时候，你对他说了，他一定听见了。”

“他知道的比人们能想象的多得多，”罗斯库司说，“他知道大家的时辰什么时候到，像猎狗追踪猎物一样走完。他可以告诉你们他的时辰什么时候到，如果他能说话，还能说出你的或者我的时辰。”

“你把卢斯特弄下床，妈妈，”弗洛尼说，“那孩子会让他中邪的。”

“闭上你的嘴，”黛西说，“你难道不能说点好听的吗？你听罗斯库司说，他会告诉你这是为什么，不管怎样，先进来再说吧，班吉。”

黛西推了推我，我上到床上，卢斯特已经躺在上面了。他睡着了。黛西拿了一根长条木头，放在我和卢斯特之间：“现在你们一人待一边。”

黛西说：“卢斯特那么小，你不要压着他。”

“你还不能去，”T.P.说，“再等等。”

我们环视房子的角落，看着马车离开。

“好了，”T.P.说。他带上昆汀，我们跑去篱笆的角落，看着他们经过。“他们走了，”T.P.说，“看见里面那辆有玻璃窗的了吗？看他。他就躺在那里。看他。”

“来吧，”卢斯特说，“我要把这个球带回家，它在家，就不会掉。现在，先生，它是我的了。如果他们看到你带着它，会说是你偷来的。”

安静了。不给就是不给。你拿着又没用。你又不会玩球。”

弗洛尼和T.P.在门旁边的泥巴里玩。T.P.有一个装着萤火虫的瓶子。

“你们怎么又都回来了？”弗洛尼说。

“我们家有客人，”加迪说，“爸爸告诉我们今晚要听我的。我想你和T.P.同样也得听我的。”

“我不会听你的，”杰生说，“弗洛尼和T.P.也不会。”

“我说了，他们会听，”加迪说，“但也许我不打算让他们听呢。”

“T.P.是不会听任何人的，”弗洛尼说，“他们开始葬礼了吗？”

“什么是葬礼？”杰生说。

“妈妈没说让你别告诉他们吗？”弗什说。

“葬礼就是大家一起哭，”弗洛尼说，“贝拉·克莱大姐死的时候，他们足足哭了两天呢。”

他们在黛西的房子里哭。黛西也在哭。黛西哭的时候，卢斯特说，安静，我们安静下来。然后我又哭起来，蓝在厨房阶梯下大声长嚎起来。黛西停止了哭声，我们也停了下来。

“噢，”加迪说，“那是黑鬼。白人不会有葬礼。”

“妈妈让我们不要告诉他们，弗洛尼。”弗什说。

“告诉他们什么？”加迪说。

黛西哭了，我听到后，也开始哭，蓝也在台阶下号叫。弗洛尼在窗边说，卢斯特，带他们下到牲口棚去，他们这样我没法做饭，把那只猎犬也带上，把他们都带出去。

卢斯特说，我才不下去，我可能会在下面碰到外公，我昨晚见到他了，他在牲口棚里向我挥手。

“我想知道你为什么不下去，”弗洛尼说，“白人也会死。我猜，你奶奶死的时候也像其他的黑人那样。”

“狗都死了，”加迪说，“南希掉到沟里的时候罗斯库司打了它一枪，他的秃鹰们过来把它撕得稀烂。”

尸骨就躺在沟里，黑色的藤蔓长满了那条黑色的沟，月光照在上面，一些人影停了下来。不一会儿，所有人都停住了，天色暗了下来，当我重新睁开眼睛的时候，我听到了妈妈的声音，还听到很多飞快的脚步声，我还能够闻到那种味道。接着，我看到了房间，我闭上眼睛，却没有一点睡意。我能够闻到那种味道。T.P.解开了我被子上的别针。

“嘘，”他说，“嘘……”

但我还能闻到味道。T.P.把我拉了起来，飞快地帮我穿上了衣服。

“快点，班吉。”他说，“我们现在就下去，到我们的房子里去。你要下到我们的房子里去，弗洛尼也在那里。小声点，嘘……”

他帮我系好鞋带，给我戴上帽子，然后我们一起出了门。我们走过大厅时，里面闪烁着灯光。

我们穿过大厅的时候，我听到了妈妈的声音。

“嘘……班吉，”他说，“我们马上就要出去了。”一扇门被打开了，那种味道从未如此浓烈过，一个人探出头来。他不是爸爸。爸爸生病了。

“你能把他带到房子外面去吗？”

“我们就是要出去。”T.P.说。黛西走上了楼梯。

“嘘，”她说，“小声点。把他带下去，回家去，T.P.。弗洛尼给他准备好了床铺。你们要把他照顾好。小声点，班吉，跟着T.P.去吧。”

她进入了传来妈妈声音的地方。

“最好把他关在那里。”那不是爸爸的声音。他关上了房门，但是我还能闻到味道。

我们下了楼，走进外面的黑暗之中。丹坐在后院里号哭着。

“它也闻到了，”T.P.说，“你就是用这种方法找到它的吗？”

我们沿着楼梯向下走，影子紧紧地跟在身后。

“我忘了拿你的外套了，”T.P.说，“你本来应该穿在身上的，但是我回不去了。”

丹哭了。

“小声点。”T.P.说。我们的影子动了起来，但是丹的影子并没有动，而是跟着他一起号哭。

“我不会把你带回家的，你再这样叫的话，”T.P.说，“你已经够让人讨厌了，还发出这种牛蛙般的声音，走吧。”

我们沿着砖墙前行，跟我们的影子一起。猪圈的味道就像猪身上的味道一样。奶牛站在牛圈里，一边吃东西一边看着我们。这时，丹又开始叫了。

“你这样会把所有人都吵醒的，”T.P.说，“你就不能忍一忍吗？”我们见到了正在树旁吃饭的阿梦。我们到达水边的时候，月光刚好照在水面上。

“不，先生，”T.P.说，“马上就要到了，我们不能在这里停。走吧，看看你自己，腿都浸到水里去了。走吧，从这里走。”丹还是在哭。

黑色的沟在嗡嗡作响的草堆里凸显了出来。尸骨散落在黑色的藤蔓中。“现在，”T.P.说道，“你想叫就叫吧，我们要在这20英亩牧场中度过整晚的时间，你叫得再大声也没关系。”

T.P.在沟里躺了下来，我也坐了下来，看着秃鹰们把南希吃掉的地方，它们吃完之后便拍打着翅膀慢悠悠地走出了那条沟。

我们在下面的时候，它还在我身上呢，卢斯特说。我给你看过了的，对吧。我就在这里把它掏出来给你看的。

“你觉得秃鹰会把达姆迪吃掉，”加迪问，“你疯了吧。”

“你真是个大坏蛋。”杰生说完就开始大哭。

“你才是一个大坏蛋，”加迪说道。杰生还在哭。他的手还放在衣兜里。

“杰生会成为有钱人，”弗什说，“他一直都把自己的钱看得很紧。”

杰生还在哭。

“看，你又把他弄哭了，”加迪说，“不要哭了，杰生。秃鹰怎么可能找到达姆迪。爸爸不会让它们得逞的。秃鹰也不会把你撕烂。现在快动身吧。”

杰生站了起来：“弗洛尼说那是一场葬礼。”他说。

“不是。”加迪说道，“那是一次聚会。弗洛尼对此毫不知情。他想要的是你那些闪光的虫子，T.P.，给他拿一下。”

T.P.把那个装着萤火虫的瓶子给了我。

“我敢打赌，如果我们到客厅窗户那边去，肯定能看到些什么，”加迪说，“这样你们就会相信我的话了。”

“我早就知道了，”弗洛尼说，“我不用看。”

“你最好闭嘴，弗洛尼，”弗什说，“妈妈会用鞭子抽你的。”

“能看到什么？”加迪问。

“我就知道，我就知道。”弗洛尼说。

“算了吧，”加迪说，“我们绕到前面去。”

我们起身行动。

“T.P.想要他的萤火虫。”弗洛尼说。

“让他再拿一下，T.P.，”加迪说，“我们会把瓶子给你的。”

“谁叫你们不去抓的。”弗洛尼说。

“我说了你和T.P.也要一起去，你就让他拿着瓶子嘛。”加迪说。

“谁说我和T.P.必须听你的啦。”弗洛尼说。

“不听我的话，也得让他拿一下。”加迪说。

“好吧。”弗洛尼说。

“让他拿着瓶子，T.P.。我们去看他们在哭什么。”

“他们没有哭，”加迪说，“我跟你说过了，他们在聚会。他们没有哭吧，弗什？”

“我们站在那里怎么知道他们在干什么呢？”弗什说。

“好吧，”加迪说，“弗洛尼和T.P.不用听我的安排。但是剩下的人就得听我的。你最好带上他，弗什。天就要黑了。”

于是弗什把我背起来，我们从厨房出发。

当我们从转角往外望的时候，可以看到光线从那边照过来。T.P.回到地下室，打开了门。

你知道下面有什么吗？T.P.说，苏打水。我看到过杰生先生从下面上来的时候两只手都提着苏打水。你在这里等一下。

T.P.走过去朝厨房门里张望。黛西说，你在这里找什么，班吉在哪

儿。

他在外面，T.P.说。

去看着他，黛西说。把他带到房子外面去。

好，T.P.说，他们开始了吗？

你把那孩子看好，别让我看到他，黛西说。我还有自己的事情要做。

蛇从房子下面爬了出来。杰生说他不怕蛇，加迪说他怕蛇，但她自己不怕，弗什说他们两个都怕蛇，加迪说给我安静，爸爸就是这样的口气。

“你现在可不能哭，”T.P.说，“要喝点这个吗？”

这东西让我的鼻子和眼睛都发痒。

“你不喝我喝，”T.P.说，“啊，找到了。趁现在没人，我们最好再来一瓶。你给我好好待着。”

我们在窗户旁的大树那里停下了。弗什坐在潮湿的草地上。冷死我了。每一扇窗户里都透着光。

“达姆迪就在那一间屋里，”加迪说，“她现在生病了。等她好起来我们就出去野餐。”

“我知道，我知道是怎么回事。”弗洛尼说。

树木在沙沙作响，草丛也是。

“旁边那间就是我们得麻疹的时候睡的地方，”加迪说，“你和T.P.是在哪里得的麻疹，弗洛尼？”

“我觉得就在我们住的地方。”弗洛尼说。

“他们还没有开始。”加迪说。

“他们准备开始了，”T.P.说，“你现在就站在这里，而我要去拿那个箱子，这样我们就可以透过窗户看里面了。我们先把这些东西都喝完。”我的肚子已经咕咕直叫了。

我们喝掉了饮料，T.P.把瓶子都扔到栅栏那边的房子下面，然后跑开了。我听到从窗户那边传来的人声，我紧紧地抓着墙壁。T.P.把箱子拉了过来。不小心绊了一跤，他又开始笑了。他躺在那里，就在草地里笑着。他站起来，把箱子拉到窗户下面，试着忍住不笑。“我怕自己会大叫起来，”T.P.说，“你站到箱子上看他们开始没有。”

“他们还没有开始，乐队都还没来呢。”加迪说。

“他们没有请乐队。”弗洛尼说。

“你怎么知道。”加迪说。

“我就是知道。”弗洛尼说。

“你什么都不知道，”加迪说，她走到树那边，“推我一把，弗什。”

“你爸爸不要你爬那棵树。”弗什说。

“那是很久之前的事情了，”加迪说，“我想他肯定都忘了。而且他还说过今晚得听我的。他不是说过听我安排吗？”

“我不会听你的，”杰生说，“弗洛尼和T.P.也不听。”

“推我一把，弗什。”加迪说。

“好吧，”弗什说，“要挨鞭子的话，你自己挨吧，我才不管呢。”他过去将加迪推到了树上的第一根枝丫上。我们看到了她屁股上的泥污。

然后她就从我们视野中消失了，只听到树木的声音。

“杰生先生说如果你把那棵树压断了他就要用鞭子抽你。”弗什说。

“我也要去告发她。”杰生说。

树不动了。我们抬头看着一动不动的树枝。

“你看到了什么。”弗洛尼小声问道。

我看到了他们。然后我看到了加迪，她的头上别着花，戴着一张发光的长面纱。

加迪。加迪。

“小声点，”T.P.说道，“他们会听到的。快下来。”他过来拉我。“加迪。”我双手抓着墙，加迪和T.P.拉着我。“小声点，”他说，“别说话，快过来。”他一直拉着我。加迪说：“安静，班吉。你想让他们听到吗？快过来，我们喝点饮料，等你安静下来，我们就可以回去了。我们最好都再喝一瓶，要不然我们会大叫出来的。我们可以说这些是丹喝的。昆汀先生总是说它很聪明，我们也可以说它是条偷喝东西的狗。”

月光照到地下室的楼梯上。我们又喝了一些。

“你知道我在想什么吗？”T.P.说，“我想有一只熊走进那扇地下室的门。你知道我要做什么吗？我直接走到它面前，往它的眼睛上啐一口唾液。在我叫出来之前把那瓶子递过来，让我堵住我的嘴。”

T.P.坐了下来，开始大笑。地下室的门和月光跳到了一边，有什么东西打了我一下。

“轻点，”T.P.说，他试着让自己不再发笑，“罗素他们会听到我们说话的。起来，”T.P.对我说，“起来，班吉，快点。”他一直在催我，一直在笑，而我则试着站起来。月光中，地下室的楼梯延伸到小山上。T.P.跑到了山上，跑进了月光里，我撞到了栅栏上，T.P.在我后面一直不停地“小声点，小声点”，然后他滚到了花丛中，笑着。我撞到了那个箱子。但当我试着爬到箱子上面的时候，箱子却跳开了，打中了我的后脑勺，我发出了一声喊叫，然后我哭了起来。T.P.一直在拉我，我的喉咙也一直在发出声音。它一直在发声，我都不知道自己是不是真的在哭。T.P.绊倒在我身上，又笑了。我的喉咙一直没停止过发出声音。昆汀踢了踢T.P.，加迪则用她的双臂和闪亮的面纱环绕住我，我没法闻到树木的味道了，我又开始哭了。

班吉，加迪说，班吉。她又用她的双臂环住我，但是我却跑开了。

“怎么了，班吉？”她问，“是我帽子的关系吗？”她把自己的帽子摘下，又到我这里来，我又跑开了。“班吉，”她说，“怎么回事，班吉？加迪做了什么？”

“她不喜欢那套神经兮兮的打扮。”杰生说，“你以为自己长成大人了，是吗？你觉得你比其他人都要好，是吗？神经病。”

“你给我闭嘴，”加迪说。“你这个肮脏的小东西，班吉。”

“你以为你十四岁了就是一个大人了吗？”杰生说，“你觉得自己了不起了，是吗？”

“闭嘴，班吉。”加迪说，“你会把妈妈吵醒的。安静点。”

但是我并没有闭嘴，她离开的时候我也跟了过去，她在梯子那里停下，我也跟着停下。

“怎么回事，班吉？”加迪问，“告诉加迪。她无所不能。不妨试一试。”

“加达斯。”妈妈说。

“妈妈。”加迪叫道。

“你逗他干什么，”妈妈说，“把他带过来。”

我们去了妈妈的房间，她生病了，躺在那里，头上围着一块布。

“到底是怎么回事，”妈妈说，“本杰明？”

“班吉。”加迪说。她又走了过来，但是我逃开了。

“你肯定是对他干了什么，”妈妈说，“你就不能让他自己待一会儿，这样我就能安静一会儿了。把箱子给他，然后你就走开，让他一个人玩会儿。”

加迪拿了箱子，把它放到地上，并且打开。里面装满了星星。我不动的时候，它们就不动。我一动，它们就开始闪烁起来。我闭上了嘴。

然后我听到加迪走路的声音，又开始了。

“本杰明，”妈妈说，“过来这里。”我走到门那里。“你，本杰明。”妈妈说。

“怎么了？”爸爸说，“你要去哪？”

“把他带到楼下去让别人看着他，杰生，”妈妈说，“你知道我病了，不是吗？”

爸爸在我们身后关上了门。

“T.P。”他说。

“先生。”T.P.在楼下说。

“班吉要下来了，”爸爸说，“和他一起去。”

我走到浴室门边，听到了水声。

“班吉。”T.P.在楼下说。

我听到了水声，一直听着。

“班吉。”T.P.在楼下叫着。我一直听着水声。

我听到了水声，我很认真地听着。

“干吗，班吉？”她问。她看着我，我出去的时候，她用双臂抱着我。

“你又找到加迪了，”她说，“你觉得加迪刚才是跑了吗？”加迪像树一样笑了。

我们去到加迪的房间。她在镜子前坐了下来，她放下了双手，看着我。

“怎么了，班吉，怎么回事？”她问，“你不能再哭了。加迪不会走的。看这里。”她说说着拿起瓶子，拔掉塞子，凑到我鼻子下面，“好甜。好香。好好闻啊。”

我转过了头，哭了，她拿着那瓶子看着我。

“啊，”她说，她放下瓶子走过来抱着我，“就这样吧。你想跟加迪说，但是你又不说。你想说但是又不能，对吧。加迪当然不会走。加迪不会走。等我换衣服。”

加迪穿上衣服又拿起了瓶子，我们一起下楼去了厨房。

“黛西，”加迪说，“班吉给你带了个礼物。”她弯下腰把瓶子放到我手里，“把瓶子给黛西，快。”加迪把我的手拉着伸出去，黛西拿走了瓶子。

“哦，真了不起，”黛西说，“我的孩子居然送给黛西一瓶香水。你快看啊，罗斯库司。”

加迪闻起来有一股树的味道的。“我们不喜欢用香水。”加迪说。

她闻起来就像一股树的味道的。

“过来吧，”黛西说，“你已经长大了，不能和其他人一起睡了。你现在是个大孩子了。十三岁。已经足够去莫里舅舅的房间里自己睡了。”黛西说。

莫里舅舅生病了。他的眼睛得了病，还有他的嘴巴。弗什端着盘子去给他送午饭。

“莫里说他要用枪射死那个流氓，”爸爸说，“我告诉他最好不要蛮干，最好先给帕特森说这件事。”他说完喝了一口酒。

“杰生。”妈妈说。

“射谁，爸爸？”昆汀问，“莫里舅舅为什么要射他？”

“因为他开不起一丁点儿玩笑。”爸爸说。

“杰生，”妈妈说，“你怎么能这样说。你坐在那里看着莫里中了埋伏被射伤，还要冷笑吗？”

“莫里最好不要中埋伏就是了啊。”爸爸说。

“射谁，爸爸？”昆汀问，“莫里舅舅要射谁？”

“没有谁，”爸爸说，“我又没有枪。”

妈妈开始哭了：“如果你羡慕莫里的午饭，怎么不当面跟他说。何必背着他，在孩子面前贬低他。”

“我根本就不嫌弃他，”爸爸说，“我崇拜莫里。他对于我自己的种族优越感来说是无价之宝。就算有人拿一对好马跟我换莫里我都不会换的。你知道为什么吗，昆汀？”

“不知道，爸爸。”昆汀说。

“我忘了怎么用拉丁语说‘我在阿卡迪亚了’，”爸爸说，“哈哈

哈……”他说，“我开个玩笑。”他喝干了酒，把杯子倒着放下，将手搭在妈妈的肩膀上。

“不要开玩笑。”妈妈说，“我的家人和你出身一样。莫里只是不太健康而已。”

“当然，”爸爸说，“身体不健康是所有人的大问题。在疾病中诞生、长大，在腐朽中死去。弗什。”

“先生。”弗什在我椅子后面说。

“去，拿着这细颈瓶，去打满酒。”

“再让黛西过来把本杰明带到楼上睡觉。”妈妈说。

“你是个大孩子了，”黛西说，“加迪已经不想和你一起睡了。快点吧，你该睡觉了。”看不到房间了，但我并没有停止哭泣，房间又出现了，黛西进来坐在床边看着我。

“你就不能做个好孩子不哭吗？”黛西说，“你不会哭了，对吧。那你能稍微等一下吗？”她走了出去。房门那里什么都没有。过了一会儿，加迪就出现在了那里。

“别出声，”加迪说，“我来了。”

我闭上了嘴，黛西把床单翻了过来，加迪钻进被子里。她并没有脱掉自己的浴衣。

“我这不是来了吗？”她说。黛西抱了一床床单来给她盖上，在她周围塞严实了。

“他马上就要睡着了，”黛西说，“我给你房间留盏灯。”

“好的。”加迪说着，把头放到枕头上，和我的靠在一起，“晚安，黛西。”

“晚安，亲爱的。”黛西说。房间变黑了。加迪闻起来就有股树木的味道。

我们抬头朝树里看去，她就坐在那里。

“她在看什么，弗什？”弗洛尼小声问。

“嘘。”加迪在树上说。

黛西说：“原来你们在这儿，”她从房子的转角处过来，“你干吗不听爸爸的话，上楼睡觉去，不要背着我偷偷跑出来。加迪和昆汀在哪儿？”

“我告诉过她不要爬到树上去，”杰生说，“我要去告发她。”

“谁在树上？”黛西说，她走过来朝树上看去，“加迪！”黛西说。树枝又开始摇动了。

“你个恶魔，”黛西说，“从那里下来。”

“小声点，”加迪说，“你不记得爸爸说过要我们安静吗？”她的双腿出现在视野中，黛西伸出手，把她弄了下来。

“把他们都弄过来干什么，你是不是没脑子？”黛西说。

“我可管不了她。”弗什说。

“你在那里做什么，”黛西说，“谁让你爬到房顶上的。”

“是她，”弗洛尼说，“她让我们来的。”

“谁让你听她的话的，”黛西说，“回家去，马上。”弗洛尼和T.P.走开了。他们刚离开我们就看不到他们了。

“半夜了还跑出来，”黛西说着，把我弄起来，把我们带到了厨房，背着我偷偷溜到外面去，“你知道吗，你们错过了睡觉的时间。”

“嘘……黛西，”加迪说，“不要那么大声说话。我们安静点。”

“那你就给我闭嘴，”黛西说，“昆汀在哪儿？”

“昆汀已经气疯了，因为他今晚必须听我的，”加迪说，“他还拿着T.P.的萤火虫瓶子呢。”

“我猜T.P.没有这瓶子也没关系了，”黛西说，“你去把昆汀找来，弗什。罗斯库司说看到他朝牲口棚那边跑过去了。”弗什跑了出去，消失在我们眼前。

“他们在那里什么都没干，”加迪说，“只是坐在椅子上到处张望。”

“他们自己就能做到，不需要你的帮助。”黛西说。我们穿过了厨房。

你现在想去哪里，卢斯特说。你要回去看他们打球吗？我们在那边找过了。对了，等下。你就在这里等着，我回去拿那个球。我想到了一个主意。

厨房很黑。树木在天空中看起来也很黑。丹从地下室里沿着楼梯晃

晃悠悠地走了上来，咬到了我的脚踝。我在厨房到处走，月光照亮了厨房。丹也跟着我追，追到了月光里。“班吉。”T.P.在屋子里喊道。

窗子旁边的那棵树并不黑，但是后面厚厚的灌木就很黑了。月光下，有虫子在草丛里鸣叫，发出窸窣的声音，我的影子在草丛上滑过。

“你，班吉，”T.P.在房子里说，“你躲到哪里去了？我就知道，你又跑了吧。”

卢斯特回来了。“等一下，”他说，“听着。不要到那边去。昆汀小姐和她的男朋友在秋千架旁边。你到这边来。回来这里。班吉。”

树下好黑。丹没有过来。他一直站在月光里。我看到了秋千，又开始哭了起来。

不要待在那里，班吉，卢斯特说，你知道昆汀小姐会生气的。

这时，秋千架上有两个人，过了一会儿只剩一个了。加迪很快走了过来，在黑暗中白蒙蒙的一片。

“班吉，”她说，“你是怎么溜出来的？弗什在哪儿？”

她用手抱住我，我闭上嘴，抓住她的裙子试图拉开。

“干吗，班吉？”她说，“怎么回事，T.P.？”她喊道。秋千里坐着的那人站了起来，朝我们走过来。我又哭了，拉着加迪的裙子。

“班吉，”加迪说，“是查理。你不认识查理吗？”

“他的黑奴在哪儿，”查理问，“他们怎么又让他到处乱跑了。”

“小声点，班吉，”加迪说，“走开，查理。他不喜欢你。”查理就走开了，我停止了哭泣，手还拉着加迪的裙子。

“干吗，班吉，”加迪说，“你能让我在这里待一下跟查理说说话吗？”

“叫他的黑奴过来，”查理说。他又回来了。我更大声地哭了，还用手抓着加迪的裙子。

“走开，查理。”加迪说。查理走了过来，把手放到加迪身上。我哭得更厉害，更大声了。

“不，不，”加迪说，“别，别。”

“他不会说话，”查理说，“加迪。”

“你疯了吗？”加迪说。她的呼吸开始加快。“他能看见。不要这样。”加迪反抗着。他们的呼吸都很快。“求你了，求你了。”加迪小声说。

“把他送走。”查理说。

“我会的，”加迪说，“放开我。”

“你要把他送走吗？”查理说。

“要，”加迪说，“放开我。”然后查理走开了。

“不要哭，”加迪说，“他走了。”于是我停下了。我能感觉到她胸部的起伏。

“我必须把他带回家，”她说说着抓起我的手。“我马上就来。”她小声说。

“等一下，”查理说，“让黑奴带他回去。”

“不，”加迪说，“我会回来的。走吧，班吉。”

“加迪。”查理小声地说，语气很强硬。我们继续往前走。“你最好回来。你会回来吗？”加迪和我开始奔跑。“加迪，”查理叫道。我们跑了出去，跑到了月光里，一直朝着厨房奔跑。

“加迪——”查理喊。

加迪和我一直在跑。我们跑上了厨房的楼梯，跑上了门廊，加迪在黑暗中跪下来抱着我。我听到了她的呼吸声，感到了她胸部的起伏。“我不会了，”她说，“我绝对不会再那样了。班吉。班吉。”然后她就哭了，我也哭了，我们拥抱着彼此。“不哭了，”她说，“不要哭了。我不会再那样了。”于是我闭上了嘴，加迪站起来，我们走进厨房，打开了灯，加迪开始在水池那边漱口，她漱得很用力。加迪闻起来有股树木的味道。

我一直都叫你不要到那里去，卢斯特说。他们很快就坐上了秋千。昆汀的手放在她头发上。他戴了一只红领结。

你这个老疯子。昆汀说。我要去跟黛西说你让他跟着我到处走。我要让她狠狠地抽你。

“我管不住他，”卢斯特说，“过来，班吉。”

“你管得住，”昆汀说，“你只是不管而已。你也一样跟在我屁股后

面。是奶奶让你一直监视我的吗？”他从秋千里跳出来，“如果你现在不马上把他带走，让他去别处，我就要让杰生抽你。”

“我可管不着他，”卢斯特说，“如果你觉得自己做得到的话你可以试试。”

“你给我闭嘴，”昆汀说，“你要把他带走不？”

“不，让他留在这里，”他说。他戴了一个红领结。阳光照在上面反射出红色的光芒。“看这里，杰生，”他点燃一根火柴，把它放到了自己的嘴里，然后他把那根火柴从嘴里拿出来。火焰还在燃烧，“想试试吗？”他说。我走了过去。“张开嘴。”他说。于是，我张开了嘴。接着，昆汀打掉了他手里的火柴。

“去你的。”昆汀说，“你想让他哭吗？你不知道他一哭就是一整天吗？”昆汀转头对卢斯特说，“我要去黛西那里告你不看好班吉。”于是她跑开了。

“过来，小妞，”他说，“嘿，回来。我不会开他玩笑了。”

昆汀跑到了房子里，她在厨房里转悠。

“你也不是好人，”他说，“不是吗？”

“他不知道你在说什么，”卢斯特说，“他又聋又傻。”

“是吗？”他说，“他这样多久了？”

“到今天已经三十三年了，”卢斯特说，“他一出生就这样。你是来演出的吗？”

“为什么这么说？”他说。

“我以前没见过你来这里。”卢斯特说。

“好吧，那又怎样？”他说。

“不怎么样，”卢斯特说，“我今晚要去看演出。”

他看着我。

“你是那个今晚用锯子演奏乐曲的人，对吧？”卢斯特说。

“你得花钱才能知道答案，”他说，他看着我，“他们干吗不把他关起来。”他说，“你把他带出来干什么？”

“你不要这样跟我说话。”卢斯特说，“我是真的管不住他。我到这里来只是为了找丢掉的钱，找到了我就可以去看演出了。现在看起来我是没机会了。”卢斯特看着地上，“你没多的钱了，对吧。”卢斯特说。

“没有。”他说，“我没有。”

“这样的话，我猜我最好再到其他地方找找。”卢斯特说，他把手放到衣兜里，“你也不想买个高尔夫球什么的，对吧。”卢斯特说。

“什么球？”他问。

“高尔夫球。”卢斯特说，“不要多的，我只要能买票的钱就够了。”

“干什么，”他问，“我能拿它来干什么。”

“我也觉得你拿它没什么用处。”卢斯特说，“到这边来，犟驴。”他

说，“过来看他们打球。拿去。你可以把它和曼陀罗花一起玩。”卢斯特捡起来递给我。它的颜色很鲜艳。

“你是从哪里搞到的？”他说。他的领结在眼光下泛着红光，我们开始往前走。

“在这堆草丛里找到的，”卢斯特说，“我还以为它就是我丢掉的钱呢。”他走过来拿走了它。

“轻点，”卢斯特说，“他看完了就会把它放回去了。”

“安尼斯·马贝尔·贝琦。”他说。他直直地看着房子。

“别出声，”卢斯特说，“他肯定会把它还回来的。”

他把它给了我，我开始哭。

“昨晚来找她的是谁？”他问。

“我不知道，”卢斯特说，“每晚都有人来，她可以从树上爬下来。我可不爱打听这些秘密。”

“他们当中有人泄露了自己的秘密。”他说。他看着房子。他走了过去在秋千下躺下。

“走开，”他说，“不要打扰我。”

“快走吧，”卢斯特说，“你现在不要给我胡闹了。昆汀小姐肯定在黛西面前告你了。”

我们走到栅栏边，透过盘绕的花草朝里看。卢斯特在草丛里找东

西。

“我在这里的时候，钱还在身上呢。”他说。我看到旗子迎风飞扬，阳光斜斜地照在一大片草地上。

“他们很快就会来的，”卢斯特说，“有一些已经到了，但他们又离开了。来吧，帮我找找吧。”

我们沿着栅栏走着。

“嘘，”卢斯特说，“他们不来，我又有什么办法。等一下。他们马上就要来了。看那边。在这里，他们来了。”

我沿着栅栏走着，女孩们把自己的书包从那里递来递去的。

“你，班吉，”卢斯特说，“回这里来。”

“你朝门外看有什么用，”T.P.说，“加迪小姐很久以前就离开了。她结了婚，离开你。你这样做没什么用的，抓着门，哭。她听不到你的声音。”

“他想要什么，T.P.？”妈妈说，“你不能跟他玩，让他安静一会儿。”

“他想去那边看看门里是什么。”T.P.说。

“呃，那不行，”妈妈说，“外面正在下雨。你就得和他一起玩，让他安静。本杰明。”

“没有什么可以让他安静下来，”T.P.说，“他觉得，只要他走到门边，加迪小姐就会回来。”

“胡说。”妈妈说。

我能听到他们说话。我出了门，就听不到他们的声音了，我下楼走到门口，女孩们背着书包从大门口走过去。她们看着我，很快地走开了，她们的头转向一边。我试图喊住她们，但她们头也不回地走了，而且速度还很快。然后，她们开始奔跑，我来到围栏的转角处，我不能再往前走了，我扶着围栏，看着她们的背影，试着说话。

“你，班吉，”T.P.说，“你在做什么，又溜出来了。你不知道黛西会用鞭子抽你吗？”

“你这样做有什么用，别在围栏这边对着她们哭，”T.P.说，“你把那些孩子都吓到了。看看她们，她们都到街的另一边去了。”

他是怎么出去的，爸爸说。你来的时候没关门吗，杰生。

当然不是，杰生说。难道你不知道我一向都记得关门的吗。你以为我想这样的事情发生吗。这个家真是够糟的，老天啊。我可一直都在跟你讲。我觉得你现在会把他送到杰克逊那里去，不然伯吉斯真的要开枪打死他的。

别说了，爸爸说。

我可一直都在跟你讲，杰生说。

我摸到它的时候，它是开着的，我在黄昏举着它。我没有哭，我试着停了下来，看着女孩们在暮色中穿行。我没有哭。

“他在那里呢。”

她们停了下来。

“他出不来。不管怎样，反正他不会伤害任何人。来吧。”

“我好害怕，我想走马路对面。”

“他出不来的。”

我没有哭。

“不要做胆小的猫咪。来吧。”

她们走在暮色中。我没哭，我抓着栅栏。

她们慢慢地来了。

“我害怕。”

“他不会伤害你的。我每天路过这里，他只是沿着栅栏在那儿走动。”

她们过来了。我打开门，她们停了下来，转身。我试着说话，我抓住了她，试着说些什么，她尖叫着，我试着说话，什么东西在发着亮光，我看不太清，我试图摆脱它们。把它们从我面前拂走，但是又看不清楚。她们要上山去，到那个它又会跌落的地方去了。我试着哭。但是我吸气进去，却呼不出来，没法哭了，我试图不从山上掉下去，但是我却摔下了山，落到了一个明亮的、旋转着的地方。

在这里，疯子，卢斯特说。他们来了一些人。现在，不要再哭了，也不要再呻吟了。

他们走到旗帜下面。他把旗子拔了出来，他们打着球，然后他把旗帜又放了回去。

“先生。”卢斯特说。

他看了看四周。“什么？”他说。

“要买高尔夫球吗？”卢斯特说。

“让我们看看吧。”他说。他来到篱笆处，卢斯特把球递了过去。

“你从哪儿弄来的？”他说。

“我捡到的。”卢斯特说。

“我知道，”他说，“在别人的高尔夫球袋里吗？”

“我在这个院子里捡到的，”卢斯特说，“我只要25美分。”

“你凭什么认为它就是你的。”他说。

“它是我捡的。”卢斯特说。

“那你再去捡一个啊。”他说。他把它放在他的衣兜里，就走了。

“我今晚要去看演出。”卢斯特说。

“是那样吗？”他说。他走到高地那边，“让开，‘加蒂’。”他说。然后，他打了一杆。

“你真是的，”卢斯特说，“你总是吵吵闹闹的。你怎么就不能安静点呢。难道你不知道大家都对你的话感到厌倦了吗？给。把你的曼陀罗

花扔掉。”他把它捡了起来，还给了我。“你需要一个新的。这个都已经坏了。”我们站在栅栏那里，看着他们。“那个白人很难相处，”卢斯特说，“你看他把我的球拿走了。”他们继续着。我们也继续沿着栅栏走。我们来到花园，不能再往前走了。我抓着围栏，透过花丛往外看。他们走了。

“现在你没什么好吵闹的了吧，”卢斯特说，“嘘，吵闹的人是我，不是你。过来。你干吗不抓着它呢。等下你就会后悔了。”他把花给了我，说，“你现在要去哪里？”我们的影子踩在草地上。他们在我们之前到达了树林。我的影子是第一个到达那里的。

然后我们到了那里，所有的影子都不见了。那里有一个装着花的瓶子。于是我把剩下的花塞了进去。

“你到底是不是大人，”卢斯特说，“还用瓶子来装杂草。你知道他们在小姐死后会怎么对你吗？他们会送你去杰克逊，那才是属于你的地方。杰生先生这样说的。你在那里可以整天跟那些疯子待在一起，整天抓着栅栏，想怎么叫就怎么叫。你觉得那样的日子怎么样？”

卢斯特打飞那些花：“你要是在杰克逊捣乱，他们就会这样对你。”

我试图拿起鲜花。可是，卢斯特站了起来，然后离开了。然后我就哭了起来。

“哭啊，”卢斯特说，“你哭得有个原因呀。好吧，那么给你一个原因。加迪。”他低声说，“加迪。你哭吧。加迪。”

“卢斯特。”黛西从厨房里喊道。

那些花又回来了。

“不哭了，”卢斯特说，“在这里，它们回来了，就像最开始的那样。好了，现在别出声。”

“你，卢斯特。”黛西说。

“是的，夫人，”卢斯特说，“我们来了。你不要捣乱了。”他猛击我的胳膊，我站起身来。我们走出树林。我们的影子都不见了。

“别哭了，”卢斯特说，“你看大家都看着你呢。不要哭了。”

“你把他放在这里。”黛西说。她走下了楼梯。

“你对他做了什么？”她说。

“没什么，”卢斯特说，“他只是又开始哭了。”

“是的，你说得对。”黛西说，“你肯定对他干了些坏事。你刚才去哪儿了？”

“在那边的香柏树下。”卢斯特说。

“你们让昆汀都愤怒了。”黛西说，“你为什么不能让他离她而去。你不知道她不喜欢他出现在视野中吗？”

“我们得到了尽可能多的时间。”卢斯特说，“他又不是我的叔叔。”

“不要顶嘴，黑鬼男孩。”黛西说。

“我没对他怎样，”卢斯特说，“他在那里玩，他突然开始又喊又哭的。”

“是你碰他的墓地了吗？”黛西说。

“我没有碰过他的墓地。”卢斯特说。

“不要骗我，孩子。”黛西说。我们走上台阶走进厨房。黛西打开火门，提了一把椅子放在前面，我坐了下来。我停住了哭泣。

你为什么要惹她生气呢，黛西说。你为什么不让他离开那里。

加迪说，他只是望着炉火。妈妈告诉他，他有了新名字。我根本就没有惹她生气。

我知道你不想，黛西说。他在房子的一边，而她则在另一边。你不要动我的东西。我不在的时候你不要碰任何东西。

“你都不害臊啊，”黛西说，“逗他玩。”她把蛋糕放在桌子上。

“我没有一直逗他，”卢斯特说，“他当时正在玩一个装满了臭甘菊的瓶子，突然就开始闹起来了。你也听到了的。”

“你没对他的花做什么手脚吗？”黛西说。

“我没有碰过他的墓地，”卢斯特说。“我要他的干什么。我只是在找我的钱而已。”

“你把它弄丢了，对吧。”黛西说。她点燃了蛋糕上的蜡烛。有些蛋糕很小块。有些是从大的上面切下来的小片。“我告诉过你要把它放好。事到如今，我猜，你是要我从弗洛尼那里再给你弄一个来吧。”

“我必须去看演出，带不带班吉都一定要去，”卢斯特说，“我才不会不分白天和黑夜地围着他转。”

“你必须做他打算要你做的事情，黑鬼男孩，”黛西说，“你听我的。”

“难道我不是一直都这样做的吗？”卢斯特说，“难道我不是一直都做他想要我做的事情吗？不是吗，班吉？”

“那你就继续这样做，”黛西说，“把他带到这里来，大吵大闹的。还惹得昆汀也生气了，现在你们都过来吃蛋糕，杰生来之前，我不希望他因为我自己花钱买的蛋糕对我指手画脚。我正在烤蛋糕，他用眼睛数着厨房里的每一个鸡蛋。接下来，你可要注意点，不要去惹他了，不然你今晚就不要去看演出了。”

黛西走了。

“你吹不灭蜡烛吗，”卢斯特说，“看我来吹。”他俯下身，鼓起了自己的脸。蜡烛灭了。我哭了起来。“嘘，”卢斯特说，“过来。在我切蛋糕的时候帮我看着火。”

我能听到时钟的声音，我能听到加迪站在我的身后，我能听到屋顶上还在下雨，加迪说。我讨厌下雨。我讨厌一切。随后，她把头放到我的腿上，她哭了，抱着我，我也哭了起来。然后，我又看着炉火，明亮、光滑的东西又出现了。我可以听到时钟和屋顶还有加迪的声音。

我吃了些蛋糕。卢斯特的手伸了过来，又拿了一块蛋糕。我能听到他吃蛋糕的声音。我看着炉火。

一根长长的线碰到我的肩膀。它一直延伸到门口，然后炉火就灭了。我哭了起来。

“你又在哭什么，”卢斯特说，“你看那里。”炉火没有灭。我停住

了。

“你不能像姥姥说的那样停下来，老老实实在地坐着看着火，安静一点，”卢斯特说，“你应该为自己感到羞耻。来。这里还有些蛋糕。”

“你这是在对他做什么，”黛西说，“你永远不会让他独自一人待着吗？”

“我只是试图让他闭嘴，免得打扰了卡林小姐。”卢斯特说。

“不知道什么东西又把他惹哭了。”

“我知道是什么东西让他哭了，”黛西说，“我让弗什回家的时候给你带根棍子。你试试就知道了。你已经一整天都不老实了。你是不是带他去河边了？”

“没有，”卢斯特说，“我们一直在这里，整天都在这个院子里，就像你说的。”

他的手又伸到了另一块蛋糕那里。黛西打了他的手：“你再试试，你敢试我就敢用这把菜刀把你的手砍了，”黛西说，“我敢打赌，他肯定一块都没吃到。”

“他吃了，”卢斯特说，“他跟我一样都吃了两块。你可以问他。”

“你再试试。”黛西说，“再试试。”

“这就对了。”黛西说。我觉得我又到了该哭的时候了。我也想象了莫里让我在他身上哭的场景。

加迪说：“他现在的名字叫班吉。”

“怎么会这样，”黛西说，“他出生时候用的名字还可以用，不是吗。”

“本杰明源自《圣经》，”加迪说，“这个名字比莫里更适合他。”

“怎么会是这样。”黛西说。

“妈妈说的。”加迪说。

“呵呵，”黛西说，“名称是不会帮助他的，也不会伤害他。改名字不会给人带来多好的运气。从我能记得我的名字的时候开始，我就叫黛西，而他们早就把我给忘了。”

“当它早就被人们忘了的时候，他们将如何知道你叫黛西的，黛西。”加迪说。

“就是这本书，亲爱的。”黛西说。她把它翻了出来。

“你会读吗？”加迪说。

“不会。”黛西说，“他们会为我念的。我要做的就是说一句我在哪儿就可以了。”

那根铁丝碰到我的肩膀，火就灭了。我哭了起来。

黛西和卢斯特开始打架。

“我看到你了，”黛西说，“哈，我看到了。”她把卢斯特拖到了角落处，摇晃他，“没有干什么事惹他，是不是呀？你就等着吧，等你爸爸回家。我希望自己跟以前一样年轻，要早几年，看不把你治得服服帖帖。我一定把你关在那个地窖里不让你去看今晚的表演，一定。”

“噢，姥姥，”卢斯特说，“噢，姥姥。”

我把我的手伸出去一直到以前飘着火苗的地方。

“抓住他，”黛西说，“抓他回来。”

我的手猛地缩了回来，我把它放在我的嘴里。黛西抓住我。我仍然可以听到我声音中间的钟声。黛西打中了卢斯特的头。我的声音变得更大了。

“去拿苏打水，”黛西说。她把我的手从我的嘴里拉了出来。我的声音变得更大了。然后我试图把手送到我的嘴里，但黛西一直抓着它。我的声音变得很大。

她在我的手上洒上苏打水。

“到储藏室里去找一下，顺便撕一块挂在钉子上的破布，”她说，“安静了。你不想再让你妈妈生病，对吧。在这里，看着火。好在黛西及时让你的手没被烧伤。看着火。”她打开火门。我看着炉火，但我的手没停，我也并没有停下。我的手试图进到我的嘴里，但是被黛西抓住了。她用布把我的手包裹起来。

妈妈说：“现在是什么情况，我生病的时候都得不到安宁吗？硬要我下床去跟两个成年黑人一起照顾他吗？”

“他现在没事了，”黛西说，“他马上就会安静了。他只是烧到了一点点自己的手。”

“家里有两个这么大的黑人，却把他带回屋子，让他在那里号啕大哭，”妈妈说。

“你们肯定是故意的，明明知道我生病了。”她走了过来站在我旁边。

“嘘，”她说，“对了，你给他吃蛋糕了吗？”

“蛋糕是我买的，”黛西说，“它从来没有进过杰生的厨房。我只是给他生日做了些补偿。”

“你想用廉价商店的蛋糕毒死他吗？”妈妈说，“你正干着好事儿呢。我就永远不能有一分钟的平静吗？”

“你去楼上睡一下吧，”黛西说，“这样他马上就会安静下来了。去吧，马上。”

“要是我把他留在这里，你们就好折磨他，”妈妈说，“我怎么能在那里睡着，他还在一边号啕大哭。本杰明。安静一分钟。”

“他没有地方去了。”黛西说，“我们没有得到以前属于我们的房间。他不能留在院子里，一哭起来所有的邻居就会看到他的。”

“我知道，我知道。”妈妈说，“这都是我的错，我很快就会消失，你和杰生两个相处得更好一些。”她哭了起来。

“嘘，你可别哭，”黛西说，“不然你又该生病了。你快点回楼上。卢斯特要带他到书房和他一起玩，直到我把他的晚饭做好。”

黛西和妈妈走了出去。

“嘘，”卢斯特说，“你别吵了。你要我再把你的另一只手给烧了吗？你又没有受伤。嘘。”

“好了，”黛西说，“别哭了。”她给了我拖鞋，我停住了。“带他去书房。”她说，“如果我再听到他哭，我就要抽你。”

我们去了书房。卢斯特打开灯。窗户变黑了，在墙上高大黑暗的东西又来了，我走过去摸了摸它。它就像一扇门，唯一的缺陷就是它并不是一扇真的门。

火在我身后燃了起来，我朝火走去，坐在地板上，拿着拖鞋。

火向上跳。它落在了妈妈椅子的坐垫上。

“嘘——”卢斯特说，“你能不能安静一回，我正在这里给你生火，你却看都不看它一眼。”

加迪说：“你的名字班吉。你听到了吗？班吉。班吉。”

“不要这样叫他，”妈妈说，“把他带到这里来。”

加迪抓着我的腋下把我抱了起来。

“起床，毛——我的意思是，班吉。”她说。

“不要抱他，”妈妈说，“你能不能把他领过来。这么简单的事情你都想不明白吗？”

“我可以抱着他。”……加迪说：“让我抱着他，黛西。”

“你走吧，自己都是小不点，”黛西说，“你连一只跳蚤都提不起，你走吧，但是要保持安静，像杰生先生说的那样。”

在楼梯的顶部有一盏灯。爸爸正在那里，穿着他的衬衫袖子。他看

着我们的方式就像在要我们小声点。加迪低声说：“妈妈生病了吗？”

弗什放我下来，我们走进了妈妈的房间。房间里生起了一堆火。它在墙上上升和下降。在镜中反射出了一堆炉火，我能闻到疾病的味道。它坐在妈妈头上的折叠布上。她的头发散在枕头上。火苗没有烧到它，但却照在她的手上，她的戒指在跳跃。

“来吧，给妈妈道晚安。”加迪说。我们走到床前。火从镜子里跳了出来。爸爸从床上爬起来，把我举起来，妈妈把她的手放在我的头上。

“现在是什么时间？”妈妈说。她的双眼紧闭。

“还有十分钟到七点。”爸爸说。

“现在让他上床睡觉太早了。”妈妈说。

“天不亮时他会醒来的，我根本无法再承受像今天这样的折腾了。”

“是的，是的。”爸爸说，他摸着妈妈的脸。

“我知道，我什么都不会，只会给你增加负担，”妈妈说，“但我很快就会消失。然后你就可以摆脱我了。”

“嘘，”爸爸说，“我带他去楼下一会儿。”他带着我走了，“来吧，孩子。我们下楼去一会儿。我们必须保持安静，昆汀正在学习，走吧。”

加迪走了过去，俯身把她的脸贴在床上，妈妈的手伸进了火光中。

她的戒指跳到了加迪的背上。

妈妈生病了，爸爸说。黛西会带你到床上去。昆汀在哪里。

弗什过来带他，黛西说。

爸爸站在那里，看着我们走过去。我们听到妈妈在她的房间里发出的声音。加迪说“嘘”。杰生一直在楼上。他把他的双手插在衣兜里。

“你今晚一定要乖乖的，”爸爸说，“保持安静，这样你才不会打扰到妈妈。”

“我们会安静的，”加迪说，“你一定要安静，杰生。”她说。我们蹑手蹑脚地走了。

我们听到了屋顶的声音。我看到镜子里的火。加迪再次举起了我。

“来吧，过来，”她说，“你可以回到炉火边去了。嘘，安静。”

“加达斯。”妈妈说。

“别哭了，班吉，”加迪说，“妈妈让你过去一会儿，你要做个好孩子，一会儿就回来了。班吉。”

加迪把我放了下来，我停住了哭泣。

“让他留在这儿，妈妈。他看完了火苗你就可以跟他说事了。”

“加达斯。”妈妈说。加迪弯下腰，把我提了起来。我们走开了。“加达斯。”妈妈说。

“嘘，”加迪说，“你现在还是能看到它。嘘。”

“把他带过来，”妈妈说，“他是太大了，你带着不方便。你必须停下来。你会把自己弄伤的。我们这种女人会因为体态笔直而感到骄傲。你想让自己看起来像一个洗衣妇吗？”

“他还不是太重啊，”加迪说，“我可以背着他。”

“好吧，我不希望他被人背着，而且，”妈妈说，“一个五岁的孩子，绝对不能，坐我的腿上。让他站起来。”

“如果你抱着他，他就会停下来不哭，”加迪说，“嘘。”她说，“你现在可以回去了。给你。这是你的坐垫。再见。”

“不，加达斯。”妈妈说。

“让他看，他会很安静的。”加迪说，“你起着点身子，我把垫子取出来。看那里，班吉。快看。”

我看着眼前的事物，没有哭。

“你迁就他太多了，”妈妈说，“你和你的爸爸，你们都不知道我要为此付出代价的人。达姆迪就是这样把杰生宠坏了，他花了两年时间才长大，而我身体还不够强壮，没办法对本杰明做同样的事情。”

“您不需要为他操心，”加迪说，“我喜欢照顾他。对吧，班吉。”

“加达斯，”妈妈说，“我告诉你，不要那样叫他。你的爸爸坚持要把那个傻傻的绰号给你冠在头上就已经够糟了。昵称是庸俗的。只有普通人才使用。本杰明。”她说，“看着我。”

“本杰明。”她说。她用手拉着我的脸，把我的脸转过来对着她的

脸。

“本杰明。”她说，“把坐垫拿开，加达斯。”

“他会哭的。”加迪说。

“把坐垫拿开，照我告诉你的做，”妈妈说，“他必须学会听大人的话。”

坐垫被拿走了。

“嘘，班吉。”加迪说。

“你去那边坐下，”妈妈说，“本杰明。”她捧着我的脸。

“住手，”她说，“别闹了。”

但我并没有停下来，妈妈抓住了我按在她的怀里，哭了起来，我也哭了。然后加迪拿回了垫子，把它放在妈妈的头部上方。她扶妈妈回躺到椅子上，妈妈压着红黄相间的坐垫哭了起来。

“嘘，妈妈，”加迪说，“你上楼去躺下，你生病了。我去找黛西。”她把我领到火那里，我看着明亮、光滑的东西。我能听到火和屋顶的声音。

爸爸把我背起来。他有股雨的味道。

“嗯，班吉，”他说，“你是一个好孩子。”

加迪和杰生在镜子里打斗。

“你，加迪。”爸爸说。

他们一直在打斗。杰生哭了起来。

“加迪！”爸爸说。杰生哭了。他不打了，但我们可以看见加迪在镜子里打斗，爸爸把我放了下来，开始打人了。他举起加迪。她反抗。杰生躺在地板上，哭了。他手里拿着剪刀。爸爸举着加迪。

“他把班吉所有的娃娃都弄坏了，”加迪说，“我要割断他的喉咙。”

“加达斯。”爸爸说。

“我会的，”加迪说，“我会的。”她反抗着。爸爸拉着她。她踢杰生。他滚到了角落那里，滚出了镜子前。爸爸把加迪带到了炉火旁边。他们都走出了镜子。只有火还在镜子里。就像在一扇门里燃烧着那样。

“住手，”爸爸说，“你想让正躺在她的房间里的妈妈难受吗？”

加迪停了下来：“他把我跟班吉做的所有的娃娃都弄坏了，”加迪说，“他之所以这样做完全是因为嫉妒。”

“我没有。”杰生说，他坐起来，哭了，“我不知道那些都是他的，我以为它们只不过是一堆旧报纸。”

“你怎么不知道，”加迪说，“你这样做只是……”

“闭嘴，”爸爸说，“杰生，”他说，“我明天会给你做一些的。”

加迪说：“我们做很多给你，你看这个坐垫。”

这时杰生走了进来。

班吉的二哥杰生下班后回到家，走进了书房。

“我不是一直都在告诉你，要小声点吗？”卢斯特说。

“现在又有什么事了？”杰生说。

“他这是故意捣乱，”卢斯特说，“他已经持续了一整天了。”

“那你不要去惹他就行了。”杰生说，“要是你不能让他安静下来，就带他出去，到厨房去。我们其余的人不能像妈妈那样把自己封闭在一个房间里。”

“姥姥说不能让他进厨房，要等到她吃了晚饭才行。”卢斯特说。

“然后和他一起玩，让他安静下来，”杰生说，“我工作了一整天，然后回到一个住满疯子的房子里。”他打开了那张报纸开始看上面写的东西。

你可以看看炉火，看看镜子，看看坐垫，加迪说。你不用等到吃晚饭的时候，现在就可以看着坐垫。我们听到了屋顶上的声音。我们听到了杰生在墙的另一边大声地哭泣。

黛西说：“你来了，杰生，你有没有惹他，惹了吧？”

“没有，夫人。”卢斯特说。

“昆汀在哪儿？”黛西说，“晚饭就要准备就绪了。”

“我不知道，”卢斯特说，“我没有见过她。”

黛西走了。“昆汀，”她说，在大厅里喊道，“昆汀。晚饭准备好

了。”

我们能听到屋顶的声音。昆汀有股雨的味道。

杰生做了什么，他说。

他砍坏了班吉所有的娃娃，加迪说。

妈妈说，不要叫他班吉。昆汀说。他坐在地毯上靠着我们。我希望天不会下雨，他说。要不你什么都干不了。

你一直在打架，加迪说。不是吗。

没有打得太厉害，昆汀说。

加迪说，你可以这样说。爸爸看到了的。

我才不关心，昆汀说。我希望不会下雨。

昆汀说：“黛西没说夜宵准备好了吗？”

“是的。”卢斯特说。杰生看着昆汀。然后，他又开始读报纸。

昆汀走了进来。“就快准备好了。”卢斯特说。昆汀跳了下来，坐在妈妈椅子上。

卢斯特说：“杰生先生。”

“什么事？”杰生说。

“给我25分钱吧。”卢斯特说。

“干什么？”杰生说。

“我要去看今晚的演出。”卢斯特说。

“我还以为，黛西要去弗洛尼那里给你要钱呢。”杰生说。

“她去要了的，”卢斯特说，“但是我把钱弄丢了，我和班吉找了一整天。你可以去问他。”

“那你可以从他那里再借点，”杰生说，“我赚的钱都是自己工作挣来的。”他开始读报纸。

昆汀看着炉火。火在她的眼睛里也在她的嘴上。她的嘴唇红红的。

“我试着让他远离那里。”卢斯特说。

“闭上你的嘴。”昆汀说。杰生看着她。

“我告诉过你，如果我看见你再和那个要上台表演的男孩在一起，我会怎么做吗？”他说。

昆汀看着炉火。

“你有没有听到我的话。”杰生说。

“我听到了的，”昆汀说，“那么你为什么不这样做呢？”

“不用你操心。”杰生说。

“我没有操心。”昆汀说。

杰生又开始看报纸了。

我能听到屋顶的声音，爸爸向前弯着身子，他看着昆汀。

喂，他说。谁赢了。

“没有人，”昆汀说，“他们把我们拉开了。老师们。”

“对手是谁，”爸爸说，“你会告诉我吗？”

“没什么好说的，”昆汀说，“他跟我一样大。”

“那就好，”爸爸说，“你能告诉是为什么吗？”

“不为什么，”昆汀说，“他说，就算他在我的桌子上放一只青蛙，我也不敢打他。”

“哦，”爸爸说，“他接着做了什么？”

“是的，先生，”昆汀说，“然后我就打了他。”

我们听到了屋顶和火的声音，还有东西在门外抽抽噎噎的声音。

“现在十一月的天气，他到哪里去弄青蛙啊。”爸爸说。

“我不知道，先生。”昆汀说。

我们听到了他们的说话。

“杰生。”爸爸说。我们听到了杰生的声音。

“杰生，”爸爸说，“过来，别弄了。”

我们听到了屋顶、火还有杰生的声音。

“现在就给我住手，”爸爸说，“你要我抽你吗？”爸爸抬起杰生坐在他的椅子上。杰生吸溜着鼻涕。我们听到火和屋顶的声音。杰生吸溜鼻涕的声音大了一些。

“我再说一次。”爸爸说。我们听到火和屋顶的声音。

黛西说，好吧。你们所有人都可以过来吃晚饭了。

弗什有股雨的味道。他闻起来也像一只狗。我们听到火和屋顶的声音。

我们听到加迪飞快地在走路的声音。爸爸和妈妈在门口张望。加迪穿过了门，走得很快。她没有看过来。她飞快地走着。

“加达斯。”妈妈说。

加迪停下了脚步。“是的，妈妈。”她说。

“嘘，卡罗琳。”爸爸说。

“过来。”妈妈说。

“嘘，卡罗琳，”爸爸说，“让她一个人待着。”

加迪来到门口，站在那里，看着爸爸和妈妈。她的眼睛扑到我身上又转移而去。我哭了起来，很大声。我站起身来。加迪走了进来，站在那里。

她背靠墙壁，看着我。我走向她，哭了，她缩在墙上，我看见她的眼睛，我哭得更响亮了，我拉她的衣服。她把她的手拿了开去，但我拉着她的衣服。她的眼睛就开始流眼泪了。

弗什说，现在你的名字叫本杰明。你知道你的名字是怎么来的吗。

你知道他们为什么要给你改名叫本杰明吗。他们是让你变成一个有蓝色牙龈的黑鬼，妈咪说，在旧时代的你爷爷老是给黑鬼改名字，然后做了神父，当他们看着他时候，他的牙龈也变成蓝色的了。他的牙龈以前可不是蓝色的。当怀孕的妇女在满月的时候看到了他，她们生的孩子也会是蓝色的牙龈。一天晚上，当十几个蓝色牙龈的孩子在那里跑来跑去的时候，他就再也没有回过家。负鼠猎人发现他在树林里。你知道谁吃掉了他吗。就是那些蓝色牙龈的孩子。

我们在大厅里。加迪仍然在看着我。她的手放在她的嘴上，我看着她的眼睛，哭了。我们拾级而上。她又停了下来，靠在墙上，看着我，我又哭，她继续走，我哭着跟着，她缩着靠在墙上，看着我。她打开了她的房间门，但我拉着她的衣服，我们去了卫生间，她靠在门上，看着我。然后，她把她的手臂围在她的脸上。我推她，哭了。

你对他做了什么，杰生说。为什么你不能让他独自一人待着。

我没有碰他，卢斯特说。他整天一直这样。他需要被鞭子打了。

他需要被送到杰克逊去，昆汀说。怎会有人住在这样的房子里。

如果你不喜欢他，年轻的女士，你最好就给我出去，杰生说。

昆汀说，我要去。你不要担心。

弗什说：“你过去一点，这样我就可以把我的腿烘干了。”他把我推回了一点。

“你现在不是又抱怨了吗？现在你仍然看得到嘛，你不是想看火

吗？你不必像我一样出去淋雨了。你出生得幸运，你知道吗？”他在火堆前躺下。

“你知道你的名字本杰明是怎么来的吗，”弗什说，“你妈妈太为你感到骄傲了。妈咪说你给他丢脸了。”

“你就待在那里，让我烘干我的腿，”弗什说，“你知道我会做什么，我会把你的屁股的皮都剥了。”

我们听到火、屋顶和弗什的声音。

弗什快速起身，猛地抽回双腿。爸爸说：“好吧，弗什。”

“今晚我会喂他吃东西，”加迪说，“有时候弗什喂他他会哭。”

“拿这个盘子去，”黛西说，“赶紧回去喂班吉。”

“你想不想让加迪喂你吃饭？”加迪说。

昆汀说，他一定要把那只又旧又臭的拖鞋放到桌子上吗。你为什么不在厨房喂他吃东西。这就像一头猪吃过的一样。

如果你不喜欢我们的饮食方式，你最好不来的好，杰生说。

蒸汽从罗斯库司那里冒了出来。他坐在炉前。烤箱的门开着，罗斯库司把他的脚放在里面。用蒸汽洗碗。加迪轻轻把勺子放到我的嘴里。在碗的内部有一个黑点。

好了，行了，黛西说。他不会再来打扰你了。

碗里的东西下降到黑斑下面。然后碗空了。有人把它拿走了。“他

今天晚上是饿了。”加迪说。碗回来了，我看不见碗底的黑点。然后，我又看到了。“他今天晚上快要饿死了。”加迪说，“你看他吃了多少。”

是的，他会，昆汀说。你送他来监视我。我恨这个家。我要逃出去。

罗斯库司说：“这雨要下一整夜。”

您已经在外面很长一段时间，还差三顿饭没在外面吃，杰生说。你看我跑不跑，昆汀说。

“那么我就不知道我要做的事情是什么了，”黛西说，“我的腿关节疼得很厉害，现在我几乎都不能移动了。整个晚上都在爬楼梯。”

“哦，我也不会感到惊讶，”杰生说，“不管你做了什么我也不会感到惊讶。”

昆汀把她的餐巾纸扔在桌子上。

“闭上你的嘴，杰生。”黛西说，她走了过去，用她的手臂围着昆汀，“坐下来，亲爱的，”黛西说，“他应该感到羞耻，他总是把自己的错误扔在你头上。”

“她又开始生气了，对吧。”罗斯库司说。

“闭上你的嘴。”黛西说。

昆汀推开了黛西。她看着杰生。她的嘴唇红红的。她拿起一杯水，摇摆着她的手臂，看着杰生。黛西抓住了她的胳膊。他们打了起来。玻璃摔到了桌子上，水洒到了上面。昆汀跑走了。

“妈妈生病了。”加迪说。

“是啊，”黛西说，“这样的天气可以让任何人都生病，你什么时候才吃完，孩子？”

“你这天杀的，”昆汀说，“该死的你。”我们可以听到她跑上楼梯的声音。我们都到书房去。

加迪给我坐垫，这样我可以看看坐垫和镜子还有炉火。

“昆汀学习的时候，我们必须保持安静，”爸爸说，“你这是干什么，杰生？”

“没什么。”杰生说。

“那你还是过来玩吧。”爸爸说。

杰生从角落出来。

“你在嚼什么东西？”爸爸说。

“没嚼什么。”杰生说。

“他又在嚼。”加迪说。

“到这里来，杰生。”爸爸说。

杰生把那东西扔进火里。它被烧出滋滋声，变得松散，变成了黑色。然后又变成灰色。最后消失不见了。加迪和爸爸还有杰生都坐在妈妈的椅子上。杰生突然闭上了眼睛。

他的嘴动了动，像是在品尝着什么东西一样。加迪的头靠在爸爸的肩膀上。她的头发像火一样，眼里闪烁着一点点炉火的光芒。我走过去，爸爸把我举起放到椅子上，加迪抱住了我。她闻起来像树木一样。

她闻起来像树木一样。角落里一片漆黑，但我还是能够看见窗口。我蹲在那里，手里拿着拖鞋。我看不到它，但我的手能看到，我能听到黑夜一点一点降临的声音，我的手摸着那只拖鞋，但是我却没法看到自己，可我的手就可以看到它，我坐在那里，听着天色变黑。

“原来你在这里啊，”卢斯特说，“你看我得到了什么。”他给我看，“你知道我在哪里得到了它的。昆汀小姐给我的。我还知道不会看不成戏的，你在这里做什么？”

“我想你是要准备溜到外面去。难道今天你还没有哭够闹够，难道还要躲在这样的空房间里闹？过来睡觉吧，我们还可以在开始之前赶到。我不能整晚都陪你，等那大喇叭一吹响，我就得走了。”

我们没有回我们的房间。

“我们就是在这里得的麻疹，”加迪说，“今晚我们为什么要睡在这里？”

“你会在意自己睡在哪儿？”黛西说。她关上了门，坐了下来，开始脱我的衣服。杰生哭了起来。“嘘，别哭。”黛西说。

“我要和达姆迪睡。”杰生说。

“她生病了，”加迪说，“等她病好点了就可以和她一起睡了。黛西。”

“嘘——”黛西说。杰生安静了下来。

“我们的睡衣还有其他东西都在，”加迪说，“真像是搬了家一样。”

“你最好穿上睡衣，”黛西说，“你把杰生的衣服解开。”

加迪解开了杰生的衣服，杰生快要哭了。

“你想被鞭子抽吗？”黛西说。杰生停止了哭泣。

“昆汀。”妈妈在大厅里说。

“什么事？”昆汀隔着墙壁回答道。我们听到妈妈锁门。她从门外看着我们然后走了进来，走到床边，弯下腰亲吻了我的额头。

“等你让他睡下，去问问黛西反不反对我用热水袋。”妈妈说，“告诉她，如果她反对的话，我就不用了，去跟她说下我也只是想问问她的意思。”

“好的夫人，”卢斯特说，“过来。把裤子脱了。”

昆汀和弗什进来。昆汀把脸转开了。“你哭什么？”加迪说。

“嘘，”黛西说，“你脱光衣服，现在在家里，你可以回去了，弗什。”

我脱光衣服，看着自己，哭了起来。“嘘，”卢斯特说，“找他们是不会有什么好的。他们走了。你继续这样，我们是不会再给你过什么生日的。”他帮我穿上了睡袍。我停住了，然后卢斯特停了下来，他的头朝着窗户。然后，他走到窗前，朝外面看去。他回来了，挽着我的手臂。“过来，她来了，”他说，“安静点，就现在。”我们走到窗前，看着

她了。它从昆汀的窗口爬出去，爬上了对面的树。我们看着树摇晃。摇晃的地方一点点往下掉，接着，那黑影离开了树，我们看着它穿过草地，然后进入我们无法看到它的地方。“来吧，”卢斯特说，“现在，你听它们的号角声。你快跟着我一起到那张床上去。”

里面摆着两张床。昆汀睡到了一张床上。他把他的脸转向墙壁。黛西让杰生和他一起住。加迪脱掉了她的衣服。

“看看你的内裤，”黛西说，“你妈没看到你，你就该感到高兴了。”

“我已经告诉她了。”杰生说。

“我想你也会的。”黛西说。

“我能从中得到什么，”加迪说，“搬弄是非的人。”

“我得到了什么。”杰生说。

“你为什么不穿上你的睡衣呢？”黛西说。她去帮助加迪脱下她紧身胸衣和内裤。“看看你啊。”黛西说，他们在后面用加迪棉质的内裤给他擦屁股，“全都打湿了。”她说。

“但是你今晚不能洗澡了。这些给你穿上。”她给加迪穿上睡衣。加迪则爬上了床，黛西走到门口，站在那里，她手里提着灯。

“你们现在都给我安静下来，你们听见了没有？”她说。

“好吧。”加迪说，“妈妈今晚不会来，”她说，“所以，你们还是听我的。”

“是的，”黛西说，“去睡觉吧。”

“妈妈生病了，”加迪说，“她和姥娘都生病了。”

“嘘，”黛西说，“你快睡觉吧。”

房间变黑了，除了门那里。然后门也变黑了。加迪说：“嘘，莫里。”她把她的手放在我身上，这样我就变得安静了，我们听到了我们自己的声音，我们听到了黑暗的声音。

它走了，爸爸看着我们。他看着昆汀和杰生，然后他走了进来，亲吻加迪，并把他的手放在我的头上。

“妈妈病得很重吗？”加迪说。

“没有，”爸爸说，“你是不是要把莫里照顾得好好的呢？”

“是的。”加迪说。

爸爸走到门口，再次看看我们。然后房间又变黑了，他站在黑色的门那里，然后门也变黑了。加迪抱着我，我能听到我们周围的一切以及黑暗的声音，我还能闻到其他的一些东西。然后我看清楚了窗户，那里的树木发出沙沙声。然后黑暗开始慢慢扩散，一如既往以光滑而明亮的姿态，直到加迪也这样说的时候，我已经睡着了。

[1](#)原文为 caddie，本意为“球童”，但文中与“加迪”同音。班吉每听到有人叫球童，就会想起姐姐加迪。——译者注

[2](#)“加迪”是对“加达斯”的昵称。——译者注

[3](#)这是孩子们对奶奶的昵称。——译者注

[4](#)酒名。——译者注

1910年6月2日

当窗框的影子出现在窗帘上的时候差不多到了七八点钟，那个时候我一直听着手表的声音。这是祖父的，当爸爸把它给我的时候，他告诉我说：我给你的是一切希望和愿望的陵墓；你要用它来证明所有人类经验都是错误的 reducto absurdum ¹，人类所有的经验对你的祖父或者曾祖父来说不见得是有用的，对于你来说也未必是有用的。我把它送给你不是说让你记得时间，而是要你有时候忘记时间，不要想着用太多力气去征服时间。因为从来没有人能战胜时间，他说。甚至没有人和时间较量过。战场表现的只是人类自己的愚蠢和绝望，胜利是哲学家和傻子的错觉。

手表放在领盒旁边，我躺着，听着它的声音。听着它的声音，是的。我不觉得有人会刻意听手表或时钟的声音。你不必这样做。你可以忘却这种声音很长一段时间，然后在第二次嘀嗒的时候，它可以使你感到，虽然才听见声音，时间却在绵远悠长地流逝着。就像爸爸说的，在这条漫长而孤独的光射线上你可能会看到耶稣在散步，或者之类的东西。还有圣徒弗朗西斯说过死亡是他的“小妹妹”，但他却从未有过妹妹。

透过墙，我听到施里弗床里弹簧的声音，然后是他的拖鞋在地板上摩擦的声音。我起身走到梳妆台用我的手沿着它滑动，碰到了那块手表，并把它面朝下放着又回到了床上。但窗扇上的阴影仍然存在，我差不多能根据影子移动的情况，说出现在的时间是多少，所以我不得不把我的背朝向它，感觉自己像过去眼睛长后脑上的动物似的，我总是有这样的感觉。以后你会对养成这样一些懒惰的习惯而后悔的。爸爸说。基督没有被钉十字架：他是被一分钟转动一下的小轮子磨死的。他没有妹

妹。

所以只要我知道我无法看到它，我就会开始想到底是什么时候了。爸爸说，对机械的位置进行不断地推测，这是一种心智有问题的症状。爸爸说排泄物就像出汗。我说好吧。猜测着。我继续着，也在猜测。

如果阴天一直持续，我就看着窗子，想着他对闲时习惯所说的话。如果天气持续这样的话，思考这些东西对身在新伦敦的他们来说是很不错的。为什么会变天呢？这是一个做新娘的月份，那个声音说着，她从镜子里跑了出来，从堆积的气味中跑了出来。玫瑰。玫瑰。杰生·康普生夫妇为女儿举行婚礼。玫瑰。不像茱萸、马利筋那种贞洁的花草。我说自己就已经犯了乱伦之罪，爸爸。玫瑰。狡猾又安详。如果你进入哈佛一年，但却没有看到赛船比赛，那你就应该找人给你退款。把它给杰生。让杰生在哈佛待上一年。

施里弗站在门口，把他的衣领翻了起来，他的眼镜上有玫瑰色的光泽，好像是洗脸时候红色的脸染上去的。“你今早打算旷课吗？”

“有那么晚了吗？”

他看了看手表。“贝尔在两分钟后就会到，我不知道已经那么晚了。”他还在看着手表，嘴里念着。“我必须快点，我不能再来一次了。上周院长就警告过我了。”他把手表放回衣兜里，然后我就没说话了。

他说：“你最好穿好你的裤子，跑着去。”他走了出去。

我站起来，到处走着，透过墙壁听到他的声音。他进入了起居室，走向门口。

“你准备好了没有？”

“还没有。你走吧，我会赶上的。”

他走了出去。大门关上了。他的脚步声沿着走廊前进着。然后，我再次听到了手表的声音。我不再四处乱逛，走到窗前，并把窗帘提到一边，看着他们朝教堂跑去，同样的人同样挣扎着，努力地把手揣进松垮的大衣袖子里，同样的书和翻飞的衣领就像斯波特和洪水中的瓦砾一样。施里弗是我的丈夫。啊，让他独自一人待着，施里弗说，他去追那些女人，跟我们有什么关系呢。在南方，人们以自己是处男为耻。男孩。男性。他们对此谎话连篇。因为它对妇女的意义并不那么大，爸爸说的。他说，发明贞操的是男人而不是女人。爸爸说，这就像死亡：在这种状态下只有其他人是被排除在外的，但是要相信这并不重要，他说，这就是为什么所有的一切都那么令人感到悲伤的原因：不仅仅是童贞的问题，我说，为什么不是处子的不能是我而是她呢。他说，这也是所有这一切都那么令人悲伤的原因之一；没有什么东西值得改变，施里弗说，他不就是去追那些女人吗？我说你有没有姐妹呢？你有没有？你有没有？

斯波特在他们中间就像身在充满枯叶的街道上的鳖一样，他的衣领立到了耳朵那里，迈着他习惯性松散的步伐走来走去。他是从南卡罗来纳州来的。他喜欢在酒吧里夸耀说，他从来没有跑着进过教堂，也从来没有准时到过那里，并在四年内从未缺席过，要么是礼拜，要么是上的第一堂课上他都不穿衬衫而且脚上不穿袜子。大约十点钟的样子，他就会出现在汤普森的酒吧里，点两杯咖啡，坐下来。他从口袋里拿出袜子，他脱掉了自己的鞋子，一边把袜子穿上，一边等着咖啡冷却下来。大约中午时分，你会看到他穿着衬衫立着衣领，跟其他人一样。别人跑步超过了他，但他从来没有加快自己走路的速度。过了一会儿四周就都空了。

一只麻雀在阳光里飞行，落到窗台上，并竖起它的头看着我。它的眼睛圆而明亮。起初，它用一只眼睛看着我，然后用另外一只眼睛来看，它的喉咙抽动的速度比任何脉冲都快。时钟开始报时了。那只麻雀不再转动眼睛，用同一只眼睛直直地看着我直到时钟不再响，就好像它也在听钟声一样。然后它拍着翅膀跳下去，飞走了。

过了一会儿，那最后的声音才停息了下来。周围保持着宁静，很长一段时间里，感觉多过了听觉。就像那些一直在响着的时钟一样，在漫长的日子里，耶稣和圣弗朗西斯谈论着他的姐妹。因为如果只是下地狱，如果所有的一切都是这样的话。如果所有的东西都会自己结束。除了她和我之外没有任何其他人。如果我们能够完成某种可怕的事情他们就会逃到地狱去躲避我们。我犯下了乱伦，我说，爸爸，就是我，不是达尔顿·阿莫斯。在他说达尔顿·阿莫斯的时候。达尔顿·阿莫斯。达尔顿·阿莫斯。在他把手枪放到我手里的时候我没有提到他。我不提他的原因是因为他会下地狱，我也会。达尔顿·阿莫斯。达尔顿·阿莫斯。达尔顿·阿莫斯。如果我们能做些和这个一样恐怖的事情，爸爸会说太糟了，人不能做这么可怕的事情，他们根本不能做可怕的事情，他们第二天甚至记不得今天所经历的恐怖，我说，你可以逃避掉所有的一切，而他说，啊，你可以吗。我向下看，看到我喃喃细语的骨头，还有像风一样的深深的水流，就像屋顶的风一样，很长一段时间过后，他们无法在荒凉的沙地上把骨头分辨出来。直到那天他说起来吧。只有烙铁才会浮上来。这并非是在你意识到没什么东西能够帮助你——宗教、骄傲，任何东西——而是在你意识到自己不需要任何帮助的时候。达尔顿·阿莫斯。达尔顿·阿莫斯。达尔顿·阿莫斯。如果我能够成为他心宽体胖的母亲，我会坐起来大笑，用我的手抓住他的爸爸，在他活着之前看着他死去。她突然出现在门边。

我去梳妆台上拿起手表，脸色仍然不好。我拍了拍水晶梳妆台的角落，我的手抓住了玻璃碎片，把它们放进烟灰缸，把手表扭了下来，把它们放在烟灰缸里。手表嘀嗒地走。我把正面翻过来，小轮子滚过来滚过去，我不知道有什么比这更好的了。耶稣走在加利利上，而华盛顿不讲假话。爸爸给杰生从圣路易斯博览会买回来一条漂亮的手表挂链：一块微小的漂亮的玻璃，你把眼睛眯成一条缝，就能看到摩天大楼、像蛛丝的摩天轮，还有针尖大的尼亚加拉大瀑布。表盘上有一个红色的涂片。当我看到它的时候，我的拇指开始疼痛起来。我把手表放下，走到施里弗的房间里，拿到了碘，涂在了伤口上。我用毛巾清理掉了其余部分附着在圈子上的玻璃。

我准备了两套内衣、袜子、衬衫、衣领和领带，把一切都打包好。把一切都放了进去，除了我的新衣服、一件旧衣服、两双鞋和两顶帽子还有我的书。我背着书并把它们堆到客厅的桌子上，那些是我从家里带来的，爸爸说以前人们靠藏书来判断一个人的地位，如今却是根据他借去不还的是什么书来判断。我听着他的声音，直到钟声停止。

我洗了澡，剃了胡子。水让我的手指又有一点点痛，所以我又用碘酒在上面涂了一遍。我把我的新衣服，把我的手表、其他衣服和配件以及我的剃须刀和刷子都放到了我的手包里，把钥匙用一张纸包着，放在一个信封里，写上爸爸的地址，并写下了两张字条，然后分别密封进信封。

影子还没有完全消失。我站在门里，看着影子在动。它以不易觉察的速度移动，匍匐到门口，将影子赶回到门里。当我听到的时候只有她已经开始移动了。在镜子里，她一下跑了过去，我感到莫名其妙。她跑得飞快，她跑出镜子的时候像云一样，她的面纱和她的高跟鞋很长，就像皑皑白雪纷飞一样，一只手紧紧地攥着新娘的礼服，还带着玫瑰的味

道，声音在伊甸园上空响彻着。然后，她穿过了门廊，我听不到她的高跟鞋的声音，然后在月光下像云一样，浮影的面纱跑过草地，然后一直往吼叫的地方跑去。她的衣服拖在后面，她紧紧地抓着她的婚纱，一直往吼叫的地方跑去。T.P.说真的好喝，班吉却在木箱下大声吼叫。爸爸起伏的胸口上穿着一件V形的胸衣。

施里弗说：“怎么，你没有.....你这是去婚礼还是去守灵？”

我说：“我刚才起不来。”

“你穿得这么整齐当然来不及了。什么事？你觉得今天是星期天吗？”

我说：“我想警方不会抓我吧，因为我穿的是新衣服。”

“你在想什么，我说的是老是在学校散步的那些学生。你是不是觉得自己太棒了而不想去学校？”

“我打算先吃饭。”在那里的影子也不见了。我踏进阳光里，再次找到自己的影子。我在影子之前先走下台阶。半小时过去了。然后，钟声停止了。迪肯也并不在邮局。我把两封信都贴上了邮票，把其中一个邮寄到了爸爸那里，把给施里弗的那个放在我里面的衣兜里。然后我记得我最后一次见到迪肯，那是在阵亡将士的纪念日，他穿着G.A.R.的制服，走在游行队伍的中间。如果你在我待的那个角落里等待足够长的时间你就会看到他跟着游行队伍走过来。再前一次是哥伦布还是加里波第或者是某人的生日的时候。他走在街道清扫者中间，戴着一顶帽子，背着一个两英寸的意大利国旗，抽着雪茄，走在扫帚和簸箕中。但是，最后一次是G.A.R.的时候，因为施里弗说：

“现在，看看你爷爷对那个可怜的老黑鬼所做的一切吧。”

“是的，”我说，“现在他可以一天又一天地跟在游行队伍后面，如果没有我的祖父，他还得像白人那样工作。”

我没有在其他地方看到过他了。但我从来不认识在你想找他们的时候就能找到的拥有工作的黑鬼，更不要说一个靠国家吃闲饭的黑人了。

一辆车开了过来。我坐上去了城里，去了帕克的店，吃了一顿不错的早餐。在我吃饭的时候，我听到了时钟报时的声音。但后来我想我至少需要一个小时，抓紧时间，没有什么能够比进入到机械流程的历史更为悠久的了。

当我吃完早饭，我买了一支雪茄。女孩说，那种五十分钱的是最好的，所以我买了一支点燃了它，出门走到街上。我站在那里，抽了几口，然后我把它拿在我手中，并继续向拐角走去。我路过珠宝商的窗口，我把脸转了开去。在拐角处，有两个擦皮鞋的纠缠我，一边一个，他们的声音沙哑刺耳，像乌鸦一样。我把雪茄给了其中一个人，给了另外一个人一块硬币。然后，他们就放了我。拿了雪茄的那人试图把雪茄卖给拿了钱的那个人。

天上的太阳就是一只时钟，我想当你不想做事的时候，你的身体是怎样通过某种诱骗的方式让你去做的。我能感觉到我的脖子后面的肌肉，我也能听到我的手表在我的衣兜里嘀嗒地走动，过了一段时间我把所有其他的声音都排开了，在我的衣兜里只剩下手表。我转身回到了街上，回到了那个窗口前。他在窗子后面的桌子上修表。他的头发开始慢慢不见了。在他的眼睛上戴着一片放大镜——他的脸上有一根金属管子嵌在眼眶里。我走了进去。那个地方充满了嘀嗒声，像九月草丛中的蟋

蟀，我能听到一只大钟的声音，就在他的头部上方的墙壁上。他抬起头来，他的眼睛又大又模糊，透过眼镜看着我。我把我的表拿了出来，并把它交给了他。

“我打破了我的手表。”

他在他的手里把表翻转了过来：“我就说，你肯定是踩到它了。”

“是的，先生，我把它从衣柜中取出的时候掉到了地上，还在黑暗中踩到了它，但它仍然可以走。”

他把它敲开，眼睛眯成一条缝：“似乎没什么问题，但是我分辨不出来，除非让我做个完整的检查。我今天下午给你弄。”

“我过会儿再把它带来，”我说，“你能不能告诉我，橱窗中的那些手表有没有好的？”

他把我的手表握在他的手掌，抬头看着我，他模糊的眼神透过镜片看着我。

“我与一个老乡打了一个赌，”我说，“我今天早上忘了我的眼镜。”

“为什么？好吧，”他说。他放下了手表，从他的凳子上坐起来看着屏障，然后，他抬头看了看墙上的钟：“现在已经二十……”

“先不要说，”我说，“先生，请告诉我，它们中有没有好的。”

他又看着我。他坐回了凳子上，把眼镜推到了额头上。眼镜在他的眼眶上留下了一圈红色的痕迹，等痕迹消失之后，他的整张脸看起来就干净多了。“你今天是要庆祝什么吗？”他说，“船赛下周才开始，对

吧？”

“不，先生。今天只是一个私人的庆祝。生日。那些表有没有好的？”

“没有。但是它们都还没有经过调试，也没有定好时间。如果你想要买一个的话……”

“不，先生。我不想买表。我们在家里已经有了一面钟了。我就想把手里的这块表修好。”我伸出了我的手。

“你最好现在就把它留在这里。”

“我稍等一会儿就会把它带回来。”他把表给了我。我把它放进了自己的衣兜里。我现在听不到它走动的声音了，其他的声音盖住了它。“我很抱歉，希望没有耽误你太多的时间。”

“没关系的。等你准备好了就把它带过来吧。你最好把今天的庆祝推迟到我们取得赛船胜利之后去。”

“好的先生，我会的。”

我走了出去，关上了门，发出叮当声。我往回看了看窗子里面。他正在透过栅栏看着我。在橱窗里放着十多只手表，它们的时间都不相同，这让我对自己这块表的时间也觉得不确定了。它们的时间都彼此不同。我听到了自己手表的声音，在我的衣兜里嘀嗒嘀嗒地走着，虽然没有人能够看到它，虽然它已经不能说明时间了，不过谁又能说明时间呢？

于是我告诉他就按照那只表吧。因为爸爸说钟表会杀死时间。他说

过时间如果不存在于小小的齿轮上那么它就是死的。两只指针水平地张开，形成一定角度，就像在风中倾斜的海鸟。我肚子里都是几年来的苦水，就像黑鬼说的新月牙儿里装满水一样。钟表商人又在干活了，他把他的板凳又放下，金属管子又回到了他脸上。他的头发从中间分开。一直延伸到秃顶的部分，就像十二月被抽干了水的沼泽地。

我看到了街对面有一家五金店。我以前还不知道买熨斗是论磅买的。

“这些熨斗是十磅的。”营业员说。“十磅一只”，它们比我想象得都要大。所以我买了两只六磅重的小熨斗，因为它们绑起来的时候看起来就像一双鞋子一样。两只在一起也很重，但是我又想爸爸过去是怎么说人类经验的*reducto absurdum*的，想到我所拥有的唯一一个进入哈佛的机会。也许到了明年，我就会想也许要两年时间我才能学会学校里的东西。

但是两个熨斗确实有些重了。一辆车开了过来。我上了车。我没看到前面的标志牌。这辆车已经满员了，里面坐的都是一些读书看报的有钱人。只有一个靠着黑鬼的座位是空着的。他穿着一双干净闪亮的鞋子，手里拿着一支灭掉的雪茄烟头。我过去常想，一个南方人一定要随时对黑人保持警惕。我觉得北方人都这样认为。当我第一次来东部的时候我就一直在想你必须记住要把它们当作有色人种而不是黑人来看待，如果我没有碰到那么多的黑人孩子，和他们打交道，我要花更多的时间与精力去体会到，所有的人不管是黑人还是白人，应该按他们对自己的看法来看待他们，让他们自顾自地快活的办法。那个时候就是我意识到黑人与其说是人不如说是一种行为方式，是一种他们所处的环境中周围白人的反应。但是我最初认为自己身边没有这么多黑人我会感到失望，因为我认为北方人认为我是这样的，但是直到那天在弗吉尼亚的早上，

我才知道我真正怀念的是罗斯库司，还有黛西以及其他的人。我醒来的时候火车刚好停下，我起身往外看去。车子挡在了一个十字路口中间，两条从山上蔓延下来的栅栏在那里交会之后又分叉，就像一支长角上的纹理的一部分一样，在这硬硬的车辙印中，有个黑人骑着骡子，等着火车开走。他在那里待了多久我不清楚，但是他就是那样安静地坐在那里。他的头上包着一张布，就好像他和他的骡子跟栅栏和道路一样，是生在那儿的，也和小山一样，就像一个被放在那里的标志，上面写着你已经到家了。他没有用马鞍，他的双腿几乎都垂到了地面上。那头驴子看起来像一只兔子一样。我拉起了窗户。

“嘿，大叔，”我说，“是这条路吗？”

“啊？”他看着我，然后松了松那块布，把它从自己的耳朵上捞了起来。

“圣诞礼物！”我说。

“哦，真的啊，老爷。你总算是抢在我的前头了吗？”

“这次我放过你。”我从我的裤子里掏出一些钱，“但是下次要小心点。两天后过了新年我还会回来经过这条路的，到时候看着点路啊。”我把钱从窗户扔了出去，“给你自己买点东西。”

“好吧，呃……”他说。他从骡子上下来捡起硬币，在裤子上蹭了蹭。“谢谢你，我的大少爷，谢谢。”火车开动了，我把身子探出车窗，伸到寒冷的空气中。扭头往回看，看到他站在瘦得像兔子一样的骡子旁边，人和畜生都在那一动不动，看起来那么荒凉、平和。火车转过一道弯，引擎发出一阵短促的、重重的轰鸣声，他们缓缓地在我的视线中消失，还是看起来那样可怜巴巴，那样有耐心，那样无尽地宁静平和：在

他们身上我看到像孩子般的笨拙和与之相矛盾的、值得信赖的、可靠的混合体，这种混合体保护着他们不可理喻地爱着他们，却又不断地掠夺他们并规避了责任与义务。然而他们用的手法太露骨简直不能称之为遁词。他们被掠夺被欺骗，却对胜利者怀着坦率而自发的钦佩，犹如一个绅士对任何一个在一场公正的比赛中打败他的人都会怀有的那种感觉。此外他们对白人的种种怪癖行为的容忍，正如祖父对调皮得完全无法预料的孙儿那样溺爱到极点，而这种感情是我早已经忘记了的。整整一天，火车穿过弯弯曲曲的山口，沿着山崖行驶，这时的旅行对我来说只有排气管和车轮的吃力的呻吟声，眼前无穷无尽的山峦逐渐与远处的天空融为一体，这时候我想起家乡，想起那个荒凉的小车站，那里泥泞的小路，黑人和乡下人不紧不慢地来来往往穿行在那个小平地上，他们背着一袋袋的玩具猴子、玩具车和糖果，一支支烟火筒从口袋里露出来，这时我的内心就像在学校听到下课铃声一样迫不及待。

我要等钟声敲响三下之后开始数数，数到60我会弯下一根手指，然后想着还有14根手指要弯，13、12、8、7.....直到我突然意识到周围的一片寂静，所有人都不敢走神，我问：“老师，您说什么？”“你叫昆汀，对吧？”洛拉问我。接下来是更加可怕的寂静，所有人都绷紧神经，我吓得手都快抽筋了。“亨利，你告诉昆汀，是谁发现的密西西比河。”“德索托。”亨利回答。这下大家的精神都放松了下来，过了一会儿我担心我刚才数得可能有些慢，便加快速度，又弯下一根手指，我又担心数得太快，便又放慢了速度，然而我又担心自己数得太慢，便再一次加快速度。就这样，我总没办法刚好在铃声打响的时候数完，双脚迫不及待在破损的地板上蹭来蹭去。那天像一块窗玻璃受到了轻轻一击，发出清脆的响声，我内心里迫不及待，却又不得不老老实实坐在那里。她站在门口，班吉。大声吼叫着。本杰明，我晚年所生的小儿子在吼叫。加迪！加迪！

我要逃离这里，他开始吼道。于是她碰了碰他，说，别出声。我不走。别出声。然后他就真的闭上嘴。黛西。

只要他想，就能知道你想要对他说的话。所以，你不必听也不必说什么。

他知道别人给他取了新名字么？他知道自己会遭遇什么霉运么？

他又何必担心他的运气呢？霉运又不会给他带来什么伤害。

要是改名换姓还是没办法改变运气怎么办？

车走走停停。我盯着窗外往来人群的头顶，他们戴着崭新的草帽，帽子上的颜色还未全然褪去。车中也有了几名主妇，她们拎着菜篮子，身着工作服的男人也开始多过那些皮鞋油光锃亮、衣领光鲜的人。

一个黑人碰到了我的膝盖。“抱歉！”他说。我挪了挪腿，让他过去。车沿着一堵墙走过，于是嘈杂喧闹的声音从墙那边反射回来，反射到把菜篮子搁在腿上的妇女那里，反射到帽子上满是脏污，拿带子系着烟斗的男人那里。我嗅到一股水腥味，于是循着墙缝，我看见了一大片水，还有两根桅杆，海鸥在半空中一动不动，好似两根桅杆中间有一根看不见的细线一般。我伸手摸了摸我的外衣，里面是一封我的亲笔信。车一停下，我便走了下去。

桥面已经升起来了，好让帆船通过。拖船紧挨着那条帆船的舷侧，冒着黑烟，牵引着它。不过，看起来那艘自己也能行驶，不过看不出是什么动力的。一名光着膀子的壮汉在前甲板上把缆绳系紧。他的身体给晒成了深棕色，如雪茄叶一般。另一名壮汉戴着没有帽顶的草帽，掌着舵。船从桥下穿行而过，没有张帆，好似白日幽灵一般。三只海鸥在船

尾半空歇着，好似一根无形的线上系着的三个玩具。

桥面一合拢，我便穿行而过，走向另一边，倚靠在船库上方的栏杆上。趸船上空无一人，门也紧闭不开。过去傍晚时分运动员在这里休息，这时候他们在划船。桥的影子，栏杆的影子，还有我的影子，都平躺在河面上。我轻而易举地就欺骗了它，让它和我形影不离。这影子有五十英尺长，我只希望能够将它按在水中，淹死它，这影子就像包裹起来的鞋子，漂浮于水面之上。黑人说，溺水人的影子就在水中盯着自己。影子闪烁浮沉，如同呼吸一般，漂浮的趸船亦是如此。碎片载浮载沉，随水流相汇，冲向大海，冲进海上的洞窟中去。水流确有几许。两只六磅重的熨斗比裁缝的长柄熨斗还要沉，人类一切经验的 *Reductoabsurdum* 嘛。黛西肯定要说浪费可耻。班吉知道达姆迪的死讯后哭得很伤心，他嗅到了这种味道，他感觉得出来。

拖船顺流而下，水面因拖船而分割出两道长长的波纹，波纹经过，摇晃着趸船，趸船随波摇晃，发出噗噗的声响。一阵长长的嘎吱声，门朝后打开来，两个人将赛艇拖出来，将赛艇放在水面上。好一会儿，布兰德出来了，手里拿着尾桨。他穿着法兰绒质的灰色夹克，戴着一顶呆板的草帽。不知他和他的妈妈曾经在哪儿知道了牛津的学生都穿着法兰绒戴着呆板的草帽，所以早前三个月他们给杰拉德买了一条双桨赛艇，让他穿着法兰绒，戴着呆板的草帽去划船。船库里的伙计们威胁说要去报警，可是他对此却无所谓。他妈妈开着一辆租来的车，身上穿戴的皮草活像一名北极探险家。她在时速二十五英里的风中同他告别，平稳不动的浮冰就像脏兮兮的绵羊。从那时起我就相信，上帝不仅是个上等人，是个运动员；而且他也是肯塔基人。待他划走船后，她绕道回来，来到河边与他并驾齐驱，汽车挂着低挡位缓慢行驶。人们说，你简直不敢说这两人相熟，那两人就像国王与王后，彼此都不看对方，只顾

沿着平行的轨道在马萨诸塞州行进，宛若有着各自轨道的行星。

他上了船，开始划桨。他如今成绩不错，这是应该的。有人说他母亲想让他放弃划船，去干班上别的同学不愿或不能干的事，可是这一次他表现很是固执。如果你可以把这叫作固执的话。他坐在那儿，一脸皇家贵胄般无聊的神情，金黄色的头发卷曲着，有着一双紫色的眼睛，长长的眼睫毛还有那身在纽约定做的衣服，而他妈妈则在一旁向我们炫耀杰拉德的那些马和他的黑用人，还有他的情妇们。肯塔基州的父亲以及丈夫们有福了，因为她把杰拉德带到坎布里奇来了。在城里她有一套公寓房间，杰拉德自己也有一套，另外他在大学宿舍里又有一套房间。她倒允许杰拉德和我来往，因为我总算是天生高贵，投胎时投在梅逊迪克逊线以南。另外还有少数几个人配做杰拉德的朋友，也是因为地儿不错（最低限度的要求）。至少是原谅了他们，或者不再计较了。可是自从她半夜一点钟在小教堂门口见到斯波特出来，他说她不可能是个有身份的太太，因为有身份的太太是不会在晚上这个点出来的，未来她是不会原谅斯波特的，因为他的名字很长，有五个单词，其中还有一个英国公爵的名字。我敢肯定她准是用这个想法来安慰自己的：有某个曼戈特或摩蒂默家的浪荡公子跟某个看门人的女儿有了一腿，这倒是很有可能的，先不说这是她幻想出来的还是别的情况。斯波特的确爱到处乱串；他毫无顾忌，什么也拦不住他。

小艇只剩一个黑点般大小，两只桨在阳光下变成两个闪光点，小船似乎一直在眨眼。你有妹妹吗？没，要是有的话肯定都是贱人。你有姐姐吗？她们曾经是贱人。她来到门口的那会儿还不是达尔顿·艾米斯，达尔顿牌衬衫。我过去一直以为它们是卡其的，军用卡其；到后来亲眼看到了才知道它们是来自中国的重磅丝绸，或者是最细腻的绒布，因为衬衫把他的脸衬得那么黑，把他的眼睛衬得那么蓝。达尔顿·艾米斯，

漂亮还算是漂亮，只是略粗俗；倒像是演戏用的道具。还是纸糊的，不信你摸一摸。哦，石棉的，不是真青铜。只是不愿在家里与他见面。

“记住了，加迪是个女人，她的所作所为一定有身为女人的动机。”

“你干吗不把他带到家里来呢，加迪？你干吗非得像个黑女人那样在草地里，在土沟里，在丛林里，躲在黑黝黝的树丛里犯贱呢。”

半晌，我听见手表走了有一会儿了。我把身体倚在栏杆上，感觉到那两封信在我的衣服里沙沙作响。我靠在栏杆上，瞧着我的影子；我真是把我的影子骗过了。我沿着栏杆移动，可是我那身衣服也是深色的，我可以擦擦手，瞧着自己的影子，我是真的骗了它。我带着它走进码头的阴影。然后我往东边走去。

哈佛，我在哈佛的孩子哈佛。哈佛，她在运动会上遇到一个小男孩，脸上长满青春痘，他参加田径比赛得了奖。他偷偷地沿着栅栏走了过去，吹着口哨想把她当作小狗一样哄出去。家里人怎么哄也没法让他走进餐厅，于是她妈妈以为他会魔法——只要和加迪独处，他就能把她迷得神魂颠倒。且不谈那些耍流氓的行为。他躺在窗沿下的木箱子旁号叫着，要是能开一辆豪华轿车，胸前纽扣眼里插着朵花那该多好。哈佛。昆汀，这位是赫伯特。这是我在哈佛的孩子。赫伯特会当你们的大哥哥，他已经答应杰生了。

满脸堆笑，虚情假意得就像个推销的。一张嘴满口大白牙，却似笑非笑。我在那儿就听说过你了。一张嘴满是虚情假意。你想开车吗？

进去吧，昆汀。

你来开车。

这是她的车，你妹妹拥有全镇第一辆汽车你就不自豪？这可是赫伯特送的礼。路易每天早上都给她上驾驶课，难道你就没读过我的信？兹定于一九一零年在密西西比杰斐逊镇为小女加达斯与悉德尼·赫伯特·海德先生举行婚礼，恭请光临。杰生·李奇蒙·康普生先生暨夫人敬启。

附：八月一日之后在寒舍会客，地址为印第安纳州南湾市××街××号。

施里弗说你连拆都没拆？三天，三次。杰生·李奇蒙·康普生先生暨夫人。年轻的洛钦伐尔 骑马出走，未免操之过急，是吧？

我打南边来，你可真够搞笑的。

是啊，是在乡下的某个角落。

你很开心是吧？你就是块去马戏团的料。

我确实去了马戏团，就因为拿水冲大象身上的虱子弄瞎了眼睛。这些乡下姑娘。你永远不会告诉她们吧，是不？好吧，至少拜伦还从未美梦成真过，谢天谢地。别打眼镜。你都不拆开吗？那封信躺在桌子上，每只角上都点着一支蜡烛，两朵假花捆在一个粉红色吊袜带上。别往人家的眼镜上打呀。

乡下人真是可怜，他们绝大部分从未见过汽车按喇叭。所以加达斯她都不愿把眼睛转过来看我，他们会离开的，他们连正眼都不瞧我。要是你伤了其中的哪一个，你们的父亲是会不高兴的。赫伯特，我会同你父亲说去买一辆汽车，你把汽车开来我真有点为难，当然我坐着兜风挺痛快的，咱家倒是有一辆马车，可是每逢我要坐着出去，康普生先生总是让黑人们干这干那，我要是说两句话啊，那可就翻了天了。他坚持要让罗斯库司专门伺候我，随叫随到，不过我也明白，这会是什么意思，我知道人们做出许诺仅仅是为了抚慰自己的良心，你是不是也会这样对

待我的宝贝小女儿呀，赫伯特？不过我知道你是不会的。赫伯特简直把我们全都惯坏了。昆汀，我给你的信中不是说了吗？他打算让杰生把高中念完，然后才会进他的银行。杰生一定会成为一个了不起的银行家。在我这些孩子中，只有他有头脑，这一点还多亏我，因为他继承了我娘家人的特点，其他几个可全都是十足的康普生家的脾气。杰生拿出面粉来。他们在后廊上做的风筝每只卖五分，他一个，还有帕特森家的男孩。杰生管账。

这辆车上倒没有黑人，一顶顶尚未掉色的草帽在车窗外匆匆流逝。是去哈佛的。我们卖掉了班吉的东西，他躺在窗子下面的地上，大声吼叫。我们卖掉了班吉的牧场，好让昆汀去上哈佛，他是你的好弟弟。你们的小弟弟。

你们应该有一辆汽车，它会给你们带来无穷无尽的好处，昆汀，你说是不是呀？你瞧我马上就叫他昆汀，我曾经叫他昆汀。你知道，加达斯基对我说了很多他的事情。

你为什么不这么看？我要我的孩子不只是和彼此做朋友，对，我要加达斯基和昆汀不只是做朋友。爸爸，我下了决心。要是你没有兄弟姐妹，多可怜啊。没有姐妹，没有姐妹，没有姐妹。别去问昆汀，他和康普生先生都感到受了些侮辱，我竟然如此强势，敢坐下来谈。现在我是有点发火了。等这件事全部过去之后，我会付出代价的。你已经把我的小女儿带走了。我本就没有妹妹。如果可以，妈妈，妈妈。

除非我按照本意，把你带走，我想康普生先生追不上来。

啊，赫伯特·加达斯基，你听到了吗？她根本不看我，没有那种温柔的眼光，撇过脸去不肯回头。你也不必嫉妒，只不过是老女人，他在

对一个成年已婚女人献殷勤。不敢相信。

真是荒谬。你真的看起来就像老了好多岁。加达斯，你脸颊红润得就如同少女一样。一脸责备，泪水肆流。空气中弥漫着樟脑和泪水的味道。昏暗的门后总有轻声哭泣的声音。周围是傍晚的金银花香。把空箱子从阁楼上搬下来，就像在搬棺材一样。弗兰奇·里克。盐渍土里看不到死亡。

我不戴没漂白的帽子，也从不戴帽子。我可以三年不戴帽子。但在以前却不能，我总戴帽子。如果没有了我，也没有哈佛，还会有帽子吗？父亲曾说，在那里，思想的最高境界就如枯萎的草藤紧抓着旧墙砖。那时没有哈佛。至少在我看来没有。又一次，比以前更悲哀。又一次，最悲哀。又一次.....

斯波特穿了件衬衫，肯定是。我又能看到自己的影子，可能是不小心，那时踩到了水坑。我应该再踩一下我那无动于衷的身影。但没有姐妹。我不会这样。我不会让我的女儿受人监视。不会。

我怎样才能让他们听我的话，你一直在教他们不要尊敬我，不要理睬我的期望。我知道你看不起他们。但是，有没有什么理由能教我的孩子——我自己的孩子，我为之受尽磨难——不要尊敬我。用高跟鞋将我影子的骨头踩进混凝土里，我听着手表，隔着外衣触摸着那几封信。

不管她做了什么，不管你怎么想，我都不会让你、昆汀或是任何人监视我的女儿。

起码你要承认，监视她是另有原因。

我不会，我不会。我知道你不会。我不想把话说得这么尖刻，但

是，女人本就不尊重彼此，也不尊重自己。

但她为什么要这样？我踩上自己的影子，钟响了，这才一刻钟。到处都找不到执事。想着我会，我可以。

那不是她的本意，这就是女人的行事方式，只是因为她爱加迪。

路灯下了山坡，然后又返回小镇。我踏上影子的小腹部分。可以伸手穿过去。感觉父亲就在我身后，就在夏季焦躁的黑暗里，八月这些街灯啊。父亲和我一同保护女人不受彼此伤害，也不受自己伤害，是我们的女人。女人对人不了解，这一点我们一致同意。她们只是天性多疑，频繁梳洗，也总没错。喜欢邪念，对它百依百顺，亲密无比，就像睡觉时拉被子一般，不停想着，直到它达到目的。不管它是否存在。他和两名新手一起，还没从阅兵式中回过神来，给我敬了个礼，颇有向上级军官行礼的样式。

“我想和你聊一聊。”我说着停下了脚步。

“和我？好啊。再见，伙计，”他也停下答道，又转过来，“和你说话很愉快。”那就是执事，浑身都透着那股气势。说一下你那些天生的心理学吧。他们说他从每学期初，四十年里从来没有误过一次火车；而且一眼就能看出谁是南方人，从来没有说错过；只要你说话，他就能说出你来自哪个州。他接车有一套常用制服，那是《汤姆叔叔的小屋》里的衣服，补丁什么的都有。

“对，没错。请走这边，少爷，我们到了，拿上您的包。”“就是这里，孩子，过来，拿着这些包。”于是，一座移动的行李山慢慢靠过来，露出一个约十五岁的白人男孩。值日生不知为何，再挂了一个包在他身上，然后把他带出去。“现在，注意些，别把它弄掉了。是的，少

爷，只要把你的房间号给这个老黑鬼就行了，你到了之后它就会好一点了。”

从那以后，他会时常进出你的房间，无所不在，喋喋不休，直到你完全服从，尽管随着他的服饰档次越来越高，他的行为举止也日趋北方化。直到最终他让你流血，直到你更明白当他叫昆汀或其他的名字时，是在叫你。你下次再见到他时，他会穿着被人丢弃的布鲁克斯品牌的套装，戴着一顶参加普林斯顿俱乐部用的帽子。至于帽圈，我忘了，只知道是别人给他的，说是亚伯罕·林肯军用饰带的一部分，他很高兴，深信不疑。几年前，那时他第一次离开家来到大学，有人散播消息，说他是从神学院毕业的。他后来细想这背后意味，竟看得很开，亲自转播。他最后肯定也信以为真了。总之，就未毕业时的生活，他说了一大篇无关紧要的逸事。熟悉地说着已故教授的姓名，却常常叫错。但对无数天真孤寂的新生而言，他俨然是他们的良师益友。我想，凭着那一通巧妙的诡辩和伪善，他简直恶臭无比，直冲鼻腔。

“有三四天没见你了，”他说，依旧用那军人眼光看着我，“你病了？”

“不，我很好。只是在忙。但我见过你。”

“你见过我？”

“在第二天的阅兵式。”

“哦，阅兵式。是，我在。你知道，我根本不关心那档子事，但男孩子们喜欢我陪他们一起，那些老兵也是。你知道的，女士们希望所有老兵都出场。所以我只能答应他们。”

“那次过节也见过，”我说，“我想，你当时在给基督教妇女禁酒会帮忙。”

“那次？我当时是为了我的女婿。他打算在市区部队里谋份差事。去扫大街。我跟他说，他只要拿着扫帚睡大觉就行了。你看到我了，对吧？”

“对。两次都看见了。”

“我是想说，你看到我穿军服了。我穿起来怎么样？”

“看起来不错。比其他人好看。他们应该让你当上将，执事。”

他轻微地碰了下我的手臂，他的手是那种又老又轻的黑人的手。“听着，这不能对外面的人说，我不介意告诉你是因为，不管怎么说，你我都是自己人。”他向我靠近了一些，快速地说，眼睛却没有看着我，“现在我是要放长线钓大鱼。等到明年，咱走着瞧。你就会看到我在哪里游行，我不必告诉你我会怎么做；我只会说，等着看吧，我的孩子。”这时，他的眼睛才开始盯着我，轻轻地拍了拍我的肩膀，身体利用脚后跟转了回去，还在不停地向我点头。“是的，先生。三年前我改为民主党是有目的的。我的女婿在这里为政府工作；我呢——是啊，先生。如果改为民主党的话就能够让那个狗崽子去工作……至于我呢，从两天前开始算起，一年之后您就站在那边的那个角落等着瞧吧。”

“但愿如此。这是你应得的，执事。对了，我想起一件事来——”我从口袋里掏出一封信，“明天把这封信拿到我的宿舍，交给施里弗。他会给你一些东西，不过一定要等到明天，记住了啊。”

他接过信，仔细观察了一番：“这是封好的。”

“是的，信在里面，不到明天可别拆啊。”

“嗯，”他说，他盯着信封，撅起嘴巴，“您是说会有东西给我？”

“是的，我为你准备的一份礼物。”

这时，他开始盯着我，阳光下，白色的信封在他那双黑手中被衬得尤其白。他的眼神很温柔很纯真，瞳孔是棕色的。突然我发现罗斯库司正看着我，那个躲在白人哗众取宠的制服里，以及白人的政治和哈佛派后面的，羞怯、神秘、口齿不清而又悲哀的罗斯库司。“您不是在跟这个黑鬼开玩笑吧？”

“你知道我不会的。难道你曾经被哪个南方人戏弄过吗？”

“您是对的，南方人都是社会名流。可是没法跟他们一起生活。”

“你试过吗？”我说。但是罗斯库司已经走了。再一次，执事又恢复成他长期教唆自己在世人面前所表现的那副模样，自大、虚伪，却不算太粗鲁。

“我会满足你的要求的，我的孩子。”

“一定要等到明天，记住了。”

“当然，”他说，“知道了，我的孩子。嗯——”

“我希望——”我说。他低头看着我，既和蔼又深沉。突然，我伸出手去，和他握了握手，从他那对市政和军队充满幻想的高度来看，他显得很庄重。“你是个好人，执事，我想.....你在各个地方帮助过许多年轻人。”

“我对所有人都还挺不错，”他说，“我不会把人们划分为三六九等，对于我而言，不管我在哪里遇到他，人就是人。”

“我希望你的人缘能够一直都这么好。”

“我和那些年轻人相处得挺好。他们也不会忘记我。”他一边晃着信封，一边说道。他把信放在口袋里，然后扣紧他的外套。“是的，先生，”他说，“我一直都有很多朋友。”

钟声再次响起，半个小时过去了。我站在影子的肚子那里，听着钟声，顺着阳光，在稀疏而又安静的叶子中回荡。钟声不停地回荡，宁静而又安详。即使是在这个随处都能见到新娘的好月份里，钟声也总是充满了秋天的味道。躺在窗户下面的地上咆哮，他看了她一眼就明白了。从婴儿们的口中，街灯和钟声都静止了。我回到邮局，将我的影子印在人行道上。走下山后，又走在通往城镇的坡上，就像是挂在墙上，一盏比一盏高的灯笼。父亲说，因为她爱加迪，她是通过爱人们的缺点这种方式去爱人的。莫里舅舅叉开双腿站在壁炉前，他不得不将一只手从火前移开一段时间，好举杯庆祝圣诞节。杰生跑了一会儿就摔倒在地上，他的手插在口袋里，看上去就像是一只被绑住翅膀的鸟，直到后来，弗什才将他抱了起来。你为什么不把手从口袋里伸出来，这样你跑的时候就容易摔跤了。躺在摇篮里，不停地晃着脑袋，后脑勺都给磨平了。加迪告诉杰生和弗什说，莫里舅舅之所以不工作是因为他小时候总是躺在摇篮里滚着脑袋，后脑勺给滚平了。

施里弗蹒跚地走了过来，胖乎乎的，一副认真的表情。他的眼镜在不断飘落的叶子下闪着光，如同水池一般。

“我给了执事一个字条，让他取些东西。今天下午我可能不在，所

以这些东西你一定要等到明天再给他，可以吗？”

“好啊。”他盯着我说，“说吧，你今天到底在干什么？穿得整整齐齐地晃来晃去，像是寡妇在殉夫似的。早上你去上心理学课了吗？”

“我什么都没做。记得明天再给他。”

“你手里拿的是什么？”

“没什么，一双我拿去打了鞋掌的鞋子。一定要明天再给他，你听到了吗？”

“好了，知道了。哦，对了，桌子上有一封信，早上你拿了吗？”

“没有。”

“在桌子上。是塞米拉米司寄来的。十点以前车夫送过来的。”

“知道了。我一会儿去拿。不知道她这次又要搞什么鬼。”

“我猜是又要组织一次演奏会吧。得啦达达吉拉德布拉。‘鼓再敲响一些，昆汀’。上帝啊，我真高兴我不是个绅士。”他继续往前走，手里紧紧抱着一本书，身体已经有些臃肿了，胖嘟嘟的，仍是一副一本正经的模样。那些街灯你们认为呢？就因为我们的一个祖先曾经当过州长，还有三个是将军，而母亲家里却不是这样。

任何一个活着的人都比一个死了的人强，然而在母亲心里却有这样一个根深蒂固的想法，即一个活着或者死去的人并不会比另一个活着或死去的人强多少。完了，完了。我们都中毒了，你把罪恶和道德混淆了，妇女们并不像母亲那样考虑道德问题，至于这件事是否是罪恶的，

她根本没有想过。

杰生我必须走了，其他的孩子你先照顾着。我带着杰生，到一个没有人认识我们的地方去，这样他就能顺利地成长，忘掉这一切。别的孩子都不喜欢我，他们压根就对其他任何事都不屑一顾，身上有着康普生家庭的那种自私自利和妄自尊大。杰生是唯一一个我能够掏心窝而不害怕的孩子。

废话，杰生自然是挺好的。我在想要不要等你身体好些了就带着加迪去佛兰西·利克。把杰生留下来，家里就只剩你和那些黑人陪着他。她会忘记他的，之后这些流言蜚语都会消散，盐渍地里也不会发现死人。说不定我可以给她找个丈夫。

电车驶来并停了下来。空中还回荡着半小时报时的钟声。我上车后，车又再次开动了，车声盖过了半小时报时的钟声。不，是三刻钟的报时。那么离十二点大概只有十分钟了。要离开哈佛了，让你进入哈佛是你母亲的梦想，她甚至为此卖掉了班吉的牧场。

我到底是做错了什么，上帝居然让我生下这样的孩子，一个本杰明已经足够惩罚我了，现在又出了她的事，对于她的亲生母亲，她却没有一点感情。我为了她受了多少罪，处处为她操心，为她打算，为她牺牲，可说是已经跌到了深渊的最底层，可是她从睁眼来到这世界上开始，就从来没有不怀私心地为我着想过。有时候我看着她就怀疑她是不是我亲生的，而杰生，从我第一次把他抱在怀里，他就没有一次曾让我伤心过。当时我就知道他是我的快乐，是我的救赎。我认为本杰明对我所犯下的罪恶已经是很大的惩罚了。他来讨债是因为我放下尊严嫁给了一个自以为高我一等的男人。我并不怪谁，我爱本杰明超过其他的孩子，这就是原因。因为这是我的责任，虽然我一直心系杰生，可是我知

道我还没有受到足够的责罚。我知道我现在不仅要为自己赎罪，还要为你所犯下的罪过赎罪，为了你们这些高高在上有权有势的人给我留下的罪孽赎罪，可是，你总要担起这些责任的，你总是会为你的亲生骨肉所犯下的过错找借口，错的总是杰生。因为比起康普生家的人，他更像是巴斯康家的孩子，而你自己的女儿，我的小女儿，我的小宝贝，她并没有好到哪里去。当我还是个女孩的时候，我并不走运，我只是个巴斯康家的人，我所受到的教育就是女人没有中间的路可选，要么就是嫁作人妇，要么就形单影只。可是当加迪出生，我把她抱在怀里的时候，我从来没有想过她会让自己贱到如此地步。你不知道我只要看着她的眼睛，就能够知道真相吗？你可能觉得她会告诉你，可是她不会的，她神秘得很，你们根本不了解她。我知道她做了什么，这件事与其告诉你们还不如让我死了算了，这就是全部的事实。你继续指责杰生，怪我把他派去监视她吧。如果这样做是在犯罪，而你却放任你自己的女儿。我知道你不爱杰生，你总是愿意去相信别人对他的批评，你从来没有像以前嘲笑莫里那样嘲笑他，你再也不能伤害我了，你的孩子们已经对我伤害得够深了，反正我也快离开人世了，只留下杰生，没人爱他、保护他，我每天这样看着他，就怕他身上康普生家族的特征最终会暴露出来。其间，他的姐姐偷溜出去，跑去会那个你们叫他什么来着，你见过那人没有，你甚至不让我去查出他是谁，这并不是为了我自己，我都不愿意看他一眼，这是为了保护你。可是你都不给我尝试的机会，那谁来抵抗那些不纯正的血统呢。我们倒是可以袖手旁观，可是她呢？她不仅败坏了你的名声，而且还污染了你的孩子们周围的空气。你必须让我走，我已经受不了了，让我带杰生走，把其他的孩子留在你身边。他们不是我的亲生骨肉，可杰生是，他们和陌生人一样，跟我毫无关系。我真的很怕他们，我可以带着杰生到没人认识我们的地方去，我要跪着祈祷，向上帝祈求宽恕我的罪恶，好让杰生逃过这个诅咒，并忘记这是其他的孩子曾经犯过的过错。

如果刚才的钟声是三刻的报时，那么现在离十二点已经不到十分钟了。一辆车刚开过去，人们已经在等下一辆了。我问一个路人，他也不知道正午以前是否还会开出一辆车。因为那是城镇间的区间车。所以现在离站的又是一辆架线式电车。我上了车，能够感受到正午即将来临。我不知道在地底下工作的矿工们是否也能感受得到。这正是要拉汽笛的原因；因为人们正在辛苦地工作流汗，要是离工作出汗的地方非常远，你就不会听到汽笛声，而在八分钟之内，你就能到达不用辛苦工作到流汗的波士顿。父亲说，人的一生不过就是不幸的总和罢了。总有一天，你会对不幸感到厌倦，而之后，时间就会成为你的不幸，父亲也曾这样说过。是一只系在无形的线上的海鸥从空中拖了过去，而你，则是带着失败的象征进入到永恒。接着，羽翼会逐渐变得丰满，父亲说，只有这样的人才能弹奏竖琴。

汽车每停一次，我就能听见我的表叫声，只是停下来的次数并不频繁，那些能够弹奏竖琴的人也已经开始吃饭了。吃饭的时候，吃东西会在你的身体里扰乱时间和空间。胃说到中午了，而大脑说是时候吃饭了。好吧，我也不知道现在是什么时间了，不过那又有什么关系呢。人们逐渐离去。无轨电车不再频繁停留，大家都下车吃饭去了，车厢里空空荡荡的。

时间就这样过去。我下了车，独自一人站在那里，与影为伴，不一会儿，下一班车就到了，我坐上它回到了上一个市际车站。到站时恰逢一辆车要开走，我找了一个靠窗的位置坐下后车子便启动了。我看着车子疲惫地缓慢驶过一片片退潮后的沙洲，驶进树林。那条河流在窗外时隐时现，我想象着，如果天气晴好，那些住在新伦敦下游的人看见吉拉尔德的游艇在午前闪耀的阳光中庄严前行该是怎样的享受。那个老太太在今早十点前给我送了一张便笺，我挺好奇她究竟想干什么。吉拉尔德

又怎么样，我竟成了他达尔顿·埃姆斯哦石棉昆汀开了一枪这就是背景。这事和女孩子们有些关系。女人们的声音总能压过那些喋喋不休和罪恶结下不解之缘，她们认为女人固然不可信，但有些男人又天真到难以自保。平凡的女孩子们。都是些远亲或世交，不过是有所来往就仿佛是要那些身份高点的人负起血缘责任似的。而那位太太就当着她们的面告诉我们，吉拉尔德的脸上拥有他们家族的全部优点。而这实在太可惜了，因为那么漂亮的一张脸蛋居然安在了男人身上，而男人是不需要漂亮的，不漂亮反而更好。但女孩子要是不漂亮，那可就全完了。她自鸣得意地向我们介绍起杰拉尔德的妻子昆汀朝赫伯特开枪，他的声音穿透了加迪的地板。“我在他十七岁时曾告诉他‘你的嘴真该长在姑娘脸上’，你能想象在朦胧的晨光中，轻拂的窗帘带来了苹果花的香气。她的头枕在只穿着晨衣的双臂上，晨光洒在她身上。那声音在伊甸上空回响，床上放着衣服，从她鼻子旁能看到苹果树顶。他说了什么？注意，他才十七岁！‘妈妈，’他说，‘事情总是如此’。”当时吉拉德就那么居高临下地坐着，从睫毛底下瞥着那两三个女孩，而女孩们的秋波也像燕子一般追逐着他的睫毛。施里弗说他一直想知道，你会照顾班吉和父亲吗？

越少提班吉和父亲越好，加迪，你什么时候照顾过他们了？

答应我！

无须为他们担忧，你这次干得真是好极了！

答应我，我生着病呢，你一定要答应我，是谁发明了这个笑话，不过他一直认为布兰德太太保养极好，他说她正在培养吉拉德，好让他将来勾引到女公爵。她称施里弗为“加拿大小胖子”，还有两次没打招呼就给我安排新室友，一次要我搬出去，一次是他在晨光中打开门，当时他的脸看起来像个南瓜饼。

“好吧，我们不得不惜别了。残酷的命运使我们分离，但我再也不会爱上别人了，永不。”

“你在说些什么？”

“我说的是残酷的命运之神，那位神祇穿着八码的杏色丝绸，戴的一磅磅首饰比划桨奴隶的枷锁还重，她还是同盟后期那位漫游者约翰的唯一拥有者和产业主。”然后他告诉我她如何跑到舍监那去，要舍监把他赶出房间，而舍监又是如何以下层人的牛脾气坚持先征求施里弗的意见。然后那女人又叫他立刻派人通知施里弗，而舍监不愿意，这导致她后来对施里弗很不客气。“我尽量不说女人坏话。”施里弗说，“但这位太太绝对是贵国各州县中的母狗之最。”现在那散发着兰花香的兰花色亲笔信就放在桌上。如果她知道我几乎每天从窗下经过，还明明知道信就在桌子上，却没有进去。夫人敬启，由于晚辈一直无缘与夫人相谈，故恳请能在今日，昨日，明日或任何日登门拜访。下一件我能记得的事就是吉拉尔德是如何把他的黑人仆役扔下楼梯，而那个黑人又是如何哀求着在神学院注一个册，好待在他的吉拉尔德主人身边，然后他又如何热泪盈眶地追着他的吉拉尔德主人的马车一路跑到火车站。我一直等着听那个锯木厂丈夫的故事，后来知道他有天带着猎枪跑到厨房门口，刚好撞见吉拉尔德从楼上下来。吉拉尔德一把夺过枪折成两半，然后把枪还给了被戴绿帽子的丈夫。他掏出丝绸手帕擦擦手，然后把手帕扔进了炉灶。这个故事我只听过两遍。

射穿他的我刚才见你来这儿了，所以来看看有没有机会认识你。来支雪茄怎样？

多谢，但我不抽烟。

看来我离开哈佛后情况变化挺大，介意我点火吗？

别客气。

谢谢，我听说了很多关于你的事。估计你母亲不会介意我把火柴扔在屏风后面，对吧？加达斯在利克斯时整天谈的都是你，我都吃醋了。我对自己说一定要见见这个昆汀，要知道这畜生长什么样，他居然把我心爱的女孩迷住了。告诉你也没关系，我从没想到她谈个不停的居然是她的哥哥。就算是世界上只有你这么一个人，她也不会谈得更多了，丈夫就更不用说了。你真的不来一支吗？

我是不会抽的。

既然如此我就不勉强了。不过这种雪茄真的挺不错，我托哈瓦那的熟人批发也花了二十五美元才买到一百支。我猜哈佛有了不少变化，我一直想去看看，但一直抽不出时间。我为了今天拼死拼活奋斗了十年，我的事业离不开银行。在哈佛时有人旧习难改，难免做了些不太好的事，而那些大学生认为这非常糟糕，我想你知道我的意思。给我说说哈佛发生的事吧。

如果你指的是这点，我不会告诉爸爸和妈妈的。

别说，千万别说，哦，这，这可是你说的，其实你知道的，我才不介意你说不说出去，我并没犯罪，只是运气不好。我并不是第一个做过那些事的，也绝不是最后一个。或许你也就是比我走运点儿。

胡说八道！

别那么生气，我又没让你说你不想说的，也不是成心冒犯你。当然像你这样的年轻人对这种事总是看得很重，不过五年后就不一定了。

我对欺诈就这么一种看法，不过我在哈佛也学不到其他看法。

我们的对话比唱戏还精彩，你是参加过戏剧社吧？你说得对，那些事没必要告诉二老，过去的就让它过去吧。我们没必要为一件小事闹翻。我挺喜欢你的，昆汀，你看上去就和那些乡巴佬不一样，我们一定会合得来。我向你母亲保证过要照顾詹森，但我也挺乐意帮帮你。这地方足够詹森发展了，但对你这样的优秀年轻人而言这舞台太小，你的抱负在这里难以施展。

多谢，但你还是把力气放到詹森身上吧，他比我更对你的胃口。

我对那件事也挺后悔的，但那时我也就是个孩子，还是个无母的孤儿。我没有一位像你妈妈那样的母亲能提点我，告诉我那些行为是好是歹。不过现在已经没必要告诉她这些事，这徒然让她伤心罢了。当然也不要告诉加达斯。

我说了，我是不会告诉妈妈和爸爸的。

你给我瞧瞧，要是我们打起来你能撑多久？

我用不着“撑多久”，如果你在学校真学过什么叫打架的话，你就有幸见识下我能扁你多久了。

小兔崽子，你知道自己在干什么吗？

走着瞧。

天哪烟要是你妈妈发现壁炉上有个孔她该怎么说我们啊看这儿昆汀我想我们要做点我们彼此都会后悔的事我爱你从第一次看见你我就爱上

了你我说你一定会是个乖小伙儿不然加达斯也不会如此期待你的到来听着我抽身于世已有十年以后你就会发现这世上任何事其实都不算什么现在我们一起处理这事儿好了你是哈佛旧人的孩子我想我压根儿就不知道现在对年轻人来说最美妙的地方现在我要把我的儿子送到这里让他拥有我曾经等待过却不曾得到的机会暂时先别走我们好好聊聊年轻人有自己的思想当他在学校的经历为他塑造一个完美人格时我会全力支持他帮助他在学校踏踏实实的挺好但是走出校门走进社会就需要找到最适合自己的方式因为到时候你就会发现其他人都在

因为他会发现 该死的 所有人都在做同样的事 来 我们握个手 让往事随风去吧 为了你妈妈 祝她身体健康 快点 把你的手给我 来看看 它简直就是纤纤玉指啊 看 洁净无瑕 一点褶皱也无 看啊

和你的钱一起见鬼去吧

不 不 别这样 我可是出身富裕之家 我深知年轻人所面临的境况 有许多烦心事要处理 想要长辈为你买单可不容易啊 因为我知道 如果没有这样的出身 一切就会完全不同 不久前我还不明白这一点 但现在我正要结婚 要面对所有的事情 得了吧 别做蠢事 听着 如果我们有机会好好地来一次谈话 我就想告诉你镇上的一个小寡妇的事

那件事情我也听说过了 你还是守着你那些该死的钱吧

那就算是我借你的吧 你只需眼睛一闭 不到一分钟 就可以变成五十岁的老头

把你的手从我身上拿开 另外 你最好把雪茄也从壁炉架上移开

你琢磨琢磨 就会惊觉它能给你带来的好处 除非你傻到透顶 你应该

见识到了 我将它们紧紧攥在手里 以防有人不怀好意 你妈妈跟我谈到过你 她说你头脑发热 做事糊涂 来 过来 亲爱的昆汀 我们才相熟 在谈论哈佛大学 你需要我么 可不能故意避开老人家啊 是吧

你先出去一会儿 赫伯特 我要和昆汀谈谈

来 进来 我们都来做一次长谈 亲近亲近 我刚刚和昆汀说过的 拜托赫伯特 先出去一下 哦 好吧 我想你和小兄弟的确想再私下聊聊

你还是把雪茄从壁炉台上移开吧

好吧 我的孩子 一切照常 过会儿 我会离开 让他们在还能使唤你的时候 使唤使唤吧 昆汀 以后老人家就会非常高兴的 是吧 来 亲爱的 给我们一个亲吻

哦 停 别那样 以后再说吧

那么 我要贷款的利息 不要让昆汀做事 他做不了 随便提一句 我把那个人的鹦鹉的事和它的遭遇告诉昆汀了么 那个悲伤的故事时刻提醒着我 你自己想想吧 回见 回见 回头见

哎呀

啊

你现在在忙什么

没什么

你又在干涉我的事情 去年夏天 难道还没玩够么

加迪你发高烧了 你病了 是怎么病的呢

我就是病了 我怎么知道是怎么回事呢

他的声音横穿过

别嫁给这个浑蛋 加迪

午后，河流缓缓流淌，不时泛起粼粼波光。此后一切都好。我们从源头处出发。在上帝和众神面前，源头活水奔流涉远。众神。更妙。如果上帝置身马萨诸塞州波士顿，也会变成暴民。或许都娶不到妻子。双桨划开水波，小船穿梭于波光上和雌棕榈树间。谄媚。谄媚，如果他不是位丈夫，他就不会在乎神的存在。这个浑蛋，加迪。河流在一个拐角处急转直下。

我病了 你一定要答应我

病了 怎么病的

我就是病了这又不不求谁但是你一定要答应我

如果他们需要照顾那就是你的原因你怎么病的此时在窗下，我们可以听到有火车正驶出车站，那是八点十分的火车。要把表兄弟们带回来。人头攒动。一个个都把头抬起来，但不是理发师。是修指甲的女孩。我们曾经有匹纯种马。没错，是在马房里，但是皮革的伪装之下却是一匹杂种马。昆汀让自己的声音压过别的声音，直穿透加迪房间的地板

车停了。我从车上下来，走到影子中间。有一条路横跨在铁轨上。木制的华盖旁一个老人从纸袋中拿出东西来吃，过了一会儿，火车已渐

行渐远，直到呼啸声也听不到了。这条路延伸到树林，那里枝繁叶茂，绿树成荫，但是新英格兰六月的叶片并不比家乡那儿四月的叶片肥厚。从此，我可以看到一个烟囱。我转过身来，踩着脚下的影子，陷入泥土。在我的身体里有一些可怕的东西。有时在晚上，我能看到它对着我咧嘴笑。我能看到它，穿过它们，透过它们的脸对着我咧嘴笑它现在不见了我也生病了

加迪

别碰我你只要向我保证就行了

如果你病了你就不能这样做

不我能从那之后一切都会好的它不会有什么大不了向我保证不要让他们把他送到杰克逊去

我保证加迪加迪

别碰我别碰我

它长什么样加迪

什么

那个透过它们向你咧嘴笑的东西

此刻，我仍然看得见那个烟囱。在那里，水流注入大海，填满洞穴。水流平缓地翻滚，只有在曙光初现之时，上帝才会说涨潮。我和弗什打猎一整天的时候，是不吃午饭的，十二点的时候我会感觉到饿，一直持续到一点，然后我就会突然忘记曾经饿过。路灯的灯光从山上照射

下来，然后就听到火车从山上呼啸而下。我前额枕着椅臂，感觉光滑平整，又有些凉爽，苹果树伸展到我的头发上，在伊甸园的上空衣服在鼻子旁边看见你发烧了。我昨天发现了，你的头就像在火炉边上烤一样。

别碰我。

加迪，你病了，不能这样。该死的。

我一定要嫁人。然后他们告诉我，我又会受伤。

最后，我已看不到那个烟囱。路延伸到了一堵墙的旁边。墙边树木繁茂，向外伸展。阳光照得树叶闪闪发亮。石头冰凉凉的，走近就会感觉到丝丝凉爽。只是，我们的国家和这个国家不同。这儿正风行着某种潮流。一种平静却猛烈的多产性甚至让忍饥挨饿的人们也感到满足。它在你周围大行其道，杜绝催生以及助长任何吝啬之风。似此也只是权宜之计，为的是让绿色遍布，枝叶繁茂，甚至远处天边也是一片碧蓝，而非杂糅之作。在我被告知会继续重蹈覆辙时 它就在我身体里哈哈大笑我也开始流汗 我在乎什么 我深知伤害对我意味着什么 它算不得什么 我只是要到房里多待会儿 那就行了 我的咀嚼肌变得麻木了 我的口中说着等等 等等 流汗后刚过一分钟 我的牙齿后面就传出了哈哈的笑声 还有爸爸 该死的马 该死的马 等等 那是我的错 每天早上他都提着篮子沿着栅栏向厨房方向去 同时拖拽着一根棍子 每天早上我都强迫自己注意窗外伺机向他扔煤块 黛西说你快要把自己毁掉了，你是不是跌断腿后没几天就觉得没意思了 等等 只要一分钟我就能习惯了 就等一分钟 我就.....

在这样的空气中，甚至声音都似乎提不起精神，就像空气已疲惫不堪，不足以将声音传播太长时间。不管怎么样，犬吠声比火车呼啸声传得更远。空气中还有某个人的声音。黑鬼们。路易·哈彻甚至从不凭借

喇叭传声，他提着那个旧提灯。我说：“路易，你上次清洁提灯还是什么时候啊？”

“我不久前才做了清洗。你还记得洪水来时，把乡亲们冲到那边去了么？就是那天，我做的清洁。那天晚上，老女人和我生火，她说‘路易，如果洪水冲到这里，你会怎么办’，我说‘这是事实。我认为我还是清洁一下我的提灯吧’。所以那天晚上，我做了清洁。”

“在宾州洪水到处肆虐，”我说，“到这里还不能完全消退。”

“那是你的说法，”路易说，“我认为，杰克逊市的洪水和宾州的一样猛烈。乡亲们也说洪水上涌漫上横梁，也不能冲到这里来。”

“你和玛莎那天晚上逃出来了么？”

“我们前脚刚出门洪水就涌进屋子里了，我反正灯也擦好了，然后我和她在墓地后面的小山顶上慢慢挨过长夜。如果我们发现任何更高处，我们就会向那儿走去。”

“此后，你就不曾再对这个提灯做过清洁了吧。”

“既然没需要，我又为什么要再清洁它呢？”

“你是说，要等到下次洪水再来么？”

“就是它帮我们躲过这次洪水的。”

“哦，拜托，路易大叔。”我说。

“嗯，没错。你我各行其道。如果只需要清洁这个提灯来防备洪水，我就不愿和人斗嘴。”

“路易大叔是不肯点灯抓猎物。”弗什说道。

“我当初在这里抓负鼠时，人家还在用煤油洗你爸爸头上的虱子，帮他掐虱子呢。”

“不错。”

“嗯，没错。”路易说，“我们用灯照负鼠的时候可不少，这没错。他们也没谁埋怨光线太暗。嘘，别出声。它就在那儿。呜——怎么不叫了，这臭东西。”我们坐在干树叶上。在我们等待之时，可以听见干树叶窸窣窸窣的私语，自己平缓的呼吸，还有泥土和这无风的十月的悠长气息，提灯发出的刺鼻气味污染了脆弱的空气，还可听到犬吠嘈杂伴着路易说话的回声渐远渐无。他从不高声大叫，但是在一个寂静的夜晚，我们听到他的声音从前门廊传来。当他把狗唤进去，他的声音听起来就像悬挂在肩上却从未用过的喇叭吹出来的一样，不过，更为清晰、柔和，好似它本身就是黑暗和寂静的一部分，在空气中穿进又穿出，缭绕不断。呜呜嗷。呜呜嗷。呜呜呜呜嗷。我一定要嫁人

有许多人想要和你结婚吗加迪

我不知道有太多你能照顾班吉和爸爸吗

你不知道你要嫁给谁那么他知道么

别碰我你能照顾班吉和爸爸吗

在我走到桥边时，我开始感受到有水。石桥呈灰色，表面长满了苔藓，还有雨水侵蚀形成的斑纹，斑纹上爬满真菌。桥下阴暗处水流清澈平缓，发出咯咯轻笑，似在私语水中倒影旋转的天空漾起的漩涡撞在石头上逐渐消逝了。

加迪

我要嫁人弗什跟我讲起了一个自暴自弃的男人。他走进树林，准备用一把剃刀自残。破剃刀一挥，只见一团东西往肩膀后飞去，同一个动作使血管搅在一起，血流如注向后飞溅，却不重叠。但还不只这样，割去了还不解决问题。还得一开始就没有它们。然后我可以说，哦，那，那是中国人的方式，可我并不认识中国人。爸爸说那是因为你是处女：你不明白吗？女人永远都不再纯真了。纯洁是一种负面状态，因此与本性相悖。本性是在狩猎你，而非加迪。我说那只是言语而已，他说童贞也不外如是，然后我说你不懂。你不可能知道，他说是的。马上，我们意识到这个悲剧并非亲身体验所得。

在石桥的投影之处，我的视线可以向下延伸很远，但不能见底。如果你把一片叶子泡在水中很长时间，它的表皮组织就会脱离，精致的叶脉纤维则随着水波轻缓摇动，好似做着睡眠运动。叶片其他组织和叶脉纤维彼此分离，不再相连，无论它们曾经如何是否一脉相承，无论它们曾经是否骨肉相连。也许在上帝说上升的时候，目光也会随之起浮，延展到深层的平静与静息之外，一睹荣光如斯。不一会儿，晨曦在天边浮现。我把它藏在桥的一头，向回走，倚靠在桥栏上。

虽不能直探水底，但目光所及穿透水流，可视也颇深，然后我看到水中一个悬挂着的倒影犹如一个箭头逆向插入水流中。蜉蝣们贴着水面，在桥的投影中飞进穿出，来往不断。如果真有地狱就好了：圣洁的火焰就会让我们二人超越生死。到时你只有我一个人只有我一个人我们两人置身圣洁的火焰之外的慑人的恐怖中那个箭头随着水流的运动上浮，接着一个漩涡疾驰而过之间，有只鳟鱼突然从水面下衔住一只蜉蝣，壮观场面直如大象叼起花生般诡异。漩涡向下游漂去，然后我又看

到了那个箭头，它探入水流中，以优美的姿态随着水波摆动，其上众多蜉蝣斜掠疾行。那时只有你我至于圣洁的火焰之上，周围摄人心魄的恐怖

鳟鱼姿态优雅，一动不动，好似悬挂在波动的阴影中。三个男孩拿着渔竿走上桥来，我们一起靠着桥栏，俯身向下看鳟鱼。他们熟悉鱼。他就像是一个邻家小伙。

“二十五年来，他们一直都想抓到那条鳟鱼。波士顿有家商店愿意用价值二十五美元的渔竿和捕获者交换这条鱼。”

“那么，你们为什么不合力而为呢？你们难道不想要一根价值二十五美元的渔竿吗？”

“不，我们会抓到它的。”他们说。他们靠在桥栏上，向下俯视那条鳟鱼。“我一定会。”有一个说。

“我不会要那根渔竿，”第二个说，“而是拿钱。”

“也许他们不会给你钱，”第一个说，“我敢说他会让你要那根渔竿。”

“那我就卖了它。”

“你卖不到二十五美元。”

“那么，能得多少是多少。我用这根渔竿就能捕到和二十五美元那根一样多的鱼。”接着他们谈论了他们会怎么用那二十五美元。他们都急着说各自的盘算，他们的声音显得心情格外迫切，异于寻常，直有些迫不及待了。他们将虚幻的愿望化为一线希望，直到可能，最后变成无

可争议的事实，人们滔滔不绝谈论自己愿望之时便是这番景象。

“我会买一匹马和一辆马车。”第二个说。

“嗯，你会的。”另外两个答道。

“我会的。我知道用二十五美元可以在哪里买到。我认识那个人。”

“是谁？”

“是谁不要紧，关键是我能用二十五美元买到。”

“呀，”另外两人嘲弄道，“他根本就不知道，只是说说而已。”

“你们真这样想？”男孩说。他们继续嘲讽他，但他不再回应。他靠着桥栏，向下俯视那条鳟鱼，一如之前。突然，他们话语中的尖刻、冲突之意就此消失了，好像对他们而言他已经抓到那条鱼，买到了马和马车。他们二人都体会到了一个成人的特征：对于梦想而言，保持沉默更能让人信服。我想，那些用过多语言粉饰自己、互相吹捧的人至少都应该发掘沉默的智慧。过了一会儿，我能感觉到，另外两人正在想方设法对付他，试图夺走他那个马和马车的想法。

“你用那根渔竿换不到二十五美元，”第一个说，“我敢说你怎么也得不到。”

“他还没捕到那条鳟鱼呢。”第三个突然说道。

接着他们同声喊着：“呀，我和你是怎么说的？那个人叫什么名字？我谅你也不敢说。根本就没这个人。”

“呀，闭嘴，”第二个说，“看，它又出现了。”他们靠着桥栏，不约

而同地一动不动。他们的渔竿在阳光照射下，显得又细又长，也一例斜放着。鳟鱼不慌不忙，只见它的身影微微摇摆向水面上浮；随之小漩涡再次缓慢向下游逝去。

“快！”第一个低声说。

“我抓不到它了，”他说，“我们看看波士顿人的手段吧。”

“这个池塘里就这一条鱼吗？”

“是的。它把其他所有的都赶走了。附近最好捕鱼的地方是在下面的艾迪。”

“不，那不是，”第二个说，“毕格罗磨坊那儿要好上一倍。”接着，他们就此争论了一番，然后突然又停下来，又去注视鳟鱼在水中浮现。此时天空的一部分倒影被卷进了破碎的漩涡。我问他们最近的镇子离这儿有多远，他们告诉了我。

“但是最近的车路是那条，”第二个一边说，一边向后指着下面的那条路，“你是要去哪儿？”

“不去哪儿。就只走走。”

“你从大学里来？”

“是的。镇上有工厂吗？”

“工厂？”他们看着我。

“没有，”第二个说，“这儿没有。”他们盯着我的着装看，“你要找工作？”

“毕格罗磨坊呢？”第三个说，“那是一家工厂。”

“在我的眼里，是一家工厂。他指的是一家真正的工厂。”

“有鸣笛的工厂，”我说，“我都没听到整点鸣笛。”

“哦，”第二个说，“在神教派教堂的尖顶上有一个时钟。你可以从那里看时间。那个表带上没表吗？”

“今天早上，我把它弄坏了。”我把表给他们看了。他们仔细查看了一番。

“它还在转，”第二个说，“这样一个表值多少钱？”

“它是一个礼物，”我说，“是我高中毕业时父亲给我的。”

“你是加拿大人？”第三个说。他的头发是红色的。

“加拿大人？”

“他和他们的腔调不一样，”第二个说，“我听过他们说话。他的腔调像黑人说唱。”

“说，”第三个说，“难道你不怕他揍你？”

“揍我？”

“你说他的腔调像有色人种的。”

“呀，住口，”第二个说，“当你翻过那座山，就能看到那个尖顶了。”

我向他们道谢。“祝你们好运。只不过不要捕到下面那条老鳟鱼。它应该自由自在地活着。”

“没有人能捕捉到。”第一个说。他们又倚靠着桥栏，向下俯视水中。在阳光下，三根渔竿就像三条斜放的线，带着黄色的火焰。我再次踩着我的影子，踏着它走到斑驳的树影下。

这条路蜿蜒曲折，渐渐远离了河流。它跨越过小山，接着又蜿蜒向下，将人的目光和念头都带到一个宁静的绿色隧道中，树木那端矗立着一个四角台塔，但距离时钟的原型表盘还远。我在路边坐下来。草很深，长到脚踝处了，而且漫山遍野。路上的影子一动不动，就像是用模板印画下来的，而阳光就是斜握的笔。但那只是一列火车，不一会儿，就在树林那边消失了，带着长长的呼啸，然后我就听到我手表和火车的声音也慢慢减弱至无，好像它正在某处走过另一月或另一夏日，快如惊鸿一瞥，一切匆匆而逝。除了杰拉尔德。

加迪，该死的，该死，加迪。

他们的声音越过山冈，三根细长的渔竿好似几条燃烧着烈焰的丝线。他们边走边看着我，但没有停留。

“哦，”我说，“我没看到它。”

“我们不想再尝试了，”第一个说，“那条鱼是捉不到的。”

“时钟在那，”第二个边说边用手指着，“再走近一点，你就能看到时间了。”

“是的，”我说，“好吧。”我站起来，“你们都要去镇上？”

“我们要去大漩涡钓鲢鱼。”

“如果我们哪儿也不去，就什么也捕不到。”第三个说。

“我不明白为什么你一直都在讲大漩涡，”第二个说，“去那儿你什么也钓不到。”

“你可以不去，”第一个说，“你不一定要跟着我。”

“我们去纺织厂那儿，游泳吧。”第三个说。

“我要去大漩涡钓鱼。”第一个说，“你们爱怎么样就怎么样吧。”

“你说，什么时候听说有人在大漩涡钓到鱼了？”第二个对第三个说。

“我们去纱厂游泳吧。”第三个说。四角台塔在树林那一端渐渐隐没，时钟的表盘还是离得很远。我们走在斑驳的树影上。随后，又走到了一个果园，只见那里粉白相间。到处都是蜜蜂，我们早就可以听到它们的声音了。

“我们去纱厂那儿游泳吧。”第三个说。在果园旁有条小路出现转弯。第三个男孩放慢了脚步，停在那儿。第一个男孩继续往前走，点点阳光沿着渔竿跃动，从他肩膀一直到衬衫的后边。“走啊。”第三个说。第二个男孩也停下来了。你为何一定要嫁人，加迪？

你是不是想要我说出来？你是不是认为我说出来，事情就不会这样了。

“我去纱厂。”他说，“走吧。”

第一个男孩继续往前走。他光着脚，踩在地上听不到声音，比叶落微尘更为纤柔。果园中成群的蜜蜂嗡嗡叫着，犹如风潮乍起越来越强。小路沿着围墙延伸，随之呈外拱形，路边野花如繁星碎落。其尽头处顺势隐入林间。阳光斜照其上，只见稀稀疏疏直如星点，又如流萤，摇扇欲扑。黄色的蝴蝶在树荫间轻摇曼舞，看似阳光点点。

“你想去大漩涡干什么？”第二个男孩说，“如果你要钓鱼，你可以在磨坊那儿钓。”

“啊，让他走。”第三个说。他们目送第一个男孩离开。阳光从他的肩上滑落，又散落在渔竿上，如金黄色的蚂蚁闪烁。

“肯尼。”第二个说。你去对父亲说清楚好吗我会说我是父亲的生殖之神我发明了他创造了他去跟他说这样不行他会说我不是然后你和我因为爱儿女“啊，走吧。”第三个说。“人家早就在那儿了。”他们还在看着第一个男孩。“呀，”他们突然说，“继续走吧，乖孩子。如果他去游泳，就会把头弄湿，回去就得挨揍。”他们踏上那条小路，顺着往前走。树荫下，黄色的蝴蝶跟随着，在他们周围上下舞动。

因为没什么别的。我以为有什么别的，但可能没有然后你会发现不公也不值得你相信。他没注意我。他头戴破帽，脸转向一边，下巴描摹出脸的轮廓。

“你为什么不和他们去游泳？”我说。那是个臭流氓加迪

你是要挑衅他，是吗？

你是骗子，是坏蛋加迪他打牌出千被俱乐部开除了大家都不和他来往他期中考试作弊被开除了学籍

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你是骗子，是坏蛋 加迪 他打牌出千 被俱乐部开除了 大家都不和他来往 他期中考试作弊 被开除了学籍

哦 怎么了 我又不和他打牌

“比起游泳来，你更喜欢钓鱼吗？”我说。蜜蜂的嗡嗡声渐渐减弱，但仍然存在，好像没有沉入寂静，更显沉默的只是我们两人，此时水位也上涨了。前面的路又变得曲折起来，渐渐地眼前的路成了街道，两边平添了几幢白色的房子和背阴的草坪。 加迪 该死的 就算不为我，你能
为班吉和父亲想想吗

我还可以考虑点什么 我还考虑过什么呢？ 那个男孩离开街道，转到一边，头也不回，翻过一个栅栏，越过草坪，来到一棵树下。先把渔竿放下，再爬上树杈，坐在那儿，背对着街道，最后稀疏的阳光透过树叶照在他的白衬衫上，一动不动。我还想了什么？我甚至不能哭。去年的时候，我就死了。我告诉过你，我已经死了。但我不知道那是什么意思，我不知道自己在说什么。在家里，八月下旬的一些日子也是这样。就像这样，空气稀薄而热切，有些悲伤，眷恋和熟悉的东西在里边。人是气候经验的总和，这是爸爸说的。人是自己所有的一切的总和。不义之财总要将人沉闷地引向人财两空的境地：一边欲火焚身，一边心如死灰，真是冰火两重天。但现在我知道我已经死了，我告诉你

为什么你必须听 我们可以离开 你和班吉，还有我去没人认识我们的地方 一辆小马车由一匹白马拉着，马蹄嵌入浅土中；形似蛛网的轮子微弱地震颤着，发出的轧轧之声显得枯燥无味。层层绿叶犹如披肩，

泛起阵阵涟漪，其下马车向着山上去了。榆树。不：榆树街。榆树街。

关于什么 关于你的学费 他们把牧场卖了换钱，你就可以去上哈佛了 你难道不明白你必须现在去完成学业吗 否则，他就什么都没了

卖牧场 白衬衫在树杈上，在摇曳的树影里一动不动。车轮形同蛛网。马车下到凹陷处，马蹄踩踏快如妇人刺绣，干净利索。随后速度慢慢减弱，似乎一直停滞不前，就像从跑步机上迅速滑落。往前走，街道再次转弯。我现在可以看到白色的圆顶塔，还有呆笨、武断的圆形钟表显示着时间。 卖牧场

他们说如果爸爸不停止戒酒 他一年内就会死 他不会戒的 他不会的 因为我 因为上一个夏天 然后 他们就会把班吉送到杰克逊去 我哭不出来 我甚至哭一分钟都哭不出来 她正站在门边 下一分钟 他咆哮着、拉扯着她的裙子 他的声音在墙壁间如波浪般来回撞击着 她背靠着墙缩着 越来越小 越来越小 她的脸色苍白，眼睛就像手指那样凹陷进去 直到他把她推出房间 他的声音来回激荡直是势不可挡 仿佛静默之中无处容身 咆哮着

当你打开门，门铃会响，但只会响一次。门上就会发出高亢、清晰却微弱的铃声，传递到整洁、安静的空间中，好像铃声经过了调节设定，既不致损坏门铃，也不需要消耗过多的安静平复，当门打开时，不久前焙烤的暖气就会扑面而来；一个脏兮兮的小孩，两只眼睛像玩具熊，扎着两条漆皮色辫子。

“你好，小妹妹。”在温暖的空间中，她的脸就像是一杯牛奶掺入咖啡，“有人吗？”

但她只是看着我，直到一扇门打开，一位女士进来。在柜台上排放

着的玻璃杯后边，露出她的脸，灰色、光滑，头发稀疏却拉紧，脑壳灰白光滑，眼镜也是整洁的灰框就像电线上的什么东西，商店的现金箱。她看上去像位图书管理员。存放在布满灰尘的货架上的某种脱离现实的东西确乎存在，它有条不紊，且平静地变干，好像一缕见证了往日的不平的怨气。

“拿两个这个，夫人。”

从柜台下面，她取出报纸切成两半，然后把它放到柜台上，把两个面包拿出来。小女孩用双眼紧紧地盯着，一动不动，就像两颗黑加仑静止浮在一杯淡咖啡上。犹太人的国土，意大利人的家乡。看着面包，两只整洁的灰手，左手食指上的宽黄金带饰，用蓝色指关节敲打着吧台。

“你是自己焙烤面包吗，夫人？”

“先生？”她说，“像那样。先生？就像在台上。先生？五美分。还要什么吗？”

“不要了，夫人。我不需要。这位女士需要。”她不够高，不能越过柜台看，于是她走到柜台的末端，看着小女孩。

“你把她带进来的？”

“不是，夫人。我来的时候，她就在这儿了。”

“你这小坏蛋。”她说，她绕过柜台走出来，但她并没有碰那个小女孩，“你衣兜里有钱吗？”

“她没衣兜，”我说，“她什么都没干。她只是站在那儿，等着你来。”

“那么，门铃为什么没响呢？”她盯着我。她只需要一堆开关，在她2×2=5的头脑后面应该挂一块黑板。“她会把东西藏在裙子下面，然后就没人能发现。你，孩子。你怎么进来的？”

小女孩什么也不说。她看着那个女人，然后飞快地向我瞪了一眼，又再看着那个女人。“他们外国人，”她说，“怎么没听到铃响呢？”

“我打开门的时候，她进来的，”我说，“我们俩进来它只响了一次。不管怎样，她在这儿拿不到任何东西。而且，我认为她不会。你会吗，小妹妹？”小女孩偷偷地看着我，若有所思。“你想要什么？面包吗？”

她把手掌伸开，露出一枚五分镍币，币面潮湿肮脏，硬币攥得很紧快要陷进肉里了。银币虽然潮湿，但却温暖。我可以嗅到淡淡的金属味道。

“你这儿有五分的面包吗，夫人？”

从柜台下面，她取出报纸，再从报纸上裁下一张放在柜台上，把面包裹进去。我把硬币和另一个放到柜台上。“请再来一块面包，夫人。”

她从箱子里拿出另一块面包。“给我那包。”她说。我给她，她解开包裹，把第三块面包放进去，拿了硬币，在围裙里找到两个铜币，就找给了我。我把它给了那个女孩。她用手指攥住，又湿又暖，就像一条蠕虫。

“你要把面包给她？”那个女人说。

“没错，”我说，“我希望你的手艺同样能让她产生我感觉到美妙感受。”

我拿起两个纸包，把面包给小女孩，那个女人在柜台后面一身铁青，冷眼看着我们。“你等一下。”她说。她往后面走去。接着门被打开，又关上。小女孩看着我，手里抱着面包靠着脏裙子。

“你叫什么名字？”我说。她不再盯着我，但她仍然一动不动，好像连呼吸都停止了。那个女人又回来了。手里拿着一个有趣的东西，就像拿着一只死了的宠物鼠一样。

“喂。”她说，小孩转过头去看着她。“拿着，”那个女人边说边拿着它戳向那个小女孩，“它只是看起来特别。我想你吃的时候，是不知道有什么区别的。给。我可不能整天这样站着。”小孩拿过来，但仍然看着她。那个女人把手放在围裙上擦了擦。“我得去修理一下门铃。”她说。她走到门边，然后猛地将门拉开。小门铃立即叮当作响，声音微弱却清晰。我们朝门口走过去，那个女人回过头来看着。

“谢谢你的蛋糕。”我说。

“他们是外国人。”她边说边盯着门铃作响的阴暗处，“年轻人，听我的劝，尽量避开他们。”

“好的。”我说，“走吧，小妹妹。”我们走出去，“夫人，谢谢。”

她把门甩上，然后猛地拉开，使门铃发出单一、微小的响声。“外国人。”她说，眼睛盯着门铃。

我们继续走。“好了，”我说，“来点冰淇淋怎么样？”她正在吃品质粗糙的蛋糕。“你想吃冰淇淋吗？”她狠狠地向我瞪了一眼，嘴里还在咀嚼。“走吧。”

我们走到杂货店，买了些冰淇淋。她却不愿意把面包放下。“你为什么不把面包放下，方便吃东西呢？”我说着，示意要帮她拿。但她攥着它，不肯放开，嚼着冰淇淋，就像太妃糖。吃过的蛋糕放在桌上。她一直吃个不停，先把冰淇淋吃了，然后又去吃蛋糕，还不断扫视着陈列柜。我把我的吃完，我们就走出来了。

“你家是往哪条路走？”我说。

此时出现了一辆马车，就是那辆白色马车拉着的。只有皮尔迪医生最胖，重三百磅。你拉着他爬坡，坚持住。孩子们。吊在车上爬坡比自己走上去还累。你看过医生了吗 去看过过了吗 加迪

我不需要 我现在不能问 以后一切都会好的 不要紧的

爸爸说，因为女人太过柔弱，太过神秘。两次月圆之间恰巧有一次周期性的排污，保持着微妙的平衡。他说月亮圆圆满满，黄黄的，她的大腿臀部就像丰收时节的月亮。淌出来淌出来老是这样，黄黄的，像走路时的光脚掌。接着就知道有个男人把这些神秘和傲慢的东西都隐藏起来。所有藏在里面的他们向外探出柔和的身影，等着人们来抚摸。腐败的液体就像浸泡的东西一样漂起来，又像发白的橡皮没有充满气体将忍冬花香和所有的气味混杂起来。

“你最好把面包带回去，好吗？”

她看着我，静静地、不停地咀嚼着；吞咽食物时，喉咙总是流畅而有规律地胀大。我打开纸包，从中拿出一块面包给她。“拜拜。”我说。

我往前走，然后回头一看。她跟在我后面。“你家是往这条路走吗？”她默然以对。走到我边上，差不多在我手肘下方停下，嘴里吃着

东西。我们继续走。周围很安静，少有人路过 让忍冬的香味和其他东西都混合起来 她会告诉我，让我别坐在台阶上 听她的门在黄昏中砰然关上 听班吉还在哭泣 晚餐的时候 她就得下来 然后让忍冬的香味都混杂在里面 我们走到了拐角处。

“好了，我得沿着这条路走下去。”我说，“再见。”她也停了下来。她咽下最后一口蛋糕，然后开始吃面包，还一边看着我转过拐角。“再见。”我说。我转入街道，继续往前走，但走到下一个拐角处时我停下来了。

“你家往哪儿走？”我说，“这条路吗？”我顺着街道直指。她只是看着我。“你家顺着那条路走吗？我肯定你家住在火车站附近，是吗？”她仍然看着我，一脸平静，似乎藏着秘密，嘴里还在吃东西。街道两边都空无一人，树木间草坪宁静，房屋整齐，但街上冷落无人，不像来时路上。我们调转方向，往后走。有两个男人坐在商店门前的椅子上。

“你们认识这个小女孩吗？她一直跟着我，我找不到她家在哪儿。”

他们停下来，看着我，然后又看着她。

“一定是新来的意大利家庭的孩子。”一个说。他身穿一件褪色的礼服大衣。“我以前见过她。你叫什么名字，小女孩？”她向他们怒目而视，下巴仍在不停地嚼动。她吞咽的时候，嘴巴还不忘咀嚼。

“也许她不会说英语。”另一个说。

“他们吃完面包后，把她留在那儿。”我说，“她一定能说话。”

“你爸爸叫什么？”第一个说，“皮特？乔？叫约翰吗？”她又咬了一口面包。

“我该怎么办？”我说，“她就是一直跟着我。我得回波士顿了。”

“你从大学里来？”

“是的，先生。我现在得回去了。”

“你也许可以沿街上去，把她交给安斯。他会在马车行。他是警察局长。”

“我想就这么办吧。”我说，“我得跟她办点事，非常感谢。走吧，小妹妹。”

我们沿街阴凉一侧往上走，断墙的影子缓缓移到街对面。最后，我们走到了马车行。典礼官不在。有一个人坐在椅子上斜靠着那扇又宽又矮的门，门后成排的畜栏里吹来凉风，风中夹杂着臊气。那个人眼睛盯着邮局，对我说他也不认识这个女孩。

“他们是外国人。我看得出来。你可以带她穿过轨道，他们就住在那儿，也许有人会认领。”

我们往邮局走去。它在街道下面。那个穿礼服大衣的人正翻阅报纸。

“安斯刚刚驾车出城了。”他说，“我以为，你最好还是往下走，穿过车站，走到他们河边的房子那儿去。那里有人会认识她的。”

“我想我只能这样了。”我说，“走吧，小妹妹。”她把最后一片面包塞进嘴里，吞下去。“还要吗？”我说。她看着我，嘴里还在嚼动，她的眼睛乌黑，一眨不眨，眼神友善。我拿出另外两块面包，给她一块，自

已在另一块上咬一口。我问了一个人车站的位置，他指给我。“走吧，小妹妹。”

我们到达车站，穿过轨道，轨道边就有河。有一座桥横跨其上，河边有一条街道，街道上房屋布局杂乱随意，街道背靠着桥。街道肮脏不堪，气味也混杂刺鼻。可见一块未经修饰的土地四周围着残垣断壁，中间矗立着一幢风化破旧的房子，边上停放着一辆古朴的马车与此格格不入，房子的上层窗户挂着一件鲜艳的粉色外衣。

“那幢房子像你的家吗？”我说。她眼睛从面包上移开，看着我。“这幢？”我边说，边用手指着。她只是嘴里咀嚼着，但这似乎让我感觉到积极的意味，像是默认，尽管她的情绪并不热切。“这栋？”我说，“那走吧。”我走进破烂的大门，回头看她。“这里吗？”我说，“这像你家吗？”

她迅疾点头，又看着我，啃了啃那潮湿的半月形面包。我们往前走。撕碎的旗子散落一地，草长得很粗，叶片直直地戳着碎旗，眼前的路向着一个破败的小门廊延伸。房子并无任何有人的迹象，没有风，上层窗户挂着的那件粉色的衣服也不动。有个门铃吊着一个瓷钮，连接的线大概六英尺长。我先拉瓷钮，见没有反应，就停下来接着敲门。小女孩正在嚼外层的面包皮。

一个女人把门打开。她看着我，然后用意大利语和小女孩很快说了些什么，先是一个渐升的变调，而后停顿了一下，质问。她又对她说了什么，小女孩只是在面包皮的一端看着她，用脏手把面包推进嘴里。

“她说她住在这儿。”我说，“我在镇子那边碰到她。这是你的面包吗？”

“闭嘴。”她说。她又对着小女孩说了一通。小女孩只是看着她。

“不住这里吗？”我说。我指着小女孩，然后她，然后门。那个女人摇头。她说得很快。她走到门廊边上，顺着街道向下指，还一边说着什么。

我也猛烈点头。“你来指给我看？”我说。我抓住她的手，一边朝着路那边挥舞我的手。她说得很快，同时用手指着。“你来指给我看。”我说着，想让她走下台阶来。

“Si, si。”她说，仍然止步不前，给我指着方位。我再次点头。

“谢谢。谢谢。谢谢。”我走下台阶，走向大门，虽不是跑，但速度也相当快。我到达大门处时停下来，回头看了她一会儿。面包皮现在已经被吃完了，她用她乌黑、友善的眼睛看着我。那个女人站在台阶上，看着我们。

“来啊。”我说，“我们迟早要找到正确的地址。”

她走过来，正好停在我的手肘下方。我们继续往前走。这些房子似乎都空空如也。看不到一个人。这些空房子让人觉得喘不过气来。但他们不可能都是空的。如果你突然把所有的墙撕开来，就会发现每个房间都不同。太太，如果你愿意，来认领你的女儿吧。不。太太看在上帝的分上，来认领女儿吧。她贴着我的手肘行走，辫子紧紧捆住，闪闪发亮，接着最当头的房子已在脑后，前面的路顺着河水拐向一边，没入墙后看不见了。那个女人从破烂的大门走了出来，头上包着块头巾，两个角系在脖子下面。路继续弯弯曲曲向前延伸，周围荒无人烟。我找到一个硬币，把它给了小女孩。走到一个拐角处时，“再见了，小妹妹。”我说。然后我就跑了。

我跑得飞快，头也不回。在路转角前，我向后望了一眼。她站在路上，小小的身影，仍然把面包攥在脏兮兮的裙子前，她的眼珠黑亮，直直地瞪着，眨也不眨。我继续往前跑。

有条小巷从大路上岔开。我转入小巷，再过一会儿，脚步慢了下来，转而快步前行。小巷夹在建筑背面之间——未经粉饰的墙面，晾衣绳上鲜艳的衣服比比皆是，一座牲口棚后墙断裂，在茂盛的果树间默默腐朽，果树久未修剪，野草滋蔓，其间开着粉色、白色的花，阳光炽热，蜜蜂嗡嗡，颇有些热闹。我回头一看，小巷的入口处空荡荡的。我更放缓脚步，影子踩在身上，影子的头在遮掩住栅栏的野草间缓缓移动。

小巷向后转到一扇门上了的门前，就此没入草丛中，只能隐约看到草间的一条小径。我翻过栅门，进到一个树木丰茂的院落，走过院落来到另一堵墙前面，顺着墙走。我的影子现在落在了背后。这儿有蔓藤和爬山虎之类的植物，如果在家乡，就是忍冬了。尤其是黄昏下雨之时，会有一阵阵香气袭来，忍冬花香都混杂在里面，好像不如此就不够味，不够难受。 你为何让他吻你 吻你

我没让他吻我 我只是让他看着我 这就够他疯疯癫癫的了 你以为呢？ 一个巴掌 她的脸上就印上了我鲜红的手印 就像手底下点亮一盏灯 照着她的双眼闪烁

不是因为接吻 我才打你。十五岁的女孩子吃饭还用手肘撑着 父亲说你吞咽的时候 真是如鲠在喉 你和加迪到底是怎么回事 坐在桌子对面却不用眼看我。 因为你让一个不可一世的、城里来的臭小子亲你 我才打你的 你该说了吧 你说不说 这下你该说牛绳²了。 我鲜红的手掌从她脸上抬起来。你觉得把她的头摁进草丛里如何。 草秆会歪歪斜斜地戳进她的肉里。 说牛绳 快说

无论如何 我都不会亲吻娜塔莉那样肮脏的女孩 眼前的墙隐入阴影中，然后我的影子也融入其中，我又一次戏弄了它。我忘记了河流是沿着街道蜿蜒而行的。我爬上墙。接着她看着我跳下来，她还是攥着面包放在胸前。

我站在草丛中，我们相视了一会儿。

“你为什么不告诉我你就住在这边，小妹妹？”面包正慢慢穿透纸，早就需要一张新的了。“好吧，我们走，把你的家指给我。”不吻娜塔莉那样肮脏的女孩。下雨了，我们在屋顶上可以听到，就像叹息穿过牲口棚高耸、芳香的空间。

这儿？摸到她了

不是这儿

这儿？ 雨并不大，但我们什么都听不见，只能听到敲打屋顶的声音，就像是你我的血液脉动

她把我推下梯子 就跑开了 把我留在那里 加迪跑开了

是这儿疼吗 加迪跑开时 是这儿碰疼了吗

哦 她贴着我的手肘往前走，手肘都要碰到漆皮似的头顶了。面包从报纸的破洞中钻了出来。

“如果你不快点回家，面包就要从报纸里掉出来了。你妈妈会怎么责怪你？”我敢打赌我能举起你

你不行 我太重了

加迪走了吗 她往家里去了吗 你从我们家那儿不能看到牲口棚 你这样尝试过吗

那是她的错 她推开我 然后跑了

我能把你举起来 看 我能

哦 她的血还是我的血 哦 我们继续踩着浅土往前走，双脚踏地寂静无声，就像踩在橡皮上一般，太阳从树林中斜射下来，好似轻描淡写。我又能感觉到在树荫隐秘处水流迅疾而平缓地流淌。

“你家离这儿很远，是吗？你真是聪明，自己一个人走这么长的路到镇上。”这就像坐着跳舞 你坐着跳过舞吗？我们可以听到雨声，食槽里有只老鼠，畜栏空荡荡的，没有马。你怎么搂着跳舞 像这样吗

哦

我曾经这样搂着 你以为我不够强壮 是吗

哦 哦 哦 哦

我是这么搂着的 我是说 你听到我刚才说什么了吗 我说

哦 哦 哦 哦

这条路继续向前延伸，路上寂静无人，阳光越来越倾斜。她那两条笔直的小辫子辫梢处用红布条扎好。她走路时，包面包用的报纸有一角在不断拍打着，面包尖露了出来。我停下来。

“看这儿。你真的住在这条路上吗？走了差不多有一英里了，都没见过一幢房子。”

她看着我，眼珠乌黑，眼神神秘又友善。

“你住哪儿，小妹妹？你难道不是住在这个镇上吗？”

在树林里某处有只鸟，在隐约断续斜射进来的阳光之外。

“你爸爸要担心你了。你难道不知道，你不直接拿着面包回家是要挨揍的吗？”

那只鸟啼声又起，只是看不见它，啼声深沉却毫无意义，没有高低变化，忽戛然而止，就像被刀切断，再起，连同流水在隐秘处迅疾平缓流淌的感觉也来了，但视觉和听觉都不能发现其所在。

“哦，该死，小妹妹。”半张面包纸软软地垂下来，“这张纸现在没用了。”我把它撕下来，丢在路边，“走吧。我们得返回镇上去。我们要沿着河走回去。”

我们从正路走出来。泥沼中有苍白的小花盛放，暗流涌动无声无息。我这样搂着你 我是说我一直是怎么搂的 她站在门口 两手叉腰看着我们

是你推的我 是你的错 你也弄疼我了

我们正坐着跳舞 我敢说加迪不会坐着跳舞

停 快停下来

我只是把你裙子后背上的脏东西掸去

你把你的脏手拿开 是你的错 你推倒的我 我很生气

我不在乎 她看着我们面红耳赤的样子 她就走开了 我们开始听到长啸声，流水飞溅声；接着，我立即看到一个褐色的身影掠过。

我仍是怒气不止。我的衬衫打湿了，头发也一样。雨点透过屋顶，可以听到雨点敲打宏大的屋顶之声，现在我能看到娜塔莉在雨中穿过花园的身影了。让雨把你打湿 我盼你染上肺炎 回家吧 你这母牛。我竭尽全力跳进猪浴池中 黄泥水直没到腰间 臭烘烘的 我不断往下陷 直到我跌倒 在里面打起了滚 “听到他们在游泳了吗，小妹妹？我也想自己去玩玩。”只要我有时间。到我有时间的时候。我能看到我的表在转动。泥土比雨要暖和，但它气味难闻。她转过身去 我就绕到她身前。 你知道我在做什么吗？她转过身去 我绕到她身前 雨钻进泥土里 穿透她的裙子 打湿的背心紧紧粘在身上 散发出的气味臭不可闻。我抱了她 我刚才就干了个。她转过身去 我绕到她身前。 我就抱了她 我告诉你。

我才不在乎你做了什么呢

你不在乎 你不在乎 我会让你在乎 我会让你在乎的。 她把我的手掀开 我用另一只手把泥巴抹在她身上 她湿润的巴掌打在我脸上 我都没有感觉 我从腿上扒下稀泥 抹在她湿透、僵直、正调转过去的身体上 听到她的手指戳进我的脸 但我没有丝毫感觉 尽管此时滴到我嘴唇上的雨感觉有点甜味

他们在水中先看到了我们，只见一个个头和肩膀露出来。他们叫喊着，有一个蹲着的站起来，又跳到他们中间去了。他们看上去像海狸，河水拍打着下巴，他们叫喊着。

“把那个女孩带走。你把一个女孩带到这儿是要干什么呢？快走开。”

“她不会伤害你们的。我们只是想看看你们一会儿。”

他们蹲在水里。他们的头攒成一团，注视着我们，然后他们分散开来，往我们这边冲过来了，还一边用手捧水朝我们泼。我们赶快躲开。

“小心，男孩们，她不会伤害你们的。”

“走开，哈佛学生！”是第二个男孩，那个刚才在桥上幻想着马和马车的男孩，“用水泼他们，伙伴们！”

“我们上岸去，把他们扔到水里面来。”另一个说，“我不怕任何女孩子。”

“用水泼他们！泼他们！”他们向我们冲过来，还一边泼水。我们向后退。“走开！”他们叫喊着，“走开。”

我们走开了。他们在河岸下面缩成一团，一个个光溜溜的头在河水上排成一排。我继续往前走。“那儿不是我们该去的地方，是吧。”阳光斜射进泥沼中，高处都是，角度更为倾斜了。“可怜的孩子，你只不过是一个女孩。”泥沼之中小花零星点缀，我从未见过如此小的。“你只不过是个女孩。可怜的孩子。”在河流边上有一条路蜿蜒而行。河水到此又回复平静，水流泛黑，平静而迅疾。“你不过是个女孩。可怜的小妹妹。”

我们躺在打湿的草上气喘吁吁 雨点像子弹一般打在我后背上，冰凉冰凉。你现在在乎了吧 在不在乎 在不在乎

我的天啊 我们真要成泥人了 快起来。雨点打在我额头上，那一块就变得火辣辣的 我手上流出殷红的血 被雨水一洗刷就淡化为粉红色冲走了。伤口痛吗

当然痛 你以为呢

我真想把你两只眼睛抠出来 我的天啊 我真是臭不可闻啊 我们最好还是到小溪里去洗洗吧

“又到镇上了，小妹妹。现在你得回家了。我也要回学校了。看啊，现在已经很晚了。你现在要回家了，是吗？”但她只是用她那乌黑、诡异、友善的眼光看着我，半露的面包被紧抱在胸前。“它被打湿了。我还以为我们及时跳开了呢。”我把手帕拿出来，想要把面包擦干，但面包皮开始脱落，于是我就停下了。“我们让它自己风干吧。这样拿着。”她就照我说的那样拿着。面包现在看上去是被老鼠啃过一样。

水位沿着蹲下的背慢慢上升 身上的泥巴像蜕皮一样脱落，发出恶臭 雨点敲打在皮肤上，形成坑坑洼洼的麻子就像发烫的油锅上沸腾的油脂。

我跟你说过，我会让你在乎

我压根就不在乎你在干什么

接着我们听到有人飞奔而来，我们停下来，向后回望，看见一个人转入小路朝我们跑过来，平行的树影在他大腿上迅疾划过。

“他有急事。我们最好——”接着我看到还有另外一个人，一个年纪稍老的跑得很吃力，手里握着一根棍子，一个男孩腰以上都赤身，跑的时候还提着他的裤子。

“那是朱里奥。”小女孩开口说话了，接着他突然向我袭来，我就看

到了那个男孩颇具意大利人特征的脸和眼睛。我们一起摔倒在地。他的双手猛打我的脸，嘴里说着什么，我以为他还想要咬我，接着，他们把他拉开，他的胸口一起一伏，奋力挣扎，嘴里还大叫着。虽然被他们缚住了双手，他却还想踢我，直到他们把他往后拉走。小女孩在那儿号啕大哭，双手抱住面包。上身半裸的男孩向我猛冲，上蹿下跳的，还提起了自己的裤子。这时，有人及时拉我起来，我看到另一个赤身裸露的身影绕过小路寂静的拐弯处朝这边跑来，跑到一半又调转方向，跳进了树丛里，衣服就像木板一样甩在后面。朱里奥仍在奋力挣脱。把我拉起来的人说：“咳，现在终于抓到你了。”他穿着一件汗衫，没穿外衣。汗衫上面别着一个金属徽章，在他另一只手里握着一根多节、圆滑的棍子。

“你是安斯，是吗？”我说，“我在找你呢。出了什么事？”

“我警告你，你所说的一切都将用作呈堂证供对你进行指控。”他说，“你已经被捕了。”

“我要杀了他。”朱里奥说。他仍然挣扎着。有两个人控制着他。小女孩哭个不停，手里拿着面包。“你拐走我的妹妹。”朱里奥说，“我们走吧，先生们。”

“拐走他妹妹？”我说，“为什么，我一直都——”

“闭嘴。”安斯说，“你跟法官说去吧。”

“拐走他妹妹？”我说。朱里奥从那人手中挣脱开来，又向我疾驰而来。但警长中途拦住了他，他们两个扭抱在一起，直到另外两人过来再次缚住他双手。安斯松开了他，在那儿气喘吁吁。

“你这外国混账。”他说，“就为你这种人身侵犯，我真想把你也抓

起来。”他再次转过身来对着我，“你愿意老老实实在地跟我走，还是要我把你铐起来？”

“我会老老实实的。”我说，“怎么都好，只要我能找到一个人——弄清楚——拐走他妹妹。”我说，“拐走他——”

“我警告过你。”安斯说，“他想要告你蓄意强奸幼女。喂，你，让那个女孩消停一下。”

“哦。”我说。接着我就开始大笑。又有两个男孩从灌木丛中走出来，他们打湿的头发像石膏那样粘着，眼睛显得圆圆的，他们忙着扣上衬衣的扣子。衬衣早就打湿了，粘在了肩膀和手臂上。我试图止住大笑，但是我控制不住。

“看他，安斯，我想他疯了。”

“我得止住笑。”我说，“一分钟之内就停下来。有一次情况就是这样，当时也是停不下来，哈——哈——哈！”我说，还在大笑。“让我坐一会儿。”我坐下来，他们在一边看着我，还有那个满脸泪痕、抱着像是咬过的面包的小孩，河水在小路下面迅疾又平静地流淌。过了一会儿，笑意终于发泄完了。但我的喉咙不受控制，就像胃吐空了还在干呕。

“噢，好了。”安斯说，“忍着点吧。”

“好的。”我说，缩紧我的喉咙。此时出现了另外一只蝴蝶，就像一线阳光逃了出来。不一会儿，我不必把喉咙缩得很紧了，我就站起来。“我好了，往哪走？”

我们沿着小路一直走，另外两人盯着朱里奥和小女孩，那两个男孩跟在我们后面某处。这条小路沿着河流伸展到桥那儿。我们跨过桥，车

轨，就有人走到门口来围观，越来越多的男孩不知从哪儿钻了出来，直到我们转入主街道，就形成好大的队伍了。杂货店门前停着一辆汽车，一辆很大的汽车，我一开始没认出来，直到布兰特太太说：“怎么了，昆汀！康普生•昆汀！”然后我看到杰拉德，还有坐在后座的斯波特，他背靠在座椅靠背上。还有施里弗。我不认识那两个女孩。

“康普生•昆汀！”布兰特太太喊道。

“下午好。”我说，把帽子举了举，“我被捕了。我很遗憾，未能看到你的纸条。施里弗跟你说了吗？”

“被捕？”施里弗说，“抱歉。”他说。他撑起身来，跨过那些人的脚，走了出来。他穿着我的一条法兰绒的裤子，就像戴着手套一样。我不记得有这么一条裤子了，我也记不起布兰特太太有几个下巴。最漂亮的女孩也和杰拉德一样坐在前面。她们透过面纱看着我，脸上带着一种娇柔惊恐的神情。“谁被捕了？”施里弗说，“怎么回事，先生？”

“杰拉德。”布兰特太太喊道，“把这些打发走。你坐这个车，昆汀。”

杰拉德走出来。斯波特却动也不动。

“他怎么回事，长官？”他说，“是抢了鸡笼吗？”

“我警告你。”安斯说，“你认识犯人吗？”

“认识。”施里弗说，“听我说——”

“那你可以和我们一道去见法官。你正在妨碍司法公正。走吧。”他摇了摇我的手。

“哦，再见。”我说，“能见到你们所有人我非常高兴。不好意思，我不能和你们一起。”

“你想办法啊，杰拉德。”布兰特太太说。

“听我说，警官。”杰拉德说。

“我警告你，你是在妨碍一个警官执法。”安斯说，“你有什么话，可以去向法官说，可以说明你认识犯人。”我们继续往前走。现在队伍已经成规模了，我和安斯走在前面领头。我能听到他们在谈论这件事的经过，斯波特在询问，接着朱里奥用意大利语说了一大通，我回头看，见小女孩站在路边，用她那友善又神秘莫测的目光看着我。

“快回去。”朱里奥冲她喊道，“我要把你揍扁了。”

我们顺着街道走，转入一片草坪，在离街较远处坐落着一栋镶白边的平顶砖房。我们经过石子路走到门口，安斯把我们之外的所有人拦在外面。我们走进房子里，里面一间光秃秃的房间里透着一股隔夜的烟味。只见一个木框中铺着沙子，中间放着一只铁皮火炉。墙上挂着一幅褪色的地图，肮脏不堪，画着这个小镇的平面图。在一张满是疤痕、堆满物品的桌子后面，坐着一个头发蓬松、呈铁灰色的人，他正透过钢边眼镜审视着我们。

“抓到他了，是吗，安斯？”他说。

“抓到他了，法官。”

他打开一个满是灰尘的大本子，拉到自己面前，把一支肮脏的钢笔蘸到一个装着类似煤渣的墨水瓶里。

“等等，先生。”施里弗说。

“犯人姓名。”法官说。我跟他说了。他慢条斯理地写在本子上，那支钢笔故意刮出声音，很是折磨人。

“听我说，先生。”施里弗说，“我认识这个人。我们——”

“遵守法庭秩序。”安斯说。

“别说了，老弟。”斯波特劝道，“让他按他的规矩办吧。反正他是要这么办的。”

“年龄。”法官问。我回答了。他边写，嘴里一边嘟噜。“职业。”我告诉他。“哈佛学生，呃？”他说。他抬眼看我，脖子微弯，目光越过眼镜上边。他的双眼清晰，目光冷漠，像山羊。“你是来这儿干什么，拐骗儿童？”

“他们都疯了，法官。”施里弗说，“那些说这个男孩拐骗的人都——”

朱里奥举止激动。“疯了？”他说，“我难道没抓住他，呃？我难道不是亲眼看见的——”

“你是骗子。”施里弗说，“你根本没有——”

“秩序，秩序。”安斯说着，提高了他的声音。

“你们都闭嘴。”法官说，“如果他们不保持安静，就把他们赶出去，安斯。”他们都不说话了。法官看着施里弗，然后又看着斯波特，然后是杰拉德。“你认识这个年轻人？”他对斯伯特说。

“是的，法官先生。”斯波特说，“他不过是乡下来的小伙子在这里

上学。他老实本分。我想警官是弄错了。他的父亲是公理会的一个牧师。”

“嗯。”法官说，“你刚才到底在干什么？”我跟他说了，他则用冷酷苍白的眼神看着我。“怎么样，安斯？”

“也许是这样。”安斯说，“这些混账外国人。”

“那个女孩在哪儿？”

“他叫她回家去了。”安斯说。

“她当时有没有被吓着什么的？”

“朱里奥跳到犯人身上，她才惊到了。他们只是沿着河边的小路往镇上走。几个游泳的男孩告诉我们他们走的那条路。”

“是误会，法官。”斯波特说，“孩子们和狗都这样，喜欢和他黏在一起。他也没办法。”

“嗯。”法官说。他向窗外看了一会儿。我们则看着他。我可以听到朱里奥挠痒的声音。法官把目光收回来。

“小女孩没受到伤害，你还满意吧。喂，你？”

“没损伤。”朱里奥闷闷不乐地答道。

“你是不是放下工作，去找她？”

“是的。我丢下活儿。我跑着找。我拼命地跑。这儿找，那儿找，接着有人告诉我，看到他给她吃的。她就和他走了。”

“嗯。”法官说，“好吧，小伙子。我看你得赔偿朱里奥，你耽误了他的工作。”

“好的，先生。”我说，“多少钱？”

“我看，一美元。”

“好了。”斯波特说，“如果这样就完了——我想可以放了他了是吗，法官先生？”

法官没抬眼看他：“你跑了多远才追上他的？”

“至少两英里。找了两个小时，才抓到他的。”

“嗯。”法官说。他沉思了一会儿。其间我们看着他，他头发笔直树立，眼镜架在鼻梁的低处。窗户黄色的投影渐渐在地板上划过，移到了墙根，接着往上爬。微尘在倾斜的光柱中打转。“六美元。”

“六美元？”施里弗问，“用来做什么？”

“六美元。”法官说。他看了施里弗一会儿，然后又看着我。

“等等。”施里弗说。

“别啰唆了。”斯波特说，“给他，老弟。给完就可以走了。女士们正等着我们呢。你有六美元吗？”

“有。”我说。我给他六美元。

“案件审结。”他说。

“要一张收据。”施里弗说，“你交了钱，就可以问他要一张签收单据。”

法官不动声色地看着施里弗。“案件审结。”他说的时候没有提高声音。

“该死的——”施里弗说。

“走吧。”斯波特说，还一边拉着他的手臂。“再见，法官。多谢了。”当我们朝门走出去，马里奥再次叫嚷起来，凶巴巴的，然后消停了。斯波特正看着我，他那双棕色的眼睛带着嘲弄，有些冷酷。“好了，老弟。我想此后你得去波士顿追姑娘了。”

“你这个笨蛋。”施里弗说，“你这是干什么，在这儿兜圈子，和这些该死的意大利人厮混？”

“走吧。”斯波特说，“他们肯定等得不耐烦了。”

布兰特太太正和他们说话。她们分别是霍尔姆斯小姐和丹吉菲尔小姐。见我过去，就都不再听她说话，又用那种娇弱、好奇又惊恐的眼神看着我。她们的面纱翻起来悬在雪白、小巧的鼻子上方，面纱之下她们的目光闪烁，泛着神秘。

“康普生·昆汀。”布兰特太太说，“你妈妈该说什么了。年轻人遇到棘手的事，没什么大不了的。但是出去走走就叫一个乡村警察抓起来了，这就不简单了。他们以为他做了什么坏事，杰拉德？”

“没什么。”杰拉德说。

“胡说。你说，斯波特。是什么？”

“他想拐骗一个脏兮兮的小女孩，但恰巧被他们抓到了。”斯波特说。

“胡说。”布兰特太太说，但她的声音渐渐变弱，她对我审视了一番，两位女孩都不约而同地轻声吸了口气。“真不像话。”布兰特太太尖刻地说，“这不就是这些无知下等的北方佬的所为吗？上车吧，昆汀。”

施里弗和我坐在两个可折叠的小座位上。杰拉德发动了车，然后上来，我们便开车走了。

“现在，昆汀，你告诉我这件蠢事到底是怎么回事。”布兰特太太说。我原原本本告诉他们，施里弗缩着，在他的小座位上生气，斯波特又往后背靠着，他旁边坐着丹吉菲尔小姐。

“可笑的是，长期以来昆汀一直都把我们骗了。”斯波特说，“我们一直认为他是模范青年，大家都可以许以妻女，直到他的不法勾当被警察拆穿公布，我们才看清事实。”

“住嘴，斯波特。”布兰特太太说。我们沿着街道，一直越过桥，穿过窗上挂着粉色大衣的房子。“你就是你不读我的纸条的后果。你为什么不来拿呢？麦肯齐先生说他告诉了你纸条的所在。”

“是的，夫人。我一直打算去取，但我还没回过房间。”

“要不是麦肯齐先生，我还不知道你要让我们坐在这儿等多久呢。当他说你不曾回去时，这就空出来一个位置，所以我们就叫他来。不过我们还是非常高兴你能来，麦肯齐先生。”施里弗一言不发。他交叉双臂抱住，眼睛越过杰拉德的鸭舌帽笔直注视前方。据布兰特太太说，这种帽子在英国是骑摩托车时戴的。我们经过那幢房子，还有三幢别的房

子，接着是一个院子，那个小女孩就站在院门口。她现在已没了面包，她脸上留下一道道煤渣样的线条。我向她挥手，但她没有回应，只是车经过时她的头缓缓转动，眼睛一眨也不眨地跟随着汽车前行的轨迹。接着我们行驶在围墙边上，我们的影子沿着墙体飞奔，过了一会儿，我们经过了躺在路边的一张破报纸，我就又开始大笑起来。我感觉到它在我的喉咙里，我往树林里看去，只见下午的阳光倾斜照射，想起下午的时候，想起那只鸟，想起游泳的男孩们。但我仍不能止住笑，接着我知道如果用劲过猛，我就会哭出来。我想起自己以前想过的不再能保住童男之身的事了，当时众多女孩在阴凉处走动，她们轻柔的声音在那儿萦绕低回，秀口一吐，字字飘香，分明感觉目光灼灼，却不露痕迹，但如果当真如此简单，也就算不得一回事了，如果算不得一回事，那我又算什么呢。接着布兰特太太说道：“昆汀？他病了吗，麦肯齐先生？”然后施里弗肥胖的手摸了摸我的膝盖，斯波特跟着开腔了，我也不再竭力去控制了。

“如果那个篮子妨碍到了他，麦肯齐先生，你就把它往你那边移一下。我之所以带上一篮子葡萄酒，就是想年轻绅士应该喝点，尽管我父亲，杰拉德的外祖父.....”

干过这样的事吗 你干过这样的事吗 在灰白的黑暗中 有一点微光 她双手扣住

“.....有酒的时候，他们就喝。”斯波特说，“是吧，施里弗？”

她的膝盖 她的脸看着天空 忍冬花香在她脸上、喉间弥漫

“也喝啤酒。”施里弗说。他的手又摸了摸我的膝盖。我就又挪动了膝盖。

像抹上一层淡薄的紫丁香 说起他时就会浮现

“你不是绅士。”斯波特说。

他横在我们之间直到她的身影在黑暗中逐渐清晰

“不是，我是加拿大人。”施里弗说。

说起了他 言辞闪烁 和船桨片在水里跳跃一般 也如在英国骑摩托时戴的帽子一样晃动 船一直在飞速前进 接着他们两人永远重叠在一起 他当过兵 杀过人

“我喜欢加拿大。”丹吉菲尔小姐说，“我觉得那里美得让人惊艳。”

“你是喝过香水吗？”斯波特说。

用一只手他就能把她举到肩膀上 接着和她一起飞奔 飞奔

“没有。”施里弗说。

那畜生飞奔着，两个背影交叠在一起 她的身影在水光闪烁的桨影中渐渐模糊了 飞奔的是那只优波流斯的猪 一边跑一边交媾 有多少次呢 加迪

“我也没有。”斯波特说。

我也不知道，反正很多 我心里有罪难言 心里有罪难言 父亲 我犯错了 你做过吗 我们没有 我们没有做过 我们真做过吗

“杰拉德的外祖父老是在早饭前去采薄荷，那时还有露水留在枝叶上。他甚至都不让老威尔基去碰，你还记得吗，杰拉德？他总是自己动

手去采了来，配制他的薄荷威士忌。他对待他的薄荷威士忌十分挑剔，就像一个老嫗一样，按照脑子里的配方对一切严格把关。他只把那配方给过一个人，那是.....”

我们做了 你怎么能不知道呢 如果你有耐心听 我就原原本本说给你听 那是一桩罪行 我们犯下了可怕的罪行 那是掩盖不了的 你以为可以掩盖住 但听着 可怜的昆汀 你根本没做过 是吗 我会告诉你是怎么回事 我会告诉爸爸 然后 该怎么办就怎么办 因为你爱爸爸 然后我们就得在指责和惊恐中离开 圣洁的火焰啊 我会让你承认我们做过的 我比你强壮 我会让你明白我们确实做过 你以为那是他们 但那是我 听着 我一直都在骗你 那是我 你以为我在弥漫着该死的忍冬花香的房里 尽量不去想那秋千 雪杉 神秘的冲击 搅在一起的呼吸 吮吸着狂野的呼吸 还有一声声 好的 好的 好的 好的 好的

“他从没喝过葡萄酒，但他总是说一篮子葡萄酒。你上次读的是什么书 杰拉德划船服里的那本关于葡萄酒的是每个绅士外出野餐的必备。”

你爱他们吗 加迪 你爱他们吗 他们碰你的时候 我就死了

一分钟前她还站在这儿 一分钟后他就在叫喊了 还一边拉着她的裙子 他们大喊大叫地走进走廊 上了楼梯 把她推上楼梯 到了浴室门口停了下来 她背靠着门 一只手挡着脸 大叫 竭力想要把她推进浴室 当她走进去吃晚饭时 T.P.正在喂他饭 他就又开始动作了 一开始只是啜泣 直到她碰到他 接着他大叫起来 她站在那里，眼睛就像角落里的老鼠 然后我往灰白的黑暗中跑去 闻起来有雨的味道 所有的花都带着潮湿的味道 暖空气释放出来 蟋蟀们在草丛里高低鸣噪 我踱着步子，周身笼罩着一片寂静的孤岛随我往前移动 阿芳看着我通过栅栏 它形如一个黑点，就像一

条线上晾的被子 我想到那该死的黑鬼竟忘了喂她 我又往山下跑去 在蟋蟀鸣叫声烘托出的真空中奔行，就像一口气穿过镜子一般 她躺在水里 头枕在沙上 水漫至她的臀部处，拍打着 水中还有一丝微光 她的裙子一半已经湿透了 两侧随着水流的起伏上下沉重摆动 水流并不流向何处 只是随着自己的动作不断起伏 我站在岸上 在避水的土堆上可以闻到忍冬花香 空气中的毛毛雨里似乎都混杂着忍冬花香 再加上蟋蟀的鸣噪 你的皮肉都可以感觉到一种实在的物质了

班吉还在哭吗

我不知道 嗯 我不知道

可怜的班吉

我在岸上坐下来 草有点湿 接着我发现我的鞋湿了

别泡在水里 你疯了吗

但她没有动 她的脸雪白有些迷蒙 借助头发才能和朦胧的沙子区别开来

现在就出来

她坐起来接着又撑起来 裙子沉重地垂下来 她爬上岸来 衣服重重地拖着 坐下

你怎么不拧干一点 你想感冒吗

是的

水流的一部分浸透到沙里 其余的流过去了 流到柳树中的黑暗处去

了 流过浅滩时

水波就像一片薄纱一样伸展开来 此时水里仍然有微光

他走过了所有的大洋 走遍了全世界

接着他说起了他 两只湿漉漉的膝盖扣在一起 在灰白的微光中脸向后仰 又是忍冬花香

母亲的房里亮着灯 班吉的房里也是 T.P.正把他放到床上去

你爱他吗

她的手伸出来 我没动它 它在我的手臂上摸索着 她把我的手平放在她的胸口上 她的

心怦怦直跳

不 不

是他逼你的吗 那就是他逼你的 让你就范 他比你强壮 他 明天我就要杀了他 我发誓

我会 爸爸就不需要知道了 以后再说 就只有你我 知道 别人没必要知道 我们可以拿着

我的学费 我们可以放弃我的入学注册 加迪 你恨他 是吗 是吗

她把我的手按在胸口 她的心怦怦跳着 我转过身来抓住她的手

加迪 你恨他 是吗

她把我的手往上移 碰到她的喉咙 在那儿可以感觉到，她的心一下一下 猛烈撞击

可怜的昆汀

她的脸朝天看 天穹低垂 低到夜空的所有气味、声音似乎都拥挤在一块，犹如置于一顶

低垂的帐篷之下 忍冬花香尤其浓烈 它混进了我的呼吸 落在她的脸上、喉咙里 就像

涂料 她的血脉在我手上突突搏动 我用另一只手斜撑着 那只手开始痉挛 抽动 我竭力

呼吸 在浓烈的忍冬花香中吸进空气

是的 我恨他 我愿为他死 我早就为他死过了 每次发生这种事 我都为他死了一次又一

次

当我把手抬起来 我仍然感觉到树枝和草印在掌中横七竖八的压痕 热辣辣的

可怜的昆汀

她向后靠去 用两个手臂支撑着 两只手还抱着膝盖

你根本就没做过 是吗

什么做过什么

我做过的 我做过的事

是的 是的 许多次和许多女孩一起

接着我哭了 她又用手来抚摸我 我贴着她宽松的上衣哭起来 然后她
向后躺下 穿过我

的头望向天空 在她的虹膜下 我看到一圈白边 我打开小刀 你还记得
那天吗

达姆迪死的那天 你坐在水里，浸湿了衬裤

记得

我把刀尖抵到她喉咙上

这不需要多久 只一秒就好了 然后就轮到我自己 我自己来 然后

好啊 你自裁好吗

好的 刀片够长 班吉现在已经睡觉了

是的

这不用一秒钟 我尽量不会弄疼你的

好啊

你可以闭上眼吗

不 就这样 你得使劲往里捅

用手摸摸看

但她没动 眼睛张得很开 越过我的头看着天空

加迪 你还记得因为你的衬裤沾上泥水，黛西怎么对你大吼大叫的
吗

别哭

我没哭 加迪

你要把刀戳进去了吗

你要我戳进去吗

嗯 戳

用你的手来摸摸

别哭 可怜的昆汀

但我止不住 她把我的头抱住 靠在她潮湿却坚实的胸前 我可以听到
她的心跳强劲而平

缓 不再怦然撞击了 水流在柳丛的暗处汨汨流动 忍冬花香像波浪一
般在空气中阵阵袭

来 我的手臂和肩膀都扭曲地压在身下

那是什么 你在干什么

她的肌肉鼓起 我坐起来

我的小刀 掉到地上了

她坐起来

什么时候了

不知道

她站起身来 我还在地上摸着

我要走了 随它去吧

往家里走

我可以感觉到她站在那儿 我可以闻到她湿衣服的味道 感觉到她在那儿

它就在这儿某个地方

就这样吧明天你找得到的走吧

等一下我一定能找到它

你害怕了吗

就在这里原来它一直都在这里

是吗那走吧

我站起来跟上我们走上山冈在我们到之前蚰蚰就默声了

很奇怪你怎么能丢掉什么东西又四处去找

灰色一片有露珠的灰色斜上灰色的天空

然后是上边的树

该死的忍冬我真希望它能不散发味道

你以前喜欢这味道的啊

我们穿过山顶走向树林她撞到了我 她让了一点走到了山沟是灰色
草地上的一道黑色伤痕

她又撞到了我

她看着我让了一下我们一起走向山沟

就这样吧

为什么

看看你是否还能看到南茜的骨灰我很久都没和你一起来看过了

现在上面长满了藤蔓和黑荆棘

他们就在这里你说你能不能看到呢 能吗

昆汀停下

来吧

山沟越来越窄最后没有了她转向树林

昆汀停下

加迪

我又超过了她

加迪

停下

我抓住她

我比你强壮

她站住不动了 虽然极度不服但是不动了

我不想打到停下你最好停下

加迪别加迪

没什么用的你难道不知道吗这不会让我去忍冬群毛毛细雨里我可以听到蛐蛐在转圈圈看着我们她退后绕过我走向树林

你一直走回屋里好了

该死的忍冬

我们来到栅栏她钻了过去我也有样学样在我把弯腰直起的时候他从树林里走向这片灰色直挺地一动不动地朝着我们走过来虽然在移动但是还是就像没动一样她走向他

这是昆汀我淋湿了我全身都淋湿了如果你不想来可以不来

他们的身影重叠了她的头在天空的映衬下显得比他高他们的头你不

想来可以不来那就不会有两个头了黑暗中有雨有潮湿的草有树叶的味道
灰色的灯就像毛毛细雨忍冬的味道伴着潮湿波浪而来我只能模模糊糊看
到她的脸靠在他的肩上他一手抱着她就像抱着一个孩子一样他伸出他的
手

很高兴见到你

我们站在这里握手而她的影子拉得很长

两个影子印成一个

昆汀你要干什么

走一会儿我想我要穿过树林回到马路上穿过镇上回家

我转身走了

晚安

昆汀

我停下

你想干什么

树林里树蛙闻到了空气中的雨味他们听起来就像难以拧动的玩具音
乐盒发出的声音忍冬的气味

过来

你想干什么

昆汀过来

我走回去她摸摸我的肩膀靠下来她的模糊的脸从他的高影上靠下来
我后退

小心点

你回家吧

我有点想睡觉了我要散散步

在分岔路口等我

我去散个步

我会马上回来的等我你等我

不我要经过树林

我没回头看树蛙它们也没注意我灰色的光线像苔藓一样撒在树上但是还是不会下雨过了一会儿我回到了树林的边上我一到这里我就又闻到了忍冬的气味我可以看见法院大楼上的灯光还有镇上的星光天幕下的广场路旁的黝黑的杨柳母亲房里的灯光依然亮着班吉房里也一样我弯腰经过栅栏穿过草地我在灰色的草地上在蚰蚰中间奔跑忍冬味和雨水的味道越来越浓烈然后我就看到了水看到了灰色的忍冬我躺在河岸上脸贴近地面为的就是不闻到忍冬的气味现在我闻不到了于是我躺在这里感觉到泥土穿过我的衣物我听着雨过了一会儿我的呼吸没那么费尽了我躺在这里想如果我就这样躺着脸贴地面我就不用深呼吸就可以闻到泥土的气息然后我的脑海中一片空白她从河岸上走过来停下我没动

时间不早了你回家吧

什么

你回家吧时间不早了

好吧

她的衣服窸窣作响我没动它们就没响了

你会像我和你说的一样做吗

我什么都没听见

加迪

嗯如果你希望的话我会照做

我坐起来她坐在地上双手握着膝盖

就像我和你说的一样回房里去

好的你想要我做任何事我都会照做

她甚至没看我我抓住她的肩膀用力地摇晃她

你闭嘴

我摇晃她

你闭嘴你闭嘴

好的

她抬起头我看到她根本就没看我我看得到的眼白

起来

我拉起她她很柔弱我把她拉着站了起来

现在走吧

你走的时候班吉还在哭吗

走吧

我们穿过分岔路看到了屋顶然后看到了楼上的窗户

他已经睡了

我必须停下来问上门她在灰色的光线下继续赶路空气中有雨的气息
但是雨一直不下忍冬的气味开始穿过花园的栅栏飘过来她走到了阴影里
我能听见她的脚步声这时候

加迪

我听到她的脚步声然后我的手就摸到了她的不冷不热的衣服

还有点儿湿气

你现在还爱他吗

她屏住了呼吸除了慢慢地吸气呼气好像发生在遥远的地方

加迪你还爱他吗

我不知道

在灰色的灯光之外事物的阴影好像泡在一潭死水里一样死物一样

我真希望你已经死了

你也是吗你现在进来

你现在在想他吗

我不知道

告诉我你在想什么

停下停下昆汀

你闭嘴你闭嘴你听到我说的话了吗你闭嘴你会闭嘴吗

好吧我会闭嘴我们制造了太多噪音

我会杀了你你听到没

我们到秋千那里去吧在这里他们会听到的

我没在哭你是说我在哭吗

没有现在别说话你会吵醒班吉的

你回屋里去现在回去

我没哭我就是个坏姑娘你没办法改变了

我们都被诅咒了这不是我们的错这不是我们的错

别说了过来现在回屋睡觉吧

你说服不了我的我们都被诅咒了

我终于看到了他他正要去理发店他在到处望我走过去

等了一会儿

我找了你好三天了

你早就想和我谈谈

我现在要和你谈谈

他飞速地拨弄了两三下就卷好了一支烟他用手擦燃了火柴

这里不适合谈话我们是不是约别处

我到你的房间来你是住在宾馆吗

不这个主意不怎么样你知道小溪后面的那座桥吗就在那个什么的后
边

嗯我知道

一点怎么样

好的

我转身

打搅你了

等会

我停下转身

她没事吧

他就像是青铜打造的他的卡其衬衫一样

她有什么需要我帮忙的吗

我会准时赴约

她听到我要T.P.一点钟的时候安好“王子”的马鞍她一直盯着我看连饭也没怎么吃她也来了

你要去干什么

难道我想去散步都不行吗

你肯定有什么事情要去办去办什么事

没你什么事你个婊子你个婊子

T.P.已经牵着“王子”在偏门等了

我不想驾马车我要散步

我走下车道出了大门我转向小道然后我跑了过去我还没到桥边就看到他靠在桥栏上马拴在树林里他转过身看了看然后又转回去了他没再抬头直到我走到桥边停下来他手上抓着一块树皮他把树皮一点点掰下来经过桥栏上面扔到水里

我来告诉你离开这个镇子

他故意撕下一块树皮慢慢地扔到水里看着它

它漂走了

我说你必须离开镇上

他看着我

是她要你告诉我的吗

我说你必须离开这里不是我父亲也不是任何人和你说的是我说的

听着先不提这个我想知道她没事吧有人找她的麻烦吗

那不是你需要关心的事情

然后我听到自己说我要你在太阳下山之前离开这里

他剥下一块树皮扔进水里然后把树皮放在桥栏上又飞快地两下就卷好一支烟把火柴转出了桥栏

如果我不走呢你想怎么样

我会杀了你别以为我瘦小就觉得我是个孩子

他从鼻孔里吐出两道烟雾在他的脸上

你多大了

我开始颤抖了我的手在桥栏上我想如果我不藏起来的话他会看得到

为什么

我要你今晚上之前走

听着小子你叫什么班吉是天生的是不是他

昆汀

我根本没想说我的嘴巴自然就说出来了

昆汀

他慢条斯理地在桥栏上弹了弹烟灰好像在削铅笔一样我的手不再发抖了

听着没必要这么较劲这不是你的错不是我也有别人

你有妹妹吗你有吗

没有但是女人都是婊子

我给了他一拳我的张开的手在抑制打他脸的冲动他的手动得和我的手一样快烟从桥栏被丢下我另一只手扬过去他又抓住了我的手在烟掉入水中之前他一只手抓住了我的两个手腕他的另一只手飞快地伸向了衣服下的胳肢窝在他身后太阳开始西下一只小鸟在阳光没照到的那个地方欢歌鸟在欢唱的时候我们看着彼此他松开了我的手

看这里

他把树皮从桥栏上拿了下来丢进了水里树皮漂了起来水流把它带走了他的手放在桥栏上漫不经心地拿着拿着手枪我们等待着

你现在打不到了

不

它漂在水面上树林里太安静了我又听见了鸟叫声接着是水流声过了一会儿枪声他根本没有瞄准树皮消失了然后一片一片的树皮浮在水面上他又打了其中两片不比银圆大的树皮

我看这就够了

他把旋转弹膛飞了出去然后朝枪筒里吹了口气一缕青烟消散在空中他给三个空弹膛上了子弹关上旋转弹膛把枪口对着自己递给了我

干什么我又不想打上一枪

从你说的话来看我知道你会需要的我把它给你你刚才也看到了它的威力

和你的枪一起滚吧

我打了他在他抓住我的手腕之后很长一段时间我还想打他我还是试了试这就好像我是透过一片五彩玻璃看他一样我可以感受到我的血脉在沸腾然后我又见到了天空和天空下的树枝以及从树枝中间斜照下来的阳光而他正抓着想让我站起来

你打了我吗

我听不到

什么

是的你感觉怎么样

没事放开我

他放了我我靠在桥栏上

你感觉没事吗

让我安静一会儿我没事

你能自己回家吗没事吗

滚让我自己待着

你最好不要走路了坐我的马车吧

不你走吧

你可以把缰绳放在鞍头上放开它它自己会回马厩的

别管我你走吧让我自己待着

我靠在桥栏上望着流水我听到他驾着马车离开的声音过了一会儿周边安静下来了我只能听到水声鸟鸣声我从桥边走了靠着树坐了下来头靠在树上闭上眼一大片阳光洒下来拂照在我的眼帘我挪动了一下身子我又听到了鸟鸣声水声然后一切都感觉退去了似的我完全听不到任何声响了在经受这么多个日日夜夜因为忍冬欲睡不得安眠的折磨之后我就终于感觉快没事了就算过了一会我就知道他没打我他为了昆汀骗了我而我就像一个女孩子一样昏睡了过去但是那都不重要了
我靠坐在这里阳光斑斑点点地拂过我的脸就像树枝上星星落落的黄色树叶听着潺潺流水声什么都不想就算我听到了迅速前来的马蹄声我坐在这里闭上眼睛听到串串马

蹄声在沙地上疾走发出的摩擦声奔跑的声音和她在我身上急急探寻的双手

笨蛋笨蛋你受伤了吗

我睁开眼睛她的手擦过我的脸

我不知道方向直到我听到了枪声我不知道我没想到他会和你偷跑出去我没想到他竟然会

她用双手托起我的脸把我的头朝树上撞

停停下

我抓住她的手腕

停下别撞了

我知道他不会的我知道他不会

她又想把我的头往树上撞

我告诉了他不要再和我说话我告诉他了

她想要我松开她的手腕

放开我

停下我比你强壮停下

放开我我得追上他问他放开我昆汀求你放开我放开我

突然她就不挣扎了她松了手

是的我可以告诉他我可以让他相信任何事我可以

加迪

她没有拴住“王子”它随时能往家里跑只要它有这个想法

任何时候他都相信我

你爱他吗加迪

我什么

她看着我然后眼里什么光芒都散去了她的双眼变得犹如石像的眼睛

空洞无神没有任何生气

把你的手放在我的咽喉上

她拿起我的手平放在她的咽喉上

现在说他的名字

道尔顿·艾姆斯

我感觉到有一股热血在她的喉头涌动强而有力地搏动着

再说一遍

她的脸转向树林阳光斜照在树林里鸟儿在这里高歌

再说一遍

道尔顿·艾姆斯

她的热血持续沸腾着在我的手心里搏动搏动

她的热血持续沸腾了一段时间，但是我的脸感觉冰冷，就像死去一般，而我的眼、我手上的伤口又感到阵阵刺痛。我能听到施里弗在使用打气筒的声音，然后他端着脸盆回来了，脸盆中间荡漾着一团暮光，暮光边缘晕染着一层黄色的光圈——就像褪色的气球一样，然后可以看到我的倒影。我试图看清水中的我的脸。

“停了吧？”施里弗说，“把那块布给我。”他试图从我的手中拿过那块布。

“小心，”我说，“我自己可以。是的，差不多停了。”我又浸了一下手中的布，这回黄色的光圈被打散了。布浸湿了。“我真希望能有块干净的布。”

“你得用块牛排敷敷眼睛，”施里弗说，“你明天要是没个熊猫眼，才怪呢。那个浑蛋。”他说。

“我伤着他没？”我把手帕拧干，想擦擦背心上的血迹。

“擦不掉的，”施里弗说，“你得送到洗衣房去才行。好了，把手帕敷在眼睛上吧。为什么不呢？”

“我总能擦掉一点的，”我说，但是确实没擦掉多少，“我的衣领怎么样了？”

“我不知道，”施里弗说，“按在眼睛上吧。按住这里。”

“小心，”我说，“我自己可以。我伤着他没？”

“也许你打到他了。我可能正好转身了，或者眨眼了什么的，所以没看到。他可把你打得半死。你全身都惨遭毒手了。你和他挥拳头打架，到底是怎么想的啊？你个蠢货！现在感觉怎么样？”

“很好啊，”我说，“我现在在想我能用什么把背心洗干净不？”

“好了，别提你那该死的衣服了。你眼睛受伤没？”

“没事啊，”我说。周遭一切似乎都变成了一动不动的紫罗兰，屋顶上的被绿色渲染的天空染上了金色的光辉，烟囱里冒出缕缕炊烟，在无风状态下直直地升上了天际。我又听到了水泵的声音，一个男人在打水，一手在压水泵，一边侧过头来看我们。一个女人出门来，但是没往外看。我能听见别处的牛叫声。

“好了，”施里弗说，“别管你的衣服了，把那块布压到眼睛上。明早上我一起来就拿你的衣服出去洗。”

“好的。我感到遗憾起码该留点血迹在他身上的。”

“那个浑蛋。”施里弗说。斯波特走了出来，我估计是和那个女人在说话，接着他穿过了院子。他用他那冰冷深邃的目光盯着我。

“嗨，小子，”他看着我说，“你为了寻乐子，倒是惹了不少麻烦啊！拐骗还带打架。你假期在干什么呢？放火？”

“我没事，”我说，“布兰德夫人说什么？”

“因为你被打出血了，她正在狠狠骂杰拉德呢。她下次看见你也会

狠狠骂你的，居然让他把你揍成这个样子。她倒是不反对打架，但是不能打出血来。我想就是因为你都流血了，她对你有点不齿。你感觉还好吧？”

“当然，”施里弗说，“如果你不能成为布兰德家的一员，那退而求其次的做法，就是看情况和他们家某人通奸，或者喝醉后找他们家哪个人打一架。”

“说得对极了，”斯波特说，“但是我没觉得昆汀醉了啊。”

“他没醉，”施里弗说，“你要喝醉了，才敢和那个浑蛋动手吗？”

“好吧，我觉得我只有烂醉如泥了才会试着动手，看看昆汀现在的样子。吉拉德那浑蛋在哪里学的拳击啊？”

“他每天赶到镇上的麦克那里学。”我说。

“是吗？”斯波特说，“你和他动手的时候，你知道他学拳击的事吗？”

“我不知道啊，”我说，“不过我猜到他练过，是练过。”

“再把布沾湿沾湿，”施里弗说，“要换盆水吗？”

“没事，”我说。我又把布沾了点水，举到我的眼睛上。“真希望能弄点什么好好洗洗我的背心。”斯波特还在盯着我。

“说说看，”他说，“你为什么和他打架啊？他说了什么惹到你了？”

“我不知道。我不知道我怎么就和他打起来了。”

“我就知道你突地跳了起来，说：‘你有妹妹吗？有吗？’当他说没有的时候，你动了手。我注意到你一直看着他，但是你看上去又好像对任何人说的话都漠不关心，直到你跳起来问他有没有妹妹。”

“啊，他又在吹嘘呗，”施里弗说，“又在吹嘘他的女人。你知道的：就像他平时在女孩子面前胡乱吹嘘时一样——含沙射影、胡编乱造、天花乱坠，根本没啥实际意义，所以女孩子也搞不清他具体在说什么。他和我们说的他于大西洋城约一个少妇到舞厅相见，却放了她的鸽子，他回了宾馆睡大觉，以及他躺在床上时如何为了她的空等伤心遗憾，因为他没有赴约并满足她的需求。还大谈女人身段的优美，以及由此而生的遗憾的结局，而女人对此不屈不挠，除了仰躺在床上就无事可做了。勒达潜伏在灌木丛中，呻吟和呜咽地等待着那只天鹅，明白吗？浑蛋，我都想自己动手了结他。不过，如果是我的话，我会抡起他那该死的酒篮子打他。”

“哦，”斯波特说，“救美英雄！小子，你不只让人崇拜，还让人敬畏。”他看着我，略带冷漠揶揄，“我的老天爷啊。”他说。

“我打了他，很抱歉，”我说，“我这副样子回去道歉和好，会不会看上去太糟了点儿？”

“道歉，见鬼的道歉，”施里弗说，“让他们都去死吧。我们要去镇上了。”

“他应该回去道歉的，那他们都会看到他是一个绅士般地在打架，”斯波特说，“我的意思就是挨打挨得很有绅士风度。”

“就这鬼样子？”施里弗说，“全身沾满血？”

“那好吧，”斯波特说，“你们知道怎么做就好了。”

“他总不能穿着汗衫到处跑吧，”施里弗说，“他还不是高年级生呢。来吧，我们回镇上吧。”

“你没必要和我一块，”我说，“你继续去露营好了。”

“让他们见鬼去吧，”施里弗说，“到这边来。”

“我该怎么和他们说？”斯波特说，“说你和昆汀也打了一架？”

“什么都不要说，”施里弗说，“和她说她的选择只到太阳下山之前有效。昆汀，过来。我要问问那个女人最近的市间铁路在哪里……”

“不用，”我说，“我不回镇上。”

施里弗停下来，看着我。他转过身来，他的眼镜就像两片小黄月亮似的。

“那你要去干什么？”

“我还不打算回镇上。你继续回去露营。和他们说我衣服脏了，就不过来了。”

“看着我，”他说，“你要去干什么？”

“没什么，我没事。你和斯波特回去露营吧。我们明天见。”我穿过院子，走向马路。

“你知道车站在哪里吗？”施里弗说。

“我会找到的。我们明天见。告诉布兰德夫人，我很抱歉，砸了她的派对。”他们站在那里看着我。我围着屋子绕了一圈，然后沿着一条石子路走到大路上。石子路两旁都长着玫瑰。我穿过大门，走到了路上。大路是下斜的，通向树林里，我认得出停在路边的那辆车。我上了山，上山途中，我发现光线越来越强，而我还没到山顶，就听到了车子的声音——似乎是很遥远的从暮光中传过来的声音，于是我驻足听了一会儿。我已经看不到那辆车了，但是我发现施里弗站在房子前面往山上望，而他身后泛黄的暮光如泼般洒在屋顶上。我抬手示意了一下，就继续穿山而行了，一面还注意着汽车的声响。然后，房子也看不见了，我停在一片黄绿色的光影里，听到汽车的声音越来越大，直到快听不见时，它又忽然没了声响。我一直等到声音再响起，然后才继续赶路。

我下山时，天色渐渐暗下来了，但是又感觉光度是没变的，好像在变的、在减弱的是我自己，虽然在大路没入树林的时候，光线还是够看看报纸的程度。很快我就来到了一条小道，我转向小道上。小道比大路窄一些，光线也暗一些，但是当看到一块木质招牌表示它通向的是无轨电车站的时候，光线又没变了。从小道出来之后，光线好像变亮了，就像我穿过了黑夜的小道走到了白昼一样。很快我就看到了车子。我坐上去，人们都扭头看我的眼睛，我找了个靠左边的位置坐下。

车上开灯了，所以当我们穿过树林的时候，我除了自己的脸和坐在对面过道里的女人之外——她头上端端正正地戴着一顶插了一根断羽毛的帽子，什么都看不见。但是我们穿过树丛之后，我又看见了暮光，同样的暮光——让我感觉时间真的停住了，而太阳也一直悬在地平线之下似的。之后我们又来到了那个亭子——有一个老人在这里吃过衣兜里的东西的亭子，而大路在暮光下延伸至暮色深处，而我似乎能感受到河流在远处平缓、迅疾地流动。车子又开动了，从敞开的门里透进来的风越来越

大，直到它让整个车厢里都充盈着夏天和黑夜的气息，不过没有忍冬的味道。我想忍冬的味道是一种极悲切的味道。我记忆中有许多花草的味道——紫藤就是其中之一。碰到下雨天，要是母亲感觉身体还好，可以在外面透透风的话，我们就会在紫藤下玩耍。而母亲卧床的时候，黛西就会让我们穿上旧衣服到雨天里玩耍，因为她觉得雨水对年轻人是没什么害处的。不过，要是母亲在的话，我们一般是先到门廊上玩，等到母亲嫌弃我们过于吵闹的时候，我们才会出去到紫藤架下玩。

这里就是我早上最后见到大河的地方，大概就在这一块。我能感觉到暮光之外的水流——自有一股水的清香。春天花开的时候下雨的话，到处都是这股清香，平时就会注意不到。但是下雨的时候，这股清香会在暮光中钻进屋子里，要么就是因为有暮光的时候雨下得更浓，要么就是暮光中本身有什么香味，反正这股清香就是暮光时最浓。然后我就会躺在床上想什么时候会消散呢？什么时候呢？车门口透进来的风夹杂着水的气息，一股潮湿平稳的气息。有时只要我一遍一遍地念叨那句话就能安然入睡但是后来忍冬的香味混进了其中于是在这整个就成为了黑夜和不安的象征我就像在半睡半醒间俯瞰着一条半明半暗的走廊而走廊上所有的静物都有模糊难辨的阴影我做的一切也都变成了阴影我所感知和忍受的一切都变得滑稽可笑了并且带着嘲弄而且没有任何内在联系地否定其本该具有的重要性我在想我是我不是谁不是谁。

在薄暮之外，我能嗅到河湾的味道，我看到最后的一丝光亮宁静地洒在沙洲之上，就像打碎的明镜一般，而再向远处，光线开始铺洒在洁净的空气之中，就像远处有些蝴蝶在盘旋一般微微颤动。班吉明这孩子，怎么老是爱坐在镜子前面呢。在他身上，经久不衰的避难者的冲突淡去、缄默并调和了。我晚来得子的班吉明被作为人质带到了埃及。啊！班吉明！黛西是因为母亲太以他为荣。他们像突然涌现的一股黑人

潮流那样侵入白人的生活，瞬间就像透过显微镜一样，将白人的真实情况孤立成为无可争辩的现实情况；而剩下的时间只有笑声，在你没觉得有什么可笑的情况下发出的笑声，以及毫无理由的哭泣。他们打一些奇怪的赌，甚至是吊唁的人数这样的事，会打个赌。孟菲斯的一家妓院里都是这种人，有一回他们好像被附体了一样，都裸奔到了街上——而三个警察才制得住他们中一个。是啊耶稣哦好人耶稣哦多好的人。

车停下了，我下了车，他们又看着我的眼睛。来了一辆无轨电车，挤满了人——我只好站在后平台上。

“前面有位置。”乘务员说。我看了看车厢里，左边是没有位置的。

“我就要下车的，”我说，“我就站这里吧。”

我们过了河。那桥拱度比较小，但是桥身很高，矗立在寂静与虚无之间，而这里有黄、红、绿相间的光亮……在澄净的天空中一遍又一遍地闪烁。

“你还是往前走，找个位置坐下吧。”乘务员说。

“我马上就下了，”我说，“就两站了。”

我在车到邮局之前就下了。我想到露营的人现在准是围坐在哪里，然后就听到了我的表声，于是我开始仔细听打钟的声音，我透过衣服摸了摸给施里弗的信，而榆树残缺的阴影就落在我的手上。就在我拐进四方院子的时候，钟声响了，我就接着赶路了，而钟声就像池塘里风起的涟漪一样传到我耳里又继续传开，这报的是几时差一刻？好吧，几点差一刻。

我们房里的窗户黑压压的，入口处空无一人。我进门的时候挨着左

墙走的，但是没人：只有阴影里弯弯曲曲的楼梯上回荡的一代代悲切的人们的脚步声的回声，就像光影洒在阴影上一般，我的脚步像飞扬的灰尘一样吵醒了阴影，接着它们又安静地沉淀了下来。

开灯之前，我就看到了那封信——为了让我一眼就望见，信是用一本书支在桌子上的。在信里，他们把他当作了我的丈夫。然后斯波特说他们要到哪里去，要很晚才回来，而布兰德夫人则还需要一个骑士。这样一来，我又会见到他了，因为现在已经过了六点了，他一小时之内是没车回来的。我拿出表，听它送走时间的嘀嗒声，我都不知道它甚至不会撒谎。然后我把它朝上放在桌子上，拿出布兰德夫人的信，撕成碎片放进了废纸篓里，又脱下了我的衣服、背心、衣领、领带和衬衫。领带也沾了血，不过反正等会就会给黑鬼的。也许上面的血迹他能看作是耶稣戴过的。我在施里弗的房间里发现了汽油，我把背心平摊在桌面上，只有在这上边才能摊平，然后打开了汽油瓶。

镇上的第一辆车一个姑娘姑娘汽油味就是杰生受不了的味道这味道让他恶心脾气暴躁因为一个姑娘姑娘没有妹妹只有班吉明我的可怜的班吉明如果我有母亲的话我就能说母亲母亲因为用了很多的汽油，我都分辨不出是污渍还是只是汽油印子了。这刺激得我的伤口又痛了起来，所以我去洗漱的时候，就把背心搭在了椅子上，为了能快一点儿弄干污渍，又把电灯拉下来了一点儿。我洗了洗手和脸，但是我还是能在肥皂泡里闻到那股子刺激鼻子收缩的味道。然后我打开包，拿出了衬衫、衣领和领带，把带血的又塞了回去，关上包穿好了衣服。在我梳头发的时候，钟响了，半点了。不过，反正还可以等到报三刻，除非假设 在飞驰而过的黑暗里只有他自己的脸没有那根折断了的羽毛除非是他们中的两个人而不是像这样的两个人同一天晚上去波士顿然后我的脸他的脸猛地一瞬间擦过黑暗中两个灯火通明的窗子猛地擦过我的脸和他的脸猛地

擦过之后就消逝了刚看见便已成为过去刚刚真的照面了吗没有道别那候车亭里空荡荡的再无一人在此吃东西马路在黑暗和寂静中也是空无一人那座桥弯成弓形，伸向寂静的黑夜中水流沉睡了安详而又迅速流走没有道别

我关了灯，回到了我的卧室，离开了那堆汽油但是我还能闻到汽油的味道。我站在窗口，窗帘在黑暗里慢慢地吹拂到我的脸上，就像有人在沉睡中深呼了一口气，又幽幽地吐出一口气，然后就不再轻抚我了。

在她们上楼之后，母亲躺在椅子上，把散发着樟脑味的手绢放在嘴巴上。父亲没动还是坐在她旁边抓着她的手叫喊声一声接过一声就像寂静里无它的容身之处似的 我小的时候，我们的书本里有一张这样的图片——一片黑暗中只有一道微弱的斜光照在从黑暗中抬起头来的两张脸上。你知道如果我是国王我会做什么吗？她从不是女王或者仙女之类的她总是当国王当巨头当将军 我会冲破那个地方把他们拖出来痛快地抽他们一顿 那张图片撕下来扯碎了。我是高兴的。我必须回过头来看才知道地牢就是母亲自己她和父亲牵着手向上走进微弱的光里而我们迷失在下面的哪个地方即使他们也没有一丝光亮。然后忍冬的气味飘了进来。就在我关上灯打算睡觉的时候忍冬的气味就一阵阵地飘了过来而且越来越浓郁直到我喘不过气来必须起床像我小时候一样在黑夜中摸索着走到别处 手看得见在头脑里触摸形成看不见的门门现在手看不见什么了 我能闻到汽油、桌上的背心和门的味道。走廊还是没有人烟，世代代悲切地寻找水。然而看不见的眼睛像咬紧牙关没有不相信怀疑甚至没有苦痛胫骨脚踝膝盖顺着一道看不见的楼梯长栏杆行走在母亲父亲加迪杰生莫里都睡着的情况下失足我不害怕只要母亲父亲加迪杰生莫里都沉沉睡去我也能好好睡一觉当我的门门门 这里也是空荡荡的，水管、

白瓷脸盆、有污痕的静止的四壁、沉思的宝座。我忘了玻璃杯，但是我
能 手能感觉发凉的手指那无形的天鹅喉咙比摩西的权杖还要脆弱玻璃
杯叩击着不是叩击在细弱的喉咙上而是叩击在发凉的金属上玻璃杯满了
溢出了水让玻璃杯发凉手指冲洗睡觉留下潮湿感觉的睡眠在喉咙的长长
沉默中 我又回到了走廊里，吵醒了大批静默中窃窃私语的失落人，闻
到汽油的味道，那只表还躺在黑暗的桌子上撒着弥天大谎。接着窗帘又
在黑暗中呼出一口气，轻抚过我的脸。还有一刻钟，我就不在了。最宽
慰人心的语言啊。宽慰人心的语言。过去不存在。现在存在。过去存在
过。现在即将不存在。（Non fui. Sum. Fui. Non sum.）好像我又在哪里
听到了钟声。密西西比还是马萨诸塞州。我有。我没有。马萨诸塞州还
是密西西比。施里弗的行李箱里有一壶酒。 你难道都不打开吗 杰生·里
奇蒙·康普生先生和夫人宣布 三次。多日。你难道不打开它吗 他们的女
人加达斯的婚礼 那种酒能让你混淆结果和手段 我打开。喝酒。我不打
开。让我们把班吉的草坪卖掉吧，那样昆汀就能去哈佛了。我会死在里
面的。加迪说的是一年吗？施里弗的行李里有一瓶。先生我不需要施里
弗的我把班吉的草坪卖了现在我可以死在哈佛了加迪说在大海的洞穴里
和间隙里随着波浪平静地波动因为哈佛是这样一个拥有好名声的地方四
十英亩买这样一个好名声一点儿都不昂贵。一个逝去的高贵的名声我们
用班吉的草坪来换取除非他能这么快意识到 在她进门的时候他就开始
哭泣 小镇上有个无耻的浑小子我一直以为父亲和她开玩笑所以总提起
那个人。我也没怎么注意过他以为他只是个普普通通的陌生的旅行推销
员或者是和别人一样穿军用衬衫的直到我猛地意识到他根本没把我当成
一股潜在的破坏力量而是看着我的时候想着的是她在通过她看着我就像
通过一块彩色玻璃一样 你为什么要搅和我的事你不知道那没什么好处
吗我想为了母亲和杰生你最好是离开

是母亲让杰生监视你的吗 我就不会干这种事

女人仅仅就是利用别人的荣誉准则这是因为她爱加迪 即便人不舒服她也待在楼下以防父亲在杰生面前嘲笑莫里舅舅父亲说他是个很差劲的古典学者才会冒险选择不懂事的瞎眼小子他应该选杰生的因为杰生最多会犯莫里舅舅犯的大错而不会让他变成黑眼帕特森家的男孩子们比杰生小一些他们卖五分钱一个的风筝直到出现了经济纠纷杰生就找了一个更小的新搭档怎么看都够小了因为T.P.说杰生仍管账但是父亲说为什么莫里舅舅还要做事如果他的父亲养得起五六个无所事事只要坐在火炉边的黑奴那他现在肯定也供得起莫里舅舅的吃住还可以借点钱给他这样也可以维持他父亲的信条那就是说在这个热度适宜的地方他的种族是天生高贵的然后母亲就会开始哭哭啼啼说父亲居然认为他的同胞比她高贵还有就是说他在嘲笑莫里舅舅是在叫我们一样的事情她不知道父亲是教会了我们的人都不过是一只只从堆废玩偶的垃圾堆里扫出来的肚子里塞满锯木屑的玩偶锯木屑从哪边的伤口里流出来的反正不是让我致命的那个。以前我总以为死亡就是类似像祖父那样的他的一个朋友一个很好的私交一个特别的朋友就像我们过去认为祖父的桌子连摸摸都不可以甚至在房子里都不敢大声说话我总认为他们就是一体的它一直在等着萨托里斯上校来一起坐坐他们在杉树后面的一个高地上萨托里斯上校站在一个更高的位置望什么然后走下来祖父穿上了制服我们能透过杉树听到他们低声的交谈他们一直在说话祖父总是说得对

报三刻的钟声响了。第一声精准无痕，庄严利落，驱散了不紧不慢的寂静感迎接下一声就是这样如果人们也能永远这样相互交错就好了一如一个火焰扭转着燃烧了一瞬间然后在冰冷的永恒黑暗中彻底熄灭而不是躺在这里尽力不去想那流逝的时间直到所有的杉树都染上了浓郁的死亡气息班吉如此讨厌这个。只要想到那树丛就像我能听见密语涌来闻到赤裸的身体内热血跳动的味道透过红红的眼帘看到被解绑了的成对的种猪一边交配一边冲进大海里他说我们必须保持清醒地观看短时间内的邪

恶但是它维持不了多久我觉得它没必要维持多久对一个有勇气的人来说而他说你认为那是勇气吗我说是的父亲大人你不这样认为吗每个人都是自己道德品质的独裁者你认不认为那是勇气比行为本身更重要比任何行为更重要因为不然你不会是真心的而我说你不相信我是认真的于是他说我认为你是过于认真了要警示我否则不会有动力告诉我你犯了乱伦罪我说我没说谎我不说谎他说你想把一个天性使然所犯的过错升华为一件耸人听闻的事情然后用真相来根除它我说这是我了将她从喧哗的世俗中分离出来如此我们就能不受限制和不受使唤就像从未有过一样他说是你试图让她这么做的吗我说我害怕我害怕她可能会然后又带不来什么好处但是如果我能告诉你我们干了那件事情那件事情就会是这样了而别人就不会这样了然后世界就会叫嚣着退出我们他说嗯关于那另外的一件事情你现在倒是也没有说谎话但是你对你内心这个部分仍然是无知的就是关于自然事件的普遍真理和原因这烦恼着每个人就算是班吉你也没在想人的有限性你在思考的是一种神化的境地其中是会达到头脑中的一种暂时的对称超越肉体而且它不单意识到自身和肉体它也不会抛弃你甚至不会死亡我说暂时的他说你现在甚至都不能想象有一天它不再这么伤害你了你似乎只是把它当成一种体验让你一夜白头这么说吧根本不改变你的容颜在这种情况下不会改变的这会是一场赌局怪事就是这些机缘巧合之下孕育出的人的每一次呼吸都是新鲜的他所投掷的骰子已经是针对他动过手脚的人不能面对最后的结局其实他早已知晓他迟早必须面对因而不须使用各种权宜之计比如暴力还有连小孩子都骗不过的小骗局直到有天在极端厌恶中他孤注一掷翻开一张牌没有人会在第一波绝望的盛怒悔恨和痛失所爱袭来时这么做只有在他意识到盛怒悔恨和痛失所爱相对黑暗的赌徒来说都不是那么重要而我说暂时的他说很难相信爱或者殇会是一种没有预先计划便买了下来的债券它的成长是不管你想不想都会成长成熟起来而且没有预兆地就被回忆起了也被当时正当值的任意管事的神替代直到你相信她也许甚至不值得为之沮丧我说我永远不会那么做没人知

道我知道什么而他说我认为你最好立马回到坎布里奇去你也许能去缅因州一个月只要你精打细算一点儿你是有这个支付能力的也许看着钱治愈的问题之多超过耶稣是一件好事而我想我知道了你相信的是什么我下个星期或者下个月是会在哪里理解的而他说那么你就会要记住让你去哈佛是你母亲毕生之梦想自你出生她就怀揣这个梦想而康普生家族没有一个人会让以为女士失望而我说暂时这对我是有好处的对大家都好而他说每个人都是自己道德品质的独裁者但是不要让人预先设定另一个人的幸福而我说暂时的他说那是最让人伤心的一个词世界上其他的什么都没有这不是绝望直到世界甚至不是世界直到这时最后一声钟声响起。

不久它终于停止了震动，黑暗中又恢复了平静。我走进起居室，把灯打开。穿上背心。汽油味道现在变淡了，甚至察觉不到了。从镜子里也看不见血迹了。至少不像我的眼睛这般明显了。我又把外衣穿上。施里弗的信在衣服里摩擦得哧哧直响。我把它拿出来，察看了一下地址，然后放进一侧的衣兜。接着我把手表拿进施里弗的房间，放进他的抽屉，就到自己的房里去了。我拿上一块新手帕，走到门口，手停在了电灯开关上。然后我记起还没刷牙，于是就又得打开包来。我找出牙刷，挤了点施里弗的牙膏，就走出去刷牙了。其后，我把牙刷挤得尽量干些，才又放回包里。把包拉上，就又走到门口去。砰地一下关灯之前，我先环顾了一圈，看看还有什么遗漏，结果发现忘了拿帽子。我得经过邮局，途中就一定会碰上他们中的某一人，接着他们会以为我不过是一个住在哈佛广场上的一年级生，却要装得像高年级学生一样。我也忘了刷它，不过施里弗有个刷子，所以我不需要再把包打开了。

1拉丁语，意为归谬法。——译者注

2在美国南方，男孩欺负女孩时，喜欢抓住女孩的头发，让她们承认那是“牛绳”。——译者注

1928年4月6日

我说，当过婊子，就一直是婊子。我说你应该感到幸运，如果她只是逃逃课，让你担心的话。我说她现在应该立马到厨房来，而不是待在她的卧室里在脸上涂涂画画，还等着六个黑鬼伺候她吃早餐——而这些黑鬼只有吃了一整盘面包和肉才能站得稳。

母亲就说：“但是要让学校领导知道我约束不了她，我不能够……”

“好吧，”我说，“你不行，是吧？对她，你就没想过什么办法。”我接着说，“你觉得晚点，也就是等到她十七岁的时候，再这样做怎么样？”

她想了想我的建议。

“但是要让他们以为……我甚至不知道她有成绩单。她上个学期告诉我，今年学校已经不用成绩单了。而现在，琼金教授打电话和我说，她要是再缺席一次，就得休学了。她怎么会这么做？她去哪里了？你成天都在镇上；你应该去看看她是不是在学校。”

“好的，”我说，“如果她逃课到街上来，我想她是要做不能在大庭广众之下做的事情。”

“你这是什么意思？我没想到你会这么说，”她说，“你是他们中间唯一一个不怪罪我的人。”

“当然，”我说，“我没那个美国时间来怪罪您。我没时间去哈佛，或者把我自己喝得烂醉如泥。我必须工作。不过，当然如果您想让我跟着她，看她都在干些什么，我可以从商店辞职，然后找一个夜间的工

作。这样，我就能成天看着她，然后晚上您就让班来换班，看着她。”

“我知道我只会给你带来麻烦，是你的包袱。”她边说，边趴在枕头上哭起来。

“我知道了，”我说，“您在我耳边这么说了三十年了。现在，连班吉都该是知道了。你想让我就这个和她说说吗？”

“你觉得这会有什么用吗？”她说。

“如果你在我准备实施计划的时候，又来搞破坏的话，肯定没用，”我说，“如果你想让我管教她，你就直说，然后你就不要插手了。每次我试图做点什么的时候，你就来插手，然后让我们都被她笑话。”

“记住她也是你自己的血脉亲人。”她说。

“当然，”我说，“那正是我在想的事情——骨肉。如果按我说的话，也有点儿血缘。当人们表现得像黑鬼一样，唯一能做的事情就是把他们当黑鬼。”

“我怕你对她发火。”她说。

“好啦，”我说，“你的那套是行不通的。你想让我做点什么，还是不做？指条明路，到底怎么样，我还要工作呢。”

“我知道你应该让你的生活远离我们，”她说，“你知道，如果当初我实现了我的想法的话，你就会有自己的事务所，日子也该过得和巴斯康一样。因为不管你姓甚名啥，你骨子里就是巴斯康家的人。我知道，如果你父亲当时要是有远见……”

“好了，”我说，“我想他像每个人一样，有偶尔猜错的时候，就算是史密斯或者琼斯也一样，会犯错。”

她又开始呜咽了。“你怎么能这么说你的亡父呢！”她说。

“没事，”我说，“没事。你想怎么样就怎么样吧。但是因为我没有自己的事务所，我必须做我该做的事情。你想让我和她谈吗？”

“我怕你对她发火。”她说。

“好吧，”我说，“那我什么都不会说。”

“但是必须采取点什么措施，”她说，“怎么能让人们以为是我允许她逃课，到街上乱跑的，或者以为我没那个能力管住她……杰生，杰生啊！你怎么能这样！怎么能留给我这么多的包袱。”她说。

“现在这样，”我说，“您会弄得你自己又不舒服的。您为什么不直接把她整天锁在房间里，或者把她交给我，就别再为她的事情操心了，您看怎么样？”

“我的亲骨肉。”她哭着说。

所以我说：“没关系，我会好好照顾她的。别哭了。”

“不要对她发火，”她说，“记住她还只是个孩子。”

“我不会的，”我说，“我不会冲她发火的。”我带上门，走了出去。

“杰生，”她喊。我没答话。我走到了大厅里。“杰生。”她在门后喊。我继续往楼下走。餐厅里没人，然后我听到她在厨房的响声。她在试图说服黛西，再给她一杯咖啡。我走了进去。

“我想你穿的是校服，对吧？”我说，“还是你们今天是放假？”

“黛西，求你了，半杯就好。”她说。

“不行，小姐，”黛西说，“我不能给你喝了。一个十七岁的姑娘，不应该喝超过一杯的，更何况卡罗琳小姐交代过的。你去穿校服吧，这样你就能和杰生一起去镇上了。你又要迟到了。”

“不，她不会的，”我说，“我们马上就来解决这个问题。”她一手端着杯子，看着我。她把脸上的头发扫到后面，晨衣则往下滑。我说：“你放下那个杯子，马上到我这里来。”

“为什么？”她说。

“过来，”我说，“把杯子放到洗碗池里，过来这边。”

“杰生，你现在要干什么？”黛西说。

“你可能以为你能像对付你外婆他们一样，对我应付了事，那就错了。我给你十秒钟，照我说的做：把杯子放下，过来！”我说。

她不看我了，看向黛西。“黛西，几点了？”她说，“到十秒的时候，你吹个口哨。拜托，黛西，就半杯。”

我抓住她的手臂。她打掉了杯子。杯子掉在地上，她往后猛地一跳，盯着我，但是我仍然抓着她的手臂。

黛西从椅子上站了起来。说：“杰生，你。”

“你松开我，”她说，“不然，我要抽你了。”

“你想打我，真的？”我说，“你会，是吗？”她真的打了我。我抓住那只手，就像抓住一只野猫一样。“你来真的？”我说，“你以为你能打我？”

“杰生，好了！”黛西喊。我把她拖进了餐厅。她的睡衣松开了，松松垮垮地挂在身上，基本上是裸着的。黛西蹒跚地走了过来。我转身，把门踢上了。

“你别过来。”我说。

昆汀靠在桌边，扣衣服。我看着她。

“现在，”我说，“我想知道你是什么意思，逃课、对你外婆说谎、在成绩单上伪造她的签名，还有让她忧患成疾。你这样做，到底是想干什么？”

她什么也没说。她把晨衣一直扣到了脖子下面的扣子，紧紧地把她的身体包了起来，然后看着我。她还没来得及化妆，现在她的脸光滑发亮得就像用擦枪布擦过一样。我走过去，抓住她的手腕。“你到底想干什么？”我说。

“关你屁事！”她说，“你放开我。”

黛西进来了。“杰生，你！”她说。

“听我的，出去。”我看都没看她一眼，说，“我想知道你逃课的时候，去了哪里，”我说，“你没到街上来，不然我会看见你的。你和谁在一起？你是和哪个该死的油头小子在树林里鬼混吗？你是去了树林吗？”

“你！你个该死的！”她说。

“你可能这样吓唬一个老女人，但是我要让你瞧瞧，现在抓住你的是谁才行。”我用一只手抓住她，然后她不动弹了，盯着我，她的眼睛开始睁大，变得深邃起来。

“你想做什么？”她说。

“你等我先解下这根皮带，你就知道了。”我说，然后解下了我的皮带。此时，黛西抓住了我的手臂。

“杰生，”她说，“杰生，你！你难道不为你的行为感到难为情吗？”

“黛西，”昆汀说，“黛西。”

“我不会让他那么做的，”黛西说，“别担心，宝贝。”她挂在了我的手臂上。这时，皮带解出来了，我猛地扯开了黛西，将她推了出去。她跌到了桌子上。她太老了，除了艰难移动以外，做不了什么了。但是那没什么关系：我们厨房里需要一个人，吃年轻人吃不完的东西。她又跌跌撞撞地走过来，挡在了我们中间，她又想抓住我。“打我吧，先生，”她说，“如果你一定要打人，才能出气的话，那就打我吧。”她说。

“你以为我不敢？”我说。

“我知道你什么都做得出来。”她说。然后，我听到母亲在楼梯那儿的动静。我应该知道她不会袖手旁观的。我放了昆汀。她跌跌撞撞地倒在了墙上，紧紧地抓着她的衣服。

“没事，”我说，“我们暂时不算这笔账。但是你以为你能在我这里

蒙混过关吗？我不是什么老妇人，也不是一个半死不活的老黑鬼，你个小骚货。”我说。

“黛西，”她说，“黛西，我想要我妈妈。”

黛西走向她，说：“没事啦，没事啦。只要我在这里，他就再也不能碰你。”母亲下来了。

“杰生，”她喊，“黛西。”

“好了，没事了，”黛西说，“我不会让他碰你的。”她把手放在昆汀身上。昆汀推开了她的手。

“你个该死的黑老妇。”她说。她跑向门边。

“黛西，”母亲在楼梯上喊。昆汀经过她，跑上了楼梯。“昆汀，”母亲喊她，“昆汀，你怎么了？”昆汀没理她。我能听到她跑到楼梯顶，然后进了大厅的声音，之后，就是门被甩上的声音。

母亲停下来了。然后，她走了过来，说：“黛西。”

“没事，”黛西说，“我来了。你去把车开出来，等着，然后送她去学校吧。”

“别担心，”我说，“我会送她去学校的，我还要确保她待在学校。我开始做这个事情了，就会善始善终。”

“杰生。”母亲在楼梯上喊我。

“现在，去吧，”黛西边走向门边，边说，“你想再让你母亲犯病吗？我来了，卡罗琳小姐。”

我走了出去。我能听到她们在楼梯上的声音。“你现在回床上睡觉，”黛西说，“你难道不知道你还不能起床吗？现在，回去躺着。我会负责监督她及时去学校的。”

我出了后门，去把车开出来，我要整个绕一圈才能到前面找到他们。

“我记得我说了要你们把备用胎装在车后边的。”我说。

“我没时间，”卢斯特说，“班随时需要有人看着，直到姥姥忙完了厨房里的事情。”

“好吧，”我说，“我养了一厨房只会跟着班屁股跑的黑鬼，而我想换个车胎的时候，还得自己动手。”

“我找不到人照顾他。”他说。然后班开始呻吟着，淌着口水。

“把他带到后面去，”我说，“见鬼了，你怎么总是把他带在别人看得见的地方。”在他开始大喊大叫之前，我就把他们赶走了。星期天够糟的了，一草坪的人把一个超大号的球踢得四处飞，这些人都不需要养六个愚蠢的黑鬼。班吉每次一看见这群人来了，就会开始围着栅栏大叫着跑上跑下，我知道这会弄到他们开始要我支付观球费为止的，然后母亲和黛西会拿出几个瓷门球和一根拐杖，假装在打球，要么就是我晚上用灯笼。也许，他们会把我们都送到杰克逊的疯人院里去。天知道呢，如果真的被送过去了，他们可能还会举行“老家周”表示庆祝呢。

我走到后面的车库里。墙上靠着一个车胎，但是如果要我自己动手装上去的话，真是该死。

我退出来，打了个转。她就站在我的车子旁边，我说：“我知道你

没带书，如果不是和我毫无关系的话，我就想知道那些书都被你怎么样了。当然，我没有权利问你。”我说，“我只是刚好是那个去年九月花了十一块六毛五买它们的人。”

“我的书是母亲买的，”她说，“我压根没花过你的钱。要花你的钱，我宁愿饿死。”

“真的？”我说，“你这么和你外婆说说看，看她会说什么。你看起来不是没穿衣服啊，”我说，“就算你抹在脸上的那些粉什么的，比你穿的所有衣服遮住的还多一些。”

“难道你认为，这是你或者你妈的钱买的？”她说。

“问问你外婆，”我说，“问问她那些支票怎么样了。说起来，我记得，你倒是也看见她烧过的啊。”她甚至没有听我说，她把脸涂得乱七八糟，而她的眼神像杂狗的一样坚硬。

“你知不知道我会做什么？如果我发现这些东西压根没花你的或是外婆的钱的话。”她边用手压着裙子，边说。

“你会做什么？”我说，“钻进桶子里？”

“我会立马撕了它们，然后扔到大街上，”她说，“你以为我不会这么做吗？”

“当然，你肯定敢这么做，”我说，“你总是说到做到。”

“以为我不会呢。”她说。她两手抓住裙子领子处，好像要撕开裙子一样。

“你要是敢撕那条裙子，”我说，“我今天就在这里打到你终生记住这一次为止。”

“你以为我不敢呢。”她说。这时，我意识到她是真的打算撕裙子，直接就这么撕开。等我停下车，抓住她的手，已经有很多人在围着看了。一瞬间，这让我非常生气，都气糊涂了。

“你要是敢再这么做，我会让你后悔来到这个世界上。”我说。

“我已经后悔了。”她说。她不动了，然后她的眼神变得有点奇怪，我当时想她要是在大街上，在我的车里哭的话，我会抽她，抽到她生不如死。幸运的是，她没哭。因而，我松了她的手，继续赶路。还好，我们就在一条巷子边上，我可以在这里转到后街上，不用待在广场上。已经有人在彼尔德家的草地上支起了帐篷。艾尔给了我们两张入场券。她把脸转开，咬着嘴唇，坐在那里。“我已经后悔了，”她说，“我不知道我为什么要生在这个世界上。”

“我知道，肯定还有人也不明白。”我说。我在学校前面停了下来。铃声已经响了，最后一个学生正在进门。“无论如何，你也按时到过一次，”我说，“是你自己进去，然后一直待在这里呢，还是我和你一起进去，要你待在这里？”她下了车，“砰”地把门关上了。“记住我说的话！”我说，“我是认真的，让我再听到一次你在后巷里和那些死小子到处晃荡的话，你就试试看！”

她回头看了一眼，说：“我没有晃荡，我想每个人都知道我在做什么。”

“他们是都知道，”我说，“这镇上的每个人都知道你是什么样子的。但是不要让我再听到，听到没？我本是并不在乎你做什么，但是我

在这镇上是有地位的，所以我不能允许我有家庭成员，有像一个黑鬼骚货一样的所作所为。明白了没？”

“我不在乎，”她说，“我很差劲，我会下地狱，但是我不在乎。我宁愿下地狱，也不想待在有你的地方。”

“如果再让我听到一次，说你没去学校的话，你会希望你本是在地狱的。”我说。她没回头。

我到邮局，拿了信，继续开车到了商店里，然后停了车。我走进来的时候，艾尔在看着我。我想给他一个责怪我迟到的机会，但是他只是说：“那些中耕机来了，你最好是能帮助乔布大叔装好它们。”

我走到后院，老乔布正在拆板条箱，照他的速度，大概一个小时能取出三个螺丝。

“你真应该为我工作，”我说，“镇上所有不中用的黑鬼都在我家吃白饭呢。”

“我就是给周六给我发钱的人干活，”他说，“我干了活，就没时间讨好别人了。”他拧开了一个螺帽，“在我们国家，除了新工人，大家干活都不太上劲。”他说。

“你该庆幸你不是一个要等到这些中耕机出来，才有活干的新工人，”我说，“在他们打算阻止你之前，你会把自己做死的。”

“这倒是真的，”他说，“新工人真是艰难啊。不管风吹日晒，整个星期下来，每天都得早出晚归。星期六对他们来说，根本没什么意义。他们也不能坐在前廊上看西瓜长得怎么样了。”

“星期六对你来说，也会没什么意义，”我说，“如果是要我付你工资的话。现在把这些东西从板条箱里拿出来，然后拖进去。”

我首先打开了她的信，然后取出了支票。女人就是女人，又晚了六天。然而，她们还总是试图让男人相信，她们做得了买卖。你想一个做买卖的人，要是把一个月的第一天从第六天开始算，他的买卖能支撑多久。同样地，当他们寄出我的银行账单的时候，她总是好奇为什么我都要到六号才会把工资存进去。女人总是明白不了那种事情。

“就我写的关于昆汀的复活节裙子的事情，我没收到回信。信顺利到了吗？我写给她的前两封信，都没有回音，不过，第二封信里的支票和其他一张支票一起兑现了。她生病了吗？请立刻给我回信，否则我会亲自来看她。你承诺过，你会在她需要什么的时候，及时通知我。你偷拆了我写给她的信，我都知道，就像我在亲眼看着你一样。你最好尽快给我打电报到这个地址，告诉我她的情况。”

这时，艾尔开始朝乔布大喊大叫，所以我把信收起来，然后走了过去，想给他一点儿生气。这个国家需要白人劳动力。就让希望懒惰的黑鬼饿上个几年，然后他们就会意识到他们是多么愚笨。

快到十点的时候，我来到了前厅。前厅里有个旅行推销员。再过两分钟就十点了，所以我邀请他到街上喝一杯。我们要聊聊收成。

“没啥好的，”我说，“棉花都被投机倒把分子掌握了。他们给农民灌迷魂汤，让农民大种棉花，然后就此在市场上打压对手。难道你以为农民除了脖子晒红、背部变驼，真的能得到什么好处吗？难道你以为那个大汗淋漓地把棉花种到地里的人，除了解决温饱，能得到一丁点儿的其他好处，”我说，“如果种多了，就卖不出价钱，也就连摘都没必要

了；如果种少了，就连放轧棉机里都少了。那这又是为什么呢？为了一群浑蛋东部犹太人，我这里说的可不是信犹太教的人，”我说，“我也认识一些很好的犹太人。你可能就是其中之一吧。”我说。

“不，”他说，“我是美国人。”

“请勿见怪，”我说，“我不会因为一个人的宗教信仰，对他有偏见的。我对犹太人本身，并没有什么意见，”我说，“这只是种族不同。你必须承认他们并不生产什么，他们只是跟随拓荒者来到了这个新的国度，然后卖衣服给当地人而已。”

“你说的是亚美尼亚人吧，”他说，“对吧？拓荒者可没必要穿新衣服。”

“请勿见怪，”我说，“我不会因为一个人的宗教信仰，对他有偏见的。”

“当然，”他说，“我是美国人。我之所以鼻子长成这样，只是因为我的家族有一点儿法国血统。我是地道的美国人。”

“我也是，”我说，“我们这样的人剩下的可不多了。我说的是那些坐在纽约的办公室里，剥削涉世不深的赌徒的人。”

“是的，”他说，“穷人赌博，可是一丁点儿用处都没有。国家应该设立法律，禁止赌博。”

“你觉得我说得不对吗？”我说。

“是对的，”他说，“我想你是对的。农民来来去去都是倒霉的那个。”

“我知道我是对的，”我说，“这是一个容易被骗的游戏，除非你有熟人，能得到可靠的内部消息。我正好认识一些这样的人。他们有一家纽约最大的操纵公司之一给他们消息。我的做法一般是，”我说，“我从来不会一次承担太大的风险。他们就是为那种自认知道了所有的信息，并且试图用三块钱就打捞一笔的人设置的陷阱。这种人就是别人干这行的目标。”

这时，十点的钟声响了。我走到电报局。就像人们常说的一样，电报局只开了一点点门。我走到角落，再一次拿出电报，想确定一下。就在我确定的时候，一个报告来了——涨了两个点。我从他们所说的话里能判断出来大家都在买进。大家都在挤上船，就像完全没想到船会沉一样。弄得就像是有法律明文规定除了买进，不能进行任何操作了一样。好吧，我估摸着那群东部犹太人也得过日子。但是，如果任何一个在其国内混不下去了的外国佬，都能到美国来赚美国人的钱，那真是想我死。又涨了两个点，现在总共四个点了。见鬼，他们这回是真对了，看来他们的确有内部消息。那么我要是不听劝告，那我每月给他们的十块钱不是白给了。我走出去，然后想起来还没打电报，又走回来，打了电报。“一切安好。今天写Q。”

“Q？”报务员问道。

“是的，”我说，“Q，你不会写吗？”

“我只是确定一下。”他说。

“你照我写的发过去，我保你没错，”我说，“电报费收件方支付。”

“你要打什么电报，杰生，”怀特医生边说，边越过我的肩膀看起来，“是要买进的密码电报吗？”

“完全正确，”我说，“你自己判断形势吧，你可比那些纽约人懂得多。”

“嗯，是的，”医生说，“要是一磅涨两分，我今年就可以攒大笔的钱了。”

有一个报告来了——跌了一个点。

“杰生是在抛售，”霍金说，“看他的表情就知道。”

“我做什么，没关系，”我说，“你们自己按自己的判断做事。这些个富得流油的纽约犹太人也要和大家一样生存。”我说。

我回到了商店。艾尔在前厅忙活，我走到桌子后边看罗恩的信。“亲爱的爸爸，真希望你在这里。自从爸爸出镇之后，就没有好派对了。我想念你，我亲爱的爸爸。”我估摸着她确实是想我了。上回我可是给了她四十块呢。我从不承诺女人什么，也不会告诉她我会给她什么。那是对付女人的唯一方法——也就是让她们捉摸不透。如果你能想出任何一个其他让她们吃惊的方法，就给她们的下巴一拳好了。

我把信撕碎，在痰盂里烧了它。我的原则是，绝不保留女人留给我的只言片语，我也从不给她们写信。罗恩总是追着要我给她写信，但是我说我忘记告诉她的任何事情，都要等到我再到孟菲斯的时候，再告诉她。不过，我说我不介意她偶尔给我用普通信封寄封信，但是她要是想给我打电话的话，孟菲斯也就容不下她了。我说，当我在那里的时候，我是一个男孩，但是我不会让任何女人给我打电话。这里我说到我给了她四十块钱。如果你喝醉了，突发奇想想给我打个电话的话，记住这一点，并且在你打电话之前数十下。

“什么时候？”她说。

“什么？”我说。

“你什么时候回来？”她说。

“我会告诉你的。”我说。然后她想买瓶啤酒，但是我不会同意。“把钱存起来，”我说，“给你自己买条裙子吧。”我也给了女仆五块钱。毕竟，就像我说的，钱没什么价值，只是看你怎么花它。钱也不属于任何人，那为什么要想办法储存它呢。它只属于能得到又能守住它的人。在杰弗逊，还真就有这么一个人，靠卖腐烂了的食物给黑鬼，赚了大笔的钱，却住在商店上面一个猪舍大小的地方，还自己煮饭菜吃。四五年之前，他生病了。他被吓得要死，所以等他好了，他参加了教会，并且花五千块钱一年资助了一个中国传教士。我总在想，等他死的时候，发现根本就没有天堂的话，会气成什么样。就像我说的，他还不如继续生病，就此死了，把钱省下来呢。

信烧完的时候，我正打算把其他的信乱塞到衣服兜里的时候，突然有一种预感，应该在回家之前拆开昆汀的信看看，但是就在这时，艾尔开始在前厅叫我了，所以我把信收好，走过去，一直在等那个红脖子做决定——到底是花两毛钱还是三毛五分钱买一根缰绳，等了十五分钟。

“你最好是买那根好点的，”我说，“你要是买便宜的东西，也就不能指望走在别人前头。”

“如果这个没什么好的，”他说，“那你们为什么还卖呢？”

“我没说这一无是处，”我说，“我只是说没那个好。”

“你怎么知道没有那么好，”他说，“你用过吗？”

“因为它不要三毛五，”我说，“这就是我为什么知道它不好的原因。”

他把那根两毛钱的抓在手里，从指间拉过去。“我觉得我还是买这种吧。”他说。我想拿过来，包装好，但是他却把绳子捆好，塞到工装裤衣兜里了。然后他拿出了一个烟袋，好不容易打开它，倒了些硬币出来。他递给我两毛钱，说：“我可以用一毛五买晚餐时的甜点。”

“好吧，”我说，“你是医生。但是明年当你要买新装备的时候，不要找我抱怨就行。”

“我还没种明年的庄稼呢。”他说。我终于摆脱他了，但是每次我把那封信拿出来，就有事情了。他们都在镇上看演出，成群结队地进来买一些对镇上没什么好处的东西，除了让市长办公室的那帮贪污腐败分子又能分得一笔之外，也不能留下什么。而艾尔就像一只笼子里的母鸡一样，前前后后说：“您好，女士，康普生先生会接待您的。杰生，给这位太太拿个搅拌器，还拿一个五分钱的屏风钩子。”

是呀，杰生喜欢做事。我说不，我读了大学从来没什么优势，因为在哈佛它只教会你怎么晚上游泳，却没教你怎么游泳，而在希瓦尼，他们压根没教你水是什么。我说你可能该送我去州立大学；也许我会学会用鼻头喷雾弄停我的钟，然后你们就能把班送去当海军，我说或者是骑兵什么的，骑兵营里可是用阉马的。那么，当她把昆汀送回来要我养的时候，我说我猜那也是对的，他们把工作送到了我面前，而不是要我远上北部找工作，然后我母亲就会开始哭，我说不是我不想在这里工作；如果你认为这能让你满意的话，我会辞职，自己来照顾，让你和黛西赚钱养家，或者要班赚吧。把他租给一个杂耍团；总会有那么些人，愿意

花上一毛钱来看他，然后她就会哭得更伤心，一直说我那可怜的受折磨的孩子啊，而我说是的，等他长大了，而不是像现在只有我半个人高的时候，就能帮您大忙了，而她说她马上就会死了，她死了我们就都好了，我说好吧，好吧，您想怎么办就这么办吧。那是您的外孙女，她肯定比其他所有外孙女得到的都要多。只是我说，这只是时间问题。如果您相信她会照她说的做，不来看的话，您就是在自欺欺人，因为第一次是那个母亲一直在说，谢天谢地，你除了不叫康普生之外，你就是康普生家族的人，因为现在你是我的全部——你和莫里，我说我自身本来能不把莫里舅舅卷进来，这时，他们来了，说他们准备好了。这时母亲也停止了哭泣。她揭开了黑纱，我们一起下了楼。莫里舅舅正从餐厅出来，还在用纸巾擦嘴巴。大致就是留出了一条小巷子一样的路，我们走到门口的时候，正好看到黛西在角落里赶班和T.P.到后面去。我们走下台阶，上了车。莫里舅舅一直在说可怜的小姐姐，可怜的小姐姐，念叨个不停，一边还轻拍母亲的手。他一直在念叨些什么。

“你带衣带了吗？”她说，“他们为什么还不走呢，等班吉明出来，又好看了。可怜的小孩。他还不知道。他甚至没意识到。”

“好了，好了，”莫里舅舅说，轻拍她的手，嘴里念念有词，“这样更好。就让他不知这丧父之痛吧，等到不得不说的時候再说。”

“其他的女人在这个时候，应该有孩子在身边支撑她们吧。”母亲说。

“你有我和杰生。”他说。

“这对我伤害太大了，”她说，“他们两个在两年之内就变成了这样。”

“好了，好了。”他说。过了一会儿，他似乎是把手偷偷伸到了嘴巴边，把嘴里的东西丢出窗外了。然后，我就知道我闻到的是什——丁香茎的味道。我估摸着，他认为这是他在父亲的葬礼上，起码要做的吧，或者也许侧柜以为仍是父亲呢，所以在他路过的时候，绊了他一下。就像我说的，如果他一定要变卖什么，送昆汀去哈佛的话，如果当初他是把侧柜卖了，还从中拿出一点儿替自己买一件独袖紧身衣的话，我们的日子真是会好过得多。我琢磨着康普生家族在交到我手上之前就败光了的原因，就像我母亲说的，是被父亲喝掉了。至少，我从来没听他说要变卖什么东西，送我去上哈佛。

所以，他一直在拍母亲的手，一边说“可怜的小姐姐”，一边用戴着黑手套的手拍母亲的手，而四天后我们收到了那只黑手套的账单，因为那天是二十六日，因为就是一个月前的同一天，父亲上这儿，把它买回了家，而他只字不提她在哪儿之类的，母亲一直哭着说：“那你甚至没见到他？你没想办法让他出点赡养费吗？”然后父亲说：“没有，他的钱，她一个子儿都不会碰的。”母亲又说：“可以用法律手段逼迫他。他没法证明，除非……康普生·杰生，你不会傻到告诉……”

“别说了，卡罗琳。”父亲说，然后他要我去帮黛西从阁楼里把旧摇篮拿出来，我说：“好呀，他们今儿个晚上倒是真给我把工作安排到家里了。”因为我们一直都在希望他们能把事情处理好，也以为他会抚养加迪的，因为母亲一直说加迪对家庭还是有足够的感情不会危及到我，一旦她和昆汀有了自己的去处。

“她还能放在哪里呢？”黛西问，“除了我，谁会抚养她啊？你们不都是我养大的嘛。”

“你养得真是太好了，”我说，“无论如何，这又给了她操心事

了。”所以我们把摇篮搬了下去，之后黛西就开始在她自己的房间里装好它。这时，母亲果然又开始了。

“别说了，卡罗琳小姐，”黛西说，“你要把她吵醒了。”

“放这里？”母亲说，“被这种空气毒害？她现在已经够糟的了。”

“别说了，”父亲说，“别犯傻了。”

“为什么不能在这里睡？”黛西说，“她妈妈还不能单独睡的时候，都是在这个房间，每天晚上由我哄她入睡的。”

“你不知道，”母亲说，“是我自己的女儿被她丈夫抛弃了，可怜的无辜的孩子，”她说，看着小昆汀，“你永远不会知道你造成的苦痛。”

“闭嘴，卡罗琳。”父亲说。

“你为什么总是这么向着杰生？”黛西说。

“我一直想保护他，”母亲说，“我一直在保护他不受其扰。至少我要尽全力保护这个小孩子。”

“我想知道，为什么说她睡在这个房间不好？”黛西说。

“我没办法，”母亲说，“我知道我只是一个麻烦的老女人。但是我知道没有人能违背上帝的意志，又不受惩罚的。”

“胡说八道，”父亲说，“黛西，那就把摇篮装在卡罗琳小姐的房间吧。”

“你可以说我是说胡话，”母亲说，“但是永远不能让她知道。而且

永远不要让她知道那个名字。黛西，我不准你在她面前说起那个名字。如果她能在不知道自己一个母亲的情况下长大，我会感谢上帝的。”

“别犯傻了。”父亲说。

“我可是从来没有干涉过，你怎么抚养他们长大成人的，”母亲说，“但是现在我受不了了。我们必须立马做个决定，今晚就要决定。要么永远不要在她面前提起那个名字，要么就送她走，或者我走。你做个决定吧！”

“别说了，”父亲说，“你只是伤心了。黛西，摇篮就装在这里吧。”

“你肯定也快生病了，”黛西说，“你看上去像鬼一样。你快上床躺着，我给你端杯朗姆酒来，然后你好好睡一觉吧。我敢打赌你出去后，肯定没好好睡过一觉。”

“不行，”母亲说，“难道你不知道医生说了什么吗？你为什么一定要让他喝酒？他现在最大的问题就是酒喝多了。看看我，我也难受，但是我还不至于懦弱到要用威士忌来麻痹自己，那等于是自杀。”

“胡说，”父亲说，“医生知道什么呢？这只是他们谋生的手段而已：建议人们做一些当下没在做的事情，这谁不会呀——连退化的猿猴都会。接着，你该喊个牧师来，牵我的手了。”然后母亲就哭了，父亲则出去了。他下楼了，然后我听到了父亲开侧柜的声音。晚上，我醒来的时候，又听到了父亲下楼的声音。母亲可能是睡了，因为家里总算安静下来了。父亲估计也很小声，因为我没听见声响，只是在侧柜前面看到了他的睡衣下摆和光腿。

黛西装好了摇篮，替小昆汀脱了衣服，把她放了进去。从父亲把她

带回来，她就没哭过。

“马上这个摇篮就小了，”黛西说，“我想到了，我在大厅里铺个简易床睡，这样你就不用晚上起床了。”

“我不想睡，”母亲说，“你回去睡吧，我没关系的。我很乐意把我的下半生用在带她身上，只要我能阻止……”

“别说了，”黛西说，“我们一起好好照顾她。但是你也要去床上睡觉，”她对我说：“你明天要去学校。”

所以我出来了，而母亲又把我叫了回去，在我肩上哭了一会儿。

“你是我唯一的希望，”她说，“每天晚上我都感谢上帝把你赐给我。”当我们在哪儿，等大家开动的时候，她说：“谢天谢地！如果他也走了，我就只剩下你了，而不是昆汀。谢天谢地，你不是康普生家族的人，因为我现在仅剩的就是你和莫里了。”我说，好吧，我可以不让莫里舅舅卷进来的。他一直用戴着黑手套的手在轻拍母亲的手，说着走开了。轮到他铲土的时候，他脱下了手套。他走到第一批人旁边，他们在帮后来的人打伞，他们时不时地跺跺脚，想把脚上的泥土弄掉，因为铲子上也沾满了泥土，所以他们必须敲掉它，而在掉下来的时候泥土发出一种空洞的声音，而当我退到马车旁边的时候，我在一个墓碑后面看到他——又在喝酒。我以为他会永远喝下去，因为我也穿了新衣服，不过还好车轮上还没沾上很多泥土，所以只有母亲看到了，说我不知道你什么时候才会有另一件新衣服，而莫里舅舅说：“马上，马上就会有。完全不用担心。你一直都有我呢！”

我们的确有他，一直都有他。第四封信来自他。但是没有打开的必要。这种信，我自己就可以写，或者凭记忆背给她听，为了保险起见就

加上十块钱好了。但是对于另一封信，我倒是有种直觉——就是感觉她又在耍什么花招了。自从第一次之后，她就变聪明了。她很快就发现，我和父亲可不一样。当他们快要填到顶了的时候，母亲又开始号啕大哭，所以莫里舅舅和母亲上车先走了。他说，你可以和别人一起回来；他们会很乐意让你搭个顺风车的。我必须把你母亲送回去，我本来想说：“是的，你本来应该带两瓶酒，一瓶是不够的。”但是我想了想场合，就没说什么，让他们走了。他们也不怎么关心我全身有多湿，因为这样母亲又很长一段时间要担心我得肺炎了。

我一边这么在想着，一边看着他们把泥土铲进去，然后拍紧，就像在和泥浆、做木栅栏什么的，我开始觉得有点小意思，所以我决定在附近走走。我想到我要是往镇上走，就会被他们追上，然后会喊我和他们中谁一起走，所以我往回走，去了后面的黑人墓园。我站在雪松下，这里没怎么下雨，只是偶尔滴几滴，而且站在这里，我可以看到他们什么时候完工离开。过了一会儿，他们都走了，我等了一分钟，才走出来。

我必须顺着他们走的路走，这样就不会沾到湿淋淋的草，所以我没有看见她，直到我走得很近，才看到她戴着黑斗篷，站在那里看花。我立马就认出了她，甚至没等到她转身看我，掀起面纱。

“你好，杰生。”她边说，边伸出手。我们握了握手。

“你在这里干什么？”我说，“我想你答应过母亲，不会再回这里的。我以为你应该更理智才对。”

“嗯？”她说。她又去瞧那些个花了，这花怕是花五十块钱也买不来的吧。有人放了一束在昆汀的坟墓上。“你这么想？”她说。

“不过，我也不奇怪，”我说，“我一直都知道，你不把别人放在心

上。你才不在乎别人呢。”

“这样啊，”她看着坟墓，说，“杰生，那个工作的事，我很抱歉。”

“你会抱歉？”我说，“你现在可是说话温顺得多了。但是你没必要回来的，并没有留下什么东西。如果你不信我，就去问问莫里舅舅。”

“我什么都不想要。”她说。她看着坟墓，说：“为什么他们都不告诉我？”她说，“凑巧我在报纸的最后边看到了，只是凑巧。”

我什么都没说。我们站在那里，看着坟墓，然后想到了我们小时候，一件一件事情出现在我的脑海里。我又觉得有点怪怪的，有点疯掉了的感觉，我想到现在在家里又要一直看到莫里舅舅管事了，就像他现在把我丢在雨里让我自己回家一样。我说：“你真是会挑时间，他一死，就偷偷回来了。但是这对你没什么好处的。难道你以为你能以此为契机，偷偷潜回来？如果你驾驭不了自己的马，你就只能放弃，”我说，“我们甚至连你在那里叫什么名字都不知道。你知道吗？我们甚至不知道你叫什么。如果你和他还有昆汀一起待在下面，倒是对你有好处。”我说，“你知道吗？”

“我知道，”她说，“杰生，”她盯着坟墓，说，“如果你能安排我见她一分钟，我给你五十块。”

“你不会有五十块，”我说。

“你不信？”她说，眼睛并没看我。

“让我看看，”我说，“我不相信你有五十块钱。”

我可以看见她的手在斗篷下移动的方位，接着她伸出了手。倒是真

有钱，我可以看到两三张黄色的钱。

“他还给你钱？”我说，“他寄了多少给你？”

“我给你一百块，”她说，“好吗？”

“只看一分钟，”我说，“而且只能按我说的做。就算给我一千块钱，我也不能让她知道。”

“好的，”她说，“就按你说的做。我也不会花一千块钱让她知道。”

“给我钱。”我说。

“完事后给你钱。”她说。

“你不相信我？”我说。

“我不信，”她说，“我了解你。我们是一起长大的。”

“你还真有脸和别人说信任这个问题，”我说，“好吧。我不能再在这里白白淋雨了。再见。”我作势要走。

“杰生。”她叫我。

我停了下来。“怎么样？”我说，“快点决定，我都淋湿了。”

“好吧，”她说，“给你！”我看到处没人，就走回去，拿了钱。她还抓着不放。“你会做的吧？”她透过面纱看着我说，“你发誓？”

“好了，”我说，“你想等到别人看见我们在一起吗？”

她让我走了。我把钱放进了衣兜里。“杰生，你会做的吧？”她

说，“如果有其他办法，我不会求你的。”

“你对极了，你也没有其他办法可想，”我说，“我当然会做。我说了我会做的，难道不是吗？好了，只是你要按我说的做。”

“好的，”她说，“我会的。”于是我告诉了她到哪里之后，就朝租来的马车走去。我走得很快，我到的时候，他们正好在解开马车。我问看车钱数了没有，他说没有，我就说康普生太太忘了些事，还要用车，所以他们就让我上车了。是敏克在赶车。我买了支雪茄给他，所以我们在后街逛了一会儿，直到天快黑了——他们是看不到这里的，也就看不到他。然后敏克说他把马队赶回去了，我就说我给你再买支雪茄，于是，我们一起驾车进了巷子，我就穿过庭院回到了家里。我在大厅里停了一会儿，直到听到母亲和莫里舅舅的声音在楼上响起，才走到后面的厨房去。昆汀和班与黛西在一块儿。我说母亲喊她，于是，我把她带到了房里。我找到了莫里舅舅的雨衣，披在她身上，抱起她回到了小巷子里，坐上了马车。我告诉敏克去仓库。他不敢经过马厩，所以我们只能原路返回，然后我看到她站在角落的灯光下，我和敏克说靠近人行道走，要是听到我说“快”，就给马队抽上一鞭子。然后，我掀开了她的雨衣，把她举到窗户边，加迪一看到她，就好像要扑过来的样子。

“快，敏克！”我说，于是敏克抽了一鞭子，然后我们就像消防车一样，在她面前呼啸而过。“现在你该履行承诺，坐火车离开了。”我说。我从后窗看到她在跟着我们的马车跑。“再抽一鞭子，”我说，“我们回家吧。”我们转弯的时候，我还看到她在跟着跑。

当天晚上，我又数了下钱，然后收好了，这种感觉不坏。我说我琢磨着这回你知道我的厉害了吧。我琢磨着现在你知道你不能害我丢了工作，就不管了吧。我从没想过，她会失信于我——没坐那辆火车离开。那

是我当时还不了解女人的原因；我除了相信她们，没想过多的，可是第二天早上，见鬼，她居然直接走进了我的店里，还好她有点理智，戴了面纱，也没有和别人搭话。这是周六早上，因为我在店里，她直接就飞快地走到了我的办公桌后边。

“你个骗子，”她说，“你个骗子。”

“你疯了吗？”我说，“你什么意思？就这样到这里来闹事？”她正打算说话，我堵住了她的嘴。我说：“你已经害我丢了一份工作；你想害我也丢了这份吗？如果你有什么事要和我说，天黑之后我和你在哪里见一面就好。你有什么好和我说的呢？我不是把我答应的事都做完了吗？我说了让你见她一分钟，难道没有？这么说吧，难道你没见到她？”她只是站在那里，盯着我，像发疟疾似的颤抖起来，双手抓得很紧，就像痉挛了一样。“我做了我答应要做的东西，”我说，“你才是骗子。你答应要坐那趟车离开的，难道不是吗？难道你没答应？如果你以为能把钱收回去，那就试试，”我说，“就算你给我一千块钱，我冒了这么大的险，你还是欠我的。要是十七次车发车之后，我发现或者听说你还在镇上的话，我就告诉母亲和莫里舅舅。那你就好好活着，直到你再见到她为止吧。”她只是站在那里，看着我，双手紧紧地握着。

“该死的你，”她说，“该死的你。”

“没事，”我说，“那也没关系。不过记住我说的话。十七次车之后！后果我也告诉你了。”

她走后，我感觉好多了。我说我估摸着她以后总得在害我丢掉到手的饭碗之前，好好三思了。那时候，我还只是个孩子——别人说什么都相信。自那以后，我可学到了。而且，就像我说的，我大概也不需要别人

的什么帮助，我就能和一直以来一样，靠自己就能挺过来。不过突然，我就想到了黛西和莫里舅舅。我想到她会怎么接近黛西，而莫里舅舅是个给点钱就什么都做得出来的人。而我坐在这里，都没办法离开商店，去保护我自己的母亲。就像母亲说的，如果老天一定要带走你们中的一个，谢天谢地留下的是你，我还可以依靠你。我说是的，我觉得我最多就到商店，不会离开你太远的。我琢磨着总得有人守着我们家这剩下的一点东西。

所以，我一到家，就盯着黛西。我告诉黛西她得了大麻风，然后拿出《圣经》给她读了一段关于人的肉腐烂脱落的内容，我告诉她，她要是看加迪、班或者昆汀的话，他们也会染上这个病。所以我以为我把一切都安排妥当了，直到有一天我回家的时候发现班在大叫。他鬼哭狼嚎的，没人能制止他。母亲说：“把拖鞋给他吧。”黛西走出去了，没听到。母亲又说了一遍，我说我去拿——因为我实在受不了这么大的噪声。就像我说的，我可以忍受很多事情，我不怎么指望他们，但是如果我白天要在那个该死的商店里忙一整天，晚上却不能平和安静地吃顿晚餐的话，我就受不了。所以我说我去拿，这时黛西急忙忙地喊了句：“杰生！”

突然，我心里就像明镜一样知道发生了什么，不过为了确定一下，我还是去拿了拖鞋过来，果不其然，当班看到拖鞋的时候，发出了好像被宰一样的号啕声。于是我逼问了黛西，把结果告诉了母亲。我们又得把她送到床上去了。当事情告了一个段落之后，我就给黛西来了个下马威——就是你能对黑鬼做到的最大的限度。黑人仆役的最大麻烦就是，你用他们时间长了，他们就开始自恃过高——以为自己才是家里当家做主的了。

“我想知道，为什么不能让可怜的小姐看看她自己的孩子，”黛西

说，“如果康普生先生在的话，就会可以的。”

“但是父亲已经不在了，”我说，“我知道你也没把我看在眼里，但是我想你总要听母亲的话。你要是一直这样折磨她，你也会把她送进坟墓的，到时候你就往这房子里塞满奴婢贱人好了。但是你要她见班，倒是想干什么啊？”

“杰生，如果你称得上是人的话，你也是个冷酷自私的人，”她说，“我感谢主，虽然赐予我的是一颗黑色的心，但是我起码是有良心的。”

“至少我是个男人，在养着这一大家子，”我说，“如果你再这么做的话，你就别想再待在这个房子里。”

于是，我再见到她的时候，我就和她说了，如果她再从黛西那里入手的话，母亲就会解雇黛西，然后把班送到杰克逊去，带着昆汀搬走。她盯着我看了一会儿。附近没什么路灯，我看不太清楚她的脸。但是我感觉得到她在看我。在我们还小的时候，每当她要开始抓狂的时候，她的上嘴唇就会开始不自禁地跳动。它每次跳动都会让她的牙齿露出来一点点，而她就站得像个电线杆一样，一动不动，只有她的上嘴唇越翘越高，牙齿越露越多。但是她什么也没说。她只是说：“好吧。多少钱？”

“嗯，透过马车车窗看一次一百块。”我说。因此，自那之后，她都表现得很好，只有一次，她要求看下银行账户清单。

“我知道每张支票背后都有母亲的签名，”她说，“但是我想看看清单。我想自己弄清楚这些支票都到哪里去了。”

“母亲用来做私人投资了，”我说，“如果你认为你有权插手她的私

事，我会告诉母亲说你认为这些支票被误用了，因为你不相信她，你要查账。”

她没多说什么，也没动。我可以听见她在细声说：“该死的你！该死的你！该死的你！”

“大声说出来啊，”我说，“我觉得我们对彼此的看法，不是什么秘密了。也许你想拿回那些钱。”我说。

“听着，杰生，”她说，“关于她的事，不要对我说谎。我不会要求看任何东西。如果那还不够的话，我每个月可以多打点钱。只要你承诺她会.....她.....你可以做到的。为她做到你可以做到的。对她好点。我什么都做不了，他们不.....但是你不能。你全身上下到处都是冷血的。听着，”她说，“如果你说服母亲让我带回她，我会给你一千块。”

“你拿来一千块钱，”我说，“我知道你现在只是在说谎。”

“我有。我会有的。我能拿到一千块。”

“我知道你会怎么拿到一千块，”我说，“还不是你怀上她的同样的方式。而等她长大.....”然后，我感觉她真的要打我了，随之我又不知道她会干什么。有一下子，我感觉她就像一个过于紧绷随时都要爆发的玩具一样。

“真是，我是疯了，”她说，抓着我的手，她的手就像发烧了一样热，“你要承诺你会好好照顾她，去.....她是你的亲人，是你的血亲。答应我，杰生。你和父亲的名字一样：但是你以为我要是求父亲，需要说两遍吗？甚至一遍都用不上吧？”

“那确实，”我说，“他是留了点东西给我。你想要我做什么，”我

说，“给她买一条围裙和一个婴儿学步车？你现在这个样子和我一点关系都没有，我比你冒的风险还要大，你反正已经没什么可失去的了。所以如果你想.....”

“不，”她说，然后她开始大笑，同时又想控制住不笑，“是，我没什么可失去的了，”她说，发出很大的声音，然后她把手放在嘴巴上，说，“什么都没有了。”

“好了，”我说，“不要再疯疯癫癫的了！”

“我也想啊，”她边说，边用手捂住嘴巴，“老天啊，老天。”

“我要离开了，”我说，“我不能被别人看见我出现在这里。你要出镇，听到了没？”

“等等，”她边说，边抓住我的手臂，“我已经停下了。我不会再那样做了。你答应了，杰生？”她说，我感觉她的眼睛都盯到我的脸上了。“你做不到？母亲那边，任何时候她需要用钱的话，如果我把给她的支票寄给你了，或者其他什么东西，你要帮我给她？而且你不会说出去？你要负责让她有其他女孩子都有的东西，你都答应了？”

“当然，”我说，“只要你遵守约定，按我说的做。”

所以当艾尔戴着帽子走上来的时候，他说：“我要去罗格那里吃点点心了。我估摸着我们没时间回家吃晚饭了。”

“怎么了？为什么我们会没时间？”我说。

“因为戏班子在镇上的演出，”他说，“他们下午也要演一出，大伙都想快点把买卖做完，能赶上看的时间。所以我们最好是在罗格那里

吃点算了。”

“好吧，”我说，“反正是你自己的事。如果愿意为自己的生意吃点苦的话，我无所谓。”

“我估摸着你不会为任何事让自己吃苦的。”他说。

“除非是康普生·杰生的事。”我说。

当我回家，打开信封，唯一让我感到吃惊的是她寄给我的居然不是支票，而是一张汇单。是的，先生们，女人没有一个可信的。在我为她冒了这么多的险之后——比方说害怕母亲发现她有时一年回来个一两次还有我必须和母亲说谎，她居然这样回报我。我觉得她可能通知了邮局，除了昆汀，谁也不能提这笔钱。她居然给这么小一个孩子五十块钱。我在二十一岁之前，还没见过五十块的呢，当所有的男孩子下午和周六全天都在外面玩的时候，我就在一家商店里干活。就像我说的，她背着我们给昆汀这么多钱，怎么指望有人能管住她啊！我说她住在你住过的地方，和你受着同样的教育。我想母亲比你更清楚她需要什么，你甚至都没个家。“如果你想给她钱，”我说，“你可以寄给母亲，不要直接给她。如果要我每隔几个月就冒这个险的话，你就必须照我说的做，或者这交易就算了。”

就在我打算开始做那件事的时候，因为如果艾尔认为我是个会听他的话，冲到街上，狼吞虎咽一顿两毛五的倒胃口的饭菜的人，那就大错特错了。我虽然不是一个脚跷在红木桌上的大人物，但是我在这里是按劳所得，如果我出了这栋楼，还不能过点文明点的的生活的话，那我就只能另谋可以让我这么做的地方了。我可以靠自己，我不需要依靠别人的什么红木桌。就在我要开始做的时候，我又得放下手里的事情，跑去给

红脖子拿一毛钱什么的，这时候，艾尔十之八九是在狼吞虎咽一个三明治，并且在回来的路上了，就在这时候我发现所有的空白支票都没有了。我记得我本来想去多拿点的，但是现在已经晚了，因为我抬头发现她过来了。我听见她在后门那里问乔布我在不在，我正好来得及把它们塞进抽屉并关上抽屉。

她走到办公桌旁边，我就看着我的表。

“你吃过饭了吗？”我说，“还只有十二点，我刚听到打钟了，你肯定是飞奔回家又回来了吧。”

“我没回家吃饭，”她说，“今天有我的信吗？”

“你是在等信，对吧？”我说，“你居然找了个识字的男朋友？”

“我母亲的信，”她说，“有没有我母亲寄给我的信？”她边说，边看着我。

“我母亲收到了一封，”我说，“但是我没拆。你要等等，等她拆开。我想她会给你看的。”

“求你，杰生，”她说，完全没注意我说的话，“有我的信吗？”

“怎么了？”我说，“我从没见你为谁的事这么着急过。你肯定是在等你妈寄钱给你吧。”

“她说她……”她说，“求你，杰生，”她说，“有我的吗？”

“不过说起来，你今天肯定去学校了吧，”我说，“或者是在哪里学会说‘请求’了。等等，先让我招待那个客人。”

我走上去，招待他。当我转回来的时候，她已经在桌子后边看不到了。我跑过去，围着桌子跑了一圈，发现她正在从抽屉里抽出她的手。我从她手里把信夺了过来，把她的指关节在桌上猛敲，直到她放手。

“你真要这样，是吗？”我说。

“把它给我，”她说，“你已经拆开了。给我！求你了，杰生。那是我的信，我看到署名了。”

“我会拿一根缰绳给你，”我说，“那是我想伺候你的，居然敢偷看我的信。”

“这里面有钱吗？”她边说，边想伸手拿信，“她说她会给我寄点钱的，她答应了的，她会寄钱。给我。”

“你要拿钱干什么？”我说。

“她说她会寄钱的，”她说，“给我！求你了，杰生。只要这次你把信给我的话，我不会再问你任何事情。”

“只要你稍微等一下，我是要给你。”我说。我把信和汇单拿了出来，把信给了她。她想拿汇单，并没怎么看信。我说：“你必须先签字。”

“有多少？”她说。

“你看信，”我说，“我估计信上有。”

她迅速过了一下信，大概看了两眼吧。

“信上没说，”她抬起头来，说，然后她把信扔在地上，问我，“多

少钱？”

“十块钱。”我说。

“十块？”她睁大眼睛看着我，说。

“一个像你这么大的屁小孩，拿到十块钱，真该高兴死了，”我说，“不过，为什么你突然这么急着要钱？”

“只有十块钱？”她说，就像在梦游一样，“只有十块钱吗？”她突然就抓向汇单，“你在撒谎，”她说，“你个小偷！小偷！”

“你说真的，是吗？”我说，推开她。

“把钱给我！”她说，“这是我的钱！这是我妈寄给我的钱！我会好好花的，我会的。”

“你会？”我抓着她说，“你要拿来干什么？”

“就让我看一下，杰生，”她说，“求你了。我不会再求你任何事情了。”

“你觉得我在撒谎，是吗？”我说，“就你这么说，我就不会给你看。”

“但是只有十块钱，”她说，“她告诉我她会……她告诉我……杰生，求你了，求你了！我一定要用钱，我有用。杰生，把钱给我。你把钱给我，我会为你做任何事情。”

“告诉我，你要拿钱干什么。”我说。

“我必须要有钱。”她看着我，说。不过，突然一下她就转了视线，然后眼睛一动不动的。我知道她要开始说谎了。“我欠别人一些钱，”她说，“我必须还钱，我今天必须还钱。”

“还给谁？”我说。她的手握得很紧。我可以看出她在构想一个谎言。“你又在商店赊了东西？”我说，“你不要不好意思告诉我。如果在我和全镇的人都打了招呼之后，你要是还能在商店赊到东西，我就不信了。”

“是一个女孩，”她说，“是一个女孩。我从一个女孩子那里借了一些钱，我必须还给她。杰生，把钱给我吧，求你了，我愿意做任何事情。我必须拿这个钱还钱。母亲会支付你钱的。我会给她写信，要她给你钱，而且我不会再问她要任何东西。你以后可以看我的信。杰生，求你了。我必须拿到这笔钱。”

“告诉我你要拿这笔钱干什么，我再看看要不要给你，”我说，“告诉我。”她只是站在那里，手紧紧地抓着裙子。“好吧，”我说，“如果十块钱太少了，我会把这个带回家给你外婆，你知道会发生什么的。当然，如果你很有钱，不需要这十块钱，那就.....”

她站在那里，看着门，好像在自言自语。“她说过会给我一些钱的。她说她把钱寄到了这里，而你说她没寄。她说她往这里寄了很多的钱。她说那都是给我的。有一些是给我的。而你说我们没有收到一分钱。”

“你和我都清楚这个情况，”我说，“你也看到那些支票是怎么回事。”

“是的，”她看着门说，“十块钱，”她说，“十块钱。”

“你应该谢天谢地，有十块钱，”我说。“给你，”我说。我把汇单正面朝下放在桌子上，手按在上面，说：“签名！”

“能给我看看吗？”她说，“我只是想看一眼。不管这上面说什么，我只要十块钱，其余的都给你。我只是想看看。”

“在你表现得这么糟糕之后，我不会给你看了，”我说，“你必须明白一件事，那就是当我要你做一件事情的时候，你必须照我说的做。你把名字签在这条线上。”

她拿起笔，但是她没签名，只是垂着头站在那里，笔则在手里摇晃——这像她的母亲。“天哪！”她说，“老天啊！”

“是的，”我说，“你要是其他的什么都没学会，那你起码得学会一件事。现在赶快签了名，走吧。”

她签了名，问：“钱呢？”我拿起汇单，弄干墨水，然后给了她十块钱。

“今天下午，你还要回学校，听到没？”我说。她没回答我。她把钱抓得就像块抹布什么的一样，然后和艾尔进来的时候一样从前门走出去了。一个顾客和艾尔一起进来了，他们在前面停了下来。我收拾好东西，戴上帽子，走了上去。

“很忙？”艾尔说。

“还好。”我说。他看着门外。

“那是你的车？”他说，“你最好不要回家吃饭吧。在演出开始之前，估计我们又会要忙一阵。你就到罗格吃个中饭算了，回头把发票放

抽屉里就是。”

“非常感谢，”我说，“不过，我估摸着，我还能养活我自己。”

他就站在那里，像猎鹰一样盯着门口，直到我回来。好吧，他可得等上一会儿；我已经尽量想表现得好了。在我说这是最后一次之前；我得记住要立刻多弄点空白支票。但是在这一片混乱中，谁又能记住什么呢。加上今天又有这个该死的演出，我不仅要养活一大家子人，还得在整个镇上找一张空白支票，又有艾尔像老鹰一样盯着门。

我来到印务店，告诉他我想和一个朋友开个玩笑，但是他那儿什么都没有。不过，他告诉我到旧歌剧院去看看，在商农银行倒闭的时候，有人把一大堆废纸和垃圾都堆在那里。于是，我为了不让艾尔看到我，又躲过了几条小巷子，终于找到了西蒙老人，从他那里拿了钥匙，来到旧歌剧院，到处找空白支票。最终，我找到了一本圣路易斯银行的。不过，这回她肯定是会仔仔细细看清楚了的，好吧，肯定会的，我不能再浪费时间了。

我回到了商店。“忘记了点发票，我母亲喊我去银行办下。”我说。我回到座位上，写了支票。我和自己说，还好她的眼睛不太好使了。家里住着这样一个小骚货，像母亲这样虔诚的基督教徒，肯定受不了。我说你我都清楚，她长大会变成什么样子，但是如果你为了父亲的缘故，一定要把她放在自己家里抚养成人，那也是你的事。她又会开始哭哭啼啼的，说：“怎么说，那都是自己的亲骨肉。”于是，我会说没事，您爱怎么着怎么着。只要你觉得没事，我更不会有事。

我把信又塞了进去，贴好信封，走了出去。

“尽量早点回来。”艾尔说。

“好的。”我说。我走到电报局，那伙机灵孩子都在呢。

“你们谁赚了一百万没有啊？”我说。

“市场行情这么差，谁能有什么大作为啊？”医生说。

“现在怎么样？”我说。我走进去，看了看。比开票低了三个点。“你们不至于被棉花行情这点小事打击到，对吧？”我说，“我觉得你们都够机灵的，应该不会这样吧。”

“见鬼的机灵，”医生说，“十二点钟的时候可是跌了十二个点。我是输得连开裆裤都没剩下。”

“十二个点？”我说，“天杀的，怎么也没人通知我啊！你怎么不告诉我？”我生气地问报务员。

“我是收到什么信息就公布的，”他说，“我又不是开投机商号。”

“你很机灵，对吧？”我说，“在我看来，我交给你的钱，总让你有时间给我打个电话吧。还是说你们这该死的电报公司和东部的‘鲨鱼’们是一丘之貉？”

他假装很忙的样子，没说什么。

“你的裤子怕是装不下你了，”我说，“你首先要知道你是在谋生。”

“你怎么了？”医生说，“你还赚了三个点呢。”

“是的呢，”我说，“如果我早上正好抛了的话。我想我还没提到呢。你们都赔光了？”

“我被套牢两次了，”医生说，“还好，我转变得及时。”

“嗯，”艾·欧·司诺普说，“我今天走了回运。我想为了公平起见，好运偶尔也是会降临到我身上的。”

我离开了电报局，随便他们在那里一毛钱一个点地买进卖出。我找到一个黑鬼，要他去帮我把车取过来，我就站在街角等着。我没法看到艾尔一只眼睛盯着时间，一只眼睛到处扫视街上的样子，因为我站的地方看不到商店的门。等那个黑鬼回来，就像过了一个星期那么久。

“你到底死哪里去了？”我说，“是不是到处找妓女去了？”

“我已经是最快速度直接过来的了，”他说，“因为停满了马车，我必须绕着广场开过来。”

黑鬼做事情，永远都能为自己找到一个滴水不漏的借口。我上了车，绕着广场开着。我瞥到了艾尔，他在广场另一头的商店内。

我直接到厨房，告诉黛西快点开餐。

“昆汀还没有回来呢。”黛西说。

“那又怎么样？”我说，“下次你是要告诉我卢斯特还没准备好吃饭吗？昆汀知道这个家开饭的时间，却不回来。所以，现在赶快开饭。”

母亲在她自己的房子里，我把信给了她。她打开信，拿出支票，拿着支票坐在那里没动。我出去从角落里拿来了一把铲子，递给她一根火柴，说：“好啦，烧了吧。不然，你等会儿又要哭了。”

她接过火柴，但是没点燃，坐在那里，看着支票。就像我说的一

样。

“我不想这么做，”她说，“把昆汀留在这个家里，增加你的负担.....”

“我想我们过得下去的，”我说，“好了，烧了吧。”

但她只是拿着支票，坐在那里。

“这张支票不是用一个银行，”她说，“过去的都是印第安纳波利斯银行的。”

“是的，”我说，“女人总是善变的。”

“变什么？”她说。

“把钱存在两个不同的银行，”我说。

“哦。”她说。她看了一会儿支票，说：“我很高兴她那么的.....这
么的富有.....上天作证我做对了。”

“好了，”我说，“就这样吧。把它烧了开心一下。”

“开心？”她说，“当我在想.....”

“我以为你每个月把这两百块钱烧了是为了开心呢，”我说，“好了，现在就烧了吧。要我点火吗？”

“我可以接受这些支票，”她说，“为了我的孩子。我不好面子。”

“你永远都不会满足的，”我说，“你知道你不会的。你已经解决过

一次了，就一直保持这样吧。我们过得下去的。”

“我把一切都留给你了，”她说，“但是有时我很害怕，我这样做，剥夺了你本应该享受到的东西。如果你想让我接受这些支票，我就能放下我的面子接受它们。”

“既然十五年来你都是烧掉它们的，那现在开始接受的意义又在哪里呢？”我说，“如果你一直接受这些支票，你什么都没失去，但是你要是现在开始接受，你就是浪费了五万块钱。到目前为止我们都过得不错，对吧？”我说，“起码目前你还没被送到贫民窟去吧。”

“是的，”她说，“咱们巴斯康家的人不需要别人的施舍。更何况是一个堕落的女人的施舍呢。”

她划燃了火柴，点燃支票，将它放在铲子里，随之将信封也丢了进去，我们看着它们被烧掉。

“你不知道那是什么，”她说，“谢天谢地，你永远不会知道一个母亲的感受。”

“这个世界上和她差不多的女人多的是呢。”我说。

“但是她们都不是我的女儿，”她说，“不是我自己的，”她说，“我很高兴把她带回来了，不管是罪孽还是怎么的，她都是我自己的亲骨肉。这是为了昆汀。”

我说过没什么人能深深地伤害昆汀，但是就像我说的，我也不指望什么，但是我不能容忍一群女人在我想好好吃饭睡觉的时候，在房子里哭哭闹闹的。

“也是你的血脉亲人，”她说，“我知道你对她的态度。”

“让她回来吧，”我说，“就我看来的话。”

“不，”她说，“我那是为了纪念你的亡父。”

“还记得赫伯特把她赶出去后，他每次都想说服你让她回来吗？”我说。

“你不明白，”她说，“我知道你不会让我更难过。但是是我在为我的孩子受罪，”她说，“我受得了。”

“在我看来，你是把自己卷进了很多没必要的麻烦中，”我说。支票烧光了。我把它弄到了壁炉里。“在我看来，把好好的钱烧了是让人羞愧的。”我说。

“永远不要让我看到那么一天——也就是说我的小孩要接受这罪恶的工钱，”她说，“我宁愿你死，也不希望你接受。”

“你爱怎么着怎么着吧，”我说，“你想马上吃晚饭吗？”我接着说，“因为如果我们不马上吃的话，我得回去工作了。我们现在非常忙。”她站起来，说：“我和她说过了。我现在喊下她。你等一下。”于是，她走到楼梯顶，喊，“昆汀！”

“昆汀还没有回来。”黛西说。

“好吧，我得回去上班了，”我说，“我就在镇中心买个三明治吧。我不想打乱黛西的安排。”我说。于是，她又开始了，黛西则前前后后地蹒跚走动，嘀咕着：“好吧！好吧！我会尽快开饭。”

“我想尽量让你们都高兴，”母亲说，“我尽力让你容易做。”

“我没抱怨啊，是吧？”我说，“我除了说我必须回去上班之外，还说了什么吗？”

“我知道，”她说，“我知道你没有得到别人那么好的机会，所以你能只能在这个乡村小店里耗掉一生。但是我一直是想让你出人头地的。我知道你父亲肯定从来没意识到过，你才是最有商业头脑的那个。所有的事情都一败涂地的时候，她结婚的时候还有赫伯特……我都深信这一点……在他承诺过后……”

“好了，他可能也只是在撒谎，”我说，“他也许根本就没有一家什么银行。如果他真的有的话，我估摸着，他也没必要大老远地跑到密西西比河来找个员工。”

我们吃了一会儿。我能听见班在厨房的声音，卢斯特正在喂他。就像我说的，如果我们要养活另外一个人，而母亲又不愿意拿那些钱，不如直接把他送到杰克逊去好了。在那里，和差不多的人在一起，班也会高兴点。我说老天爷知道，在这个家里，没必要再在乎什么面子问题了，但是不想看到一个三十多岁的成年人和一个黑小子在院子里玩，而且只要有人打高尔夫，就围着栅栏上上下下地跑动，还不停地像牛一样嚎叫是不需要什么面子的。我说要是刚开始他们就把他送到杰克逊，那我们现在的生活会好得多。我说，对他，您已经尽到责任了；别人能指望你做的，你都做了，而且还比一般人都做得多，因此为什么不送他到杰克逊去，就当是享受点我们纳的那么多税收的福利呗。然后，她就说了：“我马上就会死了。我知道我只是你的累赘而已。”我说：“你一直这么说，我都有点相信你了。”只是我说你最好是确定一下，还有不要让我知道你离开了，因为我肯定会当晚就把他送上十七次车，而我也说

过，我知道一个能容下她的地方——这个地方既不是牛奶街也不是蜂蜜大道。然后，她开始哭了，我说没关系，没关系，我和所有人一样为我的亲人感到骄傲，即便我总是搞不清楚他们的来路。

我们吃了一会儿后，母亲又叫黛西到门口去看昆汀回来了没。

“我一直和你说，她不会回来吃晚饭。”我说。

“她再清楚不过了，”母亲说，“她知道，我不允许她在街上乱跑，还有不回来吃饭。你好好看了没，黛西？”

“那就别让她这样。”我说。

“我能做什么，”她说，“你们都不把我放在眼里。”

“只要你不插手，我会打定她的主意，”我说，“要是我，不出一天，就能把她修正了。”

“你会对她太残暴，”她说，“你的脾气和你莫里舅舅一样。”

这让我想起了那封信。我拿了出来，交给了她。“你没必要拆开，”我说，“这回银行会告诉你有多少钱。”

“这是写给你的。”她说。

“你拆开看下，”我说，她打开读了一下，交还给了我。

信上是这么写的：

我亲爱的小外甥：

你肯定很高兴，我最近得了一个机会，找到了一个工作，至于得到的原因，要等到我有机会用一种更确切的方式详细告诉你。我的商业经历让我对于用比述说更确切的方式讲述的机密事情，比较谨慎，而我这次这么谨慎则应该能让你感受到一点它的重要性。毋庸多言，我刚刚完成对这项工作各个方面的全面彻底的调查，我敢打保票，这是一个一生只有一次的宝贵机遇，我现在明确见到自己长久以来不屈不挠地追求的目标就在眼前：也就是说，我的情况会得到极度改善，而我也许能借此恢复家族的声望——只留下了我一个男嗣的巴斯康家族，当然，我是把你的作风淑女的母亲还有她的孩子们当成这个家族的一分子的。

事情是这样的，我自己没有这个能力最大限度地利用好这次机遇，所以只能依靠家庭的力量，今天我从你母亲的银行账户里取出了一小笔钱，作为我的初次投入，随信附上的是我亲笔书写的息钱八厘的借据。无须多说，这是一种形式，在这个人性不定的环境下，确保你母亲的权益。不过，我自是会把这笔钱当作是我自己的，这样你母亲就能在这个我彻查过的最好的项目中分得一杯羹——请原谅我的粗俗用语。

你会明白，这是一个商人对另一个商人的坦诚；我们一起收获我们自己的庄园，怎么样？因为知道你母亲身体不佳，还有她作为南方淑女培养起来的天然的胆怯感——对经商事宜，还有她们易于在言谈中泄露机密的特点，我建议你暂且不要向你母亲提及此事。再一想，我建议你就不要告诉她了。最好是在将来某一天，我将之与其他小额借款一起存入银行，而不告知她。保护她不受俗气的物质世界影响，是我们的职责。

你亲爱的舅舅

巴斯康·莫里

“您想怎么做？”我说，将信飞过了桌子。

“我知道你不乐意我把钱给他。”她说。

“那是您的钱，”我说，“就算您想用来喂鸟，那也是您的事。”

“他是我的亲兄弟，”母亲说，“他是巴斯康家族最后一个男丁了。我们死后，巴斯康家族就断后了。”

“我想那对有些人来说是很残忍的，”我说，“好了，好了，”我说，“那是您的钱。您想怎么花就怎么花。您想让我告诉银行，支付款项吗？”

“我知道你对他有怨言，”她说，“我知道你肩上的担子很重，等我死后，就会好很多了。”

“我现在就能让自己轻松点，”我说，“好了，好了，我不会再提了。只要你愿意，你可以把所有的神经病都招进来。”

“他可是你的亲兄弟，”她说，“就算他患病了。”

“我要带上你的存折，”我说，“我今天要兑换支票。”

“他让你等了六天，”她说，“你确定这事靠得住不？我觉得很奇怪，一个有支付能力的企业会没法及时给它的员工发工资。”

“他没问题，”我说，“就和银行一样可靠。我告诉他直到我们结清每个月的账务，才给我找事做。这就是为什么有时会晚一点。”

“我只是不忍心看你损失我为你投资的这一小笔钱，”她说，“我总是觉得艾尔不是一个什么好商人。我知道虽然你在里边投了钱，但是他

不够信任你。我要和他谈谈。”

“不，别管他，”我说，“那是他的店。”

“你在里边有一千块钱。”

“你别管他，”我说，“我在盯着呢。我有你的委托代理权，没事的。”

“你都不知道你给了我多大的安慰，”她说，“你一直是我的骄傲和快乐，当你自愿把你每月的工资存入我的银行账户的时候，我有多么感谢上帝，如果他们都被带走了，还好留下的那个是你。”

“他们都没错，”我说，“我想他们都尽力了。”

“我知道你这么说，就是对你父亲还是有怨言的，”她说，“不过，我知道你有权怨恨。但是听你这么说，我的心都碎了。”

我站起来。“如果你要哭的话，”我说，“你就自己一个人哭吧，因为我要回去上班了。我去拿走存折。”

“我去拿吧。”她说。

“你不要动，”我说，“我去拿。”我走上去，从她的抽屉里拿出存折，回到了镇上。我到银行，把支票、汇单还有那十块钱一并存了进去，就停在了电报局。现在比开盘时高了一个点。我已经损失了十三个点了，都是因为该死的她居然十二点钟的时候跑过来，拿那封信的事让我分心担忧。

“那个报告是什么时候到的？”我说。

“大概一个小时之前。”他说。

“一个小时之前？”我说，“我们付钱给你干什么的？”我说，“周报？你怎么能指望一个人有所作为呢？就是整个屋顶都被掀掉了，我们也还蒙在鼓里。”

“我没指望你有什么作为，”他说，“他们修改了法律，人们不能在棉花市场有所作为了。”

“真的？”我说，“我没听说啊。这消息准是通过西部联合公司公布的吧。”

我回到商店。十三点。鬼才信有人知道这里边的门道呢，除了那些坐在纽约办公室里的人，坐在办公室里等着乡巴佬儿们恳求他们收下其手里的钱。好吧，刚打电话的那个人明显对自己没信心了，就像我说的，如果你不听信建议的话，付钱给他们就没有意义了。而且，这些人都是真正的内行人；他们知道正在发生的所有事。我能感觉到衣兜里的电报。我只是需要证明他们在用电报局欺诈。那就可以证明这是一个投机公司了。我从来也不会犹豫这么久。只是见鬼，也只有像西联一样实力雄厚的大公司才能及时发布公告。他们会用一半快的速度给你发一封电报说：“您的账户已抛售。”但是他妈的，他们才不管谁的死活呢！他们和那帮纽约人是一伙的——这瞎子都看得出来。

我进来的时候，艾尔看了下表。但是他没说什么，直到顾客离开，他才说：“你回家吃晚饭了？”

“我得去看牙医。”我说。因为虽然我在哪里吃饭和他没什么关系，但是我还要和他在店里待上整整一个下午。在我遭的这些罪之后，还得受他的罪。就像我说的，你把微不足道的乡村店长的话也听进去的话，

那只有五百块钱的人也能做出五万块钱的样子了。

“你应该告诉我的，”他说，“我以为你立马就会回来。”

“我随时愿意倒贴十块，把这颗蛀牙卖给你，”我说，“我们约定的是一个小时的晚餐时间，”我说，“如果你对我的做法不满意的话，你知道你能怎么做的。”

“我早就知道了，”他说，“如果不是看在你母亲的面子上，我早就开除你了。她是一个淑女，我很同情她，杰生。非常糟糕的是，我不能和其他认识的人说这么多。”

“那你就保持吧，”我说，“当我们需要同情的时候，我会早早地告诉你。”

“就你做的那个事，我已经替你藏了很久了，杰生。”他说。

“什么？”我说，放开他。在我让他闭嘴之前，我想听听他要说什么。

“我相信我比她清楚，那辆车是怎么来的。”

“你是这么以为的，是吗？”我说，“那你打算什么时候传播开来，说我的车是从我妈那里偷来的？”

“我什么也没说，”他说，“我知道你有她的委托代理权。她也还以为那一千块钱还投在这个店里吧。”

“好吧，”我说，“既然你已经知道那么多了，我就再告诉你多一点：你到银行去问问，我十二年来每个月月初都是存了一百六十块钱到

谁的账户里。”

“我没说什么，”他说，“我只是告诉你，经过了这件事之后小心点。”

我不会再说什么，说了没用的。我发现，碰到一个固执己见的人，最好是让他自生自灭。然而，当你碰到一个自认为是为了你好，就要对你进几句忠言的人时，最好的办法是直接和他说再见——晚安。我很庆幸，我的良心不像一只脆弱的小宠物狗——需要时时呵护安慰。如果我和他一样，要费尽心思让他的小生意风生水起，又不能盈利超过百分之八的话，那也没什么活头了。我估摸着他是以为一旦他的盈利超过百分之八的话，政府就会用重利法对付他。一个困在这样的乡镇、这样的小本生意上的男人，能得到什么鬼机会呢？为什么我能做到——接管他的生意一年就能让他下半生无忧，只是他会全部捐给教会吧。我最讨厌的莫过于伪善者了。一个认为什么事情只要存在他不懂的地方，就需要改变的人，还有只要 he 知道了，就算不关他什么事，也认为道义上 he 必须告诉其他人的人。如果我也是一个认为只要一个人做了什么我不懂的事情，就存在猫腻的人的话，我估计我肯定能在后台的账本上找出一些什么，不过，你也会看到这没什么必要让我跑去告诉那些我认为不知道这些猫腻的人，因为人家很可能知道的比我还多，就算他们真的不知道，也不关我什么事。他说：“任何人都可以看我的账本。任何人提出要求，或者在我这里享有任何权益的女士，都可以看，我也很欢迎。”

“你当然不会说，”我说，“这样做，你说服不了自己的良心。你只会把她带到后面，让她自己找。你自己肯定不会说出来。”

“我无意插手你的事情，”他说，“我知道你和昆汀一样，错过了一些事情。但是，你的母亲也生活得很不幸，如果她到我这里来问你为什

么辞职不干的话，我必须告诉她。你知道的，这不是因为那一千美元的事。而是因为一个人如果台面和事实不符的话，是走不远的。因而，我不会对任何人说谎，不管为了我自己还是别人。”

“那好吧，”我说，“我估摸着你的良心比我的更值钱；中午别回来吃中饭了，别让这件事影响我的食欲。”我是这样说的，因为在这样一个鬼家庭里，还有这样一个妈，我能做什么正确的事。我妈根本不做任何事情约束加迪，或者约束任何人，比方说，有一次，她正好撞见一个小伙子在亲吻加迪，第二天，她就开始穿着黑衣黑纱在房子里荡来荡去，甚至我父亲都没法让她开口，就是一直哭，然后说她的小女儿已经死了。可是，那时候，加迪还只有15岁，照这样下去，不出三年，我妈就得穿粗毛布衬衣，甚至还是砂纸糊的。我说，你认为我能忍受看着她和每个到镇上的推销员一起在街上晃荡吗？而他们会告诉路上碰到的推销员，在杰克逊，上哪儿找热辣妹。我并不是死要面子的人，我不能够放弃一个州立神经病医院的优秀新生，却养着一群黑鬼。我说，血、统治者和将军。如果我们从来就没有国王、总统什么的，该有多美好啊，这样，我们每个人都能去杰克逊捕蝴蝶了。我说，如果是我的话，会有点糟糕；不过，至少我会一开始就确定这是个杂种，如今，就算是上帝也说不清道不明了。

不久，我听到乐队开始演奏了，然后，人都开始走光了——大家都去听表演去了。他们在买两毛钱的缰绳上讨价还价，就是为了省出一毛五分钱去听演奏——送钱给那帮北方佬儿。我出门，走到了后院。

“好吧，”我说，“如果你不小心的话，那颗螺钉会长到你的手心里。然后，我只好拿一把斧子，砍掉它。如果你不把这些中耕机弄好，然后种上庄稼的话，你认为那些新工人靠什么吃饭啊？”我说，“难不成让他们吃鼠尾草？”

“他们的号角吹得真不错呢，”他说，“有人和我说这次有个人能表演用手锯弹曲子呢，就像弹班卓琴一样。”

“听着，”我说，“你可知道他们要在我们镇上演出，得付多少钱吗？差不多十美元呢，现在这钱正收在巴克·特尔宾的衣兜里。”

他说：“他们为什么要给巴克·特尔宾先生钱？”

“为了能在这里演出呗，”我说，“这样，你能算出他们为了给你们演出，所要付出的代价了吧。”

“你说他们为了在这里演出给我们看，还要支付十块钱？”他说。

“没错，”我说，“不然，你以为是多少……”

“天哪，”他说，“你的意思是，为了演出给我们看，他们居然被要求交钱了？照我说，就算要我出十块钱，看那个人表演拉手锯，那我也是愿意的啊。照这么算，到明天早上，我们就欠他们九毛六分钱了。”

然后，北方佬就会说服你让黑人前进了。我总说，让黑人前进，就前进吧！走得远远的，最好是整个路易斯维尔南部牵着警犬也再找不着一个黑鬼。因为当我告诉他星期六晚上他们会怎么收拾行囊，然后带着至少千元离开村里的时候，他说：“我不会吝惜的，我付得起我的两毛五分钱。”

“见鬼的两毛五，”我说，“两毛五都不够零头的。你用来买糖什么的那一毛钱硬币或者一毛五分钱不是钱啊，而且你买到的还是一盒只值两分钱的糖。还有，你用来看表演所浪费的时间呢？”

“的确是，”他说，“而且，如果我今天晚上活得好的话，那我

要捐出两毛五，他们又要多带走两毛五。”

“那你就是个彻头彻尾的蠢货！”我说。

“好吧，”他说，“我也不和你争论这个。如果蠢也有错的话，那么苦工队的人就不会都是黑人了。”

当时，我正好抬头看巷子里，就看到了她。当我退一步看表的时候，也没注意到他是谁，因为我正在看表。还只有两点半，除了我之外，大家都以为她要四十五分钟之后才会出去。所以，当我在门口望的时候，我第一个注意到的就是他的红色领带，当时我想到到底是什么人才会戴红色的领带啊！但是她边注视着门边，边在沿着巷子溜走，所以，直到他们走出了我的视野，我才开始琢磨他的事。我很好奇，她是不是如此不尊敬我，不把我看在眼里，导致她不但在我严令禁止的情况下逃学，而且生怕我看不见似的，要从我的店铺前面经过。只是她看不清店里的情况，因为太阳直射进来，要看清楚里面，就像要透过汽车探照灯看进来一样，所以我站在原地看着她经过。她的脸上画得乱七八糟的，就像个小丑一样，头发卷起来了，上面全是发胶，都粘住了一样，穿的裙子短到只能遮住大腿和屁股——在我那个年代，就算是在各约苏或者比尔街上，要是有人穿这样出来，是会被送进监狱的。我打赌，女人们这么穿的目的，就是想让街上每个经过的男人都禁不住要伸出手在她身上摸一把。当我在想那个戴红领带的究竟是一个什么样的男人的时候，我突然意识到他是戏团的人，我就像是听她亲口说了一样确定他的身份。好吧，我是一个能忍辱负重的人，如果不是这样的话，只怕我如今境况会非常糟糕，所以当他们拐角之后，我跳起来，跟出去了。大下午的，我连帽子都没有戴，为了我妈妈的好名声，必须在巷子里跟着上下走动。就像我说的，如果是与生俱来的，你可以和这样的女人做任何事情。如果是她骨子里就下贱，你倒是可以和她做任何事。你唯一能做的

就是不和她扯上关系，让她和下贱的人为伴，去自生自灭吧。

我走到了街上，但是跟丢了他们。现在，我没戴帽子站在这里，我感觉我自己也疯了似的。就像人们自然会这么想：一个疯了，另一个溺水而亡了，还有一个被她丈夫扫地出门了，有什么理由能说剩下的其他人不是也疯了呢。我随时都有被秃鹰盯上的感觉，他们在等待一个告诉我的时机——是的，我不奇怪，我一直知道你们全家人都疯了。卖地供他上哈佛以及长期纳税资助一个州立大学，而这个州立大学除了棒球联赛的时候，我进去看过两次之外，我从来没进去过，她也不准女儿的名字在这里提起，直到不久之后，父亲不再来镇上，而只是整天整天地抱着酒壶坐在那里，我能够看到他的睡衣的里面以及他的光腿，也能听到酒壶空了的声音，直到最后T.P.为他再灌入酒，而他还说你不尊重你的亡父，我说哪有，我对他的记忆一直好好地扎根在我的脑海里，除非我也疯了，而上帝知道我会做什么。我只要看到水就感到恶心，我会风一样快地迅速咽下汽油和一杯威士忌。罗恩告诉他们他不会喝酒，但是如果你们不相信他是个男人，我可以告诉你们怎么找出来。她说如果让我抓到你和哪个娼妇鬼混的话，我会给你点颜色瞧瞧。她说我会抽她，只要让我找到她，抓住她，我会尽可能地抽她。她说。我也说如果我不喝酒那是我的事情，但是你要是看到我没酒，我说我会买很多的啤酒，多到能让你在里面洗澡，因为我很尊敬一个实心眼的娼妇。为了我母亲的身体和我的职位，我试图扶持她，但是这女人一点儿都不感激我为她所做的一切，而是存心坏了自己的、我的还有我母亲的名声，让我们都成为了镇上的笑柄。

不知道她溜到哪里去了，估计是看到我来了，就闪进了另一条巷子——和一个戴着红色领带的戏子在小巷子里上蹿下跳，每个经过的人都会看到他们，然后心里嘀咕着：“什么样的男人会戴红色的领带？”好吧，

小伙子一直在我耳边说，所以我在不知情的情况下收下了一封电报。直到我签字的时候，我才意识到这是电报，我撕开它，都没怎么注意是什么东西。我约莫我一直是有料到会是什么的。反正，这是唯一可能发生的事情，尤其是一直拖着，直等到我把支票存到存折上才发生。

我看，也只有纽约那样的大城市能存在那么多敲乡下人竹杠的人了。每天累得一头牛似的，然后把你的钱送给人家，得到一张小纸条，说您的账户收盘价为20.62元。一路哄骗你，让你只在纸上得到一点甜头，然后平庸地在20.62收盘。如果那还不够的话，就可以花十块钱一个月让一个人告诉你怎样更快地流失钱，这个人要么就是完全不懂，要么就是和电报公司是一丘之貉。好了，我受够了他们。这是他们最后一次从我身上“吸血”。只有连犹太人说的鬼话都分辨不出的人，能说行情会一直看涨，在这样一个年头——和去年一样，大坝可能会又一次被冲毁，所有棉花都会拔地而起。年复一年，人们的庄稼都被冲走了，可是华盛顿的官员们只顾每天花费五万军费干涉尼加拉瓜等地方。很明显，今年又要涨洪水了，然后棉花会稀缺到卖三毛钱一磅。唉，我真想给他们一次打击，然后我也能赢回我的钱。我不是想大捞一笔，只有小镇上的赌徒才会这么干，我只想拿回自己的钱——被犹太人所谓的可靠内部消息骗走的钱。然后，我就金盆洗手不干了；他们再想在我这里骗走一分钱，是绝对不可能了的。

我回到商店里的时候，差不多都三点半了。这个时候了，基本上做不了任何事情了，不过我也习惯了。这个我从来就是知道的。乐队已经停止演奏了。观众都进场了，乐手们没必要再费尽力气了。

艾尔说：“那个小伙子找到你了吧？不久之前，他到这里来找了你。我还以为你在后院里呢。”

“找到了，”我说，“我拿到东西了。他们不至于一整个下午都找不到我，咱们镇子太小了。我得回家一会儿。”我说，“你要是觉得扣我钱会让你好受一点，那就扣吧。”

“没事，你回去吧，”他说，“现在我应付得过来。不过，我希望不是什么坏消息。”

“你必须到电报局去打听打听，”我说，“他们会有时间告诉你的。不过，不好意思，我没这个时间。”

“我只是随便问问，”他说，“你母亲知道我是她可以依赖的。”

“她会感激的，”我说，“我会尽快回来的。”

“没关系，不用急，”他说，“这个时候，我应付得过来。你回去吧。”

我取了车，回家了。今早上一次，中午两次，现在再一次，都是为了她，在全镇范围内追着她跑，还必须请求他们给我吃点我自己买的东西。有时候，我不禁要问有什么意义呢。有我自己已经设定的先例，再这样下去，我必定要疯掉。现在，我估摸着我能及时赶到家，然后开一段路去拿一篮西红柿什么的，然后，带着一身的樟脑味回到镇上，只有这样，我的头才不会炸掉。我总是告诉她，阿司匹林什么用都没有，就是面粉和水做的，只对那些想象自己有病的人有用。我说你都不知道什么是头痛。我说如果我能完全依我自己的话，我根本不愿意摆弄那辆破车。我说没车，我照样能活得好好的，我早学会了在缺失很多东西的情况下好好活着，但是如果你愿意冒险，和一个毛还没长全的黑小子一起坐那辆破烂不堪的马车，也没关系，因为我说老天会惠顾班这一类人的，上帝知道他应该为班做点什么，但是如果你认为我会放心把一个价

值千元的娇贵的机器放到一个毛没长全或者长全了的黑小子手上，你最好自己给他买一辆，因为我说你喜欢开车，而你也不知道你的确喜欢开车。

黛西说她在屋里。我走到大厅，听了一会儿，但是什么都没听到。我上了楼，但是就在我要过她的房门的时候，她叫住了我。

“我正想知道那是谁，”她说，“我太常一个人待在这里了，所以任何声响都逃不过我的耳朵。”

“您没必要待在这里，”我说，“如果您愿意，您可以像所有女人一样，成天在外面串门。”她走到门口。

“我想您可能生病了，”他说，“吃饭总是打战似的。”

“希望下次幸运点，”我说，“您想要什么？”

“出什么事了吗？”她说。

“哪能啊？”我说，“我下午的时候，中途回来一趟，有必要这么大反应吗？”

“你看到昆汀了吗？”她说。

“她在学校。”我回答道。

“现在过了三点了，”她说，“我听到敲钟，起码是半个小时之前的事了。她现在也该回来了。”

“是吗？”我说，“您什么时候在天黑之前见过她吗？”

“她该回来了，”她说，“我是个姑娘家的时候……”

“您有人管，”我说，“但是，她没有。”

“我真的拿她没辙了，”她说，“我左也试了，右也试了。”

“那您还不愿意让我试试，”我说，“所以您就知足吧。”我继续向自己的房间走去。我很轻松地开了门，站在那里，直到有人转动门把。然后听到她说：“杰生。”

“怎么？”我答道。

“我只是想到有点不对劲。”

“不是这里，”我说，“你走错地方了。”

“我不是想打搅你。”她说。

“那就好，”我说，“我方才不是很确定。我还以为我听错了呢，您需要什么？”

过了一会儿，她说：“不，没什么。”然后，就走开了。我拿下盒子，数了数钱，然后把盒子重新藏好后，开了门出去了。我在想樟脑，但是无论如何，现在可能太晚了。我可能只需要再来回跑一趟。她在门口等我。

我问她：“您想让我在镇上帮您捎点什么吗？”

“不是，”她说，“我没想掺和你的事情。杰生，但是我不知道如果你发生什么事情，我会怎么办。”

“我没事，”我说，“只是有点头痛。”

“我希望你能吃点阿司匹林，”她说，“我知道你还是会开车。”

“和车子有什么关系？”我说，“车子怎么能让人头痛。”

“你知道，汽油总是让你恶心，”她说，“从你还是个孩子的时候就这样了。我希望你能吃点阿司匹林。”

“您就这么希望着吧，”我说，“反正对您没害处。”

我上了车，准备回城。我刚转到路上，就看到一辆福特朝我笔直开过来。还好，它又突然停下了。我都能听到轮胎打滑的声音，接着车子打转、掉头，飞快地开走了，就在我在想到底是怎么回事的时候，我看到了那条红领带。我看到它又打了一个转，而就在我开到后街的时候，它就不见了，开得快得要飞。

我都气炸了。在我告诉了她一切之后，当我认出那条红领带的时候，我就什么都不记得了。甚至直到第一个岔路口，我必须停下的时候，我才开始想到我的头痛。我们一次次地花钱修路，为什么见鬼地，这条路就像开过一片瓦楞铁皮屋面一样。我很想知道，在这样的路上，一个人怎么追得上甚至是一辆手推车。我还是太爱惜我的车子了；我没法像他开那辆破福特一样，让它颠成碎片都没关系。有可能那辆车是他们偷的，所以没什么需要在乎的。就像我经常说的，血缘起决定作用。如果你身上也是流着那样的血，你也什么事都做得出来。我说你若认为自己对她有什么义务的话，现在也没有了；我说从现在起，你只能怪自己，因为你明明知道一个头脑清醒的人该做什么。我说如果我有一半的时间要做一个该死的侦探的话，起码我要去会付我钱的地方做。

所以，我必须在这个岔路口停下。然后，我记起来了我的头痛，就像有人用锤子在里面敲打它一样。我说我已经尽力让你不被她所扰；我说就我而言，她既然愿意的话，就让她下地狱吧，越快越好。我说你还在指望什么呢，现在只有那些来镇上的推销员和下贱戏子和她相好了，因为现在镇上的懦夫们都不搭理她了。你不知道发生了什么，我说你没有听到我听到的那些闲言碎语，所以你可以以为我堵住了他们所有人的嘴。在你全家就守着这个村里的小铺面，和种一点黑鬼都嫌少的地时，我家里可是有大把的黑奴。

如果他们真的种过地也好。上帝厚待了这块土地，这本是件好事，但是住在这里的人们就没干过什么好事了。现在是星期五下午，从我所在的位置，我能看到三里内的土地就没有犁过，而村里的所有劳动力都去看那场表演去了。我要是一个饿得要死的陌路人，甚至也在这里找不到一个人问路——怎么进镇？而她一直在试图要我吃阿司匹林。我说我要是吃面包就会在餐桌边吃。我说你总在抱怨你为我们放弃了多少多少——而你每年用来买那些贵得死的专利药的钱，都够你买上十来条新裙子了。我不是要找灵丹妙药，我需要的仅仅是喘息一下——不要再让我吃阿司匹林了。但是只要我必须每天工作十个小时来养一厨房的黑鬼——一大帮子被惯坏了的黑鬼，还要送他们去看什么鬼表演，不过，镇上的所有黑鬼都在这里，但是不管怎样，只要是这样，我就好不了。只是我碰到的这个黑鬼现在已经迟到了，等他赶到，戏该早演完了。

过了一会儿，他上了我的车，当我终于和他说明白，我是想问是不是看到有两个人开一辆福特车经过的时候，他回答了“是的”。于是，我继续追上去，当我来到车路拐弯的地方，我看到了轮胎印。阿贝·罗素就在地里，但是我不想打扰他，而就在我还能看到他的牲口棚的时候，我见到了那辆福特。他们试图将它藏起来，但是就和她做其他所

有事情一样，干得不怎么样。并不是说我有多看不惯她；也许她也沒辦法，但是因为她甚至不为自己的家庭考虑，不慎重起见，所以是她确实做得不应该。我一直很担心，会在路中间或者广场下的车上碰到一对发情狗一样的他们。

我停了车，走出来。现在，我需要到处瞧瞧，还要穿过一片犁过的田地——这是我出镇后第一次见到的犁过的土地，我走的每一步都像有个人跟着我在走，并且在用棍棒不断地打我的头。我总想一旦我穿过了这片田地，至少会有点平路可以走吧，这样就不至于每一步都这么颠簸了，但是当我来到树林的时候，我发现这里满是矮木丛，而我需要七拐八拐地绕过它们前行，然后我就看到了一个满是荆棘的壕沟。我围着它走了一段时间，但是我发现荆棘越来越密，而且艾尔有可能一直在打电话到我家，问我去哪里了，而这会让我母亲更加着急。

当我终于走出来的时候，因为我已经左绕右绕了那么多次，我只能停下来，仔细辨认汽车停的方位。我知道他们不会离停车的地方有多远，应该就在最近的灌木丛下边，所以我掉头，转回到了马路上。因为当下我不能确定我走了多远，所以我必须停下来，打探打探情况。而此时随着我腿部所需血液变少，它们全部聚集到了我的脑子上，弄得我的头随时要爆炸似的。而此时太阳开始下山了，正好直射在我所处的位置，而我的耳朵耳鸣了，所以我也听不出个所以然。我试图安静地往前走，然后我听到了狗吠之类的，我知道只要让它闻到我的气味，它就会开始狂吠，那一切都会失控了。

我身上沾满了各种毛毛草草、小树枝什么的，衣服里和鞋子里到处都是。然后，我不经意间到处望了一下，正好发现我的手在一丛毒葛上。我唯一理解不了的就是为什么只是毒葛，而不是一条毒蛇或者其他什么致命的东西。所以，我没怎么在意，也没动，只是站在原地等那只

狗离开。然后，我就继续向前走了。

这会儿，我压根儿就不晓得车子在哪个方位了。除了我的头，我根本没法顾及其他事情。我一直站在一个地方，甚至开始怀疑我是否真的看到了那辆福特车，不过，我都不是真的在乎我是否看到了。就像我说的，我不在乎，让她自生自灭去吧——随便她整天整夜地在外面和镇上哪个男人勾搭都没关系。完全不在乎我的人，我对她也就没什么责任可言，再说，这太过分了——把福特停在这里，让我花了一整个下午找人，然后还让艾尔带她到后面看账本，只是因为他实在太善良了。我说你在天堂也会不好过的，因为没法卷进任何人的事情里。你最好别让我抓住你，我睁一只眼闭一只眼全是为了你外婆，只要让我抓到在我母亲家干一次这种事情，你就完蛋了。这些油头小子，自以为有多大能耐，我倒是要让他们看看，你也给我等着——我会让他知道想带着我外甥女在树林里乱来，那红领带就是下地狱的催命锁。

随着阳光整个照进我的眼睛里，我的血液沸腾了，所以我不断地觉得我的脑袋要炸了，然后又克服这种情绪。随着有荆棘什么的挂在我的衣物上，我来到了它们所在的沙坑，我认出了停车的地方的那棵树，但是，就在我走出沟坑的时候，我听到了车子发动的声音。他把车子开得轰鸣作响，而且速度极快地开走了。他们长按喇叭，就像在说“呀！呀！来追呀”，然后，就消失在了视野里。我走到路上的时候，正好看得到它开远。

我走到我车子旁边的时候，他们已经完全不见了，不过还能听见不断作响的喇叭声。好吧，除了我在想“赶快”之外，我压根没想什么。赶快回镇上。赶快回家，让我母亲确信我没在那辆车上见过你。尽量让她相信，我真的不知道那个男的是谁。尽量让她相信，这不是真的：我只有十步之差导致没有在那个沟坑里逮到你。也尽量让她相信你一直是向

上的。

车子一直发出“呀！呀”的声音，只是声音越来越弱。然后就听不见了，我听见一头奶牛在罗素的牲口棚里低声叫着。不过，这仍然没进到我的脑子里。我只是走到门边，打开门，抬脚。当时，我觉得车子有点斜，比路面的斜度还要斜一点，但是我也没找出什么问题，直到我坐上去，发动车子的时候我才发现问题所在。

哎，我只好就坐在那里。太阳要下山了，而这离镇上还有五英里远。他们甚至没胆子把轮胎刺穿，打个洞什么的，只是把气给放了。我只是站了一会儿，想到那一厨房的黑鬼，我养着他们，他们却没有一个人有时间帮我在架子上装上一个备用胎和拧几个螺丝。这有点可笑，因为她不会这么有远见，故意把打气筒拿了出来，除非可能是她在看他放气的时候想到的。但是有可能是，有人把它拿了出来，给了班当水枪玩，因为只要是班想要的，这群人就算把汽车拆成碎片也不会在意，不过，黛西说：“没有人会碰你的车的。我们玩你的车干吗？”我说，你是一个幸运的黑鬼，知道吗？我说，我随时想和你交换，因为现在白人除了每天担心一个小荡妇的行踪之外，没有什么可干的了。

我朝着罗素家的农场走去，他有打气筒的。我估摸着他们没想到这一点。只是我仍然不敢相信，她有这个胆量。我总是在想这个事情。我不知道为什么我似乎不能接受现实——就是一个荡妇会做任何事情。我一直在想，让我消停一会儿吧，让我暂且忘记对你的憎恶，以及你对我的漠不关心：我反正是没法这样对你的。不管你做了什么，我都不可能这么对你。就像我说的，血缘就是血缘，你躲不过的。这不是开一个八岁小孩的玩笑，而是你让你的亲舅舅被嘲笑，还是被一个戴着红领带的男人。他们到我们镇上，嘲笑我们是一群乡巴佬，还认为我们这个小镇装不下他们。好吧，他不知道他说得对极了。昆汀也是。如果那就是她所

想的，那她最好滚开——这他妈的真是一种解脱啊！

我停下来，还了罗素的打气筒之后，开始返回镇上。我到药店，打了一针之后去了电报局。收盘价是20.21元，跌了40个点。那可是四十个五块钱啊！如果可以的话，你就拿这些钱去买点东西吧，然后她就会说：“我必须拿到它，我非要不可。”我就会说：“那太不好意思了，如果这样，你只能去找别人了。我没钱，我没那个时间去赚钱。”

我只是看着他。

“我要告诉你一些消息，”我说，“你会很惊奇的，那就是我对棉花市场感兴趣。”我接着说，“你从来没想到，对吧？”

他说：“我已经尽力想把这个交给你了。”这时，他边在抽屉里找东西，边说，“我去商店找了你好两次，也打电话到你家了，但是他们都不知道你在哪里。”

“你想给我什么？”我回答道。他递给我一份电报。我问：“这是什么时候到的？”

他回答说：“大概三点半。”

“但是现在已经五点十分了。”我说。

“我想给你的，”他说，“但是我找不到你。”

“那不是我的错吧。”我说。我打开电报，只是想看看这次他们会用什么谎话来骗我。他们的状况肯定很糟糕，都需要不远千里到密西西比河来骗我的十块钱一个月。电报上说：“廉价出清。”市场会出现波动，但是整体行情是看跌的。按照官方的说法，就是无须惊慌。

“打这样一份电报要多少钱？”我问。他告诉了我。

“他们已经付过钱了。”他说。

“那么，我只欠他们这么多，”我说，“我已经知道行情了。帮我发这个。”我边说，边抽出一张单子。买进，市场行情即将上扬，会大涨，我写道。这是为了引一些还没到电报局了解情况的乡巴佬上钩，才偶尔放出来制造恐慌的。别被吓着了。“帮我发了。”我说。

他看了看内容，然后看了看表说：“一个小时之前就已经收盘了。”

“好吧，”我说，“这也不是我的错。这又不是我发明的。我只是买进了一点，总是以为电报公司会通知我行情的涨落的。”

“我们只要收到报告，马上就粘贴出来了的。”他说。

“没错，”我说，“但是，在孟菲斯，人家每十秒钟就在黑板上公布一次。今天下午，我到过离这里不到六七十米的地方。”

他看了看电报，问：“你想寄这个？”

“我没改变主意，”我说。我写好了另一封电报，还数了数电报费。“如果你确定你会写‘买进’，那还有这个，帮我也寄了。”

我回到了商店里。我能听到乐队在街上演奏的声音。“禁酒”真是个好事儿。过去，他们总是在周六穿着家里唯一的一双鞋进城来，然后到快递公司取包裹；现在，他们都光脚去看演出，而站在门口的商人看着他们经过，就像一队笼子里放出来的老虎之类的。

艾尔说：“我希望不是什么严重的事情。”

“什么？”我说。他看着他的表。然后，他走到门边，看了看法院大楼的钟。“你应该买个美元对表，”我说，“这不会让你花那么多钱来次次怀疑自己的表不对。”

“什么？”他问。

“没什么，”我说，“希望没给你带来什么不便。”

“我们不怎么忙，”他说，“他们都去看演出了，没事。”

“如果有关系的话，”我说，“你知道你能怎么办。”

“我都说了没关系了。”他说。

“我听到了，”我说，“但是，你知道如果有关系的话，你能怎么做。”

“你想辞职吗？”他说。

“没我什么事，”我说，“我的意愿不重要。但是，不要有这样的想法，也就是不要觉得你把我留在这里，是在保护我。”

“杰生，如果好好干的话，你会是一个很好的商人。”他说。

“至少我能只顾好自己的事，而不去管别人的闲事。”我说。

“我不知道为什么你想逼我解雇你，”他说，“你知道任何时候，你想不干了，都可以辞职的，而这也不会影响我们两个人的关系。”

“也许那就是我不愿意辞职的原因，”我说，“只要我还在做这个工作，你就在为此付我薪水。”我走到后边喝了杯水，然后从后门出去

了。乔布（Job）总算装好了所有的中耕机。现在这里很安静，很快，我的头就舒服点了。现在，我可以听到他们的歌声和乐队的奏乐声。好吧，让他们赚走这个村上的所有钱吧，反正也不是在剥我的皮。我能做的都做了；长到我这么大，都不知道适可而止那就是个白痴了。尤其是，这本来就不关我的事。如果现在跑出去的是我的亲女儿又不一样，因为她不会有这个时间的；她必须做点事情，去养活那几个病号、傻子和黑鬼。不过，我怎么会有女儿，因为我怎么能有脸带任何人回家，我对每个人的尊重，是不会允许我这么做的。我是一个男子汉，我受得了，那是我的血脉亲人，我倒是想看看那个对我熟识的女子说不敬之词的男人的眼睛是什么颜色的。做这种事的都是那些个好女人，我倒是想看看那些正经的、经常去教堂做礼拜的女人是什么货色，有没有罗恩一半正经，是不是婊子。就像我说的，如果我想结婚，你知道，你会像气球一样，瞬间膨胀，而她会问，我希望你开心——有一个自己的家庭，而不是为了我们禁锢你的人生。但是，我已经不久于世了，然后你需要找一个老婆，但是你会发现没有人配得上你，而我说，不，我能找到的。你知道你会直接从你的坟墓里跳出来。我说，不用了，现在我有够多的女人要照顾了，如果我结婚，没准会发现娶的是个毒鬼呢。我说，我们家现在只缺这号人物了。

太阳已经西沉到卫理公会教堂之后了，鸽子们在绕着尖塔前后飞，当乐队歇息的时候，我能听到它们的咕咕叫。圣诞节过去还不到四个月，可是鸽子们又和以前一样多了。我估摸着现在沃尔索尔

（Waltham）牧师肚里都是鸽子肉。他可能以为我们是在朝人开枪，他发表很多演说，甚至有人持枪过来的时候，会抓住他们的枪杆。他谈论什么和平降临大地啊，善待一切生灵啊，还有连麻雀都不能打。但是，他也不管鸽子变得多么的多，他无事可做：他在乎什么呢，也不用在乎时间。他又不纳税，也不用每年看着自己的钱被用来清洗法院大楼的

钟，为了让它走得精准些——这可得花四十五块钱请人做呢。我数了数，地上有超过一百只半孵化的鸽子。他以为，它们会晓得离开这个镇子。我只能说，还好，我的亲戚没有鸽子多。

乐队又开始奏乐了，一首快节奏的歌，很大的声音，就像他们要崩溃了似的。我估摸着现在他们该感到满足了。也许他们在驱车回家的路上，那十四五英里的路途中都有歌声萦绕于耳了，还有晚上喂牲口、挤牛奶的时候，也一样。他们能做的就是吹吹调子，和牲口棚里的牲畜说说笑话，然后再算算，因为没把这些牲畜也带去看戏，省下了多少银子。他们也可以这么算，如果一个人有五个小孩、七头骡子，他花两毛五就能让全家都看到演出，诸如此类的。艾尔带着两个包裹回来了。

“又有一些货要发出去，”他说，“乔布大叔在哪里？”

“我猜是去看戏了吧，”我说，“除非你看到他了。”

“他不会悄悄溜走的，”他说，“这个我是可以相信他的。”

“那意思就是我会喽。”我说。

他走到门边，边向外张望边在听。

“乐队真不赖！”他说，“我说，差不多是散场的时候了。”

“除非他们打算在那里过夜。”我说。燕子开始纷飞了，我也可以听到麻雀在法院大院的树中穿插的声音。每过一会儿，就能看到屋顶上又飞来一群，在打转，然后又飞走。就我看来，它们和鸽子一样讨人厌。因为它们，你压根没法在法院院子里久待。你知道，第一个就是，砰的一声，一坨屎就正好落在你的帽子上。但是，因为打一次麻雀要五分钱，只有百万富翁才支付得起这费用。其实只要在场地上撒点毒药，不

出一天，就能把它们都清理掉。因为如果哪个商人要是管不住自己的禽鸟，让它们在广场上乱跑的话，他最好是贩点其他的东西，比方说像犁头、洋葱一样不会去觅食的东西。而如果有人管不住自己的狗的话，他要么就是不想要这狗了，要么就是没养过狗。就像我说的，镇上的买卖和农村的是相似的，因而我们就变成了一个村镇了。

“他们散场了，对你没什么好处，”我说，“他们还得套车，然后把车赶出来，就这样，得折腾到半夜才能到家。”

“好吧，”他说，“他们很享受。让他们偶尔花点钱看出表演，也不错。山里的农民活干得很累，但是回报很少。”

“又不是法律规定他们到山里务农的，”我说，“他们可以去任何地方。”

“如果没有农民，我和你指不定会怎么样呢。”他说。

“那我现在会在家里躺着敷冰块。”我说。

“你头痛得太频繁了，你怎么不去好好检查下你的牙齿呢？今天早上，他给你全看到了吗？”

“谁？”我说。

“你早上说去看牙医了啊。”

“你是不爽我在上班时头痛是不？”我说，“是不是？”

他们看戏回来了，正在穿过小巷子。

“他们回来了，”他说，“我想我最好是到前厅去。”他去了。这是一

件神奇的事情，就是为什么不管你是怎么了，男人都会告诉你去看牙齿，而女人就会告诉你要结婚。而且，总是那种在任何事情上都没赚到什么钱的人，在告诉你怎么做生意。就像那些穷得连双像样的袜子都没有的大学教授，总在教你怎么在十年之内成为百万富翁，而自己都没嫁人的女人在教你怎么经营一个家庭。

老乔布赶着大马车来了。过了一会儿，他把缰绳裹在了鞭子插座上。

“嗨，”我说，“表演好看吧？”

“我没去看，”他说，“不过，我今天晚上会在帐篷里，那里可以找到我。”

“鬼才信你没去呢，”我说，“你三点就离开这里了。艾尔先生正好回来找你。”

“我办自己的事去了，”他说，“艾尔先生知道我去了哪里。”

“你可以瞒过他，”我说，“我不会告发你的。”

“那他就是镇上我唯一试图欺瞒的一个人了，”他说，“不过，我为什么要浪费时间欺瞒一个人，一个我压根不在乎能不能在周六晚上见到的人？我也不会试图欺瞒你。”他边说“是的，先生，对我来说，你太精明了”，边忙得不可开交——把五六袋小行李放到大马车上。“对我来说，你太精明了。整个镇上都没有人比你更精明了。你能欺骗一个人到他完全搞不清楚情况的程度。”他边说，边爬上马车，解开了缰绳。

“你说的是谁？”我说。

“那就是杰生·康普生先生，”他说，“走起来，丹！”

有一个车轮眼看就要掉下来了，我倒是想看看他能不能在它掉之前，走出这条巷子。只要把任何车子交给黑鬼管，都会这样。我说我们家那辆老爷车真是惨不忍睹，但是你还是得让他在车房里待上一百年，就为了那小子能每周赶着它到墓地上去。我说他不是第一个被迫做自己不想做的事情的人。我要让他像个文明人一样开车，不然就待在家里。他哪知道去的是哪里，上的是什么车，可是我们为了能让他周日下午出去散散心，还得准备一辆马车和一匹马。

乔布很关心轮子会不会掉下来，只要走回来不会太远就行。就像我说的，只有田地是适合黑鬼的，在那里，他们得从日出干到日落。他们是享受不了富裕的生活和轻松的工作的。让一个黑鬼在一个白人身边待上一阵，就没什么可取之处了。他们会变成这个样子：能在你的眼皮底下，猜透你的心思，就像罗斯克斯（Roskus）一样。他犯过的唯一错误就是有一天一不小心让自己死了。偷懒、偷窃，越来越碎碎念，直到有一天你烦得只能用板子什么的把他打趴下。好吧，那是艾尔的事。但是，我很讨厌我的事情被一个老态龙钟的黑鬼和一辆拐弯时随时都担心会四分五裂的破马车在镇上宣传开来。

现在，外面的太阳还高挂着，但是房里已经开始暗下来了。我来到前厅，看到广场上都没人了。艾尔在锁保险箱，然后我就听到了钟响的声音。

“你关下后门？”他说。我回到后面，关了门，又走向前面。“我想你今晚上要去看戏吧，”他说，“我昨天给了你入场券，对吧？”

“是的，”我说，“你想要回来？”

“不，不是的，”他说，“我只是不记得我是不是给你了。没必要浪费嘛。”

他关上门，说了“晚安”后，离开了。麻雀还在树间快活，但是广场上除了几辆车已经没人了。药店前面停着一辆福特，但是我甚至连看都懒得看一眼。我知道我的底线在哪里。我不在乎给她帮助，但是我知道度。我想我可以教会卢斯特开车，然后只要他们愿意，就能整天跟着她了，而我就能待在家里和班玩了。

我走进去，拿了两根烟。然后，我就想再看看头痛时的运气，于是我站在那里，和他们聊了一会儿天。

“嗨，”麦克说，“我估摸着今年把钱压在洋基队的身上了吧。”

“为什么？”我说。

“冠军啊，”他说，“联赛里没有哪个队敌得过洋基队的。”

“确实是没有，”我说，“他们都注定要败，”我说，“你认为一支队会永远这么幸运吗？”

“我不认为是幸运。”麦克说。

“反正鲁斯在哪个队，我就不押那个队，就算我知道它要赢，我照样不会押。”我说。

“认真的？”麦克问我。

“我能从任意一个联赛里数出二十个比他有价值的球员。”我说。

“你不喜欢鲁斯什么？”麦克说。

“没什么，”我说，“我没什么不喜欢他的。我甚至都不愿意见到他。”我走了出去。路灯亮了，人们都开始赶回家了。有时候，只有天完全黑下来，麻雀才会消停。那个法院大楼旁边亮起新灯的晚上，麻雀整夜都是醒着的，一直在周围飞腾，或者跌跌撞撞地往有灯的地方飞。麻雀这样坚持了两三晚，然后一天早上就全部飞走了。然后，又过了两个月的样子，它们又全部飞回来了。

我开车回到了家。屋子里还没亮灯，但是他们应该都在看窗外，等我回来。黛西在厨房里唠唠叨叨，好像她要热着等我回来吃的食物都是用她的钱买的一样。听她唠叨的话，你会觉得世界上只有一顿晚餐，就是这顿因为我的原因她必须晚吃几分钟的晚餐。好啦，至少今天回来的时候，没有发现班和那个黑鬼挂在门上，就像同一个笼子里出来的熊和猴子似的。只要太阳落山了，他就会来到门边，就像牛回牛栏一样，然后挂在上边，摇头晃脑的，还自言自语。这种猪一样的人，真应该像猪一样被阉割掉。他为了从开着的大门那儿冲出去而被阉割，我要是跟他做一样的蠢事，那么你把一个女学生放到我面前，我都不会看的。我总是好奇，他在下面的门边，看女学生从学校回家，然后试图得到他甚至不能记起他已经不需要，也没有能力要了的东西，他是在想什么。还有，当他们脱了他的衣服，而他恰好看了一眼自己，又开始和他平常一样哼哼唧唧的时候，他会做何感想。但是，就像我说的，他们做得总是不够。我说我知道你需要什么，你需要的是他们对班所做的事情，然后，你就会听话了。如果你不知道我说的是什么，就去问黛西。

母亲的房间里亮着灯。我停好车，然后进了厨房。卢斯特和班已经在这里了。

“黛西呢？”我说，“在开饭？”

“她和卡罗琳小姐上楼了，”卢斯特说，“自从昆汀小姐回来之后，她们差点打起来了。姥姥在上边劝架。杰生先生，演出的人来了吗？”

“来了。”我说。

“我好像听到乐队奏乐了，”他说，“我真希望我能去，”他说，“要是我有两毛五的话，我就能去了。”

黛西进来了。“你回来了？”她说，“你今晚上干什么去了？你知道我要做多少事情吗？你为什么不及时赶回来？”

“也许我去看演出了呢，”我说，“晚饭好了吗？”

“我要是能去就好了！”卢斯特说，“我要是有两毛五分钱的话，我也能去看。”

“看戏和你没什么关系，”黛西说，“你进屋去，坐下。”她又说，“你现在不要上楼，等会儿她们又吵起来了。”

我问：“发生什么事了？”

“昆汀才回来就说你整个下午都在跟踪她，卡罗琳小姐就责备了她。你就不能不管她的事啊？你就不能和你的亲外甥女在一个屋檐下，和和气气地过日子吗？”

“我不可能和她吵架啊，”我说，“因为我早上之后就没见过她了。她觉得我做的是什​​么？押她回学校？太糟糕了。”我说。

“好了，你管好你的事，别理她。”黛西说，“只要你和卡罗琳小姐愿意的话，我会好好照顾昆汀的。好啦，你现在回房吧，老实点，我来

开饭。”

“如果我有两毛五的话，”卢斯特说，“我就能看演出了。”

“如果你有翅膀，你能飞到天堂，”黛西说，“我再也不想听到和表演有关的字。”

“这倒是提醒了我，”我说，“我这里有两张他们给我的票。”我从衣兜里掏了出来。

“你自己要用吗？”卢斯特问。

“我不用，”我说，“给我十块钱，我也不会去。”

“杰生先生，给我一张吧。”他说。

“我卖给你一张，”我说，“怎么样？”

“我没钱。”他说。

“那太不幸了。”我说。我假装要走出去。

“杰生先生，给我一张吧，”他说，“你也用不了两张啊。”

“别说了，”黛西说，“你不知道他不会白给任何东西吗？”

“多少钱一张？”他说。

“五分。”我说。

“我没那么多。”他说。

“你有多少？”我问。

“我一分钱都没有。”他说。

“那好的。”我说。我说完就走了。

“杰生先生。”他说。

“你还不算了？”黛西说，“他在逗你呢。他自己要用那些票。走吧，杰生，让他一个人待着。”

“我不要用。”我说。我又回到炉子边。“我来把它烧了。不过，你想不想五分钱买一张？”我边说，边看他的反应，一手则打开了炉盖。

“我没那么多钱。”他说。

“好吧。”我说。我丢了一张到炉子里。

“欸，杰生，”黛西说，“你也不羞愧？”

“杰生先生，”他说，“求你了，先生。我可以给你安一个月的轮胎，每天都安。”

“我需要现金，”我说，“只要五分钱，就是你的了哦。”

“卢斯特，别说了，”黛西说，她猛地拉了他回去，说，“继续啊！丢进去！继续啊！都丢进去好了！”

“只要五分钱，你就能拥有它了哦。”我说。

“继续丢进去，”黛西说，“他不会有五分钱。丢啊！丢进去！”

“好吧。”我说，我丢了进去，然后黛西关了炉子。

“你这么大个人了还干这种事，”她说，“快从我的厨房出去，不要再说了，”她又对卢斯特说，“不要让班吉又发作了。我会叫弗朗宁给你两毛五，这样你明天晚上就能去看演出了，现在，不要再说什么了。”

我回到了卧室里。我不能听到楼上的任何声音。我打开报纸，不久，班和卢斯特就进来了。班走到原来镜子在的地方，也就是墙面暗的地方，一边淌口水、哼哼唧唧的，一边把手放在墙面上擦。卢斯特则开始戳火。

“你在干什么？”我说，“我们今晚上不需要任何火了。”

“我在试图让他安静，复活节总是很冷。”他说。

“只是现在不是复活节，”我说，“就这样吧。”

他把拨火棍放好，把母亲凳子上的毯子拿给了班，然后专心蹲在火前面，不说话了。

我在看报纸。黛西进来喊班和卢斯特去厨房，说饭菜准备好了的时候，楼上没有任何动静。

“好，没事。”我说。她走了出去。我坐在那里看报纸。过了一会儿，我听出黛西在往门里望。

“你怎么还不来吃饭？”她问。

“我在等你开饭。”我回答说。

“已经上桌了，”她说，“我告诉过你了啊！”

“是吗？”我说，“不好意思，我没听到任何人下来的声音。”

“她们不吃，”她说，“你来吃吧，然后我就能给她们端点上去了。”

“她们不舒服吗？”我说，“医生说了什么？我希望不是出天花。”

“来吃吧，杰生，”她说，“然后我就能把事情做完了。”

“好的，”我边说，边又拿起了报纸，“我现在在等你开饭。”

我能感觉到，她在门口看着我。我继续看报纸。

“你怎么了，要这样？”她说，“你何时才会知道，这样让我多困扰？”

“如果母亲比她下来吃晚饭的时候，更不舒服，那没事，但是只要我是花钱养着比我小的人，她们就得下来吃饭。什么时候开饭，告诉我一声。”我说完，继续看报纸了。我听到她爬楼的声音，一步一步拖着走，而且边走边嘟囔、喘气，仿佛这楼梯是直的，每两步之间隔了三英尺一样。我听到她停在了母亲的门前，然后我听到她喊昆汀，貌似昆汀的门是锁着的，然后她又回到了母亲的房里，之后，我听到母亲去喊昆汀。最后，她们一起下来了。我继续看报纸。

黛西又来到了我的门边。“可以了，来吧！”她说，“不然，你又要想出什么鬼玩意来。今晚上，你就是在折磨你自己。”

我进了餐厅。昆汀低头坐着。她又化妆了。她的鼻子就像一个绝缘瓷体。

“我很高兴，您舒服些了，能下来吃饭了。”我对母亲说。

“除了来到餐桌边，我能为你做的很少，”她说，“不管我身体怎么样，我意识到，当一个男人白天在外面干了一整天活之后，吃晚饭的时候，就希望全家人陪他一起。我想让你高兴点儿。我只希望你和昆汀能够关系融洽一点儿。这会让我好受些。”

“我们相处得不错啊，”我说，“只要她愿意，我也不在乎她整天把自己锁在房子里。但是，我不喜欢吃饭的时候，大吵大闹或者生闷气。我知道那对她来说，是过分的要求，但是这是我家里的规矩。哦，我的意思是，在您的房子里。”

“这是你的，”母亲说，“现在，你是它的主人。”

昆汀就没有抬过眼。我摆好了盘子，然后她开始吃饭了。

“你吃到一块好肉了吗？”我说，“如果没有的话，我帮你找一块更好的。”

她什么也没说。

“我说，你吃到一块好肉了吗？”我说。

“什么？”她问，“嗯，这很好。”

“你还要米饭吗？”我说。

“不需要了。”她说。

“最好是让我再给你盛一点吧。”我说。

“我不用了。”她说。

“没事，”我说，“不用谢。”

“你不头痛了吧？”母亲说。

“头痛？”我说。

“我怕你有头痛，”她说，“你今天下午什么时候回来的？”

“哦，”我说，“没有，没头痛。今天下午我们太忙了，我都没记起头痛这回事。”

“这就是你回来晚了的原因吗？”母亲说。我可以看出昆汀在听着。我看着她。她依然在动刀叉，但是我捕捉到她看向我的视线，然后又看回了她的盘子里。

我说：“不是。是因为，我三点钟的时候，把车子借给了别人，所以我必须等他回来，才会晚回的。”我吃了一会儿。

“你把车子借给谁了？”母亲说。

“就是一个来演出的人，”我说，“好像他姐姐的丈夫和镇上的哪个女人开车出去了，他在追他们。”

昆汀完全不受影响地坐在那里，吃她的东西。

“你不应该把车借给那样的人，”母亲说，“你太大方了。所以不到万不得已，我是不会问你借车用的。”

“我自己也开始这么觉得了，”我说，“但是他回来了，没事。他说他发现了他在找的人。”

“那个女人是谁？”母亲问。

“我等会儿告诉你，”我说，“我不想在昆汀面前谈论这种事情。”昆汀停下来不吃了。每过一会儿，她都会喝一口水，然后坐在那里掰碎一块曲奇饼干，她一直低着头，脸对着盘子。

“好的，”母亲说，“我想像我一样完全封闭了的女人，完全不知道镇上发生了什么。”

“是的，”我说，“确实不知道。”

“我们那个时代和现在不一样，”母亲说，“谢天谢地，我不知道那些邪恶的事情。我甚至不想知道。我和大部分的人都不一样。”

我没再说什么。昆汀坐在那里，掰饼干，直到我吃完了。然后，她说：“我可以走了吗？”她说的时候没有看任何人。

“什么？”我说，“当然，你可以走了。你在等我们吗？”

她看着我。她掰碎了所有的饼干，但是她的手依然摆着一个在掰饼干的姿势，她的眼神很像一头困兽之类的，她一直在咬嘴唇，好像那些红丹是能毒死她的毒药。

“外婆，”她说，“外婆……”

“你还想吃什么吗？”我说。

“外婆，为什么他要这样对我？”她说，“我从来没有伤害过他。”

“我要你们都和平相处，”母亲说，“你们现在都是被留下的人了，所以我真的希望你们能更好地相处。”

“是他的错，”她说，“他不放过我，而我必须接受。如果他不想要我在这里，为什么不让我回……”

“够了，”我说，“一个字都不要说了。”

“为什么他不放过我？”她说，“他……他就是……”

“他几乎充当了你父亲的角色，”母亲说，“是他养活了我和你。他希望你能听他的话，这没什么不对的。”

“是他的错，”她说，她跳了起来，“他让我做的。如果他……”她看着我们，困兽般的眼神，两个胳膊好像在抽搐似的。

“如果我怎么样？”我说。

“不管我做什么，都是你的错，”她说，“如果我变坏，那是因为我必须这样。你让我变成这样的。我死了倒好。要是我们都死了就好了。”然后，她就跑了。我们听到她跑上了楼，然后，猛甩上了门。

“这是她第一次说了句像样的话。”我说。

“她今天没去学校。”母亲说。

“你怎么知道的？”我说，“你到镇上去了？”

“我就是知道，”她说，“我希望你能对她好点儿。”

“我对她好点，她就得让我一天多见上她几次，”我说，“你得要她每餐都到餐桌边来吃饭。这样，我每次都能给她多添碗饭。”

“还有些小事，你也可以做的。”她说。

“比方说，不顾你要我监督她去上学的事情？”我说。

“她今天没去学校，”她说，“我知道她没去。她说她今天下午和一个男孩子出去兜风了，而你一直跟踪了她一下午。”

“我怎么可能，”我说，“我的车今下午借给别人了。她有没有去学校已经不重要了。”我说，“如果你非担心不可，那就担心下周一吧。”

“我想让你们好好相处，”她说，“但是她遗传了她妈，固执得很。还有昆汀的。我当时就是想她可能继承了这些性格特点，才给她起名昆汀的。有时，我认为她是他们两兄妹对我的惩罚。”“我的老天爷啊，”我说，“您真是会想呢！难怪你一直身体不好。”

“什么？”她说，“我不明白。”

“我希望你不明白，”我说，“一个好女人要是知道得太多了，就会错失很多东西。”

“他们都是这样的，”她说，“他们都会在我试图纠正他们的时候，和你父亲一起对抗我。他总说，没必要那么管着他们，他们已经有了好的观念——纯洁和诚信，只要教会了这些，其余也就无所谓了。现在，我希望他知足了。”

“你还有班，”我说，“高兴点。”

“他们有意将我从他们生命里剔除开了，”她说，“她和昆汀总是在一起，他们总是在谋划联合对抗我，也对抗你，虽然当时你还太小，不能理解。他们总是把你我当成外人，对你莫里舅舅也一样。我总是和你父亲说，太放任他们了，他们在一起的时间太多了。昆汀一开始上学，我们就只好让加迪也去了，好陪他。她不能忍受你们任何人做任何她做

不了的事情。她很虚荣，虚荣和莫名其妙的骄傲。然后，她的麻烦来了，我知道，昆汀肯定会认为他也应该做同样糟糕的事情。但是我不敢相信，他们居然这么自私，会……我没想到他会……”

“也许他知道会是个女孩，”我说，“而再多一个人，都是他不能忍受的。”

“他可以控制她的，”她说，“她只会为他考虑。但是，我想那也是惩罚的一部分。”

“是的，”我说，“死的是他不是我，如果死的那个是我的话，你会好过得多。”

“你居然说这样的话来伤害我，”她说，“虽然这是我的报应。当他们开始卖地送昆汀去哈佛读书的时候，我就和你父亲说了，我们也应该为你做这样的准备。后来，赫伯特说要让你进银行的时候，我就说杰生现在也需要资助了。而当所有的开销都堆起来了，我被迫卖家具和剩下的部分草坪的时候，我给她写过一封信，因为我说她应该意识到她和昆汀在哈佛的开销里有一部分本来是应该给你用的，所以现在是她补偿你的时候了。我说她要是尊敬她的父亲的话，就应该这么做。那时候，我以为她会。但是，我只是一个穷老妇；我受的教育告诉我，人是不会不帮助自己的血脉亲人的——这是我的错，你有权利责怪我。”

“难道你以为我做我自己，是需要别人的帮助吗？”我说，“不要把那个连自己孩子的父亲是谁都搞不清的女人和我扯上关系。”

“杰生。”她说。

“好了，”我说，“我不是那个意思，当然不是。”

“在我经历了这么多之后，我不信还能有什么让我难受。”

“当然不会，”我说，“我不是那个意思。”

“我希望你至少能饶了我。”她说。

“当然，”我说，“这没什么好怀疑的，她太像他们了。”

“我受不了。”她说。

“那就别想这件事了，”我说，“她还是晚上出去，让你担心吗？”

“没有了。我告诉了她这是为她自己好，终有一天她会感谢我的。我关门之后，她拿了书在看书。有些晚上，我看她开着灯，看书到十一点。”

“你怎么知道她是在读书？”我说。

“我不知道她一个人会做什么其他的，”她说，“她从来不看其他的。”

“不是的，”我说，“你不会知道的。也庆幸你不知道。”我说。只是这个说出来也没什么用，只会让她又趴在我身上哭。

随之，我听到母亲上楼的声音。然后，她喊了昆汀，昆汀在房里问她“怎么了”，母亲说“晚安”，然后，我听到了开门的声音，母亲回房了。

等我抽完烟，上去的时候，昆汀房里的灯依然是亮着的。我可以看到没插钥匙的锁孔，但是我听不到任何声音。她在安静地学习。也许这是她在温习时学到的。我和母亲说了晚安之后，回到房间，拿出了钱

盒，又数了一遍里面的钱。我可以听到“伟大的美国太监”的如雷般的鼾声，就像一架滑翔机在起飞一样。我在哪里读到过，说为了有女人那样的声音，有的男人会做手术。但是可能他不知道医生对他做了什么。我估摸着他也不知道自己是想做什么，或者为什么博格斯先生要用栅栏尖桩将他打晕。如果他们在他还麻醉昏迷的状态下，就把他送到杰克逊去，他也绝对不会有所察觉。但是那对康普生家族的人来说，这个方法过于简单了，康普生家族想的办法该比这个复杂两倍都不止。要等到他冲出去，在街上和一个小女孩晃荡，还被他父亲看着的时候，他们才会想办法。好吧，就像我说的，他们从来不会及时一刀两断，而且结束得太快。我至少知道有两个需要动这样的手术的人，有一个住得很近，都不足一里远。但是，我觉得就算那么做了，也没什么好处。就像我说的，是个婊子，就是个婊子。就给我二十四个小时，不要让那些该死的美国犹太佬来对我指手画脚，要我做这做那。我也没想大赚一笔；这个就留给鬼灵的赌徒们去做吧。我只是想有个机会，让我把我的钱拿回来。我一旦拿回了我的钱，他们就能把整条比尔街，还有整个疯人院，都弄到我家来，让其中两个就睡我床上，另外一个吃饭的时候，坐我的位置上胡吃海喝。

1928年4月8日

破晓时分，空气中伴随着阵阵萧瑟与寒意，一束灰色的光线从东北方向移来，这束光线并没有溶解为潮气，却似乎分解成了细小的颗粒，如灰尘一样，当黛西打开小茅屋的门走出来时，这些颗粒像针似的横穿过她的肌肤，沉淀为一种稀薄的物质，不像是潮气，也不像是凝结的油脂。黛西头上缠着头巾，戴着一顶硬质黑草帽，身穿一条紫色丝绸长裙，披着一个栗色天鹅绒披肩。她在门口站了一会儿，仰着那张布满皱纹的脸看着天空，她伸出一只枯槁的手，掌心如同鱼肚般柔软，然后

她将披肩放在一边，仔细审视着她那长裙的前襟。

那条长裙从她的双肩垂下，穿过她那低垂的乳房，在她的腹部收紧，然后又垂下来，后来又微微隆起，因为她穿了好几条内裤，等春天过去，天气变暖，到处呈现出一派五光十色的颜色时，她会将内裤一层层地脱掉。她曾经是一个肥胖的女人，但现在骨架都凸显出来了，松弛的皮肤覆在上边，胀鼓鼓的腹部又开始绷紧，肌肉和组织仿若有勇敢和毅力一样，随着岁月的流逝，这些勇气和毅力都消磨殆尽了，只剩下不屈不挠的骨架，像一片废墟或一个里程碑一样，竖立在昏昏欲睡、无动于衷的内脏之上。这副骨架上方是一张面目狰狞的脸，让人感觉骨头都露在皮肉之外了。现在，那张脸对着风和日丽的天空，脸上有种听天由命的表情，又有种小孩子失望时惊愕不已的表情。最终，她转身再次回到屋内，关上了门。

小茅屋门口附近的土地光秃秃的，泛着铜绿色的光泽，好像经过几代人的光脚板磨蹭过一般。那色泽就像是古老的银器或墨西哥人的房屋上用手抹上的灰泥一样。小茅屋旁边是三棵桑树，夏天时可以在下边避暑。那毛茸茸的桑叶日后会长得如手掌般宽大、舒展，随风在空中起伏伏。这时，不知从哪儿飞来一对松鸦，在狂风中盘旋，就像是鲜艳的布片或纸片一样飞舞着，最后落在桑树上，它们来回翘动着尾巴，对着空中尖声叫嚣着，像卷走纸片或布片一样，狂风卷走了它们的叫声。后来，又有三只鸟也加入了它们的行列，它们落在摇摇晃晃的树枝上，同时翘起尾巴尖叫着。小茅屋的门打开了，黛西再次走了出来，这一次，她戴着一顶男士平底呢帽，穿着一件军大衣，磨损的裙摆下边是一件蓝格子的布裙，不规则的下摆蓬松垂下来，当她穿过院子，走上厨房门口的台阶时，裙摆也随风摆动着。

过了一会儿，她又出来了，这一次，她手中撑着一把伞，她拿伞抵

着风，穿过院子走到柴堆前，她没有合上伞，直接把它放在地上了。突然，她意识到了，立马抓住伞，在手中握了一会儿，朝四周望了一下。然后，她合上伞，放在地上，将柴火堆放在她胸前那弯曲的臂弯里，最后，她拿起伞，撑在头顶，又向台阶走去。当她将伞合上的同时，她小心翼翼地使柴火维持平衡，不让它们掉下，她把伞放在门后的角落里，又将柴火扔进炉箱里。随后，她脱掉了大衣，取下帽子，又从墙上取下那条脏兮兮的围裙穿在身上，把炉子里的火烧旺。同时，她把炉条捅得铿锵作响，炉盖也噼里啪啦直响，康普生太太站在楼梯口就开始喊她。

康普生太太穿着一件黑色缎面睡袍，一只手在下巴处紧紧拉着睡袍，另一只手拿着一个红色的胶质热水袋，站在楼梯口，呼唤着“黛西”。隔一段时间她就会呼唤一声，她的声音穿过那寂静的楼道，消失在一片漆黑中。一束灰色的光线射进来。“黛西。”她呼喊，她的声音没有任何起伏，不紧不慢的，好像她根本不期待黛西会回应她似的。

黛西回应了一声，停了下来，不再拨弄火炉，但是还没等她穿过厨房，康普生夫人又喊了一声，她还没穿过餐厅，走到窗口那束灰色的光线中，那声音又再次响起来了。

“好了，”黛西说，“好了，我在这儿呢。热水烧好了我马上给您灌上。”她提起裙摆，登上楼梯，她的身躯完全挡住了那束灰色的光线，“把热水袋给我，您回去睡觉吧。”

“我真不明白你刚才在干什么，”康普生太太说，“我早就醒了，躺在床上都一个多小时了，厨房里一丁点儿声音都没有。”

“您把热水袋放下回去睡觉吧。”黛西说。她费劲地爬上楼梯，她那身躯一点线条都没有，还不住地喘着粗气。“我会在一分钟内把火生

好，两分钟水就能烧开了。”

“我在床上躺了有一个多小时了，”康普生太太说，“还以为你在等我下楼生火呢。”

黛西走到楼梯口，接过热水袋。“我一分钟内给您灌好热水，”她说，“卢斯特今儿早睡过头了，天还没亮，他半夜就起来了。我只好自己生火。您赶紧回去吧，要不等我准备好，其他人都要被您吵醒了。”

“既然你让卢斯特停下工作出去玩儿，你就只好多做点儿事了，”康普生太太说，“杰生要是听说了会不高兴的。你很清楚这一点。”

“他又没花杰生的钱，”黛西说，“一点儿也不假。”她走下楼去。康普生太太回到她的房间。当她再次钻进被窝时，她听到黛西还在下楼梯，要不是食品储藏室那扇门拍打的声音盖过了她的脚步声，那缓慢的动作真会让人发狂。

她走进厨房，生好火，开始准备做早餐。其间，她停下手来，走到窗前，朝她的小茅屋看去，然后走到门口，打开门，对着狂风呼喊起来。

“卢斯特！”她喊道，为了避开狂风，她侧着脸站在门口听着，“听见没，卢斯特！”她又听了一会儿，当她准备再喊时，卢斯特从厨房的角落里走出来了。

“妈妈？”他说，一脸无辜的样子，黛西低头看着他那无辜的表情，站在那儿一动不动，她的表情已不是惊讶所能形容的。

“你去哪儿了？”她问道。

“没去哪儿呀，”他说，“我就在地窖里呀。”

“你去地窖干什么？”她说，“别站在雨中了，傻瓜。”她说。

“我什么也没干。”他一边说一边走上台阶。

“一点儿柴火都没捡，你竟然敢进门，”她说，“我之前已经帮你捡了柴火，也生好火了。昨天不是都跟你说过，把火炉里塞满柴火才能出去吗？”

“我是按照你说的做了呀，”卢斯特说，“我真的塞满了。”

“那柴火都去哪儿了？”

“我不知道！我可没碰。”

“哼，你现在去把炉箱装满，”她说，“装满后上楼去看看班吉。”

她关上门。卢斯特向柴堆走去。那五只松鸦在屋子上方盘旋着、尖叫着，就又落桑树上了。他看着这些鸟儿，拿起一块石头，朝它们扔去。“喔，”他说，“哪儿来滚哪儿去吧，还没到星期一呢。”

他抱着小山似的一摞柴火。看不见前面的路，跌跌撞撞地走到台阶前，走上台阶，摇摇晃晃地撞在了门上，柴火掉了一地。黛西走过来，给他打开门，他跌跌撞撞地穿过厨房。“你啊，卢斯特！”她朝他大喊，但他已经将柴火都扔进了炉箱内，发出了一阵震耳欲聋的轰隆声。“哎！”他说。

“你是想把整个房子里的人都吵醒吗？”黛西说，她用手掌拍了一下他的后脑勺，“上楼去吧，赶紧给班吉穿好衣服。”

“遵命。”他说。他朝门口走去。

“你准备上哪儿去呢？”黛西说。

“我想我最好还是走正门进去，免得吵醒卡罗琳小姐她们。”

“你按我说的走后面的楼梯上去，给班吉穿好衣服，”黛西说，“现在就去吧。”

“遵命，”卢斯特说。他走回来，从餐厅门口出去。过了一阵儿，门也不再扇动了。黛西准备开始做饼干。她一边在案板上抖动着筛子，一边唱着歌，起初只是小声地哼着，没有什么曲调，也没有歌词，只是一种重复、悲哀、幽怨而又朴实的调子，细细的面粉像雪花一样纷纷扬扬地落在案板上。房间里已经有些暖意了，火炉里的柴火噼里啪啦地响着。这时，她哼得更大声了，仿佛她的声音也随着温度的上升而解冻了，然后，康普生太太在屋子里又开始呼唤她了。黛西抬起头，仿佛她那双眼能穿透墙壁和天花板，看到那个老女人穿着睡袍站在楼梯口，机械地声声呼唤着她的名字。

“哦，天哪，”黛西说。她放下筛子，撩起围裙擦了擦手，从椅子上拿起刚放在上边的热水袋，水壶现在已经开始冒出热气了，她将围裙覆在壶把周围。“等会儿，”她喊道，“水刚开始烧热。”

不过，康普生太太这次不是要热水袋，黛西像抓着一只死鸡脖子一样，拎着热水袋走到楼梯口，向上看着。

“卢斯特是不是在楼上的房间里呢？”她说。

“卢斯特一直没进来过，我一直躺在这里听他的声音，我知道他晚点才会到，但我希望他能及时过来，免得班吉明吵醒杰生，杰生一周也

就只有这一天能睡个好觉。”

“您一大早就站在楼梯口喊叫，还指望谁能睡好觉吗？”黛西说，她费劲地爬上楼梯，“半个小时前我就让他上楼去了。”

康普生太太看着她，一手紧紧拽着下巴下面的睡袍。“你准备干什么去呢？”她问。

“给班吉穿好衣服，带他到厨房来，他就不会吵醒杰生和昆汀了。”黛西说。

“你还没开始做早餐吗？”

“我一会儿就做，”黛西说，“您还是回床上躺着吧，卢斯特一会儿就会去给您生火。今儿早上太冷了。”

“我知道，”康普生太太说，“我的脚冻得跟冰块一样凉。脚太凉了，都把我冻醒了。”她看着黛西走上楼梯，这又花了她不少时间，“你知道要是早餐时间推迟的话，杰生会发火的。”康普生太太说。

“我一次只能做一件事情，”黛西说，“您还是回床上躺着吧，要不今天早上我就有得麻烦了。”

“如果你为了给班吉明穿衣服而撂下所有其他事情，我还是自己下来做早餐吧。你又不是不知道早餐晚点杰生会有多么生气。”

“谁会吃您做的早餐呢？”黛西说，“您倒说说看。还是赶紧回去吧。”她边说边费劲地往上爬。康普生太太站在旁边看着她，她一手扶着墙，一手提着裙摆。

“你打算就为穿个衣服而把他叫醒吗？”她说。

黛西停下来。一只脚踩着上一个台阶，站在那儿，手扶着墙，身后一束灰色的光线从窗口射进来，她一动不动地站在那儿。

“他还没睡醒吗？”她说。

“我去看时，他还没醒，”康普生太太说，“往常七点半之前他就醒了，你知道他从来不睡懒觉的。”

黛西没说什么。她不再往上走了，尽管除了一团扁圆的形体，康普生太太看不到她的正面，她还是感觉出来黛西稍稍垂下了头，就像雨中的水牛一样站着，手中提着那个空空的热水袋。

“本不该跟你说这些的，”康普生太太说，“这不是你的责任，你无须天天背负着这么多的负担。你不欠他们什么，也不欠康普生先生什么。我知道你一直都不喜欢杰生。你从来就不会掩盖自己的感情。”

黛西什么也没说。她慢慢转过身走下楼梯，她一步一步地挪动着，就像小孩一样，她的手扶着墙。“您继续回去睡吧，不用去管他，”她说，“不要再找他了。我一找到卢斯特就会让他上楼去。现在别去管他。”

她回到厨房，看着炉子，接着将围裙从头上脱下来，穿上大衣，打开门，上上下下地打量着院子。狂风肆虐，无情地吹打着她的肌肤，院子里空荡荡的，没有什么会动的生物。她小心翼翼地走下台阶，像是为了避免发生什么响声一样，绕过厨房的角落。这时，卢斯特出现在地窖门口，脸上带着一副无辜的表情。

黛西停了下来。“你干什么去了？”她问。

“没干什么呀，”卢斯特说，“杰生先生让我检查一下地窖里哪儿漏水。”

“他什么时候说过让你做的呀？”黛西说，“去年元旦，不是吗？”

“我想着趁他们睡觉的时候去检查一下。”卢斯特说。黛西走到地窖门口。他站在一旁，她探着头向下看去，只能闻到一股潮湿的泥土、霉菌和橡胶的气味。

“噢——”黛西说。她再次打量着卢斯特。他迎上她那凝视的目光，无辜而又坦白。“我不知道你又在搞什么，但这里不需要你。今天早上，你是不是跟其他人联合起来试探我？你赶紧上楼去看看班吉，听到了吗？”

“遵命。”卢斯特说。他快步朝厨房的台阶走去。

“回来。”黛西说，“趁你还没走，再给我抱一摞柴火进去吧。”

“遵命。”他说。他从她身边的台阶上走过，朝柴堆走去。过了一会儿，他再次跌跌撞撞地走到门口，金字塔似的柴火挡住了他的视线。黛西打开门，用手拽着他，指引着他穿过厨房。

“你胆敢再扔进炉箱，发出那么大的响声，”她说，“你再试试看！”

“我只能这么做，”卢斯特气喘吁吁地说，“我别无选择。”

“那你就在这儿多站会儿，”黛西说，她每次从他怀中拿下一根柴火，“你今天早上是怎么了？我让你去捡柴火，你每次抱回来的都不超过六根，你倒是省力气了。你现在又想让我做什么呢？那个戏团不是已

经走了吗？”

“是的。早就走了。”

她把最后一根柴火放在炉箱中。“现在照我之前跟你说的，上楼看看班吉去。”“在我摇吃饭铃之前，我不希望任何人站在楼梯口喊我了。你听见了吧。”

“听见了。”卢斯特说。他从摇晃着的门口出去了。黛西往火炉里又添了一些柴火，走到案板那儿，又开始唱起歌来。

房间里逐渐变得暖和起来。不久，黛西的皮肤就开始呈现出光泽了，比起柴火和卢斯特皮肤上的灰尘要好看多了。黛西在房间里来来回回地走着，收集着原材料来搭配早餐。橱柜上方的墙壁上挂着一只钟，这只钟只有一根针，一直在嘀嗒嘀嗒地响着，只有在晚上借着灯光才能看到它。不一会儿，这只钟敲了五下，就像是刚刚清过喉咙似的。

“八点了。”黛西说。她停下手里的活儿，仰起头倾听着。但除了时钟和炉火声外，什么声音也没有。她打开烤箱，看着锅里的面包，然后弯下腰来，听到有人下楼了，她停了一下。她听到脚步声穿过餐厅，然后弹簧门打开了，卢斯特走了进来，后边跟着一个体形庞大的男人，这个人身上的分子好像不愿也不会凝聚在一起，也不愿与他的骨架融合在一起。他的皮肤是死灰色的，浑身光溜溜的，身体还有点儿浮肿，那步履蹒跚的走路姿势就像是一个训练有素的熊一样。他头发花白，发丝很细。齐整整地梳向前额，就像小孩梳的童花头一样。他的眼睛清澈，有着一一种矢车菊似的淡蓝色，他那厚厚的嘴唇半张着，嘴角稍微有点儿口水。

“他冷吗？”黛西说。她在围裙上擦了擦手，伸出手去摸他的手。

“他不冷，我倒觉得有点儿冷了。”卢斯特说，“每逢复活节，天就会变冷。卡罗琳小姐说，如果你没时间给她灌热水袋，也没关系。”

“哦，天哪。”黛西说，她拉过一把椅子，放在柴火箱和炉灶之间。那个男子顺从地走过去，在椅子上坐了下来。“去餐厅看看我把热水袋放哪儿了。”黛西说。卢斯特从餐厅取来热水袋，黛西把它灌满，递给了他。“赶快送过去，”她说，“看到杰生睡醒了的话，告诉他早餐已经准备好了。”

卢斯特出去了。班坐在火炉旁。他松松垮垮地坐在那儿，除了头部，完全一动不动的，当黛西来回走动时，他用那甜美而又蒙眬的眼神看着黛西，脑袋时不时地摆动着。卢斯特回来了。

“他起来了。”他说，“卡罗琳小姐让我把热水袋放在桌子上。”他走到火炉跟前，伸开双手，掌心对着炉箱。“他也起来了，”他说，“他今儿早肯定是两只脚一块儿下地的。”

“又怎么了？”黛西说，“从这儿走开。你站在火炉前让我怎么干活儿。”

“我冷呀。”卢斯特说。

“你刚才在地窖里就应该想到会冷的，”黛西说，“杰生怎么了？”

“他说我打碎了班吉房间里的玻璃。”

“那玻璃碎了吗？”黛西说。

“他是那么说的，”卢斯特说，“他说是我打碎的。”

“他一天到晚都紧闭房门，怎么可能是你打碎的呢？”

“他说我扔石子击中了那块玻璃。”卢斯特说。

“是你做的吗？”

“不是。”卢斯特说。

“不要骗我，小子。”黛西说。

“我从来没有扔过什么石子，”卢斯特说，“你可以去问班吉。我都没看过那扇窗户。”

“那又会是谁呢？”黛西说，“他这么做还把昆汀吵醒了。”她一边说，一边从烤炉中取出一盒饼干。

“就是说嘛，”卢斯特说，“这些人真有意思。真庆幸我跟他们不一样。”

“跟谁不一样？”黛西说，“让我告诉你一些事情，小黑，你身上也有着康普生家族那种疯狂的行为。你到底有没有打碎那扇玻璃窗？”

“我没事儿打碎它干什么？”

“你做这种事情还需要什么理由吗？”黛西说，“现在看好他，免得在我摆餐桌时烫着他的手。”

她去进餐厅，他们能听到她在里边来回走动的声音，之后，她就回来了，在厨房桌子上放了一个盘子，里边放着一些吃的。班看着她，一边淌口水，一边发出一阵低微的渴望的声音。

“好了，亲爱的，”她说，“这是你的早餐。把他的椅子拿过来，卢斯特。”卢斯特把椅子搬过来，班坐了下来，一边哼叫一边流口水。黛西在他脖子周围系了一块布，用这块布的一角擦了擦他的嘴。“看看你这次能不能不弄脏他的衣服。”她说，递给卢斯特一把勺子。班不再发出哼哼声。他看着勺子一点点伸进他的嘴里。仿佛这种渴望也是受肌肉控制的，饥饿本身就是一种难以言喻的感觉，它也不知道什么是饥饿。卢斯特娴熟地喂着他，有点儿心不在焉。时不时地，他会将注意力转移过来，给班喂上一勺吃的，但是很明显能看出卢斯特的心不在焉。他的另一只手放在椅背上，在那毫无反应的椅背上试探性地轻轻移动着，像是在死寂中寻找一种无声的音符。有一次他的手指在那裂开的缝隙中拨弄出了一种无声的复杂的声音，他竟忘了给班喂食，直到班再次哼叫起来，他才意识到。

黛西在餐厅来回走动。过了不久，她就摇响了那阵清脆的铃声，后来，卢斯特在厨房中听到康普生太太和杰生下楼的声音，还听到了杰生的说话声，他翻动着白眼倾听着。

“当然，玻璃不是他人打碎的，”杰生说，“当然，我也知道可能是天气的变化把玻璃给打碎了。”

康普生太太说：“我真不明白好好的玻璃怎么会碎呢，你的房间整天都是锁着门，和你离开时一模一样，除星期天外，我们没人去过那里。我不希望你认为我会去那种我不受欢迎的地方，或者，我会允许任何其他人去。”

“我才不想去你的房间，”康普生太太说，“我尊重任何人的隐私，即使我有钥匙，我也不会踏进你的房门。”

“是的，”杰生说，“我知道你的钥匙不合适。这就是为什么我要换锁。我想知道的是，那扇窗户是怎样打破的。”

“卢斯特说不是他打破的。”黛西说。

“即使不问他，我也知道了，”杰生说，“昆汀在哪里？”

“她通常周日早上会在哪儿，”黛西说，“这几天你究竟发生了什么事？”

“是这样的，我们要改变所有这一切，”杰生说，“上楼去通知她早餐准备好了。”

“你不要去管她了，杰生，”黛西说，“她每天早上都会起来吃早餐的，卡罗琳小姐答应让她每个周日睡懒觉，你是知道的。”

“即使我愿意，我也养不起一屋子的黑人，专门供她随意支配，”杰生说，“去告诉她下来吃早餐。”

“不是没有人伺候她，”黛西说，“我把她的早餐放在保温炉里了，等她——”

“你听到我说什么了没？”杰生说。

“我听见了，”黛西说，“只要你在家，我就一直在听你唠叨。不是对昆汀就是对你妈妈，不是对卢斯特就是对班吉。你怎么能任由他这么做呢，卡罗琳小姐？”

“你最好按他的指示去办，”康普生太太说，“他现在是一家之主，他有权利要求我们尊重他的意愿。我在尝试着这样做，如果我能做到，

那么你也能做到。”

“他脾气那么坏，硬要按照自己的想法把昆汀叫起来，这也讲不通，”黛西说，“也许你还会认为是她打破了那扇窗户呢。”

“只要她想，她绝对会做得出来，”杰生说，“你去，就照我说的去做。”

“即使是她做的，我也绝对不会怪她，”黛西一面说着，一面朝楼梯走去，“你一回到家，就对她唠叨个没完。”

“少说点儿吧，黛西，”康普生太太说，“不应该由我或你去告诉杰生该怎么做。有时候，我觉得他的做法不对，但是为了顾全大局，我会尝试着去服从他的愿望。如果我身体健康，能够下楼来吃饭，昆汀应该也可以。”

黛西出去了。他们听到她爬楼梯的声音。她爬了很长一段时间。

“你真应该给你的用人颁发个特别奖，”杰生说，他给他的母亲和自己盛了点食物，“你有没有做过一些值得做的事情？在我懂事前，你一定有过一些经历吧。”

“我不得不迁就他们，”康普生太太说，“我完全依赖于他们，要是我身体能健康点儿，就不是这种情况了，我真希望自己能够变得强大一点儿。我就能一个人做完所有的家务。至少可以给你减轻一些负担。”

“要是那样的话，我们家就要变成一个猪圈了，”杰生说，“快点，黛西。”他喊道。

“我就知道你会责怪我的，”康普生太太说，“因为今天我让他们去

教堂了。”

“去哪里了？”杰生说，“难道那场该死的表演还没结束吗？”

“是去教堂了，”康普生太太说，“黑人今天要举办一场特殊的复活节仪式。我两周前就答应黛西让他们去了。”

“这是不是意味着我们今天要吃冷饭冷菜了，”杰生说，“或者什么都吃不上了？”

“我知道这是我的错，”康普生太太说，“我就知道你会责怪我的。”

“为什么会怪您呢？”杰生说，“又不是您让耶稣复活的，不是吗？”

他们听到黛西登上最后一级台阶，然后听到她缓慢地挪动脚步的声音。

“昆汀。”她说。当她叫第一声时，杰生放下了手中的刀叉，他恰巧坐在他母亲对面，两个人姿势一模一样：一个人冷酷精明，前额处有两个卷曲着的棕色发卷，就像是漫画中的调酒师，淡褐色的眼睛周围有一圈黑色环状虹膜，活像两颗弹珠一样；另一个人冷酷而又牢骚满腹，头发花白，眼袋松弛，眼神迷惑，眼珠漆黑，仿佛全是瞳孔。

“昆汀，”黛西说，“起床吧，亲爱的。他们都在等你开饭呢。”

“我真不明白那个窗户怎么会打破了呢，”康普生太太说，“你确定是昨天被打破的吗？也许一直都是那样，只是天气暖和了，上边的窗框被树荫遮住了，以前没发觉而已。”

“我已经跟您说过多少遍了，就是昨天发生的，”杰生说，“难道我

还不了解我住的房间吗？您认为我可以在里边睡了一个星期，窗口上有一个手都能伸进去的洞……”他的声音停住，并逐渐消失了，他盯着他的母亲，有一瞬间，那双眼睛里空无一物。好像他的眼睛也会屏气凝神一样。他的母亲也看着他，她面部肌肉松弛，爱发牢骚，狡黠而又愚钝。他们就这样坐着，又听见黛西说：“昆汀，别跟我玩儿了，亲爱的，快去吃早餐吧，大家都在等着你呢。”

“我真是搞不懂，”康普生太太说，“好像有人要试图闯入房子里一样——”杰生跳了起来。他的椅子应声倒地。“什么——”康普生太太说，她双眼盯着他，只见他从她身边跑了过去，跳上楼梯，在那儿碰到了黛西，他的脸被黛西遮住了。黛西说：“她正不高兴呢，你妈妈还没打开房门上的锁——”杰生走过她身边，沿着走廊，走到门口。他没敲门。他抓住门上的旋钮，试了一下，然后他站在那里，手里握着旋钮，头微微前倾着，仿佛在听里边有什么声音似的，他真的听到了什么。他那一副装模作样的表情，就像是在欺骗自己，使自己相信他所听到的事情一样。

康普生太太登上楼梯，一边向他走去，一边呼唤着他的名字。这时，她看见了黛西，她就不再喊了，开始叫着黛西。

“我跟你说了，她还没打开房门的锁呢。”黛西说。

当她说话时，杰生转过身，朝她跑来，不过，他的声音却很平静，不带任何感情。“她拿着钥匙吗？”他说，“她这会儿身上有钥匙吗？我是说，她会不会……”

“黛西。”康普生太太站在楼梯上喊道。

“是哪个？”黛西说，“你怎么不让……”

“钥匙，”杰生说，“那个房间的钥匙。她不是一直都随身携带着吗？”这时，他看见了康普生太太，他走下楼，见到她。“把钥匙给我。”他说。他伸手向她那锈黑色睡衣的衣兜里摸索着。她抗拒着来回扭动着。

“杰生，”她说，“杰生！你和黛西是想把我再次送上病榻吗？”她边说边试图去挡开他的手，“你就不能让我安安静静地过个周日吗？”

“给我钥匙，”杰生边说边在她身上摸索着，“马上给我。”他回头看了一眼那扇门，仿佛希望那扇门能在他拿到钥匙之前砰的一声打开似的。

“你快来呀，黛西！”康普生太太一边说，一边紧紧地抱着胸前的睡衣。

“把钥匙给我，你这个疯婆子！”杰生突然大声叫喊起来。他从她的衣兜里掏出一大串生锈的钥匙，这些钥匙是用一个铁环串起来的，就像是中世纪狱卒拿的钥匙一样。他跑回走廊中，留下那两个女人跟在他后边。

“你，杰生！”康普生太太说。“他永远也找不到适合的钥匙。”她说，“你知道，我从来不会让任何人拿走我的钥匙，黛西。”她边说边开始号啕大哭。

“别哭了，”黛西说，“他不会把她怎么样的。我不会让他那么做的。”

“但是，这是周日的早晨，又是在我自己家里，”康普生太太说，“我含辛茹苦地按照基督教的信条将他们养大。让我给你找出是哪

把钥匙吧，杰生。”她说。她把手搭在他的胳膊上，然后开始和他争夺起来，但他胳膊一甩，就把她甩到了一边，他还转过头来看了她一眼，眼神冷冰冰的，充满怒火，然后，他拿着那串沉重的钥匙再次走到了门口。

“别争了，”黛西说，“你怎么能这样，杰生！”

“大事不好了，”康普生太太说着，又号啕大哭起来，“我就知道会是这样，你呀，杰生，”她说，再次去抓着杰生，“他甚至不让我找到自己房间的钥匙！”

“就这样吧，就这样吧，”黛西说，“会出什么事儿呢？我就在这儿呢。我不会让他伤害她的。昆汀，”她提高了嗓音说道，“你不要害怕，亲爱的，我就在这儿呢。”

门打开了，他推开门，在那儿站了一会儿，挡住了门口，然后就走进去了。“进去吧。”他操着厚重的嗓音轻轻地说。他们走了进去，这不像是一个姑娘家的房间。也不会是其他人的房间，房间里有股淡淡的廉价化妆品的清香，还有几件女士用品，那些想使这个房间显得女性化的证物很拙劣，徒增了一些不明因素，有种幽会时的房间那种了无生趣、古板老套的气氛。床铺得很平整。地板上扔着一件穿过的内衣，是一件廉价的丝绸质的浅粉色内衣，半开的抽屉中垂着一条丝袜。窗户敞开着。外边是一棵梨树，紧靠着这间房子。梨花盛开着，树枝擦过房屋，发出沙沙的响声，在窗外涌进一股股空气，带着凄凉的花香。

“现在看到了吧，”黛西说，“我不是告诉过你她没事儿吗？”

“没事吧？”康普生太太说。黛西跟着她进了房间，拉了一下她。

“您赶紧回去躺着，”她说，“我十分钟之内把她找回来。”

康普生太太甩开她的手：“找找有没有纸条，”她说，“昆汀那次就是留了一张纸条。”

“好的，”黛西说，“我会去找的，您赶紧回自己房里去吧。”

“就在他们给她取名为昆汀时，我就知道会发生这种事的。”康普生太太说。她走到写字台前，开始翻那七零八散的东西——香水瓶、一盒粉饼、一支削过的铅笔、一把断了刃的剪刀，剪刀放在一条补过的头巾上，上边撒落着香粉，还有口红印。“找找纸条。”她说。

“我正在找呢，”黛西说，“您快走吧，我和杰生会找到纸条的。赶紧回您屋里去吧。”

“杰生，”康普生太太说，“杰生在哪儿呢？”她走到门口。黛西跟着她穿过大厅，走到另一扇门跟前。这扇门关着。“杰生，”她在门外喊着。没有人回答。她转了转旋钮，又开始喊起来。但是仍然没人回应，因为他正在衣柜里往外拖东西呢，衣服，鞋子，还有一个手提箱。然后他拉着一个截过的舌槽铺板出来了，他把它放在地上，再次钻进了衣柜，这次他拿了一个小铁箱出来了。他把箱子放在床上，站在那儿看着那被撬过的锁眼，从衣兜里掏出那串钥匙，从里面挑出了一把。他手里拿着那把钥匙，站了好长一会儿，一直看着那破损的锁眼。然后他把钥匙放回衣兜里，小心翼翼地将箱子里的东西倒在床上。他仔细整理着那些纸条，每次只拿起一张，在面前晃晃。然后，他把箱子竖起来，也晃了几下，然后慢条斯理地将那些纸条放回去，又站在那儿，双手托着箱子，头低垂着，看着那个锁眼。窗外，他听到一些松鸦掠过窗子飞走了，它们的叫声在被风吹散，他还听到汽车驶过的声音也逐渐远去了。

他的母亲隔着门又开始叫他的名字了，可他还是一动不动。他听到黛西领着她走向大厅，然后门关上了。他把箱子重新放回衣橱里，又把衣服都扔了进去，下楼去打电话。他把听筒搁在耳边等待着，黛西下楼了。她朝他看了一下，没有停下脚步，继续往前走了。

电话接通了。“我是杰生·康普生，”他说，他的声音沙哑厚重，他只得又重复了一下自己的名字，“杰生·康普生，”他控制着自己的嗓音说着，“准备好一辆车，带上一位副手，如果十分钟内到不了，我会去的——什么？抢劫。我们家，我知道是谁抢劫，准备好车吧——什么？你难道不是拿政府薪水的执法者——好吧，我五分钟内就到。准备好车，我们随时准备出发。如果你临阵脱逃了，我向乡州长告发你。”

他放下听筒，穿过餐厅，餐厅桌子上那些剩饭已经放凉了，他走进厨房。黛西正在灌热水袋。班静静地、淡然地坐在她旁边。班旁边坐着卢斯特，他看上就像是一只机警聪明的小狗，正在吃着什么东西。杰生穿过厨房继续往前走。

“你早饭什么都不吃吗？”黛西说。他没有理会她。“去吃点儿早餐吧，杰生。”他继续往前走，通往院子的那扇门在他身后重重地关上了。卢斯特起身走到窗前，向外望去。

“哦，”他说，“发生了什么事？是他打了昆汀小姐吗？”

“闭上你的嘴巴，”黛西说，“你要是现在和班吉打起来，我会揍扁你的脑袋。你在这儿好好看着他，我一会儿就回来。”她拧上热水袋的塞子，走了出去。他们听到她走上楼梯，接着就听到杰生开着车走了。除了水壶的咝咝声和钟表的嘀嗒声，厨房里再也没有别的声响了。

“你知道我是怎么想的吗？”卢斯特说，“我敢打赌他准是打了她，

我猜她头部受伤了，他现在是在去医院了。我就是这么想的。”时钟嘀嘀嗒嗒地响着，显得庄重而又深沉。可能这座衰败的老房子本身就已经气血不足了，就一会儿的时间，它就嘎吱作响了六次，仿佛是在清它的嗓子。班抬头看了一眼，然后看了看窗前卢斯特那颗子弹般的头，他又开始摇头晃脑起来，嘴角淌着口水。他开始呻吟。

“闭嘴，你这个疯子，”卢斯特头也不回地说了一声，“看样子我们今天去不成教堂了。”但是，班还是坐在椅子上，他那双又大又软的手耷拉在两膝之间，发出低低的呻吟声。突然间他就哭了，那是一种毫无意义、持续不断的吼叫声。“闭上你的嘴巴，”卢斯特说，他转过身来挥了挥他的拳头，“你是想让我揍你吗？”但是，班看着他，每吸一口气就会哼一声。卢斯特走过来晃着他。“你立马给我闭嘴！”他喊道，“过来。”他将班从椅子上拽起来，将椅子拖到炉火跟前，打开炉门，把班往椅子上一推。他们就像是在用一只小船将一艘笨重邮轮拖进狭窄的码头。班坐下来，面对着火红的炉膛。接着他们听见钟声又响起来了，黛西慢吞吞地走下楼梯。当她进来时，班又开始呜咽起来。然后，又提高了嗓门。

“你怎么他了？”黛西说，“什么时候不可以，你为什么就偏偏要让他今天早上不得安生呢？”

“我什么也没做呀，”卢斯特说，“杰生先生吓到他了，就是那么回事。他没有杀死昆汀小姐，对吗？”

“别哭了，班吉。”黛西说。他安静下来。她走到窗前向外望去。“不下雨了吗？”她说。

“是的，”卢斯特说，“早就不下了。”

“那你们出去玩儿会儿吧。”她说，“我刚让卡罗琳小姐安静下来。”

“我们还去教堂吗？”卢斯特说。

“到时候我就会告诉你们的。我不叫你，你也别带他进来。”

“我们能去牧场吗？”卢斯特说。

“好吧，只要你不让他靠近这个房子。我算是受够了。”

“好的，”卢斯特说，“杰生先生去哪儿了，妈咪？”

“又不关你的事，是不是？”黛西说，她开始收拾桌子，“小点声，班吉。卢斯特马上会带你出去玩的。”

“他把昆汀小姐怎么样了，妈咪？”卢斯特说。

“没有怎么样。你们都赶紧出去。”

“我敢打赌，她不在家里。”卢斯特说。

黛西看着他：“你怎么知道她不在家里？”

“昨天晚上，我和班吉看见她从窗口爬出去了。是不是呀，班吉？”

“你真的看见了吗？”黛西盯着他说。

“我们每天晚上都能看见她从窗口爬出去，”卢斯特说，“就落在那棵梨树下边。”

“你可不要骗我，小黑。”黛西说。

“我没有说谎，你可以问问班吉我说的是不是真的。”

“你以前为什么就没说过呢？”

“这又不关我的事，”卢斯特说，“我可不愿搅和进白人的是非中。咱们走吧，班吉，咱们到外边玩儿去。”

他们出去了。黛西在餐桌旁站了一会儿，然后她就去餐厅清理那些吃剩的早餐，她自己也吃了点儿东西，又收拾了一下厨房。然后，她脱掉围裙，把它挂起来，走到楼梯口，侧着耳朵听了一会儿。楼上一点儿声音也没有。她就穿上大衣，戴上帽子，穿过院子回到她的小茅屋中去了。

雨已经停了。从东北方向刮来一阵清新的风。头顶上方出现了片片蓝天。阳光透过小镇的树木和屋顶，照在山尖上，就像是一块白布，逐渐褪去了颜色。这时，空中传来一阵钟声，仿佛一个信号般，其他钟声也纷纷紧随而至。

小茅屋的门打开了，黛西走了出来，她还是穿着那件紫色的长裙，披着栗色的披肩，戴着一双脏兮兮的及肘长的白手套，这回她没有戴头巾。她来到院子里，呼喊着重卢斯特。她等了一会儿，然后向大宅子走去，绕过宅子走到了地窖门口，她紧贴着墙壁，朝门里望去。班坐在台阶上。卢斯特蹲在他前面那潮湿的地板上。他左手拿着一把锯，受到手的压力，锯齿有点弯，他正在用一把旧木槌敲打着锯齿。这个木槌是黛西用来做饼干的，她已经用了三十多年了。每敲打一下，锯尺就会发出一种有气无力的声音，随即就一片死寂。只见锯齿在卢斯特的手掌和地面划出一道弯曲的弧线。真是不可思议。

“那个人也是这么敲击的，”卢斯特说，“我只是没有找到适合的敲

击工具。”

“这就是你干的好事儿吗，是不是？”黛西说，“把我的木槌还给我。”

“我又没有弄坏你的小木槌。”卢斯特说。

“把它拿过来，”黛西说，“锯子是从哪儿拿的还放回哪里去。”

他把锯子放在一边，把木槌递给她。班又开始大哭大闹起来，绝望地哀号着，那声音拖得很长。这并不算是是什么。只是一种声音而已。这种声音可能自古以来就存在，在行星汇合的那一瞬间不公正和悲伤也就成为了一种声音。

“你听他，”卢斯特说，“从你把我们赶出房子以来，他就一直这样。我真不明白他今天早上是怎么回事。”

“把他叫过来吧。”黛西说。

“过来，班吉。”卢斯特说。他走下台阶，拉住班的手臂。班吉乖乖地跟过来了，还在哀号着，就像是船舶发出的那种低沉沙哑的声音一样，似乎在这种声音发出以前就已经存在了，还没等这种声音结束就已消失了。

“你回去把他的帽子拿过来吧，”黛西说，“别发出声音来，吵到卡罗琳小姐。快点儿，现在就去吧，咱们已经晚了。”

“如果你不想办法让他停下来，她不管怎样还是会听到的。”卢斯特说。

“只要一走出这个地方，他就会停下来的，”黛西说，“他闻到了。就是这么回事。”

“闻到什么了，妈咪？”卢斯特说。

“你快去把他的帽子拿来。”黛西说。卢斯特就走了。他们站在地窖门口，班站在下面的一级台阶上。天空中飘浮着朵朵云彩，它们的阴影轻快地移动着，移出了这个破败的花园，穿过破篱笆和院子。黛西抚摸着班的头，动作缓慢而平稳，她抚平他前额的头发。他的哀号声平静下来，也不那么仓促了。“不哭了，”黛西说，“不哭咯，咱们马上就走了，不哭咯。”他安静、平稳地低声哼着。

卢斯特回来了，戴着一顶周围有一圈花饰的挺括的新草帽，手里还拿着一顶布帽。那顶帽子似乎太大了，卢斯特的头骨都没有贴着帽子，就像聚光灯一样打在他的头上。乍看之下，真的很独特，就像这顶帽子是戴在紧贴着卢斯特身后的另一个人的头上一样。黛西打量着那顶帽子。

“你怎么不戴你那顶旧帽子呢？”她说。

“我找不到了。”卢斯特说。

“当然找不到了。我敢肯定你昨晚一定是把它藏起来了，你就是想要毁掉这顶新帽子。”

“噢，妈咪，”卢斯特说，“天又不会下雨。”

“你怎么知道呢？你去戴上那顶旧帽子，把这个新帽子放回去。”

“噢，妈咪。”

“那你去拿把伞过来。”

“噢，妈咪。”

“你随便，”黛西说，“要不回去戴上旧帽子，要不就拿把雨伞代替旧帽子。我才不管你呢。”

卢斯特朝小茅屋走去。班轻轻地哼着。

“咱们走吧，”黛西说，“他们会赶上我们的。咱们先去听他们唱诗。”他们绕过房子，朝门口走去。当他们走上车道，黛西不时就会说一声“别哭了”。他们走到大门口。黛西打开门。卢斯特拿着伞沿着车道赶上来了。有一个女人跟他一块儿来了。“他们来了，”黛西说。他们走出大门。“好了，不哭了。”她说。班停止了哭泣。卢斯特和他的母亲赶上来了。弗洛尼穿着一件天蓝色的丝绸衣服，帽子上插着花。她瘦瘦小小的，长着一张扁平的脸，那张脸看上去很和善。

“你身上穿的衣服可是六个星期的工作换来的，”黛西说，“要是下雨了，你该怎么办呢？”

“淋湿就淋湿了呗，”弗洛尼说，“老天爷要下雨，我哪能挡得住。”

“妈妈总是说会下雨。”卢斯特说。

“要是我不为你们操心，谁还会为你们操心，”黛西说，“赶紧走吧，咱们都已经晚了。”

“今天是希古克牧师给我们布道。”弗洛尼说。

“是吗？”黛西说，“他是谁？”

“他是从圣路易来的，”弗洛尼说，“是一个大牧师。”

“噢，”黛西说，“他们就需要这样一个人，能让这些黑人小子对上帝产生敬畏心理。”

“希古克牧师就能做到这一点，”弗洛尼说，“大家都是这么说的。”

他们继续沿着街道往前走。沿着这条寂静的街道，一群衣着鲜明的白人伴随着钟声朝着教堂方向走去，时不时地会脱离队伍，试探着走在阳光下面。狂风从东南方向吹来，刚经历过暖和的天气，这股风让人觉得又冷又寒。

“我真希望你不要老带着他去教堂，妈咪。”弗洛尼说，“人们都在议论纷纷呢。”

“谁议论了？”黛西说。

“我听到他们议论了。”弗洛尼说。

“我很清楚那都是些什么人，”黛西说，“垃圾的白种人。就是这种人。他们认为他不配进入白人教堂，他们也不配进入黑人教堂。”

“他们差不多就是这么议论的。”弗洛尼说。

“让他们到我跟前来说，”黛西说，“我会告诉他们仁慈的上帝才不会管你聪明还是愚钝呢。除了垃圾的白种人，没有人会在意的。”

有条道路在前边直角处拐弯了，顺着这条路往下走，你会看到一条土路。路两边的坡度越来越陡；道路尽头，出现了一片开阔的平地，上面零星点缀着几个小木屋，那些饱经风霜的屋顶和路面一般高。小木屋

坐落在寸草不生的土地上，地上随便堆放着一些破破烂烂的东西，砖头、木板、瓦罐等一些曾经很有价值的东西。只有一些杂草在那片土地上，还有一些桑树、刺槐和梧桐树——这些树木为房子周围散发出的恶臭味也做出了一定的贡献；这些树发芽的时期也是在凄凉萧索的九月份，春天从它们身边一掠而过，就把它们交给黑人贫民区了，好让它们从这种丰富和独特的气味中吸收营养。

当他们经过他们门前时，那些黑人和他们打了声招呼，通常是跟黛西寒暄两句：

“吉卜生大姐，您今天早上过得可好？”

“我挺好的，谢谢你。”

黑人从小木屋里走出来，费劲地爬上他们共有的路堤上——男人穿着古板的褐色或黑色的衣服，戴着金表链，不时还会有人拿着手杖走过来；年轻男子则穿着廉价的，有点夸张的蓝色或条纹状的衣服，戴着时髦的帽子；妇女穿着硬邦邦的衣服，走起路来沙沙作响；孩子们则穿着从白人那里买来的二手衣服，他们用那种夜行动物般偷偷摸摸的眼神看着班：

“我敢打赌你不敢走上去碰他。”

“你怎么知道我不敢？”

“我敢打赌，你不敢，你害怕他。”

“他不会伤人，他只是一个傻子。”

“傻子就不会伤人了吗？”

“他不会的，我以前碰过他。”

“我敢打赌，你现在不敢碰他。”

“因为黛西小姐在看着呢。”

“你绝对不敢去碰他。”

“他不会伤人，他不过是一个傻子。”

不时有一些上了年纪的人来跟黛西说几句话，不过，除非是年纪很大的人，黛西才允许弗洛尼跟他们说上几句话。

“妈咪今天早上身体不太舒服。”

“那太糟糕了。不过希古克牧师会给她治好的。他会安慰他，帮她解除负担。”

道路的坡度越来越陡，就像是背景图中描绘出来的景象一样。在那片种满橡树的红土地上，道路像是从中间被截断了，就像是一条剪断的丝带一样。路旁是一座饱经风霜的教堂，那古怪的尖顶俨然是画作中描绘的教堂，整个景象就是将一张画板放置在一片平坦的空地边缘，上面都是一些平面的景观，没有任何棱角可言，背景是四月的晴空，是一个多风的天气，还不到晌午时分，空中伴随着阵阵钟声。人们迈着缓慢、庄重的步伐涌向教堂，妇女和孩子们径直走了进去，男人们则停在门口，围成一圈轻声交谈着，直到钟声停了下来，他们才往教堂中走去。

教堂内部已然经过装饰，稀稀落落地摆放着从厨房后的菜园和灌木丛中采摘的鲜花，还悬挂着绉纸彩带。讲坛上方吊着一个纸糊的圣诞铃，像手风琴一样可折叠起来。讲坛上空无一人，合唱团已经到位，虽

然天气不热，他们还是在扇着风。

大多数妇女聚集在教堂一侧。她们叽叽喳喳地交谈着。这时，钟敲响了一下，她们散开回到自己的座位上。会众们坐了一会儿，怀着期待的心情等待着。钟再次敲响了一下。唱诗班站了起来，会众同时把头转过去，只见六个小孩走了出来——其中有四个小女孩，马尾辫上都系着蝴蝶结，还有两个留着短发的小男孩，他们走上讲坛，白色的绸带和鲜花把他们结合成一体，身后跟着两个拿着文件夹的男人。第二个人身躯魁梧，浅咖啡色皮肤，穿着礼服，系着白色领带，庄重而威严。光看他的头就感觉很大众化可他仍然很威严，很有思想，衣领之上露出他的脖子，脖子上的肉层层堆叠着。会众们都认识他，当他走过去时，大家的脖子仍然来回扭动着，直到唱诗班停止歌唱，他们才意识到，来访牧师已经到来，当他们看到走在牧师前面的那名男子时，他现在仍然站在他的前面，会众席爆发出了的一种难以形容的声音，有叹息，有惊讶，还有一些失望。

来访牧师身材矮小，穿着一个破旧的羊驼呢大衣。那张干瘪黝黑的脸犹如瘦小的老猴子的脸一样。唱诗班再次开始了合唱，而六个孩子也站了起来，发出各种尖锐、胆怯、不和谐的音调，他们看着这个不起眼的男子坐在魁梧伟岸的牧师旁边，相比之下，他显得矮小而又土气。当牧师站起来用一种深沉、起伏的语调介绍这个人时，会众还是有点惊愕地打量着他，眼睛里露出不信任的光芒。牧师热情的语调更显得旁边的这个人微不足道了。

“他们还是从圣路易请来的呢。”弗洛尼低声说。

“我还知道比这更古怪的。”黛西说，“别吵了，”她对班说，“他们马上又要开始唱歌了。”

当来访者起身发言时，他的口音听起来像是个白人，平淡而又冷漠。听起来不像是从他嘴里说出来的话。起初，大家抱着好奇的心态听着，就像是在听猴子说话一样。后来开始以一种看人走钢丝的眼光瞧着他。看着他以一种冷漠、毫无变化的音调在钢丝上来回跑动，摆出各种姿势，俯身跳下钢丝，他们甚至忘了他微不足道的外表。最后，当他俯冲下来，将一只胳膊放在胸前的讲桌上时，他那猴子似的身躯就像木乃伊或是一只空船一样一动不动时，会众这才松了一口气，在座位上挪动了一下身躯，好像是刚刚集体做了一场梦一样。讲坛后边，合唱团不紧不慢地扇着扇子。黛西低声说：“别吵了，他们马上又要唱歌了。”

这时，一个声音响起了：“弟兄们。”

牧师一动不动。他的手臂横放在桌子上，当这个铿锵有力的声音透过墙壁产生的回声逐渐消失时，他还是保持着那个姿势。这声音与他之前的声音相比，简直是天壤之别，像是一只中音喇叭，有种悲伤、忧郁的感觉，深深地嵌入他们的内心深处，当回声逐渐消散时，那种感觉还在他们心中回荡着。

“弟兄们，姐妹们。”那声音又响起了。牧师移开了他的手臂，开始在讲桌前来回走动，他将双手背在身后，瘦小的身躯微驼着，就像是长期在无情的土地上苦苦挣扎的人一样。“我将永远铭记羔羊的鲜血！”他在彩纸和圣诞钟下迈着稳重的步伐踱来踱去，身躯微驼，双手紧握在身后。他就像一块被一波波的声浪磨平了棱角的小石头。很像是在用他的躯体来维系着他的声音，他的声音像女妖一样咬啮着他的内心。会众仿佛亲眼看见那声音逐渐将他吞噬，直到他消失不见了，他们也消失了，甚至连那声音也消失了，只剩下他们的心灵用着吟唱的节奏互相交谈着，无须任何言语，所以，当他又靠在讲桌前时，他那张猴子似的脸抬起来了，他的整个身躯就像是一个安详、受难的形象，人们再也想不起

那种有失体面、无足轻重的感觉了，会众们长长地出了一口气，一个妇女用尖锐的声音喊道：“是的，耶稣！”

随着头顶的乌云飘过，昏暗的窗户明亮了一阵后，就又陷入阴森森的昏暗中了。一辆汽车驶过，在沙地中费力地前行着，声音逐渐消失殆尽。黛西笔直地坐着，她的手放在班的膝盖上。眼泪顺着脸颊不停地流淌，在牺牲、放弃和时光折射出的无数的幻影中进进出出。

“弟兄们。”牧师用沙哑的声音低声说着，身体一动不动。

“是的，耶稣！”那个女声再次喊道，这次声音放低了许多。

“弟兄们，姐妹们！”牧师的声音再次响起，这回是中音喇叭的声音，他把手臂从讲台上移开，笔直地站着，举起双手，“我将永远铭记羔羊的鲜血！”会众没有意识到他的声音和语调不知道在什么时候变成了黑人特有的音调，他们只是坐在座位上轻轻地晃动着身躯，因为他的声音摇晃起来，他的声音感染了他们。

“在漫长、寒冷的岁月里——哦，我告诉你们，弟兄们，在漫长、寒冷的岁月里——我见到了光明，我见到了神谕，可怜的罪人啊！他们死在了埃及，那一辆辆摇摇晃晃的马车；那些逝去的一代又一代的人。富人而今安在，哦，弟兄们啊？穷人而今又安在，哦，姐妹们啊？哦，我告诉你们，在漫长、寒冷的岁月中，如果没有救命的牛乳和甘露，你们该怎么办呢！”

“是的，耶稣！”

“我告诉你们，弟兄们，我也告诉你们，姐妹们，这一天终究会到来的。可怜的罪人说：让我躺在主的身边吧，放下一切罪恶。耶稣会

说：哦，兄弟们啊？哦，姐妹们啊？你们是否记得羔羊的鲜血？因为我不想让天堂承受太多的罪恶！”

他外套里摸索着，拿出一个手帕，擦了擦脸。会众们异口同声地说：“阿门。”那个女声又再次响起：“是的，耶稣，耶稣！”

“弟兄们！看看坐在那里的孩子们。耶稣曾经也像他们一样。他的母亲承受了荣耀与痛苦。那一天，夜幕降临，她把耶稣放在夜空下，天使们唱着歌给他催眠；她向外看去，看到了罗马警察从旁边经过。”他边来回踱步，边擦着脸，“听我说，兄弟们！我见证了那一天的到来。玛利亚将耶稣放在膝上，那是小时候的耶稣，就跟这里的孩子们一样。我听见天使们在歌唱和平与荣耀；我看到了那双紧闭的眼睛；看到玛利亚跳起身来，看到士兵们的脸：我们要杀人！我们要杀人！我们要杀小耶稣！我听到了那可怜母亲的哭诉，因为她得不到主的拯救。”

“阿门！耶稣啊！小耶稣啊！”这时，一个声音响起：“我看到了，哦，耶稣！哦，我看到了！”还有另一个声音，没有任何言语，就像水中升起的气泡。

“我看到了，兄弟们！我看到耶稣了！看到那闪闪发光、让人震惊的景象了！我看到髑髅地，那里有圣树，看到了小偷、凶手和最卑鄙的人；我听见了那些狂言狂语：如果你是耶稣，为什么不把你的十字架扛起来背着走呀！我听见妇人在夜间哭泣和哀号；我听见了啜泣声和哭泣声，听见上帝别过脸说：你们杀死了耶稣；你们真的杀死了我的儿子！”

“阿门！耶稣！我看见了，耶稣啊！”

“盲目的罪人啊！兄弟们，我告诉你们；姐妹们，我跟你们说，当

上帝转过他那张无所不能的脸时，他说：我不想让天堂承受过重的负担！我看见上帝关上了他的那扇门；我看见洪水泛滥其中；我看见了代代传承的黑暗与死亡。接下来呢，瞧！兄弟们！是的，兄弟们！我看到了什么？我看到了什么，哦，那是罪人？我看见了复活与光明；看见温顺的耶稣说：他们杀死了我，你们才能复活；我死去，是为了看见那些永远不会死去的人。弟兄们啊，哦，弟兄们！我见到了末日的霹雳，也听见了金色的号角，吹响了天国的福音，那些铭记羔羊鲜血的死者将会复活。”

会众纷纷议论起来，班坐在那儿，眨着他那双温柔的蓝眼睛。黛西笔直地坐着，低声抽泣着，她还在为那些受难的人难过，以及那些铭记羔羊鲜血的人。

当他们走在正午明亮的阳光下，走上那条沙砾土地上时，散会的会众们又围成一个个圈子开始轻松地讨论着，黛西还在哭泣，无心跟他们谈话。

“他真是一个伟大的布道者，天啊！刚开始怎么也不像，但是后来真让人惊讶！”

“他看见了权力和荣耀。”

“是的，真了不起。他看见了。他亲眼见证了。”黛西没有出声，泪水顺着脸庞淌下来，而脸上的肌肉却没有颤抖。

她昂起头走着，甚至不去擦干泪水。

“您这是干什么，妈咪？”弗洛尼说，“所有人都会看着我们。我们很快就回到白人居住区了。”

“我看见了初，也看见了终，”黛西说，“你别管我。”

“什么初什么终的？”弗洛尼说。

“你别管，”黛西说，“我最先看到了初，现在我看到了终。”

在他们走上街道之前。她还是停下了脚步，撩起裙摆，用最里面的裙裾擦了擦她的双眼。然后，他们就继续往前走了。班摇摇晃晃地走在黛西旁边，看着走在前边不时伴着鬼脸的卢斯特，他手里拿着雨伞，那顶新草帽斜戴在头上，在阳光的照射下，活像一只傻乎乎的大狗在看一只机灵的小狗。他们走到家门口，进去了。班马上又开始呜咽起来，他们所有人都朝着车道尽头那栋大宅望去，那栋房子方方正正的，油漆已经脱落了，门柱也摇摇欲坠。

“今天有没有发生什么事呢？”弗洛尼说，“肯定发生过什么。”

“没发生什么，”黛西说，“你管好自己的事就行了，白人的事就让他们自己操心去吧。”

“一定出过什么事，”弗洛尼说，“我一大早就听见他在哼哼。虽然，这跟我没什么干系。”

“嗯，我也知道是什么事儿。”卢斯特说。

“你知道的事情太多了，”黛西说，“你没听弗洛尼刚才说过这不关她什么事吗？你把班吉带到后院去，让他保持安静，我去准备午饭。”

“我知道昆汀小姐在哪儿。”卢斯特说。

“那就给我闭上你的嘴巴，”黛西说，“当昆汀需要你的意见时，我

会让你知道的。你们现在赶紧都到后院玩儿去吧。”

“你难道不知道他们在牧场上打球会出现什么情形吗？”卢斯特说。

“他们暂时还不会开始。到那时，T.P.会过来带他去坐车的。来，把你那顶新帽子给我。”

卢斯特将帽子递给她后，就和班去后院玩儿了。班还在不停地呜咽，但是声音没那么大了。黛西和弗洛尼走进小木屋。过了一会儿，黛西就出来了，又穿上那条褪色的布裙子，到厨房去了。炉火已经熄灭了。房间里一点儿声响都没有。她系上围裙，走上楼梯。什么声音也没有，昆汀的房间还和他们离开时一样。她走进房间，捡起内衣，将丝袜放回抽屉里，合上抽屉。康普生太太的房门紧闭着。黛西在门口站了一会儿，听了听没有声音，就打开门进去了，一股浓烈的樟脑球味扑面而来。百叶窗关着，房间里半明半暗，那张床也处于黑暗之中，所以起初她还以为康普生太太睡着了，正要关上门，床上的人说话了。

“谁呀？”她说，“是谁在那儿？”

“是我，”黛西说，“您需要什么吗？”

康普生太太没有回答。过了一段时间，她问：“杰生在哪里？”头连动都没动。

“他还没回来呢，”黛西说，“你需要什么吗？”

康普生太太一句话也没说。像大多数冷漠、虚弱的人一样，当最终要面对一场不可逆转的灾难时，她总是能从某处获得一种刚毅的精神，或是某种力量。在现在的情况下，那是对尚未查明真相的事情保有的一种不可动摇的信念。“哎，”她说，“你找到了吗？”

“找到什么？您说的是什么呢？”

“字条。至少她应该会想到要留下一张字条。就连昆汀都会这么做的。”

“您在说什么呢？”黛西说，“你难道不知道她什么事都没有吗？我敢打赌，天黑之前，她一定会从这个门口走进来的。”

“你胡诌的吧，”康普生太太说，“这是遗传的。有什么样的舅舅，就会有什么样的外甥女。或者有其母必有其女。我不知道哪种情况更糟糕。我并不在乎。”

“您一直这么说究竟有什么意思呢？”黛西说，“她又何必去选择那样一条路呢？”

“我也不知道。昆汀那样做是因为什么呢？她究竟为什么那么做呢？不可能仅仅是为了讥讽我或伤我的心。不管上帝是谁，他肯定不会容许这样的事情发生的。我是一个淑女。你可能看着我的子孙，想象不到我会是这样的一种人，但我确实如此。”

“您就等着瞧吧，”黛西说，“天黑前她肯定会回来的，她会乖乖地躺在她的床上。”康普生太太什么也没说。樟脑浸泡过的布放在她的额头上。那件黑色的睡袍横躺在床脚。黛西将手放在门把上。

“嗯，”康普生太太说，“你还有什么事？你还要给杰生和本杰明准备点儿晚餐，是吗？”

“杰生还没回来，”黛西说，“我要下去做午饭了。您真的什么也不需要吗？您的热水袋还热吗？”

“你还是把我的《圣经》拿给我吧。”

“我今天早上出去时就拿给您了。”

“您把它放在床沿上了。您还指望它能不掉下去吗？”

黛西来到床边，在床边摸索着找到了那本封面朝下的《圣经》。她抚平了页面，又把书放回到床上。康普生太太眼都没睁。她的头发和枕头是同样的颜色，她的头上敷着一块被药水浸过的布，让她看起来像是一个在祈祷的老尼姑一样。“不要把它放在那儿了，”她说，她还是没有睁开眼睛，“你之前就把它放那儿了。你是想让我下床把它捡起来吗？”

黛西伸手拿过那本书，把它往里边放了放：“您又看不清，怎么读呢，要不要我把百叶窗拉开一点儿呢？”

“不要，不要去管它了，你赶紧去给杰生做点儿吃的吧。”

黛西出去了。她关上了门，回到厨房。炉子几乎都冷却了。当她站在那儿时，橱柜上方挂着的时钟敲响了十下。“十点了，”她大声说，“杰生还没回来。”她说，“我看见了初，也看见了终。”她看着冷灶说。

她拿出一些生冷的食物放在桌子上。来回走动的同时还唱着一首赞美诗。她一遍遍地唱着头两句歌词。摆放好食物后，她就走到门口去叫卢斯特，不一会儿，卢斯特和班就进来了。班还在轻轻地哼着，仿佛是自己听的。

“他一直不停地哼。”卢斯特说。

“你们都过来吃饭吧，”黛西说，“杰生不回来吃饭了。”他们在餐桌

旁坐了下来。班完全可以应付得来固体食物，虽然现在他面前都是生冷的食物。黛西在他的下巴底下系了一块布。他和卢斯特开始吃起来。黛西在厨房里来回走动，哼着她记得的那两句赞美诗。“你们都赶紧吃吧，”她说，“杰生不回来吃饭了。”

杰生这时远在二十英里开外。离开家之后，他就飞速地向小镇驶去，途中看到了去教堂做礼拜的人群，他们缓慢地行进着，还听到了空中弥漫的专横的钟声。他穿过空旷的广场，拐进一条狭窄的街道，周围变得更加沉寂了。他在一栋木房前停了下来，沿着种满鲜花的走道向门廊走去。

他听到有人在里边讲话。正准备抬起手敲门时，他听到了脚步声，于是他把手缩回去了。这时，只见一个身穿黑色绒面长裤和无领白衬衫的大个子把门打开了。他的铁灰色的头发凌乱不堪，一双灰色的眼睛又圆又亮，像小男孩的眼睛一样闪烁着。他握着杰生的手，将他拉进屋子，还不停地跟他握手。

“快请进，”他说，“快请进。”

“你准备好了吗？”杰生说。

“赶紧先进来，”大个子说，一边还推着他的胳膊肘让他往里走，房间里坐着一男一女，“你认识默特尔的丈夫吧，是不是？这位是杰生·康普生，这位是弗农。”

“我认识。”杰生说。他甚至连看都没看那名男子。

当警长拉来一把椅子时，那名男子说：“我们先出去走走，你们在这儿聊吧。走吧，默特尔。”

“没事，没事，”警长说，“你们就坐着吧。我们也没什么要紧的事儿吧，杰生？你坐呀。”

“我们边走边说吧，”杰生说，“拿上你的帽子和外套。”

“还是我们出去吧。”那名男子边说边站起身来。

“你们在这儿坐着吧，”警长说，“我和杰生到门廊那边聊会儿。”

“你赶紧拿上你的帽子和外套，”杰生说，“他们十二个小时前就已经出发了。”警长带着他向门廊走去。途中一男一女正好经过，和警长说了几句话。警长热情地跟他们对话，动作极其夸张。钟声还在回响，是从那个所谓的“黑人谷”传来的。

警长拖过来两把椅子：“坐吧，告诉我到底出了什么事。”

“我在电话里就跟你讲了，”杰生站着说，“我那样做是为了节省时间。是不是还要我通过法庭强迫你去履行你宣誓过的义务呢？”

“你坐下，跟我说明情况，”警长说，“我会关照你们的。”

“关照，天哪！”杰生说，“这就是你说的对我的关照吗？”

“是你把我们所有人卷进来的，”警长说，“你坐下，跟我说说具体情况。”

杰生有种受伤的感觉，他感到自己能力不足，过了一会儿，他就急躁地开始为自己辩护，火气越来越大。警长用他那双冷静闪烁的眼睛看着他。

“不过你不知道是他们做的，”他说，“只是你自认为的。”

“不知道？”杰生说，“我花了整整两天时间尾随她穿过大街小巷，就是想让她远离他，我告诉她要是让我再撞到他们俩在一起时，我会怎么做，你却说我不知道是那个婊——”

“好了，”警长说，“我明白了，这些就足够了。”他看着街对面，双手插在衣兜里。

“当我来找你这个官方正式委任的执法人时……”杰生说。

“这周是在莫特生演出。”警长说。

“是的，”杰生说，“如果我能找到一个多少对那些选他上台的人民能提供一些保障的执法人，那这会儿也会在那里了。”他又将情况粗略地描述了一遍，仿佛他能从他的愤怒和无可奈何中找到一种真正的乐趣。警长完全不理睬他在说什么。

“杰生，”他说，“你把三千块钱藏在家里干什么？”

“什么？”杰生说，“我藏不藏钱是我的事。你的职责是帮我把钱找回来。”

“你母亲知道你把那么多钱藏在家里吗？”

“我是说，”杰生说，“我家被抢劫了。我知道是谁做的，而且我知道他们在哪里。所以我来找你这位执法人，我再问你一次，你打不打算帮我把钱找回来，是或不是？”

“要是你找到了他们，你会怎么对待那个姑娘？”

“我不会做什么的，”杰生说，“我不会对她怎样，我碰都不会碰

她。那个婊子让我失去了工作，葬送了我的大好前程，害死了我的父亲，让我母亲缠绵病榻，还让我受到全镇人的耻笑。我不会把她怎么样的，”他说，“我不会碰她。”

“是你逼走她的，杰生。”警长说。

“我怎么做不关你的事，”杰生说，“你到底帮不帮我？”

“你把她逼得离家出走了，”警长说，“而且我还怀疑这些钱到底属于谁，我现在还不确定。”

杰生站在那儿，手慢慢地拨弄着帽檐，他平静地说：“你不打算追捕他们了吗？”

“这事与我没有任何关系，杰生。如果你有确凿的证据，我当然会采取行动。但是要是没有证据，我认为那就与我没有什么关系了。”

“这就是你的回答，是不？”杰生说，“你再好好想想吧！”

“就这样吧，杰生。”

“好吧，”杰生说，他戴上帽子，“你会后悔的。这儿又不是俄国，不是谁戴着一个金属徽章，就可以免受法律制裁的。”他走下台阶，上了汽车，发动引擎。警长看着他启动车子，转了一个弯，飞快地远离朝镇上驶去。

钟声再次响起，被风撕得支离破碎，弥漫在阳光普照的天际。他在一个加油站停了下来，让人给他检查了一下轮胎，又把油箱加满。

“要去旅游，是吗？”黑人问他。他没有回答。“看样子天是要转晴

了。”黑人说。

“转晴，见鬼去吧，”杰生说，“到十二点准会下起倾盆大雨的。”他望着天空，想着雨，想着泥泞的路面，他自己停滞在距离镇子几英里的地方。他有种幸灾乐祸的感觉，想到他要错过晚餐了，要是从现在开始，他遏制住自己匆忙赶路的心理，中午时分，他肯定会在两个镇子之间的某个地方。他倒觉得这是一个很好的休息机会，因此，他对黑人说：“你到底是怎么回事？是不是有人给你钱了，他让你阻止这辆车继续前进。”

“轮胎里一点儿气都没有了。”黑人说。

“那你给我滚一边去，把气管给我。”杰生说。

“现在鼓起来了，”黑人说，“你可以走了。”

杰生上了车，发动引擎，把车开走了。他推到第二挡，发动机发出一阵阵噼里啪啦的响声。他狠狠踩了一下油门，粗暴地把气门推进又拉出。“快要下雨了。”他说，“等我走到半路，肯定会下起瓢泼大雨。”他驱车离开小镇，钟声越来越远。他脑海里一直在想着自己在泥泞中跋涉的场景，他想找一群人给他推车。“人都去教堂了。”他想象着自己最终终于找到了一个教堂，教堂里的人们和主人走出来冲他喊着，他又想着自己如何把那个主人痛扁一番。“我叫杰生·康普生。让你们看看你们能不能阻止我，你们推选的员工能不能阻止我。”他说。他还想象着自己带着一队士兵走进法院，将那个警长拖出来了。“他还想着自己能双手交叉地坐着，看着我丢掉我的工作。我会让他看看我的工作。”他完全没有想到他的外甥女，也没有想到自己对那笔钱的武断评价。十年来，他从未考虑过这两者；它们仅仅象征着他那在得到之前即已失去的那份

银行里的工作。

天气变得晴朗起来，天空中飞掠的云层现在向相反的方向移动。在他看来，天气转晴实际上是敌人对他的又一次狡猾的进攻，他要背负着累累伤痕去应付这全新的挑战。他不时会路过一个教堂，都是些未上漆的木质建筑物，周围停着几辆破旧的机车，在他看来，每个教堂都像是一个岗亭，后卫兵会扭过头来瞟他一眼。“你们同样该死，”他说，“看看你们能不能阻止我。”他想到自己带着一队士兵，后边跟着一个戴着手铐的警长，如果需要，他还能把万能的上帝拖下宝座；他还想到他还冲破天堂中的天兵天将和地狱中牛鬼蛇神的阻挡，抓住了那逃窜在外的外甥女。

东北风一直吹，打在他的脸上。他似乎能感觉到那种持续刮的风在渗入他的骨髓，突然，一种不好的预感抓住了他，他猛踩下刹车，停了车，静坐在那儿。他摸了摸脖子，坐在那儿，开始低声咒骂起来。当他必须开车的时候，他会用浸在樟脑中的手帕来让自己清醒——那是他在打扫乡镇的时候用来挂在脖子上呼吸香气的。所以，他下车，翻开椅子上的坐垫，想看能不能找到一块。他两个位置下都翻遍了，然后又站着低咒了一阵——看到自己被自己打败而嘲笑。他可以返回拿樟脑，或者继续前行。不管怎样，他都很头痛，不过周日他很确定能在家里找到樟脑，但是前行的话就不一定了。不过，他要是回头的话，他到达Mottson的时间就会晚一个半小时了。他自言自语道：“也许我能开慢一点，边想其他事情，边开慢一点。”

他上车发动了。他说“我会想想其他事情”，所以他开始想洛林。他想象自己正和她睡在一张床上，躺在他身边，求她帮他；然后他又想到了钱，想到他被一个女人、一个少女所欺骗。如果他能相信是一个男人抢劫了他该多好啊——但是他没法做到，这本来可以补偿他失去的工作——

这份他经过了众多努力和冒险才得到的工作，但是，这象征着失去工作本身，甚至更糟糕的是，是由一个婊子所为。他用领口为脸挡着风，并继续往前开。

他看到了他命运的反作用力，如今他会迅速将其融合走向不可逃避的关口。他变得狡猾了。他告诉自己不可以犯错。有且只有一个正确的选择，他必须去做。他相信他们两个都能看到他就认出他，但是他必须先看到那个女孩，除非那个男人还戴红领带。而事实上，他需要依赖于那个红领带，似乎是即将到来的全部灾难的总和，他已经能从他脑袋的抽痛，感受到了。

他登上了最后一座山。山谷和屋顶上烟雾寥寥，一两个尖塔高耸在树木之上。他开下山，进了城，放慢了车速，并且再一次提醒自己要小心，首先找到帐篷的位置。现在，他看不太清楚，但是他知道是灾难在驱使他直行并且让他头疼。在一个加油站，大家告诉他，帐篷还没搭好，但是展车已经停在了加油站一边。因此，他开了过去。

两辆俗艳的普尔曼式客车停在小道上。他下车之前，先对它们进行了侦查。他试图放松呼吸，这样心跳就不会这么快了。他下了车，沿着加油站的围墙观察车子。车窗外挂着一些皱皱巴巴的衣物——就像刚刚洗过似的。在楼梯旁边的地上有两个帆布椅子，但是他没看到生命的痕迹，直到一个穿着脏围裙的男人走到门口，大力地泼出了手上平底锅里的洗碗水。此时，阳光照在平底锅上，反射回了车内。

他想，我应该在这个男人能警告他们之前，给他一个惊喜。他从没想过，他们可能压根不在车内。他从没想过，他们不在这儿，而问题的关键根本不是他先看到他们，还是他们先看到他，以及一切都会与预想的相反，与整个事情的整体发展相反。甚至，他还想，他必须先看到他

们，把钱要回来，然后忽略他们所做的一切，因为不然的话，大家都会知道他——杰生·康普生，被他那个婊子外甥女昆汀打劫了。

他再侦查了一次，然后上楼梯，安静飞快地向那个车子走去，停在了门边。走廊是黑的，充斥着食物腐烂的味道。那个男人是一片模糊的白色，正在用他沙哑不稳的声音唱歌。他想：“这是一个没有我高大的老男人。”在那个男人抬头看他的时候，他走进了车里。

那个男人停下了歌唱，说：“你好！请问？”

“他们在哪里？”杰生说，“马上告诉我，他们现在在哪里？在熄火的车里吗？”

男人回答道：“什么他们在哪里？”

杰生说：“别骗我了！”他在一片黑暗中踉踉跄跄地走着。

“什么意思？”那个男人问道，“你说谁是骗子？”而当杰生抓住他的肩膀的时候，他大吼道：“伙计，看清楚了！你说谁是骗子呢！”

“别撒谎！”杰生说，“他们在哪里？”

那个男人叫道：“你个浑蛋，干什么？”他的肩膀被杰生的手一抓，显得单薄脆弱。他试图扭开他的肩膀，然后转过身去，开始在他身后堆满垃圾的桌子上找东西。

杰生说：“别忙，他们在哪里？”

那个男人冷笑道：“我会告诉你他们在哪里的，等我找到我的屠刀再说！”

杰生试图抓住他的另一只手，说：“我只是在问你一个问题而已！”

那个男人边在桌子上寻找，边讥笑道：“你个浑蛋！”杰生试图抓住他的两只手，禁锢他的微怒。这个男人的身子感觉这么脆弱衰老，使得目的如此单一的杰生，第一次清楚明确地意识到了他所制造的灾难。

“好，停下来！我会出去，给我点时间，我自己出去！”杰生说。

那个男人哀哭道：“居然说我是个骗子，让我离开，仅仅一分钟，我会告诉你我不是个骗子。”

杰生抓住他，并且到处看了看。外面现在空空如也并且艳阳高照，他想人们很快就会开始回家吃周日丰盛的晚餐了，但是他自己却在试图抓住一个孱弱、气愤的弱小老人，而他不敢放开他的时间都足够他转身跑掉了。

杰生说：“你会出去多久？久到能够让我离开这里吗？你会吗？”但是那个男人还在试图挣扎，于是，杰生放开了他的一只手，打在那个男人的头上。杰生是突然出拳的，虽然打得不重，但是那个男人还是立马打翻了一众平底锅和篮子，倒在了地上。杰生站在他的上方，轻轻敲打他看有没有声息，然后迅速转身，跑了。到门口的时候，他控制了一下速度，更慢地从楼梯走下去，然后又在这里站了一会儿。现在，他的呼吸非常急促，他想站在这儿平复一下，所以他左看看右看看。突然，背后传来一阵乱七八糟的声音，他及时地转身发现那个瘦小的男人正高举着一把生锈了的斧子，从门廊处气愤地砍向他。

他抓住了斧子，并没有感觉受到了击打，但是他知道他要倒了，他想这也许就是结局，他相信他会死在这儿，但是当有东西撞击他的后脑的时候，他想：“他怎么会打我这里呢？”他想：“只有可能他在很久之

前就打过我，只是我现在才感受到。快一点、快一点，让这一切结束。”然而，之后一种求生的念头抓住了他，他不想死了，所以他开始挣扎，此时他听到那个男人在哀号并且用他的粗嗓子咒骂他。

当他们把他拖倒在地的时候，他依然在挣扎，但是他们制住了他，他不再挣扎了。

他问：“我出了很多血吗？”“我的后脑勺在出血吗？”当他感觉到被强行迅速地撤离的时候，他依然在问这个问题，他听到那个老男人气愤的声音在他身后慢慢远去。他还在说：“看看我的头！等等，我……”

那个抓住他的男人骂道：“等一下？天杀的！那个小男人会杀了你！一直走，你没受伤。”

杰生接着说：“他打了我，我在流血吗？”

另一个人说：“一直走。”他带着杰生到了车站的拐角附近，登上了一个无人的站台。

——那儿停着一辆平板车，月台边上的一块空地呆板地长满了青草，青草的四周又呆板地围着一圈花，中间是一块安着电灯的广告牌。上面写道：“用你的眼睛[1](#)好好看看莫特生。”在本该画眼珠子的地方安了一只电灯泡。那个人松开了他。

他说：“现在，你离开这里，离开。不然，你想干什么？自杀吗？”

杰生回答说：“我在找两个人，我只是问问他们在哪里。”

“你找谁？”

杰生说：“一对男女。男的昨天在杰弗逊，戴一个红领带。他们用一个表演，抢劫了我。”

那个男人说：“天哪！你就是那个人，对吗？稍等，他们不在这儿。”

杰生说：“我估计是这样。”他靠着墙，把手伸向他的后脑勺，然后看了看他的手掌看有没有血迹。他说：“我想我在流血，我估计他用那把斧子打了我。”

男人回答道：“是你自己在铁轨上撞你的头，你最好快走。你找的人不在这里。”

“是的，那个老男人说他们不在这里，但是我以为他在撒谎。”

男人回答道：“那你认为我在撒谎吗？”

杰生说：“不，不会。我知道他们不在这里了。”

男人说：“我让他们两个该死的一起滚出这里了。我不会让我的表演里出现那种东西。我经营的是由高贵的戏班子提供的受人尊敬的表演。”

杰生说：“是的！没错！那你不知道他们去哪里了吗？”

“我不知道，也不想知道。我的表演者不能耍那样的花招。你是？她的哥哥？”

杰生说：“不，不是的！这不重要。我只是想见到他们。还有，你确定那个老男人没有打我？我的意思是，我真的没流血吧？”

“如果不是我及时赶到的话，你会在流血！现在，你离我远点。那个老浑蛋会杀了你。你的车是在那边吗？”

“是的！”

“好的，现在你上车，离开这里回杰斐逊去。如果你找到了他们，他们不会再出现在我的表演中了。我经营的是一个受人尊敬的表演。不过，你说他们抢劫了你？”

杰生说：“不是的！这没什么重要的！”他走向车子，上了车。他想：“我现在必须做什么呢？”然后，他想起来了。他启动车子，慢慢地沿着马路开着，直到他找到了一家药店。不过，这个药店门是关着的。他把手放在肿块上，弯了一点脖子，站了一会儿，然后，转身离开。过了一会儿，他看到一个男人走过来，他就问他最近开门的药房在哪里，不过，事实是这里没有开门的药房。然后，他又问往北方走的火车是什么时候的，那个男人告诉他是两点半。他穿过人行道，再一次上车坐在那儿。之后不久，他看到两个黑人青年经过，他喊住了他们。

问：“你们有人会开车吗？”

“会的，先生。”

“现在立刻送我去杰斐逊多少钱？”

他们看向彼此，悄声细语地商量着。

杰生说：“我付一块钱。”

他们又开始低声交谈，其中一个说：“不能去，你想去干什么？”

他又问另外一个说：“你能去吗？”

另外一个回答说：“我不能，你为什么 not 送他去？你又没有什么事情需要做。”

“我就是有事情。”

“你要做什么？”

他们笑着继续絮叨。

杰生说：“随便你们谁去，我出两块钱。”第一个说话的年轻人回答说：“我也去不了。”

杰生说：“好吧，那你们走吧。”

他又坐了一会儿。他听到钟敲了，半小时了，然后，开始有行人穿着周日休闲和复活节的衣服经过。他们经过他的时候，有的会看他——这个安静地坐在小汽车上的男人，他的无形的生活就像旧袜子松了线一样在他的周边展开，并继续。过了不久，一个穿工装裤的黑人走了过来。

他问：“是你要去杰斐逊吗？”

杰生说：“是的！你要收多少钱？”

“四块钱。”

“只给两块钱。”

黑人说：“四块钱，不能少了。”杰生坐在车里，看都没看他。他说：“你要我开还是不要？”

杰生说：“好吧，上车吧。”

他移开让黑人坐在驾驶位上。杰生闭上眼睛，为了减轻自己的颠簸之感，喃喃自语地说：“我在杰斐逊能得到我想要的，我一定能在哪里得到些东西。”他们沿着街道开始前行，而他想到路人们都在平静地赶回家里吃周日的晚餐。继续前进，他们出了村镇了。他没有想过家里，现在班和卢斯特应该在餐桌边吃着冰冷的晚餐。在这种持续的恶劣情况下，没有出现灾难和威胁的杰斐逊，得以让他忘记，一如他见过的其他地方一样，在这里他的生命必须重新启程。

在班和卢斯特吃完饭之后，黛西会将他们支出去。“你尽量让他在外面安静地待到四点钟吧，到那时候T.P.也就回来了。”

卢斯特回答说：“好的。”然后，他们就出去了。黛西吃完饭，就收拾完厨房，然后走到楼梯口听了一会儿，发现没有什么声音。她就转回来，经过厨房，通过院门，站在台阶上，都没发现班和卢斯特。但是，她站在这里的时候，听到从地窖那里传来一阵“当”声，于是，她走到门口，向下看，又看到了早上的那一幕。

“他就是那么敲的。”卢斯特说。他沮丧，但还是怀着希望地看着那个一动不动的锯子。他说：“我没有找到敲打它的正确的工具。”

“你在这地窖里也是怎么都找不到的，”黛西说，“你把他带到太阳底下来，在那么潮湿的地窖里，你们会得肺炎的啦！”

她站在那儿，看着他们穿过庭院，走向栅栏边的一丛雪松处。然后，她往自己的小木屋走了。

“行了，现在就别多说了，”卢斯特说，“今天，你已经给我添了够

多的麻烦了。”这里有一张吊床，是把一块块木桶板插到交叉的绳网里做成的。卢斯特躺在吊床上，但是班还在漫无目的地向前呆走。他又开始哼哼唧唧了。“现在，立刻安静下来，”卢斯特说，“否则我真的要抽你了。”他躺回了吊床上。班不动了，但是卢斯特还是能听到他在哼哼唧唧。“你到底闭不闭嘴？”卢斯特说。他爬下吊床，循声赶过去，发现班蹲在一个小土墩面前。土墩两边各埋了一个装毒药的蓝色空瓶子。有一个瓶子里插着一根枯萎了的曼陀罗。班蹲在它的前面用一种不连贯的缓慢语调呜咽着，而且边呜咽边四处张望。他找了一根小树枝，插到了另外一个瓶子里。“你为什么就不得安静？”卢斯特说，“你想让我动真格儿，让你不哭不行，是吧？那我就如你所愿！”他跪蹲下来，迅速捡起瓶子，藏在了后边。班不呜咽了。他蹲着，看了看刚才瓶子所在的小坑，然后，正准备大哭的时候，卢斯特又把瓶子拿出来了。他低声呵斥道：“好了，安静点。”“你敢叫一声试试！你敢！在这里，看见没？在这里的话，你又得开始哭了。走吧，我们去看看他们开始踢球了没有。”他抓住班的肩膀，把他拽了起来，然后，他们来到栅栏边，并排站在这里，透过一簇簇还未开花的忍冬，盯着前面看。

“看，”卢斯特说，“有人过来了，看见没？”

他们看着那四个打球的人跑到草地上又出去，然后准备发球，传球。班边看，边絮絮叨叨的。他也跟着跑动的四人在栅栏处迅速地移动和絮叨。

一个人说：“这里，加迪。拿袋子来。”

“班吉，安静。”卢斯特说，但是班没有停下来，还是抓着栅栏在跌跌撞撞地跑，用他的无望的公鸭嗓尖叫着。玩球的人在继续，班一直和他保持步调跑着，直到栅栏拐了个直角，他就没办法了，只好抓着栅

栏，看着他们跑开。

“现在能安静下来了吗？”卢斯特说，“现在能安静了吗？”他摇着班的肩膀说道。班抓住栅栏，持续沙哑地尖叫着。“你能不能停下来？”卢斯特说，“能闭嘴了吗？”班凝视着栅栏外。“好吧，班，”卢斯特说，“我让你叫，我给你叫的理由？”他向后看去，走向房子里。接着，他轻声说：“加迪，你现在叫吧！加迪！加迪！加迪！”

过了一会儿，在班的声音之间，卢斯特听到了黛西在喊叫。他拽着班的肩膀，穿过庭院，走过去。

卢斯特说：“我和您说过了，他不会保持安静的！”

“你个浑蛋！”黛西说，“你对他做了什么？”

“我没做什么啊。我告诉过您只要那些人开始玩球，他就停不下来了。”

“你们过来我这边，”黛西说，“嘘，班吉，不哭了！”但是他没停。然后，他们迅速穿过庭院，走进了小木屋。“现在快去把那双鞋子拿过来，”黛西说，“但是别吵醒卡罗琳小姐。如果她说什么，就说我在看着他呢。现在，快去！我想你不至于这个都办不好吧。”卢斯特去了。黛西将班带到床上，让他躺在她的旁边，抱着他，前前后后地摇着他，并且用她裙子的褶边为他擦干了流出来的口水。她边抚摸他的头边说：“别哭了，别哭了，现在是黛西在抱着你。”可是他依然在可怜巴巴地细细呜咽着；用的几乎是世界上最无望的声音。卢斯特回来了，拿来了一双白色的缎子做的拖鞋，不过现在已经开始泛黄了，并且又破又脏。当卢斯特把拖鞋递给班的时候，班安静了一会儿。但是他依然在呜咽，并且很快，又开始大声哭了。

黛西说：“你估摸着你能找到T.P.吗？”

“他昨天说今天要去圣约翰教堂，要四点才回来。”

黛西继续摇着班，并且抚摸着他的头。

“天哪！要这么久，”她说，“这么久。”

“姥姥，我会赶那辆马车。”卢斯特说。

“你会害死你们两个，”黛西说，“你是调皮才想赶车。我知道，你很聪慧。但是我不能相信你。嘘……不哭了，不哭了，不哭了。”

“不，我不会的，”卢斯特说，“我和T.P.一起赶过车的。”黛西还抱着班在前后摇晃。“卡罗琳小姐说你要是不能让他不哭了的话，她就要自己下来，亲力亲为了。”

“不哭了，宝贝，”黛西边摸他的头边说道，“乖孩子，”她说，“你能不能想到姥姥我，然后慢点赶马车？”

卢斯特回答道：“好的。我会和T.P.一样认真赶车。”

黛西摸了摸班的头，晃着他，说：“我尽力了，真的。”接着，她又提高声音说，“那你就去吧。”卢斯特小跑了出去，班则抓着拖鞋在哭。“乖，快别哭了。卢斯特去赶马车来带你去墓地了。我们也没必要去取你的衣帽了。”她说。她走到墙角处用印花窗帘隔开的一个小柜子前面，拿出了她戴的毡帽。“我们有过更糟糕的时候呢，也不用担心别人知道了，”她说道，“你怎么说也是主的孩子。不久之后，我也将成为主的孩子，感谢耶稣。”她把帽子戴在他的头上，扣好了他的衣扣。班一直在哭，于是她拿走了他手上的拖鞋，放下之后，就带他离开了。卢

斯特过来了，牵着一匹老白马所驾的破烂不堪的马车过来了。

“卢斯特，你会小心的吧？”她说。

“会的。”卢斯特回答道。她把不再哭了的班扶上了后座，不过，他这会儿又开始絮絮叨叨了。

“他在说他的花呢，”卢斯特说，“等等，我去给他摘一枝。”

“你先别动，”黛西说，她走过去牵住了勒马索，“好了，现在赶快去帮他摘一枝吧。”卢斯特绕着房子跑向了花园。他只带回了一株水仙花。

“这是破败的，”黛西说，“怎么不帮他摘枝好点儿的？”

“这是我能找到的最好的了，”卢斯特说，“全部被你们周五的时候带去装扮教堂了啊！等等，我会修好它的。”于是，在黛西拉住勒马索的时候，卢斯特用一根树枝和两端绳子夹住了花茎，然后把花给了班。之后，卢斯特爬上马车，勒住了缰绳。黛西仍然在牵着缰绳没放开。

她问卢斯特：“你已经知道路了吧？”她说，“沿着街向上走，在广场那里拐弯，就到了墓地，然后直接回来。”

“知道了，”卢斯特回答说，“出发吧，‘小马后’。”

“你一定会小心的吧？”

“是的，一定会的。”至此，黛西才松了缰绳。

卢斯特说：“我们出发吧，‘小马后’。”

“这样，”黛西说，“你把鞭子给我吧。”

“哦，姥姥，”卢斯特说。

“给我！”黛西边走向轮子边说。卢斯特不甘不愿地把鞭子给了她。

“我现在没法让‘小马后’挪腿了。”

“这个不用你担心，”黛西说，“‘小马后’比你清楚该怎么走。你要做的就是抓住缰绳。你知道路吧？”

“我知道。就是T.P.每个星期天都会走的路嘛！”

“那今天你就照走吧。”

“当然，我都帮T.P.赶过不下一百次车了。”

“那就再赶一次，”黛西说，“现在出发吧。黑小子，如果你让班吉受伤的话，我可不知道我会干什么来对付你。虽然，你进苦工队是不可避免的，不过，如果出什么问题的话，我会提前把你送进去的。”

“好的，”卢斯特说，“‘小马后’，走吧。”

他将缰绳在“小马后”的阔背上甩了甩，马车突然就起动了。

“卢斯特，小心啊！”黛西说道。

“老马，走起来！”卢斯特说。他又甩了甩缰绳。随着地下一阵轰隆声，“小马后”慢慢地走下车道，转入了街上，此时，卢斯特驱策它用一种慢慢向前摔倒似的步态前进。

班不闹了。他坐在椅子中间，手上抓着那枝修好的水仙，眼神宁静安详，难以形容。卢斯特滚圆的脑袋就在他的正前方，卢斯特一直僵硬地回头望，直到马车出了黛西的视野。此时，卢斯特停在了路边，班望着他从车上下来，然后从篱笆上折下了一根枝条。“小马后”低下了头在啃食地上的青草，直到卢斯特坐上马车，把它拉了起来，并催促它继续前行。这时，卢斯特高举抓着枝条和缰绳的双手，摆出一副臭屁的姿态，和静静的马蹄声还有马儿发出的低沉的风琴似的伴奏声完全不搭调。汽车、行人，还有一群半棕色的黑人从他们身边经过。

“卢斯特，你去哪儿呀？是去墓地吗？”

“嗯，”卢斯特说，“他们也是去墓地吧，走起来。”

他们到达了广场，这儿有一尊石像，一个联邦士兵在这里用空洞的双眼凝望着，而他的大理石打造的双手则在风雨中飘摇。卢斯特更加来劲了，他边瞟了一眼整个广场，边给了无动于衷的“小马后”重重一鞭。“杰生先生的车，”他说，然后他又看到了一群黑人，“班吉，我们让他们看看什么是威风吧。”他说。

“你说什么？”卢斯特转过头。班手拿水仙，坐在位置上，眼神空洞无助。卢斯特再给了“小马后”一鞭，把马儿拉向了石像的左边。

一瞬间，班完全被抛起，离开了位置。然后，他大叫了一声，并且持续不断地大叫着，声音也越来越大，偶尔重重地喘两口气。不只是惊吓到，简直是被吓坏了，眼神痛苦盲目，已经无法言语；发出了如此大的声音，卢斯特眼神也空洞了一下。“上帝啊，”他说，“别叫！别叫！我的上帝！”他又试着给了“小马后”一鞭。随之，卢斯特把抽坏了的鞭子扔了。当班的声音达到无法想象的强度的时候，卢斯特抓紧了缰绳向

前倾，而此时杰生从广场另一端飞奔了过来，已经上了台阶。

随着反手一拳，卢斯特被推开了，杰生抓起缰绳，带着“小马后”往复移动。杰生把缰绳拉回了两倍，不断地抽打在马屁股上，“小马后”开始了小跑，此时班的痛苦的尖叫一直萦绕在周围。杰生把“小马后”向石像右边一拉，然后给了卢斯特的脑袋一拳。

“你怎么能拉向左边？”杰生说。他伸向后座，打了一下班，把花茎又弄断了。“闭嘴！”他说，“闭嘴！”他猛地把“小马后”拉了回来，然后跳下马车，“带着他滚回去。如果你和他再经过这个门，我会杀了你！”

“是，先生！”卢斯特回答道。他抓住缰绳，一边用末端抽打“小马后”，一边对班吉说：“够了！够了！班吉，看在上帝的分儿上，够了！”

班吉的声音越来越大。“小马后”上路了，又开始有节奏地发出蹄声，班吉也一度安静了下来。卢斯特迅速回瞟了一眼，然后接着赶路。折断的水仙低垂在班的拳头上，房屋的飞檐和门框又一次从左到右平稳地消失在身后，此时，班吉又一次有了茫然、安宁的眼神；电线杆、树木、门窗和招牌又都在它该在的地方了。

纽约，N. Y.

1928年10月

¹这里的眼睛在原文中是画的一只眼睛。——译者注

附录

康普生家族1699-1945

伊凯摩塔勃 一个遭废黜的美国国王，被义兄称为“l’Homme”（有时叫“del’homme”）。他的这位义兄是法国契卡索族人，如果早几年出生，说不定就是拿破仑手下的大将，那帮将星闪耀、功名显赫的大坏蛋之一，为此他把契卡索族的头衔简单地译为“人”。而伊凯摩塔勃本身是一个聪明人，富于想象，还善于辨别人（包括他自己）的个性，就又进一步，把这头衔英语化为“Doom”。他从自己丧失的广袤疆土中划出一块位于密西西比州北部的、足足有一平方英里的处子地来，赐给一个苏格兰流亡者的孙子，那块地四四方方，四个角就像牌桌那样整齐（那块地当时还覆盖着森林，因为那还是在1833年前，命运之星陨落，那时的密西西比州杰弗生镇还是一排乱糟糟、用泥巴糊墙的圆木平房，既用作契卡索人的管理处，也是贸易邮寄的商店）。那个苏格兰流亡者因为把赌注押在这位被废黜的国王身上，连自己生存的权利也输掉了。虽然这场赌博不算公平，但也换来了向西部蛮荒之地和平开拓的权利，无论通过何种手段，走路抑或是骑马，但必须是契卡索人自己的马，只要他和他的子民觉得合适就行。他们所到之处不久就被称为俄克拉荷马州：当时他们并不知道那里有石油。

杰克逊 一位持有利剑的伟大白人父亲。（一位久经战阵的老战士，一只爱叫嚷，瘦削，暴躁，污秽，结实且坚韧的老狮子，他把国家的繁荣富强置于白宫和他的新政党的处境之上，他看得最要紧的不是妻子的名誉而是“荣誉必须加以维护”的原则，至于它本身究竟是怎么回事

并不重要，关键是要加以维护。）他在华西镇金色帐中亲自授权，盖印并副署了一份认定书，但当时他并不知道划拨出去的土地下面有石油，以至于日后有一天，他那些无家可归、失去土地的后裔醉得昏昏沉沉不省人事时，坐着特制的深红漆棺材车和救火车风尘仆仆地经过为他们指定的埋骨之地。

以下是康普生家的人：

昆汀·麦克拉昌 格拉斯哥一个印刷工的儿子，从小孤苦，由佩斯高地母亲家里人抚养长大。他从柯罗顿荒原逃到卡罗莱纳，身上只带着一把苏格兰宽刀和一条格子呢裙，白天穿着，晚上垫着睡觉，还有一点其他的東西。到八十岁的时候，因为先前曾在一位英国国王手里吃过一次败仗，为了不至于重蹈覆辙，于是在1779年的一天夜里他又带着尚在襁褓中的孙子和那条格子呢裙（那把宽刀连同他的儿子，也就是他孙子的爸爸在大约一年前佐治亚一片战场上和塔尔顿手下的一个团一并消失了）跑到了肯塔基，一个叫伯恩或布恩的邻居早已在此建立起了殖民地。

查尔斯·斯图尔特 曾服役于英国军队下辖的一个团，后被除名，并取消军阶。被所属的那支后撤队伍和美国先遣队误以为已死，留在了一片佐治亚的沼泽地里，结果他们都错了。即便是拖着自制的假腿，他也没有丢掉那把宽刀。四年之后，他终于在肯塔基州哈洛兹堡撵上了他的父亲和儿子，当时正好赶上父亲的葬礼，随后很长一段时间他陷入了双重人格之间的挣扎。一方面他仍然想进学校当一名老师，他认为这是自己的愿望，直到最终他放弃了这个念头，回归其本性成了一个赌徒。对此康普生家族似乎没有意识到，他们都是天生的赌徒，尤其是在紧要关头，机会微乎其微的时候。他最后孤注一掷，将性命和家庭的安定，还有身后名节都投进去了。他加入了一个妄图从美国手里分裂整个密西

西比峡谷归入西班牙的阴谋组织，由一个叫威尔金森的熟人领导（他颇有才能，影响力，也有头脑和能力）。等到幻想破灭之时，就轮到 he 逃跑了（除了这位康普生老师，谁都清楚这一结果）。他很独特，是唯一一个逃亡出国的阴谋者：危险并非源于他曾阴谋要分裂的政府的报复和惩罚，而是以前的同伴出于自身安全考虑，和他反目成仇。他并没被驱逐出美国，他常说自己无国籍，他之所以被驱逐，不是因为叛国，而是行事过于张扬、招摇，往往是前路未辟，招摇过市，以致后路先断。因此，策划将 he 从肯塔基、美国驱逐出去，并且如果抓到了，可能还要让他从地球消失的并不是宪兵司令，也不是民政机构，而是他们组织的同伙。他夜里出逃，遵循了家族传统，把儿子和那把旧宽刀和那件格子呢裙带上了。

杰生·利库格斯 也许是受到父亲所起洋气名字的驱使，在1811年的一天，他带着一对精致的手枪和一只干瘪的马褡裢，跨上一匹腰细腿粗的小母马骑上了纳奇斯古道。他父亲就是那个满腹牢骚、出言刻薄、不屈不挠的木腿人，他现在还满心以为自己该当一个古典语文教师吧。利库格斯胯下的马跑头两弗隆¹路绝不要半分钟，再跑两弗隆就够呛了。虽然就这两下子，但已经足够了：他骑到奥卡托拔（那时还叫老杰弗生镇）的契卡索人管理处就不再往前走了。不到六个月，他就成了管理处的助理，不到一年，又成了合伙人。尽管名义上还是助理，但实际上已经是它的半个主人了。如今它也发展成为一家不错的店铺，里面堆放着他用那匹母马和伊凯摩塔勃的年轻人赌马时赢得的奖品。在赌马时，他总是很小心地控制着赛程，一般是四分之一英里，至多三弗隆。第二年，小母马归了伊凯摩塔勃，康普生却拥有了那块整整一平方英里的土地。将来，它将几乎占据整个杰弗生镇的中心。那时这里仍然有树木覆盖，二十年后也还有，只是到时却是公园，而非森林了。这里有奴隶住的小屋，马厩，菜园子，还有规整的草坪，林荫道，凉亭，一应设

备同样都是由建造圆柱门廊的大宅的建筑师设计，房屋用料都用蒸汽船从法国和新奥尔良运来。到1840年，那块土地仍然保持着完整（此时不仅那个叫杰弗生的白人小村庄开始对它进行包围，而且也即将被周围的白人县份吞噬了。因为几年内，伊凯摩塔勃的后裔和子民都会离开，这些留下来的居民不再去当战士或猎人，而是学做白人，学做偷懒的农民或者到处都是的庄园主——他们也这么叫——和奴隶主，只是比白人脏一点，懒一点，凶残一点——直到最后连野性自身也被驯化了，只是偶尔从坐在棉车上的黑奴鼻形上可以看出来，或者从锯木厂的某个白种工人或者某个设陷阱的猎人或者某个机车伙夫的鼻端可以看出）。当时，这里是大家熟知的康普生领地。此后，它摇身一变，成了诞生王孙贵胄、政客将军和主教的福地，一改先辈在柯罗顿、卡罗莱纳和肯塔基落魄的面貌，这个地方日后被称为州长之家。因为的确在此孕育了，或者至少可以说产生了一位州长——也叫昆汀·麦克拉昌，是为了纪念那位出身柯罗顿的祖父——尽管后来（1861年）又产生了一位将军，但人们仍叫它老州长之家（之所以这么叫是全镇全县事先一致商定好的，好像大家提前知道老州长是最后一位做任何事都不会失败的康普生，保持长寿和自杀除外）。陆军准将杰生·利库格斯二世1862年在希洛打了败仗，1864年又在雷萨加小输了一仗。之后到1866年，他第一次从仍然完整无缺的那块地上划下一块抵押给了一个从新英格兰来的暴发户。等到老镇被北军的斯密斯将军一把火烧了之后，居住在新生的小镇上的大部分居民就不再是康普生的后代，而是姓斯诺普斯了。此时已经开始受到侵犯了，接着就是被一点点蚕食。那位败阵的将军接下来四十年的时间就花在了零零碎碎出卖土地上，以免抵押出去的土地被人籍没。直到1900年的一天，他在塔拉哈契河床的渔猎野营地的一张行军床上安然死去。他晚年的大多时光就是在这儿度过的。

尽管老州长现在已经被人们遗忘；那一平方英里剩下的土地也只是被

人们叫作康普生家——当年的草坪和林荫道早已破败不堪，长满了野草，宅子已久未刷漆。廊柱也一块块剥落下来，杰生三世经常整天坐在那里，拿着一壶威士忌，还有几本乱丢的、边角卷皱的贺拉斯、李维和卡图卢斯的集子。他一面喝酒，据说一面为死去的和仍健在的镇民写些尖酸刻薄的颂诗（杰生以律师为业，他也确实在广场边的楼上开设了一间办公室。在他那布满灰尘的档案柜里封存着本县最古老的氏族——赫尔斯顿、塞德潘、格莱尼尔、布钱普以及柯菲尔德这几家的史料，这些史料在无尽的档案迷宫里放了一年又一年，已经慢慢褪色了：谁知道在他那颗父亲的心中是怎么梦想的呢，现在他已实现了三个梦想中的第三个梦——第一个是做一个精明强悍的政治家的儿子；第二个是带领英勇善战的士兵冲锋；第三个是充分利用自身优势，扮演假丹尼尔·布恩加鲁滨孙·克鲁索的角色。他当时并非返老还童，因为他一直都童心未泯——他幻想着律师办公室会再度充当直通州长官邸的过道，让他可以恢复旧日的荣光）。除了从他手里卖出去的最后那块土地，还剩下房子、菜园、坍塌的马厩，和一个用人住的小屋。黛西一家住在里面。那块土地卖给了一个高尔夫俱乐部，所得的钱用作为他女儿加迪4月举行的体面婚礼和儿子昆汀读完哈佛一年的学费，儿子在随后的1910年的6月自杀了。到1928年，尽管康普生一家仍然住在里面，人们却已经称之为老康普生家了。这年春天的一个黄昏，老州长那注定厄运、没父姓的十七岁玄外孙女偷走了他唯一神志清楚的男性亲戚（她舅舅杰生四世）秘密收藏的一笔钱，顺着排水管爬下去，和流动街头杂耍团随行的一个摊贩私奔了。在康普生一家都搬走之后的很长一段时间内，人们仍然称之为老康普生家。守寡的老母亲死后，杰生四世就不必再怕黛西了。他把房子卖给一个乡下人做陪审员、牲口贩子的食宿接待所，甚至在接待所垮了之后（现在也成了高尔夫球场），人们依然叫它老康普生家。尽管那块土地上很快就密密麻麻盖满了一排排私人的半城市平房，但它依然完整。

还有这些人：

昆汀三世 他爱的不是妹妹本人，而是康普生家的荣誉观念。康普生家的这种荣誉只是由他妹妹那吹弹即破、难以长久的贞操苦撑着（这一点他非常清楚），它悬于一线，就像要在一直受过训练的海豹鼻尖放一个地球仪。他不喜欢乱伦，也根本不会犯下这种罪行，但长老会那套天谴的说教深得其心：他，而非上帝，可以借此将自己和妹妹一起扔进地狱，这样他就可以永远守护着她，在不熄的地火中永远保住她的贞洁。不过，他最爱的是死亡，他只爱死亡，他一面爱着，又从容地活着，还近乎疯狂地期待着死亡，就像期待一位爱人的到来。他故意抑制着，不去接触那等待已久的，满心情愿的，友好的，温柔的，不可思议的爱人的肉体，直到他再也不能忍受，并非那种抑制，而是思想的束缚，于是纵身一跃，抛开一切，向水底沉去。1910年6月，他在马萨诸塞州的坎布里奇自尽，那是他妹妹举行婚礼的两个月之后，为的是等到完成第一个学年，这样就不至于浪费预交的学费了。这倒不是因为他身体里流着老柯罗顿、卡罗莱纳、肯塔基的血，而是为筹集他妹妹婚礼的钱和自己哈佛的学费，家里卖掉了老康普生家最后一块地，这片地这片牧场是他最小的、生来就是白痴的弟弟最喜欢的，除了土地，他只喜欢他的妹妹和燃烧的火光。

加达斯（加迪） 她注定沉沦，自己也清楚这一点。对此，她既不迎奉，也不逃避。她爱她的哥哥，尽管他是那样一个人，她不仅爱他，还爱他对待家庭荣誉和其凄凉下场所展现的痛苦的先知以及铁面无私的法官的一面。他以为他爱她，其实那是恨，他把她视为注定颠覆的家庭自尊的负载之舟、承载家庭荣辱的容器。不仅于此，她爱他也是因为他不能爱。她接受事实：他最珍视的不是她，而是她的贞洁，而作为贞操的监护者，她根本就不在乎：那层吹弹可破的薄膜比手上的倒刺还不

如。她知道哥哥最爱的是死亡，但她并不妒忌，愿意将毒草递给他作为成全（也许只是瞎想，但她那次精心安排的婚礼却起到了效用）。她怀上了另一个男人的孩子，已有两个月的身孕了。不管孩子是男是女，她早就为其起名昆汀了，为了纪念她哥哥，他们（她和她哥哥）都知道他早就形同死尸了。1910年，她嫁给了一个条件优越的印第安纳州的青年，是前一年夏天和母亲去弗兰区·里克度假时认识的。1911年，他们离婚了。1920年，嫁给加利福尼亚州好莱坞的一个电影小巨头。1925年，双方在墨西哥协议离婚。1940年，随着德军攻占巴黎，她就此失去音信。当时她风韵犹存，也许还经济宽裕，看上去比实际的四十八岁至少年轻十五岁。从此就再也没有人知道她的消息了，除了杰弗生镇的一个女人，她是县城的图书管理员，一位老处女，个子和肤色都像老鼠，和康普生·加达斯中学在同一个班。她余下的岁月就花在了这些事上：给《琥珀》上个正经的书壳，把《玉尔根》和《汤姆·琼斯》尽量放到初、高中生都拿不到的书架背面，尽管他们不踮脚就能拿到，而她自己却要站到一个盒子上才能把它们藏好。1943年的一天，就在前一个星期里她心烦意乱，精神几近崩溃，其间进入图书馆的人们可以发现她总是急急忙忙关上抽屉，转动钥匙锁上（那些妇女，银行家、医生、律师太太，有些也是那个班的同学，她们一般下午来，用孟菲斯和杰克逊出的报纸小心翼翼地裹住《琥珀》和桑恩·史密斯的作品，以防别人看到。见到她的情形，她们以为她马上就要病倒了，甚至会神智失常），那天下午三点的时候，她把图书馆门关上锁好。腋下紧紧夹着手提包，平素雪白的脸颊上浮现出两摊潮红，显得心事重重。她走进那家农用供应店，杰生四世起初在这儿当伙计，现在在此经营起了棉花的买卖。她大步穿过那个黑乎乎、只有男人才会进去的洞穴——洞穴里地上堆着，墙上挂着，天花板上悬着犁、耙片、绳索、挽链、车杠和颈轭，还有腌肉、廉价鞋、马用麻布、面粉、糖浆等，都是黑乎乎的。因为店里的货物只能算贮藏而非展示，那些向密西西比农民或者至少是密西西比的黑人农

民供应农业用品，想要从收获中分得一杯羹的人是不愿意提醒农民有什么需要的，而只是为他们提供一些必不可少的物资，除非已是丰收在望，产量待估。她继续往里走，一直到里面杰生的特殊领地：一个栅栏围起来的地方，凌乱地摆放着货架和由众多小格组成的柜子，其上的铁签插着轧花机收据，还摆放着账簿和棉花样品，物体表面都蒙上了灰尘和绒毛。里面还弥漫着一股混杂的臭味，其中有奶酪、煤油、马具润滑油以及大铁炉各种各样的气味，铁炉上粘着嚼过、吐出来的烟渣，怕是有百年的历史了吧。她走上前去，来到那个又长又高有些倾斜的柜台前，其后坐着杰生。她不再看那些穿工装裤的男人。他们自她进来就悄悄闭上了嘴，甚至嘴里也不再嚼动了。她带着一种近乎让她晕厥的决绝，打开手提包，从里面摸索着拿出一件东西，接着放在柜台上摊开。杰生低头看时，她站在那儿身子发抖，呼吸急促——那是一张布满阳光，颇显贵气的图片——以戛纳比尔风景为背景，群山、棕榈树、柏树还有大海、一辆大马力的昂贵的镀铬敞篷车。照片中的女人没戴帽子，头上围一条价值不菲的头巾，身上罩着一件海豹皮大衣，看不出年龄，容貌娇艳，神态镇定，表情冷漠，一副事事漠不关心的姿态；身边站着一个英俊瘦削的中年男人，穿着的军服上佩戴着德国参谋部将军的勋表和领章。——这个老鼠身形、老鼠肤色的老姑娘正在为自己的鲁莽发抖，把自己惊得一愣一愣的。她的眼睛越过图片注视着那个没有子嗣的老单身汉，在他身上一代代男人延续下来的希望即将逝去，他们都注重体面，性格骄傲，即使人格已不能保持完整，骄傲的性格也会最大限度地化为虚荣心和自我怜悯：自那个逃离故土的流亡者始，他除了性命别无所求，但他仍然拒绝承认失败，那个两次用自己的性命和好名声做赌注、两次都输的人也不接受这些，还有那个只用一匹跑四分之一英里的敏捷的小马就赢得一片封邑的人，他为祖父和父亲一雪前耻，还有精明强悍的州长，那位将军虽然在领导英勇善战的士兵打仗时失败了，但至少用自己的生命在沙场上拼死一搏，往后就是那位有文化的酒徒了，他把最

后一块土地卖掉，不是为了买醉，而是给予后代一个他心目中的最好的人生机会。

“是加迪！”图书管理员低声念叨，“我们一定要救救她。”

“是加迪，没错。”杰生说着，接着他大笑起来。他站在那里，对着照片大笑，对着那张冷艳的脸大笑。由于一个星期来从抽屉和手提包中取出放进，那张脸都变皱卷曲了。图书管理员知道他为什么大笑，至今三十二年来她一直都叫他康普生先生。自从1911年加达斯被丈夫抛弃，之后就把年幼的女儿带回家，接着又抛下孩子，坐上下一班火车离开，从此不再回来。不单是黑人厨娘黛西，图书管理员也单纯通过直觉就察觉到，杰生反正是在利用孩子的存在和私生子的身份勒索她母亲，不仅让她一辈子远离杰弗生镇，而且让自己成了孩子赡养费唯一且永久的托管人。从1928年那天小昆汀从排水管爬下来和商贩私奔之后，她就没再和他说过话。

“杰生！”她喊道，“我们一定要救救她呀！杰生！杰生！”——即便当他用大拇指和食指把照片拈起来，扔过柜台朝她飞来时，她仍然在喊着。

“那是加达斯？”他说，“别逗我了。这个婊子还不到三十岁。她现在有五十了吧。”

第二天，图书馆还是关门一整天。下午三点钟，老姑娘尽管腿脚酸痛、筋疲力尽，但仍然精神亢奋，依旧紧紧夹着那个手提包。这次，她转进了孟菲斯黑人区一个整洁的小院子，爬上整洁小屋前的台阶，按下门铃。接着门开了，一个和她年纪相仿的黑人女人平静地看着她。“你是弗洛尼，是吗？”图书管理员说，“你不记得我了——梅丽莎·米克，从

杰弗生来——”

“记得。”那个黑人女人说，“进来吧。你要见我妈妈吧。”她走进房里，是一间老黑人住的房间，里面整洁却堆满了东西，弥漫着老年人、老太太、老黑人的味道，那个老太太自己坐在壁炉旁的一把摇椅里。在这里尽管是六月天，却仍然闷烧着一堆火。这个曾经身材高大的女人穿着干净而有些褪色的印花衣服，头上围着一尘不染的头巾，一双眼睛模模糊糊，现在基本上看不见了一图书管理员把那张卷起角的剪报放在那双黑色的手中，那双手仍然很轻柔、灵巧，就像三十岁、二十岁，甚至是十七岁时的一样。

“是加迪！”图书管理员说，“是她！黛西！黛西！”

“他说了什么？”黑人老太太说。图书管理员知道她指的“他”是谁，她也不为此感到惊讶。黑人老太太不仅料到她（图书管理员）明白自己所指，也立即猜到她早已将图片拿给杰生看过。

“你难道猜不出他会说什么？”她叫嚷道，“当他意识到她处于危险之中时，他就说那是她，即使我没有图片向他证明。但只要他知道哪天，哪个人，即便就我一人，想要救她时，他就改口说不是了。但那就是！看看吧！”

“看我的眼睛。”黑人老太太说，“我怎么能看清这张图片呢？”

“叫弗洛尼来！”图书管理员嚷道，“她会认出她来的！”但黑人老太太早就在小心地照原来的折痕折好它，并且递回图书管理员手里了。

“我的眼睛再也不会好了。”她说，“我看不见了。”

事情就是这样。六点的时候，她在拥挤的长途汽车终点站艰难穿

行，包夹在一侧腋下，另一只手里拿着半张返程的票。她被每天下班的人潮挤上了人声嘈杂的站台，人潮中有几个中年平民，主要是士兵和水手，要么就是离开，要么就是去送死或者找无家可归的年轻女人，那是他们的同伴。这些女人两年里如果运气好，就日复一日在旅馆、卧车里睡，运气不好的时候，就只能在坐铺、长途汽车、车站、旅馆门厅或者公共休息室凑合了。她们偶尔也在慈善机构的病房里待上几天，产下幼儿或者在警察局里坐几天牢，然后就上路了。她总算挤上了长途汽车，她个子比谁都小，因而只能偶尔碰到地面，直到一个身影（一个穿卡其军服的男人；她根本就看不到他，因为她早已泪湿眼眶了）站起来，将她抱起，放在一个靠窗的座位上。坐在那儿，她仍在静静地哭泣，她现在可以看到外面的城市建筑在飞速后退，接着就被甩在后头了。不久她又可以回到家中，在杰弗生安生度日。尽管在那儿生活也会有种种不可理喻的激情、骚动、悲伤、愤怒和绝望，但到六点钟，你就可以把它盖住。即便是一个小孩也能用他无力的手把它放回那只平静、永恒的箱子里，让它和毫无特色可言的同类待到一块去，然后用钥匙把它锁上，就可以度过一个安然无梦的夜晚了。是的她一边想着，一边静静地哭 就是这样她不想见到照片她知道那是不是加迪都不重要因为她明白加迪不需要别人拯救她已没什么值得拯救的了因为她现在失去的都没什么价值了

杰生四世 从柯洛顿之前的祖辈算起，他是第一个心智健全的人，他是一个没有后裔的单身汉，因而也是最后一个。他思维富有逻辑，又讲理性，还善于自制，甚至可以说得上是一个遵循古老斯多噶派传统的哲学家：他全然不把这样或那样的上帝论调放在心上，只简单考虑警察的存在，唯一敬畏的就是那个为他做饭的黑人妇女，从一出生就是他的天敌，自1911年那天起就成了死敌。那天，她单凭敏锐的洞察力就猜到杰生在利用他年幼的外甥女私生女的身份勒索她的母亲。杰生不仅和康

普生家划清界限，而且独力和斯诺普斯家斗法。斯诺普斯家接管这个小镇之时适逢世纪之交，当时康普生和沙多里斯家族正日渐衰微。（并非斯诺普斯作祟，而是杰生自己的所为，当时他母亲刚死——外甥女早就从排水管爬下来，逃跑了，于是黛西也失去了这两根控制住他的大棒——他马上把白痴弟弟甩给州政府，腾空老宅，先是把一度富丽堂皇的房子隔成他所谓的公寓，然后把整栋出售给一个乡下人作接待所。）不过，这并不艰难，因为对他而言，除了自己镇上其他人、世界上其他人、其他人类都是康普生，尽管不可理喻，但无论如何他们都是不可信的。家里那块牧场卖的钱都花在了姐姐的婚礼和哥哥哈佛的学费上，而他却要从店员的微薄收入中苦心积攒下钱来，送自己去读孟菲斯的学校，在那儿学习鉴别棉花等级，这样才建立起自己的事业。而随着酒鬼父亲的死去，他就承担起了住在腐朽宅子里的腐朽家庭的全部负担。因为他母亲，他要抚养白痴弟弟。他牺牲了作为自己权利的快乐，有的就只是责任，甚至连一个三十岁的单身汉必需的生理需求都满足不了。这样，他母亲的生活就能尽可能像从前一样继续下去，这不是因为他爱她，而只是（一个健全男人始终）因为他畏惧那个黑人厨娘。他甚至都不能将她赶走，即便他尝试过停发她的周薪。尽管如此，他还是成功攒下了差不多3000美元（2840.5美元），这是他上报的外甥女偷盗的数目，那是他一点一滴、一角半块那样辛辛苦苦攒下来的。他之所以不存进银行，是因为在他眼里银行家不过又是一个康普生。他把钱藏在一个上锁的橱柜的抽屉里，他自己整理床铺，自己换床单、被褥，自从藏了钱以来，他的卧室门就一直锁着，除非自己进出。有一次，他那白痴弟弟想拦截一个路过的小女孩，他趁机在不让母亲知晓的情况下就当了他弟弟的监护人。带他弟弟去做去势手术的那次也一样，他母亲当时还不知道之前他弟弟出去过呢。这样，在1933年母亲死后，他就可以永远从中解脱出来，不仅可以摆脱白痴弟弟，也可以把那个黑人厨娘赶走，自己搬到农具供应店楼上的几间办公室。店里放着棉花样本和账簿。他把那里改成

了带浴室和厨房的卧室。每到周末，就可以看到有个女人在这儿进出，她身材高大，相貌平平，待人友善，总是面带笑容；头发黄褐色，年纪也不小了，戴着一顶花哨的圆帽，天冷时就穿着一件仿皮大衣。他们二人，一个中年棉花贩子，至于女的，镇上的人简单地叫作杰生的孟菲斯朋友，星期六晚上常常双双对对出没于当地的电影院；星期天早上就可以看到两人一起提着几个纸袋往公寓楼上走，纸袋里装着从杂货店买来的面包、鸡蛋、橘子、罐头汤，此时倒真有点家庭美满、夫妻和睦、其乐融融的样子。到了下午，她就会坐上长途汽车回孟菲斯。他现在总算解放了。他自由了。“1865年。”他经常会说，“那是亚伯·林肯从康普生手中解放了黑人。1933年，康普生·杰生从康普生家和黑人手中解放出来了。”

班吉明 出生时叫莫里，跟着他母亲唯一的一个弟弟的名字叫的。他这个舅舅长相英俊，不过见识浅薄，爱吹牛，是个无业的单身汉。他几乎向所有人借钱，甚至是黛西这个黑人妇女他也舍得开口。他一边将手从自己的皮夹里撤出来，一边向她解释：在他眼里，她不仅是姐姐家的一员，而且在世界上所有人的眼中，她都有着一副天生的贵妇相。最后，连他母亲也意识到班吉明不太正常了，她哭着坚持一定要给他换名字，由他的哥哥昆汀给他改名为班吉明（班吉明，我们最小的那个孩子，被卖到印度去了）。他爱着三件东西：为筹备加迪婚礼和昆汀学费卖出去的那块牧场，他姐姐加迪，还有火光。这三样东西他什么也没失去，因为他记不起姐姐了，只是感觉若有所失；睡觉时火光仍旧一样地明亮；那片牧场甚至比卖出去之前更好了，因为如今他不仅可以和T.P.一起无休无止地沿着栅栏追逐人们的活动，而且对他来说，人们挥舞着高尔夫球杆根本无关紧要。T.P.会带领他们钻到草丛中去，在那儿也许会有小白球突然落到他手里。只是他所不知的是，小球从人们手中释放出来，向着木板或熏制房墙壁或混凝土人行道飞去时，会抗衡甚至克服

重力以及万有引力定律。1913年，做了去势手术。1933年，被送进杰克逊的州立收容所。直到那时，他也无所失，因为就像姐姐一样，他记不起那片牧场了，只是感觉似乎少了什么，还有火光仍旧像入睡时一样明亮。

昆汀 最后一员。加达斯的女儿。出生前九个月就没了父亲，出生时没有父姓。从卵子分裂决定了性别时起，就注定了日后没有合法丈夫的命运。在她十七岁时，耶稣复生的第1895周年纪念日的前一天，从她舅舅中午把她锁住的房间窗户爬出来，借助排水管，摇摇晃晃地爬到了她舅舅门窗上锁的那间卧室外，里面当时空无一人，她砸烂一块窗格玻璃，由此爬进去，再用舅舅的火钳撬开锁住的橱柜抽屉，取走了钱。

（它并非2840.5美元，而是差不多7000美元。这让杰生大动肝火、怒不可遏。那天晚上至今的五年来，他会时不时回想起这件事，但他的愤怒并未随之有半分的减少，他也相信自己说不定会因此毫无征兆地死去，就像挨枪子儿或遭受雷击一般突然殒命。原因在于，尽管自己被偷走的不止小小的3000美元，而是差不多7000美元，但他却不能对任何人说。他不仅不能因此而得到公道——他不需要别人的同情——特别是从那些倒霉透顶的人那里，他妹妹不守妇道，外甥女也这样，他都不能去报警；另外，他丢失的4000美元本不属于他，这样他连自己的3000美元也拿不回来了。因为那4000美元是他外甥女的合法财产，是她母亲过去16年来寄过来的赡养费的一部分，根本就已不存在了。这已在他递交给地区法院的年度报告中正式记录为花销过的开支。年度报告是他作为监护人和委托管理人按照保证人的要求做的。因此，他被偷的不仅是自己节衣缩食省下的钱，还有用卑劣手段吞掉的钱，而且小偷本身竟是受害者；他被偷的4000美元是冒着坐牢的风险得到的，3000美元则是讨价还价，一点一点抠出来的，每次五分一角，差不多花了20年才攒起来：这不仅因为是他的受害者所为，而且她乳臭未干，不过一个黄毛丫头，不费吹灰的

工夫就办到了，既非预谋也无计划，甚至不知道、也不在乎打开抽屉时能找到多少；而自己现在都不能去找警察求助。他本满心以为警察始终是能帮得上忙的，以前也从未给他们添过麻烦，自己纳税这么多年，让他们过着寄生虫般的闲散生活，他们还残暴成性；不仅如此，他也不敢自己去追捕那个女孩，因为如果他追上了，她就会把秘密说出来。因而唯一的出路就是做个虚幻的梦，在以后两年、三年甚至四年的时间里这一直搅扰着他，常常是在夜里辗转反侧，失眠盗汗，其实他早就该将之遗忘脑后了。在梦里，他猛地把她抓住了，他从黑暗中跳出来扑到她身上。这时她还没把所有钱都花光，他就在她张口要喊之前把她杀了。）接着，她又在昏暗中顺着排水管爬下来，和推销员跑了。那个推销员早就犯过重婚罪了。她由此销声匿迹；可是不管她干什么活计，总归是不会坐着镀铬的奔驰车回来的；也不管拍什么照片，总归是不会有参谋部的将军在里面的。

这就是康普生一家了。

这些人中还有一些不是康普生家的人。他们是黑人：

T.P. 他穿着芝加哥和纽约血汗工厂主为他们这种人特制的廉价、光鲜、气势咄咄逼人的衣服，在孟菲斯城比尔街上游荡。

弗洛尼 她嫁给了一个在火车卧铺车间工作的服务生，就搬到圣路易斯去了，后来搬回孟菲斯城为母亲安了家，因为黛西不愿去更远的地方。

卢斯特 一个十四岁的小伙子。他不仅能完全照顾和看护好一个年纪大他一倍、个子是他三倍的白痴，而且还能逗他玩。

黛西

他们在煎熬。

[1](#)弗隆，长度单位，furlong。1 弗隆 = 0.201168 千米。——译者注

少年与海

CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS

[英]鲁德亚德·吉卜林——著 霍彦京——译

JOSEPH
RUDYARD KIPLING

英国首位
诺贝尔文学奖获得者的
经典著作

 哈尔滨出版社
HARBIN PUBLISHING HOUSE

目录

少年与海

第一章 Chapter One

第二章 Chapter Two

第三章 Chapter Three

第四章 Chapter Four

第五章 Chapter Five

第六章 Chapter Six

第七章 Chapter Seven

第八章 Chapter Eight

第九章 Chapter Nine

第十章 Chapter Ten

版权信息

书名：少年与海

作者：（英）约瑟夫·鲁德亚德·吉卜林著；霍彦京译

出版方：哈尔滨出版社

出版时间：2019.5

ISBN：9787548445623

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少年与海

第一章 Chapter One

大客轮在起伏的波涛里穿梭，一路鸣笛向周围的捕鱼船队发出警告，以免发生碰撞。船上的防风门敞开着，迎接来自北大西洋的雾气。

“切尼那小子是船上最大的麻烦，”一个身穿粗呢外套的男人“砰”的一声关上门，说道，“不能让他留在这儿。太不知天高地厚了。”

一个满头白发的德国人伸手取了一块三明治，一边咀嚼，一边嘟哝：“我知道这类人。美国佬全是这德行。我告诉你，你应该带一些鞭子，放你船上。”

“哼！那小子也没啥大坏处，他只是个可怜的家伙。”从纽约来的男人慢吞吞地回答。他全身舒展躺在垫子上，面前是湿漉漉的天窗。“打他小时候起，他家人就拉着他在各家旅馆跑来跑去。今儿早上，我跟他妈聊了会儿。那太太挺漂亮，但她凡事都由着儿子。那小子要去欧洲上学。”

“还没开始上学呢，”蜷缩在角落里的费城男人说，“那小子每月的零花钱就有200美元，他跟我说的。他还不到16岁。”

“铁路。是他爸的，对吗？”德国人问。

“没错。铁路、矿山、木材，还有船运。老头在圣迭戈有自己的摊子。在洛杉矶也有。他有6条铁路，太平洋沿岸一半的木材都是他的，他老婆只管花钱就行。”费城人懒洋洋地继续说。“她说西部不适合她，她只是跟着儿子神经兮兮地到处跑。我估计她是想搞清楚什么能让她儿

子感兴趣。佛罗里达、阿迪朗达克、莱克伍德、蒙大拿、纽约，来来回回转个不停。他现在可不是听别人差遣的小跟班。等到从欧洲念书回来，他会变成一个让人恐惧的家伙。”

“他家老头怎么不专门照管他？”穿着粗布尼外套的人问道。

“老头正在忙生意。我估计他听不进去别人的话。过几年，他会发现自己犯下的错误。好可惜。因为要是能好好管教一下，那孩子还是有很多优点的。”

“好好管管，好好管管！”德国人咆哮着说。

“砰”的一声，门又开了。一个身材瘦小的男孩，大约15岁光景，嘴角叼着抽了半截的香烟，斜倚在门口。那张蜡黄的小脸使他显得并不像这个年龄的孩子。从他的表情里透露出来的是犹疑不决、虚张声势和非常低级的小聪明。男孩穿着鲜红色的上衣，灯笼裤，红袜子，脚上穿一双骑行鞋¹，后脑勺上扣着一顶红色的法兰绒帽子。他吹了一声口哨，扫了同伴一眼，然后高声叫喊道：“喂，外面的雾很大。你们听，那些渔船在我们周围吱哇乱叫。要我说，如果我们能撞翻一艘的话，是不是很好玩？”

“哈维，关门，”纽约人说，“带上门，出去。这儿不欢迎你。”

“谁能拦住我？”男孩故意回答，“你给我买的船票吗？马丁先生。我想我应该和站在这儿的其他人一样吧。”

他从棋盘上捡起几粒骰子，左右手来回抛着玩儿。

“喂，先生们。无聊死了。咱们来玩扑克吧？”

没人搭理哈维。他继续抽着烟，一个劲儿地抖腿，用脏兮兮的手指敲击桌子。然后，他掏出一卷钞票，好像要数钱一样。

“你妈下午怎么样？”有人问，“中午饭那会儿我没看到她。”

“我估计在她的头等舱里。一到海上她就晕船。我打算给那女服务生15美元，让她帮忙照顾我妈。我能不下去就尽量不下去。因为每次穿过管家的配餐室时，总觉得那是个神秘的地方。嗨，这是我第一次在海上航行。”

“哦，哈维，别给自己找借口。”

“谁找借口了？先生们，这是我第一次出海。除了第一天我有点晕船外，我一点都不难受，先生们！”说着，他伸出不示弱的拳头，蘸湿手指，继续数钱。

“哦，你真是个大人物，有什么都能从你的脸上清清楚楚地看出来。”费城人打了个哈欠，“要是你能不这么莽撞的话，你肯定能成为你们那儿的优秀人才。”

“我知道。我是美国人——以前，将来，一直都会是。等我去了欧洲，我会证明给他们看的。呸，烟没了。我可不能抽手推车上卖的烟。哪位有纯正的土耳其烟？”

轮机长微笑着走进来，面色红润，浑身湿漉漉的。“喂，麦克，”哈维兴奋地叫起来，“我们去撞一艘船吧，怎么样？”

“要懂点规矩，”麦克严肃地回答道，“小辈们像往常一样尊重长辈，长辈们也会领情。”

角落里传来低低的窃笑。德国人打开烟盒，递给哈维一根闪闪发光的雪茄。

“小朋友，这才是适合你的东西。”他说，“你试试，然后你就会觉得从没有这么快活过。”

哈维点燃这支不怎么可爱的香烟，他觉得自己已经融入到了成人的世界。

“再来点猛的才能把我干倒，”哈维说。他并不知道自已点燃了劣质的东西，一支“惠灵雪茄”。

“我们现在看到的不就是吗？”德国人说，“麦克·唐纳德先生，我们到哪了？”

“还在附近一带，沙菲尔先生。”轮机长说，“今晚我们就能到大浅滩。不过，总体来说，现在我们周围都是捕鱼船队。我们已经和三艘小渔船发生过擦碰，中午撞掉了一艘法国船的桅杆。或许可以说，这真是一次亲密的航行。”

德国人看着哈维满眼泪水，问道：“喜欢我的雪茄吗？”

“不错，够味儿。”哈维挤出几个字来。“我猜，我们慢下来了，是吗？我得出去看看大雾是什么情况。”

“如果我是你，也会这么做的。”德国人回答。

哈维踉踉跄跄地翻过甲板，跑到最近的栏杆旁。他非常难受，但是他看到甲板上的服务生正在收椅子。他在众人面前夸口说自己不晕船，所以他的骄傲使得他只能跑到二等舱船尾的龟背甲板上，这里空无一

人。他爬到甲板边缘处，紧挨着旗杆的地方。这时，他一瘸一拐地更难受了。惠灵雪茄，汹涌的波涛，耳边的噪音，拧成一团，像要把他的心掏出来一样。哈维的脑袋昏沉沉的，两眼直冒金星，身体似乎变轻了，两只脚在海风中飘荡。由于晕船，他几乎虚脱了。海浪卷起客轮，将哈维抛起，翻过栏杆，摔在光滑的甲板上。接着，一个低浪打过来，像母亲的手一样把哈维揽入臂弯。或者说是一把将哈维拉起，顺势扔进海里。深蓝色的大海包围了哈维，他很快便进入了沉睡。

一阵开饭的号角声把哈维惊醒了，他曾经在阿迪朗达克暑期班上学时，听到过这样的声音。慢慢地，他记起自己是哈维·切尼，溺水而死，但他太虚弱了，想不起所有的事情。他的鼻子嗅到一股新的味道，后背湿漉漉的，全身都是海水。当他睁开眼睛时，发现自己还在大海上。因为周围波涛汹涌，好像银色的山脉，他躺在一堆奄奄一息的鱼上，一个后背宽阔、身穿蓝色套头衫的人背对着他。

“完了，”男孩心想，“我死了，肯定的，这个家伙掌管着我。”

正当他暗自嘀咕的时候，那个人转过脑袋来，乌黑卷曲的头发里露出一对若隐若现的金环。

“哈！现在好点了吗？”他问，“就这样躺着，我把船划得平稳些。”

他飞快地调转摇晃的船头。小船跃起足足有20英尺高，但还是驶入了平滑如镜的海面。不过，这登山般的划船方式并没有打断蓝毛衫的话。“干得不错吧，我说，是我救了你。额，什——么？很不错，我说，你们的船又没碰到我，你咋掉下来的？”

“我病了，”哈维说，“病了，控制不住自己。”

“幸亏我及时吹号，你们的船就偏了一点。我以为你被螺旋桨搅碎当鱼饵了，可你一直漂——漂到我这儿了，我把你当成一条大鱼救了上来。这次算你命大。”

“我在哪儿？”哈维问。他不相信自己现在已经安然无恙了。

“你和我在一艘平底小渔船上——我叫曼纽尔。我是双帆船‘我们在此’号上的人，住在格洛斯特。过一会儿，就能吃晚饭了。呃，什么？”

他好像长着两双手和一颗铁铸的脑袋一样，因为他觉得吹大海螺壳似乎不过瘾，必须站起来，随平底船的摆动，才能吹出刺耳尖利的声音，穿透浓浓的海雾。哈维不记得这样的消遣持续了多久，因为他躺在那里看着雾气缭绕，吓得不轻。他仿佛听到了枪声、号角声和尖叫声。有种比平底船还要大的什么东西，异常活跃，隐约出现在船旁，一时间，许多声音袭来，他好像被扔进了一个拥挤的黑洞里。身穿油布雨衣的人们给了他一杯热饮，脱掉了他的衣服，于是，哈维睡了过去。

哈维醒来时，听到了船上的第一声早餐铃。他正在纳闷自己的特等舱怎么变得这么狭小。一转头，他看到一间三角形的舱室，只见一盏煤油灯照亮了巨大的方形横梁，一张触手可及的三角桌占据了从船头到前桅的空间。在船尾，二手普利茅斯壁炉后坐着一个和他年龄相仿的男孩。他长着一张扁平的红色面庞，一双灰色的眼睛闪闪发光。男孩穿一件蓝色的套头衫，高筒胶靴。地上还有几双同样的靴子，一顶旧帽子，几双破羊毛袜，黑黄色的雨衣在床边摇来晃去。这里的空间非常狭小，像塞满了棉花，散发出阵阵气味。油布雨衣有着自己独特的浓厚气味，再混合着炸鱼味、烧焦的油脂味、油漆味、胡椒味和腐烂的土豆味。不过，所有这些味道都被渔船和海水的味道包围着。哈维看到睡觉的地方没有床单，顿时心生厌恶。他躺在一块肮脏的厚棉布垫子上，鼓鼓囊囊

的。而且，这艘船也和蒸汽客轮大不相同，她既不是顺流而行，也不在浪里翻滚，只是漫无目的地漂荡着，傻乎乎地像一匹被缰绳牵着的小马驹。嘈杂的水声在哈维的耳边回荡，船底嘎吱嘎吱作响，周围的一切都让哈维绝望，他小声嘟囔着，不由得开始想妈妈。

“好点了吗？”男孩咧嘴笑着问道，“来点咖啡吗？”他端着满满一锡罐咖啡，加了些糖浆在里面。

“没有牛奶吗？”哈维看了看漆黑的双层床，似乎期待着那里能有一头奶牛。

“哦，没有。”男孩回答，“要到大约九月中旬才能见到。咖啡还不错，我做的。”

哈维默默喝了咖啡。男孩递给他满满一盘脆脆的炸猪肉，哈维狼吞虎咽地吃了下去。

“我还没晾干你的衣服。我猜衣服有点缩水。”男孩说，“它们的样式跟我们的不一样——一件都不一样。你翻个身看看有没有受伤。”

哈维又是伸胳膊又是蹬腿，但说不出哪里有伤。

“很好，”男孩高兴地说，“收拾好，上甲板去。爸爸想见你。我是他儿子。他们都叫我丹。我还是厨师在船上的助手，干一些别人都觉得脏的活儿。自从奥托掉下船后，船上除了我没别的男孩。他是唯一的荷兰人，大约20岁。风平浪静的，你怎么从船上掉下来了？”

“哪有风平浪静？”哈维闷闷不乐地说，“刮了一阵大风，我又晕船。我估计肯定是从栏杆上翻下去的。”

“昨天只有点儿微风，昨晚也是。”男孩说，“不过，在你看来那就是大风啦——”他低声说，“待久了，你就会明白。快点，我爸等你呢。”

和其他倒霉的年轻人一样，哈维长这么大从没有人敢对他发号施令——从来没有。至少不久前是这样。跟他说话，人们得拖长了语调，有时候还得眼泪汪汪、苦口婆心地讲“听话”的好处和理由。切尼太太总是担心伤害哈维的心灵。也许这就是她整天坐立不安，紧张到虚脱的原因。哈维不明白自己为什么要迫于任何人的压力而变得着急。于是，他说：“如果你爸着急要见我，他可以自己下来啊。我想让他立刻带我去纽约，他会得到报酬的。”

丹瞪大了眼睛，这个玩笑让他兴奋不已。“嗨，爸爸，”丹扯着嗓门冲前甲板的船舱门大声喊，“他说您要是着急见的话，就亲自下来见他。听到了吗？爸爸。”

一个低沉的声音传过来，哈维从没有听过从胸腔里发出的这样浑厚的声音：“别胡闹，丹，让他过来。”

丹暗自窃喜，扔给哈维一双变形的骑行鞋。甲板上传来的声音让这个男孩克制住了自己的怒火，一想起自己和父亲的财富，以及回家的路程，他渐渐地感到些许宽慰。毫无疑问，这次获救将使他成为伙伴中的英雄。他爬上陡峭的楼梯，来到甲板上。在船尾差点被一堆杂物绊倒。在通往后甲板的台阶上，坐着一个身材矮胖的小个子男人，胡须刮得干干净净，长着两道灰色的眉毛。夜色降临，浪涌远去，留下平静无垠的大海。远处地平线周围点缀着十几艘渔船的白帆。它们中间露出几个小黑点，那是几艘已经出海的平底船。纵帆船抛了锚停在海上，主桅上挂着一面三角帆。船上只有一个男人留在房顶上——他们把船舱叫作“房

子”，船上再没有其他人了。

“早上好——我应该说，下午好，你已经睡了一天一夜，小鬼。”小个子男人招呼道。

“早上好，”哈维回答。他不喜欢被人叫“小鬼”。作为一个溺水者，他期待能得到同情。他的脚不管什么时候沾了水，他的妈妈都会痛苦不堪，但这个水手好像并不在乎。

“现在，让我们听听。不管从哪方面来说，你都非常走运。你叫什么名字？你打哪儿来（我们猜有可能是纽约）？要到哪儿去（有可能是欧洲）？”

哈维说出自己的名字和大客轮的名字，并且简单讲了这次的故事，还反复强调必须立刻把他送回纽约，到那里他的爸爸会回报他们，要多少都行。

“嗯，”哈维说完以后，胡子刮得干干净净的男人却无动于衷，“我不觉得哪个人或者哪个孩子是特殊的。竟然在风平浪静的时候从船上翻下来，更不能接受什么晕船的借口。”

“借口！”哈维叫道，“你以为我从大客轮上掉到你这艘又小又破的船上是在闹着玩吗？”

“我不知道你说的闹着玩是什么意思，小鬼。不过，我要是你的话，上帝知道，我可不会这么说这条救命的船。第一，这是冒犯教义的。第二，你让我很恼火。——你好像现在还不知道，我是格洛斯特‘我们在此’号的迪斯科。”

“我不知道，我也不关心。”哈维说，“当然，我很感激你们救我。

不过，我想让你明白，越早送我回纽约，你越能拿到更多的报酬。”

“意思是——现在？”迪斯科竖起乱蓬蓬的眉毛，瞪大温和的蓝色眼睛，充满疑惑地看着哈维。

“好多好多钱，”哈维很高兴，终于吸引了迪斯科的注意力，“货真价实的美元。”他把手伸进口袋，微微腆起了肚子，这是他表现自己显赫地位的一种方式。“今天你把我救上来，这是你这辈子干得最棒的一件事。我是哈维·切尼唯一的儿子。”

“他挺受欢迎的。”迪斯科冷冷地说。

“你要是不知道谁是哈维·切尼的话，或者知道得不多——没关系。现在就掉转船头，我们赶快回去。”

哈维认为，美国大部分土地上的人都在议论或嫉妒他爸爸的财富。

“保不准我会，也不会。收起你的肚子，小鬼，你的肚子里全是我的食物。”

哈维听到丹咯咯地笑了起来，他假装在前桅处忙着干活。哈维羞得满脸通红。“我们会给你报酬的，”他说，“你觉得什么时候能到纽约？”

“我不经常去纽约，也不知道波士顿。也许九月左右的时候我们会到达东部海角。听你说起你爸——很遗憾，我没听过他的故事——也许他会给我10美元，也许一个子儿也不给我。”

“10 美元！什么，你瞧，我——”哈维把手伸进口袋里，摸索着那卷钞票。不过，他掏出来的只有一小包湿透的烟卷。

“这可不是合法的钞票，对肺不好。扔下船去吧，小鬼，再找找。”

“钱被偷了。”哈维愤怒地哭喊起来。

“这样，你得等你爸来酬谢我了？”

“134美元——全被偷光了。”哈维激动地翻着口袋。“把它们还给我。”

一丝奇怪的神色掠过迪斯科冷峻的脸庞。“小鬼，你拿着134美元干吗？”

“这是我的一部分零花钱——每个月都有。”哈维觉得这样说会让他们惊讶不已，虽然没那么直接。

“哦，134美元是他零花钱的一部分——只是一个月的！你掉到海里时什么都记不起来了是吧？这么说吧，你可能撞断了一根柱子，就像‘东风’号上的老哈斯金一样。”迪斯科似乎在自言自语——“他在舱口跌倒了，然后一头撞上了主桅——硬邦邦的。大概3个星期以后，老哈斯金都坚持说那是一艘袭击商船的战舰。于是，他宣布要向塞布尔岛开战，因为那个岛属于英国，而且离浅滩又远。后来的航程里，他们把他缝进睡袋，只露出脑袋和脚。现在，他在埃塞克斯的家里成天玩那些破布娃娃呢。”

哈维气得差点噎住，可迪斯科还在继续安慰他：“很遗憾，我们为你感到可惜——这么年轻。我想，我们都不要再提那些钱了。”

“你当然不会提了，就是你偷的。”

“随你怎么说。要是这样能让你舒服的话。现在说说回去的事吧。”

就算能回去，我们也不会那么做。你现在不适合回去。我们刚到大浅滩，自己干活挣面包吧。我们没见过一个月能拿50美元的人，更别说零花钱了。运气好的话，九月的第一个星期能在什么地方靠岸。”

“可——可现在才五月，不能因为你要捕鱼，我就干等着什么也不干吧。我告诉你，没门儿。”

“说对了，没错。没人让你什么都不干。奥托在拉阿沃尔掉下船了，有一大堆你能干的。我怀疑他是在刮大风时没抓牢，掉进海里的。不管怎么说，他都不会回来否认了。既然你来了，显然，这是上帝在帮我。不过，我想你不是真的什么都不会干，对吧？”

“上了岸，我保证让你们都兴奋起来。”哈维恶狠狠地点点头，低声抱怨着，含糊不清地冒出一句“海盗”。迪斯科听到这句差点笑出来。

“只顾说话，我差点忘了。别多嘴。既然上了我们这艘船。那就瞪大眼睛，听丹的吩咐，帮他做事。我会给你工钱，虽然你不值那个价——不过，我会给你——一个月十块五吧。到航行结束时，差不多能拿到三十五块吧。干点活儿能让你的脑袋舒服点。至于你爸、你妈和钱的故事，以后再说。”

“我妈在那艘大客轮上。”哈维的眼睛里满含泪水，“现在就带我去纽约。”

“可怜的女人——可怜的女人！不过，等你回去的时候，她会忘掉这一切的。我们这艘船上有8个人，如果现在就返航的话——这可是一千多英里——我们会错过捕鱼季。就算我同意，船上的其他人也不会答应。”

“可我爸会摆平这事的。”

“他可能会，我不怀疑他会试着那么做。”迪斯科说，“可是，一个捕鱼季可以维持8个人的生计。到九月你见到你爸的时候肯定安然无恙。去吧，去帮丹。就像我刚才说的，一个月十块五。当然，吃住都和我们一样。”

“你意思是我还得洗锅，刷盘子？”哈维说。

“还有别的事情。没人允许你这么大声说话，小鬼。”

“我不！我爸会给你足够的钱，能买得起这艘小破船。”——哈维在甲板上跺着脚说——“你要是能把我安全带回纽约，他会给你10倍多的钱。而且——而且——不管怎么说，你已经从我这儿拿走了134美元。”

“什么——？”迪斯科铁青的脸沉了下来。

“什么？你很清楚那是什么。不仅如此，你还要我干低贱的粗活。”哈维对自己用的这个形容词非常满意——“干到九月。我告诉你没门儿，你听到没？”

哈维言辞激烈地训斥迪斯科时，他正若有所思地看着主桅顶端。

“闭嘴！”迪斯科终于开口，“出于我的责任考虑，我对你自有安排。这是我的决定。”

丹悄悄站了起来，用胳膊肘戳了一下哈维。“别再惹我爸生气了，”他恳请道，“你已经有两三次说他是贼了。从来没人敢这么说他。”

“我不！”哈维声嘶力竭地叫喊着，根本不理睬丹的建议，迪斯科依旧在一旁沉思。

“好像有点儿不友好，”迪斯科终于开口了，他扫了哈维一眼，“我不怪你，一点都不怪你，小鬼。要是我把你的胆汁打得喷出来，你可别怪我。搞清楚我说的是什么是了？给纵帆船上另一个男孩打下手，每月给你十块五——包吃住——为了教你学东西，也为你的健康考虑。明白不？”

“不！”哈维说，“带我回纽约，要不然我让你——”

他记不清接下来发生了什么。他躺在船舷上的漏水口处，捂着流血的鼻子，迪斯科平静地低头看着他。

“丹，”迪斯科对儿子说，“我看到这个男孩时，并没有仓促地去判断。你以后也绝不能被草率的判断所误导。丹，现在我觉得他很可怜。因为他显然被自己那番上等生活的话给迷惑了。他给我的名字不一定是真的，他说的别的话也一样。——至于掉下船的说法，我也半信半疑。你对他好点，丹，我给你的工钱是他的两倍。他的脑子完全糊涂了，干点活儿让他清醒些吧！”

迪斯科神色凝重地走进船舱，那是他和其他水手睡觉的地方。只留下丹安慰那个可怜的三千万家产的继承人。

1 骑行鞋，又称自锁鞋，骑自行车的专用鞋。其鞋底有金属锁扣，骑行时，正好和自行车脚蹬吻合，接触后，金属扣会自动卡在脚蹬上，防止颠簸或快速骑行时，脚从脚蹬上滑落发生危险。

第二章 Chapter Two

雨下得越来越急，越来越密，落在满是油污的地板上。“我警告你，”丹说，“爸爸平时不像今天这么暴躁，你真是活该。哼！你不该那么说话。”哈维还在双肩起伏，啜泣抽搐着。“我明白那种感觉。爸爸第一次打我，就是这个样子，那也是最后一次打我。——那是我第一次出海。当时我很难过，而且很孤单。我明白。”

“就是，”哈维咆哮道，“那个男人要么疯了，要么喝多了，我——我是什么都不会做的！”

“别那么说我爸，”丹小声说，“他一喝酒就发火，而且——好了，他跟我说你是个疯子。你怎么想到说他是贼的？他是我爸。”

哈维坐起来，擦了擦鼻子，讲了那卷找不见的钞票。“我没疯，”他反复强调，“只是——你爸从没见过比5美元还大的钞票，我爸一个礼拜就能买下这艘船，绝对没错。”

“你不了解这艘船的价值。你爸爸肯定有很多钱。他的钱是哪儿来的？爸爸说疯子没真话。你说啊。”

“他有金矿，还有其他的生意，在西部。”

“我在书上看过这样的买卖。也是西部？他是不是骑着漂亮的小马驹，拎着一把手枪，就像马戏团表演一样？人们都说那是狂野的西部。我听过他们的马刺，笼头，都是货真价实的纯银。”

“你真是个大笨蛋！”哈维尽管不高兴，但还是被丹逗乐了，“我爸从来不骑什么小马驹，他出去的时候会坐车。”

“什么？运龙虾的车？”

“不，当然是他自己的私人专列。你长这么大，见过私人专列吗？”

“司兰汀先生有一辆，”丹小心翼翼地说，“我见过它在波士顿停车场放着，三个黑鬼推着跑（丹的意思是在擦玻璃）。不过，司兰汀先生拥有长岛的每条铁路，人们都这么说，还说他买下了半个新罕布什尔，建起一排栅栏，里面养着狮子、老虎、熊、水牛、鳄鱼之类的东西。比曼先生是个百万富翁。我见过他的车，懂吗？”

“人们说我爸是几百万富翁。他有两辆私人专列。一辆以我的名字命名，叫‘哈维’号；另一辆是我妈妈的名字，叫‘康士坦茨’号。”

“等会儿，”丹说，“爸爸从来不让我发誓，但我想你应该可以。在我们继续往下说之前，我希望你敢发誓，要是说谎的话就会不得好死。”

“当然敢。”哈维回答。

“还不够。你得说‘我要是说了假话，我就不得好死。’”

“要是我说的哪个字有假，”哈维说，“我立马死在这儿。”

“包括那134美元和这些事儿？”丹问，“我听见你和爸爸说的了。我看你要是说谎的话，就会被大海吞下去，就跟约拿²一样。”

哈维气得满脸通红，急着为自己申辩。丹是个聪明的年轻人，有自

己的判断力。十分钟的盘问后，他深信哈维并没有撒谎——没多少假话。而且，还有那些最可怕的誓言，那是丹自小就知道的。哈维坐在船舷的漏水口处，红着鼻子，兴奋地讲述着一件又一件令人难以置信的奇闻。

“天哪！”当哈维骄傲地列举了一系列关于“哈维”号的事迹以后，丹终于发自内心地赞叹起来。接着，他那宽阔的脸盘上露出一丝喜悦，不禁咧开嘴调皮地笑了起来。“我相信你，哈维。爸爸这辈子终于做了一次错误的判断。”

“当然，他错了。”哈维一边说，一边早已想好了如何报复。

“他肯定会发疯的。爸爸最讨厌判断失误。”丹仰面躺下，用手拍着大腿说，“喂，哈维，你可别把这事说出去。”

“我可不想再挨打。不过，我会找机会报仇的。”

“我还从没听过谁敢和爸爸算账。但是，他肯定会再打你，他越犯错越揍你。不过，金矿和手枪——”

“我可从没提过手枪一个字”，哈维插嘴道，因为这关系到他的誓言。

“对，你没说过。两辆私家专列，还有，一辆是用你的名字命名，一辆是你妈妈的。还有一个月200美元的零花钱。不愿为挣一个月十块五而被打进漏水口。这可是本次捕鱼季最大的收获。”丹忍不住笑起来。

“那我没错吧？”哈维以为找到了同情自己的人。

“你错了，大错特错！你在我旁边待着，跟着我干。或者你会抓住机会的，我也会支持你，帮你的。爸爸一般都会尽力帮我，因为我是他儿子。他讨厌被惯坏了的人。我估计你今天非常生他的气，我也经常像你这样。不过，爸爸是一个正直能干的人，所有捕鱼船队的人都这么说。”

“这就是你说的公正，是吧？”哈维指着自已红肿的鼻子说道。

“那没事儿，不就是让你流了点血吗？爸爸是为你好。不过，话又说回来，谁要是认为我爸、我或者是这艘船上的任何人是贼的话，我是不想和这个人打交道的。我们不是靠码头为生的普通人。我们是渔夫，我们在一起出海捕鱼已经6年多了。这点你别搞错了！我跟你说过，我爸不允许我发誓。他说那是些没用的誓言，还会揍我。我给你晾衣服时，不知道你兜里有什么，我没注意看。但是我要说清楚，像你刚才发誓那样，我和爸爸都没有拿你的钱。你被带到船上后，只有我和爸爸两个人见过你，我们对你的钱一无所知。这就是我要说的，明白？”

流淌的血显然让哈维的脑袋清醒了，也许海上的孤寂也起了作用。“说得对，”哈维迷惑不解地低下头，说道，“好像有个人救了我，没让我淹死，我应该感谢他。丹。”

“哦，你真是摔晕了，傻瓜。”丹说，“这里只有我和爸爸见过你。那个厨子不算。”

“我也许应该想到，那笔钱就是那么丢了的，”哈维自言自语道，“而不应该把见过的每个人都当成贼。你爸爸呢？”

“在船舱里。你又想找他干吗？”

“等会儿你就知道了，”哈维说完，东倒西歪地走下台阶。他的脑袋到现在还是一直在嗡嗡作响。通往船舱的路上挂着一只钟，在轮舵那里一眼就能瞧见。迪斯科坐在巧克力色的船舱里，忙着在记事本上写什么东西，嘴里还不时地使劲咬着手中的黑色大铅笔。

“我刚才表现得很不好。”哈维很惊讶，自己竟然可以这么温顺地说话。

“现在又怎么了？”船长问，“又把丹骂了一顿吗？”

“不，我要找你。”

“听着呢。”

“嗯。我——我来这儿是要收回刚才说过的话。”哈维飞快地说，“我快要淹死的时候，有个人救了我——”他咽了一口唾沫。

“哎，你要这么说，就像个男子汉了。”

“他没告诉我名字。”

“说得对，说得对。”迪斯科露出了干巴巴的诡异的笑容。

“所以，我是来说对不起的。”哈维又咽了一口唾沫说道。

迪斯科慢慢从他坐着的储物柜上站了起来，伸出足足有11英寸长的大手。“我觉得刚才那样做对你的意识有好处。事实证明，我的判断没错。”从甲板上传来吃吃的窃笑。11英寸长的大手紧紧握住哈维的手，握得他从手一直麻木到胳膊肘。“我们会对你好的，小鬼。我觉得在你身上发生的那些不好的事情都已经过去了。责任不完全在你。赶紧去干

活儿吧，你会平安无事的。”

哈维回到甲板上时，耳根通红。丹说：“你的脸都白了。”

“我没觉得。”哈维说。

“我不是那个意思。我听见爸爸说的了。每次爸爸说不去想别人的不好时，爸爸就是对他让步了。他讨厌自己判断失误。呼！呼！一旦爸爸做出什么决定，他宁可在英国人面前流血，也绝不会改变想法。很高兴，事情都解决了。爸爸说不能送你回去，他是对的。这是我们的生存方式——捕鱼。再有不到半个小时人们就回来了，就跟鲨鱼追着一条死鲸鱼一样。”

“为什么？”哈维问。

“当然是为了吃晚饭啊。你的胃没有咕噜咕噜地提醒你？你要学的还真不少呢。”

“我想我也饿了。”哈维暗自哀伤，看着头顶混乱的绳索和杂物。

“这艘船真的很棒。”丹没有明白哈维的眼神，热情高涨地说，“特别是等我们把主帆放下来，把所有的鱼都抹上盐的时候。不过，在那之前，我们得先干活儿。”他指着两根桅杆间漆黑的空隙处，那里是打开的主舱口。

“那是干吗的？空空荡荡的。”哈维说。

“你，我，还有其他人，都得来把它装满，”丹回答，“那是放鱼的地方。”

“活的？”哈维问。

“哦，不。它们都是死鱼——直挺挺的——用盐去腌。储藏室那儿有成百上千桶盐，我们都没地方放行李了。”

“可是，鱼在哪里呢？”

“它们在海里，只要虔诚祈祷它们就会上船来。”丹引用了渔民的谚语说道。“昨晚捞起你的时候，你身上带着40多条鱼。”

丹指了指船尾的甲板前面用木围栏围成的鱼舱。

“等他们回来时，咱俩要用水把鱼冲干净。今晚，鱼舱会装满的。我见过船上堆满了等着加工的鱼，吃水都下降半英尺了。我们站在桌子前忙活，困得差点把自己当鱼给剖开了，累得都快睡着了。瞧，他们现在回来了。”丹的目光越过低矮的舷墙，看到六七艘平底渔船在波光粼粼的海面上向他们驶来。

“我还从没有这么近距离地观察过大海，”哈维说，“真漂亮。”

夕阳照在海面上，将其映成了粉紫色。金色的阳光照在角落的木桶上，桶里的鲭鱼泛起蓝色和绿色的条纹。视线所及的每艘纵帆船似乎都在用看不见的绳子拖着自己的平底小渔船前进。小船上的黑色人影像装了发条的玩偶一样。

“大家的收获都不错，”丹眯着眼睛说，“曼纽尔的船都没地方再装下一条鱼了。他的船被压得像睡莲叶子一样低。”

“哪个是曼纽尔？我不知道怎么才能像你一样认出他们来。”

“最南边的最后一艘船。昨晚就是他发现你的。”丹一边指向曼纽尔，一边说，“曼纽尔划船像葡萄牙人，你认不错。他的东边——从划船姿势就能看出来——是宾夕法尼亚。一眼就能看出来，船上装满了小苏打。宾夕法尼亚的东边——看！他们连成一排——隆起的肩膀，那是长腿杰克。他是戈尔韦人，住在南波士顿。他们大部分时间都在那里，而且他们擅长划船。往北，远处点儿——你一会儿就能听到他的歌声——那是汤姆·普拉特。他以前参加过战斗。他在‘旧俄亥俄号’战舰上待过，那是我们的第一艘军舰——他只说合恩角的事儿，其他的从不多说一句，除了唱歌的时候。不过，他捕鱼确实很有一套。听！我说什么来着？”

一阵悠扬的曲调从北方驶来的平底船上悄悄飘过来。哈维听到歌曲大概是关于什么人的手脚冰凉，接着又唱道：

“打开航海图，寂寞的航海图

相逢在哪里

头顶乌云密布

脚下雾气缭绕”

“满满一船，”丹笑呵呵地说，“要是他唱‘哦，船长’，那也说明他捞了不少鱼！”

小调还在继续：

“现在，送给你，哦，船长

我虔诚地祈祷

永远不要埋葬我

不论是在教堂还是修道院”

“这是汤姆的两个拿手好戏。他明天会告诉你关于‘旧俄亥俄号’的故事。看到他身后那艘蓝色平底船了吗？那是我叔叔——我爸爸的兄弟——要是大浅滩有什么倒霉的事的话，当然都会轮到索尔特叔叔。你看他划得多慢。我用我的工资和提成打赌，他是今天唯一一个被蜇伤的——蜇得还不轻。”

“什么东西蜇了他？”哈维饶有兴趣地问道。

“大部分时候是海草莓。有时候是海南瓜，有时会是海柠檬和海黄瓜。对，他的胳膊肘以下都被蜇过。这个人算是倒霉到家了。现在，咱俩该用绳子和滑轮把他们拉上来了。刚才说的是真的吗？你说从出生到现在一指头的活儿都没干过，听起来有点儿可怕，是吧？”

“不管怎样，我打算学着干活，”哈维坚定地回答道，“这是全新的开始。”

“把钩子拿过来，在后边。”

哈维抓起一根绳子，从主桅的钢索上取下悬挂着的长铁钩。丹从他的千斤顶上拉下另一只钩子。曼纽尔划着满载而归的平底船，来到纵帆船旁边。这个葡萄牙人露出闪亮的笑容，哈维后来才真正理解了这种笑容。他手持短柄鱼叉，开始把鱼扔到甲板上的围栏里，大叫道：“231条。”

“把钩子扔给他，”丹说道。哈维把钩子扔到曼纽尔的手中，他把钩子扔到平底船头用绳子围起来的索圈里，勾住丹的滑轮，抓住把手环，

顺势攀上了纵帆船。

“拉！”丹大叫，哈维照做了。他惊奇地发现平底船轻松地升起来了。

“抓住，船还没落在桅顶横杆上！”丹笑着说。哈维不敢松手，船停在了头顶的半空中。

“低头，”丹又叫道。哈维低下头时，丹用一只手扶着这只轻便小船，直到它稳稳地落在主桅后面。“它非常轻，正好能坐下一个人。在海上航行有很多门道。”

“啊哈！”曼纽尔伸出褐色的手，说：“现在好多了？昨晚我捕鱼时发现了你。现在，轮到你捕鱼了。嗯，怎么样？”

“我——我非常感谢。”哈维结结巴巴地说道。他那只可怜的手又可怜巴巴地伸进了口袋，但他突然想起自己已经没有钱可给了。当他深入了解曼纽尔后，他才明白一个小小的错误就会让这个人心神不定，浑身发烫。

“用不着谢我，”曼纽尔说，“我怎么会让你在大浅滩上漂荡呢？现在你也是渔夫了。——嗯，怎么样？哦，啊哈！”说着，曼纽尔前后扭动身子，把身上的东西都解了下来。“我今天还没清理渔船呢，太忙了。那些鱼扑得太快。丹尼，我的孩子，帮我清理一下。”

哈维立即走上前。这是他的救命恩人。他要为这个人做些什么。丹把拖布扔给哈维。哈维倚着平底船笨拙地擦洗鱼群留下的黏液。不过，他是诚心诚意地在干活。“把脚踏板掏出来，它们滑进凹槽里了，”丹说，“擦干净，放下去。千万别一脚踩下去，除非你希望这艘船坏掉。

那是长腿杰克。”

闪闪发光的鱼从旁边的平底船滑进围栏里。

“曼纽尔，你拿好钓具，我摆桌子。哈维，去清洗曼纽尔的船。长腿杰克的船就在曼纽尔的船上面。”

哈维抬头望去，头顶还有一艘平底船。

“看上去就像印度方块，是吧？”丹看着一艘一艘的船在头顶上方擦起来，说道。

“船下水时就像鸭子一样，”长腿杰克的下巴上长着灰色的胡子。这个大嘴巴的戈尔韦人像曼纽尔刚才那样，前后扭了扭身子。迪斯科高亢的声音从天窗飘了出来，人们甚至还能听到他咬铅笔的声音。

“149条半，倒霉，迪斯科，”长腿杰克说，“我只有拼了这条老命才能装满你的口袋。预定计划没完成，葡萄牙人赢了我。”

又一艘平底船停靠过来，一条条鱼纷纷跳进鱼舱。

“203条。瞧瞧这些客人！”说话的这个家伙比戈尔韦人的块头还要大，他的脸上有一块紫色的刀疤，从左眼斜着劈下来，直到右嘴角，看起来很奇怪。

哈维不知道还需要干什么。每一艘平底船落下时，他都会去擦拭，拉出脚踏板，放在船底。

“他干得不错。”脸上带着伤疤的汤姆认真地注视着，有些惊讶。“干活儿有两种方法。一种是打鱼法——先随便拿起绳子的一头，

上面都打上活结——另一种是——”

“我们在‘旧俄亥俄号’上干活的方式！”丹插嘴道。他用一块长板轻轻碰了一下汤姆的膝关节，“躲开，汤姆，我要摆桌子。”

说着，他便将木板的一端用力塞进船舷的缝隙中，迅速弯腰，躲开来自这个好战男人的回击。

“他们在‘旧俄亥俄号’上也这么做，丹，明白吗？”汤姆笑着说。

“我猜他们都是斜眼，因为他们没找到回来的路，而且我知道，如果某人还不让开的话，他就得去主桅杆上找他的靴子了，往前！我忙着呢，没看见吗？”

“丹，你在船上躺一天了。”长腿杰克说，“你一点都不尽职。我敢肯定，一个星期你就能把我们的货物管理员给带坏。”

“他叫哈维，”丹挥动着两把奇形怪状的刀子，说道，“用不了多久，他就抵得上波士顿五个挖蛤蜊人了。”他把刀子优雅地放在桌上，歪着头看了看，对这一结果非常满意。

“我看那是42条，”船边传来一个低低的声音。接着，一阵哄堂大笑过后，又一个声音说道：“我的运气来了。因为我捕了45条，不过我被蜇惨了。”

“42还是45，我弄不清了。”又是那个低沉的声音。

“宾和索尔特叔叔在数鱼，这比马戏团都热闹。”丹说，“你瞧着吧。”

“进来——进来！”长腿杰克大喊，“孩子们，外面全湿了。”

“42，你说的。”索尔特叔叔说。

“那我再数一遍。”一个温和的声音回答。

两艘小船一起划回纵帆船的旁边。

“你怎么那么有耐心！”索尔特叔叔在后面划着船，突然拍打起水花，嚷嚷道，“哪有你这样的农民，竟然来打鱼，害得我都输了。”

“对不起，索尔特先生。我是因为胃痉挛才上船的，我记得是你劝我来的。”

“你和你那紧张的消化不良应该淹死在鲸鱼洞里。”矮胖的小个子索尔特叔叔咆哮道，“你又招惹我了，你说到底是42还是45？”

“我没记住，索尔特先生，让我们数数。”

“别指望它会是42，我数的是45。”索尔特叔叔说，“你仔细数了吗，宾？”

迪斯科走出船舱，用威严的语气说：“索尔特，你现在立马把鱼扔上去。”

“爸爸，别管他们。”丹低声说，“好戏才刚刚开始。”

索尔特辛苦地忙活着，一条一条地叉着数。长腿杰克大声喊道：“他妈的真是太逗了！”另一条平底船上的小个子男人在船舷上刻下一连串记号。

“这是上个礼拜捕的。”他一边说，一边伤心地抬起头，看着食指刚刚挪开的地方。

曼纽尔用胳膊肘轻轻推了推丹。丹迅速冲向船尾的滑车，身体尽量靠在船舷边。曼纽尔让平底船迅速向前移动，丹用钩叉钩住船尾的绳子。其他人一起使劲拉起绳索，将船靠拢——连人带鱼全拉了上来。

“1，2，4——9，”汤姆·普拉特盯着鱼，认真地数着，“47条，宾，不错啊！”丹把宾从船尾拉起来，拖到堆满鱼的甲板上。

“停下！”索尔特叔叔大喊，拍着腰说，“停下，我搞不清自己有多少条鱼了。”

还没来得及反抗，他就被抬到船上了，和宾一样的待遇。

“41条。”汤姆·普拉特说，“索尔特，你竟然输给了一个农民，就这样还算个水手吗？”

“肯定没数对，”他踉踉跄跄地爬出鱼舱，“我都快被蜇成马蜂窝了。”

索尔特叔叔厚实的双手肿胀起来，变成斑驳的浅紫色。

“一些同行会发现海草莓根，”丹指着刚刚升起的月亮说，“如果他们像我一样，必须下去打捞的话。”

“还有别的，”索尔特叔叔说，“岸上的肉吃多了就会变懒，开始嘲笑自己人了。”

“你们坐下！坐下！”甲板上传来一个声音，这是哈维从未听过的。

迪斯科·特鲁普、汤姆·普拉特、长腿杰克和索尔特听到后继续往前走。小个子宾解下方形的绕线轮和缠绕在一起的麻绳；曼纽尔四肢伸展，躺在甲板上，丹跳进鱼舱，哈维听到他在用锤子敲打木桶。

“索尔特，”他说，“马上就要吃饭了，然后我们得去加工鱼。你可以把鱼扔给我爸。汤姆·普拉特和爸爸一起装船，你能听到他俩吵架。我们是第二队，你，我，曼纽尔和宾——这艘船上最年轻最帅的。”

“那有什么用？”哈维说，“我饿了。”

“再等一会儿就能吃饭了。嗯，今晚的饭还不错。虽然爸爸的那些兄弟很烦人，但雇了个好厨师。今天收获不小，是吧？”他指着堆满鳕鱼的鱼舱说，“曼纽尔，你那儿的水深是多少？”

“二十五英寻，”葡萄牙人迷迷糊糊地回答，“今天撒网又快又准。改天我表演给你看，哈维。”

年长的人们还没回来，月光开始慢慢洒在寂静的海上，根本无须厨子大喊“第二队”，丹和曼纽尔便走下船舱。桌子前面坐着的是汤姆·普拉特，最沉着缓慢的老人之一，他已经吃完饭，用手背抹了抹嘴巴。哈维跟着宾坐下来，前面摆放着一盘鳕鱼的杂碎、猪肉丁、薯条和一块热面包，还有一些浓烈的黑咖啡。他们饿坏了，却一直等着，直到宾夕法尼亚庄严地祷告完。然后，他们才埋头吃起来。这时，丹端起杯子深深吸了一口气，问哈维感觉如何。

“很饱，但还能塞一片。”

厨子是一个像煤炭一样黑的大块头黑人。和哈维所见过的黑人不同，他不爱说话，只是心满意足地笑着，比画着，示意人们多吃一点。

“瞧见没，哈维？”丹用叉子敲打桌子，说道，“就像我说的那样。最年轻最帅的男人们——我，宾，你和曼纽尔——我们是第二队，第一拨吃完我们才能吃。他们都是老家伙，又小气又能吃。得先让他们的胃口高兴，所以他们先来吃喽，可这并不是理所当然的。对吧，大厨？”

厨子点点头。

“他不会说话吗？”哈维低声问，

“没怎么打过交道。我们也不太了解。他的舌头本身就有点奇怪。他来自布列塔尼角岛，那儿的农民操一口苏格兰家乡音，他也是。布列塔尼角岛全是黑人，人们都是在打仗时逃过去的，所以说话都像农民——气呼呼地像在吵架。”

“那不是苏格兰话，”宾夕法尼亚说，“那是盖尔语，我在书上见过。”

“宾读过的书不少。他说得大多数都对——除了数鱼——额？”

“他们说多少就是多少吗？你爸不检查就直接认定？”哈维问。

“什么？当然。有什么必要为一堆老鳕鱼说谎呢？”

“有人就谎报过，”曼纽尔插嘴道，“他每天都在说谎。5条，10条，25条，或者更多。”

“在哪儿？”丹说，“那肯定不是我们的人。”

“安圭拉岛的法国人。”

“啊！西海岸的法国人不算。显而易见，他们不识数。如果你碰到

他们的软钩，哈维，你就会明白。”丹极为鄙视地说，“每次穿衣服，只多不少。”

长腿杰克大喊着走出舱门，“第二队”立刻爬了上去。

月光下，桅杆和索具的影子随着一直悬挂着的三角帆在起伏的甲板上来回翻滚；船尾的鱼堆像流淌的银子一样倾泻下来。鱼舱里传来了踩踏声和抱怨声。迪斯科·特鲁普和汤姆·普拉特在盐箱之间来回走动。丹递给哈维一只长柄草耙，把他领到粗木桌靠船舱的一侧，索尔特叔叔拿刀柄不耐烦地敲打着，脚下放着一桶盐。

“你负责把鱼扔给舱口处的爸爸和汤姆·普拉特，注意别让索尔特叔叔扎到你的眼睛，”丹飞快地跑到鱼舱，说，“我在下面递盐。”

宾和曼纽尔站在齐膝深的鳕鱼堆里，迅速挥舞着小刀。长腿杰克戴着手套，旁边放着一只篮子，面朝桌子和索尔特叔叔。哈维盯着长柄草耙和鱼桶。

“嗨！”曼纽尔大喊。他弯下腰，拎起一条鱼，一根手指卡住鱼鳃，另一根手指去抠鱼眼。然后，他把鱼放在桶边，用闪闪发光的刀刃，从鱼的喉部切到鱼尾，发出撕裂的声音，又在鱼鳃两侧各切一刀，然后把鱼扔到长腿杰克脚下的篮子里。

“嗨！”长腿杰克戴着手套，握着一把勺子，挖出鳕鱼的内脏，扔进篮子里。然后，他又用另一只扳手和勺子将鱼的脑袋和内脏清理干净。空膛的鳕鱼滑向索尔特，他用力吸了一口气，接着，撕裂声再次传来，鱼的脊骨便飞出船舷了。被取了内脏的无头鱼敞开肚皮，被扔进鱼桶，海水飞溅，哈维看得目瞪口呆。第一声大吼之后，所有人都安静了下来。鳕鱼像活着一样在众人手里滑行。过了很久，哈维回过神来，不再

琢磨这不可思议的娴熟技艺。这时，他的鱼桶已经满了。

“扔！”索尔特头也没回地咕哝道。于是，哈维一次两三条地把鱼扔进船舱。

“嗨！一捆一捆地扔，”丹说，“别散开！索尔特叔叔是船上的剥鱼能手。仔细看，学着点！”

确实，胖大叔动作敏捷，好像在争分夺秒地切割书页一样。曼纽尔半蹲着，弯下腰，仿佛一尊雕像，但他的两条长胳膊还在不停地捞鱼。小个子宾辛苦地坚持着，但显然很疲惫。有一两次，曼纽尔想找机会帮他，但又不能停下自己手中的活儿。曼纽尔突然大吼一声，因为他的手指被法式鱼钩给钩住了。这些钩子是用柔软的金属做成的，用完后还能再次使用。不过，鳕鱼经常会逃脱软钩，又在其他地方被逮住。这也是格洛斯特船队看不起法国人的原因之一。

粗盐抹在生肉上，发出刺耳的声音，听起来好像砂轮在旋转——刀子碰撞鱼桶时发出的叮叮当当声，拧断鱼头的咔嚓声，鱼肚和内脏飞溅的啪嗒声，索尔特叔叔的刀子划刻鱼骨的咔咔声，湿漉漉的空膛鱼落在鱼桶里的扑通声，各种声音混在一起。

一个小时后，哈维恨不得全世界都停下来。因为鳕鱼比想象中的要重。由于长时间投掷，他的后背生疼。不过，当他想到这是他平生第一次参与劳动时，顿觉自豪不已，只能装作平静地坚持着。

“喂，刀子！”最后，索尔特叔叔叫道。宾迅速跑过来，气喘吁吁地赶到鱼堆旁。曼纽尔扭动腰身，舒展筋骨。长腿杰克靠着船舷。厨子走了过来，像个黑色的影子一样一声不吭，收拾好一大堆鱼骨和鱼头，然后离开了。

“鱼头早餐和海鲜浓汤。”长腿杰克咂咂嘴说。

“哎，刀子！”索尔特叔叔又重复道。他的手里握着扁平的，弯曲的切割工具。

“看看你的脚下，哈维。”丹朝下喊。

哈维看到6把匕首插在舱口里侧的系索耳上。他把刀子递给大伙儿，又把钝的那些拿了回来。

“水！”迪斯科·特鲁普说。

“把筐给我，还有长柄勺，哈维，快点。”丹说。

不到一分钟哈维就回来了，手里拿着长柄勺，里面装着褐色的液体，看着不怎么新鲜，尝起来却像果汁一样。迪斯科和汤姆·普拉特喝过后，下巴都要酸掉了。

“这是鳕鱼，”迪斯科说，“它们不是大马士革无花果，汤姆·普拉特，更不是银条，自打一出海，我已经告诉过你不止一次了。”

“这件事说了7个捕鱼季了。”汤姆·普拉特冷冷地回答道，“放整齐就是放整齐，就算堆放压舱石都有对有错，要是你见过把400吨的铁放进——”

“嗨！”曼纽尔大喊一声，众人立刻开始干活，直到鱼舱空了才停下来。等到把最后一条鱼扔下来的时候，迪斯科·特鲁普和他的兄弟摇摇晃晃地到船舱里去了；曼纽尔和长腿杰克继续前行，只剩汤姆·普拉特独自等了好久才溜回舱口，最后也消失了。不到半分钟，哈维就听到船舱里鼾声震天，他双眼无神地望着丹和宾。

“丹尼，我比上次表现得稍好了点。”宾说话的时候，困得眼皮都抬不起来了。“不过，我觉得我该帮着清理的。”

“你用不着心存愧疚，”丹说，“去睡觉吧，宾，你没必要干孩子们的活儿。拿一只桶过来，哈维。哦，宾，把臭鱼篮子倒干净再睡。你能坚持会儿吗？”

宾提起沉甸甸的篮子，里面装满了鱼的内脏。他把东西全都倒进一个带有铰链盖的桶里，然后，他也离开了船舱。

“孩子们，加工完鱼以后，打扫干净。按‘我们在此’号上的规定，好天气时该由你们值班。”丹精力充沛，冲洗了鱼舱，收起桌子，放在月光下晾干。他用一捆麻絮把刀上的血渍擦干净。然后，他又开始在磨石上磨刀，哈维按照他的安排，把鱼的内脏和脊骨扔下船。

第一桶垃圾扔下去时，溅起的是一个银白色的鬼影，它直直地从油亮的海面上跃起，发出诡异的叹息，像口哨声一样。哈维吓得大叫一声，连忙向后退，丹却哈哈大笑起来。“逆戟鲸，”丹说道，“来找你要鱼头了。它们饿的时候就会这样跳起来。它们的呼吸声就像从坟墓里发出的哀号，对吧？”烂鱼散发出浓浓的恶臭，弥漫在空气中，白色的柱子一样的身子沉下去时，光滑的水面泛起了油乎乎的泡沫。“你以前没见过逆戟鲸吗？以后出海，这很常见。嘿，船上有个男孩真不错。奥托岁数太大，还有一个荷兰人，他老和我掐架。我倒不在意他满嘴教义，你睡着了？”

“困死了，”哈维一边打盹，一边回答。

“值班时不能睡觉。站起来，去看看我们的锚灯是不是还亮着。现在该你值班了，哈维。”

“呸！能有什么危险？这么好的天气。呼——呼！”

“爸爸说，这种时候才会出事呢。好天气容易迷糊。可能你还没反应过来，就被一艘班轮撞成两截了。然后17名厚脸皮的官员，装出绅士的样子，指手画脚地斥责，说咱们大雾天不点灯。我好心教你，如果你要是再打盹，我就用绳子抽你啦。”

月光见证着大浅滩上千奇百怪的景象，照在这个穿着灯笼裤和毛线衫的瘦削的年轻人身上，他走在重达70吨的纵帆船上，在杂乱的甲板间摇摇晃晃。在他的身后，走着另一个男孩，呵欠连天，一边打盹儿，一边像行刑者一样挥动打结的绳子，不时地抽打几下。

挂着铰链的轮子发出低沉温柔的咔嗒声，三角帆在微风中发出噼里啪啦的声音，起锚机嘎吱嘎吱地响。令人头疼的巡逻还在继续。任凭哈维如何反抗，威胁，低声抱怨，最后都哭出来了，可丹还是不松口，只是一个劲儿地说提高警惕有多重要。他用绳子一会儿抽打平底船，一会儿又去抽哈维。终于，船舱里的时钟敲了十下，第十声响起时，小个子宾爬上甲板。他发现两个男孩瘫倒在主舱口处，并排沉沉地睡去了。于是，宾只好把他俩拖回到自己的床铺上。

[2](#) 约拿，灾星。约拿是《圣经》中的一位先知，因违背上帝意愿给同一艘船上的人们带来厄运，后被抛进大海，海上立刻风平浪静。

第三章 Chapter Three

如同40英寻水深般的沉睡后，哈维觉得神清气爽，耳聪目明。他狼吞虎咽地吃着早餐。人们把一大盘鲜美多汁的鱼片一扫而光——这是厨子用昨天晚上收集的鱼块做成的。哈维和丹收拾了锅碗瓢盆，还有老船员们的剩饭。年长的都出海捕鱼了，只剩他俩把猪肉切片，为午饭做好准备，擦拭了船桅，添满油灯，帮厨子加了煤和水，查看了装满战利品的前货舱。美好的一天又来到了——温和、轻柔、澄明。哈维深深地吸了一口空气。

夜里，海上聚集了更多的纵帆船。广阔的海平面上布满了风帆和平底船。远处的地平线上，一艘看不见船身的大客轮在冒烟，惊扰了大海的蔚蓝。东方，一艘大船正在扬起高贵的风帆，好像给整幅画面拉开一道正方形的裂口。迪斯科在舱顶抽烟——一只眼睛盯着周围的船只，另一只眼睛看着桅顶的一面小旗子。

“爸爸每当这样陷入沉思，”丹低声说，“都是在为大伙儿盘算。我敢拿我所有的工资和利润打赌，我们马上要抛锚停船了。爸爸对鳕鱼了如指掌，整个船队都知道这一点。看见没，他们一个个都跟上来了，不用特别留意什么，只要一直跟着咱们就行。那是‘里波王子’号，来自查塔姆³。昨晚，她就偷偷跟上了。看见那艘大船了吗？挂着一面新三角帆，前帆上还有块补丁，她是西查塔姆来的。她待不了多久，除非突然走运，自打上一季就这样。她倒不会悄悄跟在后面，什么锚都拖不住她……爸爸像那样吐出烟圈时，他准是在观察鱼群。要是我们现在跟他说话，他会发疯的。上次，我就这么没眼力见儿，他拎起一只靴子就抽

我。”

迪斯科往前凑了凑，嘴里叼着烟斗，双眼空洞无神。正如他儿子所说，他正在研究这些鱼——凭着自己的知识和经验，他凝视着在大浅滩徘徊的鳕鱼群。他接纳了那些跟在他屁股后面，想一探究竟的船队。他觉得那是对他的能力的一种恭维，不过，现在可不欢迎他们。他希望能赶走其他船只，好让自己的船可以单独停靠。因为马上要到维京岛了。这里的鱼群都在狂风暴雨的区域。迪斯科站在一条20磅重的鳕鱼的角度，考虑到了最近的天气、大风、洋流、食物供给以及船上的用度等问题。事实上，这一个小时里，他自己真的已经和鳕鱼融为了一体。终于，他从嘴里取下烟斗。

“爸爸，”丹说，“我们干完活儿啦。可以出去一会儿吗？真是捕鱼的好天气。”

“别穿鲜红的衣服，也不要烤焦了的棕色鞋子，找点适合他的穿。”

“爸爸高兴了——事情解决啦。”丹兴高采烈地把哈维拉进船舱。这时，特鲁普把钥匙扔了下来。“爸爸保管着我多余的衣服，都是他给我安排的。因为妈妈说我太粗心。”丹在储物柜里翻腾着，不到3分钟，就把哈维装扮成另一番模样——脚穿一双快到大腿的渔民橡胶鞋，身上是一件厚实的蓝色套头衫，胳膊肘还打了块补丁，手上戴了一副手套，头上是一顶防水帽。

“现在你还真像那么回事儿，”丹说，“快点！”

“就在附近，”特鲁普说，“别去船队那边乱跑。要是有人问我下了什么命令，照实说——因为你们啥也不知道。”

纵帆船的尾部系着一只红色的小平底船，上面写着“海蒂”。丹拉起船头的缆绳，轻轻扔到船底，哈维跌跌撞撞地跟在后边。

“你这样是上不了船的，”丹说，“这要是在海上，你早就掉进海里了。要想上船，你得学会把握时机。”

丹装好桨栓，再在横坐板上坐下，看着哈维干活。哈维曾经在阿迪朗达克水域里划过船，样子像女士一样轻柔；不过，轻便的单人桨和短粗的8英尺长的海桨还是有区别的。他们被困在了轻柔的波涛里，哈维开始嘟囔起来了。

“快！快划！”丹说，“要是你把桨困在海里，船就会被打翻。这艘船很漂亮吧？也是我的。”

小船非常干净。船艏放着一只小小的锚，两壶水，能探测70英寻水深的棕色细锚绳。在哈维的右手下方，一只马口铁号角挂在楔子上，旁边有一把丑陋的大锤，一支短柄鱼叉，还有一根短木棍。两条绳子上挂着沉重的铅锤和双头鳕鱼钩，它们整整齐齐绕在方轴上，插在船舷上。

“船帆和桅杆呢？”哈维问。他的双手已经磨起了水泡。

丹咯咯地笑起来。“你没怎么划过平底船，你得拉桨，但不要那么用力。你难道不想要一艘这样的船吗？”

“哦，要是我开口的话，我爸也会送我一两艘船的。”哈维回答道。他一直在忙，直到这时，他才想起他的家人。

“那倒是。我忘了你爸是百万富翁啦。你现在的表现可不像个有钱人。不过，一艘船，索具，钓具——”丹把它描述得仿佛是一艘捕鲸船一般——“要花不少钱呢。你觉得你爸会像送宠物一样给你？”

“根本不用担心。这是我至今唯一没向他提过的要求。”

“那你肯定是家里最费钱的孩子了。哈维，别那样划。速度是关键，因为大海不是静止不动的，海浪会——”

“啪！”的一声，船桨柄砸在了哈维的下巴上，哈维向后倒去。

“我正要说这个事。我也尝过这滋味，不过，我学划船时还不到8岁。”

哈维下巴疼得厉害，皱起眉头，重新坐好。

“爸爸常说，一遇上事就发火是没用的，处理不好是我们自己的问题。在这儿试试。曼纽尔会告诉我们水深的。”

“葡萄牙”水手划着船在一英里外随波浪起伏。当他看到丹倒拿着船桨时，他用左臂挥了三下。

“三十英寻，”说着，丹用钩子勾起一串蛤蜊，“超过那些兵蛋子。像我这样放诱饵，哈维，不要乱搅你的线轴。”

还没等哈维掌握放诱饵的诀窍，扔出铅锤，丹的绳子早已不见了踪影。平底船随意漂荡，直到他们找到合适的抛锚位置时，才停下来。

“我们来了！”丹大喊道。船舷边有一条大鱼在扑腾，溅起一阵水花淋湿了哈维的肩膀。“大家伙，哈维，大家伙！在你手底下！快！”

显然，“大家伙”并不是指晚餐号角。于是，哈维递过木棍。丹把鱼打晕，拉上船。然后，他又用被称为“击鱼棒”的短木棍扳开鱼钩。哈维感到一阵拖拽，赶紧使劲儿拉绳子。

“哎呀，这是海草莓果子！”他大喊，“看！”

鱼钩被一堆海草莓缠绕住了，一边是红色，另一边是白色——简直和陆地上的草莓一模一样，只不过没有叶子，管状的根茎黏糊糊的。

“别摸，扔掉！别——”

警告来得太晚。哈维早已从鱼钩上取下果子，满心欢喜地打量着。

“哎哟！”哈维大叫一声。他好像抓了一把荨麻一样，手指疼得直发抖。

“现在，你知道海草莓是什么东西了吧。除了鱼之外，光着手不能碰触任何东西，爸爸说的。把它们从船舷上甩下去，挂好诱饵，哈维。光看是没用的。这都要跟工钱挂钩。”

想到自己一个月十块五毛钱的工资，哈维就笑了。他想，要是妈妈看到儿子乘着一艘平底渔船漂荡在大海中央，她会怎么想呢？每次他去萨拉克湖，母亲总要痛苦万分。而且，哈维清楚地记得，他经常嘲笑妈妈的紧张和担心。突然，绳索从手里穿过，隔着厚厚的羊毛手套刺痛手掌，原本起保护作用的木圈也没用了。

“它是个大家伙，它有多大劲，你给多大余地就行，”丹叫嚷道，“我来帮你。”

“别，你别管，”哈维抓着绳子，“啪”的一声，“这是我的第一条鱼。是——是条鲸鱼吗？”

“也许是条大比目鱼。”丹低头盯着水里的大家伙，随时等待机会行动。一个白色的椭圆形东西穿行在绿色的大海里，闪闪发光。“我拿我

的工钱打赌，它肯定超一百磅了。你还是坚持要自己一个人把它拉上船吗？”

哈维的关节被磨破了，撞在船舷上，一直在流血；他用力拉动绳子，兴奋的脸呈现出绛紫色；汗如雨下的他，盯着急速跳动的鱼线，阳光照射下的海面泛起了晕圈，几乎刺得他无法睁开眼睛。两个男孩被大比目鱼纠缠得筋疲力尽，大鱼和他们又鏖战了20分钟。不过，大鱼最终还是被拉出水面，拖到了船上。

“这就是新手的好运气，”丹擦了擦额头的汗水，说，“这条鱼足足有一百磅。”

哈维望着这个颜色杂乱的庞然大物，内心充满难以言说的骄傲。他在岸上时，见过几次这样的大鱼被放在大理石板上，但他从没想过问问它们是怎么上岸的。现在，他明白了。这是用身上的每一个部位的疼痛换来的。

“要是爸爸也在的话，”丹一边拖拽，一边说，“他早就看得一清二楚了。这种鱼越来越小。你今天捕到的这条大比目鱼应该是这趟出海最大的了。昨天的捕捞——你注意到没？——都是大鱼，但是没有比目鱼，爸爸早就发现了。爸爸说大浅滩的所有东西都会成为预兆，而且他能分析出对错。爸爸看得比这鲸鱼洞还要深。”

正当他说话时，从“我们在此”号传来一声枪响，索具上挂起一只土豆篮子。

“瞧，我说什么来着？这是在召唤所有人。爸爸有话要说，要不然他不会在一天的这个时候叫人们停下来。收起鱼线，哈维，我们回去。”

丹和哈维迎着纵帆船划过去，正要穿过平静的海面时，半英里外传来了哀号声。他们赶紧循声望去，看到宾像一只巨大的水生蠕一样，忙活半天却还在原地打转。这个小个子男人使出全身力气又是前俯，又是后仰，但是每次尝试都失败了，他的平底船还是来回摇摆，让绳子紧紧勒住了。

“我们得去帮他，要不然他准会在那儿生根发芽的。”丹说。

“怎么回事？”哈维问。这是一个全新的世界，哈维无法在这里向前辈发号施令，还得毕恭毕敬地请教问题。大海广阔无垠，喜怒不惊。

“锚找不到了。宾经常把它们弄丢。这趟出海，他已经丢过两次了——在沙地里也丢——爸爸说下次他要是再弄丢的话，就会给宾一只应急锚。那样准会让宾伤透心的。”

“什么是应急锚？”哈维又问。他模模糊糊地预感，这个应急锚应该是一种海上的酷刑，类似故事书里描写的把水手绑在船底，在水里拖着走。

“其实，就是一块大石头，不是什么锚。看见平底船，你就能看见船头的应急锚。所有的捕鱼船都明白那是什么意思。他们肯定会狠狠地取笑他。宾可无法忍受这样的事情，就像一条狗绝不允许它的尾巴上挂着一只长柄勺。他是一个非常敏感的人。嗨，宾！又被困住了？别再白费力气了。站起来，把你的钓竿竖起来。”

“它动不了啦，”小个子男人气喘吁吁地回答，“它根本动弹不了，我已经试过无数次了。”

“这堆乱七八糟的东西是怎么回事？”丹指着没用的船桨和钓竿问，

它们横七竖八地交错在一起，这明显是没有经验的新手干的。

“哦，那些啊，”宾自豪地说，“那是西班牙起锚机。索尔特先生教过我怎么操作；可是用上它也不顶事儿。”

丹在船舷边弯下腰，偷偷捂着嘴笑起来。他用力猛拉了一两下，锚立刻被拉了起来。

“拉起来，宾，”他笑着说，“要不然又被卡住了。”

哈维和丹离开了，只剩宾瞪大两只蓝色的眼睛，可怜巴巴地盯着被杂草缠绕的锚，还不忘对他们表达深深的谢意。

“哦，我说，一想到这事儿，哈维，”当再也听不到宾的声音时，丹说，“宾不是脑子糊涂，他也并不是什么危险人物，但他的才能已经用光了。看到了吧？”

“真是这么回事，或者这又是你爸爸的判断呢！”哈维弯腰撑着船桨问道。他感到自己慢慢学会了如何轻松地操作船桨。

“爸爸这次的判断没有问题。宾肯定是个十足的怪人。不，确切地说并不是那种坏蛋，他更像一个没有伤害能力的傻瓜。就这么用（哈维，对了，就这样划），我告诉你，你应该明白。他以前是一个摩拉维亚⁴传教士。爸爸说，他的名字叫雅各布·鲍勒，他和他的老婆还有四个孩子住在宾夕法尼亚州外面的一个什么地方。嗯，宾带着他的家人去参加摩拉维亚集会——很像是信徒们的野营集会——他们在约翰斯敦⁵就待了一晚上。你听过约翰斯敦吗？”

哈维想了想，说：“是的，听过，但不知道为什么，我的脑子里总觉得它跟阿什塔比拉⁶差不多。”

“两个地方都发生过大事——这就是你搞混的原因，哈维。噢，一夜之间全都完蛋了，宾和他的家人在约翰斯敦的旅馆里都出了事。大坝决堤，淹没了约翰斯敦，那儿的房子都被冲走了，你推我撞，全部沉入水底。我见过照片，太可怕了。宾还没明白过来发生了什么事，就眼睁睁地看着家人被淹死了。从那以后，他的脑子就坏掉了。他怀疑约翰斯敦发生过什么事情，只不过可怜的他，这辈子也想不起那是怎么回事儿。他只会傻笑，或者瞎琢磨。他不知道自己是谁，也不知道自己打哪儿来，就这样他碰到了索尔特叔叔。当时，索尔特叔叔正好在阿勒格尼⁷。我妈这边的亲戚，有一半住在宾夕法尼亚。索尔特叔叔每个冬天都会去那儿转悠。索尔特叔叔好心收留了宾，而且他对整个事件很清楚。他把宾带到东部，在他的农场给他找了份工作。”

“怪不得呢。昨晚，渔船碰撞的时候，我听见他喊宾‘农民’，那你的索尔特叔叔也是农民吗？”

“农民！”丹大叫起来，“从这儿到哈特拉斯⁸的水都不够把他那靴子里的泥洗干净。他是个地地道道的农民。知道吗？哈维，我见过他提着水桶，一直忙到太阳下山。他把水龙头放在桶上，就像抓着奶牛的奶头一样，他真是十足的庄稼人。嗯，他和宾一起经营着农场。今年春天，索尔特叔叔把农场卖给了一个波士顿的傻瓜，那个人想盖一座避暑别墅，花了不少钱。嗯，两个疯狂的家伙勉强度日。直到有一天，宾的教会——摩拉维亚——发现他流浪和定居的踪迹。于是，他们写信给索尔特叔叔，不知道他们具体说了什么，但是索尔特叔叔挺生气，他大多数时候都不会发脾气。他宣布自己不会放弃宾，不会把他还给宾夕法尼亚或任何地方的摩拉维亚教会。然后，他找到了爸爸，领着宾，在两个捕鱼季前来的——还说，他和宾为了生活必须打鱼。我想，他认为摩拉维亚教会的人不会到大浅滩去寻找雅各布·鲍勒。爸爸很高兴地接受了他

们。索尔特叔叔已经30年没出海了。他不再去研究粪肥专利，在‘我们在此’号上占四分之一的份额。出海对宾起了很好的作用，爸爸也习惯带着他。爸爸说，总有一天，他会想起约翰斯敦的老婆和孩子。然后，很有可能，他也活不下去了。这是爸爸说的。你可千万别和宾提起约翰斯敦或者相关的事情，否则，索尔特叔叔会把你扔下船。”

“可怜的宾！”哈维低声说，“看他俩的样子，我从来没想过，索尔特叔叔会那么关心宾。”

“我喜欢宾，我们都喜欢。”丹说，“我们应该帮他，但是我想先给你说一下他的情况。”

此刻，他们离纵帆船很近了，其他船在他们后边的不远处。

“你们用不着把平底船拉回来，吃完晚饭也不晚。”迪斯科·特鲁普在甲板上说。“我们先去加工鱼。摆好桌子，孩子们！”

“比鲸鱼洞还深奥的人，”丹说道。他一边冲哈维眨眼，一边准备好工具。“看见那些船了吗？它们从早晨就跟上了。它们都在等爸爸，瞧见没，哈维？”

“在我看来，他们都一样。”的确，对于一个从没出过海的新水手来说，这些晃晃悠悠的纵帆船好像是从一个模子里刻出来的。

“那可不一样。黄色的那个，脏兮兮的，第一斜桅歪七扭八的，它是‘布拉格’号。船长叫尼克·布兰迪，大浅滩上最小气的一个人。等我们到了缅因礁时，我们就敢这么说他。远处是‘瞭望’号。船主是哲罗德两兄弟。这艘船来自哈维奇⁹，速度特别快，运气也不错。不过，爸爸可是在死亡之地里捕过鱼的人。还有那三艘，一起挨着的，分别是‘玛吉·

史密斯’号、‘玫瑰’号和‘伊迪斯·沃伦’号。都是刚出来。我猜，明天就能看见‘艾比·迪林’号了，爸爸，对吧？它们都是悄悄从奎因浅滩出发的。”

“明天见不到那么多船，丹尼。”每当特鲁普叫他儿子“丹尼”时，就意味着老头心情不错。“孩子们，这儿太拥挤了。”接着，他对陆续上船的船员们说，“让他们等着吧，放大饵，钓小鱼。”特鲁普看着鱼舱，里面的鱼不怎么游动，这是奇怪的一件事。除了哈维的大比目鱼，船上再也没有超过15磅的鱼了。

“我在等合适的天气，”特鲁普又说。

“那你得自己想办法了，特鲁普，我看不出有什么好天气。”说着，长腿杰克扫了一眼平静的海平面。

然而，半个小时后，他们正在加工鱼。大浅滩开始起雾了，就像他们说的“大雾遮住了每条鱼”。大雾四处弥漫，层层笼罩。苍茫的海面上雾气缭绕。船员们停下手中的工作，一声不吭。长腿杰克和索尔特叔叔把起锚机插进插口里，开始起锚。湿漉漉的麻绳在滚筒上绷紧时，起锚机发出咯吱咯吱的声音。最后，曼纽尔和特鲁普也开始帮忙了。锚杆升了起来，发出呜咽的声音，三角帆也涨起来了，特鲁普稳稳地操作着轮舵。他说：“把三角帆和前桅大帆都撑起来。”

“悄悄甩掉它们，”长腿杰克大喊。他迅速拉起三角帆，其他人咔嗒咔嗒地把前桅帆升了起来。“我们在此”号迎风而行时，前桅咯吱咯吱作响。纵帆船行驶在大浅滩里，翻起白色的巨浪。

“大雾后肯定会起风。”特鲁普说。

对于哈维来说，这种感觉妙不可言。最令他高兴的事莫过于特鲁普没有对他下任何命令，只有偶尔嘟囔几句，最后还会加一句“干得好，我的孩子！”做总结。

“以前没见过起锚吧？”汤姆·普拉特问。哈维望着潮湿的帆布，惊得目瞪口呆。

“没有，我们要去哪儿？”

“打鱼，停泊。等你在船上待上一个星期，你就会明白的。对你来说也许很新鲜，可我们永远不知道会发生什么事情。现在，跟着我——汤姆·普拉特——我从没想过——”

“一个月14美元总比被子弹打穿肚子强，”特鲁普一边驾驶一边说，“放松点，别紧张。”

“钞票更好，”好战的男人一边回答，一边把圆木桅杆系到三角帆上。“不过，我们给博福港外面的‘吉姆小姐’号装配起锚机时，却没想这些。梅肯堡向我们的船尾开火。真是一场灾难。迪斯科，那时你在干吗？”

“就在这儿，或者附近的什么地方。”特鲁普回答，“在深水区挣钱，躲避海盗。对不起，汤姆·普拉特，我这儿没有炮火。不过，我想我们到东边时，正好能赶上大风。”

船头传来持续不断的拍击声和震颤声，夹杂着重重的撞击声和海浪哗啦啦拍打船舷的声音。索具湿漉漉地滴着水，船员们懒洋洋地躺在船舱的下风处——只有索尔特叔叔僵直地坐在主舱口处，抚摸着被蜇伤的双手。

“我想，那艘船会跟着的。”特鲁普抬起眼皮看了一眼他的兄弟。

“我猜它一点儿用都没了，干吗还浪费这些帆布？”农夫水手回答。

特鲁普手中的轮舵在转动，动作平稳得几乎察觉不到。几秒后，一个大浪呼啸着向纵帆船斜劈过来，重重地打在索尔特叔叔的肩膀上，把他从头到脚淋了个透。索尔特叔叔湿漉漉地站起来，刚要向前走，又一个大浪砸过来。

“看，爸爸在甲板上追着他到处跑，”丹说，“索尔特叔叔以为他的四分之一份额能抵得上船帆。这两次出海，我爸都这样。嗨！这样就能看出他是什么出身了。”索尔特叔叔刚藏在前桅那儿，一个海浪就把他拍倒了。特鲁普面无表情，脸上就像旋转的轮舵一样有条不紊。

“索尔特，要是下面有支索帆的话，划起来就容易多了。”特鲁普说道，他好像什么都没看见一样。

“放好你那破玩意儿。”飞溅的水花中传来一个咆哮的声音：“不管发生什么事儿，只要不打扰到我就行。宾，你直接下去，拿自己的咖啡。你应该更清楚，在这样的天气里，别在甲板上到处晃悠。”

“这会儿，他们肯定在大口喝着咖啡，下着跳棋，然后一直等到母牛回家。”丹说道。索尔特叔叔把宾推到前面的船舱里。“我看咱们得这么过一段时间了。在大浅滩不打鱼，会闲得发疯的。”

“很高兴你能这么说，丹尼，”长腿杰克大声说。他一直在琢磨着找乐子。“我已经忘得一干二净了，我们有一位戴着油布帽的乘客啊。不打鱼也不能闲着什么都不干。汤姆·普拉特，叫他过来，我们来教他。”

“这次可不是我的主意，”丹咧嘴笑着说，“你得自己一个人去。我

可是爸爸用绳头教会的。”

长腿杰克追着他的猎物，足足说教了有一个小时。“不管是瞎子，醉鬼，还是迷糊的人，每个人都应该了解大海。”这艘70吨的纵帆船设备并不齐全，只有一支树桩一样的前桅，可长腿杰克却有一种表达的天赋。当他想把哈维的注意力吸引到斜桅顶的吊索上时，他就会用胳膊的关节卡住男孩的脖子，使他足足盯了半分钟。为了强调船头和船尾的区别，他让哈维亲身体验了一段浮栅栏。在绳头的作用下，每条绳索上的铅锤也都深深刻在了哈维的脑海里。

如果整个甲板都空空荡荡的，海上的课程也就没那么难了。只不过这儿什么都能放，就是不能站人。甲板前面是挂着铁链和麻绳的起锚机和钓具，想跨过去都不容易。前甲板上是烟囱，舱口处摆着盛放鱼内脏的桶，后面的主桅杆占了大部分位置，水泵和敷料桶几乎没地方放。平底船都被拴在后甲板区带环的螺栓上，棚、缸、零散的东西散布其间。最后，还有支架上那根60英尺高的吊杆，纵向劈下来，每次经过时都要低头弯腰。

当然，汤姆·普拉特忙得不可开交，但还是不忘绘声绘色地描述“旧俄亥俄”号的船帆和桅杆。

“别管他说什么，听我的，太天真了。汤姆·普拉特，这个讨厌的家伙，这不是‘旧俄亥俄’号。你把孩子都搞晕了。”

“他这辈子算完了，翻来覆去地听这些，”汤姆·普拉特恳求道，“给他个机会了解一些基本原则，哈维，航海是一门艺术，要是我们在前甲板上，我可以给你展示——”

“我知道，你说过好多遍了。闭嘴，汤姆·普拉特！现在，照我说的

去做。收起前帆，哈维，抓紧时间回答问题。”

“把它拉起来。”哈维指着下风处说。

“拉什么？北大西洋？”

“不是，是帆杆。然后，把你刚才给我看的那条绳子拉回——”

“不行。”汤姆·普拉特突然插嘴道。

“安静点！他正学着呢，而且还没记清楚名字。继续，哈维。”

“嗯，这是收帆索。我把钓具钩在上面，然后放下——”

“把帆降低，孩子！降低！”出于职业习惯，汤姆·普拉特生气了。

“降低帆喉，拉起吊索。”哈维继续说道。这些名词都堆积在他的脑海里了。

“把你的手放在上面。”长腿杰克说。

哈维照做了。“放低，直到绳环——放松——天哪——不，那是索圈——直到勾住索圈。然后，我会按照你所说的把它们拴在一起，吊到最高处，然后再降低帆喉。”

“你忘记拉耳索了，不过，只要有时间，有人帮你，你肯定能学会。船上的每条绳子都是有用的，要不然早被扔下去了。听明白了吗？我可是在教你怎么赚钱呢，你这个皮包骨头的小保管员。等你学会了，就能自己划船从波士顿去古巴了，然后告诉他们长腿杰克是怎么教你的。现在，我再教你认绳索，拿起那些绳子，照我说的给我指出来。”

他又开始讲了，疲惫不堪的哈维慢慢走向他说的那些绳索。一条绳子抽在哈维的肋骨上，疼得他差点没喘过气来。

“等你有了自己的船，”汤姆·普拉特严肃地看着他说，“你可以自己驾驶。到时候，把所有学到的都用上。再来一次——这样才能学会！”

紧张的训练让哈维满脸通红，最后的教训令他浑身发烫。他是个聪明的孩子。爸爸非常聪明，妈妈异常敏感，原本就很倔强，从小的宠溺更让他变成一个顽固分子。他望着其他人，发现就连丹都没有笑。显然，他们已经司空见惯了。于是，虽然很疼，但他也只能咽了一大口口水，喘了口气，咧嘴笑了笑。遗传自母亲的聪明使得他非常清楚，船上的每个人，也许除了宾以外，都不会多说一句。这样的方法能让他学到很多。长腿杰克说出六根绳索的名字，哈维站在甲板上跑来跑去，像退潮时的鳗鱼一样活跃，一只眼睛还得提防汤姆·普拉特手里的绳头。

“很棒，做得不错，”曼纽尔说，“晚饭后，我给你看一个我做的小纵帆船模型，上面挂满了绳索。那样，我们就能再学习了。”

“对于一个乘客来说，你的表现是一流的。”丹说，“爸爸说在你被淹死前，会教你一些海上技能。爸爸真大方，下次咱俩一起值班时，我再教你。”

“浪更高了！”特鲁普气冲冲地喊。从船舷上放眼望去，大雾正在升腾。起重杆慢慢升起，10英尺外什么都看不到。深沉空洞的海浪依旧在低吟，一浪接一浪地拍打着船舷。

“现在，我来教你一些长腿杰克不会的。”汤姆·普拉特大声说。他从船尾的储物柜里取出一把破旧的深海铅锤。铅锤的一端是空的，他从羊油托盘里取了些羊油抹在洞口，继续说：“我教你怎么放这只蓝色的

鸽子。呼!”

特鲁普检查了航线，修正了轮舵方向。曼纽尔在哈维的帮助下（哈维现在非常自豪）放下吊杆上的三角帆。汤姆·普拉特一圈一圈地甩着铅锤，发出低沉的嗡嗡声。

“伙计，快点，”长腿杰克不耐烦地说，“大雾天，我们连25英尺都走不了。什么办法都不管用。”

“戈尔韦人，别嫉妒。”说着，他一松手，铅锤扑通一声掉进远处的大海里，纵帆船缓缓驶向前方。

“不过，测水深可是个技术活哦，”丹说，“要是在海上待一个星期，你只能靠铅锤了。你觉得有多深，爸爸？”

特鲁普的脸色轻松自若。他的技术和名气在整个捕鱼船队里早已被悄然认可。据说，蒙着眼睛他都能找到大浅滩，他简直被奉为大师。“60英尺，可能是——要是让我判断的话，”他瞥了一眼房间里的小指南针，说道。

“60。”汤姆·普拉特收起一堆湿透了的绳子。

纵帆船再次加速。“扔铅锤！”15分钟后，特鲁普说。

“多少？”丹骄傲地看着哈维，低声问道。哈维完全沉浸在自己的表现里，丝毫没有注意到丹的问话。

“50，”特鲁普说，“我猜，咱们离原来的地方有五六十英尺远，快到裂口处了。”

“50！”汤姆·普拉特大声回答。大雾里，人们几乎看不到他，“再有一码，她就到了——就像炮弹打开梅肯堡的缺口一样。”

“哈维，放饵。”丹在水下摸着绳子。

纵帆船在浓雾中似乎迷失了方向，前帆已经涨满。船上的其他人等在一旁，看着两个孩子钓鱼。

“嚯！”丹把鱼线挂在斑驳的扶手栏杆上。“可是，爸爸到底是怎么知道的？哈维，过来帮忙。这是个大家伙。上钩啦。”说着，他俩一起使劲，拉起一条瞪大眼睛的鳕鱼，大约有20磅重。鱼钩正好插进了它的胃里。

“怎么，它的身上全是小螃蟹。”哈维翻过鱼身，大叫道。

“凭巨锚起誓，它早就长满虱子了。”长腿杰克说，“特鲁普，不忙的话看看船底的龙骨。”

水花拍打着锚，所有人都等在船舷边，各自站好，抛出鱼线准备钓鱼。

“这鱼能吃吗？”哈维气喘吁吁地问。他又拉起一条覆盖了螃蟹的鳕鱼。

“当然！长满虱子，说明它们是聚在一起的，它们咬住鱼钩的时候太饿了。不要在意如何放饵。就算光秃秃的鱼钩，它们也会迫不及待。”

“嗨，太好啦！”哈维大叫起来。鳕鱼喘着粗气，拼命拍打——就像丹曾经说过的那样，几乎全都上钩了。“我们为什么不能在船上钓鱼，

非得在平底船上钓呢？”

“可以，但是等我们开始加工鱼的时候就不行了。那样，鱼头和内脏会把鱼群吓得跑到芬迪湾¹⁰。在船上钓鱼并不先进，除非你能像爸爸一样懂那么多。我估计今晚的排钩不够用。背疼也比在平底船上捕鱼要强，对吧？”

这真是一份劳累至极的工作。因为在平底船上，直到拉上的最后一刻，海水会一直托着沉重的鳕鱼。可以这么说，你和鱼是并排着的。但是，纵帆船的干舷有几英尺高，所以要在船舷处俯下身，使出更大的力气才可以把鱼拉起来。不过，俯身会让肚子抽筋。这项工作持续时间较长，被认为既野蛮又激烈。等到鱼不再咬钩时，船上就已经堆满了等待加工的鱼。

“宾和索尔特去哪了？”哈维问。他拍了拍油布雨衣上的淤泥，学着其他人的样子把鱼线盘起来。

“在边喝咖啡边看。”

制转杆上挂着一盏油灯，黄色的火苗跳动着。桌子已经摆好，两个男人坐在那里，二人中间放着一张棋盘，他们只顾下棋，丝毫不关心外面的鱼群或是天气如何。宾每走一步，都要怒吼几句。

“你怎么搞的？”索尔特叔叔斥责的时候，哈维正一只手拉着梯子顶端的皮圈，朝厨师大喊。

“有好多长满虱子的大鱼——一堆一堆的。”哈维学着长腿杰克的样子问，“游戏进展得怎么样？”

小个子宾垂头丧气的。“他全下错了，”索尔特叔叔愤愤地说，“宾

根本不听。”

“在下跳棋，是吗？”丹问道。哈维提着锡桶，跌跌撞撞地走过来，里面装满了热气腾腾的咖啡。“今晚不用咱们打扫了。爸爸很公正，该轮到他们了。”

“两个小鬼。他们打扫，你俩挂饵。”特鲁普一边说，一边随意转动轮舵。

“哼！我想，那我宁愿去打扫。爸爸。”

“用不着怀疑。不过，不用你俩打扫。干活！干活！你俩放饵，宾负责扔。”

“臭小子，为什么不告诉我们你们要钓鱼？”索尔特叔叔在桌子前忙个不停，“丹，刀子太钝了。”

“如果放锚链都惊动不了你的话，我估计你真得雇个助手了。”黄昏里的丹穿梭在拖网和鱼桶间，“噢，哈维，你难道不想下来帮忙吗？”

“放饵，”特鲁普说，“我想，照这样下去，鱼鹰捕的鱼都没我们多。”

他的意思是，等鳕鱼被清理干净后，孩子们会选一些内脏当诱饵——比起光着手在鱼饵桶里乱摸已经强多了。桶里装满缠绕整齐的鱼线，上面每隔几英尺就挂着一个大鱼钩；检查每一个鱼钩上都挂好了鱼饵，保证从平底船上干脆利落地放下诱饵，这可是细致活儿。丹看都不用看就能放饵，哈维却把手指挂在了倒钩上，觉得自己好倒霉。鱼钩在丹的指间穿梭，像在一个技艺娴熟的女仆手中一样。“我还没走利索的时候，就已经在岸上帮忙拖网了。”他说，“不过，这活儿很费事。哦，

爸爸！”丹冲着舱口大喊，特鲁普和汤姆·普拉特正在给鱼抹盐。“你觉得我们大概需要几盘鱼线？”

“3盘左右。快点！”

“每个桶里大约有300英寻长的鱼线，”丹解释说，“今晚够忙活了。哎哟！割破了。”他咬着手指说，“我告诉你，哈维，在格洛斯特，拖网渔船花再多的钱都雇不到我。它是很先进，但也是最麻烦的。”

“如果这不是拖网渔船，我不知道你说的是什么。”哈维闷闷不乐地回答，“我的指头都割破了。”

“呸！这正是爸爸做的一些该死的实验。他从不用拖网捕鱼，除非必须做不可。爸爸心里清楚，所以他总是用诱饵捕鱼。鱼线被拽得下垂时，说明鱼上钩了，这样才能拉起来，要不然连鱼鳍都见不着。”

宾和索尔特叔叔遵照特鲁普的命令去清理渔船，不过孩子们也并不轻松。汤姆·普拉特和长腿杰克一直打着灯笼在平底船里待命，鱼桶一准备好，他们就立刻抓起来装满，放一些彩色的小浮标，把小船放进哈维认为是极其狂暴的大海里。“他们会被淹死的，我说，平底船满得像一节货运车厢了。”他大喊道。

“我们会回来的，”长腿杰克说，“除非你们不想让我俩回来。如果鱼线缠住了，我们会揍你俩的。”

平底船随着波峰涌起，无法躲开纵帆船，眼看着要撞上去的时候，却顺着波峰滑下来，被吞没在湿漉漉的暮色中。

“抓紧，一直摇铃，别停。”丹说着，从起锚机后面取出一根系着铃铛的绳子，递给哈维。

哈维拼命地摇铃，因为他觉得自己手里握着两条命。船舱里的特鲁普正在潦草地记录着自己的航海日志，看起来并不凶恶。晚餐时，他甚至还朝忧心忡忡的哈维干巴巴地笑了。

“天气不好，”丹说，“喂，你和我把排钩放下来！他们刚走没多远，不会被锚链缠住。根本不需要铃铛。”

“叮当！叮当！叮当！”哈维还在摇铃，夹杂着咚咚声，又持续了半个小时。旁边传来吼叫声和碰撞声。曼纽尔和丹一起去拉吊平底船的滑车。长腿杰克和汤姆·普拉特一起登上甲板，仿佛身上被半个大西洋浸透了一样。平底船咯噔咯噔地跟在他们后边，被吊了起来。

“鱼线没缠住，”汤姆·普拉特身上的海水还在往下滴，说，“丹尼，下次还是你来做。”

“有你们陪着吃晚餐真高兴。”长腿杰克像大象一样跳着，把靴子里的水倒出来，用油乎乎的手摸了摸哈维的脸。“第二轮吃饭时，能有我们陪着是多么荣幸的事啊。”接着，四个人都去吃晚饭了。哈维把鲜鱼汤喝了个底朝天，煎饼也吃了个精光。曼纽尔从储物柜里取出一艘精巧的两英尺高的模型——“露西·福尔摩斯”号。这是他的第一艘船，不过，还没来得及给哈维展示绳索，哈维早已呼呼大睡。宾把哈维推到床铺上时，哈维甚至连手指都没动一下。

“这真是一件令人难过的事情——非常难过。”宾望着男孩的脸庞说，“他的爸妈都以为他死了，丢了一个孩子——丢了一个男孩！”

“别提这事儿，宾。”丹说，“到后面去，和索尔特叔叔把那盘棋下完。告诉爸爸，要是他不介意的话，我替哈维值班。他累垮了。”

“真是个好孩子，”曼纽尔匆匆脱下靴子，消失在黑乎乎的下铺。“他能成为一个男子汉的，丹尼。我不觉得他像你爸爸说的那样疯狂。额，什么？”

丹咯咯地笑了，不过笑声很快在鼾声中结束了。

船舱外，夜色深沉。起风了，年长的人们还在守夜。船舱里，钟表的滴答声清脆而响亮。纵帆船懒洋洋地停泊在海上，海水拍打着船舷。烟囱滋滋地冒着烟，火花毕毕剥剥作响。两个孩子还在睡觉，特鲁普、长腿杰克、汤姆·普拉特和索尔特叔叔轮流值班，盯着轮舵，拖着疲惫的步子到前面去看锚，为避免磨损会放松一点缆绳，每次轮班他们都要瞥一眼昏暗的停泊灯是否还亮着。

[3](#) 查塔姆群岛，位于南纬43°53′，西经176°31′，总面积约966平方公里，属于新西兰。

[4](#) 摩拉维亚教，基督教新教的一个教派。

[5](#) 约翰斯敦，位于宾夕法尼亚州，1889年5月31日，约翰斯敦12英里外的水坝垮塌，造成2209人死亡，被称为最大的平民遇难事件。

[6](#) 阿什塔比拉，美国俄亥俄州东北部的工业城市和湖港，1876年12月29日，该市的一座铁路桥因大雪坍塌，造成85人死亡。

[7](#) 阿勒格尼，宾夕法尼亚的一个港口城市。

[8](#) 哈特拉斯，位于美国北卡罗来纳州的最东部。

[9](#) 哈维奇，位于马萨诸塞州。

[10](#) 芬迪湾，位于加拿大新斯科舍省和新伯伦瑞克省之间，呈东北-西南走向。以其迅速涨落的潮汐闻名于世。

第四章 Chapter Four

哈维醒来时，发现第一分队的人们在吃早饭，“吱呀”一声门开了，纵帆船的每一平方英尺都在吟唱自己的曲调。黑人厨子站在小厨房的后面，魁梧的身影随着壁炉的火光一起摇曳。镂空木板上的坛坛罐罐随着纵帆船的起伏发出丁零当啷的声音。船头一直朝前，奋力奔向远方，随波涛起伏，在海里震颤。接着，她又像一只镰钩一样干脆利落地俯冲向海面。他听到船头劈裂浪花时发出的咔嚓声，飞溅的水花在落到甲板上之前停顿了一下，像铅弹一样倾泻而下。锚链孔里的缆绳发出混乱的噪音，起锚机沉闷而尖锐地吼叫着，经过一系列的转向、抛起、反冲，“我们在此”号积蓄力量，继续前进。

“现在，要是在岸上，”长腿杰克说，“你那些乱七八糟的活儿，不管什么样的天气，都必须干完。在这儿，我们摆脱了船队，再也没有那么多麻烦事——真是天助我也。晚安，大伙儿。”他像一条蛇一样从桌子旁溜到床上，开始抽起烟来。汤姆·普拉特也跟着他照做了；索尔特叔叔和宾摸索着爬上楼梯去站岗，厨子开始为第二分队准备晚饭。

第二分队的人从床上爬起来，摇摇摆摆地打着哈欠，其他人早已爬上了床铺。他们吃得再也吃不下一口饭后，曼纽尔往烟斗里装了些劣质烟草，两腿叉开坐在制转杆和床铺间，双脚斜搁在桌子上，一边抽烟，一边温和而慵懒地微笑着。丹全身舒展，躺在床上，摆弄着一架花哨的、配有镀金塞子的手风琴。伴随“我们在此”号的前进，曲调时而悠扬时而起伏。厨子的肩膀靠着储物柜，里面放有煎饼（丹喜欢煎饼）和削好的土豆。他盯着壁炉，以防水会顺着管道溢出来。整个房间到处弥漫

着饭味和浓烟。

哈维正在思考，纳闷自己为什么没有晕得死去活来。然后，他再次爬上床，那是最舒服最安全的地方。丹继续演奏“我可不想去你的地盘儿”，他尽量保持着音准，不受颠簸的影响。

“这要持续多久？”哈维问曼纽尔。

“等到大海平静下来，我们就能划船去看排钩了。也许是今晚，也许还得等两天。你不喜欢吗？嗯，什么？”

“我本应该一星期前就大病一场的，不过现在也并没觉得有多难受。”

“那是因为我们让你成了渔民，就这几天。我要是你的话，等我到了格洛斯特，要为我的好运供上两三支大蜡烛。”

“给谁？”

“当然是——山上教堂里的圣母啊。她一直对我们渔民很好，所以，我们葡萄牙渔民很少被淹死。”

“你是罗马天主教徒，然后呢？”

“我是马德拉群岛11的。我不是波多黎各12人。那我能说自己是浸信会13教友吗？额，什么？我去格洛斯特，就经常送蜡烛——两根，三根，要么更多。善良的圣母从来没有忘记我，曼纽尔。”

“我不那么认为，”汤姆·普拉特在床铺上插嘴道。他划了一根火柴点烟，火光照亮了他有伤疤的脸。“大海就是大海，这是合乎情理的。

这件事情上，你可以自己决定，选蜡烛或者油灯都可以。”

“有想法一致的朋友，”长腿杰克说，“那再好不过了。我和曼纽尔的思路一样。10年前，我是一艘波士顿商船的船员。刮着东北风，我们离开米诺特暗礁。不过，刚开始就遇上了重重的大浪，迎面压下来。掌舵的老头喝得醉醺醺的，下巴靠着舵柄在打颤。我对自己说：‘要是我能再次回到码头，我就要给那些圣徒展示救我性命的那艘船。’现在，我就在这儿，正如你亲眼看到的，破旧的‘凯思林’号船的模型，花了我一个月的时间，我把它献给了牧师，他把模型悬挂在圣坛上。从艺术角度来看，亲手做个模型送过去，比送蜡烛有意义多了。你可以从店里买蜡烛，可是一个模型能让善良的圣徒们明白，你是花了心思的，而且满心感激。”

“你相信吗，爱尔兰人？”汤姆·普拉特撑着胳膊肘转过身来。

“俄亥俄人，我要是不相信的话又能怎样？”

“哇哦，伊诺克·福勒做了一个‘旧俄亥俄’号的船模，现在放在卡朗博物馆，也是一个非常美丽的模型，不过，我想伊诺克绝不会奉献给教会；我觉得——”

长达一个小时的讨论全都围绕渔夫们的喜好展开。虽然经过了一轮一轮的争吵，但最终谁都没能证明什么。幸亏丹开始演奏欢快的乐曲，才结束了争论：

“跳跃的马鲛鱼，条纹的脊背

迎风的船帆

这是一个大风天——”

长腿杰克也跟着唱了起来：

“大风天

起风了，一起手挽手！”

丹坐在床上，慎重地看了汤姆·普拉特一眼，抱着手风琴继续唱：

“鳕鱼上下跳跃

呆头呆脑地跳上主链条，蹿上铅锤

大风天”

汤姆·普拉特好像在找什么东西。丹俯身蹲下，歌声却更响亮了：

“比目鱼游到了海底

笨蛋！笨蛋！注意你在哪里歌唱！”

汤姆·普拉特的大橡胶靴，盘旋着飞过前甲板，撞到了丹抬起的胳膊。大人和孩子之间开战了，因为当他举起铅锤时，他发现单调的口哨声会让别人不高兴。

“我想去拿你的宝贝，”丹小心翼翼地把靴子还给汤姆，说，“要是你不喜欢我的音乐，拿出你的小提琴。我可不打算在这儿躺一整天，听你和长腿杰克因为蜡烛吵个不停。汤姆·普拉特，你来拉小提琴，我来教哈维！”

汤姆·普拉特弯下腰，从储物箱里取出一把白色的旧小提琴。曼纽

尔两眼放光，从制转杆后面拿出一件带弦的小乐器，有点像吉他，他说这是马谢特琴。

“开一场音乐会吧，”长腿杰克在烟雾缭绕中开怀大笑，“正儿八经的波士顿音乐会。”

舱门打开了，水花扑面而来。迪斯科身穿黄色的油布雨衣，走了下来。

“你来得正是时候，迪斯科。外面什么情况？”

“就那样！”随着“我们在此”号的颠簸起伏，他一屁股坐在了储物箱上。

“我们正在唱歌，消化消化早饭。当然，你来领唱，迪斯科。”长腿杰克说。

“我会唱的就那两首老歌，你们都听过了。”

没等他说完，汤姆·普拉特的忧伤曲调早已打断了他的托辞。这个声音好像海风发出的悲吟，又像桅杆发出的咯吱咯吱声。迪斯科看着头顶上方的横梁，开始哼唱一首古老的小曲，汤姆·普拉特卖力地围着迪斯科表演，以便让曲调和歌词更贴切些：

“吱吱呀呀的邮轮——大名鼎鼎的邮轮，

从纽约带来的问候，她的名字叫无敌战舰

也许你会说快船有很多——燕尾号和锚球号

然而，无敌战舰可以击败它们。”

“此刻，无敌战舰停靠在默西河，

拖船将她送入大海；很快，你会知道水有多深

（合唱）

她是利物浦的邮轮——哦，上帝，放行吧！”

曲子共有二十节，因为他在无敌战舰上工作过，从利物浦到纽约的每一英里都没有错过。他深情地演唱着，仿佛真的置身于那艘战舰的甲板之上。在他的身旁，手风琴发出有力的节奏，小提琴也在吱吱呀呀地响。汤姆·普拉特跟着唱了一首《粗犷坚强的麦克·吉恩为舰船领航》。接着，他们又喊了哈维。哈维深感荣幸，很乐意参与进来，只不过他只记得《艾尔森船长的航行》的只言片语，那是他在阿迪朗达克的营地学校学到的。似乎这首歌正适合此情此景，可是没等他说出歌曲名称，迪斯科“”的一声跺了一下脚，大叫：“小鬼，别唱了。这是错误的判断——也是最糟糕的一种，因为它很刺耳。”

“我本应该提前警告你的，”丹说，“这首歌让爸爸很恼火。”

“怎么回事？”哈维问道。他既觉得惊讶，又感到有点生气。

“你要说的，”迪斯科说，“从头到尾都是错的，都怪惠特尔。我没有特殊的义务去纠正每个马布尔海德人，但艾尔森没错。我爸一遍一遍地给我讲那个故事，我知道。”

“说过一百次啦。”长腿杰克低声插嘴道。

“本·艾尔森是‘贝蒂’号的船长，是个年轻人，刚从大浅滩回家——那是在1812年战争之前，但正义不灭。他们发现了波特兰的‘活跃’号，

当地的吉布恩是船长。他们发现船在离开科德角的灯塔。当时，风刮得非常大，他们想尽可能快地把‘贝蒂’号驶回港口。嗯，艾尔森说在那样的情况下冒险救一艘船太不理智了，船上的人不听他的。他又建议待在‘活跃’号附近等大海平静一些时再行动，可他们还是不听。这样的天气里，不管有没有灯塔，他们绝不能绕海角转悠。就这样，他们竖起支索帆出发了，当然少不了带着艾尔森。马布尔海德的人们对他不敢冒险非常生气，因为第二天大海平静了（他们压根儿没想到这一点），一个特鲁罗14人带走了‘活跃’号上的一些人。他们去了马布尔海德，添油加醋地说了这件事情。他们说艾尔森如何给镇上丢了脸，一直说个不停，艾尔森的手下也很害怕，看到民众们都在反对。于是，他们背叛了艾尔森，咒骂他是整个事件的罪魁祸首。女人们没有煽风点火，也没有恶语中伤——马布尔海德的女人们不会那么做——只是一群男人和男孩把他放在一艘旧平底船里，拖着绕整个镇上转，直到船底磨破。艾尔森告诉他们，总有一天他们会为这件事情后悔。哦，后来真相大白了，就像往常一样，但对于一个清白的人来说已经晚了，一点用都没有。惠特尔一路上听了些零零散散的假故事，在艾尔森死后，继续给他造谣抹黑。这是惠特尔一时疏忽，但是很不公平。丹从学校带回来这些零散的故事后，我狠狠地揍了他一顿。当然，你不知道，不怪你，但是我要告诉你真相。以后，永远记住。本·艾尔森不是惠特尔编造的那类人。我爸非常了解他，知道事情的前因后果。小鬼，小心点，别仓促下结论。下一首！”

哈维从来没有听过迪斯科说这么多话，而且两颊发红，情绪激动。不过，幸亏丹及时地解释说，孩子们只能学到学校里教的东西，生命短暂，没时间在海边验证每一个谎言。

接着，曼纽尔的小马谢特琴发出了刺耳的声音，显得很和谐，他

用葡萄牙语唱起了《天真的妮娜》。最后，他的大手一挥，猛地一拨琴弦，结束了演奏。然后，迪斯科开始他的第二首歌曲，这是一首嘎吱嘎吱的老掉牙的曲子，所有人汇成一首大合唱。其中一节唱道：

“此刻，四月离去，冰雪消融

走出新贝德福德，立刻撒网

不错，走出新贝德福德，立刻打扫

我们是捕鲸人，从没见过麦浪滚滚”

这时，只剩小提琴还在演奏，过了一会儿，歌声又响起来了：

“麦浪滚滚，我的挚爱小花正在绽放

麦浪滚滚，我们要出海

麦浪滚滚，我离开时，你正播种

当我回来时，你会成为一块面包”

歌声差点让哈维哭了出来，尽管他不清楚其中的原因。然而，当厨子放下土豆，伸出手开始演奏小提琴时，情形令人更加难过。厨子仍然斜靠着舱门，曲子好像在讲述很糟糕的事情，却是随时可能发生的。过了一会儿，他开始演唱，用的不知道是一种什么语言。他的下巴紧挨小提琴的上端，在油灯的照射下，他那白色的眼珠闪闪发光。哈维从床上起身，这样可以听得更真切些。在船骨的嘎吱声和浪花的拍打声中，音乐或温柔或哀吟，好像浓雾里行驶的大船一样迷茫，最后化为一阵哀怨。

“天哪，上帝！勾起不好的回忆了，”丹说，“到底是什么？”

“芬尼安坎霍尔之歌，”厨子说，“讲的是他去挪威的事。”他的英语虽然不流利，但很清楚，好像从留声机里发出来的。

“我敢肯定，我去过挪威，但我没听过这样闹心的噪音。不过，听起来好像是首老歌。”长腿杰克叹着气说。

“咱们别想其他的事了。”丹说，于是，用手风琴演奏了一首悦耳的歌曲，结束了音乐会：

“自从出海，已经26个星期

15万公斤

15万公斤

10万公斤

在班奎罗和大浅滩之间！”

“停下来！”汤姆·普拉特大吼道，“你难道不想走了吗？丹，那肯定是约拿，除非我们把盐都抹完了你再唱。”

“不，不是。对吧，爸爸？除非你唱完最后一节，要不然就没事儿。关于约拿，我可用不着你教我！”

“什么？”哈维问，“约拿是什么？”

“约拿是指任何让我们倒霉的东西。有时候可以是人——有时候是个男孩——或者是一只桶。我知道一把约拿匕首，两次出海都栽在它手

里了，”汤姆·普拉特说，“约拿有各种各样的。吉姆·博克尔就是个约拿，直到他在乔治斯淹死为止。我从没和吉姆·博克尔一起出海，我饿死也不会和他一起。‘以斯拉洪水’号有艘绿色的平底船，也是个约拿，最糟糕的约拿。有4个人淹死了，深夜里常常在海湾闪着红光。”

“你相信吗？”哈维问，他想起汤姆·普拉特曾经讲过的蜡烛和模型，“我们不是应该给什么就收下什么吗？”

床铺那边传来了咕哝声，表达了不同的意见。“下了船，是。但在船上，什么事情都可能发生，”迪斯科说，“小鬼，难不成你也想做约拿吗？”

“哦，哈维可不是约拿。从我们捞上他那天开始，”丹插嘴道，“我们都是收获满满的。”

厨子抬起头突然笑了——干巴巴地笑了，很奇怪。他真是一个让人非常尴尬的黑人。

“讨厌！”长腿杰克说，“下次别这样，大厨，我们可不习惯你这么笑。”

“怎么了？”丹问，“难道他不是我们的幸运神吗？我们遇到他以后，难道没有捕捞得更多吗？”

“哦，是的，”厨子说，“我知道，不过捕捞还没结束呢。”

“他不会给我们造成任何伤害的，”丹着急地说，“你想暗示什么，想说什么？他没有任何问题。”

“不会伤害我们。不会。但是，总有一天，他会成为你的主人，丹

尼。”

“完了吗？”丹平静地说，“他不会——绝对不会。”

“主人！”厨子指着哈维说，然后又指着丹，“仆人！”

“真新鲜。什么时候？”丹笑着问。

“过几年，我会见证的。主人和仆人——仆人和主人。”

“你是怎么想出来的？”汤姆·普拉特问。

“在我的脑子里，我能看见。”

“为什么？”其他人也立刻问。

“我不知道为什么，但我知道会是这样。”厨子低下头，继续削土豆。人们从他嘴里再也问不出一句话来。

“好啦，”丹说，“等哈维成为我的主人前，还会发生好多事情呢。不过，我还是挺高兴的，大厨没有把哈维定为约拿。现在，从索尔特叔叔的特殊运气来看，我怀疑他也许是整个船队里最像约拿的人了。真不知道它会不会像天花一样传播。他应该在‘凯莉·匹特曼’号上。那条船自己就是约拿，肯定是——船员和索具都无法阻止它在海上偏航。天哪，上帝！就算是在风平浪静的天气里，它都会散架。”

“不管怎样，我们现在总算摆脱捕鱼船队了，”迪斯科说，“包括‘凯莉·匹特曼’在内的所有船。”这时，甲板上传来一阵敲击声。

“索尔特叔叔的运气又来了。”迪斯科离开时，丹说道。

“风吹散大雾了。”迪斯科大声叫道。整个船头弥散着新鲜空气。大雾散去，但是身后阴沉的大海仍然在翻滚着巨浪。“我们在此”号从浪头上滑下来，冲进悠长的水波大道里，如果它能保持平静，那这里真是个避风港一样温暖的地方。然而，海浪丝毫没有停歇或心生慈悲，反而继续把纵帆船向上猛抛，直达峰顶。纵帆船曲曲折折地沿着波浪滑下来时，海风呼啸着穿过索具。远处的海面溅起一堆泡沫，渐渐地其他海域也如同接到信号一样溅起泡沫来。哈维放眼望去，到处灰蒙蒙的。四五只海燕怯懦地盘旋着，飞过船首时发出尖利的叫声。一阵阵暴风雨漫无目的地四处飘荡，一次次地冲下来，又慢慢散开。

“我好像看见刚刚那边有什么东西一闪而过。”索尔特叔叔指着东北方向说道。

“不会是船队里的任何一条船。”迪斯科抬起眼皮瞧了瞧，一只手搭在舷门上。坚固的船首直直地插入波谷。“海浪就像抹油一样加速了，丹尼，你不想跳到高处，看看我们是怎么放排钩浮标的吗？”

丹穿着大靴子，与其说是爬上索具，不如说是小跑着（这一点让哈维嫉妒不已）攀上桅顶的横杆，四处张望，终于在一英里外的波峰上看到了小小的黑色浮标旗。

“一切正常，”他大喊，“出发喽！一直朝北，像烟雾一样过来了！她也是一艘纵帆船。”

他们又等了半个小时，天空才一片片地开始放晴。苍白的阳光不时地照射在大海上，海面呈现出斑驳的橄榄绿色。接着，前桅升起来，飘荡着，渐渐消失不见了。随着又一个大浪，船尾升起来了，上面有旧式的木质蜗牛角吊柱，帆是红褐色的。

“法国人！”丹大叫，“不，不是。爸，爸！”

“这儿没有法国人，”迪斯科说，“索尔特，你这该死的运气紧紧地缠着我们，就像钉桶上的螺丝钉一样。”

“我看见了。那是亚比叔叔。”

“你别这么肯定。”

“那是所有约拿的头领，”汤姆·普拉特大吼，“哦，索尔特，索尔特，你怎么不去上床睡觉？”

“我怎么知道？”可怜的索尔特说。纵帆船随海浪翻滚。

她就是那艘“荷兰飞行”号，气急败坏，慢吞吞。船上的绳索和棍子杂乱堆放着。老式的后甲板大约有四五英尺高，上面索具乱飞，纠结缠绕在一起，像码头丛生的野草。她比风速还要快——已经严重偏航——支索帆被降为前桅大帆使用——他们说那简直是“乱弹琴”！——她的前桅帆杆固定着拉绳，斜桅竖起来，像一艘古老的护卫舰；起重杆已经加固过，用螺丝钉结合在一起，没法再修补了。船头向前冲，宽大的船尾向后压。这艘船像一个不修边幅、不爱整洁的邪恶老女人鄙视一位衣着得体的女孩一样，到处乱撞。

“是亚比，”索尔特说，“船上全是杜松子酒和朱迪克人，上帝给了他判断力，他却没有好好地利用。他碰上诱饵了，像密克隆人一样。”

“是他自己的问题，”长腿杰克说，“这样的天气却没有船帆。”

“不是的，要不然他早就完蛋了。”迪斯科回答，“看样子他想来撞咱们。让他一头栽下去很简单吧，汤姆·普拉特？”

“如果这是她的装运方式，那她就危险了，”水手慢慢地说，“要是她把船帮上的麻絮都扔出来的话，她就能很快使出力气了。”

这艘船又被大海抛了起来，咔嗒咔嗒地转圈之后，再次迎风而行。

长着花白胡子的家伙在船舷边喋喋不休，用厚重的嗓音在大喊着什么，哈维却听不懂。然而，迪斯科的脸沉了下来。“他竟然冒险来给咱们送消息。说什么我们要遇到大风了，他倒霉了。亚比！亚比！”迪斯科像用水泵抽水一样上下挥动手臂，然后又指向前方。船员们都哈哈大笑起来。

“颤抖啊，砍掉桅杆，起航吧！”亚比叔叔大喊，“狂风来啦——狂风来啦。喂！想想你上次的行程，你那些格洛斯特的黑线鳕。你再也见不着格洛斯特了，再也见不着了！”

“都疯了——和往常一样，”汤姆·普拉特说，“我真希望他没找见我们。”

大船已经走远，只有灰白色头发的那个人还在大喊，内容大致是关于公牛湾的一场舞会，还有前甲板上死了的男人。哈维听得浑身发抖。他看到懒散的船员躺在甲板上，恶狠狠地瞪着眼睛。

“对她来说，正好漂到地狱里去，”长腿杰克说，“我想知道在岸上时他到底做了什么坏事。”

“他是用拖网捕鱼的渔民，”丹向哈维解释，“他总是沿着海岸找诱饵。哦，不，不是，他不回家乡。他在那儿的东边和南边。”说着，丹朝冷酷无情的纽芬兰海岸方向点点头。“爸爸从不让我去那里，他们那群人非常难搞——亚比是最坏的。你看到他的船了吗？嗯，那艘船已经

有70年了，他们说的，它是老马布尔海德的最后一条攻丝机船。船上没有后甲板，亚比也不去马布尔海德。他在那儿不受欢迎，所以他到处游荡，躲债，骂骂咧咧，就像你刚才听到那样。好多年前，他说自己成了个约拿。从印第安人的船上拿了酒做咒语，然后再呼风唤雨，做此类的勾当。我觉得太疯狂了。”

“今晚拉网没用了，”汤姆·普拉特陷入深深的绝望中，“他是专门跟着我们的。我宁愿拿出我的工资和股份，把他吊在‘旧俄亥俄’号的舷梯口，我们就不用浪费时间了。抽上六七十下，萨姆玛托就能把他打得皮开肉绽。”

凌乱的“攻丝机”在风中摇摆，所有眼睛都盯着她。突然，厨子用他那留声机一样的声音大叫道：“他要死了，所以才这么说的！他快死了——快死了，我告诉你们！看！”那艘船驶向三四英里外的远处一片阳光照射的海面。渐渐，阳光消退了，光线从船身上消失了。帆船掉进深渊——不见了。

“它被撞沉了！”迪斯科一边大喊，一边在后面跳起来。“不管他是喝醉了，还是清醒的，我们都要去救他们。用力推，把船凿开！麻利点！”

三角帆和前桅大帆被挂了起来，他们迅速拉起缆绳，把哈维推到了甲板上。为了节省时间，他们一边将锚整体从船底拉起，一边前进。除非是在生死攸关的时刻，通常他们很少这样蛮干。小小的“我们在此”号像人一样发出抱怨。他们冲向亚比沉船的位置；发现两三个拖网桶，一个杜松子酒瓶，一个船用壁炉，此外别无所获。“别管它们。”迪斯科说。尽管并没有谁暗示要打捞这些东西。“我不应该在船上和亚比较量。我想她早就撞了，那些填船帮的麻絮肯定掉了一个星期了，他们也

没想过要把水抽干。在离港时，船员们又都喝多了。”

“挺好！”长腿杰克说，“要是他们浮出水面的话，我们还得救他们呢。”

“我自己也是这么想的。”汤姆·普拉特说。

“死了！死了！”厨子翻着白眼说，“他被自己的运气带走了。”

“我觉得挺好。等我们见到船队时就告诉他们。额，什么？”曼纽尔说，“不管是谁在大风里那样航行，都会把接口撑破——”说着，他用手比画了个无法用语言描述的手势，宾坐在舱顶，出于惊恐和惋惜而啜泣着。哈维虽然没有意识到自己在无边无际的大海上见证了死亡，但他还是感到非常难受。

接着，丹爬上了桅顶的横杆。在大雾再次笼罩大海以前，迪斯科驾船返回排钩所在的海域。

“在这附近航行的时候，我们一定要快，”他对哈维说，“你以为那是诅咒，小鬼，那只是酒精在作怪。”

晚饭后，风平浪静，适合在甲板上钓鱼，这个时候，宾和索尔特叔叔非常活跃，钓到的也都是非常非常大的鱼。

“亚比肯定把自己的运气带走了，”索尔特叔叔说，“大风没加剧，也没平静。排钩怎么样了？不管怎么说，我都瞧不起讲迷信的。”

汤姆·普拉特坚持要捞起那些东西，找一个新的泊位。然而厨子却说：“运气一分为二。你去瞧瞧就会明白。我很清楚这一点。”这句话让长腿杰克很高兴，他说服了汤姆·普拉特，两人一起走了出去。

检查排钩意味着要从平底船的一侧摘下鱼，再次挂上诱饵，然后把它们重新放进大海——就像把晾衣绳上的衣服挂上去，取下来。这真是一件耗时而又非常危险的事，因为松弛的长绳也许会在一瞬间把渔船扯翻。不过，当从大雾里轰隆隆地传出一声“现在，该你了，船长”时，“我们在此”号上所有船员都松了一口气。满载而归的平底船在旁边打转，汤姆·普拉特呼喊曼纽尔去救援。

“运气果然分两半。”长腿杰克叉着鱼说。哈维望着本已卷入水里的平底船被救了上来，惊得目瞪口呆。“一半是‘南瓜’。汤姆·普拉特想拉起来不干了。可我告诉他：‘我要回去找厨子，他能预知一切。’另一半上来的是沉甸甸的大家伙。快点，曼纽尔，拿一桶鱼饵。今晚会漂过好运气。”

鱼钩上刚刚挂好诱饵，鱼就上钩了，它们的同类刚刚在这个鱼钩上丧命。汤姆·普拉特和长腿杰克有条不紊地把排钩拉起又放下。渔船的船头在湿漉漉的鱼钩绳子间起伏。他们把海参（他们称为“南瓜”）从钩子上扯下来，把刚刚捞上来的鳕鱼摔在船舷上，再次挂好诱饵，装满曼纽尔的平底船，这样一直忙到黄昏。

“我可不想冒险，”迪斯科说道，“不想在他的周围到处漂。一个星期后亚比会漂起来的。升起平底船，晚饭后洗刷。”

晚上的工作量非常大，有三四条呼呼喘气的逆戟鲸在他们附近。大家一直干到九点。迪斯科暗自窃笑了三次，每次都是在哈维把分解了的鱼扔进鱼舱的时候。

“我说，你转变的速度太快了，”当他们在磨同伴替换下来的刀具时，丹说，“今晚海上发生的事不少，我还没听到你说话呢。”

“忙得顾不上，”哈维一边回答，一边试了试刀刃，“想想，那艘船真是太令人意外了。”

银光闪闪的波浪里，小纵帆船在停泊处非常活跃。令人惊奇的是，一看到绷紧的缆绳，小船就像一只小猫一样猛扑过去，溅起了优雅的水花，穿过锚链孔，接着又传来了枪声般的爆裂声。她好像摇了摇头，似乎在说：“哦，对不起，我不能再陪你待更久了。我要去北方。”然后，她便想溜走，但是又突然停了下来，索具发出剧烈的哗啦哗啦声。“因为我要去监测，”她又开口了，就像一个醉汉在对着灯柱说话。剩下的话（当然，她是在用动作表现语言）她没有说，因为她陷入了心神不宁的烦躁中。正当大海向她奔涌而来时，她像一只撕咬线绳的小狗，像一位笨拙的妇女侧身坐在马鞍上，像一只没头的母鸡乱撞，又或是一头被大黄蜂蜇了的母牛。

“看她的样子，她现在就是个帕特里克·亨利¹⁵。”丹说。

她侧身荡在水里，起重杆从左舷跑到了右舷。

“可是——对于——我而言——不自由——毋宁死！”

！她一屁股坐在了月光照映下的水面上，要是没有齿轮的嘲笑的话，她也还是满心自豪的。

哈维哈哈大笑起来，说道：“怎么回事？你说得就好像她是个大活人一样。”

“她像房子一样稳当，像鲱鱼一样干瘪。”丹热情地说。他跳过甲板时溅起一阵水花，说，“‘躲开，躲开，别靠近我，’她说。你看她——你看她！天哪！你应该看看，一艘牙签船能把锚拉起15英寻高。”

“什么牙签船，丹？”

“那是新式船。专门捕捞黑线鳕和鲱鱼的。前面就像游艇一样好看，还有尖尖的船首斜桅，还有能装下鱼舱的房子。我听说伯吉斯自己做过三四个模型。爸爸根据它们起伏颠簸的情况，再三考虑。靠这种船能赚好多钱。爸爸能找到鱼，不过方法却不先进——他跟不上时代的脚步。船上装满了省时省力的钓具设备。你见过格洛斯特的‘选举’号吗？她是艘新船，还是牙签船里的新成员。”

“那得多少钱，丹？”

“好多好多。大概一万五，也许更多。你可以想象那是一座金山银山。”然后，他又压低声音，自言自语道，“我想，要是我有这样的一艘船，我会把她叫作‘海蒂’号。”

[11](#) 马德拉群岛，非洲西海岸外，北大西洋上一个属于葡萄牙的群岛，位于里斯本西南约1000千米，离摩洛哥的海岸线约600千米。

[12](#) 波多黎各，位于加勒比海的大安的列斯群岛东部，北临大西洋，南濒加勒比海。

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[13](#) 浸信会，又称浸礼会，基督新教主要宗派之一。17世纪上半叶产生于英国以及在荷兰的英国流亡者中。当时属清教徒中的独立派。反对给儿童行洗礼，主张教徒成年后方可受洗，且受洗者须全身浸入水中，称为“浸礼”。并主张独立自主，反对英国国教和政府对地方教会的干涉。

[14](#) 特鲁罗，英国英格兰西南区域康沃尔郡郡治、城市。

[15](#) 帕特里克·亨利,美国独立战争时期的著名政治家和演说家, 他于1775年3月23日, 在弗吉尼亚州议会上发表著名演说,喊出了“不自由,毋宁死”的口号。

第五章 Chapter Five

丹和哈维经常在一起聊天，但那是第一次，他告诉哈维为什么会把平底船的名字改成和想象中的伯吉斯黑线鳕渔船一样的名字。哈维听过很多关于格洛斯特的海蒂的真实故事，见过她的头发——丹觉得任何词语都不足以形容那些头发的美。那年冬天在学校时，丹坐在海蒂的后面，于是他“钓”了几根头发得到了一张照片。海蒂大约14岁，对男孩子们不屑一顾。丹的心灵在那个冬天痛苦万分。哈维郑重地发誓，他会严守秘密，所以丹才会向他说出这一切。月光下的甲板上，海雾令人窒息。在他们的身后是旋转的轮机，甲板迎着前方行驶，大海失去了日间的喧嚣。当然，孩子们在彼此熟识后，准会发生争斗。曾经有一次，哈维和丹从船头打到船尾，直到宾上前将他们分开才停歇。宾答应不会把他们打架的事告诉迪斯科，因为迪斯科觉得在值班时间打架比睡觉还要恶劣。哈维在体格上无法与丹相抗衡，最近的海上训练起了很大作用，虽然失败了，但他并不打算用什么狡黠的手段和他的征服者打个平手。

事情发生在哈维的疖子治愈以后。他的胳膊肘和手腕的地方由于被毛线衫和油布雨衣磨破而生出了疖子，海水的侵蚀更是雪上加霜。不过，疖子熟了后，丹用迪斯科的刀片把它们割了下来，告诉哈维他现在已经不是“纽芬兰大浅滩渔民”了，疖子的痛苦折磨是最好的证明。

因为他还是孩子，而且很忙，所以他不会费心去思考。不过，对于他的妈妈，他还是深感愧疚的。哈维常常盼望着能够见到妈妈，将他全新的生活讲给妈妈听，让她知道自己现在对这一行是多么熟悉。然而，妈妈以为他死了，她如何能承受得了这种痛苦，这是哈维想都不愿

意想的事。但是，有一天，他站在扶梯上嘲笑厨师，因为厨师指责他和丹用吊钩偷走了煎饼。这时，他突然发现自己有了很大的进步。现在的他已经能在租赁的轮船上，在吸烟室里，接受陌生人的训斥了。

哈维已经成为了“我们在此”号上公认的一员，不管是在餐桌上还是睡觉时，他都有了自己的位置。而且，在暴风雨的天气里，人们都愿意听他讲那些岸上的“天方夜谭”。不到两天半工夫，只要一说他自己的故事——似乎太遥不可及——除了丹以外（就连丹也是将信将疑），没人相信他。于是，他编了一个朋友，是一个他听说过的男孩。这个男孩在俄亥俄州托莱多有一辆四匹小马驹拉的车，每次买衣服都是五套。他举办了一场华尔兹舞会，参加舞会的人里最年长的女孩也不到15岁，不过，舞会上送来的礼物都是纯银的。索尔特驳斥道，这种故事即便不算亵渎神灵，也都是极其邪恶的，但他还是像其他人一样听得津津有味。最后，众人的评论让哈维对华尔兹舞、服饰、带黄金滤嘴的香烟、名表、香水、小型派对、香槟、桥牌以及酒店住宿等有了全新的认识。渐渐地，谈及这位伙伴时，哈维改变了语调。因为长腿杰克给这个男孩取了很多外号，比如“疯狂小子”“金边娃娃”和“没断奶的傻子”等等。哈维把灌满海水的双脚放在桌子上，给他的“伙伴”编出丝绸睡衣和进口领结之类的事情，让这个“伙伴”更加令人讨厌。哈维是一个适应力很强的孩子，懂得察言观色，分辨得出人们的话音。

不久，他发现迪斯科把一个绿色的破旧的四分仪（人们把它叫作六分仪）藏在床铺下的睡袋里。每次，哈维测量太阳的高度时，都会靠着老农民的历书，确定自己的位置。他跳进船舱，用一颗钉子在锈迹斑斑的火炉烟囱管上刻下这个值得纪念的日期。现在，船上的首席轮机手也不用再忙活了。哈维像一名资深海员一样，小心翼翼地朝船舷边吐了一口痰，然后就说出了当天纵帆船所在的位置。在船上干了30年的轮机手

也没有他一半的气势。从此以后，迪斯科的四分仪再无用武之地。这一行也有自己的行规。

所谓的“六分仪”，埃尔德里奇航海图，老农民的历书，布伦特的“海岸航行手册”，以及鲍迪奇“航海指南”都是迪斯科用来教他的法宝，至于使用深海铅锤就要靠他自己的裸眼了。汤姆·普拉特在第一次教哈维如何扔“蓝鸽子”时，哈维差点要了宾的命。哈维的力气还不够在海上长时间地持续探测水深。但是风平浪静的时候，迪斯科可以安排哈维在浅水区轻松地扔出七磅重的铅锤来探测水深。正如丹说的：“探测水深不是爸爸想要的结果，他只是想取样本而已。哈维，给铅锤涂上油脂。”于是，哈维给底部涂上油脂，小心翼翼地把沙子、贝壳、泥浆，或者什么东西递过去，迪斯科用手指摸，用鼻子闻，然后就能下结论。就像前面提到的，只要迪斯科想到鳕鱼时，就会从鳕鱼的角度去考虑。凭借长时间的本能和经验的摸索，迪斯科带领“我们在此”号从一个泊位到另一个泊位，走到哪里都能捕到鱼，就像蒙着眼睛的棋手在下棋一样。

然而，迪斯科的棋盘是在大浅滩——这是个三角区，每条边的跨度都有250英里长——茫茫无际的大海，弥漫着潮湿的雾气，可恶的狂风，折磨人的浮冰，鲁莽的大客轮，还有捕鱼船队的点点风帆。

船队接连几天都在大雾里作业——哈维负责不断地摇铃——直到对这样的浓雾天气熟悉以后，他才跟着汤姆出海，他的心都要从嗓子眼儿里跳出来了。但是，大雾没有散去，鱼儿在咬饵，六个小时里，没有人能够在海上无助地待着。哈维全身心地握着绳索和鱼叉，汤姆·普拉特要的时候就赶紧递过去。循着铃声，凭着汤姆的本能，两人划回纵帆船旁。曼纽尔的海螺声在他们旁边听起来单薄而微弱。不过，对于哈维而言，这是一次恍如隔世的经历。一个月内，哈维第一次觉得像做梦一

样：小渔船周围波涛汹涌，雾气蒸腾，绳索慢慢摇晃着，最后消失不见了，海天融为一体，他瞪大眼睛也只能看到不足十英尺的范围。过了几天，他和曼纽尔一起出海，到40英寻深的水域，但整个锚缆都放完了，也还是够不到海底。哈维感到了死亡的恐惧，对他来说，与陆地唯一的联系没有了。“鲸鱼洞，”曼纽尔一边拉一边说，“这可是跟迪斯科开了个大玩笑。快！”曼纽尔划向纵帆船，找到汤姆·普拉特和其他人，众人正在嘲弄船长。因为这是他第一次把船员们带到了这片贫瘠的区域，鲸鱼洞的边缘，大浅滩的空洞。他们在大雾中再次寻找了停泊的地方。这次，哈维乘着曼纽尔的平底船时，吓得毛骨悚然。一个白色的影子出现在浓雾里，散发着死亡的气息，咆哮着猛冲过来，水花四处飞溅。这是他第一次在大浅滩见到可怕的夏季冰山。哈维蜷缩在船底瑟瑟发抖，曼纽尔忍不住哈哈大笑。不过，海上有时候也会晴空万里，温暖宜人，似乎这样的天气只适合拉着钓鱼竿，划着桨追逐海面上的太阳光斑，除此之外做所有的事都是一种罪过。遇上云淡风轻的时候，哈维就会学习如何操控纵帆船，从一个泊位行驶到另一个泊位。

前桅的帆在蓝天下飘摇，纵帆船在长长的浪涌里冲刺，当他手握轮舵，第一次感受到纵帆船任由他指挥时，他兴奋不已。他觉得自己很伟大，虽然迪斯科说要是跟在他的船后面，蛇的脖子都会被扭断。不过，俗话说得好，骄兵必败。支索帆扬起后，他们在大风中前行，哈维站在船的右侧，想给丹展示自己已经完全掌握了这项技术。前桅帆“”的一声断了，好在这是一面旧帆。斜桁撕裂前索帆，当然，这样是哪里都去不了的。他们默默地放下破损的前索帆。接下来的几天里，哈维只好利用闲暇时间，躲在汤姆·普拉特的船上，学习如何使用针线去补帆。丹兴奋地取笑着哈维，并且说自己在刚开始时也犯过同样的错误。

像其他男孩子一样，哈维调皮地模仿船上所有人的特征，直到他掌

握了每个人的特长：迪斯科手握轮舵时独特的站姿；绳索拉起时，长腿杰克挥舞手臂的动作；曼纽尔滚圆的臂膀在平底船上用力地挥动；还有汤姆·普拉特迈着“旧俄亥俄”号的大步，在甲板上昂首阔步的姿态。

中午时分，头顶烈日，哈维站在起锚机旁。“看这孩子模仿我们，真有意思，”长腿杰克说道，“我用所有的工资和份额打赌，他不是学着玩儿的。他觉得自己就是个勇敢的水手。看他现在的样子。”

“我们每个人都是这么过来的，”汤姆·普拉特说，“孩子们自以为长大成人了，一直在自欺欺人，直到死的那一天。我在‘旧俄亥俄’号时就是那样。记得第一次站岗时——港口站岗——觉得自己就是法拉格特将军¹⁶。丹就是这神气。看看他们现在，想让自己变得更自然——每根头发都是缆绳，血液里流淌着松焦油。”说着，他走下楼梯。“我想你这次判断失误了。迪斯科，你怎么就觉得那孩子不正常？”

“他以前就是不正常，”迪斯科回答，“刚来船上时就像个疯子，但是他现在变得理智了，是我治好的。”

“他编故事挺有一套。有一天，他跟我们讲了一个跟他个头差不多的孩子的故事。那个孩子驾着四匹小马拉的车，邀请了几个同龄的孩子在俄亥俄州的托莱多开派对，我估计就是这么说的。听起来有点离奇，不过挺有趣。他知道好多这样的故事。”

“我看那都是他自己脑子里想出来的。”迪斯科忙着写航海日志，坐在船舱里回答道，“百分之百是编造的，除了丹没人听。我知道，丹在背后也笑他呢。”

“你听过西蒙·彼得·卡豪恩吗？有人撮合了他姐姐海蒂和洛林·杰拉德的婚事，男孩们把这当笑话来取笑他和乔治一家。”索尔特叔叔慢吞

吞地说。他在船上的背风处一声不吭地淋着雨。

汤姆·普拉特静静地抽着烟，有些不屑一顾。他是科德角人，20多年前就听过这个故事。索尔特叔叔粗声粗气地笑着，继续往下讲：

“西蒙说洛林一方面寻欢作乐，一方面又蠢得要命，人们却说她嫁了个有钱人。西蒙说话不靠谱，他是那么说的。”

“他说起话来可不像宾夕法尼亚的荷兰人，”汤姆·普拉特回答道，“你最好让科德角人去讲这个故事。追根到底，卡豪恩家自己也曾到处流浪呢。”

“哦，我可不想表现得像个演说家，”索尔特叔叔说，“我是来讲道理的。我要说的是关于咱们哈维的。一方面寻欢作乐，一方面又蠢得可怜。有人还相信他是个有钱人。哈！”

“你有没有想过，要是船上所有的人都和索尔特一样，那该有多好玩。”长腿杰克说，“一半在犁沟里，一半在烂泥堆里。不用卡豪恩开口，就能看出是个渔夫！”

大家都开始笑索尔特的装备了。

迪斯科一言不发，专心地写着他的航海日志。他的字迹方方正正的，略显瘦削，污渍斑斑的纸上一页一页地记录着：

7月17号，今日大雾，无鱼。向北停泊。一天结束。

7月18号，早晨起雾，少鱼。

7月19号，微风，东北风，天气晴朗。向东停泊。收获颇丰。

7月20号，大雾，微风。一天结束。本周捕鱼3478条。

星期天，他们从来不干活。如果天气好的话，他们会刮胡子，洗漱，宾夕法尼亚还会哼哼小曲。有一两次，他曾提议，要是大家愿意的话，他可以宣讲一些教义。索尔特叔叔听到这个想法后，大惊失色，并且提醒他要记住自己不再是牧师，也别再想这件事情。“我们不能让他记起约翰斯敦，”索尔特解释说，“那样说不定会出什么乱子！”于是，他们达成妥协，宾可以读一些《约瑟夫》上的内容。这是一本真皮面的旧书，散发出浓浓的海风的味道，非常详实，就像《圣经》一样厚重，里面记录了许多攻城略地的故事，所以显得鲜活而生动。他们几乎从头读到尾。其他时候，小个子宾总是安安静静的。尽管他会打扑克，听音乐，被故事逗笑，但他会一连三天，一言不发。众人想逗他开心时，他说：“虽然我并不想显得自己不合群，可我真的没什么可说。我的脑袋一片空白，我连自己的名字都不记得。”说着，他会微笑着转向索尔特叔叔，期待能得到答案。

“为什么，宾夕法尼亚·普拉特，”索尔特大声说，“下次你会把我的名字也给忘了！”

“不——永远不会，”宾咬紧嘴唇，说，“宾夕法尼亚·普拉特，当然。”有时候，索尔特叔叔忘记他的名字时，会说他叫哈金斯，里奇或者麦克什么的，但宾还是一如既往地满意，直到下一次再问。

宾对哈维总是非常温和。他觉得哈维是个找不到家的可怜孩子，又是一个脑子不聪明的傻子。索尔特看到宾喜欢这个孩子，他也释然了。索尔特不是一个亲切的人（他把管教孩子们守规矩当成自己的事业）。有一天，风平浪静，哈维瑟瑟发抖地爬上主桅（丹站在他身后，随时准备救援）。这是哈维第一次上主桅，他想把索尔特的大靴子挂上面，

这是他的任务，也是对附近船只的羞辱和嘲笑。在迪斯科面前，即便老头对他直接发号施令，哈维也不敢造次，或者和其他船员一样对他说“你不想做这些？”或者“我想，你最好是”诸如此类的。迪斯科脸上的胡子刮得非常干净，对于年轻人来说，迪斯科眼角的皱纹透着冷峻的威严。

迪斯科给他看了那张磨损的海图，说这个比任何政府公布的地图都要全面。迪斯科手握铅笔，顺着大浅滩沿线一个泊位一个泊位地指给他看——勒阿弗尔，西部湾，班奎，圣皮埃尔，格林滩和大浅滩——同时，迪斯科还给他讲了各地鳕鱼的情况和六分仪的使用原理。

哈维在这方面的能力超过了丹。因为他对数字天生敏感，瞥一眼大浅滩阴沉的太阳，他便能获取信息，来施展他的聪明才智。对于海上的其他事情，年龄会成为限制。正如迪斯科所说，哈维在十岁时就应该出海。丹可以在黑暗中放下排钩，或者抓住绳索。紧急关头，索尔特叔叔的手掌被鳕鱼划破时，丹可以摸索着继续加工鱼。大风刮在脸上，丹可以判断出风力，驾驶纵帆船驶向任何适合的水域。他做这些事情时就像放下索具一样简单自然。平底小船好像成了他的一部分，完全听命于他一样。不过，这些知识他却没法教给哈维。

狂风暴雨的天气里，大家会讲起纵帆船的一些故事。聊天时，他们要么坐在前甲板上，要么坐在船舱里的储物柜上。备用的螺丝圈、铅锤、绳圈丁零当啷地摇晃着。迪斯科讲述了50年代的捕鲸之行。巨大的母鲸在幼崽身边被捕杀，愤怒的大海波涛汹涌，鲜血喷薄而出，足足有40英尺高。渔船被撞成碎片，捕鲸的专用火箭弹发生了故障，在吓得魂飞魄散的船员们中间突然爆炸。1871年，波涛汹涌的大海迎来了寒潮，使得1200名船员无家可归，在冰上冻了三天——这些都是令人称奇的故事，但全都是真实的。不过，最刺激的还要数鳕鱼的故事，以及它

们在船底的龙骨下讨论各自处境的内容。

长腿杰克的品味更倾向于超自然。他讲的莫诺莫伊沙滩上的鬼故事，吓得没人敢出声，说那些孤独的捞蛤人遭到了戏弄，吓个半死。在死后没有得到很好的安葬的鬼魂在沙滩和沙丘上四处游荡，藏匿在火岛的宝藏由基德船长17的船员守护。大雾天气里，船只却能一直向前驶向特鲁罗小镇，缅因州的港口空无一人，只有陌生人才会在同一海域抛锚两次。原来，那是一群死去的水手在作怪，他们在深夜里划着一艘破船，呼啸前行——不是叫喊，而是呼啸——因为抛锚人的灵魂搅扰了他们的安宁。

哈维说他的家乡在东海岸。从荒凉山往南，到处都是骑着马来避暑的人，村舍里铺着硬木地板，挂着门帘，在那里消遣。他嘲笑杰克那些离奇鬼故事——不再像一个月以前那样胆小——不过，听到最后，他还是不由自主地浑身打颤，吓得僵坐在那里一动也不敢动。

汤姆讲起鞭刑时期，自己在“旧俄亥俄”号上，没完没了地绕着合恩角航行的艰难经历。当时的海军如今已经像渡渡鸟灭绝一样，在南北战争中灭亡了。他告诉人们火红的炮弹如何击中加农炮，离炮筒只有一小块湿黏土的距离。炮火打在木头上咝咝地冒着烟，“吉姆·巴克”号船上，没有经验的小水手一边泼水，一边朝炮塔再次呐喊。他还讲了封锁时期的故事——接连几周在海上漂荡，只有蒸汽船燃料用光时（帆船绝没这样的可能）才会返航，大风和寒流迫使200名船员不分昼夜地敲打着缆绳、船板、索具上的冰块，当厨房像发射出去的炮弹一样炙热时，船员们抱起桶把热可可灌进肚子里。汤姆·普拉特没接触过蒸汽船，他退役时，这种船相对比较新鲜。他承认蒸汽船出现在和平年代，貌似不错，但他还是期待帆船有重新回到大海的那天，会有万吨的纵帆船，配备有190英尺高的吊杆。

曼纽尔的发言缓慢而轻柔，故事都是关于马德拉群岛上女孩子的。月光下，摇曳的香蕉树下，干涸的河床边，一群女孩子在洗衣服。他还会讲一些圣人的故事，纽芬兰的港口有人在跳奇怪的舞蹈或者在打架。索尔特的话题侧重农业，尽管他也阅读《约瑟夫》，并且还会做解释，但他毕生的任务就是要证明绿色肥料的价值，尤其是三叶草优于任何形式的磷酸盐。提到磷酸盐，他的话里尽是厌恶。他从床铺上拿出一本油乎乎的《奥兰治·贾德》开始吟诵，拖长声调，对着哈维喋喋不休，而哈维却一句都听不懂。每当哈维嘲笑索尔特的演说时，小个子宾就会觉得非常难过，所以哈维只好作罢，出于礼貌而继续忍受。哈维能这样做还是不错的。

厨师自然不会参与这样的谈话。通常，他只会在非常必要时才会发言。然而，奇怪的灵感有时会突然降临，他会把握时机，一半用盖尔语，一半用零散的英语，滔滔不绝地说上一个小时。他尤其擅长和孩子们交流，他从不避讳预言哈维将会成为丹的主人，而且他会看到这一天的到来。他讲起冬天在布列塔尼角运送邮件的故事，乘坐狗拉的雪橇到库德雷，北极破冰船从大陆出发，冲破坚冰，抵达爱德华王子岛。然后，他还会讲从他妈妈那里听到的故事，说的都是关于南方的生活，那里永远不会结冰。他还说，在他死后，他的灵魂会躺在温暖的白沙滩上，棕榈树在头顶摇曳。对于孩子们来说，这个人太奇怪了，因为他这辈子从来没有见过棕榈树。而且，通常在每顿饭的时候，他都会问哈维，而且只问哈维一个人，饭菜是否合他的口味。这样总会立刻引起其他人的嘲笑。不过，人们还是很尊重厨师的判断，他们在心中，都把哈维当成了幸运星。

哈维每一次深呼吸新鲜空气时，身体都会变得强壮起来，每个毛孔都储存着新鲜的知识。与此同时，“我们在此”号继续前行，在大浅滩捕

鱼，银灰色的咸鱼压得整整齐齐，越堆越高。每天的工作平淡无奇，但是所有的日子都是如此繁忙而紧密。

迪斯科的名声不断攀升，自然会被其他渔船跟着——丹说他被“盯上了”。不过，迪斯科有个非常棒的小窍门，能帮他们穿越浓浓大雾笼罩的大浅滩。迪斯科之所以不和他们结伴有两个原因。首先，他想自己单独实践。其次，他反对不同地区的捕鱼船混在一起作业。船队里大部分是格洛斯特船，零星分布着普罗温斯敦、哈里奇、查塔姆的船，还有一些来自缅因州。不过，船员们都知道鲁莽衍生风险，贪婪膨胀，必会在拥挤的船队中造成各类事故。如同羊群围在一些不熟悉的头羊周围。“让那哲罗德兄弟领着他们吧。”迪斯科说，“到了东海岸，恐怕我们得在他们中间逗留一段时间。如果够幸运的话，不会待太久。哈维，你不考虑换个地方吗？”

“是吗？”哈维回答。花了好长时间才加工完鱼，他又开始汲水（他已经学会了如何放桶）。“我倒是不介意到鱼不多的地方试试。”

“我想去的地方——哪怕不站上去也行——就是东部海角。”丹说，“爸爸，好像我们在大浅滩最多只须再待两个星期。哈维，到时候你就能见到你想见的人了。然后我们就要忙起来了，没人能按时吃饭。饿了就随便垫点，实在支撑不住的时候就眯一会儿。幸亏一个月前就把你捞上来了，否则我们哪有功夫让你一根头发不少地到达处女滩呢？”

哈维曾经在埃尔德里奇图上看到过处女滩和其他一些名字奇奇怪怪的海滩，它们是航行路线的中转点，运气好的话，他们能在那里把盐抹完。不过，看处女滩的面积，那只是一个点。哈维不明白迪斯科是如何借助六分仪和铅锤找到那个地方的。后来，他才知道迪斯科有足够能力应付这点小事，处理其他事也游刃有余，并且他还能帮助其他船只。

船舱里挂着一块4×5英尺大小的黑板，哈维一直不懂它有什么用，直到浓雾密布的几天过后，哈维才明白。当时，他们听到一阵嘈杂的声音，那是脚踏式雾笛警报器在嘟嘟作响——这架机器发出的声音就像得了肺癆的大象发出的声音。

于是，他们采取了紧急停泊的措施，把锚链拉到船底下，以免惹麻烦。“横帆船正在大声喊叫他们的位置。”长腿杰克说道。三桅帆船挂起湿漉漉的红色前帆，在大雾中非常显眼，“我们在此”号用简易信号向对方船只摇了三次铃。

这艘船比纵帆船要大，中桅帆被收了起来，从船上传来了一阵尖叫和呐喊声。

“是法国人，”索尔特叔叔嘲讽道，“圣·马洛的密克隆船。”这个农民在海风里也能看得一清二楚。“迪斯科，我的烟快抽完了。”

“这儿也一样，”汤姆·普拉特说，“往后退，往后退。你们打哪儿来？——圣·马洛吗？”

“啊哈！对！对！克洛斯·布莱特——圣·马洛！圣·皮埃尔！密克隆！”这伙人挥舞着羊毛帽，聚在一起，嘻嘻哈哈道，“黑板！黑板！”

“拿过板子来，丹，记下，我也算是服了，美国这么大，到处都能碰得到法国船。46度49分，我估计他们就在这么个位置。”

丹用粉笔把数字记在黑板上，挂上主桅支索，对面传来一阵嘹亮的“谢谢”声。

“他们就这么离开，有点不礼貌吧！”索尔特的手在口袋里摸索着说道。

“上次出海，法国人还没给够你教训吗？”迪斯科问，“我可不想因为你骂他们是‘密克隆’船上没用的鸡崽，被他们拿压船石头砸。就跟你离开勒阿弗尔那会儿一样。”

“哈蒙·拉什说那样才能让他们兴奋起来。对我来说，广阔平坦的美国就不错。我们船上的烟草严重短缺。小鬼，你会说法语吗？”

“哦，会。”哈维勇敢地回答道。然后，他大喊：“嗨，我说！各位！停下！我们想要点烟草！”

“啊，烟草！”对方大叫道，然后又笑了。

“他们听懂啦，不管怎样，我们要放一艘船过去吧。”汤姆·普拉特说，“我没拿过法语的什么证书，但我知道还有一句行话。快，哈维，给我翻译。”

汤姆和哈维爬上那艘黑色的渔船时，船上乱糟糟地堆着索具，场面混乱得简直无法描述，船舱里贴满了闪闪发光的圣母像——他们说那是纽芬兰的圣母。哈维发现自己的法语在大浅滩根本施展不了，对话也仅限于点头和微笑。不过，汤姆·普拉特却在旁边挥舞着胳膊，如鱼得水地和他们交流着。船长递给他一杯说不出味道的杜松子酒。船员们扯着嗓子，头戴红帽子，手持长刀，像一群滑稽的小丑，把他当哥们儿一样迎接过来。接下来，交易开始进行。他们有烟草，而且很多——都是美国烟草，从不在法国交税。他们想换些巧克力和饼干。哈维划着船回到纵帆船上，厨子和迪斯科安排好，因为他俩负责仓库的囤货。哈维返回去的时候，刚一上法国船，他们就迫不及待地清点罐装可可粉和袋装饼干，好像海盗分赃一样。不过，汤姆·普拉特下船时，身上绑着细条的黑色烟草，袋子里塞满了可以咀嚼的或者直接吸的烟丝。那些快乐的法

国水手驾船消失在大雾中，最后，哈维听到一阵欢快的合唱声：

在我姨妈骄傲的后面，

有一片美丽的树林

夜莺在这里歌唱，

昼夜不停地歌唱

你要把这美丽的歌声带给谁？

谁又把它带到这里？

我把它送给美丽的魁北克

索雷尔和圣丹尼¹⁸

“为什么我的法语不管用，你的比画却派上用场了？”“商人”汤姆·普拉特在给“我们在此”号上的船员分发东西时，哈维问道。

“比画！”汤姆大笑起来，“哦，是，是比画。不过，却要比你的法语古老。那艘法国船上坐着的是共济会¹⁹会员，这就是原因。”

“那你也是共济会的吗？”

“看起来像，是吧？”这个从战争中出来的男人一边说着，一边把烟丝装满烟斗。此时，对哈维而言，深邃的大海又留给他一个不解之谜。

¹⁶ 法拉格特将军，戴维·格拉斯哥·法拉格特（1801年7月5日—1870年8月14日），是美国南北战争时期的一位海军将军。他是美国海军第

一位少将、中将和上将。

[17](#) 威廉·基德（William Kidd，1645年1月22日—1701年5月23日），出生于苏格兰敦提，苏格兰航海家、海盗、私掠者，被人们称为“基德船长”（Captain Kidd）。

[18](#) 索雷尔和圣丹尼，都是加拿大的城市。

[19](#) 共济会，出现在18世纪的英国，是一种带宗教色彩的兄弟会组织，也是目前世界上最庞大的秘密组织，他们自称宣扬博爱和慈善思想，以及美德精神，追求人类生存的意义。

第六章 Chapter Six

在哈维的记忆中，印象最深刻的莫过于船只自由自在地行驶在无边无际的大西洋上。正如丹所说，渔船之所以可以如此自在，当然离不开同行的热情，以及周围船只的智慧。不过，蒸汽船所承受的期望更多。后来，他们在海上经历了一次有趣的邂逅。一艘破旧的大运牛船，慢慢悠悠地跟了“我们在此”号3英里。船上所有的牲畜都在上层甲板，臭气熏天，就像上千个牛棚散发出来的味道一样。其中有个船员极度兴奋，用一只扩音喇叭朝迪斯科的船大喊。这艘船无助地在海面上漂荡，迪斯科的“我们在此”号行驶在它的下风处，以此表示抗议。“喂，你们想去哪？哪儿都去不了。你拖着牲口圈，歪歪扭扭地在海上乱窜，根本不管旁边的渔船，你的眼睛是掉在咖啡杯里了，还是你那颗愚蠢的脑袋上根本没长眼睛？”

听到这些话，那位船长在驾驶台上暴跳如雷，指责迪斯科自己的眼睛有问题。他大声嚷嚷道：“我们已经3天没有接收到观测数据了。你以为我们能蒙着眼睛驾船吗？”

“喔，我就可以，”迪斯科反驳道，“你的铅锤咋了？被你吃了？你难道感觉不到船底深度？还是那些牲口太臭影响了你？”

“你拿什么喂它们呢？”索尔特一脸认真，牛圈的味道唤醒了他身上的每个农民细胞。“他们说船上的牛很容易死掉，虽然这跟我没关系。不过，我觉得可以把油饼捣碎，然后撒到——”

“天哪！”穿红毛衫的牧牛人看了一眼外边，说道，“是哪个疯人院

把这个老头给放出来的？”

“年轻人，”索尔特从前桅支索前站起来，继续说，“让我告诉你，趁我们还没走远——”

站在驾驶台上的人摘下帽子，故作礼貌地说：“打扰了。不过，我做事自有分寸。如果这位大胡子老农民能行行好，闭上嘴，那些海蓝色的藤壶即便斜着眼睛，说不定也会屈尊给我们指点。”

“索尔特，这次你可让我开眼了。”迪斯科愤怒地说。他无法忍受这种别扭的谈话，直接抛出经纬度的位置，再也没多说一句话。

“哦，那条船上都是疯子，肯定是。”船长说。他通知了驾驶室，朝纵帆船扔了一捆报纸。

“那群该死的傻子，和你差不多，索尔特，我见过他们那类人。”“我们在此”号离开时，迪斯科说，“他们就跟迷路的孩子一样漂荡，我正要跟他说说我的判断。你就不能跟你那该死的种地活儿断绝关系吗？你难道就分不清场合吗？”

哈维、丹和其他人一起站在后面，互相挤眉弄眼，暗自窃笑。然而，迪斯科和索尔特还在认真地吵架，一直吵到傍晚。索尔特争辩说，一艘运牛船就是蓝色大海上的牛圈。而迪斯科坚持说即便如此，你的尊严和渔民的骄傲都要求你必须认清形势。长腿杰克默默地站了一会儿——有愤怒的船长就有愤怒的船员——晚饭后，隔着桌子，他开口了。

“为什么要费心管别人说什么呢？”

“他们会在几年里一直说这个事儿——这就是原因，”迪斯科说，“捣碎油饼。”

“当然，还得加盐。”索尔特仍然执迷不悟，一边阅读一份旧纽约报纸上的农业信息，一边说。

“你的话让我很不舒服。”迪斯科船长也没有退让。

“别那么想，”和事佬长腿杰克说，“看这儿，迪斯科！今天这样的天气，还有其他船在海上漂荡吗？再说了，还有谁会提醒它？要我说，在这海上，还有谁能跟它讨论管理和航行的学问？别想了。当然没有。在海上见了面顶多三言两语。双方都没当真，互相取乐。我们都明白。”丹在桌子底下踢了哈维一脚，害得刚好喝水的哈维差点呛了。

“哦，”索尔特觉得脸上有些挂不住了，就说，“我早说过跟我没关系，我说了啊。”

“对，”在礼节和规矩方面富有经验的汤姆·普拉特说，“好啦。我明白，迪斯科，凭你的判断，不管怎么样，听到类似谈话你就应该制止——不能让它发生。”

“我也不知道怎么就成这样了。”迪斯科出于颜面考虑，赶紧找了个台阶下。

“为什么，当然会这样啦，”索尔特说，“你是这儿的船长，要是你能给我点暗示，我肯定闭嘴。不是因为你是领导，也不是自己有错，起码为了给这俩倒霉的孩子做个榜样。”

“哈维，我没告诉过你吗？最后都会绕到咱俩身上。倒霉的孩子。不过，要是能看到刚才那场面，我倒愿意拿一半的比目鱼来换。”丹悄悄说。

“不过，还是不能混在一起。”迪斯科说。索尔特把烟丝装进烟卷里时，两眼又透出要展开新一轮争吵的光芒。

“分清楚有好处。”长腿杰克还在努力制止这场暴风雨。“斯坦因和哈雷早就发现了这一点。他派康纳罕去马里拉找船长，顶替原来的牛顿船长。因为牛顿船长得了风湿病，不能出海。我们都叫康纳罕是‘大航海家’。”

“尼克·康纳罕每次都要喝一磅朗姆酒才会上船，而且还要记在货单上。”汤姆·普拉特一边摆弄铅锤，一边说，“他常去波士顿那些船运公司转悠，想让老板根据他的能力让他当驳船的船长。大西洋大道20的山姆·考伊听了他的故事，让他白吃白住了一年多。航海家康纳罕！啧啧，死了有15年了，是吧？”

“我看，有17年了，他死在‘卡斯帕·麦克维勒’号建成的那年。但是他做事总是稀里糊涂的。斯坦因带走他，就好像是贼偷走了热风炉，那是没办法的办法，因为没人可用了。当时，人们都去了大浅滩，康纳罕组织了一大帮不好对付的人当水手，从来没那么多人。都是朗姆酒惹的祸！谁都能驾驶得了‘玛丽拉’号，船和货物都上了保险。他们离开波士顿港去纽芬兰的大浅滩。身后是呼呼的西北风。所有人都拎着酒瓶，上帝也挺关照他们，见鬼了，他们没有派任何人守夜，连根绳子都没碰，直到把15加仑的劣质酒喝了个精光。据康纳罕回忆，大约持续了一周。

（但愿我能把他讲的故事复述清楚！）海风呼啸，正值夏天，‘玛丽拉’号扬起前桅的船帆——康纳罕拿起六分仪，浑身直打哆嗦，脑子里浮现出航海图，头却晕晕乎乎的，最后终于知道他们要往南去塞布尔岛。一路上大家心情大好，没人说话。然后，他们又开了一桶酒，喝了个天昏地暗。‘玛丽拉’号到达波士顿灯塔后，一直偷懒，从没有拉起过下风的横档——只是任由其倾斜着向前行驶。不过，沿途上他们没看到

海草、海鸟，也没有纵帆船。那个时候，他们才发现已经出来14天了。他们怀疑大浅滩已经将他们遗忘。于是，他们测了测水深，大约60英寻。康纳罕说：‘是我，康纳罕。每次都是我！我带领你们到大浅滩了，到30英寻的地方就能像小娃娃一样无忧无虑了，我是航海家康纳罕！’”

“接下来探测到90英寻，康纳罕说：‘要么是铅锤线拉长了，要么是大浅滩下沉了。’”

“听起来这样的解释还算合理，他们拉起铅锤，坐在甲板上数着绳结，绳子被搞得一团糟。‘玛丽拉’号继续前进，速度渐渐慢了下来。这时，旁边来了一艘不定航线货船。康纳罕开口了。”

“康纳罕很随意地说：‘到目前为止，你们见过渔船吗？’”

“‘爱尔兰海岸有好多。’货船上的人回答。”

“‘哈，一边儿去，’康纳罕说，‘爱尔兰海岸跟我有什么关系？’”

“‘那你在这儿干吗呢？’货船上的人又问。”

“‘受难的基督！’康纳罕说，（他心情不好，大口喝酒时，就会这么说）‘受难的基督！’他说，‘我现在在哪儿？’”

“‘克里尔角21西南35英里，’对方回答说，‘但愿这样能让你感到安慰。’”

“一听这句话，康纳罕蹦了起来，船上的厨子一量，足足有4英尺7英寸高。

“‘安慰！’康纳罕重复道，他厚着脸皮说，‘你把我当乡下人耍吗？离开波士顿灯塔14天，距离克里尔海角35英里。受难的基督啊，真是创纪录了。而且，我老妈还在斯基伯林22。想想这个事情！忍无可忍！’但是，他说话从来不知分寸。”

“船员大部分来自科克郡和克里郡，有一个想回家的马里兰州人，他们都叫他叛徒。他们驾驶着‘玛丽拉’号去了斯基伯林，在那里和老朋友们玩儿得很高兴，待了一个星期。然后，他们回来了，大约用了32天才到达大浅滩。这个时候快到秋天了，食物也快吃光了，所以康纳罕就驾船回到波士顿，当时船上连根骨头都没得吃了。”

“航运公司是怎么说的？”哈维问。

“他们能说什么？大浅滩里有的是鱼。康纳罕只顾吹嘘自己在东部的行程创下了纪录！他们只能自我安慰。其实，这首先是因为他没有把水手和朗姆酒分开。其次是把斯基伯林当成了班奎罗浅滩。航海家康纳罕，愿他的灵魂得到安息，他真是个撒谎不看稿子的好公民。”

“以前，我在‘露西·福尔摩斯’号上，”曼纽尔轻声说，“格洛斯特人不要我们的鱼。为什么？也不出价。所以，我们漂洋过海，打算去法亚尔岛23卖。当时正好起风了，我们躲进船舱，快速行驶——没人知道划向哪里。慢慢地，我们看到了一片陆地，天气暖和了些。接着，又看到砖瓦房里有两三个黑人。额，什么？我们问这是在哪儿，他们说——好了，你们猜，他们说什么了？”

“大加纳利岛24。”迪斯科思索了一会儿说。曼纽尔笑着摇了摇头。

“布兰克角25。”汤姆说。

“不，比那还要糟。我们到了比热戈斯群岛26，那些人是从利比里亚来的！所以，我们就在那儿卖了鱼！还不错，是吧？嗯，怎么样？”

“像我们这样的纵帆船能直驶到非洲吗？”哈维问。

“只要值得一去，食物充足的话，可以途经合恩角。”迪斯科说，“我爸曾经有条船，船身略带些红色，大约15吨重，我想——应该叫‘鲁帕特’号——他驾船穿行在格陵兰岛的冰山间。那年，一半的船只都在那儿捕捞鳕鱼。不光这样，他还让我妈跟他一起——我想，我爸是想让她知道钱是怎么挣的。大伙儿都被冻僵了，我出生在迪斯科岛。当然，我什么也不记得。冰雪融化时，我们返回家乡。不过，他们用那里的地名给我取了名字。这样给娃娃取名字，真是耍小聪明，不过，人这一辈子，注定都会犯错误。”

“对！对！”索尔特摇头晃脑地说，“难免犯错。我要告诉你俩小子，如果你们一旦犯了错误，每天至少会犯上百个错——犯错后，要像男子汉一样勇于承担错误，那你们就是最棒的。”

长腿杰克使劲朝所有人眨了眨眼睛，只有迪斯科和索尔特没有注意到。这件事总算画上了句号。

后来，他们一路向北行驶，平底船几乎天天出海。他们沿着大浅滩东岸，在三四十英寻水深的地方撒网捕鱼，收获得满满当当的。

就是在这里，哈维第一次见到了乌贼。乌贼是最好的捕鱼诱饵之一，只是摸不着它的脾气。一天深夜，人们被索尔特的喊叫声吵醒了。“乌贼！”一个半小时里，每个人都趴在船舷上放下钓乌贼的鱼钩——涂成红色的铅片，下端用曲别针弯成的圈做成伞骨的样子。乌贼不知道为什么总喜欢把自己蜷成一团，还没来得及逃脱曲别针钩，就被钓

了起来。不过，乌贼在离开水里时，先是喷水，接下来就朝捕捞者的脸上喷墨汁。这群人只好摇头晃脑地躲避四射的墨汁，样子很是滑稽。喷墨结束后，人们的脸像扫过烟囱一样黑，但是甲板上会堆满新鲜的乌贼。大鳕鱼看着闪闪发光的章鱼须挂在蛤饵钩上，哪怕是一点点都会很乐意上钩。第二天，他们果然收获颇丰。同时，他们还遇到了“凯莉·匹特曼”号。他们冲着船大声炫耀自己的战利品，“凯莉·匹特曼”号想和他们做交易——七条鳕鱼换一条大乌贼，可迪斯科不同意这个价格，“凯莉·匹特曼”号闷闷不乐地停在半英里外的下风处，希望自己也能捕到一些。

直到晚饭后，迪斯科一句话都没说。他派丹和曼纽尔出去给“我们在此”号的缆绳上浮标，并且宣布他打算在停泊转向时使用阔板斧，防止别的船靠近。“凯莉·匹特曼”号派了一艘平底船来打听他们为什么要在缆绳上装浮标，而不是在海里直接抛锚。丹自然把迪斯科的话复述了一遍。

“爸爸说，他不相信5英里内的任何一艘渔船。”丹高兴地大声说道。

“那他干吗不离开？谁拦着他了？”对方答道。

“因为你们在他的下风处，他不喜欢任何一条船在他身边晃悠，更别说是你这样一艘到处游荡的小破船了。”

“我的船才不是到处游荡。”船上那个男人生气地驳斥道。丹的话直击要害，因为“凯莉·匹特曼”号名声不好，锚泊装置总是出问题。

“那你们怎么停泊呢？”丹问，“那可是你们最出名的。要是她不游荡，那你们干吗挂起新的三角帆？”这一问可问到了痛处。

“嗨，你这个葡萄牙手风琴艺人，带着你的小把戏滚回格洛斯特，滚回学校去，丹·特鲁普。”对方开始反击。

“工装裤！工装裤！”丹扯着嗓子大喊。丹知道“凯莉·匹特曼”号上有一个船员，去年冬天在一家服装厂工作过。

“小矮子！格洛斯特的小矮子！滚出去，滚出去，你这个新斯科舍家伙！”

被人叫新斯科舍家伙可不舒服，丹决定以牙还牙。

“你才是新斯科舍佬，你这个瞎摸乱闯的城里人！趁火打劫的查塔姆人！光脚开着你的破船赶紧滚回去！”丹的力气都用光了，可查塔姆人更变本加厉了。

“我知道会发生什么事，”迪斯科说，“风已经吹上船了，应该有人立即去制止。要不然她会一直呼呼作响直到午夜，等我们睡着了，她肯定会漂走。幸好，我们没被其他渔船包围。不过，我不会帮查塔姆人起锚的，也许她自己能挺得住。”

太阳落山时，海上果然开始起风了，一直刮个不停，越来越大。虽然海浪不大，不会打翻平底船的索具，但“凯莉·匹特曼”号有自己的规矩。到孩子们值班快结束时，他们听到船上传来一阵噼里啪啦的声音，像一把巨大的前装式手枪发出的枪声。

“光荣啊，光荣啊，哈利路亚！”丹唱了起来，“她过来了，爸爸。先是船底在动，和以前在班奎罗的情形一样，迷迷糊糊地开过来了。”

换作别的船，迪斯科也许会出手相救。但现在，“凯莉·匹特曼”号被整个北大西洋的风推着，径直冲向“我们在此”号。迪斯科不得不砍断

缆绳。在三角帆和停泊帆的共同作用下，“我们在此”号尽量和“凯莉·匹特曼”号保持着安全距离——迪斯科可不愿花一个星期时间去找缆绳。“凯莉·匹特曼”号默默地生着闷气，从“我们在此”号旁边擦身而过时，迪斯科迅速躲开了。于是，那艘船船舷侧倾，完全坠入了纽芬兰大浅滩。

“晚上好，”迪斯科举起安全帽问道，“你那花园种得怎么样了？”

“得去俄亥俄租头骡子吧，”索尔特叔叔说，“我们这里不需要农民。”

“要我借给你一只平底船的锚吗？”长腿杰克大声说。

“拆下你的方向舵，插进泥里去。”汤姆·普拉特说。

“嗨！”丹站在齿轮箱上，声音高亢而尖利，“说——话！工装裤大罢工了吗？还是他们雇了女工呀，你们这群流浪狗！”

“放松转舵索，”哈维叫喊道，“把他们钉在海里吧。”这是跟汤姆·普拉特学到的带有海水味道的笑话。曼纽尔斜倚在船尾，大喊：“约翰·摩根在拉风琴！哈哈！”他摇晃着粗壮的大拇指，做出嘲讽的动作，小个子宾骄傲地喊着：“驾！吁——到这来，嗨！”

接下来的整个夜晚，哈维发现，“我们在此”号拖着短短的锚链，发出噼里啪啦的声响，艰难而缓慢地移动着，而且又用了半上午的时间修复缆绳。不过，孩子们觉得，相比胜利和荣耀，这点代价不算什么。他们想起对那艘狼狈的“凯莉·匹特曼”号说的那些话，心里又有些过意不去。

[20](#) 大西洋大道，位于波士顿，是一条街道的名称。

[21](#) 克里尔角，爱尔兰的最南端。

[22](#) 斯基伯林，爱尔兰科克郡西南部。

[23](#) 法亚尔岛，大西洋亚速尔群岛之一。

[24](#) 大加纳利岛，位于非洲西北部，是加纳利群岛最大的岛屿。

[25](#) 布兰克角，位于非洲西北部。

[26](#) 比热戈斯群岛，位于非洲几内亚。

第七章 Chapter Seven

第二天，他们周围聚集了更多的帆船，盘旋着从东北方向西缓慢行驶。正当他们打算在处女滩捕鱼时，大雾袭来，他们只好抛锚停了下来，四周模糊，只传来叮叮当当的铃声。没有鱼可捕，只是偶尔有平底船相遇，互相交换信息。

丹和哈维差不多一整天都在睡觉，那天夜里黎明即将来临时，他们醒了，正想蹑手蹑脚地去厨房“钓”些煎饼。虽然没人禁止他们正大光明地吃煎饼，可他们就是喜欢这样的恶作剧，而且，这还会使厨子怒不可遏。下面的热浪和臭味使得他们只能爬上甲板去享受战利品。他们发现迪斯科正站在钟的旁边，他把敲钟的活儿交给了哈维。

“接着敲，”迪斯科说，“我怀疑我听到了些什么声音，如果真有什么，我最好留在这里。”

这是一只废弃的钟，浓雾似乎都能把它捏碎。钟声停下来的间隙里，哈维听到周围传来大客轮尖利的汽笛声。他对大浅滩非常了解，所以很清楚汽笛声意味着什么，内心的恐惧清晰地向他袭来。一个身穿鲜红色套头毛衫的男孩——作为渔夫，现在的他讨厌任何可以想象出来的鲜艳的衣服——多么鲁莽无知，曾经认为让大蒸汽客轮撞上一艘渔船是多么酷的一件事。这个男孩住在提供冷热水洗漱的头等舱里，每天早晨会用10分钟时间在镶金边的菜单上点菜。还是这个男孩——不，应该说是比他成熟很多的兄长——天刚蒙蒙亮，四点就起床了，穿着滴水的油布雨衣，为拯救宝贵的生命卖力地敲钟。这口钟比服务生的早餐铃还要

小。因为在他附近的什么地方，可能会出现30英尺高的钢甲船头，以每小时20英里的速度在海上呼啸而来。最令人心痛的是，那些在铺着柔软床垫的干燥的船舱里熟睡的乘客永远不会知道，他们也许在早饭前已经撞上了一艘小船，夺去了他人的生命。于是，哈维一刻不停地敲着钟。

“瞧，他们转动该死的螺旋桨，放慢速度了。”丹说。他正在吹曼纽尔的海螺，“保持在法定速度内，就算我们都沉在海底，到时候也还可以自我安慰。听，拉响警报了！”

汽笛“嗡——嗡——嗡”响个不停，哈维还在“叮——叮

——当——当”地敲钟，“呜——呜——呜”的海螺声也响了起来。白色的浓雾中，海天融合在一起。这时，哈维觉得有什么东西从自己身旁经过。他抬头仰望，看到了悬崖般的船头，湿漉漉的船身，似乎正跳跃着直接奔向纵帆船，卷起调皮的水花。大船升起时，露出刻着一串罗马数字的悬梯——X V，X VI，X VII，X VIII等等——在闪着橙红色光芒的船舷一侧。然后，它突然向前倾了一下，发出令人心跳骤停的“嗖嗖”声。悬梯消失了。一排铜框舷窗迅速闪过，大船喷出蒸汽，哈维举起双手无助地做了抵挡。滚滚的热水柱在“我们在此”号的身边咆哮而过。大客轮的汽笛声消失在浓雾里，小个子纵帆船踉踉跄跄地在汹涌的波涛里摇晃。哈维正要晕倒时，耳边传来噼噼啪啪的声音，仿佛树干在人行道上轰然倒下，一个低低的声音从远处传来，像电话声一样慢慢靠近：“顶风停船！你把我们撞沉了。”

“是我们的吗？”哈维上气不接下气地问道。

“不是！那边的船。敲钟！我们过去看看。”说着，丹跑着去放平底船。

除了哈维、宾和厨子以外，所有人都在半分钟内跳上了平底船。顷刻间，一艘纵帆船的前桅啪的一声折断了，从船舷滑落。又一艘空荡荡的绿色小船经过，撞上了“我们在此”号，仿佛想让大船带自己走。接着，别的东西漂了过来，脸朝下，身穿一件蓝色毛衫——一具残缺的尸体。宾脸色大变，倒吸一口冷气。哈维拼命敲钟，担心自己的纵帆船也随时会被吞没，船员们回来时，听到丹的声音，立刻跑了过去。

“‘詹妮·库什曼’号，”丹歇斯底里地叫着，“被拦腰截成两段——翻了个底朝天，碎得稀巴烂！就在离这儿不到25英里的地方。爸爸救了个老头，其他人都没了——还有，他儿子也死了。哦，哈维，哈维。我真受不了！我亲眼看见——”说着，丹抱头痛哭。这时，其他人把一个老头拖上船来。

“你们为什么要救我？”陌生老头号啕大哭，“迪斯科，你为什么要救我？”

迪斯科把一只有力的大手放在老头肩上，老头的嘴唇在不停颤抖，眼神狂乱盯着沉默不语的船员。宾夕法尼亚·普拉特站起来有话要说。索尔特叔叔想不起他的名字时，会叫他哈金斯，里奇，或者麦克。此刻，他的脸上不再是愚蠢无知的表情，他像聪明睿智的老人一样，语气坚定地说：“上帝赐予你的，上帝会把他带走，上帝保佑你！我是——我是传播福音的牧师。把他交给我吧。”

“噢，你是？可以吗？”老头说，“那请你祈祷把儿子还给我！祈祷还我9000美元的船，还有1000公担的鱼啊。你们要是不救我，我就去见上帝了。我老伴儿做了寡妇，她会节俭过日子，不会知道，永远都不会知道。现在，我却不得不亲口告诉她。”

“没什么可说的，”迪斯科说，“稍微躺下会好点，詹森·奥利。”

三十秒钟的时间里，一个男人失去了他唯一的儿子、整个夏天的劳动成果、他赖以生存的一切，任何安慰都是徒劳的。

“他们都是格洛斯特人，是吧？”汤姆·普拉特无奈地摆弄着平底船的把手环。

“嗯，那没什么区别，”詹森拧干胡子上的水，说，“今年秋天，我要一直在东格洛斯特，划船接送夏天的游客。”他跌跌撞撞地跑到船沿边，哀唱起来：

“快乐的鸟儿在歌唱

绕着神坛在飞翔

哦，高高在上的上帝啊！”

“跟我来，下来！”宾在说话，好像他有权力发号施令一样。他俩的眼睛正好相遇，对视了片刻。

“我不知道你是谁，但我会去的，”詹森顺从地答道，“也许我会挽回一些——一些——9000美元。”宾领着他走进船舱，随后把门关上。

“那不是宾，”索尔特叔叔大叫，“那是雅各布·鲍勒，而且——他想起了约翰斯敦！我从没在活人脸上见过这样的眼睛。现在该干吗？现在我该怎么办？”

外面的人也能听到宾和詹森的谈话声。后来只剩宾一个人在说话，索尔特摘下帽子，因为宾正在祷告。很快那个小个子男人走上楼梯，豆

大的汗珠滑落脸颊，看着眼前的船员。这时的丹还在轮舵那里啜泣。

“他不记得我们了，”索尔特低声抱怨道，“又得重新开始，总是捉摸不定——他会对我说什么？”

宾说话了，他们能听出这番话是对陌生老头说的。“我已经祷告了，”他说，“我们的人都相信祷告。我为这个男人的孩子祷告。我眼睁睁地看着我儿子死在我眼前——我俩最大的儿子——还有其他人。难道还有谁比上帝更明智吗？我从没为其他人做过祷告，唯独给他的儿子做祷告，祈祷他的儿子回来。”

索尔特用乞求的眼神看着他，想知道宾是不是记起了什么。

“我发疯多久了？”宾突然问道，嘴角在颤抖。

“扯，宾！你从没疯过，”索尔特开始说话了，“稍微有点儿注意力不集中。”

“我看见房子砸在桥上，然后就起火了。别的没印象。那是什么时候的事？”

“我受不了啦！受不了啦！”丹大叫起来，哈维在一旁深感同情，低声呜咽起来。

“大概5年前。”迪斯科的声音有些颤抖。

“那这几年我每天都是别人的负担吧。那个人是谁？”

迪斯科指了指索尔特。

“没有——没有！”这个海上农民不停地搓手，哭着说道，“你赚的

钱是你开销的两倍，宾，我在船上那四分之一的股份还要分你一半，那是你该得的。”

“你们都是好人，从你们的脸上就能看出来。可——”

“仁慈的圣母啊，”长腿杰克低声说，“他一路跟着我们，现在终于解除魔咒了。”

旁边传来一艘纵帆船的铃声，浓雾中有人高声喊：“嗨，迪斯科！听说‘詹妮·库什曼’号的消息了吗？”

“他们找到他儿子了，”宾大叫，“站好，亲眼看一看上帝的救赎！”

“詹森在船上，”迪斯科用颤抖的声音回答，“没有——其他人吗？”

“可我们只找到一个。他蜷缩在一堆木头上，那可能是原来的船舷。他的头破了。”

“那是谁？”“我们在此”号的人激动万分，急切地问。

“我猜是小奥利。”那个人拉长声音说。

宾举起双手，讲了几句德语。哈维敢发誓说，耀眼的光照在他扬起的脸上，但那个声音又说：“喂！你们这些家伙昨晚还狠狠地嘲笑我们。”

“现在我们可没嘲笑。”迪斯科说。

“我知道，但说实话，碰到小奥利时，我们的船有点儿——有点儿漂得找不着方向。”

这是口无遮拦的克里·匹特曼说的。“我们在此”号的甲板上传来一阵阵笑声。

“你们能把老头送上船吗？我们在这儿放鱼饵和索具呢。我想，不管怎么样，你们留着他没用了。这个可恶的起锚机弄得我们人手不够了。我们会照顾好他的，他是我老婆的姑父。”

“我愿意给你船上的任何东西。”特鲁普说。

“什么也不要，或许，可能锚有用。嗨！小奥利受了点刺激，把老头也一起送过来吧。”

宾把昏厥过去的老头叫醒，汤姆·普拉特划着船把他送了过去。他连一句谢谢都没说就走了，不知道接下来会发生什么事情。大雾笼罩了一切。

“现在，”宾深深吸了一口气，似乎要祷告。“现在，”——笔直的身子像一把剑回到剑鞘一样；闪闪发光的眼睛也褪去了光芒；声音也回到了往常一样窃窃低语的状态——“现在，”宾·普拉特说，“索尔特先生，现在下棋会不会有点早？”

“有件事情——有件事情，我正要说，”索尔特立刻大声说，“我服了，宾，你怎么能知道别人心里想什么？”

小个子满脸通红，温顺地跟着索尔特往前走。

“起锚！快点！让我们离开这片疯狂的大海吧！”迪斯科大喊。船员们从来没这么迅速地服从过命令。

“你觉得这是什么意思？”长腿杰克问。他们再次穿梭在潮湿的海雾

中，茫然不知所措。

“我认为它，”迪斯科在轮舵前说道，“是这样的：‘詹妮·库什曼’号这件事堵着我们空荡荡的心——”

“他——我们看见他从旁边漂过去了。”哈维呜咽着说道。

“当然，把他从水里捞出来，把小船推上岸；正好把他推上来，我带着他，是为了让他记得约翰斯敦，雅各布·鲍勒这类的。我们会安慰詹森，鼓励他振作起来，就像是让船靠岸。由于不够强大，慢慢就又滑下去了，现在他就又掉到水里了。我认为是这样的。”

众人认为迪斯科说得非常正确。

“要是宾一直把自己当雅各布·鲍勒，”长腿杰克说，“那可够索尔特受了，宾问这几年谁一直照顾他时，你们没看到他的脸色吗？怎么样，索尔特？”

“睡了——死一样地沉，像孩子一样翻身上床睡觉了，”索尔特轻手轻脚地跟在后面，回答道，“当然，他醒来后不能没有吃的。你以前见过祈祷能有这样的效果吗？他的祷告把小奥利从大海里救了上来。这是我的想法。詹森为他的儿子感到非常自豪。我一直都不相信崇拜空虚的偶像是一种明智的表现。”

迪斯科说：“可是，到底还是有这类人的。”

“那肯定是，”索尔特迅速反驳道，“宾脑子没糊涂，我只是在他身边做好我该做的。”

这群饥饿的人一直等了三个小时，宾才再次出现。他脸色沉静，思

绪一片空白。他以为自己一直在做梦。接着，他想不明白人们为什么沉默，可大家又没法跟他说。

接下来的三四天里，迪斯科冷漠地让所有人忙起来。不能出海时，他们就会到鱼舱把船上的库存堆叠起来，以便腾出更多的地方放鱼。从船舱到壁炉后边的风门，到处都是鱼。迪斯科向众人展示了如何堆放货物才能让纵帆船处于最佳吃水状态，这是一门诀窍。于是，船员们在恢复精神后再次活跃了起来。长腿杰克拿绳子的一端挠哈维痒痒，就像戈尔韦人说的的那样，“像一只病猫为自己的无能为力而伤心”。在这些疲惫的日子里，哈维思考了很多，向丹吐露了自己的心事，丹也表示赞同——包括以后想吃煎饼时就去要，不再用鱼钩偷钓了。

然而，一周后，他俩又想出了疯狂的点子，把旧刺刀绑在一根棍子上，竟然想去刺鲨鱼，差点让“海蒂”号翻了船。这个残忍野蛮的家伙在平底船旁边游来游去，其实只是想吃些小鱼而已，好在鲨鱼和他俩最后都安然无恙。

终于，纵帆船结束了在大雾中捉迷藏的日子。一个早晨，迪斯科在甲板上大喊：“快！孩子们！我们到‘城里’了！”

第八章 Chapter Eight

哈维终生都不会忘记那样的景色。太阳刚刚跳出地平线，他们已经将近一周没有见到太阳了。太阳的红色光芒低低地照在纵帆船的三角帆上，抛锚的纵帆船一共有三支船队——一队向北，一队向西，另一队向南。所有的纵帆船大概有一百多艘，材质不一，大小各异。远处，还有一艘横帆式法国船，这些船互相致意打招呼。它们都把平底船放了下来，像从拥挤的蜂巢里放出了蜜蜂一样。起伏的波涛里充满了喧闹嘈杂的声音，绳索和木板的丁零当唧声，船桨溅起的水花声。太阳渐渐升起，船帆呈现出各种颜色，起初是黑色，然后是珍珠灰，后来变成了白色；越来越多的船只冲破迷雾向南驶去。

这些平底渔船慢慢聚拢，分开，重新聚集又再次四散，但是都涌向一个方向。人们的欢呼声、口哨声、嘲笑声、哼小曲声，混在一起，水面上零星散落着从船上扔下的垃圾。

“到城里了，”哈维说，“迪斯科说得对。那是城里。”

“我见过更小的城市，”迪斯科说，“这儿有一千来号人。那边就是处女滩。”说着，他指向一片绿色的大海，空旷的海面上没有一艘平底船。

“我们在此”号绕过北边的船队，迪斯科挨个向朋友们挥手，然后抛锚，像一艘赛艇结束赛季一样干净利落地停了下来。大浅滩的船队总是对航海技艺精湛的船表示默许，但是，对那些技术差劲的水手会一直嘲笑。

“正好赶上捕毛鳞鱼。”“玛丽·奇尔顿”号叫喊起来。

“大部分盐都用完了？”“菲利普国王”号问。

“嘿，汤姆·普拉特！今儿晚上吃饭吗？”亨利·克雷问。大家一问一答，来来回回。这些人以前都见过彼此，平时在雾里捕鱼，而且也不像大浅滩的船队一样爱闲聊。他们好像都听说过救哈维的事，问他是不是已经成为了一名合格的水手了。年轻人取笑丹，丹伶牙俐齿，用家乡的外号向他们问好，这些外号可是他们最不喜欢的。曼纽尔和同乡用他们的语言叽里咕噜地交流着，就连不爱说话的厨子也坐在第二斜桅，大声和与他一样黑肤色的朋友聊着盖尔语。他们给缆绳装上浮标——大浅滩海底都是岩石，一不小心就会磨损到锚，会有到处漂荡的危险——之后，平底船向前行进，一直驶入一英里外的船群中，才抛锚停下来。纵帆船停靠在安全的距离内，像鸭妈妈盯着自己的孩子一样，而那些平底船却像没礼貌的小鸭子。

渔船驶入喧闹的大海，船与船互相碰撞。哈维的耳朵嗡嗡作响，人们都在评论他的划船技术。他们操着各地方言，有拉布拉多语、长岛语、葡萄牙语、那不勒斯语、意大利混杂语、法语、盖尔语，有人在唱歌，有人在叫喊，还有人骂骂咧咧，这些交织在一起，包围了哈维。他似乎成了众人的笑柄。平生第一次，他感觉到了羞愧——也许，这是因为这么久只和“我们在此”号打交道——在这群随着小船起伏摇晃的野蛮人中间。一个温柔的大浪从波峰到波谷大约三弗隆²⁷长，悄悄地扛起一排不同颜色的平底船。船只挂在天际，立刻呈现出壮观的带状，船上的人们都被抛了起来。接着，那些嘴巴大张、挥舞着手臂、胸膛裸露的水手都消失不见了，而在另一个大浪涌起时，又一排人出现了，像木偶剧场的纸片人一样。哈维惊呆了。“小心！”丹一边撒网一边说，“我让你放，你就放。从现在起，毛鳞鱼会成群结队地游过来。汤姆·普拉特，

咱在哪儿撒网？”

汤姆·普拉特队长推推搡搡，费力地向前挪动，在这儿和老朋友打招呼，到那儿又警告老对手几句，终于带着他的小舰队到了大部队的下风处。这时，立马有三四个人升起锚，打算尾随“我们在此”号。不过，正当一艘平底船超速驶离原地时，掌舵人发了疯似的拉紧锚缆，引起一阵哄堂大笑。

“放松绳子！”20多个声音大喊，“让他把锚索抖开。”

小船迅速向南冲去，哈维问：“怎么回事？船抛锚了，是吧？”

“抛锚了，肯定的。可锚具飞得太快了，”丹笑着说，“鲸鱼把它缠住了……放低，哈维！它们来了！”

周围的海上阴云密布，黑压压的一片。接着，一群银白色的小鱼蜂拥而至，大概有五六英亩大的区域里，鳕鱼像五月的鲑鱼一样开始跳跃；鳕鱼后面，三四条魁梧的黑背鲸在海面上欢腾跳跃。

接着，每个人都开始大喊，用力拉起锚冲进鱼群，却不小心和旁边渔船的鱼线纠缠在了一起，都着急地嚷嚷着，拼命将长柄渔网插入水里，尖叫着让同伴谨慎些，而心底的喜悦像新鲜的苏打水一样滋滋冒泡。鳕鱼、渔民、鲸鱼，一起扑向倒霉的小鱼。哈维差点被丹打翻到船下。不过，尽管场面非常混乱，但哈维还是注意到一双邪恶的小眼睛，他永远都不会忘记——像马戏团里大象的眼睛一样——那条鲸鱼几乎是贴着海面游过来的，朝哈维眨着眼睛。这些鲁莽的海上猎人缠住了三艘船的锚缆，拖拽了半英里远，才像野马一样脱缰而去。

不一会儿，小海鱼游走了。5分钟后，大海变得平静下来，只剩铅

锤在船边溅起水花时发出的声音，鳕鱼击水时的扑棱扑棱声，还有渔民用棍棒敲打鳕鱼的声音。这次捕鱼经历非常棒。哈维看到了水下银光闪闪的鳕鱼，成群结队地慢慢游走，一边游一边不慌不忙地咬钩。平底船抵达处女滩或东岸时，大浅滩的规定是一线一钩；不过，船只挨得非常近，单个的鱼钩也会互相打结。哈维还因此和两拨人吵了起来，一边是留着长发的温和的纽芬兰人，一边是咆哮乱吼的葡萄牙人。

比鱼线缠绕在一起还要糟糕的是，平底船的锚缆在水下缠在一起。所有人都选择自认为适合自己的位置抛锚，只在固定点周围漂浮或游荡。每当鱼儿上钩速度不快时，他们都想立刻起锚，占据更好的位置。然而，每个人最后都会发现自己还是紧紧挨着四五条渔船。在大浅滩，割断其他人的锚缆是坏透了的罪行，但还是会发生，而且神不知鬼不觉，一天会发生三四起。汤姆·普拉特当场抓住了一个正在干这种勾当的缅因州人，用船桨将其打翻在船舷。曼纽尔也遇到了这样的情况，教训了他的老乡一番。不过，哈维的缆绳被割断了，和宾同病相怜，平底船装满后，他们只好求助救援船来帮忙把鱼运到“我们在此”号上。黄昏来临时，小海鱼再次席卷而来，疯狂的喧嚣又一次拉开帷幕。夜色朦胧，平底船回到纵帆船上，他们借着鱼舱边上的煤油灯光开始加工。

这次又是满载而归，加工鱼的时候哈维就睡着了。第二天，一些船正好停泊在处女滩的入口处。哈维和众人的视线落在了一块长满杂草的岩石上，它孤零零地立在那里，高出海平面20英尺左右。鳕鱼成群结队，安安静静地穿过茂密的巨型海藻，咬钩的时候一起咬，停的时候又一起停。中午时分，船上有一段闲散的时光，人们开始找乐子。丹看到“布拉格希望”号出现了，她刚刚加入捕鱼团队，人们就开始跟她打招呼：“船队中最小气的人是谁？”

三百个声音兴高采烈地回答道：“尼克·布雷迪。”这声音听起来仿

佛是一曲管弦乐。

“谁偷了灯芯？”丹也来凑了个热闹。

“尼克·布雷迪。”船上的人们齐声高唱。

“谁把咸鱼饵炖了汤？”远处传来了陌生的声音。

人群中再次响起愉快的合唱。其实，布雷迪并没有多么吝啬，只是担了这个名声，而且大部分原因是船队中人赋予的。然后，他们又发现了一艘特鲁罗船。6年前，船上这个人被指控在一根鱼线上挂了五六个钩子——是“小偷”，他们这样叫他。这是发生在大浅滩上的事情。当然，后来他也被人们称为“小偷吉姆”；尽管他曾经在乔治斯躲藏，但他发现自己的外号已经家喻户晓了。人们像放鞭炮一样，噼里啪啦地大声叫嚷着：“吉姆！哦，吉姆！吉姆！小偷吉姆！”众人哄堂大笑。这时，一位具有诗人气质的贝弗利人——他成天都在忙，一连好几个星期都在谈论——唱道：“‘凯莉·匹特曼’号的锚百无一用。”平底船上的人们像得了宝贝一样更加起劲。于是，他们就问贝弗利人，诗人怎么也出来捞钱了，因为即便是诗人也不能任由自己的性子做事。每艘纵帆船上的人几乎都来起哄了。一旦谁的船上出现了粗心大意的脏厨子，众人就会戏弄他和他的食物。要是哪艘纵帆船遇到了什么麻烦，就会有人把故事一五一十地讲给整个船队。有人吃饭时从同伴那里“钓”了香烟，开会时他必定会被点名，他的名字会一传十十传百。迪斯科准确无误的判断，长腿杰克几年前卖掉的运鱼小船，丹的心上人（哦，丹一听就暴跳如雷！），宾的倒霉的锚，索尔特对粪肥的看法，曼纽尔在岸上时犯下的小错误，以及哈维握桨时的娘娘腔——这些掌故都成了公开的笑料；阳光下，海雾像一层银色的薄幕盖在大海上，那些声音听起来像一排看不见的法官坐在席上宣判一样。

平底船在海上漂荡，人们一边捕鱼，一边斗嘴，直到海浪从海底涌起。这时，他们不得不分开，保持距离。有人说海浪如果继续翻滚，处女滩就会崩塌。鲁莽的戈尔韦人和他的侄子却不这么认为。他们撑起锚，专门向波峰驶去，有人喊着让他们离开，另一些人却鼓动他们继续划行。平滑的大浪像柱子一样向南移动，将平底船高高抬起，推进薄雾，又将其重重摔向狂暴深邃的海里。这时，平底船抛了锚，在周围旋转着，距离水下看不见的暗礁不到一两英尺。他们真是在逞能，竟然和死神玩游戏；船上的人手足无措，忐忑不安地看着，直到长腿杰克划到它后面，静静地割断锚缆。

“你们没听见撞上石头了吗？”他叫嚷着，“为了你们这两条贱命，划！划！”

小船漂了过来，船上的人们还在赌咒发誓，争吵不停。随之而来的海浪才制止了他们，像一个人在地毯上绊倒一样，海上传来低低的呜咽和咆哮声，处女滩翻滚的浪花绵延了好几英亩，白色的海浪，怒吼着向岸边奔腾过来，令人心惊胆战。接下来，所有的船热情地为长腿杰克鼓掌，戈尔韦人也闭上了嘴。

“厉害吧？”丹像只小海豹在水里一样，蹦蹦跳跳地说，“每隔半个小时船就会爆发一次，除非海浪越翻越高。通常多久会出现，汤姆·普拉特？”

“每隔15分钟，一分不差的，哈维，你已经见识了大浅滩最伟大的事件。不过，要不是长腿杰克，你会看到更多的死人。”

大雾渐浓，纵帆船开始摇铃，一阵快乐的声音传来。一艘大船谨慎地从薄雾中探出头来，迎接它的是呼喊和叫嚷声，“来吧，亲爱的。”爱

尔兰人说。

“又是法国船吗？”哈维问。

“没长眼睛吗？她是巴尔的摩船，吓得发抖的胆小鬼，”丹说，“我们得好好教训她。我猜，这是她的船长第一次碰到捕鱼船队。”

这是一艘体格硕大，重达800吨的黑色船。她的主桅盘旋而上，主桅帆随着风向摇摆不定。现在，她比海上的其他船只更富女性气息。这个犹豫不决的大家伙，船头带着白色的镶金边的雕饰，看上去像个迷茫的女孩子，在一群坏小子的嘲笑中，半撩起裙子穿过泥泞的街道，现在的她完完全全处在这样的局面中。她明白自己就在处女滩的附近海域，听到了海浪的咆哮，于是她问人们这是哪里，平底船上的人们告诉她：

“处女滩？你在说什么？这里是星期天早上的勒阿弗尔。赶快回家清醒一下。”

“回去，你这个缩头乌龟！回去告诉他们，我们来了。”

船尾向下栽进海里，浪花翻滚着进入排水管，六七个声音一起发出了和谐的曲调：“啊——呀——嗨——她撞了！”

“用力拉！用这辈子最大的劲儿，拉起来！现在，你已经控制住她了。”

“往下！使劲往下！啥也别管！”

“大家都来压水泵！”

“放下三角帆，用力撑！”

此时，船长勃然大怒，絮叨着什么。人们回应着他，只好暂时搁置了手里的活儿。他听到了各种关于他的船的故事，以及下一个停泊地。人们问他有没有买保险，什么时候偷了锚，因为他们说那是“凯莉·匹特曼”号的锚。他们嘲笑他的船是“泥地里的耙斗”，指责他倒垃圾时吓跑了鱼。他们还说会把船拖走，还要向他老婆收取拖船费；一个大胆的年轻人竟然溜到船尾下方，拍着船身，说“滚！黑家伙！”

厨子把一盘灰倒在他头上，他拿了鳕鱼头去回击。大船上的船员们从厨房取了小煤块点燃后往下丢，平底船扬言要“灭了”她。要是她真的在冒险，他们也会警告她。不过，她平安无事地离开处女滩，他们还是制造了很多机会拿她寻开心。大船在上风处半英里的地方再次撞上岩石，历经磨难的大船终于脱离一切阻挠，找到了出路；平底船上的人们却觉得这艘船勇气可嘉。

那一夜，处女滩的风一直在嘶鸣咆哮。第二天早晨，越过怒吼的苍茫大海，哈维看到船队的主桅在风中摇曳，等候领航的小船下海。直到10点，才有一艘平底船起锚。“天眼”号的两个哲罗德人以为海上风平浪静，率先出海，实际上却打错了算盘。一分钟内，一半的船都出海了，在波浪里起伏。不过，特鲁普却一直在让船员们加工鱼。他认为这样的冒险没有任何意义。到了晚上，狂风骤雨加剧，他们高兴地迎接着那些湿透了的不速之客。这群人在风暴里能有个容身之处简直高兴得不得了。男孩们举着灯站在钓具旁，大人们早已做好起锚的准备，瞪大眼睛盯着翻滚的巨浪，波涛汹涌的大海会让他们放下一切去挽救宝贵的生命。夜色里传来了“平底船，平底船！”的喊声。他们放下钩子，拉起一个湿透了的男人和一艘差点沉没的船。最后，他们的甲板上到处堆放着平底船，床铺也都被占满。哈维值班时，大浪五次向甲板袭来，他和丹只好跳上前桅斜桁，斜桁突然砸向纵帆的下桁，他们只好用胳膊和腿抱

住桅杆，用牙齿咬紧绳索和湿透的帆布。一艘平底船被大浪拍成了碎片，海水打在一个男人的头上，将他击倒在甲板上，他的前额磕破了一个口子；黎明时分，狂暴的大海泛起冰冷的白光。一个面色惨白的男人爬上甲板，他的一只胳膊受了伤。他向众人打听他兄弟的消息。早饭时，船上多了7个人：一位瑞典人，一位查塔姆船长，一位缅因州的汉考克男孩，一个达克斯伯雷人，还有三个普罗温斯敦人。

第二天，船队进行了一次人员大清点。尽管没人说什么，但当每艘船的船员都确定在场后，众人的胃口还是不错的。只有两个葡萄牙人和一个格洛斯特老头溺水了，不过许多人被割伤或划伤了。两艘纵帆船的索具都坏了，被吹向南方，漂流了三天。法国船上死了一个人——这艘巨型船和“我们在此”号做过烟草生意。在一个潮湿朦胧的早晨，这艘船安静地滑向远处，掉进深水里，船帆依旧悬挂着，哈维从迪斯科的望远镜里见证了这场葬礼，他们只是把一个长方形的包裹推下了船舷。他们似乎什么都没做，没有举行任何悼念仪式。当晚抛锚后，哈维听见他们在唱歌。星光点缀的黑色大海上，他们唱着听起来好像是赞美诗一样的曲调，节奏平和而缓慢：

海上的纵帆船

徘徊着不肯离去

我将远行

哦，圣母玛利亚

哦，上帝

为我祈祷

永别了，故乡

永别了，魁北克

汤姆·普拉特登上了那艘船，因为他说死者是他共济会的兄弟。原来，那个可怜人被海浪拍打了两次，碰到船首斜桅的后端，伤了后背。消息闪电般传播开来。不合常理的是，法国人对这个人留下的工具进行了拍卖，他在圣·马洛或密克隆没有朋友，房间里铺满了他的东西，从红色的针织帽到带鞘刀的皮带。丹和哈维正好在海上20英寻深的水域。自然，人群中少不了他俩。这次划行非常不容易，丹光买那把刀就花了一些时间。这把刀有着奇怪的铜刀柄。他们跳下大船，划着小船离开时，海上正好下起了雨。这时，他们才想起惹了麻烦，因为耽误了捕鱼。

“我想，要是暖和点，咱俩都会没事的。”丹披着油布雨衣，直打哆嗦。他们渐渐驶入了大雾中心，像往常一样，大雾降临时没有任何预兆。

“周围的海潮捉摸不定，光靠直觉根本不够。”他说，“抛锚，哈维，我们先捕鱼。等会儿雾就散了。放下最重的铅锤。在这附近，三磅的铅锤对你来说不算什么。你看，鱼线早就收紧了。”

船首开始冒泡，大浅滩不可抗拒的力量牢牢地抓住了平底船的锚，但他们看不到船的全貌。

哈维竖起衣领，蜷缩着靠在鱼线轮上，像个疲惫的海员一样。现在，大雾对他来说没什么特别的可怕之处。他们默默地捕了一会儿鱼，发现鳕鱼稳稳地咬钩了。这时，丹拿出鞘刀，在船舷上试了试刀刃。

“真是好东西，”哈维称赞说，“你是怎么搞到这么便宜的东西的？”

“都是他们那天主教迷信在作怪，”丹挥舞着明晃晃的刀。“这么说吧，他们不想从死人身上拿铁物件。我竞拍这把刀子时，看见那个阿里沙特²⁸的法国人往后退了。”

“可是，拍卖就不能想着是从死人身上拿的东西了，这是生意。”

“我们当然明白，可没法堵住别人的嘴啊。这也是生活在先进国家的优势。”说着，丹开始吹口哨：

“哦，盖双层茅草屋的工匠，你好吗？

现在，即将到达东部海角

在海角抛锚

男孩女孩很快会相见”

“那东港人为什么要竞拍呢？他也买了靴子。缅因州很先进吗？”

“缅因州？别提了！他们知道得不多，或者说他们没多少钱去粉刷房子。我见过他们。东港那个人跟我说，这把刀子是用过的——这是船长告诉他的——去年在法国海岸用过。”

“杀人吗？把击鱼棒递给我。”哈维拉起鱼，再次装饵，把鱼线抛下去。

“杀了！当然。我听到这事儿就更想买了。”

“上帝啊，我都不知道。”哈维转过身，说道，“就为这个，等我拿

到工资，我给你一美元。不，两美元。”

“真的吗？你真这么喜欢它？”丹涨红了脸，问，“好吧。跟你说实话，我是为你才买下这把刀子的——送给你；但我没说，我想知道你的反应。这归你了，喜欢吧，哈维。我们是同一条船上的伙伴，现在，以后，都是，永远都是。接着！”

说着，丹拿出刀、皮带和其他东西。

“丹，瞧这儿，我不知道怎么——”

“拿着。我要这些没用。希望你能喜欢。”

这样的诱惑实在让人难以抗拒。“丹，你真是个好人的，”哈维说，“只要我活着，我会一直保存好它。”

“听到这句话太高兴了，”丹说着，高兴地笑了。然后，他急忙转换了话题：“好像你的绳子动起来了，很快。”

“我估计是被鱼咬住了。”哈维用力拖拽着说。他先把皮带系在腰上，然后才开始拉网。听到刀鞘尖碰撞横坐板的叮当声，内心深处感到一阵喜悦。“注意听！”他大声说，“它好像碰到草莓根儿一样的东西了。不对，这里全是沙地，对吧？”

丹凑过来，用自己的智慧做出了判断。“大比目鱼生气时，会这么干。这儿没有草莓根儿。拉一两次，她肯定会上钩。我想，咱们应该先拉起来，看看怎么回事。”

两个人一起使劲往上拉，每到系索耳的地方鱼线缠绕的速度都会加快，海里的东西慢吞吞地升了起来。

“中奖喽，哦！”丹大喊。然而，一阵尖利、恐怖的声音从海上传来——那是两天前葬身大海的法国人的尸体！吊钩正好勾住他的右腋窝，他就这么摇晃着，笔直地竖起来，头和肩膀耷拉在水面上。他的胳膊紧贴身体两侧，而且——看不清他的脸。两个男孩被吓得摔倒平底船底，他俩躺在那里不敢动弹，船舷上拉紧了的绳子上还挂着那具尸体。

“海浪——是海浪把他带过来的！”哈维说。当他的手摸到皮带时，嘴唇不住地哆嗦。

“哦，上帝啊！哦，哈维！”丹低声抱怨，“快！他是来取那些东西的。让他拿走，解下来。”

“我不要！我不想要！”哈维哭着说，“可是我找不到皮带扣。”

“快点，哈维！他就挂在你的鱼线上！”

哈维坐起来，开始解皮带。对面就是那个没脸的脑袋，头发湿漉漉地往下滴水，“他还在动，”哈维悄悄对丹说。丹迅速拿出刀子，割断绳子，哈维把皮带扔了老远。那具尸体扑通一声掉进水里，丹小心翼翼地站起来，脸色比大雾都要惨白。

“他是来取那些东西的。他是来取那些东西的。我以前见过一具腐烂的尸体挂在排钩上，没什么可怕的。但这次，他是专门来找咱们的。”

“我希望——我希望我从没买过那把刀。那样，他就不会爬上你的鱼线了。”

“我不知道这有什么区别。这么多年，头一次这么害怕。哦，哈维，你看见他的脑袋了吗？”

“我吗？我这辈子也忘不了。不过，丹，看这儿。其实他并不是故意的。都是海潮的缘故。”

“海潮？哈维，他是来找刀子的。知道吗？他们把他沉在船队往南6英里的地方。我们现在离那条船两英里。他们告诉我，他淹死的时候，身上缠着一英寻半的锚缆。”

“我不知道他要刀子干吗——要上岸吗？”

“比那更糟糕。我想，他是要拿着刀子去找上帝，去——你动那些鱼干吗？”

“把它们扔下船去，”哈维回答。

“为什么？我们又不吃。”

“我不管。我解皮带时看见他的脸了。你如果想要的话，把你钓的留着。我那些留着没用。”

丹虽然什么都没说，可他也把鱼扔了。

“我想，这下就安全了吧。”最后，他小声嘟哝着说，“要是大雾能散去，我宁愿拿出一个月工资。大雾里发生的事情有些是在晴天看不到的——像这类冤魂野鬼。很庆幸，他是这样漂过来的，而不是走着来的。不过，他也许是走来的。”

“别说了，丹！我们这会儿就在他头顶上面。我要是安全地待在船上多好，就算索尔特叔叔揍我都行。”

“他们会来找我们的。吹喇叭。”丹拿起号角，又停了下来。

“吹啊，”哈维说，“我可不想一晚上都待在这儿。”

“问题是，他是怎么拿走那些东西的？以前有个岸上的人跟我说，他曾经在纵帆船上时，大家都不敢吹号去呼唤平底船，因为船长——不是和他在一起的那个，是5年前的那个——有一次他喝醉了，把一个男孩推下船淹死了。从此以后，那个男孩就一直跟着他，经常喊着‘平底船，平底船’。”

“平底船！平底船！”大雾里传来模糊不清的喊声。两个孩子又吓得蜷缩成一团，丹手里的号角都掉在了地上。

“拿好！”哈维大叫，“那是厨子。”

“见鬼，别再让我想起那个愚蠢的故事。”丹说，“当然是厨子来救我们了。”

“丹，丹——，喂，丹！哈维！喂，哈维——！”

“我们在这儿。”两个孩子一起喊起来。他们听到了划桨声，但什么也没看到。直到厨子划着船出现了，浑身湿漉漉，闪烁着耀眼的光芒。

“发生什么事了？”他问，“等回去了，你们准会挨揍！”

“我们正巴不得呢。也是我们应该受的。”丹说，“只要能回家，啥都是好的。我俩真够倒霉了。”厨子给他们抛了一根绳子，丹给他讲了刚才的经历。

“绝对是！他是来找他的刀子的。”最后，厨子只说了这么一句。

厨子划着船穿过大雾，把他俩接回去的时候，他们从来没觉得“我

们在此”号如此亲切。船舱里透出温暖的灯光，前方飘来饭食的香气，听到迪斯科和其他人的声音，简直令人心情愉快，这一切是那么的活跃，那么踏实。众人斜倚在船舷，威胁要狠狠揍他们一顿。不过，厨子很有头脑。他先在船尾周围兜兜转转，讲了精彩的故事情节，他把哈维描述成是消灾解难的吉祥神，然后才让他们把平底船拉上纵帆船。于是，这两个男孩简直成了不可思议的英雄，每个人都追着他们问东问西，并没有因为给大家带来了麻烦而惩罚他们。小个子宾发表了抨击愚蠢迷信的演说，但众人并不赞同他，反而喜欢长腿杰克的令人毛骨耸然的鬼故事。他们一直聊到了午夜。这样的情形下，除了索尔特和宾，没有人对“偶像崇拜”持什么异议。厨子点亮蜡烛，摆上蛋糕和水，取了一撮盐，把它们放在船尾，顺水漂流，以此祈祷法国人的亡灵可以安宁，不再来兴风作浪。丹点燃蜡烛，因为是他买了带刀鞘的皮带。厨子叽里咕噜地念诵着什么，直到火苗沉入水中为止。

守夜结束后，哈维问丹：“你怎么看待进步与天主教迷信？”

“哼！我想我和其他人一样足够开明进步，可是没想到那个死去的圣·马洛人，为那30美分的刀子，一只手搭在甲板上，差点吓死两个可怜的孩子，所以，只好交给厨子全权处理了。我不相信任何外国人，不管死活，都不信。”

第二天早晨，除了厨子，所有人都为昨晚的仪式感到难堪，只能不分昼夜地干活，彼此说话时，语气也都是恶狠狠的。

“我们在此”号和“帕里·诺曼”号齐头并进，只为争夺最后的几群鱼。双方的竞争非常激烈，于是，其他船队选择了靠边观望，并且开始用烟草打赌。船员们不是忙着拉网，就是忙着加工，一直忙到困得倒头就睡——从黎明前忙到伸手不见五指的深夜。他们甚至把厨子也叫来帮忙。

哈维在鱼舱递盐，丹负责加工鱼。“帕里·诺曼”号的一个船员从船舷掉了下来，扭伤了脚踝，“我们在此”号才有幸获胜。哈维觉得船上再也塞不下一条鱼了。可迪斯科和汤姆·普拉特还在不停地堆啊堆，甚至还扔掉了几块大压舱石，把杂乱的鱼堆压紧，最后还能给第二天的鱼留下地方。迪斯科没有告诉他们盐是什么时候用完的，他跑到近船尾的贮藏室，拉起一面大主帆。那时是早晨10点。到中午时，三角帆落了下来，他们把上桅帆升起来。一些平底船跟在旁边，想让大船帮忙给老家捎信，并且羡慕他们的好运气。最后，他们清空了甲板，升起旗子——这是驶离大浅滩的第一艘船——起锚，开始返航。迪斯科装作想照顾那些并没有来送信件的同行，让“我们在此”号得体地穿梭在纵帆船间。事实上，这是他小小的凯旋仪式。五年以来的出色航行，确实证明了他是什么样的海员。丹的手风琴、汤姆·普拉特的小提琴，合奏出一支神奇的曲调，只有在盐全部用完时才会听到。

“嗨！嗨！哟吼！送信来！”

所有的盐都用完了，起锚回家！

哦，折叠主桅帆，我们回来了

新英格兰——

一千五百公担

一千五百公担

再来一千公担

我们在班奎罗和大浅滩间穿行”

最后几封信系着煤块，被扔在了甲板上。格洛斯特男人们大声喊着要捎给妻子、女性亲眷以及雇主们的口信。“我们在此”号奏着乐曲，穿过船队。船帆在风中飘荡，好像一个人在挥手告别。

不久，哈维发现，扬起三角帆，从一个泊位航行到另一个泊位的“我们在此”号，和那个朝西偏南方向满帆返航的“我们在此”号是截然不同的两艘船。即使在“小儿科”的天气里，轮舵也会受到敲击。他能感受到纵帆船在遇到汹涌的波涛时，鱼舱受到的重创。两侧浪花泛起的泡沫让他头晕目眩。

迪斯科一直在让船员整理船帆。当船帆像赛艇一样铺平时，丹不得不在大主桅上等着，因为它会经常乱飘，必须用手拉开。闲暇时，他们又得抽水，因为那些鱼在不停地滴水，这样才能让船升起来。然而，因为无须捕鱼，哈维有时间从另一个角度去观赏大海。船舷低矮的纵帆船和她周围的环境融为一体。每当她随着波峰涌起时，几乎看不到地平线。通常情况下，纵帆船都是在烦躁的推挤中坚定不移地行进，穿过灰色、灰蓝色，或者黑色的波峰浪谷，周围是一条一条的泡沫带，或者沿海浪的侧面轻柔地滑行。她似乎在说：“你不会伤害我的，是吧？我只是小小的‘我们在此’号。”然后，她就乐呵呵地顺水溜走了，直到碰见新的阻碍。船上迟钝的船员们，日复一日地辛苦劳作，根本注意不到这些。哈维却一点都不呆板。枯燥的涨潮落潮声，伴随着持续不断的浪花拍打声。海风呼啸着掠过空旷的海面，蓝紫色的云影聚在一起。红日喷薄而出，驱散了早晨的阴霾，越过层层白色巨浪；中午耀眼的阳光炫目而略带咸味；雨滴轻柔地亲吻着死寂的海平面；寒冷刺骨的夜幕宣告一天的结束；月光下的海面波光粼粼，第二斜桅冷峻地搅乱灿烂的星海。这时，哈维总会下楼，找厨子要一个甜甜圈。

不过，最有趣的要数孩子们一起站在轮舵前，汤姆·普拉特在旁边

指挥；船桅轻柔地击碎碧蓝的大海，在下风处留下完整的彩虹桥。吊杆的狭窄处碰到桅杆时发出呜咽声，脚索吱吱呀呀地响，鼓涨的风帆咆哮怒吼着。纵帆船落到波谷时，就像一个妇人被自己的丝裙绊倒一样；当她继续前行，到达波峰时，三角帆已经被打湿了。丹依然半吊悬着，殷切眺望着撒切尔岛上高耸的双子塔的灯光。

迪斯科一行离开冰冷灰暗的大浅滩海域，路过圣劳伦斯海峡时，看到了往魁北克方向去的运木船，还有西班牙和西西里的双桅横帆船。这时，海上刮起了来自阿蒂蒙浅滩的东北风，把他们送去观赏塞布尔岛的东方灯塔。不过，迪斯科并没有为此流连忘返，而是和那几条船一起经过韦斯特恩和勒阿弗尔，向乔治斯的北部边缘驶去。从那里开始，纵帆船乘风破浪，欢乐地冲向前方。

“我心里惦记着海蒂，”丹悄悄告诉哈维，“海蒂和妈妈。下个礼拜天你得雇个孩子往你玻璃上浇水，要不然听不到水声你就没法睡觉。我估计，你得一直和我们待在一起，直到你的家人来，你觉得上岸最大的好处是什么？”

“热水澡？”哈维回答。海水打湿了他的眉毛，风干后渗出了白色的盐花。

“挺好，不过有件睡袍更好。自从我们扬帆起航，我就梦想能穿上睡袍，那样你就可以随便活动你的脚指头了。妈妈给我做了一件新睡衣，洗得软绵绵的。那就是家，哈维。那是家！你能从空气里闻到家的味道。我们现在进入热浪的边缘了，我好像能闻到杨梅的味道。我想知道能不能在晚饭时赶回去，往左舵转一下。”

摇摆不定的船帆在沉闷的空气里飘动翻转，周围是深邃平滑的大

海，泛起油滑的蓝光。他们吹着口哨等着起风，却只等来一场倾盆大雨，噼里啪啦地下了没多久，便是八月中旬的电闪雷鸣。两人赤着脚、光着上身躺在甲板上，讨论着上岸后第一顿饭要吃什么，因为陆地已经清晰可见了。一艘格洛斯特剑鱼船漂浮在“我们在此”号旁边，一个男人站在船首的驾驶台处，挥舞着鱼叉。他没有戴帽子，头发湿漉漉地耷拉了下来。“一切顺利！”他高兴地大喊着，好像自己正在一艘大客轮上值班一样。“乌尔曼码头的人们都在等你，迪斯科。船队有什么消息吗？”

迪斯科大声回答了他。夏天的狂风暴雨劈头盖脸地砸过来，闪电立刻沿着海角从四面八方射来，像一座座低矮的山丘一样包围着格洛斯特海港。十磅岛，鱼棚，鳞次栉比的屋顶，水中的标杆和浮标。这幅令人炫目的场景时而会出现在“我们在此”号面前，随后又消失了，反反复复有十来次，船尾的响哨浮标在后面发出哀鸣声。接着，风暴慢慢减弱，蓝白色的电光时不时地划过天际，只剩迫击炮一样的雷鸣声，星空下的空气似乎也被震得嗡嗡作响，逐渐一切归于平静。

“旗子，旗子！”迪斯科突然指着前方大喊。

“那是什么？”长腿杰克问。

“奥托！降一半，桅杆。那样，他们从岸上就能看见我们了。”

“我忘光了。他不是格洛斯特的人，是吧？”

“今年秋天会娶格洛斯特女孩。”

“圣母保佑她！”长腿杰克一边说，一边把桅杆放低一半，以防自己也像奥托一样。三个月前，奥托在刮大风时从船上掉了下去。

迪斯科擦掉眼睛上的水，低声传达了命令，指挥“我们在此”号

驶入乌尔曼港口。纵帆船围着拖轮摇摆，守夜人从漆黑的码头呼唤“我们在此”号。黑暗中，整个过程充满了神秘感，哈维能感觉到自己再次靠近了大地，成千上万的人进入了梦乡，雨后的泥土散发着味道，货场熟悉的调度引擎不住地发出吭吭声，这一切都让他心跳加速。他们听到灯塔上值锚更的人在打呼噜，嗅到了深邃黑夜里一团闪烁的灯光。一些人被惊醒了，一边抱怨一边扔给他们一根绳子。很快，他们便登上了安静的码头。这里的两侧排列着铁顶的工棚，空旷却温暖，悄无声息地立在那里。

这时，哈维坐在轮舵旁不停地抽泣，感觉心都要碎了一般。一直坐在磅秤上的大个子女人跳上纵帆船，立刻亲吻丹的脸颊，那是丹的母亲。电闪雷鸣时，她看到了“我们在此”号。直到哈维缓过劲来，她才注意到这个孩子。迪斯科给她讲了哈维的故事。天亮时，他们一起回到迪斯科的家。等到电报局开门后，他才能给家人发电报。哈维·切尼也许是全美国最孤单的小孩了，可奇怪的是，迪斯科和丹似乎觉得哈维压根没必要哭。

直到迪斯科出现，乌尔曼码头也还没准备好接受他的价码，因为“我们在此”号比任何一艘格洛斯特船都要提前至少一周抵港，所以他们可以考虑几天。于是，所有人都到街上去转悠。长腿杰克拦下一辆洛基有轨电车，他说按规定，自己可以免费乘车，最后售票员只得同意。丹翘起雀斑鼻子，趾高气扬地到处走动，在家人面前故作神秘。

“丹，如果你再这样，我就要揍你了。”特鲁普闷闷不乐地说，“这次，自打我们上岸，你表现得太无知愚蠢了。”

“他要是我儿子的话，我早就动手了。”索尔特叔叔没好气地说。他和宾寄宿在特鲁普家。

“哦呼！”丹在后院一边拨弄手风琴，一边准备在敌人进攻时随时翻墙逃走。“迪斯科，你一直相信自己的判断力，不过你要记住，我可警告过你，你自己的亲生骨肉警告过你！要是你判断错误的话可别怪我，但我会坐在甲板上看着你。还有你，索尔特叔叔，法老的侍酒官²⁹可没跟着你！你小心点，等着瞧。你会像该死的苜蓿草一样被铲除；我就不一样了——丹·特鲁普——我会像一棵月桂树一样茂盛，因为我没有坚持自己的观点。”

迪斯科穿着一双精美的绒毡拖鞋，端起在岸上的架子，一边抽烟一边说：“你越来越像可怜的哈维了。你俩一直在桌子底下挤眉弄眼，互相踢打，整个房子都不得安宁。”

“对一些人来说，会发生很大变化。”丹回答道，“你们等着瞧。”

丹和哈维乘坐电车去了东格洛斯特。在那里，他俩穿过杨梅树丛，走到灯塔下，躺在红色的巨石上，笑得肚子都饿了。哈维给丹看了一封电报，两人发誓一定要保守秘密，直到真相大白。

“哈维的家人？”晚饭后，丹一脸沉静，说道，“嗯，我觉得他们没什么了不起的，要不然为什么到现在我们都没收到他们的任何消息。他爸在西部有好多商店。说不准，他会给你五美元，爸爸。”

“我跟你说过什么？”索尔特说，“吃饭时，不要乱喷唾沫。”

²⁷ 弗隆，英美的长度单位。

²⁸ 阿里沙特，位于加拿大新斯科舍省。

²⁹ 法老的侍酒官，出自《圣经》创世记里的一个故事。法老的侍酒官犯了错被关进牢里，约瑟为他解梦，预言三天后会官复原职，果然

应验。

第九章 Chapter Nine

不论切尼先生个人有多难过，即便他是百万富翁，他都必须和其他工人一样，让自己的生意得以继续。年老的哈维·切尼在六月底就去了东部，那里有一位崩溃的妇人，半疯半傻，日思夜想她那葬身茫茫大海的儿子。她的周围都是切尼先生安排的医生、训练有素的护士、按摩师，甚至还有心理疗伤师，然而，一切都是徒劳的。切尼太太一动不动地躺在那里，要么陷入深深的哀恸，要么向每个愿意听她诉说的人讲起儿子的故事，一说就是一个小时。她已经绝望了，可是谁又能给她希望呢？她所需要的是有人向她保证，溺水而亡不会有痛苦。因此，她的丈夫只好派人看着她，以防她去亲自试验。对于自己内心的伤痛，他只字不提——只有当他独自坐在办公桌前，看着日历，自问继续下去有什么意义时，才能体会到深深的痛。

在他的脑海里，曾经有过非常令人满意的安排：某一天，当他把所有事情都安排好，儿子从大学毕业，他会把自己的想法告诉儿子，并且把产业交给他。到那时，他会像所有忙碌的父亲一样，让儿子成为他的左膀右臂和同盟军，他们会一起打拼灿烂的事业，迎接美好的未来——有经验的老者辅助年轻气盛的头脑。现在，他的儿子死了——葬身大海，就像切尼的一艘运茶船上的瑞典海员一样；更糟糕的是，他的妻子也快不行了。他自己也被一群妇女、医生、侍女、仆人搞得晕头转向；他简直无法承受妻子那些不停变化的怪念头；绝望的切尼已经再没有心情去面对生意场上的那些竞争对手了。

他把妻子带到圣地亚哥的住所，那里还没有完全建好。他把妻子和

她的随从安排到价格不菲的侧厅，他自己住在带阳台的房间里，左右分别住着秘书和兼做电报员的打字员，成天忙得精疲力尽。西部的四条铁路正在打价格战，这原本应该是他感兴趣的；在他俄勒冈州的木材场里发生了一场毁灭性的大罢工，加利福尼亚州的议会不喜欢他，而且正准备向他宣战。

往常，不等对方宣战，他就会率先发难，肆无忌惮地采取一些手段，只要自己高兴就好。然而，现在的他浑身无力，瘫坐在椅子上，黑色的软帽耷拉在鼻子上，魁梧的身子蜷缩在宽松的衣服里，不知道是在盯着脚上的靴子，还是在看海湾里的中式帆船。他一边随手打开周六的邮件，一边心不在焉地回答秘书的问题。

切尼正在琢磨，如果放下这一切，换得脱身，需要付出多少代价。他买了巨额保险，可以获得丰厚的养老年金，还可以去他在科罗拉多的地盘，或是在华盛顿或南加利福尼亚岛这样的地方建一个小社区（那样对他妻子有好处），也许一个人会在这种环境里忘记那些实现不了的计划。另一方面.....

打字机的敲击声戛然而止，女打字员看着秘书，脸色煞白。

他递给切尼一封来自圣弗朗西斯科的信：

落水后被渔船“我们在此”号救起

大浅滩捕鱼很开心

幸有迪斯科•特鲁普照顾

在格洛斯特等候汇款或指示

妈妈可好

哈维·切尼

电报从这位父亲的手中掉在了地上，他的脑袋靠着办公桌的盖板，呼吸变得急促起来。秘书急忙去找切尼太太的医生，医生来了以后，发现切尼先生在房中踱来踱去。

“怎么——你怎么看待这封信？可能吗？它是什么意思？我有点不太明白。”切尼大声嚷嚷道。

“我知道，”医生说，“我每年少赚7千美元——就这么回事。”他想到由于切尼专横的命令，内心经过痛苦挣扎后放弃了纽约的诊所，长叹一声后归还了电报。

“你的意思是要告诉她？要是个骗局呢？”

“那么做的动机是什么？”医生非常冷静，“一查就明白了，这就是那小子。”

一位法国侍女冒冒失失地闯进来，这种必不可少的人物只有高薪水才能留得住。

“切尼夫人说让您马上过去。她有事找您。”

这位身价三千万的富翁毕恭毕敬地跟在苏珊娜后边；一个尖细高亢的声音从宏伟的白木楼梯上传来：“什么？发生了什么事？”

切尼先生爆出这则消息后不久，整幢房子里回响着这个声音，任何门窗都无法阻挡。

“没事儿，”医生沉着地对打字员说，“小说中仅有的关于医学的描述提到，任何喜悦的真相都不会致命，金丽小姐。”

“我知道，但我们首先得做很多事情。”金丽小姐来自密尔沃基，喜欢直来直去；她开始琢磨秘书的想法，猜测马上要忙起来了。秘书正认真地看着墙上的美国地图。

“米尔索姆，我们立刻出发。私家专列——直达——波士顿。马上联系。”切尼朝楼下大喊。

“我早就知道会是这样。”

秘书转向打字员，两人四目相对（这里面还有一段故事——不过，与本文无关），打字员好奇地望着秘书，对他的消息来源表示怀疑。他向她打了个手势，示意她去发送摩斯电码，就像将军调兵遣将一样。然后，像音乐家一样，撩了撩头发，看了看天花板，开始工作。金丽小姐用白皙的手指敲击电码，接通了美洲大陆。

“K.H ·韦德，洛杉矶——‘康士坦茨’号是在洛杉矶，对吧？金丽小姐？”

“对，”金丽小姐一边敲击电码一边点头。秘书看了看腕表。

“准备好了吗？‘康士坦茨’号私家专列将开向那里。安排好周日准时从这里出发。接下来，周二，芝加哥，联系纽约十六大道的特快列车。”

咔嗒——咔嗒——咔嗒！“你没有更好的安排了吗？”

“在这些路段上没有了。从这儿到芝加哥需要花费60小时的时间。

就算是乘坐开往东部的专列也没有多快。好了吗？接下来还要安排湖岸和密歇根南部铁路，做好迎接‘康士坦茨’号的准备，转往纽约中心和哈得孙河，途经布法罗，去奥尔巴尼，通知这些地方，要从奥尔巴尼到波士顿。我绝对要在周三晚上抵达波士顿。要确保没什么阻碍。发电报给卡尼夫，托西和巴尔尼斯。——署名，切尼。”

金丽小姐点点头，秘书继续往下讲。

“现在，接着。发给卡尼夫、托西和巴尔尼斯。准备好了吗？芝加哥的卡尼夫。下周二下午，我的私家专列‘康士坦茨’号将抵达纽约的十六大道，然后接特快列车开到布法罗。经由纽约中央铁路去奥尔巴尼。——去过纽约吗，金丽小姐？总有一天，我们会去，——好了吗？私家专列在周二下午由布法罗到奥尔巴尼。这是发给托西的。”

“我没去过纽约，但我知道那里！”金丽小姐猛地抬头说道。

“对不起。现在发给波士顿，奥尔巴尼的巴尔尼斯，内容和从奥尔巴尼到波士顿的安排一样，下午3点5分出发（你不用发这句话）；周三晚上9点5分就能到。这些都是韦德要做的，不过会让老板们发抖。”

“棒极了，”金丽小姐的眼睛里充满了钦佩，这才是她所熟悉并且欣赏的男人。

“还行吧，”米尔索姆谦虚地说，“现在，要不是我，别人得浪费30个小时，花一星期的时间才能想出这条路线，而不是拿出从圣达菲直接去芝加哥的计划。”

“但你看这儿，关于纽约特快列车。就算是昌西·迪普自己，也绝不会让他的私家专列挂在这趟车上的。”金丽小姐回过神来，说出自己的

看法。

“是，但他不是昌西，他是切尼——是闪电。没问题。”

“就算如此。不管怎么样，我想我们最好给那孩子拍个电报，你忘了。”

“我会问的。”

秘书返回时，带来了切尼先生命令儿子准时在波士顿见面的消息，他发现金丽小姐正对着电报机的电键笑。接着，米尔索姆也笑了起来。因为洛杉矶发来了情绪失控的电报：“我们想知道为什么——为什么——为什么，大家的不安情绪在蔓延。”

十分钟后，芝加哥方面再次给金丽小姐发来了请求：“如果发生了世纪大案，请及时通知我们。我们将严阵以待。”

比这些更加可笑的是托皮卡发来的消息（托皮卡到底在想什么，就连米尔索姆也猜不到）：“别开枪，上校。我们马上投降。”

当切尼收到对手们的回复时，看着他们的惶恐不安，切尼冷冷地笑了。“他们以为我们要发动战争了。米尔索姆，告诉他们，我可不想现在开战。跟他们说明，我们为什么这么做。我觉得你和金丽小姐也应该一起去，虽然我在路上也不可能做什么生意。告诉他们实情吧——仅此一次。”

于是，真相大白。金丽小姐充满感情地敲击电键，秘书引用了令人难以忘怀的名言：“让我们与和平相拥吧。”两千英里外的董事会会议室里，铁路工程的代表们终于松了一口气，他们手里操纵的铁路价值6300万美元。切尼要飞奔去见独子，这个孩子竟然失而复得，简直是奇迹。

老熊要去找幼崽，而不是找公牛打斗。这些为了经济命脉而拿起匕首的硬汉，现在放下武器，祝福切尼一路顺风。6个惊魂未定的笨脑瓜活跃起来了，吹嘘说要是切尼不放下武器的话，他们原本可能会有大动作。

对于电报局来说，这是一个忙碌的周末。既然焦虑已经消散，各地的人们就开始忙着为切尼一行安排食宿了。洛杉矶向圣地亚哥和巴斯托发了电报，南加利福尼亚州的工程师们收到了通知，待在孤寂的机车车库里准备就绪；巴斯托把这些命令又传达给大西洋和太平洋铁路；阿尔伯克基又全部转述给艾奇逊、托皮卡和圣达菲的管理层，甚至连芝加哥也收到了消息。车头、车厢、全体司乘人员和那辆镀金的“康士坦茨”号专列一起浩浩荡荡地出发了，即将行驶2350英里。这趟列车要先行出发，赶在177次列车会车前通过。调度员和工作人员都接到了通知。专列需要16台发动机，16位工程师，16名消防员——每台发动机和每名司乘人都要最优秀的。更换发动机只有两分半的时间，三分钟加水，两分钟加煤。“告诉他们，按照要求布置水箱和斜槽；因为哈维·切尼非常着急，着急——着急，”电报急得都要唱起来了。“预计列车时速将达每小时40英里，各部门监管员要在各自负责的路段护送好专列。从圣地亚哥到十六大道，芝加哥，让魔毯飞起来吧。全速前进！”

“天气会越来越热。”切尼说。星期天，天还没亮，他们就出发了。“我们要加快速度，夫人，尽我们一切可能。但我真觉得你没必要戴上软帽和手套，你最好吃点药，躺下来。我想让你玩儿多米诺骨牌，但今天是礼拜天。”

“我没事儿。哦，我没事儿。但是——摘下帽子会让我感觉永远到不了那儿。”

“睡会儿吧，夫人。不等你醒来，我们就能到芝加哥。”

“可我们要去的是波士顿，亲爱的。告诉他们快点。”

6英尺高的机车奋力开往圣巴纳迪诺和莫哈维荒原，但是现在的路况不适合加速，驶出这里后才能提速。当他们转向东部的尼德尔斯和科罗拉多河时，沙漠的热气紧随高山的热浪。列车在干旱和炽烈中吱吱呀呀地前进，他们把碎冰敷在切尼太太的脖子上，继续漫长的旅程，经过阿什福克，向着弗拉格丝塔芙行驶。那里的天空是干燥的，广袤的大地上有森林，有猎物。迈速表的指针来回摇摆，车顶的煤屑嘎嘎作响，旋转的车轮卷起尘土。列车内的乘客们坐在床铺上，挽起衣袖也还是热得气喘吁吁。切尼坐在人群中，为了压过机车的呼啸声，不得不扯开嗓门，讲那些每个铁路人都知道的关于铁路的老掉牙的故事。他还讲了儿子的事情，他是如何在大海中死里逃生的，他们不住地点头，鼓掌，为他祝贺；人们问起“后边”的切尼太太，还说要是火车司机再快一点点的话，她能否承受得了。切尼先生认为她可以。于是，这条庞大的火龙从弗拉格丝塔芙一路狂奔至温斯洛，直到相关路段的调度员提出抗议才慢下来。

然而，在特等包厢里的法国侍女吓得脸色煞白，紧紧抓住银制门把手。切尼太太却只是小声嘟哝着，一个劲儿地请求丈夫命令火车继续加速。于是，列车将干燥的沙漠和亚利桑那的银色月光映衬下的岩石一起抛在身后，继续在酷热中飞奔，直到挂钩发出撞击声，刹车软管滋滋作响，他们才知道已经通过洲际分界，到达了柯立芝。

三名勇敢而有经验的司机——出发时冷静而自信，浑身清爽；当他们结束可怕的车轮之行时，脸色惨白，瑟瑟发抖，汗流浹背——完成了一次伟大的飞跃，从阿尔伯克基到了戈洛丽塔，离开斯普林格，爬上州立铁路的拉顿隧道，他们又闯入拉洪塔，在这里，阿肯色的景色一览无遗，又从长长的斜坡俯冲至道奇城，切尼看着调快一小时的手表，再次

松了一口气。

车厢里没有人说话。秘书和打字员一起坐在压扁的西班牙毛垫上，后边是平板玻璃做的瞭望窗，窗外此起彼伏的铁轨交织在一起，好像在记录沿途的风光。从极度奢华夸张的包厢到空旷简洁的走廊，切尼先生焦灼地踱着步子，嘴里叼着雪茄却没点燃。司乘人员也忘记了他是众人的敌人，反而对他深表同情，竭尽全力去款待，让他高兴。

夜里，这个大家伙经过了翻山越岭的辛苦之后，车厢里的灯光照亮了豪华的宫殿。他们走过繁华，穿过荒芜。此刻，他们听到水箱发出的咝咝声，一个中国男人发出的嘶哑喉音，锤子敲击克虏伯车轮的叮叮当当声，流浪汉在车尾平台遭到驱赶时的咒骂声，工人将煤块扔进灶膛的咣当声，当他们经过一列停靠着的火车时反射回来的轰鸣声。大家向窗外望去，只见外面是深邃的深渊，脚下是高架桥，有时又会爬上遮蔽半个星空的岩石山。有时，陡崖和沟壑过后，列车又进入地平线边缘的崇山峻岭。现在，他们又突然闯进山间，地势越来越低，直到进入真正的大平原。

在道奇市，有个陌生人伸进一只手，扔了一张堪萨斯报纸，上面登载了采访哈维的一则报道，显然他是偶遇了一位事业心强的记者，这个人从波士顿发了一封电报。这则令人愉快的新闻报道说明哈维安然无恙，同时也让切尼太太稍稍宽慰了些。她又让工作人员向司机下令“加速”，经过尼克森、托皮卡和马塞利诺时，列车的速度很容易便提了上去，于是，他们飞快地将西部大陆抛在身后。乡村和城镇挤在一起，有人觉得自己仿佛置身于人群中一样。

“我看不到数字，眼睛疼，我们现在跑得怎么样了？”

“尽我们的能力跑到最快，夫人。我们没必要赶在特快列车前抵达，就算到了也只能等着。”

“我不管。我要找到行进的感觉。坐下来，告诉我还有多远。”

切尼先生坐下来，为她念着数字（上面有当天所创造的速度纪录），但是这辆70英尺长的列车仍然无法改变蒸汽机车固有的缓慢爬行，只能像一只巨型蜜蜂一样嗡嗡地在热浪中穿行。然而，这个速度对于切尼夫人来说还是不够的；热浪，无情的八月热浪，让切尼夫人头晕目眩，她觉得指针根本没有动，什么时候，到底什么时候才能到芝加哥呢？

他们在抵达麦迪逊堡时，更换了发动机，切尼给机车司机联合会捐了一笔钱，足够让他们彼此平起平坐。然而事实并非如此，他只是向司机和消防员支付了他认为他们应得的费用，只有银行才知道他给了那些同情自己的人多少酬金。记录显示，在十六大道，最后一名员工全权负责转轨操作，因为切尼夫人终于睡着了，如果谁在转轨时把她撞醒的话，那可就足够上帝忙活了。

现在，有一位高薪聘请的专家，负责把湖滨和密歇根南部的快车从芝加哥护送到埃尔克哈特。他有点像独裁者，不喜欢被人命令，不接受别人就如何倒车给出的建议。不过，他对“康士坦茨”号却是小心翼翼的，如同这趟列车上装满炸药一样，就算同伴指责他，他们也只是悄悄耳语或者比画手势。

“闭嘴！”艾奇逊、托皮卡和圣达菲的工人后来谈起这件事情时说，“我们又不是为了创造纪录。哈维·切尼的老婆在后边生病了，我们不想让她遭受颠簸。想想看，我们从圣地亚哥到芝加哥的行驶时间是57

小时54分。你可以把这个数字告诉东部线路的人们。我们真要是为了创纪录，一定会告诉你的。”

对于西部人来说（尽管这会让每个城市不高兴），芝加哥和波士顿的距离非常近，铁路更是助长了这种错觉。高速列车带着“康士坦茨”来到布法罗车站，进入纽约中心站，踏上哈得孙河铁路（几位胡须雪白，戴着金表的著名大亨登上这辆列车来和切尼谈生意），优雅地进入奥尔巴尼。从波士顿到奥尔巴尼的一路穿行——总耗时87小时35分钟，也就是3天15小时35分钟。哈维正在这里等他们。

经过激烈的情感宣泄后，大多数成年人和孩子都想起该吃饭了。他们放下窗帘，一边享受伟大而幸福的团聚，一边为失而复得的儿子准备了丰盛的美食，周围的火车呼啸而过。哈维吃饱喝足后，一口气夸张地讲完了他的历险记，时不时地用一只手把妈妈抚摸他的手推开。长期生活在空旷而充满咸味的空气里，他的声音变得浑厚了，手掌也变得粗糙而坚硬，手腕上的斑斑点点都是鱼内脏划伤的疤痕，橡胶靴和蓝毛衣上全是鳕鱼的味道。

那位阅人无数的父亲热切地望着他。他不知道儿子在这些日子里到底承受了多少苦难。其实，他忽然发现自己并不了解儿子，但他清晰地记得有一个圆脸小男孩，永远不满足，总是喜欢“缠着老爸”，惹妈妈落泪——就是这样一个在公共场合和酒店大厅找乐子的男孩，含着金钥匙出生的他喜欢捉弄或斥责门童。然而，眼前这个身体健壮的年轻渔夫丝毫没有扭扭捏捏，他的眼神坚定而清澈，毫不畏缩地看着父亲。他说话时的声音清晰利落，语言掷地有声，充满了敬意。而且，他的嗓音好像在承诺这种改变是永恒的，全新的哈维已经来到。

“一定是有人强迫他改变了，”切尼先生心想，“现在，‘康士坦茨’号

上可不会发生这样的事，就算欧洲人的教育也不会有更好的效果。”

哈维把故事至少已经详详细细地讲了两遍，但是他的妈妈还是在反复问：“可你为什么告诉这个人——特鲁普——你是谁？”

“迪斯科·特鲁普，亲爱的。行走于甲板上的最好的男人。我不管排第二的是谁。”

“你为什么不让他送你上岸呢？你要知道，你爸爸会给他十倍多的钱。”

“我知道；可特鲁普觉得我疯了。我还说他是贼，因为我找不到兜里的钱了。”

“有个水手在旗杆旁发现了——就在那天晚上。”切尼太太哭着说。

“那正好能解释清楚。我再也不怪特鲁普了，我只是说我不会干活儿——在一艘捕鳕渔船上——当然，他打了我鼻子，哦，我像一头猪一样动不了。”

“我可怜的宝贝！他们肯定虐待你了。”

“也没多严重。噢，后来，我就找到光明了。”

切尼拍着他的大腿笑了。这个男孩将按照自己的心意去成长。以前，他从没有在哈维眼中看到过这种光芒。

“那个老头一个月给我10块半，现在支付了一半。我和丹一起干活。我还做不了大人的活儿，但我能和丹一样掌控平底船了。大雾天气，我也不会慌——不那么慌了。风不大的时候，我也可以自己独当一

面——那是掌舵的技巧，妈妈——我还可以自己给排钩装饵，当然，我了解自己的绳索；而且，母鲸游回来时我能准确地扔诱饵。我对老约瑟夫的故事非常清楚。我还要给你演示怎么用一片鱼皮擦干净咖啡渍，还有——请再给我一杯。嗨，你们不知道，每天要干多少活儿，一个月才能到挣10块半！”

“我刚开始才挣8块半，儿子。”切尼说。

“真的吗？你从没有告诉过我，爸爸。”

“你也从来没问过啊，哈维。有一天，我会告诉你的，只要你愿意听。试试橄榄汁吧。”

“特鲁普说这个世界上最有趣的事情是看着别人跟他学到生活的本领。又能吃到精心准备的美食了，真好。虽然我们也能吃饱，但是大浅滩还是很艰苦。迪斯科给我们吃的最好，他是个好人，还有丹——迪斯科的儿子——丹是我的搭档。还有索尔特叔叔和他的粪肥，而且他还读《约瑟夫》，但他坚信我疯了。还有可怜的小个子宾，他真是个疯子。你绝不能和他说约翰斯敦，因为——哦，还有，你一定要认识一下汤姆·普拉特，长腿杰克和曼纽尔。曼纽尔救了我的命。可惜他是个葡萄牙人，他说得不多，但他是个很不错的音乐家。他发现我被钩住了，漂啊漂啊，然后就把我给捞上来了。”

“我想知道，你的神经没受伤吧？”切尼太太问。

“怎么可能，妈妈！我像马儿一样辛苦干活，像猪一样能吃，睡觉像死人一样沉。”

对于切尼太太来说，这些已经够她受了。她开始想象自己的眼前有

一具尸体漂浮在茫茫大海上。她回到自己的特等间，留下哈维蜷缩在爸爸身边，讲述他所受到的恩惠。

“你可以以我的名义去为他们做任何事情，哈维。听你这么一说，他们似乎都是好人。”

“船队里最好的人，爸爸。你可以去格洛斯特打听，”哈维说，“但是迪斯科一直觉得是他治好了我的神经病。我把你、我们的私家车和其他所有的事情只告诉了丹一个人，但我不太确定他有没有相信，明天，我要让他们吓一大跳。比如，他们能不能开着‘康士坦茨’去格洛斯特呢？不管怎么说，妈妈好像不适合活动，我们明天肯定会把鱼都处理完毕。他们会买我们的鱼。你看见了吧，我们是这个渔季里第一个离开大浅滩的，一公担卖4块2毛5。我们坚持这个价格，直到他们接受为止。他们很快就会买。”

“那你的意思是明天还要工作？”

“我告诉特鲁普我会回去工作。我负责称重。我还带了账本。”他看着油乎乎的账本，眼神是那么郑重其事，他的爸爸差点透不过气来。“据我所知，还有300公担的鱼——不——准确地说是294或295。”

“雇人替你吧。”切尼建议，他想看看哈维会说什么。

“不会，爸爸。我是纵帆船上的记账员。特鲁普说我有数字头脑，比丹要强，特鲁普是一个非常公正的人。”

“好吧，我想‘康士坦茨’号今天晚上不会挪地方了，你打算怎么办？”

哈维看了看表，指针指向11点20分。

“我就睡这儿，睡到3点。然后坐4点的运货车。按规定，船队里的人可以免费乘坐。”

“那是你的打算，但我觉得‘康士坦茨’号能和你们的运货车一样快。你现在最好睡觉吧。”

哈维躺在沙发上，踢掉靴子，还没等爸爸关灯，他就睡着了。切尼坐在旁边，看着这张年轻的面孔，手臂的影子落在他的额头上。切尼想起了很多事情，他发现自己作为一个父亲，忽略了太多。

“一个人永远不会知道自己什么时候会遇到最大的危险，”他说，“也许这比淹死更糟糕。不过我不希望如此——我可不希望。要真是那样的话，我可没那么多钱给特鲁普，就这么回事。我不觉得有什么危险。”

早晨，清新的海风从窗户吹进来，“康士坦茨”号和其他运货车并肩停靠在格洛斯特，哈维早已开始工作了。

“那样，他又会掉下船被淹死的。”切尼太太痛苦地说。

“我们去看看吧，万一有情况可以给他扔条绳子。你还没见过他为自己挣饭钱呢。”

“胡说八道！好像有人盼着他——”

“好吧，那个男人雇了他，他也没错。”

他们走下列车，经过街道两旁挂满油布雨衣的商店，来到码头。“我们在此”号格外显眼。灿烂的晨光里，在大浅滩时挂上的旗子依

旧迎风飘扬，所有人都像海狸一样七手八脚地忙得不可开交。迪斯科站在主桅旁，监督忙着拉索具的曼纽尔、宾和索尔特叔叔。长腿杰克和汤姆·普拉特装满篮子时，丹把它们都扔到船上。海水飞溅的码头边上，哈维手拿笔记本，代表船长，站在磅秤员前面。

“好啦！”下边的声音大叫道。“拉！”迪斯科大喊。“嗨！”曼纽尔说。“这儿！”丹推开篮子说。接着，他们听到了哈维的声音，清脆而稚嫩，他正在核对重量。

最后一条鱼被扔进去时，哈维抓住横索一跃而起，跳到6英尺高的纵梁，他把账本交给迪斯科，这是最近的一条路。他大喊：“297公担，全部清仓。”

“哈维，总数多少？”迪斯科问。

“865公担。3676块2毛5。除了工资，我希望也能有提成。”

“好吧，我可不能说没你的份儿，哈维。你能不能把咱的账本送他们办公室去？”

“那个男孩是谁？”切尼问丹。丹已经习惯了，这类被称作夏天的寄宿客的闲人，总是爱东问西问，四处闲逛。

“哦，货物管理员啊，”丹回答，“他漂在大浅滩上，我们救了他。他说自己是从一艘大客轮上掉下来的，他是一名乘客。现在他顺便就成了渔民。”

“他值那个工资吗？”

“当然。爸爸，这个人想知道哈维值不值你给的工钱。喂，你们想

上船吗？我们可以给夫人搭梯子。”

“的确，我很应该上去，没事儿，夫人。你也能亲自去看看。”

一个星期前，这位夫人连头也抬不起来，现在却能顺着梯子爬上船，站在乱糟糟的杂物和索具之间，惊讶不已。

“你们对哈维感兴趣？”迪斯科问。

“嗯，是——啊。”

“他是个好孩子，不管吩咐他做什么，他都能做好。你知道是我们救了他吧！我猜，我们救起他时，他的神经受损很严重，要不然就是头撞在什么上了。现在，他全好了。对，这是船舱，虽然有点乱七八糟的，但还是欢迎你们来参观。烟囱管上的是他记的数字，我们一般都在上面记东西。”

“他睡这儿吗？”切尼太太问。她坐在黄色的箱子上，审视着那些乱糟糟的床铺。

“不。他在前面睡，夫人。只有他和我儿子偷钓煎饼时才会待在这里。除了这个，我找不出他有什么其他毛病。”

“哈维也不是什么毛病都没有，”索尔特叔叔从楼梯上走下来，说，“他把我的靴子挂在主桅上，而且他不尊重比他懂得多的人，尤其是种地方面的。不过，大多数时候，他都是被丹给带坏了。”

丹在早晨就已经收到了哈维的暗示，此刻的他正在甲板上跳起欣喜若狂的战舞。“汤姆！汤姆！”他站在舱口朝下面低声叫道，“他的家人来了。爸爸还不知道。他们正在船舱里谈话。那位夫人真是温柔。看长

相，他爸爸真的是哈维说的那样。”

“我的天哪！”长腿杰克满身海盐和鱼皮地从底舱爬上来，说，“他说的小男孩的故事和小马车是真的吗？你相信吗？”

“我一直都知道是真的。”丹说，“过来瞧瞧爸爸怎么面对自己的失误。”

他们高兴地走过来，正好听到切尼先生说：“听到这样的评价，我很高兴。因为——他是我儿子。”

迪斯科吃惊得合不上嘴——长腿杰克发誓说听到了他的下巴发出咯噔的声响——他瞪大眼睛盯着切尼先生，又看了看切尼夫人。

“四天前，我在圣地亚哥收到了他发的电报，所以我们就来了。”

“坐着自己的私家列车？”丹说，“哈维说你们可能会坐专列来。”

“当然，自家的车。”

丹不住地眨巴着眼睛，傲慢地看着迪斯科。

“他给我们讲过一个故事，说他自己有一辆四匹小马拉的车子。”长腿杰克问，“那是真的吗？”

“很有可能，”切尼说，“夫人，有吗？”

“我们在托莱多时，他有一辆小马车。我想应该是那辆。”切尼太太说。

长腿杰克小声吹了声口哨，说：“哦，迪斯科。”然后就再没说什

么。

“我是——我被自己的判断误导了——比马布尔海德人都要笨。”迪斯科说出这番话时好像被起锚机吊起一样吃力，“我不是有意冒犯你，切尼先生，我误以为孩子疯了。他提到钱的时候很古怪。”

“他和我说了。”

“他跟你说别的了吗？因为我打过他一次。”说着，迪斯科紧张地瞟了切尼太太一眼。

“哦，说了。”切尼回答，“我必须说，也许对他来说，这是世界上最好的事情。”

“我认为必须打他，要不然我绝不会那么干。我不想让你们以为孩子在这条船上受了虐待。”

“我没这么想，特鲁普先生。”

切尼太太一直在观察这些人——迪斯科长着一张象牙黄色的脸，没有胡子，刚毅而无私；索尔特叔叔的头发带着农村的味道；宾满脸单纯和困惑；曼纽尔安静地微笑着；长腿杰克咧开嘴笑起来；汤姆·普拉特的脸上有块伤疤。凭着自己的标准，切尼太太认为他们都是粗人。然而，她的眼睛里流露出母亲的智慧。于是，她站起来，伸出双手。

“哦，请告诉我，你们都是谁？”切尼夫人一边啜泣，一边说，“我想谢谢你们，报答你们——所有人。”

“说实话，这已经是给我的百倍回报了。”长腿杰克说。

迪斯科正式介绍了每位成员。就算古代的中国人也做不到船长这么有礼貌，切尼太太语无伦次地连声道谢。当她知道是曼纽尔最先发现哈维时，她几乎要扑过去抱住曼纽尔了。

“可我怎么能让它一直漂在海上呢？”可怜的曼纽尔说，“要是你发现他在海里会怎么做呢？额，什么？我们有这么一个好孩子，很高兴你们有这样的儿子。”

“他还告诉我，丹是他的搭档！”切尼太太大声说。丹的脸早已开始泛红，但是当切尼太太当着众人的面在他的双颊上亲吻时，他羞得满脸通红。接着，他们领着切尼太太到前面参观了前甲板。这时，她又开始哭起来，非要下去看看哈维和大家一模一样的床铺。在这儿，她看到一位黑人厨子正在清理壁炉。当她走进来时，他点了点头，仿佛已经等了她很多年。大家一起给切尼太太讲船上的日常生活，她坐在制转杆旁边，双手戴着手套，放在油乎乎的桌上，有时笑得嘴唇颤抖，有时两眼含着泪花。

“以后，谁还会上这艘船来？”长腿杰克对汤姆·普拉特说，“我总感觉她把这里当成了大教堂。”

“大教堂！”汤姆·普拉特嘲笑道，“哦，要是一艘渔业委员会的船，而不是这艘被吹得摇摇欲坠的破船就好了。如果她来的时候，我们能体面些，有秩序，船上还能有其他迎宾的话，她就能昂首挺胸地登上楼梯，那样，我们——我们得多派些人手。”

“这么说，哈维就不是疯子了？”宾慢条斯理地对切尼说。

“不，当然不是，谢天谢地，”伟大的百万富翁弯下腰，温和地回答道。

“发疯是一件可怕的事情。除了失去孩子，我不知道还有什么事情比这更糟糕。但是，你儿子回来了，对吧？让我们一起感谢上帝吧。”

“嗨！”哈维在码头上热情地朝下面大喊。

“我搞错了，哈维。我搞错了。”迪斯科马上伸出一只手，说，“我判断失误。你别再提了。”

“我想，我会注意这件事的。”丹轻声嘀咕说。

“你现在就要走，对吗？”

“是啊，可你还没给我工钱呢，除非你想让‘我们在此’号被扣下来。”

“这事啊，我差点忘了，”说着，他数了数剩下的钱。“你干完了所有约定的活儿，哈维。你做得非常棒，好像你天生就在——”迪斯科赶紧闭上了嘴。他不知道该怎么往下说了。

“在私人专列外面的世界吗？”丹接过话来，毫不留情。

“快来，我指给你们看。”哈维说。

切尼留下来和迪斯科继续谈话，其他人都在切尼太太的带领下去看私家专列了。法国侍女看到大队的“入侵者”时尖叫了起来，哈维一言不发地给他们展示“康士坦茨”号的荣耀。同样，他们也什么都没说——印花皮革，纯银门把手和扶手，裁剪精美的天鹅绒，厚玻璃，镍的、铜的、熟铁的装饰以及内陆的稀有木材。

“我告诉过你，”哈维说，“我告诉过你。”这是哈维最有力的报复

了，事实足够说明一切。

切尼太太下令为众人设晚宴。为了长腿杰克以后能在寄宿房间里完整地讲述这个故事，切尼太太还亲自在房间招待了他们。这些人习惯了坐在小桌前，听着在耳畔咆哮的海风吃饭，非常规矩，也特别干净。然而，切尼太太却并不知情，只是觉得奇怪。她想让曼纽尔做管家，因为当他使用这些易碎的玻璃器皿和精美银器时，没有发出一点声音，显得泰然自若。汤姆·普拉特想起了在“旧俄亥俄”号上的辉煌时期，以及外国君主和官员们一起进餐时的礼节；长腿杰克是爱尔兰人，谈天说地时能让大家轻松自如。

“我们在此”号的船舱里，两位父亲抽着雪茄，暗自思忖着对方。切尼非常了解如何面对一个用钱无法打动的人；同样，他明白迪斯科所做的一切是用金钱买不到的。他并没有透露自己的计划，只等恰当的时机出现。

“我对您儿子也没做什么，或者说只是让他干了点活儿，教他如何使用六分仪，”迪斯科说，“他在数字方面的天赋比我儿子强多了。”

“顺便问一句，”切尼若无其事地说，“你对你儿子有什么打算？”

迪斯科取下雪茄，在船舱里挥舞了一圈。“丹只是个普通孩子，他用不着我为他考虑太多。等我退休了，他就可以管理这艘小船。他现在也不急着放弃这门儿生意。我知道。”

“嗯！去过西部吗？特鲁普先生？”

“坐着一艘小船去过纽约一次。我没坐过火车。丹也没有。对于特鲁普家的人来说，走海路最合适。我去过很多地方——都是顺道去的，

当然了。”

“我可以让他学到所有可能用到的海上技能——直到他成为船长。”

“怎么可能？我以为您只是仁慈的铁路大王。哈维告诉我的，那会儿——我判断失误。”

“我们都会犯错。我想，也许你可能知道我有一艘茶船线路——从圣弗朗西斯科到日本横滨——其中6艘是铁铸的，每艘大约1780吨重。”

“都怪这孩子！他从没说过。我倒是更愿意听到这些，而不是那些铁路、小马车的事儿。”

“他不知道。”

“我估计这种事儿他压根儿不会放心上。”

“不过，我只买了——布鲁•M船运公司——摩根和麦奎德的旧航线——这个夏天。”

迪斯科坐在壁炉旁，瘫倒在座位上。

“全能的恺撒大帝！我怀疑自己从头到尾都被搞晕了。怎么回事，菲尔•埃尔哈特离开6年——不，7年了——现在，他是‘圣何塞’的大副——每次出海26天。他的妹妹还在这儿，而且她还给我老婆读了他的信。布鲁•M船运公司是你的？”

切尼点点头。

“要是早知道，我早就不顾一切把船开回来了，我敢这么说。”

“那样的话，对哈维来说也许没这么好。”

“要是我早知道的话，要是他能提到那些可恶的茶船，我就能早点明白！我再也不会坚持自己的判断了——绝不会。那些都是设备完善的班轮。菲尔·埃尔哈特说的。”

“很高兴能听到这些评价。埃尔哈特现在是‘圣何塞’的船长，我想知道的是，你会不会让丹跟我一两年，我们看看到底能不能把他培养成大副。你放心把他托付给埃尔哈特吗？”

“带一个野小子是在冒险——”

“我明白，你为我做了很多。”

“那不一样。现在，你瞧。我没有专门推荐丹，不是因为他是我的亲生儿子。我知道，大浅滩并不能让他成为船长，但是他还可以学。他会掌舵——要我说，没哪个孩子能比得上他——至于其他的，我们特鲁普家的人天生就能学会；不过，我希望他在航海方面不要表现得太差。”

“埃尔哈特会照顾他的。他可以先像小孩子一样跟着航行一两次，然后再学着做得更好。假如这个冬天你带着他，那我明年开春就来接他，我知道，太平洋离得很远——”

“哼！我们特鲁普家的人，是生是死，都在大海上绕着地球转。”

“但是，我想让你明白——我的意思是——任何时候你想见到他，告诉我，我都会为你安排交通，而且不会花你一分钱。”

“要是你有空和我走走，我想让你去我家一趟，和我老婆说说这件

事。我已经判断失误了，那么严重，好像现在我已经分不清什么对错了。”

于是，他们一起来到特鲁普家。这是一座价值1800美元的白房子，刷了蓝色的边。前面的院子里有一艘废弃的平底船，种满了旱金莲。挂了百叶窗的客厅里展示着各种纪念品，都是出海带回来的。一个身材高大的妇女坐在那里，一言不发，神情肃穆。由于常年瞭望出海的亲人，她的眼睛变得灰暗而模糊。切尼向她说明来意，她疲惫地做了回应。

“切尼先生，在格洛斯特，一年会有一百个人死在海上，”她说，“一百个孩子和男人。我痛恨大海，就算它能听见我们说话，我也会说恨透了它。上帝从来没有为人类准备好停泊的地方。你的那些船出海，我想，然后还能直接开回家吗？”

“风向允许的话，他们不会耽搁。要是他们能按计划回来，我还会给他们发奖金。茶叶在海上不能耽搁。”

“他小的时候，经常玩儿开商店的游戏，我盼着他真能朝这个方向发展。但是，很快，他就学会摆弄平底船了，我知道他不会让我如愿了。”

“这些船都是横帆船，太太，都是铁铸的而且很结实。还记得菲尔的妹妹拿到信后给你念的那些吧。”

“我知道菲尔从来不会撒谎，但是他太爱冒险（海上的人大都是这样），要是丹觉得合适，切尼先生，就让他去吧——不用管我。”

“她只是讨厌大海，”迪斯科解释道，“而且，我——我不知道怎么能表现得更礼貌些，我想，或者说我只能谢谢你。”

“我的父亲——我的哥哥——两个侄子——还有我二妹的男人，”丹的妈妈用手抱住头，说，“我怎么能不管这些呢？”

丹回来了，欣然同意，那股高兴劲儿简直无法用语言来表达。切尼先生这才松了一口气。的确，这个提议意味着一条通往理想的平坦可靠的道路。然而，丹想到的却是在广阔的甲板上进行巡逻，瞭望遥远的海港。

切尼太太和不善言辞的曼纽尔私下聊起哈维被救一事。他似乎对金钱并不感兴趣。逼急了，他说他要五美元，因为他想给一个女孩买点东西。要不然——“我有饭吃，有烟抽，来钱这么容易，我要钱干吗？我喜不喜欢你都要给吗？额，那啥？你应该给我钱，但不是这种方式。你能想到多少就给多少。”他把切尼太太介绍给一位不讨人喜欢的葡萄牙牧师，他有一份长长的名单，这份名单和他的教士服一样长，上面都是生活贫困的寡妇的名字。作为严格意义上的一神论[30](#)教派信徒，切尼太太从教义上无法对他们表示同情，但最后她还是对这位棕色皮肤、滔滔不绝的小个子男人表达了敬意。

曼纽尔是忠诚的教会之子，为切尼太太的善举进行了祈祷。“我终于解脱了，”他说，“6个月以来的忏悔得到了救赎。”然后，他就去逛街了，买了条手帕送给了现任女友，这可让其他人伤透了心。

索尔特和宾去了西部度假，没有留下任何地址。他担心这些有钱人开着毫无用处的私家车，会让他的同伴产生不合适的兴趣。去内陆走亲访友是个不错的选择，等到岸上清静了再回来。“宾，你可千万不能被有钱人领走，”他坐在火车上说，“否则，我会用棋盘砸烂你的脑袋。你要是再忘了自己的名字——你叫普拉特——你和索尔特·特鲁普是一起的，或者你就待在原地等我来找你。千万别跟在那些人后面乱跑，《圣

经》上说他们胖得眼珠子都蹦出来了。”

[30](#) 一神论，信奉上帝是唯一的，可以取代传统基督教三位一体的学说。

第十章 Chapter Ten

但是，“我们在此”号上那位安静的厨子却是特例。因为他用一块布包着他的工具，登上了“康士坦茨”号。他并不看重薪酬，对睡觉的地方更是毫不在意。他的事业，正如梦境中所示，是要在后半生的日子里一直追随哈维。大家和他进行了一番争论，后来也被他说服了。然而，布雷顿角的黑人和亚拉巴马州的两个黑人却持不同的意见。于是，原来的搬运工和厨子把这件事告到了切尼那里。这位百万富翁对此一笑了之。他认为哈维也许有一天会需要一位贴身仆人，这位毛遂自荐者肯定抵得上5个佣工。因此，他留下了厨子。不管他说自己是麦克·唐纳，还是用盖尔语骂人，这些都不重要。车子将驶回波士顿，到时候如果他还没有改变主意，他们就会带他到西部。

离开“康士坦茨”号，切尼充满活力，到处闲逛，因为他打心眼里讨厌“百万富翁”身份的束缚。格洛斯特是一座建在新土地上的新城，他打算要将其“收入囊中”。像往常一样，他每到一座城市，从斯诺霍米什到圣地亚哥，都留下了他的印记。人们沿蜿蜒的街道做生意赚钱，一半是港口，一半是船舶商店。作为生意场上的领军人物，他想了解一下这里的生意经。有人说，新英格兰的周日早餐里，百分之八十的鱼丸来自格洛斯特，并且还列出了数据来给他做强有力的证明——船只数量，渔具，港口码头，投资金额，腌制，打包，工厂，保险，工资，修理以及利润。他和大型船队的老板们聊天，船主人数比员工人数稍多一些，船员大部分是瑞典和葡萄牙人。然后，他又和迪斯科商量，迪斯科是为数不多的拥有自己的船的船长。最后，他还要自己在心里比较一番。他来到海运旧货商店，满怀无法满足的西方人的好奇，兴高采烈地问这问

那，直到滨海地区的人们都在纳闷：“这个男人到底想干吗？”他又去了互助保险站，要求解释每天记在黑板上的那些神秘的语句；于是，在这个不大的城镇，渔民遗孀和孤儿救助组织的书记员们都来找他。他们丝毫不觉羞愧地来讨要，都想打败其他救济会的记录，切尼摸着他的胡子，把这些事情都交由切尼太太处理。

切尼太太在离东海角不远的公寓下榻——这里很特别，显然是由住宿者自行管理的，桌布上都是棋盘一样的红白格子图案，这里的人们好像老朋友一样亲密。半夜饿了的话，还可以起床去做威尔士的奶酪面包。在这里居住的第二天早晨，切尼太太在早饭前摘下了钻石首饰。

“他们都很讨人喜欢，”她向丈夫吐露，“而且很友好，很简单，虽然他们几乎都是波士顿人。”

“那不是简单，孩子他妈，”切尼先生一边说，一边朝苹果树后面的巨石望去，那里挂着吊床，“那是另外的东西，我们——我们还没有。”

“不是啊，”切尼太太平静地说，“那儿的妇女们没有一件上了100美元的裙子。为什么，我们——”

“亲爱的，我知道，我们有——我们当然有。我想这只是东部人的穿着方式。你玩儿得高兴吗？”

“我总是见不到哈维；他老是跟着你；不过我没有以前那么担心了。”

“自打韦力离开后，我从来没有这么高兴过，在这之前，我从来没有真正地理解我有个儿子。哈维会成为好孩子的。亲爱的，需要我为你拿什么吗？要不要枕个垫子？哦，我们再去码头转转吧。”

这几天，哈维一直追随爸爸，两人并肩而行。切尼以上了年纪为借口，把手臂搭在儿子宽阔的肩膀上。这时，哈维才注意到，自己从没有想过——在父亲的内心深处，对新鲜事物的神奇感知力竟然来源于市井街头——不由得佩服起来。

“你什么都不说，是怎么让他们把一切告诉你的？”当他们来到放置索具的阁楼时，儿子问道。

“我这辈子和许多人打过交道，哈维，我觉得大致能认清他们，我也了解自己。”然后，切尼先生停顿了一会儿。他们在码头边坐下来，“如果一个人能自己处理好自己的事情，别人就会看出来，然后他们就会把你当自己人。”

“就跟我在乌尔曼码头受到的待遇一样。我现在也是他们中的一份子了。迪斯科告诉所有人我是自己挣工钱的。”哈维伸出双手，摩擦着手掌，闷闷不乐地说：“它们又变柔软了。”

“念书这几年就这样吧，毕业后可以再让它们坚硬起来。”

“是啊，但愿如此。”哈维回答道，但听起来一点都不开心。

“哈维，一切都由你自己决定。当然，你还可以躲在你妈身后，成天发牢骚，让你妈为你的紧张和暴躁之类的事情担心。”

哈维不安地问：“我以前是这样吗？”

父亲转过身，伸出手。“你和我一样清楚。如果你想跟我对干，我是没办法把你培养成才的。要是你一个人的话，我还可以管好。但是，你和你妈妈一起对付我的时候，我是假装不了自己有这个能力的。不管怎么说，生命太短暂。”

“那样，我就永远长不大，对吧？”

“我想，这是我的不对。但是。你想听真话的话，到目前为止，你还没有。现在，明白吗？”

“嗯！迪斯科觉得.....比如说，你能不能想起从我出生——从头到尾，所有的花费？”

切尼笑了。“我从来没记过，不过，我大体估计一下，四五万美元吧，也许是六万，年轻一代很费钱，他们要买东西，他们还觉得不新鲜，总是父母掏腰包。”

哈维打了一声口哨，但想到父亲花了这么多钱，还是挺高兴。“都打水漂了，是吧？”

“投资，哈维。我希望这是投资。”

“就按3万算吧，我挣的30美元只是千分之一。可怜的投资和回报啊。”哈维郑重其事地摇摇头。

切尼哈哈大笑起来，差点从桥架上翻下来掉进水里。

“丹从十岁起，迪斯科就开始让丹挣钱了。丹也上过半年学。”

“哦，你也要学他？”

“不，我谁也不学。我现在还养活不了自己——就这么回事.....我应该滚蛋。”

“老朋友，我不会那么做的，或者，要是我也是被踢出来的话，我

想我也会那么做。”

“那样，我会记你一辈子——永远都不会原谅你。”哈维的下巴支撑在两只攥起的拳头上，说道。

“绝对是。你明白了吗？这就是我要做的。”

“明白了，都是我的错，和别人没关系。说来说去都一样，我总该做些什么。”

切尼从背心口袋里掏出一根雪茄，咬掉雪茄头，开始抽起来。父子俩长得如此相像：胡子遮住了切尼的嘴巴，哈维和父亲的鼻子都稍微带点鹰钩，眼睛挨得非常近，高高瘦瘦的颧骨。如果再抹点褐色的油漆，活脱脱就像故事书里画的红色印第安人一样。

“现在，你还可以继续。”切尼缓缓地说，“一年花我6000到8000，直到你成年。那时，我们就可以称你为男人了。你可以一直这样下去，一年花掉四五万，除了你妈妈给你的以外。你还可以有自己的游艇或者花哨的牧场，你可以假装饲养一些活蹦乱跳的家畜，还可以和你的朋友一起打牌。”

“就像拉里·塔克一样？”哈维插嘴道。

“对，或者像德维特家那两个男孩或者老奎麦德的儿子一样。在加利福尼亚，这样的人很多，咱们说话这会儿东部的少爷就来了。”

一艘光闪闪的黑色蒸汽船开进了港口。船上有红木甲板，镍板罗盘箱，粉白色条纹的遮阳篷，纽约某家俱乐部的旗子迎风飘扬。两个年轻男子穿着他们自认为是航海服的衣服，正在天窗下打牌；两个姑娘撑着红色和蓝色的阳伞一边看一边大声笑着。

游艇放慢了行驶速度，拉起锚链上的浮标。哈维挑剔地说：“不管有没有风，我都不会待在这种船上。连横梁都没有。”

“他们玩得很开心。我可以让你也拥有，可以是他们的两倍，哈维。你觉得怎么样？”

“我的天哪！旁边不能再放小游艇了，怎么可以！”哈维一边说，一边仍旧注视着那艘游艇。“要是我放索具还不如他们的话，那我就待在岸上……要是我不喜欢呢？”

“不愿意待在岸上——或者什么？”

“游艇，农场，还有啃老。还有，遇到麻烦就躲在妈妈身后，”哈维眨巴着眼睛回答。

“哦，那样的话，你就跟着我干吧，儿子。”

“一个月10美元？”哈维两眼放光。

“一分钱不多给，等到你有资格了再谈。攒起来，几年内都不能动它们。”

“那我最好马上就去打扫办公室——成大事都是这么起步的——从现在做起，总比——”

“我知道；我们都以为是这么开始的。不过，我想打扫卫生的人到处都有，要多少有多少。我自己刚开始时也是犯了这样的错误。”

“3000万美元的错误，对吗？我也会冒这样的险。”

“我会告诉你的，我失去了，也得到了。”

切尼望着平静的海面，摸着胡子笑了。这番话后，哈维才明白父亲是在讲他的人生。他的语调舒缓而平静，没有手势，没有表情；这段历史是十几家主流杂志乐于重金购买的——这40年的故事其实是新西部的历史，而且是还没有被书写的历史。

故事的开头，有一个举目无亲的小男孩。他在得克萨斯到处流浪，经历了无数变化无常、令人难以置信的遭遇。故事的场景在各州辗转。一个月内出现的城市或许在三个月后便会销声匿迹。曾经遇险的野外营地或许已经被开拓为大都市。有时，三条铁路已经竣工，但第四条却遭到了蓄意破坏。故事里有蒸汽机，有小镇、森林、矿山，来自世界各国的人们在这里努力工作，创造生活，发掘财富。巨额财富恍如云烟从眼前飘过，有时又仅仅会因为时间和行程而错过。有时，他在马背上，大多数时候他徒步而行，时而富有，时而贫困，出出进进，来来回回，当过水手，开过火车，做过承包商、公寓管理员、记者、工程师、鼓手、房地产经纪人的政客。他也赖过账，卖过酒，开过矿，投机倒把的生意没少做。他放过牛，也曾到处流浪，疯狂转变着的角色触动了小哈维·切尼，他认真而安静地听着，思考自己的最终理想。正如他所说，他要追求整个国家的荣耀和进步。

切尼说他的信仰从来没有舍弃他，即便是在濒临绝望时——这种信仰来自他对人对事的深入了解。他详细讲述了自己一生的勇气 and 经历，好像在自言自语。在他心中，这一切如此清晰熟悉，以至从没有改变语调。他回忆了自己如何攻击对手，又如何原谅他们，如同他们在那些漂泊的岁月里对他那样；他曾为了长久的利益，对全镇人、各公司以及各财团百般恳求，巧言利诱，威逼恐吓；他也曾翻山越岭，身后留下一条条蜿蜒盘旋的铁轨。最终，他高高在上，无人能撼动他的地位，只剩鱼

龙混杂的人们传扬着关于他的零星琐碎的故事。

听着爸爸的故事，哈维凝神屏息。他的头微微倾斜，目光一直没有离开父亲的脸。天色渐渐暗下来，雪茄发出的红光照在布满皱纹的脸颊和凝重的双眉上。哈维仿佛看到一列火车，在城市的暗夜里呼啸而过——每隔一英里，炉门便会闪闪发光：然而，这列火车会说话，每句话都震颤激荡着男孩，直达心灵深处。最后，切尼扔掉烟蒂，父子俩坐在夜色里，身边是海水。

“我以前从没和别人说过这些。”父亲说。

哈维大喘了一口气，说：“这些真是前所未有的伟大经历。”

“这是我所得到的。现在，我要告诉你我失去了什么。对你来说，这些没什么太大用处，但是我不想让你等到像我一样老的时候才明白。当然，我善于和人们打交道，而且我有自己的原则，不会受人愚弄，但是——但是——我比不过那些受过教育的人！虽然我一直在边走边弥补，但是我想缺陷还是很明显的。”

“我从没觉得！”儿子愤愤不平地说。

“但是，你会发现的。哈维。你会的——一旦从大学毕业你就会发现。难道我不明白吗？难道我看不出他们脸上的表情？他们觉得我是个‘粗人’，在其他地方都这么叫我。我可以把他们彻底打败——是的——可是不能报复他们，不能像他们一样直击要害。我不是说他们有多高高在上，也不是说我自己有多差劲。现在，机会摆在你面前，你需要吸收所学。你将和一群志同道合的人生活在一起。他们的目的也许是为了以后每年至多能挣到几千美元。但是，你要记住，你的目标是几百万美元。你将学习法律，以便当我不在时，你能更好地保护自己的财产。

你要和市场上最优秀的人坚定地站在一起（他们以后会有用的）。首先，你要把那些平庸普通的想法扔掉，不要托着腮帮子死读书。哈维，没有什么能比读书的回报更丰厚。在我们国家，学习越来越受到重视——生意和政治上都需要。你看着吧。”

“这桩买卖到最后我也看不到有什么甜头，”哈维说，“大学四年！我希望我选择的是男仆和游艇！”

“没关系，儿子，”切尼坚持道，“你现在的投资在将来必定会给你带来最大的回报，我想，等你接管生意后，你会发现我们的资产不会有任何缩水，再考虑考虑，明天早晨给我答复。快点！晚饭要迟到了！”

因为这是一场生意对话，所以哈维觉得没必要让妈妈知道；切尼自然也持同样的看法。不过，切尼太太看见后有些担心，还有点嫉妒。她的儿子，那个曾经顶撞她的孩子不见了，取而代之的是一个热切的年轻人，出奇地安静，大部分谈话都是和爸爸之间的。她明白他们在谈生意，所以不在她的管辖范围内。如果她有任何疑惑，只要切尼从波士顿回来时，给她带回一枚新的卵形钻戒就释然了。

灯光下，切尼太太转动手指上的戒指，微笑着问：“你俩一直在干吗呢？”

“聊天——只是聊天。老婆，聊的都和哈维没啥关系。”

可事实并非如此。那个孩子出于自己的考虑提出了条件。他很严肃地解释说，对他而言，铁路，就像木材，房地产或者采矿一样，不具任何吸引力。在他的内心，最渴望的是掌管父亲新购买的大帆船。如果父亲能在认为恰当的时间里答应他这件事情，他这方面保证能在四五年的大学时间里，做到勤奋和节制。放假时，他要全面地接触并且了解航

线，他的问题不会超过两千个，但是内容会涉及他父亲保险柜里最私密的文件，以及圣弗朗西斯科港口的拖船。

“成交，”切尼最后说，“当然，大学毕业之前，你可以几十次地改变想法。但是，如果你想体面地接管它，而且如果你在23岁之前还没有改变主意的话，我就会将它移交给你。你觉得怎么样，哈维？”

“没问题；做任何事情都不要半途而废。不管怎样，当今世界竞争太多。迪斯科说过，亲人就应该团结在一起，他的船员从来不会背叛他。他说，这就是他们能捕到很多鱼的原因之一。听说，‘我们在此’号星期一要去乔治斯。他们在岸上待不了多久，是吧？”

“嗯，我想，我们也该走了。我把生意扔在那里不管，自己在两大洋之间跑来跑去，杂乱无章。现在该是重新整理起来的时候了，虽然我不喜欢这么做。20年来，我从没有像现在一样享受过假期。”

“我们不能就这么离开，我要去送迪斯科。”哈维说，“星期一是纪念日，无论如何，过了星期一再走。”

“纪念日是怎么回事？公寓里的人们都在说这件事。”切尼情绪低落地问。他也并不急于破坏美好的假期。

“哦，据我理解，这是一种歌舞表演，为夏天的租客而举办。迪斯科不太赞成这种活动，因为专门给寡妇和孤儿募捐的钱会被花掉。迪斯科总有独到的见解，你发现了吗？”

“哦，——是的。有点儿。在某些方面。那这么说这是镇上的表演活动了？”

“这是夏季的集会。他们会宣布一些溺水者或失踪人员的名单，然

后有人会发表演说，背诵赞美诗，大概就这些。迪斯科说，接下来救助委员会的那些负责人就会跑去后院，争取捐款。他说真正的表演在春季。那时候，所有的神职人员都会参与进来，没有一个夏天的租客。”

“我明白了，”切尼说。他非常理解自小生长在城市里的人对城市活动的自豪，“我们会待到纪念日，然后下午再走。”

“我估计我得下去找迪斯科他们了，让他在出海前带着船员们集合。当然，我得和他们待在一起。”

“哦，是这么回事。”切尼说，“我只是个可怜的夏天的租客，而你是——”

“大浅滩的渔民——地地道道的大浅滩的渔民。”哈维一边登上一辆有轨电车，一边回头说。切尼依旧沉浸在对未来的幸福憧憬中。

迪斯科并不喜欢任何旨在慈善募捐的社交活动，但是哈维恳请说，按他的理解，如果“我们在此”号的成员在当天不出现的话，他们的荣誉就会受到损失。于是，迪斯科做出了让步。他听说过——令人奇怪的是，全世界的人竟然都知道海上发生的事情——他听说一个“费城女演员”要来参加这次活动；他怀疑这个女人会朗诵《艾尔森船长的航行》。就他个人而言，他不喜欢女演员，同样也不喜欢夏天的租客。不过，公道归公道，尽管他自己（丹一想到这个事儿就会咯咯地笑）曾经栽到自己的判断上了，但这次绝对不会重蹈覆辙。哈维回到东格洛斯特，花半天时间向这位女演员解释了事件的本质，她本来觉得这件事很好笑。女演员在东西两海域都享有很高的声誉，她考虑了很久后，终于还了事实一个公道，就像迪斯科曾说过的那样。

凭以往的经验，切尼知道纪念日会发生什么事情。然而，任何公共

集会的本质对人类灵魂而言，无非是吃喝而已。那天的早晨雾蒙蒙的，天气还有些闷热。切尼望着一辆辆电车向西疾驰而去，车上坐满了身着夏季薄裙的妇女、戴草帽的白人男人，他们刚刚从波士顿下班回来。邮局外停放着自行车，奔波忙碌的职员们互相打招呼；胜利的彩旗在沉闷的空气里缓缓摇摆；一个神气活现的男人手持冲水管正在冲洗砖砌的人行道。

“太太，”他突然说，“你还记得——西雅图被烧毁³¹后——人们重建的景象吗？”

切尼太太点点头，挑剔地望着川流不息的街道。和丈夫一样，她也熟悉西部这些聚会，也一一做了比较。渔民渐渐混入人流，涌向市政大厅的门口——长着忧郁的双下巴的葡萄牙人，有的没有戴帽子，有的用披肩遮挡；眼睛清澈的新斯科舍人，沿海各省份的男人们；法国人，意大利人，瑞典人，丹麦人，还有从纵帆船上下来的船员们；到处都是一袭黑衣的妇女们，哀伤中流露出骄傲，她们互相致意，因为今天是她们的重要时刻。信奉不同教义的牧师——高级宗教圣会的牧师们平日忙于监督指导，现在正坐在海边休息；山上教堂的牧师和路德教会长满络腮胡的前水手，跟来自20艘船的船员们相识已久。还有一些纵帆船的主人，救助会的主要资助人，还有一些小人物，他们仅有的技术也都挂在了桅杆上，还有银行家，海事保险代理人，拖船和给水船的船长，装配工，修理工，装卸工，盐商，造船工，修桶匠，以及沿海的各类居民。

他们穿梭在一排排的座椅间，以嘲弄夏季租客们的服饰为乐。一位市政官员汗流浹背地在巡逻，直到他把纯粹的市民自豪感到处撒播完为止。切尼几天前只和他聊过5分钟，而现在两人似乎早已成了老相识。

“哦，切尼先生。您觉得我们的城市怎么样呢？——是的，太太，

您可以随便坐哪里，只要您高兴。——我猜，在西部也有这样的活动吧？”

“是的，不过我们那里没有这里的历史悠久。”

“当然，是这样的。我们在庆祝二百五十周年的时候，您真应该在场的。我跟您说，切尼先生，这座古老的城市确实不负盛名啊！”

“我听说过。它也确实值得庆祝。但是，为什么这座城市没有一家高档酒店呢？”

“——就在那儿，往左拐，佩德罗，那里有很多房间，您和您的朋友可以入住。哎呀，这是我一直跟他们强调的，切尼先生。虽然那儿投资了不少，但我想对您来说没什么。我们想要的是——”

一只手重重地搭在了他穿着高级呢绒外套的肩膀上，这是一位红脸的波特兰船长，主要负责运输冰和煤。他转过身，说：“你们到底在搞什么？你们在城里拍拍手就通过了法令，让正派的人们在海上这么辛苦？城里太干燥了，像骨头一样干巴巴的，比我上次来的时候还要没意思。不管怎么说，都得给我们腾个地方喝口饮料啊。”

“好像今天也没影响你吸收营养吧，卡尔森。稍后我会把它提上政治议程。在门口坐会儿，想好你要说的，我一会儿回来找你。”

“说那些对我来说有什么好处？在密克隆，一箱香槟酒18美元”，管风琴前奏响起时，这位船长突然落座，安静下来。

“这是我们的新乐队。”官员自豪地对切尼说。

“花了4000美元。我们明年得提高收费许可，才能雇得起。我不打

算让牧师在大会上宣传所有的宗教教义。我们的一部分孤儿要站起来唱了。我妻子教孩子们。一会儿见，切尼先生。我得上台了。”

童声真真切切地响起来，高亢而清脆，喧闹的人群终于安静下来。

“噢，上帝创造了你们，上帝保佑你们！永远赞美上帝，永远礼拜！”

空气中回荡着重复的旋律，大厅里的妇女们身子向前倾。切尼太太和其他人一起开始呼吸急促起来，她无法想象世界上竟然有这么多寡妇；然后她本能地想找哈维。哈维在观众后面找到了“我们在此”号的同伴，他正站在丹和迪斯科中间。前天晚上，索尔特叔叔带着宾从帕姆利科湾赶回来了，他对哈维还是充满了疑虑。

“你们还没走？”他嘟囔道，“小鬼，你在这儿干吗？”

“噢，大海和洪水，上帝保佑你们！永远赞美上帝，永远礼拜！”

“有什么不对吗？”丹说，“他在这里，和我们大家一样。”

“可他穿的衣服和别人不一样。”索尔特龇牙咧嘴地低声吼道。

“闭上你的嘴，索尔特。”迪斯科说，“你的脾气又不听话了。哈维，就待在这儿。”

接着，市政当局的另一位重要人物登上讲台开始发言，欢迎世界各地的人们来格洛斯特。然后，他很随意地指出格洛斯特优于世界上任何地方。这里拥有丰富的海洋资源，提到为了每年的丰收，多少人付出了代价。稍后，他又宣布过一会儿会宣读死亡人员的名单——一共117人（寡妇们屏息凝视，然后相互看着对方）。格洛斯特没有多少家制造厂

或工厂可以宣扬。她的子民们靠大海为生，众所周知，乔治斯和大浅滩都不是牧场。岸上的人们能做的最大努力便是帮助那些孤儿寡母。一番简要介绍之后，他代表全市感谢所有富有公益精神的人们来参加这次募捐活动。

“我只是瞧不起这个乞讨环节，”迪斯科怒气冲冲地低声说，“这样就很难让民众对我们有公正的看法了。”

“要是他们对将来没有预见，不懂得存钱，”索尔特接着说，“按照事物发展的规律来说，他们总有一天会后悔莫及。小鬼，你得到警示了吗？财富只能维持一段时间，如果你到处挥霍——”

“只会失去一切，一切，”宾说，“那时你该怎么办？我曾经——”他那双水汪汪的蓝色眼睛上下看了看，好像在寻找什么依托——“我曾经读过——我想，是一本书里——一艘船上所有人都淹死了——只剩一个——他对我说——”

“闭嘴！”索尔特打断他的话，“你没念过多少书，瞎想太多没用。还是想想怎么养活自己吧，宾。”

哈维挤在渔民中，只觉得后背一阵毛骨悚然的寒冷，从脖子一直蔓延到靴子，感到深入骨髓的可怕。虽然这是闷热到窒息的一天，但他还是觉得寒冷刺骨。

“那个就是费城的女演员？”迪斯科·特鲁普怒气冲冲地看着台上说，“哈维，你确定她要讲老艾尔森的故事？哈维，处理好了吗？你现在知道她要讲什么吗？”

女演员讲的并不是《艾尔森船长的航行》，而是一首诗歌，内容是

关于布里克瑟姆鱼港和一支拖网渔船船队深夜遭遇暴风雨袭击的，女人们在码头点燃指路的篝火，尽可能地帮助他们。

“她们拿走了老奶奶的毛毯

老人颤巍巍地命她们快走

她们拎起宝贝的摇篮

宝贝们绝不拒绝她们”

“哎呦！”丹从长腿杰克的肩膀上望过去，“不错啊！但是肯定花了不少钱。”

“土拨鼠要出洞了，”戈尔韦人说，“丹，港口光线不亮。”

“她们并不知道

燃起的是指路的篝火

还是葬礼的火焰”

这个声音极富感染力，拨动了所有人的心弦。当她讲到浑身湿透的船员们被海潮推到岸上，无论是死是活，都被抬到火堆旁，问道：“孩子，这是你的爸爸吗？”或者“太太，这是你的男人吗？”长椅上，人们的呼吸变得凝重起来。

“布里克瑟姆船

迎风破浪

行驶的爱

如同闪电划过风帆”

女演员结束演讲时，台下几乎没有掌声。妇女们在找手帕，一些男人两眼泪光闪烁，望着天花板。

“嗯，”索尔特说，“去别的剧院听这节目得花1美元——有可能两美元。我估计有些人能掏得起钱。对我来说，纯粹白花钱……天哪，巴特·爱德华船长，到底是什么风把他刮到台上了？”

“千万别小看他，”身后一个东港的男人说，“他是诗人，他要读他的作品。也是我们这行的。”

他并没有说巴特·爱德华船长已经努力了5年，就为能在格洛斯特的纪念日上朗诵自己的一首诗。最终，委员会被他磨得精疲力尽，又觉得好笑，于是就满足了他的要求。当他身着礼拜日的盛装站起来时，还没等他开口，老人简单而单纯的幸福就为他赢得了观众的喜欢。他们静静地聆听着37行经过锤炼的文字，大篇幅地描述了纵帆船“约翰·哈斯肯”号在1867年的风暴中遇难的故事。当他结束演讲时，观众席里爆发出热情的欢呼声。

一位有远见的记者悄悄溜到巴特船长身边，向他索取这首诗的复印本，并且对作者进行了采访。于是，巴特船长，这位曾经的捕鲸者、造船工、捕鱼高手、诗人，在他73岁的时候，得到了世界给予他的一切，再无他求。

“瞧，我觉得这样才合理。”东港的人说，“我曾经去过他刚才那首诗里写到的地方，我双手捧着他的诗，我可以证明他把一切都写进去

了。”

“我们的丹一顿早饭的功夫就能随便写出这样的诗来，要不然的话你就揍他。”索尔特向来的原则是推崇马萨诸塞州的荣耀。“但我觉得他说得有点啰唆——缅因州那部分。还有——”

“我猜，索尔特叔叔这次出海要完蛋了。他从来没那么痛快地夸过我，”丹咯咯地笑着说，“哈维，你怎么啦？这么安静。看起来脸色发绿，病了吗？”

“我也不知道自己怎么回事，”哈维回答，“我的肚子胀得像要撑破一样，全身发胀，直打哆嗦。”

“病了？哦——太倒霉了。等活动结束，我们就走。”

这些寡妇——她们几乎是在一个捕鱼季里就成了寡妇——强打精神，好像奔赴刑场一样，因为她们知道未来会发生什么。夏季租客中的女孩们身穿粉色和蓝色的衬衫式连衣裙，不再吃吃地嘲笑爱德华船长伟大的诗歌，转过头张望，不明白为什么会突然安静了下来。刚才同切尼先生谈话的市政官员站上讲台，渔民们奋力往前靠。他开始宣读今年丧生人员的名单，名单是按月分组的。去年九月的死亡人员大部分都是单身的或者是外地人，他的声音在寂静的大厅里显得格外响亮。

“9月9日——纵帆船‘弗洛丽·安德森’号在乔治斯沉没，全体人员失踪。

鲁本·匹特曼，船长，50岁，单身，住在本市主街。

埃米尔·奥尔森，19岁，单身，住在本市哈蒙德街329号，丹麦人。

奥斯卡·斯坦伯格，25岁，单身，瑞典人。

卡尔·斯坦伯格，28岁，单身，住在本市主街。

佩德罗，据称是马德拉群岛人，单身，住在本市的基恩公寓

约瑟夫·威尔士，又名约瑟夫·怀特，30岁，纽芬兰圣约翰斯人”。

“不对——缅因州的奥古斯丁人。”大厅里传出一个声音。

“他从圣约翰斯出发。”发言人一边回应，一边搜寻说话人。

“我知道。他是奥古斯丁的，是我侄子。”

发言人用铅笔在旁边的空白处做了纠正，然后继续往下读。

“同一艘纵帆船，查理·里奇，新斯科舍省利物浦人，33岁，单身。

奥尔波特·梅，住在本市罗格斯大街267号，27岁，单身。

9月27日——奥尔温·多拉德，30岁，已婚，在东港从平底船落水溺亡。”

这句话直击要害。有个寡妇在座位上蜷缩起来，紧握双手，又打开。切尼太太一直瞪大眼睛在听，突然觉得难受，几乎无法呼吸。丹的妈妈在她右边隔着几个座位的地方，看到后迅速赶到她身边。发言人还在继续。当念到一、二月的死亡名单时，枪林弹雨的射击更加密集，寡妇们只剩下喘息的工夫了。

“2月14日——纵帆船‘哈利·伦道夫’号，在从纽芬兰回家的路上，桅杆折断；阿萨·缪斯，已婚，32岁，掉下船，失踪。

2月23日——纵帆船‘吉尔伯特·霍普’号，迷失方向，罗伯特·比文，29岁，已婚，新斯科舍帕布尼科人。”

他的妻子就在大厅里。人们听到一阵低低的哭泣声，就像一只小动物被袭击一样。空气突然变得令人窒息，一个女孩跌跌撞撞地跑出大厅。几个月来，她抱着一线希望，因为虽然有人也曾随平底船到处漂，但会奇迹般地被一艘深海大帆船所救。现在，她已经得到了确切的答案。哈维看到人行道上的一名警察为她拦下一辆出租马车。“到车站50美分”——司机刚开始说，警察举手示意——“可我正好要去那儿。上车。看这儿，阿尔夫，下次如果我的灯没亮，你就别喊我。明白吗？”

大厅的侧门关上了，一片明媚的阳光也被关在门外。哈维的眼神再次转向发言人和他那份无止境的名单。

“4月19日——‘玛米·道格拉斯’号在大浅滩失踪，全体船员生死未卜。

爱德华·坎顿，43岁。船长，已婚，住在本市。

霍金斯，又名威廉姆斯，34岁，已婚，新斯科舍省谢尔本人。

克雷，混血人，28岁，已婚，住在本市。”

名单没完没了，永无止境。哈维的喉咙涌起鼓鼓囊囊的一堆，肠胃翻腾起来，这让他想起了从大客轮上掉下来的那天。

“5月10日——纵帆船‘我们在此’号（哈维全身血液沸腾）。奥托·斯文森，20岁，单身，掉下船失踪。”

大厅的后面，再次传来撕心裂肺的哭声。

“她不应该来，她不应该来。”长腿杰克“啧啧”地表示同情。

“哈维，别推，”丹咕哝着说。哈维倒是听见了，但他只觉得四周一片漆黑，眼冒金星。迪斯科往前凑了凑，对妻子讲了些什么。迪斯科太太坐在那里，一只胳膊抱着切尼太太，另一只胳膊托起她乱晃乱抓的戴着戒指的双手。

“头放低——放低！”她低声说，“一会儿就好了。”

“我不会！做不到！哦，让我——”切尼太太根本不知道自己在说什么。

“你必须做到，”特鲁普太太重复道，“你儿子晕过去了。在他们成长的过程中都会这样。你难道不想照顾他吗？我们可以从这边出去。悄悄地，你只要跟着我就行。嗨，亲爱的，咱们都是女人。我想，我们必须照顾好男人们。来！”

“我们在此”号的人们立刻穿过人群，像保镖一样护送开道，他们把脸色苍白、浑身发抖的哈维抬起来，放到接待室的长椅上。

“让他妈妈来。”特鲁普太太只说了一句，切尼太太弯下腰望着儿子。

“你怎么以为他能承受这些？”她愤怒地向切尼先生吼道，切尼先生哑口无言。“太可怕了——可怕！我们就不该来。这就是个错误，太缺德了！它——它就是个错误！为什么——他们为什么不把这些东西发表在报纸上，那才是登名单的地方。你还好吗，宝贝？”

此刻，哈维觉得非常难为情。“哦，我想，我已经好了，”他一边说，一边挣扎着想站起来，傻傻地笑道，“我肯定是早饭吃什么东西

了。”

“咖啡，也许是。”切尼先生硬朗的脸上线条分明，好像青铜刻出来的雕像一样，“我们不会再来了。”

“我想，现在最好去码头吧。”迪斯科说，“那儿到处都是外国人，新鲜空气能让切尼太太振作起来。”

哈维宣布他已经好多了。然而，直到他看见“我们在此”号，看到码头，码头工人的双手，他才好受了些。他的内心十分矛盾，既充满了骄傲，但又夹杂着几分伤感。其他人——夏季租客之类的人——要么在独桅艇上游玩，要么在码头上看海；但是，他从中明白了许多——比他刚开始想的要多。他只想坐在那里，大声哭一场，因为那艘纵帆船即将远去。切尼太太一个劲儿地哭，每走一步都在掉眼泪，并且对特鲁普太太说了一些非常特别的话。而特鲁普太太像哄小孩一样哄着她。从六岁起就再也没有享受过这样待遇的丹吹起了响亮的口哨。

那群老朋友——哈维觉得他们是古老的水手——坐上一艘古老的纵帆船，旁边都是破旧的平底船。哈维溜到码头前端，解开尾缆。船员们驾驶着纵帆船，驶出码头。每个人都有许多话想说，却又什么都没有说。哈维嘱咐丹要照看好索尔特叔叔的靴子、宾的锚，长腿杰克恳请哈维一定要记住教给他的航海技能，然而，由于在场的还有两位女士，这个笑话并不好笑。好朋友即将分别，远隔千山万水，无论如何也高兴不起来。

“升起三角帆和前桅！”迪斯科大喊。风吹向轮舵，迪斯科站在前面。“再见，哈维。不知道该说什么，我会经常想念你和你的家人。”

于是，纵帆船滑向远方，再也听不见彼此的声音了。他们坐在那

里，望着纵帆船驶离海港。切尼太太还在低声抽泣。

“别哭了，亲爱的，”特鲁普太太说，“我们都是女人。我想，你哭出来也不会让心里有多好受。上帝知道，我哭也没用，但他知道我还有其他要哭的事情。”

如今，事情已经过去几年了。在美国的另一边，一位年轻人漂洋过海，满身雾气地迎风走在街上，道路两旁到处是木制仿砖砌成的豪华房子。他在一扇大铁门前停下来，另一个年轻人骑在马背上——这匹马至少值1000美元——迎面而来。接下来是他们的对话：

“你好，丹！”

“你好，哈维！”

“有什么好事儿吗？”

“哦，这趟行程我干的是二副一样的鬼差事。你差不多也快完成那三重奏一样的大学生活了吧？”

“差不多。我跟你说，利兰·斯坦福大学三年级，那儿不像古老的‘我们在此’号。不过，明年夏天我就会接管生意。”

“你是说咱们的船？”

“当然。你等着瞧吧，我要拿你开刀，丹。等我接管了，我就让旧航线下岗，让你哭着喊着来求我。”

“我倒愿意试试。”丹说着，露出兄弟般的亲切笑容。哈维翻身下马，询问要不要进来坐一会儿。

“我坐电车来这儿就是为这个。不过，厨子在附近吗？总有一天，我会把那个疯厨子给扔进海里，都怪他那个该死的玩笑。”

这时，一阵低沉得意的笑声传了过来。“我们在此”号上的前厨子从大雾中走出来，牵住缰绳。他亲自照料哈维的一切，不允许任何人插手。

“和大浅滩的雾一样浓，对吧，大管家？”丹试图达成和解。

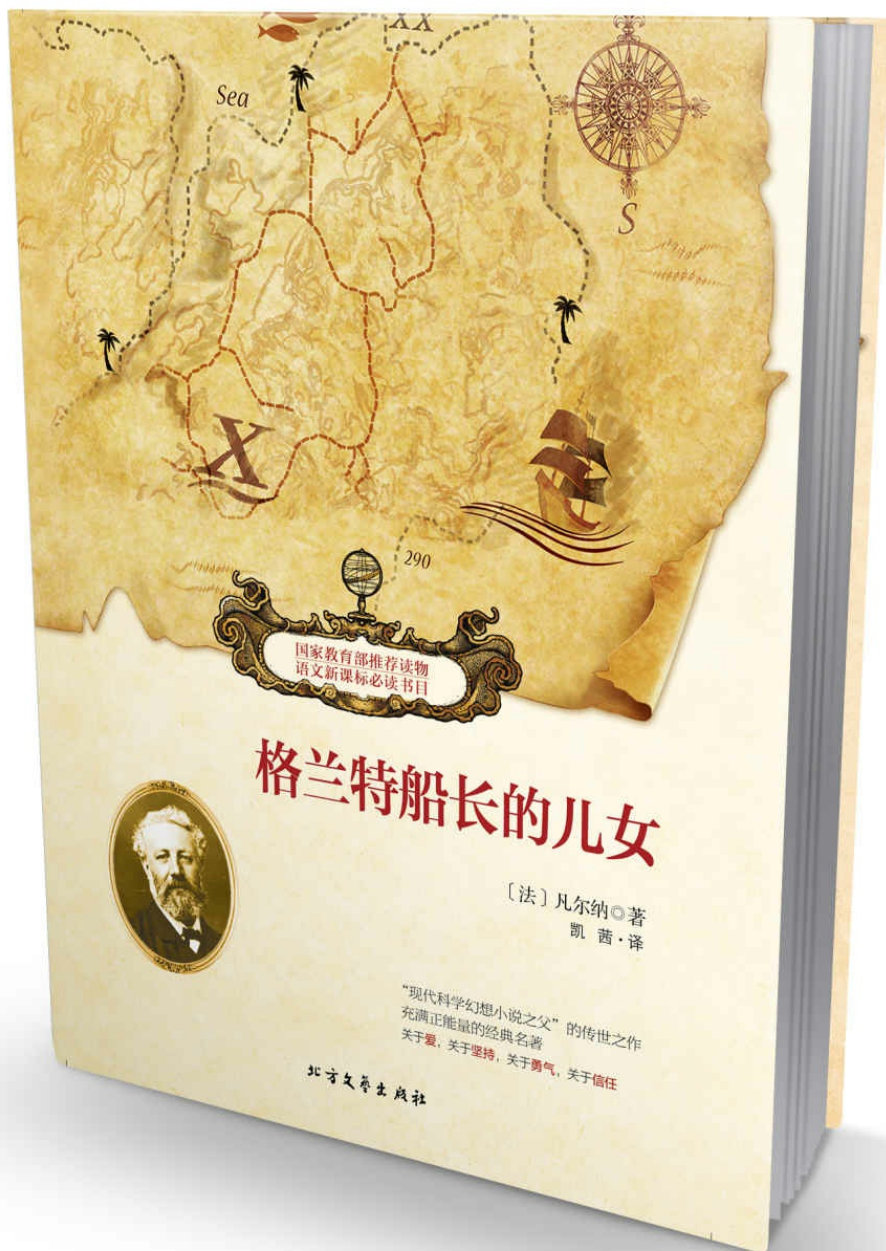
可是，这位黑得像煤球一样的凯尔特预言家认为直接回答并不合适。他用手拍了拍丹的肩膀，在他的耳边用沙哑的嗓音第20次重复了那句古老的预言。

“主人——仆人，仆人——主人，”他说，“丹•特鲁普，还记得我在‘我们在此’号上说过什么吗？”

“哦，我也不想否认，现在看来确实是这么回事。”丹说，“她是一艘高贵的船，总的来说，我欠她太多——这艘船和爸爸。”

“我也是。”哈维•切尼说。

[31](#) 西雅图被烧毁，1889年，西雅图遭遇大火，很多房屋建筑被毁。



格兰特船长的儿女

〔法〕凡尔纳◎著
凯茜·译



“现代科学幻想小说之父”的传世之作
充满正能量的经典名著
关于爱，关于坚持，关于勇气，关于信任

北方文艺出版社

目录

[格兰特船长的儿女](#)

[第一章 鲨鱼肚里的秘密](#)

[第二章 格莱拉弗夫人](#)

[第三章 船上的不速之客](#)

[第四章 上错船的巴嘉勒尔](#)

[第五章 优秀全面的小罗伯尔](#)

[第六章 分头行动](#)

[第七章 阿罗加尼亚国](#)

[第八章 穿越安第斯山脉](#)

[第九章 移动的山脉](#)

[第十章 兀鹰爪下的少年](#)

[第十一章 葡萄牙语还是西班牙语](#)

[第十二章 无意中的线索](#)

[第十三章 沙漠般的平原](#)

[第十四章 寻找水源](#)

[第十五章 与狼群夜战](#)

[第十六章 走向坦迪尔](#)

[第十七章 见独立堡司令](#)

[第十八章 洪流来了](#)

[第十九章 大树上栖身](#)

[第二十章 离奇获救后的离别](#)

[第二十一章 重新制订寻找计划](#)

[第二十二章 重踏搜寻之路](#)

[第二十三章 和巨浪搏斗](#)

[第二十四章 意料之外的线索](#)

[第二十五章 “大不列颠号”上的遇难船员](#)

[第二十六章 穿过澳大利亚](#)

[第二十七章 探险家们钟爱的地方](#)

[第二十八章 康斯登桥惨案](#)

[第二十九章 出黄金的地方](#)

[第三十章 土人的生活](#)

[第三十一章 “坐地人”的世外桃源](#)

[第三十二章 狡猾的内奸](#)

[第三十三章 真面目是海盗](#)

[第三十四章 惊险渡过斯诺威河](#)

[第三十五章 两只船都成了谜](#)

[第三十六章 骇人的吃人海岸](#)
[第三十七章 暗礁丛里的“麦伽利号”](#)
[第三十八章 浮不起来的船](#)
[第三十九章 新西兰的反殖民斗争](#)
[第四十章 威卡陀的路程](#)
[第四十一章 做了“噬骨魔”俘虏](#)
[第四十二章 毛利人的“鹰窝”](#)
[第四十三章 骇人的酋长丧礼](#)
[第四十四章 罗伯尔帮越狱](#)
[第四十五章 墓穴成了保护伞](#)
[第四十六章 制造火山爆发](#)
[第四十七章 前后夹击](#)
[第四十八章 意外出现的“邓肯号”](#)
[第四十九章 打动罪犯阿埃童](#)
[第五十章 阿埃童的坦白](#)
[第五十一章 玛丽雅泰莱萨岛](#)
[第五十二章 相聚](#)
[第五十三章 结局](#)

版权信息

书名：格兰特船长的儿女

作者：（法）儒勒·凡尔纳著;凯茜译

出版方：北方文艺出版社

出版时间：2016.9

ISBN：9787531736776

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格兰特船长的儿女

第一章 鲨鱼肚里的秘密

1864年7月26日，在北爱尔兰和苏格兰之间的北海峡海面，有艘豪华游轮正在狂风怒号中行进。游轮上挂着两面旗，船尾的桅杆上挂着一面英国国旗，大桅杆上挂着一面小蓝旗，小蓝旗上有“E·G”两个字母，“E·G”是“Edward·Glenarvan”的缩写，也是爱德华·格莱拉弗的名字。

小蓝旗上的名字下面，有个标记，标记代表着爱德华·格莱拉弗的公爵身份。在英国贵族中，爵士身份属于苏格兰十二元老之一。

爱德华·格莱拉弗爵士是皇家泰晤士游船的一名会员，皇家泰晤士游船协会在英国非常有名，影响力很大，这艘游船就是他的私人船只，以“邓肯号”命名。在这艘豪华游船上，不仅有格莱拉弗爵士，还有他年轻美貌的妻子海伦夫人，以及他的表兄麦克那布斯少校。

“邓肯号”游船是艘刚造好没多久的新船，如今正驶向格拉斯哥。这艘游轮远行前，曾在克莱德河试航，结果非常顺利。此时，在船行驶到已经能看到阿蓝岛的时候，瞭望台上一名正观望的水手突然报告说：“有条大鱼扑了过来，扑进船尾的浪槽里了。”

船长约翰·麦盖尔大惊，立刻派人告诉了格莱拉弗爵士。爵士很快带着少校走了过来，在通往船尾楼顶的路上，爵士问船长扑进浪槽里的是什么鱼。

“应该是条鲨鱼，一条很大的鲨鱼！”船长说。

“哦？这一带还有鲨鱼？”爵士觉得有些奇怪。

“有，这一带有种叫‘天秤鱼’的鲨鱼，因为头部像天秤而得名。这种鲨鱼可以在任何温度的海洋里生活。如果我没有看错，应该就是它了。如果您允许，想必夫人也喜欢看我们钓这种鲨鱼，到时候就能知道它长的是个什么样子了。”

船长说完，见自己的话吊起了大家的胃口，接着又说：“这是一种可怕的鲨鱼，繁殖能力很强，而且很凶残。对于这种鲨鱼，我们要为民除害，抓住一切机会除掉它。如果您愿意看捕鲨鱼，这绝对是个难得的机会。”

“好吧！我等着这激动人心的时刻！”

爵士说完便命人接来了兴冲冲的夫人海伦。登上了尾楼的海伦夫人兴致极高，想要观赏这百年不遇的惊心场面。

海面 and 蓝天如同水洗般晴朗，大家很清楚地看到了在海里悠闲畅游的鲨鱼，看着它一会儿沉入海底，一会儿又飞身跃起，行动非常敏捷矫健，令人赞不绝口。

捕捉鲨鱼的工作开始了，麦盖尔船长让几名水手将一条末端系着大钩，钩上穿着一块肥厚腊肉的粗绳子从右舷栏上扔了下去。那块诱人的香饵即使在离鲨鱼45米之外的地方，也依然被它闻到了，它快速地逼近游船。

这条大鲨鱼有着圆鼓鼓的眼睛，前行时瞪得更大了，眼神里全是对食物的渴望。它用那灰黑色的双鳍拍打着波浪，靠不停摆动的尾巴保持身体的平衡，并沿直线向前蹿去。在张开嘴巴时，大家很明显地看到了

它的四排白色的牙齿，也看到它的头像“秤”一样宽。

麦盖尔船长说得没错，它就是美国所说的“天秤鱼”，在法国的普罗旺斯，它也被称之为“犹太鱼”，这种鲨鱼是所有鲨鱼中最贪吃的一种。

“邓肯号”游轮上的每个人都盯着鲨鱼，看得有些出神。很快，他们发现它游到了香饵面前，为了便于吞食那块腊肉，它是打了个滚扑上去吞食的。瞬间，那块腊肉便进了它的嘴巴，当然同时，它也在缆索的猛烈摇动中上了钩。

见鲨鱼上钩，水手们急忙转动辘轳，大鲨鱼被吊了起来。

见自己被吊出水面，大鲨鱼开始拼命挣扎。但此时的挣扎已经没有任何用处了，因为自有经验丰富的水手们将它制服。他们只需用一根末端打着活结的绳子，套住它的尾巴就能让它听话。

果然，鲨鱼很快从舷栏上被拉到了船上，并重重地摔在了甲板上。接着，一名水手悄悄地靠近它，举起一把利斧，狠狠地朝它的尾巴砍去。

失去尾巴的大鲨鱼没什么可怕的了。不过，即使这样，水手们依然对它充满了好奇。

没错，他们像其他船上的水手一样，都想杀掉鲨鱼，看它肚子里有什么。当然，除了想知道它吃了什么外，还想知道它肚子里有没有什么稀奇之物。而这种好奇心，鲨鱼大多都会满足他们的，水手们绝不会毫无收获。

不过，在充满腥臭的鲨鱼腹内搜寻，海伦夫人没什么兴趣看，于是

便回到了自己的舱里。

此时，再仔细看那条奄奄一息的鲨鱼，发现它有3米多长，600多斤重。这样的庞然大物对水手们来说并不奇怪。不过，虽然这种“天秤鱼”不是鲨鱼中最大的，但却是最凶猛的。

很快，大鲨鱼的肚子就被水手们剖开了。不过很可惜，在它的肚子里，水手们没有发现任何食物，只发现了它刚刚吞食的那只鱼钩。看来，可怜的它很久没有吃东西了。就在大家带着失望，准备将它的残骸扔下海时，突然被一个看上去很粗糙的东西吸引住了，那东西隐藏在鲨鱼的腹部器官里。

“看，那是什么？”一个水手叫了起来。

“好像是块石头！这家伙吞石头是为了平衡身体！”另一个水手说。

“算了吧，怎么能是石头呢？明明就是连环弹嘛。连环弹被打进了这个家伙的肚子，没等它消化，又被我们捉住了。”又一个水手说。

“别乱说，这明明就是个酒瓶。你们就没发现它是个酒鬼吗？为了喝酒，把酒瓶都吞下去了。”大副汤姆·艾撒汀说。

“哦！难道这鲨鱼的肚子里真有只瓶子？”爵士惊奇地大叫。

“嘿，还真是个瓶子！”艾撒汀说完，仔细地看了看又说，“不过，有一点能确定，这瓶子不是从酒窖里拿出来的。”

“哦，这样的话，艾撒汀，把瓶子拿出来吧，通常从海里捡到的瓶子，里面都会有一些珍贵的文件。”爵士说。

“你真相信有这种事？”少校问。

“这种可能性不是没有！”

“不！我不认同你的可能性，我觉得很可能是这个瓶子里藏着不为人知的秘密！”少校严肃地说。

“我们很快就能知道结果了。艾撒汀，看看瓶子里有什么。”格莱拉弗爵士说。

“好的！”大副说完，费了不少劲才从鲨鱼腹部取出看不清样子的瓶子。

“太好了！让人把它洗干净，拿到尾楼来。”

格莱拉弗爵士说完，便和大家一起去了尾楼。

不一会儿，艾撒汀便将那个洗干净的瓶子拿到了尾楼的方厅里，放在由爵士、少校和船长围坐的桌子上。女人的好奇心丝毫不比男人少，海伦夫人也跟了过来。

其实，在海上，人们的好奇心会更大，很多小事都可能被放大。所以，就那么一只瓶子，大家全都围了过去，一声不响，一眼不眨地看着。

这个瓶子里到底有什么秘密？是有船只出事了？抑或只是一位航行者无聊，写了个便笺放在了瓶子里，并丢进海里？

为了看个究竟，爵士拿起瓶子研究起来。他认真和小心的样子，如同英国警方在侦破一件重要的案子。

当然，爵士这么做并没有错，因为表面看来没什么意义的事，很可能背后隐藏着重大的案情。

爵士在检查瓶子里面之前，首先检查了瓶子的外部。他发现这是一只细颈瓶，瓶口被一节生了锈的铁丝缠着。此瓶的瓶身很厚，很结实，即使用很大的压力都不会让它破裂。

爵士很快就看出它是法国香槟省独有的一种瓶子。在那里，很多卖酒的商人都会用这种瓶子去敲椅子的把手，通常情况下，椅子把手都被敲断了，但瓶子却一点破损都没有。

这只瓶子不知经过了多长时间的漂泊，也不知经过了多少次撞击，总之，它仍然非常完好地存在着，可见它是多么结实了。

“看来，它是克里弗酒厂的瓶子。”少校肯定地说。

对于香槟他是内行，所以没人质疑他的话。

“亲爱的少校，如果我们只是知道瓶子是哪家酒厂出来的，却不知道它是从什么地方来的，又有什么意义呢？”海伦夫人说。

“不用着急，我亲爱的海伦，我们现在可以知道它来自很遥远的地方。”爵士说完，指着瓶子说，“看到没有？这个瓶子的外面黏着很多凝固的矿石，由此说明，它是经过海水长时间的浸渍形成的。由此可以看出，瓶子在进入鲨鱼的肚子之前，它已经在大海里漂流了很长时间了。”

“我认同你的看法。瓶子外面聚集了这么厚的杂质，没有长时间的浸淫是做不到的。”少校对爵士说。

“那这瓶子到底是从什么地方来的呢？”海伦夫人好奇地问。

“不要着急！我亲爱的海伦，想要弄清这个瓶子的来历，需要一些耐心。我想，除非我的推测是错的，不然的话，我们的疑问，这瓶子就能给我们回答。”

格莱拉弗爵士说着话，便去刮瓶口那层坚硬的杂质，刮了一会儿后，瓶塞露了出来。不过瓶塞因为受到海水的侵蚀，已经有些破损了。

“很可能里面的东西也损坏了，多可怕！如果是重要的文件可就糟了。”爵士说。

“嗯，很可能是！”少校附和道。

“不过据我推测，由于瓶口塞得不紧，所以才会一直漂着，没有沉下去。最后又被鲨鱼吞进了肚里，然后带到了我们‘邓肯号’上。”爵士又说。

“没错！不过，如果我們是在大海里捞起来的，就可以推断出捞获地的经纬度。这样的话，我们就只需研究气流和海流方向，就能知道它漂了多少路程了。现在从鲨鱼嘴里发现它，是无法用这种方法推断的。”约翰·麦盖尔说。

“看看再说！”爵士说着，十分小心地拔开了瓶塞。顿时，一股咸腥味充满了整个尾楼。

“里面有什么？”海伦夫人紧张又焦急。

“看来我的猜测没错，像是几张纸条！”爵士说。

“啊？有纸条！有纸条啊！”海伦夫人激动地大叫起来。

“不过，也许因为潮气侵入的原因，纸条已经牢牢地粘在瓶子上了，想要拿出来并不容易。”爵士说。

“要不把瓶子打破？”少校说。

“不！我不想把瓶子打破！”爵士摇头道。

“那倒也是，我也希望不要打破！”少校转而言。

“当然最好不要把瓶子打破了。不过瓶子里的东西显然比瓶子更重要，所以只好牺牲掉瓶子了。”海伦夫人说。

“要不只把瓶颈敲掉好了！”船长突然说。

“好吧！那就这样吧！我亲爱的爱德华！”海伦夫人叫道。

其实，除了这个方法，也没什么其他办法了。所以格莱拉弗爵士虽然心有不合，但也不得不把他认为珍贵的瓶子的颈部敲掉了。不过，瓶子外面的一层杂质就像花岗岩一样坚硬，必须用铁锤去砸才行。

很快，瓶颈就被砸破了，碎片落在了桌子上。他们从打破的瓶颈处，看到里面有几块黏在一起的纸。爵士小心翼翼地将那些黏在一起的纸拿了出来，然后慢慢揭开，一点点地摊在桌子上。

此时，海伦夫人、少校和船长都挤了过来。

这些纸片，由于被海水侵蚀过，根本无法看清全部内容，只能看到一些模糊不清的文字。爵士在仔细地观察了几分钟后，拿起纸片，翻来覆去地看，不仅看正面，还看反面，甚至还对着太阳光照着看。

最后，总算把纸片上保留的那些印迹组成了完整的句子。他对旁边充满了期待，已经等得有些不耐烦的人说：“从没有侵蚀掉的文字初步来看，这里有用三种文字组成的三个不同内容的纸条。不过，也很可能是同一内容，只是用英文、法文、德文表达出来而已。”

“从几个能看清的字上，怎么也能知道纸条表达的意思吧！”海伦夫人说。

“哦，不，很难说，我亲爱的海伦，这些纸条上的字很不清楚。”爵士说。

“那可不可以把写有三种不同文字的纸条结合起来看呢？”少校问。

“应该可以，因为三张不同的文字，不一定每张上都是同一行被侵蚀，所以从这三张纸条中，也许能够凑出完整的意思。”船长说。

“嗯！我正准备这么做。不过，我们要一步步地来，先来看英文能看清的纸条吧！”爵士说。

62 Bir gow

sink stra

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lost

“这些好像看不出有什么完整的意思。”少校有些失望。

“即使看不明白完整的意思，但每个单词的意思还是能知道的。”船长说。

“对！这当然是确定的，比如‘sink’是沉没的意思；‘aland’是着陆的意思；‘that’则是‘此’的意思；‘and’是‘及’；‘lost’是必死的意思。这些单词都是很完整的。还有这个‘skipp’显然它应该是‘skipper’，船长的意思；而还有好像是说一位名叫Gr.....什么‘格’的人，应该是指一位船长的名字，大约是说船长驾驶的船只遇到了海难。”

“是的，还有这个‘monit’和‘ssistance’，两个字的意思也很清楚，一个是‘文件’，另一个是‘救援’。”麦盖尔船长说。

“这么说，好像能知道一些意思了。”海伦夫人说。

“可惜呀，还是有些重要的词没有了，比如发生海难的船叫什么名字，在什么地方发生的海难等等，没有这些，我们想帮他们也没办法呀。”少校说。

“我们总会想办法知道这些的。”爵士并不灰心。

“嗯！是的，我也相信。”少校非常容易被别人的思路带走，但随即又补充了一句，“可要怎么才能知道呢？”

“三张纸条互为补充就知道了。”爵士说。

“好吧！那我们继续看！”海伦夫人又急了，催促道。

他们开始研究第二张纸条。这第二张纸条损坏得更厉害了，他们只看到几个不相连的单词。

7juni Glas

Zwei atrosen

graus

bringt ihnen

“看来这是德文。”船长只看了一眼便说。

“你懂德文的吧，麦盖尔？”爵士问船长。

“是的，爵士，我懂。”

“那就给我们说说这几个单词的意思吧！”爵士说。

船长仔细看了看那几个单词，然后慢慢地说：“7juni是指日期，6月7日的意思。要是我们再把英文纸条上的‘62’联系起来，那就是指1862年6月7日。”

“很好！继续！”海伦激动地叫道。

“在这日期的同一行，有‘Glas’这个单词，如果把英文纸条上的‘gow’与它联系起来，应该是指‘Glasgow’，也就是格拉斯哥¹的意思。看来，是说失事的船属于格拉斯哥港。”

“嗯，我也觉得是这样。”少校和往常一样，附和道。

“这张纸条的第二行缺失，但第三行却有两个重要的单词，‘zwei’是‘两个’的意思；而‘atrosen’则很可能是‘matrosen’，这个单词是指‘水手’。”

“这么说，这句话的意思就是说那条船上有个船长和两名水手落难了？”海伦抢着问道。

“非常有可能！”爵士回答。

“不过，爵士，我要坦白地告诉您，下面那个‘graus’是什么意思我不清楚。不过也许在和下一张纸条联系起来时，我们就能知道它的意思了。对于最后两个单词，‘bringt’和‘ihnen’，是请求、乞求的意思。这样如果我们再把第一张写有英文字的纸条联系起来，就很明白，是说请求救援的意思。”船长说。

“是的！没错，请求救援！”爵士叹了口气，接着说，“可那几个不幸的落难者又是在什么地方出事的呢？到目前为止，我们还是看不出来。出事地点非常重要，可我们没有一点线索。”

“希望写着法文的纸条能给我们提供帮助。”海伦夫人说。

“那我们现在看法文吧，我们都懂法文，应该更容易理解。”爵士说。

在第三张纸条上，他们看到了用法文写的以下文字：

troi	ats	tannia
gonie	austral	

abor

contin pr cruel indi

jete ongit

et37°11' 37°11' lat

“啊！这里能看到数字！天啊！快看！大家快看啊！”海伦夫人高兴地叫着。

“我们最好按顺序来研究。我们先看第一行，从这一行残缺的几个单词中，我们能看出，头几个字是说‘三桅船’，现在将第一张纸条和这个单词联系起来，船名也就完整了，应该是叫‘大不列颠’；第二行后面的两个单词‘gonie’和‘austral’，其实就‘austral’有明确的意思，我们知道，是说‘南半球’。”爵士说。

“有了这个单词，就能看出大概方位了。应该是说船在南半球失事。”麦盖尔船长说。

“很明显是这样！”少校说。

“我们再继续看下去，‘abor’应该是指‘aborder’，也就是‘到达’的意思。那么是不是说，这几个不幸的落难人到了某个地方？而‘contin’是不是指‘continent’，也就是大陆的意思呢？可这个‘cruel！’……是不是指德文中的‘graus……grausam’？这个单词是‘残暴’的意思。”

爵士说完停了一下，继续说：“我们继续往下看吧！”

爵士对这些不很完整，但却能隐隐吐露出意思的纸条越来越有兴趣

了，兴致盎然地说：“‘indi’是不是‘inde’？也就是‘印度’的意思呢？是不是说遇难者被海浪卷到了印度？还有这个‘ongit’，应该是‘Longitude’，也就是经度的意思，但后面的数字看不清楚了，接着下面又出现了个数字，想必这个数字是指纬度。也就是说，他们的落难地在纬度37度11分的地方！这下好了，我们有了位置了。”

“可只有纬度数，没有经度数呀！”少校说。

“亲爱的少校，我们不能要求得那么完美了，现在有了准确的纬度，已经很不错了。从这三张纸条中我们能看出，这张法文纸条是最完整的一个，而这三张纸条中的单词意思，又能彼此联系，而且三张纸条的单词所占的行列也一样多，由此我们可以得出这样的结论，这是三张内容一样的文字。我们现在可以把这三张中的完整单词列出来，然后研究出最接近正确的意思。”爵士说。

“那我们最终用什么文字来翻译呢？是法文、英文还是德文？”少校问。

“我看我们还是用法文吧，法文我们几个人都懂。”爵士说。

“您说得很对！爵士！”船长说。

“那么，我们现在可以把这三张纸条中的文字拼凑出来，空白处还让它保留空白，有疑问的我们也可以标出来，然后一起研究、判断！”

爵士说着，拿起了一支笔，在上面写了起来，过了一会儿，他将这张纸拿给大家看，大家看到上面写着：

7juin 1862 trois-mats Britannia Glasgow

1862年6月7日 三桅船“大不列颠号”

格拉斯哥

sombre gonie austral

沉没 哥尼亚 南半球

à terre deux matelots

上陆 两名水手

capitaine Grabor

船长 格 到达

contin pr cruel indi

大陆 被俘于 野蛮的 印第

jeté ce document de longitude

抛 此 文件 经度

Et 37°11' de latitude portez-leur secours

37度11分 纬度 乞求 援救

perdu

必死

在他们认真看的时候，有水手过来报告说“邓肯号”已经进入克莱德湾，要船长发命令。

“现在怎么办，爵士？”麦盖尔船长问格莱拉弗爵士。

爵士想了想说：“这样吧！我们先到丹巴顿，送海伦夫人回麦凯莫府后，我去伦敦，将这件事汇报给海军部。”

船长就此下了命令。

“朋友们，现在我们继续研究。从这些凌乱的文字中，我们找到了大船失事的一些线索。这些失事的船只中有几名落难者，他们是否能够获救，就看我们的判断是否准确了。所以我们必须尽全力来做这件事，解开这个谜底。”爵士说。

“是的！亲爱的，我们一定要这么做。”海伦夫人说。

“我觉得我们现在有必要先把这些纸条上的内容分几部分来处理，首先就是我们已知的部分，接着是我们能猜出的部分，最后当然是无法知道的部分了。那么，我们现在知道了什么呢？我们知道在1862年6月7日，有艘来自格拉斯哥港的三桅船——‘大不列颠号’失事了，最后两名水手和一名船长落难在纬度37度11分的地方，现在请求救援。”爵士说。

“对，是这样的！”少校说。

“那么我们能猜到的是什么呢？我觉得应该是船只的失事地点在南半球海面。当然，我们有必要对‘gonie’这个单词多加注意。因为我们无法判断这个单词是指一个地名，还是只是一个地名的一部分。”

“这个单词会不会是‘patagonie’？也就是巴塔哥尼亚的意思？”海伦夫人问。

“可能是吧！不过，巴塔哥尼亚在不在南纬37度线上呢？”少校问。

“这个不难知道！”船长一边说，一边打开了地图。

“确实是这样！巴塔哥尼亚穿过了南纬37度线。也就是说，南纬37度线先是横截了阿罗加尼亚，然后又沿着巴塔哥尼亚北部穿过了草原，最后进入大西洋。”

船长一说完，爵士接着说：“我们现在继续推测下去，‘abor’很可能是‘aborder’，也就是到达的意思。那么，两名水手和这位船长是到达了什么地方呢？‘contin’，有可能是‘continent’，也就是大陆的意思。我们要注意，是‘大陆’，不是海岛。那么，他们到了大陆后又怎么样了呢？有个只有两个字母的‘pr’说出了他们的命运。这个单词很可能是‘pris’，也就是被俘了，或者是‘prisonniers’，做了俘虏。那么他们做了谁的俘虏呢？也就是说被什么人掳去了呢？很可能是被野蛮的‘cruels indiens’，也就是被印第安人掳去了。我这么推测你们同意吗？这么一说，是不是那些空白的地方，也就有字了呢？你们难道不觉得这几张纸条的意思已经说得很明显了吗？现在还有什么不明白的？”

爵士的眼神里充满了自信，言语也是异常的肯定。他的热情和自信感染着大家，大家一起回答说：“非常明白，再明白不过了！”

好一会儿，爵士又说：“朋友们，我觉得前面的种种推测，都是非常值得信任的，所以我觉得船应该是在巴塔哥尼亚海岸附近失事的。我随后会叫人在格拉斯哥港打听，问问‘大不列颠号’当时是要去什么地方，这样我们就能知道他们失事的地方，会不会是被迫驶去的了。”

“嗯！其实我们完全不需要去那么远打听，我们这里有商船报纸，上面会给出我们需要的信息。”船长说。

“马上查！快一点查！”海伦夫人着急地说。

船长拿出了一大捆报纸，这些报纸都是1862年的，然后仔细翻了起来。

没用多长时间，他就高兴地说：“找到了，1862年5月30日，卡亚俄2！满载，驶向格拉斯哥港，船名‘大不列颠号’，船长是格兰特。”

“啊！格兰特！是格兰特！”爵士大声地叫了起来。

“原来是他呀，那位有着雄心壮志的英格兰人！他还曾想在太平洋上建一个新苏格兰呢！”

爵士显得很兴奋。

“是啊！没错！就是他，人们在他1862年乘‘大不列颠号’从格拉斯哥港出发后，便再也找不到他的消息了！”船长又说。

“不用再怀疑了！没什么值得怀疑的！就是他，‘大不列颠号’5月30日离开卡亚俄，在8天后的6月7日，他们就在巴塔哥尼亚海面出事了。由此可以看出，整个事件都体现在这三张残缺不全的纸条里。现在你们知道了吧，朋友们！我们的推测没错！离事实已经很接近了。当然，现在我们还有一点不知道，那就是他们落难的经度数。”爵士越说越兴奋，说到后面则显得有些沮丧。

“也没事！现在我们连那地方叫什么名字都知道了，又知道纬度，所以经度并不是非知道不可。我们是可以找到他们落难的地方的。”船长安慰爵士说。

“这么说，我们是什么都知道了？”海伦夫人说。

“是的，都明白了，亲爱的海伦。三张纸条上的空白处，已经都被我们毫不费力地填上了，就如同格兰特船长亲口给我们叙述，我们替他做记录一样清楚。”

爵士说完，拿起笔，开始在一张纸上做记录：

1862年6月7日，格拉斯哥港有只名为“大不列颠号”的三桅船，在靠近巴塔哥尼亚一带海岸的南半球海面上失事，两名水手和格兰特船长登上了大陆，被野蛮的印第安人俘虏。地方位于经.....纬37度11分处，请求救援，否则必死无疑！

“太好了！亲爱的！要是那些落难者能够重新获救，回到祖国，你功不可没啊！”海伦夫人替丈夫叫好。

“我相信，他们一定能重回祖国怀抱的。这三张纸条已经说得很明显，很清楚了。英国海军部一定不会不救他们的孩子。绝对不会！以前，他们曾救过航海家富兰克林以及其他一些失事的船员，所以这次他们一定不会不救‘大不列颠号’的遇难者的！”

“是的，这些遇难者一定也有家庭，他们的亲人一定因为他们的失踪而伤心痛苦。包括格兰特船长的妻子和儿女.....”海伦夫人说着说着，伤心起来。

“没错！你说得很对，我亲爱的夫人！我会尽快通知海军部的，他们一定不会让我们失望。朋友们，现在，我们就到楼顶去吧，快进港了！”

确实是这样，使足了马力的“邓肯号”，正沿着比尤特岛的海岸在航行，美丽的山城被他们远远地抛在了船后。很快，“邓肯号”驶进了狭窄

的海湾航道，在格里诺克镇前转了个弯。

晚上6点钟的时候，“邓肯号”停在了丹巴顿那座雪花岩的脚下，而那雪花岩的岩顶上，正矗立着苏格兰英雄华莱斯。华莱斯是13世纪苏格兰解放战争中的人民领袖，不过后来被英国人杀害了。

岸上，有辆马车正等候着海伦夫人和麦克那布斯少校，准备将他们送回麦凯莫府。爵士在和他年轻美貌的夫人拥抱告别后，跳上了去往格拉斯哥的快车。

动身前，他用电报给《泰晤士报》和《晨报》发了一篇启事，启事的内容是这样的：

想要知道格拉斯哥港三桅船“大不列颠号”，以及船长格兰特船长的消息者，请咨询格莱拉弗爵士。

地址：苏格兰，丹巴顿，莱斯村的麦凯莫府。

[1](#)英国第三大城市，苏格兰最大的工商业城市和港口。

[2](#)秘鲁第二大城市。位于卡亚俄湾内，里马克河口南岸。

第二章 格莱拉弗夫人

麦凯莫府位于苏格兰南部的莱斯村附近。莱斯村实际是个美丽的小山谷，麦凯莫府那古朴典雅的宅子因为有着高高的地基，所以能轻松地俯瞰美丽的莱斯村。由于整个宅子都被约孟湖环绕，所以它像一座水上建筑矗立在那里。

麦凯莫府的历史已经有很多年了，它一直属于格莱拉弗家。

格莱拉弗住的莱斯村是英雄罗布·罗伊和弗克斯·麦考克里考的故乡，两位英雄留下的美好遗风也感染着这里的人，让他们都拥有热情好客，为人仗义的性格。

不过，在苏格兰大面积爆发社会革命的时候，很多佃户都被赶出了莱斯村，原因就是无力缴付昂贵的地租。另有一些没有被赶走的，最终也被活活饿死，还有一些则只能去做了渔夫。总之，当时整个社会都处在动荡和绝望之中。

格莱拉弗是本地的贵族，而在所有的贵族中，他们这一家族又是最维护平民权利的，对于家中的佃户，他们总是平等对待，所以他家的佃户没有一个离开，忠诚地做着格莱拉弗家族的臣民。这也就让格莱拉弗的麦凯莫府，始终都有苏格兰人在里面，就和“邓肯号”上只有苏格兰人一样，这在乱世中的苏格兰来说，绝对少见。

不管是麦凯莫府，还是“邓肯号”上的苏格兰人，他们都是老领主麦考克里考、麦克法伦、麦克那布斯、麦克诺顿庄户的子孙。总而言之，

他们都是土生土长的斯特林和丹巴顿两郡的人，他们每个人都勤劳诚实，忠诚地对待他们的主人。

这些人中，有些人至今还在说着古英格兰话。

格莱拉弗爵士家境富裕，却一向仗义疏财。当然，相比于他的慷慨，他的善良和仁慈更显珍贵，因为一个人的慷慨是有限的，但善良和仁慈却是无限的。这位英国贵族元老，莱斯村的绅士，麦凯莫府的主人，最终因为忠于英逊王詹姆士二世，不愿意无原则地逢迎当时的王朝而被英国政客歧视。

同时，因为他始终继承着先辈的优秀传统，坚决抵制对英格兰的侵略，这也成了他被政客们歧视的主要原因。

爵士同样继承着先辈的优良传统，而且胸襟开阔，充满智慧，他打开大门，迎接一切进步的事物。当然，这也都以不违背“苏格兰”的利益为底线。为了给苏格兰争光，他参加了皇家泰晤士河游船会的竞赛，并获得了很好的成绩。

32岁的格莱拉弗爵士身材高大，风度翩翩，虽然容貌英俊严肃，但眼神中闪现的却是温和与善良。气质超群的他，象征着苏格兰高地这片土地的风骨。

大家都知道格莱拉弗爵士为人豪爽，遇事敢作敢为，特别有古代骑士风度。而他确实也如中古时期苏格兰君主弗克斯一样，是19世纪的骑士领袖代表。同时，他比中世纪基督教圣人圣·马丁还要仁爱。在高地，如果遇到贫民，他会无私地将能给的全部给予他们，甚至为了给贫民御寒，他连身上的大衣都能脱下来赠予。

这年，格莱拉弗爵士娶了海伦小姐，此时也正是他们新婚三个月的时间，两个人非常恩爱。海伦小姐是苏格兰有名的旅行家威廉·达甫内尔的女儿，达甫内尔由于研究地理，并热衷于旅游探察而早早地离开了她。

虽然海伦不算名门望族，但却是纯粹的英格兰人。这在爵士看来，比任何拥有贵族身份的小姐都令他满意。更令他倾心的是，海伦热情奔放、美丽勇敢。

就这样，莱斯村有名的绅士娶了美丽勇敢的海伦做自己的终身伴侣。

实际上格莱拉弗爵士第一次遇到海伦的时候，海伦就已经是个无父无母的孤儿了，她没有什么财产，独自生活在父亲留给她的一所房子里。爵士刚开始的时候觉得这个少女很可怜，经过接触后发现她更善良，便决定娶她，因为他相信，她一定能做一个贤惠的妻子。

做了爵士夫人的海伦只有22岁，这是个金发碧眼的美丽女子，她的眼睛如同苏格兰春天的湖水一样清澈。善良美丽的她，对丈夫充满了敬重、感激和爱恋。在对丈夫全心全意付出的同时，她觉得自己就是个富豪，而丈夫则是个让人怜爱的孤儿。

当然，不仅对丈夫，就是对佃户和仆人，她也爱护有加。因此，她又被仆人和佃户称之为“仁慈的莱斯夫人”，为了她，一些人甚至甘愿付出生命。

麦凯莫府里，便有了格莱拉弗爵士和海伦夫人这对神仙眷侣。

在麦凯莫府外的林荫小道上，到处都是枫树和栗树，而湖岸上，时

常也有人在唱着古老的战歌。在这看似荒凉的山谷，处处都有古代的建筑遗迹，这些遗迹又很自然地能让人联想起苏格兰那光荣的历史。

爵士夫妇时常会漫步在这些地方。

白天，他们有时会去有着落叶松和白桦林的森林，有时又会去一望无际的灌木丛，有时还会去攀爬约孟山、骑着马在山谷间奔驰……他们感受着大自然带来的美景，欣赏着一幅幅自然天成的画卷，这些美景如同沃尔特·司各特歌颂的美景一样令人神往。

傍晚的时候，爵士夫妇会沿着如同回廊般的林荫小道散步，这条林荫小道很像麦凯莫府脖子上的一道项圈，非常美丽。走着走着，他们会坐在一些孤石上，看着淡淡月光下的美景。天地一片寂静，世上好像没有了其他的人，只有他们。

如此美景之下，两颗相爱的心也越走越近，心胸开阔明朗起来，他们静静地感受着大自然所赋予的美妙景观，用心探求大自然的奥秘。

结婚后的前三个月，爵士夫妇就是这么度过的。

不过，爵士始终没有忘记妻子是大旅行家的女儿。他想，妻子的内心一定渴望像父亲一样去旅行，去探秘。于是，他造了“邓肯号”。

果然，在“邓肯号”造好后，他带着妻子一起踏上“邓肯号”，向世界上最美的地中海、希腊半岛行驶，海伦夫人的高兴和激动可想而知。

“邓肯号”象征着丈夫对她浓浓的爱意，这条船是在驶向他们美丽爱情的深处。他们要像度蜜月一样，在仙境般的东方海岸上度过这美好的时光。世间还有比这更美好的事吗？

不过，因为那三张纸条，他们的旅行计划发生了改变，格莱拉弗爵士去了伦敦。他要为拯救那几个遇难的船员奔波。

因为是救人，所以善良的海伦夫人没有为这次短暂的分离而郁闷，只是关心着自己的丈夫，同时也牵挂着那些遇难的人，不知道爵士这次向英国海军部求助是否顺利。

在他们分别后的第二天，海伦夫人接到了爵士发来的电报，她估计丈夫很快就要回来了。然而就在当天晚上，她又收到了丈夫的第二封电报，电报上说求助遇到了困难，要推迟回来的时间。第三天，海伦夫人接到了第三封电报，电报里全是对英国海军部的不满。

海伦夫人的心里有了隐隐的不安。晚上，在她一个人闷闷不乐地待在房间时，突然看见管家荷波艾走了进来，说有一个男孩和一个女孩要见爵士，问她愿不愿意接待。

“哦？是我们高地的吗？”海伦夫人问。

“不是，夫人。我不认识他们。他们说是乘火车到了帕乐兹后，又走到莱斯村来的。”管家回答道。

“那就请他们过来吧，荷波艾！”海伦夫人说。

管家答应着离开了，一会儿工夫，他带着两个孩子来到了海伦夫人的房间。两个孩子长得很像，应该是姐弟俩，姐弟俩的穿着虽然朴素，但却很整洁。姐姐看样子有16岁，美丽的面孔上带着疲惫，双眼像是因为哭过而有些肿。不过，她的神情很坚定，是个让人一见就能产生好感的女孩。

她的手里拉着一个12岁的男孩，男孩的脸上带着倔强和坚强，像个

小小男子汉一样站在姐姐身边。他像是姐姐的保镖，一旦谁要冒犯姐姐，他便要替她出头。

姐姐看到海伦夫人后，先是有些愣住了。海伦夫人便率先开口，温和地问他们：“你们是要找我吗？”

“不！我们不找你，我们要找格莱拉弗爵士！”男孩开口说。

“对不起，请您原谅他的无礼，夫人！”姐姐看了看弟弟，急忙向海伦夫人道歉。

“哦！格莱拉弗爵士不在家，我是他的太太，如果你们有什么事需要我替……”

“您就是格莱拉弗夫人吗？”女孩急忙问。

“是的，小姐。”海伦夫人微笑着说。

“您就是《泰晤士报》上登启事，说‘大不列颠号’沉没的麦凯莫府的格莱拉弗爵士的夫人吗？”女孩问道，语气中有些紧张，也有些激动。

“是的！是这样的，你们是谁？”海伦夫人急忙问。

“夫人，我是格兰特小姐！”女孩说完，看了看男孩，“他是我的弟弟。”

“啊！原来是格兰特小姐呀！哦！格兰特小姐，是你吗？”海伦夫人一边叫，一边把女孩拉到了身边，并抓住她的手，吻了吻她的小脸。

“夫人，我父亲沉船的事，你们还知道什么？能告诉我们吗？他不是还活着？我们能见到他吗？我请求您！请您告诉我们吧！”女孩开

始哽咽。

“哦！我亲爱的孩子！我真不想让你们空欢喜，我们……”海伦夫人不知道该怎么说。

“夫人！有什么就尽管说吧！我们承受得起，我们很坚强，我们不怕听到坏消息，我们能接受任何痛苦。”

“我亲爱的孩子，我只能告诉你们，希望很渺茫，但也不能说你们和父亲就没有了见面的机会。”

“哦！天啊！太好了！”格兰特小姐流着泪叫了起来。男孩也走上前，抱住了格莱拉弗夫人，抓起她的双手不停地吻着。

三个人在激动过后平静了下来，女孩又向海伦夫人提出了一些问题。海伦夫人便将他们在“邓肯号”上捕到鲨鱼，发现了鲨鱼肚子裡的瓶子，以及瓶子里有三张纸条的事说了。最后又说，根据那几张纸条，他们推断“大不列颠号”很可能是在巴塔哥尼亚附近沉没的。而船上的船长格兰特和两名水手很可能逃生成功，到了一个大陆，最后又用了三种文字进行求救，并将求救纸条放进瓶子丢进了大海。

在海伦夫人向他们讲述整个经过的时候，男孩小罗伯尔一直瞪大眼睛，认真地听着。他的心情随着海伦夫人嘴里吐出的字发生着变化。他的脑海里开始浮现父亲的形象，随着海伦夫人的讲述，他好像看到了父亲站在“大不列颠号”的甲板上，看着船在慢慢下沉，看着父亲在大海里挣扎。他甚至感觉自己和父亲一起抓住了一块岩石，然后上了岸，在海滩上奔跑……

随着海伦夫人的讲述，他好几次都叫了出来：“爸爸！可怜的爸

爸！”

在叫的时候，他不自觉地靠近了自己的姐姐，紧紧地依偎在姐姐身边。而格兰特小姐则双手合十，默默地听着。直到海伦讲完了，她才说：“夫人，您能告诉我们，那纸条还在吗？”

“亲爱的孩子，那纸条不在我这里。”海伦夫人说。

“啊？不在吗？”女孩有些失望。

“是的，不在！爵士为了救你们的父亲，拿着纸条去伦敦了。不过纸条上的每一条信息，我都告诉你们了。对于我们是怎么找到那几张纸条的，我也告诉你们了。在那些已经被海水侵蚀的残存字迹里，我们只看到了纬度，可惜经度……”

海伦夫人还没说完，小男孩便说：“可以不用经度啊！”

“是的，小罗伯尔！所以格兰特小姐，我连那纸条上最细微的地方都告诉你了，你现在知道的和我一样多了。”海伦夫人看着两个可爱的孩子，微笑着说。

“是的夫人，只是我想看看我父亲的笔迹。”女孩说。

“那就等明天吧，明天也许爵士就带着它们又回来了。他之所以带着那纸条去伦敦，就是为了给海军部的人看，以便让他们派船去寻找你们的父亲。”夫人说。

“夫人！这是真的吗？那真是太好了！你们真的会为父亲去和海军部谈吗？”少女激动得叫了起来。

“当然是真的，孩子。不过不用感激。不管是谁处在我们的位置，都会像我们一样去做的。希望你们的愿望能实现！你们现在可以暂时住在我们家，等爵士回来……”

“夫人！对我们这样的陌生人，夫人能这么热心，我们很感激，但却不想打扰您！”女孩说。

“陌生人？亲爱的孩子，你们已经不是陌生了。既然你们来了，那么爵士一定会告诉格兰特船长的儿女们他们所谈的情况，以及会采取怎样的措施去救你们的父亲的。”

在这样真诚的邀请下，格兰特船长的一对儿女也就同意留在麦凯莫府，等爵士回来了。

海伦夫人在和两个孩子聊的时候，并没有提爵士电报上所说的海军部的态度，也没有提格兰特船长很可能被南美洲的印第安人俘虏了。她不愿意说这些，是因为怕这两个可怜的孩子替他们的父亲担心，更不想让两个孩子失望。而且说了又有什么用处？于事无补呀！

抱着这样的想法，海伦夫人没有说不好的事。

在回答完关于格兰特船长的一些问题后，海伦夫人就开始询问起两个孩子的生活了。而当她知道了他们的情况后，她就知道，格兰特小姐就是小罗伯尔在这世上唯一的保护人了。

两个孩子的经历虽然简单，却很打动人，所以海伦夫人听了后，也更加同情他们了。

格兰特船长有两个孩子，那就是玛丽·格兰特小姐和罗伯尔·格兰特。格兰特船长的名字叫哈利，格兰特是他的姓。

哈利·格兰特的妻子在罗伯尔出生时就死了。而每当他远航时，就会将两个孩子托付给一位堂姐帮忙照顾，堂姐的年龄已经很大了，但对两个孩子却很好。精明能干的格兰特船长既擅长航海，又擅长经商，属于商船上难得的人才。

格兰特船长和儿女们原本住在苏格兰珀思郡的顿德城。格兰特一家是地地道道的本地人，格兰特船长的父亲曾是圣·卡德琳的牧师，所以格兰特船长从小就接受了良好的教育。

格兰特船长的父亲认为，一个人不管做什么事，知识都是必不可少的，即使他以后的理想是当水手，也需要很好地掌握知识。

哈利·格兰特刚刚上船时，只是一名普通的船员，可几次远航后，他就因为出色的表现，升为大副了，最后又做了船长，在罗伯尔出生后的几年时间里，他累积了一些财产。

而最终让他名声大震的，则是一个伟大的计划。

格兰特和格莱拉弗家族，以及苏格兰中部低地的很多世家大族一样，对欺凌侵占英格兰很不满。因此，为了依靠自己的力量促进苏格兰的发展，他决心在澳大利亚一带找一块陆地，让苏格兰人大移民。那么他这么做的目的是什么呢？是不是想以此来摆脱大英帝国的控制而独立呢？很有可能是这种目的。

也许正因为他的这种想法被泄露了出去，所以政府对他的移民计划大加干涉，这种干涉如果放在其他国家，很可能会送了命。不过，格兰特船长没有灰心，他号召同胞发扬爱国主义精神，甚至还把自己的全部家产拿出来实现这个计划。

为此，他造了一艘船，组建了一个拥有精明强干水手的船队，并将儿女托付给那位年老的堂姐，自己带着一群水手，乘船去太平洋各大岛探险。

那是在1861年的时候。在那年，以及在第二年的5月，人们还是能听到他的一些消息的，不过在6月份的时候，也就是在他离开卡亚俄之后，人们便没有听到过他，以及他的“大不列颠号”的情况了。而那些专门针对商船的媒体——《商船日报》也没有再报道过格兰特船长，格兰特船长和他那艘船的命运也就无人可知了。

也就是在那时候，格兰特船长的堂姐去世了，两个孩子成了孤儿。那时候，玛丽·格兰特仅仅14岁。不过，懂事而勇敢的她并没有被悲伤击倒，她把全部精力都用在照顾弟弟身上。弟弟年龄还小，她不仅要抚养他，还要教育他。而之所以能做到这两点，都是因为她节俭能干。她日夜不停地劳作，抚养着自己和弟弟。

这位十多岁的女孩，小小年纪就承担起了妈妈和爸爸的责任。虽然姐弟俩的生活很清贫，但他们却坚强地活着。玛丽之所以能支撑这一切，就是因为可怜的她以为父亲和“大不列颠号”已经出事了，父亲已经死了，所以她必须承担起照顾这个家庭的责任。

然而，当她偶然翻阅《泰晤士报》，看到那条启事时，本已绝望的她瞬间又感觉到了希望，那种激动和兴奋无人能体会。

她马上去探听消息，她觉得，即使有人告诉她，她父亲的尸体出现在了荒僻的海边，甚至在一只破船上被发现了，也比活不见人，死不见尸要好。那种既绝望，又怀抱希望的折磨简直太让人痛苦了。

所以，她把这个消息告诉了弟弟。两个人当即乘上了赶往帕乐兹的

车，又经过一段步行后，他们在晚上到了麦凯莫府。而到了这里，在听了海伦夫人的讲述后，她心里的希望就更大了。

这就是海伦夫人从格兰特小姐嘴里知道的情况。格兰特小姐讲述这些的时候，并没有表现出痛苦，而是很平静地讲完的。一直以来，在这段苦难的岁月里，她像个英雄一样活着。

海伦夫人一想到这些，就心痛地流下了眼泪，她将姐弟俩紧紧地搂在自己的怀里。

小罗伯尔在听姐姐讲的时候，脸上露出的更多是惊讶，因为很多事情他都不知道，所以只是瞪大眼睛，看着姐姐，听姐姐说。在他知道了这段经历，也知道了姐姐为他所付出的一切后，他抱着姐姐喊道：“亲爱的姐姐，你就是我的妈妈！”

这是一个孩子从内心发出的声音。

几个人聊着聊着就到了深夜。海伦夫人怕两个孩子太劳累，不愿意把话题扯得太远，便带他们去已经准备好的卧室。两个孩子很快就进入了梦乡，他们在梦里期待着好消息，梦想着他们的美好未来。

在两个孩子睡着后，海伦夫人却怎么都睡不着了。她将少校请了过来，并把和两个孩子的谈话告诉了他。

“真是个不简单的小女孩，玛丽·格兰特！”少校听完，赞叹道。

“希望老天保佑，让爵士和海军部交涉成功，不然的话，两个孩子就更可怜了。”海伦夫人说。

“我想他一定会成功的，除非海军部的那些老爷大人们有着比岩石

还硬的心肠。”少校说。

不过，虽然少校说得很肯定，但海伦夫人还是忧心忡忡，一夜都没睡好。

第二天一大早，玛丽·格兰特和她的弟弟就起床了，他们在院子里着急地转来转去。突然，他们听到了一阵马车声：格莱拉弗爵士回来了。

而就在这时，海伦夫人和少校也来到了院子，他们一起奔向爵士。

爵士一脸忧郁和愤慨，神情沮丧，在拥抱他的夫人的时候，他一句话都没有说。

“发生什么事了，爱德华？”海伦夫人着急地问。

“唉！亲爱的海伦，那些人真是……太没同情心了！”

“难道他们拒绝了？”海伦还是有些不相信。

“是的，他们拒绝派船去寻找，甚至说当年为了寻找富兰克林，浪费了几百万！他们还说，纸条上的字迹太模糊，看不懂。还说那些人已经失踪两年了，很难找到他们，又说既然落在了印第安人的手里，那么肯定是到了内陆。他们不会为了这三个人——三个苏格兰人去搜查巴塔哥尼亚的。这样做没有丝毫好处，而且很可能会遇到危险。甚至说不定牺牲的比得救的人还要多。总之，他们不愿意去寻找，他们找了种种理由来推托。他们直到现在，还记得格兰特船长那个移民计划。唉！看来，可怜的船长没救了！”

“父亲！我可怜的父亲！救救他吧！”玛丽·格兰特大叫一声，跑了

过去，跪在了爵士的面前。

“什么？你的父亲？这到底是怎么一回事，小姐？……”爵士看着面前跪着的女孩，大吃一惊，忙问。

“爱德华，是这样的，这位是格兰特船长的女儿玛丽小姐。”海伦夫人说完，又指着小男孩说，“他是格兰特船长的儿子。海军部这么做，两个孩子就真成了孤儿了。”

“哦，原来是这样呀！小姐，如果我早知道你们在这里……”爵士扶起了格兰特小姐，没有说下去。

院子里发出了呜呜咽咽的哭泣声，打破了莱斯村原有的寂静。爵士、海伦夫人，以及少校和悄悄围在他们周围的仆人，都难过得说不出话来。不过，从这些沉默着的人脸上，能看出他们对英国政府这个决定的愤怒。

好一会儿，少校开口了，他问爵士：“是不是一点希望都没有了？”

“是的，没有希望了！”

“那么，既然这样，我去找他们，找那些人……”小男孩罗伯尔高声叫道。

他愤怒地握着他的小拳头，想往外面冲，但被姐姐拦住了。

“不可以这样！罗伯尔，你不能这样！这些好心肠的人为了我们，做了很多，我们首先要谢谢他们，要将感谢埋在心里，然后离开！”格兰特小姐说。

“玛丽！”海伦夫人叫道。

“小姐，你们接下来要去做什么？”爵士问。

“我们要跪在女王面前请求，我们要看女王是不是完全不顾为了救父亲的两个孩子的请求，是否面对两个想要救父亲的孩子还无动于衷。”

格莱拉弗爵士轻轻地摇了摇头。他不怀疑女王陛下的仁慈，但他知道，玛丽·格兰特是绝对见不到女王的。求见的人不可能走到王座面前，因为英国王宫的大门上，像轮船上的舵盘一样，写着一行字：

“请不要与掌舵人说话。”

海伦夫人看到丈夫的表情，知道格兰特船长的两个儿女去求女王这种做法根本行不通。但眼看着两个孩子在绝望中生活，她又于心不忍，看着玛丽牵着弟弟的手要走，她突然说：

“玛丽·格兰特，先不要急，等一等，我的孩子们，你们听我说。”

格兰特船长的两个孩子停了下来。

海伦夫人双眼噙泪，走到爵士身边，因为过于激动，她的声音有些颤抖。

“爱德华，在格兰特船长将这封信丢在海里的时候，就是把生的希望托付给了上帝，而上帝又把信转交给了我们，所以.....上帝是要我们去救那些不幸的人啊！”

“什么意思，海伦？”爵士问。

其他人都静静地听着，四周鸦雀无声。

“是这样的，我想，一个人如果在结婚后，做一件好事的话，一定会感到非常幸福的。而我亲爱的爱德华，你为了让我快乐、幸福，制订了旅游计划。那么，如果我们能拯救那些不幸的落难者，那该是件多么快乐、幸福的事呀，而且也更有价值！”

“亲爱的海伦！”爵士激动起来。

“你明白我的意思了，亲爱的爱德华？我们的‘邓肯号’非常轻快，也很结实，它是经得起南半球海洋上的风浪的！我想，我们不妨将其当成是环球旅行，好吗？爱德华！我们出发吧，去找格兰特船长！”

没等海伦夫人说完，爵士已经向夫人伸出了双臂，他微笑着，紧紧地拥抱着她。此时，玛丽和小罗伯尔也赶了过去，亲吻着她的双手。这动人的一幕，让所有在场的人都感动了，他们兴奋地大声喊：

“哇！太好了！我们美丽的莱斯夫人！我们坚决拥护格莱拉弗爵士和格莱拉弗夫人！”

第三章 船上的不速之客

前面说过，海伦夫人是个豪爽善良而极富同情心的人，让“邓肯号”去救格兰特船长的提议就很好地证明了这一点。而有着同样品格的格莱拉弗爵士，因为有了这样一位懂自己，善良贤惠的妻子而感到自豪。其实，当他在伦敦海军部受挫后，曾想过亲自出马去救那些落难者，但却并没有在海伦夫人面前说起，因为他舍不得离开新婚的妻子。

如今，海伦夫人有了这样的想法，他就没有顾虑了。当看到家中的仆人都在支持这个决定，拥护他们的做法后，爵士由衷地为“莱斯夫人”喝彩。他们要救的是苏格兰人，而这些仆人也是苏格兰人，他们的主人要救他们的同胞，怎能不令仆人们激动和高兴呢？

有了远航的决定后，他们一分钟都不想耽误了。当天，爵士吩咐麦盖尔船长，让他将“邓肯号”开到格拉斯哥港来，为即将到来的环绕地球一周做准备。需要补充的一点是，海伦夫人在提出这个建议的时候，并没有盲目地高估“邓肯号”的质量，因为“邓肯号”确实具有坚固耐用，轻便灵巧的优点，完全具备远航条件。

“邓肯号”是一艘装着蒸汽机的游船，不仅样式美观，而且载重达210吨。大家不会忘记，哥伦布和麦哲伦去新大陆探险时驾驶的船只，在吨位上都比“邓肯号”小。

我们再来看看“邓肯号”：“邓肯号”上的帆有很多，光前桅就带有主帆、梯形帆、小前帆、小顶帆等等；大桅带有纵帆、樯头帆、三角帆、大触帆，以及很多辅助帆。由于各类帆很多，所以它完全具备快帆船利

用各级风力的特点。同时，“邓肯号”还能依靠内部机器的力量让船行驶，而这个内部机器，也是有着高压性能的，具有160匹马力的最新产品。

“邓肯号”上还有蒸汽机，蒸汽机可以加大气压，推动双螺旋桨。因而，当“邓肯号”加大马力的时候，就可以达到高出所有轮船的速度。

完全没错，是这样的。当他们在克莱德河试航时，通过测程仪得知，“邓肯号”的速度达到了每小时32公里。这样的速度对远航来说完全没有问题，麦盖尔船长只需将舱房进行改装，就可以进行环球旅行了。

改装舱房时，为了多装一些煤，避免沿途补充燃料，麦盖尔船长还扩大了装煤的船舱。接着，他又扩大了装粮的船舱，让舱里装上了够吃两年的粮食。当然，钱这方面也不需要担心。最后，他们甚至还在船头的甲板上架了一门有转轴的大炮。

在远航过程中，什么事都有可能发生，所以在船上装一架重8磅，射程达7公里的大炮完全有必要。

需要说明的是，麦盖尔是位出色的船长，业务的熟练让他能够游刃有余地指挥游船，同时，他也是格拉斯哥港数得上来的优秀船长。30岁的他虽然时常沉着脸，但本性非常善良。拥有勇敢品质的他是在格莱拉弗家长大的，格莱拉弗家不仅把他抚养成人，而且还把他培养成了一名优秀的海员。在以前的远航中，麦盖尔就曾表现出惊人的沉着和智慧，所以当爵士让他做“邓肯号”的船长时，他高兴地答应了。

麦盖尔敬重这位麦凯莫府的主人，这种敬重就像弟弟对哥哥一样，心甘情愿地为他效力。以前找不到机会，现在终于有机会效力了。

“邓肯号”上的大副叫汤姆·艾撒汀，是位老水手，也非常值得信任。

整个船上的船员，包括船长和大副在内是25人。这些人都是丹巴顿郡首屈一指的水手，也是格莱拉弗家族的庄户子弟。这样的一群人，在船上形成了团结友爱的团队。同时，团队里人才济济，就连吹传统风笛的人都不缺。

拥有这样一批水手，格莱拉弗爵士也就相当于拥有了一支精兵队伍。更重要的是，水手们都很满意自己所处的位置，做事也很认真负责。热情勇敢的他们善于使用各种武器，也能熟练地驾驶船只，所以非常愿意追随主人冒险远征。

在他们听到这次远征的目的后，开心地哇哇大叫，那欢呼声响彻了丹巴顿山谷。

虽然麦盖尔船长在忙着改装煤舱和粮舱，但他没有忘记给爵士夫妇准备长途航行要住的房间。同时，他还替格兰特船长的儿女们布置了舱位。虽然海伦夫人只答应了让玛丽随“邓肯号”远行，但即使不让小罗伯尔去，他也一定会瞒着大家躲进货舱的。甚至说如果让他像富兰克林和纳尔逊小时候那样，在船上做见习水手，他一定也会毫不犹豫地答应。像这样倔强的孩子，谁能制止得了他？

最终，大家同意让他去，而且不以乘客的身份去。也就是说，不管他是做见习水手还是小水手、大水手，他都要为大家服务，而麦盖尔也愿意教他海员知识。

对于这样的决定，罗伯尔欣然接受，并且说：“如果我学得不好，你们就用皮鞭打我好了。”

“不用怕，我的孩子，我们不会这么做的。”格莱拉弗爵士认真地说。其实不用说都知道，船上那用九条皮鞭做成，用于打见习水手的“九尾鞭”早都禁用了，而且对爵士来说，“邓肯号”上并没有存在“九尾鞭”的必要。

船上的乘客，除了爵士夫妇、格兰特船长的儿女外，爵士还加了一个人，这个人就是麦克那布斯少校。

少校是个温和而话语很少的50岁的中年人。谦逊是他的特点，所以不管对任何人、任何事，他都以别人的意见为主，很少与人争辩、吵架，甚至从不跟人发脾气。他的个性，就算是上敌人的堡垒，说不定也会像上自家的楼梯一样淡定。当然，这样绵软的性格并不代表着他胆小，其实他非常勇敢，即使炮弹落到身边，脸色也不会变。可见，他应该是至死都不会发脾气，至死都不会着急的一个人。

当然，如果真要从他身上找出一个短处来的话，那可能只有一条：他是一个彻彻底底，纯纯粹粹的苏格兰人，他固执地遵守着故乡的旧风俗。因而，他不愿意为大英帝国服兵役，而他头上的少校军衔，还是他在高地黑卫队第42团时获得的，而黑卫队是由纯苏格兰贵族组成的队伍。

麦克那布斯少校原本是以表兄的身份住在麦凯莫府的，现在又以少校身份上“邓肯号”，也是再正常不过的事了。

“邓肯号”上的主要成员都在上面做了介绍。而世间的事就是这样，因为一个机缘巧合，这只船以及船上的这些人的命运就连在了一起，并准备进行一场结果难以预料的航行。而当这只船开到格拉斯哥港的轮船码头之后，很快就吸引了人们的注意，引来了大批人参观。

人们关心这只船，以及船上的人，这使停泊在这个港口的其他船只，以及那些船只上的船长羡慕不已，特别是“苏克迪亚号”上的布尔特船长。

“苏克迪亚号”和“邓肯号”一样，也是一只游船，而且也很漂亮，并且就停在“邓肯号”的旁边。“苏克迪亚号”正准备去加尔各答，论大小，它比“邓肯号”大，但大家似乎把兴趣都聚集在了格莱拉弗爵士的“邓肯号”上，而且所受的关注度越来越高。

启程的日子在一天天接近，精明能干的麦盖尔船长，在“邓肯号”于克莱德河试航后一个月，便将煤和粮食储备齐了。一切都准备妥当后，他们只等出发了。

出发的日期定在了8月25日。在这个时间出发，不到初春来临，他们就能到达南纬地带了。

爵士的这次远航计划公布后，曾有很多人来劝阻，说这样的航行既累又危险，但他丝毫不为其动摇，并继续为离开麦凯莫府做着准备。

其实，很多人虽然当面劝阻他，甚至批评他，但内心却在赞赏他，而且整个舆论也都倾向于支持这位勇敢的苏格兰爵士。很多媒体，除了政府报纸外，都在谴责海军部。当然，对于自己的这个做法，从不计较个人得失的爵士，根本就没有考虑付出，他考虑的只是怎么拯救那些落难者。

8月24日，格莱拉弗夫妇、少校、格兰特姐弟，以及船上的厨师长奥比尔先生，随行服侍格莱拉弗夫人的奥比尔太太等人，均在全府仆人的热烈欢送下，离开了麦凯莫府。几个小时后，他们就坐在了船上。

格拉斯哥的居民们，全都怀着敬仰的心情，欢送海伦夫人，因为只有她才会放着安逸奢华的生活不过，去远征援救同胞。

爵士夫妇住在“邓肯号”船尾的楼舱里，这个楼舱共有两个卧室，两个洗漱间，一个客厅。除此而外，还有一个客厅，客厅两边又有六个房间，分别住着格兰特姐弟、奥比尔夫妇和少校。麦盖尔和艾撒汀的房间则在客厅的另一端，面朝中甲板，背对客厅。

“邓肯号”上的船员住在平舱，里面既通畅又舒适。除了他们这些人外，船上还有煤、粮食和武器等，除此就没有其他的什么东西了，所以空地有的是。为此，麦盖尔船长还曾利用这些空地，对内部进行了调整。

8月24日到25日凌晨3点，正值落潮，“邓肯号”开始起航。开船前，格拉斯哥的市民还在“邓肯号”起航时看了一场动人的仪式。那是在晚上7点钟的时候，爵士带领全体船上成员，一个不落地离开游船，去了格拉斯哥古老的圣迈哥教堂。

圣迈哥教堂是经过“改教运动”大破坏后依然健在的一座古教堂。对于这座教堂，沃尔特·司各特曾对它有过优美的描写。在爵士领着众人去的那一刻，它大门敞开，迎接着“邓肯号”上的全体人员。无数市民跟在了后面。

在这有着多年历史的古老教堂里，穆尔多牧师为他们每个人祝福，乞求上天能保佑他们这次远征顺利。而在这些人中，玛丽·格兰特的声音最响亮，她在为她的恩人们做祷告，同时，在上帝面前，她肆意让那感激的眼泪往下流淌。

祷告完后，全体成员怀着平静的心情离开了教堂。11点钟的时候，

他们回到了船上，麦盖尔船长和船员们开始为即将到来的起航做最后准备。

深夜到来，“邓肯号”的机器生上了火，船长命令加足马力。很快，“邓肯号”便被黑夜和大股的浓烟包围。由于风向是西南风，不利于张帆，所以“邓肯号”上的所有帆都收了起来，藏在了帆罩里，以免受到煤烟的污染。

凌晨2点钟的时候，“邓肯号”在轰鸣的机器震颤中动了起来，蒸汽在汽缸里发出了嗞嗞的声音，气压表指向了四级压力。那时候，潮正处于平满时，微弱的曙光隐隐能让他们辨认出夹在浮标和石标间的克莱德航道。浮标和石标上的信号灯，由于晨曦的原因，显得非常暗淡，此时，正是起航的好时机。

船长命人通知爵士，爵士跑向了甲板。

潮水开始降落，“邓肯号”的汽笛鸣叫起来。缆索松了下来，螺旋桨也转动起来，“邓肯号”慢慢离开了周围的船只，向克来德湾的航道驶去。

由于对这个海湾的地势比较了解，所以船长并没有找领航人。实际上，任何一个领航人，都未必比他更懂得领航。而在船起航时，他用右手操纵着机器，左手掌舵，老练而娴熟。

一会儿工夫，几座工厂就看不见了，出现在他们面前的是一些稀稀落落，位于河边丘陵的别墅，城市的热闹和喧嚣越来越远，最后终于一点声音都没有了。

经过一个小时的行驶，“邓肯号”朝丹巴顿的峭壁继续行驶，又过了

两个小时，“邓肯号”进入到克莱德湾。早上6点，“邓肯号”经过坎泰儿岬，出了北海峡，行驶在大西洋上。

航行的第一天，海浪很大。晚上的时候，风势越来越强，“邓肯号”开始颠簸，越来越厉害。强大的风势让女人们躲在了房间，好在她们状态都不错。

第二天，风向发生了改变，船长扯起了主帆、纵帆和小前帆。由于“邓肯号”的质量很好，所以有力地压住了波澜，船的颠簸有所减轻。甲板上也便迎来了海伦夫人和格兰特小姐。他们和爵士、少校、船长一起看日出。

日出的景色很好，太阳如同一个金色的盘子，从大海深处慢慢升了起来。在耀眼的光芒下，“邓肯号”缓缓地滑行在海面上，鼓起的风帆在太阳光的照耀下，像是被太阳的光线撑起来似的。

大家在静静地观看日出时，海伦夫人突然说：“啊！真是太美了！这是晴朗的一天，希望风向不要变，一直这样送‘邓肯号’前行。”

“是啊！我亲爱的海伦，这个方向真是太好了！我们旅行的开始就这么顺利，真是个好兆头，真的不能再强求老天怎么样了。”爵士说。

“我亲爱的爱德华，这次航行要很长时间吗？”

“这要问船长！麦盖尔，一切还不错吧，你对这船怎么看？满意吗？”

“非常满意！爵士！这艘船真是棒极了，我想，任何水手都会因为上这艘船而自豪的。那船笛和机器的配合非常精妙。还有那船后的浪槽，多么均匀啊，对于浪头，这船能轻易躲过。我们现在一小时可以行

驶30公里，按这个速度的话，我们10天就能穿过赤道，不到五个星期，我们就能绕过合恩角了。”船长高兴地说。

“听到了吗，玛丽？不到五个星期，真是太好了！”海伦夫人也高兴地说。

“没错！夫人，我听到了，听了船长的话，我真是太高兴了。”格兰特小姐说。

“怎么样？玛丽小姐，这次的航行，你受得了吗？”爵士关切地问。

“完全受得了，爵士，我感觉很好，而且很快就能全部习惯了。”

“那小罗伯尔怎么样？”

没等格兰特小姐回答，船长抢先说：

“哦！他啊，您可千万别提他，他不是到机器间，就是在桅顶上，我敢说，他根本不知道什么是晕船。您看，那不就是他吗？”

大家顺着船长手指的方向一看，小罗伯尔正吊在小顶帆的帆索上，悬在30米高的地方。

格兰特小姐看了大吃一惊。

“没事的，小姐！”麦盖尔船长笑着说，“我敢保证，而且保证用不了多长时间，我就能向格兰特船长说‘这了不起的小家伙’了。那位令人敬佩的船长，我们很快就会找到的。”

“希望老天爷能听到您的吉言，船长先生。”格兰特小姐说。

“亲爱的孩子，一切都是天意，一切都会充满希望。因为我们不是自己在走，而是有上天在指引我们。我们没有乱跑，是有股力量在指点着我们。为了这场拯救，我们集合起了这股精良的力量，你只需看看他们就能知道，我们一定会成功的，不管遇到什么问题，什么困难，我们都可以解决。而且我曾答应过我的夫人，要实现我们的旅行计划，结果就有了这样的机会。我相信一定是这样的！”

“亲爱的爱德华，我相信你！你真的非常出色！”海伦夫人说。

“不！不是我出色，是我拥有最好的船员，而且还能在最好的船上。怎么，玛丽小姐，你就不想赞美一下我们的‘邓肯号’吗？”爵士开玩笑说。

“赞美！当然赞美！爵士，我不仅赞美，而且还以内行的眼光赞美呢！”

“哦？是吗？”

“是的，爵士。我小时候经常在父亲的船上玩。父亲也许曾想将我培养成水手，所以对于调帆面、编帆索这样的活，我都可以做。”

“哈哈，小姐！你到底在说什么呀！”船长瞪大眼睛叫道。

“看来，玛丽小姐已经是麦盖尔船长的朋友了。在麦盖尔船长的眼里，全世界任何一个职业都不如水手。即使是女子，做水手也好过做其他职业！麦盖尔，我说得没错吧！”爵士笑着说。

“那是，爵士。不过，我还是认为格兰特小姐在楼舱当贵宾比在甲板上扯拉帆索更适合。不过嘛，她那话说得我还是很高兴的。”

“特别是她赞美‘邓肯号’，你会更开心吧！”爵士补充道。

“‘邓肯号’承受得起这些赞美！”船长回答道。

“看你们这么赞美这艘船，我还真想到舱底下去看看，我想看看水手们在甲板中住的情况。”海伦夫人说。

“住得好极了，就像在家里一样。”船长说。

“他们真的是像住在家里一样，我亲爱的海伦。‘邓肯号’实际上就是我们苏格兰的一部分，它是丹巴顿郡的一部分，是因为特殊的原因，只能漂在海上而已。所以，我们并没有离开我们的家乡，我们一直在自己的家乡，这里就是麦凯莫府，大海就是约孟湖。”爵士说。

“那么，我亲爱的爱德华，能否让我们参观一下您的麦凯莫府呢？”海伦俏皮地说。

“那请吧，夫人！不过，我要先通知一下奥比尔才行。”

厨师长奥比尔虽然是正宗的苏格兰人，却长得很像法国人，热情聪明的他在听到主人的召唤后，很快就来了。

“奥比尔，早饭前，我们想到处看看。我们回来时，希望早饭已经摆好了。”爵士说，他好像忘记了自己是在船上，而是要去达尔百和卡戴林的湖边散步一样。

奥比尔深深地鞠了个躬，以示回答，他的脸看起来始终很严肃。

“少校，你会陪我们一起去吗？”海伦夫人问。

“如果你去，我就去！”少校说。

“啊，不用了，他现在正沉浸在雪茄烟里，还是不要把他拉出来了！对了，玛丽小姐，我要给你介绍一下，这个烟君子，整天抽烟，即使连睡觉时也要抽。”爵士笑着对海伦和格兰特小姐说。

少校同意这种说法，笑着点了点头。爵士带着其他人下去了。少校没有去，他和平时一样，淡定地坐在那里。他从不想不愉快的事，所以只是沉浸在浓浓的烟雾中，看着船后的浪槽。

静静地看了一会儿，等他再转回头来时，却发现一个陌生人站在他面前。平时淡定到不会被任何事惊到的他，着实被这件事惊了一下——这个人他从没见过。

此人身材高大，体形修长，年龄在40岁左右。远远看去，他有点像一颗大头钉杵在那里。为什么这么说呢？因为他不仅头很大很宽，而且额头也很高，鼻子和嘴巴都很大。除此之外，他还有着长长的下巴。再看眼睛，又圆又大，不停地滴溜溜地转着。看样子，他聪明机灵，而且非常乐观。

世界上有一些人总以庄重示人，而且很严肃，不苟言笑，以此来掩饰内心的卑鄙和龌龊。不过，这位陌生人却不像是这样的，他不仅不令人感到严肃，而且看起来很随性，很潇洒。

显然，他应该是位好好先生，而且总喜欢把事情往好的方面想。在他还未开口前，人们已经能从他的样子中看出他是个很喜欢说话的人了。而从他那不加掩饰的举止来看，应该是个粗枝大叶的人。

他的头上戴着一顶鸭舌帽，脚上是黄皮靴，靴子上套着皮罩。他的下身穿着绒裤，和夹克的颜色一样，都是栗色的。夹克上有很多袋子，袋子里装满了乱七八糟的东西，比如簿子、册子、皮夹子等，腰间还斜

挂着一个很大的望远镜。

陌生人的机灵好动与少校的沉默淡定形成了鲜明的对比。

陌生人围着少校走来走去，打量着他，但少校却用他一贯的淡定看着陌生人，既没问他来自哪里，也没问他要去向何方，为什么上了“邓肯号”。

陌生人对没有引起少校的关注感到有些沮丧。他将目光从少校身上收回，取下了腰间挂着的大望远镜，望远镜的长度拉出镜头可达1.2米。陌生人叉开双腿站立，像公路上的路标一样一动不动。在把望远镜对准天水相接的地方看了差不多有5分钟后，他将望远镜收了起来，挂在甲板上，然后将手按在望远镜的上方，好像手下的不是望远镜，而是一把手杖。

不料，他拉出的镜头因为是一节一节的，能活动，所以猛地缩了回去，陌生人因为站立不稳，倒在了大桅下，直挺挺的。

这种场景，任何人看到都会发笑，但少校的脸上却没有什么表情，甚至连眉毛都没动一下。陌生人忍不住了，终于大声喊道：

“厨师长，厨师长去哪里了？”显然，他是个外国人。

见没人出来，少校也没表情，他又提高了声音大叫：“厨师长！厨师长！”

此时，奥比尔正好去前甲板的厨房，听到有个陌生的大个子叫他，怔在了那里，心想：“这个人是从什么地方冒出来的？”

不过，他又想，难道是格莱拉弗爵士的朋友？可是不可能呀，都没

听爵士提过。

奥比尔一边想，一边爬上了楼舱甲板，走到陌生人面前。

“怎么？你就是船上的厨师长？”陌生人看着他问。

“是的！先生，不过我想问……”

没等奥比尔说完，那人便说：“我是6号的！”

“你在6号房间？”厨师长更奇怪了。

“对呀！请问你贵姓？”

“我叫……奥比尔！”

“哦！奥比尔呀！很好，我的朋友，我想，现在是开饭时间了吧，我要吃饭，越快越好，我已经有36个小时没吃东西了，或者说我整整睡了36个小时。想想看，一个从巴黎跑到格拉斯哥的人，这么久没吃饭，你要理解我的急迫心情！请问，几点能开饭？”陌生人噼里啪啦地说了起来。

奥比尔傻眼了，他怔怔地说：“9点！”

陌生人在身上那众多的口袋里摸了很久，总算在摸到第九个口袋的时候摸到了什么，他拿出来看了一下。

“哦！很好！现在是8点，离吃饭还有段时间，那么先给我来一块饼干，然后再来一瓶白葡萄酒。我太饿了，一点劲都没有了。”

奥比尔还是茫然地看着陌生人，陌生人继续说着，一刻都不想停。

“我还想问一下，船长呢？船长难道到现在还没起来？还有大副！这都是去哪里了？还在睡觉？幸好今天天气不错，顺风，即使没人管，船也会照样走！”

正在这时，麦盖尔船长走到了楼舱的梯子上，奥比尔马上对陌生人说：

“这位就是船长！”

“噢！太好了，很高兴见到您，布尔特船长！见到您，我可真是太高兴了！”

麦盖尔船长惊住了，他的吃惊不仅仅是因为出现了一个陌生人，还因为那人在喊他“布尔特船长”。

陌生人丝毫没有理会麦盖尔船长的吃惊表情，他犹如打开了话匣子，滔滔不绝地说了起来。

“我真是太高兴了！请允许我先和您握握手吧。前天晚上原本想和您握手的，但因为开船，怕打扰您。现在好了，船长，现在我们就算正式认识了，我真是太高兴了！”

麦盖尔船长的眼睛瞪得大大的，看看奥比尔，又看看这个陌生人。

“好了！亲爱的船长，我们认识了，就是老朋友了吧！那么说说看吧，您对这艘‘苏克迪亚号’是不是很满意？”

麦盖尔船长再也忍不住了，终于开口说：“我不知道什么苏克迪亚号！”

“哦！怎么会这样？‘苏克迪亚号’就是我们乘坐的这艘船呀，这可是一艘好船，我很早就听有人和我说了，说这船的质量很好，船上的设施和服务都很好。当然，那热情的布尔特船长就更好了。我记得，有个非洲旅行家，好像也姓布尔特，应该和您是本家吧，哈哈……那是多么有胆识的人啊！我可真羡慕您啊，可以做他的本家。”

“先生！要让您失望了，因为我不是旅行家布尔特的本家，因为我根本就不是布尔特船长！”

“哦，那么，我是在和‘苏克迪亚号’上的大副鲍来斯先生说话吗？”

“鲍来斯先生？”麦盖尔船长喃喃着，开始想这到底是怎么回事，正想给他解释清楚，便看见爵士和海伦夫人，以及格兰特小姐走到了楼舱甲板，而那陌生人一见他们就大叫：

“天啊！你们都来了，有男客，也有女客，真是太棒了！鲍来斯先生，您是否应该给我们做个介绍？”

话音刚落，还没等麦盖尔船长说话，他便绅士十足地走到了爵士他们面前，先称呼了一声格兰特小姐“夫人”，然后又冲海伦夫人喊了声“小姐”，最后又转向爵士，叫了声“先生”。

他的胡乱称呼，让几个人全怔住了。

麦盖尔船长这时开始向他介绍道：“这位是格莱拉弗爵士。”

“哦！是爵士。”陌生人急忙改口。

“那么请先让我自我介绍一下，在船上我们不应该太过拘束，不需要过多的礼节，我们很快就会熟悉起来的。和这些夫人们在一起，

在‘苏克迪亚号’上的航行，一定会非常顺利和惬意的，而且时间也会过得很快。”

海伦夫人和格兰特小姐对突然冒出的不速之客感到吃惊，一句话都说不出来了，只是怔怔地看着他。

终于，爵士开口了。

“先生，我想请教……”

不等爵士说完，陌生人便又说：“我是巴黎地理学会的秘书，我叫雅克·巴嘉勒尔，我还是柏林、孟买、达姆施塔特、莱比锡、伦敦、彼得堡、维也纳、纽约等国地理学会的会员。当然，也是东印度皇家地理人种学会的名誉会员……怎么说呢，我光在研究室研究地理就研究了20年。如今，我想做一些实地考察，这次我去印度，要把许许多多大旅行家都没有完成的事全都做了。”

第四章 上错船的巴嘉勒尔

这位巴黎地理学会的秘书非常可爱，在介绍自己所拥有的头衔时，他说得像唱歌一样动听流畅。爵士从他的言行举止，很快就知道了他的个性。何况雅克·巴嘉勒尔这个名字和所拥有的名气他并不陌生，他在地理方面的一些著作以及关于地理学方面的声望，爵士也都听说过，而且身为全世界地理学界会员的他，在法兰西也是有着卓越成就的学者之一，所以虽然是个不速之客，但格莱拉弗爵士还是微笑着，诚恳地向他伸出了手。

“我们现在已经彼此认识了，但巴嘉勒尔先生，能允许我问您一个问题吗？”

“没问题，不要说一个问题，就是20个问题都可以。爵士，和您谈话真是一件愉快的事。”

“您刚刚说您是前天晚上上的船对吗？”

“没错！爵士，我是在前天晚上8点钟的时候，从喀里多尼亚火车上下来，乘坐马车来到港口，下了马车又上到‘苏克迪亚号’上的。我还在巴黎的时候，就预定了‘苏克迪亚号’的6号房间。当时由于天太黑，上船后我也没遇到一个人，而且因为连着坐了30个小时的火车、马车，太累了，为了避免晕船，我上船后就睡了。我可真是实实在在地睡了36个小时啊，爵士，您千万不要怀疑我说的话！”

在巴嘉勒尔说完后，大家总算知道他为什么上了这艘船了。这位法

国著名的地理学家，只是上错了船，误上了“邓肯号”。在“邓肯号”上的大家都去圣迈哥教堂的时候，他正好上了船，所以没人发现他的存在也很正常。

不过，现在大家明白了，但这位马虎的地理学家却并不知道他上错了船。如果告诉他上错了船，这船不是开往他要去的印度，而是其他地方，他又会怎么样呢？

“巴嘉勒尔先生，印度是您选定做研究的首发地对吗？”

“是的，爵士。游览印度是我平生最大、最美好的愿望之一。我多么想在那个拥有‘象国’之称的国家实现梦想啊！”

“那么，巴嘉勒尔先生，您能否换个地方去实现梦想呢？”

“哦，那可不行，爵士。换个地方不好，我在印度有个地理学界的任务要完成，而且我的身上还带有给印度总督莫萨爵士的介绍信。”

“啊！您在印度还有任务？”

“是的，我有一个非常有趣的探险计划，而且这个计划还是我一位博学的朋友，费沃亚·得·圣玛旦先生帮我订的呢。我的探险目的就是追随许许多多的著名旅行家，完成他们未完成的工作。我还要在库里哥教士在1846年失败的地方完成他的遗志。总之，我要从雅鲁藏布江的河道开始，沿喜马拉雅山北麓，去西藏境内，我要知道这条流了1500公里的河道，是不是最后在阿萨姆东北部和布拉马普特拉河进行了汇合。知道吗，爵士，这是地理学上的一个疑问，如果哪位旅行家解决了这个问题，金奖章就十拿九稳了。”

说起这些，巴嘉勒尔陶醉极了，他好像已经开始展翅飞翔，去那些

他准备探索的地方了。

爵士沉默着，他不知道该怎么说。好一会儿，他才说：“巴嘉勒尔先生，您的探险计划真是太好了，科学界肯定会为您鼓掌叫好的。不过，我还是觉得您应该放弃这个计划，至少目前您需要放弃去印度。”

“放弃？哦！不！为什么要放弃？”

“因为您现在并没有去印度的方向，而是向着印度半岛的反方向航行。”

“什么？布尔特船长……”巴嘉勒尔诧异地看着麦盖尔船长。

“对不起！我不是布尔特船长。”麦盖尔船长说。

“那么，我乘坐的‘苏克迪亚号’……”

“对不起！这船不是‘苏克迪亚号’！”

听了这话，巴嘉勒尔先生的震惊可想而知。他看看一本正经的爵士，又看了看脸上浮现出同情和惋惜的海伦夫人和玛丽，再看看一直微笑看着他的麦盖尔船长，最后看看面无表情，像泥塑一样的少校。

他耸耸肩，将鼻梁上的眼镜往上一推，大叫道：“哦！不！这一定是开玩笑！”

话音刚落，他的眼光便落在了舵盘上，他看到了舵盘上大大的几个字：邓肯号—格拉斯哥。

“什么？‘邓肯号’！这是‘邓肯号’？”他狂喊起来，随即便一溜烟地奔下了楼梯，跑到6号房间去了。

等到那个马虎而倒霉的地理学家不见了身影，船上的所有人，除了少校外，全都憋不住大笑起来。如果他是搭错了火车，也倒好办。比如他如果是去丹巴顿郡，但他却上了去爱丁堡的火车，那么他可以在下一站下车。可现在却是乘错了船。他要去印度，坐的却是开向智利的船，这岂不是太滑稽了吗？

“我想，这事只有巴嘉勒尔做得出来。像他这么马虎、粗心造成的笑话，绝不止这一件。我听说有一次，要画美洲地图，结果却把日本画进去了。不过尽管这样，还是不影响他成为一个有着卓越成就的学者，更不妨碍他成为法兰西优秀的地理学家。”爵士说。

“可是，这个可怜的地理学家怎么办呢？我们该不会真把他带到巴塔哥尼亚去吧。”

善良的海伦夫人忧心忡忡地说。

“为什么不可以？是他自己粗心大意，这个责任该由他来负。比如他上错了火车，难道火车还要专门为他停下来，然后让他下去吗？”少校开口了，但依然面无表情。

“停是不可能的了。可如果我们到了停泊的港口，倒可以让他下去。”海伦夫人说。

“当然，如果他愿意，他可以这么做。等我们到了下一个停泊的港口，他可以下去。”爵士说。

此时，当巴嘉勒尔去6号房间看了自己的行李都在船上后，有些难堪地、可怜巴巴地重回到舱顶甲板。他好像已经不会说其他话了，只是不停地嘀嘀咕咕地念叨着：“邓肯号！邓肯号！”

在甲板上，他走来走去，仔仔细细地检查游船的设备，看完后，他又看了看海面上的水平线，这才走到爵士面前说：

“我想知道，这‘邓肯号’是去……”

“巴嘉勒尔先生，这船是去美洲的。”

“去美洲？”

“对！去智利的康塞普西翁。”

“天啊！是去智利呀！去智利！可是我去印度的任务又要怎么完成呢？地理学会中央委员会主席嘉德费茨先生肯定会怪我的。不仅他，还有塔弗沙先生、古德波先生、费沃亚·得·圣玛旦先生……他们都会怪我的！天啊！这可怎么办？以后我还怎么有脸去开学术会议？”

“先别慌，巴嘉勒尔先生，事情还没有糟糕到这种地步，您只不过是迟些到罢了，而且雅鲁藏布江会一直等着您去探索的。而且我们在马德拉会停泊，那时候，您可以再搭船回欧洲。”爵士说。

“谢谢您，爵士！也只能这么办了。不过，这件事怎么也算是件离奇的遭遇吧。当然，也只有我才会碰上这种怪事。不过，我在‘苏克迪亚号’上定的舱位又该怎么办呢？”

“没办法，您只能放弃了。”

“嗯！是这样的。”巴嘉勒尔说完，重新又看了一下船后，这才说，“看来，这是一只游船。”

“没错，先生，这是游船，而且是属于格莱拉弗爵士的游船。”麦盖

尔船长说。

“请放心接受我们的招待吧！”爵士说。

“太感谢了！爵士，多谢您的盛情邀请。不过，能允许我发表点小意见吗？那印度可真是个好地方，那里会发生很多稀奇古怪的事。这几位夫人一定还没去过印度吧！所以，如果能让船的舵盘转一转，让‘邓肯号’转而去加尔各答航行，会不会更容易些呢？既然这船是私人旅行……”

巴嘉勒尔还没说完，便见大家不停地摇头，也便没有再说下去了。

“先生，如果我们只为了游览，那么您的建议我们一定会认同，爵士也会同意。不过，‘邓肯号’这次远行是有任务的，是为了救那些被遗弃在巴塔哥尼亚海岸的船长和水手，然后把他们带回国。这样的一项义举，我们是不会改变的……”

仅仅用了几分钟时间，大家便把“邓肯号”远行的目的告诉了这位法国地理学家。他们从无意间获得的三张纸条，说到了格兰特船长，然后又说到了海伦夫人的建议……

这位法国地理学家听了以后，非常感动。

“夫人，请允许我对您给予最真诚的赞美，您所做的这一切，真是太伟大了！让这只船按照计划航行吧，我可不想让它有一天的延误。”

“那您是否愿意和我们一起去寻找遇难者呢？”海伦夫人问。

“那可不行！我还有我的任务要完成呢。到了下一个停泊港口的時候，我就该下去了。”

“那就只能在马德拉岛下了。”麦盖尔船长说。

“嗯！就在马德拉岛下，那里离里斯本不过只有800公里。这样我就可以再乘船回里斯本了。”

“好的，先生！随便您！能招待您几天，我感到非常荣幸，希望这几天您能过得开心！”

“啊！爵士呀！虽然我乘错了船，但却也遇到了你们，我真是太幸运了！不过真要说起来，还真是个笑话。一个要去印度的人，最后竟然坐上了去往美洲的船。真是太荒唐了！”

法国地理学家想到这里的时候，心里又有些郁闷，但这也是无可奈何的事，只能按捺着性子待几天了。

带着既来之则安之的想法，法国地理学家又变得开朗活泼起来，当然，时不时地他也会暴露出他粗心大意的毛病来。而他的风趣和幽默，也总是逗得太太们哈哈大笑。就这样，仅仅一天工夫，他便和大家混熟了，也交上了朋友。

在他的请求下，爵士还给他看了那三张纸条。他也仔仔细细地看了，并且研究了很久，做出了很多分析。当然，他的分析和爵士的一样。对于玛丽姐弟，这位法国地理学家也表现出了很大的关心，并给他们打气，让他们对找到父亲充满了希望。他的一些话，让格兰特小姐的心情好了很多。他甚至还说，如果他不是有任务的话，他一定会和他们一起去寻访格兰特船长的。

而当他知道海伦夫人是旅行家威廉·达甫内尔的女儿时，连声大叫起来。称海伦夫人的父亲是个很有胆识的学者，还曾是巴黎地理学会的

会员，并说他们也曾通过很多次信，还说海伦夫人的父亲加入学会就是他和另外一位叫玛泰柏朗的会员介绍的。巴嘉勒尔非常兴奋，称这次是个奇遇，能让他和达甫内尔的女儿同船旅行，他真是太高兴了。

最后，他要求吻一吻海伦夫人的额头，虽然这在英国人看来不合时宜，但海伦夫人还是同意了。

由于非洲北部海流的关系，游船很快就驶近了赤道。8月30日的时候，他们已经能看到马德拉群岛了。爵士决定履行他对巴嘉勒尔的承诺，提出停泊，让这位无意间闯入的法国地理学家上岸。

“我亲爱的爵士，我不和您客套，但您是否能告诉我，在我没有误上‘邓肯号’之前，你们是否要在马德拉港口停泊？”

“不，原来并没打算在此停泊。”爵士实话实说。

“那么，那就继续让我错误下去吧。这个群岛已经被研究得太透了。对于地理学家来说，没什么研究的价值了。该说的都说了，该写的也都写了。而且这里原本以种葡萄为名，可现在葡萄也不行了。我记得，1813年的时候，马德拉的葡萄酒产量是22000桶，等到1845年却变成了669桶。现在，就连500桶也没有了。真是太让人伤心了。如果您不介意的话，是不是可以在加那利群岛停泊呢？”

“好的，没问题！反正这样也不会偏离原来的航行路线！”

“谢谢，亲爱的爵士！加那利群岛好歹有三组岛可以研究。还有那特纳里夫峰，我也一直想去攀登。这次可是个机会，一定要抓住，我要攀登这座著名的高峰。”

“全随您，亲爱的巴嘉勒尔。”爵士微笑着说。

加那利群岛离马德拉群岛并不远，还不到460公里，对于“邓肯号”速度这么快的船，根本就算不上距离。

8月31日下午2点，麦盖尔船长和巴嘉勒尔在甲板上散步聊天。巴嘉勒尔不断地问麦盖尔船长智利的情况。突然，船长打断了他的话，指着南地平线说：

“巴嘉勒尔先生……”

“有什么事吗，我亲爱的船长？”

“请您朝那边看，您看出什么来了吗？”

“没有！我可什么都看不到。”

“不要看地平线！你往上看，看那云彩！”

“云彩！看云彩？我来看去……”

“现在再沿着触桅的辅帆架子往上看。”

“我还是什么都没看到。”

“不是您看不到，只是您不愿意看到罢了。那里虽然离我们有75公里，不过特纳里夫山峰在地平线上还是能清清楚楚看到的，您听明白我的话了吗？”

是的，不管巴嘉勒尔是真没看到还是不愿意看到，几个小时后，那座高峰就要出现在他们面前了。除非是个盲人，不然谁都能看到。

“现在呢？您应该看到了吧？”船长又问。

“哦！看见了，非常清楚。不过，那就是所谓的特纳里夫顶峰？”

他的语气里带着不屑。

“是的，就是它。”

“可它看起来并不高。”

“怎么会？它海拔可有3300多米呢！”

“可它比不上勃朗峰，勃朗峰可是阿尔卑斯山的最高峰。”

“是的！不过这么高的山峰，您爬起来也是很高的。”

“哦，亲爱的船长，您是说我爬上去吗？我爬上去干什么呢？这座山荷泊尔先生和彭柏先生都曾爬上去过。荷泊尔先生爬上去后，还写了篇优美的文章，将它描述得淋漓尽致，荷泊尔先生真是个伟大的人啊！他还考察了这座山的五个地带：葡萄带、月桂带、松林带、阿尔卑斯系灌木带最高处的贫瘠带等等；也考察了最高的荒瘠带。他一度爬上了山顶的最高处，而从山顶看，能看到四分之一面积的西班牙。此外，他还曾去爬过火山，还钻到了火山的腹地，考察了熄灭后火山口的最深处。您说说，这么伟大的人都做过的，我再去做又有什么意义？”

“您说得没错！是没什么去做的了。太可惜了，无事可做，在那等船也无聊，也没什么可以散心的地方。”

“哈哈……散心的地方没找到，粗心的地方倒是不少。”巴嘉勒尔风趣地说道。

两个人沉默着，巴嘉勒尔突然又说：“亲爱的船长，您说，佛得角群岛有没有可停泊的港口呢？”

“倒是有的，而且好像在那里搭船也比较方便。”

“嗯，是的！在那里下船还有个好处，就是佛得角群岛离塞内加尔也不远，如果在塞内加尔的话，说不定我还可以遇到法国同胞。当然，确实有很多人说那一带的群岛既荒凉又脏，没什么意思，不过对于地理学家来说，还是很有意思的。知道吗？这就是角度问题，很多人因为不知道从学识的角度看，所以旅行也就像河蚌一样，钻在蚌壳里往前蹿。我可不是那样的人。”

“先生，您想在哪儿上岸就在哪儿上岸好了。我相信您在佛得角群岛逗留的话，一定会对地理学做出贡献的。我们在那里停泊的时候还会加煤，您下船也不耽误我们行程。”

就这样，船长继续命令船向加那利群岛西边开去，著名的山峰渐渐被船抛在了后面。

9月2日早晨5点，“邓肯号”驶过夏至线。此时，天气发生了变化，潮湿而闷热。西班牙将这样的季节称之为“水季”。岛上缺少树木和水，全靠雨水，所以水季对非洲各岛的居民虽然有利，但对船上的乘客来说却不利。因为浪太大，船上的乘客不敢到甲板上去，只能待在方厅聊天。

9月3日，“邓肯号”就要到佛得角群岛了，准备下船的巴嘉勒尔开始整理起了行李。驶向佛得角群岛，必须经过盐岛，盐岛是个非常荒凉贫瘠的沙滩。“邓肯号”先是沿着一大片珊瑚礁航行，接着驶过圣雅克岛，圣雅克岛的南北两端有两座高山，从北向南纵贯。过了圣雅克岛后，麦

盖尔船长将“邓肯号”驶进了维拉布拉亚湾，停在了12米深的海面上。

这天的天气很差，虽然海风不至于吹进海湾，但惊涛拍岸的声音很响。同时还夹杂着倾盆大雨。大雨中，他们看见了一座城，一座像是建立在平台上的城，平台的台基像是由90米高的火山岩支撑着，高大而荒凉。

海伦夫人原想下船去城里看看，但见雨太大，只好作罢。不过，不管多大的雨，向船上加煤的工作还是要进行的，虽然困难很多。

雨水和海水交织，形成了洪流，“邓肯号”上的所有乘客只能躲在甲板下，讨论着这恼人的天气，发着牢骚。当然，在这些人中，少校平静如常，好像即使洪水滔天，他也能满不在乎。而最不淡定的是巴嘉勒尔，他焦躁地踱来踱去，并不停地摇着头。

“我敢说，这可恶的天气就是在和我做对！”他愤然说。

“也有可能是大雨在向您宣战！”爵士说。

“但我们是一定能战胜它的！”巴嘉勒尔说。

“可这样大的雨，我觉得您不该去冒险。”海伦夫人说。

“夫人是说我吗？我绝对敢去冒这个险。不过，我怕我的行李和仪器，它们要是被雨水打湿了，那就完了。”

“其实，这样的大雨，也就是刚刚下船的时候比较困难。到了城里，情况会好很多。虽然也许住的地方不够干净，而且还有可能和猴子、小猪在一起住，不怎么舒服，但这对旅行家来说，也没什么。希望您能在七八个月后搭船回欧洲。”爵士说。

“什么？七八个月？”巴嘉勒尔尖叫道。

“怎么也需要七八个月吧，因为雨季时，这里没什么船过来的。不过也没事，您可以在等船到来的时候，去一些不被熟悉的群岛考察。不管是地理学、气象学还是测量学，甚至人种学方面的研究，您都可以去做的。”

“是的，有些河流您也可以考察。”海伦夫人说。

“根本就不可能有河流，夫人！”

“没有大河，也是会有小河的。”

“小河也没有。”

“没有小河，总归会有小溪吧！”

“连小溪也是没有的。”

“好吧，那看来您只有去森林研究了。”淡定的少校也插嘴了。

“可这里好像连一棵树都没有呀！”

“哦！那这里可真是个美丽的地方！”少校一脸正经地说。

“千万不要失望，我亲爱的巴嘉勒尔，至少这里还有一些高山可以让您去考察。”爵士也插话道。

“啊？您是说山吗？这里的山不仅不高，而且还没什么意思。爵士，更主要的是，这些工作早就有人做过了。”

“这也有人做过？”爵士惊讶地问。

“唉！我就是这么倒霉，什么都让人占了先机。”

“不会吧！”

“没错！真是这样！”巴嘉勒尔可怜巴巴地说。

“哦！那真是太可怜了，那您下船后要干什么呢，巴嘉勒尔先生？”海伦夫人问。

巴嘉勒尔沉默着。

“我看呀，当时您还不如就在马德拉下船。虽然那里已经不产葡萄酒了。”爵士也替他惋惜道。

“如果是我，我情愿在船上等待时机。”少校突然又说，他的神情好像是在说：“要是我，我才不下船呢。”

“我亲爱的爵士，不知您后面还准备在什么地方停泊？”巴嘉勒尔终于说。

“后面吗？我想，应该不到智利的康塞普西翁是不会停的了。”

“哦！那可真是太糟糕了！那里离印度可真是太远了。”

“也不是这样的，绕过了合恩角，不就一天天接近印度了吗？”

“嗯，那倒也是。”

“而且只要到了印度，不管是东印度还是西印度，都没什么区别

了。”

“怎么可能没区别？”

“巴塔哥尼亚草原上的居民，不是号称西印度的印第安人吗？不管怎么说，总归都是印度人呀。”

“哦！亲爱的爵士，您不说，我怎么想不到这一点呢？”巴嘉勒尔叫了起来。

“还有一点，巴嘉勒尔，如果要得金奖章，并不一定非要去印度呀。世界上可研究的东西多了，可探索的事物也很多。任何地方都有新的事物可以发现。而且西藏的丛山和安第斯山脉的丛山，难道不是一样的吗？”

“可雅鲁藏布江呢？它怎么说？”

“对于雅鲁藏布江嘛，我觉得您完全可以用科罗拉多河代替呀！这条河流知道的人可不多，所以在地图上，是可以随地理学家的喜欢，想怎么画就怎么画的。”

“您说的道理我明白。可是爵士，地图上的河道往往一错就会错上很多。不过，我相信，如果我提出什么要求的话，地理学家们也会像派我去印度一样，去巴塔哥尼亚的。说起来也是，我为什么没有想到这一点呢？”

“您总是粗心大意的，怎么会想到这些？”爵士笑着说。

“说实话，巴嘉勒尔先生，您说说，到底愿不愿意和我们一起去？”海伦夫人的神情严肃起来。

“我倒想去，可是夫人，我又要怎么完成我的任务呢？”

“对了！我还要告诉您一下，我们可是要过麦哲伦海峡的。”爵士突然补充说。

“爵士，不要再诱惑我！”

“再说一点，我们还会去饥饿港！”

“什么？饥饿港，你们说饥饿港？”法国地理学家叫了起来。这诱惑真是太大了，让他不得不重新打算。

“饥饿港在地理书上，可是被说得神乎其神的，太有名了。”

“巴嘉勒尔先生，您再想想，如果您加入到我们这个团队，我们就有法兰西和苏格兰两个国家的人参与了。”海伦夫人说。

“那当然，这倒是没什么问题的。”

“而且我们这次远征，如果有您这样一位地理学家参加的话，对我们会有很大的帮助。您用科学知识来为人类服务，为人道精神服务，您说世上还有什么事比这更光荣呢？”

“是的！夫人，您说得太好了！”

“巴嘉勒尔先生，我觉得您不如将错就错，或者说，其实这是天意的安排。请您像我们一样吧，在天意将纸条带到我们身边时，我们就出发了。而天意又把您送到了‘邓肯号’上，那您就不应该离开‘邓肯号’呀。”

巴嘉勒尔想了想，终于开始松口了。

“我的朋友们，说实话，我看你们是想让我留下来，对吗？”

“您是怎么想的呢，巴嘉勒尔？其实，我觉得您也很想留下来，对吗？”爵士说。

“哦！是这样的。不过我一直不好开口，怕太冒昧！”那位粗心但博学的法国地理学家大声说。

第五章 优秀全面的小罗伯尔

知道巴嘉勒尔要留下来，每个人都很高兴，特别是小罗伯尔，他高兴地跳起来，搂住了巴嘉勒尔的脖子，兴奋之情溢于言表，差点将法国地理学家撞倒在地。

“真是个好孩子，我要教他地理学。”他说。

我们应该知道，麦盖尔船长可是一直致力于将小罗伯尔训练成一个优秀的水手；格莱拉弗爵士正在培养他成为一个勇敢而正直的人；少校训练他沉着冷静的性格；海伦夫人教育他成为善良真诚的人；玛丽则要求他不要辜负每一位热心教他的老师。

在这样的环境下，小罗伯尔必定会成长为一个优秀而全面的君子。

“邓肯号”在这里加上了煤，然后离开了这恶劣天气下的地方，向西进发。它沿着巴西的海岸行驶，到9月7日的时候，一阵北风将“邓肯号”送过了赤道线，进入了南半球。

“邓肯号”顺利地横渡着大西洋，每个人都满怀信心。在寻找格兰特船长的行程中，似乎成功在一点点地接近他们。在这些人中，最有信心的是麦盖尔船长，而他的信心，又来自于他的美好愿望，那就是全心全意地让玛丽小姐获得幸福。虽然他一直想隐藏对玛丽的特别关心，但除了玛丽以外，其他人都看在眼里。

对于那位博学的地理学家来说，他可以算是南半球上最幸福的人了。他整天忙着研究地图，那方厅的桌子上，摆放着的全是地图。因为

这个，奥比尔先生想要布置餐桌而没有地方，也会时不时地和他发生争执。

不过，楼舱里的人除了少校，都是支持巴嘉勒尔的。当然，少校之所以不支持是因为他对地理学没兴趣。

同时，巴嘉勒尔还在大副的一个箱子里发现了一堆书，里面有很多西班牙文字的书，因此，他决定学习西班牙语，而这种语言，船上没有一个人懂。巴嘉勒尔之所以想学西班牙语，是因为他觉得这对他在智利海滨做考察有帮助。他甚至还觉得，冲着他对语言的敏感，很可能一到康塞普西翁，他就能流利地和当地人对话。

为了达到这个目标，他一天到晚都在咿咿呀呀地学着这些复杂的语言。不过，闲着的时候，他也会教小罗伯尔一些科学知识，并将“邓肯号”路过的一些海岸的历史讲给他听。

9月10日的时候，船行驶在南纬5度73分，西经31度15分的地方。就在这一天，爵士听到了就连最有学识的人也不知道的历史。原来，这天巴嘉勒尔给大家讲美洲发现史时，讲到了哥伦布。最后他说，那位著名的热那亚人，至死都不知道自己发现了新大陆。

大家都觉得不可能，巴嘉勒尔却说得很肯定。

“没有比这更真实的历史了！当然，我没有想去抹杀哥伦布做出的贡献，但事实总归是事实。在15世纪末期的时候，人们一心一意想做的只有一件事，那就是怎么找一条最快到达亚洲的路，怎么最快从西方走到东方。总之，只有一句话，那就是怎么找出一条捷径到印度。这就是哥伦布想要试图解决的问题，所以他四次航行，曾到过美洲，在库马纳、洪都拉斯、莫斯基托、尼加拉瓜、维拉瓜、哥斯达黎加、巴拿马等

一带登陆。

“不过，这一带的海岸他知道的只有日本和中国，所以到死他都不知道那个新大陆的存在，死后更没有以他的名字命名那新大陆。”

“虽然我很愿意相信您的话，不过我亲爱的巴嘉勒尔，我还是有些地方不明白，那就是哥伦布的发现，是哪位航海家探出了结果？”爵士问。

“当然是哥伦布之后的一些人了，比如和哥伦布曾一起航行过的奥荷塔、品顿、维瑟普切、孟杜萨、巴思提塔斯、嘉白内尔、瑟利斯……这些航海家都曾沿着美洲东海岸进行过考察，他们曾由北向南去探测美洲海岸，发现那里在360年前，就和我们今天一样，被海流推着走。你们知道吗？朋友们，我们现在驶过的赤道线的地方，就是品顿15世纪末驶过赤道线的地方。

“我们如今已经快要接近南纬8度了，品顿是否是在这里到达巴西陆地的？一年之后，葡萄牙人嘉白内尔也曾来过塞居落港，之后，维瑟普切又在1502年的第三次远征中，向南推进；1508年，品顿又和瑟利斯一起航行，探察美洲沿岸各地。1514年的时候，瑟利斯发现了纳巴那他河口，不过也就是在那里，他被土人吃掉了，绕美洲南端的任务也就只能留给麦哲伦了。

“麦哲伦在1519年的时候，带领5只船出发，沿着巴塔哥尼亚的海岸南下时，发现了得塞多港和圣朱利安港，并在圣朱利安港停泊了很久。之后，他又航行到了南纬52度，发现了一千一百童女峡，也就是现在的麦哲伦海峡。1520年11月28日，他穿过海峡，进入到了太平洋。想想看，当他看到海面在阳光的照耀下闪闪发光时，心情是多么激动啊！”

“巴嘉勒尔先生，我真想生活在那种环境下。”小罗伯尔激动地叫道。

“是呀，我和你一样，我的孩子。如果我能早出生300年，我想，这个机会一定不会旁落他人。”

“要真是那样，对我们来说反而是个遗憾了，先生。因为您要是300年前就出生的话，那我们怎么能在這條船上听到您给我们讲这么精彩的故事呢？”

“这倒没什么，夫人，即使我不为你们讲，自然也会有别人为你们讲。他们甚至还会告诉你们，西海岸探险是皮赛儿兄弟的功劳。这两兄弟真是大胆的冒险家啊，他们曾是很多城市的建立者，比如库斯科、基多、利马、圣地亚哥、比利亚里卡、瓦尔帕莱索以及‘邓肯号’要到的康塞普西翁都是他们的功劳。在那个时候，他们两兄弟的发现和麦哲伦的发现联系起来后，就形成了美洲海岸线。这个贡献，也令旧世界的学者们惊喜万分。”

“如果是我的话，我一定不会满意的！”罗伯尔说。

“为什么不满意？”玛丽瞪着喜欢听发现史的弟弟问。

“就是，我的孩子，您为什么不满意呢？”爵士带着微笑也问。

“要是我的话，我一定还会看麦哲伦海峡的南部还有些什么。”

“嗯！没错，孩子，说得好极了。就是我，也想知道美洲大陆究竟是怎么延伸到南极的呢。还有比如它和南极之间，是否和德莱克推测的一样，还有一道海——对了，这位德莱克是你的同乡，爵士——所以说，如果罗伯尔·格兰特和雅克·巴嘉勒尔出生在17世纪的话，一定会跟

着索珍和勒美尔出发，因为这两名荷兰航海家也想揭开这个谜底。”

“这两个人也是学者？”海伦夫人问。

“不！这两个人不是什么学者，而是大胆的商人。他们也没想给科学做贡献。那时候，荷兰有个东印度公司，这个公司对穿越一切麦哲伦海峡的贸易船都要加以控制。我们知道，那时候，西方人要是去亚洲的话，必须穿过麦哲伦海峡，所以东印度公司可以说实施了一种垄断。有一些贸易船便想着和这些垄断进行斗争，所以想找另一条海峡。在这样的背景下，出现了一名叫伊萨克·勒美尔的人，此人接受过全面教育，而且非常聪明，他拿出钱来，组织了一个远征队，团队里就有他的侄儿雅各伯·勒美尔和一名霍恩的优秀海员索珍。

“这个远征队从1615年6月出发，这个时间比麦哲伦海峡的发现迟了100年。好在他们在炎地和斯达腾岛发现了勒美尔海峡，1616年2月16日，远征队绕过了被称为‘风暴角’的合恩角。这个合恩角可不简单，比好望角厉害得多。”

“太好了！我真想去那些地方探险。”罗伯尔又大叫。

“孩子，如果你真去了那些地方，你一定会非常高兴的。”巴嘉勒尔越说越兴奋，越说越起劲。

“这不难想象，一个航海家在一些航海地图上，一个个地标着自己发现的新地标，世间还有什么比这更开心，更快乐呢？比如看着一个陆地慢慢出现在自己面前，一个个的小岛、海峡仿佛是从海面上升了起来。最初，地图上的界线还不清楚，不连贯，这一块陆地，那一块小港，更远的是偏僻的港湾……但慢慢地，随着航海家的不断发现，地图上的虚线一下子变成了实线，港湾成了弓形海岸，海角和滨海陆地连接

起来，最后，一个完整的新大陆出现了，这个新大陆有江河、湖泊、山峰、河谷，甚至还有平原和村落，慢慢地，又形成了繁华的都市。

“啊！一个新大陆的发现者，才算得上是真正的发明家啊。他们发现这些地方的时候，就和地质学家发现了新矿山一样。一个新大陆出现了，接着就有了新世界，最后一点点都被别人挖掘、探测……真是太美好！可这一切都被别人发现过了，我们这些晚到者，反倒没有用武之地了。”

巴嘉勒尔说到后面的时候，显得有些沮丧。

“怎么可能没有用武之地呢，我亲爱的巴嘉勒尔！”爵士安慰他。

“没有了，都被发现了。”

“我们现在做的事，就是我们的用武之地呀。”

此时，“邓肯号”正疾速向维斯普廷和麦哲伦等名人走过的航道上疾驶。

9月15日的时候，“邓肯号”穿过了冬至线，船头也转向了著名的麦哲伦海峡的入口。好几次，巴塔哥尼亚的南部海岸几乎都可以看到了，但却好像又只是一条线，隐隐约约地天边出现。

“邓肯号”沿着海岸，在6公里以外南下。巴嘉勒尔用他那超大的望远镜看美洲海岸，只看到了模糊的轮廓。

9月25日，“邓肯号”行驶到了和麦哲伦海峡同纬度的地方，并很快驶了进去。通常情况下，汽船都是喜欢由这条路驶进太平洋的。此时的海峡长度不过700公里，不过水却很深，即使是大吨位的船也可以进

去。这个海峡的海底平坦，海内盛产鱼类，而海岸的森林也有很多动物。总之，这里是很好的停泊点，这个海峡的优点，是勒梅尔海峡和合恩角所没有的。

在进入海峡的最初几个小时，也就是在110至148公里的航程里，抵达格里考里角之前，海岸都很平，有很多沙，对这些细节，巴嘉勒尔丝毫也不放过。在海峡内是需要航行36个小时的，所以两岸的景致让这位地理学家可以有充足的时间在阳光下静心观看。

北边的岸上好像没有人烟，但南边那光秃秃的岩石上，却有几个火地人在游荡。让巴嘉勒尔失望的是他没有看到巴塔哥尼亚人，但船上的同伴们却不以为然。

“怎么会没有巴塔哥尼亚人呢？没有巴塔哥尼亚人，还叫巴塔哥尼亚吗？”他嘟囔道。

“尊敬的地理学家先生，不要急嘛，我们总会见到巴塔哥尼亚人的。”爵士说。

“很难说！”

“为什么很难说？这地方一定会有巴塔哥尼亚人的。”海伦夫人说。

“我表示怀疑，夫人，因为这么长时间，我都没有看到他们。”

“我想，巴塔哥尼亚在西班牙语中是‘巴挞弓’的意思，而这‘巴挞弓’又是‘大脚’的意思。想必这巴塔哥尼亚人的脚一定很大。”

“唉！知道名字的来历又有什么用呢？我们还不知道这些人该怎么称呼呢。”巴嘉勒尔故意说，似乎要以此激起大家的讨论。

“什么？不知怎么称呼？怎么可能？少校，你知道吗？”爵士叫道。

“我不知道，我也没兴趣知道！”少校说。

“巴塔哥尼亚人是麦哲伦给他们命名的，但火地人却称巴塔哥尼亚人为提尔门人；智利人叫他们高卡惠人；卡门的移民叫他们提尔门人；阿罗加尼亚人叫他们惠立什人；旅行家伯格威尔叫他们寿哈；法尔珂那叫他们特霍尔惠特……他们自己呢？又叫自己为依纳肯，而‘依纳肯’是‘人’的通称！所以我问大家，这么多的称呼，我们要怎么称呼他们？一个民族有这么多的名称，我真怀疑是不是有这个民族。”

“哇！好一番高谈阔论！”海伦夫人说。

“我承认您的这些说法，不过您还是要承认一个事实，巴塔哥尼亚人的称号多而乱，但他们的身高，应该有结论的吧！”爵士说。

“是错误的结论，我并不承认。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“不是说他们身材很高吗？”爵士说。

“不知道！”

“你可真是，那些亲眼见了巴塔哥尼亚人的旅行家们……”爵士不满地大声说。

“那些说他们亲眼见过的旅行家们，说法也不一样。麦哲伦说他的个子还不及巴塔哥尼亚人的腰部！”地理学家说。

“那不就说明他们很高吗？”

“可是德莱克却说英国人比最高的巴塔哥尼亚人还高。”

“哦！怎么拿英国人比？如果拿苏格兰人比，那巴塔哥尼亚人就不可能高了。”少校用鄙视的口气说。

“卡文迪什说这些人既高大又强壮，霍金斯也说他们是巨人，拉美尔和瑟泽还说他们身高有三米三。”地理学家又说。

“看看，这么多人说他们高，真实情况一定是这样的。”爵士说。

“是的，这些人的说法看似很令人相信，但沃尔德、拿伯罗和法尔珂那的话同样也令人相信，他们说巴塔哥尼亚人中等身材；著名的地理学家派伦·拉·基罗德、伯戈维尔、瓦利斯和凯特莱，还说巴塔哥尼亚人只有一米六左右呢。”

“那么，有这么多完全相反的说法，真实情况到底是什么样的呢？”海伦夫人问。

“真实情况？夫人，真实情况是巴塔哥尼亚人腿短身长。更有人开玩笑说，这些人坐着一米八，站着一米五。”巴嘉勒尔笑着说。

“好！学者们说得太妙了！”爵士也笑着说。

“要想让这些矛盾之处统一，那就是这些人并不存在，这才是最好的结果吧！好了，为了结束这场没有结果的争论，我说件让大家心情好的事吧，朋友们，那就是麦哲伦海峡真是太漂亮了，即使没有巴塔哥尼亚人，它也是漂亮的！”

没错，绕着布伦瑞克半岛航行的“邓肯号”，海岸两边的风景美极了。在又绕过格里考里角后，“邓肯号”前行了130公里，便把奔德·亚利纳大监牢抛在了船的右舷外了。智利的国旗和教堂里的钟楼隐隐出现在树林中，再往前行，海峡两边则突起了花岗石峭岩，那些峭岩的形状非

常怪异，让人看了有些害怕。山脚在森林里隐藏，但山顶上却有常年不化的积雪，白茫茫的一片插入云霄。

矗立在云际的塔云恩峰高2100米，位于西南面。夜幕降临，黄昏显得特别长，即将消失在天际的阳光将单调的天空染成了五颜六色。天空的星星越来越密集，航海者就是依靠南极星座指示方向的。在有星星的黑夜，星光如同海岸上的灯塔，给航行中的船只引着路。

“邓肯号”没有在沿途港湾停留，继续航行。

航行中，一种俯临海面的落叶木南极桦的树梢从帆架上不时掠过，有时候，“邓肯号”的螺旋桨又不断地拍打水面，惊醒了海面上停着的雁鹅、鳧鸭、鸥鹬，以及沼泽里的鸟类。

再前行一段时间，星光下的海岸上便出现了一些残垣断壁，那些建筑物虽然已经倒塌，但在夜色中却显得非常庞大，这些废弃的建筑遗迹是殖民者留下的。这些废弃遗迹用仅存的这点东西向海岸两边肥沃的土地，以及森林里丰富的物产表示着抗议。

穿过这片残败的遗迹，“邓肯号”便向饥饿港航行。

饥饿港的得名出自1581年。那时候，西班牙人赛孟多带领400名移民来到这里居住，并在此建立了圣菲利普城。几年后，因为饥荒，难熬的寒冬让移民死了一大半。1587年，有艘“嘉文史号”战船来到了这里，发现并拯救了这400名移民中的最后一个，这个人在这座具有600年历史的古城废墟里挣扎了整整六年，差不多快要饿死了。因为这个人，这段历史被记载了下来。

沿着荒凉的海岸，“邓肯号”继续前行。黑夜过去，黎明到来，“邓

肯号”依然在这条重要的海峡里航行，两岸又出现了桦树、榛树、枫树形成的森林，森林里不断冒出青油油的山岭，以及长着丰茂金雀花的土丘、山峰，以及那高高矗立的布兰克纪念塔。

“邓肯号”随后又经过了圣尼古拉湾口，这里曾被称之为“法国人湾”。从远处看，海面上有海豹和鲸鱼在嬉戏。这里的鲸鱼的个头很大，即使在3公里之外，仍然能看到它们喷出的水柱。“邓肯号”在绕着弗洛瓦德角时，看到上面布满了尖细的残冰。2000多米高的萨米都峰在海峡对岸耸立着，让人看得胆战心惊。岩石如同带子，将云层分隔开来，让山峰变成了空中群岛。实际上，由于合恩角只是荒海南纬56度下的岩石，所以弗洛瓦德角也就成了美洲大陆的尽头。

从这尖端过去后，海峡便越发显得窄了。海岸两边形成了两座岛屿，一座是布伦瑞克半岛，另一座则是德索拉西翁岛。德索拉西翁岛整体呈长条形，周边被成千上万的小岛环抱，犹如一条大鲸鱼落在鹅卵石沙滩上。

南美洲末端与非洲、大洋洲和印度的末端相比有着很大差别，显得支离破碎。伸进大西洋的一个角，很可能是经受了一场天灾才造成的。

在过了这片肥沃的土地后，两岸又荒凉起来，到处是连绵不断的光秃秃的海岸。海岸的支流如同凶猛的动物，将海岸啃噬成了月牙形。

“邓肯号”沿着弯弯曲曲的航道，像蛇一样爬行，但却没有丝毫的迟疑和错误。“邓肯号”行驶过的地方被浓烟包围，与海雾融为一体。荒芜的海岸上，有一些西班牙人开的商行。在这里，“邓肯号”没有丝毫减速，继续从一个个商行前经过。

过了塔玛艾角后，峡道慢慢变宽，船在行驶中也有了旋转的余

地。“邓肯号”转过波罗群岛的陡峭海岸后，便沿着南岸航行。在入港36小时后，那位于德索拉西翁岛最末端的皮拉尔角的峭岩便也展现出来。很快，“邓肯号”的面前出现了波光粼粼的海面。巴嘉勒尔激动起来，不停地挥舞着手，因为太过激动，差点因站立不稳而倒在甲板上。

第六章 分头行动

从皮拉尔角绕过去后的第8天，“邓肯号”开足马力，驶进了长22公里，宽18公里的塔尔卡瓦诺湾。这天天气晴朗。实际上，这个地方从每年的11月到第二年的3月，天空都是晴朗的。

不过，由于安第斯山脉挡住了整个海岸，所以南风不断地吹了过来。

根据爵士的命令，麦盖尔船长将船紧贴济罗岛和美洲西岸的零星小岛向前行驶。

行驶中，船上的人都在四下查看，希望海面上能浮起一块烂船板、一根断桅杆，或者是船上的任何一个小物件，只要能给他们提供“大不列颠号”沉没的线索也好，但遗憾的是没有，他们什么都没有发现。

“邓肯号”只能继续朝前行驶，此时，离克莱德湾多雾的海面已经过去差不多42天了，“邓肯号”停泊在了塔尔卡瓦诺港。

刚一停下船，格莱拉弗爵士便让人放下了小艇，带着巴嘉勒尔乘坐小艇上了岸。博学的地理学家希望能借此机会展示自己学过的西班牙语。不过，对于他的西班牙语，本地人连一个字都听不懂，这不免让他很吃惊。

“难道是我的音调有问题？”他说。

“我们还是去海关吧！”爵士说。

到了海关后，海关人员用简单的英语单词，以及手势和表情告诉他们，美国领事馆在康塞普西翁。如果去的话，骑马一个小时能到。爵士找来两匹快马，两个人骑着马很快就进了城。这座城很大，是皮赛儿兄弟那勇敢的伙伴，瓦第维亚这个天才冒险家建立的。

曾经多么繁华的一座城呀，此刻却萧条败落。而之所以变成这样，都是因为土人的掠劫。1819年，经过一场大火，这里的房屋被烧毁，没有烧毁的地方也被烟熏火燎，变了模样。

此时，这座城已经被塔尔卡瓦诺港彻底淘汰了，如今的城内，居民只剩下不到8000人了，而这数千名居民，也因懒惰而让街道变成了草地。

阳台上，有曼陀林乐器响起，窗帘内传出了柔美的歌声。原本以男性为主的城市，如今已经变成了只有妇女和儿童的村落。

爵士没有心思去研究它为什么会萧条，即使巴嘉勒尔不断怂恿他了解，他也无动于衷，他不愿意耽误时间，他要马上去美国领事馆找庞陀克。

美国领事庞陀克热情地接待了爵士，在听到格兰特船长遇难的事后，他答应爵士他会在沿海一带调查了解。

对于三桅船“大不列颠号”有没有在智利，或者是在阿罗加尼亚海岸的37度线附近出事，答案很肯定，没有。因为不管是英国领事馆还是其他国家的领事馆，都没有接到类似报告。不过，爵士并没有因此而放弃。他到了塔尔卡瓦诺后，不辞辛苦地四处打听、探访，甚至还花钱找线索，但一切都是白费力气。即使他们向沿海居民了解，也没有丝毫线索，也就是说，这里没有“大不列颠号”失事的痕迹。

当爵士把这些情况告诉船上的同伴时，格兰特小姐和她弟弟的失望可想而知。而这已经是“邓肯号”到达塔尔卡瓦诺第六天的事了。大家不得不聚在楼舱里商量。海伦夫人不断地安慰格兰特小姐和她的弟弟——她除了安慰他们，还能做什么呢？

在沉闷的气氛下，巴嘉勒尔再次把那三张纸条拿了出来，仔细研究，仿佛想让纸条亲口说出话来。他就那么一直死死地盯着，整整盯了一个小时。爵士不得不叫他说：“巴嘉勒尔，用您那聪明的脑瓜，好好想想，我们对这几张纸条的理解是不是有误？是不是我们的逻辑出现了问题？”

巴嘉勒尔不回答，他皱眉沉思。

“会不会是我们把地点弄错了？不过再笨的人，也不会认错巴塔哥尼亚这几个字吧！”爵士又说。

巴嘉勒尔还是一声不吭。

“还有，那个‘indien’单词，我们说是指印第安人，应该更能说明我们前面的判断是正确的吧！”爵士又说。

“是这样呀！完全没错！”少校回答爵士说。

“再往下看，也就更容易理解了，遇难的船员在要做印第安人的俘虏前，写了求救纸条，这不是很明显吗？”爵士还在说。

“看来，我不得不打断您的话了，爵士！”

巴嘉勒尔终于开口了。

“您的推断是没错，但最后一点我不是很认同。”

“哦，什么意思？”海伦夫人问。

所有人都把目光转向了地理学家。

“我觉得，格兰特船长在写求救纸条时，已经成了印第安人的俘虏了。而且这点很清楚，不容怀疑。”巴嘉勒尔强调说。

“什么意思？麻烦您解释清楚一点吧，先生！”格兰特小姐说。

“太容易解释了，亲爱的玛丽小姐。纸条的空白处，我们是不能读成‘将被俘虏’的，而应该读成‘已被俘虏’，这样说大家明白了吗？”

“那是绝对不可能的。”爵士说。

“不可能？为什么不可能，我的朋友？”巴嘉勒尔微笑着问爵士。

“很简单，瓶子里的纸条上写着经纬度，由此可以说这求救纸条是在船触礁后写好扔进海里的。”

“这一点没有丝毫根据！因为我不明白为什么被印第安人俘虏后就不能写求救纸条，不能装在瓶子扔进海里了。”巴嘉勒尔反驳道。

“理由很简单，被俘后，他们不可能遇到海，没有海怎么扔瓶子？”

“那也可以扔进流入大海的河里。”巴嘉勒尔说。

在惊诧中，没有人再说话，因为这种现象虽然让他们觉得不可思议，但理论上又是行得通的。巴嘉勒尔见大家暗淡的眼神里有了亮光，知道自己又给大家带来希望了。

海伦夫人第一个开口了：“这个想法也不是没有可能。”

“还是个非常妙的想法。”巴嘉勒尔得意地补充了一句。

“那您的意思是……”爵士问。

“我觉得我们不妨沿着南纬37度线穿越美洲海岸，不要离开半岛，沿37度线找到大西洋，很可能在37度线上就能找到‘大不列颠号’的船员。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“我觉得可能性不大。”沉默的少校突然说。

“不管希望是大还是小，我们都不能放弃。如果我的推测是对的，那瓶子的是通过某个内河，流到海里的话，根据我说的路线，我们一定会找到做俘虏的他们的。怎么样？看看地图吧，我一定会让你们相信我的话的。”

巴嘉勒尔说着，将一张智利和阿根廷各省的地图摊在了桌子上。

“我想，你们还是跟我横贯一次美洲大陆吧！我们可以先跨过狭长的智利，然后越过安第斯山脉的高低岩，去草原中间。想想看，这些地方缺大江吗？缺那大河吗？缺水道吗？什么都不缺。都是可以把装着纸条的瓶子送到海里去的。而这些地方，也是可以被土人部落抓获的，格兰特船长他们，很可能就是在这些地方落入了印第安人的手里。我们可不能让他们失望。沿着我给大家指的地图上的这条线路，你们难道不愿意去吗？即使我指的这条路是错的，我们不是还可以沿着37度线找吗？我们一定要找到这些遇难船员，不就是沿着37度线环绕地球一周吗？”

他热情洋溢的一番话，感动了大家，大家全都站起来和他握手。

“是的，一定在那里，我的父亲一定在那里。”罗伯尔紧紧地盯着地图，像是要把地图看进眼睛里去，他不停地嚷嚷着。

“我的孩子，你父亲在什么地方，我们就去什么地方找！我们亲爱的朋友巴嘉勒尔说得再清楚不过了，我们应该毫不迟疑地沿着这条线去找。格兰特船长不是在印第安人手里，就是在一些小部落手里。要是在小部落的手里，我们可以直接将他们救出来。但如果在印第安人手里，我们就要先侦察好情况，然后走东海岸回船上，再到阿根廷的首都招一批人，由少校指挥，这样就能完全对付阿根廷的印第安人了。”爵士说。

“好的，爵士，那我们就这么做。不过我还想补充一句，横跨美洲的旅行一定能顺利完成。”

“对！顺利完成，还不会疲劳。想想看，很多人的装备都不如我们，也没有我们这么伟大的事业鼓舞，但他们都能横贯大陆旅行，比如1782年的威纳莫，不就是从卡门走到了高低岩吗？还有1806年，智利康塞普西翁省的法官董·路易，他从安杜谷出发，穿过安第斯山脉，经过40天的路程，不是到了布宜诺斯艾利斯了吗？还有那个卡希亚上校、杜比倪先生，以及我可敬的同事莫西博士，他们不是都游遍这些地区了吗？他们是为了科学研究这么做的，而我们则是为了救人，当然更要这么做了。”

玛丽激动得声音都有些颤抖：“先生！您不怕危险，仗义救人，太让我们感动了。感激的话都不知道要怎么说。”

“危险？怎么会有危险？谁说有危险？”巴嘉勒尔叫了起来。

“我没有说！”罗伯尔瞪圆了眼睛，一脸坚毅。

“危险？哪里有什么危险？我们做的事怎么会有危险呢？我们只是在做一次648公里的旅行而已。我们是在沿直线走啊，而且这旅行路线遵循的纬度以及气候都是和在北半球西班牙、西西里岛、希腊等地的纬度一样的。这次的旅行，其实就像散步一样轻松，而且绝对不超过一个月。”

“哦，巴嘉勒尔先生，那您说，那几名落难的船员，在印第安人手里会有生命安全问题吗？”海伦夫人插话道。

“安全！这还需要考虑吗？印第安人可不是野人，是不会吃人的。我曾认识一位法国人，季莱尔先生，他就曾被草原区的印第安人掳去整整三年，当时吃了不少苦，也受到了很多虐待，但他却经受住了考验，最终胜利回国。欧洲人在这些地方，就和有用的动物一样，是有他们的价值的，所以印第安人会非常爱护他们，就像爱护他们那些值钱的动物一样。”

“要是这样的话，我们就不要再犹豫了，出发吧！不过我们要走哪条路线呢？”爵士问。

“有条路特别好走，虽然前面有些山路，走着走着也会遇到安第斯山东面山脚的小斜坡，但接下来就好走了，那是一片沙地和原野，没有任何崎岖的山路，那里简直就像一个大花园一样漂亮。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“我看还是先看看地图再说吧！”少校说。

“亲爱的少校，地图在这里。我们可以先沿37度线，从智利海岸罗美纳角与卡内罗湾之间出发。然后穿过阿罗加尼亚首都，随即再越过安杜谷火山南面的小道，过几个高低岩，再下一道绵延山坡，再渡过一条纳乌克河和科罗拉多河，就能到达潘帕草原了。走过潘帕草原，再过盐

湖、格米伊河、塔芭儿坎山，就到了布宜诺斯艾利斯省边界了。过了边界，再爬坦丘尔山。沿途，我们可以一直寻找，一直找到大西洋岸边的马达那斯角。”

巴嘉勒尔熟练地说着这些地名，摆在面前的地图都成了摆设。他的记忆力很强，在熟读弗勒雪、毛利纳、荷泊尔、伯爱尔、杜比倪等这些人的著作后，他便记下了这些地方。在说完一连串的地名后，他又说：“我亲爱的朋友们，这条路线是直线，只需30天我们就能走完。当然，如果风势不好，‘邓肯号’说不定比我们还会早些到达东海岸。”

“这么说，‘邓肯号’要在哥连德角和圣安托尼角之间巡航，是这样吗？”船长问。

“是的！”

“那么这一趟远征，都是哪些人去呢？”爵士问。

“我觉得去的人越少越好。我们现在不过是去打探格兰特船长的下落，又不是去和印第安人打仗。所以我想格莱拉弗爵士当然是我们的领袖，还有少校肯定也是要去，当然还有你们忠实的巴嘉勒尔……”

“还有我！我也要去！”小罗伯尔大叫。

“不要随便插嘴！”玛丽告诫弟弟说。

“他为什么不能去呢？旅行对年轻人来说是种很好的锻炼。”巴嘉勒尔冲小罗伯尔说。

“这样的话，我们就有四个人了，如果再叫上‘邓肯号’的三名水手……”

爵士的话还没有说完，麦盖尔船长就冲爵士说了：“您就不能让我去吗？”

“我亲爱的船长，女客都在船上呀，我们最亲爱的人在船上，当然需要最忠诚、热情的船长留下来照顾她们了。你去了，谁来照顾她们？”爵士说。

“我们不能陪同你们一起去吗？”海伦夫人问道，她有些担心爵士他们。

“亲爱的海伦，这次旅行我们很快就会回来的，所以我们只是暂时分别，而且……”

“好的，我明白！祝你们成功！”海伦夫人说。

“这可不是旅行！”巴嘉勒尔说。

“不是旅行又是什么呢？”海伦夫人问。

“我们只是走马观花般地经过，就像神仙来人世间转一圈一样，走走，行行善。‘日行一善’就是我们的座右铭。”

巴嘉勒尔半开玩笑的这句话，结束了这场辩论。其实，这并不能算是一场辩论，甚至可以说只是一次谈话而已，因为大家的目标一致。有了决定，他们当天就开始做起了准备。对于这次行动，他们也不准备张扬，怕打草惊蛇，最后让印第安人将格兰特船长他们又藏起来了。

他们将动身的日子定在了10月14日。在挑选随行的水手时，船上的水手个个抢着要去。这反倒让爵士为难起来，不知道该选谁，最后只能抽签决定。抽签结果是大副汤姆·艾撒汀、水手维尔逊和穆纳参加进

来。维尔逊和穆纳的身体很强壮，而艾撒汀又有“拳王”之称，被选中的三个人开心得不得了。

爵士积极地做着准备，他要求大家一定要按时出发。而同时，船长也开始了贮煤工作，以便尽快起航，这样就能在远征团队到达阿根廷海岸之前提前到达。所以爵士也和船长约定，两队人马进行比赛，看谁能最先到达那里。

10月14日，在他们预定的时间里，一行人准备出发了。出发时，大家全都聚在了方厅里，“邓肯号”也张好了篷帆，将螺旋桨打在了塔尔卡瓦诺湾的水面上。爵士、巴嘉勒尔、少校、罗伯尔、艾撒汀、维尔逊、穆纳都带着马枪和“高特”手枪准备下船。他们找的向导带着骡子则在岸边的水栅处等着他们。

“我们该出发了！”爵士说。

“去吧，朋友们！祝你们顺利！”海伦夫人强装镇定地说。

爵士抱了抱海伦夫人，罗伯尔跑到姐姐面前，搂起了她的脖子。

“亲爱的朋友们，我们最后一次握握手，然后就要等到在大西洋海岸见面了。”巴嘉勒尔说。

整个船上的人都涌在了甲板上，送7位远征者离船。不一会儿，7个人就到了码头，游船也开始向岸边开去，离岸不过百米。

“愿上帝保佑你们！”海伦夫人在楼舱上，大声喊道。

“放心吧，夫人！上帝一定会保佑我们的！请相信，我们会互相帮助的！”巴嘉勒尔说。

“开船！”船长命令道。

“上路！”爵士也对远征队员们说。

两队人马分别行动，陆地上的远征者赶着坐骑，向海岸进发，而“邓肯号”则加足马力向海洋驶去。

第七章 阿罗加尼亚国

格莱拉弗爵士的远征队里，除了他们7个人外，还有向导，以及向导带来的两个大人一个小孩。

向导是赶骡者的头子，是个在本地生活了20年的英国人，专门租骡子给旅客，并给过高低岩及各个山隘的旅行者做向导。在过了山隘后，他们又会将旅行者交给另一位对阿根廷比较熟悉的向导。

这位英国向导叫立古儿，虽然整天和骡子、印第安人打交道，但他却并没有忘记自己的母语，所以也能和爵士他们进行交流。这给爵士及远征队提供了方便，不管是提要求还是下命令，都不会因为语言不通而发生误会了。这位叫立古儿的向导也很乐意用英语同他们交流，因为巴嘉勒尔的西班牙语实在很难听懂。

立古儿用智利语来说叫“卡达芭”，而这个英国“卡达芭”又雇了两名当地的骡夫，骡夫用智利语来说叫“陪翁”，此外，他还雇了一名12岁的孩子做他们的助手。

“陪翁”的主要工作是牵运送行李的骡子，小孩的工作是在前面引路。所以小孩骑着一匹挂着铃铛的小母马，走在骡队的最前面，后面跟着的是10匹骡子。

在这10匹骡子中，有7匹是7位旅客在骑，还有一匹是英国向导立古儿骑。另两匹托着行李和布匹，这些布匹是他们准备“贿赂”一些部落酋长用的。两个“陪翁”因为要牵骡，所以是步行。

这样的装备，从安全和速度上都可以保证横贯智利的长途旅行。首先，过安第斯山就不是一次普普通通的旅行，必须借助强壮的骡子才行。而这些骡子，由于是阿根廷产的品种，所以发育很好，非常适宜爬山。同时，这些骡子对饲料的要求也没有那么高，甚至每天只需给它们喝一次水就能让它们走上8个小时，即使不停歇地走48公里也不用休息，即使驮300多斤重的东西也不会嫌重。

连接两大洋的这段路程中是没有任何旅社的，旅行中，远征者们只能吃干肉和辣椒拌饭，或者途中打些野味来烤着吃。对于喝的方面，他们每人身上都带着一些甜酒，甜酒装在用牛角做成的器皿里，遇到瀑布或溪水时，只需往瀑布或溪水里加上几滴甜酒就行。当然，在这种路上行走，因为神经始终处于紧张状态，非常容易受到刺激，所以含酒精的饮料并不能多喝。

至于晚上睡觉所盖的东西，他们都装在鞍子里，并用绣了花的宽带子绑在马的身上。装被子的鞍子是用本地的羊皮做成的，将这种羊皮一面割光，另一面保留羊毛，就能在寒冷而潮湿的黑夜，供旅行者们遮盖。盖着这样的暖和被子，也就能一觉睡到大天亮了。

爵士是个对旅行很内行，对各种地方风俗习惯很容易适应的人，所以他为自己和同伴准备了智利人穿的衣服。巴嘉勒尔和罗伯尔的装束是孩子穿的，是一种智利人穿的斗篷，不同的只是大小不一样。两个人穿着长长的皮靴，看起来非常滑稽。一穿上，自己先笑起来。

斗篷又叫罩篷，是一块面积不小，带着格子的花呢，然后在上面穿了个洞。

远征者们脚上穿的靴子是用小马后腿上的皮做成的；乘坐的骡子装

备也很齐全，骡子的嘴里衔着阿拉伯独有的嚼铁，嚼铁的两端又有皮质缰绳，而这些缰绳必要时又可以当鞭子用。骡子的头上有色彩艳丽的络头和漂亮的褡裢，褡裢里装着当天要吃的干粮。

粗心大意的巴嘉勒尔，每次上骡子时都差点被骡子踢上几脚。而当他一爬上鞍子，便会悠闲地坐在上面，根本不管骡子，任由它随心所欲地走，这使他腰上别着的大望远镜荡来荡去，看起来非常好玩。

幸好骡子非常听话，这也让他非常满意。而小罗伯尔，一上骡子便展现出了一流骑手的姿态。

全队出发的时候天气很好，天空像被水洗过一样瓦蓝，虽然烈日炎炎，但海风还是让他们感受到了微微的凉意。沿着塔尔卡瓦诺湾的曲折的海岸，他们快速行进，在向南走了48公里后，踏上了37度线的末端。

行进中的第一天，大家在芦苇丛中穿行，很少说话。冒着黑烟的“邓肯号”虽然渐行渐远，很快就要消失在天边了，但他们还是依稀能看到。而那临别时的话语，也一直回旋在他们的脑海。

在默默无语的旅行者中，有个人一直在自言自语，而且是用那蹩脚的西班牙语在自说自话，这个人就是法国地理学家巴嘉勒尔。

英国向导看样子也是个话很少的人，一路上都不说话。看来职业并没让他变得油嘴滑舌，他甚至和“陪翁”都很少说话。两个“陪翁”做这职业时间长了，也明白要多做少说，所以除了骡子停下来，他们会咳嗽一声，催促它们不要偷懒外，并不说多余的话。而如果他们的咳嗽对骡子不起作用，他们就会向骡子扔个石头，石头往往扔得很准，即使再执拗的骡子，也会乖乖地服从。

如果骡子身上那种绣花的带子松了，或者缰绳掉了，“陪翁”就会急忙脱下自己身上的罩篷，蒙在骡子头上，然后把带子系紧，把缰绳重新绑上，然后照旧往前走。

向导和“陪翁”有个习惯，他们早晨8点吃完早饭后就出发，一直到下午4点才会停下来休息。爵士非常尊重他们的习惯。这天，向导在向大家发出休息的信号时，旅行者们正好走到海湾南端的阿洛戈城，截至目前，他们还没有离开能听到海水拍打的海岸。他们还要向西前进32公里，直到卡内罗湾，才能到37度线的末端。

旅行者一行走遍了海滨，却没有发现任何沉船迹象，再往下跑也是白费时间，所以他们决定将阿洛戈城作为出发点，沿着这条直线一路向东进发。

这天晚上，他们进了城，来到了一家简陋的旅社，准备过夜。

阿洛戈城是阿罗加尼亚的首都，而阿罗加尼亚人又是智利族的一个分支，这一分支的人身材强健，神情傲慢，在南北美洲中属于完全没有受过外力统治的一族。实际上，阿洛戈城曾一度被西班牙人统治，但这里的居民却没有退缩和屈服，他们抵挡西班牙人的侵略，就和阻挡智利人一样凶猛，所以最终他们有了独立的旗帜，那面蓝底白星的旗子也一直飘扬在护城墙顶上。

这天晚饭前，爵士和巴嘉勒尔还有向导在街上散步，街边的房子屋顶是用茅草盖成的。这里除了有一所教堂，以及一座叫圣梵济的修道院遗址可以看外，已经没有什么可看的东西了。

爵士试图向这里的居民打听一下沉船消息，但没有结果。而巴嘉勒尔对于他所说的西班牙语，这里的人听不懂感到很失望。其实，阿洛戈

城的人是说阿罗加尼亚语的。这种土语在整个麦哲伦海峡地区都通用，所以巴嘉勒尔的西班牙语即使说得再好，也没有用武之地。

由于不能和土人交流，他只能四处看了，这也让他重新找到了乐趣。因为他觉得阿罗加尼亚人的长相特别有意思，而且这些人对于一个外国人朝他们死命地看并不反感，任由他来观察。

阿罗加尼亚人身材高大，皮肤呈古铜色，面部扁平。这里的男人没有胡子，眼神时常躲闪，脑袋很大，头上披着又黑又浓的头发。这些人看起来像是整日无所事事，游手好闲。

不过，相对于男人的懒散，女人却很能吃苦。她们每天不仅要忙着做家务，而且还要为主人照顾马匹、擦拭武器、耕田、打猎……除了这些外，她们还会抽空编织一些翠蓝色的罩篷，这样的罩篷，她们两年织一件，一件最少能卖300美元。

总的来说，阿罗加尼亚的风俗野蛮，人类的所有坏习惯，他们似乎都有，所以并不是一个能引起人们注意的民族，但这个民族却喜欢独立。

“真是些勇敢的人啊！”巴嘉勒尔散完步回来，在和大家围坐着吃饭时，突然感叹道。

大家觉得他的赞美有些言过其实，他又说，在他游览阿洛戈城的时候，他那颗法兰西人的心在猛烈地跳动。大家不知道他说的是什么意思。少校则问他那颗心为什么会猛烈跳动。巴嘉勒尔说，他的心狂跳不止是有原因的，也很正常。因为他有个同乡曾做过阿罗加尼亚的国王。少校问他这个国王的名字，巴嘉勒尔骄傲地说是脱勒斯先生。

他说脱勒斯先生是个地道的好人，长着络腮胡须，早年还在法国的柏立戈城做过律师。不过，虽然他做了阿罗加尼亚的国王，但最终还是被之前下台的那些人赶下了台。

少校在听他说朋友是一个律师，而且做了国王又被人赶下来时，忍不住笑了。巴嘉勒尔严肃地说：“律师做国王，可比国王做律师要容易得多。”

他这话一出口，大家全都笑了起来，并举起手里的玉米酒，连喝几口，为那位做过阿罗加尼亚国王的律师祝福干杯。几个小时后，大家各自裹着罩篷睡着了。

第二天早上8点钟，一行人又开始出发。小孩牵着领路的骡子走在最前面，“陪翁”走在最后，一行人又沿着37度线向东走去。他们穿过了阿罗加尼亚的一片葡萄园，又过了一片青草肥沃的地区。

慢慢地，人烟稀少起来。又走了一里多路后，他们见到了美洲大陆闻名的印第安人的练马人。再向前走，他们看到了一座被废弃的驿站，这个驿站曾是土人躲避风雨的地方。最后，他们还遇到了两条拦路的河。

幸好向导找到了一个浅滩，大家这才安然渡过。此时，安第斯山脉已经展现在了他们眼前，那是一个个向北绵延，有着圆顶的山峰。这条山脉是整个新世界的脊梁，他们看到的只是巨大脊梁中最低的一部分。

下午4点钟的时候，他们已经走了56公里了。疲惫的他们在旷野中的一棵野石榴树下休息。骡子很累，“陪翁”打开了它们的缰绳，让它们自由自在地在草地上吃嫩草。骡子驮着的褡裢里有干肉和辣椒饭，吃完这些后，他们将羊皮做的被子铺在了地上，然后躺在上面休息。他们要

借此消除一天的疲劳。

晚上睡觉有“陪翁”和向导轮流守夜，他们睡得很安心。

在如此晴朗的天气下，全体人员，包括罗伯尔都很开心，身体上也没什么不适。所以大家觉得还不如就跟在“赌场”上一样，手气好的时候乘胜追击。于是，第3天的时候，他们的速度加快了，即使遇到有激流的河，也能安然渡过。

晚上，他们在介于智利和土人国之间的河旁休息，第二天又接着走，再次前行了56公里。

这里土地肥沃，花草盛开，植物有宫人草、木本紫罗兰花、曼陀罗花、仙人掌等等。这个地区还有一些独有的鸟类，比如鹭鸶、鸱枭，以及逃避鹞鹰的黄雀等。

当然，草丛里也有动物存在，比如南美豹等。至于在这里的土人，虽然偶有看到，但却很少，像印第安人和西班牙人的混血儿就更难看到了。

偶尔见到的土人打着赤脚，赤脚上拴着大马刺，胯下骑着的马也被刺得鲜血直流，但仍在草原上狂奔。马奔跑的速度很快，如同一个鬼影，一晃而过。他们想找人问路，却怎么都找不到合适的人，所以什么消息都没打听到。

由于无法做探访，爵士只能耐着性子，继续往前走。

17日的时候，他们还是按以前的进度和顺序前行，罗伯尔却精气神十足，不按顺序走，非要走在拴着铃的骡子前面。为此，他坐着的骡子也吃尽了苦头。最后，爵士不得不严厉呵斥他，这才让他回到了原来的

位子上。

道路开始变得崎岖难行，地势也是高低起伏，很不好走，这预示着前面就要遇到山地了。

河多了起来，河水沿着崎岖的山坡汨汨地流着。巴嘉勒尔不停地看着地图。如果有些溪流在地图上看不到，他便很生气，他生气的样子看起来非常好笑，有些七窍生烟的感觉。

“这条河流竟然在地图上找不到，一条河流竟然连它的身份证明都没有，这是非常严重的事情。从地理学的法律角度来看，这条河是不存在的。这怎么可以？”

他一边嘟哝，一边开始给这条河流起名字，并在地图上做出了记号，而每次起名字的时候，他总要用上西班牙语中最响亮的形容词。

“多好的西班牙语呀，多么有震撼力的语言啊。如同金属制成的，我觉得，这种语言里，一定含有78%的铜、22%的锡，它的强度能超过铸钟的青铜。”巴嘉勒尔得意地说。

“这么美丽的语言，你应该学得很不错了吧？”爵士问他。

“当然！亲爱的爵士！不过，也许是音调的问题……可惜啊！如果音调对的话，他们一定能听懂的。”

巴嘉勒尔遗憾地说，他真希望自己能找准音调，所以一边走，一边练习发音，嗓子都被他练得发哑了。同时，一路上他也没忘记回答一些地理学上的问题，当然，在这上面，他显然是内行，甚至可以说全世界都没几个人比他厉害。

因为只要爵士向那向导提出一些问题，比如想知道当地的一些特点时，他总是可以抢先说出来，而且说得非常完整，这不禁让那向导大吃一惊。

这天中午10点的时候，他们遇到了一条横截他们一直遵循着的那条直线的路，爵士不知道这叫什么路，便问向导。不等向导回答，巴嘉勒尔就说了：“这是一条由荣博尔通向洛杉矶的路。”

爵士问向导，巴嘉勒尔说得对不对，向导说：“完全正确！”

向导说完，又问巴嘉勒尔：“您以前来过这里吗？”

“来过！”巴嘉勒尔一本正经地说。

“来过？怎么来的？是骑着骡子来的吗？”

“当然不是，我是坐着安乐椅来的。”

向导虽然不知道他这话是什么意思，但也没再问，耸耸肩走了，走到了队伍的最前面。

傍晚5点钟的时候，他们来到了一个山坳，并在那里休息。山坳在小洛卡城的北边，离小洛卡城仅有几里远，却是安第斯山的最低处。

第八章 穿越安第斯山脉

远征至今，他们还没有遇到什么不能解决的问题。不过，接下来的爬山难免会遇到一些问题和危险，与自然界真正做斗争才刚刚开始。

因为他们现在马上就要面临一个问题，那他们穿越安第斯山脉，要走哪条路才能不改变原来的路线？他们问向导。

“这一带有两条路，其中一条是曼朵察曾经发现的阿尼卡那条路。”巴嘉勒尔又抢先说。

“是的！没错！”

“还有一条路是否就是威纳里卡岭以南的那条路？”巴嘉勒尔又问向导。

“对！是这样的。”

“不过，朋友们，这两条路都有一个问题，那就是不是偏北就是偏南。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“还有路可以选择吗？”少校问。

“有，那就是位于火山斜坡的安杜谷小道，那里在南纬37度30分的地方。也就是说，如果我们走这条路的话，离我们预定的路线就差了半度。这条路的高度也不高，不到2000米。是察米地奥·得·柯鲁茨探索出来的。”

“这条安杜谷小路应该可以走，不过，你认得这条路吗？”爵士又问向导。

向导说：“认识，爵士，这条路我是走过的。我之所以没有提起它，是因为它是小路，这条路最多只能走到牧群里去，这条路是东部的印第安人畜牧走的路。”

“哦，朋友，如果是这样的话，只要牛马能走的地方，我们都能通过。而且这条路正好就在我们要走的直线上。我们就走这条路吧！”

有了决定后，一行人便出发了。他们钻进了拉斯内卡斯山谷，山谷的两边是结晶石灰岩，山路用一个让人几乎感觉不到的斜坡在向上延伸。

差不多11点的时候，他们走到了一个小湖边。

这个小湖是附近小河的汇流形成的天然蓄水池，周围环境非常好。小河的水流发出汨汨的声响，缓缓地流进湖里。湖岸上有高原，高原上长满了林木野草，通常情况下，印第安人就是在这里放牧的。

绕过这里，他们看到的是横亘南北的沼泽地，由于他们有骡子带路，而骡子有经过沼泽地的经历，所以很快就过去了。下午1点钟的时候，他们从巴内纳堡旁绕过。山坡不再是斜着缓缓向上，而是形成了陡坡。周围高山嶙峋，骡子踩在石头上，石头哗哗地往下滚，看起来很像石头瀑布。

下午3点钟的时候，他们看到了很多1770年土人起义时毁掉的一些堡垒，这些堡垒在此时，因岁月而变得诗意起来。

“唉！难道这些高山还不够将人阻隔吗？还要修碉堡！”巴嘉勒尔

说。

从这时候开始，路不仅越来越难走，而且也险峻起来。山坡的坡度越来越大，路也越走越窄，小路下的山谷，深得吓人。

骡子意识到了危险，小心地用鼻子嗅着路。远征队的队员们一个挨一个地紧紧跟随前进。有时候，当他们拐了一个陡弯后，却发现领路的那头骡子不见了，他们只能根据远处传来的铃声前行。有时候，那蜿蜒曲折的山路会让骡队形成两条平行线，甚至那领头的向导可以和走在最后面的“陪翁”讲话。而他们之间隔着的那个山谷，虽然宽度不到20米，但深度却达到了几百米以上，成了平行而行的两队人马间的巨大鸿沟。

不过，即使在如此险峻的山上，仍然长着一些草本植物，这些草本植物从岩石缝隙伸了出来，展示在人们面前。

从这些植物上，人们还是感觉到了矿物质对它们的侵袭。

凝固的熔岩越来越多，熔岩呈铁青色，高高耸起，尖端有黄色晶体。这些物质的存在，让人们马上意识到，他们就要靠近安杜谷火山了。周围的岩石一层层地堆砌，在上面摇摇欲坠，好像随时都有掉下来的可能。但即使这样，它们还是互相攀附，以防止倒下。从这些形状来看，也许只是微微的震动，就可能让岩石改变它们原有的形状。而从这些倾斜的山峰，东倒西歪的窟窿，以及那不规则的圆顶上，他们能看出这座山的形状还没有固定下来。

没错，安第斯山的大骨架正发生着变化，所以也让路线随着大骨架的变动而发生变化，也许昨天留下的认路标识，今天再来看时，已经不在原来的位置了，所以这让向导常常搞不明白。他需要停下来四处查看，仔细辨认岩壳形状，从那些容易破碎的石头上，寻找印第安人走过

时留下的痕迹。

没有其他办法，他们只能这么辨别方向。

爵士紧紧跟着向导，他知道向导的烦恼，也知道他们的行路越来越困难，却也不能去问他们，因为他觉得向导很可能就和这些骡子一样，天生有识路的本领，他应该相信他们。

有差不多一个小时，向导都在路上犹豫，在他们已经爬上去很高时，却又发现路不对，赶快退了出来。这种情况维持了很长时间，突然，他们走进了一条不怎么宽的山谷，这山谷非常狭窄。在这样的山谷里，四处都是悬崖峭壁，这些峭壁呈山峰状，挡住了他们前行的方向。

向导四处找路，但都找不到，他只能从骡子上下来，交叉着胳膊站在那里沉思。

爵士走近他，问道：“迷路了吗？”

“没有，爵士！”

“但我们现在已经不是在安杜谷那条路上了对吗？”

“不，我们还在那条路上。”

“不会错吧！”

“不会错！您看到了吗？这里到处都是印第安人烧篝火留下的灰烬，那里还有羊群走过留下的痕迹。”

“这么说，这条路是别人走过的了？”

“是的，不过现在走不过去了，很可能是不久前的地震将这条路堵住了。”

“即使堵住了骡子，也是不会堵住人的吧！”少校突然说。

“哦，那要看你们到底想怎么做了，我已经尽力了。如果大家愿意往回走，然后再在高低岩那边重新寻找出路的话，骡子和我会带大家走那条路。”

“那不就要耽误很长时间了？”

“至少会耽误三天。”

爵士没有说话，向导在遵守自己的合约做事，他的骡子是不能再往前走了。爵士回头看了看同伴。

“你们愿意继续走这条路吗？”

“当然愿意！”艾撒汀说。

“我们现在的问题是什么呢？是爬一座山脉的问题。当我们爬上去了，下坡就比现在好走多了。而且我们过了这座山，就能找到阿根廷的向导还有能在草原上奔驰的快马了。不要犹豫了，我们继续前行吧！”巴嘉勒尔说。

“继续前进！”远征者们都叫了起来。

“你不能陪我们去吗？”爵士问向导。

“我要赶骡子！”

“好吧！那随你！”

“我们不用他陪，过了峭壁就能找到安杜谷的小路，我会把你们带到山脚下的。我的能力，绝不亚于高低岩这一带的任何向导。”巴嘉勒尔说。

于是爵士给向导结了账，并让他和他的“陪翁”及骡子一起回去了。留下来的武器、工具以及干粮，他们几个人分摊着背。而此时，他们必须马上往山上爬，即使这样，很可能还要走一段时间的夜路。

走上去后他们发现，左边的斜坡有条能直上直下的小路，非常曲折，骡子完全无法通行。而就算是人走，困难也很大，不过，经过两个小时的疲惫赶路，他们终于走到了那条安杜谷路线上。

此时他们已经到了真正的安第斯山上，离那条高低岩的最高山脊也不远了。不过，这时候他们却怎么都无法认清脚下的路。想必最近一次的地震，把整个地区都搅了个翻天覆地，他们此时只能从山腰上隆起的一些地方一点点地向山脊上爬了。

找不到可以走的路，巴嘉勒尔也有些不知所措起来，只是拼命地往安第斯山的顶峰爬。

山顶的海拔在3300至3600米之间。好在天气很好，这样的天气，对他们远征的人来说非常有利。如果放在5月至10月这样的季节去爬这样的山，很可能就爬不了了。严寒的天气会把人冻死，更何况这地方会经常刮一种飓风，这种飓风每年都会将很多人刮到高低岩的深坑里去。

爵士和同伴们整整爬了一夜，即使是那根本就无法攀爬的层层岩石，他们也拼尽全力往上爬，而对于那些既深且宽的洞穴，他们都勇敢

地跳了过来。要是单独无法完成，他们就一个挽着一个的胳膊，形成一条绳索，用肩膀做梯子，像马戏团的演员一样，表演惊险的空中飞人，勇敢地越过了重重险阻。

这种时候，大显身手的往往是强壮的穆纳和灵巧的维尔逊。两个勇敢的苏格兰人，不断地借力给大家，有好几次，如果不是他们的帮助，大家很可能都过不去。每次遇到这种情况，爵士最担心的就是小罗伯尔了，因为他毕竟年龄太小。而巴嘉勒尔呢，则用他法国人的固有热情和开朗，奋力地前进着。至于少校，稳健的他知道什么时候该用多大的力，把握得也是恰到好处。所以这段路，他爬得若无其事，不慌不忙。几个小时的攀爬，对他来说，就和在山底下走没多大区别。

早晨5点的时候，气压表上显示，他们已经在2300米高的位置了。这里属于二级平顶，也是乔木地带的尽头。

此地偶有野兽出没，要是猎人的话，一定会像发了财一样高兴的。这些野兽好像知道人最喜欢猎杀它们，所以远远看到它们便飞快地逃跑了。在这些野兽中，首先有这个地区特有的骆马，这种动物可以代替羊、牛、马工作，而且生存能力非常强，即使是骡子都无法生存的地方，它们也能生存下来。

除了骆马之外，这里还有一种大耳鼯鼠，这是一种啮齿类小动物，它们既像野兔，又像野鼠，那长长的腿又像极了袋鼠。长着漂亮皮毛的它们性格温顺，胆子很小。在树上的时候，它们又像栗鼠一样蹦来跳去，非常可爱。

“没有鸟的翅膀，却有鸟的能力，它们和那些四足动物完全不同。”巴嘉勒尔说。

不过，这些野兽并不是山顶上的住客，在更高的3000米雪地，有一种美丽的反刍动物——羊驼。羊驼最被人称道的就是它的长毛，像丝绒一样柔滑。还有一种没有角的山羊，这种山羊被动物学家称为“未角羚”，它们长着细密的绒毛，高且瘦，由于时常高昂着头，给人一种孤独的感觉。

孤傲的未角羚很不喜欢有人靠近，所以想要见到它们并不容易，当它们远远地看到人时，便像鸟儿展翅一样，瞬间不见了，即使是那白得晃眼的雪地上，也看不到它们一点踪影。

天破晓时，整个山区变得有些面目全非起来，四处都是明晃晃的冰，峭壁上的冰柱泛着淡青色的光，高高地耸立着，太阳光照射在冰柱上，显得格外耀眼。此时爬山是危险的，所以他们必须先去探测一下，如果有裂缝，便不能再前进了。

维尔逊跑在了最前面，做起了急先锋。他用脚一点点地试着冰面，跟在后面的同伴们小心翼翼地随着他的脚印走。他们不敢高声说话，生怕声音太大，会震掉悬在他们头顶的七八十丈高的雪团。

试探着，小心翼翼走着的他们，总算走到了灌木地带，再往上爬250米左右，那些灌木也就该被仙人掌之类的禾本草类替代了。如果再走到3300米高的地方，很可能任何植物都没有了。

远征队员们只在8点钟的时候休息了一下，吃了点东西恢复体力，便又开始冒着巨大的危险前行了。此时的他们不仅需要跨过那如同刀尖一般的冰凌，而且还要越过那深不见底的深坑。行进中，他们看到很多地方都插上了木头做的十字架，很显然，这些地方发生过不幸的事件。

下午2点钟的时候，险峰间出现了一块光秃秃，荒凉如沙漠的平

地。此刻，天空蔚蓝，空气干燥。在这样的高度，是不会下雨的。那些水蒸气在此处变成了雪或冰雹。四周零星的云斑石或雪花岩，隐隐地从白雪中探了出来，像一个个的尸骨，从裹尸布里露了出来。有些硅石或麻石的小碎块，也被风吹得滚下了山谷，发出浑厚的声音。

此时的远征者们，已经有些心有余而力不足了。爵士看到大家精疲力竭，便有些后悔爬这么高，走这么远。而那小罗伯尔，虽然在拼命和疲劳搏斗，但也实在走不动了。见大家都不提休息的事，3点钟的时候，爵士停了下来。

“我们还是休息一下吧！”他说。

“在这地方休息吗？这里可连藏身之处都没有。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“必须要休息了，小罗伯尔需要休息！”爵士说。

“我不要休息！我可以的，爵士！我可以走！大家不要停！”小罗伯尔勇敢地说。

“让人背你吧，孩子，我们不管怎样，都要走到东面去，到了那里，也许会有茅草棚。我希望大家再走两个小时。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“大家觉得怎么样？”爵士问。

“好！”大家一致同意。

“我背小罗伯尔吧！”穆纳补了一句。

大家继续往前走，吃力地爬了两个小时。他们此时只是什么都不想地往上爬，一直爬到了最高峰。

空气变得越来越稀薄，大家的呼吸都困难起来，有了高原反应。

血液失去了平衡，从牙龈和嘴唇上渗了出来。当然，也许在高空
中，雪让空气也不好了起来，所以也是牙龈和嘴唇渗血的原因之一。空气的稀薄，让人必须费力呼吸，以便加速血液循环，这种用力，会让身体的每个器官更加疲劳，疲劳程度不亚于雪面上的阳光反射。在此种环境下，即使是再勇敢的人，意志再坚强的人，也都有些熬不住了。

高原反应中的疼痛和眩晕也出现了，不仅让体力有所减弱，而且也削弱了意志。和气候抗争，总是要吃亏的。不一会儿工夫，远征队员们的跤摔得越来越多，而一旦摔倒，就很难立刻站起来，必须跪着才能爬起来。

这段路程用了很长时间，眼看大家都要支持不住了。看着白茫茫一片的雪山，感受着刺骨的寒冷，以及快要吞噬四周的黑夜.....如果再找不到过夜的地方，后果将不堪设想。就在大家胆战心惊时，只听少校用惯常的平静语气说：“那里有座小房子！”

第九章 移动的山脉

那个小房子，也只有少校才会看到。放在任何人，即使是在小房子旁来来回回地走，甚至从小房子的顶上踏过也不会发现。因为那里仅仅从雪地上露出了一点，而那一点还和四周的岩石混杂在了一起，不注意的话根本看不出来。

小房子埋在了雪里，他们必须把雪扒开才行。在维尔逊和穆纳费尽全力扒了半个小时后，小房子的入口露了出来，远征队成员急忙进去，挤成了一团。

小房子是印第安人用土坯修建而成的，整个房子呈正方形，长宽各在3米3左右，高高地矗立在一块雪花岩顶上。小房子只有一个小门，门前有个石梯。不过，即使门再小，只要刮起飓风，里面依然会钻进雪花和冰雹。

小房子里大概可以容纳10个人。虽然这个小房子并不能为大家遮风避雨，但怎么也比在外面强，外面起码在零下10摄氏度以下。

屋里有个小灶炉，还有用土坯做的烟囱，如果能够生火取暖，抵挡外面的寒气，还是很不错的。

“我们要感谢老天爷给了我们这个栖身之处，虽然不是很舒服，但已经不错了。”爵士说。

“这还不舒服？这可是一座王宫啊！就是没有禁卫军和朝臣而已。我们能在这里栖息，已经算很舒服的了。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“是啊，还有灶炉能够烧火取暖。我觉得，现在大家虽然很饿，但寒冷更让人难受，我想，如果有一些木柴，应该比能打到野味更让人高兴。”艾撒汀说。

“有道理！我们想办法找点木柴吧！”巴嘉勒尔说。

“在这岩石顶上，哪里有什么木柴。”穆纳摇着头说。

“既然屋里能设灶炉，那么外面一定可以找到木柴的。”少校说。

“麦克那布斯说得很对。你们把这里先布置一下，准备做晚饭，我去打柴。”爵士说。

“我和维尔逊跟你一起去吧！”巴嘉勒尔说。

“还有我，我也去！”罗伯尔爬起来说。

“我的孩子，你就不用去了，好好休息吧！虽然你还是个孩子，可现在已经做了很多大人才能做到的事了。”爵士说。

就这样，格莱拉弗爵士、巴嘉勒尔和维尔逊走出了小房子。

此时已经是傍晚6点钟了，虽然没有风，但寒气逼人。天色开始转暗，太阳用最后一抹光彩轻抚着山峦。巴嘉勒尔看了看随身带着的气压表，发现水银柱显示在零下4分95度，也就是说，他们现在在3600米的高空，仅比勃朗峰低910米。

如果此刻也像在瑞士的高峰那样，有飓风或旋风刮来，那么他们谁也别想爬过这山脊。

爵士和巴嘉勒尔走上了一块云斑石，他们向四下看着。此时，他们

正处在峰峦叠嶂的高峰上，从这个地方向四下看，能看到65平方公里的地方。看东面，是山坡，缓缓地向下延伸，完全可以行走。更远处有乱石堆积。乱石应该是从冰山上冲下去的。再往下看，科罗拉多河流域已经完全隐没在黑夜中了。地面层峦叠嶂，一切都在夕阳的照耀下渐渐隐去，整个安第斯山的东方就快要看不清了。看西面，形成尖峰的嶙峋石壁依然被最后的阳光照耀着，看着浸淫在阳光中的岩石和冰山，顿时有种光彩夺目的感觉。北边能看到起伏的山峰，如同一个人用铅笔画朦胧曲线时，手微微颤抖形成的，非常随性。南边和其他几面山都不一样，十分美丽壮观，因为近黄昏，反而更显出它的美来。

没错，只需向荒野中的尔必朵河谷看一眼，便能看到安杜谷火山了，甚至还能看到那如同张着大嘴的喷火口。喷火口在离他们3公里以外的地方，如同一只巨大的怪兽，又像是圣经里提到的长鲸，张开大嘴，喷射出巨大的浓烟和褐色的火焰，照亮了四周的山峦，整个山峦都变得红了起来。

雪白的冰雹、暗红的烟火、火红的熔岩……交织成了一个色彩绚烂的万花筒。

突然，一道耀眼的火光展现在了他们面前，给那一望无际的盆地戴上了一个美丽的光环。而就在此时，夕阳的余晖也已消失殆尽，它像一颗陨星，在暗影里缓缓消失。

看着那幕火山喷发带来的壮丽景象，巴嘉勒尔和爵士出了神。原本要找木柴的他们，此时却像一个鉴赏家一样，欣喜地观赏着。不过，对于这种壮观的场面，维尔逊并不感兴趣，只是提醒他们，要找木柴了。

虽然他们站着的岩石上没有木柴，但却有一些干枯的苔藓。于是，

他们采集了很多苔藓，同时，他们还发现了一种根部能当柴烧的植物，所以也就拔了一些。

在将这些珍贵的燃料拿回小房子的炉灶后，想要点火却不容易了。而之所以不容易点着，是因为空气太过稀薄，没有足够的氧气。当然，这只是少校的看法。

“相反，水不需要100度就能沸腾，如果喜欢喝沸水煮的咖啡，那就只能委屈一下了。因为在这样高的地方，水到90度就会开。”少校继续说。

少校说得没错，火点了很久才点着。而在水沸了以后，他们将温度计插进去试了一下，发现只有87度。不过即使这样，他们还是冲了热咖啡喝。在这样寒冷的天气里，能有热咖啡喝，真是太幸福了。

然后，他们又吃了一些干肉，当然，这些干肉是不够他们吃的。而这也让巴嘉勒尔有了另一个想法，他说：“我听说骆马肉烤着吃很不错，而那骆马又能代替牛羊，如果我们能试着让骆马肉替代牛羊肉，一定是个不错的做法。”

“难道这餐晚饭没能让你满意吗，大地理学家？”少校板着脸说。

“满意！当然满意了，我的好少校！不过我觉得，如果能有一盘野味的话，一定会更好的。”

“你太会享受了！”

“你给我的这个评价我接受，少校，不过，你又是怎么想的呢？你嘴里虽然这么说，但心里其实也想着吃点什么野味吧！”

“嗯！也许是这样的。”少校说。

“要是有人想让你和他一起去打猎，你会怕寒冷和黑夜吗？”

“当然可以，如果你也愿意的话……”

大家还没来得及对他们的对话做出回应，突然听到了一阵吼声，声音由远及近，吼声悠长，吼叫的是野兽，而且不是一两只，而是一群。看样子，似乎是一群野兽正向他们这边奔来。

难道老天在赐给一个小房子的同时，还要赐给他们一顿丰盛的晚餐吗？地理学家巴嘉勒尔想。

不过，他的兴头很快就被爵士打断了，爵士对他说，在高低岩这样的地方，是绝对不可能有野兽的。

“不是野兽是什么？难道你们没听见吗？声音越来越近了。”艾撒汀说。

“难道发生了雪崩？”穆纳问。

“不会，那是野兽的叫声。”巴嘉勒尔反驳道。

“那我们去看看吧。”爵士说。

“我们现在是猎人，以猎人的身份去看！”少校说着话，拿起了一支马枪。

大家从小房子里出去，高山上的夜晚虽然因为满天星斗而没有漆黑一团，但月亮还没出来，四周还是影影绰绰，阴森森的。东、北、西这三面的山峰已经全部消失在夜幕中了，他们看到的只是最高的几座岩

石，如同幽灵般地矗立在那里。

阵阵的吼声越来越响，越来越近地向他们涌来。

到底是怎么回事？在他们还没弄清楚的时候，突然，随着哗啦哗啦的声响，有东西掉了下来。当然，不是发生雪崩，而是受惊的野兽跳了下来。它们跳下来时所发出的声响，让整个高山都颤抖起来。涌来的野兽有上万头，在空气稀薄的山顶奔腾着，叫嚣着，发出震耳欲聋的声响。

是什么样的野兽？是草原上的还是只是山上的骆马和未角羚？

如同旋风一般的动物从他们头顶几尺高的地方席卷而来，格莱拉弗爵士、麦克那布斯、罗伯尔、艾撒汀和两个水手急忙趴在了地上，只有巴嘉勒尔还站在那里，很快，他就被那些动物撞倒在了地上。

此时，一声枪响。这一枪是少校开的，他摸黑开了一枪后，感觉到有只被他射中的野兽倒在了离他几步远的地方。然而，那群野兽并没有被枪声吓倒，而是全都朝火山方向奔去，奔跑时还发出惊天的吼声，慢慢地，声音和影子都消失不见了。

“啊！总算找到了。”有人在说话，是巴嘉勒尔的声音。

“找到什么了？”爵士问他。

“眼镜呀，我找到了我刚刚丢掉的眼镜，老天保佑！”

“你有没有受伤？”

“没有！只被踩了几脚，不过也不知道是被什么动物踩的。”

“就是它踩的。”

少校说着话，已经将他打死的那只野兽拖了过来。

大家急忙和拖着野兽尸体的少校进了小房子。借着炉火，大家看到了少校那一枪所获得的猎物，那是一个很漂亮的无峰小骆驼。它的头很细，身子扁扁的，腿长长的，全身咖啡色，只有肚子下有白色斑点。巴嘉勒尔看了看后，大叫：“哦，原来是原驼呀！”

“什么是原驼？”爵士问。

“就是可以吃的动物。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“味道好吗？”

“味道好极了！绝对是上等佳肴。我早说今晚会有肉吃。看，多好的肉呀，不过谁来剥皮呢？”

“我来吧！”维尔逊主动请缨。

“好，你剥皮，我烤肉。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“您还能做厨师，巴嘉勒尔？”罗伯尔问。

“我可是法国人，孩子，法国人哪有不会做厨师的？法国人生来就是一个好厨师。”

5分钟后，维尔逊已经剥好了皮，巴嘉勒尔将那大块大块的肉放在了点燃的植物根上烤了起来。过了10分钟，原驼的肋条肉散发出了诱人的香味，巴嘉勒尔将它们切成一块块地拿给大家，每个人都毫不客气地接了过去，大咬一口。

不过，就在大家刚刚吃了一口时，便哇地叫出了声，一个个龇牙咧嘴的，这让巴嘉勒尔很是奇怪。

“太难吃了！”有人说。

“就是，没办法吃！”另一个人说。

对于自己辛辛苦苦烤成的东西大家说难吃，巴嘉勒尔一肚子不高兴，但他也不得不承认他烤的肉即使是饿死鬼也难以下咽。大家开始拿那佳肴和他开玩笑。他知道大家是在开玩笑，便开始找原因，想弄清楚原本美味的原驼肉，为何在他手里会变得这么难吃。

聪明的他，终于想起了一点，他说：“我知道了！我知道了！我知道为什么不好吃了。”

“什么原因？是因为烤的时间太长了？”少校问。

“不！当然不是了，你这挑剔的少校！是因为跑得太多了。怎么回事，我怎么把这事忘了呢？”

“什么叫‘跑得太多了’，巴嘉勒尔先生？”艾撒汀问出了大家想问的。

“怎么连这都不知道呢？就是说，原驼要在它睡觉时打死，那时的肉就很好吃。如果在它跑的时候打死，而且跑得那么快，肉也就不好吃了。根据这个肉味，我想，它们一定是从很远的地方跑来的。”

“还有这种说法？”爵士表示怀疑。

“当然是这样的！绝对是！”

“那么，到底是什么原因，让这群原本安安静静地在窝里睡觉的动物吓成这样，逃了出来呢？”

“对于这一点嘛，亲爱的爵士，我没有办法回答您。不过您要相信我。您去睡觉吧，不要再问了，我也要睡觉了。都睡吧！还有少校！”

之后，在炉灶上又添加了一些燃料后，大家便裹着罩篷睡觉了。小屋里响起了此起彼伏的呼噜声，地理学家巴嘉勒尔的呼噜声犹如低沉的男中音，在大家的呼噜大合唱中，显得尤为突出。

在这些人中，有一个人一直睡不着，那就是格莱拉弗爵士。而他睡不着的原因来自于内心深深的不安。他的脑海里不断浮现出那些野兽奔向一个地方的场景，当时那些野兽的惊惧，让他很不理解。按理说，原驼不会是因为有其他猛兽追赶而跑到这么高的地方的，猛兽原本就不多，而如果说是猎人追赶，那就更不可能了，因为这里的猎人更少。

那么到底是什么样的原因，让它们走向了火山方向的深坑呢？是什么样的恐怖事件让它们做出了如此举动？爵士猛地觉得，很可能是灾难降临的前兆。

不过，在困乏中，他的想法又变了，甚至觉得也许是件好事。他甚至想，也许他们明天就能到安第斯山下的大平原了。在那里，他们会展开仔细调查，也许离找到格兰特船长不远了。他甚至想象着，格兰特船长和他的两个水手被他们从苦难中解救了出来，这些想象让他热血沸腾。

炉灶里的火喷射出红红的火焰，也有噼里啪啦的燃烧声溅起了点点火花。火光照耀着小屋里睡着的同伴们的脸，以及在墙壁上形成的若隐若现的影子，这一切都不停地打断着他的沉思。

他一会儿有不好的预感，一会儿又有好的预感，总之，这些矛盾和反复让他更加焦躁难安。

突然，他听到了隐隐约约的声响，那声响来自于屋外，到底是什么声音呢？他不知道，也难以理解。

此时，他好像隐隐听到了一阵由远及近，轰隆隆的，带着威胁性的声音。按理说只有在离山顶1000米以下的山腰才能听到的这种像暴雨声的声音究竟来自何处，爵士很想知道答案，于是他走出了小房子。

此时，月亮已经升起来了，高山上的空气特别清新。四周一片寂静，天空看不到云彩，只能隐隐看到安杜谷火山活动时留下的一道道光。

大自然是安静的，没有风雨，也没有闪电，而且天空还闪烁着成千上万的星星，这样安静的天穹下，为什么会发出奇怪的隆隆响？还有那群原驼，它们奔逃的原因是什么？是不是和这轰隆隆的声响有关？

爵士看了看表，已经深夜两点了，他不能确定是否会有危险逼近，同时，他也不忍心去叫醒困乏了一天，正在睡觉的同伴。

回到小房子，困意再次袭来，他进入到了朦胧状态，这种状态一直持续了好几个小时。

突然，他被一阵震耳欲聋的声响惊醒，那声音像是在战场上，无数炮车在地面上转动时发出的声音。随着巨大的轰隆声，爵士突然感觉到自己身下的地面开始陷落，小房子也在摇晃，大地发生了崩裂。

“快逃啊！”他大叫一声。

睡梦中的同伴全都醒了，还没等逃出小房子，慌乱中的他们便在地上滚作一团，并落在了一个陡峭的山坡上。

天亮了，眼前的景象让他们大吃一惊，群山完全变了模样：圆锥形的山顶被齐腰斩断了，那些尖尖的山峰陷落下去，他们的脚下好像有扇门被打开了……

这是高低岩山区独有的特殊现象，几英里宽的整座山，一起向平原方向移动。

“天啊！地震了！”巴嘉勒尔大叫一声。

是的，他说得没错，地震了。这是智利时常发生的天灾。就在他们所处的区域，曾两度被震毁，而那圣地亚哥城，在14年中，有两次被震倒。

这条震动带，是因为地壳里的地下火一直在燃烧，晚期出现了山脉，让火山无法排泄热气而导致的。

几位远征者被震到了山崖边，他们攀着苔藓，拼命抓着山的边缘。此时的他们，除了惊恐和害怕，已经没有任何感受了。大山像是一列行进中的快速列车，以每小时90公里的速度向下行驶，他们只感到头晕眼花。想要大声叫喊，却叫不出来。

不过，即使想叫，别人也是听不到的；他们想要动一动，又怕一动就会掉到悬崖下。现在的他们，看来是无路可逃了。

脚下是山崩地裂发出的隆隆声，夹杂着的还有雪崩的噼里啪啦声，以及花岗岩和雪花岩发出的撞击声。当然还有一些雪块被砸碎后，随风飞舞所发出的呜呜声。这些声音的存在，让他们连向同伴打招呼也做不

到了。他们扒着的山，有时向下没有阻碍地滑，有时又像漂在海里的船只，上下颠簸，左右摇晃。在经过无底深坑的时候，有大块的石头哗啦啦地往下掉，很多千年古树被连根拔了起来。一些地面的突起部分像是被铁铲铲平了，像一把巨大的铁锹一样，在安第斯山东部形成一个斜面，非常光滑。

我们不免会这么想，如果有块几万万吨的重物，以50度角的斜度向下快速滑，会有着怎样的威力？

这样的运动究竟会持续多长时间？谁也不知道。而要运动到什么地方？哪个深渊？也是谁都说不清的。他们7个人在什么地方？还在原来的地方吗？是不是都活着？有没有人掉进深坑？不知道！他们扒着的山体运动带给他们身体的不适感越来越严重，先是头晕眼花，接着都快要窒息了。他们不仅被刺骨的寒风肆虐，而且还被不断飘来的雪花迷了眼。

身体被冻僵了，几乎没有生气，而之所以还能扒住岩石，则是他们求生的本能使然。

突然，他们听到了“砰”的一声响，瞬间便脱离了那座滑动的山体。

他们被扔了出去，扔在了山脚下的一个山坡上。山坡上，他们开始滚动，而那座滑动的大山却停了下来。

好几分钟过去了，没有一个人动。终于，有一个人爬了起来，虽然头昏眼花，却还能勉强站住。

站起来的是少校，他擦了擦被雪花和灰尘覆盖的眼睛，向四周看着。他看到他的同伴全都躺在一个山窝里，如同玻璃球落在了盘底一

样，重叠在一起。

少校点了点那叠在一起的人，除了一个人外，其他的都在。在的人全都直挺挺地躺着，不说一句话。

少掉的那个人是罗伯尔·格兰特。

第十章 兀鹰爪下的少年

安第斯山高低岩的东方，全是一些长形陡坡。长形陡坡一直往下，直到平原。

一场地震，让平原上矗立起了一座山，而平原上则到处是厚厚的牧草，草地上长着茂盛的树木，其中就有硕果累累的苹果树。

这有些像法国最富饶的诺曼底省，有一部分迁到了高原地区的感觉。

远征者们猛地从高山一下子来到了平原，如同从沙漠突然到了绿洲，从雪峰来到了草地，从寒冬来到了盛夏一样令人不可思议。

不过，这种不可思议，只会在平常的环境中产生。在如此环境下，再大的突变都不会让他们感到意外，有的只是惊恐。

大地突然安静下来，这片区域的地壳不再运动，或者说是去更远的地方运动去了。

当然，在安第斯山脉，任何地方发生震动和摇晃都是很正常的事。不过，这次他们经历的地震实在是太猛烈了，猛烈到让整个山形都发生了变化。如今再一眼望去，面前全是新的山峦。

在这么巨大的变动下，想让此地的向导找旧路想必是怎么都找不到了。

这天的天气很晴朗，早晨8点钟的时候，太阳从大西洋上升了起来，穿过阿根廷草原，投射到另一边的太平洋海面上。爵士和其他人在少校的抢救下，慢慢苏醒过来。幸好他们只是因为震动而昏厥，并没有受伤。而那个高低岩，也总算被他们爬了过来，现在已经到了山脚下。

如果不是因为少了小罗伯尔，他们一定会欢呼，因为这场地震让他们少走了很多路，将他们带到了山脚下。

罗伯尔是个多么可爱勇敢的孩子呀，每个人都喜欢他。巴嘉勒尔甚至都有种离不开他的感觉。少校虽然平时很严肃，不苟言笑，但也很喜欢他。格莱拉弗爵士，对他更是疼爱有加，甚至把他当成自己的孩子来看。

在他听到罗伯尔失踪后，急坏了，他觉得这个可怜的孩子一定是落到了深坑里，说不定正在不断地呼喊他，让他救命。

“朋友们，亲爱的朋友们，我们一定要找到他，必须找到他。我们不能就这么把他丢了，不管什么地方，所有的山谷、悬崖、深坑，我们都要去找，一定要找到。你们给我身上拴个绳子，吊着我，让我下去，我要去找他，明白我说的话了吗？我一定要这么做。希望老天爷能保佑这个可怜的孩子，如果他丢了，我们怎么去见他的父亲？为了救格兰特船长，我们却牺牲了他的儿子，像话吗？”

大家全都低着头，默默地听着。他们感觉到爵士在看他们，也知道爵士想从他们眼神中找到一线希望，但他们谁也没有抬头去迎那目光。

“你们说，到底怎么样？为什么不说话？没听到我说的话吗？你们觉得没希望找到是不是？觉得没有一点希望吗？”爵士着急地看着他

们。

仍然是沉默，最后，还是少校开了口，他说：“朋友们，有谁知道罗伯尔是什么时候不见的？”

这个问题还是没有人回答，因为他们也不知道。

“高低岩下崩的时候，他在谁的身边？”少校接着问。

“在我的身边。”维尔逊说。

“那么，什么时候你觉得他不在你身边了？好好想想！”

“我记得山崩的时候，山体间发生了碰撞，在碰撞前不到两分钟的时候，我见罗伯尔还在我身边，双手抓着苔藓。”

“不到两分钟？维尔逊，那时候的一分钟都是很漫长的，你可千万不要记错了！”

“我想……不会记错的，我记得……是不足两分钟。”

“那么，罗伯尔那时候是在你的左边还是右边？”少校又问。

“在我左边，我记得他的罩篷还拍到了我的脸。”

“那你在我们的什么方向？”

“在你们的左边。”

“这么看来，罗伯尔是在这边失踪的。”少校一边说，一边面朝山站立，指着右边的位置说，“根据他失踪的时间来看，他应该是掉在距地

面3公里的那部分山里去了。我们如果要去找的话，就要到那里去找，我们可以每人去一个地带，一定会找到的。”

没有人再说什么，剩下的6个人急忙往高低岩爬，他们分别在不同的高度和方位寻找，而寻找的路线就是山崩路线的右边。他们寻找得特别仔细，甚至是石缝也没放过。悬崖原本的深坑，有一部分已经被一些迸落的石头填满了，他们只能下到坑里去寻找。

他们不断地冒着危险爬下去，不见罗伯尔后，又爬上来，衣服被撕破了，甚至手脚也都被划破了，血淋淋的，但没有一个人抱怨。

除了几个上不去的平顶，安第斯山的这块区域全都找过了，并且已经找了很长时间，虽然大家谁都顾不上休息地去找，可显然一切的努力都是白费。那个可怜的孩子是不是已经死在了山里？或者已经被一块大岩石压住，葬身在大山下面了呢？

一直找到下午1点钟，爵士和同伴全都累得筋疲力尽，他们重又回到原来的山谷，爵士悲痛欲绝，只是不停地叹息着：“我不想走了，哪儿也不去了。”

大家明白他的伤心，知道他受到了刺激，也都开始劝慰他。

“那我们先休息一下，恢复恢复体力，不管是继续寻找还是继续赶路，我们都必须先休息一下。”巴嘉勒尔对少校和艾撒汀说。

“是呀，爱德华要我们留在这里，那就留在这里吧，我知道他还抱着希望，可还有什么希望呢？”少校说。

“谁知道呢？”艾撒汀说。

“可怜的小罗伯尔。”巴嘉勒尔说着，眼泪流了出来。

山谷里有很多树，少校选了一棵高大的树，并在树下搭了个临时帐篷。他们如今剩下的只有几块盖布，一些武器和一点干肉、冷饭了。幸好不远的地方有条小河，河里的水虽然因为山崩而显得有些浑浊，但还能用。

穆纳在草地上生起了火，很快就烧好了水。他给爵士端来了水，可爵士不喝，只是沮丧地躺在罩篷上。

一天就这么过去了。这天的深夜和头一天一样，非常平静。不过，在其他入躺着休息的时候，爵士又爬上了高低岩。他独自一个人往前走着，仔细地听着，希望能听到哪怕是一点微弱的求救声。

因为怕错过可能会有的求救，他还时不时地将耳朵贴在地面上，屏住呼吸仔细地听，并不停地叫喊着罗伯尔的名字。虽然他叫喊的声音充满了失望，但还是一边走一边叫着。

爵士就这么在山间徘徊了一整夜。由于担心他不顾一切地寻找，从光滑的岩石或峭壁上滑下去，有时巴嘉勒尔也会陪着他，有时又是少校跟着他。不过，带给他们的还是失望，爵士那千万声的“罗伯尔”，回应四周的只是同样的声响。

夜晚过去了，天边吐出了鱼肚白。在遥远的山岭，他们强制性地爵士拉回了帐篷。爵士的眼神里全是绝望，绝望中又带着痛苦。没人敢和他说一个“走”字，更没有人跟他提议离开这个山谷。

然而，干粮已经吃完了，阿根廷向导和过草原所必需的马匹，应该在前边不远处。可谁敢说走呢？可难道又要返回吗？返回的路甚至很可

能比前行的路更难走，况且他们已经和“邓肯号”约好在大西洋的岸上集合了呀。

不能再耽误下去了，为了全体的利益，他们不能不出发了。

少校想将爵士从悲痛中拉回来，劝了他很久，但爵士好像都没有听到，只是不停地摇头，有时也会挤出几个字：“是说走？”

“是的！我们必须走了！”

“再等一个小时。”

“好，那就再等一个小时。”少校说。

可一个小时过去了，爵士又说再等一个小时。看情形，就像是在给一个死刑犯恳求延长生命一样。就这样，时间在一个小时一个小时地过着，一直到了正午时分。按照少校和全体成员的意见，他们不能再耽搁了，非走不可了。于是大家一起告诉他，说不能不走了，如果再不走，全体人员的性命都可能出现大问题。

“哦！是的！那就走吧！”

他一边说，一边将眼光从少校那边转向天空。突然，他看见天空有个小黑点。

爵士缓缓地举起了手，指着那小黑点，一动不动，像被定格在了那里。在大家都茫然地看着他时，他说：“快看！快看！快看那里。”

大家一起看向天空中他指着的小黑点，黑点越来越大，他们看到了，那是一只鸟，一只在天空飞得很高很高的鸟。

“是一只兀鹰。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“对！没错，是一只兀鹰。它飞过来了！过来了！等一下！等一下！”

爵士喃喃着。

爵士在说什么？什么等一下？难道是受到刺激糊涂了？

那只大鸟越飞越近了，巴嘉勒尔说得没错，那是一只兀鹰。兀鹰在过去曾被当地的酋长奉为神明，所以这一区域的兀鹰因为受到保护而长得很大很强壮，力量也大得惊人。它们有时候甚至能把一头牛用利爪抓到空中，然后丢进深谷。

这里的兀鹰常常会袭击平原上的羊、马、小牛，并用爪子把它们抓到高高的天上，飞到两万尺的高空去。这样的高度，已经是人类的极限了。所以这种兀鹰在那样高度的话，人们在下面是很难用肉眼看到它的，而它那锐利的眼睛却可以俯瞰地面的一切，并将一切最细微的特征分辨出来。

冲着这一点，它们强大的视力就让很多生物学家赞叹不已。

这只兀鹰越飞越低是什么原因？难道它看见了什么？看见了一具尸体？难道是罗伯尔的尸体吗？

“谁知道啊！”爵士突然说。他的眼睛一直没有离开那只兀鹰。庞大的兀鹰越来越近，而且开始盘旋、急上急下。突然，大家看到，在离地面不到200米高的地方，它上面绕圈飞行，并且连绕了好几圈，而它横飞的距离应该在15英尺左右。它那灵活的双翼像是浮在了空中，一动也不动。这也是大鸟展示它们威力的时候，通常的小鸟做不到这点，小

鸟必须通过振翅来保持身体的平衡。

少校和维尔逊同时拿起了马枪，爵士用手势制止了他们。兀鹰又开始在距他们不到四分之一英里的地方，绕着一个不可攀登的平岭盘旋，盘旋的速度快得惊人，爪子像铁爪一样忽张忽紧，羽冠也开始摇晃。

“在那里，就在那里！”爵士突然大叫。

很快，他又开始大叫：“要是罗伯尔还活着的话，那么……这只兀鹰就会将……开枪！朋友们！快开枪！”

就在爵士说话的工夫，兀鹰已经绕到高耸的山峰后面去了，不一会儿，大概也就是一秒钟的时候，但也许又像是过去了一百年，总之，兀鹰从山峰后面飞了出来，缓缓地向空中飞去。大家惊恐地叫了起来，因为它的爪子下有个人在摆动，那个人正是罗伯尔。

兀鹰抓着他的衣服，飞到了距离他们所搭的帐篷不到150英尺高的地方。显然，它已经看到远征的成员们了。它开始用力展翅，夹着风，想要带着沉重的猎物飞向远方。

“啊！快呀！即使罗伯尔被撞得粉碎，也不能让兀鹰……”

爵士的话还没说完，已经抓起了维尔逊的枪，他想瞄准那只兀鹰，但胳膊和手都在发抖，眼睛也开始发花。

“我来！”少校说完，稳稳地举起枪，全身像被定住了一样一动不动地瞄准兀鹰，此时的兀鹰离他们已经有150米远了。

不过，他的手还没扣动扳机，山谷里就传出了一声枪声。有道白烟从两座雪花岩间冒了出来，而那正展翅飞翔的兀鹰也因头部中了枪，慢

慢地开始下坠，它的一对大翅膀犹如降落伞一般，带着它和爪下的猎物，缓缓地往前飞，越来越低，最后落在了约10步远的地方。

“到我们手里了！到我们手里了！”爵士喊着。

他没有管那一枪是谁开的，更没管是来自什么地方，他只是奔向兀鹰落下的地方，其他人都跟了过去。等他们赶过去，发现兀鹰已经死了。罗伯尔的身体被兀鹰那宽大的翅膀盖在了下面，爵士扑向孩子，将他从兀鹰的爪子下拖了出来，然后将耳朵放在他的胸口听着。

“快！他还活着！活着！”他用前所未有的响亮声音喊道。

大家七手八脚地将罗伯尔的衣服剥掉了，用冷水敷在了他的脸上。一会儿工夫，罗伯尔动了动，接着睁开了眼，看着面前的爵士，他小声呻吟道：“爵士，是您！……我的父亲……”

爵士激动得有些哽咽，半天说不出话来。他跪在地上，在孩子身边放声大哭。

罗伯尔的得救，真的是个奇迹！

第十一章 葡萄牙语还是西班牙语

小罗伯尔逃出兀鹰的魔爪，赢得了大家的热情拥吻，甚至恨不得将他吞进肚子里。虽然他还有些虚弱，但还是被大伙儿拉过来拉过去地紧紧拥抱。这样的拥抱，并没有折磨到罗伯尔，反而让他感受到了力量和温暖。

和小罗伯尔亲热完后，大家这才想起了他的救命恩人。自然，首先想到这一点的就是冷静的少校。他四下寻找，在离河边大约50步的地方，看到了一个人。那个人站在高高的山冈上，一动不动。

此人身材非常高大，差不多有2米以上，古铜色的脸上，在眼睛和嘴之间涂着红色，下眼皮上涂着黑色，额头上涂着白色……他的肩膀很宽，长长的头发用皮绳扎着，脚边放着一支长枪。

看样子，他应该是当地的土人，他的着装显然是边区巴塔哥尼亚人的服装：上身披着一件漂亮的大衣，大衣是用原驼的颈部皮肤、腿部皮肤和鸵鸟的筋缝制起来的，大衣外面有细细的绒毛，绒毛上绣着红色的阿拉伯式花纹；大衣里面是件紧身的狐皮袄，尖尖的前襟朝下搭着；他的腰带上悬挂着一个小小的袋子，袋子里装着涂脸用的颜料；他光着脚，但小腿上却用牛皮绑着一双靴子，靴子也是用牛皮做的。

脸上涂得五颜六色的巴塔哥尼亚人雄壮又聪明，他定定地站在岩石上，一动不动，显得那样庄重和威严。不知道的话，恐怕会误以为这是个神灵的雕像。

少校看到此人后，马上指给爵士看。爵士急忙向那个人跑去，那个人也朝前走了两步，迎了上来。爵士用双手紧紧地握住他的一只手，爵士的眼神、笑容，以及整个表情，全都充满了对他的感激。

爵士的真诚土人感受到了，他微微点了一下头，说了几句话，但少校和爵士都听不懂。

巴塔哥尼亚人在仔细地又把面前的两个外国人看了看后，重新换了一种语言。不过，不管他用什么语言，都和他第一次用的语言一样，并没有让爵士他们听懂。但好在这个土人说的几个词句爵士还是听懂了，知道是几个常用的西班牙语。

“您说的是西班牙语吗？”爵士用简单的西班牙语问。

那个土人点了点头，这种让头一上一下点的动作，在任何民族都表示肯定的意思。

“这下可好了，我们的朋友巴嘉勒尔有用武之地了，幸好他学了西班牙语。”

爵士说着，开始叫巴嘉勒尔。巴嘉勒尔跑了过来。他先是用法国人特有的风度和气质向那位土人打了招呼，不过，他所表现的风度和气质，很可能土人感受不到。

在他知道土人说的是西班牙语时，马上说：“太好了！完全没问题。”

于是，他开始说西班牙语，为了让自己的发音更清楚，他还特意张大了嘴巴：“呜斯——梭以思——翁——好门——得——奔！”（你太好了！）

土人认真地听着，但却没有说话。

“他听不懂！”巴嘉勒尔说。

“是不是你的音调有问题？”少校提醒他。

“很可能是这样，我就是吃了破音调的亏。”

他重新说了一遍“你是个好人”，那个人还是听不懂。

“要不我换一句再说说。”巴嘉勒尔说完，一个一个地吐出了几个音：“苏木——独维大——翁——巴塔哥！”（很明显，你是巴塔哥尼亚人！）

对方仍然默不作声。

“狄泽伊姆！（说话呀！）”巴嘉勒尔急得抓耳挠腮。

但那土人还是一脸茫然，不说话。

“呜斯——公卜里言得意斯（听得懂我说的吗？）？”巴嘉勒尔大声说，嗓子都快喊哑了。

显然，土人一点都听不懂，他用西班牙语说：

“诺——公卜勒那奥。（不知道你在说什么。）”

土人这话一出口，巴嘉勒尔吃惊地看着他，然后把鼻梁上的眼镜往上推了推，不耐烦地说：

“他说的是什么呀，我根本就不懂。肯定是阿罗加尼亚语。”

“怎么可能？这人一定是用西班牙语回应你的。”爵士说完，转向土人，用西班牙语问：“你说的是西班牙语吗？”

“西！西！（是！是！）”土人连连回答。

巴嘉勒尔更惊诧了，少校和爵士彼此看了一眼。

“我们博学的地理学家朋友，你本身就是个粗心的专家，是不是这次又粗心大意，学错了？”少校的嘴上现出了难得的微笑。

“哼！”巴嘉勒尔不服气地哼了一声。

“对呀，很明显，这巴塔哥尼亚人说的就是西班牙语……”爵士说。

“西班牙语？他说的？”巴嘉勒尔撇撇嘴。

“你肯定是学了另一种语言，但你以为你学的是……”少校的话还没说完，巴嘉勒尔便耸耸肩，然后打断了他的话。

“少校，你真是太过分了！”

“不然怎么人家听不懂你说的是什么？”少校又说。

“那是因为他说得不好，我不是也听不懂他的吗？”巴嘉勒尔不耐烦起来。

“不是他说得不好，是你听不懂！”少校冷冷地吐出这句话。

怕两个人为此争吵起来，爵士急忙打圆场说：“少校，您的说法不对，我们的朋友巴嘉勒尔即使再粗心，也不至于学错一门语言。”

“如果不是学错了，那么我亲爱的爱德华……”少校对爵士说完，把头转向巴嘉勒尔，“我看还是你说说吧，我的好巴嘉勒尔，你解释解释，你和土人说同一种语言，为什么会各自听不懂？”

“我才不解释呢。我可以证实我说的就是西班牙语，我天天苦学西班牙语的本子就在这里，你看看！少校，你看看！我看你还有什么话说。”

巴嘉勒尔说完，在衣袋里摸来摸去，摸了几分钟后，摸出一本破旧的书交给少校。少校接过来看了看说：“这是什么书？”

“《卢厦歌》！不知道吗？一部非常美妙的诗，它是……”

巴嘉勒尔还没说完，爵士便叫了起来：

“什么？《卢厦歌》？”

“没错！朋友，是大诗人珂梦斯的《卢厦歌》，绝对不会错！”

“珂梦斯？”爵士重复了一句，笑了。

“天啊！我倒霉的朋友，这珂梦斯可是葡萄牙诗人呀！看来，你这六个星期以来，学的原来是葡萄牙语呀！”

“什么？珂梦斯！卢厦歌！葡萄牙语！……”

巴嘉勒尔喃喃着，说不下去了。他一阵晕厥。周围传来同伴们放肆的大笑，因为此时，大家已经全都围在他们身边了。

那个土人始终看着他们，脸上没有任何表情，他是绝对不会想到有这一幕的，他只是安静地等待着。

“哦！怎么会这样？我真傻呀！不，我这是疯了！怎么会这样？这不是个笑话吗？我怎么会做出这种事来？简直就是巴布尔特的故事嘛，怎么可以把语言都混淆了呢？朋友们！朋友们！这……这……我去印度，却跑到了智利；我学西班牙语，学的却是葡萄牙语！这……这……太不像话了！如果一直这样下去的话，我会不会有天扔烟头的时候，把自己也扔下去了？哦！不！怎么会这样！”

不管是谁，听了巴嘉勒尔这番话，再看他的这副样子，都会忍不住大笑，而他自己首先就笑了起来，而且还说：“笑吧！都开怀大笑吧！尽管笑！我也笑我自己，我比你们笑得还厉害！”

说着就哈哈地大笑起来，他笑的样子，完全不像一个学者。

“笑是笑过了，可怎么办呢？没人能当翻译了！”少校说。

“哦，不要烦恼。我之所以将西班牙语和葡萄牙语搞错，就是因为它们很相近，我很快就会弥补过来的。这位尊敬的巴塔哥尼亚人，西班牙语说得真是太好了，放心吧！我保证很快就能用西班牙语向他致谢！”

巴嘉勒尔没有吹牛。果然，没过多长时间，他居然能和那位土人交流了，而且还知道那土人的名字叫塔凯甫，这个名字在阿罗加尼亚文里的意思是“神枪手”。

看来，塔凯甫是以枪法准而得名的。

令他们感到庆幸的是，巴塔哥尼亚人就是以导游为业的，他们专门给旅客在草原上带路。这样的巧遇，不得不说是天意。所以，这再次让远征队的成员们觉得这次的探险一定会成功，而且也没有人再怀疑不能

找到格兰特船长了。

大家和土人一起到了罗伯尔身边，罗伯尔向土人伸出了两只胳膊，土人没说话，只是将一只手放在罗伯尔的额头上，然后又捏了捏他疼痛的四肢，最后，他微笑着到河边采了几把野芹菜，并用野芹菜给罗伯尔擦了擦身。他擦得非常仔细，罗伯尔经过他的一通野芹菜按摩后，渐渐有了力气，而且很可能几个小时后就可以恢复过来了。

就这样，大家决定先留在临时帐篷，第二天再走。不过，没有了干粮和骡子，他们现在急需解决的是食物和交通工具问题。幸好有塔凯甫，塔凯甫以前就经常给巴塔哥尼亚边境的旅行者做向导，而且也是最聪明的向导之一，他说他可以为这个远征队提供需要的一切，带他们到相距这里不超过四里的集市去，那个集市是印第安人的集市，有他们需要的一切。

当然，塔凯甫的这个建议也是通过手势，以及简单的西班牙语表达出来的，好在巴嘉勒尔听明白了。爵士和巴嘉勒尔马上表示同意，并和其他伙伴告别，跟着塔凯甫沿着河向上游走。

像巨人一样高大的塔凯甫走得很快，爵士和巴嘉勒尔要紧走几步才能跟上他跨的一大步。走了一个半小时后，他们看到周围风景宜人，土地肥沃，草地长势也很喜人。在这里，想必即使有10万头牛羊也是不愁没有吃的。

池塘到处可见，沟渠纵横排列，给这片平原之地提供了肥沃的条件，池塘里不时会看到黑天鹅在里面嬉戏；草丛中有鸵鸟腾跃的身影，它们悠闲舒适的样子，让这片风光秀丽的水上花园变得更美了。

除了黑天鹅和鸵鸟外，这里还有很多品种的鸟，这些鸟很漂亮，却

也会发出聒噪的声音。这里有种斑鸠，身上的毛是浅灰色的，但又带白色条纹，非常可爱。这种斑鸠经常和黄莺聚在枝头，叽叽喳喳地叫着，远远看去，像是一朵朵会唱歌的鲜花。

天空中，有成群的野鸽子飞过，还有各种麻雀……它们在空中展翅飞翔，在树林里互相追逐嬉戏，嘴里不断发出啾啾啾的声音。

看着这美好的景象，巴嘉勒尔一路上赞叹不已。

巴嘉勒尔的赞叹，让土人很吃惊，因为对他来说，天空有鸟飞翔、池塘有天鹅嬉戏、草原有草……都是再普通不过的事了，这是大自然创造的，又有什么好赞叹的？不过，巴嘉勒尔却越看兴致越浓，越说越兴奋，丝毫没觉得路途遥远，直到他们已经看到印第安人的帐篷，他才说怎么这么近就到了，因为在他心里，他们才走了不多一会儿。

印第安人的集市位于两山之间的山谷深处。在一些树枝搭成的帐篷里，住着30多个游牧的印第安人，他们放牧着大群的乳牛、牦牛、羊和马。这群被放牧的牲畜仿佛成了这片草场的主人，而那些放牧者反而成了四条腿的客人。

这些印第安人又被称为安第斯秘鲁人，是阿罗加尼亚人、白环什人和奥卡人的混血人种。他们普遍是中等个子，有橄榄色的皮肤，而且身体健壮厚实，脸庞很圆，额头很窄，颧骨很高，嘴唇很薄，容貌非常女性化。

这些印第安人看人的眼神冷冷的、淡淡的。这种外形和神情，人种学者一看就知道他们不是纯血种族，也很少有人会对他们感兴趣。而对于爵士他们来说，目的并不是这些人，而是那些牧群，因为他们需要牛马。

塔凯甫和那些印第安人在进行了一番交涉后，交易便达成了。爵士买了7匹阿根廷小马，这些小马鞍辔齐全，同时，他们还买了100多斤干肉、几斛米以及盛水用的皮桶等等。这些东西原本印第安人想让他们用葡萄酒或米酒来交换，但爵士他们没有，最后，他用200两黄金换了这些。

黄金的价值，印第安人也懂得。爵士还想给塔凯甫买一匹马让他骑，但他却说自己用不着。

买好这些后，三个人一起告别了被巴嘉勒尔称之为“供应商”的印第安人。用了不到半个小时，他们便回到了临时帐篷。看到这几个人归来以及他们所带的东西，大家都欢呼起来。当然，爵士和巴嘉勒尔都知道，大家不是在为他们欢呼，而是为那些马匹和食物。

丰盛的食物让大家饱餐了一顿。罗伯尔差不多也已经完全恢复了，吃了一些食物。

在剩下的时间里，他们主要是休息，恢复体力。在休息的时间里，大家聊得最多的就是海伦夫人和玛丽，当然也谈到了麦盖尔船长，以及他的那些船员。最后又谈到了他们远征的目的，格兰特船长，并说应该距找到他不远了。

在大家聊天的时候，巴嘉勒尔也没有闲着，他寸步不离地跟着塔凯甫，因为他真的遇到了一位真正的巴塔哥尼亚人，这让他兴奋异常。在这位巴塔哥尼亚人面前，他瞬间变成了矮人。看到塔凯甫，他觉得塔凯甫完全可以和古罗马的马克西明皇帝和学者樊·德·伯罗克见过的刚果黑人差不多，都有着2米多的身高。

当然，巴嘉勒尔跟着塔凯甫还有个原因，那就是向塔凯甫学习真正

的西班牙语。好在不管他用多么蹩脚的西班牙语和塔凯甫啰唆，塔凯甫都能耐着性子听他说。

这次，这位法国地理学家可不是照着书本学习语言了，他经常亮开他的嗓子，响亮地念出那些字符来。

“要是我以后说西班牙语还是音调不对，那就不能怪我。谁能想到我会让一个巴塔哥尼亚人教我西班牙语呢？”巴嘉勒尔经常对少校说。

第十二章 无意中的线索

10月22日8点钟，塔凯甫把启程的号令一发，大家便开始前行。

阿根廷位于南纬22度到42度之间，并由西向东倾斜。远征队员们只需从这微微倾斜的路上下去，便能到海边了。

在爵士说给塔凯甫买马让他骑时，塔凯甫拒绝了，爵士以为他会和很多向导一样，步行。因为即使真是这样，就凭他那么长的腿，走起路来，一定不会比马跑得慢。然而，爵士猜错了。因为就在他们出发时，塔凯甫的嘴里发出了一声呼哨，很快，一匹高大的阿根廷种马从附近的小树林跑了过来。

这匹马高大健美，有着棕红色的毛。它的头颈细长，肩胛高耸，鼻孔扩大，双目如炬；双腿强劲有力，高昂着头的它，胸脯一直挺得高高的……一切的一切都说明，它是一匹高贵而矫健的良马。

少校是个识马行家，对这匹棕红色马赞不绝口，甚至认为它和英国“猎马”有得一拼。

这匹马有个好听的名字叫“特迦”，“特迦”在巴塔哥尼亚语里是“飞鸟”的意思。显然，这匹马无愧于这个称呼。在塔凯甫刚一跨上鞍时，它就腾空跃起。

这位巴塔哥尼亚人确实也是个骑马能手，不管是他坐在马上的姿态还是挥鞭纵马的姿势，都让人不得不竖起大拇指。塔凯甫的装备是阿根廷平原里常用的，有两种猎具，分别是“跑拉”和“拉索”。而所谓的“跑

拉”就是在—根皮带上拴上三个球，并将这根皮带挂在鞍前。

遇到“猎物”后，印第安人会将这条“跑拉”扔出去，这样野兽或敌人的腿就会被裹住并绊倒。印第安人对“跑拉”的使用很熟练，所以“跑拉”对印第安人来说，绝对是个非常好的武器，而对敌人来说就是个可怕的暗器了。“拉索”和“跑拉”的作用完全不一样，甚至可以说是相反的，但也是他们从不离手的武器。

“拉索”是由两根皮条编织成的10米绳子，它的末端被套在了铁环里并打成了活结。当人们使用它时，只需右手扔出活结，左手抓住系在鞍上的一端就行了。

除了以上这两种武器外，塔凯甫还背着一支马枪，而这就是巴塔哥尼亚人的全副武装了。

坐在棕红马上的塔凯甫，俨然像个英雄，他健壮而灵活，行动从容自然，赢得了大家的赞美。不过，对于大家的赞美，他并不在意，并远远地跑在了队伍的前面。

一队人前行时，有时奔驰，有时缓步慢行，绝不会出现快步小跑的情况。而之所以这样，也许是因为阿根廷的马不知道什么叫中等速度。

小罗伯尔骑马很大胆，并表现出了绝佳的控鞍能力，爵士看他那么娴熟，也就完全放下心来。

草原地带分三个部分，是从高低岩的山脚下就开始了的。第一部分是指从安第斯山到400公里以外的地方，这个区域全是低矮的根木丛和灌木丛；第二部分有720公里宽，由茂密的草铺就而成，一直到距布宜诺斯艾利斯288公里外的地方；第三部分全是些大片的紫苜蓿和白术。

走出高低岩山区，远征队员们便来到了沙丘地带，这个地带的地势就像波浪一样，跌宕起伏。如果没有植被将它们“按”住，它们一定会随风飞扬的。而这些扬起的风沙非常细小，所以只需一点点风，那沙就会像烟一样，一阵一阵地飘荡起来，有些甚至还会涌起一阵阵的沙柱，旋转着升到高空。

这种壮观的场景让远征队员们既高兴又烦恼。高兴的是，当那沙柱在草原上随风飘扬，形成或聚或散、或高或低、或直或弯的形状时，这种大自然形成的美妙画面就让他们喜不自胜；烦恼的是，当它们飞扬起来时，即使是将眼睛闭上，细小的沙砾也能飞快地钻进去。

这天正好刮着北风，有半天的时间，他们都是在沙尘中行走的。尽管如此，大家走得依然非常快，高低岩很快就被他们抛在了40英里以外的地方，远远地只能看到一个影子，随即便消失在了黄昏的烟雾之中。

夜幕降临，一行人走了60多里路后，有些疲乏。而此时也正是夜宿时间，他们都很高兴。在河岸上，他们搭起了帐篷。纳乌克河又被称为纳米河或考陌河，这条河的河水色浑且水流湍急，在红色的悬崖中静悄悄地流淌着。

纳乌克河发源于许多湖泊中间，而这些湖泊的所在地，又只有印第安人知道。

这一夜无人说话，第二天照常赶路。平坦的道路，不是很糟的气候，让一行人走得很快，也很顺利。不过，到了中午的时候，天气突然变得闷热起来。而到了傍晚，天边的西南处被云彩染成了彩色，这是变天的征兆，向导塔凯甫看出来，指着西边那一带给巴嘉勒尔看。

“我知道了！”巴嘉勒尔很快就明白了他的意思，转而对同伴们

说，“马上就要变天了，我们要迎来一场‘奔百洛’了。”

说完后，他又为大家解释了什么是“奔百洛”。

原来，“奔百洛”是阿根廷草原上常有的西南风，有着这样风的天气非常干燥。果然，当晚就刮起了“奔百洛”。这让晚上只裹着“罩篷”的远征队员苦不堪言。马躺在地上，人紧紧地挤在马身边互相取暖。

爵士开始发愁，这样的天气如果继续下去，很可能会耽误他们的行程。不过，巴嘉勒尔在看了看气压表后，安慰他们说情况不至于这么糟糕。

“通常情况下，气温下降，‘奔百洛’的出现带来的是三天的暴风雨。不过，如果像现在这样，水银柱只是向上升，表明刮几个小时就会停止了。放心吧！亲爱的朋友，明天天一亮，绝对是个艳阳高照的好天气。”

“你说得这么肯定，好像书上看到的一样，巴嘉勒尔。”爵士说。

“本来就是书上说的嘛，不信你看就是了。”

果然就像书上说的，凌晨1点钟的时候，风停了，大家也都睡了个好觉。第二天一早，每个人都精神百倍，特别是巴嘉勒尔，他一会儿敲敲关节，发出愉快的叫声；一会儿又伸伸懒腰，像只懒洋洋的小狗。

这天是10月24日，也是他们从塔尔卡瓦诺出发后的第10天。他们现在距科罗拉多河和37度线的交叉处还有150公里。也就是说，他们只需走3天就能到了。

一路上，爵士的注意力一直集中在有没有土人上。他想从土人那里

打听格兰特船长的消息。

如今，巴嘉勒尔已经可以用他新学的西班牙语和巴塔哥尼亚人交谈了，并且和塔凯甫之间也有了更深的了解，如果要向土人打探消息的话，塔凯甫是可以给他们做翻译的。不过，他们所走的路线却不是印第安人常走的地方，因为从阿根廷到高低岩山区的大路都在这条路线的北边，所以那些被酋长统治下的游牧印第安人在这里并不容易遇到。即使偶然遇到，一看到他们一行人也就很快地逃跑了。

原来，这些人不愿意和陌生人接触。

确实是这样，他们这一行人的装备，让任何行走在草原上的单身行人都会觉得可疑的，即使强盗看见他们全副武装，带着武器，骑着快马，也会溜之大吉的。而一些旅行者看到他们这种装备，又会误认为他们是强盗。所以，不管是良民还是强盗，能见到都很不易，更不要说深入交谈了。

爵士一行此时却很渴望遇到一伙强盗，即使双方开上几枪，但若能交流也是好的。

想找到个印第安人打听路线看来是不可能了，不过，这荒凉的路线却引起了一件事情的发生，而这件事情的发生正好给那三张纸条做了注解。

远征队所走的路线有好几次都是横穿草原，其中有条小路非常重要，是由卡门通向孟杜萨的。沿途他们看到了很多骡马牛羊的骨骼，有些被鸢鸟啄得七零八落，而那些被鸟啄过的骨头又被空气蚀得白晃晃的，走一段就能看到一堆。

骨头数以千计，而那些骨头中，难免会有一些人的骨头存在，人的骨头和牲畜的骨头混杂在了一起，最后又都化成了泥土。

直到现在，看他们沿着一条路线走，塔凯甫也没有提出任何意见，不过他知道，这条路线既没有和草原上的任何一条路相连，也没有通向任何一个城镇、村落，或是任何一个开垦区。

作为向导，他看到这帮人不仅不让他带路，而且还带着他走，感到有些惊讶。不过虽然惊讶，但他却始终保持着印第安人的矜持，不多说一句话。即使有那么多的路没有走，他也一言不发。

这天，直到要走上了那条要道，这位向导终于忍不住了，他勒住马，对巴嘉勒尔说：“这是通向卡门的一条路。”

“没错！我的好塔凯甫，这是由卡门到孟杜萨的路。”巴嘉勒尔用很纯粹的西班牙语说。

“我们不走这条路？”塔凯甫问。

“是的，不走！”

“那我们是要去……”

“我们一直向东走！”

“一直向东？可是没有路可走了呀！”

“谁知道呢！”

塔凯甫更茫然了，但却没有说话，只是看着法国地理学家巴嘉勒尔，显出很惊讶的表情。不过，他并不认为巴嘉勒尔是在开玩笑。一直

都一本正经的印第安人，是想不到别人会不一本正经的。

好一会儿，塔凯甫又说：“难道你们不是去卡门？”

“对！我们不去卡门！”巴嘉勒尔说。

“也不到孟杜萨？”

“对！不去孟杜萨！”

此时爵士走了过来，他问塔凯甫在说什么，为什么停下不走了。

“他问我们是去卡门还是孟杜萨，我说都不是，他很吃惊。”

“是的，我们走这条路，他应该会很奇怪。”爵士说。

“我想也是的。因为他说前面没路可走。”

“那么，巴嘉勒尔，你是否把我们这次远征的目的告诉了他？这样他就能知道我们一直向东走的原因了。”

“难说，这印第安人懂什么地球的经度纬度的。而且我们发现那三张纸条的事，他听了一定会觉得是个神奇的故事。”

“我问你，到底是这故事他听不明白，还是讲故事的人说不清而导致他听不懂？”少校插进来一句话，表情很严肃。

“哦！麦克那布斯，看来你还是怀疑我的西班牙语！”巴嘉勒尔说。

“那就试试，我敬爱的朋友！”

“试就试！”

巴嘉勒尔走到了塔凯甫面前，尽可能详细地把那段故事讲了出来，当然，有时候会因为找不到合适的字代替，有时又因为有些细节不好翻译出来，或者是某些细节很可能对塔凯甫来说不容易理解……总之，他那长长的一番话常常被打断。

地理学家巴嘉勒尔的表情更是好笑，他指手画脚，费尽心机，直到汗水从额头流向胸口。最后，他实在说不下去了，只好用手势来解释。最后，他跳下马，在沙地上画起地图来，告诉塔凯甫什么是经线，什么是纬线，是怎么交叉的。还有哪里是太平洋，哪里是大西洋。卡门的那条路，又是通到什么地方。在这个过程中，这个地理学家感觉到了从未有过的困难。

塔凯甫一直在默默地听着，神态安闲，看着巴嘉勒尔的表演，也不知道他是听懂了还是没听懂。总之，巴嘉勒尔讲了半个多小时后，停下来擦着满头大汗看着塔凯甫。

“你能懂他说的吗？”爵士问。

“他要是再不懂，我也不知道该怎么办了。”巴嘉勒尔说。

塔凯甫一动不动，也不说话，只是看着沙地上逐渐被抹平的地图。

“你明白吗？”巴嘉勒尔问他。

塔凯甫像是没有听到他说话，还是一动不动。巴嘉勒尔已经看到了从少校嘴角露出的讥讽笑容。为了不被嘲笑，他正要重新给塔凯甫叙述一遍，塔凯甫却将手一挥，制止他说下去。

“你们是要找一个俘虏？”塔凯甫问。

“没错！”巴嘉勒尔马上说。

“就是从太阳落山的地方到太阳升起的地方？”塔凯甫用了他们印第安人的说法——这条路线确实是由西向东。

“没错，是这样的！”

“就是说，上帝将俘虏的秘密交给了大海？”

“对！是上帝亲自交给大海的。”

“哦，那就实现上帝的旨意吧！我们一直向东走，如果有必要的话，是要走到太阳那边的。”塔凯甫一脸严肃地说。

巴嘉勒尔见自己的学生听懂了，得意起来，他将塔凯甫的话转述给了同伴们。

“多么聪明啊！在我们国家，如果是20个人听我这么说，很可能有19个都不懂！”巴嘉勒尔赞叹道。

爵士让巴嘉勒尔再问塔凯甫，是不是听说过有外国人落入草原区印第安人手里。

巴嘉勒尔照实问了，并静等塔凯甫的回答。

“好像听说过！”塔凯甫说。

当巴嘉勒尔把这句话翻译给大家听时，7个人同时聚在了塔凯甫身边，用眼光示意他说下去。

巴嘉勒尔更是激动得几乎说不出话来，他继续对这个话题问下去，

并眼巴巴地看着表情严肃的塔凯甫，恨不得在他还没开口时，就能看出他想说什么。而塔凯甫每说出一个西班牙单词，巴嘉勒尔都要用英语翻译给他的同伴听，仿佛塔凯甫是在直接用英文说。

“俘虏是个什么样的人你知道吗？”巴嘉勒尔问。

“是个欧洲人！”

“你有没有见过？”

“没有，我只是在印第安人聊天时曾听到过，说他是个好汉，有颗牯牛般的心！”

“牯牛般的心！啊，巴塔哥尼亚语言真是好啊！朋友们，你们知道是什么意思吗？是说他是个勇敢的人！”巴嘉勒尔说。

“哦！是我的父亲！我的父亲！”

小罗伯尔激动地叫着，将脸转向巴嘉勒尔：“‘那是我的父亲’用西班牙语怎么说？”

“是‘艾斯——米奥——巴特勒’。”巴嘉勒尔回答道。

罗伯尔一把抓住塔凯甫的手，大声说：

“艾斯——米奥——巴特勒！”

“苏奥——巴特勒！（是你的父亲！）”

塔凯甫回答完，眼神亮了。他一把搂住了小罗伯尔，并将他抱下马鞍，既好奇又同情地看着他，平静的外表下却是热血沸腾。不过，巴嘉

勒尔还没有问完他的问题，比如那些印第安人有没有说俘虏在什么地方，俘虏在做什么，以及塔凯甫是什么时候听说的。这种种疑问瞬间就浮现在了巴嘉勒尔的脑海里。而当他提出这些问题的时候，塔凯甫也很快就回答他了，他说那个欧洲俘虏当时是在印第安人的部落做奴隶，而这部落在科罗拉多河与勒格落河之间。

“那现在欧洲俘虏在什么地方？”巴嘉勒尔又问。

“在卡夫古拉酋长的家里。”

“卡夫古拉家在不在我们走的这条路线上？”

“对！就在这路线上。”

“酋长是个什么人？”

“他是印第安·鲍与圣族的首领，是个两舌两心的人！”

“就是说，他人很善变，做事反复无常！”巴嘉勒尔翻译塔凯甫的那句话给他的同伴。

“那你觉得我们能解救出我们的朋友吗？”

“如果他还在印第安人手里，应该可以。”

“那么就是不能确定他现在还在喽？你是什么时候听说这事的？”

“很久很久了，离我听说这件事已经过去两年时间了。”

爵士的兴奋可想而知，因为这个时间跟他们那三张纸条上描述的时间非常吻合。不过还有一个问题，不等爵士说出来，巴嘉勒尔已经在问

了。

“是几个俘虏？一个还是三个？”

“不清楚！”

“现在俘虏的情况，你一点都不知道了吗？”

“是的，一点都不知道了。”

谈话就这样结束了。是不是三个俘虏很早就分开了呢？如果塔凯甫提供的这个资料是正确的，那么从他那里得来的情报就可以证实，印第安人嘴里所说的那个欧洲俘虏，被俘的时间以及关押时间、地点，甚至那句描述俘虏的“勇敢”，都指向了哈利·格兰特。

10月25日，远征者们怀着激动的心情一路向东。这一带被当地人称为荒漠，非常荒凉，一望无际的地面上，因为狂风的磨砺，看起来非常平坦，甚至差不多要寸草不生了。

这里除了一些已经没有水的干沟，以及印第安人挖的池沼里还能找到几块石头外，其他地方连一块小石子都没有了。即使发现一些稀稀落落的矮树林，矮树林间的间距也很远。偶尔看见零星的几棵白色决明子树，树上也会有果子。打开外壳，里面是带有甜味的果味，吃起来清爽可口。

此外，还有几丛香树、“沙纳尔”树、野金雀花树和各种荆棘……从这些荆棘的瘦小程度上就能看出此地是多么贫瘠了。

26日，远征队的队员们因为要赶到科罗拉多河畔过夜，所以策马快鞭，这一天也是最辛苦的一天。

当晚，他们来到了西经69度45分的地方，看到了草原区最美丽的大河，这条河经过很长的一段流程后，流入大西洋，因此被印第安人称之为大河。

这条河在接近河口的地方有个奇特的现象，就是离海越近，河里的水越少，而之所以这样，很可能是因为被松土吸走，抑或是蒸发了。当然，直到现在，这一现象的成因也是个谜。

一到科罗拉多河，巴嘉勒尔第一个跳进红色的河水里洗澡，这里的水色之所以是红色，是因为被陶土染红了。洗澡的时候，巴嘉勒尔吃惊地发现，河水非常深，河水深的原因也很简单，就是太阳融化了积雪，使水量增大。同时，河面宽得连马都无法渡过去。幸好几百米外的上游处有个木板桥，桥上的木板都是用一些皮条捆住吊在河上的。

一队人马从木桥上过去，决定在左岸露宿。

巴嘉勒尔睡觉前，把科罗拉多河测量了一下，并在他的那张地图上做了标示。由于他不能去了解雅鲁藏布江在西藏的山中的情况，便只好来测绘科罗拉多河了。

之后的两天，一行人平安无事。可和前几天他们看到的一样，四周全是荒凉贫瘠的土地，风景也没什么变化，连地形都显得很呆板。不同的是，这里的土壤比前面的潮湿。他们一行人走的时候，时不时地要过一些有水渍的洼地或沼泽。

28日晚上，一行人在一个大湖的岸上休息。这个大湖里的水其实是矿泉水，但印第安人却称其为“蓝库湖”，也就是“苦湖”的意思。原来，1862年，这里的土人曾经被阿根廷军队屠杀过，湖因此得名。

这天晚上，如果没有猴子和野狗的骚扰，大家一定会舒服地睡个觉。但猴子和野狗整晚叫个不停，仿佛是用它们的语言来欢迎这群不速之客。当然，它们的语言让这群欧洲人烦不胜烦，完全无法领略这种“美妙的”语言。

第十三章 沙漠般的平原

阿根廷的潘帕区在南纬34度与40度之间，“潘帕”是阿罗加尼亚语，意思是草原。而这一区域之所以被称之为“草原”，就是因为它是由西部的含羞草和东部的茂草构成的，这些植物生长在浅红色或黄色的土壤的上层浮土里，也就是地质学家所说的第三纪地层，所以这里有很多洪水前期的兽骨，以及印第安人所说的已经绝种的大犰狳骨骼。

这些骨骼就像沙尘一样多，全部隐藏在野草下，所以可以说，这一区域体现了原始时代的历史。

美洲的草原称得上是北美合众国北部五大湖的“草野”，也就是西伯利亚的“荒原”。由于它属于内陆地区，所以这一区域的严寒越过了布宜诺斯艾利斯，而据巴嘉勒尔说，夏天的热气在被海洋吸收后，热量会在冬天返回来，所以海岛上的冬天和夏天，没有内陆上的差异大。而草原的气候也没有东海岸一带均匀。

草原区的气候变化很大，忽冷忽热，忽寒忽暖，从寒暑表上就能看出水柱上下跳动之大。

不过在秋天，也就是4月5日的前后，雨水通常多而急，但在10月前后，气温会很高，气候也变得很干燥。

早晨天一亮，爵士一行看准路线后便出发了。此时，地面由于被很多灌木缠结，非常结实。没有沙丘，也没有构成沙丘的细沙，空中自然也就不会有被风扬起的沙尘。

行进在草丛中的马，大踏步地向前走着。

这里遍布一种草原上独有的草，在遇到暴风雨的时候，印第安人可以在这种草下躲避。

每隔一段距离，草地上就会出现一片潮湿的洼地。洼地里长着一一种柳树，这种柳树经常生长在淡水附近。所以每遇这种地方，马匹就会在此拼命喝上一通，这不仅是为了解决它们一时的口渴需求，也是为了之后着想，因为前面很难说会不会有淡水。

果然，越往前走，洼地越少，柳树和淡水也越少。

塔凯甫一直走在队伍的最前面，一路打着丛莽。这种丛莽是一种毒蛇，一旦将牛咬了，不到一个小时，牛就会死去。塔凯甫驾着他那匹矫健的特迦马，在荆棘中奔腾，在惊跑毒蛇的同时，也为后面的马匹开了路。

在如此平坦的草原上奔驰，不管是马还是坐在马上的人，都感到很舒服。这片区域即使在周围160公里之内，也找不到一块石头，甚至一粒石子。不过，如此单调乏味的地方，让人很容易厌倦。因为不管是风景还是自然奇观，都在这里不见了踪影。

当然，对于奇观的需求，巴嘉勒尔的兴致不小。遇到任何事情都有兴趣的地理学家，就连单调的一草一木也觉得很有意思。至于为什么会对这些普通的东西有兴趣，他自己也不知道。他只是在遇到小树丛或者一棵草的时候，打开话匣子，滔滔不绝地说给罗伯尔听，好在罗伯尔也喜欢听他讲。

10月29日的时候，展现在他们面前的平原依然那么单调。下午快两

点钟时，他们遇到了一些牲畜的遗骨。这些牲畜的遗骨白花花地堆在那里，仔细一看才知是牛的骨骼。这无数牛的遗骸并没有在路上排成弯弯曲曲的一条线，非常奇怪。

难道是牛太过劳累，倒地而亡形成的？对于这些遗骸是怎么存在的，连巴嘉勒尔也不知道。为什么牛骨头会聚在一个地方？巴嘉勒尔请教塔凯甫，塔凯甫很快就解释给他听了。

“怎么可能？”巴嘉勒尔听了后很不相信，但塔凯甫却表示是真的，这让其他人很是不解。

“怎么回事？”大家问。

“说是天火烧死的。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“什么？天火？就是说雷击的了？雷击会造成这样的惨剧？五百头牛会同时倒地死亡？”艾撒汀吃惊地问。

“塔凯甫是这么说的，我想，他应该是对的。而且我相信他所说的，因为草原上的风暴很厉害，所以希望我们不要遇到这种考验。”

“天气太热了！”维尔逊说。

“是呀！在阴凉的地方，温度计都显示30度了。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“很正常，我不觉得奇怪，我现在觉得热气在向我身上涌，希望不会继续这么热下去。”爵士说。

“唉！还是不要寄希望于变天了，你看看，天那边连一丝雾都没有。”

“唉！真是太倒霉了。”爵士说完，把脸转向罗伯尔，“马都受不了了，你怎么样？我的孩子！”

“我很好！爵士，我喜欢热，热了好！”

“哦，特别是冬天热了好！”少校说完，向空中喷了一口雪茄烟。

这天晚上，他们在一座废弃的草棚旁休息。这个草棚是由树枝编成的，上面涂着泥，顶上盖着草。草棚的旁边是个用木桩围成的院子，院子大得足以让八匹马在里面过夜，这样可以避免受到狐狸的侵扰。

当然，马虽然不怕狐狸，但狡猾的狐狸却喜欢去咬马的络头，一旦络头断了，马也就跑了。

离草棚几步远的地方，他们看到了一个土坑，这个土坑是做炉灶用的，坑里全是灰烬。草棚里有一条凳子、一张破了的牛皮床、一只锅、一条铁链子，还有一把煮“麻茶”的壶。“麻茶”是南美这边很受欢迎的一种饮料，也是印第安人喜欢喝的茶。

实际上，“麻茶”就是一种干枯的叶子，用水泡了后，用麦梗子吸就行了，有些类似美洲人喝饮料的动作。

在巴嘉勒尔的要求下，塔凯甫为他们煮了几杯“麻茶”，他们又拿出了干粮，这样，一餐晚饭就有了。大家一边吃着干粮，一边喝着麻茶。麻茶在此时也赢得了大家的赞叹，称味道好极了。

第二天，也就是10月30日的时候，太阳在东方慢慢升起，将最热的温度倾倒在了大地上。这一天的天气很热，可惜平原里没有可以遮阴的地方。但尽管如此，大家依然鼓足勇气往前走。有好几次，他们遇到了牧群，看到牛羊在这种天气下懒懒地躺着，一动不动，甚至连吃草的力

气都没有了，而那牧牛羊的人，却连个影子都不见。

当然，有那些习惯喝羊奶的狗守着这群牝牛、牡牛、牯牛和羊，牧牛羊的人还有什么好担心的呢，好在这些牛被驯养得也很听话，不像欧洲的牛，见了红色就发狂。

“之所以害怕红色，想必是共和国的草吃多了。”巴嘉勒尔说。由于当时法国统治者非常怕革命，谈“红”色变，所以巴嘉勒尔借此打趣。

晚上的时候，草原上的景物发生了变化，厌倦了单调场景的远征者们，一点变化都让他们注意到了。这个区域的禾本草类少了很多，但牛蹄印却越来越多。当然，这里有两米多高的大棵白木，这可是全世界的驴子都想得到的美味。

除此之外，这里还有一种矮小的树，以及一些带刺的暗绿色植物，这些植物稀稀落落地生长着。在如此环境下都能生长，这都源于它们适宜干燥的土壤。

也许之前，由于平原上湿润的黏土滋润着牧草，所以才让牧草长得茂密丰盛，犹如地毯一样。如今那厚地毯变旧了，大块大块的地方掉了毛。实际上，这也是贫瘠土地的象征，更是地面越来越干燥的证明。

所以，之后路程的艰难也就可想而知了，塔凯甫开始提醒大家要注意。

“这样的变化我并不讨厌，老看那些草，看得我头晕眼花的。”艾撒汀说。

“就是，不过看到草，也就意味着有水。我们需要喝水。”少校慢吞吞地说。

“哦，水是不用发愁的。在路上总会看到一条河的。”艾撒汀说。

如果这段对话被巴嘉勒尔听到，他一定会告诉艾撒汀，在科罗拉多河与阿根廷省的山脉之间，河流非常少。不过那时候巴嘉勒尔正在和爵士说话，爵士让他注意一下奇特的现象，而他也正在为那奇特的现象做着解释。

原来，爵士发现，天边看不到一点火，也看不到有什么地方失了火产生烟，但大气中却充满了烟味。对于这烟味来自于什么地方，爵士想让巴嘉勒尔做出解释来。

很快，烟味变得更浓了，大家也都闻到了，而且都很惊讶。不过，巴嘉勒尔和塔凯甫却一点都不惊讶。地理学家巴嘉勒尔解释起这个问题来，一点都不困难。

“看不到火却闻到了烟。有句话叫‘无火不成烟’，这在欧洲就有例子。所以说，一定是某个地方着了火，只是这平原太平坦了，气流非常畅通，所以在120公里以外的地方烧草，我们都能闻到气味。”

“120公里以外？”少校反问了一句，有些不服气。

“当然是120公里以外了。不过，我想说的是，这些火应该是大规模的焚烧，范围很大。”巴嘉勒尔肯定地说。

“那么谁会在草原上放火呢？”罗伯尔问。

“很可能是雷电引发的火，也有可能是草晒干了，是印第安人放的火。”

“为什么印第安人要放火？”

“对于这个嘛，有人认为草原上烧过一次火，草就会长得更茂盛。所以如果真是这样的话，那么很可能是印第安人为了让草灰积肥才放火的。当然，我觉得放火的目的是为了灭虫子，灭一种叫兽虱的寄生虫，这种寄生虫对牲畜很有害，这样一把火就能把那些寄生虫烧死了。”

“可是这种烧法，会不会把草原上的一些放牧的牛羊群也烧死？”少校还是不相信。

“对呀，很可能会烧死一些。不过牛羊有很多，烧死一些也无妨。”

“我现在可不是为那些牛羊群担心，我们管不了那些，可我想，那些穿过草原区的旅客怎么办？遇到这样的火，他们会怎么做？会不会被烟火包围？”

“你怎么会为这些事担心？这种事情就算是发生，在我看来，也是一件很壮观的事，我并不讨厌遇到这种事。”巴嘉勒尔大叫道，他好像对发生这样的事很渴望。

“看，这就是学者，他们为了学术研究，不惜被火活活烧死！”爵士笑着说。

“怎么会？我亲爱的爵士，我可不傻，不会无谓送命的。我读过美国小说家库柏的一本游记，他小说中有个叫‘皮袜子’的人曾说，当野火来了的时候，可以把四周的草都拔掉，当拔成一块直径达几米的空地时，也就没有危险了。这种做法做起来非常简单，所以我不怕大火烧来，我甚至希望能遭遇这么一场大火。”

当然，巴嘉勒尔希望的大火并没有发生，如果真有一场大火，他肯

定已经被烧焦了。因为这天的太阳光照直接可以用烈火炎炎来形容，在这种天气下，即使是原本很适应的马也受不了了，喘个不停。

想要找阴凉的地方，根本找不到。如果天空偶尔飘一朵浮云把烈日暂时遮住，地面上就会出现一些阴影，于是大家马上催促马儿快跑，追着阴影去躲，稍稍慢一步，就像被烤得出了油。

前面说过，维尔逊说不愁找不到水，他说这话的时候，根本不会想到真有这么一天，他们渴得发慌。他以为在路上怎么都能见到一条小河，可事实不是这样的，事实上，平坦的地面没有任何沟渠来储水，即使看到了印第安人挖的池塘，也早已干涸了。

巴嘉勒尔看天气越来越干燥，几次问塔凯甫，什么时候能找到水。

“盐湖才有水。”塔凯甫说。

“什么时候能到盐湖？”

“大概明天晚上能到。”

阿根廷人在草原旅行时，通常都是临时掘井取水。不过远征者们却没有挖掘工具，所以只能将自带的水分给大家。在如此干渴的情况下，自然不会因这点水而满足。

大家一口气走了48公里，晚上停了下来。此时，每个人都想好好睡上一觉，恢复一下一天来的疲劳。然而，虽然预料到有蚊子，但却没想到蚊子多得在他们头顶形成了乌云，嗡嗡嗡地叫个不停，让他们根本无法休息。

如此多的蚊子涌向这里，预示着风向要发生变化了。果然，风向改

变了90度，由原来的西风变成北风了。通常情况下，当起南风或西南风时，可恶的蚊子是不会涌过来的。

在这种情况下，少校还和平时一样镇定，但巴嘉勒尔就不同了，他烦躁起来，恨死了那嗡嗡乱叫的蚊子，只恨自己没有酸水来擦身上被蚊子叮的包。少校极力安慰他，说博物学家曾统计，世界上有30万种昆虫，现在只是受到了一万只昆虫的袭击，已经很幸运了。但巴嘉勒尔第二天早晨起来依然憋了一肚子的火。不过，即使心里有气，天一亮没经别人催促，他还是起身就走，因为早走就能早到盐湖。

他们骑着的马已经既乏又渴了，虽然尽量把自己喝的水留给马喝，但那点水对马来说，太少了。这天，天气越发干燥，潘帕区的北风和非洲大沙漠里的热风一样，挟着沙砾满天飞，让他们不仅要受烈日的烘烤，还要忍受飞沙迷眼，非常痛苦。

这时单调的行程突然被打断了，原来，穆纳在前面走着走着，忽然勒转了马头，告诉大家说有一批印第安人正朝他们走来。对于这件事，一行人又有两种不同的看法，爵士觉得遇到这些印第安人是好事，他们很可能会提供“大不列颠号”失事船员的线索；但塔凯甫却持不同的看法，认为平原上遇到游牧的印第安人，很可能是盗匪，所以要尽量避开才行。

最终，大家决定准备好武器，做好应对突发危险的准备。

很快，他们看到了这群印第安人，不过人数并不多，只有十来个，这让塔凯甫放下心来。在距离印第安人只有百步远的时候，他们把印第安人的面部已经看得很清楚了。这些人是土著，而且是1838年阿根廷独裁者诺撒将军扫荡过的那个种族。他们身材高大，有着高高的额头，额

头朝前鼓起，也有着象征印第安人健美的橄榄色皮肤。

这些人的身上披着原驼皮或臭鼬皮，身上的装备除了两丈长的长枪外，还有刀、弹弓、“跑拉”及“拉索”。从这些人坐在马上的样子就能看出，他们个个都是好骑手。

此时，这些印第安人也停了下来，并开始互相呜里哇啦地说着什么，像是在商量什么事情。在爵士向他们走去时，还没走到4米远，那群人突然掉转马头，一溜烟跑了，速度快得惊人。爵士他们已经很累了，想追也追不上。

“一群孬种！”巴嘉勒尔骂道。

“能逃得这么快，一定不是什么好人。”少校说。

“他们是什么人？”巴嘉勒尔问塔凯甫。

“高卓人！”

“啊？是西班牙和印第安人的混血种族？”巴嘉勒尔转向大家，大叫道，“不过他们看到我们为什么要跑呢？我们有那么可怕吗？”

“你为什么这么说？”少校问。

“高卓人非常和善，是些善良的庄稼人。”

“是这样吗，巴嘉勒尔？”

“当然是了，那些可怜的高卓人，把我们当成强盗了。”

“我觉得他们是不敢袭击我们，所以跑了。”爵士说，他想向那些人

问些事情，而那些人却逃跑了，这让他很懊恼。

“我觉得也是，而且我觉得这些高卓人不仅不善良，而且是些不折不扣的盗匪。”少校说。

“为什么这么说？”巴嘉勒尔不满地叫了起来。

于是，关于种族学的一些问题，几个人又争了起来，争得非常激烈，连一向淡定的少校也破例加入进来，表达他的看法。

“你的看法不对，巴嘉勒尔！”

“为什么不对？”巴嘉勒尔反问道。

“塔凯甫都觉得这些印第安人像强盗，他的看法是有根据的。”

“塔凯甫这次的看法是错的。高卓人是善良的农夫、牧人，他们什么都不懂，我就曾写过一个小册子，非常受读者欢迎。”巴嘉勒尔反驳道，有些气愤。

“这次你一定错了，巴嘉勒尔先生。”少校坚持道。

“麦克那布斯先生，你是说我错了？”

“应该又是你粗心犯的错吧。我觉得你该把你书上的内容再重新纠正一下。”少校坚持说，表情一如既往地严肃。

巴嘉勒尔见少校嘲笑他的地理学知识，非常愤怒，脾气也上来了，大声怒吼：“告诉你先生，我的书没什么值得纠正的。”

“还是有需要纠正的，至少这次需要纠正。”少校也固执起来。

“先生，你今天是故意和我做对吧！”

“我看你今天脾气太大了！”少校毫不示弱。

从他们的争论可以看出，事情的本身根本不需要这种争执，于是爵士劝他们说：“我看呀，你们今天一个拼命挖苦对方，另一个又格外暴躁，都不像平时的你们，这让我很惊讶。”

塔凯甫听不懂他们在吵什么，但却知道他们是在争吵，他的脸上浮现出了微笑，慢慢地说：“都是北风不好。”

“什么？你说北风不好？北风和这件事有什么关系？”巴嘉勒尔喊道。

“是北风不好，如果没有北风，你就不会这么冲动。我听说南美洲的北风很容易刺激人的神经，让人变得冲动。”爵士说。

“啊！我们最崇拜的基督圣人圣·巴特利克也说过。你说得对，爱德华！哈哈哈……”少校大笑起来。

不过巴嘉勒尔没有笑，他是真的生气了，他觉得爵士的玩笑话开得太过分，所以又找上爵士争辩。

“你这是什么话呀，爵士，你是说我的神经受刺激了？”

“对呀，巴嘉勒尔，北风刺激了你，这种风是会让草原里的人犯罪的。就和阿尔卑斯山脉东部地区的风刮到了罗马乡间一样！”

“犯罪？你是说我像个会犯罪的人吗？”巴嘉勒尔不依不饶。

“我可不是这个意思。”

“那你还不如说我要杀你！”

“哈哈……”爵士忍不住笑出声来。

“亲爱的巴嘉勒尔，我真怕你杀了我啊，幸好北风只吹一天就停了。”

爵士的话引得众人哈哈大笑。

依然还在气愤中的巴嘉勒尔愤然离场，骑着马独自跑在最前面生气去了。不过一刻钟后，他像没事人一样，又和大家有说有笑了。

法国地理学家巴嘉勒尔的性格就是这点好，任何事过后就算。巴嘉勒尔这次的脾气爆发，爵士说得对，很大程度上是外在原因造成的。

晚上8点钟的时候，走在前面的塔凯甫指出了通向盐湖的路线，一刻钟后，他们到了盐湖堤下。渴望已久的地方终于到了，不过很快他们就又失望了，甚至说是绝望了，因为湖水全干涸了！

第十四章 寻找水源

盐湖是由温塔纳和瓜河绊尼两条山脉延伸而来，由众多湖沼形成。湖里含有大量的食盐氯化钠，所以在以前，一些人经常从布宜诺斯艾利斯出发，到盐湖来取盐。不过现在这里的水被蒸发掉了，盐分全都凝结在湖底，湖面形成了一面巨大的盐镜子，反着光。

塔凯甫在对他们说盐湖有水喝的时候，并不是指盐湖里面，而是指入湖的一些淡水。可谁知那些河流也干涸得和盐湖一样，骄阳将湖里、河流里的水全部蒸发完了，所以当远征队员们看到这种情况的时候，全都傻眼了。

此时，他们携带的皮桶里的水也已经有些变质了，不能喝了。大家焦渴难耐。饥饿和疲惫完全不能和“渴”相比，大家必须先解决这个问题。他们找了一个被土人遗弃的皮帐篷，并将它支在一个土坑里。

精疲力竭的他们安顿了下来，马则躺在了湖岸上，饥渴的马无奈而嫌恶地吃着咸草和枯芦苇。

大家在皮帐篷里住下后，巴嘉勒尔问塔凯甫接下来要做什么。两个人开始用西班牙语对话，聊得很快，表情各异。塔凯甫始终很镇定，巴嘉勒尔却手舞足蹈。爵士在旁边听着，听懂了几个字。几分钟后，塔凯甫抱起了膀子。

“他在说什么？好像是说让我们分开？”爵士问巴嘉勒尔。

“对，他让我们分成两队。他说在我们中间，如果有些人的马既渴

又走不动了，那就沿着37度线慢慢往前挨，这样那些还有点力气的马，便能跑到前面，去侦察格米伊河了，这条河离这里只有50公里，是流入圣洛佳湖的。如果那里的河水很多，他们就可以在河边等后面的人了。如果那里的水也没有了，那么他们就能折返回来，叫后面的人不要走冤枉路。”

“可要是还找不到水怎么办？”艾撒汀说。

“没有水就继续南下120公里，到温塔纳山脉最开始的几条支脉去，那里有很多河流。”

“哦，爵士，带我去吧！”罗伯尔说，好像这是去玩一样。

“你能赶得上我们吗，我的孩子？”

“能，我能赶上！我的马很好，老是要向前跑。带上我吧，好吗？爵士……求求您了！”

“好的！我的孩子！”爵士也想让罗伯尔在他身边，这样他才会放心。

“我们三个人，如果再找不到有淡水的地方，那就太笨了！”爵士接着说。

“我呢？我在哪一队？”巴嘉勒尔问。

“哦，亲爱的巴嘉勒尔，你还是在后备军这一队吧，你太了解37度线上的情况了，你知道格米伊河，还知道整个潘帕区，所以不能离开我们。我、穆纳、维尔逊都赶不上塔凯甫，也不能和他一起到约定地点，我们就在你的指挥下，信心十足地慢慢前行。”少校说。

“看来，我只能接受了。”地理学家巴嘉勒尔说，他很高兴自己获得了认可，有了指挥权。

“不过这次，你可千万不能粗心，千万别把我们领迷路了，比如引到太平洋的岸上去了等等。”少校又说。

“要真是那样可就太好了，你这个讨厌的少校。”巴嘉勒尔笑着说，把头转向爵士，“亲爱的格莱拉弗，你该怎么听懂塔凯甫的话呢？”

“我会一点西班牙语，紧急情况下可以让他听懂我的话，我也能听懂他说的部分话。”

“好吧！那你就去吧，我可敬的朋友！”

“先吃晚饭吧，要是睡得着就睡一觉，天亮咱们出发。”爵士最后说。

吃完晚饭，因为没有水喝，大家都觉得很难受，但也没有办法，只有睡觉了。巴嘉勒尔在睡梦中还梦到了很多急流、瀑布、大江、大河、池塘、小溪……甚至还梦见了很多凉水瓶，瓶子里装满了凉水，总之，梦里他见到的全是水，而这个梦也是毫无逻辑，乱作一团。

早晨6点钟的时候，塔凯甫、格莱拉弗、罗伯尔三个人都把马准备好，又将皮桶里最后一点臭水给马喝了后，骑在了马上。

“再见喽！等会儿见！”少校、艾撒汀、维尔逊、穆纳一起冲他们说。

“你们最关键是要找到淡水，不要只顾往前跑。”巴嘉勒尔补充了一句。

塔凯甫、爵士和罗伯尔走了不一会儿，再回头，发现由巴嘉勒尔领头的那队人马已经不见了，不免有些吃惊。

穿过那片盐湖后，他们到了又一个陶土质平原，那里生满了一米八左右的灌木，这属于木本含羞草，因为含有苏打水的成分而被称之为“如木”。太阳光照射着疏落分布的大片盐地，经过盐地反射后的光线强烈得惊人。

盐地初看很像结冰的水面，不过，灼热的阳光很快就能让人分清那是盐地还是冰面了。即使如此，整片被阳光晒得发焦的贫瘠土地还是和闪闪发光的盐地相互呼应，给这片荒原增添了不一样的景象。

前面说过，如果格米伊河也和盐湖一样干涸了，那么他们就不得不去南下130公里的温塔纳山区了，那一山区和盐湖完全两样。1835年，斐茨·罗伊船长曾乘着“猎犬号”，来到这个地方探险。

此地土壤肥沃，可以说是全印第安领土最好的牧草场，牧草丛生，一直延伸到森林里。森林里有种决明子树，这种树上的果子晒干后，磨成粉可以做出印第安人最喜欢吃的面包。这座森林里还有一种破斧树，是白色的，木质坚固。还有一种遇火就燃，被印第安人称为“洛杜柏”的树，以及开着层层叠叠的紫花，犹如金字塔的一种“维纳洛”树，还有那能在空中撑起24米高的大伞的“梵柏”树，这种伞状大树可以让整群牛羊在下面乘凉。

这个地方，阿根廷人一直想占领，但终因无法战胜印第安人，只能作罢。

不难想象，这样肥沃的地方，一定有从大河来的水给它们提供足够的湿度。没错，确实是这样，即使是最干旱的时候，这里的一些河流也

不会干涸。不过，要想找到这些河流，还要向南走210公里才行。所以塔凯甫的先到格米伊河的主张是对的，这样既不会脱离原来的路线，而且比温塔纳山靠近很多。

先头部队的三匹马跑得飞快，因为聪明的它们，知道主人会带它们去什么地方。特别是那匹棕红色的特迦，它展现出了渴望摆脱一切疲劳和饥渴的勇气，如飞鸟一般，跨过干涸的沼泽，跳进了树丛，并发出快乐的嘶叫。

相比之下，爵士和罗伯尔的马就没有那么欢快了，不过，也许是受到了特迦的鼓舞，它们勇敢地跟在后面。塔凯甫坐在马上基本上不用动，非常镇定，这也鼓舞着他的同伴，就像特迦鼓舞着它的同伴一样。

行进中的塔凯甫，不时地回头看着罗伯尔。

小小年纪的罗伯尔，稳稳地坐在马上，骑马行进时，肩背侧斜，腰部非常灵活。他的双脚自然下垂，双膝紧挨鞍上，让塔凯甫不禁叫起好来。确实是这样，这次的远征，已经把罗伯尔训练成一流的好骑手了。

“不错！罗伯尔，连塔凯甫都在称赞你呢，我的孩子！”

“为什么称赞我，爵士？”罗伯尔问。

“说你骑马的姿势非常好。”

“哦！我只是觉得这样骑着舒服！”听到有人夸奖他，罗伯尔的脸红了。

“就是要骑得舒服才行。罗伯尔，不要太谦虚了。我预测你一定会成为一个绝佳运动员的。”

“哦，我小时候，爸爸说想让我成为优秀的水手，我要是做了运动员，他会怎么看呢？”罗伯尔笑着说。

“做绝佳的运动员是不影响做一名好水手的。好骑手也许不一定能做好水手，但好水手却可以成为好骑手。因为在帆架上骑惯了，也就可以舒服地坐在马上了。对于怎么勒马，怎么指挥它，都很容易。”

“我可怜的父亲啊，爵士，是您救了他，他以后不知道会多感激您呢！”罗伯尔说。

“你爱你的父亲吗，罗伯尔？”

“爱，非常爱！他对我和姐姐很好，他一直一心一意地待我们，每次旅行回来，都会带他去过的地方的纪念品回来。一回到家，他就会拥抱我们，和我们亲热地说话。爵士，您认识了他，一定会喜欢他的。玛丽很像他，他说话的声音非常温柔。他是做水手的，但说话却能那么温柔，您一定想不到吧！”

“是的，绝对想不到，罗伯尔。”

“我仿佛看到他就站在我的面前。我那慈爱的爸爸呀，在我小时候，他经常把我抱到膝盖上，摇我睡觉。他还会哼一支苏格兰歌曲，歌曲里都在赞美我们的国家，有些调子我还能记得呢，不过不是很熟，玛丽记得很清楚。爵士，我们是多么爱他呀，我觉得一个人年龄越小，一定会越爱父亲的。”

“没错，长大后，更多的是对父亲的尊敬，我的孩子！”听了罗伯尔流露出的心声，爵士非常感动，动情地说。

在他们这么聊着的时候，马在缓慢前行。

“一定会找到我的父亲的，对不对？”罗伯尔沉默了一下，突然说。

“对！一定会找到的。塔凯甫已经给我们提供线索了，我非常信任他。”爵士说。

“塔凯甫是个非常正直的印第安人！”罗伯尔说。

“是的！确实是这样。”

“有件事情，不知您知道吗，爵士？”

“什么事？”

“和您在一起的每个人都很好！像海伦夫人，我真的特别爱她。还有少校，很淡定。还有麦盖尔船长、巴嘉勒尔先生，还有‘邓肯号’上的全体水手，他们都很好，既勇敢又热心。”

“是的，他们都非常好，我的孩子！”

“可是您却是这些好人中最好的一个！”

“哦？为什么这么说？”

“您应该知道的，爵士！”罗伯尔说着，拉起爵士的手，放在嘴上轻轻吻了吻。

爵士有些茫然地摇了摇头。他们的谈话没有再继续，因为他们已经落后塔凯甫很远了，塔凯甫在很远的地方招手催他们。他们知道，时间是非常宝贵的，后面有一队人马还在等着他们。

三个人再次催马狂奔起来。不一会儿，他们就发现除了特迦外，其余两匹马都跑不动了。已经到了中午了，他们必须让马休息一个小时，不然太累了。然而，旁边那大丛的苜蓿已经全都被晒枯了，三匹马都不愿意吃。

爵士心里又不安起来，干燥的天气没有变化，如果再找不到水，不知道会发生什么事。塔凯甫也沉默着，如果说这个印第安人心里有了失望的话，他一定在想，要是格米伊河也干涸了，那可怎么办呢？

他们继续出发，不管怎样，就是用马鞭，甚至马刺逼马上路都行。后来，马虽然开始动了，但却是缓慢行走，再也不可能走快了。塔凯甫本来可以跑到前面去，因为特迦只需几个小时就能把他送到格米伊河岸边。而他自己也想这样，但又不能把其他两个人丢在这荒野地带，所以只能紧紧勒住特迦的缰绳，强迫它慢下来。

让特迦慢行，特迦很不舒服，所以它不断地做着抵抗、跳跃甚至嘶叫。塔凯甫只能放松缰绳，像对人说话一样对特迦说好话，最终，经过一番人与马的“商量”，特迦接受了主人的做法，慢了下来，只是不断地咬着嚼铁，以示不满。

特迦了解它的主人塔凯甫，如同它的主人了解它一样。

这匹聪明的马有着灵敏的嗅觉，它感受到了空气中的湿意，拼命吸着这股湿意，还不断将舌头鼓动得咕咕作响，仿佛是在饮清凉的泉水。塔凯甫知道，他们离泉水不远了。

塔凯甫把特迦举动的意义告诉了爵士，并鼓励他们。同时，另外两匹马很快也知道了特迦的心思。它们拼尽全力，跟在了塔凯甫骑着的特迦身后向前奔去，下午3点钟的时候，一条白茫茫的线出现在了前面的

一个凹处，那凹处在阳光下发着粼粼的光。

“水！是水！”爵士大声叫道。

“是水！真的是水！是水！”罗伯尔也叫道。

他们没有催马，那三匹可怜的马便飞奔起来，向波光粼粼的地方跑去，此时，不管什么都无法阻止它们奔向那里。没有几分钟，它们就奔到了格米伊河岸。

最终，马连鞍带人，一起扑进了那救命的河水里，河水漫到了马的胸脯处。

三匹马的主人在河水里洗了个澡，虽然衣服都湿了，但他们却欣喜若狂。

“太好了！真是太舒服了！”罗伯尔大声叫着，不停地喝着河水。

“慢点！慢点喝！孩子！”爵士虽然这么对罗伯尔说，但自己却做不到慢点喝。

此时，他们听到的全是咕咚咕咚的喝水声。

塔凯甫也在喝，但他却没有爵士和罗伯尔喝得那么急，他慢慢地，一小口一小口地喝着。不过却也喝个不停，像是要把整条河的水全喝光。

“好了，有了这条河，朋友们就不会失望了。等他们一到格米伊河就有水喝了。这水真是既清又多，太好了。不过塔凯甫千万别把这一整条河的水都喝干。”爵士开玩笑说。

“我们要不要去迎接他们？这样可以减轻一些他们焦急等待的痛苦。”罗伯尔说。

“说得不错！孩子，可我们要怎么带水给他们呢？皮桶还在维尔逊那里呀。还是不要去迎接了，按原定计划在这里等他们吧，按照时间，以及我们马行走的速度来看，他们应该会在夜里赶到的，我们先在这里替他们准备好住宿的地方，以及丰盛的晚餐吧！”

塔凯甫不等爵士开口，便去找宿营地了。很快，他就幸运地在河岸上找到了一所关牛马用的院子。这种院子三面环墙，只要不怕露天睡觉，还真是个好地方。

当然，爵士他们并不要求一定要在屋子里睡觉，所以也没有再去找其他地方，只是在太阳下晒着自己湿透的衣服。

“住处有了，就要想法做晚饭了。我们这前头部队一定要为后面来的朋友准备好一切，等他们到了，也就没有什么可抱怨的了。而且现在等待他们的这段时间，我们正好可以去打猎。怎么样？准备好了吗，罗伯尔？”

“好了！爵士！”罗伯尔说着，一骨碌从地上爬了起来，手里拿着枪。

爵士想去打猎，是因为格米伊河两岸的平原上有成群结队的鸟，比如潘帕区特有的红鹧鸪、黑鹧鸪，以及雌鸪、黄色的秧鸡、绿色的松鸡……当然，除了这些鸟外，他们并没有看到野兽。不过塔凯甫指了指深草丛说，野兽都藏在那里。也就是说，他们只需要多走几步，就能到狩猎区了。

有了这么多的猎物，“猎人”们也挑剔起来，他们不想打飞禽，只想打野兽，所以便对着深草丛开了几枪。很快，他们面前就出现了鹿和原驼。原驼和在高低岩冲倒他们时一样，跑得飞快，打不上。他们只好又降低要求，打那些跑得慢的野兽，这些野兽用来做菜，味道都会不错。

最后，他们不仅打了十来只红鹧鸪和秧鸡，而且爵士还打下了一头野猪，这种野猪的味道非常鲜美，爵士的那一枪打得真是值了。

没用上半个小时，精神百倍的他们就将需要的野味备齐了。罗伯尔打到一只长满活动鳞甲的犰狳，这只犰狳整整有半米长，肥嘟嘟的。塔凯甫告诉他们，犰狳绝对能做成一盘好菜。罗伯尔对自己能打到这么一只怪物很自豪。至于塔凯甫，则打了一只潘帕区特产的鸵鸟。鸵鸟跑起来速度惊人。塔凯甫打这只鸟时，起先并没有围追堵截，而是骑着特迦跑到了它的面前。由于这只鸵鸟喜欢在原地转圈，很难一枪打中，塔凯甫就坐在特迦上，让特迦跟着转圈，转了不知道多少圈后，人和马都累得不想跑了，但还是打不中。最后塔凯甫扔出了他的“跑拉”，精准地套住了鸵鸟的腿，鸵鸟一时之间无法动弹，几秒钟后便躺在了地上，塔凯甫立刻捉住了它。

这不仅是一场娱乐，更是他招待外来者的待客之道。

最终，他们打到的野味有：一大串鹧鸪和秧鸡，鸵鸟、野猪、犰狳……全都带回到了院子里。鸵鸟和野猪被他们剥了皮，切成了薄片。由于犰狳是名贵的野兽，最适于烤着吃，所以他们就将它连壳放在热炭上烤了起来。

几个人在吃晚餐时，只吃了鹧鸪和秧鸡，其他的美味都留了下来，准备招待后面的朋友。吃着晚餐的时候，他们也同时在喝清水，而此时

的清水，简直比他们喝过的世界上最美的美酒都好喝，甚至比那苏格兰高地所崇尚的著名的威士忌酒都好喝。

当然，他们吃喝的时候，也没忘记给马补充能量，院子里堆了大量的干藁草，足以让它们填饱肚子。在吃好喝好后，他们裹着罩篷，躺在一一大堆柔软的紫花苜蓿草上，这种草被潘帕区里的猎人一直当成草席使用。

第十五章 与狼群夜战

这是个没有月亮的夜晚，微弱的星星在天空眨着眼，照着这片肥沃的草原。天边的黄道星隐没在黑夜里，因为浓雾，看不清楚。

格米伊河静静地流淌着，如同从云母石上滑下来的油水。所有的生物好像都休息了，无边无际的草原上一片寂静。

三个人像是在互相影响，全都一个姿势，直挺挺地躺在草堆上酣睡。

两匹疲惫不堪的马也倒在了地上，但特迦却保持着它纯种好马的优良姿态，四条腿笔直地站立着睡觉，它睡觉时和行走时一样英武，好像时刻做着准备，等待着主人的召唤。

院子里安静极了，炉子里的火炭在静悄悄的黑夜里闪出最后一点红光，它快要熄灭了。

不过，塔凯甫在晚上10点钟时，猛地醒了过来。他皱着眉头，凝神细听，像是要听到一点意外声响。很快，他那没有表情的脸上，隐约露出了一丝不安。

难道来了一批印第安人？或是来了一群黑斑虎、水老虎或其他猛兽？他预感到最后一种可能性很大，他向院子里那燃烧着的火堆看了一眼，内心更不安了。那堆干苜蓿马上就要烧完了，没有火光，很难挡住凶猛的野兽！

在这样的时刻，塔凯甫觉得没有别的更好的办法，他只能耐心等待，等待事情的发展。于是，他半躺在地上，两肘压膝，双手支地，眼睛一眨不眨，保持着在焦虑中突然醒来的人才有的姿势。

整整一个小时过去了，如果不是塔凯甫，不会有人听到外面有异样，很可能会放心大胆地睡觉。不过，虽然外来人无法感觉到危险的降临，但印第安人对危险的敏锐感觉，以及他天生的本能让他预感到，危险马上就要降临了。

仔细一听，那匹聪明的棕红马特迦也醒了过来，嘴里发出了微微的嘶叫，鼻孔伸向院子出口。塔凯甫一下子直起腰来。

“特迦觉得敌人来了！”他想。

他站了起来，走出了院门，看着黑茫茫的草原。四周依然一片寂静，但塔凯甫还是隐约发现有黑影在苜蓿丛边游动，好像还有什么东西在闪闪发光。

光是从各个方向散发出来的，有时亮，有时又暗，如同磷火在大湖沼上闪起。如果是外地人，一定会以为是萤火虫，萤火虫在潘帕区很常见。不过塔凯甫不这么看，他知道那是敌人，而且是凶恶的敌人。

塔凯甫一下子装上了子弹，躲在一个木柱后面注视着那里。

他等待着，不久，草原上响起了一阵像是狂吠，又像是长号的混杂声。塔凯甫朝那发出怪声的地方开了一枪，很快引起了无数的叫嚣。

爵士和罗伯尔被惊醒了，他们一下子爬了起来。

“发生什么事了？”罗伯尔问。

“印第安人来了？”爵士问。

“不！是‘阿瓜纳’。”塔凯甫说。

罗伯尔不解地看着爵士。

“‘阿瓜纳’是什么东西？”他问。

“是红狼，潘帕区的红狼。”爵士回答。

两个人一起拿起枪，跑向塔凯甫。塔凯甫用手势告诉他们，让他们看那块长满苜蓿的草原：那吓人的怪叫声就是从那里发出来的。

罗伯尔不由自主地向后退了一步。

“我的孩子，你害怕狼？”

“不！我不怕！爵士，只要和您在一起，我什么都不怕！”他的眼神坚定，回答有力。

“很好！红狼不是什么了不起的野兽，我们不要怕，只要来得不多，我们不用怕它们。”

“就是！我们有枪，它想来就来好了！”

“来了它们就是死路一条！”

爵士嘴里虽然这么说着，却也只是安慰罗伯尔的话。这一大群野兽的到来，实际上已经让他感到害怕了，更何况不知道来了多少。如果来了几百头的话，那么靠他们三个人，即使有再厉害的武器，也是不占上风的。

在塔凯甫说“阿瓜纳”的时候，爵士知道这是印第安人对红狼的称呼。这种动物的身材虽然和大狗一样，但却比大狗矫健和强壮。它们的头像一只狐狸，毛色是肉桂红的，脊背上有一排黑色的鬃毛。

红狼生活在沼泽区，以捕食水生动物为食，它们经常白天睡觉，晚上出动，并袭击牧场，牧场主很怕它们。这种动物饿起来的时候，连牛马都会攻击，所以是本地人最恨的动物。

当然，如果是单个红狼的话，它一点都不可怕，但如果是成群的饿狼，那就厉害了。人们经常情愿打一只美洲豹、黑斑虎都不愿意招惹一群狼，因为虎豹是可以从正面打它们的，但遇到红狼群，却是前后左右都顾不过来的。

所以，当爵士听到那一声声的怪嚎，再一看黑影在平原上蹦跳，便知道那里聚集了很多红狼，而这些红狼，正是饿得嗷嗷叫的时候，吃不上一口，它们是怎么都不会退缩的。

情况非常危急。

此时，狼群在缩小它们的包围圈，三匹马也都醒了，发出害怕的叫声。特迦拼命用蹄子踹地，想要挣脱缰绳，冲到外面去。塔凯甫不停地打着呼哨给它发指令，让它安静下来。

爵士和罗伯尔守在院子的入口处，枪也上好了子弹，做好了一切向冲在最前面的红狼开火的准备。突然，塔凯甫把他们举起的枪按住了。

“他想做什么？”罗伯尔问。

“他不让我们开枪？”

“为什么不让我们开枪？”

“可能觉得时机不成熟吧！”

其实，塔凯甫并不是觉得时机不成熟，而是有着更加重要的原因。当他托起了他的子弹袋，并将它翻转过来，表示里面几乎没多少子弹的时候，爵士明白了。

“发生什么事了？”罗伯尔问。

“他是说我们要节省子弹，今天我们打完猎，弹药快没有了，还有不到20发子弹。”

罗伯尔没再说话。

“怕吗，罗伯尔？”

“不！不怕！爵士！”

“真是个好孩子！”

此时，又有一枪打了出去。原来，一只胆大的狼冲了上来，被塔凯甫打死了。其余的狼排成密集的队形，原本前进的步伐停了下来，并退后几步，挤在了离院子大约100步的地方。

塔凯甫向爵士招了招手，爵士过去替换了他的位置。塔凯甫跑到院子里，将所有能烧的东西全都搬到了院子的入口处，并丢了个燃烧的火炭在里面。很快，幽暗的夜空便被火光照亮了，火光同时也照亮了周围的平原。

透过火光，爵士这才意识到，他们需要对付的红狼有多么多。甚至

可以说他从没见过这么多的狼聚在一起，也从没见过这么凶狠的狼。塔凯甫燃起的那堆火像一张网，将那群狼拦在了外面，但同时也更加激怒了它们。

有几只狼跑到了火堆处，烧着了前爪。

叫嚣着的狼群不断地往前涌，用枪打肯定不可能把它们全部消灭，也不可能将它们击退。

仅仅只过了一个小时，15只狼便死在了他们的枪下。

有了那堆火，他们的处境不再那么危急，只要弹药不完，火堆不灭，狼群就奈何不了他们。不过，一旦子弹没有了，而且火堆也熄灭了，那么他们就没有办法抵抗红狼了。到那时候，他们又该怎么办呢？

爵士看着罗伯尔，心里非常难过，他此时没有想到自己，只想这个可怜的孩子。他觉得这个孩子承受了他这个年龄完全不能承受的很多东西。此时，罗伯尔的面孔苍白，但他的手里还攥着枪，紧紧地盯着狼群。

此时，爵士决定冷静地思考一下，想个一了百了的办法。

“一个小时后，我们可就没弹药了。我们不能在那时候下决心。”

爵士这么想着，回头看了看塔凯甫，他将他脑海里所有的西班牙语全部集中起来，和塔凯甫对话，一面说，塔凯甫一面开枪射击。

他们俩对彼此的了解很有限，所以交流起来很困难。好在爵士知道红狼的属性，不然，塔凯甫所说的话以及所做的手势，他是怎么都不会听明白、看明白的。虽然如此，他还是费了有一刻钟的工夫，将塔凯甫

的回答转达给了罗伯尔。

“怎么样？”罗伯尔问。

“他说坚持到天亮就好了，天亮后，红狼就要回窝了。这些是夜狼，怕阳光，它们是野兽里的鸱鸒！”

“那我们就坚持到天亮好了！”

“不过，我的孩子，没有弹药也坚持不到那时候呀。”

此时，塔凯甫又做了个示范给他们看，在有只狼跑到火堆边时，他握着长刀，挥向火网那边，随后，血淋淋的刀被收了回来。

深夜两点钟的时候，火快熄灭了，弹药也快用完了。塔凯甫向火坑里投进了最后一捆干草，而弹药也只剩下最后五发了。

爵士看了看四周，异常伤感。

他想到了身边这个可怜的孩子，也想到了他的同伴，想到了他深爱的一切人。罗伯尔一直没有说话，也许天真的他根本不知道死亡马上就要降临。不过爵士已经想到了，他看到了一幅残忍的画面：活生生的孩子被饿狼撕咬，吞进肚子。

他再也控制不住自己的感情了，将罗伯尔揽在了怀里，紧紧地抱着，吻着他的额头。

两行眼泪顺着他的眼角，哗啦啦地流了下来。

罗伯尔依然微笑地看着他。

“我不怕！”他说。

“不怕！我的孩子！是的，我们不怕，很快就要天亮了，还有两个小时，两个小时天就亮了。我们就有救了。好！塔凯甫，打得好！打得真好！你就是巴塔哥尼亚的好汉！”他大叫着。

而此时，塔凯甫正用枪托打死了想冲过火堆的两只狼。

不过，在就要熄灭的火焰中，他们看到，那群密集的红狼排着队形又冲上来了。

血战到了最关键的时刻，火焰越来越小。

原本照得雪亮的原野重新回到了黑暗中，红狼的眼睛看起来更加凶残。几分钟后，狼群全都涌进了院子，塔凯甫打出了最后一枪。在又打完一只狼后，所有的弹药全都用完了。塔凯甫像个勇士一般，双手抱臂，将头紧紧地抵在胸口沉思。他是不是想用最疯狂的方法来击退群狼呢？

此时，狼群的进攻方式发生了变化，它们像是一下子跑开了，刚刚震耳欲聋的嗥叫声也消失了，整个平原陷入一片死寂。

“红狼跑了。”罗伯尔说。

“可能是吧！”爵士侧耳倾听外面的声音。

塔凯甫像是听到了爵士和罗伯尔的对话，对爵士摇了摇头。意思是说，这群狼是不会轻易放弃到口的美味的，除非天亮了，太阳光将它们逼回窝里去。

就在他们猜测群狼会怎么做时，群狼的策略显然发生了变化，它们不再去正面冲击院子。在它们觉得火堆和枪、刀让它们一时无法得逞后，迫不及待地选择了绕到院子后，从背后进攻，而它们的这个战术，会给三个人带来更大的危险。

很快，三个人听到了红狼的爪子在往那半朽的木桩上抓，而从那摇晃的木桩缝隙处，他们看到了红狼伸进来的血盆大口以及强健的腿。马发出了惊骇的叫声，挣脱缰绳在院子里疯跑。爵士一把抱住了罗伯尔，他决定保护他到最后一刻。而且为了得到死里逃生的机会，他正想着该怎么冲出突围。

不过就在此时，爵士的目光被塔凯甫的举动吸引过去了。

塔凯甫像个被围困的野兽，在院子里拼命地转着圈。突然，他跑到了等得不耐烦的特迦面前，给特迦戴上鞍轡。给特迦戴的时候，他很认真，也很仔细，甚至连一条皮带，一个纽扣都没忘记系上。特迦不断地发出咆哮声，声音越来越大，但塔凯甫像没听到一样。爵士看他如此，心里既恐慌又绝望。

“难道他要丢下我们逃跑了？”在看到塔凯甫就要上马时，他脱口而出。

“不！他绝对不会丢下我们的！”罗伯尔说。

没错！塔凯甫不仅不会丢下他们，而且准备牺牲自己来拯救他们。

特迦已经准备好了，正咬着嚼铁，蹦跳着，眼里充满了怒火，它的眼神中发出像闪电一样凛冽的光，聪明的它，已经知道主人的意思了。在塔凯甫揪住马鬃的一刻，爵士急忙抓住了他的胳膊。

“你是要这么离开？”爵士看着没有狼的那片荒原。

“没错，我要离开！”塔凯甫说着，他明白了爵士手势的意思，接着用西班牙语说，“特迦！勇敢的马，快，引着狼群离开。”

“塔凯甫！不要这样！”爵士喊。

“快！快跑！”塔凯甫又说。

此时，爵士已经感动得说不出一句话来了，他对罗伯尔说：“知道吗，孩子，他是想为我们牺牲！他要跑向别处，然后引狼群去追他！”

“塔凯甫！好朋友，你千万不要离开我们！”罗伯尔扑到了塔凯甫的脚边，大叫着。

“他不会离开我们！”爵士说完，转身又对塔凯甫说，“我们一起跑！”

爵士一边说，一边指着被惊得紧靠马柱的两匹马说。

“不行！那两匹马不行，它们是劣马，已经惊了。特迦是好马！”塔凯甫明白了他的意思回答道。

“那么，这样吧，我来骑马，你留下来，留在罗伯尔的身边！”爵士说着，抓过了特迦的缰绳，大声说，“我来！”

“不可以！”塔凯甫的话斩钉截铁。

“不行！让我去，请你救救这个孩子，他就托付给你了，塔凯甫！”爵士依然夺着缰绳。

处在激动情绪中的爵士，英语、西班牙语一起说了起来。不过对此刻来说，用什么样的语言又有什么关系呢？在这紧要关头，手势和行动足以表达一切，他们就在此刻完全了解了对方。

爵士要去，塔凯甫又不让，两个人就这么争执着，危险也在一分一秒地逼近，院后的树桩都被红狼咬得快要断了。

爵士和塔凯甫争抢着要去做引开红狼的“诱物”。塔凯甫把爵士拉到了院口，指着没有狼的原野，激动地说着，他的意思是他必须这么做，如果再耽误时间，骑马诱狼不成功，留下来的两个人会更危险。然后还说他懂特迦，特迦绝对可以利用它的矫健迅猛保全大家。

爵士急得脑子一片空白，就是不让他那么做，非要自己去不可。突然，他被一个人推到了一边。特迦蹦了起来，前蹄一个悬空，纵身跳过了已经熄灭的火堆和一堆红狼的尸体，同时，还有个孩子的声音在大声叫：“爵士！原谅我做的事吧！”

说时迟那时快，罗伯尔已经上了马，趴在马背上。他抓住马鬃，消失在了黑暗中。

“天啊！孩子，你怎么可以这样！你太糊涂了！罗伯尔！”爵士绝望地大叫起来。

不过，他的叫声，就连他身边的塔凯甫也是听不到的，因为震耳欲聋的怪叫声已经响起了，红狼转身向那匹马和那个孩子奔去，它们全都向西涌去了，速度快得惊人，像是一阵影子急速而过。

塔凯甫和爵士急忙追出院子。此时，平原又恢复了它的寂静，只隐隐能看见西边有条黑色的线，弯弯曲曲地在夜色中移动，爵士扑通一声

跪卧在地，他紧握双手，绝望地砸着地面。他再看塔凯甫，却见他正微笑着，看着远方，和平时一样镇定。

“特迦，一匹好马！孩子！勇敢！一定会没事的！”他轻轻说着，发出赞叹的声音。

“如果他掉下马了呢？”

“不会的！绝对不会掉下来的。”塔凯甫肯定地说。

不过，即使塔凯甫再肯定，再有信心，可怜的爵士还是后悔得要死，急得要死，在痛苦和绝望中等待着黎明的到来。就是此时，他连自己已经脱险都没有意识到。他要去找罗伯尔，但塔凯甫不让他去，还说他根本追不上特迦，而且特迦也会将狼群远远地丢在身后。何况就是要找罗伯尔，也不能黑夜去寻找，一定要白天去找才行。

凌晨4点钟的时候，东方渐渐露出了鱼肚白，又过了一会儿，天边的浓雾在那片鱼肚白上蒙上了银光，露水洒满了平原，蒿草也在晨风中摆动。

他们终于可以去寻找罗伯尔了。

“走吧！”塔凯甫说。

爵士一言不发，踏上了罗伯尔曾经骑过的那匹马，两个人一起向西边驰去，向着罗伯尔骑着特迦奔去的方向奔去。

他们跑了将近一个钟头，在这一个钟头里，他们寻找着罗伯尔。爵士非常害怕见到血淋淋的尸体，他拼命地催着马快跑，都快要把马肚子刺穿了，后来，他们听到了一声枪响，那枪响非常有规律，像是信号

枪。

“是他们！”爵士说。

他们跑得更快了。过了一会儿，他们便和巴嘉勒尔带领的人马会面了。让爵士感到高兴和激动的是，罗伯尔也在那里，他坐在特迦的背上，生龙活虎。爵士不禁开心地叫了起来。而特迦见到主人塔凯甫，也欢快地嘶叫着。

“孩子！我的孩子呀！”爵士喊叫着，眼神里全是慈父的爱。

他和罗伯尔同时跳下了马，奔过去互相拥抱着，随即，塔凯甫也把罗伯尔紧紧地抱在怀里。

“活着！他活着！”爵士不断地叫着。

“是的！我活着！好好的，不过幸亏了特迦！”

塔凯甫没等罗伯尔说这句话，便跑到了他的马旁边，感谢起马来。他和马说着话，抱着它的脖子拼命地吻着，好像那马的血管里流着的是人的血。

一阵亲热过后，他把脸转向了巴嘉勒尔，指着罗伯尔说：“他太勇敢了，是个勇士！”最后，他又用印第安人的夸奖语言，称赞了罗伯尔，还说，“他的马刺从没抖过！”

爵士怜爱地拥着罗伯尔，问他：“我的孩子，为什么？为什么不让我和塔凯甫去冒那个险，而要自己去呢？”

“爵士，冒险的事就应该由我来做，因为塔凯甫救过我的命，而

您，又要去救我父亲的命！”罗伯尔用孩子的语气，笑着说。

第十六章 走向坦迪尔

一群人兴奋了很长时间。

后面那一队人员除了少校，都渴得快要没命了，幸好格米伊河就在前面不远处，大家一起又上了路。早晨7点钟，一行人重回那座小院，看着院子前后那一只只红狼的尸体，便知昨晚的生死之战是多么激烈了。

后面那队人员喝足喝饱后，大家又在院子里一起吃了顿丰盛的早餐。对鸵鸟的肋条肉，食客们给了很高的评价，而对连壳烤的犰狳，食客们更是觉得这是从没吃过的美味。

“一定要吃到饱破肚子为止，吃少了都对不起老天爷！”巴嘉勒尔说。

巴嘉勒尔吃得非常多，当然并没有胀破他的肚子，因为在他喝了格米伊河的清水后，觉得这水喝进肚子就是为了促进消化的。

爵士不想待在这里太长时间，便在早晨10点钟的时候发了出发令。他们将皮桶重新装满水，这样在路上就有得喝了。马在吃饱喝足后，精神十足，将打猎时的劲头全都用上了。

潮湿的土壤非常肥沃，但四周依然不见人烟。11月2日和11月3日接连两天，大家都很顺利，一路无事。3日夜晩，长途跋涉的他们有些疲乏，便决定在布宜诺斯艾利斯的边界处，潘帕区的尽头歇息。这距他们10月14日离开塔尔卡瓦诺湾已经过去22天了，他们共走了730公里，也

就是说，他们已经顺利走了三分之二路程了。

11月4日早晨，一行人跨过了阿根廷的平原区和草原区的分界线，他们希望能在这一带遇上扣留格兰特船长的印第安人酋长。

布宜诺斯艾利斯省是阿根廷的14个省中，最大也最富饶的地方。这个省位于东经64度和65度之间，与南部印第安人区域接壤，土地肥沃，气候宜人。

此地地势平坦，到处生长着禾本草类和高大的蔬菜类植物，平坦的地势一直延伸到了坦迪尔和塔巴尔康西山的山脚。

离开格米伊河后，气温发生了很大变化。由于巴塔哥尼亚的寒风在空气中形成了气浪，使本地平时的气温保持在17摄氏度，在经历过长时间的燥热后，舒服了很多。一路上，他们兴奋而充满信心，不过，不管塔凯甫怎么说在此地会发现格兰特船长，他们一路走来却几乎没发现有人居住，或者准确地说，这里住的人已经迁徙了。

在向东走的时候，他们看到了很多湖泊。有时候，他们会从湖岸经过，有时又会横截某个湖泊，湖水有咸的也有淡的。湖岸的树丛中有很多鸟儿在跳跃，还有百灵鸟在欢快地唱着歌，当然更有羽毛像蜂鸟一样美丽的鸟。这些鸟在森林里表现得很兴奋，时不时地振翅飞翔，毫不在意那些披着红肩章，挺着红胸脯，在树上进行大合唱的棕鸟。

在一些荆棘丛中，他们还发现了一种鸟，这种鸟的窝像一些殖民地的白种人所睡的吊床一样，悬在空中。湖边还有一种羽毛色泽艳丽的朱鹭，这些朱鹭像训练有素的军人一般，迈着整齐的步伐，悠闲地散着步，时不时地还会扑闪着它们火红的翅膀。这些鸟看到人都不怕，这让巴嘉勒尔很是失望。

“我只是想看看朱鹭怎样飞，可它们就是不表演给我看。”他对少校说。

“很好办呀！”少校说。

“是很好办，这是个机会，我想利用你一下。”

“怎么利用，巴嘉勒尔？”

“跟我来吧，少校！还有罗伯尔，你也来吧，我需要个见证人。”

说着话，巴嘉勒尔和少校、罗伯尔让其他同伴先走，他们朝那群有着红色翅膀，整齐散步的朱鹭走去。

到了枪弹能打中的地方后，巴嘉勒尔在枪里装上了火药，砰地开了一枪。受惊的朱鹭飞了起来，巴嘉勒尔拿起它的望远镜，认真地观察着。

看到那鸟飞得看不见了，他这才问少校：“看到没有？看它们飞了吗？”

“当然看到了，我又不是瞎子。”

“你说，它们飞的时候，是不是像羽箭一样？”

“不像！一点都不像！”

“简直都没办法比！”罗伯尔也说。

“我早就说不像嘛，但就是有人说很像，这个人就是我的同乡，著名的夏多卜里昂。他可以称得上是谦虚的人中最骄傲的那个人，他居然

用羽箭来形容朱鹭起飞！罗伯尔，看到没有，这比喻是多么的不靠谱啊！你可千万别信文学语言中的比喻，千万别信。而且不到万不得已，也不要去看。”

“这一下你该满意了吧？”少校说。

“满意！真是太满意了！”

“满意了就好，我们快走吧，就因为你那著名的同乡，我们现在落后了两公里。”

巴嘉勒尔和少校、罗伯尔在追赶上大部队的时候，正好爵士和塔凯甫在谈论着什么，但却因为语言不通而着急。塔凯甫几次停下来，观察远处的地平线，每看一次，他的脸上就会露出惊讶的表情。

见少校和巴嘉勒尔都不在，塔凯甫便和爵士说，没想到怎么都无法沟通。在远远见到巴嘉勒尔时，爵士喊：“快来呀，巴嘉勒尔朋友，塔凯甫和我说话，可我怎么都听不懂。”

巴嘉勒尔在经过和塔凯甫的几分钟沟通后，转身对爵士说：“塔凯甫说他看到了一个奇特的现象，他感到很不可思议。”

“是什么让他不可思议？”

“他说在这个平原上，平时总会遇到印第安人成群结队地行走，也有从牧场劫来牲畜的强盗，还有去乌达斯山区卖他们的鼬绒毯子和皮条编成的鞭子的印第安人，可是咱们走了这么久，不但没有看到印第安人，而且连他们的行走痕迹都没有看到。”

“塔凯甫有没有说是什么原因导致了他们不来？”

“他不知道，只是感到很惊讶。”

“他原本觉得会在这里遇到什么样的印第安人？”

“他想遇到俘虏外国人的印第安人，也就是以卡夫古拉·凯特里鄂尔或杨圣特路茨等为酋长的印第安人。这两个部落首领在30年前有着无上的权威，不过最后被赶到了这里。此后，印第安人在某种程度上就被驯服了，也就待在了潘帕平原上，有时候他们也会在布宜诺斯艾利斯省境内游荡。这一地区曾是他们做强盗时经常光顾的地方，但现在却没有遇到他们，在这一点上，我和塔凯甫一样吃惊。”

“这样啊！那现在我们该怎么办呢？”爵士问。

“我还是再问问他吧！”

巴嘉勒尔又和塔凯甫聊了一会儿说：“他的想法我觉得很对，他说我们继续往东走，走到独立堡去，这样也就能一直在我们想走的路线上了。而且到了那里后，如果我们还是没有格兰特船长的消息，至少可以知道阿根廷平原上的印第安人到什么地方去了。”

“独立堡离这里远吗？”爵士又问。

“不远，离这里差不多有90公里，在坦迪尔山里。”

“那我们什么时候能到？”

“后天晚上应该能到。”

这件意外的事让爵士很失望，在潘帕区却遇不到一个印第安人，这是他万万没有想到的。以前这里的印第安人有很多，如果没有特殊情

况，他们是不会离开这里的。更严重的问题是，如果格兰特船长原本是被抓到这里的，最后又被带去了什么地方呢？南方还是北方？这些问题让爵士犹豫起来。想要找到格兰特船长，他们必须先找到格兰特船长的消息啊！想来想去，还是只能按塔凯甫的想法，先到独立堡，等到了独立堡，怎么也会找到可以问话的人吧。

傍晚4点钟的时候，他们看见远处出现了一个丘陵，丘陵在这个平坦的地方显得很高，而那丘陵也就是塔巴尔康西，一行人便在山脚下休息了。

第二天，他们要过山，过这座山对他们来说很容易。沙地犹如起伏的波浪，也没有很陡的坡存在，爬过安达斯高低岸的他们，简直不把这座山当回事。

过这座山的时候，马连速度都没减。中午的时候，他们走过了塔巴尔康西堡，这个堡垒是为了防备土人抢劫筑成的，如同碉堡锁链的第一个堡垒。不过，在这里他们并没有遇到印第安人，这让塔凯甫更吃惊了。正午时分，他们看到有三个骑着马的人，带着枪在他们周围跑来跑去，观察着他们。而当他们想去靠近那几个人时，他们又飞快地跑了，跑的速度很快，这简直让爵士郁闷极了。

“又是高卓人！”塔凯甫说。

而这些高卓人，也曾引起少校和巴嘉勒尔的激烈争论。

“哦，原来是高卓人呀，巴嘉勒尔，今天没有吹北风，你觉得这些人怎么样？”

“我觉得他们很像大强盗！”

“哦！亲爱的地理学家，‘像强盗’和‘是强盗’却是有很大差距的。”

“不！只有一步之遥而已，我亲爱的少校！”

两个人的对话再次引起了大家的大笑，不过，这次巴嘉勒尔没有生气，反而说起印第安人来。

“我记得从一本书上看到过，说阿拉伯人长着一副凶恶的面孔，但眼神却很温和。这些美洲土人看来和阿拉伯人完全相反，他们的眼神特别凶。”巴嘉勒尔对那些高卓人的形容，比看面相的都看得准。

根据塔凯甫的建议，大家聚在一起前进。因为在这种荒野，他们必须防备突如其来的袭击。不过，这种防备显然是多余的，因为一路平安无事。晚上，他们在一个废旧的寨子休息，这个废旧寨子原来是凯特里鄂尔酋长平时集合的地方。塔凯甫判断最近没有人住过，在仔细检查了一番后，发现这里已经很久没人居住了。

过了一天，他们再次进入平原，此时的他们，能看到邻近坦迪尔山的几个大牧场了。不过塔凯甫仍然决定不在那里停留，他想尽快去独立堡打听消息，更想知道这片区域为什么没有人。

自从他们过了高低岩，便很少看到树林了，而此时，树林又出现在了他们面前，而且这些树木还是欧洲人来了美洲后才种植的，有楝树、桃树、白杨、柳树、豆球花树……这些没有人管，自生自灭的树长得格外好，全都围绕牲畜栏种植，牲畜栏里饲养着牛、马、羊等，这些牲畜的身上全都打着主人的印迹。

牲畜栏外有健壮的狗守护。山脚下的盐碱地里长着刍草，长势非常好。因此，人们经常来这里建牧场，每个牧场有一个总管一个工头，每

千头牲畜会配四个帮工。

可以这么说，这些人就像《圣经》里说的大牧主那样生活着，他们的牲畜群比美索不达米亚平原的牧主饲养的牲畜还要多。不过，这些牧人没有家庭生活，因为牧场主通常是贩卖牛马的商人，并不像《圣经》里说的大牧主有很多子孙。

当然，以上这些都是巴嘉勒尔讲给大家听的，讲到这里的时候，巴嘉勒尔就会大谈他的人种学说，并对不同的人种进行了趣味性的分析和比较，他那风趣幽默的语言，让一向脸上没什么表情的少校也有了表情。

同时，他们还看到了一次海市蜃楼，而这个奇观的发现，又让巴嘉勒尔大讲特讲。海市蜃楼这种自然奇观在平坦的原野上经常出现：一望无际的平原上，出现了岛屿。白杨绿柳的倒影在水里荡漾。更奇妙的是，水会随着行人前进后退。那幻影看起来就像真的一样，肉眼很难辨别真假。

11月6日这天，他们遇到了几个大的牧场，还遇到了一两次宰杀牲畜的地方。这种地方被称作“杀腊场”。这个名字来自于这些牲畜被杀后的用途：腌腊肉。

血腥的大屠杀是从春末就开始了的，去牧场带牲畜的人会将“拉索”扔出去，套上一个就捕获一个，套够了就将它们带到“杀腊场”。而所屠宰的牲畜有公牛、母牛、牯牛、羊……宰杀的时候，一次能宰杀几百头。

宰杀后，他们会将牲畜剥皮、切肉。这些人的技术娴熟，手段残忍，宰杀场面更是惨不忍睹。通常情况下，宰杀牯牛时，牯牛会强烈抵

抗，所以此时的屠夫就成了斗牛场上的斗牛士。

没有什么地方比这里更让人恐惧的了，空气中到处洋溢着腥臭味，屠宰现场更是不断传出屠夫的凶狠叫声，狗吠声，牲畜的哀鸣声……总之，这里到处弥漫着死亡的气息。

在如此残忍的现场，肯定少不了一种飞鸟，那就是阿根廷独有的鸢鸟。成千上万的鸢鸟从几十公里外飞过来，在“杀牲场”的上空盘旋，瞅准时机抢夺屠夫手里的碎肉，那些碎肉由于刚从牲畜体内出来，还在微微颤抖。

不过，此刻这里没有血腥和残杀，四周一片寂静，也许是因为大规模的屠宰还不到时间吧。

塔凯甫催促着特迦快行，因为他想当晚赶到独立堡。其他人也学塔凯甫，扬鞭催促自己胯下的马跟上特迦。一行人从高大的禾木草中向前飞奔，途中遇到了几座庄户，都是筑得高高的堡垒。那些堡垒的正屋有个阳台，阳台实际上是用武器向外射击的射击点。

虽然也许爵士能从这些人那里打听到他所需要的情报，但最终还是决定到坦迪尔村去打听。原因是这里离坦迪尔村已经不远了，过了罗汇索河，再走几公里就到了沙伯勒夫河。

过完这两条河，他们越来越接近坦迪尔山了，不一会儿，他们便踏上了坦迪尔山的草坡，一个小时后，他们到达了坦迪尔村。

这个村庄隐藏在一个狭窄的山坳里，独立堡的城垛就在村子上面。

第十七章 见独立堡司令

坦迪尔山位于坦迪尔县，是一条海拔300多米的古老山脉。此山为半圆形，由一连串覆盖着青草的丘陵组成。坦迪尔县包括布宜诺斯艾利斯省的整个南部，并以这一带的山腰为界，而那来自山城的很多河流的发源地就在山腰处。

坦迪尔村在北部的山冈脚下，位置非常好，约有400名居民受独立堡掩护。坦迪尔村的位置之所以好，就是因为那里有沙伯勒夫河的重要支流。当然，这个村子有个奇怪的现象，巴嘉勒尔应该知道，那就是这个村子里居住的人，均是来自法国和意大利的移民。

为什么是这样呢？原来，纳巴那他河下游这一片的几个殖民地，全是法国人建立起来的。

1828年，为了抵御印第安人的侵袭，法国人巴耳沙普带领众人修建了独立堡，而之所以能够建成独立堡，也多亏了著名的学者杜比倪，杜比倪对南美各国很有研究，了解得很清楚。

独立堡是坦迪尔村的一个重要据点，此地村民的交通工具通常以牛车为主，去布宜诺斯艾利斯，牛车只需12天时间，所以此地的贸易比较发达。他们送到布宜诺斯艾利斯的大多是牧场养的牲畜、腌制的腊肉，以及印第安人的手工制品，比如棉布、羊毛织物、由编皮匠编制的货物等等。

坦迪尔村的房屋修建得很好，村里不仅有学校，还有教堂。

在将坦迪尔村的情况向大家做了介绍后，巴嘉勒尔还说，在这里肯定打听不到消息，因为这里的城堡经常有军队驻守。于是，爵士选了一家看起来比较好的旅社住了下来，并把马牵到了栅栏。

随后，他和巴嘉勒尔、少校、罗伯尔，在塔凯甫的带领下向独立堡走去。几分钟后，他们来到了独立堡门口，门口站着一名懒散的阿根廷哨兵，看到他们也不搭理，他们很随意地进去了。从哨兵的态度可以看出，要么这里的防卫很松懈，要么这里很安全。

再往前走的时候，他们看到一片空地上有士兵在操练，士兵的年龄很小，大的不过20岁，小的则只有7岁，所以准确点来说，这只是十几个少年儿童在舞枪弄棒，不过舞得很像一回事。

操练的士兵们所穿的制服是衬衫，而且是用条子布做的衬衫，并用一条皮带紧紧地扎住了。他们的腿上没穿长裤，也没穿短裤，甚至没有穿苏格兰式的短制服。看到政府没有把钱花在做漂亮军服上，巴嘉勒尔对这个地方的政府马上有了好印象。

这些年轻的士兵每人佩带一支后膛枪和一把军刀。也许是身材矮小的原因，枪在他们面前显得很沉重，刀在他们面前显得很长。这些年轻的士兵个个脸上黑乎乎的，根本无法认出谁是谁。就连指挥他们的长官，脸上也是焦黑一片。

爵士他们大概数了一下，共有12名士兵。想必他们是在进行大会操，而之后经证实确实如此。

巴嘉勒尔对这么小的孩子当兵一点都不感到奇怪，他对阿根廷的统计学特别熟悉，也知道阿根廷每家的儿童不超过9个。不过让他感到惊讶的是这些小士兵练的是法国操，甚至连那教练的命令都是法语，而

且这些士兵所做的12个主要冲锋动作既娴熟又准确，就和巴嘉勒尔在法国看到的一样。

“太奇怪了！”他说。

不过，爵士来独立堡却不是来看小士兵操练的，更不是为了研究这些小士兵的身份的，所以他没有让巴嘉勒尔继续惊讶下去，并让巴嘉勒尔去找驻军军官。巴嘉勒尔马上行动，和一个小兵说了几句，小兵就向一座营部的房子走去。

一会儿工夫，军队的司令便走了出来。这是一位50多岁，长着花白头发，身体健壮，有着军人风度的男人。他长着高高的颧骨，坚硬的八字胡高高翘起，显得很滑稽。

这位司令官长着一双炯炯有神的眼睛，嘴里噙着一个短筒烟斗，烟斗里冒出一团烟雾。看人的时候，他是隔着烟雾来看的，这都让巴嘉勒尔想起了法国老军官的习惯。

塔凯甫向司令介绍了爵士一行人。在塔凯甫说话的时候，司令的眼神却一直看着巴嘉勒尔，看得巴嘉勒尔很茫然，也有些难为情，不知道这位司令是什么意思。在他正要问的时候，这位司令很不客气地抓住了他的手，并用法语欣喜地问：“你是法国人？”

“没错！我是法国人！”

“哦！太高兴了！欢迎你们！太欢迎了！我也是法国人！”司令激动地说着，因为激动，他不停地摇着巴嘉勒尔的手。

“他是你的朋友？”少校问巴嘉勒尔。

“当然！到处都有我的朋友！”巴嘉勒尔自豪地说。

司令因为激动，用力太大，巴嘉勒尔的手差点被他捏碎。好不容易从那老虎钳子一样的手里挣脱出来，巴嘉勒尔便开始和司令谈话。爵士想插话进来，打听他想了解的事，但那司令显然在讲他的历史，并不愿意有人打断他的话头。

从他的叙述中，他们知道这位豪爽的军人来这里很久了，法语也已经说得不是很流利了。虽然并没忘记，但语法已经有问题了，所以他的法文听起来就像法国殖民地的黑人说的一样。

原来，这位司令不仅是独立堡的司令，也是法军的军曹，还曾经是巴耳沙普的伙伴。当然，这些都是大家从他的嘴里知道的。

自从1838年建成独立堡以来，他就没有离开过独立堡。如今，阿根廷政府让他镇守这个要塞之地。50岁的他叫麻奴艾尔·伊发纳盖尔，是巴斯克人，一年后入了阿根廷的国籍，并在军队服役时，娶了一位印第安人做老婆。

那时，他的这位印第安夫人给他生了一对双胞胎，已经6个月大了。

他和他的印第安夫人都不喜欢女孩子，好在双胞胎都是男孩子。当然，之所以只要男孩，是因为麻奴艾尔不知道除了当兵，还能干什么，所以他希望上帝能保佑他，让他生出一个连的士兵来。

“你们应该看到了吧，个个都非常可爱，都是好兵！不管是若塞、若旺，还是米开尔、贝沛！那贝沛只有7岁，但他已经会打枪了！”

那个只有7岁的男孩，在听到父亲夸奖他后，高兴地并起双脚行了

个军礼，举枪的姿势也很好看，有模有样的。

“多有前途啊！他以后一定会当上校，做师长的。”司令满意地看着年幼的儿子说。

司令越说越开心，对于他来说，军人这个职业高于一切，而他的儿子们也前途无量，这是毋庸置疑的，不允许任何人反驳。正如歌德所说，“能让人快乐的，都是梦幻”。

司令将他的历史整整讲了十多分钟，这让塔凯甫很吃惊，因为他不明白，一个人一张口，怎么可能有那么多的话说。虽然在他说话的时候，没人打断，但塔凯甫还是认为，一个法国军曹，说话应该知道适可而止，不能滔滔不绝，没完没了。

终于，他停止了说话，并请大家到他的家里去。大家不好驳他的面子，也不得不去见见他的夫人，看看是不是形象气质不凡，如果能用“气质不凡”来形容印第安女人的话。

大家接受了他的邀请，司令问大家是怎么到这个地方来的，这也正是爵士提问题的时候，不然他可能永远都没有机会说他们来此的目的。

巴嘉勒尔用法语告诉他他们这次横穿潘帕区的原因，最后还问印第安人为什么都离开了。

“哦！没错！是没有一个人了！确实！没有了.....没有一个人了！没事做，他们什么事都做不了了.....只能离开！”司令说完，耸了耸肩。

“到底为什么离开呢？”

“当然是打仗了。”

“打仗？打什么仗？”

“当然是自己人打自己人了。”

“什么意思？自己人打自己人？”

巴嘉勒尔越听越糊涂，跟着司令说起了黑人说的法语。

“对呀！巴拉圭人和布宜诺斯艾利斯人打起来了。”

“结果呢？”

“结果，印第安人只能跑了，跑去北方了。他们跟在了弗劳莱斯将军的屁股后头。那些印第安人，都是强盗。”

“那么酋长们都去什么地方了？”

“当然也都去了。”

“你是说，那个凯特里鄂尔酋长……”

“那倒没有。”

“那杨圣特路茨呢？”

“他也没有去。”

在将这段对话翻译给塔凯甫后，塔凯甫点了点头，表示司令说的是对的。原来，塔凯甫并不知道有一场内战，而这场内战还引来了巴西的干涉，阿根廷的内战让双方死了很多人。这种自相残杀的战争，给了印

第安人机会，他们决定去趁火打劫，所以当阿根廷在打内战的时候，潘帕区就没人了。

虽然这事看起来是两件事，但却是相互关联的，是因果关系。司令说得一点没错。

不过，这件事却也打乱了爵士的整个计划，他原本想做的都做不成了。想想看，如果格兰特船长在这些酋长的手里做了俘虏，那么他现在一定也被带到北方去了，如果是这样的话，接下来又要怎么去找呢？怎样才能找到他呢？难道又要跑到草原的北部边界去做一次冒险吗？这个冒险有没有意义呢？找不找得到格兰特船长呢？他必须认真考虑考虑。

此时，他还有一个重要问题要问司令，不过失望让他忘记了这件事，幸好少校想了起来。

“司令，您是否听说过欧洲人做了潘帕区印第安人酋长的俘虏？”

麻奴艾尔皱着眉想着，在记忆里搜索。

“是有这么回事！”好一会儿他说。

“啊！是真的吗？”爵士大叫一声，他的心里又有了希望。

爵士、巴嘉勒尔、少校和罗伯尔一起聚在了司令的身边，殷切地看着他。

“请您说详细点！”大家一起催他。

“那是好几年前的事了。对！……没错！已经好几年了！不过没有见过……”司令慢慢说。

“几年以前？您记错了吧，那船失事的日期不会错，是1862年6月的事……还不到两年！”爵士说。

“不！绝对不止两年，爵士！”

“怎么可能？”巴嘉勒尔喊道。

“没错，不止两年，那时候是贝沛刚出生的时候，当时有两个人。”

“不！不是两个，是三个！”爵士又说。

“就是两个，没错！”司令的语气很肯定。

“您说两个？是两个英国人吗？”爵士又问。

“不，怎么会是英国人呢？是法国人和意大利人呀！没有英国人！”

“您是说那个意大利人被杀掉了，对吗？”巴嘉勒尔激动起来。

“没错！我也是后来才知道的，最后……法国人得救了！”

“得救了？”小罗伯尔叫了起来，此时，他只听到了这三个字。

“没错，他们从印第安人的手里得救了。”司令又说。

大家全都看着巴嘉勒尔，巴嘉勒尔拍了拍额头，露出失望的表情。

“我全明白了，全明白了，什么都可以解释了。”

“怎么回事？”爵士问，他着急而不安。

“朋友们，我们现在必须忍受一次大乌龙带来的结果了。因为我们

把线索找错了。这里被俘的，根本就不是格兰特船长，而是我的一个同胞，我的那个同胞有个同伴叫马可·瓦泽洛，最后被人杀了。我那同胞在跟那些印第安人在科罗拉多河畔跑了几次后，幸运地逃跑了，最后还回到了法国。我们原来是想追踪格兰特的足迹，没想到却追到了年轻的基莱尔的踪迹。”

巴嘉勒尔的一番话使现场一片静默，很明显他们找错线索了，司令所说的俘虏情况、国籍，以及有同伴被杀，其中一人逃出印第安人手里，一切的一切，都证明他们找错了。

爵士失望地看着塔凯甫，塔凯甫又问司令：“难道你就从来没听到过有三个英国人被俘吗？”

“是的，从来没听说过！我敢保证，如果有，坦迪尔村是一定会听说的，我一定会知道……所以……不，没有这回事！”

爵士在听了司令干脆的回复后，觉得没有必要在独立堡停留了，于是他们和司令握手告别。

看着希望破灭，爵士非常难过，而走在他身边的罗伯尔，更是默默地流着眼泪。爵士想安慰他，却又不知该怎么安慰。巴嘉勒尔自言自语地说着什么，少校紧紧闭着嘴唇，一言不发。至于塔凯甫，由于找错了线索，很伤他的自尊心，所以也是闷闷不乐的。

其实，这样的错误根本不是他的责任，而且谁也没想过要责怪他。

大家回到了旅馆，晚饭吃得也是没滋没味的。当然，勇敢而热情的他们，谁也不后悔走了这么多冤枉路，谁也没觉得白受了磨难。但每一个人又都觉得所有成功的希望，在一瞬间破灭了。

坦迪尔山和海岸，还可能有格兰特船长的消息吗？不！一定不可能有。因为如果有欧洲人在大西洋岸上被印第安人俘虏，司令麻奴艾尔怎么可能得不到情报？还有那些往来于坦迪尔和卡门之间的人，他们去内罗河口做生意不可能注意不到这件事。因为在阿根廷平原上做生意的人，一有消息，很快就会一个传一个。

既然现在没有一点格兰特船长的消息，他们就只有一件事可做，那就是马上去约定好的地点和“邓肯号”会合。

不过，巴嘉勒尔又向爵士要了那三张纸条，哭丧着脸重新研究起来，他想努力找出一个新的线索。

“这纸条上写得不是很清楚吗？对于格兰特船长的船沉没，以及被俘的地点，说得再清楚不过了。”爵士说。

“哦！我看未必是这样！绝对未必是这样！我们设想一下，格兰特船长如果不在潘帕区，也就是说他不在美洲，那么他会在什么地方呢？纸条上的内容应该会告诉我们的，一定会告诉我们的，我敢说，如果我找不出来，我就不叫雅克·巴嘉勒尔！”地理学家巴嘉勒尔敲着桌子，自信地说。

第十八章 洪流来了

相距240公里的独立堡和大西洋，如果没有意外事情发生，爵士一行和“邓肯号”会合只需4天，当然，意外事情发生的可能性几乎没有。不过，这是不是也就意味着，他们寻访格兰特船长，拯救落难船员的事就此失败了？在没有找到格兰船长的情况下，自己就这么回到船上去吗？爵士有些不甘心。

第二天，爵士没有下达出发的命令，一切的准备工作都是少校做的。

少校备好了马，装好了干粮，制订好了行程计划.....由于他的准备工作做得好，一行人早晨8点就走下了坦迪尔山的青草坡。

爵士带着罗伯尔策马奔驰，始终一言不发。他遇事从不轻易妥协的性格让他无法就这样接受失败。他的心狂跳得厉害，整个身体像被火烤着一样难受。巴嘉勒尔还在想着那三张纸条，他一个字一个字地去分析，希望能找到另一种解释。塔凯甫沉着脸，放任特迦跑在最前面。少校依然淡然地做着他觉得应该做的事，仿佛线索根本就没有中断。艾撒汀和他的两个水手看到主人那么烦闷，也闷闷不乐，提不起精神。

突然，一只野兔从他们面前惊慌逃窜，有些迷信的两位苏格兰水手在彼此看了一眼后，维尔逊说：

“一个不好的兆头！”

“没错！兆头不好！在高地就发生过。”穆纳回应道。

“在高地是在高地，在这里是在这里，高地有动物逃窜是有坏事发生，在这里未必就是。”维尔逊突然又反驳说。

这天晚上，他们走过坦迪尔山区，进入了如水波荡漾一般的大平原。一路上，他们看到的都是清澈的溪水，以及经过了溪水灌溉的肥沃土壤。走过这一片区域后，地面变得平坦起来，如同风浪过后的海洋，静静地流淌着。阿根廷潘帕区的最后岗峦，他们很快也要走过去了，青草就像给马蹄铺就了一条长长的绿毯，踩在上面很舒服。

在这之前，天气都很晴朗，万里无云。不过，这天的情况却不一样了，天色发生了变化。

几天以来，因为高温而聚集的水汽此时全都凝结成了乌云，这一切也都预示着，倾盆大雨马上就要降临了。同时，由于邻近大西洋，不停歇的西风让气候变得异常潮湿。在他们来到这片肥沃的土地，看到绿油油的牧草遍布牧场时，就知道空气里的湿度有多大了。好在大片大片的乌云并没有变成大雨降下来。

晚上的时候，一口气跑了65公里的马在一个大坑旁休息，由于没有任何东西遮盖，他们只能用罩篷做帐篷和被褥，在风雨欲来的草地上睡着了。幸好风雨来势缓慢，还在酝酿，并没有落下来。

第二天，整个平原的地势变得低了起来，地下水慢慢涌了出来，土壤如同人的皮肤，每个毛孔都渗出了汗水。他们走了没多久，就看到了沼泽地，这些沼泽地有大有小，有深有浅，但无一例外地都成了拦路虎。

对于那些能辨识清楚，没有水草的沼泽地，几匹马还能应付，但遇到深浅无法预测，甚至出现了流动泥窝的沼泽，马匹行走起来就困难

了，有些虽然有草掩盖，但一不小心陷进去也是很危险的。

这些深不可测的沼泽，一定曾让很多人和牲畜陷了进去。

走在前面半英里的罗伯尔，突然骑马返回来，不停大叫：“巴嘉勒尔先生，巴嘉勒尔先生，前面的林子里长着牛角。”

“什么？长着牛角的林子？”巴嘉勒尔又问了一遍。

“对！是小丛林里长着牛角。”

“哦！小丛林，我的孩子，你一定是做梦了。”巴嘉勒尔不相信，耸了耸肩。

“我没有做梦！不信您自己去看，那里真的很奇怪，地里面长着牛角，就和麦子一样，我真想弄一些种子回去。”罗伯尔又说。

“看来是真的，他说得一本正经的。”少校说。

“当然是真的，少校先生，不信您也可以去看看。”

确实，罗伯尔既没有做梦，也没有说谎，他说的全是真的。他们走了没多久，便看见了一片牛角地，那些牛角形状的东西排列整齐，一眼看不到边。而且确实是小丛林，是那种既矮又密的丛林，非常奇怪。

“我说是真的吧！”罗伯尔说。

“出怪事了！”巴嘉勒尔说着，回头看着塔凯甫，想听他的解释。

“牛角在上面，但牛在下面。”塔凯甫镇定地说。

“什么？这是真的牛角？你是说一群牛陷进了泥里？”巴嘉勒尔大叫道。

“没错！是这样的。”塔凯甫说。

原来，之所以有牛角露出来，是因为一群牛在经过这里时，陷了进去死掉了。好几百甚至上千头牛闷死在泥滩的事，在阿根廷平原经常发生，塔凯甫不可能不知道，同时这些死去的牛也给来往的行人提了醒，让他们多加防范。

大家因为有了这些牛角的提醒，便绕过了那片死牛泥滩，而那死牛的数量之多，完全可以做一场古代祭祀神灵的百牛祭。

一个小时后，他们将那有牛角的小丛林抛到了身后两公里以外。

塔凯甫预感会有什么事发生，他观察着周围的情况。周围的一切，让他觉得很平常。

他没有一直往前走，而是常常停下来，原本就高大的他，坐在马背上就显得更高了，可以看到很远的地方。但他又没有发现什么异常，便又继续前行。走了差不多1公里多路的时候，他又停了下来，并不断地变换着方向，一会儿向北，一会儿向南，就这么走了好几公里。在他回来领路的时候，却什么都不说，这么反复几次后，巴嘉勒尔有些好奇，而爵士内心却很不安。他让巴嘉勒尔问塔凯甫发生什么事了。

塔凯甫告诉巴嘉勒尔，他看到整个平原都渗进了水，所以很吃惊，在他做向导以来，还是第一次出现这种情况，以前就算是在大雨季，阿根廷的原野都是有旱路可走的。

“如果潮湿越来越严重，会是什么原因造成的？”巴嘉勒尔问。

“不知道，不过，我知道……”

“山里的溪水涨满后，会不会发生泛滥的情况？”

“有！有过这种情况。”

“那是不是就是山里的溪水泛滥造成的呢？”

“也有可能！”塔凯甫说。

虽然并不肯定，但巴嘉勒尔还是告诉了爵士。

“塔凯甫有没有说要怎么办？”爵士问。

“我们现在应该怎么办？”巴嘉勒尔问塔凯甫。

“快速前行！”

这句话说起来容易，做起来却很难。因为地面太软，马老往下陷，所以很快就疲惫了。而且随着地面越来越低，这一片平原到处坑坑洼洼，那些坑坑洼洼的地方又都聚满了水，给马的前进增加了难度。

这个犹如锅底一样的平原，水越积越多的话，很可能会变成大湖，那时候想要过去就更难了，而且很可能有危险存在，所以最重要的是赶快过去。

再难行，大家也要加紧脚步前行。

就在马蹄下的水滩越积越多的时候，下午两点左右，暴雨开始下起来了，倾盆大雨倾倒在了平原上，如果此时想要体现自己遇再大风雨都

不慌张的修养，这应该是个很好的机会。在这倾盆大雨降临而又无法遮蔽的时候，他们只能咬紧牙关，任由雨水浇到脸上、身上。

身上的罩篷集水成池，帽子就像屋檐一样，哗啦啦地往下流水，直倒在罩篷上。就连马鞍上的缨络都变成了水网，马蹄一踩下去，瞬间溅起很大的水花，骑在上面的他们，就在上下两路大水的侵袭下狼狈逃窜。

就这样，疲惫的他们冷透了，冻僵了。傍晚时分，他们总算来到了一所破牲畜栏旁。

这样的地方，只有毫不讲究舒适性的人才会将其当成住处，或者只有那些落难的人才愿意进去休息。但爵士他们没有别的选择，也就全部钻进了这个也许连潘帕区最穷的印第安人也不愿住的废旧牲畜栏里休息。

好不容易生了一堆火，但那火的热量还没湿气大。

外面继续下着大雨，下得很疯狂，牲畜栏顶的烂草经不住大雨的侵袭，掉下了大滴的水珠。火被浇灭了。穆纳和维尔逊就这么点火、被浇灭……浇灭又点着……反复了很多次。

在这样的环境下，他们的晚饭就只能凑合了，大家吃得很勉强。当然，有个人还和往常一样，那个人就是少校，他在嚼湿透的干肉时，嚼得很起劲。淡定的少校在面对任何环境时，情绪都不会受到影响。而巴嘉勒尔，作为一个生性乐观的地道法国人，他不断地为大家讲笑话，但没有一个人笑得出来。

“看来，我的笑话也受潮了，响不了。”他最后说。

在这种情况下，他们只有睡觉了。

夜晚，天气越来越差，牲畜栏的木板发出了噼里啪啦的声响，仿佛马上就要断了。事实也的确如此，牲畜栏已经被风吹得歪斜了，大有随风而去之势。任凭风吹雨打的马在外面不停地呻吟着，它们想必在羡慕主人，因为他们至少有破屋遮挡风雨。

不过即使环境如此，疲惫和瞌睡还是占了上风，罗伯尔将头歪在爵士肩上最先睡着了，接着其他人也慢慢地进入梦乡。

上帝做了他们的守护神，这一夜他们平安无事。早晨，他们突然被特迦的嘶叫声惊醒。这匹优良的马一直都保持着警惕和清醒。它在外面的不断地发出嘶叫声，甚至还用蹄子去踢棚壁，也许是想叫醒里面睡着的人们。看来，就算没有塔凯甫，特迦也能叫醒人启程。而大家对特迦的信任和依赖，也让他们很快就醒了过来，快速启程。

此时，雨已经下得越来越小了，不过地面还保留着很多积水。黄泥下，因为水渗不进去，便积成了水洼、沼泽和池塘。在这些水洼、沼泽和池塘里的水继续增加的时候，大家便连哪里是水坑，哪里是平地都分不清了。

巴嘉勒尔拿出地图来看，他想起了格南得河和维法洛塔河就是这么吸收平原上的水，然后将两条河床形成一条的，而当形成一条河流时，那河便有几公里宽了。

他们现在必须加快前进的脚步，这关系到全体成员的安全问题。如果水泛滥成灾，他们又要到什么地方栖身？看着那一望无际的水面，看不出有高度的地方，当大水入侵时，一定是来势汹汹，没有阻碍。

因此，特迦领头，大家又开始催马快奔，特迦似乎比某些两栖动物还厉害，在水里也能成为一头河马，所以当它在水里跑跳时，仿佛就是河里的一条船在游动。

不过，快到上午10点钟的时候，特迦开始烦躁，它不断地将头转向南方，看着无边无际的平坦之地，嘶叫声越来越大，鼻孔开始拼命地呼吸空气。突然，它腾空而起，差点将骑在它身上的塔凯甫摔下马来。塔凯甫发现，特迦的嘴边泛起的泡沫里有了血迹，这是因为它嚼铁太用力的原因。

特迦越来越急躁，塔凯甫差点无法控制它了。塔凯甫觉得如果放下它的缰绳，特迦肯定会全力向北边跑去的。

“怎么回事？特迦发生什么事了？是不是被蚂蟥咬了？阿根廷的蚂蟥很厉害。”

“不！”塔凯甫只说了一句话。

“那它怎么了？是意识到有危险吗？”

“没错！它意识到了危险。”

“有什么危险？”

“不知道。”

特迦意识到的危险，如果大家还是看不到的话，耳朵应该有所警觉了。因为有一种声音像是从天边飘来的，那声音是涨潮的声音，同时，湿风夹着灰尘般的水沫涌了过来。鸟儿从空中急速飞过，似乎在逃避着一种莫名的危险。

几匹马的半截腿都浸在水里了，看来洪水要来了。

果然，只一会儿工夫，随着惊人的叫嚣声，一群牛马像狂风一样从他们身边卷过，没命地向北逃窜，速度快得惊人。而那溅起的浪花，比几百条鲸鱼在海里翻滚掀起的浪花还大。

“快跑！”塔凯甫高喊一声。

“发生什么事了？”巴嘉勒尔喊。

“洪水来了！洪水来了！”塔凯甫一面回答，一面策马向北奔去。

“洪水泛滥了！快跑啊！”巴嘉勒尔大叫一声，同伴们跟着他的马，随着特迦向北逃去。

他们必须要逃命了，在南面8公里的地方，浪潮既高又宽，以排山倒海之势向他们这边涌来，南面的平原，瞬间变成了汪洋大海，连那深草都看不见了，就像被砍掉了一样。许多含羞草被海浪连根拔起，漂在了水面上，越堆越高，像极了一个个流动着的岛屿。

洪流席卷而来，以不可抗拒的力量涌了过来。看来，这是潘帕区的一些大河溃堤了，也可能是北边的科罗拉多河和南边的勒格落河全都泛滥了，因而形成了巨大的河床。

塔凯甫告诉大家，滔天的浪头，正以快马般的速度向他们奔来。他们拼命朝前跑着，犹如暴风雨在追赶浮云。

塔凯甫四处寻找，但却始终不见一个可以躲避的地方。好像连那天边，都是与水接壤的。马匹由于受到了过度的惊吓，没命地跑着，他们只能紧紧地抓着马鞍。爵士时不时还回头看着。

“洪水马上就要淹过来了。”他想。

“快跑啊！快跑啊！”塔凯甫一直不停地叫着。

大家只能催促屁股下那可怜的马，马刺拍打在马的肚子上，流出了鲜血，形成一条血流。

踩在坑坑洼洼不平坦的泥坑里的马，好几次差点摔跤，也有好几次被水底的草绊住，走不动了，甚至倒在水里，他们又拼命将它拉起来；马又跌倒，他们又拉起来……眼看水还在不断往上涨，那追逐着他们的大浪，预示着洪流马上就要追上来了，相距他们不过两到三公里。

浪花如同雪花，在水面上翻滚。

人想要躲开水，但水又不断地追逐着人，这是人和大自然最壮烈的竞争。在相持了十多分钟后，大家只顾着逃命，到底逃了多少路程，都不知道。不过以马的奔跑速度来算，应该是有不少路程了。但即使这样，水也已经淹到了马的胸脯，马跑起来更困难了。

在那一刻，格莱拉弗、巴嘉勒尔、艾撒汀……全都觉得要没命了。他们感觉这就像是坐在了船上，船在大海里沉了，他们唯有等死。慢慢地，马蹄已经无法探到地面，水也深到了2米处，马很快就要被淹死了。

在洪流中的8个人和此时的焦急、惊恐以及悲伤，无法用语言来进行描述。

此时的他们，面临的是他们根本就无法抵抗的自然界灾难，他们感到自己太渺小了，根本就无力抗拒，此时的命运，完全没有掌握在自己手里。

又过去了5分钟，马已经是在水里游泳了。狂流以很大的力量，推着马匹，以每小时约32公里的速度前行。

在他们都感到绝望了的时候，少校突然说：“有一棵树！”

“什么地方？”爵士大声问。

“就在那里！”塔凯甫说着话，指着北方七八百米远的地方，那里确实有一棵高大的胡桃树。

大家不需要说，便知道那棵树他们必须要抓住，也许马匹到不了那里，也不能用那棵树救命，但他们需要。此时，艾撒汀的马在长鸣一声后不见了，艾撒汀迅速摆脱马镫，开始游泳。

“抓住我的马鞍！”爵士朝他喊道。

“谢谢，爵士，我能游过去。”

“罗伯尔，你的马怎么样？”爵士转头问罗伯尔。

“还行，爵士，它还可以，正像鱼一样在游泳呢。”

“注意安全！”少校叮嘱道。

少校的话音刚落，一个浪头便打了过来。这是个1米高的巨浪，巨浪发出的声音如同雷鸣，一下子扑到了他们身上，将他们一个个地连人带马卷入到了大旋涡里，旋涡里泡沫飞溅，人却不见了。

几百吨的水浪将他们一会儿托起来，一会儿按下去，几个翻滚后，浪头过去，他们浮了起来，点了一下人数，人还在，但马匹除了特迦还

驮着塔凯甫，其他的都不见了。

“坚持一下！”爵士喊着，一只手拖着巴嘉勒尔，另一只手划着水。

“行！能坚持住，不过我倒不讨厌这……”巴嘉勒尔说。

巴嘉勒尔的“不讨厌”什么还没说出口，这个倒霉鬼便呛了一口泥水，泥水连同那半句话一齐咽进了肚子里。少校还是非常淡定，不慌不忙地向前游着。他左一下右一下地划着水，比游泳教练游得还娴熟。

两个水手在水里也如同海豚一样，游得很轻松。而罗伯尔则抓着特迦的鬃毛，让它拖着自己走。英勇的特迦乘风破浪，凭着本能朝那棵大树游去。离树还有20米了，很快，大家都趴在了树上。

够惊险，也够侥幸！因为如果没有这样一个栖身之地，他们非死在浪中不可。

水此时也已经涨到了树干的顶部，大树的枝头有很多，大家想攀上去并不难。塔凯甫脱离了特迦，拖着罗伯尔最先爬了上去。然后又用他强有力的胳膊，将其他几个疲倦的同伴拉上来。大家坐在了安全的地方，但那勇士特迦却被急流推着，漂到远处去了。聪明的它不断地将头转向塔凯甫，振动着它的长鬃毛，嘶叫着。

“你不管它了？”巴嘉勒尔问塔凯甫。

“我怎么会不管它？”塔凯甫一边高声说着，一边钻进了洪流，很快，他又在离树10米远的地方露出头来，接着，大家看到他將胳膊搭在特迦的脖子上，随着急流，一马一人向远处漂去……

第十九章 大树上栖身

爵士一行逃生的这棵树，树冠是圆的，有着发亮的叶子，非常像胡桃树。不过，它并不是胡桃树，而是“蓊茈”树。“蓊茈”树在阿根廷平原总是疏落地分散着，可以说是孤树一棵。

这棵“蓊茈”树长着巨大的主干，主干的形状是微微蜷曲的，粗大的根不仅深埋土里，而且就像吸盘一样，牢牢地攀附在地面上，非常牢固，所以它是能抵挡住洪流的侵袭和冲刷的。

他们攀上去的这棵“蓊茈”树有30多米高，枝繁叶茂，能将周围120平方米的面积罩在树冠下。两米多粗的主干分出了三个主枝，而所有的枝叶又都集中在三个主枝上。三个主枝中的两个主枝向上生长，上面长着重重叠叠的叶子，这些叶子特别像一把撑开的大伞。

这棵树的枝叶交错生长，如同由手工很好的篾匠师傅编织而成，进而形成了一把保护伞，以防止风吹雨淋。三个主枝中的一个主枝和其他两个正好相反，是向下生长的，而且横倒在水中，所以有些树叶也被浸在了水里。

总之，这棵树如同海洋中的一座长满了绿草的孤岛，树上的横枝则像一条条海峡，从孤岛上长长地伸了出去。这么大的一棵树，自然有很多空间。而那伞状的枝叶四周，又有很多空隙，空隙像茂密森林里储存空气的空旷地带。只要在这棵树下，不管站在什么地方，即使有很大的太阳，也都能感受到凉意。

两个向上生长的主枝，又将无数分枝送上了云霄，而旁边的一些寄生藤，由于靠近这棵大树，也便依附了上去。有阳光的时候，阳光会从这些空间、缝隙中洒进来，照出一个硕大的阴影。可以说，因为有了这棵“蓊茏”树，周围的寄生藤便被主干很好地支撑了起来。

在爵士他们这些避难者上了这棵树后，原本停留树上逃难的飞禽便逃到了更高的枝叶里，并发出叽叽喳喳的抗议声。

当然，不管飞禽怎么抗议，爵士他们一行都要在此栖身。罗伯尔和维尔逊依靠矫健的身体，攀到了树的最高处，他们将头钻出圆圆的树冠，便处在了整个平原的最高处。

放眼四望，他们看到了很远的地方，更看清了他们现在的处境：被一片汪洋大海困在一棵树上。

凡是他们目光所能触及的，都是茫茫大海，无边无际。水面上除了漂浮着的一些枝叶，没有其他生物，更不可能有其他树木，只有独独一棵“蓊茏”树屹立在洪流之中，并被洪流冲得颤动。远处，他们看到了被连根拔起的树干，还有七零八落的树枝，以及他们曾住过的已经倒塌的牲畜栏顶棚。同时，水面上还有一些从大牧场冲下来的柱子以及野兽的尸体，甚至还有血肉模糊的兽皮。更远的地方，一棵猛烈摇晃的树上，聚着几只黑斑虎，黑斑虎们扒着树干，惊恐地吼叫着……一切的一切，都被洪流带着，由南向北漂着。再远一点，他们能看到的只有黑点，什么都看不到了。

不过，那个黑点吸引了维尔逊，他觉得那是勇敢的塔凯甫和忠诚的特迦。

“塔凯甫！勇敢的塔凯甫朋友！”罗伯尔轻轻叫着，向着北边扬着

手。

“他一定不会淹死的，罗伯尔，我们还是下去吧，和爵士们待在一起。”维尔逊说。

两个人很快从三重枝叶间爬过，爬到了主枝的顶部，那里有爵士、巴嘉勒尔、少校、艾撒汀和穆纳。他们有的坐着，有的骑着，也有的攀着……总之，怎么舒服怎么来。维尔逊叙述了他们在上面看到的一切，也带到了塔凯甫和特迦。

大家都同意他的看法：塔凯甫肯定会活着的，不过就是不知道最后是他救了特迦，还是特迦救了他。他们这些逃到树上的人，处境比塔凯甫还严峻。虽然这棵树不会被水冲走，但如果水势继续涨的话，说不定也会淹到他们躲着的地方，因为这一带的地势很低，像个蓄水池。

所以，爵士刚一上树便开始用刀划树皮，以便测量水位。此时，水位已经稳住了，泛滥似乎也已到了顶峰，这让他们松了口气。

“接下来我们要做什么？”爵士问。

“能做什么？当然是做窝了！”巴嘉勒尔用欢快的语气说。

“做窝？”罗伯尔大惊。

“是要做窝，我的孩子，我们不能过鱼的生活，只能过鸟的生活了。”

“不过，我们就是有了窝，又要吃什么呢？”爵士说。

“我给你们喂食！”少校说。

大家全都转头看着少校，只见少校坐在由两个柔软树枝搭成的天然椅子上，慢条斯理地伸出一只手，递给大家一个还在滴着水的布袋。

“哇！少校！你太厉害了！还是你想得周到，在那么慌张的情况下，竟然记得拿这东西。”爵士叫了起来。

“既然我们不想被淹死，必定也不想让自己饿死呀！”少校用淡定的语气说。

“虽然我也想到了，不过我太粗心了！”巴嘉勒尔像个孩子一样，天真地说。

“您那布袋子里装着什么？”艾撒汀问。

“可以够我们七个人吃两天的东西。”少校说。

“太好了！希望24小时后，水能退下去。”爵士说。

“最好24小时之内，我们能有办法到陆地去。”巴嘉勒尔纠正说。

“所以，我们现在的主要任务是吃东西。”爵士说。

“应该是先把衣服烤干吧！”少校又说。

“用什么烤？”维尔逊说。

“当然是用火烤！”巴嘉勒尔说。

“在什么地方生火？”

“当然就在这树干顶上了。”

“那又要用什么生呢？”

“我们去树上砍枯枝。”

“即使有柴，我们现在也没办法生起火来，因为火绒湿得就和海绵一样了！”爵士说。

“不用火绒也行！有苔藓，再有阳光，我拿我的望远镜镜头一照，火就能生起来了。只是谁去树顶上砍枯枝呢？”巴嘉勒尔说。

“我去砍！”罗伯尔自告奋勇。

罗伯尔爬得很快，一会儿就钻进了枝叶深处。怕他有危险，维尔逊也跟在了后面。两个人离开后，巴嘉勒尔已经找到一些干苔藓。此时阳光正好，他只需用望远镜将这些苔藓点着就行了。

他们将干苔藓放在了“蓊茏”树干的分枝处，并放了一些湿树叶在上面。这样就形成了一个天然的炉灶，也就不怕在树上点火引发火灾了。很快，维尔逊和罗伯尔带着一大捆干柴回来了，并把干柴放在了干苔藓上。

为了扇火，巴嘉勒尔还爬到了“炉灶”上方，像阿拉伯人一样叉开双腿，然后往下一蹲，利用身上的罩篷扇火。干柴点着了，熊熊的火苗从“炉灶”上升了起来。大家就那么随意地烤着，每个人都将罩篷挂在树上，随风吹着。

该吃早饭了，每人定量分配，因为还有明天一天要维持。洪水有可能不会像爵士说的那样，24小时就能退，而他们所带的干粮很有限。

不过，好在“蓊茏”树虽然不结果子，但却有新鲜的鸟蛋。树枝上也

有很多鸟巢，鸟巢里不仅有鸟蛋，而且也有鸟，这样看来，一切都不是太糟，他们暂时不用发愁。

在前途未知的情况下，他们想尽量把栖身之处布置得舒服一些。

“厨房和饭厅在楼下，卧室在楼上！这房子真大啊，也不要房租，我们不必住得太紧凑。我看上面好像还有天然的软藤，这样我们就能把自己紧紧地捆绑在树上，放心大胆地睡觉了。没什么好怕的，我们轮流守夜。我们这些人，足以打跑印第安人的舰队和各种野兽。”巴嘉勒尔夸张地说。

“可我们没有武器！”艾撒汀说。

“我有枪！”爵士说。

“我的也在！”罗伯尔也说。

“不过，巴嘉勒尔要是制造不出子弹，有枪也没用的。”艾撒汀又说。

“不用造，这里就有！”少校说着，拿出弹药袋来，里面有保存得很好的子弹。

“少校，这是从哪里来的？”巴嘉勒尔问。

“塔凯甫的，他可能觉得这些弹药对我们有用，所以在跳水救特迦前，把这个留给我了。”

“真是个仗义无私的好巴塔哥尼亚人！”爵士感动地说。

“没错，所有的巴塔哥尼亚人都是这样！我真佩服他们！”艾撒汀

说。

“我们也不要忘记那匹忠诚的马！它也是巴塔哥尼亚人的一部分，要是我猜得不错，等我们再见到他们时，塔凯甫一定还好好地骑在它背上。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“这里离大西洋有多远？”少校突然问。

“差不多65公里。朋友们，既然大家可以自由行动，那我可要和你们告辞了，我要找个观察台，用望远镜观察周围的环境，然后汇报给你们。”

巴嘉勒尔说完，便灵活地往上攀去，很快就消失在茂密的枝叶间了。其他人也各自活动，有人开始找睡觉的地方去了。这并不难，树上既没床铺，也没桌椅，只要有枝丫就行了。

找到了各自睡觉的地方，他们又回到炉灶边，开始闲聊。

他们没有谈目前的处境，因为也没什么可谈的，他们现在要做的就是忍耐和等待，别无他法。大家谈的是格兰特船长，当这里的水退了后，他们用不到三天就能回到“邓肯号”上去了。可他们没有找到格兰特船长和两个落难的水手，在这次失败后，也就是横穿南美大陆无功而返，那么一切希望好像都没有了。

他们还能去什么地方找？海伦夫人和玛丽要是听到没有希望了，该有多失望啊！

“可怜的姐姐！她一定很失望，一切都完了！”罗伯尔说。

爵士找不出任何话来安慰这个孩子，他还能给孩子带来什么希望

呢？他已经按纸条上说的，找了一遍了呀。

“南纬37度线，并不是个空洞的数字！不管这个数字是指什么，是指格兰特船长的船出事的地方还是他们被俘的地方，这数字都不会错，这不是瞎猜出来的，是我亲眼看到的，清清楚楚，明明白白！”爵士说。

“是啊，爵士！可我们的搜寻还是失败了！”艾撒汀沮丧地说。

“真是让人苦恼，太让人失望了！”爵士更是懊恼。

“苦恼是有些苦恼，但不必太失望！因为有这个数字，所以才会支撑着我们一直寻找下去。”少校安慰他说。

“什么意思？你觉得我们还有其它办法吗？”爵士问。

“当然还有其它办法。我们还可以做一件简单而富有逻辑的事，亲爱的爱德华，等我们回到船上后，我们可以将船往东边开，一直沿37度线走，必要的话，可以走到我们最初的出发点！”少校说。

“麦克那布斯，你说的这些，我也想过，而且不知想过多少遍了。可是有成功的希望吗？我们离开美洲大陆，可就远离格兰特船长所说的巴塔哥尼亚了呀。纸条上可是写得清清楚楚的。”

“我们能确定的是‘大不列颠号’的失事地点既不在太平洋岸，又不在大西洋岸，难道还要再去潘帕区找一遍？”

爵士没有说话。

“那条纬线既然是格兰特船长说的，我们就可以沿着这条线去寻

找。即使希望再渺茫，我们也应该试一试。”少校又说。

“我不是说不必去……。”

爵士还没说完，少校便转身向两名水手说：“朋友们，同意我的意见吗？”

“完全同意！”两名水手说。

“朋友们听我说！”爵士说完停了一下，把脸转向罗伯尔，“罗伯尔，你也听着，因为这个话题非常重要。我要想尽一切办法找到格兰特船长，这是我承诺过的，我一定要去做，即使用毕生精力去做这件事，我也要做。格兰特船长为苏格兰效忠，我们全苏格兰人都应该在他落难时援助他，这是我们的职责所在。所以怎么都要去找，即使希望再渺茫，我们也要沿着37度线去寻找，哪怕绕地球一周也要去找。当然，这不是问题的关键所在，问题在于，我们是不是要放弃在美洲大陆的寻找了？我们是不是以后再也不到这里来了？”

这个问题问到了点子上，所以没人能回答，也不知道该怎么说。

“你是怎么想的？”爵士问少校。

“怎么说呢？亲爱的爱德华，我无法用‘是’或‘否’来回答你，因为这个责任太重了，所以需要好好想一想。不过现在我想知道，如果沿着南纬37度线去找，都要经过哪些地方？”少校说道。

“这个问题要问巴嘉勒尔。”

“好吧！那就问他。”少校说。

此时，巴嘉勒尔正被树叶遮住，看不到了，想要找他，必须下面叫。

“巴嘉勒尔！巴嘉勒尔！”爵士大声喊着。

“来了！”半空中，巴嘉勒尔回应道。

“你在什么地方？”

“我在观察台！”

“在那里做什么？”

“我在观察那一眼看不到的天边。”

“可以下来一下吗？”

“有事吗？”

“是的，有事找你！”

“说吧！什么事？”

“我们想知道37度纬线都要经过哪些地方？”

“这个太容易了，我不用下去就能告诉你们。”

“好吧，那你就在上面说。”

“听着！南纬37度线离开美洲后，需要穿过大西洋！”

“嗯！还有呢？”

“然后到特利斯探达昆雅群岛。”

“明白，接着说。”

“下去两分的地方，就要经过好望角。”

“接下来呢？”

“还要穿过印度洋。”

“接着呢？”

“再经过阿姆斯特丹群岛中的圣彼得岛。”

“接着说。”

“再横截澳大利亚的维多利亚省。”

“然后呢？”

“这就出了澳大利亚……”

这句话没说完，是他不知道地名了吗？不，一声惊叫从树叶浓密的地方传了过来。爵士和朋友们吓得脸色发白，不知所措。难道发生了什么不知名的灾难？还是倒霉的地理学家掉下去了？维尔逊和穆纳醒悟过来后，急忙上去看他怎么了。最后发现，巴嘉勒尔正从树枝上一点点地往下滚，他两只手没有抓任何东西。迎接他的是死还是活？不知道！眼看他就要滚到汪洋大海里了，少校一把抓住了他。

“谢谢你，麦克那布斯！”巴嘉勒尔叫起来。

“怎么回事？滚下来了？难道又是粗心造成的？”少校问。

“没错！没错！又是粗心！这次可真要创纪录了！”巴嘉勒尔吓得话都快说不出来了。

“创了个什么粗心的纪录？”

“我们又搞错了！又搞错了！我们怎么老是搞错？”

“什么搞错了？说明白点！”

“爵士、少校、罗伯尔、朋友们，我们一直都在没有格兰特船长的地方找他！”巴嘉勒尔大声嚷嚷着。

“到底是怎么回事？”爵士更不明白了。

“我们找的地方，不仅不会有格兰特船长，而且他从没来过！”

这句话让大家全都张大了嘴巴。

巴嘉勒尔说的是什么意思？是他神经错乱，说胡话吗？可他为什么说得好像很有把握一样？大家全都眼巴巴地看着爵士，因为巴嘉勒尔肯定的话里，直接答复了他提出的所有问题，不过爵士仍然在不停摇头，他不赞成巴嘉勒尔的说法。

兴奋的巴嘉勒尔一点都没有住口的意思，又滔滔不绝地说了起来。

“真是这样啊！朋友们，我们确实是找错了，因为纸条上根本就没有说这儿。”

“说说你的理由，巴嘉勒尔。”还是少校比较镇定。

“这么说吧，少校，我原来和你们一样，也是搞错了。我现在回答你们的问题，因为说到‘澳大利亚’的时候，我突然才明白了。”

“什么？你是说格兰特船长……”

“纸条上的austral这个字不是我们以为的‘南半球’（austral），而是‘澳大利亚’（Australia）一词的前半个字。”

“哦？这可就奇怪了！”少校说。

“何止是奇怪，简直就是不可能的事。”爵士耸耸肩，他绝不认同这种说法。

“为什么不可能，在我们法国，没有‘不可能’一说。”巴嘉勒尔辩解说。

“那你是什么意思？你的意思是说‘大不列颠号’失事的地点是在澳大利亚海边？”爵士用不屑的语气说。

“当然！”

“说实话，巴嘉勒尔，你的说法让我很吃惊，特别是从一个地理学家的嘴里说出来时，我感到格外吃惊。”

“有什么好吃惊的？”巴嘉勒尔不高兴了，见大家不相信他这个地理学家的话，他心里很不是滋味。

“很明显，假如说是澳大利亚，那么，大洋洲就得有印第安人，可大洋洲有印第安人吗？”

巴嘉勒尔显然也考虑到了爵士说出的这点，他微微一笑说：“亲爱

的格莱拉弗，你反驳的理由没有说服力。我可以把你反驳得哑口无言，让你们英国人惨败一次，替我们法国在同你们英国在克雷西和达赞顾尔所打的两次败仗复仇。”

“希望如此，巴嘉勒尔！”

“听着，纸条里根本就没有‘印第安人’（indiens）和‘巴塔哥尼亚’（Patagonie）。因为‘indi’不是指‘印第安人’，而是‘当地土人’（indigenes）。说说看，大洋洲有没有土人？”

“好！巴嘉勒尔！”少校鼓励他。

“我的解释怎么样，亲爱的爵士？”

“你的解释很好，不过，除非你能证明‘gonie’不是指‘巴塔哥尼亚’（Patagonie）或‘危险万分’（agonie）。”爵士说。

“应该是指‘危险万分’！”少校说。

“管它是什么呢，都没有关系。我连解释都不想去解释它。最关键的一点是，‘austral’是指澳大利亚。我们只要知道这个解释就可以了。这样看来，我们一开始就错了，接着就步步错。如果我最先看到这个纸条，不是你们把我带进沟里的话，我一定会解释清楚的。”

巴嘉勒尔的这番话，为他赢得了很多掌声，佩服他、赞扬他的都有。艾撒汀及两个水手、少校，特别是罗伯尔，也重新找到了希望，他们非常开心，祝贺着地理学家巴嘉勒尔。而此时，爵士也开始妥协，这从他的话里就能听出，他认可了巴嘉勒尔的说法。

“再问你最后一个问题！亲爱的巴嘉勒尔，如果你能将这个问题也

解决了，那么我就承认你确实是聪明机智。”

“问吧！爵士先生！”

“请你将那纸条上的内容讲述一遍，纸条上完整的内容是什么？”

“太简单了！我马上就按纸条给你讲一遍。”巴嘉勒尔说着，拿出了几天以来一直琢磨、研究的纸条。

在地理学家巴嘉勒尔重新整理脑子里的想法，准备复述纸条内容时，大家全都静静地看着他，紧张地盯着他手里的纸条。巴嘉勒尔用手指头指着纸条上那不完整的字，用坚定的语气念道：“1862年6月7日，三桅船‘大不列颠号’，籍隶格拉斯哥港，沉没在——这里缺几个字，不过没有关系——澳大利亚的海上。由于急着登陆，两名水手和船长格兰特将到达或者已到达这陆地，将被俘或者已被俘于野蛮的当地土人，兹特抛下此文件。等等，这不是说得很清楚吗？”

“不错，是很清楚，可澳大利亚是个岛，‘大陆’两字怎么安上去？”

“放心吧，亲爱的爵士，即使是一流的地理学家，也会将澳大利亚那个岛称之为‘澳大利亚大陆’的。”

“好吧！我无话可说了！那么我们就……去大洋洲！希望老天保佑！”爵士大声叫道。

“去大洋洲！”大家异口同声地喊道。

“巴嘉勒尔，你应该知道，你来我们船上就是天意！”爵士又说。

“好吧！我承认是老天让我上了你们的船，这事千万不要再提

了。”巴嘉勒尔说。

一席对话结束，在众人心中引起了强烈反响，并将大家的情绪全都调动了起来，原以为已经走进了一个死胡同，永远也出不来了，不料又有了新线索，给大家已经失望的心情又注入了新的希望。此刻的他们，恨不得马上飞到大洋洲。因为当他们回到“邓肯号”上时，是不能将失望带回去的，不然海伦夫人和玛丽小姐，一定会为找不到格兰特船长而悲伤。

因此，他们忘记了此刻所面临的危险，变得兴高采烈起来，令他们遗憾的是，这种激动和兴奋无法强烈地进行表达。

那时候是下午4点钟，他们计划在6点钟吃饭，巴嘉勒尔决定用一桌丰盛的晚宴来庆祝这个大发现。可惜能吃的东西太少了，于是他邀请罗伯尔和他去“附近”打猎，罗伯尔当然双手赞成。于是，他们拿着塔凯甫留下的弹药袋，擦擦所带的枪，装上子弹出发了。

“注意安全！”少校郑重地叮嘱两位“猎人”。

两个人爬到了树的最高处，爵士和少校看了看他们在树上刻的水位标记，维尔逊和穆纳则重新去点“炉灶”的火。

爵士从树上往下爬，一直爬到了水面上。他有些失望，因为没有任何退水迹象，当然水面也没有再上涨。不过，水从南向北流得还是很快，这足以说明，阿根廷所有河流的水量还没有达到平衡，如果想要退水，水面就必须稳定下来，涨退都停止下来才行。

所以说，只要水还在向北方急流，退水就不可能。

在爵士和少校观察水位的时候，树上发出了枪声，接着便是欢呼

声，欢呼声中既有罗伯尔的男高音，也有巴嘉勒尔的男低音，欢呼声和枪声一样响亮，而从他们欢快的声音里，根本判断不出谁更孩子气。

看来，他们的树上打猎成功了，这也预示着他们有野味吃了。

当少校和爵士回到“炉灶”边时，发现维尔逊又有了一个好创意，那就是用针和线做成鱼钩，然后坐在树上钓鱼。此时，他的罩篷里已经有十来条活蹦乱跳的小鱼了，这是一种和香鱼一样鲜嫩的鱼。

看来，这又是一盘好菜。

这时候，罗伯尔和巴嘉勒尔两个“猎人”也从树顶爬了下来。巴嘉勒尔一只手小心地捧着一些鸟蛋，另一只手提着一串被他称之为百灵鸟的小麻雀。罗伯尔用他的聪明和机灵，打了几只黄绿相间的水鸟。它的肉质鲜美，在乌拉圭一带很名贵。

平时能将菜做出72种变化的巴嘉勒尔，此次只能将这些食材放在热灰里了。不过，虽然做法简单，但菜品却很多，而且味美肉鲜，完全称得上是一顿美味佳肴，这些美味包括：干肉、鸟蛋、烤麻雀、烤小鸟、烧鱼……这样在树上取材，在树上烹制，在树上吃的美味，想必他们一辈子都不会忘记。

吃饭的时候，大家聊得很起劲，一直称赞巴嘉勒尔既是个好猎手，又是个好厨师。地理学家毫不客气地照单全收，并不时地报以微笑，俨然一副“万能人”的表情。吃完饭后，大家又调侃起了他们的处境，说起了他们正栖息的树，称在这棵树上不仅可以眼观六路，耳听八方，而且这棵大树简直是宽阔无边。

“知道吗？我和罗伯尔打猎时，犹如进了一个大森林，怎么都钻不

出来。我就找呀找呀，找了很久，找到了太阳下山。最后不得不照原路返回，但又找不到去时的路了，饿得肚子咕咕直叫。在昏暗的树丛里，我们听到了野兽的怒吼……最后又一想，不会的，怎么会有野兽，太可惜了！”巴嘉勒尔夸张地讲着他和罗伯尔的“传奇”打猎故事。

“什么？你觉得没有野兽很可惜？”爵士说。

“对呀！太可惜了！不过，洪水不就和猛兽一样吗？而且还是让你跑不了的猛兽……”巴嘉勒尔说。

“哦，照你这么说，巴嘉勒尔，你是想说猛兽对我们有好处对吗？它有什么好处？说说看！”少校说。

“少校，你难道不知道猛兽也是有很多种分类的吗？比如可以用某门、某纲、某目、某科、某属、某种……来分！”

“这所谓的分类就是好处？我可不觉得这些猛兽有什么好处。远古时期，如果我在挪亚方舟上，我一定不会让挪亚方舟上有一对狮、一对虎、一对豹、一对熊……有害无益的野兽。”

“你真会这么做？”巴嘉勒尔问。

“当然！我肯定会这么做的。”

“用动物学的观点来说，你真是犯了一个错误！一个大大的错误！”

“大大的错误？我可不觉得，至少从人道上来说，我是对的。”少校说。

“你这话说得太不应该了。如果是我，就和你相反，我一定会让大

懒兽、翼手龙.....将那些洪水前期存在的生物全部保留下来，这样的话，我们现在就能看到它们了。可惜，现在这些生物都灭绝了！”

“告诉你吧！挪亚做得最错的地方就是留下了那些猛兽，这种做法应该受到咒骂。”

.....

两个人又因为挪亚争执起来，大家都觉得很好笑。少校一辈子难得与人争辩，但却整天和巴嘉勒尔斗嘴。当然，主要是因为地理学家巴嘉勒尔故意刺激他。最终，还是要爵士出面调停。

“猛兽这一话题是个伪命题。不管说可惜也好，不可惜也好，从科学上来说也好，从人道上来说也好，总之，今天就没有猛兽，我们现在是在‘空中森林’，在这种地方，巴嘉勒尔应该不可能看到猛兽。”

“怎么不可能？”巴嘉勒尔说。

“树上有猛兽吗？”艾撒汀说。

“当然也会有，像那些被猎人逼急了的美洲虎，它们不是也会往树上逃吗？所以虎在遇到洪水的时候，无处可逃，也会上树逃命的，这样我们就有遇到的可能了。”

“可是你今天没遇到美洲虎吧！”少校说。

“是的，我在树林里搜遍了，但都没有，真是太可惜了！如果有的话，那可真是太好了。我们可以来一场围猎，那美洲虎可是猛兽，一爪子就能把马脖子扭断。不过，如果它吃过了人肉，就只喜欢吃人肉了。当然，它最爱吃的是印第安人，接下来是黑人，再接下来是黑人和白人

的混血，最后才是白人。”

“太庆幸了！我是最后一种它想吃的。”少校说。

“没错，但也证明你没什么味道。”巴嘉勒尔带着鄙夷，反击道。

“那就让我没什么味道吧！”少校也毫不客气。

“你真是太无耻了！白种人向来以头等人自居！不过，在美洲虎先生看来，并不是这样的！”好斗的巴嘉勒尔继续说着。

“好了！我的巴嘉勒尔！我们这里现在既没有印第安人，也没有黑人，更没有其他人种，你那些美洲虎先生最好不来。我们的处境并不乐观，住得也不舒适……”爵士说。

“什么？不舒适？”巴嘉勒尔瞬间将话题转移到了其他方向，“什么意思？爵士先生，你是说我们运气不好吗？”

“当然啦！难道你觉得住在树上既舒服又方便吗？”

“是呀！舒适！太舒适了！我还从没这么舒适过呢。就是我的书房也没这么舒适过。我们就像鸟儿一样生活，在树上唱歌，在树上跳舞。我现在开始相信人类就应该在树上生活了。”

“不过太可惜了，你少了一双翅膀！”少校又找到了机会挖苦巴嘉勒尔。

“总有一天会长出来的。”

“在没有长出来之前，我亲爱的朋友，我们还是不要住这种空中楼阁，还是住在公园里有沙的地方，家有地板的地方，船上有甲板的地方

吧！”爵士说。

“格莱拉弗，我们要随遇而安才行！不管遇到什么，好的、坏的，我们都不要在意。我看你一定是后悔离开麦凯莫府那个舒适的府邸了！”

“当然不是，只是……”

“我深信罗伯尔在这里很舒服。”巴嘉勒尔又说，他希望找到一个同盟军。

“没错！巴嘉勒尔先生！”罗伯尔欢快地说。

“这是因为他这种年龄喜欢这样的生活方式。”爵士说。

“也适合我的年龄！一个人越是不讲究舒适，他的需求就越少。需求少了，幸福感也就强了。”巴嘉勒尔又说。

“算了吧，巴嘉勒尔，我看你呀，又要攻击财富和华丽的建筑了。”少校说。

“当然不是这样了，少校！对了，说到这里，我想起了一个阿拉伯故事，要是你们想听，我讲给你们听吧！”

“好啊！好啊！巴嘉勒尔先生！”罗伯尔高兴地拍手叫好。

“你想用这故事说明什么？”少校问。

“老伙计，它会证明一切需要证明的东西。”

“那就是什么也证明不了。不过也好，你说吧，你不是很会讲故事

吗？讲个给我们听听。”少校又说。

“在第8世纪的时候有个阿拉伯回教徒的著名教主，叫纳哈农拉石，他有个儿子经常愁眉不展，闷闷不乐。这个儿子就去请教法师，问怎样才能感到幸福和开心。法师告诉他，说幸福在这个世界上很难找。不过他有个百试百灵的方法，可以让人幸福开心。教主的儿子问是什么方法。法师说：‘找一个快乐的人，把他的衬衫披在你的身上。’教主的儿子吻谢了法师后，就去找‘幸福快乐衣服’了。他找啊找啊，找遍了整个京城，把国王、王子、贵族的衬衫都穿了，还是不快乐。于是，他又穿了艺术家、军人、商人的衬衫，也不快乐……总之，他穿了很多衬衫，都没有觉得快乐。最后他失望了，决定回到父亲那里。就在那一天，他经过乡下时，看到一个农夫在开心地干农活，一边干还一边唱歌。他想，他终于找到一个快乐的人了。于是，他走上前去打招呼，并问：‘你快乐吗？’农夫说：‘我很快乐！’教主儿子又问：‘难道你不想要点什么吗？’农夫说：‘不！我不想要什么。’教主儿子接着问：‘让你不做农夫，做国王你愿意吗？’农夫摇头说：‘不！我一辈子都不换。’教主儿子说：‘那你把你的衬衫卖给我吧。’农夫说：‘我没有衬衫啊！’”

第二十章 离奇获救后的离别

巴嘉勒尔绘声绘色地讲着故事，大家对他的故事也很喜欢，不过都保留着自己的意见。法国地理学家巴嘉勒尔先生和往常一样，得到了一个谁也说服不了谁的结果。不过，有一点大家都达成了共识，那就是即使在最艰苦的环境下，他们也不能灰心，也不能没有希望。

现在的处境已然这样了，既无王宫，又无茅草可住，他们只能忍耐，住在树上。

大家东扯西聊，很快就聊到了日落西山，这惊心动魄的一天，只好以睡觉来收尾了。

树上的这些人因为洪水，也因为长久的颠沛流离，感到非常疲惫。何况这一天的天气很热，毒辣辣的太阳透过树叶照在了他们身上，让他们犹如被挂在树上炙烤一样难受。

树上的原居民——鸟儿已经休息了，就连那号称“潘帕之莺”的水鸟也停止了甜美的吟唱，其他鸟儿全都呼啦啦地躲进了枝繁叶茂的顶部。对于树上的新居民来说，他们最好的办法就是和鸟儿一样，快地睡着。

不过，睡觉前，爵士、罗伯尔和巴嘉勒尔还是爬到了“观察台”，对这一片汪洋大海做了这天的最后一次观察。那时候是晚上6点钟，太阳从闪烁的浓雾地平线上正慢慢隐去，整个半边天都处在了蒸汽中，原本明亮的南半球星座，如今已经被蒙上了一层薄雾，朦朦胧胧的。不过，

即使这样，他们还是能够隐约地辨别出。

巴嘉勒尔把南极圈最亮的星座指给罗伯尔看，而爵士也在旁边听着。巴嘉勒尔说排成斜方形的是南极十字架4个头号和2号的大星。还说离地球最近最亮的星星是“人马星座”，又说有两大片云的是“麦哲伦星云”，它比我们平时看到的月亮大200倍等等。

让他们感到可惜的是，“猎户星座”原本从两极都是可以看到的，但此时却没有出来。不过巴嘉勒尔还是给他的两个学生讲述了巴塔哥尼亚人的星宿学中的有趣现象，那就是在充满诗情画意的印第安人看来，“猎户星座”的四颗星星是在一条大“拉索”和三个“跑拉”上的，还说这几颗星星之所以能挂在天上，都是猎人抛出“拉索”和“跑拉”的结果。

这些星座倒映在平静如镜的水面上，让他们一时间觉得身处两个天空。而那两个天空又是一样的清澈，非常有趣。

在博学的地理学家巴嘉勒尔向罗伯尔和爵士讲天上星河的时候，东边的地平线上却隐隐出现了下暴雨的迹象。既黑又浓的云慢慢飘了过去，将一颗颗亮晶晶的星星遮住了。这些云有着清晰的轮廓，显得阴森可怕，瞬间就将半边天吞噬了，甚至好像胃口更大，要将整个天空都归它们所有。

云层移动的速度很慢，推力应该来自于内部，因为外界没有一点风做它们的动力。天空保持着静态，就连树上的叶子，也都像是被固定住了一样，没有一丝颤动。水面没有起一丝涟漪……连空气都好像静止了，或者说好像有个巨大的抽气机，将空气抽光了。整个氛围有种诡异感，像是充满了电。

大气中的一切生物，也都犹如被通上了电，爵士、巴嘉勒尔和罗伯

尔仿佛感受到了电流正通过身体。

“看来要起风暴了！”巴嘉勒尔说。

“打雷怕吗？”爵士问罗伯尔。

“为什么要怕打雷，爵士？”

“很好，不然一会儿会有暴风和雷雨过来。”

“从现在的天气情况来看，暴风雨会很大。”巴嘉勒尔补充说。

“我不怕风暴，我怕下大雨。如果下起了大雨，我们肯定会成为落汤鸡的，说不定水还会渗进我们的骨头。总之，巴嘉勒尔，人是不能和鸟儿一样，住在树上的。不信你等会儿就知道厉害了！”爵士说。

“哦！为什么不拿出哲学修养来？”巴嘉勒尔说。

“什么是哲学修养？有了哲学修养就不会让我们淋成落汤鸡了？”

“那当然做不到，不过有了哲学修养，我们就不会感到冷了，我们会感到很温暖。”

“好吧！我们还是回到朋友们之间吧，要大家用哲学修养和罩篷把自己裹起来，裹得越紧越好。我们现在需要忍耐，而且是最大的忍耐。这是我们必须要做到的。”

爵士又看了一眼那“邪恶”的天空。此时，黑云已经将天空完全遮住了，好在黑云的边缘有个缺口，昏黄的光还能从那些缺口处隐约露出。

汪洋大海已经变了颜色，成了幽暗的一片。天上的乌云和水里的黑

暗也已经连成了一片，连原本该有的影影绰绰也消失了。四周一片寂静，像黑暗一样深沉，好像即使是光和电，也不能穿过这层黑暗，传到人的耳朵里去。

“我们快下去吧！就要打炸雷了。”爵士说。

于是他们一起顺着树干往下滑。突然，他们看到下面有微弱的光，这让他们大吃一惊。那微弱的光像是从水底发出来的，形成了无数的小水光，小水光在水面上慢慢地移动，交织。

“是什么？难道是磷光？”爵士问。

“不！一定是萤火虫。这是些活着的，不值钱的钻石。布宜诺斯艾利斯的太太们经常会拿它们做漂亮的装饰品！”

“什么？它们是昆虫吗？为什么会像火星子一样到处蹦？”罗伯尔叫了起来。

“没错！是这样的，我的孩子。”

罗伯尔顺利地捉住了一只萤火虫。巴嘉勒尔说得没错，这是一种被印第安人称之为大土蜂的昆虫，有一寸多长。这种昆虫最奇怪的地方是翅膀前有两个小斑点，而光正是从那些小斑点里发出来的，光度很强，能够让人用它们在黑暗中看书。

巴嘉勒尔把那虫子往他面前凑了凑，发现表的指针指向了夜里10点钟。

爵士回到少校和三个水手那里，嘱咐他们做好应对暴风的一切准备。如果雷声响起，此地一定会有大风，而大风必定会让“蓊茏”树猛烈

摇晃，所以他们必须把各自用藤条绑在树枝上，而且要绑牢靠。

对于他们来说，天上下的雨如果无法躲避，那么就一定要防止从树上滚下去，滚进树底下的急流中去。

之后，大家各自道了“晚安”，虽然“安”对他们来说实现起来很困难，但他们还是用罩篷将自己紧紧裹住，互相捆住对方，等待着暴风和瞌睡的来临。

人和大自然的植物不一样，但却和大自然的动物是一样的，当自然界发生一些大的变化时，心里总会有着隐隐的不安，这种感觉即使是再坚强，再镇定的人也不会做到静如止水。所以他们虽然睡下了，却也烦躁不安，根本无法睡着。在第一节雷打响时，他们没有一个人入睡。

雷声是在深夜11点左右的时候响起的，那轰隆隆的雷声震耳欲聋。

爵士冒着危险，爬到了横枝的末端，将头伸出树叶，看着天空。

天空像被泼上了墨汁，黑压压的，闪电像一把寒刀，将黑压压的天空划开了一道明亮的口子，并清晰地反映在了湖面上。乌云像一块黑布，时不时地从一边揭开，但却没有碎裂的声音。爵士看看头顶的天空，又看了看天边，依然漆黑一片，他重又回到树干的顶端。

“情况怎么样，爵士？”巴嘉勒尔问。

“情况很不好，这样下去，风暴不会小。”

“很好，既然我们逃避不了，那就接受吧，等待着一场奇观出现吧。”巴嘉勒尔掩饰不住内心的兴奋。

“你的奇谈怪论又要出来了。”少校说。

“少校，我和爵士的看法一样，这一定是一场惊人的大暴风。在我刚刚想睡觉的时候，突然想起了几件事，这让我开始盼望这场惊人的大风暴。为什么呢？因为我们现在正处在雷雨地区，我不记得从什么书上看到过了，说在1793年的时候，在布宜诺斯艾利斯省，在一场风暴中出现了37次雷电。我的一位同事莫西先生就曾数过，说有一声雷电，竟然持续响了55分钟。”

“哦？这么清楚，难道他拿着表数的？”少校不屑地说。

“没错，是将表拿在手里的……不过嘛，要是教人趋吉避凶的话，我倒有个办法。那就是在我们所住的这个平原上的最高点——‘蓊茏’树上，放个避雷针。因为在潘帕区的所有树木中，‘蓊茏’树最容易被雷电击中。而且朋友们，你们应该知道，起风暴和打雷的时候，千万不能躲在树下。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“真好！你这个建议说得还真及时。”少校讥讽道。

“我不得不承认，巴嘉勒尔，但说风凉话的时候，你也要看时候再说呀！”爵士也说。

“这有什么关系？学知识嘛，什么时候学都是好的。啊！看，打雷了！”

一个很大的雷声响起，打断了他们的对话。此起彼伏的雷声越来越大，威力也越来越大。如果借音乐来比喻雷声的话，可以说是从低音转入到了中音。不过很快，雷声尖锐起来，大气里好像有无数管弦乐被奏起，空气中不断有火光闪现，密集的雷电让他们一时之间不知道雷声引

发的闪电是哪一条。接连不断的轰隆声、划破天空的撕裂声，在他们的头顶不间断地响着。

闪电变着花样在闪现，有几条闪电甚至已经斜插地面，在同一个地方反复出现，厉害的时候会出现五六次。曾有专门研究闪电的人做过有趣的统计，认为叉形闪电有两种形状，可在这里，叉形闪电竟然有几十种花样。同时，还有一些闪电是被分成无数枝节的，有些就像珊瑚树一样，在黑压压的天空放射出奇异的树杈形，纷繁复杂，非常有趣。

很快，天空由东到北的地方像是蒙上了磷光，发出耀眼的光芒，瞬间让天空燃烧起来，天空的火烧云就像地上的一大堆木炭一样，这一壮观现象再次倒映在水面上，形成了一个巨大的火球，而“蓊茏”树正好在那火球的中间。

爵士和同伴们无言地看着这惊人的一幕，他们想要交流，可说出的话，彼此完全听不清楚，大片大片的白光不时地射向他们身边，周围时明时灭，让大家各自看到了对方的脸：少校的脸色依然镇定；罗伯尔有些惊恐和害怕；两名水手的表情很无所谓……白光下的这些表情，让人有种幽灵的感觉。

此时，雨还没有开始下，但风却蓄势待发。不过没一会儿，黑黝黝的天空像是被扯开了一道口子，雨像瀑布一样泻了下来。千条万条雨柱从天空垂了下来，形成了雨帘。闪电下能看到大颗大颗的雨点子打在湖面上，溅起了水花，白亮亮的。

这场雨的降临，是否也就意味着雷电就要结束了呢？爵士他们在接受了淋浴般的雨柱后，是不是就完事了？不！一定没那么简单。在电闪雷鸣之际，有个拳头大的火球突然裹着黑烟，落在了“蓊茏”的主枝末

端。火球滚落下来，只几秒钟，他们便听到了爆炸般的轰隆声，瞬间，一股硫磺味弥漫在了空气中。在一阵短暂的沉寂后，大家听到了艾撒汀的叫喊声：

“树着火了！”

没错，仅仅是一眨眼的工夫，树西边的部分就燃烧起来了。那由枯枝和干草做成的鸟巢，以及“蓊茈”树上快要掉落的白木，都让火势加速燃烧起来。还没等树上的人反应过来，风又刮起来了，风让火势加剧，火苗开始四处蔓延。

现在非逃不可了。

大家连忙向还没有着火的树的东边爬去。惊恐中，每个人都没有说话，慌里慌张，手忙脚乱地爬着，冒险爬上了随时都有可能折断的细枝上。

此时，西边的树枝燃烧得正旺，发出噼里啪啦的声响。火势像一条蛇，蜿蜒爬行，有些掉进了汪洋中，有些被烧断的枯枝带着火落进了洪水中，发出嗤嗤的声响，还有的掉下去的树枝上的火花没有熄灭，随波而流，并不时地发出暗褐色的亮光。树上的火焰突然腾空而起，直插云霄，和空中的火烧云连成一片，忽而又被风按了下来，在“蓊茈”树上荡漾。

爵士、罗伯尔、少校、巴嘉勒尔以及三个水手，没有不惊骇的。浓烟呛得他们直咳嗽，喘不过气来，而那热气更是烘得他们站立不稳。更要命的是，大火已经开始朝他们这边蔓延了，甚至已经烧到了他们躲着的细枝下的主枝上。他们现在完全束手无策了，既不能阻止火势的蔓延，也不能将它们扑灭。如果不离开这棵大树，他们很快就会被活活烧

死在树上。

所以，他们现在面临的处境是：要么淹死；要么烧死。总之，他们怎么都是死，如果要选择的话，也就只能选择一个不是很残酷的死法了。

“跳水吧！”爵士大喊一声。

此时，火焰已经烧到了维尔逊的身上，他马上跳进水里。接着，正准备跳下去的人听到了他惊恐的叫声：“救命啊！快救命啊！”

艾撒汀急忙爬到离他最近的树枝旁，将他从水里捞了起来。

“发生什么事了？”艾撒汀问。

“有鳄鱼！水里有鳄鱼！”

维尔逊用颤音回答完，大家便看到他们脚下围了一圈可怕的鳄鱼。它们那被火焰照亮的鳞甲在火光中发着光：扁扁的尾巴、尖长的头、鼓起的眼睛、扩到耳后的双颞……一切的一切，都让巴嘉勒尔认出了它们是什么。

它们是美洲特有的最凶残的“阿厉加鼉”，也就是被西班牙人称为“介鰻”的生物。

这些可怕的蜥蜴类动物足足有十多条，它们一边用扁扁的尾巴拍打水面，一边用长长的下颞啃树。

上不能上，下不能下，树上的这些人还能怎样呢？无论如何，他们都是要惨死的，不是死在火下，就是死在鳄鱼嘴里。在这种时候，就连

一向淡定的少校也不淡定了。

“很可能一切都要结束了！”他说。

这种可能性太大了。虽然在通常情况下，当人们对自然界的某种灾难无能为力之时，自然界的另一种元素会来制服它，但此时，爵士看着被水火、鳄鱼相挟的他们，却完全无能为力了。

这时候，风暴渐衰，空气中有无数的水汽存在，雷电在水汽的驱使下，爆发出了极大的威力，所以让渐渐弱下去的风形成了圆锥形的飓风，飓风的锥顶朝下，将沸腾的水和翻卷的云结合起来，向前推进，速度快得惊人。

飓风卷起了洪水，并将其吸到了圆锥的中心，形成了一个大大的水柱，而那旋转着的水柱，因为强大的吸引力，又将周围的气流全部吸了过去。

很快，那股飓风涌向了“蓊茏”树，并将这棵大树一圈一圈地裹了起来，整棵树都像是被这股飓风连根拔起，开始摇晃起来。爵士最初不知这是飓风所为，还以为是鳄鱼啃咬树所致。

几个人只能紧紧地拥抱在一起，想靠全体人的力量来抗拒大自然的威力。

不过，树倒了，根部朝上翻了起来。那正燃烧得旺盛的树枝瞬间便进了洪流之中，发出很大的嗤嗤声。当然，这仅仅只是一秒钟的时间，飓风在将“蓊茏”树连根拔起后，马上又去了其他地方。它在行进中，不断地吸着洪水，所过之处形成了很大的旋涡。

“蓊茏”树已经横卧在洪水中了，并随着水、风两重力量向前漂流。

鳄鱼在“蓊茏”树被飓风连根拔起时便一哄而散了，只有一只向翻起的树根上爬，边爬还边张开了嘴巴。

穆纳抓起一根带火的树枝，拼命朝它背上、腰上打去。鳄鱼被打翻在洪流里，并沉入急流中的旋涡，在进旋涡前，它还不服气地用尾巴拍打水。

此时，没有了鳄鱼威胁的他们，急忙爬到了火势蔓延的上风。这时，这根承载着他们的“蓊茏”树，正被一团火焰带领，在夜幕下的洪流中漂流。火焰因飓风的捣乱，烧得更旺了，如同燃烧着的渔船，带着火向前冲。

“蓊茏”树带着火和几个人在洪流中漂流了两个小时，还是没有看到陆地。火焰已经快要完全熄灭了，漂流中的他们，竟然脱离了危险。少校慢慢吐出了一句话：“此时的我们，如果获救，一点儿也不奇怪！”

洪流还是由南向北，保持着原来的方向。天空的闪电慢慢在减小，只是偶尔划过一道，夜色重新进入到了深深的黑暗之中。巴嘉勒尔看着天边，想要找到一个可以依靠的目标，但什么都没有。风暴接近尾声，雨点丝毫没有减弱，大颗大颗的，在风势中飘舞，如同雪花在飘散。大块大块的云朵不断地分裂，分裂成了一块一块的，在高空飘移。

“蓊茏”树在洪流中加快了速度，而且越来越快，好像树深处装着的发动机似的。没有任何一种迹象表明它能像这样漂多久。不过，凌晨3点左右的时候，少校突然提醒大家，说树根好像已经探到底了。艾撒汀折了一根树枝，伸到水下去探，证实地面确实在增高。在他们正想着是不是要到陆地了时，仅仅过了20分钟，快速行进中的“蓊茏”像是撞到了什么地方，停下来了。

“我们到陆地了！陆地！”巴嘉勒尔高兴地喊道。

没错，“蓊茏”树的一个已经烧焦的树枝末端触到了一片高地上。这样的航行，让人们在见到陆地的那刻，比任何航海家见到陆地都高兴。触礁也就是着陆，这是多么神奇的事啊。

罗伯尔和维尔逊以最快的速度蹦到了陆地上，他们大声地欢呼着。

突然，他们听到了一阵熟悉的呼哨声，接着，陆地上传来了一阵马蹄声，不一会儿，塔凯甫出现在了他们面前。夜色中，他那高大的身材显得那么威武、醒目。

“塔凯甫！是塔凯甫！”罗伯尔激动得大叫。

“塔凯甫！真的是塔凯甫！”所有的人都叫了起来。

“朋友们！”塔凯甫朝他们喊着。他像是一个站在码头，迎候着头班船旅客的人。在他估算出他们会流向这里后，便在这里等着，因为他就是被水冲到这里来的。

塔凯甫双手将罗伯尔抱了起来，巴嘉勒尔跑到了他的背后，从背后抱住了他。随即，爵士、少校和水手们也冲到了塔凯甫的身边。能见到这位忠诚的向导，他们异常兴奋，所以使劲地跟他握手。

最后，塔凯甫将他们带到了一座已经废弃了的牧场栏舍，那里正烧着一堆旺火，火上烤着大块大块的猎物，这样他们便能一边烤火取暖，一边吃美餐了。这餐饭他们吃得连一点碎屑都没留。

在吃饱喝足烤暖后，他们重新回想这段经历，没有人不感到惊讶的。他们无法想象，竟然在水、火、鳄鱼的三面夹击下脱险，甚至神奇

地漂回了陆地。

塔凯甫也向巴嘉勒尔简单地讲了他的脱险经历。他说，他之所以会获救，全是因为那英勇的特迦。

巴嘉勒尔把他们对那三张纸条的重新解释，以及大家的希望全都告诉给了塔凯甫。虽然巴嘉勒尔的设想，塔凯甫也不知道听懂了没有，但能肯定的是，当他看到他的朋友们快乐而又满怀信心时，表现得很高兴，也很满足。

我们不难想象，这群英勇的远征者，在从“蓊茏”树上下来，还没休息一天便迫不及待地动身了。早晨8点，他们做好了出发前的一切准备工作。那时候，他们所处的位置，差不多在大牧场和宰杀场的南部，由于找不到交通工具，他们只能步行。好在只有60多公里路，而且有人走累了，也有特迦可以驮。如果需要，特迦背上坐两个人都没问题，而他们总共只需走38个小时，便能到达大西洋的沿岸了。

等到出发时间一到，塔凯甫便带领大家，背对洪流向较高的平原方向走去。此时，单调的阿根廷领土重又呈现在他们面前，他们看到的只是欧洲人种的几棵树，稀稀落落地矗立在牧草地上，此情形像极了坦迪尔和塔巴尔康西两山附近。

阿根廷的一些本地树木，只有在过了漫长的草原，接近哥连德角附近时才会出现。

第一天就这么过去了。第二天，他们距海岸还有约24公里的路程，而且似乎已经感受到了海洋的存在。那时，常在下半天和下半夜刮起一阵怪风，而怪风又会将草木顺着一个方向吹下去。

慢慢地，贫瘠的土地上竖起了稀疏的树木，有矮小的含羞草，还有一丛一丛被称为“桤柯荷”的树，以及一簇簇被称为“枸纳麻柏尔”的树。除此之外，土地上还有像打碎了玻璃的盐滩，闪着光，挡在他们面前，使他们行走起来越来越难。

这些盐滩，他们必须绕过才行。于是大家全都加快了脚步，以便能在当天赶到大西洋岸上的萨拿朵湖。

晚上8点的时候，又累又乏的他们看到很多40多米高的沙丘出现在面前，而这沙丘的另一面是白沫乱飞。同时，他们听到了涨潮的声音。

“大海！”巴嘉勒尔最先叫了一声。

“是的，是大海。”塔凯甫回答他说。

此时，大家虽然已经筋疲力尽，但还是兴奋地爬上了沙丘。不过，由于天色已黑，他们想在那阴森森的海面上寻找点什么却是不可能的。不用说，他们寻找的是“邓肯号”。

“‘邓肯号’应该就在这一带，在岸边荡来荡去地等我们！”爵士有些急躁，大声说。

“也许明天就能看到了。”少校说。

艾撒汀朝他们预计“邓肯号”出现的地方呼喊，但却没有一点回音。此时，风浪越来越大，乌云从西边飘来，浪头的泡沫如同灰尘，飞上了沙丘。所以即使“邓肯号”就在附近，艾撒汀的呼唤，船上的人也是听不到的。

另一方面，此地的海岸并没有可以停泊的海湾，甚至连海港、支流

都没有。

沿岸是长长的沙滩，一直延伸到海里。如果“邓肯号”在这里触到了沙滩，很可能比触及与水面相平的礁石都危险。因为这一带波涛汹涌，沙滩激起了很高的浪头，如果“邓肯号”被风吹到这里，很可能就没救了。

因此，在看到这一带海岸的险恶，以及根本没有躲避风浪的地方后，“邓肯号”一定会开得远远的，这是唯一正确的做法。何况麦盖尔船长为人处世非常谨慎，必定会加倍小心的。

艾撒汀就是这么估算的，所以他觉得“邓肯号”一定是在离岸8公里以外的地方。

一向淡定的少校劝爵士冷静。他说对着那黑暗的地方，即使再怎么看也看不到，何必白费力气？

在劝慰过爵士后，少校先以沙丘为墙，建了一个宿营地。

如今，他们所剩的最后一点干粮，成了他们这次旅程的最后一顿晚饭。饭后，大家也都学少校，挖了一个洞做床铺，而那一望无际的细沙，成了他们的被褥，直接盖到了下巴处。

劳累了几天的他们，刚一倒下便沉沉地入睡了。当然，有一个人一直睡不着，在守夜，他就是爵士。

狂风大作，波涛汹涌，海浪拍打在沙滩上，发出了轰隆隆的声响。爵士不相信“邓肯号”就在他们附近的海面上，但如果说“邓肯号”还没有到达这里，又是不可能的事。

他们一行人是10月14日离开塔尔卡瓦诺湾，11月12日到达大西洋岸的。这就是说，在他们一行人穿过智利、高低岩、潘帕区和阿根廷平原的这30天里，“邓肯号”绝对有足够的时间绕过合恩角，到达和塔尔卡瓦诺湾相对的东海岸。特别是像“邓肯号”这样的快船，根本不可能误期。何况虽然风暴凶猛，大西洋那片的海域必定也受到了影响，但质量过硬的“邓肯号”，加上老练的船长，一定会早早地到达这里的。

爵士就这么安慰着自己，但还是无法安下心来。此时可以说是他情感和理智交织的时期，此时的情感战胜了理智。在这片黑暗的黑夜里，有着他深爱的海伦、玛丽，以及“邓肯号”上的所有船员。他马上就要见到他们了，他怎么能冷静得下来？

虽然已是黑夜，但海面上的波光粼粼还是能看清的，爵士起身在荒凉的海岸上徘徊。他不停地走走听听，好像突然看到远处有微弱的亮光。

“是船上发出的亮光吗？会不会是‘邓肯号’发出的？难道我的眼力能穿透黑夜？”

爵士这么一想，马上想到了巴嘉勒尔说他是夜视眼，即使是黑暗里的东西，他也能看清楚。于是，他去找巴嘉勒尔。这名法国地理学家正窝在沙窝里，像动物冬眠一样睡着。在被一只健壮的胳膊拽起来后，懊恼地喊道：“谁呀？干什么？”

“巴嘉勒尔，快起来，是我！”

“你是谁呀！”巴嘉勒尔还没清醒过来。

“我是格莱拉弗。快起来，我要借你的眼睛来用用。”

“借我的眼睛？”巴嘉勒尔擦了擦自己的眼睛。

“没错，借你的眼睛用用，我要让你在黑夜中看看，海面上有没有‘邓肯号’。快起来！”

“有夜视眼还真倒霉！”巴嘉勒尔自语道。不过在心里却为能给爵士帮忙而感到高兴。

巴嘉勒尔站直身体，伸了伸懒腰，不过，他还是像刚刚睡醒的人一样，鼻子里发出呼呼的声音。他跟着爵士，来到了岸的上头。

“请你仔细看一下海那边。”爵士说。

巴嘉勒尔认真地看了几秒钟。

“怎么？难道你没看见什么吗？”爵士问。

“我什么都没看见，我敢说，就是来只猫，也看不到多远。”

“你再仔细看看，看那周围有没有红的或绿的灯在亮，就是说有没有看到船的左舷灯和右舷灯？”

“我什么灯都没看到，只看到漆黑的一片。”巴嘉勒尔说着，眼睛不由自主地闭上了。

就这么被心急的爵士拖了有半个小时，巴嘉勒尔机械地跟着他，耷拉着脑袋，而猛地，又会突然抬起头来。走路踉踉跄跄的地理学家，如同一个醉汉跟在身后。爵士仔细一看，巴嘉勒尔是在边走路边睡觉。

爵士没有叫他，继续搀着他，将他送回他睡觉的那个沙窝，并用沙将他埋好。

东方刚刚吐出鱼肚白，大家便被一声声的“邓肯号！邓肯号！”叫醒了。大家爬起来和爵士一起欢呼着，叫喊着，向岸边奔去。

没错，在离岸大约4公里的海面上，他们看到了“邓肯号”，“邓肯号”的船帆低低地裹在帆罩里，以缓慢的速度向前行驶。船上的烟和水里的晨雾交织在一起，模糊不清。

海浪拍打着沙滩，如此吨位的船是不可能到沙滩脚下的，那样会非常危险。

爵士拿起了巴嘉勒尔的望远镜，观察那只船的行动。“邓肯号”上的麦盖尔船长，一定没有看见他们，因为船不仅没有掉头，反而还在继续朝前行驶，前帆张了一半，左舷还扣着帆脚。

就在此时，塔凯甫将他的枪里装上了弹药，朝着游船方向开了一枪。

大家仔细地听着，塔凯甫总共开了三枪，沙丘里回响着塔凯甫的枪声。终于，他们看到游船的中间部位冒起了白烟。

“‘邓肯号’要放炮了，看来他们看到我们了。”爵士高兴地说。

果然，仅仅几秒钟，隐隐的炮声便传到了岸上。接着，“邓肯号”加大马力，掉转帆篷，摇摇晃晃地想要靠近岸边。

爵士从望远镜里看到，游船上放下来了一只小艇。

“海伦夫人一定不会来的，海浪太大了。”艾撒汀说。

“麦盖尔也不可能来，他不能离开船。”少校也说。

“姐姐！姐姐！”罗伯尔大声嚷嚷着，伸出胳膊不停地朝那在海浪里颠簸的小船摇手。

“我要上船。”爵士说。

“爱德华，耐心点！两个小时后，你就会在船上了，不急这一会儿。”少校说。确实，小船上即使有6只桨在划，但一来一往，还是需要两个多小时的。

爵士转过头，开始寻找塔凯甫。此时塔凯甫正叉着腰，站在特迦身边，安静地看着波涛汹涌的海面。

爵士走过去，拉住了他的手，指着游船说：“和我们一起上去吧！”

塔凯甫摇了摇头。

“朋友，和我们一起吧！”爵士又说。

“不！我不能！这里有特迦，那里有‘潘帕’！”他转头指了指那一望无际的平原，淡淡地说。

爵士知道，塔凯甫永远不会抛下那片埋着他祖先的故地，他对这荒凉的平原有着浓烈的爱。所以，他握了握塔凯甫的手。塔凯甫没有要报酬，他带着憨厚的微笑，说了句“只是在为朋友帮忙”。

爵士没有勉强，他知道对塔凯甫最大的尊重就是接受他的做法，可他又想为塔凯甫留下点什么，他要让塔凯甫永远记住，塔凯甫有一群欧洲朋友。不过，他手里还有什么呢？武器和马匹全都在洪流中丢失了，他和同伴们两手空空。

在他想着怎么给塔凯甫留个纪念时，猛地想到了一样东西。他从皮夹里拿出了一幅相框，相框里镶嵌着一个小小的画像，这画像是劳伦斯的杰作，也是他最珍贵的东西，他将它送给了塔凯甫。

“这画像里的人是我的夫人。”爵士说。

塔凯甫对爵士拿出自己最珍贵的东西送给他觉得非常感动，他看着画像说：“夫人真是美丽又贤惠啊！”

此时，罗伯尔、巴嘉勒尔、少校、艾撒汀和那两个水手也都来了，每个人都和塔凯甫说着不舍的话。就要离开这个英勇热心的朋友了，每个人心里都很难受。塔凯甫用他那长长的胳膊一齐揽住了他们，将他们拉到自己胸前。

巴嘉勒尔想到塔凯甫对那张南美及两洋的地图很感兴趣，便送给了他，而这张地图也是巴嘉勒尔保存的唯一的宝贵东西。由于没有东西可送，罗伯尔只能不断地亲吻他。

罗伯尔不仅亲吻救过他命的塔凯甫，而且也亲吻特迦。

此时，“邓肯号”上的小舟已经渐渐靠岸，并钻进了沙滩间的一道河汊，停在了岸边。

“我的夫人在哪儿？”爵士问。

“我的姐姐在什么地方？”罗伯尔也问。

“海伦夫人和玛丽小姐在大船上等你们！走吧，爵士，我们不能再耽误了，再耽误潮水就落了。”划小舟的人说。

分别在即，大家又和塔凯甫进行了最后一次握手、拥抱、热吻，塔凯甫将他们送到小舟旁，又将小舟推入水中。

罗伯尔上船时，塔凯甫动情地一把搂住了他，慈爱地看着他。

“去吧！你是大人了！”他说。

“再见！朋友！朋友！再见！”爵士大喊一声。

“我们还能见面吗？”巴嘉勒尔喊道。

“老天知道！”塔凯甫说完，伸长胳膊指了指天。

他最后的那句话，在晨风中飘了很远。

小舟很快进入海面，在落潮的推力下，渐行渐远。隔着浪花，有很长一段时间，大家还能看见塔凯甫的身影，见他正一动不动地看着他们。慢慢地，他那高大的身材变得矮小起来，最后在他们眼前消失了。

虽然只是萍水相逢，但他们之间却产生了深厚的友谊。

一个小时后，罗伯尔率先跳上了“邓肯号”，他飞奔到玛丽面前，抱住了她的脖子。全船的水手都发出了热烈的欢呼声。

沿着37度线，横穿南美的搜寻就这么结束了。搜寻中，不管是高山还是大海，都未曾让他们放弃行走在37度线。虽然他们还没有遇到什么人为的困难，但却受到了大自然的严峻考验。不过，即使这样，大自然的灾难也没能成为他们的障碍，相反还锻炼了他们的意志。

第二十一章 重新制订寻找计划

回到“邓肯号”后，大家沉浸在了重逢的喜悦里，爵士不想因为这次寻找无果而让大家扫兴，所以他一开始就说：“我们一定要有信心！朋友们，虽然这次我们没有带回格兰特船长，但我们有信心和把握找到他。”

没错，为了不让海伦夫人和玛丽小姐失望，他必须做这样的保证。

在小舟划近大船时，海伦夫人就和玛丽小姐早早地等在了尾楼顶上，玛丽小姐由于太过紧张，心跳得很厉害，不仅说不出话来，而且站都快站不稳了，幸好有海伦夫人挽着她的胳膊。刚开始的时候，她以为小舟上会有父亲格兰特船长。不过，站在她身边的麦盖尔船长，却用那双水手特有的锐利眼神，看着远处，他清楚地看到，小舟上没有格兰特船长。

“他在那里，我的父亲，他来了！”玛丽小姐一直喃喃着。

不过，她的心情很快就荡到了谷底，因为在小舟越来越近时，她发现一切都只是自己的想象。在小舟离大船不到100米时，海伦夫人、玛丽小姐和麦盖尔船长都知道了小舟里没有格兰特船长，玛丽的眼泪模糊了双眼，她绝望了。

不过，就在此时，爵士那充满信心的保证让她不仅看到了希望，而且好像吃了一颗定心丸。

在一场拥吻后，远征者们将这次在陆地上搜寻时遇到的惊险场面全

都告诉了海伦夫人、玛丽小姐和麦盖尔船长。当然，爵士首先说的还是巴嘉勒尔通过他的智慧，发现了纸条上的新注解。接着，他又夸奖了小罗伯尔，将他勇敢真诚，不怕危险的事情说了，并说玛丽小姐应该为有这么一位好弟弟而自豪。

爵士的夸奖让罗伯尔有些难为情，很想躲起来，但不知道躲去哪儿，幸好玛丽小姐伸开了双臂，他便一下子偎在了姐姐的怀里。

“罗伯尔，这有什么难为情的？这才是格兰特船长的儿子呀！”

麦盖尔船长说着，伸出双手将罗伯尔从玛丽小姐的怀里拖了出来，吻着他那沾着玛丽小姐泪水的小脸。

在这里我们需要说一句，少校和地理学家同样受到了大家的热烈欢迎，而他们也谈到了真诚热心的塔凯甫。海伦夫人遗憾没有和善良的印第安人塔凯甫握手。少校在和大家叙完旧后，钻进了自己的房间，仔仔细细地刮起了胡子。

巴嘉勒尔则像个勤劳的小蜜蜂，东奔西跑地寻东找西，和船上的每个人打招呼，听每个人给他唱赞歌。他甚至还想吻遍“邓肯号”上的全体人员，包括海伦夫人和玛丽小姐。当然，他最先吻的也是这两个人，接着才挨个吻下去，直吻到最后一位——奥比尔先生。

奥比尔觉得没有更好的方法来表达他对远征队员们的欢迎了，能表达的只有美食，于是宣布开饭。

“要吃午饭了吗？”巴嘉勒尔高兴地问。

“没错，先生！”奥比尔说。

“那一定是顿丰盛的午餐吧！难道让我一个人坐一张桌子？还有，餐具呢？餐巾呢？都有吗？”巴嘉勒尔嚷嚷个不停，到处都是他的声音。

“这些都会有的，巴嘉勒尔先生！”

“这就是说，今天可以不用吃干肉、烟煨蛋和鸵鸟肋条了？”

“先生！怎么可能吃这些呢？”奥比尔这个厨师长不高兴了，觉得小看了他的手艺。

“我亲爱的朋友，我可没有小看你！知道吗？我们一个月以来，全都是吃这些东西。我们没有坐在桌子旁吃，我们是坐在地上吃，甚至骑在树杈上吃。所以当你宣布开饭时，对我来说，简直就是一场梦，甚至觉得会不会是自己的幻想。”巴嘉勒尔笑着说。

“巴嘉勒尔先生，那么你就去证实一下这是不是真的吧！”海伦夫人笑着说。

“那让我挽着您去吧！”巴嘉勒尔绅士十足地说。

“阁下有没有什么新的命令给我？”麦盖尔船长问爵士。

“亲爱的麦盖尔，午饭后，我们讨论下一步计划。”

游船上的客人，以及船长麦盖尔都来到了方厅，麦盖尔嘱咐开船的水手做好准备，一旦下命令就起航开船。

少校在刮完胡子后，其他人也都洗漱完毕，全都围在了餐桌旁。厨师长预备好晚饭后，大家吃得欢天喜地，直嚷嚷着好吃，说比平原上那

些丰盛的食物美味多了，而巴嘉勒尔也把每样菜都取了两份，还声称这是粗心所为。

说到“粗心”，海伦夫人便问可爱的法国地理学家，在远征途中，有没有犯过粗心的毛病。少校和爵士互看一眼后，全都会心地笑了。巴嘉勒尔笑得最大声，那笑里带着天真。他说他用他的荣誉保证，以后绝不会粗心了，然后还把苦读珂梦斯的作品，以为学的是西班牙语的事说了。说完又补充道：“一句话，吃一堑长一智！不过呢，那次的粗心，我可一点都没吃亏。”

“亲爱的朋友，为什么这么说？”少校问。

“这还不明白吗？因为这次粗心，我不仅学会了西班牙语，而且还学会了葡萄牙语。一举两得！”

“哦！好一个一举两得！看来要恭喜你了，恭喜你学一种语言，会两种语言。”少校调侃道。

大家全都一窝蜂地开始恭喜巴嘉勒尔。巴嘉勒尔虽然吃着饭，但嘴并没有停下，而是边吃边和大家聊天。不过，在大家都聊天时，有个没被人注意的秘密却被爵士注意到了，那就是船长麦盖尔老是坐在玛丽小姐身旁，并对她大献殷勤。

海伦夫人给丈夫使眼色，意思是“一直都这样”，而爵士也是带着欣慰的神情看着那对青年男女。突然，他叫了声麦盖尔，不过问的却是别的事。

“这次航行怎么样？”他问。

“非常好！不过我们没有经过麦哲伦海峡。”

“啊？我不在船上的时候，你们竟然绕过了合恩角？”巴嘉勒尔喊道。

“你是后悔没看到合恩角吧，亲爱的地理学家，如果你有分身术，你就能同时去很多地方了，比如在跑潘帕草原的时候，又去绕合恩角！”爵士笑着说。

“虽然无法分身，但怎么说也是个遗憾呀！”巴嘉勒尔说。

大家没再引他往下说，这个话题也到此为止。船长继续讲述他们在海上航行的经过，他说他们沿着美洲海岸走，在观察了西边的岛屿后，也没发现有“大不列颠号”的任何痕迹。到了皮拉尔角，因为靠近麦哲伦海峡的入口处，正好顺风，于是便向南去了。他们一直沿着德索拉西翁岛屿航行，直到南纬67度线才又绕过合恩角，沿着火地岛前行，最后又穿过了勒梅尔海峡，沿着巴塔哥尼亚海岸北上。

在他们行驶到与哥连德角同纬度的地方时，遇到了风暴，而这场风暴也袭击了潘帕草原上搜寻的远征队员们。好在“邓肯号”安然无恙，在沿着海岸航行了3天后，开始焦急地等待远征队员归来，直到听到塔凯甫的枪响才发现他们。

对于海伦夫人和玛丽小姐，麦盖尔船长更是敬佩有加，称在惊涛骇浪面前，两位女士毫不畏惧，也不烦躁着急。而她们之所以能如此淡定，则是因为她们的心一直牵挂着去潘帕草原搜寻的远征队员。

船长麦盖尔在讲完后，爵士先是夸奖了他一番，接着转向玛丽小姐说：“亲爱的玛丽小姐，我发现麦盖尔船长很欣赏你。我想，你坐在他的船上，一定很放心吧！”

“欣赏我？”玛丽小姐说着话，眼睛在看向海伦夫人的同时，也看向了年轻的船长麦盖尔。

“哈哈！船长先生，我姐姐喜欢你，我也喜欢你！”罗伯尔突然大声说。

“亲爱的孩子，我也很爱你们！”船长这么一说，玛丽小姐的脸腾地红了。为了转移话题，麦盖尔船长又说：“等我把‘邓肯号’航行的情况说了，阁下也把你们横穿美洲大陆的情况，以及我们小英雄的事迹说说好吗？”

说远征队的事情，没有比这更让海伦夫人和玛丽小姐感兴趣的了。爵士为了尽快满足她们的好奇心，将她们所经过的一幕幕讲了出来。他讲了他们爬安第斯山的时候，遇到了地震，然后发现罗伯尔失踪，还被兀鹰用爪子抓了起来，最后在塔凯甫那一枪的帮助下，罗伯尔获救；接着讲了他们和红狼的一场惊心动魄的战斗，以及罗伯尔牺牲自己，保全大家的精神；又说了在独立堡见司令、遇洪水，以及在“蓊茏”树上避难，最后“蓊茏”树遭到雷击，大树起火，树下又有鳄鱼，之后又遇飓风，“蓊茏”树被连根拔起，漂到了陆地，在大西洋过了一夜.....

这一切的一切，不管是开心还是恐惧，他都原原本本地说了出来，听众们忽而欣喜，忽而害怕。在爵士的讲述中，罗伯尔多次得到了姐姐玛丽和海伦夫人的抚慰，而他也从未得到过如此多人的疼爱、拥抱和亲吻。

爵士在讲述完这些后，又说：“朋友们，过去的已经过去了，我们现在应该想接下来怎么做，未来一定会属于我们。下面我们谈谈该怎么

继续找格兰特船长吧。”

午饭结束后，大家全都跑到了海伦夫人的客厅，围坐在一张堆满了各种彩色地图的桌子旁，讨论也就此开始。

“亲爱的海伦，上船时，我就和你说过，‘大不列颠号’失事的船员这次虽然没有被我们找到，但我们有信心找到他们。我们曾横穿美洲跑了一趟，这趟没有白跑，因为我们知道了这样一个事实，那就是这只失事的船既不是在太平洋沿岸，也不是在大西洋沿岸。怎么说呢？就是说我们误读了那三张纸条上的意思，误读的是对巴塔哥尼亚的解释。幸好我们伟大的地理学家巴嘉勒尔发现了这个错误。所以现在，我们没有什么疑问了，我们要重新拿出那几张纸条来解释给大家听，让大家放心。”

巴嘉勒尔接受了重新解释纸条上的内容给大家听的任务，并很快讲了起来。他将gonie和indi两个完全不同的字仔细地讲给大家，然后又把“澳大利亚”（Australia）一词从austral这个字里解释出来，以此证明格兰特船长离开秘鲁海岸回欧洲的时候，很可能是因为船只出现了问题，被西风打到了大洋洲的海岸。总之，他用他那巧妙的假设和严谨的推理，让不容易受到蒙蔽，性格固执的麦盖尔船长也接受了他的观点。

在巴嘉勒尔讲完后，爵士便宣布“邓肯号”向大洋洲行驶。

不过，少校却在“邓肯号”掉头向东航行前，说要提一个小小的意见。

“是什么？说吧！”爵士说。

“我说这些不是想要推翻朋友巴嘉勒尔的推论，也不是说他说得有问题。我只是觉得他的推断虽然谨慎，但却需要引起我们的注意，就是

他所说的这些只能作为我们搜寻的参考。我觉得我们完全有必要再对这几张纸条做一番推敲研究，以便达到无懈可击的地步。”少校说。

大家不知道平时谨慎细心的少校觉得哪里有了问题，总之觉得有些不安。

“少校，说吧，继续说。我已经准备好应对你所提出的一切问题。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“很简单！我想说，在5个月前，我们在克莱德湾研究这三张纸条的时候，觉得一切解释完全符合情理。甚至除了巴塔哥尼亚的东海岸，根本不可能在其他海岸沉船。就是说，关于这一点，我们曾连丝毫的怀疑都没有。”

“没错，是这样的。”爵士说。

“可是后来呢？巴嘉勒尔像碰到鬼了一样，突然莫名其妙地跑到了我们船上，在我们拿那三张纸条给他看时，他也毫不迟疑地同意我们的推断，并和我们一起到美洲海岸搜寻。”

“没错！我完全同意你的说法，少校先生！”巴嘉勒尔一脸平静地说。

“但是，我们却把方向找错了！”少校又说。

“对呀，我们是把方向找错了。”巴嘉勒尔先是用少校的口气说完，接着又嚷嚷道，“不过，人总是免不了会犯错，错了就要改正。如果明知错了，还要一直错下去，那简直就是个傻瓜。”

“请等我说完，地理学家先生！你的性子怎么这么急呢？我并不是

说我们要再去美洲搜寻。”少校说。

此时，爵士首先就等不及了，对少校说：“那你到底想说什么？”

“没什么，我只是要让大家承认一点，此时我们觉得‘大不列颠号’的出事地点在大洋洲，就和我们当初觉得是在美洲一样肯定。”

“当然，我们完全承认这点。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“既然大家承认这点，那么我就要告诉你，巴嘉勒尔，你的想象力实在是太丰富了，今天觉得是这样，明天又觉得是那样。今天否定了昨天的，昨天又否定了前天的……这样否定来否定去，谁能保证我们在搜寻完大洋洲后，又觉得纸条上其实不是这个意思，而是别的意思，并在其他‘肯定’的地方搜寻呢？”少校严肃地说。

爵士和巴嘉勒尔面面相觑，一句话都说不出来。因为少校说得很对，这让他们很是吃惊，也有些沮丧。

没等他们说话，少校继续说：“所以我觉得我们在去大洋洲之前，是否再作一次验证。我们可以根据纸条上的字迹，将南纬37度线穿过的地点再研究一遍，看看是否还能在纸条中找到相似的字迹。”

“没问题，这很容易，不需要多长时间就能做到，因为这条纬线经过的陆地并不多。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“那我们就再仔细研究一下吧！”少校说着，打开了一张英国版的地球平面图，并将整个地形摆在海伦夫人的面前。大家全都聚了过去，寻找着合适的地点，听巴嘉勒尔按图解说。

“我前面都已经说过了，37度纬线穿过南美洲后，就到了特利斯探

达昆雅群岛。而在纸条里，我们是看不到一个字眼跟这个群岛的名字有关联的。”巴嘉勒尔说。

大家又仔细地研究了后，发现巴嘉勒尔说得没错，所以这岛便被他们放弃了。

“接下来，我们出了大西洋，到了好望角。这里比37度低两度，随后我们进了印度洋，并在路上碰到了阿姆斯特丹群岛。同前面我们说的特利斯探达昆雅群岛一样，大家再研究一下吧，看从纸条上能不能找到相关的地名。”

大家在又仔细研究了一番后，不管是用英文、法文还是德文，不管是完整的还是不完整的字数，都与阿姆斯特丹群岛这个地名没有任何关系，最终，这个岛也被放弃了。

“接下来，我们又到了大洋洲。37度线穿过了澳大利亚大陆，从白洛夷加进去，然后又从杜布湾出来。我想，你们应该能看出，写着英文的纸条中的stra和法文字条中的austral，他们都和澳大利亚（Australia）这个字有关。我想，我不用再重复了吧！”

大家都赞成巴嘉勒尔的说法，并把出事地点的最大可能性放在了这里。

“继续往前看！”少校依然一脸平静。

“好！我们继续往前看。用地图旅行可真是太容易了。我们离开了杜布湾会经过大洋洲东面的那片海峡，也就是岛国新西兰。在这里我要提醒大家，用法文写的纸条上的continent是指‘大陆’。但新西兰却只是一个小岛，所以格兰特船长应该不会逃到那里去。即便如此，我们还是

要研究研究，比较比较。经过认真研究每一个地方后，看有没有是新西兰的可能。”

“没有这种可能，我把纸条和地图都研究过了。”船长麦盖尔说。

“没有这个可能！完全和新西兰无关。”大家都说，包括少校也这么认为。

“那么，在远隔万里的新西兰岛和美洲海岸之间，南纬37度线也就只剩一个荒岛了。”

“那岛叫什么？”少校问。

“你看地图就知道了，叫玛丽雅泰莱萨岛。这个岛在三张纸条中，也是找不到任何一个和这个名字有关的印迹的。”

“没错！确实没有。”爵士点头说。

“所以朋友们，你们说，是不是最大的可能是在澳大利亚大陆上？”

“是的，就这里可能性最大！”大家一起说。

于是，爵士就问船长：“麦盖尔，煤和石油是不是够？”

“完全够了！阁下，在塔尔卡瓦诺时，我补充了很多。而且在好望角的时候，还可以继续补充。”麦盖尔船长说。

“那么，现在开船到……”

爵士下命令的话还没说完，便又被少校打断了。

“我还有最后一个问题。”

“说吧，少校先生！”

“不管我们去大洋洲能不能搜寻到，我们在特利斯探达昆雅和阿姆斯特丹的时候，都停留一天可以吗？这两个群岛可都是在37度航线上的，我们不用拐弯，说不定也能搜寻到‘大不列颠号’出事的印迹呢！”

“他还真是多疑，固执的少校！”地理学家巴嘉勒尔嘟哝道。

第二十二章 重踏搜寻之路

相距196个经度的澳大利亚白洛夷加和美洲哥连德角之间，如果沿赤道航行的话，是需要走6350公里的。不过，地球是圆的，所以“邓肯号”只需沿着南纬37度前行，就能让航程减小到5200公里。

“邓肯号”从美洲海岸出发，需要经过1140公里的路程才能到达特利斯探达昆雅岛。而如果正好顺风，这段路程便能在10天内完成。确实如此，当天晚上，逆风的风势减弱，风向转为顺风，所以有着很好性能的“邓肯号”便在平静的海面上顺畅地航行了。

曾经去平原经过了一个月远征的乘客，很快就适应了在船上的生活，而对于离开的那一个月，仿佛只是很短的一段时间。

“邓肯号”离开太平洋，没有多长时间便进入了大西洋。曾经让“邓肯号”接受了惊涛骇浪考验的大海，此刻却成了“邓肯号”的帮手，处于平静中的海洋，风势正好利于“邓肯号”航行，所以船上的帆在西风的护送下，协同锅炉燃烧带来的力量一路航行。

航行进行得太顺利了，没有遭受任何意外，也没任何枝节发生。船上的人都在热切期盼大洋洲的出现。离目标越来越近了，大家又开始讨论起了格兰特船长，仿佛他们这次去大洋洲，就是为了去商埠接他回来一样。

格兰特船长的房间，以及他另外两位伙伴的吊床也都准备好了。房间原来是奥比尔住着，他主动让出了自己的房间，去了太太的房间。而

对于格兰特船长房间的布置和装饰，兴奋的玛丽小姐一定要亲自参与。

格兰特船长的卧室隔壁是地理学家巴嘉勒尔所谓的“6号房”，也可以说是他在“苏克迪亚号”上预定的“6号房”。

博学的地理学家时常躲在他的“6号房”里写东西，而他所写的正是他们之前一个月经历的，书名叫《潘帕印象记》。处于创作中的巴嘉勒尔，经常会激动地先读出来，然后再写在笔记本上。很多次，在他写得兴奋的时候，会向希腊神话中的史神珂里欧和诗神佳丽奥卜寻找灵感。

巴嘉勒尔向史神、诗神寻求灵感并不是秘密，他也不藏着掖着，所以海伦夫人常常预祝他能获得成功。显然两位女神的首领阿波罗非常愿意帮助地理学家，所以两位女神才有机会离开华丽的宫殿，帮助巴嘉勒尔完成他的著作。

少校看巴嘉勒尔常常和女神们神交，除了预祝他成功外，也会调侃他：“亲爱的地理学家，你可千万不要再犯粗心大意的毛病了，在你想学英语的时候，千万别拿中国的语法书学。”

船上的大家就是这么和谐团结。当然，爵士和海伦夫人也没忘记关注麦盖尔船长和玛丽小姐，觉得他们两个人个性很合，做事也默契。当然，麦盖尔船长应该还不想现在被点破，所以他们还是觉得顺其自然的好。

“如果格兰特船长知道了，你说他会怎么看？”爵士有天问海伦夫人。

“格兰特船长一定会认可麦盖尔的，也一定会觉得他配得上自己的女儿。亲爱的爱德华，如果真是这样，那就太好了。”

此时，“邓肯号”一直朝着自己的目标在行驶，离开哥连德角后的第5天，也就是11月16日，海上刮起了西风。非洲南端也会经常刮东南风，但他们在绕过好望角的时候，却遇上了西风，这对他们来说是再好不过的了。所以“邓肯号”马上拉起了全部帆篷，不管是主帆、纵帆、前帆、顶帆、樯头帆……各种辅帆一齐张开，帆索也扣在了左舷上。

船以惊人的速度向前飞奔，船首以劈波斩浪之势前行，船上的螺旋桨几乎都碰不到水。“邓肯号”像在海上参加滑水比赛一样，在海面上飞驰。

第二天，大家看到海面上漂起了很多海藻，整个海面如同一望无际的草原。原来，这是北大西洋从邻近大陆冲下来的杂草，汇集成了一片“海藻海”。而之前，莫利船长也曾提醒过要防备出现这种现象。地理学家巴嘉勒尔将他们在阿根廷看到的草原和这片“海藻海”相比较，简直是再形象不过了。当然，在这样的环境下航行，速度自然比原来慢了很多。

24小时之后，天亮了，站在瞭望台上的水手突然大叫：“看！陆地！”

“陆地？在哪儿？”值班的艾撒汀问。

“就在迎风的方向！”那名水手指给艾撒汀看。

水手的声音叫醒了船上的人，甲板上瞬间站满了人。不一会儿，楼顶上先是伸出了一个大望远镜，接着出来了地理学家巴嘉勒尔。他将望远镜架好，对着水手所说的陆地观看，可根本看不出哪里有陆地。

“你要朝云里看才行。”麦盖尔对巴嘉勒尔说。

“哦，果然！不过应该是座山，看不大清楚。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“那是特利斯探达昆雅岛吗？”麦盖尔问。

“要是我的记忆力没问题我的话，那里距我们不过68公里，所以这个岛应该在海拔2100米左右，这距离正好够我们刚刚看得见。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“没错！”麦盖尔说。

几个小时之后，那座之前还影影绰绰的特利斯探达昆雅岛出现在了天边，黑黝黝的圆锥形顶峰在旭日中显露出来。很快，主岛也从石林中出现出来，让岛群形成了一个三角形，三角形向东北倾斜。

特利斯探达昆雅群岛的中心位于南纬37度8分，西经10度44分。此岛西南17公里处是无路岛，东南8.5公里处为莺岛，因为这两个岛的环绕，这一区域的海洋面上便形成了一个岛屿群。

傍晚，“邓肯号”上的人开始测定认路标志，并最终将船的一角定在了如同岩石一角的无路岛上；船的另一角则定在了如同破损堡垒的莺岛北端。

下午3点钟，“邓肯号”向此群岛的法尔默思湾驶去。法尔默思湾将吹来的西风挡在了外面，所以海面风平浪静。因此，这里完全算得上是个优良的港口。

由于这一带的海岸有着不计其数的海兽，所以港口停了很多捕捉海豹、海兽的船只。不过，此地的港外停泊点因为经常受西北风和北风袭击，所以还是很危险的，麦盖尔船长便小心地寻找合适停泊点。

1829年，英国的一只双桅船“邱里雅号”就是在这里沉没的。

距岸还有半公里左右的时候，“邓肯号”在一个有很多暗礁，水深达到了8米的地方停了下来。乘客们纷纷登上一个大艇，在松软的沙地上着了陆。

特利斯探达昆雅群岛的居民在一个位于海湾深处的山溪旁生活，四周溪水潺潺。村子里住户不多，大概有50所房子，整洁的房子呈几何图形排列，颇有英国建筑风格。在这些英国建筑的后面，有个15平方公里的平原，平原尽头是火成岩，火成岩上矗立着圆锥形山峰，峰顶约2130米，直插云霄。

当地总督热情地接待了爵士一行，而这个地方也是受好望角英国殖民政府管辖的。爵士趁机向他询问格兰特船长的“大不列颠号”的消息，不过，不管是格兰特船长还是“大不列颠号”，这位总督大人都很陌生。

这个群岛并不是海上的交通要道，所以来此群岛的船只并不多。甚至自从1821年“白朗顿霍尔号”在无路岛触礁失事，1845年“布利莫葵号”，1857年美国三桅船“斐列德尔菲雅号”在此出过事之后，船只来此的就更少了。

爵士在问总督的时候，并没抱什么希望，只是顺便问问而已。为了心安，他还派人划着船上的快艇去绕岛巡视。这个岛并不大，只有15平方公里。其实就是再大上3倍，也没有伦敦或巴黎大，所以他们不担心。

在爵士们向总督打听消息的时候，船上的乘客就去村子附近的海岸散步。这里的居民约有150多人，而且很多都是英国人或美国人，他们最后又和南非或当地的黑种人通婚，所以这里的女子长相并不是很动

人。

从船上下来的旅行者在踏上陆地后，便有了一种踏实感和幸福感。他们喜欢脚踏陆地的感觉，所以一直沿着毗连平原的海岸散步。平原上有部分土地是经过耕种的，长着一些农作物。其他地方则由一连串的喷石悬崖构成，在这些悬崖的高处，有很多机灵的信天翁和呆笨的企鹅。

在观看了这里的火成岩之后，他们继续向平原走去。此时，山上的积雪开始融化，形成溪流流了下来，所以四处传来潺潺的流水声。整个平原在苍翠的灌木点缀下，非常漂亮，树丛里的鸟儿也和花儿一样的多。8米多高的鼠李树和木本苧科植物在牧场上高高矗立，还有枝蔓很多的巴西蔷薇，枝条结实，纤维纠缠的狮子头草和散发着清香的灰灰菜，当然，这些地方也少不了苔藓、野芹、凤尾草……

以上都是当地的特色植物，种类虽然不多，却长势喜人——大自然好像要把春季的所有美好都在这个平原上展示。感性的地理学家巴嘉勒尔不禁高兴地赞美起来，认为法国的文学家费纳龙歌颂的著名仙岛奥吉吉也不过如此。他甚至还劝海伦夫人在岛上找个仙洞住下来，就像美丽的女神珈丽莎一样，做群岛的主人。对于他自己，则愿意拜倒在海伦夫人的石榴裙下做个小仙人。

一行人边说边笑，一直到傍晚才回到船上。傍晚的村子里，到处都是放牧归来的牛羊。村子里的一些田地里种着从其他地方带来，仅有40年历史的麦子、玉米和蔬菜，这些植物郁郁葱葱，从田里一直蔓延到了街道。

在爵士一行散步回来后，“邓肯号”派出的巡视艇也回来了。这些巡

视艇仅仅用了几个小时就绕着岛转了一圈，当然，一路上他们也没有发现格兰特船长及那失事船的印迹。所以这次的搜寻结果，应该完全将特利斯探达昆雅群岛从搜寻计划中删除，因为毫无收获。

“邓肯号”原本可以从这群岛屿离开继续向东进发，但当晚他们却没有开船，原因就是爵士允许船员们来一场猎取海豹的活动。这种海豹在这里也有人将其称为海牛、海狮、海熊、海象。不管名称叫什么，总之是太多了，多得几乎可以把法尔默思湾的沿岸海域塞个水泄不通。

以前，这里生活着许多北极鲸鱼，不过由于捕猎的人太多，在用叉子将它们捕获或将它们赶走后，北极鲸鱼便在这里消失了，但还有很多两栖类动物成群结队地在此出现。

“邓肯号”的船员们准备夜里捕猎海豹，然后在第二天白天把它们熬成油储藏起来。

为此，“邓肯号”推迟了3天起航，将起航时间定在了11月20日。

这天晚上，吃晚饭的时候，大家兴致勃勃地听巴嘉勒尔讲了特利斯探各岛的历史，知道这座岛屿是1506年被葡萄牙最著名的探险家特利斯探·达·昆雅发现的，特利斯探曾是探险家阿布奎基的追随者之一。

这群岛屿在刚刚被发现时，因为是风暴中心，所以无人问津。

当然，这种看法并非毫无道理，它的名声并不好，甚至比古巴荒岛贝尔穆德斯还差，所以船只都不愿意来这里，而凡是来这里的，大多都是被大西洋的飓风逼得不得不过来此地躲避。

1697年，东印度公司有三艘荷兰船来此停泊，并测定了群岛方位；1700年，英国天文学家哈雷修订了这个方位数据；1712年到1767年，在

55年间，又有几位法国航海家来到此地，其中最有名的就是法国人纳布鲁斯，他是在1758年探险时来到这里的。而即使这样，岛上还是很少有人来，更不要说有人居住了。

1882年，美国人兰百尔来此工作，和他一起来的两位同伴在1月登上了这片陆地，并开垦荒地。当他们开垦得差不多的时候，好望角总督提议他们将这里划给英国政府，做英国领土。至此，这里的草棚便挂起了英国国旗。当时这个地方只有两位臣民，而这两位臣民还分别属于意大利人和葡萄牙人。当然，这个地方的地主就是兰百尔。

原本只有三人的土地，管理起来很容易。不料有一天，兰百尔在巡视各地时，不知是自己失足落水还是被害落水，总之是被水淹死了。1786年，拿破仑被囚禁在大西洋的圣赫勒拿岛上，英国人派出监视他的两支部队分别驻扎在了阿森松岛和特利斯探各岛。驻扎在特利斯探各岛的士兵由好望角的炮兵连和霍腾陀族的士兵组成。直到拿破仑死在那个荒岛上，这些士兵才被调回好望角。

“这里最后只剩下一个人，是个欧洲上尉，英格兰人……”巴嘉勒尔说。

“什么？是英格兰人？”少校惊问，一听到是自己的同胞，他马上表现出难得的兴趣。

“没错！这个英格兰人叫威廉·格拉斯。当然，除了他以外还有他的妻子和两个霍腾陀人。没过多长时间，又有两个英国人来了，这两个英国人一个是水手，别一个则在阿根廷当过骑兵，还在泰晤士河上做过渔夫；又过了一段时间，也就是在1891年的时候，‘白朗顿霍尔号’沉没，侥幸脱险的一对年轻夫妻留了下来。那时候，岛上只有六个男人和两个

女人；1899年的时候，岛上又有了七个男人，六个女人，四个孩子；1905年的时候，岛上人数达到了40人，如今，又增加了3倍多。”

“哇！原来一个地方的历史形成是这样的。”爵士感慨道。

“当然，为了让大家更多地了解特利斯探各岛的整个历史，我还要说一点。我觉得这个岛和南太平洋的胡安斐岛很相像，甚至可以称之为鲁滨孙之岛。因为胡安斐岛，也曾有两名水手在那里流落过。而在这个群岛流落过的也有两名学者：1793年，我的同胞，博物学家瞿布迪·朵阿尔在这个岛上采集植物标本，不料因为采集时太过专心，越走越远，迷了路，直到船长起锚时才上了船；还有1824年，亲爱的爵士，有你一个画家同胞叫夷耳的，也曾被丢在这个岛上达8个月。他更惨，忘了上船，而那船长也忘了他没有回船，就将船开去了好望角。”

“哦！这位船长真是太粗心了，难道和你是兄弟？”少校再次调侃巴嘉勒尔。

“虽然不是兄弟，但他的粗心劲，还是很像我弟弟的。”巴嘉勒尔对少校的调侃毫不生气，自嘲道。

自此，有关特利斯探群岛的历史便讲完了。

晚上，“邓肯号”上的船员进行了一场精彩的捕猎，收获了50多只海豹。在获得爵士允许时，船员们不仅享受了猎捕的快感，同时也有所收获，双重的喜悦让他们第二天就把这些值钱的动物剥了皮，并熬制成了油。

当然，在船员们忙活的时候，船上的其他人又登上了陆地浏览风景，爵士和少校还挎上了枪，准备打些野味来尝尝鲜。他们一直走到了

山脚下，看到了遍地的岩石碎块，还看到了带孔的黑色岩石。这是岩石风化后的残骸，也是火山的遗迹。

无数岩石在山脚下堆积，那座圆锥形的山峰到底是什么样子不用想就会知道，一定是杂乱无章的。

曾经有位叫卡尔思的英国船长说这圆锥形的山峰是死火山，看来不无道理。

爵士和少校看到了几只猎物，那是几只野猪，其中一只被少校打死了。而爵士仅仅打到几只黑竹鸡。不过，就是这两样东西，回去也是可以让厨师做出几盘美味佳肴的。

高原的山顶上有几只山羊，还有一些连狗看到都害怕，但却长相英武，敏捷大胆的山猫。这些山猫在岛上繁殖很快，大有在不久之后就成为山中之王的趋势。

晚上8点，大家回到船上休息，“邓肯号”也离开了特利斯探各岛。

麦盖尔船长计划在好望角上装煤，所以也就不得不让船离开南纬37度线，向北走了两度。“邓肯号”在西风下向目的地航行，不到六天，他们便将特利斯探各岛和好望角的700公里走完了。

11月24日下午3点，船上的每个人都看到了桌山。又过了不一会儿，船长测到了信号山的位置，而那也正是海湾入口的标志。晚上将近8点的时候，“邓肯号”进了海湾，并在开普敦港抛锚了。

作为地理学会会员的巴嘉勒尔，当然知道好望角的发现时间是在1486年，发现者是葡萄牙海军上将迪亚士；1497年，葡萄牙著名的航海家达·伽马也曾来过这里。而珂梦斯的《卢厦歌》歌颂的正好就是这位

航海家，巴嘉勒尔怎么可能不知道？

对于这点，他还曾发表过他的意见，他说迪亚士发现好望角实际上比哥伦布第一次航行早了6年。如果迪亚士当时绕过了好望角，那么对美洲的发现应该会无限期地延迟下去，因为欧洲和东印度间的航行，虽然绕过了好望角，但却也是这两者间最短、最佳的路线。

来自热那亚的伟大航海家为了寻找一条通向“香料之国”的路，一直开船西行，总算找到了一条捷径。所以说，当他绕过了好望角后，捷径也就找到了，这时候，他继续往西探险又有什么意义？

1652年，荷兰人凡·利白柯建立了英国最重要的殖民地首府开普敦，这片殖民地在1815年签订条约后便属英国管理了。

开普敦位于开普湾深处，“邓肯号”上的乘客们决定利用船只停泊的时间，上岸游览一番。当然，由于麦盖尔船长打算26日清晨起航，所以他们上岸游览的时间非常有限，只有上煤期间的12个小时，所以大家只能走马观花。

开普敦整座城并不大，游览完整座城也不需要多长时间。整座城的分布非常像一个分成方格的棋盘，棋盘上的棋子就是这里的居民。在这个大棋盘上，总共有“棋子”居民3万人左右，而这3万人中，不仅有白人也有黑人，他们各自扮演着自己的角色，有些是国王，有些是王后，有些则是士兵、小卒……甚至还有丑角。当然，对这些人物的形象比喻，都来自于地理学家巴嘉勒尔。

开普敦没有名胜古迹，能看的无非是一些像东南角耸起的堡垒、总督衙门的花园、证券交易所、博物馆以及迪亚士最早发现好望角时，树立起的一座十字架石碑。

不过，当人们看完这些后，如果能再品尝一下当地著名的地方酒的话，也就没有什么遗憾了——当然最终他们也这么做了。

于是，第二天清晨，他们满足地准备离开，“邓肯号”拉起了触帆、三角帆、主帆、前帆起航。只用了短短几个小时，他们便绕过了著名的“风暴角”，也就是好望角。而之所以“风暴角”被改名“好望角”，则是因为葡萄牙国王约翰二世的个人喜好。

舒适的顺风，也没有大的海浪，“邓肯号”从好望角到阿姆斯特丹的1600公里路程，很可能只需10天就能完成了。曾经去过潘帕的人，觉得在海上搜寻简直比在草原上舒服多了。在草原上，他们经历了风和水的袭击，而现在在海上，不管是风还是水，都在帮助他们行走。此刻，他们一下子觉得大自然太好了。

“海洋啊！伟大的海洋，你们是人类的朋友，船只是文明的推手。想想看，朋友们，要是地球上没有海洋，人们即使到了20世纪，也未必会知道它千分之一的面积！再想想看，不管是在西伯利亚森林，还是在中亚细亚的平原，更或者是在非洲的沙漠，美洲的草原，即使是在大洋洲的矿山里，在严寒的两极冰区，人们都是无法进去冒险的，就是再大胆，再勇敢的人也会退缩。

“因为不管是交通工具还是炎热、疾病，甚至那强悍的土人，都可能是人类无法逾越的障碍。那11公里的沙漠，很可能让人至死无法相见，那是比270公里的海洋更大的阻力。不要说在其他地方，就是海岸，即使只是遥遥相对，也有心灵相通之感。但如果隔着的是一片森林，就只能称之为异类了。

“打个比方，英国和澳大利亚之间虽然相距甚远，但因为疆界相

连，给人的感觉并不远，而埃及和塞内加尔却如同隔着几百万公里。还有北京和彼得堡，离得更像远在天边。再看看我们今天，我们穿越汪洋大海，比走撒哈拉沙漠还要容易，这就像美国的莫利舰长所说，全世界各大陆之间之所以能建立起友好的关系，都是因为海洋。”

地理学家巴嘉勒尔热情洋溢地说着，大家也都认真地听着，很是认同，就连少校也没有反驳。没错，如果寻找格兰特船长，他们只能沿着37度线在陆地上搜寻，那么这么艰巨的任务，一定无人敢去尝试，更不要说完成了。幸好有海洋，让他们能从这片陆地搜寻到另一片陆地。

12月6日，天刚蒙蒙亮，一座新的山峰便从海面上升起来了。

那是位于南纬37度47分和东经77度24分的阿姆斯特丹岛。在天气晴朗时，阿姆斯特丹岛那圆锥形的高峰即使在25公里以外也能看见。可这天早上都快8点了，高峰的轮廓依然模模糊糊，远远看去，就像特纳利夫峰一样。

“这高峰很像特利斯岛的高峰！”爵士说。

“没错！你说得太对了！”巴嘉勒尔说，“如果甲乙两岛同丙丁两岛相似的话，那么甲乙两岛也就相似，这是根据几何原理推断出来的。不过我还是要说一句，阿姆斯特丹岛和特利斯岛一样，不管是过去还是现在，都有很多海豹，也有一些像鲁滨孙一样的人。”

“什么？鲁滨孙一样的人有很多吗？”海伦夫人问。

“当然！夫人，据我所知，很多岛屿都有类似的漂流事件，在您的同胞笛福写《鲁滨孙漂流记》之前，就已经有这种事发生了。”

“巴嘉勒尔先生，我想请教您一个问题可以吗？”玛丽小姐突然说。

“没问题，不要说一个，就是两个都行，我亲爱的小姐，我保证认真回答你！”

“如果你被流放到了荒岛上，你会害怕吗？”玛丽小姐说。

“我怎么会害怕？”巴嘉勒尔叫了起来。

“算了吧，我的朋友，你总不会说你渴望被丢在荒岛上吧！”

“我当然不会这么说。不过，我要是真遇到这种情况，我想，我是不会讨厌的，我会重新安排我的生活，比如靠捕鱼、打猎为生，还比如冬天住在山洞，夏天住在树上等等。总之，我会去开发岛屿，以满足我的生活需求。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“你一个人也会去开发？”

“如果只有我一个人，我是会一个人去开发的。而且在这个世界上，人是不可能孤独的，因为就算是没有人做朋友，也是会有动物和你做朋友的，比如可以驯服一只小山羊，养只会说话的鹦鹉，再养一只听懂人话的猴子。要是岛上猛地来了一个伙伴，比如说鲁滨孙遇到的那个忠实的礼拜五.....有着这样的生活，那不是很美满吗？特别是如果有两个朋友在一座孤岛上，那就更幸福了！比如说少校和我.....”

“算了吧！谢谢你愿意和我一起在孤岛上，不过我可对学鲁滨孙没有兴趣，而且我也学不像。”少校急忙说。

“亲爱的巴嘉勒尔先生，您的想象力真是太丰富了，现实和梦想是有距离的。您想象中的鲁滨孙，好像是上帝帮他选好了一个孤岛，然后把他送上去，最后他又在大自然的帮助下，快活地活着。您呀，什么事

都往好的方面想！”海伦夫人笑着说。

“哦！夫人，难道您觉得人在荒岛上就不快乐了？”

“是的，我觉得人本身就是群居动物，不能离开社会活动。孤寂会使人绝望的。想想看，在刚开始的时候，一个人从海里爬出来，既需要为物质生活焦虑，生活也没有安全感。由于想不到怎么去别处，眼前的处境又让他感受到了威胁。这一切都会让人恐慌的。而且由于一个人孤独地看守荒岛，既没有希望回国，又看不到亲人，想想看他会怎么样？那该是多么痛苦的事啊。在那孤岛上，孤岛是他的世界，就好比全世界只有他一个人，这不就和生活在世界末日里一样吗？这样的孤独生活是很恐怖的。相信我吧！巴嘉勒尔先生，还是不要过这种生活为好。”

地理学家巴嘉勒尔不得不认同海伦夫人的看法，后来他们的谈话依然围绕“孤独生活”进行，这种谈话一直坚持到“邓肯号”停在了阿姆斯特丹岛距岸1公里的海面上才停止。

这群岛屿是由两个岛屿组成的，而这两个岛屿之间又有50公里的距离。两个岛屿分别是北边的阿姆斯特丹，也就是圣彼得岛；南边是圣保罗岛。

不过，在这里必须强调的一点是，地理学家经常把这两个岛的名字弄颠倒。

这两个容易被弄混的岛是荷兰人弗拉明在1796年12月发现的，之后，旦特尔伽思陀带着“希望号”和“探求号”寻找纳布鲁斯的时候，还来过这两个岛。而这两个岛最后一直被混淆则是从旦特尔伽思陀开始的。当时，由于海员芭罗儿和伯旦在地图上将两个岛的名字标错，所以造成了荷思伯、品伯特及其他地理学家一直把圣彼得岛说成了圣保罗岛，把

圣保罗岛又说成了圣彼得岛。

1859年，奥地利军舰“洛法纳号”在进行环球航行时，船员们发现了这个错误，并进行了纠正。而此次，巴嘉勒尔又着重强调了一下。

位于阿姆斯特丹南部的圣保罗岛是个无人岛，很可能在远古时代，它就是座火山，所以也由锥形火山构成。阿姆斯特丹岛在圣保罗岛的北部，周围20公里的地方生活着离开家乡，过着孤独生活的人们。这些人大多是渔场的看守人，而这个区域的渔场，都归波旁岛上的商人奥拓梵先生所有。牧场主奥拓梵是欧洲列强公认的岛主，每年获利在7.5到8万法郎左右。他获利的原因，大都是因为他让人在那里捕花尾带鱼，并将这些花尾带鱼腌起来，然后大批运出去卖掉。

当然，应该了解的一点是，阿姆斯特丹岛原本归属法国。不过最开始的时候，由于波旁岛圣德尼城的主人卡蔓最先占领，所以应该归卡蔓先生。后来根据国际条约，阿姆斯特丹岛划给了波兰人，波兰人便雇用了马达加斯加岛的奴隶在此开垦种植。

当然，那时候说是波兰人的就跟说是法国人的一样，所以这个岛很快就又落到了法国人手里。

1864年12月6日，“邓肯号”停泊在此岛时，岛上仅有三个人，这三个人中有一个法国人，两个黑人。这两个黑人都是岛主雇用的伙计。所以地理学家巴嘉勒尔非常高兴，因为他遇到了自己的同胞威奥尔先生。威奥尔先生的年龄已经很大了，他以长辈的身份，热情地接待了“邓肯号”上的乘客。

对他来说，这一天是最幸福、最热闹的一天。因为在阿姆斯特丹，光临的只是一些捕海豹者以及捕鲸人，这些人因为天天和凶猛的动物打

交道，所以非常粗鲁，没什么涵养。

威奥尔先生向“邓肯号”上的乘客介绍了他雇用的两个人，他们就是岛上的全部人口了。当然，除了他们之外，还有躲在窝里的野猪和上千只企鹅。这些野猪和企鹅居住在西南方一个天然的港湾深处，而那港湾也是因为山崩而形成的。

阿姆斯特丹岛在奥陀一世统治时，便有沉船事故发生。巴嘉勒尔为大家讲述了这个故事，第一个故事他以“阿姆斯特丹上，两位苏格兰人的漂流记”为题。而这个题目自然引起了大家的兴趣。

那是在1827年的时候，当时，英国的“巴弥纳号”船从这座岛前经过，突然发现岛的上空有浓烟，接着船长发现了遇难者发出的求救信号。他立刻派出小舟接回了已经被折磨得没有人形的两个人，这两个人一个是22岁的贝勒，另一个则是48岁的卡洛夫。

这两个人在18个月里，没喝过一口淡水，只以蚌类维持生命，或者将随身带的钢针敲弯，做出来鱼钩来钓鱼，有时他们还会去捉一些野猪来吃，有时甚至好几天不吃任何东西，不喝一滴水。他们只是不让用火石点燃的火熄灭，每天如同古罗马神庙里的女神一样，守着那堆火。火是不能熄灭的，因为那是他们唯一获救的希望。

就这样，他们在艰苦和疲惫中煎熬。虽然也曾遇到一只捕海豹的帆船，但根据渔业上的习惯，他们两个人需要在岛上捕海豹、剥皮、熬油一个月，然后才会再派船来接他们。但他们在岛上待了5个月，仍然没有船来接，好不容易有只到凡第门去的船靠了岸，但那船长却毫无同情心，拒绝带走两个苏格兰人，甚至连一点食物、一滴淡水都没有留给他们。

幸好，他们最后遇到了“巴弥纳号”，这才将两个可怜人救上船，不然他们必死无疑。

除了这件事，能够记录在阿姆斯特丹历史上的就是佩农船长的遭遇了。

佩农船长的历险经历和那两名苏格兰人的差不多。刚开始的时候，他是自愿来这岛上住的，而且也准备住些时日，没想到预先约定好接他的船只没有来，甚至过了40个月还是无人来接他。最后，一只被风吹到这里的外籍船发现了他，救了他。

当然，在佩农被遗忘在此的期间，还发生了一些流血事件，而那些流血事件，也有些像笛福小说里主人公鲁滨孙回岛时的经历。

佩农当时带着两个英国人和两个法国人，这四个人都是水手，他们原本打算用15个月的时间来这里打海狮，没想到15个月过去了，却没有船来接他们，最后他们连粮食也没有了。

而就在这种情况下，四名水手出现了内讧，也就是“国际关系”出现了问题，两名英国人偷袭两名法国人，甚至偷袭佩农，而如果不是那两名法国人帮助佩农，佩农一定会遭到两名英国人的黑手的。此后，五个人日夜监视对方，武器不离身，过着度日如年的生活，在焦急和困苦中生活着。

困境让五个不幸的人成了势不两立的两派，最终要不是一条英国船救了他们，说不定就会出现自相残杀的情况。

以上的两起流落事件，让阿姆斯特丹岛两度成为被遗弃者的家，而幸好这两起被遗弃事件，最终又得到老天的帮助。而自那两次事件发生

后，便不再有船在这里失事了。即使有，那些流落的人也会找到威奥尔先生的渔场来。当然，这位年老的善人，对遇难者总是慷慨地给予帮助。

在爵士他们问起“大不列颠号”和格兰特船长时，这位大善人却丝毫不知。所以很显然，阿姆斯特丹和圣保罗岛都不可能是格兰特船长的出事地点。当然，大家对威奥尔先生的回答并不感到惊讶，因为“邓肯号”停泊的地方，并没有格兰特船长的印迹。不过，他们问威奥尔的目的，只是想证实一下，格兰特船长并没有在这里，仅此而已。

有了这个结论，麦盖尔船长决定第二天就起航。

在还没有起航的这段时间，大家又在岛上游览了一番，一直到晚上。

岛上的风景很美，不过岛上的动植物，就是再擅长写长篇大论的生物学家也写不出一页纸来，因为这个岛上那些所谓的兽类、禽类、鱼类、鲸类，仅仅只是几只野猪，一些信天翁、鲑鱼和海豹罢了。

岛上有一处温泉，温泉及含铁的矿泉都是从一处淡黑色的岩缝里渗出来的，并在水面上升起了水烟，有些时候，水温很高。麦盖尔船长曾用温度计试了一下，达到了摄氏80度。如果从距离温泉几步远的海里捕来鱼，然后放入摄氏80度的水里去的话，说不定这些鱼瞬间就会变成美餐的。

所以说，这样的水温，就是巴嘉勒尔也不敢跳进去洗澡。

大家在兴高采烈地游玩了一番后，傍晚时分，他们向威奥尔先生道别，并向他表达了祝福之意，希望他在岛上一切顺利。老人回谢了他

们，并祝他们一帆风顺，搜寻成功。

最后，大家一起上了小舟，回到了“邓肯号”上。

第二十三章 和巨浪搏斗

12月7日早晨3点，随着锅炉的轰隆响，水手们摇起辘轳，将船锚吊起，“邓肯号”离开了小港的沙底。当把锚架上的螺旋转动的时候，船便下海了。

早晨8点，“邓肯号”上的乘客登上甲板，发现阿姆斯特丹已经渐渐消失在天边的云雾中。

这将是“邓肯号”沿着37度线行走的最后一次停泊。这里离大洋洲海岸还有1620公里。如果一路上都是西风，而且海上也没有出现什么意外的话，“邓肯号”很快会到达目的地的。

站在甲板上的玛丽小姐和罗伯尔，看到海面上波涛汹涌，很是感慨。这些波涛，父亲的船是否也曾经过，会不会就是在这里，船被波浪冲坏了，沉了，船员也失踪了呢？是否最后只剩下父亲和两名水手在印度洋上和汹涌的海浪搏斗？是否他们最后又被一股力量推向了遥远的海岸？

船长麦盖尔在海图上给玛丽小姐和罗伯尔画每股海浪的流向，在画到印度洋横亘海流时，发现其势力很大，并自西向东往大洋洲流去。也许正因为如此，那只“大不列颠号”的桅杆才会被打断，然后舵也失去了平衡。也就是说，在风大浪大的时候，船上的所有武装都被解除了，他们最终只能随海浪流动的方向往海岸奔去，最终船只沉没。

不过，他们还是有问题没有解决。那就是1862年5月30日，《商

船日报》曾记载了格兰特船长的消息，而那消息是从卡亚俄发出的。如果是在印度洋上失事，为什么“大不列颠号”离开秘鲁海岸只有8天，便在6月7日进入了印度洋？

当然，这个问题巴嘉勒尔也做了合理的解释，让即使是有不同意见的人也哑口无言。

巴嘉勒尔对此做出解释已经是12月12日晚上的事了。

那时候，“邓肯号”离开阿姆斯特丹岛6天。爵士夫妇、格兰特姐弟、少校、船长麦盖尔全都在楼舱里聊天。和平常一样，他们聊得最多的就是“大不列颠号”的失事地点以及船长格兰特和两名水手。

在大家聊得起劲时，爵士提出了上述问题，这么一说后，大家瞬间就像被当头泼了一盆冷水。

巴嘉勒尔没想到爵士会猛然提出这个问题，马上将头抬了起来，随即即便一声不响地去找那三张纸条了。等他回来的时候，只是耸了耸肩，一脸的“这么简单的问题”，很无所谓的样子。

“亲爱的学者，看你耸肩我就知道，你一定认为这个问题不是问题，那么既然这样，你也要给我们做个解释呀！”爵士说。

“不用急，我先来请教船长一个问题。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“说吧，巴嘉勒尔先生，什么问题？”船长麦盖尔问。

“我只想知道，如果有快艇的话，它用一个月的时间从美洲到大洋洲的太平洋可能吗？”

“当然！不过每天必须用110公里的速度行驶。”

“110公里是最快的速度吗？”

“不！有些快的帆船也有这种速度的。”

“很好！那么问题就解决了。纸条上的日期中‘6月7日’几个数字间的间隙很大，那么是不是6月7日就有待商榷了。如果纸条上的日期，是因为‘7’字前面的一个字被侵蚀掉了，原本是‘6月17日’或者是‘6月27日’，这个问题是否就解决了呢？”巴嘉勒尔说。

“没错！是这样的！从5月31日到6月27日……”

海伦夫人没有说完，巴嘉勒尔便说开了：“这样‘大不列颠号’就有足够的时间来穿越太平洋到达印度洋上了！”

这个答案大家都接受。

“我又弄明白了一些事，这多亏我们亲爱的地理学家帮助。如今，我们只有到大洋洲的西海岸上搜寻格兰特船长的踪迹了。”爵士说。

“难道只能是西海岸吗？”麦盖尔问。

“对呀，船长问的有道理。纸条上根本就没有说失事地点是在西海岸还是东海岸，所以我们搜寻的目标不能只放在西海岸一边，还是应该放在东海岸，就是说37纬度的东西两端都要搜寻。”爵士说。

“这样一说，问题不是又来了吗？”玛丽小姐也说。

“哦，那倒没有，小姐。大家请注意，如果‘大不列颠号’在大洋洲东岸停泊的话，它应该会马上得到救援和帮助的，因为这一带住的几乎全

是英国的侨民。这就是说，格兰特船长走不了16公里，就会遇到同胞，所以这个方向不可能。”船长的回答打消了玛丽小姐的疑虑。

“是这样的，麦盖尔船长。我完全同意你的看法，如果是在东海岸的杜布湾出事，格兰特船长绝对会在英国移民区获救，而且还会很快找到交通工具回家。”巴嘉勒尔也说。

“这就是说，如果失事是在大洋洲的西岸，遇难的船员就不那么容易获救了？”海伦夫人说。

“没错，是这样的，夫人！那一带非常荒芜，没有一条路通往阿德雷德或墨尔本。所以船在那里沉没的话，是不会得到救援的，就和在非洲无情的海滩上失事一样。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“那如果我父亲就是在那里失事的，他这两年又要怎么生活？”玛丽小姐说。

“我亲爱的小姐，你是不是觉得你父亲的船就算是失事，在大洋洲登陆也不成问题？”巴嘉勒尔又问。

“是的，我希望是这样，巴嘉勒尔先生。”

“格兰特船长游上岸，登陆后又是怎么做的呢？据我猜测有三种情况，一种是和伙伴们去了英国移民区；另一种就是落在了当地土人手里；最后一种就是在大洋洲的沙漠中迷了路……”巴嘉勒尔说到这里，突然停住了，他看了看大家，想看看他的这三种猜测，赞同的多还是反对的多。

“请继续讲下去，巴嘉勒尔先生！”爵士鼓励道。

“那么我首先要否定第一种情况，因为格兰特船长是不可能跑去英国移民区的，否则，他早就回家乡和家人团聚了，也就没有我们这次的搜寻了。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“我可怜的父亲！他离开我们已经两年了！”玛丽小姐喃喃道。

“姐姐，让巴嘉勒尔先生说下去，他后面会告诉我们……”

小罗伯尔还没说完，巴嘉勒尔又说：“唉！我可怜的孩子，我真的没办法告诉你们确切的情况，但我推测，你父亲很可能落到了大洋洲土人的手里，或者……”

“或者什么？土人会不会……”海伦夫人也着急起来。

“夫人，请您放心！土人虽然愚笨，但天性善良。他们不像邻近新西兰的那些土人，杀人成性。如果遇难的船员被他们俘虏，绝对不会受到生命威胁。在这一点上，我完全能够保证。所有的旅行家们都说过，说大洋洲的土人是最怕流血死人的，很多次，他们还和旅行家们联合起来，打退那些流放囚徒的袭击。他们是非常忠实可靠的，但那些囚徒就太凶残了。”巴嘉勒尔安慰他们。

海伦小姐转而对玛丽小姐说：“听到了吗？你的父亲即使落在了土人手里，我们也能找到他。而那纸条上的消息也告诉我们，他是落到土人手里了。”

“如果他在荒凉的沙漠里迷路了呢？”玛丽又说，她用殷切的眼神看着巴嘉勒尔。

“即使迷了路，我们也是能找到他的。对不对，朋友们？”巴嘉勒尔的眼神中充满了信心。

“对！我不相信人类会真的迷路！”爵士说，他想把玛丽小姐从悲观的情绪中拉出来。

“是的，我也不相信！”巴嘉勒尔也说。

“大洋洲很大吗？”小罗伯尔问。

“我的孩子，大洋洲有775万平方公里。也就是说，它有欧洲的五分之四那么大。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“有那么大？”少校不相信。

“当然有那么大！少校先生，即使有误差，误差也只是一码左右。那纸条上写着‘大陆’两个字，你总得相信它称得上‘大陆’两字吧！”

“如果真有这么大，那当然有资格被称为‘大陆’了。”少校说。

“那我再补充一句，在沙漠迷路的旅行家不多，我知道的也就只有勒沙德一个人，直到现在还下落不明呢。在我上‘邓肯号’之前，在地理学会上，听说已经找到他的行踪了。”巴嘉勒尔又说。

“澳大利亚大陆有没有搜寻过？”海伦夫人问。

“没有！早着呢，夫人！人们对澳大利亚大陆的了解还没有对非洲了解得多，不过，这并不是人类的错，而是老天不成全探险家们。从1606年到1862年，在大陆或沿海从事探险工作的不少于50人。”

“50人？有这么多？”少校有些不相信。

“怎么？少校先生觉得不可能？我可是把冒险的船员和大陆探险者

一起算在内的。”

“即使那样，50人也太多了点。”少校继续反驳。

“你觉得多？我还觉得少呢！”巴嘉勒尔有些兴奋。他和别人的不同点就是，遇到和他唱反调的，他反而会更高兴。

“那你说有多少？”

“你真不相信？那我马上把这50个人说出来。”

“哦！亲爱的地理学家，你一定要冷静，说话可不能不负责任哦！”

“你敢和我打赌吗，少校？拿你的马枪和我的望远镜作赌注。”

“为什么不敢？巴嘉勒尔，就看你愿不愿意了。”

“那好！咱们一言为定！如果你输了，你可就没马枪打羚羊，打狐狸了——除非我借给你。当然，如果你要借，我还是会借给你的。”

“巴嘉勒尔，到底谁赢谁输还不知道呢，你可别以为你一定会胜了我！”

“那我们就开始吧，先生们、女士们，请你们做裁判。至于计数员嘛，就让小罗伯尔做。”巴嘉勒尔大声说。

他的话引得爵士夫妇、玛丽、小罗伯尔、少校和麦盖尔船长都笑了起来。大家急着要看这场赌博谁赢谁输。而此次争论的焦点就是大洋洲，也是“邓肯号”要到达的地方。在这种情况下谈它的历史，没有比这更适合的了。因此，大家带着好奇，考察着巴嘉勒尔的记忆力。

“记忆女神啊！请赐予你最忠实的崇拜者神灵般的记忆力吧！在250年前，朋友们，有谁不知道大洋洲呢？而从17世纪，也就是1606年开始，无数的航海家和探险家去了这个地方，比如西班牙航海家奎洛斯，他给此地取名为‘圣地澳大利亚’。记住我说的这个航海家的名字了吗？罗伯尔，我现在要说第二个了。”

“我记下来了。”小罗伯尔说。

“好！接着，也就是在同一年，奎洛斯船队的副指挥特烈斯，他在新陆地南面去勘察。当然，有着重大发现的应该是荷兰人海拓兹，他曾在西南南纬25度的地方登陆，并将那里命名为‘恩德拉’。之后还有很多航海家去过那里，比如齐圣、俄戴多尔、勒兹、卡本塔……”

巴嘉勒尔噤里啪啦说了一大堆人名。

停了一下，喝了口水后，他又接着说：“接下来我说英国人。1680年，一个有名的浪人曾在此地打野牛，还有横渡南太平洋的丹比尔，他用几年时间，到过很多地方，最后乘坐‘希勒号’跑到了澳大利亚西北部，和土人住在了一起，并对那里的风俗习惯和生活状态做了描写；1699年，他回到了海拓兹，从海盗摇身一变，变成了皇家海军船船长。在那之后的70年，便没有一个航海家来到这里了。

“1700年，库柯船长在此片区域出现，自此，澳大利亚便迎来了很多欧洲移民。了不起的航海家库柯船长在进行了三次轰动一时的航行后，有了很多奇遇。比如他在奥塔希迪观察了金星自太阳面前经过的天文现象，那时候还差点葬身海底。还有一次，他乘坐的船只差一点就要触礁、沉没，幸好有珊瑚卡入裂口处，堵住了进水口。当然，库柯船长最大的功劳是发现了世界上最大的珊瑚海，并且多次来这里。不过不幸

的是，在他最后一次航行时，船失事于萨维茨群岛。”

巴嘉勒尔说到这里后，又接连说了一长串航海家，比如菲利浦船长、巴思上校、弗德林中尉……说到这些人物的时候，他如数家珍，充分显示了其超强的记忆力。

口干舌燥的巴嘉勒尔说得嗓子都要冒烟了，忙问罗伯尔记了多少个人名了。

“56个！”罗伯尔说。

“听到了没有？少校！如果你还想听，我还可以说，像居白勒、伯格威尔、洛兹夷德、威廉姆……”

“好了好了！够了！”少校听得头昏脑涨，他被这一连串人名吓住了。

“这就够了？还有呢，像斐路、括伊、贝儿那、特利伽，宁柯翰……”巴嘉勒尔越说越快。

“快停下吧！不要说了！饶了我吧！”少校嚷嚷。

爵士也替少校求情：“巴嘉勒尔，就数到这里吧，这次该麦克那布斯倒霉，谁让他不相信的？这下好了，他知道输了！”

“马枪呢，少校？”巴嘉勒尔得意地说。

“归你了！虽然我舍不得，但我愿赌服输。你的记忆力真是太好了！不要说一支马枪，就是一个机械库，想必你也能赢去。”少校说。

“看来，对于澳大利亚的历史，已经没有人比你更清楚了，甚至一

个小小的地名、人名，还有细小的事情……”海伦夫人还没说完，便又被少校打断了。

少校一边摇着头，一边不相信地说：“细小的事情他也能记得？”

“怎么样，少校？不服吗？”巴嘉勒尔大叫。

“我是说大洋洲的一切细小事情，你未必全都知道。”少校解释说。

“哼！真是岂有此理！你怀疑我的记忆力！”巴嘉勒尔拍拍胸脯说。

“那我要是说一件事，你要是不知道的话，我会赢回我的马枪吗？”少校问。

“可以，你说吧！”

“你可要说话算话啊！”

“当然会说话算话！”

“好的，那我问你，你知不知道澳大利亚为什么会不属于法国？”

“这个嘛！我觉得……”

“要是你不知道的话，说出英国人对这种事的看法也行。”

“我不知道，少校！”巴嘉勒尔沮丧地说。

“哈哈！其实很简单，是因为你那勇敢的同胞伯尔船长，他在1802年的时候听到大洋洲的青蛙在呱呱呱地叫的时候，非常害怕，马上拔锚离去……”

“什么？在英国是这么说的？简直就是开玩笑！”巴嘉勒尔大声喊道。

“没错，是像开玩笑！我承认，不过在英国，这种说法就是事实。”少校说。

“无聊！简直太无聊了！现在还有人这么说吗？”有着爱国之情的巴嘉勒尔再也忍不住了，大声吼道。

“我不得不告诉你，是这么说的，我亲爱的地理学家。你怎么会对这段历史一无所知呢？”爵士说完，全场哄堂大笑。

“我不知道！我一点都不知道！这是污蔑！我要抗议！英国人说法国人是‘爱吃青蛙的人’，既然法国人爱吃青蛙，怎么会怕青蛙呢？这绝对是污蔑！”

“话虽然是这么说，但事实依然是事实嘛！”少校忍俊不禁地说。

就这样，那支马枪从少校手里到了巴嘉勒尔手里，最后又从巴嘉勒尔手里回到了少校的手里。

打赌后的第三天，船长在中午测算了一下，发现“邓肯号”已经到东经130度37分的位置了。大家看着海图，发现离白洛夷加很近，而在白洛夷加和旦特尔伽思陀岬之间，大洋洲海岸类似弓的背部，而37度纬线部分又像弓弦。此时如果“邓肯号”向赤道方向行驶的话，那么很快就会到查坦莫角了。

不过这时，“邓肯号”却在被澳大利亚大陆挡住了风浪的印度洋上，向东航行。

大家估算，很可能白洛夷加会在四天后出现在地平线上。而直到此时，“邓肯号”都是借助西风在前行。不过这几天里，风力有所减弱。12月13日，竟然一点风都没有了，这导致船帆紧紧地贴在了桅杆上。

此时，如果“邓肯号”没有装汽轮机，很可能就要滞留在海面上了。

无风的状态很可能会保持很久。晚上的时候，爵士和船长麦盖尔讨论起了这个问题。年轻的船长见船上的煤也快要吃完了，面对减弱的风力，不禁有了隐隐的不安。他将船上所有的帆都张了起来，就连小帆、辅帆也没落下，不过，正如水手们所形容的，风连一顶帽子都装不满。

“不管怎么样，我们都不能埋怨老天，无风总好过逆风！”爵士说。

“没错，阁下！不过这意味着明天要变天，所以我有些着急。我们现在是在季风区域航行，季风通常是从每年的10月持续到第二年的4月，这段时间是东北风，所以只要它稍稍刮起来，我们的航行都可能延期。”麦盖尔说。

“那现在该怎么办？要真是这样的话，也只能耽误几天了。”

“是呀！如果逆风，而且没有风暴的话。”

“什么意思？你是说真要变天？”爵士说完，看了看天空。此时还没有什么变化，晴空万里。

“没错！我怕会变天。这些话我也只能和阁下说，我不想让海伦夫人和玛丽小姐担心、惊慌。”船长又说。

“你想得非常周到！不过真会有可怕的事情发生吗？”

“我怕真的会有暴风雨。您是不能只看天上的表面现象的，因为表面现象是会误导人的。这两天以来，风雨表低得让人担心，只有0.73米。这是在给我们发警报，我们不能不注意。我在南印度洋已经尝到过风暴的滋味了。南极冰山区蒸汽的凝结曾产生过强烈的吸引力，所以也就产生了极地风和赤道风，两种风发生冲突就会形成旋风和飓风，甚至其他各种风暴。到了那时候，船一定会吃亏的。”船长说。

“麦盖尔，‘邓肯号’很坚固，船员也很有经验，即使风暴来了，我们也会有办法应对的。”爵士说。

麦盖尔没再说什么，但作为船员的本能，他还是有些忧虑。麦盖尔是英国所谓的“天气通”，他对天气有着天然的敏感，所以看着指数不断下降的风雨表，开始在船上做一系列的防御措施。

麦盖尔预感到会有一场猛烈的风暴降临。虽然目前天空并没有什么变化，也没有不好的兆头，但那风雨表是不会骗人的。因为在通常情况下，当天空的气流从高纬度向低纬度流时，两地的距离会缩短，水平流动的速度越大，风速也就越大。

整个晚上，船长麦盖尔都待在甲板上，差不多晚上11点钟的时候，南边天空出现了云斑，麦盖尔船长叫来全部水手，并让他们落下小帆，保留主帆、纵帆、前帆和触帆。

半夜的时候，海上的风更大了，以每秒20米的风速前进。桅杆、帆索，甚至船舱都发出了各种不同的声音，这些奇怪的，甚至有些恐怖的声音让原本不知风暴来了的乘客也都警醒了。巴嘉勒尔、爵士、少校和罗伯尔全都涌上了甲板。他们在上床睡觉前，天空还是晴空万里，满天星斗，如今却已经乌云翻滚，狂风大作了。在这些人中，有好奇的，也

有想出力帮忙的。

“这是起飓风了吗？”爵士问麦盖尔。

“是呀，这不说来就来了吗？”

麦盖尔说着，命令其他水手卷起了前帆的收缩部分。在飓风中，水手们艰难地爬上了软梯，费力地撑起收缩部分，并用帆索捆扎在拉低的帆架上。麦盖尔尽量将一些帆面保留下来，以便缓和船的左右摇摆，平衡船只。在做好这些防备工作后，他又命令艾撒汀和水手长做好应付飓风的准备。他们将系小舟的绳子和绑桅杆的缆绳进行了加固，并将大炮两边的滑车也系紧了，甚至连横桅索和后支索也都拉紧，将每个孔都堵得严严的。

麦盖尔船长一直守在大炮旁，像个将军一样，寸步不离。他不断地从楼舱顶凝视风云突变的天空，仿佛要把它们接下来的行踪弄明白。

此时，风雨表已经下降到36厘米了，这种情况在以前的航行中是很少出现的。同时，风暴镜的颜色也提示着他们，风暴马上就要来临了。

凌晨1点钟的时候，海伦夫人和玛丽小姐在房内都感受到了颠簸，她们冒险跑到甲板上。此时，风速已经达到每秒28米，狂风将缆绳当成了乐器的弦，不停地颤动着，弹奏出属于自己的音乐；辘轳间相互撞击；绳索在粗糙的索槽里磨出了尖锐的声响；帆布被吹得前后激荡，发出呼啦啦的声响；大浪高得惊人，将游船打得东摇西晃……船只如同长着翅膀，在大浪的翻滚中卷着水花前行。

麦盖尔看到了海伦夫人和玛丽小姐，急忙走了过来，劝她们回舱。此时，狂风将大浪打在了船上，甲板随时都有被打坏的可能。由于风急

浪高，海伦夫人和玛丽小姐根本听不清船长的话，在浪涛稍稍平息一点的时候，海伦夫人问：

“什么？你是说这里有危险？”

“那倒没有！不过还是请你们回舱里去吧！”麦盖尔严肃地说。

海伦夫人和玛丽小姐无法不听从这带着命令式的恳求，她们回到了船舱。不过很快，又有大浪卷来，将她们船舱的玻璃震得发颤。风更猛烈了，桅杆受不了弯了下去，“邓肯号”像是要从浪头上跳过去。

“把主帆卷起来！把前帆和触帆降下来。”麦盖尔大声命令着。

水手们加紧卷帆索，在将吊帆索松开后，又将触帆用纤绳拉了下来，在拉动纤绳的时候，发出的声音甚至比风声还要高。做好这些后，大烟囱里喷着浓烟的“邓肯号”，蒸汽机的叶子板一下又一下地拍打着浪涛，随即，叶子板翘了起来，翘出了水面。

爵士、少校、巴嘉勒尔和罗伯尔站在甲板上，紧紧地抓住横栏杆，看着狂风大浪中的“邓肯号”，在惊讶中赞美着。虽然他们各自的话对方听不到，但却都能感受到，对方和自己一样震惊。

大海上空有海鸟在飞翔，这些风暴中的鸟，发出了比平时更大的叫声，甚至风浪越大，它们叫得越欢。

突然，他们听到了一阵声响，声音震耳欲聋，比风暴声还大。蒸汽从蒸汽机里喷射出来，如同报警的汽笛一样，发出了尖利的声响。“邓肯号”猛地向一边倾斜，维尔逊急忙去扶舵盘，不料却被舵杆打倒了，横对着狂风大浪的“邓肯号”失去了控制力。

“发生什么事了？”麦盖尔奔到指挥台前，大叫一声。

“我们的船倒下睡着了。”艾撒汀此时还不忘幽默一下。

“舵被打掉了？”

“是的！先救机器！快救机器！”机械师大叫。

麦盖尔连滚带爬地朝机器房奔去，机器间雾气沉沉，汽缸里的活塞已经不动了，连杆器也推不动横轴。机械师见连杆器失去了作用，担心汽缸爆炸，索性将蒸汽门关了起来，让蒸汽从排气管出去。

“到底怎么样了？”麦盖尔问。

“蒸汽机不转了，应该是弯了或嵌住了。”机械师说。

“嵌住就不能取出来吗？”麦盖尔又问。

“不可能取得出来。”机械师说。

蒸汽机不动了，蒸汽从活门里跑了出来，而这些损坏的地方此时又不适合抢修。因此，船长麦盖尔只能利用船帆，在原本也是敌对方的“风”里找契机。

麦盖尔先跑到甲板上，向爵士汇报了整个情况后，又让爵士带着其他几个人回船舱，但爵士却不肯。

“阁下，你们快回船舱吧！这里有我和另一名船员就行了。船很可能会被埋入波浪，波浪无情，很可能会将你们一起卷进去。”麦盖尔的态度严肃又坚决。

“可我们也想帮点忙！”爵士说。

“不行！你们非进去不可！爵士，在这种时候，船上的事应该由我做主！快回舱吧！我求你们了！”

麦盖尔的语气严肃，这也让他们知道了情况的严重性。爵士明白此时自己最应该做的就是服从，于是，他带着其他人离开了甲板，去了两位女士那里。

两位女士正焦急地等待着消息。她们不知道这场船和风浪的斗争谁赢谁输。

“麦盖尔真是太勇敢，太坚强了！他是个真正的男子汉！”爵士一进方厅就说。

“没错，他让我想起了莎士比亚的《暴风雨》中的那位司锚官，他曾对乘坐军舰的国王嚷：‘快走开！回舱里去！如果你们无法让风浪平息，那就什么也别说，也别做！告诉你们！’”巴嘉勒尔附和道。

此时，那位勇敢的男子汉没有耽误一分一秒，他要想办法让“邓肯号”从险境中解脱出来。

他决定用微帆航行的方法避免“邓肯号”被风吹得偏离航线。因此，“邓肯号”上很快就升起了一面帆，那帆是斜着拉上去的，为的就是让它侧面受风。水手们再次将前帆张开，并缩小了帆脚，在桅杆上张起了三角帆，还让舵柄对着下风舷。

“邓肯号”原本就有很好的性能，在给它注入了急风后，更是如同一匹被鞭打的快马，在风口浪尖奋勇搏斗。船帆很少，能经受得住狂风的吹吗？虽然这些帆都是用上等的帆布做成的，但在这样猛烈的风势下，

多好的帆都有可能被吹破。

当然，麦盖尔是用小的帆面来借风力的，同时还用斜进的方式，这不仅可以让船维持原有的航向，而且还可以让船身最结实的地方对准浪头。不过，这样的行驶也有很大的危险性，因为船只很可能落到两个浪头间的广阔深槽里爬不出来。

不过，这也是麦盖尔的无奈选择，要想让桅杆和船帆不被风打下来，他只能用微帆斜进的方式。船员们全都站在他的面前，随时准备接受他的调遣。麦盖尔将自己绑在了护桅索上，观察着被狂风疾浪肆虐的海洋。

夜晚就在这种紧急状态下过去了，大家都希望天亮时风暴有所减弱，很可惜，他们的希望落空了。

早上8点钟的时候，狂风比刚才更厉害，而且已经成了飓风。

麦盖尔默不作声地开始为船上的人员安全考虑，此时“邓肯号”已经倾斜得很厉害了，甲板的支柱发出了咯吱咯吱的声响，海浪甚至打在了主桅上伸出的辅杆上。很长一段时间，全体船员都以为船会那么翻过去，起不来了。在帆已经被吹出帆框，如同一只大海鸥要掉下去时，有水手拿着斧头砍去了大桅杆上的护桅索。

“邓肯号”竟然又翻了回来，漂在了海面上。不过，虽然漂起来，但却没有风向，左右摇晃，桅杆也快要被折断了。这种行驶的方法肯定不行，整个船体已经完全受不了了，如果边板散了，接缝处再一裂开，波浪很快就会冲进来的。

船长麦盖尔目前还有一个解决问题的方法，那就是扯起三角帆。而

要扯起这个小帆，他用了好几个小时，直到下午3点钟的时候，三角帆才在主桅的辅杆上随风飘扬。

就这样，一块三角帆，拖起了“邓肯号”前行，并以无法测算的速度向东北方向行驶。当然，“邓肯号”必须保持最大速度，因为只有这个速度才能让船体保持安全。很多时候，“邓肯号”的船尖像锋利的刀尖，披风斩浪，开出一条道来；有时候，又像一条鲸鱼一样，飞快地钻进浪头，同时，波浪也从船头扫向船尾；有时候，船的速度又和浪的速度一样，使舵失去了作用，左右摇晃，差点将船打翻；有时候，在飓风的推动下，浪以比船速还快的速度，越过“邓肯号”船顶，以不可阻挡之势扫过整个船身……

12月15日，整整一天一夜就这么在时而充满希望，时而满是失望中反复着，好在虽然惊险，却也过去了。船长麦盖尔始终没敢离开自己的岗位，他什么都不吃，一直观察着海面以及“邓肯号”的情况，虽然表面冷静，其实内心很惊慌，而最让他惊慌的还是北方朦胧中的影子。

怎么可能不惊慌？此时此刻，什么样的危险都是有可能发生的。

“邓肯号”被风浪打出了航线，并以无法驾驭的速度向大洋洲海岸奔去。麦盖尔感觉到灾祸很可能就要降临了。他怕船触礁，怕“邓肯号”被撞个粉身碎骨。他开始估算大洋洲海岸离他们的距离，应该不少于10公里。在这样的情况下，靠岸实际上也就意味着沉船。在无边无际的大海上，不管往什么地方行驶，总好过触礁的，因为海浪虽急，但总有办法防护，最多只是受它的摆布罢了，可如果风暴将“邓肯号”吹到岸边，一触礁，那可就完了。

在这关键时刻，麦盖尔找到了爵士，并和他展开了一场对话。他毫

不掩饰地说明了当前的情况，还说他不怕牺牲，他能够很镇定地应对即将到来的危险。最后，他又说如果迫不得已，他只能将“邓肯号”向海岸停靠。

“如果能救船上的人，你想怎么做就怎么做吧！”爵士说。

“海伦夫人和玛丽小姐怎么办？”船长又问。

“到了关键时刻，我会通知她们的。如果真的没有任何希望了，那你就通知我一声。”

“我一定通知！阁下！”

麦盖尔说完，爵士便又回到了两位女士身边。两位女士已经感觉到了危险的来临，不过却不知危险到什么程度。在男同胞面前，她们还是表现出了很大的勇气。而此时，地理学家巴嘉勒尔正在为小罗伯尔讲解大气环流方面的知识，小罗伯尔聚精会神地听着。巴嘉勒尔讲到了旋风、羊角飓风、直线台风之间的不同；而少校正带着宿命般的理论，唉声叹气地等待着末日的来临。

深夜11点左右，风暴减弱了很多，空气中的湿雾也分散开来。在明朗中，船长麦盖尔看到下方3公里处有一片陆地，“邓肯号”正奔着那片陆地驶去。前面的浪很高，麦盖尔知道，高浪一定是遇到了坚实的阻碍才会扬得那么高。

“前面出现了暗礁！”麦盖尔对大副艾撒汀说。

“我也觉得是这样。”艾撒汀回答。

“看来，我们的命运已经掌握在上帝手里了。如果我们的船能从暗

礁的缺口处驶过，我们就能活下来。可如果上帝不让船对准那缺口，我们的生命就要终结到这里了。”麦盖尔说。

“此时正值涨潮，也许我们能过去，船长！”

“能过去吗？艾撒汀，那浪腾得那么高，怎么可能闯得过去？我们只能祈祷上帝，让上帝来帮助我们了，伙计！”

此时，在三角帆的推动下，“邓肯号”以惊人的速度向前行驶。很快，它离暗礁只有两公里远了，水汽遮住了麦盖尔的眼睛，不过麦盖尔还是看到满是泡沫的水面处有个地方很平静，如果“邓肯号”能驶向那里，也就安全了。不过，要怎么才能过去呢？麦盖尔船长将船上所有的人都请到了甲板上，他不愿意在船沉没之际，让他们一无所知地被关在舱里。当爵士和伙伴们看到了前方的巨浪时，发现玛丽小姐已经吓得脸色煞白了。

“麦盖尔，我没有办法救我的妻子，如不成我们就一起死，你负责救玛丽小姐。”爵士轻声说。

“知道了，阁下！”麦盖尔船长轻轻说完，拉着爵士的手，贴在了自己已经饱含眼泪的眼睛上。

“邓肯号”离那暗礁更近了。此时正是涨潮的最高期，如果船底有足够的水，将会载他们驶过那片暗礁。不过，浪太大了，如果浪将船先抛上去，再落下来，很可能使船体触礁，那沉船也就在所难免了。如果能那巨浪降低，让巨浪处的水流平缓点就好了。

终于，在最危急的时刻，麦盖尔想到了一个办法。

“快！倒油！伙伴们，倒油！”他大声喊道。

这句话一下子提醒了船上的水手们。这正是他们走出绝境的方法：往巨浪上盖上一层油，巨浪就会平息下来，而当这层油倒在上面时，就能润滑巨浪，让巨浪翻滚的势头减弱。这办法见效快，但很快就会失效。在他们人为地让海面趋于平静后，很可能让巨浪掀得更高，甚至给船只带来更大的危害。

不过没办法，这是唯一的机会。水手们将装海豹油的大桶滚到了船头，并用超出平时的力气，将木桶挂在左右舷的栏板外。

“准备好！”麦盖尔大声喊着，等待着最佳的倒油时间。

还有20秒，“邓肯号”马上就要到那巨浪翻滚的海面上，并驶进缺口处了。

时机到了！

“动手！”麦盖尔大喊一声。

水手们砍破了油桶，桶里的油一下子倒了下去，顿时将巨浪压了下去。“邓肯号”在被压平的水面上一晃而过，仅仅只是一眨眼的工夫，船便平稳地驶进了那个缺口处。

此时，海面上因为没有了油层的束缚，翻滚得更厉害了，完全称得上是波涛汹涌。

第二十四章 意料之外的线索

过了暗礁，在水深5米的地方，麦盖尔船长首先做的就是将船两边的锚抛下，船稳稳地停了下来。停船的海底是粗沙石，能吃住锚，所以“邓肯号”不再怕滑锚，也不再怕船搁浅。在惊险中急速行驶了几个小时后，总算安全了。

这里三面环山，每座山都像是个尖尖的山峰，挡住了狂风的肆虐。

“船长！谢谢你！”一到安全区，爵士就拉住了麦盖尔的手。

虽然只是寥寥几字，但足以让麦盖尔欣慰。爵士将刚刚面临死亡时的焦急心情完全隐藏了起来，海伦夫人、玛丽小姐，甚至罗伯尔都不知道他们刚刚面临的是生死一瞬间。

如今还剩下一个重要问题需要搞清楚——“邓肯号”被这场风暴打到什么地方来了？是不是还能找到37度纬线？白洛夷加的西南方离“邓肯号”停下的地方有多远？这几个问题都需要船长麦盖尔来回答。

麦盖尔也不含糊，一面用手测算，一面观察，并在海图上做出了标记。结果还不错，“邓肯号”离开37度纬线并不远，仅仅相差了两个纬度，在东经136度12分和南纬35度7分的地方，这个地方叫灾难角，位于澳大利亚南端，距白洛夷加大约有160公里。

所谓灾难角，顾名思义也就是容易发生灾难的地方。这里和坎加鲁岛之间的位置正好与泊达角相对。灾难角和泊达角之间又形成了一条海峡，海峡通向北边的斯宾赛湾和南边的圣文森湾。

圣文森湾的东岸是南澳省的首府阿德莱德港，人口大约四万，建于1836年。这里的资源非常丰富，居民大多以种植葡萄、柑橘和其他农副产品为业，很少有大规模的工业。总的来说，这里的人是不注重商业和手工业的。

在这样的地方，“邓肯号”能否把损坏的部分修好？这也成了他们急需解决的问题。而要想修复损坏的部位，麦盖尔船长还要知道什么地方损坏了。于是，他派人下水检查，很快就有了结论：蒸汽机的轮子歪了，顶住了龙尾骨，导致汽轮无法转动。

由此也可以判断出，“邓肯号”损坏的程度还是很严重的，需要很多工具，而这些工具在阿德莱德港是根本没有的。

最终，爵士和船长麦盖尔商量后决定，“邓肯号”继续张帆前行，沿大洋洲的海岸去寻访格兰特船长的踪迹，到了白洛夷加，说不定就能得到一些线索，然后再南行到墨尔本去修损坏的船只。

在将蒸汽机修好后，“邓肯号”就能继续沿着东海岸搜寻了。

这个建议赢得了大家的赞同，麦盖尔船长决定等风顺了就开船。

没等多长时间，飓风就完全消失了，接着又刮起了西南风。大家即刻做好准备，让帆重新上了桅杆。凌晨4点钟的时候，随着水手们转动辘轳，船渐渐地驶离了港。“邓肯号”重新撑起了主帆、前帆、顶帆、辅帆、纵帆、橦帆。帆索扣在右舷上，借着大洋洲海岸的风力，靠岸急驶而去。

两个小时后，灾难角便被“邓肯号”抛在了后面。晚上的时候，“邓肯号”绕过了泊达角，沿着坎加鲁岛，在距岸几公里的海上航行。

大洋洲众多小岛中最大的一个岛是坎加鲁岛，欧洲流放到澳大利亚的顽固囚徒就在那个岛上。坎加鲁岛的外观非常漂亮，岸上的岩石也被绿茵茵的草木覆盖住了。那里和1802年最先被发现时一样，有着成群的袋鼠在树林和平原上跳跃奔跑。

第二天，“邓肯号”放下了小舟，几个人登陆去搜寻线索，此时船只在36度的纬线上，爵士不想在36度和38度之间的任何一个地方留下探寻的遗憾。

12月18日一整天，“邓肯号”都张着帆，紧贴遭遇湾前行，如同轻快的帆船一般疾速行驶。这是墨累河，也是1828年旅行家斯德特发现的澳大利亚最大的河流能够到达的地方。这个地方没有坎加鲁岛的海岸那般郁郁葱葱，只有贫瘠而光秃秃的山丘，这是支离破碎的单调的海岸形象。

此外，这里也零零星星有着灰色的暗影。总的来说，这是在南北极才会出现的荒凉景象。

这次旅行，他们是驾驶着小舟去的，而驾驶小舟并不是件好差事，不过水手们没有一个抱怨。当然，每次去旅行，总少不了爵士、巴嘉勒尔和小罗伯尔。

他们三个人在搜寻的时候，虽然没有看到“大不列颠号”的哪怕是一点点的遗物，但心里却从没丧失信心，而是一直带着希望。寻访中，他们非常仔细，也非常小心，生怕漏掉任何一个地方。每天夜里他们在船上度过，白天则上岸去寻访。

就这么一路行一路寻访，12月20日，他们到了白洛夷加，但依然没找到一点沉船的迹象。不过，这并不能证明格兰特船长没有到过这些地

方。因为船失事有两年了，即使有残骸，也很可能被海水冲没了，腐蚀了。

而且船一旦失事，土人一般来说会最先知道，他们就像老鹰能远远闻到尸体味道一样，第一时间来到船失事的地方，将东西打劫一空。此外，格兰特船长和他的伙伴们即使被海水冲到岸边，又被土人俘虏，也会将他们带去大陆的。

不过这么一想，地理学家巴嘉勒尔的推测又有了问题，如果是在阿根廷的领土上，格兰特船长一定会在纸条上将拘留地点的经纬度标出来，而不是写失事地点。因为潘帕区河流众多，很容易将求救纸条放进海洋。而在澳大利亚就不一样了，南纬37度线横截的河流并不多，而且科罗拉多河和勒格落河都是流过荒漠和沙滩而进入海洋的，所以经常断流。而其他像墨累河、雅拉河等支流交错，商船云集，要想将一个装有求救纸条，很容易破碎的瓶子扔进船来船往的河流，最终又漂流到印度洋，这可能吗？

当然是不可能的，随便一个人就能通过推断得出这样的结论。所以巴嘉勒尔推测的瓶子是由内河进入海里，在美洲还是说得过去的，但在大洋洲就行不通了。对于这一点，少校也曾提出过，而巴嘉勒尔也承认自己的推测在这里不适用，所以说，纸条里的纬度数，只可能是指沉船位置，也就是说，瓶子是格兰特船长在大洋西岸撞船、沉船时丢下海去的。

不过，就像爵士说的，肯定格兰特船长在船失事时抛下求救瓶子与格兰特船长被俘并不矛盾，在这一点上，麦盖尔也已经预料到了。因为格兰特船长的纸条上写的是“将被俘于野蛮的当地土人”，由此看来，找到几个俘虏，只是沿着37度纬线，而不去涉及其他地方，也是有问题

的。

经过一番讨论后，他们认定：要是在白洛夷加找不到“大不列颠号”的线索，爵士他们也只能回欧洲了，因为虽然没有成功，但却也是尽力而为，没有遗憾了。

这样的决定又不免让船上的人感到很沮丧，特别是格兰特姐弟俩。两个人在跟着爵士夫妇、麦盖尔船长、少校及巴嘉勒尔上岸时，心里都在想，父亲是否能获救也就在此一举了，这唯一的希望深深地牵动着他们的心。

“不要灰心！肯定有希望！一定有希望的！”海伦夫人不断地安慰玛丽小姐。

在离岸不到200米的时候，白洛夷加伸入海内已经有3公里长了，而那伸进去的尖端也是缓和的山坡，小舟划进的那个天然港湾，则是由一群珊瑚礁围成的。

“邓肯号”上的乘客登上了无比荒凉的陆地，那带状的陡坡将海岸围成了一条线，18米的高度就是整个海岸的天然屏障。要想上去，他们必须借助钩绳才行。幸好船长麦盖尔无意中发现向南半英里的地方有个缺口，那缺口明显是因为石灰岩受到了海水侵蚀，山基不牢，从而引发山崩形成的。

爵士一行穿过缺口，像爬软梯一样爬上了岩顶。小罗伯尔像小猫一样，爬上笔直的斜坡，远远地将巴嘉勒尔和少校抛在了后面。见罗伯尔跑在了自己前面，巴嘉勒尔很不服气，而少校则心平气和，如往常一样淡定。

不一会儿，一行人便集合起来，观察着展现在他们面前的平原。平原里长着灌木丛和地衣植物，土壤贫瘠。爵士说这里让他想起了苏格兰低地中的荒谷，而巴嘉勒尔说让他想起了法国的布列塔尼亚半岛。

这一带虽然没人居住，但依稀能看到远处的建筑物。而那些建筑物，肯定不是野蛮土人的住所，而应该是农民居住的地方。

“看！风磨！”罗伯尔突然叫。

果然，在他们两公里以外的地方，风磨像一对翅膀在风中旋转。

“真是个风磨！别看那风磨小，它可是非常适用的，一看就很顺眼。”巴嘉勒尔拿起他的望远镜看了看说。

“那里很像个教堂的钟楼！”海伦夫人说。

“没错！夫人，教堂是给灵魂食粮的，而风磨则是给物质食粮的，所以从这方面来说，两者没多大差别。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“我们去那里看看吧！”爵士说。

一行人向风磨方向走去，走了半个小时后，他们面前呈现出了和刚才完全不同的景象。这里完全没有刚刚看到的荒凉，反而非常富饶。

没有杂草，全是经过了开垦，有着活树做篱笆的农庄。农庄里，一群群的牛羊在草原上吃草，草原四周栽种着高大的豆球花树，不仅如此，四周还有金黄的麦穗和庞大的草堆，这些麦穗和草堆围绕着一个果园，果园布置得非常有诗意，也非常实际。想必这样的地方，就连田园诗人霍拉斯也会赞叹的。

此外，他们还看到了草棚、脚屋，当然最后还看到了一座看似简单，却非常舒适的住宅。这处住宅在磨坊下，非常抢眼，风磨转动着翅膀，像是在轻轻地抚摸着住宅。

一行人刚刚走到住宅门口，便有四只大狗狂吠开了，它们像是在向主人报告：有客人来了！

在狗叫声中，一位50多岁，面容慈祥的老者从屋里走了出来，后面跟着他的妻子和5个健壮的儿子。从老人的长相上很容易就能看出，他是爱尔兰移民，由于在本国受到了苦难，所以才远渡重洋，来此地谋生的。

没等爵士他们说明身份和来意，便听到了欢迎的话语。

“远到而来的客人，欢迎来奥陌尔家做客！”

“先生是爱尔兰人吧？”爵士马上伸出手，握住了老者的手问。

“曾经是爱尔兰人，但现在是澳大利亚人。请进来吧！诸位，不要客气！”奥陌尔说。

面对这样的热情邀请，大家也就不客气地接受了，海伦夫人和玛丽小姐跟着奥陌尔太太一起进了屋，同时，那5个儿子还帮他们卸下了身上的武器。

奥陌尔的这座房子属于木质结构，楼下有间宽敞明亮的大厅，厅里有几条长凳子，还有两个橡木木橱，里面摆放着白色的瓷器和发亮的锡壶，大厅里有一张可供20人坐的长桌子。

以上就是大厅里的所有家具，而每样家具都很结实耐用，像那5个

健壮的年轻人一样。

奥陌尔很快就为来客摆上了午餐。午餐中间是冒着热气的火锅，两旁是烤牛肉、羊腿，四周则是水果。有了主菜，当然也不会缺了小吃。热情的主人让宽大的桌子上摆满了美食。“邓肯号”上的人也就不客气地坐在了桌旁。

在农场，雇工和主人一样平等，所以在一起吃饭。

“我早就在恭候你们了！”奥陌尔对爵士一行说。

“哦？早就等候我们？”爵士吃了一惊。

“没错！凡是来的人，我都热情恭候！”

奥陌尔说完，全家主仆都站了起来，肃穆地做着饭前祷告。海伦夫人面对淳朴的风俗，看了爵士一眼，她知道丈夫喜欢一切古朴的东西。

午餐大家吃得很开心，聊得也很投机。一方是以苏格兰人为代表，另一方则是以爱尔兰人为代表，坐下来后，两方便成了一家人。奥陌尔先向他们讲了自己的历史，也就是被贫困赶得移民国外的历史。

很多人像他们一样，跑到很远的地方去生活，结果依然穷困潦倒。这不仅是他们运气不好，而且也怪他们懒惰，没有用心做事。一个人如果勤劳节俭，勇敢上进，必定会取得成功。这是奥陌尔总结出来的。

当年，在本国因为困苦，所以携带家眷来到了澳大利亚，并在阿德莱德下了船，他不作矿工，宁愿做农场主。两个月后开始经营农场，现在已经做得很成功了。

澳大利亚的土地每份按80英亩计算，由政府估价出售，一个人如果足够勤劳，买下一份田地，完全可以维持生计，甚至还会有结余。

奥陌尔正是凭借他的经验以及勤劳和节俭，先以一份田地，赚得了几份田地。如今他人丁兴旺，农场也很兴旺，虽然经营不到两年，但已经成为当地有名的农场主了。如今的他，拥有500亩土地，500头牛羊。过去曾被别人奴役，如今却成了自己的主人，享受着最大的自由和民主。

大家在听完奥陌尔的历史后，全都衷心祝贺他。

在奥陌尔说完自己的历史后，也希望对方能说说自己的事情，不过他并没有直接提出来，而是含蓄地说：“我是什么人，我已经告诉你们了，可是不便问你们是些什么人。”

对于爵士来说，他当然急于倾诉他们此次的目的了。因此，直爽的他一开口就问起了奥陌尔，问他有没有听说过格兰特船长的事。

奥陌尔的回答没有给他们带来希望，他甚至说从没听过这个名字。而这两年里，也没听说有什么船在这里的海岸或白洛夷加出现。而且他还说，“大不列颠号”出事仅仅两年时间，他绝对有把握遇难船员没有来西海岸。

“爵士，我现在有个问题，失事的船和你有什么关系吗？”奥陌尔说完后又问道。

爵士一五一十地将他们如何得到了那个装有求救纸条的瓶子，以及他们乘坐“邓肯号”寻访格兰特船长的过程，全都毫无保留地说了，甚至还说，奥陌尔的回答让他们的希望变成了绝望。

没错，这些话让在场的所有人都感到了痛苦，特别是罗伯尔和玛丽小姐，他们眼泪汪汪地听着。而巴嘉勒尔也一直在找合适的语言来安慰他们。麦盖尔船长心里很不好受，甚至觉得烦闷，他们满怀希望来寻找格兰特船长，没想到寻找的结果却是让他们绝望。

突然，在场的人都听到了一句话：“感谢上帝！爵士，如果格兰特船长还活着的话，他一定是在澳大利亚大陆！”

第二十五章 “大不列颠号”上的遇难船员

“如果格兰特船长还活着的话，他一定是在澳大利亚大陆！”这句话顿时引起了全体人员的惊愕。爵士一下子从桌子旁跳了起来，大声问：“刚刚谁在说话？”

“爵士，是我说！”桌子另一端一个农场工人说。

“哦，是你呀，阿埃童！”奥陌尔说的时候，惊讶程度也不亚于其他人。

“没错！是我！”阿埃童兴奋地说，“爵士，我和您一样，也是苏格兰人，而且我还是‘大不列颠号’上的一个遇难的船员。”

阿埃童这句话带来的反应，绝对不亚于一个炸雷，玛丽小姐顿时觉得天旋地转，她兴奋得差点晕倒，慢慢地倒在了海伦夫人的怀里。麦盖尔、罗伯尔和少校全都围在了阿埃童的身旁。

阿埃童有一张严肃的面孔，炯炯有神的眼睛深深地陷入到了眼眶中。45岁的他很瘦，但看起来却很有力气，肌肉将他身上的肥肉全都赶走了。中等身材的他有着宽阔的肩膀，整张脸充满了智慧和毅力……总之，他是一个很容易让人产生好感的人。

他像是受过苦难，而那刻画着苦难的容貌立刻获得了别人的信任和同情。看来，他是一个吃过苦，不怕苦，甚至能战胜苦的人。

爵士和他的朋友们很快就意识到了这一点，他们觉得这个阿埃童一

定能为他们带来有用的信息。所以爵士代表大家向他提出了很多问题，而阿埃童也都一一回答了。两个人犹如在一个难以预料的场合相遇相识，并成了知音，所以都是百感交集。

在这种情绪的影响下，爵士提出的问题自然也是没有章法的，想到什么就提什么了。

“你说你是‘大不列颠号’上的遇难船员？”他问。

“没错，爵士，我是船上的水手长。”

“那么船只失事后，你是和他们一起脱险的吗？”

“不，爵士。船失事时非常可怕，我是被甩出船帮，最后又被海水打到岸上来的。”

“那么你是不是纸条上说的那两个水手中的一个？”

“什么纸条？我不知道这件事。”

“那么格兰特船长呢？他怎么样了？”

“我之前以为他已经淹死了，沉到海底去了。甚至我一直以为我是唯一活着的人。”

“但你刚刚说船长还活着。”

“不！我要解释一下，我是说如果船长活着……”

“可你刚刚也说，如果他活着，他就会在澳大利亚大陆！为什么会这么说呢？”

“没错，他要是活着，他就会在这片土地上。”

“可是你到底知不知道他在哪儿？”

“不知道！爵士！我再重申一遍，我一直以为他不在了，不是葬身海底，就是撞岩石死了。是您告诉我，他可能还活着。”

“那么我想问你，你还知道些什么？”爵士问。

“我知道的就是如果他活着，那他就一定是在澳大利亚大陆。”

“那么，船究竟是在什么地方出事的呢？”少校终于也忍不住了，插话道。

这本来是爵士最先要问出的话，但一紧张就给忘了。现在，谈话真正进入正题。而不久后，那段可怕的历史就慢慢清晰起来。

阿埃童回答少校的问题时说：“当船头接触到帆的时候，我被甩了出去，‘大不列颠号’也就向大洋洲海岸方向驶去了。那时候离岸还不到两英里，所以我觉得出事地点就在那里。”

“你是说在南纬37度线上吗？”麦盖尔又问。

“没错，是这样的。”阿埃童说。

“你是说在西海岸？”

“不，我是说东海岸！”阿埃童纠正说。

“时间……”

“1862年6月27日！”

“没错，是这个时间。”爵士大叫道。

“现在您明白了吧，爵士，要是格兰特船长还活着，一定是在大陆，不需要去别的地方找。”阿埃童又说。

“那我们现在就去找，一定要找，一定要把他解救出来！朋友们！”

巴嘉勒尔大叫起来，停了一会儿又说：“天啊，那三张纸条真是太重要了，不过那纸条也幸运，落在了聪明人手里。”

此时此刻，没有人有心情听他恭维，爵士夫妇、格兰特姐弟，全都涌到了阿埃童身边。他们紧紧地握住阿埃童的手，好像有了这个人，格兰特船长也就能安然无恙了。他们觉得，既然阿埃童作为船上的水手长都脱险了，船长难道还会逃不出那场灾难？阿埃童也不断地重复着，说格兰特船长如果和他在一起就好了。

大家向他提出了很多问题，他都详细地做了解释，而当他讲话的时候，玛丽小姐一直握着他的手，这个人可是他父亲曾经的伙伴呀，而且还是“大不列颠号”上的一名船员。这个人曾在格兰特船长身边生活过，他们曾一起漂洋过海，共同冒险……想到这些，玛丽小姐紧盯着阿埃童那张经历过风吹雨淋，阳光暴晒的脸，激动地流下了眼泪。

除了少校和麦盖尔对是否要完全相信阿埃童持怀疑态度外，其他人都不再怀疑阿埃童的身份了。而少校和麦盖尔之所以心里有疑虑，是因为这件事太巧合了。不过，阿埃童说出的很多事情及日期，都和纸条上写得很符合，更主要的是他说出了一些特殊细节。当然，细节虽然重要，不过也不一定是真的，因为骗子的手段太高明了，因此，少校一直

保留自己的态度，没有下定语。

而对于麦盖尔来说，他对阿埃童的怀疑却很快就被打消了，因为他听到阿埃童在对格兰特姐弟说他们父亲的事，这让他觉得，阿埃童果然是格兰特船长的伙伴，因为阿埃童太熟悉格兰特姐弟俩了。他说，在他们出海那天，他还在格拉斯哥港见过他们。那天，船长举行了告别宴会，格兰特姐弟来吃饭，那时候，小罗伯尔还不到10岁，当时格兰特船长让水手迪克照看小罗伯尔，但小罗伯尔却背着他们爬到了桅杆的横木上，吓了大家一跳。

“我真有这么做吗？”小罗伯尔笑着问。

阿埃童又讲了一些小事情，而那些事情虽然很小，但麦盖尔却觉得十分重要。阿埃童说完，停了下来，玛丽小姐柔声请求道：“阿埃童先生！再给我们说说我们父亲的事吧！”

阿埃童极力满足了两姐弟的要求，而爵士也不愿意打断他的话，不过他却有很多重要的问题需要问，而海伦夫人见玛丽急切地想知道父亲的一切，便不让他现在开口问。

此后，阿埃童还讲述了“大不列颠号”的历史以及它在太平洋上的航行。对于那次航行，玛丽小姐也略知一二，因为船只是在1862年5月没有了消息的。而在消失前，这只船曾在大洋洲各主要陆地靠岸，比如新几内亚、新西兰、新喀里多尼亚……这些陆地大多是殖民地，所以他们所到之处，时常会受到英国当局的歧视，最后，他们在巴布亚西岸找到了一个据点，觉得如果在那里建个移民区的话，是可以繁荣发展的。

确实是这样，如果在摩鹿加群岛和菲律宾的航路里增加上一个中途站的话，是一定能吸引很多船只的。因为苏伊士运河开通后，经过好望

角的航线便被取消了。富有正义感的格兰特船长，自然是非常反感那些带着种族歧视的政治斗争的。

“大不列颠号”在勘察完巴布亚之后，便去了卡亚俄置办粮食。1862年5月30日，船离开了卡亚俄港，并决定从印度洋到好望角，然后又从好望角回欧洲。不过启程了三个星期后，一场大暴风雨就把船体打坏了，为了不至于翻船，他们只好砍断了桅杆。但即使这样，船底还是漏水了，怎么都堵不上。

几天几夜没合眼的船员们虽然很累，却仍然没有离开抽水机一刻。在风暴中颠簸了八天八夜后，船舱里进的水达到了六米，而船体也开始下沉。更糟糕的是，船上的小舟被狂风刮跑了，大家只能在船上干等。而就在这时，正像地理学家巴嘉勒尔推测的那样，船到了澳大利亚东沿岸，便撞岸沉没了。

在船被撞的那一刻，阿埃童被卷进了浪头，最后又被甩到一个珊瑚礁上，晕了过去。当他醒来后，已经落入土人手里了，而当他被带到内陆以后，便再也没有听到过关于“大不列颠号”的消息。

阿埃童对“大不列颠号”的叙述讲完了，他的讲述引起了在场人的一次次惊呼。少校对阿埃童的怀疑也消失了，因为如果阿埃童是骗子，怎么可能讲述得这么清晰？

有了那三张求救纸条，又有了阿埃童的亲身经历，一切都指向格兰特船长及他的同伴并没有葬身海底。人们在合理地对格兰特船长和那两名水手的遭遇做了推测后，又请阿埃童讲述一下他在内陆的情况。而阿埃童的这段讲述也很简单。

他说，在他成了土人的俘虏后，便开始在大运河流域劳动，生活非

常艰苦。因为土人部落本身就很贫困，不过他并没有受到虐待。在过了近两年奴隶般的生活后，他心中对自由的向往从来没有放弃过。他想到了逃跑，虽然逃跑很可能会遇到危险，但他不想放过任何一个逃跑的机会。

1864年10月的一个夜晚，趁土人防备不是很严，他偷偷地跑掉了。他跑到了原始森林，在那里吃草根、树叶、树皮等，过了整整一个月。他白天靠太阳辨路，夜晚靠星星辨路，并常常陷入绝望境地。就这样，经过沼泽、河流、高山……他走过了很多连探险家都不敢去的地方。

最后，在他走得筋疲力尽，奄奄一息时，来到了这里，善良的牧场主让他过上了平静而幸福的生活。

“没错，阿埃童很感恩，我对他也很满意。他是个勤劳、勇敢的人，只要他愿意，这里将是他永远的家。”奥陌尔也说。

阿埃童做了一个感谢的手势。他在等待大家继续问他问题。此时，他知道大家有许多问题要问，而他也愿意满足大家的需求。不过，在大家所提的问题中，很多都是重复的，他回答了一遍又一遍，他想知道还有没有新的问题呢？

爵士让大家讨论，制订寻访计划。而此时，少校却把头转向了阿埃童，问他：“你说你曾是格兰特船长的手下，有什么可以证明的吗？”

“当然有！”阿埃童没有丝毫的迟疑。

不过，也许是觉得少校对他不信任，他又补充了一句说：“我可以给你们看我在船上工作时候的服务证书。”

说完，阿埃童走出了大厅。看到阿埃童出去了，奥陌尔又对爵士

说：“爵士，我可以担保，阿埃童绝对诚实可靠。他在我这里做事的两个月里，没有做任何让我不满意的事。我之前也知道他曾是落难的俘虏，他这人非常光明磊落，值得你们信任。”

爵士正准备向牧场主解释自己从没怀疑过阿埃童的身份，阿埃童已经拿着证书走进来了，证书上写着“兹派一级海员汤姆·阿埃童为格拉斯哥港三桅船大不列颠号上的水手长”。证书上面有船主和格兰特船长的签名，玛丽小姐很快就认出了父亲的笔迹。

阿埃童的身份完全没有问题了。

“现在我要征求大家的意见，就是我们接下来要做的事。”爵士说完，把脸转向阿埃童：“阿埃童，你的意见非常重要，如果你能给我们提供一些宝贵的意见，我们将非常感谢！”

阿埃童想了想说：“谢谢阁下对我的信任，我一定不会辜负您的信任的。我对这一带的风土人情非常了解，如果我能为大家出力的话……”

“你当然能给我们出力了。”爵士说。

“我和大家想的一样，船长和两名水手从那场灾难中逃脱，既没有跑到英国属地，又没有任何消息，我怀疑和我一样，是被土人俘虏去了。”阿埃童说。

“你说的正是我推测出的，那三个遇难者很可能是被土人俘去了，那纸条上已经写清楚了。不过我们是否能够推测出，他们所去的地方是和你一样，是在南纬37度线以北呢？”巴嘉勒尔说。

“非常有可能，先生！歧视欧洲人的土人很少会住在英国的殖民

地。”阿埃童说。

“这样找起来就有些困难了。这么一大片土地，我们要怎么去找呢？”爵士为难地说。

大家都沉默着，海伦夫人用探寻的目光扫了一遍全场后，仍然没有得到答案，连那一向快言快语的地理学家巴嘉勒尔也住了嘴，而麦盖尔船长则为难地在大厅踱步。

“有什么好主意，阿埃童先生？如果是你，你会怎么做？”海伦夫人只得问他了。

“如果是我的话，夫人，我想，我会回到‘邓肯号’上，然后直接驶到出事地点，在那里见机行事。这样的话，很可能还会找到一些线索，然后再决定下一步怎么做。”

“这样做是不错，可是要等‘邓肯号’修好才行。”爵士说。

“船坏了？”阿埃童问。

“是的，船坏了。”麦盖尔说。

“坏得很厉害吗？”阿埃童又问。

“厉害倒不厉害，就是蒸汽机的叶片坏了，不过需要一些修船的工具，而这些工具只有墨尔本有。”

“难道不能张帆行驶？”阿埃童又说。

“走倒是能走，不过要是稍微有逆风的话，‘邓肯号’到杜布湾就需要耽误很长时间，不管怎么说，还是要去墨尔本的。”

“那就让它去修好了，我们不坐船去杜布湾。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“难道我们步行去？”麦盖尔问。

“我们沿着37度纬线行走，横贯澳大利亚和横贯亚美利加是一样的。”

“那‘邓肯号’又该怎么办？”阿埃童问，显然他对“邓肯号”更关心。

“等‘邓肯号’修好，直接去接我们就行了。有谁反对这个计划吗？少校，你觉得怎么样？”

“我同意！只要横贯澳大利亚这个做法可行就行。”

“那当然是没问题的，而且我还建议海伦夫人和玛丽小姐也一起去。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“你说的是真心话吗，巴嘉勒尔？”爵士问。

“那当然，亲爱的爵士，这可只有580公里，我们一天走30公里的话，不到一个月就走完了。这个时间和修好‘邓肯号’所需的时间一样。而且如果向北一点的纬线走，从澳大利亚最宽的部分穿过，很可能还要经过酷热的大沙漠，会经历很多大胆的冒险的事。可我们这次不一样，如果大家愿意的话，还可以乘坐马车，或者坐土车。坐土车更有情调，就和从伦敦到爱尔兰一样，没什么不可以的。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“如果遇到猛兽呢？”爵士把可能发生的事又进行了提问。

“澳大利亚怎么会有猛兽？”

“如果遇到那些不开化的土人该怎么办？”

“放心吧！这条纬线上是不可能有什么土人的。即使有，也不会像新西兰的土人那么凶狠。”

“如果遇到被流放的英国罪犯呢？”

“流放的罪犯，澳大利亚的南部省没有，只有东部殖民地才有。37度纬线穿过的维多利亚省不仅不允许流犯入境，而且还制定了法律，就连外省刑满释放的流犯都不允许入境。甚至今年维多利亚省政府还通知了轮船公司，要是接受了流犯，就将会禁止那个港口运煤，而且还会停止发补助给公司。”

“没错，是这样的。不仅维多利亚是这样，就连南澳、昆士兰，甚至塔斯马尼亚各省也制定了这些法律。”奥陌尔说。

“是的，就是我，也没有遇到过。”阿埃童也说。

“这下大家该放心了吧，朋友们。我们既不会遇到土人，也不会遇到猛兽，更不会有流犯，这么好的地方，就是欧洲也没有啊。现在大家该同意我的计划了吧！”巴嘉勒尔说。

“怎么样，夫人？”爵士问海伦夫人。

“我完全同意！亲爱的爱德华！”海伦夫人说完，又对大家说，“朋友们！我们上路吧！”

第二十六章 穿过澳大利亚

做事一向雷厉风行，说做就做的爵士，在巴嘉勒尔的建议得到大家的支持后，马上便开始了旅行前的准备工作，并决定第二天出发。

此次横贯澳大利亚大陆，又会发生什么事情呢？既然格兰特船长在这片大陆的事已经成为不容辩驳的事实，那么此次远征无疑是会有收获的，而这个收获就是，即使没有找回人，也会找到线索的。他们将沿着37度线进发，虽然不能肯定在这条线上会找到船长，但最起码会找到他的印迹——更重要的是，这条线通向的是船出事的地点。

更让他们有信心的是，阿埃童答应和他们一起去，做他们的向导。他要带领大家穿越维多利亚的森林，直到东海岸。

能获得格兰特船长曾经的水手长帮助，爵士非常高兴，不过他还是问奥陌尔，阿埃童的离开会不会给他们带来不便。

奥陌尔虽然很舍不得这个得力帮手，但还是同意了。

“怎么样？阿埃童，你答应和我们去寻找你遇难的同伴，对吗？”爵士再次问道。

阿埃童略略停顿了一下，很快又说：“是的，爵士！我答应和诸位一起去。即使不能找到船长的踪迹，也是能将大家带到出事地点的。”

“谢谢你，阿埃童！”爵士感动地说。

“不过我要再问一个问题，爵士！”阿埃童说。

“说吧，什么问题？”

“你们决定在什么地方和‘邓肯号’会合？”

“如果我们不需要走遍全部路程的话，那么就在墨尔本会合；如果我们要一直走到东海岸去，那就在那里会合。”

“那么‘邓肯号’的船长会在什么地方？”

“船长在墨尔本听候指令！”

“好的，我知道了！爵士，只要你信任我就行了。”

“我当然信任你！”

爵士说。

“大不列颠号”上的水手长阿埃童受到了全体成员的热烈欢迎。格兰特姐弟都不知道该怎么表达自己的谢意。当然，在场的所有人中，还是有人有些失落的，那就是奥陌尔，阿埃童的离开，意味着他要失去一位聪明忠实的帮手，不过他知道阿埃童做向导意味着什么，也就忍痛割爱了。

爵士请求奥陌尔给他们提供一些交通工具，奥陌尔答应了。之后，大家和阿埃童约好了会合的时间和地点，然后就回到了“邓肯号”上。

这一路上，大家的兴奋可想而知。一切的情况都在向好的方向发展，他们的任何顾虑此刻都不存在了，勇敢的寻访者们不再没有头绪，每个人的心里都充满了信心和希望。如果一切进展顺利，很可能只需两

个月，“邓肯号”就能将格兰特船长和那两名水手送到苏格兰海岸，并在那里登陆。

爵士商量行动计划时，麦盖尔船长提出他也要横贯大陆去旅行，他觉得旅行队伍中一定不能少了他，而且还提出了种种理由，表示非去不可。

“你去不是不可以，但有一个问题我不放心，那就是大副留在船上行吗？”爵士说。

“绝对没问题。艾撒汀是个非常优秀的海员，他一定能将‘邓肯号’开到目的地。而且心灵手巧、忠于职责的他，一定会尽快将船修好，也绝不会改变计划，延缓时间的。所以阁下只需像信任我一样信任他就行了。”麦盖尔说。

“既然如此，那就陪我们一起去吧，而且要是找到玛丽小姐的父亲，你在场会更好一些。”爵士又说。

“啊！……阁下！……”麦盖尔有些难为情，但心里却很激动。

第二天，麦盖尔带着木匠和几名水手，载着粮食去了奥陌尔的农庄，负责和奥陌尔商量交通工具的事宜。

他们去的时候，整个农庄的人都在等候他们，决定等他一吩咐，他们就动手工作。在做这些准备工作的时候，阿埃童也在那里，并毫不吝啬地将自己的经验提供给大家。

在使用交通工具方面，麦盖尔和奥陌尔的意见达成了一致，那就是女人乘牛车，男人骑马。对于马和牛车，奥陌尔都可以提供。

牛车是一种大拖车，有6米长，车上盖着大的皮质的篷子，底下装着4个车轮，车轮上没有辐条和铁箍。由于车头离车尾比较远，所以不能急转弯。为此，他们又往车头上装了10米的车辕，并决定让6头牛成对地站在辕边。

赶这样的牛车，没有技巧是不行的。作为赶车能手的阿埃童，驾车任务非他莫属。

由于车上没有弹簧，所以走时会颠簸得很厉害。麦盖尔想了很长时间都没想好怎么解决这个问题，只能将车内布置得舒适一点。为此，他将车厢用木板隔成了两部分，前一部分坐人，后一部分装粮食、行李和灶具。

经过木匠们的加工，前部分坐人的地方被设置成了精致的小屋，屋里的地板上铺着地毯，屋子里不仅有盥洗设备，还有两张床铺，是为海伦夫人和玛丽小姐准备的。四周挂上了皮帘，晚上放下来能阻挡寒气，如果下起雨来，男人们也可以躲进去避雨。没有下雨的晚上，男人们则在外面搭帐篷休息。

总之，麦盖尔船长为将这狭小的空间布置成一个安乐窝，下了很大的功夫。当然，结果非常让人满意。有了这个流动的屋子，海伦夫人和玛丽小姐也就不再用再留恋船上的房间了。

出行的男人们的交通工具很简单，爵士、巴嘉勒尔、罗伯尔、少校、船长和维尔逊、穆纳每人一匹马。驾驶牛车的阿埃童则坐在车头。

不过，不喜欢骑马的奥比尔决定坐在牛车的行李厢里。

他们需要的牛马全都在庄园的草地上吃草，下了出发令后，它们很

快就能集合了。麦盖尔在将一切都安排妥当后，带着奥陌尔一家到了“邓肯号”上。这次奥陌尔是要回拜爵士的。

阿埃童觉得他也要去一趟才行，于是，快4点的时候，麦盖尔船长带着这些客人进了船舱。

不用说，他们受到了最热烈的欢迎，爵士甚至还留他们在船上吃饭。盛情难却，客人们也都同意了。当奥陌尔看到“邓肯号”上的一切后，惊诧万分，交口称赞，因为船上房间里的每一样家具、壁橱都是用枫木和紫檀木做成的。

不过，阿埃童却不一样，好像对这种“奢侈”的东西不感兴趣，他感兴趣的是整条游船的样子和配备。他从航行的角度开始参观，不仅看机器，而且还询问了机器的马力和耗煤量，甚至还去了煤舱和粮舱。对于武器间的大炮的性能和射程，他也很关心。

麦盖尔在听了他的一些专业问题后，更相信他是个内行了。最后，阿埃童又参观了桅杆和船具。

“这条游船真漂亮啊，爵士，它是多少吨位的？”他问。

“有210吨位。”

“那么就是说，如果船开足马力的话，1分钟就能跑9公里？我说的没错吧？”阿埃童问。

“如果你说10公里的话，那就说对了。”麦盖尔说。

“啊？10公里？那也就是说，没有战船能追上它了？”阿埃童的眼睛一亮。

“没错，‘邓肯号’可是竞赛能手，不论用什么方式航行，它都不会输。”麦盖尔自豪地说。

“那么张帆远航，一定也比别的船快吗？”

“那是当然的了！”麦盖尔说。

“爵士，船长，请接受我作为一名船员的祝贺吧！”阿埃童又说。

“好的，阿埃童，如果你愿意，你也可以到这船上来做事。”爵士说。

“以后我会考虑这个问题的。”阿埃童最后说。

正当这时，奥比尔先生说宴席摆好了，让大家去吃饭。

“一个厉害的角色！阿埃童！”巴嘉勒尔对少校说。

“嗯！没错，不过太聪明了！”

少校话里有话。不知道为什么，他总觉得阿埃童的长相和举止有些问题。当然，这也许是他的一些偏见和嫉妒心理在作怪。

吃饭的时候，阿埃童还对他熟悉的一些大陆做了非常有趣的介绍，甚至还问爵士准备带多少水手去大陆远征。当他知道只带穆纳和维尔逊时，很是吃惊，并劝爵士再找几个去。说到这里的时候，他非常坚持。

这种坚持，又让少校对他的反感减弱了。

“为什么要带那么多人去？难道途中会有危险？”爵士问。

“当然没有危险！”阿埃童说。

“那么，水手们还是留在船上比较好。‘邓肯号’张帆和修理都需要人手，而且更重要的是，将来‘邓肯号’还要在指定的地点会合，所以船上的人数不能太少。”

阿埃童听爵士也这么坚持，便没有再说什么。

天色已晚，奥陌尔和阿埃童一行向爵士他们告别，回到了庄园，车马都已经准备好了，启程时间定在了第二天的早上8点。

海伦夫人和玛丽小姐也为启程做好了一切准备，而这个准备工作，她们花的时间并不长，所带的东西也没有巴嘉勒尔多。巴嘉勒尔用了半个晚上的时间，拆下了他的那个巨大的望远镜，擦了又擦，装上后，觉得没擦干净，又拆下来又擦……折腾了很长时间，所以在第二天天已大亮，少校用很大的声音叫他时，他还在呼呼大睡。

一只小舟放了下来，在将行李派人送往农庄后，一行人跳了上去。麦盖尔最后一次叮嘱大副艾撒汀，嘱咐他一定要在墨尔本等候指令，并且不论在任何情况下，都要接受指令。艾撒汀让麦盖尔放心，并代表船上的全体海员，祝福麦盖尔他们一行成功。

小舟离开了船，欢呼声此起彼伏。

仅仅用了10分钟，小舟就靠了岸，又过去十几分钟，一行人出现在了奥陌尔农场。

海伦夫人非常喜欢那辆巨大的牛车，在看到牛车上的屋子时更是兴奋。牛车由6头牛来拉，6头牛也是两个两个地并排站着，器宇轩昂。

拿着牛鞭的阿埃童，正等着出发的指令。

“这辆牛车真是棒极了！它比得上世界上所有的邮车，有了这样一辆车，完全可以像江湖艺人一样，走遍全世界。再没有比这更好的旅游交通工具了，一座流动的房子，能走、能停，来去自由，真是太好了。看来，古代游牧民族萨马特人的想法我们都实现了。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“没错，巴嘉勒尔先生，以后你也可以光临我们这个流动房子的客厅。”海伦夫人说。

“那是当然了，夫人，去你们的客厅，将是我的荣幸，我一定不会错过这个机会的。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“我每天都等候你的到来，因为你是……”

海伦夫人还没说完，巴嘉勒尔便抢先说：“我是你朋友里最真诚的一个，对不对？”

当然，巴嘉勒尔殷勤的一番话马上就被后面站着的7匹马打断了，7匹马上的马鞍全都备齐了，马开始高声嘶叫。

爵士在付了购置一切的费用后，又对奥陌尔说了很多感谢的话，而那些话在奥陌尔听来，比金钱更重要。

启程指令一发出，海伦夫人便和玛丽小姐坐进了她们的“房子”；阿埃童爬上了赶牛车的位子；奥比尔钻进了后车厢；其余人全都跨上了马。

他们在奥陌尔及其家人的“上帝保佑你们”中出发了。

牛马嘶鸣，车轮滚动，随着车厢咯吱咯吱的声响，一行人转了个弯，那热情的爱尔兰牧场主便看不见了。

12月，北半球已经很潮湿，很凄冷了，南半球则还是夏日炎炎。出发这天，夏天已经到了。由于太阳是在12月21日这天进入摩羯宫的，所以它在地平线上的时间越来越少，爵士他们一行几乎是在热带的太阳底下行进。

澳大利亚是印度洋上的英国领地的总称，主要有新荷兰、塔斯马尼亚、新西兰及四周的若干小岛构成。澳大利亚大陆，则被划分成了大小不等的殖民地，这些殖民地间的界线都是直线，这是因为英国人随心所欲，不考虑地形、河流、气候和种族划出来的。一个挨着一个的长方块殖民地彼此嵌合，如同数学家们画成的几何图形，完全不是地理学家的划分方式。

当然，海岸线倒是曲线，这些曲线自然生动，像是在向那些直线示威。

这种棋盘式的划分方式一直被巴嘉勒尔嘲笑，他觉得，如果澳大利亚属于法国的话，法国的地理学家们绝对不会像用直尺画直线般来划分界线。

大洋洲的大陆被分为6个殖民地，海边住着移民。以前曾有一些胆子大，敢于冒险的居民在内陆324公里处的地方生活，但后来却不知怎么样了。所以澳大利亚的腹地，按理说是无人知道其内在情况的。

幸好37度线不用去那荒无人烟的地方，而那些地方，即使是科学考察、探险也很可能是有去无回。爵士当然也不愿意带着大家去冒这个险，他所要去的是澳大利亚南部，也就是包括阿德莱德省的狭长部分，

是整个维多利亚省和新南威尔士，那个倒置着的三角形尖端。

从奥陌尔的农场到维多利亚边境还不到100公里，两天就能走完，阿埃童计划第二天晚上在维多利亚省最西边的阿斯人居住的城市过夜。

远征刚刚开始的时候，马上的人精神百倍，屁股下的马也神采奕奕。人精神百倍倒没什么，马要是太活跃就很危险了，所以需要多加控制。特别是骑马远征，一定要合理分配能力才行。

因此，大家决定每天只行40至50里路程，一点都不多走。何况牛拉大车走得很慢，马必须配合牛的速度。因而，那辆牛车以及车上的粮食和工具，也就成了大家保护的焦点，仿佛那是流动的堡垒。骑着马的人都走在车子两边，保护着它，不离牛车太远。

骑着马的人没有什么次序安排，只要不脱离大部队太远，还是可以自由行动的。对于善于打猎的人来说，可以到处跑跑看看，而如果想和女士聊天，那就要紧紧地守在牛车旁边了，而如果想要几个人聊聊哲学问题，也可以互相凑在一起。

在这些人中，既想和女士聊天，又想和大伙谈哲学问题的就是巴嘉勒尔，所以也就忙得不亦乐乎。

刚开始的这段路程并没有什么稀奇之处，那一连串的丘陵光秃秃的，还有一些非常开阔的地方长满了青草。当然，还有一些地方遍地都是灌木丛，灌木丛里的植物叶子尖尖的，带着咸味，是羊喜欢吃的植物。

几公里的路走过去，到处都是这些东西，当然偶尔还会看到一种猪头羊身的动物在电线杆下吃草。

总而言之，这里的平原看上去和潘帕草原并没有什么两样：翠绿而平坦的草地，清澈蔚蓝的天空，一群群的野兽。这种情景，让少校以为还是在阿根廷。地理学家巴嘉勒尔让大家不要急，说地形很快就会发生改变，而且他还向大家保证，说一定会有新事物出现。

下午3点钟的时候，牛车穿过了一片没有树的旷野，这里也叫“蚊园”。从名字就能知道，这里是蚊子的天堂。讨厌的蚊子不断地飞向人和牲畜，使人、牛马烦不胜烦。想要蚊子不叮显然是不可能的，幸好牛车上有防蚊水，只需在蚊子叮过的地方擦一擦，很快就能止痒消痛了。巴嘉勒尔由于是大个子，特别受蚊子青睐，无可奈何的他经常气得骂娘。

傍晚的时候，他们来到了用豆花树点缀着的平原，平原上有稀稀落落的几棵白胶树，再远一点是新压的一条辙道，旁边又种植了一些橄榄树、柠檬树、青栋树……最后，他们还看到了一些护园的栅栏。

大约到了晚上8点钟的时候，拉着车的牛在阿埃童鞭子的驱赶下，加快了速度，赶到了红胶站。而所谓的红胶站，只是草原上饲养牲畜的一个建筑物而已。我们有必要知道，牲畜在澳大利亚草原上非常重要，它们甚至可以说是草原上的主要财富。

作为牧人，远离故土后，他们在无边无际的草原上游牧，累了就要在地上坐下来休息一会儿，所以又被形象地称之为“坐地人”。

饲养牲畜的红胶站并不大，但爵士一行却受到了热情的款待。对于这些生活在偏僻之地的人家来说，见到人很兴奋，所以也非常好客。而这种好客的“坐地人”，在澳大利亚也是很常见的。

第二天天一亮，爵士一行便开始行动，他们必须在当晚赶到维多利

亚省。地面起伏不平，蜿蜒起伏的小山一眼看不到尽头，红色的细沙遍布小山，如同一面大红旗，可惜红旗像是被风吹皱了，不是那么平整。

几棵白皮杉的枝干很直，洋洋洒洒地伸出了它们的枝条，那深绿色的叶子遮天蔽日，庇护着肥沃的草场，草场上到处跑着活蹦乱跳的袋鼠。行走了一段路后，大家看到了一大片荆棘和小胶树。

很快，荆棘和小胶树由密变疏，成了一棵棵大树，孤立在那里，有了原始森林的感觉。

不过，在他们快要接近维多利亚边境时，四周的景物又发生了显著变化，脚下的土地也变了样。不过，他们自始至终在沿着一条直线前行，即使遇到丘陵和湖泊也不例外。几何学上不是有条定理吗？两点之间，直线距离最短。所以不管困乏还是即将面临的困难，对他们来说都算不上什么。

一行人的速度以牛车的行进速度为准，慢吞吞的。不急不躁的牲畜走得虽然不快，却也没有停下一步。

就这样，他们一口气走了大约100公里。如果把行进计划分成两天的话，那么23日的傍晚，他们就能够到达阿斯人的居住区了，这里也是维多利亚境西部的第一个城市。牛车直接被阿埃童带到了一家客栈，据说这家客栈是全城最好的。

晚饭他们吃的是清一色的羊肉，各种做法的羊肉热气腾腾地摆了一桌，非常丰盛。

大家一边吃一边聊，每个人都想了解澳大利亚大陆的新奇事物，所以就想让地理学家巴嘉勒尔开口。自然，巴嘉勒尔没有让大家失望，他

以“幸福的澳大利亚”开头，谈起了维多利亚省。

“用‘幸福’两字概括澳大利亚并不准确，应该用‘富饶’二字。因为‘幸福’和‘富饶’是两回事。澳大利亚有金矿，大家都知道，可这些金矿又都被一些冒险家占有，等我们穿过那片金矿的时候，你们就能看到了。”巴嘉勒尔一开始就说。

“作为殖民地的维多利亚，历史很短对吧？”海伦夫人问。

“没错，夫人，只有30年历史。1835年6月6日，是个星期二……”

巴嘉勒尔还没说完，少校便插嘴道：“晚上7点15分！”

对于总拿日期和巴嘉勒尔开玩笑的少校，巴嘉勒尔并不觉得这是在开玩笑，他很认真地说：“不，是7点10分！”

说完，见没人有异议，便又说：“在菲利浦港，也就是墨尔本城东面的海湾上，巴特曼和法珂在那里建立了一个据点。在刚开始的15年中，这块殖民地还是新南威尔士省的一部分，后来宣布独立，变成了维多利亚省。”

“这么说是独立后繁荣的？”爵士问。

“我最高贵的朋友，有些数据可以说明，不管这些数据少校是多么讨厌，但我还是觉得很有说服力。”巴嘉勒尔没有直接回答爵士的问题。

“没事，你说吧！”少校说。

“在1836年的时候，这块殖民地上有244个人。今天，这里已经有50

万人了。还有700株葡萄树，这些葡萄树产的葡萄每年又会制作出12.1万加仑的葡萄酒。草原上还有1.3万匹马，67.5万头牛。”

“还有猪没有统计上。”少校一本正经地说。

“哦，没错，对不起，忘了，猪有79625头。”

“那羊有多少呢，巴嘉勒尔？”少校逗他。

“有712万只！”巴嘉勒尔回答得很认真。

“这个数字，有没有把我们正在吃的这只算进去？”少校一本正经地问。

“不，当然不包括在内，因为这只羊已经被我们吃掉四分之三了。”

“太精彩了！巴嘉勒尔先生，真不愧是地理学家！我们不得不承认，这位地理学家对这些问题了解得简直太清楚了，我看我的表兄麦克那布斯是无论如何也考不住他的。”海伦大声叫好道。

“确实，直到现在还没有……”少校没说完，却故意引巴嘉勒尔说话。

“等等！少校先生，我向你保证，这地方绝对是世界上最奇怪的地方。这里大陆的形成，以及它的气候、物产、地形……甚至于将来的消失，都不可能让世界上的任何学者感到吃惊。因为这片大陆在刚开始形成时就不是从中心开始的，而是从四周先耸起，如同一个巨大的圆环。那圆环的中间先是形成了内海，接着又干涸，最后才形成陆地。还有更奇怪的，比如空气和土壤里没有一点潮气；树木每年都会脱一层皮，叶面会背向太阳，叶子一直挂在树上，从不落下；木材很不容易点燃；淋

了雨的石料很快就会融化；树长得很矮小，但草却长得很高；禽兽的种类很特别，不仅有四足兽和长嘴鸟，还有鸭嘴兽，这鸭嘴兽的出现，不得不让动物学家们又增添了新门类——单孔动物。而且在这里还经常会看到一些用长短不齐的腿跳跃的袋鼠，还有那长着猪头的山羊，会飞的狐狸，黑色的天鹅，筑巢的老鼠，会迎接客人的鸟……还有那各种鸟类的鸣叫，宛转悠扬，有的像报时的钟表，有些又像鞭跑在响，还有些像磨刀的声音，或者是那滴答滴答的钟摆声……有些鸟是早晨日出时叫的，有些则是傍晚月落时哭……天啊，太多了太多了，都是一些稀奇古怪的事，完全不符合逻辑。这里啊，就是一个完全不符合自然规律的奇怪之地。”

巴嘉勒尔在说完这些离奇的事情后，洋洋得意。说的时候，手也没闲着，随着他声音的不断升高，手里的叉子被它扬得像在跳舞，这让坐在他身边的人不得不随着他的舞动而调整坐姿，生怕他的叉子会扎中自己。

最后，在大家雷鸣般的掌声和赞叹声中，他住了嘴。

当然，不管他说的是真的还是天方夜谭，大家都已经很满足了，也不想再去问什么，补充什么。不过，少校还是忍不住了，激他道：“说完了没有，博学的地理学家？”

“什么？完了？当然没有，早着呢！”巴嘉勒尔被少校一激，劲头又上来了。

“难道还有比你刚才说的更离奇的？”海伦夫人问。

“那是当然了，还有气候，比刚刚说的动植物还要离奇呢！”

“那就举个例子吧！”

“好，我们先不说澳大利亚的卫生情况。这里氧气丰富，没多少氮气，很不错吧。更主要的是这里没有湿风，所以这里的人从没听说过得伤寒、天花等疾病的。”

“确实，这是一个很大的优势！”爵士说。

“虽然是个优势，但还不算明显。如果单从气候来说一件事的话，你们听了肯定会以为是假的。”巴嘉勒尔又说。

“哦？什么？说出来听听！”麦盖尔说。

“你们不会相信我说的。”

“不！我们肯定相信，快说吧！”大家被他吊足了胃口。

“要我说吗？那我说了，它有……”

“什么？”

“有着教化功能！”

“什么？教化功能？”

“没错！由于这里的金属不生锈，所以人也不会生锈；由于这里有纯净的空气，所以会洗涤一切，不管是衣服还是灵魂，甚至还能洗清罪恶，所以才有英国那边的顽固犯人流放到这里来教化的事情。可见，这里的环境能让坏人变成好人。”

“哦？真有这么大的好处？”海伦夫人问。

“没错，夫人，不管是对人还是对野兽，都会起作用的。”

“你一定是在讲笑话吧，巴嘉勒尔先生！”

“当然不是笑话了，你们没看到吗？来这里的牛马羊群，全都被驯化了。”

“绝对不可能！”

“虽然你们觉得不可能，但却是事实。凡是做了坏事的，一到这里便会充满正气，几年后就能脱胎换骨了。这样的作用，慈善家都知道。他们知道在澳大利亚的大陆，人类的天性都在向善的方向发展。”

“好的，就算你说的是真的，那么巴嘉勒尔先生，你已经够优秀了，要是再来这个有灵性的地方，又会变成什么样子呢？”海伦夫人笑着说。

“肯定会变得更优秀了，夫人，一定会变得无可挑剔！”巴嘉勒尔说完，笑得前仰后合。

第二十七章 探险家们钟爱的地方

第二天天一亮，一行人就动了身。这天的天气很热，但大家并没有感到很难受，因为道路的平坦，牛马跑起来毫不费力。在经过一片稀疏的新生林后，晚上，他们来到了白湖岸边，不过由于白湖里的水盐分很高，不能直接饮用。

白湖里的水色很复杂，就连地理学家巴嘉勒尔也承认“白湖”这个名字名不副实。就和黑海不黑，红海不红，黄海不黄，蓝山不蓝一样，白湖的水一点都不白。不过，为了维护地理学家的名誉，他不断地对这个湖名进行辩解，但理由苍白而没有说服力。

晚饭是奥比尔准备的，大家吃了饭后，两位女士回到了房车，其他男士则回了帐篷，虽然四周不断传来狼狗的嗥叫，但他们还是很快就睡着了。

第二天一早，大家看到白湖的对岸有一片美丽的平原，平原上长满了菊花。面对这样的美景，大家还是很想去游玩一番的，但为了不耽误时间，只好依依不舍地离开了。

一路上，他们除了看到远处有几座光秃秃的山丘外，还看到了一眼望不到边的草原和花朵，这一切都让他们觉得进入到了明媚的春天。

草原上，蓝色的细叶麻和本地特有的朱红爵床草形成了强烈的对比。形状各异的树很好地点缀着这片草地。同时，含盐的土壤里还生长着一些胭脂类植物，这些植物有些是青绿色的，有些则为淡红色，都能

做工业原料，而当它们烧成灰后，又能提炼出很好的碱来。

此时，巴嘉勒尔从地理学家摇身一变，变成了植物学家，而且能叫出这些陌生花草的名字来。对数字向来敏感的他，又向大家说起了澳大利亚的植物数来，说如今的植物有120个种类，约4200种。

在他们行进了差不多16公里后，牛车开始穿行在高大的树丛中，这些树有豆球花树、木本含羞草、白胶树等等，种类繁多。当然，这些生长在平原里的色彩缤纷的植物没有辜负阳光的滋养，它们敞开怀抱，接受着阳光的照耀，并不时地散发出浓郁的香气。

当然，相比于植物种类的繁多，动物的品种和数量就少得多了，平原上只看见几只火鸡在奔跑，不等人靠近，便飞奔而去。不过，沉着的少校很快就打了一只濒临灭绝的鸟，这种鸟被英国移民称为“巨鹤”。它们身高约1.5米，身长约0.6米，长着黑黑的嘴巴，宽大的下颚，下颚的末端尖尖的，呈圆锥形。同时，这种鸟有着朱红色的头，油绿色的颈，白色的胸和鲜红色的爪子。

总之，仿佛大自然在创造它们的时候，用上了调色板，非要把各种颜色全聚集在它们身上才罢休。

在大家热情地赞美这种鸟时，如果不是走了几里路后，小罗伯尔又打了一只怪兽，那么这一天的风光很可能都被少校抢了。罗伯尔打下的这只怪兽样子很奇怪，既像刺猬又像食蚊兽，甚至可以说是一种四不像动物，更夸张一点说是十不像的爬虫。总之，这类动物可以伸出它那带着黏液的舌头，捕捉蚂蚁吃，而蚂蚁正是它的主要食物。

“是针鼹鼠！你们见过吗？”巴嘉勒尔一口叫出了怪兽的名字。

“太难看了！”爵士感慨道。

“难看是没错，可它却是珍奇动物，这种动物只有在澳大利亚大陆才有。”巴嘉勒尔说。

巴嘉勒尔原本想将这只针鼹鼠当成单孔动物的标本留着，但却遭到了厨师奥比尔的极力反对，只能放弃。

这天，他们一行人来到了东经141度30分的地方，走了这么久，他们难得见到几个“坐地人”。

这些地方几乎无人居住，甚至连土人也不见一个。之所以这样，是因为那些未开化的民族大多生活在大令河和墨累河支流，只限于在人烟稀少的地方游荡。不过很快，他们就被一个壮观的场面惊呆了，场面庞大的投机商贩运着牲口从东部山区来到了维多利亚及南澳省。

那是在下午4点钟的时候，麦盖尔指着前面3公里处的位置给大家看，大家先是看到麦盖尔所指的地方扬起了很长溜的灰尘，但却不知道发生了什么事。后来请博学的巴嘉勒尔给大家解释，不过，没等巴嘉勒尔开口，阿埃童就说了，说那是牲口经过时扬起的灰尘。

没错，阿埃童说的是对的。因为当那扬起的灰尘离他们越来越近时，他们听到了羊咩、马嘶、牛哞……在这些混合音中，不断地夹杂着人的叫喊、口哨和咒骂声。

再走近一点，他们看到了，烟雾中走出了一些人，其中有个像是这支大军的总指挥。爵士走了过去，同那位总指挥攀谈起来。

总指挥说他是来自东部的山姆·马切尔，是这支队伍的“牧守”，正准备去佩特兰。

他们赶的这群牲畜，则是从蓝山平原买来的。刚刚买来的时候，这些牲畜很瘦弱，如今正要赶着它们到南澳那肥沃的草场上去，等将这些牲畜养肥了，他们就能高价出售，赚取利润了。这群牲畜，他们差不多能赚取5万法郎。虽然钱不少，但却需要很大的耐心和毅力，才能将这些牲畜赶到目的地。

看来，这些人赚点钱也不容易。

在牧群沿着含羞草丛继续向前行走时，“牧守”在一棵大树下开始向海伦夫人、玛丽小姐及其他人讲述自己的经历。

“牧守”说他们出来已经有7个月了，每天大约要走25公里。而要想到达目的地，他们需要3个月的时间。在这一趟生意中，除了所赶的牲口外，他还要管理20只狗，30个人，在这30个人中，有5个人是非常擅长寻找牲口的。

这个长长的队伍，走在最后的是6辆大车。30个赶牧者每人手拿一根皮鞭，在牧群中走来走去，维持秩序。那20只狗则像警察一样，在牲口的两边来回巡逻。

在大家赞扬他们这庞大的人畜队伍的井然有序时，“牧守”告诉他们，种类不同的牲口还不能在一起行走，比如野生的牛羊就不能走在一起，甚至凡是羊走过的地方，牛也是绝对不会在那里吃草的。所以全都是牛走在羊的前面，羊被分成了五个团队，并由20个人指挥，最后面的是马。整个队伍被分成了三个部分。

“牧守”告诉大家，这支庞大的队伍，领头的既不是狗也不是人，而是牛。聪明的牛是这支队伍的“首领”，每个牲畜都要听“首领”牛的指

挥。

这些牛“首领”庄严地走在队伍的最前面，用它们的本能选择着最好的路，这样自然也就会有人来对它们另眼相看。为了这支队伍，人反而要去讨好牛。在牛要停下的时候，他们就让整个队伍停；牛要歇的时候，就让整个队伍歇，因为如果执意要它们走，牛不答应，也是行不通的。

这样一支远征的牲口队伍，虽然没有古希腊名将色诺芬指挥，但也足以编入史册。随后，“牧守”又将他们远征的细节做了补充，说他们这支队伍如果只是在平原走，还算好办。因为这些牲畜白天可以吃沿路的草，渴了可以喝小沟里的水；夜里睡觉时，只要听到狗叫，它们就会起来，非常听话。不过要是走到那遍布植物和含羞草的草丛，那就麻烦多了。

此时，牲畜很容易混乱，也容易跑散，他们需要花很长的时间来整顿队伍秩序。如果不幸有“首领”走失，是需要不惜一切代价找回来的，否则整个队伍就可能溃散。而一旦遇到下雨天，情况就更糟了，很多牲畜会懒得往前走，遇到大风暴的时候，牲畜还会被吓得发狂，乱窜乱跑。

不过，由于“牧守”的机智和勇敢，他们最终克服了这些困难。他们一公里一公里地朝前挪着，把平原、树林、山丘全都抛在了后面。不过，仅有机智和勇敢还不够，他们还必须有耐性，而这耐性在他们过河时是非常关键的要素。

当人畜队伍到了河边时，“牧守”会发愁，能不能过去，关键是看牲畜愿不愿意过去。

“首领”牛在最前面，见了河掉转头就往回走，“首领”都不下去，羊也不下水，而且到处乱跑。没办法，到了夜里的时候，他们硬将公羊拖下了河，可那母羊却怎么都不愿意跟着下去。

不得已，他们只能让牲畜先喝水，熟悉一下环境。不过，这些聪明的牲畜好像知道这是圈套，怎么都不喝水，即使小羊已经渴得咩咩直叫了，母羊依然不动。在这种时候，“牧守”对着牛羊的哞叫、咩叫毫无办法，怎么都要耽误近一个月的时间。

终于有一天，也许有队牲畜高兴了，竟然过了河。这时，其他的牲畜也跟着过去，但又有问题出来了，那就是这些牲畜不能有秩序地过河，在混乱中，还会有牲畜被淹死。

以上就是“牧守”和他们说的话，在他说的時候，牧群已经走出好远一段距离了，他必须尽快赶到队伍的前面，以便选择最好的牧场。因此，他跨上了良马，和爵士们挥手告别，很快就消失在了灰尘中。

一行人背对牧群，继续朝前走，一直走到了晚上，才在沓儿坡山脚下停住。

此时，巴嘉勒尔提醒大家，说今天是12月25日，他们这才知道，这天是圣诞节。这么一个重要的节日，他们必须庆祝下。好在厨师奥比尔并没有忘记这一天，早早地准备好了食物，所以晚餐时也就有了可口而丰盛的晚餐摆在面前。看着这些美味，大家都没有忘记称赞奥比尔的手艺。

这一餐有：鹿火腿、腌牛肉、熏鲑鱼；大麦粉和荞麦做成的蛋糕；甚至还有中国名茶和大量的威士忌，以及波尔多葡萄酒。大家就这么吃着喝着聊着，差点忘了自己是在远征途中，还以为是在麦凯莫府的大餐

厅里！

自然，这么丰盛的晚餐也少不了水果，巴嘉勒尔便把那长在野橘树上的果子摘了下来。这种果子吃起来没什么味道，但将里面的核咬碎后就会感到很辣。喜欢新奇的巴嘉勒尔为了尝尝味道，嘴都辣麻了。这使少校在问他内陆的沙漠特点时，他的嘴麻得都说不出话来。

第二天，没什么重大的事情发生，他们经过了罗同河的肥沃地带后，又过了差不多已经干涸的迈根其河。这天的天气晴朗，也不是很热，从南边吹来的风让他们感到很凉爽，就像到了北半球一样，巴嘉勒尔于是又把这种现象讲解给他的学生罗伯尔。

“我们的运气真是太好了！因为相比较而言，南半球是比北半球热的。”

“为什么南半球比北半球热？”罗伯尔问。

“地球在冬天会离太阳更近，你听过这种说法吗？”

“听说过的，先生！”

“那有没有听说过冬天之所以冷是因为太阳斜射的原因？”

“也听说过！”

“这不就行了，我的孩子？南半球之所以比北半球热，就是这个原因。”

“我还是不明白。”罗伯尔眨巴着眼睛说。

“想想看，在欧洲过冬时，澳大利亚是什么季节？”巴嘉勒尔问。

“夏季！”罗伯尔说。

“这就对了嘛，正是这个时候，地球正好最靠近太阳，明白了吗？”

“明白了！”

“在南半球，夏天热是因为南半球比北半球离太阳近，明白了吗？”

“明白了，巴嘉勒尔先生。”

“所以说地球上的‘冬天’离我们近，就是相对北半球的人而言的。”

“哦，这以前我从没想过。”罗伯尔老实地回答。

“嗯！现在该知道了吧，以后千万别忘了。”

罗伯尔对这堂天文地理课很满意，而他也知道维多利亚省的平均气温在摄氏23度左右。

晚上的时候，一行人在离农思达湖约5公里的地方宿营，这里北边是高昂的德郎孟山，南边是德里邓山。

第二天中午11点钟的时候，一行人来到了威麦拉河河岸。这条河的河水很浅，有半英里宽，岸边长着胶树和豆球花树，还有几棵桃金娘科植物。

这些植物的枝头上缀着红花，长枝有4.5米左右。青绿的枝叶间有成千上万只小鸟在跳来跳去。树下的碧波间，有一对黑天鹅在悠闲地戏水。不过很快，这些河里的“珍禽”便钻进水里不见了，而那条威麦拉河则有很多支流，曲折地流向了美丽的原野。

牛车停在了丰茂如地毯的草地上，草地上长满了乱蓬蓬的草，草在水里留下了它们的倒影。这条河上没有木筏，也没有桥，只有浅滩的地方能蹚水过去。他们看了一下，发现上游四分之一的地方河水很浅，便决定从这里过去。在他们再三探测后，发现河的宽度只有3米左右，牛车从这里过去完全没有危险。

“还有其他办法吗？”爵士问阿埃童。

“没有了，不过这里很安全，可以过去的。”阿埃童说。

“那夫人和玛丽小姐需不需要下车？”

“不用！牛车会走得很稳，让她们放心，会像走在平坦大道上一样。”

“好的，阿埃童！我相信你！”

骑着马的众人全都围住了那辆牛车下河，以防牛车出意外。通常情况下，车子在从浅滩过河时，四周都会有一连串的空桶做“救生圈”，不过爵士他们一行没有这个道具，所以只能试探着过河。坐在牛车上牵着牛指挥的阿埃童非常镇定；少校和两名水手走在前面挡住了激流；爵士和麦盖尔船长则守在车子两旁，护驾两位女士；巴嘉勒尔和罗伯尔跟在后面。

到了河中心时，水深了很多，已经淹过了车子的轮轴。牛如果探不到底的话，很可能会将车一起拖下去，好在阿埃童下水抓住牛角，将牛车拉正。

不过就在这时，车子碰到一块石头上，发出了咯吱的声音，随即车子便歪了，水淹到了车里女士们的脚跟处。爵士和麦盖尔急忙抓住车

挡，车子重又漂了起来，这可以说是最惊险的一幕了。幸好阿埃童同时抓住了牛轭，并使劲一扳，将车子再次扳正。

河底出现了缓坡，淹着牛马脚部的地方低了下去。没一会儿，他们便安全地过了河。虽然大家的全身都湿透了，但好在安全，所以也很满意。不过车厢被碰坏了一些，爵士骑的那匹马的前蹄铁掌也掉在了水里，不见了。

这种意外情况让大家有些为难，阿埃童自告奋勇，说他愿意去几公里之外的地方找钉马掌的铁匠。

“那就拜托你了，阿埃童，你去大概要多长时间？”爵士问。

“几个小时吧，不会很长时间的。”

“好的，那你去吧，快去快回，我们就在威麦拉河岸上宿营等你。”

就这样，几分钟后，阿埃童骑着快马，穿过一排茂密的含羞草丛，消失不见了。

阿埃童离开后，大家将这一天的时间全都消磨在了聊天和散步中，他们一边观看威麦拉河边的风景，一边聊着天。走到灰鹭和红鹤旁，吓得两种鸟扑啦啦地全飞掉了；无花果树上的缎光鸟，百合花上的黄鹂、斑鸠、翘翘鸟在树枝间飞来飞去；鱼鹰没有捕鱼，在林间穿行；就连那看似沉稳的鹦鹉，也在盛开着花的胶树上发出聒噪的声音。

聊天散步的人们欣赏着大自然的美丽风光，他们有的去了潺潺的流水边，有的躺在了软绵绵的草地上，有的则在木本含羞草丛中溜达。

这一天，时间过得很快，天一下子就黑了。众人根据星座指示的方

向朝前走去，由于南半球没有北斗星，所以他们只能将地平线与天空闪耀的南极十字座作为指向标。回到牛车旁，奥比尔已经在帐篷里摆好了晚饭，大家也都入座吃饭。这顿晚饭很丰盛，还有一盆烩鹦鹉。鹦鹉是维尔逊打的，经奥比尔的精湛手艺后，变成了美味佳肴。

吃过晚饭，看着美好的月色，大家没有早早去睡，而是继续聊起了天。聊天当然少不了巴嘉勒尔。在海伦夫人提议让巴嘉勒尔给大家讲讲他们去大洋洲探险的故事时，大家一致表示赞同，而巴嘉勒尔也很乐意开口。

于是，他们躺在了茂盛的盘杉树下。巴嘉勒尔点燃他的雪茄，在雪茄冒出的缕缕轻烟中讲了起来。

“不知道大家还记不记得，我在船上时曾给大家说了很多旅行家的名字，这些旅行家个个深入腹地，进行周游世界的探险。这些人中有伯克、马金莱、兰兹博罗和斯图亚特。对于马金莱和兰兹博罗，这里我就不多说了，因为他们是澳大利亚委员会派去寻找伯克的，因为伯克在去了一个地方旅行后，就再也没有回来。而这次我要说的就是伯克和斯图亚特，这是两个大胆的探险家。闲话少说，我要言归正传了。”巴嘉勒尔清了清嗓子。

“1860年8月20日，在墨尔本皇家学会的鼓励下，有位爱尔兰军官出发了，这个人就是罗伯尔·伯克。和他们一起出发的有11人，比如天文学家威尔斯，植物学家白克莱尔博士、格来，印度青年军官金格、蓝尔、白纳荷，以及几名印度士兵。

“当然，除了他们这些探险家外，还有驮着行李和18个月粮食的25匹马和25匹骆驼。

“一行人按照原先设定的路线——克柏河走着，一直走到了北岸的卡奔塔利亚湾。最后又顺利地越过墨累河和大令河流域，一直到了殖民地的边界梅宁驿站。

“行李太多，也是种累赘，再加上伯克脾气不好，探险队的内部也就出现了不和的声音。就连指挥骆驼的兰戴尔，也带着几名仆人逃离了探险队，但伯克仍然照旧前进，朝着克柏河的方向走去。他时而从水草丰美的牧场走过，时而又沿着没有水源的石子路走。一直走到11月，也就是离出发日3个月后，他们在克柏河岸建立起了第一个储粮站。

“在储粮站，他们停留了一些时间，目的就是解决一系列预计会遇到的困难，之后还在威尔斯堡建立了一个中途据点。为了探险顺利，伯克将探险队分成了两个小队，一队由白纳荷领导，驻守威尔斯堡等待另一小队的成员，驻守时间为3个月或3个多月；另一小队有伯克、金格、格来和威尔斯，这4个人带着6匹骆驼和够吃3个月的粮食出发了。粮食中包括150斤的面粉、50斤的大米、50斤的荞麦粉、50公斤的干马肉、100斤的咸猪肉和腊肉以及30斤的饼干等等。

“伯克这一队的人在艰难地穿过一片荒芜区后，到了艾尔河上，此后他们沿着东经140度线一直往北走。1月7日，他们穿过了南回归线，在那天气热得像火烤一样的地方，根本找不到水喝，不过却能看到奇景海市蜃楼。当然，有时候他们也会遇到暴风雨，天气自然会凉爽一些；有时则会遇到土人——好在土人并没有为难他们。

“总之，一路上，他们基本没有看到河流、高山等障碍物。1月12日，他们发现北面出现了一些砂岩质的丘陵。等他们到了山脚下，走路就更辛苦了。即使人能勉强前行，牲口也走不动。有句话不是说，老是在山里转，骆驼也会怕的。即便如此，他们还是经过了千辛万苦，到了

脱纳河河岸，最后又到了佛林德河上游。佛林德河是在棕树和桉树下流进卡奔塔利亚湾的一条河流。

“随后，他们又穿过了一段沙滩，离海洋也不远了。不过，不幸的是有只骆驼死了，这只骆驼一死，其他骆驼也不走了。金格和格来只好留下来陪它们，伯克和威尔斯则继续步行向北走……总之，他们遇到了无数困难，这在他们的日记中就有记载。

“最后，他们来到了一个被海潮淹没的沙滩，但却不见海洋。”

巴嘉勒尔刚停下来，爵士便问：“那他们没有再往前走了？”

“不是他们不往前走，而是不能再往前走了，因为沙滩在不断地往下陷，他们只能回威尔斯堡和同伴会合。不过想要回去又谈何容易？伯克和威尔斯累得筋疲力尽，总算是回到了格来和金格身边，四个人又一起往回走。对于回去后又碰到了什么危险和困难，也就不是很清楚了，因为他们没有做记录，不过想也能想得到，一路上一定很惊险。而当他们到达克柏河的时候，已经是4个月后的了，4个人只剩下了3个人，格来因为劳累过度病死在途中，6匹骆驼也先后死了4匹。

“当然，他们只要到达威尔斯堡，就会有白纳荷及粮食等着他们，同伴也能获救，所以他们又打起了精神，一步步地往前走。4月21日的时候，他们到了威尔斯堡。谁知，就在那一天，就在他们到达的当天，白纳荷因为等他们5个月都不见人，便离开了。”

“啊？他们走了？”小罗伯尔大惊，叫了起来。

“是的，走了！想去追白纳荷也追不上了。3个被遗弃的人在吃了一点东西后，体力稍稍恢复，便决定回去。但离大令河还有150公里，他

们又没有交通工具。就在这时，伯克提出去澳洲殖民站。

“于是，3个人便又出发了。那时候，他们剩下的只有两匹骆驼，而即使是这两匹骆驼，也有一匹死在了克柏河泥泞的支流中，另一匹又不走了，他们只好将它杀掉当干粮。那时候，他们已经没有粮食了，一直在吃着一种叫‘纳儿豆’的水生植物。

“一路上，他们找不到水，即使找到，也找不到盛水的工具。因此，一行人只能沿着克柏河的河岸前行。然而，一场意外的火灾将他们的草棚子和衣物都烧掉了。他们什么都没有了，唯有等死。在那种情况下，伯克把金格叫到了身边，对他说：‘我要死了，你把我的表和笔记本拿去做个纪念；我死后将手枪放在右手中，就那么放着吧，也不用掩埋我。’伯克说完这些话后，便不再开口，第二天8点的时候他去世了。金格见伯克死了，很是害怕，又不知道该怎么办。只好去请土人帮忙。而等他找到土人回去，威尔斯也死了。至于金格本人，最后则被土人收留，一直到9月份的时候，皇家学会派人去寻找他们，在土人居住地找到了金格。也就是说，那次穿越大陆的4个探险家，最后只活了1个。”

巴嘉勒尔这个悲伤的故事让听众很是伤感，他们想到了格兰特船长，不知他会怎样，是不是也和伯克的命运一样？这样的联想很正常，玛丽小姐的眼中流出了眼泪。

“父亲！我可怜的父亲！”她喃喃着。

“玛丽小姐，不要伤心，那些人之所以那样，就是为了冒险。格兰特船长和伯克他们不一样，再说那个金格，不是在土人那里生活得很好吗？他一定会活着回来的，你父亲一定不会遭遇那样险恶的环境。”麦盖尔急忙安慰她说。

“没错！格兰特船长的安全一定没有问题，我再说一遍，大洋洲的土人是很善良和热情的，玛丽小姐！”巴嘉勒尔也说。

“愿上帝保佑他！”玛丽的眼眶里溢满了眼泪。

“对了，那斯图亚特呢？”爵士急忙岔开话说，他想改变一下悲伤的气氛。

“你是说斯图亚特吗？他可就幸运多了，他的名字被载入了史册。斯图亚特1848年又开始旅行，先后启程两次，但都没有成功。不过他是个不会轻易放弃的人，所以在1867年元旦的时候，他又带着11名伙伴，离开了堪布斯河，一直到离卡奔塔利湾60法里的地方。在那里，因为粮食吃完了，所以又半途回去。不过，他并没有放弃冒险，又组织了第4次旅行，竟然获得了成功。那次，南澳议会为了支持他，还特意拨款2000英镑。而斯图亚特也根据自己的经验，为这次冒险做了充分的准备。最终，他的朋友伍佛德、奥德等共10人参加了这次探险。那次他们带了20只大皮桶，每只皮桶的容量达到了7加仑。

“1862年4月5日，他们正式出发，计划沿着东经131度前行，而那次他们比伯克当时走的路线向西偏了7度。那时候，斯图亚特在霍芜滩安营扎寨，随后又向东行走，经过了塔里溪，又沿着溪流走了50公里路程。

“那是一个好地方，不仅有肥沃的土地，丰茂的牧场，还有‘草地人’在放牧。那里不仅牛肥马壮，而且桉树长势雄伟。看到这种情况，斯图亚特既惊又喜，继续前行，又遇到了诺泊氏河。

“诺泊氏河从热带大棕树林中流过，河岸边住着土人，土人热情地接待了他们。从土人那里出发后，他们又向西北进发，在穿过一片砾石

形成的沙滩后，找到了阿德雷德河源。随后，他们穿越安亨地区，见阿德雷德河越来越宽，河两岸也都是沼泽，便知道离海不远了。

“7月21日，是个星期二，他们在凉水滩休息，由于前面有多条小溪拦住了去路，所以他们必须绕过无法渡过的河流，从泥沼中前进，最后终于到了长着浅草的高地。

“高地上长着很多胶树和杉木，空中还有很多凶恶的水鸟在飞翔。而在那里，他们也没有看到土人，只看到几处野营地处冒着烟。7月24日，离他们出发已经过去9个月了。这天早晨的8点20分，他们继续向北前行，当天就到了海边，斯图亚特率先听到了海浪拍打海岸的声音，不过他并没有说出来。接着，他们钻进了一片葡萄园，穿过葡萄园，他们就能踏上印度洋海岸了。看着大海，斯图亚特叫了起来：‘大海！看！大海！’其他人听到后，也跟了上去，欢呼声响彻天空。

“就这样，经过第4次探险，他们的考察终于顺利结束。斯图亚特遵照出发前南澳总督所说，在洗干净手脸后，在那片谷地的树上刻下了自己名字的简写‘约·斯’两个字，以纪念这次伟大的探险。第2天，斯图亚特又去了很多地方考察，看是不是能从西南方向到阿德雷德河口，不过最终看到的全是无法过去的沼泽地，这才作罢。最后，斯图亚特爬上了一棵树，在树顶插上了澳大利亚的旗帜，还在树干上留下了一些指示文字。如果冒险家们能够按照指示做下去，在向南一尺处挖的话，就会发现一个白铁盒子，盒子里装着一张纸，纸上写着：‘由南而北纵贯澳大利亚的伟大的探险旅行。’

“斯图亚特和同伴们是在1862年的7月25日到达目的地的，他们横穿澳大利亚，途经大陆中心，直抵印度洋海岸。

“1861年10月12日，他们又离开阿德雷德城向北挺进。为了纪念这次成功，他们还留下了国旗，写上了探险队长的名字。整个过程都很顺利，轰动世界的事件也就是这样发生的。”

“那这些勇敢的探险家都回到家乡了吗？”海伦夫人问。

“是的，他们都回去了，夫人！虽然受了不少苦，但毕竟成功了。不过整个过程中还是受了很多苦，特别是斯图亚特，在回来的路上，他患了败血病，9月初的时候病情加重，伙伴们还以为他活不了多长时间了，没想到他活下来了，不得不说是场奇迹。当然，路上他们还有很多次折腾，最终在12月10日回到了阿德雷德城。自然，他们受到了全市人民的欢迎。不过，斯图亚特的病根也就从那次后落下了，在他接受了地理学会的奖金后，乘着‘印度号’回到了苏格兰。1866年的时候，他死在了诺丁山，他的家里。”

“这个人太坚强了！他的坚强和毅力，战胜了身体的病痛，最终完成了未完成的事业。苏格兰能有他这么优秀的儿子，是件非常值得骄傲和自豪的事。”爵士说。

“斯图亚特之后，还有人去冒险吗？”海伦夫人又问。

“有的，夫人，比如以前和您说起的雷莎德，他曾先后两次去探险，最后也献身于自己钟爱的事业了。去年的时候，著名的植物学家穆勒博士为了筹集探险经费，还发起了一次募捐。最后，一些勇敢的‘坐地人’在勇敢的尹泰尔的带领下，在1864年6月21日出发去探险。此时，他们应该在大陆艰难跋涉，希望他们成功，也祝我们能和他们一样，都能成功！”

地理学家巴嘉勒尔在说完这些后，大家一看时间不早了，便各自回

去睡觉。夜深人静的野外，静悄悄的，只有报时鸟在白胶树上，一秒一秒地报着时间。

第二十八章 康斯登桥惨案

阿埃童离开大家很久都没有回来，这让少校有些不安。不过，对于内心的这种变化，他并没有表现出来，只是留意着四周的环境。这片空旷平和的土地，始终一片平静。在度过了黑夜里的几个小时后，太阳展露出了它的笑脸。

爵士担心阿埃童带不回来铁匠，这样就无法修牛车，也就无法上路。而且这样一来，会耽误很长时间。对于爵士来说，他恨不得赶快到达目的地，他不想有丝毫的耽误。

还好，阿埃童回来了，而且还带来了铁匠。铁匠身材高大，身体强壮，但却长着一脸横肉，不怎么说话，总是阴沉着脸，让人一看就不舒服。不过这都无关紧要，重要的是他能把牛车修好。

“这个铁匠怎么样？行吗？”麦盖尔问。

“我也不清楚，让他先做着试试。”阿埃童说。

铁匠开始动手，做起事看上去娴熟有力。少校注意到他两个手腕上有个像手镯一样的伤疤，而且那里已经涨成了紫黑色。想必是新伤，而对这伤疤，他像是刻意要去遮掩。无奈他身上那件破旧的毛线衫并不能全部将疤痕遮住，在少校问他手腕上的伤痛不痛的时候，他没有理会，只是埋头做事。

差不多两个小时后，牛车修好了。

对于爵士那匹马上的马蹄铁，也很快就钉好了。那是一个三叶状的马蹄铁，上端剃成了叶子形状，少校拿马蹄铁给阿埃童看，阿埃童说：“这一定是黑点站的，之所以用这种，就是为了和其他站点的马蹄印区别开来。”

那个看上去有些奇怪的铁匠做好相关的工作后，便拿着工钱离开了，总共也只说了四句话。

爵士他们一行稍微休息了一下后，便上路了。他们走过了一片“露天平原”，“露天平原”上到处都是木本含羞草丛；平原上散布着很多硅石和铁矿石；又走了几英里后，进入了一片湖滩地带，这一带的牛车将牛车印压得很深，高大的芦苇丛里到处都是不规则的小溪流，发出潺潺的水声；继续往前走，他们经过了大片大片的盐碱地，而这段路走起来并不困难，也不感到寂寞。

海伦夫人热情地将骑着马的远征者轮流请上牛车，这样每个人都有机会在牛车上休息一下了。有如此可亲的夫人和美丽的玛丽小姐聊天，每个人都觉得很荣幸，更不要说到了车上后，他们还能受到夫人热情的招待。当然，被邀请上去的人少不了麦盖尔船长，虽然他聊起天来显得很严肃，却也很可爱，让人觉得很开心。

就这样，他们在不知不觉中穿过了克洛南到火尔桑的那条路，这条路上灰尘很大，所以行人很少。一行人在穿过沓儿坡区的最前方后，又过了几个小丘陵。晚上，他们住在了离玛丽柏诺大约5里远的地方。此时，天上下起了蒙蒙细雨，如果在其他国家，地面一定会湿了，但在这里，空气和地面好像有吸附水分的能力，所以他们在野外宿营竟然没受到一点影响。

第二天，越来越多的山路出现在了他们面前，他们只能慢行，而那是一个接着一个的丘陵，仿佛是瑞士的缩影，一路上地面高低不平，非常颠簸，很难行走。

他们只好从马上下来，牵着马走，因为这样比骑在马上舒服。

中午11点的时候，他们到了卡尔思柏路克，不过阿埃童却提议不进城，以便节省时间。对任何事物都有很大好奇心的巴嘉勒尔不同意，大家只好依着他，让他自己去转，而牛车和其他人则继续慢慢前行。

巴嘉勒尔和往常一样，去什么地方总爱带着小罗伯尔，他们在城市里匆匆转了一下，但即使只是走马观花，也让他对这座城市有了大概了解。他发现这座城市里有银行、法院、市场、学校、教堂，以及100多座房子，每座房子都是用砖砌成的，每个建筑物都呈四边形，看上去非常整齐。

城市里的每条街道都是英国式的平行道，非常简单统一，没什么特色。巴嘉勒尔觉得，如果对城市进行改建，一定要延长街道，如同随着孩子的长大，要将孩子的裤腿放长一样。

不过，由于这是座新兴城市，所以整个城市都充满了活跃的气氛。很多人在街上忙忙碌碌地奔跑、做事，呈现出了欣欣向荣的景象。在忙碌的人群中，搬运金子的人都在往运输站上涌，这些金子是从本迪哥及亚历山大各山区搬来的，在搬运的过程中还有当地警察护送。而对于这些生意人来说，他们在意的只是货物，对行人很少注意。

巴嘉勒尔带着罗伯尔在城里转了一个小时，随后他们穿过一片耕地，回到了队伍中。过了耕地，他们面前就是草原了，辽阔的草原上有无数的牧人和羊群。再往前走，前面又是一片荒漠，而这也是澳大利亚

特有的景象。

不过，直到现在为止，他们依然没有见到一个过着原始生活的土人。有段时间，爵士都开始怀疑，不知道这里是不是和阿根廷的潘帕没有印第安人一样，澳大利亚大陆上根本没有澳大利亚土人了。

但地理学家巴嘉勒尔坚持认为，这条纬线上，墨累河那带平原上绝对有土人，而现在离那带平原还有约320里路。

“我们快要走到出产金子的地方了。1852年的时候，来这里开采金子的人就像蝗虫一样多，铺天盖地的。而在过去，这里就是土人居住的地方，不过现在土人都跑到荒山去了，这里成了文明人的生活区域。天黑前，我们差不多就能穿过连接墨累河和海岸的铁路了。告诉你们吧，朋友们，澳大利亚竟然会有铁路，不得不说是件很奇怪的事。”

“有什么奇怪的？”爵士问。

“因为不符合逻辑嘛，在你们看来，你们英国人在海外的殖民地架电线，开万国博览会，甚至在澳大利亚建铁路，非常正常。不过对于我们法国人来说，修铁路完全把澳大利亚的布局改变了。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“你之所以这么看，是因为你只看过去，不看现在和将来！”少校道。

“没错，我承认，不过如果让火车在这无人的荒野奔跑，那大团的蒸汽和烟雾会赶走很多单孔兽、食火鸡等小动物的，而且很可能让那些没有开化的土人看着那冒烟的怪物发愣。这火车，我觉得除了美国和英国人以外，其他人看到都会吃惊的，所以在这里建铁路，会破坏环境的，也让这里没有了诗意。”巴嘉勒尔继续说。

“是诗意重要还是现代文明重要？”少校反驳道。

不过，他们的争论也只进行到了这里，因为被火车的鸣笛声打断了。

他们一行人离铁路特别近，正好有列火车从南向北减速行驶，并停在了铁路与公路交叉口的地方。这条铁路是巴嘉勒尔刚刚说的铁路中的一条，这条铁路将维多利亚省的省会和澳大利亚最大河流墨累河连接了起来，使其肥沃富饶，所以“坐地人”也很多。想必有了这样一条铁路，墨尔本的交通也就发达多了。

这条铁路已经建成的有180公里，在墨尔本和萨塔斯特间就有两个站，分别是肯顿和卡斯尔门。正在修建中的是条直达俄丘卡的长达150公里的铁路，这条铁路建在了殖民地利物林的首府，是在墨累河上建成的。

康斯登桥架在墨累河的支流吕顿河上，位于南纬37度，距卡斯尔门只有几英里远。

赶着牛车的阿埃童带着大家朝康斯登桥走，骑着马的众人跟在牛车后面，他们都想尽快赶到康斯登桥上，以便满足好奇心。而还没等他们涌上去，便看到一群人朝桥上涌去了，那是附近的居民和牧羊人，他们全都涌到铁路旁，有人还不断地说：“快，去铁路上！”

难道是发生了交通事故，所以才会引起这么大的骚动？

爵士催马快跑，其他人跟在了他的后面。没用几分钟，他们便上了康斯登桥，而到了桥边，也知道发生了什么事。

没错，确实是发生了一场车祸，而且是一场非常悲惨的车祸。火车

没有撞车，而是脱轨，掉进了河里。看到这种情景，让他们想起了美国那场最严重的交通事故。

小河里全是火车头和车厢，想必是火车太沉，将河上的桥压断了，才导致火车脱轨。他们看到，6节车厢有5节掉进了河底，剩最后一节不知怎么和前面几节脱了节，因而奇迹般地保住了。不过没有掉下去的那节离深渊也不过一米多，想起来都觉得可怕。

铁轨弯了，枕木焦了，就连掉在河里的车厢也散架了。汽锅炸裂了，碎片到处都是。在乱七八糟的废物中，他们看到从汽锅处冒出了缕缕青烟。火车掉在河里已经很惨了，没想到又有一场大火，让场景更加惨烈。

到处都是大片大片的血迹，还有东一块西一块的残骸断肢，以及那被烧成焦炭的尸体。

没有人忍心去看死了多少人。

夹杂在人群里的爵士、巴嘉勒尔、少校和麦盖尔听到了大家的议论，除了一些救人的在忙碌外，其他人最关心的就是为什么会发生这样的惨剧。

“应该是桥断了！”有人说。

“桥什么时候断了？桥不是好好地在那里吗？”另一个人说。

“是车子到了，但桥还没有接上，所以才出事的。”又有人说。

是的，这是一座转桥。转开后可以让河里的轮船经过，有火车时又要把桥转过来。而在火车过来时没转过来，是不是守桥人员失职造成的

呢？如果火车过来了，没有桥，火车自然就会翻进河里的。

这样的猜测很有道理，因为桥的一半如今都被压在了火车底下，而另一半却被铁索吊着，显然铁索并没有遭到损坏。所以说，一定是守桥人失职造成的。

事故发生在夜里3点15分，出事的火车是晚上11点45分从墨尔本出发的37次列车。出事后，最后一节没掉下去的车厢里的列车员马上求援。无奈电线杆也被撞断了，电报、电话全都不通。所以当卡斯尔门主管的当局在3个小时后赶来，在当地殖民总监米切尔先生，以及一群警务人员组织起抢救工作时，已经是早晨6点了。

在这种情况下，有很多“坐地人”也赶来帮忙。那时候，火烧得很旺，他们要做的首先是灭火。

路基斜坡上，躺着几个面目模糊，烧得不成样子的尸体。想从火海里拖出活人来，想必是不可能的事。一节节的车厢，不到一会儿便都烧光了。整列车上总共有多少旅客，没有人知道，只有最后一节车厢里的10个人幸免于难，但也受了伤。铁路当局急忙派救护车将他们送去了附近的医院。

爵士向负责此事的总监表明了身份，和警官聊了起来。那位警官长得高而瘦，看上去机智又镇定。不过，面对这样的惨剧，他也有些束手无策，所以当爵士说了句“真是一场惨剧啊”时，他冷冷地说：“岂止是惨剧，爵士！”

“那……还有什么？”爵士惊叫道。

“更是一场罪行！”警察面无表情地说。

爵士不知道该说什么，他看了看总监米切尔先生。米切尔说：“没错，爵士！我们觉得这里面一定大有文章。很可能是最后一节车厢的人遭到了抢劫，那没有遇难的五六个人很可能是受到了歹徒的袭击。因为守桥员失踪了，而转桥也被转开，所以不能说是守桥员的责任，当然守桥人也很可能是同伙。”

面对总监米切尔的武断，那位警官只是摇了摇头。

“你不同意我的看法？”米切尔问警官。

“对于你说有可能守桥员和那些歹徒是同伙，我不认同。”

“不过，要是没有串通的话，那些在草原上游荡的土人怎么懂转那桥的？”米切尔说。

“你这句话也有一定道理。”警官想了想说。

“还有一点，据一个船夫说，昨晚10点40分的时候，有只船曾经过康斯登桥，而当船过去后，桥就又关好了。”米切尔继续说。

“嗯，那就更清楚了。”

“所以说，没有守桥员，桥就不会再被转开，所以我认为守桥员和土人相互勾结的可能性非常大。”

米切尔的话好像警察有异议，他一直在摇头。

“警察先生，你觉得制造这起罪行的不是土人？”

“肯定不是！”

“不是土人？不是土人又会是谁？”

还没等警察回答，又一阵大声喧哗从上游半公里之外的地方传了过来，众人全都向那边涌去，将那里围得水泄不通。从人群中抬出了一具尸体，尸体是守桥员的，已经变得冰凉。而这也表明警察的观点是对的，这件案子和守桥员，以及土人都无关。

“这个案子一看就是老手干的！”警官说完，停了会儿，举举手里明晃晃的手铐说，“我一定要将这‘手镯’戴到他们手上，当作他们新年的礼物。”

“老手？你怀疑是……？”

“一定是那些乘坐英王陛下的船不用付钱的人干的。”

“什么？你是说流犯？”巴嘉勒尔知道澳大利亚殖民地的一些俗语，惊叫道。

“我以为维多利亚省是不允许流犯停留的。”爵士说。

“哼！那只是法律这么说，法律对他们来说顶屁用，他们是不会遵守的，会偷渡过来。如果我没猜错，他们一定是从柏斯来的，所以他们一定还会回柏斯的，一定会的，我以我的身份保证。”警官说。

米切尔同意警官的说法，点了点头。此时，牛车也已经到了铁路和公路的交叉口，不过爵士不想让海伦夫人和玛丽小姐看到这种惨状，所以和米切尔及警官打了声招呼后便告辞了，随后招呼其他同伴一起离开灾难现场。

“我们不能因为这些事情耽误我们的行程。”他说。

几个人到了牛车旁后，爵士说了列车出轨掉落河里的事，却并没说出原因，也没描述那惨烈的场景。他准备抽个时间告诉阿埃童。

一行人在离桥头几十公里的地方越过了铁路，继续向东行进。

没过多长时间，牛车就进了一个山坳。山坳虽然狭窄曲折，但风景却很美，有很多美丽的树木，那些美丽的树木一丛丛地生长着，又一丛丛地被隔离开来，如同热带树木。在这些树中，最漂亮的是一种叫“卡黍林拉”的树，这种树有着像橡树一样的躯干，枝头上结着如同豆球花一样的香荚，树叶是青绿色的，很粗糙，有些像松树的叶子。

在一棵棵的“卡黍林拉”树中，他们还看到了一种“盘杉”，这种“盘杉”虽然不肥壮，但却很挺拔。它们有着奇特的形状，树顶为圆锥形。

树丛里有很多灌木的细枝倒垂下来，如同一条条绿色的溪流，这样美的自然风景，让人不能不欣赏。因此，海伦夫人提议暂停一会儿。于是，牛车的轮子不再咯吱咯吱地响了，四周一片寂静，树丛下那绿色的青草如同地毯一般铺张开来，大自然将这张绿色的地毯画上了细格，犹如一块大大的棋盘。

实际上，这片优美之地是为长眠于地下的人创造的，不过，因为墓地被荒草掩盖，所以他们并不知道。

“这是一片墓地！”巴嘉勒尔还是看出来了。

是的，这是土人的墓地，只是在不知道的人面前，它呈现出的是绿树成荫，以及快乐飞翔的小鸟。一切都显得那么美，在这一刻，所有人内心的阴郁全都一扫而光。这样的地方，简直可以算得上风水宝地，死神也被大家遗忘了。

如果不是白人入侵，不是白人将土人赶离他们祖先长眠的风水宝地，那么，土人是幸福的。但很可惜，土人的这神圣之地被殖民者带来的牛羊肆意践踏，就连墓地上的树林也变得稀稀落落，时间一久，坟地便被行人踩平了。

此时，巴嘉勒尔和小罗伯尔沿着墓地旁的林荫之地散步，他们边走边聊，聊得很投机。不过在走了几百米后，爵士发现他们停了下来，而且还下了马，低头在看着什么。看他们的样子，像是发现了什么稀奇古怪的事情。

赶着牛车的阿埃童催促牛，赶到了他们所在的地方，大家便知道巴嘉勒尔和小罗伯尔停下来的原因了。原来，他们看见了一个8岁的小土人，是个男孩。男孩穿着欧式服装，在一棵浓密的大树下睡觉。从他的外表他们便看出了他的种族：他有着一头鬈曲的头发，以及接近棕黑的皮肤。他的鼻子有些塌，长着厚厚的嘴唇，双臂很长，是典型的棕色人种。

不过，从他机灵的模样上又能看出，他和一般土人有所不同，很可能接受过一些文化教育。

看见小孩子，海伦夫人很关心，急忙下了车。当他们全都围在小孩周围时，小孩依然在酣睡。

“可怜的孩子，一定是在荒郊野外迷路了。”玛丽小姐说。

“我觉得他一定是来这里扫墓的，也许这里埋着他的亲人。”海伦夫人说。

“我们不能不管他，他一个人孤零零的……”

小罗伯尔还没说完，便见小男孩翻了个身，但却没有醒来，不过大家从他翻过来的背上发现了一个小牌子，上面写着：“陶林勒到俄丘卡去由服务员史密斯负责照料车资已付”。

大家茫然而惊讶。

“这一定是英国人干的，他们将孩子像包裹一样寄出去，只付过‘邮资’就不管了。我以前就听说过，不过原来不相信，没想到是真的。”巴嘉勒尔气愤地说。

“可怜的孩子！他是不是乘的就是那辆脱轨的火车？会不会是他的父母出了事，留下了他一个人？”海伦夫人喃喃着。

“我觉得不会，这牌子上的字，说明他是一个人来的。”麦盖尔说。

“看！他醒了！”玛丽小姐说。

确实，小男孩醒了。在他慢慢睁开眼睛时，因为太阳光的强烈，他马上又闭上了眼睛。海伦夫人拉住了他的手，他站起来，看着周围一圈人，吓得脸色煞白。但慢慢地，他平静下来。

“你懂英语吗，小朋友？”海伦夫人亲切地问。

“懂一点！”小男孩用带着很深乡音的英语回答。

“你叫什么名字？”海伦夫人又问。

“陶林勒。”小男孩说。

“哦，陶林勒，澳洲话是不是‘树皮’的意思？”巴嘉勒尔插话道。

小男孩点了点头，随即又把脸转向了海伦夫人。

“你是从什么地方来的，陶林勒？”海伦夫人又问。

“我从墨尔本来，到萨塔斯特去。”

“你是坐康斯登桥出车祸的那辆火车？”爵士忍不住问。

“是，先生！”

“你一个人出远门？”

“不是出远门，我是回家。巴克斯顿牧师把我交给史密斯先生，让他照顾我，但可怜的服务员史密斯摔死了。”

“火车上你就没有认识的人了吗？”

“没有了，先生！”

一个几岁的孩子，没有家人的陪伴却来到了一个荒无人烟的地方，他为什么不在康斯登桥等着，却要来这里？海伦夫人满是疑问，于是又问了几个问题。

最后才得知，他是要回老家纳克兰，那里有他的家人。

“你有爸爸妈妈？”小罗伯尔问。

“有！哥哥！”陶林勒见小罗伯尔问他，一边回答一边握住了他的手。小罗伯尔听到别人叫他“哥哥”，非常高兴，一下子抱住了他，吻了起来。两个人很快就成了朋友。

此时，大家对陶林勒都有了兴趣。看见太阳已经西下，马上就到了休息时间，也便觉得赶那几里路没什么意思，不如扎营休息。

很快，阿埃童拴好了牛，帐篷也搭好了。奥比尔准备的晚饭很快就端了上来。大家邀请陶林勒一起吃晚饭，陶林勒虽然肚子很饿，但却客气地拒绝着。

最终，他还是坐了下来，并和罗伯尔坐在一起。罗伯尔不停地给陶林勒夹菜，陶林勒一边说着谢谢，一边大口地吃了起来。

陶林勒是个可爱的孩子，虽然稍稍有些拘谨，但却很讨人喜欢。

大家吃饭的时候，并没有中止谈话，他们都很关心陶林勒，不断地问这问那。其实他的情况很简单，就和很多小土人一样，小时候被送到了殖民地的慈善机构。在那里，他们的性格变得越来越温和，从不仇视其他人，而且还经常穿着原始服装，在大街上跑来跑去，有些还会出售一些像渔具、猎具、武器等等的工艺品。

而那些土人部落的首长，为了省钱，也喜欢把自己的孩子送去慈善机构接受教育。

陶林勒的父亲便是如此，他们让陶林勒在墨尔本待了5年，5年里从未见过一个亲人。不过，有着思乡之情的陶林勒很想回老家，甚至决定不管受多少辛苦，也要回去看看，哪怕看到部落流散，家人已经不在也好。

“见了父母后，你还会回去吗？”海伦夫人问。

“要回去的，夫人！”陶林勒回答海伦夫人道，他的眼神很诚恳。

“你以后想做什么？”

“我要解救贫穷和愚昧的同胞，我要给他们自由的生活！”陶林勒大声说。

虽然这句话是从一个8岁的孩子嘴里说出来的，但却没有人嘲笑。他们这些苏格兰人都被小陶林勒的勇气和精神感动了，对他也就越发地尊重起来。而巴嘉勒尔更是有着说不出的感动和同情。

说实话，巴嘉勒尔不太喜欢穿欧式服装的小土人，他希望看到原始的，赤身裸体，身上刻有花纹的小土人，因为澳大利亚到处都是穿着欧式服饰的小土人，所以他很鄙视他们。但小陶林勒的一席话，让他的态度发生了改变，甚至开始佩服这个小土人，之后，他也成了陶林勒的好朋友。

在海伦夫人问陶林勒在什么地方读书时，陶林勒说在墨尔本师范学校，还说巴克斯顿牧师是他们的校长。

“平时你们都上什么课？”海伦夫人又问。

“圣经、数学、地理……”

“哇，你们上地理？”地理学家巴嘉勒尔兴奋起来。

“没错，先生！放寒假的时候，我的地理考试还考了第一名呢！”陶林勒说。

“太厉害了！地理课能得第一名。”

“给你看我的奖品！”陶林勒从他的衣服口袋里拿出了一本32开本的

《圣经》，上面第一页写着：“墨尔本师范学校，地理课第一名，奖给陶林勒，纳克兰人。”

一个澳大利亚土人，却很喜欢地理学，这让地理学家巴嘉勒尔很意外，也很高兴，他抱起陶林勒，不停地亲吻着。陶林勒对他这种亲密的表达方式感到很迷惑，海伦夫人解释给他听，说巴嘉勒尔是著名的地理学家，要是他站在讲台上讲课的话，一定是个出色的教授。

“啊！您是地理学教授？那您考考我吧！”陶林勒高兴地说。

“让我考你？我求之不得！让我好好看看墨尔本师范的地理课都讲了些什么。”

“陶林勒一定会让你大吃一惊的，巴嘉勒尔先生，小心点！”少校逗巴嘉勒尔说。

“哼！太小看我了，我可是堂堂的地理学会秘书！”

巴嘉勒尔说着，用手扶了扶鼻梁上的眼镜，接着像教授一样，用庄严的语气说：“陶林勒同学，站起来！”

陶林勒原本就站着，听他这么一说，一挺胸，恭恭敬敬地等着回答巴嘉勒尔的问题。

“世界上的五大洲包括哪些？”巴嘉勒尔问，那时候还没有南极洲之说。

“亚洲、非洲、美洲、欧洲、大洋洲。”陶林勒脱口而出。

“嗯！不错！那么大洋洲分几部分？”

“分三部分，分别是波利尼西亚、密克罗尼西亚、美拉尼西亚。那里的主要岛屿有澳大利亚，属于英国；新西兰，属于英国；塔斯马尼亚，属于英国；查坦姆、奥克兰、马加利、马金、马拉基等，都属于英国。”

“怎么回事？难道整个大洋洲都在大不列颠的保护之下吗？我可没那么认为，我觉得法国……”

巴嘉勒尔大叫着，还没说完，便听陶林勒吃惊地说：“什么法国？”

“墨尔本师范就教你们这些？”巴嘉勒尔问。

“没错，先生！难道他们教得不对吗？”

“对！教得对极了，教得整个大洋洲都成了他们的了！”

巴嘉勒尔吃惊又懊恼，少校被他的样子逗得直想笑。

“唉！我们还是说说亚洲吧！”巴嘉勒尔有些有气无力。

“亚洲的都城是加尔各答，主要城市有孟买、马德拉斯、亚丁、马六甲、新加坡、曼谷、科伦坡；岛屿有拉克代夫群岛、马尔代夫群岛、查哥斯群岛等等，都属于英国。”

“好了，好了！我的好学生，我们还是来谈谈非洲吧！”

“非洲有两个主要殖民地，南边是好望角殖民地，都城在开普敦；西边是些英国居留地，主要城市是塞拉勒窝内。”

“嗯！这还差不多！”巴嘉勒尔稍稍松了口气，他知道，教陶林勒的一定是个英国狂。

“不错，对于阿尔及利亚、摩洛哥、埃及……把它们都从英国的版图上剔出去。我们现在再来谈谈美洲吧！”

“美洲分为南美和北美。北美属于英国，其中包括加拿大、新布伦克、新苏格兰，还有北美合众国，约翰逊任当地总督。”

“什么？约翰逊总督？他就是林肯总统的继承人啊！你了解得还真多！对于南美，像圭亚那、佐治亚、牙买加、特立尼特等地都属于英国没错，我不说了，但我不知道你们老师对欧洲怎么看？”

“欧洲？”陶林勒说完，看了看巴嘉勒尔，他不知道巴嘉勒尔为什么会那么激动。

“没错，欧洲，你说它属于谁？”

“当然是英国！”陶林勒毫不犹豫地说。

“我早知道你会这么说。欧洲包括哪些地方？”

“欧洲有英格兰、苏格兰、马耳他岛、泽西岛、昆西岛、塞得兰群岛，它们都属于英国。”

“好的，那你想想，还有其他国家吗？孩子！”

“别的国家？好像没有了。”

“怎么会没有呢？还有奥地利、西班牙、俄罗斯、法兰西呢？”

“这些不是国家，是省份。”

“胡闹！”巴嘉勒尔气得拿下了鼻梁上的眼镜。

“难道不是吗？西班牙的省会是直布罗陀。”

“太好了！真是太好了！那么法兰西呢？难道法兰西也是英国的一个省？”

“没错！先生，省会是加莱！”

“加莱属于英国？”

“当然是喽！”

巴嘉勒尔哈哈大笑起来，陶林勒茫然地看着他。在问陶林勒问题的时候，陶林勒也在积极地回答，但让大家没有想到的是，他回答得竟然那么荒诞滑稽。大家都笑了起来，陶林勒却丝毫没有慌张，只是平静地等着大家笑完。

“怎么样，亲爱的地理学家？你是不是大开眼界了？”少校笑着说。

“少校！你说得对极了。看看墨尔本的老师教得多好，整个世界都是英国的了，这样的教育方法，土人怎么可能不被驯服？”巴嘉勒尔说完，把脸又转向陶林勒，“孩子，我问你，月球呢？月球是不是也属于英国？”

“没错！月球以后一定会属于英国的！”陶林勒大声说。

巴嘉勒尔听完站了起来，他很想笑，无法在原来的地方待了，他要找个地方好好笑一场。所以他跑到了帐篷外的地方，大笑了一场。

此时，爵士拿出一本书，是理查逊著的《地理学简论》，这本书在英国很受重视，而且比陶林勒的老师教得更准确。

“孩子！这本书送给你，留个纪念吧。这本书里的知识可以纠正你地理学上所犯的一些错误。”爵士说。

陶林勒接过了书，但却什么都没说，他只是看了看书中的一些插图，一脸的不相信，并不愿意放进口袋。

此时天已经黑了，明天还要赶路，大家不得不休息，而罗伯尔也邀请陶林勒和他一起睡觉，陶林勒答应了。很快，海伦夫人和玛丽小姐便回到了她们的牛车，而男人们都在帐篷里躺了下来。此时，巴嘉勒尔还在外面哈哈大笑，他的笑声和鸟鸣声交织在一起，如同交响乐一般。

第二天早晨6点钟的时候，被鸟叫声惊醒的人们发现陶林勒不见了，他是因为太思念故乡，想早点回去，还是因为巴嘉勒尔的狂笑让他生气了呢？没有人知道。

不过，海伦夫人醒来后发现，她的旁边有一束新鲜的单叶含羞草，而巴嘉勒尔的衣服口袋里则有爵士给陶林勒的那本理查逊著的《地理学简论》。

第二十九章 出黄金的地方

莫契勋先生是伦敦皇家地理学会会长。1814年，他曾研究过澳大利亚南海岸由北向南的那条山脉，从那条山脉中，他发现其地质构造和乌拉尔山非常相似。乌拉尔山有一条山脉专出金子，所以这位地理学家就想，澳大利亚的这条山脉会不会也含有贵重金属呢？

显然，他的猜测没有错，仅仅两年后，有人就从新南威尔士给他寄了两块金矿标本。之后，他便决定向新荷兰的金矿区输送一批劳务。

在南澳最先发现金沙的是杜彤先生，而在新南威尔士最先发现金矿床的则是弗白和斯密士先生。

这些金矿的发现，震惊了掘金人，出现了全世界的“淘金热”，特别是奥菲尔城的产金量最大，发展最为迅速，真正无愧于和《圣经》里的金国同名。

不过，直到那时候，维多利亚省有金矿的事知道的人并不多，直到1851年，这个地方才掘出了金沙。很快，巴纳茨、奥温河、本迪哥和亚历山大就被测出含金量也很丰富。不过，由于开采条件限制，前三个产地的开采量并不大，只有亚历山大的矿石质量高、分布均匀，所生产出的金子价格也到了1411法郎一斤，创了全世界市场价格的最高纪录。

如今，由于处在南纬37度，所以这支远征队也慢慢地向那个金矿区走去，这是一个让很多人发财，但也让很多人破产的地方。12月31日，他们一行人在崎岖蜿蜒的路上走了一整天之后，终于看见了金矿山那圆

圆的顶部。当晚，他们将牛马放开，让它们随意吃草，自己则在一个山坳下休息。

第二天，也就是1866年的元旦，他们向那条黄金之道走去。

能够经过这座著名的金山，每个人都觉得很庆幸。亚历山大山用澳大利亚土语来说又叫“吉坡”。这里曾是很多冒险家光顾的地方，在这些冒险家里，有良民，也有强盗；有别人要他们命的，也有他们要别人命的。特别是在1851年，在“黄金热”像瘟疫一样四下蔓延时，很多人为了得到黄金，客死他乡。不过即使那样，还有很多人执着地认为，上帝为大家撒下了黄金种子，该是收获的季节了。于是，这些人前仆后继地来收获金子。

当然，黄金虽好，却也不是每个人想得就能得到的，虽然一锄头挖下去便发了财的人不少，但累死的人也不少。而对那些想发财的人来说，死的人他们是不会去说的，说的全是发财的人，这一传十，十传百，百传千……一下子便传遍了。野心家们更多地涌向了澳大利亚大陆，墨尔本光移民就有5.4万名，这些人大多是无恶不作的抢劫犯，甚至连警察和士兵都做起了抢劫的勾当。

在那个黄金狂热、秩序混乱的年代，英国当局竟然用他们惯常的沉着控制了这个局面。首先是那些警察和士兵改邪归正了，因此，当爵士一行再经过这里时，便没有出现混乱场面。

如今，13年过去了，开采金矿的事业虽然如火如荼，但因为被严格控制，却也井井有条。

不过，年复一年被开采的金矿，已经“千疮百孔”了，如同白蚁啃噬木头，内部严重损坏，已经没有什么金子可以开采了。

将近中午11点的时候，他们来到了矿区的中心，这是一座新兴的“城市”，“城市”里有工厂、别墅、教堂、银行、报馆、旅馆、农庄、游乐场，甚至还有剧场。剧场正在上演一部风光剧，剧名叫《幸运的掘金人》，结局是主人公久掘而得不到金，失望中，最后一锄挖出了一块大大的金块。

来到了世界闻名的金矿，爵士好奇心倍增，也想去看亚利山大的采金区，所以他让阿埃童先赶牛车在一个地方等他们，他们参观完后就找他汇合。这一想法正合巴嘉勒尔的意，和往常一样，他自告奋勇要去当向导和解说员。

就这样，他们从用碎石铺就的宽阔马路上走过，马路上因为洒了水，所以没有多少灰尘。路两旁全是一些“黄金有限公司”“掘金人总办事处”“块金总汇”等等大招牌，非常引人注目。

看来，劳动力和资本联合起来也替代不了过去的单干形式，到处都是轰隆隆的机器声。再往前走，他们看见地面上有不计其数的洞眼。而工人们正拿着锄头，在阳光下挖着什么。这些正在挖掘的工人说着各种语言，但彼此并没有争吵，只是埋头拼命挖着。

“不要以为没有赤手空拳来找金子的人。虽然矿区由政府买来出租，所以很多挖金子的人都是一些公司雇用的，但还有一些既买不起地方，又想要金子的人，也就不得不冒险来挖金子了。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“既然是被政府出租的，不交钱的人又是怎么挖到金子的？”

“有种说法叫‘跳坑’。就是说，他们虽然在矿床上无法开采，但只要运气好，也可以挖到金子。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“是怎么挖金子的？”少校又问了一句。

“我不是说了吗？‘跳坑’呀！”巴嘉勒尔有点不耐烦了。

“可你没说怎么‘跳’呀。”少校又问。

“‘跳坑’是这里的一种风俗，虽然可能会引发凶杀和骚乱，但政府部门却是无法取缔的。”

“我们是问你怎么‘跳’，你可真会吊人胃口。”

“我不是马上就要说了吗？这里有个公认的规矩，就是说任何一个矿区，除非遇上重大节日，不然如果24小时无人开采，那么这个矿区就变成公用地了。这时候，如果老天保佑你，你就可以在上面开采。所以说，小罗伯尔，你要是运气好，找到这样一个矿床的话，那里就归你所有了。”

“先生，请不要教坏了我弟弟。”玛丽小姐沉着脸说。

“小姐，不要生气，我就和他开个玩笑。你说，他会挖金子吗？永远不会的。那挖金子也不是简单的事，要掘地、翻地，还要播种施肥，只有这样才会有所收获。如果像老鼠打洞一样，东挖一下，西刨一下，根本就没办法找到金子。而且这种找金子的方法，也是那些走投无路的人才干的事，小罗伯尔是不会干这种事的。”

参观了主要的矿场后，他们在细沙铺成的马路上走了不一会儿就到了银行。银行的建筑很高大，屋顶竖着国旗，爵士一行不仅得到了银行总监的接待，而且还允许他们进去参观。银行里存放着从各公司搜集来的金子。银行总监拿着一些形状怪异的金子标本，告诉他们开采金子的方法。

生金的形状大致分两种，一种是卷形金，一种是分解金。这两种金子都属于矿石块，当金子和泥土混合在一起或者包在硅石里时，开采就要以土质的不同，分别使用地面开采或深度开采的办法了。

而如果是卷金，则通常分布在有急流的山谷或深沟处，一般根据体积的大小，对它们进行分层，上面的是金粒，下面的则是金片，金片越到下面越薄。如果想把金子进行分解，通常是将外部的硬皮先分解掉，然后将分解好的金子做成金团，而这金团，通常就是一个人的资产了。

在亚历山大，金子往往分布在黏土层或者青石片层的夹缝里，所以一些运气好的人还有可能从黏土层或夹缝里找到大片的金块，这样的地方也被称之为“金窝窝”。

在银行参观完生金标本后，他们又去了矿物陈列馆——这里陈列着很多澳大利亚土壤形成的各种矿物质。澳大利亚并不仅仅只有金子这一种矿产，整个澳大利亚大陆如同一个巨大的聚宝盆，所以这里摆放着很多珍宝。

比如玻璃橱里那闪闪发光的白色黄玉，完全能和巴西的黄玉媲美。除此之外还有珍贵的石榴石、墨绿的石帘石、玫瑰色的红宝石、亮晶晶的金红石，以及投龙河两岸生产的小粒金刚钻。

总之，展柜里摆放着琳琅满目的珍宝，应有尽有，品种很齐全。这些珍宝就差将它们做成首饰摆在首饰店里了，想必如果真用这种珍宝做成首饰，一定会被一抢而空的。

爵士在告别了银行总监后，出了银行，带着大家去参观矿床。

一路上，即使是将金钱置之度外的巴嘉勒尔，也在不停地朝地下

看，好像在寻找什么宝贝。大家和他开玩笑，他也毫不在乎，依然故我，甚至时不时地弯下腰来，捡起一块石头研究一番，随即又带着鄙视和失望丢掉，一路上都是如此。

“亲爱的地理学家，你这是丢了什么东西吗？”少校取笑他。

“是的，走在生产金子的地方，总觉得有宝贝掉在了地下，不知道为什么，所以我决定了，我要找块金子带走，越重越好。”

“要是你真找到了，你会怎么做，巴嘉勒尔先生？”爵士笑着问。

“如果我真找到了，那我.....我就献给我们国家，然后存在法兰西银行。”

“你觉得银行会接受你这块金子吗？”

“为什么不接受？他们可以作为建设铁路的公共基金嘛！”

大家对他的爱国精神大加赞赏，海伦夫人也祝愿他能找到一块世界上最大的金子。他们一边开着玩笑，一边向周围的矿区走去，他们看到，到处都有工人在规划地方，并机械地劳动着，不过看上去没什么热情。

参观完后，爵士带着大家去了一家小酒馆，等着和牛车会和。既然来了酒馆，他们也就趁着等阿埃童的时间吃了点东西，巴嘉勒尔还叫来老板，要了些当地的饮料。

服务员送来的饮料实际上也是英国的一种水酒，不过因为酒多水少，所以又加了一些糖。这种纯澳大利亚的饮料，让来自欧洲的他们很不习惯。所以在接过酒杯后，他们又兑了一些水，将它变成了真正的英

国水酒，他们的做法，引起了服务员的好奇。

喝完酒之后，他们又聊了一些掘金人的事。巴嘉勒尔对他所看到的一切都很满意，不过也有一些遗憾，那就是当年亚历山大大规模采金的时候，他没有来参观，他觉得如果那时候来参观的话，一定会比现在还有意思。

“那时候，地面上全是一个个的小洞，那些小洞里都是像蚂蚁一样的掘金人，他们遍地挖洞，非常厉害。不过，这些人实在太没远见了，只知道过奢靡的生活，挣再多的钱都不够他们挥霍。我们现在坐着的小酒馆，当年就被说成是‘地狱’，因为这里全都是些赌博的人，这些人时不时地还会带上刀子，连警察都不怕。没办法，政府只好找来军队镇压。军队来了后，这些人也就规矩多了，开始纳税。当然，虽然征税并不困难，但秩序却比加利福尼亚还乱。”

“采金这一行，是谁都能做的吗？”海伦夫人问。

“没错，夫人！采金不需要文凭，只需要健壮的身体就行了。那些被贫困逼得背井离乡的人，大多身无分文，有钱的带锄头，没钱的带刀，当然，不管有钱没钱，能做正经事的人，绝对不会做这么疯狂的事。于是金矿区的周围就出现了一些怪现象，比如到处都是帐篷、船篷、草棚，以及由泥土、木板和树叶搭起的小屋。而这些简易棚子中间就是总督府的大厦，上面还挂着英国国旗。当然，还有公务员们住的蓝布帐篷，以及一些换金小贩、收金商建的各种店铺。

“那些收金商赚的当然是那些很富的人和很穷的人的钱。很富的人有金子卖给他们，那些穷人则用体力挖金，也卖给他们。所以在那时候，真正赚钱的就是他们。而那帮长着长胡子，穿着红色羊毛衫，拿着

锄头的掘金人则整天生活在水里泥里，闻的是四处散发着的腐臭味。那些难闻的，让人窒息的灰尘像烟雾一样笼罩在他们身旁，所以他们的寿命都很短。如果遇到澳大利亚天气不好的时候，一场伤寒病就能让他们十个人中死去九个半。所以对于那些冒险家来说，他们拼命掘金大半辈子，真正发财的有几个？那时候有一二百人都在绝望中死去。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“那又是怎么采金子的呢？巴嘉勒尔！”爵士问。

“采金子嘛，非常简单，那些为了采金子做的初期工作叫淘金。当然，现在完全不用这道程序了，现在开发公司会直接找到金脉，然后去那里采金片、金叶和金块。而淘金者只淘金，也就是从沙子里淘金。比如他们会先挖地，把认为能出金的金层挖出来，然后再用水冲洗，将金子和沙子分离开来。这种分离有个工具，是从美国传来的一种摇床。摇床的样子像个两米长的盒子，没有盖子，里面分成两层。第一层有粗铁丝网，粗铁丝网下又有几层细铁纱网；第二层的下半部分很窄，淘金的时候通常是把含金的沙土放在第一层，在用水冲洗后再进行搅动，让石块留在粗纱上。而那碎金和细沙则根据其体积的大小，留在了每一层的细纱网上，土则变成泥水，流到了第二层的最下端。最简单的淘金机就是这样构造的。”

“是很简单，但怎么说也是一种工具。”麦盖尔说。

“就是，有些人为了更便宜，还会购买二手货，如果实在没钱买，也可以不要。”巴嘉勒尔又说。

“那要是不用这种工具，又要用什么来代替呢？”玛丽小姐问。

“一个大盘子簸箕。不过，这样筛选出的就不是麦粒，而是金粒

了。在刚刚开始采金的第一年里，许多采金人不用什么本钱就发了财，就是用这种方法。那时候，遍地都是黄金。溪水在矿床上流，所以整个墨尔本的街道，好像都是金沫子。1852年一个月，从亚历山大运到墨尔本的黄金价值就有823万法郎。”

“和俄罗斯皇帝的年薪差不多了啊。”爵士说。

“那皇帝真可怜！”少校说。

“有一下子就发财的吗？”海伦夫人问。

“当然有，夫人！”

“能给我们说说吗？”爵士问。

“1858年，在巴纳茨，有人就找到了一块573两重的金子；在吉普斯兰，有人找到了重782两的金子；1861年，又有人找到了一块重达834两的金子。在这里，有个采金人还发现了一块重65公斤的金子，这要是以722法郎半斤来计算的话，这块金子的价值就是22.386万法郎！也就是说，一锄头下去，会挖出1.1万法郎的年金，很厉害吧！”

“那是不是这些黄金的发现，让世界的黄金量增加了呢？”麦盖尔又问。

“肯定增加了，而且增加了很多。19世纪初，每年全世界的黄金产量也就4700万法郎，现在应该到9万万法郎以上了，甚至接近10亿了。”

“那是不是说，我们的脚下有很多黄金？”小罗伯尔问。

“没错，孩子！说不定有几百两呢。不过，我们之所以将它踩在脚

下，是因为我们不看重这些东西。”

“那澳大利亚是不是个很富饶的地方？”

“那也不能这么说，因为这地方虽然出金子，但却也养了一群闲人，他们终日无所事事，骄奢淫逸。所以说，最好的地方应该是出铁，而不是出金子。出铁可以让人们制造劳动工具，然后投入到劳动中去，这既锻炼了身体，又创造了财富。”

聊天就此结束，之后他们便在第二天太阳刚刚升起的时候，离开了产金区。同时，也走出了吉坡区的边境。

一行人走在了尘土飞扬的达尔令西区的路上，几个小时后，他们走了大约一半的路程。

一路上如此顺利，说不定半个月就能到达杜布湾的海滨了。到目前为止，大家的身体还能承受，而牛马也没有觉得疲累。地理学家巴嘉勒尔说澳大利亚的气候宜人，这话确实没错，天气不是很热，也没有多少潮气，人和牲畜都很舒服。

不过，自从他们看到康斯登桥火车脱轨后，一行人就有了戒备，好像以前的预防措施都不够用了，并多出了很多规定，比如打猎的人不能跑出牛车太远，必须保证在牛车的视线范围内；夜晚必须留人看守牛车，早晚必须装好子弹……知道有强盗出没，他们的心里有了担忧。

当然，精神的高度紧张和添加保安措施，爵士他们并没有让海伦夫人和玛丽小姐知道，以免她们担心。

这些保安措施非常有必要，因为稍不注意，就可能引发乱子。而且不止爵士他们一行有这个顾虑，城市里的居民和牲畜站上的一些“坐地

人”，他们也时刻地提防强盗偷袭。所以一到天黑，家家都关门闭户，院子里也都拴上了狗，一有动静，狗便狂吠起来。而那些牧人，每天早晚放牧回家，没有一个不佩枪的。这种紧张的气氛也是他们不得已而为之，一个个血案的发生，不得不让他们神经紧绷，提高警惕。

不要说市民，就是政府当局也很小心，就连那到乡下去的邮车，也要宪兵队跟着。以前邮车在跑上奔驰非常放心，现在都成惊弓之鸟了。这天，爵士一行人穿过马路时，看到有辆邮车疾驰而去，后面扬起很大的灰尘，虽然只是匆匆驰过，但爵士还是看见车子里坐着荷枪实弹的警察。

当年，黄金狂热的时候，欧洲社会上的一些好逸恶劳、梦想发财的人都涌向了澳大利亚，现在如此戒备，好像又回到那时候了。

在穿过基莫公路一公里之外后，牛车钻进了一片桉树林。这片桉树林特别大，包括了几个经纬度。从白洛夷加出发后，穿越这么一大片丛林还是第一次。

看到这些约60米高，树皮有15厘米厚的大桉树，大家忍不住发出了赞叹声。这些树的枝干非常粗，差不多有6米，桉树上有带着香味的树脂流出，树脂堆集到离地面45米的高度。在如此高度下，树枝上是不会生出枝芽的，甚至树干上连一个疙瘩都没有，就像被木匠用刨子修理过一样。

这些大树一棵棵地排列着，一排就有几百棵。而这些树也只有到了一定的高度后才会分枝，所分的枝左右对称。同时，每个树枝上都长满了树叶，叶子里有大朵大朵的花，那些花如同一个个的钵盂，看上去非常壮观。

好在这片树林里，空气对流很好，风将树林里的潮气全都带走了。而由于树与树之间隔着一段距离，所以可以让牛群、马群畅通无阻。这里不像原始森林，没有密集的树枝，也没有荆棘横生，更没有倒下的树干，以及树干上那纠缠在一起的藤条。

通常要想进原始森林，需要刀砍火烧，但在这里不用。当他们进入森林后，看到的地面全是由浅草铺就的，苍翠的树木和天地形象地形成了一根根的“擎天柱”，一眼望不到边。

虽然这片树林里树荫不多，也不凉爽，但林子里还是会有阳光像隔着薄纱一般地渗进来，在给大家带来热度的时候，也带来了一点光明。树林里的树影很规则，阳光洒下的光影也很清晰……一切的一切，仿佛都将大家带入到了一种仙境，给人一种全新的感觉。

澳大利亚的森林和欧洲大陆上的森林确实不一样，森林里生长得最多的就是品种繁多的金娘科，金娘科也是澳大利亚植物种类的代表。在如此苍翠的树荫下，暗影形成得并不深，之所以这样，都是因为叶子长得奇怪的原因。因为这些树叶的平面并没有向着太阳，反而是那刀口式的侧面正对阳光。

当人们迎着阳光看过去后，看到的只是树叶的侧面，所以阳光透下来时，就像透过百叶窗或纱窗一样。

大家都注意到了这一点，也都感到稀奇。不过地理学家巴嘉勒尔却没有觉得稀奇，他解释这个现象说：“树叶形状离奇并不奇怪，是造物主的作用，之所以让它拥有这样的形状，自有它的道理。不过植物学家将它命名为‘尤加利’，我就觉得有些奇怪了。”

“‘尤加利’是什么意思？”玛丽小姐好奇地问。

“‘尤加利’是一种桉树的名字，来自希腊文，是‘庇荫之利’的意思。植物学家们拿希腊文给树起名字，就是为了不让人发现这个错误，因为很明显，这‘尤加利’根本就没有庇荫的好处。”

“巴嘉勒尔先生，我们同意你的说法，不过不用说这事了，还是说为什么叶子会这么长吧！”爵士说。

“这是因为地理学和植物学的原因。你们应该知道，这一带的空气非常干燥，降雨量少，土壤干燥，树木内的汁液也不多，为了生存，它们必须躲避阳光来保护自己，防止被蒸发，于是，它们全都侧着面对太阳，不让正面照着。看看，没有比叶子更聪明的了吧！”巴嘉勒尔解释说。

“也没有比这树叶更自私的了，只顾自己，不替行人考虑！”少校反驳道。

除了巴嘉勒尔，大家都赞同少校的说法。巴嘉勒尔抹着额头的汗，说在没有阴凉的树下走路，也是一种享受，而且这种享受非常难得。不过，虽然巴嘉勒尔在痛苦地享受着，但桉树叶子的生长方式，仍然得不到人们的真正喜欢，因为穿越这片林子需要很长时间，被头顶的烈日照着，让人有些吃不消。

牛车在桉树林里慢慢地行走，一路上，他们没有碰到一只野兽，也没有遇见一个土人，陪伴他们的只有树上的几只鹦鹉。这些鹦鹉有些在枝头唱歌，有些则穿行在远处的树枝间隙，只留一抹五彩斑斓的影子给他们。

总之，在这无边无际的树林里，除了鸟声和马蹄声，一片寂静。

好像生怕惊动这片寂静，每个人说话都很小声，夹杂在马蹄声和车轮声中的只有阿埃童赶牛的吆喝声。

天慢慢暗了下来，爵士一行在几棵桉树下撑起了帐篷。这棵桉树被火烧过，树干不仅被烧焦了，而且也被烧空了，从树根一直通到了树顶，如同工厂里的烟囱。整棵树的外面只剩一层树皮苟延残喘。

“坐地人”烧树的坏习惯，想必是会毁灭这片森林的。不过，奥比尔在为大家做晚饭的时候，依然听从巴嘉勒尔的建议，在那个空心树里做饭——刚一点着火，那火苗就沿着那空心，一直蹿到了树顶。

吃过晚饭后，阿埃童、穆纳、维尔逊和船长轮流值班，直到日出。

1月3日，众人的眼睛始终盯着那漫长的路，好像永远都走不完似的，不过，当傍晚来临时，行走中的他们发现树丛渐渐稀疏了，又走了几公里后，平原上出现了一排整齐的房屋。

“这是塞穆尔！过了这个小镇，维多利亚省的边境就走完了。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“这个小镇有名吗？”海伦夫人问。

“就是一个简单的小村庄，现在正向市镇转变。”

“在这里我们能不能找个像样的旅馆？”爵士又问。

“没问题，能找到！”

“那么我们快去吧，让女士住得舒服一些，我想，这点她们一定不会反对！”

“当然不会反对，我和玛丽都很开心，不过最好不要太远，太远会耽误行程的。”

“不会远的，一点都不远。都累了，也该休息了，明天还要一起出发呢。”爵士说。

晚上9点钟的时候，月亮从东边升起来，穿透雾气，让四周光芒万丈起来。不一会儿，天越来越黑，一行人走在塞穆尔镇的马路上。巴嘉勒尔走在最前面，他好像对一切都很熟悉，即使是从未见过的也能说得头头是道，想必这是他的一种本能，所以他很快就领大家到了康贝儿旅馆。

在将牛马和车子都安排妥当后，大家被领到舒适的房间休息。

10点钟的时候，大家一起吃晚饭。吃饭前，奥比尔还以总管家的身份，对当晚的晚饭做了一番检查。而此时，巴嘉勒尔和小罗伯尔已经去镇上转了一圈了。不过，他们只是简单地说了一下夜游小镇的经过，也没看见什么值得他们评说的东西。

不过，如果够细心，一定会感觉到塞穆尔街上的骚动的。一群又一群的人不知在讨论着什么，你一言我一语的。说话时很紧张，也很不安。这些人中，有人在高声读着报纸，并将报纸上的内容加以评论。

这种情况，没有逃脱少校的眼睛。在他还没走出旅馆大门时，便感觉到了大街上气氛的异常。在他和健谈的旅馆经理笛克逊谈了十几分钟话后，便知道外面发生了什么事。不过他一直没有说出来，在大家吃完晚饭，两名女士也回房休息时，他留下对其他人说：

“康斯登桥上火车脱轨的凶手找到了。”

“抓到了吗？”阿埃童忙问。

“还没有！”少校说，他没有阿埃童的焦躁心理。

“真是太可惜了！”阿埃童补充了一句。

“那次事件的制造者是谁？”爵士问。

“你看一下报纸就知道了，看了报纸你也就知道警察的猜测没错了。”少校说着，递给爵士一份报纸，那是昨天的《新西兰日报》。

爵士拿着报纸，大声念了起来：

1866年1月2日，悉尼消息。大家应该记得，在12月29日的夜间，康斯登桥上发生了一起特大铁路事故。11点45分的时候，火车在经过吕顿河时，康斯登桥竟然是开着的，而从那失事的火车内看到有抢劫痕迹，而且在康斯登桥半公里处又发现了守桥员的尸体。这一切都证明，这是一起有预谋的犯罪。

果然，在经过仔细调查后得知，6个月前，在西澳柏斯的拘留中，有一批流犯在被送到诺福克岛的途中，有流犯逃跑，而这起康斯登桥惨案就是他们所为。

这批流犯共有29人，为首的叫本·吉奥兹，是个非常狡猾的匪徒，几个月前，他不知乘什么船来到了澳大利亚，虽然警方一直在通缉他，但却一无所获。

希望广大市民、移民及牧民积极预防，并协助抓捕，有消息请及时

报告给本地殖民总监米切尔。

爵士在念完这个通告后，将脸转向了巴嘉勒尔：

“巴嘉勒尔，现在你该相信澳大利亚有流犯了吧？”

“难免会有越狱的流犯的，不过正式收容的流犯确实没有。”巴嘉勒尔辩解道。

“不管怎么样，这里有流犯是肯定的了。我想，有流犯也不一定要改变我们的搜寻计划，你说不是吗，船长先生？”

麦盖尔没有说话，因为他怕说中止搜寻会让格兰特姐弟难过，但继续前行，要是出什么问题就麻烦了，所以他也不知道该怎么办，好一会儿才说：“要是海伦夫人和玛丽小姐没有和我们在一起，我倒不怕那些流犯。”

爵士明白他的想法，接着说：“我们不是说不去找格兰特船长了，不过因为有女士同行，有些不方便，我们可以先去墨尔本，然后回到‘邓肯号’上，最后再乘船去东海岸寻访失踪船员的踪迹，你觉得怎么样，少校？”

“在我发表意见前，我想听听阿埃童的意见。”少校说。

阿埃童被点名了，只好说：“我觉得我们离墨尔本有320公里，如果危险的话，向东和向南走都是一样的。两条路上同样都是人烟稀少，很荒凉，而且我不相信那些强盗会把我们这群身上有武器的人怎么样。所以照我说，除非我们有更好的计划。”

“完全正确，阿埃童！如果我们继续前行的话，很可能就找到格兰特船长的踪迹了。但如果我们掉过头向南走，那就会离格兰特船长越来越远。再说了，那批柏斯来的逃犯，我们大可不必将他们放在眼里。”巴嘉勒尔说。

这么一来，大家还是决定执行原计划。

“不过我还有个建议，爵士！”阿埃童突然说。

“有什么想法？说吧！”爵士说。

“我觉得不妨派人给‘邓肯号’下道命令，让他们将船开到东河岸去，不知道怎么样。”

“这恐怕不好吧！我觉得等我们到了杜布湾再发命令会更好一点。这样万一我们因为一些意外事件不得不回到墨尔本，也会方便一些。而且那船的问题也不轻，如果修不好强行出海的话会更麻烦，所以我觉得还是等等再发命令比较好。”麦盖尔说。

“也行！”阿埃童说，他并没有坚持自己的观点。

第二天，一行人离开了塞穆尔镇。

出发时，大家全都全副武装起来，做好了应对一切外来事故的准备。半个小时之后，大家重又进入那片桉树林。爵士情愿在旷野里行走，因为旷野比丛林安全，强盗不容易隐藏。不过现在他们没有任何选择余地，只好重又回到那单调的林中小道上去。

晚上，一行人沿着安格尔塞地区北境走了很长一段路程，过了东经146度线，大家这才在墨累县边境露了营。

第三十章 土人的生活

1月5日清晨，一行人踏进了渺无人烟的墨累区域。这片区域从墨累一直延伸到大洋洲的阿尔卑斯山一带山脉，现代文明还未触及，属于维多利亚省人迹罕见之处。截至目前，那里还只是一片处女之地，无人开发。

这片无人开发的区域在英国地图上被称为“黑人区”。当时，英国移民曾将土人粗暴地赶到了这里。因此，土人种族逐渐在这个荒僻之地消失了，而很多白种人，不管是移民、浪人、“坐地人”还是伐木人，一有需要，总会进入这个区域，甚至迫使土人不准走出森林一步。

这是种族歧视，地理学家巴嘉勒尔骑着马给大家讲这些话题。而对于这个话题，他又给出了一个结论，那就是大英帝国的殖民制度目的就是为了征服弱小种族，并把他们消灭在自己的家乡，这是个严酷的事实，随处可见，只不过澳大利亚更明显而已。

殖民初期，不管是流犯还是移民，他们都把土人不当人，只当野兽来看待，他们大肆驱逐土人，枪杀土人。在屠杀土人时，因为需要法学论据，他们便振振有词地说土人是大洋洲的劣民，杀这些卑贱的人种根本不算犯罪。悉尼的一些报纸甚至还公开提出一些消灭土人的方法，也就是大规模地毒死。

由此可见，英国人在扩展他们的殖民地时是多么的残酷，完全靠屠杀土人来实现，他们的残暴简直称得上惨绝人寰。在印度，他们曾杀害了500万印度人；在好望角，他们让100万霍吞脱人变成了1万人；在澳

大利亚，他们没有约束自己的行为，而是将大批的土人虐杀至死。

当然，英国当局虽然也发过通告，制裁了几名杀人不眨眼的伐木人，同时还制定了一些规定，比如白人要是割掉黑人的鼻子或耳朵，抑或是截下黑人的小拇指，将会受到鞭责。不过，这种轻描淡写的做法，丝毫没有威慑到那些凶手，他们反而更大规模地干起了杀人勾当，有些甚至还会灭掉土人的整个部落。

仅以凡第门岛为例，在8世纪初，岛上共有5000名土人，但到了1863年的时候，就只剩下7人了。而最近的《火星报》报道说，只有一个塔斯马尼亚人逃到了哈巴特。

巴嘉勒尔在说这些事的时候，爵士和少校及船长都没有进行一个字的反驳，虽然他们是苏格兰人，但他们也无法辩解什么，因为这一切都是事实，是人人皆知的事实。

“如果放在50年以前，在这里我们也许能碰到很多土人，可现在连一个土人都没有了。一个世纪以后，说不定土生土长的土人就会灭绝了。”巴嘉勒尔又说。

是啊，这个所谓的“黑人区”不仅没有一个黑人，甚至连他们曾经住过的草棚都没有影子。真是可怜呀！

走过一段森林后，他们进入到了一片荒野，而且越走越荒凉，越走越冷寂。不要说人，就是一头牛马也没有。很明显，此地太偏僻，连那些牛马也都不愿意来。

突然，小罗伯尔在一棵桉树下站住，指着一棵大树叫着：“看，那里有一只猴子！”

大家顺着小罗伯尔指的方向看去，果然看到一只动物在树枝上跳来跳去，非常矫健。它一会儿跳到这棵树的树顶，一会儿又跳到那棵树的树顶，身上仿佛长着翅膀似的。难道这地方的猴子会飞，如同传说中长着翅膀的狐狸一样？

此时，牛车停了下来，大家还没看清那“猴子”是怎么回事，它便在桉树那边消失了。不一会儿，它又像一道闪电一样，蹦在了大家的视线范围内，甚至还跳到了树下，蹦蹦跳跳地来到一棵桉树下，伸长胳膊抓住桉树的枝干。

那棵桉树的树干既高又滑，怎么抱都抱不住，只见那只“猴子”拿出一只斧子一样的东西，先在树上砍了几下，砍出一些深印，接着便踩着那些深印，噌噌地爬上了树顶，很快又钻进了树叶。

“这是什么猴子？”少校自语道。

“什么猴子，这是澳大利亚的土人啊！”巴嘉勒尔说。

没人相信巴嘉勒尔的话，正想嘲笑他，突然听到不远处传来奇怪的叫声，大家以为那里有什么意外发生，急忙快马加鞭，向前行走了大约100米，果然发现了一座土人的宿营地。

说是宿营地，其实也就是简单的草屋，非常简陋。

十多间草屋是用大块树皮做成的。在这片宿营地里，有30个人，其中有男人也有女人，有老人也有小孩。相同的是，他们个个都没有穿衣服，只是披着破旧的袋鼠皮，因为贫困，他们完全看不出人的样子。

看到牛车和爵士一行人后，他们先是想要逃跑。幸好阿埃童会一些土话，让这些土人放下心来。他们试探地慢慢围了过来，仿佛牲畜看见

主人要给它们喂食吃的样子。

这些土人身材矮小，皮肤虽然不是很黑，却很晦暗，像是被烟熏过一样。他们的头发很乱，胳膊很长，肚子微微向前挺起，身上不仅有汗毛，而且还有文身，有些人的身上还有在丧礼中割掉肉而形成的伤痕。

这样的形象，让人无法目睹，想不通造物主为什么会给他们这么一副面孔。

海伦夫人和玛丽小姐全都从牛车上下来了，她们拿出了一些吃的东西，分给了那些土人。土人抓过后便狼吞虎咽地吃了起来，像是很长时间没吃东西一样。

就这样，土人将他们当成了神灵来看待。因为澳大利亚人信奉神仙，还说原本白人也是黑人，只是死后进了天堂，成了神仙，所以变成了白人。

海伦夫人和玛丽小姐对土人中的妇女非常同情，这些妇女的处境比男人更糟糕。

大自然如同一个后母，虐待着她们，让她们不仅贫困，而且连一点女人的妩媚都没有。她们只是奴隶，是一些人用暴力抢来的奴隶。她们结婚，换来的只是主人握在手里的棍棒，而那棍棒也是大洋洲人常用的一种战棒。

婚后的她们，很快就从少女变成了老太婆，过着流浪生活的她们，因为没有固定的居住地，而且还要做很多事，所以经常怀里抱着裹在蒲包里的孩子，背上背着打鱼和打猎的工具、织网用的类似麻的草筋。

背负着这些东西，她们还要为一家生计负责，去捕蜥蜴、袋鼠、

蛇.....在地上追不到，她们就会爬到树上去捕。同时，她们还要砍柴，剥盖棚子用的树皮。

她们不像女人，甚至连人都不是，她们过着牛马不如的生活。吃东西也只能吃在男人们吃过后，不吃的和剩下的食物。

在这30人里，爵士一行看到了几个可怜的女人，她们显然很久没有吃东西了，正用一些谷粒在诱捕小鸟。为了捕到这些鸟，她们通常会一动不动地躺在发烫的地面上，如同死人一样，一躺就是几个钟头，才能逮到一只上了当的鸟。

通常能够上她们当的只是一些澳大利亚的鸟，可怜的女人们没有其他诡计，只能用这种拙劣的办法。

看着土人们全都围了上来，爵士他们既同情，又担心，怕他们抢劫。土人的嘴里不停地说着什么，舌头在嘴里打转，如同野兽一般。不过虽然不知道他们在说什么，但他们发出的音却是婉转而温柔的。

听着“诺吉，诺吉”的发音，又见他们不断打着手势，所以也就猜出了大概意思，应该是说“给我”。对这些土人来说，不管看到爵士他们手里拿什么，他们都是这么说的。因此，奥比尔不得不集中精力保护那节行李车厢，尤其是那些路途中他们需要食用的干粮，他更要保护好才行。

那些饿极了的土人，看着车里的干粮，馋得眼光发直，张着嘴，齧着锐利的牙齿。这样的牙齿，说不定连人肉都咬过。

其实，大部分的土人还是不会吃人肉的，他们只有在和人打架的时候，会吃人肉，而且是吃仇人的肉。

这时候，海伦夫人提议给他们一些吃的东西，爵士答应了。土人明白了他们的意思，做出感谢的表情，这样的表情，即使是铁石心肠的人，也会被感动的。这些土人高兴地大叫着，如同开了笼子的野兽等待喂食一般。

虽然他们不会认为自己是野兽，但也不能否认是未开化的民族，有着野兽一样的习性。

奥比尔是个善于和人打交道的人，所以在他为土人发放食物时，先从女人发起，不过不幸的是，那些女人根本不敢在男人面前吃，而那些男人一起扑向饼干和干肉的样子，就像饿虎扑食一般。

玛丽小姐一想到父亲很可能就被这样的土人掳去了，心里一酸，眼泪汪汪的。她仿佛看到父亲在这样的种族里当奴隶，忍饥挨饿，忍受着种种虐待。

麦盖尔船长不安地看着她，他猜出了她的心事，所以不等她开口就对阿埃童说：“阿埃童，你是不是从这样的土人手里逃出去的？”

“没错，船长！内地的土人和这里的差不多，不过您现在看到的只是很少一部分可怜人，达令河两岸有很多部落，部落首领的权威可是很厉害的。”阿埃童说。

“那么你们在这些土人的部落里做什么呢？”

“其实也和我以前做的事一样，打猎、捕鱼，也和他們一起打仗。我上次就说过，他们要根据你的作用来确定对你的待遇。只要人够聪明、够勇敢，是可以在部落里受到尊重的。”

“但还是俘虏对吗？”玛丽小姐又问。

“没错，是要受到监视的。不管白天黑夜都没机会逃。”阿埃童说。

“虽然是这样，可阿埃童，你还是逃出来了，不是吗？”少校插嘴道。

“没错，麦克那布斯先生，我是趁着部落间打仗，找了个机会逃出来的。既然逃出来了，我当然不会懊悔。不过如果让我再逃一次，我想，我是不会逃的，情愿一辈子做奴隶，因为我可不愿意穿越那片荒凉的区域，那是要吃很多苦头的。但愿上帝保佑，格兰特船长不会冒险做这样的尝试。”

“是呀，肯定不会的。玛丽小姐，但愿您的父亲还在土人手里。这样，只要他不在大陆的森林里乱跑，我们就能找到他。”麦盖尔说。

“您觉得找到我父亲的希望大吗？”

“当然！非常大，玛丽小姐，我一定会看到您在上帝的帮助下，获得幸福的一天的。”

玛丽小姐眼泪汪汪地看着麦盖尔，感谢之情溢于言表。

在他们说话的时候，突然，土人骚动起来，他们不停地高声大喊，并向四面八方跑去，随即，每个人都拿起了武器，像疯了一样。

爵士感到有些莫名其妙，而少校则问阿埃童：

“你既然在澳大利亚土人中间生活过一段时间，你一定能听懂他们在说什么吧？”

“能听懂一些。不过每个部落都有他们自己的语言，但我相信，这

些土人说什么我是能猜到的，他们应该是为了感谢阁下，决定表演一场战斗给阁下看。”

阿埃童翻译得没错，土人的骚动正是为了表演战斗给爵士他们一行看。土人没有任何开场白，直接开战，他们的表演很逼真，如果不是预先知道这只是一场表演，他们一定以为这是一场真正的搏斗。

据一些旅行家报道，说澳大利亚土人绝对是表演艺术家，看来真不是浪得虚名。

这些土人用来攻击别人和作防卫的武器是一根根大木棒，这些木棒很重，就是最结实的脑袋也会被打碎。他们用的武器还有斧头，这些斧头是用最坚硬的石头磨成的，这些磨尖的石头夹在棍子中间，斧柄达到了3米长。

斧头是一种可怕的武器，也是一种有用的武器，因为它既可以砍人头，也可以砍树枝——在什么情况下都能用。

土人们拿着手里的武器一边不停地挥舞，一边嘴里发出叫骂声。而战斗的土人们则一边互相攻击，一边倒下，做死亡状，另一些在旁观战斗的则发出胜利的欢呼声。这些场景不免让人有种惊心动魄之感，想着即使是真的战斗，也不过如此。

海伦夫人在旁边看得很着急，怕他们弄假成真。而战斗中，还不时有小孩子加入，那些小孩子中有男孩，也有女孩。他们打架不像大人演戏，而是真打。特别是那些女孩子，打起人来特别厉害，一个巴掌扇过去，非常凶狠。

这幕打斗戏整整演了10分钟，突然，所有的人都停了下来，武器也

丢掉了。土人们定定地站着，保持着他们最后的姿势，就像画面里的人物，瞬间变成了化石一样。

为什么会这样呢？发生什么事了？是什么让他们突然变得像化石一样？很快，大家就知道原因了。

原来，此时有一群鹦鹉飞了过来，在那些橡胶树的树顶上飞翔，橡胶树上全是咿咿呀呀的叫声。这些鹦鹉有着五颜六色的羽毛，羽毛在空中形成了移动的彩虹。想必如果没有这些诱人的鹦鹉，土人们是不会结束他们的表演的。

对他们来说，打猎比表演有用得多，所以他们准备打猎了。

石化的土人中有人抓起一件染成了红色，构造特殊的东西离开了其他人，而其他土人仍然像石化了般一动不动。动起来的那个土人从大树与灌木丛间穿过，向那群鹦鹉走去——准确地说应该是爬去。

他爬起来一点声音都没有，既没有碰到一个树枝，也没有碰到一颗石子，简直就像一个影子在冰面上滑，速度非常快。

爬到一定的位置后，土人将手里的东西抛了出去，那东西在离地面半米高的地方平行飞出，大约飞了四丈远。不过，那东西没有落地，反而一下子飞上了天，并且升到了10米高的位置，随即便有10多只鹦鹉被打死了，那个被他抛出的东西重新回到了土人的身边。爵士和同伴们看得目瞪口呆，简直不相信是真的。

“那个打到鹦鹉的东西叫‘飞去来’。”阿埃童给他们解释说。

“‘飞去来’？啊！这就是澳大利亚土人们用的‘飞去来’？”

巴嘉勒尔说着，像个小孩一样奔到了那个神奇的武器面前，并将它捡了起来，想看看是什么东西做的。

通常情况下，看到土人使用的时候，一定会认为“飞去来”里藏着机关，最起码里面有弹簧，当弹簧一开动，它就能在空中拐弯了。其实不是这样的，“飞去来”只是一块木头，有一米多长，有一定的弯度。中间大约10厘米厚，两头尖尖的。“飞去来”有一处凹进去的地方，大约有七八分厚，凸出的地方则形成了两条锋利的边缘。

武器的构造非常简单，没有任何稀奇的地方。

“原来这就是神奇的‘飞去来’呀，就一块木头，它是怎么飞出去，又怎么蹦回来，落到原处的呢？这是很多学者和旅行家都没有搞明白的事。”巴嘉勒尔拿着这件并不稀奇的稀奇武器说。

“会不会就像抛铁环一样，当铁环跑出去后，又会回到原地？”麦盖尔问。

“很可能是一种回力作用。就和我们在弹子台上打弹子一样，打在弹子的某个点上，它就能转个圈又回到原地。”爵士补充说。

“不，一定不是这样的。不管是抛铁环还是玩弹子，都会有个着力点，着力点会决定它的反作用。可这个‘飞去来’没有，它根本就不碰地面嘛，怎么会一蹦蹦那么高呢？”巴嘉勒尔还是觉得不可思议。

“巴嘉勒尔先生，对这种现象，又该怎么解释呢？”海伦夫人问。

“我解释不清。夫人，不过有一点我可以肯定。这种现象可以有两种解释，一种就是扔的方法很巧妙，另一个就是构造。不过，这扔的方法嘛，正是澳大利亚土人的一个秘密。”

“不管怎样，这都是他们智慧的体现。我们现在可不能把他们当成猴子了。”海伦夫人看着少校说。

少校一脸不服气，但却没说什么，只是不停地摇头。

大家就这么说着话，时间一分一秒地过去。爵士觉得不能再耽误时间，应该继续向东面前进了。当他正要请海伦夫人和玛丽小姐上车时，突然一个土人跑了过来，很兴奋地说了几句什么。

“啊，他们看见鸸鹋了！”阿埃童说。

“哦？什么意思？是要打猎吗？”爵士问。

“我们一定要看看，一定很神奇，说不定还是要用‘飞去来’。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“你看呢，阿埃童？”爵士问。

“不会耽误多长时间，爵士！”阿埃童说。

土人们没有浪费时间，他们很快就布置好了。打鸸鹋对他们来说是天大的喜事，而打到一只鸸鹋，很可能够他们这些人吃几天，所以他们将捕捉鸟类的全部工具都拿了过来。

不过，鸸鹋是一种很大的鸟，跑得很快，没有枪的他们又要怎么打呢？何况他们还没有猎犬。巴嘉勒尔想看他们打猎，正是在这样的好奇心的驱使下。

鸸鹋又被称作没有鸡冠的食人鸡，在澳大利亚的平原上，这种鸟已经很少了。它们差不多有0.76米高，肉色很白，头上有一片硬甲，眼睛

是棕色的，嘴巴则是黑色的，弯弯地朝下。它们的趾上长着利爪，爪子强健有力。

不过，由于它们的翅膀很短，所以不能飞。当然，即使它们飞不起来，但跑起来的它们，却是连马都赶不上的，所以要想捉住它们，必须用计，而且要用妙计才行。

准备好的土人中一人一叫，十几个土人便像冲锋陷阵一般散开了。在这片土地上，生长着一些蓝色的花，这些蓝色的花将这片土地染成了蓝色，所以他们全都走到一丛含羞草旁停了下来。

当土人们慢慢地靠近鹇鹇时，十几只鹇鹇马上逃跑了，跑到了一公里之外的地方躲了起来。指挥的猎手在侦察好地形后，做了个让同伴不要动的手势，同伴们马上全都躺了下来。指挥的猎手从随身携带的网兜里取出了两张缝成衣服样的鹇鹇皮，披在了身上。然后伸长右臂，抬头模仿起鹇鹇觅食的样子来。

他模仿得很像，在他向那几只鸟走去时，那几只鸟竟然完全没有发现。当然，他并没有径直过去，而是一边走一边停，并不停地做出在地上啄食的样子，有时候还会用脚在地下扬起灰尘。同时，他还不停地发出奇怪的叫声，让那鹇鹇以为是自己的同类。就这样，土人走到了那几只鹇鹇面前。只一眨眼的工夫，他便挥起了早已准备好的大木槌，六只鹇鹇一下子被打倒了五只。

这次狩猎土人获得了巨大成功，狩猎活动也宣告结束。

看完这场精彩的狩猎后，爵士一行向土人告别，然后接着上路。

第三十一章 “坐地人”的世外桃源

一行人在东经146度15分的地方，度过了漫长的黑夜，没有任何事情发生。第二天清晨7点，他们继续赶路，足迹在平原上画出了一道直线，向着太阳升起的地方前进。他们行进时留下的足迹，似乎和“坐地人”留下的足迹一样，只不过爵士的那匹马留下的是叶形马蹄印，这让足迹变得不同了起来。

平原上时不时会出现一些河流，河流曲折蜿蜒，不过有时候河水也会干涸。这些河流的发源地在野牛山，野牛山里山岭交叠，在地平线上起伏存在。河岸两边有很多黄杨树，远远看去，非常秀美。

大家决定在山脚下露营。阿埃童也加快了脚步，快速朝前走。这一天已经走了55公里的路程，所以牛马都显得很疲劳。直到天黑时，他们才到达了山脚下。

在将帐篷撑在一棵大树下后，他们匆匆吃了一餐饭，便早早休息了。此时的他们，觉得睡觉比吃饭来得重要得多。

这天晚上，该轮到巴嘉勒尔值班了。他扛着马枪在四周来回地转，巡视着外面的情况。此时的天空虽然没有月亮，但星星却很密集，这使整个夜色都显得不那么黑暗。巴嘉勒尔一边来回地踱着步，一边欣赏着夜空的繁星，在他眼里，天空已然成了一张星图，他默默地读着那张星图，体会着读懂的快乐。

黑夜让大自然进入到了沉睡的状态中，偶尔能听到的只是马脚上的

绊索，不时地发出窸窣窸窣的声音，打破着这份沉静。

巴嘉勒尔长时间地沉浸在自己的世界里，他的心跑到了天空，灵魂离开了人间。突然，一阵阵的钢琴声传进他的耳朵，将他拉回到了现实。

他仔细地听着，钢琴弹奏出的音乐很悦耳，有时高亢有时浑厚。

“这荒山野外的，怎么会有钢琴声？真是太奇怪了，我一辈子都不相信会有这样的事。”他诧异地喃喃着。

没错，这事确实有些诡异，巴嘉勒尔想，会不会是一种奇怪的鸟发出的声音？可这声音如同卜勒耶尔或厄拉尔这两位法国的著名钢琴家弹奏的音乐，会是鸟发出的吗？显然，鸟是不会发出像敲钟和磨刀一样的声音的。

此时，又有清脆的歌声传来。

黑夜的荒郊，既有钢琴还有歌声，巴嘉勒尔越听越奇怪，他甚至听出这是一首非常有名的曲子，是歌剧《唐璜》里的一段。

“真是太奇怪了！即使澳大利亚大陆的鸟真能唱歌，也不可能唱出莫扎特的名曲吧！”巴嘉勒尔越想越神奇。

不过，他还是把这首好听的歌曲听完了。在这么美妙的夜晚，还有如此动听的音乐，当一切都合二为一时，该是多么震撼啊！巴嘉勒尔完全陶醉在了这只能意会，不能言传的美妙之中。过了好一会儿，音乐停了，歌声也停了，一切仿佛又恢复到了之前的寂静。

当维尔逊来接巴嘉勒尔的班时，发现他还是一副如醉如痴的模样。

巴嘉勒尔看到维尔逊后，并没有说出这件事。他要在明天早上把这件奇妙的怪事讲给大家一起听，所以便直接回帐篷睡觉了。

第二天，狗叫声将沉睡的人们唤醒。爵士最先爬起来，看到了英国品种最好的几条凶猛猎犬站在小树林旁边，朝着他们的方向怒吼着。在他们走近时，那几条猎犬缩了回去，叫声更大了。

“难道这里有‘坐地人’？既然有猎犬出现，一定有猎人存在。”爵士说。

巴嘉勒尔正想说他昨天晚上的奇遇，便见两个骑着剽悍好马的年轻人出现在了他们面前。这些人穿着标志性的猎人服装，很是绅士。看到他们这支旅行队后，他们站住了。

看样子，这两名猎人一定在想，怎么在这里会出现一队全副武装的旅行者呢？

正在此时，牛车上的两名女士走了下来。两位猎人一看，急忙下马，摘下帽子向女士走去。

爵士也迎了上去。由于他们是外面来的生人，于是便首先通报了自己的名字和身份，两位年轻人急忙鞠躬致敬，其中一位年龄稍大点的说：“爵士，夫人，如果不嫌弃的话，请到寒舍去休息一下吧！”

“请问您二位是……”爵士问。

“我叫米希儿，他叫桑笛儿。我们是霍坦站的主人，既然来了，那就请到寒舍坐坐吧！”年长的年轻人又说。

“哦，你们真是太客气了，实在不敢打扰……”

“爵士！你们能接受邀请，对作为飘零者的我们来说，将是最大的荣幸。”米希儿继续说。

爵士不好再推托，只能接受了。

“先生，如果不冒昧的话，请问昨天晚上弹唱莫扎特名曲的是你们吗？”巴嘉勒尔问。

“没错，先生！昨晚唱歌的是我，伴奏的是我的堂弟桑笛儿。”米希儿说。

“真是太好听了！请接受我由衷的赞美！”巴嘉勒尔伸出了手。米希儿绅士十足地同他握了握，然后指了指右边的路，大家便一起动身了。他们一面聊，一面欣赏着路边的风景，向霍坦站走去。

那里有布置得如同英国公园一样的美丽庄园：一望无际的草地被灰色的栅栏圈成了一块块的牧场，里面有上万头牛羊在吃草；管理这些牛羊的是很多牧人和牧犬，整块庄园不时地传出牛吼声、羊咩声、犬吠声和鞭策声。

东边有片树林，树林后耸立着霍坦山。霍坦山高有5000多米，巍峨雄壮。一排排的常绿树像是人工雕琢的样子。一些像棕榈树的低矮灌木连成的丛林，隐没在树叶中。这些丛林里有很多小白花，散发出淡淡的香味，让空气中都流动着一股薄荷香。

在这些树木中，有很多是从欧洲移植过来的果树，比如桃树、梨树、苹果树、无花果树、柑橘树等，甚至包括橡栎树。看到这么多的果树，大家都欢呼起来。不过，在这里碰到家乡的果树，并没有让他们很吃惊，真正让他们吃惊的是在枝头唱歌的鸟儿。

那里不仅有羽毛美得像绸缎一样的缎鸟；还有一半是金黄羽毛，一半又是些发亮绒毛的丝光鸟；更有他们最早时见到的琴鸟，琴鸟的尾巴有些像古希腊神话里的乐圣奥尔斐弹的那把古琴。琴鸟在凤尾草中穿来穿去，不过在它们的尾巴接触到树枝时，却听不到乐神安飞翁为重建白城而演奏的音乐。

巴嘉勒尔恨不得抓只琴鸟，在它们的尾巴上弹上一曲。

通向庄园的那条道的两边种植着一些树，走过这条小道，一座用木材和砖石建造的漂亮房子就呈现在了他们面前。

房子的造型非常漂亮，墙外环绕着回廊，整整有一圈，是典型的瑞士风格别墅。不过，回廊的廊檐下却挂着中国式的灯笼；前庭有些像罗马古建筑；窗外种植着五颜六色的花……

看来，没有比这别墅更舒服，更精致的地方了。

别墅外的草坪上，每隔不远处便有一根铜灯柱，灯柱上装着雅致的灯球。夜里的时候，灯光可以把别墅四周照得如同白昼；房子里装了煤气，是从一座小型煤气机里输送出来的，而煤气机就放置在屋外凤尾草树下面的木棚里。

整个住宅没有脚屋、马房和厂棚，所以根本看不出这是个农庄。这里的房屋总共有20多座，全都坐落在半公里路之外的山谷里，在这一区域形成了一个独特的村落。每座住宅里都有电话，家家户户可以通过电话联系。这座隐藏在异国风光的丛林中的村落，好像丝毫感受不到外界的嘈杂和喧嚣。

很快，众人就走完了那段林荫小道，接着又过了一座铁桥，桥不

大，桥下是潺潺的流水。桥的一端是住宅外的花园。在他们过了小桥后，马上就有热情的管家先生出来迎接了。

而当他们走进华丽的大厅时，顿时被豪华的家具和精美的摆设惊呆了。

从房子的设计和房屋里的摆设能够看出，主人很有艺术文化修养。比如前厅，摆满了各式各样精美的骑马射猎艺术品；和前厅相对的一间房有个大窗户开着，里面有架钢琴，钢琴上摆着乐谱，乐谱很齐全，每个时期的名曲都有；房间里还有个画架，画架上摆放着画稿；画架旁边有座像座，像座上摆放着大理石人像；墙上挂着很多西欧名画，地上铺着名贵的柔软地毯；墙上挂着的壁毯上绣着一些美女图；一座古铜吊灯悬挂在天花板上……此外，房间里还有很多珍奇古玩。

在澳大利亚森林里，有这么一座别墅，别墅里放着这么多的名贵珍品，实属罕见。不要说爵士他们，就是任何人见到，都会大吃一惊的。

总之，在飘零的流浪日子里，还能将自己的生活过得这么有趣味，将家乡的东西布置得到处都是，让人恍惚不是进了“坐地人”的住处，而是到了英国或法国贵族的高级别墅，这不能不让人啧啧称奇。

柔和的阳光透过纱窗照进房间的每个角落，海伦夫人站在窗口，看着外面的美景忍不住地赞叹起来。

原来，住宅下面有一片开阔之地，这片宽阔之地从房屋下面一直延伸到了东边山脚，整个地方由连绵的草地和树林、稀稀疏疏的空地、起伏不止的山峦、崎岖不平的谷地构成，形成了一幅精美的山水画。而这幅山水画在太阳的照耀下，像是被激活了，散发出动人的光芒。看着这样的场景，哪怕是再有想象力的人，也是难以勾勒出如此画面的，而这

明媚的自然风光也足以让人一饱眼福。

此时，桑笛儿已经吩咐厨师做好了早饭。10多分钟后，大家坐在了餐桌旁，酒菜之丰盛自不必说。爵士一行在如此豪华的别墅里并没有丝毫的拘束，在愉快地品尝美食的时候，高兴地聊起了天。

不过，最开心的莫过于两位“坐地”年轻人了，他们以能在家款待嘉宾而感到高兴和荣幸。

两位年轻人很快就知道了爵士一行的目的了，他们为爵士那无所畏惧、乐于助人的精神所打动，也对格兰特船长的一对儿女说了些安慰的话。

“格兰特船长如果没有在沿海殖民区的话，一定是落在了土人手里，那纸条上写好了所在的方位，看来在他们一上岸的时候，就被土人掳去了。”米希儿说。

“格兰特船长的手下阿埃童也曾落入土人手里，不过又逃出来了。”麦盖尔船长说。

“你们是否听说过‘大不列颠号’失事的事情呢？”海伦夫人问两位年轻人。

“不，从没听说过。”两位年轻人说。

“你们觉得格兰特船长要是做了土人的俘虏，是否会受到非人的待遇呢？”海伦夫人又问。

“不！我觉得不会，因为本地的土人并不凶残，夫人。你们尽管放心，这些土人的性格特别温和，以前就有很多欧洲人和他们生活在一

起，也都从没受到过虐待。”年轻人说。

为了证明两位年轻人说的是对的，巴嘉勒尔说：“当年伯克探险队中唯一生还的金格就很能说明这个问题。”

“不仅仅是那位探险家，还有个叫布柯莱的英国兵，在1803年的时候，也曾脱险于菲利浦港，最后被土人收留，在那里过了33年。”桑笛儿说。

“还有澳大利亚杂志上登过的一个人，是最近发生的事。有个叫毛利尔的人，在土人那里过了16年，现在回到家乡了。所以我觉得格兰特船长的经历很可能和毛利尔一样，你们完全有希望找到格兰特船长。”米希儿又说。

两位年轻人的话也证实了巴嘉勒尔和阿埃童以前说的那些话是对的，大家听了自然非常高兴。

后来，在海伦夫人和玛丽小姐离开后，大家又聊起了康斯登桥惨案。两位年轻人也说听说过此事，不过并没有引起他们的不安，因为他们的畜牧站总共有100多人，这些匪徒是不敢向他们出手的。而且在墨累河这片荒凉的土地上，根本没有东西可抢，他们不可能冒险来到此地。再说，新南威尔士那边戒备森严，他们很难到这里来。两位年轻人的说法得到了阿埃童的认同。

由于两位年轻人的热情和好客，爵士一行决定在霍坦站待一天。而这一天的12个小时，也成了他们旅行以来最休闲的日子，牛马也正好趁这个时间恢复一下体力。在这种情况下，两位年轻人提出了一个休闲方案，大家一致赞同。

中午，七匹强壮的猎马带着大家出了院门，而海伦夫人和玛丽小姐则坐着轻快的马车出发了，他们的后面跟着打猎的仆人，每个猎人身上都背着猎枪，同时，猎犬也奔跑在他们之前。

他们用了4个小时，踏遍了这片园林的大路和小道，这片园林就像是德意志的一个小土邦，居民很少，但山羊却多得数不清。不过，那些可供他们打猎的鸟兽虽然不断地从四周涌来，但却没有一只跳到他们的枪口。所以当他们的枪响了一声后，原本在森林里安居乐业的动物们全都不安起来。

小罗伯尔和少校在一起，看到这种情况非常兴奋。他不管姐姐的叮嘱，不管不顾地第一个开枪。好在麦盖尔船长一直照顾着他，才让玛丽小姐放下心来。

这场围猎当然取得了很大成绩，特别是他们打中了本地的一种特产——袋熊和袋鼬。

袋鼬的狡猾程度完全能和狐狸媲美，而它“偷”的技术，绝对可以超过狐狸。不过，长相难看的它只有约1.5米长。巴嘉勒尔首先打死了一只，由于其虚荣心作祟，所以他觉得他打的袋鼬非常漂亮。

“多漂亮的一个动物呀。”他说。

小罗伯尔打中了很多猎物，其中有一只是黑毛白斑点的袋狐，它们的皮和貂皮一样珍贵。此外，他还打了一对在树洞口休息的小松鼠。

当然，最惊心动魄的一场打猎还是追捕那只大袋鼠。那时候还不到下午4点，猎狗们突然把一群袋鼠惊动了，小幼袋鼠很快就钻到了母亲的袋囊中，大袋鼠就一个接着一个地跑了。

袋鼠是世界上有名的跳远冠军，它的后腿整整比前腿长了两倍，所以当它一屈一跳之间，就会像弹簧射出去似的，既快又远。而带头逃跑的是只雄袋鼠，有1.4米高，非常漂亮。

虽然猎人和猎犬在紧紧追捕，但那群袋鼠却像一点都不累似的。在这种情况下，猎犬也不敢贸然出击，甚至连靠近它们都不敢，因为袋鼠有着锋利的后爪，非常可怕。

追逐到最后，猎犬和猎人们都跑不动了，而那雄袋鼠却躲到了树后。接着，便有肚子已经被破开的猎犬从空中摔下来。显然，猎犬们在涌到袋鼠群附近时，没占到便宜不说，而且肚子也被抓破了。

没有办法，猎人们必须用子弹来收拾它们。不过，就在此时，小罗伯尔却差点为此送了命。原来，在他瞄准那些袋鼠想要开枪时，因为走得太近，一群袋鼠一跃而起，向他扑了过来。

罗伯尔一下子倒在了地上，在马车里坐着的玛丽小姐吓得一句话都说不出来。在这种情况下，根本没人敢开枪，因为怕伤着罗伯尔。

还是麦盖尔机灵，他冒着生命危险，拔出猎刀扑向了大袋鼠，大袋鼠当场毙命，而罗伯尔因为解救及时，毫发未伤。在他爬起来后，便扑向了姐姐，姐弟俩抱在了一起。

“谢谢你！麦盖尔船长！”玛丽小姐握着船长的手说。

“我有责任保护他，这是我的职责所在。”麦盖尔说。

因为这起意外事件，打猎活动也就此结束。而因为“群袋鼠无首”，其他袋鼠便仓皇而逃。那只被麦盖尔用刀杀死的大袋鼠也成了大家的战利品。当天晚上，用土方法炮制的大袋鼠尾汤也成了当晚最受欢迎的美

味。

晚饭吃完后，大家又吃喝了一些冰激凌和果子露，之后便聚在大厅开起了音乐会。音乐会上，海伦夫人为大家弹了一首曲子；米希儿和桑笛儿为大家唱了支法国名作曲家古诺、马塞、达维德的名曲中的一段，最后又唱了天才作曲家德国人瓦格纳的名曲，唱得非常好。

开完音乐会后，大家又喝了些澳大利亚名茶，巴嘉勒尔还说他要品尝一下当地的土茶。

于是，两位年轻人便给他端来了一杯看起来像墨水一样的饮料，而颜色之所以这么深，则是因为这茶是用一升的水和半斤茶叶，经过4个小时熬制而成的。

巴嘉勒尔喝得直龇牙，但还是赞叹说这是难得一喝的好茶。

夜深人静，一行人进入了梦乡，在梦中，他们还延续着白天的快乐。

天一亮，爵士一行便和两位年轻的“坐地人”告别。彼此说了一些亲热的告别语后，相约以后在欧洲的麦凯莫府再见。

之后，牛车和马队绕过山麓，让那座豪华的别墅如同幻影一般，消失在了他们的视野里。不过，在又走了8里路后，依然没有走出霍坦站地界。

上午9点钟，他们走出畜牧站的最后一道栅栏，进入了维多利亚省那片连名字都不知道的地方。

澳大利亚的阿尔卑斯山脉在东南方像一道屏障，挡住了他们的去

路。山脉绵延1500公里，陡峭的悬崖如同一个伟大的防御工程，阻挡着空中的流云。

阴云密布的天空热得让人透不过气来，崎岖不平的山路更增加了行进的难度。说是平原，但却山丘遍布，小胶树稀稀落落地分布在山丘上。再往远处看，丘陵越来越高，像极了阿尔卑斯山脉的阶梯。

一行人越往前走，山路越高，这从牛拉车时的吃力程度就能看出来。牛累得呼呼喘气，身体的紧绷让牛筋突起，所拉车的车轮在地面上因为摩擦，发出了咯吱咯吱的声响。

虽然阿埃童是名赶牛车好手，但也不可避免地出现了牛车撞击地面的现象。不过，虽然忐忑、颠簸，但车上的两名女士却没有说一句埋怨的话。

船长麦盖尔带着他的两名水手走在最前面开路。他们尽量挑好路行走，但几乎看不到什么路，高低不平的地面如同海边的礁石一样，牛也像是在礁石缝里寻找路径，一时之间，大家有种在波涛汹涌的海面上行驶的感觉。

路不好走倒也罢了，关键是非常危险。时不时还会遇到荆棘，好在有维尔逊拿着斧头在前面开路。

地面既湿又软，一脚踩下去就会感到身体在往下陷。这一段路程对他们来说是那么遥远，而且还有很多障碍。那高耸的花岗岩，幽深的山谷，深不可测的河滩，都让他们不得不绕道而行。因此，他们这段时间所走的路程并不多。

傍晚时分，一行人在山脚下的高本柏纳河宿营，这里长满了1米左

右高的灌木，灌木的叶子呈淡红色。

“接下来还有很多苦要吃！想想看，就这山名，想想都可怕。”爵士说。

“不用被这个名字吓跑，这是一个雷同的名字，就像澳大利亚和欧洲都有格兰比安山脉、比利牛斯山脉、阿尔卑斯山脉、蓝山山脉一样，都只能算是模型，而且还是缩小了很多的模型。这些名不副实的名字，只能说地理学家们的想象力太匮乏了，想不出新的名字，就连一个名字也要反复用。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“这么说，这条阿尔卑斯山脉是……”

海伦夫人还没说完，巴嘉勒尔便说：“只是个袖珍山而已，我们走过去毫不费力！”

“只有你这种稀里糊涂的人才会觉得翻这么一座山不用费力。”少校慢慢地说。

“什么意思？我什么时候稀里糊涂了？我早就不糊涂了，不信你问问两位女士，叫她们评论评论，看你们还能不能找出我的问题。”巴嘉勒尔不高兴地反驳道。

“没错，巴嘉勒尔先生！你一个错都找不到，你已经是个非常完美的人了。”玛丽小姐说。

“啊！太完美了也不好！巴嘉勒尔先生，我觉得你还是和以前一样比较好！”海伦夫人笑着说。

“哦？真的吗，夫人？如果我不犯错，我就成了一个普通人了。所

以，我还是需要犯一些小错误，这样就能与众不同了，而且还能让你们开心。如果我不犯错，好像没尽到义务似的。”巴嘉勒尔严肃地说。

这一天就这么过去了，第二天，也就是1月9日的时候，不管巴嘉勒尔如何乐观地表示这座山很好爬，但他们还是越来越感到吃力，找不到路，他们不得不边找边走，有时候甚至还会钻到又深又窄的山坳里，直到无路可走。

在走了大约一个小时后，阿埃童觉得已经到了进退两难的地步。就在此时，他发现路旁有个小旅馆。

“这儿怎么会有旅馆的？太奇怪了，在这种地方有什么生意可做？”巴嘉勒尔说。

“最起码它能给人指路。我们进去坐坐吧！”爵士说。

爵士和阿埃童一前一后地进了小店。

这个旅馆叫“丛林旅舍”，老板长着一脸横肉，看起来像个粗人。店里卖的酒有烧酒、白兰地和威士忌。这些酒不仅卖给客人，老板自己也喝，在没有客人的时候，他会坐在那里自斟自饮。

当然，在这么偏僻的地方，来的客人都是赶牧群的人或者“坐地人”。

爵士给了老板一些小费，问了几个问题，老板虽然爱理不理，却也回答了，而且还告诉了他路线。

在他们出门时，发现墙上有张告示。

告示是殖民地的警察贴的，上面说柏斯有些流犯潜逃了，首犯叫本·吉奥兹，如果有人发现并将他捉拿归案，会有赏金100镑。

“这样的大坏蛋，应该受到绞刑！”爵士说。

“那也要抓住他才行呀，100镑可不是个小数目，这家伙不值这些钱的。”阿埃童说。

“这个老板看起来也不像个好人。”爵士又说。

“没错！我也觉得他不像个好人。”阿埃童附和道。

阿埃童赶着牛车，一行人又开始赶路了。他们向鲁克洛方向走去，那里有条羊肠小道崎岖又蜿蜒，一直通向山腰。在这里，大家开始走山路。

这条山路很陡，下坡时，因为车速太快，必须有人在后面拉着才行；而当车转弯时，由于车辕太长，又不好拐弯，不得不把牛解开。有时，因为坡太陡，走起来不方便，他们又不得不让那已经疲惫不堪的牛来拉一下。

终于，穆纳所骑的那匹马倒下了，不知是因为太过疲劳还是生病，倒下就没再爬起来过。

阿埃童检查了那匹马，并没有查出它的死因。

“很可能是血管爆裂引发的死亡。”爵士说。

“也许是吧！”阿埃童说。

爵士把自己的马给了穆纳，自己则坐上了海伦夫人和玛丽小姐坐的

牛车。一行人继续往前走，而那匹死去的马也就成了老鹰的美餐。

真像巴嘉勒尔说的，澳大利亚的这个阿尔卑斯山脉并不高，宽度不过5公里左右，如果山路选择正确的话，翻越此山只需48小时。而如果到了山的那边，路也就不会那么难走了。

1月10日那天，一行人终于爬到了海拔600米左右的山顶。这时大家才发现，这座山从远处看确实是山，但走近才发现就是一座丘陵。山顶地势并不陡峭，一眼看去，四周也没有什么障碍物。

山的北边是奥美奥湖，湖面上波光粼粼，有很多水鸟浮在上面。除了湖以外，还有墨累河流域冲积形成的平原；山的南边是仿佛铺着绿色地毯的草场，那里的地层不仅具有丰富的含金量，而且还有茂密的森林。由此可见，不管是物产、河流还是动植物，那里还是大自然做主的，原始的，没有受到人为破坏的地方。

这样一看，阿尔卑斯山脉成了一道分隔原始和文明的屏障。

此时，几道阳光穿过西边的天空，将大地照得光彩夺目；山脉的北边，一片荒凉，只有晃动的阴影让山脉以南地区的黑夜来得更早。

一行人站在原始和文明的分界线上，很明显地感受到了光明和黑暗的对比。放眼看去，四周都是陌生的环境，心里不免有些惆怅。

当晚，他们夜宿在了山顶，第二天一早开始下山。下山比上山走得快了很多，不过，他们半路上却遇到了来势汹汹的冰雹，那不是一般的冰珠，而是像冰砖那样大，伴随着乌云倾倒下来的冰雹。

这些冰雹之大，落下之急，就连石炮炸石也炸不出那个样子。

没办法，他们不得不退缩在一块大岩石下避让。

即使这样，冰雹还是将巴嘉勒尔的头打出了两个大包，而牛车篷也被打出很多洞来。有些像刀尖一样的冰凌，甚至在砸到树上时，直接嵌进了树皮里。如果想不受伤，看来只能等冰雹停了再走了。

一个小时后，冰雹停了，一行人这才从倾斜的岩石上缓缓下去。地面很湿，岩石也滑溜溜的，他们每行一步都要万分小心才行。

牛车一路上摇摇晃晃，吱吱呀呀地往前走，车子有几处已经脱了榫，好在整个车身很结实，所以还能勉强往前走。傍晚的时候，他们从阿尔卑斯山最后一段路下去，到了稀疏的杉树丛中，前面一直是通向吉普斯兰平原的。

现在，阿尔卑斯山脉总算是平安越过了，已经放轻松的他们决定在这里夜宿。

这一夜也是平安度过，第二天一早他们又上路了。出发时大家都兴高采烈，恨不得马上到达目的地，和格兰特船长团聚。不过，他们现在只有到了太平洋海岸，才有可能找到格兰特船长和那两名失事的船员踪迹，所以即使到了吉普斯兰平原，也是找不到什么线索的。

阿埃童又向爵士提议下命令给“邓肯号”，让“邓肯号”开到太平洋沿岸，这样就便于搜寻了。而且这里有条路——鲁克洛正好通向墨尔本，交通很便利，派人给“邓肯号”下命令正合适。

阿埃童的话听起来很有道理，巴嘉勒尔也劝爵士接受这个建议。巴嘉勒尔觉得“邓肯号”如果能开过来到话，对他们的搜寻将非常有利，而且他还补充说，过了这条路，说不定就很难找到通向墨尔本的大路了。

爵士还在犹豫不决，因为少校反对。少校说，这一路的旅行是不能少了阿埃童的，因为这里靠近沿海，对这段路程，他最熟悉。如果发现了搜寻线索，需要去追踪寻找，必须有阿埃童在才行，更何况阿埃童是知道“大不列颠号”的失事地点的。

从这里可以看出，少校的想法也没错。同时，船长也同意少校的意见。

麦盖尔之所以支持少校，是因为从杜布湾派人去墨尔本，要比从这里近得多，而且还不需要穿越320里的荒野。最终，大家认同了麦盖尔船长的说法，决定到了杜布湾再说。

阿埃童有些失望，少校看在了眼里，但却没有说什么。他习惯将一些没有确定的事放进肚子里。

吉普斯兰平原地势平坦，只是由东向西稍稍有些坡度。一眼看去，吉普斯兰平原到处都是含羞草、桉树和胶树，有些灌木还开着鲜艳的花，就连那毫不引人注目的溪水里也长满了蒲草，溪水的两岸长满了兰花。而这些树，正好改变了此地单调的景色。

溪水潺潺，浅的地方可以涉水而过。鸨鸟和鹑鸪聚集，见人就逃；树林里袋鼠蹦跳的样子像极了小木偶。此时，爵士他们没有一个人有心思去打猎，因为马已经吃不消了，瘦弱得厉害。同时，闷热的天气让人和牛马都很难受，他们什么都不想，只是不停地往前走。

沉闷的空气里，只有阿埃童赶牛的吆喝声让整个氛围有了些许生气。

下午2点钟的时候，他们穿过了一片凤尾草丛，虽然这些凤尾草长

得很奇特，很漂亮，但他们却无心欣赏。凤尾草长得很像树，差不多有3米高，开着漂亮的花。他们从这些花下经过时，因为有了像大伞似的枝叶庇荫，也就舒服了很多。

容易喜形于色的巴嘉勒尔很快就开心起来，不断地发出赞叹声。他的赞叹声惊起了树枝上停着的鹦鹉，于是便响起了鹦鹉聒噪的叫声。

在巴嘉勒尔为惊起了鹦鹉而得意时，突然他的马先是摇晃了几下，接着便扑通一声倒在了地下。难道是因为天热，中暑而晕倒了吗？大家急忙围了过来。

“巴嘉勒尔！巴嘉勒尔！你没事吧！”爵士喊道。

“我没事！朋友们！我只是没有马骑了。”巴嘉勒尔笑笑，将脚从马镫上取出。

“你的马死了？”爵士又问。

“是的，就和穆纳的马一样死了。”

爵士、麦盖尔船长和少校来检查了一番死因，同样毫无结果。马真的是咽气了！

“太奇怪了，怎么会这样？”麦盖尔说。

“对呀！怎么会这样呢？”少校也嘀咕道。

这起意外事件的发生，让他们一行人都不安起来。因为在这样荒无人烟的地方，想要找马匹是根本不可能的事。如果这些马是因为得了马瘟，那么他们都将无法继续前行。

有句话叫祸不单行，在他们还没从巴嘉勒尔骑的那匹马的突然死亡中缓过来时，傍晚，维尔逊的马也死掉了。更严重的是，又有3头牛也倒下了。看来，出现了“马瘟”是不争的事实了。现如今，把拉车的牛和给他们骑的马一起算下来，活着的只剩下3头牛和4匹马了。

问题越来越严重。没有马骑，他们还可以步行，因为很多“坐地人”就曾步行穿过这带荒区。可没有了车，两位女士又要怎么做呢？这里离杜布湾还有将近200公里的路程，她们能步行吗？

麦盖尔船长和爵士都很着急，他们再次检查还活着的那些牛马，以防它们也发生意外。不过却没有发现一点不好的地方，甚至连细微的毛病都没有。

牛马都好好的，还能经受长途跋涉，希望可怕的“瘟疫”到此为止，所乘的牛马不再有事。

就这样，大家带着疑虑，还是出发了。没有马的人就走路，走累了就轮流坐一会儿牛车。这天，他们仅仅走了16公里。晚上的时候，当休息的号角一吹，大家便睡觉了。

这一夜，他们是在高大的凤尾草丛里休息，虽然草丛里到处飞着被当地人称为“飞狐”的大蝙蝠，但这一夜还是安然地度过了。

1月13日这天，没有什么意外的事情发生，牛马也没有倒下的，而且还很精神。大家这才长松一口气。海伦夫人的牛车上坐的人越来越多，非常热闹。30度的气温让他们热得受不了，都觉得有喝冷饮的必要，所以厨师奥比尔忙得不亦乐乎。

在这种时候，最受大家欢迎的就是苏格兰啤酒，因此大家开始赞扬

起巴克来酒厂的老板来，称他是大不列颠最伟大的人物，比英国名将威灵顿还要伟大，因为威灵顿虽然伟大，但却造不出啤酒。

喝了酒的巴嘉勒尔，又开始了他的喋喋不休。

这一天看似很顺利，大家也希望能顺利到底。他们一口气穿过了一片足足有25公里长的高低不平的红土地带，计划在晚上赶到那条在维多利亚南部流入太平洋的斯诺威河边休息。

很快，牛车就走在了黑土层的平原上，路的两旁是荒草，另一边长满了一种叫胃豆草的植物。天慢慢黑了下来，天边出现了一丝雾气，产生雾气的地方就是斯诺威河。这时，大家都加快了行进的速度。

走过一个土丘，转弯后，他们看到了一片森林，不过，就在他们离斯诺威河不到半公里，阿埃童赶着牛车想穿越那片森林时，牛车陷入到了泥沼里，泥沼没到了车轴处。

“后面的要当心！”阿埃童急忙对后面骑马的人说。

“怎么啦？”后面的人问。

“牛车陷进泥沼里了。”阿埃童一边说，一边用鞭子抽打那3头牛，不过不管牛怎么使劲，那牛车都纹丝不动，而且有越陷越深的迹象。

“看来，我们只能在这里夜宿了，等到明天把车子拉出来再走。”阿埃童又说。

爵士无奈地同意了。

这天的黄昏好像很短，夜幕很快就降临了，不过天气依然很热。空

气中的水汽也很重，闷得人喘不过气来。

此时，一道道闪电将天边照得白花花的，暴风雨就要来了。大家马上在一棵大树下扎好帐篷。看情况，只要不下雨，他们是能在这棵树下平安度过一夜的。不过，如果再下雨，那牛车就更难弄出泥沼地了，所以阿埃童费了不少劲，最后才把3头牛从沼泽里拉出来——泥已经到了牛的肚子上。

阿埃童把牛马牵到一起，照料它们。这天晚上，爵士对牛马也很是照顾，并不断地说着感激的话。确实，此时，没有什么比这些牲畜更重要的了。

大家简单地吃完了晚饭——因为天气太热，每个人的胃口都不怎么好。他们现在最需要的就是休息。海伦夫人和玛丽小姐向大家道了声晚安后，便回到了她们的车房里。男人们有的钻进帐篷，有的直接躺在草地上——在这样的天气下，躺在地上也没什么关系。

晚上，天空出现了乌云，黑夜在乌云的笼罩下，越发地黑暗。

四周一片寂静，连一丝风都没有，偶尔会听到猫头鹰的叫声，那叫声有些像欧洲的杜鹃鸟，听起来哀哀怨怨，非常凄凉。

深夜11点的时候，少校突然醒了，不过他依然半闭着眼睛躺在那里。过度的疲劳，让他不愿意起来。突然，树林里隐隐约有亮光在晃动，那亮光既像一条白带子，又像阳光下的湖面在闪闪发光。

难道林子里有鬼火？

少校爬了起来，慢慢向树林里走去，当他走近后才大吃一惊。原来那是一种奇特的自然现象，发光的是菌类植物。这些奇特的植物发出的

亮光是因为孢子囊在黑暗中可以发射出高强度的光而造成的。

少校是个不愿意独享美好现象的人，所以准备去叫醒对一切事物都充满好奇的巴嘉勒尔。不料，还没等他去叫，又有意外发生了。

在奇光的照耀下，他发现树林边有几个人影一晃而过。是真的有人还是自己的幻觉？

少校伏在地上，仔细地观察着。他看清了那几个人影，并不是他的幻觉，那真的是几个人，而且像是在地上寻找什么。

他们在干什么？少校决定无论如何也要搞清楚。他没有叫人，而是毫不犹豫地匍匐着跟了上去，一个人像草原上的土人一样，边爬边躲地进了草丛。

第三十二章 狡猾的内奸

夜里两点的时候，天空电闪雷鸣，乌云密布，滂沱大雨一倾而下。帐篷显然是挡不住雨水的，男士们只好全都挤到了牛车里。由于不能睡觉，所以便聊起了家常。而在这些人中，只有少校一直沉默不语。

大雨一直下个不停，这场暴雨很可能引发斯诺威河的河水泛滥。而且这里土壤变松，车轮很可能继续下陷。因此，穆纳、阿埃童和船长不停地跑到河边看水位，等他们回来时，衣服已经湿透了。

天亮的时候，雨停了，不过并没有太阳。到处都是泥滩，地面上形成了一个又一个的池塘。潮湿的地面冒出了阵阵热气，使空气中的湿度达到了极点，让人很难受。

爵士最关心的还是车子的安全问题，现在将车子弄出泥坑才是重中之重。当他们去看那辆笨重的车子时，发现稀泥已经淹没了半个车轮，想要把车弄出来并不容易，即使是把牛马的力量都加上也做不到。

“无论如何，我们都要赶快把它弄出来。”麦盖尔说。

“那行动吧！”阿埃童说。

于是，爵士、两名水手、麦盖尔船长和阿埃童都钻进树林去牵昨天拴在那里的牛马。

拴牛马的地方是一片胶树林，林中全是枯树，有一棵树的树皮已经剥落，看样子已经有近百年的历史了。那剥落的树皮，如同欧洲的软木

树被农人剥了皮一样。这些老枯的胶树大约有20米高，树枝上没有一片叶子，光秃秃的，枯枝像枯瘦的爪子，向四周分散开来。

这样的枯枝，是没有鸟肯在上面做窝的。

整个树林都像得了瘟疫，萎靡不振的。这种现象在澳大利亚并不常见，至于为什么会这样，谁也不知道。不要说现在的人，就是这些人的老祖先，可能都没见过这片林子的树叶发青。

爵士一边走，一边看着灰蒙蒙的天。胶树的枯枝，好像清晰地映衬在了天空中，如同一个个的剪影。阿埃童最先跑到昨天他牵过去，让牛马吃草的地方，但却没有发现牛马，顿时大惊。

这些牛马都是用缰绳拴着的，就是跑也不会跑很远。大家分头去找，但结果却一无所获。阿埃童慌忙从长满含羞草的斯诺威河河岸回来，发出了呼唤牛马的哨声，但却没有牛马的回应。阿埃童有些不安，大家也都面面相觑，既震惊又失望。

一个小时过去了，爵士和麦盖尔在从离车子1公里之外的地方往回走的时候，听到了咕咕咕的叫声。

“快，它们在这里。”船长麦盖尔最先反应过来，大叫一声，赶忙向那绿油油的草丛跑去。那里的青草很茂盛，就是一群牛马藏在里面也看不到。

很快，大家都跑过来了，但看到的场景却让他们目瞪口呆，因为有两头牛，三匹马已经全都躺在了地上，没气了，甚至连尸体都僵硬了。一群黑老鹅正停在树枝，冲着死去的牛马呱呱叫着，伺机抢食。

爵士和其他人怔怔地看着，说不出一句话，维尔逊忍不住大声骂了

起来。

“骂有什么用呢？维尔逊，我们现在能做的，只能是把没死的一头牛、一匹马牵回去，以后只能靠它们了。”爵士说。虽然他也很急，但此刻他只能安抚别人。

“如果牛车没陷进泥里就好了，不管怎样，我们都要把那车子弄出来。”麦盖尔说。

“我们还是先回去吧，出来的时间长了，女士们会着急的。”爵士说。

阿埃童和穆纳各自解开了牛和马的缰绳，大家沿着河岸走了回来，半个小时后，女士们才知道发生了什么事。

“太可惜了，阿埃童。如果我们过威麦拉河时，把牛马的蹄子上都钉上三叶形马蹄就好了。”少校对阿埃童说。

“为什么这么说，少校先生？”

“你们没看到吗？所有的马中，只有钉了三叶形马蹄的马没有死，其他的都死了。”

“是呀，真是这样的。”麦盖尔也说。

“只是碰巧而已。”阿埃童说完，瞟了少校一眼。

大家都等着少校说下去，但少校咬了咬嘴唇，把想说的话又咽了回去。他向正在检修车子的阿埃童走去。

“他那话是什么意思？”爵士问麦盖尔。

“谁知道呢！不过少校倒从不胡言乱语。”麦盖尔说。

“少校应该是对阿埃童产生了怀疑。”海伦夫人说。

“怀疑？为什么？”巴嘉勒尔说完，耸了耸肩。

“有什么可怀疑的？难道说是阿埃童毒死了牛马？他和我们是一条心的，为什么要毒死牛马？”爵士问。

“我只是猜测而已，也许我猜测错了。因为从阿埃童参加到我们搜寻的队伍里，一直都表现得很忠诚。”海伦夫人又说。

“虽然如此，可我觉得少校能说这句话，一定有他的理由。我要去问个明白。”麦盖尔说。

“会不会他认为阿埃童和那些流犯是一伙的？”巴嘉勒尔突然说。

“流犯？什么流犯？”玛丽小姐问。

“哦，是巴嘉勒尔乱说的。我们都知道，维多利亚省是没有流犯的。”麦盖尔补充说。

“哦，没错，我怎么糊涂了呢？维多利亚省哪里有什么流犯？即使有，在这样的环境下，也早都让他们改邪归正了。”

巴嘉勒尔因为说错了一句话，最后又想拼命去圆那句错话，结果欲盖弥彰，如同那越陷越深的牛车一样。海伦夫人定定地看着他，看得他心里直发毛。

海伦夫人和玛丽小姐去了帐篷那里，而奥比尔也像平时一样开始做早饭。

“我应该把自己像流犯一样押出境！”巴嘉勒尔懊恼地说。

“我觉得也是。”爵士说。

爵士的话很严肃，一点都不像是开玩笑。巴嘉勒尔的心里更难受了，不过爵士一说完便和麦盖尔去了牛车那里。

此时，阿埃童和两名水手正拼命地将牛车从稀泥里拉出来，他们把牛和马套在一起，使劲地拉着，皮条几乎都要拉断了，而维尔逊和穆纳则在旁边推着车轮。不过，不管他们怎么拼命拉，都拉不出来。

泥已经慢慢地干了，紧紧地咬住了车轮，就像给车轮铸上了钢筋混凝土一样。麦盖尔叫大家一起向车轮下泼水，以便让泥土脱离车轮，但还是不起丝毫作用。在人和牛马又使劲地拉了一阵后，大家都累了，只得停了下来。现在他们除非将车子的零部件全部拆除，不然没有任何办法。不过，拆车的工具他们手里也没有，就是想拆也没办法拆。

此时，阿埃童还是一门心思想把牛车拖出来，他想用鞭子拼命地打牛马，但被爵士制止住了。

“不要再打它们了，现在就剩下这两头了，再继续赶路的话，有一头必须驮两位女士，还有一头驮行李，它们的用处大着呢。”

“那好吧！”阿埃童不甘心地解下了累得气喘吁吁的牛马。

“朋友们，我们现在还是回帐篷商量一下接下来怎么办吧！”爵士说。

众人一起回到帐篷。吃完早饭后，大家开始讨论。首先，他们需要确定所处的准确位置，这个任务当然非巴嘉勒尔莫属。他仔细算了一下

后，说现在位于斯诺威河岸，南纬37度，东经147度53分的位置。

“杜布湾海岸位于什么位置？”爵士问。

“东经150度。”

“那也就是说，两地相差2度7分，那么合多少公里？”

“120公里。”

“离墨尔本呢？”

“至少也有320公里。”

“好，现在所处的位置，离所要去的地方有多远我们大概知道了，接下来说说我们要怎么做吧。”

经过一段商议，大部分人主张向海岸进发。海伦夫人和玛丽小姐在面对现实问题时，毫不胆怯，说她们可以每天走8公里。

“海伦，你真是个女中豪杰！不过，我们有没有把握在杜布湾找到我们需要的呢？”爵士说。

“没问题！沿途会经过埃邓。埃邓作为一个历史悠久的城市，去墨尔本就方便多了。而且我们现在只需走50公里，就能到维多利亚边境上的德勒吉特城，那里可以购买到粮食，而且还能找到交通工具。”

“爵士，那‘邓肯号’呢？现在让它开到杜布湾，不是正好吗？”阿埃童说。

“你觉得呢，麦盖尔？”爵士转头问麦盖尔船长。

“我觉得急着让‘邓肯号’起航不好，因为我们之后还有大把的时间通知大副艾撒汀。”麦盖尔想了想说。

“是的，我觉得也来得及！”巴嘉勒尔也说。

“何况大家不要忘了，4到5天后，我们就能到埃邓城了。”麦盖尔又说。

“4至5天？你能确定吗？或许15天到或20天能到就算不错了。”阿埃童不同意麦盖尔的意见。

“120公里需要走15天到20天吗？”爵士又问。

“再往前走下去，就是维多利亚最难走的一段路了，都是荒郊。据‘坐地人’说，那里荆棘遍布，也没有畜牧站，如果想过去，除非用斧头开路。请相信我！”

阿埃童说得很肯定，大家看看巴嘉勒尔，他也同意阿埃童的说法。

“即使这样，我们15天后，也是可以通知艾撒汀的。”麦盖尔说。

“可现在的主要问题不是路，而是我们要过斯诺威河。这河的水已经涨起来了，我们想要过去，必须等它落下去才行。”阿埃童又说。

“为什么一定要等水落下去？我们还可以找个浅滩的。”

“船长先生，浅滩是找不到的。都怪我们运气不好，在这样的时期，又遇到这样的河水，这在以前是很少发生的事。”阿埃童又说。

“斯诺威河很宽吗？”海伦夫人问。

“非常宽，也很深，夫人！这条河宽在16公里以上，水流湍急，就是游泳健将来了也很难过去。”阿埃童又说。

“我们可以砍树做小船。”小罗伯尔突然说。

“不错！真不愧是格兰特的儿子。”巴嘉勒尔夸他道。

“罗伯尔说得没错，这是我们的最后一着了，我觉得我们不要浪费时间做无谓的讨论了。”麦盖尔说。

“你觉得呢？”爵士又问阿埃童。

“如果没人帮忙，一个月我们都过不去。”阿埃童说。

“那么，你的意思是没有其他办法了？”麦盖尔有些愤怒，脸涨得通红。

“当然有！那就是让‘邓肯号’离开墨尔本到东海岸来。”

“你为什么老让‘邓肯号’起航呢？难道它到了杜布湾，我们面临的问题就不成问题了？”

阿埃童没有回答，好一会儿，才支支吾吾地说：“我只是说出我的意见，而且我的意见对大家最有利。如果阁下觉得我不该留下，那我马上就走。”

阿埃童说完，两只胳膊相抱，看着大家的反应。

“你怎么能这么说呢？我们现在是在讨论，有意见尽管提，怎么能赌气呢？”爵士说。

“我们现在是没有办法。既然无法过斯诺威河，那就要等人来帮助。而找谁帮助呢？当然是找‘邓肯号’上的人。所以我们可以暂时留在此地，幸好这里粮食还充足，如果派一个人去给大副艾撒汀送信的话，就能让他将船开到杜布湾来了。”阿埃童说得言之凿凿。

大家对他的这个建议还是有些不置可否，船长麦盖尔更是不同意。

“在派人去送信的时候，如果河水降下去了，我们就能找个浅滩过去。即使想坐船过去，也有时间。以上就是我的建议，大家可以好好考虑一下。”阿埃童继续说。

“好的，你的意见值得我们考虑。不过这个计划的最大问题就是要耽误很长时间，但大家也可以趁这个时间休养生息。你们觉得如何？”爵士问。

“少校先生，你也说说吧！怎么一直不说话呢？”海伦夫人说。

“既然点名让我说，那我就坦诚地说，我完全同意阿埃童的建议，因为我觉得他真是太聪明，太谨慎了。”少校说。

大家没想到少校会这么爽快地接受阿埃童的建议，因为他以前总是在反对阿埃童的计划。所以不要说大家，就连阿埃童也觉得有些奇怪。

原本大部分人都同意阿埃童的建议，见少校也同意，就毫不犹豫地表示赞同了。就是说，此时，爵士在原则上同意了阿埃童的建议。

“为了稳妥起见，我们是不是要等人送来交通工具再进行这个计划？”爵士又问。

“是的。因为我们要是过不去，送信人也是过不去的。”麦盖尔说。

大家都看着阿埃童，他倒是一副很有把握的样子。

“总会有办法的。”他说。

“有什么办法？”麦盖尔问。

“再回到鲁克洛通往墨尔本的那条大路上不就可以了吗？”

“什么？步行400公里吗？”麦盖尔大叫道。

“当然不，我们不是还有一匹好马吗？这段路用不了4天就能走完，再加上‘邓肯号’从墨尔本开到杜布湾需要两天，从杜布湾到这里又只需要24小时，所以总共差不多一个星期，我们就可以获救了。”

阿埃童说话的时候，少校不停地点头，这让麦盖尔很吃惊。不过大家都觉得阿埃童说的方法不错，也最有效，于是决定照这计划进行。

“那么还有一个问题，那就是谁去最合适。这个任务非常重大，也很辛苦。谁能担当此任？”爵士说。

维尔逊、穆纳、麦盖尔、巴嘉勒尔，甚至小罗伯尔都说愿意接受这个任务。麦盖尔的态度特别坚决，阿埃童一直没有说话，最后说：“阁下，如果相信我的话，就让我去吧！这一带我非常熟悉，而且比这更难走的路我都走过，所以我能担当此任。只要阁下写封信给大副，使他相信我，我保证6天后把‘邓肯号’开到杜布湾来。”

“格兰特船长的部下真是不简单，我绝对相信你！相信你能完成这个任务。”爵士说。

显然，完成这个非常困难的任务，没有比阿埃童更适合的人选了，

所以大家也都没再继续争了。不过麦盖尔却提出了反对意见，说阿埃童留在这里应该更合适，因为他可以帮助大家寻找格兰特船长的线索。不过少校说，在这种形势下，想要寻找根本不可能，所以让他暂时走开也好。

“阿埃童，去吧！快去快回！”爵士说。

阿埃童的脸上露出了得意之色，他急忙将头转了过去。不过，即使他反应再快，也被麦盖尔看在了眼里，所以麦盖尔对阿埃童有了怀疑。

阿埃童开始积极地做着出发前的准备，两个水手也帮他备马和装干粮。此时，爵士忙着给艾撒汀写信。信中他让大副火速赶到杜布湾，并告诉大副，阿埃童是个可以信赖的人。他甚至叫艾撒汀一到东海岸就派水手前来支援……

少校看着爵士写信，当要署阿埃童的名字时，他突然问阿埃童：“你的名字要如何写？”

“当然是照着读音写。”爵士说。

“不对！读音也许会读成阿埃童，但写出来却是本·吉奥兹才行！”少校一字一句地说。

第三十三章 真面目是海盗

本·吉奥兹这个名字一出口，每个人都惊呆了。

阿埃童最先反应过来，见自己暴露了，一不做二不休，马上抽出枪，朝爵士开了一枪，爵士应声倒地。同时，外面也传来了枪声。

麦盖尔船长和两名水手这才反应过来，正想去抓本·吉奥兹，但已经晚了，他跑到了胶树林，和那些土匪会合了。

爵士的伤势并不重，他爬了起来。而帐篷里是挡不住子弹的，他们必须退到安全的地方才行。

“快进牛车！”麦盖尔大喊一声，拉着海伦夫人和玛丽小姐，让她们先上了牛车。此时，只有在那厚厚的车厢里才安全。

麦盖尔、少校、巴嘉勒尔和两名水手全都抓起了马枪，准备还击。爵士和罗伯尔也钻进了车厢，一直在车厢后面的奥比尔跑了出来，加入到战斗的行列。

事情发生得太突然了，突然到难以想象。在本·吉奥兹躲进树林后，那边的枪声停了，周围死一般的寂静，只有胶树上端有白烟缭绕，那片茂密的胃豆草丛依然纹丝不动，似乎刚刚发生的一切只是一场幻觉。

少校和麦盖尔跑到胶树下搜寻，发现匪徒已经跑远了，地面上只留下他们的脚印，以及还在冒烟的导火索。谨慎的少校马上把导火索用脚

踩灭了，在这样的枯树林里，一点点火光都可能让整片森林燃烧，并带来严重的后果。

“他们跑了？”麦盖尔问。

“是的，不过他们一跑，倒更让人担心了。现在，我们在明处，他们在暗处。我们随时都会遭到袭击，所以一定要格外小心才是。”少校说。

少校和麦盖尔在周围又搜寻了一番，始终没有发现那批流犯的踪影。他们逃得如此之快，让大家都很困惑，因此也就有了更多的担心。如今，那辆陷进泥里的牛车，就像他们的坚固堡垒，成了他们的防御中心，他们必须每两人一班地轮流守着。

看到爵士被本·吉奥兹打中，海伦夫人吓坏了，她扑到了爵士的身边。很快，她清醒过来，在爵士上了车后，撕开他的衣服，让少校检查。少校说爵士受的只是皮外伤，没有碰到筋骨，不用担心。

虽然流了很多血，但爵士为了让大家放心，还是勉强抬起了带伤的胳膊，向大家做了个手势，表示自己没什么。在伤口包扎好后，他便和大家谈起了这件事。

少校最先说，除了维尔逊和穆纳在外面站岗外，其他人全都在车厢里听他说。不过，少校在叙述他已经有所了解，而大家不知道的事之前，把柏斯的流犯潜逃，并在铁路上引发惨案的事给海伦夫人和玛丽小姐说了。

不仅如此，他还把他们从塞穆尔买的那份《新西兰日报》递给了海伦夫人，最后又说，本·吉奥兹是个罪行累累的惯犯，警察当局正在悬

赏捉拿他。

不过，他前面说的这些大家并不关心，关心的是他怎么知道阿埃童是本·吉奥兹的。这一点对于其他人绝对是个谜。

在大家急切的目光中，少校慢条斯理地说了起来。

阿埃童一开始就给少校留下了不好的印象，所以他本能地警觉起来，并对阿埃童多了几分注意。在威麦拉河时，他看到阿埃童和那铁匠递眼色；阿埃童去每座城镇时，总有些犹豫；他不断要求爵士把“邓肯号”调到东海岸来；牛马的离奇死亡；阿埃童讲话时的吞吞吐吐……这一切的一切，都让他对阿埃童多了几分怀疑。

如果不是昨天晚上发生的那件事，少校肯定也不会知道阿埃童就是那些匪徒的头目。

头天晚上，少校借着菌类植物所发出的光亮，发现树林里有人影，于是悄悄地钻进了小树林，到了那几个人身边。

他看到有三个人在察看地上的脚印和马蹄印，而其中一个就是给马蹄钉三叶形马蹄掌的铁匠。

“是他们，没错，就是他们。”三个人中的一个人说。

“是的，是他们没错。三叶形马蹄印就在这里。”另一个人附和道。

“对，这马蹄印从威麦拉河一直到这里。”

“那毒草还真好，他们的马全都死光了。”

“胃豆草的功效太大了，就连一队骑兵的马都会被弄倒的。”

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“最后，这些人不说话了，我就又向前跟了一段时间。‘本·吉奥兹真厉害！’那铁匠又说，‘真不愧是个水手呀，能把格兰特船长的故事编得这么好，他们全信了。如果这次我们成功了，那就发大财了。’‘还是习惯叫他本·吉奥兹，这名字多好呀！’这些人说到这里的时候，离开了胶树林。随后，我也就回到了帐篷，但总是翻来覆去睡不着，看来那些澳大利亚的流犯并不像地理学家说的，全都变好了。我现在说这话，巴嘉勒尔先生千万别生气！”

少校说完，停了下来。大家默默地听着，回想着事情的前前后后。

“阿埃童！这个阿埃童，把我们引到这里，就是要抢劫杀人啊！”爵士气得脸色发白。

“是这样的！”少校肯定地说。

“这么说，从威麦拉河起，他的同党就一直跟着我们，寻找机会对我们下手？”

“没错，是这样的。”

“可恶的阿埃童，他一定不是‘大不列颠号’上的水手，说不定他那服务证书都是偷来的。”

大家全都看向少校，他也想到了这点，说：“这到底是怎么回事，我们还无法理出头绪。不过我想，他的真名一定就叫阿埃童，而那本·吉奥兹，一定是他当罪犯时的名字。并且我觉得他一定认识格兰特船长，一定做过‘大不列颠号’上的水手，不然，他不可能把那些细节说得那么清楚。而从他同伴的话里也能听出，本·吉奥兹就是阿埃童，就像

阿埃童是本·吉奥兹一样，也就是说，原本他是‘大不列颠号’上的水手，但最后却做了犯罪团伙的头目。”

经过少校的这一番解释，大家也都表示认同。

“那现在还有个问题，格兰特船长的部下，为什么会来澳大利亚？”爵士又问。

“怎么会来澳大利亚，这一点不清楚，甚至连警察都可能不知道。不过，这个谜团总有一天会解开的。”少校说。

“难道警察不知道阿埃童和本·吉奥兹是一个人？”爵士又问。

“应该是的，如果警察知道了发生在我们身上的这件事，一定会帮我们找到线索的。”

“这就是说，那伙坏人混入奥陌尔庄园，就是想作案了？”海伦夫人突然说。

“完全可以肯定是这样的，他们一定想在那个爱尔兰人身上下手，不过正好碰到了我们，所以临时改变了计划。那家伙在听爵士说了船舶失事的事后，觉得这是个千载难逢的发财机会，于是和我们出发，到了威麦拉河，通知了他的同伙——铁匠，然后在马蹄铁上做了手脚，此后，这些恶人便一直跟着我们了。阿埃童这个坏蛋，用毒草害死了我们的牛和马，最后见时机差不多了，又骗我们到了斯诺威河边，想让他的手下对我们下手。”

少校那猜测加拼凑的述说，基本概括了本·吉奥兹的犯罪历史。而大家也逐渐对他有了了解：他是一个胆大包天、穷凶极恶的罪犯。

如今，这个罪犯加入这个搜寻队的目的已经被揭穿了，大家不能不保持警惕。不过，一个被揭穿了身份，揭掉了假面具的人总比隐藏在内部的奸细危害小一些。

然而，有些事不揭穿也罢，一旦揭穿就会有人受到伤害。在大家都在谈论阿埃童的罪恶时，玛丽小姐却在想着另一件事。麦盖尔船长发现她脸色苍白，愁容满面，非常绝望，也猜测出她在想什么。

“玛丽小姐，你哭了！”麦盖尔说。

“我的孩子！为什么要哭呢？”海伦夫人也忙说。

“夫人！我的父亲！他……他……”玛丽说不下去了。

她这一说，大家才意识到，此刻，她比其他人有着更大的痛苦，从她眼中闪现出的泪花就能看出，她有多伤心。

阿埃童的阴谋一揭穿，他所说的那些线索也就烟消云散了，那么寻找她父亲的希望也就破灭了。如果“大不列颠号”根本不在杜布湾触礁，格兰特船长也根本就没踏上澳大利亚这片土地，那么，他们将再次陷入困惑中去。

见格兰特姐弟闷闷不乐，大家也都不说话了。此时，还有谁能说出有希望的话给两姐弟带来安慰呢？罗伯尔突然扑倒在姐姐的怀里哭了。

“一张有缺损文字的纸条都看不懂，我真是太笨了！”巴嘉勒尔用手拍着脑袋，对着自己生起气来。

此时，爵士走到了车厢外，站在了站岗的穆纳和维尔逊身边。平原上一片平静，但天空却有乌云聚集，这让原本就沉闷的气氛更沉重了，

静静的平原像是落根针都能被人听到。那帮恶徒就这么离开了吗？

有一大群鸟飞到了树林里的枯枝上；地上有几只袋鼠正在悠闲地吃草；灌木丛里有对风鸟伸出头来……这一切都表明，没有什么东西能打扰这个区域的宁静。

“有没有看出什么异常来？”爵士问两名水手。

“没有，阁下！看来那些恶徒走远了。”维尔逊说。

“说不定本·吉奥兹跑到阿尔卑斯山脚下去了，很可能会去找流窜的山贼做帮手。”穆纳说。

“非常有可能！这些混蛋因为害怕我们的精良武器，所以很可能在深夜偷袭我们。天黑后，我们一定要加倍注意才行。如果我们能尽快离开这个地方，走到东海岸就好了。可惜河水泛滥，我们无法过去。要是我们能买个木筏过去，花多少钱都可以。”爵士说。

“为什么我们不能就地取材，自己做木筏呢？这里有的是树木。”维尔逊说。

“不行的！这条急流很特殊，一般的木筏是没办法渡我们过去的。”

此是，麦盖尔和少校及巴嘉勒尔一起来到了爵士身边，他们准备去观察斯诺威河的水势。

由于刚刚下过大雨不久，暴涨的河水让波浪翻滚，在水底形成了很多旋涡，这样的河水没有稳妥的方法是很难过去的。

“看来这条河我们是过不去了，但我们这么老站着也不是办法，我

们现在应该去做阿埃童之前说的那件事。”麦盖尔说。

“什么意思？”爵士问。

“就是说，我们要赶快去求援，派出的人去不了杜布湾就去墨尔本。我们现在还剩下一匹好马，所以阁下就把这件事交给我吧！我去找人救援。”麦盖尔说。

“可是这太危险了，这一带经常有强盗出没，而且大小路口很可能有本·吉奥兹的人把守。”爵士说。

“我考虑到了这点。不过目前情况危急，不能再拖了。我希望一个星期后能让大家走出困境，阁下，您觉得怎样？”

“爵士在做决定前，我是否能提个要求？派人去墨尔本无可非议，但麦盖尔千万不能去，他可是一船之长，‘邓肯号’不能没有他，所以他不能去冒险，还是我去吧！”巴嘉勒尔说。

“巴嘉勒尔先生，你说得没错，可为什么要你去呢？”少校问。

没等巴嘉勒尔回答，维尔逊和穆纳便异口同声地说：“我们可以一起去墨尔本！”

“我去最合适，你们觉得我不能一口气骑320公里？”少校又说。

“大家都安静！朋友们，我们是需要派一个人去，但却又不知派谁去好，要不抽签决定吧！巴嘉勒尔，把名字都写在纸上……”爵士大声喊。

“阁下，您的名字可不能往上写。”麦盖尔说。

“为什么不能写？”爵士问。

“因为您的伤口还没好，还需要海伦夫人的照顾。”

“没错，爵士！你可不能离开这个队伍。”巴嘉勒尔附和道。

“没错，爵士，您的责任就是守在这里做指挥，千万不能离开。”少校也说。

“这一趟任务非常危险，我也应该要承担，怎么可以把它推给其他人？都不要说了，写名字吧，而且我还希望我是第一个抽。”爵士严肃地说。

大家看爵士那么坚决，只好依了他。在将大家的名字摆在一起抽签时，穆纳抽到了，他高兴地跳了起来。

“爵士，我是不是现在就可以动身了？”他问。

爵士紧紧地握住了他的手。随后，大家重又回到车厢，只剩下少校和麦盖尔在车厢外站岗放哨。海伦夫人知道了抽签的结果后，鼓励了穆纳一番，使得这位水手非常感动。

穆纳勇敢善良，强壮聪明，担当这个重任应该最合适。

晚上8点是穆纳动身的时间，黄昏时，维尔逊替他备好了马。考虑到三叶形马蹄铁很可能隐藏危险，所以便和一匹死去的马的蹄铁做了交换。这样那些恶棍就不知道这马蹄印是他们的了，而且恶棍们没有马，追不上穆纳。

在维尔逊备好马后，爵士准备写信给大副艾撒汀，不料胳膊受了伤

无法写，只好请巴嘉勒尔代写。此时，巴嘉勒尔正在走神，他的思绪在那三张纸条上，脑海里浮现的全是那三张纸条上的字迹，他反复地想着、推翻着，推翻着、想着，怎么都想不通。爵士请他代写信的话他也没有听到，爵士只好又重复了一遍，他这才反应过来。

“好啊！我来替您写！”

巴嘉勒尔说着，摊开了一张纸。不过，虽然拿着铅笔在听爵士说，可他的思绪还在那三张纸条上。爵士对他念道：“汤姆·艾撒汀，立刻起航，把‘邓肯号’开到……”

巴嘉勒尔在写到“到”字时，猛然看到半叠着的《新西兰日报》上露出了“aland”这个单词。他停了下来，思绪完全飘远了。

“巴嘉勒尔，想什么呢？”

“什么？”巴嘉勒尔反应过来。

“想什么呢？”少校问。

“没想什么，没想什么！”

随即，巴嘉勒尔一边低声呢喃着“阿兰（aland）！”，一边站了起来，他的手里举着报纸，来回摇头，想说什么，但到嘴边又停住了。海伦夫人、玛丽小姐、罗伯尔和爵士都吃惊地看着他，不知道他为什么像失了魂一样。过了好一会儿，他渐渐平静下来，眼中露出得意的神色。他坐下来，对爵士说：“说吧！爵士！”

爵士继续念下去：“将‘邓肯号’开到南纬37度线，横穿澳大利亚东海岸的地方……”

“你是说澳大利亚吗？哦！对，是澳大利亚！”他又开始自言自语。

在他写完信后，拿给爵士签名，爵士的胳膊受了伤，很痛，便潦草地签上了自己的名字。在将信封封好后，巴嘉勒尔由于激动，手还在颤抖，又在信封上写下了姓名和地址：“墨尔本，‘邓肯号’汤姆·艾撒汀大副手启。”

写完这些后，巴嘉勒尔离开了牛车，他边走边比画着，嘴里还喃喃着：“阿兰！阿兰！西兰（Zealand）！”

没有其他事情发生，穆纳出行的准备也已经齐全，这位勇敢而忠诚的水手觉得这是自己为爵士效力的时候，所以非常兴奋。

巴嘉勒尔又恢复了正常，不过他的眼神里却隐藏着一件心事。这心事他不准备马上说。当然，他之所以不说，肯定有他不说的理由，因为少校一直听到他在嘀嘀咕咕，好像是自己和自己在生气。有时候，他又会说出一句莫名其妙的话来：“不！不可说！就是说了，又有什么用？一切都太迟了！”

不一会儿，巴嘉勒尔又去给穆纳说去墨尔本的旅途中注意的事项，他将地图打开，仔细地讲解着行走路线，也就是说，有很多小路通向克诺大路，而克诺大路一直向南到了海岸后，转一个弯便是通向墨尔本的路了。只要沿着这条路走就不会错，千万不要为了抄近路而迷路。

总的来说，路线是很简单的，凭借穆纳的聪明，他一定不会迷路。至于危险，也就是在离这几公里之内有可能会碰到本·吉奥兹和他的同党，只要一过这些地方就没事了。

穆纳表示，只要穿过了匪徒的埋伏区，他一定能以最快的速度赶到

墨尔本，并将匪徒远远地甩在后面。

晚上6点钟的时候，天空又下起了倾盆大雨。帐篷是挡不住雨的，大家只好全都挤在牛车里吃饭。好在牛车非常牢固，虽然深深陷入泥里，却也如同堡垒一样给他们提供安全。而对于武器，他们有7支马枪、7支手枪，弹药和粮食都很充足，足够他们维持几天时间。“邓肯号”不到6天就能到杜布湾来，而再过24小时，“邓肯号”的船员们就能到斯诺威河的对岸，到那时，即使他们无法过去，匪徒看到他们有了增援，也会退却的。

不过，这一切要想实现，都要在穆纳冒险成功的基础上完成。

8点钟的时候，夜色渐浓，正是穆纳动身的好时机。在给穆纳牵过马来后，为了谨慎起见，维尔逊还在马蹄上缠了一块布，这样马跑起来也就没有声音了。不过，在出发前，马似乎很疲乏，这不禁又让他们担心起来，因为他们的全部希望都在马那矫健的四条腿上。

少校叮嘱穆纳，一旦突破了匪徒的埋伏地就要爱惜马，宁可迟上一天半天，也不能半途而废。

麦盖尔也交给了穆纳一支手枪，并在里面装上了6粒子弹。一个沉稳勇敢的人，再加上有力的武器，即使遇到匪徒，也是有办法应对的。

最后，爵士、海伦夫人、玛丽小姐和穆纳握了手，穆纳跨上了马鞍。爵士最后又叮嘱他：“信一定要亲自交给汤姆·艾撒汀，不要让他有一分钟的耽误，立刻开船到杜布湾来。如果在杜布湾没见到我们，就说明我们还没有渡过斯诺威河，那就赶快来救援。好了！去吧！我勇敢的水手，上帝会保佑你的！”

在充满危险，风雨交加的夜晚，一个人要穿过无边的荒野，没有坚定的意志是无法做到的。这样的告别，不管是对谁，都不免有些心酸。穆纳没有说过多的话，只说了一句“再见了！阁下！”，便消失在了黑暗的路上。

此时，风雨声更大了，桉树在黑暗中被吹得咯吱咯吱直响。有时候，枯枝落在湿地上也会发出“啪”的声响。那挺立的枯木有几棵被风刮倒了，发出可怕的声响。风在怒吼，河水在咆哮，枯枝也在哗哗作响。大片的乌云被风吹得向南跑，也许是速度太快，像烟雾一样很快又没有了……这一切的喧嚣声，把黑夜衬托得更可怕。

穆纳离开后，众人重又回到牛车里，狭小的空间让大家不得不蜷缩在一起。海伦夫人、玛丽小姐、爵士及巴嘉勒尔在门窗关得紧紧的前厢；奥比尔、维尔逊和罗伯尔则挤在后厢；少校和麦盖尔在车厢外站岗。这种戒备是完全有必要的，因为匪徒随时有可能来偷袭。

黑暗中的狂风拍打着两名“哨兵”的脸，但他们还是忍耐着。

越是恶劣的环境，匪徒越容易来袭击。因此，他们必须把眼睛瞪得圆圆的，警觉地看着四周，听不到风在怒号，雨在倾盆，树干在断裂……

不过，有时候，那狂风好像也累了要休息一样，会停下来。这时候，他们就会听到斯诺威河在静静的芦苇丛和胶树林里翻滚的声音。这种由动到静的转换，往往让人更觉恐怖。所以，少校和麦盖尔会更加小心地听着周围的动静。突然，他们听到一阵尖锐的叫声。

麦盖尔走到少校面前：“听见什么了吗？”

“听到了，会不会是野兽在叫？”

“不！像是人在叫！”麦盖尔说。

随后，他们又听到了一阵嘈杂声，那声音里好像有枪声，但似乎又听不清，因为狂风又怒吼起来。

他们跑到下风处站着听。

此时，车里的人也听到了叫声和枪声。爵士掀起帘子，走到了站岗的两个人面前。

“枪声来自什么地方？”他问。

“好像是那边！”麦盖尔说，他手指的方向正是穆纳出发时走的那条路。

“离这里有多远？”

“如果刨除传声快的风力，应该有5公里左右。”

“我们去看看！”爵士说着，提着马枪就要走。

“不能去！这很可能是匪徒的调虎离山计，骗我们离开牛车。”少校说。

“要是穆纳被匪徒打死怎么办？”爵士说完，抓住了少校的手。

“我们明天就会知道发生什么事了。”少校说。他的声音一如既往地冷静，他不同意爵士去冒这个险。

“您不能去！还是我去看看吧！”麦盖尔说。

“你也不能去！难道你想让自己白白被匪徒打死？这会削弱我们的力量，也等于自取灭亡。如果我们那勇敢的水手已经死了，肯定是不幸的，但我不希望不幸一个接一个！如果他真的死了，那也是命运的安排！如果放在他是我，我也不希望你们去救我！”少校冷冷地说。

理智地说，少校留住爵士和麦盖尔是对的，如果他们真要去的话，生还的可能性不大。在这样的晚上，跑到匪徒埋伏区，就等于自投罗网。再说，原本他们人手都不够，经不起再做无谓的牺牲了。

爵士虽然知道少校说得对，也没再坚持，但他仍然紧紧地握着手里的马枪，在车子周围打转。稍微有一点动静，便会侧耳细听。他努力睁大眼睛，像是要穿透那片黑暗，他好像看到自己的水手被匪徒打死了，甚至听到了他的求救声。那些穷凶极恶的匪徒，一向是以杀人为乐的。想到这里，他的心像刀绞一样痛。

爵士的样子，少校看在眼里，他不知道自己是否能阻止爵士的再次冲动行事，让他跑到敌人的枪口上。

“爵士！你一定要冷静！你要听我作为一个朋友的劝告。你要想想还处在危险和困境中的海伦夫人和玛丽小姐，以及其他同伴。何况，你要去哪里？这样的晚上，你知道穆纳在什么地方吗？他被伏击的地方很可能在两公里之外，可到底在两公里之外的哪里？你知道吗？你怎么去？你……”

少校的话还没说完，便听到了一阵呼救声，呼救声很微弱。

“听听吧！”爵士说。

呼救声是从枪声那里传来的，不到半公里远。爵士此时什么都不顾了，他推开少校，跑了过去。这时，他又听到了断断续续喊救命的声音，声音凄惨绝望。麦盖尔和少校也跟了过去，好一会儿，他们看见了一个人影，正沿着小道连滚带爬地跑了过来，嘴里发出呻吟声。

来人是受了重伤的穆纳。他们三个人急忙把他往牛车上抬，此时的穆纳浑身是血。

雨下得更大了，风也更疯狂了。在他们进了车厢后，车厢里的人全都惊呆了。当清醒过来后，他们马上让出位置，让穆纳躺好。少校把穆纳的上衣脱掉，衣服上的血水和雨水混合着往下掉，他们找到了他的伤口，发现他是被人在右肋下刺了一刀。

少校马上动手，熟练地为他包扎起来。这一刀有没有伤中要害，少校不敢下结论。这位勇敢水手的生死，此时掌握在上帝的手里。

伤口处鲜红的血液还在往下流，穆纳紧闭双眼，脸色苍白，奄奄一息。

少校给他清洗了伤口，然后敷上了一层厚厚的火绒，最后又盖上了几层纱布包扎起来。

当看到血止住了时，大家这才松了一口气。斜躺着的穆纳左肋朝下，头和胸部肿得高高的。海伦夫人喂了他几口水，十多分钟后，他抽搐了一下，然后睁开了眼睛，嘴里喃喃地说着话，但听不清。

少校把耳朵凑近他嘴边，听到他在说：“爵士……信……本·吉奥兹……”

少校把话重复给大家听，然后看着大家。穆纳这话是什么意思呢？

难道匪徒袭击派出的人，是怕我们找救兵？那信……

想到信，爵士急忙去摸穆纳的衣袋，最后大惊失色，因为他给大副艾撒汀的信没有了。

这一夜，大家都是在恐惧和不安中度过。他们非常担心穆纳的生命，他还在发高烧。在这种情况下，海伦夫人和玛丽小姐就成了穆纳最热心的护士。她们不停地忙碌着，无微不至地照顾着他。

天亮的时候，雨也停了。乌云仍在头顶翻滚，地面上全是枯枝，道路越发泥泞，牛车陷得更深了。不管上车下车，都变得越来越困难。好在车子已经陷到了最底部，不可能再往下陷了。

麦盖尔、少校和爵士天一亮便跑到周围观察，并沿着穆纳昨晚跑过来时，沾满了血迹的小路走，但始终没有发现匪徒的踪迹。一直走到昨晚的事发地，当他们看到两具尸体躺在那里时，便知是穆纳打死的。死去的匪徒中，其中一人就是铁匠。死后的他脸色铁青，整张脸都变了形，样子非常可怕。

为了安全起见，他们没往更远的地方跑，又原路返回。情况的严重性让他们陷入到了沉思中。

“要不要再派个人去墨尔本？”爵士终于说。

“非去不可！我的水手没有完成任务，那就让我去吧！”麦盖尔说。

“不可以！麦盖尔，你要知道，300公里，连匹马都没有。”

是的，穆纳骑走的那匹马始终没有出现。它到底是被打死了还是在荒野中跑丢了，抑或是被匪徒抢走了？如果能找到它就好了。

“不管怎样，我们都不能再分开了，即使等8天、15天也好，我们可以等斯诺威河里的水降下去，那时候我们再慢慢想办法回杜布湾，然后再想更安全的方法给‘邓肯号’送信。”爵士说。

“也只能这么做了。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“所以，朋友们，我们千万不能再走散了。单身一个人很容易进入匪徒的伏击圈，非常危险。愿上帝保佑勇敢的水手，也保佑大家平安！”

爵士的意思很明显，首先，怎么都不能有人再去冒险了。接着，他们需要在河岸上耐心等待，直到水降下来，能安全渡过去为止。在他们过了河后，离南威尔士省的边境城市德勒吉特也就不到22公里的距离了。

在那里，不难找到去杜布湾的交通工具，而到了杜布湾后，他们也能发电报到墨尔本，并能直接给“邓肯号”下命令了。

这种做法无疑是明智的，只是又晚了一步。如果爵士不派穆纳去求援，他也不可能遇到这样的事。

回到营地，他们看见同伴脸上的愁容消失了，便知道穆纳一定是得救了。

“他好很多了！”小罗伯尔迎上来说。

“哦？好多了？”爵士又问了一句。

“是的！好多了！少校也放心了，穆纳至少没有生命危险了！”海伦夫人说。

“少校去什么地方了？”爵士又问。

“他在穆纳身边，穆纳拼命要和他说话，不让人去打搅他们。”

此时，退烧且清醒过来的穆纳，在刚刚能够说话时便急着找爵士或少校。少校看他很虚弱，不想让他多说话，但他执意要说，少校只好听着。在他们谈了几分钟后，爵士回来了，穆纳说的话便由少校传达。

少校把爵士叫到了车外，然后在支着帐篷的胶树下和朋友们会合。此时的少校心情沉重，丝毫不像平时那么淡定。当他的眼睛落到海伦夫人和玛丽小姐身上时，显得很不安。

爵士问他究竟发生什么事了，少校便把情况一五一十地说了。

“我们的穆纳出发后，在黑夜里用最快的速度沿着巴嘉勒尔给他指的那条路狂奔。大约走了3公里的时候，迎面遇到了几个人，打头的就是本·吉奥兹。因为人少，所以他枪里的子弹还没打完，右肋便被刺了一刀，然后就从马上摔下来了。那些匪徒以为他已经死了，其实他还清醒着，他感觉到有人在搜他的衣服，然后听到一个匪徒说‘信找到了’，接着本·吉奥兹要回了信，并说‘有了这封信，‘邓肯号’就是我们的了’。”

少校讲到这里的时候，爵士大吃一惊，冷汗直冒。

接着少校又说：“本·吉奥兹让匪徒把马给他追回来，然后又说，‘2天后我就能登上“邓肯号”了，6天就能到达杜布湾。到时候，我们在杜布湾会合。那时候，爵士一行还陷在泥窝里出不来呢。你们快到亘布尔比桥去过河，然后到东海等我，我自有办法让你们上船。等你们上了船，我们就让船上的人去喂王八。有了“邓肯号”，我们就能在海上称王称霸了。匪徒们欢呼说：‘伟大的本·吉奥兹！我们拥护本·吉奥兹！’穆

纳骑过的那匹马很快被追了回来，本·吉奥兹翻身上马，朝克诺的大路飞奔而去，而他的同伙也向南方跑去了，显然要渡斯诺威河了。穆纳虽然身负重伤，可 he 知道自己必须要回来报告这消息，所以强撑着往回跑。在离这里大约300米时，遇到了我们，并被我们抬了回来。这就是穆纳给我叙述的一切。”

少校说完，停了一下又说：“现在明白那勇敢的水手为什么坚持要说话了吧！”

事情清楚了，大家全都惊慌起来。

“这是一群海盗，海盗啊！我们的船员会被他们杀死的，我的‘邓肯号’会落到海盗的手里的。”爵士怒骂道。

“现在知道了，本·吉奥兹的最终目的就是为了抢那艘船！然后……”少校没有说完。

“我们必须在匪徒没到之前赶去海边。”巴嘉勒尔插话道。

“可我们怎么过斯诺威河呢？”维尔逊问。

“我们可以抬着穆纳走，轮流抬着他。不管怎样，我们都要想办法过去，不能让我们的同伴死在海盗的手下。”爵士说。

从亘布尔比桥过斯诺威河有些冒险，因为匪徒很可能就守在桥头，不让他们过，而且很可能会用30人来对付他们这7个人。不过现在顾不了这么多了，只要能闯，他们是怎么都要闯过去的。

“爵士，在走冒险这最后一步棋前，我觉得还是先去侦察一下比较稳妥。这件事就交给我吧！”麦盖尔说。

“我和你一起去！”巴嘉勒尔大声说。

爵士同意了这个建议，麦盖尔便和巴嘉勒尔朝斯诺威河走去。为了不让匪徒们发现，他们一直在河边的高大芦苇下穿行，一直走到了本·吉奥兹说的那个地方……

天黑了下来，可那两个勇敢的，全副武装的伙伴还是没有回来，大家都很焦急。

将近深夜11点时，维尔逊汇报说他们回来了。

两个人跑了16多公里的路，累得筋疲力尽。

“看到桥没有？”爵士问。

“看是看到了，不过只是一座藤条扎的桥，而且完全能确定，匪徒们过去了，只是……”麦盖尔没有说完。

“只是什么？”爵士着急地问，他预感又有不幸的事发生了。

果然，巴嘉勒尔沮丧地说：“桥被他们烧断了！”

第三十四章 惊险渡过斯诺威河

亘布尔比桥被烧断了，而斯诺威河是无论如何都要过去的，所以现在不是沮丧的时候，而是积极行动的时候。现如今，他们必须在匪徒赶到杜布湾之前到达，所以摆在大家面前亟待解决的问题不是怨天尤人，而是怎么办。

第二天，麦盖尔和爵士跑到了河边，一边看水的涨势，一边想办法渡河。

潮水仍然没有下降，依旧是波涛汹涌。想从这样的洪水面前强涉而过几乎是不可能的。爵士双手交叉，定定地站在那里，沉默不语。

“还是我先游过去吧！”麦盖尔说。

“不！麦盖尔，现在不行，我们还是等等看吧！”爵士说话的时候，抓住了麦盖尔的胳膊，他怕这个勇敢的年轻人什么都不顾地跳进这滚滚的河水中。

两个人重又回到他们的帐篷，这一天，他们在焦躁中度过。河边，爵士不知道跑去了多少次，他总想找个冒险也能过去的方法，但都找不到。这条河好像是在和他们作对，水势丝毫不减，想必就是过火山的熔岩，也没这么艰难。

经过海伦夫人的精心照顾，穆纳的身体恢复得很快，已经脱离了危险。直到现在，少校才敢断定那一刀并未击中他的要害，当时之所以奄奄一息，是因为流血过多造成的。当伤口包扎好后，血也就止住了，他

只需再休养几日，便能完全恢复。

海伦夫人一直执意让穆纳住在前车厢，这让穆纳很不好意思。当然，最让他感到不安的是他觉得自己的伤势延误了大家的行程，所以提出如果能过河，大家可以先过去，只留维尔逊照顾他就行了。

接连好几天，河水都是汹涌澎湃的。爵士看起来越来越烦躁，海伦夫人和少校不断地劝他忍耐，但根本不起作用。

爵士觉得本·吉奥兹肯定已经上了“邓肯号”，如果真是这样，他忍耐得住吗？他最心爱的“邓肯号”，很可能已张开帆，开足马力奔赴海盗设下的陷阱，他的手下正一步步地接近死亡，他能忍耐吗？

当然，作为“邓肯号”船长的麦盖尔，同样非常难受，每每想到“邓肯号”上的船员要死在海盗的手里，他就焦急万分。他不惜一切地学澳大利亚人做胶树皮船，他想用棍子夹起轻便的胶树皮过去。

1月18日，麦盖尔和维尔逊试了一下那个胶树皮船，但他们即便使出了浑身解数，仍然让胶树皮船在激流处翻了，而他们也差一点葬身水底。小船很快就被卷进了漩涡，不见了，他们拼命游了3米才游回岸边。

同时，由于雨水连绵不断，高山上的积雪也融化流了下来，河水不仅没降，反而涨了，河面的宽度达到了1公里。

1月19日和20日，他们是在焦躁的情绪下度过的。少校和爵士沿着河岸，走了8公里也没找到浅滩，到处都是奔涌的河水，湍急的河流，仿佛整个山区的所有雨水全都汇集在了这里。

此时，他们援救“邓肯号”的希望也就完全破灭了，“邓肯号”只能听

天由命，因为离本·吉奥兹去墨尔本已经有5天了，“邓肯号”说不定已经开到了东海岸，甚至说不定已经落入海盗的手里了。

不过，即使这样，他们也不能老在这里待着。洪水虽然涨得快，真要退的话，也会退得很快的。果然，在21日早晨的时候，巴嘉勒尔观测出水位开始下降，他急忙把这好消息告诉了爵士。

“现在水位下降还有意义吗？一切都太迟了！”爵士叹着气说。

“可我们也要过去呀，不能老待在这里。”少校说。

“也许我们明天就能过去了。”麦盖尔说。

“就是明天过去，也救不了那些船员了。”

“阁下！请您听我说，大副艾撒汀是个纪律严明的人，所以他肯定会执行您的命令，将船开到东海岸的。不过，谁敢保证本·吉奥兹到了那里后，船就修好了呢？而且就算是修好了，说不定因为种种原因，又会延迟一两天出海呢？”麦盖尔说。

“没错！麦盖尔，希望是这样，那我们马上赶去杜布湾。现在，我们离德勒吉特只有55公里了吧！”

“对！当我们到了那里后，也就有交通工具了。那时候我们可以尽快赶到东海岸，说不定就能阻止那场灾难的发生了。”巴嘉勒尔也说。

“好！那我们马上做准备！”爵士命令说。

麦盖尔和维尔逊又开始了造船。上次的失败让他们领教了洪水的冲击力，所以这次他们锯了几棵大胶树，准备做一个既结实又大的木筏。

这个工作非常浪费时间，第二天才完工。

此时，水位已经明显下降了，不过斯诺威河的水流依然很急。但只要他们能顺着水流走，适时控制水势，还是可以渡过去的。

中午的时候，两个人把两天所需的干粮率先搬上了木筏，把牛车和帐篷也都丢弃不用了。

穆纳的伤势很快就恢复了。下午1点钟，大家上了木筏。木筏的右边有个长桨交给了维尔逊掌管，目的是防范木筏被急流冲走；麦盖尔船长站在了木筏的尾部，用一根很粗的橹掌握着航向；海伦夫人和玛丽小姐坐在了船的正中间，靠近她们的是爵士、少校和巴嘉勒尔，他们的任务是保护两位女士的安全。

“准备好了吗，维尔逊？”麦盖尔问。

“准备好了！”维尔逊握着大桨说。

“一定要小心，防止浪头将我们冲走。”

麦盖尔说完，便解开了系着木筏的绳索，木筏顺水漂去。开始时的5米左右距离还好，维尔逊还能够控制木筏，但很快，木筏就被卷进了旋涡，在里面打转，怎么都出不来。不管是桨和橹，好像都已失去了作用。

木筏转得越来越快了，坐在木筏里的人也被转得头晕眼花。麦盖尔站在那里，脸色苍白，紧紧地咬着嘴唇，眼睛盯着那无数的旋涡。

木筏随着旋涡推进，过了很长时间，木筏被转到了河中心，此时，他们离出发的岸边才不过半公里路程。水势越来越急，中心已经无法再

形成旋涡，木筏稍稍稳当了一些。

麦盖尔船长和维尔逊又用起了他们手里的橹和桨，并沿着一条斜线在水中前行。后来，经过一番千辛万苦，终于快到岸时，维尔逊手里的桨突然折断了，木筏顿时失去了平衡，再次被急流冲走。此时，麦盖尔手里的橹不能再断了，为了尽力抵抗急流，满手是血的维尔逊赶来帮他。

终于，当木筏在河里折腾了半个小时后，他们到了对岸的陡峭岩石旁。不料又撞到了岩石上，木筏被撞散了，而木筏上所带的可供两天食用的干粮也掉在了急流里。

如今，离德勒吉特还有50公里的他们，一无所有了。在这无人的荒野上，他们很难遇到移民或“坐地人”，因为这里除了海盗和山贼外，根本没有良民敢来。

不管怎样，他们都不能再耽误了，必须立刻出发。穆纳觉得自己要是跟着大部队走的话，一定是个累赘，所以要求留下来，等他们回去后再派人来接他。

爵士当然不肯将他一个人留下，怎么都不答应。爵士觉得他们到达德勒吉特怎么也要3天，然后还有5天的时间去东海岸，到那时，“邓肯号”很可能早都到东海岸了，所以反正是迟，再耽误几个小时也没什么关系。

“我不会丢掉任何一个人的。我们可以做个软兜，轮流把你抬着走。”爵士说。

软兜是用带有叶子的桉树编成的。在将穆纳放上去后，爵士第一个

去抬，和他一起抬的是维尔逊。

一行人就这么出发了。

原本的旅行是很顺利的，没想到结果却是这样狼狈。现在他们已经不是寻不寻找格兰特船长的问题了，因为阿埃童所说是假，那么格兰特船长很可能不在大陆，甚至从未来过这里的大陆。而这片大陆，又差点葬送了他们一行人。更可怕的是，这些勇敢的人也许在到了澳大利亚东海岸时，载他们回国的游船已经被匪徒抢走了。

这一天，大家都是在沉默和痛苦中度过的，抬穆纳的人每十分钟会换一次。在这样炎热的天气下，光走路都已经很累了，还要抬上一个体重很重的人，辛苦可想而知，但大家却没有一个人叫苦叫累。

走了大约8公里路之后，天黑了下来，他们便在胶树林里夜宿。晚饭是从木筏散架，掉进水里的干粮中抢回来的一些。

由于这里比沙漠还荒凉，没有野兽和小鸟，所以他们身上的马枪根本就没有用武之地，这样一来，他们明天的粮食在哪里也就没了着落。更雪上加霜的是，夜里还下起了雨。好不容易盼到天亮，雨过天晴，大家这才又集中精力出发。

突然，小罗伯尔发现了一个鸟巢，鸟巢里有十几只蛋，这让他们喜出望外。奥比尔将这些蛋用热水煮熟，然后又加了一些从水洼里挖出的马齿苋，22日这天的午餐便有了。

一路上到处都是蒺藜草，路也越来越难走。这种蒺藜草在墨尔本又叫“箭草”，如果不小心，很可能会撕破裤腿，扎进腿里，让双腿流血不止。不过，即使这样，两位勇敢的女士也没有叫苦，她们和男士一样义

无反顾地前行，让大家很受鼓舞。

当然，行进中，也少不了两位女士对男士们的言语鼓励。

当天晚上，他们夜宿在布纳山脚下的容嘉那河岸。晚饭的时候，少校打了一只很大的老鼠，这也解决了他们的晚饭问题。这种老鼠又被称为“地道鼠”，非常美味。大家都说，如果这只大老鼠能像山羊那么大就好了。

厨艺精良的奥比尔将它烤熟后，这就成了大家的一顿美味晚餐。可惜太少了，连骨头都被啃个精光。

23日，处在精疲力尽中的一行人毅然决然地上路了。从山脚下绕过去后，展现在他们面前的是广阔的荒原，荒原上的草长得如同鲸须一样，有些像箭林、刀山。这些草的根茎交错，如果想要经过，即使不用斧劈也要用火烧来开路才行。

这天早晨，厨艺精湛的厨师长奥比尔已经没有食材可用了。走在贫瘠的散乱硅石中，大家又累又饿，再加上天气的燥热，他们真的很难承受。如果再这样继续下去，一行人肯定会倒在地上的。

峰回路转，好运终于来了。在一棵珊瑚状灌木上，挂着一些像贮满了甘露的荚果，大家急忙冲上去喝了个饱，精神也随之得到了恢复。很快，吃的也有了，那就是虫蛇鸟兽赖以生存的植物，这种植物叫“纳儿豆”，是草类隐花植物。它的叶子像苜蓿，叶子下长着芽孢。芽孢里有扁豆大小的果子，采下来后，用石头一砸会出现面粉。这种植物巴嘉勒尔曾听说过，可以做粗面包。

“纳儿豆”的出现，对爵士一行人来说，简直就是救命的美食，大家

吃得格外香甜。这种植物有很多，奥比尔也收藏了很多，这预示着他们以后一段时间的粮食不用发愁了。

行走到第二天的时候，穆纳已经能自己走路了，而他的伤口也已经全部愈合。此时一行人离德勒吉特不到16公里，当晚，他们便在东经149度的新南威尔士的边境上休息。

而就在此时，雨又开始下了。虽然是小雨，但也下了几个小时，大家的衣服全都被淋湿了。麦盖尔好不容易找到了一个锯木人留下的木棚，虽然木棚已经破旧不堪，但仍然可以利用它来躲雨。

维尔逊出去找了些枯枝，想要烤“纳儿豆”粉做的面包，不过，拾来的干柴却怎么都点不燃。原来，这些枯枝里含有大量的矾质，不能充当燃料。博学的巴嘉勒尔在之前给大家讲澳大利亚的奇闻时就说过这话。

没有火，他们只能吃干冷的面包，穿湿漉漉的衣服睡觉。木棚外，枯枝上的鸟儿不停地叫着，像是在嘲笑他们的狼狈。

女人的体质本身不如男人，两位女士即使再强装精神，体力也一天不如一天了。所以与其说是走，倒不如说是连拖带爬。不过，路总有走到尽头的时候，在木棚里凑合了一晚的他们天一亮就出发了。

11点的时候，他们到了德勒吉特城在上威斯的一个小镇，也就是说，他们距杜布湾还有80公里的路程。

在德勒吉特城，他们找好了交通工具。此时爵士的心里又燃起了希望。如果“邓肯号”延误航行，他们在24小时之内就会到达杜布湾，那时候“邓肯号”及上面的船员应该还有救。

中午的时候，大家美美地吃了一餐，然后坐上一辆邮车离开了这个

城镇。5匹壮马拉着邮车，飞快地向前跑去。车夫在得知将会多得到一些钱时，更是快马加鞭，每小时能行16公里，即使休息，也不过两分钟。

处在焦急中的爵士，恨不得让自己变成小鸟飞到东海岸去。

第二天，在太阳升起的时候，他们隐隐听到了海潮的声音，这也预示着他们马上就要到达目的地了。邮车绕过海湾，到了30度线的海岸，也就是到了爵士命令艾撒汀将船开到这里的地方。

一看到海，大家便极目四望，在海面上搜寻“邓肯号”的影子。他们希望看到“邓肯号”在海里游荡，希望它能像在阿根廷的哥连德角外一样。不过，在那无边无际的海面上，他们根本看不到一只船的影子。

现在，还有一种可能性，那就是风太大，“邓肯号”在港口外抛了锚，所以开到杜布湾的内港——埃邓城去了。

因此，爵士又让邮车向右转，向9里之外的埃邓城进发。

很快，他们的邮车停在了标志港口的固定信号灯不远处，他们看到了码头上停着几只船，但没有一只有麦凯莫府的旗号。

爵士、麦盖尔和巴嘉勒尔全都下了车。他们去海关打听情况，查近几天船舶的进港记录，结果在一星期内都没有一只船到杜布湾。

“会不会是‘邓肯号’推迟了起航，所以我们赶在了它的前面？”爵士大声说。此时的他，不想往绝望方面想。

船长麦盖尔摇了摇头。他了解艾撒汀，他绝对不会拖延时间，一定会执行命令的。

“不管是凶是吉，我们都需要有个结果。”爵士说。

10多分钟后，他们给墨尔本船舶保险经理人联合会发了一封电报。然后，大家重又坐上邮车，到维多利亚旅馆休息。下午的时候，爵士收到了电报，电报上说：

杜布湾埃邓城格莱拉弗爵士：“邓肯号”在本月的18日起航，去向不明。

船舶保险经理人安德路。

电报从爵士手里掉了下去，飘到了地面上。

这就是说，那只爵士的苏格兰游船，此刻已经成了海盗船，而新的主人就是海盗头日本·吉奥兹。

从横穿澳大利亚大陆时的信心百倍开始，到现在的绝望结束，格兰特船长以及受难的船员，他们连踪迹都没找到，而且还赔上了船队上人的性命，这次失败的寻访真是损失惨重。

此刻，爵士已经精疲力尽，毫无办法了。这位勇敢的爵士，潘帕的场场天灾没有压垮他，可澳大利亚大陆上的海盗却将他压垮了……

第三十五章 两只船都成了谜

为了寻找格兰特船长，他们经历了一次次的失败和绝望，此时，他们又无路可走了。

他们现在是不是该绝望呢？茫茫大地，他们要去什么地方搜寻？又有什么办法可以让他们实施搜寻？“邓肯号”没有了，就是想立刻回国也没有可能了。这些好心肠的、勇敢的苏格兰人，在做义举的时候，丝毫没想到会这样失败。他们觉得，这样的结果，一定会遭到世人的嘲笑。

在一场场的捉弄下，爵士不得不承认，他已经无力再做这样的义举了。

玛丽小姐在这种情况下，也不好再提她的父亲，尽管她很想提，可她同时又想起了另一队遇害的船员。所以，以前是海伦夫人在安慰她，现在成了她安慰海伦夫人。于是，她建议大家回苏格兰去。

船长见她这么坚强、识大体，非常佩服。他想要给她提提格兰特船长的事，但却被玛丽小姐用眼光制止住了。她说：“不要再找我父亲了，麦盖尔先生，我们要为这些善良的人着想。在这种情况下，爵士应该命令大家回欧洲。”

“没错，玛丽小姐，麦盖尔应该回去，因为‘邓肯号’的遭遇需要让英国政府知道。不过你也不要失望。”爵士说。

“既然我们答应出来找格兰特船长，就不能半途而废。这样吧，不如你们都回去，我一个人找，找不到我誓不罢休。”麦盖尔说。

玛丽小姐为麦盖尔的誓言而感动，她伸出手，握住了这位年轻船长的手。

当天，他们便开始讨论回欧洲的事宜。不过不管怎样，他们都必须尽快先去墨尔本。

第二天，麦盖尔便去打听开往墨尔本的船的船期。他开始还以为从埃邓到维多利亚省的船有很多，实际上并不是这样。此地一共只有三四只船，全都停在杜布湾里。没有一只要开往墨尔本、悉尼或威尔士角。爵士他们想要回欧洲，只有这三个地方能搭船，因为只有这三个地方有英国本土间的正规航线。

在经过一番考虑、讨论后，爵士决定沿着海岸公路去悉尼，但巴嘉勒尔却又提出了一个令大家都没想到的建议。

他说他去过杜布湾，那里的三只船中有一只会到新西兰北岛都城奥克兰，如果能包下这只船，然后再搭半岛邮船公司的船就能回到欧洲了。

当大家还在考虑他的提议的时候，巴嘉勒尔又列举出了种种理由，每个理由都说明了一个问题，那就是整个路程只需花费五六天时间，因为澳大利亚和新西兰相距只有上千公里。而他们寻找格兰特船长正好也是在37度线上，所以这个建议从某种意义上说也是个机会，他们还可以在新西兰沿海搜索一番。

不过，新西兰只是一个岛，格兰特船长写的可是“大陆”，所以巴嘉勒尔并没挑明去新西兰就是为了寻找格兰特船长。

麦盖尔船长支持巴嘉勒尔的建议，不过，上船前，他说要先去看看

那艘他们要乘坐的船，所以爵士、少校、巴嘉勒尔、罗伯尔及麦盖尔船长一齐坐上一个皮划子，向距岸约两锚链远的船只驶去。那是只250吨的双桅船，叫“麦伽利号”。这只船专门在澳大利亚和新西兰各口岸做短程航行。

船主叫威尔·哈赖，肥胖的身材，面色红润，看起来很野蛮，似乎是个没有接受多少文明教育的人。他的手掌很厚实，鼻子很塌，独眼，嘴唇上油汪汪的。由于脾气暴躁，很少有人搭他的船。

见爵士一行上了“麦伽利号”的甲板，他大声问：“什么事？”

“你是船长吗？”麦盖尔问。

“没错，我是船长，怎么了？”哈赖说。

“你们这船是要装货去奥克兰？”

“没错，那又怎么样？”

“你们一般装什么货？”

“当然是好买好卖的货了。”

“什么时候开船呢？”

“明天开船，我们要趁午潮开船。你到底有什么事？”哈赖不耐烦了。

“你们搭不搭客？”

“搭客？那就要看是什么客了。而且也要看他们能不能吃得惯我们

船上的大锅饭了。”

“我们可以自备伙食。”

“你们有多少人？”

“有10位，其中两位是女士。”

“我可没有舱房。”

“只要把甲板上的便舱让给我们就行了。”

“这样啊……”

“到底愿不愿意？”麦盖尔也不耐烦了。

“那就要看你们……”哈赖说着话，用那钉着铁掌的皮靴在船上来来回回地走着，突然停到了麦盖尔面前，“出多少钱！”

“你想要多少？”麦盖尔反问道。

“要50镑。”

爵士点点头，表示认可。

“那好，50镑就50镑。”麦盖尔说。

“这仅仅指船费！”哈赖又补充了一句。

“可以！”

“伙食我们不管。”

“不管！”

“那好，说定了。拿来！”哈赖伸出了手。

“什么？”

“当然是定金了！”

“好吧，先付一半，25镑！”麦盖尔说着话，把钱数给了他。哈赖接过钱就往腰包塞。

“明天你们来上船吧！午饭前来，我们到了时间就会准时开船的，不管人到没到。”

“知道了！我们午饭前肯定到。”

麦盖尔说完，便和爵士一行离开了船。

“真是个大老粗。”麦盖尔说。

“哈哈……他倒对我的胃口，他就是一只纯粹的海狼。”巴嘉勒尔饶有兴趣地说。

“你怎么不说是只纯粹的狗熊？”少校没好气地说。

“我敢说，这只狗熊以前很可能做过人口买卖的事。”麦盖尔补充说。

“管他做过什么呢，只要他是‘麦伽利号’的船长，他的船是去奥克兰就行。再说了，从杜布湾到奥克兰，我们也不会见他几次面，到了奥克兰，就再也不用见他了，所以无所谓！”爵士说。

海伦夫人和玛丽小姐知道明天就能坐船往回走后，非常高兴。爵士也提前给她们打了预防针，说“麦伽利号”肯定没有“邓肯号”舒服，她们说不在乎。

对于自己的老婆可能在“邓肯号”上被匪徒杀害了，奥比尔虽然很伤心，但还是很尽责地买了足够他们在船上吃的干粮，而所买的食物，全都是双桅船上没有的。

少校找到了一个钱庄，兑换了爵士汇到墨尔本联合银行的几张汇票。此时的他们，需要补充一下现金、武器和弹药；巴嘉勒尔还去找了一份爱丁堡·约翰斯顿出版社出的一份精致的新西兰地图。

穆纳那差点要了性命的伤已经好了。维尔逊则提前到“麦伽利号”上布置他们要入住的舱房，

船舱经过他的一番洗刷后，完全变了样。哈赖看他干得起劲，也就走开了。对哈赖来说，他是不管将要乘船的人是男人还是女人，更不管他们叫什么名字。他关心的只是船舱里装着的200吨皮革。

把该准备的东西全准备好了，还有多余的时间，爵士决定再去37度线看看。

他之所以这么做有两个原因。首先，他要把阿埃童所说的假沉船地点看一看，如果阿埃童真的不是“大不列颠号”上的水手，那么“大不列颠号”既然不是在西海岸沉船，那么就该是在东海岸。而这地方他们在离开后，应该就不会再来了，所以临行前想去看看。

同时，即使“大不列颠号”不是在这里失事的，“邓肯号”如果是在这里落入海盗之手的，说不定也经过了一场恶战，他想看看能不能找到踪

迹。

于是，爵士在麦盖尔的陪同下，骑着维多利亚旅馆主人为他们准备的马，打算从北绕着杜布湾走一圈。

这是一次伤心而痛心的搜索，所以一路上他们都闷声不响，只是看着被海水浸淫的岩石。

凭借麦盖尔的聪明和热诚，他们是可以搜寻每一个地方的。而照理说，海滨也会有沉船遗物被打捞上来，但他们却一无所获。“大不列颠号”的失事，到目前为止对他们来说依然是个谜。而对于“邓肯号”，情况也一样。

突然，麦盖尔在岸边的一棵树下发现了点什么，那是篝火的痕迹。很明显，这里曾有人夜宿过，会不会是游牧队的牧人呢？

当然不是，因为另一迹象告诉他们，匪徒来过这里。这个迹象就是一件旧的，打过补丁的，脏得看上去令人作呕的灰黄两色粗毛衣，毛衣上有柏斯大牢的号码。

“看到没有，那些匪徒来过这里，我们‘邓肯号’上那些可怜的伙伴……”爵士说不下去了。

“是的，很显然，他们没有上岸，都死在……”麦盖尔的声音哽咽了。

“那些恶棍！如果有一天落到我手里，我一定会替我的船员报仇的！”爵士愤怒地大叫一声。

悲伤让爵士的脸色发生了变化，他盯着大海看了很久，接着便一声

不吭地上马离开，回到了埃邓城。

现在还有一件事情要做，那就是把最近发生的事报告给当地警察。在听他们讲述事情经过的时候，警官竟然非常兴奋，特别是听到本·吉奥兹跟那些匪徒离开了，他毫不掩饰地长松一口气，还说这下子全城都能松口气了。

当然，这消息也很快用报告的形式通知了墨尔本和悉尼当局。

爵士和麦盖尔回到旅馆后，见大家也都闷闷不乐。整个晚上，大家都在沉默中度过。他们回想到在白洛夷加时的希望，又想到现在，心里感到很绝望，而地理学家巴嘉勒尔更是烦躁不安。

晚上，麦盖尔把他叫到了自己的房间，问他有什么心事。

“我的朋友，我.....是不是和平时不一样？”

“巴嘉勒尔先生，我觉得您心里一定有秘密！”

“嗯！怎么说呢？我真是不由自主啊！”巴嘉勒尔说。

“到底发生什么事了？”

“我不知是开心还是失望。”

“您的意思是您既开心又失望？”

“没错！”

“您是不是有新的看法？找到了什么新的线索？”麦盖尔继续追问他。

“没有！到新西兰后，我们就再也不会回来了。不过，要怎么……
唉！你要知道，人都是这样，只要有一口气在，就不会死心！世界上不是有句最好的格言叫‘气不断，心不死’吗？我现在就是这样。”

第三十六章 骇人的吃人海岸

1月27日，爵士一行上了“麦伽利号”船，住在了狭小的船舱里。

船主并没有将自己的房间留给女士，因为他那房间实在是很脏，即使留也没人去住。12点整的时候，船在退潮时起锚了。由于有西南风刮来，所以船上撑起了帆。维尔逊想帮5位船员的忙，但被哈赖拒绝了。

既然船长不愿意接受帮助，维尔逊也只能不管闲事了。

5位船员是在船长的怒骂声中升起帆来。“麦伽利号”摆出了远洋的架势，把低帆、前帆、顶帆、纵帆、触帆、插帆和许多小帆全都升了起来。那有些臃肿的船头，以及宽宽的船底和笨重的船尾，让这只船像一只老迈的鸭子，慢慢地向前挪着，这样的船，注定行驶得很慢。

尽管老态龙钟，但不出意外的话，最多6天也就能驶进奥克兰港口了。

晚上7点钟的时候，船远离了澳大利亚海岸和埃邓港口的固定灯塔。海浪非常大，船走得不仅慢，而且颠簸得非常厉害，爵士一行只好如同坐牢一样，规规矩矩地守在船舱里，不敢轻易行动。

每个人都在想着心事，很少说话。爵士坐不住了，站起身来，在狭窄的船舱里走来走去；少校则像泥塑人一般，一动不动；麦盖尔不停地去甲板观察风向，罗伯尔跟在他的后面；巴嘉勒尔一个人坐在角落里，叽叽咕咕地不知道在说些什么。

他在想什么？是在想命运让他们去新西兰，还是想起了新西兰的历史？在新西兰的历史里，有没有把新西兰的两个岛当成大陆呢？他在想着那三张纸条上的事。

“contin, contin.....”他不停地念叨着，“这是大陆（continent）呀！”

他想起了两个岛被航海家们发现的过程：1642年12月13日，荷兰人塔士曼在发现凡第门后，于17日将船驶进了一个大海湾，海湾的尽头就是夹在两岛之间的海峡。

这两座岛，一个是北岛，另一个是南岛。

塔士曼派几只小艇登陆。那几个人登陆回来后，从陆地上带回来几个土人，那些土人中等身材，黑头发盘在头顶，头顶上插着又大又长的羽毛。这些土人有着棕色的皮肤，瘦得皮包骨头，说着生硬的语言。一上小艇，他们便叽叽喳喳，不知道在说些什么。

这让人误以为欧洲人和土人刚一见面就能建立友谊，谁料第二天，当塔士曼的一只小艇去附近海岸探索有没有停泊地点时，看到载着7个土人的独木舟开始攻击他们的小艇。为此，小艇里的水手长的喉咙上挨了一枪，最后只能跳海逃命，小艇里的其余8人，有6人被杀。最终，只有两个人和水手长逃回了船上。

之后，塔士曼报复性地开了几枪就乘船跑了。

而那个海湾也就被称之为屠杀湾。塔士曼沿着屠杀湾西岸一直向北行驶，1月5日的时候停在了北角附近。由于那里无法补充淡水，而且海浪很大，所以只能离开。不过，他给那里取名叫“斯塔腾兰”，也就

是“三民地”的意思，旨在纪念“三民会议”。

塔士曼一直以为他在南美洲的南部发现了一个“大陆”。不过，巴嘉勒尔又想：“17世纪的一个海员很可能会把新西兰误当‘大陆’，但19世纪的海员却不会这样。如果说格兰特船长犯这样的错误，显然是不可能的。”

在塔士曼之后的100年里，新西兰仿佛不存在了。后来一个法国航海家旭尔维在南纬35度37分又发现了这片陆地，由于旭尔维的小艇被偷，他竟然放火烧了一个村庄。

1769年10月6日，著名的库克船长用一些小恩小惠收买了土人，并开花炮恐吓他们，让他们变得老老实实。1773年，库柯船长再次来到和克湾，亲眼看到了土人吃人肉的事。

1827年3月，著名的瞿孟居威尔，那位“阿思特洛纳伯号”上的船长，竟然不带任何武器地在陆上和土人过了好几天，他不仅没有受到伤害，而且还和土人互换了礼物。土人教他唱歌，他教土人测量地图。

上述的事件整体看来很矛盾，有些土人和善，有些则凶狠，由此我们也能得出一个结论：新西兰土人的大多数残酷行为是出于报复。他们对人的好坏，取决于对方对他们的好坏。

有个叫伊尔的英国人是个流浪科学家，他曾环游世界，在经过这两个岛时，也发现了吃人肉的事。

1831年，年轻的纳布斯船长曾在群岛湾见到了这种土人吃土人的惨景，也看到了土人间战斗的激烈。野蛮的他们开始使用火器，而且使用得非常熟练，所以有些部落整个都被他们消灭了。

同时，新西兰人很恨侵略者，他们有着很强的自卫能力，永不放弃地和英国移民做着斗争。

巴嘉勒尔就这么坐在角落把新西兰的一些历史回忆了一遍，越想越焦躁。因为所有他能想起来的历史，没有一个能让他把这两个岛称之为“大陆”，但“contin”这个词却在他的脑海里挥之不去，但他又无法想象出一个更合理的解释。

1月31日，从开船到现在，“麦伽利号”船在海上已经行驶了整整4天了，可还没有过澳洲和新西兰之间那片狭窄海面的三分之二路程。船主哈赖极少关注船上的事，任凭水手们去做。他每天所做的事情就是抱着大麦烧或白兰地，把自己喝得醉醺醺。看船主这样，水手们也都学他，所以“麦伽利号”基本上就是听天由命。

这样的船长和船员，让麦盖尔不得不格外地留心起来。不止一次，船几乎要翻了，是穆纳和维尔逊急忙将舵扶正。不过，他们的帮忙并没有得到哈赖的感谢，反而遭到辱骂。他们只能忍着，有好几次，他们想把哈赖捆起来，但都被麦盖尔制止了。

麦盖尔对此船的处境非常担心，但为了不让爵士烦心，只能在背地里和少校及巴嘉勒尔说。少校给他出的主意也是把哈赖捆起来，只是说法不一样。

“你觉得怎样对整只船好就怎样做，毫不犹豫地担负起这只船的指挥。如果你不愿意指挥，那你就去驾驶这船。那个醉鬼，我们可以在到了奥克兰后放了他，他还可以继续做他的船主，那时候，他爱让船翻掉是他的事。”

“当然，少校，真到了万不得已的时候，我想我会照您的话去做

的。目前，我们还是照料着就行了。”麦盖尔说。

“你不能领航吗？”巴嘉勒尔问。

“不容易，船上连一张航海地图都没有。”麦盖尔说。

“是这样呀！”

“是的，哈赖这家伙看来对这一带太熟了，根本不需要测算航路。”

“也许他认为，他的船自己会认路，不需要人操作。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“哈哈……如果哈赖在靠近陆地时还不醒，那我们可就麻烦了。”

“但愿到时候他能醒。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“既然如此，你能不能在必要时把‘麦伽利号’开到奥克兰去？”

“关键是没有那一带的地图。礁石就在水下几米处，不管这船多么结实，龙骨一碰到就会散架的。”

“船一散架，船上的人也只能往岸上爬，没有其他办法了吗？”少校问。

“没错。对了，巴嘉勒尔先生，听您说海岸上的毛利人很厉害是吗？”麦盖尔问。

“是呀，我的朋友！毛利人非常聪明，专喜欢吃人肉！”

“你这么一说，如果说格兰特船长的船在新西兰海岸附近沉没，我们就不必去找了？”少校又问。

“沿着海岸找还是可以的，希望上帝保佑，我们不要落入这些残酷的毛利人手里。”巴嘉勒尔说。

这段对话又让巴嘉勒尔想起了两只法国军舰的遭遇。

按照毛利人的风俗，他们的荣誉来自于在受了侮辱后，用血来洗刷。在这样的部落，酋长塔谷里是不可能忘记上次他的部落所受的耻辱的，所以他耐着性子等待欧洲的船只，以便实现自己的复仇计划。

那时候，从法国过来的“卡德尼号”军舰和“马思加南号”来到了塔谷里部落所在的这一区域，由于接连的几场风暴，“卡德尼号”军舰的桅杆受到了严重损坏，于是，马利荣舰长把“卡德尼号”船停在了群岛湾里，去陆地上寻找木材。

5月22日，他在离海岸2公里的地方，发现了一片树林，那里有高大的柏树，柏树附近有个小湾，离他们的船只有1公里。

马利荣舰长让船上三分之二的人带着斧头和工具，去那片树林里砍树，并开出了一条通向小湾的路。同时，他又选了两个据点，第一个据点安置的是病员、铁匠和箍桶匠，在毛土洛小岛上；第二个据点则是一些老实忠厚、身体健壮的毛利人在帮他们干活，位置在离岸1公里半的陆上。

做了这样的安排后，马利荣舰长并没有放松警惕，他让派出去的人都全副武装。在看到毛利人没有武器，而且老实憨厚后，也就让船员们放下了武器。虽然“马思加南号”上的舰长克诺采舰长劝马利荣舰长要小心为上，但他不以为然。

此后，那些毛利人更殷勤了，与船上的官员相处得也很融洽。特别

是在马利荣舰长正式到陆上访问时，那些毛利人还称他为大酋长，并给他的头发上插上了四支白羽毛，以示尊敬。

在他们的造桅工作进行了33天，船上的水库也在淡水里取了水后，6月12日下午2点左右，马利荣把小舟准备好，去塔谷里的村子脚下打鱼。当时，他随身带了两名军官，一名叫弗得利古，另一名叫勒巫。同时还带了一个志愿兵，以及教练官和12名水兵。而那时候，塔谷里和另外五名酋长一直在陪着他。

不过，晚上的时候，马利荣舰长却没有回来。

第二天，“卡德尼号”到毛土洛岛上去装淡水，也没有遇到什么意外，照常回到了船上。但在9点钟的时候，“马思加南号”值班的水兵救起了一个人，那个人叫图尔勒，是马利荣舰长带去的一名水兵。他的腰部被铁矛戳了两下，身负重伤。这就是说，马利荣舰长带去的包括他本人在内的17人，最终只逃回了一个人。

原来，早晨7点钟的时候，毛利人还在热情地欢迎马利荣一行，他们甚至还把马利荣一行背上了岸。但突然，一群带着铁矛、木棒的毛利人向他们冲来。没办法，在人力悬殊的情况下，除了水兵图尔勒之外，其他人全都死了。

图尔勒是在中了两铁矛后，先是躲在了矮树丛中，接着趁毛利人不注意，跑到了海里。

听了图尔勒的讲述，船员们非常气愤，大叫着要报仇，但同时又想着赶快把岸上几个据点的人救回来。

而当时，克诺采舰长并没有在船上，而是在木工厂。于是，首席军

官居克莱陌儿替他临时指挥，将“马思加南号”的大划子派了出去，上面是一名军官和一名士兵，他们要去救木工厂的人。

在途中，他们发现了马利荣舰长的小舟，于是就在那里上了岸。

前面说过，克诺采舰长因为不在兵舰上，所以对大屠杀的事情一无所知。下午2点的时候，他看见一队士兵慌慌张张地向他跑来，才知道出了事。为了预防大家惊慌，他禁止把消息透露出去。

当时，毛利人已经占领了有利位置。克诺采舰长马上命令把所有的工具拆卸下来，把不是很重要的埋掉，将工棚烧掉，然后带着60人往军舰上退。在他们撤退的时候，毛利人还在后面一边追，一边大喊：“塔谷里杀了马利荣了！”

水兵们要去报仇，被克诺采制止了。

在他们登划子时，发现有1000名左右的士兵已经死了，在地上一动不动。当那大划子驶到海里后，石头就像雨点一样飞了过来。4名水兵向毛利人开枪，打死了一名酋长。

克诺采舰长立刻又派一只大划子到毛土洛岛上去，将岛上的伤病员救了回来。

第二天，克诺采舰长又派了一队兵去岛上增防。而最终，法国人进攻了村子，毛利人的6个酋长被杀。

最后，他们还想去看看和马利荣一起被杀的16个人中是否还有活的，并为死者报仇。于是，很多士兵划着一只大划子重新上了岸，并到了塔谷里的村庄。结果发现，阴毒的塔谷里早就跑了，逃跑时，肩上披的就是马利荣舰长的大衣。

士兵们在塔谷里的屋里搜出了很多东西：刚烧过的头盖骨，上面还有被啃过的牙印；一条用木头串起来的人腿；马利荣舰长的硬领衬衫，上面全都是血；士兵和水兵的衣服，弗得利古的手枪，小艇上的质形徽章和一些破烂的布条.....同时，在另一个村里，他们还搜到了很多人肠子，已经被洗得干干净净，有些已经煮熟了。

收集完了这些杀人和吃人的证据后，他们又将被害人的遗骸恭恭敬敬地埋了。最后放了一把火，将整个村子给烧了。

1772年7月14日，两艘兵舰离开了那个伤心之地。

对于新西兰土人不讲信用，会吃人的事情，库克在1773年第二次来新西兰旅行时，也证实了这一点。

12月17日，库克率领由弗诺舰长指挥的一只船来到了这里，并放下一个大划子登陆。他们登陆的目的是去采摘野草，不过那划子出去后却没有回来。当时，上陆地的总共有10个人，一个是候补少尉，另9个人是海员。

弗诺舰长有些不放心的，便派伯勒中尉去找他们。伯勒到了头一个划子登陆的地方后，曾写了如下报告：“那是一幅屠杀惨景，讲起来都让人毛骨悚然。我们同伴的头、肠子、肺.....零散地被丢在沙滩上，旁边有狗在吞食。”

除了以上两次血腥记录，我们有必要说说1815年，有两兄弟也被新西兰毛利人攻击；还有1820年，桑浦生指挥的“波伊得号”上全体船员被杀的事；当然，还有1892年3月1日，酋长爱纳拉罗抢劫来自悉尼的英国双桅船“霍思号”，并杀害了很多水手，将水手的尸体煮熟吃了的事。

有着吃人爱好的毛利人所住的海岸，就是醉鬼哈赖指挥的“麦伽利号”正慢慢驶向的地方。

第三十七章 暗礁丛里的“麦伽利号”

疲惫不堪的航程好像怎么都走不完。2月2日，“麦伽利号”已经行驶6天了，但还是看不到奥克兰的海岸。好在一直吹的是西南风，海水逆流，船也不会倒退，所以也算是件好事。汹涌的波浪让船时不时地掉进浪槽，但又不断地勉强驶出，而每个回合，都会让桅杆猛烈地摇晃。

经常醉醺醺的哈赖是个慢性子，他并不要求船走得多快，所以也没将帆拉得太紧，否则全船的桅杆都有可能倒下来。麦盖尔一直忧心忡忡，盯着船上那摇摇欲坠的零件，希望能尽快到达目的地，免得出什么意外。

由于一直在下雨，海伦夫人和玛丽小姐基本上都是待在舱里不出来。不过有时候，她们也会出来，即使淋湿衣服也不管。当情绪不高的两位女士回到船舱后，大家都想尽办法逗她们开心。巴嘉勒尔有几次还给她们讲故事，但收效甚微。

从家里出发时的信心百倍到现在归家时的垂头丧气，形成了极大的反差。

在这些人中，心情最不好的就是爵士了。他不管外面下没下雨，都会站在甲板上，只要见风停了，他便会拿着望远镜四处搜寻，仿佛想在大海上寻找点什么，他的脸上时不时地露出痛苦和不安的表情。一切对他来说，都已经是力不从心了。

麦盖尔寸步不离地跟在他身边。这一天，爵士在看了看一望无际的

天边后，突然看到海面上的浓雾中出现了一个缺口。麦盖尔也看到了，便问他：“阁下，您是否在寻找陆地？”

爵士摇了摇头。

“我想，您是急着想离开这只双桅船。按理说，36个小时前我们就应该看到奥克兰的信号灯了。”麦盖尔说。

爵士还是不说话，他一直举着望远镜，将望远镜对准地平线，看了有1分多钟。

“陆地没有在那边，阁下可以望望右舷方向。”麦盖尔说。

“为什么要向右舷看？我可不是在找陆地，麦盖尔。”爵士叹口气说。

“那您在找什么，爵士？”

“找我的船，找我们的‘邓肯号’。我觉得它一定就在那里，在海面上干着海盗的勾当，罪恶深重！它是在那里，就是在那里，麦盖尔，告诉我，它就在澳大利亚和新西兰之间，我们能遇到它，一定能遇到。”爵士激动地说。

“希望上帝保佑我们不要遇到它！”

“为什么？”

“难道阁下忘了我们现在所处的环境了吗？要是‘邓肯号’来追我们，我们逃都没办法逃。”

“逃？为什么要逃？”

“爵士！难道您觉得我们可以不逃吗？不过话又说回来了，即使逃也逃不了，我们一定会被俘，一定会被匪徒摆布。本·吉奥兹一伙可是什么事都做得出来的，我们死倒没什么，我们可以流尽最后一滴血保护其他人，可我们死了该怎么办呢？您还要想想爵士夫人呀，还要想想玛丽小姐呀。”

“可怜的女人们！麦盖尔，你知道吗？我心痛死了。我有时候感到非常失望，甚至绝望。因为我觉得好像还有更大的不幸在等待着我们，老天好像在考验我们，和我们作对，我感到非常恐惧。”

“爵士！”

“我没有为自己害怕，我是在为我爱的人和你爱的人担心。”

“不要害怕了，爵士！从现在开始，我负责‘麦伽利号’，你负责察看‘邓肯号’，而看到它不是为了接近，而是为了躲开。”

麦盖尔说得没错，若是遇到“邓肯号”，他们这“麦伽利号”就要倒霉了，而在这片区域，正是海盗们横行的地方，所以遇上非常有可能。不过至少在这一天，他们并没有碰到“邓肯号”。

当天夜里，已经是他们从杜布湾出发的第6个晚上了，麦盖尔担心的事情并没有发生。

然而，这天夜里却很可怕，天空像蒙上了一层布，黑咕隆咚的。哈赖和水手们好像一下子从醉意朦胧中清醒了过来。哈赖走出船舱，一边揉着睡眼惺忪的眼睛，一边摇着肥厚的大耳深吸了两口清新空气，好像是在给自己解乏。然后，他看着桅杆。

风吹得更厉害了，同时风向也发生了变化，开始从西向东吹，将那

条船往新西兰海岸的方向吹去。

哈赖大声叫骂那些水手，让他们赶快把帆落下来，并扯起了夜航帆。麦盖尔知道他的意思，却没说话。他不愿意和这些粗俗的水手说话。不过，为了安全起见，他和爵士还是不能离开甲板，他们不敢不盯着这只船。

两个小时后，狂风大作。哈赖把前帆收了起来，因为“麦伽利号”和美国船一样，是有两层帆架的。这项工作5个水手做起来并不困难。有了这两层帆，只要再把上层的帆落下来，那么前帆就能缩小到最小面积了。

狂风让风浪大了起来，“麦伽利号”的底部震动得特别厉害，如同撞在了岩石上。不等笨重的船壳涌上浪头，便又被打了下去。海水冲上了甲板，就连甲板左舷边的小艇也被冲得无影无踪了。

麦盖尔不安起来，浪头虽然不大，但如果换了别的船，还是可以随浪行驶的，完全不用担心。不过这只船却很可能会下沉，因为每往下沉一下，甲板上溅起的海水就会因为排水口没有排出而溢满船舱。

因此，为了预防万一。麦盖尔建议砍破舷板，让水更容易往外流，但这个建议却被哈赖拒绝了。这还不算什么，还有更大的危险在等着他们。当快要11点的时候，站在甲板下风处的麦盖尔和维尔逊听到了异响，他们本能地警觉起来。麦盖尔对水手说：“是回澜！”

“对！是海浪触到了礁石反弹回来了。”

“怎么也有400米吧！”

“最多还有400米就是陆地了。”

麦盖尔将身子探出了舷外，他观察着那片幽暗之地，大声说：“维尔逊，快测水！”

守在船头的哈赖丝毫没有意识到危险，维尔逊抓起测水钟，跑到了前桅的桅盘处。他抛下了铅锤，让绳子从指缝间流出，不过在溜了三段后，铅锤停了。

“只有3英寻！”维尔逊说。

“我们钻进礁石丛了。哈赖！”麦盖尔对船主哈赖说。

哈赖无所谓地耸了耸肩。他走到了船舵处，将船舵不停地扭动，让它向着下风的船舷。此时已经非常危险了，维尔逊丢下测水钟，使劲去拉前桅的调帆索，并让船帆兜着风转了过去，同时又把哈赖推到了一边。而此时，哈赖还不知道维尔逊为什么要推他。

“就让风吹吧！放松扣帆索！”麦盖尔一边喊，一边掉转船头，让船避开了一块礁石。

半分钟之后，危险解除了。船开始往礁石缝里钻，天虽然很黑，但却能看见有条汹涌的白线正在离船约4英里的地方。

哈赖这才知道大祸临头了，惊慌起来，说起话来也是前言不搭后语，胡乱地发着命令。这一切都说明这个醉鬼被吓得失去了常态。他一直觉得陆地离船还有二三十公里，一切都平安无事。

谁知靠近陆地的也有险滩，海浪将船打出了他平常走的路线。真是经验主义害死人啊！

其实此时他还不知道，麦盖尔已经采取紧急措施，将船驶离险滩了，但糟糕的是无法搞清方向，所以船很可能只能在礁石圈漂荡。

风依然在向东方吹，船也颠簸得越加厉害了。船头和船尾随便落下哪一头，都有可能触礁。果然很快，暗礁越来越多，他们必须将船来个大转弯，逆风行驶到没有暗礁的水面才行。

不过，像这样一条不稳当的船，帆面缩得又小，想要让它急转弯很难，但也可以尝试一下。

“把船舵转向下风船舷！”麦盖尔朝维尔逊大喊。

“麦伽利号”慢慢地接近暗礁，很快，海浪打在了水下的岩石上，飞起很大的泡沫，泡沫在浪头发发出明晃晃的白光，像一片磷光罩在了浪头上。大海也开始咆哮、怒吼。

维尔逊和穆纳爬在舵盘上，可舵已经转到了底部，不能再转了。就在这惊险的一瞬间，随着砰的一声响，“麦伽利号”撞在了岩石上，支索断了，前桅也变得不再稳定。受了这样损坏的船，还能不能转过头来呢？

不能了！因为一个高浪打过来，将船推到了暗礁上方，随即又往下掉，“麦伽利号”重重地摔在了礁石上，一动也不能动了。

船舱里的玻璃被震烂了，船上的人也都跑到了甲板上。由于海浪一直在冲洗着甲板，所以情况非常危险。麦盖尔知道船已经深深陷入到了沙里，所以叫爵士他们回到船舱去。

“到底发生什么事了？这船怎么了？”爵士问。

“沉肯定是不沉，不过海浪会不会将船打散，这就难说了。幸好我们还能想出办法来。”麦盖尔说。

“放小艇下海不行吗？”

“等天亮再说吧！现在天太黑，浪也大，又不知道哪里是陆地。”

此时，哈赖就像疯了一样，在甲板上来来回回地跑着。他的手下，那些水手在惊慌了一会儿后，也开始破罐子破摔，用酒精来麻醉自己。麦盖尔怕他们喝醉了闹事，但要是想靠那疯了般的哈赖制止他们，显然也不可能，因为那个疯子醉鬼正在心里打着算盘，计算这次会让他损失多少，是否能够获得保险公司的索赔。

麦盖尔没有去打扰他，而是让同伴们武装起来，随时准备和喝得烂醉的水手们的骚扰作斗争。此刻，醉鬼们正在甲板上哭爹骂娘，说着脏话。

“你们要是敢跑到船舱去，我会像打狗一样将你们打死。”少校说。

喝醉的水手们被少校那严肃而凶狠的话语吓住了，一溜烟跑了。这时候，麦盖尔才耐心地等待天亮，不再担心醉鬼闹事。

风停了下来，海浪也平静了，陷在沙子里的船一动不动。麦盖尔想在太阳出来后，寻找能够上陆地的地方。此时，船上唯一的交通工具就是一个吊在右舷上的小划子。小划子很小，一次只能坐四个人，所以想要把他们全都运到陆地上，怎么也要跑四趟。

伏在舱篷里的麦盖尔，极力想要透过黑色暗夜看到些什么。他在心里盘算，如果这里离海岸比较远，那么那只划子是否禁得起跑三趟运人？他竭力地想着，期盼着东方早点吐出鱼肚白。

对麦盖尔一直都很信任的两位女士回去休息了，男士们听不到醉鬼的叫声，精神也恢复了。静悄悄的船上，就像在沙滩上睡着了般一动不动。

等到天蒙蒙亮时，已经是凌晨4点，麦盖尔站在了甲板上。此时，大地已经渐渐开始泛白，天边也有云朵出现。广阔的天空有晨雾浮现，还有一丝亮光如灯塔般在山峰闪耀。山峰完全遮住了他的视线，所以无法看到初升的太阳。

在大约15公里远的地方，他看到了陆地。

“有陆地！”麦盖尔大叫。

大家被麦盖尔的叫声惊醒，全都跑到了甲板上，一起望着天边出现的海岸。不管这个海岸上住着善的还是恶的人，他们都必须去，因为那是他们唯一逃难的地方。

“哈赖去什么地方了？”爵士问。

“不知道，爵士！他和那几个水手不知跑去哪里了。”麦盖尔说。

“马上找到他们，不能丢下他们不管。”仁慈的爵士一向都是这样。

大家找遍了船上的水手间、中舱和下舱，都没有他们的影子。

“会不会掉到海里了？”巴嘉勒尔问。

“很有可能！”麦盖尔担心地说。

说完，他走向了船尾。

“我们找划子吧！”他说着话，和维尔逊、穆纳一起想放划子，没想到却找不到划子了。

第三十八章 浮不起来的船

原来，趁着天黑，哈赖和他的水手利用船上唯一的小划子逃跑了。

“这群自私的家伙跑掉就跑掉吧，免得给我们添麻烦。”麦盖尔安慰爵士说。

“是的，我们船上多得是勇敢的人。今后，麦盖尔就是‘麦伽利号’上的临时船长，我们都做你的水手，听从你的指挥。”

爵士的话引得大家哈哈大笑。年轻的船长麦盖尔看了看大海，又看了看那残缺不全的船桅说：“现在我们想脱险有两个办法，第一个办法就是把船弄出来，然后开到海里去；第二就是做木筏上岸。”

“如果能将船弄出来，当然是最好的了。”爵士说。

“这船损坏的程度怎么样？”海伦夫人问。

“我觉得应该不是很厉害，夫人！我们可以在船头装一个临时桅杆，让它代替前桅的作用。这样虽然走起来慢，但怎么也会到达目的地的。”

“那我们就先检查一下船损坏的程度吧！”少校说。

爵士、麦盖尔和穆纳用了3个小时的时间，把货舱里的皮革移开，然后将一部分丢在了海里，以便减轻船体的重量。在彻查船底时，他们发现船左边靠近腰板的地方有裂口，幸好“麦伽利号”一直在向右倾斜，

裂口正好对着天空，所以海水没有从那里流进去。维尔逊在那裂口处又塞了一些麻线，并打上了一个铜补丁。

底舱里灌进去的水不多，用抽水机很容易抽干，这又能减轻一些船的重量。

在检查船的壳时，麦盖尔并没有发现船上有因为搁浅而受到的大损伤，不过副龙骨有一部分嵌在了沙里，他们必须要想办法弄出来。

维尔逊在检查完船的内部后，又去了船座，确定了船搁浅的沙地的部位。

所有的事情都做完了，现在只需想办法将船弄出来。太平洋涨潮的水位并不高，不过即使这样，麦盖尔还是想利用涨潮的浪头将“麦伽利号”冲起来。但做个临时桅杆也是需要很长一段时间的，所以正午涨潮时并没有赶上。他们只好再仔细观察水势对船头的影响，以便等下次涨潮再试。

计划好后，大家开始着手准备，麦盖尔让人将桅杆上剩下的帆全都卷了起来，然后又落下主帆、副帆和顶帆。机灵的小罗伯尔像只猫一样蹿上了桅杆，大胆地做起了见习水手的工作，为这次的尝试立了大功。

接下来要做的就是抛锚。他们需要在船的后面，也就是龙骨方向抛一个或两个锚，以便在船尾涨潮时浮起来。其实，现在如果有个小划子就好多了，没有的话，他们也只能用前桅断掉的木头和空酒桶做木筏，以此作为运锚的工具。而只要在他们抛锚的时候，吃得住底，那么船浮起来就有希望了。

想好了对策后，他们开始做木筏。做木筏的时候，船上的所有人都

参加进来了。他们先用斧头砍断了系着索的前桅，然后又让残桅倒下去，接着将桅盘取了下来。

麦盖尔主要想用空桶托桅盘，然后做成一个桅盘筏，这样空桶就能增加浮力了。而当桅盘筏上装上一个槽后，整个桅盘筏也就好操作多了。

造筏的工作仅仅只做了一半，正午就到了。麦盖尔让爵士带领大家继续做筏，自己则去测算地理位置。为了方便测地理位置，麦盖尔去了哈赖的房间，从那里找来了一本格林尼治天文台年鉴和六分仪，透过六分仪上的望远镜，他能看到地平线，这样也就能测算出数据了。不过没想到，北面有块陆地延伸到海洋，将那地平线遮住了，根本没办法测算。

既然如此，他就必须用人工地平线来代替。而要做人工地平线，通常要用一个装满水银的大平盘来测量。没有水银的话，还可以用流质的柏油来代替。麦盖尔知道了新西兰西岸的经度，所要测的只是它的纬度。

首先，他用六分仪测出了太阳从子午线到地平线的距离，测出的结果是68分30秒，由此也就知道太阳和天心的距离是21分30秒。由于两个数据加起来是90度，所以再根据格林尼治年鉴，就能得出纬度值，也就是38度。

由此确定，“麦伽利号”的方位是东经171度13秒和南纬38度。

麦盖尔又看了一下地图，发现“麦伽利号”现在已经偏离原航线一个纬度，稍稍偏南了，所以现在他们必须向北航行一个纬度才能到达新西兰的都城。

在把方位测定好后，正好是12点15分。大家站在甲板上，焦急地观察着“麦伽利号”的动静，他们期待它能在浪潮的作用下，从沙地里浮起来。不过，虽然船下发出了嘎啦嘎啦的声响，但最多只能说明船在颤动，船身依然纹丝不动。

下午2点的时候，锚被放在了造好的木筏上。麦盖尔和维尔逊在船尾系了一条细铁链，登筏抛锚。借着涨潮，木筏漂到了船后，并在距船约100米，水深大概10英寸的地方抛了锚。锚吃住了海底，他们又运主锚，将其抛在离水深12英寸的地方。

把这些准备工作做好后，只等涨潮最厉害的那刻到来了。麦盖尔既激动又高兴，夸奖了水手们几句，并重点夸奖了巴嘉勒尔，开玩笑说只要他好好干，以后会提升他做水手长的。

此时，奥比尔已经做好了饭，目的是让大家吃得饱饱的，好有精神干活。饭后，麦盖尔又把各方面都检查了一番。因为想要把一个搁浅的船弄出来并不是一件容易的事，所以他不能粗心大意，否则会前功尽弃的。

为了让船上的重量减轻，麦盖尔又让人把船上的大部分货物扔进了海里，并将船上比较有重量的皮捆子、松段、备用帆架和几吨生铁全都放到了船的尾部，以便压住船尾，帮助船头翘起。同时，他们还把很多空酒桶滚到船尾，然后又往里面装上了水，以便加强船头的浮力。

这些事情做完已经是半夜了，全体人员累得腰酸背痛。此时的风力在慢慢减弱，大家观察着云层的颜色和形状，发现风向有所变化。麦盖尔将这个情况报告给了爵士，并提议暂时休息，等第二天再说。

他说：“第一，我们都太累了，没有力气肯定做不好这件事；第

二，如果船浮起来了，我们在黑暗中也很难让船在暗礁堆里穿行；第三，看云层情况，明天会刮西北风，这可能是老天在帮我们，所以我们要把桅杆上的帆张起来，逆风而行，这样帆力就能将船浮起来了。”

麦盖尔的理由非常充分，这让船上性子最急的爵士和巴嘉勒尔也不得不同意。这一晚上，他们轮流值班，护船看锚，一整夜就这么平静地度过了。

一切都没出麦盖尔的预料。天亮了，西北风也刮起来了，而且越刮越大。大家全都集合起来，做好了张帆的准备。由于他们想利用的满潮还没到达，所以就在船头装上了便桅，以便替代前桅，这样一来，船漂起来的话，也就能驶离这片险滩了。

在将大大小小的帆全都升上去之后，潮水开始上涨。浪头一个接一个地打了过来，原本裸露的礁石渐渐看不见了，就像一个个的海怪，回到自己的老巢一样消失不见了。

艰巨的工作马上就要开始了，这种等待的焦躁感侵袭着他们每个人的心灵。也许因为过度紧张，每个人都很严肃，一句话都不说，静静地等待着命令。麦盖尔聚精会神地观察着潮势，盯着被他们拉得很长很紧的铁链。

1点钟的时候，潮水涨到了最大值，这时，麦盖尔一声令下，大帆主帆一起被拉了起来，风力被兜起来了，鼓在桅杆上。

“快转绞盘！”麦盖尔大声喊道。

绞盘上装着摇把，大家拼命地摇着，两条粗大的铁链在绞盘的强力转动下被拉得笔直。锚由于在海底被吃得太紧，转起来并不容易，而想

要开船成功，必须转得快才行。此时，风更大了，帆全都鼓了起来，贴住了桅杆，将船拼命往外推。

大家感觉到了船的颤动，船好像就要浮起来了。

此时，如果再有人能帮把手，说不定船就能从沙滩里浮出来。

“海伦，玛丽，过来帮忙！”爵士喊。

两个在旁边紧张握拳的女士急忙跑了过来，和大家一起用力。绞盘轮子上的掣子再次响了一下。不过也只响了一下，便不再响了，因为绞盘再也转不动了，那只桅船一动不动。这也就说明，他们全部的努力宣告失败。

潮水开始下降，不过，就是风再大，浪再高，这船也还是浮不起来。

既然第一种方案失败了，那么他们就必须执行第二种方案，也就是丢下这只船。因为他们如果想在这只船上等别的船来拯救，未免太可笑了。

这种地方其他船只根本不可能来，人家的船长和水手又不是酒鬼。何况就算是真能等到一只船，想必那“麦伽利号”也早被海浪打成碎片了。

在这种情况下，如果有大一点的风暴，船很可能被打得在沙滩上摇摆，船肯定也会散架。如此看来，船散架不可避免，所以麦盖尔决定在船散架之前，尽快登陆。

麦盖尔建议扎个“浮台”。“浮台”是船员的术语，其实就是造个木

筏，一个坚固结实的木筏，能够装上足够的粮食去新西兰海岸的木筏。这时候，一切的讨论都是多余，决定了就必须尽快执行。

晚上，他们的造木筏工作差不多要完工了，但因为天黑，他们不得不停下来。

吃过晚饭，海伦夫人和玛丽小姐回舱里休息，巴嘉勒尔和其他人在甲板上走来走去，谈起了一些严肃的问题。小罗伯尔一直跟在他们身后，这个勇敢的孩子一直聚精会神地听着，像个大人一样，想为即将到来的危险贡献一分力量。

巴嘉勒尔问麦盖尔可不可以在附近着陆，这样就能沿着海岸走到奥克兰去了。麦盖尔没有回答他，因为他不想让巴嘉勒尔失望，不想告诉他，走路几乎不可能到奥克兰。

“木筏到不了岸，那用双桅船上的小划子可以吗？”巴嘉勒尔问。

“当然可以，不过必须要在白天划才行。”

“看来，那自私胆小的坏家伙们肯定是扔下我们去奥克兰了。”

“不要再提他们了。那些没有道义的醉鬼，说不定已经掉在海里喂鱼了呢！”

“要是掉海里了也活该。谁让他们把划子划走不顾我们的？”

“不要再提这些事了，过去的还提它干什么？很快我们也会坐木筏离开的。”爵士说。

“我们不能就近上岸！”巴嘉勒尔说。

“什么？仅仅走30公里你就怕了？”爵士说。

“怎么会呢，爵士！我知道我们可以走过去，我从不怀疑我们的毅力，就连两位女士我都不怀疑。30公里，在其他地方，绝对不算什么大事。可是在新西兰不一样。你们不要认为是我胆小。如果穿越美洲、澳大利亚大陆，我举双手赞成。不过我要重复一句，我们千万不能就近登陆。”巴嘉勒尔严肃地说。

“为什么？”爵士问。

“因为这里的毛利人，也就是土人太可怕了。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“土人不用害怕。我们都全副武装，怕什么，就是来几个土人袭击，我们也不怕。”

“不是几个土人的问题，是新西兰土人结成了一个可怕的部落，他们反抗英国的统治，一直在和侵略者作斗争，而且常常会战胜，然后将敌人吃掉。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“什么？这里的土人会吃人？”小罗伯尔大惊。

随后，小罗伯尔又喃喃自语道：“姐姐，海伦夫人！我害怕！”

“好孩子！不用怕！”爵士安慰他后，又对巴嘉勒尔说，“我的朋友，你是不是说得太夸张了？”

“我说得一点都不夸张，爵士！罗伯尔是个大人了，我们不可能瞒他，我们应该让他知道这些。”

巴嘉勒尔说完，停了一下又说：“你觉得新西兰的人都很慈悲？去

年的时候，有个英国人在离奥克兰只有几公里的地方被残忍地杀害了，这个英国人叫瓦克拉。而且这些土人还是在英国官方眼皮底下杀的人。”

“算了吧！这些故事一点都不真实，旅行家经常把一件平常的事形容得惊险万分，恨不得说自己是从土人肚子里逃出来的。”少校说。

“没错，我也知道，有些话是有水分的，不过还有很多说法是可靠的，比如说牧师肯达尔、马德逊，船长狄龙、居威、拉布拉斯等等，难道我们也不相信他们的话吗？毛利人的酋长死了，他们会杀人来祭天。他们还会用人做供品，说这样可以平息死者的怨气。不拿人做供品，死人的怨气就会发泄到生人头上，而且他们还觉得杀人祭奠死者是在给死人送仆人。最后，他们会把祭奠死者的人吃掉。所以说，杀人祭奠风俗的成分少，吃人的成分多。”

巴嘉勒尔说得没错。在新西兰、斐济岛或托雷斯海峡，吃人已经变成了一种风俗了。不过，说到底吃人也是因为食物缺乏，填不饱肚子才会这样的。后来，这种残忍的风俗也就被定成了教规，赋予了神圣的意义。从此以后，吃人由只为填饱肚子变成了一种礼仪，这就是吃人风俗的演变。

在毛利人眼里，吃人很平常。此外，他们还觉得吃敌人是在给自己积蓄力量和勇气。同时，因为这些能量会聚集在大脑，所以在吃人时，人脑就是他们的主菜。

巴嘉勒尔认为新西兰的土人之所以吃人主要是因为饥饿，所以不但大洋洲那些不开化的野人会这样做，欧洲也有这样的土人。于是他说：“吃人的风俗在最文明的民族中也曾出现，并不是只有几个特殊人

士才这样。而这些吃人的人，大多存在于苏格兰的祖先中。”

“是这样吗，巴嘉勒尔先生？”少校不相信。

“当然是这样了。不会错的，不信你看看圣·哲罗姆描写的苏格兰阿提考利人吧，看了你就知道你的祖先究竟是什么样的人了。而且你不用去远古找，就在伊丽莎白时代找，莎士比亚笔下的索内·宾就是一个苏格兰土匪，因为吃人肉而被判死刑。为什么吃人？是宗教吗？宗教不会教人吃人的，是因为饥饿，饥饿让他们没有了人性。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“难道真是因为饥饿？”麦盖尔问。

“那当然，在这飞鸟走兽很少的地方，就是打猎也打不到什么，他们便只好吃人了。而且这些地方还有专门吃人的季节，就像文明国家有打猎季一样。在那吃人的季节所谓的打猎，其实就是部落与部落之间的战争，战败者就成了战胜部落的菜了。”

“照你这么说，巴嘉勒尔，吃人的习惯只有在新西兰到处都是牛、羊、猪等牲畜的时候，才会灭绝吗？”爵士问。

“那是当然了，爵士！”

“那么他们是怎么吃人的？是生吃还是煮熟了吃？”少校又问。

“少校先生！你为什么要问这个？”小罗伯尔惊慌万分。

“孩子，一定要问清楚，要是他们真要吃我的话，我还是希望他们把我煮熟了再吃。”

“为什么？”

“这样他们就不至于活剥我了呀！”

“少校，你想得美！不过就是把你放在锅里煮，不是也很难受吗？”巴嘉勒尔说。

“唉！算了，反正怎么都是死，在活剥和活煮之间，我就不选择了。”

“少校，老实告诉你吧！新西兰人吃人肉，一定会煮熟或烤熟的。对人肉的烹饪，他们可是行家。不过，要我说嘛，一想到要被人吃掉，我就不舒服。把自己送进未开化的土人的肚子里，真是太不划算了！”巴嘉勒尔说这些的时候，看起来非常认真。

“一句话！我们绝对不能落到毛利人手里，对吗？”

第三十九章 新西兰的反殖民斗争

地理学家所说不虚，新西兰土人吃人的事也不用怀疑。所以，就近上陆确实是有危险的。不过待在船上更危险，因为“麦伽利号”很快就会被风浪打坏，想要等来往的船解救是幻想，所以他们必须离开。

这里不可能有船只来往。所有来新西兰又想找地方靠岸的，不是在奥克兰就是在新普利默斯，“麦伽利号”现在搁浅的位置正好在那两个地方之间，而且正是伊卡纳马威海岸最偏僻的地带。

同时，这一地带也是土人窝，所以他们逃上岸后，必须尽快走开，而且越快越好。

“我们什么时候出发？”爵士问。

“明天早上10点钟吧，那时正好是潮水上涨的时候，潮水会将我们带上岸的。”麦盖尔说。

第二天，汇聚全部人心血的木筏造好了。不过木筏太小，装不下全部的人和食物，他们必须再造一个。造一个既能经得起风浪，又能便于操纵的木筏，而造木筏的工具自然就是桅杆了。

他们马上把支帆索砍断，大桅从右舷栏杆处倒了下来，掉进了海里，而那栏杆也随着嘎吱声，倒了下来。在将大桅砍倒后，“麦伽利号”船面就变得光秃秃的了。在大桅被锯成三段后，木筏的骨干也就有了。

他们又把前桅的断料同大桅结合起来，这时候，所有的松段都结实地联结在一起。细心的麦盖尔还将木料间装上了六只空桶，以便增加木筏的浮力。把基础做好后，维尔逊又在木筏上铺上了舱口的格子框，这样木筏上就有了漏空地板，而当浪头打向木筏时，也不会停在木筏上面。

最后，他们又将挡水板紧紧地钉在木筏的周围，以便阻止海水溅到木筏的面上。

这天早晨是顺风。麦盖尔见能够利用风当动力，便又架起了一个桅杆，四周还用支桅索拉紧，并在桅上挂起了便帆。同时，他们还在木筏后部安上了一个宽掌舵，以便在风浪大的时候操控方向。

就这样，一个新型木筏做成了。9点钟的时候，他们开始往上装食物，所装的食物足够他们食用到奥克兰了。接着，他们又把贮藏室的一些粗粮、劣质饼干及两桶咸鱼装了上去。装那些东西的时候，因为看上去质量太差，厨师长奥比尔都有些难为情。

食物是装在封闭的木箱子里的，以便防止水渗进去。接着，他们又将枪械弹药装了上去，好在他们有短枪，需要用时也很方便。同时，他们还装上了一个便锚，之所以装便锚就是为了预防无法使木筏一次到达岸边，在海里停泊时用。

10点钟的时候，潮水开始上涨，风也从西北边吹来，并在海面上荡起了浪花。

“大家准备好了吗？”麦盖尔大声问。

“准备好了！船长！”维尔逊说。

“那就上船！”麦盖尔大喊一声。

大家很快就爬上了木筏。穆纳一下子砍断缆绳，张起帆，木筏在风力及潮湿的推动下向陆地进发。

他们离岸有5公里左右。如果是个划子，用不到3个小时就能到达。但他们所用的木筏就很难说了。如果风势不减，说不定一个涨潮就能将他们顺利送上岸；但如果风停了，潮也落了，那么他们就必须停下来，等第二次涨潮时再来。

当然，大家希望一次就能成功。

风越来越大。刚开始的时候，木筏航行起来很快，黑色的礁石和黄色的沙滩很快就在波涛中淹没了。为了避免触礁，他们的注意力高度集中，生怕出现一丝差错，导致木筏的航行方向发生变化。

中午的时候，他们距海岸还有2.8公里。天气晴朗，大家隐隐看到了陆地的样子。东北边耸立着的高峰有800米左右，它的侧影像极了一只仰着脖子的猴子，龇牙咧嘴的。那座山叫比龙山，非常有名，从地图上看处在南纬38度的地方。

12点的时候，巴嘉勒尔再让大家看时，发现所有的礁石都不见了。

“还有一个礁石呢。”海伦夫人突然说。

“哦？在什么地方？”巴嘉勒尔问。

“你们看，在那里！”海伦夫人用手指着。

大家朝她指的方向看去，发现1海里之外的地方有个小黑点。

“还真是，我们可要记住它的方向，等会儿潮水淹没它了，我们看不见的话，很可能会触礁的。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“维尔逊，那块礁石正对着北边山，划的时候要注意，离它远点。”麦盖尔嘱咐维尔逊。

为了控制方向，维尔逊全力压住木筏的后舵。不过奇怪的是，走了半公里了，那黑点依然浮在海面上。麦盖尔拿起望远镜朝那黑点看了看说：“不是礁石，是浮着的一个东西。”

“会不会是船上的桅杆？”海伦夫人问。

“不会！桅杆不可能飘这么远。”

“别急，让我看看！”

麦盖尔仔细看了看后，惊讶地说：“是小划子。”

“啊？是双桅船上的小划子？”爵士也很吃惊。

“没错，小划子现在底朝天了。”

“太不幸了，想必上面的人都死了。”海伦夫人叹息道。

“他们是晚上走的，那时候天黑浪大，就那么在暗礁里穿行，很危险的。”麦盖尔说。

“愿上帝可怜可怜他们吧！”玛丽小姐喃喃道。

木筏上的大家都沉默下来。

之后，他们离小划子越来越近，很明显，小划子是在距离岸边约2公里的海面上翻掉的，小划子上坐着的人，一个都没能逃出。

“向小划子靠近，说不定它对我们有用。”爵士说。

穆纳站在木筏的前部，挡住了划子，不让它撞上木筏。翻了的划子在风的吹拂下，悠悠地漂着，离他们越来越近。

“是空的吗？”麦盖尔问。

“没错，船长，是空的。舷裂开了，对我们没什么用。”维尔逊说。

“难道一点用处都没有？”少校问。

“没错，也许能当柴火烧。”麦盖尔说。

“太可惜了，如果小划子不破的话，还能带我们去奥克兰。”巴嘉勒尔叹气道。

“小划子坏了，这么大的浪，还是坐木筏更安全一些。小划子轻轻一撞就会碎的。爵士，我看我们就不要在这里停留太久了！”麦盖尔说。

“由你决定！”爵士回答。

“维尔逊，我们沿海岸前行。”麦盖尔下命令道。

看情形，潮还要涨1个小时。木筏因此又趁着潮势向前走了1公里。不过这时候风完全停了下来，甚至还有微微的逆风在吹，因此木筏不动了。过了一会儿，随着涨潮，木筏甚至开始后退。麦盖尔没有丝毫迟疑，马上命令停泊。

穆纳早就想这样了，所以很快将锚抛下，锚落在了海底约5英寸深的地方，木筏在后退了4米后，把锚缆拉得更紧了，帆也被卷了起来，大家都做好了停泊一段时间的准备。

陆地就在不到2公里远的地方，他们看都看得到，但又可望而不可即。潮水会在晚上9点钟以后再次涨起来的，所以麦盖尔觉得既然不准备晚上划行，那就必须停到凌晨5点。

海水汹涌，浪头被掀起很高，一浪一浪地涌上了岸。爵士问麦盖尔为什么不利用这种浪头前行，说不定很快就能将他们送上岸。

麦盖尔说：“阁下，您是被光学现象迷惑了，浪头看起来是在运动，其实并没走，流动的只是水分子而已。不信您将木板丢在海里试试，它一定会停在海面上不动的。所以我们只能耐心等待了。”

“那就先吃晚饭，晚饭后再说。”少校说。

于是，奥比尔拿出了几块干肉和10块大饼干。让大家吃这种东西，奥比尔很不舒服。不过大家似乎吃得很香，虽然海浪将木筏颠得一上一下，但女士们也吃得津津有味。

一个又急又大的浪扑了过来，木筏动荡得更厉害了，有人甚至以为木筏已经触礁了。缆绳拉得越来越吃力，怕绳索被拉断，麦盖尔便每隔半个小时，让人放1英寸，让木筏随水流漂一会儿。

慢慢地，麦盖尔着急起来，不管是缆绳断了还是锚滑了，都会产生不可想象的后果。此时，天慢慢黑了下来，太阳只剩下微弱的影子，在地平线后面缓缓下沉。水波向西方微微荡着，像银片般撒在了海面上。远远望去，有个黑点在茫茫的海面上出现，那是搁浅的“麦伽利号”，它

一动也不动。

好像从黄昏到夜晚只用了几分钟时间。很快，横亘在东面和北面的陆地就那么在夜影中消失了。

大家挤在窄小的木筏上，心急如焚。有的睡着了；有的迷迷糊糊；有的心乱如麻，即使睡着也做着噩梦；有的则一夜未曾合眼。天亮的时候，大家站起身活动了一下筋骨，都是疲惫不堪。

随着涨潮，风又起了。早晨6点钟的时候，麦盖尔急忙安排划木筏，不料情况发生了变化，锚由于嵌在沙里太深，即使木筏上装有滑车，依然拔不出来。

麦盖尔只能命人砍缆绳，让它永远沉进海里。不过，如果这次涨潮不能将他们送上岸的话，他们中间也无法停泊。

帆又被张了起来，木筏慢慢地向陆地浮去。在晨曦中，远处出现了浅灰色黑影。行驶中，他们遇到了很多礁石，但都巧妙地绕过去了。不过目前海风不稳，想要靠岸并不是件容易的事。

9点钟的时候，他们离陆地还有不到1公里的距离。他们看到了岸上的沙滩，还看到沙滩很陡，所以必须在沙滩中找到一个停靠的地方。风越来越弱，最后停了下来。帆耷拉着，拍着桅杆，这倒成了木筏的累赘。麦盖尔马上让人将它取了下来。

现在，只能靠涨潮将木筏冲到岸边了。不过，这不仅会让方向无法控制，而且因为大面积海藻的阻碍，会让木筏无法前行。

10点钟的时候，麦盖尔见木筏差不多不动了，而岸边又近在咫尺。想停吧，没有锚。等会儿遇到落潮，很可能木筏又会被冲进海里去的。

麦盖尔急得团团转，手足无措起来。

幸运的是，木筏像是突然撞到了什么，停下了。原来是搁浅在了离岸仅有25米的沙滩上。

几位男士急忙跳进水里，将木筏用缆索固定在了一块礁石上。两位女士则被大家举起，递着送上了岸，这让她们的衣服上一点水也没沾。很快，他们的武器、粮食也都到了这片骇人的海滨。

爵士虽然很想一点时间都不耽误地向奥克兰进发，不过从早晨开始，天空就阴云密布，等他们下了木筏，天空已经下起了雨。所以继续前行肯定行不通，他们必须找个避雨的地方。

好在维尔逊很快就在海边寻找到了一个被海水侵蚀形成的天然深岩洞。大家也便带着粮食和武器进去了。他们将原先被海水打进来的成堆的海藻做成了天然的床铺，然后躺下休息。洞口还有几块干木头，大家点着，烤干了衣服。

麦盖尔原本以为这雨会来得快，去得也快。没想到一下就下了好几个小时。风也在猛烈地吹着，大家只好耐心地等待。

没有任何交通工具，如果此时在外面乱跑，必定是疯子才会做的事。而且奥克兰并不算很远，只需几天就能走到。对他们来说，如果遇到新西兰土人的话，他们晚个一天半天都没关系。

在熔岩洞里休息的时候，他们谈起了新西兰的战争。为了让大家更清楚地明白他们即将面临的危险，这里有必要介绍一下北岛上的流血事件。

这事发生在1642年。当时，塔士曼到达库克海峡后，新西兰这个地

方便经常有欧洲船只来往，但仅仅只是生意往来，这里的人依然可以悠闲地过他们自由自在的生活——没有一个欧洲国家想要占领这些分布在太平洋上的岛屿。

后来，有些来自英国的传教士，不断灌输一些思想，希望新西兰的酋长接受英帝国的统治。上当受骗的酋长们便给维多利亚女王写了封信，要求受她的保护。那时候，酋长们根本没想到这是一个圈套。不过，有个人预言说：“以后我们这片土地就要被外国人占领，不再属于我们了，我们要变成他们的奴隶了。”

1840年，“先驱号”军舰开到了伊卡纳马威岛北部的群岛湾。舰长霍波逊下船到克罗那勒卡村，招呼全村村民到教堂开会，并在那个会上宣读了英国女王的委任状。

第二年的1月，新西兰的一些主要酋长被召集起来开会，霍波逊想让他们出卖土地，说他们得到了英女王的保护，而且还得到了自由，所以土地就应该是英国女王的了。最开始的时候，那些酋长的意见分歧很大，但最终还是没有能经受住花言巧语以及金钱的诱惑，承认了领土属于英国。

此后，从1840年到“邓肯号”离开克莱德湾，整个局势没有巴嘉勒尔不知道的，所以他也打算毫无保留地告诉大家。

“我曾听说新西兰人民是非常勇敢的，虽然他们做了让步，但也只是短时期的让步。之后的抵抗也正说明了这个问题。新西兰的毛利族是个大部落，在他们推选酋长时，都是英勇善战的人当选。同时，这个民族的人全都身材高大，英勇无比，比如有个叫希熙的酋长，他的英勇善战甚至能超越法兰西古代的名将威森杰托利。而现在，在伊卡纳马威

岛，酋长桑淳逊仍然在率领民众为保卫国土斗争，战争可以说一直就没断过。”

“英国人不是已经控制新西兰了吗？为什么还会这样？”麦盖尔问。

“控制是没错，霍波逊舰长曾做了岛上的总督，而且还在一些条件较好的地方建立了殖民区，总共有9个，人口也超过了18万零346人，很多商业城市也都在各个地方出现。而北岛上也有了新普利默斯、阿呼普利、惠灵顿等城市，这些城市非常繁荣，而且常有船舶往来。在南岛，还有号称新西兰的花园、赛过法国蒙伯烈的纳尔逊，库克海峡上的皮克敦、克赖斯特彻奇、英佛加尔及尔、都内丁……所有的这些城市，全都有一个特点，那就是无法判断它的优势和劣势。当然，这些城市并不是土人的村落，也不是木棚遍地，而是有码头、教堂、银行、船舶、植物园、风土研究所、报馆、医院、慈善社团、神学院、帮会组织、俱乐部、合唱团、剧院、万国展览馆……总之，和伦敦、巴黎没有多大差别。今年，这里还有全世界的工业品展览，也许现在展览正进行得火热。”

“太奇怪了！跟土人还在打仗，怎么能开展览呢？”海伦夫人惊讶道。

“英国人怎么可能在乎战争？打仗不可能让他们害怕，他们可以一边打仗，一边开展览。甚至他们还有可能在土人的枪口下修铁路。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“那战争的情况怎么样了？”麦盖尔问。

“我们离开欧洲都有6个月了，所以之后的事情我也不太清楚。不过，穿过澳大利亚时，我们应该能从报纸上了解一些情况，说不定会说

北岛的战争正打得火热。”

“那这战争是从什么时候开始打起的呢？”玛丽小姐问。

“战争是从1863年开始的。不过，在这之前，毛利人早就想摆脱英国的殖民统治了。有些部落还把老巴塔图推举起来做国王，甚至还将威卡陀江和隈帕河之间的村子当国都。

“不过，他们推举起的只是一个胆小而狡猾的老头，好在他的首相很精明。首相就是桑浦逊，而这次的战争，也就是他带领大家打的——他的优势在于对军队的组织和管理上。所以在他的建议下，一个塔腊基省的酋长就能把很多零散的部落统一起来。而另一个威卡陀的酋长则又组织了一个土地大同盟，旨在阻止土人将土地卖给英国政府。英国政府对此很是担忧，也曾在报纸上登了这个消息。更重要的是，土人们的战争水平越来越高，双方的矛盾也越来越尖锐。”

“那么战争的导火索又是什么呢？”爵士问。

“这说起来就复杂了。说是一个土人将新普利默斯附近的5000亩土地卖给了英国政府，不过那经纪人来接手时，酋长金基不愿意了，他在土地上安营扎寨，日夜守卫。几天后，高尔德上校又带兵硬占此地，于是一场战争就爆发了。”

“那么，毛利部落里的土人士兵多吗？”麦盖尔又问。

“不多，近100年来，毛利族人口在不断减少，现在两岛加起来也不到9万人吧，其中有3万名战士想必还能和对手交手。”

“那么他们赢了吗？”海伦夫人接着问。

“赢了，夫人。英勇善战的土人，战斗力让英国人都觉得吃惊和佩服。新西兰土人是非常会作战的，特别擅长打游击战。他们时常采用挨个歼灭敌人的方法，而且还专门抢夺移民的财产。当时，卡麦龙将军曾率领部队在丛林里搜索，但搜索得很是吃力。

“1863年，毛利人在一次战争中，占领了威卡陀江上游的一座要塞，那里地势险要，在一个陡峭的山头上，外面有三道防线。很多酋长号召土人保卫领土，并说一定会消灭白种人。而卡麦龙将军的3000名手下，个个凶残万分，他们捉到俘虏后，没有一个不杀死的。

“桑浦逊原来只有2500名战士，最后增加到了8000名。土人在抗战中，连妇女儿童都是要加入进来的。不过最终他们领土失陷，那里也成了一片焦土。在那场战争中，曾涌现出了很多激动人心的故事。比如有一次，400名毛利人守在了俄纳甘堡垒里，在被卡莱将军的1000人包围后，他们即使在不吃不喝的情况下也不投降，最后还杀出一条血路，逃到了沼泽地里。”

“那么英国人占领威卡陀后，是不是这场战争就结束了？”麦盖尔问。

“怎么可能结束？英国人不驯服土人誓不罢休。我这次离开巴黎时，就听说总督接受了塔兰伽各部落的投诚，还允许他们保留四分之三的土地。还说起义领袖桑浦逊也想投降。不过我敢说，这绝对是谣言。可能事实正好相反，圣战正在有组织地进行着。”

“照你这么说，这场战争会在塔腊纳基省和奥克兰省展开？”爵士问。

“我觉得应该是这样的。”

“那个地方不正是我们要去的吗？”

“没错，那里离科依亚港只有几公里，港上一定高高地挂着毛利人的旗帜。”

“这么说，我们还是从北边走比较安全。”

“我也觉得是这样的。他们那么恨欧洲人，特别是英国人，我们一定不能被他们发现。”

“要是幸运的话，我们说不定会遇见欧洲军队呢。”海伦夫人说。

“有这个可能，不过希望不是很大。丛林里很可能隐藏着土人的游击队员，通常士兵是不敢单独去搜索的。所以我们不能指望欧洲军队救我们。我们还是沿西海岸走吧，这样就能走一站休息一会儿了。而且我也想走霍兹特陀先生曾走过的威卡陀江边。”

“你说的这个人是旅行家吗？”小罗伯尔问。

“没错，孩子，他是科学委员会的一名委员，1853年曾来这里做过环球航行。”

“巴嘉勒尔先生，那么来新西兰的，有旅行家像伯克、斯图亚特一样出名的吗？”小罗伯尔又问。喜欢听旅行探险故事的他，小脸涨得通红，非常兴奋。

“当然有，像霍克博士、白利萨士教授、博物学家狄风巴和哈斯太.....他们都很有名，也把探险视为生命，只是没有去澳大利亚和非洲的旅行家知名度高罢了。”

“那你知道他们的故事吗？”

“当然知道！我说给你听吧。故事不长，因为新西兰也就这么大，没多少奇闻逸事。甚至从严格意义上来说，这些人也算不上是探险家，充其量只是一群游览者而已，而且他们都牺牲了，牺牲在一些微不足道的小事上。”

“他们都是谁？”这故事也引起了海伦夫人的兴趣。

“有几何学家威功伯和霍维特。霍维特我以前和你们说过，就是找到伯克遗体的那个人。霍维特和威功伯曾在1863年的上半年从克赖斯特彻奇出发，他们穿越了坎特伯里省北部的高山。威功伯的旅伴鲁布在《里特尔顿时报》讲述过这件事。说1863年4月22日，他们到了拉卡亚河发源的冰山脚下，然后爬上了海拔1300米的山顶，最后又累又冷，走不动了，只好在冰天雪地里睡觉。在山里转悠了7天后，终于找到了路。那时候，他们浑身是伤，没有火取暖，也没东西吃，衣服还经常被雨雪弄湿，带的一些糖也化了，饼干变成了渣子……

“最后，他们终于找到了一座土人住的草棚，还在一个菜园子里找到了一些马铃薯，这在当时，已经算是美味佳肴了。等到了塔拉马考河入海处时，才发现只有过去之后向北走才能到达格来河。不过河水很宽很深，最后他们只好找了两只破了的划子，稍作维修就下了河。可到了河中心后，划子漏水。威功伯急忙跳进河里，鲁布因为不会游泳，只好还在破划子上。不过这倒也救了他的命，因为天空下起了瓢泼大雨。

“鲁布在风浪中被冲到了岸边，失去了知觉的他在第二天醒来后，向一汪清泉爬去。之后，他在附近发现了身体陷进泥里的威功伯，威功伯已经死了。鲁布用手扒了个坑，将他的尸体掩埋。整整两天，他没进

食一粒米，就在饿极了的时候，他被好心肠的土人收留了。所以说，新西兰土人还是有好人的。5月4日，他回到了白仑拉湖霍维特的宿营地。不过，6个星期后，这个可怜的人竟然死了。”

“真是太惨了，好像他们的生命是联系在一起的，一个死了，另一个怎么都没办法活。”麦盖尔感叹道。

“麦盖尔先生说得很对！我也觉得是这样的。不过到底为什么，会让霍维特也在几乎相同的环境中死掉呢，没人能够说得明白。当时他受工程局主任维德的委托，从胡路尼元到塔马尼考河口探一条能够骑马的路。

“出发时，他是带着5个人去的。在刚刚开始65公里的路程里，他们非常顺利，他也在努力地工作着。不过到了塔拉马河边时，他们却怎么都走不通了，只好回到了起点，并带着很多食物和用品再度出发。

“那时候虽然是寒冬，但他仍然带着两名手下去渡白仑拉湖，这一去便再也没有回来。他乘坐的那只小艇搁浅在了水边，大家找了9个星期后，毫无结果。那些不幸者，很可能因为不会游泳，落在水里淹死了。”

“他们会不会没有死，而是落到了新西兰某个土人的部落里？”海伦夫人问。

“夫人，不可能的。因为出事那么久了，如果活不见人，死不见尸，在新西兰这么小的地方，一年没有消息的话，肯定就是死了。”巴嘉勒尔说到后面，声音小了下来，他想到了格兰特船长……

第四十章 威卡陀的路程

2月7日早晨6点，爵士发出了起程的指令。虽然晚上雨已经停了，但天空仍然阴云密布，阳光无法穿透，整个天空都阴沉沉的。不过，天气不是很热，白天赶路也能承受。

巴嘉勒尔拿出地图看了一下，觉得沿着弯曲的海岸走，还不如先去50公里之外的隈帕河和威卡陀江汇合的加纳瓦夏村。那里有邮车经过，这样就可以乘马车回奥克兰了。

于是，他们各自背着自己所用的东西，绕着奥迪湾的岸边走。为了安全起见，他们不仅没有拉开距离走，而且还本能地准备好了马枪，警觉地注意着草原上的动向。

巴嘉勒尔手拿地图，用艺术家的眼光盯着图上标注的地方。

这天，他们经过了一片沙滩，沙滩上堆满了蚌和乌贼鱼的头骨。这片沙滩的沙里掺杂着很多过氧化铁及一氧化铁。如果有磁石的话，一接近地面，磁石上瞬间就会附上一层亮晶晶的晶体。

海水里有游动的海生生物，它们被潮水或轻或重地抚着，见到有人来便快速游走。还有那些有着圆圆的脑袋和机灵大眼睛的海豹，它们个个长着隆起的额头，用丰富的表情注视着周围。怪不得很多古代神话会把它们诗化，称它们是会唱歌的美人鱼。

这些海兽很受人们喜欢，当然，捕捉它们主要是为了获取它们的油和皮毛。它们的毛和油，对很多捕获它们的人来说，是很大的买卖。

海豹中有大约三四只海象，这些海象个个有七八米长，长着长长鼻子的它们，颜色是灰蓝的。

它们躺在厚厚的沙滩上，懒洋洋地摇着鬃曲的硬髭毛，硬髭毛一络一络的，很像人的胡子微微翘起。

小罗伯尔细心地看着这些有趣的动物，突然惊奇地大叫：“那些海豹在吃石头。”

果然，有的海豹正大口大口地吃着海岸上的石头。

“没错，它们是要吃石头，不过这没什么奇怪的。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“可这种食物也太奇怪了吧，石头可不容易消化。”小罗伯尔说。

“孩子，这些石头可不是它们的食物，之所以要吃，是为了增加它们的体重，以便沉入水底。不信的话，等到它们需要在岸上时，这些石头又会被吐出来的。”

巴嘉勒尔说得没错，很快，那些海豹便爬向了岸边，并钻进了水里。不过，爵士没有时间等它们再返回岸边，看它们吐石头。他催促大家快点走，巴嘉勒尔只得依依不舍地离开。

10点钟的时候，大家在雪花岩脚下吃早饭。这些雪花岩纵横交错，就像上古时代欧洲中部的克勒特人一样，在海岸上架起用石头做成的大梁。蛙壳滩里有大量的海菜，这些海菜的形状很小，吃起来味道却不怎么样。不过，经过奥比尔的精心加工，在炭火上烤熟了后，还是很香甜可口的。

吃完干粮，休息了一会儿后，他们又沿着海湾的岸边向前行。在一

些峭壁上，他们发现了很多海鸟，比如军舰鸟、超鸥，以及待在岩石尖上一动不动的信天翁等。下午4点钟的时候，他们已经走了差不多15公里了，不过大家并不觉得累，女士们甚至希望不要休息，一直走到晚上。

此时，路在他们面前转了个弯，绕过了北面几座山后，进入到了隈帕河流域。

这是一片一望无际的大草原。看起来，整个地面郁郁葱葱，非常平坦，应该很好走。不过走到边缘就不一样了。那里全是开着小白花的树丛，树丛里夹杂着凤尾草。要从这些草丛里过，不开出一条路来是走不通的。

晚上8点钟的时候，他们终于绕过了几个山丘，感到有些累了，他们开始就地宿营。

夜里的时候，他们没有放松警惕，荷枪实弹地轮流站岗，一直等到太阳出来。不过，晚上他们并没点火。在新西兰，既没有老虎也没有狮子，更没有无名熊这些凶猛的野兽，所以不需要点火驱赶它们。同时，新西兰还有两条腿的黑斑虎，也就是土人，这些吃人的土人如果看到火的话，很可能被吸引过来。

一整夜就这么过去了，晚上偶有大胆的野鼠来啃食粮食，也有一种沙蝇，蛰得他们难受。

第二天，巴嘉勒尔醒来后，心情非常放松，对这个陌生的地方也没有刚开始时的恐惧了。因为到目前为止，他最担心的土人并没有出现，也没有在梦里威胁他，所以他的心情很好。

“我觉得我们这次一定会顺利走到奥克兰的，不会再遇到什么麻烦了。我想，今晚我们就能走到两河交汇的地方，等上了奥克兰大道，遇上土人的机会就更小了。”巴嘉勒尔轻松地对爵士说。

“现在我们离两河交汇的地方有多远？”爵士问。

“和昨天我们所走的路程差不多，大概有25公里。”

“不过，昨天是因为那些草丛拦住了我们的去路，不然会走得更快的。”

“以后不会有那种草丛了，我们只要沿着隈帕河走，路就好走多了。”

“那我们走吧！”

然而事情并没像巴嘉勒尔说的那样，在刚刚开始的几个小时路程中，他们依然受到了很大的阻力。新西兰的丛林没有车路，所以步行的他们还是会被那些凤尾草挡住去路，就像新西兰土人捍卫自己的国土一样。不过，临近中午的时候，他们还是走到了隈帕河的河边，而从这里一直沿河岸向北走，也就不存在什么障碍物了。

一路上，他们看到的都是纵横的小河，小河里的水清悠悠的，在灌木丛里轻快地流着。据植物学家霍克调查，在新西兰所发现的2000多种植物里，本地特有的植物只有500种。而且这些花的种类也不多，色彩很单一。真正生长旺盛的是一些羊齿类、禾本类和伞形类，常生植物几乎没有。

在这些青翠的草丛中，偶尔还会耸立一根开着朱红色花的高大树木。除此之外，还有诺福克松和罗汉柏等，这些树的枝条密集挺拔；而

那和欧洲的柏树很像的“利木”树，则被凤尾草紧紧地包围着。

这里的一些树枝和灌木丛，仿佛全都成了鹦鹉的王国，它们在枝尖树梢上飞翔、喧嚣。在这些鹦鹉中，有种绿毛鹦鹉，它的项下有一条红色带状羽毛；还有一种有着棕红色羽毛的鹦鹉，翅膀下的羽毛明显比全身的羽毛鲜艳。

少校和小罗伯尔一路走一路打猎，有几只鹬鸟和竹鸡成了他们的猎物。对于他们打到的这些猎物，奥比尔也不停歇地边走边拔毛，以免耽误路程。

对于巴嘉勒尔来说，他的好奇心永远大于其他方面，他并不在乎野味的味道和营养价值，他更看重的是它属于什么品种，所以他一直想要捉住一只新西兰特有的“凸衣”鸟。据说这种鸟很奇怪，会发出像人一样的嘲笑声，所以人们又给它起了个外号叫“嘲笑专家”；还有一种鸟叫“丝朵”，它们长着黑色的羽毛，但脖子上却有一圈是白色的，犹如黑色衣服上的白色领结，非常滑稽。

“‘凸衣鸟’在冬天长得很肥，肥得连飞都飞不动了。于是，它们不得不自己开膛破肚，将肚子裡的脂肪叨出来，以减轻体重。你们说，是不是很奇怪？”

“太奇怪了，怎么会这样？我不相信！”少校说。

巴嘉勒尔恨不得马上捉一只这样的鸟，并将鸟胸前那血淋淋的伤痕展现给少校看，可惜捉不到。

不过，他捉住了另外一种怪鸟，这种怪鸟叫“几维”，在生物学上又被称之为“鹬鸵”。

这种鸟没有翅膀，也没有尾巴，两只脚上各长着四个趾，有着白色的羽毛和鹬鸟一样的长嘴，样子非常奇特。更奇怪的是，它们什么东西都吃，不管是蛹、昆虫还是蠕虫，即使是种子它也吃。

为了逃避猫狗人的追逐，它们经常跑到偏僻的地方，所以才让巴嘉勒尔有机会捉住它们。

几维鸟的体形很可笑，非常容易引起旅行家的注意。

“阿斯洛纳伯号”和“瑟勒号”来大洋洲探险时，有法国科学院请居蒙威尔带一只这样的怪鸟回去，以便做研究使用的标本。不过，即使居蒙威尔拿出很多钱给新西兰土人，也依然得不到一只活的几维鸟。

这么难以做到的事，竟然被幸运的巴嘉勒尔做到了，而且一捉就捉住了两只。如果以后把它们送到巴黎动物园去，并在挂在外面的鸟笼子上写着“雅克·巴嘉勒尔先生赠”，那该是多大的荣幸啊。

此时，他们一行人精神百倍地沿着隈帕河岸往前走。如此荒无人烟的地方根本没有行人的踪迹，草丛里、沙滩上有河水在缓缓流淌。行人在这条河岸上走时会看见东面封锁着河谷的小山，小山的形状很奇怪，侧影浸在朦胧的雾气下，犹如很多巨兽。巨兽的样子很像他们之前在洪水中发现的怪兽，如同一条条的长鲸变成了化石。

看着这些形状怪异的山峦，就能知道这片火山的地质构造。其实，新西兰南北二岛原本就是火山喷发形成的，如今，火山底下的火在奔腾，使火山发生了颤抖，所以才有了熔岩浆从火山口冒出。

下午4点的时候，大家走完了大概15公里路，离两河的交汇处也仅有8公里了。到了两河交汇口，他们走上了奥克兰大道，而且准备在那

里夜宿。对于奥克兰这座城市，他们只需两三天就能走到，而且不久他们就能找到去奥克兰的邮车，邮车半天一趟，非常方便。

“看来，我们今天晚上还要露宿。”爵士说。

“希望这是最后一次。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“如果是最后一晚，那就太好了。露营实在是件考验人的事。”

“巴嘉勒尔先生，要是我没记错的话，在两河交汇处有个村庄，我们是否可以在那里找个旅馆住？”麦盖尔问。

“没错，那里是有个村子，叫加纳瓦夏村。不过在毛利人的村子里，根本找不到客栈和小酒店，最多只能找到一些土人住的茅草棚。我们千万不能去那些地方，还是要避开他们才好。”

“巴嘉勒尔先生，你真是太怕毛利人了。”爵士笑着说。

“亲爱的爵士，对于这些毛利人，我们一定要严加防范。毛利人现在和英国人的关系那么紧张，见到我们，能不抓吗？话又说回来了，我情愿不要他们的盛情款待，因为我觉得避开那个村子，避开那些土人才是上策，等我们过了毛利人经常出没的地方，也就能安稳地睡觉了。”

大家自然赞同巴嘉勒尔的主意，而且海伦夫人情愿在露天待一晚，也不愿意去那吃人的土人所在的村庄。因此，玛丽小姐和她都说不用中途休息，可以继续赶路，以尽快走过那段吓人的区域。

两个小时后，黄昏降临。太阳从西边的地平线上下沉，不过在即将完全沉下去之前，太阳又突破云层，射出了最后的一道光芒，光芒照在东边的山峰上，如同在跟他们一行人挥手再见。

在黄昏降临前，他们便加快了脚步，他们知道，在这样的高纬地带，黄昏很快就会过去，黑夜马上就要降临了。他们必须在黑暗来临之前赶到两河交汇处。而就在这时候，地面上升起了一团浓雾，让他们连路都看不清了。

虽然视线被浓雾遮住了，但好在听力不受影响。很快，越来越大声的流水声告诉他们，他们离目的地很近了。晚上8点钟的时候，他们来到了两河交汇处，在那里，听到了惊涛骇浪的声音。

“威卡陀江终于到了。从这条江的右岸边走就能到奥克兰。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“那今晚就在这里露宿吧，我看前面有些阴影，应该是丛林吧，丛林正好便于我们隐蔽，吃完晚饭我们就可以休息了。”少校说。

“今天的晚餐只有饼干和干肉。我们不能生火，悄然而来，悄然去。好的一点是，这浓雾可以让别人看不到我们。”巴嘉勒尔松了口气说。

大家听从了巴嘉勒尔的建议，进了小树林，在安静地吃了些东西后，因为走了一天很累，所以个个都早早地进入了梦乡。

第四十一章 做了“噬骨魔”俘虏

天亮了，水汽遇冷凝结，水面笼罩在浓雾中，什么都看不清。

没过多久，太阳出来了，云雾散尽，河边的景色从浓雾中显露出来，威卡陀江也在晨光中呈现出它美丽的剪影。

那是一个狭长的半岛，上面长满了灌木，直愣愣地伸在两河之间，半岛像一把剑伸向远方，越远的地方越尖细，最终在两河汇流的地方消失了。

隈帕河的水流非常急，在和威卡陀江合流还有近四分之一公里时，挡住了威卡陀江的去路。不过，平静的威卡陀江最终还是制服了猖狂的隈帕河，并带着威卡陀江流入太平洋。

威卡陀江面上，有只20米长、2米宽、1米高的船逆流而上，船头高高翘起，像威尼斯的交通船一样。这只船的材质是一种杉树的树干，船的底部铺着凤尾草，船上有8个桨，在桨的划动下，船飞速前进。

船尾坐着一个人，正手握长桨操纵着航向。

从船尾那个人的面相上就能看出，这是个高个子的新西兰土人，年龄在40到50岁之间。他有着宽阔的胸脯，四肢的筋肉高高鼓起，一看就知道很有力量；他的额头布满了皱纹，皱纹又粗又深，眼珠发黄，眼中发射出凶狠的光，看上去非常可怕。

不用说，这是一个毛利族的酋长，从他满脸又细又密的文身便能知

道，他的地位很高。而且他的鹰钩鼻子的两边，有两条黑色的螺旋线绕过眼眶向上翘起，并在额头交叉，最终延伸到了浓密的头发丛中。

酋长那白色的牙齿和下巴全都隐藏在了有规则的彩色图案中，图案上是涡云状的纹路，这些纹路相互缠绕，一直延伸到胸脯。

这种文身属于刺花，是尊贵的象征，在新西兰又叫“墨刻”。身上有着这样纹路的人，说明曾参加过很多次战争，是勇士才有资格拥有的花纹。奴隶和平民是没有刺这种花纹的权利的。一些有名望的酋长，他们的身上还会刺一些动物的图像，所以通常只要看一看花纹的精细程度，便能知道他们的身份高低了。有些酋长刻这种“墨刻”会达到5次之多，虽然刻的时候很疼，却也是荣耀的象征。因为在新西兰，地位越高，身上的文身刺得就越多，越密。

据说，瞿孟居威尔曾对这种刺花做过介绍，并形象地称它在新西兰土人心中，就和欧洲许多大家族所引以为豪的族徽一样。不过，两者之间也有不同点，欧洲人的族徽可以流传，但新西兰的这种刺花却是个人标记，是私人的东西，无法流传。

同时，这种刺花还有实用意义，也就是说，它不仅是尊贵的标志，而且还能让皮肤变厚，防止蚊虫叮咬。

这位坐在船尾的酋长，能看出他脸上已经被毛利族的花匠用信天翁的尖骨刺过5遍花纹了，所以他才有了高傲骄矜的神态。

这位酋长身披弗密翁麻织成的宽衫，宽衫上围着狗皮，腰里围着一条短裙，裙子上有点点血迹，那都是在最近的战斗中染上的。他的耳垂上挂着绿玉耳环，脖子上挂着玉石做的珠圈，珠圈上的玉石晶莹透亮。

当然，他身上的物件中，最让人害怕的还是那支英国造的长枪，以及两面都是刀刃的斧头，斧头长约40厘米，是翠绿色的。

酋长身边还有9位级别比较低的战士，这9名战士个个佩带武器，凶相毕露。其中有几个好像受伤不久，所以披着弗密翁麻织的大衣，坐在那里一动也不动。在9名有凶相的战士脚下，还卧着3只恶狗。

船头部分有8名水手，看样子像是酋长的奴隶，他们用力地划着桨，小船行进的速度非常快。

而在这条船上，还有10个俘虏紧紧地挤在一边，他们的脚被拴住了，无法动弹。这10个人就是爵士一行。

原来，就在昨天晚上，迷迷糊糊的他们，竟然钻进了土人窝里睡觉。半夜，还在睡梦中的他们便被抓上了船。虽然并没受到什么虐待，他们也想着要抵抗，但却来不及了，因为他们的武器和弹药全都落入了土人的手里，如果他们抵抗，很可能连命都没有了。

这些土人在说话时，话语里时不时会蹦出一些英文单词，所以很快爵士一行人就知道这是一些残兵败将，他们的人已经死了大半了，目前正在向威卡陀江的上游撤退。这位酋长的部下是被英军42旅屠杀的，所以这次回来，是为了向沿江招兵，然后再去和桑浦逊会师的。

这位毛利族酋长，有个恐怖的名字叫“噬骨魔”，这个名字用土语来说就是“啃四肢的人”的意思。“噬骨魔”威名远扬，英国士兵都知道他，而且如今新西兰总督也在悬赏捉拿他。

这样一个人，落到他手里的俘虏，大抵也不可能会活着。

眼看就要到奥克兰了，没想到却被抓上了毛利人的船，这对爵士一

行人来说，绝对是个沉重的打击。不过，爵士表现得很从容，其实这只是他的性格，越到关键时刻，他越表现得沉稳。因为在这支小队伍里，他是队长，同时也是海伦夫人的丈夫，所以他必须为大家做出榜样，必要时，甚至要第一个去牺牲。

爵士有着很强的宗教思想，他觉得任何神圣的举动，都是会感动上帝的，上帝因此就会主持公道。所以，虽然在这场旅行中，他们遇到了很多困难，但他从不后悔自己的热情，也不后悔因为热情而导致的后果。

同伴们没有让爵士失望，他们同样表现出了淡定和坦然。别人看到他们一行这样，简直不敢相信他们正大难临头。在土人面前表现出的坚强和淡定，让那些未开化的土人有些肃然起敬起来。

通常来说，土人都有着很强的自尊心，只有沉着冷静的人才会赢得他们的尊重。爵士也意识到了他们的这种思想，知道这样很可能会避免同伴受到一些无谓的虐待。

土人原本就不善言谈，所以一路上都没有说话。而爵士一行在被抓后，也没说上几句话，此时爵士想问问酋长，打算把他们怎么样，于是对着“噬骨魔”酋长说：“酋长，你准备带我们去什么地方？”

爵士说话的时候，丝毫没有慌张。酋长冷冷地看了他一眼，没回话。

“你准备要把我们怎么样？”爵士又问了一句。

酋长的眼神里发出一道凌厉的光，粗暴地说：“我们要拿你们去做交换，不然就杀掉你们。”

爵士心里有了底，所以也就不再问下去了。他现在能肯定，这些土人的首领也有落到英国人手里的，所以想拿他们交换回自己的首领。爵士知道，他们还有活命的希望，因此并没有完全绝望。

小船在江上飞快地行驶，巴嘉勒尔突然心情开阔起来，他觉得这非常好，因为如果土人将他们带到英国人的防地的话，他们倒占了便宜，会少走很多路的。于是，他开始放松地看起了地图，不时地还会看看威卡陀江流。

海伦夫人和玛丽小姐抑制住内心的恐惧，小声地和爵士说着话。而她们强装的镇定，即使是最机敏的相面人也不会看出内心的焦灼。

威卡陀是新西兰土人最引以为傲的地方，也是民族之江。他们对这条江的感情，就像德国人对莱茵河，斯拉夫对多瑙河一样。威卡陀总长约320公里，将北岛浇灌成了最肥沃的土地。

因此，两岸部落也都以江来命名，比如威卡陀部落，这个部落里住的人坚强不屈，没有任何人和任何事能让他们屈服。而现在，他们正纷纷拿起武器和侵略者对抗。

威卡陀江几乎没有别的国家的船只来这里，甚至只有本岛的一些船只在这里劈波斩浪。当然，偶尔也会有胆大的探险家来到这里，而威卡陀的上游几乎不允许任何外人进入。

巴嘉勒尔是知道土人们对这条江的热爱的，不过对于“噬骨魔”酋长会将他们带到什么地方去，他还是无法猜测。但在酋长和士兵们的谈话中，他听到了“导泊”两个字，这引起了他的注意。

他看着地图，寻找着“导泊”这个地方。那是新西兰一个有名的湖

泊，位于北岛奥克兰省南端，威卡陀江的水正流向此湖。据他计算，从威卡陀江到那里大概有70公里的路程。

巴嘉勒尔用法语和麦盖尔沟通，让他计算下船速，麦盖尔说船速是每小时2公里。

“这么说，如果只是白天行进，到达‘导泊’需要4天。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“我们现在需要知道英国人的防地在什么地方。”爵士说。

“这就不清楚了，不过根据他们的战事，战争应该蔓延到塔腊纳基省了，说不定英国军队就在‘导泊’湖边驻扎着呢。因为那个地方属于游击区。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“但愿是这样！”海伦夫人说。

一想到年轻漂亮的妻子和玛丽小姐要被送到荒无人烟的地方，任凭土人摆布，爵士的心里就很难过。不过，看到酋长一直在盯着他，他也就尽量抑制住情绪，漠然地看着江的两岸。

两江汇流口上游半公里处是巴塔图王的故居。小船从故居前经过，却没有一丝停留。江里除了这只船外，没有其他的船只。两岸偶然闪现的茅棚，彼此间也隔着很远的距离，给人一种很零乱的支离破碎的感觉。

江边的田地都已经荒芜了，岸上没有一个人。

有不同种类的水鸟给凄凉的大地带来了一丝生机。这些水鸟中有拖着一条长腿、黑翅膀、白肚皮、红嘴巴的涉水鸟，还有一种通身灰色的水鸟，更有白毛、黄嘴、黑爪的水鸟……它们悠闲地看着土人的小船。

江岸边还有一只翡翠鸟，这种翡翠鸟以鳗鱼为食，时常成群结队地在水里游。

突然，威卡陀江中冒出了一个小岛，小岛上有田鳧、秧鸡和苏丹鸡，它们以傲然的姿态梳理着羽毛，享受着安静舒适的生活。这里由于战争，两岸居民逃的逃、亡的亡了，所以没人打扰它们。

威卡陀江最初的一段江面很宽，江流在辽阔的平原上流淌。不过随着船的行驶，江面发生了变化，不断有丘陵、高山出现，江面变得窄小了很多。在离河流交汇处约6公里远的江左边，巴嘉勒尔看到地图上标的是基里罗亚高岸。

突然，酋长在这个险要之地要求停船，并让人把从爵士他们那里抢来的食物递给他们，让他们吃，他的士兵和水手们则吃土人自己的食物，也就是烤熟的凤尾草根。凤尾草根在生物学上被称之为“可以食用的羊齿蕨”。除了这种食物外，他们还吃一种新西兰到处都有的马铃薯。毛利人不喜欢吃肉类食物，所以爵士一行人所带的干肉引不起他们的兴趣。

3点钟的时候，他们途经江水右岸的几座高山，那些高山犹如遭到破坏的堡垒，而这山就叫泊卡洛亚连山。在一些高山峭壁上，确实有残留的城堡。这些城堡是当年毛利人中的工程师筑成的防御工程，这种工程也被称之为鹰窝。

太阳快要下山了，小船触到了河岸，河岸上堆着很多浮石，这些浮石实际上是火山岩。由于威卡陀江的发源地在火山地带，所以这些浮石也被急流冲得沿江都是。河岸上有几棵树，酋长决定让大家在树下宿营。

当船停下后，酋长让爵士一行下了船，这时候，他们只捆绑了男士的手，女士的手则没有捆绑。

士兵们将爵士一行押到了营地中心的火堆旁，他们被士兵们围在了中间。

在酋长还没有说要把他们当人质去交换时，爵士和船长就商量过，怎么趁着残兵败将们睡着时，偷偷溜走。

不过，在知道他们要做人质后，大家便觉得逃跑的做法不可取。最稳妥的办法就是忍耐，让土人拿他们去交换英军的俘虏，这样他们一行人生还的机会就会更大一些。因为在这种陌生的地方选择逃跑，自己又没有武器，无法自卫，会非常危险。

10个手无寸铁，还带着两名女士的他们，要对付30个武器装备齐全的土人，获胜的可能性几乎没有。

不过，对于当人质，他们也有担心，那就是怕发生意外事件，或者是因为什么事情延缓了土人拿他们去交换，当然，这种可能性也比较小。

确实，爵士的猜测没错，在“噬骨魔”的部落里，确实有一名重要首领被英军抓去做了俘虏，他们特别想将那首领换回来。

第二天，船继续朝前行驶，而且越来越快。10点钟的时候，船在泊海文纳河口停了下来，这条支流是从右岸的平原里蜿蜒流入江中支流的。

河口处有只小船，小船上坐着10个土人。这只船在和酋长他们的那只船相遇后，船上的人都互相打着招呼，意思是说“顺利地回来了”。

接着，两只小船齐头并进，一起朝前行驶，那只船上的10个人也是残兵败将，他们衣衫褴褛，沉默不语，武器上沾着鲜血，有些人的伤口还流着血。他们的这种表情，其实只是未开化民族固有的无所谓的表情而已。

中午的时候，西边出现了孟伽陀塔里山，河谷变得狭小起来，江水在峡谷里急速流动，溅起了层层浪花。划着桨、唱着歌的土人们，让桨划水的声音和歌声混合起了一起，像是在为歌伴奏一样，非常好听。浪头在船头上溅起很大的水花。

急流过去后，江面变得温顺、平静了很多，船每隔1英里会拐一个弯，缓缓地向前行驶。

傍晚的时候，酋长让船停在了山脚下，这一地带的山，最初几个山峰正好落在了狭窄的河岸上，形成一排陡峭的悬崖。有20个土人乘船驶了过来，他们开始为夜生活作准备。

很快，篝火在树下被点燃了。一个和“噬骨魔”有着相同地位的首领走了过来，和“噬骨魔”拥吻，亲切地打着招呼。

爵士一行还是被放在了营地中间，“噬骨魔”派人严密地看守他们。

第二天早上的时候，船逆流而上。威卡陀江的支流里突然窜出了很多小船，小船上的土人大概有六七十个，他们是些吃了英国士兵的苦头，从前线退回来的人，正准备回到山区去。一些小船上不时地传出歌声，有个土人在大声唱着他们的爱国歌曲：“巴巴拉提瓦提提敌，依东伽内……”

这是毛利人渴望独立而唱的国歌，国歌清晰嘹亮，引起了山谷的回

响。在那个土人唱歌时，另一些土人则一起拍着胸脯，齐声和着那首雄壮的歌声打拍子，而此时，土人水手把船划得更快了，小船在江波中急驶。

在这一天，有个非常奇怪的现象吸引住了爵士他们。那就是在下午4点钟的时候，酋长“噬骨魔”控制小船，进入了一条狭窄的小道。急流冲刷着江中的小岛，江中小岛之大令人惊讶，在这样的江面上行驶，非常容易翻船。而在这样的地方，又绝对不能翻船，也不能去江边，因为江边有滚烫的泥沙，一旦踩在江边，必死无疑。

为什么会这样？

原来，这就是有名的沸泉，顾名思义，这泉水就像烧开的水一样。而沸泉的产生，曾一度引起探险家的好奇。那因沸泉而形成的铁锈将两岸的淤泥全都染成了红色，可以说一块净土都找不到。空气中到处充斥着刺鼻的硫黄味，土缝里发出了恶臭。之所以有这种气味，则是因为泥土被泡涨后，冒出煤气产生的气味。

对于这种气味，土人们显然已经习惯了，但爵士他们却无法忍受。不过，虽然气味让他们难受，但这番奇景却是不能不去欣赏的。

江面上的小船在蒸汽形成的雾中乱窜，周围朦朦胧胧的，在江面上形成了一个巨大的穹窿。江两边是数不清的沸泉，沸泉喷射出一根根的滚烫水柱，参差不齐，像是人们特意设置的喷泉。

如此壮观的场面，让人不禁怀疑这喷泉是有人控制、调节的。江面上的水被沸泉打起，在空中和沸泉结合，又在太阳光的照射下发出五颜六色的光芒。

在这里之所以会看到如此奇观，都是因为其特殊的地质构造形成的。这里由于火山活动频繁，导致地火在地底下燃烧，河水在江面沸腾。离这里不远的地方有诺陀路阿湖，湖东面有罗托玛哈那和特塔拉塔两个温泉，而其他喷水口和硫气坑则多得数都数不清。

据说，曾有几个大胆的探险家来过此地，对这奇景感慨不已。

如今，新西兰还有加里罗和瓦长利两座活火山，过多的热量无法从那两座火山口喷出，进而在这里形成了沸泉。

小船上的土人在3公里长的热气层中穿行，很快，硫黄形成的烟雾消散了，空气中有了新鲜的空气，大家都觉得一阵凉爽。原来，船过了沸泉区域。

天黑前，他们又过了希巴巴思厄和塔麻特克两道急流，但土人们仍然在使劲划桨。至此，他们已经走了100多公里的路程。晚上，他们在另一个地方露了宿。

第二天，巴嘉勒尔看了看地图，发现右边耸入云霄的是海拔约1000米的陀巴纳山。

中午，江面上所有的小船都向南驶去，并进入了导泊湾。导泊湾有一座茅草棚，茅草棚上飘着一块布，土人们看到那块布后全都向其致敬。

爵士他们知道，那块布就是他们的国旗。

第四十二章 毛利人的“鹰窝”

据历史记载，导泊湖的形成是因为岛中间有片火山岩，火山岩的中间出现了一些窟窿，当那窟窿塌陷后，便形成了长约40公里，宽30公里的大坑。而那土坑里是来自四周山顶的泉水，形成了导泊湖。

导泊湖是个奇特的湖泊，它的海拔有300多米，四周由800米的高山环抱。西边有高高的悬崖峭壁；北边有几座山峰矗立在那里，山峰顶上长满了小树；东边是广袤无垠的湖滨平原，平原上有纵横交错的小径，小径上有很多发光的浮石；南边是一片森林，森林处有一个圆锥形的火山头……

这一切都环绕着一片碧水，看上去气势壮丽。

总的来说，这一片区域很像一个大大的烧开了的锅，锅底下是燃烧着的火苗，地面被烧得滚烫，像沸水一样在翻滚。

抖动的地面上有龟裂，如同被烤焦的烧饼，地面的缝隙处渗出一缕缕热雾。由此可见，这些地底的热气如果不在20公里之外的同伽利洛火山口找发泄口的话，整个高原必将成为一个大熔炉。

从湖面向北看，很多喷火的小火山中间耸立着同伽利洛火山，火山的顶端喷着火焰和烟雾，如同一个人头上的装饰品——羽毛。这羽毛是和一座错综复杂的山连在一起的。而在这座火山后的平原上，有一座鹿厄胡峰，峰顶在3000多米的云雾里消失了。

这座圆锥形火山向来无人问津，也从来没人探索过。但同伽利洛火

山不同的是，它很容易就能爬上去。在这近20年的时间里，就有毕威尔、狄逊和最近的霍兹特陀，前后三次来此测量过。

如果不是处在这样的危险环境下，巴嘉勒尔一定会为大家讲关于这座火山的传说，他一定会告诉大家，同伽利洛山和塔腊纳基山很久以前是朋友，也是邻居。不过有一天，他们为了一个女人而发生了争吵，脾气火爆的同伽利洛动手打了塔腊纳基。挨打后的塔腊纳基自尊心受到了很大的伤害，从瓦嘎尼河谷溜走了，走时还抛下了两座小山头。

最终，他从瓦嘎尼河谷逃到了东海海滨，独自矗立在那里，并改名为俄戈蒙山。

当然，此时的巴嘉勒尔没有讲这些故事的心情，何况他就是讲了，大家也没心思听。他们现在正处在刀刃上，只能听天由命，默默地看着导泊湖的东北岸。

酋长的船驶出了威卡陀江，进而钻进了另一条河，这条河的形状非常像威卡陀江的漏斗。

船在绕过一个尖岬后，沿着湖东面的沙滩，在海拔600米的芝加山脚下停下了。

这个山脚下长着很多弗密翁草，这种草是新西兰土人用来做布料的植物。弗密翁草可谓全身都是宝，首先它的花是上等蜜源；它的胶质茎可以做蜡或浆粉；它那可爱的青叶子能替代纸在上面写字；干叶子能做引火绒；将叶子撕裂后，还可以搓绳子、造缆索、织渔网；它的纤维能编被褥、大衣、席子或麻布；染成红色或黑色的麻布可以给高贵的土人做衣服。

在新西兰南北二岛上，这种浑身是宝的弗密翁草随处可见，不管是在海边、湖边还是江边都能看到。在爵士他们到达这片区域后，那野生的弗密翁草依然郁郁葱葱。它们形似龙舌兰，长着棕红色的花，花从叶子丛中伸出。狭长而锋利的叶子层层叠叠，形成了漂亮的剑林。弗密翁草上经常会停很多小鸟，这些小鸟争相吸吮花心中的甜汁，并传播着花粉。

湖里有一大群正在搜寻食物的鸭子，它们长着淡黑色的羽毛，羽毛间夹杂着灰绿色花纹。这些原本的野鸭子，如今已经被驯化，成了家畜。

在船又行驶了约四分之一的路程后，前面出现了一座城堡，城堡建在一处陡峭的悬崖上，那是凭着天险而建的土人城寨。爵士一行被土人押了下来。这次土人并没有绑他们的手脚，想必知道他们逃不掉。

通往城寨的小路被茂密的丛林覆盖，弗密翁草在丛林里显得格外醒目，丛林里还有长着青叶子、红浆果的“弗树”，它那鲜嫩的果实胜过欧洲的千年蕉。除了这些外还有一种可以做黑色染料的“油湖树”。

树丛里，有发出金属光泽的大鹑鸽、灰色的圆嘴鹑以及无数长着红肉冠的棕鸟，看到他们一行人过来，这些鸟瞬间便飞了起来。

爵士、海伦夫人和其他伙伴在绕了一圈后，终于到了城堡里面。城堡由一道高5米的坚固栅栏围着，里面还有两道防线。第一道防线是用木桩形成的；第二道则是柳条墙，柳条墙上凿着枪眼。

进了第二道防线，里面就是内城了。内城有40多座草棚，草棚排列很整齐，属于典型的毛利式住房。

爵士一行还没走进内城，便看到外面的木桩上挂着许多骷髅，这些骷髅让人看了很害怕。

海伦夫人和玛丽小姐急忙把脸转到了一边，她们不忍心看这么残忍的场景。这些骷髅的主人是土人敌方首领的头颅，也是土人的战利品。土人在将这些首领杀了后，砍下头来挂在木桩上，而身体却成了他们的食物。

“噬骨魔”酋长的住所在城寨的最里面，被一群简陋的茅屋包围。住所的后面是个露天广场，用于集会和习武。“噬骨魔”的房屋墙壁用木桩和树枝做成，为了暖和，墙里面还糊着一层弗密翁草席。

“噬骨魔”所住的房子不是很大，但在酋长里已经算很不错了。

这所房子朝南有个大缺口，缺口处挂着厚厚的帘子，帘子的作用实际上也是门的作用。屋顶有些像古罗马人住的房子，有飞檐，向外延伸出去。房子的椽子上刻着各式花纹，门外的墙上，雕着奇特的花卉、树木、奇珍异兽……还有很多密密麻麻的花纹，这就是所谓的迎门墙，出自毛利族的能工巧匠之手。

酋长的矮屋子地面平整，离地面约5公分高的地方有张矮床，床上铺着芦席，芦席上铺着垫子，垫子是用软软的香蒲叶子编成的；房子中间有个石洞，石洞实际上也是一个炉灶；房顶上有缺口可当烟囱，烟雾大时，会从房顶的烟囱处向外冒，所以墙壁被熏得乌黑发亮。

“噬骨魔”的房间旁有个仓库，仓库里贮藏着酋长的食物和生活用品，包括弗密翁草、山芋、水芋、凤尾草根等。

离他房子更远的地方有几所院子，院子里养着家畜，这些家畜是当

年库克船长带来的，繁殖的并不多。此外，屋外有到处乱窜着寻找食物的狗。总的来说，毛利人用来食用的牲畜他们养得并不好。

爵士一行一直在等待着，等待着酋长的发落，同时，他们还在忍受着一群老妇人的辱骂。这些老妇人不仅对他们指手画脚，甚至还伸出了拳头，朝他们不断地挥舞着。

从她们嘴里偶尔吐出的几个英文单词中能知道，她们说要为死去的亲人报仇。

面对辱骂和威胁，爵士一行的反应也各有不同。海伦夫人表面平静，内心却很惊慌。她控制住这个情绪，怕丈夫为她担心。可怜的玛丽小姐吓得差点昏过去，幸好有麦盖尔船长在旁边扶着。麦盖尔一直守候在她身边，以便在需要时保护她。

少校面对辱骂，毫不理会，巴嘉勒尔却不一样，他气得咬牙切齿。

爵士怕老妇人们对妻子造成伤害，走到了“噬骨魔”的面前，指着那些妇人，要他制止她们的无礼挑衅。

酋长瞟了他一眼，没有说任何话，只是用手轻轻一挥，妇人们便乖乖地离开了。爵士向他表示了感谢，然后回到了同伴面前。此时，近百人聚集到了“习武场”，这些人中有老人也有小孩，有男人也有女人。他们有些沉着脸，愁容满面，等待首领发号施令；另一些则在不断地痛哭流涕，为他们死去的亲人悲哀。

原来，在响应桑普逊号召，反抗英国侵略的所有酋长中，仅有“噬骨魔”活着回来了。他给民众说了他们在威卡陀江下游平原地带失利的情况。如今，派出去打仗的士兵有200多人，大部分没有回来，还有一

部分做了俘虏。那些牺牲的战士，永远都不可能回到自己的故土了。

这也就是在他们看到“噬骨魔”后伤心的原因。打败仗的事情原本没人知道，现在全都传开了。

新西兰土人在亲友阵亡后，表达悲痛的通常做法就是伤害自己的肉体，特别是女人，她们用锋利的贝壳将自己的脸和肩膀划得血肉模糊。把自己的肉体伤害得越深，表明她们越悲伤。

看着那些妇女的鲜血和眼泪一起往下流，如同疯子一样，在场的所有人都感到了恐惧。

让土人们悲伤的还有一个原因，这个原因也是他们最看重的，那就是他们的亲人不但死了，而且连骨头都没能带回来埋进自家祖坟。

毛利民族是个非常迷信的民族，他们觉得遗体的保存关系到一个人的来世。而他们所要保存的也不是腐烂的皮肉，而是骨头。他们用心收集起死者的骨头，并进行洗刷、刮磨，甚至还在骨头上涂上了一层漆，最后又将这些骨头装进一个特制的容器里，这个容器也被称之为“光荣之屋”。

“光荣之屋”上有死者的木头像，木头像上画着死者生前身上刺着的花纹。如今，这些战死他乡的战士，骨头不是被野狗吃掉，就是被暴露在野外，所以墓穴只能空着，应做的宗教仪式也无法进行。

土人们一想到这些便气愤不已，妇女们对爵士一行的辱骂刚刚过去，男人们又怒骂起来，有些甚至挥舞起了胳膊，想要对爵士一行动手。

酋长担心土人控制不住情绪，做出过激行为，所以叫人将他们押到

了另一个地方。那是个木棚，木棚里供着神位，土人将这个地方叫“华勒都”，是个神圣不可侵犯的地方。

爵士一行总算离开了那个令人恐怖、紧张的环境了。大家全都躺在了弗密翁草席上休息。海伦夫人因为高度紧张，再加上劳累，身体和精神都难以支撑，倒在了爵士的怀里。爵士紧紧地拥着她，不断安慰说：“亲爱的海伦，不要害怕，鼓起勇气来。”

小罗伯尔一进棚子，便站在了维尔逊的肩上，探出墙头和屋檐间的缝隙朝外面看，从那里能看到整个城寨的情况，也能看到酋长的房子里。

“他们都围着酋长在开会……指手画脚的，好像在咒骂着……酋长好像要说话了……”小罗伯尔轻声给大家汇报着。

好一会儿，罗伯尔又说：“那些人没有吵了，在听酋长讲话……”

“看来，酋长保护我们的目的，就是为了用我们换回他们的首领，不知道他手下那些人答不答应。”少校说。

“好像是同意了……那些……那些人都回自己棚子里了……有的……有的还离开城寨……”罗伯尔说。

“真的？”少校问。

“是真的！现在只有那些押送我们的人还在酋长那里……来了！有个人朝我们这里走来了！”罗伯尔小声喊着。

“快点下来，罗伯尔！”爵士说。

此时，海伦夫人也紧张地站了起来，抓住爵士的手说：“爱德华，玛丽和我可不能落入土人的手里。”

海伦夫人说完，递给爵士一支装好了子弹的手枪。

“这武器是从什么地方来的？”爵士大惊，眼神中有一丝亮光闪现。

“这枪我一直随身带着。毛利人是不搜女人的，实在不行，这枪就留给我，虽然不能打死他们……”

海伦夫人的话还没有说完，少校便急忙说：“爵士，快收起来，不到万不得已，千万不能暴露……”

爵士把枪刚刚藏好，那挡着棚子的门帘便被掀开了，从外面进来了一个人。他向爵士这行人做了个手势，让他们跟着他走。大家互看一眼，依次走出草棚。他们穿过一条小道，走到了酋长面前。

“噬骨魔”酋长的旁边聚集着他的手下，而在泊海文纳河口驾着小船和他会合的酋长也在他旁边，那位酋长叫卡纳特德，体格健壮，相貌凶狠，年约40岁。从他脸上刺着的细致花纹来看，他在部落中的地位很高。

不过，“噬骨魔”对他好像很冷漠。善于观察的人看了，一定能猜出他们之间有矛盾。

没错，虽然两个人的力量相当，但卡纳特德在部落里所拥有的权势，让“噬骨魔”嫉妒。因此，在两个人讲话时，“噬骨魔”的脸上虽然流露出笑意，但心里却暗藏敌意。

“你是英国人？”“噬骨魔”问爵士。

“没错，我是英国人！”爵士毫不犹豫地说，因为他知道这个国籍能促进土人拿他们做交易。

“你的同伴们呢？”

“他们和我一样。我们是旅行家，因为沉船，流落到此。我们没有参加战争，我们是清白的。”

“有没有参加战争，谁知道呢？凡是英国人，都是我们的敌人，因为你们侵占了我们的领土，烧毁了我们的村子。”卡纳特德吼道。

“他们做错了！说实话，对于这件事我也很难过，这不是因为我们落入你们之手才这么说的。”爵士认真地说。

“告诉你，我们的‘图洪加’——卢伊·阿同的大祭师落入你们英国人手里，成了你们的俘虏，他让我们把他赎回来。如果不是他说过，我们一定会剜了你们的心，告慰死者的。然后我们还要把你们的头挂在木桩上。”“噬骨魔”说。

原本冷静开口的他却越说越激动，最后气得浑身发抖，大吼着。

不过很快，他平息了自己的心情，慢慢地说：“你觉得英国兵会用‘图洪加’和你们交换吗？”

爵士犹豫了一会儿，他观察着酋长的脸色，好一会儿才说：“很难说！”

“我觉得你的命就能抵上我的祭师的命！”

“不！在我们这里面，既没有首领，也没有祭师！”

巴嘉勒尔听爵士这么说，愣住了，他诧异地看着爵士。

“怎么？你没把握？”

“是的，没有！”

“就是说，英国人不肯把我们的‘图洪加’换回来？”

“用我一个人换肯定不行。如果换，必须用我们几个人一起换。”

“我们毛利人就是一个人换一个人！”

“如果要换，那你就用两个女人换吧！”爵士说着，指了指海伦夫人和玛丽小姐。

海伦夫人想要奔到爵士面前，少校一把抓住了她。

“这两位女士在英国有着很高的地位。”爵士又说，并向她们恭敬地鞠了一躬。

“噬骨魔”观察着每个人，嘴角突然涌出险恶的微笑，但只有一会儿，他的笑容便僵住了，怒声喝道：“你们这些该死的欧洲人，想骗我吗？你以为我看不出你的心思？”

说完，他一指海伦夫人：“她是你老婆！”

“不！她不是我的老婆！”

卡纳特德说完，淫笑起来。随即推开人群，走到海伦夫人面前，将手搭在了她的肩上。海伦夫人的脸吓白了，大声惊呼：“爱德华！”

爵士气极了，他掏出手枪，一枪打死了卡纳特德。

枪声惊动了整个城寨，土人一下子涌了过来。他们举起手来，高声叫喊着，说要严惩凶手，爵士手里的枪也被夺走了。

“噬骨魔”用不可思议的眼神看了爵士一眼，然后一只手挡在了爵士面前，另一只手挡住了因为激怒而跑来的人们。

最后，他严肃地喊道：“神禁！神禁！”

土人们听到这句话，停止了愤怒。爵士一行终于在酋长和神威面前，没有受到伤害。

很快，他们又被押回牢里，不过却发现罗伯尔和地理学家不见了。

第四十三章 骇人的酋长丧礼

“噬骨魔”既是部落酋长，又是部落里的祭师，所以他拥有祭师的权威。正因为如此，他才在喊出“神禁！神禁！”时让迷信的土人退缩。

什么是“神禁”呢？其实也就是土人的一种风俗。一旦某个人或某件事被“神禁”，那么就不能有任何人接触或使用了。毛利族的教规规定，谁伸出了褻渎的手，触及到了“神禁”后的人或物，那么就触犯了神怒，是会被神处死的。即使神没有处死，祭师们也会将触犯了神怒的人处死。

“神禁”除了成为土人的一种习惯外，还会作为酋长的政治目的随时宣布。有些土人甚至在很多种情况下，受到无数天的“神禁”。打个比方，在他剪头发、绣花、造船、造房甚至是重病将死时，都可以受到“神禁”。

又比如说，在河里捕鱼的人很多，鱼养不大；还比如地里的庄稼刚成熟便遭人践踏……这都可以用“神禁”来保护，不过这属于经济目的。而如果一个酋长为了防止闲人骚扰住宅，也是可以将住宅“神禁”起来的。还比如他想垄断外来船舶的外贸活动，他可以用“神禁”来隔离这只船。又比如一个欧洲商人触怒了他，他可以用“神禁”这个欧洲商人……

总之，在这些场合下，“神禁”所起的作用就和欧洲古代皇帝的“否决权”差不多。

在土人心里，一个被“神禁”的东西，千万不能触摸，不然必遭惩

罚。比如说，一个土人动了被“神禁”的东西，在很长一段时间里，有些食物他是不能吃的。即使过了这个禁食期，他的手也不能触摸食物。而如果他是富人，他在不能触摸食物时，可以让奴隶帮他食物送进嘴里；若这个人是穷人，那么他只能用嘴去叼食物吃了，意思就是说：“神禁”让他变成了牲畜。

不管怎么说，这种奇怪的风俗约束和操纵着新西兰土人最微小的动作，甚至可以说是“神”对土人生活的干涉。这种风俗虽然不是法律，但在土人眼里比法律还庄严。而这种频繁的“神禁”，也可以说是法律的概括，它无可辩驳，也无人辩驳。

被关起来的爵士一行，因为酋长的一个“神禁”指令，让他们从狂怒的人群中活了下来。当时那几个“噬骨魔”的亲信，在听到首领“神禁”后，马上住了手，并反过来护住了爵士一行。

不过，爵士并没妄想着能够免死，他抱定了一命换一命的想法。

我们应该知道，在土人的风俗里，一个临死之人必须遭受各种苦刑，绝对不会让你痛痛快快地一下子去死的。爵士自然知道他这次的义愤之举意味着什么，也知道自己免不了会受到残酷的报复。他做好了准备，而且他也希望这个残酷报复只针对他一个人，不要牵连到其他人。

可以想象，这一夜，爵士一行是多么难熬，没有人能描述出他们的焦急心情，更没人知道他们的痛苦。可怜的小罗伯尔和乐观的巴嘉勒尔不见了，他们去哪儿了？又会遭遇什么？是不是已经成了土人报复的第一批牺牲品？

此时，对于他们俩，大家已经不抱任何希望了，连很少绝望的少校也死了心。玛丽小姐因为没有了弟弟，非常悲伤。这让麦盖尔很是心

疼。

爵士的脑海里不断回响着海伦夫人那可怕的要求，她希望他打死她，以免受苦刑或做奴隶。可他怎么会忍心打死自己的爱妻？

“玛丽小姐，我又有什么权利来打死她？”麦盖尔心里也在这么想着，不禁万念俱灰。

对于逃跑，想都不用想，根本不可能。10个全副武装的战士，正站在门口。

一直到2月13日早晨，由于“神禁”的原因，土人没有任何人和爵士一行接触。关他们的棚子里也有吃的东西，但爵士他们却一点都没动。悲伤过度的他们，丝毫感受不到饥饿。

整整一天就这么过去了，既没有坏消息，也没有好消息。很显然，这是要将死者的葬礼和凶手的死刑一起进行了。

爵士觉得“噬骨魔”肯定已经打消了交换他们的想法，不过，少校对此还抱有一线希望。

“谁知道会怎么样呢？我敢说，对你打死卡纳特德，他肯定还心存感激呢！”少校老是这么说。他让爵士回想一下卡纳特德死时，“噬骨魔”的表情。

不过，虽然爵士觉得少校说得有道理，但还是不抱任何希望。第二天又过去了，对爵士的处刑并没有举行。

为什么会这样呢？

原来，毛利人有一个必须严格执行的风俗，那就是一个人在死后的3天里，灵魂并没有离开肉体，所以死去的人还要过3个24小时，尸体才能埋葬。

2月15日，整个城寨都静悄悄的。麦盖尔时不时地站在维尔逊肩头朝外面看。外面看不到一个土人，只有关押他们的地方有土人轮流值班。

到了第3天，每个棚子的门都打开了。男男女女，老老少少的土人有好几百人涌到了堡上，他们个个都很安静，悄无声息。

“噬骨魔”也从他的房间里出来了，后面跟着的是一些部落里的首领，他们走到城寨中间，站在一个2米高的土堆上。其他土人站在土堆后的几米处，将土堆围成了半圆形。整个环境寂静异常。

“噬骨魔”做了个手势，有个土人战士便走到了“牢房”。

“别忘了我和你说过的话。”海伦夫人对爵士说。

爵士将海伦夫人拥在了胸前。此时，玛丽小姐也走到了麦盖尔身边，她对麦盖尔说：“爵士和夫人都觉得，一个妻子如果无法忍辱偷生，就可以要求丈夫把她打死；那么作为一个未婚妻，也有同样的要求。约翰，在这关键的时候，我能说，在您的内心深处，已经承认我是您的未婚妻了对吗？如果是这样，亲爱的约翰，我希望您也能像海伦夫人要求爵士的那样，好吗？”

麦盖尔欣喜若狂，叫了起来：“亲爱的玛丽……”

没等他把话说完，草帘便被掀开了，他们被押到了“噬骨魔”那里。两个女士已经下定决心要死了，所以也没什么怕的了，看起来非常平

静。男人们心如刀割，但表面却很平静，一脸坚毅。

当一行人走到酋长面前时，酋长对爵士说：

“是你杀死了卡纳特德？”

“没错！是我杀死了他。”

“那么明天太阳一出来，你就得死！”

“只是我一个人死吗？”爵士问，他的心跳得厉害。

“如果不是我们‘图洪加’的生命比你们宝贵……”“噬骨魔”叫了起来，眼神中射出毒意。

此时，土人的人群突然骚动起来。爵士朝四下一看，见人群被分开，有个土人战士气喘吁吁地跑了过来。“噬骨魔”也许是想让爵士他们听到，便用英语问道：

“你是从阵地上回来的吗？”

“是的！”土人战士说。

“你看见我们的‘图洪加’了吗？”

“看见了。”

“他怎么样？还活着吗？”

“没有！他死了，他被英国人枪毙了！”

看来，既然“图洪加”死了，爵士和同伴们的生命也就走到尽头了。

“你们都要死！明天太阳出来的时候，就是你们的死期！”“噬骨魔”大声叫道。

他们的命运就这么被做了判决，所有的人都要死。不过，海伦夫人和玛丽小姐面对这种情况，脸上却露出了微笑，看着天空，以表示感谢。

爵士一行这次没有被押到“牢房”，而是和土人一起，参加了卡纳特德的葬礼，并且还要跟随葬礼举行血祭仪式。几个土人战士将他们押到了一棵很大的“苦楝”树脚下。看守他们的人一直和他们在一起，紧紧地盯着他们。整个部落都沉浸在悲伤和哀悼中，似乎已经忘记了自己是谁。

卡纳特德已经死了3天了，按土人的风俗，灵魂已经离开肉体，可以举行葬礼了。

卡纳特德的尸体停在城寨中间的小土堆上。死去的卡纳特德穿着一件华丽的衣服，外面裹着一层草席，头上插着一根羽毛，还戴着一圈绿叶。他的整个面部、胳膊和胸脯上都擦上了油，看不到爵士用枪打过的痕迹。

卡纳特德的亲友全都走到了小土堆旁，突然，像有人指挥的乐队在唱丧歌，四周传出了哭泣声、号哭声和呜咽声，这些声音交织在一起，形成了交响曲，响彻云霄。

大家用沉痛的音调，用哭声来表达对死者的哀悼。死者最亲近的人，不停地捶打着自己的头，远亲则抓自己的脸，他们用这种形式来表现死者流的血比流的泪多。

这些可怜的女人用这种形式表达着她们的悲伤。不过，好像这样的形式还无法告慰死者的灵魂，她们觉得死者一定会将怨气和怒气发泄到活着的人身上，所以她们觉得，如果不能让死者复生，那么就要让死者在阴间享受快乐。因此，卡纳特德的妻子是不能让丈夫一个人进坟墓的，何况这个不幸的女人也不想独自活在世上。

这都是风俗，也是责任。也就是说，殉夫的事在新西兰很正常。

于是，卡纳特德的妻子出来了，她非常年轻。披头散发的她一会儿号哭，一会儿哽咽，悲伤至极。她一面哭泣，一面诉说着什么，从她模糊的话音和缠绵的语调中可以感受到，她是在歌颂死者的品德。而当她哀伤到极点时，便躺在了土堆下，将头在地上拼命地撞。

此时，“噬骨魔”走到了她的身边。她爬了起来，“噬骨魔”挥舞着手里的木槌，将她砸倒在地。

她就这么死了。

吓人的声音再次响起，土人们举起自己的拳头，威胁着爵士一行。爵士一行一动也不敢动，因为葬礼还没有结束。

卡纳特德和他妻子的尸体并排躺着。不过，在那个阴冷的环境下，卡纳特德仅有妻子一人陪着还不行，还需要奴隶。所以他们的奴隶也要跟着一起死——因为如果没有奴隶，谁来伺候他们夫妻？

可怜的6个奴隶被带到了两具尸体面前。这些奴隶都是土人部落间发生战争时，俘虏的敌方土人。

奴隶主在世时，这些奴隶忍受着饥饿，受尽了虐待，干着牲畜干的活。而在奴隶主死后，他们依然要陪着奴隶主去死，去为死人服务。

这些奴隶好像并不为他们的命运叫屈，也安于接受这样的命运。也许是因为他们早就知道要殉葬，所以表现得很平静，没有一丝惊恐。他们的双手没有被捆上，以示他们心甘情愿去陪葬。好在他们的死法会很利落，所以也算是解除了长期的辛劳和折磨。

毛利人的酷刑只针对这些欧洲人。

爵士一行在20步远的地方挤成了一团，他们把眼睛转向了别的地方，不忍心看这一个接一个的凶残场景。

6名土人战士高高地举起木槌，向那6名奴隶砸去。顿时，6名奴隶倒在了血泊里。于是，有人发出了一声号令——吃人肉开始了。

6名奴隶的尸体是不会像主人的尸体一样受到“神禁”的，所以他们归全部落的人所有。就这样，6名奴隶的尸体，成了哭丧者的酒菜。

祭礼结束后，所有的土人，首领、战士、老人、妇女、儿童……不分年龄、性别，个个都像发了疯一样，扑向了“食物”。

爵士一行看得浑身发抖，喘不过气来。他们尽量不让海伦夫人和玛丽小姐看到这惊人的一幕。而这时，他们也已经意识到，明天太阳出来时，他们不知道会有怎样的死法，而且死之前，又要经历什么，他们不敢想，也不能想。

吃完人肉，是葬礼的舞蹈节目时间。土人们开始喝一种用“极品椒”酿成的烈性酒，喝了烈性酒的土人，已经没有一点人性了。他们会不会忘了酋长的“神禁”，提前向爵士他们下手呢？爵士一行吓坏了。

好在“噬骨魔”始终保持着清醒，在给大家一个钟头的跳舞喝酒时

间后，他们依照习惯开始进行最后一项仪式。

卡纳特德夫妇的尸体被抬了起来，根据新西兰土人的风俗，他们的手脚是要弯过来，并贴着肚子的。而且现在的埋葬并不是真正的埋葬，只有把尸体埋在土里后，皮肉烂了，只剩下骨头，埋骨时才算是真正的埋葬。

墓地被选在了城寨外3公里处的小山顶上，这座山在湖的右边，叫孟伽纳木山。

在将尸体往那里抬时，有土人拿来了两只原始的轿子，这种轿子只是两个软兜。在将软兜摆在土堆下后。他们把两具蜷曲的尸体用藤箍支着放到软兜上。然后由四个土人抬着往前走。轿子后面是排列整齐的土人，他们大声号叫，唱着丧歌，一直走到墓地。

爵士他们一行始终被监视着，一直看着送殡队伍离开城寨，慢慢地，那哭声和歌声低了下来。

大约半个小时后，那些送殡的人钻进深谷不见了。接着，又看见他们出来了，在山路上蠕动。远远望去，那支漫长而曲折的队伍一起一伏的，像鬼影一样在晃动。

整个部落的人在250米高的地方停下了，那就是孟伽纳木山的山顶，是预先为卡纳特德夫妇准备的墓地。

在土人的风俗里，一个普通的土人坟墓只是一个坑和一堆石头。可对一些有权有势的酋长来说，这些人是会变成神灵的，所以也就为他们造了一个能和他们生前的名誉相匹配的大坟墓。

墓地外有一道栅栏，墓穴旁有很多木桩，木桩上刻着一些涂得鲜红

的人物。

新西兰土人认为，死去的人的灵魂也和活着的人一样，是要吃东西的，所以墓穴里还放了很多粮食、衣服和武器。

死者死后该享用的一切，全都置办齐了。他们这才将尸体放了进去，并让两具尸体并排躺着。大家在又大哭了一阵后，这才将尸体掩埋起来。

做完这些，送殡的队伍默默地下了山。此后，任何人都不能再去那座山了——谁去谁就会死。因为它是受到“神禁”的，同伽利洛山也一样，没有土人敢去。

同伽利洛山上埋着的，是1846年地震时死去的一名酋长。

第四十四章 罗伯尔帮越狱

太阳在导泊湖边的图哈华山峰和普克塔浦山峰后面沉了下去，爵士一行重又被押回“牢房”。在第二天太阳升起前，他们是不能离开这所“牢房”的。

还有一夜的时间，这一夜，他们要做离世的准备。虽然悲痛欲绝，惊恐万分，但他们还是一起吃了一餐饭。

“在死亡面前，我们不用垂头丧气，要叫那些野人看到，我们欧洲人是多么不怕死。”爵士说。

吃过饭，海伦夫人开始高声诵起了晚祷，全体同伴随着她一起脱帽祷告。

有谁在死亡降临时，会不想上帝？

做完晚课后，大家互相拥抱了一下。

玛丽小姐和海伦夫人退到了棚子的一角，躺在一张草席上。她们暂时忘记了悲伤和痛苦，互相拥抱着进入了梦乡。接连的疲惫、惊恐和失眠让她们再也熬不住了。

在玛丽小姐和海伦夫人进入梦乡时，爵士把其他人拉到了一边：

“亲爱的伙伴们，我们和两位可怜女士的生命，都掌握在了上帝手里。如果明天我们的死是天意，那作为上帝子民的我们，一定要勇敢地

接受死亡，接受上帝的审判。上帝能看透我们的心意，知道我们是一群追求高尚目标的人。如果不成功，那就是上帝的安排。到那时候，不管上帝的旨意如何严酷，我们都不抱怨。不过，在这里我们不是为了求死，这里有苦刑，有奇耻大辱，特别是还有两位女士……”

爵士的语气很坚定，说到这里，他的声音开始颤抖。他停了下来，抑制住感情，慢慢地说：“约翰，我知道你会像我对待海伦一样对待玛丽，你有什么决定？”

“我答应过她的事，我想我一定能做到！”麦盖尔说。

“可我们没有武器怎么办？”爵士说。

“还有一件武器！”麦盖尔说着，拿出了一把短刀。

“在卡纳特德倒在您脚下时，我将这把刀从野人的手里夺了过来。爵士，我们俩不管谁活着，都要履行我们对海伦夫人和玛丽小姐的诺言。”

棚子里一片沉寂。好一会儿，少校说：“朋友们，我们还没有到最后的时刻，是不能采取这种举动的，我始终不相信没有任何机会。”

“我只是这么说。情况不同啊，如果只是几个男人，我一定会喊，朋友们，冲出去，杀死那些坏蛋！不过还有她们，还有她们呀……”

就在这时，麦盖尔悄悄地掀开了门帘，发现在“牢房”外看守的土人有25个。25个看守面前燃着一堆火，火光照在了城寨里高低不平的草棚子上。那些看守有的躺在火周围，有的站着不动。不过，不管他们是躺着还是站着，他们都会时不时地转头看着爵士一行人待着的棚子。

曾有人说，在看守和想越狱的人之间，越狱的人逃跑的机会更多一些。因为一个有心，一个无意。有时候，看守的人是会忘记自己在看守的，而越狱的人却时刻盯着看守在看，所以如果犯人想逃跑的话，还是有机会的。

不过，在爵士他们所处的环境中，那些看守好像并没有无意，因为这些人对欧洲人充满了仇恨，有着强烈的复仇心。如果说爵士他们为什么没有被捆的话，是因为根本不需要捆绑，因为有25个人看着唯一的一道门。

他们所在的棚子背后靠着城寨尽头的一座石岩，前面只有一条小道通向城寨中心的平原。棚子两边是悬崖峭壁，底下又是30米深的深坑。所以要想滑下去根本不可能。想挖地道吧也不行，因为地面全是大石头。唯一的出路就是通向城寨中心，像吊桥一样的泥路，可那泥路也被土人把守着。所以逃跑根本是不可能的事。

爵士在棚子里试过很多次，但都不是逃跑的好办法。

真是令人焦躁的一夜，时间在一分一秒地过着。当夜幕完全笼罩了整座山时，天空既没有月亮也没有星星，黑暗一片。狂风在寨子周围肆虐，吹得棚子上的木桩发出了呜咽声。

土人烧的那堆火因为狂风，更亮了。火光直直地射向了关着他们的棚子。里面的人顿时被照亮了。爵士他们这群可怜的人，只能沉浸在绝望中。

周围死一般地寂静。

差不多凌晨4点的时候，一阵轻微的声响引起了少校的关注。响声

是从棚子底部的木桩后传出来的，也就是在靠近石岩的那面墙底下。

开始的时候，少校并没注意那声响，后来听到不断在响时，他把耳朵贴近地面，仔细听了听，觉得像是有人在扒土挖洞。

少校心里有了底，急忙溜到爵士和麦盖尔身边，打断了他们绝望的沉思，然后将他们引到有声音的地方。

“快听！”他小声说着，做手势让他们伏下身子听。

扒土的声音越来越响，他们听出有种很尖的东西像在钻石头，石子也在哗啦啦地往下掉。

“是不是野兽在动。”麦盖尔说。

爵士拍拍额头说：“谁知道呢？如果是人在扒呢？”

“管它是人是兽，等会儿就知道了！”少校说。

维尔逊、奥比尔也跑了过来，大家一起动手挖墙壁。麦盖尔的短刀有了用处，其他人则捡起地上的石头，甚至用手和指甲来扒。穆纳趴在地上从门帘缝隙看外面，给他们放哨。

那些土人还围坐在火堆旁一动不动，他们丝毫没意识到离他们20步远的地方有情况发生。

那层硬土是由凝灰岩构成的，特别容易碎，所以虽然没有工具，但他们挖得很快。不一会儿，大家便断定外面有一个人或几个人在挖地道。这些人为什么要挖地道？他们知道这棚子里有俘虏吗？他们有什么企图？

大家又加紧挖。手破了，流血了，可还是不停地在挖着。半个小时后，他们挖出的洞有1米左右宽了。外面的声音更响了，他们之间仅仅隔着薄薄的一层土，只要将这层土扒掉，两边就通了。

几分钟后，少校的手被刀尖扎破了，他急忙往回一缩，疼得差点叫出来，但又忍住了。

麦盖尔伸出了短刀，挡住了外面钻进来的刀，随即他摸到了一只手。那手像是女人或小孩的手，而且像是欧洲人的手。

双方都一言不发，很明显都不敢声张。

“难道是罗伯尔？”爵士自语道。

即使他说话的声音很低，玛丽小姐还是被惊醒了。她溜到了爵士身边，抓住了那只糊满泥土的小手吻着。

“是你！我的小罗伯尔！真的是你！”玛丽肯定地说。

“姐姐，是我，我来了，我来救大家了。不过不要说话。”

“真是个好孩子！”爵士激动地说。

“看着外面的土人。”罗伯尔又说。

在知道外面是小罗伯尔后，穆纳也跑了过来，一听这话，急忙跑到原地去监视。

“没事，现在只有4个看守，其他人都睡着了。”穆纳小声说。

“我们再扒！”维尔逊说。

洞扒大了，罗伯尔钻了进来，先是扑进了姐姐的怀里，接着又到了海伦夫人的怀里，他的身上捆着一条弗密翁草的长绳子。

“我的孩子！他们没有杀掉你吗？”海伦夫人小声说。

“没有，夫人！我也不知道怎么回事，就那么乘乱逃出了土人的视线。我爬出栅栏，在树丛里躲了两天。晚上我到处跑，找你们。趁着全部落的土人都在为酋长办丧事的时候，我跑到这个棚子的城寨脚下，发现我能爬到你们这里来。

“在一个没有人的棚子里，我找到了一把刀和绳子。我把峭壁上的草丛和树枝当软梯，爬上来了。我还发现这棚子靠着的高岩中间有个洞，那个洞和棚子只隔着几层厚的松土，所以就把洞扒通了。”小罗伯尔说。

没人说一句话，许许多多的热吻回应着小罗伯尔。

“我们走吧！”小罗伯尔说。

“巴嘉勒尔在下面吗？”爵士问。

“巴嘉勒尔先生？”罗伯尔一惊，反问道。

“他呢？他是不是在下面等着我们？”

“没有，爵士，巴嘉勒尔先生难道没有在这里吗？”

“不在这里，罗伯尔！”玛丽说。

“难道你没有看到他？在那么乱的情况下，你们就没碰到？你们不是一起逃的？”

“没有！我们没有一起逃，爵士！”罗伯尔说。听说巴嘉勒尔不见了，他非常吃惊。

“快走吧！一分钟都不能耽误了。现在巴嘉勒尔在任何地方，都比在我们这里好！我们要赶快走！”少校说。

时间对他们来说太宝贵了，现在他们非逃不可。

这次逃脱，他们面对的将是洞外一段几乎垂直的峭壁，有多危险可想而知。好在这峭壁只有7米左右，当他们下了这段峭壁后，就会遇到一个斜坡，斜坡一直通到山脚下，从山脚下，他们又可以钻进山谷去。而土人要是知道他们逃跑了，是要绕个大圈子才能到这里的，因为他们不知道关他们的棚子和斜坡间有一个地道。

为了逃跑成功，他们预先做了一些安排：大家先一个接一个地爬出狭窄地道，到下面的山洞里。在这些人中，麦盖尔断后，在他离开前，要先把他们扒出的洞填上，并用草席把地道口盖住。

当然，想要下那段峭壁，没有绳子不行。幸好罗伯尔带着一条。

大家急忙解开绳子，将绳子的一端拴在岩石上，另一端拖向外面。绳子是用弗密翁叶筋做成的，麦盖尔先试了试，觉得绳子有些不结实。此时，任何的险都不能随便去冒，因为摔下去的话很可能会死。

“一条绳子一次只能吊两个人，我看我们还是根据绳子能承受的重量来吧。爵士和夫人先下，等你们下去了，抓住绳子摇三下，然后再下另两个。”

“还是我先下去吧。我在坡的下端看到了一个深坑，先下去的人可以躲在里面，等后面的人。”罗伯尔说。

“好！我的孩子，你先下去吧！”爵士握了握他的手，慈爱地说。

罗伯尔出了洞，很快就不见了。一分钟后，绳子抖了三下，说明他已经顺利到了地面。

很快，爵士和夫人也冒险爬出洞外。黑夜依旧，不过东边山峰处已经有微微的光亮了。

清晨的寒气让海伦夫人很振奋，她精神十足，开始了她的危险之旅。

爵士率先抓住了绳子，随即海伦夫人也抓起了绳子，两个人沿着绳子滑了下去，很快就到了峭壁搭到坡顶的地方。随即，爵士在海伦夫人的前面顶着她，慢慢地往下退。爵士很快就找到了落脚点，周围是些草根和小树。他先试了一下，然后将海伦夫人的脚也放上去。

有小鸟被惊飞，还有小石子哗啦啦地往下掉，两个人胆战心惊。

在坡上走了近一半的距离后，他们听到洞里有人叫“停下来”。

是麦盖尔在叫。

爵士一只手抓住一丛方茎草，另一只手拉着海伦夫人停了下来，大气都不敢出。

原来，监视外面土人的维尔逊发出了警告声，他发现爵士他们在下面发出了声响，所以急忙托着门帘看外面。听到他的招呼声后，麦盖尔急忙提醒爵士。

果然，看守的土人听到棚子里有异样声响，走了过来。不过他在离

棚两步远的地方停下了，低下头仔细听着。他站在那里时间虽然只有1分钟，但对棚子里的人来说，却像1个小时。

最后，土人可能觉得自己听错了，又摇摇头回到了同伴身边，并抱了一捆干柴，加在了半熄的火堆上。火又旺了起来，照亮了土人的脸，从他脸上，看不出任何的怀疑。又看了看天边最开始的那一缕淡淡的晨光后，他重新躺在火边，烤着冻得很僵的手脚。

“可以了！”维尔逊小声说。

麦盖尔冲洞外的爵士发出信号，爵士顺势往下一滑。很快，海伦夫人和爵士便在罗伯尔等着的那条小路上停住了。

在将绳子摇了三下后，其他人都下来了，最后，麦盖尔带着玛丽小姐也下来了，他们到了罗伯尔说的那个深坑。仅仅用了5分钟，全体成员都顺利地逃出了棚子，离开了临时藏身的土坑。他们避开了有人居住的湖岸，沿着狭窄的小路钻进深谷。

他们走得很快，像鬼影一样，在小树丛中穿行。他们要去哪儿呢？

没人知道，他们只是没目的地乱跑。不过，他们自由了。

将近早晨5点的时候，天慢慢亮了，云堆高处，有淡蓝色的影子出现。

晨雾中很快就要露出朦胧的山峰了，太阳很快也要上山，不过，太阳上山虽然不是处置他们的时间，却是暴露他们逃跑的时间。

所以，他们必须在土人追捕之前，逃出土人圈子。而且必须跑得远远的，让他们无法找到踪迹。

不过，他们无法走快，因为小路实在是太难走了。爬坡时，爵士扶着海伦夫人，麦盖尔扶着玛丽小姐。罗伯尔则满心欢喜，享受着成功和胜利的喜悦。他在前面开路，两名水手断后。

再有半个小时，旭日就要从云雾中升起了。

没有巴嘉勒尔的引路，逃命的几个人又乱跑了半个小时。此时，大家在逃命中还想着巴嘉勒尔，还在为他的安危担心。下落不明的他，成了成功喜悦中的一道阴影。不过，大家还是尽可能地朝东方跑，迎着晨曦跑。

很快，他们到了离导泊湖约150米高的地方。

清晨的寒冷让处在高空中的他们越发冷了，刺骨的寒冷侵蚀着他们的肌肤。高山和丘陵隐隐约约地重叠在他们面前。不过爵士此刻想的却是进山越深越好，他只想先钻进谁也找不到的迷宫，然后再设法摸出来。因为太阳出来了，这就预示着逃亡者又要面临追杀了。

就在这时，他们听到了惊人的咆哮声，那是由成百上千的呼叫声混合而成的，在空中发酵。

声音是从城寨里传出来的。可城寨此刻又在什么地方？爵士一时之间无法辨清方向。而且由于被浓雾笼罩，他们根本看不清下面的低谷。

不过不用怀疑，土人一定是发现他们逃跑了，正在追捕呢。他们现在是否已经被土人发现了？他们沿途留下的遗迹会不会已经向土人指明了方向？

此时，下面的雾气全部涌了上来，并把他们包围在湿云里，他们看见脚下100米远的地方有着疯狂的土人。

看来，他们看见了土人，而土人也看见了他们。又是一阵咆哮声响起，咆哮声中还夹杂着狗叫声。

全部落的土人都跑了出来，他们想要爬上悬崖，但却爬不上来，所以又转头涌向了栅栏，抄小路追踪他们.....

第四十五章 墓穴成了保护伞

爵士一行离山顶还有30米远的距离。

他们要想躲过毛利人的追捕，只能爬到山上，然后再转到山的另一边去。他们希望另一边有山脊，这样就能让他们直达山峰了。不过，山峰混杂在庞大的山系中，让他们有些分不清方向。如果巴嘉勒尔和他们在一起，一定能知道这复杂的山势是怎么形成的，应该怎么逃脱。

不管怎样，他们必须费力往上爬。叫骂声离他们越来越近，突然，那群凶狠的土人追到山脚下却停住了。

“朋友们！加油！”爵士并没看到这种情况，还在为大家加油。

不到5分钟，他们就爬到了山顶。他们四下看着，判断着自己所处的形势，考虑着要怎么躲那些土人。

站在他们所处的高度，他们能够看到整个向西展开的导泊湖。导泊湖的四周被许多山环绕，风景非常优美。导泊湖的北边是毕龙伽山的群峰；南边是同伽利洛山的喷火口；东边视线被与华西梯连山相连的山峦遮挡，华西梯连山是由一连串起伏的山岭组成的大山脉。此山从库克湾起，斜贯北岛全境。所以他们必须从山那边再跑下来，这样就能钻进狭隘的山坳里了。

不过，如果真要这样的话，他们可能又找不到出路了。

此时，云雾在太阳的照耀下消散了，他们清楚地看到了山下的毛利

人。那里是个平顶小山头，小山头的平顶上有个圆锥形山尖，当他们到达那个山尖时，土人离他们也不过150多米。

爵士一行不敢停留，不管多累也要拼命地跑，不拼命跑的话，很可能被土人包围的。

“趁现在我们的路还没有被截断，赶快跑到山那头去。”爵士大声说。

不过，两位可怜的女士却是怎么努力都跑不动了，在她们努力又要往上爬时，少校制止了她们：“不用跑，你们看看下面。”

爵士和其他人一起朝下看，发现了一件不可思议的事情。

山脚下的土人，像是接到了一道严厉的指令，或是遇到了不可逾越的鸿沟，全都停在那里，不往上追了。

那些吃人的土人，只是在山脚下一字儿排开，拼命地叫嚣着，挥舞着手里的枪和斧头。不要说他们，就连他们的狗都停在那里，像它们的主人一样，大声狂叫。

这到底是怎么回事？是什么样的力量制止了他们？

被土人追赶得够呛的他们瞬间目瞪口呆，很是莫名其妙。他们想，会不会是“噬骨魔”部落的一种魔力？而一旦魔力失效，他们又会拼命追上来呢。

突然，麦盖尔大叫一声，其他人一起回过头来。麦盖尔手指着圆锥形山尖上那筑起的小碉堡给他们看。

“那是卡纳特德的墓！”罗伯尔大声说。

“什么？你没说错吧，罗伯尔？”爵士问。

“没错！爵士，那里就是卡纳特德的坟墓。我知道！”

罗伯尔确实没有说错，再往上走15米，就是山尖的顶端了，那里有很多涂了红颜色的木桩，木桩将那里围成了一道栅栏。爵士也认出了那是新西兰酋长的坟墓。

原来，仓皇逃跑的他们，无意间逃到了孟伽纳木山的山顶。

爵士带领大家一起向那圆锥形山尖走去，一直爬到了坟墓脚下。他们发现，坟墓前有个大缺口，缺口处用草席盖着。如果打开草席，他们就能走进墓室了。爵士正要往墓室走，却又连连后退两步。

“里面好像有个土人。”

“哦？这墓室里还有土人？”少校也很吃惊。

“是呀，我也奇怪。”

“不管他，先进去看看再说。”

爵士、少校、罗伯尔和麦盖尔率先钻进墓室。果然，那里有个披着弗密翁草麻外衣的毛利人。由于墓室太暗，他们看不清毛利人的样子。不过，毛利人表现得很平静，正悠闲地吃着东西。爵士正要和他说话，那个“土人”却开口了，口气非常和蔼，他用流利的英语说：“我亲爱的爵士，坐下吧！有早饭在等着您呢！”

是巴嘉勒尔。

大家一听，全都奔了进来。而每个人都被长着长长胳膊的巴嘉勒尔抱了一下。

巴嘉勒尔找到了，有了他，大家也就不用没目的地乱转了。大家正要开口问他是怎样到这里来的，爵士一句很扫兴的话让大家把兴奋又收了回去。爵士说：“土人把我们包围了！”

“土人？根本不用在乎他们。”

“我怕他们会……”

“他们？那群笨蛋！你们看着好了！”

巴嘉勒尔说着，走出了墓室，其他人跟在他后面。再看山脚下，那群土人依然在原地咆哮。

“让他们叫吧！拼命叫！喊破嗓子地叫！这群愚蠢的家伙，看他们敢不敢爬上来。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“什么？他们不敢爬上来？为什么不敢？”爵士问。

“因为这里埋着他们的酋长，所以这山被‘神禁’了，此刻这坟墓保护着我们。”

“什么？‘神禁’？”

“对呀，朋友们！正因为这座山被‘神禁’了，所以我才逃到这里来的。这里就和欧洲中世纪那些不幸的人逃到不可侵犯的圣地一样。”

“啊！太好了！上帝保佑！”海伦夫人长舒一口气，高兴地将双手举向天空说。

没错，这座山因为有了酋长的坟墓，所以成了“神禁”之地，避免了那群迷信的土人侵袭。

不过，逃到这里的爵士一行并没有算是完全脱了险，只能说暂时安全了。不过这暂时的安全，也是可以让他们想出更好的脱险办法。爵士心里五味杂陈，沉默着，什么话都不说。少校摇着头，露出不可思议及庆幸的神色。

“朋友们！那群蠢货如果想把我们这么围困起来，那简直就是做梦。我敢说，不出两天，我们就能逃出他们的魔掌。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“我们是要逃，可怎么逃呢？”爵士说。

“不知道！不过我们终究会逃掉的。”巴嘉勒尔说。

此时，每个人都想知道巴嘉勒尔的遭遇。不过很奇怪，巴嘉勒尔这个原本说话滔滔不绝的人却沉默了下来，直到别人逼他，他才挤出几句。

平时说话眉飞色舞的他，现在却没有一点精气神，回答起问题来也是支支吾吾的。

“这巴嘉勒尔怎么像换了一个人似的？”少校想。

是的，巴嘉勒尔不仅说话不像以前了，就连仪表也和原来不一样了。他用罩衫紧紧地裹住了自己，生怕大家看到什么。一谈到自己，也总是面露尴尬之色。不过大家不便紧追不放，所以只好装作没看到他的情绪变化。

在不谈到他自己的时候，巴嘉勒尔依然兴高采烈，和往常一个样。

对于他所经历的，也是大家在墓室外的栅栏脚下，围着他坐下时，他有所保留地，有选择性地讲给大家的。

在爵士用枪打死了卡纳特德后，他和罗伯尔一样，乘乱逃出了城寨的外城。不过，他没有罗伯尔幸运，他误入了另一群毛利人的营地，并被抓了起来。那里的酋长身材很高大，样子看起来也很聪明，巴嘉勒尔很快就看出他比本部落的其他人地位高。那位酋长的英语说得很好，喜欢用鼻尖磨巴嘉勒尔的鼻子，以示欢迎。

巴嘉勒尔警觉地想，难道自己又成了这里的俘虏？可又不像。不过，他每走一步，酋长都会殷勤地陪着他，简直到了寸步不离的地步。最后，他知道了自己为什么会得到这种“优待”。

原来，这位酋长叫“西夷”，也就是“太阳之光”的意思。巴嘉勒尔从酋长的言行看出，他并非什么恶人。在那酋长看到巴嘉勒尔鼻梁上的大眼镜以及身上挂着的望远镜后，便对巴嘉勒尔有了敬意，他努力想让巴嘉勒尔成为他身边的人，并不断用小恩小惠笼络巴嘉勒尔，同时为了预防巴嘉勒尔逃跑，晚上的时候，还用弗密翁麻的绳子捆住他。

就这样，巴嘉勒尔在那里待了3天，这3天，他说不清自己是受到了优待还是虐待。

“应该说既是优待，又是虐待。”巴嘉勒尔最后说。

对此，他并不做过多的解释，总之，他在精神上也成了俘虏，虽然没有面临像爵士他们一样的生死恐怖，却也比爵士他们好不了多少。

终于在一天夜里，他将捆着他的绳子咬断，逃跑了。

由于他曾远远见到卡纳特德埋在这里，也知道酋长所葬的孟伽纳木

山顶上，是会被“神禁”的，所以就逃到了这里来。同时，由于他的同伴还囚禁在这一山区，所以他不愿意丢开他们独自逃命。

好在他成功了。昨天夜里，他来到了卡纳特德的墓室。在这里，他一边休养生息，一边等待机会救回同伴。

巴嘉勒尔把他的经历讲完了，他会不会有意隐瞒了他在土人那里的一些生活细节？大家从他一次次吞吞吐吐的语言中，感觉到是这样，但也没有追问，因为对他们来说，他逃出来了，大家就应该祝贺他。

过去的事情就是那样，他们必须谈谈接下来该怎么办了。

当前的处境还是很严峻的，因为虽然土人们此时不敢往山上爬，但却准备围困他们，想必是要让他们熬不过饥饿和干渴，乖乖地逃下山。所以土人们有的是耐性，他们有的是时间等待。

而在这段时间，爵士一行也在等待时机，必要时，他们要给自己创造机会。

所以爵士首先做了一番侦察，他发现孟伽纳木山的地形是临时碉堡式。当然，他的目的不是借助这些碉堡防卫，因为土人是不敢攻上来的，他的目的是如何走出这个碉堡。少校、麦盖尔、巴嘉勒尔和他一样，也去观察了一下这座山，观察各条山路的方向、坡度和能够到达的地方。

他们发现，孟伽纳木山连接到华西梯连山的那条山岭有1公里长，而且是斜坡，一直通向平原。岭上的山脊很窄，而且没有规则地起伏着。如果想要逃脱围困，这是唯一的途径。而且他们如果黑夜从山脊上逃跑的话，也不容易被土人发现。更重要的是，在他们逃进那条连山深

谷后，很可能毛利人就无法追到他们了。

不过这条路很危险，因为山脊低的地方枪弹能够打到，这样土人在山腰下就很容易地构成了一道火网，这条火网是任何人都闯不过去的。

爵士和他的朋友们一起冒险前行，走上了那段危险的山脊。果然，迎面就是冰雹样的弹丸，幸好没有打中他们。但几包火药纸团却被风吹到了他们面前，纸团上有字，好奇的巴嘉勒尔捡起来一看，怒声道：“朋友们！你们知道这帮混蛋是用什么做的火药纸团吗？”

“是什么，巴嘉勒尔？”爵士问。

“是用《圣经》上的纸做的。如果《圣经》里神圣的语言只是为了让他们做火药团，那我真为那些传教士委屈，他们白费心血了。他们还说要给毛利人建图书馆，我看简直就是不可能的事。”巴嘉勒尔气愤地说。

爵士和同伴们又爬上了圆锥形山坡的坡路，走向墓室，想去看看墓室内部的情况。走着走着，他们突然觉得脚下有什么东西在动，非常吃惊。最后才发现脚下就像锅被煮沸般在颤动。很明显，地下火燃烧起来了。蒸汽很久以前就蕴藏在山下，由于无法喷射出来，所以在里面沸腾。

作为从威卡陀的沸泉中过来的人，这种特殊现象并没有让他们大惊小怪，他们知道依卡那马威岛的中部基本上都是火山质。有无数像筛子一样的孔让蒸汽、沸泉和硫气坑从孔里泄露出来。

巴嘉勒尔发现了这点，并让同伴注意，说此刻他们站着的这座山就是火山质，是北岛中部许多圆锥形山顶之一。也就是说，这座山以后会

变成火山。火山的内部是呈淡白色的凝灰岩，轻微的一个颤动就很可能让山体形成一个大火山口。

“你说得没错，不过在这里还不如在‘邓肯号’锅炉旁危险。这里的地壳好在像个坚固的钢板。”爵士说。

“没错，可这里毕竟是个大锅炉，即使再结实，用久了也会出问题的。”少校说。

“少校，我可不想老待在这里，但老天也要给我们一条路走才行。只要老天给我们指一条路，我马上就走。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“唉！如果这座山能带着我们走就好了。看它肚子里装那么多的气，说不定我们脚下就有几百万马力的力道。可惜啊！白白浪费了。如果‘邓肯号’有这千分之一的马力，就能将我们送到天的另一边了。”麦盖尔感慨道。

麦盖尔的这句话，再次勾起了爵士的伤感。因为爵士不管身处何种环境，首先是为同伴担忧，所以在自己还很危险的时候，他又在为“邓肯号”及船上的员工难受了。

他一边沉思，一边走回同伴身边。海伦夫人看到他，迎了上去。

“我亲爱的爱德华，地形侦察得怎么样了？有没有希望？”

“有！很有希望！亲爱的海伦，那些土人是不敢越过这山界一步的，所以我们不愁找不到机会逃脱。”

“是的，我们现在还是回墓室吧，这可是我们的堡垒，我们的府第、饭厅、研究室。没有人会来打扰我们！夫人们，请容许我在这座美

丽的住宅招待大家吧！”

巴嘉勒尔说着，走进了墓室。

山脚下的土人见这些“可恶”的逃犯又要亵渎被“神禁”的墓室，发出了骇人的咆哮，那咆哮声如同枪声一样响。不过，幸运的是，枪弹打不到他们想要达到的高度，所以子弹又飞到山腰下去了。于是，那辱骂声便随着枪弹声在天空盘旋。

海伦夫人、玛丽小姐和同伴们见土人迷信到发狂，也便完全放下心来，他们一个个地钻进了墓室。

卡纳特德的墓室周围有很多涂着红色颜料的木桩。木桩上刻有很多象征性的图案，或者说木桩上刻着一些花纹，这些花纹表示死者的高贵和拥有的功绩。墓室里有成串辟邪的东西，这些辟邪用的物件有些是贝壳制作的，有些则是石头雕刻的。这些物品全都在木桩与木桩间悬挂，摇摇晃晃的。

墓室内部的地面上是地毯似的绿色叶子，墓室的正中心比其他地方高一些，高出的地方就是新挖成的坟墓。

卡纳特德的武器全都摆在墓室里，武器包括枪械，里面装着子弹和火药线，长矛，漂亮的绿玉斧头……以及大量的弹药。总之，这些武器足够卡纳特德在阴间打猎用了。

“这还真是个军械库呢。我们可以拿来作一番用处。土人死了竟然还要埋武器，而这些武器正好又帮了我们，他们想的真是太周到了。”巴嘉勒尔兴奋地说。

“哈哈……怎么会这样？这些枪可都是英国造的呢。”少校说。

“那是当然的了。把枪当礼物送给这些土人，真是太蠢了。然后他们又拿这些枪对着送他枪的人。不过，这次我不能不说这是对的，因为不管怎么样，这些枪对我们有用。”爵士说。

“不过，更有用的是为卡纳特德准备的食物和水。”巴嘉勒尔狡黠地说。

确实是这样，死者的亲友为死者准备了很多食物和水，以此表明他们对死者的尊敬。而墓室里堆放的粮食，足以让他们吃上个十天半月，或者说，这是留给死者的永远也吃不完的食物。

食物主要是植物，有凤尾草根，还有被土人称为“旋花芋”的甘薯，以及从欧洲移植过来的马铃薯。墓室里的大缸里装着清水，以及十多个编得很精美的篮子，篮子里装着用绿树胶做成的长方块东西。

因此，大家在这里完全不用愁吃喝，所以也准备毫不客气地大吃一顿。

于是，爵士拿出足够大家吃的东西，给奥比尔去加工。奥比尔是个非常讲究的人，即使在这种环境下，也不愿意让大家凑合着吃一餐。不过，面对这些东西，他又不知道该怎么加工，因为他根本没有火。

还是巴嘉勒尔有办法，他说只要把凤尾草根和甘薯塞到土里就行了，不用去管它。

确实是这样，地面上的温度都很高，更不要说土里的温度了。如果有温度计的话，他们一定会测出60到65度的温度来。也正因为如此，奥比尔的手差点被烫了。在他正烤着草根时，一股热浪突然冒出，喷出了两米高的距离，吓了他一跳。

“快把水龙头关上。”少校大声嚷嚷。两名水手急忙来帮忙，并将那坑堵住了。

此时，巴嘉勒尔却呆呆地看着那个地方，脸上露出了微笑，并自言自语地说：“嘿嘿！完全可以，怎么不可以呢？”

“有没有烫伤？”少校问奥比尔。

“没有烫伤，少校！真没想到……”

“没想到老天这么优待我们对吧！”巴嘉勒尔得意地叫了起来。

“现在我们有了卡纳特德的食物和水，还有火给我们烤！天啊！这里真是太好了，简直就是个天堂。我觉得，我们可以在这里建立一个殖民地，然后在这里住一辈子，做山上的鲁滨孙！真是太好了！我看这里任何东西都不缺。”

“没错，真是什么都不缺，如果地壳再硬一些就更好了。”麦盖尔说。

“还嫌这地壳不硬？这地壳可不是一天两天形成的，耐地心火力已经很久了。我觉得，在我们走之前，这里都不会有问题。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“吃早饭了！”奥比尔严肃地说，表情就和在麦凯莫府伺候主人一样。

大家马上来到了栅栏房，吃着那些近来他们常吃的救命的食物。此时，他们能吃的只有两种食物，不过在这种情况下，也没什么可挑剔

的。

对于凤尾草根的味道，每个人的看法都不一样。有些人觉得很甜，很好吃，但有的人却觉得没有味道。那热土里的烤甘薯，他们吃得很香。巴嘉勒尔因此说，卡纳特德很幸福，埋在这里还有这么好吃的东西。

吃饱喝足后，爵士提议大家商量逃脱计划。

“这就想走了？这么好的地方，急什么急？”巴嘉勒尔说，话语里满是不舍。

“巴嘉勒尔先生，这个地方虽然舒适安全，可我们也不能老沉迷在这里呀。”海伦夫人说。

“夫人，您都这样说了，我当然要遵命了！您要议，那就议吧！”

“我觉得，我们要想逃跑，必须等东西吃完再跑，这样我们的精力也就充沛了。而且我们不妨在今晚就设法跑到东边山谷去，然后乘黑暗穿过土人的包围圈。”爵士说。

“太好了！要是毛利人能放我们过去的话。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“要是不放我们过去呢？”麦盖尔问。

“那我们还可以想出妙计来。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“你有妙计？”少校问。

“妙到让你们谁都想不到。”巴嘉勒尔说完，便什么都不愿意说了。

他们只有等待，等天黑时，偷偷溜过土人的防线。

土人一直没有离开他们原来的地方，人数也在不断地增加，应该是后来又来了不少人。山脚下燃起了一堆堆的篝火，这些篝火形成了一个大大的火圈子。

在黑夜笼罩着四周的时候，孟伽纳木山如同从一个大火坑里冒出来，很快又消失在黑暗中。他们在坟墓里，听到了200米以下的土人在骚动、叫嚣、喧哗。

晚上9点钟的时候，天已经很黑了。爵士和麦盖尔决定在带领大伙儿从危险的山路上逃跑前，再去侦察一番。他们悄悄地跑了下去，大约走了10分钟路程的时候，到了那条窄窄的山脊上，而这山脊正好穿过土人的包围圈，并高出营地约17米。

直到这时，一切都还是非常顺利的。躺在火旁边的土人，根本没有注意到有两个人在逃跑，所以他们又多走了几步。突然，山脊左右两边同时响起了枪声。

“快往回跑！那些土人的枪法很准。”爵士说。

很快，他俩就爬上了山顶的陡坡，回到墓地后，安慰被枪声惊扰到的同伴。爵士的帽子上中了两弹，不过有了这个经历，他也就知道，在这条漫长的山脊处，到处都是土人战士，他们绝对不能冒这个险。

“还是明天再说吧！土人监视得太严了，我们根本就过不去。”爵士说。

天气很冷，幸好卡纳特德最好的衣服和最厚的被褥都在墓地里，所以每个人都不客气地裹在了身上。然后在土人迷信的保护下，安然入睡

了。由于外面有栅栏挡着，地下又有滚烫的蒸汽冒着，他们还有什么不放心的呢？

第四十六章 制造火山爆发

2月17日，孟伽纳木山墓地里的10个人被旭日唤醒。

山脚下的土人依然在山脚下疯狂地转来转去，气急败坏，视线始终不离开他们。一看褻渎了他们圣地的欧洲人出来，土人们便大声地叫嚣着。

大家向四周看了看，看见前后左右的山峰全都笼罩在晨雾中，晨风将导泊湖吹得波光粼粼。

大家都想知道巴嘉勒尔有什么绝妙的主意，便都围住了他，眼巴巴地看着他。巴嘉勒尔很快就满足了大家的好奇心，他说：“朋友们，我这个计划最大的好处就是，如果成功了，更好；如果不成功，最多还像现在这样，没什么改变。”

“到底是个什么样的计划？”少校问。

“我的计划就是：土人迷信的这座山既然能成为我们的避难所，那么我们还可以利用这种迷信逃出这座山。要是我们能让‘噬骨魔’和他的手下相信我们因为褻渎了这片圣地，受到了惩罚，让他们相信苍天将愤怒发泄到了我们头上……总之，让他们相信因为一场天祸，我们死了。你们想想看，这样的话，他们是不是就会离开这里，回到他们的城寨去？”

“那是当然了。”爵士说。

“可要怎样才能让他们相信我们死于非命呢？”海伦夫人说。

“很简单，我们让他们相信，我们被天火烧死了。朋友们，如今替天行道的烈火就在我们脚下，我们只需将这火放出来就行了。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“什么？你想制造火山喷发？”麦盖尔大惊道。

“没错，造一个人工火山。也就是一个临时性的火山，这个火山的火势可以由我们来控制。我们让蒸汽和地火冒出来，然后喷射出去就行了。”巴嘉勒尔又说。

“这个主意确实不错！非常好！巴嘉勒尔！”少校说。

“明白我的意思了吧！我们假装被新西兰的火神所放的火烧死了，实际上是躲在了卡纳特德的墓里……我们要等个几天，三天、四天或五天。总之，我们要让土人相信我们死了，然后在他们放弃围困我们时再离开。”

“要是他们爬上山来，看我们有没有受到天罚呢？”玛丽小姐说。

“不！绝对不会的！亲爱的玛丽，他们绝对不会这么做的。这山可是受了‘神禁’的。既然这山自动烧死了触犯‘神禁’的人，那么他们就更会遵守‘神禁’了。”

“很好！没有比这更好的办法了。不过，我怕那些土人一直在山脚下不走，我们这里的粮食又吃完了。不过这种可能性不大，特别是如果我们做得像的话，我想他们很快就会走的。”爵士说。

“那么这一招要什么时候开始执行？”海伦夫人问。

“今天晚上动手，夜里做最好！”巴嘉勒尔说。

“你真是个天才，巴嘉勒尔！我不是一个盲目乐观的人，但这次，我保证你能成功。那些坏蛋，让他们看看我们的表演吧，让他们迷信，让他们继续滞留100年！传教士千万不要怪我们，我们可是万不得已才这么做的。”爵士说。

巴嘉勒尔绝妙的计划被大家一致通过。

迷信的毛利人，利用他们这一点，一定会成功。爵士一行人现在就打算这么做了。

虽然设想得非常好，但要做成功并不容易。如果一个假火山，没弄好弄成了真火山怎么办？火山口被他们真正扒开又怎么办？那还不把他们一起吞下去？在蒸汽、火焰、熔岩一冒出来后，他们还能控制住火势吗？圆锥形的山顶，会不会整个都沉入火海？喷射地火是大自然的一个权利，可现在人却要利用这个权利了。

巴嘉勒尔显然预料到了这种情况，所以也便很小心谨慎地实施他的计划。首先，那火不能制造得太大，只需做出一个喷火的样子，骗骗土人就行了，不然真弄出个火山爆发，想必连他们自己都逃不掉的。

这一天，他们在焦躁中度过，等待着夜晚的来临，但却怎么都等不来。每个人都在算着时间，那一分一秒是那么难熬。

在将计划执行前的准备工作都做好后，他们又开始做逃跑时的准备工作。他们将墓室里的粮食分成了几份，打成一个个的小包裹，然后拿出几张草席、武器。当然，做这些工作的时候，他们都是躲在栅栏里进行的，没让土人看到。

6点钟的时候，奥比尔做好了一顿丰盛的晚餐，这可能是他们在这里吃的最后一餐。这顿饭过后，他们还不知要在深谷中逃亡多久，以后会在什么时候，什么地方吃饭都难说。所以大家为了预防将来的饥饿，都决定饱饱地吃上一顿。

有盘大菜放在了最中间，是隔水蒸熟了的老鼠肉。老鼠是维尔逊捉的，这也算是新西兰的名贵野味了。不过海伦夫人和玛丽小姐却死活不吃。男士们不管，和土人一样，大口大口地吃着。老鼠肉的味道不错，甚至可以说很美味。几只老鼠很快就被他们吃完了，只剩下一堆骨头。

黄昏来临，太阳那微弱的光也隐到了乌云后面，好像有风起云涌的样子。很快，天边电闪雷鸣。

对于这时候的电闪雷鸣，巴嘉勒尔非常开心。他说这就是为了协助他完成计划才出现的天气变化，是老天要帮他演这出戏。

自然界发生的这种天气变化，对迷信的土人来说，非常恐怖。因为新西兰人一直认为雷是大神卢伊·阿同发出的怒吼，电是大神愤怒的眼神。因此，雷电交加让他们觉得大神要来惩罚亵渎“神禁”的人了。

晚上8点钟的时候，山顶隐藏在了黑暗中。天空像是被拉开了一张黑幕，衬托着巴嘉勒尔即将制造的火光。

此时，毛利人已经看不到山顶上的这些欧洲人了，所以正是他们动手的时候。而且这事要做就要做得快，因此爵士、巴嘉勒尔、少校、罗伯尔、奥比尔和两个水手都来帮忙。

巴嘉勒尔把喷火口的地方选择在了离卡纳特德墓室30步远的地方。因为墓室是一定不能喷火的，这一点特别重要。如果墓室着了火，被烧

毁了，那么这座山的“神禁”也就消失了。

巴嘉勒尔选中了一块有着巨大岩石的地方，岩石四周冒出了热气。看来，这块大岩石的底下是山顶自然形成的小喷火口。由于石头太重，所以才压住了火没能喷发出来。如果此时把这块大岩石掀开，那喷火口就如同拔掉了塞子，蒸汽和熔岩也就喷出来了。

爵士他们几个急忙去墓室，拔出了几根木桩，用力撬开了那块大石头。最终在他们的协同作业下，岩石开始活动。同时，他们又为这块岩石在山坡上挖出了一条壕沟，以便让火沿着斜坡滚下去。他们把岩石撬得活动力越大，石头下的地面也就颤抖得越厉害。

隐隐有火焰奔腾着从热气沸腾的地壳下蹿了出来。胆大的爵士他们没有害怕，继续闷声工作，像神话里操纵地火的神灵一样。很快，岩石下出现了几条裂缝，裂缝里冒出了几股热气，这也预示着这个地方已经很危险了，他们只需一使劲，便能将那块大岩石翻起来，并从斜坡上滚下去。

薄薄的地壳发生了迸裂，炽热的气柱直冲云霄，沸泉和熔岩奔腾着向毛利人的宿营地及山下的沟沟坑坑滚去。

圆锥形的山尖开始整个颤抖，大家以为它正在向一个无底深渊陨落。爵士和同伴险些被喷射出的火焰灼伤，他们急忙躲到了墓室里。即使他们跑得很快，也被90多度的开水溅上了几滴。

火山口喷出了沸水，这沸水先是像蒸锅汽，接着又散发出了浓厚的硫黄味。

此时，泥土、熔岩和火山碎块全都成为炽热的一团，火焰在山腰上

奔流，划出了一条火铺成的路。附近的山峰全被这火照得透亮，深谷里也闪出强烈的光。

山脚下躺着的土人全部爬了起来，熔浆在他们四周沸腾，溅在了他们的身上，烫得他们大声号叫。没有被火烫着的，也都拼命向四周的丘陵逃跑。跑到一定距离后又回过头来，失魂落魄地看着那惊人的一幕。

他们看到了张着大嘴的火山，看到了愤怒的火神把亵渎圣山的人吞了下去。在喷射出来的熔岩和滚落下来的石头稍稍少了一些时，爵士他们听到土人们在念咒语：

“‘神禁’啊！‘神禁’啊！‘神禁’啊！”

此时，大量蒸汽、烧红的石块以及熔岩都从喷火口冲了出来，这已经不是沸泉了，这就是火山爆发，也直到此时，才是地火喷射最猛烈的时候。

火山喷发出现后，不到一个小时，白热的熔浆便在山腰上形成了一条白色的带子。大群老鼠从各个地方逃出，像无头的苍蝇般，只想尽快离开这个被烧焦的土地。

狂风刮了一整夜，暴雨如注。圆顶上一直在喷射地火，而且越喷越厉害，这让爵士担心起来，因为喷出的火焰已经将喷火口边缘都点燃了。可他们只能躲在栅栏后，盯着这可怕的火山爆发。

第二天清晨，火山爆发的猛烈程度仍然没有丝毫减弱，反倒有浓厚的淡黄色蒸汽，同喷出的火焰交织在一起，熔浆开始四处奔流了。

爵士用眼睛不断地瞟着各个地方，并扒开栅栏缝，观察土人的动静。

土人已经离开火山喷射范围，逃到附近的高地上去了。火山脚下，几具被烧成焦炭的尸体堆在那里。更远一点，靠近城寨的地方，熔岩已经将20多座草棚烧毁了，而且还在冒烟。土人东一群西一群，仰望着火光冲天的山峰，表现出惊恐，这种惊恐就来自于他们的迷信。

“噬骨魔”跑到了战士们当中，爵士很清楚地看到了他，发现他从没有火的山边走到了山脚下，却也没有走上前一步。

接着，他张开两只胳膊，如巫师念咒一般，对着这座山开始比画起来。他这么做的意思，大家很容易就猜出了。正如巴嘉勒尔所说，“噬骨魔”对这座能够替天行道的神山，又赋予了一种意义，“神禁”也更严厉了。

很快，排成一行的土人离开了，他们沿着曲折的小径，回到了自己的城寨。

“他们总算走了！感谢上帝！我们成功了！亲爱的海伦！我勇敢的同伴们，我们也算是死过、埋过的人了。今天晚上，我们要复活，然后离开这个地方，离开我们的坟墓，逃出野蛮人的部落。”爵士动情地说。

墓室里弥漫着的喜悦心情很难用语言表述，每个人的心里都对未来充满了希望。这些勇敢而坚强的人暂时忘掉了过去经历的种种失败，沉浸在了成功后的喜悦之中。此时的他们，根本没去想要逃出这荒凉之地，回到欧洲是件多么难的事。

他们虽然骗到了“噬骨魔”这个部落，难道就等于骗过了所有新西兰的土人部落吗？

他们没有想这些，只是在咒骂着毛利人。特别是少校，毫不掩饰对毛利人的鄙视，将所有他能说出的难听的话都用来形容毛利人。骂人的本领，巴嘉勒尔丝毫不比少校逊色，两个人比着来骂毛利人。

高兴归高兴，但要真正离开，还需要等一整天。所以在这段时间里，大家开始商议逃跑计划。巴嘉勒尔那被他视若宝贝的新西兰地图还在身上，所以他拿了出来，仔细地在地图上寻找着最安全的逃跑路线。

在经过了一番热烈讨论后，他们决定向东边的巴伦特湾走。从那里走要经过一段陌生区域，这些陌生区域看起来像是没有人居住。这群勇敢的人，对于大自然所制造的障碍并不害怕，他们最怕的就是遇到毛利人，所以一心想要避开他们去海岸。

在东海岸，有传教士在那里建的传教站，而且到目前为止，北岛部分区域是没有受过战争蹂躏的。所以土人的流动部队也不会搜索到那些地方。从导泊湖到巴伦特湾，差不多有160公里的路程，每天走16公里的话，也要走10天才能走到。

走这条路，吃苦是难免的，但对于这群勇敢的人来说，没有一个人嫌累、嫌苦。他们只要到了传教站，就能在那里休息了，而且也就有了更多的机会到奥克兰，因为他们最终还是要到奥克兰去的。

在做好路线决定后，大家继续观察山脚下土人的动静。晚上，山脚下已经没有任何土人了。在夜幕降临的时候，也没有任何篝火显示山下有土人。可以这么说，如今，他们是畅通无阻了。

晚上9点钟的时候，乘着黑夜，爵士发出了启程号召。大家拿上卡纳特德的粮食和武器，慢慢地开始下坡。麦盖尔和维尔逊走在最前面，仔细听着周围的动静，稍有风吹草动，他们就会停下来，一有细微的亮

光，他们就要侦察一下。

每个人都是在顺着山坡的坡势往下滑，避免被人发现。

走到离山顶70米的地方时，麦盖尔和维尔逊到了最危险的山脊，这里是土人在山脚下可以发射到的范围。毛利人是很狡猾的，会不会用假装退却来诱他们上钩呢？如果毛利人没有被火山爆发的骗局骗过去，并在这时候出现，那将是件非常可怕的事。

所以爵士虽然一直很有信心，但还是非常紧张，他的样子引起了巴嘉勒尔的嘲笑。走过这段山脊大约需要10分钟，可以说，整个队伍的安全，就在这10分钟里。海伦夫人紧张地抓着他的胳膊，他甚至感觉到了她的心跳。

尽管环境险恶，可他们没有一个人想要退缩。麦盖尔带着全体人员，在夜幕的掩护下，在狭窄的山脊上小心地爬着。有块石头碰了下去，滚到了山脚，麦盖尔停了下来。

如果山脚下有土人的话，异样响动一定会引起他们两边的疯狂扫射的。

狭窄的山脊上，爵士一行像蛇一样爬行着，当然速度很慢。在麦盖尔走到山脊最低点时，他离土人曾盘踞的平山顶还有不到8米远的距离。过了这里，山脊就更高了，坡也很陡，再向上走四分之一的路，便是一片矮树林了。

最低的山脊区域他们总算是走过去了，没有遇到任何危险和意外。接下来，爵士他们开始爬那很陡的区域，那片小树林他们是看不见的，但却知道在什么地方，那里只要没有埋伏，也就到了安全地带。

然而，他注意到，他们已经走出“神禁”范围了。那段上升的山脊是不属于孟伽纳木山的，这是耸立在导泊湖东面的山系，所以他们不仅要防止土人开枪射击，还要防止他们扑上来。

整整10分钟，爵士一行都是在缓缓地向平岭爬的。虽然麦盖尔没有看见那片矮树林，但他估计，矮树林应该在离他们70米远的地方。

突然，他停了下来，甚至往后倒退，他仿佛是听到了前面阴影里有什么声音。他的这个后退让后面的人也大吃一惊，大家都站着不动了。

大家就在惶恐中等待着，呼吸都不敢大声。此时此刻，一分一秒是那么的漫长。难道他们又要往回跑，跑到山尖上去？

声音没有再响，麦盖尔带着大家又继续往山脊的窄路上爬。

很快，矮树林模糊的影子出现在了他们面前，又走了几步，他们便进入那片矮树林了，所有的人都聚集在了一棵大树下，并蹲了下去.....

第四十七章 前后夹击

漆黑的夜晚，正是他们逃走的有利时间。他们必须趁着黑夜离开导泊湖这一区域，这是最危险的一片区域。

在他们一行人中，巴嘉勒尔担任向导，而在这险峻的逃行中，他一次又一次地依靠他那奇妙的旅行家本能，带着大家在黑暗中穿行。那几乎完全看不见的小路，他也能找到，甚至不会走错。

由此可以说，是他天生的夜视眼帮了他的忙，他那双猫一样的眼睛让他在黑夜里连最细微的东西都看得到。

东面有个斜坡，爵士一行走了整整3个小时。巴嘉勒尔故意稍稍向东南方向走，走到了凯马纳瓦山脉和华西梯连山之间的狭窄通道，这条通道是奥克兰到和克湾必经的道路。他打算过了山坳后就离开大路，并借着高山的掩护，穿过那段无人区，向海岸走去。

9点的时候，他们已经走了12个小时了——12个小时走了20公里路。没办法，他们无法要求在黑夜里，让两位坚强的女士走得更快。而且，此时好像很适宜他们夜宿。他们到了两大山脉之间的小道，右边就是通向伯兰的大路。

巴嘉勒尔一直拿着地图不撒手，在向东拐了个弯后，已经10点钟了。此时，他们到了一个峻峭的山口，准备吃饭休息。

他们拿出袋子里的干粮，大口大口地吃了起来。玛丽小姐和少校虽然不喜欢吃凤尾草根，但现在也开始大口嚼了起来，一行人一直休息到

下午2点。

他们又开始前行，这次向正东方走。晚上的时候，他们到了离山12公里的地方，开始露天睡觉。

这一晚，他们是在平静中度过的。

第二天，他们遇到了一些困难，因为他们走到了一片奇特的区域。这个区域到处是火山湖、沸泉和硫气坑，虽然让他们看到了很多奇观，风景也很美，但却走得很辛苦。

这段路程，每隔一段就有很多弯，这些曲曲弯弯的路无疑很难行走。

50平方公里的地方，热量以各种形式从地底下喷出。就连那透明的咸水泉，也从一丛丛茶树中渗了出来。咸水泉上有无数的昆虫在飞舞，泉眼里发出了刺鼻的气味，在地面上流出了一层沉淀物，白得耀眼。

从咸水泉里出来的水很烫，附近其他泉眼里涌出的水却是冰冷彻骨的。泉眼旁边有高大的凤尾草，这种只适合古代生物生长的环境，丝毫没有影响它们的郁郁葱葱。

地下喷射出的水就像公园里的喷泉一样，而喷泉涉及的范围，因为蒸汽的原因而四下缭绕。喷射出的水像是有神在操控，形状起伏，从一层层的天然平台流了下来，猛一看，真以为平台上安装了一个现代化水盘。当水被浇下去后，团团的白烟便慢慢地混合在了一起，将平台上半透明的阶梯全都侵蚀，有些像沸腾的瀑布里的水，因为倾入洼地而形成了大湖泊。

再远一点是喷泉的尽头，那里有很多硫气坑，所以也让那里的地面

冒起了很多泡泡。

同时，那里还有一些熄灭了一半的喷火石，喷火口留下的大裂缝，冒出了气体，这让空气中充满了刺鼻的亚硫酸气。硫黄凝结，形成硬壳或结晶块，铺得地面上到处都是。

这里幅员辽阔，但却一直被这么蕴藏、堆积，无人理睬。也许直到有一天，当西西里岛的硫黄矿都采完时，人们才会想到这片毫不起眼的区域。

一行人穿过障碍重重的区域，疲惫和辛苦可想而知。同时，在这里夜宿也非常困难，更重要的是他们即使拿着马枪，也没有遇到一只值得奥比尔来亲手烹制的鸟。所以在大部分的时间里，他们只能吃凤尾草根和甘薯。虽然这些食物无法恢复他们的体能，却可以让他们不至于饿肚子。

种种不利局面让他们急着要走完这片荒地。

当然，想要绕过这片荒地也不容易，他们至少需要花费4天的时间。2月23日的时候，他们离孟伽纳木山已经有80公里了。爵士一行人就在山脚下夜宿。这座山巴嘉勒尔的地图上虽然有，但却没有标注名字，而他们眼前展现的是一片灌木丛生的平原，再远一点还有一片森林。

这让他们非常高兴，不过他们并不希望这个适宜人居住的地方有太多居民，因为土人让他们感到恐惧。好在到目前为止，他们连一个人影都没有看到过。

这天，少校和罗伯尔打了三只小雏鸟，三只小雏鸟也就成了他们这

天餐桌上最抢手的食物。

边吃边聊天的众人，在吃甘薯和马铃薯时，巴嘉勒尔有个提议，而这提议一经他提出便受到了大家的热列赞同。他提议把那座高入云霄，还没有名字的山叫格莱拉弗，甚至还庄重地将名字写在了他那张地图上。

自此以后，他们旅途中的一些单调枯燥的细节也就不再细说了。

一行人在森林和平原上行走，麦盖尔根据太阳和星星的位置，测定着方向。幸好这几天的天气不是很热，也没有下雨。不过经历了千辛万苦的爵士一行却越来越累了，越累就走得越慢，越慢就越心急，他们急着到传教站去。

一路上，虽然他们还是会聊天，但已经不再是聚在一起聊了。他们自动地分成了几组，分组不是从情感分，而是从思想上分。

很多时候，爵士都是一个人默默地朝前走着，越靠近海岸，他就越会想起“邓肯号”，想起“邓肯号”上的船员。在抵达奥克兰之前，还是可能遇到很多危险的，但此时他却把所有的危险都抛在了脑后，他又想起了船上那些遭到残害的水手们，那惨杀的画面不断地浮现在他的脑海，怎么都挥之不去。

大家也没再谈起格兰特船长，因为既然没法再去救他，谈了又有什么用？如果说他的名字会被人提起的话，那一定是格兰特的女儿玛丽小姐和麦盖尔之间的谈话了。

麦盖尔并没有向玛丽小姐再提起过他们被关到土人草棚里时，她对自己说的那些话。生死关头说的话，他不想把它当成是正式的诺言。

他向玛丽小姐谈起了格兰特船长。他仍然没有忘记要寻找格兰特船长，他甚至还向玛丽小姐保证：阁下将来一定还会继续寻访的。

他说，格兰特船长那三张纸条绝对是真的，不容怀疑。所以格兰特船长一定还活着，即使找遍全世界，也一定要找到。玛丽小姐听到这话时，完全陶醉了。他们就被这样一个决定紧紧地连在了一起，思想也融为一体。

对于这个话题，海伦夫人也会时不时地参与进来，虽然她对找到格兰特船长没有抱多大希望，但却不愿让这对年轻人扫兴，更不想让他们失望。

一行人中，少校、罗伯尔、维尔逊和穆纳经常一起去打猎，不过打猎也不会离队伍很远，打猎时，每次都会获得若干野味。

巴嘉勒尔和其他人都不一样，他一直裹着那件弗密翁外衫，独自在一旁默默地思考着什么。

当然，有句话是一定要说明一下的。虽然根据自然规律，处在苦难、危险中的人性格会发生变化，变得烦躁自私，但爵士一行，这些共患难的朋友却始终是精诚团结的，为了大家，甚至会不惜生命。

2月25日，他们被一条河挡住了去路，那就是巴嘉勒尔地图上标注的隈卡利河。最终，他们找到了一个浅滩，徒步过去。

此后的两天里，他们走的是一个接一个的灌木平原。导泊湖和海岸间的路程，他们已经走了近一半了，虽然很累，却也没有遇到什么意外之事。

不过走着走着，他们面前出现了一望无际的森林，这片森林给人的

感觉有些像大洋洲的森林，不过这里没有桉树，有的是“高利”松。

四个月的旅行虽然让他们欣赏美景的心情少了很多，但一看到可以和里班古柏、加利福尼亚“巨树”相媲美的“高利”松，他们仍然惊叹不已。“高利”松又名“脂胶”松，光分枝下的树干就有30多米。这些“高利”松一棵棵地长着，彼此间并不相连。因而让整片森林都由单棵树，而非树丛组成。

这些树的顶上像是撑起了一把绿伞，一下子伸向天空300多尺高。

“高利”松的树龄看起来并不大，只不过上百岁的样子。所以也有些像欧洲的红松，有着深绿色圆锥形的王冠。不过，和红松不一样的是，绿色花盖下是无数交叉着的枝丫，这些新西兰最大的树，有些足有17米粗，爵士一行张开胳膊合围都抱不过来。

他们就是在这样的树丛里钻了三天，从没有人走过的黏土地上走过。由此也可以看出，没有人在这里生活。“高利”松的脚下堆积着厚厚的松脂，如果松脂能输出的话，想必是运也运不完的。

爱打猎的几个人还在这里看见了很多几维鸟，这种鸟在毛利人常去的地方是根本看不到的。看来，它们是被毛利人的猎狗赶到了这没有人烟的森林里。当然，它们也给爵士一行提供了丰富的、有营养的野味。

突然，巴嘉勒尔看见密林里有一对飞禽，他立刻警觉起来。他叫上少校和罗伯尔，三个人不顾疲劳，朝两只飞禽追去。

大家对他强烈的好奇心很不理解。其实，他是认出了那对鸟。那是一对陌花鸟，属于恐禽类，也就是被博物学家认为早已灭绝的鸟。不过，霍兹特陀先生及一些旅行家说这种鸟在新西兰还有。所以当他在

时此地看到这种鸟时，也就证实霍兹特陀先生和那些旅行家是对的。

巴嘉勒尔所追的两只陌花鸟是和大懒兽、翼手龙同时代的生物后代。这些鸟是一种超大鸵鸟，有6米多高。胆子小却跑得快的陌花鸟在枪弹下能速度很快地飞奔，所以他们三个人在追了几分钟后，见陌花鸟消失在大树后面不见了，也就只能作罢。

3月1日这天晚上，爵士一行终于走出了森林，在尹吉兰基山脚下夜宿。这座山有2000米高。此时，他们从孟伽纳木山到这里也已经走了有160公里了，还有50公里路程就能到海岸了。

麦盖尔原本希望这段路能在10天内走完，没想到却遇到了很多困难。

真是这样，他们沿途走了很多冤枉路，遇到了很多障碍，再加上测算得不是十分准确，实际的路程远比他们估计的要多出五分之一的路程。所以当他们走到这个山脚下时，全体成员已经累得筋疲力尽了。

还有两天才能到海岸，现在大家亟需打起精神，提高警惕，因为他们又要走到毛利人常去的地方了。因此，大家顾不上疲劳，在第二天太阳一上山便又出发了。

在将右边的尹吉兰基山抛在后面后，他们左边又有一座高1200米的哈带山。两山之间的路很难走。虽然是十来公里的平原，但上面却长满了熊柳，熊柳的枝条非常柔软，又被称之为“窒息藤”。

因此，他们每走一步，手、胳膊和腿就会被这些熊柳缠住。这些枝条像一条条的长蛇，弯弯曲曲地缠绕在他们身上。两天里，他们一边开路一边前进，和“蛇”进行着搏斗。这种会缠人的枝条非常坚韧，巴嘉勒

尔差点想把它列入“植虫科”去。

在这样的平原，打猎显然是不可能的，所以爱打猎的几个人也便没有了用武之地。身上携带的粮食已经被他们吃完了，又没办法补给，淡水也很缺，大家越走越累，又饥又渴，简直到了苦不堪言的地步。

从出发到现在，这应该是他们最狼狈的时候。

他们已经不是在走路了，而是在拖着腿向前挪，每一步挪得都那么艰难。他们像是一群失去了灵魂，只剩下躯壳的肉体；失去了五官，只是本能地朝前走着。最后，他们终于挪到了约廷尖，也就算是到达了太平洋海岸。

突然，他们看到了几座草棚，那草棚一看就是遭受战争灾难后的一个村落，附近的田地已经荒芜了，到处都是焚烧和抢掠过的痕迹。就在这里，爵士一行又将接受一场生死考验。

当他们沿着海岸艰难地往前挪的时候，离海岸1公里远的地方，有一队土人挥舞着手里的武器，向他们冲来。爵士一行已经到海边了，想跑也无处可跑，只好决定和土人来个殊死搏斗了。正这么想的时候，麦盖尔大喊：“快，那里有只小艇，我们上小艇。”

没错，离他们不到20步远的地方，有一只独木舟，舟上还有六把桨。爵士一行看到它，就像看到救命稻草一般，冲了过去。

在将它推到水里后，一行人就跳了上去。麦盖尔、少校、维尔逊、穆纳划桨，爵士掌舵，两名女士及奥比尔、巴嘉勒尔、罗伯尔则躺在他们身后。

只用了不到10分钟，独木舟就在海面上走了四分之一海里了。海面

很平静，大家也都默默无语。不过，麦盖尔不愿意离海岸太远，决定沿着海岸向前划，但就在这个时候，他拿桨的手停下了。

原来，又有三只独木舟从约廷尖那里划了过来，舟上坐的是土人，显然是要追他们的独木舟。

“快！往大海里划！往大海里划！宁肯沉到大海里也不能让他们捉住。”麦盖尔大喊。

四把桨一齐用力划，独木舟转向了海中心。差不多半个小时后，他们的舟和追他们的舟便保持了相同的距离。不过过了没多久，他们便划不动了，速度也慢了下来。而后面追他们的小舟却划得越来越快，距他们已经不到两公里了。

看来，想要逃避土人的攻击是不可能了，土人带着枪，肯定是要向他们开火的。

此时，爵士在做什么呢？他站在小舟的尾部，向天边看着，似乎正期望着什么。他在期望什么？能实现吗？又或者是不是他有什么预感？

突然，他的眼睛亮了一下，接着伸出手，指着远处一个点说：“有船，有一只船！朋友们，那里有船，我们快划呀，快划！”

四个划桨的人没有一个人去看那让他们重拾希望的船，他们只是拼命地划着，一点都没有放松。不过巴嘉勒尔却爬了起来，拿出他的望远镜朝那个黑点看去。

“确实是一只船，还是一只汽船。正开足马力往前跑，看样子是向我们这个方向开来。伙伴们，快划呀！”巴嘉勒尔兴奋地说。

划桨的人又加了把劲，差不多半个小时后，他们和追他们的舟又保持了原来的距离。而那只被他们视为救命稻草的汽船离他们越来越近了，已经能够看得清楚了。当那两根落了帆的桅杆和大团的黑烟冒出来时，爵士将舵一下子扔给了罗伯尔，抓起巴嘉勒尔的望远镜看了起来，他看得很仔细。

突然，他脸色苍白地站在那里，一脸紧张，望远镜从他的手里掉了下去。麦盖尔和伙伴们看到他这个样子，也不知道发生了什么。

为什么他显得那么绝望？

“那是‘邓肯号’！‘邓肯号’！坐着流犯的‘邓肯号’！”爵士的一句话完全解释了他神情变化的原因。

“没错！是‘邓肯号’！”麦盖尔也叫了起来。他丢下桨，站起身来。

“看来，我们面对的是死路一条。前后夹击。”爵士自言自语道。

是的，是那条汽船，是被流犯抢了，做了海盗船的汽船！

少校仰头看天，大骂了一句：“怎么这么倒霉啊！”

此时，没有人再去划独木舟，只任由它在海面上漂。因为他们已经不知道该向什么地方划了，他们无路可逃了。前面是海盗，后面是土人，他们逃不掉。

突然，“砰”的一声枪响。追过来的土人向他们开枪了，正好打在维尔逊的那只桨上，桨又动了几下，独木舟更靠近“邓肯号”了。

“邓肯号”正开足马力往这里驶，和他们只有不到半海里的距离。麦

盖尔在腹背受敌中，已经不知道该怎么办了。他不知道该向什么地方逃。两名可怜的女士吓得魂不附体，跪在小舟上祷告。

土人的枪弹更密集地扫射过来。这时，随着轰的一声响，“邓肯号”上的炮弹从他们的头上飞过，他们被枪炮夹击，看来只能束手就擒了。

麦盖尔绝望了，他抓起一把斧子，想要把小舟砍个洞，然后让一船人随着小舟一起沉入海底，但却被罗伯尔的一声大喊制止住了。

“快看，是汤姆·艾撒汀！是汤姆·艾撒汀！是他在船上！我看见他了！他也看到我们了，他在挥帽子，和我们打招呼呢！”

麦盖尔高举斧子的手停在了半空。

第二颗炮弹又从他们头上飞过，将追他们的三只独木舟中的第一只打成了两截。同时，“邓肯号”上发出了“乌拉！”声。土人慌了，扭头就向海岸划去。

“快！快来救我们！救我们！汤姆！”麦盖尔大喊。

就这样，这群倒霉鬼就这么离奇地回到了“邓肯号”上，一切都是那么富有戏剧性！

第四十八章 意外出现的“邓肯号”

爵士一行的耳朵里，响起了熟悉的、古老的苏格兰音乐。此时他们的心情，完全无法描述，一切都像做梦一样。当他们踏上“邓肯号”的甲板，听风笛手吹起风笛，奏着麦凯莫府的传统族歌时，船员们用他们热烈的欢呼声欢迎着船主他们归来。

爵士、麦盖尔、巴嘉勒尔、罗伯尔甚至连少校都激动得说不出话来，眼泪在眼眶里打转。他们互相拥抱，一阵狂欢。

巴嘉勒尔像疯了一样，在甲板上乱蹦乱跳，同时还把他不离身的大望远镜当成枪，瞄准了向海岸逃去的土人的独木舟。

不过，船上的人员在看到爵士一行衣衫褴褛，面色黑黄后，便知道他们一定受了很多苦，所以也就停止了欢呼。

三个月前，他们满怀希望去寻找格兰特船长和两名船员，现如今，他们一个个像鬼一样，逃回了船上。

对他们来说，这艘船他们早就不抱希望了，早就做好打算，再也不见它了，可他们却鬼使神差地重新回到这艘船上。这完全是偶然。而当他们回到这里时，却又是那么狼狈，那么憔悴，完全是一副九死一生的样子。

而此时，爵士忘记了饥渴，他问汤姆·艾撒汀，怎么会跑到这一带的海面上来。

确实很奇怪，“邓肯号”怎么会出现在新西兰东海岸的？怎么没有落到本·吉奥兹手里？是什么指引这只船来到了绝望的他们面前？这一切都是个谜。

为什么？怎么会？大家全都用这句话开头，向艾撒汀提问。这位忠厚老实的老船员在不知道听谁的，最先回答谁的时候，最终决定先回答爵士的问题。

“流犯呢？那些流犯去哪儿了？你们是怎么应付过去的？”爵士问。

“流犯？”艾撒汀疑惑地问，他显然不知道爵士说的是什么。

“对呀！抢劫游船的那些混蛋呀！”

“抢劫游船？什么游船？您的‘邓肯号’吗？”

“当然是‘邓肯号’啦！汤姆，那个船上的本·吉奥兹呢？”

“什么本·吉奥兹？我不知道这个人，也没看到过他。”艾撒汀越听越糊涂。

“什么？从来没有？”爵士大叫，他也糊涂了。

“汤姆，那我问你，为什么‘邓肯号’来到了新西兰东岸的外面？”

艾撒汀一副大吃一惊的表情，这让爵士、海伦夫人、玛丽、巴嘉勒尔、少校、罗伯尔、麦盖尔、奥比尔、穆纳、维尔逊也大吃一惊。在等汤姆·艾撒汀平静地说出下面一句话时，大家惊愕万分。

艾撒汀说：“遵照您的命令，‘邓肯号’才来到这里的。”

“什么？遵照我的命令？”

“没错！爵士，您在1月14日给我的一封信中，嘱咐我这么做的。”

“什么？快！快把信拿来给我看！”爵士觉得不可思议。

此时，10个回到船上的旅行者们都围住了可怜的艾撒汀，目不转睛地看着他。原来，是那封从斯诺威河写的信把他们送回到了“邓肯号”上。

“到底怎么回事？快点说清楚，我是在做梦吗？你真的收到了一封这样的信，汤姆？”

“是的！是收到了您的一封信。”

“在什么地方？墨尔本？”

“对！是在墨尔本收到的，就是我们将船修好的时候，收到了您的一封信。”

“信呢？”

“信是您亲自写的，爵士，我看到您的亲笔签名了。”

“是的！那封信是一个叫本·吉奥兹的流犯送给你的吗？”

“不，是一个叫阿埃童的水手送给我的。他曾在‘大不列颠号’船上当过水手长，信就是他送给我的。”

“对！没错！阿埃童，本·吉奥兹，他们就是一个人。这事先放下，我问你，那封信里说了什么？”

“信里您命令我立即离开墨尔本，到……”

“难道信里不是说在澳大利亚东海岸？”爵士着急起来，艾撒汀更茫然了。

“怎么会是澳大利亚东海岸？不是呀！上面写着新西兰东岸呀！”他说的时侯，两只眼睛瞪得圆圆的。

“不是！是澳大利亚东海岸，汤姆！写的是澳大利亚东海岸，不是新西兰！”大家异口同声地说。

艾撒汀的大脑轰的一声，差点晕过去。爵士说得那么肯定，想必是自己把信看错了。原本忠厚老实的老水手，怎么会犯这样的错误呢？他的脸腾地红了，心里也更慌了。

“不要慌，汤姆，这一定是天意！”海伦夫人安慰他说。

“不！夫人，请您原谅我！不对！千万不要原谅我！可我没有看错信呀！阿埃童看信上的地方也和我看见的一样啊。而且还是他，他要我把船开到澳大利亚东海岸去。”

“是阿埃童要去澳大利亚东海岸？”爵士又问。

“对！他要我去！还说信里的地方写错了，说你要我到杜布湾去和你们会合。”

“信还在吗，汤姆？”少校问，他也糊涂了。

“在，少校先生！我马上去拿。”

艾撒汀去前甲板他的房间拿信去了。在他走开的1分钟内，大家全

都你看看我，我看看你，很是惊讶。只有少校紧紧地盯着巴嘉勒尔，双手环抱说：“哼！巴嘉勒尔，看来不得不承认，这错误犯得有点大啊！”

“什么？”巴嘉勒尔茫然地弯腰低头，额头上挂着的眼镜如同一个大大的问号。

艾撒汀拿来了那封由巴嘉勒尔代笔，爵士署名的信。

“您看看吧！”艾撒汀说。

爵士接过信念了起来：“令汤姆·艾撒汀速速起航，将‘邓肯号’开到南纬37度线横截新西兰东海岸的地方……”

“什么？新西兰东海岸？”巴嘉勒尔大叫起来。

他一把将那封信从爵士手里抢了过来，揉了揉眼睛，随即又把眼镜从额头拉到了鼻梁，仔细地看。

“写的真是新西兰！”他喃喃道，信从他的手里滑到了甲板上。

此时，有只手搭在了他的肩上，他回过头，和少校正好好面对。

“我的好巴嘉勒尔！还算不错，最起码‘邓肯号’没去印度！”少校说的时候，脸上的表情很严肃。

这玩笑引得全体船员大笑，笑得前仰后合。巴嘉勒尔的脸上有些挂不住了，疯了一样在甲板上走来走去，然后抱着头抓头发。他不知道自己在做什么，也不知道在想什么，他机械地跑下楼舱梯子，跑到中甲板上，像喝醉了般摇摇晃晃地走着，没有任何目标。

随即，他又爬到了前甲板，在前甲板上，他的脚突然绊在了一捆缆

索上，如果不是他速度很快地抓住了一根绳子，他一定会摔倒的。

接着，大家听到了轰的一声震响，前甲板上的那尊炮响了。霰弹打在了平静的海面上，让海面沸腾起来。原来，慌张的巴嘉勒尔抓住了炮上的绳子，由于炮里是装着弹药的，所以绳子一动便将扳机触到了火药引子，引起了爆炸。巴嘉勒尔因为这一震，也从前甲板的梯子上滚了下来，一直滚到了水手间，不见了。

炮声惊得大家又是一张慌乱，以为出什么事了。10名水手一下子奔到了中甲板下，将巴嘉勒尔抬了出来。此刻，他的屁股朝下，头和脚并到了一起，仿佛人被折成了两段。

巴嘉勒尔没说话，水手将他长长的身躯扛到了楼舱里，就那么摊在甲板上。所有的人都为他担心。少校每到有人受伤时，便成了医生，所以立刻准备给巴嘉勒尔脱衣服，看他伤到了什么地方，并要为他裹伤。

但就在少校给他脱衣服时，他像触电般地突然坐起。

“不！不能脱！千万别脱！”他大嚷着，将那套破衣服重新拉回身上，然后扣起来，紧张得有些反常。

“衣服总要脱的呀，巴嘉勒尔！”少校说。

“我说不脱就不脱！”

“我只是想检查一下……”

“不用检查！”

“说不定身上哪里摔……”少校又说。

“你是说摔断了吗？要是摔断了，让木匠来修一下就好了。”他说完，两条长腿一蹦，自己站了起来。

“叫木匠来修什么？”

“修中舱的支柱呀，我不是把支柱摔断了吗？”

大家又是一阵哄堂大笑。这一次笑得更厉害了，比任何一次都厉害。不过他这一说话，大家也都放心了，说明那可敬的巴嘉勒尔在刚刚的触炮摔跤中，没受什么伤。

“即使这样，这位地理学家也一定觉得很害臊！”少校想。

“巴嘉勒尔，现在你老实坦白，我知道你的粗心大意都是老天的安排。因为不用说，如果不是你写错了，‘邓肯号’一定就落到海盗手里了。而如果不是你，我们肯定又被土人抓去了。所以看在上帝的面上，请你告诉我，是什么样的离奇联想，让你鬼使神差地将‘澳大利亚’写成了‘新西兰’？”爵士认真地问。

“这……这不简单吗？那……”巴嘉勒尔吞吞吐吐地说到这里，看了看罗伯尔，又看了看玛丽小姐，说不下去了。接着又说：“没办法！亲爱的爵士，我就是个稀里糊涂的人，就是个糊涂蛋，一辈子都改不掉的荒唐。我死都改不了粗心大意的毛病……”

“除非你把你那张皮剥掉。”少校突然说。

“剥我皮？什么意思？”巴嘉勒尔突然气势汹汹起来。

“什么什么意思？我没什么意思啊？你是指什么？”少校反问道，语气很平缓。

话就说到这里，没再继续进行下去了。

“邓肯号”为什么会到了新西兰解释清楚了。那几位像做了一场梦般的人，也不再想别的事，他们都想去房间里舒舒服服地休息一会儿，然后吃饭。

此时，爵士和麦盖尔等海伦夫人、玛丽、少校、巴嘉勒尔和罗伯尔以及其他人都进了楼舱后，把艾撒汀留了下来，他们还有事要问他。

“汤姆，现在有事我要问你。在你接到我的命令，说到新西兰海岸附近时，有没有觉得奇怪？”爵士问。

“是觉得奇怪，而且非常奇怪。爵士，不过我对接到命令，从来不会说什么，只照指令做事就行了。如果我自作主张，不照指令做事，出了问题，不就是我的事了吗？即使您处在我的位置，应该也会这么做的吧，船长？”艾撒汀说。

“没错，我也会这么做的。”麦盖尔说。

“那么当时你是怎么想的？”爵士又问。

“怎么想的？爵士，我当时就想，为了找到格兰特船长，您才让我到指定的地点来。我想您一定是有了安排，另有船载您去新西兰，所以才要我们到新西兰东海岸来接您。而且在离开墨尔本时，我对船要到达的目的地一直是严守秘密的，等船开到大海，大洋洲的陆地都不见了，我才向大家说。而那时候，船上还出了一些小风波呢，我当时也有些为难。”

“什么风波，汤姆？”爵士问。

“开船的第二天，阿埃童知道了我们要去的目的地……”

“阿埃童？你是说他还在船上？”爵士大叫道。

“是的，还在船上，爵士！”

“阿埃童还在？”爵士又说了一遍，看了看麦盖尔。

“真是老天有眼啊！”麦盖尔说。

只用了一会儿时间，阿埃童的所作所为，以及他的长期预谋、爵士受伤、穆纳的被狙击、一行人在斯诺威河那带的沼泽地所受的困苦……总之，阿埃童的所有行为，全都呈现在了爵士和麦盖尔面前了。没想到，事态发生了想象不到的逆转，流犯竟然又落到了他们手里。

“他现在在什么地方？”爵士问。

“在前甲板下的一个房间里，我派人监视他了。”

“为什么关他？”

“当他知道船是开到新西兰后，大发脾气，并威逼我更改航向，甚至鼓动船员反叛。我意识到他是个危险的家伙，就对他采取防备措施了。”

“最后呢？”

“之后，他就一直待在他的房间，自己也不想出来。”

“太好了，汤姆！”

之后，爵士和麦盖尔便被请到了楼舱，他们最渴望的丰盛晚餐已经准备好了。坐在方厅餐桌里的他们，一开始并没有提到阿埃童。

不过，当饭吃完，大家恢复了精神，再次聚到甲板上时，爵士把阿埃童被扣在船上的事对大家说了。同时，他还说他准备把阿埃童叫到大家面前来审问。

“我能不参加吗？老实说，我亲爱的爱德华，我一看见他就难过！”海伦夫人说。

“这场对质非常重要！海伦，留下吧！我一定要让本·吉奥兹亲眼看到，他又面对面地站在了我们全体受害人的面前。”

海伦夫人答应了。

玛丽和海伦夫人坐在了爵士右边。爵士的左边是少校和巴嘉勒尔、麦盖尔、罗伯尔、维尔逊、穆纳、奥比尔、艾撒汀……也就是说，所有曾差点被阿埃童陷害丢掉性命的人，全都在这里。当然，船上的其他人不知道这一幕的重要，都保持着沉默。

“带阿埃童过来！”爵士大声说。

第四十九章 打动罪犯阿埃童

阿埃童走了出来，穿过中甲板，走上了楼舱的梯子。

眼神黯淡无光的他，牙齿紧咬，拳头紧握，神色中既没有傲慢，也没有受到屈辱的愤慨。他走到爵士面前，双臂环起，一声不响地站在那里，显得淡定而又坦然，没有丝毫的恐惧和慌张。

“阿埃童，我们又见面了。在‘邓肯号’，也就是你想送给本·吉奥兹那帮流犯手里的船上，我们又见面了！”爵士目不转睛地盯着他说。

阿埃童的嘴唇微微动了动，面无表情的脸上突然泛红。这红不是忏悔，不是尴尬，而是没有成功的愤怒。原本想做这艘船的主人，结果却做了这艘船的罪犯。而不久后，他的命运也会在这艘船上被裁决。

不过此时，他没有说话。爵士耐心地等着，但他仍将嘴巴闭得紧紧的，一句话都不说。

“为什么不说话？阿埃童？难道你没什么话说？”爵士忍不住又问。

阿埃童皱了皱眉，连同额头的皱纹都密集地皱了起来，随后，他从容地答道：“没什么好说的，爵士！是我自己计划不周密，被人抓个正着，您想怎么样就怎么样吧！”

这句话说完后，阿埃童又不说话了，他漠不关心地将眼睛转向西边海岸，好像已经决定将周围发生的一切都抛在脑后。看他的神情，仿佛完全与此事无关。不过爵士还是忍耐着，因为他想知道阿埃童的历史，

特别是与格兰特船长和“大不列颠号”相关的那段历史。因此，他竭力压制住内心的怒火，继续审问下去。

“我有几个问题，我想你总不会拒绝回答吧，阿埃童！首先，我知道，我是叫你阿埃童好呢还是叫本·吉奥兹好？你到底是不是‘大不列颠号’上的水手？”

阿埃童像是没有听到他说的话，不动声色地望着海岸。

爵士继续问着，心里也着急起来。

“你为什么要离开‘大不列颠号’？为什么跑到大洋洲来？”

对方依然一言不发，脸上也没有丝毫表情。

“听我说，阿埃童，我希望你主动坦白，因为这才是你的唯一出路。我最后问你一次，你愿意回答我提出的问题吗？”

阿埃童把脸转向了爵士，并紧紧盯着他的眼睛，毫无惧色：“爵士！我无话可说，我有没有罪，还是让法院来证明吧！”

“证明你有罪你觉得难吗？不，太容易了！”爵士说。

“容易？爵士，我觉得这话说得太早了吧！我敢说，就是伦敦最好的法官也拿我没办法。格兰特船长都不在这里，您说有谁能说我为什么来大洋洲？警察没有抓住我，我的同伴也没人落网，那么谁能证明警察缉拿的本·吉奥兹是我？没有，没有人知道，除了您。又有谁能说出一个犯罪事实来？不要说犯罪事实，就是可谴责的行为也没有。谁能肯定地说我想劫取这艘船当海盗船？谁能说？有证据吗？没有！听清楚了，爵士，没有任何人！您现在对我有怀疑是吗？好，您定我个罪，有确凿

证据的罪，您有吗？没有！所以在提出证据之前，我始终都是阿埃童，我是‘大不列颠号’上的水手，不是什么犯人本·吉奥兹。”

阿埃童在说这些话时有些激动，但很快又恢复了平静和淡然。他一定觉得这样的一番话会结束这场审问，不过爵士还是问了下去。

“阿埃童，调查你的犯罪证据不是我的事。我们现在所抱的立场希望你能清楚，我不会说你所犯的罪行，那些事法官会问你。我只是在找人，你知道的，我只是要你说一句话，很可能就能把我们找错的路线纠正过来，好吗？”

阿埃童没有丝毫犹豫地摇了摇头。

“格兰特船长在什么地方？告诉我好吗？”爵士仍然执着地问。

“不！我不会说的，爵士！”

“那你能告诉我‘大不列颠号’失事的地点吗？”

“不！我不会说的。”

“阿埃童，帮帮那两个可怜的孩子，如果你知道格兰特船长在哪里说的话。那两个可怜的孩子就等着你一句话啊！”爵士恳求道。

阿埃童犹豫了，他的脸抽搐了一下，低声说：“不！我不能说！爵士！”

说完，停了一下，又很暴躁地大声吼道：“不！我不说，我是不会说的。你叫人吊死我好了。”

阿埃童补充的这句话，像是为自己刚刚很可能出现的心软而愤怒。

“什么？吊死？”爵士也怒不可遏，吼道。

吼完后，他深吸一口气，控制住自己的情绪，用庄重的语气说：“阿埃童，这里没有法官，也没有刽子手，在船到了码头后，我就把你交给英政府，他们会知道怎么处置你！”

“我要的就是这个结果。”阿埃童平静地说。

之后，他便又回到了临时拘留他的那个房间，两名水手在外面监视着他的一言一行。而这次审问，也让在场的人都感到愤慨和失望。

爵士没有办法说通阿埃童，他还能怎么做呢？很显然，他现在只能根据原来的计划，回欧洲了。此次寻访的失败，也只能等以后找到线索再进行了。因为照现在的情况，“大不列颠号”的踪迹已经找不到了，三张纸条上也没有任何可寻找到的线索，甚至37度线上的陆地也已经没有了，所以“邓肯号”只能开回欧洲。

爵士在和同伴们经过一番商议后，又和麦盖尔谈了谈回航的事情。麦盖尔看了一下煤仓，发现存煤最多只能烧半个月，所以他们必须在最近的中途站补充燃料。

麦盖尔建议将船开到塔耳卡瓦诺湾去，在补充了燃料后，再做环球旅行打算。由于从这里到塔耳卡瓦诺湾也在37度线上，而且是直航，所以补充完必需品后，就可以绕过合恩角，从大西洋航线回苏格兰了。

这个计划被大家接纳了，所以麦盖尔又马上命令机械师加大气压。半小时后，他们的船头方向指向了塔耳卡瓦诺湾，一路上太平无事。晚上6点钟的时候，新西兰最后的山峰已经在天边的雾气中隐去了。

这就是说，他们要归航了。

对于这群勇敢的人来说，回格拉斯哥港却没有带回格兰特和他的两名船员，多少有些让他们扫兴。出发时，大家欢天喜地，满怀信心。可现在要返回欧洲，这让他们有种打了败仗的感觉，一个个都垂头丧气起来，没有一个人因为要回到家乡而兴奋。为了找到格兰特船长，他们每个人都愿意去冒险，即使时间拖得再长他们也心甘情愿。

所以全船船员仅在见到爵士他们一行回船时“乌拉”过，之后便一直无精打采。船上的客人们也都没有像从苏格兰出发时那样谈笑风生，每个人都躲在自己的房间，甲板上很难看到有人。

当然，这些人中，有一个人把这种悲情情绪表现得更加夸张，这个人就是巴嘉勒尔。

平时，他怎么都会从绝望的信息中找到一些希望，可此时，他也一直愁眉苦脸，默不作声，大家很少看见他。

这个生来喜欢说话，有着法国人特有活泼性格的他，现在却变得沉默和沮丧起来，甚至比船上任何人都伤心。在爵士谈到再次寻访时，他总是摇摇头，很是绝望，好像已经把“大不列颠号”上遇难船员们的命运知道得清清楚楚了，大家也觉得他深信几名船员已经没有活在人世了。

不过，船上还有一个人，原本可以说出“大不列颠号”失事的情况，可他就是不说，这个人就是阿埃童。显然，阿埃童是知道格兰特船长他们的情况的，最起码知道船失事的地方，但他不说，因为如果找到了格兰特，那么就有了他犯罪的证人，这对他将是非常不利的，所以他怎么都不肯说话。

他让船上的人，特别是水手们恨得牙痒痒，恨不得打死他。

爵士一直想从他嘴里套出话来，并做了很多次尝试，但怎么说都没有用。总之，阿埃童非常固执，固执到莫名其妙，以至于少校觉得他根本就不知道格兰特船长和“大不列颠号”的事情。而少校的这种猜测，和巴嘉勒尔的不谋而合，这也正是巴嘉勒尔对格兰特船长命运悲观的主要原因。

不过，如果阿埃童一点都不知道，为什么不说出来？他应该明白，他说不知道，对他没有什么伤害，但他死也不松口，这就为他们制订新的寻找计划制造了麻烦。

那么，阿埃童在大洋洲，是不是可以推断出格兰特也在大洋洲？对于这个问题，他们必须想尽一切办法让他开口。

海伦夫人见爵士几次审问失败，便要求她去和阿埃童谈谈。男人不能做到的事，很可能被女人的温和所打动。就像太阳和狂风比赛，看谁能让行人脱衣服的时候，狂风刮得越大，路人就把衣服裹得越紧；反倒太阳一出来，路人就主动把衣服脱下来了。

这个故事谁都知道。而且爵士也知道他年轻的妻子非常有智慧，便答应了由她去说服阿埃童。

3月5日，阿埃童被带到了海伦夫人的房间，玛丽小姐也被海伦夫人叫了过来。因为玛丽小姐，所以海伦夫人不愿意忽视掉任何有帮助的线索。

两位女士和阿埃童聊了1个小时，不过谈话的情况却一直没有向外透露。她们到底和阿埃童聊了什么？她们有什么办法撬开阿埃童的嘴，套出一些秘密？总之，聊天详情除了她们两个人外，没有人知道。不过在她们让阿埃童离开后，好像并没有获得什么有用的线索，很是沮丧。

所以在将阿埃童带回那间拘留房间时，有几名水手拦在路上，对他进行了暴力威胁。而阿埃童呢，只是耸了耸肩，什么也没说。这更让水手们愤怒了，直到麦盖尔和爵士制止，水手们才愤愤离开。

不过海伦夫人并不罢休，她决定继续说服那个冷血固执的人。所以第二天的时候，她亲自跑去阿埃童的房间，以免在他经过甲板时，引起大家的愤怒。

善良温柔的海伦夫人这次是单独一个人面对阿埃童的，整整聊了两个多小时。爵士急得像热锅上的蚂蚁，一直在房间里走来走去。有时他下定决心，不管用什么办法都要从阿埃童那里探听到消息，有时他又想把妻子叫出来，他不想让妻子遭受谈判失败带来的痛苦。

不过，海伦夫人这次出来时，脸上却带着微笑。她会不会已经套出了很多信息呢？会不会感动了铁石心肠的坏蛋，让那坏蛋动了恻隐之心，说出了秘密？

虽然海伦夫人的脸上是微笑，但少校还是露出一副不相信阿埃童会说出甚至会知道什么秘密的神情。

不过很快，一个好消息瞬间传遍了整艘船——坏蛋阿埃童被海伦夫人说动了。这个消息如同电流一般，人人都知道了，而且也都聚在了甲板上，这速度比听到艾撒汀的哨子声集合得还快。

爵士也迎了上去，着急地问：“他说了？”

“说是还没说，不过他让步了，说想见你！”

“哦！亲爱的海伦，你成功了！”

“我希望能起点作用，爱德华！”

“你有没有许给他承诺？还要我向他保证一下是吗？”

“是的，我许给他了一个诺言。亲爱的，我许诺他，减轻他的一些处罚。”

“好的！亲爱的海伦，让他来见我吧！”

海伦夫人被玛丽小姐陪着回房间了，阿埃童又被带到了方厅，爵士在方厅等着他。

第五十章 阿埃童的坦白

阿埃童再次来到了爵士面前，押送他来的人退了回去。

“是想和我说什么吗，阿埃童？”爵士说。

“没错，爵士！”

“是要和我一个人说吗？”

“是的，不过我觉得少校和巴嘉勒尔要是在的话会更好。”

“更好？是对谁更好呢？”

“对我！”

阿埃童非常镇定地说完，看着爵士。爵士也盯着他，看了一会儿后，他叫人将少校和巴嘉勒尔叫了过来。

当少校和巴嘉勒尔到了之后，爵士对阿埃童说：“好了，现在可以说了！”

阿埃童沉默了一下，接着说：“爵士，按说我们要先签个合同，先谈好条件，还要有证人才行，这就是我为什么会请巴嘉勒尔先生和少校也在这里的原因。因为我现在要和你提一个交换条件。”

爵士对阿埃童的油盐不进已经深有了了解，所以并没表现出惊讶，虽然他觉得像阿埃童这样一个人，竟然还要和他谈交换条件有些荒唐。

“你想交换什么？”爵士一脸平静地问。

“希望从您那里得到一些好处，因为您也想从我这里得到您觉得有用的信息，所以我们可以一手交钱，一手交货。爵士，您能答应这个条件吗？”

“那要看你能说出什么信息了。”巴嘉勒尔插言道。

“我不问你能说什么信息，我现在只想知道你打算从我这里得到什么好处。”爵士淡淡地说。

阿埃童点了点头，慢慢开口道：“我想要的好处就是，不要把我交到英国政府那里去，爵士！”

“阿埃童，你觉得这样才公平对吗？”

“不！我没说这样就公平，但我总归有条件，而如果我让您将我放掉，您肯定是不答应的，对吗？”

面对阿埃童提出的这个条件，爵士犹豫了一下。格兰特的命运就在他回答的一句话里，可是，他又觉得他不能拿法律开玩笑，因为阿埃童已经犯了法。

“阿埃童，我不能就把你这样放掉！”爵士说。

“我并没有让你把我放掉！”阿埃童的脸上浮现出笑容，那笑容里带着自豪。

“那么，不让我把你交给政府，又不放你，又该怎么办呢？”

“有一个折中的办法。爵士，将我吊死和放我走，您肯定都不愿

意，那么就取中间。”

“中间是什么？”

“将我流放到太平洋的荒岛上，然后给我必要的东西。我可以在荒岛上生活，并在那里忏悔。”

爵士被阿埃童的这个建议惊到了。他看了巴嘉勒尔和少校一眼，两个人都默不作声。爵士想了想说：“阿埃童，我可以答应你的要求，但你一定要把你知道的告诉我，不能隐瞒。”

“可以，爵士！我可以将我知道的关于格兰特船长和‘大不列颠号’的事都告诉你。”

“毫不隐瞒吗？”

“那当然，全部说出来。”

“有谁可以证明你全说了呢？”

“爵士，请你相信我的人格。当然，相信一个坏人的人格，也许是很可笑的，不过又有什么办法呢？因为我只能用人格担保，愿不愿意随您。”

“我暂且相信你吧，阿埃童。”爵士说。

“这么做不会错的，爵士！因为如果我骗了您，您还是有办法报复我的。”

“我有什么办法报复你？”

“您把我放在了荒岛上，那么我怎么都逃不掉的。您可以再去抓我。”阿埃童流利地说。

阿埃童是个聪明人，他把对方担心的事情先说出来，然后替对方说出解决问题的方法，叫对方无法反驳。如此诚恳地和对方谈条件，对方能不相信他吗？当然，他还有一招，有一招更让人对他信任。

“爵士及二位先生，我希望三位能知道一个事实：我是将一切摊在大家面前来谈的，我不会去骗大家。同时，我还有一个证据，可以证明我会诚实地说以下这些话的。为什么呢？很简单，我希望你们也能很真诚地和我交谈。”

“好吧！说吧，阿埃童。”爵士说。

“您还没接受我的提议呢，爵士！不过，我还是可以毫不犹豫地告诉你一件事，那就是对于格兰特船长的事，我知道的并不多。没错，爵士，我能提供给你的，只是一些关于我自己的事，对于您寻找他，帮不了多少忙。”

爵士和少校的脸上浮现出失望。他们以为阿埃童掌握着重大的秘密，而现在，他首先承认他提供的信息对寻找格兰特船长没有什么用处。当然，三个人中，唯一面不改色的就是巴嘉勒尔。

不管怎样，阿埃童的话尽管无人证明是真实的，但如此坦白，已经让人很感动了，尤其他最后又补充了一句：“我预先说了，爵士，如果您接受这次交换，那对我的好处要比对您的好处多。”

“不管怎样，我接受你的提议。我也答应，阿埃童，将你放到太平洋一个荒岛上去。”

“好的，爵士！”

阿埃童的这个决定对他而言是好还是不好呢？很不好说。因为他面无表情，丝毫没显露出高兴还是不高兴，仿佛这个谈判和他无关，说的是别人的事。

“那么我现在可以回答你们的问题了。”阿埃童最后说。

“我们现在没什么好提问的，你还是把知道的一切都告诉我们吧。阿埃童，你先说说，你是个什么样的人。”

“爵士和两位先生，我的真名就叫汤姆·阿埃童，我也确实是‘大不列颠号’上的水手长。在1861年3月12日的时候，我乘格兰特船长的船离开了格拉斯哥。在太平洋上，我们一起跑了14个月，我们一直在寻找能够做苏格兰移民区的地方。格兰特船长是个干大事业的人，而我有自己的打算，再加上我们的性情也不一样，我又不愿意迁就他，所以经常发生矛盾和争论。爵士，你们要知道，格兰特这个人一旦决定做一件事，任何力量都是阻挡不了的，那个人就像是钢铁铸成的，所以也想让别人做钢铁。不过，即使这样，我还是不怕他，我叛变了，而且还让船员和我一起叛变，并想将那只船夺过来。对于我该不该做这件事，现在可以不做讨论，不管我是错也好，对也好，总之，格兰特船长毫不迟疑地在1862年4月8日，在大洋洲西海岸将我赶下了船。”

“大洋洲？也就是说，在‘大不列颠号’到卡亚俄停泊前，你已经不在那船上了。那么这船是在到达卡亚俄之后失踪的？”少校插嘴道。

“没错，我在船上的时候，‘大不列颠号’就没在卡亚俄停泊过。而我之所以在奥陌尔农庄里谈到卡亚俄，是因为你们先说了它在卡亚俄停泊过。”

“接着说下去吧！”爵士说。

“就那样，我被格兰特船长丢在了荒无人烟的海岸，离西澳省省会柏斯的流犯拘留所仅仅只有30公里。我在海滨处彷徨时，遇到了一些流犯，那些人刚从牢里出来，所以我也就入了伙。爵士，对于那两年的生活，还是请您不要再问了，我只想告诉您的是，我最后化名本·吉奥兹，而且还做了流犯的头子。1864年9月，我以阿埃童之名，被爱尔兰人雇用。我在那里的时候，就是想瞅个机会弄一只船。所以两个月后，当‘邓肯号’来了，爵士你们去农庄，将格兰特船长的历史说个清清楚楚的时候，我知道了一些我不知道的事实，知道了‘大不列颠号’在卡亚俄停泊过，并且在我离开船的两个月后，也就是1862年6月发出了最后的消息，而且纸条上还说是在37度线上失事的。于是，我决定将‘邓肯号’弄到手，这样一只好游船，是连英国最快的兵舰也赶不上的。不过，船因为严重受损，需要修理，于是我就想让它开到墨尔本去。而我自己则以原来的真实身份跟着你们，引你们到大洋洲东岸，也就是我假定的船失事的地点。所以我引你们穿过了维多利亚省，还让我的同伙跟着我们，有时候他们也会跑到我们前面。当然，我手下在康斯登桥做的那案子，完全没必要。因为当‘邓肯号’到了东海岸后，也就逃不出我的手心了。当我有了这只船，我就能在海上称王称霸了，所以为什么还要做那种案子呢？但没办法，他们还是做了。

“就在我将你们引到斯诺威河，牲畜又被我用胃豆草毒死得只剩下一头牛和一匹马时，我又将牛车引到了斯诺威沼泽区的泥淖里，最后提出恳切建议……当然，之后的事情你们已经知道了，我也就不说了。不过你们一定要相信一点，如果不是巴嘉勒尔先生粗心大意，写错一个地名的话，那么‘邓肯号’一定已经落在我手里了。这，就是我的历史。很可惜，诸位先生，没有你们想要的线索。现在你们总该相信了吧，你们

做了个赔本的买卖。”

阿埃童说完，便不再说话了。他习惯性地双臂抱胸，安静地等着。爵士、少校和巴嘉勒尔都沉默不语。他们知道这就是事实，阿埃童已经把自己知道的都说了。“邓肯号”之所以没被劫去，是他万万没想到的。因为他的同伙已经到了杜布湾海边，爵士发现的那件囚衣足以说明这个问题。他的同伙很忠实地响应他们头目的命令，在那里等着“邓肯号”，不过久等不来，只好又跑到新南威尔士省的乡下干伤天害理的事情去了。少校继续他的盘问，以便确定和“大不列颠号”有关的一些日期。

“这么说，你确实是在1862年4月8日在大洋洲西岸被赶下船的？”

“绝对没错。”阿埃童说。

“那之前格兰特有没有提到他的一些计划？”

“我只是隐隐知道一些。”

“说说看，即使只是一些细微的线索也行。阿埃童，说不定你提供的一些细微线索，就能让我们找到真相。”

“爵士，我能告诉您的就是，他想去新西兰看看。不过，他的这个计划在我还没有离开船上时，并没有实现。所以‘大不列颠号’在离开卡亚俄后，也是很有可能会跑到新西兰附近陆地的。而且这与文件上所说三桅船失事的日期1862年6月27日很吻合。”

“当然吻合。”巴嘉勒尔说。

“不过，文件上并没有‘新西兰’字样呀。”

“对于这一点，我也不是很清楚。”阿埃童说。

“好吧，阿埃童，你实现了你的诺言，我也会实现我的诺言。我们去商量一下，看把你丢到太平洋哪个岛上比较好。”

“随便什么岛都好，爵士！”阿埃童说。

“你先回房间吧，等我们商量好再说。”

于是，阿埃童在两名水手的看守下，去了他那间拘留房。

“他并不像个十恶不赦的人。”少校说。

“是呀，他个性坚强，人又聪明，这样的人，怎么会去做坏事呢？”爵士不解道。

“格兰特船长你们觉得怎么样了？”

“恐怕凶多吉少，可怜的两个孩子，谁能告诉他们，他们的父亲在什么地方？”

“我能告诉，是的，我能告诉！”巴嘉勒尔说。

刚刚，我们一定注意到了一个细节，那就是平时多话、性格急躁的巴嘉勒尔，却在爵士盘问阿埃童时，几乎一言不发。他只是仔细地听着，并不说话。而这句话却是石破天惊，所以首先就把爵士吓了一跳：“巴嘉勒尔！你……你开什么玩笑，你……你知道格兰特船长在哪儿？”

“没错，我知道，而且和别人知道的一样。”

“从什么地方知道的？”

“当然是从那三张纸条上了。”

“哦？”少校不相信地看着他。

“少校，等我说完你再耸你的肩膀好了。我以前没说出来，是因为怕你们不相信。不过现在我决定说了，虽然说了也没多大用处，但阿埃童的那句话正好证明了我的想法是对的。”

“是说新西兰吗？”爵士问。

“你们先听我说。爵士，我在替您给艾撒汀写信时，写错了一个字，而那一个字又救了大家。那个写错的字并不是毫无理由地写错的，因为当时爵士您让我代笔的时候，‘西兰’这个名词正好在我的脑海里回旋。之所以这样，是因为在我们奔到牛车里避流犯，少校对海伦夫人说流犯作恶的时候，他把登着康斯登桥惨案的那份《新西兰日报》递给了她。当时，正写信的我，看到报纸折了一半，还有一半报名露了出来，而露出的那部分正好就是aland。我当时心里一亮，因为aland正是英文纸条上写的aland呀，我们通常会认为这字是‘登陆’，实际上可能是‘西兰’（zealand）的残余。”

爵士不置可否地哼了一声。

“那样的解释，一开始我们并没有想到，知道为什么吗？因为法文纸条比较完整，所以我就盯住法文纸条去寻找线索了。而这个重要的字，正好不在法文纸条上。”

“哈哈……巴嘉勒尔，你太主观了。你现在又把前面两种解释推翻了。”少校说。

“那你反驳吧，少校，我可以一一再驳你的反驳。”

“如果真是这样，那么austral又该作何解释？”

“当然还是刚开始我们说的意思了，‘南半球’（australes）的地区。”

“好，那indi呢？你开始说它是‘印第安人’（indiens），最后又说
是‘当地土人’（indigens）。”

“这个吗？我第三次，也是最后一次解释它为‘绝地之
人’（indigence）！”巴嘉勒尔说。

“那么contin呢？总不会不是‘大陆’（continent）了吧？”少校大叫起
来。

“新西兰是个岛，当然不是‘大陆’。”

“那是什么？”爵士问。

“亲爱的爵士，我把纸条上的内容解释给你听，你再判断吧。不过
我要提醒你两点，首先，尽量忘记前面的两次解释，从先入为主的思想
里解放出来；其次，有些地方未免会有所牵强，而且我可能也解释不
好，但这些地方也都是无关紧要的。尤其是‘gonie’，我将其解释为‘风
涛险恶’，心里总觉得不对，不过又想不出其他解释。更重要的是，我
的解释是以法文为基础的。别忘记了，写纸条的可是个英国人，作为英
国人，对法文的语法运用不熟练也正常。在这一点上交代完之后，我要
开始我的最新解释了。”

巴嘉勒尔说完，拿出那三张纸条中的一张，慢吞吞地念了起来：

“1862年6月27日，三桅船‘大不列颠号’，籍隶格拉斯哥港，沉没于风涛险恶的南半球海上，靠近新西兰——也就是英文纸条上所说的‘登陆’。在两名水手和船长格兰特到达此岛后，不幸变成了蛮荒绝地之人。兹特抛下此文件于经.....及纬37°11'处。请速予救援，否则必死无疑。”

巴嘉勒尔念完了，从他所念的内容来看，他的解释还是可以接受的。不过，这次解释和前两次，仿佛同样正确，所以也有可能和上两次一样，都是同样的错误，所以爵士和少校都没有讨论的兴趣。不过，既然“大不列颠号”的踪迹在37度线上，那么巴塔哥尼亚海岸和澳大利亚海岸没有找到，新西兰的机会相对也就多了。巴嘉勒尔提出的这点，爵士和少校也不得不考虑。

“巴嘉勒尔，为什么要隐瞒这件事，而且还要隐瞒两个月？你应该早点告诉我才对。”

“因为我不希望大家空欢喜一场。那时候，我们正要去奥克兰，也就是纸条上所指的37度线上的一个地方呀。”

“可是后来我们出了奥克兰那条线，你总要说的吧！为什么还不说呢？”

“因为我虽然知道是这种解释，但现在怎么都对寻找格兰特船长没有用啊。”

“什么意思，巴嘉勒尔？”

“很简单，如果格兰特船长的船在新西兰沉了，而且两年没有消息，那么他不是死于沉船，就是死于新西兰土人手里。”

“所以，你觉得……”爵士问。

“我觉得，即使我们找到了船失事的痕迹，船上的人也早已经不在
了。”

“唉！这些话先保密，不要说！朋友们，当我找到了合适的机会，
再告诉格兰特那对可怜的儿女吧！”爵士说。

第五十一章 玛丽雅泰莱萨岛

在全船人都知道阿埃童的招供对寻找格兰特船长根本没有决定性线索后，每个人的心情都很沉重。原本大家希望阿埃童说出秘密就能找到格兰特船长及其他两名水手，没想到丝毫起不了作用。

因此，“邓肯号”决定还是按原路返回。在返回途中，可以选择一个荒岛把阿埃童放下。

巴嘉勒尔和麦盖尔在地图上选择适合放阿埃童的荒岛，正好看到37度线上有个荒岛，名叫玛丽雅泰莱萨，这个岛离美洲海岸约1900公里，离新西兰大概810公里，是一座孤零零地矗立在太平洋中间的峭岩。

这座岛北边靠近帕摩图群岛，归法国管辖；南边则什么都没有，即使从那里走到南极冰区，也是空空荡荡的，所以也没有一只船去那荒僻之地考察过。总而言之，这是一座和外界隔离的小岛，只有喜欢风暴，在海洋上飞行的鸟儿会来岛上偶然歇息。这样一个地方，在很多地图上都没有标注。

这是一个和外界完全隔绝的孤僻的地方，而且也远离一切航线。他们在选择好这个小岛的位置后，又告诉了阿埃童，阿埃童答应在这里过远离人群的生活。所以“邓肯号”开始掉头，方向指向玛丽雅泰莱萨岛。

而且通过这条直线，“邓肯号”在经过小岛后，也就能直达塔尔卡瓦诺湾了。

两天后的下午两点，瞭望的水手向他们报告，说很远的地方出现了

一片陆地，想必那就是玛丽雅泰莱萨岛了。此岛浮在海面上，像极了一条大鲸鱼。

“邓肯号”以每小时9公里的速度前进，距小岛还有16公里。小岛的侧影浮现在了水面上，越来越清晰。随着太阳的西沉，浮在水面上的小岛在强光的照映下，出现了曲折的侧影。倒插在太阳照耀下的海面上的是几座低矮的，稀稀落落的山。

5点钟的时候，麦盖尔见小岛上方有股轻烟袅袅升起。

“那是一座火山？”麦盖尔问正拿着望远镜观察的巴嘉勒尔。

“很难说，这岛我不是很了解。不过，如果它的形成是因为海底突起的话，那么火山喷发喷出个岛屿也不奇怪。”

“那么我们是不是可以说火山能把它喷出来，也就能将它喷回去？”爵士问。

“可能性太小了。这岛已经存在几百年了，应该不会出现这种情况。尤里亚岛曾经从地中海冒出，不过在海面上的时间不久，仅仅几个月就消失不见了。”巴嘉勒尔回答说。

“约翰，船能在天黑前着陆吗？”爵士问麦盖尔。

“不行，爵士，我不能让‘邓肯号’在黑暗中冒险向不熟悉的海岸靠近。我现在要减小马力，让它就这么在附近荡着，等明天天亮后，我们再放小艇上岸。”麦盖尔说。

晚上8点钟的时候，“邓肯号”离玛丽雅泰莱萨岛只有3公里了，岛在水里仅剩下一条长长的影子，快要看不到了。“邓肯号”一点一点地向那

小岛靠近，9点钟的时候，那里突然出现一道强光。强光来自一团火，火光照亮了黑暗，在一个地方，持续不断地燃烧着。

“这应该就是火山。”巴嘉勒尔一边仔细观察，一边说。

“不过，如果是火山爆发的话，肯定会发出巨响的，可我们离那里那么近，怎么会听不到响声的？而且现在刮的是东风，声音应该能传到我们耳朵里。”麦盖尔说。

“是的，这火山很奇怪，只有火没有声。而且它们总是亮亮停停的，就像灯塔一样。”巴嘉勒尔又说。

“说得没错，不过我们不是在有灯塔的海岸附近呀，怎么会有灯塔呢？”麦盖尔说完，突然又惊呼起来，“啊！太奇怪了，又有火光出来了，在海滩上，快看，那火还在移动。”

确实，那火光一会儿有，一会儿又没有。

“是不是这岛上住了人？”爵士说。

“一定住着土人！”巴嘉勒尔说。

“如果有土人，那就不能将阿埃童丢在这里。”

“为什么不能，就把他送给土人吃了吧！他一定会受土人欢迎的。”少校开着玩笑，但表情严肃。

“还是找一个没人住的荒岛吧！我可是答应过他，要保证他安全的，我不能说话不算话。”爵士被少校要改善土人“胃口”的说法逗笑了，却也一本正经地说。

“不管怎样，我们都要提防着。新西兰土人太野蛮了，也很狡猾，他们经常手举火把，欺骗过往船只，和以前那些康瓦尔的居民一样，引诱过往船只。”巴嘉勒尔补充道。

“船头掉个方向，明天太阳出来时，我们就能知道是怎么回事了。”麦盖尔吩咐掌舵的水手说。

深夜11点的时候，乘客及麦盖尔全都回房间了，船头的甲板上只有几名值班的水手在四下漫步，而船尾只剩下舵手在守着舵把。

此时，玛丽小姐和罗伯尔走上了楼舱顶。

格兰特船长的一对儿女就那么伏在扶栏上，忧愁地看着海面上的微微粼光，以及“邓肯号”尾部发着亮光的浪槽。此时的玛丽小姐，正在担心着弟弟的前途，而罗伯尔也在想着姐姐以后该怎么办。同时，他们都想起了父亲。他们亲爱的父亲是否还在人世？他们就这么放弃寻找父亲吗？不！绝对不能这么放弃，他们不能没有父亲。没有父亲，他们该怎么办？这段时间，不要说失去父亲，就是没有爵士和海伦夫人，他们都不知道会变成什么样子。

经历了磨难的罗伯尔，越发成熟了，他知道姐姐的心事，于是握住姐姐的手说：“千万不要失望，玛丽，父亲曾告诉我们，‘勇气会代替世上的一切’。那是百折不挠的勇气，是能够战胜一切的勇气，这样的勇气我们必须要有。姐姐，一直以来，都是你在照顾我，那么，现在就让我为你操劳吧！”

“我亲爱的弟弟！”玛丽小姐哽咽着说不出话来。

“有句话我想告诉姐姐，不知道姐姐会不会生气。”

“说吧，我的弟弟，我不会生气的。”

“你肯答应我吗？”

“什么意思？”玛丽小姐问完，心里有了不安。

“让我去当水手。”

“难道……难道你要离开我？”玛丽小姐大叫一声，紧紧地握住了弟弟的手，好像生怕一松手，弟弟就消失了一样。

“是的！姐姐，我想和父亲一样，成为一名水手，还要像约翰船长一样！我亲爱的玛丽，约翰船长不会让我们失望的，他是那么侠义、勇敢的人，你一定要像相信我一样相信他。他答应过我，要将我培养成优秀的船员。他还答应我，一边培养我，一边带我去寻找我们的父亲。亲爱的姐姐，你要答应我，一定要答应我！因为如果我们跑丢了，父亲一定会走遍天涯海角寻找我们的。所以现在他不见了，我们就有责任走遍天涯海角去找他。如今，我的生命里已经有了目标，我要毕生为这个目标而奋斗，去寻找那个永远不会抛弃我们，我们也永远不会抛弃的人。亲爱的姐姐，我们的父亲！他太伟大了！”

“是的！他是个高尚而伟大的人。知道吗，弟弟，父亲现在已经是祖国祖国的骄傲了。如果不是运气不好，没有完成他的事业的话，他一定是我们国家的伟人之一。”玛丽说。

“我怎么会不知道？”罗伯尔激动地说。

玛丽小姐一把搂住了弟弟，眼泪从眼眶落下，掉在了罗伯尔的额头上。

罗伯尔在玛丽小姐怀里叫着：“姐姐！姐姐！我们的朋友，他们虽然不说、不提，可我还是抱着希望，我永远都抱着希望。我要做个像父亲那样的人，在事业未成功前，绝不死去。”

玛丽一句话都说不出，只是不断地抽泣着。一想到他们还会去寻找父亲，一想到麦盖尔船长的侠骨柔情，她的心里就有种温暖的情愫在内心奔腾。

“约翰先生也一直抱有希望吗？”她按捺住怦怦跳动的心说。

“是的，他一直怀抱希望。他像个大哥哥一样，永远都不会抛弃我们。我要去做水手，好吗？姐姐，我去做水手，和他一起去寻找我们的父亲，好吗？”

“好的！只是我们姐弟俩就会分开了。”

“姐姐，你不会孤零零一个人的，船长和我说过了，海伦夫人也不想让你离开她。你是个女孩子，你可以接受她的好意。如果你不接受，反倒是辜负了她。可我是个男孩子，男人要勇敢，要靠自己。父亲很早就教育过我。”

“可我们的老家怎么办？那里充满了我们的回忆！”

“那里我们不会忘记，也不会抛下！姐姐，这些事情，我们的朋友，约翰船长和爵士都已经决定了，而且还做好了安排。爵士让你留在麦凯莫府，他们要把你当女儿一样对待。这是爵士告诉了约翰，约翰又告诉我的。你在那里会像在自己家里一样的，那里会有人和你谈我们的父亲，你还可以在那里等我和约翰。总有一天，我相信父亲是会回来找我们的。到了那天，这该是多么值得高兴的一件事啊。”罗伯尔说着说

着，激动的额头发出了亮光。

“我亲爱的弟弟，你长大了！如果父亲能亲耳听到你说这些话，该是多么高兴啊！你太像我们的父亲了，我亲爱的弟弟，你真像我们那可亲的父亲，等你长大了，一定会做个父亲那样的人的。”玛丽小姐说。

“希望如此，姐姐！”罗伯尔说着，脸上浮现出神圣和庄严的神态来。

“不过爵士和夫人的恩情，我们又要怎么报答呢？”玛丽又说。

“这不是什么难事。因为我们爱他们，尊敬他们，我们会经常表达我们的感情，多吻吻他们，然后一旦有机会，我们可以为他们去奉献，甚至献出生命！”罗伯尔天真地说。

“不！我们不能为他们死，我们要为他们好好地活着！他们一定希望我们好好活着，我也希望你好好活着。”玛丽说完，狂吻弟弟的额头。

两姐弟一边聊着天，一边幻想着未来，他们在黑夜的船上，彼此对望。即使不说话，彼此的心里也在对话。平静的海面上荡起了涟漪，一起一伏的。螺旋桨在黑暗中缓缓地搅动着波光。

突然，一件奇妙的事情发生了。两姐弟像是被什么神秘的东西吸引着，让他们同时产生了一种幻觉，他们感觉到，在那微微荡起的微波里，有一个声音传了出来，那声音低沉凄凉，让两个人的心全都绷了起来。

他们听到，那声音在叫：“救救我！救救我！”

“姐姐，你听到什么了吗？有没有听到什么？”罗伯尔问。

玛丽小姐想必也听到了。她没有回答弟弟，却和弟弟罗伯尔一起趴在栏杆上，俯下身子朝黑夜里的海面寻找。不过他们什么都没有看到——那里漆黑一片。

“罗伯尔！我……我好像……听到……我听到了，和你一样听到了！我们会不会是在做梦，我亲爱的弟弟呀！”玛丽先是脸色苍白，接着呼吸急促了起来。

接着，又是一声声的“救命”传到了他们的耳朵里。这次更清楚了，以至于两姐弟同时发出了“父亲！是父亲……”的叫声。

玛丽因为激动过度，竟然晕倒在了罗伯尔的怀里。

“救人啊！救救我姐姐！救人啊！救救我父亲！”罗伯尔大喊道。

船尾掌舵的最先奔过来，帮着罗伯尔把玛丽小姐扶了起来。接着值班的水手们也跑过来了，然后是麦盖尔、海伦夫人和爵士，他们全都从睡梦中惊醒，跑了过来。

“我姐姐就要死了，我父亲……我父亲在那里。”罗伯尔大声叫着，指着黑夜中的海面说。

众人莫名其妙。

“真的！我父亲真的在那里，我听到我父亲喊救命的声音了。还有我姐姐，我姐姐也听到了。我们都听到了。”罗伯尔又大声叫道。

此时，玛丽清醒过来，她睁开眼睛，像疯了一样，大声叫道：“父

亲！我的父亲在那里！”

可怜的少女玛丽，她爬起来冲向栏杆，把身子俯下去，想要投入海里。

“爵士！夫人！我父亲就在那里，我向你们保证，他就在那里。我们听到了他的声音，是从海浪里传出来的，就像临死告别的声音一样。”玛丽大声叫着。

她开始抽搐，接着全身痉挛，抖个不停。大家不得不把她抬回她的房间，海伦夫人跟着她进了房间，去照顾她。而罗伯尔还在那里喊着：“是真的！我的父亲就在那里！我们没说错，真的就在那里，爵士！”

在这种情况下，众人都觉得两个孩子是因为思念过度，产生了幻觉。不过这么严重的幻觉，又该怎么解释呢？

所以爵士还是抓住了他的手：“孩子，你听到你父亲的声音了？”

“对！爵士，我听到了，就在那里，在海浪中间。他在喊‘救我！救我！’。”

“你真听清是你父亲的声音？”

“是的！没错，就是我父亲的声音！爵士！我听得很清楚，我可以发誓，我姐姐也听到了，她和我一样，清楚地听到了父亲的声音！您想想，一个人可以听错，可两个人怎么会听错呢？爵士！救救我的父亲吧！放只小艇子！放只小艇子！”

爵士见他这样，觉得一定是幻觉太严重引起的。不过他还是把掌舵

的舵手叫了过来。

“霍金斯，在玛丽小姐晕倒时，你是在这附近掌舵吗？”

“是的，爵士，我就在这里。”

“那你有没有看见什么，或者听见什么？”

“没有！什么都没看见，也没听见！”

“是这样吗，罗伯尔？”

“不！是真的，真的是我父亲在叫。如果是霍金斯的父亲在叫，他一定也会听到的。可那是我父亲呀，爵士！是我父亲啊！”罗伯尔坚定地说。

罗伯尔的嗓子哑了，他脸色苍白，再不开口，最后也和姐姐一样，昏了过去。爵士急忙让人把他抬回了房间，由于受了过度的刺激，他进入到了深度睡眠中。

“可怜的两个孤儿！上帝对他们太残酷了！”麦盖尔说。

“是呀，他们伤心过度，所以产生了幻觉。”爵士说。

“两个人同时产生幻觉，怎么可能？太奇怪了，科学也是无法解释这种现象的。”巴嘉勒尔自语道。

随即，他俯下身子，对着海面，侧耳细听。四周一片沉寂，巴嘉勒尔又大声叫了几声，依然没有什么回音。

“太奇怪了！看来，思念和痛苦交织起来，一些现象是无法解释

的。”他喃喃说着，向自己的房间走去。

第二天，也就是3月8日的早晨5点，天刚蒙蒙亮，罗伯尔两姐弟便聚在了甲板上，其他人因为无法劝住他们，也到了甲板上。他们要看看昨晚勉强能看到的那片陆地。

所有的望远镜都拿出来了，他们向岛上仔仔细细地看着。“邓肯号”离那小岛仅有1公里，他们沿着海岸缓缓地向前开。在他们的视力能看清岸上的一些细微情况时，罗伯尔突然大喊，说他看见海岸上有三个人，一边挥舞胳膊，一边在跑，其中一个人的手里还摇着一面旗子。

麦盖尔抓过罗伯尔手里的望远镜，看了一下后喊道：“是英国国旗！”

“没错！是英国国旗！”巴嘉勒尔也叫了起来，他回头看着罗伯尔。

“爵士，如果您不想让我游着去岛上，那就请放下一只小艇。爵士！我求您了，我要第一个登岛。”罗伯尔激动得声音发抖。

船上没人再说话。因为这是他们万万没有想到的。在37度线穿过的一个小岛上，竟然有三个人，三个遇难的人，而且还是三个英国人。于是，他们每个人都想起了昨夜的那一幕，他们想到罗伯尔和玛丽听到的呼救声……

也许，两个孩子弄错了，是有呼救声传进了他们的耳朵，但那怎么会是他们的父亲呢？怎么可能？不管怎样，都是不可能的。于是每个人都想，说不定会有个大大的失望在等待着他们，因为希望越大，失望也就越大。这两个孩子，已经经不起这种打击了。可现在又有什么办法呢？他们无法阻止两个孩子上岸，别人没有，就连爵士也没有。

“放艇子！”爵士大喊。

只用了1分钟，艇子就放到了海里。罗伯尔、玛丽小姐、爵士、麦盖尔和巴嘉勒尔全都涌上了艇子。艇子在六名水手的拼命划动下，很快就离开了大船。在离岸还有大约20米远的时候，玛丽大叫一声：“是我的父亲！”

是的，岸上有一个高大而健壮的人，他站在两个人中间，面孔慈爱而又坚毅，完全就是玛丽和罗伯尔的结合体。他正是两个孩子不断描述的那个人，他们的心灵没有欺骗他们，那是他们的父亲，是格兰特船长。

格兰特船长在听到玛丽的呼唤后，先是张开双臂，接着便像被雷击了一样，倒在了沙滩上。

第五十二章 相聚

巨大的幸福降临不会让人窒息，即使格兰特和他的一对儿女在小岛上激动得差点背过气去，大家除了为他们高兴外，却并不担心他们。而那激动的场面，是用多少笔墨都无法描述的，甚至任何美妙的词语，都无法写出当时的场景。

几个人只是看着他们三个人紧紧地抱在一起，一句话也不说，全都流下泪来。

格兰特船长一登上“邓肯号”，便在甲板上站立，向迎接他们的海伦夫人及其他人表示感谢。

原来，三个人在团聚后，经过短暂的晕厥，很快醒了过来，然后两个孩子在返回游船的小艇上，向自己的父亲讲述了“邓肯号”是如何进行环球航行寻找他的。虽然只是简单地说了一下，但其中的艰难，格兰特船长一想便知。

对于爵士和海伦夫人，以及船上所有的人，格兰特船长都觉得自己背负了很大的人情债。从爵士到水手，这些人为了寻找他，付出了很多努力，吃了很多的苦。格兰特船长的心头涌现出了无限的感激之情，而这种感激，又通过他坚毅豪爽的性格以及英气勃勃的面孔表现了出来，以至于让全体船上人员都感受到了这种感激，这也让他们觉得，他们之前的辛苦全都值得。

不要说其他人，就是生性淡漠的少校，也热泪盈眶起来。至于感性

的巴嘉勒尔，则像个孩子一样，呜呜地哭了起来。

像一切爱女儿的父亲一样，格兰特看着女儿玛丽小姐，觉得她是那么漂亮妩媚。他忍不住说了出来，并要海伦夫人评论，仿佛要告诉大家，他不是被疼爱蒙蔽了双眼，他说的都是事实。

随后，他又把脸转向儿子罗伯尔。

“你们看，他长得多高，多帅，简直就是个大人。”他乐不可支，怎么看儿子都看不够。

说完，他将两个孩子重又搂到胸前，拼命地吻着，怎么吻都吻不够，仿佛要把两年离别所积蓄的思念全都用亲吻抒发出来。

罗伯尔先向父亲介绍了船上所有的人，这个懂事的孩子用不同的介绍方式介绍不同的人，虽然他介绍的内容，无外乎是“他们每一个人，对我和姐姐都太好了”。在介绍到麦盖尔时，年轻的船长脸红了，在给玛丽的父亲回话时，他的声音都在发抖。

还是海伦夫人为他解了围，说起了旅行过程中的经历给格兰特船长听，格兰特船长为自己拥有这么能干、懂事的儿女而自豪。当知道罗伯尔在此次旅行中屡次建功时，他意识到，这个可爱的孩子已经用自己的方式，向爵士这些人偿还人情债了。而在麦盖尔谈起玛丽时，他也没有丝毫吝啬自己的溢美之词。

海伦夫人巧妙地插了几句话，格兰特船长意识到了什么，他将女儿的手放到了英俊的麦盖尔手里，然后回头对爵士和海伦夫人说：“爵士、夫人，我们为我们的孩子祝福吧！”

格兰特船长感激的话都说完了，其他人想表达的感情也都说了，最

后，爵士把阿埃童的事告诉了格兰特船长。格兰特船长证实，阿埃童确实是在大洋洲被他赶下船的。

“这个人很聪明，做事也敢作敢为，只是贪欲将他引向了犯罪的道路。希望他能反省、忏悔，以后做个好人。”格兰特船长说。

在将阿埃童送到岛上之前，格兰特船长决定在他的岛上招待一下这些朋友，他请大家去参加他的板屋，还希望大家能坐在那里，像鲁滨孙一样吃一餐饭。这个提议获得了大家的欢呼。而最急着想去看格兰特船长在岛上生活的地方的是他的一双儿女，他们知道，在这个地方，父亲一定因为想念他们，流了很多的眼泪。

艇子下水了，格兰特船长及他的一双儿女、爵士夫妇、少校、麦盖尔和巴嘉勒尔等，再一次去了小岛。

只用了几个小时，他们便走遍了格兰特船长的这片领土。这座小岛准确来说，仅仅是从海底升起的一座大山的山顶，山顶上有一小片平地，平地上到处是雪花岩岩石和火山残余物。地壳形成时，山峰在地下火的影响下，从太平洋深处冒了出来，然后形成了物化土，随即又被植物占领了这片土地。

同时，一些过往的捕鲸船将很多猪、羊等牲畜载到了岛上，并在这里繁衍生殖。此后，这太平洋的孤岛上便有了动物、植物和矿物。

而当“大不列颠号”的遇难者来到这里后，也就开始了人类劳动，这片土地也便被开垦出来。在两年半的时间里，格兰特船长和两名水手，让这个荒岛变了样，他们种植了好几亩地，种了很多蔬菜。

众人来到了格兰特船长所住的地方，屋子建在一棵胶树的下面，胶

树的叶子绿油油的。屋子的窗户面临大海，从窗户里能看到太阳光照射下的大海在闪闪发光。格兰特船长让人将桌子摆在了茂密的树荫下，大家就座后，很快就有一只山羊腿、一些纳儿豆粉做的面包、几碗奶、两三棵野菊苣和一些清凉的水端了上来。虽然只是一些简单的食物，但坐在这样的环境下进餐，却是别有一番风味，更有了世外桃源的感觉。

这样的生活，是巴嘉勒尔所向往的，他高兴地嚷嚷着：“真是便宜阿埃童那家伙了，这个小岛简直就是天堂嘛。”

“没错，这是个天堂。当我们三个受难者来到这里后，真是太幸运了。只恨这岛小了一些，如果是个宽阔的岛屿，不是海浪冲击的小缺口，而是一个大港湾的话，那就更好了。”

“为什么觉得小了不好呢，船长？”爵士问。

“如果是个大岛，那么就可以做一些基础建设，让苏格兰人在太平洋上有移民区了。”

“船长，您还没有放弃这个念头吗？您的这个想法，真是太伟大了，在我们国家很有影响力。”

“我不会放弃的，爵士。当上帝借您之手，将我救出去后，其实就是为了让我完成这个事业。我古老的苏格兰同胞，所有受苦受难的人，我们应该有一片属于自己的地方，以便逃离贫困。我亲爱的国家应该在这一地带拥有属于自己的移民区，完全属于自己的居住地，这样我们就能在这里享受欧洲享受不到的独立和幸福了。”

“说得太好了，格兰特船长，这个计划太好了，真是个伟大的计划。不过这个岛……”海伦夫人还没说完，格兰特船长便说：“这个岛肯

定不行，夫人！这里只是一些岩石，养活几个人还可以，可我们需要的是大片的拥有丰富资源的地方，而那个地方，只有南非才有。”

“很好！船长，您的愿望很美好，您想找的那样一片土地，我们会和你一起去找的，美好的前途一定属于我们。”爵士大声说。

就这样，格兰特船长和爵士的手紧紧地握在了一起，仿佛这一握就是给对方的一个承诺。

之后，在这座小岛上，在这座小屋里，大家最迫切想知道的就是“大不列颠号”上遇难的三个人在两年半的时间里，是怎么生活的。当然，格兰特船长很快就满足了他们这个愿望。

“我们的故事和一切来到荒岛过鲁滨孙生活的人的故事一样。来到这里后，根本没有人可依靠，能依靠的只有上帝和自己。我们必须和大自然作斗争，为自己争取生存环境和资源。至于是怎么来到这里的，还要说1862年6月26日到27日夜里发生的事。那时候，经历了6天大风暴的‘大不列颠号’被风浪打到了这里，触到了这个岛的岩石上。这个岛宽约3公里，长大概8公里，岛里有30来棵树，当然还有一些草场和清水泉。幸好这个清水泉一年四季都不会干涸。所以当我带着幸存的两名水手来到这里后，并没有感到绝望，我的两位患难朋友包柏和乔艾，我们三个人团结起来，共创家园。开始的时候，我们就和我们的榜样——笛福作品中的鲁滨孙一样，将船上残存的工具、火药、枪械，以及宝贵的种子带上了岛。刚刚开始的时候确实很辛苦，不过很快，打猎和打鱼就能为我们提供稳定的食物了。

“由于岛内的羊很多，沿岸还有很多水生动物，所以我们暂时不用担心生活，同时，生活也慢慢规律起来。

“好在我们从船上抢救了一些测量工具，很快就知道了我们所处的位置。不过这个结果让我们很沮丧，因为这个小岛处在任何航线之外，所以不可能有船过来搭救我们，除非有船只遇到了意外，来到了这里。在得知这种情况后，我不敢再奢望能与亲人见面，所以一边思念着亲人，一边勇敢地接受着这个考验。我们开始劳动，很快，马铃薯、菊苣、酸模等植物就种植到了岛上，并开始调剂着我们的日常生活。

“之后，还有其他一些蔬菜进入到了我们的生活当中。同时，我们还捕到了几只野羊，并将它们驯服，之后又有了羊奶和奶油。当然，那干河沟里长出的纳儿豆也成了我们做营养面包的食材，所以在生活上，我们还算富足。

“当然，我们所住的屋子就是用‘大不列颠号’的旧料造成的，屋顶涂上了柏油的帆布，正是因为有了它，我们才顺利度过了多雨的季节。在这个小屋里，我们讨论了很多事情，也做了很多计划。

“我也曾想用破船板造一只小艇，然后往有陆地的地方跑。不过就算是最近的陆地——帕摩图群岛离这个岛也有800公里。这样一个漫长的航程，一只小艇是不可能做到的。所以我放弃了这个计划，只能等机会，等着有人来救我们。

“那时候，我真想念我可怜的孩子们啊！我无数次站在岸边的岩石上，等候过往的船只。在我们沦落到此的这段时期，仅仅有两三只帆船出现过，不过很快就没影子了。两年半的时间就这么过去了，我们甚至都觉得没什么希望了，不过我们还是没有失望。

“最终，就在昨天，在我爬到岛的最高峰时，看到有轻烟在岛的西南方向飘荡。接着那烟慢慢大了起来，不一会儿，有船出现在了我们的视

线中，并且向我们这个方向驶来。不过小岛没有可停泊的地方，这船会不会避开小岛开走呢？这又是我所担心的。

“那真是一种煎熬，昨天，我的心差点从胸膛里蹦出来。我的两个同伴在岛的另一座山峰上点起了火，不过游船并没有任何回应。可看到希望就在眼前，难道我们就要这么失去吗？我没有再迟疑，怕船在夜里绕过这个岛开走，所以下了海，往船那里游。那时候，希望占据了我的内心，给我补充了能量。所以我以超人的毅力与波浪作着斗争，在我渐渐接近游船，已经不到30米时，船却掉头了。于是我发出了失望的呼救。当时，只有我的两个孩子听到了，其实那不是他们的幻觉。后来，我只能重新回到海岸。疲惫加上焦急，弄得我浑身瘫软，只能算个半死的人了，是我的两个同伴把我拉上了岸。我们在岛上就这么过了难熬的一夜！

“本以为我们就会被永远抛弃了，谁知天一亮，我们竟然看见船慢慢地荡过来了。还看见你们的艇在下海。我们太激动了，因为我们得救了。更让我激动的是，天啊！竟然是我的两个孩子，我两个亲爱的孩子就出现在我的面前，并且伸开双臂要拥抱我。”

格兰特船长的讲述最终在他拥吻玛丽和罗伯尔中结束了。直到此时，格兰特船长才知道，他们之所以获救，是因为那三张纸条。他是在遇难8天后，写了三张纸条，装在瓶子里让它随着海浪漂流的。

不过，在格兰特船长讲述他的经过时，巴嘉勒尔又在想什么呢？

这位可爱的地理学家，正将那三张纸条上的文字在脑海里反复回想，他把原本设想的三种解释重又想了一遍，好像全都错了。那么，那三张被腐蚀的纸条上，到底写着什么呢？又是什么意思呢？他按捺不住

了，抓起格兰特船长的手说：“船长，您现在是否能告诉我们，您那纸条上写的是什么呢？”

见巴嘉勒尔提出这个问题，所有人的好奇心全都被吊了起来，9个月来都没有猜出的哑谜，想必现在可以得到答案了。

“船长，那三张纸条上的文字，您还记得吗？”巴嘉勒尔又问。

“当然记得。我没有一天不去想它，那可是我们唯一的希望！”

“船长，那几句话是什么意思？我们猜来猜去，实在是猜不出来。”爵士说。

“我马上就告诉大家！不过你们要知道，为了增加获救机会，我在瓶子里装了三张用不同文字写成的纸条，大家想知道哪个纸条上的内容呢？”格兰特船长问。

“什么？三张纸条上的内容都不一样？”巴嘉勒尔又叫了起来。

“大概意思是一样的，只是地名不同。”

“那么还是先说法文写的吧。那张保存得相对比较完整，我们每次解释纸条上的内容，都以它为基础。”爵士说。

“爵士，用法文写的是这样的：1862年6月27日，三桅船‘大不列颠号’，籍隶格拉斯哥港，沉没在离巴塔哥尼亚800公里的南半球海面。因为急求登陆，两名水手及船长格兰特爬上了岱波岛。”

巴嘉勒尔不由自主地哼了一声。

“不幸长久成为蛮荒绝地之人。兹特抛下此文件于经153°、纬37°11’

处。务乞速予救援，否则必死于此！”

格兰特船长说完后，巴嘉勒尔忍不住了，大声说：“怎么是岱波岛？不是玛丽雅泰莱萨岛吗？”

“没错，巴嘉勒尔先生，这个岛在英国地图上是玛丽雅泰莱萨岛，但在法国地图上却是岱波岛呀！”

格兰特船长的话音刚落，巴嘉勒尔的肩膀上就挨了重重一拳，打得巴嘉勒尔的身子猛地往下一弯。他回过头，看见是少校。一向沉稳老道的少校，这次看来破例了。

“真是个好地理学家啊！”少校轻蔑地说。

巴嘉勒尔对少校打在他肩上的那一拳并没什么感觉，但在地理学上出现问题，却给了他比那一拳还重的打击。他低下头去。

因为对那张纸条，他就像格兰特船长说的那样，已经差不多知道原文了。那些残缺模糊的字，他也已经猜出来了，像巴塔哥尼亚、澳大利亚、新西兰，这些名字虽然先后在脑子里蹦出，但好像都是正确的。其他的也好像都知道原义了，可就是“abor”让他糊涂了。他将它解释成了“达于”（aborder），实际上它是法文地名“岱波岛”（tabor），这个地方，就是“大不列颠号”遇难后避难的地方啊。当然，这个错误在所难免，因为“邓肯号”上的地图都写着“玛丽雅泰莱萨岛”。

“即使这样，我也不能忘记一岛两名的事啊。这是一个不可原谅的错误，我不配做地理学会的秘书，我的脸都被丢尽了。”巴嘉勒尔抓着他的头发嚷嚷着。

“巴嘉勒尔先生，您不需要这么难过的。”海伦夫人安慰他。

“不！夫人！我真是太蠢了，就像一头蠢驴一样蠢。”

“是的，还比不上头玩杂技的驴。”少校开玩笑似的替他骂了一句，算是安慰他。

吃完饭后，格兰特船长把那间他们住了两年多的房子整理好了，他不准备带走任何东西，因为这些东西还要留给阿埃童，让一个恶人享受善良人创造的财富。

回到船上后，爵士打算开船，也顺便让人送阿埃童下水。阿埃童站在楼舱口，站在格兰特船长的面前。

“阿埃童，咱们又见面了。”

“船长，是您啊！很好！见您一切都好，我很高兴。”阿埃童平静地说，他并没有表现出见到格兰特船长的惊讶。

“阿埃童，当初将你赶到有人居住的地方，反而害了你！”

“好像是这样的，船长！”

“现在你要替我住这个无人居住的荒岛了，希望老天能答应你的忏悔！”

“但愿是这样！”阿埃童的语调依然平和。

爵士看着阿埃童。

“把你丢在这个荒岛的决定，你还坚持吗，阿埃童？”

“是的，爵士！”

“这个岱波岛合你的意吗？”

“非常合我的意！”

“好的！阿埃童，听我一句话，这里离任何陆地都很远，你和你的手下是不可能取得联系的，因为奇迹毕竟很难出现。所以‘邓肯号’放你在这个岛上，你逃不掉。不过你不会和格兰特船长在这里的两年多那样，既无人知道，也无人救援，虽然你不配被别人记着，但我们会记着你的，我们知道你在什么地方，我知道该在什么时候，什么地方来找你，我永远也不会忘。”爵士说。

“愿上帝保佑您！”阿埃童说得很简洁。

这也是爵士和阿埃童的最后谈话。之后，阿埃童下了游船，上了小艇。

麦盖尔又让人给他送了几箱干粮、工具、武器和若干弹药。所以，阿埃童在这个岛上利用劳动来改造自己，不仅什么都不缺，而且连书籍都有。

到了分别的时候，大家全都站在了甲板上。有几个人心里很难过，比如玛丽小姐和海伦夫人。

“一定要这样吗？一定要把他丢在这里？”海伦夫人问爵士。

“是的！海伦，在这里是为了让他改过自新。”

小艇在麦盖尔的指挥下，离开了大船。站在艇子上的阿埃童，不动

声色地摘下头上的帽子，给大家庄重地行了个礼。

爵士也脱了帽子，全体船员都脱下了帽子，他们像是表达着对一个临死之人的告别。就这样，小艇在一片沉默中离开了。

到了陆地，阿埃童走向沙滩，小艇又回到了大船。

此时已经是下午4点钟了，大家全都在楼舱顶上看着他，见他双臂环抱，一动不动，像座石像一样矗立在岩石上，看着“邓肯号”。

“我们走吗，爵士？”麦盖尔问。

“走吧，约翰！”爵士急促地说，掩饰着内心的难过。

“开船！”麦盖尔对开船的水手喊道。

汽管里响起了蒸汽声，波浪被螺旋桨打着，发出了很大的响声。晚上8点钟的时候，岱波岛上的最后几座山峰也在夜幕中消失不见了。

第五十三章 结局

在“邓肯号”离开岱波岛的第11天，也就是3月18日，他们看见了美洲海岸，并在第二天停在了塔尔卡瓦诺湾。

在航行了5个月后，他们回来了。在这5个月里，他们一直严格遵循着南纬37度线，并环绕地球一周。这值得纪念的一次旅行，在英国旅行史上还是第一次。他们穿过了智利、潘帕区、阿根廷共和国……经过了大西洋、达昆雅群岛、印度洋、阿姆斯特丹群岛、澳大利亚、岱波岛……然后穿过了太平洋。

当然，他们的一切努力都没有白费，因为他们找回了“大不列颠号”的遇难船员，并把他们带了回来。

更重要的是，那些响应爵士号召，去寻找遇难者的，忠诚而热心的苏格兰人，一个也不缺，完好无损地回来了，回到了他们古老的苏格兰。这次远征，很符合古代史上的一场“勇敢人的战争”。

此时，“邓肯号”的燃料和其他供养也都补充完毕，他们即将沿着巴塔哥尼亚的海岸，绕过合恩角，驶进大西洋。

没有比这更顺利的航行了，因为这只船里装载着满满的幸福。船上已经没有什么秘密了，连麦盖尔对玛丽的爱慕之情也已经成了公开的事。不过，还有一件事成了少校心里的神秘事件，那就是巴嘉勒尔一直将衣服裹得紧紧的，甚至连领带都打得很严，围巾更是围得密不透风，甚至围到了耳根处。

少校一直心存疑虑，想要看个究竟。不过，不管他怎么盘问，用什么方法旁敲侧击，甚至是诈巴嘉勒尔，巴嘉勒尔始终什么都不说。而即使当“邓肯号”穿过赤道线，甲板上的温度达到了50度高温时，他依然把衣服裹得严严的，连一个扣子都不松。

“该不是马虎地将这里当成严寒的圣彼得堡了吧！”见巴嘉勒尔裹着一件大衣，像是很冷的样子，少校开玩笑道。

5月9日，也就是在船离开塔卡瓦诺湾的50天之后，麦盖尔看到了克利尔角的灯火。“邓肯号”驶进了圣乔治海峡，并穿过爱尔兰海，转过克莱德湾，于11点的时候停在了丹巴顿。

下午两点的时候，船上的所有人在高地人的热情欢迎中进入了麦凯莫府。

当我们看到这里的时候，是不是会觉得很多事情都是注定了的呢？比如格兰特船长和他的两名水手的得救是注定了的；麦盖尔和玛丽之间产生爱慕，最终在古老的圣迈哥教堂里举行婚礼也是注定的。因为9个月前，那位曾为格兰特船长及遇难船员祈祷的穆尔多牧师最后又为格兰特船长及他的救命恩人送去了祝福；而将来，罗伯尔也会像他的父亲、自己的姐夫一样做个海员，甚至还要在爵士的大力支持下，继续格兰特船长未完的伟大事业……这一切，都像是注定的。

一切都很圆满，唯有巴嘉勒尔，他不可能一辈子不结婚，而他的婚姻，是否也是注定了的呢？也许早就注定了。因为这位博学有趣的地理学家，虽然做了一番英雄，被人传诵，但同时他那马虎的毛病也传得尽人皆知。很多人都想见他，都来邀请他参加一些社交活动，忙得他不可开交。

就在这种情况下，有位30岁的可爱的小姐看上了他，并且愿意和他结婚。这位小姐就是少校的妹妹，一位脾气有些古怪，但却美丽善良的阿汝贝娜，她爱上了同样有着古怪性格的巴嘉勒尔。

虽然这位想要嫁给巴嘉勒尔的小姐拥有上百万法郎的陪嫁，但却始终没有因为这点而自傲。

巴嘉勒尔虽然也垂青阿汝贝娜小姐，但却并不主动。

于是，少校决定撮合他们，他甚至告诉巴嘉勒尔，他可以再做一次粗心大意的事，那就是结婚。

巴嘉勒尔还是犹豫不决，很是奇怪，怎么都不愿意说出“好”字。

“是不是你不喜欢阿汝贝娜小姐？”少校问他。

“没有！少校！她多可爱呀！她实在是太可爱了！不过说实话，我情愿她不可爱，甚至希望她有一些缺陷。”巴嘉勒尔慌忙解释说。

“如果是这样，那你尽可以放心，她并不完美，她有很多缺点，即使再完美的女人，都是有缺点的，所以巴嘉勒尔，你这是答应了？”

“我不敢答应！”

“到底是怎么回事，我亲爱的朋友？为什么老是这么犹豫不决？”

“是我配不上阿汝贝娜小姐！”巴嘉勒尔无数次地说。

可为什么配不上，他依然不说。

终于有一天，巴嘉勒尔在被少校逼得走投无路的情况下，说出了实

话。他将自己身上的一个“缺陷”告诉了少校，这个“缺陷”非常特别，如果他犯了法，警察抓他的话，肯定能很快从这个“缺陷”上找到他。

“就为这个呀！”少校大叫道。

“就是这个原因。”巴嘉勒尔认真地说。

“这又有什么关系呢，我亲爱的朋友？”

“你真觉得没关系吗？”

“当然没关系，不仅没关系，反倒会因为这独特的一面而更迷人呢。这样一来，你也就成了阿汝贝娜梦想中最独特的那个人了。”

少校一本正经地说着，丝毫没有笑，这让巴嘉勒尔心里很忐忑。

之后，少校又去找了阿汝贝娜小姐，仅仅用了很少的时间就谈好了。15天后，婚礼在麦凯莫府的小教堂举行，新郎巴嘉勒尔打扮得漂漂亮亮的，迎接貌若天仙的新娘阿汝贝娜。当然，这天，巴嘉勒尔的衣扣仍然扣得严严实实。

原本巴嘉勒尔的这个秘密，是一辈子都不会有人知道的，当然只要阿汝贝娜不说。不过，少校告诉了爵士，爵士又告诉了海伦夫人，海伦夫人又告诉了麦盖尔太太，也就是玛丽。最后，这件事又传到了奥比尔太太的耳朵里，之后，这件事便传开了。

原来，巴嘉勒尔在毛利人家里做俘虏的时候，他的身体上被毛利人刺上了花纹。这个花纹并不是刺了一点点，而是从脚跟一直刺到了肩膀，而且还在他的胸前刺了一只大几维鸟，几维鸟张着两只大翅膀，嘴巴啄的地方正是他的心脏所在处。

这件被刺花的事，也就成了巴嘉勒尔在这次伟大旅行中最难堪，最难受的一件事了，而且也成了他一生的刺，这件事让他从此不再原谅新西兰。正因为如此，虽然大家都劝他，他也想念自己的国家，但他却再也不愿意回法国了，他怕地理学会有个刺过花纹的秘书的事成为新闻事件，让学会成为整个社会的笑柄。

当然，对于格兰特船长，当他重回祖国后，全苏格兰人都欢迎他。他的回家也成了全民族的一件大喜事。他，自然成了在苏格兰家喻户晓的一个人。

格兰特船长的儿子罗伯尔，果真也像他一样，成了一名水手，并在爵士的帮助下，为实现在太平洋建立一个苏格兰移民区而努力奋斗……



国家教育部推荐读物
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海底两万里

〔法〕凡尔纳◎著
凯 茜·译

“现代科学幻想小说之父”的传世之作
畅销不衰的永恒经典
带你畅游绚丽神奇的海底世界
带你领略美丽的海洋风光

北方文艺出版社

目录

[海底两万里](#)

[第一部](#)

[第一章 传说中的海怪](#)

[第二章 肯定与否定](#)

[第三章 先生，听您的](#)

[第四章 尼德·兰](#)

[第五章 冒险行动](#)

[第六章 全速前进](#)

[第七章 种类不明的鲸鱼](#)

[第八章 动中之动](#)

[第九章 尼德·兰愤怒了](#)

[第十章 水中人](#)

[第十一章 “鹦鹉螺”号](#)

[第十二章 电主宰一切](#)

[第十三章 一连串数字](#)

[第十四章 黑水流](#)

[第十五章 一封邀请书](#)

[第十六章 徜徉在海底平原](#)

[第十七章 海底森林](#)

[第十八章 太平洋下四千里](#)

[第十九章 万尼科罗群岛](#)

[第二十章 托列斯海峡](#)

[第二十一章 两日陆地生存](#)

[第二十二章 尼摩船长的手雷](#)

[第二十三章 强制入睡](#)

[第二十四章 珊瑚王国](#)

[第二部](#)

[第一章 印度洋](#)

[第二章 尼摩船长的新建议](#)

[第三章 价值连城的珍珠](#)

[第四章 红海](#)

[第五章 阿拉伯海底地道](#)

[第六章 希腊群岛](#)

[第七章 地中海两日](#)

[第八章 维哥湾](#)

[第九章 沉没的大陆](#)

[第十章 海底煤坑](#)
[第十一章 萨尔加斯海](#)
[第十二章 大头鲸和长须鲸](#)
[第十三章 冰山](#)
[第十四章 南极](#)
[第十五章 意外还是偶然](#)
[第十六章 缺少空气](#)
[第十七章 从合恩角到亚马孙河](#)
[第十八章 章鱼](#)
[第十九章 大西洋暖流](#)
[第二十章 北纬47度24分、西经17度28分](#)
[第二十一章 屠杀场](#)
[第二十二章 尼摩船长的最后几句话](#)
[第二十三章 总结](#)

版权信息

书名：海底两万里

作者：(法) 儒勒·凡尔纳著；凯茜译

出版方：北方文艺出版社

出版时间：2016.8.10

ISBN：9787531736769

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海底两万里

第一部

第一章 传说中的海怪

对于生活在1866年的人们来说，一定都记得那件发生在海上的，离奇得难以解释的怪事。当时，各种各样的传闻在沿海居民中间蔓延着，我们没有必要去一一考证，但有一点可以确定，那就是整件事情受到了欧美进出口商人、船主和各国海军官员的关注。

事情源于一只巨大的海怪，它酷似鲸鱼，但又不同于鲸鱼，体积比鲸鱼大很多，行动比鲸鱼又快得多。一些航海日志是这样记录这只海怪的：这个庞然大物很长，形状跟纺锤相似，有时会发出磷光。即使是居维叶¹、拉塞佩德²、杜莫雷尔³、卡特勒法热⁴这样的生物学家，也说不出这是一种什么生物。正是这个无法确定种类的怪物，在充满好奇心的人们中间引起了轩然大波。

最先发现这个怪物的，是加尔各答市布纳希汽船公司的“加瓦纳·喜金孙”号。1866年7月20日，巴克船长驾驶着“加瓦纳·喜金孙”号行驶在澳大利亚海岸东五英里的海域，突然，他发现了一座“暗礁”，就在他要测定“暗礁”的位置时，竟然发现这座暗礁喷出了15米高的水柱。

事情过去了三天，西印度-太平洋汽船公司的“克利斯托巴尔哥郎”号在太平洋上遇到了同样的事情。也就是说，海怪从澳大利亚海岸游到了太平洋海岸只用了三天。

1866年8月4日，国营轮船公司的“海尔维地亚”号和皇家邮船公司的“山农”号，在距离上面说的海域两千里的美国和欧洲之间的大西洋海面上相遇了，他们同样看到了那个大怪物。如果以两条船为参照物，那只怪物比二者的总长还要长，足足有106米。要知道，那些经常出没在阿留申群岛的大个鲸鱼也不过五六十米。

关于海怪的消息接连不断地传来。连“贝雷尔”号、茵曼轮船公司的“约迪纳”号、法国二级军舰“诺曼底”号、“克利德爵士”号也声称遇到了同样的事情。关于海怪的传说越来越离谱，一些浮躁国家的居民以此作为茶余饭后的谈资。唯一不同的是英国、美国和德国，它们是以科学的精神来对待此事。

信息的传播速度超乎了人的想象，在很短的时间内，连普通人家都知道了海怪的事情。咖啡馆里、舞台上、报刊上，到处充斥着关于海怪的奇闻。一些不负责任的媒体描述得更为离谱，他们认定海怪的触须可以缠住一只载重五百吨的船，并把它拖到海底下去。为了让自己的观点更加可信，他们甚至搬出了亚里士多德、普林尼。更有的人用庞特匹丹的挪威童话、保罗·艾吉德的记述，以及哈林顿的报告来佐证自己是正确的。哈林顿说自己在1857年的时候在“伽斯提罗”号上看见过一种只在“立宪”号到过的海域才能看见的巨蛇。

这样的社会环境造就了一批相信者和怀疑者，他们在学术团体和科学报刊上无休止地争论着。亢奋的人们热衷于海怪的问题，这种氛围甚至席卷了文坛，一些新闻记者和文人也加入论战。当然，这种争执不仅仅局限于笔战，一些态度傲慢的家伙甚至为此付出了血的代价，哪怕只是留了两三滴血。

争论持续了6个月，始终分不出胜负，公说公有理，婆说婆有理。

在这场论战中，巴西地理学院、柏林皇家科学院、不列颠学术联合会或华盛顿斯密孙学院发表的权威论文，被当时流行的小报批评得一无是处，乃至《印度群岛报》、摩亚诺神父的《宇宙》杂志、皮德曼的《消息报》刊登的内容和法国及其他各国大报刊的科学新闻都不能幸免。林奈⁵的“大自然不制造蠢东西”的言论被引用的频率非常高，这些“有才”的作家故意曲解他的意思，作为自己言论的佐证。他们假惺惺地恳求大家信奉大自然，不要去相信大怪鱼、大海蛇、“莫比·狄克”等等人们疯狂臆造出来的怪物的存在。

终于，结束论战的人物出现了，一个以尖刻的讽刺著称的颇受大家欢迎的编辑先生发表了一篇包括唯物主义基本范畴和基本原理的文章，用马克思主义哲学消灭了那个怪物。他成了另外一个希波吕忒⁶，在一片和谐的氛围中消灭了那个怪物。人们美其名曰——机智战胜了科学。

就这样，所有的传言都淹没在1867年的年初，人们都相信，传言不会复活了。但人们的结论似乎下得太早了，一系列新的事件再次出现。一个会移动的，行踪诡异的小岛、岩石或者说是暗礁取代了怪物，成为人们热议的新话题。这与那些科学问题不同，这是实实在在会给人们带来灾难的，因此，事情开始朝着另一个方向发展。

1867年8月5日，在一个任何地图都没有标注的地方突然冒出了一座岩石，而蒙特利奥航海公司的“摩拉维安”号恰好撞上了它。当时，“摩拉维安”号刚好在夜间驶到北纬27度30分、西经72度15分，在风力的助航和400匹马力发动机的推动下，船的平均速度达到了每小时13海里。幸好船身的质地比较坚固，才使船上236名加拿大乘客幸免于难。

据亲历者描述，事故发生在早晨5点左右天刚破晓的时候。船上值班的海员们立即跑到船的后部，十分细心地观察着海面。除了一个600

多米宽的大漩涡以外，海面上没有任何声息。按照习惯，他们仔细地将事故发生的地点记录下来。然而，船究竟是撞上了暗礁还是撞上了一艘沉没的船，谁都无法给出答案。本着实事求是的原则，到达目的地后，船员们全面检查了船底，才发现船的龙骨断裂了。

如果不是三星期后再次发生了同样的事，也许这件事就已经被人们淡忘了。1867年8月26日，在北纬27度30分、西经72度15分的地方再次发生了撞船事件，而且出事的是一艘非常有影响力的船。

从只有一艘400马力、载重1162吨的明轮木船的公司，到拥有4艘650匹马力、载重1820吨的船，最后发展到拥有12艘船（8艘明轮、4艘暗轮）的船舶公司，格那尔这一名字无人不知，无人不晓。1840年，他就开辟了从利物浦到哈利法克斯²的航线。到1867年，公司已经成为拥有“阿拉伯”号、“波斯”号、“中国”号、“司格图亚”号、“爪哇”号、“俄罗斯”号等多种品牌船舶的知名企业。

对当时的海运业来说，格那尔的地位是无人可比的。据著名实证主义者斯宾塞记载，格那尔公司的船在大西洋上航行了2000次，每一次都准时到达目的地，从不延迟，不会遗失一封信、落下一个乘客。可以说，这家船舶公司的规范管理让它获得了丰厚的收益，尽管法国的海运公司也曾试过跟它抢生意，但总是以失败告终，因为人们信赖格那尔公司，愿意搭乘它的船。对于所有的乘客而言，选择格那尔公司已经成为一种习惯，因此，格那尔公司出现事故，在人们当中引起了很大的反响。

有同样遭遇的还有“司格图亚”号。1867年4月13日，在顺风顺水的海面上，“司格图亚”号以每小时13海里半的速度行驶在西经15度12分、北纬45度37分的海面上。当时它的水下深度是6.7米，排水量是6685立

方米。

撞击发生在下午4点16分，“司格图亚”号船尾、左舷机轮后面一点的地方发生了轻微的撞击。由于船上的乘客正在大厅中吃点心，大家并没有注意到轻微的撞击，后来，管船舱的海员跑到甲板上大喊“船要沉了！”，这才引起人们的注意。起初，旅客们十分惊慌，在船长安德生的安抚下，人们才渐渐平静下来。安德生向大家保证，“司格图亚”号一定能保证大家的安全，因为“司格图亚”号的防水板有七大间，一两个小漏洞不会影响船的正常行驶。

经过检测，安德生船长确定第五间防水板被海水浸入了，而且漏洞相当大。幸运的是这里没有蒸汽炉，不会导致炉火熄灭。

潜水员奉安德生船长的命令下水检查船身的损坏情况，他们发现，船底有一个长两米的大洞，根本无法堵住，船只能继续航行。当时，“司格图亚”号距离克利亚峡还有300海里。这300海里足足行驶了三天，利物浦的人们无不为之捏了把汗。

上岸后，工程师们将“司格图亚”号架了起来，他们亲眼见证了船身吃水线下两米半的地方，被划出了一个整齐的等边三角形的缺口。从缺口的形状来看，破坏船身的利器一定不是钢铁质地的，因为钢铁质地的利器在划破船身后很难转身后退。

舆论再次将这次事件推上了风口浪尖。转眼间，这个怪物就背负了很多原因不明的航海事故，它成了罪大恶极的代名词。据不完全统计，每年航海事故的发生数为3000起左右，查不出原因的有200起，毫无疑问，人们将所有的责任都推到了这个怪物身上。

不管这样的揣测科不科学，有一点是可以确定的，五大洲的海上交

通陷入了紧急时刻，人们迫不及待地要消灭这个可怕的海怪。

[1](#)法国动物学家，比较解剖学和古生物学的奠基人。

[2](#)法国博物学家，最早描述了大西洋蓝枪鱼。

[3](#)法国动物学家。

[4](#)法国博物学家。

[5](#)瑞典博物学家，动植物双名命名法的创立者。

[6](#)希腊神话中的人物，传说是亚马孙部落的女王，她好战英勇，是战神阿瑞斯的女儿。

[7](#)加拿大新斯科舍省省会和最大城市，大西洋沿岸诸省中最大港口城市，是世界上第二大的自然深水港。

第二章 肯定与否定

时任巴黎自然科学博物馆副教授的我，被法国政府派去内布拉斯加州参加为期6个月的科学考察。考察完成后，我正准备带着丰硕的考察成果从美国内布拉斯加州的贫瘠地区返回。当时，距离离开还有一个多月，我想利用短暂的逗留时间整理各种标本，恰好在这时，传来了发生这些事故的消息。

对于人们热议的话题，我并不陌生，而且试图得出自己的结论。我将美国和欧洲的各种报刊研究了很久，始终无法得出确定的答案。但有

一点我从不怀疑，那就是这件事绝对不是谣传，因为“司格图亚”号的裂口足以证明。

纽约的人们对于事故发生的起因有很多种揣测，其他不得而知，但那种认为事故源于浮动的小岛或者不可捉摸的暗礁的观点，毫无可能。因为，除非暗礁被安装了机器，否则，它根本不可能一会儿到达这里、一会儿又到了那里。

同理，它也不可能是一只浮动的船壳或是一只巨大的破船，因为它不可能转移得那么快。

于是，人们得出了两种靠谱的结论，一种认为它是一个力大无比的怪物，另一种认为它是一艘动力十分强大的“潜水艇”。

从当时的情况来看，第二种观点是有一定道理的，在我看来，很有可能是某一国政府为了克制其他国家而制造出这种武器，就像水雷、潜水冲击机一样，这是一种新型的武器。

很快，各国政府纷纷发表声明，说这是事关各国公共利益的事情，各国政府必须要真诚对待，开展全面的调查。然而，在英国，在法国，在俄国，在普鲁士，在西班牙，在意大利，在美国，甚至于在土耳其调查后，均无结果。于是，他们表示，如果是某国政府所为，根本不会这样密不透风，因为每一个国家都会受到敌对势力的监视，根本不可能有这样的机会。所以，第二种结论也被推翻了。

各种揣测、调查并不足以让海怪消失，它再次出现在人们的视野里，于是，各种荒诞不经的传说更加肆无忌惮起来。

由于我出版过一本名为《海底的神秘》的书，在学术界引起了一定

的反响，有很多人将我视为自然科学方面的专家。因此，在我到达纽约后，有很多人来询问我对这件事的意见。

对此，我在大多数情况下都否认这件事的真实性。后来，巴黎自然科学博物馆教授伯艾尔·阿勒纳斯先生被《纽约先锋论坛报》邀约，请他发表对这个问题的意见，于是，我不得不发表自己的看法。在这里，我将摘录一些文字，它们来自于我发表在4月30日《论坛报》上的一篇文章，内容很丰富的文章，内容如下：

“在我排除了很多不可能的猜想以后，我只能承认有一种力量惊人的海洋动物的存在。”

“我们无法认识海底的世界，因为，探测器无法到达22000海里或15000海里的地方。因此，我们无法推测那里生长着什么生物。”

“但是，我们可以用辩证法来考虑这些问题。既然地球上有很多我们不认识的生物，那就存在一种可能，在探测器无法到达的海底生存着一种不被我们所认识的鱼类，在特定的时候，它们也想出来透透气，来海面上玩耍一下，这种想法是说得过去的。”

“从另一个角度来看，如果它是一种我们认识的动物，那么我们就要梳理一下鱼的分类，从而承认一种巨大的独角鲸的存在。”

“根据我们对独角鲸的认识，我们可以确定，海上的那种动物身长比独角鲸长十倍，而且具有自己的攻击武器，它的牙可以刺穿‘司格图亚’号，它的力量可以冲破一只汽船的船壳。”

“生物学家们都知道，独角鲸的牙齿就像一把骨质的剑，像钢铁一样坚硬。这一点是可以确定的，因为有人曾经在鲸鱼身上发现过独角鲸

的牙齿。独角鲸的牙齿可以穿破船底，像利锥穿透木桶那样。在巴黎医学院陈列馆就可以看到一枚独角鲸牙齿，长225厘米，底宽48厘米！”

“因此，在对现有资料进行分析和整理的基础上，我得出结论：是身躯庞大的海麒麟用牙齿撞坏了船只。这样就可以解释这种现象了。当然，这只是猜测，也可能并不准确。”

最后几句话是我为自己留下的一条后路，以保住我作为教授的尊严，同时也避免自己成为美国人的笑柄。实际上，我的本意是承认这个“怪物”的存在的。

我的文章勾起了人们的想象力，得到了一部分人的支持。人性就是这样，总是对神奇怪诞的东西感兴趣，而海洋的存在，给我们留下了足够的空间。相对于陆地而言，海洋为庞大的生物提供了最好的环境。与海洋里庞大的生物比起来，大象、犀牛是那样瘦小。也许海洋里存在着硕大无比的软体动物和看起来叫人害怕的甲壳动物，如100米长的大虾，或200吨重的螃蟹，这也是很正常的。从前，与地质学纪年同期的陆上动物，如四足兽、四手兽、爬虫类以及鸟类，都是按照巨大的模型创造的。经过漫长的岁月，这些巨大的模型逐渐缩小，埋藏在深不可测的海洋底下（因为海洋是稳定的，而地壳是运动的），也许那些庞大的物种都保留在海洋内部？

我必须要停止这些想象，要知道，可怕的现实正朝着我的想象发展。我不得不强调，大家都一致承认有一种神奇的东西存在，但大家所说的这种神奇的东西并不是怪诞的大海蛇，二者截然不同。

然而，这已经不是一个纯粹的科学问题。很多人从利益出发，主张将海上这个可怕的怪物消灭，铲除对交通的隐患，确保船只安全航行。

工商界的报刊《航业商情杂志》就阐述了这样的观点。这种观点得到了很多国家的支持，北美合众国首先发表了声明，表示纽约方面已经组织了清除独角鲸的远征队，同时，装有冲锋角的二级战舰“林肯”号将加入这次行动。各造船厂纷纷为佛勒冈司令官提供便利，帮助装备这艘二级战舰，以便早日加入行动。

怪物似乎得到了消息，之后的两个月，再也没有出现过。有人开玩笑说，这个精灵的家伙肯定是偷听了政府的电话，已有防备，所以不再随便出现。

于是，这个装有强大冲锋角的二级战舰闲置下来，整日无事可做。等待让大家陷入了烦躁，正在这时，大概是7月2日，旧金山轮船公司从加利福尼亚开往上海的一艘汽船“唐比葛”号在太平洋北部的海面上又遭遇了这个东西。

消息传来，人们立刻骚动起来，佛勒冈司令官一刻都不敢耽搁，装上日用品和煤，立刻出发了。海员们都很积极，全部准时到岗，只差生火，加热，解缆了，大家都希望这只船早点出发。

还有3个小时，“林肯”号就要离开博罗克码头了，此时，一封信送到了我的手里，信的内容如下：

地址：纽约第五号路旅馆。

收件人：巴黎自然科学博物馆教授阿勒纳斯先生。

先生：

各国政府都希望您加入“林肯”号远征队，如果您愿意参加，佛勒冈司令官将为您提供一个舱房供您使用。

敬启

海军部长何伯逊

第三章 先生，听您的

在此之前，我还比较抵触谈及海麒麟的事情。在读了这位海军部长的来信后，我突然认识到自己内心的真实想法，于是我改变了主意，我愿意同大家一起将这个捣乱的怪物铲除掉。

此时，我忘了自己刚刚长途跋涉回来，身体是如何疲倦，也忘了要回国看看朋友，看看植物园内小房子里珍贵标本的愿望。此时，我心中只有一个想法，那就是跟大家一起去铲除怪物，因此，我毅然决然地接受了美国政府的邀请。

我还有一些出人意料的想法，我幻想着海麒麟能够将我送上法国的岸边，或者我在欧洲的海域捉到它，并将它的牙齿带回自然科学博物馆。

不管怎样，决定了就不会改变，我一定会去太平洋北部的，哪怕是与回法国南辕北辙，我也要这样做。想到这儿，我急切地叫来了我的仆人葛瑟尔。在我出行的时候，葛瑟尔总是陪伴在我左右。我很喜欢这个生性冷淡、循规蹈矩、勤奋的青年人，他对我也很好。对于生活中的一些突然事件，他总是能泰然处之。他心灵手巧，做什么事都信手拈来。尽管他的名字在方言中是劝告的意思，但他很懂得分寸，别人不问他的

时候，从不轻易发表意见。

俗话说近朱者赤，由于跟植物界的学者接触比较多，葛瑟尔也成了生物专家。他能从门、类、纲、亚纲、目、科、属、亚属、种、变种，一直数到最后的一个类别，熟练得像杂技演员爬梯子一样。分类是他生活的全部，除此以外他什么都不知道。尽管他对分类理论很在行，但由于缺乏实践，我猜他连大头鲸和长须鲸都分不出来。总之，他是个忠诚正直的人。

10年来，葛瑟尔始终跟随在我左右，陪我去各地进行科学考察。他从不计较利益得失，哪怕是旅途再辛苦，只要我需要，他提起行李箱就会随我出发，刚果、中国，随便哪里，他连问都不问。

他的身体很强壮，不过思维倒很简单，思考问题的能力实在不敢恭维。

葛瑟尔今年30岁，我40岁，我们的年龄比例正好是15比20。当然，葛瑟尔也有缺点，就是太过礼貌，每当听见他用第三人称跟我说话时，我就会感到烦闷。

我边准备行李，边喊：“葛瑟尔！”

我很信任葛瑟尔，平时我从来不会问他愿不愿意跟我去旅行，但这次是个例外，不仅因为这次远征时间比较长，而且充满了危险，我觉得自己应该征求葛瑟尔的意见。

“葛瑟尔！”第三次叫出他的名字，我有点不耐烦。

葛瑟尔终于出来了。

“先生，找我什么事？”他走进来问。

“我们两个小时以后出发，你赶紧准备一下。”

“先生，听您的。”葛瑟尔平静地回答。

“立刻，马上。赶快把所有的旅行用品、衣服都放在我的箱子里，不用点数。”

“那先生的标本要怎么处理呢？”葛瑟尔问。

“放在以后整理。”

“那怎么处理先生的那些奇形怪状的动物、植物，大马、大蛇以及其他动物的骨骼呢？”

“暂时寄放在旅馆里。”

“先生的那只活野猪呢？”

“托人在我们离开的时候照顾他，最好将我们的那群动物送回法国去。”

“难道我们不回巴黎？”葛瑟尔问。

我有些迟疑，说：“回是回去，不过要先去一趟别的地方。”

“先生，一定要这么做吗？”

“放松一点，我们搭‘林肯’号出发，只不过是绕个弯而已。”

“就按先生的意思办。”葛瑟尔肯定地回答。

“葛瑟尔，大概你已经听说了关于怪物的事情，就是那条有名的独角鲸。作为《海底的神秘》的作者，我有义务接受这个光荣的任务，同佛勒冈司令一同出发。我知道这次旅行会存在危险，也不知道确切的航程，但是，我相信，与一位老练的船长出发，一定会平安归来的。”

“我愿意跟随先生。”葛瑟尔回答。

“毕竟这是一次危险的旅行，我希望你再仔细考虑一下。”

“先生，听您的。”

葛瑟尔仅用了一刻钟就将箱子整理好了。我从来不用担心他会落下什么，因为凭借他对鸟类和哺乳类动物的分类本领，将衬衫和西服分类简直是小菜一碟。

我们乘坐酒店的电梯来到二楼的大厅。我又步行了几级台阶，来到服务台结账。我拜托朋友将我打包好的动植物标本送回法国，同时，给替我照顾野猪的人留下一笔钱。办完所有的事情后，我和葛瑟尔上了一辆去往34号码头的马车。马车从百老汇路出发，途经团结广场、第四号路、包法利街的十字路口等站，全程只需20法郎。在34号码头，我们将乘坐加士林轮渡到纽约的一个区——博罗克林，它位于东河左岸，距离停泊“林肯”号的码头只有几分钟的路程。在这里，远远就能看见“林肯”号喷出的黑烟。

达到“林肯”号以后，我第一件事就是去找佛勒冈司令。一个水手将我领到船尾，一位看起来气色很好的军官向我伸出了手，他说：“阁下是伯艾尔·阿勒纳斯先生吗？”

“是的，您就是佛勒冈司令吧。”

“是的，教授，舱房已经备好，就等您大驾光临了。”。

对佛勒冈司令的盛情款待我表示了感谢，便跟随海员到了为我准备的舱房，而司令则去准备开船的事情。

作为捕捉新目标的重要装备，“林肯”号有着得天独厚的条件，由于装有高压蒸汽机，“林肯”号内的气压可以增加7个大气压力，因此航行速度很快，平均时速可以达到每小时18.3海里，但要对付那只独角鲸，仍然存在一定危险。“林肯”号内的其他装备也很精良，看起来完全能够完成这次航海任务。而对于我而言，最满意的就是他们为我准备的位于船尾的舱房，我的房门正对着军官们的餐室。

“我们的舱房不错。”我对葛瑟尔说。

“那是当然的，先生，我们的旅途一定会很舒服，就像寄生蟹住在海螺壳中那样。”葛瑟尔回答。

见葛瑟尔正在整理箱子，我便独自一人走上了甲板，参观如何开船。我到达甲板的时候，海员正在解“林肯”号的最后几根铁索。看起来，如果我再晚来一刻钟，就会错过这次惊险的旅行。当然，“林肯”号也会失去一个整个事件的记录者。

佛勒冈船长十分准时，一分钟也不愿意耽搁，他迫不及待地想到达那个神秘的地方。他叫来了船上的工程师，问道：“准备好了吗？”

“准备好了，船长。”工程师答道。

“启程！”佛勒冈船长下达了指令。

机器房迅速收到了开船的指令，轮机人员赶紧让机轮转动起来。蒸

汽涌入半开的机关中，活塞发出了呼呼的响声，推动机轴的杠杆。动力让螺旋桨迅速地搅动海水，“林肯”号就这样踏上了庄严的航程，离开了前来送行的渡轮和汽艇。

好奇的人们挤满了博罗克林码头和纽约的东河沿岸地区，足足有50万人，他们发出的欢呼声响彻天地。人们用手帕向“林肯”号表达着自己的敬意，目送着“林肯”号离开，直到船抵达赫德森河口——纽约城所在的长形半岛的尖端，人群才不情愿地散去。

船的右岸是一排排别墅，当船穿过炮台的时候，上面用鸣礼炮的方式向大船致敬，“林肯”号则以连升三次美国国旗的方式向炮台回礼。渐渐地，船改变了方向，驶进设有浮标的航道。当大船掠过沙洲时，尊享了数千观众的欢呼。

大船出港以后，有一艘渡轮和一艘汽艇相送，直到纽约航路的出口，它们才返航回港。此时已是下午3点。领港人离开大船，踏上了返航的小船。煤转化成动力推动着波浪，晚上8点以后，岛上的灯光渐渐暗了下来，加足了马力的船舶在大西洋上继续驰骋。

第四章 尼德·兰

佛勒冈不仅是一名优秀的船长，也是一名优秀的海员，他与大船非常默契，就像融为一体一样，简直可以说他就是船的灵魂。他从不怀疑独角鲸的存在，因此，不准人在船上讨论。

相信海怪的存在，与信奉宗教大体相同，不是出于理智，完全是出于情感。他发誓，只要那个怪物存在，自己就一定会将它清除出海洋。他对海怪将毫不手软，会像罗德岛¹的骑士杜德尼·德·格那样去消灭骚扰人们正常生活的海怪，也就是说，佛勒冈船长与独角鲸中间，只能有一个胜利者。

长官的意见得到了船上的海员们的赞同，他们用实际行动表示着自己对长官的支持。他们坚信能够消灭海怪，同时制定了各种作战计划，认真地进行海面侦查，而且轮换着到定横木上去值班。哪怕被太阳晒伤，脚被滚烫的甲板烫伤也没有人叫苦，仍然坚持在自己的岗位上。

尽管“林肯”号还没有沾上太平洋的海水，但船员们已经开始幻想胜利的情景，他们幻想着碰到独角鲸，并且用鱼叉解决了它，将它拖到船上。

船一出港，佛勒冈司令就下达了命令，谁第一个报告独角鲸的踪影，就可以得到2000美元的奖金。因此，每个人都嫌自己的眼睛不够用，时刻盯着海面的情况。

至于我，对于独角鲸的事也是亲力亲为，跟大家一样保持着一种迫切的心情。整个船上只有葛瑟尔显得与众不同，他对我们所热衷的事情始终不感兴趣，给船上其他人的热情浇上了一盆冷水。

我要再次强调，佛勒冈船长是一个细心的人，细心到将每一种能制服独角鲸的装备都带在船上，毫无疏漏。如手投的鱼叉、鸟枪的开花弹、用炮发射的铁箭、十分完善的后膛炮，应有尽有。据传，后膛炮的威力很大，可以发出重4公斤的锥形炮弹，射程是16公里。这种大炮是美国制造的，模型曾在1867年的万国博览会中展览过。

除了各种装备精良的武器，船上还有一样法宝，那就是鱼叉手之王尼德·兰。尼德·兰大约40岁，身材伟岸，有6尺多高。他的气质很与众不同，神情庄严，性格暴躁，眼睛炯炯有神，表情非常引人注目。他是叉鱼业的佼佼者，双手非常矫捷，灵敏冷静，大胆机智，至今还没有碰见过对手，除了狡猾的长须鲸和特别聪明的大头鲸，其他鱼类都很难躲过他的鱼叉。

能将他请到船上，绝对是明智之举。因为他耳聪目明，机灵劲儿超过了整个船上的人。我无法用更美好的语言去赞美他，只能说他是船上的望远镜，是一门随时可以发射的大炮。

尽管是加拿大人，尼德·兰对我这个法国人有一种特殊的好感，他很少与其他人接触，我是个例外。我从交谈中得知，尼德·兰的老家在魁北克，那里至今还通行拉伯雷的法国话，当这城市还属于法国的时候，他家里就已经出了一批大胆的打鱼人了。而我不仅对尼德·兰这个人感兴趣，对他说的法国话也很感兴趣。

我和尼德·兰渐渐熟了起来，他开始给我讲他在北极海中打鱼和战斗的故事。那些故事由他讲起来有声有色，就像一部史诗，而他的语气，则像加拿大的荷马²在朗诵着北极的《伊利亚特》³。

之所以这么详细地记录尼德·兰，是因为他是我最好的朋友，我们的友谊是在共同的战斗中建立起来的，因此，我对他的想念难以言喻。

一开始，尼德·兰不太相信独角鲸之类的传说，他是唯一一个与大家意见不统一的人，因此，他尽量避免与大家讨论这件事情，但我一直想让他开口谈这件事。

三个星期后的一个黄昏，我们的船经过南回归线，到达离巴塔戈尼

亚海岸30海里，跟白呷同一纬度的地方，距离麦哲伦海峡不到700海里。再过8天，“林肯”号便要在太平洋的海面上行驶了。

面对神秘的大海，我和尼德·兰一同坐在船尾甲板上，漫无边际地谈论着各种各样的话题，很自然的，我们的话题转向了独角鲸，谈论着遇到独角鲸后的各种可能性。只见尼德·兰一言不发，我充分地利用了这次机会，对他说：“尼德·兰，既然上了船，你怎么会不相信独角鲸的存在呢？原因是什么？”

他没有马上回答，而是摆出他惯有的姿势，用手拍拍他宽大的前额，闭目沉思。过了一会儿，他说：“阿勒纳斯先生，是有原因的。”

“作为一位职业的捕鲸专家，我知道您对海中的巨大哺乳类动物一点都不陌生，按理说，您应该赞同大家的想法，为什么成了唯一一个怀疑这件事的人呢？”

“教授，相信您经常听人说有划过天空的非常特殊的彗星，有住在地球上的太古时代的动物，这只是普通人的想法，天文学家和地质学家是不会承认这么荒唐的看法的。作为一名职业的捕鲸人，我见过很多种鲸鱼，也杀死过很多种鲸鱼。但是，不论鲸鱼如何强大，如何凶狠，即使长了牙，也绝不可能弄坏一艘汽船的钢板。”尼德·兰说。

“尼德·兰，很多权威人士也是这么认为的。”

“教授，如果说鲸鱼能够毁坏一艘木头船，那是有可能的，虽然这样的事我没有亲眼见过。但是，穿透钢板，我真的很难相信，除非我能够亲眼看到，否则我很难相信这件事情。”

“尼德·兰，我们有必要好好讨论讨论这件事……”

“教授，这个没什么可讨论的了，也许只是一条巨大的章鱼。”

“尼德·兰，那是不可能的。所谓章鱼，是一种软体动物，它没有坚硬的肌肉。就算章鱼有那么大的体积，长达五百英尺，它也不能损坏‘司格图亚’号或‘林肯’号这类的船。所以有关海怪的传说，并不是无稽之谈。”

尼德·兰带着讥讽的口气说：“生物学家，这么说您对独角鲸的存在持肯定态度了？”

“是的，尼德·兰，我所说的是有事实根据的。海洋中存在这一种哺乳动物，这一点我深信不疑。它有坚实的躯体，属脊椎动物科，类似于长须鲸、大头鲸或海豚，并且长着锋利的牙齿，破坏力很强。”

“哦！”尼德·兰随意地应了一声，满是不相信的语气。

我又说：“尼德·兰，你要搞清楚，一种动物想要在海洋底部生存，要具备一定的条件，它必须拥有坚强无比的躯体。”

“怎么讲？”尼德·兰问。

“因为水底的压力很大，只有拥有一种巨大的力量才能在那里生存。”

尼德·兰的眉头动了一下，看着我问：“真的吗？”

“是的，有数字为证。”

尼德·兰再次怀疑起来：“有时候数字并不完全可靠！”

“尼德·兰，此数字非彼数字，你听好了。只要了解一点常识就知

道，一个大气压力相当于32英尺高的水柱压力。实际上，这是以淡水为基础的，要知道海水的密度比淡水的密度大。尼德·兰，你想想吧，生活在海底，要承受同您所在深度相等倍数的大气压力。打个比方，如果在320英尺深处的压力是10个大气压，那么在3200英尺深处就是100个大气压，32,000英尺深则是1000个大气压。如果您潜入大海洋的底部，您身体每平方厘米要承受上千公斤的压力。哦，尼德·兰，您算过您身体有多少平方厘米的面积吗？”

“很大呢，阿勒纳斯先生。”

“的确很大，足足有17,000平方厘米的面积。”

“这么多？”

“那当然，一大气压要重于一公斤的重量，按照您全身上下17,000平方厘米的面积来计算，您身上要顶着17,568公斤的重量。”

“那我怎么感受不到？”

“你之所以感受不到这样的重量，是因为你的身体内和身体外承受着相等的压力，内外平衡，压力便抵消了。但在水中就完全不一样了。”

尼德·兰明显对我的谈话感兴趣了，他说：“因为水在我的周围，而不能进入到我的身体，所以才造成这样的结果。”

“是的，尼德·兰。现在我们来推算一下，如果深入到海底32英尺，要承受17,568公斤的压力；在海底下320英尺，受到17万5680公斤的压力；在海底下3200英尺，受到175万6800公斤的压力；如果在海底下32000英尺，要受到1756万8000公斤的压力。按照这样的算法，如果人

潜入海底，就会被压成薄片，像被压扁的铁板一样。”

尼德·兰大喊一声：“太神奇了！”

“好了，尼德·兰，回到我们的主题来，如果是一个身长几百米的脊椎动物，要在海底生存，要承受千百亿公斤的重量。现在，您应该对这种动物的骨架和机体有一个大概的认识了吧！”

“要承受这样的重量，它们的身体至少要有八英寸的钢板那么厚，像铁甲战舰那样才行。”

“你说得一点没错，尼德·兰，那么你应该知道这样一个巨大的动物，以快车的速度撞击在船壳上，会是什么样的后果了吧。”

“也许我能够想象得出。”尼德·兰的语气渐渐弱了下来，我能感受得到，他在动摇，但是碍于面子，又不愿意马上认输。

“现在您相信了吧？”

“现在我只能确定一件事情，那就是只有足够大的动物，才能生存在海底。”

“应该说海底一定存在着一种巨大的动物，因为如果海底没有这样的动物，就无法解释‘司格图亚’号所遭遇到的事故。”

“这……”尼德·兰又陷入了迟疑。

“你不妨直说吧！”

“因为……这不是真的！”尼德·兰无意中背出阿拉果⁴的这句有名的话。

尼德·兰的回答再次证明了他的固执，我很识趣地转换了话题。大家都知道，“司格图亚”号的事故是毋庸置疑的，有船底上的洞为证。

或许您会认为我通过一个洞就断定一切，毫无道理，但我要说的是，洞不是无缘无故产生的。既然排除了暗礁撞坏的可能性，那么元凶就一定是动物的牙齿。

综上所述，我断定这个动物属于脊椎动物门，哺乳动物纲，鱼类，鲸鱼目。具体来说，它属长须鲸、大头鲸、海豚的那一科，至于其他方面该如何归属，只能等逮到它以后才能知道了，只有解剖了这个神秘的动物，才能解决一切问题。因此，首先我们要碰见它、捉住它，然后解剖它。

[1](#)希腊第四大岛，位于爱琴海东南部和地中海的交界处。

[2](#)古希腊盲诗人，堪称西方文学的始祖。他以诗歌般的记叙手法所展现的战争、生活场景至今仍为人所津津乐道。

[3](#)古希腊诗人荷马的作品，又译《伊利昂纪》（取自书名“伊利昂城下的故事”之意），是古希腊诗人荷马的六音步长短格史诗。

[4](#)法国物理学家、天文学家，精于光学和电磁学实验。

第五章 冒险行动

几天下来，“林肯”号的旅途一切顺利。但期间却发生了一件展现尼德·兰惊人技巧的事，他没有辜负大家对他的信任。

这一天，日历指向6月30日，“林肯”号行驶在马鲁因海面上，途中遇见了几艘美国捕鲸船，但都不能向“林肯”号提供关于独角鲸的消息。但是，当“梦鲁”号的捕鲸船船长得知尼德·兰在我们船上的时候，请求他帮忙去追捕一条已经发现的鲸鱼，得到了佛勒冈船长的准许，因为佛勒冈船长也想见识一下尼德·兰的本领。尼德·兰的本领真没得说，他投出的双叉不仅射中了他们发现的那条，而且还捕获了另外一条，叉子直接刺破了鲸鱼的心脏。

船上的人欢欣雀跃，我们相信，如果那个怪物碰见尼德·兰，很难全身而退。

7月3日，我们到达了与童女峡在同一个纬度的麦哲伦海峡口上，战舰沿着美洲东南方的海岸以惊人的速度行驶着。对这条曲折的海峡，佛勒冈船长很反感，他表示，我们要从合恩角绕过去。

船长的主张得到了全体船员的一致赞成，大家普遍认为，那条独角鲸不会生存在这条狭窄的海峡里，哪怕是经过也很困难。而途经合恩角是我们最好的选择。所谓合恩角，是伸在美洲大陆南端的岩石，从前荷兰水手用自己故乡的名字称呼它。

我们的船继续向西北开，明天，我们就可以在太平洋的海面上行驶了。

“快来看啊！快来看啊！”“林肯”号上的水手们相互鼓励着。

在2000美元奖金的诱惑下，很多人打起了精神，睁大眼睛准备随时汇报，一刻也顾不上休息。晚上，那些患昼盲症的人精神更好，因为他们在黑暗中也能看清楚，于是比别人多了50%的机会获得这笔奖金。

对于我而言，金钱并不能打动我，但我同样密切注视着海面。除了吃饭和睡觉，其他的时间我都留在甲板上，哪怕阳光暴晒或是下雨的天气也不例外。为了让自己舒服一点，有时我伏在船头的围板上，有时扶着船尾的栏杆，眼望着一望无际的海洋，连眼都不眨一下。每当看见海面上有鲸鱼灰黑的脊背露出的时候，船上的所有人员就像过年一样，大家都挤在甲板上，眼里冒着喜悦的光，就等着鲸鱼出现。但当“林肯”号扭转了船头，向发现的动物冲去的时候，才发现空欢喜了一场。原来，只是一条普通的长须鲸，或是大头鲸，大家咒骂着离开了。

有很多时候，我感觉自己的眼睛发黑，觉得自己要瞎了一样，但是葛瑟尔却没有这样的烦恼，还总是劝诫我说：“如果先生能把眼睛睁得小一点，也许就不那么辛苦了。”

这个季节，南半球的天气很恶劣，但是海面很平静，人们一眼望去，可以看出很远。

在船上的所有人当中，只有尼德·兰最淡定，除了在甲板上值班以外，他很少像我们一样盯着海面，他那双神奇的眼睛，并没有发挥多大的作用，因为他每12小时中有8小时在舱房中看书或是睡觉。对此，我多次责备他不负责任。

对于我的责备，他显得不以为然，说：“算了吧！阿勒纳斯先生，别说是没有，就算真的有海怪，也不会给我们机会看见它的，我们这不是浪费时间吗？我也听说了，在太平洋北部的海中，我们正在寻找的怪物又出现了，但是您想想，那条独角鲸那么精明，有可能两个月以后还停留在那片海域上吗？教授，您应该更了解动物的秉性，凭借它具有的快速移动的能力，除非有特殊情况，否则，它早就跑远了！”

我无言以对。我们的行动确实有些盲目，但是，除此以外，我们还能怎么做呢？机会可遇不可求，况且船上的每一个人都坚信独角鲸的存在，坚信它会出现的。

7月27日，“林肯”号穿过西经110度上的赤道线，一直向西行驶，行驶在太平洋中部的海面上。按照佛勒冈的意思，我们要离大陆和海岛远一点，行驶到水深的地方去，因为怪物不喜欢水浅的环境。大家也都同意船长的看法。船员为战舰添了煤后，穿过土阿莫土群岛¹、马贵斯群岛²，夏威夷群岛³，在东经132度的地方越过了北回归线，向中国海开去。

行驶在中国海的海面上，船上的每个人都感觉离怪物更加近了。长时间的海上行驶，给大家的生活带来了很大困扰，每个人都心跳加速，恐怕是为将来患血瘤症埋下了隐患。到了后来，每个人都紧张到吃不好睡不好。连值班水手由于视觉失误而发出的错误的警报，也会引起全员的骚动。这样的骚动每天要发生一二十次，后来大家对这种事都习以为常了。

一天过得像一个世纪。对于大家而言，这三个月就像三个世纪那样漫长。这三个月来，“林肯”号时而向看到的鲸鱼冲去，时而离开航线，时而掉转船头，有时还一下子停住.....为了捉到那个怪物，“林肯”号冒着机器坏掉，浪费动力的风险，从日本海搜到美洲海岸。但始终一无所获，所面对的仍然是茫茫无际的大海，传说中的巨大的独角鲸、潜在水中的海岛、沉没的破船、飞走的暗礁，以及其他什么神秘的东西，都没有出现。

渐渐地，人们的心里产生了变化，不再像之前那样笃信独角鲸的存在，紧接着，羞愧、恼怒的情绪像闸口一样打开。像失去信仰的人一

样，每个人的心理防线都垮了下来，大家只想做一件事，好好地吃一顿，睡一觉，来弥补自己因为判断失误而牺牲的时间。

人们从一个极端跑到了另一个极端，最初最拥护这次远征的人成了最坚决的反对者。从库管员到军官，打算放弃的氛围更加浓烈。由于佛勒冈船长的坚持，这艘船才保持前进的方向。

可是，这种大规模的搜索持续太久时间是无益的，“林肯”号已经尽了最大的努力，应该能够得到人们的谅解。这艘船上的人员表现出了极大的耐心和热情，对得起美国海军部对他们的信任。哪怕没有成功捕捉到那只怪物，也不是他们的过错。看来，是到了该回航的时候了。

船长很快收到了回航的建议，但是，船长坚持自己的意见，想要再等待一下。但船员们已经没有耐心等下去了，紧张的气氛一触即发。无奈之下，一个星期以后，佛勒冈船长向哥伦布承诺，如果三天后还没有海怪的踪影，“林肯”号就向欧洲海岸进发。

得到了船长的承诺，船员们的精力又回来了。人们以另一种心情欣赏着海洋的景色，以纪念这次独特的远征。于是，望远镜一天24小时被占用着，这对于独角鲸而言，是最后的挑战。

在最后的三天里，“林肯”号始终以缓慢的速度行驶着。到了最有可能碰到独角鲸的海面，人们想方设法吸引它的注意，让它现出原形。船员们先是将大块大块的腊肉扔到船后，不过仍然没有效果，反倒便宜了那些鲨鱼们。“林肯”号停在了海面上，许多小船被放下去，搜索任何一个独角鲸可能出现的角落，但是效果并不明显，直到11月4日晚上，目的还没有达到。

时间一晃到了三日后，返航的那天。佛勒冈船长履行自己的诺言，

命令战舰离开太平洋北部的海面，向东南方行进。

此时，船处在北纬31度15分、东经136度42分，距离日本本土200英里的地方。晚上8点钟，月亮害羞地躲在了乌云后面，大海的波纹放松地舒展着。

面对这样的景色，我和葛瑟尔悠闲地倚在船头右舷桅板上，眼睛朝一个方向望去。而船上的其他人爬在缆绳上，借助黑夜望远镜，细心地观察着天海交接的地方。月亮时而透过云朵间，露出一张害羞的脸，使黑压压的海面闪耀着动人的光辉，时而躲在乌云后面，使整个海面消失在黑暗之中。

我瞥了葛瑟尔一眼，他的脸上也流露出沮丧的表情。至少，我感觉是这样的，也许是好奇心驱使的。

我对他说：“喂，葛瑟尔，现在是获得2000美金的最后机会了。”

葛瑟尔答道：“请先生相信我，我从没对这2000美金感兴趣过，如果想摆脱贫穷，还不如接受合众国政府给的10万美元。”

“葛瑟尔，也许你是对的，我们不计后果地加入到这次远征中来，浪费了很多时间和精力，如果当初作出不一样的选择，我们已经回到法国了。”

“是啊，已经回到先生的小房子里，我早已完成生物化石的分类了。先生的野猪也能回到法国，接受巴黎民众的参观了。”

“是啊，还不知道那些好事的人怎么嘲笑我们呢！”

“人们一定会嘲笑您的，这就是您得到的报酬。”

“你说得没错！”

“我想要是换成另外一个学者，一定不会冒昧地做这种事……”

还没等葛瑟尔的话说完，不远处便传来了尼德·兰的声音，他喊道：

“快来啊，那个让我们冥思苦想的家伙就在我们斜对面呢！”

[1](#)是法属波利尼西亚东部的一个珊瑚岛礁群，是世界上最大的珊瑚礁群。

[2](#)是法属波利尼西亚的一部分，法国在19世纪中将此地并入领土中。

[3](#)是太平洋中北部的岛群，是世界著名的旅游胜地。

第六章 全速前进

这一喊声像支兴奋剂一样，船上所有的人都丢下手里的活计，朝着尼德·兰跑去。船长发出了停船的命令，船靠惯性移动着。

尽管天色很暗，我也很想看看尼德·兰究竟看到了什么。我感觉自己的心都快跳出来了。

尼德·兰并没有让大家失望，大家都看到了他的手指向的东西。距离“林肯”号370米左右，水下发出了神秘的光，就像之前传说的那样。从光的强度来看，一定是从巨大的发光动力体发出来的。发光的部分在

海面上形成一个巨大的椭圆形结构，椭圆被拉得很长，中心是亮白的焦点，射出不可直视的光，这光渐远渐淡，直至熄灭。

“那不过是无数磷分子的集合体。”一位军官说。

我直接否定了他：“不是的，发出这种强度的光，绝不是佛拉得或萨拉吧¹这类的动物。这种光是从动力体里发出的。快看啊，它动了，向我们冲过来了！”

战舰上一片唏嘘声。

佛勒冈船长说：“安静，把稳舵，我们向后退。”

水手们和工程师们各就各位。汽门马上被关掉了，“林肯”号从左舷转了180度的圈。

佛勒冈船长指挥道：“舵向右，向前开！”说时迟那时快，战舰很快离开了发光的区域。想不到的是，那神秘的东西却以更快的速度向我们逼近。

大家被这种紧张的气氛吓得气都不敢喘，而那个动物却游刃有余地与我们回旋。时而冲向我们；时而以时速14海里的速度围绕着战舰转圈，并且将船置于巨大的光圈中；时而离开“林肯”号，留下冒着一团团烟雾的闪着磷光的尾巴；时而从海天尽头出发，以惊人的速度向“林肯”号冲过来，在距离船身20英尺的地方突然停下来，并且熄灭了光，就像房子里突然停了电一样。不久，它又突然出现在战舰的另外一端，不知道是从船身旁边绕过来的，还是从海底潜水过来的。神出鬼没的怪物不断地向我们施加压力，感觉它能随时消灭我们。令我奇怪的是，面对突然出现的怪物，我们不是在捕捉，而是在逃避，形势完全变了。于

是，我向佛勒冈船长建议，我们要还击，谁知，却看见了佛勒冈船长紧张的神情。

他对我说：“阿勒纳斯先生，我要对船上所有人的生命负责，在没有摸清情况之前，我不能让大家去冒险。我现在实在不知道该怎么去对付这个怪物。等到天亮吧，也许到时候问题就解决了。”

“船长，你不想弄清楚这究竟是什么东西吗？”

“先生，事情已经很明白了，这是一条带电的独角鲸。”

“也许应该像你所说的那样，为了安全着想，我们不能靠近它，就像不能接近一条电鳗，或一个水雷那样！”

船长对我的话表示赞同：“没错，它身上有雷电般的力量，它一定是上帝造出来的最可怕的动物了。正因为如此，我们更要加倍小心。”

所有的人都忘记了睡觉，站在船头守望。面对强敌，“林肯”号只能保持低速慢慢行驶。而独角鲸就像是与“林肯”号比武一般，紧随其左右，久久不肯离开。

快到半夜的时候，独角鲸突然不见了，收起了自己的光芒。大家都很好奇，难道是它离开了，我们都不希望它离开。到了半夜0点53分的时候，船上传来了一声巨响，就像被极强的压力挤出的水柱所发出的声音那样。

当时，船的尾楼上站着佛勒冈船长、尼德·兰和我三个人，我们都聚精会神地凝视着黑压压的海面。

船长首先打破了沉默：“尼德·兰，您听过鲸鱼叫吗？”

“当然听过了先生，不过像这种鲸鱼的叫声我还是第一次听到，我想我应该去争取那2000美金。”

“我相信你能获得这2000美金，不过我要提醒你，这声音好像就是鲸鱼类动物用鼻孔吐水时所发出来的声音。”

“您判断得很准确，不过这声音的分贝要大很多，毫无疑问，一直跟随我们的肯定是一条鲸鱼类动物。先生，请您答应我，明天天亮时，让我们交谈几句。”

我怀疑地说：“尼德·兰先生，你确定鲸鱼会听你说话？”

尼德·兰答道：“只要让我靠近它四鱼叉那么远，它就只能乖乖听我的。”

船长说：“您是不是需要一只捕鲸艇呢？否则怎么接近它？”

“先生，还是您想得周到。”

“不过，要一只捕鲸艇，岂不是拿我的生命去冒险？”

“难道只有你危险吗？”尼德·兰干脆地回答。

时间流逝到深夜两点多，在距离“林肯”号5海里的海面，再次亮起了强烈的白光。虽然距离很远，又夹杂着风声和浪声，但我们还是清楚地听到了鲸鱼尾巴的搅水声和它的喘息声。这只巨大的独角鲸将空气吸入肺中的时候，就像是水蒸气被送到2000马力机器的大圆筒里面一样。

我暗自想，这只鲸鱼的实力一定敌得过一队骑兵的鲸鱼。

直到天亮，大家都一直保持着警戒，每个人都处于一种备战状态，

各种打鱼的设施都被搜罗出来——能把鱼叉射出一英里远的大口径短銃、致命的长枪，当然，还有尼德·兰手里那把可怕的鱼叉。

时钟指向6点，天亮了起来，独角鲸的电光被晨曦的微光淹没了。时钟指向七点，天大亮了，视野被晨雾挡住了，哪怕最好的望远镜也不起任何作用，因此大家又陷入了失望和懊恼之中。

我攀上尾桅，发现早有军官等在那里。

8点，晨雾渐渐被阳光消散，天渐渐明朗起来。突然，又传来了尼德·兰的喊声，像昨天晚上一样。他说：“看啊，怪物在船左舷后面！”

大家的目光再次聚集在尼德·兰手指的方向。只见距离战舰一海里半左右的地方，一个长长的黑色躯体浮出水面。它的尾巴像桨一样搅动着海水，形成一个巨大的漩涡，力大无比。这个动物经过的地方，都留下了一行巨大、雪白耀眼的水纹，汇成一条长长的曲线。

我们的战舰离这个鲸鱼类动物越来越近，我终于有机会观察这个怪物了。“山农”号和“海尔维地亚”号对这个怪物的分析报告描述得有些夸张，从外形上来看，它身长不过250英尺。至于宽，我很难估量。这是个长宽高比例很匀称的动物。

我发现，有两道水和汽从这只怪物的鼻孔吐出来，直喷到数十米的高度，由此我断定了它的呼吸方式，并且最后断定这动物属于脊椎动物门，哺乳纲，鱼类，鲸鱼目……属。到这里，我必须打住了。要知道，鲸鱼目有三科：长须鲸，大头鲸和海豚，独角鲸属于最后一科。每个科又分为好些属，属又分为好多种……尽管很复杂，但我相信，在上帝和佛勒冈船长的帮助下，我可以完成对这种动物的分类。

大家有些不耐烦了，因为船长迟迟不下命令。仔细地观察完这个动物后，船长叫来了工程师，问：“先生，气压够了吗？”

“够了，先生。”工程师答。

“好，加足马力，冲刺！”

战斗的号角令大家欢呼了三声。过了一会儿，两道黑烟从战舰的烟囱上冒出来，甲板随着汽锅震动起来。

“林肯”号像上了膛的子弹，猛地向怪物冲去，但这怪物好像一点也不在意一样，当战舰接近它半锚链2的时候，它的身体仍然露在水面上，逃跑的意思并不明显，只是刻意地与我们的船保持一定的距离。

就这样，我们的船与海怪前后相随持续了三刻钟左右，但我们的船甚至不能多接近这条鲸鱼4米。很明显，这样的局面很难打破。

佛勒冈船长心里很烦躁，不停地抚摸着下巴上的胡须。

船长喊道：“尼德·兰呢？”

尼德·兰很快出现在船长面前。

船长问道：“尼德·兰，你还愿意把小船放下海去吗？”

尼德·兰给出了否定的回答，因为他知道，除非这个东西自愿，否则很难捉住它。

“有什么办法呢？”

“先生，如果您允许的话，或者我可以尝试一下在船头前桅的绳梯

上守着，等我们足够接近它的时候，我就把鱼叉投出去。”

船长说：“好的，尼德·兰，就按你说的办。工程师，继续加大马力。”

尼德·兰踏上了他的岗位。火苗更加旺盛了，机轮每分钟转到43转，蒸汽从活塞里喷出。经过测程器测量，此时“林肯”号正以时速18海里半的速度前进。

但那个可恶的动物也不甘落后，也以时速18海里半的速度前行。

这样的速度足足持续了一个小时，哪怕多靠近鲸鱼两米的距离，也无法做到。这对于美国海军中最快的战舰来说，实在有点难为情。船员们流露出愤怒的表情，水手们诅咒着怪物，但怪物始终淡定如初。佛勒冈船长更加烦躁了，不停地摸着下巴上的胡须。

他再次将工程师叫过来，问：“马力已经达到最大的限度了吗？”

“是的，船长，按您的吩咐，已经将马力加到了最大限度。”他答。

“活塞上紧了吗？”

“上到了6.5气压。”

“把它们上到10气压。”

船长命令的语气很严厉。恐怕在密西西比河上，再也找不到这样的船了，哪怕是跟人比赛赌输赢的船，也无法做到。

我对站在我身边的葛瑟尔说：“伙计，你看，感觉我们的船马上就要爆炸了！”

“先生，听您的吩咐。”葛瑟尔答。

我很愿意利用这个机会过去尝试一下。

上紧了活塞，将煤炭倒入火炉中，风箱把空气送进去，火苗更加旺了。“林肯”号的速度又提了起来，船桅被风吹得震动起来。由于烟囱过窄，浓烟拥挤着找不到出口。

船长吩咐将测程器再一次抛下去。

“现在速度多少？”佛勒冈船长问。

“报告船长，19.3海里。”

“继续增加人力。”

命令生效了，气压表指向了10。但这条鲸鱼也毫不示弱，轻松地以19.3海里的速度移动。

多么激烈的较量呀！任何语言都难以描述我当时激动的心情。尼德·兰手拿着鱼叉站在他的岗位上准备着，有几次他们离得很近。

“我们追上它了！”尼德·兰大声喊道。

可就在尼德·兰准备投叉的时候，这条鲸鱼发现了危险，动作敏捷地逃开了。据我观察，它的时速足足有30海里。就在我们的船以最快速度航行的时候，它竟然能够绕船一周，就像是在逗我们玩儿一样！大家发自内心地愤怒了。

时间到了中午，捕鲸行动丝毫没有进展。于是，佛勒冈船长决定采取更为直接的办法。

他说：“既然‘林肯’号比不上它的速度，那我们只能利用锥形炮弹来对付它了。水手长，快叫炮手到船前头来集合。”

水手们立即装上炮弹，打了出去。然而，炮打空了，从距离船半海里远的动物上面掠过去，没有打中。

船长命令道：“换一名好炮手，谁能打中这个怪物，就奖给他500美元！”

船长的话音刚落，一位胡子花白、目光镇定、面容冷静的老水手走到大炮前，摆好炮位，对着目标瞄准。轰的一声炮响了，直直地打在动物身上，船员们欢呼起来。至今我还清楚地记得老水手的面容。

然而，打中的炮弹并没有给它致命的打击，而是从它圆圆的身上掠过去，落在两海里外的海中。

看到结果，老炮手暴跳如雷，说：“见鬼，这混蛋的身上一定有一层6英寸厚的铁甲！”

佛勒冈船长也无法淡定了，啐了一声：“该死的东西！”

在佛勒冈船长的命令下，“林肯”号又开始追逐鲸鱼了，船长发誓一定要追到那条鲸鱼，哪怕追到船爆炸！

对此我表示赞同。

既然不能在速度上战胜敌人，人们便开始期盼那只怪物体力不支。然而，这么长时间过去了，鲸鱼并没有显出一点疲劳的样子。

“林肯”号在这场战斗中的表现是可圈可点的，船上的每个人都保持

着一种不屈不挠的精神。据我估计，整天下来，鲸鱼至少游了500公里。

黑夜再次降临了，波涛汹涌的海洋被阴影笼罩着。

我以为我们的远征就这样结束了，要跟那只古怪的动物说再见了，然而事情并非如此。

夜间10点50分，战舰前面三海里的海面上再次亮起了光，跟昨天夜里一样闪亮，照亮了“林肯”号附近的海洋。

由于运动量过大，那条独角鲸好像是在休息，一直停着不动。也许是白天跑得累了。它漂浮在海水上。佛勒冈船长觉得这是个好机会，要好好利用。

为了不将敌方惊醒，他命令“林肯”号降低速度行驶，小心谨慎地前进。利用鲸鱼休息的机会一举消灭它们，这在海上是常有的事情。尼德·兰就不止一次在鲸鱼昏睡的时候叉中它们。这一次，他又到了船头斜桅下，走上了他原来的岗位。

战舰压低了声音前进，在距离动物370米左右的时候关了气门，船凭着惯性在移动。船上很静，连一根针掉落的声音都能听见。当船开到距离白热的焦点不足100英尺的时候，光的亮度再次强烈起来，照得我们眼睛发花。

这时，倚在船头栏杆上的我发现尼德·兰在我下面，一手拉着帆索，一手挥动他锋利的鱼叉，与那只睡着的动物距离只有20英尺了。

这时，他的胳膊猛地使劲一伸，将鱼叉投了出去。紧接着，我听到鱼叉碰上硬壳的声音。

突然，对面的电光熄灭了，战舰的甲板上，两团巨大的水猛扑上来，冲倒了船上的人，打断了护墙桅的绳索。而我也例外，由于没站稳，从船栏杆上掉到海中去了。

[1](#)佛拉得是一种腹足类软体动物。萨拉吧学名樽海鞘，是一种海洋无脊椎动物，是类似于水母的半透明、扁平桶状的海洋生物。

[2](#)锚链长度是按“节”来衡量的，一节链长约为27.5米。

第七章 种类不明的鲸鱼

突如其来的落水把我吓得发慌，但是，我知道自己当时是有意识的，我先是下到了20英尺深的水里。当然，我在潜水方面还是有一定造诣的（当然不能跟拜伦和埃德加那些大师相比）。尽管沉在水中，神志却很清醒。我两脚使劲一蹬，又浮上了水面。

寻找战舰所在的位置，是我浮出水面后做的第一件事。紧接着，一连串的问题在我的脑海里打转：船上的人发现我落水了吧？“林肯”号会不会改变航程？与独角鲸的斗争结果如何？会有人救我的吧？

夜色浓重，一个巨大的黑影消失在东方，它的标灯远远地熄灭了。我觉得不会有人来救我了，于是陷入了失望之中。

我拼命地喊着“救命”，并向林肯号游去。

由于衣服被海水浸湿了，穿在身上特别重，这成了我求生的障碍，我简直透不过气来了，我要沉下去了，发出了最后的呼声：“救命啊！”

紧接着，我的嘴里被海水填满，我越是挣扎，越被海水卷入水底……

就在死亡的边缘，一只有力的手拉住了我的衣服，紧接着，我被托出水面，葛瑟尔的声音在我的耳边响起：“先生，醒醒，您靠着我的肩膀，或许可以游泳。”

我一把抓住了葛瑟尔的胳膊，像抓住一棵救命稻草。

我断断续续地说：“是你啊，葛瑟尔。”

他答道：“是我，我来保护先生。”

“你也不小心掉到海中来了？”

“不是的，我跟过来照顾你！”葛瑟尔极为自然地说。

我接着问：“战舰呢？”

葛瑟尔转过身来回答：“先生，战舰是指望不上了。”

“什么意思？”

“我下水的时候，听见有人说‘舵和螺旋桨都坏了’。”

“坏掉了？”

“是的！是那个怪物干的，尽管‘林肯’号只是损坏一点，但那一点是最关键的地方，所以船已经无法掌握方向了。”

“我们死定了！”

葛瑟尔也知道我们生存的希望不大，但是他很平静地说：“我们还可以支持几个钟头，在这几个钟头内，我们可以做很多事！”

我被葛瑟尔的情绪感染了，也变得乐观起来，我用尽全身力气游着，但衣服仍然禁锢着我的身体，令我行动不便。葛瑟尔也意识到了，他用刀子割破了我的衣服，替我脱掉了，我终于可以抓住他游泳了。

过了一会儿，我将葛瑟尔的衣服也脱掉了，继续着我们的航行，但危险的处境并没有改变。葛瑟尔冷静地说：“这个时候大船已经指望不上了，现在我们只能指望大船上的小艇，那是我们唯一的生路。为了能坚持得更久一点，我们要尽量节约力量。”即使在水下，葛瑟尔的思维也很清晰，在计划着我们应做的事。

就像葛瑟尔说的，为了节约力气，我们一个人朝天躺着，两臂交叉，两腿伸直，浮着不动，另一个人潜水把他往前推送。我们轮换着做这种“拖船”的工作，只是每个人都不会超过10分钟，照这种方法，我们可以在水面上浮好几个钟头，也许可以一直支持到天亮。

接下来，就看我们的运气了。尽管我的心里对这件事不抱任何幻想，但是，只要想起我们有两个人，我就又重新燃起了希望。

此时是夜里11点钟，距离太阳升起还有8个小时，也就是说我们要继续游8个小时。老天还算照顾我们，海面没有波浪，很平静，使我们不至于太过疲劳。我试图透过黑暗，看看周围的环境，但什么也看不见，只有我们激起的浪花透出一点亮光来。在我手下破碎的水波，像一面镜子，又像一块青灰色的金属片，就好像我们在水银中游泳一样。

半夜1点左右，我开始感到疲倦，四肢开始痉挛，身体开始僵硬。为了保住两个人的性命，葛瑟尔一个人扛起了所有的工作。不久，就传

来了他急促的呼吸声，我知道，葛瑟尔也坚持不了多久了。

我对葛瑟尔说：“别管我了，保住自己的性命。”

葛瑟尔很快就否定了我的话：“那是不可能的，哪怕是死也是我先死。”

这时，风吹散了一片厚云，月亮露出了笑脸。在月光的照耀下，海水闪闪发光。我们像注入了力气一样，重新燃起了希望。我将头抬起，看向远方。在距离我们5海里的海面，我发现了模糊的战舰，但小艇，一只也没看见！

我想用喊声引起“林肯”号的注意，但是距离太远了，船上的人根本就听不见，并且我的嘴唇已经肿胀得发不出声音，好在葛瑟尔还可以说话，他连续喊了几声救命。

我们停止一切会影响我们听力的动作，等待着“林肯”号的回答。尽管我有些耳鸣，但仍然听见有人在回应葛瑟尔。

“他们听见我们的呼救声了，太好了！”我低声说。

“是啊，我们有希望了。”

这样的结果鼓舞了葛瑟尔，他再次向海面发出求救的呼喊。

这一次，我们听得很清楚，有人听到了我们的呼救，并且做出了回应。也许是跟我们一样的受难者，也许是撞船事故的另一个受影响者，也许是战舰上的一只小艇在黑暗中呼唤我们。

葛瑟尔为了将我托起，拼尽了最后的力气，而我也在与身体的痉挛

做最后的抗争。葛瑟尔将身体探出水面往远处张望，然后又筋疲力尽地躺下。

我问他：“有什么新发现吗？”

葛瑟尔没有回答我的话，他低声说，“为了保存体力，我们还是不要说话了！”

我有一种预感，他看见了那个怪物。在接下来的过程中，葛瑟尔始终坚持拖着，偶尔抬起头来，看看附近的情况，看看我们是不是距离“林肯”号越来越近了。我的体力消耗得越来越快，身体僵硬，仅存的一点力量根本无法支撑我的身体。海水开始往我的嘴里灌，身体被寒冷侵占了。我努力抬起了头，但没支撑一会儿便又跌入水里。

就在我觉得自己将要与世隔绝的时候，一个坚硬的物体支撑了我。随后，我感觉被人拉到水面上来，胸闷的感觉不见了，但我的意识正在渐渐消失。

我感觉有人在用力摩擦我的身体，产生的热度让我苏醒过来，我迷迷糊糊地睁开眼睛，问道：“葛瑟尔，是你吗？”

“我在这里呢，先生。”葛瑟尔答道。

傍晚，我醒来的时候，我第一眼看到的不是葛瑟尔，而是另一张对我来说很熟悉的脸。

我一口喊出了他的名字：“尼德·兰！”

“没错，先生，我就是来追奖金的尼德·兰！”加拿大人答道。

“您是怎么掉入海中的？”

“我也和你一样，在船被撞的时候跌入海中的，我比您幸运的是掉在了一个浮动的小岛上。”

“一个小岛？”

“我说的小岛就是您说的那只巨大的独角鲸。”

“尼德·兰，此话怎讲？”

“我终于知道为什么我的鱼叉拿那只怪物没有办法了。”

“究竟是什么原因呢，尼德·兰？”

“教授，那个东西是没有生命的，它是用钢板做的！”

好奇心让我重新振作起来，我努力回忆之前看到的那个怪物，尼德·兰的话让我的立场开始动摇，我要重新认识这个成为我们临时避难所的生物。我尝试着用脚踢它，真切地感觉到这是个坚固结实、钻不透的硬物体，而不是我所认为的海中哺乳类动物的庞大躯体的柔软物质。

我开始怀疑这是一个与太古时代动物的甲壳相似的骨质坚硬体，可以归入两栖爬虫类，就像是龟鳖、鳄鱼或是鼋龙¹之类的动物。

但是，我的想法再次被推翻了，我脚下的这个怪物的脊背是有光泽的，很滑，并不是粗糙有鳞的。触碰它时会发出金属所特有的响亮声，那么，尼德·兰说得没错，它是由螺丝钉铆成的铁板制造的了。

整个学术界都以为它是个动物，没想到它戏弄了所有的人，竟然是个人造的机器。这太令人惊讶了，所有人的心血都白费了。照目前的情

形来看，或许人们更愿意接受它是一个荒诞的、类似于神话的生物的事实。

答案已经清楚了，我们正在一个潜水船的脊背上，就像浮在一条巨大的钢鱼上。事实摆在眼前，我和葛瑟尔只能表示赞同。

“船上都有些什么？”我问。

“有一套驾驶机器和一批驾驶人员，他们已经三个小时没动了。”

“一直待在原地？”

“也不是，阿勒纳斯先生，它会随波漂荡。”

“如果是这样的话，我想我们有救了。”

“唔！”尼德·兰迟疑地说。

突然，这个钢鱼动了起来，在助推器的推动下，渐渐动了起来。我们赶快紧紧把住那个浮出水面约80厘米的上层。老天还算照顾我们，船的速度并不快。

尼德·兰低声说：“我现在最担心的是它突然沉到海里去，如果那样，我们就死定了！”

我们都很赞同尼德·兰的看法，现在唯一的办法，就是赶紧跟里面的人取得联系。据我推断，船的上层一定会有一个入口。于是，我们仔细地搜索起来，但我们很快发现，一行行的螺丝钉排列得很清楚、很均匀，把钢板衔接得十分结实，无缝可寻。

入夜后，我们毫无办法可寻，只能等到天亮再想法进入这只潜水船

的内部。

我们三个人的性命就捏在驾驶人的手里。如果他们潜入水下，我们就没有活路了。如果他们能一直坚持这样航行，我就有把握跟他们取得联系。要知道，哪怕在船里生存，也是需要空气的，他们肯定会到海面上来换气的，所以，我断定，船的上层肯定有个可以跟外界联系的口。

我们不再将希望寄托在佛勒冈船长身上，只能靠我们自救了。船的速度很缓慢，每小时约12海里。类似船桨的装置十分规律地搅动海水，有时船浮出一些，有时会向高空喷出磷光的水柱。

凌晨4点左右，船的速度明显快了起来，我们被拖得有些头晕。还好有尼德·兰，他一下子摸到了一个钉在钢背上的大环，我们牢牢地挽住它，才不至滑倒。

有一件小事令我印象深刻。当波浪小一些的时候，我似乎听到远处传来一些不可捉摸的乐曲声。我想，没有人知道那只怪船是怎样在水下航行的，是什么样的机器让它拥有这样快的速度，他们在船里是怎样生活的呢。

天终于亮了。雾聚集了一会儿，就散开了。正当我要仔细观察一下上层平台的船壳的时候，我觉得船渐渐下沉了。

尼德·兰用脚狠踢钢板，喊道：“你们就是这么待客的吗？赶紧开门吧！”

船在行驶的过程中，发出很大的声音，盖住了我们的喊声。幸运的是，过了一会儿，船竟然不再下沉。

突然，船里面发出一阵推动铁板的声音。一个人从铁板下面爬了上

来，看到我们大喊了一声，赶紧又钻了回去。

过了一会儿，我们被8个蒙着脸的壮汉抓到了机器中，被几个又高又大的壮汉押解着，我们的心里充满了恐惧。

1鼉，爬行动物，体长两米多，背部、尾部均有鳞甲。穴居江河岸边，皮可以蒙鼓。鼉龙是一种怪物。

第八章 动中之动

说时迟那时快，我们被粗暴地拖进潜水船中，在那样的环境里，我们根本就分不清方向。我不知道大家是一种什么样的心情，只觉得自己不由得打了一个冷战，感觉鸡皮疙瘩都起来了。难道我们遇上强盗了？

一个狭小的盖板将我们与外界隔开了，我们陷入一片黑暗中，伸手不见五指。我被绑在一架扶梯上，鞋子被脱掉了。尼德·兰和葛瑟尔跟在我的身后，也被人押着。通过声音，我们分辨得出有一扇门打开了，我们走进去以后，门就立即关上，发出很响亮的声音。

我们被孤零零地关在里面。黑暗中，我们根本不知道被关在哪儿，一丝光亮都没有。受到这样的对待，尼德·兰表示很生气，他尽情地发泄着自己的愤怒。

他大声喊道：“混蛋，你们太野蛮了，跟那些吃人肉的畜生没什么区别。告诉你们，我是不会屈服的！”

葛瑟尔显得很平静，他安慰道：“安静些，尼德·兰，现在还没到关键时刻，你没必要那么激动。”

尼德·兰完全听不进去，他说：“还没到关键时刻，我们已经快被烤了，兔崽子们，大爷还有把尖刀给你们留着呢，你们别得意得太早……”

见尼德·兰如此动怒，我对他说：“这种时候生气也没有用，只会让情况变得更糟，也许正有人监听我们说话呢。我们现在最重要的任务是搞清楚我们被关在哪儿。”

我尝试着往前走了几步，五步后，我碰到了一堵铁墙，所谓的墙其实是用螺丝钉铆住的铁板。接着，我向反方向移动，又撞上了一张木头桌子，桌子边放着几张方板凳。这间监狱式的房间地板上铺着很厚的麻垫子，走起路来听不到脚步声。从光光的墙壁也摸不出有门窗的痕迹。葛瑟尔从相反的方向走过来，我们撞在了一起。接着，我们重新回到舱房的中间，算起来舱房大约有20英尺长，10英尺宽。高度要高于尼德·兰的身高，但准确的数字，暂时还无法衡量。

半个钟头过去了，我们还是没有搞清楚状况，就在这时候，眼前突然从黑暗转向光明，简直是两个极端。这种光线我们在“林肯”号上就曾见识过，射在海面上就成了很美丽的磷光。我本能地闭上眼睛。为了弄清楚周围的状况，过了一会儿，又赶紧睁开，我发现光线是从装在舱顶上的一个半透明的半球体中发出来的。

看清楚周围的尼德·兰拿着刀做出防卫的姿势。很明显，我们的处境很危险。

“先生，放轻松点。”冷静的葛瑟尔说。

我们借着舱房的灯仔细地观察里面的环境。只见房中有一张桌子和五张凳子。由于封闭很严谨，看不到门户。周围很安静，我们听不到任

何声音。在这种情况下，我们想搞清楚它是停在海面上，还是在海底下移动。

但是，突然变得这样明亮肯定是有原因的。我估计，很快就会有人过来跟我们见面了，而且很可能是一个重量级的人物。我果然没有想错。很快，一声门响后，走进来两个人。

走在前面的是一个身材短小的男人，他肌肉发达，两肩宽阔，躯体健壮，头颅看起来很结实，蓬松的黑发，浓浓的胡须，犀利的目光。看起来应该是南方人，因为他身上散发着法国普罗文斯省人所特有的气概。狄德罗认为人的手势是富于譬喻的，这个人的举动就很好地诠释了这句话。我想他一定是一个善于用修辞的人，出口成章。可惜的是，我无法证实这件事，因为他对我讲的是一种特异的、听不懂的语言。

第二个人长得更有特点，总结如下：第一，自信，因为他的头高傲地摆在两肩形成的弧线中，他那漆黑的眼睛冷静地注视着人；第二，镇定，因为他的肤色，苍白不红，表示他血脉的稳定；第三，刚毅，这从他眼眶筋肉的迅速收缩可以看出来；第四，勇敢，他的深呼吸表明了他的肺活力很强。

不仅如此，这还是一个有才华的人，他坚定的目光似乎反映出他高深的思想。所谓相由心生，从他的举止和表情来看，他应该是个坦白直率的人。

他的出现并没有给我们带来紧张，反而让人觉得很安定，我料定我们的交谈会很顺利。

我无法确定这个人的年龄，只能发现一些表面特点，比如他身材高大，前额宽阔，鼻子笔直，嘴唇平正，牙齿齐整，两手细长，按照面相

学来说，这个人感情丰富，堪称完美。他还有一个细微的特征，那就是两只眼睛的距离要远一些，视野更加宽阔。这一点在以后的日子里得到了证实，他的眼力甚至比尼德·兰的还要高强。他注视一样东西的时候有一个特点，就是会紧皱起眉毛，微微合上眼皮，也许这样更聚光。这是我见过的看起来最厉害的眼神了，感觉他能放大远方的事物，还能洞察人的内心，甚至能一眼看穿海底深处的情形。

这两个戴着水獭皮便帽、蹬着海豹皮水靴、穿着特殊织物做成的衣服的陌生人，动作非常灵活，而且显得非常与众不同，而其中高个的那位显然是这船上的首领，他用打量的眼神将我们从头看到脚，一言不发。然后转身对他的同伴说了一些我们不懂的话。他们的语言听起来很响亮、婉转，其中母音的声调好像变化很多。

他的同伴一边点头一边回答，然后转过身来对我们说些什么。由于语言不通，我们只能用法语告诉他我们听不懂。这样的交流非常困难。

葛瑟尔提醒我向他们讲讲我们的经历，于是我用非常清晰的音节向他们重新讲述了我们的遭遇，并向他们做了正式的自我介绍，当然，也向他们介绍了我的仆人葛瑟尔和鱼叉手尼德·兰师傅。

他们似乎对我的描述非常感兴趣，一直认真地听着，但是从他们的表情来看，他们似乎没有听懂我说的话，始终一言不发。

现在只剩下一个办法，我决定讲英语试试。这是一种很流行的语言，希望他们能听得懂。但是，尽管我平时经常看英语和德语的书，但是说起来仍然很困难。不过，为了让他们明白我们的意思，只有硬着头皮说下去。

但效果并不佳，我叫来尼德·兰，说：“还是您来说吧，您的英语地

道一些，也许他们能听得懂。”尼德·兰很痛快地答应了，用英语将我们的经历讲了一遍。他的大概意思跟我说得差不多，只是加了一些渲染，质问他们藐视人权，警告他们没有权力将我们关在这里，还特意引证了《人身保障法》的条文，要对非法监禁我们的人提起诉讼。他的言语很激动，动作很夸张，最后用手势告诉他们，我们饿了，要吃东西。

刚才过于专注，忘了吃饭这件事了，此时我们的肚子都发出了咕咕的声音。

结果再次令我们失望了，尽管尼德·兰说得天花乱坠，但他们还是没有任何表情，很显然，他们不懂英语。现在我们真的不知道该怎么办了，他们既不懂得阿拉戈的语言，也不懂得法拉第的语言，我们实在无能为力了。正在大家为难时，葛瑟尔对我说：“先生，不如我跟他们讲德语试试。”

“你懂德语？”我吃惊地问。

“先生，您不会因此不高兴吧，我像其他的佛兰德斯人一样，会说德语。”

“小伙子，我当然不会生气了，正相反，我很高兴，开始吧。”

葛瑟尔第三个出马，用德语将我们的遭遇又描述了一遍，语气一如既往地镇定。可是，这样的尝试再次失败了，他们还是不懂。我们再次陷入了失望之中，开始后悔自己懂的语言太少。突然，我想起我小的时候学过拉丁语，于是尝试用拉丁语讲述我们的经历。实际上，懂拉丁语的人一定会笑话我的发音，但是为了解决问题，我只能硬着头皮说下去。可结果再一次让大家失望了。

最后，这两个陌生人见我们不再说话，便用那种特殊的语言彼此说了几句，就走开了，对我们没有任何表示，门就关上了。

尼德·兰又开始发怒了，埋怨这些人的无理，同时，怪自己倒霉，说了那么多种语言，法语、英语、德语、拉丁语，可是这些人一种都不懂。

尼德·兰的抱怨让我有些不满，我生气地对鱼叉手说：“够了，发脾气能解决问题吗？我们有时间还是想想别的办法吧。”

可是，我们的伙伴根本听不进去我的劝告，反问我：“可是，教授先生，难道我们就在这铁笼子里等死吗？”

葛瑟尔说话了：“放心吧，我们不会那么容易死掉的。”

我对葛瑟尔的话表示赞同，说：“别那么悲观，也许事情没那么糟。现在，大家来发表一下对刚才那位船长和船员的看法吧。”

“我认为这些人就是混蛋！”尼德·兰回答。

“老兄，我们要讨论的不是这些。我承认，这两个人的国籍很难断定，既不是英国人，不是法国人，也不是德国人。依我看，这个船长和他的助手应该是生长在低纬度地带的人。他们身上带有南方人的特点。难道他们是西班牙人、土耳其人、阿拉伯人或印度人吗？当然，这只是猜测。至于他们的语言，实在很难猜测。”

葛瑟尔说：“语言不通真的很麻烦，看来世界上需要一种统一的语言。”

尼德·兰说：“他们才不管别人说什么语言呢，之所以用这种语言，

好像就是为了让别人无法听懂。你们想想，语言不通可以理解，难道张张嘴、动动牙齿是饿了想吃饭的意思还不懂吗？世界上任何一个地方都是通用的吧，所以我说他们是故意的。”

葛瑟尔说：“也许他们真的是那种不聪明的人！”

正在我们争论的时候，房门打开了，一个侍者进来给我们送衣服，是那种海上穿的上衣和短裤，衣服的质料我从来没有见过。我们赶紧将衣服穿上。接着，侍者将三份餐具放在桌上。从侍者的动作来看，他也许是个哑巴，或者是个聋子。

葛瑟尔说：“这才是待客之道嘛。”

尼德·兰不屑地说：“算了吧。这里能有什么可吃的？至多是甲鱼肝、鲨鱼片，海狗骨头罢了！”

“也许会有惊喜哦！”葛瑟尔说。

桌布已经摆好了，食物用银制的罩子盖着，我们在饭桌前坐了下来。很显然，我们受到了礼遇，从这一点可以看出，对方是一个有文化、有礼貌的人。如果不是看到刺眼的电光，我简直会以为自己是在豪华的酒店里。当然，我要对大家说清楚，这里没有面包和酒，只有新鲜、清凉的水，很显然，尼德·兰并不喜欢。在餐桌上，有几种肉我认得，是烹调得很精致的鱼，还有几种是我说不出名字的菜，我甚至分不清它们是动物还是植物，不过很好吃，很合我的胃口。餐桌上的餐具也很精美，勺子、叉子、刀、盘上都刻着字母，字母周围有一句题词，原文被我们抄了下来，内容如下：

MOBIL IS IN MOBIL IN

翻译过来是动中之动！这里的IN译成“中”字正好可以用在这只潜水船上。而字母N可能是在海底下发号施令的那位神秘人物的姓名开头的字母。

我的两个同伴现在只想着一件事，就是尽量多吃一些，我很快也加入了他们的队伍。还有一件事可以确定，就是从目前来看，我们应该是安全的，主人肯给我们食物，而且食物还很丰富，看来主人没有让我们死的意思。

吃饱以后，紧接着，睡意就侵袭过来。我们已经连续与死亡抗争了一夜，看来现在该休息一下了。

“伙计们，我真想好好地睡一觉。”葛瑟尔说。

“英雄所见略同！”尼德·兰回答。

说时迟那时快，我的两个同伴躺在舱房的地毯上，没过多久就开始打鼾了。

而我，尽管也很困，但却睡不着。有很多问题还没有答案，我忍不住开始思考。而且，我明显地感觉到船在向海底下沉。于是在半梦半醒之间，我被噩梦纠缠住了。在关押我们的那个屋子里，我窥见了一大群没见过的动物，它们好像和这只潜水艇是同类，一样可怕。渐渐地，我的思绪停止了，开始慢慢地睡去。

第九章 尼德·兰愤怒了

不知道睡了多久，我们的精神恢复如初。我是第一个醒来的，看到我的同伴还趴在角落里，留在睡梦中。

当脑袋离开那种硬邦邦的床以后，我马上变得清醒起来，我又恢复了以前的精力。我开始重新打量这个关押我们的地方，没有发现任何不一样的地方。唯一的区别是，那个侍者在我们熟睡的时候，把桌上的东西拿走了。毫无变化的处境让我产生了一种怀疑，我们会不会被永远关在这个囚笼中。

然而，困扰我的并不只是这种无法逃脱的想法，更令我难过的是越来越稀薄的空气。这是一间封闭的屋子，正常情况下，每人每小时要消耗100升空气中所含有的氧，而现在的境况显然不能满足我们的正常需要，如果再这样下去，当这间屋子只剩下二氧化碳的时候，我们就无法呼吸了。因此，眼下最迫切的问题是给我们的牢房换换空气，当然，整个潜水艇也该换换空气了。

我再次对这所移动住宅如何换气的问题感兴趣起来，难道他们通过氯酸钾加热放出氧气？还是用氢氧化钾吸收二氧化碳气体呢？如果他们通过这些化学方法获得氧气，就必须与陆地保持一定的联系，才能取得这些化学原料。或者是他们利用高压把空气储藏在密封的房间里，然后根据船上人员的需要再把空气放出来？还是他们用更方便，更经济，也是最容易实现的方法，像鲸鱼类动物一样，每隔24小时浮到水面上来换一次空气。不管怎样，都到了该换气的时候了。

呼吸困难的感觉越来越强烈了，我不得不加紧呼吸，以便吸取更多一点氧气。突然，我感觉到房间里变得凉快了，而且闻到了一股带海水咸味的新鲜空气。我确定，屋子里吹来了含有大量碘质的海风。为了让肺部充满新鲜气体，我张大了嘴。这时，我明显感到船在摇摆，原来它

浮到了海面上，果然，它采用了鲸鱼的呼吸方式来换气。

在自由地呼吸着新鲜空气的同时，我的头脑更加清晰，开始寻找那个透气的孔，也可以说是“通气的管子”。结果很容易就被我找到了，就在房门的上面，源源不断的空气就从那里送进来，填补房中不足的空气。

正在我观察周围的情况时，我的两个伙伴也醒过来了。他们揉揉眼睛，伸伸懒腰，一下子站起来。

葛瑟尔像平常一样，客气地问：“先生睡得好吗？”

我回道：“还可以，葛瑟尔！尼德·兰，您睡得如何？”

“非常甜美，教授。不知道是不是我的错觉，我觉得我现在呼吸的是海风！”

水手的嗅觉果然灵敏，我将刚才发生的事告诉了他们。

他说：“怪不得我们在‘林肯’号上看到这条所谓独角鲸的时候会听到那种吼声呢。”

“尼德·兰师傅，没错，那就是它的呼吸声！”

“不过，阿勒纳斯先生，是不是到了晚餐时间了，我睡得忘记时间了。”

“伙计，你说的是昨天的晚餐吗？现在恐怕已经是第二天的中午了，该吃午餐了。”

葛瑟尔吃惊地问：“难道我们睡了24个小时？”

“我想没错。”我答。

尼德·兰根本不关心时间，他真正在意的是填饱自己的肚子，他说：“不管是什么餐，只要有东西送过来，我就很满足了。”

“两顿一起来吧。”葛瑟尔说。

加拿大人说：“这个靠谱，船上的午餐和晚餐，我们都得尝尝。”

我接着说：“对呀！尼德·兰，不用担心，这些人并不想饿死我们，否则昨天就不会给我们送餐了。”

“难道，要先把我们养肥？”尼德·兰问。

“我可不这样认为，他们可不像是吃人的野蛮人！”我回答。

尼德·兰很严肃地说：“仅仅是送了一次饭而已，不能说明什么，谁知道这些人多久没吃新鲜的肉了。如果真是这样的话，教授您，您的仆人和我，三个身体健康的人的肉……”

我打断了尼德·兰的话，说：“您不要这样想，也许这样的想法会让我们陷入更糟的处境。”

鱼叉手说：“可是，事实确实如此，我们饿得要命，却没有食物送来。”

我答道：“尼德·兰，也许是我们的胃口赶在船上规定的用餐时间前面了。”

“是！我们忍一会儿就好了！”葛瑟尔安静地答道。

性急的尼德·兰又开始抱怨起来：“葛瑟尔，我真是佩服你的定力，不管遇到什么事情都不发火，总是那么镇定。竟然还可以把饭后的祷告挪到饭前来念，就算饿死，也不埋怨一句！”

“埋怨又不能改变事情的结果。”葛瑟尔说。

“至少可以发泄一下。我知道，教授不喜欢我管他们叫吃人的野蛮人，那我只有管他们叫海盗了。这些海盗以为将我们关在这个笼子里，就听不到我的咒骂，那就大错而特错了。教授，您说他们会不会放我们出去？”尼德·兰问。

“说实话，我也不知道，尼德·兰。”我回答。

“那么，您预测一下如何？”

“这就要看我们发现的是不是一个重大的秘密了。如果潜水艇上的人认为这个秘密对他们很重要，一定要保守，不能让更多的人知道，那么，我们就危险了。如果情形刚好相反，那么我们应该用不了多久就能出去了，他们只是等待一个登陆的机会。”

葛瑟尔说：“说不定他们就这样把我们留下来了呢，把我们编入他们的船员名册中了。”

尼德·兰接着说：“把我们留在这艘船上，直到有一艘比‘林肯’号更快、更灵巧的战舰，一举歼灭了这个匪巢，才能将我们解救出去。”

我答道：“也许像你说的那样，尼德·兰师傅，可是，到目前为止，他们还没有向我们表达这种意思。我们现在讨论这种事情是不是太早了？我再强调一遍，我们要等待，既然没事就不要随便找事。”

鱼叉手坚持自己的看法，他说：“教授，正相反，我们要大干一场了。”

“哎！尼德·兰师傅，干什么呀？”

“逃走啊。”

“在陆地上逃狱都那么难，更何况是海底的监狱，我看不行。”

葛瑟尔问尼德·兰：“你打算怎么做？我想一个美洲人是不会束手无策的！”

事实很清楚，想逃出这里，是一件不可能的事。鱼叉手面对葛瑟尔的质问，默不作声。从尼德·兰身上还是可以看出法国人的特质的，从他的回答中，就可以看出来。

过了一会儿，尼德·兰说：“那么，阿勒纳斯先生，既然逃跑是不可能的，那我们该怎么办呢？”

“我也不知道，我的朋友。”

“很简单，留在这里啊。”

葛瑟尔说：“对呀！留在里面总比留在上面或下面好些！”

尼德·兰赶紧补充道：“不过，首先要将看守、警卫和把门的都赶出去。”

“尼德，兰，难道你想占领这艘船？”

“是的。”加拿大人回答。

“这怎么可能？”

“先生，怎么不可能呢？机会来了我们没有理由不利用，如果这个船上只有20个人，我想，我们两个法国人和一个加拿大人是可以做到的！”

我不想再与尼德·兰讨论下去了，对他的想法，我不再表示反对，只是告诉他在机会到来之前一定要忍耐，不要有任何动作。不管什么行动，只有事前计划好，才会有成功的可能。

尼德兰答应我不再发脾气，不再说粗话，不再做粗暴的动作，不表现出任何企图来。可是，他的承诺并不能使人安心。不过为了鼓励他，我还是表示了赞同：“好，尼德·兰，就这么一言为定了。”

随后，房间陷入了沉默，我们分别想着自己的心事。尽管尼德·兰对占领机器船表现出很大的信心，但是，我对此不抱任何幻想。我觉得尼德·兰所说的机会很不靠谱，一艘船能够维持正常的运行一定会有很多人，一旦发生冲突，如果我们的对手很强大，我们就更不可能活着出去了。就算是想破脑袋，我也想不出该如何逃出这间房子。再者说，船长怎么会允许我们自由行动呢，很显然他是要保守秘密的，让不让我们活下去还是个未知数呢！只有那个头脑简单的鱼叉手还想着能逃出去。

尼德·兰的脸上始终表现出激动的神情，一定是在幻想着占领机器船的情景。过了一会儿，我又听见他嘴里不知在默默地咒骂着什么，只见他的样子愈来愈吓人。终于他站起来，像一只被困的老虎，愤怒地敲打着墙壁。

时间过得很快，我们已经快饿得虚脱了，这一回，侍者并没有来。我想，如果他们对我们还存在一点友善的态度，就不该如此忽视我们三

个人的处境。

尼德·兰饿得快发疯了，碍于之前的承诺一直在忍耐着，但我很担心，一旦船上的人出现，他会彻底发作。

两个小时过去了，尼德·兰更加愤怒了，他开始叫喊，可是没有任何回应。舱房里一阵寂静，没有一点声响。而且，我明显感觉船不动了，因为船身在推进器推动下所发生的震颤不见了。我猜测有可能是它潜入到大海的最深处了，所以才会这样阴森可怕。

被困在这间房子里这么久，我真的不敢想象接下来会发生的事。我们曾经幻想船长会放我们出去，现在看来果真是幻想，永远不会变成现实。我不再觉得船长是一个高雅善良的人，他在我的印象中变成了一个无情的、冷酷的怪人。在我眼里，他完全没有人性，也没有同情心，他是人类永远的敌人，我们之间有着解不开的仇恨。

也许，他们存心将我们关在这里活活饿死，想到这儿我越来越感到恐惧。这种时候，只有葛瑟尔若无其事，而尼德·兰已经开始像猛虎般在吼叫。

这时候，门外传来了脚踩在金属地板上的声音。门锁响了一声后，侍者从打开的门外走了进来。

还没等我们反应过来，尼德·兰便像猛虎一样扑过去，一把抓住这个步行的侍者，用手掐着他的脖子。侍者被他那有力的大手掐得透不过气来。

正当我和葛瑟尔想解救这个侍者的时候，我听到有人用法语说：“您不要急，尼德·兰师傅。教授先生，您听我说！”

第十章 水 中 人

说话的人正是这艘船的船长。

尼德·兰听了船长的话，立刻站了起来。在主人的吩咐下，被掐得半死不活的侍者赶紧蹒跚着离开，并没有表现出对尼德·兰的愤恨，这足以证明船长在船上有很高的威信。我和葛瑟尔都有些吃惊，我们默默地等着看事情如何发展。

船长靠在桌子的一角，双手交叉着，仔细地观察着我们。他在想什么？难道是后悔刚刚用法语对我们说话？

我们都保持着沉默，谁也不愿意先开口。过了一会儿，船长用镇定的语气说：

“各位，其实我会说法语、英语、德语和拉丁语。初次见面时，你们说过的话我都听得懂，但为了证实你们说的话是真话，我才让你们将事实描述了四遍。而你们的四次描述，内容都完全相同，这使我肯定了你们的身份。很荣幸，我竟然遇到了肩负着出国进行科学考察使命的巴黎博物馆生物学教授伯艾尔·阿勒纳斯先生、他的仆人葛瑟尔以及北美合众国海军部‘林肯’号战舰上的鱼叉手尼德·兰先生。”

我们对船长点点头，表示礼貌。船长的法语很标准，没有一点口音。不管是字句、词汇还是表达，都很流利，像是出自法国人之口，但是从外表来看，我又觉得他不是法国人。

他接着说：“先生们，隔了这么长时间才来看你们，你们一定觉得我很无礼。其实，我一直在考虑，怎样对待你们几个人，但始终没有做出决定。要知道，你们打乱了我的生活，因为我是一个与人类不相往来的人……”

“我们不是故意的。”我说。

“真的是这样吗？”船长提高了声音说：“你们应该清楚，自己为什么上‘林肯’号，也应该知道‘林肯’号在海面上到处追逐我，用炮弹轰我的船。尼德·兰师傅还用鱼叉打我的船，难道这一切都不是故意的吗？”

从船长的语气中，我听出了愤怒。面对这些指责，我觉得自己有必要进行一些说明：“先生，您知道吗，您已经在美洲和欧洲引起争论了。您的潜水艇冲撞其他船只所发生的意外事件，已经轰动了两个大陆。您没必要知道人们做了多少种神秘的假设，但您应该知道，直到太平洋北部海面，‘林肯’号仍然觉得是在追打一种海怪，所以才非要把它从海洋中清除掉不可。”

船长的脸上露出轻轻的笑容，他温和地回答：“阿勒纳斯先生，您能确定你们的战舰只是在追击海怪，而不是去追击潜水艇吗？”

我很难回答这个问题，因为无论是潜水艇还是巨大的独角鲸，都是佛勒冈船长要消灭的对象，这是他的职责。

船长接着说：“先生，既然您无法回答我的问题，我就有权利把你们当成敌人看待。”

我不想再跟他纠缠这个问题，所以，故意不回答。

船长又说：“我没有接待你们的义务，我可以重新将你们扔回到这

艘船的平台，就当没有发现你们一样，我甚至可以潜入海中，我有权这样做的，对吗？”

我回答道：“只有野蛮人才会这样做，文明人是不会这样做的。”

船长有些激动，他说：“我不是你们所说的文明人，我早就跟整个人类社会断绝了关系。所以人类社会的法规对我没有用，希望您以后不要再在我面前提这些东西了。”

船长说这些话的时候很果断，并且他的眼睛里闪烁着愤怒和轻蔑，我敢肯定，这个人的背后一定隐藏着一段不平凡的经历。他不止让自己游离于人类的法律之外，而且让自己保持绝对的独立、自由，不受任何约束！很显然，与他交手的船都获得了失败，谁还敢到海底下去追赶他呢？面对这样一艘特质的铁甲舰，哪一艘能吃得消它的冲撞呢？在这种情况下，没有人能够质问他所做过的事，现在只能等待他的判决了。

我的脑子里很快闪现出上面的想法，谁知那个怪人一言不发，好像在思索着什么。我像俄狄浦斯注视人面狮身怪一样，既害怕又好奇地注视着它。

船长再一次打破了沉默，他说：“尽管我还在迟疑，但既然命运将你们送到这里来，你们就留在我的船上吧。在这里，你们是自由的，但有一个前提，你们要答应我一个条件，你们只要口头上答应就可以了。”

我答道：“先生，您说吧，我想这一定是一个正直的人可以接受的条件。”

“是的，先生，是这样的。我们遇到了一点小意外，因此，我必须

将你们关在你们住的舱房里几小时，或是关上几天。我也不想这样，但是特殊情况特殊对待，你们一定要服从。我应该对你们负责，不该让你们看到的，与你们无关的，就不能让你们看到。你们能答应吗？”

看来船上一定发生了什么事情，而且是不符合法律的。也许这将成为我的经历中非同小可的一件事。

“我们接受，但您要回答我一个问题。”

“说吧，先生。”

“你刚刚说我们完全自由，那么您所说的自由是怎样的自由呢？”

“你们可以像船上其他人一样随便走动，随便观察，但是特殊情况下除外。”

显然，我并没有得到我想要的答案，于是我又说：

“先生，很抱歉，囚徒在监狱里也是可以随便走动的，这种自由显然不能满足我们的要求。”

“可是你们还想拥有什么自由呢？”

“我们要见我们的祖国，我们的朋友，我们的亲人！”

“这样做只是让你们不再受那世俗的束缚罢了。这明明是束缚，你们却认为是自由，抛弃了它，不会像你们想象得那样难受的！”

尼德·兰喊道：“告诉你，以后我会想办法逃走的。”

“尼德·兰师傅，我并没有让您回答。”船长冷淡地说。

我也被他激怒了，说：“先生，您倚势欺人！太蛮横了！”

“先生，您误解了我的仁慈！对于我来说，你们是俘虏，我有权将你们重新送回海底去，但我还是留下了攻击过我的你们。你们发现了一个任何人都不会知道的秘密，您以为我会将你们送回陆地上去吗？永远都不可能，我要你们留在这里，不是为了你们，而是为了我自己！”

可见，船长是非常固执的，他的看法很难改变。我明白，他是让我们在生死之间进行抉择。对于这样的条件，我们很难接受。

但船长接下来的话，对我产生了很大的影响。他说：“阿勒纳斯先生，在此之前，我对您有所耳闻。我相信，上我的船对您而言是一个有趣的旅行，你应该会喜欢。我以前拜读过您关于海底秘密的著作，对于生活在陆地上的人而言，这部著作非常难得。但是，对于海底的了解，您只是完成了一部分而已，海底世界还有很多神奇的景象，相信您一定会百看不厌的。跟我在一起，您会一直保持一种震惊、好奇的心情，下一次进入海底世界的时候，我们将是一对科学研究的伙伴。相信我，我会将一个新的元素世界展现给您，您将领略到其他人没见过的世界。”

我的心事被船长说中了，我甚至暂时忘记了接受他的建议会让我失去自由。以后的事情以后再说吧，于是我回答道：“先生，尽管你游离于人类生活之外，但是您无法否认人类感情的存在，我们非常感谢您收留我们。就我个人而言，我可以暂时忘却自由，去追寻科学，我相信，我这样做值得。”

很遗憾，船长并没有像我想象的那样，与我握手表示赞同，而是想离开房间。我及时制止了他，问了他最后一个问题：应当如何称呼他。

他告诉我们可以称呼他尼摩船长，而我们所在的这条船叫“鹦鹉

螺”号。

尼摩船长将侍者叫进来，并用那种我听不懂的语言吩咐了几句。然后转身对尼德·兰和葛瑟尔说：“你们跟这个人去你们的舱房用餐吧。”

“我很乐意！”尼德·兰回答。

于是，他和葛瑟尔跟这个关了我们30多个小时的房间告别了。

“阿勒纳斯先生，我带您去吃午餐。”

“船长，听您的。”

我在船长的带领下，走上了一条有电光照耀的走廊，大约走了十多米以后，第二道门在我们面前打开。

一个装修考究的餐厅呈现在我的眼前。小餐厅的两端摆放着镶嵌乌木花饰的高大橡木餐橱，橱柜架子的甲板上摆放着各种价值连城的陶器、瓷器、玻璃制品。在由天花板倾泻的光线的照耀下，金银制的餐具显得辉煌夺目，天花板上的精美图画，使光线显得更加柔和。而在餐厅的中央摆着一桌丰盛的菜。尼摩船长指引我入座，并对我说：“教授，您饿了吧，赶紧吃吧，别客气。”

这是一顿丰盛的午餐，有很多鱼类和荤菜，其中几道菜我连名字都说不上来。这些食物都是用上等的食材做成的，尽管有一些特殊的味道，但是很合我的胃口。还没等我问船长一些关于菜的问题，他就已经猜到了我的心事，主动回答我说：“这些菜对于生活在陆地上的您来说一定很陌生，但您可以放心大胆地吃，这些菜很卫生，而且富有营养。长久以来，我一直吃这些食物度日，船上的其他船员也是一样，你看，我们的身体一样强壮。”

我好奇地问：“这些食物都是海产品吗？”

“没错，教授，我的全部生活来源都来自大海。通常我会用撒网的方式获取食物，有时候，会等到网满得快要断了才把它拉上来。偶尔，我们也会去那些海底深处获取食物，追逐那些生活在海底深处的猎物。海底对于我而言，就像牧场对于牧民一样，整个海底都是我的私人产业，它们是造物主送给我的礼物。”

我吃惊地看着尼摩船长，说道：“船长，餐桌上有鱼做成的食物我能理解，但有一点我想不明白，餐桌上怎么会有肉呢？”

尼摩船长回答：“教授，我想您是误会了，我从来都不吃陆上动物的肉。”

我指着盘子里的东西，对船长说：“难道这不是肉吗？”

“教授，您误会了，这不是肉，这同样是海里的东西，具体来说就是海螯的里脊。这盘像炖猪肉的是海豚的肝。我有一个很精干的厨师，他能将菜做成不同的样式。您尝尝这道被马来西亚人誉为世界上最美味的菜——海参罐头。这是奶油糕，这奶油不是普通的奶油，它是从鲸鱼的奶头上挤出来的，糖是从北极海中的一种大海藻里提炼出来的。还有一道菜，您一定要尝一尝，就是这道秋牡丹的果子酱，它的味道比最甜的果子酱还要好。”

我怀着一种好奇的心情品尝了所有的菜，其实，真正吸引我的并不是食物，而是尼摩船长讲的那些不可思议的、听起来非真非假的故事，他说：“阿勒纳斯先生，我们吃的、穿的都来自神秘的大海，这是我们生命的源泉。你往自己身上看一看，这些衣料是由一种贝壳类的足丝织

成的，染上了古人喜欢的红色和我从地中海海兔类动物中提取出的紫色。我们船上的香料是从海底植物中提炼出来的；睡觉用的床是用海中最柔软的大叶海藻做成的；写字用的笔是用鲸鱼的胡须做成的，墨水是用墨鱼或乌贼分泌的汁做成的。总之，现在我所拥有的一切，都是海洋赠予我的。”

“船长，您对海的感情很深吧？”

“这是肯定的，占地球面积70%的海洋就是一个包罗万象的世界。这个世界很单纯、很纯净，生活在海洋里的人不会觉得孤单，因为他的左右到处都是生命的气息。海象征着包容和爱，正像著名的法国诗人说的那样，海洋是不死的。大自然赋予了海洋三种生物，那就是动物、植物和矿物。海洋中的动物繁殖能力很强，主要包括腔肠动物四类，节肢动物三类，软体动物五类，脊椎动物三类，即哺乳类、爬虫类和成群无数的鱼类。鱼类的品种最丰富，足足有13000多种，其中在海水中生存的占了九成。海是大自然的仓库，一切都源于海，一切又归于海。海洋能够为你打造一个和谐的世界，在陆地上拥有的暴力、战争，在这里都消失了，在这里没有嚣张的气焰，没有权势，只有和谐。先生，海能够赋予人独立的个性，赋予人自由，所以，就在海里生活吧，您将成为一个完全自由的人！”

尼摩船长正说到兴头上，突然不再出声了。我不知道是什么原因，也许是他说得太多了，也许是他不太习惯这种表达方式。只见他在房间里走来走去，很焦躁的样子。过了一会儿，他逐渐平静下来，脸上又恢复了那种平静的表情，对我说：

“教授，现在我可以带您去参观我们的‘鹦鹉螺’号，不知道您愿不愿意。”

第十一章 “鹦鹉螺”号

离开了餐厅，我们来到了另外一个与餐厅差不多大的房间——图书室。高大的紫檀木镶嵌着铜丝的书架摆在图书室的四壁，架上的隔板上摆放着装帧统一的书籍。在书架下面摆着一排用兽皮盖住的长沙发，坐上去很舒服，曲度很适合人类的生理结构。沙发的旁边配有一排可以随意移动的支架，可以将书放在上面看。除了书架和沙发，在房间的最中央放着一张大桌子，上面放着一些过时的报纸，还有很多小册子。从天花板的磨砂玻璃球里照射出柔和的灯光，使整个房间显得很温暖。我被这个设计精致的图书室吸引住了，对于船上能有这样精致的图书室感觉很惊讶，满肚子赞美的话。

我将身子转向在沙发上躺下的主人说：“尼摩船长，对于这座隐藏在海洋深处的图书室，我满怀激动，如果它存在于大陆的宫廷中，或许我不会这般吃惊。”

尼摩船长说，“教授，这里是不是比您的自然博物馆工作室还安静呢？”

“您太谦虚了，尼摩船长，这里要比我的工作室豪华一百倍，这里有六七千本书呢……”

“阿勒纳斯先生，准确地说是12000本。这些书隔绝了我与陆地上的所有联系，我的‘鹦鹉螺’号第一次潜入水底的那一天，我购买了最后一批书，最后几份日报。从那时起，人类的思想就与我隔绝了。这些书可

以任您翻阅。”

我很感谢尼摩船长给我这样的机会，我将书架从上到下打量了一下，我看到了不同语言的科学书、哲学书和文学书，唯一缺少的是政治经济学书籍，一本都没有。在整个图书室，不同语言的图书随意排列着，没有明显的分类，从这一点可以看出，“鹦鹉螺”号的船长通晓很多国家的语言。

无论是古代还是近代大师的杰作都可以在这里都看到，这里凝聚了人类在史学、诗歌和科学等方面多年积累的成果，从荷马到维克多·雨果，从色诺芬到米希勒，从拉伯雷到乔治·桑夫人，每一本书都凝结了一个时代的精华。这个图书室最珍贵的图书要数那些机械学、弹道学、海洋绘图学、气象学、地理学和地质学等方面的书籍，它们占据了书架的重要位置，很显然，主人很注重研究这方面。此外，傅科尔、亨利·圣·克利·迪维尔、查尔斯·弥尔·爱德华、凯特法尔、邓达尔、法拉第、贝尔特洛、塞基院长、彼得曼、莫利少校、阿加西等人的著作也占了很大一部分。就连科学院的论文、各国地理学会的会刊等在这里也保存着。令我感到意外的是，我写的那两本书被尼摩船长放在很显眼的位置上，也许正是因为这两本书，我才受到了尼摩船长的款待。

通过贝特朗的《天文学的创始人》一书，我竟然推算出这只船的制造日期。据我所知，那本书是1865年出版的，据此可以判定，“鹦鹉螺”号下水的日子应该在三年前。我希望有更新的书证明我的猜测，但是此刻，我更想发现船上的奇迹，研究的事就等到以后再说吧。

我对船长的大方表示感谢，希望能从这些书中得到更多的启迪。然而尼摩船长却告诉我，这里不仅是图书室，也是吸烟室。

我很好奇，船上竟然也能吸烟，我开始怀疑船长与哈瓦那有来往，可我又一次猜错了，他很坚决地否定了我。

船长让我试试船上的香烟，并保证我一定会喜欢。我接过那只形状有点像哈瓦那制的伦敦式雪茄，并在一个漂亮的小火盆上把烟点起来。认识我的人都知道，我是一个爱吸烟的人，却过了两天不抽烟的生活，于是一见到烟，便尽情地吸了几口。接下来我说：

“味道很好，但我知道这不是烟草。”

船长回答：“你说得没错，这不是来自哈瓦那的烟草，也不是来自东方。而是大海中的海藻赋予我的一种烟精，这种海藻的数量很少。对了，先生，难道您不想念哈瓦那吗？”

“船长，以后不要跟我提哈瓦那了。”

“您就尽情享用吧，不用去关心这些烟是怎么来的，你只需知道，尽管这些烟没有经过烟草管理局的检查，但质量一定没得说。”

“这话我相信。”

紧接着，尼摩船长带我进入与图书室相对的一道门，展现在我眼前的是一个宽敞华丽的长方形客厅。客厅很大，面积将近60平方米，房间有5米高，天花板用淡淡的图案花纹装饰着，顶上的射灯照射出明亮柔和的光线。这里就像是一座博物馆，陈列着各种珍贵的宝贝，你能想到的，你想不到的，这里都有。

下面，就由我来带你欣赏一下房间里的宝贝。房子周围的壁毯上悬挂着30来幅画框相同的名画，画与画之间用闪闪发亮的饰物相隔。这里有很多珍贵的画作，有一些只能在欧洲私人的收藏馆或是画展上才看得

到。这里悬挂的作品有：拉斐尔的《圣母》，达·芬奇的《圣女》，戈列治的《少女》，提香的《妇人》，维洛奈斯的《膜拜图》，牟里罗的《圣母升天图》，荷尔拜因的《肖像》，委拉斯奎兹的《修士》，瑞贝拉的《殉教者》，鲁本斯的《节日欢宴图》，特尼尔斯父子的《佛兰德斯风景》，吉拉德、米休、保罗·波特的《世态画》，席里柯和皮埃尔·保罗·普吕东的油画，伯旧生和韦尔内的海景图。在一些近代作品中，有些油画甚至有很多名人的签名，如德拉克洛瓦、安格尔，代坎普、杜洛伊、梅索尼埃，道拜尼等，还有一些古代铜像和石像的缩小版仿品，都摆在房间角落里的座架上。

我渐渐被“鹦鹉螺”号所拥有的神奇吸引了。

古怪的船长对我说：“教授，这个客厅有些乱，很抱歉在这里接待您。”

“船长，如果我没猜错，您是一位艺术家吧？”

“先生，说我是个业余的爱好者更合适。我以前很喜欢收集这些精美的艺术品，因此，孜孜不倦地收集了很多价值很高的艺术品。而现在，这些东西已经成为对我来说是死亡之地的陆地的纪念品了。对于我而言，那些艺术家已经成为另一个世界的人，离现在也有两三千年，因此，在我看来，他们没有古代和现代之分。名师是不分时代的。”

只见客厅的一个并不太显眼的位置，放着一台大型的钢琴，钢琴上随意摆放着一些乐谱。我指着房间里摆放凌乱的韦伯、罗西尼、莫扎特、贝多芬、海顿、梅耶贝尔、赫洛尔德、瓦格纳、奥比、古诺以及其他许多人的乐谱说：“您认为这些音乐家怎么样呢？”

尼摩船长回答道：“对于我这个‘与世长辞’的人来说，这些音乐家与

俄尔普斯¹是同时代的人，他们有着共同的特点，生活在我的记忆之中。先生，我跟您说过，对于生活在陆地上的人来说，我就是一个死人，同您的长眠在地下六英尺深的朋友们一样！”

接着，尼摩船长陷入了深深的沉默之中。我专注地观察着船长脸上的表情，只见他的胳膊靠在一张嵌花的桌子上，心无旁骛地想着自己的心事。我识趣地不去打断他，继续欣赏餐厅里的艺术品。

除了手工艺品外，那些天然的海中植物、贝壳等也占据了客厅的主要位置。在大厅中间，有一个电光照耀的喷泉，喷起的水落在一片用大贝壳制成的环形水池中。这个巨大的无头软体类动物的贝壳边缘有6米长，比威尼斯共和国送给佛朗索瓦一世的贝壳还要大得多，而巴黎圣许毕斯教堂曾用这种贝壳做了两个巨大的圣水池。

在这个喷泉的周围有一个用红铜架子镶嵌的玻璃柜，柜中摆放了很多珍贵的海产品，上面贴着标签，很明显已经分过类。看到这些难得的东西，我感到难以抑制的喜悦。

植虫动物可以分为两类，分别是腔肠类和棘皮类，柜子中摆满了这两类海产品。属于腔肠类的有管状珊瑚，扇形矾花，叙利亚的柔软海绵，摩鹿加群岛的海木贼，磷光珊瑚，挪威海中的珊瑚，不同种类的伞状珊瑚，八枚珊瑚虫，石蚕（我的老师密尔·爱德华对石蚕的分类很在行），波旁岛的眼形珊瑚，安的列斯群岛的“海神之车”……总之不同种类的珊瑚这里都有，还有一些从没见过的腔肠类动物。这些珍稀的动物构成了一个海岛。除此之外，在那些多刺的棘皮类动物中，还有海盘车、海星球、五角星、慧星球、流盘星、海猬、海参等动物被做成的整套标本摆在这里。

对面是一个陈列着各种软体类动物标本的玻璃柜。面对眼前的无价之宝，我简直高兴极了。我没有时间挨个对这些宝贝进行详细描述，仅列出几种供大家参考：这里有白玉贝，产于美丽的印度洋，这种贝的底色是红棕色的，上面映衬着有规律的白点；这里有价值两万法郎的刺球王贝，这种颜色鲜艳，全身长着刺的贝类对于欧洲博物馆来说也是少见的品种；这里有最难捕获的普通糙贝，它产于新西兰岛海中；这里拥有塞内加尔岛的奇异唇贝，这种贝壳会让你联想起一吹就四散飘飞的肥皂泡；这里有最受人欢迎的爪哇的喷水壶形的贝，这种贝拥有石灰质的管子，形似树叶；这里有新荷兰岛海繁殖的一组红棕色的洼贝，还有美洲海繁殖的青黄色洼贝。除此以外，还有很多珍贵的贝壳，比如：具硫黄质的版形贝、珍贵的西德勒和维纳斯七角贝、图兰各巴海岸的格子花盆贝、质地细密光亮的细纹蹄贝、来自东方海岸的绿色帆贝、在锥形贝类中不为人知的圆锥贝，甚至还有印度和非洲作为货币使用的各种各样的磁贝以及东印度群岛最珍贵的贝壳——“海的光荣”。还有一些由科学家们用最美的名词命名的纽丝螺、燕子螺、金字塔形螺、油画海扇蛤、卵形贝、螺旋贝、帽螺、唐冠螺、朱红贝、油螺、竖琴螺、岩石螺、毛法螺、花斑长旋螺、纺锤螺、袖形贝、带翼贝、笠形贝、硝子贝、棱形贝，它们都属于蚝贝。

在另外一些格子里，也摆着一些闪闪发光的珠子，有一些是玫瑰红色珠，是从红海的尖角螺中取出来的，还有蝶形海耳螺的珠子，有黄色的、蓝色的、黑色的，以及各海洋中各种软体动物和北方海中蚌蛤类的新奇产品。这里最珍贵的要数那些从最稀罕的珍珠贝中取出来的珠子，它们的分量要比鸵鸟蛋还大，价值要超过旅行家塔韦尼埃卖给波斯国王的那颗珍珠，哪怕是与我最看中的珍珠——马斯卡特教长的另一颗珍珠比较起来，它们也略胜一筹。

所以，很难计算出所有藏品的价值，如果尼摩船长是用金钱换来的这些收藏，那他是从哪里来的钱呢？正在疑惑的时候，船长打断了我的思绪：“教授，您一定对我的贝壳很感兴趣，任何一位生物学家都会感兴趣的。这些贝壳都是我亲手收集起来的，我搜寻了海洋的任何一个角落，在这个过程中，我收获了另外一种快乐。”

“我能理解您的心情，作为亲手收集这些珍宝的人，就算是在这些宝藏中行走，都是一件幸福的事。在欧洲，任何一所博物馆都不会有像您这样的关于海洋产物的珍贵收藏。对于这些收藏，我想用最美的语言来赞美它，可是，我不知道该如何赞美。我并不是要窥探您的秘密，但是我很好奇‘鹦鹉螺’号为什么能具有这么强大的动力。我刚刚在客厅的墙壁上看见很多仪器，不知道您能不能向我介绍一下它们的用途……”

船长回答道：“阿勒纳斯先生，我已经向您承诺过，您在我的船上自由的，因此，您可以随意地参观‘鹦鹉螺’号，我愿意做您的向导。”

“我真的不知道该如何表达我的感谢之情！先生，我知道随便乱问是不礼貌的，但是我很想知道那些物理仪器是干什么用的……”

“教授，我房子里也有这样的仪器，到时候我会告诉您它们的用处，现在我带您去参观一下您以后住的地方，我想您对这个应该会很关心。”

尼摩船长带着我走出了这个神奇的房间，经过走廊来到了船头的一个房间，这里不仅有床，而且还有梳妆台和一些家具，房间很漂亮。

我对船的主人充满了感激之情。

他边开门，边对我说：“我们的房间是挨着的，而且它跟我们刚离

开的客厅是相通的。”

船长的房间古朴得让我不敢相信，房间里只有一张铁床，一张办公台和一些梳洗用具。除了一些生活必需品，没有任何装饰。

尼摩船长请我坐下，并对我讲述了很多。

[1](#)是希腊神话里的神奇乐师，他用美妙的琴声击退了海妖，拯救了希腊的英雄们。

第十二章 电主宰一切

在尼摩船长的房间，他指着挂在墙壁上的仪表对我说：“这些仪表对于‘鹦鹉螺’号来说是航行的必需品。我总是时刻注意这些仪表盘，因为他们为我提供了准确的位置和方向。有些仪表您一定很熟悉，比如测量“鹦鹉螺”号室内温度的温度表，测出空气的质量和预告天气变化的晴雨表，指示空气干湿情况的湿度表，通过混合物分解来预报暴风雨的暴风镜，为我们指明航线的罗盘，测太阳高度的六分仪，及时向我们提供船所在经纬度的经纬仪，可日夜观测的具有两种用途的望远镜。通过这些仪器，我可以在‘鹦鹉螺’号浮上水面时，观察大自然。”

我答道：“我当然了解那些航海常用的仪器，但是，另外一些您没提到的仪器呢，比如说上面有转动时针的流体压力计，这些是做什么用的呢？”

“它是测量海水的压力的，有了这个仪器，我就知道船在海中的深度了。”

“那些新式的测验器呢？”

“为我提供海底下各水层的温度。”

“还有另外一些我看不懂的呢？”

尼摩船长建议我耐心地听他说完。他沉默了一会儿，接着说：“船上所有的动力都依靠电来提供，可以说电是‘鹦鹉螺’号最初的原动力。支撑日常生活的光和热也都是由电来提供的。”

“电！”我惊叫起来！

“没错，教授。”

“可是，船长，电怎么可能使船行走的速度如此之快，根据现在的科学水平，电能所产生的力量是有限的。”

尼摩船长回答：“电与电是不同的，你明白这一点，也就明白了一切。”

我接着说：“船长，我不是想打探您的隐私，只是感到好奇。如果您觉得可以，就回答我的问题；如果觉得不方便就可以不做回答。我知道，如果您用某种特殊的物质来发电，那么，这种物质用完以后，您是如何补充的？”

尼摩船长爽快地说：“这个问题可以回答，开发海底的锌、铁、银、金等矿藏是一件可以实现的事，我根本不需要从陆地上获取，海洋便可以为我提供一切。”

“海洋负责提供？”

“是的，教授，方法有很多。按照物理原理，金属线受到不同的热度就能产生电，因此，我们将埋藏在海洋不同深度的金属线连接成电路，就达到了我的目的，不过，我更喜欢另一种比较简单实用的办法。”

“能不能介绍一下？”

“您一定知道海水中氯化钠的比例很高，它能够占到海水总量的2.7%，其余96.5%是水，剩下的物质包括小量的氯化镁、氯化钾、溴化镁、硫酸镁、硫酸和石碳酸。我就是从氯化钠中提炼钠，从而制造我所需要的物质。”

“钠也可以吗？”

“没错，教授。我们通常用另一种物质代替锌，而这种物质是由钠跟汞混合而成的。你知道，汞是不会损失的，我们只需要补充损失的钠就可以了。另外，还可以透露一点，钠电池的动力要比锌电池强很多倍。”

“船长，听您的解释我已经意识到您利用钠的优越性，但是，提取钠这个过程是怎样的呢？您在提取的过程中一定会损失很多钠，生产出来的会超过消耗的吗？也就是说，有剩余的钠吗？”

“教授，我并不使用电池来实现整个过程，而是利用煤炭来实现。”

“陆地上的煤炭？”我惊讶地说。

“海底也有煤炭吧？”尼摩船长反问道。

“在海底怎么采矿呢？”

“阿勒纳斯先生，有时间我会让您大饱眼福的，将解开您所有的疑惑。我有必要再向您重复一次，‘鹦鹉螺’号的动力、光和热都靠电来实现，而电是海洋赋予我们的。”

“电并不是万能的吧？它能制造空气吗？”

“呵呵！这个也是可以实现的，因为电可以发动强大的抽气机，将外面的空气输送到封闭的房间里，我们可以根据需要，确定留在海洋深处的时间。只是，这样做实在没有必要，我们随时都可以浮到海洋上来换气，又何苦给自己制造麻烦呢？”

我答道：“我敬佩您发现了人们一直在探索的秘密，利用了大自然的力量。”

尼摩船长冷淡地回答：“不知道他们会不会发现这个秘密，管他呢，您已经见证了这种宝贵的动力的首次应用。这种动力所拥有的特点让我们受益匪浅，不仅能够连续地为我们提供照明，还可以用于时钟的运转。请您注意观察这座钟，靠电运行的它非常准确，它的准确性超过了任何一款钟表。我以24小时为基础对一天进行划分，对于我而言，白天和黑夜、太阳和月亮没什么区别，因为我可以将人造光带到海底去，它可以满足我们所有的生活。您看，时钟显示现在是上午10点。”

“没错。”

“‘鹦鹉螺’号的速度是随时被记录的，通过我们面前的这个表盘就可以读出，原理很简单，只需要将测程器的一个线跟螺旋桨连接起来。现在你看这个表就知道我们的船正以时速15海里的速度行驶着……”

我打断了船长的话，说：“真是太神奇了，船长，您从来不利用风

能、水能和蒸汽，只需要一种原动力就可以搞定一切。”

尼摩船长站起来，带我走出房间，来到“鹦鹉螺”号的后部，对我说：“阿勒纳斯先生，您别着急嘛，我的话还没说完呢。”

通过刚刚的参观，我对船的分区有了一个初步的了解，大体是这样的：船的前半部包括了餐厅、图书室、客厅、我和船长的房间，还有一个储藏空气的密室。房与房之间用那些不渗水的隔板隔开，其中餐厅长6米，图书室长5米，大客厅长10米，船长室长5米，我的房间长2.5米。还有储藏空气的密室，也长达6.5米。所有的门都是用防水隔板做成的，用橡胶闭塞器关得紧紧的，确保在有微小漏洞的情况下也能保障“鹦鹉螺”号的安全。

接下来，尼摩船长带我穿过一条狭窄的过道，来到了船的中心——一个井一般的开口跟前，开口处有一架铁梯子，可以通到这口井的顶部，我又开始好奇这架梯子的作用。

船长很快就为我解开了谜底，告诉我这是通到小艇上的。

我十分吃惊，问：“难道您还有一只小艇？”

“不仅有，而且还是一只很好的小艇，轻快、安全，可以用来游览或是钓鱼。”

“您登上小艇，是不是需要浮在水面上呢？”

“不是这样的，‘鹦鹉螺’号船身的上部有一个凹洞，是专门用来存放这艘小艇的。小艇的四周用螺丝钉钉得紧紧的，船身都是不透水的甲板。小艇与‘鹦鹉螺’号船各有一个跟人差不多大小的小孔，这样人就可以从大船通到小艇内部，而这架梯子就是与那个小孔相连的。当我想登

上小艇的时候，就会用螺钉关上‘鹦鹉螺’号的孔门，同时也关上小艇的孔门。当我松开固定大船和小艇的铰钉，就可以漂浮在水面上了，而当我打开本来是紧闭的盖板，竖起桅杆，划起桨来，就可以遨游在大海里了。”

“那么，您是如何回归大船的呢？”

“阿勒纳斯先生，您正好说反了，是大船回到我身边。”

“是通过什么方式传达信息的呢？”

“大船和小艇之间通过一根电线连接在一起，因此，只需我打个电报就行了。”

我被船长的介绍震惊了，说：“这简直太不可思议了，一切都那么方便！”

穿过一个楼梯间，我终于来到了葛瑟尔和尼德·兰的舱房，在一个长约两米的房间里，我和我的两个伙计重逢了。此时，他们正在开心地品尝着食物。于是，我又在船长的带领下，来到了储藏各种食物的厨房，那里足足有3米长。

厨房里还是少不了电，一切烹饪工作全部利用电来完成。这里的炉子是用白金片制成的，电力通过白金片均匀地将热传到锅上。除了制作食物，“鹦鹉螺”号还通过蒸馏器的汽化作用提取饮用水。在厨房的隔壁，是一间舒适的浴室，24小时供应热水。

与厨房相连的便是长5米的船员工作室，这里似乎并不欢迎我，房门没有打开，因此，里面的布置也完全是保密的。但是凭感觉，这个房间应该是根据驾驶“鹦鹉螺”号需要的人数来设置的。

再往里面走，就是船的机器间了。房间全长20多米，里面放满了驾驶船所需要的一切，如生产动力的原料，还有分装着转动螺旋桨的机器。房间里灯光非常明亮，我可以看清里面的全部内容，从这里的布置来看，尼摩船长是当之无愧的一流工程师。

房间里的气味让我很不舒服，尼摩船长很快看出了我的不适，他对我说：“房间的气味是钠分解时散发出来的，这是这艘船的败笔。为了清除这种气味，我们每天早晨都要浮出水面透气。”

我对“鹦鹉螺”号的机器设备充满了好奇，不停地研究着。这时，船长对我说：“船上的全部电池装置都是本生¹的，鲁姆科夫²的电池装置电力不强。实践证明，结构简单的本生电池电力很强，而鲁姆科夫的装置就差一些。电池产生的电通过面积很大的电磁铁对杠杆和轮齿组成的特殊结构产生作用，从而推动轮轴，这样船就可以移动了。初步计算，推进器的直径是6米，涡轮的直径是7.5米，在这种情况下，轮轴每秒钟可以转120转，最高可以达到时速50海里。”

“鹦鹉螺”号的秘密我只知道一部分，还有很多无法解答。例如电是如何产生这么强大的力量的，这种力量来自哪里？究竟是从新型的变压器所造成的高电压中得来的，还是通过杠杆转动得来的？等等类似的问题都难以理解。

我对尼摩船长说：“求是的精神驱使我不得不冒昧地问你一些问题。我已经见识到‘鹦鹉螺’号在行驶中所产生的力量和速度了，但是，我很好奇，我们是如何指挥它向左、向右、向上和向下移动的？为什么这艘船可以潜入海底深处，它是如何承受海底几千几万的大气压力的？又是怎么升到水面上来的？又是如何维持在合适的深度的呢？”

船长略微迟疑了一下，回答说：“既然你将留在船上，那么就不妨为你揭开谜底。走，跟我去客厅吧，那里是真正的控制室，到了那里，你就知道整艘船的秘密了！”

[1](#)德国哥根廷人，研制出实验煤气灯，后来被称为本生灯。他还制成了本生电池、水量热计、蒸气量热计、滤泵和热电堆等实验仪器。

[2](#)德国技师，1850年制成第一只感应线圈。1851年，他提出第一个感应火花线圈(变压器)的专利。

第十三章 一连串数字

我们每个人嘴里叼着一根雪茄，舒服地坐在客厅的沙发上。船长将“鹦鹉螺”号的平面图、侧面图和投影图等全部图片都摆在我的面前，对我解释道：“阿勒纳斯先生，从这些图您可以看出这只船的形状和容积。船的中心是一个圆筒形，两端呈圆锥状。就像一支雪茄烟，它最长的地方有70米，最宽的地方是8米，这种设计与普通的远航船有所不同，更利于船在积水中行走，阻力更小。我们粗略地估算过，‘鹦鹉螺’号的面积是1010.45平方米，体积为1500.2立方米，也就是说，每次潜入水中时，船的排水量能达到1500立方米或1500吨。”

“当初，我设计‘鹦鹉螺’号的时候，就是要达到让船身露出水面十分之一的效果，这样，船在水中就可以保持平衡了。另外，通过排水量我们知道，船的重量为排水量的90%，也就是1356.48立方米，因此，船上其他物品的重量一定不能超过这个数目。”

“‘鹦鹉螺’号的内壳和外壳都是由钢板制造的，两壳之间用蹄铁连接

起来，因此，船身无比坚固，不怕最汹涌的风浪。我们刚刚说过，船的两层壳是用钢板制造的，而钢的密度要比海水的密度大。船的外壳有5厘米厚，重量约为394.96吨。船的内壳有50厘米高，25厘米宽，重62吨。而其他机器、镇船机、各种附属船具和装置品、内部的各样墙板和木材等的重量之和也在规定的范围之内。我在‘鹦鹉螺’号上设置了一个储水池，它的容积为150.72吨。我只需让水池装满水，就可以完全潜入水中了。教授，情况就是这样的。”

我好奇地问：“船长，我还是有疑问，让船与海面齐平，这一点我可以理解，但是，当船潜入海底的时候不是会遇到压力吗？那么您是如何让‘鹦鹉螺’号全部装满了水，从而潜到海底去的呢？”

尼摩船长回答：“教授，您应该将静力学和动力学分开来考虑，否则会造成严重的错误。物体都有重力，有了这种趋势，下沉就不是困难的事。我只需增加重量，并时刻关注海水在不同深度的压缩数量就可以了。”

“你说得有道理。”我回答。

“然而，压缩海水并不是一件容易的事，我要时刻关注压缩数量。如果船潜入1000米深的水层，我就要注意海水应保持在1000米的压力下，根据计算，我要将总重量增加到1513.77吨。”

“仅仅如此吗？”

“是的，阿勒纳斯先生，这是很容易证明的。我有很多个储水池，能容纳上百吨的水量，所以我能潜入海底很深的地方。当我要升到水面的时候，只需要将储水池中的水排出去就可以了。”

面对数字推理，我无法反驳。我只能对船长所做的说明表示赞同，但我明显感到这样做会存在困难。面对我的不解，船长希望听到我的解释。

我说：“我们打个比方，当您潜入水下1000米深的时候，‘鹦鹉螺’号的外壳承受着100大气压的压力。如果您想在这个时候上升到水面，就必须保证船上抽水机的力量超过100大气压的压力，也就是说，这种力……”

尼摩船长紧接着说：“这很容易实现，只需要有电就可以了。教授，我已经跟您重复过很多次了，船上的动力是无限的，抽水机的动力也是无限的，您应该见识过了，上次您曾见识过它对‘林肯’号喷出的水柱。另外，只有当我们想潜入到1500和2000米的中等深度时，我才需要补充那些储水池，这对保护机器有好处。因此，当我想潜入水下二里深的海洋底下时，我会采用其他同样有效的办法。”

“船长，能透露是什么办法吗？我很想知道。”我问。

“看来，我一定要跟您讲清楚我是如何驾驶这船的了。当我想让它在水平面上移动时，我会使用普通的舵，而把机轮和滑车转动的副舵装在船尾。当我想让‘鹦鹉螺’号在水中上升、下降时，我就利用杠杆原理从船的内部来操纵它们。当纵斜机板的位置与船身平行时，船便在水平面上行驶。如果它们的位置倾斜了，船就会在推进器的推动下，沿着对角线方向沉下去，或沿着这对角线浮上来。而推动器可以加速这种浮动，一旦水的压力达到一定程度，‘鹦鹉螺’号就可以迅速移动。”

船长的话让我感到无比震惊，我喊道：“船长，您实在是太有办法了。那么领航人在海底又是如何判断行走的路线的呢？”

“领航人的位置在‘鹦鹉螺’号船身的上部突出部分，那里装有一个透明玻璃的笼间，能够确保领航人清楚地看见航路。”

“这样的压力不会使玻璃破碎吗？”

“没问题的，只要不是冲击，玻璃都可以承受。记得在1864年的时候，曾有人在北方海中利用电光做打鱼的实验，当时使用的玻璃只有7毫米厚，结果竟然可以抵抗16大气压的压力，同时又可以让强烈发热的光线通过。与当时相比，我们的玻璃更厚，已经达到了21厘米，超过了当时的30倍。”

“尼摩船长，领航人又是如何在漆黑的海底看清航线的呢？”

“在领航人的笼间后面，装有一座光度很强，可以照亮半海里距离的电光探照灯。”

“啊！船长，您真是个天才。现在，我终于可以解释在‘林肯’号上看到的所谓独角鲸的磷光现象了，真的是迷惑了很多学者啊！既然说到这儿，我就不得不向您请教，影响很大的‘司格图亚’号事件，是偶然发生的吗？”

“教授，那次确实是个意外，当时我正在水底两米处航行，所以发生了冲撞。事实上，‘司格图亚’号并没有遭受什么损失。”

“先生，您说得没错。但是跟‘林肯’号的相撞呢？”

“教授，俗话说人不犯我，我不犯人。如果不是它攻击我，我也不会还击，我总不能让它伤害我吧。其实，‘林肯’号损失并不严重，只需要到附近的海港修理好就可以了，并不是很困难。”

我发自内心地赞美道：“‘鹦鹉螺’号真是一艘神奇的船！”

尼摩船长的情绪有些激动，他说：“是的，我爱它胜过一切。虽然在海上航行很危险，会受到意外的袭击，但我仍然爱它。荷兰人詹森曾说过，尽管大海给人的第一印象会让人感觉很害怕，但在‘鹦鹉螺’号上却毫无这种感觉。要知道，这是一艘牢固无比的船，双层的船壳使它既不用害怕船被损毁，也不怕被风吹走；既不用担心发生可怕的火灾，也不用担心煤炭会用完。从这些可以看出，‘鹦鹉螺’号是一艘举世无双的船，我作为这艘船的船长、建筑师和工程师，我有信心！”

激动的情绪让尼摩船长变成了另一个人。可以看出，他对船的感情，就像一个父亲爱他的儿子一样！作为这艘船的设计师，船长曾在伦敦、巴黎、纽约学习过。为了建造这艘神秘的船，他通过很多假地址来购买船的材料。比如，从法国克鲁梭工厂购买船的龙骨，从伦敦朋尼公司购买推进器，从利物浦利亚工厂购买船壳的钢铁板，从巴黎嘉衣公司购买船的储水池，从普鲁士克虏伯工厂购买机器，从瑞典的摩达拉工厂购买船前头的冲角，从纽约的哈提兄弟公司购买精确的测验仪器。他要求这些厂家按照他的设计图制造，当然，署名都不是他的。

我很好奇他是如何将一块一块材料组装起来的，他告诉我，他在大洋中的一个荒岛上建立了自己的工作场。岛上的工人都是他的同伴，正是在他们的配合下，才将“鹦鹉螺”号完整地装配好。船完工后，他毁掉了周围的痕迹，因此，没有任何人知道船的秘密。

我知道制造船的费用一定很巨大。据尼摩船长自己说，“鹦鹉螺”号的载重吨数是1500吨，建筑费用为170万法郎，连装备费一共为200万法郎，算上船内所有的美术品和收藏物一共是500万法郎。

“尼摩船长，我最后问您一个问题。”我忍不住插嘴道。

“别客气，问吧，教授。”

“您很富有对吗？”

“是的，如果我愿意，可以偿还法国几十亿的国债！”

我有点不敢相信船长的话，但又觉得他没有必要骗我。管他呢，将来会有机会验证这话是真是假。

第十四章 黑 水 流

数据表明，地球上海水所占的面积为383.2558万亿平方公里，体积共有22.5万亿立方米。如果将它变成一个圆球，这圆球的直径则为60里，重量为300亿亿吨。这实在是个巨大的数目，要知道，这个数目的海水相当于陆地上所有的河流在4万年中所流下的水量。

在地质学的纪元中，火的时期之后为水的时期。首先，海洋占据绝大部分面积，然后，山峰和岛屿逐渐呈现，后来又在洪水的作用下隐没，重又现出，连接起来，构成大陆，最后才形成了现在的格局。固体大陆从流体海水所取得的面积为3700.657万平方英里，也就是1291.6万公顷¹。

地球上的各大陆形状不同，把海水分为五大部分，即北冰洋、南冰洋、印度洋、大西洋和太平洋。

太平洋从北至南，是在南北两极之间，从西至东，是在亚洲和美洲之间，共有145度经度的宽广。太平洋的水量非常丰富，海水流动很缓慢——命运安排我首先从太平洋经过。

尼摩船长告诉我，如果我高兴，我们可以从这里开始旅行。于是，当钟指向12点45分的时候，船长命令船浮上水面。

三声电铃响后，储水池里的水被排出来了，之后“鹦鹉螺”号开始做上升运动，直到船停了下来，船长告诉我，我们到地方了。

我顺着钢铁楼梯，来到了“鹦鹉螺”号的上面。只见船刚刚浮出水面80厘米。“鹦鹉螺”号的船头和船尾像是一只雪茄烟，表面上的钢板像爬行动物的鳞甲。我终于明白为什么“林肯”号不能发现它了，因为从远处看来，它跟海中的动物没什么区别。

平台的中间，放着船长的小艇，看起来像是一个突出的筋包。平台的前后，一个是领航人所在的房间，一个是放置射灯的房间。平台上的海风很凉爽，吹散了天空中的云朵，视野很开阔，可以看出来很远。在船上，感觉不到波浪。

视线所到达的地方只有海水，没有暗礁，没有小岛，更没有“林肯”号。为了弄清楚船所在的纬度，尼摩船长使用六分仪测量太阳的高度。当太阳和地平线齐平的时候，他确定现在的时间是正午，于是，他问我是否出发。我看了一下海面，重新回到客厅中。船长熟练地在地图上记了方位，告诉我，我们所在的经度是西经137度15分。

为了弄清楚船长的国籍，我故意问他：“您是根据哪种子午线计算的？”

船长回答我说：“我可以根据巴黎、格林尼治和华盛顿子午线来计算。但由于您在，所以我以后会根据巴黎子午线计算。”

这个回答并没有让我得到任何信息，我只能点头表示感谢。船长又说：“现在所处的位置是西经137度15分、北纬30度7分，距日本海海岸300多海里。今天是11月8日，我们现在就开始海底探险吧。”

“希望一切顺利！”我回答。

接着，船长又对我说：“教授，您可以开始研究了，我现在会让船在水深50米下的地方行驶，目的地在东北偏东方，您可以随时观察航行路线。我要先告辞了，您可以随便使用餐厅，不要客气。”

尼摩船长告辞了，留我一个人在这里思考。我只对“鹦鹉螺”号的船长感兴趣，这个人让自己游离在人类世界之外，从不透露自己的国籍，难道我永远也无法知道这个答案吗？这个人会报复人类吗？也许他被人伤害过，也许他在政治生涯中受过挫折，这些都只是猜测。我只是一个被他收留的人，他甚至没有跟我握过手，这足以说明我们的关系。

这个问题，我整整想了一个小时，可是始终无法想清楚这个谜底。最后，我只有将注意力转移到桌上的平面地图上，将手放在上面所指出的经纬度相交的那个位置。

海洋中也有自己的江河，它是一种特殊的水流，具有不同的温度、不同的颜色，大家都称它为“暖流”。地球上共有5条主要的水流路线，依次分别在大西洋北部、大西洋南部、太平洋北部、太平洋南部、印度洋南部。也许，第6条水流也存在，将里海和阿拉伯海与亚洲的各大湖连起来，成为一片大海。

而地图上那个点，展开了被日本人称作黑水流的一条暖流，它从孟加拉湾流出，由于热带太阳光线的直射，变得很温暖，穿过马六甲海峡后，沿着亚洲海岸向前流淌，在太平洋北部的地方形成了一个环弯形，直到阿留申群岛。樟脑树的树干和各地的土特产都是通过这条暖流输送出去的，纯靛蓝的水色同海水的颜色完全不同，形成鲜明的对比。如今，我们的船正在这条水流上经过。我的双眼紧紧盯着这条水流，正当自己要同它融为一体时，尼德·兰和葛瑟尔出现在客厅门口。

我的两个伙伴第一次看到客厅里的展品，他们简直被震惊了，尤其是尼德·兰，他喊道：“难道我产生了错觉？我们是在魁北克博物馆吗？”

“如果您愿意，也可以说成是桑姆拉大厦。”葛瑟尔回答。

我将我的两个同伴叫到房间里，对他们说：“这里不是加拿大，更不是法兰西，而是‘鹦鹉螺’号所在的海底下50米。”

葛瑟尔说：“您说的肯定是真的，这个餐厅能让佛莱蒙人竖起大拇指称赞。”

“朋友，不要高兴得太早，对于你这个分类工作者来说，这里可有很多工作可做啊。”

葛瑟尔是一个非常积极的人，还没等我吩咐，就已经开始了他的工作，嘴里念叨着：“腹足纲，油螺科，磁贝属，马达加斯加介蛤种……”

这时，对于分类学一窍不通的尼德·兰问起我同尼摩船长会谈的情形：“您发现他是哪一国人的吗？这艘船打算把我们带到哪里去……”他一口气问了我很多问题，我都来不及回答他。

我努力将自己知道的都向他讲述了一遍，又问他有没有什么发现。

尼德·兰说：“我没有任何收获，没看到什么，也没听到什么，甚至连个影子都没有看到，难道他们是电人？”

“电人！”我觉得他的想法有些不可思议。

尼德·兰严肃地对我说：“我真的是这样想的，阿勒纳斯先生，实在没有别的更好的解释。对了，您知道船上有多少人吗？10人，20人，50人，还是100人？”

“我希望您放弃逃走的想法，要知道，这艘船上的设备很先进，既然来了就应该好好地参观一下，否则，太可惜了。您要相信我，只要你见识了这艘船的奇特之处，你就会心甘情愿地留在这里了。”

尼德·兰回答道：“除了船上的钢板，我没有看到任何其他的东西，估计将来也不会有什么改变。我们选择逃跑，才是最明智的……”

尼德·兰的话音刚落，客厅就陷入了一片黑暗。由于光线突然消失，让我的眼睛产生了一种疼痛感，就像在黑暗中突然亮起了灯光，让眼睛受到了刺激一样。

我们不再出声，连动也不敢动一下，共同等待着命运的宣判。这时，传来了一种滑行的声音，我甚至以为是盖板在“鹦鹉螺”号的两侧动起来了。

尼德·兰说：“我们真的要完蛋了。”

葛瑟尔则低声说：“水母目！”

忽然，眼前又出现了光明，光线从两个长方形的孔洞射进客厅里。在电光的照耀下，海水变得很闪亮。我们和海水之间只隔着两块玻璃晶片，一想到这些玻璃有可能会碎裂，我就陷入了一种恐惧。还好边上有红铜的结实框架顶住，使它具有更强的抵抗力。

在灯光的照耀下，我们将“鹦鹉螺”号周围的海水看得清清楚楚，真的是一道美丽的风景线。很难用语言描述那种美。

对于海水的认识我们算是比较深刻的，知道海水中所含有的矿物质和有机物质，能够增加它的透明性。比如在太平洋的安的列斯群岛，阳光可以穿透海水约300米，在海底约145米深的地方可以看见水底下面的沙床，十分清澈。然而，“鹦鹉螺”号却带给我们另一种体验，电光照耀在海水中，变成了流动的光。

我开始赞成爱兰伯的假设，认为海底是有磷光照耀的，我甚至可以想象出这样的景象是多么美好，我相信，这是大自然赋予海底居民的恩赐。于是，客厅的窗户成了我们见证海底奇迹的通道。客厅里越黑暗，越能反衬出外面的光辉，突然我觉得自己置身于一个很大的鱼缸里面。

在没有任何参照物的情况下，“鹦鹉螺”号好像静止了。只有看着船头的水线纹，才知道我们是在向前行走。眼前的景色彻底将我们征服了，我们时而靠在玻璃窗前，时而换个姿势，静静地欣赏着美景。这时，葛瑟尔打破了沉默，说：“尼德·兰先生，眼前的景色值得一看吧？”

“太有意思了，这么美丽的景色真是值得欣赏。”尼德·兰被眼前的景色吸引了，完全忘记了逃跑计划。

我喊道：“我终于明白船长为什么喜欢远离人世的生活了，这里完

全是另外一个神奇的世界！”

“可是我为什么看不到鱼呢？”尼德·兰好奇地问。

葛瑟尔回答：“看不到又怎么样呢，也许只是您不认识它们。”

“怎么可能，我可是叉鱼手呢！”尼德·兰喊道。

两个伙伴在这个问题上无法保持意见统一，他们的出发点不同。

教科书中是这样给鱼下定义的——有双重循环作用的，冷血的，用鳃呼吸的，生活在水中的脊椎动物，属于脊椎动物门中的第4纲和最后一纲。鱼分为两个种类：硬骨脊椎类和软骨脊椎类。

葛瑟尔在分类方面要比尼德·兰在行得多，因此，他对自己的朋友说：“尼德·兰，虽然您是个优秀的叉鱼手，但是分类不是您的强项。”

尼德·兰很严肃地回答：“其实人们对鱼的分类很简单，只分为能吃的和不能吃的。”

葛瑟尔回答：“专业的分类是将它们分为硬骨鱼类和软骨鱼类，你懂得这些吗？你说的那是不专业的分法。”

“葛瑟尔，你小看我了。”

“那您还能够细分吗？”

“我应该可以。”尼德·兰回答。

葛瑟尔继续说道：“让我来告诉你吧，硬骨鱼类可分为6目。第一目是硬鳍鱼，这种鱼有完整的上鳃，像个梳子。这一目可以分为15科，大

约75%的鱼都属于这一类，比如鲫鱼。”

尼德·兰回答：“鲫鱼很好吃。”

葛瑟尔接着说：“第二目是腹鳍鱼，它的腹鳍垂在肚腹下面和胸鳍后边，并不长在肩骨上。这一目可以分为5科，大部分淡水鱼都属于这一科，比如鲤鱼、鲮鱼。”

尼德·兰不以为然地说：“淡水鱼，不感兴趣！”

葛瑟尔接着说：“第三目是副鳍鱼，这种鱼的腹鳍接在胸鳍的下面或者挂在肩骨上。鲽鱼、比目鱼、鞋底鱼、大比目鱼分别属于这一类的4个科目。”

鱼叉手从吃货的角度又喊道：“这样的鱼非常好吃。”

葛瑟尔如数家珍，接着说：“第4目是无腹鳍鱼，属于这种类型的有鳐鱼、鳗鱼、电鳗鱼，它们共同的特点是鱼身很长，没有腹鳍，身上有很厚的带黏性的皮。”

尼德·兰说：“这种鱼的味道一般。”

葛瑟尔说：“第5目是鳃鱼，这种鱼的特点为鳃是完全自由的，像很多小刷子一样，整齐地对应在鳃环节上。这一目只有一个科，海马鱼、龙马鱼都属于这一科。”

“没有味道。”尼德·兰嫌弃地回答。

葛瑟尔又向尼德·兰介绍最后一目：硬腭鱼。他说：“这种鱼的颞骨是固定在齿颞的颞间骨边上的，上颞的拱形骨跟头盖骨牢固地连接在一

起，因此而得名。这一目包括两科，典型的代表是鲍鱼、银鲳。”

“我都不愿意浪费锅来煮这种鱼。”加拿大人喊道。

“尼德·兰，这回你明白了吗？”葛瑟尔问。

“我完全不懂，不过请你说下去，葛瑟尔，我知道您对这些感兴趣。”

葛瑟尔缓缓地说：“至于软骨鱼类可以分为三目：圆口鱼、梭鱼、鳍鱼。第一种鱼的鳃开着很多小孔，可以合成一个转动的圆环，比如七鳃鳗，就属于这一目。第二种鱼的鳃类像圆口鱼的鳃，是用下鳃活动的，属于软骨鱼类中比较重要的，主要分为两科，比如鲨鱼、鲛鱼……”

还没等葛瑟尔说完，尼德·兰便吃惊地问：“鲨鱼和鲛鱼属于同一类？哈哈，葛瑟尔，为了鲛鱼的命运着想，人们还是不要把它们放在一个鱼缸里了！”

葛瑟尔接着说：“软骨鱼中第三目的鲟鱼跟平常的鱼没什么区别，只是多了一个有盖的孔。这一目分为4科。”

尼德·兰笑葛瑟尔是一个吃货，因为他把最好吃的鱼放在最后来讲。葛瑟尔最后补充说：“哪怕你听懂了我刚刚说的所有的话，也没什么用，因为下面还有很多分类，如科又分为属，属又分为亚属，为种，为变种……”

这时，尼德·兰俯下身子，贴着玻璃窗说：“天啊，葛瑟尔，你看啊，好多种鱼啊，它们朝我们游来了！”

葛瑟尔回应道：“是啊，感觉在我们的眼前摆着一个大鱼缸！”

我并不赞同葛瑟尔的话，说：“鱼缸里的鱼是不自由的，而这里的鱼可以像鸟儿一样自由自在。”

尼德·兰说：“别浪费时间了，葛瑟尔，现在请你为这些鱼分分类吧！”

葛瑟尔拒绝了，说：“我可没那本事，我家主人可以！”

于是我告诉他们，眼前的是一条剑鱼。

大家都知道，葛瑟尔是一个对分类学有着一定研究的人，但他并不是生物学家，因此，他有可能分不出鲚鱼和鲐鱼的区别。而尼德·兰不同，他是一个捕鱼高手，见识过各种各样的鱼，他可以毫不迟疑地说出这些鱼的名字来。

尼德·兰补充道：“是一条中国剑鱼。”

葛瑟尔赞同地说：“对，它属于剑鱼属，硬皮科，固颞目。”

如果尼德·兰和葛瑟尔合体，将是一个十分出色的生物学家。眼前的剑鱼，围绕着“鹦鹉螺”号游来游去，仔细观察可以发现，它的身躯就像是被压扁了一样，背脊上有剑式的武器，尾巴两边长着四排尖刺。它们的外表简直无可挑剔，颜色搭配简洁大方，上边是灰色，下面全白，中间点缀着点点金黄，在波浪的漩涡中闪闪发亮，漂亮极了！在剑鱼中间夹杂着鲤鱼，并且是那种我喜欢的中国鲤鱼，它的上半身是黑黄色的，肚下带着淡淡的玫瑰色，眼睛后面长着三根刺。这种鱼很稀少，甚至连勒瑟伯德都没亲眼见过，他只在一本日本的图画书中见到过。

一大群水族部队围绕着“鹦鹉螺”号游了整整两个小时。它们玩耍着、跳跃着，进行着色彩和速度的竞赛。在它们之中，我看到了青色的海婆婆，长着双层黑线的鲷鱼，尾巴圆润、颜色洁白、背上长着紫红色斑点的虾虎鱼，生长在日本海中周身蓝色、头顶洁白的鲭鱼，不用说，从名字就可以看出这种鱼的气势。除此之外，还有长着蓝色或黄色鳍的条纹鲷鱼，有一条黑带长在尾巴上的线条鲷，裹在六条丝带中的线带鲷鱼。我们还看到了外形很像笛子的笛口鱼以及近一米长的海鹌鹑，日本的火蛇，多刺的鳗鱼，眼睛细小灵动、牙齿锋利的六英尺长蛇等等。

我想用最美丽的语言来赞美它们，我的两个伙伴则忙着判断鱼的种类，对鱼进行分类。这些外表活泼美丽的鱼让我感到从未有过的幸福，要知道平时我们不会有机会随意观察这些动物，如今，它们就在我们面前游来游去，自由自在，让我们看个够。

眼前比鸟还多的不知名字的鱼被电光吸引过来了，我甚至无法一一列举它们的种类。可见，日本海和中国海鱼的种类非常多，很多都可以成为标本。这时，客厅中的灯光突然亮了起来，船的盖板也关闭了，这时，眼前的美景消失了，我却仍然沉浸在刚刚的喜悦之中，直到机械停止不动为止。通过罗盘我判断出，我们正在朝着东北偏东方以时速15海里的速度行驶着，船位于水下50米，承受着5气压的压力。

大钟指向了5点，船长仍然没有出来。我和我的两个伙伴各自回到了自己的房间。只见餐桌上已经摆好了晚餐，有美味的海鳖汤，鲤鱼的薄片肉，看起来十分可口的鲤鱼肝，还有一盘金鲷鱼的肉片，味道与鲑鱼比起来毫不逊色。

在船上我仍然保持着夜间看书、写笔记的习惯。像平常一样，我思

考了一点问题以后就躺在海藻叶制的床上睡着了。睡梦中，“鹦鹉螺”号穿过黑潮暖流，迅速地驶离了这里。

[1](#)1公亩约等于100平方米。

第十五章 一封邀请书

我醒来时已经是11月9日了，昏睡了整整12个小时。葛瑟尔像往常那样过来向我问好，接着就干起活来，而他的室友仍然睡得昏昏沉沉。

我完全没有心思理会我的这个伙计，只是一心琢磨尼摩船长为什么还没有出现，我渴望再一次见到他。

我穿上了一件引起葛瑟尔很多想象的、质地很好的贝壳丝衣服，对他说：“你知道这衣服是用什么制成的吗？是由能发光的、丝一般柔软的纤维制成的。在地中海沿岸的海石上能找到很多这样的纤维，它们是由一种形状类似猪腔骨的贝类留下的，用它来制作衣服、袜子、手套，既柔软，又暖和。有了这些东西，‘鹦鹉螺’号上的人完全不愁穿戴，这些东西要比陆地上的棉花、羊毛和蚕丝质地好得多。”

穿好了衣服，我来到了客厅，发现那里没有人。于是，我又开始全神贯注地研究玻璃柜里的宝藏。我想弄明白，为什么柜子里那些稀罕的植物，已经风干多日，却仍然能保持鲜亮的颜色。同时，我发现了很多珍贵的水生植物，如环生的海苔，孔雀昆布，形状像葡萄叶似的海藻，粒状的水马齿，柔软的鲜红色海草，扇子形的海菰，外表像下陷的冬菇一样的吸盘草，这种草一直被归入植虫动物一类，最后我还看到了整个一簇的海藻类植物。

船长消失了整整一天，使得我没有机会接触那些珍稀的植物标本。“鹦鹉螺”号始终保持着东北偏东的方向行驶，以时速12海里的速度前进，距离海面50至60米。

11月10日，距离船长消失已经三天了，除了一个船员，我们没有看见其他人，船上显得冷冷清清的。尼德·兰和葛瑟尔陪我度过了大半天，他们也很好奇，船长为什么不出现，难道这个人病了吗？还是要改变主意处置我们？

值得庆幸的是，我们在这里拥有葛瑟尔所说的自由，主人还为我们提供了考究的饭菜，那么，既然对方遵守了承诺，我们也就没有理由抱怨，更何况人家对我们始终以礼相待，还有什么权利抱怨人家呢？

在这无聊的日子里，我总要找点事情做，于是我开始尝试将这次奇遇写成日记，尽可能将每一个细节描述清楚。船上那些用海中的大叶藻制成的纸张成了我的伙伴。

11月11日，当我在房间里感受到新鲜空气的时候，我向中央楼梯走去，登上了平台。此时，时钟刚刚指向6点。由于阴天，海水显得很暗，没有波浪。我之所以走上平台，只是幻想着能与船长在平台上相遇，可令我失望的是，我只看到在玻璃笼间里操作的领航人。于是，我坐在小艇外壳的突出部分，大口地呼吸着新鲜空气。

不知不觉中，一轮红日从东方渐渐升起，浓雾在太阳的照耀下逐渐散去。阳光下的海面看起来像是燃烧的火药，散发出一片红光。种种迹象表明，今天一整天都将刮风。然而，经过暴风雨洗礼的“鹦鹉螺”号对普通的风暴并不惊恐。

这时，有人走上平台来，打扰了我原有的平静。我以为是尼摩船

长，没想到上来的人是他的副手。他似乎并没有注意我的存在，径直走到平台前面，用一架倍数很大的望远镜仔细观察四周的情况。结束这些动作以后，他走近嵌板，说了一句法语，这也是我后来经常听到的，但是我并不懂法语，只能用音译的办法将它记录下来，大致是这样的：

“诺图隆—雷思普—拉伊—威尔希尔。”

船副做完了这些事后，离开了平台。通常这种情况下，“鹦鹉螺”号就又要潜入海底航行了，感觉无趣的我穿过狭长的过道，回到自己的房中。

这样的状况持续了5天。我每天早上都会在平台上听同样的人讲同样的话。尼摩船长像人间蒸发了一样，始终没有露面。我渐渐不再抱有希望。直到11月16日，我和我的两个伙伴从外面回到房间时，看到了一封署名为“阿勒纳斯教授收”的信。我迫不及待地拆开信封，一串带有德文字体的文字映入眼帘，信是这样写的：

明天早晨，将在克利斯波岛的林中安排一次打猎，尼摩船长诚挚地邀请阿勒纳斯教授和他的伙伴们抽空参加。

“鹦鹉螺”号船长尼摩

1867年11月16日

尼德·兰喊道：“去打猎！”

葛瑟尔补充说：“而且是在克利斯波岛的林中！”

尼德·兰又说：“难道我们有机会去陆地了？”

我重新将信读了一遍，肯定地说：“没错，信中是这样写的。”

尼德·兰说：“那我就接受邀请吧，至于其他的怎么办，就随机应变吧。我很高兴又可以尝到新鲜的野味了。”

尼摩船长是个不喜欢大陆和岛屿的人，他为什么会邀请我们去林中打猎呢？我的心里产生了很多疑团，为了得到答案，我很乐意地接受了他的邀请。

我翻出地图，知道了克利斯波岛的大体位置，在北纬32度40分、西经167度50分的地方，我将它指给我的同伴看。据我所知，古老的西班牙地图将这个岛称为洛加·德拉·蒲拉达，翻译过来是银石的意思，1801年的时候，克利斯波船长发现了它。那个小岛距离我们所在的位置大约1800海里，为了到达目的地，“鹦鹉螺”号便朝着东南方向行驶。

我告诉他们，尼摩船长即使偶尔登上陆地，也一定会选择荒无人烟的地方。尼德·兰摇摇头，不作任何回应，过了一会儿，他和葛瑟尔离开了我的房间。很快到了晚餐时间，船员客气地将晚餐送了过来。

解决了吃饭问题，我躺在床上想着明天的事，想了很久才昏昏睡去。

第二天早上，刚刚起床我便发现“鹦鹉螺”号不再行驶了，我简单洗漱后赶到了客厅。原来，尼摩船长早就到了，一直在客厅里等我。我出现后，他第一件事就是问我愿不愿意跟他去打猎。我当然给予了肯定的回答，不过，紧接着我又问了一句：“既然您已经与大陆隔离，为什么

还要去克利斯波岛的森林打猎？”

船长笑着回答说：“教授，您误解了，我所说的森林同您所说的森林不同，我的森林没有太阳，没有光和热，没有狮子、老虎、豹子以及其他四脚兽。森林里的一切只为我提供原料，这里就是海底的森林。”

我好奇地问：“海底的森林？”

“您说得没错，教授。”

“您是说去海底森林里打猎？”

“的确如此。”

“不用坐船吗？”

“不需要，即使步行去，也不会沾上海水。”

“您确定是打猎吗？”

“是去打猎。”

“需要猎枪吗？”

“需要。”

我不可思议地看着“鹦鹉螺”号船长，眼睛里充满了疑问。我甚至觉得他的脑子出现了问题，也许消失这么多天，正是因为发病的缘故。哎，可怜的船长，希望他不要发病才好。

我的眼神出卖了我的想法，但是尼摩船长并不做解释，只要求我跟

着他，于是，我们一起去餐厅吃早餐。船长客气地请我用餐，我们像往常一样吃饭、聊天，他告诉我，要尽量吃饱一点，因为海底森林里没有餐馆，让我做好早点吃午饭的准备。

各种美味的海产品填饱了我的肚子，包括鱼类、海参、助消化的海藻类植物等，饮料则是用水和酵素酒合成的液体。我知道，很久以前，堪察加岛人就是用海藻酿酒的。

尼摩船长起初只是顾着吃饭，后来才肯张口，他对我说：“阿勒纳斯先生，不要以为我是自相矛盾才会邀请您到我的克利斯波岛的森林中去打猎，也不要以为我是因为发疯才告诉您这是海底森林，这样的想法是不对的。只有当您知道事实真相的时候，才会放弃这种想法。要知道，人只要拥有可呼吸的空气，就可以在海底生存，这是人人皆知的常识。然而，这并不只是一种假设，人只要穿上一件不透水的衣服，头上戴一个金属的盒子，再获得必需的空气，在海底生存就可以成为现实。”

我补充说：“简单地说，只是需要一套潜水设备。”

“你这样说并没有错，但是，带了潜水设备的人是无法在海中自由活动的。因为输送空气的胶皮管子同大船是连在一起的，我们很难走远。”

我好奇地问：“难道还有更好的办法？”

“当然，洛克鲁尔和塔纳洛兹创造的器械就解决了这个难题。为了在海底更好地生存，我改善了你的两位同乡的器械，让它使用起来不至于那么痛苦。解决的办法是，将一个厚钢板制的密封瓶中储满50大气压力压缩的空气，用一条腰带捆在人的背后，而瓶上有一个吹风机，用来

控制盒中的空气。只要压力达到一定程度，盒中的空气才会流出来。而洛克鲁尔器械，则是用两条胶皮管子从钢盒中接出来，一条用来吸气，另一条用来呼气，而人的舌头，就成了控制这两条胶管的开关。但是，当深海中压力变大的时候，我就要像潜水员一样，把我的脑袋装在铜制的圆球中，而圆球恰恰与两条胶皮管相连。”

我问道：“尼摩船长，这样并不能保证氧气始终充足，总会有用完的时候，要知道当空气中的氧只剩下百分之十五时，就不能再呼吸了。”

“您说得没错，但是您忘了，阿勒纳斯先生，‘鹦鹉螺’号的打气机可以将高压压缩的空气装进去，这样，这套器械里的空气就足够我呼吸9到10小时了。”

我回答：“我彻底被折服了，但是，您在海底是怎么解决照明问题的呢？”

船长回答：“兰科夫灯可以解决一切问题。阿勒纳斯先生，我的背上背着呼吸器，而腰间别着探照灯。探照灯的电池不是普通的氯化钾，而是海中的氯化钠，你知道，海中的氯化钠是取之不尽的。只需要一个感应线圈便可以将电聚集起来输送到灯泡，而灯泡中有一根弯曲的装有少量二氧化碳的玻璃管。当探照灯处于开启状态时，二氧化碳便发出一组白光，为我照明。有了这些设备，呼吸和照明的问题就都解决了。”

“尼摩船长，你解除了我所有的疑问。但是，除了洛克鲁尔呼吸器和兰科夫探照灯以外，我还很好奇，如何在海中使用猎枪呢？”

“这可不是普通的火药枪。”船长回答。

“难道是气枪？”

“也不是，我在没有硝石，没有硫黄，没有木炭的情况下，根本就不能制造火药。”

我接着问：“要知道，海水的重量是空气重量的855倍，在这种环境下，您是如何克服这些困难开枪的呢？”

“这不是问题，现在流行的富尔顿1的设计就可以解决这个问题。富尔顿的设计是在英国人菲林格尔和布列、法国人福尔希、意大利人兰迪的基础上加以改进的，这种枪装有特殊的开关，哪怕在海中射击也可以做到游刃有余。但是，我必须重复一遍，我的枪不是用火药，只是用了压缩空气，这种空气在‘鸚鵡螺’号上是取之不尽的。”

“难道这种空气永远都不会用完？”

“当然，要知道我有洛克鲁尔瓶，有了这种设备，空气就像水龙头里的水一样，只需要开关水龙头，就会源源不断地涌出。阿勒纳斯先生，马上您就可以亲身体会这种神奇。”

“但是，您知道，海底的视线并不是很好，而且海水的重量要比空气重得多，怎样才能保证瞄准猎物呢？”

“先生，这种枪的神奇之处就在于它可以一枪毙命，不管伤势如何，只要接触到便会立即倒下。”

“这是什么原因呢？”

“因为这种子弹与众不同，它是由奥地利化学家列妮博罗克发明的一种小玻璃球，里面有钢套子，下面有铅做底，带有很高的电压。只要

是接触到动物，哪怕只是轻微的冲击，也会让动物停下来死去。这种子弹的威力很大，但是体积并不大，普通猎枪的弹盒可以装上10个。”

我从椅子上站起来：“耳闻不如一见，从现在开始，我就跟着您走了，我要用我手中的枪来实验一下。”

船长带我到了“鹦鹉螺”号的后部，经过尼德·兰和葛瑟尔的舱房门前，我叫上他们一起出发。不一会儿，我们来到了靠近机器房的一个小房子里，穿上特制的衣服后，就将开始一场奇特的旅行。

[1](#)美国著名工程师，他发明的汽船是第一次工业革命的重要发明之一。

第十六章 徜徉在海底平原

小房子位于“鹦鹉螺”号的军火库和储藏衣服的地方。墙上挂着12套供散步者使用的潜水衣。这些潜水衣并没有引起尼德·兰的兴趣，他很不情愿穿。

我对他说：“尼德·兰，你要搞清楚，我们是要去克利斯波岛的海底森林！”

由于吃鲜肉的梦想破灭了，尼德·兰很失望。他回答说：“阿勒纳斯先生，您确定您要穿上那些衣服？”

“当然。”我肯定地说。

尼德·兰无所谓地耸耸肩，说：“先生，随你吧！”

在船长的嘱咐下，两个船员走过来帮我们穿这些不透水的、沉甸甸的衣服。衣服的质地是橡胶的，没有缝隙，在强大的压力下，也可以保持完整。它的作用相当于一套又柔软又坚固的盔甲。衣服是连体的，裤脚下连着厚厚的带铅铁板鞋底的鞋。穿衣服的人靠一块铜板来保护胸部，以抵御水的冲压，这样人就可以自由呼吸了。衣服的袖子和手套是连在一起的，丝毫不妨碍手部运动。

眼前的这套潜水衣很完美，相比18世纪发明的树皮胸甲、无袖外罩潜水衣、藏身箱等要先进得多。不一会儿，我和葛瑟尔在别人的帮助下穿好了衣服，尼摩船长和他的一个大力士同伴也都穿好了潜水衣。只要我们将脑袋钻进金属圆球中，就可以出发了。

不过我并没有着急出发，而是要求尼摩船长将猎枪给我看一看。

尼摩船长答应了我的请求，命令船员将一支看起来并不复杂的枪拿给我看。枪托是由钢片制成的，体积相当大，中间是储藏压缩空气的容器，上面有活塞，转动机件便可以使空气流入枪筒。枪托里面装了足足20粒电气弹，在弹簧的作用下，子弹可以自动跳入枪膛中。一粒子弹打出之后，另一粒立即填满，可以保证连续发射。

我对尼摩船长说：“我们快到海底去吧，我迫不及待地想试试这支枪了。”

“教授，现在我们在海底10米处，马上就可以出发了。”

“我们怎么过去呢？”

“马上您就知道。”

尼摩船长率先将头钻进圆球帽子里面去，我和葛瑟尔重复着他的动

作。尼德·兰轻蔑地说：“你们好好地打猎去吧”。

潜水衣看起来跟普通的衣服一样，也有领子，不同的是这个领子是铜的，而且有螺丝钉。头顶的圆球上有三个孔，人可以透过它们看见周围的东西。当我们的头钻进圆球中时，背上的洛克鲁尔呼吸器便立即发挥了作用，以确保我们自由呼吸。

准备就绪后，我们手拿着猎枪出发了。但是穿上这身沉甸甸的衣服，鞋底被钉在甲板上，很难挪动步伐。这时，我被推进一个跟藏衣室相连的小房子中，我的同伴也一个一个被推进来，我听到身后关门的声音，紧接着，房间陷入了漆黑。

隔了几分钟，我的耳边传来了呼啸声，之后，我感到一股冷气从脚底涌到胸部。很明显，我们被海水包围了。不一会儿，小房子里便充满了水。这时，“鹦鹉螺”号船侧的另一扇门打开了，一道光线照了进来，我们可以在海底行走了。

如今，我很难用语言形容当时的情景，相信就算是一个著名的作家也很难描绘，这样一来，我也就情有可原了。

尼摩船长走在前面，我们走在中间，他的同伴跟在我们后面。我和葛瑟尔紧紧挨着，以便互相照顾。在这里，我们的感受完全不同，衣服、鞋底和空气箱似乎不再沉甸甸了，也不再觉得厚厚的圆球是个负担，我们的头在圆球里可以自由活动。海水带走了一切重量，在这里，阿基米德原理体现得更加充分。于是，我从一个呆立不动的物体变得行动自如。

我惊奇地发现，阳光竟然可以照到海底30英尺的地方。在太阳光的作用下，水中的颜色不见了，能见度非常好，我可以看清100米以内的

物体。而百米之外，水底则呈现出不同的色度，远处是浅蓝的，再远处是模糊黑暗的。在这里，水就像是空气一样，虽然密度比空气大，但透明度相当。我抬起头，就能看见平静无波的海面。

海底的沙子很细、很平静，没有皱纹，在上面行走，只看得见潮水的痕迹。沙子像是一把强力反光镜，将太阳光反射回去，从而产生一种强大的光线辐射。也许，没有人会相信我的话，不过这确实是真的。

我们在沙层上缓缓地移动，10分钟后，像长长暗礁一样的“鹦鹉螺”号船身就消失不见了，但可以看见船上探照灯的亮光，哪怕是走到黑暗的地方，也可以顺着光线回到船上去。

如果不是亲眼看见，真的很难了解电光在海底的作用。在陆地上，由于空气中含有尘埃，因此，光线变得像雾一样，没那么透亮。但是在海底没有杂质的情况下，电光就变得很透亮了，一点也不模糊。

我们在无边际的细沙平原上走动，不时用手拨开水帘，走过后它又自动合上，脚下水的压力也消失不见了。过了一会儿，一片美丽的景色出现在我的眼前，一块海底岩石上铺满了美丽的动植物。

此时，刚好上午10点。太阳光倾斜着投射在水面上，光线由于折射，显现出七种不同的颜色。海底的花、石、植物、介壳、珊瑚类动物，被光线装饰得美丽异常。红、橙、黄、绿、青、蓝、紫，7种颜色汇聚成色彩缤纷的万花筒，就像是水彩画家亲自搭配的颜色一样绚丽。这样的美景让我一饱眼福，此时，我真想同葛瑟尔共同分享这种喜悦，更想向尼摩船长表达我激动的心情。但是，这些想法很难实现，我只好自顾自地开心着，哪怕要耗费很多空气，我也要表达一下自己的心情。

面对如此美丽的景色，葛瑟尔也不淡定了。这个对生物分类着迷的

人又开始了他的工作。满地都是腔肠动物和棘皮动物，有变化不一的叉形虫、孤独生活的角形虫、纯洁的眼球虫、被人称作雪白珊瑚的蘑菇形的菌生虫、肌肉盘贴在地上的白头翁……整个沙层被布置成了一片花地，再镶上结了天蓝丝绦领子的红花石疣，显得格格外精致。在水流的作用下，这些花朵也随着轻微地摆动起来，显得更加婀娜多姿。此时，我的脚下有成千上万的美丽的软体动物：环纹海扇，海棒鱼，会跳跃的德纳贝，洼形贝，朱红胄，酷似天使翅膀的袖形贝，叶纹贝，以及其他许许多多的无穷无尽的海洋生物。对于我们给它们带来的搅扰，我感到十分惋惜。但是，我们不能停下脚步，前面等待我们的是更美丽的风景。我们头上是成群结队的管状水母，漂在水中的它们伸出天蓝色的触须；月形水母像是一把套了天蓝色框子的伞，为我们遮住了阳光；还有发亮的半球形水母，为我们照亮了前进的道路。

在接下来的旅行里，各种各样的珍稀品种呈现在我的眼前，而我始终跟在尼摩船长后面，不敢落下。不久，脚下的土壤不再是细沙，而是一片胶黏的泥地，由硅土或石灰贝壳构成，美国人将它称为“邬籽”。接着，是一片海藻地，这种植物的繁殖能力很强，长在地面上，未曾被海水冲走过。脚踩在海藻质地的草坪上，软绵绵的，那感觉像是踩在地毯上一样。我们不光脚踩着一片绿色，头上还顶着一片绿色。这些绿色，都是由海藻类植物构成的，足足有两千多种。认得出的有长长的海带（有些是球形，有些则是管状）、红花藻、叶子很纤细的薜苔、很像仙人掌的蔷薇藻。还有离海面较近的青绿色的海草，再深一些地方的是红色的海草，而最深处的是黑色或赭色的水草，形成了海底花园和草地。

植物界可以说有很多奇迹，而这些海藻类绝对可以算作其中之一。海藻类涵盖了地球上最小的植物和最大的植物，既有5平方毫米的微生物，也有长度超过500米的海带。

离开“鹦鹉螺”号一个半小时以后，就是中午了。太阳光垂直照下来，没有了折射作用，颜色逐渐消失。我们走路的声音很响亮，能够传出去很远。这是因为声音在水中比在空气中传播得更快，差不多快了四倍。

渐渐地，海下地面开始出现明显的斜坡，越来越低。随着深度的增加，阳光变得很微弱。当我们到达百米深度的时候受到的大气压约为10帕，不过由于我的潜水衣是特制的，所以这种压力对我来说没什么影响，就是觉得手指不能灵活摆动，但这种情况也很快就消失了。我穿着并不是很习惯的潜水衣，游了两个小时，按说应该很累了，但现在并没有这种疲倦的感觉。

到了大约300英尺的深度，还勉强可以看见微弱的太阳光，接着它的，就只有红色的曙光，那是白天和黑夜之间的暗淡的光线，勉强可以引路，暂时不需要兰科夫灯。

这时候，尼摩船长把我叫到前面，指着远处阴影中模糊不清的物体，我想，他是在告诉我，那就是我们的目的地。是的，我没有猜错。

第十七章 海底森林

我们走到了尼摩船长所拥有的物产最丰富的森林边缘，这里算得上是一片富饶的土地。尼摩船长成为这片领土的主人，没有人和他竞争，是他的勇气让他拥有了一切，除了他，还有谁敢拿着斧子来这里开荒种田呢？

在这片森林中，高大的木本植物比比皆是，其中一种拥有阔大的拱形枝干的树木，将我深深地吸引。这是我以前从未见过的树种，它的树枝排列的形状很奇特。

在这里，草类植物生长得并不茂盛，树木也不像陆地上那样或是垂下，或是向外蔓延，这里的所有树木都是笔直伸向海洋表面。大多数树木都不长枝条和叶带，尽管看起来很细小，但都像铁杆一样笔直。在海水强大密度的影响下，海带和水藻坚定不移地垂直生长，即使偶尔被我用手指分开朝着别的方向，当我的手放下的时候，便也立即恢复垂直的样子。

我渐渐适应了海底的世界，熟悉了这些古怪的形状，也熟悉了没有光亮的生活，我可以避开林中地上随处存在的尖利的石块。在我看来，海底植物的生长过程是不断地从旧范式向新范式过渡的科学发展的过程。与南北两极地带和热带领域相比，这里的物产更加丰富。仅仅几分钟，我已开始混淆植物和动物的区别，要知道，它们在海底的区别是很小的。

据我观察，这里的植物并不是真正同土壤相连。抓住它们根部的，不管是固体、沙、贝、甲壳或石子，对它们的影响都不大。对它们而言，只需要一个支点，就可以疯狂地生长。它们的生长更多是靠内因，一定存在一种维持和滋养它们的东西，这个东西就是海水。这些或是没有叶子，或是长着小片叶子的植物，表面颜色很单一，只有玫瑰红、洋红、青绿、青黄、灰褐和古铜色。比如像扇子般展开的孔雀彩贝，通红的陶瓷贝，像嫩笋一样的片形贝，约有15米高的古铜藻，茎在顶上生长的瓶形水草，还有很多其他类型的海产植物就这样鲜活地呈现在我面前，而不是像在“鹦鹉螺”号船上看到的那些风干的标本。这些植物有一个共同的特点，那就是都不开花，就像一位很风趣的生物学家说的那

样：“大海是一个与众不同的自然，在这里动物类开花，植物类不开花！”

海洋中有开着花的丛林，植虫动物的篱笆行列，它们或是生存在像温带树木一般高大的灌木丛中间，或是生存在湿润的阴影下面。也有像花一般绽放出条纹状花朵的脑纹状珊瑚，晶莹剔透的黑黄石竹珊瑚，生长茂盛的石花珊瑚，当然也少不了动物类，如成堆成堆的蝇鱼，它们像成群的鸟儿，在树枝之间飞来飞去。还有两腮耸起、鳞甲尖利的麦虫鱼，飞鱼，单鳍鱼，它们像一群鹌鹑，在我们脚下跳来跳去。

尼摩船长发出休息口令的时候，已经到了下午一点钟。我很高兴能在这样的环境中休息一下，于是，我在一条像箭一样笔直的海草华盖下面躺了下来。那感觉舒服极了，唯一让我感到遗憾的是，我们不能通过语言交流。我只能将套在圆球里的头靠近葛瑟尔，我从他的眼睛里同样看到了兴奋的亮光。见我靠近，他还在潜水衣里做各种搞笑的动作，表示他对这次旅行的满意程度。

我很吃惊，已经足足走了4个小时的路，但是并没有饥饿的感觉，我不明白这是什么原因。唯一与陆上不同的是，我似乎比平时更容易困，而且很难控制睡觉的冲动，恨不得只要躺下立即就能睡着，只有与其他人通过身体接触交流的时候，才暂时制止了瞌睡虫。与我不同的是，尼摩船长和他的同伴，早就躺在清澈的水晶体上，美美地睡着了。

有了榜样的作用，我很快也陷入昏睡之中，当我再次醒来的时候太阳已经向西边沉下去了，我不知道自己睡了多久，只觉得很满足。我发现尼摩船长已经站起来了，我也跟着站起来，伸伸懒腰，忽然，我发现在距离我几步远的地方，有一只一米高的海蜘蛛，正斜着眼睛看我，似乎马上要朝我扑过来。

我被眼前的阵势吓到了，尽管我穿着厚重的潜水衣，不会被它咬伤，但是恐惧仍然很难控制。就在这个时候，葛瑟尔和尼摩船长的伙伴起来了，他们在尼摩船长的指引下，也看到了那只怪物。只见他的伙伴拿出枪，一枪就将那个怪物打得抽搐挣扎。

这次经历让我预感到，后面还会有更可怕的动物出现在我的面前，到时候，恐怕连潜水衣也无法抵御它们的袭击了。于是，从那时开始，我提高了警惕。刚开始的时候，我以为我们休息过后就会回到船上去，但后来我发现我想错了，尼摩船长让我们休息，是为了给后面的旅行储备精力。

在倾斜地势的作用下，我们不知不觉中被拉到海底的最深处。大概下午3点的时候，我们来到了一座狭小的山谷中。山谷的四周是峭壁，要知道这是150米深的海底。通常情况下，人们只能在90米以内的海底旅行，但是由于我们装备更精良，因此可以超越大自然的极限。

我之所以判断我们是在150米的海底深度，是通过四周的环境得出的结论。因为周围海水很清澈，而且没有了阳光的照射。越往下，周围越是黑暗，无法看清十步外的情况，我们只能摸索着缓慢行走。这时，尼摩船长用电光机器为我们照明，我们眼前立即出现了一道明亮的光。我和葛瑟尔照着尼摩船长的样子做，轻轻地转动螺丝钉，让电磁铁跟曲玻璃管接通，很快四盏灯都亮了起来，海下没有阳光的地方也变得明亮起来。

尼摩船长继续向海底深处出发，周围连树木都变得稀少了。于是，我得出结论，植物界要比动物界消失得早些。尽管海产植物在这贫瘠的土地难以生存，但数量很多的动物、植虫动物、节肢动物、软体动物和鱼类却生活得有滋有味。

手电筒的灯光将周围的海底居民吸引过来，但它们始终停留在我们的猎枪射程之外。因为，我发现尼摩船长曾几次停下来瞄准，但经过观察之后，最终放弃了射击。

我们的旅程结束在下午4点钟的时候。当时，我们的去路被一道高大的岩石墙和一大堆怪石群挡住。那些巨人般的岩石层、花岗石的悬崖、乌黑的岩洞，让人无法攀爬上去。这里就是陆地了，克利斯波岛的尽头。

尼摩船长突然停住脚步，用手势示意我们停下来，我克服了自己想穿过这道墙的渴望，止步于尼摩船长的领地的最后界限。我理解他不愿意跨过这界限的原因，过了这里就属于地球的陆地了，那是他不愿意面对的。

于是，我们在尼摩船长的带领下往回走，往回的路与来时不同，相比之下，这条路更陡，但是距离海面更近一些。有过潜水经历的人都知道，返回海面的时候，一定要控制节奏，要逐渐地适应，如果突然上升到海面，在压力变化的影响下会造成严重的内伤。过了一会儿，光线又重新照亮了我们的周围，在折射作用下，海洋中的物体又变成了七彩的。

到了海底10米深的地方，各种各样的鱼类开始出现，成群结队数量可观，但是，我们的狩猎对象并没有出现。这时，我发现船长正在做出射击的姿势，将枪口朝着一个游动的东西瞄准，枪响后，一个很好看的水獭在几步远的地方应声倒地，它可能是生活在海中的唯一的四足兽了。被船长射中的水獭有一米半长，皮表面呈栗褐色，底下是银白色，这种颜色在俄国和中国的市场上十分罕见，制成皮筒一定很好看，可以卖个好价钱。

对于这新奇的哺乳类动物，我除了喜欢还是喜欢。当然，它也是其他狩猎者喜欢的对象，圆鼓鼓的头，短短的耳朵，圆圆的眼睛，白色瓷须像猫须一般，掌形带甲的脚，团簇的尾巴。这种珍贵的肉食动物主要生活在太平洋的北极圈里，十分罕见，已经濒临灭绝。如今，我们有幸遇到，并且狩猎到，真的是非常幸运。于是，尼摩船长的同伴以迅雷不及掩耳之势上前把水獭捡起来，扛在肩头，继续我们的旅程。

一个小时后，我们来到了一片位于海底不及两米深的细沙平原上。抬头看海面，可以看见跟我们做一样动作，穿一样衣服，只是方向相反的一群人在头上，那是我们的影子。影子个个脑袋垂在下面，两脚倒悬在空中。

在这里，可以看到很多对平时而言难得一见的景象。在我们的头上呈现出厚薄不一的波浪，肉眼看去像掠过一阵浓云，瞬间出现，瞬间消失。我又看到浪头起伏时演变成无数泡沫，飞溅得像羊群一样的白涛。我也看到巨大的鸟类从海面疾飞掠过，仿佛就在我们头上。

这个时候，我亲眼见证了一次完美的射击，跟任何猎人的射击比起来都有过之而无不及。只见尼摩船长朝着一只两翼张得很大的飞翔过来的大鸟瞄准，砰的一枪，大鸟掉在尼摩船长的同伴身旁，很快，猎物就被我们捕获。这次捕到的是一种美得让人赞美的海鹅。

美丽的海鹅并没有终结我们的狩猎任务，我们继续着这次难忘的旅程，在接下来的两个小时内，我们艰难地跋涉，有时沿着细沙平原走，有时沿着苔藓草地走，渐渐地我开始有些走不动了，好在这时，看见了“鹦鹉螺”号的探照灯从半里远的地方模糊地照过来。我估计20分钟后，我们就可以回到船上休息了，可以自由地呼吸了。尽管现在我们有空气储藏器，但我觉得供给我的氧气并不是很多，很难满足我的要求。

然而，这只是我的一厢情愿而已，后来我们耽误了很多时间才回到船上，因为发生了意外。

尼摩船长走在最前面，我跟在他后面，距离他有20步左右。突然，我看见尼摩船长回转过身来，用手把我按倒在地下。他的同伴也对葛瑟尔做了同样的动作。我被突如其来的意外搞得一头雾水，好在有尼摩船长在我身边，我少了几分担心。于是，我安然地躺在苔藓丛林的后面，但当我抬起头时，我被吓得全身都僵住了。原来，一对巨大无比的鲨鱼发出磷光，气势汹汹地游了过来。这是鲨鱼中最可怕的一类，尾巴巨大，目光呆滞，嘴的周围有很多喷出磷质的孔，闪闪发光。

如果这对火鲛发现我们，肯定会用它们的铁牙床，将我们咬成肉酱！此时，我不知道葛瑟尔是不是还有心思将它们进行分类。对我而言，此时我已不再是一个生物学者，而是一个即将成为火鲛口中美餐的人。眼睁睁地看着它们的银白的肚腹，还有满是利牙的大嘴。

也许是我们命不该绝，这对贪食的动物并没有发现我们，在黄黑色的尾巴略微触碰到我们后便游过去了。能够躲过这次劫难，真的是上天眷顾我们，这次遭遇比在森林里碰见猛虎还要惊险。

半个小时后，确定火鲛离开后，我们在电光的指引下，回到了“鹦鹉螺”号。在确定我们都进入小房子后，尼摩船长把门关起来。然后他按下一个圆钮，船内部的抽水机活动起来以后，我周围的水渐渐低下去，很快，小房中的水便不见了。打开里面的门以后，我们走进了装有潜水衣的房子。

我们迫不及待地将衣服脱下来，拖着疲乏的身子回到各自的房中，复杂的感情夹杂在一起，一方面沉浸在这次有趣的探险之中，另一方

面，觉得身体马上就要散架了，迫不及待地进入了梦乡。

第十八章 太平洋下四千里

我在回到“鹦鹉螺”号的第二天，也就是11月18日，经过短暂的调整后终于完全歇过来了。醒来后，我照例来到了平台上，碰到“鹦鹉螺”号的船副又在重复着我听不懂的话。我猜测，这句话一定跟海面的情形有关。于是，我观察着海面的动静，只见近处、远处都很平静，空荡荡的，克利斯波岛的高地消失在我们航向的后面。海面上一片湛蓝，三棱镜分出的其他颜色都被海水吸收了，只将蓝色反射到四面八方去，将海面染成了一幅条纹宽阔的天光蓝毛布，在层叠的波涛上很有规律地摊开。

尼摩船长的出现，惊动了正在欣赏美丽海景的我。然而，他却只顾着自己做天文观察，做完观察后，时而靠着探照灯笼间，时而注视着洋面，完全没有意识到我的存在。不一会儿，又有20名壮硕的水手来到甲板上收渔网。这些人的体型很像欧洲人，但国籍却各不同，有来自爱尔兰的、法国的、斯拉夫的，也有希腊的和克里特岛的。他们彼此用特有的语言交流着。由于不懂他们在说什么，我只能眼睁睁地看着他们。

“鹦鹉螺”号用的渔网是袋形的，用一根浮在水上的横木和一条串起下层网眼的链锁支开，跟诺曼底沿海使用的差不多。这些口袋似的网被装在船后面的铁框上，像扫把在海底打扫一般，将遇到的鱼全部网上来。我在网中看到了很多种类新奇的鱼，如动作滑稽可笑又名丑角鱼的海蛙鱼，黑色带有许多触须的噪嘆鱼，带红色波纹的弯剑鱼，弯月形有

厉害毒汁的馥鱼，橄榄色的八目鳗，长着银白鳞片的海豹鱼，能发电的旋毛鱼，多鳞有古铜色横斜纹的纹翅鱼，淡青色的鳌鱼，虾虎鱼等。也有一些身形较大的鱼，如头部隆起的加郎鱼，一米长的天蓝和银白相间的鲤鱼，华丽的金枪鱼。对于这些鱼而言，这个袋网就像是一个噩梦，一旦误入就很难逃脱。

今天的成绩不错，网到的鱼足足有上千斤。但是网在船后拖拉着有好几个小时，看起来也不是什么特别的收成。由此可见，我们在“鹦鹉螺”号上并不缺少食物，“鹦鹉螺”号的速度，和它的电光的吸引力，可以为我们带来源源不断的食物。船上有一个食物储藏室，用来存放这些不同种类的海产品。有些要趁新鲜食用，有些要保存起来。

食物准备充足了，换气完毕了，“鹦鹉螺”号又要开始海底旅行了。当我准备回去的时候，尼摩船长转过身来，没有问候，直截了当地对我说：“教授，您看到了吧，海洋是具有生命的，像我们一样会愤怒，也会有温情。昨天，她还在沉睡，今天，她就又动起来了，您看，她在太阳的抚摸下苏醒了！又要开始新一天的生活了。作为一项学术研究，这是不是很有趣呢？在我看来，她跟人一样，有脉搏、有血管、有起伏，就像科学家莫利说的那样，海洋跟动物身上的血液循环一样，有真正的循环作用。”

尼摩船长自顾自地说着，并不需要我与他交流，于是，我干脆连礼貌的“当然”“一定”和“您对”都省略了。他每说一句话，中间都会停顿很长的时间，似乎是用一种特殊的形式在思考。

他接着说：“不错，海洋有真正的循环作用，这是通过增加热、盐和微生物来实现的。热力的存在使得海水具有不同的密度，使海中出现许多顺流和逆流。赤道地带存在水汽蒸发现象，而北极区域则没有，

于是热带海水和极圈海水间永远不停地在进行交流。此外，海洋的呼吸作用是通过那些由上而下和由下而上的水流形成的。我发现，海水的分子在零下2度的时候是密度最大的。温度再降低，重量又减轻了。您将在极圈海域看到这种现象所产生的结果，您将了解到，自然的规律导致了冰冻作用只有在水面上才会发生。”

听到尼摩船长说极圈二字，我心里想，难道这个大胆的人要把我们带到极圈中去吗？

船长醉心于他对海洋的研究，根本顾不上留意我的想法，过了一会儿，他又说：“教授，海水中盐的含量是非常大的，如果您能够将海水中的盐提炼出来，可以造成一个450万立方里的面积的盐堆，在地面上堆起来，可以铺成十米高的一层表皮。大自然赋予海这么多盐分是有原因的，因为盐质使海洋永不容易蒸发，使海风不能将分量过多的水汽带走，如果过多的水汽化成水的话，那么，温带的地方就会被水淹没了。大自然真是了不起啊，可以调动全地球的力量，使其保持平衡！”

尼摩船长停了一会儿，在平台上转了几圈，又接着对我说：“至于那些生活在水滴中的原生秒水虫，数量也是巨大的。一滴水中便有千万亿的不可计数的微生物，它们在一毫克的水量中便有80万个。它们的作用是吸收海中的盐，消化水中的固体物质，在它们的作用下，形成了石灰质陆地和珊瑚。当水滴中的矿物质被吸去了以后变轻了，于是浮到水面上来，在水面吸收了盐质变重后，又沉下去，重新给那些微生物带来可吸收的新物质。就这样，上下循环的潮流永远都不会停止，因此海洋的生命力更强大，海洋中的生物更丰富。人们说，海洋是人类致命的地方，但那只是对人而言，对无数的动物和我而言，它是真正生命的所在！”

尼摩船长的表情变得同往常不同，他怀着一种特殊的心情接着说：“所以，海洋赋予了我真正的生活！我还有个想法，要在水中建设城市，海底住宅，像‘鹦鹉螺’号一般，每天早晨浮上来换气。如果这个理想能够变成现实，那么，那将会是一座真正自由的城市。不过，也难说不会有专制的魔王……”

尼摩船长用一个激烈的手势配合这句话。过了一会儿，尼摩船长像是要把一些不祥的思想驱赶出去一样，快速跑过来，向我提出一些问题。

“阿勒纳斯先生，您知道海洋的深度吗？”

“船长，我只知道一些基本的探测数据。”

“您可以告诉我吗？”

我回答：“我记得不一定准，还请您见谅。北大西洋的平均深度为8200米，地中海为2500米。在南大西洋南纬35度的地方，有几种探测数据，一种是12,000米，一种是14,091米，还有一种是15,149米，根据这些数据计算，海洋的平均深度应该是7000米左右。”

尼摩船长答：“先生，我可以向您提供一些更确切的数字，目前我们所在的太平洋位置的平均深度为4000米。”

说完这话，尼摩船长便离开平台，带我来到了客厅。他立即发动了测程器，表盘显示船的速度为每小时20海里。

之后尼摩船长便又消失了，我们几个星期没有再见面。只是偶尔，我瞥到他的背影。他的副手仍然定期地来进行航线记录，所以我可以及时了解“鹦鹉螺”号所走的路线。

我和我的两个伙伴在一起谈了很长时间，葛瑟尔向尼德·兰讲述了我们在海底的惊险遭遇，尼德·兰开始后悔没有同我们一起去，错过了很多的精彩。当然，我们都希望以后还有游历海底森林的机会。在航行的间隙，客厅的嵌板会每天敞开几个小时，我们通过这里了解海底的秘密，大家都百看不厌。

“鹦鹉螺”号向着东南方向行驶，位于海底100米和150米的深度之间。但有一天，不知道为什么它使用的两块纵斜机板，沿着纵斜线潜下去，一直到了2000米的深度。此时，温度表指向摄氏4.25度，好像在这样深度的水里，温度不会受地带的影响，是统一的。

11月26日凌晨3点，“鹦鹉螺”号行驶到了西经172度的位置，跨过了北回归线，可以远远地望见夏威夷群岛。1779年2月14日，有名的航海家库克就是在这里被杀死的。

自出发以来，我们已经足足走了4860里。这天早晨，我走上平台看这群岛的七个岛中最大的夏威夷岛，我清楚地看到它那已经属于开发地带的边缘，跟海岸线平行的各支山脉和海拔数千米的火山群。还看见了岛上高耸的摩那罗亚火山。在这一带，“鹦鹉螺”号的渔网还打到了孔雀扇形珊瑚，它属于扁平水螅类，是太平洋这一部分的特产动物。

“鹦鹉螺”号仍朝着东南方行驶。12月1号，它在西经142度上越过赤道线；12月4号，经过马贵斯群岛附近的海域。行驶到南纬8度57分、西经139度32分时，我看见了300海里以外的洛嘉伊万岛的马丁尖岬，这是法属马贵斯群岛中的最重要的一个岛。我远远地看见满是丛林密布的山岭，由于尼摩船长不喜欢接近陆地，我无法看清楚其他的東西。在这一带海域，渔网打到了哥利芬鱼、赤裸鱼、骨头鱼、忒吒鱼，这些都是非

常珍贵的品种。哥利芬鱼的尾巴是金黄色的，长着天蓝色的鳍，肉味鲜美无比；赤裸鱼几乎没有鳞甲，也很好吃；带骨腮的骨头鱼，黑黄的忒吒鱼，都比鲤鱼好吃，值得品尝。

从12月4日至11日，“鸚鵡螺”号共行驶了4000多里。途中，我们遇见了一大群奇异的软体动物——枪乌贼，它们跟墨鱼很相像，属于头足纲，双鲤目。法国渔人将它们称作水黄蜂。古代生物学家对这种鱼类很有研究，根据生在吉利安之前的希腊医生阿典尼的话来判断，希腊的有钱公民也会食用这道美味的菜。

在12月9日和10日夜间，“鸚鵡螺”号同一大群喜欢夜出的软体动物相遇，这一群动物足足有数千百万个。它们的路线同槽白鱼和沙丁鱼相同，从温带地方转移到较暖的水域去。我们通过很厚的玻璃窗观察它们是如何向后倒退，如何极端迅速地游泳，如何运用它们的运动管转动，看它们族群中是如何优胜劣汰。这种多脚动物胡乱抓爬，难以形容，就像是小孩玩的蛇形吹气管子。连速度行驶非常快的“鸚鵡螺”号，也在这大群动物中间走了好几个钟头，无数枪乌贼落入了我们的网中，此外网住的还有被奥宾尼分类的九种太平洋的品种。

各种奇妙的景象和场面出现在我们的旅行之中，我们沉浸在这种快乐当中。我们一面欣赏造物者的作品，一面发现海底深处的秘密。

12月11日，我整天都窝在客厅里看书。我的两个伙伴透过打开的嵌板，观察那明亮的海水。突然，“鸚鵡螺”号不动了，它的储水池满装着水。

在水下1000米的地方，除了集中大鱼，其他的海洋居民很少出现在这一领域。当时，我正在读简·墨苏著的一本很有趣味的书——《胃的

调理者》，正当我领略书中的意境的时候，葛瑟尔用不淡定的声音请求我让他进来。

我好奇地问发生了什么事，葛瑟尔只是叫我出去看看。

我站起来，向窗外望去，只见外面有一团巨大的黑东西，悬在海水中间不动。我正试图去为这种巨大的动物分类，忽然意识到这不是动物，而是一条船。

尼德·兰肯定了我的判断，并补充说：“这是一条碰了暗礁的船。”

在我们面前的的确是一条船，船上的护桅索仍然挂在链上，船壳还很完整，估计船沉下来不久，最多也就几个小时。三根断桅从甲板上两英尺高的地方掉下来，表明这只遇难的船不得不把桅樯牺牲了。这只装得满满的船是侧躺着的，向左舷倾斜，从造型上看很凄惨。更为凄惨的是甲板上躺着挂在绳索上的尸体。只见一个人站在舵边，一个妇人手中抱着一个小孩，在船尾跳板格子上站着。通过船上的电光可以看见，这个妇人还很年轻，她死前的最后一个动作是将孩子拖起，而这个可怜的孩子正抱着妈妈的脖子。更为恐怖的是4个水手的尸体，他们的姿态看上去非常吓人，因为他们的身躯抽搐得不成样子，可以看出他们死前在做着最后的挣扎，企图摆脱将他们缠在船上的绳索，最终在挣扎中死去。唯一镇定的是那个看航路的舵手，表情很严肃，只见他灰白的头发贴在前额，痉挛的手放在舵轮上，仿佛遇难后仍然在驾驶着那艘船。

我们被眼前怕人的景象惊呆了，发不出任何声音。我们眼看着沉船事故，观察着每个濒临死亡的人的表情，我的心跳加速。突然，一些巨大的鲨鱼出现了，它们显然是被眼前的大餐吸引了，快速地向前游来。

这时，“鹦鹉螺”号绕过沉没的船继续向前行驶，我清楚地看见了沉

船的名字：“佛罗利达”号，山德兰港。

第十九章 万尼科罗群岛

沉船的景象牵动着每个人的神经，也揭开了“鹦鹉螺”号一连串海中灾祸的开始。自从到了船只往来比较多的海中，遇见那些遇难的船只在海水中腐烂就成了常有的事，在更深的海底下面，甚至还有生锈的大炮、子弹、锚、链以及其他许多铁器。

我们在“鹦鹉螺”号上孤独地生活，而船的脚步却从来也没有停止过。12月11日，我们望见了位于南纬13度30分和23度50分之间、西经125度30分和151度30分之间的帕摩图群岛，由东南偏东至西北偏西，从度西岛直至拉查列岛，海岛在长500里的海面上罗列起来。群岛的面积共370平方公里，由约莫60个小群岛组成，其中包括由法国占领的作为它的保护地的甘比尔群岛。造就这些小岛的功臣是珊瑚，正是由于这个种群的存在，才使得地面缓缓上升，终于有一天，这些小岛连接起来，形成新岛后又与周围的岛连接在一起，久而久之，自新西兰和新喀里多尼亚岛起，至马贵斯群岛止，便形成了一个新的大陆，也许将来会成为第五大洲。关于新大陆构成的理论我曾在尼摩船长面前谈过，他的反应很冷淡，说这个地球上需要的不是新大陆，而是新人。

在这些群岛中，最有特色的岛屿就是克莱孟德尼，它是“密涅瓦”号船长贝尔在18年前发现的。在这次航行中，“鹦鹉螺”号偶然来到了这里，我也可以研究太平洋中的小岛所构成的造礁珊瑚体系。造礁珊瑚跟普通珊瑚不能混为一谈，它们的纤维组织被一层石灰质的表皮蒙上，著

名的老师密尔·爱德华先生把它们分为5部分。这些珊瑚树是由细小微生物的分泌物累积而成的，它们数以亿万计地生活在细胞里面，分泌的石灰质逐渐累积，组成了岩石、礁石、小岛、岛屿。在偶然的机会下，它们形成一个圆形的环，围绕着一个珊瑚洲或一个内湖，边缘有缺口，可与大海相通。当然，它们也形成一些礁石的悬崖，跟新喀里多尼亚海岸和帕摩图群岛的小岛相似。或者像联合岛和毛利斯岛一样筑起礁石脉，像城墙一样坚固。

我沿着克莱孟德尼的悬崖走了几百米，在短短的时间内，我开始对微生物这个伟大的劳动者充满了敬意。这些悬崖大半是被称为千孔珊瑚、滨珊瑚、星珊瑚和脑形珊瑚的造礁珊瑚类的杰作。造礁珊瑚类动物比较喜欢海波激荡的表层，在这里它的繁衍能力更强，因此，它们是从上层开始工作的，逐渐到下层。带着剩余分泌物的上层物质沉到下面去，周而复始。达尔文学说用该学说来说明环状珊瑚岛的构成，相比那种认为海面下几米有浮出的山岭或火山的峰顶作为造礁珊瑚的工作基地的学说，更加符合实际。

由于墙是直的，所以我很容易靠近墙壁观察我感兴趣的东西，此时，我看到探测器显示的深度超过了300米，石灰石被我们船上的阵阵电光照亮了。

葛瑟尔问我：“先生，积累这些巨大的墙垣要花多少时间呢？”

我告诉他，在学者看来，一个世纪的时间都算短的。

他较真地问：“准确来说，究竟是多长时间呢？”

我不得不将时间回答得准确一些，对他说：“要192,000年，葛瑟尔，《圣经》记载的时间也不完整。此外，煤炭的形成也需要更长的时

间，因为森林被洪水冲击后产生矿化作用，玄武岩产生冷化作用，时间长一点，才能够作用得更加充分。其实，文字的记录只是一个数字概念，并不能指出两个时间的先后，因此，照《圣经》的说法，太阳并不是一开始就存在的。”

“鹦鹉螺”号又一次浮上海面透气，我可以透过玻璃窗看见低洼的和多树的克列蒙瑞尼岛发展的全部过程。在旋风和风暴的作用下，岛上的珊瑚石变成了富饶的沃土。暴风将一些谷粒果核带到附近岛屿石灰质的土地上，原本地里蕴含着鱼类和海产植物分解出来的渣滓便形成了很好的草木肥料，不久种子就可以生根发芽了。种子长大后变成了树林，贮藏了丰富的水蒸气，又繁殖出一些微生物、爬虫和昆虫。而风这个天然的搬运工又将这些东西带到其他海岛上，就这样，海岛活跃起来。岛上有了植物和动物，人自然就被吸引过来了，群岛就这样逐渐形成了。

克莱孟德尼消失在傍晚的夕阳里，我们发觉“鹦鹉螺”号在西经135度上接触到南回归线的时候改变了航向，向西北偏西驶去。正值夏季，太阳光十分强烈，但是，由于我们行驶在水底30至40米的深度，并没有受到这个因素的影响，海水的温度总保持在10度到12度之间。

12月15日，社会群岛和塔希提岛出现在我们面前，作为太平洋王后的塔希提岛看起来是那么婀娜多姿，社会群岛也很令我们留恋。早晨的时候，我看见了几里外高耸的山峰，而我们的食品也全部来自小岛，美味的鲭鱼、鲤鱼、乳白鱼，还有好几种属于鳗鱼类的海蛇。

8100海里的里程在不知不觉中过去了，“鹦鹉螺”号转眼便来到了汤加塔布群岛和航海家群岛之间，此时测程器的仪表盘指针指到9720海里。在很久以前，“阿尔戈”号、“太子港”号和“博兰公爵”号的船员就是在汤加塔布群岛丧生的，而拉·白鲁斯的朋友、郎格尔船长是在航海家

群岛被杀的。过了不久，维蒂群岛出现在我的视野里，“和合”号的水手和指挥“约瑟芬”号的南特人布罗船长就是被岛上的居民杀害的。

很多的小群岛，如维蒂岛、万奴岛和甘杜朋等岛构成了长100里，宽90里的岛群。这里位于南纬6度至2度、西经174度至179度之间。

1643年，托利色利发明了风雨表，路易十四即位，塔斯曼发现了这群小岛。这三件大事究竟哪一件对人类最有益处，值得思考。后来，人们纷纷登上了这群小岛，最有名的是库克、土尔加斯朵和杜蒙·居维尔，他们分别于1714年、1793年和1827年来到这里。杜蒙·居维尔登上小岛以后，曾进行过勘察，清楚了小岛的大体结构。

“鹦鹉螺”号越来越接近狄勇船长遇到过惊人冒险的地方——魏利阿湾，他第一个发现了这里的秘密。

我们按照谢奈克的方法在海湾中打到很多好吃的牡蛎，我们将牡蛎剥开放在饭桌上，美美地吃上了一顿。在地中海科西嘉岛，牡蛎这种贝壳类动物非常普遍，而且产卵非常快，一个牡蛎可以产200万个卵，如果没有牡蛎这种动物来遏制它，相信这一带整个海湾都会被牡蛎填满。

尼德·兰吃了很多牡蛎，但并没有像吃其他食物那样，后悔吃撑了，因为牡蛎最大的优点是不会使人产生饱胀感。人体每天需要315克氮素，而这些氮素需要大约200个牡蛎来提供。

12月25日，“鹦鹉螺”号驶入新赫布里底群岛。

1606年，奎洛斯发现了这个群岛，1768年，布甘维尔登上群岛探险，1773年，库克将它命名为新赫布里底群岛。这个群岛位于南纬15度至2度、西经164度至168度之间，由九个主要大岛组成，形成一条从西

北偏北至东南偏南的120里的长带。我们的船沿着奥卢岛岸边行驶，临近正午的时候，发现这个群岛上耸立着一座很高的山峰，整个群岛被一片青绿的树林覆盖着。这一天刚好是圣诞节，因为不能同家人过节，尼德·兰显得很懊恼，要知道基督教徒将这一天视为家庭团聚节。

我与尼摩船长分别了七八天，27日清晨，终于再次见面。当他走进客厅的时候，我产生了一种幻觉，觉得我们只是分开了五六分钟而已。

当时，我正在地图上看“鹦鹉螺”号的航线，船长凑上前来，用手指着地图说：“这是万尼科罗群岛。”

这是一个很有诱惑力的名字，因为白鲁斯的探险船就是在那里失踪的。我立即站起来，问：“我们已经到达万尼科罗群岛了？”

“你说得没错，教授。”船长回答。

“我们是否有幸去看看这个沉没了罗盘号和浑天仪号的岛屿？”

“教授，如果您愿意，我们可以去探险。”

“大概什么时候能到？”

“教授，马上就到。”

尼摩船长走上平台，我紧随其后。刚到平台，我就急急地望向天际。

两座大小不等的由火山形成的岛屿出现在东北方，被40海里长的环形珊瑚礁围绕着。是的，这里就是万尼科罗岛了，它还被杜蒙·居维尔称作搜索岛，位于南纬16度4分和东经164度32分之间，就在万奴岛的天

然小港前面。岛上好像有一道青纱帐，将岛上的土地和海滩笼罩起来。岛上耸立着加波哥山，它高达900米，站在上面可以俯视全岛。

小岛的附近是一个狭窄的水道，外围有一道石带，“鹦鹉螺”号就行驶在暗礁岩石里。这里的海水深度大概在50米至65米之间。这时，我发现有十二三个土人站在红树荫下，他们对于我们的到来感到非常惊讶。对于这个能在水面上行走的灰黑色的东西，他们充满了警惕，也许他们将“鹦鹉螺”号当成是很厉害的鲸科动物了。

这时，尼摩船长突然跟我聊起白鲁斯遇难的事情，这事我是知道的。

“船长，对于这件事，我了解的并不比你多。”我回答他。

“您可以再普及一下。”他带些讥讽的语气说。

“小事一桩。”

我简单地向他描述了杜蒙·居维尔在著作中提到的关于这件事的原委。

1785年，路易十六派遣拉·白鲁斯和他的副手郎格尔船长作环球航行，于是他们选择乘坐“罗盘”号和“浑天仪”号两艘三级舰出发，此后便音讯全无。

6年后，法国政府开始关心这两艘战舰的命运。为了开展搜寻工作，装备了两艘大运输舰——“搜索”号和“希望”号。9月28日，土尔加斯朵指挥这两艘大运输舰从布勒斯特海港出发。过了两个月，他们从“阿伯马尔”号船的船长口中得知，已经发现了两艘失事战舰的残骸，失事地点在新佐治岛沿岸。土尔加斯朵在不知道这个消息的情况下向海

军部群岛出发，他的根据是韩德船长的一个报告，报告中称这群岛是拉·白鲁斯失事遇难的地点。

最终他并没有得到自己想要的结果，反而失去了两名副手和好几名水手。

真正将遇难者谜底揭开的是一位老航海家狄勇船长，他是一位资深船长，经常在太平洋上航行。1824年5月15日，他驾驶“圣巴土利克”号经过新赫布里底群岛之一——第克贝亚岛附近。在那里，一个印第安人乘着独木舟，靠近他的船边，卖给他一把银质的刀柄，柄上有镂刻的文字痕迹。这个印第安人又说，6年前，他在万尼科罗岛住下来的时候，曾看见过两个欧洲人，他们是一只遇难船上的船员，这船多年前撞在岛附近的暗礁上了。

狄勇立即联想到拉·白鲁斯船上的遇难人员，因为这些船只的失踪曾经震动世界。他打算去万尼科罗群岛，按照印第安人的说法，那里还有遇难船只的许多遗物，只是大风和海浪阻挡了他，无法前往。

狄勇回到加尔各答，他想方设法让亚洲学会和印度公司注意他的发现。后来，他得到了“搜索”号的指挥权，1827年1月23日，在一个法国人的陪同下，前往万尼科罗群岛搜寻。

1827年7月3日，“搜索”号停泊在万尼科罗群岛前面，也就是此刻“鹦鹉螺”号所在的这个万奴岛的天然小港中。

狄勇在这个地方获得了很多遇难船只的遗物，如：铁制的用具，锚，滑车的铁链环，小炮，一颗18号的炮弹，残破的天文仪器，船后部断片。此外，还有一口带着“巴赞给我造的”标识的铜钟，从标记可以得知，这口铜钟是由布勒斯特军械局铸造厂生产的，产于1785年左右。

狄勇船长整整在那里待了三个多月，收集了很多完备的资料。之后，他前往新西兰，于1828年4月7日到了加尔各答。回到法国后，查理十世热情地招待了他。可杜蒙·居维尔对这一切并不知情，他已经出发去别处寻找船只失事的地点了。他的根据是一只捕鲸船传出的消息——在路易西安尼省和新喀里多尼亚岛的土人手里发现了很多徽章和一种圣路易十字勋章。

狄勇离开万尼科罗群岛两个月后，杜蒙·居维尔带领“浑天仪”号向大洋出发。他的船停靠在何巴市面前，在这里他得知了狄勇所收集的结果，此外，他从加尔各答轮船公司的“和合”号的一个名叫何伯斯的船副那里得知，在南纬8度18分和东经56度30分之间的一个小岛上，那里的土人使用了一些铁条和红色毛布。

杜蒙·居维尔不知道是否应该相信那些报刊所刊登的内容，经过慎重的考虑，他仍然决定到狄勇曾经到过的地方去。

1828年2月10日，“浑天仪”号到了提科皮亚岛面前，为了尽快到达万尼科罗群岛，他聘请了一个落户在岛上的逃兵当向导和翻译，两天后，他望见了万尼科罗群岛。一直到14日，他始终沿着群岛的礁石脉行驶，直到20日，他才停泊在礁石圈里面，即万奴岛的天然港内。

23日，几名登岛的船员得到了一些遗物，而当地土人则始终逃避，不愿意带他们到船只遇难的地方去。人们从这种逃避的态度中断定，船上的遇难人员一定受过他们的虐待。当地土人是担心杜蒙·居维尔给拉·白鲁斯及他的苦命同伴报仇。为了让这些土人带路，26日，杜蒙·居维尔明确地告诉他们自己不会报复，而且还送给他们很多礼物，当地土人这才带领船副雅居诺，到了船只遇难的地方。

在巴古和万奴两岛的礁石间，水下5米至6.5米的地方，堆积着很多被石灰质的沉积层粘住的锚、炮、铁块和铅块。浑天仪号的大艇和捕鲸船费了九牛二虎之力才开到了这个地方，船员们把他们发现的宝贝打捞上来，清点后发现有一个重1800斤的锚，一门口径8分的铁铸大炮，一大块铅和两尊铜炮。

杜蒙·居维尔问土人知不知道拉·白鲁斯后来造的那只小船失事的地方，迟迟得不到答案。为了纪念这位著名的航海家和他的同伴，杜蒙·居维尔在一株红树华盖下，建造了一座简单的四角形的衣冠墓。为了避免土人的贪心，上面没有竖立铁架。

就在杜蒙·居维尔打算离开岛上的时候，他和他的船员都受到海岛气候的影响，得了热病，于是出发的日期拖延到了8月17日。

为了告知杜蒙·居维尔狄勇的发现，法国政府派出“巴沿尼”号小战舰到万尼科罗群岛，任命列哥郎·德·土浪美林为指挥，当时船停在美洲西部海岸。“浑天仪”号离开几个月后，“巴沿尼”号到达了万尼科罗岛，他们并没有新发现，只证明了土人没有破坏拉·白鲁斯的墓。

以上就是我告诉尼摩船长的事实。

他问我：“这么说，人们还是不知道拉·白鲁斯造的第三只船在哪里失事的？”

“您说得没错。”

尼摩船长沉默了一会儿，示意我跟他到客厅去。此时，“鹦鹉螺”号潜入海水下几米深，嵌板打开了。

我迫不及待地走到玻璃隔板面前观看，只见菌生植物、管状植物、

翡翠海草、石竹小草将珊瑚礁石的基地盖满了，下面是成千上万的可爱鱼类，有鲍鱼、雕纹鱼、卿筒鱼、裂骨鱼、金鱼，在它们中间，我发现了一些打捞机无法打捞的遇难船只留下的物品，如铁马磴、锚、炮、炮弹、绞盘架、船头废料等等，现在都被活生生的花朵覆盖了。

当我为眼前的残骸感到难过的时候，尼摩船长严肃地对我说：“1785年12月7日，拉·白鲁斯船长率领了‘罗盘’号和‘浑天仪’号出发。他最初选择访问了友爱群岛，新喀里多尼亚，然后向圣克鲁斯群岛出发，停在哈巴衣群岛的纳姆嘉岛。接着，船行驶到现在的万尼科罗群岛的礁石上面，当时他们并不知道这座岛的名字。走在前头的‘罗盘’号撞在南边海岸的礁石上，在前来救援的途中，‘浑天仪’号也碰上了暗礁。触礁后，‘罗盘’号立即沉下去，而‘浑天仪’号支撑了几天。遇难船员们受到了当地土人的善意招待，他们住在岛上，利用两艘大船的材料，建造了一艘小船。有些不愿意再冒险的船员选择留在万尼科罗群岛上，而另一些体弱多病的船员则跟着拉·白鲁斯一同出发，向所罗门群岛开去。最终，他们在伤心岬和喜悦岬之间遇难了。”

“您是从哪里知道这些的？”我吃惊地问。

“别急，你马上就可以看到我从失事的船上找到的文件。”尼摩船长将一个印有法国国会标记的白铁盒递给我。铁盒已经被海水腐蚀了，里面有一纸发黄的公文，字迹很清楚。

阅读后得知这是法国海军大臣给拉·白鲁斯船长的训令，周围还有路易十六的笔墨。

这时，尼摩船长说：“对于一位海员来说，能够死在珊瑚墓这里真是一件幸福的事，这里实在太幽静了，愿上天赐给我和我的同伴一座同

样的坟墓！”

第二十章 托列斯海峡

12月27日至28日夜间，“鹦鹉螺”号以最快的速度离开了万尼科罗群岛，开始向西北方进发。仅仅三天时间，它足足走了750里，也就是从拉·白鲁斯群岛走到了巴布亚群岛。

1868年元旦，一大早葛瑟尔就在平台上找到我，对我说：

“先生，新年到了，祝您一切顺利，不知道我这样的祝福合适不合适！”

“谢谢你，葛瑟尔，在巴黎你也是这样问候我的。不过，这次所处的环境可不同，你说的一年顺利，是希望我们早日结束被囚禁在船上的生活，还是在新的旅行过程中一切顺利呢？”

葛瑟尔老实地回答：“先生，我该如何回答您好呢？这两个月，的确让我们见识到了很多离奇的事，这让我们感到很新鲜，可是，将来我们的结局会怎样呢，是不是不会有离开的机会了？”

“是的，葛瑟尔，不会有了。”

“那我就用尼摩船长的名字来回答吧，要知道他的名字在拉丁语里是‘一点不碍事’的意思。”

“葛瑟尔，你指的是？”

“先生，我所说的顺利的一年，就是指可以让我们看到海底的一切……”

“葛瑟尔，你也想看见一切吗？那需要很长的时间，尼德·兰又是怎么想的呢？”

葛瑟尔回答：“尼德·兰并不这样想，您知道的，他是个很实际的人，喜欢酒、肉和面包，光是吃鱼和看鱼并不能让他满足，他吃惯了牛排，喝惯了白兰地，所以当然不适应这样的生活。”

“葛瑟尔，对于我而言，船上的饮食条件并不难适应。”

葛瑟尔附和道：“我也是一样的，可是尼德·兰却不能忍受，他一直在伺机逃走，所以，如果新的一年我们是顺利的，那么他就不顺利了。反过来亦然。所以，总有一方满意的。这就是我的结论，最后敬祝先生万事顺意。”

“谢谢，葛瑟尔，可是今年没有礼物了，我只能同你握手表示新年的祝福了。”

“先生从没有像现在这样慷慨过。”葛瑟尔回答。

葛瑟尔说完了要说的话，转身离开了。

自从我们离开日本海以后，足足走了11,340海里，即5250里。现在，展现在“鹦鹉螺”号面前的就是澳大利亚东北边岸珊瑚海的危险海面。距离海面几海里远的时候，我们就开始沿着暗礁行驶。1770年6月10日，库克率领的船就是在这里失事沉没的，他自己乘的船碰在一座岩

石上，由于有一块珊瑚石堵在被冲破的船身上，船才得以保全。

对于这条长360里的暗礁脉，我充满了好奇。亲眼所见后发现，暗礁脉上常有波涛汹涌的海水冲击，奔腾澎湃，十分凶猛，那声音就像是打雷。突然，“鹦鹉螺”号转动纵斜机板，将船下降到水底很深的地方，我便不能欣赏这座由珊瑚石构成的长城了。

在水下，我欣赏到了我们打捞到的不同种类的鱼，有大小同鲸鱼一般的嘉蒙鱼，两侧呈浅蓝色，身上有横斜纹，鱼的体积越大，纹路越不明显。这些鱼成群结队地陪伴我们，为我们提供鲜美可口的肉。渔网又打到许多青花绸鱼，这种鱼只有半分米长，味道跟海绊鲤很像。接着又打到了锥角飞鱼，它被誉为海底飞燕，在黑暗中可以放出磷光，照亮空中和水中。渔网眼上还有一些软体类、植虫类和藻类，包括翡翠虫、海渭、糙鱼、马刺鱼、罗盘鱼、樱子鱼、硝子鱼以及刀片藻和大囊藻。这两种藻类可以从细孔中分泌出一种黏液。在藻类植物里面我又发现了一种十分好看的胶质海藻，这在博物馆里绝对算得上是天然珍宝。两天后，我们驶出了珊瑚海，1月4日，我们望见了巴布亚岛海岸。这时候，尼摩船长告诉我，他打算经过托列斯海峡去印度洋。此外，他什么也没说。对于这样的航线，尼德·兰非常高兴，因为这条路使他跟欧洲海面渐渐接近了。

众所周知，托列斯海峡是很危险的地带，这不仅有刺猬一般的暗礁，而且还住着很多土人。巴布亚岛（又名新几内亚岛）和新荷兰岛被托列斯海峡天然地分开了。

巴布亚岛总面积约4万平方公里，长达400里，宽达130里，位于南纬0度19分和10度之间，西经128度23分和146度15分之间。正午，我看着船副测太阳的高度，望见了远处层层叠起的阿化斯群山的高峰。

1511年，葡萄牙航海家弗朗西斯·薛郎诺发现了这座岛。1526年，唐·约瑟、德·米纳色斯也来过；1527年格利那瓦来过；1528年西班牙将军阿尔瓦·德·萨维德拉来过；1545年尤哥·奥铁兹来过；1616年荷兰人舒田来过；1753年嘉铁列、爱德华、布几威尔、库克、贺列斯特等人来过；1792年土尔加斯朵来过；1823年斗比列来过；1827年杜蒙·居维尔来过。雷恩兹曾说过：“巴布亚是占据全部马来亚的黑人的集中地。”我坚信，这次旅行将我带到了可怕的安达孟尼人面前。

“鹦鹉螺”号很快就到了地球上最危险的海峡口，就算是大胆的航海家，也不敢在这里冒险通过。路易·已兹·德·托列斯是个例外，他从南方海上回到美拉尼西亚群岛时，曾经冒险经过这里；而1840年，杜蒙·居维尔的几艘船冒险经过这里的时候，船只几乎全部搁浅。而如今，“鹦鹉螺”号要来领教这珊瑚礁石群的厉害了。

托列斯海峡宽约34里，中间被无数的岛屿、暗礁和岩石堵住，增加了通过这里的难度。为了顺利通过这里，尼摩船长采取了必要的措施，让“鹦鹉螺”号浮在水面上前进，它的推进器像鲸鱼类动物的尾巴一般，慢慢地冲开海浪。

为了见证奇迹，我和我的伙伴们来到了平台上，我们看见尼摩船长在领航人的笼间里，亲自指挥着“鹦鹉螺”号。

我的面前有一幅很详细的托列斯海峡地图，它是由“古往·德波亚”号的前海军少尉，现在的海军上将文生唐·杜日兰组织编制的，他是杜蒙·居维尔最后一次环球航行的参谋人员之一。这幅图可以为“鹦鹉螺”号提供向导，从而避免一些危险。

进入海峡后，“鹦鹉螺”号周围的海水变得汹涌澎湃，翻滚沸腾。海

浪的方向是从东南向西北的，我们以两海里半的速度行驶在珊瑚礁上方。

“真是恐怖的海！”尼德·兰对我说。

“没错，不仅恐怖而且可恶，连像“鹦鹉螺”号这样的船都很难对付。”我回答。

尼德·兰又说：“那位怪船长要非常熟悉航线才行，稍一疏忽，可能就撞在珊瑚礁石上了。”

尼德·兰说得没错，我们的处境非常危险，不过让人稍感安慰的是，“鹦鹉螺”号像是有了魔法，安然地经过了这些珊瑚礁。它绕过了“浑天仪”号所走的航线，从北边沿着莫利岛行驶，再回到西南方，向甘伯兰海道驶去。我紧张起来，以为它要重复杜蒙·居维尔的航线，但忽然船又回到西北方，穿过许多不为人知的岛屿，接着又再次驶往通提岛和凶险的水道，然后又第二次改变方向，向西方格波罗尔岛开行。

下午三点钟，波涛汹涌，正是大海涨潮的时候。“鹦鹉螺”号靠近这个岛，至今仍记得当时出现在眼前的好看的班达树林。“鹦鹉螺”号沿着海岛走了两里左右，突然，我被一个强烈的冲击震倒了。“鹦鹉螺”号撞上了一座暗礁，停了下来，可以明显感觉到靠左舷轻微地搁浅下来。我踉跄着站起来，看见了出现在平台上的尼摩船长和他的船副。他们检查了船的情况后，说了一些我不懂的话。

我们停在距离格波罗尔岛两海里远的地方，这个岛的海岸从北至西形成回环形，像是一个臂弯。向南边和东边望去，可以看见大海退潮时露出的珊瑚石尖，我们的船就地搁浅在海里面。这里的海平面不高，因此，想重回大海有些困难。不过幸运的是船并没有损坏，可见船身的坚

固程度。尽管如此，现在最要紧的事也是回到海里，否则尼摩船长的潜水船就完了，只能搁浅在这里。

当我的脑子胡思乱想的时候，尼摩船长表现得很冷静，他不动声色地走过来，一副胸有成竹的样子。

我问他：“出了什么事吗？”

“不，一点小意外而已。”他回答道。

我又说：“一点小意外？如果不解决问题的话，恐怕您要重新做一个陆地居民了！”

尼摩船长做了一个否定的手势，他坚毅的目光告诉我这是不可能发生的事，过了一会儿他又对我说：“阿勒纳斯先生，您多虑了，‘鹦鹉螺’号没有任何问题，我们仍然可以去海洋深处探险，这只是整个航程的开始，我怎么会让它这么早就结束呢？”

我完全忽略了尼摩船长的讽刺语气，对他说：“可是尼摩船长，‘鹦鹉螺’号在一开始就搁浅了，您应该知道，太平洋涨潮的幅度不大，我实在想不出什么法子能让‘鹦鹉螺’号浮起来，重回大海。”

尼摩船长回答道：“教授，您说得没错，太平洋的潮水涨幅不大，但您知道的，这是托列斯海峡，高潮和低潮之间足足有一米半的落差。再过五天就是月圆之夜了，月球如果不帮助‘鹦鹉螺’号回到海面，我才觉得奇怪呢！”

尼摩船长边说边和他的船副回到“鹦鹉螺”号船中。而船没有任何变化，仍然停在原地不动，那些珊瑚腔肠类动物开始将它们牢固的洋灰在船身上堆砌。

“先生，有什么进展吗？”尼德·兰在船长离开后，来到我面前问。

“尼德·兰师傅，我们要耐心地等待5天，9号的时候月球会帮助我们重新回到大海上。”

“这可信吗？”

“尼摩船长是这么说的。”

“难道他真的不打算把锚抛到海中去，也不把链索结住机器来拉船吗？”

“既然潮水可以帮助我们，当然就没必要浪费力气了。”葛瑟尔简单地回答。

尼德·兰看着葛瑟尔，耸了耸肩，表示自己是个内行。

他又说：“您要相信我，现在‘鹦鹉螺’号除了可以卖废铁，没有任何用处了，它根本不可能像以前那样在海上或者海底航行了。我看现在到了我们跟尼摩船长告别的时候了。”

我答道：“尼德·兰师傅，我可不这么认为，我认为勇敢的‘鹦鹉螺’号还有机会，4天后，也许潮水可以帮助我们。再者说，如果现在我们靠近英国或者法国南部海岸，逃走或许能够实现，但目前我们是在巴布亚海面，情况完全不一样。如果确定‘鹦鹉螺’号真的没有重回大海的可能了，我们再做最后的打算，而现在就逃走，我总觉得是一件不好的事。”

尼德·兰又说：“那我们侦察一下附近的地形总行吧，这岛上有树，

树下一定有动物，我真想吃几口动物的肉。”

葛瑟尔表示赞同尼德·兰的话，他说：“先生，您能不能让尼摩船长把我们送到岛上去，让我们习惯一下走路也好啊，让我们重温一下回到陆上的感觉。”

我答应了葛瑟尔的请求，但我对他们说：“我可以去试试，但你们别抱太大的希望，也许他不会答应。”

葛瑟尔说：“只要试一下就行了，如果船长能够答应我的请求，我们是不会做过分的事情的。”

出人意料的，尼摩船长竟然答应了我们的请求，他似乎很爽快，而且没让我保证一定会回到船上。当然，我知道在新几内亚岛上逃亡是很危险的，所以我绝不会让尼德·兰去尝试。如果落在巴布亚土人手里，还不如被囚禁在“鹦鹉螺”号上呢。

尼摩船长为我们提供了一艘小艇，我没有问尼摩船长会不会跟我们一起去。我甚至以为会没有人为我们划船，驾驶小船的事只能由尼德·兰一人搞定。需要说明的是，尽管大船在暗礁之间的水路上航行是一件危险的事，但对于一艘小船来说，这并不是什么难事。更何况尼德·兰是一个经验丰富的水手。1月5日到来的时候，我们带着电气枪和刀斧驾驶着小艇离开“鹦鹉螺”号。海面很平静，偶尔有微风拂面。我和葛瑟尔负责划桨，而尼德·兰在暗礁间的狭小水路中指挥着舵。小艇快速前进，一切都很顺利。

尼德·兰怀着一种无法抑制的快乐，他看上去就像一个刚刚释放的囚人，终于远离了囚禁他的牢房。

他一再重复道：“我们可以去吃肉了。只要有野味，没有面包也成啊。鱼肉也很好吃，但是天天吃真是难受啊，现在抓一只野味，放在火上烤一烤，那才够味呢。”

葛瑟尔说：“真够嘴馋的，他说得我都流口水了！”

我说：“但我们得先搞清楚，林子里的野味是不是很凶猛啊，如果它们的身材比我们还高大，怎么去打猎啊？”

尼德·兰回答说：“阿勒纳斯先生，您说得对，也许它的牙齿已经磨得像刀一般锋利了，但我决定了，哪怕这个岛上只有老虎，我也要吃它的腰窝肉。”

“尼德·兰师傅，说得好吓人呢。”葛瑟尔回答。

尼德·兰又说：“管它是没有羽毛的四足兽，还是有羽毛的两脚鸟，只要一出现在我面前，我立刻开枪致敬。”

我说：“好家伙，尼德·兰师傅又粗心大意起来了！”

尼德·兰回答：“阿勒纳斯先生，您就放心地划桨吧，25分钟以内，我一定让您吃上我烤的肉。”

8点半左右，我们驾驶着小艇穿过了格波罗尔岛的珊瑚石带，慢慢地停在沙滩上。

第二十一章 两日陆地生存

尽管我们被囚禁在“鹦鹉螺”号上不过两个月，但当我的脚踩在土地上的那一刻，还是产生了一种难以形容的感觉，这感觉给我留下了极其深刻的印象。而尼德·兰踏上土地的一刹那，看起来更像是一个占有者。

仅仅用了几分钟，我们上了岛。这里所谓的土地是由珊瑚堆积而成的，也有些是干涸的河床，中间夹杂着一些花岗岩。从岩石的构成来看，这个岛屿大概形成于太古时期。这里有很多高大的树木，远远看去，整个天际像是被一道绿色的帘幕遮掩起来一样。树林间有合欢树、无花果树、火鸟树、麻栗树、木芙蓉、班达树、棕树，葛藤将它们连接起来，形成一个天然的吊床，周围丛生着很多兰科、豆科和蕨科植物。

可是，这些并不能引起加拿大人的注意，他一门心思追求食物。只见他先是从树上打下来几个椰子，让我们美美地享受了椰汁和椰肉，以弥补这么多天来我们对“鹦鹉螺”号船上食物的遗憾。

“太好吃了！”尼德·兰赞叹道。

“味道确实不错！”葛瑟尔附和道。

尼德·兰接着提议：“我想把这些水果带到船上去，不知道尼摩会不会反对？”

我回答：“他不会吃的，但应该不会反对。”

“他真是没有口福啊！”葛瑟尔惋惜地说。

尼德·兰回答：“这样也好，剩下的都可以给我们吃了。”

我对尼德·兰说：“我奉劝你不要将船都装满了，最好留一点地方装其他的東西，或许岛上还有其他的特产，比如蔬菜什么的。这在‘鸚鵡螺’号上一定是最受欢迎的。”

葛瑟尔立即表示赞同，他说：“先生说得没错，我建议将小船划分为三个部分，分别用来装水果、蔬菜和猎物。可是，为什么到现在也没见到猎物的影子呢？”

“葛瑟尔，你要有信心。”尼德·兰回答。

我说：“别说那么多了，我们出发吧，大家路上一定要小心，尽管这是个荒岛，但是也不排除有其他人的可能，我们要时刻提防，不要成为别人的猎物。”

“咕……”尼德·兰发出两声怪叫，上下嘴唇碰了一下，似乎是在发表自己的意见。

葛瑟尔好奇地问：“尼德·兰，发生什么事了？”

尼德·兰回答说：“我开始懂得人肉的诱惑力了！”

葛瑟尔大叫：“什么，尼德·兰，你要吃人肉！那我岂不是惨了，回到船上我要和您住在一起的。难道某天醒来，我会成为你的食物吗？”

尼德·兰笑答：“放心吧，葛瑟尔，我们是朋友，不到紧要关头，我是不会吃你的。”

葛瑟尔回答：“我可不敢相信你的话，还是赶紧去打猎吧，如果猎物不能满足你的味蕾，那我真的危险了。”

我们边走边聊，短短两个小时，我们就穿过了森林的穹隆，走遍了整个小岛。在这个过程中，我们意外地得到了很多食物，都是船上没有的，对于我们来说很珍贵。这些食物是热带地区很常见的面包树，没有核仁的那种，被马来西亚人称为“利马”。

面包树的特点在于树干笔直，高达40英尺。树顶由很多宽大的树叶组成，呈环形，很漂亮，生物学家很容易就认出了这是“面包果树”。目前，马斯卡林群岛已经将这种树移植成功。对于热带地区而言，这是很有用的植物，不需要耕种，一年里有8个月可以结出面包果供给人们食用。面包果是粗大的球形果子，长约一分米，外表凹凸不平，看上去像一个六角形。

对于尼德·兰而言，面包果并不陌生，在以前的旅途中他也吃过，因此，他懂得如何将果子做得更好吃。所以，当第一眼看到这些果子的时候，他就开始流口水了。

他急急地对我说：“先生，我迫不及待地想尝一尝面包果了。”

我鼓励他说：“尼德·兰，不用客气，你赶紧尝尝吧，我们的目的很明确，就是来获得食物的，所以没理由不尝。”

“我马上就可以搞定。”尼德·兰说道。

凭着经验，尼德·兰用火镜将面包树的树枝点着，等火光着到一定程度的时候，我和葛瑟尔选了两个最好的果子摘了下来。不一会儿，大多数面包果就都变成了黄色，产生了黏性，只有少数的面包果还没有成熟，厚厚的表皮上蒙上一层白肉。

这是些没有核仁的果子，葛瑟尔摘了十余个交给尼德·兰，让他处

理成厚片，准备放在火上烤。尼德·兰边切片边说：“你们就等着吃好吃的面包果吧。”

葛瑟尔说：“我们确实很长时间没有吃面包了！”

尼德·兰又说：“先生，这同普通的面包可不一样，这是更美味的糕点，先生，您真的从来没吃过吗？”

“没吃过，尼德·兰师傅。”

“那您一会儿就好好品尝一下面包果特有的风味吧，包您吃了一个还想吃第二个，否则我就不是第一号鱼叉手了。”

过了几分钟，面包果已经烤熟了，里面白色的粉状物像是又软又嫩的面包屑，看起来相当诱人。我们迫不及待地吃起来。这东西看起来像面包，吃到嘴里以后就变成了白叶菜的味道。我由衷地觉得味道很好，我很喜欢吃。

“如果这种果子可以长久保鲜，就可以带回船上去吃了。”我说。

尼德·兰激动地说：“真的吗，先生！认为不能保鲜那是从生物学家的角度来说的，但作为一个面点师，我可以尝试。葛瑟尔，去摘一些果子回来，我们可以拿回船上去吃。”

“您要怎样加工这些果子呢？”我好奇地问。

“您知道的，这果子里有淀粉泥，只要利用它将果子制成发面团，就可以长久保存了。想吃的时候，只需要在厨房里烤一烤，就可以吃了。当然，到时候或许会有一点点酸味。”

“尼德·兰师傅，有了面包果，我们就不差什么东西了吧？”

尼德·兰回答道：“教授，我们还差一些水果和蔬菜！”

“那我们现在出发，找水果和蔬菜去。”说完，我们立即出发去寻找我们想要的东西，目的只有一个，就是让我们的午餐更加丰盛。

果然不虚此行，中午的时候，我们找到了很多香蕉，这在热带地区并不是稀奇的水果，马来西亚人将它们称作“比桑”，意思是可以生吃的东西。除了香蕉，我们还找到了味道辛烈的巨大的雅克果、甜芒果和大个的菠萝。尽管寻找这些东西花费了我们很多时间，但是品种齐全的水果是对我们最好的补偿。

尼德·兰走在最前面，葛瑟尔跟在尼德·兰后面，我走在最后。鱼叉手果然手疾眼快，总是能采到很好吃的果子，使得我们的贮藏食品更加丰富了。

葛瑟尔再一次问尼德·兰：“好朋友，这次我们不缺什么了吧？”

“嗯！”尼德·兰回答得有些勉强。

“难道您对今天的收获还是不满意？”

尼德·兰回答：“你没发现吗？我们找到的都是些蔬菜和水果，可是一点肉类都没有，没有肉也就没有汤了。”

我说：“是呀，看来尼德·兰答应做给我吃的排骨，没有希望了。”

尼德·兰赶紧接过话茬儿，说：“先生，真正的狩猎还没有开始呢，您别着急，这么大的岛，总会有动物的。”

“哪怕今天没有，明天也会有的，对吧？不过我们不能离岸边太远，我想我们得返回了。”葛瑟尔提议道。

尼德·兰喊道：“不会吧，现在就要回去？”

我肯定地说：“没错，我们天黑之前一定要回到船上去。”

“那现在几点了？”尼德·兰问。

“看样子，至少是下午两点了。”葛瑟尔回答。

尼德·兰惋惜地说：“在陆地上的生活，时间过得真快啊。”

“走吧。”葛瑟尔提醒道。

在回去的路上，我们又得到了一些棕榈果，采摘这种果子要爬到树顶上。还有一些被马来西亚人称作“阿布卢”的小豆以及品质上乘的芋薯。

当我们带着东西回到小艇上的时候，发现东西实在是太多了，可尼德·兰总觉得还不够。临上船的时候，他又看见几棵高达25英尺至30英尺的棕榈树，这是当地比较珍贵的树种，叫作西米树，这种树不需要打理，自己会繁殖生长。

尼德·兰是个户外生存的高手，只见他挥动斧子，几下就将西米树砍倒，从叶子上的粉色粉屑来看，这几棵树已经成熟了。

我用生物学家的眼光观察尼德·兰砍树，他先将树干去掉一层一英寸厚的树皮，再剥去表皮下面缠绕成一团的纤维网，接着就可以取得粉状的西米了，这是美拉尼西亚居民的主要食物。

只见尼德·兰将树干砍成一片一片的，等将它放在太阳底下晒干后，通过一块薄布，就可以将纤维和粉末分开，从而提取到西米了。

下午5点的时候，我们带着所有的成果离开了海岛，回到“鹦鹉螺”号旁边。我们回到船上的时候，看不到一个人，“鹦鹉螺”号像是被遗弃了一般。我们将食物搬上船以后，回到各自的房间。晚饭已经准备好了，就摆放在房间的桌子上，我简单吃了一点东西，便休息了。

1月6日，船上仍然没有一点声响，毫无生气。我们发现小艇仍然停在“鹦鹉螺”号旁边，还在原来的位置，我们决定再次去格波罗尔岛上探险。尼德·兰希望今天的运气好一点，可以得到一些猎物。

太阳升起来的时候，我们已经出发了。我们在波浪的带动下，很快就到了岛上。

再次踏上陆地以后，我觉得还是让尼德·兰带路比较好，因此我和葛瑟尔跟在后面。尼德·兰的腿很长，走得很快，我们常常被他甩在后面。

尼德·兰先沿着海岸向西走了一会儿，跨过一些激流，来到了高地平原，这里有很多漂亮的树木。树上，停着一些翠鸟，看见我们过来，它们立即飞走了，很是警惕。通过鸟儿的表现判断，这里不仅没有居民，而且应该很少有人到岛上来。面对这种情况，我们实在不知道该怎么对付这些两足动物。于是我们穿过草原，来到一片小树林的边缘，这里有很多鸟儿在歌唱，洋溢着一派生机。

“这只是一些鸟类呢。”葛瑟尔说。

尼德·兰说：“也有些可以作为食物的。”

葛瑟尔回答：“我只看到了一些鹦鹉，好像不能吃吧？”

尼德·兰答道：“好朋友，在没有其他食物的时候，鹦鹉就等于山鸡。”接着，他补充说，“而且，如果烹调水平够高的话，这也是值得品尝的。”

在这片浓密的小树林里，一大群鹦鹉在树枝间飞来飞去，如果有人指导，相信它们一定可以说人类的语言。当然，在没接触过人类的情况下，它们只是叽叽喳喳叫个不停。这里鹦鹉的种类非常多：有神气严肃的五彩鹦鹉，它们像是哲学家；有大红色的赤鹦鹉，飞起来像一块随风飘荡的红纱；有带着天蓝色斑点的巴布亚鹦鹉……还有一些其他种类的飞禽，根据经验来看，这些飞禽都是不能食用的。

不过，这地方应该盛产一种鸟类，它们从不走过阿卢群岛和巴布亚群岛的边界，由于机缘未到，我们没有欣赏到。

我们离开鸟儿的天堂，穿过一片稀疏的树林，来到了一片有很多树丛的平原。在那里，也有很多华丽的鸟儿飞过，它们的羽毛很特别，一定要逆风才能飞行。这些鸟儿飞行的路线波状起伏，在空中划出美丽的曲线，它们的羽毛颜色很鲜艳，吸引着人们的眼球。我很快认出这是无双鸟。

“属于燕雀目，直肠亚目。”葛瑟尔补充道。

“是鹤鹄科吗？”尼德·兰问。

“应该不是，尼德·兰师傅，到您大显身手的时候了，您能否将这美丽的鸟儿打下一只来？”

尼德·兰回答：“教授，我只能说试一下，您知道的，我的强项是叉

鱼，枪法要差一些。”

这种鸟是马来西亚人和中国人进行贸易的重要内容，马来西亚人想方设法捕捉这种鸟，或是在树顶上安放罗网，或是使用强力胶，或是在泉水中投毒。这些方法对于我们来说并不适用，我们只能通过射击来捕捉它们。事实证明，射击确实不是我们的强项，只是浪费了一些弹药而已。

时钟指向11点，我们穿过了岛中心的山脉，没有任何收获。此时，我们的肚子开始叫起来，饥饿折磨着我们。我们以为今天的运气会好一点，谁知只是一厢情愿而已，一点猎物也没得到。幸运的是，葛瑟尔随意开了两枪，竟然获得了午餐。葛瑟尔得到了一只白鸽和一只山鸠。简单地拔掉羽毛后，我们就将它们放在旺火上烤。在鸽子快要熟了的时候，尼德·兰开始处理面包果。食物准备好后，我们很快吃得精光，连骨头都没剩，由于白鸽和山鸠在生长过程中会吃很多肉豆蔻，因此它们的肉像加了香料一般，味道非常好。大家对这顿午餐非常满意。

“这个味道跟母鸡的味道差不多。”葛瑟尔说。

我问：“尼德·兰，我们还缺什么东西？”

尼德·兰回答：“教授，我们还差一只四脚猎物，刚刚吃的鸽子、山鸠只能算是零食，不吃到有排骨的动物，我是绝对不会罢手的。”

“尼德·兰，如果你不能捕捉到一只无双鸟，我也不会罢手的。”

葛瑟尔建议道：“那我们出发吧，先向海边走，等到了第一层斜坡的时候，再到森林里去。”

葛瑟尔是个有见识的人，因此我们按照他的建议出发。一个小时

后，我们来到一座西米树森林，森林里有一些不伤人的蛇，在我们脚下逃走了。无双鸟非常机灵，我们总是没有办法接近它们。对此，我很失望，觉得自己的愿望要落空了。可就在这时，葛瑟尔弯下身子，发出了胜利的呐喊，他带着一只非常好看的无双鸟向我走来。

我兴奋地喊道：“葛瑟尔，你太棒了！”

“先生，您过奖了！”葛瑟尔腼腆地回答。

“绝对不是夸奖，你真的做了一件了不起的事，竟然捉到了一只无双鸟，太了不起了！”

“先生，如果您仔细观察一下，就知道我没有谦虚了！”

“葛瑟尔，为什么这样说？”

“因为它跟鹤鹑一样，醉了。”

“醉了？”

“是的，先生，我想它是吃豆蔻吃多了，醉了，所以我才有机会捉到它。尼德·兰先生，您看，贪吃贪喝会产生可怕的结果！”

尼德·兰不服气地说：“切，两个月来，我只喝了一些真尼酒，根本没道理责备我。”

于是，我开始观察这只奇异的鸟。葛瑟尔的判断是正确的，它的确是因为吃了豆蔻汁醉了，以至于瘫软在地，无力飞行。我们完全没有必要担心，只需要让它好好地睡上一觉，醒来后就没事了。

巴布亚和邻近群岛共盛产8种无双鸟，同其他的比起来，这只无双

鸟属于最美的一种。由于比较稀少，它被誉为“大翡翠”无双鸟。它的周身有三分米长，头和眼睛都比较小，离嘴边比较近，长着褐色的脚爪和指甲，翅膀是榛子色的，末端是朱红色的。它的头部和颈部是淡黄色的，喉间是翡翠色，腹部和胸部是栗子色，全身的色彩非常鲜艳。它的尾巴上长着两个角形的绒毛绿球，与细长的羽毛相接，这种飘逸的形象为它博得了一个好听的名字——“太阳鸟”。

我有一个愿望，就是将这只美丽的无双鸟带回去送给巴黎的植物园，巴黎的小朋友还没有在动物园里看过这种鸟。

尼德·兰问：“这种鸟真的有那么稀奇吗？”加拿大人用一种毫不客气的口吻问道。

“老朋友，这种鸟非常珍贵，哪怕是一只死去的无双鸟也可以卖个好价钱，正因为这样，才有人想方设法来假造它。就像假造珍珠和钻石一样。”

葛瑟尔吃惊地问：“先生，还有人假造无双鸟？”

“没错，葛瑟尔。”

“先生，您知道土人是怎么制造的吗？”

“略知一二。每年季候风来临的时候，便是无双鸟脱毛的季节，那些制假者将无双鸟美丽的羽毛收集起来，粘贴在被拔过毛的鹦鹉身上，略加修饰后再卖到欧洲那些喜欢鸟类的博物馆或个人手里。”

尼德·兰说：“这也无伤大雅，前提是这鸟不是拿来吃的。”

得到这只无双鸟后，我的欲望被彻底地满足了，但是尼德·兰的欲

望却远远没有被满足。幸运的是，下午两点的时候，一只肥大的野猪主动献身给尼德·兰，那种野猪被当地人称作“波利沃特”。这只野猪出现得很及时，正当大家期盼四足野味的时候，它出现了。于是，尼德·兰一枪解决了它。接着，他很快从猪身上割下六七块腰窝肉，准备晚上烤着吃。接着，剥皮，开膛，取出内脏。

处理完野猪之后，尼德·兰和葛瑟尔再一次发挥了他们卓越的打猎才能，从树丛中赶出了一大群袋鼠，尽管它们的动作非常敏捷，但是终究没有电气弹跑得快，没跑出多远，就应声倒下。

在获得了丰盛的食物以后，尼德·兰兴奋地喊了起来：“教授，您看啊，我们的食物够丰盛了吧。‘鹦鹉螺’号船上从来没有这些食物啊。看，我们又得到了五只袋鼠。想起回到船上，我们吃肉，那些人干看着的画面我就高兴。”

尼德·兰太过兴奋了，如果他能够早点闭嘴的话，我想这些袋鼠都跑不过他的手掌心。

这时，葛瑟尔说：“这些袋鼠属于兔袋鼠，哺乳类的第一目，尽管身材非常短小，但是跑的速度非常快。由于它们是运动健将，所以肉质很鲜美，一直被当成珍品。”

我们很满意自己的成果，尼德·兰甚至想明天还到岛上来，再捕捉一些袋鼠，甚至其他可以吃的四足动物也统统一网打尽。但意外总是在人们得意的时候出现，我们也是如此。

下午6点，我们回到海滩停泊小船的地方。远远看去，“鹦鹉螺”号就像一座很长的礁石，停靠在离岸两海里的海面。

尼德·兰一刻不停地准备着晚餐。他将“波利沃特”野猪的腰窝肉放在红火上烤，空气中弥漫着野猪肉的香味。

面对这些新鲜美味的烤肉，我也变得像尼德·兰一样快乐起来。请大家原谅我们的嗜肉，实在是太久没有吃过了。

这顿晚餐的美味，使我至今难忘。野猪肉配上两只山鸠，使得菜的种类更加丰富。还有西米面条、面包果，再加上芒果、菠萝和椰子果酿成的饮料，我们对这顿丰盛的晚餐满意极了，我甚至觉得我的伙伴吃得忘记了一切。

葛瑟尔问道：“我们今晚不回船上去了，好吗？”

尼德·兰补充说：“最好永远都不回去了。”

尼德·兰的话音刚落，一个石头落在我们脚边，我们立即清醒过来。

第二十二章 尼摩船长的手雷

我们朝着树林的方向看过去，但并没有离开原地，我停下了往嘴里送食物的手，尼德·兰也停止了咀嚼食物。

葛瑟尔说：“这些石头是哪里来的，肯定不是陨石吧？”

像是配合葛瑟尔的话，紧接着，第二块圆形的石头又落了下来，打

落了葛瑟尔手里一块好吃的山鸠腿肉。这引起了我们的注意。

我们三个人同时站了起来，握紧了手里的枪，准备应对这突然的攻击。

尼德·兰问道：“难道是猿猴？”

葛瑟尔回答：“差不多吧，他们是野蛮人。”

我提议赶紧回到船上去，于是，我们向海边走去。

就在我们向后退的时候，20来个土人拿着弓箭和投石器，出现在我们面前，距离我们不到100步远。此时，我们距离小艇有大概20米远。

这些土人不慌不忙地向我们走来，同时带来了雨点一样的石块和弓箭。尼德·兰宁可放弃生命也不愿放弃那些食物，于是，他不顾危险地将食物快速地收拾起来。

过了两分钟，我们回到海滩边上，将食物和武器放在小艇上，接着，我们飞速将小艇推入海中，安上了两支桨。我们刚刚划了200米，便出现了100多个土人，他们大喊大叫，挥舞着双手走到海水中齐腰的地方。我一厢情愿地认为，这些土人一定会将“鹦鹉螺”号上的人吸引出来的，可是我错了，这只机器船像睡着了一样，毫无动静。

又过了约20分钟，我们终于回到了“鹦鹉螺”号上。

我走进客厅，只见尼摩船长在那里弯着腰弹奏他的大风琴，他陶醉在自己的音乐之中。

我叫了声船长，但是尼摩像是没听见一样，没有回答。

我又叫了一声船长，并试图用手去触碰他。

他的身体微微抖了一下，转过身来对我说：“哦，教授，是您啊，你们打猎的成果如何啊？”

我回答说：“收获颇丰呢，遗憾的是，我们给您带来了不少麻烦，现在有很多两腿动物在船的附近，我比较担心。”

“两腿动物指的是？”

“是一些野蛮人。”

尼摩船长用一种讽刺的语气说：“教授，回到陆地上碰到野蛮人不是什么稀奇事，不过，能让您称为野蛮人的，一定是很坏了。”

我还想再说些什么，只听尼摩船长说：“先生，野蛮人我见得多了，到处都是。”

我说：“不过，船长先生，如果您不想让他们到船上来做客，最好想一想办法。”

“教授，您就把心放在肚子里吧，这是完全不用担心的。”

“可是外面的土人人数众多。”

“多到什么程度？”

“有上百个。”

尼摩船长重新弹起了大风琴，他说道：“‘鹦鹉螺’号从来不怕野人的攻击，就算是所有的土人都聚集在海滩上也不怕！”

风琴再次发出了悠扬的乐声，乐曲中带着苏格兰曲风的特色。很快，船长再次沉浸在音乐中，我不再说话，怕打扰到他。

当我重新回到平台上时，黑夜已经到来。由于船搁浅在低纬度的地区，因而夜晚直接越过黄昏降临在人间。渐渐地，格波罗尔岛在我的眼前变得模糊起来，海滩上闪耀着火光，是那些土人守在岸上，久久不愿离开。

我安静地在平台上欣赏着热带地区的美丽夜晚，一不留神过去了几个钟头。有时，我会记起那些土人，但我并不恐惧，因为尼摩船长给了我很大的信心。有时，我的思绪回到了法国，跟随黄道十二宫的星宿一齐离去。我还联想到那个月圆之夜，月球要掀起波浪，将我们送回海面上。快到凌晨的时候，海面更加平静，隔壁的树林也听不到任何声音，我重新回到舱房中，安心地睡去。

一夜平安无事，也许是土人看到“鹦鹉螺”号这个大怪物，便不敢贸然靠近。但是，船上的嵌板依然开着，还存在着被土人潜入的可能性。

1月8日早晨6点，我来到了平台上。晨雾渐渐散去，格波罗尔岛从雾气中显露出来，接着，海滩、山峰相继出现。

土人的人数变得越来越多，甚至达到了五六百人。有的土人乘着低潮来到距离大船400米远的珊瑚石尖上。我们可以看清彼此。那些巴布亚土人身材高大健壮，前额宽大突起，鼻子粗大，牙齿很白。他们的头发是红色的，像是羊毛一样，披散在漆黑发亮的身躯上。他们的耳朵上挂着骨质的耳环，很少见这些土人穿衣服，只有一些女人穿着及膝的草叶裙子，上面用一根草带子系起来。土人当中，头领的脖子上系着一个弯月形的饰物和红白色玻璃编成的项链。这是一个全民武装的部落，所

有的土人都带着弓、箭和盾，肩上背着像网一类的东西，网里装满了圆形的石块。

其中一个头领走到靠近“鹦鹉螺”号的地方，专心地研究眼前这只船。从他的装束来看，他应该是一个高级的“马多”，身上披着一条用香蕉树叶编的围巾，围巾颜色鲜艳，还带着花边。

那个人离我们很近，我们可以轻易地击毙他，但我不会轻易动手，我首先要确认他的意图。

在海水的低潮期间，这些人围着“鹦鹉螺”号看来看去，他们很安静，并不大喊大叫。我常常听到他们说“阿洗”这个词。我从他们的手势中大概猜出，他们想让我去岛上，但我无论如何是不会答应这个邀请的。

这些人的出现使得我们不能离开大船了，这可苦了尼德·兰师傅，他很失望，因为不能再补足食物了。于是，他充分发挥巧手的优势，将从岛上带回来的肉类和面粉加工成熟。而那些土人，只是坚持到11点海水涨潮的时候便离开了。但我发现，海滩上的人数越来越多，连临近小岛的土人都聚集到这里，只是我还没有看到过载人的独木舟。

由于无事可做，于是我决定去海里打捞一点贝类、植虫类和海产植物。重要的是，明天“鹦鹉螺”号就要离开这里了，尼摩船长曾预言，月圆涨潮的时候，船就可以回到大海上去了。于是，我向葛瑟尔要了一个轻便的打捞器，就像打捞牡蛎的网一样。

葛瑟尔问我那些野蛮人的去向，他说：“先生，不知道为什么，我感觉那些土人并没有那么凶恶。”

“你要知道，他们是吃人的猛兽。”

“吃肉并不代表他们不是老实人。”葛瑟尔回答，“这同一个诚实的人同时也可以是一个贪吃的人是一样的道理，并不矛盾。”

“是的！葛瑟尔，我并不反对你的说法，他们是吃人的老实人，可是不为了不被他们吃掉，我想我还是警惕一些的好。但尼摩船长看起来好像并不在意，完全不加防范。好了，我们还是快动手打捞海产品吧。”

在两个小时内，我们很积极地打捞，但是，并没有得到什么珍贵的海产品，只是打捞到一些驴耳贝、竖琴贝、河贝子等，还打到了一些好看的糙鱼、海参、珍珠、牡蛎和一打小鳖，这些海产品都可以作为船上的食物。

让我们感到意外的是，我们竟无意中找到了一件自然变形的珍品，这种东西并不常见。葛瑟尔将打捞器捞起来的时候，网中都是些很平常的贝类，但是，当我仔细观察网里的东西时，竟发出了喜悦的欢呼声。

葛瑟尔好奇地问：“先生，您没事吧？”

“朋友，没事，我得到了一件宝贝，我甚至愿意用一个指头来换它呢。”

“什么宝贝呢？”

“你看这个贝壳。”我将我手里的战利品拿给葛瑟尔看。

“先生，这不过是一个普通的斑红橄榄贝，橄榄贝属，节鳃目，腹足纲，软体类门……”

“你说得没错，但是葛瑟尔，你仔细看看这个橄榄贝的纹路，就会发现它的不同之处，它不像普通的橄榄贝那样从右往左卷过来，而是从左往右转过去。”

“你说的是真的？”葛瑟尔喊道。

“我怎么会骗你呢，你看，这是一个左卷贝！”

“左卷贝！”葛瑟尔兴奋地重复着。

“不信的话你过来看看贝壳的螺旋纹。”

葛瑟尔颤抖着接过这枚珍贵的贝壳，对我说：“先生，我从没有像现在这样激动过！”

这的确很让人激动。在自然法则规定中，贝壳的螺纹是从右向左的，天体行星和卫星的公转和自转也是从右向左的。人类使用右手的可能性要多一些，因此，人类的工具和器械、楼梯、锁钥、钟表的法条等都是由右向左来使用的，就是为了配合人类的这一特点。同样道理，大多数情况下，贝类的纹路也都是右转的，因此，那些左转的贝类极其珍贵，一些爱好者会以重金来收购。

我和葛瑟尔陶醉在我的意外发现之中，我在幻想着，我们的博物馆又多了一件珍贵的宝贝。没想到的是，一个石子落了下来，将我们的珍品打碎了，始作俑者是一个土人。

面对突然的状况，我发出了绝望的喊声。而葛瑟尔快速地拿起我的手枪，对准10米外的土人就是一枪，我还没来得及阻止，子弹就落在土人胳膊上的护身灵镯上。

“葛瑟尔！”我喊道。

“先生，是这个土人先发起攻击的。”葛瑟尔答道。

我对他说：“可是，我们仅仅是损失了一个贝壳，也不能要了他的性命啊！”

葛瑟尔激动地说：“先生，我宁可他打碎的是我的肩骨，可他为什么偏偏要打碎我们的贝壳呢，混蛋玩意儿！”

我知道，葛瑟尔的反应是发自内心的，可是，我还是不能赞同他的说法。此时，我们并没有察觉到情况已经发生了变化，“鹦鹉螺”号周围围绕着20多艘独木舟。这些小船是用中空的树身做成的，很长，很窄。为了使船身平衡不左右摆动，每个独木舟都配上了两条浮在水面的竹制长竿。独木舟快速向我们驶来，担任驾驶任务的是一些半光着身体、熟练使用自由桨板的土人。看着眼前的阵势，我们不得不害怕起来。

“鹦鹉螺”号既没有桅杆，也没有烟囱，这种特殊的设计对于巴布亚人来说很陌生，哪怕是再了解欧洲船只的人，也会对眼前的船只毫无头绪。他们只是凭直觉判断这个东西对他们无利。因此，他们始终保持在安全的距离，不敢贸然靠近，但当他们发现船只是停止的以后，他们企图了解船只的构造。对此，我们当然持反对的态度。

但是，这些土人只害怕轰隆隆的炮声，对于我们这种没有声响的武器，完全不畏惧。只见他们的独木舟距离“鹦鹉螺”号越来越近了，他们开始用箭攻击船只了。

葛瑟尔说：“外面的箭跟冰雹一样，不知道有没有毒！”

我边从嵌板进来边说：“我们应该先通知尼摩船长。”

我走到空无一人的客厅，冒昧地敲了敲朝着船长房间开的那扇门。

里面传来一个声音说：“请进。”我走进房间，发现船长正在专注地计算着什么，本子上有很多未知数和其他的代数符号。

我抱歉地说：“打扰您了。”

船长回答说：“尽管我在做一件非常重要的事情，但凭我对您的了解，如果不是有紧急的事情，您是不会敲门进来的。”

“你说得没错，非常紧急，我们被一群土人围起来了，我想，再过几分钟，他们就要对我们进行攻击了。”

尼摩船长淡定地说：“哦，他们是怎么过来的，乘独木舟吗？”

“没错，船长先生。”

“没什么大不了的，教授，我们只需要把嵌板关上就行了。”

“正是，我就是来告诉您……”

“这太简单了。”尼摩船长说。

只见，他只是按了一个按钮，就将命令传达给船员了。

过了一会儿，他转过来对我说：“已经搞定了，教授，嵌板已经关上了，小船也放好了，现在，任何东西都不能损伤我们的船了，哪怕是‘林肯’号战舰的炮弹也不行，您现在不担心那些人冲进来了吧？”

“船长，我还有个担忧。”

“什么担忧呢？”

“我担心明天换气的时候，那些人会沿着嵌板爬进来……”

“教授，您以为他们有机会走上船来吗？”

“应该可以吧。”

“哈哈，教授，别担心，让他们上来好了。实在没有必要阻止他们。不过，他们真够可怜的，我途经格波罗尔岛的时候，就曾有一个苦命的人牺牲了，我也不想这样。”

我本打算马上离开的，没想到被尼摩船长留了下来。他让我坐在他的身边，耐心地询问我们登陆的情况以及我们的遭遇。他完全想象不到加拿大人对肉的迫切渴望。我们的谈话内容很宽泛，尽管尼摩船长还是像以前那样不轻易打开自己的心扉，但是，我明显感觉到了他的和蔼可亲。后来，我们谈到了“鹦鹉螺”号目前所处的地位，谈到了杜蒙·居维尔差点在这里丧命，说到这里的时候，他显得非常激动，说：“作为最有智慧的航海家之一，他从不怕南极的冰层，不怕大洋洲的珊瑚礁，不怕太平洋的吃人肉的土人，没想到，经历了种种危险后，竟死于火车失事，多么不幸啊，太可惜了！我真想象不出，这么精明能干的人，最后一刻在想什么呢？”

尼摩船长的情绪是那样激动，以至于我都被感染了。

我和尼摩船长手拿着地图，重复着那位伟大的航海家做过的事情，寻找他探险过的地方以及一些记载资料。

尼摩船长对我说：“居维尔在海面上做过的事，我全部在海底做了，相比之下，我做得更方便，更完整，因为‘鹦鹉螺’号可比‘浑天

仪’号和‘热心女’号安静多了，从没有大风大浪。”

我说：“船长先生，你有没有想过杜蒙·居维尔的旧式海船跟‘鹦鹉螺’号有相似之处？”

“有什么相似之处呢？教授！”

“相似之处在于它们都搁浅了！”

尼摩船长并不赞同我的话，他冷冷地说：“‘鹦鹉螺’号并不算搁浅，你要清楚，居维尔要让他的船离开礁石，重回海上必须付出很大的努力，而我却不同；还有，‘浑天仪’号和‘热心女’号几乎沉没了，但我的‘鹦鹉螺’号毫无危险。我们只需等待，只要等到指定的那一天，便可以重回海上了。”

我肯定地回答：“船长，我相信……”

尼摩船长不等我说完，便站起来说：“明天下午两点四十分，便是‘鹦鹉螺’号重回海上的那一刻，我们将毫发无伤地离开托列斯海峡。”

尼摩船长一口气说完这些话以后，便示意我离开。我知趣地回到自己房中，只见葛瑟尔在，他很想知道我和尼摩船长说了什么。

我告诉他：“尼摩船长对此不屑一顾，我们只要踏实睡觉就行了，什么都不用管。”

“先生，你确定吗？”

“当然，对了葛瑟尔，尼德·兰去哪里了？”

葛瑟尔回答说：“抱歉，先生，尼德·兰正在做袋鼠肉饼，味道一定

不错。”

我躺在床上，听着土人在外面大声地呐喊和踩踏，久久不能睡去。土人在外面折腾了一夜，但船上的人并不理睬，他们对此早已司空见惯，没有任何感觉，就像守在铁甲堡垒中的士兵全不留心在铁甲上奔跑的蚂蚁一样。

早上6点，我准时起床。我发现今天的嵌板并没有打开，因为船内有空气储藏库，缺氧的时候，只需要放几立方米的氧气到“鹦鹉螺”号里就可以了。我一直在房间里工作，直到中午，也没有见到尼摩船长，貌似船没有做任何出发的准备。

又过了一段时间，我来到客厅。根据尼摩船长的预测，海潮会在2点40分左右达到最高点，那时，“鹦鹉螺”号就可以离开这里了。如果预测不准的话，恐怕“鹦鹉螺”号还要继续留在这里，不知道要待到什么时候。

过了一会儿，我隐约觉得船在颤抖，接着听到船身与珊瑚石上的石灰质摩擦时发出的沙沙的响声。

尼摩船长在2点35分时出现在客厅里。

可是，不久就在船身上感到有些似乎是前奏的颤抖。我听到珊瑚石上石灰质形成的表面在船边上摩擦，沙沙作响。

“我们准备出发。”他说。

“啊！”我应了一声。

“我下了打开嵌板的命令。”

“那些土人呢？”

“哪里有土人？”尼摩船长耸了耸肩问道。

“他们不是想爬进‘鹦鹉螺’号吗？”

“从哪里进来？”

“就是打开的嵌板呀。”

尼摩船长平静地回答：“教授先生，那是不可能的，无论是谁，只要我们不允许，他就根本无法进来，哪怕是嵌板开着的时候也不行。”

我不解地望着船长。

尼摩船长看出了我的迷惑，问：“还是不明白吗？”

“是的。”我诚实地回答。

尼摩船长把我领到中央楼梯那里，说：“您看吧！”

恰好尼德·兰和葛瑟尔也在那里，他们存在着跟我一样的疑惑。只见船员将嵌板打开，那些土人疯狂地呐喊着向船扑来，足足有二十几个。可是，当第一个土人的手触碰到嵌板的把手时，马上便被一种无形的力量推开。他的伙伴们也遭遇了同样的命运，都跳跃着逃跑了。

葛瑟尔见到这样的场面，兴奋极了。尼德·兰在急躁性格的驱使下，跑到楼梯上去一探究竟，当他的手碰到楼梯扶手的时候，被击倒在地。他大声喊道：“有鬼的！我被雷击到了！”

我很快明白了，那不是普通的扶手，而是接通了船上电流的扶手。

只要接通电源，接触扶手的人就会受到电击。如果尼摩船长将整个船上的电流都放到这个导体中去，足以置人于死地。这简直是一张电网，任何不请自来的客人都会受到电击的惩罚。

土人再也不敢接触那个可怕的扶手了，一直在往后退。这时，我们笑着安慰不幸的尼德·兰，用手抚摸他，而他则大声地咒骂着。

时钟指向2点40分，此时，“鹦鹉螺”号被波浪掀动，渐渐离开了珊瑚石床。它的机轮重新搅动海水，速度也越来越快，不一会儿就将托列斯海峡的危险水道抛在后面，向大海驶去。

第二十三章 强制入睡

1月10日，离开托列斯海峡的第二天，“鹦鹉螺”号活跃在大海之中。我根据机轮的转动速度判断，它的时速不少于35海里。

我感叹电的神奇，它不仅能够为“鹦鹉螺”号提供动力、热力和照明，而且还能够保护“鹦鹉螺”号。这种神奇的力量真的值得我赞美，同时，我还要赞美制造这艘船的工程师，他的创造非常伟大。

1月11日，我们开始一路向西，经过了东经135度、南纬10度的韦塞尔角，这里是卡彭塔里亚海湾的东尖端。这里的海域有很多零散的礁石，地图上均有记载。根据地图指示，“鹦鹉螺”号很容易地绕开了处于左舷方向的礁石，和右舷方向的维多利亚暗礁，它们同在东经135度和南纬10度，这时船正沿着这纬度行驶。

1月13日，“鹦鹉螺”号到了东经122度的帝汶海，在这里可以看见与海同名的帝汶岛。这岛的面积有1625平方公里，被“拉夜”王公们统治着。这些王公们自称为鳄鱼的子孙。在这里，鳄鱼大量繁殖，人们为了表达对祖宗的尊敬，奉养它们，给它们食物，还将青年女子作为食物送给它们。如果有不了解情况的人敢触碰它们，就会惹来杀身之祸。

“鹦鹉螺”号并没有在帝汶岛停留，只是在中午的时候经过这里，因此并没有跟这些难看的鳄鱼打交道。

在这个区域，我还看到了属于这群岛屿的罗地小岛。这个岛上盛产美女，这是马来西亚市场公认的。

“鹦鹉螺”号在这里改变了方向，开始向西南印度洋方向行驶。我开始疑惑，尼摩船长接下来打算带我们去哪里呢？难道要回到亚洲海岸吗？还是要靠近欧洲海岸？从航行的方向来看，他并没有故意躲避有人居住的陆地。难道他要带我们去南极，先经过好望角，再经过合恩角，然后向南极方向行驶，最后再重新回到太平洋中来？不过，“鹦鹉螺”号方便在太平洋海面上航行吗？看来只有等待时间告诉我真相了。

“鹦鹉螺”号经过了嘉地埃、依比尼亚、西林加巴当、斯各脱暗礁群后，我们就再也看不见陆地了。此时，是1月14日。“鹦鹉螺”号的速度突然缓慢下来，时而在水中走，时而浮出水面。

尼摩船长借着这次航行的机会，将海水不同水层中的水温记录了下来，还做了一些有趣的试验。通常情况下，要测量水下不同水层的水温，是很复杂的，要利用相当复杂的机器，而且不管是用玻璃温度表来测量还是使用金属仪器来测量，所得到的结果都是无法校正的。但尼摩船长却可以克服这个难题，他可以亲身到海底去测量任何一个水层的温

度，只要温度表跟水层接触，就可以得出很精确的数字。当然，这么做一定要借助“鹦鹉螺”号的力量，或者是把所有的储水池装得很满，或用纵斜机倾斜下降，这样就可以轻松到达3000、4000、5000、7000、9000、10000米的深度。经过试验，尼摩船长得出了一个结论，不论任何纬度，1000米水下的水层温度是恒定的，永远是4.5度。

对于尼摩船长的实验，我非常感兴趣。通过观察我发现，尼摩船长对这种实验有一种无法阻挡的热情。我常常思考，他做这个实验的目的是什么呢？是为了人类的利益吗？答案是否定的。因为他的实验结果根本不会有人知道。除非他打算将实验的结果交给我，如果是这样的话，我就有离开“鹦鹉螺”号的希望了，但是现在，我还没有看到这种希望。

抛去其他因素，尼摩船长还是将他获得的各种数字都告诉了我，这些数字都是关于地球上主要海洋海水密度的报告。通过这些数字，我获得了不是关于科学的，而是关于个人的知识。

事情是这样的。1月15日的早上，我和尼摩船长在平台上散步，他问我是否知道各处海水的不同密度。我告诉他我不知道，因为科学界还没有对这个问题进行过研究。

尼摩船长告诉我，他曾做过类似的观察，而且能够保证数据的准确性。

我回答道：“这很好，可惜的是这些数据不能传到陆地上去。”

尼摩船长停顿了一会儿，说：“教授，您说得对，‘鹦鹉螺’号是与陆地完全不相干的世界，它对于陆地而言，就像土星和木星相对于地球一样。不过，既然命运安排我们在一起，我还是要把我观察到的结果告诉您。”

“敬请赐教！”

“教授，海水比淡水的密度大是众所周知的，但各地海水的密度并不是完全一样的。我们可以将淡水的密度当成1，那么太平洋海水的密度是1又千分之28，地中海的海水密度是1又千分之30……”

我在心里默念了一句：难道他曾到地中海去冒险过吗？

只听他接着说：“爱奥尼亚海1的海水密度是1又千分之18，亚得里亚海2的海水密度是1又千分之29。”

从尼摩船长的实验数据可以看出，“鹦鹉螺”号并不刻意躲避欧洲海面，因此，我判断，也许不久的将来，我们就会出现在欧洲——比较文明的陆地海中去。如果尼德·兰听到这个好消息，一定会高兴得睡不着觉。

之后的几天内，我们大部分时间都在做各种不同的实验，研究不同深度水层的盐分含量、海水的感电作用、海水的染色作用，海水的透明传光作用。在实验中，尼摩船长的奇特才能充分地发挥出来，而且我能感受到他对我好感。

后来的几天内，我再次陷入了孤单，始终没有看到船长的出现。

1月16日，“鹦鹉螺”号停在海面下几米深的地方，它像睡着了一样，电力机械不动，机轮不动，只是随着波浪荡来荡去。我猜测是船员在检修机件。就在我胡乱猜测之际，我和我的同伴们看到了神奇的景象。

当时，“鹦鹉螺”号的嵌板是打开的，探照灯并没有点亮，因此，水中看到的只是模模糊糊的阴影。由于海面上的光线也不足，我们眼前的

一切都变得模糊不清。可就在一刹那间，“鹦鹉螺”号明亮起来，起初我以为是探照灯的灯光，后来发现我错了，原来是“鹦鹉螺”号漂浮在一层磷光里面，照亮了我们周围的一切。光来自微生物，它们不断地在船身周围游来游去，使得光线非常夺目。这时，我在明亮的水层中间，看到了闪光，这种亮度只有在炼钢的熔炉里才看得见，在强光的作用下，周围有些明亮的部分也变得很暗了。

在这种强光的作用下，阴影无从生存。它不同于普通的亮光，这光里分明充满了生命，这光是生动的，活泼的。

没错，是海中点滴微虫和粟粒夜光虫聚集在一起，才形成了这样的亮光。它们的数量非常惊人，仅仅30立方厘米的水中，就有25,000的发光微生物。加上水母、海盘、章鱼、海枣以及其他发光植虫动物（被海水分解了的有机物体的泡沫，或满浸鱼类所分泌的黏液）产生的微光，使得它们的光更加强烈。

“鹦鹉螺”号在这种强光中停留了好几个小时，我们欣赏着海中粗大的动物像火蛇一样游来游去，赞美之情油然而生。

船外的火光中间，游荡着漂亮的海猪，它们是不知疲倦的海中丑角，还有长达三米的剑鱼，它们就像是风暴的预言者，时而用剑锋冲撞着玻璃。当然，还有体积较小的剑鱼，跳跃的鳍鱼，人头形状的狼鱼，以及成百上千的其他鱼类，它们在这阴暗的大气中奔跑，形成了美丽的条纹。

这景象像是魔法一样，让人心醉！也让人不禁猜测，究竟是空气中的变化导致了这种景象，还是海面上发生了风暴呢？当然，即使有风暴，“鹦鹉螺”号也是感受不到的，只是随着波浪摆来摆去。

“鹦鹉螺”号就这样行驶着，而我们则不断地被眼前的景象所吸引。葛瑟尔一直在忙着给看到的动物分类，我们几乎忘记了时间，日子似乎可以忽略不计了。

尼德·兰总是幻想着改变船上的生活，而我们则像蜗牛一样，习惯了目前的生活，不想去改变。这样的生活让我明白，成为蜗牛是一件很容易的事。

我们渐渐熟悉了这样的生活，甚至觉得这样的生活很方便，开始遗忘世上还有另外一种生活。就在这时候，一件离奇的事情唤回了我的思绪，我们开始好奇自己所处的位置。

1月18日，在东经105度和南纬15度的地方，“鹦鹉螺”号遇上了很坏的天气。风浪很大，而且从晴雨表显示的来看，马上就要迎来暴风雨。

船副照常来测量太阳的角度，我也跟着来到了平台。往常的时候，船副总会说那句我听不懂的话，这次却不同，他说了一句完全不同的话，尽管我不知道他在说什么，但我确定，此次非同寻常。果然，过了一会儿，尼摩船长走出来，拿着望远镜向天边望去。

船长站在那里足足有几分钟，始终朝着同一个方向眺望。过了一会儿，船长放下望远镜，跟船副交流了几句。从船副的表情来看，他有一种难以抑制的激动。尼摩船长不同，他的表情很淡定，当然他也提出了一些反对意见，得到了船副肯定的回答。这些只是我从他们的手势判断出来的，我试图朝着船长眺望的方向看去，可是，什么都没有看到，只见天和水完全交界在一条水平线上。

再看尼摩船长，只见他在平台的两端走来走去，由于想着心事，完全没有留意到我的存在。平时，船长总是迈着规律的脚步，但今天却有

些不一样，脚步很坚定，却没有规律。他有时停下脚步，双手交叉在胸前，眼望大海。难道他在寻找什么？可是，“鹦鹉螺”号哪怕是距离最近的海岸，也有好几百海里。

而此时的船副，则显得有些神经质，他不停地走来走去，有时候还会跺脚，偶尔又固执地看着远方的天际。这与尼摩船长的冷静形成了鲜明的对比。

我下定决心尽快弄明白是怎么回事，因为我听到尼摩船长下达了增加推动力的命令，“鹦鹉螺”号行驶得更快了。

这个时候，船副似乎又有新的发现，他示意了一下船长。船长停下脚步，拿着望远镜看向天边，观察了很久。

我很好奇尼摩船长在看什么，于是回到客厅，将我常用的望远镜拿到平台上，扶着平台的把手，将望远镜装设在探照灯的笼间上，打算一探究竟。

但还没等我的眼睛挨到望远镜，就有人出现抢走了我的装备。

我转过身，想弄清楚是怎么回事，却发现尼摩船长愤怒地站在我面前，他脸上的表情是我从没见过的，眼睛像要喷火一样，双拳紧握，牙齿咬紧，全身的每一个细胞都透露出可怕的仇恨。他一言不发地站着，而我的望远镜则从他的手中滑落下来，掉在他的脚边。

我不知道他的愤怒来自于什么，难道是怕我这个外人知道什么秘密吗？对，也许他并不是仇恨我，因为他的眼睛始终盯着远方，那里一定有我不知道的秘密。

后来，尼摩船长似乎想到了新的主意，他冷静下来，表情也逐渐好

转。他神秘地跟船副说了一些什么，然后转过身来，激动地对我说：“教授先生，我觉得您应该遵守我们的约定。”

“船长先生，约定的什么条款呢？”

“在我看来你们可以恢复自由之前，我要把您和您的同伴关起来。”

我看着他的脸回答说：“您是主人，您说了算，但是我可以问您一个问题吗？”

“不可以，先生。”

从他的语气中我读到了坚决，因此，我只能放弃我的想法，听从他的安排。

我找到我的两个伙伴，告诉他们船长的决定。您应该可以想象得出加拿大人的反应。不容我们说更多的话，就有船员将我们关进来到“鹦鹉螺”号第一晚住过的那个房间里。

尼德·兰想问些什么，但是船员们没给他机会，他一张口，就被关进了牢笼里。

葛瑟尔对我说：“先生，能告诉我是什么原因吗？”

我将事情的经过告诉了我的同伴，他们也像我一样好奇，但是得不到答案。

我的头脑里一直回旋着一个疑问，而尼摩船长的表情始终徘徊在我的脑海里，纠缠着我。各种假设都无法得到证实，我被这种情绪折磨着。这时，尼德·兰的话将我拉回到现实之中，思绪暂时得到了解脱。

尼德·兰说：“吃午餐了！”

饭菜已经准备好，摆在餐桌上。在下达开饭命令的同时，尼摩船长让船员加快了“鹦鹉螺”号的速度。

“先生，能否听我一句话？”葛瑟尔问我。

“当然可以。”我回答。

“先生，别想太多了，赶紧吃饭吧，还不知道接下来会发生什么事呢。”

“葛瑟尔，你说得没错，我们要吃得饱饱的。”

尼德·兰说：“可惜的是，人们只给我们吃船上的食物。”

葛瑟尔回答：“尼德·兰师傅，满足吧，如果没有午餐，岂不是更糟。”

听了葛瑟尔的话，加拿大人停止了所有的咒骂。

吃饭的时候，大家都沉默寡言。我吃得不多，葛瑟尔也是勉强吃一些，只有尼德·兰一直在吃。午餐过后，我们回到各自的座位上。

突然，房间陷入了一片黑暗。尼德·兰在黑暗中很容易地就睡着了，令我感到意外的是，葛瑟尔竟然也睡着了。正在我对此感到好奇的时候，突然感觉自己的眼睛也睁不开了。接着，头脑也变得昏昏沉沉的，在昏睡之前，我意识到，我们的饭里一定被加了安眠药。看来尼摩船长来了个双保险，不仅要把我们关起来，还要我们睡着。

我感觉到嵌板关起来了，大海的波浪也停止了。难道是“鹦鹉螺”号

离开了海面，还是回到了水底？

我还在跟睡眠进行抗争，但显然我是失败者，我的四肢渐渐变得无力，眼睛彻底睁不开了，很快我陷入沉睡中，瞌睡虫统治了我的整个身体。

[1](#)地中海的一个海湾，北接亚得里亚海。

[2](#)位于意大利半岛和巴尔干半岛之间，为地中海的一部分。

第二十四章 珊瑚王国

第二天一早醒来后，我觉得神清气爽，令我吃惊的是，我竟然躺在自己的房间。我想，我的同伴应该像我一样回到自己的房间了。他们应该像我一样，完全不知道夜里发生了什么事。除非有偶然的机会，否则我们永远不会知道昨晚发生了什么事。

我打算出去走走，但又搞不清楚状况，不知道船长是重新赋予了我们自由，还是仍然将我们视为囚犯。事实证明，我再次获得了自由，我经过走廊，走上楼梯，来到了平台上。我的两个伙伴已经先我一步，正在平台上等我。

我问他们是否知道昨天发生的事，他们的答案都是三个字，不知道。他们存在着跟我一样的疑问，不知道自己是什么时候，是怎样回到房间的。

至于“鹦鹉螺”号，我们没有发现任何不妥，它还是像往常一样前行。它的速度很慢，只是漂浮在海面上。

尼德·兰瞪着大眼睛观察海面，观察远处，但是看不到陆地，看不到船只，只能看见远处海天相接。

这时，风很大，西风将波浪吹起来打到船上，使得船随着波浪摆动起来。

一早，换过新鲜空气之后，“鹦鹉螺”号行驶在水下15米深的地方，这样可以保证很快回到水面上来。1月19日这天，“鹦鹉螺”号如此往返了好几次，这是以前从未有过的。船副像往常那样，再次出现在平台上，重复着那句我听不懂的话。

这几天，尼摩船长并没有出现，我们只能看见给我们送饭的那个管事人，看不出他有任何异常。

下午两点的时候，我在客厅里整理笔记，尼摩船长出人意料地推门进来。我们彼此行了一个礼，没有任何交谈，我继续做我的工作，但在内心里，希望他能向我透露一下那天晚上究竟发生了什么事。

然而，我并没有如愿，尼摩船长一言不发，他的样子看起来很疲惫，明显睡眠不足。从他的表情来看，他正在被一种苦痛折磨着。他不停地重复着几个动作，或是在地上转圈，或是站起来又坐下，或是拿起书又放下，或是对着器械做着记录，但是无论做什么，都无法掩饰他内心的焦躁。后来，尼摩船长走到我面前，对我说：“教授先生，您懂得医术吗？”

我被这突如其来的问题蒙住了，我看了他一眼，并没有立即回复他。

他接着说：“您懂医术吗？我记得您的好多同事，像葛拉提奥雷、

摩坤-丹顿，以及其他的人都曾经学过医。”

我回答说：“的确如此，我在做博物馆教授之前，也曾当过几年大夫和住院医生。”

“太好了，先生。”

尼摩船长对我的回答很满意，但我不明白他为什么突然问这个。我也不知道接下来他会提出什么问题，我该怎么回答。

船长说：“教授先生，我有一个船员病了，您能否帮忙治疗一下？”

“他生病了吗？”

“是这样的。”

“我们现在过去看看。”

“请跟我来吧。”

接受这个邀请，我的心情非常激动，冥冥之中，我觉得这个船员的病情跟昨晚的事情有关，于是，在好奇心的驱使下，我跟着尼摩船长来到了“鹦鹉螺”号的后方，走进靠近水手住所的那个房间。

躺在病床上的的是一个40岁左右的人，看上去是典型的盎格鲁-撒克逊人，外表很坚强。我弯下身为他检查。我发现他不仅生病了，而且头部受了伤。包裹头部的纱布沾满了鲜血，为了检查伤口，我将纱布解开，病人睁开双眼看着，没吭过一声。

病人的头部不知被什么工具打碎了，脑子都露了出来，伤口很吓人。由于伤势较重，病人的呼吸很缓慢，脸部的肌肉一直在抖动。

由于脑部发炎，病人的思想和动作有些麻木，脉搏也时有时无。他的手脚都很冰凉，种种迹象表明，这个不幸的人很难再救活了。我为他重新包扎了一下，回过头来，对船长说：“他是怎么受的伤？”

船长明显在搪塞我，他说：“当时，‘鹦鹉螺’号受到了冲撞，机器上的一条杠杆被折断了。当时，船副正在杠杆下方，他奋不顾身地冲下去，替船副承受了这个打击……在‘鹦鹉螺’号上，全体船员就是一个统一的整体，可以为兄弟牺牲，可以为朋友牺牲，每个人都心甘情愿。教授，他的伤势究竟怎样？”

我觉得难以启齿。

这时，船长对我说：“您放心说吧，这个人不懂法语。”

我看了一眼伤员，回答道：“他只能再坚持两个小时。”

“真的没救了吗？”

“是的。”

尼摩船长的手颤抖着，眼角流下几滴泪，这是我第一次看见船长哭。

我又看了一眼这个垂死挣扎的人。他的脸色很苍白，在房间灯光的照射下，显得他的脸有些惨白。他的额头上有很多皱纹，那是生活的磨难赋予他的。我幻想着从他的口中说出一些真话，那些涉及“鹦鹉螺”号的秘密。

这时，尼摩船长下了逐客令，说：“教授先生，您可以出去了。”

于是，房间里只剩下船长和那个病人。我回到自己的房间后，久久不能平静。那一天，我一直被一种不安的情绪笼罩着，夜间睡眠也很糟糕，半睡半醒间，我听到了丧乐，音乐里，掺杂着一些我听不懂的祷词，也许人们是通过这种方式表达对死者的祝福。

第二天早上，我和尼摩船长再次在平台上相遇。尼摩船长径直走到我的面前，对我说：“您愿意和我去海底散步吗？”

“我的同伴可以一同去吗？”我问。

“如果他们愿意，我很欢迎。”

“船长先生，他们当然愿意。”

“那么，请你们去换潜水衣吧。”

我们谁都不再提起那个去世的病人。我来到尼德·兰和葛瑟尔的房间，告诉他们船长的提议。葛瑟尔立即表示愿意同去，而尼德·兰竟然也出人意料地表示愿意和我们一同去。

早上8点半，我们换好了行头，带上探照灯和氧气瓶。那座厚厚的嵌板打开后，尼摩船长和随从的十来个船员一同出来，到了水下10米的地方，我们的脚踩在了海底陆地上。

刚开始，我们要经过一段崎岖不平的路，这里是海下25米深的地方。这同我们首次探险的地方并不相同。这里没有细沙、没有海底草地、没有海底树林，通过周围的环境我判断出，这个地方是珊瑚王国。

矾花目属于植虫动物门，翡翠纲，主要包括矾花、木贼和珊瑚三科。其中，珊瑚属于珊瑚科，是一种奇怪的物种，被人分入过矿物类，

也被人分入过植物类和动物类。在古代，有人将它当成治病的药材；在近代，曾被人当成装饰的珍宝。直到1694年，马赛人皮桑尼尔才明确地将它们分入动物类。

珊瑚的本质是一种微生物，它们聚集在易碎的和石质的伪珊瑚树上。这种珊瑚的繁殖能力很强，能够像树枝一样发芽，它们每个都是单独的个体，同时又是个统一的整体，感觉就像一个国家一样。最近的植虫研究结果表明，珊瑚虫在分支繁殖中起到了矿化作用，对于我而言，最感兴趣的就是海底的这片石质森林。

借助兰科夫探照器的帮助，我们朝着正在形成的珊瑚层走去。很多年以后，这些珊瑚脉能够将印度洋的这一部分海面封闭起来。路旁布满了小珊瑚树构成的珊瑚树丛，树枝上挂满了闪闪的星状小花。这里的植物同陆地上的植物是相反的，那些固定在海底岩石上的树枝都是从上向下生长的。

灯光在树枝中间穿梭，造就了海底独特的迷人景象。我依稀看见薄膜一般的和圆筒形状的细管在海水中颤动，于是迫不及待地去采那些带有纤维触须的新鲜花瓣（有的刚开，有的刚露头）。我感觉自己的身子非常轻快，就像化作了一条鱼一样。当我的手触碰到这些花朵的时候，花丛中立即发出警报，接到警报的花瓣立即躲入红匣子中去了，花朵消失在我的眼前，珊瑚丛也很快变成了一大团石圆丘。

偶然的会将这些珍贵的植虫送到我的面前。要知道，这种珊瑚非常有价值，同在地中海、法国、意大利和巴巴利海岸打到的一样珍贵。在贸易活动中，有的人将其中几种称作“血花”和“血沫”，名字非常富有诗意。这种珊瑚在市场上可以卖到500法郎一公斤，可见这片海域中蕴藏着大量的财富。

其他种类的珊瑚树也会夹杂在这种宝贵的物质里，构成了整块的“马西奥达”珊瑚。在这些整块的珊瑚上面，我看到了美丽的玫瑰珊瑚。

过了一会儿，珊瑚树丛连接起来，树枝分布也密集起来，真正的石质丛林和奇矮建筑的长槽展现在我们面前。

尼摩船长走在前面，带我们走过一段长廊般的过道，经过这里，我们来到了水下100米深的地方。灯光照在这些凹凸不平的拱形建筑上，顶上像是安装了水晶灯一样的天花板。

我们每走一步，都会见到一种迷人的景象。我相继看到了海虱形珊瑚、节肢蝶形珊瑚，有的是青色的，有的是红色的，就像是铺在石灰地上的海藻。在科学界，经过生物学家的论战，最终才将珊瑚堆列入植物。但有一位思想家曾提出：它们是刚从无知觉的沉睡中挣扎起来，但又没有完全脱离矿物的属性。

两个钟头以后，我们来到了水下900米深的地方，那是珊瑚形成的最后边界。在这里，没有孤立存在的珊瑚丛，没有低树林的丛木，只有大片的森林，巨大的矿物草木，粗大的石树以及海葛藤，在各种色彩和反光的点缀下，羽毛草花圈非常好看。我们在高大的树枝下自由自在地漫步，脚下便是管状珊瑚、脑形贝、星状贝、菌状贝、石竹形珊瑚，像是一条由花卉织成的地毯，颜色鲜艳夺目。

这样的美景真的很难用语言来描绘。遗憾的是我们不能互相交换一下此时的心情，也不能脱离罩在身体外面的圆盔。此时，我是多么希望能够同海中的鱼类做进一步的接触，同时也希望自己能像那些两栖动物一样任意穿梭于大海和陆地之间。

就在这时，尼摩船长停下了脚步。我和我的伙伴们也随着船长停下脚步。我转过身来，发现船员们围成一个半圆形环绕着他们的首领，而他们的肩上抬着一件长方形的东西。

我们所在的位置是一片宽大的空地，四周被一圈高大的树枝环绕着。探照灯的灯光在这里显得很模糊，将地上的阴影拉得很长。空地的尽头漆黑一片，只有珊瑚的尖刺留住了一丝微弱的亮光。

我和尼德·兰、葛瑟尔并排站着，每个人都细心地观察着，我们知道，我们即将见证一个离奇的场面。我向下望去，只见地面上有好多凸起的石灰质，在石头基础上，竖立着一副珊瑚的十字架。十字架两边横出的两条长胳膊，就像是用石质的血制成的一样。

在尼摩船长的示意下，一个船员跑到距离十字架几英尺远的地方开始挖坑。我终于明白了，原来这块空地是墓地，用来埋葬“鹦鹉螺”号死去的伙伴，这长方形的东西里装的就是那夜死去的人的尸体。

我感到前所未有的激动和紧张。我的大脑被这些动人的事物搅扰着，我很想闭上眼睛，忘掉眼前的一切。

挖坟的过程很缓慢，声音很大，鱼类被铁锹撞击石灰石的声音吓得落荒而逃。铁锹偶尔会碰到水下的火石，发出星星般的火光。渐渐地，坟穴越来越大、越来越深，终于可以容纳尸体了。于是，其他船员将尸体抬过来，用白色的抹布包裹着，放到挖好的坑里去。尼摩船长双手交叉在胸前，其他的船员、朋友，也跪下来为逝者祈祷。

面对此情此景，我和我的伙伴们也虔诚地鞠躬敬礼。

简单的仪式过后，船员们用土石掩盖住坟穴，地面形成了微微的隆

起。

坟穴填好后，尼摩船长和现场的船员再次走到坟前，大家屈膝，伸手，同伙伴作最后的告别。

然后，送葬的队伍沿着原路返回，我们穿过一堆一堆的珊瑚丛，在船上灯光的指引下，回到“鹦鹉螺”号上。我们回到船上的时候，恰好是1点钟。

我换了衣服，走上平台，那些可怕的思想依然缠绕着我。于是，我在探照灯旁坐下。

过了一会儿，尼摩船长走到我跟前。

我站了起来，问尼摩船长：“那人是在那天晚上死的，对吗？”

“没错，教授先生。”尼摩船长回答。

“他和其他死去的伙伴一样，都躺在那片珊瑚墓地，对吗？”

船长突然用颤抖的手将脸捂住，发出痛苦的哽咽，他说：“海底几百英尺深的地方，就是我们死后的墓地，那里很安静！”

“船长，别太难过，至少您的伙伴不用受鲨鱼的欺负，可以安静地在那里长眠！”

尼摩船长严肃地回答：“是的，教授，在那里，他们不用受鲨鱼和人的欺负。”

第二部

第一章 印 度 洋

马上就要开始海底旅行的第二部分了。第一部分结束于动人的珊瑚墓地，在我的心中留下了难以磨灭的印象。

看来，尼摩船长真的打算就此脱离陆地了，连死后的坟墓都选在了海底。在那里，他的同伴不会受到各种各样的搅扰。这些船员同呼吸，共命运，从生到死都“不会有一个生人来扰乱！”，尼摩船长当时还说了这么一句话。

他对人类社会是如此的不信任，而且这种不信任很难转变。

葛瑟尔一直认为尼摩船长是一位被埋没的学者，他用蔑视来回应人类社会。但我并不同意这种看法。葛瑟尔还认为尼摩是一位不为人们所了解的天才，为了逃避人世的欺骗，才逃避到海里。在这里他可以获得完全的自由。

但在我看来，并不完全如此。要知道，海洋中有1.5万亿公亩的广阔水面，海水非常清澈，哪怕是低下头来看一看，都会觉得头晕。而且“鹦鹉螺”号通常在水深100至200米深的地方行驶，可以一连好多天。如果不是热爱大海的人，是很难忍受这样枯燥的生活的。

但对于热爱大海的人就不一样了，比如拿我来说，我每天都在平台

上散步，呼吸海洋的新鲜空气来强壮身体；每天透过客厅的玻璃观察物产丰富的海洋宝库，阅读图书室的各种书籍，做笔记……这些事情占据了我所有的时间，我没有一刻会感到厌烦。

在健康方面，我们每个人都很棒。船上的餐饮完全能够满足我们身体所需的营养，只有尼德·兰对此并不满意，因此，他总是想方设法做出不同口味的菜式，对此，我并不赞同。在环境方面，海底也有着很大的优势，因为在这里，温度是恒定的，完全不用担心会患上感冒。船上有很多石蚕属的草树，这种树在法国被称作“海茵香”，它是一种很好的药材，同腔肠动物易化的肉混合起来，可以治疗咳嗽。

连日来，大量的水鸟、蹼足鸟、海鸥等鸟类不断地出现在我的眼前，可惜的是它们都成了我们的盘中餐，对于海洋上漂泊的生活而言，这些被打死的鸟烹调一下，会成为诱人的美味。

海龟也是“鹦鹉螺”号收获的猎物之一，它们属于海甲鱼类，背后微微隆起，龟甲是最珍贵的宝贝。在水下的时候，这些龟通常会闭起鼻腔外孔的活肉塞，在水下停留很久。有时，“鹦鹉螺”号会打捞起一些睡梦中的甲鱼，但它们的肉并不好吃，真正美味的是甲鱼蛋。

至于鱼类，自打我从嵌板后面发现它们的秘密以后，我就开始发自内心地赞美它们，我曾仔细观察过几种鱼类，要知道，我以前从来没这么做过。

这里我要着重指出的是红海、印度洋和近赤道美洲那一部分太平洋所特有的牡蛎类。这些鱼类并不是靠石质的东西来保护身体的，而是用骨质的甲壳来保护身体。甲壳有时为立体三角形，有时为立体四方形。

葛瑟尔的札记里曾提到过这一带海中所特有的腹鱼类。如针鱼，它

的背脊是红色的，腹部是白色的，还有三行纵列的线纹。还有电鱼，它长7英寸，颜色非常鲜艳。也有珍贵得可以作为标本的卵形鱼，这种鱼的带纹是白色的，没有尾巴。可以称得上是真正的海豪猪的鱼虎也不少，它的身上有很多刺，身子鼓起来的时候就变成了一个刺猬。还有海马鱼，它能够在很多海洋中生存。还有长嘴飞马鱼，这种鱼由于腹鳍很阔大，像翼一样，所以能飞，但是飞得不高，只能跳入空中。还有鱼尾上有很多圆环的鸽子鱼，下巴长达25公分的大嘴鱼，美味又漂亮的美首鱼，能够跳跃的奇形鱼。奇形鱼的身上长着黑色的纹路，由于腹鳍很长，因此它能够自由地在水面上溜来溜去。美丽的风帆鱼可以竖起所有的鳍，远远看来，就像扯起布帆一样。华美的彩鱼得到了大自然的厚爱，身上聚集了黄、天蓝、银白和金黄多种颜色。绒翼鱼则全部由丝条组成。刺鳍鱼的身上老是沾着污泥，还会发出窸窣的声音。海幼鱼的肝是有毒的，还有波帝鱼，这种鱼有一个会动的眼罩，还有一个管状的长嘴哨子.....

就像陆地上的麻雀一样，海中到处都是鱼，只要带上猎枪，只要一滴水就可以将鱼打死，我想夏斯包式和雷明答式枪的制造者一定会对此感到吃惊。

在勒瑟伯德的分类理念看来，第89种鱼属于骨质鱼类的第二亚纲，这一纲有一个明显的特征，即都有一个鳃盖和一块鳃膜。据我所知，蝎子鱼就属于这个属。从外形上看，它的头上有尖刺，有一个脊绪，偶尔会有细小的鳞。有一些两指鱼的品种属于第二亚属，这种鱼身长三至四分米，身上带有黄色带纹，头的形状不是很常见。而一些号称“海檐鲸”的怪鱼品种属于第一亚属，这种鱼的特点是脑袋很大，头上有深纹，个别的还会起瘤，身上带利刺和疙瘩，从外形上来看，这些鱼有些人讨厌和害怕，因为它们的身上和尾上满是鸡眼，还有很多刺。

从1月21日起，“鹦鹉螺”号每天都是24小时行驶，三天共行驶了750里，也就是1620海里，也就是说时速为22海里。在行驶的过程中，船上的电光将鱼吸引过来，使得我们可以有机会认识各种各样的鱼。不过由于船的速度很快，大部分鱼赶不上船的速度，所以很快被船落在后面，当然，有些鱼还是可以第一时间跟上来的，在船的周围游动，陪伴着我们。

1月24日凌晨，船到达了南纬12度5分、东经94度33分的地方，在这里，我们可以看见企林岛。这座岛是由造礁珊瑚浮起形成的，岛上长满了椰子树，既高大又漂亮，据说达尔文和费兹罗亚船长曾来这岛上探险。

“鹦鹉螺”号距离这座荒岛很近，在行驶过程中收获了很多腔肠类和棘皮类动物，以及隶属软体动物门的一些新奇介壳动物。过了不久，企林岛又消失在我们的视线当中，船继续向西北航行，朝着印度半岛的尖端驶去。

我记得当时尼德·兰对我说：“终于感受到文化的气息了。跟巴布亚比起来，这里当然要好很多，要知道在巴布亚有太多的野蛮人！教授先生，我们到了有马路、有铁路的印度半岛，在这里可以遇到很多本国 人，这是不是上天赐予我们的离开尼摩船长的机会呢？”

我立即否定了他，说：“这样不好，尼德·兰。我们要坚信，‘鹦鹉螺’号会把我们送回欧洲的。尤其是到了欧洲的海域，我们更要小心谨慎。你应该了解尼摩船长，在欧洲海域他绝对不会让我们自由出入的，我们享受不到在马拉巴尔或科罗曼德尔海岸，像在新几内亚森林中打猎一样的待遇了。”

“教授先生，我不明白，为什么我们一定要征得他的同意呢？”

为了避免跟加拿大人争论，我没有回答。我是一个宿命论者，我一直在思考，冥冥之中我们来到了“鹦鹉螺”号船上，难道这不是命运的安排吗？

从离开企林岛开始，行船速度大大减慢，行程也比较随意，因此，我们能参观到更深的海底。船员们屡次使用纵斜机板，利用杠杆可以将机板对浮标线倾斜移动。

就这样，我们来到了海底两三百公里深的地方，要知道，即使能够到达1.3万米的探测器，也无法深入到印度海的深处，因此，从没有人勘测过这里。至于这里的温度，根据我们测量，始终保持在4度左右。

不过，我注意到，深水处的水温总是比海洋表面的海水温度要低。

1月25日，海面上一片寂静，没有任何波澜，于是，“鹦鹉螺”号浮出水面来透气。在强大的推进器的作用下，水流被喷上高空。在这种情况下，“鹦鹉螺”号很容易被误认为是一条巨大的鲸鱼类动物。除了睡觉，我这一天都在平台上度过。大部分时间里，我的视线里没有看到任何内容，只是到了下午4点的时候，我看见一艘长形的汽船在我们的西边行驶。从我们这个方向，可以看见汽船的桅杆，但它不会看见紧挨着水面的“鹦鹉螺”号。根据我的判断，这艘汽船应该属于印度半岛和东方航线轮船公司，它的航线是锡兰岛至悉尼，中途停泊在佐治王岬和墨尔本港。

过了一个小时，大自然为我们展现了一个神奇的景观，令我和葛瑟尔获得了极大的满足。我们所说的神奇的景观，实际上是一种迷人的动物。在古人看来，遇见它，是一种祥瑞。亚里士多德，阿达尼，普林

尼，奥比安，都曾对它进行过研究，主要是研究它的性情嗜好，并且用美好的诗词来赞美它，将它称为“鹦鹉螺”和“庞比留斯”。但这些名称并没有被近代科学所接受，它被命名为“阿哥那提”——缸鱼。当时，只见海面上游动着一群缸鱼属的动物，足有上万条。如果细分下去，它们是带突瘤的缸鱼属，只有印度洋海域才有。这种美丽的软体动物是靠向后倒退来运动的，它们的运动管非常丰富，通过管来进行排水运动。它们有8根触须，其中有6根是浮在水面上的，又长又细，而其他两根呈掌形，迎风张开，像帆一样。

由于距离很近，我们可以清楚地看见它们的螺旋波纹的介壳，居维埃曾将它们的壳比喻成精美的小艇，这是非常形象的。因为，这壳虽然是这个动物分泌出来的，但并没有紧紧附着它，可以随时离开。

我对葛瑟尔说：“缸鱼可以随时离开它的介壳，但它们始终保持着唇齿相依的关系。”

葛瑟尔的回答很有意思，他说：“用来形容尼摩船长非常恰当，或许应该将‘鹦鹉螺’号改为‘缸鱼’号。”

在一个小时的时间内，这群软体动物始终伴随着“鹦鹉螺”号行驶。可是过了一会儿，它们像是接收到了什么可怕的信号，整齐地卷起了帆，又将胳膊缩了回去，身体也缩了起来，然后，介壳很快藏入水中不见了。一系列的动作如此统一，甚至连演习过的舰队都无法超越它们。

转眼间，黑夜来临了，“鹦鹉螺”号在细浪中缓慢前进。

1月26日，我们的船在东经82度附近穿过了赤道线，重新回到北半球的航道上。

当天，陪伴我们的是一大群鲨鱼。这一带海域由于鲨鱼的快速繁殖而变得危险起来。在鲨鱼属中，有背脊呈栗子色、肚腹呈灰白色的烟色鲸，它的嘴里足足有12排长牙；有脖子上长着大黑点的睛点鲛，这个黑点被白圆圈圈起来，就像眼睛一样；有嘴脸呈圆形，身上带有灰点的淡黄鲛。这些凶猛的动物时常冲撞客厅的玻璃，力气之大令人害怕。尼德·兰有些闲不住了，嚷嚷着要到平台上叉这些怪物。但“鹦鹉螺”号没有给加拿大人机会，船加快了速度，不久就将鲨鱼甩在后面了。

1月27日，船行驶到了广阔的孟加拉湾口，在这里，我们遇见了非常凄惨的景象。这里的海面上，漂浮着很多尸体。那是从印度城中的恒河流下来的，一直流到了大海里。这里有一些天然的殉葬者——鹭鸟和鲸鱼。那些鹭鸟没有完成任务，就由鲸鱼来完成。

当天晚上7点多，“鹦鹉螺”号悠闲地行驶在海面上，船身一半在水里，一半露在水面上。远远望去，海面一片乳白色。也许你会认为这是月光的作用，实际并非如此，新月还不到两天，它早就消失在阳光中的水平线下了。虽然有微弱的星光，但是同水面上的颜色相比，还是显得很暗淡。

葛瑟尔揉揉自己的眼睛，简直不相信眼前的景象，于是向我提问。幸运的是，我能够回答他的问题。

我告诉他，这就是人们常说的奶海，整个水流都是白色的，这种景象可以在盎波尼岛海岸和这一带海中看到。

葛瑟尔继续问：“先生，为什么会出现这种景象呢？如果我没说错的话，这海水并没有变成奶呀！”

我答道：“当然不是了，葛瑟尔，你之所以看到海水是白色的，是

因为海水中有无数的细微滴虫，这种滴虫的外形是胶质无色的，但却可以发光，它的宽度大概有一根头发那样厚，长度也只要一毫米的五分之一。这些微生物聚集在一起，就形成了一片白色。”

葛瑟尔喊道：“竟然有好几里长！”

“是啊，老实人，不要幻想着去计算这些滴虫的数量，一定不会得出答案的，因为我听说，曾经有航海家在这奶海上走了40多海里。”

“鹦鹉螺”号在这白色的水流中行走了好几个小时，毫无声响，就像在其他海域中行驶一样。快到半夜的时候，海面又恢复了原来的颜色。但我们身后的海面，仍然是一片白色，就像被北极光照耀得一样。

第二章 尼摩船长的新建议

1月28日中午，当“鹦鹉螺”号浮出水面的时候，它正位于北纬9.4度。从这里望去，可以看到西边约15公里处有一块陆地。陆地上首先映入我眼帘的是高低起伏的山岭，山岭高约600米。当我测定了这块陆地的方位后，就回到了船舱，在地图上找到测好的经纬度后，我发现，原来我们到了锡兰岛——一颗悬在印度半岛下端的明珠。

锡兰岛是地球上的岛屿中最为富饶的岛之一，为了更详尽地了解这个岛的情况，我去船舱的图书室查找相关图书，正好找到了西尔所著的《锡兰和锡兰人》。根据这部书的内容，我知道了古时候这座岛有各种不同的名称，并且它的位置是在北纬5.55度和9.49度、东经79.42度和

82.4度之间，岛长442.6千米，最宽的地方有241.4公里，周长为1448.4公里，面积为63320.03平方公里，比爱尔兰岛的面积要小一些。

这时，尼摩船长和大副走了进来。船长看了一下地图，然后回过头来对我说：“锡兰岛是以采集珍珠闻名于世的。阿勒纳斯先生，您愿意去采珠场看看吗？”

“太好了，船长，我当然愿意。”

“好，这个简单。不过，我们只能看到采珠场，却看不到采珠人。因为今年定期采珠的时间还没有到。但这不要紧，我这就吩咐让船驶到马纳尔湾，晚上我们应该就能到。”

船长对大副交代了几句，大副便马上离开了。不久，“鹦鹉螺”号又潜入了水中，压力表显示它在水深9米左右。

我从面前的地图上找到了马纳尔湾，它位于锡兰岛的西北海岸，在北纬9度的位置。马纳尔海湾是由马纳尔小岛的延长海岸线形成的。要到达马纳尔海湾，必须上溯锡兰岛的整个西部海岸。

“教授，”尼摩船长说，“在孟加拉湾、印度海、中国海、日本海、美洲南部海域、巴拿马海湾、加利福尼亚海湾，都有采珠人，但锡兰岛却是出产珍珠最多的地方，这里出产的珍珠品质也最为优良。我们来得早了一些，每年三月采珠人才齐聚马纳尔湾。他们要整整忙碌30天，会出动300只船一起采珠。每只船上有10个船手和10个采珠人。采珠人分为两组，轮流潜入水中。他们通常是用一根长绳的一头系在船上，另一头系在一块大石头上，然后用两只脚夹住大石头，再潜入水下12米深的地方去采集珍珠。”

“那么，”我说，“他们一直使用这种原始的方法吗？”

“是的，总是使用这种方法。”尼摩船长回答道，“尽管1802年《阿米恩条约》签订后，这些采珠场就属于工业化程度最高的人——英国人了。”

“不过，船长，我认为，您所穿的那种潜水衣对采珠一定大有帮助。”

“是的，这很有用，因为那些可怜的采珠人不能在水底停留太久。英国人佩斯瓦尔在他写的《锡兰岛游记》中记载说，有一个加非列利人可以在水下停留5分钟。我觉得这很不可信。我知道有些人可以在水下停留56秒，最厉害的甚至可以停留86秒，不过这种人是很少见的。而且，从水里出来回到船上后，这些可怜人的鼻孔和耳朵都会流出血水来.....我认为，这些采珠人停留在水下的平均时间是30秒。在这30秒内，他们得赶紧把自己采得的珍珠贝往一个小网中塞。一般来说，这些采珠人都不会活得很久，因为他们的视力很早就退化了，眼睛也会发生溃疡，他们身上也有很多伤口，有时甚至在水底就中风了。”

“是的，”我说，“这是一种很悲惨的职业，是为了满足少数人的喜好而存在的。不过，船长，您能告诉我，一只船一天可以采多少珍珠贝吗？”

“大约4到5万只。甚至有人说，1814年，英国政府为谋得高额利润，雇人采珠，采珠人在20天的时间里，一共采得了7600万只珍珠贝。”

“那么，这些采珠人会得到比较高的工资吧？”我问道。

“工资非常少，教授。在巴拿马，他们每星期只能挣一美元。平常他们采到一个有珍珠的贝才能得一美分，但他们采得的贝里多数是没有珍珠的！”

“这些可怜人，他们让雇主发了财，可自己只能在采到一颗有珍珠的贝时挣到一美分！真是太可恶了！”

“教授，要不这样吧，”尼摩船长对我说，“您跟您的同伴一起去看马纳尔海滩吧，如果有已经早来的采珠人在那里，那我们就可以看看他们是如何采集珍珠的了。”

“好的，船长，就这么办吧。”

“阿勒纳斯先生，您怕鲨鱼吗？”

“鲨鱼？”我喊道。

这个问题，至少对我来说，还用问吗？

“怎么样？”尼摩船长立即又问道。

“船长，我老实跟您说，我还没有习惯跟这种鱼打交道。”

“我们已经很习惯了。”尼摩船长回答道，“再过些时候，你们也会习惯的。而且，我们还有武器，没准我们可以猎得一条鲨鱼呢。那是非常有趣的打猎。那么，教授，明天，明天一早我们再见吧。”

尼摩船长语气从容地说完这些话后，就离开了船舱的客厅。

“我们要考虑一下。”我自言自语地说道，“不要忙，我们可以到海底森林中去猎水獭，就像我们在克利斯波岛树林中做的那样。这个可以

去。但是，到海底去，谁知道会不会碰到鲨鱼呢，那家伙可不一般！”

于是我开始幻想鲨鱼，想到它那宽阔的、有一排排尖尖牙齿的牙床，一下就能把人咬为两段，我的腰上就觉得有点疼了。还有，尼摩船长提出这让人为难的邀请时，他那满不在乎的神情，真是让人猜不透。他们不会认为这就跟去树下捉一只不咬人的狐狸一样容易吧？“嗯，我觉得葛瑟尔一定不愿意参加，这样我也就可以有借口不去了。”我心里想着。至于尼德·兰，老实说，我觉得他肯定愿意去。不管有多大的危险，对于好斗的他来说，这种事总有一种特殊的诱惑力。

我重新拿出西尔的书来读，但我只是无心地翻了翻。我总是在书中的字里行间看见那大大的、张开的、让人害怕的牙床。这时候，葛瑟尔和尼德·兰走了进来，他们神态安宁，很是高兴。他们还不知道有什么在等待着他们。

“天哪，先生，”尼德·兰对我说，“您的那位尼摩船长——那个怪物——向我们发出了一个很友好的邀请。”

“啊！”我说，“你们知道了……”

“对不起，先生，”葛瑟尔回答道，“尼摩船长请我们明天陪先生一起去参观锡兰岛的采珠场。他说的话非常得体，简直就像是一位地道的绅士。”

“他没有对你们说点别的吗？”

“先生，”加拿大人回答道，“除了让我们跟您一起去采珠场外，其他什么也没说。”

“说真的，”我说，“他没对你们提过一些细节，关于……”

“没有，教授。您跟我们一起去看吗？”

“我……当然！尼德·兰师傅，我觉得您对这件事很感兴趣。”

“是呀！我觉得这个很新奇，让人十分好奇。”

“或者也会很危险呢！”我暗示道。

“很危险！”尼德·兰说，“到珍珠贝海滩上走一走也会有危险！”

一定是尼摩船长认为没有必要让他们去趟海滩还想到鲨鱼，所以他才没跟他们讲。我眼神有些慌张地看着他们，好像他们的身体已经被鲨鱼咬走了一部分似的。我应该提前告诉他们吗？当然应该告诉他们，可是我不知道该怎样跟他们讲才好。

“先生，”葛瑟尔对我说，“先生，您愿意给我们讲讲采珍珠的事吗？”

“是就讲采珍珠吗？”我问道，“还是也讲有关……的故事？”

“就讲采珍珠。”加拿大人回答道，“亲眼去看看之前，还是先知道一点比较好。”

“好吧，朋友们，你们请坐，我会把自己从英国人西尔写的书中了解到的一切，都讲给你们听。”

尼德·兰和葛瑟尔坐在长沙发上。加拿大人首先问我：“先生，珍珠是什么？”

“这么说吧，尼德·兰，”我说道，“在诗人看来，珍珠是大海的眼

泪；在东方人眼里，珍珠是一滴固化了的露珠；对妇女们来说，珍珠是她们戴在手指、脖子或耳朵上的椭圆形的首饰，它晶莹剔透，非常漂亮；对化学家来说，珍珠是有点胶质的磷酸盐和碳酸钙的混合物；最后，对生物学家来说，它不过是某种双壳类动物分泌螺铀质器官的病态分泌物。”

“它是属于软体动物门，”葛瑟尔说，“无头纲，甲壳属的。”

“说得很对，葛瑟尔，但是，”我补充道，“能在体内凝结成珍珠的最好的软体动物，是珍珠贝、乳白珠贝，以及宝贵的小纹贝。珍珠不过是一种圆形的螺铀质的凝结物。它或者黏在珠贝的壳上，或者嵌在动物身体的折纹上。在珠贝壳上黏着的是固定的，而在动物身体上的是可以自由活动的。不过，珍珠总需要一个小小的固着物，或者是一颗石卵，或者是一粒沙，来作为它的核心，螺铀质就这样在好几年间不停地、一层一层地环绕着这个核心累积起来。”

“人们能在同一个贝中找到好几颗珍珠吗？”葛瑟尔问道。

“是的。有些小纹贝简直就是一个珠宝盒。有人甚至这样说，一个珍珠贝里面——这点我很怀疑——含有不下于150条鲨鱼。”

“150条鲨鱼？”尼德·兰喊道。

“我是说鲨鱼吗？”我急忙解释道，“我要说的是150个珍珠，不是鲨鱼，说鲨鱼就跑题了。”

“是的，”葛瑟尔说，“先生，那么，现在可以给我们讲讲用什么方法可以把珍珠取出来吗？”

“要想把珍珠取出来，可以有好几种方法。如果珍珠是黏在贝壳上

的，采珠人就会用钳子把它夹出来。不过，最常用的方法是把小纹贝摊在铺有草席的海岸边上，它们暴露在露天中就会死去。10天后，等它们腐烂到相当程度的时候，再把它们浸在一个很大的海水池里，然后打开它们，洗刷干净。接下来，有两道工序。首先，人们把商业中称为‘真银白’‘混杂白’和‘混杂黑’的珍珠分别分开盛在125千克到150千克的箱子里，然后再把珍珠贝的腺组织取开，煮一煮，筛一筛，把最小的珍珠都取出来。”

“珍珠的价格是由它们的大小决定的吗？”葛瑟尔问道。

“不仅要看它们的大小，”我回答道，“还要看它们的形状，看它们的水色，就是看它们的颜色，看它们的光泽——也就是肉眼看上去非常柔和绚丽的光泽。最美丽的珍珠称为贞珠或者范珠，它们是在软体动物的纤维上单独长成的，是白色的，多数是不透明的，但有的是像蛋白一样透明的，最常见的形状是球形或梨形的。球形的，可以做手镯；梨形的，可以做耳环。因为这是最宝贵的珍珠，所以它们论粒卖。其他的珍珠都是黏在贝壳上的，它们的形状比较不规律，它们是论重量卖的。最后，小珍珠是最次一级的珍珠，称为小粒，它们是论堆卖的。”

“不过，”葛瑟尔说，“采珍珠是不是很危险？”

“不，不，”我急忙回答道，“要是之前采取一些预防措施，就没有什么危险。”

“这种工作能有什么危险呢？”尼德·兰说，“顶多就是喝几口海水罢了！”

“尼德·兰，就是像你说得那样，”我也学着用尼摩船长那种满不在乎的语气说道，“老实说，尼德·兰，你害怕鲨鱼吗？”

“我，我怎么会怕鲨鱼呢？”加拿大人回答说，“我可是专业的捕鱼手！捕捉它们可是我的专长！”

“我不是说用大的鱼钩去钓它们，我是说，把它们拉到甲板上来，用斧子砍断它们的尾巴，割开它们的肚子，挖出它们的心肝，然后扔到海里去！”我说道。

“您是说，遇到……”

“正是。”

“在水中遇到吗？”

“在水中遇到。”

“天哪，这就需要有一根好鱼叉。先生，您知道吗，鲨鱼是天生有缺陷的。它们要是想咬人的话，必须先把肚子翻过来，在它们翻过身子的时候，就可以……”

尼德·兰用这种口气说到“咬”这个字的时候，我听着简直觉得整个脊背都凉飕飕的。

“你呢，葛瑟尔，你怎么看鲨鱼？”

“先生，我坦白跟您说。”葛瑟尔说道。

“这就好了。”我心里想着。

“如果先生要求猎鲨鱼，”葛瑟尔说，“那么，作为您的助手，没有理由不跟您一起去！”

第三章 价值连城的珍珠

我的睡眠很糟糕，夜里总是无法入睡。即使侥幸入睡了，也总是梦到鲨鱼，我突然觉得，将“超度”作为“鲨鱼”一词的语源，无可无不可。

第二天一早，尼摩船长特意安排人在凌晨4点将我叫醒。我乖乖地穿好衣服，去客厅里见他。尼摩船长已经在等我了，见到我以后，他问道：“教授先生，您准备好了吗？”

“一切准备就绪。”

“那我们出发吧。”

“船长，难道只有我们两个人？”

“他们已经在路上了。”

我好奇地问：“难道我们不需要装备吗，比如潜水衣？”

“我已经安排好了，我们不会靠近海岸的，只是远远地在马纳尔礁石岩脉的远处海上。那只小艇可以将我们带到水下，完全不需要我们跋山涉水了。当然，小艇上会有我们穿的潜水服，等我们下水的时候会派上用场。”

我跟着尼摩船长来到中央楼梯，又走上平台。果然，尼德·兰和葛瑟尔已经在那里做准备，从他们的表情来看，他们对这次旅行很感兴

趣。远远地，我看到“鹦鹉螺”船上的5个水手将小艇停靠在大船边上，正在等着我们。

夜色笼罩着海面，天空被片片云彩遮住，散发出微弱的星光。我的眼睛被远方的陆地吸引着，只能看到一条摇曳不定的线，天边被这条线从西南到西北封住了75%。

夜间的时候，“鹦鹉螺”号到了锡兰岛西部海岸，现在又到了海口的西边，准确地说是马纳尔岛陆地形成的这个海湾的西边。这里的海底，罗列着很多长度超过20英里的小纹贝礁石岩脉，简直是天然的珍珠生产厂。尼摩船长带着我、葛瑟尔和尼德·兰，坐在小艇后面，他的四个同伴解开了绳索，我们就离开了大船。

小艇驶向南方，船上的潜水人并不急于下水，而是用海军战舰上常用的方法在水中划桨。

每隔一秒就划一下桨，小艇的速度很快，使得周围的水珠飞溅起来，在水珠的作用下，小艇在轻微地颠簸着。

我们始终保持着沉默，谁都不知道尼摩船长在想什么。也许他觉得我们距离陆地太近了，这种想法与加拿大人是截然相反的，加拿大人总是觉得自己距离陆地太远。至于葛瑟尔，则只是坐在那里看热闹，看不出心里在想什么。

时钟指向5点30分，天边的曙光将海岸的轮廓映射出来。海岸的东边和南边高低起伏，此时我们距离海岸只有5英里，在这短短的距离内，海岸同雾水混在一起。在我们的视线里面，看不到船，也看不到采珠人。用尼摩船长的话说，我们来早了。

6点钟，天色逐渐转亮。日夜交替较快，这是热带地区特有的情形。对于这里而言，没有晨暖和黄昏。太阳刚刚穿过东方的云幕，红日就升起来了。

陆地在我们眼里越来越清晰了，甚至可以看清楚稀疏的树木散落在各处。小艇朝着马纳尔岛前进。这时，尼摩船长终于站了起来，观察周围的环境。

他示意同伴将锚抛下去，但铁链只下沉了一米左右深，就被一处小纹贝礁岩脉突起来的最高峰挡住。在大海退潮的力量下，小艇转过头来，只听尼摩船长对我们说：“教授先生，一个月以后，数以万计的珍珠商船就会聚集在这个狭窄的海湾里，船上的采珠人则会承担起搜宝的责任。这一带海湾的地理位置非常适合采珠工作。这里没有最强烈的风，也没有汹涌的波浪，这对采珠人来说，是最有利的条件。现在，我们就穿上潜水衣，开始水下游览吧。”

我并不答话，只是望着海水出神。同行的水手为我们穿上厚重的潜水衣。于是，我们开始了这次没有“鹦鹉螺”号船员陪同的旅行。

不久，我们的身体就被橡胶衣服包裹住了，背上还背了空气箱。可是，这一次我们没有带兰科夫灯。于是，趁着我的头还没有钻进铜帽中的时候，我向尼摩船长提了出来。

船长回答说：“这一次，我们用不上兰科夫灯，因为我们不会深入到海底，太阳的光线足够为我们引路了。而且，灯光有可能会引来危险的动物。”

我回过头来看我的两个朋友，只见他们已经罩上了铜帽子，根本不能听到我和尼摩船长的谈话。在戴上帽子之前，我又向他提出了最后一

个问题：“船长，难道我们没有武器吗？”

“武器，你们山中人的钢刀不是比铅弹更厉害吗？我这里有一把刺刀，就放在您的腰带上吧，我们出发。”

只见我的同伴每个人都配上了一把短刀，尼德·兰手里还舞动着一把鱼叉，这叉是他离开“鹦鹉螺”号之前放在小艇中的。

紧接着，我也戴上了沉重的铜帽，背上的空气储藏器立即工作起来。

在水手的搀扶下，我们一个接一个地来到了水下约1.5米深的地方，我们的脚踩在平坦的沙上。尼摩船长示意我们跟着他走，沿着逐渐下斜的坡道，我们进入了水底。

水底的环境清除了我脑海中鲨鱼的念头，我的内心变得非常平静，由于动作敏捷，我的信心更足了，将注意力完全投入到欣赏水下美景中。

太阳照得水下非常明亮，我甚至可以看到最微小的物体，10分钟过后，我们来到了平坦的水下5米深处。

途中，我们遇到了一大群单鳍属的新奇鱼类，数量多得像沼泽地中的山鸡，这种鱼没有鳍，只有尾上的那一支。其中，有一种像蛇一样的爪哇鳗，长8分米，肚子是白色的，很容易同海鳗混淆在一起。至于躯体呈鸡蛋型的硬鳍属中，燕雀鱼则是典型的代表，它的脊鳍像镰刀一样。这些鱼都是可以食用的，晒干经盐水浸泡后，非常美味，人们通常称之为“卡拉瓦”。还有就是土兰格巴鱼，它属于长轴属，全身披着有8条纵带的鳞。

太阳越升越高，海底更加明亮，水下的环境也逐渐发生了变化，走过细沙地后，我们来到了突起的岩石路。路上，铺了一层动物地毯，其中有软体动物和植虫动物。壳很薄、大小不一的胎盘贝夹杂在两门动物之间。同时，我还看到了印度洋特有的一种牡蛎——介壳呈圆形的橙色满月贝，还有突锥形贝，一些波斯朱红贝……这些贝类美不胜收，“鸚鵡螺”号的美丽色彩就是由这些贝供应的。我们还看到了有人手形状的多角岩石贝，长约15厘米，竖立在水底；有全身长着尖刺的角形螺贝；有舌头形状的鸭子贝，在印度斯坦市场上可以见到的可食用的蝇贝；可以发出亮光的带甲水母；最后，我们还看到了美丽绝伦的扇形圆眼贝，这是这一带海中繁殖能力最强的树枝形动物之一。

在这些植物的下面，还有很多其他品种的节肢动物在活动，最多的是齿形蛙类，它身上的甲壳呈弯曲的三角形；卑格鱼可以算得上是这一带的海中特产；还有形状非常难看的单性鱼。我也曾碰见过跟单性鱼一样难看的动物，那就是被达尔文列为重点观察对象的大蟹，它们有一种特殊的本领——可以吃椰子。它会先爬上海岸，然后想办法将椰子从树上弄下来摔破，再用很有力量的钳把椰子剥开来吃。这种蟹在明亮的水底行动非常敏捷。同时，这里还有自由自在的鱼鳖类，它们慢慢地爬行于岩石之间，也会经常爬到马拉巴海岸。

7点的时候，我们终于到了繁殖着不计其数的亿万珍珠贝的小纹贝礁石岩脉上。

这些软体动物非常宝贵，它们黏附在岩石上，很结实，完全摆脱不开。从这个意义上来说，珍珠贝是不自由的，大自然没有赋予它移动的能力。

杂色小纹贝的两片介壳差不多相等，外壳呈圆环状，它的壳壁很

厚，外表很粗，凹凸不平。有些珍珠母的外壳上带有条状的淡青色线纹，线纹尽头处有些发亮。这种珍珠母比较年轻。

其他种类的珍珠母，表面上看起来粗糙一点，颜色黑一点。如果年龄达到10岁以上，宽度可以达到15厘米。

尼摩船长将一大堆小纹贝指给我看。我很清楚，这里是一个宝藏，而这个宝藏是采不尽的，因为相比大自然的创造力而言，人类的破坏能力显得微不足道。尼德·兰就是大自然破坏者的代表，他赶紧将那些最好的珍珠贝塞到他带着的渔网中。

我们继续向前出发，尼摩船长带着我们走上小路。海底的地面逐渐升高，当我将胳膊举起来的时候，甚至摸到了水面。后来，岩脉的水平面又逐渐低下去。我们经常要绕过一根根的四角锥形的高大岩石，而那些粗大的甲壳动物，就隐藏在岩石的灰暗处，像是一门大炮，一动不动地盯着我们。

无数的多须鱼、藤萝鱼，卷鱼类和环鱼类环绕在我们的脚边，它们毫不客气地伸展着自己的触角和卷须。

突然，一个宽大的石洞出现在我们眼前，洞口周围铺满了各种海底花草。刚开始的时候，我觉得照到这里的阳光很微弱，洞中很黑暗。当我跟着尼摩船长进入洞中以后，逐渐熟悉了这种亮度。渐渐地，我可以分辨出天然石柱支架起来的、穹隆很宽大的形成轮廓的起拱石，这些石柱的宽大底座安在花岗岩的石基上，同托斯甘式建筑的笨重石柱很相似。起初，我不明白尼摩船长为什么要把我们带到这个神秘的地窖中来。不过，疑团很快就解开了。

当我们经过一段陡坡之后，站在了圆形的井底地面上。尼摩船长停

住脚步，用手指着一件东西。刚开始的时候，我看得不是很清楚，后来发现，尼摩船长指的是一只身量巨大的珍珠贝，一只庞大无比的砗磲，一个盛有一池水的圣水盘，一个超过两米宽的大钵，显而易见，这只贝比“鹦鹉螺”号客厅中放着的还大。

为了看得更清楚，我来到这个稀有的软体动物跟前。只见它的纤维带把它钉在花岗岩的石板上，黏附着石板，就这样在安静的石洞中生长。根据外形判断，这只贝的重量起码有300公斤。净肉都能达到15公斤，要想吞食几打这样的贝，起码要有一个卡冈都亚¹的肚子。

很显然，尼摩船长对于这只双壳动物的存在了然于胸。看来，他已经来过这里很多次了。我开始猜测，船长带我们来这里，是为了让我们欣赏这里的奇珍异物。然而，我再次错了，尼摩船长来这里的目的是为了进一步了解砗磲的情况。

通过观察得知，这只软体动物的两壳是半张开的。船长上前将短刀插入两壳间，使它们无法合拢。然后他用手把两壳边挂着的作为这动物的外套的膜皮弄开。

在膜皮叶状的皱纹间，出现了一颗椰子大小的珍珠，它呈圆球形，是一种透明体。通过光芒可以看出，这是一颗无法估计价值的稀有珍宝。我的心为之一动，很想去摸一摸它，掂一掂它的分量。但是，船长阻止了我的动作，并抽出他的短刀，让两片介壳再次合拢起来。

我突然明白，尼摩船长是想把这颗珍珠塞在那只砗磲的衣膜里面，这样，这颗珍珠就可以慢慢长大了。日复一日，软体动物的分泌物堆积在珍珠周围，等到果实成熟后，尼摩船长就可以将这只自己培养的珍珠摆在自己的陈列室里。尼摩船长在按照中国人和印度人的办法来生产一

颗珍珠。这种办法是：将一块玻璃片和金属物塞入这种软体动物的内部皱褶里面，螺铀质便渐渐把它包裹起来变成珍珠。据我观察，同尼摩船长收藏的珍珠相比，这里的珍珠显然更加珍贵。初步估计，这些珍珠起码值1000万法郎。

这些珍珠并不是奢侈的装饰品，而是天然的奇珍异宝，我想任何一个女人都不会将这颗大珍珠戴在耳朵上。

参观完这里，尼摩船长带我们离开石洞，来到小纹贝礁石上。这里的海水很清澈，因为还没有采珠人过来工作，把水搅浑。我们几个人悠闲地散着步，按照自己的节奏，或是停下休息，或是向前赶路。至于我自己，已经忘记了那可笑的空想。这个地方，海底与海面的距离很近，因为我发现，我的头距离水面只有1米了。这时，葛瑟尔来到我的身边，用他的铜帽贴着我的铜帽，朝我挤眉弄眼，以示友谊。不过，这水底高原只有几米的距离，很快我们就再次回到深水中。这时，尼摩船长突然停下来，我以为他在示意我们往回走，然而我错了。他只是做了一个手势，让我们就近蹲下来。接着，他用手指指向不远处。

原来距离我们5米的地方，有一个黑影沉入了海底。我又开始害怕那可怕的鲨鱼了。可是，这一次是我弄错了，那不是怪物，而是一个活人，是一个黑皮肤的印度采珠人。

还未到采珠期，他就来到这里采珠。只见他的小艇停在头上几英尺的水面，而他一会儿潜入水中，一会儿又浮上来。在他的双脚之间，夹着一块像面包一样的石头，石头的一端绑在小艇上，这样他就可以借助小艇的力量迅速下到海底。他没有更多的采珠工具，到达海底5米深以后，他立即跪在海底，将小纹珠贝塞入他的口袋中。紧接着，他上去将口袋里的东西放在船上，又再次潜入水中。

由于采珠人的视线被岩石遮挡住，因此看不到我们。更何况，他怎么会想到竟然有人在海底偷看他的采珠工作呢？

每潜入水中一次，他可以拿到十来个螺贝，由于螺贝是被黏附在岩石上的，因此要耗费他很大的力气才能将螺贝拉下来，可以说每一颗珍珠都是他用生命换来的。

我聚精会神地观察着采珠人的活动，半个小时都没出什么意外。可就在我对这种有趣的采珠现象习以为常的时候，我发现采珠人做了一个害怕的手势，立即站起，试图回到海面上去。很快我就明白他为什么害怕了，只见一个巨大的黑影出现在采珠人的头上，那黑影正是鲨鱼。只见那个怪物张开嘴巴，迎面朝采珠人冲过来。我吓得一动也不能动，眼睁睁地看着这个饥饿的动物向印度人扑来。为了活命，印度采珠人躲到一边，暂时避开了鲨鱼的血盆大口，但是，并没有躲开鲨鱼尾巴的打击。这一下正好打在他的胸口上，他立即跌入海底。

说时迟那时快，几秒钟以后，鲨鱼再次翻转脊背，马上就要把采珠人分为两半了。突然，蹲在我身边的尼摩船长站了起来，手拿短刀，朝着鲨鱼冲去。

鲨鱼正要咬这个不幸的采珠人的时候，发现有新的敌人靠近，于是它立即翻转方向，向船长冲过来。

我至今都无法忘记尼摩船长当时的姿态，只见他弯下身子，非常冷静地等待着那条巨大的鲨鱼。当鲨鱼向他冲来的时候，他敏捷地躲到一边，同时，将短刀刺入鱼腹。当然，战斗刚刚开始，这一刀刺激了鲨鱼，它怒吼起来。鲨鱼的血很快将海水染红，在这浑浊的水中，我什么都看不见。直到游到明亮的地方以后，才看见勇敢的尼摩船长一只手抓

住鲨鱼的一只鳍，另一只手疯狂地刺向鲨鱼的鱼腹。尽管鲨鱼挨了好几刀，但都没有刺到致命的地方，所以鲨鱼更加疯狂地扭动身体，扰乱了整个水面的平静。

尽管我被吓得不能动弹，但我非常想回去救船长。

我眼睛一眨不眨地关注着战斗的形势，只见船长被压在身上的巨大躯体绊倒，摔进了水底。过了一会儿，我看到了鲨鱼吓人的牙齿，与其说是牙齿，还不如说是钳子，看样子，尼摩船长马上就要成为鲨鱼的晚餐了。正当这时，手拿鱼叉的加拿大人冲向了鲨鱼，扔出了救命的一叉，打中了鲨鱼。

一团鲜血在海水中弥漫，只见鲨鱼疯狂地扭动着身体，激烈地挣扎着，激起了很大的水花，很显然，尼摩船长得救了。

鲨鱼被刺破了心脏，喘息着进行着最后的挣扎，令人意想不到的是，葛瑟尔竟然被掀倒了。

此时，尼德·兰迅速将尼摩船长扶起，好在船长没有受伤，他们共同走到印度人身边，快速地将绳索割断，抱起印度人，两脚使劲一蹬，浮出海面来。

我们三个人赶紧跟上来，带着那个意外得救的人，转瞬间，都到了采珠人的小艇上。

尼摩船长最关心的是能不能救活这个不幸的采珠人。

我们也是一样，大家都希望船长能够成功，因为这个可怜的人刚刚落入水中不久，最要命的是这个人被鲨鱼尾巴打伤。

幸运的是，在葛瑟尔和船长的按摩下，采珠人逐渐恢复了知觉。无法想象，当他睁开眼睛的瞬间，看见4个大铜脑袋弯身朝向他，他会是什么感受呢？

尤其是尼摩船长将珍珠囊放在他手中时，他心中是什么感觉呢？只见这位得救者，用一只发抖的手接过了贵重的礼物。他的眼神表明，他对这一切感到很惊奇，或许他觉得自己遇上了超人的神灵。

在船长的示意下，我们回到了小纹贝的礁石岩脉间，沿原路返回。半个小时后，我们找到了“鹦鹉螺”小艇的铁锚。在水手的帮助下，我们爬上小艇，卸下了沉重的铜帽，尼摩船长的第一句话是对加拿大人说的，他说：

“尼德·兰师傅，谢谢您。”

加拿大人回答：“船长，这是我应该做的。”

船长只是淡淡一笑，他告诉我们必须尽快回到“鹦鹉螺”号上去。

小艇飞快地行驶着，我们又碰到了浮在海上的那条鲨鱼的尸体。从鳍梢的颜色可以判断，这是印度海中最让人恐怖的黑鲨鱼，它身长足足有25英尺，它的大嘴占了它全长的三分之一。

这是一条成年的鲨鱼，它嘴里的上颚上，有摆成等边三角形的6排牙齿，这是判断它是否成年的依据。

就在我全神贯注地注视鲨鱼的尸体时，一连十几条鲨鱼出现在鲨鱼身边，争先恐后地吃肉，对我们所在的小艇则视而不见。

我们返回“鹦鹉螺”号时，已经8点多了。我们回想着在马纳尔一带

礁石岩脉间旅行所遭遇到的事情。我不得不承认尼摩船长很勇敢，同时也意识到了他对逃到海底下生活的这一种族的牺牲精神的敬佩。无论怎样，尽管他很古怪，但他还是存在爱人之心的。

当我将心中的想法说出来的时候，尼摩船长显得有些激动，他说：

“教授先生，尽管印度的人民还生活在水深火热中，但是我的心仍然挂念着这个国家，这种关注永远不会停止，除非我不在人世！”

[1](#)拉伯雷《巨人传》里的主人公。

第四章 红 海

1月29日，我们的船以每小时20海里的速度向马尔代夫群岛和拉克代夫群岛驶去，远远地将锡兰岛甩在天边。接着，又沿吉檀岛行驶，这岛原名珊瑚岛，是法斯科·德·嘉马在1499年时发现的，它是拉克代夫群岛的19座主要岛屿之一，纬度位于北纬10度和14度30分之间，经度位于东经69度和50度72分之间。

自离开日本海以来，我们足足行驶了16,220海里，即7500里。

1月30日很快到来了，当“鹦鹉螺”号浮出海面透气的时候，只能看见一片汪洋。我们的船正朝着西北偏北方向——阿曼海驶去。阿曼海位于阿拉伯和印度岛之间，是波斯湾的出口。

据我所知，波斯湾是没有出口的，那里根本无法通行。那么，尼摩船长是想带我们去哪里呢？我百思不得其解。

尼德·兰对于这种未知的旅程很不满意，他甚至直接找到我，问船长要带我们到哪里去。

我安慰他，告诉他随着船长的意思就好了。

他气呼呼地说：“随着船长的意思可以，但是可不能把我们带得太远，波斯湾是没有出口的，进去了还得原路返回。”

“好的，听你的就是了。过了波斯湾，“鹦鹉螺”号会走红海，从巴布厄尔曼特海峡通过是可以做到的。”

尼德·兰回答：“先生，你应该知道的，红海跟波斯湾一样没有出口，因为苏伊士海峡还没有凿通，即使凿通了，也不至于让‘鹦鹉螺’号在堤堰和闸口的水道间冒险吧。所以，红海不可能是带我们回到欧洲的路。”

“所以，我只是说可能而已。”

“那您是怎么想的呢？”

“我想，当‘鹦鹉螺’号走过阿拉伯和埃及一带的海域后，它会重新回到印度洋，或者经莫桑比克海峡，或者走马斯加林群岛海面，驶到好望角。”

“到了好望角以后会怎么样呢？”加拿大人特别坚持地问道。

“那么我们就要走入我们还不认得的大西洋了，朋友！对这种海底旅行，你已经感到疲倦了吗？当你看到海底那些新奇的、时常变换的景象，难道会无动于衷吗？在我看来，这种旅行将来差不多是没有人能做的了，要是就这样完结了，我真的会感到非常遗憾。”

“不过，”加拿大人回答说，“阿勒纳斯先生，您知道我们被禁在这只‘鹦鹉螺’号上已经快三个月了吗？”

“不，尼德·兰，我不知道，我也不想知道，我没有去算时间，我也不想去想结果。结局终有一天会到来。并且对此我们根本无法左右，我们现在讨论这个，一点用处也没有。尼德·兰，如果你现在是来对我说‘找到逃走的机会了’，那我很愿意跟你讨论最后的结果。可是，现在的情形并不是这样，并且坦白地说，我想，尼摩船长可能永远也不会冒险到欧洲去。”

4天内，直到2月3日，“鹦鹉螺”号以不同的速度、在不同的深度下走过了阿曼海。“鹦鹉螺”号好像是随意行驶的，因为它走的航线很不确定，不过它从不越过北回归线。

离开阿曼海的时候，“鹦鹉螺”号浮出了水面，让我们有一个很短的时间去认识阿曼地方最重要的城市——马斯喀特城。马斯喀特城的外表非常奇特，让我不禁发出了赞叹。但留给我们欣赏这座美丽城市的时间仅有一瞬间，不一会儿，“鹦鹉螺”号又潜入了海底的深处。

随后，它沿着马拉和哈达拉毛一带的阿拉伯海岸、在距岸6海里的海面行驶。这一带海岸线上有起伏不平的山岭，间或有一些古代遗迹。2月5日，我们进入了亚丁湾。亚丁湾就像是巴布厄尔曼特长颈形海峡的漏斗，把印度洋的海水倒流入红海中。

2月6日，“鹦鹉螺”号浮出了水面。这时候，我们远远看见了亚丁港，港口筑在海岛上，中间有一条很狭窄的海峡把它跟大陆连接了起来。

我本以为到了这个地方以后，尼摩船长一定会退回来。可是我错

了，我很诧异，他并没有这样做。

2月7日，我们进入了巴布厄尔曼特海峡，“巴布厄尔曼特”在阿拉伯语中的意思是“泪门”。这个海峡宽20海里，但只有52公里长，对“鹦鹉螺”号来说，如果开足马力，穿过这个海峡也不过花费一小时。但是我什么也没有看到，就连英国政府用来巩固亚丁港防卫的丕林岛也没有看到。因为有很多从苏伊士到孟买、加尔各答、墨尔本、波旁、毛利斯的英国船和法国船，都要经过这条狭窄的海峡。所以“鹦鹉螺”号一直没有浮出水面，只是很小心地在水底行驶。

中午的时候，我们就进入了红海。

红海是《圣经》中记载的名湖。即使是在下雨天，在这里也感觉不到凉爽。它没有一条大河流入，温度过高又使得水量不断蒸发、消失，平均每年有一米半厚的水面消失。真是一个奇怪的海湾，这种四面封闭的湖，如果照一般湖的情况来说，应当早就完全干涸了。

我甚至不想去思考尼摩船长是怎么想的，他为什么要把我们带到这个海湾中来。不过对于“鹦鹉螺”号进入红海，我举双手赞成。

“鹦鹉螺”号以正常的速度行驶着，不快也不慢。它有时浮出水面，有时又潜入海底，以躲避不断往来的船只。这样也使得我有机会可以从海底和海面上来观察这让人惊异的海。

2月8日早晨，摩卡港出现在我们面前。

随后，“鹦鹉螺”号走近了非洲海岸。这一带的海水就深得多了。在这里，透过打开的嵌板，在水晶般清澈的海水中，我可以仔细观察那色彩鲜明的奇妙的珊瑚丛林，那披上用海带和黑角菜做成的华美青绿毛皮

的一片片宽大的岩石。与利比亚海岸相连接的这些火山的暗礁和小岛，像地毯一般铺开，景色变化无穷，真是美得无法形容。但是，由海底这些丛生的枝状动物展现出来的最美丽的地方，是在“鹦鹉螺”号就要驶到的东部海岸附近。那是在铁哈马海岸一带，在这一带海岸，不单海面下有一层层的花一般的植虫动物，而且这些植虫动物在20米左右的水深处组成了五彩斑斓的图像、花纹，这些图像、花纹有很多的变化，水底下的比接近水面的一层变化更多，但颜色较为黯淡，因为近水面的一层受海水的湿润，颜色非常鲜艳。

就这样，在客厅的玻璃窗边，我不知道度过了多少让人惬意的时间。在“鹦鹉螺”号电光探照灯的照耀下，我不知道欣赏了多少海底的新奇动植物。有伞形菌；有颜色呈石板色的多须峭，特别是晶形峭；有像笛子一般，等着潘神来吹的管珊瑚；有这一带海域中特有的贝壳，它们附着在珊瑚礁的洞穴中，下部有螺丝纹环绕；最后还有成千上万的属于水螅类的那些我没有看过的普通海绵。

海绵纲是水螅类的第一纲，这一纲就是由这种非常有用的新奇的产物组成的。海绵并不是植物，像现在还有些生物学家认为的那样，它是动物，不过是最低一目的动物，是比珊瑚更低的水螅类。它是动物这点是不用怀疑的，我们不能同意古代人的想法，认为它是介于动物与植物之间的中介物种。不过，关于海绵的机体组织，生物学家还没有形成一致的意见。有些生物学家说海绵是水螅类，也有一些生物学家如爱德华先生却认为它是独立的、单一的个体。

海绵纲大约共有300种，这些品种大多数海中都有，也有一部分生长在淡水里，被称为“河水海绵”。不过海绵繁殖特别多的地方是在地中海、希腊半岛、叙利亚海岸和红海一带。

在这一带海域，那些柔软细嫩的海绵繁殖得非常快，而且这里有些海绵的价值很高，每块达150法郎，比如叙利亚的金色海绵、巴巴利亚的坚韧海绵等。既然我们被苏伊士海峡分开，走不过去了，那我就不可能在近东海岸的港湾里研究这些植虫动物了，我只得在红海中来观察它们了。所以，当“鸚鵡螺”号慢慢地在水层走过这些东部海岸的美丽岩石时，我把葛瑟尔叫到了我的身边。

在这一带海域的海水里，生长着形状各异的海绵，比如足形海绵、山状海绵、球形海绵、指形海绵等。对于这些各式各样的海绵，颇具诗人气质而少了学者气质的渔人们给它们取的名字都非常美妙，例如，花篮、花枣、羚羊角、狮子蹄、孔雀尾、海王手套……这些名字都是非常恰当的。从它们呈半液体的胶质的纤维组织中不断流出像线一样的水，这像线一样的水把生命带进了每一个细胞中，然后又通过收缩运动排出体外。这种半液体的胶质在水螅死后便不再分泌，会腐烂，并产生阿摩尼亚气体，剩下海绵的角质纤维或胶质纤维。刀形海绵是茶褐色的，根据它的弹力、渗透力或抵抗浸渍力的程度大小，人们可以把它用作各种不同的用途。

这些水螅丛附着在岩石上、软体动物的壳上以及蛇婆茎上。它们把最轻微的凹凸也都铺平了，有的是平铺开，有的是竖起或垂下，像珊瑚形成的瘤一样。我告诉葛瑟尔，可以用两种方法来采集海绵，或者用打捞机，或者用手。后一种方法一般是潜水的采绵人使用的，这种方法比较好，因为它不会损害水螅丛的纤维，可以让它保留更高的使用价值。

在海绵类旁边繁殖着的植虫动物，有一种形状很美丽的水母，有软体类动物，比如各种各样的枪乌贼，根据奥比尼的说法，这些枪乌贼只有红海才有。还有爬虫类，比如属于龟鳖属的条纹甲鱼，这种甲鱼可以

作为我们餐桌上的一道美食食用。

这里还有很多值得注意的。下面举一些“鹦鹉螺”号的渔网时常会捕到的鱼：鲤鱼类，比如椭圆形、砖石色、身上有不等的蓝黑斑点、带有双重的齿形刺的鲑鱼；背色呈银白色的白鲱鱼，尾巴上带小点的赤鲱鱼，以及像两米长的宽大带子、在水中间滚来滚去的锦带谭鱼。完全没有牙齿的没齿鲑，它是跟鲨鱼很相近的一种软骨鱼。峰顶上有弯弯的尖刺的驼峰牡蛎，它的身长足有1英尺半。蛇鱼类，比如尾巴是银白色的、背上淡蓝色的、胸部是褐色带灰色边线的海鳗。身上有窄窄的金色条纹，颜色像法国国旗红蓝白三色的光鱼，它属鲭科的一种。长4分米的楔形硬鳍鱼，以及身上有漆黑的六条横带、蓝色和黄色的鳍、金色和银色的鳞的美丽的加郎鱼。还有团足鱼、黄头耳形豚鱼、硬鳍斯加鱼、海婆鱼、剑鱼、虾虎鱼以及在我们已经走过的海洋中处处生活着的其他成百上千种鱼类。

2月9日，“鹦鹉螺”号浮出了海面。这里是红海最宽阔的一片海面，直径达190海里。海面的西岸是苏阿京，东岸是刚福达。

这天中午，尼摩船长在地图上记录完“鹦鹉螺”号航行的方位后，就走上了甲板，正好我也在那里。我在心中默默地计划着，我一定要问问他对于此后航行计划的打算，如果他不说不行，我就不让他回船里去。

他一看见我就向我走了过来，并且很有礼貌地递给我了一支雪茄烟，然后对我说：

“教授，您喜欢这红海吗？您有没有充分观察红海中蕴藏着的奇妙东西呢，比如，生活在其中的鱼类和植虫类，生长在其间的海绵花坛和珊瑚森林？您看到那海边的城市了吗？”

“是的，尼摩船长。”我回答道，“‘鹦鹉螺’号太适合做这种研究了，它真是奇妙无比，是一只又聪明又有智慧的船！”

“不错，先生，它不仅又聪明又大胆，而且还不会受损伤！它对于红海中厉害的风暴、汹涌的波涛、危险的暗礁，一点也不畏惧。”

“是的，”我说，“红海经常被人们称为最厉害、最多发风浪的海，如果我没记错的话，在上古时代，人们就不是很喜欢它，它的名声就不好。”

“是的，阿勒纳斯先生，人们确实不喜欢它。希腊和拉丁的历史学家没有一个说它好的。史杜拉宾说，红海在刮北风和雨季的时期特别厉害，特别不好航行。阿拉伯人艾德利西用古尔则海湾的名字来写红海，他说有很多的船只航行到它的浮洲时就沉没了，没有人敢在夜间冒险航行。他认为，红海受非常厉害的台风控制，不管是在海底下还是在海面上，又处处有可以损害船只的小岛，所以，它‘一点好处都没有’。”

“很显然，”我马上说道，“那是因为这些历史学家没有在‘鹦鹉螺’号船上航行过。”

“是的，船长微笑着回答道，“在这一点上，近代人可并不比古代人进步，而且发明蒸汽力是需要好几千好几百年的时间呢！”

“不知道在100年以后，是不是会有第二只‘鹦鹉螺’号出现呢！”

“阿勒纳斯先生，一般说来，进步都是很慢的。”

“是呀，”我回答道，“您的这艘船比它所在的时代进步了一个世纪，甚至好几个世纪。如果这艘船就这样跟它的发明人一起消逝了，那是多大的不幸呀。”尼摩船长听了我的话后并没有回答。

静默了几分钟后，我接着问道：“船长，您对红海似乎有过特别的研究，您能给我讲讲红海这个名字的来历吗？”

“阿勒纳斯先生，对于这个问题，有很多不同的解释。您愿意听听一位14世纪的史学家的意见吗？”

“当然愿意。”

“这位空想家认为，‘红海’这个名字是在以色列人走过这片海域之后才有的。当时，埃及军队把他们追赶到海上后，海听到了摩西的声音就涌了上来，把埃及军队淹没了。因为这片神奇的海当时变成了鲜红的颜色，所以，从那以后，人们都叫它‘红海’，再不以其他名字称呼它了。”

“尼摩船长，”我说道，“这是诗人的解释，我并不满足于这个解释。所以，我想问问您个人的意见。”

“阿勒纳斯先生，按照我的理解，我们应该把红海的名字看作希伯来语‘爱德龙’一词的转译，古代的人之所以用‘红海’来称呼它，是因为这片海的海水有一种特殊的颜色。”

“可是，直到目前为止，我所看到的都是清澈的海水，没有什么特殊的颜色呀。”

“是的，不过当您走进这个海湾的内部时，您就会看到很奇异的景象。回想从前我看过的多尔湾，那完全是红色的，就好像血湖一样。”

“那么船长，您认为海水之所以是这个颜色是因为海水中有某种微生物海藻存在吗？”

“是的，那是一种被称为‘三棱藻’的细小植物所产生的朱红色的黏性物质。40000个这种植物，才占1平方厘米的面积。说不定等我们到多尔湾的时候，您就可以看到这些植物了。”

“这样说来，尼摩船长，难道您不是第一次搭乘‘鹦鹉螺’号经过红海？”

“先生，这不是第一次。”

“那么，对于您前面讲过的以色列人走过这片海和埃及军队被淹没在海中的事，我想问问您，您在海底下曾看到过关于这件历史大事件的一些痕迹吗？”

“没看见过，教授，因为有一个很明显的理由。”

“什么理由呢？”

“那就是摩西带领他的人民走过的那个地方，现在完全是沙土，差不多连骆驼的腿也泡不湿了。您知道，如果没有足够的水，我的‘鹦鹉螺’号是不可能驶过那里的。”

“这个地方在哪儿？”我问道。

“这个地方在苏伊士运河上面一点，从前那里是很深的河口，因为当时红海的水面还一直延伸到那些咸水湖中。暂且不说现在这条水道能不能发生奇迹，但从前以色列人就是通过这里走到巴勒斯坦去的，埃及的军队也是在这里被水淹没的。所以我想，如果我们在这些沙土中来做发掘工作，一定可以发现埃及制造的大量武器和用具。”

“那是一定的。”我回答道，“而且希望考古学家要赶快进行这项发

掘工作，因为如果等苏伊士运河开通以后，这里就会建设起许多新的城市。对于‘鹦鹉螺’号这样的船来说，这条运河实在没有什么用处。”

“是的，不过它对全世界会很有用。”船长回答道，“古时的人很清楚，如果在红海与地中海之间建立起交通，对于他们的商业是有很大大好处的。可是，他们没有想到要挖掘一条直通的运河，而是利用尼罗河来做中间的连接。根据传说，这条连接尼罗河和红海的运河，很可能在薛索斯特里斯王朝时期就已经有了。其中，可以肯定的是，公元前615年，尼哥斯曾进行过一条运河的开凿工程，引尼罗河的水穿过与阿拉伯相望的埃及平原。这条运河如果上溯航行需要四天的时间，河的宽度可以满足两艘有三排桨的船并行通过。这项运河工程由斯塔斯帕的儿子大流士继续进行，大约在蒲图连美二世时代完工，史杜拉宾曾见证过这条运河作航行使用。不过，在近布巴斯提的运河的起点和红海之间的河床坡度大小，一年中只有几个月可以航船。直到阿德南时代，这条运河一直用作商业贸易的交通。后来，由于哈里发沃默尔命令放弃运河，导致运河淤塞了，随后又修复了起来；公元761年或762年，哈里发阿利·蒙索尔要阻止粮食通过这条运河运送到反抗他的穆罕默德·宾·俄毕杜拉那里去，这条运河就被完全填平了。”

“船长，那么，现在看来，古代人不敢开凿的这条把两片海连接起来的并使加的斯到印度的航程整整缩短9000公里的运河，现在由德·勒赛普接手开凿了，不久，就可以把非洲变为一个巨大的海岛了。”

“很可惜，”尼摩船长又说道，“我不能带您穿过苏伊士运河了，但后天，当我们在地中海的时候，您就可以望见塞得港的长堤了。”

“地中海！”我喊道。

“是的，教授，您觉得这很奇怪吗？”

“让我觉得奇怪的是，我们后天就要到地中海了。”

“为什么会感到奇怪呢？”

“因为如果‘鹦鹉螺’号经好望角，绕非洲一周，后天就到达地中海的话，那它必定要以非常惊人的速度航行。”

“教授，谁告诉您它要绕非洲一周呢？谁告诉您它要经过好望角呢？”

“除非它在陆地上行驶，或者从地峡上面过去，或者……”

“或者从底下穿过去，阿勒纳斯先生。”

“从底下穿过去？”

“是的，”尼摩船长用很平静的语气回答道，“很久以来，人们在这舌形地面上所做的一切，大自然早就在它底下做过了。”

“怎么可能！原来底下有条通路！”

“是的，底下有一条地道，我把它称为阿拉伯海底地道。地道在苏伊士下面，通到北路斯海湾。”

“那么，这地峡只是由松动的沙土形成的吗？”

“上面是沙土形成的部分，但到了50米以下，就有一层很坚固的不动的岩石。”

“您是偶然发现这条地道的吗？”我愈加好奇地问道。

“是因为偶然的机会，但同时也是因为推理，教授，甚至推理的成分要多于偶然的成分。”

“船长，我虽然在听您讲，但我的耳朵却抗拒它听到的话，不能相信这是真的。”

“先生啊！有耳朵，但听不见的人在什么时代都有。这条海底地道不仅存在，而且我已经走过好几次了。如果不是这样，我今天也不会冒险到这无路可走的红海中来了。”

“我能不能冒昧地问问您是怎么发现这条海底地道的？”

“哦，先生，”船长回答我，“没关系的，这不算冒昧，在不能分开的人们中间，不应该有任何秘密存在。”

我没有理会他这句另有所指的话，只是等待着尼摩船长讲讲他是怎样发现这条地道的。船长说：

“教授，帮助我发现这条只有我一个人知道的海底地道的，是一个生物学家的简单推理。我曾经注意到，在红海和地中海中有某些完全相同的鱼类，比如，蛇鱼、车鱼、绞车鱼、簇鱼、愚鱼、飞鱼等。在我确定了这个事实后，我就想，在这两个海中间是不是有连接水道存在呢。如果有连接水道存在，由于两个海的水平面不同，地下水流必然要从红海流到地中海。因此，我就在苏伊士附近打了很多鱼，把铜圈套在这些鱼的尾巴上后又把这些鱼放入了海里。几个月后，在叙利亚海岸，我找到了一些我之前放走的尾巴上有铜圈的鱼。这就证明两个海之间是有路可通的。于是，我就利用‘鹦鹉螺’号去找寻这条通路，终于发现了这条

通路，而且我也冒险走过去了。教授，不久以后，您也要通过我的阿拉伯海底地道了。”

第五章 阿拉伯海底地道

当天，当我把这次谈话的一部分内容告诉给葛瑟尔和尼德·兰的时候，他们俩立刻产生了兴趣。我对他们说，两天后我们就会进入地中海，葛瑟尔高兴得拍起手来，尼德·兰则耸了一下肩膀，喊起来：

“一条海底地道！一条两海之间的通路！可有人听说过吗？”

“朋友，”葛瑟尔说道，“‘鹦鹉螺’号您曾听说过吗？没有。可是它确实存在。所以，用不着哪怕是微微的耸肩，不要以为您从没有听说过，您就可以理直气壮地反对了。”

尼德·兰立即摇摇头说：“来吧！我巴不得有这条地道，有这位船长，并且愿上帝让他把我们带去地中海。”

这天晚上，在纬度21度30分的地方，“鹦鹉螺”号浮在水面，靠近阿拉伯海岸。我望见了奇达，这个埃及、叙利亚、土耳其和印度之间的重要市场。

没一会儿，奇达在夜晚的阴影中看不见了，“鹦鹉螺”号潜入微带粼光的海水中。

2月10日，也就是第二天，有好几只船，向我们开来。于是“鹦鹉

螺”号又潜入水中航行。中午的时候，在地图上标记船的方位时，海面上什么也没有，它就又浮上来，并且一直到露出浮标线。

我坐在平台上，尼德·兰和葛瑟尔陪着我。在东岸的湿雾中，好像有一大块东西隐约显现。我们靠在小艇侧面，大家随便地聊着。这时候，尼德·兰伸手指向海上的一点，对我说：

“您看见了吗？那边，教授！”

“没有，”我回答，“尼德，我眼睛不好，您知道的。”

“好好看一下，”尼德·兰又说，“在右舷前头，差不多和探照灯的同一直线！您看不见那块好像在动的东西吗？”

“是，”我仔细地看了一下说，“水面上似乎有一个灰黑色的长的东西。”

“是另一艘‘鹦鹉螺’号吗？”葛瑟尔说。

“不是，”加拿大人说，“也许我弄错了，也许是一只海牛。”

“红海中有鲸鱼吗？”葛瑟尔问。

“有的，老实人。”我回答，“人们有时能碰见呢。”

“这不是鲸鱼，”尼德·兰说，同时目不转睛地盯住那东西，“鲸鱼，我太熟悉了，它们的形状我不可能弄错。”

“等着看吧，”葛瑟尔说，“‘鹦鹉螺’号要过去了，一会儿我们就可以知道那是什么了。”

没错，这灰黑的物体很快就离我们只有1海里远了。它很像搁浅在海中间的大礁。是什么呢？我还不能确定。

“啊！它动了！它潜入水中了，”尼德·兰喊道，“真奇怪！会是什么动物呢？没有像鲸鱼或大头鲸那样的分开来的尾巴，鳍也好像是切断的手足一般。”

“那么是……”我说。

“看啊，”加拿大人立即又说，“它朝天翻过来了，它把奶头挺起在空中了！”

“是人鱼！”葛瑟尔喊道，“是真正的人鱼，请原谅我这样说。”

人鱼这个名字让我找到了方向，我立即明白这个动物是就是传说中被称作鱼美人的人鱼水怪。

“不，”我对葛瑟尔说，“这不是人鱼，这是海马。它是一种奇怪的动物，红海中不见得有多少。”

“脊椎动物门，哺乳纲，单官哺乳亚纲，鱼形类，人鱼目。”葛瑟尔接着说。

葛瑟尔这样说，我就再没有什么可以说的了。尼德·兰却仍在注视着那个东西。他的眼睛看见这东西，闪出要把它捉到手的贪婪光芒。他的手像是要去叉它。看他的样子，真是让人觉得，他是在等待时机，跃入海中，去攻打它。

“呵！先生，我从没有捕过这种东西。”他很激动，声音有些发抖。

这一句话表达了鱼叉手的全部心意。

尼摩船长这时候出现在平台上。他显然望见了海马，也明白了鱼叉手的意图，立即对加拿大人说：

“尼德·兰师傅，您要是有一支鱼叉，一定会手痒，想要试一下吗？”

“正是这样，先生。”

“您不会不高兴吧？将来您若再操叉鱼这一行的时候，请把这只鲸科动物加在您曾经打过的鲸鱼的清单上。”

“这样我绝不会不高兴。”

“那么您可以试一试。”

“谢谢您，先生。”尼德·兰说道，眼睛同时一亮。

“不过，”尼摩船长立即又说，“您最好不要放走这东西，这对您有好处。”

“打这海马有危险吗？”我并不理会加拿大人，做着耸肩的姿态问道。

“有时候有危险，”船长回答，“这东西向攻打它的人转过身来，撞翻他的小艇。但尼德·兰师傅不用担心。他眼光很敏锐，动作也准确。我劝他留心，不要放走这海马的原因是人们把这东西当成一种美味好吃的食物。我也知道，尼德·兰师傅是不会拒绝一大块一大块好吃的肥肉的。”

“啊！”加拿大人喊道，“这东西原来还是珍品啊！”

“是的，尼德·兰师傅。它的肉属于真正好吃的肉，十分受珍视。在马来群岛，人们都把它留到全公餐桌食用。就因为这样，所以人们对这种好东西拼命地猎取，对它的同类海牛也是一样，以致这类动物日渐稀少了。”

“那么，船长，”葛瑟尔严肃地说，“如果这条海马是它种族中的最后一条，为了科学的利益，放过它，不是更好吗？”

“可能更好，”加拿大人回答，“不过为了膳食的利益，还是捕获它好些。”

“尼德·兰师傅，您打吧。”尼摩船长说道。

于是，船上的7个船员，依旧不作声地，不知不觉地，到了平台上来。一个人拿着一支鱼叉和一根跟钓鲸鱼用的差不多的钓竿。接着，小艇被松开了，从它的窝中被拉出，放到海中。

6个桨手坐在横木板上，手把着舵的是小艇艇长。尼德·兰、葛瑟尔和我三个人坐在后面。

“船长，您不来吗？”我问。

“不，先生，我祝你们打海马成功。”

6支桨划着小艇离开大船向海马驶去，此时，在距“鹦鹉螺”号两海里的海上，海马正游来游去。

在距离这鲸科动物还有几百米远的时候，小艇就放慢速度，桨没有

声息地放到了平静的水中去。尼德·兰手持鱼叉，站在小艇前端。这类打鲸鱼的鱼叉，通常是拴在绳索一端，绳索很长，动物被叉子叉住，带着叉子走的时候，绳索就迅速放出去。但现在这根索的长度只有20米左右，它的另一端绑在一个小木桶上面，小木桶在水里浮着，指示海马在水里面所走的轨迹。

我站起来，清楚地看到了加拿大人的对手。这海马又名儒艮，和海牛很相似。它的尾巴很长，拉在身体后边，两侧的鳍尖端有指爪。作为防御武器，它的上颚还有两枚很长很长的牙齿，这是它跟海牛不同的地方。

尼德·兰准备猎捕的这条海马身形巨大，身长超过7米。它在水面上一动不动地躺着，仿佛睡着了，这种情况下比较容易猎取。

小艇小心地靠近海马，差不多五六米远了。所有的桨都挂在铁圈子上，纹丝不动。我半站着身子。尼德·兰全身有些往后仰，熟练地挥动鱼叉，投了出去。忽然传来一声呼啸，海马沉了下去。可能是用力过猛，鱼叉打在水中了。

“鬼东西！”愤怒的加拿大人喊道，“我没有打中它！”

“打中了，”我说，“它受伤了，看，它的血！不过你的叉子并没有钉在它身上。”

“我的鱼叉！我的鱼叉！”尼德·兰喊起来。

收回鱼叉，水手们同时划了起来。艇长让小艇跟着浮桶追赶海马。

海马不时浮出海面上来呼吸。它游得非常快，可见它受的伤并没有影响它的气力。小艇也不慢，因为船员们胳膊有力。好几次只相距几米

了，加拿大人就要投叉了，但海马却立即沉下，躲开了，没办法打中它。

可以想象，在这种情况下，急性子的尼德·兰是何等愤怒。他对这条不幸的海马发出英语中最严厉的咒骂。对我来说，我仅仅是有些不高兴罢了，因为海马使我们所有的计划都落空了。

我们不停地追赶了一个钟头。我想，捕捉它恐怕是很不容易了。孰料那海马忽然起了报复的坏念头。它转过身来，攻击小艇。这它可要后悔了！海马的这种行径逃不过加拿大人的眼睛。

“小心！”他说。

小艇艇长说了几句他特有的奇怪语言，意思是通知水手们，大家要小心戒备。海马在离小艇20英尺的水面上停住，它的大鼻孔不在嘴的尖端，而在嘴的上部敞开。它突然吸起空气，然后，一鼓作气，扑向我们。

小艇躲不开它的冲撞，艇身翻倒过去一半，一两吨的海水跑进艇中。这水必须排出去。艇长用他的机灵，使艇身只是侧面而不是正面受到海马的攻击，所以小艇没有被撞翻沉没。尼德·兰紧靠在小艇前头，把鱼叉向巨大的动物刺去，那东西用牙齿咬住小艇的边缘，把小艇顶出水面，就像狮子咬小鹿那样。我们都被撞翻了，身子互相交叠。真说不好这次的冒险打猎将怎样结束，要不是那狠命地跟海马战斗的加拿大人把叉打中了它的心脏。

我听到牙齿碰撞在小艇铁板上的声响，海马沉到水里，把叉带走了。不久，小木桶浮上水面来，然后，海马的躯体现出，脊背翻过来了。小艇划过去，把它拖在后面，向“鹦鹉螺”号划回去。

只有使用力量很大的起重滑车，才能把这条海马拉到大船的平台。它重达5000公斤，就在加拿大人面前被宰割了。他一定要当面看着这动物被宰割。当天午餐时，管事人就把船上厨师做得很好的这些肉拿出几片来给我吃。我觉得味道很好，甚至比小牛肉还好，虽然不一定好过大牛肉。

第二天，2月11日，“鹦鹉螺”号的食物储藏室又增加了一种美味。我们捕获了一群落到“鹦鹉螺”号上面的海燕。那是埃及特有的尼罗河海燕：嘴是黑色的，头灰黑，有斑点，眼睛周围有带白点的圈，脊背、两翼和尾巴是灰黑色，肚腹和胸颈为白色，脚爪是红色。另外我们还捉到十来个尼罗河的鸭子，这也是很美味的猎物，脖子和头上是白色的，并且带有黑色斑点。

“鹦鹉螺”号行驶的速度很缓慢。可以说，它是慢步溜达着往前走。我发现，红海的水越接近苏伊士，咸味越少。下午5点左右，我们测定拉斯—穆罕默德角就在北方，这角是石区阿拉伯的顶端，在苏伊士湾和亚喀巴湾中间。

“鹦鹉螺”号进入尤巴尔海峡，这个海峡直通到苏伊士湾。

我清楚地望见两湾之间的一座高山，从那里可以俯瞰拉斯—穆罕默德角。这是荷厉山，摩西当年与上帝见面的地方就在其中西奈山的山顶，在人们心中，这山头不断有闪电笼罩。

6点左右的时候，“鹦鹉螺”号时而浮上来，时而沉下去，经过多尔湾的海面。多尔湾位于海湾里面，海水在湾中呈红色，这点尼摩船长在前面就已经加以说明了。不一会儿，黑夜来临，四周是深深的静默。有时有塘鸡和夜鸟的叫声，怒潮打在岩石上的声响，以及汽船的响亮水门

搅打湾中海水所发出的远远的声音，冲破了这静默。

从8点到9点，“鹦鹉螺”号一直在水下几米深的地方航行。

根据我的计算，我们应当十分接近苏伊士了。从客厅里的嵌板看出，我能看见被我的电光清楚照出的水底岩石。我能感觉到海峡是越来越窄了。

九点一刻，船又浮出水面，我来到平台上，迫不及待地想穿过尼摩船长的海底地道。我无法安静地等待，我要呼吸夜间的新鲜空气。不久，在黑暗中，有一些黯淡的火光，因为蒙雾而有些模糊，大概距我们有1海里远。

“一座浮在水上的灯塔。”我身旁有人说。

我回过头来，原来是船长。

“那是苏伊士浮在水上的灯火，”他接着说，“我们不久就要走进地道入口了。”

“进出口不容易吗？”

“不容易，先生。所以，我照例要亲自到领航人的笼间，守在那里，指挥航行。阿勒纳斯先生，‘鹦鹉螺’号现在要潜入水中了，等通过了阿拉伯海底地道后，才能浮上来。所以，现在请您下来吧。”

我跟着尼摩船长下来。紧接着，嵌板关闭，储水池装满了水，船随即潜入水底十来米深。我想要回房，船长留住我，对我说：

“教授，您愿意跟我一起到领航人的笼间去吗？”

“我不敢开口，我正求之不得呢！”我回答。

“那么，您请来吧。这样您就可以看见，这次既是地下航行又是海底航行的整个过程。”

尼摩船长领我到了中央楼梯。在楼梯栏杆的中腰，他打开一扇门，我们沿上层的长廊走去，到了领航人的笼间里，前面说过，这笼间在平台的前方尖端。

那是一个每面都有差不多6英尺宽的小舱房，跟密西西比河和哈得逊河汽船上领航人的笼间差不多一样。一架垂直放着的机轮在舱房中间转动着，轮齿接在舵缆上，舵缆直通到“鹦鹉螺”号的后面。在舱间的复壁上，船窗两面都是装上了凸镜片的，使守舵人四面八方都可以看见。这笼间是黑暗的，但我的眼睛很快就习惯了这种黑暗，我看见里面的领航人，他很精壮，两手扶住机轮的把手。在外面，平台上另一端的探照灯在笼间后面照耀，可以照到海面很远的地方，看起来分外明亮。

“现在，我们来找地道吧。”尼摩船长说。

领航人的笼间跟机器房之间是用许多电线接连的，在笼间里面，船长可以很方便地对“鹦鹉螺”号发出航行方向和速度快慢的指示。他只需按一下金属钮，机轮的速度就会立刻下降。

我默默地注视着“鹦鹉螺”号此刻走过的十分陡峭险峻的高墙，这是沿海高厚沙地的坚固的基础。我们沿着这座高墙走了一个小时，和它相距只不过几米远。尼摩船长两眼紧盯着挂在笼间的有两个大小同心圆的罗盘。随着船长每次做一个手势，领航人就即时改变“鹦鹉螺”号行驶的方向。

我在左舷的船窗边，观看着由珊瑚累积成的十分美丽的基础建筑。在岩石凹凸不平的外面，无数植虫、海藻、介壳动物，舞动着它们的巨大爪牙，长长地伸张出来。

10点15分，尼摩船长亲自上阵把舵。在我们面前出现了一条又黑又深的宽阔的长廊。“鹦鹉螺”号直冲进去，两旁发出了一种刺耳的沙沙声响。这声音来源于红海的水，由于地道的斜坡冲到地中海上，“鹦鹉螺”号也跟着这道急流下去了，像箭一般快，尽管它的机器想要尽力慢一些，把推进器逆流转动，也没有起什么作用。

地道两边狭窄的高墙上，我只看见在电光的照射下，飞奔的舰船划出辉煌的线纹、笔直的线条和火色的痕迹。我的心激动不已，将手按在心上。

10点35分，尼摩船长放开舵上的机轮，向我转过头来，说：

“到地中海了。”

不到20分钟，“鹦鹉螺”号顺着水流，就通过了苏伊士地峡。

第六章 希腊群岛

第二天，也就是2月12日，天刚亮，“鹦鹉螺”号就浮出水面。我立即跑到平台上去。往南三海里的地方，隐约显现出北路斯城的侧影。我们被一道急流从一个海带到另一个海来了。不过，这地道顺流而下容易，逆流而上恐怕就很困难了。

7点左右，尼德·兰和葛瑟尔也上来了。这两个分不开的同伴只知安安静静地睡觉，全然没有留意到“鹦鹉螺”号所完成的壮举。

“那么，生物学教授，”加拿大人以略带调侃的语气问，“您那地中海呢？”

“我们现在就在它的水面上了，亲爱的尼德·兰。”我说。

“嗯！”葛瑟尔哼了一声，“就是昨晚吗……”

“对，就是昨晚，几分钟的时间，我们便通过了这原以为无法通过的地峡。”

“我不相信。”加拿大人说。

“您错了，尼德·兰师傅，”我立即说，“那个就是埃及海岸，那向南方弯下去的低低的海岸。”

“先生，您去跟别人说吧。”加拿大人很固执。

“既然先生确定，”葛瑟尔对他说，“那你就要相信先生。”

“尼摩船长还客气地邀请我观看了他的地道。他亲自指挥“鹦鹉螺”号通过这条狭窄的地道，那时候我就在他的面前，在领航人的笼间里，亲爱的尼德·兰。”

“尼德·兰，您听明白了吗？”葛瑟尔说。

“您的视力好，”我又说，“您可以望见那伸在海中的塞得港长堤。”

加拿大人仔细地看了一下，说：

“果然，教授，您说得对。您的那位船长是一位出色的人物，我们现在确实是在地中海了。很好。我们来商谈一下我们的小事情吧，但不要让别人听到。”

我知道加拿大人要商谈的是什么事情，但是不管怎样，我想谈一谈总是好的，既然他想谈。于是我们三个坐到探照灯附近，在那里可以感受到一些浪花的泡沫。

“尼德·兰，”我说，“我们现在等着听您讲话了，请问有什么好消息对我们说吗？”

“我要跟你们说的是很简单的几句。”加拿大人回答道，“我们现在是在欧洲了。在任性的尼摩船长还没有把我们带到两极的海底中，或者带回大洋洲之前，我要求离开‘鹦鹉螺’号。”

说实话，跟加拿大人讨论这件事，总是让我感到很为难。

我一方面一点也不想妨碍我的同伴们得到自由，另一方面我自己又完全没有离开尼摩船长的意愿。因为他，因为他的船，我得以日复一日地完成我的海底研究，也就是在海底重写出来这部关于海底宝藏的书。试问我还会再得到这样一个机会来窥探这些海洋的秘密吗？当然是不可能的！所以我无法想象我还没完成我们的周期计划就离开“鹦鹉螺”号。

“尼德·兰伙计，”我说，“请您直率地告诉我，在这船上的生活让您觉得厌烦无聊吗？您很憎恨命运把您送到尼摩船长手中来吗？”

加拿大人停顿了一刻，然后，交叉着两臂说：

“坦白说，我并不后悔这次海底旅行，我很高兴，但是必须要彻底完成，才能算数。这就是我的想法。”

“尼德·兰，这事是一定要做完的。”

“那么在何时何地完成呢？”

“什么地方？我一点也不知道。什么时候？我说不出来，或者不如说，假定旅行是要结束的——在这个世界上，有始必有终——就是那一天，海洋中再没有什么可以让我们学习的时候。”

“我跟先生想法一样。”葛瑟尔说，“很可能走遍了地球上的所有海洋后，尼摩船长让我们三人集体自由飞走。”

“飞走！您是说飞走，获得自由吗？”加拿大人喊道。

“尼德·兰师傅，用不着夸张，”我立即回答道，“尼摩船长我们一点也不用怕他，但我也不认为葛瑟尔说得对。我们知道了‘鹦鹉螺’号的秘密，我想，它的主人就算不再限制我们的自由，也不能任由我们在陆地上随便宣传这些秘密。”

“那么，您希望怎样呢？”加拿大人问。

“希望有一些我们可以并且应该利用的像现在一样的机会，但是应该在6个月后。”

“生物学专家，请问您，6个月后，我们将在哪里呢？”加拿大人问道。

“也许在这里，也许在中国。您知道，‘鹦鹉螺’号跑得飞快。它跑过海洋，就像燕子飞过天空，火车跑过大陆一样。”它并不怕常有船只频繁来往的海面。谁敢告诉我们说，它不会到达法国、英国或美洲海岸，

在那里不会跟在这里一样，有个适合逃走的机会吗？”

“阿勒纳斯先生，”加拿大人说，“您的论证从根本上就错了。您总是说将来，将在那里或将在这里，而我说的是现在，我们现在正在这里，我们就要利用眼前这个机会。”

我被尼德·兰的论证驳倒了，看来这次较量我是输了。我实在无法找出对我更有利的论证来。

“先生，”尼德·兰又说，“我们做一个假设，当然这是不可能的，假设尼摩船长今天就给您自由，您接受吗？”

“我不知道。”我回答。

“假如，”他又补充道，“他只是今天给您自由，以后就不再给了，那您接受吗？”

我没有回答。

“葛瑟尔朋友是怎样考虑的呢？”尼德·兰问。

“至于葛瑟尔朋友，”这个老实人平静地回答道，“你们的葛瑟尔朋友没有什么可说的，他在这个问题上，是绝对没有任何意见的。跟他的主人一样，跟他的同伴尼德·兰一样，他是个独身的人。没有妻子，没有父母，没有孩子在故乡等着他。他为先生做事，他同先生想的一样，他同先生说的一样，他感到最大的遗憾是，人们不能把他算作一票，凑成多数。现在进行论辩的只有两个人，一个是先生，一个是尼德·兰。”说过这些话之后，葛瑟尔朋友闭嘴听着，准备给双方记分。

我看见葛瑟尔完全置身事外，不能不发出微笑。

事实上，加拿大人，看到葛瑟尔不来反对他，应该也很高兴。

“那么，”尼德·兰说，“先生，既然葛瑟尔不算数，那我们俩来讨论这问题吧。我说过，您听到我的话了，您有话反驳吗？”

很显然，要最终得出结论来，我也不愿意躲躲闪闪。我说：

“尼德·兰朋友，我的回答是这样的。您反对我是对的。我的论证在您的面前站不住脚。我们不能指望尼摩船长仁慈地放我们自由。出于一般人最常有的谨慎，他也不会让我们自由。反过来，我们也要小心谨慎地利用第一次机会，脱离‘鹦鹉螺’号。”

“对，阿勒纳斯先生，您这些话说得很对。”

“但是，”我说，“我要提出一点，只一点，那就是一定要等到很有把握的机会。逃走计划一定要一次性成功。因为，如果失败了，我们就不会有再来一次的机会了，尼摩船长也自然不会原谅我们了。”

“您这些话非常正确。”加拿大人回答说，“只是您提出的这一点可以用在任何的逃走计划上，两年后做或两天内做都可以。所以，还是这个问题：有好机会，就要把握住。”

“我同意。尼德·兰，现在请您告诉我，所谓的好机会到底是指什么呢？”

“我的所谓好机会，就是在黑夜里，在‘鹦鹉螺’号很接近欧洲的某一处海岸的时候。”

“你打算游着逃走吗？”

“是的。如果我们离海岸足够近，船又浮在水面，我们就逃走。如果我们离岸很远，船又在水下航行，我们就不走。”

“不走又怎样呢？”

“不走，我就找机会夺取那只小艇。我知道怎样操纵这小艇。我们只要走进艇里面去，把螺钉松开，我们会浮上水面来，这样就是在船头的领航人也不会察觉。”

“好，尼德·兰。您就注意侦察这个好机会吧，但您不要忘记，一旦行动失败，我们就完了。”

“我不会忘的，先生。”

“现在，尼德·兰，您想知道我对于您的计划的看法吗？”

“很想，阿勒纳斯先生。”

“那么，我认为——我并没说我希望——这个好机会不会出现。”

“为什么不会出现？”

“因为尼摩船长不可能看不到，我们并没有放弃恢复自由的希望，他一定会小心防备，尤其是在靠近欧洲海岸的这一带中。”

“我同意先生的观点。”葛瑟尔说。

“我们走着瞧吧。”尼德·兰回答，然后果断地摇摇头。

“那么，”我补充说，“尼德·兰，就谈到这里吧。以后不要再提这事了。到您准备好的那一天，您通知我们，我们跟着您走。我完全信任您

的计划。”

这次讨论就这样结束了，可是后来，却导致了很严重的后果。

我必须说，事实似乎是证实了我的预见，结果加拿大人很是失望。我不知道是尼摩船长在这一带船只频繁往来的海上不信任我们，还是他仅仅想躲开在这地中海行驶的所有国家的无数船只。“鹦鹉螺”号经常是在水底走，或是在距海岸很远的海面行驶。就算船浮出来，也只是让领航人的笼间露出水面。或者它就潜到很深的水底去。因为在希腊群岛和小亚细亚之间，我们到不了深两千米的海底，所以，我只能从维吉尔¹的诗句中认识斯波拉群岛之一——卡帕托斯岛。尼摩船长把手指放在平面地图上的一个点上，念出这诗句来：

在卡帕托斯上面住着海王尼普顿的能预言的海神格洛里厄斯·普勒泰²……

没错，海王尼普顿的老牧人曾住在这座岛上。而现在这座岛被称为斯加班图岛，位于罗德岛和克里特岛之间。透过客厅的玻璃窗，我可以清楚地看见位于岛下的花岗石岩峭壁。

2月14日，我打算用研究希腊群岛鱼类来度过一天的时间。可是，不知什么原因，船上的嵌板闭关得紧紧的。通过“鹦鹉螺”号的航向我可以判断，船在朝着康地岛方向行驶。我曾经搭“林肯”号战舰去过那里，当时，那里正在爆发反抗土耳其专制的起义。但至于起义结果如何，我全然不知。当然，我也无法从尼摩船长那里得到答案，因为他一向与陆地绝缘。

当天晚上，我和尼摩船长单独待在客厅里，我没有问起起义的事情。因为我通过尼摩船长的沉默判断，他心里有事。过了一会儿，尼摩

船长一反常态地通知船员打开客厅的嵌板，他就沿着嵌板在那里走来走去，眼睛一直关注着外面的海水。我猜不到船长在干什么。而我，只能利用这个时间继续研究鱼类。

我在这些鱼类中发现了亚惠虾虎鱼，亚里士多德曾管它叫“海鳅”，这种鱼在尼罗河三角洲一带的咸水中很常见。还有另外一种带磷光的鲷鱼经常陪伴在它的身边，它属于鲷鱼的一种，被埃及人当作神圣的动物，当它们大批量出现在尼罗河水中的时候，预告着将洪水泛滥，那时，人们会举行隆重的仪式来欢迎它们。我还看见了翼手鱼，这种鱼身长3分米，鱼鳞是透明的，骨质苍白带有红色的斑点。我的注意力被另一种鱼吸引了，也引发了我对古代无限向往。那是一种贴在鲨鱼肚子行走的印鱼。在古代人看来，这种鱼可以阻止船行走，正值亚昔盎海战时，“安东尼”号就曾被这种鱼挡住了去路，于是奥古斯汀打了胜仗。鱼类竟然能够决定一个国家的命运。

这时，一个腰间别着皮袋的潜水人出现在海水之间，我确定他不是尸体，因为他正在用胳膊游泳，时而浮到水面，时而潜入水中。

我回过头来对尼摩船长喊道：“船长，您快看，这里有一个遇难的人。我们一定要救他。”

船长并不理会我，而是径直走到玻璃窗前。此时，那个人也贴到了嵌板上，双眼注视着我们。我正感到诧异，发现尼摩船长对那个人点了点头。潜水人做了一个手势回答他，便立即回到海面，消失不见了。

船长对我说：“您不要担心，他是被大家称作比斯岬的马达邦岬的尼古拉。在西克拉群岛上，无人不知晓他的大名。作为一个勇敢的潜水人，他经常从这个岛游到那个岛，他在水下生活的时间比在陆地上还

长。”

“船长，您也认识他？”

“教授先生，我为什么就不能认识他呢？”

回答完我的问题，尼摩船长来到了客厅左边隔板的一个橱柜前。只见橱柜盖上有一块铜板，上面写着“鹦鹉螺”字样，上面题了“动中之动”四个字。

船长似乎没有注意到我，他打开橱柜，只见里面放着很多成条的东西。

原来是金条。他从哪里弄来这么多金条呢？这些金条是用来做什么的？

我默不作声，一直盯着船长看。只见他将金条一条一条地取出来，整齐地摆在柜子中，将柜子摆得满满的。据我估计，柜子里起码存了1000公斤重的金子，应该价值500万法郎。

船长将盖子盖上，并用希腊文在上面写了地址。

写好后，尼摩船长打开一个按钮，这时，出现了4个人，他们费力地将小柜子推出了客厅。接着，是滑车摩擦铁楼梯的声音。

这时，尼摩船长回头对我说：“教授先生，您刚刚说什么来着？”

“我什么都没说，船长。”

“那快去休息吧，先生，晚安。”

说完，尼摩船长走出了客厅。

回到房间的我，毫无睡意，一直在想着刚刚发生的事情。那个柜子和潜水人之间到底有什么关系。紧接着，我明显感受到了颠簸和摇动，“鹦鹉螺”号离开水底，浮出了水面。

过了一会儿，我听到平台上传来了一阵脚步声，我知道，一定是有人将小艇放到大海上去，因为小艇与“鹦鹉螺”号相碰撞时发出了声音。

两个小时后，小艇被重新拉回船上，“鹦鹉螺”号重新回到水底。如果我没猜错的话，金条已经按照地址送出去了。是送到陆地上去了吗？尼摩船长的通信人是谁呢？

第二天，我将我的两个同伴叫过来，并将昨天晚上发生的事告诉了他们。他们和我一样，心中充满了疑问。

加拿大人问：“那几百万两黄金是从哪里来的呢？”

我无法回答他的问题。午饭后，我来到了客厅继续我的工作。直到下午5点，我一直在写笔记。突然，我感到一阵闷热，只得将身上的贝足丝衣服脱下来。我很好奇，我们没有处在高纬度，又是潜在水中，怎么会产生这样的热度呢？我看了一下压力表，表针指向60英尺深，仅仅是水面的热力是无法达到的。

我带着疑问继续工作，可是温度一直上升，已经到了无法忍受的程度。我不由自主地想，难道是船上着火了？

正在我打算离开客厅的时候，尼摩船长走了进来。他看了一下温度表，对我说：“现在是42度。”

“船长先生，我觉得我已经受不了了。”

“呵呵，教授，这热力是我们自由调节的。”

“这么说，您可以随意降低温度？”

“不能，不过我们可以离开这热源。”

“那么，您说这热力是外来的？”

“不错。我们现在简直是在沸水中行驶。”

“是真的吗？”我喊道。

“请看。”

嵌板打开，我看见“鹦鹉螺”号周围的海是白茫茫的。

水流中间升起一阵带有硫黄的水蒸气，水流像锅炉中的水一般沸腾。我把手放在一块舷窗的玻璃上，热得厉害，我赶快缩了回来。

“这是什么地方？”我问。

“教授，”船长回答我说，“现在是在桑多林岛附近，就是在分开尼亚—卡玛依小岛和巴列亚—卡玛依小岛的那条水道中。相信您会想看一看海底火山喷火的奇异景象。”

“我原以为，”我说，“这些新岛屿的形成早就结束了。”

“在海底的火山区没有什么是停止的，”尼摩船长回答，“地球也老是受地下火力的折磨。根据嘉西奥多尔和蒲林尼的说法，公元19年，有

一个名字叫特耶女神的新岛，在新近形成的那些小岛位置上出现。不久这岛沉没了，到公元69年又重新浮出水面，以后又沉下去一次。从那个时期直到现在，它不再在海中升降。但是，1866年2月3日，一个名为佐治岛的新的新岛，在接近尼亚—卡玛依小岛的地方，从带有硫黄的水蒸气中间冒出来了。6日，它同尼亚—卡玛依合为一体。又过了7天，2月13日，阿夫罗沙小岛出现在海面上，在它和尼亚—孟加宜中间隔着一条10米宽的水道。这个现象出现的时候，我正在这一带海中航行，因此我得以观察岛屿形成的整个过程。

“阿夫罗沙小岛呈圆形，直径300英尺，海面以上高30英尺，它的成分为黑色玻璃质的火山石，同时夹杂有长石碎片。后来，在8月10日，又有一个更小的名为列卡岛的小岛，在靠近尼亚—卡玛依小岛的地方出现。从此，这三个小岛连在一起，形成一个大岛。”

“现在我们航行的水道在哪里呢？”我问道。

“请看这里，”尼摩船长指着一张希腊群岛的地图回答道，“我把新出现的小岛都补充标记上去了。”

“这水道有一天会被填平吗？”

“非常有可能，阿勒纳斯先生。自1866年以来，有8个火山石的小岛浮出在巴列亚到卡玛依小岛的圣尼古拉港对面。显然，不久，尼亚和巴列亚两个小岛就要连接起来。”

我回到玻璃舷窗旁边。这时“鹦鹉螺”号已经停住了。高温愈来愈令人难以忍受。这里的海水本来是白色的，由于铁盐的作用，现在变成了红色。尽管客厅封闭得很严密，但还是有一种令人不舒服的硫黄气味渗进来。我又望见了海水中的赤红色火焰，辉煌灿烂，把电灯的光辉都遮

蔽了。

我全身都是汗，喘不过气来，就要被高温烤熟了。

“我们不能再停留在这沸腾的水流中了。”我对船长说。

“是的，再留在这儿就太不谨慎了。”尼摩船长心平气和回答。

命令发出，“鹦鹉螺”号掉转船头，离开了这座大熔炉。如果莽撞地留下，难免要遇到危险。一刻钟后，我们又可以在海面上呼吸新鲜空气了。

我不由得想，如果尼德·兰选择这一带海域来实行逃走计划，我们怕是不能活着走出这火海。

第二天，2月16日，我们离开了这片在罗得岛和亚历山大港之间，深度有3000米的海域。之后“鹦鹉螺”号在雪利哥海面行驶，绕过马达邦海角后，就远远地离开了希腊群岛。

[1](#)罗马诗人，著有史诗《埃涅阿斯纪》。在古希腊罗马文学作家中，维吉尔被公认为是荷马之后最重要的史诗诗人。

[2](#)古神话中替海王尼普顿看守海中鱼类的老牧人。

第七章 地中海两日

地中海，是最碧蓝的海，是希伯来人口中的“大海”，希腊人的“海”，罗马人口中的“我们的海”。在地中海周围，长满了橘树、芦

荟、仙人掌、海松树等，还有番石榴花在不停地吐出芬芳。地中海被群山环抱，这里空气清新。但是，在地中海的地下，熔浆不停地翻滚，这里正是海王尼普顿和阎王普鲁托¹争夺世界霸权的地方，是争斗到现在还没有停止的战场。米希勒说，就是在地中海，在它的岸上，在它的水中，是地球上的人类在这个星球上锤炼自己的最强有力的一个场所……

虽然地中海很美，但我只能大概瞭望一下。地中海面积大约有200万平方公里。因为尼摩船长在这次快速航行中，一次也没有出来过，所以我没办法从他那里得到关于地中海的知识。我猜测“鹦鹉螺”号在这次海底旅行中走过的路程大约有600里，走了大概48小时。2月16日早晨，我们从希腊一带的海面出发，到18日太阳从东方升起时，我们已经通过了直布罗陀海峡。

我可以很明显地看出，尼摩船长不喜欢地中海，因为它正好处在船长要逃避的人类所居住的陆地中间。这海水和这海风给他带来的即使不是很多的懊悔，也一定是很多的回忆。在地中海，海洋赋予他的那种自由自在的神情姿态、独来独往的行动，都不见了。他的“鹦鹉螺”号在地中海——非洲和欧洲相接近的海岸中间，也显得非常沉闷。

因此，在通过地中海时，我们的速度是每小时25海里。很显然，尼德·兰很难过，只好放弃他的逃走计划。在“鹦鹉螺”号以每秒12米或13米的速度行进的过程中，他不可能使用那只小艇。因为在这样的条件下离开“鹦鹉螺”号，无疑就像从飞奔的火车上往下跳，这简直是太不要命的行为。并且，我们的船只有在夜间才浮上水面来，置换新鲜空气，在其他行进的过程中，它就只根据罗盘的度数和测程器的指示来行驶。

所以，当我从地中海里往外看的时候，就像飞驰的列车上的旅客所看到的在他眼前疾驰而过的风景一样，也就是说，只能看到远远的天

际，对于像闪电一样闪过的眼前的景致却是看不见的。不过，我和葛瑟尔两人仍然可以看见地中海中的一些鱼，它们依靠鳍的力量可以在“鹦鹉螺”号附近的水流中停留一些时间。我们在船舱的客厅玻璃旁静待时机，相信所记的笔记对于我教学地中海鱼类会有很大的帮助。

在被阵阵电光照得雪亮的水流中间，有一些长1米的八目鳗游来游去，这种鱼差不多在所有气候的不同地方都有。还有属于鲑鱼类的尖嘴鱼，宽5英尺，肚腹是白色的，脊背上有带颜色的斑点，从船里看上去，它们就像宽大的围巾被水流夹带着滚来滚去。其他的鲫鱼类的鱼很快就游了过去，我很想认识它们，看它们是否值得希腊人给它们赋予的“鹰”的称号，或者近代渔人很离奇地给它们的“老鼠”“蟾蜍”和“蝙蝠”的名字。好多鳶形鲛有12英尺长，这是潜水人特别害怕的东西，它们结伴在水里以很快的速度游来游去。梅狐狸，长8英尺，嗅觉极其敏锐，就像淡蓝色的阴影一样在水中出现。鳊鱼是鲷鱼属，有些长达13分米，全身是银白和天蓝色的条纹，这特别能凸显出它们鳍的深黑色；它们的眼睛嵌在金色的眼眶里，这是一种古时专门用来祭祀美神维纳斯的鱼。美丽的鳍鱼，长9至10米，是速度很快的鱼，它们有力的尾巴不断冲撞船舱客厅的玻璃，让我们能看到它们有栗色小斑点的淡蓝色的脊背，它们跟鲨鱼很像，但没有鲨鱼的力气大。这种鱼在各地的海洋中都能碰见，春天的时候，它们喜欢游到河里去。但在地中海的这些不同的鱼中，当“鹦鹉螺”号上浮接近水面的时候，我可以很清楚地观察到的，是属于骨质鱼组第63属的一种鱼。那是脊背为蓝黑色，肚腹上带有银甲，背上的线条发出金黄色微光的鳍鲸鱼。这种鱼是以跟着船只一起走而出名的，在热带的炎热天气里，它们躲藏到船的阴影里乘凉。真的是这样，它们跟着“鹦鹉螺”号，像以前陪着拉·比路斯的船只一样。在很长的时间内，它们不断地与我们的船进行比赛。我透过船舱的玻璃欣赏着这些鱼，可以看出，它们仿佛生来就是为赛跑的，它们的头很小，身

子很光滑，呈纺锤形，有些身长超过3米。它们的胸鳍特别有力，尾巴是交叉形的。它们行动时呈三角形，像可以和它们比赛速度的某种鸟类一样，因此，古人说它们是熟知几何学和战略学的。

凭着记忆，我仅举出了葛瑟尔或我能望见的那些地中海的鱼类。那是拳状电鳗，呈淡白色，游走时像不可捉摸的气体一样。还有海鳐鱼，像长3至4米的蛇一样，有着青、蓝和黄的美丽颜色。有海鳐鱼，长3英尺，它的肝是非常美味的。有带鱼，浮来浮去，就像细长的海藻。有虾虎鱼，诗人称其为琴鱼，水手称其为笛鱼，它们的嘴上三角形和多齿形的两块薄片，形状就像老荷马的乐器。有燕子笛鱼，游得很快，就像燕子一样，因此得名。有金头鲷，头是红色的，脊鳍上满是丝线条。有芦葵鱼，身上有黑色、灰色、栗色、蓝色、黄色、青色的斑点，能发出钟铃般的叮当响声。有华美的鲾鱼，这种鱼是海中的山鸡，全身呈菱形，有淡黄色的鳍，鳍上有栗色的小斑点，它身体的左上部通常有栗色和黄色的花纹。最后是漂亮的海鲱鳃，是海里真正的无双鸟。

至于海中的哺乳类，在走过亚德里亚海口时，我好像看到了两三条大头鲸，它们有真甲鲸属的脊鳍；几条圆球头属的海猪，它们是地中海的特产，头的前面有一条条的明亮的花纹。还有十来条海豹，它们的肚腹是白色的，有黑色的皮毛，身长3米，它们的名字叫“和尚”，它们的样子简直就跟多明尼克派的修士一样。

葛瑟尔说，他自己好像望见了一只6英尺宽的、背上有三条长长的伸出去的突起棱骨的大龟。

至于植虫类动物，我曾在短时间内欣赏到一种美丽的橙黄色、形状为唇形的水螅，它们吸附在船左舷窗户的玻璃上，那是一条条很长很细的丝带，丝带上长出了无穷无尽的枝叶，末梢是最精美的、就算是阿拉

克妮的织女也织不出来的花边。可惜我没能捕捉到这个美丽的动物，幸而“鸚鵡螺”号在16日晚上行驶的速度特别缓慢，要不然，像这么美丽的地中海的植虫动物一定不可能被我看到。下面是当时的情形。

我们正走过西西里岛和突尼斯海岸的中间。在通过墨西拿海峡的狭窄海域时，海底突然上升，在这一带好似形成了一条山脊，水深只有16米左右，而两边海底的深度却有170米。因此，“鸚鵡螺”号要很小心地行驶，生怕会撞上这道海底栅栏。我在地中海地图上指给葛瑟尔看那条很长的暗礁所在的位置。

“先生，打断一下，”葛瑟尔说，“这个就是连接欧洲和非洲的一条地峡了吧。”

“是的，老实人。”我回答道，“它完全堵住了利比亚海峡，史密斯的测量也证明这两个大陆从前在崩角和夫利那角那里是连接起来的。”

“我也觉得是这样。”葛瑟尔说。

“要知道，”我又补充道，“类似的一道栅栏也存在于直布罗陀海峡和叙达海峡之间，在地质学上的纪元时期，二者是把地中海完全封锁起来的。”

葛瑟尔用心研究着，“鸚鵡螺”号缓慢地接近了地面，走过了浅水海底。

这浅水海底，因为有很多石头，而且地底是火成岩，所以长满了花草，还有海绵、海参、透明的海胆；有发出轻微磷光的淡红色的蔓；有海带，俗名叫海黄瓜，浸在七色阳光的光线中；有游走的宽1米的车盘，它们那大红的颜色，把海水都染红了；有最美的咸丛海水仙；有茎

很长的石纹花；有许多不同种类的可以食用的海栗子；有青色的海葵，它的茎是淡灰色的，花盘是栗子色的，掩映在由触须形成的类似橄榄色的毛发里面，很难看清楚。

葛瑟尔特别注意观察了软体动物和节肢动物，虽然关于这一部分的术语很枯燥，但我不愿让这个老实人白费功夫，所以也都记录了下来，不想把他的观察遗漏了。

在软体动物门中，他看到了柿形海扇，一个挨一个堆起来的酷似马蹄形的双壳贝，三角形的多那螺，壳是透明的、鳍是黄色的三齿稍子贝，橙黄色的腹脚贝，带点淡青色小斑点的卵形贝，名字叫海兔的腹足贝，古锹形贝，多肉的无触角贝，地中海特产的伞贝，在壳中会产生一种很宝贵的螺铀的海耳贝，火焰形的海扇无头贝（据说，相较于牡蛎，法国南部的人更爱吃这种贝），让马赛人很珍视的毛蚶，又白又肥的双层草贝以及介蛤（这种介蛤在北美沿海地区有很大的产量，在纽约的零售数量也很可观）。除此之外，还有颜色不断变化的、藏在自己壳洞中的盖形梳贝；我很爱吃的有胡椒味的豹石子贝；头上有个凸起的壳、侧面有突出的带线条痕迹的薄鳃类蛤；带有很多大红瘤的辛提贝；尖端弯曲、有些像小艇形状的肉食贝；头上像戴着一顶帽子的铁贝；螺丝形壳的人形柱贝；灰色的海神贝；有白点、像蒙着丝巾、类似小蚰蜒的琴贝；爬在其他动物背上的洼涡贝；壳是椭圆形的琉璃草耳朵贝；茶褐色的丝挂贝以及数不清的海螺，海蛤，菊贝，岩贝，薄片贝，宝石贝，花瓶贝等。

葛瑟尔在他的笔记上把节肢动物很准确地分为六纲，其中有三纲是属于海产动物。这三纲是甲壳纲、蔓足纲和坏虫纲。

甲壳纲又分为九目，其中第一目包括十足目节肢动物，这些动物的

头部和胸部通常是连接起来的，有好几对体节组成，胸部又有4至6对走动的脚。按照我们的老师密尔·爱德华的方法，葛瑟尔把十足目节肢动物分为三类：短尾类、长尾类和无尾类。这种分类方法，听起来名字有点通俗，但很明确。在短尾类中，葛瑟尔以“阿马地蟹”举例，这种蟹的前面有两支分开的长刺，还有蝎子蟹——不知道为什么希腊人会用这种蟹来象征智慧。除此之外，还有可能因迷路到浅海底中来的棍形海蜘蛛、刺形海蜘蛛，它们通常生活在水很深的地方。十足蟹、矢形蟹、菱形蟹、粒形蟹——这些蟹很容易消化，葛瑟尔指出，还有无齿的伞花蟹、螃蟹、西蟹、毛绒蟹等。他把长尾类分为五科——装甲科、掘脚科、无定位科、虾科、足目科。葛瑟尔举例说，普通的龙虾（人们很喜欢吃母龙虾肉）、熊虾或海蝉、河虾以及各种食用的虾。但他没有说到其他科的区别，其中有对虾这一属，因为地虾是地中海中唯一的对虾属。

当“鹦鹉螺”号通过利比亚海峡的浅水海底到了深海中后，速度又恢复了正常，之后便看不到软体动物、节肢动物和植虫动物了，只能看到一些大鱼像黑影一样游过。

在2月16日至17日夜间，我们进入了最深的地方，也就是达3000米的地中海的第二道水域。受机轮的推动，“鹦鹉螺”号随侧面的纵斜机板下滑，一直潜到了最深处的水层面。

在这里，虽然没有什么新奇的东西，但不断涌来的海水也让我看到了各种或动人或可怕的场面。就是在这个时候，我们经过了地中海遇难沉船事件发生率最高的地方，不知道有多少船只在从阿尔及利亚沿海至普罗文沙海岸遇难。

因此，在快速从海底深处经过的这次行驶中，我看到了很多躺在海

底的沉没的船。有的被珊瑚胶黏住了，有的仅仅蒙上了一层铁锈，还有散落在各处的锚、大炮、子弹、各种铁架、机轮叶、机器零件、破碎的圆筒、损坏的锅炉，以及那些浮在水中或直立或翻倒的船壳。

这些船只是因为相撞或者碰上了花岗石暗礁才沉没的。我看到有些船桅杆直立，船上的东西已经被水浸坏了，它们应该是笔直沉下去的。似乎它们就停泊在广阔的港口，正准备准时出发。当“鹦鹉螺”号从这些沉没的船只中间穿过，它的灯光照耀到它们的时候，看起来就好像这些船只在用它们招展的旗帜向“鹦鹉螺”号致敬，把它们的编号一一向它报告！不，不是这样的，在这灾难的所在地，只有寂静和死亡。

当“鹦鹉螺”号越来越接近直布罗陀海峡的时候，我看到地中海海底的这些遇难沉没的船只的残骸堆积得愈加多了。欧洲和非洲海岸在这里变得狭窄起来，在这狭窄的间隙，相互之间发生碰撞是常有的事。经过的时候，我看到有许多用铁制成的汽船的各种古怪的残骸，有的倒下了，有的竖立着，就好像某个庞然大物。其中一只船的侧面破裂了，烟囱也弯了，它的机轮只剩下了骨架，它的舵也已经离开了尾柱，但铁链仍然牢牢地把舵系住，后面的铁盘受海水的侵蚀，已经显出非常难看的形状。看到这里，我不禁想到，有多少人在这次海难中丧生了！有多少牺牲者被卷进了海底！有没有保全了性命的水手，可以给人们讲讲这次可怕的灾祸？或者海浪是否依然在守护着这次海难的秘密呢？

然而，“鹦鹉螺”号无情且快速地开足马力从这些船只的残骸中间穿了过去。2月18日，凌晨三点左右，“鹦鹉螺”号到达了直布罗陀海峡的入口。

直布罗陀海峡中有两道水流：一道是上层水流，从很久以前，人们就知道是它把大西洋的水引入地中海的；还有一道与之方向相反的下层

水流，现在通过推理已经证明了它的存在。按道理说，由于大西洋潮水和流入其中的其他大河的河水，地中海海水的总量应该是不停增加的，海水的水平面应该每年上涨才是，因为水汽的蒸发远远赶不上流入其中的水量。但事实上并非如此，由此，人们就自然而然地认可有一道下层水流的存在，通过它把地中海过剩的水从直布罗陀海峡输送到了大西洋。

事实确实是这样。“鹦鹉螺”号现在就要利用这道与上层水流相反流向的下层水流。它迅速地进入了这条狭窄的水道。在那一瞬间，我望见了蒲林尼和阿维纽斯所说的那座沉没在海底的壮丽的赫克留斯庙的废墟，以及支撑那座庙的小岛。几分钟后，我们就浮在大西洋的水面上了。

[1](#)古罗马神话里的冥王，阴间的主宰，地府之王，人们死后灵魂世界的主宰者。

第八章 维 哥 湾

大西洋有着非常辽阔的水面，长9000海里，宽约2700海里，面积有2500万平方海里，是非常重要的海域。在古代，除了迦太基人，可以说几乎没有人知道这片海域。迦太基人就是古时候的荷兰人，因为贸易，他们曾沿着欧洲和非洲的西部海岸往返航行。蔚为壮观的水面上，有插着各国旗帜的船只往来其间，这片水面的最西头是两个尖角，也就是航海家非常害怕的合恩角和暴风角。

“鹦鹉螺”号靠着动力，推动它前面的冲角，在大西洋上劈波斩浪，不断向前驶去。在三个半月的时间里，它已经行进了近一万里，超过绕

地球一周的距离了。现在我们要上哪里去呢？将来我又会遇到什么呢？“鹦鹉螺”号通过直布罗陀海峡，进入了大西洋海面后又浮上了水面，我们每天又可以在甲板上散步了。

在尼德·兰和葛瑟尔的陪同下，我立即走上了甲板。远远望去，在距离我们12海里的地方，隐约出现了西班牙半岛最西南的尖角——圣文孙特角。在我们走上甲板的时候，起了非常大的南风，海面波涛汹涌，海水滚滚而来，“鹦鹉螺”号激烈地颠簸起来。因为时刻有大浪打来，我们在甲板上待不下去了，所以我们几个人在呼吸了几口新鲜空气后，又回到了船舱中。我回到我自己的房间，葛瑟尔也回到了他的房间。但是加拿大人好像心事重重的样子，他跟着我走了进来。在我们通过地中海的时候，因为“鹦鹉螺”号的速度很快，使得他很难实行他的计划，他显然非常失望。

在我关上房门后，他坐了下来，也不说话，只是望着我。

“亲爱的朋友，尼德·兰，”我对他说道，“我很了解你的心情，不要责备自己。在“鹦鹉螺”号以那么快的速度行驶的过程中，想要离开它，简直就是发疯！”

尼德·兰不说话。他那紧闭的嘴唇和拧在一起的眉毛，说明他的心中有一个坚定的信念。

“看着吧，”我又说，“事情并没有想象得那么糟糕，你还是有希望的。我们现在正沿着葡萄牙海岸往上游行去，再过一段时间，我们就可以到达法国、英国了，到了那里，我们就可以轻而易举地找到一个能顺利逃走的机会了。啊！但是，如果‘鹦鹉螺’号驶出直布罗陀海峡后直接往南驶去，如果它把我们带到了没有陆地的地方，那我肯定跟你一样，

会感到无比的郁闷。但是，我们现在知道了尼摩船长并不躲避靠近陆地的海面，我估计再过几天，你就可以顺利实行你的计划了。”

尼德·兰紧紧盯着我的眼睛，最后，他张开嘴巴说道：“今天晚上，我就会实行我的计划。”

听了他的话，我一下子就站了起来。我承认，我真的一点也没料到他会这样跟我说。看样子我得跟加拿大人说点什么，但我又找不出应该说的话来。

“我们不是约定要等待一个好的机会吗？”尼德·兰接着说道，“这个好机会现在就掌握在我的手中。今天晚上，我们离西班牙海岸只有几海里，晚上很黑，海面又吹着风。阿勒纳斯先生，您既然已经有言在先，那么我完全相信您。”

因为我一直没说话，加拿大人站了起来，走向我，然后对我说：“就在今天晚上9点。我已经告诉葛瑟尔了。那个时候，尼摩船长在他房中可能已经睡下了。机械师以及船上的其他海员都不可能注意到我们。我和葛瑟尔会先到船舱的中央楼梯去，而阿勒纳斯先生，您就留在离我们两步远的图书室中等待我的信号吧。船桨、桅杆和帆都已经在小艇中了，而且我还准备了一些食物。除此之外，我还弄到了一把英式的螺丝扳子，我们可以用它把小艇钉在“鹦鹉螺”号船身上的螺丝钉取下来。你看，一切都已经准备好了，我们就等着今天夜里见了。”

“海上的风浪可是很大的。”我说。

“我知道风浪很大，”加拿大人回答道，“但这次必须冒险了。为了自由，是值得我们付出代价的。而且，那个小艇很结实，即使有风浪，我们只要走几海里，也不会有什么问题。想想，也许明天我们就可以跑

到几百里之外的海面上了呢？但愿我们一切顺利，如果一切顺利的话，明天10点或11点的时候，我们就可以在陆地的某处了，当然也可能已经送了命，所以，只有依靠上帝的恩典了。我们今天夜里见！”

说完这些话后，加拿大人便走出了我的房间，留下我一个人不知所措地待在房间里。我也想过可能机会来了，我希望可以有时来仔细考虑、琢磨、讨论，但是我那性情固执的同伴却不让我这样做。到底我还能对他说些什么呢？尼德·兰是对的。现在的确是一个好机会。我能反悔吗？我能为了我一人的私利，阻碍我同伴们的将来吗？我负得起这个责任吗？明天，尼摩船长不就会把我们完全带到远离所有大陆的大海中去了吗？

就在这个时候，响起了嘹亮的哨声，我知道这意味着船上的储水池已经储满了水，“鹦鹉螺”号又要潜入到大西洋的海底去了。

我要尽量避开船长，以免他发现我心中的躁动情绪，因此，我决定留在房间中不出去了。我就这样焦虑地度过了很愁闷的一天。一方面，我很想走，很想寻得我的自由；另一方面，我又觉得很可惜，离开这神奇的“鹦鹉螺”号，我的海底研究也就完不成了。如果这样离开，就像我经常说的，如果这样离开“我的大西洋”，那么我就观察不到它最深的水层了，也就无法解开印度洋和太平洋曾向我透露的秘密了。这就像我刚读完第一章小说，它从我手中掉了下去，我在做梦到最美好的时候，梦就被打断了。我就在这样的苦闷中度过了一天的时间，有时，我好像看到自己和同伴一起安全逃到了陆地上；有时，我又自私地希望有意料之外的事情发生，使得我可以有机会阻止尼德·兰进行他的计划。

我曾到过客厅中两次。我要去看看罗盘，我要确定一下“鹦鹉螺”号行驶的方向是接近海岸还是离开了海岸。“鹦鹉螺”号一直在沿着葡萄牙

沿岸的海域行驶，它在大西洋中沿着海岸线向北驶去。这是个好机会，因此，我必须下定决心，准备逃走。我的行李并不多，除了我的笔记，就再没有什么其他的了。

我总在想尼摩船长如果知道我们要逃走他会怎么想，他会不会很难过，或者会不会给他造成什么伤害，甚至如果有人发现我们逃走或我们逃走没有成功的时候，他会怎么办。显然，我对尼摩船长没有任何抱怨，恰恰相反，他对人的态度比我遇到的任何人都真诚。离开他，不能说我就是忘恩负义。我没有许过要永远与他在一起的誓言。他也认为，让我们彼此在一起的，是客观环境的力量，而不是我们的约定。但他这种公然的说法，这种想把我们永远留在船上做囚人的想法，正说明我们企图逃走的所有想法都是合理的。

自从在桑多林岛附近跟船长见过一面后，我就再没有见过他。在我们走之前，还有没有机会让我跟他再见一面呢？我既想见到他，又怕见到他。如果屏气静听，我是不是就可以听到他在隔壁房间走动的声音呢。可是，听了很长时间，也没有任何声音传到我的耳中来。那想必船长并不在房间。我于是又想，这个脾气古怪的人是不是还在船上呢。自从那个晚上，小艇离开了“鹦鹉螺”号去执行一个神秘的任务，我对于这个人的想法，就有了稍许变化。在我看来，不管怎么说，他跟陆地一定还保留着某种关系。难道他从未离开过“鹦鹉螺”号吗？有时候，整整几个星期的时间，我都见不到他。在这段时间里，他都在做什么呢？我一直认为他是因为愤世嫉俗，不愿与人接触，不愿见人，但有没有可能他是去了其他地方，去完成某个我不知道的秘密任务呢？所有这些想法，以及很多其他的想法，同时涌入了我的心里。现在这种我们所处的奇怪的情形，很容易让人胡思乱想。我感到非常不安，这让我难以忍受。

由于心中烦躁，我觉得这一天实在过于漫长，时间实在是走得太慢

了，等待好像是无止境的。像往常一样，我还是在我的房间里吃的晚饭。因为心里有事，根本吃不下多少。7点钟从餐桌起身的时候，我在心中计算着，距我跟尼德·兰约定的相见时间还有120分钟。想到这些，我更激动了。我的脉搏猛烈地跳动着，根本平静不下来。我在房间里走来走去，希望通过走动可以让我烦躁的心平静下来。如果我们在这次逃走行动中不幸送命，我并不会觉得有什么难过，但是，想到如果我们的逃走计划在离开“鹦鹉螺”号之前就被发现了，想到我们被带到愤怒的尼摩船长面前，或者，更为糟糕的，他因为我的背叛而内心痛苦，我的心就会不自觉地怦怦跳起来。

我要再去最后看一眼船舱的客厅。走过长长的走廊，我到了那间在那里不知道度过了多少快乐和获益良多时间的陈列室。我用眼睛紧紧盯着那些陈列品，就像一个要永远流亡的人，在走之前的最后一个晚上会做的事情一样。这些大自然的杰作，这些艺术的精品，在这么多天里，我把我全部的精力都放在了它们身上，现在，我要永远离开它们了。然后，我又透过客厅的玻璃，把眼光投向大西洋的海底，可是嵌板没有开，就是这块铁板把我与我还不认识的这个大洋隔开了。

就这样，我在客厅里走来走去。我走近客厅的门，那门在客厅的角落，是与尼摩船长的房间相连的。我很吃惊，那扇门是虚掩着的。很自然地，我退了回来。如果尼摩船长就在房间里，他可能就会看到我。但我没有听到任何声音，我走进房间，发现房中没有人。我推开房门，走了进去。船长房中的布置还是跟以前一样，就像隐士僧侣的房间那样严肃朴实。这个时候，房中墙上挂着的几幅铜版画引起了我的注意，我第一次踏进这个房间时并没有留意到这些画。那是一些肖像画，画的都是历史上的伟大的人物，他们把自己的一生都献给了人类的伟大事业。他们是哥修斯哥，那个听到“波兰完了”的喊声就倒下了的英雄；波查里

斯，近代希腊的列盎尼达斯；俄康乃尔，保卫爱尔兰独立的战士；华盛顿，美利坚合众国的创始人；马宁，意大利爱国志士；林肯，被拥护奴隶制的人暗杀的美国总统；最后，是那位为了黑人的解放而献出了自己生命的殉道士约翰·布朗，他吊在绞刑架上的样子，就像维克多·雨果用铅笔画出来的那可怕的样子。这些英雄人物和尼摩船长之间有什么关系呢？从这些英雄人物的肖像画中，我有可能发现船长的秘密吗？他是被压迫人民的保护者、解放奴隶的志士吗？他是当代引起政治或社会动荡的什么人吗？他是这次可悲的但也永远是光荣的、美国可怕内战中的一位英雄吗……

忽然，房间的钟表响了8下。当钟表的第一声响声过后，我忽然就像从梦中惊醒了一样，我浑身开始颤抖，好像有一只无形的眼睛看透了我内心最深处的秘密。我急忙走出了船长的房间。走到客厅里，我开始观察罗盘。通过罗盘，我发现，我们一直在往北行驶。测程器显示“鹦鹉螺”号并没有加速，正以平常的速度行驶；压力表显示，“鹦鹉螺”号正在水深60米左右的地方行驶。所以周围的一切环境对于加拿大人实行他的计划都非常有利。

回到我自己的房间后，为了暖和一些，我又多加了一些衣服，穿上了靴子，戴上了用水獭皮做的帽子，还披上了海豹皮做里子的外衣。一切准备就绪，我开始等待。四周一片寂静，只有“鹦鹉螺”号推进器的震动声。我竖起耳朵来，用心去听。我感到十分不安，很怕会有一些喊叫声，告诉我尼德·兰的逃跑计划已经被发现了。

还有几分钟就到9点钟了。我把耳朵贴在与船长房间相连的一侧墙上，但没有听到任何声音。我走出自己的房间，来到客厅中，客厅里很黑，一个人也没有。

我打开跟图书室相连的那扇门，图书室里同样光线黯淡，冷冷清清的。我走到门的附近，站在那里，这扇门正对着中央楼梯。我在等待尼德·兰的信号。

这个时候，“鹦鹉螺”号推进机的震动声变小了，过了一会儿，一点声音也没有了。“鹦鹉螺”号的行进计划怎么变了呢？我不知道船停了下来对于尼德·兰执行他的计划是有利还是不利。周围一片寂静，我只能听到自己的心跳声。忽然，我觉察到了轻微的冲撞。我马上反应过来，“鹦鹉螺”号是停驻在大西洋海底了。我更加觉得不安起来。加拿大人还没有给我发出信号。我很想出去找他，让他改变计划。我觉察到，“鹦鹉螺”号的航行计划改变了……正在这个时候，客厅的门被打开了，尼摩船长走了进来。他看到我，没有说一句寒暄或客套的话，只是用很亲热的语气对我说：

“教授，原来您在这里，我正在找您呢。您了解有关西班牙的历史吗？”

就算是一个很熟悉自己本国历史的人，处在我当下的情况，也会变得心神恍惚，头脑发胀，也会一句话也说不出。

“教授，”尼摩船长又接着说，“您听到我的话了吗？您了解有关西班牙的历史吗？”

“了解得很少。”我回答道。

“许多学者都不知道。”船长说，“那么，教授，您请坐，”他说，“我要跟您说说发生在这个国家历史上的一个新奇事件。”

船长躺在一张安乐椅上，我机械地坐在他旁边，隐藏在他淡淡的阴

影中。

“教授，”尼摩船长对我说，“请您听我说，您会对这段历史感兴趣的，因为它可以帮您解决一个您一直无法解答的问题。”

“船长，我在听您说呢。”我说道。我不知道船长要说什么，我想这会不会跟我们的逃走计划有关。

“教授，”尼摩船长接着说，“请您注意，我们现在要上溯到1702年。您知道，在那个时期，你们法国的国王路易十四以为他做一个手势，比利牛斯山就得缩到地下去。他非要西班牙人接受他的孙子——安茹公爵做他们的国王。这就是统治西班牙的腓力五世国王。可是他的统治很不力，与其他国家出现了问题，发生了争执。一年后，荷兰、奥地利和英国王室在海牙制定了同盟协约，要把腓力五世赶下台，支持奥地利的一位亲王上台，并且给了他查理三世的封号。

“西班牙当然要抵抗这个同盟，可是它没有强大的军队力量，不过它有钱，但是那些金银都要从美洲运送过来。1702年，由法国夏都·雷诺海军上将指挥的23艘法国战舰护送的一队载有大量金银的运输船驶向了西班牙。与此同时，敌人联合的海军也在大西洋上不断游弋。

“这队运输船本来是要驶到加的斯港口的，但法国海军司令接到了英国舰队在这一带海域巡逻的情报，就决定把这队运输船开到维哥湾去。

“提炼这些金银的费用比所得的好处大得多。不过在维哥湾就不一样了，我只需要去捡人们丢掉的东西就行了。当然，不只是在维哥湾，在其他各处的失事地点也一样，对于这些，我统统都在海底地图上做了标记。您现在明白我是有无穷无尽财富的富翁了吧？”

“我明白，船长。但请让我说一句，您来打捞维哥湾金银的这件事，不过是比跟您竞争的一个会社先行了一步罢了。”

“什么会社？”

“是一个获得西班牙政府特许来打捞这些沉没运输船只的会社。因为巨大的利润可图，会社的股东们都受到了诱惑，兴致高昂，人们估计这些沉没船只上的财富足有五亿之多。”

“五亿！”尼摩船长回答，“以前有，现在就没有了。”

“正是这样，”我说，“所以，把这个消息告诉这些股东可能是一件好事。通常，赌博的人最懊悔的，是他们疯狂的希望的破灭，而不是金钱上的损失。不过，对于这些股东，我并不觉得惋惜，我想到的是千千万万的受苦人，如果把这些财富分配给他们，对于他们来说会有多大的帮助呀，可现在这些都没有用处了！”

我本来不想表达这个惋惜的意思，我感觉这会伤害到尼摩船长。

“没有用处！”船长激动地说道，“那么，先生，您觉得这些财富由我收集起来，就没有用处了吗？在您来看，我这么辛苦地打捞这些东西就是为了我自己吗？谁告诉您我不是准备好好地使用它们的呢？您以为我不知道世上有无数的受苦人、被压迫的种族、要救济的穷人、要报仇的牺牲者吗？您不明白吗……”

说到这里，尼摩船长停了下来，他是不是在后悔说了这么多话呢？看来我猜对了。不论是出于什么动机，不管他是不是到海底来寻求独立自主的，他首先还是一个人！我终于明白，当“鹦鹉螺”号驶过发生起义的克里特岛附近的海域时，尼摩船长送出去的数百万金子是给谁的了！

第九章 沉没的大陆

2月19日一早，加拿大人走进了我的房间。我正在等他，他看起来神情非常沮丧。

“怎么样，先生？”他对我说。

“尼德·兰，昨天的机会对我们来说非常不利。”

“是的！那个古怪的船长在我们正要逃出他的船时，却把船停了下来。”

“是的，尼德·兰，他跟他的银行经理之间有秘密。”

“他的银行经理？”

“或者不如说是他跟他的银行之间有秘密。我所说的银行就是大海，也就是他存放财富的地方，那个比国家的金库还要安全可靠的大海。”

我是把昨晚发生的意外事件告诉了加拿大人，希望这样可以使他放弃逃跑的计划，不要抛弃船长。可是，我讲述的结果却是尼德·兰很强烈地表达了他的悔恨，他对于自己没能亲自到维哥湾的战场上去走走表示非常惋惜。他说：

“好，事情还没有结束！这一次计划又落空了！下一次我们一定可

以取得成功，如果可能，就是在今晚……”

“‘鹦鹉螺’号是向哪个方向行驶的？”我问道。

“我不知道。”尼德·兰回答道。

“那么，中午的时候，我们就来观测一下船所在的方位吧。”

加拿大人去葛瑟尔那里了。我穿好衣服，走进了客厅。罗盘的指示不是很明确，它显示“鹦鹉螺”号的航向是西南偏南的方向，也就是说我们是在向着背离欧洲的方向行驶。

我等着要把船所在的方位记在地图上，等待的过程中，我感到非常焦虑。11点左右，储水池里的水没有了，“鹦鹉螺”号浮出了水面。我跑到甲板上，当我到达那里时，尼德·兰已经在那里了。

我们完全看不到陆地了，放眼望去，都是一片片汪洋大海。在遥远的天际，有几只帆船，那一定是顺着风向到了桑罗克角，然后再绕过好望角的船。天色暗了下来，恐怕是要起风了。

尼德·兰非常生气，极力向多雾的天际远眺，他很希望在那浓雾后面，有他所渴望的陆地。

正午，太阳出来了一会儿。大副在天气暂时晴朗的时候测量了太阳的高度。一会儿，海面更加汹涌了，我们只好回到船中，嵌板很快又关闭了。一个小时后，我看了一下地图，发现地图上标记的“鹦鹉螺”号的方位，是在西经16度17分、南纬33度22分，离此最近的海岸还有150里——现在是没办法逃走了。

“电光灯对我们来说起不到作用。”

我觉得他没有听懂我的话，但又不能再重复了，因为船长已经把他的头套在金属球中了。我也用金属球套好了我的头，他还给了我一根铁手杖。几分钟后，像往常一样，在做了我们之前做过的动作后，我们就踩在300米深处的大西洋的海底了。

时间已经接近半夜了。海水里一片漆黑，尼摩船长指给我远处的一团淡红色的微光，那点点微光在距“鹦鹉螺”号两海里左右的地方亮着。我不知道那亮光是什么，是什么在发亮，以及它为什么和怎样在海水中发光的。总之，因为那点点微光，虽然光线很模糊，但也可以使我们看清自己的周围。不久后，我就习惯了海底的这种黑暗。在这里，电光灯根本起不了什么作用。

尼摩船长和我，我们彼此挨得很近，我们一起向着那点点微光走去。平坦的海底开始渐渐变得陡峭。因为有手杖的帮助，所以我们依然可以大踏步地前进。不过，总体来看，我们还是走得很慢，因为我的脚时不时会陷入一种有海藻和石子的泥泞里。

行进的过程中，我忽然听到有声音从我的头顶上传来。这种声音越来越大，成为一种连续不断的声响。不过，一会儿后，我就明白这声音的来源了。原来是下起了大雨，我听到的声音是雨滴落在海面上发出的声响。我不自觉地想，我肯定要被淋湿了！我要在水中被水淋湿了！脑中产生这个古怪的想法时，我不禁笑了起来。老实说，穿了那很厚很厚的潜水衣，我真的一点也感觉不到水，我只觉得自己是在比地上空气更为稠密一些的海水中罢了。

走了半小时后，地面上开始出现很多的石头。水母、很小的甲壳类、磷光植虫类，它们发出了轻微的光，照亮了地面。我看到了由无数植虫类和海藻堆积起来的一堆一堆的石头。当我踩在这些黏黏的海藻地

毯上时，我的脚时不时地就会打滑，如果没有铁手杖的帮助，恐怕我会不止一次地摔倒在地了。回过头去看，我看到“鹦鹉螺”号那淡白的灯光渐渐变得模糊了。

上面说的我看到的那些石头堆是按照某种规律排列起来的，我不知道那是什么规律，也不知道为什么它们会有这样一种规律性。我看到一些很长很长的巨大的深沟，它们不断地延伸，没入了远方。还有很多我不敢相信的其他奇特的地方。我那沉重的铅铁靴底发出了干脆的声响，我感觉到我好似踏上了用骸骨堆积成的床垫，那么我现在走过的这个广袤的海底平原是什么呢？我很想问问船长，但他的那套与他的船员们到海底旅行时用的手语，就是他们在海底用来交谈的那套手语，我一点也不懂。

指引我们前行的淡红色的光越来越强了，我们能看到那些红光把天际也照得泛红了。发出光的位置就在海底，对于这点，我感到非常奇怪。这是一种电力发散现象吗？我是遇到了陆地上的学者还不知道的一种自然现象吗？甚至我脑中忽然有了一个奇怪的想法，难道这火团是因为人才出现的吗？在这深水的海底，我会不会碰到尼摩船长的同伴、朋友？他们也像船长一样过着这种古怪的生活，船长是来拜访他们的吗？我是要遇到那些被流放的同胞了吗？对于陆地上的穷苦生活，他们觉得十分厌倦，所以就来到了这海洋的最深处找寻那独立自主的生活吗？这些疯狂、奇特的想法不时萦绕在我的脑中，加上我不断承受着眼前一系列神奇景象所带给我的刺激，在这种情况下，如果我真的在这大海的深处碰见了尼摩船长梦想中的一座海底城市，又有什么值得奇怪的呢！

我们的道路被照得愈来愈亮了，光芒来自一座高约800英尺的山顶。我现在看到的，不过是由水层形成的晶体所造成的反光。那个光源，不知原因的光源，还在山的那一面。

在这大西洋海底深处罗列起来的石头迷阵中间，尼摩船长一点也不迟疑地大步前进着。他很熟悉这晦暗的道路。他一定是时常来，因此他不可能会迷路。跟着他走，我很有信心。我觉得他就像海中的一位神灵，当他走在我前面的时候，他那魁梧的身材，显现在水平天际那晶莹的背景上。

时间走到了清晨6点。我们来到了那山的石栏前面。但要走近那石栏，我们必须通过一条很难走的小径，从广阔的乱石丛林中冒险穿过去。

那真是一片死气沉沉的丛林。那些树没有树叶，也没有树浆，它们受海水的作用已经石化了，到处都有巨大的树木耸立其间。这里就像一个煤矿坑一样，那些树木深深的根把它支起在倒塌的地面上，枝叶就像用黑纸做的一样，把它们的剪影清楚地投影在海水形成的天花板上。你可以想象一座哈尔兹的森林，不过是沉在水底的森林，是挂在山坡上的森林，现在我看到的情形就跟那有些相像。小路上满是海藻和黑角菜，一群甲壳类动物在小路的中间缓缓地爬动。我不断向前走去，慢慢地攀上一块块大石头，跨过倒下来的树干，碰断了在两树之间摇摆的海番藤，惊吓了在树枝间迅速游过的鱼。我觉得兴致勃勃，一点也感觉不到疲倦。我紧紧跟随着我那不知疲倦的带路人走着。

多么美丽的景象！怎样才能把它们描绘出来呢？怎样说明海底这些树木和岩石的形象呢？怎样描绘海底深处的晦暗与杂乱呢？怎样描绘它们那被海水反射后增强的红色光泽呢？我们越过一片一片岩石，当我们走过后，它们随即一片片地倒了下去，发出了类似雪山崩塌的隆隆的响声。左右两旁都有很广阔的平地，就好像是人类亲自整理过的，我不禁在想，海底的居民会不会突然出现在我的面前呢。

尼摩船长一直在往前走，我不愿落在他的后面，于是也大着胆子跟着他走。我的手杖帮了我很大的忙。在这些好似深渊旁边凿出来的狭窄小路上，一失足，就会出现危险。我脚步很稳地走着，并没有感到头昏眼花。有时我会跳过海底的一个裂口，裂口深不可测，如果是在陆地上，这样深不可测的裂口可能会使我后退。有时我会冒险从深窟上倒下的摇动的大树干上走过。我尽量不去看自己的脚下，把注意力集中在欣赏这个地方粗旷的景色上。那里，有一些巨大的岩石，完全不理睬平衡的定律，它们的下部切削不平，倾斜地支了起来。有些树便从这些岩石的缝隙中，像受了很大的压力一样迸了出来，它们彼此相互支撑着。还有一种天然形成的楼阁——类似尖峰的大扇的墙垣，像突出的碉堡的墙一样，呈很大角度地倾斜着，如果是在陆地上，由于地心引力的存在，估计它们不可能成为现在这个样子。

就是我自己，也感觉不到由于海水的强大密度所造成的那种压力。虽然我那沉重的衣服、铜质头盔，以及铅铁靴底让我觉得非常累赘，但当我走上那崎岖不平的斜坡时，我简直像羚羊和山羊一样快，可以说是身轻如燕地越过了。

离开“鹦鹉螺”号两个小时后，我们穿过了一条长长的丛林带，在我们头顶100英尺之上，耸立着那座山峰，山峰的投影映照到对面的山坡上，光辉又反射了回来，山上还有一些石化了的小树。

我想问问船长。但既然没法开口问他，我就挡住了他，拉住他的胳膊，让他停了下来。但他摇摇头，用手指着那山的最后一个山峰，好像在对我说：

“走！再走！继续走！”

我跟着他，再一次鼓起勇气向前走去。几分钟后，我就攀上了那座尖峰，那座山峰高出所有那些大堆的岩石10米左右。

我向我们刚走过的一边看去，这座山峰高出其他平地大概700至800英尺左右，但从整体来看，它高出大西洋海底的高度为上面所说的两倍，即1500英尺左右。我极力往远处看，一眼就看到了那亮光照射下的广大的空间。是的，这是一座火山，在距离山峰50英尺以下，在像雨点一样密密麻麻的石头和渣滓中间，一个非常大的喷火口正吐出硫黄火石等急流，四散的急流就像瀑布一样，团团没入了海水中。处在这样位置上的火山，就像一个巨大的火烛，照着海底下广阔的平原，一直延伸到远方水平线的尽头。

就像上面说的，这个海底的喷火口喷出了硫黄火石等，但并没有烈焰。因为必须有空气中的氧气才会有火焰。在水底下，火是无法燃烧起来的。但火石流本身就会产生白热化，发出白色的火光，就像在跟海水作斗争一样，二者相接触的时候便会化成水汽。速度很快的海流又把所有这些混合气体都卷了进去，火石流一直滚到了山脚底下，像维苏威火山喷出的岩浆流进了多列·德尔·格里哥海港中一样。

站在山顶往下看，我们刚才走过的那边，那已经荒废了、沉没了、倒下了的一切，呈现出了一座城市的样子，但却是已经破坏了的的城市——屋顶坍塌了，庙宇倒下了，拱门破损得零落不堪了，石柱倒在了地上。虽然如此，但我们依然可以从这些废墟中看出原来的哥特式的建筑结构。

再往远处看去，那里是一个宏大的水利工程的遗址。近处是一座圆丘形状的建筑，类似巴尔巴尔庙。另一边还能看出堤坝的形状，好像一个古老的在海岸上庇护过那些商船和战舰的海港。更远一些，有一道一

道倒塌下来的墙垣，有宽阔无人的马路，就像一座沉没在水底的庞贝古城。而此刻，尼摩船长已经把那已经消失的古城呈现在了我的眼前。

我现在是在哪里？我是在哪里？我管不了那么多了，我一定要知道我现在在哪里，我要说话，我要把套在我头上的那个铜球摘下来。

这个时候，尼摩船长走到了我面前，向我做了一个手势，让我停下来。然后，他拿起一小块尖尖的石头，向一块黑色的玄武岩大石头走去，在上面写下了这样四个字——大西洋洲。

我心中的疑问一扫而光，变得豁然开朗起来。大西洋城，这里就是忒沃浦比说的古代的亚特兰蒂斯，柏拉图说的大西洋洲。欧利根、波菲利、雅布兰克·昂维尔、马尔特·布伦、韩波尔曾否认大西洋洲的存在，他们仅仅把这里当成是存在于神话传说的故事中。但波赛唐纽斯、蒲林尼、阿米亚诺斯·马切利努斯、特图里安、恩格尔、许列尔、托尼福、布封、德维查克等人都认可这个洲的存在。这个神奇的大陆，现在就呈现在我的眼前，而且我还看到了那些可以证明它在沉没时曾遭受过巨大灾难的无可争辩的实物证据。那么，这就是那块存在于欧洲、亚洲、利比亚之外，在海加尔山外面，上面居住着强大的大西洋种族（他们曾对古希腊人发起过多次战争），最后却沉没了的陆地。

柏拉图曾把这些传说时期的英雄事迹记载在他个人的著作中。他的《德谟多库篇》和《克里底亚篇》就是受诗人、立法家梭伦的启发而写成的著作。

一天，梭伦与萨依斯城的一些聪明又有智慧的老人交谈。根据城中神庙圣墙上的编年录，萨依斯城已经有800年的历史了。这个时候，其中的一位老人讲述了关于另一个城的历史，那个城要比萨依斯城古老

1000年。这个最早的雅典城，曾经被大西洋人入侵过，导致它的一部分被破坏了。他说，这些大西洋人占据着一个广大的洲，这个洲比亚洲和非洲的总和还要大，它的面积从纬度12度起，向北至40度止。他们的统治范围一直延伸到埃及。但他们并不满足，他们还希望把希腊纳入其版图内。但是，由于希腊人进行了顽强的不屈不挠的抵抗，导致他们最后不得不放弃了把希腊扩充进其国家版图的计划。几个世纪后，一场洪水、地震灾害发生了，这次巨大的灾难仅仅用了一天一夜的时间就把整个大西洋洲完全吞没了，只剩下这个洲上最高的山峰马德尔、阿苏尔群岛、加纳利群岛、绿角群岛等还浮在海面上。

当尼摩船长写下那四个字时，上面的一切就不自觉地在我的脑中出现了。由于那最扑朔离奇的命运的指引，我踏上了这个神奇大陆的一座山峰。我的手摸到了十万年前的、地质时期的那些古老的遗址！我走过了最初的原始人类曾经走过的那些地方，我那沉重的靴底踩在了洪荒时期动物的骨骼上，而那些曾经郁郁葱葱、遮天蔽日的森林现在已经化成了矿石。

为什么？为什么我没有足够的时间？我真想从这座山的陡峭斜坡上走下去，走遍这曾经连接起非洲和美洲的广袤大陆，去看看那些沉没前的伟大城市。或者，那边，在我眼睛所及的地方，我好像看到了那勇武好战的马基摩斯人曾经居住的城市，那有着虔诚信仰的欧色比斯人曾经居住的城市，巨人族曾经在那里生活过千百年，他们一定有力量用石头来建筑一座直到今天还可以抵抗水力侵蚀的建筑物。或者有一天，如果发生了火山喷发，这些沉没的废墟或许可以重新浮出水面。有人指出，在大西洋的这一海域有很多海底火山。一些船只经过这一海域时都会感受到因火山喷发造成的特殊的震动；一些船只经过这一海域时还听到了类似水火两种元素在做激烈抗争时所发出的被抑制住的没有迸发出来的

声音；还有一些船只曾在这一海域见到过海面上漂浮着火山灰。从这里直到赤道，地下都有很多活火山，导致地块不断地在发生变化。或许，谁知道呢？在遥远的未来，由于火山喷发，以及火山喷出的火石不断地累积，可能会使得发生火山喷发的山峰重新出现在大西洋海面上。

当我在想着上面这些事情的时候，当我正设法想把我看到的眼前所有这些伟大景物的细节都存储进我的大脑的时候，尼摩船长却用手扶着布满青苔的已经剥落的石碑，站在那里一动不动，不知道在想些什么。他是在想那些已经逝去的过去的人类吗？他是在向过去的人们打听人类命运的秘密吗？这个脾气古怪的人到这里是来找寻逝去的历史，以此磨炼自身的吗？还是他已厌倦了现在的生活，希望到这里来复活古代的生活？我相信，只要我能知道这个古怪的人在想什么，明确地了解他的想法，我就能知道自己该怎么做了。

我和船长一直在那里静静地待了一个小时，欣赏着那因火山产生的光辉照耀下的广阔平原。有时，火山产生的热力实在惊人，那来自地心内的沸腾使得山的表面迅速地发生了颤动。隆隆的声响通过海水传播出去，产生了洪亮的回响声。这个时候，透过海水，月亮出现了，向这块沉没的大陆投下淡淡的光芒。虽然那仅仅是一些微弱的光芒，却产生了一种难以形容的景象。

船长站了起来，最后看了一眼这广阔的平原，然后向我做了一个手势，让我跟着他离开。

很快地，我们就走下了山峰，在过了已经石化的森林后，我就看到了“鹦鹉螺”号探照灯发出的灯光。远远看去，那就像一颗挂在天际的星星。船长一直向着“鹦鹉螺”号的方向走去，当我们踏上船时，正是第一缕曙光照在海面上的时候。

第十章 海底煤坑

2月20日，我睡了很久才起。身体的疲劳让我一直睡到了11点。我赶紧穿戴洗漱完毕，就是为了早点知道“鹦鹉螺”号的航行方向。通过客厅中的仪器得知，它正向南航行，时速为20海里，水深100米。

葛瑟尔过来找我，我将昨天夜间的旅行告诉了他，同时敞开嵌板，让他望向沉没的大陆部分。“鹦鹉螺”号行驶在距离大西洋洲平原地面10米的水层，它的速度非常快，像是一只被风推送的气球一样飞跑。我们坐在客厅中，就像是坐在特快专列上一样。我们眼前不断掠过奇形怪状的大石块，或是屹立不动的树林，以及他们交叉在海水中挤眉弄眼的怪样子。还可以看见藏在轴形草和白头翁地毯下面的大堆石头，无数长长在立的蛇婆在上面竖立着，另外可以看见的是轮廓奇怪的大块火石，它的存在使地心大火力量的猛烈得以证实。

当我们的电光照耀这些奇特景象的时候，葛瑟尔正认真地听我讲述大西洋人的历史，巴伊¹写出的那些迷人的篇章就是基于这纯粹空想的观点。我和葛瑟尔探讨这些英雄人民的伟大战争经历，讨论大西洋洲的历史问题。可是葛瑟尔有些心不在焉，他并不留意我所讲述的各人的经历，然而，不久以后我就解开了心中的疑问。葛瑟尔已经被无数的鱼类所吸引，完全投入到分类研究中，思想离这个现实的世界越来越远。在这样的情况下，我选择同他一起做鱼类学的研究。

同我们以前研究过的相比，大西洋这边的鱼类并没有显著的特点。只是有一种鲤鱼，身长5米，体力也好，可以跃出水面很高。还有各种

鲨鱼，最引人注意的是长15英尺的海色鲛，它的周身是透明的，待在海中毫不起眼，特别的是它长着尖利三角形的牙齿。

对于多骨鱼的分类，葛瑟尔明确标记了淡墨色的帆船鱼，这种鱼身长3米，上颚有一把尖利的刺刀。被亚里士多德时代称为海龙的颜色生动的海鳐，它的脊背上有利刺，使得捕捉它们的时候充满了危险。其次，葛瑟尔记录了脊背呈褐色的哥利芬鱼，周身带有蓝色小条纹，圈在边缘金黄的框子里面。记录中还有美丽的鳊鱼；能发出蓝色光线的月形金嘴鱼，它在阳光的照耀下，像银白色的斑点一般。还有一种旗形鱼，它身长8米，喜欢成群结队地生活，它长有淡黄色的峭，鳍长6英尺，呈镰刀和长剑形。这种鱼很胆大，喜欢吃草叶，不爱吃小鱼，有趣的是，雌鱼要是做一些相关的动作，雄鱼就会立即服从，就像训练有素的很驯服的丈夫那样。

我们一面观察海洋动物的品种，一面欣赏大西洋洲的辽阔平原。由于地形变化较大，“鹦鹉螺”号的速度会有些变化。就像鲸鱼类动物有感应一样，“鹦鹉螺”号会跟着感觉溜进许多丘陵形成的狭窄曲折的水道里面去。它一会儿像氢气球一样浮上水面，一会儿又潜入水底行驶。这种本事不得不让人佩服，于是，我联想起了氢气球飞行的情景，唯一不同的是，“鹦鹉螺”号完全服从它的领航人的双手。

时钟指向下午4点，地面的泥土成分逐渐发生了变化，石头越来越多，出现了很多变质岩和玄武石凝灰岩，还有一些散在中间的硫黄火石和黑石。我猜测，不久，我们将踏上辽阔的平原。是的，没错，当“鹦鹉螺”号继续行驶的时候，我望见前方的水平线被一带高墙挡起来，像是没有了出路。很显然，我们到达了大陆，至少也是一个岛（也许是加纳利群岛之一，也可能是绿角群岛之一）。我始终无法判断船的方位，也许，这是尼摩船长故意安排的。但是我可以确定，这座高墙就是大西

洋洲的尽头，我们几乎走遍了整个大西洋洲。

我的观察并没有被黑夜中断，葛瑟尔回去休息了，只有我一个人留在客厅中。“鹦鹉螺”号的行驶速度很慢，围绕着地面上不知何物的东西盘旋，偶尔会接触这些东西，就好像想停在上面似的。有时，又会浮出水面。透过海水的透明晶体，我望见一些光辉的星宿，那正是跟参垦鱼贯排列起来的六七颗黄道星宿。

我贪婪地欣赏着玻璃窗前的美丽景色，直到嵌板关闭，我才停止。这时，“鹦鹉螺”号到达那座高墙旁边了，我无法猜测它将如何继续前行。回到房间后，我发现“鹦鹉螺”号不动了。我打定主意，只睡一会儿就早早醒来。

第二天早上8点多，我来到了客厅中。压力表显示，“鹦鹉螺”号正在洋面上行走。同时，我听到平台上有脚步声。

海上的波浪情况与船的摇摆没有任何关联，我来到嵌板上，发现板是敞开的，令我感到意外的是，外面并不是白天，而是一片漆黑。我好奇极了，我们究竟在哪里，难道是我弄错了？现在是晚上？我冷静下来一想，不对，外面没有一点星光，比真正的黑夜还要黑。

我的思绪有些混乱，这时，我听到有人对我说：

“教授先生，是您吗？”

我回道：“是我，尼摩船长，我们现在在哪儿？”

“教授先生，我们在地下呢。”

我诧异地喊道：“在地下？但‘鹦鹉螺’号为什么还是浮着走呢？”

“它一向如此。”

“我真的想明白了。”

“您别急，探照灯马上就亮起来了，到时候，您就会明白这一切的。”

我在平台上等待答案被揭晓。这种黑暗是绝对的，甚至连人的影子都看不到。我注意到，空中的顶点正好在我的头上，我开始感受到一丝微光，紧接着，探照灯亮了起来，驱逐了周围的黑暗。

明亮的探照灯让我感觉有些晃眼，我眨了一下眼睛，重新注视着眼前的一切。我发现“鹦鹉螺”号是静止不动的。它就浮在岸边，而让它漂浮起来的海面是一个长两海里、宽六海里的湖。从压力表的数字来看，湖的水面与外海的水面是相同的，因此可以判断它们是相通的。这里的形状就像是一个漏斗，上面是圆形的，下部倾斜，而周围都是高墙，高度足有五六百米。顶上有一个圆孔，使得太阳光可以从这里照耀进来。

在我没有捋清这一切的时候，我向尼摩船长走去，问他：“我们这是在哪里呢？”

船长告诉我，我们停留在一座死火山的中心，这座火山是由于地面震动，海水侵入内部而熄灭的。他说：“教授先生，就在您睡着的时候，‘鹦鹉螺’号潜入海面10米下，从一条天然开凿的水道驶进这小咸水湖里面，而现在我们所在的这里是湖中停船的港口，是最安全、便捷的。不用担心会有海风的威胁。无论你怎么努力，都不可能在大海的海岸上找到这样一个安全的港湾。”

我回答说：“尼摩船长，您说得没错，这里很安全。但是这个地方

只有您知道吧？除了您，谁还会过来呢？对了，上面不是有一个孔吗？”

“是的，上面那个是喷火口，从前火石、烟气和火焰，都是从这里喷进来的，但是现在，这成了我们的透气口了。”

我再次问道：“不过，这座火山是如何形成的呢？”

“这只是海洋中众多小岛的一个，船只从外面看，它只是一个暗礁而已。而对于我们而言，它就是一个巨大的岩洞了。我也是无意中发现的。”

“人们从那个孔无法到达这里吗？”

“不可能，我无法从这里上去，上面的人也不可能从这里下来。要知道，这里的石壁很陡峭，垂直距离差不多有100英尺左右，山腰间的石层不可能越过的。”

“船长，我不得不佩服您，大自然的一切都可以被您利用。但是，您能不能告诉我，这个港口有什么作用呢？‘鹦鹉螺’号好像并不需要停泊的地方。”

“是的，你说得没错。但是，您要知道，它需要电力发动，这就需要原料发电，需要钠产生电原料，而制造钠又需要煤炭。而这里，拥有丰富的煤炭资源。因为森林资源被海水淹没后，很多年之后就变成了煤。”

“那么船长，我们来这里是为了挖矿了？”

“正是如此。这些矿藏就在海水下面，像纽卡斯尔²的煤坑一样。船

员们只要穿上潜水衣，手拿锄头和铲子，就可以挖到煤了，我们根本不需要去陆地上的煤矿要煤炭。而当我们用煤炭来加工钠的时候，火焰和烟雾就从这个孔喷出去，从外面看来，这仍是一座活火山。”

“我们可以参观一下船员是如何挖煤的吗？”

“不行，我们没有时间，现在我们要继续我们的海底旅行。因此，这次我们只是过来拿以前储存的钠，等装载完钠，我们就要继续出发了。如果您想在附近散散步，就充分利用装钠的这段时间吧。”

我谢过船长，去找我的两个同伴。他们还在房间里，我将他们叫过来，向他们讲述了我们所在的位置。来到平台以后，葛瑟尔显得很平静，觉得在山底航行不是什么稀奇的事情。而尼德·兰没有别的想法，只是一味地寻找出路。

10点左右，我们填饱肚子，离开船来到岸上。

葛瑟尔说：“我们又在陆地上了。”

加拿大人对此并不赞同，他说：“我们并不是在陆上，而是在陆下。”

我们的眼前是一片约500英尺宽的堤岸，它就存在于山崖脚下和湖水之间。我们沿着沙滩，绕着湖水散步。从上面看下去，悬崖的下边崎岖不平，堆着许多火山喷出的大块石头和巨大的火山浮石。在分解作用下，这些大堆石头上浮起一层光滑的珧琅质，在探照灯的照射下发出美丽的光彩。被我们的脚步扬起的云母石微粒，像一阵火花的浓云一般飞起来。

地面距离湖水越来越远，地势逐渐上升，不一会儿，我们就来到了

弯曲的石栏附近。这里的斜坡很陡，走上去一定要慢，因为这累积形成的岩石之间，并没有被洋灰接合起来。更重要的是走在这些长石和石英晶体所造成的玻璃质的粗面岩石上很容易滑下去。种种迹象表明，这个巨大的岩洞的确是由火山造成的，我不断地提醒同伴注意。

我对他们说：“你们想一下，沸腾的火石充满了这个漏斗，并且这种白热流质的水平面一直高到山的出口，像熔铁在熔炉里一样，你们能够想象出漏斗当时的情形吗？”

葛瑟尔回答：“可以想象得出，但是先生，您能告诉我，这个熔炉是如何停止工作，又是如何将静静的湖水注满熔炉的吗？”

“葛瑟尔，应该是当时的海底地形发生了变化，形成了现在作为‘鹦鹉螺’号的航道的出口。大西洋的海水就是从这里流入火山内部来的。水火两种元素经历了激烈的斗争以后，尼普顿海王取得了胜利。于是，多年过去了，这座沉没的火山，变成了安静的岩洞。”

尼德·兰说：“很好，我赞成上面的解释，但是从我们的实际出发，我为这个口不在海平面上而感到遗憾。”

葛瑟尔答道：“不过，尼德·兰朋友，如果这个口在海平面上，‘鹦鹉螺’号就不能穿进来了！”

“尼德·兰师傅，我得强调的是，如果海水不从山底下冲进去，就没有今天的岩洞了。所以您的惋惜是多余的。”

我们继续散步，路越来越窄，甚至没有了路，我们只能选择跳过去。要经过兀起悬挂的大石，我们只能选择俯身爬过去。在葛瑟尔和尼德·兰的帮助下，我克服了路径的困难。到了30米外的地方，地形再次

起了变化。先是累积岩和粗面岩，接着是玄武岩。后一种结了许多气泡，一片片地摊开在那里。前一种岩石则形成规律的梭形，像一系列石柱排起来，把这巨大穹隆的起拱石支起，堪称天然建筑物的壮丽模型。其次在玄武石岩中间，镶嵌着很多沥青条纹，铺着硫黄形成的宽阔地毯。这时，有一道强烈的光从洞口射入，照射着这些掩埋在火山里的物质。

到达200英尺高左右，我们已经到了极限，无法再通过前面的障碍物。内部穹隆又成兀起斜出，往上走就转变为绕圈的行路。植物和矿物在山腰展开斗争，一些小树从岩石里长出来。我很快辨认出那是大戟草，这种植物可以流出具腐蚀性的浆汁。这里还生长着向日草，这个名字其实并不形象，因为阳光从来不照射它们，那褪了色的和不大香的花串向下垂着，样子看起来很凄凉。这里还有菊花和长叶芦荟，它们无力地生长着。在火石形成的滑道中间，还有一些细小的紫罗兰，散发出一股香气，这让我感到很愉悦。对于花而言，香气是灵魂，而海中的花，像那美丽的水草，正是缺少了灵魂。我们来到了一丛健壮的龙血树下面，这时候，尼德·兰喊了起来：

“教授先生，您快过来看，这里有一个蜂巢。”

我朝他做了一个不相信的手势。

加拿大人再次重复：“您过来看呀，确实是一个蜂巢，周围还有很多蜂在飞呢。”

我将信将疑地走过去。加拿大人说得没错，那里的确有一个蜂巢，就在龙血树洞中挖成的一个孔穴上，工作着无数的勤劳的蜂。在加纳利群岛上蜂是很常见的，它们产的蜂蜜被视为珍品，价值连城。加拿大人很自然地要采蜂蜜，留作食用，对此，我无法反对。

加拿大人用一些干草夹上一些硫黄，用打火机点燃后，用来熏蜂。蜂渐渐离开了蜂窝，于是，尼德·兰成功采集了好几斤香甜的蜜。他把蜜装在背上的口袋中，对我们说：

“回去我要把蜂蜜跟面包树的粉和起来，给你们做美味的糕点。”

葛瑟尔回道：“太好了，那是又香又甜的面包呢！”

我对他们说：“暂时还是先不要去想又香又甜的面包吧，我们继续我们有趣的旅行吧。”

当我们走到转弯的地方时，便可以看到湖的全貌。探照灯的灯光照在湖面上，显得十分平静，一点皱纹、一点波纹都没有。此时，“鹦鹉螺”号像是绝对静止了。船员在平台上工作，可以清楚地看到他们的身影。

接着，我们绕过这些前列岩石的最高尖峰，它们把穹隆圆顶支起。在这里，我们看到了蛰鸟的身影，它们时而在黑暗中盘旋，时而飞回巢中又飞出。还有一种肚腹呈白色的鸱，一种鸣声刺耳的鹰。在斜坡上，有美丽肥胖的鸱。加拿大人简直要流口水了，一直在后悔没有带枪。他想用石头来代替铅弹，前几次都没有成功，没想到后来居然打伤了一只美丽的鸟。他不惜冒生命危险，也要将这只鸟弄到手。在他的努力下，终于将这只鸱塞入口袋中，同蜡蜜放在一起了。再往前走就是山脊了，我们无法经过。此时，我们的头上是火山口。在那里可以清楚地看到头上的天空。我甚至看见乌云被西风吹走，一直把云雾的细丝碎片带到这山峰上。这足以证明，这些云停在很低的空中，距离海平面至多800英尺。

半小时后，我们拉着加拿大人回到内层堤岸来了。岸边有很多植

物，像是铺了一张大地毯一样。其中，最多的是海鸡冠草，这是一种泡来很好吃的伞形花小草，又称为钻石草、穿石草和海苗香。葛瑟尔采了好几束。同时，这里还有好多甲壳类，龙虾、大盘蟹、长手蟹、苗虾、长脚虾、加拉蟹，以及数不清的大量蚌蛤、磁贝、岩贝和编笠贝。

在这个地方，出现了一个高大的岩洞。我和我的同伴们舒服地躺在细沙上。火力把珐琅质和发光的洞壁磨亮了，可以清楚地看到洞壁上的云母石粉屑。尼德·兰尝试着用手探测墙壁有多厚，我不禁笑出声来。加拿大人再次将话题转到逃走计划上，这次我不再采取冒进的形式去打消他的希望，也不再向他强调尼摩船长往南行驶只是为了补充钠的储藏量。我希望他现在就回到欧洲和美洲海岸去，这或许有利于加拿大人未完成的逃走计划。不知不觉中，我们已经来到洞中一个小时了，刚开始我们的谈话很有趣，但渐渐就变得无趣了。谈话的兴致逐渐被困意所取代。我没有抗拒睡虫，深深地睡着了。

忽然，葛瑟尔的声音把我惊醒，只听这个老实人喊道：

“警报！警报！”

我赶紧支起上半身来，问道：“发生什么事了？”

“水涌上来了！”

果然像葛瑟尔说的那样，海水像急流一般涌向我们。既然不能成为软体动物，我们只能逃走。几分钟后，我们到达了安全地点——岩洞的顶上。

葛瑟尔问：“这是什么状况，又有什么奇妙景观吗？”

我回答说：“朋友，那只是潮水而已，像司各特3小说中人物的遭遇

一样，我们遇到了突袭而来的潮水。大西洋潮起潮落，这是自然平衡的法则，就算是湖中的水平面也是要上升的。我刚刚洗了个澡，现在得回到‘鹦鹉螺’号换衣服去了。”

我们的环湖旅行在三刻钟后结束，我们重新回到了船上。此时，船员已经将钠装载完毕，“鹦鹉螺”号又要开始新的旅行了。奇怪的是，尼摩船长并不急于下命令。难道他要等到夜间从地下水道出去吗？也许是吧。

不管我猜得对不对，“鹦鹉螺”号在第二天准时离开它的港口，又航行在陆地的海面或是大西洋水底下几米深的水层了。

[1](#)法国天文学家及演说家，法国大革命的早期领袖人物之一。

[2](#)是英格兰核心城市之一，16世纪以后为英国主要的煤港。

[3](#)英国著名的历史小说家和诗人。

第十一章 萨尔加斯海

“鹦鹉螺”号行驶的方向没有改变，尼摩船长仍是下令把船向南行驶，所以，再回到欧洲海岸去的所有希望都要暂时放弃了。我不敢想象他会把我们带到哪里去。

这一天，“鹦鹉螺”号经过了大西洋中很奇怪的一片海域。我们知道，大西洋中有一股名为“漩流”的大暖流。该暖流从佛罗里达湾出发，向斯勃齐堡湾流去。但在北纬44度左右、汇入墨西哥湾之前，该股暖流会分为两支：主流流向爱尔兰和挪威海岸，支流则折返向南流去，流到

阿棱尔群岛附近，然后抵达非洲海岸，由此经过一个长长的椭圆形，再回到安的列斯群岛。

这第二条支流与其说是笔直流动的支流，不如说是犹如项圈一般的环流——形成了许多暖流圈，把这片冰冷、寂静的大西洋围绕起来，形成了萨尔加斯海。这可是大西洋中真正的湖沼，大暖流的水想要绕这个湖一周，要经历三年的时间才能完成。

严格说起来，萨尔加斯海这片海水遮盖了整个广袤的大西洋洲。某些作家甚至认为，那些散布在这片海域的无数草叶，来自于古代大陆的草地。情况可能是这样的，就是这些草叶植物，以及昆布、海带和黑角菜之类，来自欧洲和美洲海岸，被大西洋暖流裹挟着一直到了这片海域。

此刻，“鹦鹉螺”号经过的地方就是上面说的这片海，是真正的一片草地。昆布、海带、黑角菜、热带海葡萄等形成了很厚、很密实的一块地毯，船要加足马力才能把这块厚实的地毯冲开。尼摩船长不愿让“鹦鹉螺”号的机轮纠缠在这些草叶堆里面，因此，他让船下沉到水下几米，在水面几米深的水层中行驶。

萨尔加斯海的名字来自西班牙语，是海藻的意思。这些海藻是浮水藻和承湾藻，由它们构成了这广大的草叶海面。《地球自然地理》的作者、科学家莫利认为，这些藻类植物之所以在大西洋这一带平静的海域中聚集起来，原因在于：

“我们可以拿出来的证据，我以为就是从谁都知道的一种经验得出的结果。把软木塞碎片或其他可以漂浮的东西的碎片放进一盆水中，并使盆中的水做圆形运动。这时候，我们就可以看到那些分散的碎片会成

群地聚集到水面的中间位置，也就是最不受水的运动影响的位置。把这个现象类比一下，那个盆可以看作大西洋，而暖流就是呈圆形运动的水流，萨尔加斯海就是漂浮物齐聚形成的中心。”

我同意莫利的观点，而在这普通船只很难到达的特殊环境中，我又可以来研究这种现象。在我们的头顶上，漂浮着从各处漂来的物体，它们在那些呈紫黑色的草叶中间堆积着。有生长于安第斯基山脉、经由亚马孙河或密西西比河漂来的大树干；还有无数遇难船只的残骸，只剩下船架以及破损的甲板，甲板上面堆满了各种水草和贝类，看起来显得非常沉重，再没有浮上水面来的可能性了。

3月22日一整天，“鹦鹉螺”号都在萨尔加斯海中行驶着，喜欢吃海中植物和贝类的各种鱼，在这里可以找到丰富的食物。一天后，大西洋又是我们经常可以看到的样子了。

从2月23日到3月12日这19天中，在大西洋水面，“鹦鹉螺”号的平均行驶速度是每24小时100里。很显然，尼摩船长要完成他的海底周游计划，我一点都不怀疑他在绕过了合恩角后还会再回到太平洋的南极海来。

所以，尼德·兰害怕也是有原因的。在这些驶过的海面上，没有看到过一个岛屿，不用再想逃走了。要想让尼摩船长改变主意，也没有什么好的方法，所以我们唯一可以做的就是服从。因为对于一件不可能依靠强力或计谋做成的事情，我喜欢用思考，或者用说服的方法做成。尼摩船长已经让我们发誓不泄露他的生活秘密，那是用名誉做担保的誓言，我们一定会遵守的，那么，这次旅行结束后，难道尼摩船长还会不让我们恢复自由吗？不过，这还需要跟尼摩船长再商谈。如果我去要求恢复我的自由，合适吗？会被接受吗？他当时不是已经跟我们说过，为

了他的生活秘密不被泄露出去，需要将我们永远禁闭在“鹦鹉螺”号船上吗？4个月来，我之所以从来没提过这件事，在他看来，不就是我对于自己处境的默认吗？如果再来讨论这个问题，最后的结果恐怕是会引起他的怀疑，以致将来如果出现我们可以实行逃走计划的好机会，也会让我们的逃走计划实施起来变得更加困难。对于这所有的理由，我在心里翻来覆去地衡量比较，慎重地考虑，也下不了决心。我把这些理由提出来和葛瑟尔谈过，他和我一样，也是很为难。总之，虽然我不是个容易失望的人，但我很明白，我重见世人的机会是一天少于一天了，特别是在尼摩船长大胆地把“鹦鹉螺”号向着大西洋南方行驶的时候。

在我上面说的这19天的时间里，我们的旅途中，什么意外事件也没有发生。我很少见到尼摩船长。他很忙。我时常在图书室里看见他翻开摆在那里的一些书，特别是生物科学方面的书。他还翻阅了我写的关于海底秘密的著作，并在空白处写满了批注，有些是驳斥我的理论和整个系统的。但尼摩船长只是通过这种方式修正我书中的那些不正确的部分，他很少跟我讨论一些问题。有时，我会听到大手风琴发出的忧郁、沉闷的声调。那是尼摩船长在弹奏。在弹奏大手风琴时，他还带着丰富的表情。但是，弹奏的时间一般只选择在夜间，隐在黑暗中，和当“鹦鹉螺”号行驶在沉睡得如同荒漠的海洋中时。

在这19天的旅行中，我们基本都是在水面上航行的。这片海少有人烟，仿佛是被遗弃了一般。只有几艘运货到印度去的帆船，向着好望角的方向驶去。其中一天，我们还被一只捕鲸的小艇追逐过，相信他们一定是把“鹦鹉螺”号当成很有价值的巨大鲸鱼了。但尼摩船长不愿意让这些勇敢的打鱼人白费力气和时间，他下令“鹦鹉螺”号又潜入了水中，才让这些捕鲸人停止了追逐。尼德·兰对这个意外事件很感兴趣。我想，加拿大人对我们这条由钢板制成的大鲸鱼没被那些打鱼人的鱼叉叉

死，一定觉得很遗憾。

在这段时间，葛瑟尔和我观察到的鱼类，和我们在其他纬度研究过的鱼类并没有多大的不同。我们看到的鱼，主要是那种可怕的软骨鱼属中的一些鱼，它们分为三个亚属。一共不下32种带条纹的鲨鱼，有5米长，扁扁的头比身躯还大，尾鳍呈圆形，背上有7条平行斜下来的黑色带子；其次是珠子鲨鱼，颜色是灰色的，鳃间有七个孔，只有一个脊鳍，长在身上的中间部位；还有大海狗走过，人们从前曾把它们当成贪食凶恶的海鱼；一队一队漂亮的海豚，有好几天一直陪着它们，它们五六条组成一群，像狼在乡间游荡一样，这种鱼的身子长3米，上面呈黑色，下面呈红白色，带有很罕见的小斑点。

观察完这些鱼类后，葛瑟尔对一大群飞鱼做了分类。再没有比看海豚敏捷地猎取这些飞鱼更有趣的事情了。不管这些飞鱼飞的路程远近、飞出的曲线如何，即使是在“鹦鹉螺”号上面，不幸的它们老是碰到海豚用那张开的嘴迎接它们。这些飞鱼有的是海飞鱼，有的是鳶形魴魴。它们跳出海面后，那发光的嘴总能在黑色的夜空中划出一条条火线，然后，它们又像流星一样潜入了暗黑的海底。

一直到3月6日，“鹦鹉螺”号都是在这种情形下行驶的。13日那一天，尼摩船长开始用“鹦鹉螺”号做探测海底的实验，我对这个非常感兴趣。

自从我们从太平洋出发以来，差不多已经走了13000里。通过测定，我们发现，“鹦鹉螺”号现在的方位是在南纬45度37分、西经37度53分。就是在这一带海域，“海拉尔”号的邓亨船长曾投下过14000米长的探测器，但也没有到达海底。也是在这里，英国二等战舰“会议”号的海军大尉巴尔克曾投下过15000米长的探测器，也没有到达海底。尼摩船

长决定把“鹦鹉螺”号驶到最深的海底，来检测一下之前人们多次探测所得的结果。我准备把这次探测试验的结果完全记录下来。

当船舱客厅的嵌板都打开时，“鹦鹉螺”号开始下潜，一直到达最深的海底。

你可以想到，“鹦鹉螺”号并没有使用装满储水池的方法来使得船下潜，因为这种方法不可能充分增加“鹦鹉螺”号的重量，使它一直下潜到海底。而且如果使用这种方法，当它浮上来的时候，还要排除多装的水量，抽水机可能没有足够的马力来抵抗外部的压力。

尼摩船长决定使用船两侧的纵斜机板，让它与“鹦鹉螺”号的浮标线成45度角，然后沿着一条充分延伸的对角线潜下去，由此来探测海底。计划好后，“鹦鹉螺”号的推进器开到了最大的速度，它的四重机叶猛烈地搅动着海水，这情景简直难以用语言来形容。

在这强大力量的推送下，“鹦鹉螺”号全身抖动得像一根咚咚震响的绳索，由此它也慢慢地潜入了水中。尼摩船长和我待在船舱的客厅中看着，我们用眼睛紧盯着那移动得非常快的压力表的指针。不久后，“鹦鹉螺”号所在的位置就超过了大部分鱼类可以生活的水层。大部分鱼类只能生活在海水或河水的上层水域，只有极少数的鱼类可以住在相当深的水层中。在后一种鱼类中，我看到过有6个呼吸口的六孔海豚，有像望远镜一样巨大眼睛的望远镜鱼，有灰色的前胸鳍和黑色的后胸鳍，还有用淡红色的骨片胸甲做保护的带甲刀板鱼，以及生活在1200米深处、顶着120度的水压生活的榴弹鱼。

我问尼摩船长，他是不是曾在更深的水层观察过鱼类。他回答我：“鱼类吗？很少。但在目前，人们又知道了什么？对于科学，人们

又推测到了些什么呢？”

“船长，人们所知道的情形是这样的。人们知道，在海洋的最底层，植物比动物更不容易生长，会更快地绝迹。人们知道，在还可以看到一些生物的水层，没有任何一种海产植物。人们知道，在2000米水深处，生活着肩挂贝、牡蛎类，两极探险英雄麦克林托克 [1](#)曾在北极海2500米深处，采得一个星贝。人们知道，英国皇家海军‘猛犬’号船员曾从2620英尺，也就是1海里多的深处，采得一个海星。尼摩船长，您或许会对我说，人们实在是一无所知吧？”

“教授，”船长回答道，“不，我不会这样认为。不过，我想问您，对于这些生物可以在这样深的水层中生活，您又怎么解释呢？”

“我可以用两个理由来解释。”我回答道，“首先，由于海水的不同咸度和密度所决定，那些上下垂流动的水流会发生一种运动，这足以维持海百合和海星一类生物的基本生活。”

“是这样的。”船长回答说。

“其次，因为氧气是生命存活的基础。我们知道，氧气会溶解在海水中，并不会因海水的深度增加而减少，反会因海水的深度增加而增加，而海底水层的压力又会把它压缩了。”

“啊！人们知道这些事吗？”尼摩船长说道，语气显得有点惊异。“不过，既然这是事实，那么，人们当然会知道。不过，教授，我还要说的是鱼类的鱼鳔。如果鱼是在水面捕得的，那么鱼的鱼鳔里的氮气含量会多于氧气，但如果鱼是从水深处捕得的，它们的情况就恰恰相反，鱼的鱼鳔里的氧气含量会多于氮气。这也证明您所说的这点是对的。现在，让我们继续观察吧。”

我的眼睛紧盯在压力表上面。表针指示“鹦鹉螺”号目前在6000米水深处。从我们下沉以来，已经过了一个小时了。“鹦鹉螺”号随着它的纵斜机板溜下去，一直在往下沉。一望无际的海水看起来非常透明，这种透明的海水简直无法用语言形容。再过一小时后，我们会到达13000米海深处，即3.75里海深处，但我们还没有感到船要到达海底。

但是，到了14000米水深处，我看到有黑色的尖顶从海水中露出来。这些尖顶可能是与喜马拉雅山或白朗峰一样高或更高的山的山顶，如果是这样的话，下面就还是深不可测的深渊。

虽然受到了强大的阻力，但“鹦鹉螺”号仍然在继续下潜。我能感觉到它的钢板螺旋衔接处都在颤抖了，白色的方格铁板有些地方已经弯起来了，它的中间隔板发出了呜呜的声音，船舱客厅的玻璃窗受到海水的压力，好像也要凹进去了。如果这个坚固的机器不像尼摩船长所说的那样坚硬得像一大块实铁的话，那它一定早就垮了。

在掠过那些水底的岩石斜坡的时候，我仍然能看到一些介蛤类、蛇虫类、活的刺虫类，以及某种海星。

但没过多久，这些生命迹象就完全消失了，在“鹦鹉螺”号又下潜了3里后，就超过了海底生物可以生存的极限了，这就像气球上升到了不能呼吸的空气外层一样。我们到了16000米的水深处，也就是4里海深处，“鹦鹉螺”号这个时候是顶着1600的气压在行驶，也就是说，它身上每平方厘米都承载着1600公斤的重量。

“多么新奇的地方！”我不禁发出了这样的感叹，“我们走进了人类从没有到过的最深处！船长，您看那些宏伟的岩石，那些没有居民的岩洞，那些地球最深处的收容所，那些没有任何生命迹象的地方！这是没

人见过的壮丽景象，为什么我们只能让它们存在于我们的记忆中呢？”

“那么，教授，”尼摩船长问我，“您能想出比把它们仅仅放在记忆中更好的办法吗？”

“您这话是什么意思呢？”

“我的意思是说，在这海底深处，再没有比拍照更容易的事情了！”

我还来不及对他的这个提议表示惊讶，尼摩船长便一声吩咐，紧接着就有人把一架照相机拿到了客厅中。从船舱敞开的嵌板望出去，周围的海水因为受到“鹦鹉螺”号灯光的照耀，显得非常清楚。因为这个光线，周围没有任何阴暗或者明淡不均的地方。就算是在太阳光下照相，恐怕也没有比这更好的光线了。而且“鹦鹉螺”号在它的推进机的作用下，以及受它的纵斜机板斜度的管制，停住不动了。这使得照相机可以对准海底的风景拍摄，几秒钟后，我们就得到了非常清楚的海底风景的底版。

我现在拿出来的是用这些底版冲洗的照片。从照片上，我们看到那些一直沉没在海底的岩石的原貌，那些构成了地球基石的花岗岩，那些大石堆中出现的深幽的洞穴，那些非常清楚的像某些弗莱蒙画家用画笔所绘出来的轮廓呈黑色线条的侧影。向更远处看去，是横在边际的山脉，而这幅风景画的底层远景，是一道像波纹一样弯曲的美丽线条。我不知道用什么语言才能描述这些平滑、黝黑、闪着光泽、没有任何苔藓、没有任何斑点的岩石，它们呈现出离奇古怪的形状，并且牢固地矗立在细沙形成的海底，在“鹦鹉螺”号灯光的照耀下，闪闪发亮。

在尼摩船长照完了相之后，他对我说：

“教授，我们上去吧。不要在这个地方停留时间过长，也不要让‘鹦鹉螺’号太长时间地顶着这样的压力。”

“好，我们上去。”我回答道。

“您站稳了。”

我还来不及理解尼摩船长为什么这样告诫我，就重重地摔在了地毯上。

按照船长发出的信号，“鹦鹉螺”号的推进器与发动机开始协同工作，它的纵斜机板也垂直地竖立了起来。“鹦鹉螺”号就像要飞向天空的气球一样，闪电般地迅速上浮。它拨开海水，发出响亮的声音。可是，对于所有这些情况的详细情景，我们都看不到。不过4分钟的时间，“鹦鹉螺”号就越过了从海底到水面的4里距离，像一条飞鱼一样，跃出了水面，同时把海水击打得飞溅起老高，随后又落回水面。

[1](#)英国航海家，北极探险家。

第十二章 大头鲸和长须鲸

从3月13日到3月14日夜间，“鹦鹉螺”号一直在朝着南方行驶。我以为到了合恩角，它就会掉头往西行驶，进入太平洋，这样就可以绕世界周游一周了。但实际上，它并没有这样做，它仍然继续向着南方驶去。那么，它是要到哪里去呢？难道是到南极去？这太疯狂了。我开始不自觉地想，船长的这种大胆狂妄的做法足以说明尼德·兰的顾虑以及恐惧都是合情合理的。

这几天以来，加拿大人不再跟我说起他的逃走计划了。他变得不爱说话，非常沉默。看得出，这种看不到尽头的囚禁让他感到非常难受。我能感受到累积在他心中的愤怒是多么的强烈。每次当他在船上遇到船长的时候，他的眼睛都会燃起阴沉可怕的火光，我时常担心他那暴烈的天性可能会使他走向一条极端的路。

3月14日，尼德·兰和葛瑟尔来到我的房间找我。我问他们有什么事。

“先生，”加拿大人对我说，“我想向您提一个问题。”

“你说吧，尼德·兰。”

“您觉得‘鹦鹉螺’号上一共有多少人？”

“我也不太清楚，我的朋友。”

“我觉得，”尼德·兰立即说道，“驾驶这艘船并不需要很多的人。”

“是的，”我回答道，“从目前的情况来看，大约最多需要10个人就足够了。”

“那么，”加拿大人问道，“既然是这样，为什么船上有这么多人呢？”

“为什么？”我反复道。

我用眼睛盯着尼德·兰，我很了解他的意图。

“因为，”我回答道，“据我推测，结合我所了解的船长的生活来看，‘鹦鹉螺’号不仅仅是一艘船，就像船长一样，对于想与陆地断绝所

有关系的人们来说，它又是一个藏身处。”

“可能是这样吧。”葛瑟尔说，“不过‘鹦鹉螺’号上只能收容一定数目的人，先生可以大概估计一下它能容纳的最多的人数吗？”

“葛瑟尔，你这话是什么意思呢？”

“就是用计算的方法大概估计一下。根据先生所知道的这艘船的容积可以知道它上面的空气的含量，另一方面也可以知道每个人呼吸所需要的空气，将这些结果与‘鹦鹉螺’号每24小时必须浮上水面来调换空气相比较的话……”

葛瑟尔没有把话说完，但我很明白他是什么意思。

“我明白你的意思了，”我说，“并且这很容易计算，但那只是一个很不确定的数字。”

“那没关系的。”尼德·兰坚持着说道。

“对于这个问题，是这样计算的，”我回答道，“每个人每小时消费100升含有氧的空气，24小时总共消费了2400升含有氧的空气，这样就可以求出‘鹦鹉螺’号含有多少倍的2400升空气来。”

“正是。”葛瑟尔说。

“可是，”我又说，“‘鹦鹉螺’号的容积是1500吨，一吨的容积是1000升，‘鹦鹉螺’号含有150万升的空气，拿2400来除……”

我用铅笔很快地计算出：

“所得的商数是625。这就是说，‘鹦鹉螺’号上24小时的空气可以供

625人呼吸之用。”

“625人！”尼德·兰重复道。

“可是你要想想，”我又说道，“乘客、水手和工作人员都算上，我们还不及这数字的十分之一。”

“这对于三个人来说，还是过多了！”葛瑟尔低声说道。

“可怜的尼德·兰，所以我只能劝你忍耐了。”

“比忍耐还要更进一步，”葛瑟尔回答道，“我们只能听天由命了。”

“但从长远来看，”我又说，“尼摩船长不可能一直往南走！他总是要停下来时的时候，比如遇到了冰山。他总有一天要回到有人居住的海中去，到了那个时候，尼德·兰，我们就有机会实施你的计划了。”

加拿大人摇摇头，用手抚摸着前额，一句话也没说，就离开了。

“先生，我觉得尼德·兰很可怜。”葛瑟尔说道，“我觉得他老是想着之前的事情，过去生活的一切不时出现在他的脑海中。对于来到这艘船上后我们所失去的一切，他觉得很惋惜，心中产生了悔恨。从前的回忆苦苦地纠缠着他，他很伤心，很难过。我们必须了解他目前的情况。他在这艘船上能做什么呢？什么也不能做。他不像先生一样是一位学者，他跟我们不一样，对于大海中的美丽事物他没有什么兴趣，所以他才想不顾一切地冒险离开，只求能走进他们国家的一个酒店中去。”

很显然，船上单调的生活对于习惯了自由和积极生活的加拿大人来说，是不可忍受的。海上发生的能让他高兴的事件是少之又少的。可是，这一天，一件偶然发生的意外事件又使他重回了从前当鱼叉手时的

好日子。

这天上午11点左右，“鹦鹉螺”号行驶在海面上，遭遇了成群的鲸鱼——对于这种遭遇，我并不觉得奇怪，因为我知道由于受到人类过度的追击，这些动物都躲到两极边缘、高纬度的海水中来了。

鲸鱼在海上航行事业方面所起的作用，在地理上的一次次大发现中所带来的影响是很重大的。正是这些鲸鱼带领着巴斯克人、阿斯图里人、英国人和荷兰人，冲破大海中的重重危险，从地球的这一极端到地球的那一极端。

海上风平浪静，我们坐在甲板上。此刻，这一纬度地区的季节正好是美丽的秋天。忽然，加拿大人指着东方天边向我们说道，那边有一条鲸鱼。我们仔细地去看，发现在距离“鹦鹉螺”号5海里的海面上，有一条鲸鱼的灰黑色的脊背不停地浮起来、沉下去。

“啊！”尼德·兰喊道，“如果我现在是在一艘捕鲸船上，那一定会是让我觉得非常痛快的一次遭遇。那是一条身躯非常巨大的鲸鱼！你看它喷出的那混合有气体的水柱，就能知道它的鼻孔是有多大的力气了。真可惜！我怎么就被困在这块钢板上了呢！”

“难道说，”我问道，“尼德·兰，你还没有打消你要捕捉鲸鱼的念头吗？”

“先生，捕鲸鱼的人怎么能够忘记他从前的手艺呢？怎么可能厌倦那种捕捉所带来的激动呢？”

“尼德·兰，你之前没在这一带海域中捕过鲸鱼吗？”

“从来没有过，先生。我只在北极海中，就是在白令海峡和台维斯

海峡一带捕过鲸鱼。”

“这么看来，你对南极海中的鲸鱼还是很陌生的。你以前捕捉到的都是一些平常的白鲸，那些鲸鱼是不会冒险通过赤道温热的海水来到这南极海中的。”

“啊！教授，你在说什么呀？”加拿大人用相当怀疑的口吻说道。

“我说的是事实。”

“哦，好吧，是事实！正在这里说话的我，在两年半以前，在北纬65度的格陵兰岛附近捕获了一条鲸鱼，这条鲸鱼的身上还带着一支白令海峡中的捕鲸船所用的鱼叉。现在我要问您，鲸鱼在美洲西岸被刺中了，如果它没有绕过合恩角或好望角通过赤道的话，它为什么会死在美洲东岸呢？”

“我跟尼德·兰的想法一样，”葛瑟尔说道，“对于这个问题，先生您怎么解释呢？”

“朋友们，我的解释是这样的，鲸鱼类是一种有地域性特征的生物，按照种类的不同，它们会定居在某处海中，并不会离开。如果有一条鲸鱼从白令海峡走到了台维斯海峡，那原因很简单，就是因为这两个海洋中间一定有一条相通的水道，不是在美洲海岸边，就是在亚洲海岸边。”

“我们能相信您的话吗？”加拿大人闭着一只眼睛问道。

“我们要相信先生说的话。”葛瑟尔回答道。

“那么，”加拿大人立即又说，“既然我没在这一带海中打过鲸鱼，

我就不认得在这带海中往来的鲸鱼了吗？”

“是的，尼德·兰，我刚才已经跟你说过了。”

“那你就更应该去认识它们了。”葛瑟尔回答道。

“看！看！”加拿大人声音很激动地喊道，“它过来了！它向我们冲过来了！它是在侮辱我、玩弄我！它知道我现在不可能惩治它！”

尼德·兰一边乱跺脚一边用手挥动着一支并不存在的鱼叉，在那里颤抖。

“这里的鲸鱼跟北极海中的鲸鱼一样大吗？”他问道。

“差不多一样大，尼德·兰。”

“先生，我见过长到100英尺的大鲸鱼！我甚至听说阿留申群岛的胡拉摩克岛和翁加里克岛的鲸鱼身长超过150英尺。”

“我觉得这种说法有些夸张了。”我回答道，“这些不过是鲸科、有脊鳍的动物，也就是大头鲸。它们通常比普通白鲸要小一些。”

“啊！”加拿大人喊道，他的眼睛紧盯着海面，“它更近了，它到‘鹦鹉螺’号所在的水圈中来了！”

鲸鱼一直在往前游。尼德·兰用眼睛死死地盯着它。他喊道：“啊！并不是一条鲸鱼，是10条、20条，一群鲸鱼呢！一点办法也没有，在这里就像手和脚被绑住了一样根本动不了！”

“不过，尼德·兰，”葛瑟尔说道，“为什么你不去请求尼摩船长准许你去追鲸鱼呢……”

葛瑟尔的话还没有说完，尼德·兰就已经从打开的嵌板溜进了船舱，跑去找船长了。没过一会儿，两个人就一起出现在了甲板上。

“尼摩船长，您看一下这群鲸鱼，它们在距‘鹦鹉螺’号1海里的海面上游来游去。”

尼摩船长说道：“那是南极的鲸鱼，它们可以让一整队的捕鲸船都发财呢。”

“那么，先生，”加拿大人问道，“为了不忘记我从前当鱼叉手的职业，我是不是可以去捕捉它们呢？”

“仅仅为消灭它们而去捕捉它们，有什么好处呢？”尼摩船长回答道，“我们船上要这么多鲸鱼油也没有什么用。”

“可是，先生，”加拿大人又说道，“在红海中，您不是准许我们去捕捉海马吗？”

“那时是为了要给我们的船员补充新鲜的肉，所以才那样做的。现在是为了杀害它们而杀害它们。我知道这是人类的特权，很多时候是为了消遣，但是我不允许人们做这种残害生命的消遣。尼德·兰师傅，去杀害这些善良无害的像普通白鲸一般的南极鲸鱼，是非常不应该的，是应该被责备的行为。就是因为那些捕鲸人，才把整个巴芬湾弄得一条鲸鱼也没有的，他们就是通过这种方式消灭了整个一纲有用的动物。不要为难这些不幸的鲸鱼了吧。就是你们不去捕捉它们，它们都已经有不少的天敌了，比如，在北方，就有大头鲸、狗沙鱼和锯鲨之类。”

当船长在对尼德·兰讲这些大道理的时候，我们很容易能想到加拿大人的表情是什么样的。这些话对打鱼的人来说没有任何意义。尼德·

兰看着尼摩船长，显然是不理解船长跟他说的这些话。可是，尼摩船长的话是对的。打鱼人的野蛮和过度的屠杀总有一天会把大海中的最后一条鲸鱼都消灭殆尽。

尼德·兰嘴里哼着《美国进行曲》，两手插在口袋里，转过脸去，不再理睬我们。尼摩船长看着那一群鲸鱼，对我说道：“就像我刚才说的，就是除开人类不算，鲸鱼也有不少天敌。这一群鲸鱼不久就要跟强大的敌人遇上了。阿勒纳斯先生，您看见6海里海面上那些正在移动的灰黑点了吗？”

“那是大头鲸，是很可怕的动物，曾经我碰到过两三百只成群结队的大头鲸队伍！这种动物是非常残酷有害的东西，消灭它们是对的。”

加拿大人听到最后一句话，急忙转过身来。

“那么，船长，”加拿大人说道，“为了鲸鱼的利益，现在就让我们去消灭它们吧……”

“用不着我们去冒险。‘鹦鹉螺’号本身就足以驱散那些大头鲸了。它装有钢制的冲角，我想，它的厉害可以赶上您的鱼叉了。”

加拿大人一点不客气地耸耸肩：“用船的冲角去攻击鲸鱼！谁听说过这种做法呢？”

“请等一下，阿勒纳斯先生，”尼摩船长说道，“我要给您看一次您从没有见过的捕鲸的方法。对于这些凶恶的鲸科动物，一点也用不着可怜它们。它们就是嘴和牙齿。”

“嘴和牙齿！”再没有比这更好的形容了，用这种说法来描写脑袋巨大的大头鲸再合适不过了。这类鲸鱼有的身躯超过25米，而它们巨大的

脑袋约占了身长的三分之一。它们的武装要比长须鲸强大，长须鲸的上颚处只有一串鲸须，大头鲸却有25枚粗牙，每枚牙长20厘米，牙尖呈圆筒形和圆锥形，每枚牙重约2斤。就是在那巨大脑袋的上部和有软骨片分开的大空洞里面，藏有三四百公斤重的名为“鲸鱼白”的宝贵鲸鱼油。

“可是，这一群怪东西一直在往这边游。它们一定是看见了长须鲸，准备攻击它们。我们提前就可以预知大头鲸一定会取得胜利，不单是因为它们比温良的敌手更结实、更便于攻击，而且也因为它们可以在水底下待比较长的时间不浮上水面呼吸。”

现在正好是去援救这些长须鲸的时候了。“鹦鹉螺”号行驶在水里面。葛瑟尔、尼德·兰和我，我们坐在客厅的玻璃窗前。尼摩船长到驾驶室去了，以便操纵他的潜水船像一件毁灭性的武器一样行动。不久后，我感觉到“鹦鹉螺”号的推进器骤然加速转动起来，速度立即加快了。

当“鹦鹉螺”号行驶到这两群鲸鱼附近的时候，大头鲸和长须鲸已经开始战斗了。“鹦鹉螺”号是想把这群大头怪物拦住。开始的时候，这些怪物看见这个新奇的东西参与进战斗中来，并不怎么激动，还是跟平常一样。但过了一会儿后，它们就不得不开始防备它的攻击了。

好一场恶斗！就连尼德·兰不久后也终于拍着手掌兴高采烈起来。“鹦鹉螺”号变成了一支非常有攻击性的鱼叉，就像在船长的手中挥来挥去一样，不停地投向那些肉团，从那些肉团中穿过去，之后就会留下那怪物的两半片蠕动的身躯。大头鲸用它那厉害的尾巴不停地拍打着“鹦鹉螺”号的两侧。但即使大头鲸不停地冲撞它，大船也没有什么感觉。猎杀了一条大头鲸后，它又跑过去猎杀另一条。它不停地转来转去，不肯放过一条猎物。这大船完全按照掌舵人的指挥，不时地前前后

后。大头鲸沉入深水层，它就潜下去追捕；大头鲸浮到水面上来，它就跟着追到水面上来。或正面打，或侧面刺，或切割，或撕裂，从四面八方，纵横上下，用它那可怕的冲角乱刺乱撞。

好一场屠杀，水面上是何等激烈！这些被吓怕的动物发出了尖锐的叫啸，还有它们那特有的鼾声。本来很安静的水层中间，现在被它们的尾巴搅得翻起了汹涌的波浪。

这种激烈的大屠杀一直延续了一个小时，那些大头怪物完全是躲无可躲。有好几次，十几二十条大头鲸一齐联合起来，想压扁“鹦鹉螺”号。透过“鹦鹉螺”号的玻璃，我们可以看到它们那有着整排大牙齿的大嘴，还有它们那可怕的眼睛。尼德·兰简直抑制不住自己了，他不停地威吓它们，咒骂它们。我们觉得它们好像抓住了我们的船，就像在矮树丛下的小狗咬住了小猪的耳朵一般死也不放。“鹦鹉螺”号催动它的推进器，不顾它们的巨大重量，不管它们的强大压力，去拖拉它们，把它们带到了海水的上层，不停地攻击它们。

最后，这一群大头鲸四散逃走了，海水又恢复了平静。“鹦鹉螺”号浮上了海面。嵌板打开了，我们立即跑上了甲板。

海上漂浮着稀烂的鲸鱼的尸体，看那情形，就是一次猛烈的爆炸恐怕也不可能比这更厉害地把这些巨大的肉团分开、撕破、碎裂了。我们现在航行在漂浮着许多庞然大物的躯体中间，这些躯体有灰蓝色的脊背、灰白色的鱼肚，全身长着巨大的疙瘩。被吓怕了的大头鲸早就逃到天边去了。好几海里的海面都被染成了红色，“鹦鹉螺”号就航行在一片血海上。尼摩船长也来到了我们所在的甲板上。他说：

“尼德·兰师傅，你觉得怎么样？”

“先生，”他的热情退下去了，这时安静下来了，加拿大人回答道，“非常不错，那真是厉害得让人害怕的景象。不过我不是屠夫，我是打鱼人，这不过是一次大屠杀罢了。”

“这是一次对有害动物的屠杀，”船长回答道，“‘鹦鹉螺’号并不是一把屠刀。”

“我还是喜欢我的鱼叉。”加拿大人立即回应。

“各人有各人不同的武器。”船长回答说，同时用眼睛紧盯着尼德·兰。

我很害怕尼德·兰会克制不住自己发脾气，做出激烈的行为，由此造成不良的可悲的后果。但当他看到“鹦鹉螺”号这时正要靠近一条长须鲸时，他的愤怒很快就消失了，他的注意力被那条长须鲸吸引过去了。

这条长须鲸没能避开大头鲸的牙齿。我认得它是一条扁头的完全是黑色的南极鲸鱼。从解剖学的角度来看，它跟普通白鲸和北嘉皮岛的鲸鱼的不同之处在于，它颈部的7根脊骨是接合起来的，比它的北方同类多两根肋骨。这条不幸的鲸鱼侧躺着，肚上满是被咬破的伤口，已经重伤而死了。在它受伤的鳍尖上，还挂着一条它救护不了的小鲸鱼。它的嘴还在流水，水像回潮一般，通过它的须，潺潺作响。

尼摩船长把“鹦鹉螺”号开到了这条鲸鱼的尸体旁边，船上的两个工作人员走到了这条鲸鱼身边。他们把鲸鱼奶头中藏着的奶都取了出来，足有两三吨左右，这让我大吃一惊。

船长把一杯还带着热气的鲸鱼奶递给我。我不太好拒绝他的好意，但又不能不向他表示我不喜欢喝这种饮料。他向我保证这种奶的味道非

常好，跟牛奶没有什么不同。

喝了一口以后，我很认同船长的看法。这种奶对我们来说是很有用的，因为我们可以用这奶制成我们日常食品中很好吃又容易保藏的食品——咸黄油或奶酪。

但从这一天开始，我可以看出尼德·兰对尼摩船长的态度愈来愈坏了。我觉得很不安，暗下决心要密切注视加拿大人的一举一动。

第十三章 冰 山

“鹦鹉螺”号又向着它原先的行驶方向往南驶去。它以非常快的速度沿着西经50度行驶着。它是要到南极圈去吗？我想不会的，因为直到今天，人类所有去到这个地球顶点的尝试都是以失败而告终。并且，现在已经是相当晚的季节了，因为南冰洋地区的3月13日相当于北冰洋地区的9月13日，是到了春秋分的时期了。

3月14日，我在南纬55度望见了漂流的冰块。那仅仅是一些20到25英尺长的灰白色的碎片，但形成了许多暗礁，不停地撞击着海浪。“鹦鹉螺”号行驶在南冰洋的洋面上，由于尼德·兰曾经在北冰洋海中打过鱼，所以他对于这种冰山的景象是很熟悉的，但葛瑟尔和我却都是第一次见这种景象。极目远眺，南方的天际，有一片令人眼花缭眩的雪白。英国捕鲸人把它称为“眩目冰带”，因为不论云层有多厚，都不会使它变得暗沉。这片雪白预告着前方有成群的冰堆或冰层。

果然，不久后就出现了更大的冰块，它们那雪白的光辉随着云雾的任意变换也在发生着变化。有些冰块就像绿色的脉管，好似那硫酸铜在上面画出的波纹线条一样。有些冰块就像巨大的紫色水晶，中间有光线穿过。阳光反射在后者的晶体上，它们那无数的切面上发出闪闪的光芒。前者就像一块块巨大的石灰石，好似构成了一座大理石城市。

我们愈往南走，这些漂流的冰岛就愈来愈多、愈来愈大。这些冰岛上有着南极的鸟类，成百上千的海燕、棋鸟和海鸭筑的巢。这些鸟类叽叽喳喳的叫声震得我们直耳鸣，有些鸟还把“鹦鹉螺”号当成了鲸鱼的尸体，飞到船上来，用嘴不停地啄那钢板，发出嗒嗒嗒的响声。

当“鹦鹉螺”号在冰群中行驶的时候，尼摩船长时常到甲板上来。他很留心地看着这一片人迹罕至的海面。

有时候，我可以看到他那镇定的眼神变得激动起来。他是不是在想，到了这人迹罕至的南极海中，他就像回到了自己的家里，他是这人类难以到达的空间的主人呢？可能他真的是这么想的，但他从来没有说过。他站在那里一动不动，只有当他意识到自己是这艘船的驾驶人的时候，他才回过神来。

于是，他巧妙地指挥着他的“鹦鹉螺”号，很轻巧地躲开了那些长达几海里、高70至80米不等的大冰块的冲击。有时候，前面看起来是完全被封闭住不能通行的。在南纬60度的海面上，没有任何可以行驶的路，但尼摩船长却指挥着“鹦鹉螺”号小心地寻找着，不久后就发现了一条很窄的通道。他指挥着这艘船，大胆地从那狭窄的通道驶了过去，同时他也知道，这窄窄的水道在“鹦鹉螺”号走过后便会被封闭。“鹦鹉螺”号就这样被这只妙手指挥着，避开了所有的这些大冰块。按照这些冰块的式样大小，葛瑟尔很高兴地对它们进行了正确的分类，那就是像山的冰

山，无边无际的平坦冰田，浮冰或漂流的冰，层冰或碎裂的冰，圆形或环形的冰圈，还有那一块一块的冰流。这里的温度相当低，我们把温度表放在外面，温度表的指针指向零下2度至3度。但我们穿着用海豹和海熊的皮做的衣服，觉得很暖和，并不感觉冷。而且“鹦鹉螺”号内部也会用电气机发热，一点也不冷。另外，退一步说，就算实在太冷了，那么“鹦鹉螺”号只需潜下水底几米深的海域，就可以到达人们可以忍受得住的不太冷不太热的温度中了。

如果我们早两个月到这里，在这南极圈内，可能永远是白天，但现在已经有三四个小时的黑夜了。再过一段时间，这一片海域就会有6个月的时间都被黑夜覆盖。3月15日，“鹦鹉螺”号走过了南设得兰群岛和南奥克内群岛。

3月16日早晨8点，“鹦鹉螺”号沿着西经55度，切过南极圈行驶着。这里处处都是围绕着我的冰块，四处都被冰块封住了，无路可走。可是，尼摩船长总能找到一条又一条通路，一直在往前行驶。

“他究竟要去哪里呢？”我问道。

“到前面去。”葛瑟尔回答说，“总之，到了他不能再往前走的时候，他就只能停下来了。”

“我可不敢这么肯定地这样说！”我回答道。

坦白说，对于这种冒险的游历，我觉得非常痛快。这些新鲜壮观的景象让我迷醉，我简直无法用语言来描述这些让我惊异的景象。冰群变得更雄伟壮丽了。这边，是一大群冰块形成的一座东方城市，中间有无数的清真寺院和尖塔；那里，是一座因地震而被推倒在地的倒塌的城市。在阳光的斜照下，它们不停地变换出不同的颜色，而有些时候，这

壮观的景象又在雪花飞舞的大风暴中消失不见了。当大风暴来临的时候，到处都是爆炸声、崩裂声，冰山像翻筋斗一样，又像画家在作画一样，把这里的整个布景都改变了。当大风暴来临、这些冰群的平衡被破坏的时候，“鹦鹉螺”号便会潜入水中。声音传到水下，剧烈的程度惊人。冰群不断下沉，形成深而广阔的可怕水涡，这种不断旋转的力量一直扩散到很深的水层。每当这个时候，“鹦鹉螺”号就会把持不住地乱摇乱翻，就像要被疯狂的水流卷走一样。有时看不见路了，我想我们恐怕要成大海的俘虏了，可是本能却引导着船长，根据一些微小的迹象，比如那冰田上显现出来的一条一条淡蓝色的细水纹，船长总可以发现新的通路，从来不会弄错。所以，我一点也不怀疑他之前曾经驾驶着“鹦鹉螺”号来过这南极海。

但是，在3月15日这天，层层冰群把我们的路完全挡住了。这还不是真正的冰山，只是因寒冷冻结起来的巨大的冰群。这种障碍物可阻止不了尼摩船长。他指挥着“鹦鹉螺”号用它那猛烈得吓人的力量向冰群冲去。“鹦鹉螺”号像楔子一般穿进不停飞出粉末的冰群中，伴着大得惊人的破裂声，它把冰群划开了。它就像古代的攻城机一样，被无穷大的力量推动着不停地向前。冰群的碎片被抛到高空，像冰雹一样落在我们的周围。仅仅依靠它本身的推动力，我们的船就掘出了一条水路。有的时候，由于它的力量过于猛烈，它会爬到冰群面上来，用它的重量压碎冰群，或者，偶然地，它会被冰群束缚在底下，这个时候，它就会用简单的摇摆动作把冰分开，在冰面上造成阔大的裂口。

在这些日子里，不时有猛烈的冰屑来袭击我们。由于有浓厚的云雾，我们站在甲板的这一端，根本看不清甲板的那一端。不时还会有从各个方向突然刮起的暴风。白雪不断地堆积成十分坚硬的冰层，只有用尖利的铁锹才能弄开它。仅仅在零下5度的温度下，“鹦鹉螺”号外部就

全部被冰层封住了。在这种环境下，一艘平常的船可能是没有办法行驶的，因为所有的绞辅绳索都被冻在滑车沟里了。也只有这艘没有帆、装有可以不用煤的电动机的船才能冒险跑到这样高的纬度来。

在这种情形下，风雨表的指示针总是处于很低的位置，有时降到了73度5分。罗盘也没办法正确地指示出方向了。当“鹦鹉螺”号到达南磁极圈的时候，它的指针开始变得乱摇乱晃起来，指出的方向也与实际的方向相反。根据汉斯廷的说法，这南磁极圈差不多位于南纬70度、东经130度，而根据杜贝莱的观察，这南磁极圈是在东经135度、南纬70度30分。所以，这就必须观察放置在船上各部分的罗盘，取一个平均数作为标准。不过因为我们不停地在不断变化的水路中间行驶，用这个平均数来估量走过的水路的方位，所以结果总是很难让人满意。

到了3月18日，经过几十次无果的冲击后，“鹦鹉螺”号完全找不到出路了。在“鹦鹉螺”号周围的不是冰流、冰圈、冰田，而是连接在一起、无穷无尽的屹立不动的一片冰山。

“冰山！”加拿大人对我说。

我明白，对尼德·兰以及所有以前的航海家来说，冰山是不可超越的障碍。中午时分，有一会儿的时间，太阳出来了，尼摩船长做了一次相当准确的观察，指明“鹦鹉螺”号是在西经51度30分、南纬67度39分。这已经是南冰洋地区相当深入的海域了。

这个时候，展现在我们面前的完全不像是大海或者流动的水面。对着“鹦鹉螺”号的冲角，展现在我们面前的是一片崎岖不平的同时夹杂着混乱无序的大冰群的辽阔平原，再加上那乱七八糟、凌乱无序的景象，就像河流在解冻前所显示出来的景象一样，不过面积却是十分巨大罢

了。到处都是陡峭的尖峰，就像直升到200英尺高的细针，远一点，是由尖峰形成的一连串的悬崖，带着灰白的色泽，像一面一面的大镜子，映着一些半掩在云雾中的阳光。而充斥着这荒凉的自然界的，是那可怕的寂静，就连偶尔出现的海燕和海鸭的振翅声也没有办法打破这种寂静。一切都被冰冻住了，连声音也被冰冻住了。所以，在这被冰冻起来的冰场中，“鹦鹉螺”号停止了它的冒险行动。

“先生，”那一天，尼德·兰对我说道，“如果您的船长能再走远一点.....”

“那么？”

“那么，他便是杰出的人。”

“尼德·兰，为什么这么说呢？”

“因为没有人能走过冰山。您的船长有力量，可是，他不可能比大自然更有力量。在大自然划下界限的地方，不管他愿不愿意，他都得停下来。”

“是这样的，尼德·兰，不过我很想知道冰山的后面是什么。可是在我们面前的是一道围墙，这让我觉得很难受。”

“先生，您说得很对。”葛瑟尔说，“围墙被发明出来，只是为激怒人们的。无论什么地方都不应该有围墙。”

“是的！”加拿大人说，“在这座冰山的后面，人们早就知道有什么东西了。”

“是什么呢？”我问。

“是冰，都是冰！”

“尼德·兰，你说得很肯定，”我继续说，“但是，我可不敢这么肯定。所以我要去看看。”

“那么，教授，”加拿大人说道，“您要放弃这个想法。您已经到了冰山的面前，这就够了，您不能再往前走了，您的尼摩船长和他的‘鹦鹉螺’号也不能再往前走了，不管他愿意不愿意，我们都要掉头回去往北走了，也就是回到老实人居住的国土上去。”

我必须承认尼德·兰说的是对的。“鹦鹉螺”号行驶到冰山面前的时候就必须停止了。因为不管它怎么努力，不管它利用推动器发出的用来冲破冰块的力量有多强大，它还是一动也动不了。平常的时候，即使它不能往前进，那它也可以退回去。但现在，对于“鹦鹉螺”号来说，后退跟前进一样是不可能的，因为来时的水路在我们通过后就被封住了，只要“鹦鹉螺”号稍微一停，它就会被立刻冰冻住，寸步难行。下午两点钟左右，这样的一种情形就发生了，新的冰层以惊人的速度蔓延，迅速地把“鹦鹉螺”号冰冻起来。我现在不得不承认，尼摩船长的决定太草率、太不谨慎了。

我来到了甲板上，那里，尼摩船长已经在观察形势有些时候了。看到我走上来，他对我说：

“那么，教授，您是怎么想的？”

“船长，我想，我们是被困住了。”

“被困住了？您这话是什么意思呢？”

“我是说，我们不能前进，也不能后退，不能向任何一个方向行驶

了。我想，这就叫‘被困住了’，至少对居住在陆地上的人们来说是这样的。”

“阿勒纳斯先生，您是不是在想，‘鹦鹉螺’号不可能脱身了？”

“我觉得很不容易脱身，船长，因为现在的季节已经相当晚了，我们不能指望解冻的时候了。”

“啊！教授，”尼摩船长用一种讥讽的语气说道，“您还是这么悲观！您总是只看到困难和障碍！我现在可以肯定地告诉您，‘鹦鹉螺’号不仅可以脱身，而且它还可以继续前进。”

“继续向南方前进吗？”我用眼睛紧盯着船长问。

“是的，先生，它要行驶到南极去。”

“到南极去！”我喊道，同时不自觉地表示出了我的怀疑和不可置信。

“是的！”船长冷冷地回答道，“‘鹦鹉螺’号要到南极去，到那地球上所有的子午线相交的、以前没有人到过的地方去。您知道的，我可以驾驶着‘鹦鹉螺’号去做我想要做的任何事情。”

那个时候，我忽然有一种冲动，想问一问尼摩船长，是不是已经去过那人迹罕至、从未有人类足迹踏过的南极。

“没有，先生，”他回答我说，“我们现在就一起到那里去。对于别人到不了的地方，我可以到达。我从没有让‘鹦鹉螺’号行驶到这么遥远的南极海上来过，但我再跟您说一次，它还要继续往前走。”

“我相信您，船长，”我带着讥讽的语气又说道，“我相信您！我们继续往前走！对我们来说不存在什么难以通过的障碍！我们可以冲开这座冰山！我们把它炸开，如果它敢反抗，我们就给‘鹦鹉螺’号装上翅膀，让它从冰山上面飞过去！”

“教授，您觉得我们可以从上面过去吗？”尼摩船长平静地说道，“我们不是从上面过去，而是从下面过去。”

“从下面过去？”我喊道。船长的计划突然给了我启示，让我的心忽然明亮起来。我明白了。“鹦鹉螺”号的神奇构造可以帮助船长冲破这人类难以超越的障碍，再一次帮助船长达成他的愿望。

“教授，我觉得现在的我们已经心意相通了。”船长微笑着对我说道，“您现在已经知道这个计划是可以成功的——在我个人看来，我觉得这个计划一定行得通。这个计划对于一艘平常的船来说是办不到的，但对于‘鹦鹉螺’号来说是很容易办到的。如果现在在我们面前的是一个大陆，它就只能停步不前了。但相反，如果南极是一片自由的海，它就能到南极点上去！”

“是的，”尼摩船长的说法提醒了我，我说，“即使海面被冻结凝固住了，但它的下层依然是可以自由通行的，因为这有充分的自然条件，那就是海水的密度要比冰山的密度大。如果我没有搞错的话，也就是说冰山沉入海水的部分与它浮出海面部分的比是三比一？”

“差不多是这样的，教授。海面上的冰山有1英尺，那么在海面下的冰山就有3英尺。并且，因为这些冰山不超过100米高，海面下的冰山就不至于深入到300米的海水。300米深对‘鹦鹉螺’号来说算得了什么呢？”

“根本不算什么，先生。”

“并且它可以潜入到更深的水层，一直到海水中的温度恒定的水层。在那里，我们可以抵御海面下零下30度或40度的寒冷。”

“是的，先生，您说得很对。”我很激动地回答道。

“唯一的问题就是，‘鹦鹉螺’号要潜入海底好几天，”尼摩船长紧接着又说道，“那么在这几天中，我们就不能调换船上的空气了。”

“就是这个问题吗？这个问题很容易解决，”我回答说，“‘鹦鹉螺’号上有容量巨大的空气储藏库，我们只要把储藏库全部装满，不就有够我们使用的空气了吗？”

“这个想法不错，阿勒纳斯先生。”船长微笑着回答说，“我不希望您到时责备我过于冒险了，所以我现在先提出我能想到的反对意见来，请您考虑一下。”

“您还有反对意见吗？”

“只有一个。那就是，如果南极是海，而且那片海完全被冻住了，那么，很可能到时我们就浮不出水面了。”

“是这样的，先生，不过，难道您忘了‘鹦鹉螺’号装有非常厉害的冲角了吗？如果南极的海面真被冻住了，到时我们可以沿对角线的方向直冲上去，冰面遭到剧烈的冲击，不是就会迸裂开了吗？”

“啊！教授，您今天还真是有不少的好主意呢！”

“并且，船长，”我愈来愈兴奋地接着说道，“我们为什么不能这样想呢，也许在南极跟在北极一样，人们都能碰到自由通行的海。无论是在南半球还是在北半球，冰冷的两极都跟陆地的两极不同。在还没有反

面的证据出现前，我们可以假定在地球的这两个极点或者有陆地，或者有跟冰层分开的海洋。”

“我也是这样认为的，阿勒纳斯先生，”尼摩船长回答说，“不过，我单单要提醒您注意这点，是因为您之前提出了许多反对我计划的意见，而您现在却又提出了许多支持我计划的赞成的理由。”

就像尼摩船长说的那样，我甚至要鼓励他这样做了。现在是我要把他拉到南极去，我走在前面了，我比他走得更远了……但实际上完全不是这样，我不过是个可怜的傻瓜。尼摩船长对这个计划的可行性与不可行性了解得比我要多得多，他不过是让我在这些看起来不可能实现的梦想中高兴高兴，甚至让我为之疯狂，这看来很好玩罢了。

不过，他一点时间也不肯浪费。跟我说完这番话后，他就发出信号，把他的大副叫了上来。两人用我听不懂的语言迅速地交流了一下。也许大副预先就得到了尼摩船长的通知，也许他也觉得这个计划可行，所以他没有表露出一丝惊异的表情。即使如此，他的冷淡也比不上葛瑟尔。当我告诉这个老实人，我们要一直走到南极去的计划的时候，他显露出的表情可以说是冷淡到了极点。他听了我的话后，就只说了一句“随先生的便好了”。我也只好满足于他的这种回答。至于尼德·兰，如果要问谁的两肩耸得最高，那一定就是这个加拿大人的两肩了。他对我说：

“您瞧，先生，您和您的尼摩船长真让我觉得可怜！”

“尼德·兰，我们是要到南极去呢。”

“去是可以去，但你们却回不来了！”说完这番话后，他就回他的房间去了。“为了不弄出人命。”他离开的时候这样对我说道。

但是，这个大胆计划的准备工作却还是按部就班地开始了。“鹦鹉螺”号用它那强大的抽气机把空气吸入储藏库，然后再用高压把空气储存起来。4点左右，尼摩船长告诉我，甲板上的嵌板要关起来了。我再一次看了一眼我们就要穿过的这座冰山。这个时候正是白天，天气晴朗，空气新鲜，很冷，温度在零下12度左右，没有风，所以这种温度并不会让人觉得很难受。

十来个船员走到“鹦鹉螺”号的两侧，他们拿着尖尖的铁镐，开始凿开船身周围的冰。不一会儿，船身就松动了。船员们很快就完成了这项工作，因为新结的冰还相当薄。然后，我们一起回到船舱中。当“鹦鹉螺”号的储水池装满了浮标线周围的自由海水后，它就潜到了水面下。我和葛瑟尔一起回到客厅中坐下。透过打开的玻璃，我们可以看到南冰洋的下层。温度表的水柱在上升，压力表的指针也在表盘上移动着。

到了水下300米左右，就像尼摩船长预测的那样，我们就到了冰山底部的水面了。但“鹦鹉螺”号依然在继续下沉，一直到了800米的水层。刚才水的温度是12度，但现在不超过11度，也就是说我们已经争取了两度。不用说，因为有热气机管，“鹦鹉螺”号一直保持着很高的温度。船的这些动作都按照尼摩船长的计划特别准确地完成了。

“请先生原谅，我要说一句，”葛瑟尔对我说，“我们一定可以过去的。”

“我也是这样想的！”我带着不容置疑的语气回答道。

在这畅通无阻的海底，“鹦鹉螺”号沿着西经52度向着南极的方向驶去。从67度30分到90度，“鹦鹉螺”号还要走过22度半的纬度，也就是说，它还要走过500多里。“鹦鹉螺”号这时的速度是每小时26海里，相

当于一辆快速行驶的快车的速度。如果它保持这个速度行驶，那么40个小时后，它就可以行驶到南极了。

由于来到了一片人类从未涉足的海域，受好奇心的驱使，晚上的一部分时间里，葛瑟尔和我一直待在客厅的玻璃边。受到“鹦鹉螺”号探照灯的照耀，海水晶莹雪亮，但海水中却一片荒凉，没有任何生命的迹象。鱼类不会待在这种像监牢般的海水中，它们会通过这里的这条通道从南冰洋游到南极那片自由的海中去。从长形钢铁船壳的振动，我们可以感觉得出“鹦鹉螺”号行驶得非常快。

深夜两点左右，我决定回房间休息几个小时。葛瑟尔和我一样，也要回房间休息了。穿过走廊的时候，我没有遇到尼摩船长，我想这个时候他一定是在那领航人的驾驶室里。

第二天，3月19日，早晨5点，我又来到了客厅。通过电力测程器，我发现，“鹦鹉螺”号的速度慢了一些，这个时候，它在很小心地慢慢排出储水池中的水，这说明它在上升。

我的心不自觉地跳动起来。我们就要浮出水面了，我们马上就可以呼吸到南极那自由的空气了吗？还没有。这个时候发生了一次冲撞，从发出的不爽快的撞击声音判断，我知道，“鹦鹉螺”号碰上了冰山底层的冰面，而且这个冰面还很厚。的确，用航海的术语来说，我们是“撞上了”，不过现在不是在冰面上，而是在冰面下撞上了，也就是在3000英尺的海洋深处“撞上了”。这就是说，在我们的头顶上有4000英尺的冰层，包括浮在水面上的1000英尺的冰层。这时海面上下所有冰层的高度，都超过了我们之前记录的任何高度。情形有些让人感到不安。在这一天内，“鹦鹉螺”号前前后后做了很多次尝试，但它总是会碰上盖在它头顶上面的像天花板一样的冰墙。有时候，它是在900米的水深处碰上

了冰山，也就是说那冰山有1200米厚，除了海底下900米深的冰层，还有300米的冰层浮在水面上。与“鹦鹉螺”号潜入水底的时候相比，冰山的高度现在又增加了一倍。

我小心地记录下冰山这些不同的高度，这样，我就获得了排列在海水中的这条冰山山脉的走势图。

晚上，我们的情况没有出现什么好转。在400米和500米的水深处，“鹦鹉螺”号总是会碰上冰山。冰山的厚度显然是减少了，但隔在我们和洋面之间的冰层还厚得很呢！现在的时间是晚上8点。按照每天的习惯，这个时候，“鹦鹉螺”号内部的空气早在4个小时之前就应该换过了。不过，虽然尼摩船长没有让储藏库放出一些新鲜的补充空气来，但我并不觉得怎么难受。

这一夜，我睡得很不好。希望和恐惧轮翻地出现在我的心中。一晚上，我起来了好几次。“鹦鹉螺”号还在继续摸索着上升。凌晨3点左右，我看见冰山下层的冰面只有50米了，也就是说，把我们和水面隔开的冰层不到100米了。冰山渐渐变成了冰田，山地渐渐变成了平原。我的双眼紧紧地盯着压力表。“鹦鹉螺”号沿着对角线的方向，向着那在探照灯照耀下闪闪发亮的冰面冲去。“鹦鹉螺”号在不断地上升，冰山像蜿蜒的栏杆一样不断地在降低，一海里一海里地变薄了。最后，在值得纪念的这一天，3月19日早晨6点，客厅的门打开了，尼摩船长走了进来，他对我说：“我们到了自由通行的海面了！”

第十四章 南 极

我飞奔到甲板上。

是的！自由通行的海。从我站的地方望过去，近处有一些散乱的冰块和漂浮的冰层，远处是一片大海，大海的上空是群鸟的世界，而水底下有成千上万的鱼类。海水的颜色按照深浅的不同，呈现出从深浓的靛蓝到橄榄的青绿。温度表显示，现在的温度是3摄氏度。与冰山附近的天气相比，这里就好像是春天，在北方的天际露出了远远的冰群的面貌。

“我们现在是在南极吗？”我问船长，同时心在不可抑制地砰砰跳着。

“我不知道。”他回答我说，“中午的时候我没有测量我们所在方位。”

“可是，太阳能穿过这些云雾吗？”看着那灰色的天空，我说。

“太阳只要露出一点就够了。”船长说道。

距离“鹦鹉螺”号南方两海里处，有一座高200米的孤立的小岛浮出了海面。“鹦鹉螺”号小心翼翼地向着小岛驶去，因为这片海中可能各处都有暗礁。一个小时后，我们到达了小岛。又过了两个小时，我们就绕着小岛走了一周。它的整个周长有4海里至5海里。一条狭窄的水道把它与一片广大的陆地分开了，或者那是一个大洲，我们还望不到它的边界。这片陆地的存在好像证明了莫利的假设是对的。的确，那位高明的美国学者指出，在南极和纬度60度中间，海上有浮动的冰群，这些冰群非常巨大，是在大西洋北部不会碰到的巨大冰群。根据这个事实，他得出一个结论，那就是南极圈中有大片的陆地，因为冰山在大海中间是没办法形成的，它们只有在靠近陆地的岸边才能形成。按照他的计算，覆

盖在南极的冰群形成了一个球形的圆盖，这个圆盖的宽度可能达到4000公里。

可是，“鹦鹉螺”号因为怕搁浅，只能停在相距这片大陆6米左右的岸边。我们看到，有一片雄壮的岩石层高耸在岸边。尼摩船长命人把小艇放到了海水中。船长以及他的带着各种器械的两个船员，还有葛瑟尔和我，我们一起来到了小艇上。这个时候是上午10点，我没有看见尼德·兰。我想加拿大人一定不愿承认南极就在他的面前。我们只划了几下桨，小艇就到了岸边。在葛瑟尔就要跳下小艇的时候，我把他拉住了。

“先生，”我对尼摩船长说，“第一个踏上这片陆地的应该是您。”

“是的，先生，”船长回答道，“我会毫不犹豫地踏上这极圈的土地。到今天为止，还没有一个人在这片陆地上留下他的足迹。”

说完这番话后，他轻快地跳上了岸。紧张激动的情绪让他的心脏不停地跳动着。他攀上了一块岩石，倾斜的岩石尽头是突起的一个犄角。站在那个岩石的犄角上，他交叉着两手，满眼是抑制不住的热情。他站在那里一动不动，静默地望着远方，就好像取得了这南极的所有权一样。在这种极乐情绪中过了大概5分钟后，他向我们转过身来，对我喊道：“先生，如果您愿意，就请上来吧。”

我跳下小艇，走向岸来，后面跟着葛瑟尔，那两个船员留在了小艇中。

岸上的土质是赭红色的凝灰岩，一直延伸到远处，就像是由一层层的砖石构成的一样。地上满是被火山灼烧的石头、火山喷出的火石以及石屑。很显然，这片大陆是由火山喷发形成的。往远处看，我们还可以看到某些地方在喷出轻微的烟，发出一股硫黄的气味，这证明在这片大

陆的内部仍然有火在喷发。可是，攀上一座高耸的悬崖，极目远眺，在半径几海里的圆周内，我们望不到任何火山。大家都知道，在南极地带，詹姆斯·罗斯曾经在东经160度、南纬77度32分上找到了还在活动的爱列贝斯和铁罗尔火山口。

这个荒凉的大陆上没有什么植物。一种单调的黑色苔藓丛生着，铺在黑色的岩石上。除此之外，仅有的是某种微生草木、原始硅藻、堆积起来的石英质的细胞植物、呈现大红和猩红色的黑角菜以及被退潮的海水带上来的鱼类。

岸边还有一些软体动物，比如小蚬、蛇类、心脏形的光滑贝，以及那些呈长方形的、膜质的、头由两个圆形的突出的耳叶形成的触须贝。我又看到在北方曾见过的无数的触须贝了，这些触须贝长约3厘米，鲸鱼一口就可以吞食掉它们一大群。这些美丽的翼步类动物，是大海中真正的蝴蝶。而往远处看去，使这海岸边流动的海水生动活泼起来的是出现在海底深处的植虫类——一些珊瑚树。根据詹姆斯·罗斯的观察，这些生活在南极海中的珊瑚树，在1000米深的海水中都可以生活。此外，还有属于海胞类的小翡翠珊瑚以及这一带地区所特有的许多海燕和散布在地上的许多海星。

但洋溢着生命气息的地方是在空中。空中有无数不同种类的鸟儿在上下飞翔，发出嘈杂的鸣叫声，混合在一起的叫声如此响亮，使得我们的耳朵发出了轰鸣声。除了天空中，还有一些鸟类栖息在岩石上，它们一点也不怕人，看着我们走过的时候，还很亲热地聚集到我们脚边。那是在水中和在陆地上行动起来都十分轻快、便捷的企鹅。有的时候，人们会把它们与动作敏捷的镊鸟搞混，但镊鸟在陆地上是没办法很敏捷地行动的，看起来非常笨拙。这些企鹅成群结队地聚集在一起，发出古怪的叫声。它们的动作很少，但叫喊声却十分响亮。

在这些鸟类中间，我看见有属于涉水鸟科的南极水鸟。它们的大小跟鸽子差不多。白色，有锥形的短嘴，眼睛周边有一圈红圈。葛瑟尔把这种鸟捉来当成食物，因为这类鸟如果烹调得当，味道是非常鲜美的。空中还有翼幅宽4米、煤黑色的信天翁飞过，它们也叫海鸳，这个名称真是名副其实。还有巨大的海燕类，其中包括最喜欢吃海豹的、翼呈拱形的弓形海燕，身上带有白色和黑色的海棋鸟——一种很小的海燕，以及有的是整体呈灰白色、两翼边缘是栗子色，有的整体呈蓝色的一组海燕，这种蓝色的海燕是南冰洋的特产。我对葛瑟尔说道：“灰白色的那种海燕油脂很多。在费洛埃群岛，人们会在它们的腹部放上灯芯，点燃后可以当灯来用。”

“就差一点儿，”葛瑟尔回答说，“它们就可以完全是一盏灯了。这样看来，如果大自然能在它们的身上再预先准备一个灯芯就好了！”

走了半海里的路程后，地上出现了许多洞窟，那是短翼潜水鸟的鸟巢，是它们筑好后用来产卵的。当我们走过的时候，从洞窟中飞出很多短翼潜水鸟。它们发出像驴一样的叫声。这些鸟的身材跟我很像，全身呈石板色，下面有一圈白色，脖子上有柠檬色的圆圈。后来，尼摩船长打了好几百只这种鸟，因为它们那黑色的肉可以吃，而且味道非常鲜美。而这些鸟就那样站着让人拿石子打死，并没有想逃走的意思。

可是，云雾一直没有散开，到了11点钟的时候，太阳还没有出来。这让我觉得非常焦急，因为没有太阳，我们就不能做各种观察。那么，我们如何确定我们是到了南极呢？

当我走回尼摩船长身边的时候，发现他用胳膊肘靠在一块岩石上，一言不发，只是用双眼紧盯着天空。看来他也有些不耐烦了，好像在生气。但这又有什么办法呢？这个大胆又具有强大力量的人是不可能像指

挥“鹦鹉螺”号超越海洋中的各种困难那样指挥太阳的。

中午到了，太阳仍然没有出来。甚至在云雾的遮挡下，人们根本没办法明确它的具体位置。不久后，云雾又变成了雪花。

“我们明天再来好了。”船长干脆利落地对我说道，然后我们一起去看停在不远处的“鹦鹉螺”号。

当我们离开“鹦鹉螺”号以后，船上的船员把渔网放入了大海中，我兴致勃勃地观察着人们刚从海里捕获的鱼类。在南极海里生活着很多候鱼，它们是为躲避纬度较低海域水层的风暴，才转移到这里来的。可是到了南极以后，它们往往又成了海豚和海豹的猎物。除此之外，我看见一种灰白色的软骨鱼，它们身长约10厘米，身上有斜横的淡白条带，并且生有尖刺，这是南极的刺鳍鱼；还有南冰洋的软骨奇鱼，它们的身子拉得很长，足有3英尺长，这种鱼有着银白色和光滑的表皮，圆圆的突起的头，脊背上有三支鳍，头的最前端是一支向嘴边弯过去的喇叭管。我吃过这种鱼的肉，觉得味道一般，吃起来平淡无味，但葛瑟尔不这样认为，他很喜欢吃。

直到第二天，暴风雪还没有停止，在这种情况下，人们根本不可能站在“鹦鹉螺”号的甲板上。当我在客厅中记录我这次来到南极大陆后的所见所闻的时候，我听到了在大风雪中间上下飞翔的海燕和信天翁发出的号叫声。“鹦鹉螺”号并没有停泊在一处，在太阳掠过天际投下的曙光中，它沿着海岸驶去，又向南行进了10海里左右。

第二天，3月20日，暴风雪终于停了。天气比较寒冷，温度表显示当下的温度是零下2度。浓雾散开了，我希望今天我们可以测出所在的方位。

尼摩船长还没有出来，于是葛瑟尔和我先乘坐小艇去了陆地。这里的土质跟我们第一次踏上这片大陆落脚处的土质一样，也是由火山喷发形成的。满地都是火山喷发后的迹象，有火山岩、玄武岩等，但我还是没有看到喷出这些岩石的火山口。这里跟之前我们踏足的地方一样，有无数的海鸟，这给南极大陆增添了许多生动活泼的气息。除了海鸟，这里还生活着一大群海中的哺乳类动物，那是各种不同种类的海豹。当我们走过它们身边的时候，它们会用温和的眼光盯着我们看。这些海豹有的躺在地上，有的睡在倾斜的冰块上，有些刚从海里上来，有些又回到了海里去。看见我们近前，它们并不逃走，因为它们从没有跟人打过交道，并不害怕人类。这里的海豹有很多，足足可以装满好几百艘船。

时间是早上8点。我们还有4个小时来观察太阳以确定我们的方位。在花岗石的悬崖中间，有一处宽大的港湾，呈新月形，我向着这个港湾一步步走去。

站在那里，放眼望去，在我们的周围，不管是陆地上还是冰层上，一望无际的都是海中的哺乳动物。我眼光不自觉地开始搜寻那个老头蒲罗德，在神话里，他是给海神尼普顿看守家畜群的老牧人。

这里的海豹特别多。它们三五成群地形成不同的队伍，每个队伍里都有雄的和雌的海豹。雄海豹在关照整个家族，雌海豹在给它们的小海豹喂奶，有些已经成年的年轻海豹在远一些的地方随意走着。这些海豹要走动的时候，它们的躯体会伸缩，然后一跳一跳地走，它们还会用自身那不发达的鳍来帮助走动，走起来相当笨拙。它们那短短的鳍在同类海牛的身上，却变成了真正的前臂。但是，一旦它们进入海里，就会变得特别灵活，因为这些海豹的骨盘狭窄，毛又短又密，脚是掌形的，非常有利于游泳。当它们游上岸休息的时候，姿态看上去非常美观，特别招人喜欢。

我向葛瑟尔指出，这鲸科动物的大脑叶特别发达，除了人类以外，任何哺乳动物都没有这么丰富的脑髓神经，所以它们非常聪明。因此，只要接受某种程度的训练，这些海豹就很容易被驯养，进而成为家畜。我同意某些生物学家的意见，只要给予海豹适当的训练，人们就可以把它们当成打鱼的猎犬，让它们为人类服务，做许多有益的事。

大部分海豹睡在岩石上或者沙地上。这些海豹是没有外耳的，这一点，它们跟有突出的外耳的海獭不同。在这里，我还看见好些海獭的变种，这些变种的海獭长3英尺，毛是白色的，它们的头就像猎狗一样，上下颚共有10枚牙齿，其中有4枚门牙、2枚百合花形的大虎牙。在它们中间，还有海象走来走去。海象也是海豹的一种，它们是有可以活动的短鼻子的海豹，是海豹这种动物中体型最大的，它们身长20英尺，高大约10英尺。看见我们走近，它们一动也不动。

“它们不是很危险、会伤人的动物吗？”葛瑟尔问我。

“不，”我回答说，“除非是有人要攻击它们，它们才会伤人。海豹为了保护它的子女，甚至可以把渔人的小船弄成碎片，这并不是什么稀奇的事。”

“它是为了自卫，那是它的正当权利。”葛瑟尔立即说道。

“我没说不是呀。”

又走了两海里远，我们就被一片高高矗立的岩石挡住了去路，正是因为有这些岩石，所以这片港湾才会不受南风吹打的影响。这片耸立的岩石就在海边，海浪打在岩石上，不时有泡沫飞溅，而在岩石外，有隆隆的吼叫声传来，这吼叫声就像一群牛羊在反刍时发出的响声一样。

“这是……”葛瑟尔说，“水牛们在开音乐会吗？”

“不是的，”我说道，“这是海马们在开音乐会。”

“它们是在打架吗？”

“也许它们是在打架，也许它们是在玩耍。”

“请先生原谅，我们应当去看一看。”

“好的，葛瑟尔，我们应当去看一看。”

于是，我们走过那些乱石，走过那些被冰块弄得很滑的碎石，走过那些灰黑色的岩石地。我不止一次地滑倒了，搞得我腰部很痛。可能是因为葛瑟尔比较小心，也可能是因为他比较结实，他一次也没有摔倒过。他把我扶起来后，对我说：

“如果先生把两腿分开一些走，就容易保持身体的平衡了。”

终于走上了那片岩石的高处，展现在我们面前的，是一片白色的大平原，上面全是海马。这些海马正在成群结队地玩耍，刚才我们听到的是它们快乐的声音，而不是它们愤怒的号叫声。

海马的外形和四肢跟海豹很像。但它们的下颚没有虎牙和门牙，而上颚有两枚长约80厘米的虎牙，下颚还有长约33厘米的角牙，这些牙的牙质致密无疵，比象牙还要硬，而且不容易变黄，成为人们争相谋求的珍品。因此，海马受到过度的猎取。猎取海马的人盲目对海马进行屠杀，不管是有孕的母海马还是幼小的海马，他们都不放过，每年猎杀的海马数量超过4000条，如果这样下去，不久海马就会从地球上完全消失了。

从这些新奇的动物身边走过，它们一点也不害怕，待在那里没有动，这让我可以从容地观察它们。它们的皮很厚，皮上还有很多皱纹，颜色是类似赭红的茶褐色，皮毛短而少。有些海马长到了4米。它们比北冰洋的海马要安静，胆子也要大，因为它们并没有委派特别选出来的海马哨兵在它们露营地的四周进行看守。

观察完海马后，我就想回去了。这个时候的时间是11点。如果尼摩船长觉得条件允许，可以进行观察、测量，那我就想当面看着他做。可是，我不敢存有这一天太阳会出来的奢望。天边仍然有重重积压的浓云，我们依然看不到太阳的影子。好像这十分宝贵的太阳，不愿意在这地球上人迹罕至的地点，露出头来给人们看。

我想我们应当回“鹦鹉螺”号去了。我们沿着悬崖顶上一条狭窄的斜坡走下去。11点半的时候，我们到了登陆的地方。尼摩船长乘坐搁浅在那里的小艇来到了这里。我看见他站到一块玄武石岩上，旁边放着他的器械。他用双眼紧紧盯着北方的天际，那里，太阳画出了一条长长的曲线。

我站到他的旁边，静静地等候着，没有说话。正午的时间到了，跟昨天一样，太阳还是没有出来。这真是不由人的事。我们又没办法做观察工作了。如果明天还是不能做观察工作，恐怕我们就只好放弃测定所在方位的事情了。

今天是3月20日，明天3月21日正好是春分，如果不考虑折射的光，我们就看不到阳光了，因为太阳将有6个月的时间没入水平线以下不能出来。南极圈的极夜时期就要开始了，这会持续到9月中的秋分，太阳才会再次出现在北方的天际，沿着长长的螺旋线上升，直到12月21日。12月21日是北冰洋地区的夏至日，过了这一天以后，太阳又开始下降。

因此，明天就是太阳最后一天出来的日子了。

我把我的想法和顾虑告诉了尼摩船长。听完我的话后，他对我说：

“您说得对，阿勒纳斯先生，如果明天我测量不了太阳的高度，那么在接下来的6个月里，我就都不能做这个测量工作了。不过也正是因为这次航行的机会，我们才能在3月21日的时候来到这南极海中。如果太阳能稍微露一下头，我们就可以很容易地测定我们所在的方位。”

“为什么这么说呢，船长？”

“因为太阳是沿着拉长的螺旋线走的，想在水平线上确切测量它的高度，是很困难的，即使使用仪器也很容易得出错误的结果。”

“那么，您打算怎么测量呢？”

“我打算使用我的航海時計。”尼摩船长回答我说，“明天3月21日，把折光作用估计在内，如果太阳直射线正好切在北方的水平线上，那就可以判断我们是在南极点上了。”

“是的，”我说，“不过，从数学的角度看，通过这种测量方式得到的结果并不完全精确，因为春分时间不一定是在正午。”

“当然，先生，但差数也不会超过100米，并且我们也不需要更精确的结果。那么，我们明天再来吧。”

尼摩船长转身回船上去了。葛瑟尔和我一直待到了下午5点。我们不停地在海滩上跑来跑去地做观察、做研究。除了捡到一颗海鸟蛋外，我们没发现什么新奇的东西。这颗海鸟蛋特别大，我想对于喜好收集珍奇事物的收藏家来说，他可能愿意出1000法郎来买这颗海鸟蛋。因为在

它浅黄色的外壳上有像是用象形文字描绘的线条和花纹，这足以使它成为一件稀奇的珍玩。我把它交给了葛瑟尔。葛瑟尔把它拿在手中，小心翼翼地，走起路来脚步很稳，就像是在保护珍贵的中国瓷器一样，完好地把它带到了“鹦鹉螺”号上。

到了“鹦鹉螺”号船上后，我把这颗海鸟蛋放在了陈列室的一个玻璃橱中。

晚餐我吃得很好，吃了一块味道很美的海豹肝，我觉得吃起来味道很像猪肝。吃完晚饭后，我就回房间睡觉了，在临睡前，我像印度人一样，虔诚地祈求太阳的恩惠，希望它明天可以出来。

第二天，3月21日早晨5点，我走上了甲板，看到尼摩船长已经在甲板上了，他对我说：

“天气已经变得晴朗一些了，看来太阳很有希望可以出来。吃完早饭后，我们就一起到陆地上去，选择一个合适的地点做我们的观察工作。”

跟尼摩船长确定了计划后，我就去找尼德·兰了。我想拉他跟我一起去。但固执的加拿大人拒绝了我的请求。我看得出来，正如他的脾气越来越坏一样，他也一天比一天沉默了。因为早预料到会是这样，所以对于他的固执、不愿意去，我也并不觉得惋惜。陆地上有那么多的大海豹，早知道我就应该用它们做诱饵，来引诱这个粗心又不爱思考的打鱼人了。

吃完早餐后，我就乘坐小艇到陆地上去了。在夜间的时候，“鹦鹉螺”号又前进了好几海里，所以现在“鹦鹉螺”号在距离岸边整整1海里的大海，这里的岸上有高400米至500米的岩石矗立。小艇上载了我、尼

摩船长、两个船员，以及我们做测量工作要用的仪器，即航海時計、望远镜和晴雨表。

当我们乘坐小艇去陆地上的时候，我看见了許多鲸鱼，它们是南极特有的鲸鱼。一种是没有脊鳍的平直鲸，这种鲸的腹部有很多皱褶，有宽大的灰白色的鳍的驼背鲸，尽管它叫驼背鲸，但它们那隆起的背并没有形成翼；还有黄褐色的、最活泼的鲸科动物鳍背鲸。远远地，我们就听到了这些巨大的动物发出的声音，它们正在把混有气体的水柱喷向高空，远远望去，它们就好像在喷出阵阵的浓烟。这些大型的哺乳类动物在安静的海水中往来、玩耍，现在，南极的这片海水已经成为受猎人过度追逐的鲸科动物的避难所了。

9点钟的时候，我们靠岸了。天空明朗起来，浓浓的云层向着南方散去，水面的雾也在慢慢地消失。尼摩船长向着一座高峰走去，我想他一定是在这座高峰上做他的观察工作。于是，我们跟在船长后面，在满布火山喷发时所发出的硫黄味的气体中，沿着满是尖利的火石和浮石的路，艰难地往上攀登。虽然船长已经很久没在陆地上生活过了，但走上这些最陡峭的斜坡，他依然显得轻便灵活，不单我比不了，就是追赶羚羊的猎人看到后也会觉得羡慕的。

我们花了两个钟头的时间才攀上这座满是云斑岩、玄武岩的高峰。站在峰顶上往下看，我们看到了一片广阔的海，远远地延伸到北方，与天际合为一线。在我们的脚下，是让人目眩的明亮的白冰场。在我们头上，随着云雾的散去，透出了带着一丝淡白的蔚蓝色。在北方，太阳就像一只火球一样，但它的边缘已经被水平线的锋刃削去了一角。在海水的中间，有非常好看的喷水花束成百上千地开放着。远远地，我们看到了“鹦鹉螺”号，看上去就像是一只正在酣睡的鲸鱼。在我们后面，东方和南方的地方，是一片广阔的陆地，布满瞭望不见边际的岩石和凌乱的

冰群。

走到峰顶后，尼摩船长拿出晴雨表小心地开始测量这座山峰的高度，因为要确定我们所在的方位。

差一刻就到正午了，因为折光作用，太阳像一个金盘一样出现了，它把它最后的光芒撒在了这人迹罕至的荒凉的大陆。

尼摩船长戴上网形线望远镜观察那沿着一条拖拉得很长的对角线渐渐沉入水平线下的太阳。这种望远镜利用一个镜面可以校正折光作用。我手里拿着航海時計，心跳得很快。如果太阳轮盘隐没一半的时候，航海時計正好是指着正午，那就可以确定我们是在南极点上了。

“正午！”我喊道。

“南极！”尼摩船长用很严肃的声音说道，同时把望远镜递给我，望远镜里显出的太阳正好在水平线的位置上被切成了完全相等的两半。

我注视着那照在峰顶上的最后的阳光和那从层峦叠嶂的山峰上投下来的黑影。

这时，尼摩船长用手扶住我的肩，对我说：

“先生，1600年，荷兰人迪尔克被海浪和风暴吹送到了南纬64度，发现了南设得兰群岛。1773年1月17日，著名的库克沿着东经38度，到达了南纬67度30分；1774年2月28日，他沿着西经109度，到达了南纬71度15分。1819年，俄国人波林格瑟到了南纬69度上；1821年，他沿着西经111度，到了南纬66度。1820年，英国人布莱斯·福尔在南纬65度上停了下来。同年，美国人穆里尔，当然我怀疑他的记述不太可靠，从西经42度往上走，在纬度70度14分上发现了自由流动的海。1825年，英国人

鲍威尔到达南纬62度。同年，英国人维德尔，一个捕海豹的渔人，沿着西经35度，一直到了南纬72度14分；沿着西经36度上，一直走到了南纬74度15分。1829年，英国人福斯图指挥着‘谢特克里’号，占领了南纬63度26分、西经63度26分的南冰洋大陆。1831年2月1日，英国人毕司格在南纬68度50分发现了恩德比岛；1832年2月5日，他在南纬67度发现了阿德拉伊岛；2月21日，他在南纬64度45分发现了格拉罕岛。1833年，法国人杜蒙·居维尔在南纬62度57分的冰山前停了下来，并发现了路易·菲利普岛的所在位置；两年后的1月21日，他到达了南方的另一尖点，位于南纬66度30分的阿德利岛；8天后，他到了南纬64度40分被他命名为卡拉利的海岸。1838年，英国人维尔克斯沿着东经100度前进到南纬69度的地方。1839年，英国人巴连尼在南极圈的边界发现了沙布利邓岛。最后，1842年，英国人詹姆斯·罗斯走上爱列贝斯山和铁罗尔山，1月12日，在南纬76度56分、东经171度7分，他发现了维多利亚岛；同月23日，他测定了南纬74度的方位，这是当时可以达到的最远的位置了，27日他到达南纬76度8分，28日他到达南纬77度32分，2月2日他到达南纬78度4分；1842年，他回到了他一度越不过去的南纬71度。那么，现在，我，尼摩船长，在1866年3月21日，在南纬90度上到达了南极点，我占领了面积等于人类所知道的地球大陆全部面积六分之一的这一部分的土地。”

“船长，您准备用什么名字来给它命名呢？”

“先生，我打算用我的名字来给它命名！”

在说这话的时候，尼摩船长展开一面黑旗，旗子的中间有一个金黄的N字。然后，他回过身来，面对着把最后的光芒射向大海水平面的太阳喊道：

“再见，太阳！沉下去吧，光辉的太阳！就请你在这自由的海底安息吧，让那六个月的黑夜遮蔽我的新领土吧！”

第十五章 意外还是偶然

3月22号早晨6点，“鹦鹉螺”号便准备离开。天气很冷，最后一丝黑暗没入了清晨的曙光。星星在天空闪耀，特别明亮，我们可以看到南冰洋地区的极星南宿星在头顶的正上方闪烁。

温度表显示，温度已经降到了零下12度，寒风吹来，刺入肌骨。流动水面上的冰群愈来愈多了，无数灰黑色的冰块浮在水面上，海面渐渐冻结成了一整块，形成了新的冰层。很显然，南极海面在冬季六个月的时间里都是结冰的，绝对不可能通过。那么，这个时期的鲸鱼是怎样生活的呢？它们会从冰山下面游出去，去找寻比较适宜居住的海域。而海豹和海马已经习惯了严寒的天气，仍然会留在这冰天雪地中生活。这些动物的天赋异禀可以帮助它们在这冰天雪地里挖掘洞穴，而洞穴的门是敞开的，这保证了它们可以到洞口来呼吸。被寒冷所迫，鸟类都迁移到北方去了。这个时候，这些哺乳类动物是这南极大陆唯一的主人了。

这时，“鹦鹉螺”号的储水池装满了水，开始慢慢下降。下降到1000英尺深的时候，它不再下降。强大的推进器搅动着海水，使得“鹦鹉螺”号以每小时15海里的速度向北方直直地行驶而去。到晚上的时候，它已经行驶到冰山下巨大的冰壳下面了。

为避免“鹦鹉螺”号的船壳在碰到一些沉在水中的冰块时产生危险，

客厅的嵌板完全关闭了起来。因此，这一天的时间，我都在整理我的笔记。我总是在想在南极点时的情景。我到达了那人迹罕至的地方，一点也不觉得疲倦，没有感到任何危险，就像坐在火车车厢里在铁轨上溜过去一样。而现在是归途了，还会有什么与之相似的新鲜、令人惊奇的事在等待着我吗？我想一定还有，海底的神奇是层出不穷的。可是，自从因偶然的机会有来到这艘船上以来的五个半月里，我们已经走了14000里。在这比地球赤道线还要长的旅途上，有那么多或新奇或可怕的偶然事件使得我们的旅程惊心动魄，兴味无穷。克列斯波林中打猎，托列斯海峡搁浅，珊瑚墓地，锡兰采珠，阿拉伯海底地道，桑多林火海，维哥湾的亿万金银，大西洋洲，南极！对所有这些事情的怀念，在夜间像梦一样在我的脑子里不断掠过，使我一刻也不能安歇。

凌晨3点左右，我被猛烈的一下冲击惊醒了。我立即起来坐在床上，在黑暗里仔细地听。这时候，我突然被抛到了房子的中间。很显然，“鹦鹉螺”号是在碰上什么东西后发生了很严重的倾斜。我靠着墙板，沿着墙来到走廊，又从走廊慢慢来到客厅。客厅被天花板上的灯光照得通明。桌椅家具都倒了。但幸运的是，那些玻璃柜的下部钉得很结实，所以没有倒下来。船左舷挂的图画，由于垂直线发生了转移，都被贴在了绣花挂毡上，挂在了右舷上，下面的框缘离开原来的位置有1英尺远。这时“鹦鹉螺”号往右倾斜，并且完全不动了。我听到脚步声和嘈杂的人声从船的内部传来，但尼摩船长并没有出来。在我正要离开客厅的时候，尼德·兰和葛瑟尔进来了。

“发生什么事了？”我马上问他们。

“我正要来问先生呢。”葛瑟尔回答说。

“好奇怪呀！”加拿大人喊道，“我知道是怎么回事！‘鹦鹉螺’号一定

是碰到什么东西上了，从它倾斜的情况来判断，我想这一次不会像上一次在托列斯海峡中那样幸运了，它可能不会脱身了。”

“不过，”我问，“它至少是在水面上吧？”

“这个我不知道。”葛瑟尔回答道。

“这个很容易确定。”我说。

我去看压力表，看后非常惊异，我看到压力表的表针指着360米深的水层。

“这是怎么回事？”我喊道。

“我们需要去问一下尼摩船长。”葛瑟尔说。

“可我们到哪里去找他呢？”尼德·兰问道。

“你们跟我来。”我对我的两个同伴说。

我们离开了客厅。图书室中没有人。中央楼梯边、船员工作室也没有人。我想尼摩船长也许是在驾驶室，我们最好还是等着，于是我们三人又回到了客厅。我这里就不讲加拿大人是如何大声咒骂的了。这是一个让他发火的好机会，我希望他的坏脾气都能尽情发泄出来，所以我没有回应他一句。

这样过了大概20分钟，我们尽力想去听清楚“鹦鹉螺”号里发出的一些最轻微的声音。这时候，尼摩船长走进了客厅。他好像没有看见我们。他的面容经常是很镇定又没有表情的，但现在却露出一些不安的情绪。他静静地看看罗盘和压力表，把手指放在平面图上南冰洋的这一部

分。

我不想打断他的思路。直到过了一刻钟的时间，当他转过身子面向我的时候，我才拿他在托列斯海峡对我说的一句话反问他：

“船长，是偶然事件吗？”

“不，”他回答道，“先生，这一次是意外事件。”

“很严重吗？”

“可能很严重。”

“会有危险吗？”

“没有。”

“‘鹦鹉螺’号触礁了吗？”

“是的。”

“这次是因为什么触礁的呢？”

“是由于大自然的任性胡来，而不是由于人们的笨拙无能。我们的指挥驾驶并没有出一点错误。可是，我们不能阻止平衡力发生作用。人们可以违背人为的法则，但却不能抵抗自然的法则。”

尼摩船长在这个时候还来做这种哲学思考，真是太让人惊奇了。不管怎么说，我觉得他的答复对我没有起到一点帮助作用。

“先生，”我继续问道，“我可以问问这次事故发生的原因吗？”

“一群庞大的冰块，整整一座冰山，倒了下来。”他回答我说，“当冰山底部或受温热的水流或受来回水流的冲击减损的时候，它们的重心就会往上移。那时，它们就会发生大的翻转。现在的情形就是这样。‘鹦鹉螺’号在水底行驶的时候碰上了一个大的翻倒的冰群。这个冰群从船身下溜过。‘鹦鹉螺’号被冰群那巨大的力量顶了起来，被带着到了浅一些的水层，然后就不动了。”

“如果我们把储水池里的水都排出去，使船重新获得平衡，那么‘鹦鹉螺’号不就能脱身了吗？”

“目前就是在做这个工作，先生。您可以听到抽水机正在抽水的声音。请看一下压力表上的指针，它显示‘鹦鹉螺’号正在往上升，但是同时冰群也在跟‘鹦鹉螺’号一齐向上升，一直要到这个冰群被一个障碍物阻挡住，我们才有可能脱身。”

果然，“鹦鹉螺”号一直向右倾斜着倒在那里。只有当冰群停下来的时候，它才可能恢复平衡。但在这个时候，谁知道我们会不会碰到冰山的上部，被挤在两个冰面中间呢？

我想着我们现在所处的环境可能会面临的一切后果。

船长不停地注视着压力表。自打撞上冰群后，“鹦鹉螺”号只上升了150英尺左右，但它一直是倾斜的。忽然，我们觉察到从船壳上传来的一种轻微的移动。很显然，“鹦鹉螺”号恢复了一点平衡，站起一点来了。悬挂在客厅中的东西分明回到了它们原来的位置，墙板已接近垂直。我们谁也没有说话，仿佛能听到心脏跳动的声音。我们一直看着，感觉船立了起来，我们脚下的地板又变为横平面的。

10分钟过去了。

“‘鹦鹉螺’号终于恢复平衡，站起来了！”我喊道。

“是的。”尼摩船长说道，同时他向客厅的门走去。

“不过，我们能浮上去吗？”我问他。

“当然能浮上去。”他回答说，“因为储水池还没有排水，排水后，‘鹦鹉螺’号自然就可以浮上海面。”

船长离开片刻，我看见船员们在得到他的命令后停止了操作，“鹦鹉螺”号不再上升了。是的，它可能碰到了冰山的底部，让它留在水中会更好一些。

“我们侥幸脱险了！”葛瑟尔说道。

“是的，如果没有脱险，我们就可能在这些冰块中间被压扁，至少会被困住，因为没有充足的空气……是的，我们侥幸脱险了！”

“让它完蛋好了！”加拿大人小声嘀咕着。

我不想与加拿大人做无谓的争辩，于是没有回答他。而且，嵌板在这时候打开了，外面的光线透过嵌板的玻璃照了进来。

就像我说得那样，我们现在完全是在水中。不过，在“鹦鹉螺”号两边，相距10米左右的距离，各竖起了一道雪白炫目的冰墙。船的上下两方也有同样的冰墙。在船的上面，因为被冰山下层的冰面遮了起来，所以就像多了一个宽阔的天花板。在船的下面，因为倒下去的冰块在慢慢滑下去的过程中遇到了两侧的冰墙，并找到了一个支点后就不动了，所以也维持着它目前的这种位置。“鹦鹉螺”号是被困在冰洞里了。这冰洞宽约20米，里面都是平静的水。所以，如果它要从这冰洞里出来并不困

难，或向前进，或向后退，然后再往下行数百米，走到冰山下面就可以找到一条通路了。

客厅天花板上的灯熄灭了，但还是有亮的光线照射进来。那是来自四面冰墙的强烈反射，它们把“鹦鹉螺”号探照灯的光强烈地反射进客厅中来了。对于光线在这些任意切割的冰群上所发出的光线，我简直不能用语言来描述，冰上的每一角度、每一条棱、每一个面，都按着分布在冰上的线脉的不同性质，发出种种不同的光线。这就像一个令人炫目的巨大的珠宝玉石矿藏，特别是青色玉石的青线、蓝宝石的蓝光和玻璃翠的碧光交织在一起，使得处处都有无限柔和的蛋白的色调，这些光散布在晶莹的冰群的尖点中间，就像有许多双目不能直视的亮眼的钻石一样。此时，探照灯的光力增加了百倍，就像灯光通过了巨大灯塔的凸镜那样。

“好美！好美！”葛瑟尔叫了起来。

“是的！真美！”我说，“真好看。尼德·兰，是不是？”

“是的！真美！”尼德·兰回答说，“真华美！真壮观！我真恨自己，我不得不这样说。人们从没有看过这样的景象，不过这景象可能需要我们付出很大的代价。直说的话，那我想，我们眼前所看到的景色是上帝不许人的眼睛看到的！”

尼德·兰说得对。这真是太美了，实在不像是凡人所能看到的景色。

忽然，葛瑟尔喊了起来，我回过头来问道：“什么事？”

“先生快把眼睛闭起来！先生不要看了！”

葛瑟尔说这话的时候，急忙用手遮住了眼睛。

“老实人，你怎么了？”

“我眼花了，我看不见了！”

我向玻璃那里看过去，但我的眼睛忍受不住那强光。

我知道是怎么回事了。“鹦鹉螺”号正在快速前进，所有冰墙上那些静止的光忽然变成了像雷电发出的光芒。这数亿万“钻石”发出的晶光混合起来了，在推动机的推动下，“鹦鹉螺”号正在一个电光熔炉中行驶。

这时，客厅的嵌板又关闭了起来。当我们的眼睛受到光线过度猛烈的照射后，眼睛上似乎出现了重影，一直有光线附着在眼膜上。我们把两只手按在眼睛上，过了好些时候才让眼中的纷乱得以恢复。这时候，我们才敢把双手放下来。

“天哪，我从没有见过这样的景象！”葛瑟尔说。

“我也从没有见过！”加拿大人回答道。

葛瑟尔又说：“看惯了这些自然界的神奇景象后，当我们回到陆地上的时候，对于陆地上那些由贫乏可怜的人手造出来的简陋的小东西，我们会怎么想呢？不！人类居住的世界对于我们来说真是太没意思了，不值得我们注意！”

这样的话从一个冷淡的佛莱蒙人口中说出来，可以看出我们已经兴奋到了何等程度。可是，加拿大人却伺机浇了一盆冷水。

“人类居住的世界！”他摇摇头说，“你放心吧，葛瑟尔。我们回不

去了！”

那时是早晨5点。这个时候，“鹦鹉螺”号的前端又发生了一次撞击。我知道那是它的冲角碰上了一个大的冰群。这可能是由于不慎驾驶导致的，因为这条海底地道满是冰群，并不容易行驶。因此，我想，尼摩船长可能是在改变路线，或是绕过那些障碍物，或是沿着地道的弯折处行驶。总之，“鹦鹉螺”号并没有完全被阻止，依然可以前进。但是，完全出乎我意料的是，“鹦鹉螺”号显然是在向后倒退。

“我们是要倒回去吗？”葛瑟尔问道。

“是的。”我回答说，“恐怕再往前走，这个地道是没有出口的了。”

“那么……”

“那么，”我说，“很简单，我们倒回去，从另一个口出去就可以了。”

我这样说是想表示我心里很镇定，但实际上并非如此。这时，“鹦鹉螺”号倒退着行驶，速度愈来愈快，机轮倒着转，带着我们疾驰而去。

“我们要被耽搁时间了。”尼德·兰说。

“早几个钟头或晚几个钟头都没关系，只要能出来就行。”

我不停地从客厅到图书室来回走着，我的同伴们坐在那里一言不发。不久后，我躺在长沙发上，拿起一本书，开始机械地看起来。一刻钟后，葛瑟尔走过来，对我说：

“先生，您看的这本书很有趣吗？”

“很有趣。”我回答道。

“我想也是很有趣。先生看的是先生写的书呢！”

“是我写的书吗？”

正是，我手中拿着的是那本《海底的神秘》。我真是没想到会这样。我把书合起来，又来回地走起来。尼德·兰和葛瑟尔两人站了起来，要离开。

“朋友们，请留下吧。”我拉住他们说，“我们留在这里，直到我们走出这条走不通的道路。”

几个小时过去了，我时不时地去看那挂在客厅墙壁上的机械压力表，表针指示，“鹦鹉螺”号一直维持在300米深的一个水层，罗盘总是指南，测程器显示行驶速度是每小时20海里。就一个很窄的水道来说，这是很快的速度了。尼摩船长知道船不能行驶得过快，但这个时候，几分钟感觉就像几个世纪一样漫长。

8点25分左右，“鹦鹉螺”号又发生了第二次碰撞。这一次是在船的后部。我开始面色发白。我的同伴们走到我的身边。我拉着葛瑟尔的手，我们面面相觑，都没有说话，只是用眼睛示意，这比用语言来表达我们的想法好像会更为直接一些。

这个时候，尼摩船长走进了客厅，我迎上向前去问道：“南边的路也堵住了吗？”

“是的，先生。冰山翻倒的时候把所有的出口都堵住了。”

“我们是被困住了吗？”

“是的。”

第十六章 缺少空气

就这样，“鹦鹉螺”号的四周都是不可能通过的冰墙，我们成了冰山的俘虏。加拿大人用他那粗大的拳头拍打着桌子，葛瑟尔则沉默不语。我直直地盯着船长。他的面容又恢复了平常冷淡、严肃的表情，他两手交叉着，似乎在思考着什么。“鹦鹉螺”号不动了。这个时候，船长说话了，他镇定地对我们说：

“先生们，在目前我们所处的情况下，有两种死的方式。”

这个神秘人物好像一位数学教师在给他的学生解答算术题。他说：

“第一种死的方式是被压死，第二种死的方式是被闷死。没有饿死的可能，因为‘鹦鹉螺’号储藏的粮食还有很多，足够我们吃的，所以我们就来考虑一下压死或闷死的可能性。”

“船长，”我回答说，“我们不用怕闷死，因为储藏库还有满满的空气。”

“对，”船长接着说，“可是这些空气只能使用两天，现在我们在水中已经待了36个小时了，‘鹦鹉螺’号污浊的空气需要换了。到48小时的时候，我们储藏的空气就会用完。”

“那么，船长，我们只要想办法在48小时前脱身就可以了。”

“至少，我们应该想个办法把围住我们的冰墙凿开。”

“从哪一面凿呢？”我问道。

“通过探测器我们就会知道。我会让‘鹦鹉螺’号搁浅在下部冰层，然后让我的船员穿上潜水衣下去，从冰墙最薄的地方凿开冰山。”

“可以把客厅的嵌板打开吗？”

“可以，‘鹦鹉螺’号已经停下来了。”

尼摩船长离开了。不久后就传来了哨声，我知道是储水池在储水。不久，“鹦鹉螺”号又慢慢下沉了，停在了350米深的冰层底下，也就是冰山下部的冰层潜入水底的深度。

“朋友们，”我说，“形势很严峻，但我相信你们可以拿出自己的勇气和力量来。”

“先生，”加拿大人回答我说，“现在不是用咒骂来惹您讨厌的时候。我准备为了大家共同的安全牺牲一切。”

“好样的，尼德·兰。”我伸出大拇指，向加拿大人说道。

“我还要说，”他补充说，“我使铁锹就和使鱼叉一样灵活，如果我能帮上什么忙，就请船长随便吩咐我吧。”

“他一定不会拒绝你的帮助的。请跟我来，尼德·兰。”

我带着加拿大人到了“鹦鹉螺”号船员换潜水衣的房间。我把尼德·

兰的提议告诉了船长，船长欣然接受了。加拿大人也穿上了他的潜水衣，一会儿后，他就跟所有的同伴们一样准备好了。每人背上都背着一个洛克鲁尔空气瓶，里面是由储藏库供应的大量的新鲜空气。对“鹦鹉螺”号的空气储藏库来说，这是一次大量的然而又是非常必要的支出。至于兰科夫灯，在这满是光亮的明亮的海水中似乎用处就不是那么大了。

当尼德·兰准备好装备后，我又回到了客厅。客厅的嵌板被打开了，我站在葛瑟尔旁边，仔细地看那困住“鹦鹉螺”号的周围的冰层。

几分钟后，我们看见十多个船员下到了水里，其中有尼德·兰。因为他身材高大，很容易就可以认出。尼摩船长也跟他们在一起。

在穿凿冰墙之前，尼摩船长让人先进行了各种探测工作，以保证穿凿工作是向着正确的方向进行的。他们把很长的探测绳放入上下两面的冰墙。上面到了15米，仍然被厚厚的冰墙挡着，所以从上层冰墙来开凿是不太现实的，因为那就是400米高的冰山本身。于是尼摩船长又使人探测下部冰层的厚度。下部有10米厚的冰板把我们与海水隔开。这片冰场大概10米厚，也就是说要把这个冰场凿开一片，凿开的大小等于“鹦鹉螺”号从浮标线上计算的面积。凿开这么一个大孔后，我们就可以从这个孔下到冰面的下面去。这大约需要挖掘6500立方米的冰。

工作马上就开始了，每个人都在全力以赴。他们没有在“鹦鹉螺”号周围挖掘，因为这样可能会给“鹦鹉螺”号造成更大的困难。尼摩船长带着人在距离船左舷约8米远的地方画了一个巨大的圆圈。他带着船员们就在这圆圈周围的好几个地方开始同时挖掘。铁锨不停地凿着坚硬的冰，一块一块的冰从冰层上被凿了下来。由于重力作用，这些冰块没有什么重量，于是纷纷跑到了冰山顶上。这样一来，下面的冰层就变薄

了，而上面的冰层反而增厚了。但没关系，我们是要从下面通过，至少下面的冰层被削薄了。

经过约两小时的努力工作，尼德·兰疲倦不堪地回来了。他和他的同伴们被其他人员替换了下来。这次，葛瑟尔和我也加入进来了。“鹦鹉螺”号的大副来指导我们工作。海水特别凉，但当我挥动铁锹不久后就暖和起来了。虽然是在30度的气压下劳作，但挥动起铁锹来还是很轻松自在的。

工作了两小时后，我回到船舱吃了点东西，休息了一会儿。我觉得洛克鲁尔气瓶供应给我的新鲜空气与已经有很多二氧化碳气体的“鹦鹉螺”号船中的空气很是不同。船舱里的空气已经48小时没有换过了，已经变得非常污浊。可是，12个小时过去了，在画出的冰圈上，我们只挖去了约1米厚，也就是约600立方米的冰。假定每12小时可以挖去同样多的冰，那么要完全完成这个工作，还要五夜四天的时间。

“五夜四天的时间！”我对我的同伴们说道，“但储藏库中的空气只够我们用两天了。”

“并且，”尼德·兰补充说，“这还没算上假如我们逃脱这座魔鬼监狱后，可能还要被困在冰山下，仍然不能立即呼吸到上面的空气！”

这个想法是正确的。那时谁能预料到我们得救所需要的最少的时间是多少呢？在“鹦鹉螺”号回到水面之前，我们不就会因缺氧窒息而死了吗？难道“鹦鹉螺”号连同它上面的所有人都注定要死在这冰冻的坟墓里了吗？形势十分不容乐观。但人人都在正视这个问题，并决心各尽所能，坚持到底。

跟我想的一样，夜间的时候，我们又从这巨大的圆圈中挖去了一片

1米厚的冰。但是，到了早晨，当我穿上了潜水衣，走进零下六七度的海水中时，我看到旁边的冰墙又渐渐地连接起来了。而且，离我们开凿的水坑远一点的水，因为人们的劳作没有使它变温，又现出了要结冰的态势。面前又出现了新的危险，我们还有得救的机会吗？这种海水的冻结，可能把“鹦鹉螺”号的船壳像压玻璃一样压碎，那么，该怎么来防止这种情况的发生呢？

我并没有告诉我的两个同伴我们要面临的这个危险，以免打击到他们做这种艰苦救护工作的勇气。不过，当我回到船上的时候，我把这个情况向尼摩船长提了出来，要他注意可能要面临的这种严重复杂的情形。

“我知道这件事。”他对我说。他总是这样，即使出现了最可怕的意外也不能改变他的镇定。“这就是又多了一个危险，我不知道要用什么方法躲过去。我们得救的唯一机会，就是我们的工作要比海水冻结得快。问题的关键在于谁先抢在前面。”

“抢在前面！”我早就应该想到这一点了。

这一天，在好几个钟头的时间内，我坚持顽强地挥动着铁锹。这工作支持和鼓励着我。并且，在外工作就等于会离开“鹦鹉螺”号，直接呼吸那现从储藏库取来的、由空气瓶供应的新鲜空气，也就是说可以离开那污浊的船舱里的空气。

到了晚上，我们又挖去了近1米的冰层。当我回到船上时，呼吸着那饱和的二氧化碳空气，我差不多要窒息了。啊！为什么我们没有办法消除这种有害的气体呢？我们并不缺少氧气。这海水中含有大量的氧气，我们可以使用强力电池把它分解出来，然后让那刺激污浊的空气恢

复到原来的状态。我想过这件事，但并不好实行。因为，我们呼吸所产生的二氧化碳气体已经侵入到船上的各个部分。要收集二氧化碳气体，必须把氯化钾放在玻璃管中，不停地摇动玻璃管。可是船上没有氯化钾，也没有其他可以替代的物质。

这一晚，尼摩船长不得不打开空气储藏库的排气口，放出一些新鲜的空气到“鹦鹉螺”号内部。不这样做的话，也许我们早上就醒不过来了。

第二天，3月26日，我又开始做矿工的工作，要把第5米的冰块挖出来。此时，冰墙两侧和底层的冰层显然又加厚了。看得出，这些冰块在“鹦鹉螺”号可能脱身之前会都凝结起来。我一时感到非常绝望。我的铁锹就要从我手中掉下来了。再挖有什么用呢，我就要因窒息而死了，而且还是被这像石头一样的冰层压扁，就是再残酷野蛮的人也没有发明出这样一种酷刑呀。这就好像我是被夹在一个怪物的牙床里面，无法抵抗，而怪物却在逐渐收紧它的利齿。

这个时候，尼摩船长在指挥大家工作，他自己也在工作，他从我身边走了过去。我用手把我们所处的由冰层形成的监狱的墙壁指给他看。此时，船右舷的冰墙离“鹦鹉螺”号的船身已经不到4米了。

尼摩船长懂我的意思。他向我做了一个手势，让我跟着他走。我们回到船上。脱下潜水衣后，我随着他走到了客厅。

“阿勒纳斯先生，”他对我说，“我们要使用些特殊的奇妙的方法了，不然的话，我们就要被封在这逐渐凝成一体的冰中，就像被封在石灰中那样。”

“是的！”我说，“但应该怎么做呢？”

“啊！”他喊道，“我的‘鹦鹉螺’号是不是有足够的力量可以支持住这种压力而不至于被压扁呢？”

“那又会如何呢？”我问道。我不明白船长的意思。

“您不明白吗？这海水的冻结可以帮助我们！您没看见因为海水的凝结可以炸开那困住我们的冰场吗？就像它在凝结的时候可以炸开最坚硬的石头那样。您不觉得它并不是毁灭人的力量，而是拯救人的力量吗？”

“是的，船长，或许是这样的。但是，不管‘鹦鹉螺’号有怎样的力量，它都不可能抵挡得住那大得吓人的压力，它会被压扁的，压成一片钢叶。”

“先生，我能想到这点。那么，如果这样的话，我们就不能指望大自然的帮助而只能完全靠我们自己了。那就得反抗这种凝结作用，就得消除海水的凝结。现在不单是‘鹦鹉螺’号两侧的冰墙愈来愈靠近了，而且‘鹦鹉螺’号前后也只剩下不到10英尺的海水了。海水的凝结在从各个方向向我们靠拢。”

“储藏库中的空气，可以维持到什么时候？”我问船长。

“后天，后天储藏库里的空气就用完了！”船长回答道。

我被吓出了一身冷汗。不过，对于他的这个答案，我有必要感到惊讶吗？3月22日，“鹦鹉螺”号潜入了南极的水底下。今天是3月26日，5天来，我们完全靠着船上储存的空气生活，而最后仅剩的新鲜空气又要留给工作人员。就是现在我在写这些经历的时候，我对这些事情的印象还是十分深刻。我全身战栗起来，恐惧布满了我的全身，好像我的肺叶

中已经没有了空气一样。

可是，尼摩船长站着一动不动，一言不发，他在思考。很显然他已经在心里打定了一个主意，但他好像又不太接受这个主意，自己又否定了自己的答案。后来，他低声说：“开水。”

“开水？”我重复道。

“是的，先生。我们现在是被关在一个相当狭窄的空间里。如果不断地从‘鹦鹉螺’号的抽气机喷射开水出来，不是可以提高这空间的温度，延缓水的冻结吗？”

“这倒可以一试。”我坚定地说道。

“那我们就试一试吧，教授。”

那个时候，外面的温度表显示是零下7度。尼摩船长带我走进厨房，那里有许多复杂的蒸馏器，通过蒸发作用来供应我们可以喝的开水。此刻，机器装满了水，电池释放出来的所有电热都被传导到浸在水中的螺旋管中去了。几分钟后，水就达到了沸点。然后，我们把开水送入抽气机中，在放出开水的同时又有冷水进来，以补充流出去的开水。电池发出的热力大得惊人，从海中吸进的凉水经过机器，一到抽气机中就成了沸水。

我们开始往外放开水。大约过了3个小时后，外面的温度表显示是零下6度，温度提高了1度。又过了2个小时后，温度表显示是零下4度了。

看到这种工作的进展情况后，我开始从许多地方加以检查，我对船长说：“我们一定可以成功的。”

“我想是可以成功的。”船长回答我说，“至少我们不至于被压扁了，但我担心的是我们还是会窒息。”

到了夜间，水的温度又提高了一度，再往外放开水已经不能使温度再提高了。但海水只有再下降两度才会凝结，因此，这就可以保证我们不至于被冻住了。

3月27日，6米厚的冰从这冰层中被挖去了，还剩下4米厚的冰需要挖。也就是还需要我们合力工作48小时。此时，“鹦鹉螺”号内部的空气已经不可能被更换了，因此这一天的情形就更糟糕了。

一种难以忍受的污浊空气让我感到非常难受。到下午3点左右，我实在难以忍受这种痛苦了。即使打个呵欠、喘口气都会让我的上下颚变得扭曲。我的肺迫切需要新鲜的空气。空气是呼吸所必不可少的东西，现在却愈来愈稀薄了。我完全处于昏昏沉沉的状态中，甚至连躺下来的力气都没有，我几乎要失去知觉了。我忠实的朋友葛瑟尔也跟我一样，受着同样的折磨。他留在我身边，再不离开我。他拉着我的手，不断地鼓励我。我还听到他低声说：

“如果我可以不呼吸，让先生有多一些的空气该多好！”

听到他说这话，我眼中不觉蓄满了泪水。

对我们所有人来说，待在船上都觉得非常难受，所以轮到我们自己去挖冰的时候，人人都很迅速地、很高兴地穿上潜水衣，要立即出去工作。铁锹碰在冰层上咚咚作响。胳膊累了，手破了，但这些算得了什么，这些伤口有什么要紧！总算可以呼吸到新鲜空气了！总算可以呼吸了！总算可以呼吸了！

可是，没有谁会超出指定的时间，延长自己在水下工作的时间。每个人工作完以后，就将新鲜空气的气瓶交给同伴。尼摩船长自己先做出了榜样，他第一个遵守了这种严格的纪律规定。时间到了，他把他的空气瓶给了另一个人，回到船上有害的空气中。他总是那么镇定，从不示弱，也从不发一句怨言。

这一天，我们更好地完成了工作，只剩下2米的冰需要挖去了。把我们与自由的海水隔开的，只有2米的冰了。可是，储藏库的新鲜空气已经所剩无几了。剩下的一些空气只能留给工作人员使用了，一点也不能供应给“鹦鹉螺”号了！

当我回到船上的时候，我几乎要窒息了。这一晚好难熬呀！我简直不知道该怎么来描写这种痛苦。第二天，我感觉呼吸不畅。头痛又加上了昏沉、发晕，我现在就像一个喝醉的人。我的同伴们也经历着跟我一样的痛苦。有些船员已经呼吸急促并且发喘了。

这一天，只剩下第六层的最后1米冰了，尼摩船长觉得用铁锹挖得太慢了，决定用高压来冲开那把我们和底下海水分开的冰层。这个人直到现在还保持着他一贯的冷静和镇定。他在用他的精神力量来抑制肉体上的痛苦。他缜密地思考、计划，然后一丝不苟地执行。按照他的命令，船减轻了重量，也就是说，由于重力的变化，“鹦鹉螺”号从冰冻的一层浮了起来。当它浮起来的时候，人们就开始想办法把它拖到照它的浮标线所画出并挖出的巨大坑里。然后，让它的储水池装满水，这样，它开始下降，沉在了水坑里。

这时候，所有的船员都回到了船上，与外界相连的两扇门都紧闭了起来。“鹦鹉螺”号这时是躺在冰层上的，这个冰层只有1米厚，并且已经有千百处被探测器钻通了。

储水池的龙头完全打开了，100立方米的水流了进来，让“鹦鹉螺”号的重量增加了10万公斤。

我们静静地等待着，忘记了自身的痛苦，仍然怀抱着希望。我们好像在赌博，能否得救，完全就看这最后一击了。虽然我的脑子不断地发出嗡嗡声，头昏得要命，但不久后我还是听到了来自“鹦鹉螺”号船身下的颤抖声。冰层破裂了，发出奇怪的声响，就像撕纸时候的声音一样——“鹦鹉螺”号渐渐地沉下去了。

“我们穿过去了！”葛瑟尔在我耳边低声说道。

我说不出口，只能紧紧地抓着他的手。我完全不由自主地在抽搐，紧紧地握住了他的手。

突然间，“鹦鹉螺”号被它过重的重量裹挟着，像一颗炮弹般沉入了水中，就是说，它掉下去了，穿过了冰层，像在真空中尽可能快地下沉一样掉下去了！

于是，船长命令把所有的电力都传输到抽水机上，抽水机开始快速地把储水池中的水排出。几分钟后，下降停止了。又过了没多久，压力表显示，“鹦鹉螺”号在上升了。推进器全速开动，船身的钢板发出了震动声，似乎都能感觉到螺丝钉在动。“鹦鹉螺”号带我们向北方驶去。

但是，现在从冰山下航行到自由海，还需要多少时间呢，需要一天吗？如果是这样的话，那我仍免不了要死在前头了。我半躺在图书室的长沙发椅上，几乎不能呼吸了。我的面孔开始发紫，我的双唇已经变蓝了，我身体的所有器官好像都失灵了，肌肉也动不了。我看不见也听不到了。我感觉不到时间了。对于这样的时间我经历了多久，我简直无法估量。但我忽然意识到了我临死的痛苦，我知道我是快要死了……

一下子，我苏醒了过来。几口空气进入了我的肺中。我们是升到水面上了吗？我们是越过冰山了吗？

不是！那是尼德·兰和葛瑟尔，我的两个忠实的朋友，他们在牺牲自己救我。一个气瓶里面还有些剩余的空气，他们没有用，而是给我保存了起来，当他们快要窒息的时候，却把一点一滴的生命留给了我。我要把气瓶推开，他们扯住我的手，于是我又很快意地呼吸了一会儿空气。

我向大钟看去，这个时候正是上午11点。这天应该是3月28日。此刻，“鹦鹉螺”号正以每小时40海里的惊人速度行驶着。它简直就像在海水中做着痛苦的挣扎。

尼摩船长在哪儿？他还活着吗？他的同伴们是否跟他一起牺牲了呢？这时候，压力表显示，我们距离水面只有20英尺了。也就是说，只有一个冰层把我们与大气分开了。我们能冲开它吗？“鹦鹉螺”号就在做这个工作。是的，我感觉到它倾斜了，后部下降了，将前面的冲角挺了起来。水装进去以后，就足以使它发生倾斜。然后，在它的强力推进器的推动下，它从冰层下面像一架强大的攻城机一样冲了上去。它先是逐渐撞击冰层，然后退了下来，再加足马力全速向裂开的冰层冲过去。最后，随着极大的冲击力，它跳上了被它的重力所撞碎的冰面。

嵌板打开了，可以说是拔开了，新鲜的空气像潮水一般涌入“鹦鹉螺”号船舱的每个角落。

第十七章 从合恩角到亚马孙河

我都不知道我是怎么到甲板上来的。可能是加拿大人把我抱上来的。我终于呼吸到大海上那让人兴奋的新鲜空气了。我的两个同伴站在我的旁边，他们也尽情地呼吸着这新鲜的空气。不幸受苦的、长久没有吃东西的人们，是不能马上尽情乱吃饱餐一顿的。但我们不一样，我们用不着节制，我们可以尽其所能让自己的肺充分吸收这海面上的空气。而给我们送来这种快意迷醉的，正是那海风，正是那海风！

“啊！”葛瑟尔说，“空气，真好！先生，我们不用再担心呼吸困难了！现在不缺空气了，人人都有可以呼吸的空气了。”至于尼德·兰，他没有说话，只是张开大嘴尽情地呼吸着，那张开的嘴简直让鲨鱼看了都会害怕。加拿大人好像一个正在燃烧的火炉，正在那里拼命地“抽气”呢。

我们很快就恢复了力气。看了一下我们周围，我发现，甲板上只有我们三个人，没有一个船上的人员。尼摩船长也不见了。“鹦鹉螺”号上奇怪的水手们仅仅呼吸那流通到船舱内的空气就满足了，居然没有一个人出来享受这外面的新鲜空气。

我说的第一句话是对我的两个同伴表示感激和感谢的话。在漫长痛苦的最后数小时，是尼德·兰和葛瑟尔延续了我的生命，我真的不知道该怎么样来报答他们的这种牺牲精神。

“行了，教授，”尼德·兰回答我说，“这件事值得拿出来说说吗？这件事有什么值得称赞的地方呢？一点都没有。这只是一个简单的算术问题。您的生命比我们的生命有价值，所以应该救您。”

“不，尼德·兰，”我回答说，“我的生命并没有比你们的更有价值。

谁的生命也比不上善良仁爱的人的生命更有价值，而你们正是这种人！”

“算了！算了！”加拿大人很有些不好意思地一再说道。

“你呢，我忠实的朋友葛瑟尔，你一定也承受了巨大的煎熬吧。”

“老实说，先生，我并没觉得多痛苦。我就是少了几口气，但我觉得还可以挺过去。并且，眼见先生晕过去了，我就一点也不想呼吸了，就像人们说的，这是要了我的命呀……”葛瑟尔觉得自己太啰唆了，不好意思起来，没说完就停住了。

“我的朋友们，”我情绪激动地说道，“我们彼此要永远团结在一起，同时你们有权利让我听你们的……”

“我要使用这个权利。”加拿大人立即说道。

“怎么使用？”葛瑟尔说。

“当我要离开这像地狱一般的‘鹦鹉螺’号的时候，我要使用这个权利拉您跟我一起走。”尼德·兰说道。

“还是说些正经事吧。”葛瑟尔说，“我们现在是朝着北方行驶吗？”

“是的。”我回答说，“因为我们是向着有太阳的方向走，现在有太阳的方向就是北方。”

“不错，”尼德·兰补充说，“不过我们还应该知道，我们是向着太平洋还是向着大西洋走呢？是向往来人多的地方还是荒无人烟的地方走呢？”

对于这点，我就不能给予确定的答复了。现在尼摩船长又回到“鹦鹉螺”号可以获得完全自由的大海中了，我怕他要把我们带到亚洲和美洲之间广阔的太平洋中去，这样他就完成了他的海底环球旅行了。但是，如果我们回到了太平洋，离开所有人居住的地方，那么尼德·兰的计划就要落空了。

对于这一点，不久后我们就得到了明确的答案。“鹦鹉螺”号行驶的速度很快，不久就走过了南极圈，船头向着合恩角的方向驶去。在3月31日晚上7点，我们横穿过了南美洲的这个尖角。

那时，我们忘记了过去经历的所有的痛苦，所有那被困在冰群中的记忆都消失不见了。我们只是想到了自己的将来。尼摩船长并没有露面，在客厅中和甲板上都没有看见他。他的副手每天在地图上记录着行驶的方位，通过这些记录，我了解到了“鹦鹉螺”号所走的确切方向。这天晚上，我非常高兴，因为我发现“鹦鹉螺”号行走的方向很明确，我们是在沿着大西洋的水路到北方去。我把我所观察到的结果告诉了加拿大人和葛瑟尔。

“这是个好消息呀！”加拿大人说，“不过‘鹦鹉螺’号要到哪里去呢？”

“那我可说不准，尼德·兰。”

“尼摩船长会不会等过了南极以后，又要到北极去冒险，然后再从西北方的著名水道回来呢？”

“也不能确定他不这样做。”葛瑟尔回答说。

“那么，”加拿大人说，“我们就不用客气了，恕不奉陪了。”

“不过，”葛瑟尔补充道，“这个尼摩船长确实是一个杰出人物，能认识他，绝不后悔。”

“特别是在要离开他的时候！”尼德·兰立即说道。

第二天，4月1日，“鹦鹉螺”号浮上了水面。中午前几分钟，我们向西远望，望见了海岸。那是火地岛。早期的航海家因为望见岛上土著人的茅屋升起了无数的烟火，于是就给它取了这个名字。

火地岛是一个大的群岛，位于南纬53度至56度、西经67度50分至77度15分之间，长30里、宽80里。看起来它的海岸线很低，但远方却矗立着高高的群峰。我好像望见了萨眠图山，这座山高出海平面约2070米，是由金字塔形的片岩形成的，峰顶很尖。尼德·兰告诉我说，根据这座山是被云雾所遮还是山形可以显露出来，就可以判断天气的好坏。这时候，看上去山峰在天空中清楚地显露了出来。那是好天气的预兆，事实也正是如此。

“鹦鹉螺”号又回到了水面下，接近海岸后沿着海岸走了几海里……从客厅中的玻璃窗望出去，我看见了很长的海藤以及巨大的黑角菜，就是那种带球的海藻，只有南极的自由海中还有一些这样的品种，它们有带黏性的和光滑的纤维带，长度达300米，比大拇指还粗，很坚韧，简直像真正的铁索一样，时常可以被作为船缆使用。另外还有一种叫苇柏菜的海草，叶长约4英尺，缠在珊瑚的分泌物中，像地毯一样铺在海底。它被无数甲壳动物和软体动物，如螃蟹、乌贼等当成巢穴和食物。

在这物产丰富的海底，“鹦鹉螺”号以非常迅速的速度驶过。到了晚上，它走近了马鲁因群岛。第二天，我就可以看见那群岛上的峻峭山峰了。

在这一带海域，我们用渔网打到了很美丽的昆布和品种各异的海带，特别是打到了一种黑角菜，这种黑角菜的根上还带有美味的淡菜。不仅如此，我们还在甲板上打到了十来只海鹅和海鸭，不久它们就都被送到了厨房里。在鱼类方面，我还看到了属于虾虎鱼属的骨鱼，尤其是长约2分米、身上处处有灰白和黄色斑点的杜根鱼。

我也欣赏到了无数的水母。那是马鲁因海中特有的茧形水母，是最美丽的水母属。有时候，它们呈现出半球形，就像很光滑的一把伞，上面有红褐色的条纹，下面垂着12条很有规则的彩带。有的时候，它们又像一个翻过来的花篮，从篮中散出大片红色的叶子和红色的细枝，看上去非常美观。在它们游动的时候，它们摇动着那4只叶状的胳膊，让自己丰富的触须飘摇四散，随便地挂在哪里。我很想保留一些这种精美植虫动物的品种，但它们不过如过眼云烟，一离开原来的海水，就会消失得无影无踪。

当马鲁因群岛最后的高地在水平线上消失不见的时候，“鹦鹉螺”号潜到了20至25米深的水层，沿着美洲海岸继续行驶，而尼摩船长一直也没有出现。

一直到4月3日，我们都没有离开巴塔戈尼亚海岸。“鹦鹉螺”号有时沉在海底，有时浮出洋面。它驶过了拉普拉塔河。4月2日，它横穿了乌拉圭，但是在距离陆地约50海里的海面上横穿过去的。它一直在往北沿着南美洲弯曲延长的海岸线行驶。自从从日本海出发以来，到现在为止，我们已经走了16000千里了。上午11点左右，我们从南回归线西经37度上切过，走过了浮里沃海面。尼摩船长不喜欢让他的船离有人居住的西海岸太近，所以加足马力，以非常惊人的速度驶了过去，这使得尼德·兰大为不快。

这种快速的行驶维持了好几天。到4月9日晚上，我们看到了南美洲最偏东的形成圣罗克角的尖角。但“鹦鹉螺”号到达这里后又躲开了，它潜入了最深的海底，去找寻在这尖角和非洲海岸塞拉·勒窝内之间的海底山谷。这座海底山谷是从安的列斯群岛相同的纬度上分出来的，有大约9000米深。在这里，从大西洋一直到小安的列斯群岛，有一道长约6公里的悬崖，很陡峭。在与绿角群岛相同的纬度上，也有一道差不多一样长的石墙，这样就把整个沉下去的大西洋洲围了起来。这座广大山谷的底层有一些崎岖不平的山脉，使得这海底下的景象非常美丽。我是按照“鹦鹉螺”号图书室中所藏的手稿地图来讲这海底的情形的，这地图显然是尼摩船长亲手绘制的，并且都是根据他个人的观察绘制出来的。

两天内，在这一带荒凉无比、没有任何生命迹象的深水中，“鹦鹉螺”号利用纵斜机板到底下去看过。“鹦鹉螺”号有很长的沿纵对角线，使它可以潜到所有的深水层。但在4月11日，它忽然上升了。在亚马孙河的出口现出了陆地，这是宽大的河口，输出的水量很丰富，把好几里内的海水都冲得没有咸味了。

越过了赤道线，西方约20海里处是几内亚群岛，那是法国的领地，在那里我们可以找到容易藏身的地方。但是海风吹得厉害，汹涌的波浪不容许一只小艇去冒险。对此，尼德·兰一定也了解到了，因为他没有跟我说任何一点。对我个人而言，我也不会主动提起他的逃走计划，因为我不愿意他做那些一定会失败的试验。

还好我还可以做些有趣味的研究，以弥补这次的延误。在4月11日至12日的两天时间内，“鹦鹉螺”号没有离开海面，船上渔网打到的植虫类、鱼类和爬虫类非常丰富，成绩喜人。

有些植虫类是由渔网的锁链拖拽上来的。大部分是那美丽的属海葵

科的须形海藻，还有那大西洋一带海域的特产——背带须形藻。它有着小小的圆筒躯干，有优美的直线纹和红色斑点，头上展开新奇的触须花朵。

对于这一带海域中的鱼类，我还没有机会加以研究，就举下面几种不同的吧。在软骨鱼类中，有化石花斑鱼，这是一种呈鳗色、长约15英寸，有淡青色的头、紫红色的鳍、蓝灰色的脊背，肚腹是鲜明的银白红褐色斑点、眼膜周围由金黄色圈起来的一种很奇特的鱼。它们一般是生活在淡水中的，是亚马孙河水把它们带到了海中来。有很多带肉球的平鱼，这种鱼的脸呈尖形，尾巴很长、很细，像一根齿形的尖刺。有长约1米的小鲨鱼，鱼皮是灰黑带淡白色的，牙齿排成数行，弯曲向后，又称为拖鞋鱼。有蝙蝠鞍鱼，这是一种呈等腰三角形的红色鱼，半米长，胸鳍在突出的肉上，看起来有些像蝙蝠的形状，但在鼻孔边有角质的触角，因此又被称为一角鱼。最后有好几种剑鱼，也叫带甲鱼，这种鱼的两侧有很多刺，呈现出鲜明的金黄色。还有酸刺鱼，它们身上有鲜明的紫色，显出柔和的光泽来，就像鸽子咽喉部分的颜色那样。

最后来说说观察的一组多骨鱼类吧。其中有巴桑鱼，属无翼鳍属，面部颜色雪白，完全呈现钝角形，身上是美丽的黑色，长有一条很长很细的肉质纽带。除此之外，还有多利刺的齿状鱼，发出闪闪的银白色光的3分米长的沙丁鱼，长有两支肛门鳍的卵形鳍鱼，颜色全黑的黑色牙刺鱼——人们经常会点燃火把来钓它们（这是一种2米长的鱼，它的肉很鲜美，味道跟鳗鱼肉差不多，晒干后还带有熏鲜鱼肉的味道）。有只在脊鳍和肛门下长鱼鳞的半红色拉布鱼，有身上有金、银色光辉，又有红玉和黄玉色泽的蜚鱼；有肉非常嫩，身上的磷光时时在海水中显露出来的金尾鲷鱼，有舌头很细小、身上为橙黄色的普比鲷鱼，还有魔鳍金黄的石龙子、黑色硬鳍鱼、苏里南群岛的突眼鱼等。

这个“等”还是阻挡不了我再谈一种鱼。这种鱼葛瑟尔也还记得，因为它是一种很特殊的鱼。

我们的其中一张渔网打到了一种扁平的鳊鱼，把这鱼的尾巴截去，就完全成为一个圆盘状，它重20公斤左右。鱼身下面是白色的，上面是淡红色的，带有深蓝色的圆点，并且圆点周围还有黑圈，表皮很光滑，后面是一支中间开裂的蛤。它被放在甲板上，极力挣扎着，全身抽搐，想翻过身来，它费了很大的力气，最后一蹦，居然又蹦到海里去了。可是葛瑟尔看着这条鱼，立即扑了上去，在我要拦住他的时候，他的两手已经又把鱼抓住了。

接下来，他立即被这个鱼给打倒了，两腿朝向空中，半身麻痹，大声喊着：

“啊！主人，我的主人！您快来救救我。”

这可怜的老实人从不这样称呼我，这是第一次。

加拿大人和我跑过去把他扶了起来，我们用两手急急地摩擦着他，当他恢复过来的时候，这个永远喜欢分类的人用很小的声音低低地说道：

“软骨纲，软鳍目，鳃是固定的，鲐鱼科，电鱼属！”

“是啊，我的朋友。”我对他说，“那是条电鱼，就是因为它，你才弄得这么狼狈。”

葛瑟尔马上接着我的话说：“啊，你是相信我的。不过我要狠狠地报复一下这东西。”

“你想怎么办？”

“吃了它。”

果然，晚上的时候，这鱼就进了我们的肚子，不过这真的只是个报复行为。因为说实话，这鱼的肉并不细腻，还很难咬动。

这种攻击葛瑟尔的鱼，是一种叫伞形的电鱼，非常危险。这种奇怪的动物要是在水这样的导体里，只要几米的距离就可以发动电能来攻击别的鱼类。而且它的发电能力非常强，据研究表明，在它身体两侧带有电量的面积，不少于27平方英尺。

第二天，也就是4月12号，“鹦鹉螺”号已经到了马罗尼河口附近的地方，离荷兰领地不远。在这一带的海上，生活着好几群海牛，它们一起过着群居的生活。这些只是普通的海牛，跟海马以及大海马差不多，同样属于人鱼目。这些外表漂亮的动物，虽说有6米长，重4000公斤左右，但性格温顺，从不害人。

“鹦鹉螺”号上的船员为了充实食品库，便捉了6头海牛，要知道，它们的肉比牛肉和小牛肉还要可口。当然，捕捉海牛没什么技术含量，因为这些温和的动物一点也不懂得反抗。这好几千斤的肉，在晒干后就要储存在船上的食品库里。

这一带海域的物藏真是不少。这一天，大家又在进行打鱼活动了，这样一来，“鹦鹉螺”号的食物储藏就更丰富了。这次捕到的鱼也很多，这种鱼的鱼头有一块突出的椭圆形肉质边缘的薄骨片。这是属于亚鳃软骨目第三科的一种鱼——鲫鱼。顾名思义，这种鱼可以“印”在物体上，因为它们身上有由活动的软骨片组成的平板圆盘，圆盘中间可以弄成真空的，这样就可以像吸盘一样印在物体上了。

打鱼活动结束后，船靠近了海岸。这儿附近有不少海甲鱼安睡在水面，不过想要抓住它们可不太容易，因为它们太敏感了，轻轻一点响动就会被惊醒，而且，锋利的鱼叉对它们那坚硬的外壳也无济于事。但有一点，要是让鲷鱼来捕捉海甲鱼就没问题了。的确，鲷鱼就是个活的钓钩，可以帮助朴实的钓鱼者来获得收益。

用鲷鱼来捉海甲鱼，“鹦鹉螺”号的船员是这么做的：他们在鲷鱼的尾端系了一个很大的环，这个环虽然大，但是并不妨碍它们工作。环上系着一条长绳，再把绳子的一端绑在船上。把鲷鱼投到海里，鲷鱼马上就表现出它们超凡的捕鱼能力。它们用最快的速度游到海甲鱼的胸甲上，牢牢地吸在上面，哪怕被海甲鱼攻击也绝不松开。这样，当把鲷鱼拉回到船上时，被黏住的海甲鱼也就一起被拉回来了。

就这样，捉了好几条海甲鱼，每条都有1米宽，200公斤左右重。它们的胸甲是一层层的又薄又透亮的宽大的骨片，上面布着棕色带黄白色的斑点。因为这胸甲的存在，所以这种鱼显得异常珍贵。而且从食用的角度来说，这鱼也是味美可口的，跟普通的甲鱼差不多。

打完了鱼，我们也就结束了在亚马孙河这一带海域的逗留，当黑夜降临的时候，“鹦鹉螺”号又回到了大海。

第十八章 章 鱼

在这几天内，“鹦鹉螺”号经常会躲开美洲海岸。很显然，它不想到墨西哥湾或安的列斯群岛海中去。那一带海域的海水并不浅，并不是不

适合它航行。那一带海域的平均深度是18000千米。很可能是因为那一带有许多岛屿，有许多汽船往来，所以对尼摩船长来说就不太适合。

4月16日，在距离海岸线30海里左右的位置，我们看见了马丁尼克岛和加德路披岛。甚至某个时刻，我还望见了岛上群山的高峰。

加拿大人打算在墨西哥湾实行他的计划——或者逃到某些陆地上去，或者靠近往来岛屿沿岸的一只船。当他看见“鹦鹉螺”号避开了墨西哥海湾时，他感到很失望。如果在墨西哥海湾，尼德·兰能趁尼摩船长不知情的时候，把小艇夺到手，那逃走的可能性是非常大的。但如今是在大西洋上，那就不用再想逃走的计划了。

对于这件事，加拿大人、葛瑟尔和我谈了很长时间。自从我们来到“鹦鹉螺”号船上做俘虏到现在，已经6个月过去了。我们走了有17000千里。就像尼德·兰说的，那是根本看不到终点的旅程。所以他向我提出了一个建议，这是我完全没有预料到的建议，那就是向尼摩船长干脆利落地提出来——船长是打算把我们无限期地留在他的船上吗？

类似这样一种会谈让我觉得非常为难和厌烦。在我来看，这种会谈是不会有结果的。我们不可能指望“鹦鹉螺”号会回到陆地上去，所以一切都只能靠我们自己了。并且，最近这段时间以来，尼摩船长这个人变得更加沉郁、更不常露面、更不爱交往了。好像他在有意躲着我。我很少有机会能碰到他。以前，他很喜欢给我讲解这海底的神奇，现在他听任我自己看书做研究，几乎不到客厅中来了。

他为什么会这样呢？这是因为什么呢？我并没有做什么对不起他的事或是做错了什么事。难道是在船上让他为难了？不过，我从没奢望过有一天他会恢复我们的自由。

所以，我请尼德·兰在去找船长前让我好好想一下，如果这次会谈没有任何结果，可能会增加船长的猜疑，使我们的处境变得更加困难，对于加拿大人实行起逃跑计划来绝对是有害无利的。我又补充说，我不可能以我们的身体健康为理由请求离开“鹦鹉螺”号。事实上，除了在南极的冰山下我们承受了巨大的痛苦外，尼德·兰、葛瑟尔和我，我们的身体一直都很好。那种卫生的饮食、健康的空气、规律的生活、恒定的温度，决不至于让人生病。而对于一个对陆地没有任何留恋的人来说，对尼摩船长来说，“鹦鹉螺”号就是他的家，他想到哪里就到哪里，他可以朝着他的目的地走去，这在别人看来充满神秘的道路，在他看来就不那么神秘了。对于船长的这样一种生活，我是可以理解的，但是我们不能这样，我们并不能做到与人类完全隔绝。对我个人来说，我也不想让那十分奇异、十分新鲜的研究与我一齐埋葬。我现在有机会来写这样一本关于海洋的真正的书，而我想，这本书早晚有一天是可以公之于世的。

就在这里，在安的列斯群岛海域海水下10米处，从敞开的嵌板看过去，又有多少我应当记在我的日记本上的有趣的海洋生物啊！在许多植虫动物中间，有那名为海扁筒的船形腔肠类，那是一种粗大的长方形膀胱，带着螺钿质的闪光，把它们的膜迎风张开，让它们的蓝触须浮在水中，像丝线一样，看上去就像美丽迷人的水母，但摸上去又像分泌腐蚀性汁液的麻草。在鱼类方面，有长约10英尺、重600磅、属于巨大软骨鱼属的蛇平鱼，它们的胸鳍是三角形的，脊背中间有些突起，眼睛长在头部的最前端，像是船只的残骸，浮来浮去，有时就像不透亮的窗板一样，遮盖住我们的玻璃窗。还有黑白两种颜色的美洲剑鱼，有很长的、多肉、带黄色的鳍和突出颞骨的匣形虾虎鱼，有鱼齿很短很尖、满是细鳞、属于臼脂结的一种、长约16分米的鲭鱼。有从头到尾包括胸腹间带有一条一条的金黄色带、在水中摇动它们那熠熠生辉的鳍、像云层一般

出现的海鲱鲤鱼；有装有碧玉色的条带、穿着丝绒的外衣，像维郎尼斯所画的王公一样在我们眼前走过的金黄的苹果鳍鱼；有胸鳍拨得很快，一下子就不见了的带刺的鲷鱼；有身长约15英寸、被包围在闪闪磷光中的磷光鲸鱼；有拿它们粗大多肉的尾巴搅动海水的鳅鱼；有好像用它们那尖利的胸鳍摇来摇去割海水的红色鲍鱼；有银白色的月光鱼，它们的这个名字取得非常恰当，因为它们在水中升起来的时候，就像发出了许多淡白光线的月亮。

4月20日，我们行驶在平均1500米深的水层。那个时候，跟船最接近的陆地是留加夷群岛。散开的群岛就像铺在海面上的一堆石板。在这一带有很多海底悬崖，就像宽大的铺下的平板大石那样形成一道一道直立的高墙，在墙中间露出许多黑洞来，即使用船上的灯光，也照不到底。

这些岩石上面铺着层层阔大的海产草叶，宽大的昆布类、巨大的黑角菜，简直就像是由海产植物形成的墙壁，就像地下巨人生活的世界。

从上面我们说的巨大的植物，葛瑟尔、尼德·兰和我自然而然地就会谈到这一带海域中的巨大的动物。显然其中有些是作为其他一些动物的食物的。不过，从几乎不动的“鹦鹉螺”号的玻璃窗中看出去，我在那很长的草叶条上看到了腕足门的主要节肢类动物、长爪的海蜘蛛、紫色海蟹、安的列斯群岛海中特有的翼步螺等。

大约是11点左右的时候，尼德·兰让我注意看那巨大昆布间发生的让人害怕的骚动。

“那么，”我说，“这里估计是章鱼的洞窟，在这儿看见一些这种怪异的动物一点也不奇怪。”

“什么？”葛瑟尔说，“是那头足纲的枪乌贼，单纯的枪乌贼吗？”

“不，”我说，“是那身躯巨大的章鱼。尼德·兰一定是搞错了，因为我并没看见什么。”

“我觉得很可惜。”葛瑟尔回答说，“我很想亲眼见见这种大章鱼，这种东西我听人说过很多次了，它还可以把船拖到海底下去呢。这类东西叫克拉……”

“克拉克，吹嘘一下就够了。”加拿大人用讽刺的语气说道。

“克拉肯。”葛瑟尔抢着说道，并没有理会同伴的嘲笑。

“我才不相信世界上有这么一种动物存在呢。”尼德·兰说。

“为什么不相信？”葛瑟尔说，“我们都相信过先生所说的海麒麟。”

“葛瑟尔，我们错了。”

“当然错了！不过一定还有别的人相信它的存在。”

“可能是这样，葛瑟尔，但是，我一定要亲自动手宰过这种怪物才会相信它的存在。”

“那么，”葛瑟尔问我，“先生你也不相信有巨大的章鱼存在吗？”

“哎！有谁会相信它的存在呢？”加拿大人喊道。

“尼德·兰，有许多人会相信的。”

“不是打鱼人，恐怕是学者们吧！”

“不好意思，尼德·兰。打鱼人和学者们都相信它的存在！”

“但是，现在跟您说话的这个人——我，”葛瑟尔神情十分严肃地说，“我记得很清楚，我曾看过一只大船被一条头足类动物的胳膊拉到海底下去。”

“你看见过这个？”加拿大人反问道。

“是的，尼德·兰。”

“是你亲眼看见的吗？”

“对，是我亲眼看见的。”

“那请问是在什么地方看见的呢？”

“在圣马罗港。”葛瑟尔沉着坚定地回答道。

“在海港吗？”尼德·兰用讥笑的语气问道。

“不是，是在一所教堂里。”葛瑟尔回答道。

“在一所教堂里！”加拿大人喊道。

“对，尼德·兰。那是一幅绘着这条章鱼的图画！”

“好嘛！”尼德·兰大笑着说，“原来葛瑟尔先生在逗我玩呢！”

“事实上，他是对的。”我说，“我听人说过这幅画。不过画的主题源于一个传说。你们知道，在谈到生物科学时，我们一般是怎样看待这些传说的，并且，一谈到怪物，人们的想象就会变得丰富起来。不仅有

人说这些章鱼可以拉走船只，并且有一个叫奥拉夫松·马格努斯¹的人说有一条头足类动物，长约1海里，与其说那像一个动物，不如说那像一个岛屿。又有人说，宜都罗斯的主教有一天在一堆岩石上搭了一座神坛做弥撒。做完了弥撒后，这堆岩石就自己动了起来，回到海中去了。这堆岩石原来是一条章鱼呢。”

“说完了吗？”加拿大人问道。

“没有。”我回答说，“另一个主教，庞特匹丹·德·博尔根也说到过这样一条章鱼，在这条章鱼身上甚至可以操练一队骑兵呢！”

“从前的主教们可真能说！”尼德·兰说。

“最后，早期的生物学家也举过一些怪物的例子，它的嘴好像一个海湾，身躯十分巨大，连直布罗陀海峡都过不去。”

“真妙！”加拿大人说。

“在这些故事里面，有一些是真的吗？”葛瑟尔问。

“我的朋友们，这里面没有一个是真的，这些已经超出了真实的界限而走入了寓言或传说的范围，所以都不是真的。不过，讲故事的人都是依据一定的原因进行想象的，这个原因可能不是真实存在的东西，但至少有一个假借的理由。人们不能否认有巨型的章鱼和枪乌贼存在，不过它们都赶不上鲸科动物。亚里士多德曾经确实说过有一条长310厘米的枪乌贼，现在的打鱼人也时常看见身长超过180厘米的枪乌贼。杜利斯提和蒙伯利野的博物馆也收藏有一些长达2米的章鱼的骨骼。此外，根据生物学家的计算，这种动物身长6英尺，但它们的触须却长达27英尺，单凭这一点就足够使它们成为可怕的怪东西了。”

“现在有人捕到过吗？”加拿大人问。

“即使没人捕到过，但至少水手们是看见过的。我的一个朋友，哈夫尔港的鲍尔·博斯船长时常肯定地对我说，他在印度洋中曾经碰见过一条这种身躯巨大的怪物。但最奇怪的，不能否认这些巨大动物存在的，就是数年前，也就是1861年发生的那件事。”

“那是怎样的一件事呢？”尼德·兰问道。

“是这样的。1861年，在特尼里弗岛的东北部，差不多跟我们现在所处的相同的纬度上，通讯舰‘亚列敦’号的船员看见一条巨大的枪乌贼在水中浮游。布格船长驾驶船靠近它后，用鱼叉和枪打它，却没有什么结果，因为枪弹和鱼叉在刺穿它那棉花一般的肉后，就好像插进了完全稀烂的黏液中。经过几次的失败，也没有把它捕上来，最后船上的人员把绳索结扣扣在这个软体动物的身上，这绳索结直滑到了它尾鳍的边上才停了下来。船上的人员想把这怪东西拉上船来，但它的身体十分重，受绳索的拖拉，弄得它的尾巴都掉了，最后它没有了尾巴，便潜入水中不见了。”

“总算有了一件是真的事。”尼德·兰说。

“是一件确切无疑的事，亲爱的尼德·兰。因此有人建议，把这章鱼称为‘布格的枪乌贼’。”

“它有多长？”加拿大人问。

“它不是长6米左右吗？”葛瑟尔一边说着，一边站在玻璃边重新看那崎岖不平的悬崖。

“正是6米长。”我回答说。

“它的眼睛长在额头顶上，那不是生得非常大吗？”

“是的，葛瑟尔。”

“它的嘴是不是跟鹦鹉的一样，尖得不得了？”

“不错，葛瑟尔。”

“那么，先生，打断一下。”葛瑟尔平静地说道，“如果这边的不是布格的枪乌贼，至少也是它的兄弟了。”

我转身看着葛瑟尔，尼德·兰跑到了玻璃窗边。

“真是吓人的东西。”他喊道。

我也跑过去看，我简直被吓得退了回来，不禁生出厌恶的表情。在我眼前走动的正是那让人害怕的怪物，这个真可以列入古代悲剧传说的怪物里面了。

这是一条身躯巨大的章鱼，长约8米。它非常快速地倒退着走着，游走的方向跟“鹦鹉螺”号行走的方向相同。它那海色的呆呆的大眼睛直直地盯着前方。它的8只胳膊，或者说成是8只脚更适合长在它的脑袋上，因此这种动物又有一个头足类的别称。它的脚可以伸得很长，有它身躯的两倍，不断地伸缩摆动，就像那疯妇人的头发一样乱飘。我们清楚地看见了那呈半球形圆盖的、排列在它触须里面的250个吸盘。这些吸盘有时贴在客厅的玻璃上，中间是真空的。这怪东西的嘴，那骨质的嘴，生得像鹦鹉的嘴一样，垂直地或开或合。它骨质的舌头本身有几排尖利的牙，颤抖着露出一副大铁钳。大自然是多么离奇古怪啊！软体动物身上居然长了一个鸟嘴！它的身躯呈纺锤形，中间鼓鼓的，有一个大

肉块，看起来它的重量不下20000到25000公斤，它身上的颜色随着这怪东西情绪的变化极端迅速地改变着，从灰白色陆续变为红褐色。

这个软体动物的情绪为什么会这么起伏呢？一定是因为“鹦鹉螺”号在它面前，“鹦鹉螺”号要比它更大、更吓人，并且它用它的吸盘、脚或者下颚又没法捕捉到“鹦鹉螺”号。可是，这些章鱼是多么吓人的怪物呀！造物者赋予它们的是多么神奇的力量呀！它们得有多大的劲呀，想想它们可是有三个心脏的！

偶然的时机才让我遇上了这枪乌贼，我真的不愿意丢了这个机会，丢了对这个品种小心加以研究的机会。我努力克服自己对它外形的所有厌恶心情，拿了一支铅笔，开始为它写生。

“或者这与‘亚列敦’号看见的是同一个东西吧。”葛瑟尔说。

“不是。”加拿大人回答说，“因为这一条有尾巴，是完整的，而那条是丢了尾巴的。”

“这不能成为理由。”我回答说，“因为这类动物的胳膊和尾巴是可以重新生长出来的，已经过了7年了，布格的枪乌贼是有时间再长出新的尾巴来的。”

“此外，”尼德·兰也紧接着回答说，“如果这条不是它，那许多条中间或者有一条就会是它！”

果然，好些其他的章鱼也出现在了船右舷的玻璃边。我数了一下，一共有7条。它们正随着“鹦鹉螺”号前行，我听到它们的嘴碰在钢板上发出咯咯的声音。我们是它们希望中的食物。我继续着我的观察工作，我看到这些怪东西随着“鹦鹉螺”号在我们两旁的海水中十分准确地保持

着一定的速度，从玻璃窗看出去，就像它们是站着一动不动一样，我简直可以在玻璃上用纸把它们缩小后临摹下来。这个时候，“鹦鹉螺”号行驶的速度很慢。

忽然，“鹦鹉螺”号停了下来。一次冲击使它全身都发出了震动声。

“我们是撞上什么了吗？”我问道。

“总之，”加拿大人回答说，“我们快要摆脱那群怪东西了，因为我们浮起来了。”

“鹦鹉螺”号浮了起来，但它却停着不走了。它的推进器的轮叶没有搅动海水。1分钟过去了。尼摩船长走进了客厅，后面跟着他的大副。

我有好些时间没有看见他了。他的神色看起来很忧郁。他没有跟我们说话，或者可能是没有看见我们。他走到嵌板边，看了一下那些章鱼，然后对他的大副说了几句话。他的大副出去了。不久嵌板便闭合起来，天花板的灯也亮了。

我走到船长面前，对他说：

“这真是新奇的章鱼品种。”我说话时的语气很从容，像一个喜爱鱼类的人在鱼缸前说话时那样。

“是的，教授。”他回答我说，“但我们现在要跟它们进行肉搏了。”

我盯着船长，我没有听明白他说的话。

“肉搏吗？”我重复道。

“是的，先生。‘鹦鹉螺’号的推进器停了。我想是因为有一条枪乌贼

的下颚骨撞进了轮叶中，因此导致船不能动了。”

“您要怎么办？”

“浮上水面，把这条害虫给宰了。”

“这是一件很困难的事情呀。”

“是的。电气弹对这团软肉来说没什么用，如果没有足够的抵抗力，是不足以让电气弹爆炸的。我们还是用斧子砍吧。”

“也可以用鱼叉，先生。”加拿大人说，“如果您不拒绝我加入，我一定会来帮忙。”

“我接受您的帮助，尼德·兰师傅。”

“我们陪您一起去。”我说道。我们跟着尼摩船长向中央楼梯走去。楼梯边有十来个人，拿着冲锋用的斧子，准备出击。葛瑟尔和我，我们拿了两把斧子，而尼德·兰则手执一竿鱼叉。

这个时候，“鹦鹉螺”号已经浮上水面来了。一个水手站在楼梯的最高一级上，把嵌板上的螺钉松了下来。可是母螺旋刚放开，嵌板就十分猛烈地被掀了起来，显然是被章鱼的一只胳膊的吸盘拉住了。很快，有一只长胳膊像一条蛇一样从开口处伸了进来，其他20只胳膊还在上面摇来摇去。尼摩船长只挥了一斧就把这根巨大的触须截断了，它卷曲着从楼梯上滚了下去。

在我们彼此拥挤着走上甲板的时候，它的另外两只胳膊像双鞭一样在空中挥动着，落在了尼摩船长面前站着的那个水手身上，并且以非常大的力气把他卷走了。尼摩船长大喊一声，跳了出去。我们也跟着一齐

跳了出来。

多么惊心动魄的场面啊！这个不幸的人被章鱼的触须缠住，黏在了吸盘上，让这条庞大的卷筒卷着随意地在空中摇来摆去。他不停地喘着粗气，看起来快要窒息了，他叫喊着：“快来救我！快来救我！”他是用法语说的这话，这引起了我的注意。原来船上有一个我的同胞，或者还有好几个我的同胞。这让人听了心碎的呼救声，我一生都无法忘记。

眼看这个不幸的人就要没命了。谁能从这强大的力量中把他夺回来呢？说时迟，那时快，尼摩船长跳到了章鱼的身上，又是一斧头把它的另一只胳膊也砍了下来。他的副手此刻也像疯了一样奋勇地跟那些爬在“鹦鹉螺”号两边的其他章鱼决斗在了一起。船员们各自挥动斧头，开始乱砍乱杀。加拿大人、葛瑟尔和我，我们也拿着我们的武器加入了这场肉搏。一种浓烈的血腥味弥漫在空中，让人心悸。一瞬间，我以为那个不幸被章鱼缠住的人可能已经被人从它那强大的吸盘上救了下来，因为那个章鱼的八只胳膊有七只都被砍下来了，剩下的一只把那个人像一支笔一样在空中挥来挥去。但当尼摩船长和他的副手扑到它身上的时候，这个东西喷出了一道黑色的液体，这是一种从它肚子的一个口袋中分泌出的黑水。结果，我们的眼睛都被弄得看不见了。当这团浓黑色的雾气消散的时候，枪乌贼不见了，跟它一起消失的，还有我那不幸的同胞。

那时的我们是何等的愤怒呀，我们控制不住地要跟这些章鱼拼命！不知是有10条还是12条章鱼已经到了“鹦鹉螺”号的甲板上和两边，我们在甲板上，在混合着鲜血和墨水跳动着的滚来滚去的一条一条的肉段中间，这些动物黏性的触须就像多头蛇的头一样，不一会儿就又生了出来。尼德·兰的鱼叉每一下都准确地刺入了枪乌贼那海色的眼睛中，把它的眼珠挖了出来。可是，我那勇敢的同伴一时没躲开，突然被一条怪

物的触须卷住后掀倒在地。枪乌贼那可怕的嘴对着尼德·兰张开了。这个不幸的人眼看就要被咬为两段了。我急急地跑过去救他，但尼摩船长走在了我的前面，先我一步动了手。他的斧子砍入了章鱼那两排巨大的牙齿中间，加拿大人意外得救了。他站起来后，把整个鱼叉刺入了章鱼的三个心脏中。

“很高兴能有报答您的这个机会！”尼摩船长对加拿大人说。

尼德·兰点点头，没有说话。

这次战斗持续了一刻钟之久。怪物被打败了，有的受伤了，有的死了，最后都给我们让出地方来，滑入水中不见了。

尼摩船长全身血红。他站在探照灯附近，一动也不动，用双眼盯着那吞噬了他的一个同伴的大海，大滴的泪珠从他的眼里流了出来。

[1](#)古挪威的国王。

第十九章 大西洋暖流

我们中间没有一个人能忘记4月20日那天所出现的惊人的场面。我是伴随着强烈的情绪写下来那一幕的。写完后，我把这段记述读了一遍，读给葛瑟尔和尼德·兰听。他们觉得我记述得很正确，就跟实际情形一样，但产生的效果还不够强烈。只有我们诗人中最有名的那位，也就是《海上劳工》的作者才能用他的妙笔把那惊心动魄的情景描绘出来。

我在前面已经说过，尼摩船长用很长的时间盯着那流动的海水。他

真的非常痛苦，难受得不得了。自我们到“鹦鹉螺”号上来，这已经是他失去的第二个同伴了。而且这个同伴死得那么惨！他几乎被章鱼粗大的胳膊压扁了、窒息了，他的身体几乎被章鱼的铁牙床磨碎了，他不能像他的同伴一样在安静的水底珊瑚墓地长眠。

就我个人来说，在这次战斗中，那个不幸的人发出的最后的绝望的呼喊声让我的心都碎了。这个可怜的法国人，忘记了在船上约定使用的语言，用祖国和母亲的语言发出了最后一次的呼救。“鹦鹉螺”号上所有的船员，他们的身心都是跟尼摩船长一起的，他们也跟他一样在躲避人类，而这其中有一个是我的同胞。这个神秘的团体显然是由不同国籍的人组成的。来自法国的只有他一个人吗？这又是不断横在我心头的一个难解的问题。

尼摩船长回他的房间去了，很长一段时间，我都没有再看见他。如果从“鹦鹉螺”号来判断——因为他是整艘船的灵魂人物，船完全能感应到他的情绪——他应该是愁闷、失望和踌躇的。“鹦鹉螺”号并没有沿着一个方向行驶。它像一具死尸一样随波上下。它的推进器已经停止了，或者说它几乎不用推进器了。它没有固定漂流的方向。它又不忍离开那战斗的地方，那吞噬了它的一个亲人的海面。

这样过了10天。一直到了5月4日，“鹦鹉螺”号在巴哈马水道口望见了留加衣群岛后，又向着北方的水道驶去。于是我们沿着海中最大河流的潮水行驶，这条大河有它自己的岸，自己的鱼类和自己的水温。我称这个河为大西洋暖流。

是的，这是一条河流，它在大西洋中自由地流动，而且它的水流跟大西洋的水流互不相混。这是一条颜色很深的大河，比周围海水的颜色还要深。它的平均深度是3000英尺，平均宽度是60海里。在某几处，它

的水流速度是每小时4公里，水容量比地球上任何一个河流的水容量都要大。

按照莫利船长的说法，大西洋暖流的真正水源，也就是它的出发点是在加斯贡尼海湾。在这海湾中的时候，它的水流的温度和颜色还不是很强，但已经开始形成了。它沿着赤道、非洲海岸向南流去，水流受热带地区阳光的照射，日益变得温热起来。它横穿过大西洋，一直到达巴西海岸的三罗格罗，然后分成两个支流，一个支流流入安的列斯群岛海中，尽量吸收那里的温热水分。这个时候，大西洋暖流担负起恢复海上温度平衡的重任，它把热带海水跟北极海水混合了起来，使之保持均衡。在墨西哥湾中，它被晒得非常热，然后沿着北美洲的海岸向北流去，一直流到纽芬兰岛。再然后受台维斯海峡寒流的推送，转折向西，又流入大西洋，在地球这一处的一个大圈上沿倾斜的曲线流动。到北纬43度的位置，暖流又分为两支，其中一支在东北季候风的帮助下，回到加斯贡尼湾和阿苏尔群岛，另一支让爱尔兰和挪威海岸变得温暖后，又流至斯勃齐堡，在那里，它的温度降至4度，成为北极自由流动的海。

此时，“鹦鹉螺”号就是沿着大西洋暖流行驶的。从巴哈马水道口出来，在14里宽、350米深的地方，暖流流动的速度是每小时8公里。越往北，暖流流动的速度越慢。这种规律性的变化是有其存在的必要性的，因为有人已经指出，如果暖流的速度和方向发生了改变，那么欧洲的气候就将变幻莫测。

到了中午时分，我跟葛瑟尔走到了甲板上。我告诉了他关于大西洋暖流的一些特殊性。当我把话讲完后，我让他把手放进水流里面去。

葛瑟尔按照我说的把手放进了水流里，他感到很奇怪，因为他丝毫不感觉不到冷热。

“这是因为，”我说，“大西洋暖流从墨西哥湾出来后，它的温度跟人的体温差不多。暖流就像一个巨大的暖气炉，流经欧洲沿海地区，使得欧洲沿海地区的气候温和，永远有青草绿叶。并且，如果我们按照莫利船长说的那样，把暖流的热力全部利用起来，那么得到的热量可以使一条像亚马孙河或密苏里河一般大的河流永远保持熔点温度。”

这个时候，暖流的速度是每秒225厘米。它的水流跟周围的水流很不一样，因为受到挤压，它的水面突出在洋面上，导致它的暖水和海中的冷水之间凹凸不平。另外，暖流的水因为富含盐质，所以看起来很黑，它呈现出的纯蓝靛色与周围的绿波截然不同。当“鹦鹉螺”号驶入与加罗林群岛同一纬度的位置时，它的冲角进入了暖流，但它的推进器还在海水中搅动，于是，我们可以看到这两种水流的明显的分界线。这个时候，在地中海中很常见的一种鱼——鱼游过来了，它们成群结队地在暖流中游着。

夜间的时候，大西洋暖流的粼粼波光与“鹦鹉螺”号探照灯发出的电光交相辉映，就好像在为我们指路，特别是在天气发生剧烈变化，有暴风雨威胁到我们的时候。

5月8日，“鹦鹉螺”号驶入与北加罗林群岛同一纬度的位置，我们与哈提拉斯角的侧面遥遥相望。在这一海域，大西洋暖流的宽度是7500海里、深度是210米。“鹦鹉螺”号依然像前几天一样随意地行驶着。好像已经没有人管理和监督这艘船了。在这种情况下，我要承认，逃走的计划是很有可能实现的。因为，在有人居住的海岸可以很方便地找到藏身处，而且现在海面上有许多不断往来行驶的汽船，它们中的一些是定期从纽约或波士顿到墨西哥湾去的船只，还有一些是小型的二桅帆船，它们在美洲沿海各地承担着沿岸航行的工作，我们能得到这些船只帮助的希望很大。所以，现在是一个非常好的逃走的机会。即使“鹦鹉螺”号

在离美洲联邦海岸30海里的位置行驶，也没有什么关系。

但突如其来的恶劣天气完全打乱了加拿大人的逃走计划。天气变得很坏。“鹦鹉螺”号走进了常会有暴风的一带海域，这里经常会有台风和旋风，之所以会这样，正是因为大西洋暖流的存在。冒险乘坐一只脆弱的小艇，与不断狂吼的波涛搏斗，那一定会白白送命。尼德·兰本人也认识到了这个现实，所以，虽然只有逃走才能治愈他那发狂的思乡病，但在目前的情况下，他也只好咬紧牙关，再忍耐一些时间了。

“事情必须得有个结果了。”那一天，他对我这样说，“我想，对于这件事，我们必须有个明确的决定。尼摩船长他离开陆地后一直在往北走。但我对您直说了吧，我已经受够南极了，我决不会再跟他到北极去。”

“那怎么办呢，尼德·兰？这个时候，我们是不可能逃走的！”

“我还是坚持我从前的那个主张。咱们必须跟船长谈谈。当我们驶近您祖国沿岸的时候，您没有开口跟他说。但现在到了我祖国的沿岸了，我就要跟他说。过不了几天，‘鹦鹉螺’号就要到达与新苏格兰同一纬度的位置了，那里靠近纽芬兰岛，有很宽阔的海湾，圣劳伦斯河就流入这个海湾中。圣劳伦斯河是我家乡的河，是我生长的城市魁北克的河。每当我想到这个的时候，我就完全控制不住我的愤怒，我的头发都要竖起来了。先生，我情愿跳到海里去！我不愿留在这里！我快闷死了！”

加拿大人显然是忍无可忍了。他的那种坚强、自由的天性让他不可能适应这无期徒刑一般的监牢生活。他的容貌一天一天在改变，他的性格愈来愈忧郁了。我能感受到他所忍受的痛苦，因为我也一样，我也很

想念我的家乡。差不多已经过去7个月了，我们一点也不知道陆地上的消息。还有，尼摩船长的孤独，他脾气的改变——特别是自从那一次与章鱼进行战斗后，他变得更加沉默了，这都让我对与尼摩船长一起航行产生了新的不同的看法。我觉得自己已经没有最初的热情了。在这只有鲸科动物和其他海中生物生活的环境中，只有像葛瑟尔那样的一个佛莱蒙人才能安心地接受。真是的，如果这个老实人没有肺而有腮，我想他完全可以做一条非常了不起的好鱼。

“先生，您觉得呢？”尼德·兰见我沉默不语，又问道。

“尼德·兰，那么，你是想让我去问尼摩船长，他对我们是怀着怎样的意图并有什么打算吗？”

“是的，先生。”

“可是他之前已经说过了，那还有必要再问一次吗？”

“是的，先生。我希望最后一次把这件事情搞清楚，请你就为了我，以我的名义跟他说说吧。”

“可是我很难有机会见到他，而且他好像也在躲我。”

“那你就多了一个去见他的理由，不是吗？”

“尼德·兰，我以后一定去问他。”

“那是什么时候？”加拿大人坚持地问道。

“等我遇到他的时候……”

“阿勒纳斯先生，那你让我去找他谈好吗？”

“不，还是我去找他谈。明天……”

“不，今天。”尼德·兰说道。

“好，就今天，今天我就去见他。”我答应了加拿大人的请求。如果让他自己去的话，我相信他一定会把整件事情搞砸的。

加拿大人回他的房间去了，我独自留在那里。我决定去问问船长，决定现在就去把这件事情办了——我喜欢有事就马上去办，不喜欢拖拖拉拉的。

我回到了我自己的房间。从我的房间中，我可以听到有脚步声从尼摩船长的房间中传来。不应放过这个能遇到他的机会，我在心里默默地对自己说。于是，我走过去，敲了敲他的门，没有人回应。我又敲了一下，然后我用手转动了门锁。

门打开了。我来到房间后，发现船长正弯身坐在工作台前，完全没有注意到我的出现。我暗下决心，一定要得到自己想要的答案，于是，我走近船长。

这时，船长突然抬起了头，皱着眉，粗暴地对我说：“您在这里干什么？”

“船长，我要跟您谈谈。”

“但是，我现在很忙。您就不能让我安静一下吗？”

这种说话方式让我很难接受，但是，既然下定了决心，就绝不退缩。我冷冷地说：“船长，有一件事，我非说不可。”

船长用讥笑的语气对我说：“有什么重要的事？难道您有什么新发现？”他摊开手上的书稿，用严肃的语气对我说，“教授先生，我手上的书稿被译成很多种语言。书稿中记录着我对海洋的研究以及我一生的经历。如果上帝支持，这书稿将会永久地留在这个世界上。我已经在上面签署了名字，并且用一个密封的盒子装好。如果‘鹦鹉螺’号沉没了，那么，最后一个活着的人，将会将它投入大海，海浪会将它送到某个人的手中。”

书稿签署了船长的姓名？那么，他的秘密总有一天会公布于世？接着，我引用他的话说道：“船长先生，我同意您的做法。绝对不能让您的研究成果受到损失，但您是在用很原始粗糙的方法来执行您的计划。谁知道大风会把这盒子吹到哪里去呢？它又会落到什么人手中呢？您就不能再想想其他更好的方法吗？您，或者你们中的一位不可以……”

“不可以，先生。”尼摩船长打断了我的话，急促地说道。

“如果您能恢复我们的自由，我，我和我的同伴们，我们愿意保存这个特别的手稿……”

“自由！”尼摩船长站起来说。

“是的，先生，就是自由，我现在想跟您谈谈。我们在您的船上已经待了7个月了，我今天代表我的同伴和我来问您，您是不是想把我们永远留在您的这艘船上。”

“阿勒纳斯先生，”尼摩船长说，“我今天要跟您说的，就是7个月前我跟您说的：谁进了‘鹦鹉螺’号都别想离开。”

“您这简直就是奴隶制！”

“随便您怎么想吧。”

“可是，奴隶也有恢复自由的权利，随时随地都可能有机会恢复自由，不管是哪种机会，只要他认为是个好机会，都会加以利用的！”

“对于这个权利，”尼摩船长回答说，“谁否认您没有了吗？难道我曾让你们发过誓吗？难道我曾以此把你们束缚住吗？”

尼摩船长两手交叉在胸前，用眼睛紧紧地盯着我。

“先生，”我对他说，“再一次跟您谈这个问题，您肯定不愿意听，我也很不愿意提起。但既然我们已经说到了，就一次说个明白吧。我再重复一次，这不单单是关于我一个人的问题。对我来说，我喜欢研究，研究对我来说是一种帮助，一种有力的精神吸引和转移，一种热情，它可以让我忘掉一切。与您一样，我也愿意自己一个人生活，不求为人所知，只是，我有一个小小的希望，那就是我想把自己的研究成果，在某一天用一个也许不怎么牢靠的盒子装上，让它随波逐流，送给未来的人。总之，在某些方面，我对您和您的生活态度有了一定的了解，我很佩服您，我也心甘情愿地跟随着您，不会有什么苦恼和不快。但在其他方面，我对您的生活一无所知，我觉得您的生活的一些方面很复杂、很神秘，对于这一部分，一直到现在，我的同伴和我，都丝毫不了解。我们的心时常随着您而跳动，我们会为您的某些痛苦而难过，也会因为您的某些天才或勇敢的行为而受到鼓舞。但是，我们同时又看到，哪怕是要表示一下人类的同情心，不论是站在朋友的角度还是站在敌人的角度，我们都必须压抑自己的感情，不敢轻易表露出来。就是这种感觉，这种我们对您的陌生的感觉，也使得我们难以忍受我们的处境，甚至对我来说也是这种感觉。而对于尼德·兰来说，更是如此。作为天性喜欢自由的加拿大人，由于对自由的热爱，对奴役的憎恨，他就会生出逃跑

的计划。对于尼德·兰的所思所想，以及他想做的，您有没有考虑过哪怕一次……”

我停下来，没有继续再说。尼摩船长站了起来说：

“尼德·兰在想什么，他想做什么，想怎么做，就随他去做好了，那跟我有何关系？又不是我把他找来的，也不是我乐意把他留在船上的。至于您，阿勒纳斯先生，您是能看透一切的人，有些事就是不说出来，我想您也是能了解的人，我没有什么可以对您说的。希望这是您最后一次来找我谈这个问题，再有下一次，我是不会再听您说的了。”

我从尼摩船长的房间退了出来。从那一天开始，我们之间的关系开始变得紧张。我把我们之间的谈话内容转述给了我的两个同伴听。

“现在，我们总算知道了，”尼德·兰说，“对于这个人，我们是不可能抱有什么期待的。‘鹦鹉螺’号现在接近长岛了，不管天气如何，我们一起逃吧。”

但是天气却愈来愈恶劣了，有迹象显示，大风暴就要来了。天空中的颜色已经变成了灰白的牛奶色。在天际，紧随着一阵一阵疏散的云朵来的，是那浓密的乌云。低垂的厚厚的云层很快覆盖了整个天空。海水开始高涨起来，涌起了巨浪波涛。除了那风暴的好朋友海燕之外，我们看不到一只鸟儿。风雨表受了大气中饱和的电力，内部物质分解了，开始显著下降，表示空气中的温度很高，水蒸气很多。暴风雨马上就要来了。

终于，大风暴在5月8日那一天来了。这个时候，“鹦鹉螺”号正行驶到与长岛同一纬度的位置，离纽约水道只有几海里远。不知受什么古怪情绪的影响，尼摩船长没有让船潜入海底，而是让它在水面上乘风破浪

浪，这也使得我有机会观察并描述这次大风暴的经过。

风从西南方一阵一阵地吹来，首先是小风，刚开始时的速度是每秒15米，到了下午两点左右，风速达到了每秒25米。这已经是暴风了。

尼摩船长站在甲板上，在猛烈的暴风里，他一动不动。他用一根绳子绑在腰间，以此来抵挡袭来的阵阵巨浪。我也站在甲板上，也用绳子把自己捆了起来，我一边欣赏着风暴，一边赞美着这个不怕风暴的奇人。片片巨大的浓云从我们头顶扫过，波涛汹涌的海水一阵阵涌来。我已经看不到风浪形成的大漩涡中间的小波浪了，只能看到那浓黑色的长波大浪。浪涛并不汹涌，因为它们一浪接着一浪，延伸到远方的时候，逐渐成了条纹状的细浪。

我不敢直视闪电的光辉，但尼摩船长正在紧盯着它，好像要把暴风雨的灵魂吸取过来。可怕的隆隆的响声遍布空中，这是由互相搏击的波浪的怒吼声、大风的呼啸声以及雷电的爆裂声混合而成的很复杂的响声。风从天际的各处吹来，台风由东方出发，经过北方、西方和南方，又回到东方，跟北半球的回旋风暴的方向正好相反。

啊，终于知道这大西洋暖流为什么被称为风暴王了，真是名副其实。由于它水流上下空气的温度不同，才引起了很强烈的台风。

接着下起了大雨，还伴着雷电带来了一阵火光，雨点则成了轰隆隆的闪电的修饰了。真要说的话，我觉得要选一种配得上尼摩船长身份的死，那一定是雷击致死。忽然，“鹦鹉螺”号猛烈地颠簸起来，这时候，它把前头的冲角竖了起来，就像是竖在空中的避雷针一样，我还会看到冲角上不时有很长的火花发出。我实在是筋疲力尽了，只好爬在甲板上，然后滚到了嵌板边。我把嵌板打开，回到了客厅，这时候，狂风暴

雨大作，雷电交加，猛烈到了极点，连在“鹦鹉螺”号船舱里站起来都很困难。

直到半夜左右，尼摩船长才回到船中。然后我听到了储水池开始蓄水的声音。“鹦鹉螺”号渐渐装满了水，慢慢地沉到了海底。

透过客厅中打开的玻璃窗，我看见好些惊慌的大鱼在雷电火光照耀的水中像幽灵一样游过。有一些鱼就在我眼前被雷电能死了。“鹦鹉螺”号一直在下降。我想只有当它下降到15米深的地方时，才可能找到安静。但出乎我的意料，由于上部水层受到了过度猛烈的搅动，它一直下降到50米的水深处。在大海的深处，它才重新寻找到安宁。

海底是那样的安宁，那样的寂静，那样的平和，谁能想到这个时候的海面正在经历着狂风暴雨的洗礼呢？

第二十章 北纬**47度24分**、西经**17度28分**

经历了这次大风暴之后，我们的船被抛到东方去了。我们的愿望——在纽约或圣劳伦斯河口附近的陆地逃走，也成了泡影。最可怜的是尼德·兰，他失望极了，开始变得像尼摩船长一样孤独，常常将自己关起来不理人。我和葛瑟尔的关系则变得更加紧密，时常待在一起。

而“鹦鹉螺”号则躲到了东北方。几天来，它变得很神秘，时而漂流在水上，时而在水下行驶，在危险的浓雾之间行驶着。浓雾产生的主要原因是冰雪消融，使空气变得极端湿润。很多船只消失在浓雾之中，可

以说浓雾造成了很多灾祸。海水拍打暗礁的声音被风声淹没，因此，还有很多船只消失在暗礁之下。尽管经过这里的船只通过鸣笛相互警告，但仍然会有悲剧发生。

所以，航行在这一带的船只就像是经历一场战役，那些战败的船只变成了残骸，静默地躺在海底。其中有一些已经腐烂，而一些新遇难的船只还很崭新，那些铁制部分依旧可以映照出我们探照灯的光辉。据统计，在种族角、圣·保罗岛、美岛峡、圣劳伦斯河口这些海域遇难的船只最多，船员连同乘客一同消失在茫茫大海之中。

日历翻到5月15日，我们行驶在纽芬兰岛暗礁脉的极南端。海水的冲积作用形成了暗礁脉，这里有一大堆有机体的渣滓残骸，它们是从赤道一带被大西洋暖流输送过来的；有的被寒流夹带着从北极沿美洲海岸流下来。堆积在这里的还有被雪崩冲刷下来的漂流石岩。数以万计死亡的鱼类用语就形成于此，很多软体类和植虫类动物正是在欲望的驱动下，葬身在这里。

在纽芬兰岛暗礁脉附近，海水只有几百米深，但稍向南一点，海底就下陷到约3000米，形成了一个很大的洞穴。暖流在这里范围很大，水流的速度和温度也逐渐下降，从而形成了海。

硬鳍海兔是我能举出的被“鹦鹉螺”号惊吓到的鱼类之一。这种鱼脊背是灰黑色的，身长约1米，它们对爱情很忠诚，可以说为同类树立了良好的榜样，但是这种榜样作用并没有被同类所效仿。还有一种味道鲜美的酥鱼，它的身体是翡翠色的；有跟狗头很像的卡拉克鱼，它的眼睛很圆很大；有像蛇一样的奇形鲫鱼，属于卵生鱼类；有黑色的弹形虾虎鱼，也被人称作河沙鱼，长约2分米；有尾巴很长的长尾鱼，会发出银色的光辉，而且游行速度很快，可以一直游到北极的海中去。

有的时候，船上的网里还会出现一种勇敢彪悍、多肉的鱼，这种鱼的头上有很多刺，而且鳍上有针，被称为海中蝎子，它是奇形鲫鱼、鳕鱼和鲑鱼的克星。还有一种鱼是“鹦鹉螺”号上的打鱼人费了好大力气才捕捉到的，它的身上多瘤，周身为栗子色，鳍为红色。由于鱼身结构很特殊，所以离开海水以后，还能够存活一段时间。

当然，除了以上说的，我还可以举出一些鱼的种类，比如在北极海域长期陪伴我们的小鱼；盛产在大西洋北部的银白尖嘴鱼；“拉斯加斯”笠子鱼；鹰鱼类，这是鳘鱼的一种。通常情况下，人们将鳘鱼归结为山中的鱼，因为纽芬兰岛可以算得上是一座山，不同的是它位于海底。

当“鹦鹉螺”号经过拥挤的鳘鱼群的时候，葛瑟尔激动地喊道：“哇，鳘鱼哩！我曾经以为鳘鱼跟鲾鱼、靴底鱼一样是扁平的呢。”

我喊道：“哈哈，你的想象力太丰富了，杂货铺里的鳘鱼之所以是扁平的，是因为人们将它割开后摆出来的。但是活着的鳘鱼跟鲾鱼类一样，是纺锤形的。这样的构造有利于在水中穿行。”

葛瑟尔回答：“先生，我相信您说的。您快看，这鱼也太多了，跟蚂蚁一样。”

“哈哈，我的朋友，如果没有人类的渔网，也许会更多呢。你知道一条母鳘鱼能产多少卵吗？”

葛瑟尔回答：“我猜大概有50万。”

“起码有1100万，兄弟。”

“1100万，除非我亲自验证过，否则让我如何相信？”

“葛瑟尔，你算完以后就会相信我的话了。要知道，美国、英国、法国、丹麦和挪威人都是成千上万地打这种鱼，如果不是鳕鱼的繁殖能力强，恐怕海中早就没有它们的影子了。就拿英国和美国来说吧，7.5万名水手驾驶着5000只船，专门用来捕捉鳕鱼。按一只船上4万条计算，一共可以捕捉20万条。挪威海域也是一样的情形。”

葛瑟尔答道：“听先生这么说，我相信你，不需要再计算了。”

“计算什么？”

“刚刚您说的1100万只卵。但还有一点需要跟您确认……”

“确认什么？”

“如果是这样，那岂不是4条母鳕鱼就可以供应英国、美国和挪威的需求了。”

当我们的船经过纽芬兰岛暗礁脉时，我发现每只船都会放下来10根左右长的钓丝，钓丝上装有200个钓饵，每根钓丝的一端都与小锚相连，被浮标上的线固定在水面上，而“鹦鹉螺”号很容易就通过了水底的现网。经过这里的大部分船都驶向北纬42度。那个方向跟纽芬兰的圣·约翰港和内心港在同一纬度，内心港则是横过大西洋海底电线的终点。

而“鹦鹉螺”号并不随波逐流，它向东驶去，看样子像是要沿着海底电线朝暗礁高地驶去。这里的高低都被探测过，高低起伏都有明确的记录。

时间到了5月17日，我在距离内心港约500海里，水下2800米深的地方，看见了海底的电线。起初，我并没有告诉葛瑟尔，初见电线时

候，他还以为是一条巨大的海蛇，他一如既往地想对它进行分类。我不得不点醒这个老实人，同时，向它描述这条海底电线装备的特殊过程。

在1857年至1858年之间，第一条海底电线被铺设，但是它的作用在发了400次电报以后便无法发挥了。于是，工程师们在1863年又铺设了一条长达3400公里的新线路，线缆有4500吨，是用“大东方”号运输的，但最终也以失败告终。

8天后，“鹦鹉螺”号在海底3832米深的地方行驶，海底电线就是在这里装设失败的。查看地图可以发现，这个地方距离爱尔兰海岸有638海里。当人们发现电线中断以后，便决定将损坏的部分重新拉上来，割断后重新连接。可是没过几天，线又断了，此时，已经无法挽回损失。

美国人并没有气馁，铺设海底电线的倡导者——西留斯·费尔提，将自己的全部财产都投入进去，同时，再次搜集新办法。很快，资金到位后，又铺设了另外一条优良的线路。新的线缆是完全绝缘的，先用纤维做的带子缠裹，然后再用金属套管包起来。1866年7月3日，“大东方”号再次出发，到海上装设新线路。

装设工作很顺利，可是仍然有意外发生。当电气工人装线的时候，总是有人损坏里面的铜丝，导致线缆无法导电。于是安德生船长召集他的工程师，开会研究这件事，并且贴出告示，如果抓到破坏线缆的人，可以不经审判直接扔入海里。此后，再也没有发生损坏线缆的事情。

7月23日，“大东方”号将海底电线铺设到了距纽芬兰岛约8公里的时候，收到电报说普鲁士和奥地利在萨多瓦战役后签订了停战协定。几天后，海底电线在浓雾中安装到内心港，至此，整个工程胜利竣工。第一个使用海底电报的是美洲和欧洲之间，当时很流行以下几句话——“光

荣是属于上帝的，和平是属于善良的人们的。”

我不敢想象，原来海底电线是这个样子的，这个长得像长蛇一样的东西由介壳的残体掩蔽起来，上面可见很多虫孔，最外面封上了一层石质的黏胶，是为了使它不受软体动物的侵害。它停留在海底多年，不受波浪的影响，但它发挥的作用却如此之大，每隔32%秒钟便会有电波传出。经过多年的检验证明，这条海底电线是经久耐用的，因为树胶外套留在海水中，变得更加牢固了。同时，由于地点靠近暗礁高地，所以海底电线永远不会被冲到深水层中去。

“鹦鹉螺”号在海底电线的指引下，到达了水底4431米的海底，只见电线安置在那里，没有任何拖拉的痕迹。接着，我们靠近了1863年意外事件发生的地点。

这里有一个长约120公里的广大山谷，形成在海底。就大小而言，如果将勃朗峰放下去，山峰也不至于露出水面来。山谷的东边被一道高2000米的峭壁挡住。26日，我们来到了山谷，这里距离爱尔兰只有150公里。难道尼摩船长要在不列颠群岛登陆吗？显然不是。出人意料的，尼摩船长掉转方向向南行驶，重新回到欧洲海域，难道是要绕过翡翠岛吗？

正在我胡乱猜测之际，我的耳边响起了尼摩船长的声音，他说：“很久以前，这只船叫‘马赛人’号，它于1762年下水，船上装有74门大炮。16年后的8月13日，拉·伯亚波·韦斯利尔指挥‘马赛人’号同‘普利斯顿’号作战。1779年7月4日，它会同德·埃斯坦海军大将的舰队共同打败了格连那德。1781年9月5日，它带着使命加入到格拉斯伯爵在杰萨比克湾的海战中。1794年，它被法兰西共和国更换了名称。同年4月16日，它加入了威拉列·若亚尤斯指挥的舰队，将美国派出的万·斯他比尔海军

大将率领的一批小麦输送船护送到平安的地方。共和纪元二年圆月111日和12日，这个舰队在海上遭遇了英国舰队。先生，历史是如此巧合，今天是圆月13日，1868年6月1日。如此推算下去，距离今天，事件已经发生了整整74年。就在这个地方，北纬47度2分、西经17度28分这片海域，英勇的‘马赛人’号的三支桅被打断，船舱中也进了海水，船上三分之一的船员都失去了战斗力。为了不屈服于敌人，他们宁可带领356名水手沉到海底去，他们将旗帜钉在船尾，高喊‘法兰西共和国万岁！’，静静等待船沉没海底。”

我喊道：“‘复仇’号！”

尼摩船长双手交叉着，低声说：“先生，你说得没错，‘复仇’号，多么美的名字。”

[1](#)法国资产阶级革命时期的表示月份的说法。

第二十一章 屠 杀 场

开始的时候，他只是淡淡地讲述这艘爱国战舰的经历，意外的是，当他说出最后几句话的时候，情绪高涨起来。引起我注意的是“‘复仇’号”这个名字的意义。当我将这一切联系起来的时候，我的眼神已经离不开船长。只见船长用双手伸向海洋，火热的眼睛映照出战舰的残骸。也许我永远也不清楚事实的真相，但是，我越来越确定，将尼摩船长和他的同伴们隔绝在“鹦鹉螺”号船壳中，不是一种普通的情绪，而是一种非常强烈的仇恨。但他们会不会在这种仇恨的驱使下展开报复行动，我就不得而知了，也许将来会有答案。

可是，当“鹦鹉螺”号缓缓回到海面的时候，“复仇”号的形象也渐渐消失。事实表明，我们再一次行驶在弥漫自由空气的水面上了。

这时，远处传来轻微的爆炸声，我看向船长，只见他丝毫没有动。

我叫了一声船长。

他没有回答。

我独自来到平台上，只见葛瑟尔和加拿大人已经在那里了。

“哪里传来的爆炸声？”我紧张地问。

“应该是炮响。”尼德·兰回答说。

在我的视线内，出来了一艘汽船，它向“鹦鹉螺”号驶来。突然那艘船加大了马力，迅速向我们追赶过来，距离我们只有6海里。

“尼德·兰师傅，那是哪里来的船？”

加拿大人回答说：“从它的帆索船具和桅杆高度来看，应该是一艘战舰，也许它们是在追赶‘鹦鹉螺’号，并伺机将它击沉！”

葛瑟尔说：“我说朋友，它真的会伤害‘鹦鹉螺’号吗？它可能做水下攻击吗？”

我问：“尼德·兰师傅，您能辨认出这船的国籍吗？”

尼德·兰回答：“由于没有挂国旗，暂时无法确定它的国籍，但我可以确定那是一艘战舰。”

15分钟过去了，我们继续观察这艘朝我们驶来的大船。但是，这么远的距离，我不相信它能认出“鹦鹉螺”号是一艘潜水艇。过了一会儿，加拿大人告诉我，那是一艘有冲角、有两层铁甲板的大战舰，从它的两座烟囱里喷出了浓厚的黑烟。它的帆同帆架交错在一起，彼此挤得很紧。在帆架上看不到任何旗帜标志。由于距离较远，无法辨认信号旗的颜色，只能远远看到它像薄带一样在空中飘舞。如果尼摩船长同意让它靠近，那么，我们就得救了。

尼德·兰说：“教授先生，等到船距离我们约1海里的时候，我们就跳到海里游过去，我建议您跟我一起走。”

我并不理会加拿大人的提议，继续看着那艘船。随着距离的缩小，那艘船在我眼里的影像越来越大，我想不管是哪个国家的船，它都会欢迎我们的。

葛瑟尔接着说：“先生，请您好好考虑一下，如果您愿意跟着尼德·兰朋友走的话，我负责将您驮到那船边去。”

我刚想回答葛瑟尔的问题，就见一道白烟从战舰发出，几秒钟后，周围的海水被一件重物激起了浪花，落在“鹦鹉螺”号的后部。紧接着，我的耳边响起了爆炸声。

我警惕地喊道：“他们怎么会向我们开炮！”

加拿大人低声说道：“勇敢的好人！”

“看来，他们并没有同情我们几个遇难的人！”

“请先生原谅……”葛瑟尔边拍打身上的水花，边说，“请先生见谅，他们一定是认出这条独角鲸啦。”

我喊道：“他们眼神也太差了吧，我们是活生生的人呢。”

尼德·兰看着我的眼睛说：“也许他们正是为了这个呢！”

我豁然开朗，现在可以肯定了，人们对这个怪物的存在保持一种敌对的态度。毫无疑问，在与“林肯”号的接触中，当加拿大人用鱼叉叉它们的时候，佛勒冈司令已经意识到这条独角鲸是一只潜水船，它远比鲸科动物更危险。是的，一定是这样的，所以周围的海面上一定布满了追逐这艘毁灭性的机器的舰艇。

当然，我同样意识到，如果尼摩船长利用“鹦鹉螺”号进行报复，后果将是严重的。我们回想一下，我们被囚禁在房间中的那一夜，“鹦鹉螺”号就攻击了那些船只。那些葬送在珊瑚墓地上的人，就是那次战争的牺牲者。是的，我越来越肯定自己的猜想是正确的。至此，尼摩船长的秘密暴露了一部分，虽然无法确定他的身份，但有一点是可以确定的，那就是如今很多国家联合起来追杀他，一定是与他有着不共戴天的仇恨。往事像电影一样在我的脑海中回放，我突然意识到，在前来追赶“鹦鹉螺”号的船只当中，没有朋友，只有无情的敌人。

紧接着，越来越多的炮弹落在我们的船周围，还好没有击中“鹦鹉螺”号的。

战舰距离我们越来越近，转眼只有3海里了。尼摩船长始终忽视战舰对我们的猛烈轰击，只是躲在船里不出来。可是，加拿大人告诉我，一旦炮弹打在“鹦鹉螺”号的船壳上，那伤害将是致命的。

他说：“先生，我们应该想办法逃走。或许我们可以向追来的船发出信号，让他们明白我们是正直善良的人。”

尼德·兰拿出他的手帕来回摆动，虽然他的力气很大，但是马上就被一只更有力的手掌制止了。

船长喊道：“混账东西，你是不是想让我把你钉在那只战舰的冲角上？”

尼摩船长说出的话非常可怕，再看他的脸更是可怕。也许是由于心脏痉挛的缘故，他的脸变得非常苍白，仿佛心脏停止了跳动一样。他的瞳孔可怕地抽缩着。他边吼边按住了加拿大人的肩头，不再让他动弹。接着，回头对着攻击“鹦鹉螺”号的战舰吼道：“难道你知道我是谁？我不用看就知道，你属于那个被诅咒的国家。好，现在我就把我的旗帜给你看看！”

尼摩船长在平台上插了一面旗，不难看出，跟在南极插的那面一样。正在这时，一颗炮弹落在“鹦鹉螺”号船身上，还好没有造成严重的损坏。只是船长受到了惊吓，炮弹在他身边落下，又落入海中。而船长似乎对此并不在意，他干脆地对我说：“先生，现在您和您的同伴一起下去。”

我好奇地问：“船长，您是要攻打那只船吗？”

“你说得没错，我要将它炸沉。”

“请不要这样做！”

尼摩船长冷冷地说：“这件事您别管，我已经决定了。教授先生，命运注定让您看见不该看见的场景。是对方先开的火，我要让他们付出惨痛的代价，您赶紧进去吧。”

“这艘船属于哪个国家的？”

“您不知道就最好了。我不会告诉您的，您快下去。”

我们三个人只有服从。这时，“鹦鹉螺”号的十五六个水手出现在船长周围，他们带着同样的仇恨注视着那艘追来的船。就在我们回到房间的时候，又有一颗炮弹落在船身上，紧接着，传来船长的喊声：“开打吧，把所有的炮弹都留给敌人，他们一定会败给‘鹦鹉螺’号的！但不要让它在这个地方沉没，它不配同‘复仇’号的光荣残骸消失在同一个地方！”

我按照船长的指令回到房中。尼摩船长和他的副手仍然留在平台上。紧接着，“鹦鹉螺”号的推进器转动起来，迅速躲到炮弹打不到的地方。但对方的船似乎并不死心，继续朝我们追来，而尼摩船长也只是与它保持一定的距离。

转眼到了下午4点左右，不安的情绪将我带到中央楼梯。我无法让自己停住脚步，冒险来到平台上。只见船长显得很激动，不停地在原地踱步，眼光不时瞄向距离“鹦鹉螺”号五六海里的战舰。此时，尼摩船长不再是一个绅士，更像是一头猛兽，他故意让战舰追来，故意将它引到西方。奇怪的是，他并不回击，对此我难以理解。我试图做最后的努力，让他改变主意，但是还没等我开口，就被他制止了。他告诉我，他是正义的，他是被压迫者。他曾经深爱过这个国家，但是他的爱人、子女、父母全都去世了，所以他痛恨这里的一切，痛恨船上的人。

说完了这些，他再次警告我不要说话。

我的目光落在追来的战舰上，它正在紧追不舍。我赶紧找到尼德·兰和葛瑟尔，对他们说：“快，我们逃走！”

尼德立即表示赞同，他问：“战舰是哪个国家的？”

我答不出来，只是对他说：“它属于哪个国家的并不重要，重要的是，天黑之前它会被击沉。与其做一个杀人的帮凶，还不如同他们一起去死。”

尼德·兰平静地说：“这正是我的意思，等到天黑我们就伺机逃走。”

夜幕来临了，船上一片静默。“鹦鹉螺”号沿着原来的航线行驶。我能够听到推进器的声音以及规律的搅水声。它浮在水波上，顺着波浪一会儿转向这边，一会儿转向那边。

我和同伴们已经下定决心，当战舰接近“鹦鹉螺”号的时候，我们就逃走。由于月亮很圆，月光很明亮，也许我们会被发现，但是这并不能改变我们的主意。既然我们无法阻止惨剧的发生，那我们就只有离开这里。有几次，我以为“鹦鹉螺”号要还击了。出人意料的是，它只是让敌人靠近，但紧接着就又做出逃避的姿态。

时间就这样流逝着，我们始终在等待着逃跑的时机。也许是太激动，我们彼此之间话很少。尼德·兰想立刻跳入海中，但我制止了，我让他等待时机。据我观察，如果“鹦鹉螺”号对战舰展开攻击，我们就很容易逃走。

时钟指向了凌晨3点，我的内心越来越不安，为了缓解紧张的心情，我来到了平台上。只见船长还在那里，他靠着旗帜站着，旗子在微风的吹动下，在他的头上招展。他的目光一刻都没有离开敌人的战舰，炯炯有神的目光像是电灯，诱惑着敌人的战舰。当月亮越过子午线的时候，木星在东方升起。抛开人为的因素，天空和海洋是如此平静地共

处，在月光的照耀下，海水像一面明镜，将月亮的影子美丽地展现出来。身处如此安静的环境中，我觉得自己的生命都在颤抖，甚至忽略了“鹦鹉螺”号上的仇恨。战舰距离我们约2海里远。只见它们循着“鹦鹉螺”号的磷光追来。我能清楚地看见对方表示方位的灯光以及挂在平台上的白色船灯。船上喷出的一阵阵火花、一团团煤渣，像星光一样散在空中。

我在平台上安静地待到早晨，尼摩船长似乎忽略了我的存在。战舰距离我们还有1.5海里的距离，当曙光初现的时候，炮声再次响起。是“鹦鹉螺”号在攻击它的敌人，我和我的同伴们逃走时刻，马上就要来临了。

我想下去通知我的伙伴们，正巧碰上了船副和几个水手。尼摩船长连他们的存在也忽略了。这时，“鹦鹉螺”号已做好了“战斗准备”，其实准备的措施很简单，只是将平台周围栏杆上的线网放下来，将探照灯和领航人的笼间藏到船身里面。同时，卸掉了可能阻碍它行动的突出部分，这样就准备就绪了。

我回到客厅中，明显感觉到“鹦鹉螺”号一直在浮出水面。清晨的曙光照耀着海水，在海浪的波动下，玻璃窗前显得很活泼、生动。

就这样，可怕的6月2日便开始了。大约5点的时候，“鹦鹉螺”号的速度减慢了。我立刻明白了尼摩船长的意图，他是故意让敌人靠近。紧接着，耳边传来猛烈的炮火声，以及炮弹落入水中发出的呼啸声。

我们的机会来了，我对伙伴们说：“朋友们，时机成熟了，让我们握握手，愿上帝保佑我们！”

尼德·兰始终表现得很坚定，而葛瑟尔看起来则很镇静，我略微有

些紧张，感觉就要控制不住自己的情绪了。我们经过图书馆，通过那扇通往中央楼梯笼间的门，这时，我突然听到上层嵌板忽然关闭了。加拿大人想跳到梯阶上去，被我拉住了。紧接着，耳边传来熟悉的呼啸声。我们清楚，这是“鹦鹉螺”号在潜水。

“鹦鹉螺”号的意图很明显，而我们都清楚，逃走的行动已经迟了。“鹦鹉螺”号放弃了从坚固的铁甲上来攻打敌人的双层战舰，它现在要潜伏到战舰的浮标线下面，在更有利的方位来进行袭击。我们被迫成为这场悲剧的见证者。此时，我们已经没有更多的时间来思考，只得躲回房间，面面相觑。我感觉自己快要疯掉了，头脑一片空白，那感觉就像是在等待一场可怕的爆炸，难受极了。我的耳朵变得非常警惕，随时准备接收外界传来的信息。

奇怪的是，“鹦鹉螺”号突然提升了速度，以至于整个船壳都开始颤抖。突然，我感受到了冲撞的发生。我似乎听到了推进器拉开来和送进去的声音。要知道“鹦鹉螺”号的推进器是有着强大的推动力的，它穿透那艘战舰就像是穿过布帆一样。我已经无法抑制我的情绪了，我们跑出房间，急忙去找尼摩船长。

在客厅中，我看到尼摩那忧郁、冷酷的面庞。他的双眼一直在注视着他的敌人，眼看着这艘庞大的物体沉入海底。船距离“鹦鹉螺”号大概10米远，我可以清楚地看到船壳裂开，海水一拥而入，水瞬间就淹没了两门大炮和吊床舱房。甲板上跳动着慌乱的人影，在海水的冲击下，那些不幸的人挣扎着、扭曲着身体，做着最后的挣扎。

我觉得自己已经没有知觉了，头发竖起，两眼睁得溜圆，呼吸急促，紧接着，耳边的声音逐渐消失，我被一种神奇的力量固定在玻璃上面。

转眼间，一艘巨大的战舰就沉没了，“鹦鹉螺”号则始终没有离开，还在对它进行最后的监视。忽然，战舰发生了爆炸，甲板被轰跑了，船舱也着了火。海水的力量使“鹦鹉螺”号也倾斜了。紧接着，那艘战舰迅速下沉，挤在桅杆上的遇难者将桅杆上的横木架压弯了。不一会儿，那艘庞然大物沉入水中，海水将船员的身体拉入漩涡。我转过头来看尼摩船长，只见这个可怕的行刑者，眼睛里充满了仇恨，眼睛一眨不眨地看着这一切。

当一切都结束后，尼摩船长回到他的房间。我紧跟着他，在他房间的嵌板上，我看到了一些英雄人物的肖像，同时看到了一个年轻的妇人和两个小孩的肖像。尼摩船长盯着肖像，向像中人敞开怀抱，跪在地上抽噎起来。

第二十二章 尼摩船长的最后几句话

经历了这一可怕的事件，“鹦鹉螺”号陷入一片黑暗和沉默，它在水下近百尺深的地方逃离了事发现场，没人知道它是向北还是向南。我不知道这个实施了报复的人想逃到哪里，而我开始对这个人产生了一种厌恶之情。也许他曾经受过很深的伤害，但这并不是他伤害别人的理由，他没有权利报复。尽管我不是他的同谋，但是他让我见证了他的罪行，我想我有理由讨厌他。

11点的时候，房间里又恢复了光明。我来到客厅，一个人都没有看见。我开始研究客厅里的各种机器。经过观察我发现，“鹦鹉螺”号正以时速25海里的速度向北方驶去，时而浮在海面上，时而潜入水中。从地

图的记录来看，我们经过了英吉利海峡口，正以极快的速度向北极海中驶去。

夜间，我们的船行驶到大西洋海面200里的地方。我打算回到房中休息，但是，梦魇一直伴随着我，脑海中总是回放着那幅可怕的画面。

自那时起，我们不知道将会被“鹦鹉螺”号带去哪里，只知道船正以飞快的速度行驶，只知道船穿梭在雾霭之间。也许它要走近斯勃齐堡的尖角，走近纽藏伯尔的悬崖，或者是要驶过神秘的白海，喀拉海¹，鄂毕湾²，利亚洛夫群岛，以及亚洲沿海没有人到过的海岸。时间就像停止了一样，我们的生物钟彻底被打乱了，生活失去了规律。我感觉自己进入了一个神奇的领域，我总是想象着有个蒙面的人，身材高大的他一头扎进海洋中去。我简直成了怪异的戈登·宾。

“鹦鹉螺”号似乎做好了长期行驶的准备，我们在船上看不到任何人的身影，也没有人向我们解释什么。我们只是能感觉到，船偶尔会浮上水面透气，船员一直在机械地重复着两个动作——打开、关闭。之前，船长每走到一个地方都会在地图上记方位，但现在这项工作也省略了，于是，我彻底不知道自己在什么位置了。

尼德·兰憋闷得快要发疯了，直到最后关头，他竟然说不出话来。葛瑟尔努力让他恢复正常，又怕他精神错乱，自寻短见。葛瑟尔细心地照料着尼德·兰，不让他有任何闪失。我知道，我们不能再这样下去了，有一天早上，我迷迷糊糊中听见尼德·兰俯身低声对我说：“我们逃！”

我吃惊地站起来，问：“什么时候？”

“晚上。你没发现吗，‘鹦鹉螺’号上的人都精神萎靡，处于一种麻木

状态。教授，您会跟我们一起走吗？”

“会，只是我们甚至不知道自己在什么位置。”

“今天早上，我在浓雾之中看到了一块陆地，就在向东20海里的地方，尽管我不知道那是什么地方，但我们可以逃到那里去。”

我完全赞同尼德·兰的想法，回答说：“对！只要有机会获得自由，哪怕被大海吞噬了也值得！”

“现在的海浪很汹涌，风又大，只要我们逃到那块陆地，就不用担心他们划着小艇来追我们了。我已经偷偷准备了一些食物和水。”

“你一定要叫上我。”

尼德·兰又补充说：“如果他们发现我们逃跑，并追上我们，你们一定要杀死我，我不想被他们捉回去。”

“哪怕是死，我们也要在一起。”

我铁了心跟尼德·兰一起逃走。我来到了风浪很大的平台上，天气很恶劣，但我们决定，只要见到陆地我们就逃走，不能错过任何机会。

此时，我既想见尼摩船长，又不想看见他。想起那个可怕的画面，我觉得自己无法原谅他，想想还是不见的好，这也是人之常情。

留在“鹦鹉螺”号上的最后一天是最漫长的，为了不泄露我们计划逃走的目的，我和我的两个伙伴一直保持着一定的距离。晚上6点，晚餐时间到了，可是我什么都不想吃。为了让自己保存体力，勉强吃了一些。6点半的时候，尼德·兰走进我的舱房，对我说：“我们暂时不要见

面了。等到10点的时候，我们趁着黑暗逃走，我们在那边等您。”

尼德·兰顾不上听我的回答就离开了。此时，我决定再确定一下船行驶的方向。我来到客厅，确定了我们的船是在深50米的地方，并以惊人的速度向东北偏北方驶去。

最后，我要跟陈列室里面的珍稀宝贝告别，我努力将每一件宝贝都记在心里，留作纪念。就这样，一个小时过去了，我重新回到我的房间。根据计划，我穿上了海底专用的结实衣服。整理好笔记里的秘密。我的心跳得非常厉害，担心尼摩船长突然出现，如果碰见尼摩船长，他一定会发现我们的秘密。

我经过船长的房间时听见里面有脚步声，他每发出一个响声，我就以为他要出来了，幻想着他指着我的鼻子问我，为什么要逃走。我又幻想着自己触碰到了报警器，这种感觉糟糕极了，我甚至想，还不如直接跑到船长的房间，跟他摊牌更舒服一些。

当然，这种想法只是停留在脑海，我很快就让自己平静下来。然而，尽管身体平静了，但心情始终无法平静。我回忆着在“鹦鹉螺”号度过的所有日子，回忆登上“鹦鹉螺”号后拥有的快乐与痛苦，比如：在海底打猎，经过多列斯海峡，遇见巴布亚岛的土人，坐礁搁浅，珊瑚墓地，苏伊士海底地道，桑多林岛，克里特的潜水人，维哥湾，大西洋洲，冰山，南极，被困在冰层中，跟章鱼战斗，大西洋暖流的风暴，甚至是经历的那个非常悲惨的画面。这些事情一股脑儿地涌入我的脑海，一幕幕地放映着。突然，我觉得尼摩船长变得高大起来，现出了超人的原型。我甚至觉得，他不是人，而是海神。

9点半钟的时候，我感觉自己的头快要炸了，为了让自己好过一

些，我用双手紧紧按住脑袋。我想让自己的思维停止运转，但在这半个小时里，我的脑海里不停地浮现那个噩梦，我觉得自己快要疯了。这时，我隐约听到了手风琴的声音，琴声中透露出一种对人世的憎恨和远离，可见，演奏的人想要斩断同人世的纠葛，如此婉转而哀怨。我的整个身心都被琴声吸引了，仿佛游离到人世之外。

突然，我的脑子里出现了一个可怕的画面，尼摩船长发现我们要逃跑，于是离开房间，到客厅里等我，他要跟我说话，而且对我施了法术，我只能听从他的指令。然而，现实中很快就到了10点，我必须去跟伙伴们会合了，哪怕是上刀山下火海也没有退路了。我只能硬着头皮打开房间，小心翼翼地尽量不发出声音。然而，偏偏事与愿违，门发出了非常恐怖的声音，或许这只是我的幻觉。我沿着“鹦鹉螺”号的过道，在黑暗中一步一步地向前摸索，每走一步，心跳都要加快几下。

客厅里一片黑暗，我蹑手蹑脚地进入客厅后，发现尼摩船长正在那里。我担心的事并没有出现，他根本无暇顾及我，而是完全沉浸在梦幻般的音乐中。我努力让自己走路不发出声音，因此，走得很慢，足足花了5分钟，才走到客厅通往图书室的门。

正当我胜利在望，即将离开客厅的时候，尼摩船长的一声叹息将我的希望打破了。我感觉到他站起来了，而且向图书室这边走过来，也许说飘过来更贴切，不知道什么原因，他突然哭起来，胸部鼓鼓的，紧接着他说了一些莫名其妙的话：“够了，上帝啊！到此为止吧！”

难道尼摩船长后悔自己的所作所为了吗？

我顾不上多想，趁机跑出图书室，通过中央楼梯，来到了小艇旁边。我从开着的小孔走入艇中，发现我的两个伙伴已经在等着我了。

“我们可以出发了！”我喊道。

“马上出发！”尼德·兰回答。

为了打开“鹦鹉螺”号船身钢板上开的孔，尼德·兰用钳子把螺钉紧紧地上好。等我们准备好以后，尼德·兰又用那把钳子松开固定大船和小艇之间的螺钉。突然，船上一片混乱，难道是有发现我们逃走了吗？我发现我的手里多了一把短刀，是尼德·兰递给我的。

我低声说：“我们以死相抗！”

尼德·兰不再理会螺丝钉，想去弄清楚船上究竟发生了什么事。只听船员们在不断地喊“北冰洋大风暴来了！”很显然，这阵骚乱并不是针对我们的。

没什么比北冰洋大风暴更让人害怕的了，这是挪威沿岸一带最危险的海域。难道，“鹦鹉螺”号就要被卷入深渊中了吗？我们的小艇会是什么样的命运？

此时，海水就像涨潮一样，汹涌无比。海水之间形成了很急的漩涡，吞噬了所有经过的船。那是激流的中心地带，就像人的肚脐眼一样，那种力量可以将15公里以内的所有东西吸附进去，动物和船都不能幸免。

船长的决策让“鹦鹉螺”号驶入了一个危险的境地，漩涡成螺旋状运动，将船迅速卷入，速度越来越快。小艇还没有离开大船船身，我感觉自己此时正被一种惊人的力量所带走。就在那一刻，我感受到了死神的召唤，血液停止了循环，神经已经麻木，全身开始冒冷汗。船上，到处是绝望的吼叫声，还有大船撞击飞石的声音。在这紧急时刻，“鹦鹉

螺”号像一个战士，在不停地调节自己，我们则随着大船不停地竖起，落下。

“我们不能离开大船，只有依附大船我们还有一线希望……”尼德·兰的话音未落，就传来了可怕的嘎嘎的声音。接着，螺丝钉就掉落下来，小艇挣脱了大船的怀抱，像石块一样，落入漩涡中。

一根铁条撞在了我的脑袋上，昏迷立刻侵袭了我。

[1](#)北冰洋的边缘海，位于亚洲大陆西北部沿岸和新地岛、北地群岛之间。

[2](#)喀拉海深入俄罗斯西伯利亚西北部的大海湾，位于亚马尔半岛与格达半岛之间，是鄂毕河的出海口。

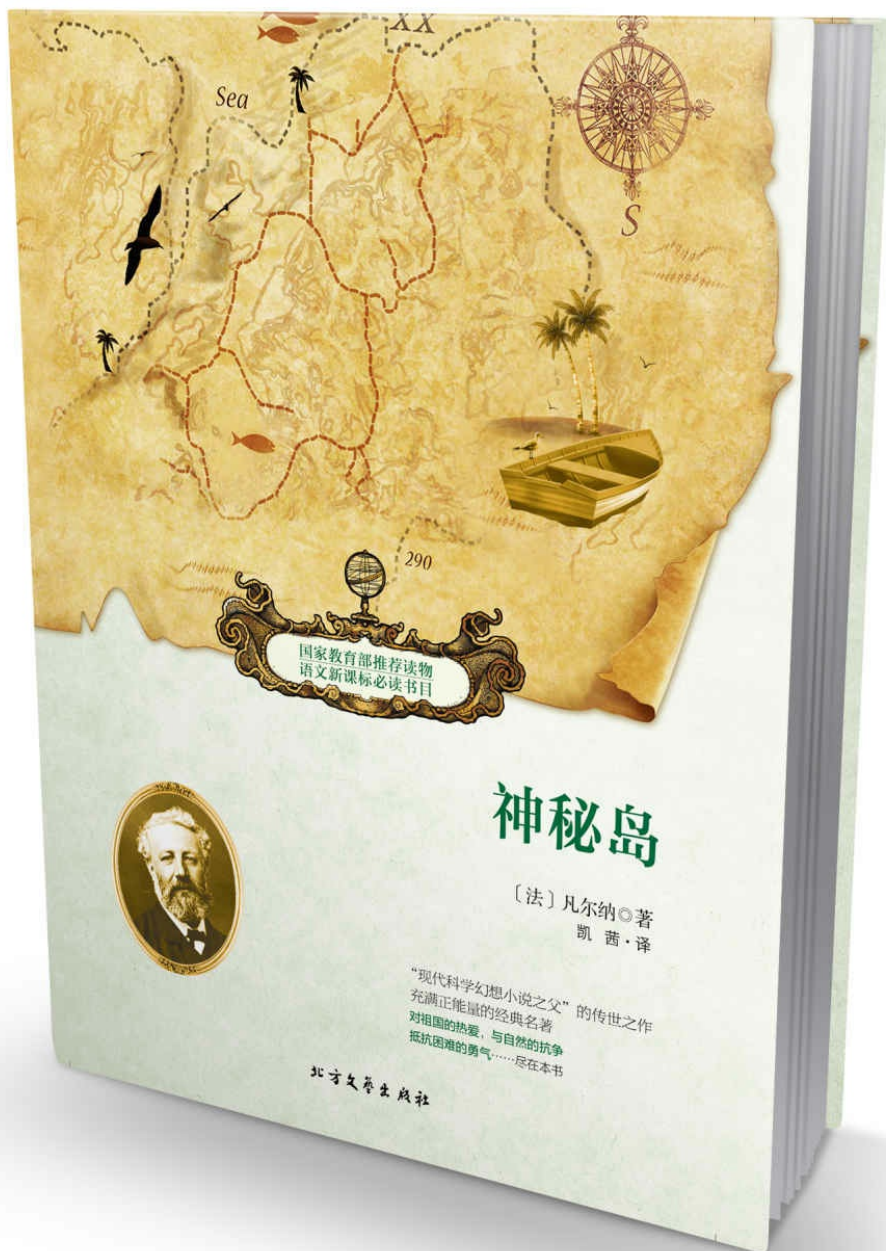
第二十三章 总 结

下面，我简单地将我们这次海底旅行进行一下总结。我不知道我和我的伙伴们是如何逃出那场可怕的灾难的，只知道，当我醒来的时候是躺在罗夫丹群岛上一个渔夫的木头房子里面。我们都安然无恙，互相拥抱表示庆祝。

由于交通工具的原因，我们不能马上回到法国去。因此，我们只能等往来北角的汽船经过这边时才能走。在这段时间内，我向那些善良的人讲述了我们的惊险故事。整个讲述尊重事实，没有遗漏任何情节，也没有夸张。也许，当科学进步到一定程度的时候，人们可以随时去海底体验我们所经历的故事。

但在其他人没有经历过这样的历险之前，估计人们不会相信我的记录。不过那又有什么关系呢，我有权利讲述自己看到的一切。在过去10个月的时间里，我们穿过了太平洋、印度洋、红海、地中海、大西洋、南北两极海洋，经历了一段无比神奇的海底环球旅行。

可是，关于“鹦鹉螺”号的一切我就都不得而知了。它有没有抵住北冰洋大风暴的压力；尼摩船长是不是还活着；他是否还在继续他的复仇计划；海浪会不会把关于他生活的手稿带到大陆上来；他的真实姓名和国籍到底是什么……这些问题，我都无法回答。但我真的希望他那强有力的潜水船能够度过那次可怕的灾难，重新在海洋上生存。这样，尼摩船长就可以居住在他所选择的祖国的海洋中，平息心中所有的仇恨。但愿他能够放弃复仇的情绪，成为一个真正的海洋探险家。虽然他的命运很离奇古怪，但并不妨碍他的崇高与伟大。由于我也经历了10个月的超自然的生活，因此，我更能理解他。我想，我可以回答6000年前《传道书》中提出的一个问题了。书中问道：“谁能了解这海洋的最深处呢？”我想，我和尼摩船长可以回答了。



国家教育部推荐读物
语文新课标必读书目



神秘岛

[法] 凡尔纳◎著
凯 茜·译

“现代科学幻想小说之父”的传世之作
充满正能量的经典名著
对祖国的热爱，与自然的抗争
抵抗困难的勇气……尽在本书

北方文艺出版社

目录

[神秘岛](#)

[第一部 气球上降落的人](#)

[第一章](#)

[第二章](#)

[第三章](#)

[第四章](#)

[第五章](#)

[第六章](#)

[第七章](#)

[第八章](#)

[第九章](#)

[第十章](#)

[第十一章](#)

[第十二章](#)

[第十三章](#)

[第十四章](#)

[第十五章](#)

[第十六章](#)

[第十七章](#)

[第十八章](#)

[第十九章](#)

[第二十章](#)

[第二十一章](#)

[第二十二章](#)

[第二部 隔壁荒岛上的人](#)

[第一章](#)

[第二章](#)

[第三章](#)

[第四章](#)

[第五章](#)

[第六章](#)

[第七章](#)

[第八章](#)

[第九章](#)

[第十章](#)

[第十一章](#)

[第十二章](#)

[第十三章](#)

[第十四章](#)

[第十五章](#)

[第十六章](#)

[第十七章](#)

[第十八章](#)

[第十九章](#)

[第二十章](#)

[第三部 林肯岛里的秘密](#)

[第一章](#)

[第二章](#)

[第三章](#)

[第四章](#)

[第五章](#)

[第六章](#)

[第七章](#)

[第八章](#)

[第九章](#)

[第十章](#)

[第十一章](#)

[第十二章](#)

[第十三章](#)

[第十四章](#)

[第十五章](#)

[第十六章](#)

[第十七章](#)

[第十八章](#)

[第十九章](#)

[第二十章](#)

版权信息

书名：神秘岛

作者：(法) 儒勒·凡尔纳著;凯茜译

出版方：北方文艺出版社

出版时间：2016.8.10

ISBN：9787531736752

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神秘岛

第一部 气球上降落的人

第一章

“我们是不是在往上飞？”

“不，恰恰相反，我们正在往下降！”

“史密斯先生！比你说的还糟糕，我们是在往下掉！”

“哦！天啊！怎么会这样？还不赶快把压舱物都抛掉！”

“你看，已经都抛掉了，全空了！”

“现在气球开始上升了吗？”

“还没有！”

“我好像听到了海浪拍打的声音！”

“不奇怪，我们乘坐的吊篮下就是大海！”

“海面离我们不到500英尺吧！”

“啊！快！把一切有重量的东西全都抛下去……一切，一切的东西！”

这些带着惊恐叫喊的声音来自于1865年的3月23日。那天的下午4点钟，一望无际的太平洋上空传出了这些惊悚的叫喊。

那一年原本属于草长莺飞的春季，不料却被从北方吹来的恐怖暴风打破了。

这场暴风是从3月18日开始刮起的，整整刮了9天，片刻不停地咆哮着。

暴风沿着北纬35°，横穿赤道，经过1800英里的路程后，来到了南纬40°。从美洲到欧洲，从欧洲到亚洲，暴风一路肆掠。所到之处，城市被毁，树木被废，巨浪毁堤.....

之后的统计数据就可见一斑：从海面抛向陆地的船有几百艘；巨浪将一些地方夷为平地；几千人在陆地、深海送了命.....

这，就是那场狂风带给人们的灾难，以及呈现给人们的凄惨情形。

在这之前，也有类似的暴风，比如1810年10月25日在哈瓦那、1825年7月26日在瓜德罗普，都曾经历过这样的灾难。不过，这两次的灾难都比不上1865年的这场毁灭性大。

而就在陆地和海洋经历这场世纪灾难的同时，太平洋上空也同样上演着惊险的一幕。

那天，太平洋上空飘浮着一只氢气球，那是一只犹如被龙卷风卷起，所以才会冲上天空的气球。在暴风中，氢气球以每小时90英里的速度穿过太空，卷进漩涡，并在气流的漩涡中打着转。

仔细一看，不难看出，那只气球的下面是系着一只吊篮的。不过，

由于浓重的水雾弥漫海面，所以吊篮里坐着的五个人，人们是看不到的。

海面上突然凭空飘浮着一只带着吊篮“尾巴”的气球，有人就好奇了，这气球是暴风的玩具吗？它是从哪里来的呢？又是要飘向什么地方？

当然，没有人觉得它会是在刮暴风的时候从地面上的升起来的。但是，暴风是18日开始刮起来的，在人们看到这气球时，已经是23日了，是不是可以说，这只气球在5天前就飞上了天空呢？

这么看来，我们没有理由不相信，这携带着吊篮“尾巴”的气球来自一个遥远的地方，因为根据狂风的速度，一昼夜的时间，足以将这气球带出2000英里了。

不要说其他人，就是吊篮里坐着的那些人，他们自己也无法计算出从气球起飞到现在，经过了多少路程。

如果有人知道吊篮里还坐着人，一定会更加好奇的，因为在这样咆哮的狂风面前，他们怎么可能平安无事？

他们脚下的吊篮被狂风吹得荡来荡去，而且还打着转，难道他们感觉不到旋转，没有跌宕起伏和眩晕的感觉吗？

没有！不过，可惜的是，他们无法透过吊篮下的迷雾来欣赏脚下的风景，他们被一团团的阴云环绕着，眼前雾茫茫的一片，没有白天和黑夜的区别。

飘浮在高空中的他们，看不到周围的一切，既看不到脚下有什么，也听不到地面上的人声，甚至有时连那澎湃激昂的海浪声也传不到他们

的耳朵里。只有在气球急速下降时，他们才会意识到危险。

于是，他们扔掉了所有的装备：弹药、枪支和粮食。那减轻了负重的气球便再次升了上去，升到了4500英尺的高度。

当迷雾散去，在一瞬间，他们看到了脚下的汪洋大海，同时意识到，悬在空中比落下深海要安全得多。于是，他们不断扔掉随身携带的东西，即使那东西再有用，在生和死面前，也都变成了垃圾。同时，他们尽量避免让气球漏气，因为他们深知，只有气球里的氢气，才是他们活命的法宝，也只有氢气，才能保证他们一直悬浮在空中。

每一个黑夜，他们都是在惊险和恐怖中度过的。（如果胆子小一点，肯定早都吓死了。）黑夜过去就是白昼，可白昼丝毫没有让他们的恐惧减轻，直到3月24日那天清晨来临，暴风呈现出了减弱的迹象，这才让他们轻轻地松了口气。

那天，在东方吐出鱼肚白时，浮在他们头顶的片片阴云逐渐散去，并向高处移动。几个小时后，狂风变成了强风。用一句专业术语来说就是：大气流动的速度比原来减弱了一半。

当然，这样的风势如果放在船上的水手身上，他们仍是要收帆待命的。

云雾渐散，到中午11点时，空气变得越发稀薄，并散发出雷雨过后的潮湿气息。暴风好像已经停止了向西肆掠，风也变得若有若无。这风会不会像印度洋上的台风，说停就停，瞬间就烟消云散呢？

还没等他们高兴，预料不到的事情又发生了——气球开始缓缓下降，像一只泄气的皮球，正在慢慢变瘪。气囊越伸越长，已经由圆形变

成了椭圆形。

中午12点时，气球离海面只剩下2000英尺了。

原本这只气囊的容量是很大的，能够容纳5万立方英尺的气体。而正是因为它能容纳如此多的气体，才会让气球升上天空，并越升越高。甚至即使不上升，也会在空中平行移动很长时间。

可现在，气囊里气体的减少，让气球吊篮里的人意识到了危险的逼近，他们再次把除了自身之外，一切能使吊篮下降的物品——极少的存粮，衣服口袋里的小刀等全部丢了下去。

即使这样，还是不能让他们感到安全。于是，有人爬上了套网索的圆环，将气球与吊篮间的绳索系牢了一些。

不过，所有的人都很清楚，气球里的氢气已经不足以让气球携带吊篮和他们维持一个向上甚至平行的状态了。留给他们的，只是死路一条。

他们乘坐的吊篮下，连小岛都没有，更不要说陆地了。有的只是一片汪洋大海，没有可着陆的陆地，连下锚的地方都没有。

一望无际的大海上，咆哮着惊涛骇浪。这样的汪洋大海，即使视野扩大40英里，也是看不到边际的。

从高处看下面的大海，犹如缓缓移动的平原。而在暴风肆掠下激起的浪头，则又如同在广阔平原上奔驰的骏马。那泛起的一个个水花，就像是骏马的鬃毛在迎风飘扬。

没有陆地，即使连孤帆也不见一片。他们能做的只是不惜任何代价

阻止气球下降，否则，气球就会被海浪卷入大海。

吊篮里的人在这危急时分想尽了办法。但是，尽管他们竭尽全力，却也无法阻止气球的下坠，气球正向东方，以飞快的速度下坠着前移。

他们处在了极其凶险的境况下。此时的他们已经不再是气球的主人，即使再努力，也只能成为气球的奴隶，被气球带着走。

气囊还在不断地往下瘪，氢气从看不见的缝隙往外泄，他们没有办法去堵塞那缝隙，只能看着它漏气。

气球下降的速度还在加快，下午1点钟时，吊篮离海面已经不到600英尺了。

氢气还在从缝隙处外泄，又有东西从吊篮里扔了下去。重量的再度减轻，让他们还能坚持一些时间，不至于在几个小时里掉下去。

但是，这也仅仅只是延缓了他们的坠海时间，如果在几个小时里，在天黑前他们找不到可降落的陆地，那么无疑，他们就会和气球、吊篮一起葬身海底。

这种时候，他们唯有孤注一掷了。这些机智勇敢、聪明冷静的人没有怨声载道。他们在想办法怎么延迟气球和吊篮坠海的时间，决定不到最后一刻绝不放弃。他们知道，柳条编织的吊篮，不可能在海面漂浮，一旦落入海里，就没有理由不沉下去。

下午两点时，气球离海面更近了，只有约400英尺的距离。此时，吊篮里的一个人发声了，此人声音洪亮，听不出丝毫恐惧。回答他的人，声音同样铿锵有力。

“没有东西可扔了吗？”

“不，还有，还有一万金法郎。”

随着说话声，一个有些重量的金袋被抛进了海里。

“气球有没有上升？”

“有上升，但很快又会下降的。”

“还有可扔的东西吗？”

“没有了。”

“不，还有，我们乘坐的吊篮！”

“抓住网索，把吊篮扔进海里！”

在这种时候，放弃吊篮确实是唯一一个减少氢气球重量的方法。有人割断了系着吊篮的绳索。气球在吊篮掉下去的同时，上升了2000英尺左右。

抓着网索的五个人，慢慢地爬上气球网，紧紧地攀着网眼，脚下是万丈深渊。

重量的增强或减弱，对一个气球的升降有着很大的影响，即使扔下很轻的东西，也会让它的高度发生改变。它就像一个天平，一个浮在空中的天平，精准地反映着重量的变化。

可以想象，当它的重量稍稍减轻后，它就开始急速上升了。

此时，攀着气球网上的五个人正是这样，因为吊篮的失去而急速上升。但没过一会儿，随着气体从缝隙往外泄，气球又开始下降了。

他们已经无计可施，只能听天由命了。

下午四点钟时，载着五人的气球离海面只剩下500英尺了。

一声响亮的犬吠声从网眼上传来，原来，攀在网眼上的还有一只狗，它是跟着它的主人一起乘坐气球，经历这场冒险的。

“多卜，你看那是什么？”一个人大声喊着，声音因激动而有些颤抖。

“天啊！是陆地！陆地！”

原来，气球在经过几百英里的飘移后，来到了一个地方。这样，他们的前方脚下便出现了一片陆地，那是一个有些高度的陆地。

不过，看着虽说不远，但实际怎么也得在30英里以外。气球要想飘移过去，怎么也需要一个小时。

一个小时！会不会气球还没飘到那片陆地，氢气就泄完了呢？

这是他们目前最需要解决的问题。

不过，既然已经清清楚楚地看到了陆地，那么他们即使付出任何代价，也是要到那里去的。那里是什么？是座岛屿还是大陆，他们不清楚，因为那场狂风很可能将他们吹到世界上任何地方的任何角落。至于到了哪个角落，他们无法得知。

不过，那是一块陆地，他们能确定。既然是块唯一能让他们停留的

陆地，那么不管那里有没有人，他们都要去，必须去，不得不去。

四点钟的时候，气球下降的速度越来越快，他们也更加贴近水面了。他们感觉到了巨大的海浪无数次地冲击网眼下部。这让气球如同一只断了翅膀的小鸟，怎么都飞不上去。

好不容易维持了半个小时，他们离那片陆地还有大概1英尺了，可气球像一个耗尽了全部体力的伤员，再也飘不动了，悬在了那里。气球里只剩上面一点点气体，所有的人，包括那只狗都紧紧地攀住了气球网……

最终，他们的半个身体还是浸在了海里，感受着波涛汹涌的海浪，冲击着他们的身体。

没过多长时间，气球的气囊就变成了一个瘪瘪的口袋，像帆一样任风吹走了。他们会这样被吹到陆地上吗？

然而，在离目的地还有两锚链距离的时候，网眼上的四个人突然大声惊呼起来，原来，那只已经没有氢气的气球，在一个巨浪的打击下，竟然腾空而起，好像是攀附在它身上的重量又减轻了。

气球又升到了1500英尺的高度。在那里，气球遇到了一股风。那风很糟糕地不仅没有将瘪了的气球吹到他们需要到达的目的地，反而吹向了和陆地平行的前方。

值得庆幸的是，这种糟糕的情况仅仅维持了两分钟，很快，它又飘了回来，落在了他们想要到达的，一块不会被海浪冲击到的沙滩上。

在彼此的帮助下，他们从网眼里逃了出来。此时，那空瘪的气球因为没有了任何负担，被风一吹，悠悠地飞了起来，转瞬间就消失不见

了。

从气球里下来的几个人这才看到，原本吊篮里有五个人和一只狗，现在却只有四个人了。

大家这才明白，在快要接近陆地时，为什么气球会突然腾空而起，想必是有人和狗被卷进了海里，气球因为重量减轻，所以才升上去的。

在发现少了个同伴后，四个人齐声说：“一定要救他！一定要把他救起来！他应该会自己游上岸吧！”

第二章

在气球上飘流，被狂风带到海岸上的是些职业气球飞行员吗？不，根本不是，那么他们是业余的吗？也不是。他们只是一群战俘。因为其英勇无畏，个性豪迈，所以才想到了这个异想天开的逃跑方法。

他们曾无数次地经历生死，差点从漏气的气球上掉下海。但幸运的是，他们在神灵的保佑下，活过来了。

3月20日那天，是他们坐上气球，从里士满逃亡的日子，从那天后，便开始了他们的空中飞行。如今，他们离弗吉尼亚的首都很远，足足有7000英里。

他们逃出的里士满正经历着一场可怕的南北战争，那时候，作为南方要塞之地的里士满，顺理成章地成了尤里西斯·格兰特将军想要占领

的地方。

那么，这些战俘是什么人？又是为什么要用气球逃跑呢？

事情要从1865年2月说起。那时候，格兰特将军正绞尽脑汁，想要以奇制胜，占领里士满。不料却没能如愿，反而连他的几名军官也成了敌人泰莱思的俘虏。这几名军官也被囚禁在了里士满城内。

在这些被俘的军官中，最有名的就是赛莱斯·史密斯了，他是联邦参谋部的成员。

此人是马萨诸塞州人，一位学识渊博的学者。

在这场南北战争中，他奉命负责一项在战略上极为重要的铁路管理工作。作为北方人的他，虽然看似瘦骨嶙峋，实际上却非常健硕。虽然年龄不过45岁左右，但那一头短发和几撮胡子却早已花白。勋章上的他长相端庄、气度不凡，非常英武。当他紧闭嘴巴时，显得非常严肃，双目也是炯炯有神，俨然一位激进派学者。

实际上，他是一名从底层做起的工程师，曾和一些行伍出身的将军一样，不仅头脑机智，而且心灵手巧。曾经的舞锤弄斧，使他的身体非常强壮。同时，作为一名活动家兼思想家，他有着热情开朗的性格，让他能在遇到任何问题时都乐观对待，并最终找到解决办法。见多识广的他在任何紧要关头都能保持清醒的头脑，善于随机应变，他坚强而又有毅力，遇事永远都充满信心。

正是因为有着以上的这些性格特点，他才能永远做自己的主人。

他曾将16世纪奥兰治威廉三世的一句话“即使没有成功的希望，我也要勇敢进取，坚忍不拔”作为自己的座右铭，并时刻提醒自己。

作为勇敢化身的赛莱斯·史密斯，自从在伊利诺伊州自愿效力于尤里西斯·格兰特后，每次战役都少不了他，比如在巴丢卡、波尔门特、匹兹堡埠头等地作战时，他英勇善战，屡立奇功；而在围攻科林斯、吉布森港、黑河、查特努加、威尔德涅斯和波托马克等地时，他更是勇猛善战，以一当十，从没辜负格兰特将军“绝不计算我的伤亡”的训导。

史密斯无数次差点成了格兰特所说的“不用计算的阵亡将士”，但最终，他安然无恙，直到在里士满被俘。

在被俘的人中，除了赛莱斯·史密斯以外，还有一位重量级的人物，那就是《纽约先驱报》的战地记者吉汀·史佩莱。这位叫史佩莱的记者原本只是随着北军做战地报道的，不料也被南军抓住了。

吉汀·史佩莱在英、美编采人员中有着很大的名气，他和斯坦利等有名的记者一样，只要能够做出最准确、最有深度的报道，即使遇到任何困难和危险他都不怕。

不仅如此，他总能在最短的时间里将新闻报道在第一时间传回自己效力的报社。所以在美国众多报纸中，《纽约先驱报》因他们的存在而成为纽约最知名的报纸。

吉汀·史佩莱作为一流的记者，拥有一切优秀记者所具备的素养，比如他精明能干，体力充沛，办事敏捷，善于动脑。史佩莱去过的地方有很多，可以说是周游过全世界。

见多识广的他，不仅有着军人的素质，而且还具备艺术家的气质。他热情健谈，非常有行动力，同时还不怕辛苦，冲劲十足；他拥有超强的职业道德，在为自己的报纸做新闻时，也为自己做了新闻；他对一切

事物都充满好奇心，善于捕捉别人不知道或采访不到的事物；作为战地记者，他习惯了在枪林弹雨中完成自己的工作，对他来说，越是从危险中得到的素材，越是具有新闻价值的好素材。

史佩莱参加过的战役有很多，而每次采访，他总是冲在最前线：一手左轮枪，一手笔记本。

枪林弹雨没有让他拿笔的手颤抖。在别人聊天时，他一遍又一遍地给报社打电报，发自己采写的新闻报道。他采写的每一篇新闻都言简意赅，主题明确。史佩莱还曾在《民主派机关报》工作过，在那时就有人评价他，说他是幽默风趣的好记者。

史佩莱在参加完黑河战争后，不顾危险，不惜代价地久久地趴在电报局窗口，只是为了给报社传递回最新消息。他还曾花费两个小时，两千元，用电报给报社发回《圣经》的前几章。

当然，正是他这种执着认真的精神，才让《纽约先驱报》比其他报纸更早地报道了这一战况。

吉汀·史佩莱年约四十，身材高大。他拥有淡红色络腮胡须，眼神坚定又机警。凡是他的眼神扫过的事物，都能牢牢地记在心里。体格健壮的他，也可以适应任何气候.....

这种种的一切，都让他的身体犹如经过了火炼，然后又浸在冷水里形成的钢筋。

他在《纽约先驱报》做记者有十个年头，不但文笔优美，而且精通绘画。因此，他的新闻报道和别人的单纯文字不同，他会配上插图，这不拘一格的表现形式在内容充实的情况下也就显得更加形象了。

这位尽职的战地记者在被俘前，还在用笔写着他的报道：“有名南军正用枪对着我，但是……”

当然，那名用枪对着他的南军士兵并没有打中他，他和以前的每一次一样幸运，只是稍稍受了一点伤。

赛莱斯·史密斯和吉汀·史佩莱就这样被捕了，并同时被送往里士满。在被捕前，他们从未见过面，但却都听到过对方的事迹。

史密斯工程师身上的伤很快就好了。在疗伤期间，他认识了同在接受治疗的史佩莱记者，两个传奇式人物一见如故，很快就建立起了真诚的友谊。此后不久，他们便有了一个共同的目的：逃回格兰特的军中。他们甚至决定向格兰特将军提出，为了联邦的统一继续战斗。

两位有了共同目标的美国人决定伺机逃跑。不过，虽然南军允许他们在市镇里自由行走，但整个里士满却是戒备森严的。逃跑，几乎是不可能的事。

被囚禁在里士满期间，史密斯的仆人来寻找主人了。

这是位对史密斯非常忠诚的仆人，是个勇敢的黑人。因为其父母是奴隶，所以他一出生就在史密斯家里做奴隶，虽然史密斯“反对奴隶制”让他获得了自由，但他却不愿意离开自己的主人，甚至愿意为主人去牺牲生命。

30多岁的他有着强壮的身体，而且聪明活泼、勤劳诚实，这些性格都使他整天处在乐观的状态中。

他叫那普加涅查，不过，他更习惯别人叫他那普。

那普在得知主人被俘的消息后，毫不犹豫地离开了马萨诸塞州，来到了里士满。凭着耐心和机智，他终于在经过了20多次的生命冒险后，进入到了史密斯被囚禁的地方，见到了主人。

见到那普，史密斯既感动又惊讶，而那普在看到主人时，兴奋和激动的心情溢于言表。

不过，那普虽然能进入里士满，但他们想溜出去却是万万不可能的。因为里士满的状况是“进松出紧”。南军对北军的战俘看守很严，想要顺利逃出，没有绝佳的机会根本办不到。

在这期间，两军还在继续作战。

格兰特将军在付出了重大代价后，最终取得了匹兹堡的胜利。然而，格兰特在里士满战线上，即使和巴特莱部队联合，依然无法取得胜利。因此，他们这些战俘想要尽早得到释放，简直就是痴人说梦。

囚禁中的生活是枯燥而乏味的，将采访写新闻视为生命的史佩莱记者再也受不了了，他开始转动脑筋，决定不惜任何代价也要逃出里士满。然而，虽然尝试过要逃跑，但最终还是失败了。他的囚禁生活还是要继续过下去。

在他们这两名战俘急切想要逃回格兰特军中时，被围困在里士满的人也迫切希望和南军取得联系。

比如被北军包围的南军约勒德·布撒泰。

里士满的总督一直想和李将军联系，但因为一直被北军围困，未能如愿。为了把当地的情况尽快传递出去，以求得到援兵，约勒德·布撒泰建议利用氢气球越过包围线，然后到达南军的兵营。

这个计划赢得了总督的认可，他很快就令人造了一只氢气球供布撒泰使用。同时，他还派了五个人做他的助手，让他们在乘坐气球时，携带上干粮、降落时使用的自卫武器，以备出现意外时使用。

3月18日，是他们约定好气球起飞的日子。

因为怕被敌军发现，所以他们将起飞时间定在了夜间。当然，想要升空并飞行顺利，还要到达他们想去的目的地，最好是有舒缓的西北风。在这些条件都具备后，他们只需几个小时，就能到达李将军的军营了。

不过，事情并没有向他们预想的方向发展。

这天晚上没有舒缓的西北风，而是疯狂的飓风。暴风越刮越猛烈，布撒泰只好延期动身，因为在如此恶劣的天气下，不管是气球还是乘坐的人员，都是很有危险的。

虽然延缓了行动，但那只被他们灌足了气的气球还是放在了里士满的广场上，布撒泰一直在等待时机，等待风势减弱了再起飞。由此可见，这些困守在城里的人是多么盼望暴风过去啊。

但是，两天过去了，暴风依然没有减弱的迹象，那拴在地上的气球被狂风吹得撞来撞去，虽然布撒泰担心气球被撞破，想去采取一些保护措施，但却因为飓风而无法办到，只能顺其自然。

很快，3月19日又过去了。20日早上，暴风更加猛烈，让气球起飞是不可能了。

不过就在那天，在里士满的一条大街上散步的赛莱斯·史密斯被一

个人叫住了。叫他的人他并不认识，是个叫庞库那夫的水手。这名水手的年龄在35到40岁之间，体格健壮，皮肤黝黑，有着一张英俊的脸和有神的大眼睛。

水手庞库那夫是标准的美国北方人，他曾在各大洋进行过航行，也参加过很多探险活动，经历过别人没有经历过的很多事。由此可以想象，这是一位多么胆大勇猛、敢作敢为的男人。

庞库那夫是年初到里士满办事的，和他一起来的还有位来自新泽西的男孩，15岁，是庞库那夫曾经工作过的一条船的船长的遗孤。对这个孩子，庞库那夫像对待自己的亲生儿子一样好。

在南军围城之前，庞库那夫和男孩没能出城，等到他们被围困在里面了，想出去又没办法出去了。

庞库那夫的性格决定了他不会向任何困难低头，所以他也在寻找机会，寻找能逃出去的机会。当他听说有位被俘的军官工程师史密斯的遭遇后，他能体会到史密斯被囚禁在这里的苦闷。

于是，他在见到史密斯后，便叫住了他，并直截了当地问：“史密斯先生，你有没有在里士满待够？”

史密斯怔住了，看着庞库那夫。庞库那夫走近他，小声地补充了一句：“先生，您就没打算逃跑吗？”

“逃跑？”史密斯有些惊讶，脱口而出。

虽然他不知道这位和自己说话的人是谁，但他用自己那敏锐的目光打量了庞库那夫一眼后，便认定他是一位可以信赖的人。

“您是谁？是怎么知道我的？”史密斯问。

庞库那夫向他简短地介绍了自己，并说史密斯是个名人，没人不认识。

史密斯点了点头，问他：“你有什么逃跑的好办法吗？”

“有！你看到广场上那只气球了吗？它停在那里很久了，毫无用处，我觉得它是为我们准备的……”

没等水手庞库那夫说完，工程师史密斯就知道他的意思了。他一把抓住庞库那夫的胳膊，将他拉到了自己的住处。

庞库那夫向史密斯说出了他的计划，整个计划听起来很简单，但却是要冒险的，这个“险”就是生命安全，而制造这个“险”的就是威力很大的飓风。好在如何操纵气球是工程师赛莱斯·史密斯很擅长的事，而对气球的飞行，庞库那夫又像对航海一样熟悉，这点飓风对他来说不在话下。

这样的话，习惯于在大海里冲风破浪的他，如果能和史密斯一起，再带着他视为儿子的赫伯特一起逃离里士满，就不是件困难的事了。

庞库那夫讲的时候，史密斯一直默不作声地听着，他的眼神已经透露出了“很好”的意思。想着自己向往已久的机会就要来了，不愿错过任何机会的他，觉得庞库那夫的这个计划是可以实行的。

不过，他不得不承认，这个计划很危险。

首先，夜间是有岗哨的，虽然他们有可能走近气球潜入吊篮，甚至割断系住吊篮的绳子，但弄不好，也可能会被岗哨发现并打死。

当然，即使有一半的成功机会，他也不想错过。

如果没有这场风暴，那该多好呀。史密斯想。

不过如果没有这场风暴，气球早就起飞了，也不可能给他们这个机会。

“要走的话，我这里不仅我一个！”史密斯最后说。

“你要带几个人走？”庞库那夫问。

“还有两个人，一个是我的朋友史佩莱，另一个是我的仆人那普。”

庞库那夫沉思了一会儿。

“也就是说你这里有三个人，再加上我和赫伯特，总共五个人。气球的承载人数是六个……”

“好！那就没什么问题了，我们决定了！”史密斯坚定地说。

史密斯的“我们”里，包括了史佩莱。他之所以能替史佩莱决定，是因为他对史佩莱的了解。这位战地记者不是胆小怕事之人。

两个人分手后，史密斯很快就将这个计划告诉了史佩莱。果然，史佩莱马上就同意了，还说让他感到惊讶的是，这么好的机会，自己怎么就没有想到呢。

至于那普，他是主人史密斯走到哪里他就会跟到哪里去的人，所以更没有犹豫。

下午，庞库那夫又去和史密斯商量起航的事。

“就今天晚上吧！我们在广场上集合！”庞库那夫说。

“好的，晚上十点钟，希望上天保佑，在离开前风势能减。”史密斯说。

庞库那夫和史密斯告别后，向自己的住处走去。

在那里，15岁的赫伯特·普朗正在焦急地等待着他们敲定时间。

就这样，五个有着坚强意志，敢于冒险的人打算在暴风之夜冒冒险，碰碰运气！

这一天的风势都没有减弱。布撒泰和他的同伴都不愿意在这样的不利条件下起飞，他们无法想象坐在风吹雨打的吊篮里的恐怖。

这一天过得漫长而难熬。整整一天里，工程师史密斯都在担心，担心气球会在狂风的冲击下破裂。他无数次迎着大风，在空旷的广场上来回踱步，看着那些飞行工具，一踱就是好几个小时。

和史密斯一样，庞库那夫也是坐立不安，他也好几次去广场，双手插在衣兜里看着那个气球，打着呵欠。看似他在消磨时间，实际上和史密斯一样担心。他甚至还担心拴在地面上的气球会不会被风吹得刮到了天上。

夜晚终于来了。四周一片昏暗。在这个雨夹雪的寒冷天气里，整个里士满都笼罩在了黑暗和浓雾中。

呼啸的狂风好像突然让处于守和攻的南北两军休了战，大炮的轰鸣声被狂风的怒号完全掩盖了，街道上看不到一个人影。在如此恶劣的天气下，布撒泰根本想不到他们的气球会丢失，所以也没在广场上设岗。

一切都给史密斯他们的逃跑创造了条件。

不过，在这样的狂风骤雨中，采用这么冒险的方式逃跑，会成功吗？

快到集合时间了，庞库那夫带着赫伯特提前来到了广场。

“天气实在太糟了！”庞库那夫一边大声说着，一边用手去压头上那顶被风快要刮跑的帽子。

“不过，我们……我们一定会成功的！”他给自己打气。

九点半的时候，史密斯和他的伙伴们从不同的方向来到了广场。汽灯被大风吹灭了，广场上一片漆黑。刚刚来到广场的几个人，连那拴着的大气球都看不见。

气球上的网索系在沙囊上，气球下的吊篮是用一根钢缆固定在一个铁环上的。顺利在吊篮处会合的五个人，没有被其他人发现。不要说其他人了，在这样黑漆漆的夜晚，即使是他们自己，想要看清对方也不容易。

史密斯、史佩莱、那普和赫伯特一言不发地快速坐进了吊篮。庞库那夫没有马上上去，而是按照工程师史密斯的指示，将沙囊一一解开，整个过程只花了几分钟。

做好这些后，庞库那夫也坐了上去。

只剩系着气球的那根纲缆没有解开了，只要史密斯一声令下，解开钢缆，气球就可以起飞了。

可就在这时，一件意料不到的事发生了，一只狗跳进了吊篮。原来，这是史密斯工程师的爱犬多卜。在看到主人离开后，它挣脱了拴着它的绳索，追赶上了它的主人，并上了吊篮。

史密斯担心狗的存在会增加额外重量，影响气球的上升，想赶它走。

“它太可怜了，留下它吧！”庞库那夫说着话，将两袋沙土扔了出去，算作减轻狗的重量。随后，他解开了钢缆，气球飞速斜着向上蹿去。由于起飞速度过快，吊篮碰到了两户人家的烟囱，但很快就消失得无影无踪了。

他们的耳旁响起了飓风的呜咽，在伸手不见五指的黑夜，气球在下降，史密斯根本不敢想象会发生什么。

总算是飘到了天亮，然而，被浓雾包围着的他们，根本看不见大地，更不知道自己飘向了哪里。

时间在一天天地过去，直到第五天的时候，他们才从散去的云层间，看到他们身处汪洋大海中。他们乘坐的气球，因为飓风的作用，竟然以不可想象的速度，飞到了他们难以想象的地方。

现在我们知道了：3月20日起飞的五个人，在3月24日的时候，除了一个人失踪外，其他四个人全被丢在了远离他们国家6000英里的荒凉海岸上。

四个人一从气球上下来，便决定去寻找失踪的那个人，因为那个人就是他们的领袖——工程师赛莱斯·史密斯。

第三章

从网眼上掉下去的史密斯，很快就被海浪卷走了，同被海浪卷走的还有那只狗。那只忠实的狗，在看到主人掉下去后，出于本能去救主人，也掉了下去。

“我们快点去找吧！”记者史佩莱大声喊着。

安全降落的史佩莱、赫伯特、庞库那夫和那普，全然不顾疲劳，决定去寻找掉在海里的史密斯。

四个人中，最伤心的莫过于那普了，伤心欲绝的他痛哭流涕。世界上最亲最敬的人掉进海里生死未卜，他能不伤心吗？

根据时间推算，史密斯落下水是在他们着陆前的两分钟里，所以还是很有机会救回他的。

那普不停地哭喊着：“我们快去找到他吧！快去找到他吧！”

“一定会找到他的，那普。”史佩莱说，“一定能找到他！”

“他还活着吗？”

“活着，当然活着，一定活着！”

“他会不会游泳？”庞库那夫问。

“会的！他会游泳！”那普直点头，最后又补了一句，“多卜一定和

他在一起。”

水手庞库那夫看着一望无际的大海，又看看被巨浪拍打的海岸，摇了摇头。对于找到史密斯，他很不乐观。

史密斯失踪的地方，离他们着陆的地方有近半英里，由此可以说，史密斯落水的地方，离海岸也足有半英里。

此时已经快要六点钟了，笼罩在浓雾下的暮色，显得越发黑暗。四个人从他们降落的地方一直向北走，那里究竟是什么样的地理环境，他们无从猜测。但不管怎样，他们都要去。

他们走在没有任何植物的、光秃秃的沙地上。由于地面不平整，坑坑洼洼，走起来非常艰难。

走着走着，他们看到有叫不出名的大鸟从坑洞里飞出来，成群结队地盘旋在他们头顶。庞库那夫认出那是海鸥和猎隼，这些海鸥和猎隼的叫声连绵起伏，连奔腾的潮水声也掩盖不了。

他们边走边停，停下就呼叫，然后再倾听海里有没有出现回音。他们觉得，如果史密斯已经游上了岸，一定离他们上岸的地方不远。所以即使史密斯的回答他们听不到，多卜的叫声他们一定是能听到的。

然而，在他们静下心来倾听时，除了海水拍打海岸的声音以及鸟鸣声外，什么都没有。于是，他们继续前行，找遍了海滩的角角落落。

在他们徒步前行大约20分钟后，突然发现脚下已经白浪翻滚了，只得停了下来。陆地被他们走完了，他们到达了一个海滩的尽头，海水正凶猛地冲击着海岸。

“我们到岬角了！”庞库那夫看着大家，“我们现在只能按原路返回，一直向右走，就能走出海滩。”

“他可能就在这里，很可能就在这里，我们再喊几声吧！再喊几声！”那普说着，开始面对大海喊起来。其他人也都跟着大声地呼喊，但仍然没有回音。他们不放弃，停了一会儿后，又齐声大喊。

在依然听不到任何回音后，他们这才不甘心地往回走。这次，他们沿着岬角的另一边走，这条路不仅遍地是沙石，而且比刚才的更崎岖不平。

不过，庞库那夫很快就发现这一带的海岸很直，而且地面比其他地方高。于是告诉大家，这里靠近丘陵。众人透过浓雾，果然看到了隐隐约约的山丘。

大家很快又发现，这里的鸟类没有那边多，海水的喧嚣声也弱了很多。他们甚至还注意到，这里的波涛比那边的减弱了很多，拍打海岸的声音也没有了。

岬角一带的地形，形成了半圆形的海港，而海里的浪花则正好让岬角尖端隐藏起来。他们如果从这里一直向南走的话，很可能是史密斯上岸后落脚地的对面。

在步行了约一英里半之后，他们竟然找不到返回的路了。不过，既然是个岬角，而且也曾绕它走到了尽头，那么这里一定是和沙滩外的陆地相连的。于是，虽然已经筋疲力尽，但他们还是鼓足勇气往前走，希望能碰到一个拐角，回到原地去。

在走了差不多两英里后，他们来到了一个到处都是又圆又滑岩石的

高耸土堆上，土堆下是海水。

他们再次被海水阻挡，不禁大失所望。

庞库那夫说：“这么看来，我们是在一个小岛上。我们已经从小岛一端走到另一端了。”

庞库那夫说得没错。他们降落下来的地方不是大陆，也不是沙滩，而是一个孤零零的小岛。整个小岛全长不到两英里，宽度就更不用说了。

这是一片海鸟栖息的荒岛，遍地都是乱石，寸草不生。这个地方会不会和一些重要的群岛连在一起？很难说。当他们还在吊篮时，通过云雾，曾看见过陆地，但当时并没有看清楚。

尽管如此，航海多年的水手庞库那夫，依然能从昏暗的光线中认定，西边有一片朦朦胧胧的巨大阴影，阴影是突起的，极有可能是海岸。不过，因为天色过于黑暗，那里是不是孤岛，有没有和其他岛屿相连，他们都不清楚。

不管怎样，此刻，他们不能离开四周都是一望无际海洋的这个小岛。因为天黑，他们只能将寻找工程师史密斯的事拖到第二天了。

让他们感到不安的是，他们没有听到一声回音，所以无法判断史密斯是死是活。

“我们的朋友史密斯虽然没有出声，但并不能代表什么。”史佩莱安慰着大家。

“也许他晕过去了，也许是受了伤，总之，他很可能不能马上回

答，所以我们不要灰心。”

史佩莱说完，提议大家在小岛上燃起火堆，以便给史密斯信号。然而，这里遍地沙石，根本找不到任何树枝或荆棘。

他们只能到处去寻找。

不管是那普还是史密斯的这些伙伴，他们对史密斯都充满了敬重。找不到他，那份悲伤无法用语言来形容。但在这样的情况下，除非史密斯能自救，能自我逃生，然后在海岸上找到避难之地，不然很可能就永远地离开这个世界了。

漫长而痛苦的时光在慢慢地流逝。天气异常寒冷，每个人的处境都非常困难，但这些困难他们似乎并没有感受到。他们一刻都不想休息，一心只想着他们的领袖。他们怀抱希望，一遍又一遍地在这个寸草不生的沙石地里奔走呼叫，他们一次次地回到小岛的北端，在他们降落时的地点寻找、喊叫、倾听。

每喊一声，他们都在竭尽所能地让自己的喊声大一点，再大一点，以便能在更遥远的地方听到。在一切都风平浪静后，有次那普的呼喊甚至都有了回声。

“很可能西方不远处有海岸。”赫伯特提醒庞库那夫说。

庞库那夫点了点头，他也意识到了。而且他相信自己的眼睛，相信自己的眼睛不会欺骗自己。多年的经验告诉他，只要出现陆地，不管那地方是多么模糊，他都会认出来。

然而，那普的呼喊带来的回声却是那么的遥远，小岛的整个东部又是一片昏暗，所以那边到底是怎么回事，他们依然一无所知。

不过，好在天气已经逐渐晴朗，午夜时分，天空满目星辰。可惜史密斯不在，不然他一定会告诉他的同伴，这些星辰并不是北半球的，因为这里看不见北极星，这里看到的星座和在美国常见的不一样，这里的南十字座在天空能发出耀眼的光芒。

他们在焦灼中度过了漫长的黑夜。3月25日清晨五点钟，天慢慢亮了起来，但地平线还是黑黝黝的。

破晓时分，一抹朝霞在海面上升起，因为有浓雾在他们身边环绕，所以小岛上的他们依然无法看清20英尺以外的东西。

史佩莱和那普仔细地观察着海面，庞库那夫和赫伯特则急切地寻找着海岸，很可惜，他们没有看到一点陆地的影子。

“没事的，虽然我们没有看到陆地的影子，但我相信.....那里一定有陆地.....就像我们现在不在里士满一样地肯定。”庞库那夫说。

朝雾不再上升，飘浮在了半空，让人觉得到处都是烟雾缭绕。阳光慢慢照射到了小岛上。差不多早上六点半的时候，烟雾变得越来越稀薄，并逐渐消散，形成了上浓下薄的景象，整个小岛像是从云端慢悠悠地飘下来似的。

随着浓雾的消散，小岛周围的海洋完全显现出来，并逐渐向东面的远处延伸。不过，海洋西面却像是被一块险滩硬生生地插了进去，海面在那里戛然而止。

不错！那里的确有一片陆地。这样的话，他们现在可以说暂时安全了。不过，将他们所处的这个小岛和对岸隔开的是一条约半英尺宽的海峡，海峡水流湍急。

面对水流湍急的海峡，有个人却没有和任何人商量，便自作主张地跳了下去，这个人就是那普。他想到对岸去寻找他的主人。

没人能拦住他，庞库那夫叫他他也不听。史佩莱想跟着下去，但却被庞库那夫拦住了。

“你想渡过海峡？”

“对！我要过去！”史佩莱回答。

庞库那夫说了一声“好”，随即又说：“那普如果能过去，他就足够能帮助他的主人。假如我们全都冒险跳进海峡，在那样的急流下，很可能被冲进大海的。如果我的感觉没错的话，现在是退潮期。你看看，沙滩上的潮水已经退下去了。所以先别急，等水浅的时候，我们就能很容易地找到一条足以让我们安全涉过去的水域了。”

史佩莱冷静地一想，觉得庞库那夫说得没错，便说：“是的，我们不能太分散，这样不容易互相关照。”

此时，海峡里的那普正与激流搏斗，他要横渡海峡。岛上的同伴看着海峡，见那里有黑色的胳膊不时从水里露出来，但很快又不见了。等会儿又露了出来……就这样，他在一点一点地接近，终于临近了对岸。

从时间上来看，从小岛到对岸大概需要半个多小时，距离是几百英尺。

那普选择从一块高大的花岗岩石下上岸。上了岸后，他抖了抖身上的水，随即便拔腿就跑，很快就消失在一块岬角后面了，而他消失的岬角和小岛北端的岬角高度完全相当。

那普的所有举动，他的伙伴们都在担心地看着，直到他上岸并消失在岬角后面，他们这才一边寻找散布在海滩上的贝壳生物充饥，一边盯着那可能寄托着希望的陆地。

贝壳生物很难吃，但他们不得不吃，因为再难吃也好过饿肚子。

对岸像是一个宽阔的港湾，南端形成了险峻的岬角，岬角上寸草不生，非常荒凉。

对岸的岬角靠近海岸，由此也就形成了一系列奇形怪状的花岗石轮廓，高高地耸立在那里，越向北，岬角就越宽阔，这也使海岸越发迂回曲折，从西南向东北转弯，在终点处形成了一个狭长的地角。

构成港湾弓形地带的两端距离是8英里左右。由于小岛离海岸有半英里，最宽处也不过有四分之一英里，所以远远看起来，港湾如同一条大鲸鱼横在那里。

小岛对面的沙滩上散布着许多黑石头，最底层则是沙砾。一旦退潮，黑石头便慢慢地显露出来。黑石头下的第二层是花岗石峭壁，它垂直地将沙砾与黑石头阻隔开来。

峭壁的顶部虽然高低不齐，但整体看来高度却有300英尺。峭壁连绵不断，向右延伸了3英里左右便突然终止，如同一座人工凿开的断崖，莫名其妙地消失在了南角的地面上。

海岸的高地上没有一棵树。从小岛上，某些地方有些类似好望角开普敦的一些平坦地带，当然要小很多。

不过，悬崖的右边倒长满了植物，绿油油的，这让小岛上的他们好像看到了一片望不到边的森林。在看过花岗石的连绵起伏，再看到悬崖

上的青翠植物后，他们顿时有种满目苍翠的感觉。而当他们又将目光越过高地，看向西北方7英里之外时，他们看到阳光照在一个山巅上，山巅闪耀着明晃晃的光。

那是一座高山，一座顶端积满了白雪的高山。

他们所在的小岛是不是和大陆相连，他们无从知道。但如果有地质学家看了左方那些因地震而形成的土堆后，一定会说，这都是由火山爆发造成的。而这岛，不用说，它是火山爆发的产物。

史佩莱、庞库那夫和赫伯特仔仔细细地考察着这片土地，因为这片土地很可能是他们几年，甚至一辈子的居住地。

如果没有船只经过这里，他们将永远无法离开。

“嗨，庞库那夫，发现什么了？”赫伯特问。

“一切事物都有它的两面，有好的一面，也有坏的一面。”庞库那夫说。

“再等等看吧，现在正在退潮，三个小时后，我们一定能想办法过去的。只要我们到了对岸，就能想出脱离困境的办法了，而且很可能会找到史密斯。”

确实像庞库那夫所说，三个小时后，潮水退去了，海峡的大部分显露出了沙滩。小岛和对岸只隔了一条窄窄的水域，要想过去非常容易。

十点钟左右的时候，史佩莱和同伴们脱去衣服，将衣服捆成一团顶在头上，下到了不到5英尺深的水域，涉水而过。15岁的赫伯特不够高，便像鱼一样游过去了。

三个人顺利地到达了对岸。

阳光下，他们先是晒干了身体，然后穿上衣服开始商量下一步要做什么。

第四章

三个人坐着商量时，史佩莱突然从地上弹了起来，叫庞库那夫和赫伯特在这里等他，然后顺着几个小时前那普所走的路线跑了。他心里牵挂着朋友史密斯，所以很快就绕过峭壁拐角不见了。

赫伯特也想跟着一起去，庞库那夫说：“孩子，你不用去，我们留下来寻找过夜的地方和吃的东西，这样等他们回来后就有休息的地方和食物了。每个人都应该有自己的工作。”

“那好吧！我们现在开始！”赫伯特说。

“嗯，我们要好好计划一下。现在又累、又冷、又饿的我们，首先要找个住的地方，然后生一堆火，找一些吃的东西。森林里不缺木柴，这里到处是鸟窝，有鸟窝就不缺鸟蛋。所以我们现在只要找个能躺下休息的地方就行了。”

“太好了，我们找个山洞吧，我相信我们一定能找到一个可以栖身的山洞。”赫伯特高兴地说。

庞库那夫鼓励他：“一定会的！走吧，孩子。”

两个人来到了海滩边的一个硕大石壁下，潮水从这里退去已经很久了。他们没有向北走，而是向南边走去。在他们还没有从气球上降落时，庞库那夫便注意到离他们现在的位置大约几百步的地方，有个山口非常狭窄。他当时就想，那一定是河流或小溪的出口。而现在，他们需要找的住处正好是靠近河流和小溪的地方，何况史密斯很可能被巨浪冲到这里来。

前面已经介绍过了，这里的悬崖有300英尺高，因为巨浪无法冲击到，所以上面没有一个空洞，甚至连一条缝隙都没有。悬崖的质地是花岗岩，坚实而陡峭，海水很难将它侵蚀。

悬崖上空盘旋着无数的海鸥，其中不乏一些蹼足鸟类。它们长着又尖又长的嘴巴，一刻不停地叫着。这些鸟类不怕人，很可能是因为第一次见到侵入它们领地的人类。

在这些鸟类中，庞库那夫认识一种游禽类的大海鸥，以及藏在花岗岩峭壁缝隙里的小海鸥。他想，如果有枪的话，一定可以打死很多的。而此刻，他和赫伯特都手无寸铁。

其实，海鸥的肉是很难吃的，不要说肉，就连蛋都带着腥臭。

赫伯特继续往前走，在走到海边时，突然碰到了一堆被海藻覆盖的石头，可以想象几个小时后的涨潮，这里一定会被潮水淹没的。

赫伯特拿开海藻，在乱石中发现了一些类似蛤蜊的东西。这种蛤蜊，对于处在饥饿中的他们来说，简直是太好了。

赫伯特马上叫庞库那夫，庞库那夫跑了过去，看到这些蛤蜊说：“只有贻贝吗？可以充当鸟蛋了！”

“这不是贻贝！”赫伯特一边说，一边仔细地观察这些软体动物，“它们是茨蟹。”

“茨蟹？能吃吗？”庞库那夫问。

“当然！好吃极了！”赫伯特说。

“太好了！我们就吃它们吧！”庞库那夫说。

庞库那夫是非常信任赫伯特的。赫伯特虽然只有15岁，但却精通自然史。他的父亲还曾有意识地培养他这方面的知识，并经常性地让他去听一些波士顿的名师讲课，那些教授也特别喜欢聪明好学的赫伯特。

以前，赫伯特就曾不止一次地向庞库那夫证明自己的博学，所以庞库那夫相信赫伯特不会搞错。

岩石上有着密密麻麻的，一动不动地黏在岩石上的茨蟹。它们有着椭圆形的贝壳，虽然是软体动物，但也会穿孔，能在最坚硬的岩石上挖出洞来。

茨蟹和一般贻贝的区别就在于外壳的两端很圆。

在太阳光的照射下，茨蟹半开着壳，这让庞库那夫和赫伯特美美地饱餐了一顿。他们像吃蛤蜊一样地吃着茨蟹，带着辣味的茨蟹，让他们在没有任何调料的情况下，也感觉非常可口。

终于吃饱了，但那带着辣味的茨蟹却让他们感到口渴。他们需要找淡水来喝，但在这种地方，哪里能有淡水？不得已，两个人在又捡了装满衣袋和手帕的茨蟹后，回到了悬崖下面。

又走了两百步左右，他们到了庞库那夫曾看到的那个山口。那里确实有一条溪流，但流出的到底是不是淡水，他们也不知道。溪水是从石壁下的缝隙里流出来的，而石壁是剧烈地震的产物。

溪流的尽头形成了一个带有弯度的小尖角，宽度大约在100英尺左右，深度不到20英尺。湍急的溪水在花岗石的夹缝间流淌，河身在石壁下的河口处突然拐弯，进入到了半英尺外的矮树林中。

“我们终于有水喝了，那里还有我们需要的木柴。”庞库那夫指指那矮树林说完，好一会儿又说：“赫伯特，我们只缺住的地方了。”

溪水清澈见底，庞库那夫相信溪水在潮水未涨前，不会有海水倒灌进来，所以还是清甜可口的。

最重要的水问题他们解决了，现在只需找藏身的山洞了。然而，到处都是平滑的陡峻石壁，他们转来转去还是毫无收获。

不过，在河口处，有个比涨潮后的水面还高的地方。那里也有一堆岩石，因为剧烈的地震而形成了天然岩洞。这种由巨大岩石块形成的岩洞又被称为“石窟”。

庞库那夫和赫伯特进了“石窟”，沿着沙路走了很久，里面比他们想象的还要幽深。“石窟”里的光线并不暗，有缕缕阳光从石缝里照进来，亮晃晃的。

让他们感到好奇的是，这些由大块岩石自然形成的山洞，有些岩石的排列却是非常整齐的，整齐到令他们惊讶的地步。当然，从石缝里进来的不仅有阳光，还有风，悠长的通道在“石窟”里形成了过堂风，风进来了，寒气也就进来了。庞库那夫想，要是用沙石将一部分石缝堵住的

话，这里倒是一个不错的住处。

“石窟”的平面图类似“&”，很像拉丁文“和”字的缩写。

庞库那夫打量着这个“石窟”，开始考虑堵哪些缝隙可以阻止强烈的西风和南风。

“我们有活干啦！如果能找到史密斯的话，他一定会非常好地利用这座迷宫的！”庞库那夫说。

“一定会找到他的，庞库那夫。”赫伯特大声说，语气很肯定。

“等他回来的时候，我们要给他展示一个像样的住宅。这样，我们在左边通道生火，还要留个洞口来出烟。”赫伯特继续说。

庞库那夫很喜欢他找的这个“石窟”，他仔细地打量着它：“孩子，这都不难，‘石窟’足够我们住的了。动手吧，我们先弄些木柴过来，堵塞多余的缝隙，要不然风吹进来的话，声音会像鬼叫一样，特别恐怖。”

两个人离开了“石窟”。转过拐角，他们爬到了河的左岸。水流湍急起来，一棵枯树顺着潮水流了下去。潮水快要上涨了，而潮水的上涨必定会将那顺流而下的树枝推向更远的。

这提醒了庞库那夫，他觉得不妨利用潮水的涨落来运送较重的东西。

他们继续向前走，走了10多分钟后，庞库那夫和赫伯特来到了河流的另一拐角处。在这里，河水流经一片美丽的森林。虽然正值秋天，但森林里的树木却依旧郁郁葱葱。

在这里，他们看到了很多松柏科树木。松柏科在世界的每个角落都能看到，不管是寒冷的北方还是炎热的南方都有这类植物的身影。

对自然史颇有研究的“少年博物学家”赫伯特认出了那些可以散发清香的喜马拉雅杉，还认出了夹杂在杉树中间的枞树。枞树的枝叶非常浓密，向四周伸展，如同一把大大的伞撑在那里。

他们穿过一片深草丛，突然，有些枯枝在他们脚下发出了像鞭炮一样的声响。

庞库那夫对赫伯特说：“孩子，虽然我们不知道这是什么树，但它一定很适合当柴火。我们叫它‘柴树’吧，目前我们最需要的就是它。”

“那多弄一些回去。”赫伯特一边说，一边捡了起来。

遍地都是这样的枯枝，俯拾即是，根本不需要他们从树上往下折。这些树枝是绝佳的柴火，而且燃烧起来一定很快。如果两个人随身带的话，拿不了多少。可捡多了，又怎么运过小溪呢？

庞库那夫意识到了这个问题，他说：“孩子，我们要想办法来运这些木柴，不想办法不行，如果我们有一辆大车或一只船就好了。”

“我们有河。”赫伯特说。

“没错。”庞库那夫说，“我们可以做个木筏，这样河就成了我们的运输线。”

“不过现在是涨潮期，方向不对。”赫伯特担心地说。

“没事，我们可以等退潮。退潮的时候，我们就能借着水流，将柴

火运到‘石窟’方向了。现在赶紧做木筏吧。”庞库那夫说。

庞库那夫带着赫伯特，捡了很多柴火，并将它们捆成捆放到了河边，而河边的草丛里也有很多这样的枯枝，这些地方想必是永远也不会有人来的。

做好准备工作后，庞库那夫便开始着手造木筏。

他们把造木筏的地方选在了河堤的突出处，这里是天然的小港，而且水流很弱。

水手庞库那夫和少年赫伯特向造木筏的地方搬了几根粗木头，然后用爬藤将它们绑在了一起，木筏就这么造成了。他们将捡来的木柴堆了上去。

他们捡的木柴有很多，即使是20个人也搬不完。一个小时后，所有的工作都做完了，他们便将木筏系在岸边，静等退潮。

还有几个小时才到退潮期，庞库那夫和赫伯特商量，趁这个时间去一处高坡，看看四周的情况。

他们要去的高坡在离河流拐角大约200英尺的地方。通向高坡的地方有块石壁，石壁的一端是倾斜着伸向森林的，过了斜坡便又是一块平地。所以这个石壁也就成了他们去高坡的一个天然石梯。

庞库那夫和赫伯特沿着石壁往上走，身强力壮的他们没用几分钟便到了坡顶，站在坡顶上，他们能完全俯视河口。

他们首先看到了他们在最危险的情况下，幸运渡过的海洋。此时看起来，他们既感慨又激动。

海岸的北部是史密斯失踪的地方，他们多么希望能够看到一些气球的残骸啊，甚至还希望能看到史密斯正攀在上面。可什么都没有，他们看到的只是无边无际的海洋和空无一人的海岸，连记者史佩莱和那普的踪影都没有，也许他们已经走出好远，走出他们的视线了。

赫伯特突然大声说：“我觉得像史密斯这么优秀的人，不会随便被淹死的。他一定是在一个地方上岸了，对不对，庞库那夫？”

庞库那夫轻轻地摇了摇头，他觉得很可能已经不会再看到史密斯了，但为了不让赫伯特灰心，他仍然说：“当然，这是肯定的，即使别人都没有办法存活，史密斯还是可以顺利脱险的。”

庞库那夫说的时候，也没忘记仔细观察海滨。

山坡下的沙滩是向外延伸出去的，一直延伸到了河口的右边，最后被河口翻滚的浪花拦住。在那里，有些礁石露出了水面，个个像水陆两栖怪兽一样，一动不动地躺在水里。礁石旁边的大海在阳光下波光闪闪。

有个突出的岬角将南面的水平线完全遮住了，使他们无法看清陆地延伸出去的方向是在东南还是西南，使海岸形成了一个狭长的半岛。

在港湾北部的尽头，海岸的轮廓延伸到很远的地方，并最终形成了一个很大的弧形。

海滨那里没有悬崖，只有退潮后的大片沙滩，地势非常平坦。

庞库那夫和赫伯特又向西看去，吸引他们的是六七英里外，山顶上堆积着白雪的高山。而从山坡下斜的地方一直到海岸两英里内，全都生长着大片的树木，还有零星的常绿树木在里面，所以并没有让他们觉得

荒凉。

从森林到海边，是一片平地，上面零散地长着一些高矮不齐的树丛。左边的林间空地上有一条小溪，在阳光的照耀下闪着亮光。沿那条小溪继续往前走，可以找到小溪的发源地——山岭的支脉间，也是庞库那夫他们停靠木筏的地方。

水流沿着高大巍峨的花岗岩石壁间隙流了出来。石壁左边险峻狰狞，右边却和缓平整，微微倾斜。整片石壁看上去像是由一块块的岩石堆积而成的，那些岩石经过了风吹雨淋，变成了一块块的沙砾，径直向海角尽头延伸。

这让庞库那夫有了一种陌生感，他不禁喃喃道：

“这是一个海岛吗？”

“总之，看起来，它像是一个很大的海岛。”少年赫伯特说。

“不管它有多大，岛还是岛！”庞库那夫说。

实际上，这是个海岛还是个大陆，是他们一直无法弄明白的地方。要想解决这个问题，他们需要很全面地观察整个地方。不过，不管这里是海岛还是大陆，看起来好像很肥沃，风景也不错，算得上物产丰富。

“不错！很好！能让我们降落到这样的地方，可以说是不幸中的万幸了。”庞库那夫说。

“是呀！感谢神灵！”赫伯特说着，虔诚地表达着对上苍的感谢。

两个人四处看着，可这样粗浅地看，根本无法预测自己未来的命

运。

最后，他们又沿着那块天然石梯的南边山脊往回走。这边石壁的边缘有很多奇形怪状的石头，石头的缝隙里栖息着成千上万只飞鸟。

赫伯特从石壁上跳下去时，惊起了很多飞鸟。

看着那些被他惊动的鸟，赫伯特惊喜地大喊：“啊，它们不是海鸥，也不是沙鸥！”

“那是什么？是鸽子吗？”庞库那夫问道。

“是的，是鸽子。不过是野鸽子，也许是山鸽子。看到了吗？它们的翅膀上有黑纹，还有两道。尾巴是白色的，羽毛是青灰色的。所以我判断出，它们应该是野鸽子。野鸽子的肉非常好吃，蛋就更不用说了。我们看看它们的窝里有没有蛋！”

“哈哈……我们可不能给它们孵蛋的时间，除非它们孵出的是荷包蛋！”庞库那夫兴致极高，风趣地说。

“我们要怎么煎荷包蛋呢？”赫伯特说，“是用你的帽子吗？”

“不错的想法！不过我可不会用帽子变戏法，我们只能吃吃泡蛋。最硬的蛋就交给我吧！”庞库那夫说。

两个人在花岗石的缝隙里仔仔细细地搜查了一遍，在一些洞穴里，看到了鸟蛋。捡了好多后，他们用庞库那夫的手帕包了起来。看着快要退潮了，他们便从山坡上下来，向河的岸边走去。

等他们到了放着木筏的岸边，已经是下午一点钟了。快要退潮了，

他们必须趁这个时间将木柴运到河口去。

庞库那夫不想上木筏掌控方向，但又不能让木筏随波逐流。于是，虽然没有绳索和钢缆，庞库那夫还是用一些爬藤拧成了长长的绳子，然后将绳子一端系在了木筏的尾部，自己牵着另一端。

在赫伯特用长竿将木筏撑开后，木筏在水上漂流，庞库那夫在岸边控制着木筏的方向。由于河水平缓，他们完全不用担心木筏会在水里打旋。

没用一个小时，他们和找到的木材便到了河口。

河口离他们的“石窟”仅仅只有几步远。

第五章

木筏上的干柴被卸了下来，庞库那夫用一些木柴将能灌风的缝隙堵了起来。随后，他用沙石和烂泥封闭了迎着南风的洞口，只在旁边留了一道细缝用作出烟、拨火。最后，庞库那夫和赫伯特还将“石窟”分隔成了三四个房间（如果这也能称为房间的话），并在石洞里铺上了一层细沙。

当然，在这么简陋且光线黑暗的地方，恐怕只有野兽才会真正满意。不过好在洞里很干燥，中间位置较高，能让他们站直身体。

看着布置好的一切，他们还是有些满意的，在没有其他更好的地方

的时候，有这样的石洞已经很不错了。

“也许他们找到了比我们这里更好的地方。”赫伯特一边协助庞库那夫做事，一边说。

“嗯，有可能，不过既然我们不知道他们有没有找到史密斯，我们就必须做好准备工作——有准备好过没有准备。”庞库那夫说。

“是啊！要是他们能把史密斯先生也找回来，那该多好啊！”赫伯特大声说。

“没错！如果能找回来就好了。”庞库那夫停了一下，接着又说，“如果他能活着，那真是个了不起的人，简直是创造了奇迹。”

“活着？”赫伯特不满地看了庞库那夫一眼，大声反问道，“你的意思是我们不会再看到他了？”

“不，我当然不是这个意思！”庞库那夫说完，手里的工作也差不多完成了。他看着他们布置好的“房间”，满意地点了点头，说：

“现在，只等我们的朋友们回来了。总算能给大家一个安身之地了。”

接下来要做的就是造炉子和生火做饭了。

这件事对他们来说并不难。他们在专门留下细缝的出烟口处，铺了几块平板石，简易的炉灶就做成了。在这个地方做饭，只要烟带不走热气，还是能给“房子”增添些温度的。

捡来的木柴被他们放在了另一个“房间”，庞库那夫拿了一些放

在“炉灶”旁。

在庞库那夫忙得热火朝天的时候，赫伯特突然问他有没有火柴。

“当然有，这是我要给你的一个好消息，因为没有火柴和火绒，我们就没办法生火做饭了。”

“没有火柴还可以像土人一样钻木取火。”赫伯特说。

“好吧，要不你试试？孩子！这样既能让你锻炼身体，还能看你能不能钻出火来。”

“嘿嘿……这对我来说太简单了。这是太平洋岛上的土人经常使用的办法。”

“嗯，没错，不过我试过很多次都不行。我想，大概土人使用了一种特殊的方法吧，要么就是他们使用的石头和一般石头不一样。我看呀，还是用火柴吧！”

庞库那夫说着便去找自己的火柴，结果发现没有了。

“见鬼！火柴上哪里去了？”

烟鬼庞库那夫习惯将火柴盒放在坎肩口袋里，可他伸手摸时却发现没有了，最后摸遍所有裤子的口袋都没有，他大吃一惊。

“坏了！”他看着赫伯特说。

“火柴盒一定是被我弄丢了！怎么办？赫伯特，你那里总有火绒盒之类的东西吧？”

“我这里什么都没有，庞库那夫。”赫伯特说。

庞库那夫往外面跑去，赫伯特也跟了出去，两个人在他们走过的沙滩、石缝和河岸找了个遍，但都没有找到。火柴盒是铜制的，按理说掉在什么地方应该很容易看得到，但他们找遍了每个角落，都没有。

“庞库那夫，你不会是在吊篮里时，将它扔到海里了吧！”赫伯特问。

庞库那夫摇摇头。

“不，我记得很清楚，我没有扔掉！”

庞库那夫想了一会儿，继续说：“不过像这么小的东西，确实容易在忙乱中丢失，要是真的丢了的话，我宁可丢掉我的烟斗！唉！真是糟糕，这火柴盒去哪里了呢？”

“你看，现在退潮了，我们去着陆的地方看看吧！”赫伯特说。

在这样一个岛上寻找一盒火柴，想必是不太可能的事。因为涨潮的时候，沙滩上的鹅卵石都被海浪冲走了，更不要说火柴盒了。不过怎么也要去试一下的。

赫伯特和庞库那夫向他们昨天降落的地方快速走去，那里离他们的“石窟”大约有两百步左右。可他们连石砾堆和岩缝都找过了，还是没有。

如果是丢在这个地方的，肯定被海浪冲走了。于是他们又去岩石缝隙找，也是毫无所获。对他们当时的情况来说，火柴盒的丢失，无疑是非常大的损失，而且这样的损失还是别的东西无法替代的。

庞库那夫内心有着无法掩饰的不安，他皱紧眉头，沮丧地一言不发。赫伯特安慰他说，即使在这里找到火柴，也被海水浸泡过了，不能用了。

庞库那夫摇摇头：“不，孩子，火柴是装在铜盒子里的，盒子盖得很严，不会浸到水。唉！没有了火柴，我们可怎么办呢？”

“我们一定会找到生火的办法的，而且史密斯先生和史佩莱先生一定有火柴。”赫伯特说。

“也许吧，不过他们现在不在，即使他们有，回来也吃不到我们做好的东西了。”

“说不定他们也没有火柴或火绒这样的东西呢。”赫伯特很快又说。

“嗯，也有可能。”庞库那夫说。

“那普和史密斯不抽烟，史佩莱是个情愿扔掉火柴盒也不扔掉笔记本的人。”

赫伯特不再说话了。丢了火柴是件令他们感到沮丧的事，但他还是相信即使没有火柴，也仍然会有别的方法生火。

庞库那夫是个有着非凡经历和经验的人，他不会自寻烦恼，但这次却和少年赫伯特不一样，他没有那么乐观。不过，不管怎样，他们只能等那普和史佩莱回来了，煮蛋计划只好搁浅。这不管对他们还是对他们的同伴来说，都是一件很郁闷的事。

没有找到火柴，生不了火，庞库那夫和赫伯特只好又去捡了一些蛤蜊，然后默默地回到“石窟”。

不过，庞库那夫对寻找火柴还是没有放弃。他们再次从“石窟”出发，两眼紧盯地面，慢慢开始了又一遍的寻找。他们甚至还爬到了河的左岸，在他们停靠木筏的地方寻找，还去了山坡上寻找，甚至还到森林和深草丛中寻找，但依然什么都没有。

一直找到傍晚五点钟，庞库那夫和赫伯特这才又回到“石窟”。在“石窟”里，他们在把每个角落都摸遍，还是没有找到后，这才死心。

六点钟，太阳落山时，在海滨漫步的赫伯特和庞库那夫看到了那普和史佩莱。

只有他们两个人，没有史密斯.....赫伯特非常失望：庞库那夫没有猜错，史密斯果然没有找到。

史佩莱和那普一看到赫伯特和庞库那夫，便一言不发地坐在了石头上。又累又饿的他们，连说话的气力都没有了。

那普两眼通红，眼泪扑簌簌地往下掉，没能找回主人让他既伤心又绝望。

休息了一会儿后，史佩莱便向庞库那夫和赫伯特讲起了他们寻找史密斯的经过。

他们沿着海岸一直找到了8英里之外，去了比他们最后一次降落时还远的地方。可所有找过的地方，不仅没有一个人，而且连人的一点印迹都没有。那里的鹅卵石根本就没有动过的痕迹，整个海滨连一个脚印都没有。显然，那段海岸没有去过人。

不管是大海还是陆地，都是一样的荒凉，史密斯很可能还没有找到上岸的机会，便在离岸几百英尺的地方淹死了。

史佩莱讲完以后，那普便跳了起来，大声喊道：“不！他不会死的！他不可能死！别人也许会，但他不会，绝对不会！任何灾难他都能逃过！任何灾难！”

吼完后的他又喃喃道：“不！我受不了！受不了！我接受不了他不在！”

赫伯特跑到那普面前，安慰他说：“那普，相信我们，我们一定会找到他的！一定会找到的，老天会将史密斯先生送还给我们的。饿了吧，先吃点东西吧！”

赫伯特一边安慰他，一边递了些蛤蜊给这个极度悲伤的黑人。虽然食物很难吃，但却能够充饥，让人不饿肚子。但已经饿了好几个小时的那普，依然一点东西都不吃。

失去了主人的他，不愿意一个人活着。

难以下咽的蛤蜊还是被史佩莱狼吞虎咽地吃下去了。筋疲力尽的他，一下子倒在了沙滩上。

赫伯特走到他身边，握着他的手说：“先生，和我们走吧，我们找到了一个住处，比随便躺在一个地方好多了。天已经黑了，先回去睡觉吧，明天我们去更远的地方找。”

史佩莱和那普随他们一起向“石窟”走去。

路上，庞库那夫问史佩莱身上有没有火柴，即使一两根也行。史佩莱停下脚步，摸摸口袋却什么都没有找到，他说：“原来有，大概是被我扔了。”

庞库那夫又问那普，那普说他也没有。

“该死！”庞库那夫不禁叫道。

史佩莱一把抓住他的胳膊：“你也没有火柴？”

“没有，一根也没有，所以才没办法生火！”

那普叹了口气，大声说：“如果主人在，他一定会有办法。”

四个人怔在那里，不安地你看看我，我看看你，谁都不说话。好一会儿，赫伯特才打破了沉默。

“史佩莱先生，你再找找，你平时抽烟，一定带着火柴。再找找，也许能找到一根。”

史佩莱重新在大衣、裤子和坎肩口袋里仔细摸了一遍，竟然在坎肩的里层摸到了一个类似火柴的木棒。庞库那夫大喜，但却只能隔着衬里捏它，怎么都拿不出来。如果这根小木棒是火柴，他必须小心翼翼，不能让火柴头碰掉。

“让我试试可以吗？”赫伯特说着话，灵巧地将它取了出来，而且没有将它弄断。

这根火柴，在其他时候很可能一文不值，但在此刻却显得非常珍贵。更让他们高兴的是，这是一根没有用过的，完好无损的火柴。

庞库那夫哈哈大笑：“有了这一根，好比有了一整船火柴。”

拿着这根来之不易的火柴，他领着大家去了“石窟”。

进了洞，在他们搭起的炉灶旁，庞库那夫就要使用这唯一的珍宝了。这个珍宝在有人居住的地方，随处可见，但此时却是独一无二的。他拿在手上，紧张得手直发抖，他必须一次点成功。

为了提高成功率，他说：“如果有引火纸就好了。”

史佩莱犹豫了一下，还是从他的宝贝笔记本上撕下了一页，递给他：“用它吧！”

庞库那夫接过史佩莱递给他的纸张，跪在了柴堆前。在将干柴架起来后，他还往下面垫了一些枯草、枯叶和干燥地苔，这样做的目的是为了保持柴堆里的空气流通，使火容易点燃。

接着，他将纸张卷成了圆锥形，像在有风处吸烟一样，将纸筒插到了地苔里。随后，他又捡起一块粗糙的石头，将它擦了又擦。最后，他屏住呼吸，按捺住自己怦怦乱跳的心，轻轻地在石头上划着火柴，划第一下的时候没有划着。由于怕碰掉火柴头，他也不敢使劲。

“不行，我干不了这活，手抖得厉害，划不着！”庞库那夫说着站起身，让赫伯特来点。

赫伯特也没经历过这种事，甚至也没这么紧张过，比普罗米修斯上天偷火还紧张。不过，他没有拒绝，也没有犹豫，拿起火柴就划。随着“哧”的一声响，火柴头燃起了蓝色火苗，并冒出一股呛人的烟来。

赫伯特此时不紧张了，他不慌不忙地让火柴向下倾斜，这样火就更旺了。最后，他将点燃的火柴放在了纸筒里，几秒钟后，纸筒、地苔和干草着了起来。

庞库那夫急忙在旁边用嘴吹起风来，一分钟后，干柴发出了噼里啪

啦的声音，熊熊大火在黑暗中燃烧起来。

“谢天谢地！太好了！我从没这么紧张过！”庞库那夫起身喊道。

用平板石做成的火炉点亮了“石窟”，炉子里的烟从一些狭窄缝隙里跑了出去，像烟囱一样为这火炉拨着火，很快，“石窟”暖和起来。

只有一根火柴，他们必须保住这个“火种”，不然火炉再熄灭，他们就没办法了。他们必须永远留住一些红木炭。

早就准备好大量木柴的他们，此时只需随时添柴就可以了。

有了火炉，庞库那夫决定给大家做一顿比吃蛤蜊还丰盛的晚餐。他让赫伯特拿了两个蛋。

在庞库那夫和赫伯特为大家做晚餐时，史佩莱倚在一个角落，一言不发地看着他们。他的脑子里一直在想着三个问题：史密斯还活着吗？如果活着，又在哪儿呢？如果没有摔死，为什么不发信号给他们？

在史佩莱想这些问题时，那普走出了“石窟”，在海滩上像丢了魂般独自徘徊。

做晚餐的庞库那夫原本会50种做蛋方法，但此刻却不能由他选择了，他只能将蛋焖在火灰里。五六分钟后，火灰焖蛋做好了。他将史佩莱和那普叫过来吃，这是他们四个人在无名岛上吃的第一顿美餐。

庞库那夫做的焖蛋非常好吃，而且由于蛋里含有很多营养，所以对于这群可怜的落难人来说，非常难得。在满足中，他们也有了精神。同时也在心里想，如果能一人不缺地吃一餐团圆饭，那该多好啊！

试想一下，五个从里士满逃出来的人，围坐在“石窟”的干沙地上，吃着美味的焖蛋，中间是噼里啪啦的熊熊烈火，那是多幸福的事啊。如果真是这样，他们一定会感谢上苍的。

然而，此刻，他们一致公认的领袖，那个博学多才的赛莱斯·史密斯竟失踪了！而且很可能连个尸首都找不到。

在忙乱、紧张和伤心中，3月25日就这么过去了。

深夜来临，洞外是怒吼的狂风，海浪不断地拍打着海岸，时而发出单调的低响，时而发出震耳欲聋的巨响。

对于这天晚上的感受，记者史佩莱做了简短的记录，他记下了对这片陌生之地的初步印象。在他的记录里，有史密斯的失踪，也有寻找司米司和生火做饭等等。不过，过度的疲劳，还是让他决定暂时忘掉心里的忧愁。

他找了一个阴暗的角落躺下。少年赫伯特一躺下就睡着了，水手庞库那夫一直惦记着那堆火，虽然躺着，却也不时起来添加柴火。

四个人中，三个人在“石窟”里，有一个人却怎么都不愿意进来，那就是伤心欲绝的那普。他不管同伴们怎么叫他，只是自顾自地整夜徘徊在海滨，不停地呼喊着他的主人……

第六章

这几个从云端落入荒无人烟的海岸的人，开始清点他们所带的全部物品。

其实，除了他们身上所穿之物外，已经基本没有什么了。不过，必须说明的是，吉汀·史佩莱除了身上穿的衣服外，还有一个笔记本和一只表。而这两样东西之所以被他保留了下来，并不是刻意为之，而是忘记抛掉了。

他们四个人的身上都没有武器、工具，甚至连一把小刀都没有。当时还在吊篮里的时候，为了减轻氢气球的重量，他们把所有的东西都抛下去了。

此时此刻，他们连丹尼尔·笛福和维萨小说中主人公在约翰·菲兰德群岛和奥克兰群岛航海遇难的塞尔库克和勒那都不如，因为这两部小说中的主人公遇难时并不是一无所有。同时，那些在航海中遇难的人，船上还有像粮食、家畜、工具和弹药之类的东西。但他们这些从气球上降落的人却什么都没有，更不要说工具了。

他们现在，只能凭借自己的能力，赤手空拳创造一切。

其实，如果赛莱斯·史密斯能和他们在一起，那么，凭借他的科学头脑和创新能力，他们一定不会一筹莫展的。

可是，他们也许再也见不到史密斯了，所以他们只能寄希望于自己，同时还要乞求上天保佑他们，除此之外，他们没有别的指望。

这一带属于什么地方？附近有没有人？这里是不是一个荒岛？这里适不适合居住？这都是他们急需搞清楚的。

因为只有弄清楚了这些问题，他们才可以决定下一步该怎么做。然

而，庞库那夫却觉得这些问题最好过几天再探索，他们现在首先要做的是准备食物，找一些像鸽子、鸽子蛋之类的食物。他们必须在工作前，先恢复自己的体力。

对他们来说，现在已经可以生存了。因为“石窟”可以暂时安身；火生起来了，留住火种也不难；石缝里有鸽蛋、海滩上有蛤蜊、高地上空有野鸽子在天空盘旋……这些想要捡、拾，甚至用木棍、石头往下打都不难；附近的森林还有可以食用的果子……当然，最重要的是，淡水这里也有。

有了这些，他们便决定先在“石窟”休整，然后再去深入探险。对于庞库那夫的建议，那普特别赞同，因为他的想法不变，他不能离开这里，这是他主人史密斯出事的海岸，他要在这里等他的主人。

那普一直不相信主人已经死了。不对，更确切地说，是他不相信像史密斯那样的人，怎么会这么稀里糊涂地死去。因为他觉得，史密斯绝对不可能被海浪卷走，更不可能在离岸不到几百英尺的海里淹死。除非让他亲眼见到、亲手摸到史密斯的尸体，不然他绝不相信。

这个念头在他脑海里根深蒂固地存在着，而且越来越坚定。也许这只是他一厢情愿的幻想，但却是令人感动的幻想，所以庞库那夫也不愿意说破。

庞库那夫对史密斯活着不抱希望，但他知道他不能和那普去争辩，更知道争辩也没有用。

那普如同一条在主人坟前执着守候的狗，他哀伤得几乎活不下去了。

3月26日清晨，那普再次沿着海岸向北走，再次去了出事的海滨，他清楚地记得，史密斯就是在那里失踪的。

这天早上，他们不仅吃了鸽蛋和茨蟹，而且赫伯特还在石头凹处找到一些海水蒸发后留下的盐。盐在这种时候出现，对他们来说正是时候。

吃完饭，庞库那夫原本希望史佩莱陪他和赫伯特去森林打猎，但考虑到必须有个人留在洞里照顾火种，而且那普找到史密斯的可能性虽然小，却也不是没有可能，所以需要有个人在关键时刻帮助那普，便让史佩莱留下来了。

临出发时，庞库那夫说：“我们打猎，最好能在路上找到些猎具，或者在森林里弄些武器。”

赫伯特没有回答庞库那夫，他提出了另一个问题，他说没有火绒，最好能有它的替代品。

庞库那夫问用什么替代，赫伯特说：“焦布，也许焦布可以代替火绒。”

庞库那夫觉得他的主意不错，不过这样的话，他的一块手帕就必须牺牲了。最后，想着牺牲一块手帕却可以保住火种也值得，便将他的大花格子手帕撕下了一块，烤成了半焦，放在“石窟”中间一个小洞深处，避免它受潮。

九点钟的时候，天阴了下来，天空刮起了东南风。

赫伯特和庞库那夫绕过“石窟”，向河的北岸走去。到了森林里，庞库那夫先从一棵大树上掰下两根大树枝做棍子，赫伯特又将这两根棍子

在石头上磨尖了。

这样，他们就有了粗糙的武器。此时，如果有人拿着刀子，他们一定会不顾一切代价换来。

两个拿着原始工具的“猎人”，沿着河岸向草丛深处走去。不过，河身没有一直向前，而是拐到了西南方向，所以他们越往前走，河床就越窄了。加上两岸越来越高，树枝间互相交叉，使其形成了一座座拱门。

为了预防迷路，庞库那夫决定一直沿着河岸往前走，这样不管怎样都能找到回来的路。不过，越往前走越难走，比如有些柔软的树枝搭在了水面上，还有一些地方有荆棘、爬藤。想要过去，他们必须一边拨开障碍物，一边在障碍物中跑跳。赫伯特非常灵活，像只猫一样，很快就在矮树丛中不见了。

一到这种时候，庞库那夫就马上叫住他，以免他走失。同时，庞库那夫还在观察着周围的地势。他发现河的左岸非常平坦，但却大多是沼泽地，而且渐渐向内陆平缓升高。在他看来，有些像水网。

庞库那夫再仔细一看，发现那些水都是从地下泉眼里流出来的。

在他们这边，有些矮树丛中，会有一些小溪流，很容易跨过去。但河的那边也有河水流过，形成的却是峡谷。而且峡谷那里有座小山，上面有层层叠叠的树木，像帘子一样挡住了人的视线。

庞库那夫想，在河的那边行走一定很难，地势陡不说，而且弯向水面的枝丫牵牵绊绊，结成了一团麻。

毫无疑问，这片森林和他观察过的海岸一样，都是从来没人到过的地方。庞库那夫在这里只看见了动物留下的脚印，却又不知道是哪些动

物留下的。赫伯特认为一定是一些猛兽留下的，而这些猛兽一定会给他们带来麻烦。

不过，好在他们没发现树上有斧子砍过的痕迹，也没有篝火的余烬，这进一步说明，没有人来过这里。

这对他们来说是件值得庆幸的事，因为在太平洋的任何一个岛屿，有人反而会比没人更可怕。

越往前走越困难，他们走路的速度也越来越慢，两个人只顾走路，也就顾不上谈话了。走了差不多一个小时，他们才走了一英里多路。走路都这么艰难，更不要说打猎了。

树枝间时常有小鸟乱飞乱叫，好像是受到了惊吓。也许它们是在看到人以后，才懂得害怕的。

在他们走进一片沼泽地后，赫伯特发现了一种类似翠鸟的鸟。这种鸟长着又长又尖的嘴，羽毛上发出金属般的光泽，但这种光泽不能给人带来美感。

“这应该是啄木鸟。”赫伯特说着，想走近去看。

“太好了，这下有机会吃啄木鸟的肉啦。不过就是不知道它们愿不愿意让我们烤！”庞库那夫说。

他的话音刚落，赫伯特已经将一块石头向啄木鸟扔去了，虽然没有击落，但也打到了它的翅膀，鸟很快就飞走了。

“我真是太差劲了！”赫伯特懊恼地说。

“不，你已经很厉害了，孩子！你扔得很准，要是别人的话，说不定扔过去，连碰都碰不到。不要泄气，很快我们就会捉住它们的。”庞库那夫安慰他说。

两个“猎人”继续向前走着。树木已经没有前面的密集了，很多树的外形也很漂亮，但结的果子却不能吃。庞库那夫和赫伯特找了很久，还是没找到日常生活中最实用的棕榈树。

棕榈树从北半球到北纬40°到处都是，但在南半球却只有南纬35°才有。在这片森林里，只有松柏科比较常见，还有能被赫伯特认出的是类似于北美西部洋松的喜马拉雅杉和高达150英尺的大枫树。

突然，一群美丽的鸟飞了过来，长着色彩艳丽的长尾巴。它们纷纷落在一棵棵树枝上，轻抖着身体。羽毛随即飞落下来，地面上瞬间就铺上了一层美丽的绒毛。赫伯特捡起一根羽毛看了一下说：“这是锦鸡。”

“我最喜欢吃的是松鸡和珍珠鸡，不过如果这种鸡也好吃的话……”庞库那夫还没说完，赫伯特便说：

“锦鸡非常好吃，肉质很鲜嫩。”说完，他看了看那些美丽的锦鸡又说：“如果我没有记错的话，这种鸟是不怕人的，我们只需走近它们，用棍子打就行了。”

于是，水手庞库那夫和少年赫伯特从草丛里出来，走到一棵树枝上停满锦鸡的树下。

这些靠吃昆虫而活着的锦鸡，正在用它们的爪子攀在小树枝上等待昆虫。

两位“猎人”拿起棍子，就像镰刀割草一样，将它们一连串地打了下

来。

这些美丽的鸟没有一点要飞的意思，任凭“猎人”们将它们打落在地上，等到有锦鸡反应过来要飞走的时候，地下已经落了差不多有上百只了。

“太棒了！只有这种野禽最适合像我们这样的猎人，伸手就能得到。”

庞库那夫说着，找了个细而柔韧的树枝，将这一只只美丽的锦鸡穿上串，这些鸟顿时就像那排成行的云雀在齐飞。

穿好鸟儿后，他们扛着战利品继续前进。河流在这里突然向南转了一个弯，不过这个弯好像并不长，因为河的源头就在前面不远处的深山里，而这些河水也是由主峰上的积雪融化汇合而成的。

他们此次的目的前面已经说过了，是要找一些野味给同伴吃。可是到目前为止，他们的目的还没有达到，所以还是继续往前走。

突然，前面有一只类似动物的东西跑到了草丛里，还没等他们看清楚是什么动物就不见了，庞库那夫不禁说：“要是多卜在这里就好了！”然而，和主人一起失踪的多卜，想必也和主人死在一起了。

差不多下午三点钟的时候，又有一群鸟飞进了树林，这些鸟一进来便开始在杜松上啄食松子，突然，它们发出了像喇叭叫似的长鸣。

这是一种在美国常见的、带着颈羽的松鸡。庞库那夫和赫伯特看见了好几对，发现它们鲜艳的栗色羽毛中，点缀着深褐色的斑点。有些松鸡脖子上还长着像翅膀一样的两个肉瓣。

赫伯特认出，长肉瓣的是公松鸡，没有肉瓣的是母松鸡。它们的大小和普通鸡的大小差不多，但味道却比笋鸡还要鲜美。

庞库那夫打定主意要捉上一只。不过，想要捉它们却并不容易，因为这些松鸡很难让人接近。他们试了好几次都无功而返，反而把那些可怜的鸟吓得一阵乱飞。

于是，庞库那夫对赫伯特说：“既然它们飞起来我们逮不着，那么不妨用绳子来钓好了。”

这个建议让赫伯特有些吃惊，他大叫：“是像钓鱼一样钓松鸡吗？”

“没错！”庞库那夫得意地说。

此时，他已经看到草丛里有六个松鸡窝了，每个窝里都有三四个蛋。他十分小心地观察着松鸡窝，以免将它们弄坏。他知道，松鸡一定会到它们的窝里来的。所以打算在这里布下圈套，也就是放上钓丝。

这是一个奇特的装置，这种装置只有艾萨克·沃尔顿¹的门徒会用。

庞库那夫做这些的时候，赫伯特一直饶有兴趣地看着，并不怎么相信这样做会成功。庞库那夫用的钓丝是用细爬藤做的，一根根连接起来，每根长度差不多有15到20英尺左右。庞库那夫还从一棵矮小的刺槐上将一把粗大结实的倒刺掰了下来，绑在爬藤的一头作钩子，钓饵就是一种在地面上蠕动的大红毛虫。

一切都安排妥当后，庞库那夫悄悄地从草丛里钻出来，将绳子的带钩处放在了松鸡窝附近，然后拿着另一端回到了草丛里，和赫伯特躲在一棵大树下，耐心地等着松鸡上钩。

半个小时过去了，没有丝毫动静。但又过了一会儿，一切就像庞库那夫预料的那样，有几对松鸡回窝了。它们一边往窝里走，一边还在地上寻找吃的东西，丝毫没有意识到它们已经被“猎人”盯上了。

此时，最有兴趣的就属赫伯特了，他静心屏气地看着。庞库那夫紧张得大气不敢出，瞪大了双眼，张大嘴巴，噘起嘴唇，好像正在等着松鸡入口。

他们看到，松鸡走到了钩子附近，并在那里转来转去，还没有发现地上的钓饵。为了引起它的注意，庞库那夫轻轻地拉了拉绳子，钓饵微微动了一下，钩子上的虫子好像活了似的跳动着。

庞库那夫的心情比那些钓鱼等鱼上钩的人还着急，因为钓鱼的人是看不见水里鱼的动向的。

果然，在绳子动了一下后，三只松鸡便被吸引了过去，它们开始用嘴去啄食食饵。几乎就在同时，贪吃的松鸡在将食饵吞进嘴里时，钩子也进了嘴。庞库那夫迅速将绳子一抖，三只松鸡便被吊了起来。

“哈哈！”他大笑着，向松鸡跑去，并将它们捉住了。

赫伯特兴奋地拍着巴掌，这是他第一次看见有人用绳子钓禽类。庞库那夫此时却非常谦虚，说这种办法很早就有人用过了，并不是他的发明。

“不管怎么样，在当前的情况下，我们必须多想办法。”庞库那夫最后说。

他们用绳子将这些松鸡的爪子绑在一起，提上走了。

庞库那夫特别高兴，觉得这样就不至于空手回去见同伴了。看看天色已晚，他提议回“石窟”。

虽然找不到方向，但河流就是他们的方向，他们只需沿着河流，照原路返回就行了。

差不多傍晚六点钟的时候，两个筋疲力尽的“猎人”终于到了“石窟”。

[1](#)英国作家。著有《钓客清谈：做人与生活的境界》，是一部介绍自然界的美和乐趣的英语书籍。

第七章

吉汀·史佩莱两臂交叉，一动不动地站在海边，久久地凝视着大海。

一层厚厚的乌云从东方蔓延开来，以很快的速度向他的头顶移动。夜色开始降临，风也越来越大，吹在身上冷飕飕的。天空呈现出凶恶的模样，一切都像在告诉他：暴风雨就要来了。

赫伯特径直走向“石窟”，庞库那夫则向史佩莱走去。正在发呆的史佩莱，丝毫没有感觉到有人走近。

“看来，今晚要迎来在这里的第一场暴风雨了。史佩莱先生，暴风雨来临，海燕是很喜欢的。”

庞库那夫的这句话让史佩莱回过神来，他转身看着庞库那夫。

“还记得海浪卷走我们的伙伴时，气球离海岸有多远吗？”

庞库那夫没想到他会问这个。想了想说：“不会超过两锚链。”

“一锚链是多长？”史佩莱又问。

“差不多有120寻，大概200米的样子。”

“也就是说，史密斯失踪的地方离岸不会超过400米对吗？”

“应该是这个样子。”庞库那夫说。

“那只狗也是在那时候失踪的？”

“对，是这样的！”

史佩莱皱了皱眉，“我觉得有些奇怪。”他说，“如果说我们的伙伴和他的狗都死了，那么尸体为什么没有被冲到岸上来？”

“确实有点奇怪。不过，海里的风浪那么大，极有可能把他们冲到更远的地方去了。”庞库那夫说。

“这么说，你是认为我们的朋友已经死了吗？”史佩莱又问。

“我是这样认为的。”

“你的一些经验，确实让我很佩服，庞库那夫。”史佩莱停了一下，继续说，“不过，不管是不是死了，在史密斯和多卜一起失踪的这件事上，我觉得还是有很多解释不清的地方的。”

“史佩莱先生，我也希望事情能像你盼望的那样。可是，在这件事

上，我觉得我的看法没错。”庞库那夫说完，回到了“石窟”。

一进去，他便看到赫伯特扔了一抱干柴进去，炉子发出噼噼啪啪的声音，烈火将“石窟”通道最暗的地方都照得通亮。

庞库那夫开始做晚饭。他们需要恢复体力，所以必须做一些能吃饱又有营养的食物。他们决定将锦鸡留在明天，所以先将两只松鸡拔了毛，又在棍子上烤起来。

七点钟时，那普还没有回来，庞库那夫有些不安，担心悲伤过度的他会在这荒无人烟的地方出了意外，甚至怕他因为绝望而自杀。

对于庞库那夫的看法，赫伯特持不同意见，他说也许是那普发现了线索，所以才忘记了时间，继续在寻找。还说很可能这线索对史密斯非常有利。因为如果没有希望，那普为什么不回来呢？也许他发现了一些人的痕迹，比如脚印，也许发现了一些残留物等，因为有了这些东西，他才会沿着线索去寻找，说不定现在正在他的主人身边呢。

少年赫伯特这么推测着，也这么说着，其他两个人则默不作声地听着。记者史佩莱对赫伯特的分析表示赞同，但庞库那夫却认为那普一定是沿着原来的路走得太远，赶不及回来，不可能找到线索。

在发表了自己的看法后，赫伯特突然也有些坐立不安起来，几次要去找那普，但庞库那夫都说没用，在如此黑暗和恶劣的天气环境下，根本不可能找到那普，还不如在家里等他。到了明天，那普要是还没回来，他庞库那夫一定会毫不犹豫地和大家一起去寻找的。

史佩莱同意庞库那夫的意见，劝赫伯特在这种时候最好不要和大家分开，赫伯特只好放弃计划，但眼泪却从眼眶里流了出来。

史佩莱被赫伯特的仗义所打动，紧紧地将他搂在怀里。

天气变得越来越恶劣，阵阵狂风从东南方刮来，吹过了海滨，激起了更大的海浪。海浪冲击着岸边的礁石，发出很大的声响。即使有倾盆大雨，也被暴风吹得零零散散了，整个海岸笼罩在一片雾气之中。

沙砾碎石哗啦啦地冲撞着海岸，如同是从车里在向外倾倒。飞沙走石和雨水汇集到一起，形成了两股坚不可摧的力量。旋风在河口和峭壁处打着转，激起了阵阵漩涡。

“石窟”炉灶上的烟从缝隙里出去后又被吹了回来，通道里烟雾弥漫，呛得人快要窒息了。在松鸡烤好后，庞库那夫只得将火熄灭，留几块火炭在灰烬里做火种。

到了晚上八点钟，那普依然没有回来。

毋庸置疑，一定是狂风暴雨将他阻拦在了外面，他很可能已经找到了一个藏身之所，等待暴风雨过后再回来，或者也许他想第二天回来。现在即使想去寻找，也是不可能的了。

三个人的晚餐是鲜美的松鸡肉，庞库那夫和赫伯特为打这些野味辛苦了一天，又累又饿，所以吃得津津有味。

吃过晚饭，大家都在昨晚睡的角落休息了，庞库那夫还是躺在了靠火的地方，而赫伯特则躺在他的身边。

深夜，外面风急雨紧，就和他们从里士满乘坐气球逃跑的那晚一样。秋季是暴风雨的频发期，给人造成了巨大的灾难。在无边无际的大海上，狂风暴雨更是没有任何阻碍地肆虐，尤其让人害怕。这样的天气，对荒无人烟的东海岸来说，更是可怕。

幸好有这自然堆成的“石窟”。但是，这些由花岗石堆积而成的“石窟”并不十分牢靠，风吹过来时，连地基好像都在晃动。

庞库那夫枕在一块岩石上，明显感觉到头下面在频繁震动。

他不停地安慰着自己，让自己不要害怕，自己所住的“石窟”绝对不会倒塌。

可是，即便如此，他还是听到远处高地上有石头被风刮起，有的掉在了沙滩上，有的则掉到了他们居住的“石窟”顶上，有的直接被垂直卷起，在空中分裂成小石块，如同一颗颗子弹被射出。

庞库那夫爬起来两次，在向外面看的时候，只能借通道入口来保证自己的安全。暴雨好像并没有他躺在那里听到的那么恐怖，庞库那夫随即又回到了自己刚刚躺着的地方，听炭火在灰烬里发出的爆裂声。

呼啸的风声和轰隆的雷电声都没打扰到赫伯特，他睡得很熟。庞库那夫在爬起来两次后，也睡了，航海生涯让他足以应付这种环境。可史佩莱却是辗转反侧睡不着，他在心里埋怨自己，为什么不陪着那普一块去。由此可见，史佩莱对史密斯也并没有放弃希望。而就在此时，熟睡中的赫伯特突然被一种心神不宁的预感惊醒，他的脑海里不断浮现出那普。为什么那普没有回来，这个问题让他也开始辗转反侧起来。外面的狂风暴雨好似都不存在了，他不时地合上眼皮，但又猛地睁开眼。

夜越来越深了，差不多深夜两点钟时，正酣睡的庞库那夫被一个人推醒了。

“发生什么事了？”庞库那夫喊道。同时，职业习惯让他马上清醒了过来。

史佩莱俯下身子，对他说：“快听，庞库那夫，快听！”

庞库那夫竖起耳朵，但他耳边除了风雨声外，没有其他声音。

“是风声吧！”他说。

“不！”史佩莱说。他凝神听了一会儿又说：“我好像听到……”

“什么？”

“我好像听到了狗叫的声音！”

“什么？狗叫？”庞库那夫跳起来大喊。

“对！是狗叫！”

“不会！不可能，不可能的！在暴风雨中，怎么会……”

“不要说话，你听……”史佩莱继续说。

庞库那夫聚起精神听了一会儿，果然，在风雨中，他好像也听到有狗在叫。

“对不对？是不是狗叫声？”史佩莱激动地握住了庞库那夫的手说。

“对……好……好像是！”庞库那夫说。

“是……是多卜！多卜！”赫伯特大喊一声。

三个人同时向“石窟”洞口冲去。不过，他们想要出去却并没有那么容易，因为狂风很快又把他们吹进去了。最终，在他们用尽全力冲出去

后，却只能倚在一块岩石上。他们四下看着，却又说不出话来。夜色昏暗，海洋、天空和沙滩全都变成了漆黑一片，没有一丝亮光。

他们就那么在黑暗中站了几分钟，狂风阻止了他们的下一步行动。他们的衣服全都湿了，风沙吹打得他们连眼睛都睁不开。

在暴风雨稍稍又有些停歇的时候，他们再次听到了狗叫声，他们即刻做出了判断：声音离他们并不近。

肯定是多卜在叫，可是它是孤零零一个还是有谁和它在一起呢？很大的可能是孤零零一个，如果它和那普在一起，它一定会到“石窟”来的。庞库那夫没有办法开口，也没办法让别人听到他说话，他只是捏了捏史佩莱的手，意思是让他“稍等”，随即又重回“石窟”。

不一会儿，他拿着点着的干柴跑了出来，并将它扔在了黑暗中，同时吹起了口哨。

狗仿佛正在等候这个信号，很快，叫声近了。不久，一只狗跑向了“石窟”。三个人马上跟着跑了进去。

在往火炭上加了一把火后，火燃烧起来，将“石窟”的通道全照亮了。

“多卜，就是多卜！”赫伯特激动地大喊。

他们面前的确是多卜，这是一只漂亮的盎格鲁·诺尔曼杂种狗，这种狗的特点是：跑得快，嗅觉灵。总之，它具有猎狗所具备的一切优点。

这只属于工程师赛莱斯·史密斯的狗，孤零零地站在他们面前，它

的身边既没有那普，也没有它的主人。

多卜并不知道这个“石窟”，可它又是怎么到这里来的呢？这让他们有些不可思议，特别是在这样有着暴风雨的黑夜。更令他们奇怪的是，多卜并没有显得很疲倦，身上也没有沾上泥。

赫伯特将多卜拉到了自己身旁，拍着它的头，多卜则用它的脖子来回摩擦着赫伯特的手。

“狗都找到了，还怕它的主人找不到吗？”史佩莱说。

“上天保佑！我们让多卜带路去找吧！”

这次，庞库那夫没有反对。因为多卜的回来，太出乎他的意料了。

“走吧！”他说。

离开前，庞库那夫仔细地盖上了灰堆里的火炭，甚至还又添加了几块木柴，以便使火种能维持到他们回来。多卜发出了短促的叫声，好像是叫大家跟它走。

最后，庞库那夫将剩余的晚餐用手帕包了起来，带在身上，随即和大家一起在狗的带领下出去了。

此时，雨下得正急，而风也到了大发威力的时候。云端里没有丝毫的月光透出，想要直线前进根本不可能。他们紧紧地跟在多卜后面。在这人狗一行中，多卜走在最前面，接下来是史佩莱和赫伯特，庞库那夫走在最后。他们想说话都不可能，只能默不作声地往前走。雨虽然不是很大，但风势却很凶猛。

不过，有一点对他们还是很有利的，那就是这晚刮的是东南风，风在他们身后扬起了灰尘，对他们的前进却没有多少障碍。如果风沙是迎面而来的，他们也就没办法前行了。

总之，很多时候，他们像是被人从后面推着，不由自主地在往前跑，想要站住脚都难。除了风的原因外，多卜的出现，也给大家带来了希望，让他们有了力量。这次，他们不再是漫无目的地寻找，他们已经相信那普肯定是找到了他的主人，所以才打发忠实的多卜给他们送信的。

不过，工程师史密斯是活还是死？会不会是那普让多卜叫他们过去，给不幸遇难的史密斯料理后事？

过了一座悬崖，三个人不约而同地停下来喘息休息。转过岩石就有一个能避风的地方了，经过15分钟的奔跑，他们终于可以歇口气了。而在岩石后，他们彼此间也就能说话，同时也能听到对方说话了。赫伯特刚刚提到史密斯这个名字，多卜就发出了几声急促的叫声，好像是在告诉他们，史密斯得救了。

“你是说他得救了，对吗？多卜，他是不是得救了？”赫伯特反复地问着。

多卜又叫了几声，像是在回答它。

几个人又往前走。此时，潮水又开始上涨了，再加上狂风的推动，海浪升到了异常的高度。显然，这已经是春潮了。奔腾的巨浪和礁石碰撞，发出很大的声响。潮水像是要把整个海岛都淹没似的，沿岸没有长堤保护了，海滨受到了大浪的侵袭。

在他们离开悬崖不久，暴风就又向他们袭来。虽然他们一直弯着腰前行，但还是被风推得很快，幸好有在前面领路的多卜，才让他们没有丝毫的犹豫，执着地向一个方向走。

在他们向正北方向走的时候，右边是茫茫的大海，波涛巨浪在狂风中发出了震耳欲聋的响声；他们的左边则是漆黑一片，根本无法看清是什么样子。但在想象中，那里应该很平坦，因为风在吹向那边的时候，丝毫感觉不到有障碍，也没有碰到什么又折回来的感觉。

清晨四点钟，他们差不多已经走出5英里之外了。阴云稍稍有些散去，冷风吹在身上也没那么刺骨了。穿着单薄的他们冷得瑟瑟发抖，但谁也没有退缩，他们只是跟着多卜一直走着。这个有灵性的动物走到什么地方，他们就会跟到什么地方。

差不多五点钟的时候，迷雾越发稀薄，阴云也不再完全笼罩。此时，四周出现了一些浅灰色光晕。晦暗的天空中，有一线白光露出。波涛巨浪上面开始闪动白光，水花也重新变成了白色。

此时，他们左边的海岸上，起伏的丘陵已略有显现，不过也只是像黑底上的灰点一样模糊不清。

大约六点钟的时候，天大亮了，浓云淡去，此时他们离“石窟”已经有6英里左右了。沿着海滩，他们还在往前走，一路上，看到了很多礁石。这些礁石大都隐入深海，只有少量露出海面。左边是一片开阔的沙丘地，上面长着许多蓟草。这里没有悬崖，朝向海洋的方向没有任何障碍物，只有一小堆一小堆的凌乱石头。

这里的树木不是很密集，三三两两地丛生着，树身和枝干向西倾斜。

西南方，隐隐有着森林的影子。

此时，多卜显得有些焦躁，它一会儿跑在前面，一会儿又跑到后面，好像是在催促他们快点走。随后它就离开了海岸，向沙丘走去。他们也都跟了上去，这里完全像是一个沙漠，没有任何生物。

沙丘广阔辽远，由很多山石和部分小山组成，分布得并不均匀，整个地形有些像在沙上做的瑞士模型。这样的地方，除非有着超强的直觉，不然肯定会迷路。

离开海岸后，在沙丘上走了五分钟，他们跟着多卜来到了一个洞口。这个洞口在一座很高的沙丘后面。多卜到洞口时停了下来，随即便一声比一声大地叫了起来，三个人怀着忐忑的心情走了进去。

洞里的一个草铺上躺着一个人，那普跪在躺着的人身边。

直挺挺躺着的人正是工程师赛莱斯·史密斯……

第八章

跪在史密斯身边的那普一动不动，庞库那夫一见他便问：“还活着吗？”

那普没有反应，史佩莱和庞库那夫都变了脸色，而赫伯特则攥紧拳头，怔怔地站在那里。

伤心过度的黑人那普根本不知道有人进来，更没有听见庞库那夫的问话。

史佩莱走近僵卧着的史密斯，蹲下身解开了他的衣服，将耳朵凑到他的胸前。

他好像听了很久，其实也只有一分钟，可那一分钟似乎比一个世纪还长。终于，他听到了极其微弱的心跳声。

那普挺直身子，两眼发直，好像身边没有任何人。过度的伤心已经让他的面容发生了变化，几乎快要认不出来了。他一直以为他的主人已经死了。

史佩莱花了很长时间为史密斯仔细检查，最后站起身来。

“他还活着！”

一听这话，庞库那夫马上跪在史密斯身旁，他也听到了心跳声，而且在史密斯唇边，他还感觉到了微弱的呼吸。

在听到史佩莱说史密斯还活着的时候，赫伯特便去找水了。他在距离洞口大约100英尺的地方发现了一条小溪，小溪里的水很清澈。也许是因为下雨的缘故，溪水像被过滤过一样，干净得没有一点杂质。

不过，他却没有盛水的器具，想从沙丘里寻找一枚贝壳也没找到。最后，他只能将手帕浸在小溪里，然后拿着浸满水的手帕跑回洞里。

手帕里的水足够史佩莱用来给史密斯湿润嘴唇了。在史密斯的唇上沾了点冷水后，刺激产生了奇效。他突然从胸部吐出一口气来，嘴唇微微动着，似乎想要说什么。

“我们一定会救活他的。”史佩莱大声说。

刚刚已经完全绝望的那普听到这句话后，又清醒了过来，他的心里又有了希望。他解开主人的衣服，却发现他的头上、身上和四肢没有一点伤痕。

太让人惊奇了。原本以为他被激浪冲到了乱石中，然后挣扎到了沙丘的洞里，没想到他的手上连一点伤都没有，真是太不可思议了。

不过，这些疑问他们不久后就能得到答案。在史密斯能说话的时候，他会把整个过程告诉他们的。目前最重要的是将他救醒，照目前情况来看，按摩应该可以达到这个目的。

于是，他们开始将庞库那夫的绒衣垫在史密斯身上，对他进行按摩。

经过反复按摩，史密斯苏醒过来。他先是微微动了动胳膊，接着呼吸也正常起来。不过，由于精力耗尽，他没有说话，不然他一定会说，幸好伙伴们及时赶来，不然他肯定活不过来。

看到史密斯被救活，庞库那夫这才问那普：“你以为你的主人已经死了，对吗？”

那普点头说：“是的，我以为他死了。要不是多卜找到你们，并把你们领到这里来，我肯定已经把主人埋了，而且还会死在他的坟前。”

赛莱斯·史密斯可真是死里逃生啊！

随后，那普向他们讲述了他找到史密斯的过程。他说那天黎明到来前，他离开了“石窟”，并爬上了海滨的最高处，然后一直向北走，走到

了他曾经去过的海岸。

那时候，那普并不抱希望，他之所以再次去海岸、岩石和沙滩里寻找，只是想找到一点线索。因此，他特别留意那些被潮水冲不到的海滩，因为能被潮水冲到的，线索肯定也掉了。那普那时候也并没有想到会把主人找回来，只是想找到主人的尸体，然后亲手埋掉。

那普找了一遍后，还是没有结果。在那荒无人烟的地方，根本不曾有过人的踪迹，成千上万的贝壳散落在海水冲不到的地方，也不见人动过。

于是，那普决定继续向前走几英里，他想，也许是海水把尸体冲到更远的地方了。因为他认为，尸体在海岸较低的地方，迟早会被冲到岸上来的，所以他要和主人见最后一面。

“我沿着海滨又走了两英里，将浅水处的岩礁和深水处的沙岸都看过了，都没有，我已经绝望了。可就在昨天傍晚，差不多五点钟时，我在沙滩上看到了许多脚印。”

“脚印？”庞库那夫惊呼。

“对，脚印！”那普说。

“那些脚印是从什么地方开始有的？是从水边开始的吗？”史佩莱问。

那普摇头：“只有满潮线上有，其他地方的一定被潮水冲掉了。”

“继续说下去吧，那普。”史佩莱说。

“看到脚印，我高兴坏了。跟着脚印一路跑就到了沙丘，大概有四分之一英里。我一边跟着跑，一边注意着别把脚印踩掉了。差不多五分钟后，天黑了下来，我听到了狗叫声，我知道那是多卜，然后它就把我带到了这里，带到了主人的身边！”

那普说，在他看到主人毫无生气的身体时，悲伤至极，怎么都看不出生命的迹象。他在刚开始寻找的时候，只是想找到主人的尸体，可当他找到后，却又希望他是活着的。但当他费尽力气想唤主人醒来时，却一点作用都没有。他没有别的办法，就想对这个他敬爱的人尽最后一次忠。这时，他想到了他的伙伴们，他知道，他们一定也希望看他不幸的主人一眼。看着多卜，他便想到让这条忠诚的狗带信，因为他丝毫不怀疑狗的智慧。在这些伙伴中，多卜对史佩莱最熟悉，所以他就一遍又一遍地在多卜面前重复史佩莱的名字，最后，他给多卜指了指南方，多卜就朝着他指的方向跑去了。

多卜凭借它那神奇的直觉和嗅觉，竟然去了它从没去过的“石窟”附近，并最终带他们过来了。

几个人聚精会神地听完了那普的讲述。

他们在想，史密斯肯定是经过千辛万苦才从海里逃到岸上的，随后又经过重重困难到了沙丘。不过，他身上为什么会没有一点伤呢？这让他们很吃惊，也很不解。史密斯是怎么走完这一英里多路的？从海滨到沙丘的山洞这段路，他又是怎么走的？他们难以理解。

“这么说来，那普，不是你带他到这里来的？”史佩莱问。

“不，不是我！”黑人那普说。

“看来是他自己来的。”庞库那夫说。

“很明显是他自己来的，但这太令人难以置信了。”史佩莱说。

这事最后也只能让史密斯自己解释了，他们现在只能等他说话。

经过又一番的按摩后，史密斯的胳膊动了起来，接着头也动了动，最后还说出了几个字，但谁也听不清他在说什么。

那普弯下身子，呼唤着史密斯，可史密斯好像听不见，眼睛依然紧闭着。不过从他的动作来看，他已经脱离了危险，只是还没有完全恢复知觉而已。

对于这个山洞，庞库那夫感到很遗憾，因为这里既没有火，也没有取火的东西，他开始后悔没有把焦布带在身上，不然说不定能用两块火石砸出火星来，就能点燃焦布了。

史密斯的衣服口袋里什么都没有，只有坎肩里的一只怀表。看来，必须尽快把史密斯抬回“石窟”了。

在这点上，大家的意见比较一致。

在又用冷水湿润了史密斯的嘴唇后，他再次苏醒过来。庞库那夫想起了带在身上的烤松鸡，便将鸡肉汁和水融在一起做成了饮料，赫伯特在海边捉回了两只大蚌。庞库那夫将自己调制的饮料用蚌壳送到了史密斯的嘴里，史密斯贪婪地喝着，睁开了眼睛。

那普和史佩莱正好俯在他的身上。

“主人！主人！”那普叫着。

史密斯听到了，他首先认出了那普和史佩莱，接着又认出了庞库那夫和赫伯特，他用无力的手握了握他们的手。

史密斯又说了几个字，由此可见，即使在这种情况下，他仍然没有停止思考问题，这次大家都听清了，而且刚才他说的一定也是这句话，他说的是：

“这是荒岛还是大陆？”

“管它是什么呢！”庞库那夫大声说，“我们有的是时间看它是什么，只要你活着，是什么我们都不在乎。”

史密斯点了点头，像睡着一样闭上了眼睛。

他们没有再打扰他睡觉。史佩莱想着快点把史密斯抬到舒适点的地方，而那普和赫伯特，以及庞库那夫已经离开山洞，跑向了一座小山，他们看中了小山顶上的几棵东倒西歪的树。

在去那座小山的路上，庞库那夫不断地重复着一句话：

“‘荒岛还是大陆？’都那样了，只有一口气了，他竟然还在想这个，真是了个了不起的人！”

庞库那夫和两个同伴爬上小山后便开始了工作。由于没有工具，他们只能用手去掰一棵棵树枝。这是一种像海枫一样的树，之所以掰这些树枝，是想将它做成担架，抬史密斯回“石窟”。

大约40分钟后，他们的担架做好了。而这期间，史佩莱一直陪伴在史密斯身边，等他们回来，已经差不多是上午十点钟了。

回到洞中，史密斯正好从昏睡状态中醒来，他那苍白的，像死人一样的脸色也逐渐趋于正常。他微微抬起头，向四周看看，像是在思索自己在什么地方。

“听我说话累吗？赛莱斯？”史佩莱问。

“不累。”史密斯说。

庞库那夫说：“我觉得史密斯先生要是吃些松鸡肉冻的话，会更有精神一些。史密斯先生，我们这里有松鸡。”

庞库那夫一边说，一边将肉冻递给史密斯。

史密斯只少少地吃了一些松鸡肉冻，其余的都分给其他伙伴吃了。他们正饿得厉害，这样的食物，对他们来说实在太少了。

“对了，‘石窟’里有很多好吃的东西，知道吗？史密斯先生，从这里向南走，有一所我们的房子，有睡觉的地方，还生着火，也有我们打的鸟，那种鸟被我们的赫伯特称为锦鸡。现在担架做好了，只要你恢复些力气，我们就抬你回家去。”庞库那夫热情地说。

“谢谢你们，我的朋友。”史密斯说：“一两个小时后我们就走吧。史佩莱，现在你说说。”

史佩莱便把他们的经历向史密斯讲了一遍，讲他们是怎么坠落在这个陌生的地方的，又是怎么发现“石窟”并寻找他的。当然也没忘记说那普的忠诚和多卜的忠心、智慧以及其他种种事情。总之，凡是史密斯不知道的，他全都说了。

“这么说，不是你们把我救起来的？”史密斯的声音还很微弱。

“不是！”史佩莱说。

“不是你们把我带到洞里的？”

“不是！”

“山洞离海有多远？”

“差不多半英里。史密斯先生，你觉得奇怪吗？我们看你在这儿，也感到奇怪。”庞库那夫说。

“奇怪！真是太奇怪了！”史密斯说。此时的他，已经恢复了元气，对一切事物都充满了兴趣。

“可你能告诉我们你掉进海里后的情况吗？”庞库那夫说。

史密斯陷入了沉思。当他被海浪从气球网上卷进大海后，先是沉了几下，随后在上升的时候，隐约感觉到身边有活物在挣扎，最后知道是多卜，多卜从气球上跳下来是为了救他的。那时候气球已经不见踪影了。减少了他和狗的重量的气球，像箭一样射了出去。

掉在激浪澎湃的海洋里的他，离海岸超过了半英里。他拼命地游泳，旁边的多卜也一直咬着他的衣服，以便让他能浮在水面上。不过因为有激浪冲来，将他们冲向了北方，他们在挣扎了半个多小时后，便一起沉到了深海里。从那时起，直到他躺在伙伴们的怀抱，他什么都不知道。

“不管怎么样，你肯定是在被海水冲到岸上后，用尽全力来到这儿的。因为那普是根据你的脚印找到你的。”庞库那夫说。

“也许……当然……”史密斯若有所思，随即又问：“海滨上没有人迹吗？”

“没有，一点印迹都没有。”史佩莱说完，停了一下又说：“再说，如果真有人救了你，为什么又把你扔在这里？”

“不错！亲爱的史佩莱，你说得对。”史密斯说完，把脸转向他的仆人，“告诉我，那普，难道不是你……你是不是一时失去知觉……那时……不，不可能，那太传奇了……脚印还在吗？”

“在的，主人！”那普认真地说，“入口的地方和小山背后被雨打不到的地方都有，其他地方的脚印被暴风雨冲掉了。”

“庞库那夫，请拿我的鞋子和那脚印比对一下，看是不是我的好吗？”史密斯说。

庞库那夫拿着史密斯的鞋子去了。在那普带着庞库那夫和赫伯特去找脚印的时候，史密斯对史佩莱说：“这是一件非常奇怪的事！”

“根本无法理解！”史佩莱说。

“什么也别想，亲爱的史佩莱，这些问题留待以后再谈吧！”

过了一会儿，几个人回来了，说史密斯的鞋子和脚印完全吻合。由此可见，脚印肯定是史密斯的。

“好吧，刚才我以为是那普失去了知觉，看来是我失去了知觉。想必我像个梦游者，被多卜从海里拖上来，然后迷迷糊糊地被它引到了这里来……多卜，过来，我的狗！”

机灵的多卜一边叫，一边跳到了主人身边。史密斯亲热地抚摩着它的头。大家都觉得没有其他可能来解释史密斯的获救了，这件事肯定归功于多卜。

中午12点的时候，庞库那夫问史密斯现在能不能坐担架。史密斯虽然没有回答，却依靠顽强的毅力，站了起来。不过，他还是需要靠在庞库那夫的身上，不然就会跌倒。

“把担架抬过来吧！”庞库那夫说。

交叉着枝干，上面铺着树叶和野草的简易担架抬来了。史密斯躺了上去，庞库那夫和那普各抬一头，向海滨走去。这是一段约八英里的路程。由于不能走得太快，他们需要时不时地歇息，所以到达“石窟”，差不多需要六个小时。

风依然在刮，而且很大，幸好雨已经停了。史密斯虽然躺在担架上，但却用胳膊支撑身体观察着海岸和内陆。他一直没有说话，只是睁大眼睛看着周围的景物，看着那高低不平的地势，茂密的森林和各种产物……这些东西深深地印在了他的脑海里。

不过，在走了差不多两个小时后，疲倦的他睡着了。

五点半的时候，他们到了悬崖下，很快也就回到了“石窟”。

在几个人将担架放在沙地上时，史密斯还没有醒来。

一场暴风雨让这里发生了很大的变化，这变化让庞库那夫大吃一惊。海滩上多了很多大块的石头，石头上覆盖着厚厚的水草、海藻和水生植物。看来，曾经只是漫过小岛的海水，因为风浪大，冲到了花岗石壁下面。

“石窟”前的泥土被海浪冲走了。庞库那夫突然有了不祥的预感，急忙冲到通道里，很快又沮丧地回来了，呆呆地看着伙伴们：火被浇灭了，灰烬也已经成了一摊泥，留着代替火绒的焦布也不见了。海水一直灌到了通道，“石窟”里的所有东西都已经被损坏了……

第九章

史佩莱、赫伯特和那普都知道发生了什么，对于庞库那夫认为的这件事的严重后果，大家却又有着各自不同的反应。

找到了主人的那普，对什么都不再在意，甚至不愿听庞库那夫的“唠叨”。赫伯特和庞库那夫的感觉相同，史佩莱则只是随意说了句：“庞库那夫，我觉得无所谓！”

“我再重复一遍，我们的火灭了！”

“哼哼！”

“没有办法再生火了！”

“我觉得没什么！”

“我说史佩莱先生……”

“怕什么？史密斯先生不是在这里吗？他不是活着吗？他在就会有办法生火！”

“用什么生火？”

“不用任何东西都可以！”

庞库那夫没再说什么，还能说什么呢？他和其他人一样，都觉得不管什么事都难不住史密斯。在他们每个人的心里，史密斯就像是宇宙的中心，是一切科学和人类智慧的结晶。只要和史密斯在一起，他们就能过上美国最发达的城市生活。有了他，什么都会有的。

总之，和他在一起，没什么好担心的。如果有人告诉他们，他们站着的地方马上就要被火山吞灭了，或者是很快要沉入海洋了，他们可能也会非常镇定地说：“没事，有史密斯在呢！看他的吧！”

史密斯还躺在担架上，经过一路的颠簸，他又昏睡过去了，所以没办法请教他怎么生火。松鸡肉吃完了，没有火不能做其他野味，更何况那些锦鸡也被冲走了，这天的晚餐他们只好随便吃点什么了，接着再想下一步该怎么办。

他们把史密斯抬到了“石窟”的中间位置，并用干海藻为他铺了个床。良好的睡眠有助于史密斯恢复体力，比吃营养品有效。

黑夜来了，随着风向转变为东北风，天气异常寒冷。曾经隔的那些小间也被冲毁了，寒风直灌进来，“石窟”里冷得几乎无法住人。由于担心史密斯病没养好，再冻感冒，大家便都把外套和坎肩盖在史密斯身上。

晚上他们吃的是赫伯特和那普从海滩上捡的大堆的茨蟹，以及他们在岩石上搜集到的一些能吃的海藻。这些海藻只有在潮水涨得很高的时候，才会被冲到岩石边，属于一种马尾藻类植物，又叫溇卜。

溷卜晒干后能产生一种胶状物，非常有营养，亚洲沿海的居民经常食用。晚上，大家在吃了很多茨蟹，又吸了一些溷卜的汁后，还是非常满足的。

“没事，史密斯先生很快就会想出办法的。”冻得瑟瑟发抖的庞库那夫说。

天气冷得刺骨，他们没有任何御寒的办法。

庞库那夫心里非常着急，想尽了办法生火。那普为了帮助他，还去找了一些干燥的地苔，试图用两块鹅卵石擦出火花。不过，因为地苔不容易点着而失败。其实，两块鹅卵石擦出的所谓火星，并不是火，而是光，所以才会失败。

虽然知道把握不大，但庞库那夫还是一遍又一遍地摩擦着，甚至模仿土人的做法，双手不停地摩擦干柴。庞库那夫和那普不断进行着这种剧烈运动，但如果用两根木头就能将动能转换为热能的话，这种做法是否也可以烧开轮船的锅炉呢？所以结果可想而知。两块木头虽然被磨热了，但还不如他们剧烈运动后身体的热度。

一个小时后，庞库那夫累得满身大汗，赌气地把木块扔在了地上。

“别人再怎么说明，我也不会再相信土人说的摩擦起火了。要是再这么磨下去，我的胳膊就先燃烧起来了。”

水手庞库那夫否认土人的摩擦取火，实际上是缺少根据的。土人虽然通过剧烈运动摩擦取火，但却并不是每一种木柴都能起火。而且他们还有一种“秘诀”。庞库那夫之所以取不出火，是因为他不懂这个“秘诀”。

发了一顿脾气的庞库那夫，很快就又高兴起来，因为赫伯特捡起了他扔的木头，又摩擦起来。这位强壮的水手看着少年做他已经失败的事，哈哈大笑。

“孩子，摩吧！好好摩！”

赫伯特笑着说：“我是在摩，可我摩是为了让身体暖和一点，现在我冷得发抖。我可没说要摩出火来！我的好庞库那夫，我很快就会和你一样热了。”

果然，赫伯特很快就累得满头大汗，只好放弃了这件事，而在那天，也没人再尝试过摩擦起火。

不能为这点小小的困难就去打扰史密斯，这句话史佩莱说了不下20次，之后，他就躺到一个沙铺上睡觉去了。赫伯特、那普和庞库那夫也都躺下休息，多卜睡在了他主人的脚边。

到了第二天，也就是3月28日，早晨八点钟的时候，史密斯醒了，当他看见伙伴们都围在他身边看他时，仍像前一天那样，开口便问：“这是荒岛还是大陆？”

可见，他最惦记的就是这件事。

“我们一点都不清楚，史密斯先生！”庞库那夫说。

“你们现在还知道？”

“等你带我们视察完这个地方，我们就知道了！”庞库那夫说。

“我想我应该可以试试！”史密斯说完，毫不费力地站了起来。

“你能站起来了，太好了！”庞库那夫非常激动，大声说。

“我感到身体没劲。有吃的吗？朋友们，很快就会好的，你们不是有火吗？”史密斯说。

几个人都不说话了，几秒钟后，庞库那夫才叹气说：“没有火！准确地说，是我们现在没有火了！”

随即，他把前一天发生的事情详细地说给了史密斯，还把他们找到独一无二的火柴的趣事告诉了他。最后又说到他们想用土人的方法取火，但没有成功。

“嗯，我们可以想办法，如果没有和火绒类似的东西……”史密斯说。

“怎么办？”庞库那夫问。

“那我们就自己做火柴。”

“是做化学火柴？”

“对！化学火柴！”

“也许这么做可能还比你昨天做得容易些。”史佩莱拍了一下庞库那夫的肩说。

庞库那夫却没将这件事想得那么简单，但他没有反驳。

这是一个晴朗的天气，大家全都走出了“石窟”。

太阳从水平线上慢慢升起，照在了那块高大的悬崖上，顿时给那里

增添了一层黄晕，看起来非常漂亮。

史密斯在匆匆看了一眼四周后，坐在了一块石头上，赫伯特递给他一些蛤蜊和马尾藻。

“史密斯先生，我们只有这些了。”

“谢谢你，孩子，可以了……至少今天早上是够了。”

他一边大口地吃着这些简单粗糙的食物，一边喝着用巨大贝壳取来的淡水。

其他人都默默地看着他。史密斯吃完后，交叉着双臂说：“看来朋友，你们并不知道命运将我们带来的是荒岛还是大陆，对吗？”

“是这样的，史密斯先生。”少年赫伯特说。

“我们明天就可以知道了，到时，我们可就没其他事了！”史密斯说。

“还有事！”庞库那夫说。

“什么事？”

“生火！”这件事是庞库那夫一直绞尽脑汁在想的事。

“嗯，火我们是一定要生的。庞库那夫，放心吧！”史密斯说完，转身看着大家。

“昨天你们在抬着我的时候，我好像看到西面有座高山，从上面可以俯瞰这片土地对吗？”

“是的，那座山看起来非常高……”史佩莱说。

“那我们明天就去爬那座山，到时就能知道这是荒岛还是大陆了。我再重复一遍，到时就没别的事了。”

“有，还有生火！”庞库那夫非常固执。

“庞库那夫，他会给我们生火的，有点耐心！”史佩莱说。

庞库那夫瞪了史佩莱一眼，好像在说：“要是靠你的话，我们就不用想吃烤肉了。”不过他最终没说出口。

此时，史密斯一直没说话，他好像对火的事一点都不担心。沉思片刻后，他说：“朋友们，看来，我们的处境很悲惨，因为我们很有可能是在荒岛上。如果是在大陆，那我们总会到达有人居住的地方，只是多费些时间和力气而已。可如果我们是在荒岛上，那就要岛上有人帮助我们才能脱离困境。如果没有人，那就只能自己想办法了。”

“没错，是这个样子的。”庞库那夫说。

“不过，不管是荒岛还是大陆，赛莱斯，你觉得这是什么地方呢？”

“现在还不能肯定！”史密斯说，“据我猜测，应该是太平洋的陆地。因为我们离开里士满时，刮的是东北风，那时候风力很大，由此可以说我们的方向一直没有变。如果风向是从东北到西南，那我们很可能已经越过了北卡罗来纳州、南卡罗来纳州、乔治亚州、墨西哥湾、墨西哥狭窄地带……到了太平洋。据我估计，气球最少飞出了六七千英里。如果风向只是改变了半个方角的话，我们所在的地方很可能是曼达瓦群岛，或者是帕劳群岛。要是风力再大一些的话，我们可能已经到了新西兰。如果真是到了新西兰，那回家可就方便多了。因为不管我们遇到的

是英国人还是毛利人，都对我们有帮助。相反，如果这里是小群岛的荒岛海岸，那我们只能做长期在此居住的打算了，也就是要想着怎么能舒舒服服地住下去。而要想知道是荒岛海岸还是陆地，我们从那座能俯瞰周围的高山就能看出。”

“什么？‘长期’？你是说‘长期’，亲爱的赛莱斯，真是这样吗？”史佩莱大声喊道。

“我们要做好最坏的思想准备。没有最坏，就当是意外收获吧！”史密斯说。

“对，应该这样。如果真是个孤岛，我希望它不在船只的航线之外。如果在的话，那可就倒大霉了！”

“在没有上山确定之前，什么都不好说。”史密斯说。

“可是，明天上山，赛莱斯先生，你的身体受得了吗？”赫伯特问。

“我希望我能做到。孩子，也要看你和庞库那夫是否是个机灵能干的猎手了。”史密斯回答道。

“说到野味，史密斯先生，只要能烤，我保证可以带回野味来……”庞库那夫爽快地说。

“那你尽管把野味带回来吧！庞库那夫。”史密斯说。

大家经过一番具体分工后决定：史密斯和史佩莱留在“石窟”里，观察海岸和高地；那普和赫伯特及庞库那夫去森林，在搜集柴火的时候，如果遇上飞禽走兽就打回来。

上午十点钟，大家出发了。赫伯特信心很足，那普也是兴致勃勃，但庞库那夫却在小声嘀咕：

“要是回家后真能看到火，肯定是雷点着的。”

三个人爬上河岸，在河流的拐角处，庞库那夫停下了脚步，对其他两个人说：“我们是先打猎，还是先砍柴？”

“先打猎吧，看看，多卜已经开始寻找野味了。”赫伯特说。

“好吧！那先打猎，回来捡木柴。”庞库那夫说。

随后，三个人先从一棵小枞树上各掰了一根粗枝做武器，跟上了在深草丛上蹦下跳的多卜。

这次，他们没有沿着河道走，而是直接进了以松柏科为主的丛林深处。这里有些地方的松树虽然稀疏，但却因为长在了一起，便显得很高大。从它们的生长情况来看，这里好像比史密斯想象的纬度要再高一些。丛林中有很多因为年深日久而磨秃的树桩，这满地的木柴，他们做燃料是怎么都用不完的。经过一片空地，丛林慢慢密了起来，想要穿过去也困难了很多。

丛林中并没有现成的路，因为怕迷路，庞库那夫走几步就要折个树枝做记号。由于上次是和赫伯特沿着河道走的，这次他们没按那条路线走，有些失策。他们走了快一个小时了，却连一个动物都没有看到。仅仅有些小鸟，可没等他们走近，便被多卜惊动飞走了，连锦鸡也没看见一只。看来，他们只有再回上次钓到松鸡的沼泽地去了。

“庞库那夫，你答应主人带的野味如果只是这些，怕是不需要用火来烤吧！”那普略带讥讽地说。

“有点耐心，我倒怕回去后缺的不是野味。”庞库那夫说。

“难道你不相信史密斯先生？”

“是的！”

“你不认为他能生起火？”

“我要亲眼看到火才相信。”

“那就等着吧！主人说有火就一定会有的。”

“那就等着瞧吧！”

此时，太阳还没有升到正上方，他们继续前行。突然，赫伯特发现一棵树上有果子可以吃，这也算是收获了。这种树是南欧松，上面结的松子特别好吃，是欧美地区的珍品。树上的松子已经完全成熟了，几个人一边吃，一边听赫伯特介绍。

“看，拿海藻做面包，把生蛤蜊当肉，餐后的点心就是松子。对于我们这些一无所有的人来说，有这么一餐已经很不错了。我们没有理由埋怨。”赫伯特说。

“孩子，我没有埋怨，我只是觉得这顿饭，肉太少了。”庞库那夫说。

“多卜看到什么了！”那普喊着，朝丛林深处跑去。

多卜转眼就钻到看不见的地方了，却仍然在叫。同时，在多卜的叫声中，他们好像还听到了夹杂着奇怪的哼哼声。

庞库那夫和赫伯特也跟着那普跑了过去。这时候，如果多卜捕捉到了什么野味，他们先考虑的，首先是怎么捉住，而不是怎么烹调。

等他们三个“猎人”跑进灌木丛，便看见了多卜正在和一只野兽搏斗，多卜咬住了那个野兽的耳朵。野兽看起来有点像猪，长度在两英尺半左右，颜色是深褐色，不过肚子上的颜色比背上浅。它浑身上下长着又稀又硬的毛，脚趾间像有脚蹼连着，紧紧地按在地上。赫伯特认出来了，它是水豚，是啮齿动物中最大的一种。

水豚没有和狗搏斗。由于眼睑太厚，它的眼珠深深地陷进了眼窝，眼珠转动的样子显得非常笨拙，也许是第一次看见人类，它有些发蒙。

那普紧握棍子正要去打，却见它已挣脱了多卜的牙齿，很轻地叫了一声，随即向赫伯特冲去，差点把他撞倒，然后便跑进丛林不见了。

“糟糕！”庞库那夫喊。

等他们三个人跟着多卜追了上去，那水豚已经跳到被古松覆盖的水池不见了。

那普、赫伯特和庞库那夫怔在那里，多卜纵身跳进水池，但躲在水底的水豚却再也没有出来。

“我们等等看！它一定会到水面上呼吸的！”赫伯特说。

“它不会被淹死吗？”那普问。

“不会的，它长着蹼足，算得上是两栖动物。我们注意盯着它。”赫伯特说。

多卜待在水里没有上来，不停地在水面上寻找。庞库那夫和其他两个人站在池边把守着，他们要切断水豚的退路。

果然就像赫伯特说的，几分钟后，水豚就露出了水面。多卜凶猛地跳在它身上，拖住它不让它下沉。又过了不长时间，水豚便被它拖到了岸边，那普举起棍子就将它打死了。

“哈哈！”庞库那夫发出了胜利的笑声。

“只要有火，这只猪会被我们吃得只剩下骨头！”

庞库那夫说着便将水豚扛在了肩头。看太阳的位置，差不多有两点钟了，庞库那夫挥手示意大家回去。

多亏的多卜，他们没费一点力气就找到了回去的路。半个小时后，他们已经走到河边了。

和上次一样，庞库那夫又飞快地做了一个木筏。木筏顺流而下，向“石窟”漂去，不过如果没有火，一切的劳动也就白费了。

可当他们还没走出50步时，庞库那夫便站住了，他指着悬崖的转角，扯开嗓门大声喊：

“赫伯特！那普！你们看！”他喊道。

他们看到，“石窟”里，有轻烟在袅袅上升。

第十章

几分钟后，三个“猎人”奔到了噼啪作响的火炉旁。扛着水豚的庞库那夫，一会儿看看坐在火旁的史密斯，一会儿又看看史佩莱。

“收获怎么样呀？勇士们！”史佩莱和他们打着招呼。

“火，天啊，真是火，这下可以烤这只大肥猪了！我们马上就能大餐一顿了。不过，这是谁生的火？”庞库那夫问道。

“太阳！”史佩莱说。

史佩莱回答得没错。庞库那夫在奇怪这火竟然是太阳点燃的时，他简直有些不相信自己的眼睛了。他怔怔地站在那里，都忘了问史密斯。

“你有放大镜？”赫伯特问史密斯。

“没有，孩子，可我做了一个。”他答道。

史密斯把他的“放大镜”拿出来给大家看。原来，它的构造非常简单，是由史密斯和史佩莱表上的玻璃做成的。史密斯用一些土将两片玻璃粘在一起，然后在中间灌满了水，“放大镜”就这么做成了。用放大镜将太阳光聚在干燥的地苔上，一会儿工夫，地苔就燃烧起来了。

看完这个“放大镜”后，庞库那夫一言不发地看着史密斯，从他的表情中可以看出，在他眼里，史密斯即使不是神仙也是一个不平凡的人。怔了好一会儿后，他才大声说：“把这记下来，史佩莱先生，记下这些！”

“已经记了！”史佩莱说。

随后，那普协助庞库那夫做了肉叉，然后将洗干净的水豚架在了燃烧正旺的火上烤起来。

“石窟”又温暖起来，当然除了因为有火外，还因为他们又用木柴和泥土重新做了隔板。

很明显，史密斯和史佩莱这天的效率非常高。

史密斯基本恢复了体力，这从他爬上高地就能看得出来。史密斯最擅长的就是目测高度和距离。当他站在高地的顶上，久久地注视着火山锥时，就已经估算出了这座明天他们打算去爬的山的距离和高度了。

这座山位于西北方向6英里的地方，差不多有3500英尺高。如果站在山顶上，是可以看到50英里以外的。因此他觉得，是“荒岛还是大陆”，在他登上那座山后就能一目了然了。

这天的晚餐非常丰盛，除了水豚肉、马尾藻外还有南欧松的松子，大家对水豚肉的美味全都赞不绝口。整个吃饭过程中，史密斯都很少说话，他在想明天的事。

庞库那夫两次提建议，说现在最好该怎么做，但史密斯只是摇头不作声，他想得更全面。

最后他说：“明天我们就能知道接下来应该怎么做。”

晚饭结束，在向篝火堆里又添加了木柴后，全体人员——包括忠实的多卜，全都进入了梦乡。这一晚，他们睡得很安稳。

第二天就是3月29日了，他们精神抖擞地起床，开始为他们命运的一次远征做准备。

一切都已准备好，就等着出发了。前一天吃剩的水豚肉足够大家再吃一餐，路途中还可以找到更多食物；被做成放大镜的两块玻璃又安在了史密斯和史佩莱的表上，庞库那夫又烧了一块布代替火绒。

在火成岩地区，他们不会缺火石。

早上七点半，大家带着木棍，从“石窟”出发了。大家这次的路线是庞库那夫提议的：“去时走森林里开辟过的小道，回来时走其他路。”

这样的路线也是去高山最直的一条路。绕过南面的拐角，他们沿着河的左岸开始前行，直到河流折向了西南，他们才离开河道。

在常绿树下，他们找到了曾经走过的路。九点钟时，他们到了森林的最西边。刚刚走过的地方，以前曾是沼泽，后来由于地壳运动，变成了沙地。慢慢地，沙地由平坦变得起伏，直到形成现在的斜坡，并从岸边一直延伸到了高地。

在他们走这一段路时，时不时会看到一些小动物出现，多卜总是第一时间扑上去。不过由于主人觉得打猎没到时间，所以很快就被叫回来了。史密斯只要心里有了计划，就会下定决心去做，不会轻易改变。所以对于周围的环境和物产，他都没有兴趣，他只想赶快爬上前面的高山，所以也就旁若无物地径直前行。

十点钟的时候，他们在一棵大树下休息了几分钟，随即就又出发了。

穿过森林，山的形状呈现在了他们面前：这是有着两个火山锥的山。

在两个火山锥中，其中一个高约2500英尺，锥顶很平，如同被削过

一般，下面是由乱石支撑着的，有些像动物爪子，紧紧地抓着地面，脚趾向四面分散开来，脚趾间形成了很多峡谷，峡谷里树木丛生。不过，有一丛树却和锥顶相平。东北方向的山坡上树木很少，所以他们很清楚地看到那里有条深深的缝隙，应该是水道。

另一个火山锥在头一个的上边，锥顶呈圆形向一边倾斜，有点像一顶歪戴的帽子。这个火山锥看起来像是由泥土构成的，表层有一些突出的红石头。

大家在经过一番商议后决定，沿着第二个火山锥爬。根据这座山的地势，他们准备沿着支脉的山脊前行。

“我们这是要到火山地带去了。”史密斯说完，便领着大家向支脉爬。支脉虽然弯弯曲曲，但并不算很陡，所以走起来也比较容易。

一路上，到处都是乱石、玄武岩和浮石碎片。很明显，这里曾发生过地震。路上的枞树三三两两地生长着，枝繁叶茂，将和它有着百尺距离的峡谷遮得一线阳光都透不进去。

爬了一会儿，赫伯特看到了一些庞大动物新近留下的足迹。

“这些野兽会阻挡我们吗？”庞库那夫问。

“到时候再说！”史佩莱以前在印度打过虎，在非洲猎过狮，所以很镇定，又说，“到时候我们会想出办法来的，不过还是要特别小心才行！”

他们警觉地慢慢往上爬。

路越来越难走，不仅曲折，而且还有很多障碍物。由于不能直接往

上爬，通向高山的距离也便显得远了很多。有时走着走着，他们面前会横出一个深渊，只得绕道而行，费很长时间和力气去寻找另一条路。所以在中午12点的时候，他们不得不在一棵大枫树底下休息吃东西。

附近有条山涧，水流形成了一个瀑布。这时他们才发现，这里距离高山顶还有近一半的路程，想必天黑前是不可能赶到目的地了。

从这里看，底下的海洋很辽阔。右边因为一个隆起的海角挡住了视线没有看到。从左边看可以看到几英里外，在向他们住的那个方向看时，视线又被一些奇形怪状的山脊挡住了，那些山脊如同中央火山锥的支柱，所以在这里依然无法看出是“孤岛”还是“大陆”。

下午一点钟的时候，他们继续往上爬。在斜着向西南方向爬的时候，他们走进了一个灌木丛。灌木丛很浓密，几对雉科鹑鸡类飞禽在树荫下拍打着翅膀，这是角雉，和鸡的大小差不多。不过，角雉的喉咙下方却是长着肉瓣的，眼睛后面也有圆形的小冠毛。雌角雉是褐色，雄角雉则全身通红，有着白色的斑点，非常漂亮。

史佩莱捡起一块石头向它们扔去，扔得非常准，一只角雉被打死了。庞库那夫深吸一口气，此时他已经很饿了，所以贪婪地盯着那些角雉。

离开灌木丛后，他们互相攀着肩膀翻过了100英尺左右的陡坡，爬上一个平台。平台上树木很少，土是火山土。再往上爬，坡度就更陡了，必须绕成曲线才能行走，而且走时必须小心谨慎，不然很可能被摔得粉身碎骨。

走这段路的时候，那普和赫伯特走在最前面，庞库那夫殿后，史密斯和史佩莱走在中间。这段路依然有很多野兽的足迹存在。能到这么高

的地方来的必定是那些站得稳、脊骨柔软的羚羊或山羊。他们在行进中也看到过几只，但庞库那夫却将它们认错了，大喊：

“看！绵羊！”

一行人停下来，他们看见，在距离他们大约50英尺的地方，有6个头不小的动物，长着弯曲的角，但角的顶端又是扁平的，看起来很有力量。它们那光滑的褐色长毛下是蓬松的细绒毛。

赫伯特说这不是绵羊，而是温带山区最常见的莫伏鹿羊。

“这种羊有羊腿和羊排吗？”庞库那夫问。

“当然有！”赫伯特说。

“那我就把它们当绵羊！”庞库那夫说。

这些被赫伯特称为莫伏鹿羊的动物站在一块玄武石中间，一动不动，呆呆地看着他们，好像第一次看见人类。随后，不知为什么突然一惊，跳过山石不见了。

“再见！改天我们再见！”庞库那夫看着它们逃跑的影子，风趣地喊道。

史密斯、史佩莱、赫伯特和那普全被他逗得哈哈大笑。

几个人继续往上爬，接下来碰到的就是地壳发生变化遗留下的熔岩了。时不时地，他们会被含硫的泉水挡住道路，所以只能从旁边绕过去。他们看到，有些地方的硫已经和其他物质形成了结晶，存在于由很多长石晶体构成的白色火山岩渣里。

两个火山锥中较低的那个顶部比较平整。而越是临近高地，他们爬山来就越困难。差不多下午四点钟的时候，他们终于走完最后一带林区。走过林区，周围看到的都是一些弯曲的矮松，而它们之所以长成这样，都是因为抵挡狂风造成的。

这一天，天气晴朗，万里无云，这也是他们最感幸运的地方。不过，由于处在海拔3000英尺的地方，即使是微风，对他们爬山也有影响。周围一片寂静，虽然知道外面晴空万里，但因为那比较高的火山锥遮住了半边水平线，所以他们几乎看不见太阳。

等到太阳西下，海滩上因为光照而形成的庞大山影也越来越大。东边开始涌出了一些水汽，虽然是云，但却更像是雾，在太阳光的照耀下，发出多彩的光芒。

由于山势崎岖蜿蜒，他们真要爬上去还有两英里左右的路要走，而且路也越来越滑，一旦遇上那些风化了石头，很可能会摔下山的。

夜幕已经降临，史密斯和他的伙伴们费尽力气，用了七个多小时才到达了第一个火山锥顶端的高地。一到高地，他们便决定吃饭休息，恢复体力。

第一个火山锥的顶端也是第二个火山锥的底部，这里有许多岩石，他们很快找到了休息的地方。虽然旁边没什么可以当燃料的，但高地上却有几丛灌木，也有地苔。

庞库那夫在用石头围火炉的时候，那普和赫伯特捡了些干枯的灌木枝回来。他们躲在岩石的避风处，用火石打出火星，点着了焦布，那普对着焦布吹了几口气后，仅仅几分钟，烈火就噼噼啪啪地燃烧起来。

在这里，他们生火不为烤肉，而只为了御寒。那普打的几只鸟他们决定放在第二天吃。这天的晚餐很简单：一些剩下的水豚肉和南欧松的松子。

晚上六点，他们吃完了晚餐。此时，天还没有完全黑下来，史密斯想再去看看高火山锥的环状底层。如果火山锥很陡，走不上去的话，他们就要考虑怎么绕过去了。这问题让他考虑了很久，因为那个“斜戴帽子状”的火山锥很难爬上去。如果不能直接登上山顶，又无法从火山锥底下绕过去的话，他们很可能没办法观察到西边的陆地方向，也就是说，他们这次爬山的目的将无法实现。

史密斯不顾疲劳，在赫伯特的陪同下，沿着高地的边缘向北走去。庞库那夫则和那普布置睡觉的地方。史佩莱要记录下这天发生的事情，所以没去。

光线不是太暗，高地上的夜色幽静迷人，史密斯和赫伯特紧挨着往前走，一句话都不说。高地上有些地方比较宽，很容易就能过去。但有些地方却被岩石挡住了去路，只剩窄窄的一条道，不能并排前行。

在走了大约20分钟后，两个人不得不停了下来，因为两个火山锥的斜坡并成了一个，坡度接近70°，根本无法通行。

史密斯和赫伯特不得不放弃从这里过去，但这么一来，他们又得到了一个爬到火山锥顶端的机会。因为在他们面前突然出现了一个深洞，是棱角粗糙的火山口。火山口的作用是，当火山喷发时，岩浆会从这里喷出，熔岩凝固后和火山渣形成了一个的阶梯，从阶梯上上去就容易多了。

史密斯只匆匆看了看这个地方，便带着赫伯特，毫不犹豫地进了山

洞，越往里面走，光线越暗。离山顶还有1000英尺，火山口里的斜坡能不能上？这个问题等会儿就能知道了，因为不到最后关头不放弃的史密斯必须上到不能上为止。

幸好火山内的斜坡一直蜿蜒而上，他们才顺顺当当地攀了上去。

火山当然已经完全熄灭了，山坡上也没有一缕烟，甚至在黑洞里也看不到一点火星，当然更没有轰隆声和其他响声。也许这个深井通向了地壳底层，但里面却没有一点颤动。火山口的空气里也没有硫黄的气味。由此可见，这是一座沉睡着的火山，而且是个完全被熄灭的死火山。

史密斯的这个探索可以算是成功了。

两个人继续往上爬，爬上了内壁，越爬火山口愈大，甚至通过火山口还能看到天空的半径也是越来越大。

他们每往前走一步，视线里的星星就会增加一些，直到满天星辰映入他们眼帘。放眼望去，不仅天蝎座主星在头顶闪闪发光，就连据说离地球最近的半人马座比邻星也都显现在了他们眼前。

不过，随着火山口的增大，他们又看到了南鱼座的北落师门和南三角座。最后还发现，在接近南边的地方，相当于北半球北极星的南十字座也在天空闪耀。

将近八点钟时，史密斯和赫伯特到了火山锥顶端的最高峰。

此时，四周一片漆黑，他们几乎连两英里以外的地方都看不见了。到底这片大陆是被大海包围着呢，还是陆地西边和太平洋中的某个大陆相连呢？他们现在无从知晓。

一条带状乌云出现在了西边的水平线上，夜色更加昏暗。到底什么地方是陆地，什么地方是海洋，他们仿佛处在了一个大圆圈的中央，完全看不清楚。

突然，水平线上透出一丝微弱的光，乌云向他们头顶移动，地面上慢慢有了光线。原来，这是一弯新月在西沉，当乌云移开后，水平线完全被月光照亮了。仅仅只有一瞬间，史密斯就看见了水面上倒映的新月在荡漾。他一把抓住赫伯特的手，沉重地说：“这是一座荒岛！”

此时，新月落到了水波之下。

第十一章

史密斯和赫伯特回到了高地，那是在他得知所处的地方是个荒岛后的半个小时后。对其他入，他只是简单地说，上天将他们扔在了一个荒岛上，其他事情明天再谈。

随后，大家都去睡觉了，这群被抛在荒岛上的人，居然安安稳稳地在海拔2500英尺的山洞里睡了一觉。

天亮了，这天是3月30日。没有其他东西吃，他们只吃了一点烤角雉做早餐，然后就又开始往上爬了。

史密斯准备再到火山顶上去观察一番。如果他们所在的荒岛和任何陆地都不相连，也没有来往太平洋各群岛的航线的话，他们很可能就要

一辈子困在这里了。这次，其他人都参与到了这次探寻中，他们也想看看这个荒岛，以便决定以后靠什么来生存。

早上七点，史密斯、赫伯特、庞库那夫、史佩莱和那普出发了，他们好像对现在的处境并不慌乱。毫无疑问，这是因为他们对自己有信心。不过，需要说明的是，史密斯的信心基础和其他人的不一样，史密斯的信心来自于他认为在这片看似荒凉的土地上，一定会找到适合他们生存的必需品，而其他人的信心则来自于有史密斯。

特别是庞库那夫，自从“生火事件”后，他便没有什么值得悲观的事了，甚至觉得只要和史密斯在一起，哪怕是只有一块光秃秃的石头，也没什么可怕。

“哼！我们在没有官方许可的情况下就离开了里士满，这地方又没人阻拦我们，我们要是逃不出去，才怪呢！”他说。

根据昨晚史密斯的行走路线，他们沿着高地出发，绕过了矮一点的火山锥，向那巨大的火山洞口走去。天高气爽，太阳出现在万里无云的天空，照耀着整个东面山坡。

来到了火山口。火山口和史密斯昨晚在黑暗中辨认出的一样，是一个很大的漏斗形，越走越宽，从高地到顶端有1000英尺左右。洞口以下是厚而宽的熔岩，这些熔岩从山坡一直蜿蜒到了山下，由此可以看出当初岩浆流到低处山谷的路线。荒岛的北边，到处都是这样的凹沟。

火山口内部的斜坡度数在35°到40°之间，爬上这样的斜坡并不难。从这也能看出，熔岩是以前遗留下的，在新喷口还没喷发时又从山顶漫下来。

由于光线太暗，火山管的深度用肉眼无法观察，但可以看见，它是从底层通向火山口的。不过，能够确定的是，火山已经完全熄灭了。

史密斯和伙伴们到达火山口的顶峰，站在北边隆起的锥形小山丘上时，还不到早上八点。

“看，海，全是海！”他们禁不住喊道。从这句话也能看出，他们已经有当个孤岛居民的思想准备了。

是的，他们被无边无际的大海环绕着。史密斯刚刚在上来时还抱有希望，希望他昨晚因为天黑没有看清楚，希望这次看到的是海滨和岛岸。然而，在半径50多英里的范围内，除了汪洋大海，什么都看不到，没有陆地，甚至没有孤帆。

荒岛被一片辽阔的大海所包围，处在大海的中心。

他们就那么怔怔地呆望着，看了几分钟，看遍了所能看到的每一处，每一个边缘。庞库那夫的视力很好，经常能看到别人看不到的地方，如果水平线上有一片陆地，即使像水汽一样模糊，他也能看到，但他犹如望远镜般的眼睛，依然没看到任何东西。

看完海洋，他们又开始看山下的海岛。史佩莱第一个开口道：“这个岛有多大？”

确实，在无边无际的海洋面前，它很渺小。

史密斯想了想，又仔细看了看海岛的四周，再把他们所处的高度都考虑到后，他说：“朋友们，长度大约在100多英里。不会错，应该是这样！”

“面积有多少？”

“这很难说，地势不规则。”史密斯又说。

如果史密斯估算得不错，那么它的大小就和地中海的马尔他岛或赞德岛相似。不过，与那两座岛不同的是，它的形状更奇特和复杂，不管是海角、地岬、地角、港湾和河流，都比那两座岛少，它的形状很扁，且没有规则。

史佩莱根据史密斯描述的情况将海岛的轮廓画了出来，很快就看出了它形状的奇怪来——就像一只极大的海兽躺在了太平洋的水面上。

实际上，这座海岛的形状确实如此，史佩莱画得很准确。

了解了这座岛的形状，对他们有着很大的意义。

他们降落的地方在海岛的东部，这里形成了一个宽阔的港湾，而港湾的尽头正好是一个突出的海角。

庞库那夫第一次观察时，因为视线被隆起的地岬遮住，所以并没有看得很清楚。在东北方，有个港湾是被两个海角围住的，海角间还有一条长长的海峡，如同一只半张着嘴的蛟龙。

海岛的中间是火山。

东北和西北海岸形成了一个弧形，有点像动物扁平的头盖。由于海岸突起，所以在那里形成了一块高地。不过，这部分形状并不明显。

从隆起的那点开始，从南到北都比较平坦。沿岸的三分之二被一条细窄的小河隔开，海岸因此变成了像鳄鱼尾巴般的长长的一条。

这条尾巴伸向海里30多英尺，形成了一个半岛。半岛弯曲处又形成了可以停靠船只的宽阔海湾，这也是海岛的低海岸。

海岸最狭窄的地方就是“石窟”，它距纬度相同的西海岸小河，差不多有30英里左右。

海岛的内陆又是什么样的呢？南部海岸有很多树木；北部则多是沙丘，且非常干燥。

突然，史密斯和伙伴们发现了一个地方，那个地方位于火山和东部海滨之间，是条湖，沿湖生长着很多常青树。在这样的孤岛上发现这种树木，让他们很是惊讶。从他们所处的山顶看过去，湖面和海面一样高，史密斯大概估算了一下，湖面的高度在300英尺左右。湖在高地与海滨向上延伸的位置上。

“那是不是一条淡水湖？”庞库那夫问。

“是的，是条淡水湖，湖水是从山里流出来的。”史密斯说。

“快看！有条小河在向湖里流水。”赫伯特指着从西边流过来的一条狭长溪流说。

“没错，既然有小河在向湖里送水，那么可以肯定的是，靠海的地方一定有出口，回去时过去看看。”

这条曲折的小河以及前面提及的河流，都是这座孤岛上的水系，也是他们几个人能看到的。不过，整个海岛三分之二都被覆盖上了树木，形成了一片森林，所以这些河流很可能是从树底下流进海里的。甚至可以说，这一带温带草木很多。不过北部却看不见任何河流，所以东北部的沼泽地成了一潭死水。

当然，其余地方都是些沙丘和沙滩，和海岛上那茂密的树林比起来，沙丘和沙滩处显得那么突兀。

再一看他们才发现，海岛的正中央并非火山。火山矗立在西北部，所以也成了两个地带的分界线。火山支脉被绿荫遮盖的地方是西南、正南和东南。北边和那三方不同。山脉的分支很明显，一直延伸到沙地平原。

很明显，火山喷发时，大堆的熔岩正是向这边喷出的，所以才形成了东北港湾的峡口。

史密斯和伙伴们在山顶上足足待了一个小时，海岛就摆在他们面前，像一幅立体的彩色图画：绿的是森林，黄的是沙地，蓝的是水。除了被大树覆盖下的土地、塌陷的山谷和火山口的内壁，其他地方他们看得一清二楚。

还有一个非常重要的问题，一个能影响到他们前途的问题：

岛上有没有人居住？

问题是由史佩莱提出来的，但经过他们一番仔细观察，答案是：没有。

任何一个地方都没有开垦过的痕迹，没有房舍、小屋、渔场，甚至连证明有人家的轻烟都没有。

当然，还有几个地方就是庞库那夫看也看不出有没有住人。那个地方离他们最远，有近30英里，伸向了西南半岛。还有就是被森林覆盖的四分之三面积的土地，他们无法将上面覆盖的东西揭开，看下面有没有

稀疏的村舍。

不过总的来看，他们所处的地方就是太平洋的一个海岛，一个荒无人烟的海岛。

岛上到底有没有居民，他们还需要经过更彻底的搜索。还有一个问题他们无法回答，那就是这里是否经常或者偶尔有船只或土人来？

方圆50英里的地方看不到陆地，不管是马来人的帆船还是波利尼西亚人的独木舟，都是很难渡过50英里的。

现在还有几个问题：海岛靠近什么群岛？是不是孤零零地在太平洋上？没有仪器，能算出经纬度吗？看来这些都不容易办到。在没有了解这些情况前，他们只好假设附近有土人做些防备。

看完海岛，在确定了它的形状和地势，也算出了它的大小，查清了海岛上的山川河流，甚至森林和平原的分布情况后，史佩莱将它们一一画了出来，只等下山后，再从矿物质、动物及植物方面总结出这块土地的资源情况了。

即将下山时，史密斯用他那安详而沉稳的语调问大家：

“朋友们，上天将我们抛在了这样一片土地上，我们很可能要在这里长期生活。当然，如果正好有船只从这里经过，我们就会得救，但这种可能性太小了。这是个小岛，没有停船的港湾，所以很有可能，它位于一般船只的航线之外。也就是说，相对于来往太平洋各群岛的船只，我们太靠南了。对于绕过合恩角到澳洲的船只来说，我们又太过靠北了。总之，我们的处境不是很乐观……”

“亲爱的赛莱斯，你说得没错。”史佩莱大声说，“我们都是男子

汉，我们信任你，你也要信任大家。是不是这样，朋友们？”

“对！我完全听你指挥。”赫伯特首先抓住了史密斯的手。

“不管在什么地方，什么时候，你都是我的主人！”那普喊道。

“对我呢，不管您要我做什么，如果我‘哼’一声，我就不是杰克·庞库那夫。只要您愿意，就把它变成小美国！我们把这里建设成城市，铺铁路，打电线发电报.....如果有一天，这里不再是孤岛而是城市时，就把它交给联合政府。不过我还有个希望！”

“什么希望？”史佩莱问。

“我们不要当自己是遇难的人，要当自己是来开垦的移民！”

庞库那夫的话让史密斯笑了起来，大家一致同意庞库那夫的提议。最后，史密斯向大家表达谢意，谢谢大家对他的信任，还说一切都要靠大家共同努力。

“好了，我们现在回‘石窟’吧！”庞库那夫大声说。

“稍等一下，朋友们，我觉得我们是不是该给这个海岛，还有我们看到的海角、地岬和河流起个名字呢？”史密斯建议道。

“好想法，有个名字，我们叫起来就方便多了。”史佩莱说。

庞库那夫想了好一会儿才说：“在这段时间，有些地方好像已经有名字了.....”

“就像‘石窟’。”赫伯特说。

“对！这个名字叫起来很方便，也是无意间叫起来的，我们就把第一次过夜的地方叫‘石窟’吧，好吗？史密斯先生！”庞库那夫问。

“好！既然已经取了名字，庞库那夫，就叫它‘石窟’吧。”

“太好了！其他的也好起。”庞库那夫非常高兴，连连说，“赫伯特和我说过鲁滨孙的故事，要不我们模仿鲁滨孙起名字吧，比如说上帝湾、鲸鱼岬、伤心角什么的！”

“那还不如用史密斯先生的名字，史佩莱先生的名字，那普的名字.....”

“用我的名字？”那普笑得露出了雪白的牙齿。

“有什么不可以？如果叫那普港，不是很好听吗？还有基汀角.....”庞库那夫越说越兴奋。

“我觉得还是用国家的地名会好点，这样也就能提醒我们不要忘了我们的祖国。”史佩莱说。

“想法不错！这样，一些主要地方，我赞成用国家的地名来命名。”史密斯说完，想了一会儿又说：“比如我们可以把东边的大海湾叫联合湾，南边的大海湾叫华盛顿湾；还可以把我们站立的这座山叫富兰克林山，我们看到的那湖叫格兰特湖.....这样非常好。朋友们，我们用祖国的名字怀念祖国，纪念那些为国为民的人。对于从这座山顶上所看到的河流、海湾、海角和地岬，我们就根据它的形状命名，这样既好记也有地方特点。这海岛形状奇特，想一些能表现其特点的名字应该不会太难。还有那些有待我们去探索的地方，不管是森林、河流还是小溪，我们都可以随时根据它们的形状来命名，大家觉得怎么样？朋友们！”

史密斯的提议自然赢得了满堂喝彩。

此刻，海岛就像一幅地图摆在了大家面前，只等他们给起名字了。当史佩莱把这些名字标在他画的地图上时，海岛的地理名称也就完成了。

他们先确定了两个大海湾和一座高山的名字，就是根据史密斯的提议：两个海湾，一个叫联合湾，另一个叫华盛顿湾；高山就叫富兰克林山。

“我提议，海岛西北的那个半岛叫蛇盘半岛，半岛尾部很像尾巴，就叫甩尾角，行吗？”

“完全同意！”史密斯说。

“那么，”赫伯特用手指着海岛的另一端，“那海湾特别像个张着嘴巴的大鲨鱼，就叫鲨嘴湾好了。”

“太棒了！”庞库那夫拍手称好，接着又说，“嘴巴的上下部分如果叫颞角就更形象了。”

“可那有两个海角怎么办？”史佩莱说。

“没事，就叫上颞角和下颞角。”庞库那夫说。

“好的，我都记下来了。”史佩莱说。

“现在还剩荒岛东南端的海角了吧？”庞库那夫说。

“是说联合湾的尾部吗？”赫伯特问道。

“不如叫它兽爪角吧。”那普脱口而出，他也想让这块领地上有他命名的地方。

那普的这个名字取得非常好，因为那陆地部分确实像一只卧着的怪兽，海角正好处在怪兽的脚部。

事情进行到这里，庞库那夫非常满意。他们对于气球将他们降落到了那个淡水区，充满了感激，所以给那条小河取名感恩河，着陆的岛叫着陆岛；“石窟”上方高耸着的那块花岗石峭壁，因为站在上面能看到整个海湾，所以取名叫观望壁。

最后，他们又将蛇盘半岛上的森林取名为西遥森林。

能看见的所有地方都已被他们取好了名字，对于以后再发现的地方，他们还会随时命名。

取完名，史密斯通过太阳的高度和方向又做了方位测定，确定正东是联合湾和观望壁；通过日出日落时间和中午时分太阳的位置，他又确定了海岛的正北方向。因为海岛方向处于南半球位置，所以当太阳在正午时，经过的就是北方而不是南方，跟在北半球时看到的不一样。

当所有的工作做完后，就在大家准备下富兰克林山，回“石窟”时，庞库那夫叫了起来：

“我们真是太傻了！”

“怎么回事？”史佩莱有些不解，因为他已经合上笔记本打算走了。

“我们忘了给我们所在的岛取名字了！”

赫伯特想提议用史密斯的名字命名，他想，伙伴们一定会同意的，可还没等他说，史密斯便说：

“朋友们，不如用一个伟人的名字来命名吧。这个人为了美利坚合众国的统一一直在战斗，我们就给这个岛取名林肯岛吧！”

大家兴奋至极，连呼三声，很喜欢史密斯的这个提议。

这天晚上睡觉前，这群林肯岛的新移民聊了很久：他们聊到了祖国，聊到了可怕的战争，聊到了格兰特将军和林肯，聊到了北军的事业……他们相信，正义的事业一定会胜利。

这一天是1865年3月30日。

他们没有想到，就在他们聊过后的第16天，在一个星期五，华盛顿发生了一件可怕的阴谋，那就是，一位暴徒夺走了亚伯拉罕·林肯的生命……

第十二章

林肯岛的新移民经过火山口，绕过火山锥，用了将近半个小时回到了他们昨晚过夜的高地。庞库那夫觉得差不多到了平时该吃早饭的时间了，便让史佩莱和史密斯把表对了一下。

史佩莱的表是个精良的怀表，每天都不会忘记小心地上发条，而史密斯的表在他流落沙丘上时就停了。

史密斯将他的表上足了发条，根据太阳的高度确定了应该是早晨九点钟，将表对在了这个时间上。

史佩莱准备调整自己的表的时间，却被史密斯拦住了：“亲爱的史佩莱，先等一下，你的表是里士满的时间对吗？”

“是的，赛莱斯。”

“也就是说，你表上的时间是根据里士满的子午线确定的。里士满和华盛顿的子午线几乎一样，是这样吗？”

“没错，是这样的。”

“那好，你每天记住给它上发条，不要拨动表上的针。记住，这可能对我们有用。”

“这会有什么用呢？”庞库那夫暗自想。

在高地上，他们痛痛快快地吃了一顿，将剩下的野味和松子全都吃掉了。对于没有吃的东西，庞库那夫可一点都不发愁，因为一路上他们都有找到吃的东西的机会。只要给多卜一份符合它胃口的食物，它便能在灌木丛中找到新鲜的野味。庞库那夫还计划让史密斯为他做一两支猎枪和一些火药，这些，他觉得史密斯很容易就能办到。

从高地下下来后，史密斯提议重新选一条路回“石窟”，他想去看看格兰特湖，因为格兰特湖被树木环绕，非常美丽。

于是，他们沿着格兰特湖的发源地——那条支脉的山脊走。在这些新移民的嘴里，他们已经很熟练地用上了新地名，而这些新地名的使用，也极大地方便了他们的相互表达。特别是年轻的赫伯特和庞库那

夫，他们几乎对这些名字着了迷，一路上都在议论，庞库那夫说：

“赫伯特，这些名字听起来棒极了！我们以后不用再担心走丢了。孩子，不管是朝着格兰特湖走，还是沿着感恩河穿越西遥森林，我们都能走到观望壁去，还可以到联合湾！”

庞库那夫的一番话赢得了大家的赞许。不过即使不怕走丢，他们还是相互等着，一起前行。因为这片密林里，很可能会有猛兽。为了谨慎起见，他们必须多加防范。

通常，领路的总是多卜，不过多卜时不时地要去丛林钻一钻，所以多卜后面的庞库那夫、赫伯特和那普就成了领路人。走在最后面的是史密斯和史佩莱，他们总是并肩前行。

史佩莱随时需要记录发生的事，而史密斯则很少说话，时不时会拣一些东西放进口袋，这些东西要么是矿物质，要么就是植物。

“他总在拣什么？我从来没发现有什么值得拣的东西。”庞库那夫喃喃道。

差不多十点钟的时候，一行人走下富兰克林山，到了大约一英里远的黄色石灰质地的平原。这里树木稀疏，一直延伸到森林边缘。

这里有块很大的玄武岩——据比萨克普学说讲，这样的岩石冷却需要3.5亿万年。这些岩石分布在平原各处，而且分布得很不规则。不过令他们奇怪的是，山坡上特有的一些熔岩，这里却没有。

史密斯本来以为小河的发源地在森林和平原交叉处，不出任何意外就能到达小河源头，不料见赫伯特急急忙忙地跑了过来，那普和庞库那夫则躲在了一块岩石后。

“发生了什么事了？孩子！”史佩莱问。

“我们看到烟了，离我们一百步远的石头丛里有烟！”赫伯特说。

“难道这里有人？”史佩莱喊道。

“在不知道对方来历的情况下，我们绝不能暴露自己。我认为岛上不会有土人的，我怕遇见他们。对了，多卜呢？去什么地方了？”

“多卜在前面。”

“它就没叫吗？”

“没有。”

“那太奇怪了！想办法叫它回来。”

不一会儿，史密斯、史佩莱和赫伯特，以及其他两个人都聚在了一起，他们全都躲在了玄武岩的石堆后面。

结果，他们全都清楚地看到有一缕黄烟升上了天空。

史密斯轻轻一吹口哨，多卜便跑了回来。史密斯向其他人做了个手势，让他们等着，然后一个人从岩石后溜了出去。其他人一动不动地等待着，等得不耐烦起来。

这时，他们突然听到了史密斯的喊叫声，便急忙冲了过去。等到了史密斯面前，才闻到空气中弥漫着刺鼻的臭气。

在史密斯刚刚看到烟的时候，也吃了一惊，不过很快他就猜到了这

股烟的来历，因为这气味太好辨别了。

“这股烟是自然界产生的，那里有硫黄泉，如果我们咽喉痛，倒可以用它来治。”史密斯说。

“史密斯先生，可惜我没伤风！”庞库那夫说。

于是，几个人一起向浓烟上升的地方走去。果然，他们看见有硫黄泉从一个岩石之间的缝隙里涌了出来。当硫黄泉吸收了空气中的氧气后，空中便散发出了强烈的硫酸味。

史密斯将手伸到硫黄泉里，顿时觉得泉水滑腻腻的。他轻轻尝了一下，发现味道特别甜，而这硫黄泉的水温估计也在36℃左右。

赫伯特问他是怎么算出水温的。

史密斯说：“孩子，非常简单，当我把手伸到泉水里面后，既没有觉得它烫，也没有觉得它凉。这就说明它和我们人体的温度差不多，而我们人的体温就在36℃左右。”

由于这些硫黄泉对他们这些新移民来说没有什么实际用途，他们便朝几百步以外的森林边缘走去了。

走到森林边缘，正如他们想象的那样，河水从这里流出，非常清澈。河岸非常高，两岸全是红土，红土里含有氧化铁，所以他们即刻将小河命名为红河。

当然，说它是小河并不准确，它实际上是条大河，河水既深又清，是由山涧的水汇合而成，既有河水的舒缓，又有大海的激烈，安静时如潺潺流水，激烈时又拼命冲击岩石，有时甚至还会从高处直泻而下，形

成一道瀑布。

这条河与格兰特湖的距离有一英里半左右，河宽30到40英尺，是一条淡水河。想必格兰特湖里的水也是淡水。

若能在湖边找个居住地，应该比“石窟”理想很多。

河水在朝几百英尺外的方向流，两岸又都被一些树木遮盖着。这些树木不是他们在离观望壁几英里之外的地方看到的松柏科，而是美国和塔斯马尼亚温带地区的品种。

虽然正值四月初，但在这里却相当于北半球的十月，算是初秋，所以树木的枝叶依然很茂盛。树林中的树木除了桉树还有桉树，还有一种树到第二年才能长出一种香甜的甘露蜜。这种甘露蜜和东方的甘露蜜差不多。

在一些倾斜的河岸上还生长着澳洲杉以及一种比较高的草，这种草在荷兰被称为“觚草”。不过，他们最想要的就是太平洋各群岛都盛产的椰子树，这里却没有。原因很简单，这里纬度太低。

“太可惜了！椰子树用处很多，果实也好吃！”

树林里聚集着很多飞鸟，主要集中在桉树和桉树的树杈间。不过，由于枝杈间太过稀疏，完全不能遮住它们的翅膀，所以很容易就让一行人认出里面有着黑、白、灰色鸟冠的鹦鹉，还有五颜六色的长尾鹦鹉，以及浑身闪耀着绿色光泽的红头鹦鹉和蓝鹦鹉等等。除了各种鹦鹉外，他们还看到了各种颜色的飞禽，这些飞禽聚在一起，形成了一个万花筒。它们一边拍打翅膀，一边叽叽喳喳地乱叫，嘈杂的声音能把人的耳朵吵聋。

突然，丛林中出现了一些奇怪的声音，这些声音混杂在一起，像是在举办一场奇怪的合奏。居民们不仅听到了鸟叫声、野兽吼声，好像还听到了一种像是土著人嘴里发出的声音。

听到这些怪异的声响，那普和赫伯特忘了“必须小心谨慎”的原则，向灌木丛中冲去。不过，他们并没有看见凶猛的野兽或是可怕的土著人，而是看见了六只善于模仿各种叫声的鸟，那就是山雉。

仅仅只用一根棍子，他们便准确地将合奏中断，随即便有了打牙祭的食物，他们又可以吃上一顿美味的晚餐了。

赫伯特还发现了一些长着青铜色翅膀的鸽子，它们浑身碧绿，有着华丽的冠，有些则像麦加利港的鸽子。不过，想要捉住这些鸽子并不容易，除了这些鸽子难捉，还有成群的乌鸦和喜鹊同样难捉。

当然，如果他们有猎枪，肯定一枪就能打死一大群。可这些“猎人们”的武器只有石头和棍子，这些原始的武器根本无法满足他们打猎的需要。

森林里，他们还看到了在丛林中上蹿下跳的动物，这些动物跳得很高，一跃能有30英尺，称它们为“飞兽”绝不夸张。跳得既高又快的它们，个个就像松鼠一样，不停地从一棵树跳到另一棵树，“猎人”们的武器更显得不中用了。

“看，袋鼠！”赫伯特大声喊。

“好吃吗？”庞库那夫问道。

“你是说袋鼠肉吗？”史佩莱问，“如果炖得好的话，比最好的腊味还好吃！”

史佩莱的这句话极具诱惑力，所以话音刚落，庞库那夫就带着那普和赫伯特冲着袋鼠去了，史密斯想喊他们回来，可已经来不及了。

不过，袋鼠是灵敏的动物，在看到人来后，它们立刻像皮球一样弹着走了，速度非常快，“猎人”怎么追赶都是白搭。在气喘吁吁地追赶了五分钟后，袋鼠钻进森林不见了，就连多卜也对那些袋鼠感到无奈。

庞库那夫他们悻悻然地回来了，见了史密斯和史佩莱后说：“史密斯先生，我说吧，咱们一定要造几支猎枪才行，你说能不能造？”

“也许可以。我想，我们第一步还是先制造一些弓箭吧，我想你对弓箭的使用，一定会和澳洲的猎人一样熟练的。”

“弓箭？”庞库那夫有些不屑，“那不是小孩子才玩的吗？”

“你可不要小看它，我的庞库那夫先生。”史佩莱说，“很多世纪以来，弓箭制造了多少流血事件？火药可是不久以前才有的，而战争却是有了人类就有的！”

“也对，史佩莱先生，我说话向来不加思考，请原谅。”庞库那夫说。

一向对博物学感兴趣的赫伯特此时又将袋鼠的话题引了出来：

“我们想要对付的袋鼠是一种大袋鼠，是最难捉的一种，长着灰色的长毛；如果我没有记错的话，还有黑袋鼠和红袋鼠、岩石袋鼠和鼯，这些袋鼠捉起来就相对容易一些。袋鼠据统计有12种……”

赫伯特话没说完便被庞库那夫打断了：“赫伯特，对我来说，袋鼠

就有一种，那就是‘肉叉上的袋鼠’，可惜我们今天没捉住！”

大家在听了庞库那夫的新分类后，都禁不住大笑起来。

没有其他野味，晚上也只能吃山雉了。庞库那夫掩饰不住心中的遗憾，不过很快他们就遇到了一件好事。

多卜为了填饱肚子，开始四处搜索，正饿着的它，嗅觉异常灵敏。如果真让多卜自己去打猎的话，它很可能不管什么野味，只要在它的爪子下，都会进入它的肚子，不给“猎人们”留。不过，它现在有那普监视，所以只能老老实实在地听从“猎人们”指挥。

差不多三点钟的时候，大家发觉多卜钻进灌木丛好久都没有出来，最后，“猎人们”听到了它低低的咆哮，他们知道，多卜一定是和什么动物在撕咬。那普冲了进去，看到多卜正在拼命吞食一只小动物。那普要是再晚十秒钟，小动物就被它全吃下去了。幸好多卜攻击的不是一只而是一窝，除了它吃掉的，还有两只啮齿动物在草地上。

那普一手提着一只胜利而归。这些动物的毛色是黄色夹杂绿色斑点，个头比兔子大一些，尾巴非常短。

这是什么动物并没有难倒这些美国公民，他们认出这是刺鼠的一种，叫“莫拉”，是一种比美国常见的兔子稍大一些的动物，长着像兔子一样的长耳朵。和刺鼠不同的是，它们的嘴里长着五颗臼齿。

“哈哈……太好了！有烤肉了，我们可以回家了！”庞库那夫高兴地大喊。

在稍作停顿后，他们又开始往前走。高大的橡胶树和怪柳，在山间形成了一个拱门，红河里清澈的水从拱门下流过。旁边有高达20英尺的

丁香树以及自然学家都叫不出名字的树木。这些树木全都低垂在小河上，而绿荫下的河水也正发出潺潺的声响。

这里的红河河面比其他地方宽，史密斯估计他们很快就要到达河口了。果不其然，当他们穿过美丽的密林时，发现已经到了红河的尽头。

新移民就这样到了格兰特湖的西岸。这里景色宜人，湖周围7英里处，长着各种树木，树木面积达到了250英亩左右。东边的湖岸上有几处较高的地方满眼翠绿，透过这些苍翠屏障，他们能看到海洋在阳光下闪闪发光。北边的湖岸显得有些曲径通幽，和南边峻峭的轮廓形成了鲜明的对比。

小小的湖畔有许多水禽在栖息，离南岸几百英尺的湖面上露出了很多岩石，有些像安大略湖里的“千岛”。湖畔上有几对翠鸟一动不动地停在石头上，静等游鱼到来。只要发现游鱼，它们便会在发出一声尖叫的同时钻进水底，随即将“目标”衔出水面。

湖岸上非常热闹。水禽在那里旁若无人地行走，品种有很多，有野鸭、塘鹅、水鸡、红嘴鸟……还有舌头像刷子一样的水鸟，它们和一两只美丽的琴鸟张开鲜艳的尾巴，非常欢快。

这是一个清澈无比的淡水湖，湖水颜色很深，水面上不时有水泡泛出，涟漪在湖面上一圈一圈地荡漾着，最后又彼此融汇在一起，非常漂亮。由此也可以知道，湖里有很多鱼。

“这里太美了！如果能住在这一带就好了。”史佩莱说。

“我们一定会住在这里的！”史密斯肯定地说。

他们决定选择一条最近的路回“石窟”，于是便从湖岸的南边拐了过

去。

这里有很多灌木和丛林，想必没有人在此走过，所以想在这儿开一条路并不容易。即使这样，他们还是决定从这里走，一直走到观望壁北边。

就这样，他们披荆斩棘地前进了两英里，等到穿过最后一带树丛后，高地便呈现在了他们面前。那是铺着厚厚绿茵的高地，再往前走就是一望无际的海洋了。

若想回“石窟”，他们必须斜穿高地走一英里，然后再往下走，直到感恩河的第一个拐角。不过，史密斯想了解一下湖水涨满后会从哪里泄出以及如何泄出，所以他们又穿过树丛，继续向北前行了一英里半。他们想，那里应该有从花岗石缝倾泻而下的瀑布。

简单地说，这里很可能是这个湖的中心位置，当小河的流水将它灌满后，它就形成瀑布流向了大海。如果真是这样，史密斯便能利用瀑布落差的力量了。

他绝不会让这股力量白白浪费掉的。

他们继续沿着格兰特湖向高地前行。不过，在他们朝这个方向走了一英里后，却没发现那必然存在的瀑布。

此时已经是下午四点半了，他们还要准备晚餐，所以必须回去了。于是，这队人马重又折回原路，沿感恩河的左岸回到了“石窟”。

火很快被他们生了起来，一直负责烹饪的那普和庞库那夫都有很好的手艺，他们很快就烤好了刺鼠肉，敞开肚皮饱餐了一顿。

吃完晚饭，大家正要睡觉，史密斯突然从口袋里取出几块完全不同的矿石，简单地说：“朋友们，这里有铁矿石、黄铁矿石；还有陶土、石灰石、煤……总之，自然界给了我们这么多好东西，就看我们怎么利用了。明天就开始工作吧！”

第十三章

第二天一早，庞库那夫问史密斯：“史密斯先生，我们该从哪儿做起？”

“从第一步做起！”史密斯答道。

确实，他们必须从“第一步”做起。一直到现在，他们连最基本的工具都没有，又无法做到“慢慢来，有的是时间”。他们没有时间，他们最紧要的工作是制造出日常生活中必须用到的工具。

想起来，他们原本可以不用自己摸索创造的，因为有前辈的经验在那里，但他们还是要亲自动手做。因为他们所需要的钢和铁还在矿石状态，陶器也还在陶土里，布匹和衣服的纺织原料都在未知中。

不过，有一点他们很清楚，那就是孤岛上的居民是万物之灵的“人”，他们中不仅有史密斯这样的优秀工程师，而且还有一伙聪明热情的帮手。史密斯知道伙伴们都具备什么样的特长。

史佩莱是个对什么都有自己的独到见解，见多识广的记者。他善于学习，对于开拓这样的孤岛，他灵活的头脑和灵巧的双手一定能发挥作

用。同时，他还有着在任何困难面前不退缩的执着精神，更是个酷爱打猎的好猎手，所以现在他必须把爱好变成职业。

赫伯特有着非常丰富的自然学科知识，同时还是个善良勇敢的孩子，在他们共同的事业中，他一定会发挥出自己的能力。

那普聪明机智，刚强健壮，是热诚的化身。他不仅有着钢铁般的身体，而且还懂打铁常识，这对他们的创业也大有好处。

对于庞库那夫，他不仅航行过各个海洋，而且还在布鲁克林造船厂当过木匠，并在另一些船上学习过裁缝，假期里还去当过园丁、园艺师、农民等。总之，庞库那夫和所有的水手一样，样样都能干，样样都能干好。

五个勇于向命运挑战的人，对成功有着必胜的把握。此刻，这些人聚集在一起，想不成功都难。

史密斯已经说了，他们要从第一步做起，而这第一步就是制造一些日常工具，一些可以改变大自然的工具有。大家也都知道，想要制造工具，必须有大量的热能。热能从何而来？当然是燃料。在这个荒岛上，木柴和煤炭随处可见，他们需要做的仅仅是有个炉子。

“用炉子做什么？”庞库那夫问。

“我们要做的陶器就需要用炉子来烧。”史密斯说。

“那要用什么来做炉子呢？”

“当然是砖头！”

“砖头又要从哪里来呢？”

“我们可以用陶土做砖头。现在开始吧，朋友们。为了节约时间，我们可以把原料产地开辟成工厂，让那普为我们送吃的东西。那里有的是火，还可以烹调。”

“可是，没有武器打猎，我们吃什么呢？”史佩莱说。

“是呀，如果能有一把刀就好了！”庞库那夫说。

“什么意思？”史密斯问。

“如果能有一把刀，我就可以做一副弓箭，这样我们也就有野味吃了。”

“嗯，是这样！一把刀，一把锋利的刀……”史密斯自言自语道。

此时，史密斯的眼神盯上了正向岸边跑的多卜，他很快有了主意。

“多卜，快过来！”史密斯叫着。

多卜听到主人叫它，飞快地跑了过来。史密斯用双肘夹住它的头，将它脖子上的一个套环解了下来，然后将其折成两段，大声说：“这就是两把刀，庞库那夫，满意吗？”

庞库那夫兴奋起来，大声欢呼。原来，多卜脖子上的套环正是用薄薄的钢片做成的，只要在沙石上给它开个口，然后再在石头上磨快就行了。沙石海滩上有很多，他们不用费心去找。

很快，只用了两个小时，钢片就磨好了。当装上结实的刀柄后，两把锋利的刀就做成了。

这是他们制作的首批工具，两把刀的成型让他们欢呼起来。这确实是他们辛劳后的成果。随后，他们又出发了，去了史密斯建议的格兰特湖西岸，来到了他们昨天注意到的陶土地，并捡了一些作为标本带回来。

随后，他们又沿着感恩河，从观望壁穿过，走了5英里多路来到了林间空地，此地离格兰特湖还有约200英尺。

在这里，赫伯特发现了一种树木。这种树属于棕榈科，又叫可留金芭树，虽然果实不能吃，但它的树枝，却是南美洲的印第安人做弓箭时必备的材料。

他们砍了一些又长又直的树枝，捋去树叶后，将它的两头削细。这样一来，他们只需再找一种适合做弦的柳条就行了。最后，他们又找到了一棵木槿树，这种树有结实的纤维，足以和动物的筋腱相比。

有了弓，只差箭了。箭杆很容易做，只需用硬且直，没有节的一些枝条就可以了。然而箭头用什么来做呢？铁的代用品是很难找到的，没办法，庞库那夫只能尽最大努力，碰机会寻找可以替代铁的东西了。

在为制砖做准备时，他们到了前一天发现陶土的地方。那里陶土遍地都是，用陶土制砖瓦非常合适，而且这项工作并不难，只需用沙子过滤净陶土中的杂质，做成砖头，花些时间烧就行了。

砖坯需要用模子压出来，可史密斯还是决定用手来做。

做这项工作，整整用去了他们两天的时间。具体做法是：把陶土浸在水里，调好，然后将它们分成一小块一小块。如果是熟练的工人，即使不用工具，12小时也可以做1万块左右。但林肯岛上的这五名制砖“工

人”，两天做了将近3000块。

在做好这一块块的砖后，他们又将其做成砖坯，并一块接一块地摆放在一起，等烧个三四天后，就可以用它们来砌炉子了。

4月2日，史密斯将海岛的方向测了出来，也就是说，他找出了日出的确切方位。

他在前一天先将太阳落到水平线下的时间精确地记录了下来，同时还考虑到了折射差。等到第二天早上，他又用同样的方法，记下了太阳升起的时间，最后就得出了日出到日落所需的时间——12小时24分。

由此得出结论：日出6小时20分后，这一天的太阳正好在天空的正北处，并通过子午线。

史密斯把这些结论全都记了下来，并找出了和太阳连成一条直线的两棵树，这两棵树也就帮助他确定了方位。在他一个人默默地将一切都做好后，他又找出了当地永恒的子午线。

在将炉子做好的两天前，他们就已经将林间空地上的树枝全部砍了下来，并捡回了所有掉在树下的枯枝，以此作为他们烧砖和生活所需的燃料。在收集燃料期间，因为有了弓箭，庞库那夫打猎也顺利了很多。而他能够得到箭头，也要归功于多卜。

多卜猎回了一头豪猪。这头豪猪的肉并不鲜美，但它身上的硬刺对他们来说却非常宝贵。于是，他们将这硬刺装在了箭头上，再加上一些有着美丽冠子的鹦鹉羽毛，漂亮的箭就做成了。

史佩莱和赫伯特学箭术很快，没多长时间就成了技术娴熟的神箭手。此后，“石窟”里便开始存储大量野味了，比如水豚、鸽子、刺鼠、

松鸡等等。这些野味大多是他们在感恩河左岸的森林里打来的。

由于庞库那夫和赫伯特第一次来这里时，曾追逐过一只啄木鸟，所以他们将这片森林命名为啄木鸟林。

这些野味他们大多选择新鲜着吃，但还有一些比如水豚腿之类的食物，他们会用清香的树叶裹上，用柴火反复熏烤，然后挂起来。等炉子和锅造好后，他们就能用熏烤好的水豚腿来熬汤了。

刚开始打猎的时候，他们并没有离开制砖厂多远。有一次，他们在打猎途中发现了一些大动物新近留下的足迹，脚爪非常有力。不过，他们认不出这属于哪一类野兽。

在得知森林里很可能有猛兽后，史密斯便提醒大家一定要小心谨慎。

他的提醒果然及时。有一天，史佩莱和赫伯特看见一只很像美洲豹的野兽。幸好那野兽没有扑过来，不然即使他们能够侥幸逃脱，也难免受重伤。

史佩莱下定决心，如果有了正式武器，比如庞库那夫要的枪，那么他一定会和这野兽较量，并把荒岛上的野兽全部消灭光。

在这些天的时间里，他们并没有去修整“石窟”，因为史密斯一直希望找到另一个更方便的住所，甚至他还想着要自己建一座住所。所以在“石窟”里，他们只是暂时性地在通道铺了一些地苔和枯叶，以便工作疲倦时休息，并没有做长远的打算。

在把林肯岛上居住的时间又算了一下后，他们开始每天记日志。

4月5日是个星期三，算下来，他们被风暴从气球上抛到这里已经有12天了。

4月6日，天刚破晓，史密斯和他的伙伴便开始在林间空地集合，他们要开始烧砖工作了。烧砖不在窑里，而是在露天下进行。

那些凝固的砖坯被他们砌成了一个大大的窑。他们把捆好的木柴放在地上，然后把晒干的砖坯一排排地围在木柴外面，很快就围成了一个正方形。在这正方形的外层，他们又开了几个通气孔。这工作他们整整做了一天，直到傍晚时，才开始在柴捆上点火。

这天晚上，为了不让火熄灭，每个人都没有睡觉，小心地照顾着。

整个烧砖工作持续了48个小时，结果不错，达到了他们的预期效果。随后，他们又将这些发烫的半成品冷却起来。在这期间，那普和庞库那夫也被史密斯带到了湖的北边，用一个树枝编的筐子，将那里的石灰石和一些普通石头运了回来，在经过一番加热后，将它们分解成了浓度很强的生石灰。

这些生石灰经过沸化后，体积有了很大膨胀，质地也纯粹了很多，和用白垩或碳酸钙烧成的完全一样。等到他们把石灰和细沙搅拌在一起后，也就成了上等的灰泥。

在做好这些准备工作后的4月9日，史密斯所需要的熟石灰和几千块砖头就全都有了。

他们马上着手砌窑，焙烧他们日常生活中绝不能缺的陶器。这个焙烧过程很顺利，五天后，窑里就烧起了煤。这煤也是史密斯在红河口一带发现的。当第一缕烟从20英尺的烟囱上升起来后，这块地方瞬间变成

了一个小作坊。庞库那夫甚至觉得任何现代化的工业品，都会从这个小作坊里做出来。

是的，看起来，这并不是天方夜谭。

在这土窑里，他们最先制造出烹调用的陶罐。由于主要原料是陶土，史密斯便在里面加了一些石灰和石英，使其混合成为正式的“管土”。随后，他们又找了一些石头做模子，用陶土做成饭碗和茶杯，另外还做了盛水的大壶等等。

虽然这些陶器看起来并不美观，甚至可以说丑陋笨重，但经过高温焙烧后，瞬间就不一样了。

“石窟”的厨房增添了很多厨房用品，这些谈不上精美的器皿在他们眼里和那上了釉的精美瓷器一样珍贵。

有必要说一下，庞库那夫为了知道这些陶土算不算得上是“管土”，甚至还做了几只大烟斗，结果让他非常满意。不过，令他有些遗憾的是没有烟叶，所以他有些懊恼，但却也抱着希望，不断地重复着：

“我就不信了，别的可以找到，烟草也是一定能找到的。”

烧制器皿的工作一直延续到4月15日。在这期间，他们没有浪费一点点时间。五位孤岛新移民瞬间全都变成了陶土匠，整天做着陶器。而是否要成为铁匠，也要等史密斯发出新指令，让他们做铁匠活时才行。

第二天是星期日，也是复活节，大家提议放一天假。

4月15日的晚上，制作好的陶器被他们运回了“石窟”，炉子也被暂时熄灭，以备需要时再用。

回家的时候，他们遇到了一件让他们值得庆幸的事，那就是史密斯发现了一种从多孔菌科的植物上取得的海绵状柔软菌肉。这些菌肉在经过适当加工后，再沾上一些火药，或在硝酸盐、氯化钾溶液中煮沸，就极其容易燃烧，所以这也成了火绒的最佳替代品。

之前，他们曾多次寻找，都没有找到一种可以代用的食用菌，也没有找到这种多孔菌。那天，当史密斯看到这些苦艾、薄荷和茵陈蒿等植物后，便采集好递给庞库那夫：“拿去吧，庞库那夫，这下你可高兴了。”

庞库那夫仔仔细细地看着，发现这种植物的叶子上布满了软毛，也有很多长须，便问：“这些是什么，史密斯先生？它们是烟草吗？”庞库那夫问。

“不，这是一种苦艾，学者们又把它叫作中国艾，我们可以用它替代火绒。”

具体做法是，当这种叫苦艾的植物干燥到一定程度后，将其放在硝酸盐溶液里浸透，便可以成为非常易燃的引火材料了。至于硝酸盐，岛上多得是它的原材料——硝石。

这天，因为有了陶罐，岛上新移民吃了一顿丰盛的晚餐：除了那普炖的刺鼠肉汤外，还有一只熏水豚腿。在这熏水豚腿中，那普还加上了一些他已经煮熟的“贝母属”块茎。

“贝母属”块茎属于一种草本植物，营养美味，吃起来很有英国面包的感觉。这也填补了他们没有面包吃的遗憾。

吃过晚饭后，史密斯和伙伴们相约去海滩散步。此时正是晚上八点

钟，海滩上的夜色非常美。由于是满月后的第五天，月亮还没有升起来。不过，水平线上已经有了一片柔和的银白色光芒。

这应该算是月亮的“曙光”了。南边的天顶上，周极星在闪闪发光，最明显的就是南十字座。

几天前，史密斯在富兰克林山上也曾看到过它。

面对这美丽的星座，史密斯看了很久，他发现这星座的上下两端各有一颗一等星，左边是一颗二等星，右边则是一颗三等星。

他想了好几分钟后，问赫伯特：“赫伯特，今天是不是4月15日？”

赫伯特说：“是的，史密斯先生。”

史密斯点了点头，缓缓地说：“在这一年当中，有四天的实际时间和平均时间完全相等。如果我没有记错的话，其中的一天是明天。可以说，孩子，在明天的十二点整，太阳会在几秒钟内经过子午线。明天的天气如果好的话，我们就能够大体推算出海岛的经度，即使有误差也相差不了几度。”

“不用六分仪也行吗？”史佩莱问。

“可以！而且今晚月色明亮，我现在就能算出南十字座的高度。由此可以根据水平线上的天极，将纬度算出来。你们要知道，朋友，在我们没有得到精确方位之前，是不可能完全肯定这是一片孤岛的，所以我们必须精确地知道这座岛和美洲、大洋洲或太平洋主要群岛的距离。”

“确实是这样的，如果我们离有人居住的海岸不到100英里，我们就可以造一只船。那时候造船可比造一所房子有用多了。”史佩莱说。

“因此，我必须在今晚算出林肯岛的纬度来，这样明天中午就能知道经度了。”

之后，史密斯回到了“石窟”。在火光下，他削了两把小平板尺，然后将两个小平板尺的一端连起来，做成了一副圆规。圆规的两只脚既能分开，又能合起。

连接板尺两端的是结实的橡胶树，是从柴堆里找来的，并用刺将它们钉在了一起。

仪器做好了，史密斯又重回海滩。然而，想要测出天极的高度，必须在没有云的水平线上测量，可如果要在海面上测量，那么南方的水平线又被兽爪角挡住了，所以他必须找到一个合适的测量点。

最理想的地方当然是正对南方的海岸，不过要在那里测量很费事，需要渡过感恩河。

最后，史密斯决定在观望壁上测量。当然，他首先考虑到了高地的海拔高度，所以打算第二天用几何学原理，把高地的高度求出来。就这样，林肯岛的居民们爬上了感恩河的左岸，站在了西北到东南沿海一带的高地边缘，那里有很多稀奇古怪的石头。

这一带的前方是感恩河左岸的山冈，山冈一直向兽爪角的尽头和荒岛南部倾斜。他们由此看过去时，初升的月亮照亮了南边的水平线，在天空的映衬下，水平线显得非常清晰。由于没有遮挡物，他们便将兽爪角到甩尾角的整个半圆形水平线看得一清二楚。

此时，在他们面前，南十字座出现了，十字架二也便倒置在了离南极较远的星座底部。

这个星座离南极比北极星离北极远，十字架二大约也在距南极 27° 的方位上，史密斯完全清楚这一点，所以计算时也将这个角度估算了进去。当十字架二经过正对南极的子午线时，他再观察，也就容易多了。

测量开始，史密斯把圆规的一只脚对着水平线，另一只脚对着十字架二，这样的话，两只圆规脚间的距离，也就形成了十字架二和水平线之间的角距。为了将所得角度固定下来，他用树木的刺将一根木条横钉在圆规的两只脚上。就这样，两者之间的角度也就适当地保留了下来。

当这些工作做完后，他要做的就是计算角度了。不过在做下一步工作之前，他必须将水平线的俯角考虑进去，所以必须再去海平面上观察，测量峭壁的高度。

当有了上述的角度后，他就能得出十字架二的高度了，并且能得出天极在水平线上的高度。因为地球上任何一个地方的纬度相当于当地天极在水平线上的高度，所以海岛的纬度也就出来了。

当天晚上的工作大体完成了，其他计算要等到第二天。夜里十点钟的时候，躺在“石窟”里的新移民在这个从陌生到熟悉的岛上睡熟了……

第十四章

4月16日是个星期日。这天正好是复活节，新移民们天刚一亮就从“石窟”里出来洗衣服了。

史密斯决定制造一些肥皂，在尽快找到小苏打或钾碱、脂肪或油料

后就开始行动。对于做新衣服，在此时也是一件很重要的事，但并非两三句话就能说清，所以他们想找个适当的时间地点再讨论。

他们身上穿的衣服质量不错，就是天天劳动磨损，也足以维持半年。目前他们急着观察海岛附近有没有住着人的陆地。如果今天天气好，他们很快就能知道了。

当水平线上升起太阳时，新移民知道，今天是个大晴天。

太阳带着美丽的光晕，在这秋日的早晨让他们感到了温暖。这是一个离别的季节，但这秋日太阳的出现，消除了他们的感伤。

他们要完成昨晚没有结束的观察：测量峭壁的海拔。

“不使用昨天晚上用的那种圆规行吗？”赫伯特问史密斯。

“可以的，孩子，现在我们要换一种测量方法，不过还是要像昨晚一样准确。”

赫伯特向来不放过任何一个学习的机会，所以他要跟着史密斯去海滨，庞库那夫和史佩莱及那普则留在了原地做其他事。

史密斯提前准备了一根笔直的木杆，对于自己的身高非常清楚的他，对比着自己的身高，算出了木杆的长度：12英尺。

赫伯特拿着的是史密斯交给他的，用柔韧的植物纤维做成的垂线，垂线的一头系着一块石头。当他们来到离海边约20英尺，离峭壁500英尺的地方时，史密斯将木杆小心地插进了两英尺深的沙地里，他要利用垂线让木杆和地面保持垂直。

做好准备工作，史密斯退后几步，趴在了沙滩上，这样他就能看到木杆的顶端和峭壁的上沿了。当他用小棍在观察点处仔细地做了记号后，便对赫伯特说：“几何学的基本原理你知道吗？”

“知道得很少，史密斯先生。”赫伯特很谦虚，不想在史密斯面前表现自己。

“相似的两个三角形需要具备什么条件知道吗？”

“知道！对应比成比例。”赫伯特说。

“不错，孩子！我刚刚做了两个相似的直角三角形，一个小一点，三边是垂直木杆和从这根棍子到木杆底部的距离，此时，我的视线就是三角形的斜边；稍稍大点的三角形，三边是垂直峭壁的高度。我们现在要测量的也就是这个高度。这根棍子到峭壁底部的距离，以及由我视线形成的三角形斜边，就是第一个三角形斜边的延长线。”

“我明白了，史密斯先生。”赫伯特大声说，“小棍子与木杆间的距离和小棍子与峭壁底部的距离比就是木杆高度与峭壁的高度比。”

“很好！赫伯特，我们现在已经知道了木杆的长度，如果再来量两段水平距离的话，那么根据比例一算就能得出峭壁的高度了，这样就省得我们直接去测量了。”

木杆在沙滩上的高度是10英尺，根据木杆的长度，他们测出了两段水平距离。

从小棍子到插木杆的地方，两者间相距15英尺；小棍子到峭壁底部的距离是500英尺。把这两段距离量完后，史密斯和赫伯特便回到了“石窟”。

史密斯拿出一块他第一次外出打猎时带回来的平板石，这块石头很像一块石板，可以用尖利的贝壳在上面写字。在这张平板石上，史密斯写下了下面几行数据：

$$15: 500 = 10: X$$

$$500 \times 10 = 5000$$

$$5000 \div 15 = 333.3$$

从这些比例中，他又得出了花岗石峭壁的高度：333英尺。

最后，史密斯拿出了前一天晚上用过的圆规，测出了十字架二和水平线之间的角距。在这中间，他将一个圆周分成了360个等分，并精确地将圆规角度落在圆周上，从而得出它们之间的角距为10°；而在这个角度上再加上十字架二距离南极的27°，再减去观察时所在的峭壁离海面高度的值，就得出了一个37°的角来。

此时，他们知道了南极与水平线间相距90°，在从90°里又减去53°后还剩下37°。由此，史密斯最终得出了测量结论：林肯岛位于南纬37°线。如果将计算时的误差计算在内的话，那么海岛位置就在南纬35°与40°之间。

如今，只要算出经度，他们就能确定海岛的位置了。史密斯决定在中午，太阳经过子午线时再进行测量。

这个星期日，他们还计划好了要去岛的上游，地点在湖的北边和鲨嘴湾之间。如果时间允许，他们还准备去下颚角的北部。并决定在沙丘上吃饭，晚上再回来。

将近八点钟的时候，一队人马沿着海峡边缘前行，对面的着陆岛上有许多飞鸟在悠闲地散步。这是一种潜水鸟，叫声听起来有些像驴子。庞库那夫看飞鸟，从来只看它们美味不美味。这些鸟肉有些黑，但他想，味道一定不错。

此外，他们还看到了一些两栖动物，这些两栖动物个头庞大，在沙地上慢慢地爬行着，他们很容易地认出这是些海豹。

海豹想必是要在小岛上安家，这样的动物并不能从吃的角度来考虑，因为它们不好吃，肉质粗糙又肥腻。

不过，史密斯还是非常仔细地看它们，他没有说出自己的想法，只是告诉大家，不久之后还要去一次小岛。

海滩上有着无数的贝壳散落在地，品种很多，如果被研究贝壳的专家看到，一定会欣喜若狂的。

贝壳让他们得到了实惠。退潮时，那普在位于“石窟”5英里左右的岩石丛里，发现了很多蛤蜊。

“这一天那普可没白过。”看着那一大片蛤蜊聚集地，庞库那夫说。

“能找到这么一大片，还真是好运。据说每只蛤蜊每年能产卵5到6万，按这个速度，我们以后永远不用愁吃不到它了。”史佩莱说。

“不过，蛤蜊没什么营养。”赫伯特说。

“是的，蛤蜊中的蛋白质很少。一个人要是每天只吃蛤蜊，必须吃上个十五六打才行。”史密斯说。

“那太好了！反正这些蛤蜊怎么吃都吃不完，我们就拼命吃。要不要带上一些当早饭？”庞库那夫说。

说完，不等大家回答，他就和那普去捡了，而且一捡就是一大堆。在将蛤蜊装在那普用木槿纤维做的网袋后，他们又将它和原来装着的食物放在一起，继续向沙丘和大海间的海滨走去。

史密斯不断地看表，接下来的工作是观察太阳，必须在正午进行。

孤岛的这部分很荒芜，除了夹杂着熔岩碎片的沙石和贝壳外，什么都没有。

这样的荒芜一直延续到了联合湾尽头的下颚角。这里虽然荒凉，但海岸也有一些海鸟常来，比如海鸥、信天翁和野鸭。庞库那夫对野鸭“情有独钟”，好多次想射几只下来，但由于野鸭很少停下来，不容易射中，所以也就没有成功。

庞库那夫又对史密斯说：“看看，史密斯先生，没有一两支猎枪，我打不到什么。”

“那是。庞库那夫，不过做猎枪还要靠你自己，你要先给我们找一些能做枪身的铁，还有一些做撞针用的钢，还要硝石、炭和硫黄做火药，还要用水银和硝酸做雷汞，用铅做子弹……这些东西都齐备的话，赛莱斯也就能给我们做出最新式的武器来了。”史佩莱说。

“嗯，是这样的。而且我可以肯定地说，在这岛上，完全能够找到这些东西。不过，做枪需要一些特殊工具才能做得精致，所以还是以后再说吧！”史密斯说。

“那为什么我们当初在吊篮里的时候，要把所有的武器、用具，甚

至刀扔出去呢？”庞库那夫大声说。

“如果不扔出去，庞库那夫，我们会随着气球沉入海底的。”赫伯特说。

“嗯，你说的是对的。孩子！”庞库那夫说完，又想起了其他的事，便问：“我想，那布撒泰和他的伙伴在第二天早上发现气球没了，一定会急死吧！”

“我可不管这些！”史佩莱说。

“这可都是我的主意！”庞库那夫洋洋得意起来。

“非常好的主意，庞库那夫！结果我们到了这里。”史佩莱笑了起来。

“我宁可在这里也不在南方人手里，特别是史密斯先生回到了我们中间。”庞库那夫大声说。

“和我想的一样，真的！所以我们还要什么呢？我们现在什么都不缺了。”史佩莱说。

“如果不是这样的地方……我们真不需要什么！再说了，我们总有一天会离开这里的。”庞库那夫耸了耸肩笑道。

“如果林肯岛和有人居住的岛或大陆间隔不远，那么朋友们，我们离开这里的时间会比我们想象的早。对于林肯岛的具体位置，一个小时内我们就会知道了。虽然我没有太平洋地图，但太平洋南部的地理位置却一直在我脑海里的。根据我测出的纬度，林肯岛的西边是新西兰，东边是智利海岸。不过，这两个国家之间至少相距6000英里。所以，这个

岛在这片海洋中的哪一点上，很快就能从经度上知道了，而且会知道得非常清楚。”

“同一纬度上，帕劳群岛是不是离我们很近？”赫伯特问。

“对！但怎么也有1200英里。”史密斯说。

“那边都有些什么？”那普指着南方问。对别人的谈话，他也表现出了极大的兴趣。

“什么也没有。”庞库那夫抢先说。

“是的，什么都没有。”史密斯进一步说。

“赛莱斯，林肯岛要是距离新西兰或智利不到两三千英里的话，我们该怎么办？”

“那就不盖房子，由庞库那夫指挥我们造船……”

“太好了！太好了！我一直想当船长，就等你制造一个能远航的船了！”

“需要的话，我们可以造一只。”史密斯回答说。

这群荒岛移民一边悠闲地聊着天，一边等待观测时间的到来。赫伯特依然没搞明白史密斯在没有任何仪器的情况下，怎么确定太阳通过海岛子午线。

此时，他们从“石窟”出发，走了6英里多路程了，离史密斯神秘得救的地方——沙丘也不远了。他们停了下来。

已经是中午十一点半了，他们决定在这里吃中饭。赫伯特朝不远处的小河跑去，用那普所带的瓶子装回了一些淡水。

在准备吃饭的间隙，史密斯安排好了一切，准备对天文进行观测。他在一个落潮后地面平整的海滨处选了一个地方，这里的细沙平滑如冰面，所有的沙子都摆放得很整齐，像是经过了精心设计。

地面是不是水平，对他来说无关紧要。那6英尺高的标杆插在地上，是不是和地面垂直也不重要。相反，史密斯还要将它歪向南边，背对太阳。他只需牢记一点，海岛在南半球，所以林肯岛上的人所看太阳运行的弧线不在南水平线上，而在北边。

赫伯特终于明白了史密斯要如何确定太阳经过海岛子午线的方位了。所谓海岛子午线的方位，其实就是当地的正南方。史密斯在没有仪器的情况下，只需测量标杆在沙地上的投影就能求得他所需要的结果了。

按理说，当影子长度缩到最短时，正是中午十二点的时候，只要仔细看影子末端，就能找出影子缩短后和伸长间的距离。

当史密斯将标杆偏向与太阳相对的方向时，影子就变长了，这样它的变化也就更容易看清了。也就是说，日晷时针越长，针点移动就越容易辨认，而标杆的影子就是日晷上的指针。

测量的时间到了，史密斯跪在地上，标杆的影子在逐渐缩小，随着影子的变化，他在上面打上了小木桩做标记。其他人带着好奇，也弯腰看他测量。史佩莱拿着表，随时报告影子缩到最小时的时间。

有一点要说明一下，史密斯观测的这天正好是4月16日，也就是

说，是和平均时间相同的。因而史佩莱表上的时间，也是华盛顿的真实时间，这样算起来就容易很多。

此时，随着太阳的移动，影子慢慢缩短，当史密斯看到影子开始加长时，他问：“现在是什么时候？”

“五点过一分。”史佩莱马上回答。

现在只需把结果算出来就行了。华盛顿和林肯岛相差五小时，由此也可以说，林肯岛中午时，华盛顿是傍晚五点钟。当太阳绕地球每过 1° 时需要四分钟，也就是说，移动 15° 可用一个小时。这样用 $15^\circ \times 5 \text{小时} = 75^\circ$ 。

华盛顿的经度为 $77^\circ 3' 11''$ ，由此可以推算出：海岛在西经 152° 的地方，也就是格林尼治子午线以西 77° 加 75° 。

当史密斯向大家公布这个结果时，也向大家表明，这和计算纬度一样，同样存在着误差。不过，刨去误差，他能肯定的是林肯岛的位置在纬度 35° 到 40° 之间，经度在格林尼治子午线以西 150° 到 155° 之间。

从以上数据就能看出，他所估算的可能误差在 5° 上下，如果 1° 合60英里，那么在实际位置上， 5° 的误差也就是300英里。当然，这个误差是不会影响他们所要知道的推断的，由此也可以看出，林肯岛距离每一个国家和岛屿都很远，如果想要乘船去那些地方，即使船够大够好，也是非常危险的。

这个结果也让他们知道，林肯岛离泰地岛和帕劳群岛至少有1200英里的距离；离新西兰则至少有1800多英里；距美国西海岸更是有4500多英里。

史密斯努力地回忆着，他实在想不起，太平洋还有哪个岛屿能与林肯岛靠近。

第十五章

又是一天过去了，4月17日，庞库那夫第一句话就问史佩莱：“先生，我们今天做什么呢？”

“赛莱斯先生让做什么就做什么。”史佩莱说。

前一段时间，史密斯带着大家先是做制砖工人，接着又做陶器工人，如今，他们很快又要成为冶金工人了。

头天吃过早饭，他们一行人离开“石窟”，去了7英里之外的颞角，那里是连绵不绝的沙丘尽头，没有观望壁那种悬崖峭壁，有的只是火山喷发出的一些奇形怪状的矿物质，这些矿物质又在两个海角间形成了狭长的海湾。

来到这里后，他们便没再继续往前走了，而是折转身往回走。在暮色苍茫时，他们回到了“石窟”。不过，由于是否能够离开林肯岛，他们还没有特别肯定的答案，所以怎么都睡不着。

1200英里，这是海岛和帕劳群岛之间的距离，非常遥远，一只小船是绝对无法渡过的。更主要的是，寒冷的季节马上就要来临了。

对于这些困难，庞库那夫强调了很多次，造船不是那么容易的事，

何况他们还没有必要的工具。要想造船，必须先做造船用的工具：锤、斧、镑、锯、钻、刨等等。光做这些工具他们就需要花费很长时间。

因此，这也决定了他们必定要在林肯岛上过冬。而要在林肯岛上过冬，寻找一个比“石窟”还能避寒的地方也就提上了议事日程。

然而最终，他们决定先炼铁，要想炼铁，就必须寻找适合炼铁的铁矿。

史密斯曾在海岛的西北部发现过这种矿物质。但在通常情况下，藏在地里的金属质地并不纯，经常和氧或硫化化合物混在一起。

史密斯曾带回来过两种标本，一种是没有经过碳化的磁铁矿；另一种则是黄铁矿，也就是硫化铁。所以他们必须先除氧，也就是用炭使氧化铁还原，以便得到纯粹的铁。

氧化铁还原需要用炭将矿石烧到一定温度后才能进行，这个过程可以使用土方法，既简便又迅速，而且只需一道工序就能将铁矿石炼成铁。还有一种方法就是用鼓风炉，需要分两步走，第一步先让铁矿石熔化，第二步再将百分之三或百分之四的炭从矿石化合物中排除，以便让其变成铁。

史密斯刚刚捡来的这些氧化铁，只是不规则的深灰色大块，从这些深灰色大块中，他们可以得到一种由八面结晶体形成的黑色粉末。

这种矿石通常存在于天然磁石里，产自瑞典和挪威。离这个矿脉不远之处就是煤层了，林肯岛的新移民也早已经利用过这些煤做燃料了。由于炼铁原料就在手边，给他们的工作带来了极大的便利。英国的矿藏之所以丰富，就是因为是在开采出煤的时候，还能开采出金属用以冶炼。

“史密斯先生，这是不是说，我们可以炼铁了？”庞库那夫问。

“是的，为了炼铁，我们首先要去做你最喜欢做的事，去着陆岛上打海豹。”史密斯说。

“打海豹？炼铁需要海豹？”庞库那夫有些莫名其妙，转头问史佩莱。

“赛莱斯既然已经这么说了，肯定错不了！”史佩莱说。

史密斯已经从“石窟”离开了，其他人又无法解答这个问题，庞库那夫只好接受任务，准备打海豹。

史密斯、赫伯特、史佩莱、那普和庞库那夫很快就在岸边集合了。此时正值退潮，海峡形成了一道浅滩便于他们通行。他们涉水而过，水还没有淹过膝盖。

这是史密斯第一次来到着陆岛，而其他人则是第二次了。当初，他们就是被气球扔在这个地方的。

在他们登上这座着陆岛时，有几百只企鹅看着他们，并没有表现出丝毫的害怕。孤岛新移民拿着棍子，虽然不费吹灰之力就能将它们打死，但一行人却并没有动，因为企鹅不是他们的目标，所以他们不想无端地将其杀害。当然，更重要的一点是，他们不能惊动那只躺在几锚链之外的沙滩上的海豹。

着陆岛上还有一只鸟，样子非常老实，翅膀已退化成像鳍一样在两边张开的短肢，浑身的羽毛也像鳞片一样。在这些鸟聚集的地面上，到处都是洞，连海鸟也在洞里做了窝。居民们也没想着要去伤害这些鸟，便悄悄地穿过此地向北走去。在着陆岛尽头的水面上，露出像岩石一样

移动的黑色脑袋。

这就是他们想要猎捕的海豹，不过要想捉住它，就必须等它上岸。因为这种长着细密短毛和肥壮身体的动物在水里游得很快，想要在水里捉住它们简直是不可能的事。不过当它们在陆地上时却很笨拙，由于蹼足短小，只能在陆地上摇摆着缓慢行走，捉起来就方便多了。

这种动物的习性庞库那夫非常熟悉，于是他告诉大家，海豹经常会到海滩上晒太阳，晒着晒着就会睡着，所以要捉它们，等它们睡熟时最好。

猎人们都躲在了岩石后，静静地等待海豹在海滩上出现。

一个小时后，有好几只海豹来到了海滩上玩耍。庞库那夫和赫伯特绕过着陆岛的海角，堵住了它们的退路，然后从后面向它们进攻。此时，史密斯、史佩莱和那普也从石头后边爬了出来，向即将展开战斗的战场跑去。

高大健壮的庞库那夫大吼一声，冲了出去，史密斯和其他两个人也跑过去挡住了海豹下水的道路。只一会儿工夫，两只海豹便死在了他们的棒下。不过，其他几只还是逃回到了海里。

“史密斯先生，这就是你要的海豹，到手了！”庞库那夫一面说，一面向史密斯走去。

“太好了！这样我们就可以做风箱了。”史密斯说。

“做风箱？”庞库那夫大惊，“用它们做风箱？看来这些海豹的运气不错！”

原来，史密斯是要用这种两栖动物的皮做鼓风机，这是冶炼时不可缺少的工具。被他们捉住的海豹身长不到6英尺，大小一般，头很像狗的脑袋。

虽然海豹不是很大，但要将这两只抬回去，还是需要费些力气和时间的。因此，那普和庞库那夫决定就地剥它们的皮。而在这期间，史密斯和史佩莱也决定去巡视着陆岛。

水手庞库那夫和黑人那普的剥皮技术不错，三个小时后，两张海豹皮便摆在了史密斯的面前，史密斯甚至都不需要进行鞣制便能直接使用。

在潮水再次退去的时候，几个人涉过海峡，回到了“石窟”。

回去后，他们把海豹皮绷在了木架上，然后用纤维将其缝合起来，并尽可能地不让它漏气。此时，史密斯手里除了用多卜的套环做的两把钢刀外，并没有其他工具。不过在他发挥了同伙的智慧后，便有了其他办法。

三天后，他们的工具仓库里增添了鼓风机。这样在矿石加热的时候，便能用鼓风机给矿石送风了，这是冶炼工作中最重要的一环。

正如记者史佩莱所记载，4月20日的清晨，孤岛新移民进入到了他们的“金属时代”。

之前已经说过，史密斯准备在邻近煤矿和铁矿的地方进行冶炼工作，他在经过一番考察后，得出了矿脉在富兰克林山东北支脉山里的结论。而那里离“石窟”有6英里左右，在那里工作还要每天往返“石窟”，根本不太现实。

因此，他们决定在富兰克林山用树枝搭一个简易棚子暂时居住，这样就能不分昼夜地工作了。

在有了这个决定后的清晨，他们便准备出发了。出发前，那普和庞库那夫找了个筐子，将风箱放在上面，同时还放入了一些植物和兽肉。除了所带的食物之外，他们决定沿途再找一些能吃的东西。

在走向富兰克林山时，他们需要经过一片啄木鸟林，进入啄木鸟林要从东南方向进入，经过树木最密集的地方，然后从西北方向斜穿出去。

走路过程中，他们没有忘记重新开辟一条路，以便让这条路和观望壁及富兰克林山联系起来。

这条路上有很多品种繁多且熟悉的美丽植物。这些新品种都是赫伯特发现的，其中有庞库那夫命名的“假韭菜”。这些“假韭菜”比真正的韭菜大了很多，而且它们和洋葱、冬葱、芦笋一样，属于百合科。它们的叶子不仅能吃，而且根也能做菜。同时，这些根在经过了发酵后，还可以制成可口的饮料。因此，在前行的过程中，他们也没忘记收集这些树根。

他们用了整整一天的时间通过森林。不过在穿越森林的时候，也知道了森林里的很多动植物。

多卜在森林里专门搜寻兽类，它不断地穿行在林间，将隐藏在里面的动物一个个赶出来。赫伯特和史佩莱还用弓箭射死了两只袋鼠以及一只既像刺猬又像食蚁兽的动物。

这种动物在缩成团时，浑身的刺会倒竖起来，很像刺猬，但也有些

类似于食蚁兽。它们长着利爪，嘴巴像鸟嘴一样，又细又长。它们有着伸缩灵活的舌头，舌头上长着很多小刺，这舌头正是它们捕食昆虫的利器。

“在它下了锅后，又会像什么呢？”庞库那夫问了句很有意思的话。

“像美味的牛肉。”赫伯特说。

“不错了，我们不能要求太高。”庞库那夫说。

在行进过程中，他们还看到了几头野猪，这些野猪对他们视若无睹，既不躲，也不冲过来。

在一行人觉得不再会遇到什么野兽时，史佩莱隐隐看见几步之外的浓密树林里，有只野兽伏在一棵树的低枝下。史佩莱开始以为那是一只无尾熊，也就是“懒兽”。

这种动物的体形和大型狗比较相像。不过身上却长着很硬的毛，也有锋利的爪子。这种动物能够非常灵巧地攀爬树木，平时也以吃树叶为生。

在他们认出这种动物后，并没有打算去打它。不过史佩莱在笔记本上记载时，却将原来的“熊”字抹去，换成了“无尾熊”，随后又继续前行了。

晚上五点钟的时候，史密斯下令休息，此时他们已经穿过了森林，来到了富兰克林山东部的主要支脉下。几百英尺以外有红河的水流过，所以他们能获取大量的淡水。

只用了一个小时，他们就将营地安扎好了，是在森林边缘的树木之

间，用爬藤和树枝编织而成的营棚。在用爬藤和树枝扎营棚时，他们还在周围抹上了一层泥土。这样，一个不错的住处就有了。

孤岛新移民开始准备他们的晚饭，并在营棚前烧了一堆熊熊烈火，将肉放在火焰上烤。晚饭结束时已经八点钟了，他们留了一个人值班，其他人躺下休息。之所以留人守着，除了不让篝火熄灭外，还为了预防野兽潜入营地。

第二天是4月21日，史密斯和赫伯特一起去寻找古代生成的土层。上次他们去的时候，已经从那种土层中发现了铁矿石和标本。最后，他们又在东北部的一个支脉下发现了一个矿脉，那里接近红河发源地，且矿石都是暴露在地面上的。

此种矿石特别容易熔化，含铁量也很高，很适合史密斯用以还原炼铁。这是炼铁土法，也是塔卢尼亚人常用的，最后又被科西嘉人将其简化使用并传了出去。

用这种方法炼铁需要砌个熔炉，还要制造几个坩埚，以便把矿石和炭一层层地放在坩埚里，最后让它发生变化并还原。不过，史密斯并没有打算用这些设备。他只是想把矿石和煤做成一个立方体，然后用风箱把空气鼓入立方体中。

很明显，这是世界上最早的冶金学家土八该隐 曾采用过的方法。既然亚当的后人用这种方法冶金成功，那么林肯岛上的他们一样会成功。

因此，他们很快就捡了炭和铁矿石，并将铁矿石打碎，将上面的杂质擦干净，最后把炭和铁矿石一层又一层地叠加起来，就像木炭工人烧木炭一样。最后，在鼓风机的作用下，炭先是变成了碳酸，最后变成氧

化碳，而在这个变化过程中，又能使氧化铁还原，放出氧气。

史密斯这样进行他的工作之前，先在窑里制造了陶土管子，将其装在海豹皮风箱的一端，风箱装在了矿石堆的附近。

鼓风机是史密斯用一个木架、一些植物纤维做成的绳子，以及一个秤锤做成的。当鼓风机把大量的空气吹进立方体后，温度便提高了。空气使立方体里面发生了化学变化，经过一段时间，纯铁也就冶炼出来了。

工作量大，任务艰巨，想要做好这件事，必须依靠大家的耐心和智慧。最后，他们成功地炼出了一块和海绵差不多的生铁。不过，这块生铁还要加以锤炼才能使用。也就是说，想要打铁，必须把熔解后的杂质排出去。

当然，这些“铁匠”是没有任何工具的业余“铁匠”，他们的条件比最早时期的冶金工人还差。不过，他们依然像前辈一样，认认真真地干了起来。

他们给生铁装上了木柄，做成了锤子，随后又将花岗石当砧子，打起铁来。经过几天时间，到了4月25日这天，他们终于打出了铁条，虽然只有几根，但他们还是用这些铁条做成了铁橇、钳子、鹤嘴锄以及铲子等工具。

当庞库那夫和那普拿着这些工具时，高兴得像捡了宝贝。

当然，这些金属并没有达到完美的状态，也没有成为他们需要的钢，还只是钢和炭的混合物。想要得到钢，必须将生铁中多余的炭除去，或者要在熟铁里加入一定数量的炭才行。

用第一种方法，他们可以做出天然钢或铸钢；用第二种方法，则可以抽出泡钢。

史密斯决定采用第二种方法炼钢，因为这种方法炼出的钢非常纯。为了更好地进行这项工作，他又用陶土做了一个坩埚，并将铁和炭末放在坩埚里加热，最终，钢炼成了。

刚刚制成的钢，不管是在冷还是热时，都能随意加工。史密斯也就是在此时，在那普和庞库那夫的协助下，把钢烧红后，浸在水里，最后制成了硬度很好的斧头。

许多工具都是采用这种方法制成的，比如，刨刀和砍柴的斧子等。当然，制作短斧他们用的是钢板，做锯和凿子用的是钢块。

这些工具虽然粗糙，却也是他们以后工作中不可或缺的。

5月5日，林肯岛上新移民的“金属时期”结束，“铁匠们”重回“石窟”。不过，很快他们就有了新的工作，新的头衔，而林肯岛新移民也已变成了林肯岛的居民。

第十六章

5月6日，这天也是北半球的11月6日。

这些天的孤岛都阴沉沉的，大家开始为过冬做准备。不过，目前的气温并不是很低，如果用一只摄氏寒暑表在林肯岛测量的话，平均温度

应该在10℃到12℃左右。不过这并不让他们惊奇，因为林肯岛处在南纬35°到40°之间，气候和北半球的西西里岛及希腊一样。

尽管如此，严寒的冬季也还是会降临西西里岛和希腊，所以如果是在最冷的冬季，林肯岛也会被封冻，因而必须预先做好准备。当然，就算是严寒还没有威胁过来，雨季也快到了。

这座孤岛处在大洋中，孤零零的，任凭风霜雪雨侵袭，因此变天和发生严重灾害是常有的事。所以，他们眼前的首要问题就是怎么立刻寻找到一个比“石窟”更安全的住所。

虽然，庞库那夫对自己寻找的“石窟”钟爱有加，可他也知道，他们必须要找另一个住所了。因为海水曾侵袭过“石窟”，这情况大家也都知道，如果再发生这样的事，局面就很难收拾了。

“我们必须准备一些防御设备。”史密斯有一天对他的伙伴们说。

“防御什么？岛上又没有其他人。”史佩莱有些不解。

“到底有没有人，还不好说，因为我们没有观察过内陆。再说了，即使没有人，猛兽肯定也是有的，所以我们必须对可能遇到的危害有所防备。这样我们就不需要每天生火守夜了。还有，朋友们，我们的眼光应该放得长远一点，因为我们所处的地带，很可能是海盗出没的地方……”

“什么，海盗出没？我们离陆地那么远，海盗也会来吗？”赫伯特有些不相信。

“这是很有可能的，孩子。”史密斯耐心地对他说，“海盗既是勇敢的水手，又是可怕的敌人，所以我们必须采取一些防御措施。”

“好主意！不管有两条腿的人出现还是四条腿的野兽出现，我们都要提防。不过史密斯先生，我们是否应该把海岛再搜查一番，然后再决定是否行动，这是不是更好一点呢？”庞库那夫说。

“是的，再好也没有了！”史佩莱附和完，又加了一句，“可我们在这里都找过了，根本就没有找到一个山洞，也许山的那边有，谁知道呢？”

“是这样的。朋友们！”史密斯说，“你们可能忘了，我们现在需要的是寻找靠水的地方，根据我们在富兰克林山顶端看到的情况，西边既没有小溪，也没有河流。我们这里正处在感恩河与格兰特湖之间，这种优越是在其他地方看不到的。同时，风从西北边吹来时，我们会因为背向南方而不会像其他地方一样迎着风，所以这个地方才是最佳选择。”

“这么说，我们还是在湖边造一座房子吧，那里砖头和工具都有，而且我们做过制砖工人、陶器工人、冶金工人……再做瓦工肯定也是举手之劳。”庞库那夫说。

“确实是这样。不过我们在做任何决定的时候，先要经过全面考虑。如果我们能找到一个天然住所的话，不仅安全，而且还会省掉很多工作。更何况这种天然住所既能防御岛上的敌人，又能防御岛外来的敌人。”史密斯说。

“说得没错，赛莱斯。”史佩莱说，“不过我们把整个花岗石壁都找遍了，连一个窟窿、一条裂缝都看不到！”

“就是，什么都没有。”庞库那夫有些沮丧，叹口气又说：“如果能在一个高高的峭壁上凿出一个什么危险也危及不到的住所就好了，最好

能有五六间房，还能面朝大海……”

“还要窗明几亮！”赫伯特笑着加了一句。

“还有能上能下的楼梯！”那普补充道。

“很好笑吗？”庞库那夫大声说，“难道我说的咱们办不到吗？我们不是有鹤嘴锄和铲子吗？史密斯先生不是还会给我们做火药吗？用火药难道不能炸个山洞吗？史密斯先生，你是说过什么时候我们需要火药，就会给我们马上做的对吗？”

庞库那夫在那里发挥他丰富想象力的时候，史密斯始终在一旁静静地听着，心里想着庞库那夫的话。想要将花岗石炸开，就是有炸药也不容易。如果大自然不能帮他们解决住所问题，这将是件非常麻烦的事。所以他没有回答庞库那夫，而是建议大家再到河口和北部峭壁尽头仔细寻找一番。

就这样，大家又在两英里周围进行了仔细检查。不过，陡峭的峭壁上非常光滑，根本找不到一个洞穴。他们只看到峭壁上空有很多野鸽在盘旋。原来，在山峰顶上，花岗石边缘的一些小孔就是它们的窝。

这陡峭的山峰让他们很是为难，因为不管是用鹤嘴锄还是炸药，想要在峭壁上凿出一个山洞来住人，都是一件可算得上痴心妄想的事。所以他们现在面临的问题是：他们要放弃庞库那夫找到的那个“石窟”，但放弃“石窟”，海岸上又没有其他可以藏身之处。

林肯岛的居民们在搜寻了一番后，终于来到了峭壁的终点——北边拐角。再往过去走就要经过很长一段斜坡，然后才是和海岸平行的沙地。

从北边拐角到西边尽头，全是些由岩石、泥土和沙粒形成的斜坡路，斜坡倾斜度为45°，上面点缀着很多草木，树木一丛丛地生长着，野草厚得像毛毯。不过再往过去走不远却看不见植物了，那里是一片开阔的沙地。这片沙地形成的平原从斜坡的尽头开始，一直到海滨。

史密斯觉得湖水漫出来必定会流向此处，他的这种看法并不是没有根据的。因为从红河里流出的水有很多，必定需要一个河流作为出口。不过，虽然他已经搜索了很久，但从观望壁到河口，始终没有找到那个出口。

史密斯建议大家去爬斜坡，从观望壁那里回“石窟”。这样的话，他们就可以沿途观察湖的东岸和北岸了。他的建议得到了大家的支持，几分钟后，跑得最快的赫伯特和那普上了高地，随即，史密斯、史佩莱和庞库那夫也跟了上去。

此时正是海岛最美的时候，太阳照耀下的湖面发着耀眼的光，光线穿过树木，使整片树林都笼罩在光环之下。

海岛居民们贪婪地看着这片树林，看着老树上的枝丫因为黝黑而在一片绿树中显得格格外不同。有着美丽羽冠的鹦鹉站在枝头尖声大叫，美艳绝伦。它们如旋转着的万花筒，不断地在树木中来回跳跃。

他们没有立刻去湖的北岸，而是绕开高地，从河的左边向河口方向走去，这一段弯弯曲曲的道路差不多有一英里半。不过由于树木稀疏，树木之间间隔着很宽的距离，所以走起来并不十分困难。

这是一块肥沃的土地，走过这片树木茂盛的树林，红河和感恩河之间的草木就没有这么茂盛了。

史密斯和他的伙伴们开始小心翼翼起来，他们携带的武器只有弓箭和带着铁尖的棍子，还好并没有野兽出现，也许它们经常出没的是南部密林。不过突然，走在最前面的多卜看到了一条蟒蛇。这让他们大吃一惊。这是一条长约十四五英尺的蛇，不过很快就被那普用棍子打死了。

史密斯在仔细看了这条蛇后，告诉大家不要害怕，它没有毒，只是一条衲脊蛇，是新南威尔士的土人经常饲养的蛇。不过，这里很可能还会有其他能使人致命的毒蛇，比如叉尾的蝰蛇，它们经常会突然笔直地竖起来。抑或是飞蛇，它们不仅长着一对耳朵，而且爬得很快。

多卜刚才受到那条大衲脊蛇的惊吓，很快又去追另一只爬行动物了。由于它跑得很急促，大家都为它捏了一把汗，史密斯急忙将它唤了回来。

又走了一会儿，他们便来到了红河流入格兰特湖的地方。这里他们曾经来过，当时他们从对岸的富兰克林山上下来后来到了这里。

史密斯觉得红河流进格兰特湖的水量非常可观，所以大自然一定会给它很多出口，这些出口无疑也会形成瀑布。如果能够找到出口，对他们将非常有利。

居民们相互间拉开距离往前走，却也不让相互间失去联系。他们先是绕着湖岸走，看到很深的湖面下到处都是游鱼。庞库那夫想做几根钓鱼竿，钓几条鱼。

他们从东北角绕了过去，觉得湖水应该是从这里流出的，因为这里的湖岸几乎和高地的边缘一样高。不过寻找了一番还是没有看到排水的痕迹。

居民们继续沿岸搜索，再又拐了一个小弯后，看到湖岸低了下去，并和海岸保持着平行。这边的森林比那边稀疏，可那一丛一簇的树木却让周围的风景愈发地美丽。而从这里，他们也能看到格兰特湖的全景，湖面平静如镜，没有丝毫的波纹。

多卜在灌木丛里四处乱窜，将丛林中的各种飞鸟赶了出来。史佩莱和赫伯特向这些鸟射了几箭，赫伯特射出的一箭正好射中了一只飞鸟，飞鸟掉在了地上。多卜跑去将飞鸟衔了回来。

这是一只美丽的水鸟，浑身青灰，嘴巴很短，前额却很宽，脚爪有蹼，像花边一样。这种鸟的翅膀周围有一道白线镶嵌其中，大小和较大的鸕鶿差不多，名字叫“黑鸭”。

黑鸭是介于涉水鸟和蹼足鸟之间的长着趾的水禽。这种鸟的味道和角雉无法相提并论，口感非常差。不过多卜并没有像人类那么挑剔，所以大家决定将这只黑鸭赏给多卜，留给它当晚饭。

他们继续沿着湖东岸向前走，很快又到了他们曾去过的一个地方。不过，史密斯却怎么也找不到湖水流出的迹象，这让他非常诧异。即使是在和史佩莱和庞库那夫说话，他都掩饰不住内心的惊讶。

一直很安静的多卜突然焦躁起来，这个机灵的动物开始在岸边来回奔跑。猛地，它停了下来，并定定地看着湖面。随即，它举起爪子，指着一个其他人都看不见的东西狂吠起来，很快就又安静下来。

此时，史密斯和其他人并没有注意到多卜的异样，当它叫得愈来愈厉害的时候，才引起了史密斯的注意。

“多卜这是怎么了？”他问。

多卜冲他跑了过来，神态更加不安。随后它又向岸边冲去，并猛地跳进了湖里。

“多卜，快回来！”史密斯大声喊，他怕多卜遇到危险。

“发生什么事了？”庞库那夫望着湖面问。

“可能是闻到什么两栖动物之类的了吧！”赫伯特回答。

“可能是只鳄鱼。”史佩莱说。

“我觉得不是，有鳄鱼的地方纬度都比较低。”史密斯说。

这时候，多卜已经被它的主人喊了回来，但它回到岸上后却并没有安静下来。受直觉支配的它伏在了深草丛中，双眼紧紧地盯着水里。此时的湖面很平静，一点涟漪都没有。大家几次停在岸边，注视湖面却什么都看不见。

水里到底隐藏着什么呢？

史密斯有些茫然。

“我们继续我们的探测吧！”他说。

又行走了大约半个小时，他们已经相聚在了湖的东南角了。直到此地，他们的湖岸搜索才结束。不过史密斯还是没能找到湖水流出的地方。

“这样的出口一定存在，虽然我们看不见，但湖水一定是从西边的花岗石壁流出的。”史密斯说。

“亲爱的赛莱斯，知道从什么地方流出有用处吗？”史佩莱问。

“有非常重要的用处。”史密斯严肃地说，“如果水是从峭壁里流出来的，那么峭壁里肯定有洞。如果能把洞里的水排出，我们就能住在里面了。”

“不过史密斯先生，难道湖水不能从湖底流出，然后经过地道流入大海吗？”赫伯特问。

“当然有这个可能。不过，如果真是这样，那大自然就没有给我们住所，我们必须自己盖房子了。”史密斯说。

在他们准备穿过高地直接回“石窟”时，多卜却越发地狂躁起来。它愤怒地叫着，没等史密斯阻止，就又跳进了湖里。

大家一起向岸边跑去。这时，多卜已经游到20英尺外的地方了。史密斯在叫它的时候，突然看到水里露出了一只大脑袋，那里的水看起来似乎并不深。

这是一只有着圆锥形脑袋的两栖动物，长着一双大眼睛，嘴边有柔软的长须。赫伯特看到它，马上知道它是什么了，他大声喊着：

“海牛，这是海牛！”

其实它并不是海牛，而是儒艮，鲸类的一种。它的鼻孔是长在鼻子的上部的。当这只巨大的动物向多卜扑过来的时候，多卜也吓了一跳，急忙往岸上逃。此时，它的主人们却没办法救它。

突如其来的情况让史佩莱和赫伯特也没有想起用弓箭。儒艮一下子抓住了多卜，并将它拖到水底下。

拿着铁头标枪的那普想去救多卜，但被史密斯拦住了。

“不行，那普。”他说。

此时，水里正在展开一场不可思议的搏斗。以多卜目前的处境来说，它是难以招架的。岸上的居民们只看到水面上白浪翻滚，看不到战斗的双方。

他们清楚地知道，这是一场可怕的搏斗。看来，多卜是注定要死了。不过，突然，多卜从另一处漩涡里又钻了出来。不知是从哪里来的一股力量，竟然将它抛到了离水面十英尺之外的空中，随即多卜又掉到了动荡的湖水里。不过没多久，它就游上岸来。更让人吃惊的是，它不仅轻易地脱了险，而且身上没有受到重伤。

这到底是怎么一回事？史密斯和其他人都很不解。不过更让他们诧异的是，水里面的搏斗仿佛并没有停止。

也许儒艮遇到了更凶狠的猛兽的进攻，所以才放了多卜而自卫吧。

湖里的搏斗进行了很久，鲜血染红了湖面。慢慢地，儒艮在一片血红的湖水里浮了上来，很快就在一片沙滩上搁浅了。居民们急忙跑了过去，发现儒艮已经死了，而湖水也已经被血水染红了。

这是一只长达15到16英尺，重三四千磅的巨大动物，它的颈部有伤口，貌似是用尖刀割破的。

湖底到底有着什么样的两栖动物，在进行了一场骇人的袭击后，又把凶猛的儒艮咬死了呢？没有人能说得明白。史密斯和他的伙伴们抱着对这件事的莫大兴趣回到了“石窟”。

第十七章

5月7日，林肯岛的居民们进行了分工，史密斯和史佩莱去了观望壁；赫伯特和庞库那夫出发去河的上游捡木柴；那普一个人留在“石窟”为大家准备早饭。

史密斯和史佩莱很快就来到了湖的南岸上儒艮搁浅的小沙滩。

此时，一群飞鸟正在啄食它的肉，史密斯想把儒艮的肉给大家吃，便用石头赶走了飞鸟。这是一种味道绝佳的肉，在马来群岛和其他一些地方，称得上是王孙贵族们能吃到的特供菜。不过，这种肉还要那普动手做才行。

在赶走飞鸟的时候，史密斯又对昨天发生的事产生了兴趣，他又有了新的念头，那就是要揭开昨天那场水底搏斗之谜。他想知道到底是什么样的动物，让儒艮致死的。

于是，他在湖边久久地站着，看了很长时间，但什么都没发现，湖面在阳光的照射下闪闪发光。

在靠近儒艮搁浅的沙滩那边，湖水比较浅，不过也从那里开始，湖底明显倾斜下去，由此可见，湖的中央一定很深。整个湖面很可能是一个巨大的盆地，而那湖水正来自红河。也就是说，是红河的水将这里灌满，变成了湖泊。

“赛莱斯，好像水底下并没有什么可疑的东西。”史佩莱说。

“是的，亲爱的史佩莱，我只是无法想明白昨天发生的事。”史密斯说。

“不错，我也是。儒艮身上的伤确实非常奇怪。而且我还有一些不明白的地方，那就是多卜为什么会被扔到水面上来呢？如果不是亲眼看到，我一定觉得多卜是被一只强大的胳膊托起扔出水面的，然后那只看不见的手又用刀将儒艮杀死了。”史佩莱说。

史密斯点点头，陷入了沉思。

“有些事情真是让人想不明白，不过有一个问题是不是还比较容易理解呢？亲爱的史佩莱。我是怎么得救的？我是怎么被人从海浪里拖出来的？又是怎么到沙丘上去的？这些疑问，难道不是问题吗？我想，这里面一定有什么我们不知道的秘密，这个秘密我们一定也会揭开的。不过现在，我们只需留心观察，不要在大家面前讨论这些怪事，我们要先将这些疑问埋藏在心里，然后继续我们的工作。”史密斯说。

大家应该记得，史密斯到目前为止，都没有发现能让湖水泄走的出口。不过他一直坚信，一定有这样一个地方。

走着走着，他们来到了一股急流处，好奇心让史密斯扔了几块木头在水里，那几块木头流向了南边的拐角。于是，他跟着木头漂去的方向走，走到了湖地的南端。

南端有块地方湖水在下陷，貌似有部分水流进了地缝。

史密斯将耳朵贴在地面上，那地面和湖面一样高。他静静地倾听着，并清晰地听到了瀑布发出的声响。

“我找到排水的地方了。”史密斯一边说，一边站了起来。

“没错，湖水是经过花岗石右壁的一条通道流向大海的，我们只需利用它就能找到流经的石洞了。”

史密斯说完，砍了一根长长的树枝，在除去树叶后，将它放在了岸边的拐角处。此时，他发现水里有个一英尺左右的大窟窿——这就是他们一直以来想要寻找的排水口。排水口的水流很大，史密斯放的树枝很快就被冲得没了踪影。

“没有什么疑问了，出口就在这里，我要将它打开看个究竟！”史密斯说。

“你要怎么打开？”史佩莱问。

“我要让湖面降低三英尺。”

“你想怎么降低？”

“我只要一个比这个口还大的出口就行了。”

“你要将这出口开在哪里呢？赛莱斯。”

“很简单，开在离海滨最近的地方。”

“可那里只是一片花岗石呀！”史佩莱说。

“是这样的。”史密斯继续说，“我要将花岗石炸开，然后等到水流出去后，湖面就降低了，此时，那里必定会露出一个洞口来的……”

“然后可以重新形成一个瀑布，然后让水泻向海滩？”史佩莱又问。

“对！就是要形成一个可以让我们利用的瀑布。走吧，走吧！”史密斯说完，催促着史佩莱离开。史佩莱是完全信任史密斯的，所以丝毫没有怀疑这事会不会成功。

不过，他们现在既没有火药，工具也有限，怎么才能将花岗石壁凿开呢？史密斯虽然对此事充满信心，但在条件不成熟的情况下，他能达成所愿吗？

在史密斯和史佩莱回到“石窟”时，赫伯特和庞库那夫已经开始从木筏上卸木柴了。

“我们刚刚做完樵夫，史密斯先生，是否还要做泥水匠……”庞库那夫开玩笑说。

“泥水匠……不，我不需要泥水匠，我现在需要化学家。”史密斯答道。

“是的，我们要化学家，我们要炸海岛……”史佩莱补充道。

“什么？炸海岛？”庞库那夫大惊。

“是的，至少可以说是要炸一部分。”史佩莱回答。

“让我先说说情况吧！朋友们！”史密斯说完，便将他和史佩莱了解到的情况和他的打算告诉了大家。

从史密斯的口中大家知道，在观望壁下面的花岗石壁里，有一个不知大小的山洞，所以要凿开石壁进到里面去。为了达到这个目的，必须先凿出一个较大点的出口，使湖面降低，然后将急流通过的山洞进行清除。而要想做到这些，他们必须制作炸药，在岸上或其他部分炸开一条

深沟，这也是史密斯利用自然界提供的物质来实施他的计划的想法。

很显然，大家是拥护史密斯这个计划的，特别是庞库那夫。因为炸花岗石、人工制造瀑布等等这些大规模的工作，对他来说是强项。所以既然现在史密斯需要化学品，他便也像过去变成木匠和铁匠一样积极，要做个化学家。

对他来说，大家需要什么，他就可以做什么，正如那普所说，如果需要，甚至连“舞蹈和礼仪教师都做”。

就这样，那普和庞库那夫被派去提炼儒艮身上的油，而儒艮身上的肉则要被他们当作食物。

每个人都对史密斯非常信任，所以他安排什么大家都会支持。

几分钟之后，史密斯和赫伯特、史佩莱带着筐子去了煤层方向，在那里的过渡地层里，有大量的黄铁矿石，史密斯曾去那儿找过一些类似的标本。

他们用了一整天的时间，将矿石运到了“石窟”，接近傍晚时，堆在“石窟”外的矿石已经有好几吨了。

第二天，也就是5月8日，史密斯他们开始了工作。由于黄铁矿石的主要成分是炭、火石、矾土和硫化铁，又因为硫化铁的含量比较高，所以他们先对其进行了分离，变成硫酸盐。随后，他们将获取的硫酸盐经过蒸馏，获得了硫酸。

很简单，他们的目的就是为了获取硫酸。

硫酸是工作生产中不可缺少的原料。在当时，每个国家只需根据硫

酸的消耗量，就能估算出这个国家的工业生产情况。况且这种硫酸的用处还有很多，比如他们以后制造蜡烛、鞣制皮革等等都要用到。

不过，这次史密斯获取的硫酸有其他用途。

之后，史密斯又在“石窟”后面平坦的地上铺了一层树枝和木柴，在设想好的框架上，他铺上了薄薄的一层黄铁矿石。这些黄铁矿石差不多有核桃般大小，是事先打碎后才用的。

在将这些准备工作做完后，他们点燃了木柴，让其热度传到了黄铁矿石上，由于黄铁矿含有炭和硫黄，所以很快就燃烧起来。他们又新添了一些碎矿石，将其堆成一大堆，并在外面盖上了干土和野草。为了让其充分燃烧，还留下了一些通气孔，给人的感觉像是要把木柴烧成木炭似的。

由于硫化铁变成硫酸铁、矾土变成硫酸铝的过程需要10到12天左右，所以在做好以上工作后，他们便去做其他事了。

不过，硫酸铁和硫酸铝虽然能在水中溶解，但火石、焦炭和灰渣却不能在水中溶解。

在进行这些化学工作时，史密斯还在做着其他工作。一行人干得热火朝天，信心百倍，恨不得马上获得成功。

那普和庞库那夫已经提取下了儒艮身上的全部脂肪，并将其装在了大陶土罐里。他们现在需要做的是用碱化的方法，将脂肪里的甘油分离出来。要想完成这个工作，他们还需要小苏打或石灰，而不管用什么方法分解脂肪，都能做成肥皂，并使甘油分离出来——这种甘油正是史密斯做炸药最想要的。

想用石灰很方便，不过用这种办法得到的石灰质的肥皂，是不能在水里溶解的，因此毫无用处。但如果将石灰换成小苏打，则可以得到一种能够溶解的肥皂，这样的肥皂在他们的日常生活中也是经常要用到的。

史密斯是个做任何事都想得很全面的人，所以他宁可费神去找小苏打。找小苏打难吗？不，并不难，岸边的水生植物如海蓬子、番杏和各种漂上岸来的马尾藻科……都是制小苏打的原料。

当他将这些植物大量收集起来后，先把它们晒干，然后在露天坑洞里焚烧，几天后就能得到灰色的粉末，也就是人们所说的“天然小苏打”。

有了天然小苏打，史密斯便用其和脂肪化合，得到了能够溶解的肥皂，同时也得到了一种中性物质——甘油。

做完这些还不够，为了给以后的工作做准备，史密斯还需要另一种东西，那就是硝酸钾，也就是硝盐和硝石盐。

当然，想要硝酸钾，史密斯只需用硝酸和碳酸钾化合就行了。而碳酸钾又很容易从植物的灰里得到，所以真正难以找到的是硝酸，因为硝酸不像其他物质，伸手即拿，所以还是会遇到一些困难的。

幸好赫伯特在富兰克林山旁曾发现过一个硝盐矿脉，所以他们只需将这种盐进行提炼就行了。

以上的准备工作他们整整持续了一个星期，在硫化铁还没有变成硫酸铁之前，其他工作都完成了。剩下的几天，他们便开始抓紧时间砌特殊的砖炉，准备蒸馏还没有制得的硫酸铁。

5月18日的时候，砖炉砌好了，化学变化也完成了。在这些天里，史佩莱、赫伯特和那普及庞库那夫在史密斯的指导下，也成了后者最得力的助手。他们需要史密斯这种既让他们信服，又知识渊博的老师。

黄铁矿石在经过一番加热后，都还原了。他们将得到的硫酸铁、硫酸铝、火石和炭渣及灰烬放在了一只装满水的盆里，在将这些混合物搅拌后，让其沉淀，最后把上面的水倒出来，得到了底下含有硫酸铁溶液和硫酸铝溶液的纯净液体。而其他那些不能溶解的物质则一直保持着一种固体状态。

最终，那些纯净液体在经过蒸发后，形成了硫酸铁的结晶，而其余含有硫酸铝，且没有蒸发过的液体便被他们丢掉了。

就这样，史密斯有了可以用来提取硫酸的硫酸铁结晶。不过，制造硫酸还是需要花很大成本的，需要很多设备，比如一套特殊的工具：白金的仪器、不怕酸类腐蚀的铅室等等。

这些必需品他们一样都没有。不过史密斯知道，在波希米亚，有一种制造硫酸的方法，非常简单好用，而且能够生产出浓度很高的硫酸。

“北欧硫酸”就是用这种方法制成的。

具体做法是将硫酸铁的结晶密封在瓶子里，然后进行煅烧，使之蒸发成水汽，最后经过一段时间的冷却后就变成了硫酸。

于是，史密斯将结晶放进了锅里，然后点起了炉火，让其结晶蒸发为硫酸。

这件工作完成后的5月20日，也就是他们开始工作后的第12天，史密斯获得了大量的硫酸，并打算用这种化学品为他们以后的很多事服

务。

目前最主要的是要用这种化学品做什么呢？制造硝酸。硝酸制造起来并不难，只需用硫酸和硝石化合就能蒸出硝酸来了。

只是这种硝酸要用来做什么呢？大家并不知道，史密斯也没有告诉他们。不过，他的目的很快就要达到了，只需经过一道工序，他费尽心思想要的东西就能制造出来了。

这最后一道工序便是用蒸发的方式浓缩甘油。浓缩甘油前要用一只水槽把少量的硝酸和甘油混合在一起。这样的话，也不需要冷却剂就能得到黄色的混合油液了。

在进行这样一道工序的时候，为了预防发生爆炸引起的危害，史密斯便在离“石窟”有一段距离的偏僻之处做这项工作，制成后他才拿着瓶子给大家看，兴奋地说：“这就是硝化甘油！”

确实，这是一种很令人害怕的化学药品，这种药品的爆炸威力比普通炸药的威力还要大十倍。由于它在爆炸后屡屡造成事故，因此，自从人们发现这种制作炸药的方法，便用一种有较多孔的能吸收液体的黏土或糖将其混合，以降低它的爆炸危险性。

不过，林肯岛上的这群居民在操作的时候，并不知道降低危险性的方法。

“我们就是用它去炸石头？”庞库那夫有些怀疑。

“没错！朋友，这种硝化甘油可以产生极大的威力。越是坚硬、阻力大的花岗石，爆炸起来越厉害。”史密斯说。

“那这种威力我们什么时候可以见识到呢？史密斯先生？”

“明天就能看到了。我们现在去挖一些埋炸药的坑。”史密斯说。

第二天是5月21日，他们在天刚亮的时候，便去了格兰特湖的东岸，那里离海滨仅有500多英尺。那块高地从水边向下倾斜，湖水仅由一道花岗石阻拦。

因此，他们只需炸开外围的花岗石，湖水就能从缺口冲出，进而形成一条小河，并沿着高地的斜坡一直向海滩流了。这样的话，湖面也会自然降低了，泄水的石洞也会暴露出来。而那石洞就是他们的目标。

庞库那夫在史密斯的指导下，拿着鹤嘴锄，开始凿花岗石地面。埋炸药的坑要挖在岸边的斜坡上，而且还要比湖面低很多才行。因为只有这样，当岩石炸开后，才会有很大的缺口让湖水外流。

这项工作庞库那夫做了很长时间，而史密斯为了取得更好的效果，甚至决定用7夸尔¹的硝化甘油对其进行爆炸。为了做好这项工作，庞库那夫和那普轮班工作，一直做到下午四点钟才将坑挖好，将炸药埋好。

此时，又有一个问题出现了：如何去点那埋好的炸药呢？通常是利用雷管引爆，进而引起硝化甘油的爆炸。这样做的前提是必须要用很大的冲击力才行，如果只是点火，很可能只会让它燃烧，而不会让它爆炸。

所以，史密斯还需要制造雷管。虽然没有雷粉，但他有的是硝酸，因而也就能很轻易地制造出一种类似于棉花火药的东西。当这种药品被塞进弹药筒，然后加上一些硝化甘油，就能用火绳将其点燃，进而产生爆炸了。

对于撞击下的硝化甘油也可以爆炸这一点，史密斯非常清楚，因此他决定采用这种方法，如果这种方法不成功，他再想其他方法。

其实，撞击硝化甘油的方法很简单，只要将少量硝化甘油滴在坚硬的石头上，然后用锤子去拼命砸，就能很快爆炸了。不过这么做的话，用锤子去砸的人可就危险多了，非死不可。

于是，史密斯决定用一根植物纤维做的绳子，吊起几斤重的铁来代替砸硝化甘油的人。让那块铁吊在炸药坑洞的上面，然后用另一根绳子沾上一些硫黄，再将它的一端系在第一根绳子的中间，另一端拉到离炸药几英尺外的地上。

当他们将沾上硫黄的绳子点燃后，火势顺着绳子会燃到第一根绳子的接头处。而一旦火烧到了接头的地方，第一根绳子就会烧断，吊着的铁块自然就会砸在硝化甘油上。

这一切的准备工作做完后，史密斯让其他人退到了很远的地方，然后将硝化甘油灌满土坑，一直灌到与坑口齐平。最后又在岩石表面滴了几滴。而此时，岩石上面的铁块也已经是悬好的了。

史密斯点燃沾着硫黄的绳子后便离开了，而且还和其他人回到了“石窟”。

根据史密斯的计算，这根绳子需要燃烧25分钟左右。果然，在这个时间后，他们听到了惊天动地的爆炸声。那爆炸的威力，让他们觉得整个林肯岛都在震动，石块更是被炸得满天乱飞。

空气中产生了很大的气浪，让他们明显地感受到了“石窟”的颤动。虽然他们离那里有将近两英里，但还是被掀翻在地了。

这样的威力，海岸一定是被炸开了。所以当 they 从地上爬起来时，便飞快地向湖岸方向奔去。

到了那里，他们欢呼起来。

花岗石壁上裂出了一个很大的口，急流翻滚着穿过了高地，并从300英尺高的地方飞流而下.....

[1](#)容积单位，一夸尔约等于四分之一加仑。一加仑约等于3.79升。

第十八章

史密斯的计划成功了。可他还和往常一样，并没有因为这点成功就满足。他站在那里，紧紧地闭着嘴唇，眼睛睁得大大的，看着他的成果。

赫伯特兴奋到了极点，那普则高兴得手舞足蹈，庞库那夫不停地点着他那硕大的脑袋，自语着：“太棒了！我们的工程师真是太棒了！”

硝化甘油的确发挥了巨大的威力，由它炸开的出口非常大，流出的水也比原本旧出口流出的大了三倍。因此，当爆炸发生后不久，湖面就明显下降了3英尺，甚至更多。

林肯岛的居民们急忙回到了“石窟”，他们拿出所有的工具：几把鹤嘴锄、铁头标枪、纤维绳索、火石和钢块.....重返高地，多卜跟在了他们后面。

在路上，庞库那夫忍不住问史密斯：

“你做的那种甘油的威力实在太大了，是不是用它就能将海岛全部炸毁呢？史密斯先生。”

“不要说海岛，就是大陆，甚至整个世界都能炸毁。当然，这需要足够的数量。”史密斯说。

“这么说，你也能用这种硝化甘油做弹药了？”庞库那夫又问。

“不可以，庞库那夫。这种甘油太容易爆炸了。做棉花火药，甚至一些普通火药，都不是什么难的事，因为我们有硝酸、硝石、硫黄和炭。不过不幸的是，我们没有枪。”

“哦，枪啊，史密斯先生，只要有决心，不怕做不到。”

此时的庞库那夫，已经将“难”字从他的人生字典里去除了。

他们期待的情景即将出现，居民们先是上了观望壁，接着向出口处走去。

几分钟后，他们来到了格兰特湖的南端，并一眼看到他们的目的已然达到。

湖里露出了他们曾搜寻了很久的洞口，因为湖水下降而留下的一道狭长分水线也正让他们更近地接近了洞口。洞口宽约20英尺，不过高度并不高，还不到2英尺。洞口的形状很像人行道边下水道的沟口，所以他们想要进去也不难。

不过，那普和庞库那夫还是拿起鹤嘴锄，将洞口凿成了一个更让他们感到舒服的高度。

史密斯走近洞口，发现从洞口通向洞里是有一定斜度的，倾斜度在30°到35°之间，完全可以通行。如果继续往前走，坡度没有变陡的话，他们走向海面都不难。

花岗石的内壁有很多大的石洞，这些石洞对他们很有用。

“我们怎么还不进去？史密斯先生，待在这里干什么？你看，多卜都进去了。”庞库那夫问，他迫切想进入那条狭长的通道。

“好的，不过我们一定要能看见路才行。那普，你去砍一些带树脂的枯树枝过来。”史密斯说。

那普和赫伯特向湖边跑去，附近有很多松树和其他树木。

他们很快就回来了。在把一些树枝做成火把后，他们用火石和钢片将火把点燃。

举着火把，史密斯带领大家进入了原本灌满湖水的黝黑通道。

让他们没有想到的是，他们越往前走，通道的直径就越大，弯腰走着走着，竟然能够完全站直身子了。洞里的花岗石因为常年被流水冲洗，又湿又滑，走在上面，随时都有滑倒的危险。

于是，他们像爬山一样，用一根长长的绳索将大家连在一起。不过幸好花岗石上有向外凸起的部位，这样也就形成了天然的阶梯，减少了他们滑倒的次数。

在火把的照耀下，他们看到花岗石上有很多闪闪发亮的水珠，想必石壁上还垂着钟乳石吧。

史密斯仔细观察了一下这些黑色的花岗石，发现它们是个整体，石纹细致，不仅看不出地层，甚至连一条缝也看不到。看来，自从有了海岛，这条通道就已经形成了。当然，这条通道也不像是由流水冲击而成的。

造成这个通道的不是尼普顿¹而是普鲁托²，因为石壁上留有熔岩的印迹，那印迹就连日久天长的水流都没能将其冲掉。

林肯岛的居民们继续往前走，走得很慢很慢。这个石洞由于是第一次来，所以他们无法知道它有多深。虽然脚在继续冒险往深处走，但心里还是有着莫名的恐惧，所以谁也没有说话。不过，他们每个人的脑子里都有无数个念头在闪现：

这个通向大海的地洞，会有水螅及其他巨型动物吗？

幸好有多卜，它一直走在前面。依靠多卜这个有灵性的动物，他们就能知道有没有危险在前面等着他们。他们知道，不到紧要关头，多卜是不会发出警告声的。

沿着弯弯曲曲的道路，在走了大约100英尺的时候，走在最前面的史密斯停下来了，其他人也跟着停下来了。

他们发现，脚下很宽，是一个大小适中的山洞，顶上在一滴一滴地往下滴水。不过很快大家就发现，水并不是从岩石里渗出来的，而是石洞里奔腾而过的急流留下的印迹。

这里虽然有些潮湿，但不仅没有污浊之气，反而有清新之感。

“亲爱的赛莱斯，这是岩石的深处，虽然很适合藏身，但却不适合住人。”史佩莱说。

“为什么说不能住人？”庞库那夫问。

“因为这里太小了，光线也暗。”

“那我们可以把这里凿得深一些，大一些，还可以开几个洞来透亮和通风。”庞库那夫说，他现在觉得没有什么事是不能做到的。

“我们再看看吧，也许后面会有更合适的地方，大自然一定会让我们省下改造的力气的。”史密斯说。

“我们才走了三分之一路程吧！”赫伯特问。

“差不多三分之一。从洞口到这里只不过有100英尺，不可能少于这个数……”史密斯还没说完，那普就打断了主人的话：

“多卜到哪里去了？”

他们开始在附近寻找，但还是没有发现多卜。

“它应该走到前面去了吧！”庞库那夫说。

“我们赶快跟上去！”史密斯说。

他们继续加快脚步往前走。

史密斯每遇到通道拐弯的时候，就会特别留意，虽然通道里需要拐弯的地方有很多，但他还是能很容易地认清方向。他知道，石洞是通向大海的。

在他们又走了差不多50英尺时，突然听到远方传来一种声音。通道

在此时起了传声筒的作用，他们停了下来。这声音非常清晰。

“是多卜，是多卜在叫！”赫伯特大声喊道。

“对！是它，是它在叫。勇敢的它像是很愤怒。”庞库那夫说。

“没事，我们手里有铁头标枪，只要提防着就没事，继续前进！”史密斯说。

“太奇怪了，越来越奇怪了！”史佩莱在庞库那夫的耳边轻声说，庞库那夫点了点头。他们奔跑起来，向多卜发出叫声的方向跑去。多卜的叫声更加清晰，那是一种愤怒至极而发出的声音。

它是不是因为侵犯了什么动物的窝，所以在搏斗？居民们就是在这种好奇心的驱使下，什么危险也不顾地跑上前去的。

几分钟后，他们前行了差不多16英尺，看到了多卜。

这里已经快要接近通道的尽头了，而且是个高而宽敞的石洞。多卜在那里来来回回地跑着，愤怒地叫着。举着火把的庞库那夫和那普将石洞的每个地方都照亮了。

史密斯和史佩莱、赫伯特则拿着标枪，做出随时战斗的准备。不过，宽大的石洞空空如也，他们将四周搜遍，但还是什么都没有。

没有野兽，更没有人。不过，多卜还在叫着。不管是他们抚摩它也好，呵斥它也好，都无法使它安静下来。

“这个地方一定是湖水流到海里去的出口。”史密斯说。

“是的，所以我们一定要留神，千万不要掉到窟窿里去。”庞库那夫

说。

“多卜，走！向前走！”史密斯喊着。

多卜听主人这么一叫，更兴奋了。它飞奔向石洞的尽头，在那里叫得声音更大了。

他们打着火把向前走去，看见花岗石地面上有个洞，那洞像是一口井，想必湖水就是从那里排出去的。而且这里也不是什么倾斜的、能够通行的通道，而是一口能够直上直下的井，冒险下去的可能性不大。

他们把火把凑近井口，试图能看清里面，但什么都看不见。史密斯将一根点燃的树枝向井里扔去，树枝在迅速下坠的时候将井里照亮了，但他们还是没有看到任何东西。

很快，他们听到了“嗤”的声响，接着树枝上的火熄灭了，由此可见，树枝掉在了水里，也就是海面上。

史密斯估算了一下树枝坠落的时间，测算出井的深度应该在90英尺左右。由此可见，这里的地面应该也在海拔90英尺的地方。

“此处将是我们的住所！”史密斯肯定地说。

“这里很可能会有野兽。”史佩莱说，他仍然有着强烈的好奇心。

“即使真有两栖动物，也已经从井里逃出去了。它已经把地方让给我们了。”史密斯说。

“可是不管怎么说，多卜不会无缘无故地叫，它一定是看到或听到什么了。我真想让自己变成多卜，哪怕是一分钟也好。”庞库那夫说。

史密斯看着他的狗，小声喃喃道：“是的，我也相信，多卜一定知道很多我们不知道的事。”

靠近他的几个人想必也听到了他的这句话。

不管怎么样，林肯岛居民们的希望没有落空。他们一方面是靠运气，另一方面却是依靠他们领袖的惊人智慧，使他们获得了很多。

如今，他们已经占领了这个巨大的石洞，里面虽然光线很暗，而且也无法估算出石洞的大小，但能肯定的是，他们能够用砖头将它隔成很多房间。所以即使它算不上一幢住宅，但至少也算得上是个宽大的公寓。如今，湖水已经改道，不再回来了，这里可以任由他们使用了。

不过，摆在他们面前的还有两个问题需要尽快解决，一个是怎么让这个岩石中间的洞获得阳光，另一个就是怎么才能让他们出入方便。

头顶上的花岗石非常厚，要想从上面取得光源是不可能的事，所以他们只能将临向大海的岩壁凿穿。

史密斯在从洞口过来的时候就估算过这个石洞的坡度和长度，而且也认定外壁应该不是特别厚。如果能让光线从这里进来，也就一定能从这里开一扇门。因为凿门和凿窗的做法一样，只需在外面架一个梯子就行，所以并不难。

当史密斯把自己的想法说出来后，庞库那夫说：“好的，史密斯先生，那我们现在就开始干吧！我这里有鹤嘴锄，把墙壁凿透很简单，你只需告诉我凿什么地方就行了。”

“在这里凿吧！”史密斯说着，把身体强壮的庞库那夫带到了一个地方，那里的石壁是凹进去的，而且凹得相当深，岩石的厚度应该也比别

处薄。

在火把的照耀下，庞库那夫开始凿花岗石。凿的时候，碎石迸得到处都是。在他凿了差不多半个小时后，那普替换他开始凿。又是半个小时后，史佩莱换下了那普。

几个人一直干了两个多小时，他们开始怀疑用鹤嘴锄是否能凿通花岗石。正在此时，史佩莱的最后一锄凿穿了岩石，手里的工具脱手掉在了外边。

“哈哈！太好了！”庞库那夫大喊起来。

他们看出，这石壁仅有3英尺厚。

史密斯凑近壁孔，他看到这里离地面有80多英尺，还看见了海岸和小岛，以及那一望无际的海洋。

阳光通过他们凿出的孔透了进来，照亮了这宽阔宏伟的石洞——他们能完全看清石洞的形状了。石洞的左边宽和高度最多不会超过30英尺，右边却非常宽敞。顶壁是圆形的，高度达到了80英尺以上。

石洞顶壁由不规则的花岗石石柱支撑，形状有些类似教堂中央的圆顶。石柱有的像侧面的扶壁，有些则像椭圆形的拱门，拱门上点缀着各种花纹。在一些角落，他们还看到了很多突出的图案，那些图案很像是挂着的装饰品。通过石柱形成的奇异拱门，有缕缕光线隐隐透出来。

这个山洞真是大自然的杰作，可以说是拜占庭、罗马和哥特式建筑艺术的综合体。大自然用它的鬼斧神工，为他们创造了一个阿尔罕布拉式的福地。

看着这个山洞，林肯岛的居民们发出了由衷的赞叹。他们原以为这只是一个狭小的石洞，没想到却是一个别开生面的神奇宫殿。那普犹如进入了大庙，禁不住恭敬地把帽子摘了下来。

赞叹声和欢笑声充溢着石洞，回声不断地在石洞响起，最后渐渐消失在黑暗的中堂。

“朋友们！我们可以在这里开扇窗，将左边当卧室和仓库，另一边的石洞当书房和博物馆。”史密斯大声说。

“我们应该给它起个名字！”赫伯特说。

“对！起个名字，就叫‘花岗宫殿’吧！”史密斯说。

其他人听到这个名字，都欢呼起来，觉得特别贴切。

火把就要燃烧完了，他们不得不从石洞里出来，准备第二天再来整理这个新住处。

离开前，史密斯再次趴在黑咕隆咚的井口朝里面看了看，并且还仔细听了听。井底没有丝毫声响，甚至连深处本应有的波涛汹涌也没有。他又扔了一根燃烧着的树枝，刹那间，深井又被照亮了，但和上次一样，他还是没看到任何可疑的东西。

如果真有水怪在深井，也会因为没有水流，找不到新出口而重回大海的。他想。

史密斯呆呆地注视着深井，一句话也不说。

庞库那夫走到他的身边，碰了他胳膊一下，大声喊道：“史密斯先

生！”

史密斯一下子回过神来，连问：“什么事？朋友？”

“火把就要灭了！”

“那……走吧！”史密斯说。

一行人离开了石宫，开始向漆黑的洞口处爬去。多卜紧跟在他们身后，还不时地发出咆哮声，不过声音非常低。

从下往上走很不容易，他们走一会儿便要休息几分钟，然后再走。那漫长的花岗石梯阶，如同一个个的中途休息站。

又走了一会儿，他们呼吸到了新鲜的空气。石壁上那晶莹的水珠好像已经被蒸发掉了，火把越发暗淡，那普手里的火把已经有一支熄灭了。为了不在黑暗中行走，他们必须加速前进。

差不多四点钟的时候，史密斯和他的伙伴们终于走出了通道。此时，庞库那夫手里的火把也灭了。

[1](#)罗马神话的海神。

[2](#)古罗马神话里的冥王，人们死后灵魂世界的主宰者。

第十九章

5月22日，林肯岛上的居民开始迫不及待地布置起他们的“宫殿”来。和之前那个狭小的“石窟”相比，他们的新住宅“花岗宫殿”则宽

敞安全了很多。

“花岗宫殿”隐藏在坚固的岩石里，不仅海水灌不进来，就是雨水也淋不到。不过，对于旧居“石窟”，他们也没有丢弃，史密斯决定将它开辟成工作作坊。

布置“花岗宫殿”时，史密斯和众人来到海滩，寻找史佩莱凿崖壁时掉落的鹤嘴锄，因为只要找到鹤嘴锄就能发现凿穿花岗石的地方。很快，史密斯就找到了鹤嘴锄，虽然它已经陷进了泥沙里，但还是从微妙的痕迹处将它找了出来。

被他们凿穿的花岗石小洞口处，有几只野鸽子在那里飞进飞出，很可能是将那里当成了为它们造的窝。

史密斯建议大家把石洞的右边隔成几间房，在前方留一条过道，然后在迎面开五扇窗，一扇门，以此采光和进出。

庞库那夫对开五扇窗采光很同意，但对于开一扇门却感到有些多余。因为他觉得，通道就是“花岗宫殿”的天然阶梯，进出并不困难，所以不必重开一扇。

“朋友，我们觉得那个通道进我们的住宅方便，那么其他人要进来也是同样方便的。所以我的想法和你完全不同，我想把那里堵死，可能的话再做一道堤坝，让湖水重新升高，将那入口处完全淹没。”史密斯说。

“那里淹没了，我们又从什么地方进去呢？”庞库那夫问。

“我们可以在外面做个梯子，梯子就用绳子做。当我们收起绳子做的软梯时，就没人能进我们的住宅了。”史密斯又说。

“你怎么那么担心？到目前为止，我们从没遇见过什么猛兽，更不可能有土人。”庞库那夫觉得史密斯简直有些杞人忧天。

“你能肯定没有猛兽和土人吗？庞库那夫？”史密斯看着他问道。

“我们还没检查完整个岛，所以还没办法完全肯定。”庞库那夫说。

“这就对了。截至目前，我们对这岛的了解还只是一部分。再说了，即使岛上没有敌人，也很难说不会有外面的敌人进入海岛。太平洋的某些地方是异常危险的，我们不得不防。”史密斯说。

史密斯的话没有错，庞库那夫没再说什么。最终，大家接受了史密斯的在“花岗宫殿”的正面开五扇窗和一道门的建议。除此之外，他们还需要开一扇向外凸出的大窗户，以及几个椭圆形的小窗孔，目的同样是为了采光。同时，他们还打算将有着奇妙圆顶的中堂作为一间主要房间。

高出地面约80英尺的“花岗宫殿”正面，由于向着正东方向，所以太阳一升起，首先照到的就是它。如果从“石窟”的乱石堆中画一条垂直线到地面的话，“花岗宫殿”的峭壁处正在这条垂直线与感恩河口的峭壁凸出处中间。

因为有这些凸起部分的阻挡，使东北风无法从正面吹，只能从侧面吹过来。另外，史密斯还计划在将窗框做好前，做一些避免室内遭受风吹雨打的特制百叶窗，而且这种百叶窗还能在必要时隐蔽起来。

显然，他们的第一步工作是凿洞。不过如果只靠鹤嘴锄的话，很可能需要很长的时间才能完成。好在有万事都能的史密斯，他制作出的硝化甘油还剩了一部分，正好可以拿来使用。

史密斯将这种硝化甘油炸药放在选定的石壁上精准炸开，随后用鹤嘴锄和铲子将门窗凿成他们需要的形状，并将边缘地方磨平。

这样的工作连续做了几天，当早上的阳光通过他们开的窗户透进“花岗宫殿”时，连里面隐蔽的角落都照亮了。

根据史密斯的原定计划，他们下一步是将石洞分成临海的五间空房。然后将右边开的那扇门作为进出口，外面安放好软梯，然后在石洞里隔出30英尺的厨房、40英尺的饭厅和40英尺的寝室。

当然，还有庞库那夫提议的会客厅也少不了，再向右就是大厅。

他们设计的所有房间都没有把石洞占满，因此，他们还打算设计出走廊和仓库。这样的话，他们的一些工具、食品以及储备物资就都能放进非常适合储存东西的仓库了。当他们把在岛上搜集到的各种物产和动植物都放进仓库时，也就不担心它们受潮了。况且仓库很宽，他们能够将这些东西不重叠地挨个放着。

除了这些地方可以利用外，大石洞上方还有很多小石洞，也是可以供他们随意使用的，而这个小石洞的存在，像极了他们新居的阁楼。

做好一切计划后，下一步就是如何实现了。居民们此时又从工兵变成了制砖工人。他们将砖头烧好后，搬到了“花岗宫殿”。

直到此时，他们依然只能通过狭长的通道进洞。进洞时，先爬观望壁，再绕过河岸，到通道里后，向下走200多英尺。如果想要回到高地，就必须朝上爬同样长的距离。

这样做浪费了很多时间，而且到达目的地时已经很累了。因此，史

密斯认为拿软绳做楼梯的事情不能再拖了。这样当他们把梯子收起来时，从外面就完全看不出有通向“花岗宫殿”的道路了。

软梯很快就做好了，做工非常讲究。用爬藤植物的坚韧纤维做梯帮，软梯犹如粗索般结实；横档是用红杉的树枝做的，轻巧又结实。这一整套工序均由做绳梯的专家庞库那夫完成。

此后，他们又用一些植物纤维结成了一些绳子，在门上拴起了一个轱辘。有些类似于起重机的功能。

就这样，他们开始毫不费力地运砖头了。由于运输上简化方便了很多，所以内部的装修也很快就启动了。砖头他们有不少，石灰也不缺。很快，隔间的初步制作就完成了。刚开始的时候，“宫殿”看起来还是很简陋的，不过当他们按照一步步的计划，把房间和仓库都隔起来后，这里就有了“宫殿”的豪华气派。

做这些工作的时候，史密斯亲自拿着锤子、刮刀带头去做，并且做得顺手又完美，给大家树立了很好的榜样，让他们工作起来劲头更足，更有信心了。

爱说笑的庞库那夫，不断地给他们这个团队制造着笑料，他一会儿做木工，一会儿又做绳索工，再一会儿当泥瓦工。对于史密斯，他更是佩服得五体投地。他甚至觉得史密斯是一个万能博士，没有他解决不了的事情。

当然，现在还有一些问题需要解决，比如衣服，这是一个比较严重的问题。还有像冬季室内的照明，以及怎么利用岛上那肥沃的土地、怎样把野生植物变成栽培植物等等。一切的一切，在史密斯的策划下，一定都可以顺利完成。

庞库那夫经常说，他还有个梦想，那就是能开凿几条运河，这样就能运输岛上的丰富物产了，甚至还可以开矿，制造各种工业生产所需的机器。还可以修铁路，让铁路在林肯岛上像一个个密集的蜘蛛网一样，将各个地方都联系起来。

史密斯任由庞库那夫在那里自言自语，他不想让对生活充满希望的勇士扫兴，因为他知道信心是能感染人的。所以他一边听庞库那夫说，一边微笑，丝毫不提他们日后可能遇到的困难。

他不想告诉大家，在这航线以外的太平洋地区，也许他们一生都无法得到人类的援助，所以他们一切都必须靠自己，不然什么都得不到。因为林肯岛和其他任何一个岛屿都隔着很远的距离，同时他们也无法造出很好很大的船，又不能驾着小船去航海……

也许正像庞库那夫所说，鲁滨孙奇迹般地获得了一切，他们所处的环境要比鲁滨孙强，同样可以获得一切。

是的，对这些精力旺盛的人来说，只有懒汉才会死在这里，他们是可以获得成功的。

在近段时间的工作中，赫伯特一直表现得非常积极和突出。聪明活泼的他，学什么都很快，做什么都做得非常好。史密斯越来越喜欢这个优秀的少年。而赫伯特对史密斯也带着尊重和崇敬的心情。两个人如此亲近，并没让庞库那夫产生嫉妒的心理。

那普和任何时候一样，一直勇敢、热心、忠诚无私地表现着自己的美好品德。他像庞库那夫一样，崇拜着他的主人，却表现得并不热烈。每当庞库那夫兴高采烈地说着什么的时候，那普总是做出“这有什么稀奇”的表情。不过，庞库那夫和那普很快就成了好朋友，并不见外地

用“你”来互称对方。

在他们做这些事的时候，史佩莱也一直和大家一起辛勤工作，而且干得非常熟练，丝毫不比他的伙伴们差。这一点也让庞库那夫很吃惊，他没有想到，这个新闻记者不仅能够丝丝入扣地分析问题，而且做起事来也毫不含糊。

5月28日，软梯装好了。软梯装在80英尺的垂直高度，阶梯达到了100级。让他们感到幸运的是，离地40英尺的峭壁上有一个凸起的地方，史密斯正好利用这个凸起的地方，将软梯分成了两截。这样的话，他们用鹤嘴锄又仔细地将凸起部分凿开，以此形成了一座平台，最后把第一段的梯子由此系住，第二段梯子的上端固定在平台上，下端系在“花岗宫殿”上，这样，整个软梯的摇晃程度就减弱了很多。而且仅用这根软绳，采用分段方式就能到达“花岗宫殿”。

此外，史密斯还计划装置一种水力机械，这样居民们去“花岗宫殿”就能毫不费时费力了。

原本就有着灵便身体的居民们很快就习惯了用软梯上下，而这一切也都离不开庞库那夫的指导。庞库那夫对此的熟练得益于他是个爬惯了桅杆和帆索的水手。

当然，在大家都习惯使用绳索的时候，多卜可就麻烦了，必须经过严格训练才行。这只可怜的有着四条腿的动物，虽然很不愿意接受这种训练，但在庞库那夫的耐心教导下，竟然也能勉强攀爬了。甚至不久后，它爬软梯的样子就可以和马戏团的动物媲美了。

面对这样的“徒弟”，庞库那夫感到非常骄傲。不过，有时候庞库那夫也不需要多卜自己爬，而是背着它爬，对这一点，多卜也是坦然接

受。

必须要说的是，当他们在做上述工作的时候，寒冷的冬季马上就要来了，大家因此也没忘记食物的问题。这样，史佩莱和赫伯特就成了大家推举出来的食品采购员。

他们每天都要抽出好几个小时去打猎。当然，到目前为止，他们活动的地方也只局限于啄木鸟林以及河的左岸一带。之所以这样，就是因为没有桥梁和船只，他们不能过感恩河。

而被他们命名为“西遥”的大片密林，他们还没有去探测过。对于这么重要的探险工作，他们计划等开春后，天气暖和时再进行。好在啄木鸟林是鸟兽聚集的地方，而且还有袋鼠和野猪，他们带着标枪和弓箭穿行在里面时，经常能打到很多野味。

此外，赫伯特还发现了一个适合兔子生长的地方。在湖的西岸，有一片潮湿的草地，杨柳摇曳，各种香草散发出阵阵清香。那里有兔子们非常喜欢吃的大茴香、香薄荷和很多唇形芳香植物。

史佩莱认为那是大自然形成的天然养兔场，所以必定有兔子，没有兔子倒奇怪了。

于是，他和赫伯特仔细搜寻起来，结果虽然没有看到兔子，但却发现了很多珍贵的植物，对赫伯特这个“自然学家”来说，认出它们毫不费力。赫伯特很快便搜集了一些迷迭香、薄荷、郭公草……这些草有着一定的药用价值，有的能治肺病，有的则能当收敛剂，有的还能做退烧药，有的甚至能预防痉挛或风湿。

等他将收集到的这些嫩芽拿回去后，庞库那夫问他做什么，他

说：“这些是草药，生病时可以吃。”

“岛上可是没有医生的，我们不可以生病。”庞库那夫说得一本正经。

赫伯特没有回答他的话，只是继续去搜集，而“花岗宫殿”里的每个人都对赫伯特的做法表示赞赏。除了这些草药，赫伯特还采摘了一些可以用来泡水喝的北美洲“薄荷茶”。

而在此期间，工夫不负有心人，赫伯特和史佩莱找到了兔子的居住地，那里满是窟窿，像筛子似的，密密麻麻的。

“我们找到兔子窝了。”赫伯特非常兴奋。

“不错，是这儿！”史佩莱也很高兴。

“可它们都在家吗？”

“不知道，很难说！”

当然，这个问题他们很快就解决了。因为他们话音刚落，便有成千上万只小动物从四面八方涌了出来，而且飞快地向远方逃去，跑得非常快，连多卜都追不上。

两位“猎人”和他们的狗在追赶了一番后，还是让那些动物逃跑了。不过史佩莱并没有死心，他决定怎么也要逮住一些，最好能逮住六七只。

当然，逮住的这些他只想用它们来充实食品库，等到有机会时，他们还可以将这些逮住的兔子进行圈养。

要想捉住这些动物并不难，他们只需在洞口布置一些圈套就行了。不过，他们当时并没有那样的圈套，也没什么东西可以制作成圈套。他们只能到那筛子似的每个洞眼前，将棍子伸进去搅一番。

没有别的办法，他们只能“守洞待兔”。

差不多过了半个小时后，他们在洞口逮住了四只兔子。这种啮齿动物和欧洲的差不多，叫美洲兔。

他们将捉住的兔子带回“花岗宫殿”，晚餐时，它便作为主菜被端上了餐桌。没有人轻视这些美洲兔，因为它们的肉实在是太美味了。这是他们寻找到的一个很有价值的资源，而且还是个貌似永远都享用不尽的资源。

5月31日那天，他们隔离房间的工作也完成了。他们又开始想着给房间添置家具，不过这项工作他们计划等漫长的冬季来临时再完成。

他们将隔出的第一间房作了厨房，并在里面砌了烟囱。当时，这些业余的工人们觉得想要把烟通到外面去非常难，而史密斯也觉得凿个出烟口通到高地上不太可能，最简单的办法就是在厨房的窗子上开个小洞，然后用砖头砌个烟囱，将烟囱做得像铁炉子的管道一样连到洞口。

不过，遇到有风的天气，这样的烟囱也会产生倒烟。但由于迎面吹来的风并不多，而且作为厨师的那普并不计较这些，所以也就这么做了。

等到他们把内部装修完之后，史密斯便去堵湖水原本的出口了，这样做后，除他们外，也就没人能进来了。

在做这些事的时候，他们计划先让大块岩石滚到入口，然后将入口

牢牢地堵住。当然，史密斯并没按照他原来的计划去筑堤坝，让湖水恢复原有的高度去淹没洞口，只是在用大岩石堵的入口缝隙处种植了一些野草和灌木，以便在明年春天来临时，让那茂密的草木将入口完全隐藏。

同时，史密斯还计划用瀑布将淡水引到他们的新居来。于是，他在地面上凿了一道通向他们的“花岗宫殿”的小沟。就这样，源源不断的清澈湖水便流进了他们的厨房，每天的输水量在25加仑到30加仑之间。可以说，这条小沟很好地解决了他们用淡水难的问题。

如今，一切工作差不多都做好了，而这些工作他们做得非常及时，因为寒冷的季节眼看就要到了。有着厚厚百叶窗的正面窗口，关闭时特别严实，只等史密斯有时间时做玻璃装上了。

为了让他们的新居变得更美观，史佩莱还将各种各样的植物和浮草装饰在了窗子周围那些凸起的岩石上。瞬间，窗口便像镶在了美丽的画框中一样，清新又淡雅，非常具有艺术性。住在这座充满了艺术感的又舒适又安全的新居里，居民们都有了一种自豪感和成就感。

他们从窗口向外面径直看去，辽阔无边，能够看到整个联合湾；向北看，能看到上颚角和下颚角；向南看，能看到兽爪角。

确实，这一切都让他们非常满足，无法不骄傲，不自豪。庞库那夫面对他们的新居更是赞不绝口，甚至风趣而形象地称这是“五层楼的豪华公寓”。

第二十章

进入6月份，冬季来了。

此时，林肯岛相当于北半球的12月。冬天的林肯岛，狂风暴雨就没有停过。不过因为有了“花岗宫殿”，林肯岛的居民们面对这种恶劣天气，完全可以高枕无忧，丝毫不用担心。而他们当初的“石窟”就不一样了，不仅无法抵挡严寒的入侵，而且还有汹涌的潮水往里面灌。

显然，史密斯之所以要找“花岗宫殿”，就是因为他已预料到会有这样的事情发生，所以才做了这些准备。

不仅对“人”过冬做了安排，史密斯甚至还将放置在“石窟”里的炼铁工具和熔炉都早早做了安排。

在冬季的整整六个月的时间里，居民们没有去打猎，也没有去捕食，只是做了一些杂活，因为食品库里储备的食物足以让他们安稳地度过这段时间。

庞库那夫在闲着没事时建议做些捕兽机，他对此事乐此不疲，不久便用爬藤做好了几个圈套。此后，他们便每天都在美洲兔的居住地捕食一定数量的啮齿动物。

有了这些源源不断的啮齿动物，那普几乎整天不闲地忙着腌肉、熏肉，以保证大家吃到美味的食物。不过，最让他们感到头疼的是，他们身上穿的，仍然是气球降落时的那身衣服——已经没有其他衣服可穿了。

因此，他们开始讨论做衣服的事。原来的衣服虽然暖和而结实，而且因为穿时比较爱惜，也没怎么烂，但他们需要换装。而且，在严寒的

冬季，穿那样的衣服也会冷得受不了。

万事都难不住的史密斯也在为此事犯难。虽然他们解决了最需解决的住房和食物问题，但穿衣问题还是应该提上日程。不过即使想到了解决的办法，等做好也已过了冬季了。

史密斯心里已经有了打算。他记得他们去富兰克林山上探测时，曾看到那种莫伏鹿羊，不过这需要等天气转暖时再去捕猎。只要有了这些羊毛，他就会有办法将羊毛做成既暖和又结实的衣服。当然，具体该怎么做，他还在考虑。

史密斯现在急需解决的是在不添加衣服的情况下，如何安稳地度过在岛上的第一个冬季。

“也不难，我们就在‘花岗宫殿’里待着，像烤肉一样地烤我们就行了。反正这里的燃料多，不用节省。”庞库那夫说。

“就是，而且林肯岛的纬度高，冬天应该不会太冷。赛莱斯，你曾说过，35°就相当于北半球的西班牙对吗？”史佩莱说。

“是这样的，不过西班牙的冬天也很冷，冰雪都少不了，所以林肯岛最冷时应该也会冷。当然，这是个海岛，气候应该比西班牙稍稍暖和一点。”史密斯说。

“为什么海岛的气温会暖和一些呢？史密斯先生？”赫伯特有些不明白。

“因为大海就像一个巨大的贮藏器，它会将一部分夏天的热量储存起来。这样到了冬天的时候，它就释放出一些热量来，所以能够保证沿海地方的温度适中。虽然冬天的气温会比夏天低很多，但也会比其他地

方的冬天稍高一些。”史密斯解释说。

“哦，这些问题到最冷的时候自然就知道了，不用再谈了。反正我不管冬天冷不冷，我能知道的是，冬天的白天肯定很短，夜晚很长，我们还是考虑怎么照明吧！”庞库那夫说。

“这非常容易！”史密斯说。

“容易什么？你指容易谈吗？”庞库那夫问。

“这是一个容易解决的问题。”

“可我们要什么时候开始解决呢？”

“明天吧，我们明天先去打海豹。”

“是为了做蜡烛吗？”

“没错，我们要做蜡烛！”

史密斯说出了他的计划。对于用海豹做蜡烛，这计划执行起来完全可以，因为他们有石灰和硫酸，海岛上也有足够多的动物给他们提供制造蜡烛所需的脂肪。

6月4日是个星期天，也是圣灵降临节。按照习惯，居民们要休息一天。

停下了所有工作的居民们对着苍天做了祷告，说了很多感恩的话。如今，岛上的他们已经和刚刚降落到着陆岛时的落难者不同了。他们没有祈求什么，他们只是感激上苍。

6月5日，天气虽然不是很好，但他们还是向着陆岛出发了，他们需要在退潮时渡过海峡。于是，他们决定先造一只船，而且这船一定要尽量造得结实好用。

因为有了船，对他们来说，交通也就便利多了，以后就是去海岛西南部进行大规模的探测，也能沿感恩河顺利前行了。而这项探测工作，他们决定等天气好转时进行。

海豹有很多，可他们只有标枪。但即使这样，还是有六只被他们毫不费力地刺死了。那普和庞库那夫就地开始剥皮，他们只需带着皮和脂肪回“花岗宫殿”就行了。脂肪做蜡烛，海豹皮做皮靴。海豹肉不好吃，他们舍弃了。

最终，他们带着300磅的脂肪和六张海豹皮回去了，而那脂肪全都用在了做蜡烛上。

制造蜡烛并不难，虽然无法做到完美，但至少可以做得实用。史密斯手里有现成的硫酸，所以他就将硫酸和中性脂肪放在一起加热，然后分离出了甘油。最后，又从这些新的化合物里，用开水分离出油脂、硬脂和人造奶油。

为了让制作工序更简单，他还使用了石灰来碱化脂肪，这样很快就得到了一种带着石灰质的肥皂。这种肥皂特别容易被硫酸分解，同时，硫酸也让石灰沉淀，进而有了硫酸盐，并游离出脂酸来。

脂酸又分离出了油酸、珠酸和硬脂酸。油酸因为是液体，所以只需给这三种混合物施加足够的压力就能提取出来，而其余两种就是制造蜡烛的原料。

整个制作过程不超过24小时。制造好后，他们又做了试验，并用植物纤维做了蜡烛芯，将其放在熔化的蜡油里，然后用手去捏制，最终捏成了地道的油脂蜡烛。

当然，唯一欠缺的是蜡烛的外表不够光滑，颜色也不够白亮。

没有在硼酸里浸泡过的蜡烛芯无法在燃烧过程中通过半熔化随蜡油燃尽，但史密斯还是采用了一系列措施让它达到了这个要求。

有了蜡烛，“花岗宫殿”里的居民再也不怕漫长的黑夜了。

拥有了蜡烛后，仅仅在一个月內，他们就做了很多事，甚至还把一些粗糙的工具进行了改良，让其变得更精致，同时也新添了一些工具。

首先就是制造了剪刀。有了剪刀他们才开始了进岛后的第一次理发。当然，剪刀还无法让他们刮脸，但至少可以将他们的胡子剪得短一些。虽然赫伯特没有胡子，那普的胡子也很少，但其他三个人的胡子却很多，已经是满脸胡须了，迫切需要这把剪刀。

同时，他们还做了锯子。虽然锯子制作起来很麻烦，但最终他们还是做成了，只是使用时必须用很大的力气才能将木头锯开。

有了锯子，他们便做了很多的桌子、凳子和碗柜等，同时还做了床架，并在床上铺上了草垫，以此替代被褥。不仅如此，他们还为厨房做了食品工具架，以便在上面摆放烹调用品。最后还做了砖炉。

有了这些东西，整个厨房便变得井井有条了。在厨房工作的那普，也有了在化学实验室工作的感觉。

在做完各种生活用具后，居民们完全将自己变成了木匠。他们开始

想着怎么在因为爆炸而产生的瀑布上搭桥了，而且决定搭两座桥，一座搭在观望壁那里，另一座则搭在高地那里。由于有道水流把高地和岸边隔了开来，所以他们想去海岛北部的话，必须涉水才能过去。为了避免涉水，又不得不去红河发源地，这样就只能绕道了。但如果能在观望壁和高地处各搭一座长20到25英尺的桥梁的话，那么他们的出行就会变得简单多了。

当然，架桥这项工程最需要的就是木头，这对他们来说不是难事，仅仅用了几天时间就架好了两座桥。

有了这两座桥，那普和庞库那夫去沙丘附近的蛤蜊场也就容易多了。他们甚至还造了一辆简易粗糙的车代替筐子，拉回了好多蛤蜊，并将这些蛤蜊放在了感恩河的河口。

很快，蛤蜊在岩石丛中繁殖起来，并形成了新的蛤蜊场。这些软体动物非常美味，居民们每天都会吃一些。

虽然林肯岛的居民们只探测了林肯岛的一小部分，但由此可见，仅这一小部分，也已经完全可以满足他们的需要了。倘若他们还能深入到更多隐蔽的地方，到感恩河和甩尾角间的森林区去打猎，将可能发现更多的新物产。

所以，居民们是不满足于发掘一小部分海岛的。虽然肉类和蔬菜他们都不缺，找来的木质树根经过一段时间的发酵后又能给他们提供带着酸味的饮料，在饮料里加入一些从养兔场采来的香草后，又能变成芬芳可口的茶……但他们还在继续发掘着。

不仅发掘，他们还搞发明，找到了不用甘蔗和甜菜就能炼制糖的办法。这种糖是用一种叫“酿蜜枫”的树，经过蒸馏后得到的液体。

“酿蜜枫”是枫树的一种，分布在温带地区，林肯岛上有很多。当然，“酿蜜枫”经过分解，还能分解出矿物质——盐。唯一可惜的是没有面包。

也许在不久之后，居民们就可以在岛上找到一种能替代面包的食物了。

这不是什么天方夜谭，因为南部森林里是能够找到西米和面包树的，不过直到现在，他们都没有发现这种宝贵的树木。

然而，在这件事情上，上天不久就让他们看到了希望。虽然上天赐给他们的东西并不大，甚至可以说很渺小，但这种东西就是史密斯再绞尽脑汁，发挥全部智慧也创造不出来的。

这宝贝是在赫伯特补坎肩时，无意中在衣服夹层里发现的。

这一天，天空下着倾盆大雨。居民们都聚集在“花岗宫殿”的大厅做事情，正在补衣服的赫伯特突然大声喊着：“快看呀！史密斯先生，有一粒小麦！”

说着话，赫伯特把那粒小麦，那粒独一无二的小麦粒拿给了伙伴们看。那是从他坎肩口袋的小窟窿掉到夹层里的。

原来，这麦粒是他们在里士满的时候，赫伯特喂庞库那夫送给他的几只鸽子时，遗漏在衣服里的。

“小麦？一粒小麦？”史密斯急忙问。

“是的，史密斯先生，是一粒小麦，不过只有一粒！”

“哈哈……孩子，看来我们的日子会越过越好了。不过，这粒小麦它能做什么呢？”庞库那夫大笑着说。

“可以让我们做面包！”史密斯说。

“是面包吗？会不会还有蛋糕、馅饼？哈哈……我看呀，这粒小麦做成的面包，一定不会撑破我们的肚皮。”庞库那夫又笑了起来。

赫伯特听了庞库那夫调侃的话，也觉得这粒小麦没有太大的意义，正打算将它扔掉，但被史密斯阻止了。

史密斯将小麦粒接了过去，仔细地看着。在看到小麦粒没有任何损伤，非常完整后，他对庞库那夫严肃而认真地说：“庞库那夫，一粒小麦能结多少个麦穗你知道吗？”

“我觉得会结一个吧！”庞库那夫有些奇怪史密斯为什么要问他这些。

“不，是10个。庞库那夫，那么一个麦穗又会结出多少粒麦子你知道吗？”

“我怎么会知道呢？”

“差不多是800粒！”史密斯冲庞库那夫说完，又对大家说：“因此，如果我们将这粒小麦种下去，成功的话会收到800粒小麦；再将800粒种下去，收到的是64万粒；将这64万粒种下去，收到的就是5.12亿万粒；当把5.12亿万粒种下去后，收到的就是4000亿粒……总之，情况就是这样！”

居民们默默地听着，听得哑口无言。这是些让他们感到惊讶的数

字，但这数字又是真真实实可能存在的。

“很难想象吧，朋友们！这还只是一般繁殖等差级数。不要以为每个麦穗结800粒麦粒就算多了，比起罂粟和烟草来，这些又算得了什么呢？罂粟一粒种子能结32,000颗籽，烟草能结36万颗，如果不限地让它们繁殖，只需几年，地球上都要被这些植物长满了。”史密斯说完停了一下，接着又说：“庞库那夫，现在你说说，4000亿粒麦粒是多少蒲式耳¹？”

庞库那夫摇头：“我可不知道，我只知道我是个大傻瓜！”

“每蒲式耳平均有13万粒，那么4000亿粒就是300万蒲式耳以上。怎么样啊？庞库那夫！”

“天啊！300万！”庞库那夫大叫。

“是的，是300万。”

“你是说在四年之内吗？”

“对，四年之内，甚至都不需要四年，仅两年就够了。根据这里的纬度来看，我觉得每年是会有两次收成的。”

庞库那夫还和原来一样，用他的大声欢呼来表达高兴。

史密斯把脸转向赫伯特：“因此，你发现的这粒小麦对我们非常珍贵。如今，每一样东西对我们来说都是非常有用的，所以朋友们，千万不要忘记这点！”

“不会再忘的，史密斯先生，我们都不会忘记。如果有一天我找到

了一粒能结36万粒烟草籽的种子，我保证绝不扔掉，现在呢？我们要做什么？”庞库那夫说。

“将这粒种子种下去。”赫伯特说。

“对！很小心地种下去，将来能不能收获麦穗就靠它了。”史佩莱说。

“就是不知道它能不能发芽！”庞库那夫又说。

“会的，一定会发芽的！”史密斯说。

这天是6月20日，也是播种这唯一一粒种子的最好时机，因此，当天他们就种了下去。刚开始的时候，有人提议将种子种在盒子里，但经过商议，他们还是决定种在大地上，结果怎样，任凭大自然安排。

当然，虽然结果由大自然安排，他们还是给予了这粒种子特别的关怀，一心想着最终的成功。

这天正好雨过天晴，他们爬上了高高的“花岗宫殿”岗。在那个既能照着太阳，又能避风的地方除草灭虫，将其做成一个优良的田畦，并在上面洒了一层石灰，还装上了栏杆，然后在那滋润的土壤里种上了他们那粒宝贵的麦粒种子。

居民们在做这件事情的时候，如同在为一座大厦奠基石。庞库那夫由此也想起了他那次没有火柴的焦急心情。这次比那次还重要，火要是灭了，他们还有其他方法燃火，但如果这粒种子没了，那就不是人力所能办到的了。

1计量单位。它是一种定量容器，好像我国旧时的斗、升等。一蒲

式耳在英国等于8加仑，相当于36.268升。

第二十一章

庞库那夫每天都要去那块“麦田”，如果有什么昆虫敢去那里，一定会很倒霉的，因为庞库那夫绝对不会饶过它们。

6月底的时候，在一连几天的阴雨过后，天气变得异常寒冷。29日那天，温度甚至达到了0.6℃。

6月30日，也就是北半球12月31日那天，正好是个星期五。那普说这是一年中的最后一天，不吉利，但庞库那夫却说这就说明新年的第一天是个大好日子。

不管怎样，旧年底，新年初的这些天是寒冷的，感恩河的河口甚至已经结上了冰。很可能在不久之后，整个格兰特湖面也会结冰的。

在这样寒冷的冬天，他们需要准备很多木材。机灵的庞库那夫在河水还没完全冻封的那几天便开始用木筏运送大批木柴了。河水除非冻住，不然就会永远不知疲倦地流动着，这也为他们运送木柴提供了方便。

除了在森林里获取燃料，他们还需要从其他地方获取。于是，他们又去了富兰克林山的支脉下，运了几车煤炭回来——在最冷的时候，煤炭所产生的高热量才是最受他们欢迎的。

7月4日，温度更低了，达到了-13℃。

由于大家平时做任何事都是在饭厅，于是就在饭厅砌了一个火炉。

“花岗宫殿”里的淡水是史密斯从格兰特湖引进的，虽然天气很冷，但却并不妨碍他们从冰面下的湖水里引水。

那一股股的淡水还是让史密斯非常满意的。为了储存这些淡水，他还在仓库后凿了一个蓄水池，当水池满了后，多出来的水会自然通过地下井流入海里。

干燥的天气让居民们很想去感恩河与兽爪角之间探险，那里有一片广阔的沼泽地，很可能有水禽，居民们觉得一定能够打到很好的野味。因此，他们很快做好准备，整装待发。

从“花岗宫殿”到那块沼泽地大约有八九英里的路程，一来一回大概需要一整天时间。由于那块地方以前没去过，所以居民们决定全都参加这次远程探险。

7月5日的早上六点，天刚蒙蒙亮，史密斯、史佩莱、赫伯特、那普和庞库那夫手拿标枪、圈套、弓箭，带着干粮，从“花岗宫殿”出发了，多卜跑在了最前边。

此时的感恩河已经结冰，想过去的话，最近的路就是从冰面上过去。不过史密斯最后还是说：“冰面是不能代替桥梁的。”

所以他们接下来的任务就是在这里也架一座桥。

当居民们从冰面上到了感恩河的右岸后，他们有些激动，因为这是他们第一次到达这个地方。这里有美丽的松柏林，松柏林上还挂着美丽的雪花。

在穿越松柏林的时候，还没走到半英里，多卜便惊动了飞禽走兽。飞禽走兽们飞的飞，跑的跑，全都去了空旷地带。

看着那些奔跑的动物，赫伯特说：“这些看起来有些像狐狸！”

不错，那些奔跑的野兽中就有一群狐狸，它们个子很大。在多卜追赶它们的时候，还会发出很大的嗥叫声。叫声将多卜吓了一跳，怔在了那里，而这些狡猾的狐狸也就趁多卜怔住时逃得无影无踪了。

不懂动物学的多卜，自然会被那骇人的叫声吓住。不过那些叫声却恰恰暴露出了它们的身份，赫伯特很快就认出，那些浑身灰红，黑尾巴上长着一些白毛的狐狸是“白狐”。

赫伯特告诉大家，这种狐狸通常出现在智利、马尔维纳斯群岛和美国北纬30°与40°之间的区域。不过，让赫伯特有些遗憾的是，多卜竟然没能捉住一只。

“它们的肉好吃吗？”庞库那夫问。对他来说，海岛上的动物，他只关心好不好吃。

“不好吃。不过，动物学家们至今都不知道它们长着昼眼还是夜眼，有些还将它和狗归为一类。也不知道这种归类是否正确。”赫伯特说。

赫伯特能知道这些，可见他对动物学的兴趣和了解。史密斯听他这么说，用赞许的眼神看了他一眼笑了。而庞库那夫在得知这种狐狸的肉不好吃后，也就不把它放在心上了。

不过，他也想到，如果在“花岗宫殿”建家禽场的话，一定要多加防范，不能让这些狐狸光顾。在他把这种担心说出来后，大家也都表示赞

同。

从这一带绕过去后，居民们突然发现有一段海滩是被海水冲击着的。

此时正好是早上八点，天气虽然寒冷，却也很晴朗。在又走了一段时间后，太阳照在身上暖洋洋的。由于没有风，史密斯和同伴们也就不再感到寒冷的侵袭了。蔚蓝的大海风平浪静，如同地中海港湾的晴天一样。兽爪角向东南方拐过去，伸向了四英里以外的地方，好像一把弯刀放在那里，越是接近尖端越细。

沼泽地在左边，边缘地带形成了一个尖尖角，正被太阳火辣辣地照着。

联合湾那边很空旷，连一片沙滩都没有，更没有做大海屏障的东西。此时如果有船只在这里遇到东风袭击，想必也是无法躲避的。

海面很平静，没有浅滩，更没有礁石。陡峭的海岸让他们意识到，此地的沿岸一定是万丈深渊。

向西四英里是西遥森林的边缘。对林肯岛的居民来说，这里可算是冰雪侵袭中的南极岛或荒凉海岸了。

到了吃饭的时间，他们停下来没再走。那普在点燃木柴和干燥的海藻后，又烤了一些肉，沏了几杯薄荷茶。

一行人吃着烤肉看着周围的环境。相对于其他地方，这里应该是林肯岛最贫瘠的地方，和西部形成了鲜明的对比。这不禁让史佩莱感慨，如果当初他们是降落在这里的话，很难说会不会像现在这么活着。

显然史密斯也想到了这一点，他说：“如果我们掉在这里，很可能上不了岸。这里的海水太深了，连礁石都没有。‘花岗宫殿’最起码还有沙滩，那边小岛的环境，也给我们提供了脱险的条件，可这里却什么都没有。”

“真是太不可思议了，林肯岛的地形会这么复杂。照理说，如此复杂的地形，只有陆地才会有。林肯岛之所以物产丰富，土地肥沃，是不是墨西哥暖流经过的原因呢？而它的北边和东南边好像是北冰洋周边一样。”史佩莱大发感慨。

“是呀，亲爱的史佩莱！”史密斯连连点头，看着四周继续说，“我也发现了这个问题。这个海岛的地形和自然状况太奇特了，它似乎囊括了整个陆地的全貌。我想，如果说这里以前是一片陆地，我都不会觉得奇怪。”

“什么？你是说，太平洋中间有大陆？”庞库那夫大声问。

“即使这样，也没什么奇怪的。难道澳大利亚、新爱尔兰和太平洋里的群岛，被称为第六大洲有问题吗？难道它们没有欧洲、亚洲、非洲及美洲重要？我觉得，大洋里的岛屿，很可能在以前是大陆上的高脊。当大陆沉入水里时，它们就形成了岛屿。”史密斯回答说。

“难道它们也像过去的亚特兰蒂斯一样？”赫伯特问。

“不错，孩子……非常有这个可能。”

“林肯岛会是大陆的一部分吗？”庞库那夫又问。

“嗯，很可能是一个大陆的一部分，因为岛上丰富的物产说明了这一切。”史密斯说。

“是的，不然怎么会有那么多的飞禽走兽？”赫伯特肯定地说。

“很有道理，孩子，你这一说倒让我找到了根据。按我们一直以来的观察所得，林肯岛上有很多动物，更有趣的是，这些动物的种类非常多。能出现这种情况，很大的可能就是这里原是大陆的一部分，因为大陆沉入太平洋，留下了这片岛屿，自然也留下了这些物种。”

“那是不是可以这么说，总有一天，很久以前遗留下的这些大陆也会沉下去？到了那时候，是不是可以说美洲、亚洲也就没有陆地了？”庞库那夫不是很相信。

“不，那倒不至于，因为旧的大陆不在，新的大陆还是会出现的，毕竟成千上万的微生物会为新建大陆而努力。”史密斯说。

“为新建大陆忙碌的微生物是什么？”庞库那夫又问。

“这些微生物叫珊瑚虫。正是因为它们不断地兴建，才形成了像库力梦岛和太平洋中的很多珊瑚岛。这些微生物非常微小，它们聚集的一厘米就可能有4700万个珊瑚虫。这些微生物能生成石灰，石灰又能在海底形成大块物质，这些大块物质会像花岗石一样坚硬结实。古时候的初期，陆地通常是利用大自然的火形成的，现在由于地壳运动的力量减退，所以微生物就接替了火的职能。经过无数珊瑚虫的努力，随着时间的推移，终有一天，太平洋会变成一片大陆，供我们后代去开发和居住了。”史密斯说。

“那一定需要很长很长的时间。”庞库那夫说。

“做这些事，大自然有的是时间。”史密斯说。

“还要新大陆做什么？适合人类居住的地方已经够多了。”赫伯特说完，停了一下又说：“当然，大自然创造出的东西，总有它的用途。”

“是的，世间万物的存在，都有它的用途。所以我觉得，这也就是为什么珊瑚岛存在的地方，一定会有新大陆的原因。”史密斯说。

“那给我们详细讲讲这些吧！史密斯先生。”赫伯特说。

“科学家们认为地球以后一定会灭亡。即使没有灭亡，动植物也是最先无法生存的。到了那个时候，地球将会变得异常寒冷。当然，对于气温为什么会变得寒冷这个问题，科学家们也有一些分歧。有科学家认为地球气温之所以降低是因为太阳的温度降低造成的，也有人认为是地球内部火焰的逐渐熄灭而造成的。这样的影响通常比想象中还大。对我来说，我同意后一种说法。为什么这么说呢？很简单，月亮只是一颗冷冰冰的星球，虽然太阳没有偏向，也给了它热量，但月球上却是根本无法住人的。月亮之所以这么冷，就是因为它内部的火焰完全熄灭了。既然月球内部的火焰熄灭了，那么其他星球也会有这种情况出现的。当然，我们可以不用去管这些原因。但总有一天，地球会冷却，这种冷却的过程也是一个逐渐演变的过程。

“那么，真的到了那个时候，又会发生什么呢？很可能温带地区在经过相当长的时间后，会像我们的南北极一样不能住人。这时候，人类和其他动植物就会向赤道地带挤去，那时候就有大规模的人口迁移了。到那时，欧洲、中亚地区、北美洲、南美洲都会被放弃，草木也都随人转移，一切动植物都向赤道进发。那么，南美洲的中部和非洲中部将会成为人类的主要居住地。而拉伯兰人和萨摩亚人都会发现，地中海沿岸的气温竟然和寒带一样。当然，也很可能由于大家都往赤道挤，那里的资源不够地球上生物的消费。这都是有可能出现的。不过，自然界有着

非凡的能力，很可能现在就在赤道地区为地球上所有动植物的迁徙打下了基础。比如说一些微生物，它们很可能就是受到自然界的委托，为开辟新大陆而工作的。所以我常常想，朋友们，我们的地球，很可能将来会变得面目全非。当新大陆产生后，原有的大陆就会被淹没，甚至在未来的一些年代，会出现一些像哥伦布一样的人，他们发现了坎波拉素山、喜马拉雅山和勃朗峰所形成的岛屿，甚至还会发现，它们竟是美洲、亚洲和欧洲下沉留下的遗迹。最后也才知道，原来这些新大陆也不能居住。因为热度会消散，这个消散的过程就和一个人去世的过程一样，身体在逐渐冷却。那时候，地球上的生命就很可能绝迹。即使不绝迹，也可能只是维持一段时间。

“到了那个时候，整个地球都可能变得死气沉沉的。当然，等到条件成熟，它们很可能又会复活。朋友们，这所有的一切，实际上都是大自然的秘密。我现在只是从珊瑚虫的工作说到了以后，看来是扯得有点远了。”

“亲爱的赛莱斯，我可不认为你扯得远，我觉得这是预言，都会发生的。”史佩莱说。

“只能说这是上帝的秘密。”史密斯说。

“你们说得都对。不过史密斯先生，你能告诉我，林肯岛是那些小虫子形成的吗？”庞库那夫认真地听完后，问史密斯。

史密斯摇头：“当然不是，它们纯粹是因为火山造成的。”

“那么它们以后会消失吗？”

“有这个可能。”

“但愿它们消失的时候，我们已经不在这里了。”

“不用担心，庞库那夫。它消失的时候，我们当然不会在这里。我们可不会老死在这里，我们终有一天会离开这里。”史密斯说。

“不过，我们还是应该像我们会永远住在这里一样建设我们的家园，我们可不能半途而废。”史佩莱说。

他们的谈话到此为止。吃完早饭，居民们继续前行，直到到了沼泽地的边缘。

这片沼泽地共有20平方英里，向东南延伸，一直延伸到一个圆形的海岸上。这片沼泽地的土壤属于火山黏土，黏土里夹杂着一些像灯芯草、芦苇、野草之类的腐烂植物，形成了一层厚厚的地毯。

沼泽地里的水坑结了冰，在阳光下闪闪地发着光。当然，水坑不可能是由雨水和暴涨的河水形成的。因为沼泽地的水分很可能是由土壤渗出来的，这些带着沼气的水分在天热的时候，很容易让人生病。

在一些水坑里，长着水生植物，水生植物上有成群栖居的野鸭、绿翅鸭和丘鹬密集在这里，它们时不时地扑打着翅膀，似乎一点都不怕人，即使这些居民走近它们，它们也不会飞走。

密密麻麻聚集着的飞禽，如果用枪打的话会打死很多，但居民们只能用弓箭。这样打虽然不如用枪打方便，却也有个好处，那就是用弓箭没有声音，不会惊动其他飞鸟。如果用枪的话，很可能枪一响，飞禽们都飞到其他地方去了。

当然，捕获结果让他们很满意。他们打了一些鸭子。这些鸭子的头是绿的，嘴巴扁平，虽然通体以白色为主，但也夹杂着黄褐色的花纹。

翅膀上还有黑、白、红三色。

赫伯特称这种鸟为“花鳧”。

在捕捉它们的时候，多卜出了很大力。

之后，居民们将这片沼泽地起名为“花鳧沼地”。在这片沼泽地里，他们不仅可以得到大量水鸟，而且还可以寻找一些用来驯养的鸟类。这样以后就能将它们赶到湖边，开辟一个家禽场，当家禽来养。

差不多傍晚五点钟的时候，林肯岛的居民们穿过花鳧沼地，从感恩河的冰面上过去，回到了“花岗宫殿”。

此时，已经是晚上八点钟了。

第二十二章

8月15日，严寒的天气还在继续。虽然没有再出现之前的最低气温，但对岛上的居民来说，天气晴朗还好点，一旦刮起风来，穿得太少的他们会冷得瑟瑟发抖。

庞库那夫有件非常遗憾的事，那就是岛上虽然有许多狐狸和海豹，但却没看到一只熊。如果岛上有熊，他们就可以用熊皮来做衣服，那多暖和呀。

“熊可真舒服呀。我什么都不想要，只想借它身上那件暖和的衣服

过冬。”

那普听了庞库那夫的话笑了：“可是熊不愿意把它的衣服借给你。庞库那夫，它可不是圣·马丁。”

“我们可以逼迫它借。特别是你，那普，你可以向它借的。”庞库那夫半开玩笑半认真地说。

当然，直到目前为止，他们在岛上还没有发现凶猛的食肉动物，一次都没看见过。

即使这样，他们还是没有放弃希望，赫伯特、庞库那夫和史佩莱一直在观望壁和森林边缘布置陷阱，希望能捕捉到大一点的食肉动物。

庞库那夫认为，不管是啮齿动物还是食肉动物，对它们的围捕都是一样的。只要它们能跑进陷阱，就有办法将其带回“花岗宫殿”。

当然，他们的陷阱布置得非常简单，只在地面上挖了一些坑，在坑里放了一些食饵，用气味引诱它们过去，同时还在洞口铺上了一些树枝和野草。

挖陷阱的时候，他们并不是随意去挖的，他们也有选择，选择那些有野兽脚印出现的地方。

自从布置了这些陷阱，居民们每天都要来看。在刚刚开始几天里，陷阱里还是掉进了一些动物，比如他们曾一连三次捉住了在感恩河右岸见过的白狐。

当庞库那夫第三次把白狐从陷阱里扔出来时，非常厌恶地看了它一眼，沮丧地说：“怎么全是你们，你们一点用处都没有！”

“也不是一点用处都没有，它们还是有用处的。”史佩莱说。

“什么用处？”

“用它来引诱其他动物呀。”

大家觉得史佩莱的想法不错，于是，陷阱里的食饵也就换成了死白狐。

除了这个陷阱外，庞库那夫还用一些长而结实的树木纤维做了几个圈套，去兔子的居住地套兔子，效果比用陷阱好很多。不过，虽然捉了不少兔子，但种类却只有一种。

好在单调的兔子肉在那普的精心烹制下，也都变成了美味佳肴，让居民们百吃不厌。

8月份的第二个礼拜，居民们竟然有两次在陷阱里捉到了超过白狐的美味，那就是他们曾在湖的北边见过的小野猪。庞库那夫即使没有吃过这种小野猪肉，也知道它们像美洲和欧洲的家猪一样好吃。

“我要告诉你，庞库那夫，它们不是家猪。”赫伯特说。

“孩子，不管它是不是，可我就要把它当家猪看！”庞库那夫一边说，一边俯下身子到陷阱口去抓小野猪的短尾巴。

“为什么要把它当家猪呢？”

“我喜欢把它当家猪。”

“那你……你是很喜欢猪喽，庞库那夫？”

“是呀，我是喜欢猪，特别是猪腿。如果它的腿不是四只，而是八只的话，那我会更加喜欢的。”庞库那夫说。

野猪有四种，居民们逮住的只不过是其中的一种，是美洲产的一种野猪，叫畜乳。这种野猪的颜色特别深，没有同类野猪所生的那种长牙。

总之，畜乳全身的肉都能吃。就凭这一点，庞库那夫已经很满足了。

8月份已经过了一半，风向开始转向西北，气候也开始变暖，气温虽然有所上升，但天空却飘起了雪花，整个海岛都裹上了一片银装。居民们瞬间觉得海岛焕然一新了。在一连几天的大雪后，海岛上积了差不多两英尺的厚雪。

风越刮越大，即使在坚固雄伟的“花岗宫殿”，他们依然可以听到海水撞击礁石的轰隆声。在一些空旷的地方，雪花甚至会被旋风吹得打转，更夸张的是，瞬间能让雪花在天空形成高高的雪柱。

通常情况下，如果有船只遇到这样的雪柱，都会开炮轰击的。

当然，横扫海岛的暴风雪是从西北方吹来的，所以“花岗宫殿”并没有遭受到正面袭击。

不过，在这风雪怒吼的日子里，雪柱还是让他们感到害怕。

为此，史密斯告诫大家不要出去。于是大家只好从8月20日到25日，整整在“花岗宫殿”里待了五天，听外面的风雪在啄木鸟林嘶吼。他们想，那片树木一定是遭受到了风雪的蹂躏，说不定很多树木都被连根拔起了。

庞库那夫用调侃的语气不停地安慰自己：

“就让风去刮吧！让它们去当樵夫，替我们砍柴吧！”

其实，就算他们想去阻止，也是没有办法做到的。

此时，居民们是多么感谢上苍呀，是上苍给了他们一间结实牢固，如铁桶般结实的住所。当然，在感谢上苍的同时，他们也没忘向史密斯表达谢意。因为这个石洞虽然是上天创造的，但也是史密斯发现的，然后又被史密斯利用了起来，所以他们才避免了受到风雪的摧残，安全地躲在里面。

如果他们不是住在这里面，而是住在用砖头或木头建造在观望壁上的房子，那肯定是无法经受这样的暴风雪的。甚至于那个“石窟”，也是无法住的。因为当海水漫过小岛之后，很可能会排山倒海地灌入“石窟”。也只有住在“花岗宫殿”，才让他们不用担心风吹雨淋浪打。

当然，躲在“花岗宫殿”过冬的居民们并没有闲着，他们将仓库里存放的木料，用锯子锯成了木板，然后又做成了家具。庞库那夫对这些样子笨重的家具非常喜欢，甚至说不管别人拿什么来换，他都不会答应。

就在这段时间里，他们还学会了编篮子。

对于编篮子这项工作，他们完成得非常不错。编篮子所用的原料是柳树，来自湖北部凸起的地方。在那片柳林里，生长着许多紫红色的绢柳。雨季前，庞库那夫和赫伯特曾将它们砍回来，经过加工后，这些柔软且有弹性的柳条便能编篮子了。

刚刚编篮子时，他们没有经验。不过凭借着聪明和机灵，在研究和

回想了曾见过的篮子后，他们最终还是做成了。

编的时候，居民们还互相比赛，看谁做的篮子样式好看。不久，仓库里就增添了很多大大小小、各式各样的篮子。最后，那普还将这些篮子拿去装块茎和南欧松子。

8月末，天气又有了新的变化，气温没有再降下去，暴风雪也停了。居民们又开始为探险做准备。此时，岸上的积雪已经积了两英尺厚了，地面也被冻住了，硬邦邦的，好在行走起来并不困难。因此，史密斯建议大家去爬观望壁。

仅仅只是几个月的时间，一切都发生了很大的变化。森林里，原本一片翠绿的枞树，此时却只看到白茫茫的一片。从富兰克林山到海边，不管是森林还是平原，甚至湖泊、河流也都成了白色。感恩河的河水是在冰面下流动的，因此，在遇到涨潮或落潮的时候，冰面就会因为破裂而发出很大的咔嚓声。

冰封的湖面上，有着无数的飞鸟在展翅飞翔。湖水里的鸭子、丘鹬、水鸭和海鸠全都成群结队地聚集在一起。

从岩石丛中流出的水，形成瀑布后又结成了冰柱。猛一看，就像一个个形状奇特的漏斗倒挂在水流中，煞是好看，像极了一件件文艺复兴时期的艺术品。

森林里被暴风雪损害到何种程度，具体他们还不清楚，需要等到冰雪融化后才能看出。

史佩莱和庞库那夫、赫伯特没有忘记去看他们曾经布下的陷阱。但当他们到了那地方才发现，陷阱也被积雪盖住了。他们小心翼翼地寻找

着，丝毫不敢大意，生怕自己成了陷阱的“猎物”。如果掉进了自己布下的陷阱，不仅危险，而且也很丢脸。

幸好，他们顺利地找到了陷阱。陷阱里没有动物，但附近却留下了很多动物的爪印，其中有些爪印还很清晰。从那些爪印中，赫伯特判断出它们是猫科食肉动物。由此他们也意识到，史密斯说得没错，林肯岛上有凶猛的野兽存在。而且毫无疑问，这些野兽是住在西遥森林里的，因为饥饿，冒险来到了观望壁，甚至很可能已经嗅出“花岗宫殿”有人居住了。

“这些猫科食肉野兽是什么？”庞库那夫问。

“很可能是老虎。”赫伯特说。

“老虎？老虎不是只有热带才有吗？”

“不一定，在一些新大陆，像墨西哥和布宜诺斯艾利斯的巴塔哥尼亚高原都有。而且我们这个岛和拉普拉塔河附近差不多，所以有老虎一点也不奇怪。”赫伯特说。

“既然如此，我们一定要提防，千万要小心。”庞库那夫说。

温度的上升，使岛上的积雪开始融化。又经过了一场雨之后，林肯岛原本的银装素裹完全不见了，整个岛像是被清洗了一遍似的。

尽管天气不是很好，但居民们还是需要补充一些日常需要的东西，比如要去采集一些南欧松子、块茎和酿蜜枫；还要去捉一些兔子、刺鼠和袋鼠等。

为了得到这些，他们到森林里去了很多次。此时才发现，很多树木

都被那场风雪刮倒了。庞库那夫和那普推着大车去了很远的煤层处，挖了很多煤炭回来。一路上，看见他们曾烧陶器的土窑，也已经受到了严重的损坏，6英尺高的烟囱早就被刮掉了。

他们要给“花岗宫殿”再补充一些木柴。看到感恩河的冰面化了，他们便利用河水和木筏，运送了好几趟。然而种种情景让他们知道，寒冷的季节还有一段时间才能过去。

他们还去了一趟“石窟”。当他们看到“石窟”时，更加庆幸在暴风雪的日子里，他们有了别的住处。因为现场的种种迹象表明，海水对“石窟”一定展示过它的威力。

他们看到，潮水曾漫过了小岛，闯进了“石窟”的通道，通道里全是泥沙。而那岩石上，更是积着厚厚的海藻。

在那普和庞库那夫、赫伯特打猎砍柴时，史密斯和史佩莱就去整理“石窟”。庆幸的是，他们炼铁的工具和风箱还完好无损，同他们用沙子保存时的样子一样。

他们储存起来的木柴和煤炭给这个冬季做了贡献。居民们因为有了它们，才没有受到严寒的侵害。当然他们也知道，北半球的2月，温度还会急剧下降。他们在南半球的8月底，正相当于北美洲的2月，所以严寒还会再来。

8月25日左右，下雪天又变成了下雨天。风向也发生了转变，转为向东南方向吹去。天气极度寒冷起来。

据史密斯推算，此时的温度绝对不会高于-22℃。刺骨的寒冷加上狂风，让他们难以忍受。这样的天气持续好几天，居民们不得不第二次

将自己“封闭”在“花岗宫殿”里。他们将原先开着的窗孔都堵了起来，只留一条窄窄的缝隙通风，所以也很消耗蜡烛。

为了节约蜡烛，他们不再节省燃料，将炉火烧得很旺，在取暖的同时还用以照明。

有时候，五个人中的两个也会忍着寒冷到冰天雪地里去，看那因为潮水一涨一落而形成的雪堆。不过很快，他们便忍受不了寒冷，跑回了“花岗宫殿”。因为严寒，每次在他们用双手攀爬软梯的时候，不仅觉得困难，而且还要忍受一阵阵的疼痛，冻僵的手在触摸软梯时，有种钻心的痛，一直从手指传到全身。

为了让空闲时间不在无聊中浪费，史密斯决定让大家在室内工作。

之前我们已经说过，居民们是将酿蜜枫的汁液当糖吃的。他们会将树皮割开一道深深的口子，然后让汁液流入瓶子，最后通过各种方法对瓶子里的液体进行熬制。慢慢地，液体变得发白，形成浓浓的糖浆。

原本大家对这样的东西已经很满足了，但有一天，史密斯告诉他们，他们可以当制糖工人，做出更好更甜的东西，居民们兴奋起来。

“制糖工人？我觉得这工作一定不错！”庞库那夫说。

“是的，这是一项非常精细的工作。”史密斯说。

“太合适我们现在做了！”庞库那夫又说。

在大家听到史密斯说的“精细”时，全都以为需要庞大的场地、复杂的设备和工序。但其实并非如此。这制糖工作不仅工序不烦琐，而且非常简单，只需一道工序就能将那种液体变成结晶体了。

具体做法是，将他们开始做好的糖浆盛在一只很大的土罐子里，然后放在火里熬，让它表面形成一层碎屑。当这层碎屑变厚后，那普要用木刀将它掀起来，避免它加速蒸发，同时也能避免它发焦。

当糖浆在炉火上熬制了几个小时后，就变成了浓缩蜜糖，而且他们这些炼糖工人也浑身热乎乎的了。最后，他们又将蜜糖倒进预先制作好的陶土模型里。

第二天，在蜜糖冷却后，便会凝结成许多糖块和糖片了。这些糖几乎是透明的，只是有些微微发红，味道特别好。

9月中旬，天气还是没能转暖，一直被“囚禁”在“花岗宫殿”的居民们感到非常厌倦。他们几乎每天都要出去一趟，但因为寒冷，总是无法走得太远。待在室内的他们，只得不断地做事，以改善他们的居住条件，一边工作一边聊天。

趁这个时间，史密斯和大家说了很多事，主要是讲科学在实际生活中的应用。他们虽然没有图书馆，但史密斯却是一本可以随时翻看的移动百科全书。只要有问题，他就能为大家解答，所以他们也便不停地“翻阅”史密斯这本书。

时间就这么在无聊和充实中度过。这群乐观而勇敢的人在这时都没有为自己的未来担忧。

9月中旬一过，“囚禁”的日子总算结束了。每个人都在焦急地等待着，期盼着美好季节的来临。即使不是美好季节，严寒天气快点过去也好啊。他们在想，如果能有一件保暖的衣服，那么在这样的季节里，他们可能已经出去打猎很多次了。

打猎，不管是去沙丘，还是去花鬼沼地，只要有飞禽走兽的地方，他们一定会满载而归。

不过，史密斯一直为大家的安全和健康着想，建议大家不要去森林深处。而大家也都依照他的意思去做了，轻易不外出。

当然，必须要说的是，在被“囚禁”的生活里，也有无法忍受的，那就是庞库那夫和多卜。

多卜这只忠诚的狗实在无法忍受“花岗宫殿”的狭小空间，即使待在里面，它也不停地在每个房间乱窜，不时地表达着被“困”在此处的不满和烦闷。

史密斯留意到，每次多卜去仓库后面那通向大海的黑井时，都会发出奇怪的咆哮。

井口是用一个木盖子盖着的。多卜总是绕着那井口转，有时候甚至还会将爪子伸到井盖下面，像是要将木盖掀起来。随即又会奇怪地大叫一阵，叫声愤怒而又不安。

多卜的奇怪举动，史密斯见过不止一次。

这只深井里到底有什么？为什么这只机灵警觉的狗会一直盯着它呢？深井是通向大海的这不会错，但会不会还有其他的通道也通向海岛的地底下呢？会不会这条深井和其他小洞是相连的呢？会不会有猛兽探出井口呼吸呢？

史密斯猜测了各种可能性，虽然没有根据，有很多猜想甚至听起来很荒唐，可相信科学，不愿意往迷信方面想的他，还是对多卜的举动感到好奇。多卜绝对不会无缘无故地对着月亮大叫，深井若是没有引起它

的不安，它怎么会这么执着呢？多卜的举动，让史密斯心里的疑惑更多了。

史密斯将自己的想法仅仅只是告诉了史佩莱，他不想告诉其他人，第一是没什么用处，第二是他觉得也有可能是多卜的幻觉，造成了它的怪异举动。

严寒季终于要结束了，虽然也有过下雨、下雪，甚至有过冰雹、狂风，但这样险恶的天气并没有维持多长时间。当冰雪融化后，不管是海滨还是高地，感恩河还是森林，又全部能通行。居民们为大地的回春而高兴，因为再过不久，他们就可以只在吃饭和睡觉时待在“花岗宫殿”，其他时间都在外面了。

9月下旬，居民们开始了经常性的打猎。这又让庞库那夫想起了猎枪，他不停地央求史密斯制造火药，甚至说史密斯是答应过他的，一定要说话算话。史密斯知道，没有一些特殊的工具，他们不可能制造出一支能用的枪，所以一直没有动手，这一项工作也便推到无限期。

他和平时一样，说赫伯特和史佩莱都是神奇的弓箭手，用弓箭同样能猎来野味。不管是刺鼠、袋鼠还是水豚；也不管是鸽子、鸨、野鸭还是鹅……总之，这些飞禽走兽，在他们的弓箭下无疑都是无法逃生的，所以不妨再等些日子。

然而，庞库那夫非常固执，一刻不停地缠着史密斯，直到史密斯答应他才作罢。

对于这一点，史佩莱倒是非常支持庞库那夫的。

“岛上有没有猛兽我们不知道，如果有的话，我们必须做好和它们

斗争的准备，将它们消灭，所以制造枪这事，肯定有一天会成为我们的首要任务。”史佩莱说。

不过截至目前，史密斯考虑的并不是武器，而是衣服。这一个冬天，居民们依靠身上的衣服熬了下来，但很明显，这身衣服不可能维持到第二年冬天。他们现在不管用什么代价，一定要得到一些食肉动物的皮毛，然后做衣服。

他们曾发现过莫伏鹿羊，所以大家也一致同意去捉这种羊。甚至觉得如果能够饲养下来，对他们必定是有好处的。所以此刻，他们还需要开辟一个饲养牲畜和家禽的地方。一句话，他们要在岛上建饲养场。

这两件事，才是天气转暖后，他们必须尽快做的事。

为了接下来的这两项工作，他们必须深入到林肯岛的每个地方，特别是他们没有去过的地方，这些地方包括感恩河右岸从河口到蛇盘半岛的那大片密林，以及海岛西部……不过，去这两个地方，他们必须选择一个好天气，也就是说，大概要在一个月之后才能进行。

于是，他们又开始了焦急的等待，而在等待的过程中发生的一件事，让他们探索整个林肯岛的愿望更迫切了。

那天是10月24日。庞库那夫和往常一样去看他布下的陷阱。平时，他总是将食饵好好地放在坑里。这次当他去的时候，竟然发现了一只母畜乳和它的两个小崽子。

这可是能够放在他们食品室里的动物。庞库那夫高兴坏了，急忙捉住它们，并带回了“花岗宫殿”，还得意地向大家炫耀了一番。

“看吧，我们又可以大吃一顿了。史密斯先生！史佩莱，还有你，

每个人都有份。”

“看你这么高兴，我也高兴，可你要请我吃什么呢？”史佩莱说。

“当然是烤小猪了。”

“哦？是烤小猪吗？庞库那夫，我开始还以为你带回来的是塞满了松露的小松鸡呢。”

“怎么？你不喜欢烤小猪？”庞库那夫不满地大叫。

“那倒不是。如果不是有些吃腻的话……”史佩莱说。他有些失望。

“嗯，你说得对！都是你说得对！”庞库那夫说，他对自己拿回来的野味不受欢迎而感到有些不开心，嘟囔道，“你还真不好伺候，如果是我们刚刚登岛时的7月份，你看到了这种野味，不开心死才怪。”

“不说了，不说了！人嘛，都有这缺点，总是处于不满足中。”史佩莱笑着说。

“好了，现在该轮到那普展现他的手艺了。你们看看，这两只小猪还不到三个月，简直就像鹌鹑一样嫩。那普！快来吧，我可要亲自看你烹饪。”庞库那夫喊道。

于是，庞库那夫和那普拿着小猪去了厨房，并用心地烹饪起来。

结果，那普果然拿它们做了一顿精美的晚餐。丰盛的晚餐包括两只烤乳猪，一只袋鼠做的汤，一只熏腿，还有南欧松子和薄荷茶。确实，这已经是他们最好的食物了。而在这顿美味佳肴中，最好吃的就要数那两只烤乳猪了。

五点钟的时候，居民们在“花岗宫殿”的餐厅里，先是喝了冒着热气的美味袋鼠汤，接着又吃了烤乳猪。庞库那夫亲自为大家分割，并给每个人分了一大块。

烤乳猪肉非常好吃，庞库那夫吃得狼吞虎咽，正吃得高兴，突然他一声大叫，接着又骂了一句什么。

“怎么啦？”史密斯问。

“这是什么？这是怎么回事？把我的牙都崩掉了。”庞库那夫说。

“是什么崩的？烤乳猪里难道还有石头吗？”史佩莱说。

“大概是吧！”庞库那夫一边说，一边从嘴里取出了一个东西，那是崩掉了他牙齿的东西……

当然，崩掉他牙齿的不是石头，而是一颗铅弹。

第二部 隔壁荒岛上的人

第一章

七个月前，一群逃亡者从气球上降落到了林肯岛。

在这七个月里，他们虽然四处搜索，但却从未发现有人，也从未发现有人升起过炊烟，更没有找到一点人行动后留下的痕迹。

这一切的一切，都好像是在告诉他们：这里没有人居住，从来都没有。

在这群曾经的遇难者，现在的居民不得不得出“林肯岛上除了我们之外，没有其他人，而且从未有过其他人”结论时，庞库那夫却吃到了一颗子弹。

这个结论，马上就被他们推翻了。

这颗子弹是从一只小野猪身上找到的，这只没有能力伤人的小野猪，身体里的子弹来自一支枪管。也就是说，这颗子弹是从一把枪里发射出来的，射进了小野猪的身体。

毫无疑问，只有人类才可能使用这样的武器。

在庞库那夫将那颗子弹放在桌子上时，伙伴们都惊呆了。虽然那颗子弹是那么平淡无奇，但他们很快就联系到了很多事情，这些事情比白

天见鬼还让他们震惊。

史密斯很容易就将这件怪事和之前发生的一系列怪事联系到了一起。他拿起子弹，在手指间反复地转着、看着，随即转身问庞库那夫：

“你能肯定带有这颗子弹的畜乳只有三个月吗？”

“能肯定，绝对不会再大。史密斯先生，当我在陷阱里面发现它们的时候，它们还在吃奶呢。”庞库那夫说。

“很好，那现在足以说明，在这三个月里，有人曾在林肯岛上开过枪。”

“不仅开过枪，而且还是在打这只小野猪。虽然这只小野猪没死，但却受伤了。”史佩莱说。

“这是肯定的。根据这件事，我们不妨作个推断：我们来到这里之前，岛上是有人的。如果没有人，也可以说，在这三个月之内，有人在这里着陆过。那么，这些人是有目的地来这些地方，还是偶然来到这里的呢？是乘船过来的还是因遇险不得不来这里呢？这些都是我们要想办法弄明白的事。至于这些人是什么人，是欧洲人还是马来人，是朋友还是敌人，我们无法得知。而他们现在是不是已经离开了这个岛屿，我们也不清楚。不过，这些问题非常重要，我们必须尽快弄清。”

史密斯的话音刚落，庞库那夫就从桌旁跳了起来，大声嚷着：“不可能，绝对不可能。林肯岛上除了我们之外，绝对不会有别人的，我敢发誓，不会有人。海岛就这么大，如果真有人，怎么没发现他们？不可能，绝对不可能！”

“如果没人，那就更怪了！”赫伯特说。

“如果这只畜乳身体里生来就有一颗子弹，那就更奇怪了。”史佩莱说。

“除非，子弹是庞库那夫嘴……”那普神情严肃，话没说完，庞库那夫便打断了他的话。

“那普，你看看，你看看，我的下巴颏里能有子弹吗？如果有还能五六个月发现不了？”庞库那夫说着话，张开了大嘴，露出32颗牙齿。

“你好好看看，那普，你看能从我嘴里找出一个窟窿吗？找到一个，我就拔6颗牙齿给你。”

史密斯虽然心事重重，却也被那普和庞库那夫逗笑了。他说：“那普的假设肯定不对，我能肯定的是，在三个月内，曾有人在海岛上开过枪。我想，这些人也许是不久前才登岛的，也许他们只是路过，因为我们曾在富兰克林山顶端俯瞰全岛。要是真有人的话，我们不会看不到的。而且这些人很可能是几星期前才出现的，也许是被大风暴吹到这里来的。当然，不管怎么说，我们都必须把这件事弄清楚，这是非常重要的一件事。”

“我觉得我们有必要小心一点！”史佩莱说。

“是的，这正是我想告诉大家的。说不定是海盗呢。”史密斯说。

“那么，史密斯先生，”庞库那夫用少有的严肃语气说，“我们来造一只平底船怎么样？这样我们就可以任意搜寻全岛了。我们必须做好准备，不做准备不行。”

“庞库那夫，你的建议很好。不过现在我们来不及了，造船的话，

怎么也要一个月时间。”史密斯说。

“那是不错，但用一个月造的是正规船。我们不需要航海用的船，我们就造一只平底船。我敢说，只要五天，只要五天就能造好。我们只在感恩河上航行就行了。”庞库那夫说。

“五天就能造一只船？”那普不相信。

“是的，五天能造一只船，一只印第安人的船。”

“船是木头的？”那普还是觉得不可能。

“当然。不过，更准确一点说应该是树皮的。我再说一遍，五天一定能完成，史密斯先生。”庞库那夫加重了语气。

“五天？那好，干吧！”史密斯最后说。

“不过在这期间，我们一定要多加小心才是。”赫伯特说。

“的确是这样。朋友们，我要求大家，即使是打猎，也不能离‘花岗宫殿’太远。”史密斯叮嘱大家。

在紧张的氛围中，居民们吃完了晚饭。

这顿饭吃得让庞库那夫很扫兴，而在这顿饭后，居民们重新得出了一个结论：荒岛上还有除他们之外的人，或者曾有人来过。枪弹说明了一切。这一结论不容置疑。

当然，这一结论的得出，让居民们处在了提心吊胆中。

这天晚上临睡前，史密斯和史佩莱聊了很久，他们不断地重复着一

些问题，这些问题和史密斯难以想象的获救，以及他们屡次遇到的怪事之间到底有没有关系呢？史密斯在经过一番思索后问道：“有一句话我想和你说，亲爱的史佩莱，你愿意听听我的想法吗？”

“当然愿意，赛莱斯。”

“我的想法就是，即使我们在岛上搜索的时间再长，也不会发现什么的。”

造平底船的工作，庞库那夫第二天就开始了。他并没有打算造一只甲板和船舷都有的船，他要造的只是一只只能在感恩河上航行的平底船。当然，最主要的是，这船一定要能通过河水较浅的地方，也就是说要能在这条河的发源地航行。

平底船不难造，只需将树皮一个挨一个地连接起来，一艘轻便的小船便造成了。如果这只船遇到了什么障碍，必须要搬运的话，也非常方便。

于是，庞库那夫决定用钉子将这一片片的树皮钉起来，以保证平底船不漏水。

造船的树皮需要非常坚韧，所以在选择树木上他们也很小心。上次的暴风曾将很多高大的桦树刮倒了，那树皮正是他们需要的。

由于很多桦树倒在地上，所以他们只需将树皮剥掉就行了。不过最难的是他们没有好用的工具，但最终还是克服了重重困难。

庞库那夫在史密斯的帮助下，不停歇地干着。史佩莱和赫伯特也没闲着，他们负责给大家提供足够的食物。

赫伯特娴熟地使用起了弓箭和鱼叉，让史佩莱很是佩服。同时，赫伯特的勇敢和渊博的知识，也让史佩莱很是惊讶。

当然，出去打猎，他们还是遵从了史密斯的建议，没有离开“花岗宫殿”超过两英里。即便是这样，他们还是从森林的边缘，猎到了大量的刺鼠、水豚、袋鼠和畜乳等等。

虽然他们设的那些陷阱已经不如冬天有效了，不过兔子窝依然给林肯岛的居民们提供着日常的食物。

10月26日，赫伯特和史佩莱在去打猎的路上，聊起了史密斯发现枪弹时的推论。

“史佩莱先生，你不觉得奇怪吗？如果真有其他入登了岛，为什么没有靠近我们的‘花岗宫殿’？”

“如果这些人还在岛上，却又不靠近‘花岗宫殿’，这是有些奇怪；但如果他们已经不在岛上了，那就没什么奇怪的了。”史佩莱说。

“什么意思？你是说这些人已经离开荒岛了？”赫伯特反问。

“很有可能是这样的，孩子。他们很可能在这里逗留的时间很短。如果逗留的时间长，特别是现在还在的话，他们是一定会暴露行踪的。”

“可如果他们能离开这里，还算是遇难者吗？不算了吧？”赫伯特又说。

“这句话说得好！赫伯特，但至少他们算临时遇难者。有可能是风暴将他们吹到了这里，等风暴一过，他们那没受什么损坏的船就又能航

行了，所以他们走了。”史佩莱说。

“我觉得有一点是肯定的，那就是史密斯先生好像不希望岛上有人，或者害怕岛上有人。”赫伯特说。

“很明显，能从海上来到这里的，很有可能是马来人。这些人不好对付，见了最好躲开。”史佩莱说。

“也许什么时候我们会发现他们登岛的痕迹，你说是吗？史佩莱先生？”赫伯特又说。

“那是肯定的了，孩子。这也是我们接下来要探寻的。只要他们留下一个帐篷，或是一点烟火灰烬，我们也能追寻到他们的踪迹。”

说这些话的时候，他们正好在感恩河附近的美丽森林里。森林里屹立着很多高达200英尺的松树，这些松树又被新西兰的土人称为加列松。

“我有一个想法，史佩莱先生，如果我们爬到一棵加列松上的话，说不定能看到周围的很多景物。”赫伯特说。

“好主意！不过这么高的树，你能爬得上去吗？”史佩莱问。

“我试试吧！”赫伯特说完，便像个敏捷的猴子，朝树上纵身一跳，攀上了几根树枝。树枝的分杈很多，所以他爬的时候并不是很困难。几分钟之后，赫伯特爬上了树顶，处在了绿色平原的最高处。

居高临下的赫伯特，很容易就从海岛东南方的兽爪角看到了西南的甩尾角。而由于富兰克林山的高耸，海岛西北边被很大一部分地平线遮住了。从这高高的瞭望台上，赫伯特看到了岛上他们没有探测过的地

方。这些地方会不会就是那些陌生人的藏身之地呢？

赫伯特仔细地看。海上看不出有什么，不管是水平线还是海岛周围，完全看不到一只船。不过，还是有一段海岸被树木遮挡住了，所以即使有只船在那里，特别是当它没有桅杆时，即便靠近了海岸，他也是看不到的。

在向西遥森林里看时，也是什么都没有看到。树木在那里形成了一道道厚厚的屏幕，密得没有一丝缝隙，足足有好几平方英里。他再顺着感恩河向上看，就连确定它的源头在深山的什么地方都困难，所以也许会有小河水在向西流也说不定。

不过话又说回来了，赫伯特就是将宿营的迹象全忽略掉，难道连一缕轻烟也看不到吗？不可能的，因为天气晴朗，即使只有薄薄的轻烟，他也会很容易发现的。

这么一想，在一瞬间，他好像看到在西方有一缕薄烟，不过当他定睛看时才发现是自己看花眼了。他又尽量用自己那敏锐的视觉，朝四面八方看，他很肯定，他能看到的地方什么都没有。

赫伯特从加列松上下来，和史佩莱一起回到了“花岗宫殿”。当他们向史密斯汇报查看的情况后，史密斯只是轻轻摇了摇头，一句话都没有说。显然，他认为在彻查林肯岛之前，他是不会对这个问题下结论的。

不过，在两天后的10月28日，他们又发现了一件不可思议的事。

那天，赫伯特和那普沿着海岸到距离“花岗宫殿”大约两英里的地方散步，突然发现了一只龟。这是迈答斯的一种食用绿海龟，它们的壳和肉都是绿色的。

这只海龟当时正在从乱石堆向海里爬，正巧被赫伯特看见了。

“快，那普，快帮帮我！”赫伯特喊着。

那普跑过来看到了绿海龟。

“太漂亮了！可我们怎么才能捉住它呢？”那普说。

“没什么难的，那普！”赫伯特说，“只要我们将它的肚皮朝上翻，它就逃不掉了。你拿着鱼叉，看我怎么做你就怎么做！”

而此时，这只绿海龟也已经意识到了危险，将头和脚往硬壳里一缩，顿时像一块石头，趴在那里不动了。

赫伯特和那普将他们手里的叉子伸向海龟的身子底下，然后一起使劲，很快就将它翻了过来。海龟长度大约3英尺，体重至少有400斤。

“太好了！太好了！庞库那夫看见的话，一定高兴死了。”那普喊道。

确实，庞库那夫要是看到它，一定会很高兴的。因为这种海龟是吃海藻长大的，味道非常鲜美。被翻转过来的海龟，脑袋露了出来。由于它的头上长着上颚骨，前面小而且扁，又隐藏在下颚骨下，所以脑袋显得尤其粗大。

“现在要如何处置我们的猎物呢？是想法把它拖回我们的‘花岗宫殿’吗？”那普问。

“反正它是翻不回去了，我们就先留它在这里吧。回头把大车拉来，拖它回去。”赫伯特说。

“是个好主意！”那普说。

为了确保万无一失，赫伯特还不嫌麻烦地在海龟的身旁砌起了石头，将它紧紧地夹在那里。虽然那普觉得他这么做有些多此一举，但赫伯特还是坚持去做。

于是，两个人沿着海滩回到了“花岗宫殿”。赫伯特为了给庞库那夫一个惊喜，丝毫没提那只被他们做上了记号的上等海龟。

不过，当两个小时后，他们拉着车想去拖海龟回来时，却发现海龟不见了。

那普和赫伯特当时就面面相觑，四下察看，看是不是记错了地方。但最后发现完全没记错，海龟就是放在那里的。赫伯特甚至还看到了他夹那只海龟的那些石头，所以他完全可以肯定他们没找错地方。

“看来，是海龟自己翻身逃了。”那普说。

“也许是吧！”赫伯特虽然这么说，但却仍然很疑惑，呆呆地看着他夹海龟的石头发愣。

“庞库那夫要失望了！”那普说。

“就是史密斯先生，对海龟的失踪也会莫名其妙的。”赫伯特暗想。

“赫伯特，听着，千万不要和别人说起。”那普说。他怕别人笑话他们。

“不行，我们非说不可。”赫伯特说。

拉来的大车完全没用了，他们只能拉着空车又回去。

那时候，史密斯和庞库那夫正在造船，当赫伯特把经过向他们叙述了一遍后，庞库那夫大喊：“唉！真是两个大傻瓜，我看这下可丧失了五十顿饭呢。”

“可是庞库那夫，这不能怪我们。我刚刚说了，我们把它翻过去了。”那普说。

“那就是翻得不彻底！”庞库那夫说。

“不彻底？”赫伯特不同意这种说法，重新又将他是如何小心地用石头把海龟砌在中间的事说了一遍。

“这就有些奇怪了。”庞库那夫说。

“史密斯先生，你说海龟的身子仰过来，还爬得起来吗？肯定爬不起来吧，特别是大海龟。”赫伯特说。

“是这样的，孩子！”史密斯说。

“可它怎么就不见了呢？”赫伯特说。

“你们放海龟的地方，离大海有多远？”史密斯问。他停下了工作，思索起来。

“应该不到50英尺吧！”赫伯特说。

“当时是低潮？”

“对，是低潮，史密斯先生。”

“好了，很明显，海龟在海滩上办不到的事，在水里一样办不到。

但是在涨潮的时候，却能翻转过来，并游到大海深处。”史密斯说。

“啊，是这样啊，那我们就真是个傻瓜了。”那普大声说。

“不错，是傻瓜，我刚才就这么说你们了。”庞库那夫加了一句。

史密斯的这个解释看似非常合理，可他真的认可自己的解释吗？

未必吧！

第二章

10月29日，庞库那夫保证的五天内造一只树皮平底船的计划顺利完成。

这只轻舟长12英尺，重不到200斤。船身是由一种叫“卡拉经帕”的树的柔韧细枝做成的，共有三个座位，为了保持平衡，三个座位分别在船头、中间和船尾。

除此之外，这只轻舟还有两个船桨和一个掌握方向用的尾橹。

这只平底船下水很容易，只需将它放在“花岗宫殿”前的沙滩上，待潮水上涨的时候，船就会浮起来。

在做试验的时候，庞库那夫兴奋地跳上去，一边对这只船大加赞美，一边拿着橹摇了起来。他放声大笑，为自己的胜利完工而欢呼。

“这只船，我们可以用它来环游……”

庞库那夫的话还没说完，只听史佩莱说：“环游全世界？”

“不，我可没说全世界，我是说全岛。我们可以找一些压舱石头，还要竖起一根桅杆，等过几天，史密斯再为我们做一面帆……这样的话，我们就能信心十足地出航了。史密斯先生，有你，史佩莱先生，还有你，还有赫伯特，那普，还有你，你们都来试试我们的新船吧！快来呀，试试看，看能不能坐下我们五个人。”

这船确实需要先试一下。庞库那夫通过岩石间的水道，将平底船摇到了岸边。他们商量着，准备沿海岸将船划到第一海角，也就是南部岩石的尽头去。这条路线，算是他们第一次试航路线。

在居民们刚刚上船后，那普就开始大喊：

“庞库那夫，你的船有些漏水。”

“没事的。那普，这些木头是会自己密合的。再过两天，两天之内，肯定连一条缝都没有了。到那时候，我们船里的进水量，就会比酒鬼胃里的还要少。快跳进来吧！”

在大家都坐上船后，庞库那夫划开了桨。

天气晴朗，没有一丝风的海面风平浪静。坐着船在海上行驶，犹如在湖水里行驶一样，又有些像是在平静的感恩河逆流而上，非常安全。

那普和赫伯特各拿一支桨划着，庞库那夫则坐在船尾摇着橹。

他们让船穿过海峡，到了小岛的南端。有微风从南方吹来，不过，

不管是他们航行在海峡还是在碧蓝大海，微风都没有引起惊涛骇浪，只是在海面上泛起微波。不过，因为船上人多，载重量大，也没人能感受到波浪的力量。在划到离岸约一英里的时候，他们停了下来，打算好好看看富兰克林山。

看完富兰克林山，他们又将船划到了河口。平底船沿岸开始航行，海岸似乎将花皂的沼泽地全都遮住了，一直伸向尽头的海角。

由于海岸线曲折，海角距离感恩河有近3英里的路程。即使这样，他们还是决定将船划到海角去。如果有需要的话，他们还想划得更远，以便更好地了解兽爪角一带的海滨。

平底船沿着曲折的海岸线航行，绕过了被潮水淹没的礁石。他们看到，由花岗石形成的峭壁是从河口处逐渐向海角倾斜的，东一堆西一堆地散布着，完全和观望壁的峭壁不同。这种荒凉的景观，让他们感觉好像有人曾在这里开采过，遭到遗弃才如此凋零。

森林到向外突出的陡峭海角长达两英里，上面没有任何植物，形状很像从枝叶茂密的森林里伸出来的一只巨大胳膊。

平底船在顺利地向前划行。史佩莱手拿铅笔，不停地在笔记本上画着什么，很快，海岸的轮廓就清晰地出现在了纸上。那普和赫伯特、庞库那夫一边划船一边聊着，并不时地观察着这块他们从没到过的新领地。随着平底船的向南航行，颚角的南北处好像也开始了移动，并将联合湾紧紧地包围了起来。

坐在船上的史密斯一直没有说话，他只是带着种种疑虑，神情专注地观察着这个陌生的地方。

平底船在又前行了大约45分钟后，他们到了海角的顶点。在庞库那夫正准备掉转船头时，赫伯特突然站了起来，指着一块黑黑的东西说：“快看，那边的海岸上有什么？”

大家一起朝他指的地方看去。

“好像真有东西，是残破的船骸吗？好像有一半还陷在泥沙里呢。”史佩莱说。

“天啊，我明白了！”庞库那夫大喊。

“你明白什么了？”那普问。

“那是木桶，那一定是木桶，也许里面还有东西呢。”庞库那夫说。

“靠岸吧！庞库那夫。”史密斯说。

仅仅划了几桨，平底船就进了一条小河，船上的几个人全都跳上了岸。

庞库那夫说的是对的，那是木桶，而且有两只，正半埋在沙里。不过，除了两个木桶外，他们还看到了绑在木桶上的一只大箱子。想必这只箱子就是因为木桶浮力的支撑，才能在海面上漂浮，最后又被搁浅在了海滩上。

“这么说，荒岛上确实有过遇难的船了？”赫伯特说。

“没错，一定有过。”史佩莱答道。

“这箱子里会有什么呢？”庞库那夫一边问着，一边查看箱子。

“锁着呢，没关系，我们可以把它砸开！用什么砸？用石头……”庞库那夫自说自话，举起了一块石头，正打算往下砸，却被史密斯拦住了。

“庞库那夫，能等一会儿再砸吗？就等一个小时。”

“为什么要等？史密斯先生，也许这箱子里有我们需要的东西。”

“我们肯定会打开箱子看的。不过庞库那夫，先不要将它毁坏，先交给我，我们可能用得着。我们现在先将它带回‘花岗宫殿’，到了那里我们不需要砸锁就能打开这箱子。这箱子带起来也不费事，既然能够漂到这里来，肯定也会漂到河口去的。”史密斯说。

“没错，史密斯先生，看来我又冲动了。不过人难免会控制不了自己。”庞库那夫解嘲说。

史密斯说得绝对没错，确实是这样，箱子既然需要两只空桶才能漂浮，那么可见还是有一定重量的。将箱子放在平底船上，显然很麻烦，而且很可能船载不动。所以最好的办法就是让它在水面上漂，然后将它拉到“花岗宫殿”的沙滩上。

不过，这只箱子是从什么地方来的？这个问题非常重要。史密斯和他的伙伴们在四处认真观察了一番后，又去了几百步以外的海岸，但再也没找到遇难船只的其他遗物了。

赫伯特和那普爬上了一块高高的山石，依然没有看到任何东西，比如像折断桅杆的孤舟，或者是没有扬帆的船只等等。

但能够肯定的是，这岛上有过遇难船只。而且，想必也和枪弹事件有关。也许遇难船里的人在荒岛的其他地方登陆过，甚至很有可能还在

这里。而同时，他们又想起了一点，那就是：那些遇难者不可能是海盗，因为这只箱子是欧美制造的，不可能是海盗的东西。

大家全都围在这只硕大的箱子旁，四下打量着。这是只橡木箱子，箱子密封得很严，箱盖外面包着一层很厚的兽皮，并用铜钉牢牢地钉着。用手敲的时候，会发出空洞的声音。两只木桶被牢牢地拴在了箱子的两边，绳子的结打得非常好。

庞库那夫在看了那个结后说，只有水手才会系这样的结。整个箱子没有丝毫破损，从它只是搁浅在沙滩，没有撞在乱石上就能说明这点。

经过一番仔细观察后，他们得出结论：箱子在水里的时间并不长，甚至可以说是上岸不久。因为海水好像并没有渗进箱子里去，有可能箱内的东西也没有损坏。

现在的这种情景表明，很可能曾有只折了桅杆的船在荒岛附近漂浮，有人将这只箱子扔了出来。船上的人是想让箱子漂到陆地，以后再来找回去。

“我们现在就把箱子拖回‘花岗宫殿’，到时候就能打开箱子看看里面有些什么了。如果我们最后遇到了从遇难船只中逃生的人，就把箱子还回去。如果找不到……”

“那就是我们的了。”史密斯还没说完，庞库那夫就大声发表自己的想法，说完又嘀咕了一句，“可是里面都有些什么呢？”

海潮已经逐渐接近箱子了，很快就会把它浮起来。居民们急忙用一根绳子，将箱子拴在了平底船后面。之后，庞库那夫和那普用桨挖开了泥沙，以便让箱子移动时更方便点。

最后，平底船拖着那只箱子，绕过了遗留箱子的地方，这里也被他们取名叫拾箱角。

箱子很重，两只木桶只能勉强使它浮在水面上。庞库那夫时刻担心箱子会脱扣而沉到海底。当然，他的顾虑是多余的。在他们划了半个多小时后，航行了3英里的他们在“花岗宫殿”下面靠岸了。

平底船和木箱子一起被拖上了沙滩。此时正值退潮，他们很快就到了潮水涨不上来的地方。那普急忙去“花岗宫殿”取来工具，他们要让箱子完好无损地打开，然后再清点里面有些什么。

在做这一系列准备工作的时候，庞库那夫一直处在兴奋中。他先将两个木桶卸了下来。木桶完整无缺，他们以后还能用。随后，他又用凿子、锤子将箱子的锁打开。在箱盖打开后，他们发现，箱子的内壁还衬着一些锌皮，想必是为了防止箱子里的东西受潮所设计的。

“这里面会是什么？说不定会是罐头！”那普大声说。

“但愿不是罐头。”史佩莱说。

“如果是……”庞库那夫的声音很轻。

“是什么？”那普听到了，忙问。

“没什么！”庞库那夫不愿意说。

他撕开皮箱里的那层锌皮，先将它放在了箱子上，然后又取出箱子里的东西放在沙滩上。每当拿起一样东西时，庞库那夫都要欢呼几声。看到这些东西，赫伯特也是兴奋地直拍手，那普更是在旁边跳起了舞。

在看到箱子里还有书时，赫伯特更高兴了，而见箱子里还有厨房用品，那普高举起来，放在嘴上不停地亲吻。

总之，箱子里的东西很多很杂，好像是为了不让每个人失望似的，里面有工具、武器、仪器、衣服，甚至还有书籍，样样俱全。史佩莱将这些东西全部记在了笔记本上。

工具有：三把小刀，两把砍柴用的斧子，两把木工用的斧子，三个刨子，两个铰子，一把鹤嘴锄，六把凿子，两把锉，三把锤子，三把螺丝起子，两把钻孔锥，十袋洋钉、螺丝钉，三把大小不同的锯子，22厘针……

武器有：两支燧发枪，两支撞针枪，两支后膛马枪，五把尖刀，四把马刀，两桶每桶25斤的火药，12箱雷管……

仪器有：一个六分仪，一副双筒望远镜，一架长筒望远镜，一匣绘图仪，一个航海指南针，一只华氏寒暑表，一只无液晴雨表，一只装有照相器材、物透镜、感光板、药品的匣子……

衣服有：两打类似于羊毛，实为植物纤维的衬衫；三打长袜……

生活用品有：一只铁汤罐，六把带柄小铜锅，三只铁盘，十只钢精匙子，十只钢精叉子，两把水壶，一个轻便火炉，六把餐刀……

书籍有：《圣经》、地图、《波利尼西亚成语辞典》各一本，《自然科学》共六本，三沓白纸，两本空白笔记本……

“看箱子里的东西，我们不难看出，主人一定是个生活经历丰富的人。看这些东西，什么工具、武器、仪器、衣服、生活用品、书籍……什么都不缺。好像料定自己会遇险，所以才准备的似的。”史佩莱在清

点完这些东西时说。

“真是这样，什么都有。”史密斯若有所思。

“是不是能够肯定，箱子的主人不是海盗了？”赫伯特问。

“肯定不是。当然，除非箱子的主人被海盗抓住了，然后又被抢了箱子……”庞库那夫说。

“这不可能。箱子的主人应该是乘坐欧美船只时，遇到了暴风，无奈被风吹到了这里。也许这些东西是乘客保留下的必需品，所以才会被扔在海里，并拴上了木桶。”史佩莱说。

“这个看法您是否同意？史密斯先生。”赫伯特问。

“同意，孩子。我想应该是这样：当他们遇险时，或者意识到自己将要遇到危险的时候，他们马上将各种各样有用的东西收集了起来，放在了一个箱子里，最后希望事后能在海岸上找到……”史密斯还没说完，庞库那夫就插话道：“难道他们连照相器材的匣子也要收集起来？”

“嗯，对于这些照相器材，确实很难说为什么要留着。如果多放一些衣物或火药，我觉得更符合常理。”史密斯说。

“可惜这些仪器、工具和书籍上没有任何记号，不然我们可以查出他们的来历。”史佩莱又说。

确实如史佩莱所说，所有的东西，包括书籍、用品、工具、武器，在经过他们的仔细检查后发现，没有一个东西有牌子。

更奇怪的是，这些东西就像新的一样，好像从没有用过。从这一点

上来看，这些东西应该不是随随便便扔在箱子里的，而是经过了慎重考虑，精挑细选装进去的。同时，还有一件事足以说明这一点，那就是，箱子里的东西为了防潮，还用锌皮保护着。如果是慌乱中收集的，是不可能有工夫进行金属的焊接的。

更何况，箱子里的《自然科学》和《波利尼西亚成语辞典》都是英文书籍，但却既没有出版日期，也没有出版者姓名。像那本英文四开本《圣经》，不仅没有出版日期和出版者姓名，而且印刷独特。

特别是那本地图，印刷、设计和内容都特别精致，里面不仅有世界各国的分图，而且还有几幅地球平面图，都是根据麦卡托投影法制作而成的。内文用的是法文，同样没有出版日期和出版者名字。

因此，从这些东西上，他们没有找到丝毫线索。不过，有只船曾在附近航行，这一点却是不容怀疑的。但这群人来自什么地方，是哪个国家的人，他们却一点儿都看不出来。

当然，抛开这些疑问，这只箱子的到来，倒是给林肯岛上的这些居民提供了很多东西。虽然之前，他们凭借自己的智慧，利用自然界，也制造了很多东西，但现在一下子又凭空多了这些文明世界使用的东西，还是让他们非常开心，好像上天要帮助他们，故意给他们带来的似的。

他们不禁又感激起上苍来。

当然，在这些人中，还有个人有些失望。这个人就是庞库那夫。

箱子里什么都有，就是没有他最期待的东西。在他翻到箱底，还没有看到他想要的东西时，欢呼声也不如刚开始热烈了。当清点完这些东西后，他失望地喃喃道：

“东西是都不错，可你们看到没有？根本没有我最想要的东西嘛！”

“你想要什么？庞库那夫？”那普问。

“怎么也应该有烟草嘛，半斤烟草我也就满足了嘛！”庞库那夫严肃地说。

几个人忍不住笑了起来。

在发现这只箱子后，大家更加确定要彻底搜查林肯岛了。而且经过商议后认定，第二天天一亮就出发。他们要沿着感恩河向上游进发，直到西海岸。他们甚至还想到，如果真的遇到了那些遇难的人，他们会毫不迟疑地去帮助他们，解救他们的。

商量完后，在天黑之前，居民们把从箱子里拿到的各种物品搬进了“花岗宫殿”，并有条理地放在了大厅里。

这一天是10月29日，也是个星期日。临睡前，赫伯特要求史密斯给大家念段《福音》。

“好的！”史密斯说。

他拿出了箱子里的那本《圣经》，正要打开时，庞库那夫喊：“等等！史密斯先生，我是个迷信的人。你先随便翻一页，然后把第一行的字念出来，我看看和我们的遭遇是不是吻合。”

史密斯微微一笑，按照庞库那夫的意思，随手翻了一页，而这一页，正好又夹着一个书签。

他发现，在《马太福音》第七章第八节，有用铅笔画的红十字。于

是，他将第一行念了出来：“凡祈求的，就能得到；寻找的，就能寻见。”

第三章

10月30日，大家开始为预定的全岛搜索做准备。

近期发生的很多事情，让他们的搜寻变得有意义了很多。确实是这样，如今的情况和原来不一样了，现在他们不但不再需要别人的帮助，而且还可以去帮助别人。所以大家一致同意：只要行得通，他们会尽可能地感恩河上游前行。

因此，此次的搜寻很可能要去很远的地方。如果需要，他们甚至还想把粮食和武器都运到荒岛的西边去。

现在，他们出发前不仅需要考虑带什么东西走，还要考虑能带些什么东西回来。如果真像他们猜测的，海滩上发现了遇险船只的话，那么，将会有大量遗留物品需要他们搬回来。这样的话，大车就比平底船更有用了。不过，大车太过笨重，拉起来很不方便，这又让庞库那夫充满了遗憾。如果说刚打开箱子，遗憾的是箱子里没有他最爱的“半斤烟草”的话，那么现在他遗憾的就是箱子里少了两匹新泽西的壮马。因为强壮的马对现在的他们来说，实在是太有用了。

那普将足够他们吃三天的食物装了起来，除了大量肉类之外还带了几加仑的啤酒。三天是史密斯规定的最长搜寻期限。此外，他们还计划

一路上给食物做些补充，所以也携带上了轻便的火炉。

另外他们还带了两把砍柴的斧子，以便过密林时开路用。还有望远镜和袖珍指南针这些仪器，他们都没有忘记带。

除了需要的工具和仪器外，他们还带了两支燧发枪。他们觉得，此次搜寻带燧发枪比带撞针枪更合适。燧发枪需要的是火石，他们随时可以装，而撞针枪需要的是雷管，雷管是有，但却是有限的。如果雷管用完了，想要再做就麻烦多了。

随后，他们又带了一支马枪和一些弹药。对于火药，目前储存的仅有50斤，所以他们只稍稍带了一些。史密斯打算自己将来再制造一些炸药，以便节省下箱子里的这些火药。

除了这些武器，他们又带了五把尖刀，并将它们藏在了皮鞘里。

带着这样的装备，居民们信心满满地出发了。不用说，因为有了这样的装备，出行最高兴的要数庞库那夫、赫伯特和那普了。不过，史密斯还是让他们保证，不到万不得已，不能随便开枪。

早上六点钟的时候，居民们和多卜一起坐上了平底船，离开海岸向感恩河口行驶。

在他们出发前的半个小时里，潮水就开始涨了。涨潮还要维持几个小时，这对他们航行来说非常有利。而如果是退潮，他们的船会因为逆流而上出现一些困难，所以他们必须赶着涨潮前行。

这天正好处在月圆的三天之内，潮水涨得很凶猛，足够令船身始终保持在潮流中心，在高耸的两岸间快速前行，完全不需要靠双桨提速。

仅仅用了几分钟，他们便来到了感恩河的一个拐角处。在七个月前，庞库那夫曾经来过这里，而且还在这里制造过第一只木筏。

等他们过了这个拐角，河面一下子变得开阔起来，船只也从高大的绿树丛中飞快驶过。

感恩河两岸的景色异常秀丽，自然形成的河水和树木，有着不一样的美，令史密斯和他的伙伴们啧啧称奇。越往前走，树木的种类也就越多。特别是河右岸生长的那些被建筑师视为宝贝的榆树科植物，虽然长期浸泡在水里，却也没有腐烂。

还有一些其他科类的植物，其中较为特殊的是一种含着珍贵油料的果仁树。再往前走，赫伯特发现了一种木通科植物，这种盘藤灌木的枝条由于在水里浸泡过，所以就成了一种很好的索具。

同时，赫伯特还发现了一些带着美丽花纹的黑檀木。

找到了个平底船容易靠岸的地方，史佩莱、赫伯特和庞库那夫拿着枪，随着多卜上了岸去打野味。除了打猎，他们还想去采集一些有用的植物。赫伯特发现了一种藜科野生菠菜，以及一些白菜类的十字花科蔬菜。

因为这些蔬菜可以移植，他们非常高兴。还有一些水芹、萝卜以及一些一米多高、多毛多枝的草茎植物，这些植物结着褐色的种子。

“这些植物是什么你知道吗？”赫伯特问庞库那夫。

“难道是烟草？”庞库那夫大声说。对庞库那夫来说，没有什么植物能比装进他烟斗的烟草更令他高兴的了。

“不是，庞库那夫，它们是芥菜。”赫伯特说。

“管它是什么菜呢，孩子，如果碰到烟草，咱们可千万别错过了。”庞库那夫说。

“不要急，总有一天会为你找到烟草的。”史佩莱说。

“好吧，希望到那时候，我们已经不知道有什么不能从我们岛上找到了。”庞库那夫说。

对于那些能够移植的植物，他们小心翼翼地连根挖了起来，带回了平底船。此时，史密斯在船上正想着他的心事。

史佩莱、赫伯特和庞库那夫不断地上岸，他们有时会去感恩河的右岸，有时又会去感恩河的左岸。

感恩河的右岸树木非常茂盛，而左岸地势则比较平坦。史密斯看了一下携带的袖珍指南针，发现从河的方向到第一个拐弯处是从西南向东北拐的，这一段路中，有3英里左右是笔直的。

不过，当他们拐过了第一个弯之后，方向就发生了改变。感恩河的上游开始朝西北延伸，直到河流的发源地，也就是富兰克林山的支脉。

在几次登岸中，有次史佩莱竟然捉住了四只小鸟。这种小鸟的颈部很长，嘴巴薄且长，长着短短的翅膀，几乎没有尾巴。赫伯特称它们为鹌鹑，说它们可以饲养。就这样，这些鹌鹑也就成了他们未来家禽里的第一批客人。

直到此时，他们都没有开过一枪。

他们所开的第一枪是在西遥森林，那时候，他们发现了一种像翠鸟一样美丽的飞鸟。

“我知道这是什么鸟。”庞库那夫大声喊着，随即一直背着的枪也从肩膀上滑了下来。

“你知道这是什么？”史佩莱问。

“这是我们第一次打猎时，逃跑的那种飞鸟。我们还曾用它给那一带的森林命名呢。”

“你是说啄木鸟？”赫伯特喊。

确实是啄木鸟，它们的羽毛散发着一一种金属般的光泽。当他一枪打出去时，鸟便掉落了下来，多卜随即将它衔到了平底船上。随后，他们又打了很多吸蜜鹦鹉。这些吸蜜鹦鹉长得和鸽子差不多大小，羽毛是白色掺杂绿色，翅膀则是深红色的，冠毛处还镶着一道白边。

吸蜜鹦鹉是赫伯特打下来的，他非常开心，因为吸蜜鹦鹉比啄木鸟的肉质嫩。

当然，想要庞库那夫承认他打下的野味不是最好吃的，也不容易。

上午十点钟的时候，他们划着平底船，来到了离感恩河河口约5英里处的第二个拐角。在这里，他们决定暂时休息，并在树荫下吃饭。

这里河流的宽度有60到70英尺，河床深度在五六英尺左右。史密斯发现，这里的支流虽然多，但却只是一条小溪，船只根本无法在上面行驶。周围的森林，不管是啄木鸟林还是西遥森林，都是一眼望不到边的。在森林深处，以及他们坐下休息的感恩河岸边大树下，居民们丝毫

找不到人停留的蛛丝马迹。

因为不管是树木还是杂草丛生的灌木林，以及那些爬藤，均没有被刀砍过的痕迹。如果遇难者真的在荒岛生活过，他们应该不会已经离岸，但丛林中又确实无法找到这些脱险者们。

因此，史密斯急着想去的地方是林肯岛的西海岸。据他估算，从这里到他想去的目的地，至少有5英里路程。

于是，他们继续划着平底船前行。行进中，感恩河仿佛不是在朝着海岸流，而是在向着富兰克林山流。

他们已经打定了主意，只要河水能浮起船，他们就用平底船前行。这样既能省力，又不浪费时间。要直接走路的话，必须用斧子在密林中开路才行。

然而，助他们前行的潮水慢慢失去了作用，也许是因为退潮引起，也许是因为离感恩河的河口太远的缘故，总之，他们感觉不到海潮的流动了，船也无法顺流而行。赫伯特和那普人手一只桨，慢慢地划着，坐在船尾的庞库那夫也开始摇橹。

越往前走，树木越稀疏，时不时地，他们还会看到有孤零零的大树耸立在那里。但那孤独耸立的大树却又似乎因为相距太远的缘故，愈发显得美丽起来。想必是因为距离带给了树与树之间空气流动的机会，所以让它们长得越发枝繁叶茂。

这里的植物真是太美了，要是植物学家看到这些，一定会张口说出林肯岛所处的纬度。

“看，桉树！”赫伯特突然喊道。

说得没错，那正是美丽的桉树，是和澳大利亚、新西兰生长的桉树同属一类的树木。这是一种亚热带树木，高度为200英尺左右，光树干部位就达到了20英尺。这种树凹凸不平的树皮有5英寸厚，树皮内含有红色树脂，散发着阵阵芳香。

它属于叶子垂直生长，有着“爱神木”之称的桃金娘科，但长得如此之大还是很少见的。它和其他树的不同就在于是叶边而非叶面向上生长，所以很容易让阳光穿过树木透洒过来，也由此显得分外美丽。

桉树的底下绿油油的，一群小鸟从树下的灌木丛里振翅飞翔，叽叽喳喳的，美丽的翅膀像极了红宝石，在阳光下发着璀璨的光。

看着美丽的桉树，那普问：“这是一种乔木吧，它有什么作用呢？”

“嘿嘿……这些树就是一个个大胖子，看着好看，没用的。”庞库那夫说。

“庞库那夫，你说错了，桉树可是制造家具的上等木料。”史佩莱说。

“我需要再补充一点，桉树这一科有很多种类都是非常有用的。比如番石榴的果实能做果子酱；丁香树能制香料；安石榴能结石榴；柳金娘丁香树的果实能酿造美酒；乌葛杨梅内含有酒精；石竹科的杨梅树皮能制肉桂；尤琴椒树能造牙买加辣椒；普通杨梅嫩芽和果实能提取胡椒；有的桉树能提供香料；几内亚的桉树能发酵制啤酒……总之，澳大利亚的所有橡皮树、铁皮树，都是桃金娘科，有46属，1300多种。”

赫伯特说起植物学来，滔滔不绝。史密斯面带微笑地听着，庞库那夫也在心里为赫伯特骄傲。

“太好了！赫伯特，不过我敢说，这些树可绝不像你说的那么有用，它不是你说的品种。”

“是的，庞库那夫。”

“那就是我说对了？这树长这么多的树皮没什么用处。”庞库那夫说。

“那倒也不是。庞库那夫，现在我们头顶上的这些高大的桉树就有很多用处。”史密斯说。

“什么用处？”

“它们对人的身体可是大有好处的。知道在澳洲和新西兰，居民们把这种树叫什么吗？”

“不知道，叫什么？史密斯先生。”

“叫它们‘寒热病树’。”

“是说它们能传播寒热病吗？”

“不，恰恰相反，它们能预防寒热病。”

“哦，是这样呀。那我可要记下来了。”史佩莱说。

“嗯，记下来吧。亲爱的史佩莱，桉树是可以驱除瘴气的，这一点已经得到了证实。在中欧和北非，那里的土壤对人的身体健康很有害，这些能够自然解毒的树对当地的卫生条件大有改善，而且听说有这种桃金娘科森林的地区，连疟疾都没有了。所以这些树木的存在，对我们生

活在这个岛上，是非常有利的。”

“啊，现在看来，这个岛是真不错啊。太好了！我们在这岛上，什么都有，只是……”

庞库那夫的话没说完，史密斯便说：“庞库那夫，会有的，一切都会有的。我们现在继续往前走吧，河流允许我们去哪儿我们就去哪儿。”

他们划着船，继续向前行进了大约两个小时。行驶过的地方长满了桉树，看来，桉树是荒岛的这部分森林中的主要树木。

感恩河一直向前延伸，弯弯曲曲的。河两岸是高高的陡坡，上面绿茵茵一片，全是看不到边的桉树。行驶中，河床里出现了很多突出的岩石，也有很长的水草，给行驶中的平底船增加了难度。

划桨越来越困难，庞库那夫只好用长竿撑船。但河水愈来愈浅，眼看着平底船就要没办法向前行驶了。

太阳向水平线渐渐下沉，长长的树影满地都是。史密斯知道，想要很快到达荒岛的西岸是不可能了。离海滨差不多还有五六英里路，如果在黑夜穿越陌生丛林的话更不容易，于是便决定再往前行驶一段后就宿营。

森林越来越浓密，看来，这里是动物的聚集地。如果庞库那夫没看错的话，他似乎看到了很多猴子在树木间上蹿下跳。最后，有两三只猴子还到了他们的平底船旁，瞪眼看着他们，想必是第一次见人，并没有觉得害怕。

想要一枪打死一只猴子一点都不难，庞库那夫也很想试试，但史密

斯却不同意，他认为这是没有意义的屠杀。同时，猴子们非常机灵，如果无缘无故遭到侵犯，它们很可能会不顾危险地向他们进攻。

确实是这样，庞库那夫如果单纯从食物角度来看，这种食草动物也算是绝佳的美味，但他们现在食物非常充足，完全不必浪费火药。

四点钟的时候，受到越来越多的水草植物及岩石的阻碍，他们的平底船越来越难行进。河两岸越来越高，似乎快接近富兰克林山的支脉了。如今，他们离由南面山坡的涧水形成的感恩河的源头也更远了。

“不行了，在15分钟之内，我们的船非停不可。走不了了，史密斯先生。”庞库那夫说。

“那好，我们就停在这里吧。庞库那夫，我们需要扎营。”

“现在我们离‘花岗宫殿’有多远？”赫伯特问。

“如果将河道的弯曲度考虑在内的话，我们现在应该已经到了西北部7英里左右的地方了。”史密斯回答他。

“扎营？我们还要往前走？”史佩莱问。

“是的，我们必须前行，明天一早，我们不坐平底船，用两个小时的时间去海滨。因为只有这样，我们才会有充足的、一整天的时间去观察海岸。”史密斯说。

“好，那就在前面停船。”庞库那夫说。

平底船马上就要触到石头了，可以推算出河宽最多不超过20英尺。两岸丰茂的树木像是给河面搭起了凉棚，让整个河面都处在了半明半暗

中，影影绰绰的。他们好像听到了万马奔腾般的瀑布声，想必那也是几百英尺外上游的天然屏障吧。

河身突然拐了一个弯。坐在平底船上的他们，透过一些树木间隙，看到了那个瀑布。平底船再次触碰到了河底，他们不得不选择靠岸。几分钟后，他们的船停在了一棵大树下。

上岸后，已经快五点钟了。太阳的余晖洒落在浓密的枝叶间，照在了瀑布上，使那溅起的水珠变成了七道彩虹。如果再往前，感恩河就会在灌木丛中消失，那里就是它的发源地。由于无数支流的汇合，形成了一条河流，而又因为无数支流的分离，使这里变成了小溪。

这就是大自然的杰作。

周围的景色真是太美了，大家都愿意在这里露宿。从船上下来后，他们便在一丛小树下列起了篝火。旁边有很多大树，如果他们愿意，几乎可以在旁边的大树杈上过夜。

每个人都饿了，一阵风卷残云后，他们准备睡觉。然而，还没闭上眼睛，他们便听到了一阵奇怪的咆哮声。为了安全起见，他们燃起了更大的火，让那噼噼啪啪的烧柴声壮胆。为了保持火势旺盛，那普和庞库那夫还轮流守夜，添加柴火。

两个人时不时地会在黑夜中，在火光中，看到灌木丛中的野兽走了出来……

好在这一夜他们安然度过了。

第二天，也就是10月31日，早上五点钟的时候，他们起身，准备重新上路。

第四章

清晨六点，准备搜寻的居民们很快吃完了早饭，并决定从一条捷径出发，向荒岛西岸行进。

走到目的地需要多长时间呢？史密斯曾计算过，怎么也要两个小时。当然，最终会不会超过两个小时，还要看他们可能遇到什么样的障碍。西遥森林里生长着各种灌木丛，多得一眼望不到边，所以他们必须手握砍斧，在灌木和爬藤中开辟出一条路来。而那夜间听到的野兽咆哮，更让他们做好了随时开枪的准备。

最终他们又要露宿在什么地方，那要由富兰克林山的方位来决定。从北往下走大约3英里，就能到达富兰克林山，一直向西南走就能到达西岸。

出发前，他们先将平底船拴好，庞库那夫和那普还带上了足够大家吃三天的食物。有了这些食物，一路上他们就不用想着去打猎了。

史密斯再次叮嘱大家，不能随便开枪，免得惊动了那些“遇难者”。手拿指南针的他，决定在前面引路。

附近的森林，他们并不陌生，曾在湖边和观望壁上看到过。树木品种有喜马拉雅、洋松、桤柳、橡皮树以及桉树、木槿、杉树和其他树木等等。树木因为生长得很密集，无法长得更粗壮。

因为需要边走边开路，所以居民们走得并不快。按照史密斯的计划，他们要在这里开一条和红河相连的道路。

他们好不容易从荒岛的高山斜坡走到了一片平坦之地。也许是因为吸收了地下沼泽的水汽，也许是受到了小河流水的灌溉，这里的植物生长得特别茂盛。不过这也让史密斯有点奇怪，因为他记得上次他们去火山口的时候，除了红河和感恩河，并没有看到其他水源。

这一段路，他们仍然遇到了很多猴子，这里的猴子在见到他们后，露出了惊讶的表情。史佩莱打趣说，很可能这些活泼的四脚动物将人类当成了自己退化的兄弟。

史佩莱的打趣是有一点道理的。因为他们在越过灌木时，不时地会被爬藤缠住、勾住，行动迟缓。而那些猴子却能灵巧地在灌木丛中上蹿下跳、奔跑。和人类相比，它们灵敏自如多了。

好在这些猴子并没有表示出对他们的敌意，只是看着他们。

除了猴子，他们还看到了畜乳、刺鼠、袋鼠和其他的啮齿动物。见到这些动物，庞库那夫有好几次差点忍不住向它们开枪，但最终还是说：“跳吧！玩吧！等我们转回来再收拾你们。”

差不多九点半的时候，他们的面前出现了一条三四十英尺宽的河流，湍急的河流挡住了他们前进的步伐。河水中央的岩石，因为被海浪冲击，溅起了片片白沫。这里的河水虽然清澈，但却很深，无法通行。

“看来我们无路可走了。”那普喊道。

“怎么会无路可走？这种小河算不得什么的，我们可以游过去。”赫伯特说。

“那倒不必。这条河应该是通向大海的，我们可以沿这边的河岸向前走，走不到海滨才怪呢。走吧！”史密斯说。

“稍等一会儿，朋友们，这条河叫什么名字？我可不想让我们的地图留下空白。”史佩莱说。

“对，应该起个名字。”庞库那夫说。

“孩子，你给起个名字吧！”史密斯对赫伯特说。

“我们到了河口再给它起行吗？”赫伯特说。

“也好！我们不要再停顿了，尽快沿河岸前行吧。”史密斯说。

“不行，再等等！”庞库那夫说。

“又怎么啦？”史佩莱问。

“不能打猎，总能捕鱼吧！”庞库那夫说。

“我们不能再浪费时间了。”史密斯说。

“不需要太久，只要五分钟，五分钟。为了我们的食物着想，也要给我五分钟。”庞库那夫说完，趴在了岸边。他将胳膊伸到水里，很快就从岩石缝里抓出了很多活的皮皮虾来。

“太厉害了！”那普一边说，一边去帮庞库那夫。

“唉！这岛上可是什么都有，就是没有烟草！”庞库那夫叹着气，喃喃道。

满河都是皮皮虾，仅仅用了不到五分钟，他们便装满了袋子。

从河岸走比从森林里走要快得多。路途中，他们时不时地会发现一些动物的足迹，从足迹上他们判断出这是巨大的野兽，很可能是来河边喝水时留下的足迹。不过，他们虽然能看见这些动物的足迹，但却看不见这些动物本身。他们捕获的那只畜乳，崩掉庞库那夫牙齿的啮齿动物，也不是在这里打中的。

从急流中，史密斯还发现了一个问题，那就是他们离西岸远比他原先想的要远。

确实，假如河口离这里仅仅只有几英里的话，那潮水一定会将河水顶回去的。可事实并非如此，河水仍然在连绵不断地流着。史密斯感到很奇怪，并不时地拿出指南针，想看河流到底拐了多少个弯，最后才又回到西遥森林的。

走着走着，河面宽了起来，河水也不湍急了。右岸和左岸的树木都稠密起来，想要透过树木看到点什么，几乎是不可能的。不过他们能确定，这片森林里不可能有人，因为多卜并没有叫。如果附近有人，机警的多卜不可能不叫的。

十点半的时候，史密斯突然听到前面的赫伯特大喊了一声：“看！大海！”

他们急忙向前走去，只用了几分钟，荒岛西海岸的全景便呈现在了他们面前。

这里和他们无意中从气球上降落的东海岸完全不同。这里既没有花岗石峭壁，也没有岩石，甚至连沙滩都没有。森林延伸到了海边，树木

的枝干垂在了海里，浪花飞溅到了枝叶上。

通常他们看到的海岸，即使没有广阔的沙滩，也会乱石当道，但这里没有。这里的海岸更像是大海的边缘，装饰边缘的就是那些茂盛美丽的树木。所谓的海岸仅仅只是比水平面高一些而已。在这片长着森林的肥沃土地下，一定还有花岗石。不过，这些丰茂的森林生长在上面，一定也和生长在内陆上一样牢固。

他们去了一个陌生的海港，那里勉强能够容纳两三艘渔船。这条河流和其他河流不同的是，水流不是缓缓地流向大海，而是从一个40多英尺高的地方倾泻而下的。这也就解释了他们在河的上游时，根本感受不到涨潮的原因。

确实，太平洋的水即使涨到最高处，也不会高出河面。由此可见，即使几百万年过去了，这里的潮水也是无法将花岗石侵蚀的，更不可能形成一个和海水相接的河口。

看到这种场景，大家一致同意将这条河命名为跌水河。从这条跌水河向北，走到森林边缘约两英里处时，树木就稀疏起来。再往外面走，风景依然美丽，山冈由北向南形成了一条线。

跌水河和甩尾角之间的海岸，全都是高大美丽的树木，形成了一片茂密的森林。

树木形状各异，有些长得笔直，直插云霄；有些则做弯腰拂水状；更有些的根部被海浪轻轻地冲洗着。

如今，他们要在这片蛇盘半岛上开始搜寻了。在他们看来，其他荒芜的海岸不可能有人居住，只有这里才可能是那些遇难者的栖息地。

这天，天气非常晴朗。在一块山石上，那普和庞库那夫一边准备着中饭，一边向四周看着。四周及他们所能看到的视线之内，不见一只船。不过，史密斯不这么看，在没有看完整个蛇盘半岛的海岸之前，他是不会下结论的。

十一点半的时候，午饭吃完了，史密斯下令动身。为了能继续沿着海岸前行，他们并没有去峭壁和沙滩处，而是从大树底下穿行。

从跌水河到甩尾角，大约有12英里的路程，一路没有障碍的话，走到那里他们只需四个小时。可如今，他们不仅要绕大树走，而且还有灌木和爬藤挡道。砍伐灌木、斩断爬藤都需要时间，在这步步受阻中，延误行程也是很自然的事。

这里完全没有船只遇险的迹象。史佩莱曾说过，即使遗留下东西，也会被海水冲走的，所以他们不能因为没有看见遗迹就认定没有船在这里遇险过。

史佩莱的说法绝对正确，因为畜乳身体内的枪弹足以说明在之前的三个月里，林肯岛上有人开过枪。

在快下午五点钟的时候，他们还是没有离开蛇盘半岛，离蛇盘半岛的尽头还有两英里左右。

事情很明显，史密斯和他的伙伴们要想到达甩尾角，再赶回他们在感恩河发源地的营地，那简直是不可能的事，所以他们必须在海角上过夜。

居民们不缺食物，带的东西足够，而且河岸上虽然没有走兽，却有着大量的飞禽，比如啄木鸟、锦鸡、角雉、松鸡、吸蜜鹦鹉、鹦鹉、红

鹦鹉、野鸡、鸽子.....这些飞禽全都栖息在树上，甚至可以说是每一棵树上都有鸟窝，每只鸟窝里都有飞禽。

差不多七点钟的时候，他们拖着疲惫的身体，到达了甩尾角。这里就是海边森林的尽头了，海岸也不再像刚才的模样，上面布满了岩石、暗礁和泥沙。虽然这里有可能让他们找到一些东西，但因为黑夜的到来，他们只能等明天了。

庞库那夫和赫伯特开始寻找露宿的地方，赫伯特还在西遥森林的尽头，发现了一些竹子，这些竹子密集地生长在一起。

“太好了，这对我们非常有价值。”赫伯特说。

“什么价值？”庞库那夫不解地问道。

“告诉你吧，庞库那夫，这些竹子我们削成竹篾后能编篮子；要是将竹皮捣成糊状，还可以制造纸张，中国人就是这么做的；那些粗粗细细的竹竿，我们还能用它做竹管。竹管能运水；要是那种粗大的竹子，还是很好的建筑材料。因为竹子既结实又轻便，更主要的是它不怕虫蛀；那些齐竹节，如果我们把它们锯成一段一段的，还可以当杯子用。这样的杯子，中国人也常用。当然，你对这些是没有兴趣的，不过.....”

“不过什么？”

“你知道吗？告诉你吧，印度人还将竹子当芦笋吃呢。”

“芦笋？是30英尺高的芦笋吗？它们好不好吃？”

“当然，好吃极了。不过真正吃的并不是30英尺高的竹子，而是它

的嫩芽。”

“太好了！孩子，真是棒极了！”庞库那夫连连说。

“我再补充一点，如果将那些嫩茎剥了皮泡在醋里，最后就成了上等的调味品。”

“啊，赫伯特，你越说这东西越好了。”

“最后还有一点，竹子里含有一种汁水，非常香甜，用它是可以制造可口的饮料的。”

“还有吗？”庞库那夫问。

“没有了，完了！”

“那它不能当烟抽？”

“不，不能，可怜的庞库那夫。”

对话结束，他们也很很快找到了可以休息的地方——岩石上的洞穴。

岩石上有很多洞穴，这些洞穴很可能是被西南风激起，形成海浪，冲击岩石而形成的。在这样的洞穴里休息非常不错，还能躲避夜晚海风的袭击。

然而，当他们正准备去一个洞穴看看时，突然听到了一声吼叫。

“都往后退！”庞库那夫大喊一声。

他抓住赫伯特的胳膊，将他拉到一块岩石后又说：“我们枪里可都

是小子弹，从这只野兽的叫声中能知道，它并不在乎这小子弹。”

庞库那夫的话音刚落，便见一只野兽出现在了洞口，那是一只有着漂亮花纹的野兽。

这只带着花纹的野兽是美洲豹，大小和亚洲种类的豹子差不多，身长约5英尺。在那金黄色的毛片上，分布着眉形条纹和卵形黑点。这些条纹和黑点，与它雪白的胸脯形成了鲜明的对比。

赫伯特知道美洲豹是老虎的天敌，与豺狼的劲敌——花豹一样，都是十分可怕的动物。

美洲豹向前迈了一步，机警地四下看着，身上的毛全部倒竖起来。看样子它不像是第一次闻到人味。

此时，史佩莱也从一块石头后跑了出来。赫伯特以为他没有看见美洲豹，有些着急，正想去阻拦他，史佩莱却对他做了个不要动的手势。

史佩莱遇到过老虎，所以应对这种凶猛的野兽很有经验。他走到了离野兽仅有10英尺的地方，先是一动不动地站着，然后将枪抵在了肩窝上，使整个身体完全紧绷。在野兽准备纵身向他跃来时，他枪中的子弹精准地打向了美洲豹两眼间的位置——美洲豹倒在了地上，死了。

赫伯特和庞库那夫急忙跑了过去，那普和史密斯也从另一边向倒毙的美洲豹跑去。他们在看着地上的野兽时，心里在想，这美丽的兽皮，要是拿来装点“花岗宫殿”的话，一定很漂亮。

“天啊，史佩莱先生，你真是让人既羡慕又嫉妒啊！”赫伯特冲着史佩莱大喊。

“好吧，孩子，你也可以做到的！”史佩莱说。

“我？行吗？”

“完全可以，你就当它是一只野兔，沉着地朝它开枪就行了。”

“是啊，它可并不比兔子狡猾。”庞库那夫说。

“现在呢，它的窝已经让给我们了。朋友们，我们为什么不进去过夜呢？”史佩莱说。

“会不会有其他野兽进来？”庞库那夫有些担心。

“我们在洞口燃一堆火吧，这样野兽就不敢进去了。”史佩莱说。

“那么，我们行动吧！”庞库那夫说。

这天，那普留下来剥那只美洲豹的皮，其他人则在森林里捡了一些干柴堆在洞口。史密斯在看到那片竹林后，也砍了一些，和干柴放在一起。

等到这一切都做好后，他们便钻进了美洲豹的洞里。洞里到处都是白骨，他们把枪支准备好，随时预防突如其来的袭击。

晚饭后，在临睡前，他们又往洞口的火堆里放了些干柴。那阵阵爆裂的声音，打破了四周的寂静。

那是竹子发出的声音，像极了鞭炮。这样的声音，想必再胆大的野兽也会胆寒的。

制造这样震耳欲聋的声响，并不是史密斯第一个做的。据马可·波

罗说，很多世纪以来，在中亚地区的鞑靼人，就是采用这种方法来驱散帐篷附近的野兽的.....

第五章

这群林肯岛上的新居民，就这么在美洲豹的洞里，如同土拨鼠一样睡了一夜。

太阳出来的时候，他们到了海角尽头的海岸，仔细观察着海面。此时的他们能看到周围三分之二的水平线。史密斯在看了一会儿后，便能够确定海上既没有一只航行的船，也没有一点遇难船只的残骸了。最后，他又用望远镜看了一遍，结果还是一样。

不仅海面，就连岸上也是这样。形成一条直线的约3英里长的海角南边，根本什么都看不到。隆起的高地遮住了海岸的其他部分，就是在蛇盘半岛的尽头，也无法看到兽爪角。

荒岛南岸他们还没去看过，要不要即刻就去，在那里再花上整整一天时间呢？

那一天正好是11月2日。

去荒岛南岸并没有在他们预先的计划内，当他们在感恩河的发源地弃船登岸时，也只是决定到西岸去看看，然后返回船上，最后再从感恩河返回“花岗宫殿”。

当时之所以如此计划，是因为史密斯认为西岸肯定能住人，而且不管是遇难船只还是正常航行的船只，都有可能在那里停泊。但当他亲眼见到此地的情况后，便打消了原来的看法，因为这里根本就没有适合抛锚的地方，所以他临时决定再去南岸看看，也许那里有他们在西岸没有发现的东西。

史佩莱也提议继续搜寻，以便找到他们假定的遇险者，于是问兽爪角离半岛尽头有多远。

“如果将海岸的曲折状况计算在内，应该在30英里左右。”史密斯说。

“30英里？”史佩莱大惊。

“那可需要走一天呢。我们不妨最后从南部海滨回‘花岗宫殿’。”史佩莱说。

“不过，从兽爪角到‘花岗宫殿’差不多有10英里呢。”赫伯特说。

“这样算下来，应该有40英里吧。不过不用害怕。我们这次对陌生的海岸进行观察后，以后就不用再去重新搜索了。”史佩莱说。

“想法不错，但我们的平底船怎么办？”庞库那夫说。

“那船独自在感恩河的发源地也有一天时间了，再放上两天也没什么关系。到目前为止，我们还看不出这岛上有贼。”史佩莱说。

“不过，一想到海龟的事，我就没办法相信岛上没贼了。”庞库那夫说。

“海龟！你是说，难道到现在为止，你还不相信它是海水翻过来的吗？”史佩莱问。

“谁又知道是什么情况呢？”史密斯喃喃着。

“可是……”那普张着嘴，话没说完便停了下来。

“你有什么要说？那普。”史密斯问他。

“如果我们沿着海岸去兽爪角，在绕过兽爪角时，去路会被挡住的。”那普说。

“你是说会被感恩河挡住吗？是这样的，到时候我们可就既没桥也没船了。”赫伯特说。

“不过，史密斯先生，只要有树干，我们还是会过去的。”庞库那夫说。

“没关系的，如果我们真的打算走近道去西遥森林的话，那完全有必要造一座桥来。”史佩莱说。

“造一座桥？对呀！史密斯先生不是优秀的工程师吗？需要的话，他一定会为我们搭一座桥的。至于我们今天晚上如何去感恩河的对面，我倒可以给大家保证，保证大家滴水不沾地过去。我们身上带着的食物还可以吃一天，同时还能边走边打野味。走吧，我们快走吧！”庞库那夫等不及了。

史佩莱的建议得到了庞库那夫的大力支持，也得到了大家的一致认同。其实这主要缘于大家都想尽快解开内心的疑团。去了兽爪角，他们就可以说看遍整个林肯岛了，谜底也一定能被揭开，所以他们一点时间

都不想耽误。那40英里的路程很漫长，想要在天黑时回到“花岗宫殿”，并不是一件容易的事。

清晨六点，一行人从营地出发。为了避免再次出现“美洲豹”事件，他们全往枪里装上了子弹，多卜也被安排在了队伍的最前边，其他人跟着它往前走。

半岛尾部形成了一个海角，如果从海角尽头算起的话，海岸周围足足有5英里长。这一部分他们搜查完了，既无扎营迹象，也没有残留的物品，更没有燃烧后的遗留灰烬，甚至连一个脚印都没有。

总而言之，不管是过去还是最近，有人登陆的迹象都不存在。

在他们到达海角后，弧形地带就全部走完了，再向东北方向拐的话就到了华盛顿湾。从这个地方看整个南部海滨，25英里外就是海滨尽头兽爪角。透过清晨薄薄的晨雾，他们能隐约看到兽爪角的轮廓。也许是一种错觉，兽爪角犹如是悬挂在陆地和海洋之间。

他们所站的地方与对面那巨大的港湾间，地势明显分成了三部分。离他们最近的是平坦地带，背后是一大片森林。再往前走，海岸就变得曲折起来，更有尖角突出在海面。

兽爪角所在的地方，到处都是黑色的岩石，凌乱中组成了一幅奇怪的画面。

他们停下来，大致看了一下这片荒岛上的部分地势。

“如果有船来这里，肯定会沉的。你看，到处不是沙洲就是暗礁，太险了！”庞库那夫说。

“如果船沉了，是不是会遗留下一些东西？”史佩莱说。

“也许石头上会有残存的木片，不过沙滩上肯定没有。”庞库那夫说。

“为什么这么说？”

“很简单，沙滩比石头还要危险。不管什么东西掉在沙滩上，都可能陷下去并被淹没。就是那上百吨的大船，只需几天，也有可能连船都消失不见。”

“那么，如果有船在这里遇了险，如今找不到一丝遗迹，是不是也不奇怪？庞库那夫。”史密斯问。

“是这样的，史密斯先生。时间和风暴会掩盖一切的，所以没什么奇怪。不过，即使真是这样，没有一根桅杆和圆木被冲到海岸上来，也是很难让人信服的。”

“这样的话，那我们还是继续搜寻吧！”史密斯说。

在又走了差不多20英里后，他们来到了华盛顿湾的另一边，此时已经到了下午一点钟。

他们开始停下来吃饭。

海岸从他们停下来的地方变得曲折，遍布岩石和沙洲。他们看到了久久冲击海湾中的岩石，形成一道道水花的波涛。

从这个海角到兽爪角，森林与礁石间的海岸非常狭窄。

走在有着很多岩石的海滩，他们有种寸步难行的感觉。越往前走，

花岗石峭壁就越是陡峭。站在下面，他们只能看到顶端的绿色树梢。

经过半个小时的休息，他们又开始赶路了。此时，他们连岩石间也不放过，细心地搜寻着。庞库那夫和那普，不管发现什么，即使是在海浪里的东西，他们也会跑上去观察一番。不过总是失望而归，他们发现的，很多都只是一些奇形怪状的石头。不过，有一点他们能肯定，那就是这里有很多可以食用的蛤蜊。

但由于所处的位置运送起来不方便，所以这个发现对他们来说也没什么意义。

海岸上，没有任何发现的东西能够说明这里曾有遇险的船只。哪怕出现任何一件值得他们注意的东西，他们都会注意到，但还是没有。他们没能看到一根桅杆、一根圆木，或者是像在拾箱角发现的“聚宝箱”。

差不多三点的时候，一行人来到了一条小溪边。小溪在这里形成了一个天然港口，这个港口在海里并不容易被人发现，只有通过一条狭长的通道后才能看到。

小溪的后面，因为剧烈的地震，使岩石分裂成了一条道。沿着这个破口形成的道，他们经过一个角度很小的斜坡，最后来到了一处高地。高地离兽爪角至少有10英里，所以它与观望壁的直线距离也不过4英里。

史佩莱建议大家休息一会儿，大家都同意了，因为经过一段艰难的跋涉，他们又累又饿。虽然离平时的吃饭时间还早，但他们还是想用点野味来补充补充体能。吃完这餐饭，他们便要坚持到晚饭时再吃了，而晚饭他们计划等回到“花岗宫殿”后再吃。

于是，大家聚在了一棵美丽的海松树下，狼吞虎咽地吃起了那普口袋里装着的食物。

他们坐着的地方离海面有五六十英尺，周围的视野并不宽广。不过，在海角以外，他们还是能看到联合湾的。但由于地面的隆起，使其和森林形成了一道天然的屏障，将北边的地平线全都遮住了，所以无法看到小岛和观望壁。

当然，虽然能看到一大片海洋，但史密斯还是架起了他的望远镜，在水平线上并没找到船只的踪影。就连水边和峭壁处，他们都仔仔细细地检查过，并且还使用起了仪器，但仍然没有发现什么可疑物品。

“看来，这下我们能完全放下心来了，不用再担心有人和我们抢林肯岛了。”史佩莱说。

“但畜乳身体里的子弹，总不会是我们凭空想象出来的吧。”赫伯特大声说。

“真是该死，那是真的。”庞库那夫大叫道，他又想起了他被崩掉的牙齿。

“可我们现在会得出什么结论呢？”史佩莱问。

“这结论就是，三个月前，或许是更早，曾有一只船，不管是有意还是无意，来到了这个岛上。”史密斯说。

“这么说，赛莱斯，你认为他们什么痕迹都没留地又陷进了沙滩？”史佩莱叫道。

“并不是这样的，亲爱的史佩莱！想想看，既然有人曾来过岛上，

难道他们就不能离开这岛吗？”

“如果我没猜错的话，史密斯先生，你的意思是那船又离开了？”

“当然，很有可能是这样！”

“那么，我们曾错过了回国的机会？”那普问道。

“很可能是这样。”

“既然如此，那么好吧，我们已经失去了机会，还是赶快赶路吧，这是没有办法的事。”庞库那夫说，他想回“花岗宫殿”了。

在他们正打算起身的时候，突然听到多卜一边大叫，一边从森林里跑了出来，嘴里还衔着一块破布，破布上满是污泥。

那普一把抢过那块布，那是一块非常结实的布。

多卜还在叫着，并不时地来回乱跳，好像是在喊它的主人们，快快跟它去森林。

“看来我们能揭开子弹的谜底了。”庞库那夫大声说。

“你是说这里有遇险的人？”赫伯特问。

“很可能那人受了伤。”那普说。

“也有可能已经死了。”史佩莱补充说。

几个人沿着森林边缘的大松树，跟着多卜往前跑。史密斯和伙伴们全都将武器准备好了，随时准备出击。

就这样，他们在森林里走了一段，却依然没有发现人的痕迹，这不禁让他们又失望起来。灌木和爬藤没有丝毫受到损坏的迹象，他们仍然要像在密林中一样，用斧头去砍树丛和爬藤，然后往前走。由此可以推断，这里根本不可能有人来过。不过，多卜仍然在来回跑着，并不像是在随意奔跑，而像是一个有目的的搜索。

多卜在密林中来回奔跑了七八分钟，终于在几棵大树间停住了。史密斯和伙伴们也停下了，他们四下看着，但灌木丛和大树间什么都没有。

“多卜，怎么了？”史密斯对着他的狗说。

多卜开始在一棵松下跳跃，并发出很大的叫声。庞库那夫突然大声喊道：“啊，太好了！太好了！”

“什么太好了？”史佩莱问。

“我们只是不断地在海里和沙滩上寻找遇难船只。”

“那又怎样？”

“可是它却在树上。”

庞库那夫说着话，用手指着松树顶上的大块白布说。看来，多卜衔在嘴里的那破布就是从松树上面掉下来的。

“可这又不是什么破船。”史佩莱有些失望地说。

“对不起，我错了。”庞库那夫的声音小了起来。

“怎么？为什么说……”

“因为这是我们气球上遗留下的东西，是我们的气球，它现在就在我们头顶的树上呢。”

庞库那夫说完，又兴奋起来，大声说：

“有这些布多好呀，可以够我们用很多年呢，还能用它们做衬衫和手帕，多好呀。史佩莱先生，荒岛上的树能结衬衫，真是太好了，你觉得怎么样？”

这只带着他们来到此地的气球，最后居然落在了这里，落在了这棵树上，又让他们重新获得，这对他们来说，是不管怎样也要留下来的，他们要将它带回自己的国家，或者取掉上面的漆，然后好好利用这几百码的上等棉布。

总之，发现它，怎么都算是一件高兴的事。因此，人人都变得和庞库那夫一样开心了。

不过，现在要想将这破败不堪的气球从树上取下来，并不是一件容易的事。那普和赫伯特，以及庞库那夫都爬上了树，想尽办法将它从树杈上解下来。

他们忙活了两个小时后，终于有了收获，不仅将带有活门、弹簧和黄铜零件的气囊拿了下来，而且也取下了大量的绳索、套环和吊绳。在这些零部件里，除了气囊有部分被扯坏外，其他的都完好无损。

这件事对他们而言，真是喜从天降啊。

“史密斯先生，这气球对我们已经没什么意义了，以后我们就是离开小岛，也不会乘气球离开的，是不是？这气球可是不会听我们摆布，想去哪就去哪的，我们已经经历过这种事了。你看，我们不妨造一只

船，20来吨，然后用这些布来做主帆、前帆和三角帆。剩下的布，我们还可以拿来穿衣服。”庞库那夫说。

“这件事情以后再说，庞库那夫，以后再说吧。”史密斯答道。

“在不知道做什么的时候，我们要将它放在安全的地方才行。”那普说。

当然，他们现在最先要做的就是怎么把这些布和零件搬回“花岗宫殿”。

由于分量太重，他们必须找一辆车子来搬才行。而在搬走之前，他们也不能让这些对他们来说是宝贝的东西暴露在外面，任凭风吹雨打。所以最后，在他们的一起努力下，终于把它拖到了岸边，拖到了那个他们曾住过的美洲豹洞穴，这个洞穴是肯定不能有风雨入侵的。

“本来缺一个柜子，现在好了，有柜子了。可这柜子没办法上锁。我看还是将这洞穴堵起来吧，两条腿的贼我们不怕，怕就怕那四只脚的兽。”庞库那夫说。

六点钟的时候，他们已经将一切都收拾妥当了。随后，他们给海湾取了个名字叫气球港，然后沿着兽爪角继续前行。

庞库那夫和史密斯讨论了很多，说了很多计划和打算，但最一致的意见便是不要耽搁，尽快实现计划：在感恩河上架一座桥，以便和荒岛南部进行联络；平底船无法装运气球，所以拉辆大车过来，将气球运回去；造一艘带甲板的船。

庞库那夫的想法是造一艘单桅快船，这样他们就能环航全岛了，而且以后这船也会有其他用途。

此时，黑夜降临。当他们到了曾发现大木箱的地方时，天已经完全黑了下来。即使这样，他们还是又搜寻了一番，但和其他地方一样，找不到一点遇难船只的踪迹。这也再一次证实了史密斯之前所说的，不会寻找到任何线索的结论。

从发现木箱的地方到“花岗宫殿”大约有4英里，在他们沿着海岸，经过感恩河的河口，过了感恩河的第一个拐弯处时，已经是午夜时分了。

80多英尺宽的河面，想要过去非常困难。但庞库那夫之前已经保证让大家滴水不沾地过河，所以他只得硬着头皮去想办法。

疲惫不堪的他们先是走了很长的路，接着又爬树取气球，所以都恨不得马上回到“花岗宫殿”，饱餐一顿后好好睡一觉。他们想，如果有一座桥该多好，他们只需15分钟就能到家了。

四周一片漆黑，庞库那夫准备实现自己的承诺，造一个木筏载大家过去。他和那普各持一把利斧，选了两棵树后就砍起来。

坐在岸边的史佩莱和史密斯打算去帮他们，而赫伯特则在岸边徘徊着。当他走到河边后，突然指着感恩河大喊：

“快看，那是什么东西在漂？”

庞库那夫马上停下工作，黑暗中，他隐隐看到有什么东西在水里移动。

“是小船。”他大喊。

大家跑过去一看，果然有只小船正顺流而下，所有的人不禁大吃一惊。

“注意安全！”庞库那夫喊道。他并没有考虑，此时不出声是不是会更安全一点。

小船继续向前漂移，在离他们大约12英尺的时候，庞库那夫喊道：

“这是我们的船。是绳子断了，所以漂下来了吗？太好了，真是太好了！”

“这是我们的船？”史密斯小声喃喃着。

庞库那夫并没有看错，这正是他们的平底船。一定是船上的绳索断了，所以才从感恩河的河口上游漂下来的。他们现在必须马上把它截住，不然很可能被激流冲出河口。

那普和庞库那夫马上用长木杆阻止了它的漂移。

平底船靠了岸，史密斯率先跳了上去。在经过一番检查后，发现绳子果然是在岩石上磨断的。

“哼！这事儿真是太奇怪了。”史佩莱小声对他说。

“确实非常奇怪。”史密斯说。

不管这事有多奇怪，但他们不能不说是太幸运了。赫伯特、史佩莱、那普和庞库那夫先后上了船。平底船磨断的绳子不会有问题，但有问题的是，这船为什么是在这个时候被他们截住的。如果早一会儿或晚一会儿，这船肯定是会漂到大海里去的。

如今的时代已经不是神话时代了，不然，他们一定会以为有神灵在这林肯岛上暗地里保护着他们。

他们划着桨，来到了感恩河的河口。平底船在“花岗宫殿”附近的海面停下，大家下了船，朝“花岗宫殿”的软梯处跑去。

不过，就在此时，多卜又开始愤怒地狂叫了。寻找梯子的那普，也突然大喊一声：“梯子呢？我们的梯子不见了！”

第六章

史密斯怔怔地站在那里，一言不发。其他人则在黑暗中寻找着软梯，他们认为软梯很可能被吹到了一边，也许是掉在了地上……不过，在石壁上摸索，在地面上寻找了一番后，还是一无所获。

会不会是被风吹到了半空中？因为天黑，他们无法证实这样的推测对不对。

“如果这只是一个玩笑的话，那么，这个玩笑开得也太过分了。我们想回自己家，但却找不到进家的梯子。对我们这些累得要死的人来说，真是太不好玩了。”庞库那夫大声喊着。

那普无计可施，大嚷大叫，却不知道该说些什么。

“我现在才发现，林肯岛上真是怪事连连！”庞库那夫又说。

“奇怪吗？有什么好奇怪的！庞库那夫，很简单，有人趁我们不在的时候，霸占了我们的房子，然后还把软梯拉上去了。”史佩莱说。

“你是说有人？那.....那会是谁？”庞库那夫说。

“当然是开枪打畜乳的那个人了。还能有谁？我们还真是倒霉！”史佩莱说。

“如果上面有人，那我喊喊他，他一定会答应的。”庞库那夫有些不耐烦起来。

“喂！”庞库那夫拉开长音，大声吼着。峭壁和山谷间，回荡出了“喂”的回声。

他们开始侧耳倾听，好像听到了一阵“咯咯咯”的笑声，但这笑声是不是人发出来的，他们并不知道。但也没人来回应庞库那夫，即使他再次大声呼喊，仍然无人应答。

确实，即使是再麻木的人，在遇到这种情况的时候也会感到恐惧，更何况他们并不麻木。在他们所经历的每件事中，意义都非同寻常。但在他们居住于这荒岛上的七个月时间里，的确没有一件怪事能同这件事相提并论。

突如其来的变故，让他们在惊诧中忘记了疲劳。然而他们只能待在“花岗宫殿”下，还无法思考接下来要怎么做。他们知道谁都无法解决这个问题，谁都无法给出一个答案，但却还是互相聊着，聊得天南地北，神奇又不失离奇。

那普此时因为无法进入厨房而感到难过。之前所带的食物已经吃光了，黑夜中的他们无法重新补充食粮。

终于，史密斯开口了。

“朋友们，我看我们只能等到明天，到时再见机行事了。我们现在先回‘石窟’吧，虽然没什么吃的东西，但起码可以睡上一觉。”

“这到底是谁在和我们开这么大的玩笑？”庞库那夫喃喃着。他还在犹豫，并不想离开这里。

不管和他们开玩笑的是谁，他们现在最好的做法就是听从史密斯的建议，去“石窟”，等待天亮。而留在“花岗宫殿”值班的则是多卜。

多卜在接受了这个命令后，一声不响地趴在了悬崖底下。它的主人，以及主人的伙伴则只能去找那乱石丛休息了。

虽然疲惫不堪，但如果认为他们一到“石窟”就能呼呼大睡的话，那就大错而特错了。睡不着的原因不仅仅是因为他们急于想知道到底发生了什么事，而且他们也在考虑等到天亮，是不是一切真相就都能大白于天下。

当然，他们更想知道，是不是真有人在故意捉弄他们。最后，还有一个睡不着的原因就是在“石窟”里睡觉，一点都不舒服。

不过，那个舒服的住所已经被人霸占了，他们只能先这样。

“花岗宫殿”对他们来说意义太大了，那里不仅是他们的住所，还是他们的仓库。他们全部的东西，包括武器、仪器、火药和粮食都在那里。如果这些都被别人抢走了，那他们就只能从头做起，而如果要重新制造武器和新工具的话，那将是件非常严重的事。

他们变得焦躁不安，每隔几分钟，就有人跑去看多卜是不是还好好地守在那里。

当然，有一个人表现得很淡定，那个人就是史密斯。他像平时一样镇定地等待着。不过，这令人不可思议的事件，即使凭他那聪明的头脑和理性的思维，也无法想明白。同时，当他觉得有个人在左右他们时，就有些懊恼起来。

这种懊恼也出现在了史佩莱的身上。于是，他们轻声地议论着，议论着这莫名其妙的事情。但想破头皮还是没想通。这岛上肯定有着不为人知的秘密，这个秘密到底要怎么才能揭开呢？

好幻想的赫伯特不停地向史密斯问东问西；那普觉得这是主人的事，甚至如果不是担心伙伴们生气，他一定可以像在“花岗宫殿”一样熟睡的。而在这些人里，最着急的就是庞库那夫了，他快要被气疯了。

“这一定是个玩笑，是有人给我们捣鬼。我不喜欢开这种玩笑，开玩笑的人他等着，别落到我手里，否则我一定会让他好看的。”庞库那夫气愤地嚷嚷着。

曙光从东方微微露出，几个人马上起床，到了峭壁旁的海岸上。早晨的太阳是可以直射“花岗宫殿”的，所以他们只需再等一会儿，“花岗宫殿”的整体就都会被太阳照亮的。

虽然是早晨五点，但透过遮天蔽日的枝叶，他们仍能看到那几个紧闭的窗户。

一切都显得非常正常。不过，他们突然发现出发前关好的门现在是敞开着的，都忍不住大叫一声。

有人去过“花岗宫殿”，毫无疑问。

软梯的上半段一直是从门口挂到平台的，现在仍然在那里，但下半段却被拉了上去，拉到了齐门槛的地方。当然，这么做的目的，是那“侵略者”想防止有人侵袭。

进了“花岗宫殿”的是些什么人？有多少人？想知道这些是不可能的。因为，直到现在，没有一个人露出头来。

庞库那夫继续喊着，喊了好一会儿，仍然无人应答。

“这该死的！安安静静地以为是躺在自己家吗？喂！你们就是强盗、土匪、海盗、约翰牛！”

美国人庞库那夫，在他骂出“约翰牛”时，觉得已经把对方骂到极点了。

太阳完全升了起来，照在了“花岗宫殿”的正面。不过，里面却依然悄无声息。

“花岗宫殿”里有没有人，他们并不知道。但从梯子所处的位置看，应该是有的。不过他们能肯定的是，这些人不管是谁，都还没有离开。但要怎么才能抓住他们呢？

赫伯特提议，不妨在箭上系一根绳子，这样当他们把箭射向门槛上的软梯空当时，就能拽住箭上的绳子，然后将它拉到地面上来了，这样也就能恢复进“花岗宫殿”的通道。除了这个办法，似乎也没有其他办法可行。而且假如射箭本领高的话，这么做是一定会成功的。弓箭“石窟”里就有，除此以外，还有一些木槿编织的绳子。

就这样，庞库那夫将这根绳子系在了弓箭上，然后让赫伯特瞄准软梯下端，张弓射箭。

史密斯、史佩莱和庞库那夫急忙向后退了几步。他们怕窗口有什么东西出现，这样他们就完全暴露在那人的面前了。此时，史佩莱也举起了枪，并把枪托抵在肩窝处，枪口对准了“花岗宫殿”的门。

赫伯特射出了那支箭，箭带着绳子，飞到了软梯最后两档之间。

他们成功地达到了目的。

赫伯特一把抓住了绳子头，就在他准备把软梯拉下来时，门缝里突然伸出了一只手，紧紧地抓住了绳子，将绳子重新拉进了“花岗宫殿”。

“该死的！如果我有子弹，一定不让你活着！”庞库那夫喊道。

“那是谁呀？”那普问。

“你问那是谁？这也看不出吗？”

“没有看出来。”

“这都没看出来？那是一只猴子！一只吼猴，猩猩，狒狒，大猩猩，猿猴……看来，我们的住所现在成了猴子窝了。它们趁我们不在的时候，从梯子上爬了上去。”庞库那夫气愤地说。

仿佛为了证明庞库那夫的话是对的，窗口再次出现了两三只猴子的脸。它们打开窗户，向这些原本的主人们做着鬼脸。

“我就说是开玩笑。这些可恶的家伙，我们要杀一儆百！”庞库那夫喊完，举起枪，瞄准一只猴子就打。那只猴子从上面掉了下来，掉在

了沙滩上。其他猴子见状，一转眼全都不见了。

这只猴子属于猕猴类的一种，也有可能是黑猩猩或是猩猩，更有可能是大猩猩。总之，这是类人猿，因为和人最相像而得名。不过，对动物学非常精通的赫伯特却坚决地说它就是猩猩。

“它长得真好啊！”那普大声喊着。

“好又能怎样？我们还是没办法进去。”庞库那夫说。

“我们有射击能手赫伯特，他有弓箭，不妨让他来试试。”史佩莱说。

“这些猴子机灵着呢，我想它们一定不会再出现在窗口了。我们是打不到它们了。一想到它们会在我们的仓库里乱翻，我就.....”

“不用着急，我们不会被它们弄得没有办法的。”史密斯说。

“它们会一直不下来吗？我不信，史密斯先生，你知道上面一共有多少只吗？”庞库那夫问。

他的问题没人能够回答。赫伯特做了第二次试验，但和上次一样，同样被猴子拉了上去。等到再拉的时候，绳子断了，软梯牢牢地留在原地。这情况确实让他们很为难，庞库那夫急得直跳脚。

这一系列情况原本很可笑，但庞库那夫却笑不出来。当然，他们最后一定会将这些“侵略者”赶出去的，也一定会重新回到家裡的，但还要等多长时间呢？又要怎么做才能赶它们走呢？问题就在这里。

两个小时过去了，在这段时间里，猴子们一直非常谨慎，不再露

面。有三四次，它们从门口和窗户里探出鼻子和爪子，下面的人就马上开枪了。

“还是躲起来吧，也许当它们觉得我们走远了，会重新露出头来的。到时赫伯特和史佩莱就躲在岩石后，看见它们就打。”

大家便立即按照史密斯的安排开始行动。史佩莱和赫伯特因为射击技术高超，躲在了猴子看不见的地方。此时，那普、庞库那夫和史密斯则爬上了高地，去森林里打猎了。因为现在已经到了早饭时间，但他们一点食物都没有。

半个小时后，史密斯和庞库那夫拿着一些野鸽子回来了，并燃起火来，将鸽子肉烤得非常香。

但还是没有一只猴子出来。史佩莱和赫伯特让多卜继续在窗下守着，自己去吃饭了。吃过后，他们继续在那里埋伏。

两个小时过去了，情况依然没有好转。猴子犹如失踪了般突然销声匿迹了。当然，也许是因为有同伴被打死，所以害怕了，躲起来了，躲在了“花岗宫殿”的后半部，或者是跑去了仓库。而当他们一想起仓库里有那么多珍贵的东西时，便急得团团转，甚至连史密斯叮嘱他们要有耐心这点也忘了。

“真是太糟糕了！我们竟然对它们毫无办法。”史佩莱说。

“可不管怎么样，我们都要把它们赶出去。”庞库那夫着急地喊着，“不管它们有多少，哪怕有20个，我们也可以将它们制服，不过这需要我们和它们面对面较量。真是的，难道我们就没办法抓住它们吗？”

“要不，我们从湖边，从原来的洞口进去吧。”史密斯终于说。

“对啊，我们可真糊涂呀，怎么连这个地方都没想起来？”庞库那夫说。

确实，要想进入“花岗宫殿”里，和这些“侵略者”面对面地战斗，这是唯一的办法了。

洞口虽然被他们用石头和泥土筑成的墙堵住了，但他们可以把那墙推倒，这堵墙以后就是想修复，也不是什么难事。幸好当时没有将湖水引到高处，淹住洞口，不然不知道要多浪费多少时间和精力呢。

就这样，他们带着武器和锄头、铲子，来到了“花岗宫殿”下。此时已经是中午十二点钟了。多卜还被留在原地，他们几个人则爬上了感恩河左边的堤岸，向观望壁走去。

不过，就在他们向那个方向走了不到50步时，听到了多卜的怒吼声。大家折转从河堤上冲了下去。一转弯，他们就发现了事态的变化。

有一大群猴子，像是突然受了什么惊吓，慌忙要逃。其中有两三只像杂技演员一样，从一个窗口爬向另一个窗口。如果要将梯子放回原处，它们是容易下来的，但它们好像并没打算这么做，也许是因为害怕，所以看上去它们有些糊涂，找不清方向。

此时，居民们想要瞄准它们真是太容易了，于是大家便开枪射击。猴子死的死，伤的伤，随即又是一阵叫喊，跌进了房间里。有些猴子在向外冲时，跌到了沙滩上，摔死了。

几分钟后，他们敢肯定，“花岗宫殿”里已经没有一只活猴了。

庞库那夫大声笑着叫好。

“不要叫好！行吗？”史佩莱说。

“为什么不能叫好？都被我们杀光了。”庞库那夫说。

“虽然是这样，但我们还是进不去。”史佩莱说。

“那……我们从那水洞口进去吧！”庞库那夫说。

“行是行，不过最好……”

像是为了特意回应史密斯的话，一条软梯竟然从门槛上滑了下来，掉在了地上。

“天啊！真是太神奇了！”庞库那夫看着史密斯，大声喊道。

“太神奇了！”史密斯喃喃着，首先上了梯子。

“史密斯先生，留神呀，说不定那些该死的家伙还没死光呢。”庞库那夫喊道。

“很快就能知道了。”史密斯嘴里说着，人继续往上爬。

此时，大家也跟在他的后面往上爬，不一会儿就爬到了门口。他们四下看着，并没有看到一个人，在猴子曾经光顾过的仓库，也同样没有一个人。

“那么，那个梯子，又是谁给我们送下去的呢？”庞库那夫大喊。

这时，他们先是听到了一声喊叫，接着看见一只原本躲在走廊里的

猩猩冲到了屋里。猩猩个头很大，那普在后面紧紧追赶。

“啊，你这强盗！”庞库那夫也喊着。

在他拿着手里的利斧，准备朝猩猩的脑袋上劈时，史密斯抓住了他的胳膊：“把它留下吧，庞库那夫。”

“留下它？饶了这个畜生？”

“是的，梯子可是它扔给我们的。”

史密斯的话让其他人觉得很奇怪，甚至不知他是在开玩笑还是说真的。

不过，大家还是扑向了猩猩。猩猩拼命自卫，但最终还是寡不敌众，被捉住并捆了起来。

“这下好了，我们捉住它了，怎么办？”庞库那夫说。

“让它当我们的仆人。”赫伯特说。

赫伯特并不像是在开玩笑，因为他知道，猩猩的聪明，是完全可以被利用的。

于是，大家开始仔细端详起猩猩来。因为是类人猿的一种，所以它的颜面和澳洲、南非的土人有些相像。它没有同类那样凶猛可怕，又不像狒狒那么好动；既不像南美洲长尾猿那么脏，也不像北非的叟猴那样狂躁，更不像犬面狒狒那样顽劣。

在类人猿中，有和人一样拥有智慧的猩猩，而这只猩猩正好具备了这个特点。如果他们不在时，留它在家里干个活的话倒很不错。它很可

能不仅会伺候人，还会扫地、洗衣服、擦皮鞋，甚至还会像人一样使用刀、叉、汤匙等等，甚至还会喝酒……

它们能做到像受过训的仆人一般能干。有人曾将这样的猩猩培养成了自己的仆人，既忠诚又能干。

居民们捉住的这只猩猩个头很大，差不多有6英尺高，体格匀称健硕。它的胸腔很宽，头却不是很大，圆圆的。颜面角达到了65°，鼻子向外突起，通身长着光亮而柔软的毛发。

总之，这是一只品种优良的类人猿。

它的眼睛不如人眼大，眼神里却闪烁着一种智慧的光芒。雪白的牙齿在胡子下闪闪发光。更有意思的是，它的下巴上有一小撮卷卷的胡须，而且还是褐色的。

“太漂亮了！可惜它不懂我们的话，不然就能和我们交流了。”庞库那夫说。

“主人，难道……难道，我们真要收它做仆人？”那普疑惑地问。

“当然了那普，你可不要嫉妒哦！”史密斯笑着说。

“它一定能做得很好的！你们看，它多年轻呀，而且很容易调教。我们不要像有些人那样，拔它的牙齿，打骂它，只要好好对它，它就能很好地忠于主人。”赫伯特补充说。

“是的，它一定可以的！”庞库那夫说。此时，他已经不生这个霸占过他们住处的“开大玩笑的人”的气了。他走到了猩猩面前：

“嘿！你好吗？老兄！”

猩猩哼了一声，眼神中没有敌意，也没有怒意。

“你是否愿意加入我们的团队，为史密斯先生服务呢？”庞库那夫继续问。

猩猩又哼了一声，好像是在代替回答。

“给你的待遇是一日三餐，其他的就没有了。你愿意吗？”

猩猩第三次哼了一声。

“这谈话也太简单了吧！”史佩莱说。

“简单更好！好的仆人应该少说多做。没有其他的待遇，明白吗？伙计！我们是不会先给你报酬的，如果到时候你干得不错，我们会给你报酬加倍的！”庞库那夫最后说。

就这样，他们这个团体又有了一位新成员。在决定给它起个什么名字时，庞库那夫提出，为了纪念他曾认识的一只猿猴，他想叫它狙伯迪，简称狙布。

大家完全赞同他的提议。于是，没有经过任何仪式，猩猩小狙布就和他们一起住在了“花岗宫殿”，做起了他们的仆人。

第七章

林肯岛上的这群居民，最终没有打开原有的洞口，而是从原路回到了房间。他们因此也省去了推墙和修墙的麻烦。

因为，当他们想去推墙时，那群猴子却因为受到某种惊吓而开始出逃，这给了他们机会。为什么会这样？难道是猴子们发现了他们要从别处进去袭击它们？是这样吗？它们退却的真正理由是什么？

趁着是白天，他们将死去猴子的尸体带到了丛林里埋掉，然后又忙着整理被那群“侵略者”搞得乱七八糟的东西。虽然房屋里的东西被翻了个翻天覆地，却没有任何东西被损坏。这又是他们的一个幸运。

收拾好后，那普开始烧火做饭。食品室里有很多好吃的东西，所以他们很快就饱餐了一顿。

当然，美餐时，他们并没有忘记新成员小狙布。他们给了它很多南欧松子和块茎，小狙布吃得津津有味。

不过，庞库那夫只解开了它前肢的绳子，留下了绑着后肢的绳子。想要全部解开，还需等他们训练得它非常听话时才行。

在睡觉前，史密斯召集大家开了个会，讨论他们需要马上实施的计划。当然，迫在眉睫的事是在感恩河上搭一座桥，这样就能将荒岛南岸和“花岗宫殿”之间的道路打通了。接着，他们还要建一个围栏，以便驯养他们打算捕捉的莫伏鹿羊以及其他可驯养的动物。

这两件事是他们当前最需要解决的问题。而在搭好了桥之后，他们便能很容易地将气球运回来了。那时候，他们也就能得到布匹，而围栏里的动物也能给他们提供“毛”，进而让他们有冬衣穿了。

史密斯计划将围栏设在红河发源地附近。因为那里有新鲜的青草，

很利于食草动物生活。

而从观望壁到红河的发源地，那段路已经被他们走成了一条道。如果能有一辆比原来还好的大车，特别是他们如果能捉住一只可以拉车的野兽的话，那么运送东西也就方便多了。

那普提出了他的想法，认为围栏离他们住的“花岗宫殿”远不远并不重要，重要的是家禽不能离他们太远。而且家禽最好能离厨房近一些，所以靠近原来洞口的那段湖岸非常不错，甚至可以说没有比那里更合适的了。

在那个地方，他们不仅可以驯养鸟类，而且还可以驯养水禽。在之前狩猎时，他们捉到的鹌鹑也很适合在那里驯养。

那普的意见得到了重视，计划也就定了下来。

第二天，也就是11月3日，他们的造桥工程开始实施。对于这项工作，必须人人参加。所以很快，这群居民又都变成了木工，他们扛着锯、斧子、锤子，从河岸上走了下来。

突然，庞库那夫说：“昨天幸亏有狙布给我们梯子，我们这次出去，梯子可千万不要又被‘坏家伙’们收上去了。”

“是呀，我们还是把梯子的下方绑住吧！”史密斯说。

于是，他们钉了两个木桩在沙地上，钉得特别牢靠，然后将软梯缚在了上面。随即便爬上了感恩河的左岸，并很快来到了河口拐角处。

他们考虑着在这里架桥是不是合适，貌似非常不错。

从这里到他们前一天去的南部海滨只有3英里半，他们很容易就能在这座新桥和气球港之间修建起一条能让大车通行的道路，为“花岗宫殿”和荒岛南部建起一条交通线。

史密斯随即还向他的伙伴们提出了另一个方案，那就是将观望壁孤立起来，这样，那些野兽和猿猴也就不会再到这里来了。那么他们的“花岗宫殿”“石窟”“家禽场”.....整个上半部高地也就不怕受到它们的掠夺了。

当然，这个计划实施起来并不难，所以史密斯很快就着手做了起来。

高地的三面均是水，有人工挖掘的，也有天然形成的。西北方向是格兰特湖岸，包括从通道入口到湖岸排水的缺口这段距离。

北边是一条新水道，从湖岸缺口一直延伸到了海边。此水道位于瀑布源头的上下端，在通过高地和岸边时，自然冲出了一条河床。现在他们只需将这条小河的河床往深里挖，就能将猛兽阻隔在外面了。至于东部，从河口到感恩河河口这一段，则有大海这个天然屏障。南边有从河口到拐角的感恩河做阻碍物。

经过他们的一番规划，只剩下高地的西边可以通行。这一段是从河流拐弯处到格兰特湖的南角，两处之间的距离有一英里。

当然，在这里最简便的方法是挖一条深渠，并用湖水将这深渠灌满。当湖水过多时，就会通过这条深渠，流向感恩河了；而在湖水排泄后，湖面就能降到最低。史密斯正是因为有了红河水量大的结论，才想出这个方法的。

“如此一来，观望壁就会成为一个岛屿了，周围全是水。我们和岛上其他领土的联系，只能通过桥——一座将要搭在感恩河上的桥。此外，还有两座，一座搭在我们打算开凿的运河上，另一座就是通向感恩河左岸的桥了。如果我们能让这些桥吊起来，观望壁无疑就会既方便又安稳了。”史密斯说。

为了让大家理解他的话，史密斯还画出了一幅观望壁的图，通过这幅图，让大家明白他的计划。当然，大家完全赞同这种设计，庞库那夫更是举起斧子，大声说：“我们这就去搭桥！”

搭桥是他们最先要做的工程。于是，他们砍伐上等的建桥树木，并将上面的枝枝杈杈全都砍掉，将其做成横梁、托架和厚板。

他们要造的是吊桥，将感恩河右岸的桥梁固定，然后让左岸部分可以活动。这样，就能利用均衡锤，将桥吊起来了。

工程非常艰巨，虽然有史密斯这个指挥，但他们还是花了很长时间来做这件事。因为感恩河的河宽达到了80英尺，修桥之前，他们必须在河床中打下桥桩，只有这样才能支撑起桥板。而为了打桥桩，他们又必须安装打桩机。这样当桥桩形成两个弓形结构后，就能让桥身承受一定的重量了。

幸好他们所有的木工工具和金属安装工具都齐备，所以干起活来兴致也高。在七个月的各项技能锻炼中，他们使用工具的熟练程度已经很高了。当然，必须要说的是，史佩莱的操作技术已经丝毫不比庞库那夫逊色了。这不禁让庞库那夫暗忖：“一个记者的手工活能做到如此地步，真是了不起！”

经过三个星期的辛勤劳动后，他们完成了感恩河上架桥的工程。在

这三个月里，他们连早饭都是在工地上吃的，只有在晚上才回“花岗宫殿”休息。

也正是在这段时间，小狙布和他们熟悉起来。它好奇地盯着他们，看着他们做事。为了预防万一，庞库那夫并没有将它的束缚全部解除，他想得很明白，只有在他们将几座桥都架好后，才可以给它自由。

当然，狙布身上的束缚并没妨碍多卜和它玩耍，而狙布不管做什么事，都显得很严肃，很认真。

11月20日，他们的架桥工作全部完成。桥身部分因为有均衡锤的缘故，所以很容易悬吊，只需小小的力气便能将桥升起来。而那桥落下时用来支撑的横木，也因为和枢纽之间有着20英尺的距离，所以不会让动物轻易跳过。

桥架好后，他们便开始商量起搬运气球的事，他们很想尽快将气球放在能让它万无一失的地方。但如果想要搬运，就必须拉着大车去气球港。要想用大车拉，又必须在西遥森林开辟出一条道来。这些都需要很长时间才能完成。那普和庞库那夫后来又去气球港看那气球，回来后告诉大家，藏在石洞里的气球布没有损坏，所以大家也就决定先完成观望壁的工作。

“既然不用担心动物们来这里，那我们还是安心地开辟家禽场吧！”庞库那夫说。

“这样的话，我们是不是可以再開一块高地，将野生植物都移植过来？”那普说。

“对，我们要准备第二块麦田了。”庞库那夫说的时候，非常得意。

他们的第一块麦田里只有一粒种子，而那粒唯一的庄稼，在庞库那夫的细心照料下，长势很好。史密斯曾说过可以结10个麦穗，现在全成了现实。而每个麦穗，又都有着80颗麦粒。仅仅用了六个月的时间，他们就得到了800粒麦粒，所以他们可以每年收获两次麦子。

那800颗麦粒，除了有50颗被他们珍藏起来外，其余的都打算用来开辟另一片新开垦的麦田，并决定像照顾那唯一的麦粒一样去照料它们。

在将耕地的准备工作做好后，他们在麦场周围围了一圈结实的篱笆，那篱笆不仅高，而且顶部也都削尖了，一般的动物是很难跳进去的。对于飞鸟，他们也有预防。庞库那夫在这方面是个天才，他用木板做了几个人体模型，并让这些模型发出一些风车的响声，以便吓飞那些想偷吃的鸟。

做好这些工作后，他们这才将750粒麦粒种在了畦垄里，让其在大自然中自由生长。

11月21日，史密斯开始设计运河工程，他要将格兰特湖的南角到感恩河拐弯的地方分隔开来。因为那里只有上面两三英尺是泥土，再往下就是花岗石了，所以他必须先制造出一些硝化甘油来。史密斯制造的硝化甘油为这次的硬地开沟起了作用。仅仅不到两个星期，高地的坚硬土地上就被开成了一条6英尺高、12英尺宽的沟渠。

之后，他们又用同样的方法，在岩石的湖岸开了一条沟渠，并从湖里引出水来，形成了一条小河。这条小河也便成了感恩河的支流，被他们命名为硝甘河。

情况和史密斯推测的完全一样，湖面一下子降低了，但降低得很

少。为了让高地统统被河流包围，他们又将河床加宽，同时用木桩隔开了泥沙。

这一系列的工程直到12月中旬才全部完工。此时，观望壁一下子变成了不规则的五边形，方圆四英里的流水像带子一样环绕着它。有了这样的地势，他们就再也不用担心盗贼了。

这里的12月天气很热，但居民们仍然孜孜不倦地工作着，他们急于建家禽场，所以没有丝毫休息就干了起来。

在高地的隔离工作完成后，狙布的自由也就恢复了。当然，它没有离开它的新主人们，也没有要逃跑的意思。

狙布不仅性格温和，而且力大无穷，动作敏捷。不信你可以看，它在爬“花岗宫殿”的软梯时，身形灵敏，无人能比。在被新主人们经过一段时间的调教后，已经开始拉木料，甚至还会将石头从硝甘河里运走了。

“虽然它称不上是个泥水匠，但怎么也算是个猴子！”赫伯特开玩笑道。“猴子”是泥水匠对徒弟的称呼，因此非常适合此时的狙布。

家禽场设在了格兰特湖的东南岸，占地约200平方米。外面由篱笆围着，里面有很多窝棚，供飞鸟繁殖使用。窝棚由树枝做成，并被分隔成了很多小单间，以供新来的鸟居住。

第一个进窝棚的是那对鹌鹑。很快，这对鹌鹑就孵出了小鹌鹑。除了鹌鹑一家，还有很多鸭子，它们都住在格兰特湖边。在这些鸭子中，有些还是中国产的一种鸭子，它们的翅膀像扇面，羽毛光鲜亮丽，和锦鸡有一比。

几天之后，赫伯特又捉住了一对鹑鸡。这对鹑鸡的尾巴很长，并向外张开。这种鹑鸡实际上是一种美丽的野鸽子，不过很快就被他们驯化了。此外，还有一些塘鹅、翠鸟和大鸛是自己到了家禽场的。当这里的小家禽们叽叽喳喳地闹腾一番后，也就安安稳稳地待在里面了。

小家禽的繁殖能力很强，居民们完全不用担心他们没有家禽吃。

为了扩大家禽场的使用范围，史密斯还在家禽场的一角建起了一个鸽棚，并养了很多常来高地的鸽子。这些鸽子比起斑鸠来，特别好养，很快也就养成了。

终于到了用气球布做衬衫的季节了。由于保持气球原状，给它吹足气，然后带着他们离开无边无际的荒岛的想法只有无法在岛上生存的人才会有，因此，史密斯根本没朝这上面去考虑。

在将气球的气囊运往“花岗宫殿”前，他们还必须想办法减轻大车的重量，因为他们虽然有车，但却没有更好的办法去解决拉车问题。

荒岛上是否有能替代马和驴子的动物呢？这对他们来说，也成了一个问题。

“如今，找个能拉车的牲口简直是太重要了。虽然以后史密斯先生会为我们制造蒸汽火车，我们以后也能坐火车从‘花岗宫殿’出发，途经富兰克林山，然后到达气球港。”

庞库那夫对自己的话确信无疑，你看，当一个人的幻想成为信念时，力量有多大！

平心而论，庞库那夫所说的，只是需要一头能拉车的牲口而已。当然，这次也和以前的每一次一样，老天没让他们失望。

那是12月23日的一天，那普和多卜一个在大喊，一个在大叫，而且是在用尽全力地喊和叫。正在“石窟”里劳动的其他人，以为发生什么事了，急忙奔了过来。

他们被眼前的一幕惊呆了——有两头温顺的牲口，在桥开通时，竟然闯到了高地上。它们看上去是马，至少应该是驴子。两头牲口长得非常匀称，通体为淡灰色，而且还是一公一母。

牲口的腿部和尾巴处全都是雪白的，只是头、颈部以及全身带着黑色的条纹。两头牲口沉稳地向前走着，眼神中没有惊慌，更没有害怕。它们瞪眼看着惊呆了的居民，至少在当时，它们还不知道这些人以后会成为它们的新主人。

“这是野驴，是一种介于斑驴和斑马间的动物。”赫伯特喊道。

“难道它们不是驴子吗？”那普问。

“耳朵没有驴子长，长得也比驴子漂亮。”

“不管是驴子还是马，总之，正像史密斯先生说的，这是我们的‘动力’，必须将它们捉住。”庞库那夫说。

说完，他悄悄地从草丛爬到了硝甘河的桥上，将桥往上一吊，两头野驴就成了瓮中之鳖。可如何捉住它们呢？用暴力？可是能制止得了它们吗？不，肯定不行。最后，他们决定让野驴先在高地上自由自在地待几天，反正这里有的是青草。

随即，史密斯便开始着手在家禽场附近修建牲口棚了，还在里面准备了饲料，垫上了干草，以便让它们在这里过夜。

给野驴备好窝棚后，他们便让两头漂亮的牲口自由行动了。为了避免惊动它们，使它们受到惊吓，居民们尽量和它们保持一段距离。由于两头野驴习惯了在原野和森林里狂奔，有好几次都对滞留此地表现出了不耐烦，很想离开。

它们沿着阻拦它们的河水来来回回地走着，发出短而急促的喊声，并不时地在草地上蹦跶。但过了一会儿，它们便安静下来，呆呆地看着河那边的丛林，也许它们在想，以后再也去不了那里了。

看到时机差不多了，居民们使用植物纤维制造了一套套在牲口上的挽具，并在野驴到来不久，做了一辆大车，甚至还在西遥森林中开辟了一条道路。准确地说，是一条从感恩河拐角到气球港的，大车可以通过的便道。

12月底，他们就可以驾着野驴出行了。

野驴驯得已经能在庞库那夫手里吃东西了，而且居民们再走近它们时，它们也不会跑了。刚开始要给它们套上挽具时，它们会直立起来开始挣扎，很难勒住，但没过多久，它们便顺从了。

由于野驴没有斑马倔强，所以南非很多山区的居民都用它们拉东西，而且即使是在欧洲最冷的地方，它们也能听话地干活。

在用野驴拉车的这天，居民们全都上了大车，庞库那夫独自在前面牵着牲口赶路，向气球港方向走去。

自然，这一路并不平坦，坎坷不平的路上很是颠簸，但大车和他们还是平安地到达了气球港，并将气球的气囊和零部件全都装上了车。

晚上八点钟的时候，他们从感恩河的桥上过去，在下了左边的堤岸

后，将驴车停在了海滩上。

解开野驴身上的缰绳，再将野驴牵回牲口棚，庞库那夫做完这一切后，晚上临睡前，还禁不住兴奋地大吼了一声：“好！”

第八章

1月份的第一个星期，林肯岛的居民们做好了他们需要的衣服。做衣服的针是大木箱里就有的。虽然手有些笨拙，但做出的衣服却很牢固。大木箱里没有线，也幸亏史密斯的建议，他们解下了气球上的旧线，解决了做衣服时的最大问题。解气球上的线的时候，并不容易，需要很大的耐心，这又多亏了史佩莱和赫伯特。庞库那夫在做这种精细活的时候，没什么耐心，中途“退了场”，不过用针线缝衣服的时候，却没人能比得了他。

确实，没人不知道，水手是很擅长使用针线缝衣服的。

布料的获取也算费了些周折，他们要先从植物焚烧后的灰里获取小苏打和钾碱，然后清洗气球气囊上的布料。在经过一番清洗后，将那棉布上的油漆洗掉，在它恢复了柔软性和弹性后，再将其晾干，这样布也就洁白如新了。

居民们做了很多衬衫和袜套。做好后，他们就换洗了几个月来一直穿在身上的衣服。虽然衣服的布料很粗糙，但对他们来说，已经非常不错了。同时，因为有了这些布料，他们也就有了被单，而被单的存在，

让“花岗宫殿”一下子温暖起来，睡榻变成了舒适的床铺！

就在这段时间，他们还制作了第一批靴子，也就是海豹皮靴。他们从美国穿到这里的靴子，已经必须要换了。而这批靴子，他们在制造的时候，为了不夹脚、挤脚，特意做大了一些。

此时已经到了1866年，虽然年初天气很热，但他们还是不断地要去森林打猎。森林里到处都是刺鼠、野猪、水豚、袋鼠和其他动物。箭法百发百中的史佩莱和赫伯特获得了很多野味。

不过，史密斯依然叮嘱大家要节约火药，甚至尽可能地为寻找替代品做准备。箱子里的弹药，他们需要留到以后再用。因为在这样一片荒岛上，谁又能知道还会发生什么？因此，对于不可知的未来，他们要尽可能地节省火药。

史密斯开始自造弹药。因为岛上找不到铅，他便用铁粒来代替。由于铁弹没有铅弹重，他便将铁弹尽可能地做大一些，并少装一些火药。这样做虽然力量不如原来的子弹，但如果射击者技术不错，还是可以弥补这个缺点的。

本来史密斯也能制造火药，因为硝石、硫黄和木炭他们不缺。但做这项工作的时候，却是要特别小心谨慎的，没有特殊工具的话，很难保证质量。于是，史密斯决定制造火棉。制造火棉并非只能用棉花，一些植物纤维，比如大麻、亚麻、绿泽兰等的纤维都可以，它们的纤维和棉花纤维一样纯净，非常适合做棉花火药。

在林肯岛的红河河口，生长着很多绿泽兰，居民们也曾经用它制造过咖啡。

当然，现在他们需要收集的还有绿泽兰的树心。对于火棉制造时所需的发烟硝酸，也是可以制造的。史密斯可以用它手里的硫酸，加上从大自然获取的硝石中获得硝酸。这些都是生产火棉时所需的东西。

不过，火棉也是有缺点的。首先它特别容易燃烧，和其他物体的燃点为 240°C 不同，它在 170°C 的时候就能发生自燃。这就很容易让枪支走火，进而使其损坏。当然，火棉的优点也很明显，比如它不容易受潮，不会使枪筒受到污染，其火力也能达到普通火药的四倍。

制造火棉非常简单方便，只需将棉花或类似于棉花的纤维在发烟硝酸里浸一下，然后在冷水里洗净，最后晾干就可以了。

不过，史密斯只有普通的硝酸，没有发烟硝酸或硝酸单水化合物。因而，这种硝酸在遇到潮湿的空气时，往往会冒出一股白烟。为了解决这个问题，史密斯往普通硝酸里掺加了三至五倍的浓硫酸。就这样，林肯岛上的居民们再打猎时，便拥有了自制火药。由于他们使用时非常谨慎，所以效果并不比原本的火药差。

到现在为止，高地上已经被他们开垦出了3英亩土地。当然，为了野驴的生活，他们还是保留了一些青草地。

此外，他们也曾去啄木鸟林和西遥森林几次，在那里挖了很多野菜、菠菜、水芹、萝卜和大头芥等，以便自己栽培。很快，这些可以食用的蔬菜就生长起来，成了他们在吃野味时非常不错的调剂品。

除此之外，木柴和煤炭也被他们一车一车地拉了回来，而每外出一次，他们都不会忘记顺便修复道路，因而很快，车轮下的道路就变得平坦而光滑了。

“花岗宫殿”储存食品的地方，源源不断地有从养兔场获得的兔肉。当然，也幸好天然养兔场在硝甘河的对面，不然，兔场里的兔子们一定会到高地破坏他们精心开垦的菜地的。

岩石间的蛤蜊场也经常为他们补充食物。在蛤蜊场，他们很容易获得上好的软体动物。

当然，除了这些外，庞库那夫还会在格兰特湖和感恩河上钓鱼，每次都收获颇丰。庞库那夫做的几根钓丝，上面有铁钩，不仅常常会钓到一些鳟鱼，而且还会钓到一种银白色的腹部带着金黄斑点的鱼，这种鱼的味道非常鲜美。

厨师那普具有精湛的厨艺，经常给他们变换花样。如今他们最缺的，也只有前面说过的面包了。

在林肯岛，他们还经常会捉到一些从颚角沿岸来的海龟。这些海龟时常隐藏在丘陵起伏的海滩，所以那里经常会看到雪白滚圆的龟蛋。龟蛋和鸟蛋有所不同，蛋白不会凝结。一只海龟一年产卵能达到约250枚，而且是在阳光下孵化的，所以非常多。

“这里可以算得上是蛋场了，只要伸手就能捡到。”史佩莱说。

不过，对于拥有这么多的龟蛋，他们还是不满足。在去猎捕其他食物时，还往往会再带回一些海龟来。从营养学的角度来看，这已经算得上是珍宝级的食物了。

烹制海龟时，那普会在龟汤里放入一些香料用以调味，大家也是吃得赞不绝口。

这里还要说一件特别幸运的事，那就是有大批鲑鱼进了感恩河。这

些鲑鱼分布在上游几英里之内，非常好捉，他们因此而得到了大量可储存的冬季食品。

原来，在这个季节，正好是雌鲑鱼找地方产卵的时候，所以当它们引着雄鱼进入淡水后，就会激起水花，发出一阵唧唧声。一千多条鲑鱼，个个身长两英尺半。想要捉住它们，居民们只需在水里做一个水闸来阻拦它们，然后伸手去捉就行了，一次差不多能捉一百多条。

这些鲑鱼被他们晾干后腌了起来，等到冬天结冰，没有办法捕鱼时可以拿出来吃。

此时，聪明机灵的獾布已经完全升职为仆人了。它穿起了外套和白亚麻短裤，而且还系上了围裙。对于围裙上的那只口袋，獾布表现出了很大的兴趣，经常将爪子伸进去玩。

獾布能这么快胜任，都源于那普的细心训练。居民们经常看见那普和獾布在谈话，不知道的还以为黑人那普和猩猩獾布是有共同语言的。时间一长，獾布对那普便很信任和喜欢了，而那普对獾布也有着同样的感情。

平时的时候，獾布的主要工作是搬柴。没事做的时候，它就会待在厨房里，模仿那普的一举一动。黑人那普在训练獾布时，非常有耐心。聪明的獾布也没辜负师傅的教导，很快就学会了做很多事。

一天，獾布在胳膊上搭着一条餐巾，出人意料地跑到了餐桌上伺候大家吃饭。獾布的这个举动让“花岗宫殿”的居民们兴奋异常。

獾布伺候起大家来既认真又麻利，不管是换盆子还是拿碟子，以及倒水，都做得沉稳仔细，这禁不住让被伺候者们大笑起来，庞库那夫更

是笑得无法自制，众人开始不停地喊狙布：

“狙布，快！拿汤来！”

“狙布，给我拿份刺鼠肉来！”

“狙布，给我一个盆子！”

“狙布，你真是个好狙布，一个忠实的狙布！”

不管大家怎么乱嚷，狙布总会一个个地去做，做得井井有条，一件事不漏。

第二天，当庞库那夫把头天狙布伺候他们的事拿出来当笑话讲时，狙布总会摇头摆尾，做出听懂了的反应。

“狙布，真的，该给你提高待遇了！”庞库那夫说。

现在大家应该已经知道，猩猩狙布已经在“花岗宫殿”被居民们完全驯服了。

即使跟着居民们去森林，它也不会逃离。最有意思的是，它经常扛着庞库那夫给它的棍子，如同一个人扛着一把枪，和居民们一起去打猎。

遇到居民们要去摘树上的果子时，它会飞快地爬上去；如果居民们的车轮陷入了泥坑，它也会跑上前用肩膀将车轮顶出来。

“太好了！这家伙如果只玩不干活，我们肯定拿它也没办法！”庞库那夫经常说。

到了一月底的时候，居民们开始在荒岛中部干活。他们打算在富兰克林山的山脚下，也就是红河发源地增设一个牲畜栏，用来豢养一些食草动物，比如能够取毛做冬天衣服的莫伏鹿羊。之所以将牲畜栏设得离“花岗宫殿”远一些，是担心太近惹麻烦。

做出了新辟牲畜栏的决定后，每天一早，全部居民，或是只有史密斯、赫伯特和庞库那夫三人便会向红河发源地走去，从“花岗宫殿”到那里不到5英里。建牲畜栏的地方他们选择在了富兰克林山的南面，那里有一块草地，中间有几棵树，旁边还有一条小溪，小溪的水是从山坡上流下来的。

这是一块建牲畜栏的好地方，既有新鲜的青草，又有大树，而且大树还没有把那片土地全部遮住。因此，他们决定在青草地周围设一道高高的栅栏，以防那些矫健的动物跳进去伤害他们要饲养的牲畜。同时，牲畜栏一定要宽敞，因为他们准备饲养100只莫伏鹿羊、野山羊和未来的羊羔。

史密斯在把牲畜栏外的界线划定后，便开始采伐设置栅栏所需的木料了。在他们修路时，已经砍伐了很多木料，所以只需做成木桩，牢牢地插在地里就行了。

当然，在栅栏的迎面位置，他们也没忘记留下一个出口，并在那出口处安装了结实的大门。

牲畜栏的设置他们用了不下三个星期。

当然，除了做栅栏，史密斯还做了许多能让牲畜睡觉的地方。由于莫伏鹿羊的力气很大，所以他们将牲畜棚建得非常牢固，因为他们知道，初来这里的牲畜肯定会因为一时的不适应而发脾气，当兽性发作

时，一定是非常可怕的。所以那些木桩都安插得非常结实，并且每隔一段距离安插一根，以保证整个栅栏的耐用性。

牲畜栏建好后，他们便开始在食草动物时常出没的地方围猎。围猎时间选定在了2月7日。这天天气晴朗，居民们全体出动。此时，野驴已经完全变成了“家驴”。史佩莱和赫伯特骑着它们，向需要围猎的地方奔去。

两匹野驴将在他们的围猎中发挥很大作用。

围猎计划很简单，先包围他们想要饲养的牲畜，然后逐渐缩小包围圈。在这个过程中，史密斯、庞库那夫和那普以及狙布，各守森林一方。骑着驴的史佩莱和赫伯特及多卜则在牲畜栏周围半英里处来回奔跑，围堵它们。

林肯岛的莫伏鹿羊有很多，这种羊的身形和鹿差不多，角比山羊角还硬，是一种优良品种。它们那灰色的短绒毛上，夹杂着许多长长的白毛。

这样的围猎方式特别辛苦，他们必须来回地奔跑，不停地叫喊。好不容易围住上百只莫伏鹿羊的时候，不想又让它们逃跑了三分之二。

最终，他们只是将30只莫伏鹿羊和10只野山羊赶进了牲畜栏。牲畜栏的门起先是敞开着的，对被赶得乱窜的牲畜来说，还以为是条逃生之道，没想到一进去，便成了栏中之畜。

总之，这种结果已经很好了，他们没什么好抱怨的。

进了牲畜栏的莫伏鹿羊，大多都是母羊，有几个甚至很快就要生小羊羔了。因此，莫伏鹿羊的家族一定会继续扩大的，很快，他们将不仅

会有羊毛，而且还会有皮革。

围猎结束时已经到了晚上。回到“花岗宫殿”后，“猎人”们已经筋疲力尽。不过，虽然很累，但第二天他们还是忙不迭地去牲畜栏检查了一番，发现他们头天围进去的“牲畜”也曾试图撞倒栅栏，但没有成功。

当然，不久以后，这些牲畜便适应了被圈养的生活，不再闹了。

二月份过得很平淡，没什么特别的事情发生。居民们只是照计划实施，过着平静的日常生活。并在改进畜牧栏及修建去气球港的路的同时，又开始修筑另一条路。这已经是他们修筑的第三条路了，此路是从牲畜栏通向西海滨的路。

算下来，他们在林肯岛上没有仔细搜索的也就只有蛇盘半岛的森林了，那里到底隐藏着多少野兽，他们不知道，而史佩莱也恨不得马上和大家一起去森林里将那些野兽驱逐出去。

现在天气还热，在天气变冷之前，他们首先要用心培育一些植物，那就是从森林里移植到观望壁的植物。赫伯特每次出去，总会挖一些野菜带回来，然后种植进去。有时候，他还会带回一些菜籽，如能够榨出上好植物油的菊苣科植物，以及一些能够治疗坏血病的野菠菜和马铃薯等，当然还有原本生长在南美洲的珍贵植物块茎。

赫伯特的用心有了效果，他们的菜园子里已经拥有了很多植物，多得已经不怕飞鸟来破坏了。菜畦里还种着像莴苣、卵形马铃薯、野菠菜、大头芥、萝卜等很多十字花科植物。

总之，在这样一片肥沃的土地上，居民们一定会收获更多的希望。

经过一直以来的辛劳和努力，“花岗宫殿”里的居民们已经有了很多

除了酒之外的饮料。这些饮料，即使再挑剔的人，也不会有什么不满意。

当然，最后他们还是从苏薄荷茶及麒麟掌里酿出了酒。除了这种酒，史密斯还用针枰的嫩芽，经过发酵和煮沸后，制成了一种啤酒。这种啤酒的味道很好，英国和美国人将这种酒叫“泉水啤酒”，也就是“松啤酒”。

夏天即将结束的时候，居民们的家禽场又有了新成员，这是一对美丽的鸨，属于鸨科鸟，羽毛很特别。还有很多阔嘴鸭，嘴两边长着长长的膜。还有美丽的公鸡，它们的鸡冠和肉瘤，以及表皮都是黑色的。

总之，直到现在，他们一切的工作都进行得非常顺利，而这也全靠了这群智勇双全的人。因为自身的优秀，连老天都在帮助他们。

这段时间，在白天的酷暑过去后，晚上便有阵阵海风吹来，非常凉爽。

此时，当他们做完了当天的工作后，便会坐在观望壁里那通用爬藤装饰过的平台聊天谈心，计划未来。每到这时，性格爽朗的庞库那夫总能给大家带来欢笑，使整个场面变得快乐又温馨。

当然，他们最常聊的就是他们的国家，那个南北战争到底怎么样了？那样一场战争，一定不会拖延很长时间的。那个他们出走的里士满，一定已经落在了格兰特将军的手里。一旦格兰特将军攻破南部联盟首府，那场可怕的战争也就结束了。

如今，正义的北军一定取得了胜利。他们多么渴望拿到一份报纸，一份能让他们了解自己国家和同胞的报纸啊。

这群不幸而又幸运的人，和他们的国家、同胞失去联系已经11个月了。不久后的3月24日，就是气球将他们抛在这无名岛的周年纪念日。

去年的那一天，他们成了这座荒岛上的难民，在风雪和雷雨的侵袭下，完全不知怎样保全自己，更不知道未来会怎样。最终，依靠富有智慧的工程师史密斯和其他人，他们有了武器、仪器和工具，成了荒岛上的居民。利用岛上的动植物和矿藏，他们开始了一段新的人生。

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每当大家讨论这些的时候，史密斯在大多数的时间里总是最沉默的那一个，在其他人说话时，他只是默默地听着。在赫伯特天真地表达他的想法、庞库那夫幽默地说笑时，他也会跟着别人笑一下，但他的心里，随时随地思考的却是之前发生的那一系列不可思议之事。

那些事，截至目前，在他的内心深处都是神秘莫测的。

第九章

晴朗的天气一直持续到3月份的第一个星期，之后天气便发生了变化。3月1日那天还很热，月亮也很圆，但很快就变了天，阴云密布，暴风雨马上就要来临了。

3月2日，随着轰隆的雷声响过，狂风从东方吹来，噼里啪啦地朝着“花岗宫殿”打来的，是如同葡萄弹一样的冰雹。居民们急忙关上门窗——稍慢一点，很可能让冰雹和雨水穿过门窗进入房间。

看着鸽子蛋大小的冰雹，庞库那夫暗叫一声不好：看来，麦田要遭殃了。

庞库那夫不顾恶劣的天气，冲出了“花岗宫殿”，向麦田跑去。那绿色的麦梢已经隐隐露出了头，他急忙用一大块布，将露出头的麦梢罩了起来。为了避免麦穗受到伤害，这点辛苦他是不会在意的。

这样的坏天气，一持续就是一个星期，在这一个星期里，雷声不停地响在高空。

暴风雨夹杂着雷电的轰鸣，狂风暴雨袭击了一次又一次，空中不断有闪电闪过。林肯岛上的几棵树，以及森林、湖畔的一棵棵大树，也都被雷电击倒了。雷电有两三次击打在沙滩上，瞬间让沙石融化成了像玻璃一样的晶状体。

在发现了这些像玻璃一样的物质后，史密斯马上想到可以利用这个原理来制造玻璃。

天气不好，又没有特别急的事情要做，居民们便在“花岗宫殿”做一些简单的事，比如完善屋子的设施等。为此，史密斯还制造了一台车床，做了几件厨房用品和洗漱用品，随后又制造了放置枪支的枪架，用以保存武器。

因此，在不好的天气里，从“花岗宫殿”传出的工具声和车床声响成一片，与室外的雷声交相呼应。经过他们一番锯、刨、锉、旋等，终于，“花岗宫殿”里的任何设施都不缺了，不管是桌子椅子，还是碗柜都绰绰有余。

就是在这样的恶劣天气下，大家也没有忘记小猎布，有一天，那普

将它的“卧室”安排在了仓库后面的房间里。这个房间有些像船舱，只有一个吊铺，吊铺上铺满了干草，非常适合獾布居住。

“獾布真是太可爱了，很听话，又不顶嘴，还不辩解，是个非常好的仆人。那普，是不是？它是个合格的仆人吧！”庞库那夫看到獾布时，总是对那普不断地重复这些话。

当然，獾布是无愧于这种夸奖的，它总是毫无怨言地帮大家洗衣服、扫地、捡木柴、烤肉、伺候吃饭等等。当然，还有一件最令庞库那夫感动的事，那就是在没有伺候他钻进被窝睡觉前，獾布是不会去它的吊铺睡觉的。

至于居民们的健康，直到目前都没什么问题。虽然他们经常要去参加户外劳动，环境卫生条件有限，而且还是热带气候，但他们清楚地知道，他们不能生病。值得庆幸的是，这些长期进行脑力和体力劳动的人，竟然从没生过病。

确实是这样，这是一群健康的人。经过这一年的时间，赫伯特长高了两英寸，身体也逐步发育，越来越像个大人了。而他也有自己的目标，那就是做一个德才兼备、身体健康的人。

为了实现这个目标，每次做完事后，他都会抽出时间来学习。他拿出箱子里的书，反复阅读，以吸取书本中的知识。同时，他还不忘向史密斯学习各种科学知识，向史佩莱学习语文，而这两位老师，也非常愿意教他。

史密斯为了把自己所知道的一切都教给赫伯特，不仅经常讲给他听，而且还会做给他看。而赫伯特也经常会将史密斯教给他的知识运用到生活中去。

“如果我死了，赫伯特一定会接我的班的。”史密斯经常这样想。

3月9日，持续了很多天的暴风雨终于停了。不过，这也是夏季的最后一个月，所以天气依然阴沉沉的。经过雷电激烈震荡的大气层，好像并没有恢复原有的晴朗，除了有三四天的晴天，他们可以出去打猎外，其他时间几乎每天都是阴雨绵绵。

此时，野母驴也生产了，生下了一头小母驴。小母驴长得很快，一天一个样。牲畜栏里的莫伏鹿羊群也有了新成员，小羊羔们不断地在牲畜棚里咩咩直叫。听到这些叫声，那普和赫伯特非常高兴，而这些新添的小羊羔里，也有那普和赫伯特各自最喜欢的。

此外，居民们也试着开始驯养野猪，没想到也成功了。

于是，他们又在家禽场附近修建了一个猪圈。很快，里面就有了小猪崽。这些小猪崽的性格不像它们的父母那么野蛮，温顺了很多。而且在那普的精心饲养下，个个长得肥头大耳。

勤劳的小狙布经常热心地将厨房里的剩菜拿给小猪崽们吃，有时还会拽着小猪崽的耳朵和它们玩。淘气的它和孩子们一样，将小猪崽的尾巴当成玩具了。

三月份的一天，庞库那夫在和史密斯聊天时，庞库那夫提醒史密斯，有一件史密斯曾答应要完成的工作还没做。

“队长，你曾说过，你要做一种机械梯来代替软梯的对吗？什么时候能做起来？”庞库那夫问。

“哦，你是说升降梯吗？”史密斯问。

“我不知道它叫什么，就暂时叫它升降梯吧。不管叫什么名字，只要让我们不费时费力地进出‘花岗宫殿’就行了。”庞库那夫说。

“这并不难，可这有意义吗？”

“当然有，史密斯先生，如果有了这样的梯子，我们进出就轻松多了。当然，也许对有些人来说，这样做是有些讲排场，但对搬运东西来说，这却是非常有意义的。带着既沉又重的东西爬软梯，很不方便。”

“哦，那好吧！庞库那夫，我一定会让你满意的！”史密斯说。

“可没机器你要怎么做呢？”

“可以先做机器。”

“做什么机器？一架蒸汽机吗？”

“不，一架水压机。”

史密斯说得没错。他如今已经能够利用一些自然力量，使它毫不费力地为他想要拥有的机器服务了。不过，要想达到这个目的，还需要将“花岗宫殿”的内部水流提高。

于是，他扩大了石头与草丛间的那个缺口，使通道底部瞬间产生了湍急的瀑布。当通道里的水慢慢漫出来时，他又将它们从地下井排了出去。最后，史密斯在瀑布下方安装了一个圆筒状的螺旋桨，让外部缠绕着绳索的轮盘和圆筒螺旋桨相连。同时，他还在绳索上挂了一只吊篮，以便利用地面长绳来调节动力，当人坐上吊篮之后，便能很快地升到“花岗宫殿”的门口了。

这个计划很快就实施了。3月17日的时候，他们就开始使用这个升降梯了，效果非常好。从那天起，升降梯代替了原始软梯，一切重物，不管是木料、煤炭还是粮食，以及人，都能通过这个简单的装置上上下下下了。

想想看，面对这么方便的设施，还有谁会不满意呢？不要说人，就是狗——多卜也喜欢上了这设施。因为原来登软梯时，由于它不像狙布一样擅长攀缘，所以很多时候不得不攀在那普或庞库那夫的肩上，有时甚至还会攀在猩猩狙布的背上进“花岗宫殿”，非常不方便。

之后，史密斯又准备制造玻璃。

要制造玻璃，他们最开始时做的陶土炉子就有了用处。虽然在准备的期间，史密斯遇到了很多困难，好多次试验都失败了，但最终还是找到了制造玻璃的材料。

为了成功地制造出玻璃，他的两位老助手史佩莱和赫伯特一连好几天都守在“制造厂”。

其实，制造玻璃的原料并不复杂，只需沙粒、白垩、碳酸钠或硫酸钠就行了。沙粒海滩上多得是，白垩石灰里也有，小苏打海藻里就有，硫酸则可以从黄铁铜里提取。地下有的是煤，所需要的加热，陶土炉子就能承担。

很快，该要的原料都摆在了面前，只等开始做了。

当然，还有件工具很难制造，那就是吹玻璃的吹管。这种吹管必须是铁管，长度要达到五六英尺，史密斯是用它来蘸液体玻璃的。吹管最终是庞库那夫做的，他将薄薄的铁片卷成了枪筒形，也就能当吹管用

了。

8月28日，吹管试验合格。他们选了300分的沙粒、35分的白垩、40分的硫酸钠和两三分煤屑相混合……最后又将这些原料统统放进坩埚里，又将坩埚放在了炉子上。

当炉子里的高温让坩埚里的原料化为了胶状物时，史密斯就用吹管蘸了一些，放在预先准备好的金属板上滚了滚，使其变成适合吹的形状。最后，他将吹管递给了赫伯特，并让他吹吹管的另一端。

“要怎么吹？是像吹肥皂泡一样吗？”赫伯特问。

“当然，完全和吹肥皂泡一样！”史密斯说。

于是，赫伯特鼓起了嘴，使劲往管子里吹了一口气，吹气的时候，他还不忘双手不停地旋转吹管。很快，玻璃在吹管里就被吹得膨胀起来。最后，他们在膨胀物上涂了一层胶状体，一块直径一英尺的玻璃球就出现了。

然后，史密斯从赫伯特手里拿过吹管，不断地来回摇晃着，最后将那个柔顺的玻璃球拉长，使其成为一个有着尖尖两头的圆柱体。最后，他又去掉两头的半圆形，使其形成了一个玻璃圆筒。

接下来的工作就容易多了，只需将锋利的铁片放在冷水里浸一会儿，便能快速将尖尖的两头去掉了。此时再直着将玻璃筒割开，再次经过一番加热，让玻璃软化后，铺在平板上，用木辊子碾平就行了。

第一块成品玻璃做成了。根据这个做法，他们又做了15次，最后制出了50块玻璃。这样，“花岗宫殿”的窗口便装上了玻璃。虽然有些粗糙，不够白亮，但却很透明。

制成了玻璃后，他们又做了瓶子和杯子。当这些日常生活用品从吹管的末端形成时，他们开心得像个孩子。

庞库那夫执意要试试，大家便同意让他“吹”，不想却用力过猛，出来的产品变得奇形怪状。不过，他却将此当成了乐趣，乐此不疲。

在这段时间里，居民们也曾去岛上旅游了一次，那次，他们发现了一种能够增加日常食物种类的大树。

事情是这样的。那天，史密斯和赫伯特去打猎，在他们到了感恩河左岸，西遥森林里时，赫伯特像往常一样，不停地问史密斯问题，史密斯都耐心地做了解答。

不管是打猎还是做其他事，都必须一心一意。史密斯因为不擅长打猎，再加上赫伯特不停地向他提问一些化学和物理学方面的知识，所以他们错过了很多袋鼠、水豚和刺鼠。最后，直到天色已暗时，两个人这才发现，他们手里一个猎物都没有。

正在此时，赫伯特突然高兴地大叫：“快看，史密斯先生，那棵树！”

这棵树算不上是乔木，更准确地说应该是灌木。因为整棵树仅是一根树茎包着一层鳞状树皮，树皮上长着一些和叶脉平行的树叶。

“这树有点像棕榈树，但它究竟是什么树呢？”史密斯问。

“是凤尾松，史密斯先生。我在《博物学大辞典》里看到过，上面有一张配图就是这样的。”赫伯特说。

“但为什么树上没有果实呢？”史密斯说。

“没错，史密斯先生，它没有果实，但它的树干里却有一种‘面粉’，这‘面粉’可是大自然给磨好的。”赫伯特说。

“就是说，它是面包树？”

“对呀，可以说是面包树。”

“孩子，不错！真是不错！我们的小麦还没成熟，有了这个正好。不过，孩子，你没弄错吧！”史密斯还是有些不放心的。

赫伯特没有弄错。他将凤尾树的一个枝干折了下来，发现里面是腺状组织结构，真有不少粉末，而这些粉末也就是树心。

总而言之，这是一种有着粉状树心且夹杂着木质纤维的树。由于此树的年轮也是粉质的，因此就形成了一圈圈的同心圆。

在他们闻时，发现树散发着一股刺鼻的气味，原来这气味来自粉末里的黏液。不过，只要经过挤压，那刺鼻的黏液就会被挤出去，留下的淀粉也就成了很有营养的面粉了。

史密斯和赫伯特围着这棵凤尾松视察了一番，并在这一带做上了记号后就回到了“花岗宫殿”。

当他们向大家宣布了这个新发现后，大家都很高兴，第二天就去收“面粉”了。

庞库那夫对这个岛越来越感兴趣，他问史密斯：

“史密斯先生，你说，遇难者海岛，在世界上存在吗？”

“什么意思？庞库那夫。”

“是这样的，我是想，一些荒岛，一定是为一些有才的人准备的。因为当这些有才的人到了那里后，必定会想出好的办法来应对的！”

“嗯！有这个可能！”史密斯笑着说。

“我觉得一定是这样的。史密斯先生，至少我们的林肯岛就是这样的。”庞库那夫认真地说。

凤尾松的茎被居民们大批大批地带回了“花岗宫殿”。史密斯为此专门制作了一台压榨机，以此来清除“面粉”中的刺鼻黏液。而那最终留下的“面粉”，又被那普做成了糕点。虽然这还算不上是真正的面包，但已经相差无几了。

如今，不管是牲畜栏里的野驴、山羊，还是绵羊，都已经能够提供居民们必要的驴奶和羊奶了。而那架大车，他们已经很少用了，只是常常驾着一辆一个人坐的驴车，去牲畜栏。

庞库那夫经常去那里，而他每次去，必定会带着狙布，狙布也就成了赶车的“车夫”。狙布赶车特别有天赋，经常挥舞鞭子，灵活地做着它该做的工作。

牲畜栏和他们的“花岗宫殿”一样，变化很大，如今已是一片欣欣向荣的景象。如果不是因为他们背井离乡，看不到国家和亲人的话，他们真的很幸福。他们已经开始习惯了这里的生活，熟悉了这片荒岛。如果有一天他们真要离开，说不定还会舍不得呢。

当然，虽然不舍，但那对祖国的热爱，依然让他们时刻等待着机会离开。他们等着有船进入他们的视线，这样就能发出求救信号，然后让

船带他们离开。因为现在的他们，虽然也过着幸福的生活，但也有很多担心，总害怕有什么意外发生。因为，谁都不敢夸下海口，说自己会永远幸福，永远不会遭受灾难。

当然，不管怎么说，他们在这个岛上已经生活一年多了，这个岛也成了他们一切谈话的焦点。

有一天，他们对岛的位置重新做了一次观测，而那次观测，也和他们接下来遇到的事情有着非同寻常的关系。

4月1日是个星期天，也是复活节。林肯岛的居民们和往常一样在放假休息，做祷告。这一天的天气特别好，和北半球十月的天气一样。

傍晚，吃过晚饭的他们照例坐在了观望壁的平台上，看着天渐渐变黑。此时，那普为大家端来了用绿泽兰种子做的饮料，以代替饭后的咖啡。

几个人一边喝着咖啡，一边聊着荒岛在太平洋中的位置，史佩莱突然说：

“亲爱的赛莱斯，我们捡的那个木箱里有六分仪，你有没有拿它重新测我们的位置？”

“没有测！”史密斯说。

“这个仪器应该比你之前测时用的仪器精准，如果拿它测一下的话，说不定会有新的发现呢。”

“有什么好测的？荒岛的位置难道会变吗？还不就在原来的位置。”庞库那夫说。

“是这样没错。不过，要是仪器不精准的话，测出的也不会太精准。既然我们可以获得精准……”史佩莱话没说完，史密斯便说：

“亲爱的史佩莱，你说得完全对！虽然上次的差错仅仅在 5° 之内，但还是核实一下比较好。”

“是呀，说不定我们离外界并没有想象中那么远呢，谁知道呢？”史佩莱又说。

“明天测一下就知道了。如果不是有很多琐事缠身的话，可能准确结果早就知道了。”史密斯说。

“好，那太好了！像史密斯先生这样的测量家，我想是不会错的。如果荒岛没到处跑的话，它应该还在上次测的那个位置。”庞库那夫说。

“明天看吧！”

第二天，史密斯拿出六分仪，重新进行了观测，以便证实他之前测的位置。

以上就是他两次得出的结果：

第一次观测，他得出了林肯岛的位置：西经 150° 到 155° 之间；南纬 30° 到 35° 之间。

第二次就精准到了分：西经 $150^{\circ}30'$ ；南纬 $34^{\circ}57'$ 。

第一次测的时候，史密斯所用的仪器非常简单粗糙，但史密斯却测得很精细，所以差度没有超过 5° 。

“如今，我们已经有了六分仪和地图，亲爱的赛莱斯，看看林肯岛在太平洋的什么位置吧！”

赫伯特听说后急忙跑去拿来了地图，由于地图是法国出版的，所以地图上的地名全是法文。在他们铺开太平洋的区域地图时，史密斯手拿指南针，开始确定他们所在的位置。

突然，手里的指南针停了下来，史密斯大叫一声：“天啊，太平洋这一带很早之前就有一个岛。”

“这里有一个岛？”庞库那夫大声问。

“是不是我们这个岛？”史佩莱问。

“不！不是的。这个岛的西经在 153° ，南纬在 $37^{\circ}11'$ ，位于我们林肯岛西边 2.5° 、南边 2° 的位置。”史密斯说。

“那……那个岛是什么岛？”赫伯特问。

“叫岱波岛。”

“它是一个重要的岛屿吗？”

“不，那是太平洋的一个荒岛，很可能从来没有人去过。”

“我们要不要去看看呢？”庞库那夫说。

“去什么地方？”

“去岱波岛！史密斯先生，如果我们造一只只有甲板的船的话，我掌舵，咱们就能去那里了。对了，岱波岛离我们有多远？”

“差不多是东方150海里左右。”史密斯说。

“这算不了什么，150海里算什么？如果顺风的话，48小时我们就能见到它了。”庞库那夫说。

“可是……去那里又有什么意义呢？”史佩莱问。

“不知道，到时候就知道了！”

就这样，这天后他们便决定要造一只船，一只只有甲板的船，并准备在10月份，天气变暖后起航。

第十章

庞库那夫是个执着的人，是个想要做一件事情，就必须要去做的。如今，他的目标就是去那个岱波岛，因此，他要造一只船，一只能够让他们航行到岱波岛的船。

造这样一只船最好用哪种木料呢？榆树还是枞树？这两种树，林肯岛有很多。在经过权衡后，他选择了枞树，因为枞树比榆树更容易砍伐，而且防水性能也不逊色于榆树。

在想好一些细节问题后，由于离他们远航的晴朗季节还有近半年的时间，所以不需要大家都来做这件事。这样的话，造船的事也就只抽出了史密斯和庞库那夫，由他们去做。

史佩莱和赫伯特继续做他们的“猎人”，而那普和他的徒弟小狙布则主要负责干家务。

史密斯和庞库那夫选好树木后便将其砍了下来，去了杈后又锯成了板。他们劳动的娴熟程度，丝毫不比真正的木工差。一个星期后，他们将“造船厂”设在了“石窟”和峭壁之间的一个地方。在将一条长约35英尺的龙骨放置在沙滩上后，他们又在龙骨后面装上了船尾木材，在前面装上了船首木材。

史密斯做这些的时候，并不盲目。他对造船知识的了解，丝毫不比其他方面的知识差。做之前，他画好了船的图样，然后才一步一步地开始做。虽然庞库那夫曾在布鲁克林的造船所工作过几年，有一定的造船经验，但其实他也只是史密斯的一个得力助手。

经过一番精密计算，最后，他们又将肋材架在了龙骨上。

庞库那夫渴望实现自己造一只只有甲板的船的愿望可想而知，所以他一分钟都不愿意离开他的造船工作。

不过，有一件事的发生，却让他离开了“造船厂”，那件事可想而知，对他也是非常重要的。当然，即使这样，他也仅仅只离开了一天。

那天是4月15日，也就是他们第三次麦收的时间。这次的收成和第一次的收成相比，自然翻了很多，也达到了他们预期的目标。

“整整5蒲式耳呀，史密斯先生！”庞库那夫在很仔细地数了这些珍宝后，对史密斯说。

“不错，5蒲式耳。按每蒲式耳13万粒计算，总共就有65万粒了。”史密斯说。

“太好了！我们这次把它们全种上吧，少留一点。”庞库那夫说。

“是的，庞库那夫，如果下次的收成也能像现在这样，那么我们很快就有4000蒲式耳了。”

“到了那时候，我们就能吃到面包了，对吗？”

“是的，那时就能吃面包了。”

“可还要有个磨盘才行，只有那样才能吃面包。”

“没事，到时候我们可以做一个磨盘。”

这次他们预计的麦田面积就比前两次大了很多，在他们很小心地将地耕好，又将那些珍贵的麦种撒下田后，庞库那夫便又致力于他的造船工作了。

在这期间，负责打猎的史佩莱和赫伯特冒险去了西遥森林他们从没去过的一些地方。当然，进那里面时，他们是往枪里装好了子弹，做好了准备的。

那是一片深幽而美丽的大森林，树木密集，好像是因为地方不够，所以树与树之间才那么紧地挤在一起一样。

在如此密集的森林里行走探索，非常不容易，好在史佩莱每次来这里时都会事先带上指南针。枝叶的浓密，使阳光无法透射进来，更无法让他们按原路返回，所以他们必须依靠指南针指路。

按理说，在如此拥挤的空间，不应该有很多飞禽走兽，因为这太不利于它们活动了。然而，在4月份的下半月，他们竟然打到了两三只大

的食草动物。有一只是考拉，是在它们躲在密集的树枝间时被捉的，这种考拉他们曾在格兰特湖的北岸看到过。

考拉的皮被他们带回了“花岗宫殿”，仅仅只是用硫酸鞣制了一下，这些考拉的皮就能用了。

4月30日的时候，史佩莱和赫伯特再次进了西遥森林深处。史佩莱走在前面，赫伯特走在后面，两个人走着走着，走到了一块树叶比较稀疏的地方，阳光透过那些树叶洒了进来。走在前面的史佩莱发现了几株植物，那些植物的茎圆且直，并开出了一簇簇像葡萄一样的花团，散发出一种香气，花团里还有细密的种子。

史佩莱在仔细闻了这种香气后，折了一根树枝，好奇地问赫伯特：

“赫伯特，这是什么植物？”

“你是从哪里找到的？史佩莱先生？”

“就在那里，有空地的地方。有很多，想要多少就有多少！”

“这个东西啊，史佩莱先生，庞库那夫要是看到，一定会感激你一辈子的。”赫伯特说。

“啊？是吗？它是烟草？”

“对呀，是烟草，虽然不算最上等的，但也是烟草啊。”

“啊！是这样呀，那庞库那夫一定会高兴坏的。我们可不能让他独享，也应该给我们留一份。”

“我倒有个主意。史佩莱先生，我们可以先不告诉庞库那夫，等我

们把这烟草叶制好了，再把烟斗给他装得满满的，递给他。”赫伯特说。

“对！对！赫伯特，到了那天，我们的好朋友庞库那夫一定会什么都不要就满足的。”

于是，记者史佩莱和少年赫伯特，采集了大量的宝贵烟草回到了“花岗宫殿”。像防范一个机警而严厉的海关检查员一样，他们躲避着偷偷摸摸地带着“烟草”溜进了房间。

当然，他们并没有隐瞒史密斯和那普，庞库那夫也始终没有半点怀疑。在这段有些漫长的时间里，他们将那些小片的烟草先是晒干，接着切细，最后放在了炙热的石头上焙制。

要真正成为可吸的烟叶还要等差不多两个月时间。而在这两个月的时间里，他们一切都进行得非常顺利，庞库那夫也一直一无所知，因为他在忙着造船，只有晚上才回来睡觉。

5月1日那天，非常适合捕鱼，而且这次捕鱼必须全体出动。因此，庞库那夫不得不放下了他心爱的造船工作。

有一段时间，他们曾看见过一个庞然大物出现。那庞然大物就是鲸鱼，出现在了林肯岛附近两三英里的海上。

“如果我们能将它逮住，该有多好啊！”庞库那夫大喊。

“如果有合适的船和上好的鱼叉，我一定会追上去，并捉住它的。虽然这样比较麻烦，但非常值得去做。”庞库那夫说。

“庞库那夫，我可很想看你使用鱼叉的，肯定非常有趣。”史佩莱

说。

“有趣不假，不过那也很危险。既然现在无法捉住它，我们就不要去管它了。”史密斯说。

“我想不通，在纬度这么高的地方，怎么可能有鲸鱼出现呢？”史佩莱说。

“奇怪吗，史佩莱先生？鲸鱼是会出现在我们这里的。在太平洋中，英美捕鲸员都说过了，在新西兰和南美洲中间的海洋里，很容易遇到南半球鲸鱼。”赫伯特说。

“是这样的。我奇怪的是，为什么我们只看到了一条？当然，反正我们无法接近它们，一条和很多条没什么区别。”庞库那夫说完，叹了口气又回去工作了。

庞库那夫在钓鱼方面很有天赋。如果说，对于钓鱼者来说，他们的钓鱼乐趣和所钓的鱼的大小成正比，那么捕鲸员的喜悦一定是和捕到了一条大鲸鱼成正比的。当然，如果钓鱼和捕鲸鱼都只是爱好，那么这个问题也就没那么重要了。

然而，虽然没有得到这条大鲸鱼，但如果能逮住，这大鲸鱼一定会给大家带来很多好处的，比如鲸鱼的油、鲸鱼的骨头等等，对他们来说都是个宝贝。

这条大鲸鱼好像并不打算离开荒岛海面，所以赫伯特和史佩莱在不打猎、那普也不做饭时，就会站在“花岗宫殿”的窗口，或者是站在观望壁上，拿着望远镜去看它。

他们看到，大鲸鱼在进入联合湾后，会在从颚角到兽爪角的那段海

面上激起浪花。由于它庞大的身躯是支撑在有力的尾巴上的，所以游动也靠尾巴，游动速度应该达到了每小时12海里。当它游到离岸很近的海面上时，他们会很清楚地看清它的样貌。这是一只南方鲸鱼，通体都是黑色的，头部比北方鲸鱼扁。

除此之外，他们还看见从它的气孔里会喷出很高的水汽。这让他们更觉奇怪了。因为关于这一点，动物学家和捕鲸员的看法不同。对于喷出来的是空气还是水，有人就认为是空气，而之所以落下来是水，是因为遇冷造成的。

不管怎样，这么大一只哺乳动物的出现，仍然让居民们朝思暮想，特别是庞库那夫，自打见过它，便一直想着，即使在工作时，也在想，最后甚至到了像个孩子没有得到想要的玩具时，茶不思饭不想，连说梦话说的都是鲸鱼。

如果他有办法去猎捕，有适合入海的船的话，他一定会什么都不顾地去捕捉的。

在他们都认为得到鲸鱼是不可能的事的时候，一个偶然的机会成全了他们。那是在5月3日的时候，站在窗口的那普突然大喊起来。原来，那只大鲸鱼竟然在海滩上搁浅了。

正准备去打猎的赫伯特和史佩莱，马上放下他们的枪。庞库那夫也扔下了斧头，史密斯和那普，以及众人一起向那里跑去。

原来，那条大鲸鱼在涨潮时，在距“花岗宫殿”还有3英里的拾箱角搁了浅，没办法再回到大海里去了。

现在正是他们抓紧时间，断了它归路的时候。于是，居民们手拿鹤

嘴锄和搭钩，跑过感恩河桥，冲向河的右岸，沿着海滨一直向大鲸鱼搁浅的地方跑去。这段路程，他们只用了不到20分钟。而也就是在这段时间里，鲸鱼搁浅的上方已经有大群飞鸟在盘旋了。

“这可真是个大怪物啊！”那普大声喊着。

发出这样的喊声一点都不奇怪。因为在海滩上搁浅的这个家伙长达80英尺，重量不下15万斤，是个特大的鲸鱼。

大怪物一动不动地躺在沙滩上，虽然处在涨潮期，但它好像并没想着要挣扎到水里去。

居民们怔怔地看着，等到退潮后才走过去。他们围绕着这个大怪物转了一圈后，发现鲸鱼之所以不动，是因为它已经死了。它的左侧插着一根鱼叉。

“这么看来，这一带是有捕鲸船的。”史佩莱开口说。

“为什么这么说？”庞库那夫问。

“那鱼叉不是还在鲸鱼的身上吗？”

“不，史佩莱先生，这绝对不能说明问题。我听说鲸鱼是可以带着鱼叉游上万英里路程的。它很可能是在大西洋的北部被打中，最后又游到了太平洋南部，然后搁浅死掉了，这很正常。”庞库那夫说。

“但是……”史佩莱没说下去，但他并不同意庞库那夫的说法。

“完全有这种可能。我们还是先看看鱼叉吧！真是捕鲸员的话，鱼叉上一定会有船的名字，这是他们的习惯。”史密斯说。

庞库那夫拔掉了那把插在鲸鱼身上的鱼叉，并念出了上面的字：

“玛丽尤·撒塔莱，格雷普兰。”

“天啊，这是一只格雷普兰的船！我家乡的船！”庞库那夫激动地喊着。

“朋友们，不会错的，玛丽尤·撒塔莱，这就是一只捕鲸船，而且是顶呱呱的捕鲸船！朋友们，听到了吗？这是一只格雷普兰的船，是一只格雷普兰的捕鲸船！”

庞库那夫挥舞着手里的鱼叉，不停地念着上面的字，那里有他家乡的名字。

自然，玛丽尤·撒塔莱号是绝对不会来这里索取他们插中的鲸鱼的，所以他们必须趁着鲸鱼还没有腐烂时将它切开。头顶上那群飞鸟，想必跟着这个“美味蛋糕”已经飞了很久了。

此刻，面对摊在沙滩上的美味，它们好像一分钟都不愿意等了，随时准备往下扑。居民们不得不开枪，将它们驱散。

由于是母鲸，居民们得到了很多鲸奶。博物学家德芬巴赫说过，鲸奶是可以替代牛奶的。确实是这样，不管是从味道、颜色还是浓度上来看，它都和牛奶没什么区别。

捕鲸船上，庞库那夫也曾去工作过，所以对于怎么切肉很是熟悉，于是他带着大家去做。这项任务非常艰巨，他们整整做了三天。不过，对于这么繁重的工作，他们并不害怕，连史佩莱也是如此。这就像庞库那夫所说，史佩莱最后会成长为一个真正的“遇难英雄”的。

切鲸鱼很讲究，他们必须先将鲸油切开，然后切成两英尺半的方块。随即还要将其分成很多片，让每片的重量在1000斤左右。这样也能用当地的陶土罐来熬制鲸油了，避免将“花岗宫殿”弄得腥气冲天。

当然，在熬油的过程中，鲸油的重量会减少很多，几乎是原来的三分之一。

鲸鱼很大，仅从舌头上，他们就得到了6000斤油；从下嘴唇上，他们得到了4000斤油。这都让他们可以在相当长的时间里有足够的硬脂和甘油提供。此外，鲸鱼的骨头虽然不需要拿来做雨伞或支架，但也是有其他用途的。比如鲸鱼嘴上部的800块骨片，因为是纤维组织，所以有着很好的弹性。旁边的则很像一个超大的梳子，光梳齿就达到了6英尺。

想想看，鲸鱼就是用它来衔成千上万的小鱼和软体动物的，其力量可想而知。

在这些分解工作完成后，他们心满意足地将剩下的残骸留在海滩上。他们不用担心这些残骸，因为很快就会被那些飞鸟吞食干净的。此后，“花岗宫殿”的居民们再次恢复了他们的日常工作。

在重回“造船厂”工作前，史密斯忽然想做一些东西，他所说的这些东西，自然也引起了大家的极大兴趣。那就是，他要选用鲸鱼的12块骨头，然后再将每块骨头切成同样大小的六份，最后将其顶端削尖。

“史密斯先生，做这个东西干什么？”赫伯特问。

“可以刺死狼和狐狸，也可以刺死豹。”史密斯说。

“我们是要现在做吗？”

“不，这个要冬天做，只有在我们手里有了冰块时才能做。”

“什么意思？不明白！”赫伯特说。

“孩子，以后你会明白的。这东西可不是我发明的。在美洲的阿留申群岛，那里的猎人经常使用这样的工具。这些骨头，在天冷结冰时，可以将它们折弯浸在水里结成冰，由此让它们一直保持这样一个弯曲的形状，最后我们再在上面涂上一层油，扔到雪地里。那些正处在饥饿中的野兽吞下去后，知道会怎样吗？它们的胃会很快将冰融化，而那骨头因为冰的融化则会恢复成直形，然后就将吞食它的野兽的身体刺穿了。”

“太好了！真是个天才发明啊！”庞库那夫说。

“这样的话，可以为我们节省下很多弹药。”史密斯说。

“是啊，这可比我们设陷阱好多了。”那普也说。

“好吧！我们就耐心等待冬天的到来。”

“嗯！等冬天到来！”

至此，这件事放了下来，他们继续造船。到了5月底的时候，他们给船铺板的工作也已经完成了一半。从这半成品的形状来看，是只外形美观，适合航行的船。

庞库那夫将他全部的热情都投入到了这项造船工作中来。幸好他的身体强壮，不然恐怕会吃不消的。为此，伙伴们也时常拿给他一些慰劳品。而5月31日，他得到了他人生中最好的一件礼物，这件礼物给他带

来了非常大的快乐。

那天，他们吃完饭，庞库那夫正打算离桌，有人将手放在了他的肩膀上。他一看，是史佩莱。

史佩莱说：“不要走，稍等一下，庞库那夫，别想偷偷溜走，你的餐后点心还没吃呢。”

“不用，我要去工作了！谢谢你，史佩莱。”庞库那夫说。

“可喝一杯咖啡总行吧！朋友？”

“我什么都不需要。”

“那么抽一袋烟怎么样呢？”

一听这话，庞库那夫一下子跳了起来，因为他看到了史佩莱手里那装上了烟的烟斗。

当史佩莱伸手递给他烟斗，赫伯特用一块烧红的火炭为他点烟时，庞库那夫那忠厚的脸庞一下子变了。

他想说话，但却一句话都说不出来。怔了怔后，他一把夺过了烟斗并衔在嘴里，拼命地吸着。连吸五六口后，当那带着香味的蓝烟从烟斗里飘出来后，他在烟雾中不断地说：“是烟，这真的是烟！真的是烟！”

“是呀！庞库那夫！还是好烟呢！”史密斯说。

“啊！老天，万物的主啊，岛上现在真是什么都不缺了。”庞库那夫激动地喊着。他贪婪地吸了一口又一口。

“是谁找到这个的？是你吗？赫伯特？一定是你！”庞库那夫终于想起问这句话了。

“不是的，庞库那夫，是史佩莱先生找到的。”

“啊？史佩莱先生？”庞库那夫一边大叫，一边冲过去抱住了史佩莱，并将他紧紧地挤在胸前，挤得他喘不过气来。这感觉史佩莱从没遇到过。

“庞库那夫！”史佩莱在能喘一口气时，连连说：“饶了我吧，你应该感谢赫伯特，如果不是他认出了这种植物，我也不知道它是烟草。还要感谢赛莱斯，这烟叶可是他烤的。当然还有那普，是他费尽心思才让我们保守住了这个秘密。”

“太棒了！朋友们，相信我，总有一天，我会报答大家的！总有一天！我们的情谊，那可是一辈子的，一辈子！”庞库那夫激动得满脸涨红。

第十一章

6月，冬季来临，此时也就是北半球的12月。他们目前要做的就是抓紧时间做好既保暖，又结实的衣服。

用来做冬季衣服的羊毛还在莫伏鹿羊的身上，他们只需剪下来，然后织成毛料就行了。

不过，此时的他们还没有刷毛机、梳毛机、磨光机、绷架、绞丝机和纺织机。不能自动地做这一切，他们只能用手工。

无法自动纺织，他们就利用毛质纤维在强大的压力下会黏在一起的特性，先将其做成毛毡。制作毛毡比较容易，只需紧紧挤压就可以了。因为羊毛压缩得越紧，毛毡就越容易保暖。

短毛的莫伏鹿羊，特别适合先做成毛毡。

这项工作不可能由一个人完成，于是庞库那夫便暂时放下了造船工作，和大家一起协助史密斯，开始了做毛毡前的准备工作。比如清除渗透在羊毛里的油脂和油质。具体清除办法是：将羊毛放在盛满水的大木桶里，然后让木桶里的水一直保持在70℃的温度。

浸了24小时后，再拿出来用小苏打水彻底清洗羊毛，并将其拼命挤压，很快，结实的毛料也就做成了。当然，这样的毛料未免太粗糙了，即使拿到欧美市场，肯定也是一文不值，但在这林肯岛上，却是什么都不换的宝贝。

其实，这种简陋的制造毛料的方式，很早以前就有人用了。而那原始的毛料，也是用史密斯现在的方法做的。当然，在制造一架能够压榨羊毛的机器时，史密斯还是发挥出了他的工程师特长，巧妙地利用了海滩上瀑布做动力的原理，来发动那台水力压榨机。

这种方法，应该到目前为止都没人用过。

再没有比这么做更简单的了。他们先将羊毛放在了凹槽中间，然后用有着很大重量的木槌，不断地交替着去槌。当然，用动力代替人力的就是他们将要造的机器。几个世纪以来，人们一直在使用这种机器，只

是最后人们又发明了压滚，才不再使用这种方式，而采用了有规律的滚压方式了。

这项工作最终取得了绝对胜利，当然这胜利也是在史密斯的正确指挥下取得的。为了方便压榨，使羊毛柔软，也为了避免羊毛在槌的过程中过于收缩，他们事先将羊毛在肥皂水里做了浸泡。最后，当羊毛从压榨机里出来后，就变成厚厚的毛毡了。

这粗糙的羊毛有着很多优点，比如因为其交织细密，不仅适合做衣服，而且还适合做毛毯。

当然，这粗糙的羊毛制品不是美丽的细毛呢、开斯米，也不是绸子、缎子，更不是驼绒和法兰绒，它只是林肯岛上的一种纺织品。这种纺织品可以给他们提供暖和的衣服，厚厚的被子，并让他们安全地度过1866年到1867年的冬天。

严寒是在6月20日到来的。庞库那夫的造船工作只好暂时停止，虽然有些遗憾，但也是没办法的事，只能等到开春后再进行了。

庞库那夫的最大愿望就是去岱波岛，他对那里充满了好奇。不过，史密斯却不同意他纯粹出于好奇远航。因为他觉得在那样一个荒岛上，不可能找到什么想要的东西。而且他们所造的船，在他看来还是稍微小了一些。在那样陌生的海洋里航行150海里，到底会发生什么？他也不知道，所以有着深深的顾虑。

如果那船到了海里，到不了岱波岛，又无法回来，在那漫无边际的海洋里漂着，又该怎么办呢？

史密斯和庞库那夫无数次聊起了这件事。庞库那夫对这次的航海却

表现得信心十足，特别迫切。而当问他为什么要这么做时，庞库那夫又说不出来了。

“朋友，你看看，你对林肯岛赞不绝口，说到离开时就会悲伤，但你又拼命地想离开。为什么呢？”有一天，史密斯又问庞库那夫。

“不是永远离开，是离开几天。史密斯先生，我就想去那边看看，看那个岛是什么样的。”庞库那夫说。

“说不定它不如林肯岛。”

“我知道呀，我知道它一定比不上我们的林肯岛。”

“那为什么还要冒险去那里呢？”

“只是想去看看而已，算不上冒险。”

“那儿很可能什么都没有，也不可能有什么。”

“谁又能确定什么都没有呢？”

“如果航行中遇到飓风怎么办？”

“不会的，我们在天气好的季节去，绝对不用担心这事。不过，史密斯先生，为了预防万一，能不能让赫伯特和我一起去？”庞库那夫又说。

“庞库那夫，赫伯特偶然间成了我们的孩子，如果他或者你出了什么意外，你觉得我们能好过吗？”史密斯拍着庞库那夫的肩膀，语重心长地说。

“史密斯先生，请放心吧！我们绝对不会让你们担心的。而且还没到远航的时间呢，等时间到了再说吧。我想，当我们的船造好了，我们一起乘着它下海，环绕我们的荒岛时，我敢说，你一定会放心让我们去的。说句实话，最重要的可是你造的这只船。”庞库那夫想去的心情丝毫没有改变。

“不是‘你造的船’，是‘我们造的船’。”史密斯纠正他说。他决定暂时让步，因为他知道他们谁也说服不了谁，只能等以后有机会再谈了。

差不多到六月底的时候，林肯岛下了今年的第一场雪。牲畜栏里早就准备了很多饲料，只需每星期派人去看一次就行，不用每天都去。

为了猎到更多的动物，他们还是布置了陷阱，而史密斯用鲸鱼骨制造的那食饵暗器也做过了试验。

居民们将鲸鱼骨弄弯后，让弯鱼骨的外面结上冰，并涂上最厚的脂肪，放在了野兽经常出没的地方。

很快，试验就取得了成效，由此可以证明阿留申群岛的渔夫们发明的这个非常打猎利器特别管用。有好几只狐狸、野猪，还有一只美洲豹都成了他们的试验成果。这些脂肪全被它们吃进了胃里，最终它们都被伸直了的鲸骨刺穿了身体。

这个试验的成功让史密斯非常高兴。当然，除了这件事外，还有一件有趣的事，那就是他们和外界联系的一种尝试。

和外界联系，这是史佩莱想过很多次的事，可该怎么联系呢？是将一封信装进瓶子，扔进海里，寄希望于这个瓶子被海水冲到有人居住的海岸？还是利用鸽子来给他们送信？

不过，这两种方式，最后都被他自己否决了。因为他们所处的海岛离外界有1200英里，仅靠一只信鸽或一个瓶子去完成这个任务怎么可能？简直就是个笑话。

不过在6月30日的时候，赫伯特用枪打下了一只信天翁。这只信天翁没有死，只是腿部受了伤，所以捉住它，也颇费了一些周折。那是一只非常美丽的鸟，双翅展开有10英尺，这样的一只鸟，看情况连太平洋都是可以飞得过去的。

赫伯特想留下这只美丽的鸟来驯养。因为他觉得它只是受了腿伤，很快就能痊愈，更主要的是他认为能够将它驯养好。可史佩莱却告诉他，他们要抓住这个机会，抓住一个和外界发生联系的机会。如果信天翁是从有人居住的地方来的，那么再将它放走，它就会返回那里。

作为一个好的新闻记者，他也许只是想利用信天翁将林肯岛上的冒险故事写出来，进而带到外界去。如果这个故事到了他所尊敬的编辑约翰·贝尼特那里去，对于《纽约先驱报》以及史佩莱本人来说，都将是个很大的成功。

就这样，史佩莱写了一份简单的新闻报道，装在了不渗水的袋子里，然后又在袋子上写了几句话，比如请捡到这封信的人将它寄给《纽约先驱报》等等。

最后，他又将这袋子系在了信天翁的脖子上。因为他知道，信天翁有在海面上休息的习惯，如果系在脚上，很可能会丢失或进水。最后，他们将这个“希望”放回了天空，并眼睁睁地看着它带着信飞去了西方，一直到看不到为止。

这是他们的第一次尝试，这尝试让他们很是激动。

“你们说，它会飞到哪里去呢？”庞库那夫问。

“可能会飞去新西兰吧！”赫伯特说。

“希望一切顺利！”庞库那夫大声喊着。其实他对这种方式并没有抱什么希望。

随着深冬的来临，他们又不得不在“花岗宫殿”里工作，主要是缝衣服或是做其他一些事，有时候还会利用气囊上的一些零部件做船帆。

七月的每一天都是彻骨的寒冷，好在木材和煤炭都不缺。史密斯为此还在餐厅里装了第二个壁炉，以此来消磨漫长而寒冷的冬夜。

在壁炉旁，他们时常一边做事一边聊天，有时候还会朗读木箱子里的书。也正因如此，他们又学到了很多東西。

晚饭后，在明亮的烛光下，他们烤着炉火，喝着热腾腾的绿泽兰咖啡，听着外面的狂风怒号，闻着从烟斗里散发的芳香……每个人都是那么的满足和享受。如果背井离乡和与文明隔绝不算痛苦，而是一种乐趣的话，那么他们将是世界上最幸福的人了。

可惜现实并非如此，所以他们只能把对祖国和亲戚朋友的思念放在了聊天上。他们想念着他们的祖国，期待着美利坚合众国能强大。

一直关心着国家大事的史密斯，总是和伙伴们说一些政事，谈对一些事情的看法。当他在说的时候，伙伴们也总是听得津津有味。

一天，史佩莱突然说：“亲爱的赛莱斯，你曾说美国的工商业发展很快，如果有一天它们出现停滞怎么办？”

“停滞！为什么会出现这种情况？”

“因为煤炭太缺了。说句实话，煤是非常上最宝贵的矿产之一。”

“煤炭确实很宝贵。想起来，金刚石也只不过是碳的结晶，大自然存在的金刚石，好像就是为了证明煤炭的宝贵。”史密斯说。

“什么意思？史密斯先生？你是说，我们炉子里烧的是金刚石吗？它只是长得像煤？”庞库那夫插话道。

“那倒不是，朋友！”史密斯说。

“总之，煤炭总有一天会被烧光的，这一点你不会否认吧！”史佩莱又说。

“不用担心，煤炭的矿藏有很多，十万个矿工每年才能开采一万万英担¹，想把煤炭采完，早着呢。”

“可随着煤炭需求的增多，我们能够预料，当十万个矿工变成二十万个矿工的时候，开采量也会加倍的。”史佩莱继续说。

“这倒是的，听说欧洲的煤矿都要采用新式机器来开采了。不过等欧洲煤矿开采完后，美洲和澳洲的煤矿还是可以维持很长一段时间的。”

“能维持多久？”史佩莱又问。

“至少是250年到300年吧！”

“唉！这么说，我们这一代人是不用怕了，但我们的后代可就惨了。”庞库那夫叹气说。

“那时人们会发现其他替代品的。”赫伯特说。

“希望会是这样吧！没有煤炭就没有机器，没有机器就不会有火车、轮船、工厂以及各种现代化文明。”

“我们的后代会发现什么替代品呢？你知道吗？史密斯先生。”庞库那夫担心地问。

“大概是能猜测出的，朋友！”

“是什么？”

“水！”

“水？水能做什么？做轮船和引擎的燃料吗？水可以烧水吗？”庞库那夫大喊。

“是这样的。水能分解出一些元素。当然，这个分解的过程需要电。但是到了那个时候，水就会成为一种可以掌控很多的力量了。一切伟大的发明，都和一种不可思议的规律分不开，并逐渐完善，最后被我们应用。所以朋友们，我相信，有一天水是会被当成燃料的。当把组成水的氢和氧分离开后，当然也许也会结合，这都将成为热和光的无尽能量。到时候，它的力量之大，是连煤炭都比不上的。而且以后的轮船和火车，藏煤室及煤水车里装的都可能不再是煤，而是一种压缩气体。当这两种气体在炉子里燃烧时，就会产生很大的能量，所以我们不需要担心。只要地球存在一天，便会给人类提供生存的需要。只要我们不缺动物、植物和矿物，我们就永远不会缺光和热。所以我深信，没有了煤炭，我们还是可以用水来提供热能的，水就是将来的煤。”史密斯的语气很坚定。

“希望我能有机会看到。”庞库那夫说。

“可惜你生得太早了！庞库那夫！”那普突然插话说。

当然，打断这段谈话的并不是那普，而是多卜，它突然又开始发出了阵阵怪叫。上一次它怪叫，就曾让史密斯很惊讶。那是在“花岗宫殿”通道尽头的一口井旁，多卜曾绕着那井口不停地狂叫、奔跑。

“多卜怎么啦？为什么又那么叫？”庞库那夫问。

“怎么回事？狙布也叫起来了。”赫伯特又说。

确实是这样的，猩猩狙布也和狗多卜一样，表现出了极度的不安，并很快显现出了焦躁和愤怒。

“看来，那个直通大海的井里有动物，常常从井底钻出来呼吸。”史佩莱说。

“嗯，肯定是这样的，不会有别的原因。”庞库那夫说完，将脸转向多卜，朝它喊道：“多卜，不要叫了，还有你，狙布，回到你的房间去。”

猩猩狙布和狗多卜全都停止了狂叫。狙布到它的吊铺上睡觉去了，多卜还留在房间。这天晚上，它每隔一会儿就要低低地咆哮几声。居民们并没再谈这个话题，但史密斯却一直眉头紧皱。

7月的最后几天，天上不是下雨就是下霜。当然，气温却没有去年低，即使是最冷的时候，也有-22℃。不过，虽然这个冬天不太冷，但风雪还是很多。此外，不断的海潮时不时地威胁着“花岗宫殿”的石壁，使其不断地发出很大的声响。

每当这时，居民们便会倚在窗口，看那奔腾的海水向岩石下冲去，瞬间又被撞出浪花。这壮丽的景象让居民们看得特别过瘾。

波涛夹杂着泡沫，不停地吞噬着海滩，让海滩一会儿消失一会儿出现，那些峭壁，也好像被浮在了一百多英尺宽的海面上，看上去非常壮观。

在这样的风暴下，他们不敢冒险出去，因为被刮倒的大树比比皆是，十分危险。不过，即使这样，他们每星期还是必须要去牲畜栏一次。幸运的是，他们圈的那块地因为有富兰克林这座山做屏障，所以不容易受到飓风的袭击，那里的树木、栅栏和畜棚也还好好地停留在那里。

不过，观望壁的家禽场可就没有那么幸运了，因为迎着东风，损失非常大。鸽棚顶被刮跑了两次，栅栏也被吹得东倒西歪。这些都需要他们重修，而且必须修得比上次还要牢固才行。因为很显然，林肯岛在太平洋大旋风的中心，属于最危险区域。当狂风从四面八方刮过来时，犹如在用鞭子抽打陀螺。

和陀螺不同的是，林肯岛不会动，但那风做的鞭子却是一直围绕着它在转，在抽打。

8月的第一个星期，天气恢复了正常，大气也变得平静下来。不过，大气一平静，严寒又来了，寒暑表显示，此时的气温甚至已经降到了-22℃左右。

8月3日，居民们到了荒岛的东南，在花皂沼地附近去打猎。而在那里，他们看到了来这里过冬的一些水禽，看得他们直眼馋。

那里有数不清的野鸭、丘鹬和小水鸭。最后，大家商量后决定用一天时间专门来打这些鸟。

参加这次打猎的人，不仅有史佩莱和赫伯特，还有庞库那夫和那普。全部成员中只有史密斯中途退出，说他在“花岗宫殿”还有其他事。

那天，他们一行人出去，并说好傍晚就回来，随即就向气球港奔去，接着又直奔花鳉沼地，多卜和狙布这次也跟他们一起去了。一行人在过了感恩河后，史密斯将吊桥放下，说他要回家，要去单独做一件事。

史密斯所做的是仔细观看井的内部。井口是和“花岗宫殿”的通道持平的，底下通向大海，是格兰特湖的输水道。

多卜经常绕着井口乱跑的原因是什么？为什么会发出怪叫？是什么让它不安？有什么吸引着它到井口来？狙布为什么也会和多卜一样不安？这井除了通向大海，还会通向哪里？能通向荒岛的其他地方吗？

这一切的一切，都是史密斯想知道的。所以他要趁大家都不在的时候搞清楚这件事。如今，时机来了。

只需要一根绳梯他就能下到井底。自从他们用了升降梯后，绳梯也就被搁置起来。史密斯重新将它拿了出来。

井口的直径在6英尺左右。他先将绳梯的上端牢牢系住，然后将另一端放进了井里。下井的时候，他的腰里插了一把刀，一把左轮手枪，手里还提了一盏灯。

下到井底，却没有发现什么，只有一些突出的尖石头。如果是灵活的动物的话，很容易沿着这些突出的石头爬到洞口去的。

史密斯发现了这一点，便也借着灯光，仔细察看那些尖石头。不过，他依然没能从那上面发现什么痕迹，也没发现有什么破损的地方表明被做过阶梯。

在往下又走了几级后，史密斯再次举起灯，四下看着，依然没发现可疑之处。

当史密斯已经跨到最后一级的时候，他触及到了水面。此时，水面非常平静，不管是水面上还是井壁上，都没有任何孔和洞通向峭壁内部。史密斯尝试着用刀柄在石壁上敲了几下，石壁发出的也不是空声。显然那是结实的花岗石，不可能被什么生物开出一条道来。

在海滩岩石的下层土地下，有一条沟将大海和井底连接起来。如果想要从大海进入井底，然后再爬到井口，是必须穿过这个沟道的。能做到这一点的，只能是水里的动物。不过，这条沟通向什么地方？在海岸的哪里？水是深还是浅？史密斯并不知道。

史密斯在检查完井内后，沿着绳梯上去，然后拉起了绳梯，盖好了井盖。

回到餐厅，史密斯喃喃道：“即使什么也没看见，但我依然相信，这里一定有猫腻。”

[1](#)重量单位，1英担约等于50.80千克。

第十二章

傍晚，出去打猎的几个人兴冲冲地回来了，个个满载而归，所打的猎物比任何一次都多。甚至连多卜的脖子上都挂着一串小水鸭，像项圈一样。而狙布的身上则缠绕着成串的丘鹬鸟。

“主人，我们现在可有东西消磨时间了。我要把这些东西全都做成大肉饼存起来，这样我们就不用担心没有余粮了。不过我还是需要有人当帮手。”那普高兴地说完，将脸转向庞库那夫。

“我找你行吗？庞库那夫！”

“不行，我要做船上的零部件，不能帮你！”庞库那夫说。

“那你行吗？赫伯特先生？”

“我明天要去牲畜栏，也不行，那普！”赫伯特说。

“那只能找你了，史佩莱先生！你能帮我吗？”

“当然，我非常愿意帮你。不过那普，我可告诉你，要是你的烹饪秘诀被我看到了，我可要写出来发表了。”史佩莱说。

“欢迎发表，想什么时候发表都行！”那普爽快地回答。

就这样，第二天的时候，史佩莱做了那普的助手，在厨房里帮着那普做肉饼。

史密斯在头一天将他在井底发现的情况告诉了史佩莱。和史密斯一样，史佩莱也觉得即使没有发现什么，也还是应该继续去探索。

天气又变了，接连下了一个星期的霜。

这一个星期，居民们除了去家禽场看家禽外，其他的时间都没有离开“花岗宫殿”。“花岗宫殿”里到处都洋溢着令人垂涎三尺的香味，这当然是那普和史佩莱在厨房里大显身手后的结果。

不过，他们并没有将所有的野味都做成储藏食品。因为严寒的冬季，他们即使不把野鸭和另一些野禽腌制，而是留下来吃新鲜的，也会是世界上最美味的。

而在这一个星期里，庞库那夫也在很擅长缝帆的赫伯特的帮助下，将船帆缝制好了。

船上的索具他们不缺，用的全是气球上的。同时，他们也从气球的绳网上取得了上好的绳索。总之，气球上的所有东西，庞库那夫都用在了新船上。那些绳网除了船帆上需要外，还剩下很多绳子，都被他用作了升降索、护桅索、帆脚索等等。

船上所用的滑车，史密斯则根据庞库那夫的要求，用车床做了一些。所以在船还没造好的情况下，船上的整套索具却已经全部做好了。最后，庞库那夫还做了一面美国国旗。而国旗上的蓝、红、白三色，均是他从染料植物中得来的。

这种染料植物岛上有很多。然而，国旗上，除了有代表合众国37州的37颗星外，庞库那夫还加了代表“林肯岛”的第38颗星。因为他觉得，此时的林肯岛，已经归属于伟大的合众国版图了。

“虽然还没有归并，但我在心里已经将其归并了。”他说。

国旗做好后，他们还将它升起在了“花岗宫殿”最中间的一扇窗户上。同时，当那国旗随风飘扬时，居民们连呼三声，以表敬意。

此时，寒冷的冬季很快就要结束了。他们来到岛上后的第二个冬天，似乎也要平安地度过去了。不过，就在8月11日的夜里，他们时常去的观望壁的高地却差点被破坏掉了。

那天过后的凌晨四点，居民们还在睡梦中，突然听到了多卜的狂叫声。

此时，多卜并没有在井边叫，而是在门口叫。它不仅叫，而且还不不停地用前爪去挠门，像是要把门挠开似的。而听到多卜叫，狙布也叫了起来。

“喂，多卜！你在干什么？”第一个被惊醒的那普喊了一声。听到问话，多卜叫得更响了。

“发生了什么事了？”史密斯问。

他们急忙穿好衣服，冲到了窗口，打开窗户。外面白茫茫的一片，朦胧中，他们还是看到了一片灰色。虽然看不清那是什么，但却听到了那灰蒙蒙的地方传来的奇怪声音。

看来，很可能是他们以前未曾发现的动物来到了这里。

“那灰色的是些什么？”庞库那夫喊。

“有可能是狼，也有可能是美洲豹，还可能是猴子。”那普说。

“坏了，它们快要到高地了。”史佩莱说。

“天啊，那是我们的家禽场，还有我们的菜园！”赫伯特也大喊。

“它们一定是从桥上过来的，想必是谁忘记把吊桥吊起来了。”史密

斯说。

“是的，是我，是我忘了把吊桥吊上去了。”史佩莱说。

“史佩莱先生，看你干的好事。”庞库那夫说。

“已经这样了，没办法挽回了，我们还是商量接下来该怎么办吧！”史密斯说。

当史密斯和同伴还在互相议论着的时候，那些野兽已经过了桥，来到了岸边。那些野兽到底是些什么，已经不重要了。重要的是它们均能登上感恩河左岸，并很快到观望壁去。所以必须尽快阻止它们，必要时，肯定还有一场恶战在等着他们。

“但它们到底是什么呢？”在听到野兽惊人的叫声后，赫伯特提出了这个问题。这个声音他好像听过，他猛地记起了第二次去红河发源地时，曾听到过这样的叫声。

“我知道了，是狐狸！”他大声叫着。

“啊？那快去！”庞库那夫也大喊一声。

于是，大家拿起斧子、枪，飞快地跳进升降梯，并快速到了岸边。

没错，这是一群狐狸，一群正处在饥饿中的、非常可怕的狐狸。即使这样，居民们还是奋不顾身地冲了上去，射出了一排子弹。黑暗中的枪声，把对方吓退了。

此时，对居民们来说，主要是想办法拦住这群强盗，不能让它们到高地去。不然，菜园、家禽场和麦田，都可能被无情地损坏、践踏，给

他们造成巨大的损失。尤其是那麦田，很可能会成为永远都无法弥补的损失。

好在这群狐狸也只有经过感恩河再到高地这一条路，只要守住了感恩河和花岗石峭壁间的堤岸，就能斩断它们前行的道路。更对他们有利的是，堤岸比较狭窄。

大家都知道这是最好的办法，因此在史密斯的安排下，迅速地到达了指定地点。此时，处在朦胧的天色和雾色中的狐狸已经处在了惊慌中。史密斯、史佩莱和赫伯特、庞库那夫以及那普之间，形成了一道牢不可破的防线。而多卜更是张开它的血盆大口，站在人前，做好了战斗的准备。狙布在它的后面，前爪抓着一根带有节疤的棍子，如同舞蹈一般地挥舞着。

天色还处在昏暗之中。想要看到对方，也只有开枪时，借着左轮枪的火光看到。他们看出，那些双眼如同燃烧的火炭，浑身通红的狐狸足足有一百多只。

“不能让它们过来，千万不能让它们过来！”庞库那夫厉声道。

“它们绝对过不来。”史密斯说。

它们确实没有过来，当然，并不是它们退缩了，不敢过来了。而是当后面的狐狸往前涌时，居民们的左轮枪和斧子让它们无法过来。好几只狐狸已经倒在了血泊里，但它们的数量好像并没有因此减少，很可能是后援正源源不断地从桥上向这边涌来。

没办法，居民们只能和狐狸进行肉搏战了。当一只狐狸如同一只山猫，扑向那普的背时，赫伯特开了一枪，那只狐狸死了，那普也被救了。

下来。多卜表现得很勇敢，它愤怒地和狐狸做着搏斗，冲上去咬狐狸的脖子，很快就咬死了一只。而猩猩狙布，也做着勇敢的动作，挥舞着手里的武器，击打狐狸，它不想被他们安排在后面。

狙布的目光非常敏锐，而且和居民们不同的是，它能够看清黑暗中的东西，所以它总会跑向战斗最激烈的地方，并帮助居民们向狐狸进攻。当它击中了狐狸后，便会因兴奋而发出尖锐的叫声。

有一次，它甚至跑去了很远的地方。直到居民们开枪时，通过火光才看到它正被五六只大狐狸包围着，勇敢地作战。

经过了整整两个小时，激战才结束，居民们终于获得了胜利。此时，天刚刚破晓，他们看到了那些失败者慌张地越过桥头，向北蹿去的背影。接下来，那普迅速地将桥吊了起来。

当天大亮，他们清理现场时发现，死狐狸足有五十多只。

正在他们想欢欣鼓舞时，却突然发现少了狙布。

“狙布，狙布到哪里去了？”庞库那夫大喊。

狙布失踪了。和狙布感情最深的那普大声地喊着。狙布也第一次没有回应朋友的叫声。

大家开始四处寻找，他们个个提心吊胆，生怕会在狐狸尸堆里看到狙布。在他们将染红了积雪的尸体拖到一边时，在死狐狸中找到了狙布。此时，那些死狐狸的肢体已经变得残缺不全了，应该是狙布这勇猛的战士用棍子殴打的结果。

可怜的狙布手里还紧紧地握着半截棍子，它在缺少了武器，寡不敌

众后，胸前受了重伤。

“它没有死，它还活着！”那普弯下腰，检查了一番后说。

“一定要将它救活，要像对待自己人一样对待它。”庞库那夫说。

狙布好像听懂了庞库那夫的话，将脑袋轻轻地依偎在庞库那夫的肩上，像是在向他表示感谢。庞库那夫的手也受了伤，但他的伤和其他伙伴一样，不足挂齿。因为他们拥有精良的武器，所以对方无法逼近他们，只是猩猩狙布的伤势比较重。

在那普和庞库那夫将受重伤的狙布放进升降梯时，狙布只是轻轻地呻吟了一声。到了“花岗宫殿”，他们从床上拿了一个垫子放在地下，让狙布躺在垫子上，然后小心地清洗了它周身的伤。

经过仔细检查后他们发现，多卜受的并不是致命伤，但因为流血过多，它的身体极其虚弱。并且，在将它的创口进行了包扎后不久，狙布开始发起了高烧。

居民们就像那普所说的“完全要像对待自己人一样”地照顾着它。他们给它喝了几杯清凉饮料，这些清凉饮料是从“花岗宫殿”的药草箱里取出，浸泡而成的。狙布起初很虚弱，但渐渐地，呼吸正常起来。看到这种情况，居民们这才放下心来，安安稳稳地睡觉了。

多卜在朋友狙布受伤后，也总是像居民们所说的，“悄悄地”来探望。对于大家对狙布的看护，它好像表现得很满意。而当它看到狙布的前爪露出了床铺外面时，也会用轻轻舔爪的方式表达关切。

白天，居民们将死狐狸运到了西遥森林埋了起来。

这次狐狸侵袭差点造成毁灭性的打击，对居民们来说，这是一次很深刻的教训。此后，他们每天一定会在完全确认吊桥已经吊了起来，没有任何疏忽，不会有任何动物来侵犯时才上床休息。

几天后，在居民们的用心照顾下，獾布身体状况好转了，热度也退了，原本就懂一些医术的史佩莱告诉大家，獾布已经脱离了危险。

8月16日的时候，獾布的身体完全恢复了，饮食也正常起来。那普为此还专门为它做了几份美味，“病人”獾布吃得津津有味。

说到獾布，优点有很多，如果说它有什么缺点的话，那就是有些贪吃了。而它的这个缺点，那普怎么都纠正不过来。

史佩莱经常说是那普把猩猩獾布惯坏了。有一天，那普无奈地对史佩莱说：“这可怎么办呢？好像除了吃，獾布没有其他的乐趣，我非常希望它能快乐。”

连着躺了十天，8月21日的时候，小獾布终于能起床了。伤势痊愈的它，过不了多久，又能活蹦乱跳了。不过，和很多生过大病的人一样，獾布的胃口比原来更好了。

史佩莱相信獾布有超出人类的一些本能，也相信它不会毫无节制地大吃特吃。

那普看到自己的徒弟胃口大开，非常高兴，宠溺地说：“吃吧，吃吧，獾布，全吃掉吧！你为我们战斗受伤，我无论想什么办法都会让你恢复健康的。”

8月25日那天，那普突然大声叫着大家：“史密斯先生、史佩莱先生、赫伯特先生、庞库那夫，你们来啊！快来啊！”

那普叫的时候正好是在狙布的房间里，大家急忙从餐厅跑了过去。

“发生什么事了？”史佩莱问。

“你们快看呀！”那普高兴地说。

大家看到了什么呢？看到了小狙布竟然像个孩子似的，在“花岗宫殿”的过道上叉着双腿，悠闲地抽着烟。

“天啊！那可是我的烟斗！它怎么把我的烟斗拿去了？喂，好狙布，我的好狙布，拿去吧！我送给你了！抽吧！老兄！”

狙布很娴熟地喷了口烟，像是很满足似的。史密斯对狙布的行为倒不觉得奇怪，他甚至给大家举了很多例子，说一些受到驯养的人猿，会和人一样有烟瘾的。

自此，小狙布就有了自己的烟斗，而这个烟斗也曾是庞库那夫使用的。这只烟斗原来是吊在庞库那夫房间，靠近烟草的地方。最后被狙布拿了去，而且还自己装烟，自己用火炭点烟。

在猿猴里，想必已经没有比它更逍遥自在的了。

狙布和庞库那夫，原来就有着很好的感情，这下又有了共同的嗜好，感情也就更进一步了。

“也许它就是一个人。如果真有一天，它开口说话了，你会奇怪吗？”看着狙布“人模人样”的样子，庞库那夫经常问那普。

“不会，我觉得肯定不会。不过，它不和我们说话，我有时倒很奇怪。他真像人，就差说话了。”那普说。

“要是有一天，它突然对我说：‘庞库那夫，我们交换烟斗吧！’我肯定会觉得非常有趣。”庞库那夫又说。

“就是，只可惜它生来是个哑巴！”那普说。

九月初的时候，冬天已经过去了，大家又开始了正常的工作。庞库那夫和史密斯的造船工作进行得非常顺利。甲板差不多都铺好了，船身内部也用了一些完全适合的、经过蒸气熏弯了的肋材。

在林肯岛上，最多的就是木料了，为此庞库那夫还建议史密斯将船的内壁做成双层的。这样的话，船身也就更牢靠了。

史密斯无法估计当船驶入海里后会遇到什么情况，所以也很同意庞库那夫的意见，将船造得特别结实。

9月15日，船的内部和甲板都竣工了，为了将一些缝隙补上，他们用晒干的海藻做了填充，用锤子将海藻凿进了缝隙里，最后又在上涂了很多融化后的松脂。

他们造好的这只船开起来并不难。居民们首先将12,000斤重的花岗石放在了压舱室，最后又在压舱的石块上铺了一层甲板，让船的内部形成两间舱室。舱里有可当橱柜的坐板两条，还有支持两舱隔板的桅杆，而人也能通过两个舱口从甲板到舱里去。

做桅杆的树，庞库那夫没费多少工夫就找到了。那是一棵没有节疤的枞树，只需将顶部刨圆，将桅底砍成长方形即可。对于船上所用的桅杆、舵和船身用的木料，他们都是在“石窟”做好再拿过去的。

虽然这些材质很粗糙，但却结实耐用。10月的第一周的时候，居民们连帆架、桅柱、帆杠、圆材、桨等全都做好了。一艘完整的船停放在

了他们的面前，大家非常高兴，便提议去做一次林肯岛的航游，以便熟悉船的属性及检测它的不足。

在这期间，他们也没忘记做其他事。比如莫伏鹿羊和山羊又增添了小羊羔，为此，他们又加大了牲畜栏。还有蛤蜊场、养兔场、煤矿区和铁矿区，甚至连没有探索过的西遥森林的一些地方，他们也都走遍了。

在那里，他们不仅看到了一些不知名的飞禽走兽，而且还重新发现了一些土生植物。虽然他们“花岗宫殿”的蔬菜品种不少，但多一种蔬菜总归是没有坏处的。

除此之外，他们还发现了一些番杏科植物，它们长着肥厚的叶子，和好望角产的非常相似，也能食用，有些植物的种子里还含有很多淀粉。

新船下水试航是在10月10日。造船获得成功让庞库那夫神清气爽。在将船上的索具全部配齐后，他们用滚轮将船推到了水边。

潮水上涨的时候，居民们欢呼着，庆祝新船浮起来。在欢呼声中，庞库那夫的声音更加响亮，甚至有些得意忘形。

当然，造船虽然完成了，但他还有其他工作，比如调度指挥。在大家的极力推崇下，他高兴地接受了“船长”这个称号。

为了庆祝他当上船长，大家决定给船起个名字，最后经过一番商量后决定将船取名为“长风破浪号”。

当潮水将“长风破浪号”浮起来后，居民们发现它在水里很平稳，非常容易驾驶，于是便将试航放在了当天。

他们决定离开海滨，做一次林肯岛的全岛航行。

这天，天气晴朗，海面风平浪静，虽然当天刮的是西北风，但却丝毫没有影响他们到南部海滨一带去。

“大家都上船吧！”船长庞库那夫下了命令。动身之前，他们已经吃了早饭，但还是带了一些食物上船，因为这次航行到晚上才能回来。

史密斯和庞库那夫一样，也急于想知道新船的情况。这艘船的图样是他根据庞库那夫的建议设计的，但却没有庞库那夫那么信心十足。

虽然庞库那夫自从那次和他聊了想去岱波岛后，没再提过这事，但史密斯还是希望庞库那夫能完全打消这个念头。确实是，如果只有两三个人乘着这只载重不超过15吨的小船去冒险的话，他是无论如何也不放心的。

十点半的时候，包括多卜和狙布在内，全体成员都上了船。当赫伯特拔起陷入感恩河河口沙滩的铁锚时，表示这场新船试航开始了。他们将船帆升了起来，让桅顶飘起了林肯岛的旗号。这被称为“长风破浪”的新船，也在庞库那夫的驾驶下，向海洋出发了。

顺着联合湾吹来的风向，“长风破浪”向前行驶着。和庞库那夫说的一样，新船的速度非常快，其他人坐在这只既快又稳的船上感到非常满足。

在绕过拾箱角和兽爪角后，庞库那夫开始让船沿着荒岛南岸逆风而行。此时，船的航行状况非常好。

船的性能这么好，让居民们很高兴，因为这只船很可能以后会给他们带来很大的帮助，只要在风和日丽的时候出航，一定会很顺利的。

船在行驶到距气球港三四英里时，他们看清了海岛的全貌。从兽爪角到甩尾角，沿岸的景色一直在发生着变化。森林里深绿的枞树和其他树木的浅绿，形成了层次美，一眼看过去，到处都是绿茵茵的。这片绿和富兰克林山顶峰的白雪皑皑，又形成了鲜明的对比。

“太美了！”赫伯特忍不住大叫。

“是呀，我们的岛真是太美了。我爱它，就像爱我的母亲一样。想想我们刚来这里时的凄凉，再想想现在，我们这五个从气球上降落到这里的人还缺什么呢？”庞库那夫说。

“对！我们现在什么都不缺了，什么都不少，船长！”那普说。

于是，那普和庞库那夫大声地欢呼了三声，以示对林肯岛的爱意。

此时，史佩莱正靠在船桅上，描画着眼前的景象。史密斯则在一旁，默默地看着他。

“史密斯先生，你觉得我们的船怎么样？”庞库那夫问。

“看起来很不错！”史密斯说。

“那你说，这船能到比较远的地方航行吗？”

“想去哪儿呢？庞库那夫。”

“岱波岛，比如说去岱波岛。”

“朋友，当我们遇到紧急事情的时候，乘坐‘长风破浪号’去比较远的地方我很赞同。可你要去岱波岛，我真是不放心。既然不是非去不可，

为什么还要冒这个险呢？”史密斯说。

“没有人不想了解邻居的情况。岱波岛可是我们唯一的邻居，我们应该去拜访，这是礼貌。”庞库那夫认真地说。看来，他的想法丝毫没变。

“哟……我们的朋友庞库那夫，怎么一下子讲起礼节来了？”史佩莱说。

“我不是什么讲礼节！”庞库那夫不高兴起来，他对史密斯一直反对他很不开心，但他又不想让史密斯担心他。

“庞库那夫，你想想，我们怎么能让你一个人去岱波岛呢？”史密斯继续劝他。

“有个人陪我去就行了。”

“即使这样，原本的五个人，就有两个人要处于危险中。”史密斯又说。

“不是五个，是六个。还有狙布！”庞库那夫说。

“不对，是七个！还有多卜。”那普补充说。

“绝对不会有危险的，史密斯先生！”庞库那夫加重了语气。

“这都只能说是可能，可能有危险，庞库那夫。我想再说一遍，我们不能进行不必要的冒险。”

固执的庞库那夫没再说话，这件事也就在此暂告一段落。不过，庞库那夫并没有放弃，他在想着以后继续谈这话题。

不过，让他没有想到的是，没过多久后发生的一件事倒帮了他，去岱波岛这原本可去可不去的事情就变成非去不可了，而且是去做好事。

他们在向气球港的海岸行驶。因为那里的小溪很可能会成为一个停泊船只的海港，所以 they 要查看沙洲和礁石间的海峡。必要时，在那里布置浮标。

在离岸不到半英里的时候，他们迎着斜风调转方向前行。因为风将一部分高地挡住了，所以船行驶的速度开始减慢。此时，船上的帆无法鼓起，海面变得很平静，像镜子一样。只是偶尔因海风吹过，使海面形成涟漪。

船头上，赫伯特一直注视着海峡中的航行方向，突然，他大喊一声：“庞库那夫，按风向行驶，按风向行驶！”

“到底发生什么事了？有礁石？”庞库那夫问。

“不.....稍等一会儿，我现在还看不清楚，向着风.....往右.....”赫伯特嘴里说着，侧下身，伸手在海里捞起了一件东西，大声说：“有一只瓶子！”

他从海里捡起的是一只有着软木塞的瓶子，而他捞起这个瓶子的位置则在离海岸不到几锚链的位置。

史密斯从赫伯特的手里接过瓶子，打开来，从里面拿出了一张纸。纸已经被水浸透了。但还是能隐约看到上面写着：

遇难者.....岱波岛：西经153°，南纬37°11'。

第十三章

“岱波岛有遇难的人！离我们几百英里的岱波岛有遇难的人！天啊，史密斯先生，这下你还会反对我去吗？”庞库那夫激动地大声喊。

“嗯，庞库那夫，你去吧！尽快动身！”史密斯说。

“那明天去，你觉得怎么样？”

“好！就在明天吧！”

史密斯的手里一直攥着瓶子里的那张纸，在又仔细看了看后说：

“朋友们，根据这张纸上的措辞，我认为这个在岱波岛上遇难的人有着非常丰富的航海经验，因为他写出的岱波岛的经纬度和我们测出的完全一样，而且精确到了分。另外，他写的是英文，可见不是英国人就是美国人。”史密斯说。

“完全没错！而且这也就能解释我们为什么会捡到那只箱子了。既然有遇难的人，想必一定来过遇难的船。庞库那夫想着造船，现在我们在试航时又捡到了这个瓶子。不管这个遇难者是谁，都说明他的运气很好。因为如果不是今天的此时此刻，很可能瓶子就不会到达我们手里，而且很可能会撞在石头上撞得粉碎。”史佩莱说。

“确实是这样，在‘长风破浪号’正好航行到这里时捡到了它，没有比这还巧的事了。”赫伯特说。

“这件事你有没有觉得奇怪？”史密斯问庞库那夫。

“奇怪？我不觉得奇怪，我只是觉得凑巧而已。史密斯先生。瓶子是会漂到一个地方去的，它没有漂去其他地方，而是漂到了这里。”庞库那夫说。

“嗯，庞库那夫，也许你说得对，不过……”史密斯说。

“可是没办法知道这瓶子在海里漂了多久，对吗？”赫伯特又说。

“是这样的。这纸有些像是最近才写的。你有没有这么认为？”史佩莱说。

“判断不出来。看来，也只能以后才知道了。”史密斯说。

在他们说话的时候，庞库那夫已经开始掉转方向，扯着满帆，向兽爪角方向驶去了。

每个人都在想那个在岱波岛上遇难的人。现在他们去那里救他还来得及吗？这件事，对林肯岛上的居民来说，是一件大事。他们也是遇难者，幸运地在这里生活下去了，所以他们也想尽最大的努力来帮助遇难者。

绕过兽爪角，差不多已经到下午四点钟了，“长风破浪号”在感恩河的河口抛锚了。

当天晚上，他们开始为远征做准备。庞库那夫和赫伯特去岱波岛应该是最合适的，因为他们都懂航行。如果第二天，也就是10月11日起航的话，以目前的风势，150海里的航行距离，应该用不到48小时就能到达目的地，所以应该会在13日到达岱波岛。

这样，再返回林肯岛的时间，应该是在10月17日。

好在近来的天气很好，随着气温的上升，风势也比较平稳。一切好像都对两位勇敢的远航者有利。

原本打算让史密斯、那普和史佩莱留在“花岗宫殿”的，但史佩莱却不愿意，作为一名《纽约先驱报》的记者，他不愿意错过这次探险的机会，所以表示即使是游泳，他也要去。最终，他也被批准去参加这次远航。

到了傍晚，居民们开始把一些需要的东西往船上搬。所搬的物品中，不仅有够吃一个星期的食物，还有被子、生活用品、武器弹药和指南针。在将这些准备工作都做好后，居民们回到了“花岗宫殿”休息。

第二天，清晨五点钟，出行的人和留下的人开始依依惜别。在一番叮嘱后，庞库那夫扬帆起航，向兽爪角出发。他们首先要绕过兽爪角，然后再向西南方向前进。

已经离开海岸四分之一海里了，“长风破浪号”上的三个人还看到“花岗宫殿”的高岗上站着两个人在挥手，他们是史密斯和那普。

“朋友们！我们这还是15个月以来，首次分离呢！”史佩莱禁不住喊道。

三个人一起向高岗上的两个人挥手致意。不久，“花岗宫殿”就消失在了兽爪角的石壁之后。

这天上午，他们一直航行在林肯岛以南地带。但不久之后，再看林肯岛，便像是一只绿色的篮子浮在海面上了，处在海岛中央的变成了高高的富兰克林山。不过，再走过一些，那高山也变得小了起来，完全无法吸引住过往船只的注意了。在走了一个小时后，他们离甩尾角也已经

有10海里左右的路程了。

无法再看清延伸到富兰克林山山脊的西海岸了。三个小时之后，水平线下面，整个林肯岛都消失不见了。

“长风破浪号”的航行非常顺利，冲风破浪，飞快地向前行驶着。庞库那夫根据指南针，张起前帆，掌握着行驶的方向。赫伯特则和他轮流掌舵。赫伯特的掌舵情况也很好，让庞库那夫一点毛病都找不到。

史佩莱会时不时地和轮流掌舵的两个人分别聊聊，有时还会去帮着整一下绳索，庞库那夫船长对这两个业余水手感到非常满意。

傍晚到了，一轮新月出现在了苍茫的暮色中，很快又降落了。他们只有在16号才能看到上弦月。天黑了，星斗满天，这也意味着明天将是个大晴天。

庞库那夫非常小心地将前帆落下，以预防在满帆时，遇到夜风侵袭。虽然这天的夜晚很平静，他完全不用担心，但做水手时养成的小心谨慎的习惯，还是让庞库那夫不敢马虎。

史佩莱这天晚上睡了半宿。庞库那夫则和赫伯特两个小时轮一次班，轮流掌舵，轮流在舵旁休息。庞库那夫相信赫伯特，犹如相信自己一样。这个少年的沉稳和果断令他吃惊，同时也让他欣慰。

庞库那夫一直像船长指挥舵手一样地指挥着他，而赫伯特也出色地做着舵手，没有让“长风破浪号”的前进方位发生丝毫偏差。

航行的第一夜就这么平安地度过了，他们迎来了10月12日的白天。这天白天的情况也很顺利，一直在向西南方向前进。因为只有这个方向才能够保证他们不遇到别的海流，船只直接驶入岱波岛的视线范围。

行驶在海上时，他们依然没有忘记四下观察。海面上除了偶有信天翁或军舰鸟飞到枪弹的射程之内，看不到任何东西。史佩莱不禁想起了上次自己带信给《纽约先驱报》的那只信天翁。

在岱波岛和林肯岛之间，经常飞行的好像也就信天翁最多。

“这海面真是太寂寞了，没有比这更寂寞的了。现在可是捕鲸船到南太平洋的季节呀。”赫伯特说。

“也没你想象那么寂寞吧！”庞库那夫说。

“什么意思？我听不明白。”史佩莱说。

“怎么会寂寞？我们不是在海面上吗？难道我们这船不是船，我们是小鲸鱼？”

庞库那夫说着，自己倒先笑了。

傍晚时分，据他们估计，他们离开林肯岛已经差不多36个小时了，照每小时3海里到4海里的速度，应该航行120海里了。如今风势很小，说不定很快就要停下来了。尽管如此，如果他们航线准确，估算没错的话，应该在天破晓时，会看到岱波岛的。

在10月12日向10月13日过渡的这一夜，史佩莱、赫伯特和庞库那夫都没有睡着，他们激动地盼着天亮。

这次的冒险究竟会怎样？他们谁也说不清。他们真的快到岱波岛了？那个等待拯救的遇难人还在吗？遇难的是谁？林肯岛上的几个人一直很团结，会不会因为多了一个人而不团结了呢？遇难人会不会愿意换

个岛生活呢？

一切一切的问题，都需要他们明天来解答，所以他们根本无法安下心来。好不容易天亮了，他们的眼睛一齐看向西方的水平线。

“看，陆地！陆地！”清晨六点，庞库那夫发出了一声大喊。

庞库那夫没有看错，确实有块陆地在那里。“长风破浪号”上的伙伴们是多么高兴啊。很快，用不了几个小时，他们就能登上岱波岛了。

现在，他们离目的地还有不到15海里了。岱波岛的海岸比较低，比水面高不了多少。

此时，“长风破浪号”的船头冲向了海岛的南部，从东方冉冉升起的太阳正照向两处海峡。

“看看，这海岛没有我们林肯岛大。很可能和林肯岛一样，都是由地震形成的。”赫伯特说。

十一点钟，他们的船离海岛不到两海里了。庞库那夫小心翼翼地向前行驶着，寻找适合登陆的海岸。此时，他们已经能非常清楚地看到岱波岛了。岛上生长着很多大树，包括橡皮树，品种和林肯岛上的一样。

不过，让他们感到惊讶的是，岛上没有炊烟，整个海岸也不像有人生存。

可那纸条上明明写着有遇难者，而且那遇难者还在苦苦地等待营救。

此时，他们的“长风破浪号”已经穿过了礁石，并驶向了曲折的海

峡。庞库那夫让赫伯特掌舵，自己则站在船头，手里握着帆索，很小心地观察着每个拐弯的部分，随时准备下帆。

史佩莱拿出望远镜，焦急地向海岸看着。不过，他还是什么都没发现。

中午十二点的时候，他们的船身碰到了陆地，庞库那夫急忙抛下船锚，收帆登岸。

很明显，他们已经登上了岱波岛。因为根据最新的航海地图，已经没有其他岛屿在新西兰和美洲之间的太平洋上了。

由于担心退潮时，海水将船吹走，庞库那夫和两个同伴便将船牢牢地系好，随即向沙滩走去。他们想爬到半英里之外的一座小山上，那座山看样子有250至300英尺高。

“如果站在那座小山上，我们一定能看清海岛全貌的，然后再仔细搜索。”史佩莱说。

“是呀，在林肯岛上，史密斯先生也是爬上了富兰克林山，我们也要这样。”赫伯特说。

“没错，这是最好的办法。”史佩莱说。

三个人一边说，一边向那块小山走去。去小山会经过一片空地，空地上有成群的野鸽子和海鸥，在空地上空不停地盘旋着，情况和林肯岛差不多。空地的左边，他们看到的是一片丛林，丛林里有沙沙沙的声响，像是草叶在摆动，里面应该有其他动物。不过，岛上看不出有人。

到达小山脚下后，他们仅仅用了几分钟便爬上了小山。站在小山

上，他们环顾着四周。

这片海岛周围方圆不过6英里。就连海角、地岬、港湾和河流都能看到，整个海岛给人的感觉像是一个被拉长的椭圆。周围全是大海，没有陆地，更没有孤帆。

当然，和林肯岛不同的是，林肯岛有些地方肥沃，有些地方荒芜。而这里树木丛生，非常富饶。有两三座小山，但也不高。有条河流通过一片草地，流向了大海，入海的河口也很窄。远远看去，那条河流如同是斜躺在这条椭圆形的海岛上。

“这海岛可真小。”赫伯特说。

“是呀，对我们来说，是有些小。”庞库那夫说。

“好像……好像岛上并没有人。”史佩莱有些疑惑地说。

“确实是这样，根本就看不到有人的迹象。”赫伯特也说。

“我们下山吧，慢慢搜查。”庞库那夫说。

三个人一起下了小山，回到了停泊“长风破浪号”的地方。此时，他们决定先徒步在海岛上巡视一番，这样就不会落下什么地方了。当然，沿海滩走路并不难，仅仅只有几处大岩石挡路，他们只需绕过去就行。再向南前进时，他们惊动了一些海鸟和海豹。不过那海豹一看到他们，马上就跑进了水里。

“想必这里的海豹是见过人的，所以他们才会怕人，和当初看到的林肯岛上的海豹不一样。”史佩莱说。

走了大概一个钟头后，他们来到了小岛的南部，这里有一个突出的海角。再沿着西岸往北走，也是沙石海岸。沙石海岸的背后是茂密的森林。

他们花了四个小时，将整个海岛搜遍，不过，不管什么地方都没有住人的迹象，海滩上也没有人的脚印。

他们现在不得不承认，海岛上是没有人的，即使以前有，现在也没有了。当然，这让他们更奇怪，除非那纸条是几个月甚至几年前写的。现在，曾经在这岛上的遇难者已经得救了，或者是已经离开了人世。

庞库那夫、史佩莱和赫伯特做着种种猜测。这些猜测又有多少是对的呢？他们决定先到“长风破浪号”上去吃点东西，晚上再继续搜查。

吃完饭，已经是傍晚五点了，他们又进入到森林。

森林里的动物看到他们后四散而逃，逃跑的是一些家养的山羊和猪。由此可见，确实这里曾有捕鲸船来过，最后将猪和羊留在了这里，并在岛上繁殖了起来。赫伯特开始想着怎么捉它个一两只，然后带回林肯岛去。

此时，他们完全能确定这岛是曾经有过人了。接下来有更多的证据证明了他们的推断，比如森林里有树丛被踩成了路；有树木被斧子砍过；人类双手劳动的印迹也非常明显……

不过，那被砍的树木像是很多年前砍的，被砍过的地方已经长满了青苔，道路上全是荒草，很难看到树桩。

“我们现在确实能证明岛上有过人，而且能证明这人在岛上住过一段时间。不过，这是什么人呢？为什么会在这里？”史佩莱说。

“纸条上不是说，是遇难的人吗？”赫伯特说。

“当然，如果这人还在岛上，我们肯定能找到他。”庞库那夫说。

三个人继续向前搜寻，他们很自然地斜穿海岛，走向了通往大海河流的地方。

一路上，他们又陆续发现了很多有人住过的痕迹，比如那些长在林间空地上的植物，都是些可种植、可食用的蔬菜。

当然，看种植时间，应该也在很多年前。

这些植物的发现让赫伯特很高兴，因为这里有许多菊苣、胡萝卜、白菜……这些植物，他只需收集种子就能拿到林肯岛上去种植了。

“太好了！看来这些那普也会喜欢，对我们来说正合适。这次来这岛上，即使没有找到遇难的人，有了这些，也不算白来。老天对我们真是太好了！”庞库那夫说。

“确实不错！不过从这些被开垦过的地方看，岛上应该早就没人住了。”史佩莱又说。

“嗯，我也觉得应该是这样。不管什么人在这岛上，都不会不照料这些珍贵的农作物呀。”赫伯特又说。

“是啊！看来，遇难人是走了！我们现在只能这么假设。”庞库那夫说。

“但是……那纸条是很多年前的吗？”

“我想是的。”

“如果真是很多年前的，那么瓶子在海里漂了那么久，怎么会到林肯岛附近呢？”

“这很正常，没什么不可能的。天黑了，我看我们还是停止搜查吧。”庞库那夫说。

“好！我们回船去，明天继续搜查。”史佩莱说。

他们只能这样了。不过，当他们正打算返回“长风破浪号”时，赫伯特指着林间的一团黑影说：

“看，那里有所房子。”

三个人立刻向那所房子跑去。黑夜里，他们隐隐约约看到了一所用木板钉成的房子，房子上面是一层厚厚的防雨布。庞库那夫飞快地奔过去，推开了半掩着的门。里面空空如也！

第十四章

庞库那夫、赫伯特和史佩莱，进了那所处在黑暗中的房子，里面黑洞洞，静悄悄的……

庞库那夫连喊几声。

黑暗中没有应答，也没有声音。

庞库那夫点燃了一根小树枝。顿时，整所房子都被照亮了。屋里并不是什么都没有，房间最里面有个壁炉，壁炉非常粗糙，里面还有一些残余的灰烬和一些干柴。庞库那夫将燃着的小树枝扔进了壁炉，壁炉里的干柴噼里啪啦地燃烧起来。

仔细再看，他们发现房间里还有一张床，上面是凌乱而潮湿的床单。这都说明此处很久没人住过了。壁炉的一角有两把生锈的水壶，一只铁锅；房间的碗柜里放着几件水手的衣服，不过已经发霉了；桌子上有个锡饭盒，一本《圣经》，但也已经受潮；墙角放着一些劳动工具，比如一把铲子、一把鹤嘴锄、两支猎枪，其中一支猎枪已经坏了；一个架子上放着一些用过的火药、枪弹和几匣雷管。放这些的架子是用木板做的.....

所有的一切，上面都覆盖着厚厚的灰，那是成年累月留下的灰。

“没有人！”史佩莱说。

“是的，没有人！”庞库那夫说，有些失望。

“应该是很久没人住过了。”赫伯特说。

“应该是很久了。”史佩莱又说。

“史佩莱先生，我看咱们今晚不用回船了，就在这房子里住一晚吧！”庞库那夫说。

“没错！庞库那夫，如果屋主回来，看到我们，应该也不会赶我们走的。”史佩莱说。

“他不可能回来的。”庞库那夫摇头说。

“为什么这么说，你觉得他已经离开这个岛了？”史佩莱问。

“不！如果他离开岛的话，肯定会把这些武器和工具带走的，可他没有。你应该知道对于遇难的人来说，这些东西是多么珍贵。所以不会！不！绝对不会的，不会离开这岛的。”庞库那夫说完，停了一下，接着又说：“不，不会的！他没有离开。要是他自己造了只船离开了，那这些东西不会留下。他，应该还在岛上。”

“那么，他还活着吗？”赫伯特问。

“很难说，可能活着，也可能死了。如果死了，难道他会自己埋掉自己吗？不管怎样，我们至少应该先找到他的尸体。”庞库那夫说。

就这样，他们在岱波岛上的第一夜是在没有人住的房子里度过的。有壁炉，墙角也堆着干柴，足以维持房间的温度。当他们关上门后，三个人便坐在凳子上，谈了起来。

虽然他们说的话不多，但他们却想得很多。每个人都在想象着各种情况的发生，他们希望听到外面传来脚步声，更希望看到有人突然推门进来，站在他们的面前。

虽然这所房子已经被人遗弃了，但如果真发生了他们希望的情况，他们一定不会吃惊的。他们甚至随时都准备着和这岛上的遇难者握手，告诉他，他们是来救他的。

但是，他们没有等到脚步声，也没有等到有人推门进来。时间就那么一分一秒地过着。

这一夜对庞库那夫和他的伙伴们来说，绝对是漫长的一夜。整整一夜，就只有赫伯特睡了两个小时，而这两个小时的睡眠，也是因为他年

轻，正需要睡眠。

睡在床上，他们都在想着第二天的搜寻，想着第二天要搜寻完整个小岛，要连最隐蔽的角落也搜寻到。

庞库那夫的那些推论是正确的。房子被遗弃在这里，还有很多工具、武器和生活用品都留着，这一切都说明了一个问题——主人已经不在了。不过，即使是已经离开了人世，他们也要找到他的尸体，甚至给他举行一个正式的丧葬仪式。

天终于亮了。

三个人开始仔细地搜查这所房子。从房子周围的情况来看，此处非常适宜盖房子。因为它背后是一座小山，小山上长着五六棵形状漂亮的橡胶树。房子的前面是一片树林，中间是曾用斧子开辟过的宽敞空地，空地四周有着东倒西歪的木栅栏。空地通向海边，海岸向左是河口。因而，站在这所房前便能看见大海。

再看造房用的木板，很容易就能看出是用船壳和甲板做成的。很可能是有只破船漂到了这座岛的海岸上，有几人或一人逃生成功，用那只船的残骸盖了这所房子。

在房子里来回踱了很久的史佩莱，进一步证实了这个假设，因为他在盖房子的木板上，看到了一些模糊的字迹。那木板应该是遇难船只的外壳，上面写着：“大……不……”

史佩莱叫来了庞库那夫，庞库那夫看过后大喊：“大不列颠，这通常是船的名字，不过从这名字没有办法知道它是英国船还是美国船。”

“是英国船还是美国船倒都不重要，庞库那夫！”史佩莱说。

“是的。如果遇难船上的水手还活着的话，不管他们是哪个国家的人，我们都是要救的。不过我看在搜查前，还是先回‘长风破浪号’一趟为好。”庞库那夫说。

庞库那夫有些担心起自己的船来。如果岛上真有人，那船再被一些人占了，那么……想过后他又耸耸肩，觉得自己的这个担心有些多余。

当然，不管这种担心多不多余，庞库那夫还是希望能回船吃饭。况且这段路并不远，还不到一英里。

就这样，他们一边往停泊船的地方走，一边查看丛林深处，并看见了上百只山羊和猪在四处乱窜。

离开那所房子差不多20分钟后，他们来到了小岛的东边，看到“长风破浪号”仍然停在原地，船锚也深深地隐在泥沙里。

庞库那夫松了口气。这只船就像他的孩子一样，牵挂孩子的安危是一个做父亲的责任。

在船上他们好好地吃了一顿早饭。他们希望这顿饭能吃得饱饱的，这样就能坚持到中午再吃了。吃完早饭，他们继续搜查，这次搜查得非常仔细。

这座岛上的居民很可能已经离开了人世，所以他们这次是冲着找死人而不是找活人的想法而去的。

不过，搜查的结果同样让他们失望——他们一无所获。直到上午，他们找遍了覆盖小岛的密林，什么都没有发现。他们几乎能完全肯定，人已经死了，残骸很可能也被野兽吃了个干干净净。

“我看明天一早我们就动身回去吧！”在一丛枫树下，庞库那夫对其他两个人说。此时差不多有两点钟，他们需要休息几分钟。

“把遇难者的东西带回去也不错！不算亏心！”赫伯特说。

“是的，这些工具和武器可以充实我们的‘花岗宫殿’，补充枪弹和火药很重要。”史佩莱说。

“我完全同意！不过我们千万不能忘了，走时捉两头猪，这可是我们林肯岛上没有的。”庞库那夫说。

“还有收集菜籽！这样我们就能得到新旧大陆都有的蔬菜了。”赫伯特说。

“那么，我们最好能在岱波岛多待一天，这样就能把该带的东西都带上了。”史佩莱说。

“不必要，史佩莱先生。我觉得我们还是明天一早走为好，这样我们的风向就仍然是西面。我们来时很顺利，希望回去也能很顺利。”庞库那夫说。

“那好，我们不要浪费时间了。”赫伯特起身说。

“不会浪费时间的。赫伯特，你收集种子比我们在行，你去收集时，我和史佩莱先生就去捉猪。虽然我们有多卜，但也能想法捉几只的。”庞库那夫说。

于是，赫伯特去了生长农作物的地方，庞库那夫和史佩莱则去了丛林。

很多和猪差不多的动物在丛林乱窜，非常灵活，他们很难接近。在追了差不多半个小时后，终于把在密林里躺着的两头猪捉住了。可就在這時，他们听到了一阵呼喊声。声音是从海岛北边百米远的地方传来的，喊声中夹杂着恐怖的尖叫，完全不像是从人的嗓子里发出来的。

庞库那夫拔腿就跑，那两头正要被捆的猪趁机逃走了。

“那是赫伯特，赫伯特的声音。”史佩莱说。

“我们赶快去！”庞库那夫边喊边跑。

幸好他们跑得快，到了那里时，发现赫伯特正被一个野人按在地上。野人非常高大，像是巨型人猿。

庞库那夫和史佩莱一起扑向大怪物。庞库那夫本身就是大力士，史佩莱也是壮汉，所以很快就救出了赫伯特。他们将那野人按在了地上，牢牢地捆住。

野人挣扎了几下，但因为绑得很紧，也就不再动弹了。

“受伤了吗？赫伯特。”史佩莱问。

“没有受伤！”

“如果你被这个人猿伤了，那我们就……”庞库那夫还没说完，赫伯特便说：“他不是人猿。”

庞库那夫和史佩莱大惊，仔细一看被他们绑起来的怪物，果然，他是人，不是人猿。不过，这是什么样的人啊，样子凶残而可怕，可怕到无法形容。

当然，更令他们感到有些毛骨悚然的是，他好像已经丧失了人性。

此人披着乱蓬蓬的长发，长发垂及胸前，和胡须混在一起。一丝不挂的身上，仅在腰间围了一块破布。他有双指甲极长的大手，还有如同红木一样的皮肤，更有硬如牛角的双脚，他的眼里，闪现出的是野性。

这个已经不能称之为人的动物，却是真正的人。不过，这样的人兽，躯体内到底是人性多还是兽性多呢？

“你觉得这是人吗？或者曾经是个人？”庞库那夫问史佩莱。

“嗯！这是没有问题的。”史佩莱说。

“那么，他应该就是那个遇难者了？”赫伯特说。

“应该是这样的。不过，这个不幸的人好像已经完全丧失人性了。”史佩莱说。

记者史佩莱说得没错，这个遇难者曾经是个文明人，但孤独的野外生活，已经让他变成了一个野人，甚至更坏的是，他也许已经退化成人猿了。看看他紧咬的牙，那牙齿就和野兽吃生肉时的利齿一样，再听听他喉咙里发出的沙哑的声音……

他肯定已经丧失了所有的记忆，甚至已经忘记怎样用机械和工具，怎么点火了。从他灵活敏捷的举止来看，虽然体力发达，但智力却已经退化了。史佩莱问了他几句话，但他好像一点都不懂，甚至好像什么都没有听到。

不过，史佩莱从他的眼神中还是发现，他好像并没完全丧失理智。

做了俘虏的他，并没有挣扎，也没想着去挣脱束缚。是否他过去曾是个人，当生活将他变成了兽后，再一见到人，太过激动了呢？会不会他在见到人时，脑海里也闪过一些记忆，然后恢复了人性呢？要是给他自由的话，他会逃跑吗？是不是还要留在这里？这些都很难说。

史佩莱仔细打量了他很久，然后说：“不管他以前是什么，现在是什么，将来又会变成什么，我们都有责任将他带回我们林肯岛去。”

“是的，是这样的！我们要小心地照顾他，也许会让他恢复人的智慧。”赫伯特说。

“是呀，一个人的灵魂是不会消亡的。将一个人从愚昧中拯救出来，是一件很好的事。”史佩莱说。

庞库那夫不相信，摇了摇头，他怀疑是否真的能将这样一个变成动物的人又恢复成人。

“我们一定要试试，不管怎样都要试试，出于人道也要这样。”史佩莱又说。

确实，他们是教徒，也是文明人，拯救一个人是他们的责任。三个人都明白这点，而且他们深信，史密斯若是知道的话，也一定会这么做的。

“那就这么一直绑着吗？”庞库那夫问。

“放开他的脚的话，他还是可以走路的。”赫伯特说。

“那我们试试吧！”庞库那夫说。

于是，他们割断了绑在“野人”脚上的绳子，但绑着手的绳子并没放松。“野人”站了起来，却并没有逃跑的意思。

三个人走到了他的身边，他用冷酷的带有野性的眼神看了他们三个人一眼，好像丝毫不记得这是他的同类，至少应该是曾经的同类。他的嘴里发出了咿咿咿的声响。不过，他的外貌虽然非常野性，但却并没有反抗。

在史佩莱的提议下，他们将他带到了那所小屋，希望他在看到自己的东西时，能回忆起点什么。因为那所房子也许就像星星之火一样，可以点燃他人性的光辉，激活他麻木的灵魂。

那所房子离他们捉住“野人”的地方并不远，几分钟后，他们就站在了房子里。但那“野人”像是什么都不记得，对房间的任何东西都没有反应。

也许，这个可怜的人在最初来到这里的时候，还有些人性和理性。但长期在小岛上困守，孤独和恐惧将他变成了“野人”的模样。除了这些原因外，真的无法想象一个人会退化到如此的地步。

史佩莱想，也许当他看到火光时，他会有所反应的。因为当那熊熊的烈火燃烧起来的时候，那美丽的火焰，通常连真正的野兽也会吸引过来的。所以，当他们点燃壁炉里的柴火时，似乎真的引起了他的注意，不过很快，他转过身去，那瞬间闪现的智慧光芒又消失了。

显然，他们没有更快的让他恢复的办法，只能先将他带上“长风破浪号”。

将“野人”带上“长风破浪号”后，留下庞库那夫在船上看着他。

赫伯特和史佩莱继续上岸做他们未完成的工作。几个钟头后，他们回到了海边，带着那所房子里的遗物：工具、武器，以及挖到的蔬菜和收集到的种子，甚至还有不少野味和两头猪。

在上了船后，他们只等着早上涨潮，就能起锚开船了。

“野人”在前舱，非常安静，始终一言不发，像个聋哑人。

庞库那夫递给他熟肉的时候，他推开了。很明显，这些熟肉不对他的胃口。不过，当他看到庞库那夫将赫伯特打来的鸭子拿在手里时，却像野兽看见猎物般地夺了过去，狼吞虎咽地吃了起来。

“你们认为他会恢复人性？”庞库那夫不停地摇头。

“有可能的。只要我们细心地照料他，一定会的。是孤独将他变成了这个样子，从此以后，他不会再孤独了。”史佩莱说。

“就是，他太可怜了。他一定这样生活很久了。”赫伯特说。

“是啊！”史佩莱说。

“你们看他有多大年龄？”赫伯特问。

“这倒很难说。他满脸的浓胡须，根本看不清长相。不过应该不年轻了，怎么也有50岁左右吧！”史佩莱说。

“你发现没有？史佩莱先生，他的眼睛深深地陷了进去。”赫伯特说。

“是的，赫伯特。不过我想说的是，同他的外表相比，他的眼神中更显人性。”史佩莱说。

“唉！不管怎样，我们看着吧。我倒对史密斯先生对这个‘野人’有什么样的看法很感兴趣。我们本来要找的是人，结果带回去的却是个妖怪！不过好在我们尽力了。”庞库那夫说。

这一夜，平安度过。他们不知道“野人”有没有睡觉，不过，虽然他们已经完全解除了他身上的绳索，但他也没有动。他没有像真正的野兽一样，在刚刚被捉的时候，会有些发愣，但过一会儿，野性又会发作。

清晨，已经是10月15日了。一切都像庞库那夫说的，天刚亮，天气就发生了变化，风开始向西北吹，这对“长风破浪号”返回林肯岛是个好事。不过，这也让天气越来越冷，给他们的航行带来了困难。

他们是清晨五点钟开始起锚的。庞库那夫收起主帆，向着东北方向的林肯岛驶去。

第一天非常顺利，航行中没有什么意外，“野人”也很安静地待在前舱。也许他曾是个水手，船身的颠簸，会让他想起什么吗？想起他的职业？不过，他始终很安静地待在那里，好像一点都不觉得烦闷，只是有些惊讶的表情时不时地会表现出来。

第二天，风势变强了，北风也是越来越大，这使“长风破浪号”无法把握方向。庞库那夫不得不顺风而行，但一个海浪直接打在了船头。庞库那夫虽然没说什么，但这种情况还是让他有些许的不安——风势如果继续这么大，那么他们回林肯岛的时间，一定会比去岱波岛花的时间长。

确实是这样的。“长风破浪号”在海里已经行驶了两天两夜了，到了17日清晨，他们还是看不到林肯岛的影子。航行时快时慢，既无法让他们估算出走了多远，也不能确定这方向是否正确。

又过了24小时后，他们依然看不到陆地在哪里。狂风从迎面刮来，海上更是波涛汹涌。船上的帆被他们紧紧地收了起来，并不时地变换着方向。到了18日的那天，大浪竟然将“长风破浪号”全都卷了进去，如果庞库那夫不是让大家把自己绑在了甲板上，他们很可能被波浪卷走。

等到风浪平息下来，他们开始解绑在身上的绳索。让他们想不到的是，“野人”竟然上来帮忙了。他好像一下子恢复了水手的本能，手拿圆木，从舱口奔了出来，打穿了一块舷壁，使甲板上的水流了出去。等到船舱里的水全都流完后，他又不声不响地走回到自己的舱里。在他工作的时候，庞库那夫、史佩莱和赫伯特都惊讶地看着他。

他们的处境的确很困难，这也是庞库那夫最担心的。他们如果真在大海里迷失了方向，可能就再也回不到林肯岛了。

夜晚到来，越发地寒冷。差不多到夜里十一点钟的时候，风势有所减弱，大海也趋于平静。船身平稳下来，船速也加快了。

庞库那夫、史佩莱和赫伯特都没有睡觉，他们小心谨慎地四下看着。他们现在面临两个可能，一个就是他们离林肯岛不远了，破晓时很可能就会看到；另一种可能就是他们被海流带去了很远的地方，再也找不到正确的航线了。

庞库那夫是个乐观主义者，虽然有些烦躁，但也没有完全失望。他紧紧地握着舵柄，恨不得自己长一双能看破一切的眼睛。

深夜两点钟的时候，他猛地跳了起来，大声喊道：

“快看！光！光！”

确实是这样，有一点亮光在东北20海里外的地方亮起，那就是林肯岛。应该是史密斯燃起的火，为的是给他们指明航行方向。这样看来，庞库那夫的航线有些偏北。于是，他重新掉头，向有火光的方向驶去。

那是火，是燃烧在水平线上的火。但那火也像一颗启明星一样，照耀着他们前行的航线。

第十五章

“长风破浪号”航行了四天，终于在10月20日的上午十点，缓缓地向感恩河的沙滩驶去。

在林肯岛的史密斯和那普见天气变了，“长风破浪号”载着伙伴们又迟迟不归，很是不安。天一亮，他们便爬上了观望壁，在望眼欲穿中，看到了“长风破浪号”。

史密斯高兴地说：“他们总算回来了，谢天谢地！”

那普表现得更是高兴，甚至跳起了舞，他一边转圈，一边拍手叫道：“是呀！我的主人，他们终于回来了！”

史密斯在刚开始的时候，推测遇难者不在船上，因为他觉得庞库那夫他们很可能没有在岱波岛找到遇难者。或者就是找到了，那个人也不愿意离开岱波岛。

果然，甲板上只有庞库那夫、史佩莱和赫伯特三个人。

早早在沙滩上等着的史密斯和那普，在船刚一靠岸时便迎了上去说：“你们总算回来了，真把我们急坏了。朋友们，是遇到什么事了吗？”

“没什么意外。我们这次出航非常顺利，经过和情况，我们会慢慢告诉你的。”史佩莱说。

“不过，看来你们的搜索没有成功，去时三个人，回来时还是三个人。”史密斯说。

“对不起，史密斯先生，我们不是三个人，我们是四个人。”庞库那夫说。

“四个人？你们找到遇难的人了？”

“是的，找到了。”

“那……活着吗？”

“是的，他还活着。”

“可是……他……他在什么地方？是什么人？”

“他是……”史佩莱停了一下，又说：“准确一点说，他曾经是人，赛莱斯，我们能回答你的，只有这些了。”

随后，史佩莱便详细告诉了他们在岱波岛的搜查情况，并告诉他们岛上有长期无人居住的房子，以及最后他们怎么捉住了那个已经不像是人的遇难者。

“关键的问题是，我直到现在都不知道该不该将他带回来。”庞库那

夫说。

“当然要带回来了，庞库那夫！”史密斯回答得很快。

“可是……这可怜的家伙一点人性都没有，也不做人事。”

“也许现在是这样，但几个月之后，这个可怜的家伙就会和我们一样了。如果我们中的某个人长期孤独地生活在那样一个岛上，谁知道会变成什么样子呢？一个人孤单单地生活在一个荒芜之地是最大的不幸。朋友们，既然你们见到了那个可怜的家伙，就应该相信，孤独是很能摧残一个人的。”

“不过，史密斯先生，你怎么知道他是最近才变野蛮的？”赫伯特问。

“因为那纸条是最近才写的，而且很可能，写那纸条的就是这个遇难者。”史密斯说。

“会不会是他一个死去的伙伴写的？”史佩莱问。

“不可能，亲爱的史佩莱。”

“为什么不可能？”史佩莱又问。

“如果是这样的话，纸条上会说有两个遇难者，实际上那纸条上只说了一个人。”史密斯回答得很肯定。

接着，赫伯特又简单地叙述了他们在海上遇到的事，并说在风暴激烈时，那“野人”突然变成了水手，还帮助他们。由此也可以说明，那个人的脑子里曾经闪现过一些以前的经历。

“很好！赫伯特，你所观察到的这个细节，说明这个人并不是无药可治。他如今变成这样，是绝望导致的。现在，他遇到了他的同胞，既然他还有灵魂，我们就能拯救他的灵魂。”史密斯最后说。

当他们将岱波岛上那个“野人”从“长风破浪号”的前舱带出来时，史密斯非常同情他，而那普更多表现出的是吃惊。

不过，“野人”刚一上岸就想逃跑。

史密斯及时走了过去，将一只手轻轻地搁在他的肩膀上，样子威严、目光仁慈。“野人”像是受到了感染，马上安静下来。他垂下眼睛，低下头，没有了逃跑的举动。

“真是个可怜的人！”史密斯喃喃道。

史密斯长久地注视着这个可怜的人。从外表上看，他确实已经不像个人了，不过，和史佩莱一样，史密斯很快就从他的眼神中，看出了一种无法用语言来形容的智慧。

大家决定将这个遇难者，也叫陌生人，带到他们的“花岗宫殿”居住，并给他设了一间单独的房子。在那间房里，他是逃不出去的。

没有遇到任何的反抗，他们很顺利地将他带去了那里。他们想，经过一番细心照顾，很可能有一天，他也会像他们中的每个人一样，成为林肯岛居民中的一员。

此时，史佩莱、赫伯特和庞库那夫都饿坏了，那普急忙为他们准备午饭。吃饭时，史密斯又详细地听他们讲述了岱波岛的情况。他同意他们三个人的看法，觉得那个陌生人不是英国人就是美国人。之所以这么肯定，就是从那所房子木板上的“大……不……”这个名字联想到的。

同时，陌生人有着浓密的胡须和蓬松的头发，史密斯认为他很可能是撒克逊人。

“对了，赫伯特，你一直没和我们说你是怎么遇到那个‘野人’的。我们可是真不知道，当时如果不是听到你的呼救，匆忙去救你，你很可能就被他掐死了。”史佩莱说。

“哎呀！我也不知道是怎么回事，我就记得我正在收集种子，突然听到扑通一声，像是有什么东西从树上掉了下来。我还没来得及转身，那个不幸的陌生人，也许刚刚是藏在树上的，就突然扑在了我的身上，速度很快，比我现在说得还快。如果当时不是史佩莱和庞库那夫……”

赫伯特的话还没说完，史密斯便说：“我的孩子，没想到你冒了这么大的风险。不过，如果没有你这次冒的风险，说不定你们还找不到这可怜的人呢，那我们也就少了一个新伙伴了。”史密斯说。

“这么说，赛莱斯，你是想让他重新变成人吗？”史佩莱问。

“当然！”史密斯说，语气很坚定。

吃过饭后，他们重又走出“花岗宫殿”，将“长风破浪号”里的东西搬了下来。史密斯把所有的武器和工具都仔细地看了一遍，但怎么都找不到能证明陌生人身份的印迹。

从岱波岛上捉来的猪，是大家公认的对林肯岛最有用的东西。他们将猪送进了猪圈，希望它们很快在这里繁衍起来。

除了猪受欢迎，还有那两桶弹药和几匣雷管同样受到了居民们的欢迎。大家甚至开始商量要在“花岗宫殿”的外面或石洞里建一座小型的火

药库，这样的话就不用担心爆炸了。然而，就算是有了这些弹药，但他们制造的棉花火药还是要继续使用，因为它的效果丝毫不比普通火药逊色，所以没有理由淘汰它。

在他们将从岱波岛获得的东西都搬完后，庞库那夫说：“史密斯先生，我觉得我们应该将‘长风破浪号’放在一个稳妥的地方。”

“放在感恩河的河口不安全吗？”史密斯问。

“倒不是不安全，史密斯先生。放在感恩河口的话，有一半时间是搁在沙滩上的，时间长了船会受损。你应该知道的，这可是一艘上好的船，我们回来时，遇到那么大的海风大浪袭击，都安然无恙。”庞库那夫答道。

“让它浮在海里可以吗？”史密斯又说。

“当然可以，只是.....史密斯先生，在海里没有什么遮挡的，我怕刮东风的时候，‘长风破浪号’会长期遭受波浪的冲击导致受损。”

“那么，你觉得放在什么地方合适呢？庞库那夫？”

“我们把它放在气球港吧。这样的话，因为小河外有岩石挡着，正好可以做我们的港口。”史密斯说。

“会不会太远了？”

“不会的，离我们的‘花岗宫殿’不过3英里。而且我们还有条平坦的大道通到那里，所以不怕。”

“好吧！那就这样吧，庞库那夫！不过，我总是觉得放在附近会更

方便我们照顾。以后，等我们有空了，再筑个港口吧！”史密斯说。

“太好了！我们筑港口的时候，还要筑个灯塔、码头。啊！史密斯先生，我太激动了，只要和你在一起，就不怕办不到。”庞库那夫兴奋地大叫。

“勇敢的庞库那夫，我们绝对能做到，不过这也要靠你的大力帮助才行。在我们的所有工作中，你的力气，让你一人干了三人的活。”史密斯最后说。

于是，赫伯特和庞库那夫重新登上“长风破浪号”，拔锚起帆，去了兽爪角。两个小时后，他们将船停在了气球港那平静的海面上。

从岱波岛到这里的陌生人在“花岗宫殿”已经住了很多天了，居民们有没有觉得他的野性已经有所减少了呢？他那逐渐封闭的内心，是否已经开始打开？简单点说就是，他的灵魂回到他的身体上了吗？

答案是肯定的，而且回来得很快，让史密斯和史佩莱有时候简直无法相信这个不幸的“野人”曾经丧失过人性。在野外生活惯了的陌生人，当初在岱波岛时，曾完全无拘无束，所以当让他住在“花岗宫殿”的时候，开始时并不接受，经常一言不发地生闷气，居民们还曾担心他会从窗口跳下去。

慢慢地，他平静了下来，而居民们也给了他更多的自由。

他们完全有理由对他抱有希望，而且是很大的希望，因为陌生人已经不再茹毛饮血，他开始吃一些比他在岱波岛上所吃的食物稍稍文明点的东西，而且见到熟肉时，也不再排斥和反感了。

史密斯趁他睡着的时候，帮他剪短了头发和胡子。原有的胡子和头

发像鬃毛，让他的脸看起来更野蛮。当然，他当初那块遮体的破布已经不在，取而代之的是合适的衣服。

由于大家的耐心照顾，陌生人逐步恢复了人的样子，甚至连那凶恶的眼神也变得温和起来。毫不夸张地说，如果他曾经的智慧光芒回到脸上的话，他一定是个非常漂亮的，有魅力的男人。

每天，史密斯总会抽出几个小时和这个新伙伴在一起，并不断地在新伙伴面前做各种事，以吸引他的注意。

确实，史密斯的做法，如同星星之火，在陌生人的心底蔓延。

此外，史密斯经常会在他的面前大声说话，以便让他的听觉和视觉一起打开，进而打开他那封闭的内心。

不仅史密斯这么做，居民们也都在这么做。有时候是这个人，有时候是那个人，有时候他们全体出动。

在他面前，他们谈论最多的就是航海了。他们知道，一个水手最感兴趣的就是这样的话题。

从陌生人的一些反应中居民们发现，对他们的谈话，他是能听懂一些的。不过，居民们从他的表情中发现，他有时候显得很苦闷，也很痛苦。有好几次，他们甚至发现，他像是要开口说话，但最终还是什么都没说。

当然，不管怎样，这个可怜的陌生人还是沉默和忧郁的。

他沉默的原因是什么？只是表面沉默吗？他的忧郁呢？是因为孤独造成的吗？他们都无法确定。不过可以想象，在一定的环境下，每天看

到的事物很有限，接触的也仅仅是几个居民，他一定不习惯。不过也许很快他就会习惯和他们一起生活的，因为这里不缺吃，不缺穿，他的原始生活习惯一定会发生改变的。

他真会习惯这种生活吗？说句不好听的话，到时候，他会不会像动物被主人驯服后一样？这对居民们来说，是个非常大的问题。而这个问题的答案，也是史密斯急于想知道的。

不过，他现在仍然不愿意草率地对待他的朋友，同时也是病人。因为对他来说，陌生人就像是得病了，但到底会不会完全康复，他真的不知道。

史密斯随时都在关注着他。更准确地来说，他是在等待陌生人的灵魂回来，并随时帮陌生人抓住灵魂。当然，居民们对史密斯诊治的过程充满兴趣，并热心地希望能帮助史密斯诊治。

也许不久后，只有庞库那夫仍对能否治好他心存怀疑，其他人则会和史密斯一样，对治好他充满了信心。

正如前面所说，陌生人表现得很安静。有时候，他甚至对史密斯表现出了一种依恋。很明显，他感受到史密斯的作用了。于是，史密斯决定对他做一次试验。陌生人经常会注视海洋，所以史密斯想将他从大海面前带到森林去，他觉得那些绿树，也许会让他想起些什么。

“但是，我担心到了森林里后，他会逃跑！”史佩莱说。

“我正想试这一点。”史密斯说。

“这家伙呼吸到了新鲜空气，非撒腿就跑不可。”庞库那夫说。

“我不信他会这样。”史密斯说。

“那我们就来试试。”史佩莱说。

“试试看！”史密斯说。

这一天是10月30日。岱波岛上的那个遇难人在林肯岛的“花岗宫殿”已经待了九天了。这天阳光明媚，阳光洒在海岛上。

史密斯和庞库那夫一起来到陌生人住的房间，见他正靠窗躺着，凝望着天空。

“朋友，起来吧！”史密斯冲他说。

陌生人很快就坐了起来。他看着史密斯，然后跟着他往外面走。庞库那夫跟在他后面，对这次的试验不抱希望。

到了门口后，史密斯和庞库那夫帮他上了升降梯，此时的那普、赫伯特和史佩莱也已经在“花岗宫殿”外等着他们了。随着升降梯的下降，几分钟后，他们集合在了沙滩上。

居民们离陌生人远了一些，让他单独行动。

他快速向大海走了几步，脸上浮现出难得的光泽。不过，他并没有逃跑的打算，只是静静地看着被小岛隔断的、漫上沙滩的细浪。

“他看到的只是海，并不会让他产生逃跑的念头。”史佩莱说。

“是呀，我们应该将他带到高地的森林边缘，在那里做试验才能得出结论。”赫伯特说。

“即使想跑，他也跑不掉的，吊桥是吊起来的。”那普说。

“哦，这种人是不会将硝甘河那样的河当回事的，他只需一跳就能过去。”庞库那夫说。

“我们很快就会知道答案了。”史密斯简单地说完，看着陌生人的眼睛。

他们将陌生人带到了感恩河的河口，大家通过河的左岸，爬上了观望壁，到了森林的边缘。

这里树木茂盛，微风吹过，树叶发出了沙沙沙的声响。他们发现，陌生人深深地吸了一口气，贪婪地将大气里的芬芳吸进鼻孔。

居民们紧紧地跟在他的身后，随时准备等他逃跑时抓住他。

果然，陌生人好像准备跳进那条阻隔他到森林里去的河流。他蹲了下去，做出了纵身要跳的动作，但很快，他又退了回来。在一种迷茫中，有一颗大大的眼泪从他的眼眶里流了出来。

“啊！你流泪了，你回归本性了！”史密斯高兴地喊道。

第十六章

没错，这个可怜的人流泪了！

他的脑海里一定是想起什么事了，用史密斯的话来说就是，他所落

下的几滴泪，让他变成了一个人。

居民们走到了离他有段距离的地方，以便让他独自在高地上待会儿，让他感受到彻底的自由。不过，他好像并没打算要这种自由。

不久，史密斯将他重新带回“花岗宫殿”。

又是两天过去了，陌生人好像慢慢地愿意和大家一起生活了。更让居民们肯定的是，他在听他们说话，而且应该听得懂。当然，令大家奇怪的是，他还是不愿意和居民们说话，这也是能肯定的。因为有一天傍晚，当庞库那夫路过他房间时，听到他在自言自语：

“不！我！绝不！在这儿！”

庞库那夫把情况告诉了大家。

“看来，他的内心一定隐藏着一段痛苦的记忆！”史密斯说。

陌生人已经能在菜园子里干活了，而且是使用工具在干活。看到这种情况，居民们并没有去打扰他——想必他更愿意保持这种独来独往的个性。当有人走近他身边时，他会在倒退中不停地喘气，胸前起伏不止，仿佛肩上挑着沉重的担子。

为什么会这样？是悔恨吗？他们只能这么想了。有一天，史佩莱突然说：“我想，他之所以不和我们说话，说不定是因为事态严重，他说不出口而已。”

他们只能耐心地等待他开口。

又是几天过去了，这天是11月3日。陌生人在高地上干着干着，突

然停了下来，手里的铁铲掉落在地上。史密斯在不远处看着他，见他又流下了泪来，一种抑制不住的同情让他向陌生人走去，并轻轻地拍了拍他的胳膊，叫了声：“朋友！”

陌生人竭力想要躲开他的眼睛，史密斯想去握他的手，但他马上缩了回去。

“朋友！”史密斯又叫了一声，眼神和语气非常坚定。

“我希望你能看着我的眼睛！”

陌生人慢慢地将眼神转向史密斯。突然，像是有磁石吸引着他似的，在史密斯坚定而又充满智慧的眼神下，他内心高高堆起的围墙垮了。他瞬间有种想逃跑的冲动，但同时表情一变，眼睛里有东西在闪烁。他有很多话想说，他再也控制不住自己了。

终于，他将双手交叉，用沙哑而沉重的语气说：“你们是谁？”

“我们是和你一样的人，一群遇难的人。我们把你带到了我们中间，你的同胞中间。”史密斯充满感情地说。

“同胞？我……没有！”

“我们都是你的朋友！”

“朋友？我的朋友？”陌生人喃喃着，突然用双手捂住了脸，大声叫道：“不！不要！离开我！快离开我……”

他歇斯底里地喊着，向高地边缘跑去。在那里，他一动不动地站着，很久，很久。

史密斯回到了伙伴中，将刚刚发生的事情告诉了他们。

“看来，他一定是有什么秘密！很可能是个经过了忏悔，想要重新做人的人。”史佩莱说。

“我们到底带回来的是个什么人？他有着多大的秘密……”庞库那夫说。

“我们不要管他有什么秘密，我们要做的就是尊重他。不管他曾犯过什么罪，现在也已经用最痛苦的方式赎清了，我们不应该将他看成罪人！”史密斯打断了庞库那夫的话。

在海岸上，陌生人整整待了两个小时。他一定是在那里回忆过去，回忆他以前的人生。那无疑是悲惨的。

陌生人站在海岸上时，居民们的眼睛始终没有离开他，但也没有去打扰他。两个小时后，他像是下定了决心似的，走到了史密斯面前。

他的两眼红肿，但却不再流泪。他表现得极度谦卑，神情焦躁、腼腆、羞愧……

总之，他的眼睛始终看着地下。

“先生，你们是英国人吗？”他问史密斯。

“不，我们是美国人。”史密斯说。

“哦！”陌生人回应一声，随即又小心翼翼地说：“那还好！”

“那你呢？你是什么地方的人？朋友！”史密斯问。

“英国人！”他慢慢地说。

这三个字对他来说，说出来是那么费劲。说完后，他走到了海滩上，在瀑布和感恩河的河口处来来回回地走着，表现得极度不安。

当他走过赫伯特身边的时候，他站住了脚，用很低的声音问：“现在是几月？”

“11月。”赫伯特说。

“哪一年的11月？”

“1866年。”

“12年，12年了！”他哑着嗓音叫着，离开了赫伯特。

赫伯特走到大家面前，将他们的对话告诉了大家。

“唉！真是个不幸的人，连哪年哪月都不知道。”史佩莱说。

“是呀！在岱波岛找到他的时候，他已经在那里生活了12年了。”赫伯特说。

“天啊！12年！独自过着那样一种生活，整整12年，这会完全摧毁一个人的。”史密斯说。

“我也是这么想的。这个人会不会不是遇难，而是因为犯罪，所以被放逐在那里的？”庞库那夫说。

“很可能是这样的。庞库那夫。如果真是这样，那很可能放逐他的人，有一天也会将他接回去的。”史佩莱说。

“可到那时候，他们就找不到他了。”赫伯特说。

“是这样的，既然那些人还会去找他，那么……”

史密斯再次打断了他们的话：

“朋友们，在一切都没了解清楚前，我们就不要再讨论这件事了。我相信，那个可怜的人受尽了苦难，不管他曾犯了什么错，犯过多少错，他都已经用最可怕、最痛苦的方式赎清了。也许他是想要摆脱这种痛苦，所以才这么苦闷。我们不要逼他，不要逼他告诉我们他的过往。如果可以的话，我相信终有一天他会主动告诉我们的。等到我们知道的时候，就能决定怎么做了。再说，也只有他才会知道他对回到祖国是否还抱有希望。反正我是表示怀疑。”

“为什么这么说？”史佩莱问。

“因为有个问题，如果他肯定自己有一天会被救走，他怎么会扔那纸条？绝对不会。有可能的是，他是被判终身在那小岛上，所以他也没想过会重新看见同类。”

“不过……有一件事我还是想不明白。”庞库那夫说。

“什么事？”

“我在想，这个人要是在岱波岛上生活12年了，那么能够想到，他成野人应该也有很多年了。”

“嗯，很有可能。”史密斯说。

“那这就奇怪了，说明那纸条是他很多年前写的。”

“当然，不过那纸条上的字，像是最近才写的。”

“但那瓶子里的纸条，难道不是经过好几年才漂到林肯岛的吗？”

“对啊，这种可能也有。”史佩莱说。

“会不会这瓶子在林肯岛上已经很久了？”史密斯说。

“不会的。当我们捡起它来的时候，它在漂着。我们绝对不认为瓶子到了岸上一段时间后，又会被海水冲走，因为这是不可能的。南岸有那么多的岩石，很容易被撞得粉碎的。”

“是这样的。”史密斯若有所思地说。

“还有一点，如果那纸条是很多年前就写下的，想必在瓶子里一定封闭很多年了，一定会受潮的，可那纸条完全不是那种情况，它保存得非常好。”庞库那夫又说。

庞库那夫的观点完全正确，他说出了一个不争的事实，虽然这个事实很令人费解。因为他们捡到的那个瓶子，里面的纸条看起来就是最近才写的，而且纸条上还注明了经纬度，那就说明写纸条的人，显然并非一般的水手，而应该是有着丰富的水文学知识的人。

“现在有很多我们无法解释的问题，但我们也不要急于问他什么，等他愿意说的时候再说吧，朋友们。”史密斯最后说。

随后的几天，陌生人又恢复了他之前的沉默，也没去高地之外更远的地方。他只是不停地干活，一分钟都不休息。同时，他做事的时候，也是一个人躲在一边去干。更让居民们感到费解的是，他从不回“花岗宫殿”吃饭，即使是再三邀请他，他也不去，只是一个人吃些生蔬菜。

晚上的时候，他也不回自己的房间休息，而是待在树木丛生的地方。遇到不好的天气，他会蜷缩在岩石缝里。他依然和他在岱波岛时一样，要住在野外。居民们费尽心思和口舌，让他和大家一起生活，但他都不肯。居民们也就随他，打算等待时机再劝他。

果然，不久后时机就成熟了，受到良心驱使的他，勇敢地向居民们自白，讲了他身上发生的一件可怕的事。

那一天是11月10日的晚上八点钟，天已经快黑了。陌生人突然出现在了大家的面前。那时候，大家正聚集在平台上，像往常一样聊天。陌生人当时的眼中发出了异样的光，像是又回到了之前的野蛮时代。

看到陌生人的样子，史密斯和伙伴们都吃了一惊。看来，因为一段可怕的经历，让他在准备讲话时，牙齿发出了咔嚓咔嚓的声响，如同一个正发着高烧的病人在呢喃。

他到底是怎么啦？是因为看到同类，心里难受吗？是他不愿意过正常人一样的生活？是他还在留恋过去的野人生活？也许是的，因为他开始断断续续地说了。

“为什么？为什么要把我带到这里来.....为什么要让我离开我的小岛.....你们和我是什么关系？为什么要这样.....你们了解我吗？知道我是谁吗.....我做过什么，为什么一个人在那里.....你们知道吗？是谁告诉你们我不是被遗弃在那里的.....是谁说我是被判决老死在那里的？我的过去是怎么样的.....你们知道吗？你们知道我有去偷盗、去杀人.....你们是怎么判断我不是坏人的.....我只是一个该死的东西，不配活在人类生活中.....只配像野兽一样生活，你们知道吗.....告诉我，你们知道吗？”

居民们静静地听他说话，没有人去打断他的话。这些断断续续的话，像是直接从嘴里流出来的，不由自主地流出来的。史密斯走向他，准备安慰他几句，不过他却连连向后退，大声说：“不！不！我只想问你一句话，我到底有没有自由？”

“当然有！”史密斯说。

“那么……再见！”他大叫一声，像疯子一样逃开了。

那普、庞库那夫和赫伯特跟着他跑了过去，但到了森林边缘的时候，却不得不空手而归。

“我们应该由他去！”史密斯说。

“看来他不会回来了。”庞库那夫说。

“不！他一定会回来的。”史密斯肯定地说。

又过去了几天，陌生人还是没有露面，但史密斯始终认为这个可怜的人是会回来的，这是他的一种预感吗？

“悔恨加重了他的痛苦，他想过孤独的生活，这会压制他的野性，所以这也会是他野性的最后一次发作。”史密斯说。

在此期间，居民们的各项工作照常进行。牲畜栏和观望壁的工作一样多，因为赫伯特从岱波岛搜集了许多种子，他们要将这些种子播种下去。

菜园设计得很合理，居民们想让菜园获得丰收，所以一刻不停地用心照料，工作好像总也做不完。他们种植的蔬菜越来越多，必须扩充园

地。很多原来生长着杂草的空地，他们也想将其变成真正的麦田和蔬菜园。

幸好海岛有着大片的青草地，不至于让野驴饿肚子。同时，他们还将观望壁那被水环绕的高地变成了菜园。同时，他们准备将牧场迁到山冈以外的地方。因为牧场不用再担心猿猴和野兽的袭击，不需要重点保护了。

11月15日，居民们迎来了麦田的第三次收割。就在18个月之前，他们仅有一粒麦粒，18个月后，麦田越来越大。他们在第二次种下了60万粒后，收得了4000蒲式耳，而如今，他们已经收到了5亿粒麦子。

居民们的粮食充足，每年只需播种10蒲式耳，就能得到足够人和牲畜食用的粮食了。在11月份后半个月的时候，居民们在收割完麦子后，开始将庄稼变成粮食。当然，这时他们还只有小麦，没有面粉。想要把小麦变成面粉，他们还必须有一个磨坊才行。

瀑布曾被史密斯作为制毡的动力，而这次，他又打算用流向感恩河的瀑布作为磨坊的动力。

大家经过一番商量后决定，在观望壁上建一个简单的风磨。由于高地面临大海，所以经常会有海风吹过来，建风磨的难度并不比建磨坊大。

“我觉得呀，建风磨太有意思了，这会让我们周围的环境更美的。”庞库那夫说。

他们开始选择木料，制造风磨的骨架。做风磨所需的石头是从湖的北边找来的，至于风磨的风翼，则是用气球气囊上那没用完的布料做

的。

在制作之前，史密斯首先做了个模型，最后将磨坊的位置定在了湖岸上，也就是家禽场的右边。他们先用几根结实的料将一个扇轴支撑起来，然后又在上面安装了一个风磨的骨架，这样，风会带动机械转动，动力也就产生了。

他们的工作进行得非常顺利，对木匠工作很娴熟的那普和庞库那夫只根据史密斯的模型就能工作了。

没过多久，他们就在选定的地方建起了圆柱形的亭子。亭子的形状很像一个胡椒瓶，顶部尖尖的。中央轴上是被铁夹子固定的风翼，有四根。这些风翼和中央轴之间保持了一定的角度。很快，亭子里的各种机械，比如两块磨石、一只漏斗、一个振荡槽和一个筛粉机就全做好了。

两块磨石一块是固定的，另一块则可以活动；方形大木槽的漏斗是上面大下面小，为的是让麦粒漏进磨石；振荡槽是用来将麦粒灌进磨眼的；而那筛粉机则是为了筛出面粉，留下麸皮。

由于他们所用的工具很好，工作又没什么难度，所以很快就完成了。当然，之所以完成得这么好，是因为磨坊的机械原理太简单了。

这次建磨坊的工作，全体居民都参加了。12月1日，磨坊顺利建成。磨坊的设计很成功，做得也很成功。庞库那夫依然和往常一样，对自己的工作成果很满意。

“现在我们就等风了。风一来，我们的麦子就能磨了。”庞库那夫说。

“要等一阵好风来，庞库那夫，这风也不能太大。”史密斯说。

“不对，风越大，我们的风车才会转得越快。”

“不需要它转得太快。据估算，风翼每分钟转动的次数是每秒内走过的尺数的六倍时，磨坊就能达到最大的工作量了。和风每秒走24英尺，它能让风翼在一分钟内转动16次，所以转得再快就是浪费了，没有必要。”史密斯说。

“是这样呀，那真是太好了。这时东北方正好有微风过来，很快就能帮我们工作了。”赫伯特说。

居民们都在高兴地等着，等待面粉出来，等着品尝在林肯岛上吃的第一口面包。

他们没有耽误一点时间，马上就开工了。这天，他们早上磨了两三蒲式耳的小麦，第二天早上，“花岗宫殿”的餐桌上就摆上了面包。虽然也许是因为面没发好，不是很松软，但不管怎样，每个人都吃得津津有味，开心得无法形容。

在这期间，陌生人还是没有出现。史佩莱和赫伯特曾好几次去“花岗宫殿”附近的森林寻找，但都没有找到他，甚至连他的踪迹也没发现。

由于他长时间没有回来，居民们开始感到了不安。这里鸟兽众多，虽然他曾在岱波岛上像野人一样生活过，知道怎么生存下去，但如果他现在又变得像原来一样，过着野人的生活，并且兽性大发，那该怎么办呢？

但史密斯还是很坚定地说：“他会回来的，一定会回来的。”

史密斯一直在重复这句话，不过，他的伙伴们却并不这么想。

史密斯继续说：“当这可怜人还在岱波岛的时候，他只是孤零零的一个人。但现在他来了这里，他知道我们会等他。他既然有勇气告诉我们他过去的一部分生活，那么他一定会将他的全部生活告诉我们的，他是在忏悔，所以一定会回来的。而当他告诉了我们他全部的故事，他就永远也不会离开我们了。”

事实再次证明，史密斯是对的。

12月3日，赫伯特从高地离开，去湖的南岸钓鱼的时候，并没有带武器。因为在岛的这一部分，从来没有出现过野兽，也没有人想过会有凶狠的野兽存在。

在赫伯特去钓鱼时，庞库那夫和那普在家禽场工作，史密斯和史佩莱在“石窟”里制造小苏打。他们的小苏打已经用完了。

突然，庞库那夫和那普听到了一阵喊“救命”的声音。而因为“石窟”离出事地点远，史密斯和史佩莱刚开始并没有听到。

那凄厉的“救命啊！救命啊！”让庞库那夫和那普率先奔出了家禽场，一边大声叫喊，一边向湖边跑去。

他们的叫喊声也惊动了“石窟”里的史密斯和史佩莱，两个人也往湖边跑。

谁也没有想到，陌生人竟然冲到了庞库那夫和那普的前面，他纵身一跳，飞快地越过森林和高地间的硝甘河，并上了岸。

此时，赫伯特的面前正有一只凶猛的美洲豹。这只美洲豹的样子及

大小和他们上次在甩尾角打死的那只差不多。赫伯特吓了一跳，喊着救命，靠在了一棵树上，而野兽此时也一蹲身要扑过去了。

陌生人手里没有武器，只有一把刀，但他却猛地向野兽扑去。野兽见又有了一个敌人，而且是向它进攻的敌人，便马上掉转身，向陌生人扑去。

陌生人和美洲豹展开了一场搏斗。不过这场搏斗的时间并不长，灵活矫健的陌生人很快就用像钳子一样的一只手，掐住了美洲豹的喉咙。另一只手则紧紧地攥着刀，狠狠地刺入美洲豹的心口。即使美洲豹的利爪已经抓进了他的肉里，他也不顾。

美洲豹死了，陌生人狠狠地踢了一脚野兽的尸体后准备离开。赫伯特缠着他，不让他走，并不停地嚷嚷：“不！你不能走！不要走！”此时，其他居民也赶到了。

史密斯走向陌生人。陌生人的衬衫都被美洲豹撕破了，肩膀上流着血，但他却像不知道一样。在看到史密斯后，他皱了皱眉头。

“朋友，你冒着生命危险，救了我们孩子的命，我们欠你人情。”史密斯说。

“生命？我的生命一文不值，算不了什么。”陌生人喃喃道。

“你受伤了。”

“没事！”

“把你的手伸给我可以吗？”

赫伯特说着，想用手去拉刚刚救了自己性命的恩人的手，但陌生人却很快地躲开了，沉着脸，胸前不停地起伏。

“告诉我，你们是谁？”陌生人说。

这是他第一次要居民们讲他们的事，很可能他在等他们讲了自己的事情后，他再讲自己的故事。

史密斯简单地说了他们如何从里士满逃出，又怎么降落到此地，更说了他们是怎么靠努力拥有了现在的财富。

陌生人认真地听着，听得聚精会神。

讲完后，史密斯又把史佩莱、赫伯特、庞库那夫、那普，以及自己都介绍给了他。最后又说，自从到了林肯岛，让他们最感到高兴的事就是从岱波岛回来时，有了一位新朋友。

陌生人在听他说了“新朋友”三个字后，脸一下子红了，一脸的恐慌不安。头越垂越低，垂到了胸前。

“知道我们是什么人了，能不能和我们握握手呢？”史密斯又说。

陌生人摇摇头，用沙哑的声音说：“不！不！不能！你们是好人的，可是我……”

第十七章

陌生人没有说完的最后一句话，证明了居民们此前的猜测是对的。他确实有过一段痛苦的往事，而这往事又是和作恶有关。他在赎罪，但自己却怎么都无法宽恕自己。

无论此人之前做过些什么，但他现在已经感到了惭愧，他要忏悔。当居民们热情地和他握手时，他却觉得自己不配。不过，经过了美洲豹事件，他没再回森林，甚至连“花岗宫殿”以外的地方都没有去。

他人生中最大的秘密是什么？他以后会说出来吗？

在这一点上，大家的意见相同——在他不说的时候，绝对不问，以此让他毫无顾虑地和大家生活在一起。

生活还和之前的每一天一样，这样持续了几天。史密斯和史佩莱一直在一起工作，他们有时是化学家，有时又是实验家。史佩莱通常也只有在和赫伯特出去打猎时才会离开史密斯。春秋时分，森林里的动物一定不会少，他们必须随时当心，不能再单独行动了。那普和庞库那夫的工作是在厨房或家禽场，有时也在牲畜栏，他们从来没有空闲的时候。

陌生人依然单干，他再次恢复了刚到“花岗宫殿”不久后的生活，不和大家一起吃饭，睡觉在大树底下，绝对不和居民们联系。居民们想让他和大家在一起过集体生活，但这对他来说好像是难以忍受的。

“既然如此，又为什么要写纸条，还把装纸条的瓶子扔进大海要人们去救他？”庞库那夫说。

“对于这件事，他一定会解释给我们听的。”史密斯老是说这样一句话。

“什么时候会解释给我们听呢？”

“也许会比你想象的早，庞库那夫。”

确实是这样，陌生人离自己主动坦白的时间已经不远了。

12月10日的时候，也是陌生人重回“花岗宫殿”附近一周后，史密斯看见他走过来，用平静而谦逊的语气说：“先生，我请求您一件事好吗？”

“有什么事就说吧，不过我要先问你一个问题。”史密斯说。

陌生人听了这话，脸瞬间又涨红了，慢慢地开始后退。史密斯知道他心里在想些什么，看来，他是怕史密斯问起他的过去。

史密斯没让他走，拦住了他。

“伙伴，你不仅是我们的伙伴，还是我们的朋友，我希望你能明白这一点。好了，现在还有什么要说给我听的，请说吧。”

陌生人一下子捂住了眼睛，浑身开始颤抖，一时竟说不出话来。

“先生，我请求您，请您答应我一件事。”好一会儿，他开口道。

“说吧，什么事？”

“你们有个离这儿四五英里的牲畜栏。它们需要照料，能让我去那里吗？”

史密斯同情地看着他，好一会儿才说：“朋友，牲畜栏里的牲畜棚是住牲口的。”

“那里最适合我，先生。”

“朋友，你是自由的，做任何事我们都不会限制。你愿意去牲畜栏住，也行。不过，我们的‘花岗宫殿’也随时欢迎你。还有，既然你要住到那里去，那我们必须先给你整理一下，让你舒舒服服地去住。”史密斯说。

“你们不用管，我自己会安排的。”

“朋友，这件事怎么做合适，你应该让我们去决定。”史密斯说。他对陌生人，总是用“朋友”这个亲密的称呼。

“谢谢您，先生！”陌生人轻声说完，转身走了。

史密斯把陌生人的想法告诉了大家，大家商量后决定给他在牲畜栏盖间木头房子，一间住着舒服的房子。

当天，居民们便拿着工具去了。不到一个星期，那间木头房子就盖好了，只等陌生人搬进去。这房子离牲畜棚大概只有20英尺，此时的牲畜栏里已经有80多只羊，他住在那里照顾起来很方便。

为了让木头房子更适合人居住，他们还做了一张床、一张桌子、一条凳子、一只碗柜、一只箱子。另外还把一支枪、一些弹药和工具放在了牲畜栏里，以供陌生人使用。

在居民们给他造房子的时候，陌生人正在高地做事，他并没有看到他的新居。他想把他在高地上未完成的工作做完。经过他的劳动，高地已经被全部翻松，只等着播种了。

12月20日，牲畜栏里的房子完全收拾好了。史密斯告诉陌生人，他

想什么时候搬过去都行，陌生人说他晚上就搬去。

这天傍晚，居民们和陌生人都聚在了“花岗宫殿”的餐厅。此时是晚上八点钟，由于担心陌生人因为他们都在而感到不舒服，居民们便去了大厅。

他们坐在大厅聊了几分钟后，突然听到有人轻轻敲门，接着陌生人就走了进来。他没有任何开场白，直接说：“诸位先生，在我离开大家之前，我想告诉你们我的过去。你们应该知道我的过去。”

陌生人的几句话让居民们很是感动。

史密斯起身说：“朋友，我们并没要求你一定要告诉我们，你有权不说。”

“不，我应该让你们知道。”

“那么坐下说吧！”

“不，我要站着说！”

“好吧，说吧！”史密斯说。

陌生人站在了一个光线暗淡的角落，他的头上没戴帽子，双手交叉在胸前。像是在下决心，他深吸了一口气，然后用那略带沙哑的嗓音说了起来。在叙述的过程中，居民们中没有人去打断他，以下就是他所讲的——

1854年12月20日，有艘豪华游船“邓肯号”停在了白洛夷加，它在澳大利亚西海岸南纬37°。“邓肯号”是苏格兰贵族格莱拉弗爵士的游船。

游船上除了有格莱拉弗爵士和他的夫人外，还有一名英国陆军少校、一名法国地理学家，以及两个孩子，这两个孩子是格兰特船长的儿女。而就在一年前，格兰特船长和他的水手们在“大不列颠号”船上失踪了。

“邓肯号”上的船长是约翰·麦盖尔，这艘船上的水手共有15个人。游船之所以要在澳大利亚海岸停靠，是因为在六个月前，当“邓肯号”航行到爱尔兰海时，捡到了一个瓶子，瓶子里有个纸条，纸条上用三种语言——英文、德文和法文说“大不列颠号”遇险了，格兰特船长和他的两名水手还活着，落难到了一个海岛上。

纸条上注明了落难海岛的经纬度。

不过可惜的是，纸条上的字只能看到纬度，经度被海水浸湿，看不清楚了。

虽然只看到了纬度37°11'，但如果沿着37°线前行的话，不管是大陆还是海洋，最终都是能找到格兰特船长和那两名水手落难的海岛的。

虽然“邓肯号”将此事汇报给了英国海军部，但英国海军部却迟迟没有去寻找。于是，格莱拉弗爵士决定去寻找他们，并很快将格兰特船长的一对儿女玛丽和罗伯特·格兰特接了过来，带着两个孩子和自己的家人，沿着纸上所写的纬度前行。

“邓肯号”在离开格拉斯哥后，没有停歇地经过麦哲伦海峡，进入到了太平洋，最后到了巴塔哥尼亚。

刚开始的时候，格莱拉弗爵士一直以为格兰特船长和两名水手是被当地的土人掳去了。

“邓肯号”在到了巴塔哥尼亚的西岸时，船上的一行人登陆后去打

听，一直打听到东岸的哥兰黛角。游船从西岸驶到东岸后，没有打听到结果的一行人又上了船。

“邓肯号”沿着37°线，横穿巴塔哥尼亚，依然毫无线索。

11月13日，“邓肯号”又驶向了大西洋，一路上继续寻找。他们途经特李斯坦达昆雅群岛和阿姆斯特丹群岛，但都没有找到。直到1854年12月20日，“邓肯号”到了澳大利亚的白洛夷加。

原本格莱拉弗爵士是想像他们以前穿过美洲那样穿过澳洲的，所以船上的一行人又登了陆。为了打听到格兰特船长的消息，他们去了离海岸几英里之外的一个爱尔兰农场，农场主很热情地接待了他们。

格莱拉弗爵士向农场主问起了格兰特船长的消息，问他在一年多前，有没有听说有个叫“大不列颠”的三桅船，在澳大利亚西海岸沉没了。

爱尔兰农场主说他没有听说过，但他的一个仆人却突然站出来说：“阁下，这真是太巧了，要是格兰特船上还有人活着的话，一定會在澳大利亚一带。”

格莱拉弗爵士便问那仆人是誰。

仆人说：“阁下，我是苏格兰人。我曾是格兰特船长手下的水手，是‘大不列颠号’船上的幸存者之一。”

格莱拉弗爵士非常高兴，也看了他所提供的证明文件，证明他确实是“大不列颠号”的水手，叫阿埃童。不过在船触礁时，他和格兰特船长被分散开了。原以为船长和其他水手都死了，自己是“大不列颠号”上的唯一幸存者。

“不过，沉船的地方不是澳大利亚西岸，而是东岸。如果纸条上说的是真的，格兰特船长还活着，那么一定是被当地土人掳去了，我们只要去东岸找就行了。”仆人说。

仆人的样子给人的感觉很真诚，说出的话也没有什么漏洞。而那农场主也说，他雇用此人也是在一年多以前，这仆人既忠诚又老实。

格莱拉弗爵士相信了他，并决定听从他的意见，循着37°，横穿澳大利亚去寻找。

最后，格莱拉弗爵士还和他的夫人、格兰特船长的两个孩子、一名陆军少校、一名法国地理学家，还有麦盖尔船长及几个水手组成了搜寻小组，请阿埃童做他们的向导。

而就在此时，“邓肯号”出现了问题，去了墨尔本修理，随船负责的是大副汤姆·奥斯丁。

阿埃童则带着一行搜寻人员出发了，那天正好是1854年12月23日。

需要说明的一点是，阿埃童确实是“大不列颠号”的水手长，但却是个叛徒。他的叛变只是因为和船长格兰特发生了争吵，随即便煽动水手和他一起叛变，想要将船抢过去。

当然最后他没有得逞，并在1852年4月8日，被格兰特船长丢在了澳大利亚的西海岸，格兰特船长他们开船走了。

这种做法按海上的规矩来说，并没有错，但这个叛徒却很愤怒.....

实际上他并不知道“大不列颠号”遇险了，他只是在听格莱拉弗爵士

说了后才知道的。

此时的他，早已经不是水手长阿埃童了，他已经成了一群逃犯的头目，而且化名为本·吉奥兹。他之所以要去做格莱拉弗爵士的向导，就是想把他们引到自己的地盘，然后抢走“邓肯号”，并用“邓肯号”在太平洋上做海盗。

.....

陌生人说到这里的时候，停顿了一下，声音开始颤抖，接着说——

这群搜寻人员让阿埃童做向导横贯澳大利亚，怎么可能不倒霉？而就在那时候，阿埃童已经串通好几个手下，跟在了他们身后。

“邓肯号”到了墨尔本后就去修理了，阿埃童决定引诱格莱拉弗爵士让“邓肯号”离开墨尔本去澳大利亚东岸，因为对他们来说，在那里打劫船只更容易。

因此，阿埃童将搜寻人员引到了离东岸不远的一片大森林，让爵士进退两难，然后他又假装出主意，让爵士写信给“邓肯号”上的大副，让“邓肯号”驶到东岸的杜布湾去，还说他可以送这封信。

格莱拉弗爵士确实让人写了信，而这叛徒也以为自己的阴谋进行得很顺利。因为只要“邓肯号”驶进了杜布湾，他们就能毫不费力地将它抢过去，并将这些人全部杀光。

这样的话，他本·吉奥兹也就成了海上一霸了。

不过，最终老天爷开眼了，没让他实现可怕的阴谋。

阿埃童去了墨尔本，并将信交给了大副汤姆·奥斯丁，见了爵士信的大副也开始起航了。不过，等到过了一天，阿埃童才发现那船并不是驶向他想要去的目的地，而是在向新西兰的东岸前进。

可以想象，阿埃童是多么失望和懊恼。

他想要去拦大副，但大副却将爵士的信拿给他看。他发现，信上果然写着新西兰东岸。原来，写这封信的那位法国地理学家出现了失误。

就这样，阿埃童的计划落空了。他气急败坏，想一个人直接抢船，没想到很快被制服，并被戴上了手铐脚镣，带到了新西兰海岸，而他的同党和格莱拉弗爵士并不知道发生了什么。

“邓肯号”一直在新西兰海岸待到了3月3日，阿埃童在听到轰隆隆的炮声时才知道，是格莱拉弗爵士一行人上船来了。

原来，格莱拉弗爵士经过重重险阻，穿过了森林，到了澳大利亚东岸的杜布湾，在发电报到墨尔本后，才得知“邓肯号”没有去杜布湾，还说“邓肯号”18号就起航了，目的地不清楚。

格莱拉弗爵士意识到情况不好，并认为游船肯定是被本·吉奥兹抢走了，甚至已经沦为海盗船了。

当然，即使这样，格莱拉弗爵士还是没有放弃寻找格兰特船长，他是一位勇敢而充满爱心的人。他搭上了一辆商船，沿着37°线，横穿新西兰，向新西兰西岸驶去。虽然没有发现格兰特船长和他的水手们，却知道了“邓肯号”在新西兰东岸，这不能不说是老天的安排。

“邓肯号”依然在大副手里。而那时，“邓肯号”在那里已经等了整整五个星期了。

那一天是1855年的3月3日，格莱拉弗爵士上了“邓肯号”后，将阿埃童叫过去审问。阿埃童开始时不愿意说，爵士告诉他，如果他不说不说，那在下一次靠岸时，就将他交给当地的英国官方，阿埃童依然什么都不说。

不过在“邓肯号”继续沿着37°线航行的过程中，阿埃童被格莱拉弗爵士夫人感化了。他答应把一切都说出来，但有个条件，就是格莱拉弗爵士不要把他交给英国官方，把他遗留在太平洋的任何岛上都行。

格莱拉弗爵士急于知道格兰特船长的情况，也就答应了。

就这样，阿埃童向爵士讲述了他和格兰特船长的事，但在格兰特船长将他留在澳大利亚海岸之后，又发生了什么他就知道了。

最终，格莱拉弗爵士实践了自己的诺言，“邓肯号”也继续前行，最后到了岱波岛。他们原计划要将阿埃童留在那里的，没想到在那里找到了格兰特船长和他的两名水手，这不能不说是个奇迹。

其实也很正常，因为这岛就在37°线上。

于是，那个叛徒恶棍就被留在了那个荒凉的小岛上，而原本在岛上的格兰特船长和其他两个人则离开了。在他们离开前，格莱拉弗爵士说：“阿埃童，你在这里是不会与任何人取得联系的。这里远离任何一个陆地，所以你逃不掉。将你遗留在这里，是让你想想自己的良心在哪里，这只有上天知道。你不会消失，也不会被遗忘，就像格兰特船长一样。当然，虽然你不值得人去怀念，但我们会记得你，知道你在什么地方，也会知道什么时候来接你。我一定不会忘记来接你的！”

“邓肯号”扬帆起航，消失在了水平线上，那天是1855年3月18日。

阿埃童被孤零零地留在了那里，虽然他不缺火药、武器、工具和种子，而这一切，都是格兰特船长和那两名水手留下的。

格兰特船长在岛上盖的那所房子，他也可以居住。也就是说，他只需在孤独和寂寞中赎清自己的罪恶。

.....

“先生们，他很痛苦，为自己犯下的罪恶而后悔、羞耻。他无数次对自己说，他一定要配得上在人群里生活时，才会在有一天人们来接他时离开。这个恶棍受到了惩罚，受尽了无数的折磨。他想通过自己的辛勤劳动，改造自己，重新做人。他每天祷告，想通过每天的祷告来悔过自新。两年过去了，三年过去了，时间在一分一秒地过着。在孤独中，他学会了谦恭，他期待水平线上出现船只，他不停地问自己，自己是否已经赎清罪了，他已经吃尽了人间的苦难。想想看，对在忏悔中煎熬的人来说，孤独是多么可怕！”

“不过，看来上天觉得对他的惩罚还不够，慢慢地又将他变成了一个野人，让他觉得自己有了野性。

“他不知道用了多久让自己变成了那个样子，可他最终还是真的变成了被你们找到的那个可怜可悲的家伙！”

“你们现在应该知道了吧，我就是那个.....阿埃童·本·吉奥兹。”

阿埃童讲完了，居民们也都听完了，他们都站了起来。他们无法形容自己的内心，那故事是多么悲惨，又是多么的沉痛和绝望啊！

史密斯开口了，他说：“阿埃童，你是曾犯下了罪行，而且是很大

的罪行，但那是过去。现在上天觉得你的罪恶赎清了，所以你才回到了我们身边，这就是一个证据。阿埃童，你得到了宽恕！现在，你还愿意和我们做伙伴吗？”

阿埃童连连后退几步。

“握握手吧！”史密斯说。

阿埃童抓住了史密斯伸过来的手，眼泪汨汨地流了出来。

“你愿意和我们住在一起吗？”史密斯又问道。

“让我再独自待一段时间好吗？史密斯先生，让我一个人住在那牲畜栏里吧！”阿埃童说。

“你愿意怎样就怎样吧！阿埃童！”史密斯说。

阿埃童正准备离开，史密斯又问了他一句：“朋友，我想再问一个问题，既然你想独自生活，为什么又要写纸条扔在海里，让我们去找你呢？”

“纸条？什么纸条？”阿埃童连问两遍，有些不明白是什么意思。

“我们之所以去找你，是因为捞到了一个瓶子，瓶子里有张写有岱波岛正确位置的纸条。”

“没有！”阿埃童摇了摇头，想了一会儿，又说：“没有！我从没写过什么纸条，也没有扔瓶子到海里。”

“从来没写？”庞库那夫又问了一句。

“没有！从来没写。”

阿埃童说完，向大家鞠了一躬，然后走到了门口，离开了……

第十八章

赫伯特紧跟着跑到门口，见阿埃童已经在升降梯里了。很快，他消失在了黑暗中。

赫伯特回到屋里，带着同情的语气说：“他真可怜！”

“他终有一天会回来的。”史密斯说。

“怎么回事？史密斯先生，难道那瓶子真的不是阿埃童扔的？不是他扔的，那纸条是谁写的？”

是的，这确实是个令他们难以理解的事情。

“很可能就是他扔的，只是这个可怜的人不正常，自己不知道而已。”那普说。

“对！他肯定是不记得自己做过什么了。”赫伯特说。

“这个问题我们不妨这么想，朋友们，也许，他能够知道岱波岛的准确位置，因为那时他还没有被遗留在岛上，还没发生之后的事。”史密斯说。

“不过，要是他写纸条的时候，他还没有变成一个野兽，那就是说他是七八年前扔的那瓶子。但那么长的时间，为什么瓶子里的纸条没有潮湿呢？”庞库那夫说。

“那很可能是阿埃童记错时间了，他变成野兽是以后的事情。”史密斯又说。

“也只能这么想了，不然真没办法解释。”庞库那夫说。

“确实，已经没办法解释了。”史密斯说，他好像并不想继续纠结这个问题。

“但是，我们能相信阿埃童说的话吗？”庞库那夫说。

“相信！我相信他所说的故事的真实性。格莱拉弗爵士乘着游船远行，以及远行的结果都上了报的，我现在还能记得。”史佩莱说。

“对！阿埃童说的一定是真的。不用怀疑，庞库那夫，这会让他更痛苦的。人在反省、谴责自己的时候，不会说假话的。”史密斯说。

12月21日，居民们走出“花岗宫殿”，爬上高地时却并没有看见阿埃童。而他回到牲畜栏附近的木屋时，已经是深夜了。居民们打算不去打扰他。让他主动从自责中走出不容易做到，但时间一定能让他做到。

赫伯特、庞库那夫和那普继续做他们平常做的工作，史密斯和史佩莱也回到“石窟”去做他们原来进行的工作。

“亲爱的赛莱斯，你昨天并没有对瓶子里纸条的事做出满意的解释。我不明白的是，你怎么会说是那可怜的人自己写了纸条，装进瓶子扔进海里，自己最后又不记得了呢？”史佩莱突然说。

“因为我无法认定就是他把瓶子扔进海里的，亲爱的史佩莱。”

“那么你.....”史佩莱觉得史密斯的话更难理解了。

“我什么都不知道，也不想这些事。怎么说呢？总之，有很多的事，我们是无法做出解释的，所以我也只是将这件事当成不能解释的事件中的一件。”史密斯没等他说完便打断了他的话。

“这倒是真的。赛莱斯，有很多事情都让我们有些莫名其妙，比如你的被救、海滩上那只装着很多东西的箱子、多卜的莫名叫声、瓶子里的纸条.....这些像谜一样的问题，会不会让我们永远也找不到答案？”

“我觉得不会，一定不会。即使最后我们要钻到海岛底下去寻找答案，也一定要弄个水落石出。”史密斯说。

“对！希望有一天，我们能有机会找到这些神秘事件的谜底。”

“机会？史佩莱，我不信什么机会和神秘说，这里发生的一系列不可思议的事情，总会有一个原因的。而这个原因，我们一定要找到。不需要给我们机会，我们都要找到。不过现在，我们还是要继续我们的工作，继续观察。”

很快，1月份就到了。时间进入到了1867年。

夏季来临，大家继续辛勤地工作。连续几天，赫伯特和史佩莱去打猎的时候，看到了牲畜栏那边的情况，并告诉大家，阿埃童已经住在了他们为他盖的木屋子里，而且很用心地在照料里面的羊群。有了阿埃童，他们也就不需要隔三岔五去牲畜栏那边照顾牲畜了。

不过，为了不让阿埃童孤独寂寞，他们还是经常去看望他。同时，

史密斯和史佩莱心里一直存在着一些疑团，所以能有个人在那边照料着，遇到什么意外之事及时通知他们，也是件非常不错的事情。

不过，有些意外事情要尽量在发生前告诉史密斯才行。因为这些意外事情除了和林肯岛的秘密有关外，还有一些其他的事情，比如海面出现了船只、西海岸有船遇到危险、海盗来了等等。所以，史密斯决定想一个办法，让牲畜栏那边和“花岗宫殿”之间随时随地取得联系。

1月10日，史密斯向伙伴们说了他的想法。

“啊？史密斯先生，你要做什么？难道要装电报吗？”庞库那夫有些惊讶，问道。

“是的，就是这个意思。”史密斯说。

“是用电吗？”赫伯特问。

“没错，是要用电的。制造电池的材料我们有，但难的是需要个拉铁丝的工具。当然，这些问题我觉得都是可以解决的。”史密斯说。

“好吧！要是哪天我们能坐上火车，我才高兴呢。”庞库那夫说。

就这样，他们开始着手准备。刚开始的时候，他们做的是最难做的事情——制造铁丝。因为铁丝做不成的话，也就没必要制造电池和其他附件了。

我们知道，在林肯岛是不缺铁质的，所以拉铁丝没问题。史密斯首先制造了拉模板，这种拉模板是由大小不同的圆锥形窟窿钢板组成的，可以让铁丝很容易达到他们所需要的粗细。

这个工作做起来一定要小心、细致才行。所以他们先将铁做成了铁棍，然后将铁棍的两头挫尖，最后把铁棍插入拉模板的窟窿里，让卷轴一面卷一边往外拉，在将它抽长到25英尺到30英尺的时候再将它松开，随即又在较小的窟窿里重复同样的工作。最后，史密斯将获得的40到50英尺的铁丝连接起来，使它们能从“花岗宫殿”一直到5英里外的牲畜栏。

史密斯在安装好机械后，就将拉电线的工作交给了其他人，自己则去制造电池了。没多久，居民们就把拉铁丝的工作完成了。

如何制造直流电池，这是史密斯要做的事。我们知道，现代的电池是用炭精棒、锌和铜做成的。可在林肯岛上，他寻遍了各个地方也没有找到铜，最后只好放弃使用铜。

炭精是将煤去掉氢后，放在蒸馏器里得到石墨，这是可以做到的。但想要炭精，还需要花大力气来制造一种特殊设备。

至于锌，居民们在拾箱角捡到的那只大箱子里就有，用它来做电池是再合适不过的了。

史密斯在经过反复的考虑后，决定仿造1820年柏克勒尔发明的一种电池。这种电池只需要锌、硝酸和钾碱，而这三种东西他都有。

利用硝酸和钾碱互相作用而制成的电池，构造并不难，史密斯只需在很多玻璃瓶里装上硝酸，接着再将这些瓶子的瓶口塞住。然后将玻璃管插进有塞子的瓶口，这样管子的下端就会产生很多小孔。最后，将它们装在一只有黏土的布口袋里，把管子浸在硝酸里。

史密斯事先将一些植物烧成了灰烬，做成了钾碱溶液，然后将溶液

从管子上端倒下去，这样一来，硝酸和钾碱就能通过黏土互相作用了。

最后，史密斯将两块锌片中的一块浸入硝酸里，另一块浸在钾碱溶液里，当两块锌片被金属线连接时，电流就产生了，并从瓶子里传到了管子的锌片中。这样一来，管子里的锌片就成了阳极，阴极就是瓶子里的锌片。在将每个电瓶所产生的电流都加到一起的时候，就能发电报了。

这是史密斯的天才设计，这个设计虽然简单，却让“花岗宫殿”和牲畜栏之间有了电报联系。

2月6日，居民们开始在通向牲畜栏的路上架设电线杆，电线杆上装有拉电线用的玻璃绝缘器。仅仅用了几天时间，他们就把电线拉好了，这些电线能够随时输送每秒十万公里的电流，而这种电流的回路便是他们脚下的土地。

史密斯总共做了两套电池，分别放在“花岗宫殿”和牲畜栏处。这样一来，牲畜栏这边有事就能通过发电报的方式通知“花岗宫殿”的居民；当“花岗宫殿”这边有事的时候，也能发电报给牲畜栏这边。

至于收报机和发报机，对史密斯来说就太容易做了。他将两地的电线分别缠在了一块绕着导线的软铁上，这样，两极之间就通上了电。当电流从阳极发出后，通过线路到了磁铁，磁铁瞬间被磁化，然后让电流从地底回到阴极，一旦电路中断，磁铁也就失去了磁性。

当把软铁放在磁铁前时，电路一接通它就会被吸住。反之，电路一断就会掉下来。

史密斯在将铁片的这些运行装置做好后，就只需一个圆盘了。他在

圆盘上面还写上了字母，然后又在铁片上安上了指针，两个电站间就能彼此联系了。

他们把一切都准备妥当是在2月12日。

这天，史密斯先向牲畜栏那边发了个电报，问一切可好，很快，阿埃童就有了回复。庞库那夫为此高兴坏了，此后，他每天一早一晚给牲畜栏那边的阿埃童发电报，而每一次，他都能得到回复。

有了这个接通两边的“通讯”，对居民们来说有两个好处：第一，他们能清楚地知道阿埃童是不是在那里；另一个就是让阿埃童不再孤单了。

即使这样，史密斯还是坚持每周去看望他，阿埃童也时不时地会来“花岗宫殿”，而每次他来，都会受到居民们的热情招待。

这样忙忙碌碌工作的日子非常美好，居民们的蔬菜和粮食也在一点点地增加。从岱波岛采集来的种子所种的蔬菜长势很好，因此，观望壁的高地上呈现出了一派欣欣向荣的景象。

不用说，他们的第四次麦收照样是个大丰收。能想象得到，他们再也不用去计算接下来会收获多少粒麦子了。

庞库那夫曾想着要去数的，但史密斯告诉他，如果他每分钟能数300颗的话，一小时数9000，他需要数近5500年才能数完。最终，老实的庞库那夫还是放弃了这个打算。

此时的天气也非常好，白天虽然很热，但一到晚上，海风便能让温度很快降下来。在这期间，也曾下过几场持续时间不长的暴雨。暴雨来势凶猛，电闪雷鸣，十分恐怖，像是要把整个林肯岛吞噬掉，这样的状

况经常会延续好几个小时。

就是在这样的天气下，林肯岛的各项工仍然在有序地进行着。

家禽场里挤满了家禽，居民们只得用“吃”来减少它们的数量。而且，他们还需要控制这些家畜的数量，因为很快，猪又生了小猪，这让那普和庞库那夫可累坏了。为了照料它们，着实花了不少时间。

史佩莱和赫伯特经常骑着野驴出去。当然，他们骑的早就不是最初的那两头了，现在他们骑的是一对漂亮的小驴。赫伯特能成为优秀的骑手，多亏了史佩莱的指导。这样，他们经常用牲口拉车，向“花岗宫殿”运柴火、煤炭，甚至运送史密斯需要的各种矿产。

在这段时间里，居民们还去了西遥森林几次。在那里，他们完全不用担心会中暑，因为头顶上那浓密的枝叶，让太阳光根本无法穿透。他们将整个感恩河的左岸都看了一遍，开避了一条从牲畜栏通向跌水河河口的道路。

在这几次探险中，由于经常遇到凶猛的野猪，居民们便全都全副武装。即使这样，他们也和野猪展开过很多次搏斗，甚至还和美洲豹做过激烈的斗争。

史佩莱对美洲豹恨之入骨。不过，每次搏斗，赫伯特都会是他的得力帮手。赫伯特勇敢，史佩莱沉着，两个人合作起来非常默契。后来，他们出去时便携带武器，有了这些武器，也就不再怕那些野兽了。

如今，在“花岗宫殿”的餐厅里，到处挂着色彩斑斓的兽皮，已经有20张了，很可能还会继续增加。

居民们是有着很大的野心的，他们要将岛上的美洲豹全部消灭掉。

史密斯有时候会去一下偏僻而陌生的地方，到了那些地方，他会很仔细地观察每一处。而在那些密林深处，他注意的并不是兽迹，而是其他踪迹。但让他失望的是，他并没有发现任何令他怀疑的东西。

而每次去这些地方，史密斯都要带上多卜和狙布，但它们并没有像在井口那样咆哮。不过，它们咆哮的地方——深井，史密斯也下去看过，什么都没发现。

捡到的那只箱子里，还有照相器材他们没用过。这段时间，史佩莱在赫伯特的帮助下，开始选取荒岛上风景最好的地方拍照。

照相机非常精良，有着非常好的物镜扩大功能。除了相机外，照相器材里还有涂底板用的珂罗酊、能让底板感光的硝酸银、定影的亚硫酸钠、涂湿印相纸的氯化银、冲晒底片需用的醋酸钠和氯化金……

总之，照相所需要的东西全都有。当然，在没有将底片放进印相夹前，他们还必须将印相纸放在硝酸银溶液里几分钟。

很快，史佩莱和赫伯特便成了技术高超的摄影师。他们在林肯岛的很多地方都拍了照，比如有在观望壁拍的，有站在富兰克林山上拍的海岛全景，有在有着奇形怪状石头的感恩河口拍的，还有在牲畜栏、兽爪角、拾箱角等地方拍的。

当然，他们还没有忘记给岛上的每个人拍张照片。

“照相后，我感觉我分身了！”庞库那夫说。

庞库那夫的有些相照得特别好，被他挂在了“花岗宫殿”的墙上。一有时间，他就会站在自己的相片前，高兴地看着自己。恍惚间，他觉得

自己站在了百老汇最豪华的橱窗前，怎么都舍不得离开。

必须要说明的是，照得最成功的要数狙布。照片上的狙布看上去有着说不出的感觉，一本正经地坐着，像人一样。

“狙布像是在做鬼脸似的。”庞库那夫说。

这样的照片，小狙布不可能不喜欢，如果不喜欢，那可真是太挑剔了。当然，真实的情况是它很开心，所以总会带着一副趾高气扬的表情看自己的照片。

很快，3月份来了，炎热的夏天彻底结束。雨水越来越频繁，但气温依然很高。林肯岛的3月份相当于北半球的9月，天气也不是很好——一切都好像预示着严寒很快就要到来了。

21日早晨，刚刚起床的居民们一开窗还以为看到了初雪景色。原来，赫伯特在打开窗口时，突然大叫：“天啊，快看！整个岛上都飘满了雪花！”

“怎么可能？这时下雪？”史佩莱一边说，一边走到窗口。

其他人也过来了。他们不能确定那是不是雪，但能确定的是，不仅整个岛，就连“花岗宫殿”下的海滩上都是白茫茫的一片。

“肯定是雪！”庞库那夫说。

“太像雪了！”那普说。

“但从温度表上看，现在是14℃，会下雪吗？”史佩莱说。

史密斯看着外面，一句话都没说。在这样的季节，这样的温度下，

怎么可能下雪？他无法解释这种现象。

“糟糕！我们种的东西都要冻死了！”庞库那夫难过地大叫。

他正准备下去，机灵敏捷的狙布却已经抢在了他的前面，很快就要滑到沙滩上去了。

然而，没等它着地，那白茫茫的一片便瞬间向空中飞去，“雪花”四散开来，几分钟内，遮天蔽日的“雪片”便遮住了太阳光。

“不是雪花，是鸟！”赫伯特又大喊。

原来，那白茫茫的一片只是一群群长着雪白羽毛的鸟。成千上万的鸟栖息在海岛的每一片海滩上，形成了一幅壮观的画面。居民们全都惊呆了，直到它们消失在天空，飞远了，这才清醒过来。

此时，林肯岛又恢复了原样，它像是刚刚经历了女巫的魔咒，一下子让严寒的冬天变成了盛夏。

令他们有些遗憾的是，因为事出突然，竟然没能让史佩莱和赫伯特打下一只鸟来，更无法确定它们的种类。

几天后的3月26日，就是这群遇难人从气球上降落林肯岛的两周年纪念日了。

第十九章

林肯岛上的居民来林肯岛已经有两年了。在这两年的时间里，他们没有和自己的同胞有过任何联系，没有任何来自文明世界的消息。流落到这里的每个人，都如同宇宙间那不起眼的、被忽视的小行星一样。

国家到底发生了什么样的变化？种种想法时常出现在他们的脑海。在他们离开家乡的时候，国家正因为内战而四分五裂。是不是现在的南方叛军还在流血？一切的一切，对居民们来说，都是令他们倍感痛心的事。他们经常谈论此事，也毫不怀疑，英勇的北军为了祖国的荣誉，已经取得了最后的胜利。

在他们来到林肯岛的两年里，出现在他们视线范围的船一只都没有，哪怕是一叶孤帆都不曾看见。很明显，林肯岛是不在正常的航线范围内的，甚至可以说，根本没人知道有这样一个岛。

这一点不用说，从地图上也能看出。要不然，虽然这里没有港口，但也可能会有船来补充淡水。

四下一望，在无边无际的大海上，除了小鸟外，没有任何东西。要想离开这里，回到祖国，他们必须自己想办法。

当然，他们也有获救的希望。在4月份的第一周里，居民们坐在“花岗宫殿”餐厅时讨论起来。

当时，他们谈起了自己的祖国——美国，然后又说起了自己的家乡，更说起了想要看到自己的故乡，希望是多么的渺茫。

“我可以说，要离开林肯岛，还是有个办法的，而且只有这个办法可行，那就是造一艘能航行几百里的大船。我们既然能造小船，为什么就不能造大船呢？”史佩莱说。

“如果有了大船，我们就会像去岱波岛一样，很容易到帕劳群岛去了。”赫伯特加了一句。

“我完全赞同。”庞库那夫虽然对造船和航海问题向来持支持态度，但也说，“不过，我虽然是赞同这么做的，但到近处去航行和去远处完全不同。我们去岱波岛的时候，虽然遇到了狂风，但我们心里很清楚目的地就在附近，可我们离最近的陆地有1200海里，那可是很长一段距离。”

“所以你不想去冒这个险对吗？庞库那夫？”史佩莱问。

“没什么险不敢冒，只要你们愿意，什么风险我都敢去冒。史佩莱先生，你们应该了解我，我这个人是天不怕地不怕的。”

庞库那夫说完，停了一下又说：“而且不要忘了，除了我之外，我们这里又多了一个水手。”

“多了个水手？谁？”那普问。

“当然是阿埃童了。”

“是的，阿埃童也是水手。”赫伯特说。

“不过，那还要看他愿不愿意和我们一起离开了。”庞库那夫说。

“这简直是多余的话，他就是在岱波岛，如果格莱拉弗爵士的游船又去接他，你说他会拒绝离开吗？”史佩莱说。

“朋友们，有件事你们可能忘记了。”史密斯听他们说完，开口了。看大家都看着他，接着又说：“这几年，阿埃童在那里几乎是失去理智

的。当然，问题还不仅仅在这里，问题是我们要不要等曾经答应阿埃童来接他的那艘苏格兰船救我们。格莱拉弗爵士答应过阿埃童，在他觉得阿埃童已经赎了罪时，会将他接出岱波岛的。我相信格莱拉弗爵士是说话算话的。”

“是的，我也相信。而且我觉得他们会很快来接阿埃童的，因为阿埃童在岱波岛已经12年了。”史佩莱说。

“那好吧，就按你们说的，爵士会回来带走阿埃童，而且很快就会回来，这些我都没意见，不过他的船会停在哪儿呢？很明显，他会停在岱波岛，而不是我们的林肯岛。”庞库那夫说。

“这没什么可以怀疑的，因为地图里根本就没有林肯岛。”赫伯特说。

“所以，朋友们，我们也要在岱波岛做一些准备，以通知去的人知道阿埃童在我们的岛上。”史密斯说。

“那很容易办到。只要我们在格兰特船长和阿埃童曾经住过的木屋里留一张纸条，上面写清林肯岛的位置，接阿埃童的人一定能看明白的。”史佩莱说。

“太可惜了，我们第一次去的时候，竟然没想到这么做。”庞库那夫有些遗憾地说。

“我们当时怎么可能知道要这么做呢？当时还不知道阿埃童的故事，更不知道有一天会有人接他。可惜现在虽然知道了这事，再去岱波岛却太冷了。”赫伯特说。

“是呀，现在太迟了，等到明年春天时再去吧。”史密斯说。

“要是那艘苏格兰船开春前就去了呢？”庞库那夫有些担心。

“那种可能性太小了，因为格莱拉弗爵士是不会选择冬天到这一带来远航的。除非是阿埃童和我们在一起待的五个月里他去过，要是在这期间他没去过，那肯定是要过些时间才会去的。这样吧，等到10月份的时候，天气有所好转，我们就去岱波岛，还是来得及在那里留一张纸条通知的。”史密斯说。

“如果‘邓肯号’正好在这几个月去了岱波岛，那就太遗憾了。”那普说。

“但愿没有那么糟糕，但愿上天不会不给我们这个唯一的机会。”史密斯说。

“我觉得，当我们再去岱波岛的时候，就能知道这个机会还在不在了。如果游船去过的话，那里一定会留下痕迹的。”史佩莱说。

“那是当然的，所以朋友们，既然我们有这样的回国机会，就先耐心等待吧。如果最后连这个机会也没有了，那时候再商量接下来该怎么办更合适。再等等吧！”史密斯说。

“还有，将来不管我们用什么方法离开了林肯岛，我们一定要明白，不是我们嫌这里不好。”庞库那夫说。

“对！庞库那夫，那只是我们不愿离开我们的祖国、家庭和朋友而已。”史密斯最后说。

等他们商量好这些后，便不再去谈造大船以及大船是向北行驶到太平洋群岛还是向西去新西兰了。大家依然和以前一样，用心地做着各自

的事，为在“花岗宫殿”度过第三个冬天而做着准备。

当然，他们还有个计划，那就是在恶劣的暴风雨来临之前，要乘坐小船来一次环岛航行。截至目前，居民们并没有考察完海岛的全部沿海地带，比如海岛的西岸和北岸，也就是从跌水河口到颚角，以及颚角那如同鲨鱼一样张开嘴的狭长海峡……对这些地方，他们只是稍稍有些了解，所以他们还想再去看看，做深入的了解。

这次的航行，是由庞库那夫提出的。史密斯完全同意他的提议，因为他也想去这些地方。

天气开始发生变化，但气压计的变动却并不明显，所以他们预计天气不可能变得更坏。不过，就在4月份的第一个星期里，气压突然降得很低，等重新上升后，又接连刮了五六天的大风，最后才上升到对航海有利的29.9英寸高度，并保持在那里。

4月14日，居民们决定乘坐停在气球港的“长风破浪号”做一次长时间的航行，为此他们开始准备充足的能在船上吃的食物。

史密斯希望这次的航行阿埃童也能参加，所以便告诉了他这个计划。但阿埃童却更愿意留在岛上。于是大家最终决定，在大家出航期间，阿埃童暂时住在“花岗宫殿”，并由狙布陪他。好脾气的猩猩狙布也没表示出不满。

他们正式出发是在4月16日清晨。除了阿埃童和狙布之外的所有居民，包括多卜都上了船。

这天有从西南方向吹来的微风。于是，“长风破浪号”斜迎着风离开了气球港，向甩尾角驶去。海岛周围虽然有90英里长，但从气球港到甩

尾角，南岸这部分却只有20英里长。由于迎风而行，他们的行驶必须靠近海岸。

到达甩尾角，他们整整用了一天的时间。在离开气球港之后的八个小时中，仅仅只有两个小时是退潮期，其余六个小时全是涨潮，因而他们只能逆流而行，所以用了很长时间，天黑时才绕过海角。

即使这样，庞库那夫还是向史密斯提议，收起两帆，继续慢行。但史密斯建议在离岸几锚链的地方抛锚，他想在第二天的白天仔细观察这部分海岸。他的提议获得了大家的认同，同意夜间停止航行。如果天气好的话，他们甚至希望能在靠岸处抛锚。

就这样，居民们在停靠于海角下端的“长风破浪号”上休息了一晚，此时风已经停了，四周静悄悄的。这一夜，除了庞库那夫外，居民们都无法像在“花岗宫殿”一样睡个安稳觉。不过，他们还是睡着了。

4月17日，天刚刚亮，庞库那夫就开始扬帆起航，他的航行方向一直保持着左舷航行，这样可以让“长风破浪号”一直沿着西岸前行。

这一带居民们还是很熟悉的，他们曾徒步来到森林海岸探索，此地的景色之美，曾引起他们无数次的赞叹。因此，为了把周围的一切看得更清楚一些，他们尽量让船靠岸前进。不过，由于很多树干漂浮在海面上，所以他们的船不得不左躲右闪，航行中的船还被迫停了几次，这也让史佩莱有了拍摄美景的机会。

中午时分，“长风破浪号”到了跌水河的河口。从船上向对面左岸看去，是稀疏的树木，而当过了3英里之外时，即使稀疏的树木也不存在了。西边山岩间生长着一簇一簇的树木，荒芜的山脊一直向下倾斜到了海滨一带。海滨的南北有着很多差别，相比而言，南部的地势平坦，土

地肥沃，树木异常茂盛；北部则是一片荒凉，地势崎岖陡峭。

荒凉的北部很像是“铁滩”，意思就是这些地方外表荒芜，犹如从远古时代地底涌出的玄武岩浆结晶形成的海滩。如果站在这些荒岛上，那些嶙峋的大石头一定会让人大吃一惊的。

当初，虽然他们在富兰克林山的顶端曾眺望过这里，但因为站得太高，无法看到这些嶙峋的山石。如今从海面上直视，这些地方则越发显得荒凉了。

“长风破浪号”经过了半英里的航行后，发现了很多岩石，虽然大小不一，高度也从20英尺到300英尺不等，但形态各异，有些像圆圆的塔楼，有些则像棱柱，尖尖的，更有些像角锥形的方塔，圆锥形的工业烟囱……总之，就是北冰洋上的冰山也没有它们形态丰富。

更有意思的是，有些岩石间还搭着桥梁，有些则有着一串串波浪形的拱门，有的洞窟雄伟宽阔，有的则是一排排的石柱、尖塔和拱门……大自然的鬼斧神工，绝对可以超过“哥特式”教堂。

这些凭人的想象力无法创造出的艺术品，就这么绵延在八九英里的美丽海滨上，非常壮观。

居民们傻傻地看着，看得入了神，没有人说一句话。不过，多卜显然没有被这些天然的艺术品所震撼，它突然叫了几声，瞬间，回声从玄武岩石的峭壁处传了出去。史密斯觉得多卜的叫声有些奇怪，那叫声特别像在“花岗宫殿”井口发出的叫声。

“再到岸边去一下。”史密斯说。

“长风破浪号”又向有着“艺术品”的海岸靠近了一些。这里是否有值

得他们去探索的洞窟呢？

不过，在仔细看了看后，史密斯并没发现洞窟，连一个可以栖息的藏身之地都没有。同时，峭壁的底部还在受着海浪的冲击。不过很快，多卜不再叫了，他们也就与海滨保持着几锚链的距离前行。

荒岛西北部的海岸很平坦，一些沼泽地上生长着丛林，居民们也曾在这里探索过。这一带又和刚刚看到的荒凉海岸有所不同，数不清的水禽的存在，让这片海岸显得很有生机。

这天晚上，“长风破浪号”在荒岛北部的小海湾停下了，这里靠近陆地，附近的海水又深，很适合停下来过夜。这一天都过得很平静，夕阳西下时，海面变得异常寂静，直到破晓时分，才有微风吹起。

因为停靠的地方很容易上岸，所以打猎能手赫伯特和史佩莱便上岸去了两个小时，回来时手里多了几串野鸭和丘鹬。当然，他们能有如此收获，也都得益于多卜的机灵能干，让每只落下的禽类都一只不落地到了他们手里。

第二天早上八点，“长风破浪号”再次起航。由于是顺风，风势渐大，它便飞快地向上颚角驶去了。

“看来很快就有西风刮来了，而且是很猛烈的西风。昨天太阳落山时，我看到西边红彤彤的，今天早上又有马尾云出现，所以看情况不是太好。”庞库那夫说。

马尾云的出现预示着天气要发生变化。这是卷云的一种，通常散布在头顶处，大概离海面5000英尺左右，有些像轻巧的粗棉花。

“既然如此，我们快把帆张起来吧，到鲨嘴湾去躲躲，那里应该可

以保证我们的安全。”史密斯说。

“说得没错！北边海滨尽是沙子，实在没什么看头。”庞库那夫说。

“是的，只要我们愿意，就在鲨嘴湾耽误今明两天都没什么关系，我觉得那里非常值得我们去用心探索。”史密斯说。

“这已经不是我们愿意不愿意的事了，是我们不得不去，非去不可。”庞库那夫说完，又看了看天空的西边说：“那边的天气非常不好，马上就要变天了。”

“风在向颞角吹，也算是在一路顺风而行。”史佩莱说。

“这风吹得倒不错，不过我们进港需要逆风。这一带的海面比较生疏，希望我能顺利驶过。”庞库那夫说。

“从鲨嘴湾南岸的情况来看，海里很可能有礁石，而且有很多。”赫伯特补充道。

“你觉得该怎么做就怎么做吧，庞库那夫，我们全都听你的。”史密斯说。

“没什么好担心的，史密斯先生，怎么都会想出办法来的，就算是让刀插进我的肋骨，我也不会让礁石去撞‘长风破浪号’的肋骨的。”庞库那夫说。

庞库那夫所说的“长风破浪号”的“肋骨”指的是船在水中的部分。对于这部分，他看得比自己的身体还重要。

“现在几点钟了？”庞库那夫问。

“十点！”史佩莱说。

“史密斯先生，那我们现在离颚角有多远？”

“差不多15英里。”史密斯说。

“嗯，还有两个小时，等到了十二点，我们就能到达颚角海面了。不过不幸的是，我们正赶上退潮期，海水是向海湾流的，现在又出现了风浪，可能很难进颚角了。”庞库那夫说。

“更要命的是，今天是满月，赶上了4月份潮势最凶猛的时候。”赫伯特说。

“庞库那夫，那你可以在颚角附近抛锚吗？”史密斯问。

“现在就要变天了，我们只能在靠近岸边的地方抛锚。史密斯先生，你想要做什么？我们要在颚角附近抛锚的话，肯定会搁浅的。”庞库那夫说。

“那要怎么做？”

“我准备想办法将它停在海面上，等涨潮期的来临。具体来说就是我们要等到傍晚七点钟。如果那时候光线不错的话，我就进港，不然的话，我们只能整夜停在海面上，一直到明天早上太阳出来时再进去了。”庞库那夫说。

“就像我前面说的，庞库那夫，你想怎样就怎样吧！”史密斯说。

“唉！太可惜了，海滨没有灯塔，要是有了灯塔的话就好办多了。”庞库那夫说。

“是呀，这次没有善良的工程师为我们点火，引导我们入港了。”赫伯特说。

“对了，亲爱的赛莱斯，一直都忘了道谢。老实说，如果那次不是你的那堆火，我们不一定能回来……”史佩莱说。

“什么？火？”史密斯非常惊讶。

“史密斯先生，我们指的是，在从岱波岛回来的时候，‘长风破浪号’在抵达岛的前几个小时，我非常焦急，不知道方向对不对。可就在10月19日的夜里，你在观望壁点了一堆火，然后我们就调整了方向，迎着林肯岛的上风头回来了。”庞库那夫解释说。

“就是，就是，多亏我有那么好的办法呀！”史密斯说着，若有所思。

“这一次，除非阿埃童想到了这一点，不然就没人帮我们做了。”庞库那夫又说。

“嗯！不会有人了，不会有人了！”史密斯说的时候，眼神悠远。

过了几分钟，当史密斯看到船头只有自己和史佩莱后，俯下身子，小声对他说：“我发誓，史佩莱，10月19日的夜里，我绝对没有在观望壁或什么地方点过火！”

第二十章

庞库那夫的预测没有错，事情果然和他说的一样。风越刮越大，很快从微风变成了暴风，速度达到了每小时40到45英里，如果在海里遇到如此大的风，首先要做的就是收起桅帆，但即使这样，船也会像飞一样前行。所以“长风破浪号”在六点钟时，行驶到了港湾口。

不过，此时潮势发生了改变，船无法进港。

庞库那夫让船和海岸保持了一定距离。按当时的情况，庞库那夫即使想去感恩河的河口，也是无法办到的。于是，他把三角帆作为暴风帆，升到了主桅的顶上，在船停下来后，船头是正对着陆地的。

风势很大，不过因为有陆地挡着，掀起的波涛并不高，因此他们也不用担心海浪威胁到“长风破浪号”。而由于压舱解决得特别好，所以也不可能翻船。但是，因为有大量的海水被冲到甲板上，使船骨受到了很大的考验，所以船很可能会被打坏。

当然，作为经验丰富的水手，庞库那夫把可能出现的问题都考虑到了，何况他对自己的船很有信心。但即使这样，他还是有些焦虑，可也只能耐心等待天亮了。

这一晚，史密斯和史佩莱并没有聊天，他们没找到机会。不过，史密斯悄悄给史佩莱说的那件事，以及笼罩在整个海岛上的一股神秘力量，还是让他们觉得必须要进行一次深层次的探讨了。

史佩莱不断地想着这件事，想着这件再次让他们觉得不可思议的怪事。荒岛的海滨上出现了野火，那火是真实存在的，他的确看见了。不仅他看到了，赫伯特和庞库那夫也看到了。那实实在在存在的火，像黑夜里的标志，告诉了他们林肯岛的正确方位。他们一直以为那火是史密斯点的，但史密斯却说他根本就没做过这件事。

史佩莱想好了，在“长风破浪号”回去后，他们要认真地研究此事，并且要让史密斯将这件怪事告诉大家，也许在大家都知道了这件事后，才能共同想办法在全岛的每个方位做仔细的搜查。

当然，这天夜里，他们没有在港湾入口的陌生海岸上发现什么莫名其妙的野火，而“长风破浪号”也一整夜地停泊在了海面上。

风势有所减弱是在东方出现第一丝曙光时。风势的减弱改变了两个方位，这都有利于庞库那夫进入那狭窄的港湾。差不多七点钟的时候，“长风破浪号”由上颚角的上风口，通过海峡在海面上滑行。此时，他们发现周围的海岸上有着很多形状怪异的熔岩峭壁。

“这里绝对是个停船的绝佳港湾，就是停一个舰队都没有问题。”庞库那夫说。

“太奇怪了！这个港湾一定是经过了好几次火山爆发，由岩浆凝结堆积而成，四面都被遮挡住了。我觉得暴风再猛烈，这里也不会受到影响，会一直平静如镜面的。”史密斯好奇地说。

“是的，绝对是这样，这里想要风刮进来都难。因为这里仅有两个海角形成的狭窄通道能通风，但南面的海角又遮住了北边的海角，所以风更不容易进来。我可以这么说，我们的‘长风破浪号’就是在这里停上一年，锚都不会动的。”庞库那夫说。

“可是对我们的船来说，这港湾太大了！”史佩莱说。

“没错，我也觉得只停‘长风破浪号’有些太浪费了。要是美国舰队想在附近找个军港，没有比这里更合适的了。”庞库那夫开玩笑说。

“我们现在就像在鲨鱼嘴里似的。”那普想起了港湾的形状。

“嗯，是呀，那普，我们现在正在往鲨鱼嘴里走。你是担心它突然闭起了嘴，我们出不去了吗？”赫伯特笑着说。

“我才不怕呢，赫伯特先生，我只是不喜欢这个港湾，它的形状太难看了。”那普说。

“看看，看看！我还说要把它献给我们的国家呢，那普倒看不起它了。”庞库那夫大声说。

“先不说别的，就说这里的水吧，它够深吗？停‘长风破浪号’还可以，其他装甲舰未必可以。”史密斯说。

“想知道水深不深倒不难。”庞库那夫说。

于是，他用一根绳子吊起了一块铁，将铁当成铅垂线，对水的深度进行了测量，最后发现全部放下去还触不到底，而那条绳子足足有50寻1长。

“看！现在就是装甲舰来了，也不会搁浅的。”庞库那夫高兴地说。

“还真是这样。看来，这个港湾就像个无底洞。不过也正常，这海岛可是火山爆发形成的，有深渊并不奇怪。”史佩莱说。

“我敢说，这些峭壁也很直。要是庞库那夫用一根比刚才那条绳子还长五六倍的绳子，也不会触碰到海底。”赫伯特说。

“嗯，是这样的。但是庞库那夫，有一点我可要说，这个港湾有一个非常大的缺点。”史佩莱说。

“缺点？什么缺点？史佩莱先生，你说！”

“你没有发现这里少一个到荒岛内陆去的通路吗？我看了一圈，没有找到能登陆的地方，一个都没有。”

史佩莱说得没错。由于峭壁是熔岩形成的，所以便成了一道无法逾越的障碍。这也有些像挪威的海峡，不过这里比挪威海峡更荒凉，更冷清。一直贴近断岩前行的“长风破浪号”，真的没有找到一块可以让船上的人登陆的堤。

庞库那夫也有些无奈，他安慰自己说，以后有必要的話，可以用手雷在峭壁上炸出一个缺口来。

无所事事又无法登陆的居民们，不得不由庞库那夫调转方向，在下午两点左右的时候，出了这个港湾。

一出港湾，那普便长长地松了口气。

忠诚老实的黑人那普，在那张大鲨鱼嘴里时，总觉得不舒服。

从颞骨角到感恩河的河口不过8英里，又因为“长风破浪号”是正对着“花岗宫殿”的，所以只是一阵轻微的风，船便在离岸一海里的海面上飞驰起来。

在经过了那硕大的熔岩峭壁后，他们很快就到了形状奇怪的沙丘地带。这个地方也是史密斯当时莫名其妙得救的地方，成千上万的海鸥不断飞来。

四点钟之后，庞库那夫驾着船又从小岛的地岬处向右边行驶，最后进了小岛和海岸间的海峡处。五点钟的时候，在感恩河口的沙滩上，“长风破浪号”抛锚了。

他们终于回到了阔别三天的住处。阿埃童早早就在海滩上迎接他们了，狙布也高兴地低叫着，欢迎他们回来。

此时，荒岛沿岸他们已经全部搜寻过了，却没有发现什么可疑之处。既然荒岛上一定有神秘的东西存在，那它会在哪里？是不是在蛇盘半岛那无法看穿的森林里呢？他们不知道，但只有那里他们从没去搜查过。

史佩莱和史密斯先进行了一番沟通，最后决定告诉大家一定要注意岛上出现的奇怪事件。而在所有的奇怪事件中，最近发生的一件让他们更加难以理解，那就是点火的问题。

不过，在他们两个人先沟通的时候，史密斯不禁又问史佩莱，这已经是他不止二十遍地询问了：“你肯定那是火？会不会是局部的火山爆发？或者会不会是流星？”

“绝对不可能是火山或流星。赛莱斯，那肯定是火，而且是人点的火。要是您觉得我会看错的话，可以再问问庞库那夫和赫伯特。”史佩莱说。

就这样，过了几天，在4月25日的晚上，当大家又聚在观望壁上时，史密斯开口道：“朋友们，我想提醒大家，岛上发生了很多稀奇古怪的事，我想让大家对这些稀奇古怪的事发表一下自己的看法。当然，这些事情说起来很……”

史密斯还没说完，庞库那夫的嘴里先是喷出一口烟，接着说：

“想说神奇吧！我们的林肯岛上会发生神奇的事？”

“庞库那夫，我可以换种说法，是神秘事件。当然，除非你能回答

让我和史佩莱感到迷惑的问题。”史密斯说。

“什么迷惑？说吧，史密斯先生。”庞库那夫说。

“好的，我想问你，在我掉到海里后，是如何来到内陆的？那可是4英里以外的地方。为什么我会一点儿都不知道？”史密斯问。

“可能是你失去了知觉.....”庞库那夫说。

“不，这讲不通。还有，你们当时是住在‘石窟’里的，而我却在‘石窟’5英里之外，多卜是怎么找到‘石窟’那里的？”史密斯又问。

“可能是狗的嗅觉灵敏.....”赫伯特说。

“有着这样的灵敏嗅觉也太不可思议了，而且当天狂风暴雨没停过，多卜到‘石窟’时，身上竟然没有一点泥，而且是干的。”史佩莱说。

“好吧，还有不明白的，在多卜和儒艮搏斗时，为什么会无缘无故地被抛出水面？”史密斯继续问。

“我现在承认，我确实不明白，一点都不知道是什么原因。还有那儒艮的侧面像是被什么利器割伤的，这些都太莫名其妙了。”庞库那夫说。

“当然还有就是小畜乳的身体里怎么会有子弹？既然没有遇难船只的遗迹，为什么又会有装了各种各样东西的箱子？还有那装着纸条的瓶子，为什么会在我们试航时被我们捡到？当我们需要船只的时候，为什么平底船会断了绳子从感恩河口漂到了我们身边？当猿猴侵占我们的住处后，软梯怎么又那么巧地从上面落下来让我们用？最后当然就是阿埃童说他没有写过纸条的事了。这些问题，谁能解答？”

当史密斯将这一件件发生在林肯岛上的怪事摆在大家面前时，赫伯特和那普、庞库那夫都茫然地你看看我，我望望你，不知该如何回答。

这还是史密斯第一次将这些奇怪的事情归纳起来展现给大家。全部听完后，每个人都傻了眼。

“确实是这样，史密斯先生，你是对的，这些事情真的难以解释。”庞库那夫终于认同了事情的蹊跷。

“还有一件，朋友们，这是最近新添的事情，跟之前的事相比，这件事更加离奇。”史密斯接着说。

“是什么？史密斯先生？”赫伯特好奇心来了，马上问道。

“庞库那夫，你是不是说过，当你们从岱波岛回来时，林肯岛上有篝火？”

“是的。”庞库那夫说。

“你确定看到了篝火？”

“当然能确定！那天看到的篝火，和我现在看到你一样不容怀疑。”庞库那夫说。

“赫伯特，你当时看到了吗？”

“当然，史密斯先生，当时那火光像一等星一样。”赫伯特叫道。

“可是那会不会就是一等星？”史密斯继续问。

“当然不是！当时可是阴云密布呢，而且星星怎么会跑到低于水平

线的地方？史佩莱先生和我们一样都看到了，他能给我们作证。”庞库那夫回答。

“好吧，我在这儿也再说一句，那火光非常亮，像闪电一样亮。”史佩莱说。

“对！对！是这样的，那火光像是点在我们‘花岗宫殿’的高岗上。”赫伯特附和道。

“好的，那我告诉朋友们，10月19日那天夜里，我和那普根本就没在海滨上点过火。”史密斯慢条斯理地说。

“什么？你没点过火？”庞库那夫吃惊得话都快说不出来了。

“我们一直没有离开‘花岗宫殿’。如果你们当时看到了火光，一定是其他人点的。”史密斯说。

庞库那夫和赫伯特，以及那普全都怔在了那里。庞库那夫和赫伯特知道他们没有看错，在10月19日的夜里，他们确实看到过一堆火。

此时，他们没有理由不相信，林肯岛上是有秘密的。而这个秘密就是每当他们遇到困难，在紧急关头时就会有一股难以想象的力量在帮助他们。这样的秘密激起了居民们极大的好奇心。这秘密在哪里？是有什么东西隐藏在隐蔽的地方吗？他们一定要不惜任何代价搞清楚。

史密斯又告诉了大家一件事，那就是多卜和狙布有时会在“花岗宫殿”与大海相通的井口旁打转、号叫。史密斯还说，他曾到井下去过，但并没有发现什么可疑的东西。

经过这次谈话后，全体居民决定，等到气候转暖时，他们要仔细搜

查整个林肯岛。

不过，自那以后，庞库那夫便有些坐卧不安了。他一直觉得荒岛是他们的，但当有一天，他知道荒岛不再只属于他们，而且也属于另一个人，甚至不管他愿不愿意接受，他们都在受那个人的支配时，他感到非常失落。

那普也和他谈起过这些解释不了的问题，不过他们原本就有些相信神灵，所以觉得是神灵给了他们力量，让他们统治林肯岛。

林肯岛的5月份，也就是北半球的11月，天气开始转冷，有时候甚至比冬季还冷，冬天的过早到来，让他们不得不开始为过冬做准备。

当然，虽然严寒即将到来，但居民们却早已经准备好了。他们饲养的莫伏鹿羊已经有很多只了，这些羊的羊毛能够制造大量的毡子，这些毡子又能让他们做成最保暖的衣服。

当然，做冬衣的时候，他们是不会忘了给阿埃童也准备一套的。史密斯建议他到“花岗宫殿”来和大家一起过冬，因为在“花岗宫殿”里过冬，比在牲畜栏那里要好得多。这次阿埃童没有拒绝，只是说等牲畜栏的工作做完后就过来。

4月中旬，阿埃童搬了过来。此后，阿埃童就开始和大家过集体生活了。虽然他也希望自己能融入这欢乐的气氛中，但却依然摆脱不了忧郁和自卑，不和大家一起说笑。

这已经是居民们在林肯岛上过的第三个冬天了。而这个冬天和前两个冬天一样，居民们大部分的时间都是在“花岗宫殿”里度过。有很多次，狂风暴雨差点把海岛基石震塌，汹涌的巨浪像是要淹没整个海岛。

不管何种船只，只要停在岸边，都会被撞得粉碎。

在又一次大风暴后，感恩河洪水泛滥，桥梁有两次差点被洪水冲走。而每次浪潮击打海滩，水花四溅时，堤岸都像要被淹没得无影无踪，所以他们必须要加固桥身。

像龙卷风一样的暴风雨夹着雪花，给观望壁的高地带来了极大的灾难。受损害最多的是磨坊和家禽场，因此，居民们不得不赶紧把家禽围栏修好，以避免动物们的安全受到更严重的威胁。

在最恶劣的天气里，有好几只美洲豹和成群的猿猴都曾闯过河来，这些或机灵或凶猛的野兽，因为饥饿，不得不冒死从河里过来，特别是在河水结冰的时候，它们更容易从冰面过来。这都让居民们非常担心。这些野兽要是过来了，不管是家禽、家畜还是农作物都会遭殃，所以他们时常用枪来对待这些不请自来的“客人”，用枪逼迫它们离开。

居民们是永远不缺活干的，除了有时需要外出外，他们还有着很多计划和打算，以使“花岗宫殿”变得更舒服，更好。

在如此寒冷的季节里，居民们也曾去花鳉沼地打猎。去那里打猎，他们通常都会选择下霜的日子。因为在那种气候下，会遇见很多水禽和野鸭、丘鹬等。

打猎时，史佩莱总是和赫伯特在狙布和多卜的配合下进行，这样的配合使打猎活动百发百中。从“花岗宫殿”到打猎处的这段路对他们来说是比较好走的，他们有几条路可供选择，比如跨过感恩河桥去；从通向气球港的大路去；从拾箱角绕到峭壁去等等，不管哪条路，都只有二三英里而已。

最冷的是6月、7月、8月和9月，这四个月很快就过去了。在这四个月里，天气确实非常冷。不过，居民们的“花岗宫殿”并没有受到风暴强袭的威胁。牲畜栏也一样，因为没有暴露在外面，同时因为富兰克林山为它遮挡了一部分狂风，前方又有森林和海岸上的峭壁，所以所受的损失最小。

10月时，阿埃童回到牲畜栏的木屋里住了几天，修理那些稍微受到损坏的东西。手艺精湛、做事麻利的他很快也就弄完了。

整个冬天过得很平淡，没有什么新的怪事发生。自从那次汇总了怪事后，庞库那夫和那普不管遇到什么事，即使是小得不能再小的事，他们也会联想一下，看是否属于神秘事件。

多卜和狙布也没再围绕井口号叫转圈了，更没有显得不安，好像前面的一系列怪事都要中断了似的。不过每天晚上，居民们还是会在“花岗宫殿”谈论这些事，而且过些时间彻底搜查荒岛的想法也没有变，即使是最难去探索的地方，他们也想去看看。

当然，就在此时，有件重要而可怕的事情的发生使他们暂时改变了计划。

那是10月的一天，天气已经慢慢转暖，大地很快就要回春了。大自然好像刚刚经历了冬眠，开始苏醒。森林里长出了很多常绿树，大多是松柏科，而另一些如喜马拉雅杉之类的树都已经抽出了嫩芽。

大家应该不会忘记，史佩莱和赫伯特经常喜欢在林肯岛拍摄相片。那天是10月17日的下午，差不多在三点钟的时候，受晴朗天气的感染，赫伯特决定去拍一些联合湾的照片。联合湾在观望壁的对面，一端是颚角，另一端则是兽爪角。

那时候，水平线很清晰，海面也是一片平静，只有微风吹过时会荡起一丝涟漪，在阳光的照耀下闪闪发光。

赫伯特是将相机放在“花岗宫殿”餐厅的一个窗口上照的，这样的角度完全可以俯瞰整个海岸和港湾。在像往常一样拍了几个镜头后，赫伯特便到阴暗的角落用药品定影了。

当他再从阴暗角落回到亮处时，他拿出了底片来看，突然发现底片的水平线上有个不怎么清楚的黑点。赫伯特非常不满意这个黑点，想把它去掉，便又去洗了几次，但那黑点还是存在。

“难道是镜头上的黑点？”赫伯特想。

在好奇心的驱使下，他从望远镜上取下了一个放大镜，仔细看那个斑点。这一看他大叫一声，放大镜差点从他手里掉下来。

他急忙跑去找史密斯，并把底片和放大镜都递给史密斯，让他看底片上的黑点。

史密斯仔细看了一下，抓起望远镜就冲到了窗口。

当望远镜慢慢扫过水平线后，他停在了那个黑点上，好一会儿，史密斯才放下望远镜，说了一句：“那里有只船！”

没错，在离林肯岛不远的地方，有一只船。

[11](#)英寻约等于1.8288米。

第三部 林肯岛里的秘密

第一章

两年半，林肯岛上的居民从气球上降落到这里已经有两年半了。在此期间，他们没有和外界的任何人、任何物发生联系。即使有一次记者史佩莱将他们的故事写成信，让一只信天翁带到大陆去，也仅仅是他们在给自己一个机会，并没有对它抱有什么幻想。

阿埃童虽然不是和他们一起从气球上降落下来的人，但也是另一座孤岛上的遇难者，并不算是外界的人。

但在那一天，10月17日，在这荒凉的岛上，竟然出现了一只船，有船必定就会有人。

这是不变的事实。那船就在离他们林肯岛不远的地方。这只船为什么要到这里来？是路过还是要找岸靠的？到底是什么情况？几个小时后，居民们就能清楚了。

当赫伯特看到船后告诉了史密斯，史密斯看到又马上叫来了史佩莱、庞库那夫和那普后，庞库那夫立刻拿起了望远镜。望远镜在水平线上扫过去，他盯上了史密斯和赫伯特所说的那个点，也就是照片底片上出现的那个黑点。

“天啊！真的是只船！老天保佑！”他大声喊着，但并不是惊喜的叫

声。

“是往咱们这里开的吗？”史佩莱问。

“不知道，现在只有桅杆露在水平线上，船还看不到呢。”庞库那夫说。

“那现在我们要怎么办？”赫伯特问。

“只能等着了。”史密斯说。

这只船的出现让居民们沉默了很久，这是他们到林肯岛之后，遇到的最重要的一件事。这件事情的出现，引起了他们内心的一些情感，有激动、兴奋，但也有恐惧和失落。

当然，之所以会这样，是因为他们和一般流落在荒岛上的人还不一样。那些人在和残酷的自然界做斗争的同时，更多的是痛苦和苦闷。而林肯岛的居民们却不是这样的，特别是庞库那夫和那普，他们在这里很愉快，也很富有。所以当他们觉得有一天他们要离开这个荒岛时，内心的失落和难受可想而知。

他们依靠自己的辛劳和智慧，将这片荒芜的土地开垦得富饶美丽，开始了他们的新生活，甚至已经习惯了这样的生活。

不过，不管这船是从哪里来的，都可能给他们带来家乡的消息，带来他们的同伴，所以从这点上来说，他们又是激动和兴奋的。

庞库那夫靠在窗口上，不时地拿起望远镜看。他的眼睛死死地盯着那只船，他看到，那只船的位置应该在东面20海里的海面上。因为距离比较远，所以还没有办法给那船发信号。

摇信号旗，那只船上的人肯定看不见，而开枪的话也不会听到，甚至此时就是燃起烽火来都是多余的。但有一点他们必须承认，那就是有着高高富兰克林山的海岛，绝对逃不过那只船上的人的视线。

不过，这船到底来这里干什么？是误打误撞来的？地图上，太平洋区域除了有岱波岛外，并没有其他陆地，而且岱波岛还不在于波利尼西亚群岛、新西兰和美国海岸起航的船只经常跑的航线内。

当大家正在为这些问题而烦恼的时候，赫伯特突然大声说：“会不会是‘邓肯号’？”

之前我们已经说过，格莱拉弗爵士的游船叫“邓肯号”，曾驶到岱波岛将阿埃童遗弃在那里，还承诺以后会把阿埃童接回去。岱波岛距离林肯岛不远，经线距离仅有150英里，纬线有75英里。

如果有向那个岛上行驶的船，林肯岛他们应该是可以看到的。

“这事要马上告诉阿埃童，叫他过来，只有他才知道那是不是‘邓肯号’。”史佩莱说。

大家都认同史佩莱的说法，于是马上用发电报的方式通知阿埃童：“速来这里！”

几分钟后，铃响了，阿埃童回电：“马上就到！”

在等待阿埃童的时间里，居民们还在用望远镜看那只船。

“如果是‘邓肯号’，阿埃童肯定会认出来的，他曾在那只船上待过。”赫伯特说。

“要是阿埃童发现是‘邓肯号’，一定会非常激动的。”庞库那夫说。

“是啊，但愿这船真是格莱拉弗爵士的‘邓肯号’，阿埃童现在已经有资格上‘邓肯号’了。我只怕这是别的船。这里海盗很多，我怕是有海盗要上我们的岛。”史密斯说。

“有海盗也不怕，我们可以把他们赶出去。”赫伯特说。

“是的孩子，不过如果不需要我们战斗，是不是会更好呢？”史密斯笑着说。

“说这些猜测的话没用，航海的人是不可能知道林肯岛的，就连最新的地图上都没有。不过，赛莱斯，要是有一只船猛地发现这里有块大陆，也不会错过来察看一番的，是不是呢？”史佩莱问。

没等史密斯回答，庞库那夫便说：“那肯定是的。”

“我觉得很可能是这样，甚至很可能船长的工作就是专门寻找一些没被人发现过的陆地，林肯岛正符合他们的察看范围。”史密斯补充说。

“那要是这船来了，离我们的岛只有几锚链的时候，我们要怎么办才好呢？”庞库那夫说。

这问题问得有些突然，史密斯半天没有回答，想了好一会儿，才同往常一样，用平静的语气说：“我们要怎么做呢？朋友们，我想，我们首先要和船上的人取得联系，代表美国占有了此岛，然后乘坐他们的船离开。最后当我们带着我们的人重返此岛时，就能把太平洋上的这个岛献给美利坚合众国了。”

“啊！这可真是太好了！这样我们就等于送给国家一份大礼了。我们把这岛开发得也差不多了，岛上也有了名字，还有天然港口、储水场、道路、电报设施、船只和制造场等等，应有尽有，就差让林肯岛上地图了。”庞库那夫高兴地说。

“但是，如果在我们离开后，有人想夺取这个岛呢？”史佩莱说。

“该死！会这样吗？那我情愿一个人留下来守着它。你们把这个任务交给我吧，我绝不会让任何人从我手里把岛夺走的。”庞库那夫喊道。

时间已经过去了一个小时，他们还是不能确定那只船是不是在向林肯岛驶来。虽然能看出离林肯岛又近了一些，但船是向着什么方向行驶的呢？就连庞库那夫也说不清楚。不过，由于海面上正刮着东北风，想必船会向右顺风行驶，更何况向林肯岛驶来正好是顺风。此时海面还是很平静的，即使地图上没有标着浅滩，想必他们也能放心大胆地开过来。

四点钟的时候，阿埃童过来了。此时离居民们叫他过来已经过去了一个多小时，他刚刚跨进“花岗宫殿”的餐厅便说：“先生们，有什么吩咐？”

史密斯和往常一样，向他伸出了手，随即将他领到了窗口。

“阿埃童，我们请你来是想让你确定一件事，这件事非常重要，那就是我们发现了一只船。”

阿埃童听到这句话，脸色微变，眼神黯淡下来。他从窗口探出头去看了一下水平线，但什么都没有看到。

“用望远镜看吧。阿埃童，会不会是‘邓肯号’来接你了呢？”史佩莱说。

“你是说‘邓肯号’？会这么快来接我？”阿埃童喃喃着，小声说。

在荒岛上像野人一样过了12年，他还觉得没有赎清罪吗？他已经改过自新了，不管别人看他还是他自己看自己，他没有觉得自己已经得到宽恕了吗？

“不，这一定不是‘邓肯号’！”他说。

“阿埃童，你知道吗？我们现在一定要预先知道接下来会发生什么事，然后再做准备。”史密斯说。

阿埃童用望远镜向大家所说的方向看去。他一动不动地看了很久，最后说：“那确实是一只船，但我想它不是‘邓肯号’。”

“你为什么会觉得它不是‘邓肯号’？”史佩莱问。

“‘邓肯号’是一只游船，周围不可能没有一点烟存在。”

“会不会是因为张帆行驶的原因？如果它现在是顺风，离陆地又远，会不会为了节省煤，所以才没有烟出来呢？”庞库那夫说。

“你说得也有道理，庞库那夫先生，这船是熄了火了，我们只能等它走近后再看，到时候也就会知道将要发生什么了。”阿埃童说。

说完，他去房间的一个角落坐下，不再说一句话。居民们又开始谈论起了这只船，但阿埃童始终没有加入进来。复杂的心情让大家无法安心工作，不停地走来走去，坐立不安。

让赫伯特感到好奇的是，那普表现得很平静，好像并不期待早早回国，难道他不觉得主人的国家就是他的国家？

史密斯陷入了沉思，他的内心里期待这只船到来的念头在慢慢减弱，害怕船到来的心情却越来越强烈起来。

那只船离荒岛更近一些了。从望远镜里，他们已经能看出那是一只双桅船，并不是太平洋上强盗们经常用的那种帆船。那么此时，是不是可以说史密斯的顾虑是多余的，这只船即使在海岛附近出现，也不会给他们带来危险呢？

庞库那夫又仔细地看了一会儿后，能完全确定这是一只双桅船了。这只船正张着中桅帆和上桅帆，沿着右舷，斜着向海岸驶来。

阿埃童也做出了同样的确定。

不过，由于刮着西南风，这只双桅船如果是向这个方向驶来的，那么很快就会被兽爪角挡住，所以必须去气球港，在华盛顿湾的高岗上才能看到。但糟糕的是，此时已经是傍晚五点钟了，在这样的暮色中，他们很快就要什么都看不见了。

“天快黑了，要不要去海边燃一堆火告诉他们方向？”史佩莱问。

这是一个非常重要的问题。史密斯的内心虽然保留着自己的顾虑，但也表示了同意。夜间时，这只船会不会离开后一去不复返？如果船开走了，以后还会有船过来吗？没有船再过来了，居民们会不会永远都无法离开了？

“不管那是只什么船，我们都要让它知道这岛上是有人居住的，我们不能放过这个机会。这个自动送上门的机会要是被我们放过了，很可

能会后悔一辈子的。”史佩莱说。

就这样，他们决定让那普和庞库那夫去气球港，并在天黑时点燃一堆篝火，以此吸引船上人的注意。

然而，就在那普和庞库那夫准备离开“花岗宫殿”去气球港时，却发现那船掉转了方向，向联合湾驶去了。想必那船上的驾驶者的技术非常娴熟，他们很快就接近了海岸。于是，原定计划取消，那普和庞库那夫留了下来。

大家再次将望远镜交给了阿埃童，让他确定这船是不是“邓肯号”，因为“邓肯号”正好也是双桅船。如今，那船离海岸只有10英里左右了，阿埃童只需看看船的两根桅杆间有没有烟囱就能确定了。

此时从望远镜上看，水平线上的船非常清晰。阿埃童放下望远镜，非常肯定地说：“不是‘邓肯号’，绝对不是！”

庞库那夫接过阿埃童手里的望远镜，朝船看去，只见船的载重在三四百吨之间，结构非常精致漂亮，船身虽然狭窄，但樯帆整齐。这是一只航行起来非常快的船，至于是哪一国的，暂时还不能确定。

“那船顶上像是飘着一面旗，不过看不清颜色。”庞库那夫说。

“再过半小时就能看到了。而且我发现那船长像是想上岸，所以今天或明天，我们应该就能和他们见面了。”史佩莱说。

“最好能知道船上是什么人再打交道，现在只要我能认出那船上飘着的旗，我就可以知道了。”庞库那夫说。

庞库那夫说话的时候，眼睛始终没有离开望远镜。此时，天已经完

全黑了下来，风也停了，船上的旗卷着、垂着，他更看不清楚了。

“不过不是美国旗，也不是英国旗。要是英美的旗的话，红颜色很容易看得出来；也不是法国旗和德国旗，更不会是俄国的白旗、西班牙的黄旗。好像.....好像是个单色旗。别急，让我想想，让我想想，想想这一带海面上，还会有什么旗？智利旗？可那是三色的；巴西旗？不对，那是绿色的；日本旗？也不是，那是白色和红色的，而这旗是.....”

此时，微风把那面旗吹展开来，阿埃童拿起庞库那夫放下的望远镜一看，用沙哑的声音喊道：“是黑旗！”

是的，那是一面黑沉沉的旗，正在桅杆上随风飘扬。此时，他们都不禁对那只船产生了怀疑。

是不是工程师史密斯的疑虑成真了呢？来的是一只海盗船？这船是不是太平洋上横行的海霸？这船到林肯岛沿岸是要做什么呢？这是一个无人知晓的荒凉小岛，是要在这里窝藏赃物吗？还是要在这里过冬？这片由居民们开垦的净土，难道要成为这些坏人的藏身之处，成为海盗的巢穴？

居民们的心里不由自主地产生了这样的想法。因为这黑色的船旗颜色，很可能是海盗的旗号。如果当初由阿埃童带领的犯罪分子成功地抢走了“邓肯号”，是不是“邓肯号”也会挂上一面这样的旗子？

大家纷纷议论起来。

“朋友们，不用担心，这船可能只是到沿岸转一圈，很可能不会上岸。当然，不管怎样，我们还是隐蔽起来比较好。观望壁上的风磨真是

太显眼了，阿埃童和那普，你们快去把风翼降下来吧，‘花岗宫殿’也要用树枝遮蔽起来。把火也都熄灭，尽量不要让他们知道岛上有人。”史密斯说。

“那我们的船怎么办？”赫伯特说。

“我们都藏在气球港了，想必那些人不会找到的。”庞库那夫说。

居民们很快就去执行史密斯的命令了。那普和阿埃童去了高地，做了一些必要的防备，把一切人的存在迹象全都掩盖了起来。在他们做这些工作的时候，其他人则去了啄木鸟林，拾了很多树枝和爬藤，将“花岗宫殿”的窗子伪装了起来。同时，他们还准备好了枪支弹药，以应对突如其来的袭击。

在他们将一切准备工作做好后，史密斯说：“朋友们，要是这些坏蛋想要侵占林肯岛，我们一定要保卫它，是不是？”

“对！赛莱斯，即使牺牲自己的生命也在所不惜。”史佩莱说。

史密斯伸出了自己的手，其他人都上去和他的手紧紧地握在一起。

当然，有一个人只是默默地蹲在角落，没和大家一起握手，他就是阿埃童。也许他认为自己是罪犯，没资格这么做。

史密斯知道阿埃童的想法，他走了过去。

“阿埃童，你想怎么做？”他问。

“我想尽我的责任！”阿埃童说。

说完他站在了窗边，透过浓密的枝叶向外看去。

此时已经是晚上七点半了，20分钟前，太阳就已经消失在了“花岗宫殿”后面，所以东方的水平线上也只是朦胧一片。

那只双桅船还在向联合湾驶去。在驶过兽爪角之后，又沿着上涨的潮水向北去了。所以，这时候那只船正好和观望壁高地相对，离他们不过两英里。

双桅船也算是进了宽阔的海港，如果在兽爪角和颞角画直线的话，这条直线应该正好通过右舷后部。

这只船要干什么？是要进入海湾吗？还有，如果这船入了港，是不是会在那里抛锚？还有，这船会不会只是在此处转一圈，上面的人根本就不下船，直接就又走了呢？这些，都将在后来的一个小时里揭晓。他们现在要做的只能是等待。

这只挂着黑旗的船让史密斯很是不安。在林肯岛上，他和伙伴们一直都工作、生活得很顺利很开心，这只船的出现，会不会给他们的工作和生活带来威胁？

这只船上的人，只可能是海盗，不会是别的。

他们为什么要来这里？是不是曾经来过这里，所以才在驶近荒岛的时候，挂上他们的旗帜？岛上曾经发生过的奇怪的事，会不会和海盗有关？

史密斯一直在默默地想着这些问题，可想了很久还是得不出结论。但有一点他很清楚，他觉得双桅船一定会给他和伙伴们的安全带来威胁。

不过，不管最后发生了什么事，他和他的伙伴们是一定不会屈服于

恶人的，他们一定会作战到底。当然，现在他们还有个事情一定要搞清楚，那就是海盗的人数是多少？武器会不会比他们的更精良？

这些情报要怎样才能知道呢？

黑夜完全降临了，甚至连月亮也已经消失。荒岛和海洋，一下子被黑暗包围。水平线上也是阴云密布，没有一丝光线透出来。黑夜好像让风从暮色中消失了，他们不再听得见树叶的沙沙声，更听不到潺潺的水声。

那只船上的灯也熄灭了，什么都看不见。不过，即使现在它停在了荒岛周围，他们也是看不到它的。

“这只该死的船很可能晚上就会走，那么明天我们就看不到它了。”庞库那夫说。

此时，黑暗中先是闪过了一道亮光，接着传出了炮声。那轰隆隆的炮声像是在回答庞库那夫刚才的推测。

那只船还在那里，船上装有大炮。

炮声是在亮光闪过后，过了六秒才响起来的。

所以说，此时，那只船离岸仅有1.25英里。

铁链从链孔里被放了出来，发出了哗啦啦的声响。

双桅船抛锚了，而且是在他们“花岗宫殿”的视线范围内抛锚的……

第二章

再清楚不过了，那只海盗船在离岛不远的地方抛锚，就是为了第二天用小艇登岸。

史密斯和林肯岛上的其他居民，做好了随时行动的准备。虽然他们做了准备、下了决心，但也提醒自己不能大意。如果海盗们登岸后，不到岛内看的话，他们还是可以隐藏起来的。也许海盗们只是想从感恩河取一些淡水离开，那么应该不会发现河口一英里之外的一座桥，以及他们的“石窟”工场。

可船顶上挂着的旗帜是想说明什么？还有那一炮的意思是什么？很明显，这是一种示威的做法，或者是想说他们已经占领海港了？史密斯此时已经知道，海盗船上的武器装备非常精良，而且很齐全。有了炮，林肯岛上的居民们要去怎么对付呢？他们仅仅只有几支滑膛枪而已。

“不管发生什么事，我们的‘花岗宫殿’也是攻不破的。而且这里有芦苇和乱草掩盖，敌人一定不会发现，更不可能攻进来。”史密斯说。

“可我们的麦田、家禽场、牲畜栏，我们创造的一切……很可能不到几个小时就会没有了。”庞库那夫气愤地跺着脚，大声嚷嚷着。

“是的，一切都可能被毁灭。庞库那夫，我们无法阻止他们做这些事。”史密斯说。

“他们是不是有很多人？如果只有十多个，我们还是能够阻止他们的，但如果有四五十或者更多，我们就没办法了。”史佩莱说。

正在这时，阿埃童走了过来。

“史密斯先生，让我去一趟吧！”

“干什么？朋友！”

“我去打探一下情况。”

“可是，阿埃童……这样很危险的，不行！很可能会有生命危险……”史密斯犹豫着。

“为什么不行？先生？”

“因为这不是你的事。”

“即使不是我的事我也要去做。”阿埃童说。

“你想怎么去？坐船吗？”史佩莱问。

“不，我不坐船，我游过去。要是坐船的话，很容易被他们发现的。我一个人从海里游过去比较好。”阿埃童说。

“那船离岸还有1.25英里呢，你行吗？”赫伯特说。

“我水性很好。赫伯特先生。”

“可是……这是有生命危险的。”史密斯还是不想让他去冒险。

“我不怕。史密斯先生，答应我吧，这是我重新做人的机会。”阿埃童说。

“好的，去吧！阿埃童！”史密斯说。他知道如果不答应，阿埃童一

定会伤心的。

“我和你一起去。”庞库那夫说。

“你不相信我？”阿埃童伤心地说完，叹了口气。

“不是这样的，别误会！阿埃童，庞库那夫不是不相信你，你误解他了。”史密斯说。

“是呀！我只是想用船送你过去，现在匪徒很可能已经上岸了。如果你一定要一个人去，那我和你一起去，我在着陆岛等你，你一个人上他们的船。”庞库那夫说。

事情就这么决定了。

阿埃童准备出发。阿埃童的计划非常冒险，但在这样的夜色中，也许会成功。他只要到船边抓住主要链条，便能获悉船上的人数，甚至有可能知道海盗们来到这里的真实意图。

两个人在同伴们的陪伴下出了“花岗宫殿”，来到了海滩上。由于海水很凉，阿埃童脱下衣服后，在身上抹了一层油以防冻，因为他很可能要在海水里待上好几个小时。

此时，庞库那夫和那普也已经去搬那只平底船了，平底船在感恩河的河口几百英尺的地方。等他们回来，阿埃童已经将衣服搭在肩上，准备动身了。居民们握手和他告别。

阿埃童和庞库那夫上了平底船并划动起来。

两个冒险的人在夜里十点钟时，消失在了黑暗中，而他们的伙伴则

全都去了“石窟”等他们。

庞库那夫和阿埃童划着平底船过了海峡，并在对面的着陆岛上岸。由于怕被在着陆岛上溜达的海盗发现，他们的一举一动都十分小心。在经过一番侦察，确定着陆岛上没人后，庞库那夫和阿埃童一起上了着陆岛。石洞里有小鸟被他们惊动，飞了出来。

阿埃童深吸一口气，跳进海里，向那双桅船的方向游去。庞库那夫则躲在了一个乱石堆后等着他。

双桅船上正好亮着灯，阿埃童很容易找到它的正确位置。

阿埃童在水里拼命地游着，却没有发出丝毫的声音。船上的灯光映照在水里，阿埃童只是将头露出水面，两眼注视着黑暗中的船身。

此时，他什么都没想，只想尽快完成任务。对于船上的坏人以及海里的鲨鱼，他全然没有考虑。水流悄无声息地带着他前行。

半个小时后，阿埃童游到了船边。他先是抓住主链喘了口气，接着攀上了主链，爬到了船的前端。

看到有几条水手裤正晾在那里，他随手拿起一条穿上，静静地倾听着船上的声音。船上的人并没有睡觉，而是在那里谈笑唱歌。在说话声和谩骂声中，他听到了令他心里隐隐作痛的几句话：

“我们得到的这只船可真是太棒了！”

“不愧叫‘飞速号’，行驶起来又稳又快！”

“诺福克船队都追不上它。”

“船长万岁！船长万岁！”

“鲍勃·哈维万岁！”

鲍勃·哈维，当阿埃童听到这个名字后，顿时一惊。这是他在澳洲时的同伙，是一个胆大包天的水手，没想到他现在还在干这种犯罪的勾当。

可以想象，当阿埃童听到这个名字时的心情。

看来是哈维在诺福克岛的海岸抢夺了这只双桅船。诺福克船队去追，却没有追上，船上装有武器、弹药和各种工具。

原来，这只双桅船原本准备开往夏威夷群岛的一个岛屿，不料却被海盗抢去成了海盗船。有了这只船，这些海盗在太平洋上无恶不作，抢劫过往船只，屠杀船上的人，简直比索马里海盗还没有人性。

海盗们高兴地喝着酒，兴奋地说着他们曾干过的无耻勾当。阿埃童从他们的话里知道，“飞速号”上的船员，大多是英国罪犯，是从诺福克岛上逃出来的。

说到这里，有必要先介绍一下诺福克岛的情况。它位于澳大利亚东部，处在南纬29°2'，东经165°42'，是一座小岛，岛上有座海拔1100英尺的霍太山。

在诺福克岛上，曾监禁过一些英国感化院都无法感化的顽固罪犯。当时，岛上有500名罪犯，由150名士兵监管，这些士兵又都听从一名总督的指挥。

岛上纪律严明，罪犯经常会受到苦刑。

不难想象，当这么多的暴徒聚集在一起时会怎样。虽然监管严厉，但还是不断有人逃跑。逃跑后的罪犯便经常突袭船只，将船抢过来后在波利尼西亚群岛一带继续抢劫过往的船只。

这种做法也曾是阿埃童以前想做的。哈维在抢了停在诺福克岛附近的“飞速号”后，又将船上的人杀死，最后驾驶着这只抢来的船在太平洋上横行。此时，这个阿埃童的熟人是海盗的头目。

原来的罪犯，如今的海盗们大都在船尾的舱里，也有几个躺在甲板上聊天。

阿埃童现在明白，这只船是偶然间来到林肯岛附近的，以前从来没有来过这里。这和史密斯的推测一样。在航行中，哈维发现了这块陌生的陆地，便决定到岛上巡视一番，如果满意，这里将会变成他们的大本营。

“飞速号”上悬挂的黑旗以及那声炮响，都是模仿军舰降旗时的做法，是海盗的一种示威行为，不是什么信号，做这些举动也和林肯岛没有关系。

如今，居民们辛辛苦苦开拓的领地面临着危险，荒岛上不仅有储水场和港口，还有家禽场、牲畜栏、麦场和用于居住的“花岗宫殿”等。这些都是居民们通过辛勤的劳动获得的，非常宝贵。

如果这些资源和领地被犯罪分子抢去了，很可能会成为他们最隐蔽的藏身之处。由于无人知道此地，所以犯罪分子是非常安全的。而对于林肯岛的开拓者，海盗们也一定不会放过，肯定会灭口，所以哈维和他的部下一旦知道居民们的存在，大家就危险了。

即使海盗们要出海打劫，也会留几个人看守的。这样的话，居民们很难脱身。所以，大家必须不惜一切代价将这群罪犯消灭。阿埃童是这么想的，他知道，史密斯一定也会这么想。

但是，直接面对面地战斗能不能取得胜利呢？这还取决于海盗的人数和装备情况。阿埃童决定无论如何也要搞清楚这一点。

在他上船一个小时候后，船上的喧哗声慢慢地没有了，很多海盗都喝醉了，呼呼大睡起来。阿埃童没有丝毫犹豫，决定冒险爬上甲板。

此时，船上的灯光也已经熄灭了，整只船上一团黑暗。他抓住船桅，慢慢地爬到了前甲板。甲板上躺着东倒西歪的海盗，他悄悄地从他们身上跨过去。在船上绕了一圈后，发现船上装着四门能发射八到十磅炮弹的大炮。他悄悄用手一摸，发现是后膛炮，这些新式武器不仅操作方便，而且威力很大。

他大概看了一下，甲板上睡着的应该有十多个人，下面舱里睡了多少人？他还不知道。不过从刚才他们的谈话中，阿埃童估计船上总共有50个人。

50个强盗，林肯岛上只有6个居民，这是多么悬殊的力量，看来想要赢得这场胜利，绝对不是一件容易的事。幸好有阿埃童，让史密斯有机会掌握敌人的情况，以便适时做出安排，避免出现惊慌和忙乱。

阿埃童只要完成他的摸底任务，把情况告诉给林肯岛的居民就行了。

他准备到船头后再下水返回。

不过，他突然产生了一个想法，那就是他要做一件额外的工作：牺

牲自己的生命，保全林肯岛上的居民。

他觉得，史密斯肯定打不过这些海盗。海盗们有精良的武器，不管是集中火力攻击“花岗宫殿”，还是采用围困的方法让大家饿死，都会达到他们的目的。但是，林肯岛上的居民是他的恩人，是他们，让他脱胎换骨成了好人。如果这些人被海盗们屠杀，岛上的劳动成果也被毁于一旦，林肯岛成为海盗的巢穴……后果不堪设想。

阿埃童对自己说，这都是自己的错，是自己造成了如此恶劣的后果，因为他的伙伴哈维只是在做他以前打算做的事。

想到这里，他觉得太可怕了。于是，他想鱼死网破，炸掉整只船和船上的人。当然也包括他自己。

这样的话，自己也算是为林肯岛上的居民做了贡献。

这么决定后，他没有迟疑，决定去找火药库。他知道，火药库通常在船的后半部分。而在海上抢劫是不会缺少火药的，只需一粒火星，就可以让整只船炸毁。

阿埃童沿着中舱甲板，慢慢地向后面走去。甲板上到处都是熟睡的人。当然，更多的不是睡熟而是喝醉倒下的。主桅底部有一盏灯，周围有一个枪架，枪架上的武器应有尽有。阿埃童先从枪架上拿走了一支左轮枪，发现里面装满了弹药。

这些弹药足够他来完成这个破坏计划。他直奔船尾，想去后舱的火药库。

想要穿过光线很暗且遍地躺着喝醉海盗的甲板绝非易事。当他不小心踢到海盗时，这些恶棍先是谩骂，接着回踢了他一脚。为了不被他们

发现，阿埃童只能走走、停停、躲躲。最后终于走到了后舱的隔板旁，找到了通往火药库的门。

门是锁着的，怎样才能打开呢？除了用力，似乎没有别的办法。可他使了很大的劲，门还是打不开。他再一想，还是先砸掉门上的挂锁吧，不过很可能会弄出一些声响来。好在他的腕力够大，挂锁终于被他拧断了，库门也打开了。

不过，在他正准备进去时，一只手搭在了他的肩膀上。

“谁？干什么？”一个粗鲁的声音。

阿埃童在黑暗中，看到了一个高高的影子，接着，一道灯光照在了他的脸上。

阿埃童连退几步，他在灯光中认出了这个高高的影子是他曾经的伙伴鲍勃·哈维。不过，哈维并没有认出他，或者说他早就以为阿埃童死了。

“干什么的？”

哈维一把抓住了阿埃童的胳膊，问了一句。

阿埃童没有回答，他想挣脱哈维的手，冲进火药库。因为他觉得只要自己能对着火药箱开一枪，就能成功了。

“伙伴们，快来！”哈维大叫一声。

有两三个海盗被叫醒了，跳了起来，向阿埃童扑过来，想把他扑倒在地。阿埃童急忙闪开身，连开两枪，两个海盗随着他的枪声倒下了。

不过，他也因为躲避不及，被哈维一刀砍在了肩膀上。

此时，阿埃童已经无法实施自己鱼死网破的计划了，哈维已经将火药库重新锁好，甲板上和舱里的海盗也醒了。为了保全自己，帮助林肯岛上的居民战斗，他只能先逃走。

有个问题是，能逃得了吗？不过，阿埃童决定不管怎样都要尽全力回到伙伴们面前。

枪里还剩四颗子弹。刚才打掉的两颗，一颗是朝哈维开的，不知道打中了没有，即使打中，也一定只是轻伤。阿埃童趁海盗们退后的机会，冲上了扶梯，跑向甲板。

经过灯下面时，他开枪将灯打灭。周围一片漆黑，这样他就能逃跑了。不过又有海盗冲了过来，于是阿埃童开了第三枪，打中了其中的一个，后面的海盗开始往后退。阿埃童三步并作两步跑上甲板，仅仅三秒钟，一个海盗的咽喉就被他卡住了。他连开三枪，最后一颗子弹，打中了被卡住咽喉的海盗。随即，阿埃童越过舷栏，跳进了海里。

阿埃童在海里还没划几下，船上的枪声就密集起来，一齐朝海里扫射。

当船上的枪声响起的时候，着陆岛乱石后面躲着的庞库那夫会怎么想？在“石窟”里等着的史密斯、史佩莱、赫伯特和那普又会怎么想？

他们此时正拿着枪，冲到海滩上，随时准备和敌人作战。

他们以为阿埃童被海盗打死了，甚至想着海盗很可能会趁着黑夜到岛上来。

在他们焦急地等了大概半个小时后，枪声停了，但阿埃童和庞库那夫还不见踪影。此时着陆岛是不是已经被海盗占领了？他们是不是该去支援他们？又要怎么去支援？

此时，正是涨潮的时候，海峡是过不去的，又没有船，史密斯和同伴们的焦急心情可想而知。

差不多午夜十二点的时候，阿埃童和庞库那夫乘坐的平底船靠了岸，大家高兴地迎了上去，热烈地拥抱他们。阿埃童的肩膀受了轻伤，庞库那夫一切都好。

居民们马上躲进了“石窟”。阿埃童将他侦察到的情况告诉了他们，并说了自己想炸掉那只船的想法。

每个人都向阿埃童伸出了手。阿埃童又告诉大家，此时的处境更危险了，因为海盗已经被惊动了，他们知道了林肯岛上有人，所以一定会全副武装登陆的。对于海盗来说，他们没有任何顾忌，一旦落在他们手里，只有一死。

“放心吧！我们不会白白送死的。”史佩莱说。

“我们还是进去盯着吧！”史密斯说。

“我们能逃脱吗？史密斯先生！”庞库那夫问。

“当然可以，庞库那夫。”

“呵呵……我们可是6对50！”

“是的！我们只有6个人，当然不包括……”

“什么？”庞库那夫问。

史密斯没有说话，指了指上面。

第三章

这一夜有惊无险地过去了。

居民们如今面临着生死问题。他们没有离开“石窟”，而那只海盗船上的海盗好像也没有上岸的想法。自从海盗们对阿埃童开了最后一枪后，便没有再开过枪，甚至没有丝毫的声音显示他们在着陆岛附近。

难道他们拔锚起航了？是不敢和岛上的人交火，所以离开海岸了吗？

当然，事情并非这么简单。当天破晓时，透过薄雾，居民们看到了朦胧中一团模糊的黑影，那便是“飞速号”。

“朋友，现在的情况是，薄雾中，海盗所处的位置是看不到我们的，这对我们有利。但关键是，海盗们没有进一步行动，很可能是觉得岛上人多，足以抵抗他们。所以现在我们要做的就是在雾散前，将我们的人分成三路，一路在‘石窟’；另一路在感恩河口；还有一路在着陆岛。这样做即使不能阻止他们，也可以牵制他们，使他们不敢轻易登岛。

“现在我们总共有两支步枪、四支滑膛枪。我们要先将自己武装起

来，弹药我们不缺，有的是。所以我们不必害怕船上的滑膛枪，就是大炮也不用担心。我们有这些岩石作掩护，他们不能把我们怎么样。现在我们只要不在‘花岗宫殿’的窗口开枪，他们就不知道去炸它，我们就有根据地。我最担心的是肉搏战，因为他们人数占优。所以，我们必须想办法不让他们登陆，但同时还不能将自己暴露在他们面前，所以要舍得用弹枪。尽管开枪，不过也要瞄准了再开。我们每个人争取打8到10个海盗，只有这样才能将他们全部消灭。”史密斯严肃地说。

虽然情况紧急，但史密斯在说话时，语气依然十分镇定，好像不是在指挥战斗，而是在调度一项工作。当然，同伴们也都完全认可他的部署。

现在他们要做的就是雾散前分开，到各自把守的地方去。那普和庞库那夫先去“花岗宫殿”，拿了很多弹药回来。史佩莱和阿埃童都是好枪手，所以每人拿了一支步枪，射程在一英里左右；史密斯、那普、庞库那夫和赫伯特则各拿了一支滑膛枪。

位置分配是这样的：史密斯和赫伯特埋伏在“石窟”附近，负责的范围是“花岗宫殿”下的海岸；史佩莱和那普埋伏在感恩河口的岩石间，河上的吊桥被他们扯了起来，他们负责阻止海盗渡河以及在对岸登陆；阿埃童和庞库那夫划平底船过了海峡，在着陆岛上找好点。

这样的安排，可以让他们的火力同时从四个点发射，以便让海盗们觉得岛上人很多，而且防卫能力很强。

当然，如果阿埃童和庞库那夫无法阻止海盗上岸，那么，他们很可能被海盗的船切断退路，这时，他们必须在海盗堵截他们退路前赶到另一据点去。

在将一切都安排妥当后，居民们要出发去他们各自的位置了。他们互相最后一次握手，庞库那夫还热情地拥抱了赫伯特，大家都竭力抑制自己的感情，然后离开。

不一会儿，四个据点都有人了，史密斯和赫伯特在一起，史佩莱和那普在一起。他们都躲在了岩石后。而阿埃童和庞库那夫仅仅用了五分钟便顺利地渡过了海峡，登上了着陆岛，各自隐藏在东岸的岩石丛中。

别人无法看到隐藏着的他们，而他们也看不到雾里的海盗船。

此时是早晨六点钟。

没过多长时间，薄雾散尽，船上的中桅在水汽中显露出来。虽然几分钟后又有浓雾涌向海面，但很快又被海风吹散了。

此时，那只载有海盗的“飞速号”完全暴露出来，锚链上系着一根曳索，船头是向着北边的，左舷对着海岛。和史密斯估计的完全一样，这只船离岸不过1.25英里。

黑旗在船上迎风飘扬。

史密斯从望远镜里，看到了船上正对着荒岛的四门大炮。显然，他们准备先用大炮轰击海岛。

不过，此时的“飞速号”上有三十多个海盗在甲板上走来走去；船尾也有几个人；桅索中间站着两个人，手里都拿着望远镜，观察着海岛。

看来，哈维和他的手下也无法理解昨晚发生在船上的事。一个上半身没穿衣服的人，强力打开了火药库门，并和他们进行了一场格斗，开了六枪，打死一个打伤两个。

那个人呢？被他们打死了吗？或者他又回到了岸上？他是从什么地方来的？上“飞速号”的目的又是什么？真像哈维所想的那样，是要炸双桅船吗？

每个问题都让他们吃惊和想不通。不过，有一点他们能够肯定，那就是他们“飞速号”面前的海岛是有人居住的，而且可能有很多人。不过，他们拿望远镜看了，不管是岸上也好，高岗上也好，都看不见一个人。就连海滩上也不见人，甚至连一点房屋的影子都没有。

岛上的人都去哪里了？逃去了内陆？海盗船长应该是做了这样一番揣测的，所以他觉得他们首先要摸清情况，然后再让手下上岸。

一个半小时过去了，“飞速号”上的海盗还是没有进攻和登陆的迹象，很明显，哈维还在犹豫。尽管他换了倍数很大的望远镜，但隐藏起来的居民他还是一个都看不到。对于被绿枝和爬藤掩藏着的“花岗宫殿”，虽然在那光滑的岩石上显得有些突兀，但大概也没引起他的注意。确实是的，谁能想到，在那么高的地方上，有人会将它作为居住的房屋呢？在他用高倍望远镜，从兽爪角到联合湾，又到颞角都看了一遍后，依然没有人存在的迹象。

八点钟的时候，居民们看到“飞速号”上有人要行动了。先是一只小船被放了下来，接着有七个人跳了进去。七个人每人带着一把滑膛枪，他们一个掌舵索，四个划桨，另外两个伏在船头看四周情况，并做着随时开火的准备。

看来，这次他们并不是准备登陆，而是为了侦察。如果登陆，应该不会只有七个人。海盗们从他们的瞭望台上看到荒岛的海岸上有个小岛，而海岛和小岛间又有半英里宽的海峡。不过，史密斯很快就从他们

小船的行驶方向发现，他们不是要进海峡，而是要从着陆岛登陆。

着陆岛那边，庞库那夫和阿埃童正各自隐藏在岩石夹缝，看到小船向他们划来时，他们等着那船进入他们的射程。

小船在小心翼翼地前行，海盗们每隔很长时间才会去划一下。而此时，居民们才发现，有个海盗的手里拿着一根铅垂线，想必是要测量海峡的深度。这说明，哈维是想让“飞速号”靠近海岸。

“飞速号”上的三十多个海盗，在索具间一直盯着小船，并寻找着安全靠岸的界标。

此时，在离着陆岛不到两锚链的地方，小船停了下来。那个掌舵的先起身，寻找能够上岸的地方。

只听两声枪响，一股轻烟从着陆岛的一块岩石间腾起。掌舵者和测水者全都倒在了水里。原来，阿埃童和庞库那夫同时打中了那两个人。

随着一声轰隆隆的炮响，从双桅船上喷出了一团烟雾，炮弹落在了掩护阿埃童和庞库那夫的岩石顶上，岩石被炸得粉碎，但两名射击手却并没有受伤。

那只小船上的人先是一阵破口大骂，接着继续掌舵划行，此时，掌舵的重新换了一个人，其他的人则划着桨。没想到的是，他们不但没掉头回去，反而沿岸驶来，准备绕着陆岛南端过去。海盗们使劲划船，拼命想躲出阿埃童步枪的射程。

在转了半个圈后，他们在双桅船上那只大炮的掩护下，在离拾箱角岸边约五锚链的地方，继续向感恩河的河口驶去。

很明显，他们是想进入海峡，切断着陆岛上居民的退路。对海盗来说，不管着陆岛上有多少人，他们都要将居民们置于两船火力的不利位置。

小船继续向感恩河口的方向驶去，差不多15分钟过去了，周围没听到一点声音，海面也是一片平静。

虽然身处被切断退路的危险，但庞库那夫和阿埃童都没有离开他们原有的位置，他们不想在小船和“飞速号”的炮火前暴露自己。同时他们也相信，不管是防守河口的那普和史佩莱，还是埋伏在“石窟”附近岩石处的史密斯、赫伯特，都会支援他们的。

离第一次射击已经过去20分钟了，海盗划的小船也有不到两锚链就到感恩河口了。此时，海面开始涨潮，由于海峡过窄，水势很大，海盗们的小船被冲到了河口。当他们费力保持在海峡中流时，那普和史佩莱开枪了，这两枪同样没有落空，小船上又有两名海盗倒下了。

“飞速号”上的大炮又开火了，但和刚才一样，仅仅只是把岩石炸碎而已。

此时，海盗的小船上仅有三个人了。小船顺着水流，像箭一般地冲过海峡，到了史密斯和赫伯特面前。由于觉得没在射程之内，所以两个人都没有开枪。最后，小船在双桨的划行下，绕到了着陆岛北端，向“飞速号”划去。

截至目前，岛上的居民都毫发无伤，而且枪不虚发。但海盗们却损失惨重，四个海盗死的死，重伤的重伤。如果海盗想继续这么进攻的话，那居民们还打算用这个方法来个个击灭。

由此也可看出史密斯的指挥有方了。史密斯的策略，让海盗认为岛上不仅人多势众，而且武器精良，并不能轻易取胜。

小船逆水划了半个小时后，终于靠近了“飞速号”。当没有受伤的三个海盗带着其他死伤的海盗上船后，船上顿时发出了一阵阵的号叫声，接着又是莫名的两三声枪响。

稍停，又有十来个海盗怒气冲冲地跳进了小船，接着，又有一只小船被放了下来，跳进去了八个人。第一只小船依然向着陆岛划去，想赶走着陆岛上的人，另一只则准备袭击感恩河的河口。

在这样的情况下，庞库那夫和阿埃童就处在了最危险的境况中，非回海岛不可了。不过，他们还是在第一只小船进入射程后，准确地开了两枪，小船上顿时又是一片混乱。在这个间隙，庞库那夫和阿埃童冒着密集的火力，从岩石后面出来，穿过着陆岛，上了他们的小船。当海盗们的第二只小船到达南端时，他们已经穿过海峡，到了位于“石窟”的史密斯和赫伯特身边。

海盗就此占据了着陆岛，而此时，感恩河口也传来了枪声。原来，是海盗的第二只小船在驶向感恩河的河口时，八人中的两个被史佩莱和那普击中，奄奄一息。剩余几个人在惊慌之下，让小船撞上了礁石，等到了感恩河的河口时，小船已经进水了。

那六个没中枪的海盗则高举滑膛枪，登上了河的左岸，向着拾箱角枪弹打不到的地方跑去。

此时，着陆岛上有十二名海盗和一只小船。在这十二名海盗中，也有几个受了伤；而在海岛上，则有六个海盗，但因为吊桥被扯了上去，他们无法过河，更不能到达“花岗宫殿”。

“史密斯先生，现在该怎么办？”庞库那夫问。

“我想，我们要转入下一场战斗了。海盗们不可能甘心这么处于劣势的。”史密斯说。

“他们肯定过不了海峡。阿埃童和史佩莱在那里是可以阻挡他们的，因为他们的步枪能打到一英里之外呢。”庞库那夫说。

“那是当然的，不过两支步枪是敌不过双桅船上的大炮的。”赫伯特说。

“船还没到海峡呢。”庞库那夫说。

“假如到了呢？”史密斯问。

“不可能的，他们要是真敢那么做，船就会搁浅或熄火！”

“还是有可能的，落潮时，船肯定有搁浅的危险，但如果他们乘涨潮时去，就不会搁浅。那时候，在他们的炮火下，我们是守不住阵地的。”阿埃童说。

“完了，这帮混蛋真的好像要起锚了！”庞库那夫喊。

“看来，我们只能躲到‘花岗宫殿’了。”赫伯特说。

“稍等会儿！”史密斯说。

“史佩莱先生和那普还没过来。”庞库那夫说。

“到了时候，他们会过来的。阿埃童，准备好，该是你和史佩莱用步枪的时候了。”

“飞速号”就要起锚了，显然他们想驶近着陆岛。此时退潮已结束，潮水上涨至少会持续一个半小时，他们想趁这个时间前行。对于阿埃童所说的海盗会趁涨潮时进海峡这个观点，庞库那夫并不认同，他觉得他们不敢冒这个险。

此时，着陆岛上的海盗慢慢地到了对岸，与海岛只有海峡之隔了。

海盗们手里的是滑膛枪，伤不到埋伏在“石窟”和感恩河口的居民。而海盗们没想到，居民们会用射程远的步枪应对他们，所以完全暴露在了他们的火力之下，并在毫无隐蔽的情况下，观察着着陆岛和海岸。

步枪响了，阿埃童和史佩莱一人一枪，再次给海盗们带来了坏消息——两个海盗倒下了。

海盗们惊恐起来，十个人毫不顾及伤亡的同伴，向着陆岛方向逃去，并连滚带爬地上了小船，向“飞速号”跑去。

“少了八个。史佩莱先生和阿埃童真是厉害，像听到指令似的，同时开枪。”庞库那夫说。

“诸位，不好了，双桅船像是要开动了。”阿埃童说着话，开始往枪里装子弹。

“起锚了。”庞库那夫叫道。

“已经在动了。”

居民们清楚地听到了绞盘发出的声音。曾经被锚拉住的“飞速号”，起锚后，便开始向岸边漂了过来。此时，海面上吹起了风，三角帆和桅帆张开了，逐渐向海岛靠来。

两个阵营——感恩河和“石窟”的居民都隐藏得很好，但他们的情绪却很紧张。要是带着炮火的船发现了自己，就完全无法还手了。如果真是这样，那该有多么可怕啊。但又要怎么做才能阻止海盗上岸呢？

史密斯意识到了危险的降临，他思考着该怎么办。很快，大家就要问他该怎么做了，可要怎么做呢？藏到“花岗宫殿”去吗？那里有充足的食物。可要几个星期甚至几个月地囚在里面吗？这样虽然没有问题，但以后又要怎么办？任由海盗掠夺海岛，恣意蹂躏吗？最终，海盗们还是会想法屠杀躲在“花岗宫殿”的他们的。

不过，如今居民们还有一个机会，那就是哈维很可能不敢冒险将“飞速号”开到海峡去，只是停留在着陆岛外面。这样的话，海盗离海滨还有半英里距离，即使开火开炮，威力也不是很大。

“我觉得他不会去冒险，哈维如果是个航海老手，绝对不会去冒这个险，他知道在海水比较浅的时候，双桅船一定会遇到危险。没有了船，他们海盗还怎么去抢劫？”庞库那夫非常肯定地说。

此时，双桅船马上就要靠近着陆岛了，能看出船是尽力往上开的。风力小，潮流量也不大，可见哈维在竭力控制他的船。

“飞速号”沿着小船行驶过的路线在行走，通过对海峡的全面观察，正大胆地往海峡开。现在海盗的意图全清楚了，那就是：让炮火对着“石窟”，向曾打死他们同伴的开枪点发射。

“飞速号”以飞快的速度绕过了着陆岛的顶端，主帆扯起，顺着风向感恩河对岸驶来。

“这群恶棍！他们来了！”庞库那夫说。

此时，那普和史佩莱也回到了史密斯、阿埃童、庞库那夫和赫伯特这边。

史佩莱和那普之所以过来，是因为他们在感恩河的河口已经无法应对双桅船了，只好放弃那块阵地。这是聪明的举动。在这样的紧要关头，居民们最好能团结在一起。当他们从岩石后跑出来时，曾遭到了海盗的枪击，但都没有打中。

“史佩莱、那普，你们还好吧！”史密斯大声问。

“我们很好，就是枪弹从地上弹起时，碰了一下，没事。那该死的船开到海峡去了。”史佩莱说。

“是呀，看来，只需要十分钟，船就要停在‘花岗宫殿’前了。”庞库那夫说。

“现在我们要怎么做？赛莱斯？”史佩莱问。

“现在我们还有时间，先躲到‘花岗宫殿’吧，他们是看不到我们的。”

“可以，但如果我们被围困……”史佩莱没有说完。

“到时候再说吧！”史密斯说。

“那我们快走！”史佩莱说。

“史密斯先生，让我和阿埃童留在这里可以吗？”庞库那夫问。

“不行，留在这里没有意义的。庞库那夫。我们不要太分散。”史密斯说。

此时，他们一点时间都不能浪费了。居民们迅速离开“石窟”，因为有岩石挡在他们面前，所以双桅船上的海盗都没有发现他们撤退。不过有两三枪打在了岩石上，这也表明“飞速号”离他们越来越近了。

居民们快速跳进升降梯，从“花岗宫殿”大门进去，直奔大厅，仅仅用了一分钟时间。“花岗宫殿”里，多卜和狙布都在，它们是前一天晚上被居民们关在这里的。

他们回来得真是及时，因为透过窗口的树枝，可以看见“飞速号”开进了海峡。枪声不断，四门大炮对着他们刚刚的阵地——感恩河的河口以及“石窟”拼命轰击。那两处的岩石乱飞，而每发一炮，海盗们就会发出兴奋的欢呼声。幸好史密斯早早地让他们将窗户隐藏了起来。

他们多么希望“花岗宫殿”能够幸免，不遭受炮击啊。不过，就在这时候，有炮弹穿过屋门，进了走廊。

“这里被发现了！”庞库那夫大喊。

居民们不知道，哈维在看到这块悬挂着枝叶的地方时，觉得有些可疑，便开了一炮，结果发现真有问题，便又发了一炮。第二炮将遮蔽的树叶打飞了，石壁上的洞口暴露在了外面。

居民们瞬间处在了绝境中，他们的最后堡垒也被发现了。此时，他们既无法阻挡猛烈的炮火，又不能在炮火的袭击下保护这堡垒，只能眼睁睁地看着碎片在他们周围飞。如今唯一的办法就是去“花岗宫殿”的上层通道躲避，对于这处堡垒，只能舍弃了。

然而，突然，他们听到了一阵沉闷的巨响，随即便是一阵阵惨叫。

居民们全都跑向窗口。

一股水柱将双桅船抛了起来，将它冲成了两片。十秒钟不到，“飞速号”和船上的海盗全都不见了……

第四章

“船爆炸了！”赫伯特最先大喊一声。

“是的！是的！爆炸了，就像阿埃童点着火药库一样爆炸了！”庞库那夫激动地说着，和那普、赫伯特一起跳进了升降梯。

“这到底是怎么回事？”史佩莱惊诧地问，他被这突如其来的结果搞蒙了。

“现在我们终于知道了……”史密斯飞快地说。

“知道什么？”

“先不要急！史佩莱，先别急！关键是，现在海盗被消灭了，这才是最关键的。”

史密斯催促怔在那里的史佩莱和阿埃童，三个人一起赶到了海滩，和庞库那夫、那普及赫伯特会合。

那只双桅船已经消失了，连桅杆都不见了。它是被水柱抛起，然后向侧边倒下去，随后沉没的。毫无疑问，这里海峡的水深不过20英尺，有时水深，有时水浅。水浅时，沉下去的船帮就会重新露出水面的。

沉船上有东西已经浮出了水面，还有木筏漂出了舱口，比如装活鸡的鸡笼、箱子和木桶。奇怪的是，沉船的残骸却没有丝毫影子，既不见甲板上的木料，也没有船身的肋材，“飞速号”沉没得令人不可思议。

但是，船上两根折断的桅杆还是摆脱了护桅索和支索，漂了上来。桅杆上挂着帆，有卷着的部分，也有浮在水面的部分。阿埃童和庞库那夫不等潮水将那些财物漂上来便跳进了小船，想把沉船的残骸拖到海滩或着陆岛上去。不过，正在他们想要把小船摇起来时，史佩莱的一句话让他们停了下来。

“上了感恩河右岸的那六个海盗去什么地方了？”

是呀，这可不能忽视。那六个人乘的小船虽然已经在岩石上被撞碎了，但他们却在拾箱角登岸了。

居民们四下看着，看不到一个捡了命的海盗。很可能他们在看到双桅船沉没后，跑到荒岛内陆去了。

“我们慢慢对付他们。不过，他们带着武器，还是很危险的。现在我们是六个人对他们六个人，实力相当，先解决当下的问题吧！”史密斯说。

于是，阿埃童和庞库那夫划着船，向刚刚沉船的地方划去。

海面趋于平静。两天前正值新月，所以是潮水正高的时候，不过再有一个小时，双桅船应该就能露出水面了。

桅杆和圆材被阿埃童和庞库那夫用绳子缚住，绳子的另一头被他们拉到了海滩。在大家的齐心努力下，沉船的残骸被拉了起来。最后，庞库那夫和阿埃童又驾着小船将漂浮着的东西，包括鸡笼、木桶和箱子全

都捞了起来，并送到了“石窟”。

水面上浮起了几具尸体，其中就有鲍勃·哈维的，阿埃童激动地说：“过去我就和他一样，也是干这个的。庞库那夫！”

“可现在你金盆洗手了。勇敢的阿埃童！”庞库那夫说。

他们数了数浮起来的尸体，觉得很奇怪，只有五六具。这些尸体，没过多长时间就被冲进了大海，其余的海盗很可能来不及逃出来，和船身倒在一起，留在了海底。这样倒也省了他们掩埋尸体了。

史密斯和其他人用了将近两个小时的时间，将圆材拖上沙滩，然后将船上那些没有丝毫损坏的帆铺开，准备将其晾干。每个人都干得很卖力，很少说话，但脑子里却都在想着很多事。

被炸的双桅船上的任何一件物品，对居民们来说都是增添的一份财富。确实是这样，一只船上会载有日常生活所需的用品，这样居民们的仓库又能增加很多有用的东西了。这就相当于他们在拾箱角捡到的那只箱子，甚至比那只还大。

当然，庞库那夫心里还有其他想法：“如果能让这双桅船浮起来该多好。如果这船只是有个窟窿，还是能够补好的。这船怎么也有三四百吨重，和‘长风破浪号’相比，好很多了。有了这只船，就能去更遥远的地方了，甚至能爱去哪儿就去哪儿了。史密斯先生，我要和阿埃童去好好看看，在它身上下功夫是值得的。”

是的，如果双桅船还能航行，那他们回国就大有希望了。不过，要想解决这个问题，他们必须等潮水很低的时候才能动手，只有那时，他们才能检查整个船身的情况。

在把财物全部运上岸后，居民们这才才有几分钟的时间吃饭。他们太饿了，幸好离食品室不远，而那普又是一个手脚麻利的厨师。于是，他们很快就在“石窟”附近吃了饭。不用说也能知道，吃饭时，他们聊得最多的就是如何摆脱险境的。

“真是个奇迹！那群恶棍被炸得正是时候，‘花岗宫殿’正被袭击呢。”庞库那夫说。

“你能猜测出是为什么吗？庞库那夫，究竟是什么原因引起的爆炸？”史佩莱问。

“史佩莱先生，这还不简单吗？肯定是那些海盗没有严明的纪律，他们也不是水手，所以就让火药库开着。在他们不停开火的时候，有糊涂的海盗点燃了火药库，然后船就爆炸了。”庞库那夫用肯定的语气说。

“可是史密斯先生，我觉得奇怪的是，爆炸起的作用并不大，声音也很小，而且炸坏的木板和肋材也不多。我觉得船不像是被炸毁的，更像是被撞沉的。”赫伯特说。

“你认为这点非常奇怪对吗？”史密斯问。

“是的，史密斯先生。”

“我也觉得这点很奇怪，赫伯特，不过等我们检查完后就能知道是什么原因了。”史密斯说。

“史密斯先生，难道你觉得‘飞速号’是像触礁一样被撞沉船的？”庞库那夫问。

“要是海峡有礁石的话，我觉得没有什么不可能的。”那普说。

“别胡说，那普！你就没看见吗？我可是看得一清二楚的，双桅船在沉船前那一刻，有个大浪把它抛起来了，然后就倒在了左边。如果是触礁，它只会像正常的船一样，慢慢地沉下去。”庞库那夫说。

“因为它不是一只正常的船。”那普说。

“不要争了，很快就能知道是怎么回事了。”史密斯说。

“很快就会知道的。不过我可以打赌，用我的脑袋打赌，海峡里绝对没有礁石。史密斯先生，你是不是觉得这件事很奇怪？”

史密斯没有回答他。

“不管怎样，是触礁也好，爆炸也罢，庞库那夫，你都要承认一点，这事发生在紧要关头。”史佩莱说。

“那当然是，不可否认。不过问题不在这里，我是想问史密斯先生有没有看出有神灵之类的东西。”庞库那夫说。

“我无法回答你，庞库那夫。我只能这么说。”史密斯说。

史密斯的回答显然不能让庞库那夫满意，他一直认定船是被海盗们无意炸毁的。何况海峡底下和沙滩一样，有一层细沙，所以在水浅时才会轻松地跨过去，根本不可能有礁石。

何况，双桅船下沉是在水势正猛时，更不可能出现触礁的事。因为即使底下真有礁石，由于水势深的原因，船也会浮起来，不会触到礁石，所以船身不可能是因为受到礁石撞击而下沉的。

可以这么说吧，庞库那夫的分析还是有一定道理的。

差不多过了一小时的时候，居民们再次登上船去了沉船处。让他们感到遗憾的是，双桅船上的两只小船都已经不存在了。一只前面说过，在感恩河的河口被撞得粉碎，另一只与双桅船同时下沉，没有露出来，想必已经撞坏了。

此时，“飞速号”的船身慢慢露出了水面。双桅船由于桅杆全部断了的原因，再加上经过剧烈的震动，压舱底的位置发生了一些变化，致使船失去了重心，所以双桅船是歪倒在一边的。当然，船的龙骨还是能看见的。由此可以想象当时是有着一股多么惊人的力量，才导致翻船的。那股惊人的力量就是巨大的水柱。

居民们坐着小船，围绕在沉船的周围。潮水继续下退，他们即使无法查到船下沉的真正原因，至少也清楚了当时的爆炸所造成的后果。

他们发现，离前梢七八英尺的船头部分的龙骨两侧损坏最大。在20英尺长的一段里，有着两个大的缺口，一边一个。这样的窟窿，要想堵住是绝对不可能的。他们没有发现船底的铜包板和木板，很明显是被炸成了灰烬，还有连接船底的肋材、铁螺丝和木钉也都没有了。

这是一股神秘的力量，让船的龙骨和船身从头到尾全部脱落。从龙骨上来看，纵梁断了，有很多裂口。

“这船是别想再浮起来了。”庞库那夫说。

“是呀，不可能浮起来的。”阿埃童说。

“这个先不说，我们先说沉船的事。如果真像你说的是爆炸，那这结果也太奇怪了。为什么只炸船底而不炸甲板和楼顶？还有这些大窟

窿，很明显不是火药炸的，倒有些像是石头砸的。”史佩莱对庞库那夫说。

“海峡里有石头吗？你说的其他方面我同意，可就是不同意你说的是用石头砸的。”庞库那夫又说。

“我们想办法到船里去看看吧，也许到了船里面，就能知道是怎么遭到破坏的了。”史密斯说。

这当然是目前最可行的办法。于是大家也都全部同意，因为这样做还有个好处，那就是能把全船所有的财物做个清点。

进船里并不难。潮水还在下退，甲板上也能走人了。压舱的是铁块，特别沉重，已经掉到了船壳外面。海水还在从船身的窟窿里往外流，发出哗哗的水声。

史密斯带着大家拿着斧头，沿着已经破损了的甲板往前走。甲板上的很多箱子挡住了他们的路。箱子由于泡在水里的时间不长，所以里面的东西也没什么损坏。

低潮仅仅只有几个小时，他们必须抓住这个机会。于是，他们先将船上的货物放到了安全的地方。

在船身的入口处，阿埃童和庞库那夫找到了一些索具，这些索具可以将木桶和箱子吊起来。然后他们又把货物装在了小船里，运上岸，最后再来运其他的東西。对于一些整理工作，他们可以放到后面来做。

总体来说，他们很满意。因为很快他们就发现，双桅船上竟然有很多货物，各种各样的，就像那些沿海贸易的波利尼西亚商船一样，里面装载着五花八門的东西：生活用品、工业品和工具，应有尽有。甚至可

以毫不夸张地说，只要是他们想要的东西，都能从这船上找到。

在其他人为货物的丰富而感到高兴的时候，史密斯却在发呆。因为他发现，就像前面说的，不仅双桅船的船身受到了损伤，就是内部的一些装置，特别是靠船头的一些地方，也被毁坏了。这情景像有人用极大的炮弹，打到了双桅船上形成的，因为连隔板和支柱都损坏了。

搬开甲板上的箱子，居民们便很容易地从船头走到了船尾。甲板上的箱子都不大，是一些普通的小箱子，居民们搬起来并不困难。对于箱子上标明的起运地点的字迹，也已经完全看不清楚了。

最后，居民们来到了这只双桅船的船尾。在阿埃童的指点下，大家很快就找到了火药库。史密斯发现，火药库并没有爆炸，所以应该还有几桶火药。火药通常都是用金属封皮包着的，应该不会受潮，还能用。

事实确实如此。居民们从子弹堆里找到了20桶火药，桶是用铜皮包着的。在居民们小心翼翼地将这些桶搬出去后，庞库那夫这才相信，“飞速号”果然不是被炸沉的。而且火药库所处的位置，受损情况反而最小。

“不是炸沉的我相信，但要说是石头砸的，我觉得不可能，因为海峡里找不出一块石头。”庞库那夫固执地说。

“那么，这件事到底是怎么回事？”赫伯特问道。

“想不明白，就连史密斯先生都想不明白，就没人能想明白了。”庞库那夫又说。

搜查了几个小时后，潮水开始上涨，他们不得不暂停工作。不过，他们是不需要担心沉下的船被冲走的，因为如今的它就像是被抛锚了，

死死地定在了那里，所以他们就是第二天再来也没关系。当然，那些船里的物资他们还是要尽快收拾出来的，免得陷入海峡的流沙里。

忙了一天，已经到傍晚五点钟了，居民们回去吃了一顿丰盛的晚餐。吃完后，虽然疲累，但还是忍不住要看看他们拉回来的“飞速号”上的货物。

打开好几个箱子，里面都是衣物。不过能够想象得出，还是非常受大家欢迎的，因为各种尺码都有的衣服和鞋子，够他们所有人穿了。

“我们现在可成富人了！不过这么多的东西，我们要怎么办呢？”庞库那夫高兴地说。

除了衣物，庞库那夫还看到了烈性酒桶、烟叶桶、火器及刀剑，还有棉花包、农用品、木匠铁匠的工具等等。当然还有各种各样的种子。由于在水里泡的时间不长，所以都没有受潮。

庞库那夫高兴地欢呼着。如果是在两年前得到了这些东西，不知道有多珍贵。不过，对他们这些勤劳的人来说，有了这些工具和宝贝，同样很有用。

“花岗宫殿”的仓库够大，把货物装进去没有问题。但要想在天黑前把全部东西都收拾妥当，显然时间不够。而且他们还有件事没解决，那就是“飞速号”上的六个海盗。这可是一群穷凶极恶的歹徒，居民们必须时刻提防着。

虽然感恩河上的桥被他们扯了起来，但那河流和小溪是挡不住这些海盗的，在如今走投无路的情况下，他们可是什么事都做得出来的。

他们必须想出一个一劳永逸的办法，但目前，他们必须在“石窟”附

近站岗，因为那里有很多货物。

最后，他们决定每天都要留人在那里值班守卫。

一整天就这么过去了，直到天亮，海盗们都没来捣乱。狙布和多卜一直在“花岗宫殿”脚下“值班”，一有动静，随时会通知居民们。

10月19、20、21日三天，居民们都在整理从双桅船上拿过来的东西，不管是货物还是索具，每一样值钱的或有用的东西，都被他们保留了下来。

这三天里，退潮时，他们会去沉船地进行检查。涨潮时，就整理东西。

船身铜包板大部分也被他们揭了下来，船身一天天地在向沙泥里陷。不过，阿埃童和庞库那夫不等流沙将船底沉没，就已经潜入到海峡水底，将双桅船的锚链和压舱铁块都捞上了岸，甚至连那四门炮都没有让它沉下去，而是利用空桶将它们浮了起来。

就这样，居民们的军火库和“花岗宫殿”仓库全都充实起来了，庞库那夫开始盘算在海峡和感恩河口筑大炮了。他还计划用四门大炮来阻挡任何一个想要侵犯林肯岛领土的海盗。

在将双桅船上的东西运完后，双桅船仅剩一个空壳了。在史密斯打算将破船炸开，将岸上的残骸收拾一下时，天气发生了变化，不仅开始涨潮，而且狂风也从东北方吹了过来。

很快，破船和残骸就消失得干干净净。史密斯只好节省火药，放弃炸船计划了。

到了23日和24日夜里，双桅船的船身全碎了，只剩下残骸被海潮抛上海滩。

史密斯还想寻找船上的文件，但在他仔细搜寻尾楼和橱柜后发现，并没有他想找的东西。也许海盗们在抢了“飞速号”后，已经将原来与船长和主人有关的标志都销毁了。由于船尾没有漆港口名，所以无法得知这只船的国籍。不过，史密斯还是根据那两只小船的船型，从阿埃童和庞库那夫那里得出是英国制造的结论。

离出事已经过去一个星期了。当然，“出事”两字并不准确，更准确地应该说是他们的“神奇好运”。因为居民们之所以安然无恙，全是因为那神奇的好运。现在，即使退潮水浅的时候，他们也看不见那船的印迹了。当然，那船神奇地消失，也让他们获得了很多财富。

不过，因为那普的一个举动，让他们神秘好运中的神秘爆炸事件更无法解释了。

10月30日，那普去海滩散步，捡到了一块铁筒厚片，上面有着爆炸的痕迹。这块有些残缺不全的厚铁筒边缘已经变形，但仍能看出它是由炸药的爆破形成的。

那普将厚铁筒交给了他的主人史密斯，史密斯当时正和伙伴们在“石窟”工场做事。

史密斯接过那个厚铁筒看了看，回头问庞库那夫：“朋友，你还坚持认为‘飞速号’不是撞沉的？”

“对！史密斯先生，海峡不可能有礁石！”庞库那夫肯定地说。

“不过很可能是撞上了这块铁筒？”史密斯说着，将铁筒给大家看。

“撞它？就一小块铁筒？”庞库那夫不相信地嚷道。

“朋友们，记得在双桅船沉没前，有水柱将它抛起来了么？”史密斯问。

“是的，史密斯先生！”赫伯特说。

“想知道水柱是怎么形成的么？就是这个不起眼的家伙！”史密斯指着小铁筒说。

“什么？你说是它？”庞库那夫还是不相信。

“是呀，别小看它，它是水雷的残余部分。”

“什么？水雷？”除了史密斯，其他人一起喊道。

“可……这……谁布的水雷呢？”庞库那夫有些结巴，还是觉得不可能。

“我能告诉你的就是，这水雷不是我布的！但水雷的残余部分就在这里，你们可以估算一下它所爆发出的威力有多大！”史密斯说。

第五章

事实清楚了，“飞速号”的神秘沉海是因为水雷在海底爆炸引起的。

史密斯的判断不会错。在南北战争中，他就曾研制过这种可怕的武

器。那普捡到的那个铁筒里实际是装炸药的，也就是类似于硝化甘油、苦味酸等药品。双桅船被炸时之所以会掀起一个圆水柱，就是在它的作用下形成的。而船底被炸、船身下沉，均是因为鱼雷破坏严重导致的。

不要说双桅船，就是装甲舰遇到这种水雷，也会像普通渔船一样被炸毁，而这次“飞速号”遇上了它，当然不可避免地毁于一旦了。

不过，虽然知道了是什么原因造成的，但还有一个问题，那就是海峡里怎么会有水雷？是怎么来的？这又成了无法解释的问题。

“朋友们，好了，我们不用再做种种猜测了，已经完全能够确定了，在这座岛上，有个神秘的人，也许他也曾和我们一样，是因为遇难而被遗弃到这岛上来的。我为什么要这么说呢？是因为要让阿埃童知道我们两年来遇到的种种怪事。我们曾多次受到一个人的帮助，但这个人到底是谁，我们却是完全不知道的。他屡次帮助我们又是为什么呢？我不清楚。但我清楚的是，他确确实实是在帮助我们。并且根据这些事情来看，他是个非常有才能的人。因为只有具备了惊人才干的人才能做到这一切。阿埃童和我们一样，也曾受到他的恩惠。我在从气球上掉下来后，他将我从海里救了上来；那个写阿埃童在岱波岛的纸条，一定也是这个人。还有我要说的一件事，就是那只箱子，那只在拾箱角捡到的箱子，一定是他想让我们得到一些必需品，特意放在那里的；在荒岛高地上点燃篝火，让你们找到陆地的一定也是他；畜乳身上的那颗子弹，一定也是他打的；在海峡里布置水雷，炸毁双桅船的，也一定是他……总之，一句话，任何我们无法解释的怪事，都是这个神秘的人做的。所以，不管这个人是谁，是遇难的还是被流放的，我们都应该感激他，不然，我们就是忘恩负义的人了。我们现在欠下了这个陌生人的情债，我希望我们有一天能报答他。”

“没错，亲爱的赛莱斯，林肯岛上确实隐藏着一个万能的人，对我们有着莫大的帮助。我想再说一下，如果我们承认在现实生活中有超凡能力的人的话，那么这个人就接近于神了。会不会是他听到了我们在‘花岗宫殿’里所说的全盘计划，所以才在我们第一次试航时将瓶子扔给我们？还有将多卜从湖里扔出来，刺死儒艮的会不会也是他呢？还有你被救的事……因为根据当时的情况，那是谁都做不到的。这种种事情，让我们不得不相信，这个人具有呼风唤雨的能力。”

史佩莱说完，大家都点头，觉得很有同感。

“是的，如果我们能够确定帮助我们的是一个人，那么他真的是具有一般人没有的本事。这现在也成了个谜，不过这个谜在我们找到他后，肯定就能解答了。但现在还有个问题，我们到底是要尊重这位万能的人，不去惊动他呢，还是要尽量将他找到？大家有什么看法？”

“我觉得，不管这个人是谁，他都是个非常勇敢的人。我非常佩服他！”庞库那夫说。

“你说得没错，可我问的不是这个意思，庞库那夫。”史密斯说。

“主人，我觉得我们要尽量找到这个人。但我想，他要是不想露面的话，我们一定找不到他。”那普说。

“没错！那普！”庞库那夫说。

“我也觉得那普说得对。但如果是这样的话，我们就不能揭开谜底了。当然，不管我们是否能找到这个神秘的人，我都觉得我们至少应该有尽力找到他的心意。”史佩莱说。

“孩子，你呢？谈谈你的想法吧！”史密斯问赫伯特。

“哈哈……”赫伯特很高兴地说，“他先是救了你，然后又救了我们大家，我还真想谢谢他呢！”

“那是当然的，孩子，我们每个人都想感谢他。我不是个喜欢刨根问底的人，但要是能让我见他一面，挖我一只眼睛都行。我在想，这个人一定非常英俊，身材魁梧，有着漂亮的胡须，发亮的头发。还有，他一定是坐在云彩里的，手里还托着一个大地球！”庞库那夫说。

“庞库那夫，你说的那是造物主！”史佩莱说。

“嗯，不错，史佩莱先生，但我想象中的他就是这个样子的。”庞库那夫说。

“你怎么想？阿埃童？”史密斯又问一直不说话的阿埃童。

“史密斯先生，对于这件事，我不知道还有什么更好的意见，你采取的意见就是最好的。如果我们需要去寻找他的话，我随时会去的。”阿埃童说。

“谢谢你，阿埃童。不过我希望你能回答我的问题，怎么想就怎么说好了。你是我们的伙伴，而且也为我们冒了好几次险，我们做任何重要决定的时候，都会征询你的意见的，所以还是说说你的看法吧！”史密斯说。

“史密斯先生，我觉得我们应该尽最大的努力将这个恩人找出来，因为很可能他正在孤孤单单一个人受着苦难；也许他也想换种生活。还有，我也欠他的情，一定是他去过岱波岛，发现了我这个可怜的人，然后告诉你们，有个不幸的人需要解救。所以幸亏是他，才让我有了重新做人的机会。我不会忘记他的，一辈子都不会！”阿埃童说。

“好的，那咱们就决定了，我们要尽早去搜查，不放过任何一个角落，连最隐蔽的地方都不要放过。希望这位大恩人能明白我们的心情和心意，并原谅我们！”史密斯说。

接下来的几天，居民们都忙碌地在田间劳作，准备在把这些紧急的事情做完后，实行他们的计划：走遍林肯岛上任何他们没去过的地方，寻找恩人。

从岱波岛拿来的种子种植的蔬菜已经到了收获的季节，幸好“花岗宫殿”位置够大，就是把岛上所有的物资运来都放得下。而且存放地点也很安全，既不怕坏人抢夺，也不怕野兽糟蹋。同时，因为有着厚实的花岗石壁隔着，完全不用担心受潮。

即使这样，居民们还是用鹤嘴锄和火药，将通道的一些天然石洞扩大，使其成了一个全能仓库，里面不仅放着居民们的粮食、工具，还放着武器和一些工具。总之，居民们的所有物资全在里面。

从双桅船上得到的四门炮，也在庞库那夫的强烈要求下，用绳索和辘轳吊到了“花岗宫殿”。同时，他们还在窗户间的空余位置设置了炮眼。过不了多久，大家就会在花岗石壁上看到炮口了。

在可以俯瞰整个联合湾的高处，不管是什么船舶，只要它想在小岛附近抛锚，都会彻底暴露在个高空炮台的射程范围之内。

11月8日那天，庞库那夫对史密斯说：“我们的炮台筑好了，史密斯先生，能否让我们试试炮弹的射程？”

“你觉得这么做有用吗？”史密斯问。

“当然有用。不仅有用，而且非常有必要，因为这样可以让我们掌握炮弹的射程。”

“既然如此，那你就试吧，庞库那夫。不过，试验时，能不能用棉花火药？棉花火药有很多，而且用不完，我想将普通火药省下来。”史密斯说。

“就是不知道棉花火药用在大炮上，大炮经不经受得住。”史佩莱问。他和庞库那夫的想法一样，都想试试大炮。

“我想应该可以，不过用时要小心一点！”史密斯说。

史密斯的想法是对的。大炮因为是用锻钢铸造的后膛炮，按说能装大量的火药，射程也不错。但想要取得很好的效果，弹道就要尽量低伸，而要想做到这一点，必须用极大的初速度才能推动炮弹。

“初速度与火药的量成正比，这种大炮在制造时，所用的金属必须具有高度抵抗力。为什么用钢？就是因为它是抵抗力最大的金属。所以我相信，我们的炮是完全能经受得住爆炸气体膨胀的，试射效果一定也不会错。”史密斯说。

“我们先试试，等会儿就能更加肯定了。”庞库那夫说。

四门大炮被庞库那夫收拾得如同新的一样，亮度能和美国海军巡洋舰上的大炮相比。自打从水里捞出来，庞库那夫就用了很长的时间给它擦拭、磨光、上油、拆洗零件。

这天，装着圆锥形炮弹的四门大炮在所有居民，包括狙布和多卜面前试验发射，由于棉花火药的爆炸威力比普通火药大四倍，所以他们决定少放一点。

准备工作做好后，庞库那夫站在那里，抓住了拉火绳的末端，随时准备发射。

在史密斯做出“发射”指令后，庞库那夫就开炮了，炮弹飞出了着陆岛，落在了海里。射程到底有多少，他们还不好估计。

他们决定发射第二炮，而且瞄准了拾箱角尽头的岩石，那块岩石离“花岗宫殿”有3英里左右。这一炮是赫伯特发射的，打中了那块尖石头，炸得碎石乱飞。虽然庞库那夫对他打的第一炮已经很满意了，但赫伯特的第二炮更准，这让他很为赫伯特开心。

第三炮瞄准了联合湾南边的沙丘，并很精准地打在了4英里之外的沙地上。炮弹落在了海里，水花四溅。

发射第四炮的时候，史密斯特意多加了一点火药，想看看到底能射多远。由于怕发生大爆炸，他让大家站在了很远的位置，用一根长绳子代替人手拉火。

随着一声巨响，居民们飞奔向窗口一看，炮弹擦过离“花岗宫殿”近5英里的颞角的一块岩石，掉在了鲨嘴湾。

“太棒了！史密斯先生！”庞库那夫高兴地狂喊，声音和炮声不相上下。

“看看！我们的炮台不错吧，这下就是太平洋上的海盗全来了都不怕。没有我们的允许，任何人也休想登岛。”

“相信吗？庞库那夫，这样的试验最好是别做！”史密斯说。

“为什么？那我们要怎么对付岛上的六个海盗？难道放纵他们践踏我们的森林、田地和农场？这些海盗就和美洲豹一样凶狠，我觉得我们应该毫不犹豫地向他们开炮。对不对，阿埃童？”庞库那夫问阿埃童。

阿埃童犹豫着，没有马上回答。史密斯对庞库那夫这不经大脑的话感到很无奈，果然，敏感阿埃童低下了头，小声说：“我就曾是凶狠的美洲豹，庞库那夫先生，所以我没有发言权。”

说完，他慢慢地走了。

庞库那夫这才意识到自己说错话了。

“我太不是人了。可怜阿埃童。他在这里，应该和我们一样，都是有发言权的。”

“是呀，不过我们要尊重他追悔往事的心情，他越自卑，我们就越应该尊重他。”史佩莱说。

“那是当然的了，史佩莱先生，我以后再也不这么莽撞了，再乱说话我就咬掉自己的舌头，我也不愿意阿埃童伤心。不过话又说回来了，对那些海盗，我们不能客气，必须尽快将他们从岛上消灭！”庞库那夫又说。

“这是你的想法吗？庞库那夫？”史密斯问。

“是的，没错，我就是这么想的。”

“在他们没有和我们敌对的时候，我们也要赶尽杀绝吗？”

“他们以前做得还不够吗？”庞库那夫问，他从不会慎重地考虑问

题。

“也许他们会改过自新，真诚悔过呢！”史密斯说。

“他们怎么会悔过？”庞库那夫不相信地耸耸肩道。

“别这么说，庞库那夫，你看阿埃童，他已经改过自新了。”赫伯特拉着庞库那夫的手说。

庞库那夫吃惊地看着大家，他没想到自己的意见会遭到反对。那些到岛上来的海盗，是屠杀“飞速号”全体船员的凶手，所以对他来说，那些人就是野兽，所以他必须毫不留情地消灭他们。

正直率性的庞库那夫，认为绝对不能和这些人打交道。

好一会儿，他才说：“好吧，既然每个人都反对我，那么你们就饶了这些恶棍吧，但愿你们不会后悔。”

“我们随时注意着，不会有危险的。”赫伯特说。

一直没有表明立场的史佩莱说：“这六个人每个人身上都有武器，要是他们躲在角落向我们开枪，他们很快就能成为岛上的主人。”

“为什么他们要这么做？对他们没好处的，不可能这么做，而且我们也是六个人。”赫伯特又说。

“好了好了！你们这些好人想干什么就干什么吧，不用去管他们了。”庞库那夫觉得他不能说服其他人，便赌气说。

“庞库那夫，不能让自己先当恶人。要是一个不幸的人站在你面前，在你的射程内，你会开枪吗？”那普说。

“当然会，我会像打疯狗一样，打死他们的。那普！”庞库那夫冷冷道。

“庞库那夫，你一向听我的，在这件事上，能听我一句吗？”史密斯说。

“我会按你的想法做的，史密斯先生，但我的想法不会变。”庞库那夫说。

“那好！除非他们先攻击我们，不然我们绝不攻击他们。”

庞库那夫接受了这个大家都认可的只防御、不进攻的做法，虽然他并不认同这种做法。

如此大的荒岛，又有很多资源，这些海盗会不会良心发现，改邪归正，在这个新环境里开始新生？他们不知道，但出于人道主义精神，他们还是决定先防备。不过，居民们现在无法再像以前一样，只提防野兽了，因为岛上还有六个恶棍，他们很可能什么事情都做得出来。

处境确实非常艰难。对于一些胆子小的人来说，甚至可以说已经失去了安全的保障，但居民们目前却有理由反对庞库那夫的“绝杀”做法。这种想法到底有没有错？也只能拭目以待。

第六章

居民们开始进行全岛彻底大搜索。这也成了他们的头等大事。

搜索的目的有两个，一个是找出那个神秘的大恩人，因为他们已经确定有这么个人了；另一个目的就是寻找那几个海盗，了解他们藏在什么地方，怎么生活，会不会危害到居民的生活。

史密斯对于这两件事，丝毫也不想耽误，马上就开始行动。不过，搜索很可能需要花费好几天工夫，所以他们将必需品和工具全都装在了车上，以方便露营。但不巧的是，有头野驴的一条腿受了伤，暂时不能拉车，需要休息几天。所以他们将出发的日子定在了11月20日，整整向后推迟了一个星期。

这里的11月正好是北半球的5月，是春暖花开的季节，也是太阳进入南回归线，一年中白天长夜晚短的时间，是搜寻的最好时间。即使这次的搜寻不能达到目的，但说不定也会有其他发现，特别是自然产物方面的新发现。史密斯说此次要重点搜寻西遥森林，而西遥森林正好位于蛇盘半岛。

离出发还有些时间，他们决定利用这个时间去观望壁做事。此外，阿埃童还想回牲畜栏照料一下家畜。大家也同意他去那里住两天，在将牲畜们的饲料准备足后，就回“花岗宫殿”。

在阿埃童去牲畜栏之前，史密斯怕他一个人去不安全，问他要不要再让一个人去陪他，阿埃童说不需要，说自己一个人完全可以，不怕有什么危险。而且还说如果牲畜栏或附近发生了什么事情，他一定会发电报给“花岗宫殿”的他们的。

9日早晨天一亮，阿埃童便驾着野驴，拉着大车出发了。两个小时后，他发了一个电报给“花岗宫殿”的居民们，说自己已经到了，平安无事。

而在这两天里，史密斯也在忙着做一件事，那就是格兰特湖南端原有的缺口虽然已经堵死，而且草木也遮住了一部分，但他还是不放心的，想把它完全遮住。挡住了那边，“花岗宫殿”也就不必担心什么突然袭击了。

做这项工作并不难，史密斯只需让湖水升高两三英尺就能将洞口淹没。不过，要想提高湖面，还要在湖的两个缺口处建个水闸，这样湖水就能通过这两个缺口，向硝甘河和跌水河流了。

居民们对做这件事很有信心，因为两个水闸只有8英尺宽、3英尺高，所以很快就用石块砌成了，而且砌得特别严密。

砌了水闸后，外人是无论如何也不会想到在湖水底下还有一个通道，更想不到以前湖水就是从这里流出去的。

当然，给“花岗宫殿”供应水的蓄水池用的水和带动升降梯的小河他们还保留着，而且设计得绝对不会有断水之忧。这样一来，只需将升降梯吊起，他们在“花岗宫殿”就能高枕无忧了。

做完这项工作，庞库那夫、史佩莱和赫伯特还准备去一趟气球港。庞库那夫一直担心海盗去了停泊“长风破浪号”的小海湾。

“这些海盗在南岸登陆，如果沿海滨前行的话，很快就能发现小港，这样，我们的船可就危险了。”庞库那夫说。

他的顾虑并不是没有根据，所以他们完全有必要去气球港看看。

11月10日的午饭后，庞库那夫和史佩莱、赫伯特带着武器出发了。庞库那夫故意在大家面前将两颗子弹装进了他携带的步枪枪筒里，并做出一副“我已经准备好了，不管是人还是畜生，只要到了我的面前，就

会倒霉”的表情。史佩莱和赫伯特也各自带了一把枪。差不多三点钟的时候，他们离开了“花岗宫殿”。

和他们一起走出“花岗宫殿”的还有那普，那普决定先送他们到感恩河拐角处，在他们过了河后再将桥重新扯起来，并将回来的时间约好，以放枪为号。在听到枪声后，那普会过来给他们放桥。

三个人沿着荒岛南岸一直往前走，仅仅只有3英里的路程，他们却走了两个小时。一路上，他们仔细地观察着沿途各地，但不管是森林还是沼泽地，都没发现海盗的踪迹。很明显，海盗并不知道居民们的人数以及所采取的防御手段，所以他们很可能只在荒岛一带活动。

到了气球港，看到“长风破浪号”完好地浮在小海湾上，庞库那夫放心了。看来，气球港因为被高耸的峭壁遮挡着，地势又非常险峻，所以不管是处在陆地还是海里的人，都难以发现它。

“恶棍没来过这里。有句话叫‘深山才有虎豹’，他们一定是躲进西遥森林了。”庞库那夫说。

“太好了，要是他们找到了‘长风破浪号’，说不定就乘着它逃跑了呢，这样我们就不能去岱波岛了。”赫伯特说。

“那是，我们还要去岱波岛送纸条呢。要是苏格兰游船来接阿埃童，他们就能知道阿埃童的新地址——林肯岛的位置了。”史佩莱说。

“对！史佩莱先生，有了‘长风破浪号’，我们随时乘它动身都行。”庞库那夫说。

“不过，庞库那夫，我还是觉得我们把荒岛搜寻完再走比较好。如果我们找到了那个陌生人，说不定他对岱波岛的了解，就和对林肯岛一

样清楚。不要忘了，那纸条可是他写的，所以说不定他连那游船什么时候回来都知道呢。”

“是的，不过，这个人究竟是谁呢？他那么了解我们，我们却一点都不了解他。如果他只是个遇难者，为什么隐藏着不出来？我们是好人，没必要躲好人吧。而且我很不理解，难道是他自己要来这里的？要是他想离开的话，他能离开吗？甚至他还在吗？还要继续在这里待下去吗？”庞库那夫又大声说。

三个人一边聊着天，一边去“长风破浪号”前察看船上的甲板。庞库那夫看了一下系锚缆的短桩后，突然大声叫道：“太奇怪了！”

“发生什么事了？庞库那夫？”史佩莱问他。

“怎么回事？这个扣可不是我系的。”庞库那夫指了指锚缆系在短桩上的绳子说。

“不是你系的？你确定？”史佩莱问。

“绝对不是我系的，我可以发誓，我一直是打活扣的，但这个却是拱结。”

“你记错了吧，庞库那夫。”

“绝对没有记错，我系扣已经形成习惯了，一个人的习惯不会随意改变。”

“那会不会是强盗来过了？”赫伯特问。

“那就难说了。反正是有人拔过‘长风破浪号’的锚，还让它抛了锚，

这是不会错的。咦，这还有一个证据，看！锚缆也是被抽出来过的，卷索不在锚缆孔里了。我再说一遍，有人用过我们的船。”庞库那夫大叫。

“要是海盗发现了这只船，应该会抢去用，甚至乘它逃跑才对。”史佩莱说。

“逃跑？能去哪里？去岱波岛吗？这只船这么小，他们敢乘着它跑远吗？”庞库那夫说。

“也是，何况他们未必知道有岱波岛。”史佩莱接着说。

“不管怎样，有一点是不会错的，那就是我们的‘长风破浪号’偷偷被人用过了！这一点就像我生在格雷普兰，叫庞库那夫一样确定。”庞库那夫说。

他这么肯定，史佩莱和赫伯特都不再说什么了。显然，在庞库那夫把船驶到气球港后，有人动过它。而且庞库那夫还十分肯定地说有人拔过锚，又抛过锚。这两个动作，是航行时的必备动作，不然还会有什么其他原因？

“奇怪的是，为什么我们在岛上却没见过‘长风破浪号’行驶？”史佩莱又提出了一个问题。

“史佩莱先生，如果夜里顺风的话，只需两个小时，这船就能驶出我们的视线范围以外。”庞库那夫说。

“好吧，那我还有一个问题，海盗驾驶‘长风破浪号’做什么？而且用过后，还会好好地给你送回港？”史佩莱接着问。

“嗯！这倒是个问题，不过我们不用多费脑筋想了，把它列入奇怪事件吧。关键是‘长风破浪号’还在这里就好了，如果不幸被海盗们第二次劫走，怕是再也找不到它了！”庞库那夫说。

“庞库那夫，不如我们把‘长风破浪号’带回去吧，停在‘花岗宫殿’附近不行吗？”赫伯特说。

“不是不好，只是不是很好。感恩河的河口不适合停船，那里的潮势太猛了。”庞库那夫说。

“停在‘石窟’底下的沙滩怎么样？”

“也许行，不过既然我们要离开‘花岗宫殿’做一次远行，我想，当我们不在时，还是放在这里比较安全。在岛上的海盗没有全部消灭前，最好放在这里。”庞库那夫说。

“我同意你的说法。遇到变天时，这里最起码不会像感恩河那样，暴露在外面。”史佩莱说。

“要是海盗再来这里怎么办？”赫伯特说。

“孩子，如果他们用过‘长风破浪号’，即使在这里没找到它，也会在‘花岗宫殿’的沙滩上找到它的。反正我们不在时，没办法阻止他们将船抢走，所以我同意史佩莱的意见，还是留在气球港。不过，等我们搜寻完海岛后，如果还没有消灭这群恶棍，那么就要谨慎了，还是把船放到‘花岗宫殿’附近比较好。等这些讨厌的家伙不存在了，再做其他打算。”庞库那夫说。

“好的，那就这么决定了！走吧！”史佩莱说。

三个人回到“花岗宫殿”，将全部经过告诉了史密斯，史密斯对他们的想法和打算都很认同，并答应庞库那夫，以后看着陆岛和海岸间的海峡能不能利用水闸，开辟一个人工港口。如果能办到，“长风破浪号”就能永远地停在他们眼前了，随时可以关照它，必要时，甚至还可以将它锁起来。

当天晚上，他们给牲畜栏的阿埃童发了个电报，让他带两只山羊过来，那普想让它们适应一下高地的水土。但奇怪的是，电报发出去，阿埃童没有回电，这在以前是从没发生过的事。史密斯不禁有些惊讶，不过又一想，也许阿埃童正好不在牲畜栏，甚至已经动身到“花岗宫殿”了。因为他去牲畜栏已经有两天了，当时走的时候，说在10日晚或11日早晨回来。于是居民们便去观望壁等他，那普和赫伯特甚至还去桥边迎接他，准备看到他后马上放吊桥。

不过，等到晚上十点，还不见阿埃童。于是，他们又给他发了封电报，并让他立刻回答。但是，“花岗宫殿”的电报铃仍然一声不响。

居民们开始感到不安，是不是发生什么事了？难道阿埃童不在牲畜栏？或者他还在那里，但却已经不能自由行动了？他们能在黑夜里去牲畜栏吗？

大家商量时，有说去的，也有说不去的。

“会不会是电报发生了故障，无法发报了？”赫伯特说。

“有可能！”史佩莱说。

“那就等明天再看吧！确实，阿埃童有可能收不到我们的电报，我们也收不到他的。”

这一夜，大家焦躁地等着，直到天亮。

11月11日一大早，史密斯又给阿埃童发了个电报，依然没有回音。再试一次，结果还是一样。

“马上去牲畜栏！”他说。

“一定要全副武装！”庞库那夫加了一句。

最后又一想，“花岗宫殿”还是留一个人好，于是让那普留下。那普在把大家送到硝甘河畔，将吊桥扯上去后，躲在了一棵树后，他要等他们或阿埃童回来。而且如果海盗此时出现，想要逃跑的话，那么那普还可以开枪阻止他们。如果阻止不了，他还能躲到“花岗宫殿”里去，他只需上了升降梯，进入里面就绝对安全了。

一行人走出“花岗宫殿”，向牲畜栏走去，如果在牲畜栏找不到阿埃童，他们还决定去附近的森林找。

早上六点，史密斯带着三个伙伴过了硝甘河。那普藏在左岸一个小山丘后面，山丘上长着一棵龙血树，可以做他的屏障。

史密斯他们扛着两支步枪、两支滑膛枪，每支枪里都装满了子弹，即使遇到一个很小的敌对动作，他们也能及时做好开枪的准备。

路两旁都是密密的森林，是海盗们可以藏身的地方，而且这些人还有武器，的确非常可怕。

几个人走得很快，谁也不说话。在前面引路的是多卜，它有时径直向前跑，有时又会钻进森林，有时又会安静地慢行，好像并没有什么意外出现。

他们十分相信这条忠实而机灵的狗，它不会让他们受到任何突然的惊吓，但只要有一点危险存在，它就会警觉地大叫起来。

史密斯和其他三个伙伴继续前行，当走到从“花岗宫殿”牵向牲畜栏的电报线时，他们已经走了近两英里路了。一路上没有发现任何可疑情况，电报杆还是好好地竖在那里，电线也还拉着。

不过，史密斯突然发现电线好像有些松了，而走在前面的赫伯特在走到74号电线杆前时，突然停下来大声喊道：“这里电线断了！”

几个人急忙走上去。果然，电线杆被连根拔起，横在了路上。他们一下子明白了，这就是“花岗宫殿”和牲畜栏两处发不了电报的原因。

“不像是被风刮断的。”庞库那夫说。

“没错，是连根拔起的，而且是被人用手拔起来的。”史佩莱说。

“电线也断了。”赫伯特补充了一句。

“是不是最近坏的？”史密斯问。

“是的，一定是不久前才被破坏的。”赫伯特说。

“马上去牲畜栏，马上去！”庞库那夫大叫道。

此时，他们正处在“花岗宫殿”和牲畜栏的中间位置，到牲畜栏还有两英里半，他们加快了速度，急急地向前走。

没错，牲畜栏确实出了事。他们担心的并不是阿埃童没有收到他们的电报，而是担心阿埃童在去牲畜栏前就答应过前一天回“花岗宫殿”的，结果却没有回来。总之，将“花岗宫殿”和牲畜栏间的联系切

断，一定别有用意，这种搞破坏的做法，除了海盗，谁会做得出来？

居民们急匆匆地往前赶。他们真心喜欢这个新来的伙伴，如果他被他曾经的同伴杀了的话，那真的是一件让他们难以接受的事。

没过多长时间，他们便来到了路旁的一条小河边。河水是从红河里流出来的，如今已经变成了牲畜栏牧场的水源。他们慢下脚步，将手扣在了扳机上，警觉地注视着四面的森林，随时做着战斗准备。

多卜发出了低沉的咆哮声，似乎是提醒他们，危险就要降临了。

他们慢慢地向前走。树林中出现了牲畜栏的栅栏，并没有遭到破坏的迹象。大门紧闭，牲畜栏里静悄悄的，既没有往常羊的咩咩叫声，也没有阿埃童的吆喝声。

“进去吧。”史密斯说。

史密斯往前走着，其他人跟在他后面二十步之外。每个人都警觉地看着四周，做着随时开枪的准备。

不过，就在史密斯拨开门上的内闩，准备推门进去时，多卜大叫起来。随着它的叫声，只听“砰”的一声，接着便是一声惨叫。

赫伯特直挺挺地倒在了地上，子弹打中了他.....

第七章

赫伯特的惨叫声让庞库那夫急忙扔掉手里的枪，跑了过去。

“死了，这群混蛋把他打死了！把我的孩子打死了！”他号叫着。

史密斯和史佩莱随即跑了过去。史佩莱伏在赫伯特的胸前听了听，想确定他的心脏还有没有跳动。

“还有心跳！但是必须把他送去……”

“你是说‘花岗宫殿’吗？不行！那就来不及了！”史密斯道。

“那快，快抬到牲畜栏去！”庞库那夫说。

“快点！快点！”史密斯急忙说。

史密斯到了栅栏的左边，突然发现一个海盗正端着枪对他开枪，打穿了他的帽子。在海盗想要开第二枪的时候，史密斯一刀刺向了他，这一刀比枪来得还快，海盗随即躺在了地上。

此时，史佩莱和庞库那夫抬着赫伯特越过栅栏，进了围栏，去了阿埃童的房间。不一会儿，赫伯特便躺在了阿埃童的床上。又过了一会儿，史密斯也进来了。

看着赫伯特不省人事，庞库那夫悲痛万分，抽抽搭搭地哭着，并不停地拿头去撞墙。史密斯和史佩莱都无法使他安静下来，而他们也悲痛得一句话都说不出。

不过他们知道，他们只能依靠自己将眼前这个命悬一线的孩子从死亡线上拉回来。

史佩莱曾经历过很多事，所以也懂一些药理常识，而且他也曾很多

次在无奈之下治过刀伤和枪伤。这次他也要在史密斯的协助下，对赫伯特进行简单救治。

不过，当史佩莱准备救治时，赫伯特已经没有知觉了。这是一种“休克”状态，很可能是因为流血过多，也有可能是枪弹力量太猛，伤及到了他的骨头，或者是因为激烈的震荡造成的。

赫伯特脸色苍白，史佩莱摸着 he 微弱的脉搏，发现他的脉搏很长时间才会跳一下，而且好像随时都会停止。

无疑，赫伯特的病情是严重的。

几个人解开了赫伯特的衣服，让他露出了受伤的胸膛，并用手帕紧紧地捂住流血的伤口，最后又用冷水去擦他的心口。

赫伯特的伤口在胸膛以下的第三根和第四根肋骨之间，是个椭圆形的洞。史密斯和史佩莱给赫伯特翻了个身，在翻动他的时候，他发出了微弱的呻吟，他们差点都要认为这是他临死前的呻吟了。

除了胸前的伤，赫伯特的背部也有一处伤，是那枪弹从前胸射进，从后背出来的伤。

“老天保佑！还好枪弹没有在身体里，我们也就免了取子弹了。”史佩莱说。

“心脏呢？心脏怎么样？”史密斯问。

“幸好没碰到心脏，碰到的话，赫伯特早就没命了。”

“他死了？”庞库那夫绝望地哼了一句。此刻的他正处于紧张中，没

有听到前面的话，就只听到了最后一句。

“没有死，庞库那夫，他活着，他的脉搏还在跳，刚刚还呻吟了一声呢。为了孩子着想，你还是安静点吧，别激动。我们现在需要沉着，不能让大家一起跟着你紧张。朋友！”史密斯说。

庞库那夫不说话了。但史密斯的话，还是让他非常伤心，大颗大颗的眼泪从眼眶里掉了下来。

史佩莱决定全身心地为赫伯特治疗。虽然他已经能够确定枪弹是从前胸进去，后背出来的了，但在枪弹进入他身体的时候，对身体有哪些损伤？碰到了哪些器官？对一个真正的外科医生来说，都不能马上作出判断，更不要说一个记者了。

不过有一点他很清楚，那就是必须防止伤口发炎，因为伤口发炎很容易造成血流不通，进而引发高烧。但要用什么药才能消炎呢？怎么才能防止伤口发炎呢？

虽然有无数个难题在等他解决，但史佩莱还是做了他必须尽快做的事，那就是将两处伤口敷住。史佩莱觉得不能用温水擦洗伤口，也不能挤压伤口，因为那样会引起伤口流更多的血。赫伯特流的血够多了，而且因为流血，身体已经越发地虚弱。

史佩莱决定先用冷水给他清洗伤口。

赫伯特始终保持着左侧躺着的姿势。

“就让他这么躺着，不能让他动。这样躺最利于他胸前和背后的伤口恢复，对排脓有好处，还有就是要让他尽量好好休息。”史佩莱说。

“那现在要不要抬他回‘花岗宫殿’？”庞库那夫问。

“现在还不能！”史佩莱说。

“我要打死这群恶棍！”庞库那夫大声说。他的表情很吓人，握紧的拳头不停地挥着。

“庞库那夫，别冲动！”史密斯说。

史佩莱继续给赫伯特诊治，赫伯特的脸色苍白得可怕，史佩莱着急万分。

“赛莱斯，我不是外科医生，我真不知道该怎么办，你给我出出主意吧，告诉我该怎么办。”他说。

“给自己点信心！朋友！诊治时一定要冷静，什么都不要想，只想着一定要治好赫伯特！”史密斯说着，握紧了史佩莱的手。

史佩莱深吸一口气，刚刚才泄的气又鼓了起来。他恢复了沉着，挨床坐着，看着赫伯特，而史密斯也站在他的旁边。庞库那夫撕下了自己的衬衫，沮丧地做着绷带。

史佩莱告诉史密斯，现在最先要做的就是给赫伯特止血，而且还不能让伤口堵塞，也不能让伤口很快长好，不然内脏被打伤了，脓血很可能会留在胸膛里。

史密斯完全同意他的看法，所以史佩莱决定暂时不把两个伤口缝合，只是将它们暂时包扎。幸好这两处创伤不用扩创。

发炎是最有可能发生的，居民们有没有什么能够防止发炎的药品

呢？

有，有一种药是能够防止发炎的，而且这种药还是大自然提供给他们们的。这种药就是冷水。冷水是防止发炎的最有效的镇静剂，是治疗严重炎症的灵药，如今的医生，有时候也会用到它。

当然，冷水还有一个好处，那就是它能让创口保持在一个绝对休息的状态，在过早包扎伤口的情况下能起到保护创口的作用，因为一些临床经验表明，创口在最初的几天里，和空气接触非常危险。

史佩莱和史密斯，虽然不是外科医生，但却用智慧和生活中的经验，做出了以上的判断，最后又像一名称职的外科医生一样，对赫伯特进行了治疗。他们将敷布敷在了赫伯特的两处创口上，然后不断用冷水来保持敷布的湿润。

庞库那夫在进屋不久就生上了火，好在屋子里什么生活用品都有。不仅有枫糖，还有各种各样的草药。这些草药也是赫伯特从格兰特湖畔采集来的，他们熬了一些，做成清凉饮料喂给赫伯特。

此时，赫伯特已经完全失去知觉了，他的体温很高。

一晚上过去了，他还没有醒过来。

此刻的赫伯特奄奄一息，随时都有停止呼吸的可能。直到11月12日，史密斯和同伴们才终于看到了一点希望，赫伯特从长时间的昏迷中清醒过来，他睁开眼的第一时间就认出了史密斯、史佩莱和庞库那夫。他总共只说了两三句话，对于发生了什么事，他一点都不知道。

大家把事情的经过告诉了他，并让他不要动，说他已经没有生命危险了。过不了多久，他就能康复了。

赫伯特并没有感受到多大的痛苦，而这都源于他的伙伴们不断用冷水来清洗伤口，使其没有发炎。现在伤口虽然还有化脓，但体温却没有再升高，这都是好现象，希望这两处伤不会再造成更严重的后果。

庞库那夫那一直吊着的心，总算放了下来，他就像一个修女，也像慈母一般，整天坐在赫伯特的床前。

赫伯特虽然又沉沉入睡，但却睡得比较安稳。

“我相信你！史佩莱先生，我对你有信心，你一定会救活赫伯特的。”庞库那夫说。

“是的，我们一定要救活他。虽然伤势很重，枪弹甚至已经穿透了他的肺，可也只是打穿了肺，并不会致命。”史佩莱说。

“上帝会保佑你的！”庞库那夫连连说。

不难想象，在牲畜栏里的24小时，居民们的脑子里只想着赫伯特的伤势，完全没有考虑如果海盗们回来要怎么办？他们既没有想到即将到来的危险，也没有想着怎么预防可能出现的危险。

终于，在觉得赫伯特脱离了生命危险，庞库那夫又守在赫伯特床前时，史密斯和史佩莱谈起了他们所面对的问题。

他们仔细检查过牲畜栏，并没有阿埃童的影子。这个可怜的人，会不会是被他曾经的同伙绑走了呢？他有没有进行过反抗？是不是反抗又被打败了？当然，后一种假设最有可能。在史佩莱爬上栅栏时，清楚地看到有个海盗沿着富兰克林山的支脉，向南部跑去了，当时多卜还追了过去。

从牲畜栏处跑掉的海盗，就是在感恩河口被岩石撞坏的那只海盗船上的人，而被史密斯刺死的那个海盗，现在还躺在牲畜栏外，正是哈维的同党。

牲畜栏没有受到损坏，大门也还关得好好的，更没有牲畜逃去森林。而在屋子里以及栅栏里，他们都没有发现格斗的痕迹，也没有被打坏的东西，只是阿埃童的武器和他一起失踪了。

“他很可能是遭到了袭击，对于他这样一个善于自卫的人来说，肯定是抵挡不了才这样的。”史密斯说。

“没错，很可能是海盗们看牲畜栏里什么都有，就在这里住了下来，不过看到我们过来便逃跑了。还有一点也很清楚，那就是等我们来的时候，阿埃童已经不在了， he 现在是死是活，我们也不知道。”史佩莱说。

“我们要去森林搜查，将这些恶徒从岛上完全消灭。庞库那夫曾说要像对待美洲豹一样，看来他的预见是对的。我们要是早点这么做，也许就不会发生这么多不幸的事了。”史密斯说。

“是啊！看来我们不得不狠下心来了。”史佩莱说。

“不过，我们现在只能暂时住在牲畜栏里，等到赫伯特移动不会出问题时将带他带回‘花岗宫殿’。”史密斯说。

“那普怎么办？”史佩莱问。

“那普是安全的。”

“但那普要是看我们老不回去而着急，冒险来找我们呢？”

“他千万不能过来，他要是过来，肯定会在半路被杀掉的！”史密斯用很快的语速说。

“可他来找我们的可能性很大。”

“唉！可惜电报没办法发了，不然还可以告诉他。现在这种情况，我们也不能让庞库那夫和赫伯特留在这里，太危险了。这样吧，我一个人去‘花岗宫殿’跑一趟。”

“不行！绝对不行！赛莱斯，你千万不能暴露自己，而且这样的冒险是完全没有必要的。海盗们肯定在监视着牲畜栏，他们现在一定是躲在密林中，你这一出去，我们的不幸又会增加一件。”史佩莱说。

“那怎么办？那普怎么办？他整整一夜没我们的消息了，一定会来这里的！”史密斯着急起来。

“而且他也不知道像我们这样防范，所以很可能在路上被打死！”史佩莱又补充了一句。

“真的没办法给他传话了吗？”史密斯正在想这个问题的时候，突然把目光落在了多卜身上。多卜正在他面前走来走去，像是在告诉他：“还有我呢！”

“对！可以叫多卜带话！”史密斯大声说。

多卜看到主人叫它，马上抬头看着史密斯。

“对！多卜可以！我们不能去的地方，多卜能去。这样就能把牲畜栏的情况带回到‘花岗宫殿’了，还可以把‘花岗宫殿’的情况带回来。”史佩莱也高兴地说。

“那快！马上行动！”史密斯说。

史佩莱从笔记本上撕下一张纸，拿出笔来写下了几句话：

我们在牲畜栏，赫伯特受伤了，你自己注意安全。千万不要离开“花岗宫殿”。海盗有没有在附近？回信让多卜给我们带回来。

这封简短的信不仅告诉了那普他们现在的处境，还告诉了他需要注意的事项。在将这封信折好后，他们将其系在了多卜颈上一个比较显眼的位置。

“多卜，好多卜！”史密斯一边抚摩着这条通人性的狗，一边轻声说着，看到多卜像听懂似的看着他，他又说：“那普，多卜，去找那普！那普！去，快去！”

多卜听了史密斯的话后，很有灵性地在他面前来回跳了几下，它知道主人要它去做什么。牲畜栏通向“花岗宫殿”的路，它是非常熟悉的，用不了一个小时，它就能到“花岗宫殿”。

现在，不管是史密斯还是史佩莱，走这条路都是很危险的，但多卜却可以穿过野草和密林，不被发现地走完全程。

史密斯带着多卜到了牲畜栏门口，把门打开。

“多卜，去，找那普！那普！”史密斯重复着他的话，指了指“花岗宫殿”方向，多卜朝他摇摇尾巴，向前跑了，转眼间就不见影了。

史佩莱走过来说：“它一定会顺利送到的。”

“是的！忠实的多卜，机灵的多卜，不仅会送到，还会顺利回来

的。一定！”

“现在几点钟了？”史佩莱问。

“差不多十点钟！”

“用不到一个小时，它就能到那里了，我们耐心地等它回来吧！”

史密斯关上了牲畜栏的门，和史佩莱重回房间。赫伯特还在昏睡，庞库那夫不停地用冷水浸湿那块敷布。

史佩莱一时之间不知要做什么，便为赫伯特准备起营养食品来。同时，他也没忘记倾听栅栏外面的动静，以免海盗闯入来个突然袭击。

居民们等着送信的多卜，坐卧不安。差不多十一点的时候，史密斯和史佩莱拿着枪站在了门外，他们准备一听见狗叫就去为它开门。他们深深相信，多卜要是顺利到了“花岗宫殿”，那普一定会让它马上送信回来的。

等了有十多分钟的时候，他们听见了一声枪响，接着又听到了狗叫声。

史密斯急忙打开门，先是看见100英尺外的森林里出现了一缕烟，他马上朝那里开了一枪，接着，多卜蹿了进来，他急忙关上了大门。

“多卜，好多卜，你回来了！”史密斯亲热地搂着多卜的脖子，一边叫，一边取下了它颈部拴着的一张纸条，上面有那普写的几个大字，史密斯小声地念了出来：

我不出“花岗宫殿”，附近也没有海盗。赫伯特真可怜！

第八章

很明显，海盗们一直都在附近监视着牲畜栏，他们想将居民一个个杀死。对于这样凶残的海盗，居民们没有别的办法，只能将他们视为野兽。

居民们必须时刻注意安全。因为当前的情况对这帮恶棍是很有利的，他们在暗处，而居民们却在明处。他们随时都有可能采取防不胜防的突然袭击，居民们却无法对他们采取行动。

于是，史密斯和其他几个人商量后决定，暂时住在牲畜栏里。阿埃童的房间里有各种生活用品，食品也还能够维持一段时间。也许是因为居民们来得太及时，让海盗们没来得及把东西抢走就跑了。

据史佩莱分析，事情应该是这样的：六个海盗在登岸后，沿着南部海滨，穿过了蛇盘半岛。他们没有冒险进入西遥森林，却到了瀑布口。随即又沿着河口走到了富兰克林山，在那里找到了栖身之地。最后，他们发现了无人居住的牲畜栏，并在这里住了下来，随时准备实施他们抢夺小岛、杀害居民的计划。

可怜阿埃童回到牲畜栏后，便被海盗们抓住了，结果可想而知。

没错，现在岛上还有五个海盗，每个人都是全副武装，在森林里注视着外面的一切。如果现在冒险去森林，等于自寻死路。现如今，对于这些海盗的攻击，居民们既无法预防，又不能去阻止。

“等等看吧，现在没有其他办法，只能等赫伯特好了后，我们再去全面搜寻，与这些海盗不留情面地较量，这也是我们全面搜查的目的，当然还有……”

史密斯还没说完，史佩莱便接着说：“寻找那位神秘人。”

随即，史佩莱又说出了他的疑惑：

“亲爱的赛莱斯，这位一直在紧要关头保护我们的人，为什么这次却没有保护我们呢！”

“谁又能说清呢？”史密斯说。

“什么意思？”史佩莱问。

“可能我们还没有走到绝境，还有机会。亲爱的史佩莱，甚至也许他在另一种场合，用他的方式在帮助我们呢。怎么说呢？现在关键不是这个问题，关键是怎么保住赫伯特的生命。”

这确实是现在他们最担心的问题。又是几天过去了，让他们感到欣慰的是，在他们一直用冷水为他降温消炎的过程中，赫伯特的病情并没有恶化，创口也没有发炎。同时，因为他们靠近火山，所以这里的水也含有少量的硫，这都对治疗起了作用。当然，更因为有了他们的细心呵护，总算让赫伯特保住了命。化脓现象比以前好了很多，热度也降了下来。

不过，由于在饮食上对赫伯特有限制，这让他的身体非常虚弱，需要好好静养一些时间，好的休息对他的身体很有好处。当然，还有那些清凉饮料，他们也尽量让他多喝。

现如今，史密斯、史佩莱和庞库那夫给赫伯特上药和敷创口的技术越来越高了，每次给赫伯特包扎伤口时，他们总是先给他敷上布和棉花，包扎时也是松紧合适，以免伤口因为合不拢而发炎。而因为经常要更换包扎的布，所以屋里的布料，差不多也快用完了。

史佩莱在给赫伯特敷裹伤口时非常仔细，他知道这个过程的重要，所以也一直给伙伴们讲，说好的敷裹比好的手术更难得，而且还说这是大多数外科医生都承认的一件事。

离赫伯特受伤已经过去十天了，11月22日，赫伯特的身体好了很多，而且也开始吃一些营养品了。他的脸上慢慢浮现出了原来的光彩，眼神也变得明亮了。

不过，为了让他少说话，庞库那夫费尽心思找话题和他说，讲了很多稀奇古怪的事情，但他还是有很多问题要问。比如问阿埃童去哪里了，他一直以为阿埃童还在牲畜栏，对于为什么见不到他而纳闷。庞库那夫怕赫伯特难受，没有说出实情，只说阿埃童和那普一起在看守“花岗宫殿”。

“哼！这群恶棍，对他们绝对不能怜惜，史密斯先生还想用仁慈来感化他们，可结果呢？哼！叫我说，我的仁慈就是那一粒粒子弹。”庞库那夫说。

“再没见过他们吗？”赫伯特问。

“没有，孩子，不过等你好了后，我们会找到他们的，到时候我们就能看到那些背地里害人的畜生了。”庞库那夫说。

“我还很虚弱对吗？我的庞库那夫！”

“没事的。你的体力会慢慢恢复的，被子弹穿胸算得了什么？真是开玩笑，没什么可怕的，这种事我见多了，没什么了不起的！”庞库那夫义愤填膺地嚷嚷着。

“真的，太可怕了，一想到出这种事，我都禁不住全身发凉！”史佩莱不止一次地在他们面前这样说。

“如果真的到了非动手术不可的地步，你会怎么做？会犹豫吗？”史密斯有一天问史佩莱说。

“不会的，赛莱斯！我不会犹豫。真是老天保佑，没有出现一些并发症。”

在林肯岛上，居民们曾无数次运用他们的聪明才智解决问题，这都源于他们丰富的社会经验和渊博的知识，所以屡屡成功。那么，他们会不会遇到一些即使用尽全部才智，也无法解决的问题呢？

人是群居动物，人与人之间都是相互依赖的，可林肯岛上却只有他们有限的几个人。史密斯明白这点，所以曾无数次地问自己，一旦遇到一件他们全都无能为力的事情，那又该怎么办呢？

他有种忧虑，这种忧虑就是，他们这群人一直都是幸运的，但现在似乎开始走入不幸阶段了。刚开始的时候，自他们顺利逃出里士满，侥幸降落这座岛，在近两年半的时间里，他们一直都是需要什么就有什么，自然界给他们提供了大量的矿物质、植物、动物……正是因为大自然提供的这些东西，才让他们依靠自己的聪明才智和科学常识，将这些物资加以利用。所以他们一直幸福地生活着。况且，在一些非常严峻的情形下，还有一股不可思议的力量来帮助他们……

当然，这些幸运都过去了，史密斯觉得，他们现在面临着严峻的考验。

确实是这样的。当海盗们的船来到荒岛附近后，虽然船及大批海盗被一股神秘的力量消灭了，但还有六个亡命之徒逃掉了。这群人登上了岛，无恶不作。想要捉住他们，几乎是不可能的。他们携带着武器，阿埃童肯定已经被他们杀害了，赫伯特还差点丧了命.....

史密斯安静下来就会想，这会是居民们遇到的第一个打击吗？

史佩莱也会反复思索，他甚至觉得，一直对他们有着很大帮助的神秘力量，好像一下子不起作用了。那股神秘的力量，肯定来自于一个人，那个人是谁？是不是已经离开了？是不是他也没办法了呢？

这一系列的问题他们都无法回答。不过，我们不能就此认为史密斯和他的伙伴们已经丧失了信心，已经绝望了。不是，绝对不是这样的！他们是在直面自己的处境，分析一切的可能性，并随时准备应对这一切不好的局面。他们用坚韧和不屈，正准备勇敢地面对未来，即使最后他们真的遭到了严重的、灾难性的打击，也还是会勇往直前的.....

第九章

赫伯特的病情逐渐好转。现在他们只等一件事，那就是等病情再好一点，就可以将他抬回“花岗宫殿”了。

牲畜栏给阿埃童盖的那间房子虽然不错，里面的物品也应有尽有，

但总比不上“花岗宫殿”。更重要的是，牲畜栏这边非常不安全，虽然居民们谨慎而小心，但还是怕海盗们打黑枪。而在“花岗宫殿”，他们就没有这样的担心了。“花岗宫殿”可以称得上是“铜墙铁壁”，处在那样的环境，任何的进攻都是无用的，他们还怕什么呢？

于是他们等待着，焦急地等待着。等赫伯特的伤势不会因为移动而导致危险时，他们就可以动身了。虽然想要通过啄木鸟林还是有着很大的困难，但他们决定只要时机成熟，就一定要抬他回去。

在这期间，他们没有收到那普的消息，不过，他们并没有过多的担心。因为那个勇敢无畏的黑人在“花岗宫殿”里是非常安全的，绝对不会受到袭击，所以他们没有再派多卜去那里。他们怕那机灵而忠实的狗被海盗发现并射死，那么他们就会失去一个可靠而得力的助手，他们不愿意冒这个险。

所以，虽然他们渴望能尽快到“花岗宫殿”相聚，但还是需要等待。

看着自己仅有的兵力分散几处，让海盗们有机可乘，史密斯非常苦恼。在阿埃童失踪后，赫伯特又受了伤，所以他们仅剩下的四个人面对的是凶狠的五个海盗。

史密斯的苦恼被赫伯特看在了眼里，他知道自己的受伤让大家处在了更危险的境地。

11月26日，在赫伯特睡着后，史密斯、史佩莱和庞库那夫又开始商量如何对付海盗了。

在说到他们现在无法和“花岗宫殿”的那普取得联系时，史佩莱说：“我的想法和你们一样，我们不能冒险回去，不然走在路上只能挨

打。依我看，我们还不如直面而上去追赶这群恶棍呢。”

“我同意史佩莱先生的意见，我们可都不是怕死的人。不说别人，就说我吧，只要史密斯先生一声令下，我随时都会冲进森林和他们拼命。那些恶棍真是太可恶了，不就一个抵一个吗？怕什么！”庞库那夫说。

“能抵得了五个吗？”史密斯问。

“我和庞库那夫全副武装去吧，带着多卜……”史佩莱说。

“亲爱的史佩莱、庞库那夫，不要冲动，我们现在需要冷静下来考虑问题。如果我们已经摸清了海盗躲在荒岛的什么地方，那么我们是可以直接发动进攻的。但事实不是这样的，甚至恰恰相反，是他们探明了我们在哪里，直接攻击的会是他们。这一点不用怀疑。”史密斯说。

“可是，史密斯先生，他们不一定会打中我们的。”庞库那夫嚷道。

“赫伯特已经被打中了，庞库那夫，而且你再想想，你们离开牲畜栏，海盗们肯定看得很清楚，他们知道这里只有我和一个受伤的孩子，难道不会任由你们进森林，转而攻击我们吗？”史密斯说。

“没错，史密斯先生，我真是气糊涂了。这里什么都有，他们一定会想尽办法来抢夺的，你一个人当然阻止不了他们。”庞库那夫心里憋着气，但又无可奈何地说。

“要是在‘花岗宫殿’就好了。”

“如果在‘花岗宫殿’，情况就完全不一样了。在那里，我们可以把赫伯特留给一个人来照顾，其余三个人就能去森林搜索，而我也就不用再

有后顾之忧了。现在我们是在牲畜栏里，所以最好的办法就是在大家能走的时候一起走。”史密斯又说。

史密斯的话让史佩莱和庞库那夫无法再反驳，他们清楚地知道，史密斯说的是对的。

“如果阿埃童还活着就好了，那个可怜的人，到我们集体没多长时间。”史佩莱说。

“是不是他已经死了？”庞库那夫用一种异样的声音问。

“怎么？庞库那夫，你是觉得海盗不会杀他？”史佩莱问。

“我想，如果阿埃童对他们有利，他们就不会杀他。”

“什么意思？你认为阿埃童见了他以前的同伙，就会忘记我们……会背叛我们？”

“这很难说！”庞库那夫说的时候，也觉得有些不对，所以声音轻了很多。

“庞库那夫！”史密斯一把抓住了庞库那夫的胳膊。

“你有这想法是不对的，如果你真是这么想的，我很伤心。我敢担保阿埃童绝对是个忠实可靠的人，他不会背叛我们！”

“我也敢担保！”史佩莱补充说。

“对不起！史密斯先生，我错了！我不该这么想，我怎么会这么想呢？完全没有根据。我已经昏头了，每天关在牲畜栏里很烦，整天胡思乱想，心里不安。”庞库那夫不停地说。

“镇定点！庞库那夫。”史密斯冲庞库那夫说完，又转向史佩莱：“亲爱的史佩莱，你觉得还要多长时间，我们就能抬赫伯特回‘花岗宫殿’了？”

“现在不好说，赛莱斯，我们一疏忽，很可能会导致严重的后果。虽然他现在一天比一天好，但身体还很虚弱，我看……也许……差不多要八天吧。嗯！我们不能急，慢慢来，再等等！”史佩莱说。

还要八天，那时候已经到12月初了。如今，春天已过去两个月了，天气好的时候，已经很热了。林肯岛的森林也都恢复了生机，非常茂盛。按季节来看，也是收割的时候。所以如果一切顺利的话，他们不仅要搜寻全岛，而且还要下地干活。

由此可见，被困在牲畜栏里的他们，损失可想而知。然而，虽然内心焦急万分，但他们还需要忍耐，这是不得不做的让步。

有几次，史佩莱在多卜的陪同下，冒险去了栅栏外巡视。在巡视过程中，他始终将手放在扳机上，随时准备迎接战斗。

最终，他不仅没有遇到危险，也没有发现可疑的迹象。因为只要有一点危险存在，多卜都会提醒他的，但没有，在整个过程中，多卜始终没叫。甚至可以说，在当时，他不需要顾虑什么，也许海盗们在荒岛的其他地方正做着坏事。

11月27日，史佩莱再次出去，并走向了山的南部，冒险进了四分之一英里的森林。这次，多卜似乎嗅到了意外情况。它没有像往常一样漫不经心，而是焦躁地来回跑着，不停地在野草和灌木丛中穿梭。

史佩莱紧紧地跟着多卜，一面叫它的名字，唤起它的注意，一边注

意着周边的环境，甚至还躲在了树后，随时准备开枪。但也许多卜嗅到的并不是人，因为根据以前的习惯，在嗅到陌生人时，它会发出沉闷的怒吼，但现在它并不是这样吼叫，可见附近没有危险，也没有危险分子。

多卜还在继续不安地在前面四处嗅，史佩莱悄悄地跟在了它的身后。突然，多卜冲向了一丛茂密的灌木丛，接着又衔回一块破布给史佩莱。

史佩莱拿着这块有些肮脏的破布，飞快地回到了牲畜栏。居民们仔细看了一下，认出是阿埃童背上的一块毡子，这是“花岗宫殿”独家生产的，所以不会错。

“庞库那夫，看到没有，遭到不幸的阿埃童是反抗过的。只是海盗们将他硬拖走了，你现在还怀疑他吗？”

“不怀疑了，绝不怀疑，史密斯先生，我早就后悔这么想了。但通过这件事，我们也可以得出一个结论。”

“什么结论？”史佩莱问。

“从这块毡子我们就能看出，他们并没有在牲畜栏将阿埃童杀死，而是架走了他。所以说，他有可能还活着。”

“是的，确实有这个可能。”史密斯沉思了片刻说。

此刻，他们对阿埃童没有死还抱有一些希望。

以前，他们常想，阿埃童一定是像赫伯特一样遇到了袭击，被枪打中了。如果并没有打死他，而是架到了荒岛上的某一个地方，是不是可

以说他目前只是他们的俘虏？或者是海盗中有人认出了他，知道他曾和他们是一伙的，而且还是他们的首领，是个化名为本·吉奥兹的澳洲伙伴，会不会妄想让他再入伙呢？因为如果能说服阿埃童成为他们的人，对他们一定大有好处。

经过一番分析，大家觉得这件事对他们算是个好事，因为他们有可能还会和阿埃童见面。站在阿埃童的角度来说，只要他还活着，即使是个俘虏，也会想办法逃生的。这对居民们来说，绝对是个有力的帮助。

“不管怎么说，如果阿埃童成功逃脱，一定会去‘花岗宫殿’找我们的。因为他并不知道海盗们的暗杀计划，也不知道赫伯特被打中了，更不会想到我们被困守在牲畜栏里了。”史佩莱说。

“希望他在‘花岗宫殿’，也希望我们能尽快回到那里去，不然这些恶棍虽然没办法毁我们的房子，但却能糟蹋我们的高地、农场和家禽场。”庞库那夫嚷嚷道。

庞库那夫自从来到林肯岛，已经完全是一副农夫做派了，所以心里时时刻刻牵挂着他的田地和庄稼。当然，还要说明一点的是，赫伯特比他们更想回到“花岗宫殿”，他知道大家在那里是最安全的，但为了他却不得不守在牲畜栏里。因此，他只有一个念头，那就是尽快离开。可什么时候才能离开呢？他觉得自己已经可以承受移动了，而且回到“花岗宫殿”那面对大海，有着清新空气的房子，对他的身体也很有好处。

有好几次，赫伯特催促史佩莱，但史佩莱始终没有说离开，理由很简单，他的伤口还没好，在移动过程中，很可能使伤口重新拉伤。

不过，不久之后发生的一件事，让他们又不得不答应赫伯特，带他离开。当然，他们绝对没有想到，因为这个决定，最终带给他们的是更

大的悲伤。当然这都是后话了。

决定离开是在11月29日的晚上，差不多七点钟的时候，几个人在赫伯特的床前正说着话，突然听到了多卜急促的叫声。

史密斯、庞库那夫和史佩莱急忙抓起枪，跑了出去。他们看到多卜在栅栏底下又叫又跳，像是很高兴的样子。

“看来是有人来了。”

“肯定是！”

“好像不是敌人。”

“是那普来了吗？”

“说不定是阿埃童呢。”

三个人的话还没说完，有黑影就从栅栏上翻了下来，并跳进了牲畜栏。居民们一看，是狙布。多卜高兴地向狙布表达了它的亲热和欢迎。

“狙布，你怎么来了？”庞库那夫叫道。

“一定是那普让它来的。”史佩莱说。

“很可能它身上有信。”史密斯说。

庞库那夫跑到猩猩狙布面前。确实如此，如果有什么情况需要传递给主人的话，没有比选择狙布更好的了，因为它可靠又行动敏捷。同时，它不仅能去居民们没法去的地方，甚至多卜没办法去的地方，它也能去。

史密斯没有猜错，狙布的脖子上确实挂了一个小口袋，而小口袋里就有一封信，是那普写的。

当看到这封信后，史密斯和他的伙伴们的愤怒和懊恼可想而知，因为纸条上写着：

星期五早上六点钟的时候，高地遭到了海盗的侵袭。那普。

这情况让居民们气得你看看我，我看看你，一句话都说不出。怎么办？海盗们在观望壁，也就意味着他们准备践踏和毁坏庄稼。

赫伯特在看到他们沮丧的脸后，猜出情况不妙了。等到看见狙布，他就更能确认，“花岗宫殿”一定是遇到了威胁。

“史密斯先生，我们回‘花岗宫殿’吧。我能走，经得起路上的劳累，我可以的。”赫伯特说。

史佩莱走到赫伯特身边，看了他一会儿说：“那我们抬你走吧！”

不过，到底该用担架抬还是用阿埃童架过来的大车呢？这个问题很快就找到了答案，因为用担架对受伤的赫伯特来说显然更合适一些。但抬担架需要两个人，也就是说，如果遇到危险，就只有一个人去防御了。相反，如果用大车，就有两个人来防御。至于路途中的颠簸，要是把床上铺的垫子铺在车上，小心前行的话，不就避免了吗？这一点他们能办到。

第二天一早，他们决定出发。

大车被拉了过来，庞库那夫也很快套上了野驴，史密斯和史佩莱将赫伯特连同床上的垫子一起抬上了大车。天气很好，太阳从树叶中透射

过来，明晃晃的。

“枪都准备好了吗？”史密斯提醒大家。

史密斯和庞库那夫每人拿了一支双筒枪，史佩莱拿着一把步枪。一切都准备好了，只等出发。

“有没有觉得难受？赫伯特？”史密斯问。

“史密斯先生，放心吧！我绝不会死在路上的！”赫伯特说。

赫伯特是用尽力气说的，在他坚强的意志下，虚弱的身体也散发出了能量。

史密斯心里有些难受，他犹豫着，并不想下这个决心。但不走又会让赫伯特失望，甚至因为郁闷而病情加重。

“出发！”史密斯终于说。

在牲畜栏的门打开后，知道什么时候该安静的多卜和狙布走在了前面。当大车出去后，门又被关上了。庞库那夫牵着拉着大车的野驴，慢慢地向前走。

本来他们想重新选一条小路，这样安全性会高很多。但那条小路需从树下穿过，大车走起来非常困难。所以，他们还是走了原路。这条路海盗们是非常熟悉的，但他们还是决定走。

史密斯和史佩莱走在大车的两边，随时准备迎战。其实，此时也许海盗们还在观望壁高地上。

显然那普是在看到了海盗们之后，才写信让狙布给带过来的。上面

所写的时间是早上六点钟。来惯了牲畜栏的猩猩，从“花岗宫殿”到牲畜栏用不上45分钟，所以，很可能在路上他们并不会遇到海盗。如果真要发生枪战，应该是在离“花岗宫殿”不远的地方才可能。

然而，居民们还是不敢马虎。拿着棍子的狙布，有时会和多卜走在前面，有时又会在路旁的森林探索，并没有发出警告声。

做着向导，领着拉着车的野驴慢慢向前走的是庞库那夫。

他们是早上七点钟离开牲畜栏的，一个小时候，5英里的路程他们走了4英里，没有发生任何危险。沿路的情况和感恩河的河口到格兰特湖之间，以及整个啄木鸟林一样，到处都是静悄悄的。

没有什么需要多卜和狙布发警报的，这片森林就和居民们第一天从气球上降落时一样寂静。

马上就要到高地了，再走一英里，他们就能看见硝甘河上的吊桥了。史密斯想，吊桥应该还好好地存在着。因为假设海盗们过了桥，绕过了高地周围的小河，为了谨慎起见，他们也一定会把小桥放下的，这样便于他们后退。

终于，他们通过树木之间的间隙，看见了海平线。大车继续前行，他们没准备舍弃大车。此时，庞库那夫突然勒住了野驴的缰绳，用沙哑的嗓音愤怒地喊道：“这群强盗！”

居民们朝他看的方向望去，只见磨坊、棚屋和家禽场的房舍上空腾起了一股股的浓烟。浓烟里，有个人正在那里劳动——仔细一看是那普。

大家喊了一声，那普听见后，急忙跑了过来。

原来，海盗们在高地上做了一番破坏后，离开了这里，已经差不多有半个小时了。

“赫伯特先生呢？”那普问。

史佩莱来到大车旁边，见赫伯特已经又昏迷了……

第十章

居民们没有再考虑海盗会给“花岗宫殿”带来什么危害，也不再考虑高地遭受的损失了。他们没心情考虑这些，因为赫伯特的病情特别危急。此次路途中的劳累和颠簸，有没有引起什么致命的内伤？史佩莱不敢确定，这使他们陷入到了深深的绝望中。

大车到了河道拐弯处后，他们用树枝做了一个担架，将人事不省的赫伯特连垫子一起放在了担架上。十分钟之后，史密斯、史佩莱和庞库那夫抬着赫伯特到了峭壁下，大车被那普带到了观望壁的高地上。

进了升降梯后不久，赫伯特就躺在了“花岗宫殿”他自己的床上。

居民们费尽了心思，总算让赫伯特苏醒了过来。醒来后的他，在看到自己躺在“花岗宫殿”的房间时，笑了。不过由于太过虚弱，所以一句话都没说出来。

他的伤口由于还没有愈合，史佩莱怕重新裂开，又检查了一遍，所

幸伤口没有开裂。

但为什么他会昏迷呢？赫伯特的病情到底恶化到了什么程度？在史佩莱刚刚给他检查完后，赫伯特就因为高烧又昏睡过去了。

史佩莱和庞库那夫始终在他床边，没有离开一步。而在这个时间里，史密斯也将牲畜栏里发生的事告诉了那普，那普也向主人讲述了高地上发生的事。

原来，海盗们前天夜里出现在了森林边缘的硝甘河渡口。当时，那普正在家禽场附近。看到有个海盗想渡河时，他开了一枪，因为在晚上，他也不知道那一枪打中有没有。不过，海盗却并没有因为那一枪而退缩，那普也差点来不及退回“花岗宫殿”。在“花岗宫殿”里，他至少是安全的。

可要怎么办呢？海盗们马上就要破坏高地了，该如何阻止他们？有什么办法通知主人吗？在牲畜栏的主人们情况又是怎样的？史密斯和其他人是11月11日就去牲畜栏的，现在都29日了，他唯一知道的情况就是多卜带来的坏消息：阿埃童失踪、赫伯特受重伤，史密斯、史佩莱和庞库那夫被围困在牲畜栏。

那普完全不知道该怎么办了。他不停地问自己怎么办，他不怕什么，因为海盗们根本就无法进“花岗宫殿”，可农场、家禽场和田地就要任凭他们糟蹋了吗？如果能把消息传递给主人，主人也许能知道该怎么解决这件事，这不是很好吗？

就这样，那普想到了狙布，决定写封信让狙布带到牲畜栏去。那普知道猩猩很聪明，这是很久以前就证明过的。因为以前他们只要一提“牲畜栏”这几个字，狙布就知道是什么意思。同时，大家也许还记

得，狙布曾陪着庞库那夫驾车去过牲畜栏。

狙布只需穿过森林就能到达那里，而且就算是海盗们看见了狙布，也会将它当成一只猩猩来看待，不会把它当成“敌人”的。

想到这里时，那普没有犹豫，马上写好了信，并系在狙布的脖子下面。随后将它带到了“花岗宫殿”门口，将一根长绳子放到了地面，不停地对狙布说：“狙布！牲畜栏！狙布！牲畜栏！”

猩猩狙布知道了他的意思，抓住绳子，敏捷地滑到了海滩上，然后在黑暗中消失了，丝毫没有在海盗们发现。

“做得好！那普！不过，如果不通知我们，可能会更好一些。”史密斯说。

他想到了赫伯特，因为这次移动，严重地影响了他伤口的复原。

从那普说的话可以看出，海盗一个都没到沙滩上来。为什么不来，是因为他们搞不清楚岛上有多少人，甚至可能以为岛上有一支部队在防卫“花岗宫殿”？

因为他们不会忘记，当他们从双桅船上到小船时，山石的高处和低处，都有枪弹向他们打去。他们认为这些人一定是故意不暴露行踪。不过，观望壁的高地上却没有“花岗宫殿”的炮火掩护，他们能够上去，于是就肆意破坏起来。

他们抢走了很多东西，并放火烧毁了那里的房舍，直到居民们回来前半个小时，他们才离开。当时，他们以为居民们还被困守在牲畜栏。

看到海盗们离开，那普才跑了出去。他冒着暴露被打死的危险，爬

上了高地，想去扑灭那熊熊的火焰。虽然并不起什么作用，但直到大车到达森林边缘，听到叫他，他才作罢。

这就是那普这边的情况。海盗的存在，成了林肯岛上居民们的一个祸根。过去的他们，生活得多么幸福和快乐，但现在，他们却不断地要被海盗骚扰、袭击，很可能还会有更大的危险在等待着他们。

史佩莱和庞库那夫留在了“花岗宫殿”，守在了赫伯特床边。史密斯则和那普一起，去了解被海盗破坏和殃及的范围。

令他们庆幸的是，海盗们始终没有到“花岗宫殿”脚下来。不然，“石窟”的工场就要遭殃了。不过，即使“石窟”遭到了损坏，损失也比观望壁的损失小。

史密斯和那普慢慢地向感恩河方向走去。他们爬到了河的左岸，但却没有发现海盗，即使是河对岸以及丛林深处，都没有可疑的迹象。

看来，现在有两种可能：一种是海盗们在通往牲畜栏的路上看见了居民，并知道他们要回“花岗宫殿”了；另一种可能是在他们破坏了高地后，钻进了啄木鸟林深处，随后沿着感恩河跑了，所以并不知道居民们回来。

如果是第一种，说明他们又去牲畜栏了，因为那里已经没人了，但却有很多资源；如果是第二种，那么他们一定是找到了能安身的地方，正在等待时机重新进攻。所以，居民们想要采取守势，是绝对没有问题的，但尽快肃清这些强盗的计划却要因为赫伯特的伤势加重而推迟了。

确实，以他们现在的力量，只能勉强对付这帮海盗，但现在谁也离不开“花岗宫殿”。

史密斯和那普来到了高地，难过地看着被践踏的田地：成熟的麦穗倒在了地上，农场和菜园都被毁了。

幸好还有些种子在“花岗宫殿”里保存着，以后还能将菜园恢复。

被烧毁的地方有家禽场的外壁，野驴的厩房等等。此时，一些受到惊吓的动物还惊恐地在地面上徘徊。海盗焚烧时躲在湖上的飞禽，此时也飞回来了，正在岸边戏水。

虽然一切还可以重建，但看到被损坏的这些，史密斯的脸色比平时差了很多。他难以抑制自己的愤怒，但却什么都没说。在又看了一眼被破坏和烧毁的田地及房舍后，他回到了“花岗宫殿”。

随后的几天，也是居民们在荒岛上过得最痛苦的日子。因为赫伯特的身体更虚弱了，好像是因为抵抗力下降，引发了一种疾病。史佩莱担心自己没有能力与这逐渐恶化的疾病做斗争。

赫伯特几乎一直处在昏迷中，有时甚至还出现了神志不清的状态。居民们没有药品，唯一的药品就是清凉的饮品。虽然发热情况并不严重，但不久之后，就会每隔一段时间发一次烧。这是12月6日那天，史佩莱第一次发现的。

他发现，赫伯特的手指和耳鼻的颜色都发生了变化，惨白一片。接着，他发现赫伯特的身体开始发抖，打着哆嗦，身上也起了很多鸡皮疙瘩。再一摸脉搏，非常微弱，也不正常。

赫伯特口渴得厉害，皮肤也越来越干燥，时不时还会出现痉挛症状。没过一会儿，赫伯特的脸上开始发烧发烫，脉搏越跳越快，之后就是一身大汗，最后，热度又降低了。

这种情况隔一段时间就会出现一次，一次又会持续五个小时。

史佩莱一直坐在赫伯特床边，他知道，赫伯特染上了疟疾。现在必须想尽办法医治才行，不然情况会更严重。

“要想治好他，必须有退热药才行。”史佩莱对史密斯说。

“退烧药？从哪里来退烧药？我们既没有奎宁树皮，也没有硫酸奎宁，怎么办？”

“是的，可也许柳树皮能替代奎宁，湖边有柳树。”史佩莱说。

“那我去削些来试试！”史密斯说。

史佩莱说得没错，柳树皮、七叶树皮，还有冬青树叶及蛇根草，全都可以做奎宁皮的代用品。虽然它没有奎宁皮那么见效，但在没有办法的情况下，也不妨用用。

史密斯从一棵黑柳树上削了一些树皮，拿回到了“花岗宫殿”，由于无法提取其精华，他们只能不经加工就使用。在把树皮捣成碎末后，当晚就让赫伯特吃了下去。

这一夜就这么过去了，虽然赫伯特的神志还不是很清醒，但却没有发烧。第二天的时候，热度也没有上升。

庞库那夫的心里又有了希望，但史佩莱却不这么看，因为他觉得也许发烧是隔天的，可能再过一天才会复发，所以他焦急地等着第二天。

还有一点让史佩莱很不安，那就是赫伯特完全进入了虚脱状态，甚至还出现了眩晕。更让史佩莱害怕的是，赫伯特的肝脏充血了。这说

明，不久后，赫伯特神志不清的情况会更严重，甚至还会影响到大脑。

史佩莱对这种并发症简直束手无策，他将史密斯拉到一边说：“赫伯特患上了一种恶性疟疾。”

“恶性疟疾？不会的，史佩莱。恶性疟疾不可能自发产生，必须有这种病菌潜伏才会发病。”史密斯说。

“是的，我明白。赫伯特很可能是在荒岛沼泽地时就感染上了这种病菌。他刚刚已经发作过一次了，如果连续发作三次的话，他就完了。”

“柳树皮还有用吗？”

“没用了。如果没有奎宁来防止恶性疟疾第三次发作的话，他就没命了。”

他们的谈话幸好没被庞库那夫听到，不然一定会让他发疯的。

12月7日，整整一天，史密斯和史佩莱都焦急难耐，但却又没有丝毫办法。

差不多中午的时候，赫伯特又发作了第二次。这一次的发作，让赫伯特好像也意识到了自己将要不久于人世，他将胳膊伸向史密斯、史佩莱和庞库那夫。

这么年轻的生命就要结束了，太残忍了！这个心碎的场面，让史密斯和史佩莱都无法直视，更不要说庞库那夫了。他们急忙打发庞库那夫去了其他地方。

这次痉挛又持续了五个小时。很显然，他已经经不起第三次痉挛了。

当晚，赫伯特的神志更加恍惚，嘴里说着胡话。而他说的几句胡话，更让伙伴们伤心和心痛。他不停地呼喊着重童的名字，还不断恳求那位神通广大的神秘人。看来，神秘人的形象已经深深印在了他的脑海里了。最后，像是耗尽了所有体力，他再次陷入到了完全虚脱状态。

有好几次，史佩莱都以为赫伯特已经离开了人世。

12月8日，赫伯特依然是在昏迷和痉挛中度过的。他骨瘦如柴的手一直紧紧地抓着床单。居民们又给他吃了一些捣碎的树皮，但史佩莱已经不抱什么希望了。

“如果明天一早没有有效的退烧药，赫伯特肯定会死掉的。”史佩莱说。

黑夜来临了，也许这是这位勇敢善良、聪明可爱的少年的最后一夜。在同年龄段的孩子中，他是那么出色，居民们也像喜欢自己的孩子一样喜欢他。

然而，这一夜，却是他生命攸关的一夜。治疗这种可怕疾病的药，那唯一能让他起死回生的药，林肯岛上根本找不到。

这一夜，赫伯特更加迷糊，肝脏充血的现象也更严重了，甚至连大脑都受到了感染，他已经认不清人了。

再来一次痉挛，他必死无疑，他还能活过第二天吗？

太难了！在不断的发烧中，他好像已经耗尽了全部体力，如同一个

死人躺在那里。

凌晨三点钟，赫伯特发出了一声可怕的叫声，那声音像是因为极度痉挛造成的身体分裂。那普当时离他并不远，听到后马上跑了过去。

而就在此时，多卜也发出了奇怪的叫声。

居民们全都冲进了赫伯特的房间，他们想让垂死中挣扎的他安静下来。

赫伯特差点就要滚到床下去了。史佩莱急忙抓住了他的胳膊，他脉搏的跳动在逐渐加快.....

早上五点钟的时候，太阳透过窗户，照进了“花岗宫殿”。它好像是在告诉大家，这是个晴朗的早上，不过，这也可能是可怜的赫伯特的最后一天。

在一缕阳光照向床边的一张桌子时，庞库那夫指着桌子上的一样东西，惊叫了一声。

那是一个长方形的匣子，匣子上有个标签，上面写着：硫酸奎宁。

第十一章

史佩莱冲过去，拿起匣子将它打开，匣子里盛着约200克莱因的白色粉末。

在他尝了一口后，他长舒一口气，这是经过了提炼的、珍贵的奎宁，是最有效的退热剂。

现在必须马上让赫伯特把药喝下去，对于它到底是从哪里来的，怎么来的，以后可以讨论。

“端一杯咖啡来！”史佩莱说。

很快，那普端来一杯咖啡，史佩莱往里面加了大约18克莱因的奎宁，并将它喂给了赫伯特。

时间还来得及，赫伯特还没有发作第三次痉挛，他们多么希望痉挛永远不要再发作呀。

必须说明的一点是，如今，人人又充满希望了，因为在这紧要关头，在大家都已经绝望的时候，那股神秘的力量又发挥作用了。

几个小时后，赫伯特平静了很多。居民们这下可以讨论这是怎么回事了。此次的支援，陌生人比任何一次都明显。不过，他是怎么在夜里潜入“花岗宫殿”的？这是他们都不知道的，也是觉得不可思议的事情。这位像圣人一样的神秘人，行动和他本人一样神秘。

这天，他们每隔三个小时就要给赫伯特吃一次硫酸奎宁。

第二天，赫伯特的病情有了好转。当然，他还依然没有脱离危险，因为疟疾是会复发的，而且复发起来会更危险。不过，大家对他的照顾却越来越用心了。

现在他们手里有特效药，送药的人无疑又离他们很近，所以大家都充满了希望。

和以往每一次一样，他们没有失望。十天之后，也就是从12月20日起，赫伯特的身体开始慢慢恢复了。不过，体质还是很虚，只是不再发烧了。

为了身体，居民们对他的饮食严加控制，这个可怜的孩子为了早日痊愈，也非常听话，“医生”史佩莱怎么说他就怎么做。

在预计会发作第三次痉挛的时候，赫伯特没有发作，庞库那夫兴奋至极，像个刚从深渊里被解救出来的人一样，高兴地抱着史佩莱，抱得他快透不过气了。此后，庞库那夫便叫这位记者为史佩莱医生。

当然，真正救了赫伯特的“医生”并没有出现。

“一定要找到他！”庞库那夫不断地重复着这句话。对他来说，这个人是谁并不重要，重要的是他救了赫伯特，所以一旦被找到，他一定会带着十二分的热情来拥抱他的。

1867年的12月份很快就过去了，这年的年底，居民们遭受了严峻的考验。新的一年，也就是1868年的年初，天气晴朗，也很炎热，不过幸好有海风吹来，让他们感受到了一丝丝凉意。

赫伯特的身体恢复得很好，他的床在“花岗宫殿”的一个窗口旁，很容易就能呼吸到新鲜空气，这对他的身体恢复非常有利。随着身体恢复的还有他的胃口，在他可以补充营养时，那普做了鲜美可口的食物给他吃。

“有这么多好吃的，谁都想得疟疾了！”庞库那夫开玩笑说。

在这段时间里，海盗们并没有出现在“花岗宫殿”附近，而阿埃童也还没有下落。虽然史密斯和赫伯特非常希望找到他，但大家还是觉得这

个可怜的人很可能已经死了。当然，阿埃童到底怎么样，他们很快也会知道的，因为一旦赫伯特复原，他们就要去远征，而这次远征的结果也将有着非常大的意义。

他们必须向海盗报仇，但这需要动用全部的力量，所以他们怎么也要等上一个月时间。

好在赫伯特恢复得很快，肝脏不再充血，伤口也基本愈合了。

1月份的时候，他们的主要工作放在了观望壁，工作内容也很单纯：将被海盗糟蹋后残留的小麦、蔬菜等都贮藏起来。在那块被践踏的地方，他们捡了很多麦粒和植物，并准备在接下来的半个季度里重新播种。对于家禽场的外壁和牲畜栏的修复，史密斯也觉得可以过一个时期再做。因为在没有消灭这些恶棍的时候，很可能还会遭到破坏。如果再给他们第二次破坏的机会，那就太不值得了。

他们要等强盗全部消灭后再修复。

1月份的第二个星期，赫伯特能下床了。在刚开始的时候，他只是下床活动一个小时，接着是两个小时、三个小时……原本体质就健壮的他，因为年轻，身体恢复得也比一般人快。

18岁的赫伯特长得很高，一看就知道会成长为一个帅气的男子汉。

在史佩莱的严格要求下，赫伯特在经过一段时间的静心休养后，快速地恢复起来。月底时，他已经能在观望壁和海滩上散步了。

不仅如此，他还和庞库那夫、那普一起去洗过海水浴，结果对他的身体很有好处。史密斯觉得远征的时机已经成熟，随即便决定在2月15日出发。而这个时间段，也是一年中夜晚最清朗的时候，对他们搜索整

个海岛很有好处。

他们开始为这次有着非同意义的远征做准备。此次的出行非常重要，居民们也都下了决心，不达目的，决不回“花岗宫殿”。而这目的有两方面，一方面是歼灭海盗，如果阿埃童还活着，就把他救回来；另一方面就是找到那个无数次帮助他们的神秘人。

在整个林肯岛上，居民们彻底了解的地方主要是从兽爪角到颚角之间的整个东海岸，比如花皂沼地、格兰特湖周围、牲畜栏路和感恩河之间的啄木鸟林、感恩河流域和红河流域……当然，还有富兰克林山的支脉，也就是建牲畜栏的地方。

还有一些地方，他们曾探索过，虽然不是很彻底。比如兽爪角到甩尾角之间的华盛顿湾的宽阔海岸、沼泽森林海岸，以及绵延到鲨嘴湾港口那看不到边的沙丘……

没有探索过的主要有覆盖蛇盘半岛的整片森林，感恩河右边的整个地区，跌水河的左岸，支撑富兰克林山的东、西、北三面支脉，以及山谷的荒野等等，这些没有探索过的地方不仅隐秘，而且有差不多上千亩地方，所以必须深入探索。

不过，也许最好他们能先去牲畜栏，因为很可能那些海盗为了生活和自身安全，又回到那里去了。当然，也有两种情形存在，一种就是海盗们再次将牲畜栏破坏，那么他们就是过去了也阻止不了；另一种情况就是海盗正好在里面。如果真是第二种情况，那么他们就是等回来后再赶他们也不迟。

经过一番讨论，居民们决定暂时不去牲畜栏，先穿过森林去甩尾角。

穿越那段森林需要用斧头开道，从“花岗宫殿”到半岛末端，他们必须开辟出一条16到17英里的路程来。

他们的大车完好无损，那头野驴也已经休息了很长时间，可以远征了。于是，他们将食品、露营用品和各种所需工具，甚至轻便火炉也都装在了大车上。

“花岗宫殿”的武器在目前来说是非常齐全的，所以他们从中精挑细选出了一些火药和武器带在身上。

当然，有一点他们必须要注意，那就是很可能海盗也在森林里游荡，走在密林深处的他们，很可能被海盗的冷枪打中。所以居民们一定要集体行动，不管遇到什么事，都不能擅自行动。

大家最终决定，“花岗宫殿”也不留一人，就算是多卜和狙布，也要随同一起远征。实际上也是，这样一个外人根本无法上去的住宅，完全不必去留守。

2月14日是个星期天，也是他们动身的前一天。这天，居民们整整休息了一天，并做了祈祷。

赫伯特的身体虽然恢复了健康，但还是有些虚弱，所以他们决定在大车上给他安排一个座位坐着。

虽然“花岗宫殿”牢不可破，但史密斯还是在第二天破晓时做了一些必要的安排。将以前用以攀爬的软梯，深深地埋在了沙里，以便回来时使用。而升降梯，他们一块块地拆了，拆得一点不剩。拆升降梯是由庞库那夫一个人在“花岗宫殿”做的，拆完后，他将一根分成两股的绳子，让人在下面拉着，然后他从上面系下来。当绳子扯下来后，上面的平台

和海滩之间也就断绝交通了。

出发的这天天气很好。

“真暖和啊！”史佩莱说。

“呵呵……史佩莱医生，我们在树荫下走的话，保证晒不到太阳。”庞库那夫说。

“出发吧！”

史密斯一声令下，他们便向“石窟”方向走去。大车放在“石窟”前的海滩上，史佩莱让赫伯特上了车，并让他至少要在几个小时里坐车前行，赫伯特只好听从“医生”的话。

一行人出发了，走在最前面的是史密斯、史佩莱和庞库那夫，跟在他们身后的是拉着野驴的那普，接下来是大车，以及车上坐着的赫伯特。多卜对这次的远征表现得很兴奋，一直都是蹦蹦跳跳的。

赫伯特在车上找了个位置让狙布坐，狙布很不客气地坐了上去。

他们绕过感恩河的拐角后，向左边走了一英里左右就过了桥。桥这边是通向气球港的大路，他们从路口向右拐进西遥森林。在刚刚走进西遥森林时，树木稀疏，大车通行完全没有问题。慢慢地，他们需要砍掉一些爬藤和灌木才能前行，当然，截至目前，他们还没有遇到严重的阻碍。

阳光通过浓密的枝叶投射到了地上，形成了阴影。看着树中珍品喜马拉雅杉树、洋松、橡皮树、龙血树……一棵接一棵，他们忍不住赞叹林肯岛这块宝地。除了树，森林里还有很多鸟，比如山鸡、啄木鸟、

雉.....应有尽有，当然还有各种鹦鹉，比如美冠鹦鹉、长尾鹦鹉等。有飞禽就会有走兽，像刺鼠、袋鼠和水豚一看到他们走近，便飞也似的逃了。

这情景让他们想起了刚刚降落林肯岛，第一次打猎时的情景。

“这些飞禽走兽好像没有以前胆子大。从这里也能看出，海盗们曾经来过，所以在这儿一定能找到他们的踪迹。”

果不其然，他们找到了几处像是有人通过的足迹，也有一些被折断的树枝，应该是用来做记号的。还有些地方有灰烬，更有些黏土上有脚印。不过，他们没找到这些人露宿的迹象。

史密斯提醒大家不要打猎，因为很可能海盗们也在森林，一开枪就会惊动他们。即使要打猎，也要离开大车去打，不过留下大车没人看管也很危险。

下午的时候，他们离开“花岗宫殿”差不多有6英里了，前行的路越来越难走。为了穿过密林，他们不得不继续砍伐阻挡他们的树木。

密林中，多卜和狙布一直在打头阵，两个忠实的动物认真地执行着它们的任务。在它们前行一段回来后，如果不发出任何警告声，那么就可以确定前面是安全的，既没有海盗，也没有野兽。

在居民们眼里，不管是海盗还是野兽，都是动物，其凶残的本性也相似，他们不得不防。

这天晚上，他们露宿的地方离“花岗宫殿”有9英里左右，附近还有一条小溪，溪水直接流入了感恩河。以前，他们并不知道这里有条小溪，小溪的存在，让这一带的土地变得肥沃了很多。

走了一天，居民们都饿了，在饱餐了一顿后，他们开始安排怎么平安地度过这一夜。

如果只是要防御美洲豹之类的野兽，他们只需在帐篷周围点上火就行了。但现在他们还要防御海盗，而如果点火的话，不仅不会吓走他们，甚至还会将他们引过来，这非常危险。

因此，他们决定在漆黑的夜里度过。

当然，这样的夜晚必须有人守着才行，于是一致同意两人一班守夜，而且还是两小时换一次班。当然，赫伯特除外，虽然他一直要求参加守夜，但大家都没同意。于是，庞库那夫便和史佩莱一班，而史密斯则和那普一班。

值夜班的时候，他们会在营地周围站岗放哨。

夜晚虽然只有几个小时，但却是漆黑一片。当然，这漆黑与其说是因为没有太阳，倒不如说是因为那遮天蔽日的树叶。寂静的深夜，不时地传来美洲豹的怒吼和猿猴的叫声。听到同类叫，狙布总是表现得很郁闷。

这一夜总算是平安度过了。

2月16日，居民们继续向森林深处走去。前行中的障碍物越来越多，令他们烦闷而乏味。由于需要不停地用斧头开路，所以一天走下来，也不过才6英里路。

居民们对这些树充满了感情，并不舍得去砍那些高大美丽的树，只砍一些小树枝。当然，不砍大树的原因还有一点是费力又费时间。不

过，因为要选择性地砍树，开辟的道路变得非常曲折，大大延长了路程，增加了行走时间。

这天，赫伯特又发现了植物新品种，是他以前在岛上从来没发现过的。比如树蕨，这种植物的叶子就像泉水一样，向四面流淌开来。还有一种是野驴很爱吃的带长荚的刺槐，刺槐上长着一种香甜可口的果实，非常好吃。

同时，居民们还发现了几丛被誉为新西兰万树之王的卡列松。这些卡列松长势雄伟，树高达到了200英尺；枝干呈圆柱形，顶上有锥形绿叶。

这片森林里的动物品种，他们大都见过。他们还看见了一种澳洲特有的大飞禽——澳洲鸵鸟。这种鸵鸟很难接近，它身高5尺，有着褐色的羽毛，属于涉水鸟类。

多卜看到它后，拼命去追，没想到这种澳洲鸵鸟奔跑的速度非常快，远远地将多卜抛在了身后。

至于海盗们留下的印迹，居民们在一堆似乎刚刚熄灭的灰烬旁，发现了一些脚印。经过仔细检查并测量了脚的长度和宽度后，得出这是五个人脚印的结论。这说明，这五名海盗曾在这里露宿过。

只有五个脚印而不是六个。

“这里面没有阿埃童的！”赫伯特说。

“是啊，既然阿埃童没有和他们在一起，那么很可能是被海盗们杀了。这些恶棍连个窝都没有，不然我们会像追赶老虎一样去追赶他们的。”庞库那夫说。

“是啊！他们一定是在四处游荡，找机会做岛上的主人！”史佩莱说。

“他们想做岛上的主人？想做岛上的主人……”庞库那夫不停地喃喃着，像是有人用铁爪卡住了他的喉咙，话都说不出来了。好一会儿才说：“史密斯先生，我的枪里装着一颗什么样的子弹你知道吗？”

“不知道，庞库那夫！”

“就是那颗穿透赫伯特胸膛的子弹，我一定要用它打中那些海盗！一定要打中，我向你保证！”

不过，不管他们多么愤怒，多么想去报仇，但从他们观察的情况来看，都无法证明阿埃童还活着，他们再也见不到阿埃童了。

这天晚上，他们的露宿地点离“花岗宫殿”有将近14英里。史密斯估计，离甩尾角应该也不到5英里。

史密斯估算得没错，第二天他们就到了半岛的尽头。

绵长的森林被他们走完了，不过，他们没有找到海盗的藏身之处，也没有找到神秘的恩人的隐身之地……

第十二章

2月18日，居民们开始在甩尾角和瀑布沿岸一带的森林进行搜索。

这片区域宽度不超过4英里，位于蛇盘半岛的两岸，是他们要彻底搜查的区域。此片森林不仅树木高大，而且枝繁叶茂。从这些树的生长程度就能看出，这一带的土壤相对于其他地方而言，肥沃得多。

这部分森林，很可能会被人认为是从美洲或从非洲迁徙到这个温带地区的部分原始森林。为什么这么说呢？因为这些雄伟的大树周围的土壤比较热。原来，这里的土壤虽然表面湿润清凉，实际上内部却是火山的一部分。

森林中最常见的是卡列松和桉树，而这两种树都是高大雄壮。

来这片森林，居民们不是欣赏树木的，他们在心里早已经将这里列为加那利群岛第一岛屿。不过，令他们感到难过的是，林肯岛现在并不完全属于他们，已经被海盗占领了一部分，并玷污了部分领域的清白，包括这片美丽的森林。

所以，他们一定要将海盗消灭得干干净净。

居民们搜索得很仔细，但西海岸依然没有发现丝毫踪迹，甚至连脚印、断枝和灰烬都没有。

“在这里没发现他们的印迹并不奇怪。海盗们是从荒岛的拾箱角附近上岸的，在穿过花鳧沼地之后，便进入了西遥森林。随后，他们走的又差不多是我们从‘花岗宫殿’走出来的那条路，所以我们能在那边的森林发现他们的踪迹。但他们在发现这块地域不适合他们居住后，又向北走，最后找到了牲畜栏。由此可见，这里他们并没有来过。”史密斯对他的同伴们说。

“说不定他们又去牲畜栏了。”庞库那夫说。

“我觉得不会。他们肯定知道我们会去那边，所以牲畜栏对他们来说，仅仅只是仓库，不是他们的久留之地。”史密斯说。

“赛莱斯说得没错，我觉得，海盗们一定是将窝安在富兰克林山的支脉了。”史佩莱说。

“史密斯先生，那我们还是去牲畜栏吧，在那里将他们消灭掉。我们走这么远，只是在浪费时间。”庞库那夫大叫道。

“不，我们并没有浪费时间。我的朋友，别忘了我们这次来西遥森林，不仅仅是寻找海盗，还有别的目的，我们要寻找我们的恩人并报恩。庞库那夫！”史密斯说。

“那是没错，史密斯先生，不过我觉得恩人要是不想露面的话，我们是找不到他的。”庞库那夫说。

庞库那夫的话说到了点子上，而且也是大家的心里话。那位神秘的陌生人的住处，一定和他的人一样神秘莫测。

这天晚上，跌水河口停放着他们的大车。露宿时，他们照样设了值班人员守夜。现在，呼吸着新鲜空气，进行着户外活动的赫伯特，吹着凉爽的海风，又恢复成了一个非常健壮的年轻人了。

再出发时，他不再坐在车上，而是走在了队伍的前面。

2月19日，居民们离开了海岸河口的对面，那里有很多奇形怪状的石头，这些石头堆砌起来，形成了一幅奇异的图案。

随后，他们又去了河的左岸。以前，他们因为经常去牲畜栏，所以将这条路铺平了，平坦的道路离富兰克林山仅有6英里左右。

史密斯是这么打算的：他们先要仔细地观察河床里的山谷，然后慢慢地向牲畜栏附近进发。如果牲畜栏里真有海盗，就将他们消灭，然后把牲畜栏夺回来；如果那里没有海盗，他们就守在那里，这样既能伏击海盗，也能作为搜查富兰克林山的一个据点。

居民们马上同意了这个方案，因为他们都想尽快赶走恶棍，还荒岛一个太平。

富兰克林山有两大支脉，两大支脉又被一道峡谷分开，所以他们决定沿着这道峡谷前行。河岸上，杂木丛生，不过在一些高坡上，杂木却很少。这段崎岖的道路非常适宜打伏击，所以他们每走一步都非常小心。

多卜和狙布一直穿行在两旁的密林中，像是和对方比赛自己的灵活度一样。

一路上，他们没有发现有人走过，也没有痕迹证明这里或者附近出没过海盗。

傍晚五点钟时，大车停了下来。这里离牲畜栏的栅栏不到600英尺，因为栅栏被围成半圆形的一排树木遮住，所以看不清那里的情况。

在进入牲畜栏前，他们必须先侦察一番，以确定那里有没有海盗。海盗很可能就藏在附近，如果他们什么都不顾大摇大摆地进去，很可能会像赫伯特一样，送上门去被他们打，所以最好等到天黑时再去。

不过，史佩莱却觉得不能再等了，要马上侦察牲畜栏的情况。庞库那夫也忍不住了，说他愿意陪着史佩莱去侦察。

“不行！朋友们！等天黑再去吧！我可不能让你们冒这个险去暴露

自己。”史密斯说。

“不过，史密斯先生……”庞库那夫还想说什么，但被史密斯打断了。

“庞库那夫，求求你，不要冲动！”

“好吧！”庞库那夫嘴里答应着，但为了发泄，他还是像在船上做水手时那样，不断地痛骂海盗。

就这样，居民们守在大车旁，机警地注视着森林周围，并等待天黑的到来。

三个小时过去了，因为风势减弱的原因，树林里寂静异常，即使他们折断一根树枝，或者用脚踩在了干枯的树上，甚至不小心滑了一跤，都能听得清清楚楚。

多卜安静地趴在草地上，没有丝毫的不安。

八点钟的时候，天色已暗，这种时候最适宜侦察。史佩莱说他和庞库那夫去，史密斯答应了。多卜和狙布留下来和史密斯、赫伯特以及那普在一起。因为如果它们也跟着去，一旦突然叫起来，很可能会惊动海盗。

“千万要小心！这次你们过去，不是要抢牲畜栏的，而是要侦察里面的情况。”史密斯对史佩莱和庞库那夫说。

“知道了！”庞库那夫说。

两个人悄悄地走了。

由于树叶茂密，再加上天黑，三四英尺距离之外就什么都看不见了。史佩莱和庞库那夫小心翼翼地往前走，只要听到一点可疑的声音，就会停下来。

两个人之间保持着一定的距离，为的是缩小目标。其实，说心里话，他们在等待枪声。

从大车旁离开差不多五分钟后，两个人便来到了森林边缘的一块空地上，过了空地，他们就到牲畜栏的栅栏处了。

他们停在了这块没有树，因而有着朦胧光线的空地上。离牲畜栏大门还有近30英尺，门像是关着的。从森林边缘到栅栏，这30英尺的路程他们必须穿过，这段路程，用弹道学上的专业术语来说叫“危险区”。

其实，此时不管他们谁闯进了那个“危险区”，只要海盗在栅栏后面开一枪，他们都必倒无疑。所以，虽然史佩莱和庞库那夫都不是怕死鬼，但他们清楚地知道自己不能做无谓的牺牲品，这不仅对他们不好，而且还会影响同伴。如果他们被打死了，剩下的三个人又该如何抵抗这群恶徒？

庞库那夫认为海盗们一定是在牲畜栏里睡着了。见栅栏离自己那么近，急了，想要冲过去，却被史佩莱拉住了。

“等会儿，等会儿再行动！”史佩莱在庞库那夫耳边说。

庞库那夫焦急地握着枪，压制住自己想要冲出去的冲动，咒骂着海盗。

很快，这块空地上唯一的一道光线也没有了，四周一片漆黑。那黑暗像是一块黑布，从浓密的森林上空遮到了他们的头顶。富兰克林山像

是一道屏障，黑压压地挡在了西边的水平线上。纬度低的地方就是如此，而这种时候，也是他们前进的最好时机。

史佩莱和庞库那夫从到了森林边缘开始，眼睛便一刻不停地盯着栅栏。牲畜栏里好像没有人，顶部的那道黑线，比周围的环境更黑。他们看得很明白，那里没有什么模糊的影子。如果海盗们在栅栏的话，一定会留人站岗放哨，以防突袭的。

史佩莱抓住庞库那夫的手，匍匐着向牲畜栏方向行进。同时，他们随时做着开枪的准备。

在伸手不见五指的环境下，他们到了牲畜栏门口。

庞库那夫上前推门，但和他们想象的一样，门是关着的。但随即他又发现，外面的门没关。他觉得海盗们一定在牲畜栏里，因为这门只要从里面关上了，从外面是推不开的。

史佩莱和庞库那夫屏气凝神地听了一会儿，栅栏里没有任何声音，甚至连爱叫的莫伏鹿羊和山羊也没有发出一点声音。

怎么办？要不要翻过栅栏进到牲畜栏里面去呢？不可以，史密斯说过，只让他们打探。

确实，如果他们贸然进去了，绝对是种冒险。因为他们虽然有可能成功，但也有可能失败。在海盗们不知道他们会来时，突袭成功是有机会的。现在轻易地越过栅栏，会不会暴露了自己而失去突袭的机会？

史佩莱不想贸然进去，他觉得大家一起冲进去突袭的成功率更高。因为有一点是肯定的，栅栏前是没有人把守的，所以他们完全可以悄悄回去，然后商讨后再来突袭。

庞库那夫应该也有这种想法，所以在看到史佩莱转身匍匐时，也就跟着去了。

几分钟后，他们把情况汇报给了史密斯。史密斯想了想说：“好了，我有理由认为，强盗们是在牲畜栏里了。”

“等我们进去就知道了。”庞库那夫说。

“朋友们，去牲畜栏！”史密斯说。

“那我们的大车呢？留在森林里吗？”那普问。

“不！大车上有我们的军火和粮食。而且交起战来的时候，它还能做我们的堡垒。”史密斯说。

“那就向前进发！”史佩莱说。

他们拉着大车出了森林，悄悄地向牲畜栏行进。此时，夜色依然处在黑暗之中，四周就和庞库那夫、史佩莱匍匐前行时一样，没有一点声音。因为满地的杂草，所以踏在上面软绵绵的，没有一点声音。

居民们都做好了随时开枪的准备。狙布也听从了庞库那夫的命令，独自走在最后。那普用一根绳子拴住了多卜，避免它往前跑。

很快，他们就来到了空地面前。这里依然悄无声息。

一行人没有犹豫，径直向栅栏处走去，很快就过了“危险区”。在这个过程中，没有枪声响起。在到了栅栏前时，大车停了下来。那普拉住了野驴的缰绳，史密斯、史佩莱、赫伯特和庞库那夫则向门口走去，看门是不是从里面关上的。

不料，他们看到有扇门开着！

“怎么回事？”史密斯问庞库那夫和史佩莱。

两个人怔在那里。

“我发誓，刚刚这门是关着的。”庞库那夫说。

居民们犹豫了。刚才庞库那夫和史佩莱侦察时，海盗们在牲畜栏吗？毫无疑问，他们是在的，因为门是从里面关上的，只有他们能打开。可现在他们还在吗？是不是有一个海盗刚刚出去了呢？

这些问题全都涌进了居民们的脑子，他们不知道该如何解答这个棘手的问题。此时，赫伯特已经向栅栏处迈了几步，但又突然退了回来，他紧紧地抓住史密斯的手。

“怎么了？”史密斯问。

“里面有亮光！”

“你是说屋里？”

“是的！”

五个人一起看向那里，果然，屋子的窗户里，有微弱的光在闪烁。史密斯马上做出了决定。

“海盗们一定没有怀疑什么，所以才会聚在屋子里。现在这间屋子被我们包围了，也是我们唯一的机会。冲进去！”

居民们端着枪，走进了栅栏，外面只留下大车让狙布和多卜看管

着。进栅栏前，居民们还将獾布和多卜拴在了车上，避免它们乱跑。

几个人分成两边，史密斯、庞库那夫和史佩莱在一边，赫伯特和那普在另一边，他们沿着栅栏，向漆黑的牲畜栏里走去。

不久，他们来到了关着的房门前。

史密斯给大家做了个不要动的手势，然后走到窗前，向里面张望。

那盏亮着的灯在桌子上，桌子旁边是阿埃童的床铺。

床上躺着一个人。

史密斯突然惊讶地连退几步，用沙哑的嗓音喊道：“是阿埃童！”

居民们马上推开房门，冲到了屋里。

床上的阿埃童好像睡着了，脸上有因长期折磨而受的伤，手部和腕部也有着大片的伤痕。

史密斯弯下身，抓住他的胳膊叫道：“阿埃童！”

他们没有想到会在这种情况下看到他，而且是以这样的状态。

听到有人叫他，阿埃童睁开了眼睛。他怔怔地看了看史密斯后，又看了看大家。

“你们？怎么会是你们？”他大叫，露出了惊喜的神色。

“阿埃童！是我们！是我们！阿埃童！”史密斯不停地重复着。

“这是哪儿？”

“牲畜栏的房子里！”

“只有我们？”

“是的！就我们！”

“他们会回来的！快！快防备！”阿埃童大声叫着。

也许因为太过激动，他晕了过去。

“史佩莱，我们随时会遭到进攻。把大车马上拉到牲畜栏里来，然后闩上门，做好战斗准备！”

庞库那夫、那普和史佩莱出去了。他们一刻都不能耽误，否则，那大车就可能落到海盗手里。

在史佩莱和两个伙伴穿过牲畜栏，来到栅栏处时，多卜在栅栏外正低沉地咆哮着。

史密斯离开阿埃童，跑了出去，做着战斗的准备。赫伯特跟着他跑了出来，他们一齐看向能俯视牲畜栏的支脉顶峰——如果海盗们是埋伏在那里的话，绝对有将居民一个个打死的可能。

此时，月亮出现在像蒙了一层黑布的夜空，银色的月光洒向栅栏外面，将牲畜栏里那繁茂的树木、清清的小溪和遍地的绿草全都照亮了。靠山一边的房屋，以及一部分栅栏，也映在了皎洁的月亮下，只有对门的栅栏还是黑暗一片。

不久，一团漆黑的东西出现在了月光下，那是他们的大车。

在大家关门上闩时，史密斯听到门上传来一个声响。此时，多卜突

然挣脱了绳索，愤怒地狂叫着，向着房子右边跑去，那里也是牲畜栏的后边。

“准备战斗！朋友们！”史密斯大喊。

居民们端着枪，随时准备向敌人射击。

多卜还在不停地叫着，而狙布也向多卜追去，发出尖锐的叫声。

居民们跟着狙布向前跑，月光下，他们看到，在一棵大树覆盖的小溪岸边，横陈着五具尸体！

是海盗的尸体！是四个月前来到林肯岛，并上了岸的恶棍的尸体！

第十三章

怎么会发生这样的事情？是谁杀死了那些海盗？是阿埃童？不对，他刚刚还在担心海盗们会回来，让居民们做防备。

在说完那些话后，他就晕了过去。如今，他已经陷入到了昏迷之中，一动不动地躺在床上。

居民们百思不得其解。因为过度激动和兴奋，他们整整一夜都无法睡着，一直在阿埃童的房间等着，没有人再到海盗们死去的地方。不过，即使阿埃童醒来，也不一定会知道这些尸体是怎么来的，因为他连自己躺在什么地方都不知道。

当然，对于他失踪后发生的事，他应该能够叙述清楚。

和居民们分别了104天的阿埃童，第二天从昏迷中清醒过来了。他的精神不错，居民们也表现出了见到他时的喜悦心情。

阿埃童向居民们叙述了他失踪前后的事，虽然很简短，甚至只是说了他所知道的，但也着实算得上惊险。

去年11月10日，在他从“花岗宫殿”离开，来到牲畜栏的第二天，海盗们翻过栅栏，袭击了他，并将他绑了起来，堵上了嘴，带到他们躲藏的一个地方——富兰克林山麓的一个山洞。

原本这群海盗是想将他在第二天处决的，不料有个海盗认出了他原是澳洲的本·吉奥兹，便决定将他留下来。可以说，是本·吉奥兹挽救了他，如果他是阿埃童，肯定就被海盗们杀死了。

此后，阿埃童一直被原来的手下威逼利诱，让他入伙，并让他带领他们进入“花岗宫殿”，杀死全体居民，做这荒岛上的主人。

阿埃童早已不是本·吉奥兹了，现在的他已经改过自新，而且也得到了大家的宽恕，所以他情愿死，也不愿意出卖居民们。就这样，他被捆绑着、堵着嘴在山洞里待了近四个月。

而这群海盗，上岸不久就发现了牲畜栏，那里食物和日用品都很丰盛，也就成了他们赖以生存的东西，但却没有住在里面。

11月11日，两个准备到牲畜栏拿食品的海盗看到居民们来了，便向他们开枪，打中了赫伯特。打中赫伯特的那个人在开枪后就逃了回去，并向其他海盗炫耀，称他打死了一个居民。不过另一个却没有回来。

我们知道，另一个被史密斯刺死了。

得知赫伯特死了后，阿埃童的痛苦和绝望可想而知，他一想到居民们还剩下四个人，而且受着坏人的威胁就感到很难过。而当居民们因为赫伯特的受伤而在牲畜栏休养期间，海盗们也躲在山洞，很少出去，即使在抢掠焚烧了观望壁高地后，也怕居民们拿大炮轰击，所以隐藏在山洞里很长时间。

而在他们隐藏山洞的这段时间，他们更凶残地对待阿埃童，捆绑着他的手脚，即使他想逃走也不可能，唯有等死。这种情形一直维持到了2月份的第三个星期。海盗们为了不被居民复仇，很少离开山洞，仅去荒岛内陆或南岸一带打猎。不过，他们一直在等待机会，等待将居民全部掠杀的机会。

之后，阿埃童便没再听到居民们的消息了，甚至他以为自己再也没有机会见到他们了。有一段时间，经受不了虐待的阿埃童陷入到了虚脱状态，甚至连视觉和听觉都严重衰退了。有两天时间，他都处在人事不知的状态下。

“不过，史密斯先生，我是被绑在山洞里的，为什么会在这里？”阿埃童迷茫地问。

“是呀，还有那些海盗为什么会死在栅栏外？”史密斯反问他。

“什么？死了？他们死了？”阿埃童不顾自己虚弱的身体，从床上撑起了大半个身子，惊叫道。

他想爬起来，最后在大家帮助下起了床。居民们扶着他去了牲畜栏后的那条小溪边。

此时天已大亮。

河岸上躺着五名海盗的尸体，看样子死的时间并不长。

阿埃童愣在那里，史密斯和其他人也都一起默默地看着他。那普和庞库那夫在史密斯手势的指挥下，检查了那些尸体。尸体已经僵硬了。

尸体上没有显著的伤痕。

在他们又仔细查了一番后，庞库那夫在第一具尸体的额头上、第二具尸体的胸膛上、第三具尸体的后背上、第四具尸体的肩膀上、第五具尸体的腿上各发现了一个小红点。这种小红点是怎么来的，他们并不知道，也不知道这算不算是伤口。

“他们应该是在这里被打中的。”史密斯说。

“这是什么武器？”史佩莱大声问。

“应该是一种像闪电一样的武器。当然，我们不知道这是什么。”史密斯说。

“到底是谁做的呢？”庞库那夫问。

“岛上的正义人士。阿埃童，就是他把你带到牲畜栏的，这次他又再次发挥了神力。每次当我们做不到的时候，他都做到了。他总是在帮了我们后又避开我们。”史密斯说。

“我们去找他吧！一定要找到他！”庞库那夫说。

“是的，我们要找他，不过，在他不愿意见我们之前，我们是见不到这个创造了无数奇迹的圣人的。”史密斯说。

居民们被一个他们无法看到的人保护着，这让他们一下子觉得自己的行动没什么用处。而更让史密斯着急烦恼的，是这个大恩人让他有种失去自尊心的感觉，似乎恩人在帮助他们的同时又拒绝他们的感恩。

所以，在史密斯看来，从某种意义上来说，这个神秘的人降低了这种义举的价值。

“找吧！我相信，总有一天我们会向这位高傲的保护我们的人证明，我们不是一群忘恩负义的人。在我们能够报答他，为他尽一点点能力来表达我们谢意的时候，我相信，就算是付出生命，我们也会在所不惜！”史密斯说。

自此，林肯岛上的每位居民都下了决心，要用心搜寻。这位大恩人做的每一件事，都激励着他们，让他们想要解开这个谜。而要想解开这个谜，必须近距离地接近这位有着非凡能力的、神秘的人。

从小溪边出发，几分钟就走回了牲畜栏。在大家的精心照料下，阿埃童的身体也很快就康复了。

那普和庞库那夫将那五具尸体运到了离牲畜栏不远的森林里，埋了起来。随后，他们向阿埃童讲述了在他遭到囚禁时发生的事。阿埃童这才知道，赫伯特经历了生死考验，而居民们也经受了很多灾难。当时，他们都以为阿埃童被杀了，再也没有机会见到他了。

史密斯在讲完后说：“现在我们还要做一件事，因为我们的远征目的只完成了一件。虽然以后我们不用担心海盗了，但这次重新当上小岛的主人却不是靠我们自己的能力得来的。”

“嗯！我们去搜寻富兰克林山脉吧！那一带错综复杂，而且有很多

山洞。朋友们！如里能发现秘密，我就成了第一个迎接秘密的记者了。”史佩莱说。

“找不到救命恩人，我们就不回‘花岗宫殿’。”赫伯特说。

“对！凡是我們能够做到的，我们都要做到。不过，我还要说一遍，也许真的是只有他想见我们时，我们才能找到他。”史密斯说。

“那我们是不是要先住在牲畜栏？”庞库那夫问。

“是的！这里食物有很多，又正好靠近我们搜索的区域。再说了，必须去‘花岗宫殿’时，坐上大车，很快就能去了。”史密斯回答道。

“可以，不过我有个小小的意见！”庞库那夫说。

“什么？”

“现在天气一天好过一天了，别忘了，我们还要进行一次航海。”

“航海？”史佩莱问。

“对呀，我们要去岱波岛。如果我们不送封信到岱波岛，告诉来接阿埃童的苏格兰游船，他们是不会找到他的。当然，也许现在去都已经迟了。”庞库那夫说。

“庞库那夫，你想怎么去航海？”阿埃童问。

“当然是用我们的‘长风破浪号’了。”

“‘长风破浪号’，早就没有了！”阿埃童大声说。

“什么？没有了？到哪里去了？”庞库那夫一下子从座位上跳了起来。

“八天前，那群人在小港湾发现了它，想乘它航海，但……”阿埃童没有说完，庞库那夫就插话道：“但……什么？”

他的心跳得厉害。

“他们没有鲍勃·哈维掌舵，船就撞在了石头上，撞碎了。”

“天啊！真是些强盗、土匪、恶棍！不要脸的恶棍！”庞库那夫气愤地大骂起来。

“庞库那夫，没事的，我们还可以再造一只，造一只更大的。我们有全部的铁器，还有双桅船上的索具。”赫伯特拉着他的手，安慰他说。

“可是一只三四十吨的船，怎么也要五六个月才能造好！”庞库那夫沮丧地说。

“我们可以利用好时间的，看来今年是去不了岱波岛了。”史佩莱说。

“庞库那夫，冷静点！事情已经这样了，急也没用。也许晚点去岱波岛，对我们没有坏处！”史密斯说。

“‘长风破浪号’，我可怜的‘长风破浪号’！”庞库那夫喃喃着。“长风破浪号”是他最引以为豪的船，现在却没有了，他能不心痛吗？

没有了“长风破浪号”，对居民们来说，确实很惋惜。大家也一致同

意，再造一只船。做完这个决定后，他们便又要开始在荒岛最隐秘的地方搜寻了。

2月19日破晓，居民们出发了，这次他们总共用了一个星期。由于山麓支脉和无数分支形成了地势复杂的谷地和丘陵，所以这些地方，以及富兰克林山的内部都可能成为他们的搜索目标。这些地方如果真有人居住，是很难被人发现的。因为山谷的地形复杂，所以史密斯带领大家顺次搜索。

首先，他们去了通向火山南部的山谷，那里是跌水河最先流过的地方，也是海盗们躲藏的地方。阿埃童带大家去了那个他之前被囚禁的山洞。山洞和阿埃童离开前没有什么区别，里面还是能找到不少火药和粮食，那都是海盗们从别处搬来，藏在这里的。

这个山洞附近的山谷里，都被枞树和其他树木覆盖了，山谷里每处都搜遍了。当他们绕过西南支脉的拐角时，便进入了一条峡谷。峡谷的景致有些像分布奇形怪状石头的那个海滨，里面树木稀疏，乱石林立。

这一带也是野山羊和莫伏鹿羊经常纵跳嬉戏的地方。

从此处开始，也就到了林肯岛最荒芜的地方了。不过，虽然富兰克林山向各处分散的山谷有很多，但和峡谷及牲畜栏那里一样，生长着树林和牧草的不过只有三条山谷。

牲畜栏的山谷向西靠近跌水河河谷，向东靠近红河河谷。这两股溪流均是由附近山涧汇合而成的。这些溪流让附近的土地变得潮湿肥沃起来。而当溪水流到下游，和许多支流汇合后，又形成了河流，比如啄木鸟林的一些支流汇合形成感恩河就是这种情况。

这些河流延伸后形成了无数的溪流，进而使蛇盘半岛的土壤因为有了水的滋润而肥沃起来。

这三条河谷周围有很多溪流，不管三条中的哪一条，都是很好的藏身之地，最适合人居住。不过，他们搜查了每一条山谷，依然没有发现人的踪迹。

神秘的陌生人的住所，会在峡谷深处、乱石丛中吗？或者是在蜿蜒崎岖的北部山峡或熔岩流过的地方？

富兰克林山的北边有两条山谷，这两条山谷宽而不深，里面很少有草木。谷底的熔岩上，有一些火山岩石和矿石，零散地堆积着。这些地方他们都要长时间搜索的，那成千上万的洞窟，虽然不适宜住人，却也因为隐蔽，值得一搜。

不要说洞窟，就是一些阴暗的地道，他们都要进去看看。这些地道应该是火山爆发时形成的，因为喷出过火焰，所以洞里明显有熏黑的痕迹。他们举着火把，穿过了黑暗的走廊，直入深山最深处，连里面一些很小的洞隙也都看过了。

有些比较浅的地道，虽然不深，却也是阴森森的。这些自然形成的古老地道，由于没人走过，也没人动过里面的岩石，所以还保持着火山喷发时的形状。虽然阴暗且荒凉，但史密斯不得不承认，这里并不是寂静到没有任何声音的，因为在他们走进一个深达几百英尺的阴暗山洞底部时，他突然听到远处传来低沉的轰隆声，这种声音因为有了岩石的回响，使其变得更大、更响。

史密斯身旁的史佩莱听了一会儿，最后认定，这种声音的出现，很可能是因为火山底下发生着化学变化，火山要复燃了。

“难道是火山没有熄灭的缘故？”史佩莱问。

“我们上次探索过火山口后，很可能又发生了一些变化。任何一座经历过火山爆发的山口，都可能还会爆发。”史密斯说。

“不过，要是富兰克林山再次火山爆发，会给林肯岛带来危险吗？”史佩莱担心地问。

“应该不会吧！火山口如同一只安全阀门，因为它的存在，烟和岩浆会喷发出来，而且只是从这个火山口喷发。”史密斯说。

“那是不是可以说，如果岩浆形成了一个新的出口，而且是向着岛上的某个富饶地方喷的，对林肯岛就有威胁了？”

“亲爱的史佩莱，为什么你觉得它会形成新的出口，不走原来的道呢？”史密斯问。

“火山未必会按常理出牌，是很捉摸不定的。”史佩莱说。

“你应该明白，富兰克林山的斜度决定了山涧的水是向着我们探索的山谷流的，如果想要改变水流方向，除非有地震，改变地质的中心。”史密斯说。

“发生地震也不是不可能的事。”史佩莱说。

“嗯！也许，地下的力量休息了很长时间后，极易爆发地震。如果真是这样，亲爱的史佩莱，真要是火山爆发起来，必定会给我们带来严重的后果。希望火山不会爆发。当然，这是我们无法阻止的，对不对？即使真的发生了火山爆发，观望壁应该也不会受到很大的威胁，因为观望壁与富兰克林山之间的这部分很低，即使岩浆向格兰特湖流，也只会

落在沙丘和鲨嘴湾附近。”

“应该不会这么快，山顶上还没有火山爆发前出现的烟。”史佩莱说。

“没错，我昨天仔细看过，山顶的火山口没有一丝烟雾。不过因为经过的时间长了，喷火口下是会堆积一些石块和凝结了的熔岩的。因为累积过多，很可能会把那安全阀堵住。不过，在第一次火山爆发时，那障碍就被排除了。所以我们的林肯岛犹如一个锅炉，而火山口就是烟囱。我敢说，亲爱的史佩莱，锅炉是不会因为受压而爆炸的。当然，火山最好不要爆发。”

“可我们刚才绝对没有听错，里面是在发出一种声音。”史佩莱说。

“你说得没错，里面是有动静，但我们无法估算出它的能量，也无法估算出它会造成什么样的后果。”史密斯又听了一会儿说。

两个人从地道里出来，把情况告诉了其他伙伴。

“真是太好了！火山要来就来吧，只要它高兴来，会有人治它的。”庞库那夫高兴地嚷嚷着。

“谁会治它？”那普问，一脸茫然。

“当然是那位有着非凡能力的圣人了。那普，这位好心的圣人，如果火山张开了它的大口，他一定会有办法将它堵住。”

由此可见，在庞库那夫心里，是多么敬仰那位屡次帮助他们的神秘人，他是用对待神灵的态度来对待他的。他能有如此想法，也很正常，因为这股神秘的力量，已经出现过很多次了，每一次都用一种令他们无

法想象的方式爆发。

所以说，他的力量是无穷大的并不夸张。此外，他能很巧妙地让居民们找不到他，即使他们用尽心思，用非凡的热情来找，也找不到。

从2月19日到2月25日，整整七天时间，居民们将林肯岛的整个北部地区都找遍了，连最隐蔽的地方都找了，还是没有。他们甚至连岩石都没放过，一个个地敲打，还搜查了富兰克林山的边缘，直至到了那座像削过的火山锥的顶部，也没有；他们还去了像大帽子一样的山脊找过，都没有什么发现，而“大帽子”下面就是火山口。

不仅如此，他们连深渊都去察看过了。虽然那深渊里没有火，但却能发出清晰的轰隆声。当然，最终他们也没发现能引起火山爆发的烟雾，更没发现石头发烫。

他们将能找的地方都找了，但将富兰克林山找遍，也没找到那位神秘的陌生人的踪迹。

最后，他们又去了沙丘。尽管到鲨嘴湾的路不好走，就算是平路，走起来也很困难，但他们还是上上下下、左左右右地察看那高耸在海湾里的熔岩峭壁。可还是没有，连一点人迹都没有。

总之，他们这趟是无功而返了，既花费了时间，也付出了不少精力，大家既失望又懊恼。

没办法，他们只能商量着回去了。这种没有意义的搜索不能无限期下去，他们甚至觉得这位神秘的陌生人根本就不住在岛上，或者说不住在荒岛表面。这点他们非常肯定，因为荒岛表面已经找遍了。

这么一来，他们又开始胡思乱想了，特别是庞库那夫和那普，他们

不仅仅将这当成了一种神秘事件来看，甚至还用一种超出凡人的想法去想这件事。

2月25日，居民们悻悻然地回到了他们的“花岗宫殿”。他们在用弓箭将双股的绳索射到门槛口后，就又恢复了从海滩到“花岗宫殿”门口的通道。

一个月后，也就是3月25日，他们迎来了来林肯岛上的三周年纪念日。

第十四章

他们是从里士满逃出的俘虏，整整三年了，他们无数次谈起自己的祖国和家乡。

他们深信那场内战已经结束，北军的正义之战必将获得胜利。然而，在这样一场可怕的战争里，究竟发生了些什么事情？有多少人为这场战争流血？又有多少人为这场战争失去了生命呢？

这种种问题他们时常谈起，但直到目前，他们还是无法回到祖国，甚至连什么时候能回去都不知道。如果能够回去，即使只有一天，只要他们能和那个文明世界恢复联系，让祖国和林肯岛之间有了交通，然后再让他们回到岛上来，他们也愿意，也满足。

那时候，这块被他们开辟的土地，也将属于他们的祖国，在这里的这段生活也终将成为他们一生中最有意义、最幸福的时光。

这个愿望他们能实现吗？

要想实现这个愿望，只有两种可能，一种就是有船到林肯岛来，第二种是居民们能造一艘可以将他们带到最近陆地去的船。

“只能等善良的圣人给我们提供回国的方法了！”庞库那夫说。

确实，如果有人告诉庞库那夫和那普，有一艘300吨重的大船在鲨嘴湾或气球港等他们，他们绝对不会惊讶。因为在他们的心里，发生任何事都是有可能的。

史密斯没有那么乐观。他劝大家在对待造船这个问题上要面对现实，此时最紧要的事是乘船将阿埃童现在的地址送到岱波岛去。

“长风破浪号”不存在了，新的船造好需要半年时间，冬天马上就要来了，所以无论怎么赶，他们都不可能赶在开春时出航。

史密斯和庞库那夫商量说：“我们要在天气转暖时做好出航准备。朋友，我们不仅要重新造船，还要尽量把船造得大一点。等苏格兰游船到岱波岛去，是件靠不住的事。很可能它已经在几个月前去过了，因为没有发现阿埃童而又离开了。现在造一艘大船，是希望我们有一天能乘着它去波利尼西亚群岛或新西兰去。你觉得怎么样呢？庞库那夫！”

“史密斯先生，我相信你大船小船都能造。关于木料和工具嘛，我们都不缺，关键是需要多长时间的问题。”庞库那夫说。

“如果我们要造一艘250吨到300吨的船，需要多长时间？”史密斯问。

“差不多七八个月吧！至少需要这么久。何况现在已经快到冬天

了，冰天雪地是很难做木工活的，所以又要耽误几个星期。如果能在明年11月造好，就已经是很快的了。”庞库那夫说。

“行！那时候正是航海的好时间，我们不管是去岱波岛也好，去更远的地方也好，都很合适！”史密斯说。

“那就这样吧！史密斯先生，你负责设计图样，我们都是你的工人，阿埃童也会是个得力的助手的！”庞库那夫说。

居民们商量后，一致同意造船。是的，在当时的情况下，这已经算是最好的办法了。虽然造一艘二三百吨的船，需要花很多时间、很多力气，但居民们觉得既然成功地造过船，就有信心继续造好。

于是，史密斯开始了对船的设计，制作船的模型，其余人则去砍伐树木。西遥森林有的是上好的橡树和榆树，他们将其砍了来，做成了肋材、船骨和铺板。

在砍树的过程中，他们将上次远征时走过的一条通道开辟成了道路，叫它西遥路，砍好的木料被他们运到了造船工场——“石窟”。不过，他们开辟的西遥路因为所选树木的缘故，路也是弯弯曲曲的，但却给他们去蛇盘半岛提供了方便。

在做木工的过程中，木匠们需要注意一些事项，比如伐树和锯木料必须加快速度，因为湿木料不能用，需要在伐完、锯完后晾晒一段时间，干燥后才能用。所以，木匠们在整个4月都非常繁忙。仅有秋分时，因为刮暴风才暂时停下。

在这项工作中，不仅人参与了，就是灵巧的猩猩狢布，也帮了他们很多忙，用结实的臂膀帮他们将砍下的树扛回来。

“造船工场”就在“石窟”附近他们盖的一间大棚子里，砍下来的木料也放在那里，等干燥后使用。

好在4月份的大部分天气都很晴朗，相当于北半球10月的天气。所以在这段时间里，他们不仅砍伐树木，同时也没放弃其他工作。

很快，观望壁上那些被海盗践踏的痕迹就不存在了。

他们不仅重新建立了磨坊，而且还重修了家禽场。家禽场的鸟类越来越多，所以他们必须扩大场地才行。牲畜栏里如今还有五头野驴，四头经过了训练，既能拉车，又可以让人骑。另一头是小野驴，还不到训练的时候。

牲畜栏的农耕工具有犁，所以居民们常常让两头野驴拉着耕地，那两头野驴的作用，就和约克、肯塔基州的耕牛一样。虽然事情很多，也很繁忙，但因为有着各自的分工，大家也不觉得很劳累，反而锻炼了身体。

晚上的时候，居民们会聚集在“花岗宫殿”里，为他们美好的未来设计无数条计划，“花岗宫殿”充满了欢声笑语。

现在，阿埃童不再躲避大家，也不再提回牲畜栏居住，他能和大家一起工作生活了。不过，他还是经常沉默不语，心事重重。

当然，这并不妨碍他做事。他是个非常能干的人，不仅有着强壮的身体，还很机敏、灵巧。居民们都很喜欢他，也很器重他。这，他也是能感觉得到的。

当然，虽然阿埃童没有住在牲畜栏，但牲畜栏的工作却并没有放下不管。每隔一天，总会有人驾着车或骑着驴去照料那些莫伏鹿羊和山

羊，并且还会带一些羊奶回来，羊奶是那普需要的。

去牲畜栏的人，在来去的路上，有时还会打猎。因此，经常去牲畜栏的就是赫伯特和史佩莱了。他们出去时，总会带上好猎枪，并由多卜带路。因此，“花岗宫殿”里从没断过野味。大到野猪、水豚、刺鼠、袋鼠，小到野鸭、山鸡、松鸡、啄木鸟和丘鹬。

除了这些野味外，还有他们兔场的兔子、蛤蜊场的蛤蜊，以及从感恩河捉来的海龟、鲑鱼。高地上的蔬菜和森林里的果子也是应有尽有，品种繁多。

厨师那普每次面对这么多食材，都不知道要做哪一样。

当然，虽然牲畜栏没有人固定居住，但和“花岗宫殿”之间的电报线还是恢复了。因为有时候谁要去牲畜栏，并且晚上要住在那里的话，都会通过电报来通知一下。如今，荒岛已经安全了，他们不必担心再遭到坏人的攻击。

不过，曾经发生的可怕的危险，还是很有可能再重新出现的，因为随时都有可能遇到海盗或逃犯来到岛上对他们进行袭击。哈维能向这个方向来，很可能还有别的同伙和党羽知道，那些人也都有可能到这边来，居民们需要时刻注意荒岛周围海面的情况。因此，居民们每天都会通过望远镜，向联合湾和华盛顿海湾之间的水平线上观望。

在牲畜栏时，他们也会注意西边的海面。在那里，他们能看到很大一部分西方水平线。

当然，他们没有发现可疑的人或物，不过必要的警惕还是不能少。

有天晚上，史密斯向大家宣布了一个计划，那个计划就是给牲畜栏

设防。他觉得，为了小心起见，他们应该把牲畜栏的栅栏加高，并在旁边建个木制堡垒，以便必要时利用它来防御敌人。

“花岗宫殿”的位置好，牢不可破，所以如果有海盗上岸后，他们首先瞄准的肯定是牲畜栏和岛上的其他建筑物、贮藏物资和牲畜。一旦居民们正好在这里，就必须先保护好自己不受坏人伤害。

这个计划不错，大家也都赞同，但却需要他们明年春天再实施。

5月15日，居民们的新船龙骨已经做好，放在了造船工场。很快，船头和船尾的木材，以及樁头也都接在了龙骨的两头，船几乎能立起来了。

他们造船用的材质都很好，优良的橡木做了长达110英尺的龙骨，龙骨上能够支撑一根宽度达到25英尺的横梁。

不过，在大家做好这些后，寒冷的冬天就来到了。此后的几个星期，在安上第一批船尾的肋材后，他们不得不暂时停下造船工作。

5月份的最后几天，天气越来越差，东风猛烈的程度堪比暴风，史密斯开始为他们造船工场的棚屋担心。但担心归担心，他没有办法将这造船工场盖到靠近“花岗宫殿”的安全地带，因为在狂风暴雨到来的时候，着陆岛是无法挡住从大海涌向海岸的浪潮的，所以浪潮很容易会冲到花岗石壁底下。

好在他的担心是多余的。由于风向突转，拾箱角将“花岗宫殿”的整个海滩都挡住了，包括他们的“造船厂”也受到了保护。

在造船工作中，最热心的就数庞库那夫和阿埃童了。他们卖力地劳动着，即使风吹雨打，也不放弃他们的工作。

最终，因为严寒使木质纤维变得像铁一样坚硬了，无法继续工作，他们才在6月10日前后放下了手里的工作。

史密斯和其他居民都觉得，这一年的冬天应该非常寒冷，寒冷程度和新英格兰各州相当，因为新英格兰各州和赤道间的距离与林肯岛和赤道间的距离相同。在北半球的一些地方，比如美洲的英国部分地方以及美国北部等等，都因为北极地势平坦，且没有高地阻拦北风，所以非常寒冷。

不过，林肯岛的寒冷就不是这个原因了。

“我们应该知道，纬度相同的一些地方，岛屿和沿海是没有内陆冷的。比如说，我听说苏格兰的冬天比伦巴底的冬天暖和。为什么会这样呢？因为苏格兰附近的海洋到了冬天会将在夏天吸收到的热量散发出来，而散发出的热量，肯定会影响到岛屿和沿海地区。”史密斯有一天给大家讲解说。

“那……史密斯先生，为什么我们林肯岛就不是这样呢？”赫伯特问。

“这个很难讲明白。不过我想，也许是因为林肯岛的位置在南半球的原因，南半球可是比北半球冷的。孩子，我想这点你应该明白。”史密斯说。

“是的。就说冰山吧，纬度低的南太平洋，一定比纬度低的北太平洋多。”赫伯特说。

“对！对！在捕鲸船上当水手时，我就在合恩角附近见过冰山。”庞库那夫说。

“那是不是可以说，林肯岛之所以这么冷，是因为附近有冰山或浮冰的原因呢？”史佩莱问。

“亲爱的史佩莱，你的想法很有道理。我们这里冷是因为靠近冰山的缘故。我们也要清楚一个自然道理，那就是它能说明南半球为什么会比北半球冷。南半球到太阳的距离，夏天比较近，相反冬天比较远。这就是夏天和冬天温度差别大的原因。我们不妨想一下，是不是我们在林肯岛的冬天冷的时候，恰恰它的夏天是很热的。”

“对不起，史密斯先生，我们南半球的划分，为什么被你说得那么可恶？太不公平了！”庞库那夫说的时候，皱起了眉头。

史密斯笑了。

“庞库那夫，这是大自然赋予的，不管公平不公平，都只能这样。为什么会这么划分，是有原因的。按力学定律来说，地球环绕太阳转的轨道不可能是圆形，只能是椭圆形的。所以地球运转时，在通过椭圆形中离太阳远的极点时，就叫远日，反之叫近日。我们处在南半球，冬季时，正处在离太阳最远的那个点，所以这区域就比较冷。这是没有办法改变的。庞库那夫，人类即使有再多的学识，也不能改变宇宙运行的规律。”

“可是史密斯先生，人类的知识这么丰富，要是把知道的一切都写成书的话，不知道有多厚呢！”庞库那夫又说。

“要是把不知道的也写成书，一定也会很厚的。”史密斯说。

不管怎样，6月份的严寒还是来了，居民们只能整天坐在“花岗宫殿”。大家对这种枯燥乏味的生活很是厌烦，特别是史佩莱，简直觉得

是在监禁。

有一天，他对那普说：“你要是去什么地方，能给我订一份报纸来，我可以把我们全部的财产都给你，说话算话！发发善心吧，给我弄份报纸。知道吗？我最享受的事就是每天一早能知道头天各地发生了什么。”

那普憨厚地笑了，他说：“我想的是我每天都要做什么。”

其实，不管是在室内还是室外，都有很多工作可以去做。

经过三年的艰辛开拓，如今林肯岛的繁荣已经达到了顶峰。双桅船带给他们很多新的资源。除了那整套索具能够用来装备正在建造的新船外，还有双桅船上曾有的各种工具和用品，以及枪支、弹药、衣服等，现在这些东西都储存在“花岗宫殿”的仓库。

如今，他们已经不再需要自己做的那粗糙的“毡布”了，他们有许多亚麻布制品。他们在岛上过第一个冬天时曾挨过冻，但现在不管天气多冷，都不用害怕了。

不过，这种亚麻布制品他们还是需要省着点用的。

为了让那些亚麻布制品也可以应用在生活中，史密斯利用氯化钠获取了小苏打和氯，并将小苏打变成碳酸钠，将氯制成氯化钙，并最终用它们将亚麻布漂白，用在了家庭中。

居民们的衣服和以前古老家庭中的一样，一年就洗四次。需要说明的是，史佩莱等不到每天一早的报纸，却和庞库那夫成了优秀的洗衣工人。

6月、7月、8月过去了。当9月到来的时候，天气依然寒冷，平均温度只有-13℃左右，比去年同一时期还要冷。因此，“花岗宫殿”的炉火点得很旺，这也让石壁被烟熏成了像斑马纹一样的图案。

柴火他们不缺，在离他们不远的地方就有，随时可以添加，只是煤炭的运输有些麻烦，好在造船时的许多木头碎片给他们节省了不少煤。

林肯岛的人和牲畜都很平安。不过，猩猩小狙布却非常怕冷，这可能是它身上唯一的缺点了。因为它是个非常出色的“仆人”，机灵、热情、谨慎、不怕辛苦、不爱说话……它完全有资格被评选为猿猴界的典范。这么优秀的同伴，怎么能不多加关爱呢，因此，居民们为它做了一件很厚的衣服。

“它为什么做事做得那么好？就是因为它有四只手呀，能不好吗？”庞库那夫开玩笑说。

确实，虽然是动物，但它做事却非常出色。

居民们离他们上次去林肯岛搜查已经过去七个月了。在此期间，荒岛上再也没有那位神秘圣人的音讯和印迹。现在已经是9月份了，天气在慢慢转暖，但他依然没有用任何方式显示他的能量。

其实，就算他发挥了能量，可能也显示不出来，因为现在已经没什么事能难倒居民们了。

史密斯曾注意到，在这神秘的陌生人通过“花岗宫殿”和居民们联系时，多卜是会感觉到的。在这段时期，多卜从没发出过那种咆哮声，狙布也不再有不安的表现。

这两位朋友也没再去井口转圈，更没像史密斯看到的那样莫名其妙

地吼叫。难道，这个谜永远都无法破解吗？再遇到什么紧急情况，他还会出现吗？谁又知道以后还会发生什么呢？

严寒毕竟马上就要过去了。不过，就在大地刚刚开始回春的时候，发生了一件事，而这件事，很可能会导致难以预料的严重后果。

9月7日，史密斯观察了火山口，他发现，山顶处冒出了一缕烟雾.....

第十五章

史密斯将他看到的紧急情况告诉了居民们，大家全都放下了手里的工作，注视着富兰克林山的顶峰，一句话不说。

火山就要苏醒了，蒸气从火山口升腾就说明了这一点。不过，火山喷发会不会引起毁灭性的爆炸？他们不知道。就算是火山爆发，也不一定会殃及整个林肯岛。

他们觉得，火山流出的岩浆未必能造成灾难。因为向北的山坡上，有条凝结的熔岩，那是火山曾经爆发留下的印迹，这印迹证明荒岛是受过考验的。何况，从火山口的形状来看，岩浆大多会喷在他们担心的领域的对面。

当然，过去的情况无法准确地预测将来。如今，火山顶峰的原有火山口已经被堵塞了，很可能会再次出现一个火山口。这种事不是没有出现过，像埃特纳火山、波波卡特佩特和奥里萨巴火山都是这样。

火山喷发前夕，任何事情都是有可能发生的。

同时，在很多时候，火山喷发还会引发地震，地震又会改变火山的内部结构，促成新火山口的形成。

史密斯在和大家说这件事的时候，真实地表达了可能出现的两种情况，最后还告诉大家，这件事是无法阻止的。同时他还安慰大家，要是没有地震，“花岗宫殿”就会一直是安全的。不过，如果在富兰克林山南边有新的火山口出现，牲畜栏就会被毁灭了。

从这以后，富兰克林山顶部的火山口上，烟就没断过。而且他们发现，烟愈升越高，愈来愈浓，特别是火山口较低的地方，但不管什么地方出来的烟，都没有夹带火焰。

不管发生什么事，他们的工作还是要继续，特别是天气已经转暖，他们又要忙着造船了。

为了效率更高，史密斯还利用上了瀑布，在岸上建了一个水力锯木场。这样的话，树干就能更快地被做成铺板和托架了。

史密斯所做的这个水力锯木装置，同挪威一些乡村锯木场所用的差不多，都是先用水平机械装置转动木块，然后让另一个垂直机械装置转动钢锯就行了。为此，史密斯还用了一个车轮、两个滚筒、几个滑车将它装配起来。

工作效率提高后，在9月底的时候，船的骨架便有了，肋材也做好了，当用箍条将所有的船骨缚好后，船的大致轮廓也就出来了。

这是只纵帆船，形状是船头尖，船尾细长，这样的船形对远航非常有利。不过，船的铺板工程并不是马上就能做完的，需要很长的时间。

好在海盗们那只被炸的双桅船上的铁制品还能用，庞库那夫和阿埃童便从双桅船的铺板及损坏的肋材上拔下了一些螺丝钉和铜钉。

这些螺丝钉和铜钉，让他们少干了很多制铁工作，但木工方面却还有很多活儿在等着他们。

到了收割季节，造船工程暂停一星期。这一星期，他们去了高地收割麦子和其他农作物，同时也堆积了很多干草。农忙一结束，他们又马上投入到造船工作中。每天晚上，居民们都忙得筋疲力尽，为了不浪费一分一秒，他们连吃饭的时间都做了调整。

每天十二点吃完午饭后，一直要到天黑才吃晚饭，吃完就去睡觉。

当然，遇到一些有趣的话题，他们也会聊一会儿再去休息。而这些话题，大都脱离不开未来。如果他们乘着新造的纵帆船去了内陆，那么他们的生活环境肯定会发生变化。会发生什么变化呢？这都是他们重点讨论的。

不过，在谈到如何面对这些美好未来的同时，他们也一致认定，不管以后的生活发生什么样的改变，林肯岛他们一定还会回来。这是他们用智慧和辛劳创造出来的，一旦和美国联系上了，这里就将成为祖国的一部分。

这些人中，最想在林肯岛上过一辈子的就是庞库那夫和那普了。

“赫伯特，你永远也不会离开林肯岛，对吗？”庞库那夫问。

“那是当然的。庞库那夫，如果你准备一辈子在这里，我也肯定不会离开。”

“孩子，我早都想好了！我就在这里住着，你结婚了带着妻子和孩子来，我要将你的孩子培养成聪明活泼的小家伙！”庞库那夫高兴地说。

赫伯特脸红了，却也笑着说：“好吧！”

“史密斯先生，还有你，你永远是我们岛上的领袖！想想看，岛上能生活多少人？一万人没问题吧！”庞库那夫越说越兴奋。

他们就这么谈笑风生，听庞库那夫滔滔不绝地说。最后，史佩莱说，他要在林肯岛上办一份报纸，就叫《林肯岛先驱新报》。

人类之所以能够成为万物之灵，就是因为有目标、信念和愿望。他们的目标和愿望，总是离不开永远的事业，因为即使人不在，那事业还会在。正是因为有着这样的信念，人类才成为地球的主人。

他们有着美好的远景，那么獾布和多卜呢？它们对未来又是抱着什么样的态度呢？

阿埃童也曾在心里对自己说，当他再次见到格莱拉弗爵士后，他一定要让爵士知道，他已经改过自新了。

10月15日这天，他们谈到九点多钟才去睡觉，比平时晚了很多。尽管大家还是不愿意去睡，但劳累了一天，眼睛都睁不开了，必须要去休息了。在庞库那夫向他的床边走的时候，餐厅里的电报铃声突然响了。

史密斯、史佩莱、赫伯特、阿埃童、庞库那夫、那普，每个人都在，就连獾布和多卜也在“花岗宫殿”，没人在牲畜栏。

史密斯慢慢地站了起来，大家你看看我，我看看你，都像是在问对

方，你听到什么了吗？

“怎么回事？难道是……魔鬼在……”那普惊恐地叫道。

没有人回答他。

“这是暴风雨的天气，会不会是因为电流的原因……”赫伯特说不下去了。

大家一起看向史密斯，史密斯摇了摇头。

“稍等！如果真是有人发电报，那么还会再发的。不管对方是谁。”赫伯特说。

“但你觉得会是谁？”那普大声问。

“会是谁？除非是……他……”庞库那夫小声地说。

这时，电报机又响了一声，铃声将庞库那夫的话打断了。

史密斯走向电报机，向牲畜栏发报问：“你需要什么？”

很快，指针上的字码表给他们留下了这么一句话：“马上到牲畜栏来！”

“总算要揭开谜底了！”史密斯大声说。

没错！他们终于要揭开谜底了。在好奇心的驱使下，居民们的激动和兴奋让他们劳累了一天的疲劳全都消失了，并催促着赶快去牲畜栏，此时休息已经被他们抛在了脑后。

激动得说不出话的一行人马上离开了“花岗宫殿”，只留下狙布和多卜看家，此次，他们不需要它们陪同了。

天空中没有月亮，夜色黑沉沉的。如同赫伯特所说，他们的头顶像是压了一块黑压压的乌云，浓厚的乌云让天空没有一颗星星。暴风雨中夹杂着闪电，时不时地划过天空。

这天的天气非常恶劣，也许几个小时后，岛上就要迎来轰隆隆的雷声了。不过，不管天色有多黑，都阻挡不住他们去牲畜栏的路。

他们很快就上了感恩河左岸，随后经过高地，又过了硝甘河上的吊桥，最后走上森林的边缘。

每个人都加快了脚步，抑制着自己兴奋又激动的心情。很明显，他们马上就要解开这个在他们心头存在很久的困惑了，他们很快就能知道那位神秘的陌生人叫什么名字了。虽然他们没有见过他，不知道他是谁，但他却和他们的生活息息相关。他在帮助他们的时候，是那么无私，那么神通广大，即使没有和他们生活在一起，没有听到他们的讲话，也能知道他们的诉求，知道他们需要帮助，他到底是怎么做到的呢？

每个人都满怀心事，急速前行。在一扇由树枝形成的拱门下，周围一片漆黑，他们连路都没办法看清了。森林里一点声音都没有，在如此低的气压下，想必连飞禽走兽都躲了起来。没有微风，也听不到树叶被吹动的声音，只听得见居民们的脚步声。

在黑暗中又走了差不多15分钟，庞库那夫终于打破了沉默：“我们是不是该点个火把？”

史密斯说：“在牲畜栏里我们能找到火把。”

从“花岗宫殿”出发是晚上九点十二分。感恩河与牲畜栏之间的距离是5英里，走了3英里路程时，时间为九点四十七。

此时，随着巨大的“咔嚓”声，一道闪电从森林上空划过，在照亮了森林的同时也让整个海岛亮了起来。那道闪电刺得他们几乎睁不开眼了。

看来，暴风雨马上就要来了。

闪电频繁起来，也更亮了。远处传来了轰隆隆的雷声，空气沉闷到令人窒息。

居民们被一种强大的力量推动着，继续急速前行。

十点钟的时候，他们来到了牲畜栏门口，随着一道闪电照在栅栏上，雷声也接踵而至。

史密斯很快带领大家穿过牲畜栏，到了房屋门前。

发电报的人应该就在屋子里，但窗户上却没有一丝灯光。

史密斯敲了敲门，没有人应。

他将门打开，居民们全都拥了进去。屋内一片漆黑，那普划了一根火柴，点着了灯，整个屋子都亮了起来。

屋子里没有人，一切就和他们上次离开时一样。

“难道我们都出现了幻听？”史密斯喃喃道。

不会的，肯定不会，电报上清清楚楚地写着：“马上到牲畜栏来！”

他们走到放电报机的桌子前。一切都和原来没什么两样，电池好好地装在匣子里，电报机也不像有人动过。

“最后一个来这里的是谁？”史密斯问。

“是我！史密斯先生！”阿埃童急忙说。

“你是在……”

“四天前……”

“快看，有张纸条！”赫伯特指着桌子上的一张纸条，大声地说。

纸条上的字是用英文写的：

跟着新电线走！

“我们走吧！”史密斯大声说。

他现在知道了，电报并不是从牲畜栏发出的，而是从一个神秘的住处发出来的。之所以能发给“花岗宫殿”，是因为他又在原有的电线上加了一根电线。

那普拿起点着的灯，离开了牲畜栏。此时暴风雨即将到来的迹象更明显了，闪电和雷声密集起来。在电闪雷鸣中，他们竟然能够看到富兰克林山顶火山口的烟雾缭绕。

他们找遍了牲畜栏和栅栏周围，都没有找到电线。史密斯在第一根电线旁看了看，在闪电的照耀下，他看到在一个绝缘物中有根新线拖到

了地面上。

“在这里！”他说。

这根新电线如同海底的电缆一样拖在了地上，外面包着一层保护电流通过的绝缘物。这根新电线像是从森林和富兰克林山的南部支脉穿过的，一直延伸到了西边。

“我们跟着它走！”史密斯一声令下。

居民们沿着那根电线，小跑着向前走去。

雷声隆隆，他们连对方的说话声都听不见了。不过，大家仍然不顾一切地往前走，根本顾不上说话，似乎觉得说话都是在浪费时间。

他们爬过了牲畜栏的山谷和跌水河山谷间隆起的支脉，又从一条最狭窄的跌水河上跨过去。那条电线有时在地上，有时又挂在较低的树枝上。

电线一直引导着他们前行。史密斯觉得电线应该在山谷尽头深处，而那也就是神秘人的住处。

然而，情况并不是这样的。所以，他们不得不爬上了西南的支脉，又下到了贫瘠的、有着奇形怪状石头的高地上来，这里是荒凉的玄武岩峭壁。由于没办法看到电线，他们不得不弯下腰去摸电线。最后他们确定，电线是通向大海的。

居民们找遍了海岛的角角落落都没有找到，想必神秘人住所是在沿海一带的岩石深处。

黑夜里的天空突然像是着了火，红彤彤的，瞬间有种电光火石之感。闪电打在了被浓烟环抱的火山顶，像是要把火山点燃。

差不多在深夜十一点钟的时候，他们到了俯临西边海洋的峭壁。

风起云涌，500英尺的海面上，波涛翻滚。据史密斯估算，这里离牲畜栏已经超过一英里半了。

电线通向了峡谷的悬崖，然后又钻进了一堆岩石里。岩石并不是很平稳，居民们顺着电线爬了过去。在这个地方，不小心就会掉进海里，特别是一些下坡的地方，非常滑。但居民们没有考虑这些，他们像被一个神秘莫测的东西吸引着，向那神秘的地方走去，身不由己。

这样的峡谷，就是在白天都难以通行，但他们却从峡谷里走了下去，虽然他们自己都不知道是怎么走的。

岩石滚落在地上，迸出了一些火星，有些像一个个的小火球。他们正是利用这些亮光前行的。

走在最前面的是史密斯，断后的是阿埃童。他们一步步地艰难前行，有时不小心从又湿又滑的石头上摔下去，又挣扎着爬起来，继续前行。

突然，他们发现电线拐到了海滩的岩石边，岩石被海浪不断地冲击着，发出很大的声音，海滩上暗礁密布。此时，他们已经走到了玄武岩峭壁的尽头。

没有路了，这里是个分水岭，非常狭窄，和海面保持着平行。居民们沿着电线的分水岭往前走，走了不到一百步，发现分水岭和海面接壤。

史密斯蹲下摸索了一会儿，发现电线竟然钻进了海底。

居民们全都惊呆了。

他们大叫起来，甚至感到了绝望。难道他们要钻进水里，到海底的洞穴去吗？实际上，按照当时的心情，即使让他们往水里钻，他们也会毫不犹豫地这么做的。

在他们嚷嚷着要下水时，史密斯拦住了他们。

他把伙伴们带到了一个石洞前，说：“稍等一会儿，现在正是涨潮的时候，落潮时，路就有了。”

“什么？你怎么知道？”庞库那夫忍不住问。

“如果我们不能去他那里，他是不会叫我们来的。”

史密斯说话的语气很肯定，没人反驳。何况，他的想法也是非常合理的。想来峭壁底下是有一个洞穴的，涨潮时，它被海水淹没，但只要潮水落下去，就能显露出来了。

落潮还要等多久，他们不知道，只是默默地蜷缩在深洞里。此时，大雨倾盆，轰隆隆的雷声在山石间发出奇怪的回响。

虽然是在如此糟糕的环境下，但居民们仍然情绪高涨，每个人都有着很多稀奇古怪的想法。他们觉得等会儿要看到的，一定是个仪表堂堂，和凡人不一样的神灵，因为只有神灵，才会像岛上这位神秘的人一样做着这么多不可思议的事情。

午夜时分，拿着灯的史密斯开始向海滩下探索。

果然如他所说，落潮后，露出了一个庞大的洞口。而电线也被折成直角，从洞口进了一个宽阔的港湾。

史密斯走到伙伴们面前，只说了一句话：“一个小时后就能通行
了。”

“真的有洞吗？”庞库那夫睁大了眼睛，惊喜地问。

“现在还不信？”史密斯说。

“洞里的水位一定很高吧！”赫伯特说。

“我觉得有两种可能性，一种是洞里没有一点水，这样我们就可以直接进去了。另一种情况就是虽然有水，但他提供了工具给我们。”史密斯说。

一个小时后，居民们冲出山洞，冒雨到了海面。此时，水面上露出的洞口已经有8英尺宽了，如同一个桥孔，里面有着波涛汹涌的海水。

史密斯弯下身去看，发现水面上漂浮着一个黑色的东西。他急忙拉住它，原来是系在洞内尖石上的一只小船，船上有两把桨，船身包着铁皮。

“都上船！”史密斯说。

居民们欣喜地上了船，那普和阿埃童一人拿着一把桨划着，庞库那夫掌着舵，史密斯则在船头拿着灯照路。

他们乘坐的船先是经过了一个椭圆形的檐顶，接着便发现那顶部越来越高。由于周围一片漆黑，他们带的灯光又暗，所以暂时还看不清洞

的高度、长度和宽度。

他们行驶在玄武岩洞窟，听不到外面的一点声音，即使轰隆隆的雷声也听不见，可见这石壁有多厚。

这么大的洞窟，世界上有不少。这些石窟是由地质变化，自然形成的地窖。有些里面灌满了海水，有些里面则像个湖泊。比如赫布里底群岛上的芬格尔山洞；布列塔尼半岛上的洞窟；科西嘉岛的洞窟；挪威厄斯福德的洞窟等等，当然还有肯塔基州那500英尺高、20多英里长的庞大曼摩斯山洞……

大自然创造了很多这样的奇观，供人欣赏。

这个洞窟通向什么地方？是通向荒岛中心吗？史密斯不停地向居民们发出简短的指示，庞库那夫按史密斯的指示掌舵，当他们在弯弯曲曲的洞窟里走了差不多15分钟后，史密斯突然叫道：“向右偏一些！”

小船调整了方向，贴着右壁前行。史密斯在石壁上看见电线是不是还在沿着这边前行，结果发现仍然钉在岩石上时便说：“继续往前走！”

小船在双桨的划动下，继续向黑咕隆咚的洞里前进。

又前行了15分钟后，在离洞口大约半英里地的地方，史密斯又喊了一声：“停下！”

随着小船的停下，他们看到有一道夺目的光照亮了整个洞窟。洞窟处在荒岛地心，这是居民们怎么也不会想到的地方。

洞窟上有圆形的拱顶，足足有100英尺高，是由很多玄武岩的石柱撑起来的。这些石柱看样子是在地球形成时就竖在这里的，柱子上有很

多奇形怪状的花纹和高低不平的窟窿。

石柱一个紧挨着一个，高度有些是40英尺，有些则是50英尺。虽然洞外浪潮涌动，但洞窟里的海水却只是轻柔地冲刷着石柱的底部。史密斯告诉大家，向照亮了整个洞窟、将石壁照得清晰可见的光亮地方行驶。

在光亮下，轻柔的水波发出了银色的光，他们乘坐的小船犹如行驶在两片银光之间。

光亮是由中间向四方发射的，所以清楚地照亮了洞窟里的每个地方，甚至是每一块岩石。居民们知道，这是一种由电力产生的光，他们从那银白的光亮中看出了这一点。这光如同洞窟里的太阳，将整个洞窟照得犹如在阳光下。

史密斯向他们做了个继续前进的手势，双桨划着的小船向光源所在的地方驶去。小船溅起的小水花，如同一颗颗珍珠。

还有差不多半锚链，他们就能到达光源所在地了。

此处的水面宽度大约在350英尺。明晃晃的光源后面，大片的玄武岩石壁堵住了出路。这部分洞窟非常宽，呈现出小湖的形状。穹顶、四壁、尽头的悬崖、棱柱和尖顶都在光的照耀下，发出夺目的光，这些光很像是从它们身上发出的。

湖中心有漂浮物，是一截长长的，雪茄烟形状的东西。那个漂浮物静静地躺在水面上，一动不动。光源是一只长约250英尺，高出水面10到12英尺，如同庞大鲸鱼的家伙。它的光是从两边发出来的，有些像从白热的炉灶里发出的。

小船在慢慢地向它靠近，站在船头的史密斯，兴奋得差点无法自制。他猛地抓住史佩莱的胳膊，大声喊道：

“是他！原来是他！一定是他！他……”

他没有说下去，而是猛地坐了下去，喃喃自语地说出了一个名字，那名字只有史佩莱能听到。

史佩莱显然也知道这个人，所以在听了后，用奇怪的眼神看着史密斯，然后用略带沙哑的嗓音说：“是他？逍遥君！”

“对！就是他！”史密斯说。

小船在史密斯的指挥下，向那奇怪的漂浮物驶去，当他们停靠在它的左边时，有道光从厚厚的玻璃上射了下来。

史密斯带着大家登上了一个平台，然后从一个敞开的舱口冲了下去。下面有个扶梯，扶梯的尽头是甲板，上面也有电灯亮着。史密斯走到甲板尽头，轻轻地将一扇门打开。

这是一间装饰得富丽堂皇的屋子。当他们穿过这间屋子后，便进入了隔壁的一间房，房间里摆着很多书。书房的天花板上有灯光投射下来，照在了他们的身上。

书房的尽头还有一扇门是关着的，史密斯轻轻地推开了它。

这是一间如同博物馆般的大厅，非常宽敞，里面陈列着很多稀奇古怪的矿物制成品、艺术品和工业品。看到这些琳琅满目的东西，居民们犹如进了仙境。

此时，他们看到了一个人。那个人好像并不知道他们进来，只是静静地躺在华贵的沙发上。

史密斯上前一步，一开口便让伙伴们大吃一惊，他用因为激动而略微颤抖的声音说：“尼摩船长，您让我们来，我们来了！”

第十六章

沙发上躺着的人站了起来。

灯光照在他那端庄的容貌上：高而亮的额头、炯炯有神的眼睛、雪白的胡子、披散在肩上的浓密的头发……

虽然站了起来，但他的一只手依然撑着椅背，神态安详。看来，他因为生病，身体有些衰弱。不过，他说话的声音依然洪亮。

他用惊讶的语气，用地道的英语说：“先生，我没有名字！”

“我知道您！”史密斯说。

尼摩船长用他那双敏锐的眼睛看着史密斯，像是要把他看穿。随即，他靠在了沙发的垫子上。

“无所谓了！现在知道也没什么关系，反正要死了！”他喃喃道。

史密斯慢慢地走到他身边，史佩莱也走过去，握住了他的手。从他手的热度中，史佩莱知道他正发着高烧。

阿埃童、庞库那夫和赫伯特，以及那普都远远地、毕恭毕敬地站在角落看着。明亮的灯光将豪华的大厅照得满目生辉。

尼摩船长将他的手从史佩莱的手里抽了出去，然后用手势告诉史密斯和史佩莱，让他们坐下。

其他人都站在那里，怀着激动的心情注视着这个被他们奉为“岛上神秘圣人”的人。这个拥有无限能力，在不同场合，无数次解救他们，帮助他们的保护神，此刻就在他们眼前。他们欠这位大恩人很多人情。

然而，让庞库那夫和那普没想到的是，他们心目中的超凡神灵，只是一个看上去很普通的人，而且是一个快要死了的人。

尼摩船长没想到有人知道他的名字。不过，史密斯是怎么知道他的呢？而他在听到有人叫他的名字时，又怎么会吃惊地从沙发上突然站起来呢？

尼摩船长重新躺回沙发。他将头搁在一只胳膊上，看着旁边的史密斯。

“您是怎么知道我过去的名字的？先生？”他问。

“我不仅知道您，还知道那只神奇的潜水船的名字……”史密斯回答说。

“‘鹦鹉螺号’吗？”船长微微一笑，轻声说。

“对！是‘鹦鹉螺号’！”

“可是您……知道我是谁？”

“我知道！”

“很多年了，和人间隔绝很多年了！在这个海底，我生活了30年，漫长的30年。这是我找到的唯一自由的地方，是谁泄露了我的秘密？”

“尼摩船长，不要怪他不守承诺，他是一个不受您约束的人。”

“是那个16年前，到过我船上的法国人吗？”

“是的，他们没有死，还写了一本讲述您故事的《海底两万里》。”

“那只是我一生中几个月的故事！”船长看上去显得有些烦躁。

“是的，不过就是这几个月，也足以让人了解您……”

史密斯的话还没说完，就听尼摩船长说：“一个罪人，对吗？是的，是一个会遭到人类唾弃的罪人！”说完，他的唇边露出了一丝奇怪的笑容。

史密斯没说话。

“是吗？先生？”他又问了一句。

“尼摩船长，对于您过去的的生活，我和很多人一样，都不知道您为什么要选择那样一种奇怪的方式。不过，在不了解的情况下，我是无法对事情的结果作出判断的。而且，在我们到了林肯岛后，您一直伸出善意的手帮助我们、保护我们。正是因为有了您的帮助和保护，我们才得以保全性命！所以我能知道的，就是您的善良、慷慨和万能！”史密斯真诚地说。

“是我做的！”尼摩船长只简单地说了这几个字。

史密斯和史佩莱一起站了起来，其他人也围了过来，他们想用语言或表情来表达自己的感激。

尼摩船长做了一个“不必”的手势，掩饰住激动的心情说：“先听我把故事讲完吧！”

于是，尼摩船长很简单地讲述了他生平的故事。尽管他讲得很简洁，但也是用尽了全力。很明显，他正在和自己虚弱的身体做斗争。史密斯好几次请求他休息一会儿，他都摇了摇头，好像现在不讲完，以后就没机会了。在史佩莱提出给他看病时，他说：“不必了！我很快就要死了！”

在他的叙述中，大家了解到了如下内容。

尼摩船长是印度独立王国博尔本德尔君主的儿子，英雄迪泊·塞戈卜的侄子，人称达卡王子。

达卡王子10岁时，父亲将他送到了欧洲接受全面教育，希望他以后能依靠自己的才学带领全国人民与压迫者做斗争。

天资聪颖的达卡王子，在10岁到30岁的20年间，学到了很多知识，并在科学和文学方面很有天赋。

出身贵族，拥有巨大财富的他在漫游欧洲时，虽然受到了很多人的奉承和欢迎，但他却并不满足于这些，甚至说很排斥这些。有着极度求知欲的年轻英俊的他，内心里有个愿望——复仇。

他要复仇的国家是英国。对英国，他充满仇恨，英国是他最不愿意去的国家。然而，因为仇视，他又不得不关注这个国家。

达卡王子是迪泊·塞戈卜家族的成员，他的父亲虽然是君主，却也仅仅只是一个名义上的君主。作为一个被征服者，他们对征服者是怀有仇恨的，作为被侵略者的达卡王子，他无法从内心宽恕侵略者。

从小，达卡王子就是在恢复主权和报仇雪恨的思想下长大的。他热爱自己的国家，觉得他的国家如同诗一般美丽，但却不幸地成了英国殖民者的奴隶。他诅咒奴役印度人民的英国，所以从不愿意踏进那片土地半步。

精通各国政治，通晓多种高深科学知识的达卡王子熟稔欧洲人文历史，实际上更像一个优秀的艺术家。

如果只从表面看，很容易会认为他是一个只会埋头研究知识，心无旁骛，目空一切，没有祖国观念和信仰的富家子弟。实际上，这位身兼艺术家、科学家、政治家于一体的印度人，是立志要复仇的。他一直希望自己能带领印度人民赶走外来侵略者，夺回国家主权，恢复祖国独立。

1829年，达卡王子回到了博尔本德尔，并娶回了一位印度贵族女人。达卡王子的妻子和他一样，一直在为祖国的命运担心。虽然他们生了两个可爱的孩子，生活幸福美满，但他们解放印度的愿望却没有改变，他们一直在等待着机会。

终于，机会来了。

那时候，由于殖民者对人民的压榨太重，印度民众开始对英国殖民者表达出了强烈的不满，这让达卡王子觉得机会来了。他将自己一直以来对外国侵略者的仇恨，灌输给了广大印度人民。

他开始不停地在仍然保持独立的印度半岛游说，最后又到了接受英国统治的地区游说，他以迪泊·塞弋卜家族的名义，要为祖国在塞力伽帕旦战斗。

1836年，达卡王子组织了一次大规模的抗英运动，他本人也成了印度士兵武装起义的领袖。在这场战争中，他不仅奉献出了自己的财产，而且还战斗在了最前线。

勇敢而谦逊的他，像那些为了祖国的事业而战斗的英雄一样，没有丝毫考虑过自己的生命安危。他曾参加过二十场战役，受伤十余次。

然而，最终，他们最后一批起义的勇士，也被英国的枪炮镇压了。全军覆没的他们，只有他逃出了虎口。

当然，这次起义也让英国在印度的势力受到了影响。当时，如果印度士兵得到外来援助，那么联合王国在印度，乃至亚洲都是会受到影响的。而正是因为这次起义，达卡王子名声大震，成了家喻户晓的英雄。

他从不躲藏在背后，而是公开和英国作战。英国当局曾高价悬赏他的人头。

不过，虽然没人出卖他，但他的父母和妻儿却因他而送了性命，而那时他还不知道亲人为他做出的牺牲。

起义被暴力镇压，但文明不会倒退，社会发展的规律依然在推动着文明前进。

在印度士兵起义失败后，印度君主的领地依然被英国统治。

达卡王子逃出虎口后便进了博尔本德尔的深山。此后，他一直一个人生活在那里，一度甚至对人类的一切都产生了厌恶，对文明世界充满了仇恨。他发誓再也不回到人群中去了。

于是，他变卖了所有的财产，集结了二十多名最忠诚的伙伴，在某一天突然离开了众人的视线。

他去什么地方寻找他的自由了呢？在水底，在海洋的深处，在人们根本就无法找到他的地方。

曾经的军事家变成了学者。在太平洋的一个荒岛上，他成立了自己的造船厂，根据自己的设计，建造了一艘潜水艇。他利用水力来照明、发电，以此来供应潜水艇装置的需要。他的这种方法，也让电源永不枯竭，源源不断。

海里有很多珍宝，有自然界能够提供的一切，有着数不清的鱼类、海藻和哺乳动物，以及人类不知道的各种物资。这些宝藏满足了达卡王子和他伙伴们的需求，他们就这样过起了遗世独立的生活。

他将潜水艇命名为“鹦鹉螺号”，并自称尼摩船长，一直悄无声息地生活在海洋深处。

在很多年里，他游遍了南极、北极，各个大洋，成为一个被文明世界遗忘的逍遥王子。原本就搜集了无数海底珍宝的他，更因一艘西班牙大帆船在维哥湾失事，成了百万家产的拥有者。

有了这么多的财富，他便隐姓埋名去帮助那些为了独立而英勇奋斗的国家。

这样的隐世生活过了很多年，一直到1846年11月6日的一个晚上。

这天晚上，有三个陌生人上了他们的船。这三个人中，一个是法国的教授，另一个是教授的仆人，还有一个是加拿大的一名渔夫。这三个人之所以能上船，是因为当时正好有艘美国的“亚伯拉罕·林肯号”巡洋舰在追逐“鹦鹉螺号”时，两船因为发生碰撞，“林肯号”上的三个人被抛了出去，正好落在了他们船上。

尼摩船长从教授嘴里得知，自己的“鹦鹉螺号”经常被人当成大鲸鱼类哺乳动物和海盗的潜水船，因此一直受到很多人的追杀。

三个偶然进入他们船的人，接触到了他们神秘的生活。原本他可以将这三个人放回大洋的，但他没有那么做，而是将他们软禁了起来，整整七个月。

因此，这三个人亲眼见证了他们在海底航行了两万里，并目睹了潜水艇上发生的诸多事情。

这三个人并不知道尼摩船长的历史，在1847年6月6日的时候，他们偷偷地乘上“鹦鹉螺号”上的一只小船逃走了。当时，“鹦鹉螺号”正好在挪威海岸附近卷入大漩涡，所以尼摩船长一直以为那三个人已经离开了人世。

没想到那三个人却幸运地被抛在了海岸，并被罗弗敦群岛¹的渔民们所救。尼摩船长更没有想到，那位法国教授回国后，写了一本书出版了，书里的内容就是讲他们在“鹦鹉螺号”上那七个月的离奇经历。此书最终引起了广大读者的好奇。

之后的很长一段时间，尼摩船长带着他的人，继续漫游于各个海洋，而他身边的人也在一个个地去世。尼摩船长在为去世者找到一个长

眠之地——太平洋的一块珊瑚礁上之后，自己依然生活在海底。

此时，他已经是位60多岁的老人了。独自一人，无依无靠的他，将他的“鹦鹉螺号”开进了一个他之前一直停泊的港口——海底石洞，而这个石洞就是林肯岛的海底，这里最终也成了“鹦鹉螺号”和尼摩船长的藏身之处。

在林肯岛上生活了六年的尼摩船长，没有再去航海，只是静静地等待生命的流逝。他觉得他应该回到长眠的伙伴们中间了。而就在此时，他发现了一个载人的气球降落在了林肯岛上，并在离岸几锚链的位置发现了掉在海里的史密斯。穿着潜水衣在海里游动的尼摩船长在同情心的召唤下，救起了史密斯。

当然，救起史密斯后，他首先想到的是不要被其他五个遇难者发现，就将史密斯放在了沙丘地的山洞里。不过，由于火山喷发的原因，使一部分玄武岩升出了水面，将尼摩船长藏身的山洞堵住了，他的“鹦鹉螺号”便一直被堵在了山洞里。

在此期间，他一直默默地注视着那些身无他物而降落在荒岛上的人，这些人的诚实、勇敢和团结友爱让他很是感动，于是便情不自禁地去了解他们生活中的疾苦。穿着潜水衣的他，经常进入“花岗宫殿”里的一个井底，并沿着那凸出的岩石爬到井口听居民们聊天。

在那里，他听到了居民们的很多故事，了解到了文明世界的很多情况。从居民们那里，他也得知为了废除奴隶制，美国所发生的内战。

确实是这样，岛上这些善良人的行为深深地影响着他对世界和人的看法。当然，他也帮居民们做了很多事，比如救活史密斯，领多卜去“石窟”，并将它从湖里的危险大战中救出；将装满了居民们需要的东

西的箱子放在了拾箱角；在他们需要平底船时，将平底船送到了感恩河；在猴子霸占“花岗宫殿”时，赶走了猴子，并将绳梯给他们扔了下去；写纸条装在瓶子里，告诉他们阿埃童在岱波岛上；将水雷放在海峡底部，引起海盗双桅船的爆炸；在赫伯特重病之际，送硫酸奎宁，将他从垂死中救了过来；用猎捕海底动物的电弹打死了五名海盗……

种种神秘莫测的事，都体现出了尼摩船长的善良和才华。

这位伟大善良同时也愤世嫉俗的人，因为急促的心跳让他意识到自己在世的时间不多了，而他还想给居民们提出一些建议。于是，就像前面我们所知道的，他在牲畜栏通向“花岗宫殿”的电报线上接了一条线，邀请居民们来到他的住所。

如果他知道史密斯了解他的历史，并知道他就是尼摩船长的话，很可能他就不会邀请他们来了。

尼摩船长在讲完他的一生后，史密斯说，尼摩船长的历史，对居民们震动很大，他代表大家向这位大恩人表示感谢。

尼摩船长对他的谢意并不看重，也没有去握史密斯伸出的手，他的脑子里一直在想着另一件事，所以便问：

“您已经知道了我的历史，您有什么看法？”

显然，尼摩船长之所以向他们讲述自己的历史，是因为他住在深海里的事被那三个人看到了，而且还被那法国教授写进了书里，影响很大。而且，在那三个人逃跑后，在北大西洋，“鹦鹉螺号”曾被一艘巡洋舰追逐，最后将那艘巡洋舰撞沉了。

史密斯知道尼摩船长的意思，但他却没有回答。

“先生，您知道吗？那是英国人的巡洋舰！”尼摩船长的声音大了起来，瞬间，他好像又变成了达卡王子。

“那巡洋舰是来攻击我们的，明白吗？我们被挤在了一个又窄又浅的港湾……没办法，我必须闯过去，然后我就……闯过去了！”

他说完这些，停了一下，接着说：“我主张正义和公理，无论在何时何地，我都会尽力让自己去做对大家有益的事，但同时，我也会做我应该做的‘坏事’。因为我知道，正义不等于要饶恕罪恶！”

尼摩船长说完，又沉默了一会儿，接着平静地说：“对我这人怎么看？先生们？”

史密斯向尼摩船长再次伸出了手，他神情严肃地说：“先生，您的错在于抗拒历史的发展，您想让过去的事重来。不过，也正是因为这样，您的错误才既有人称赞，也有人责难——是非对错只有上帝知道。但从情理上来说，是值得原谅的。因为一个人如果错误地认为自己要做的事都是对的，那么人们也许会攻击他，但也会尊敬他。所以，您即使有错，也不会失去别人对您的尊敬！您的名字和事迹会由历史来做出评判。历史喜欢英雄的故事，但同时也会谴责因为战争所造成的后果。”

尼摩船长的胸脯在极度起伏，他将手举向空中，喃喃道：“我到底是对了还是错了呢？”

“一切事物都是从上帝那里来的，以后还要回到上帝那里去！尼摩船长，您救了我们，我们将会永远怀念您！”史密斯说。

赫伯特走到了尼摩船长身边，他跪下身，吻了吻船长的手。

处在垂死中的船长，眼里噙满泪水，慢慢地说：

“我的孩子，愿上帝保佑你！”

[1](#)挪威北部、挪威海中的群岛。

第十七章

天亮了，但洞窟深处却是感受不到外面的阳光的。此时正是涨潮期，洞窟的入口已经被淹没了。

从“鹦鹉螺号”的天窗里射出的灯光照向了远方，照到的地方明晃晃的，也让浮船周围的海水泛起了粼粼波光。

此时，尼摩船长疲惫地倒在了长沙发上，想要抬他去“花岗宫殿”根本不可能。因为他已经说过，他要和他所有的珍宝在一起，要和“鹦鹉螺号”一起等待死亡的降临。

尼摩船长很长时间都处于失去知觉的状态，史密斯和史佩莱小心翼翼地观察着他的情况。他的体力衰退得特别厉害，曾经那么强健的体魄，如今却成了一个即将失去灵魂的躯壳，所有的生命寄托只存在于心脏和大脑里。

史密斯和史佩莱悄悄地商量着，看还有没有办法帮助这个垂死的人，即使无法挽救他的生命，但是否可以让他多活几天？可他也说过，他已经没办法救活了，他也不惧怕死亡。

“我们无能为力！”史佩莱说。

“是什么原因导致的呢？”庞库那夫说。

“很简单，生命衰竭！”史佩莱说。

“我想，是不是把他抬到外面晒晒太阳会好一点？呼吸一些新鲜空气，说不定就好了。”庞库那夫又说。

“不行！庞库那夫，这样做是没有用的。而且尼摩船长已经说了，他不会离开自己的船的。他在‘鹦鹉螺号’已经生活整整30年了，死也要死在这里的。”史密斯说。

尼摩船长好像听见了史密斯的话，他稍稍抬了抬身子，用微弱的，但别人却能听清的声音说：“没错，先生，我是要死在这里……这是我的愿望。不过，我现在还有一个请求！”

史密斯和其他人一起来到他的长沙发前，将他的坐垫重新放了一下，以便他能躺得舒服一些。

灯光穿过天花板上的花玻璃，将整个大厅都照亮了。

尼摩船长注视着他这博物馆般的房子，以及房子里的珍宝。他先是看了看隔板挂毡上的一幅幅画，那是意大利、佛兰德斯、法兰西和西班牙等大师的杰作；又看了看桌子上的那块大理石雕塑和铜像；最后又看了看隔板后半部分：那里有一架华丽的风琴，旁边有鱼缸，里面饲养着各种珍奇水族，以及海藻、植虫和珍珠……

在将这些看了一遍后，他将目光停在了一面墙上，那墙上刻着一句话，也是“鹦鹉螺号”的一句箴言：

“动中之动。”

在观看这些不管是人工还是大自然创造的珍品时，尼摩船长的眼神里始终包含着不舍，仿佛这一眼看完，就再也看不到了。

实际上，他常年居住在深海，所看到的宝贝绝不仅仅只有这些。

史密斯一直没有说话，他在等尼摩船长开口。

几分钟过去了，这几分钟，尼摩船长像是在回顾自己的一生，随即他转过头来，看着居民们：

“各位先生，你们想对我尽点义务吗？”

“船长，请您相信，如果能延长您的寿命，我们每个人都愿意献出自己的生命！”

“我相信你们，那么我希望你们能答应我最后一个愿望，也就算报答我为你们做的一切了。”尼摩船长说。

“我们答应您！”史密斯庄重地点了点头。

他这句承诺，已经代表了居民中的每一个人。

“各位先生，明天，我就要死了！”尼摩船长平静地说。

赫伯特正要开口，尼摩船长用手势阻止了他开口。

“明天我死了后，我不想被埋在其他地方，我要留在‘鹦鹉螺号’。这里将是我的坟墓，也是我同伴长眠的大海深处，我们要长眠在一起。”

居民们默默地听着。

“希望你们能尊重我的愿望，将这个洞口完全封住。‘鹦鹉螺号’如今是困在里面出不去的。不过，虽然无法出去，但至少会和我的遗骸一起沉入深渊。”

居民们毕恭毕敬地听着这个将死之人的遗言。

“我死了后，史密斯先生，请您和您的朋友离开‘鹦鹉螺号’，让这全船的珍宝做我的陪葬。你们现在已经知道我是以前的达卡王子了，那么我给你们留一件纪念品。那里有个保险箱，里面装的大部分都是我在做丈夫和父亲时的东西。那时候是当成可以玩赏的东西来看的，是些昂贵的金刚钻。除了这些，还有一些是我和我的朋友在海里搜集到的珍珠。这些财宝，我希望你们以后能好好利用。史密斯先生，我相信你们，相信你们不会因为这些财宝而惹上祸端。等我上了天堂后，我还是会参加你们的事业的，我相信你们的事业一定会为人类造福。”

尼摩船长说完这些，也许是因为太累的缘故，他不得不休息了一会儿，接着又说：“你们明天在将保险箱拿走后，一定要离开大厅，并关上门，然后去‘鹦鹉螺号’的甲板，将中舱口放下，将整个船关好。”

“船长！我们一定会按您的话去做的！”史密斯说。

“出去时还坐你们来时的小船。不过，在离开‘鹦鹉螺号’之前，一定不能忘了在船尾的吃水线上，是有两个大旋塞的。你们要把旋塞打开，在海水灌进贮水槽之后，‘鹦鹉螺号’就会逐渐沉到水底去的，我也就能躺在大海深处了。”

尼摩船长在看了史密斯一眼后，像是明白他在想什么，接着又加了一句：“不要害怕，你们只不过是掩埋一个尸体而已！”

史密斯和同伴们都没再说其他的话，因为尼摩船长已经交代了他的后事，他们也就没什么可说的了，只能照办。

“答应我了吗？诸位先生！”尼摩船长最后问。

“我们一定按您说的办！船长！”史密斯说。

尼摩船长向他们做了个表示感谢的手势，接着让他们暂时离开一下，说他要休息几个小时。史佩莱想留在他身边陪他，怕他突然离世，但他却拒绝了，还说：“我会活到明天的！先生！”

居民们离开了那间像博物馆一样的房间。在经过书房和餐厅后，他们来到了一间装着电动仪器的机房。这里的仪器不仅能供应整个山洞的照明，而且还能供应“鹦鹉螺号”的机械动力。

“鹦鹉螺号”原本就是一个奇迹，但它的内部却有着更多的奇迹，连史密斯看了都惊讶不已。

居民们登上了那个高出水面七八英尺的平台，看见了一个大圆孔，圆孔外镶嵌着一块厚玻璃凸透镜，是向外透射光亮的地方。圆孔后面是舵轮舱，是“鹦鹉螺号”在海上航行时，舵手掌握方向的地方。而从这些机械设备中可以看出，在航行中，电灯光能照得很远的。

史密斯和伙伴们默默地看着这一切，刚才听到的故事，已经深深地印在了他们的脑海里。想到多次帮助他们，仅仅只结识了几个人就要死了，每个人的心里都有着说不出的难过。

以后不管后人会如何评价他那不平凡的一生，他这个达卡王子都是永远不会被人忘记的。

“真是太了不起了！想不到他会在海底生活这么多年。难道他觉得只有在海底才能得到他需要的宁静吗？”庞库那夫说。

“如果能坐上‘鹦鹉螺号’，我们一定会离开林肯岛，去有人的地方的。”阿埃童说。

“天啊！我可不坐这样的船。在水底，打死我都不干，我只希望在水面上航行。”庞库那夫大声说。

“庞库那夫，我觉得像‘鹦鹉螺号’这样的潜水艇，肯定很好驾驶，也很容易让人摸透习性。而且在海底里不怕暴风雨，也不怕撞船。即使在几英尺深的大海里，也会像在湖里一样平静。”史佩莱说。

“也许是这样，可我情愿驾驶装备齐全的船在海面上风里来雨里去。我总觉得，船就应该在海面上行驶，而不是在海底下走！”庞库那夫又说。

“朋友们，我们不用讨论潜水艇，‘鹦鹉螺号’不是我们的，我们没权利处理它，何况我们也不能去利用它。因为洞窟出口已经被上升的玄武岩堵住了，‘鹦鹉螺号’也不可能驶出洞。更重要的是，尼摩船长的愿望是和这艘船一起葬身海底，他说出的愿望就是我们要执行的法律，我们必须按照他的要求去做。”史密斯说。

他们聊了很长时间，然后去了“鹦鹉螺号”里面，在吃了一些东西后，又回到了尼摩船长躺着的房间。

尼摩船长之前和他们在一起的时候，曾陷入虚脱状态，但经过几个小时的休息后，他的精神恢复了，眼睛又熠熠发光，甚至嘴角还挂着一丝笑。

居民们围在了他的身旁。

“诸位先生，我时常观察你们，你们每个人都勇敢又诚实，为大家着想。我以前尊重你们，现在仍然尊重你们。让我和您握握手吧，史密斯先生！”

史密斯伸出手，和船长的手紧紧地握在了一起。

“非常好！”尼摩船长喃喃道。

随即他又说：“我的事情已经说了很多了，现在要和你们说说你们住的林肯岛的事情。你们想过要离开这里吗？”

“想，可我们也想回来，船长！”庞库那夫急忙说。

“是回去后再回来吗？庞库那夫，我知道你非常爱这个岛。因为你们的努力，让这个岛变了样，你们是这个岛上的主人！”尼摩船长笑着说。

“船长，我们希望这个岛能并到美国去，因为它所处的位置在太平洋上非常有利，我们想把它开辟成一个港湾。”史密斯说。

“你们是一群为祖国着想的人，先生们。你们为了祖国的繁荣富强一直在努力。做得好！一个人应该活在祖国，死在祖国！可我.....我死得离最爱的人太远了！”

尼摩船长的话里有着深深的遗憾。

“还有什么需要我们转达吗？有没有什么东西要我们带给在印度深山里的朋友？”史密斯也有些激动，动情地说。

“没有！史密斯先生，我没有朋友，认识我的人都以我早就死了！不说这些了，谈点你们的事吧！寂寞和孤独很可怕，也是很多人都无法忍受的。我曾认为可以独自生活……因此，想办法离开林肯岛，回到家乡和亲人面前吧！我知道海盗们已经将你们造的那只船毁了。”

“我们还想再造一艘更大的船，这样就能将我们带到最近的陆地了。不过，就算我们回去了，终有一天，我们还是会回来的，因为我们留恋这个地方，这里有很多东西是我们不想忘，不能忘的。”史佩莱说。

“比如说，我们在这里认识了您——尼摩船长！”史密斯接了一句。

“这里曾是我们唯一能安家的地方！”赫伯特补充说。

“我要长眠在此，如果……”尼摩船长没有把话说完，停了片刻后，他对史密斯说：“史密斯先生，我单独和你说几句行吗？”

其他人尊重船长的意见，退了出去。

史密斯和尼摩船长只谈了几分钟，便又将大家叫了进去。不过，史密斯没有把尼摩船长和他说的话说出来。

之后，史佩莱精心地照顾着尼摩船长。而尼摩船长也用尽全身的力气，和虚弱的身体做着抗争。

这一天过去了，居民们没有离开“鹦鹉螺号”一步。时间再次从白天到了黑夜，不过在洞窟里，他们却是没有白天黑夜之分的。

虽然死期将至，但尼摩船长并没有丝毫的痛苦表情，整个人都很平静，只是那端庄高贵的面容变得苍白，没有一点血色。在生命逐渐消逝

的过程中，他不时地喃喃着，发着呓语，说的全都是他以前经历过的一些事，慢慢地，他的四肢开始发凉。

偶尔，他也会和围在他身边的居民说话，或者是露出一丝微笑，而那丝微笑，也一直保持到了最后……

午夜时分，尼摩船长用尽全力将双臂交叉，想必是想死后也保持这个姿势。

差不多深夜一点钟的时候，他的眼睛又变得熠熠生光，然后喃喃了句：“上帝！祖国！”便永远地闭上了眼睛，安详地离开了。

史密斯弯下身去，送他离开。那位曾经的达卡王子成了历史，而现在，这位尼摩船长也将成为历史。

赫伯特和庞库那夫忍不住号啕大哭起来，而阿埃童只是在一旁默默地流泪。那普跪在史佩莱身边，像座雕塑，一动不动。

史密斯将手放在死去的尼摩船长头上，庄严地说：“让我们为死去的恩人祷告吧！但愿他的灵魂能回到上帝那里！”

几个小时后，居民们实现了他们的诺言，做好了尼摩船长临终前托付给他们的事。

史密斯和他的伙伴们，拿着恩人尼摩船长留给他们的东西——装着亿万珍宝的保险箱，离开了“鹦鹉螺号”。

他们离开前，躺着尼摩船长的房间依然灯光灿烂。

他们小心翼翼地关上了房门，随即又将通向甲板的铁门严实地关

上，以便让水透到“鹦鹉螺号”里去。

最后，他们跳上了系在潜水艇上的小船，然后将小船划到了“鹦鹉螺号”的船尾，将船尾吃水线附近的两个为了让船下沉而设置的大旋塞打开。

“鹦鹉螺号”缓缓地下沉，接着就不见了。

居民们眼睁睁地看着它下沉，船上的灯光顿时照亮了周边的海水，很快，洞窟又变成了漆黑一片。

当被灯光映透的海水变黑后，那艘神奇的“鹦鹉螺号”，成了它神奇的主人——尼摩船长的棺材，永远地沉入了海洋的深处……

第十八章

天亮时，居民们已经回到了洞窟的出口，一路上没人说话。为了纪念尼摩船长，他们给这里取名为达卡洞。此时正值退潮，虽然海水冲刷着船身，但他们还是很容易地从拱形洞口穿过去了。

庞库那夫、那普和阿埃童又将船拉回洞内，放在了洞壁边的沙滩上，这样就不怕小船受到海水冲击了。

夜里暴风雨就停了，在他们走出洞口时，也只有很小的几声雷声，随即就消失了。虽然没有了雷雨，但天空还是阴沉得可怕。对南半球来说，10月份是春季的第一个月。看情况，这个月的天气都不怎么好，因

为风向的位置发生了变化。

史密斯带着同伴们离开了达卡洞，径直向牲畜栏走去。那条从达卡洞接上来的电线，那普和赫伯特一路上都收了起来，留待以后再用。

从达卡洞到牲畜栏，居民们也很少说话。

10月15日夜里发生的一切，一直浮现在他们的脑海。尼摩船长，那个在危急之中时常帮助他们的陌生人，那个他们想象中有着超凡能力的人，此刻再也没有了，永远地消失在了人间，和他的“鹦鹉螺号”永远地沉入了海底。

居民们一下子发现，他们比任何时候都孤单。他们时常梦想、期盼遇到的神秘力量也随着那人的消失而不存在了。这种想法不要说别人，就连史密斯和史佩莱都有。

差不多早晨九点钟的时候，他们回到了“花岗宫殿”。

原来他们就决定要加速造船，这次史密斯更是让大家投入全部的时间和精力来做。因为对他们来说，未来的一切都是无法预料的。如果他们拥有了一只坚固的船，那么就是在天气不好的情况下航海也是可以的。而且如果船不是很小，就是长时间航行都没有问题。

居民们决定，在将船造好后，他们即使不马上离开林肯岛，也会去太平洋波利尼西亚群岛的小岛，或者是去新西兰海岸；即使不去那些地方，岱波岛他们也是一定要去的，要把阿埃童在林肯岛的事情写个纸条留在那里。

这项工作他们必须做，而且是越快越好。因为苏格兰游船即使已经来过，也可能会再来。在这点上，他们一定要非常重视才行。

于是，他们的造船工作又紧锣密鼓地开始了。史密斯、庞库那夫、阿埃童在那普、史佩莱和赫伯特的协助下，不停地工作着。除非有更重要的事，他们很少停止和休息。

还有一个原因在催促着他们，那就是他们必须赶在秋分刮风暴之前去岱波岛，否则一旦刮起来就没办法去航海了。这也就是说，他们必须在五个月内将船造好，这样才能保证3月初船能下水。

于是，居民们一刻都不停歇了。好在那只“飞速号”双桅船上的索具都被他们保留下来了，所以他们不需要制造这些，只需造船身就行。

1868年的整个年底，他们几乎什么事都没干，一直在进行着这项工作。两个半月之后，船上需要的肋材放好了，第一批铺板也铺成了。此时他们才看出史密斯这船设计的优点来，并觉得下海航行时，一定会非常好。

庞库那夫的工作非常积极，遇到同伴拿枪去打猎，他就要发牢骚，觉得不该浪费时间。不过，为了迎接即将到来的冬天，“花岗宫殿”必须储备相当数量的食物才行。但这也引起了庞库那夫的不满，只要看见有人离开“造船工场”，他就不开心，甚至赌气。不过他的赌气方式就是自己越发地卖力，一个人干六个人的活。

这个夏天，天气一直不好，有几天甚至暑热难耐，只有来上一阵狂风暴雨，才会舒服一些。不过，接连的电闪雷鸣让他们很不舒服。没办法，这是赤道地区特有的天气。

1869年1月1日，林肯岛迎来了空前的暴风雨，荒岛上好几次都响起了雷击声，许多大树，甚至格兰特湖南岸的那些用来覆盖家禽场的高大

榆树，也有一棵被击倒了。

为什么会出现这么恶劣的天气？和地心的变化、地底的变动有没有什么关系呢？史密斯觉得是有关系的，因为当暴风雨来临时，他发现火山复活的征兆又出现了。

1月3日一早，赫伯特打算去给野驴套缰绳，在他刚刚爬上观望壁时，就发现火山顶上冒起了烟雾。他立刻返回去告诉了大家，大家马上出去观看。

“天啊！这家伙不是只冒水汽了，是开始冒烟了！”庞库那夫大声说，丝毫没意识到危险的降临。

不过，他的这句话却准确地表达了火山口的变化。三个月来，火山口一直喷的是水汽，虽然喷出的水汽有时候浓，有时候淡，但始终只是内部矿物质沸腾引起的。可此时喷的却是像柱子一样的灰色烟雾，烟雾底部的宽度达到了300多英尺，上升高度达到了700英尺。烟雾散开的形状像极了一个大蘑菇。

“有火苗了！”史佩莱说。

“这火苗我们可没办法扑灭！”赫伯特说。

“应该把这火山推倒！”那普说得一本正经。

庞库那夫大笑起来。

“那普，说得太好了！这工作你做最合适。”

史密斯一直默默无语，他向前走了几步，久久地注视着富兰克林山

山顶火山口冒出的浓烟，随即又倾听了一会儿，他听到了来自远方的隆隆声。他轻轻叹了口气，走到大家面前，神情严肃地说：

“没错！朋友们，我不能再隐瞒你们了，我们这里要发生重大变故了，火山内部不仅在沸腾，而且已经起火，我们马上就要遭受火山喷发带来的危害了。”

“史密斯先生，那我们就等它喷发吧！喷发得好，我们还可以给它鼓掌，我觉得我们完全没必要为这件事紧张、操心！”庞库那夫说。

“事情可没你想得那么简单。古时候岩浆的出口现在还在，那时候是向北边流的，可是……”

史密斯还没说完，史佩莱就接着说：“可是对我们没有一点好处，最好不要喷发！”

“这哪里说得明白？说不定火山里还有什么宝贝呢，一下子把它喷出来了，我们就可以拿来用了。”庞库那夫毫不在乎。

史密斯摇了摇头，他好像预感到这种现象并不像庞库那夫说得那么简单、轻松，而是会给他们带来很大危害似的。

他觉得即使火山口的位置决定了岩浆不会直接流入林肯岛的森林和他们开拓的地带，但火山喷发还是会带来一些连锁反应的，特别是火山喷发所引发的地震。

林肯岛地质结构很复杂，比如有些是玄武岩，有些是花岗岩；北边是坚硬的熔岩，南边是松软的土地……这样不同的地质，很难将它们紧密地融合起来，非常容易引发崩裂。所以即使岩浆溢出不会造成灾祸，但因为大地结构发生改变会导致荒岛解体，后果不堪设想。

阿埃童趴在地上，将耳朵贴在地面，好一会儿才说：“好像是拉着铁链条的马车发出的声音，轰隆隆，轰隆隆的。”

居民们也都趴在了地上，认真地听了一会儿，果然和阿埃童说的一样，不是通常意义上的爆炸声。不过，在轰隆隆的声音中，好像还夹杂着一些轰鸣声，先是越来越大，接着又慢慢降了下来。如同地底下一会儿是狂风暴雨，一会儿又雨过天晴。

由此也可以说：这是因为中间管道太宽，水汽和浓烟在向外冒所发出的声音，应该不会发生爆炸。

“太好了！太好了！我们现在可以安心工作了！让富兰克林山的山顶尽情唱歌吧，让它冒烟、轰鸣、喷火吧！史佩莱先生，今天大家都要参加工作，我们要开始装龙骨了，恐怕长十二条胳膊都不够用。等到我们的新船造好后，我觉得还是用原来的名字‘长风破浪号’比较好，是不是？我打算两个月之内，让我们新的‘长风破浪号’在气球港下水，反正我们现在一分钟都不能浪费。”庞库那夫大声说。

在庞库那夫的叫嚷下，大家都去造船厂装内龙骨。内龙骨他们用了很厚的木料，因为它是船的底部，需要将船身和肋材牢牢地连接在一起，所以这项工作特别重要，大家必须都参加。

1月3日这天，由于大家都忙着装内龙骨，也就没再讨论火山的事情。而且从“花岗宫殿”下面，他们也看不到富兰克林山。不过，这天的天气原本很晴朗，但太阳却有两次都被阴影遮住了。这阴影不是阴云，必定是浓烟经过了林肯岛上空，而风也将水汽刮到了西边。

史密斯和史佩莱注意到了天空的异样，这说明火山复活还在继续。

他们两个人又讨论了一些事情，但也没停下手里的工作。不管怎么说，他们现在最紧要的工作便是造船。如果发生变故，他们有了船，也就有了保障，而且很可能这船将来会成为他们的避难处。未来不可预知，谁又能知道会发生什么呢？

晚饭后，史密斯、史佩莱和赫伯特又向观望壁高地爬去。此时，天已经完全黑了，四周一片黑暗，但他们还是可以看出，火山口里升起的不仅有水汽，还有烟雾，甚至还带有火焰和一些白色物体。

“火山口里喷出火了！”赫伯特说完，比其他两人更快地跑上了高地。

富兰克林山离观望壁高地约有6英里，此时，它正像一支点燃的火把。由于山顶浓烟四起，浓烟中还夹杂着熔渣和岩石灰烬，所以那火光就显得尤为微弱。不过即使这样，整个荒岛还是被笼罩在了一片红光之中，那红光也映照在了高岗的树上。

很快，水汽随着旋风上升，像是要将天空遮住，只隐隐能看到几颗星星在微微地闪烁。

“变化太快了！”史密斯说。

“很正常！火山复活的时间并不短。你没忘吧，赛莱斯，我们满山寻找尼摩船长时，曾看到它在冒出蒸汽，那是在10月15日前后吧！”史佩莱说。

“对，是在两个半月前！”赫伯特赶忙说。

“所以说，实际上那山底下的火已经燃了有十个星期了，现在出现这种情况并不稀奇。”史佩莱说。

“你有没有感觉到地面在运动？”史密斯问。

“有！感觉到了一些。不过我想，这离地震还远着呢！”史佩莱回答。

“我不是说现在已经受到了地震的威胁，希望上帝保佑，不要发生地震。我们先抛开地震。现在的震动，是因为地心的火焰燃烧到了一定的高温。打个比方，如果地壳是锅炉的锅身的话，那么在蒸汽的压力下，锅身会发出颤抖，现在就是这种情况。”史密斯说。

“那火焰真美啊！”赫伯特突然大叫。

果然，有串火花直接从火山口喷了出来。虽然火花上还有水汽，但那蜿蜒上升的火舌以及无数的火星正向四周发散开来，让浓烟化作了一道白色粉末，飞出烟雾范围。随后，还有一连串的爆炸声，像极了机关枪在扫射。

三个人在观望壁的高地上一直待了近一个小时，这才慢慢地走下海滩，走向“花岗宫殿”。一路上，史密斯都在想着心事，想得出神。史佩莱问他是不是担心火山喷发，会直接或间接地给林肯岛造成危害。

史密斯说：“有这方面的原因，但不仅仅是这个原因！”

“我想，我们的最大灾难，就是能让荒岛崩裂的地震。我觉得其实也不用害怕，因为火山出口还算通畅，水汽和岩浆都能喷出来，应该没事。”史佩莱说。

“是的，不过我并不是担心地下气体膨胀引起地震，我怕的是别的原因引起的灾难！”史密斯说。

“你是指什么？亲爱的赛莱斯。”

“现在还不能完全肯定，等我再考虑两天。过些天，我想去山里看看，到时候就知道了。”

史佩莱没再说话。

这一晚，虽然火山在喷发，而且声音越来越响，爆炸声甚至传遍了整个荒岛，但很快，“花岗宫殿”的居民们还是进入了梦乡，他们太累了。

1月4日、5日、6日，接连三天，他们都在忙碌地工作着。史密斯没再说什么，只是投入全部精力去工作。此时，富兰克林山上已经覆盖上了烟雾，烟雾里夹杂着岩石，在喷射出来后又落回到了火山口。

庞库那夫看到这种场景，开玩笑地说：“看，那个大家伙在玩球，就像个魔术师一样。”

喷出的物质掉回了火山口，由此可以看出，内部压力使岩浆上涨了，不过还没涨到齐火山口。东北方向的部分缺口处能看到，岩浆还没向北部山坡流。

造船任务越来越紧迫了，但岛上的其他工作却又不能不做。比如牲畜栏里的莫伏鹿羊和山羊，他们必须饲养。虽然大家让阿埃童在1月7日的时候去了那里，因为那里他最熟悉，但他一个人还是很难忙得过来。

这天，史密斯对阿埃童说：“我和你去吧！”

这让庞库那夫和其他人都很吃惊，庞库那夫说：“史密斯先生，工期就要近了，你一去，就少了两个人了。”

“明天我们就回来。这次非去不可，我要去了解了解火山喷发的情况。”史密斯说。

“又是火山喷发，火山喷发！是的，火山喷发是大事，可我不在乎！”庞库那夫带着不满说。

即使庞库那夫再有意见，史密斯还是决定第二天去牲畜栏那边。赫伯特执意要跟史密斯去，史密斯怕又引起庞库那夫更大的不满，便没带赫伯特。

第二天一早，史密斯和阿埃童坐上由两头野驴拉的大车，向牲畜栏奔去。

森林上空有一股股的烟雾飘过，火山口不断有夹杂着各种杂质的烟雾腾空而起。空气中弥漫着带有不明颜色和重量的杂质。这些杂质，显然不是单纯从火山里喷出来的。它们有些是那种能悬浮的石粉状灰烬，有些则是淀粉状的灰色尘埃。这些灰色尘埃因为重量轻，有时候甚至能在空中飘荡好几个月。

1783年，冰岛火山喷发后，大气里有一年的时间都弥漫着灰烬，曾导致阳光都无法穿过。

不过，多数灰色尘埃状物质还是下降的。

史密斯和阿埃童快到牲畜栏时，突然，天空下起了火药一样的黑色东西，顿时，地面上，甚至树林和草场都铺上了厚厚的一层烟灰。好在有东北风，那些厚厚的烟灰很快又被吹到了海里。

“怎么会这样？真是太奇怪了，史密斯先生！”阿埃童说。

“情况越来越严重了。火山口喷出的浮石和尘埃物，都说明火山的地层正发生着激变！”史密斯说。

“有什么办法解决吗？”

“现在我们除了仔细观察发展情况外，没有什么别的办法。所以，阿埃童，你在牲畜栏做你的事，我去红河的源头看看，看看北山坡的情况。然后……”

“然后什么？史密斯先生？”

“我们去趟达卡洞，看看那里的情况。等着我，不到两个小时，我就回来了。”

史密斯说完就走了。阿埃童去了牲畜栏，一边等史密斯，一边饲养因为火山喷发而表现得极度不安的莫伏鹿羊和山羊。

史密斯爬上东部支脉，经过红河后，去了他们第一次发现硫黄泉的地方。

那里发生了很大的变化。他看到的不再是一股烟，而是十几股了。不断向外输送的烟雾，像是地下发生着活塞运动，将它们奋力推出来了一般。

看来，地壳已经无法承受那股惊人的压力了。

大气里有各种气体，甚至有水蒸气和碳酸气的混合物。这一带的地面大多是由长期岩烬粉末凝结而成的火山凝灰岩，史密斯站在这些凝灰岩上，感受到了地面的颤动，不过，他并没有发现新的岩浆。

在把富兰克林山的北山坡看了一遍后，他确定没有岩浆。

此时，火山口又喷出了火柱和烟柱，接着，岩烬像雹子一样落在了地上，但岩浆依然没有涌出火山口。看来，火山物质还没有上涨到管口最上端。

“情愿岩浆涌出来啊！”史密斯禁不住自言自语道。

“那样最起码岩浆可以从原路流出，不然谁知它们会不会重开一条道呢？那危险就不在这里了。还是尼摩船长看得清啊！不，危险不在这里！不在这里！”

史密斯嘴里一边嘀咕，一边向堤道走去。下面是鲨嘴湾的外围，在这里他可以观察很久以前岩浆喷涌的路径。当他看完后，他就能完全肯定，最近的一次火山喷发，已经是很久很久以前的事了。

随后，他又按原路返回。路上，他又仔细听了听地底下发出的轰隆声。有几次，他甚至还听到了类似爆炸的声音。

九点钟的时候，他回到了牲畜栏，阿埃童正在等着他。

“牲口饲料都弄好了，史密斯先生。”阿埃童说。

“非常好！阿埃童！”

“可是它们好像很不安！史密斯先生！”

“它们应该用直觉向我们报警。它们的直觉不会欺骗它们的！”

“您还要做什么吗？”

“阿埃童，我们马上走，带上一盏灯！”史密斯说。

他们将野驴的缰绳取下来，让它们在牲畜栏里自由行动，然后两个人出了牲畜栏，关上门，向西岸的羊肠小道走去。

走在铺满尘埃的路上，森林里的野兽，甚至连鸟好像都绝迹了。微风吹起地上的灰尘，他们瞬间被灰尘包围。两个人即使走得很近，也看不清楚对方。

因为怕被灰尘迷了眼睛，甚至钻进嘴巴、鼻子，他们捂住了双眼、鼻子和口腔。

没有了眼睛看路，他们只能摸索着前行，走得很慢。再加上空气的混浊，让他们连呼吸都困难起来。每走大约一百步，他们都要停下来喘息一会儿，所以当他们来到由玄武岩和斑岩形成的荒岛北岸顶峰时，已经是十点钟了。

史密斯和阿埃童继续往下走，每一步，他们都是按照狂风暴雨那夜走过的路前行的。好在这是白天，下坡也不像上次那么危险。而且因为岩石上铺满了灰尘，走起来方便多了。

很快，他们来到了海岸尽头，也就是40英尺高的分水线。史密斯还记得那分水线是慢慢倾斜到海面的。此时，潮水很低，冲击玄武岩石块的波浪因为有火山烟灰的原因，很是浑浊。

史密斯和阿埃童很快就找到了那个入口，在洞口前，他们停了下来。

“铁皮小船应该还在吧！”史密斯说。

“在这边呢！史密斯先生。”阿埃童说着话，很快就把他们放在拱门底下的小船拉了出来。

“上船吧！阿埃童！”史密斯说。

两个人上了船，微波将小船送到了洞窟底的拱门下。阿埃童用火刀和火石点着了灯，并将灯放在了船头，然后拿起桨划起来。掌舵的史密斯驾着小船，向洞窟驶去。

洞窟里已经没有从“鹦鹉螺号”里透出的光了，里面黑暗异常。当然，也许“鹦鹉螺号”上的灯并没有灭，但却没有一丝能穿过海底照进洞窟。

他们带来的灯光很暗，却也能引着他们沿着石壁慢慢前行。靠近外面的穹窿下一片沉寂，但当他们再往前走时，却听到了火山内部发出的轰隆声。

“是从火山里传来的。”史密斯说。

除了轰隆声，他们还闻到了一股强烈刺鼻的气味，这是一种带着硫黄味的水蒸气，几乎让他们透不过气来。但这种气味也告诉他们，这是由化学反应造成的。

“尼摩船长担心的事情终于发生了。”史密斯喃喃说着，脸色都变了。

“继续往洞底走！”他说。

“继续向前！”阿埃童说着话，拾起双桨，将小船划向了洞窟尽头。

差不多过了25分钟之后，他们来到了洞窟的尽头。

此时，史密斯站了起来，将灯光照在石壁上。这是隔开洞窟和火山中央通道的石壁。石壁到底有多厚？10英尺还是100英尺呢？不好估算。不过，从地底下火山发出的声音很清楚就能知道，这石壁应该不会很厚。

在看了石壁的下方后，他又将灯绑在了桨上，然后察看玄武岩石壁的高处。

就在此时，他看到了很多不很明显的缝隙。他贴近缝隙去闻，闻到了有刺鼻气味的东西从缝隙里渗了出来，散布在洞窟的空气里。有些地方的缝隙很大，甚至裂向了离水面二三英尺的地方。

史密斯沉吟着，忽然低声说：

“危险就在这里！太可怕了！危险就在这里！尼摩船长说得没错！真是太可怕了！”

阿埃童听到了，但什么话都没说。

史密斯向他做了一个手势，他便划起桨来。半个小时后，他们到了达卡洞口……

第十九章

在牲畜栏待了一天一夜，史密斯和阿埃童将一切都整理好后，便在1月8日这天回到了“花岗宫殿”。

史密斯当即召集大家，说林肯岛危险在即，谁都无法阻止这场灾难的降临，更无法脱离这种处境。

“朋友们，我们的岛不能和世界共存，早晚会毁灭，而毁灭的主因在岛的底部，我们无能为力！”

史密斯的语气显得非常激动。大家你看看我，我看看你，最后又看向史密斯，他们不很明白他说的话。

“到底怎么回事？赛莱斯！”史佩莱说。

“我会告诉你们的，或者说，我只是把尼摩船长那天单独和我说的话告诉大家。”史密斯说。

“尼摩船长！”大家一齐喊出了这个他们心里很神圣的名字。

“对！是他临死前最后一次提醒我们的！”

“最后提醒我们，最后提醒我们……看看，虽然他已经死了，但他还是会帮助我们的。”庞库那夫大声说。

“尼摩船长说了什么？”史佩莱问。

“朋友们，我想说的是，林肯岛和太平洋上的其他岛屿不一样。尼摩船长告诉我，它的基础终究会崩溃。”史密斯说。

“不可能的事！林肯岛绝不会这样。”庞库那夫不屑地嚷道。虽然他一直很尊敬史密斯，但在这点上，他绝不认同史密斯的说法。

“庞库那夫，听着！在听了尼摩船长的话后，我昨天又去了达卡洞，已经证实了他说得没错。那个达卡洞一直延续到了火山洞的底部。现在，隔着火山中央管道和洞窟的石壁上，已经有很多裂缝了。更严重的是，火山内部的硫黄气体已经从缝隙里渗出来了。”史密斯严肃地说。

“什么？”庞库那夫皱起了眉头。

“我发现这些缝隙是因为内部压力的作用造成的。玄武岩石的石壁正在慢慢裂开，迟早会出现一道大口子。这样，火山管道就和洞窟相通了。”

“很好啊！这多好，这样海水把火一扑灭，不就什么事都没有了吗？”庞库那夫打趣道。

“根本不是那样的。等洞窟里的海水进入沸腾的岩浆，那林肯岛就要炸上天了。如果地中海的海水灌进埃特纳火山，西西里岛也会这样的。”

居民们听到事态这么严重后，便不再说话了，他们明白危险马上就要降临了。

需要说明的是，史密斯并没有夸大其词。在通常情况下，火山几乎全在临近海或湖的地方，所以很多人会天真地认为，只要将水灌进去，很快就会让火熄灭，实际上却不是这样的。他们根本不明白这样会引发地球局部爆炸，就像正烧着的锅炉发生膨胀而爆炸一样。

火山内部原本就有几千度的温度，当水灌进去后，立刻就变成了气体，让能量增大到可以突破任何屏障的地步。

所以说，可怕的危险正威胁着荒岛。达卡洞能保持多久，林肯岛就能存在多久，这毫无疑问。而这个时间，不是几个月，也不是几个星期，很可能是几天，甚至几个小时。

居民们的悲伤可想而知，不过，他们的悲伤更多的不是因为自己即将遇到危险，而是他们赖以生存的岛，他们辛苦开辟的岛就要毁灭了。他们热爱这个岛，他们希望这个岛越变越好.....可现在，他们付出无数心血建立的家园就要消失了。

庞库那夫不想隐藏他的悲伤，眼里流下了大滴大滴的泪水。

在悲伤中，他们讨论了其他情况，研究了对他们有利的以及可能存在的机会。最后大家一致同意，一分钟都不浪费，全身心造船，因为这才是他们唯一能获得安全的途径。

于是，大家全部投入到了造船工作中。如今的播种、收割和打猎，还有什么意义呢？不管将来他们要在海上航行多长时间，仓库现有的物资都足够他们使用。现在最紧要的是，赶紧把船造好，在发生不可避免的灾难时，能让他们有个藏身之地。

造船工作在如火如荼地进行着。1月23日左右，新船的甲板铺好了一半。截至目前，火山顶端还没有发生什么大的变化，火山口依然只是在喷水汽、烟火和岩石。不过就在23日的晚上，火山里的岩浆从火山口流了出来，瞬间覆盖了另一个帽状火山锥。随即，居民们听到了一阵天崩地裂的声响。他们开始还以为是荒岛爆炸了，急忙从“花岗宫殿”跑了出来。

此时是深夜两点钟。

天空像是着了火般地被映红了。那1000英尺高、亿万斤的火山锥被抛向了地面，整个林肯岛都颤抖起来。幸好火山锥是偏向北方的，所以便落在了大海和凝灰岩平原上。

火山口变大了，火焰喷出天空，将整个林肯岛上空映成了一片火海。同时，一股岩浆从另一个山顶像瀑布一样倾泻下来，像极了一只因装了太多水而溢出的花瓶。随着岩浆的外流，火舌顺着山坡一直往下滚。

“牲畜栏，我们的牲畜栏！”阿埃童大叫。

没错，岩浆是向牲畜栏方向流的。新的火山口正好向着东方，所以，林肯岛上最富饶的一些地方，像红河源头、啄木鸟林马上就要被毁灭了。

居民们一听阿埃童这么喊，马上向野驴的厩房跑去。他们牵出野驴，将大车套好，坐上大车向牲畜栏奔去。此时，他们只有一个念头，那就是赶快去牲畜栏，将那些牲口放出来。

差不多三点钟的时候，他们到了牲畜栏。此时，莫伏鹿羊和山羊在大声尖叫，声音里充满了恐惧。一股正燃烧的物质和岩浆已经从山坡倾向牧场了，一直流到了栅栏旁。阿埃童急忙打开大门，那些牲口顿时向四面惊慌逃去。

一个小时后，沸腾的岩浆充满了牲畜栏。

岩浆让横贯牲畜栏的河水成了蒸汽，房子全被烧光了，就连木栅栏也一根没剩，曾经的牲畜栏此刻变得面目全非。

居民们无法阻止这样的灾难，想反抗简直就是个笑话。这样的自然

变化，人们无能为力。

天已大亮，这天是1月24日。

史密斯和大家还没有回“花岗宫殿”，他们想在回去前弄清楚那已经泛滥的岩浆将要流向什么方向。富兰克林山的地势是向东海岸倾斜的，虽然那里有啄木鸟林隔着，但还是无法阻止岩浆洪流流向观望壁高地。

“也许格兰特湖能给我们保护！”史佩莱说。

“希望这样吧！”史密斯并不乐观。

居民们想去火山锥坠落的那片平原，但岩浆却挡住了他们的去路。岩浆分成两路往下流，一路顺着红河河谷流，一路顺着跌水河河谷流。凡是岩浆流过的地方，那里的河水都蒸发了。

想要跨过那些岩浆洪流看来已经不可能，他们只能返回。

没有了顶的火山，已经完全变了样子，原来如同帽子般的尖锥形如今变成了桌子似的平面。新的火山口在东南两边各有一个喷口，岩浆正从那里不断地涌出来，形成了清晰的两股洪流。

新的火山口上冒出的烟尘，和密云汇合，笼罩着整个荒岛。雷声阵阵，让他们分不清到底是在打雷还是火山喷发发出的轰隆声。从火山口喷出的，燃烧着的石块高高地向天空飞射，差不多有一千多英尺高，最后在天空像烟花般地爆炸了。

天空有一道道闪电划过，像是在和火山比美。

早上七点，居民们所处的地方已经没办法待了，他们便去啄木鸟林

的边缘藏身。火山口喷射出的火石像雨点般落向他们周围，从红河河谷流下的岩浆很快也要将红河谷和牲畜栏的道路切断了。森林边缘的一排树木已经着了火，发出噼里啪啦的声响。

居民们从啄木鸟林出来，到了牲畜栏路上，他们慢慢地向安全方向走去，并不时地回头张望。岩浆以很快的速度向东流着，刚刚凝固的岩浆，又被流过来的岩浆淹没了。

此时，红河河谷造成的岩浆洪流危害越来越大，大部分森林都着了火，浓烟在树梢上空翻滚，岩浆将树干全部吞没了。

在离红河河谷半英里左右的地方，居民们站住了，他们现在必须要考虑生死存亡问题。

一直在想着这个问题的史密斯，此时知道，不管是多严重的问题，居民们都已经能够承受了，于是便说：“现在我们将面临两种可能，一种比较乐观，就是湖水挡住了岩浆，这样荒岛上至少能有一部分保留下来，我们也就有了活着的机会；另一种结果很糟糕，就是岩浆洪流漫过西遥森林，林肯岛上所有的草木都将不复存在。如果是这样的话，我们就只有在光秃秃的石头上等死了。如果荒岛再爆炸，那么我们会死得更快！”

“都已经这样了，我们还造什么船？”庞库那夫双手叉腰，跺着脚说。

“不管怎样，庞库那夫，我们都要撑到最后！”史密斯说。

在他们讨论的这段时间，岩浆的洪流已经将一些树木吞没了，甚至从森林里冲出了一条道来，一直到了格兰特湖边缘。这里有段高岗，如

果体积够大，是可以挡住洪流前进的方向的。

“马上行动！”史密斯说。

大家明白了史密斯的意思——如果他们能让洪流进入湖里，那么就还是有机会的。

居民们急忙跑向造船工场，将铲子、铁锹和斧头都带了过来，并用泥土和倒下的树木，在几个小时里筑起了一道堤坝。堤坝高3英尺，长100多英尺。

一口气干完这一切，居民们似乎觉得他们只用了几分钟时间。

当然，他们筑堤筑得正是时候，因为岩浆很快就要流到堤坝脚下，像洪水漫过河岸似的向堤坝涌来，来势汹汹，仿佛要将这唯一阻碍它们蚕食整片西遥森林的障碍吞食掉。

不过，他们筑的堤坝足够牢固，洪流在和堤坝相持了一段时间后，泻入了20英尺深的格兰特湖。

居民们怔怔地看着这场水火大战，一声不吭。

这是一场多么壮观的水火之战呀，任何笔墨都难以描绘其惊心动魄的场面。在那沸腾的岩浆流入湖里后，随着咝咝的声响，湖水瞬间化成水汽。水汽盘旋着升上天空，如同一个很大的锅炉被打开了阀门。

当然，湖水最终都要干涸，因为湖水就这么多，但岩浆依然带着白色的物质源源不断地流入湖里。

有岩浆在湖底凝固，堆积起来的岩浆凝固物高出了水面，但很快，

又有新的岩浆流了上去，瞬间又转化成岩石。这些岩石与湖中心一步步地接近，并在湖里堆起了一个岩石堤。

看来，这些岩石很快会将湖填满的。当然，湖水是根本无法泛滥了，因为岩浆已经占领了它们的地盘，它们只能化成水汽升上天空——那不甘心的滋滋声异常刺耳。

不过，水汽在升上天空不久，又像雨点般落进了海里。

湖里凝结的岩石越来越多，原本平静的湖面，现在也堆起了冒着热气的岩石，犹如一块上升的土地变成了宽广的浅滩。

现在不妨在脑海里描绘这么一幅画面：一阵飓风掀起了湖水，瞬间又被严寒凝结。这就是那股不可阻挡的洪流流入湖内三小时后的情景。

不过显然，水没能战胜火。但好在岩浆朝着格兰特湖方向流，这对居民们还是有利的，他们又可以多活几天了。观望壁高地、“花岗宫殿”和造船工场，都暂时保住了。他们现在需要用这几天的时间赶紧给船铺板，往船缝里填塞东西，赶紧让新船下水。因为如果荒岛爆炸的话，在岸上的他们肯定不安全，需要去船上避难，即使没有装索具，等船下水后再装也行。

“花岗宫殿”虽然还是安全的，但随时有可能崩塌。

从1月25日到30日，这六天时间，居民们一直在造船。六个人差不多做了几十个人的工作，他们片刻不休地工作着。火山喷发出的火焰，正好给他们提供了连夜工作的机会。

岩浆还在向外流，只是比以前少了一些。也幸好如此，因为格兰特湖已经被填满了，如果再有岩浆出来，肯定会流入观望壁高地，然后再

流到海滩上来。

不过，荒岛这边因为被挡住了，所以还好一些，而另一边的情形就完全不是这样了。

那边在第二股岩浆从跌水河的河谷流出后，因为地势相对平坦，河谷宽广，所以岩浆流过去完全没有遇到障碍。沸腾的岩浆很快就涌向了西遥森林。原本一年中这段时间的树木都很干，所以很快就着了，凶猛的火势一直蔓延到树干，树枝像是在给火上添柴，特别是那交叉在一起的树枝，更是加快了火势蔓延的速度，树顶部分的火势比树根的岩浆洪流速度更快。

森林里的美洲豹、野猪、水豚，以及各种飞禽走兽全都惊慌失措地向感恩河沿岸、气球港方向的花皂沼逃去。居民们此时连最凶猛的野兽都不怕了，他们离开了“花岗宫殿”，也没有在“石窟”里住，而是搭起了帐篷在外露宿。

史密斯和史佩莱每天都会去观望壁高地，有时赫伯特也会跟着他们去。但庞库那夫从来不去，他不忍心看那被彻底摧毁的庄稼。

这确实很让他们痛心，林肯岛上现在除了蛇盘半岛的尽头还留有苍翠的树木外，其他地方的森林全都没有了，到处都是被烟火熏烤得奇形怪状、黑漆漆的树桩。

被毁灭后的森林，甚至比花皂沼还要荒凉。岩浆的侵袭是无孔不入的，连那生机勃勃的野草，也被烧得精光，那原本绿茵茵的原野变成了光秃秃的凝灰岩石。

大海里再没有从跌水河和感恩河流入的水了。如果格兰特湖也干了

的话，居民们就没有淡水喝了。幸好南边一角的湖水没有被岩浆侵袭，使他们暂时还能喝上淡水。

火山坡屹立在西北方，如同一只嶙峋的巨爪抓着荒岛。这是多么令人恐怖的画面呀！居民们开垦的原本肥沃的土地上，曾种植着粮食，在泉水的灌溉下，他们收获了很多。可如今，那里变成了荒凉的山石。现在，他们除了原本保存的食物外，已经没有新的补给了，这是多么让他们感到痛心的事。

“太难过了，心疼死了！”史佩莱说。

“是的，史佩莱，希望老天爷能给我们时机，让我们造好这只船，船将是我们唯一的避难所。”史密斯说。

“赛莱斯，火山喷发已经没有原来猛烈了，对吗？如果我没看错的话，火山口虽然还在喷岩浆，但却比以前喷得少多了。”史佩莱说。

“喷多喷少并不是关键，关键是火还在山下燃烧呢。海水随时会灌进去。这就像船上有一群旅客，船突然失了火，又没办法扑火，火还在慢慢地向火药库蔓延……史佩莱，干吧！干活吧！一分钟都不能再耽误了。”史密斯说。

又是八天过去了，也就是2月7日的时候，岩浆还在向外涌，不过好在火山喷发只局限于原来的范围。史密斯担心岩浆泛滥到海边，这样造船工场就毁了。此外，居民们已经感觉到荒岛的颤动了，这让他们非常害怕。

已经2月20日了，即使他们不眠不休地造船，但离新船下水也还要一个月。荒岛能否还能保留到那时候？他们不知道。庞库那夫和史密斯

都说，在船身做好后，立刻让船下水，对于甲板、船舷、内部的木制品和索具，他们都可以等以后再补做。

这样至少能够让居民们在荒岛外有个可靠的避难之处。他们甚至还想，可以把船带到气球港去，这样就离爆炸中心远一点。因为一旦荒岛爆炸，他们放在感恩河河口的船，是很有可能被炸碎的。

有了这个想法，他们便更加集中力量做船身。

转眼到了3月3日了，他们算了一下，差不多再有十天，新船就能下水了。

这是居民们在林肯岛上的第四个年头。在这里，他们经受过无数考验，所以此时，他们还是满怀信心，充满希望。庞库那夫虽然因为林肯岛被毁而显得有些不开心，但此时，面对即将下水的新船，他还是高兴了不少。

没错，他已经将全部的希望都寄托在新船上了。

“史密斯先生，我们这船造得真是时候。现在正是夏天过渡到秋天的时候，到了秋分，我们不得已时，还可以把船靠在岱波岛，在那里过冬。虽然岱波岛不能和我们的林肯岛相比，不过……唉！真够倒霉的，谁知道会发生这样的事呢！”庞库那夫说。

“继续干活吧！”史密斯总是这么回答他。

于是，他们又埋头干起来。

又是几天过去了，有一天那普问史密斯：“主人，如果尼摩船长活着，还会发生这些事吗？”

“当然会！那普。”史密斯说。

“如果我说，肯定不会！”庞库那夫凑在那普耳边说。

“嗯！我和你想得一样！”那普说得一本正经。

情况变得严峻是在3月份的第一个星期，火山口再次沸腾，岩浆像一条条玻璃丝，流向荒岛，流遍了山脊。岩浆洪流从已经凝固了的凝灰岩表面流出，将第一次火山喷发后残存的几棵干枯的树干全部摧毁了。这次的洪流没有朝格兰特湖西南方向流，而是流过了硝甘河，进入了观望壁高地。

这次岩浆洪流带给居民们的打击更大，高地上的磨坊、内院的建筑物和厩房都毁坏了。受到惊吓的家禽四散逃去，多卜和狙布也表现出了惊恐，它们的直觉告诉它们，大祸就要来临了。

前面一次火山喷发，荒岛上已经死了很多野兽，一些没死的也躲到了花鳉沼地上，它们已经没有其他的藏身之处了。

当然，也有少数野兽逃到了观望壁高地，但此刻，连这最后的容身之处也没有了。岩浆洪流沿着花岗石壁边缘，向海滩倾泻下来，像瀑布一样——是发着火光的瀑布。

这惊魂的一幕无法用语言来形容。如果是在夜里，可以将它形容成尼亚加拉瀑布，不过这瀑布却不是水，而是上面是水蒸气，下面是沸腾的岩浆。

居民们不得不换地方，换到了最后的堡垒——新船。虽然船的上部缝隙还没填好，但他们还是决定让它下水。

下水的时间定在了第二天，也就是3月9日早上。庞库那夫和阿埃童已经做好了一切准备。

然而，就在3月8日的晚上，火山口喷射出了水蒸气，直冲3000英尺的高空，像一根巨大的柱子。随着这股蒸汽，居民们听到了惊天动地的爆炸声。

看来，事情一定是这样的：达卡洞的石壁因为受到气体压力，崩裂了。海水穿过火山中央管道进了火坑，随即又被蒸发成水汽。不过，火山口宽度不够，水汽无法排出，于是便发生了大爆炸。

爆炸声很响，就是在100英里之外都能听得清。岩石碎片飞进了太平洋，仅仅几分钟，海水便漫过了林肯岛的所有地方……

第二十章

林肯岛已经不存在了，唯一没被淹的还有一块地方，那就是30英尺长，20英尺宽，高出水面不到10英尺的孤石。

此处是“花岗宫殿”的全部废墟。高大的石壁崩塌成了碎块，几块较大岩石的堆砌，形成了这么一块陆地。富兰克林山的火山锥已经变成了两片，鲨嘴湾的熔岩峡口、观望壁的高地、着陆岛、气球港的花岗石块、达卡洞的玄武岩，甚至连远离爆炸中心的又窄又长的蛇盘半岛……一切都消失在了海洋上。

整个林肯岛，只剩下这块长形岩石了。而如今，它也成了六个居民

和一条狗的避难之所。

所有的牲畜全在这场巨大的灾难中死了，很多动物以及鸟类，不是被压死就是被淹死，没有活口，就连他们的猎狗也在这场灾难中被活活压死了。

史密斯、史佩莱、赫伯特、庞库那夫、那普和阿埃童，以及多卜，他们还活着。幸好他们当时正聚集在帐篷下，在荒岛被炸得粉碎，所有物体都像雨点般被甩出去后，他们也被抛向了海里。

在他们浮出水面后，看到的也就是这么一个石堆了。于是，他们游了过来，并在这里落了脚。

在这样一堆石头上，他们整整生活了九天。不幸的他们，如今只剩下遇难前从“花岗宫殿”仓库里带来的粮食，喝的是岩石低洼处的雨水。而倾注了他们全部精力制造的船，已经完全变成了碎片。他们离不开这堆石头，他们没有火，也没有取火的办法。

看来，他们只能等死了。

熬到了3月18日，虽然每天极尽节省，只吃能维持活下去的食物量，但他们还是只剩下够生存两天的食物了。

在这种情况下，所有的智慧和所学的知识，都已经没有用武之地了。现在，上帝掌握着他们的命运。

史密斯依然保持着他的沉着，但史佩莱已经开始焦躁不安了，庞库那夫更是在礁石上走来走去，无法驱散内心的怨气。赫伯特寸步不离地跟着史密斯，看着他，希望他能想出办法。那普和阿埃童比较镇定，因为他们只是在听天由命。

“太倒霉了，真是太倒霉了！如果能有个核桃壳将我们带到岱波岛也好呀！没有了，我们现在什么都没有了！”庞库那夫不停地发着牢骚。

“尼摩船长死得倒真是时候！”那普慢悠悠地说。

之后的五天里，他们更加节约了，每天只吃不至于饿死的量就行。他们的身体越来越弱，而赫伯特和那普已经有点精神恍惚了。

在这样的情况下，他们对生存还有希望吗？没有了！他们能有什么希望？他们会有机会吗？期待有船在他们的视线范围内出现吗？

他们很清楚，正常的船只不会到太平洋的这部分来的。如果正好有苏格兰游船去岱波岛接阿埃童，倒是不错的。可他们有这么好的运气吗？而且能指望这些吗？简直就是开玩笑。

再说，他们还没来得及给岱波岛送信，告诉阿埃童的地址。所以，即使“邓肯号”真去了那个地方，但船长在搜遍全岛后都找不到阿埃童，还会来纬度较低的这个地方吗？

不！不可能有这样的获救机会。他们只能在这堆石头上等待死亡的降临，等待饥渴要了他们的命。

躺在石堆上的他们，仅仅只剩下一口气了。周围发生了什么，有什么事发生，他们全都不知道。只有阿埃童有时会不由自主地用尽全力抬起头，绝望地看着空无一人一物的海洋。

3月24日清晨，突然，阿埃童向水平线上的一个黑点伸出了手。然后，他强撑起身体，跪在了地上，随即又站起来，像是在用手发什么信

号。

有只船在慢慢地接近这堆石头。

这只船看起来不像是漫无目的而来的。在蒸汽机的推动下，它飞快地向这堆石头驶来。其实，如果居民们能有精神去观察水平线的话，他们应该在几个小时前就发现它了。

“是‘邓肯号’！”阿埃童喃喃着，随即便倒在了石头上，不省人事。

.....

史密斯和伙伴们终于醒过来了，他们发现自己在一只游船上，而到底是如何死里逃生，又是如何在人的精心照料下醒过来的，他们一无所知。

但阿埃童的一句话，马上让他们明白过来。

“是‘邓肯号’！”他喃喃道。

“啊？是‘邓肯号’吗？”史密斯大喊一声，随即举起手来，大声说：“万能的上帝啊！您发了慈悲，将我们这些人保全了下来！”

没错，救他们上船的，正是“邓肯号”，也就是格莱拉弗爵士的游船。阿埃童在岱波岛上已经12年了，赎满了罪，所以，格兰特船长的儿子罗伯特便指挥“邓肯号”，奉命接他回国。

就这样，居民们被救了，并且要踏上回国的旅程了。

见到罗伯特·格兰特后，史密斯问：“格兰特船长，你们是去岱波岛，没找到阿埃童，在离开那里时到了这里吗？这里可在岱波岛东北方

向100英里以外呢。”

“史密斯先生，我们不仅是为了接阿埃童，也为了接回你和你的伙伴们。”罗伯特说。

“什么？找我们？”

“没错！我知道你们在林肯岛。”

“林肯岛？”史佩莱、赫伯特、那普和庞库那夫一起，惊讶地大叫起来。

“你知道林肯岛？航海地图上可是没有的。”史密斯说。

“我在岱波岛上看到了一张纸条，所以才知道的。”罗伯特说。

“一张纸条？”史佩莱更吃惊了。

“是的！是一张纸条，上面写着阿埃童和五名美国人的所在地。”罗伯特说着，拿出了一张标明林肯岛经纬度的纸条给他们。

史密斯在看了纸条后，发现字迹和他们在牲畜栏里看到的纸条上的字迹一样，连忙说：“是尼摩船长写的！”

“啊！一定是他驾驶我们的‘长风破浪号’，去了岱波岛并留下了这张纸条。”庞库那夫说。

“他冒险去就是为了送这张纸条！”赫伯特补充道。

“看，我没说错吧！尼摩船长就是离开了人世，也还是会帮助我们的。”庞库那夫说。

史密斯非常激动，看着大家。

“朋友们，愿仁慈的上帝能怜悯我们的大恩人尼摩船长的灵魂！”

说到这里，史密斯和其他居民一起摘掉了头上的帽子，喃喃着尼摩船长的名字。

随后，阿埃童把一只保险箱交给了史密斯：“给，保险箱在这里！”

原来，在荒岛下沉时，阿埃童冒险将保险箱保存了起来，现在也交给了史密斯。

史密斯被他的做法深深打动了，他一边叫着阿埃童的名字，一边对罗伯特说：“先生，这个被你们惩罚在岛上的罪犯，经过忏悔，已经完全改过自新了，成了一个诚实的人。当我和他握手的时候，我感到非常骄傲！”

此时，罗伯特才知道关于尼摩船长的历史，以及林肯岛上居民们的情况。

船上的人观测了这片浅滩，说它的标志以后将会在地图上出现，随即，船长罗伯特下令起航。

半个月之后，居民们回到了他们的祖国——美国。他们发现，在他们居住在岛上的几年里，那场残酷的战争已经结束了，而且真理和正义取得了胜利，国家又恢复了和平和宁静。

在林肯岛上居住过的居民们，将尼摩船长留给他们的那箱财宝中的大部分，在爱德华州买了一大片土地。又将财宝中一颗最好的珍珠，以被救回国的幸存者名义，送给了格莱拉弗爵士的夫人以示感谢。

之后，他们便在这块土地上劳动、生活，追求着一份平静的幸福。他们用开辟林肯岛的智慧，重新建了一个宽阔的聚居地，并用林肯岛及林肯岛上的那些地方来命名，比如给一条河取名叫感恩河；给一座山取名叫富兰克林山；给一条湖取名叫格兰特湖；给一个森林取名为西遥森林.....

这里，也成了一个陆地上的海岛。

史密斯和伙伴们，通过他们的智慧和双手，让这片海岛也繁荣起来。

在这里生活的人，老居民一个都不少，而且他们发誓要永远生活在一起。

那普就不用说了，还是跟主人在一起；阿埃童则经常过来和他们一起劳动；庞库那夫做起农活比做水手还顺手；赫伯特在史密斯的教育下，完成了他的学业；史佩莱则创办了一份《林肯岛先驱新报》，并使它成为世界上消息最灵通的报纸之一。

他们的陆上海岛经常有人来拜访，比如格莱拉弗爵士和他的夫人；约翰·麦盖尔船长和他的夫人玛丽·格兰特；罗伯特·格兰特和麦克·那布斯少校.....

总之，都是一些和格兰特船长以及尼摩船长一生有关的人。

他们生活得很幸福，也很满足，并和过去一样，团结友爱。

不过，他们永远也不会忘记那个岛，那个在他们一无所有时，用双手和智慧，用四年的时间，让他们变得应有所有的岛。

当然，现在那里只有一堆被太平洋冲击着的花岗石.....

那里是尼摩船长的坟墓！

（完）

尤金·扎米亚金○著 张蔚○译

我们 We

D-503 O-90 R-13 I-330 S-471

Yevgeny Zamyatin

焚书年代的文学奇品
第一部反乌托邦小说



北方文艺出版社

目录

[我们](#)

[我们](#)

[笔记之一](#)

[笔记之二](#)

[笔记之三](#)

[笔记之四](#)

[笔记之五](#)

[笔记之六](#)

[笔记之七](#)

[笔记之八](#)

[笔记之九](#)

[笔记之十](#)

[笔记之十一](#)

[笔记之十二](#)

[笔记之十三](#)

[笔记之十四](#)

[笔记之十五](#)

[笔记之十六](#)

[笔记之十七](#)

[笔记之十八](#)

[笔记之十九](#)

[笔记之二十](#)

[笔记之二十一](#)

[笔记之二十二](#)

[笔记之二十三](#)

[笔记之二十四](#)

[笔记之二十五](#)

[笔记之二十六](#)

[笔记之二十七](#)

[笔记之二十八](#)

[笔记之二十九](#)

[笔记之三十](#)

[笔记之三十一](#)

[笔记之三十二](#)
[笔记之三十三](#)
[笔记之三十四](#)
[笔记之三十五](#)
[笔记之三十六](#)
[笔记之三十七](#)
[笔记之三十八](#)
[笔记之三十九](#)
[笔记之四十](#)

[we](#)

[RECORD ONE](#)
[RECORD TWO](#)
[RECORD THREE](#)
[RECORD FOUR](#)
[RECORD FIVE](#)
[RECORD SIX](#)
[RECORD SEVEN](#)
[RECORD EIGHT](#)
[RECORD NINE](#)
[RECORD TEN](#)
[RECORD ELEVEN](#)
[RECORD TWELVE](#)
[RECORD THIRTEEN](#)
[RECORD FOURTEEN](#)
[RECORD FIFTEEN](#)
[RECORD SIXTEEN](#)
[RECORD SEVENTEEN](#)
[RECORD EIGHTEEN](#)
[RECORD NINETEEN](#)
[RECORD TWENTY](#)
[RECORD TWENTY-ONE](#)
[RECORD TWENTY-TWO](#)
[RECORD TWENTY-THREE](#)
[RECORD TWENTY-FOUR](#)
[RECORD TWENTY-FIVE](#)
[RECORD TWENTY-SIX](#)
[RECORD TWENTY-SEVEN](#)

[RECORD TWENTY-EIGHT](#)
[RECORD TWENTY-NINE](#)
[RECORD THIRTY](#)
[RECORD THIRTY-ONE](#)
[RECORD THIRTY-TWO](#)
[RECORD THIRTY-THREE](#)
[RECORD THIRTY-FOUR](#)
[RECORD THIRTY-FIVE](#)
[RECORD THIRTY-SIX](#)
[RECORD THIRTY-SEVEN](#)
[RECORD THIRTY-EIGHT](#)
[RECORD THIRTY-NINE](#)
[RECORD FORTY](#)

版权信息

书名：我们We

作者：扎米亚金

出版方：北方文艺出版社

出版时间：2016年10月2日

ISBN：9787531733362

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我们

我们

笔记之一

通告

最英明之线

史诗

此处，我将今晨《联合国报》上登载的文章摘录如下：

120天之后，“积分号”宇宙飞船即将竣工。最伟大的历史时刻就在眼前，它将首次进入太空。1000年前，你们英勇的祖先统一了全球，建立了伟大的联合国。而今，你们面临着更加光荣的使命：我们所建造的玻璃电飞船，将喷吐着火焰，进入宇宙深处。而它此番进入宇宙就是为了完成将其他星球上的未知的生物从原始的蒙昧中解救出来，即为它们套上那充满理性之光的逻辑之枷。这是一种充满着数学般精确的幸福，如果它们还懵懂不知，我们的责任便是将这种幸福加诸它们。当然，武力的征服总是要在文字语言之后的。

因此，仅以全知全能者之名向联合国全体号码公告如下：

凡有能力者，都应竭尽所能撰写论文、史诗、宣言、颂歌及其他各类文章，赞颂这一威武、壮美及伟大之联合王国。

这些作品便是“积分号”将要运载太空的首批礼物。

联合国万岁，号码们万岁，全知全能者万岁！

我满怀激动地抄写下这一字一句，此刻，我的两颊仍灼烧似的发烫。我们要将这逻辑等式运用到浩瀚的宇宙之中，解放那野蛮的曲线，将它纠正成一条完美的直线，就像联合国这样的直线，这是一条神圣的直线！它英明、它精确、它睿智、它伟大！

我，即D-503，是“积分号”的设计师，也是联合国的数学家，与其他数学家一样，我的笔也写惯了数字公式，想用它来描述那富于动感的进军乐章，有点困难。因此，我就将我的所见所闻，所思所想，更确切地说，就是将我们的思想记录下来。对，“我们的”；这个意思准确多了。那么，就用《我们》来为这个笔记命名吧。我将用这个笔记记录下在联合国的美妙数学式生活。这样，记录本身就会成为一部赞美诗，是的，我非常确信这一点。

在这篇笔记接近尾声的时候，我的双颊仍然是滚烫的。此刻，我更像体会到了一个女子初次听到腹内胎儿的搏动的心情。它似我，但又不是我。我必须如母亲一般，将我的精力、我的心血全副交予它，日复一日，年复一年地滋养它，孕育它。最后，忍痛将它从我的躯体上撕裂下来，毕恭毕敬地交给联合国。

我已做好了准备，如同其他所有的号码一样，准备全力以赴。

笔记之二

芭蕾舞

和谐的四方形

未知数 X

春天到了。风吹了进来，它来自绿墙之外，从哪个不知名的田野里吹来，带着香甜的黄色花粉。这甜得发腻的花粉弄得我们的嘴唇也跟着干了起来，你不住地舔着它。现在，我在大街上遇到的每个女性（当然，也包括那些男性们）必然也有着这般甜的嘴唇。这么想着，多少有点影响我的逻辑思维。

但是，天空却不然！一片湛蓝，连一丝云彩都没有（古代人的鉴赏力真不可理喻。那种被吹嘘得天花乱坠的团团雾气，多么奇形怪状又毫无秩序。他们的诗人竟能从中获得灵感）。我只爱今天这样经过消毒的、完美无瑕的天空。如果我说，我们只爱这样的天空，我相信绝没错。在这样的日子里，整个世界仿佛都是用最坚固的、永世长存的玻璃烧铸成的，就像那道绿色大墙和我们所有的建筑物。在这些日子，你可以看到这蓝色世界的最深处，可以看到它们至今无人知晓的令人惊叹的方程式，这些你可以在最普通、最习以为常的事物中见到。

不过，瞧那天空！它依然湛蓝湛蓝的，没有一点儿云彩的影子（古

人的审美趣味是那般可笑，从那些既毫无价值的，又奇形怪状，甚至没有秩序可言的因水蒸气聚合而形成的团团雾气里寻求灵感），而我则只热爱今天的天空，哦，我也可以说是“我们”只热爱它。只有在这样的天空之下，整个宇宙才似用最坚不可摧的永久留存的玻璃所铸成的，就如同那绿墙一般。在这样的天空之下，我们便能深入到这蓝色世界的最核心，洞悉那至今我们未曾知晓的美妙方程式，而这些方程式我们在那些最普通、最平凡的事物中也能看得到。

下面的事就是最好的例子：今天早上，我在“积分号”飞船上照常工作，我无意间看了一眼机床：它们是那样清楚明了，调速飞球不停地旋转着；那发亮的曲柄按照规矩转着圈；平衡器骄傲地晃动着肩膀；钻头也有节奏地转动着，仿佛应和着无声的音乐节拍伴奏。在淡蓝色阳光的照耀之下，我突然间发现了一种难于言表之美，即这个庞然大物的机械芭蕾之舞，简直美极了。

紧接着，问题便来了。这美从何而来呢？为什么这场芭蕾舞如此美妙？随即我自问自答：因为这是一种非自由的运动，这场芭蕾舞意味着绝对的审美服从，这种服从是对理想的非自由状态全心全意的服从。若说我们的祖先，在人生最富于灵性的时候，也曾沉浸其中的话（例如，在秘密宗教仪式和军事行进之中的某些舞蹈成分），这仅代表着，人类天生便具有着非自由的属性，而如今的我们，只是有意识地……

我还没有来得及完成上面的话，联络机便发出了咔嚓的响声。我抬眼一瞧，是O-90，当然会是她。半分钟以后，她就会过来，同我出去散步。

可爱的O！我总觉得她的名字恰如其分，她的身高比母性标准低了10厘米，因此，她看上去显得圆滚滚的。不论我讲些什么话，她的粉红

色双唇都会变成O形来回答我的话。而且，她的手腕如孩童一般有着一道圆乎乎的肉褶。

当她进来的时候，我脑袋里的逻辑飞轮还在转着，因为惯性的作用，我便和她谈起了我的新公式，当然也包括那机器和舞蹈秩序之美。

“太美妙了，是不是？”我问。

“是的，简直妙极了……春天到了。”O-90脸上洋溢着柔美的笑。

春天！她居然说的是春天。女人哪！……我不想再说什么了。

我们在街上散步，街上有不少号码散步，因为今天是个好天气，这种时候，下午的私人时间号码们都用来散步。同往常一样，音乐塔铜管齐鸣，吹奏着《联合国进行曲》。无数个身着浅蓝色制服（这种制服是从古代的制服传承下来的）的号码们，整整齐齐地四人一排，有序地散着步。每个号码胸前都挂着一枚金色的胸章，上面印着用于区别他们身份的号码。而我——我们，我们这四人一排的小组合仅仅是这奔腾的大海中一朵小浪花而已。我左侧是O-90（如果在1000年前，写这篇笔记的某位留着长发的祖先，可能会可笑地称她为“我的”）；我右侧两个陌生的号码，一个是男性号码，另一个是女性号码。

天空瓦蓝瓦蓝的，我们的胸章上映着一个一个小太阳，我们脸上洋溢着微笑，没有一丝太阳照射不到的蒙昧存在。到处都是阳光明媚的，你明白吗？……仿佛周遭的一切都是由某种阳光般通透的物体所组成的物质一般。我们踏着铿锵的节拍：特拉塔塔塔，特拉塔塔搭，迈着铿锵有力的步伐朝着太阳光愈走愈高……

此时，我用早上在飞车站时的目光，开始打量眼前的一切，就像我

首次见到它们一样：每条街道都呈现出完美的笔直状态，在街道的两旁是锃亮的玻璃路面，而街道边上的透明住所也是美妙的平行六面体，以及由我们这些灰蓝色号码所组成的四方形的和谐队列。我觉得，仿佛不是前几代人的杰作，而是我，恰恰是我自己取得了与过去古老生活战斗的胜利，我才是这一切的创造者。此刻，我更像是一座高塔，我不敢随意呼吸，也不敢挪动自己的臂肘，就像整个墙壁、屋顶、机器都会跟着坍塌一样，瞬间灰飞烟灭。

然后，我的思绪闪回到几个世纪之前，显然，是通过对比，我联想到了在博物馆中所见到的一幕，那是一幅二十世纪的先祖们所拍摄的照片：一条大街，街上有很多杂着五颜六色的乱糟糟的人群、汽车、牲畜、广告、树木、禽鸟及其他色彩.....据说，这就是那时候的生活！

这些所谓的确实存在的景象让我吃惊不已！简直不可思议！因为觉得太荒诞了，我竟忍不住笑出声来。而我的右边也随之传来了笑声，仿佛呼应我的笑声似的，我扭过头去，看到了一个陌生女人的脸以及她那一排显眼的洁白牙齿。

“抱歉，”她说道，“你刚才打量四周的神情非常激昂，仿佛是传说中的上帝完成了创世的第七日。我觉得，你当时的神情甚至认为，我也是你创造的杰作。因此，我觉得十分荣幸.....”

她这么说的时侯，表情严肃，我甚至还能感觉出有某些尊敬的意味（可能她知道我是“积分号”的设计师）。但是我有些纳闷，她的眉头还是眼睛里有一种奇特的X，我有些捉摸不定，猜不透那到底是什么，一时之间也没法找到答案。不知为什么，我觉得有些窘迫，连忙用我符合逻辑的话解释我的举动。

“今天显然已经和二十世纪时的情形判若天渊了，它们之间存在着不可逾越的鸿沟……”

“为什么说是不可逾越呢？（多么洁白的牙齿啊！）鸿沟上是可以架桥的啊！你试想一下：和着乐鼓行进的军队、整齐划一的队伍——这些在过去也是存在过的，所以……”

“是的，确实是这样！”我大声说道。

真是不谋而合啊。她所说的话跟我在散步前所记述的话居然惊人的相似。你懂吗？甚至连思想结构都相同。这是因为，我们中的任何一个都不是“单独的个体”，而是“整体中的一员”，因此，我们是如此的相似……

她说：“你也这么认为吗？”

我见到她那两道眉毛，它们高高挑起，就像字母X上端的两道线一样。我有点不知所措了，我向左边看了看，又向右边看了看。我的右手边是她，颇长、苗条、柔韧，又灵活得像一条马鞭。她是I-330号（我终于看清了她的胸章）。我的左手边是O，她又是截然不同的风格，浑身上下都是浑圆的，而手腕上还有那孩童般的肉褶；我们这排的最后一个那个陌生的男性号码。他有些佝偻，身体就像字母S。我们这四个人真可以说是迥然不同……

右手边的I-330，似乎看出了我眼中的迷惑，随之叹了口气，说道：“是呢，唉！”

说实话，这声叹气正符合我的心境，但是在她的脸上，要不就是在这声音里，我总觉察出有某些说不出的异样来。

我一反常态，言辞激烈地说：“有什么可‘唉’的呢？科学在进步，如果现在办不到，或许再过50年，100年……”

“那时候连大家的鼻子……”

“是的，就连鼻子，”我几乎大喊起来，“若是有差别，就会有妒忌心……比方说，有人是蒜头鼻，而有的人则是……”

“是呢，你的鼻子依照古代的说法，应该属于古典类型了。但是你的手……不，请不要抽回去，伸出来，让我看一看！”

我最不想让别人盯着我的手看。手上覆盖着浓密的汗毛，这非常不成体统，是返祖的现象。我将手伸了出去，假装无关紧要地说：“跟猿猴差不多吧。”

她仔细看着我的手，又看了看我的脸，说道：“这很有趣，简直是最古怪的和弦。”她不住打量着我，好像在掂我的分量似的，此时眉梢又微微挑起。

“他已登记我了。”O乐悠悠地张着粉红色的圆嘴，笑着说道。

我有些不高兴了，我该怎么说她呢？她还不如不说话，现在显然她有点混乱了。这个可爱的O，她的语言速度总是计算错误，正确的算法应该是语言的秒速小于思想的秒速，而她恰恰相反。

在大街尽头的蓄电塔上，钟表敲响了17下。这表示私人活动时间结束了。I-330和S形的男性号码一起离开了。看到他的脸觉得有让人尊敬的意味，我又发觉有点熟悉，但是却想不起来在哪里见到过他。

临分开的时候，I-330又露出她那令人不解的微笑：“后天，请来112

号礼堂找我。”

我耸了耸肩膀说：“若是我恰好被分配到那个礼堂的话……”

她居然用非常肯定的语气说道：“你会收到通知单的。”

这个女人让我觉得十分不快，她恰如一个偶然闯进的因子，钻进方程式干扰解题的进程，而你却无法除掉她。终于能和亲爱的O单独待着了——虽然时间并不多了。我牵着她的手，我们一起走过了四条街。到了街口该分手了，她要向右拐，而我则要向左拐了。O温柔地抬起她那晶莹透彻的蓝眼睛，望着我害羞地说：“此刻我多想去你那里，拉下窗帘……就在今天，就在这时候……”

她真可笑。但是我又能怎么回答呢？明明昨天她已经来过了。她非常清楚，我们的下一个性日期是在后天。而这恰好能说明她的思想有时候又会超前很多，就如同给发动机提前点了火一样。

我们分开时，我吻了她的眼睛两次……不，应该说是三次，那令我着迷的、美丽的、湛蓝的、没有一丝阴霾的、清澈的蓝眼睛。

笔记之三

外套

绿墙

守时戒律表

我将昨天的笔记重新看了一遍，我发觉里边的内容还不够清楚。也就是说，这一切对我们来说是明白清楚的，但对你们来说则未必。你们，是我所不知道的读者，谁知道“积分号”将会被送往何处？那伟大的人类文化史，没准你们仅仅读到了900年前的位置，就如同我们的祖先一样。没准你们并不明白一些基本的知识，比如，守时戒律表、私人活动时间、母性标准、绿墙、全知全能者。可能你们会觉得这些说法十分奇怪，让我来谈这些，虽然有点滑稽，但也不是三言两语就可以说清楚的。这就像是让一位二十世纪的作家，将自己小说中的名词，比如外套、套间住房、妻子等词语解释清楚一样困难。但是，若他小说的读者是那些更古老的原始人，他就必须要说清楚什么是外套。

我可以想象，当原始人看到“外套”这个词，他会在心里琢磨着：“这是做什么用的？只是个累赘罢了。”我相信，如果我这样说，自从200年战争结束之后，我们中的所有人都没有走出绿墙之外，你们也会像野蛮人一样觉得不可思议吧。

但是，亲爱的读者们，你们可以就此动一下脑筋，设想一下。因为这是非常好的决定。我们都知道，整个的人类历史，就是由游牧生活逐渐向定居生活的过渡。所以说，我们最终的生活方式就是定居，而（我们的）最固定不变的生活方式，正是最最自然也最最完美的生活方式。过去的人们，总是从一边流窜到另一边，那是遥远的史前时代的事儿了，因为那时候人们有着某种需要，即与之产生的混乱的战争、商业经济，以及新大陆的发现。但是现在的人们还需要这么做吗？

我知道，这种定居生活人类起初未必能适应。在200年战争期间，城市变为废墟，道路被毁坏殆尽，荒草丛生。森林将城市阻隔开来。在这样的城市中居住，会让生活非常不方便，但又如何呢？试想，人类在尾巴进化掉之后，起初都是不适应的。没有了尾巴，人还不知道该怎么驱走讨厌的苍蝇。可以肯定地说，在刚开始的时候，他甚至因为没了尾巴而愁眉苦脸。但是，进化到现在，你能想象自己有尾巴吗？或者，你们能想象不穿衣服而全身赤裸地在街上走吗？（不过，也可能你们现在还光着身子出门也不一定。）但道理是相通的：我不敢设想在一个没有绿墙包围的城市中生活，我同样不敢设想，没有数字守时戒律表的生活会怎样。

守时戒律表.....此刻它正待在墙上，它有金色的背景，上面的紫色数字正满怀威严又含情地望着我。此刻，我突然想到了古人们所说的“圣像”，突然有想吟诗或者写祈祷文（当然，两者都差不多）的冲动。唉，可惜我不会作诗！否则我就能够写出一首热情洋溢的优美诗篇了。啊，守时戒律表，联合国的心脏与脉搏！

当我们小的时候，也许你们也是如此，在学校里一定读过古代文学中那篇流传至今的最伟大的文献：《铁路时刻表》。但是若将它和守时戒律表放在一处，二者高下立现。它们一个是石墨，而另一个则是金刚石，虽然组成它们的元素相同，都是碳元素，但是晶莹剔透的金刚石永远比石墨要灿烂，它有着永恒的光芒！

当我们翻阅《铁路时刻表》的时候，是那样激动，甚至不敢大声喘气。但是守时戒律表，这并不是夸大其词，它才让我们所有人成为了伟大史诗中的六轮钢铁英豪。每天早晨，在同一时刻，我们几百万人像六轮机器一样准时地起床，如同一个人一般。而又在同一时刻，几百万人一齐进入工作状态，又同时结束一天的工作。我们恰似那有着一百万只

手的一个人一样，在同一秒钟，我们将饭勺送进嘴里吃饭；在同一秒钟，我们走出门散步，我们一同进入讲演厅，又在同一时刻，我们上床睡觉.....

当然，我必须承认，时至今日，我们仍然没能找出关于幸福的精确答案。我们这统一的巨大机体，在一天之中有两次将被分解成无数个小细胞。这两次便是所谓的私人时间，它们是16点至17点，21点至22点。在这些时候，你们会发现，有些人会将房间里的窗帘放下来，而有些人会选择在《进行曲》的旋律中走上街头散步；还有些人会像我一样，坐在书桌前忙事情。但是我相信，让那些人叫我理想主义者好了，或者幻想家我也不介意。那一天早晚会来临，等到那时候，一天中全部的86400秒全都被守时戒律表所统治。

我通过书本，以及人们的讲述知道古代人的种种不可思议的事情。当然，那些人仍然生活在不受管束的所谓自由之中，也就是说，生活在那种毫无纪律性可言的原始野蛮状态之下。我太困惑了：一个国家政权，即使这个政权还不够成熟，怎么会允许人们在没有守时戒律表的状况下自由生活呢？那里没有散步，用餐时间也可以随意安排，甚至人可以随意选择起床和睡觉的时间。有的史学家甚至还提及，那时候连大街上也是灯火通明，深更半夜还有行人走动。

我实在难以接受这些。即使他们的智力还达不到聪慧的程度，但也不至于如此愚昧啊！难道他们看不出来吗？这样的生活毫无意义，简直就是集体自杀，虽然是慢性的。那时候的政权由于人道主义的考量，禁令谋害别人，但是它们却容许这种光天化日下的罪行发生。杀死一个人，就是将个人的寿命总和减少50岁，这便是犯罪。但是，若使人类整体的寿命总和减少5000万岁，却不是犯罪。这是多么可笑的逻辑！这则简单的数学运算，随便找出一个10岁的号码，不出半分钟就能精确地计

算出来。

但是过去的那些人却办不到，即使把他们认为聪明绝顶的康德们请出来也办不到。因为没有哪个康德会想到要建立科学伦理学体系，即这种以加减乘除为基础的科学伦理学体系。

而且，更为奇怪的是，那些国家（他们居然敢这样称呼！）对性生活完全放任不管。这也太不可思议了。不分对象、不分场合，甚至不分时间……简直跟牲畜相仿，完全反科学！还有一点，与牲畜别无二致，就是随便生孩子。真是可笑至极！他们会园艺、懂养鸡、会养鱼（我们有十分可靠的材料可以证明这些），虽然他们掌握了这些知识，但是他们却没有按逻辑发展的递进方式发展到最后阶段，即婴儿生育学。他们也没有想到要制定母性标准和父性标准，这也太荒唐了！

这些都太可笑了，我简直不知道该怎么形容才好。当我写到这里的时候，隐隐地便有些担心起来：你们，这些我所不认识的读者们，会不会以为我在说笑？或者以为我就是想嘲笑你们而已，而装腔作势地说出以上那些荒唐的话？

所以，我要郑重地重申，首先，这不是笑话，我并没有开玩笑；而且我也不善于开玩笑。因为我觉得任何玩笑都有谎言的成分；其次，联合国的科学家们已经不止一次地证实了，古代人的生活确实像我说的那样，而联合国的科学是最权威的；再者，若是现在人们还生活在自由之中，也就是说，仍然处于原始的野蛮状态，那国家又从何谈起呢？即便在今天这个时代，在我们这众多号码之中，有时仍会传来猿猴时代的野性之声。对于古人，我们又会有什么过多的苛求呢？

值得庆幸的是，这种野性之声也不过是偶然现象，是不值一提的。

仅仅是机器零件的小故障，很容易修复，而整部机器的伟大的、永恒的运转将不受任何阻碍。若是不得不卸掉那些变了形的螺栓，全知全能者自然会伸出熟练的铁手，而安全卫士也不会熟视无睹.....

顺便写一句，我一下子就想起了那个人，昨天我们在散步的时候见到的那个双曲线S。大概有一次，我在安全卫士局见过他。这就难怪了，昨天我看到他便有一种肃然起敬的感觉。我也想通了为什么见到那个举止奇特的I-330号在他旁边，我竟有些尴尬.....

睡觉铃响起了。已经22点半了。明天接着写吧。

笔记之四

晴雨表与野蛮人

羊角风

如果

到目前为止，我生活中的所有一切都明明白白（可能是因为这样，所以我才比较喜欢使用“明白”这个词）。但是今天.....我却有点晕了。

首先，我竟然真的收到了一张前往112号礼堂的通知单，居然被她说中了。虽然这可能性微乎其微，仅仅是500/1000万，即等于2万分之

1（礼堂共有500个，而号码则有1000万个）。其次.....还是先让我理清顺序，一一道来吧。

礼堂：这是一个巨大的半圆形建筑，当然，它的组成材料依然是透明玻璃，阳光照射进来，在一圈圈的座椅上，都坐着那些尊贵无比的圆球似的光脑袋。我非常高兴地环顾四周。其实我是想看看，在这一片蓝色之中，我会不会见到O的那粉色的可爱嘴唇。啊！但是我脑海中居然闪现出一副洁白的牙齿，仿佛.....不对。今晚21点，O会过来我家。所以，我此刻最想见到的必定是她啊。

铃声响了。全体起立，齐唱《联合国国歌》。接着，录音讲演者全身披着扩音机的金光，冉冉升起。随后洪亮的声音便充斥了全场：

“尊敬的号码们！不久之前，考古专家们发掘出了一本20世纪的著作。那位讽刺作家在书中提及了野蛮人与晴雨表。野蛮人发觉，每次当晴雨表停在‘雨’上面时，天就会下雨。野蛮人很高兴，他想有雨，于是就将晴雨表中的水银倒了出来。直到晴雨表恰好停在了‘雨’上面。（屏幕上立即出现了一个戴羽毛饰品的野蛮人，他正在专心致志地倒水银。底下一阵哄笑。）

“你们都在笑，可是你们觉不觉得，其实那个时代的欧洲人更可笑。欧洲人和野蛮人有着同样的期盼，他们也想要下雨，但是他们却毫无办法，只能眼巴巴地看着晴雨表。这样一比较，野蛮人至少还有动手实验的勇气、干劲和逻辑性（虽然这逻辑感是那么的原始）。但是，他至少做出了判断，将因果之间联系了起来：他倒出了水银，即迈出了行动的第一步.....”

我仍然在那里，但是突然之间，我忘了眼前所看到和听到的一切

（我必须强调：我遵照事实记录下一切，毫不掩饰），虽然讲演还在进行，且依然是那么妙趣横生，可是我却突然发觉自己不应该来。（怎么会有这种感觉呢？但是，我既然收到了通知，我必须来的呀！）我突然觉得很空洞无聊，而我这么说又没有任何意义。于是，我又努力集中注意力，重新关注起讲演来，这时已经讲演到了此次的主题——我们依据数学结构制成的音乐（数学为因由，而音乐则是结果），他正在讲解最近刚发明的音乐创作机。

“.....只需要简单地转动手把，谁都可以在一小时内完成三部奏鸣曲的创作。与之相比，你们祖先作曲时却那么难。他们先要获得所谓的‘灵感’，这种东西就像得了羊角风一样奇怪，有了它他们才能完成创作。接下来，我们就来听一段他们经由灵感爆发之后所创作的音乐，这音乐简直可笑至极！这是20世纪的作曲家斯克里亚宾的作品。而这个（此时台上的帷幕缓缓拉开，一架20世纪的古老乐器呈现在所有人面前）黑色的大箱，被叫作皇家大三角钢琴，从这件乐器上也能看出，他们的音乐水平.....”

我再也想不起来下面的话了，可能是因为.....我还是实话实说吧，其实是因为我看到了她，是的，就是因为她，I-330出现在了“钢琴”边上。可能是因为她的突然出现，让我有些呆住了！

她穿着一条有些奇怪的古代服装。这条很长的黑色裙将她的身体紧紧裹住，让她的双肩和前胸更显得白皙。随着起伏的呼吸，她胸前的那道阴影显得十分诱人.....还有那两排洁白的小牙齿，它们甚至亮得有些刺目.....她面露微笑，随后落座，并开始弹奏。这音乐是野蛮的、狂热的、震撼的，就跟古代人的生活一样，缺乏任何理性的因素。人们哄堂大笑，是啊，他们笑得那么有理，仅有几个人没有笑.....但是，为什么我也没有笑.....

我到底是怎么了？啊，羊角风，这是一种精神病，带着疼痛的病。我好像也得了似的，突然觉得有种轻微的、甜蜜的疼痛，它越蜇越深，越来越痛。尔后，我见到了太阳，它正在冉冉升起，但是这太阳与我们常见的不同，不是那种透彻、明晰，有着幽幽蓝光的太阳。而是充满野性的，它炙热地燃烧着，仿佛要将一切都弄得粉碎……

我左手边的号码用余光看了我一眼，他仍然咯咯笑着。那时，我并没有意识出他在笑着什么，但是我却看清楚了他的模样：我清楚地看到他嘴边泛起的小唾沫星子，其中一个冒起了泡泡，然后，“啪”的一声，破了。这一声将我唤醒，我又回来了。

然后，我便跟所有人一样，也听到了那些没有任何意义、毫无系统可言的叮当乱想的琴声。我轻笑着，觉得无比畅快，心情又变得纯粹起来。那位天才的录音讲演者将那个野蛮时代描绘得绘声绘色，就是这样。

后来，又演奏了我们当代的音乐，以与那个野蛮的音乐进行对比。我很高兴地欣赏着我们当代的音乐，简直美极了。演奏厅里回响着那清亮、通透的半音音阶，它们一会儿集中，一会儿分散；应和着泰勒和麦克劳林公式的人造和声，还有毕达哥拉斯的短裤似的全音二次方的转调，曲子的起伏没有哀伤，只有和谐的音律之美，整个音乐采用了弗朗和费谱线条那行星光谱分析似的美丽节奏……简直堪称完美，那么恢宏庄严的曲子、那么富有整齐和谐！而古代人的音乐造诣简直太可悲了，它们那么恣肆任意、那么野蛮，毫无规矩可言。

与平常一样，所有人又四人一列地走出了礼堂。一个熟悉的双曲线身影从我身边闪过，我礼貌地朝他致意。

一小时之后，可爱的O就来了。我的心情舒畅极了，这是一种令人愉悦又健康的憧憬。回到家，我便赶到大楼办公室，将一张粉红色的票子递给值班员，她交给我一张允许拉窗帘的许可证。我们只有在性活动日才被允许拉窗帘。其余的时间，我们都生活在跟空气一样透明的玻璃房中，因此，我们的一切活动全部是公开的，任何人都能够看到。因为，所有人都是坦诚相见的，并没有什么秘密可隐藏。而且，这样的居住环境也减轻了安全卫士的工作压力。否则，肯定会有些令人厌烦的麻烦出现。恰恰是因为古代人的那些不透明的、奇怪的令人难以想象的居所造就了他们的狭隘、可悲的自我。“我的（原文如此！）房子即是我之堡垒。”他们居然说出这类话！

22点，我拉下窗帘，而O也微喘着气走了进来。她的粉红色双唇直接迎了过来，还有手里的一张粉红的票子。我扯下票根，但是我的嘴却怎么也离不开那粉红的嘴唇，直到最后一秒钟，22点15分，我才松开了嘴。

后来，我给她看我的日记，我们还一起说话。我还特别热情地谈到正方形和立方体之美，还有直线之美。刚开始，她着迷地听着，可过了一會兒，她的脸上便泛起了红晕。接着她清澈的蓝眼睛里便掉下泪来，一滴，二滴、三滴，呀，我摊开的稿页（第7页）已经被浸湿了。墨水化开了，看来，我得重抄一遍了。

“亲爱的，若是你愿意，我觉得.....”

“愿意什么？”难道又是她想要个孩子的陈词滥调吗？或者想要说别的什么，难道是那个女人的？虽说这.....我觉得是有点儿.....不过，也太荒谬了！

笔记之五

正方形

世界之主宰

愉快又宜人的生理功能

我们又见面了，我的那些读者们，我们这样的交谈形式，就像.....举个例子来说，我们是多年的故交。R-13，他可是一个非常出名的诗人，虽然他的嘴唇厚得像古代的黑种人，可是他远近闻名。而你们却生活在遥远的地方，可能是月球、金星、火星或者水星上，我们素不相识，无从知道你们在哪里，又是些什么人。

可以试想：若是一个正方形，假设它是一个有生命的、绝妙的存在，它需要聊聊自己的生活。你们或许会猜到，这个正方形可能没有想过要去谈论自己的四个角，虽然它们都是相等的。但是它想不到这一点，因为它总是这样的，它已经习惯了这样。因此也就不当是一回事了。而我，我有时候也会身处于正方形的这种境地中。比方粉红票子，它的存在是必然的，就像正方形的四角必然均等一样。但是，可能在你们眼中，这也许比牛顿的二项式定理更让人难以捉摸。

那么请听我接下来要说的话：在古时候有位哲人曾说过一句至理名言（当然，这可能是偶然为之）：“爱情与饥饿才是世界之主宰。”所

以，人类为了能统治世界就要付出努力来战胜饥饿。当然，我所指的努力是城市和乡村的战争，即那场旷日持久的200年大战。可能是因为宗教的偏见，基督徒将“面包”牢牢抓在手中，丝毫不肯放。而在联合国建立的前35年，我们所赖以生存的石油食物就已经发明了。确实，经过战争，地球上只有十分之二的人存活了下来，也正因为此，地球清除了那些多余的腐败垃圾，而今变得那么生机勃勃！

所以说，这些幸存的十分之二人口在联合国的美好大家庭中过得那么幸福。然后用来构成这个幸福百分比的分子和分母分别是快乐和嫉妒。这一点显而易见，若是在如今我们仍然存在着嫉妒的根由，那么在旷日持久的200年大战中死去的人的牺牲又有何意义可言呢？但是，嫉妒的根由确实存在，譬如蒜头鼻子和古典鼻子的差别（上回散步的谈话便涉及到这个内容），仍然有些人十分招人喜爱，而另外一些人则不讨人喜欢。

这是自然不过的事，从联合国解决了饥饿的困扰之后（代数的观念认为：饥饿便是身体获得福利的总和），便开始致力于征服另一个主宰，即爱情。最后爱情也被战胜，此意即，它被规范化，被组织了起来，纳入了数学的范畴。于是，在300年前，一个划时代意义的法典诞生了，即《性法典》。此法典规定“身为性的产物，每一个号码都对任何其他号码享有使用的许可权利”。

具体的操作方法，便是技术性的了。首先号码们必须要到性管理局的化验室进行仔细而全面的检查，准确测算出血液中性荷尔蒙的含量，依据此给你制订出相应的性活动日期表。然后，就可以提出申请，自愿与某个或者某些号码产生性行为，然后，你便得到了一个粉红票子的小本子。至此，一切就办妥了。

这是非常明白清楚的，因此，也不会存在任何的嫉妒因由，而担当分母的数为零，自然我们的幸福指数便是无限地大。相对于古人，他们曾因那可怜可悲可叹的爱情而酿成的无数悲剧，在今天不会上演。在我们的时代这只会是和谐、愉快而又宜人的生理功能。就如同睡眠、体力工作、饮食、消化等其他功能一样。所以说，逻辑的力量是那么神奇，它足以让一切得到净化。啊，若是你们，亲爱的读者们，也能感受到这力量的伟大就好了，若是你们也能学会遵从逻辑的指引，并一以贯之，那可多美妙啊！

好奇怪！此刻我笔端流淌着人类历史的最高成就，呼吸着最纯净的空气，但是我的心底却涌上了阴霾，就像蒙着一层不透明的蛛网，中间还有一个长着四只爪子的未知数 X 。可能，就是因为它，我的爪子，那两只毛茸茸的爪子一直在我眼前晃来晃去的。我不想谈起它们。也有些讨厌它们，它们就是野蛮时代的印记。难不成我身上真的有.....

我想让这些内容不存在，因为这些内容超出了我提要的范围。可是，仔细一想，我又决定保留下来。这样，我的笔记便是精确如地震仪的存在了，哪怕我头脑中任何最细微的波动都能被真实地记录下来。因为，在某些时候，这种波动便有预兆的意味.....天啊，这简直是胡说八道了。我不该这样想，想一想，所有的自然力量和本能问题都被我们解决了，不会有任何意外的灾祸发生了。

此刻，我想通了。看来我心里的那种奇怪的感觉应该是源于我所处的正方形状态，这个问题在笔记开头我已经写过了。而我心底深处也没有类似于 X 之类的存在。我仅仅是担心你们，亲爱的读者们，在你们心头会不会时常盘踞着 X 呢？我相信，你们会明白我的用心。也会体谅我，我完成这本笔记的难度。我所书写的比人类历史上任何一位作家还要难。他们当中，有人为同时代的人写作，而有的人为后世之人写作，

但是，却从未有位作家为远古的祖先们写作，或者是类似于远古祖先的未开化的生命存在写作。

笔记之六

意外历险

该死的“清楚”

24小时

我必须再写一次：我觉得我有这样的责任，即在写作过程中毫不避讳任何事。所以，我必须在笔记中列出这些事实：至今我们的生活，连定型化、固定化都没能完全实现。而我们离理想的彼岸也仅仅差最后一步了。所谓的理想，自然是没有任何意外事故的太平境界（这是再清楚不过的了），然而，在现实中……瞧，仍然是有些让人不愉快的，比方说，今天我在《联合国报》上读到一篇文章：两日后，在立方体广场将举行审判大典。这表明，有某个号码又起来破坏了伟大国家机器的运行，一些超出预见的意外事故又发生了。

除了这个意外，我自己也有点意外。虽然这件事是发生在私人时间，即特地被用来处理有些意外的专门时间，但是，我仍然……

大概是16点的时候（确切地说，是15点50分），我正在家里。

突然电话铃响了：“请问是D-503吗？”一个女人的声音传了过来。

“是我。”

“你有空吗？”

“有。”

“我是I-330。现在我就去找你，我们一起去参观古代房子。你赞同吗？”

I-330.....她总是让我心绪不宁，我觉得不安，甚至有点惶恐。就是因为这样，我更要说：“好吧，我去。”

5分钟以后，我们已经在飞船上了。五月的天空湛蓝湛蓝的，明亮轻盈的太阳在自己的飞船里优哉游哉的，它跟在我们后面，嗡嗡响着。前面是一片飘浮的白色云朵，它像一大团瀑布一样，胖乎乎，又十分有趣。我们乘坐的飞船前窗开着，风灌了进来，吹得我嘴唇发干，我忍不住舔着它，老得舔几下。

此刻，我已经看到了绿墙外的那一块块模糊的绿地。紧接着，心脏便微微沉了一下。我们在降落，下降，再下降，就像从陡峭的山坡上不断滑翔一样，终于，我们来到了古宅面前。

这幢房子被整个罩在玻璃壳子中，要不然，它早毁了。它长得很奇怪，破败不堪，还有些土里土气。玻璃门旁有个看门的老太太，她脸上满是皱纹，嘴巴更是，密密麻麻的褶皱布满四周，嘴唇已经完全瘪了进去，见不到嘴唇。我没法想象出她开口说话的样子。但是，她的确开了口。

“哦，亲爱的，你又来了。来看看我的小房子吗？”

她整张脸都展开了，显得容光焕发。我的意思是，她的那些呈放射状的皱纹就像光线，全部发散开来，显得像在放光一般。

“是的，老奶奶。”I-330说道。

她又在放光了：“多好的太阳！你看到没呢？哦，小淘气！真淘气！我知道，我知道。没事儿，你们自个去吧，我就在这里晒太阳。”

显然……我的这位女伴常常来这里。我有点心烦意乱的，想甩掉什么似的，但是却甩不掉——没准就是这天空在作怪，真糟糕！这样的天空却有云块堆在那。

当我们顺着宽大的、幽深的楼梯往上走的时候，I-330说：“这位老奶奶，我很爱她。”

“什么意思？”

“说不清楚。也许，看到她满是皱纹的嘴。也许，没有什么原因，只是爱而已。”

我不解地耸耸肩。她仍然在说着，并且面露笑容，也许她根本就没笑。

我觉得极其不舒服：“我认为不该这样说，这是再自然不过的事了，不会有‘没有原因的爱’，所有的爱都应该是‘有理由的’。因为自然界的一切都应该……”

“清楚……”我想接着说下去，但是，在我自己说了“清楚”这个词之

后，我偷偷瞄了她一眼。不知道她发现没有。此刻，她往下望着，而她的眼睑就像窗帘似的拉了下来。

我的脑海里立即闪现出这样的一幕：深夜22点，当一个人走在大街上，眼睛所及的都是在灯火通明的玻璃方格，而那些之中有一些是黑色的方格，因为它们的窗帘都被拉下来了，而它的后面……那么，在她的窗帘后面又隐藏着什么呢？为什么她会给我打电话？她又为什么带我来这里？她做这一切又是为了什么？

一扇沉重的、不透明的门被推开了，一个昏暗的、杂乱的住处（这种地方，古代人都称之为“公寓”）呈现在我们面前。里面摆着一台上回在礼堂见过的怪模怪样的“钢琴”，还有很多杂乱无章的、没有任何秩序感可言的色彩和线条，跟我那次听到的音乐一样。顶部是白色的，而四周则是深蓝色的，还有一堆乱七八糟的古旧书，它们色彩各异，红的、绿的、橙黄的。还有黄铜烛台、铜佛像，而木质家具的线条也是歪七扭八的，不成体统，没有一条线条能被列入等式。

这种混乱不堪的场景让我几乎忍无可忍了。可是，我的女伴可比我强多了。

“这间是我最喜欢的……”突然她像想到了什么，面露着微笑，这就像是一个咬唇的动作，那排洁白的小牙齿也露了出来，“或者应该这样说，这是所有这些公寓中最杂乱的一间了。”

“可能将它形容为‘王国’更恰当一些，而不应该说是所谓的‘套间’，”我说出我的意见来，“这就是无数个小型的王国，这里充满了火药味，充满了战乱的恐怖，类似于……”

“是啊，确实如此。”她很认真地回应道。

我们穿过一间房间，房间里有几张婴儿床（在古代，孩子也属于私人范畴）。之后呈现的又是一个个房间，以及房间里的东西，有闪亮的镜子、阴沉的柜子、五颜六色的沙发、很大很大的“壁炉”，还有一张红木大床。而我们的那些透明的、漂亮的、永久性的玻璃，仅仅被放在了那些毫不起眼的，小得可怜的窗户上。

“那么不可思议啊！这里的人们居然‘因爱而爱’，他们为爱痴狂，为爱而深受折磨……（说到这，她眼睛的窗帘又拉了下来）人类的精力虚耗在这些事情上，是多大的浪费啊。你觉得呢？”

她好像说出了我心中所想，且的确正中我的下怀。可她的笑容却让我心烦不已，那个刺人的X。她眼睑后面到底隐藏着什么，我不得而知。但是，相比这就是令我心烦的原因。我有些受不了了。我甚至想和她吵架。大声地喊叫（就是这样），但是我只能表示出赞同，因为她说的确实是对的。

我们停在了一面镜子面前。此时，我只能透过镜子看到她的双眼。一个念头突然间出现了：人的身体构造也有些不可思议，简直跟这该死的“公寓”差不多。太奇怪了。人的头部是不透明的，而只有两扇非常小的窗户，即眼睛。只有通过它，人们才能看出人的想法。可能是她看出了我的想法，便转向我说道：“看，我的眼睛……你觉得如何？”（这些话有些突兀，于是她又陷入了沉思。）

我面前是两扇黑洞洞的窗子，这对我来说是非常陌生的另一种生活。我见到幽暗的火光，那是从“壁炉”里发出来的，以及人影的晃动，仿佛……

这其实不难解释，因为我见到了自己的影子。但是，我觉得不舒

服，甚至觉得这人不像我。的确，正是周遭的环境令我觉得十分不适。我甚至有些害怕，仿佛自己深陷古代的牢笼之中，那古代生活的旋涡似乎要将我吞噬一样。

“你啊，”I-330看着我，说，“你到隔壁房间去待一会儿吧。”她的声音仿佛来自幽暗的双眸，来自那生着壁炉的火上。

我来到了另一间房间，坐了下来。正对面的墙架上有一个诗人的塑像，他长着塌鼻子，相貌一般，我猜这人可能是普希金。此时，他正死死盯着我，似笑似不笑的。我为什么要坐在这里呢？一动不动地看着他的模样？到底发生了什么事？我怎么会来到这里了呢？眼前的一切实在是太荒唐了！这个奇怪的女人，这场莫名其妙的把戏，到底一切都是怎么了？

隔壁柜子的门砰地响了，我听到了似乎是丝质衣服的声音。我想站起身来，我想看看她到底要做什么，我想.....现在我记不清了，也许想骂她一顿，但是，我极力忍耐着。而此时，她出现了。

她身着一件明黄色的短裙，而头上则是一顶宽边的黑色呢帽，脚上有黑色的长筒袜。裙子很薄，是丝绸的。

“很明显，你想显得与众不同，但是这样.....”

她没有让我继续说下去，而是打断了我的话：“很明显，与众不同就是特别的。所以，与众不同就要违反平等原则.....古人所说的‘甘愿平凡’，在我们看来就是要尽的‘义务’。因此.....”

“说得很对，确实是这样，”我忍不住打断她，“那你又为何.....”

她来到塌鼻子诗人的雕像前，再次垂下眼睑，将那充满野性之火的

双眼隐藏住。随即，她便开口了。她很认真地（没准她想尽力安抚我的情绪）说道：“古人们怎么能容忍这样的人呢？居然称他为诗人，你不觉得荒唐吗？不但人们容忍他的所作所为，甚至还敬佩他。多么卑躬屈膝的思想！你认为呢？”

“很清楚.....我的意思是说.....（这句该死的‘很清楚’！）”

“是的，我懂。可是，事实上，这些诗人与那些成就帝位的君主相比，具有更强的主宰性。但是，那些君主们为什么不把他们关起来，消灭掉他们呢？而在我们这里.....”

“是，在我们这里.....”我还没有说完。

她便大笑了起来，她的眉眼里都是笑意，仿佛画出了一条曲线。我发觉那笑如同一条激越的，弹力十足的鞭子一般柔韧。当时我浑身发颤。我想做点儿什么.....我要揪住她.....可是，我也不记得了.....我就下意识地看了下我的金色号码牌：16点50分。

“你不觉得是时候该离开了吗？”我尽量有礼貌地问道。

“如果我想让你和我一起留在这儿呢？”

“你在说什么？你知道你刚刚说了什么吗？10分钟后，我必须出现在礼堂。”

“.....所有号码都有责任完成艺术和科学的必修课程.....”I-330将我要说的话说了出来。

随即，她拉下了窗帘，抬起她的眼。幽暗的眼睛里有熊熊烈火在燃烧着。

“在医疗部有个医生，他登记了我。若我去求他，他一定会给你开一张病例证明，证明你生病了。如何？”

我明白了。现在我终于知道问题的答案了，原来她有这样的目的。

“原来如此！不过，身为一个诚实的号码，不妨实话告诉你，我应该立刻前往安全卫士局……”

“哦？”她又使出那勾人的微笑，“我非常想知道，你会不会去？”

“你仍旧不走吗？”

我抓住了门把手，它是铜制的，而我的声音也像是铜制的。

“等一下……行吗？”

她来到电话机旁，给一个号码打电话。当时我太紧张，居然没有听清那个号码。只记得她说：“我在古宅等你。是的，是的，只有我一个……”

我拧了铜把手：“我可以用飞船吗？”

“当然可以！随便。”

走到门口，老太太在太阳光下打瞌睡，仿佛一株植物。她那满是皱纹的嘴再一次张开了：“你的那位，怎么，她要一个人留下来吗？”

“是。”

老太太的嘴合上了。她摇着头。显然，连她那已经衰退的脑袋都深知干这样的蠢事是那么危险。

17点的时候，我已经在礼堂了。这时我突然想起来，我并没有说出全部的事实来，刚才我对老太太隐瞒了些什么：I并不是单独一个人。我并不是故意的，但是我却骗了老太太。我觉得也许是这件事让我没法集中精力听课。但是，是啊，其实是她不是一个人在那儿——我难受的应该是这一点。

21点30分，这一小时是我的私人时间，原计划我是要到安全卫士局去的。但是，经过这一天的历险，我非常累。而且，只要在两天之内报案都是算数的。因此，我决定明天再去，反正还有24小时呢。

笔记之七

很小的眼睫毛

泰罗

天仙子草与铃兰

深夜。满眼都是绿的、红的、蓝的各色颜色；那架红色的钢琴，还有那黄色的短裙。接着眼前又是一尊佛像，突然它抬起了铜眼皮，佛眼中竟然流出眼泪来；而那连衣裙也渗出血液来，而镜面上也是液汁，大床上也是，还有儿童床……太恐怖了……简直是一阵甜蜜的恐怖……

我突然醒了。见到眼前是柔和的蓝色之光。墙玻璃、椅子，还有桌

子都闪着蓝色的光亮。我的心终于平复了下来，不再狂跳。液汁、佛像.....简直荒诞透了！太明白不过了，我生病了。我从来都不做梦。据说古人常常做梦，而且做梦也是他们生活的一部分。怪不得，他们的生活中充斥着各种奇形怪状的事物：绿色、棕红色，佛像，流淌的液体。如今的我们十分清楚这一点：梦是非常严重的精神性疾病。而我，在接触这些之前，我的头脑就是一台精确的、干净而又闪亮的机器，但是如今.....确实如此，我觉得大脑里有某种陌生的存在，就像眼睛里进了一根很小的睫毛。虽然全身都十分正常，可是对眼睛来说却万分难受，一分一秒也忘不掉.....

令人愉快的清脆铃声响起了：7点钟，起床时间到了。通过眼角的余光，我知道左边和右边的玻璃墙里，跟我一样的人们，他们以跟我一样的动作穿衣。我觉得无比振奋，我就是个强大统一体的一部分。精准的手势、同时弯腰、同时转身，这是多么精确之美啊。

确实，那位叫泰罗的古人的确堪称天才。只可惜他没能想到将自己的管理方式应用到生活领域，用它协调一天的24小时；而今他的体系已经被精确地应用到每分每秒。我实在不知道这些古人的想法，他们可以任由康德这类人写出几个图书馆那么多的书，而却对于泰罗的这一预见置若罔闻。

吃完早饭。众人齐声高唱《联合国国歌》。随后依然四人一列地进入电梯。我们听到马达的轻微声响——人随之下降，下降，再下降，我的心脏有些许震动。突然之间，又想起了那个奇怪的梦。大概这便是梦所留下的印记。啊，我记起来了，昨天在飞船上，我也曾有过这种降落的感觉。但是，一切都结束了。我是对的，昨天我很坚决地拒绝了她。

坐在地铁上，我知道我离“积分号”越来越近了。这时候的“积分

号”一定躺在飞船的装配台上，它在淡蓝色的阳光下发着微光。我闭上眼睛，想着公式：我又计算了一遍需要多大的初速度它才能飞离地球。因为爆炸原料的力量，因而“积分号”每一秒的行进都会发生质的改变。公式是庞大而复杂的，我必须计算得一清二楚。当我在严谨的数学世界中遨游的时候，仿佛觉得有人来到我身边，似乎还触碰了我一下，“不好意思，打搅了。”这个声音是确实存在的。于是，我睁开了双眼。

一抬眼（可能是仍然沉浸在数字之中），仿佛眼前有个物件飞速远离我而去，再仔细分辨，这是一个脑袋，接着是它旁边的两只粉红色的招风耳。随后便是后脑勺从上到下的弯曲曲线，宛如字母S。

透过代数世界的玻璃，我再次体会到眼睛中掉入的睫毛。我心中隐隐不悦，今天我该.....

“没关系，不用客气。”我朝他微笑了一下，同时又点头致意。

他的胸章此刻我也看清楚了：S-4711（这很有趣，怪不得我首次见到他时，就会将他与S联想到一起，这是某种下意识的视觉印象）。他目光炯炯，犹如两根尖利的芒刺，快速地钻进我的身体，而且愈钻愈深，仿佛要进入我的内心深处，获悉一些连我自己都不敢面对真相.....

突然，我又想到了那个讨厌的眼睫毛，他便是安全卫士人员，不妨此刻就来个痛快，将我所知道的全部告诉给他。

“嗯，昨天，昨天我去了古宅.....”我好不容易说出了这句话，可是声音却好奇怪，干巴巴的，我甚至想咳嗽几下。

“这很不错啊，真不错。从那儿的材料里你应该能够得到一些更富

有意义的结论。”

“是啊，可是.....你知道吗，其实，我不是一个人去那里的，同行的还有I-330，而且.....”

“I-330？你运气可真好！她是个非常富有才华的女性，而且还十分幽默，有不少人崇拜她呢。”

哦，可不是嘛，上回散步的时候，他就在她身边。或许他们，她登记了他。哦，不，我没法告诉他。绝对不能告诉他。

“是啊，你说得很对！的确是这样！”我微笑着，笑容十分灿烂，但是我知道，那样子肯定很蠢，尤其是那微笑，显得我愚蠢至极。

芒刺又钻进了我的心底，随后又飞快地钻了出来，回到他的眼中。他不置可否地笑笑，朝我点了一下头，就转身离开了。

我拿起报纸，遮住脸，假装认真看报（其实，我觉得所有人的目光都射向我），没一会儿，我便将眼睫毛、芒刺的事忘诸脑后了。因为报上的一则消息：“根据可靠情报，一个秘密的地下组织在私下进行所谓的解放运动，妄图颠覆利于国民的约束条例，他们的踪迹我们已经获悉了。”

“解放”？太奇怪了！人类的犯罪本能居然如此强烈。我说“犯罪本能”是有原因的：自由与犯罪总是相生而存的.....这类似于飞船的飞行和它的速度之间的关系。若是飞船速度为零，那它就没法飞行。若人没有自由，他自然就不会犯罪。这是再清楚不过的了。

要想让人类远离犯罪，最行之有效的方法就是让人类远离自由。我们脱离自由还不算很久（从整个宇宙的范畴上来看，几个世纪也可以算

是不久而已），某些可悲又可怜的白痴就又出来捣乱……不，我真想不通，昨天我为什么没有去，我应该马上去，是的，马上去安全卫士局。16点以后，我一定要去。

16点10分我来到了街上。在街角我意外遇见了O。她欣喜若狂，看到我兴奋得满脸粉红。这是一场多么及时的相遇啊！她单纯可爱，我正需要朝她倾诉。她会支持我的……但是，也不需要这样，我已经想好了，不会改变主意了。

音乐机器仍然演奏着《进行曲》，这首曲子每天的这个时候都会准时地播放。这种不断重复、富有规律的节奏是那么优美，又是那么令人愉悦啊！

O走向我，“我们去散步吧。”她的两只圆溜溜的大眼睛不住瞧着我。这美丽的蓝色犹如两扇窗子，通往她纯净的内心世界。我可以一眼看穿，甚至是毫无阻碍地看进去，看到里面空无一物。我的意思是说，那里面什么多余的东西都不存在。

“不，我不能散步。我要去另一个地方……”接着我便告诉了她，我要去哪儿。她的表情让我有些意外：她那粉红色的圆嘴忽而转成了弯月，嘴角往下撇着，流露出一种不屑，仿佛什么东西倒了她的胃口。我突然有点儿想发火了。

“你们这些女性号码，都有着严重的偏见，简直没救了。你们简直没法使用抽象思维。非常抱歉，我只能使用这样的措辞，这便是头脑迟钝的意思。”

“你居然，居然要去找那些间谍，这太可耻了！……算了，我不想说了！居然我刚刚还去植物园给你采铃兰……”

“为什么要说‘居然我’，干吗要使用‘居然’两个字呢？毕竟是女人。”我气愤地（我不得不承认我不该这么做）抢过她手中的铃兰。“铃兰，看看吧，这就是你的铃兰，它很香，是吧？只要进行一点儿逻辑性思考也行啊。铃兰很香，的确如此。但是你不能仅仅谈论气味，说它是香或者不香，从而判定出它是好或者不好。你不能这样，对不对？铃兰有铃兰的香气，而天仙子草也有天仙子草的臭气，它们都是气味。古时候有间谍，而今也有……间谍，说出来也无妨。但是这一点不是已经很清楚了吗？古时候的间谍是天仙子草，而今我们国家的间谍则是铃兰。是啊，他们就是铃兰！”

她那粉红的嘴唇不断地发抖，仿佛要笑似的。如今我清楚了，其实是我的误解，当时我以为她就要笑了，其实并不是这样的。但我当时并不知道。因此，我的嗓门更高了：“是啊，他们就是铃兰。这很可笑吗？并非如此吧。”

每个经过我们身旁的光球似的脑袋都转向我们看着。O柔媚地挽住我的手说：

“你怎么了？今天好像有点不同……你难道是病了？”

那个梦……黄颜……佛像……我终于明白了：我必须要去卫生局。

“对啊，我应该是病了。”我回答道。心里居然有一丝庆幸（这是多么矛盾的心情啊；本来就没有什么值得庆幸的事啊）。

“你现在就得去看医生。你知道，你必须得健康，这不需要我说。”

“亲爱的O，你说得太对了，非常对！”

我没有去安全卫士局，因为我必须要去卫生局。在那里我一直待到

17点。

而晚上（恰好那里的人已经下班了），O来我这里了。我们没有拉下窗帘，而是仔细演算着一本古老的习题集的算术。做这些会让我们头脑清楚，思维也能得到净化。O静静地坐着，她头稍微向左边歪着，舌头顶着左颊，正苦思如何计算出结果。她的样子十分孩子气，我很爱她这副神情.....我感觉舒服多了，什么都是那么清清楚楚、明明白白，一切都又美好了起来。

最后她不得不离开了，而只剩下我一个人。我深呼吸了两口气（这个临睡前的呼吸动作对身体有益）。突然，一股淡淡的香气冲入我的鼻腔，一件不愉快的事涌上我的心头.....我立即发现了它，那株藏在我床上的铃兰。瞬间，所有的回忆又搅了上来，让我情绪难宁。她真不该这样做。是的，我没有去安全卫士局。因为，我生病了，这可不是我的错。

笔记之八

无理数

R-13

三角形

我第一次碰到-1的平方根，是多年前的事，那时候我还在念小学。虽然时隔多年，但是往事依然清晰：在一间明亮的球形大厅里，坐着100位脑袋圆圆的小男孩，前面是我们的数学机器，因为它实在是太老旧了，在开始上课之前，老是会发出“啪啦啪”的声音，所以，我们叫它啪啦啪老师。那堂关于-1的平方根的讲述也是那样，在上课之前，值日生照常将它的背上插头插上，当扩音机发出了“啪啦啪”的响声之后，授课开始。我当时边哭，边用小拳头捶着桌子喊：“我不要-1的平方根，将它从我的脑海里消除吧。”这个无理根就如同别人的某些可怕的存在一样，它无声无息地钻进我的脑子里，让我不得安生，我找不到答案，没法解开它，因此心烦意乱，痛苦之极。

而今我又碰到了这个-1的平方根。我翻看前一篇笔记。我意识到，我在自欺欺人，目的就是为了避开这讨厌的-1的平方根。什么生病的事，简直就是扯淡。我完全有能力来到安全卫士局。若是这件事发生在一周之前，我肯定早就去举报了。但是，此时为什么我会犹豫不决呢？到底是怎么一回事呢？

今天也是这样。在16点10分，我已经来到了亮闪闪的玻璃墙前面，眼前便是安全卫士局的牌子，在阳光的照射下更显得亮闪闪的。透过透明的玻璃墙，我见到门里工作的人们，他们整齐地排成一列，身上的灰蓝色制服令人心生敬畏，他们的脸部发出幽幽的蓝光，犹如古代教堂的长明灯。他们在这里工作，肩负着伟大的责任：为联合国奉献一片赤胆忠心，在国家的祭坛上有他们的爱人、朋友，甚至是他们自己的身躯。连我都想加入这光荣的战列，与他们并肩作战。但是，此时，我却犹豫着，我的两只脚牢牢地钉在地面上，不能挪动一步。我就那么站着，痴痴地站着，一动不动……

“嘿，数学家，做白日梦呢吗？”

我吓了一跳。我眼前出现了一对乌黑的眼睛，眼中还闪着笑意，接着看到那张厚厚的嘴唇。是诗人R-13，我的老友。站在他身边的是粉红色的O。我气愤地扭过头去。我心里想着，若不是他们来碍事，我早就进入安全卫士局了，而那个盘亘在头脑中的-1的平方根也早已脱离我的头脑，被扔得远远的了。

“谁说我在做白日梦，我是在欣赏得出了神。”我不留余地地回击道。

“确实如此，确实如此。我的老友，你不适合当数学家，而是应该去当个诗人！我是说真的，来我们那里吧。成为一名诗人。怎么样？如果你想的话，我马上就帮你安排，如何啊？”

R-13说话语速总是很快，那些字母从他那两片厚厚的嘴唇里蹦出来，嘴边都是唾沫星子，每当碰到要送气的辅音字母，口水就像喷泉一样溅了出来。

“我是为科学服务的，现在如此，将来也如此。”

我皱着眉头说，我不热衷于开玩笑，而显然R-13却十分擅长此道。

“唉，你不该这样想，所谓的科学只是一种胆怯的表现罢了。你只是用一堵墙将无限包裹其中，而不往墙外边去看一看。就是这样，若你朝墙外看一眼，你肯定会觉得眩晕，所以，你宁愿闭上眼.....没错.....”

“墙才是所有人类该遵守的界限.....”我反驳道。

R接着口若悬河地反驳着，而一旁的O则微微媚笑着。我甩了下手说：“你们笑好了，无所谓，我不在乎这些。”我没空跟他进行辩论，我

眼前需要解决的是那个讨厌的平方根，将它赶跑才是我要立马解决的问题。“你们看，这样可以不？”我接着说道，“你们一起到我那里去，做几道算术题（我想起了昨天的那个令人心安的时刻，可能今天也能这样度过）。”

O看了一眼R，随后眼波流转地看着我，她的脸颊上泛起柔和又令人心醉的粉红色，如同那粉红的票子。

“可是今天我……我的票子登记了他。”她朝R看了一眼，说道，“而他今天晚上有事……因此说……”

R湿润而发亮的嘴唇，翕动着说：“那不要紧的，我们差不多半小时就可以了。O，是吧？我对你的算术题没什么兴趣，不如你来我这里聊天吧。”

我不想一个人待着。或者更确切地说，我害怕和这个我单独待着，这个我是这样陌生，虽然他也同样地佩戴着“D-503”的胸章，仿佛只是某种巧合才会如此的。因此，我便答应了R的邀请。虽然他一贯缺乏逻辑性，也没有科学精神，甚至还不曾有诗的音韵，但至少，我们还是朋友。而且就在三年以前，我和他同时选了这个迷人的、可爱的O。所以，这多少让我们的关系更近了一层，比学生时代要好多了。

我们终于到了R的房间。屋里的所有摆设跟我房间里的一模一样：守时戒律表、玻璃软椅和桌子、柜子，还有床。然而，当R走进来之后，他搬开了一张圈椅，接着又是一张——转瞬之间，屋里的秩序感消失了，代之而来的是平衡被打破的混乱，也破坏了欧几里得几何公理。R一点儿也没变，依然是那样。在学习泰罗管理法和数学之时，他总是成绩最差的那个人。

我们一起聊到了“啪啦啪”。那时候我们都很喜欢它，于是就将很多写满感谢话的纸条贴在了他的玻璃腿上。还有给我们上课的法律课老师。他的嗓门非常大，每次说话的时候，扬声器里会送出一阵阵风来。我们便扯着嗓子跟它一起念。记得有一回，爱搞恶作剧的R-13就弄了些皱巴巴的纸团，将它们塞到了喇叭里。从那以后，每次念课文，喇叭里就会飞出很多纸团来。最后R接受了惩罚，但是现在回想起这件事，我们三个笑个不停。是的，我也忍不住哈哈大笑了起来。

“如果它跟古代人那样，它成为一个活人，那又会怎么样呢……”R忍不住猜想着，接着，他那两片厚嘴唇又不断冒出唾沫来……此刻太阳透过天花板和四壁照了进来。我们都被阳光包围着，而它的影子则在我们脚下。O温柔地坐在R-13的腿上，她漂亮的蓝眼睛也闪着可爱的光。此刻，我觉得分外平静，心烦的情绪也不在了，-1的平方根也安静了下来，不再出来捣鬼……

“你的‘积分号’如何了？它是不是很快就会进入太空去完成启迪太空居民的任务啦？加快进程吧，再快点！否则我们这些诗人会写出更多的诗篇，让‘积分号’都载不动。每天8点到11点……”R一边笑着，一边挠了挠自己的后脑勺。他的后脑勺有些方正，看起来活像小手提箱，我即便联想到一幅古代的画作——《在马车里》。

我心情愉快地问道：“啊，你也在为‘积分号’创作吗？你快说说你都写什么啦？比方，就说说今天的感想吧。”

“今天啊，今天我什么也没写。因为，我有别的事要处理……”他说到“别的事”的时候有点犹豫，因此又喷了很多的唾沫出来。

“那是什么事情啊？”

R皱了皱眉头：“若是你很想知道，我就不妨直说了吧，嗯，其实，我是在写一份判决书，我想以诗歌的形式呈现出来。而被处决的正是我们中的一员，是的，他也是一位诗人。就是精神错乱了。有点白痴……我们在一起相处了两年多，本来什么都好好的，但是突然有一天，他就疯掉了。他居然说什么：‘我是天才，我凌驾于法律之上’。他还写过不少疯话……唉！我怎么说起这些来了。”

R的厚嘴唇不再向上翘起，而是突然耷拉了下来，眼里的光泽也突然消失了。他突然站起身来，别过身去，眼睛透过玻璃看向外面。我盯着他的后脑勺，看到那个小箱子，心中暗想：“此刻，他的小箱子在翻腾着什么呢？”

接着，是一阵令人不安的沉默。我觉得有些不妥，虽然说不上来为什么。但是就是觉得有什么地方不妥……

“幸运的时候，那些莎士比亚、陀思妥耶夫斯基（还有几个作家的名字）的时代已经一去不复返了。”我有心地高声说道。

R转过头来，看向我，同时，他从厚嘴唇里又喷出很多话来，但是，他的眼神却没有了先前的光泽。

“是啊，我可爱的数学家，我们多么幸运，我们多么幸运啊！我们在这个美好的算数黄金分割点上……就像你所说的那样，从零到无限大，从痴呆的人到聪明如莎士比亚的人，我们都进行了积分化。所有的一切都是这么的和谐统一。是不是？”

不知道为什么，我突然想起了她，那个女号码，想起了她说话时的语调。我意识到在他们之间有一根很细的线（到底是什么线呢？我说不清楚）。而此时联想到这些，真是我的不对。那个讨厌的-1的平方根又

回来了。我看了看证章：16点25分。粉红票的使用时间只剩下35分钟了。

“我必须得走了……”我吻了O，和R握手道别，转身朝电梯走去。

我已经来到了大街上，当我穿过马路来到街对面时，再回头看那幢玻璃大楼。很多灰蓝色窗子被窗帘遮上了。那是美妙的泰勒式幸福。我找到了R-13家所在的小方格，窗帘已经放下了。

亲爱的O……亲爱的R……原来R身上也有（我不知道为什么会写下这个“也”字），是的，他身上也有着某种隐秘的心事。而我们三人，即我、R和O——我们是稳定的三角形，未必是等腰三角形，但一定是个三角形。我们，若是采用古人的说法（这可能对你们星球的读者来说更容易理解一些），我们亲如一家。偶尔，我们可以躲进这个牢固的三角内休息。即使是短暂的也好，这短暂的躲避也会让你心情愉快。

笔记之九

祭典

铿锵格

巨手

今天是个气氛庄严的日子，在这样光辉的日子里，你会忘记我们自身的一切，包括我们的弱点、我们的不精确性以及我们的病痛。周遭的一切都如同崭新的玻璃一样，通透、坚实、永恒。

我们身处在立方体广场。广场上的观众台是66个同心圆，有66排号码坐在那里，他们的脸上泛有安详之光，眼中满是肃穆的光亮，也许这便是联合国的光辉。女号码的嘴唇似殷红的鲜血所染就的花朵。那坐在座位前几排的则是一串串娇嫩的花带，他们是孩子们的笑脸。整个广场流露出肃穆又庄严的气势。

根据我们所掌握的材料来看，古人的礼拜仪式与我们今天的祭典非常相像。但是他们所顶礼膜拜的是上帝，即那个可笑的，古人所臆造出来无所不能的天神。我们可不会那样愚蠢，我们膜拜的是理性之神。他们所谓的上帝，只是让他们陷入不断的自我反省和痛苦无比的寻觅之中，什么也不会赋予他们。除了所谓的自我牺牲之外，甚至连那些牺牲的意义都没有搞清楚，他们仍然困惑，仍然蠢笨。与之相比，我们的理性之神则帮我们解决所有的难题，它又是平静的、祥和的。

今天是联合国最盛大的祭典，也是对200年大战的回忆，是全体对个人，是总和对单一的胜利！

而今，有一个号码就站在广场中央的立方体高台上，他虽被阳光照耀着，但脸色却如此苍白。不应该说是苍白，而应该说是无色的，类似玻璃般透明，不但是脸孔，连嘴唇也是透明的。但是他的双眼却是黑森森的，就像要将一切都吞噬掉的可怕黑洞一般。标志着他特征的胸章早已被摘除了。他的两只手用火红的带子捆住（这是古代的习俗，大意是这样的：那时候，还不存在联合国，因此，被判有罪的人肯定觉得自己有权利抗争，所以他们的手要用铁链铐住）。

在立方体高台的顶部有个一动不动的机器，它是死刑机。而在死刑机旁矗立着的则是凝然肃穆、身躯如金属铸成的全知全能者。我们在下面朝上望过去，因此，并没法看清他的面容，而只能见到他那棱角分明、匀称简朴的线条轮廓。

还有他的手.....这跟照片上的效果是一样的，如果手足够近的话，你会觉得它非常强大。而此时，我们的注意力都被它们所吸引，忘记了其他的一切。只是专注在那一双沉甸甸的大手上，此刻，它们正稳稳当当地放在膝盖上。它们太重了，简直膝盖有点无法承受了.....

突然，一只巨手缓缓地抬起了，庄严又沉重的命令由此而发出。观众台上的一个号码走了上来，这是遵照手势做出的回应。他是一名诗人，今天他非常幸运地向祭典献出自己的诗篇。

紧接着，全场响起了铿锵有力的诗句，每一句都指向那个疯狂的、丧失了理智的号码。此刻他正被反剪着双手，立在台阶之上，等待最终的宣判。

.....一片火光。在这铿锵格的朗诵中，房屋也要坍塌了一般，周围泛起黄色的光，墙瞬间便倒塌了。绿色的树干被烈火烧干，流淌出脓液，最后余下焦黑的枯枝。随之普罗米修斯降临了（这当然是指我们）：

“火焰被锁上了枷锁，他用机器和钢铁，在混沌的世界中建立秩序的法则。”

一个焕然一些的世界出现了，这是钢铁浇筑的世界：钢铸的太阳、钢铸的森林、钢铸的人类.....突然出现了一个疯子，他“打开了枷锁，火又再次出来兴风作浪”，而世界又进入了混沌之中.....十分可惜的

是，我没法记住这首诗。我只记得，当聆听的时候，我觉得这是最恰当的，也是最富教育意义的比喻了。

那沉重的铁掌又一次举起，于是，立方体高台上又出现了一个诗人。我吃了一惊，不由得站起身来。居然是他！这怎么可能呢？但是，就是他，那厚厚的黑人般的嘴唇……他怎么没跟我说起呢？他居然被赋予了如此伟大的使命……他的嘴唇在瑟瑟发抖，居然变成了灰色。我能理解他此刻的心情。毕竟近在咫尺的是我们的全知全能者，他可是联合国的灵魂人物啊。还有身旁的众多安全卫士们，但是，即使是这样，也不要显得过分紧张啊。

诗句锋利无比，又干脆利落……就像利斧一般砍削，字字短促却分外有力。它述说了我从未听过的罪恶，他居然写出亵渎全知全能者的诗篇，说他是……天哪，我怎么能重复那些字眼呢？

R-13念完诗，面色苍白地走了回去，他的眼睛没有看任何地方，而是直视着脚下的路，最后坐下。（想不到，他居然这么腼腆。）我突然看到另一张脸，在他的身后。那是一张尖尖的脸庞，呈深色的三角形，转瞬即逝。接着，我的眼睛跟数千双眼睛的目光，一齐投向了死刑机。然后，便见到那只钢铁铸成的巨臂第三次做了个手势。

那个囚徒被风吹得有些摇晃，他慢慢地走了上去。一级、二级、三级……直到走到最顶端的台阶之上。终于到了生命的最后时刻，他昂起头，脸望天空。如命运般沉重的全知全能者走了过来，在死刑机四周环顾一圈，巨掌放在了操纵杆上……全场肃穆，落针可闻，所有的目光都集中在那巨掌之上。它承载着几十万伏电压，它执行了成千上万人的意志，这又是何等威严而伟大的使命啊！

这一秒钟分外长，终于，手臂一动，操纵杆被压动了，电流接通了。明晃晃的刀刃，只是微微颤了一下……死刑机的管道发出了非常轻微的咔嚓声，一阵轻烟将那个号码笼罩住，只一瞬，他便开始消融了，所有人都目不转睛地看着，顷刻间，他的身躯就消失不见了，取而代之的是一摊洁净的液体。在这之前，他还是有着鲜血涌动的生命……

这一切的原理，我们再熟悉不过了。这是物质的分解，即人体原子的分裂。但是每次欣赏这样的分裂过程，我们总能感觉到全知全能者的超人伟力，就像在看奇迹般观看这场祭典。

女性号码们涌了上去，她们簇拥在全知全能者身边，她们露出红彤彤的脸颊，激动地张着红润的小嘴，手中拿着的鲜花[2]在微风中招展着。这是惯例，有10名女性号码可以在全知全能者身上装饰鲜花。而全知全能者则如最高司祭一般，肃穆而缓慢地走下台阶，缓缓地在观众席间走过。所有女性号码伸出手臂来欢迎他，而全体号码则要齐声欢呼、呼声震天。接着，全体号码再向安全卫士们致敬。虽然他们也在观众台上，在我们身旁，可是我们却认不出他们来……谁又清楚呢？没准古人所幻想的未来世界便是如此，他们心中的“守护之神”便是今日的安全卫士们。

[2]这些鲜花是从我们的植物博物馆里摘来的。我并不认为它们很美，它们就跟其他在绿墙之外的那些野蛮的东西们一样低级。只有那些充满理性之光的、有用之物才是富有美感的。比方说，机器、靴子、公式、食品，等等。

是的，整个的祭典仪式，有些部分类似于古代的礼拜仪式，然而更多的则是类似于雷雨般的使人得到净化的功能.....我所未见的读者们，你们若十分荣幸地读到这篇笔记，看到我的这段描写，你们是不是也会有类似的经历呢？如果你们没有，那我真的觉得你们的人生太可悲了些。

笔记之十

信

小耳朵

毛茸茸的我

昨天。它成为了一张过滤纸，所谓的过滤纸就是那些化学家们常用来过滤化学液体的纸。经过过滤之后，所有的多余的分子就会被过滤掉。今天早上，我愉快地下楼，仿佛自己已经被蒸馏得干干净净，是那么地精神爽利。

楼下的大厅里，有一个控制员，她的工作职责就是时刻看表，登记那些进来的号码们。她家U.....我不打算说出她的号码，否则我可能会说她什么不好听的话。而实际上，她是一个令人敬重的，年纪不小的女性。她唯一让我感觉不舒服的地方是，她的两颊总是下坠的，就像鱼鳃一样。（当然，这长相也没有什么特别需要批评的！）她用笔写着，我

看到：纸上的字迹是D-503，而就在这时，一滴墨水滴了上去。我刚想说话，她却突然抬起了头，朝我微笑着，那微笑也像那滴浸淫了的墨水。

“有你的信，亲爱的。你会收到它的。你会的。”

我知道，凡是经她读过的信，都必须送到安全卫士局去（这一点是不言自明的，不必我做过多的说明了）。在12点钟之前，这封信会如期转到我的手里。但是，她那浸淫着墨水的微笑让我不舒服。纯正透明的液体又被墨水搅浑了。这干扰不言而喻。在“积分号”操作台上，我险些失误，差点计算错了一个数据，这在我是从来不会发生的事。

12点，在见了那个红褐色的鱼鳃脸和她那墨水似的微笑之后，信终于转到了我的手中。我说不清楚，为什么我没能当场就打开信，而是将它塞在里口袋里，急忙跑进了屋里去。随后才拆开了信封，很快就看完了它，然后.....我便坐了下来。信的内容很简洁，是一份正式通知书，大意是：I-330登记了我，今晚21点我要去她那里，其余的就是她的地址。

“这是怎么回事？我已经很清楚地表明我的态度了。在发生了这一切之后，她怎么会有这种要求呢？再者，她怎么会知道我没有去安全卫士局呢？因为她不可能知道我生病了。而且.....”

我的头脑如一台发电机般急速转动着，不停地响着。佛像.....黄颜色.....铃兰.....粉红的月牙儿.....而且，今天，是啊，O会到我这里来。我要将这张与I-330通知单告诉她吗？她一定不会相信的！这事跟我没有任何关系啊。我完全是.....（铁定很难让她相信）但是，我们之前会有一场困难无比的、又毫无逻辑可言的谈话，这点儿我是十分肯定

的。不，不能这样，只要不进行这类谈话，怎么都行。不如就顺其自然吧。就直接给她寄一份官方通知书的复制件算了。

我快速地将通知书塞进口袋里，这个动作让我一眼便看到自己那只原始人的手。我想起那天散步的情形，I拿起我的手反复打量，难道她真的.....

眼看要到21点15分了。今晚是一个明亮的夜晚，四周的一切都是用绿莹莹的玻璃组成的。但是这种玻璃跟我们用的那种不同，它更容易碎，又很薄。空中犹如罩了一层薄薄的玻璃，里面的一切都在飞旋着、乱叫着.....若是眼前出现了那些情景，如礼堂的圆顶盖像烟雾般冉冉上升，或者是月亮像浸淫着墨水的U那样微笑，或者所有房间里的窗帘都被拉下.....我也不会有丝毫惊讶的。

我有些不同，似乎所有的肋骨都变成了一根根铁条，压迫着心脏，使我呼吸急迫。我来到了一个玻璃门旁，门上清楚地印着金色号码的——I-330。此刻，她正背对着我，伏案写着些什么。我进了屋。

“票子.....”我将一张粉红票子递了过去，“今天我接到了通知，因此，便过来了。”

“你真准时！稍等我一下，号码？先坐一下，我马上就结束了。”

说完，她便垂下眼去继续写。在那垂下的眼睑后面到底有什么呢？她到底想做什么呢？她心里到底藏着些什么呢？我怎样才能计算出答案呢？她自己仿佛就是那个来自野蛮时代的原始人。我默默地看着她。我的肋骨像一根根铁条，挤得更紧，心脏的压迫感也更强烈。

.....每次交谈的时候，她的面孔就像是飞速旋转的车轮一样，根

本没法看清楚她有几根辐条。而此刻，这个轮子居然没有动。我眼前的她有着奇特的组合：她那两条挑起的眉毛已经延伸到太阳穴处了，因此，便成了一个颇具嘲弄意味的尖三角，此外，还有一个正三角，那就是从鼻端至嘴角的两道深深的皱纹，这是一个角尖朝上的三角形。两种三角形和平地呈现在一张脸上。这十分不协调，这就是那个令我烦躁的X。而整张脸又像一个画上十字架的大叉。

轮子快速地转了起来，辐条又看不清楚了.....

“看来，你果真没有去安全卫士局！”

“我.....我生病了.....所以没去成。”

“嗯。我已经料到了，你一定不会去成的。不会有这件事，就会有那件事。（尖利的牙又露了出来，她微笑着。）不过，现在你可在我的手中了。你知道吧：‘任何号码若在48小时之内有隐情不汇报，将被认定.....’”

心脏猛地一跳，肋骨的铁条都被挤弯了。我太傻了，简直跟个小孩一样。我居然被骗了。我只得呆坐着一言不发。我已经深陷在一张网中，手脚拉扯着也逃不脱.....

她站了起来，伸了个懒腰。随即便按下了按钮，窗帘被拉了下去。我和她单独相处了，外面的世界与我们暂时分开。

I站在了我的后面，窸窸窣窣地脱下衣服。我一动不动地听着，突然之间，我想起了一件事.....不对，这是一种闪念。那还是不久之前的事，我接到命令，给一种新型街道音响振动膜片计算弧度（当然，这种振动膜片都有一个很好看的外观，就是一种粉红的小耳朵，它们被安放

在马路上，为安全卫士局记录街头人们的谈话内容）。我记得那些粉红色的小耳朵，它们只有一种器官，只有一种功能，就是听。而我现在就是那种小耳朵。

我听到解扣子的声音，“吧嗒、吧嗒、吧嗒”，先是领子，接着是胸口，接着是更低的位置……丝织品滑过肩膀、膝盖的声音，落地的声音。接着，我又听到（这比用眼睛看更清晰）一只脚，从浅灰蓝的丝质衣服里跨了出来，接着，另一只脚……

小耳朵颤抖着，悄悄听着发生的一切。周遭无声无息的，不对，有心脏撞击铁条的声音，那声音沉闷而又剧烈。我听见，或者说我感觉到了，她在我背后，停顿了一秒钟。随后，柜门的声音响了，接着又是丝质衣服窸窣窸窣的声音……

“行了，转过来吧。”

我转过身来，她身着一件杏黄色的古装衣裙。她居然穿成这样，这比她什么都不穿要恐怖1000倍。薄薄的衣料半遮半掩地露出尖尖耸起的两个尖峰，那泛出粉红的颜色的两个小点儿若隐若现，还有一双柔软的浑圆的膝盖……

她坐在一张低矮的软椅里。面前的方形小桌上有一个小瓶子，瓶子里有满满的绿色液体像毒液一般，而在瓶子边上有两个高脚小杯子。此刻，她嘴里含着一根细细的纸管，不时地从嘴角喷出烟雾。（这是一种古代的制烟物质，我一时想不起这叫作什么了。）

小耳朵仍然在震颤着。心脏的锤子仍然在猛击烧得滚烫的铁条。我自己听得清清楚楚，那每一声的撞击声，如雷贯耳……若是她听到了怎么办？

但是，她只是悠然地喷吐着烟雾，偶尔瞥我几眼，然后，不动声色地将烟灰抖在我的粉红票子上。

我尽可能地保持冷静的语调，问道：“若你只想这样的话，为什么非要登记我呢？又为什么邀我来这呢？”

她好像什么都没听到一样，拿起小瓶往小杯子斟满那绿色的液体，又喝了一口。

“好酒。你要喝吗？”

原来这是酒。这时候，我才突然醒悟过来。昨天的场景又浮现了出来：全知全能者那只巨大的手臂，那炫目的利刃，以及立方体高台上的那个脸朝后仰的躯体。我的身躯剧烈地颤抖着。

我说道：“你什么都知道，对吧！法令规定，凡是吸食尼古丁或者饮用烈酒的人，联合国绝不会轻饶.....”

两道黑色的眉高高挑起，直指太阳穴，形成一个尖三角。看着十分具有嘲讽的意味。

“‘杀掉几个人比让千千万万个人自我毁灭或堕落.....更为明智’.....你不觉得这很可笑吗？”

“可笑，你怎么会有这种想法？”

“若是将这些真理放到街上会怎样？那些赤裸裸、光秃秃的真理.....你设想一下.....比如，我那个忠实的追求者S，你不是也见过他吗？若是他衣不蔽体地走在大街上，让所有人看到他的真面目.....这会怎么样？.....噢！”她笑着说道。但是我意识到，从她的鼻子到嘴角有

一个显示出悲伤的三角形。我立即弄明白了：那个佝偻着身形，有着招风耳的S，他搂抱着她的模样，她，当时这是副样子吧.....

是的，而今我所记录的内容，只是当时我的所思所想而已。此刻，我边写边明白过来，他那样做是正常的。这话的意思即，他也是一个号码，如同所有诚实可靠的号码一样，他也有权享受生活，否则便不公平了.....这是再明白不过的事实。

I大笑了很久，她笑得非常怪。收住了笑之后，她仔细地看了我一眼。

“最惊奇的是，我和你在一起很放松。我不觉得你有什么威胁。你是个不错的人，这一点我深信不疑。你不会去的，你绝对不会去安全卫士局告发，说我又喝酒又抽烟。你或者生病了，或者实在很忙，或者还有其他的原因.....我相信，你肯定也想尝一尝这迷人的酒。”

她居然这么放肆，这么肆无忌惮地嘲讽我！我清楚地意识到，此刻我很恨她。为什么要说“此刻”呢？我应该是一直就很恨她的。

她将那杯满满的绿色毒液一饮而尽，随后站起身来，走了过来，在那杏黄色的衣裙掩映下，粉红的肌肤若隐若现，她停在了我软椅的后面.....突然，她用手臂揽住我的脖子，嘴唇挨着我的嘴唇。不对，不是挨着，而是深些，更深些，更加可怕些.....我发誓，这超出我预料之外，可能是.....可能是我根本没法抗拒（现在我完全清楚了），单单是我，是不会发生后面的事情的。

嘴唇太甜腻了（我想这便是酒精的味道吧）。仿佛猛烈的毒药进入了我的口里，越来越多，越来越多.....

我离开了大地，像一颗单独的卫星一样，不停地转着，沿着一条没经计算的轨道旋转着，转啊转，然后坠落……

此后发生的事，我仅能勉强写个大概。

从前我从来没有思考过这个问题，其实这是确实存在的事实，即我们所生活的地球，它的内核是熊熊火焰，而身为一个人，我们时时刻刻生活在这灼热的红海之表面。只是，我们从来没有认真思考过罢了，若是我们脚下薄薄的外壳变成玻璃的，转眼之间，我们便看到那……

我突然间变成了玻璃人，我看清了我自身的内部结构。我有两个我，一个是过去的D-503，号码为D-503，而另一个……从前他还只是偶尔显露一下他毛茸茸的爪子，而现在他却从躯壳里跳了出来。而这层外部的躯壳裂开了，快要……

我使出全身力气想抓住最后那根救命稻草（软椅的扶手），我大声地说出话来，以便我能听到曾经的自我的声音：“从什么地方……你究竟是从什么地方弄来的……这毒酒？”

“噢，这个啊！是一名医生给的，我的一个……”

“‘我的一个！’‘一个’什么人？”

另一个自我不可遏制地突然跳了出来，他大声喊道：“我不准许！不准许，任何人……只有我，只能是我。若是谁……我就杀死他……因为我……我……”我看见，另一个自我用毛茸茸的手使劲搂住了她，撕扯着她身上的薄丝裙，用牙咬着她。……是的，我记得确实如此，他用牙咬着她！……

我不记得细节了，反正，I最后挣脱掉了。那一刻，她的眼睛又盖

上了那层该死的不透光的窗帘。她昂着头，直着身子，斜倚着柜子站着。

我清楚地记得，我跪在地板上，抱住了她的腿，亲吻着她的膝盖，哀求地冲她说：“此刻，快啊，现在，就现在。”

她露出了尖利的牙齿，眉毛挑起，那个具有讽刺意味的三角形又出现了……她缓缓地弯下腰，无声地摘下了我的胸章。

“甜心，甜心，就这样。”

我慌乱地脱下身上的制服。但我仍旧什么都没说，她将胸章上的表打开了，让我看时间。表上显示着22点25分。

我的心顿时彻底凉了。我知道，如果22点半以后，我还在街上游荡的话，那将会给我带来致命的恶果。刚才的狂热顿时烟消云散，我又恢复到了原来的我。但是有一件事我却无比清楚：我恨她，很恨，很恨！我甚至没有跟她道别，便头也不回地跑了出去。我一路跑一路尽力将胸章别到胸前，从备用楼梯（我怕在电梯里被人发现）使劲往下奔去，直到来到空无一人的大街。

一切都井然有序，又简单又规矩。我目光所及全是亮着灯的玻璃房子，白色的玻璃天空，还有那绿莹莹的静静的夜晚。然而，在这片宁静、冰冷的玻璃之下，却有着一颗狂暴的、躁动的、毛茸茸的东西在静静地沸腾着，我气喘吁吁地使劲跑着，一定不能晚啊！

突然，我意识到，刚才着急别上的胸章掉了下来，叮当一声落在人行道玻璃路面上。我连忙弯下腰去捡起来，就在这短短的一秒钟中，我似乎听到背后有脚步声传来，我扭头看去，只见一个瘦小的驼背身影在

街角出现，至少我当时这么觉得。我又使劲地跑了起来，耳边有着风的呼呼声。终于来到了我的房门口，我停住脚步，22点29分。离规定时间只差1分钟！我侧耳倾听，并没有人跟来。这太奇怪了，一定是毒酒的副作用。

当夜我难以入睡。我感觉我的床仿佛会动，它一会儿升起来，一会儿又降下去，又升起.....我不断默默地告诫自己：“深夜，所有号码都必须睡觉，这是责任，就如同白天所有号码都必须工作一样。为了白天的工作，夜晚必须安眠。否则便是犯罪。”但是，仍然没有用，我还是无法入睡.....我完蛋了。我没法履行对联合王国的义务！我.....

笔记之十一

不行，我写不来；没有提要就没有吧！

深夜。雾气蒙蒙。空中布满了金灿灿的云块，因此没法看到更远处。古代人觉得那便是天神——那个了不起的怀疑主义者——的所在地。而我们却十分清楚，那里是清澈、晶蓝、光秃的一片，其余则一无所有。其他的我也不知道了，而现在我却已经知道得太多了。能确信知识的正确这便是我的信仰。我曾坚信自己，我坚信我非常了解自己。而今——当我再一次对镜自照的时候，我居然生平首次看清了眼前的那一个“他”。我惊奇地发现，眼前的这个人，便是“他”：两道浓黑的眉毛，在中间的眉心位置居然有道类似刀疤的垂直的皱褶（这道皱纹以前

也有吗？），浅灰色的眼睛四周有一圈黑眼圈，这是失眠导致的。而在这浅灰色的眼睛后面.....而今我终于发现，在它后边的是什麼。在此之前我从不曾知道那里会有些什麼。我从“那里”（这个“那里”既熟悉又陌生，它仿佛就在眼前，又远隔万里）望着镜中的自己，也望着那个他。我终于可以确信，那个有着两道浓眉的人，并不是我，而是其他人，这并不是真正的我，我也是生平头一次与他相遇。

啊，我到底在写些什麼，赶紧停下来吧。所有这些简直是胡说八道，太莫名其妙了，可能是昨天中毒所导致的吧.....到底是中了什麼毒呢？是中了那绿色的毒汁，还是中了她的毒？不过，这无所谓了。我之所以会写，就是想让大家看看，人类精密的逻辑与理智有时候会莫名其妙地颠倒到什么程度。而这样的头脑，则能将古代人百思不得其解的问题轻而易举地解决了.....联络机响了，R-13。是他。我简直有点儿欣喜若狂了。我实在不想一个人待着.....

20分钟以后

在这由平面的二维世界所组成的纸上，我见到一行行的字整齐排列着，而我眼前的另一个世界，则.....我对数字的感觉居然在逐步消失，只有20分钟，怎么我感觉却过了200分钟，甚至是20万分钟.....

当我平静下来，一字一句地将R与我会面的情形认真写下来，这感觉太怪异了。就像是一个人坐在自己的床边，悠闲地观察着躺在床上愁眉苦脸的自己一样。

R-13进来的时候，我已经神色如常了。我跟他谈起在祭典上他朗诵的诗歌，还表达了我由衷的敬佩之情。我觉得他写得很成功，那个狂人就是因他的诗的审判而最终走向灭亡的。

“.....而且若是我被要求为死刑机做示意图，我一定会毫不犹豫地
将你的扬抑格放进去。”我对他说道，同时不经意地瞧了他一眼，结果
就见到R暗淡无光的眼睛和发白的嘴唇。

“你怎么啦？”

“什么？啊.....我只是觉得腻了。到处都在讲判决书，判决书。我
不想再谈这些了。我不想.....”说到这里，他皱着眉头，同时揉着后脑
勺那个小箱子，小箱子里仍然装着我无法理解的东西。我们都不说话
了。过了好一阵儿，他仿佛在小箱子里找到了些什么，急于取出来，他
的双眼突然又闪亮了起来，带着笑意。他猛然站了起来：

“我要写诗，为‘积分号’写诗！是的.....我要写这样的诗。”一瞬
间，R又恢复了过去的样子，他的嘴唇又喷出很多唾沫星子，话又多了
起来，小喷泉又翻涌着。

“嗯，你看啊（又喷了些水），古代的与天堂相关的传说，你知道
吧。其实现在回想起来，那讲述的就是我们啊，而今我们所处的时代。
确实如此，你设想一下。人类有两个乐园：一种是没有自由的幸福，另
一种是没有幸福的自由，只有这两种选择，没有其他。而那些愚蠢的古
人选择了后者，所以，在接下来的日子里他们一直想得到脚镣手铐的束
缚。他们不断思念着，思念着，这便是他们口中的‘世界之大不幸’。这
样过了几个世纪，直到我们这个时代，他们才重新认识到，如何能重新
获得幸福.....不，你仔细听我说！那时上帝与我们坐在同一张桌子前。
的确是这样！是我们帮助了上帝，我们制服了那些恶魔，就是那些恶魔
们，他们让人类去犯禁，去偷吃禁果，将人类禁锢。他就是那只阴险毒
辣的蛇。而我们最终抬起了脚，往它头上使劲儿一踩.....好了，他死
了。而我们又重获了天堂。我们又回到了亚当、夏娃的时代，我们简单

纯洁、无忧无虑。没有了所谓善与恶，美与丑，因为一切都归于单纯，如天堂般纯净的美好生活，如孩童般天真的心灵。全知全能者、死刑机、立方体高台、气钟罩、安全卫士——这一切都是万般美好的，这意味着善，意味着庄严、壮观、纯粹、高尚、崇高和无瑕。因为这一切都让我们不自由——即让我们拥有着美好的幸福。也只有古人才会胡思乱想，不停地争论，什么是道德，什么又是反道德的。……得了，就是这样了，反正，我是想写一部这样的天堂史诗。你觉得如何？对了，总体的风格是庄严的……你听明白了吗？是不是很不错呢？”

当然是很不错的了！我记得，在我听完了他那番陈述之后，想：“虽然他长相不怎么样，甚至看着有点蠢，但其实他的头脑是很理性的，很聪明。”因此，我觉得我非常喜欢他，我是说那个真的我（到现在我仍然觉得，过去的那个我才是真实的我，而眼前的我患了病）。

很明显，R从我的面部表情中看出了我的想法，他搂着我的肩膀，哈哈大笑了起来：“哎，你呀你……亚当！哦，对了，顺便说一下那个夏娃的事吧……”随即，他从口袋里掏出一个小本子，边翻看边说：“后天……不是，是两天以后，O有一张你的粉红票子。你觉得怎样？还跟以前一样吗？你想让她过来吗？”

“这还用问吗？当然想啦。”

“好，那我转告她。否则，你知道吗，她自己还有些害羞呢……多么有趣啊！我跟你讲，她对我仅仅是按粉红票子行事而已，可是对于你……她又不好意思直说到底是谁插进了我们的三角关系之中。风流鬼，你坦白告诉我，到底谁啊？”

我的心里突然有个帘子掀开了：那丝绸的窸窣声，那绿色的酒瓶，

她那温软的嘴唇.....突然之间我居然问了句不该问的话（唉，我要是没说那句话该多好啊！）：“告诉我，你尝过尼古丁或者酒的滋味没有？”

R抿着嘴，皱着眉头，瞧着我。我知道他此刻的想法，他一定觉得：“虽说我们是很好的朋友.....但.....”他还是回答了我：“怎么说呢？我自己其实是没有尝过。但是我知道有个女子.....”

“I-330！”我喊了出来。

“怎么？你，难道你也是？”他大笑了起来，笑得气都喘不过来了。

镜子在桌子的另一边，此刻坐在软椅里，只能在镜中看到自己的前额和眉毛。此时，真实的我在镜中见到了一个扭曲的模样，那两道眉的裂痕歪扭着，拧紧着。接着是一声野蛮又刺耳的嚎叫：“‘也’是什么意思？你快说，那个‘也’到底是什么意思？我命令你说！”

R的两片厚嘴唇大张着，而双眼也瞪得圆圆的.....终于，那个真实的我制服了那个野蛮人，他扭住了那个野蛮人的衣领，让那个长着毛手的、气喘吁吁的我不能动弹。真实的我R诚恳地说道：“看在全知全能者的分儿上，请原谅我的冒失。我病了，病得太厉害了，我辗转反侧，无法入眠。我也不知道我到底是怎么回事。”

镶嵌着厚嘴唇的脸上掠过一丝笑意：“是的，是的。我懂的，我懂你！因为这些我非常熟悉.....当然，这是理论性的。再见啦！”

走到门口，R又像个黑球似的滚了回来，走到桌子旁，扔下一本书，说：“这是我刚完成的作品.....专门送给你的，差点儿忘了这个。再见。”说着，又朝我喷了一阵唾沫，离开了。

只剩下我一个人。或者更准确地应该说，只剩下真实的我和另一

个“我”待着。我跷着二郎腿坐在软椅里，很好奇地盯着那个在床上愁眉苦脸的我。

怎么会这样呢？这到底是为什么？三年的时光，我、O和R相处得十分融洽，而今却只是提了一下她的号码而已.....难道这就是所谓的爱情，所谓的嫉妒，这些东西果真让人疯狂，不止存在于古人所写的那些可笑的书里面。我头脑中的方程式、公式、数字完全消散了，全部变成了一团乱麻.....不行，明天我要去找R，跟他说.....不，那是假话，我不可能会去的。明天不会，后天也不会。永远我都不会去了.....我不能，我没法去见他。就这样吧！我们稳固的三角关系就这样垮了。

我一个人。傍晚。薄雾。金光灿灿的白色的天幕遮住了天空。如果我能知道高处是什么该多好！如果我能知道，我到底是谁，我是什么人该有多好！

笔记之十二

对无穷大的限制

守护天使

对诗歌的思考

我仍然相信，我会康复的，我会一如从前。最近我睡得很好。不再

做梦，也没有了病痛。而亲爱的O明天就要来看我了。一切都将恢复过来，就像一个简单的、规律的、有限的圆圈一样。我并不惧怕“有限”这两个字，因为人最高理性活动的目的，就在于要对无穷大不断的限制，要将无穷大变为灵活而又方便的、容易被人所理解的微分。正是因为这一点，我的工作，即我所热爱的数学有着美感。而她，却恰恰缺乏这种美。当然，这只是我的偶然联想。

我坐在地铁的车厢里，在车轮有节奏的隆隆声中想到了这些。伴着车轮声，我低声地吟诵着R的诗句，手里是他昨天送给我的那本诗集。我突然感觉到，在我背后有个人俯在我的肩头，偷窥我面前打开的书页。我并没有转过头，而是用眼角的余光见到一对粉红色的招风大耳朵，以及那个熟悉的佝偻身影.....原来是他！但是我不想惊扰他，仍然装作一无所知的样子。我假装什么都没有发现。心中想着，我进车厢的时候并没有见到他。不知道他什么时候就出现在我身边了。

这虽然是件微不足道的小事，但是却让我振作了起来。这是一种非常好的影响，它让我信心倍增。当你感觉到有双警惕的眼睛在关爱地注视着你的举动，以防你出现什么差错，让你一点也不会偏离正轨，这是多么好的事啊。可能你会觉得我有点言过其实，但是在我脑海中总是会出现这类情景，就如古代人所幻想的天使一般，安全卫士对我来说就是那样的存在。而古人们所设想的很多美好的东西，而今都成为了现实。

当我感觉到有一个天使在护卫我的时候，我正在低声诵读那首叫《幸福》的诗篇。我觉得这是一首具有诗意美和思想深度的优美诗篇。开篇是这样的：

二乘二是永恒的相恋；

在四的情绪中不离不分.....

人间炽热相恋的爱人们，

正是二乘二的永恒之数。

剩下的诗句也同样地让人激动，充满着睿智的、永恒的、幸福的乘法口诀。

好的诗人都应该是哥伦布。在他发现美洲之前，这块大陆其实已经存在了若干年，但只有哥伦布看出了它的价值，并且让它被世人所知。在R-13出世之前，乘法表就已经存在了，但只有R-13在这个数字的丛林中找到了它的诗意之美。他描述得多么准确生动啊。在这世上，还有比找到这种美好的更美满的幸福吗？钢铁也会生锈。而古代的居民是上帝的杰作，我的意思是说，是上帝创造了那些会犯错误的人。当然，这便意味着上帝也犯了个错。而乘法表则不然，它更加聪慧，也更加准确。因为乘法表绝对不会（请注意我的用词），它绝对不会出错。能生活在乘法表所组成的严整而又永恒规律的数字王国之中，是多么幸福的事。没有犹豫，永不犯错。仅有一个真理，仅有一条正确之路。真理便是二乘二，正确之路便是四。若是这些幸福地、完美地互乘的二们思考起自由来，也就是说，它们想着犯错，这不是太荒唐了吗？R-13抓住了问题的本质、这最.....

此时，我的后脑勺又有了感知，那是守护天使呼出的暖暖的鼻息，现在又转到了我的左耳边了。显然，他意识到我已经把书合上了，而我的思想则飘出去老远老远。其实，若他要求我打开脑中的思想，我也很乐意。这样做我会觉得舒适和快乐。如今我甚至记起来，当时我还回头看着他，双眼盯着他流出征询的意思。但是他好像没有理解我的意图，

也或许是他不想弄明白什么。最终，他什么也没有问……我的那些素不相识的读者们，而今，我只能将我的心声吐露给你们。你们，在我看来，如今就像当时的他在我身边一样，是那样珍贵，虽远隔万里，却仿佛近在身旁。

我就是这样想的，由个人，比方R-13，联想到整体，比方，我们的国家诗人和作家学院。我思索着：古人怎么没有意识到这一点呢？他们的文学和诗歌创作是那么的荒诞，文学艺术的伟大的能量竟然被他们白白浪费了！任何人可以随便写出自己的想法，爱怎么写就怎么写，这简直太荒诞了！还有更加荒谬的，在那个时代，海洋整天都做着没有任何意义的拍打海岸的动作，那潜藏在波涛中的巨大力量只是用来激发恋人的爱情冲动。而我们，我们却从海浪的拍打中获取了电力。我们将这头发狂的如野兽般奔腾的海浪，变成了温驯的猎物。同样，我们也驯服了那些如夜莺般日夜鸣鸣的诗歌。而今，它们成为了国家的工具，为国家服务。

例如，我们著名的《数学诗歌》，如果没有这类诗歌，我们怎么会如此强烈、如此真诚地爱上四则运算呢。《玫瑰花刺》，这是多么经典的诗歌作品啊，安全卫士们就是玫瑰花刺，他们守卫着我们娇嫩的国家之花，来防御粗野的触摸……当听到孩子们齐声诵读：“坏孩子来采玫瑰，花刺尖扎疼了他，坏孩子大声嗷嗷叫，边哭边跑往家逃”的时候，当看到他们像背诵祈祷文一样露出虔诚、认真的神情，你怎么能不为之感动呢？还有那首《致全知全能者之歌》，当我们读到这首诗的时候，怎么会不被那位最英明、神武、伟大的号码自我奉献、全情投入的精神所动容呢？还有那部令人畏惧的《法庭判决之歌》，以及不朽的悲剧《上班迟到的人》，以及人人都记得的通俗之作《性事卫生诗抄》！

我们生活中的所有优美，所有复杂都通过文学语言得到不朽。我们

的诗人也不是古时候的天使精灵般地降临人间，他们是与我们有着相同步调的人间的智者，他们和我们一起踩着音乐机器进行曲那严肃、机械的节拍，一丝不苟地大踏步前行。他们所创作的诗歌来源于早晨电牙刷震动的时候，来自全知全能者的死刑机器的火星飞溅时、来自联合国国歌庄严肃穆的歌声中，来自透明的脸盆发出的响声，来自窗帘落下时发出的咔咔声，来自烹饪指南轻松快活的语言中，来自街头小耳朵十分微弱的震颤声.....

这些便是我们的神，他们就在这里，在我们身边，与我们在一起。他们身处安全卫士局、身处厨房、身处工厂、身处休息室。众神变得和我们一样了，因此，我们便成为了神。那些素不相识的星球上的读者们，我们很快就要见面了，到时候你们的生活也会变得跟我们一样充满了理性和精确之美.....

笔记之十三

雾

尔

荒唐的事

天刚拂晓，我便醒了。睁开眼睛便看到了玫瑰色的天。一切都非常好，既安宁又充满秩序感。晚上O就会过来了。我已经好了。我轻轻笑

着，又睡了过去。再次醒来时是起床铃响起之后。我透过天花板和四壁的玻璃向外看去，天空变了颜色，四周都弥漫着云雾。大雾弥漫，狂乱的浓云越积越多，越积越厚，甚至逐渐逼近。仿佛天地之间的界线也不甚分明，一切都飞快地运动着，不断地融化，坠落……什么都消失不见了，我见不到房子，看不到玻璃墙，它就像晶盐水中溶解了一样。只是影影绰绰地见到黑色的身影，在街上，在屋里。这些人影就像浸在奶液中的颗粒，他们飘浮着，有高有低，一切都在烟雾之中，仿佛在那里起了一场不知名的大火一样。

11点45分，我瞄了一眼表，立刻就记住了那个时间。眼看就要到了体力劳动的时间了。我连忙回到屋里待了一下。这时候，电话响了。电话那头的说话声像一枚细长的针逐渐扎进我心里：

“噢，你真的在家！太好了！请在街口等我。咱们一起去个地方……先这样，去哪儿？哦，见了面我再告诉你。”

“你非常清楚，现在我要去参加体力劳动。”

“你也非常清楚，你会照我说的办的。两分钟后见。”

两分钟后，我在街口处。我之所以在那儿是因为我要告诉她，我要听命于全知全能者，而不是她。居然还说出“按我说的办”这样的话！她居然还那么肯定，那样自信。好吧，我必须认真地跟她说清楚……

在街上，一件件仿佛由潮雾织成的灰制服匆忙从我身旁走过，又毫无察觉地融化在雾中。我一直盯着表看……仿佛这一刻，我变成了那根颤动着的秒针。10分钟，8分钟，3分钟，2分钟……眼看就要到12点了……不用说，劳动时间已经过了，我仍然在街上。我非常恨她。但是我仍然在等她，我必须让她知道……

在如牛奶般浓稠的白雾中，我见到了两片血红的嘴唇一闪而过，就像尖刀拉开的口子。

“让你等很久啦。但是，现在已经迟了。你没法过去了！”

我不出声地盯着她的嘴唇。女人在我眼中都是嘴唇，两片嘴唇。那个女人的嘴唇是粉红色的，圆润而有弹性，像个圆圈，将自己与其余的世界阻隔开来，而眼前的这一个，这副嘴唇啊，在一秒钟之前她还不在这里，突然她就来了，像用刀拉开似的，而今还淌着甜腻的血……

她走近了一些，肩膀倚在我身上。我们仿佛融为了一体，我感觉她身上的某种东西似乎流进了我的身体。我觉得就是这样。我的所有神经、所有的头发、所有的既感觉甜蜜又疼痛难忍的心跳都让我深切地知道，对这种“理所当然”，我欣然领命。若是一块铁被一块磁石所吸引，也一样会乐意服从这种必然的、科学的规律。同样的道理，如果一块石头被用力掷向空中，在经过短暂的停顿之后，它会飞速地往大地坠落。它心中也同样欢乐无比。而人在经过了弥留之时，最后呼出那一口气，然后便离开了人世，他也有着不言而喻的快乐。

我记得，想到那里，我便觉得窘了，我微笑着，突兀地说道：“雾……真大啊。”

“尔喜欢雾？”

这个“尔”是很久远的词汇，它是古代统治者用来呼唤奴才的，人们早就不用了。它缓慢地、尖刻地滑进了我的心中……是的，我就是个奴才，这便是需要，我觉得很不错。

“是的，很不错……”我默默地自语，接着便对她说道，“不，我恨

雾，我也怕雾。”

“那么就意味着你喜欢它。你惧怕它，是因为它比你强大；你痛恨它，是因为你怕惧它；所以，你是爱它的，因为你无法征服它，人们通常都喜欢他们所无法驾驭的东西。”

“是的。说得非常对。就因为这样……我……”

我们俩就这么走着，仿佛像一个整体。在层层雾霭中，我见到远远的太阳的微光，四周都充满着活力，周遭都披上了金黄的、玫瑰色的以及红色的光泽……整个世界像一个完整的女性，我们仿佛孕育其中，还没有出生，我们怀着欣喜之情成长着。我很清楚，我特别清楚地意识到：这一切——太阳、雾霭、那玫瑰色的和金黄色的光泽，都因我而存在。我没有疑问，我也不知道我们要去哪里。有什么关系呢？就这样走着，走着，生长着，生长着，这已经让我很快乐了……

“我们到了……”在一个门口处，我们停了下来。“今天值班的正好是他，上次我在古宅里曾说过他。”

我小心谨慎地呵护着体内正在生长的萌芽，看了一眼牌子上的字“医疗部”，我明白了。

……眼前是一间被金色云雾笼罩着的玻璃房间。在玻璃吊顶棚上有各种颜色的玻璃瓶子、玻璃罐子。以及电线，闪着蓝色幽光的管子。屋子的主人是个身材单薄的男性号码，他就像个纸剪的人，不管他怎么转动身子，你看到的只是一个单薄的侧影而已。他的鼻子也像亮闪闪的尖刀一样，而嘴唇则像两片剪刀。

我并没有听见I-330跟他说的话，那时候，我只是目不转睛地盯着她

的嘴唇，我看到它们在动，而我也感觉到自己脸上露出那不由自主的幸福的笑容。医生那剪刀似的嘴唇闪动了一下，说道：“噢，是的，我明白了。这病十分危险，我认为没有比这个病更危险的了。”他微笑着，用同样薄纸般的手很快地在纸上写着什么，然后将纸交给了I-330，随即又写了一张，交给了我。

他交给我们的是一张诊断书，证明我们生病了，无法干活。我是个不折不扣的窃贼，我偷盗了联合国的工作时间，我应该受到死刑机的严惩。但是这种想法却离我十分遥远，仿佛那是书里才有的情节，跟我并没有什么关系……我连忙接过了纸条，没有一点犹豫的意思。我，以及我的双眼、双唇、双手都明白，我必须这样做。

在拐角处空无一人的车库里，我们钻进了飞船。跟上次一样，I负责驾驶，她熟练地按动了起飞键，我们飞离了地面，而且越飞越高，金色的雾以及太阳都被抛到了身后，我想起了医生那尖削的侧影，突然我觉得他是那么的可爱。以前，我知道所有的一切都是围着太阳转的，而今我突然明白过来，其实一切都是围绕着我旋转的。我慢慢地、幸福地阖上了眼睛……

在古宅门口，我们又见到了那个老太太。她的那张嘴那么可爱啊。又皱成了一团，可能，它一直闭合着，而此时又欢快地张开了，她微笑着说：“啊，你这小淘气！你怎么偷跑出来了？……既然来了，那就算了吧！如果有什么事，我一定会赶过来通知你们的。”

我们进入了那扇沉甸甸的不透亮的门，随着沉重的关门声，我的心也疼痛地打开了，愈开愈大，直至完全敞开了……我的嘴唇触碰到了她的嘴唇……我吸吮着，不停地吸吮着。我勉为其难地放开了她，不出声地盯着她那睁大的双眼，接着又……

房间里有着黄昏所有的昏暗.....蓝的、杏黄的、墨绿的山羊皮，还有那佛像的灿烂微笑，巨大的木床，发光的镜子.....我又来到了这里，跟梦中的场景很像，而今我已经深深明白，一切都有着金灿灿的玫瑰色的琼浆，我自己的身体里也是这样.....仿佛，过不了多久，它就要喷涌而出.....我深陷其中，我遵循着不可抗拒的规律的支配.....这里什么都没有，没有粉红票，没有时间考量，也没有联合国，连我似乎也不存在了。只有那两排紧紧闭合的小利齿，还有望着我的温柔的睁大的双眼，我看着这双眼睛，越陷越深.....除了屋角的洗脸池里发出的滴水声之外，我什么都听不到。我觉得这声音似乎来自千里之外，那是某个远方的声音。而我则是宇宙.....在水滴声中，我感觉到岁月的流逝，转瞬之间就如同过了几个世纪.....

我穿上了制服，向I俯下身去，我要使劲将她看个够，仿佛这是最后的诀别一样。

“我早就知道.....我早就知道你.....”I轻声地说着。随即，她用手抚了抚脸，转身轻快地走下床，穿上制服，脸上又浮现出她惯常的如刺芒一样的微笑。

“好了，我的堕落天使。这下你可完了。难道你不怕吗？好了，再见。你可以一个人回去吧。如何？”

她打开了镶着镜子的大柜门，转头瞧着我，等待我的反应。我乖乖地走出了房间。刚走出几步，我突然觉得应该再依偎一下她的肩膀，哪怕只一下也好，我只有这一个要求。于是，我急忙转身回去。我想着，也许她还站在镜子前扣制服的纽扣。但是，当我跑进房间的时候，她并不在那里。我清楚地看到柜门上钥匙的圆环仍然在不停地晃动着，但是她却不见了。她没法这样离开的呀，因为房间里只有一扇离开的门。但

是她就是不在那！我将每个角落都找了个遍，我甚至还打开了柜子，将那些五颜六色的古代衣裙都翻了一遍，但是，并没有人……

亲爱的素不相识的读者们，将这段离奇的经历讲给你们听，我也觉得实在是太荒诞了。但是这都是我的真实经历，所以，我只能据实以告。从一早醒来开始，这一天都充满着不可思议的荒诞冒险，这就跟古代的那种叫作梦的疾病十分相像。既然如此，我讲的这个听起来有些荒诞的事就没有什么大不了的。此外，我坚信，迟早我会找到答案，能解释清楚这些荒诞不经的事。这么想，我便多少有些欣慰，希望你们也不要因此而感到疑惑。

……我仍然有些许不安！希望你们能够明白，此刻我的心情！

笔记之十四

“我的”

不准许

冰冷刺骨的地板

下面要说的仍然是昨天发生的事。因为，昨晚临睡前我有很多事情要做，所以短短的私人时间里，我没法把所有的事情都写完。但是，每件事却像印刻在我脑海中一样，挥之不去。我甚至永远也没法忘记，我

至今仍然清楚地记得那冰冷刺骨的地板.....

晚上，O会准时来我这里，因为这是她约定好的时间。我下楼去值班控制员那里，准备领取许可证。

“你怎么啦？”值班员问我，“你今天有点儿.....”

“我.....我生病了。”

确实是这样，我真的是病了。因为发生在我身上的一切都是病态的。想到这，我想起了那个病例证明，是啊，我有医生开的证明啊！我连忙将手放入口袋里去摸：它依然在那儿，还簌簌作响。这么看来，所有的事都是真实的，都发生过！

我将纸条交给了值班员。我发觉我的两颊滚烫。我没敢朝她看，但是，我仍然能感觉到从她的眼睛里射过来的奇怪的眼神.....21点30分。左边房间的窗帘拉了下来。而右边的屋子里，我看见他正在读书，我见到书上方的那个秃头的邻居，他的头上有不少疙瘩，而他的额头很像一个黄色抛物线。我有些苦恼，我不停地在屋子里走来走去。出了那么多事，我该怎么对O说呢？我明显地意识到右边的邻居向我投来的目光，他在朝我这边看，那额头的皱纹清晰可见，我还发现他额头上有些模糊不清的线条，我甚至觉得这些线条是跟我有关的。

21点45分。一阵快活的粉红色旋风刮了进来，两只红润的胳膊紧紧地圈住了我的脖颈。随后，我发觉那团围住我的圈越来越松.....越来越松.....甚至，断了。她的双手垂了下来.....

“你变了，你不是以前的那个.....你不是我的了！”

“‘我的’，多么古老的用法啊。我不隶属于.....”我有些急迫地辩解

道，突然我意识到，确实，过去我不隶属于任何人，但是而今.....而今，我已经不是生活在我们的理性世界中了，而是跑到了古代，那个野蛮的充斥着-1的平方根的世界里去了。

窗帘在慢慢往下放。那个邻居的一本书突然从桌上掉了下去。在窗帘快到触碰到地板的时候，通过那个窄窄的细缝，我看见一只蜡黄的手拾起了书，我想着，如果能一把攥住这只手就好了！

“我本来.....我本来希望能在散步的时候碰到你.....我有很多话.....我有许多话要对你说.....”

可爱又无辜的O！她那粉红色的嘴，犹如下弯的月牙儿般耷拉着。但是，我没法跟她说，我没法将所发生的事告诉她。确实是这样，我不能让她成为我的同谋犯啊。因为我非常清楚，她不会去安全卫士局告发我的，因此，我没法.....

“亲爱的O，我病了。我觉得很累，今天我又去了医疗部。不过，这些都没什么，一切都会好起来的。所以，我们别谈这些了，让我们忘了吧。”

O温顺地躺在床上。我轻柔地吻着她，我轻吻着她手腕上那条孩子般的胖胖的肉褶。她美丽的蓝眼睛闭着，粉红色的半月嘴渐渐地绽露出微笑，那笑容似花朵般开放着。我吻着她的身体。

突然，我意识到自己已经成为了空壳，我的精力已然耗尽，什么都不剩。我没法，我没法。我明白，我应该.....但是，我没法.....不，这都不可能了。我的嘴唇突然变冷，与此同时，粉红色的月牙儿颤抖着，仿佛就在一瞬间，色泽全无，紧紧地关闭了。O将罩单扯了过去，盖在身上，而脸则深陷在枕头里.....

我则坐在床旁的地板上。冰冷刺骨的寒意袭来。我一声不响地坐着。那逼人的寒气不断地袭了上来。也许，在那蓝色的沉默的星河之中，也同此时我身处的环境一样沉寂又刺骨吧。

“请理解我，亲爱的，我并不愿意……”我语无伦次地解释着，“我确实……”

这是实话，我，其实那个真正的我，并不愿意……但是，我怎么解释给她听呢？我怎么才能让她明白：铁块并不情愿，但是规律却是无法拒绝的，是一定会发生的。

O缓缓地抬起头，闭着双眼说：“你走吧。”因为她是带着哭腔说出的话，“走”听起来就像在说“抖”。这个有点可笑的细节一直在脑海中挥之不去。

我浑身冰冷，四肢麻木地离开了房间转到了走廊。我的头使劲靠在玻璃上，窗外是一层淡淡的薄雾，仿佛越飘越远。可能到了深夜，又会浓雾弥漫了，我心里想着，“这将是一个多么可悲的深夜啊！”

O飞快地从我身旁走了过去，奔向电梯，门被重重地关上了。

“等等。”我使劲地喊了一声。

但是，我只能听到电梯往下落的声音，它在不断下降，下降……

“我的R，我的O，都被她夺走了，但是……但是，我仍然……”

笔记之十五

气钟罩

明净如镜的海面

我应该永生承受烈焰燃烧之苦

我刚来到“积分号”制造台，副设计师便迎面走了过来。他长着一张又圆又白的脸庞，活像个白瓷盘子，每当他说话的时候，你就像面对着一盘美食一样。

“你居然生病了。这里缺了你，差一点就出事了。”

“出事？怎么回事？”

“是啊！昨天下班铃响了，所有人的工作都完成了。大家正要离开飞车站。居然在清场的时候，发现了一个人。这是一个没有号码的男人。我简直想不明白，他是怎么进来的。不过，他被带到审讯部去了。相信，要不了多久，我们就会知道答案了。他会开口说出诸如‘他为什么来，又怎么进来的……’”说着，他露出了一个大大的笑脸。

在审讯局工作的人都是非常富有经验的物理学家，全知全能者直接管理这个部门。审讯局拥有很多富有创造力的设备，而那些设备中，最高级的还要数气钟罩。它类似于古代学校里用作实验的某种仪器：古人们将白老鼠放在玻璃罩中，用空气泵将罩中的空气不断地抽出来，里面的空气会越来越少……当然，你会猜到最后的结果是什么。

但是，我们所设计的气钟罩要完备得多，里面的气体也丰富多样。而且，我们也不会将它残忍地用在可怜的小动物身上，它有着更为高尚的责任，即保卫联合国的安全，也就是说，用它来保障数百万人的幸福。

大概在五百年前，当时审讯局才刚刚成立，有些头脑简单的人居然将审讯局和古代的宗教裁判混为一谈。这太可笑了。可笑到简直将实施气管切开术的医生与抢劫的强盗当成了一种人。当然，他们手上都有刀，也许用的还是同一种刀。虽然动作都是切开活人的喉咙。但是最终他们的目的却是不同的，一个是救死扶伤的人，而另一个则是谋财害命的罪犯。一个应该是带正号的人，而另一个则是带有负号的人.....这两者的区别再明显不过了，只要稍稍有点逻辑性，就不会混淆。而我只需一秒钟，逻辑推理之齿轮就会准确无误地钩住了负号，将它翻转过来。

但是，头脑中又出现了另一个场景：那个柜子上不断晃动的钥匙圆环。很明显，门刚被关上，但是，I却不在那里，她不见了。哪里都没有。此时，我的逻辑推理的齿轮就不管用了。是梦境吗？但是，就在此时，我仍然能感觉到右肩那难以言传的甜蜜的疼痛，那是来自I的，在大雾弥漫的街头，她曾紧紧倚靠在我的右肩上，我们并肩前行。“你喜欢大雾吗？”是的，我喜欢雾，我爱大雾.....一切都是那么富有生机、新奇而又美妙。一切都那么好.....

“都那么好！”话居然脱口而出了。

“那么好？”那一双圆溜溜的、陶瓷般的眼睛，盯着我。“你在说什么？这有什么好的？若是那个没有号码的男人真的得逞.....很有可能，还有其他的同伙，四周都有这样的人，时时刻刻都存在着，他们一直在这里，在‘积分号’附近，那么.....”

“其他的同伙？他们又是些什么人？”

“我怎么会知道呢？但是，我能感觉得到他们的存在，你知道这种感觉吗？”

“你听说过那个手术没有？好像是一种能够切除幻想的手术？”（我确实也听到了这种说法。）

“嗯，听到过。这又怎么了？”

“当然有关系了，若是我处于你的职位，我肯定会要求给我做这个手术的。”

那张瓷盘的脸上立即显现出仿佛吃了柠檬的表情，那么可怜的酸楚的神情。对于他来说，哪怕有人无意中暗示他富有想象力，他也会非常不开心。其实，这又算得了什么呢？但是，在一星期之前，我也会因此而不开心的。而如今，我不会了。因为我知道想象力确实存在，我也明白，我的病根就在这里。我还非常清楚，我并不想治愈它。至于为什么，我说不出来，但是我就是不乐意那么做。

我们共同走上了玻璃台阶；我们越来越高，而脚下的世界则越来越小。

我的那些素不相识的读者们，不论你们是谁，我可以肯定的是，你们一定生活在太阳之下。若你们也生过病，就如同现在的我一样，你们一定会知道清晨的微弱晨光是什么样的，那是一种粉红的、透明的、暖融融的金灿灿的光亮。甚至空气也带着那微微的粉红的颜色，一切都浸染了太阳柔和的血液之中。一切都是生机勃勃的，连石块也是有生命力的，柔软的，而铁也是温暖的、活生生的。人们也是如此，生机勃勃，

面露笑容。但是，仅仅一小时之后，这一切就会消失不见。太阳的粉红色的鲜血会枯竭——但是此时，我眼前的都是生命。我发现在“积分号”的躯体内有玻璃血液在流动着，它们有着生命之光。我眼看着“积分号”，想象着它此刻正在思索着自己的未来，那未来是壮阔的，又是势不可挡的。它将给宇宙带来的沉重——那是一种永无尽头的幸福。我的那些素不相识的读者们，这就是你们一直苦苦追寻，而无法得到的幸福。你们一定会找到的，你们一定会成为幸福的人，这点毋庸置疑。

“积分号”船体已经基本竣工。它是一个椭圆形的长长的船体，这让它显得精致而高贵，通体是玻璃的，这种材质既永久又坚韧。我看着那些为“积分号”忙碌的人们，有的人正忙于架构玻璃船舱内的横梁和纵柱，位于尾部的是装载着巨型火箭发动机的基座。若发射进宇宙之后，每隔三秒钟，尾部就会喷射出火焰和气体。这样它就会越飞越高，像一个喷射幸福的飞船一样，疾驰进茫茫太空……

再往下看，就见到深受泰罗工作法影响的人们，正在一丝不苟地工作着，他们犹如一架大机器上的每个操纵杆，规律地、精确地、富有节奏地弯腰、直腰、转身。他们拿着闪亮的玻璃工具，喷着火在切割和焊接玻璃板、弯管接头和托板。那巨大的玻璃起重机轻易地就碾过玻璃轨道，如同人们一样准确，它转动、弯曲，将物体准确无误地送入“积分号”的船体内部。一切仿佛都如出一辙，像人化的机器，又像机器化的人。这是多么震撼的美、和谐之音，多么辉煌！

快，奔入他们的行列之中去。我奔下了楼梯，融入人群，成为他们中的一员。所有人都有着钢铁般的节奏，这让他欣喜若狂，我见到大家丰润的脸颊，如镜子般明净清透的额头，他们都富有节律地工作着。而我自己则像在这明镜般的海洋中浮游，我身心舒展开来……突然之间，有一张纯真无邪的脸转向我，问道：

“今天怎么样啦？好些了吗？”

“什么？”

“昨天，你没有过来。大家以为你患了重病了……”他明亮的额头朝向我，微笑着说。那神情纯粹得像个孩子。

一瞬间，血便往我的脸上涌。我没法，我没法对这样的一双眼睛撒谎。我没有回答，心却越收越紧……此时，那张白瓷圆盘又出现在舱门口，他冲着我喊道：“D-503，请过来看一下，悬臂架的中心力矩怎么不太对，而且……”

他并没有说完，我已经向他奔去了——我非常不光彩地逃掉了。在跑的时候，我也不敢抬眼看，我只觉得脚下的玻璃台阶闪闪发光，弄得我头晕目眩。每往上走一步，我就觉得越发的绝望。我是个罪人，我中了很深的毒，我不配待在这里。以后，我没法跟这里准确划一的、机械的旋律融合在一起，不能跟什么都没有发生一样，在这平静如镜的海面上浮游。我应该永生承受烈焰燃烧之苦，四处流浪只为了找到一个可以不让别人看到我的地方。当然，若是我有决心……我将会选择……一根尖利的冰刀刺穿了我的心，我感觉寒冷刺骨。我自己倒是没什么，怎样都可以。但是她，如果她被告发的话……可能会……

我终于从舱口爬了上去，来到了制造台上，但我并不知道我该去哪里，我只是无谓地站着。我抬头便能看到太阳，正午的太阳正有些暗淡无光，在它的下面是一动不动的“积分号”——这个巨大的，缺乏生命力的玻璃体。它的粉红色的鲜血已经流干。当然，这只是我自己的设想而已。其实，它跟之前一模一样，但是，我仍然……

“你出了什么事？D-503，你幻听了吗？我叫了你半天了……你到底

是怎么啦？”副设计师的声音终于传到了我的耳朵里，此刻，他简直是在大喊大叫了，看来他这么大声地喊了很久了。

我到底是怎么了？我没有了方向，虽然马达照样轰轰地响着，飞船也做好了起飞的准备，但是，却没有了方向。我也不知道该往哪里飞，若是往下飞，就会撞到地上去，那么就往上飞吧，冲着太阳飞，冲着那一片火海飞去……

笔记之十六

黄色

影子

无药可救的灵魂

过了好些日子了，这期间我都没有写笔记。我也记不清确切的天数了，因为期间的生活都是平静似水的。它们都是单调、统一的黄色，如同在沙漠中被晒热的沙子，没有蔽荫，也没有一滴水，眼前只有望不到尽头的漫漫黄沙。我不能失去她，自从在古宅我们分别之后，她就消失得无影无踪了。我知道，没有她我无法活下去……

从那次她莫名其妙地消失之后，我只见过她一次，那是某次散步，大概是二三天前的事，或者是四天以前？我的记忆模糊了，因为眼前所

经历的日子，都是一模一样的。她只是与我擦肩而过，在那一瞬间将我那如黄沙般空洞的内心填满了。与她并肩前行的是那个佝偻的S，他的头只能够到她的肩膀，在她另一边是那个单薄的如纸片般的医生，而与他们并行的第四个号码，我没有记住他的脸，但是对他的手指却印象深刻，他有一双细长又苍白的手指，那手就像一道光，从制服中射了出来。I见到我，朝我招了一下手，接着她便越过S的脑袋，伸长脖子对那个手指如光束般的人说话。我隐约听到“积分号”几个字，这时，四个人的目光齐刷刷地朝我射过来，不一会儿，他们的身影便消失在灰蓝色的人群中，而我眼前仍然是一片枯黄。

那天晚上，我收到了她的一张粉红票子。我站在联络机前，爱恨交织地祈求着，希望早点看到她的号码出现，因此我不断盯着屏幕，想着I-330这几个数字。每当电梯门响，我就奔向大厅，见到一个个号码走出来，高的、矮的、苍白的、粉红的.....周围的很多窗帘都纷纷地拉下去了。可是她仍然没有出现。她没有来。

此时是22点整，可能此时此刻，她正依偎在某个号码的身上，对那个号码温存软语地说着：“你爱我吗？”的话。她会对谁发问呢？那个人到底是谁呢？是那个有着如光束般手指的人吗？还是喜欢喷口水的R，再不然是那个佝偻身形的S吗？

S.....怎么最近我总能听到他跟在我身后发出的噼啪的脚步声，那声音就像脚踩在了水洼上。为什么最近他一直像个影子似的伴我左右呢？总有那个灰蓝色的扁平的影子出现在我的前面、后面、左面或者右面。其他的号码不停地踏着它，或是迈过它，但是，它一直在我身边，距离我不远也不近的。我们之间好像有一条纽带将我们紧紧相连。可能，这根无形的纽带就是I-330。我也不清楚，也许，安全卫士们已经知道了我.....

若是有人跟你说，你的影子在观察你的一举一动，它什么都看得清清楚楚，你相信吗？突然之间，你会有一种奇怪的感觉：你的双手好像并不是你自己的了，它们不听你的话。我突然意识到，我的双手动作十分可笑，它们和脚步一点也不同步。我都忍不住想回头看个究竟了，但是我却做不到，怎么做都不行，脖子僵硬地挺直着，简直没法转动。我只得使劲跑、越跑越快。虽然我没法回头，但是我的后背仍然能感到，那影子也快速地追赶着我，我没法躲开它，简直没处躲……

我终于到了我屋里。现在总算就我自己了。但是，屋里电话，这样新的问题又出现了。我不假思索地拿起话筒：“喂，请拨I-330。”话筒里传来一阵轻微的响声，我能听到人走动的脚步声，那声音穿过走廊，进入了她的房门。接着便没了声响……我扔下话筒，我不能再等了，我必须，我必须去找她！

这事发生在昨天。我匆忙地赶去找她。来到她的住所外面，从16点到17点，我一直在附近徘徊着，整整一个小时。号码们列队整齐地从我身旁走过，那几千只脚踏着相同的节拍走着，仿佛一直长有万足的巨兽般经过。只有我是孤零零的，我像来到了荒无人烟的小岛上。我仍然在找寻，在灰蓝色的海洋中寻找她的身影……

很快，很快就会看到的。那个有着两道嘲讽的眉毛和一双黑亮而深邃的眼睛，眼睛后面是熊熊烈火，人影幢幢……我要直接冲过去，冲到烈火的后面，对她说“尔”，是的，“尔”，我要对她说：“我不能没有你。我没法独自生活下去。”但是，她并没有出现。

突然，我觉得周遭一片寂静，原来音乐机器的乐声已经停止了。我醒悟过来，已经17点了，人们都走光了，只剩下我一个人。这时候要转身回家，已经太晚了。四周都是抹着黄色阳光的玻璃的荒漠。玻璃墙面

闪着光亮，它底部朝上地悬着，看着它颠倒的样子，我觉得自己也是倒着的，那形象居然如此可笑。

我要赶紧走，我必须得离开这里。赶到医疗局去，弄一张证明，否则.....也许，还有一个办法。我就待在这，静静地待着，等安全卫士们来发现我，将我带到审讯局去，这样，所有的问题都结束了。所有的罪恶也都一笔勾销了。

一阵轻微的声响，身形佝偻的S出现在我面前。我没有直视他，但是我已经感觉到，他的一双锐利的小钢钻已经钻进了我的心里。我勉强笑了笑，说（此时此刻我必须得说点什么）：“我.....我必须得去医疗局。”

“没有人阻拦你啊？你为什么还站在这儿？”

我没有答话，我仍然感觉自己可笑地颠倒着，大头朝下而脚朝上。

“跟我走。”S厉声地说。

我听话地跟着他走，毫无目的地甩着那两只不听使唤的胳膊。

我没法抬眼看上去，因此感觉仿佛走在了一个上下颠倒的世界里：机器的基座朝上立着，而人们也似机器一样脚贴在天花板上站着；再往下瞧，就见到了凝固在马路玻璃面里的天空。我到现在还记得，当时的所思所想，我想着，也许是自己最后一眼看世界了。但是居然如此荒谬，世界不是它本来的样子，而是倒立着呈现在我眼前的。因为，我没法抬起头来。

我们停了下来。我跟前是台阶。我跨了一步.....过一会儿，我就会见到那些穿着白大褂的医生了，还有那巨大的气钟罩。

我使出了浑身的力气，努力抬起了头，猛然间，“医疗局”三个字映入了我的眼帘。怎么他会把我带到这儿来呢，而不是审讯局？他怎么会放过我了呢？其实，我根本还没有想到这些。我只是使劲向上一蹿，蹦过台阶，用力地将大门紧紧关上。直到这时，我才喘了一口气，好像从早晨到刚才我都没有喘过气一样，心脏仿佛也没有跳过，直到这时候，我的胸中的闸门才被打开了……

屋里有两个人。一个是矮墩墩的男性，他很结实，双眼像牛角一样，仿佛要随时将病人挑起来似的；而另一个则很消瘦，两片嘴唇很薄，似闪闪发光的剪刀，鼻子也似尖刀……是他，就是他。我径直朝他奔了过去，就像见到了老朋友一样，差点碰到他的鼻子，我不断说着关于失眠、我奇怪的梦境、那些影子，以及黄沙的内容。他的两片剪刀似的嘴张开着，似在微笑。

“你的情况太糟了。身体里有了一个灵魂了。”

灵魂？这是多么奇怪的说法啊，这应该是个被人们弃之不用很久的词了……

“这……非常危险吗？”我低声地问道。

“无药可救。”剪刀片子说得非常肯定。

“但是……这个病到底是怎么个情况呢？我……我不明白。”

“这个嘛……我怎么解释呢？……你是个数学家吧？”

“是的。”

“那么，这样说吧。比方说，有个平面，就像镜面一样。我们两人都站在这个平面上，对不对？这里的阳光炫目，我们歪着头，以免被太阳烤到。再比方说，有一架飞机刚刚飞过，它在镜子的表面留下一道阴影。这一切都发生在瞬间，随即便消失不见了。现在，请试着想象一下，若是这层坚硬的表面，被火灼烤，就会变软，甚至它的表面会坍塌了，不再平滑。而所有经过它的东西也会凹陷进入，落入到镜子的世界中去。而此时，我们便像孩子一般怀着好奇的心往里面看。你要明白，其实孩子们可并不像我们想象的那么傻。这样，平面就成为了另一个世界，它有了容积。而在镜子的内部——在你的身体里，也有了太阳、飞机螺旋桨的旋风，以及你颤抖的嘴唇，甚至还有别人的。你会清楚这一点区别，即冰冷的镜子起着反射的作用，而这一个镜子的世界却具有吸收的作用，万事万物在此处皆有痕迹。比方说，你偶尔在某个人的脸上看到了一道难以辨别的皱纹，此后，这个印象就会永远留存在你的记忆中。再比方说，有一天，你听到了水滴落的声音，也许你如今仍然记得那个余音……”

“是啊，就是这样的。”我使劲抓住他的手。我确实曾想起水龙头滴答的滴水的声音。我对它太熟悉了，以至终生难忘。

“但是，我怎么就突然有了灵魂了呢？为什么以前没有，而如今却……为什么没听说别人有，而我却……”我更加用力地捏住了他的手，害怕就此失去了线索。

“为什么？哦，为什么呢？人类没有羽毛也没有翅膀，而我们却有翅膀底下的肩胛骨呢？因为我们有飞行器，翅膀对于我们没有任何用处，它只会碍事。翅膀是用来飞翔的，但是，我们还能飞往何处呢，我们已经飞到了目的地了。你明白我的意思吗？”

我似懂非懂地点了点头。他瞧了我一眼，随之便尖厉地笑了起来，声音像手术刀一样锋利。另一个医生被我们的谈话所吸引，粗壮的短腿走出了自己的办公室，朝我们这边走了过来。他用牛角般的眼睛挑了那位医生一下，又挑了挑我。

“怎么回事？灵魂？你们居然谈起了灵魂？该死！这样下去我们可能要得这种传染病了。我曾经说过（他又挑了剪刀嘴大夫一眼），我认为最好是摘除掉所有人的幻想.....这很容易，只需要做个外科手术就可以了，只有手术能够解决.....”

他戴上了一副很大的X光眼镜。仔细观察了我好一阵子，透过颅骨检查着我的大脑，边说边在本上记录。

“奇特，十分奇特！你听我说，你想做摘除手术吗？你若这样做了，将会对联合国有很大的贡献。这样会避免传染病的发生.....若是你没有特别的理由，或许.....”

如果换过以前，我会毫不迟疑地说：“我非常乐意。”但是，如今，我并没有回答他的话，而是目光盯着纸片医生，恳切地看着他。

“你还不清楚吧，号码D-503是‘积分号’的设计师。若是我们做了摘除手术，肯定会破坏.....”

“唉。”短腿医生有些遗憾地慨叹了一声，回到了自己屋里去了。

只剩下我们两个。他那薄纸似的手轻轻地搭在我手上，露出剪影般的侧脸，低声对我说：“我只跟你说，你不是唯一的那个。我的同事说这病会传染，并不是危言耸听。你仔细想想，难道你没有注意到有人也发生了跟你类似的情况？症状也很相像.....”

他目不转睛地瞧着我。他是什么意思？他指的又是谁呢？难道.....

“我跟你.....”我立马从椅子上站了起来。但是，他反而提高了嗓门说道：“.....至于你说自己患了失眠症和经常做梦，我的建议是你应该多散步。长途跋涉对你会很有帮助的。明天早上你就可以试试.....比方说，你可以一直走到古宅那里去。”

他的眼光又转向我，像要看透了我一样，脸上露着微笑。我察觉到，那个微笑里藏着的字母——是那个名字，那个对我来说非常特别的名字.....这会不会是我的幻想呢？我迫不及待地等他写好了证明书，是今天和明天两天的病假证明。接着，我便又一次紧紧握住了他的手，便快速地跑到了外面。

我觉得轻松无比，像飞船一样越飞越高.....我知道，明天会有很美好的事发生。它又会是什么呢？

笔记之十七

透过绿墙玻璃

我死了

走廊

我有些迷惘了。就在昨天，我还以为一切问题都将豁然开朗，所有x都已经有了答案，但是，在我的方程式里又出现了新的未知数。这个未知数的坐标原点在古宅那里。从这个原点延伸开去，x轴，y轴，z轴都无限延长，而由它们所构筑的世界已经侵入了我的生活。

此刻我正沿着x轴（第59号大街），朝原点方向走去。昨天所发生的一切仍然像五颜六色的风暴一样在我脑中翻卷着：那颠倒的房子和人，我那两条不听使唤的胳膊，以及发光的剪刀嘴，还有水龙头滴答的滴水声……这一切都曾存在过，它们就深陷在烤软的玻璃表层的里面，就是那个“灵魂”在的地方，在那里飞速地旋转着。

我遵照医嘱，特别选了这条路线，这不是一条斜边，而沿着直角边所走的路线。此刻我已经来到了直角上了第二道边线上，就是绿墙边上的坡路上。绿墙之外是无边的绿色海洋，那里有树根、树枝、花朵和树叶，它们所组成的气浪铺天盖地地朝我袭来，我就要被吞没了，我将从一个最精细、最精密的机器变成……

但非常庆幸的是，在我和那野蛮的绿色海洋之间有玻璃绿墙的阻隔。啊，绿墙，这是多么伟大、英明的存在啊！这是人类最伟大的发明。当绿墙被筑起时，人类终于要脱离野蛮。当我们这座绿墙竣工之时，世界终于被隔绝开来，一端是由树木、鸟兽所组成的野蛮而混乱的世界，而另一端则是机械的、完美的理性世界。从此以后，人类不再是野人。

在墙的另一边，我隐约看到了一头野兽，它隔着玻璃正傻傻地看着我，那黄色的眼睛似乎在表达某种我无法理解的东西。我们俩对看了好一阵，就像是平面世界和立体世界相互对望的两个黑洞。我甚至突然意识到：“这个黄眼睛的脏兮兮的家伙虽然身处混乱的绿色海洋之中，也

许它的生活比我们还倒快乐呢？”我举手挥了一下，黄眼睛眨巴眨巴，就转身离开了，很快就消失不见了。可怜的小家伙！我怎么会想到它比我们要幸福呢？我简直疯了！不过，也许它真的比我幸福，至少，我是个例外吧，我病了啊。

我意识到我快要走到古代房子了。因为，眼前就是古宅的朱红色院墙了，还有那个老太太合拢成一团的嘴。我飞速地朝她奔去：

“她在这儿吗？”

合成一团的嘴慢慢张开：

“她？是谁？”

“啊，还有谁？当然是I-330啦。那一次，我和她一起过来的。”

“哦，对，对。”

她瘪嘴的条条皱纹，还有眼睛周围的皱纹越来越深……她瞧着我说：“告诉你吧，她在这儿，刚进去。”

“她在这里。”这时候，我发现，在老太太的脚旁长着一丛银白色的苦艾（因为这里是史前风格博物馆，所以一切都尽量保持原貌），艾叶的枝条爬在老太太手上，她拍了拍枝条，一道金黄的阳光洒了下来。那一瞬间，我、太阳、老太太、苦艾、黄眼睛……似乎我们突然成为了一个整体，就像有某种涌动的血液让我们紧紧相连似的，那是相同的、令人热血沸腾的感觉……

写到此处，我都有些惭愧了。但是我曾保证过，无论如何，我都会袒露心迹，不做隐瞒的。那么，好吧。是的，这时候，我低下头吻了吻

老太太的嘴，那张毛茸茸的，揪成一团的软嘴。她用手擦了擦嘴，露出微笑。

我快速地踩上了楼梯，经过了那些个熟悉的、昏暗的房间。我也不知道为什么我直奔卧室而去。我快速地奔到卧室门口，手已经碰到了门把手，但是，我突然意识到：“若是不止她一个人该怎么办？”于是，我停下脚步，倾听了一会儿。但是除了我的心跳声，什么也没有听到。此刻，心已经不在我的体内了，它跑到了旁边的某个地方突突跳着。

我走了进去。看到那张大床，显然没有被动过。一面镜子，另一面镶在柜子上，锁眼里还插着那个带圆环的钥匙。屋里面并没有人。我轻声呼唤着：“I-330，你在这儿吗？”一声又一声，声音非常低，我屏住呼吸，闭上双眼，如同我正跪在了她面前般呼唤：“I，亲爱的！”仍然没有任何声响，除了水龙头滴水的声音，这声音让我非常不舒服，我也不知道是因为什么。连忙跑过去拧紧了水龙头。显而易见，她不在这儿。那么，她是否在别处呢？

我从昏暗的楼梯上走下来。走到每扇门前，我都会伸手拉一下，第一扇门、第二扇、第三扇门……每扇门都紧紧锁着。除了刚才我进入的那个“套间”之外。但是那里也没有人啊。我只得转身走了回去，我自己也不知道，我为什么要这样做。我走得很慢，脚底下似有千斤重，就像有两个铁块粘在了鞋底上。至今我仍然清楚地记得，当时我这样想着：“地心引力不变的说法是错误的。这么看来，我的那些公式……”

我的思绪被突如其来的响声打断了，这声音来自低层的那扇门，它像被用力撞开了一样。砰的一声，接着便是人飞快踩着石板跑的声音。我突然振奋了起来，身体也突然间轻快了。我连忙跑到了栏杆旁，俯下身看过去，说了一声“是你吧”，所有要说的话都包含在这里面了。

突然之间，我愣住了。在楼下的方窗格的阴影里出现的是S的脑袋和他那两只粉红色的招风耳。瞬间的一闪念，我便得出了结论：“决不能让他看见我。”这个结论毫无逻辑可言，也没有任何前提基础（到现在，我也不知道我怎么会那样想）。我踮起脚，轻轻地贴着墙走，想赶紧躲到那间没有上锁的房间里去。

我刚到门口，一秒钟后，S已经上了楼，正朝这边走来。希望门别有声响！我默默祈祷，但是木头门还是吱扭地叫了一声，真是惊心动魄！绿的、红的和黄澄澄的佛像从我身边一闪而过，我飞快地跑到柜子的玻璃镜前：一眼便看到自己苍白的脸.....我的耳朵仍然听着，我感觉到浑身血液沸腾.....门吱扭被打开了，是他，他迈过了门槛！

我猛然抓住了柜门上的钥匙，看到那晃动的圆环，我突然想起那次与I.....脑子随即便闪现出一个决定，这是一个局促的决定，它甚至是没头没尾的闪念。我猛然间打开了柜门钻了进去，随后，又紧紧地关上了门。柜子里面黑漆漆的。我迈了一步，接着脚下一晃，突然觉得自己开始慢慢地往下飘落，眼前全黑了，我要死了！

现在，当我回忆起这段奇妙的经历时，我苦苦思索，认真回忆当时的景象，我也找了一些书来找寻问题的答案。而今，我终于明白了，那是一种暂时的死亡现象。古代人都非常清楚它，但是对于我们来说，这是全然陌生的领域，我们对此一无所知。

我不清楚这种状态持续了多久，可能有5至10秒钟。反正没过多久，我就活了过来。我迅速地睁开眼。四周仍然是一片漆黑，我仍然感觉自己在下沉、不断地往下沉.....我伸出手想抓住点什么。但是我碰到了粗糙的墙面，它在飞速上升，因此我的手指流血了。很明显，这一切都是真实的，并不是我的胡思乱想而已。这是怎么一回事？

我听到自己的呼吸声，那声音在颤抖（写出这一点，我并不觉得难为情，因为这一切来得太快了，我还不清楚状况呢）。一分钟，两分钟，三分钟，我仍然在往下沉。最后，我感觉下落的地面突然停住了，它不再坠落了。当仍然一片漆黑，我试着摸索着，摸到了一个把手，我用力一推，门开了。一道昏暗的光线射了进来。同时，我身后的小平台迅速往上升去。我想抓住它，但是已经太迟了。我被落在这儿了……而“这里”是什么地方，我并不知道。

眼前是一条走廊。四周一片寂静。走廊的圆形拱顶下是一串发亮的小灯，构成了一道没有尽头的小亮点儿。这里很像某种地下隧道，不同的时候，这里要狭窄很多，也不是用玻璃建造的，而是一种很古代的材料。我突然想道：也许是某种过去遗留下来的地下通道，相传就在200年大战的时候，很多人在这种地方避难。我没法想太多，只能朝前走去。

大约走了20分钟，向右一拐，眼前便开阔了些，因为走廊变宽了，灯也变亮了。我还听到了嗡嗡的声响。但听不出是机器声，还是人的说话声。我停在了一扇沉重的不透明的门前，声音就来自这里。我轻轻地敲门。随后又使劲敲了一下。门后突然安静了。就听到“当”的一声，沉重的门慢慢地打开了。

出现在我面前的是那个消瘦的、长着剪刀嘴的医生！我不清楚，我们谁更加惊讶。

“怎么是你？”他那剪刀似的嘴随之闭合上了。我目瞪口呆地望着他，不发一言。我好像并没有听到他的话，可能他的意思是，尽快离开吧。不要待在这里。因为我发觉他在用自己扁扁的薄纸肚皮挤着我，将我挤到走廊的亮处去，还使劲推我的背。

“请问.....我只是.....我想见见她，I-330.....但是好像有人在我后面.....”

“待在这儿，别动。”医生大声地说，转身离开了.....

我终于离她很近了。她可能就在附近，她会来到我身旁，来到这里。那么，现在我身在何处又有什么关系呢？我的眼前又浮现了熟知的杏黄的丝绸，她迷人的微笑，垂着窗帘的眼睛.....我的嘴唇、我的双手、我的膝盖都不住地发颤，我的脑子居然胡乱地想：“振动会产生声波，那么，颤抖也是有声的。但是，我怎么听不到呢？”

她瞪大了眼睛瞧着我。我深深地看着她，看到那双眼睛里面去了.....

“我没法.....你刚才在哪里.....怎么会.....”

我目不转睛地盯着她看，眼睛根本没法离开她。我语无伦次地胡乱说着，就像得了神经病一样，也可能这些话只是我的想法，我并没有说出口：“有个影子.....他一直在我身后.....我死了.....从柜子里.....因为那个医生，他用剪刀嘴告诉我说，我有了灵魂.....无法救药.....我得出去散步.....”

“无药可救的灵魂！可怜的家伙！”I放声大笑，清脆的笑声将我全身都融化掉了，我突然清醒了过来。发觉周身都是或长或短的笑声的音波，闪着亮光。这实在太美了。

拐角处又出现了医生的身影。啊，多么可爱、多么伟大的纸片医生。

“怎么啦？”他来到她旁边。

“没事，没事！回头我再解释给你听。他只是偶然来到这里的。你跟他们说，我很快就过去……十五分钟左右……”

医生又转身离开了。只剩下我和她，门也重重地被关上了。I像一根尖针一样，慢慢地、逐渐扎进了我的心田，我感觉说不出的甜蜜滋味，她的肩膀、她的手，甚至她的整个身体都紧紧地依偎着我。我们如同连体人一般走着。

我已经记不清，我们在哪儿拐进了黑暗中。我也看不清她，只能随着她走着，我们沿着台阶往上走，不停地走啊走。我们都不说话，闭着眼睛，头微微朝后仰着，抿着嘴唇在静听音乐，那音乐是来自我身体的轻微颤抖。

等我终于清醒了，我才意识到自己在古宅庭院的一个隐蔽的角落里，这里还有一道围墙，在墙的上面有一些残乱的光石条，以及大小不一的黄色砖块。她慢慢睁开眼，说道：“后天16点。”说完便离开了。

这所有的事情是否是真实的？我不得而知。也许，只有到了后天，我才能知道答案。而只有一个印记是明确的：那就是我右手的几个手指尖上的蹭破的皮。但是，今天在“积分号”飞船上，副设计师明确地对我说，他亲眼所见，我不停地用砂轮蹭着了这几个手指。可能确实如此。也许吧，那么，我也不知道了。

笔记之十八

逻辑的迷宫

伤口与膏药

不会再来

昨晚我一入睡，便陷入了梦境中，我自己犹如一艘超载的船般沉没了。我的周围是寂静无声的绿色海洋，波涛淹没了我，我慢慢地从水底浮了出来。突然，我睁开眼：看到我仍在自己的房间里！天色还早，这是一个昏暗的早晨。太阳的一丝光亮从玻璃镜柜门上映射到我眼睛里，这光亮让我无法入睡，我没能完成守时戒律表规定的睡眠任务。如果我能将柜门拉开就好了。但是我像陷入了蜘蛛网里似的，没法动。连眼睛也蒙上了蛛网。

最后我费尽了力气，终于挣脱了蛛网。用力拉开柜门；突然，在柜门后面那些挂满衣服的地方，钻出来了I-330！我并没有太多惊讶，因为最近见到的奇事已经太多了。我记得当时我并没有露出吃惊的神情，也没有问什么话。而是连忙跳进了柜子，用力将门关上。随后，我气喘吁吁、用手乱摸着，急迫地搂住I。至今我还记得，当时从门缝中，我见到一道刺目的阳光，它犹如闪电一般，刺进黑暗之中，它一曲一折地映射着地板、柜壁，一直往上——直到这道光之刃落在了I洁白的脖子上.....我突然觉得恐惧，惊慌地叫出了声——我又睁开了眼睛。仍然在我的房间里。

依然是那个昏暗的早晨。柜门上映着一道太阳光。而我则好端端地躺在床上。是梦！但是为什么我的心仍然悸动着，它在战栗，它在抽搐；而我的手指尖和膝盖也隐隐作痛。这是真的。此刻，我已经分不

清，哪个是梦，哪个是现实了。在我看来，那些充满理性，没有任何疑问的三维空间中，冒出了无数个无理数，那些牢不可破的光滑表面，如今变得粗糙、毛糙、伤痕累累.....

起床铃还没有响起。我静静地躺着思索，想找出这些奇特的逻辑链条之间的关系。无论是曲线，还是任何别的形状，在平面的世界里，都有与之对应的公式。但是，我们却并不清楚这些公式所对应的是什么物体。我们甚至不曾见过它们.....但是，最不可思议的是，这些无形的物体是真实存在的。虽然我们看不见，但是它们却存在着。在数学的世界里，我们总是看到那些长相奇特的、带钩刺的身影，它们是无理数公式。数学从不会出错，这点它跟死亡一样。所以说，若是在我们的平面世界中，无法找到这些物体，这便意味着，它们存在于非平面空间，即更加巨大的世界中.....

我已经等不及起床铃响了，连忙下了床，在屋里来回踱步。到目前为止，在我最近摇晃起伏的生活中，数学是我唯一安全坚实的岛屿，但是如今，它也离开了河床，开始了浮动，还不断地打着旋。所谓的“灵魂”，到底是什么？它是不是也是如我的制服、我的靴子（它们此刻都安安静静地在玻璃镜柜里待着）一样真实的存在呢？若靴子没有病，那么，为什么说“灵魂”就是病呢？我使劲想着，怎么也没法摆脱这荒唐的逻辑迷宫。它就像绿墙之外的某种存在一样，如一座可怕的森林，如一些奇形怪状的、不可言喻的生灵。仿佛，我透过厚厚的玻璃墙，瞧见了它。它是无限大的，但同时又是无限小的，它是那个-1的平方根，又是一个长着毒刺的蝎子。是的，它不是别的什么，它就是我的“灵魂”。它也是古代神话中的那只蝎子，使出浑身力量拼命蜇着自己.....

起床铃声响起。新的一天开始了。我所感知的一切都不会消失，也不会死亡，只是被白天的日光照射着而已，就如同我们所亲眼见到的其

他东西，随着深夜的来临，它们也不会消失，仅仅是被罩上了夜的黑色而已。我的头脑中升起了某种轻雾。透过这层雾气，我见到一条条长玻璃桌，还有一个个圆脑袋，大家正在整齐划一地咀嚼食物。远处，通过节拍机传来滴答声。在这习惯的、亲切的音乐中，所有人一齐机械地数数——50。这是联合国法律规定的咀嚼一块食物的次数。随后，我跟着熟悉的节拍走下楼，同所有人一样在登记离场本子上签上自己的号码。但是，我却觉得自己同所有的人隔绝着，我仿佛只身一人；被一堵隔音的软墙隔着，墙里面才是我的世界。

但是，若这个世界只属于我，我又何必记录下这一切呢？何必写下那些关于柜子、走廊之类的荒唐的“梦”呢？我觉得很糟糕，我并没有完成一部颂扬联合国的诗韵严谨的长诗，而是写成了一部幻想小说。唉，若它仅仅是一部小说也好啊，至少不是我当下所经历的生活，那些充满着未知的X，以及-1的平方根的堕落生活。不过，可能也没有那么糟！我的那些素不相识的读者们，同我们相比，你们仅仅是儿童而已。我们毕竟是由联合国哺育长大的，而我们也已达到了人类所能达到的最高水平。而你们毕竟是儿童，你们一定非常乐意吞下这丸被幻想小说外衣所包裹的苦药。

同一天傍晚

你们有过这样的经历吗？乘坐着飞船在天空中盘旋上升；舷窗开着，风呼呼地刮进来，掠过你的脸颊。此刻，你离大地越来越远。你甚至忘记了它的存在，因为大地像土星、木星和金星一样遥不可及。此刻我就是这样的感觉：狂风朝我袭来，我不记得有大地，不记得有可爱的O。但是，大地还在，虽然暂时离它远去，但是早晚我会回来。我只能闭上眼睛，不去看登记表上O-90该出现的日期。

今天晚上，遥远的大地向我证明它确实存在。遵照医嘱（我非常乐意，并且真心实意地希望自己康复），我独自一人沿着空荡荡的玻璃大街上散步了整整两个小时，按守时戒律表的规定，所有人都在礼堂里，除了我.....实际上，这是一种反常的现象。设想一下吧，若是一根手指，远离了其他手指，它被从一只手上割了下来。它只得孤零零地沿着玻璃人行道，弯着腰，独自奔跑。这多么奇怪、多么反常啊。而我就是这根手指。但是，更为反常的是，这根手指竟然不想跟其他的手指待在一起。它宁愿孤独，或者.....是的，我确实这样想，或者跟她待在一起，挨着她的肩膀，握紧她的手指，将自己的整个身心融入其间。

天色已黄昏，我才返回家中。此时，晚霞的余晖笼罩着玻璃房上，也笼罩着电塔的金色尖顶，以及那些说笑的号码脸上。这太奇怪了！晚霞的余光与早晨初升的阳光的照射角度完全一致，但却产生出完全不同的效果，晚霞总是让人心生宁静，甚至有些苦涩，而晨光——则是充满生机的。

当我来到楼下前厅时，控制员U从一堆映着霞光的信件里，找出了一封信，交给了我。我再次重申一下，U是一位令人尊敬的女性，我确信，她对我只怀有诚挚的感情。但是，每当我见到她如鱼鳃般的脸颊，我就觉得不是很痛快。

U伸出瘦干的手将信交给我，同时，她轻轻叹了口气。这一声叹息，只是微微拂动了一下我与世隔绝的窗帘，我的整个身心都集中在这封信上，我甚至捏着它手指发抖。我相信这一定是I写给我的。

接着，我又听到了一声更重的叹息。这次，它引起了我的注意，我抬起头来，将目光盯在了鱼鳃脸颊和那因羞涩而低垂的眼睑上，她露出一个温柔、有点哀伤的微笑，随后说道：

“可怜，真可怜啊！”随后又是一声加重的叹息，随后，她似不经意间朝信瞥了一眼（按照规定，她当然已经看过了信的内容了）。

“什么？.....你怎么会这么说？”

“不是的，亲爱的，其实，比起你自己，我更加了解你。我早就注意你了。其实，你需要一个比你更有生活经验的人，这样的人才能更好地陪伴你。”

她又一次微笑，这微笑像一贴膏药一样贴满我的全身，而那创伤自然来自我手上的信。随后，她害羞地低声说：“我再想想，亲爱的，容我再考虑一下。相信我，如果我有足够的勇气.....”

伟大的全知全能者啊！她刚才到底在说什么？.....莫不是她想要.....

我有些头晕目眩，眼前好像有成千上百根正弦曲线，我的手颤抖个不停。我连忙走到墙旁的亮处。阳光越来越暗，有些悲伤地洒在我身上、地板上、手上以及信笺上。我飞快地拆开信，迅速扫了一眼签名：我的心裂开了一个口子：信不是I的，而是来自O。在信页的右下角有一滴已经化开的墨水渍，墨水渍，这又是一个伤口。我顶厌恶墨水渍了，不管是墨水渍还是其他别的什么，我都无法忍受。如果是以前，这样的墨渍最多让我感觉不快。但是，如今，这个灰色的墨水渍却像一块乌云一样，逐渐弥散开，越来越浓，越来越黑，这到底是怎么了？难道又是“灵魂”在起作用？

信的内容是这样的：

你懂得……或者，你并不明白……我向来不大会写信。但是，我也顾不得这些了。现在你懂了吧，没了你，我没法再活下去了，我不再有光明，不再有春天了，因为R，他其实……当然，这跟你也许无关了，虽然是这样，我还是对他感激不尽。最近这些时日，若没有他，我真不知道该如何是好……最近这些日子，我觉得仿佛过了十年，不，可能是二十年。我的房间也变了样，它不再是四方形的了，而是变成了圆形——没有尽头，我一遍遍地转圈，转了一个又一个，总没有个头，一扇门都没有，我甚至找不到出口。

我不能失去你，因为我爱你。我知道，我没法再跟你在一起了。我深知，现在世上你只需要那个女人。所以，就是因为我爱你，我不能再……

大概需要两三天的时间，我才能将那个破碎的我缝合起来，能恢复一些过去的O-90的样子。到时候，我会亲自提出申请，将你从我的名单上剔除。这样你就会觉得舒服一些。你也会得到你想要的幸福。我不会再来了。

永不再见了。

不会再来。这当然很好，她说得没错。但是她为什么要这样呢？为什么呢？

笔记之十九

第三级的无限小

鼓额头的人

越过栏杆

她说“后天见”。她是在哪里说的这句话。是在那个走廊里吗？那个亮着一串小灯的昏暗的走廊里.....好像不是那里。应该是.....对，在古宅院子里，那个隐蔽的角落里，她说的那句话。那么，“后天”，也就是今天。我眼前的一切都插上了翅膀，时间仿佛也在飞，“积分号”也插上了翅膀，推进器已经安装完毕，今天我们还对它进行了无负载的试验。那轰鸣声是多么震撼啊！又是多么美妙动听啊！在我看来，那每一声轰鸣都是对她的敬礼，对那个我心中的唯一的敬礼。

在进行首次喷发实验时，有12名工作人员站在那儿，当轰鸣声音响起时，他们便化为了焦灰。仅有的一些残屑证明他们曾存在过。这时候，我非常骄傲地宣布：这个意外事件并没有影响我们的工作情绪，没有人因此而退缩。机器仍然在照常运转，没有任何偏差，仿佛一切都不曾发生一样。12个号码，只是占据了联合国10亿分之一的份额。这个数字，若应用在数学领域，仅仅是三级数的无限小而已。所谓的怜悯之心只有古代人才会有，他们之所以会这样，完全是出于对数学概念的无知和轻视。这当然十分可笑！

同样地，我也觉得自己很可笑：就在昨天，我竟然因为一团微不足道的污渍而耿耿于怀，这太荒谬了！这都是镜面软化的表现，所谓镜面

就应该像墙面一样坚韧，如钢铁般坚硬才对。写到此处，我立即想到了一句古代谚语：“用鸡蛋来碰石头”。

16点钟。我没有去散步，因为，她可能会出现。我并不想因此而错过与她会面的机会。而此时的太阳光也很刺眼。

我，应该是玻璃大楼里唯一的一个人。透过洒满阳光的玻璃墙，我朝外望出去，我的上下左右，全是一个个空房间，它们长得也一样。放眼望去，如同一面面镜子一般，互相照射着。只有在浅蓝色阴影投射下的灰暗楼梯上，有一个身影，她是灰色的，瘦弱的，此刻正在往上走着。我甚至听到了脚步声。透过门，我看出：一贴膏药似的微笑渐渐靠近了。而过一会儿，这个影子转到了另一条楼梯上，走了下去。联络机突然响了。我连忙奔了过去，那白色的显示屏上出现了一个我不认识的男性号码！

电梯门打开了，首先映入眼帘的是额头——他的额头突出，身材高大，歪戴着一顶帽子，而眼睛……长得有些奇怪，令人望而生畏。仿佛它们在说话。

“她给你的信（这声音是从突出的额头下传上来的）……她要求你必须……按照信上的话去做。”

说完，他转头看了一眼周围。没有别人，“快点接信呐！”

他将信塞给我，转身走了。

只剩我一个人。不，不是的。还有她。信封里有一张粉红票，我甚至闻到了她身上的味道，那淡淡的香气。快看信，看看她说了什么。我迫不及待地开始看信，怎么可能呢？我又看了一遍，上面只有短短的三

行字：“粉红票子……请你务必要放下窗帘，就像我真的在你那里……一定要让他们这么认为……非常对不起……”

我将信撕碎了。我见到了镜子里那个我，他皱着眉，眉毛都要拧成几段了。我拿起粉红票子，想也撕碎了。但是，我的脑海中突然听到了那句话：“她要求你必须……按照信上的话去做。”我的手松开了，胳膊耷拉着，票子依然好端端地在。不得不承认，她比我强大，我只能照她说的做。但是……也未必吧。再等等吧，反正时间还早。

票子仍然待在桌子上。我看到镜子中的自己，那纠结地拧成几段的眉毛。我怎么没想到去开一个医生证明呢。我真想出去散散步，沿着那绿墙使劲走，使劲走。等走到筋疲力尽了，我就回去瘫倒在床上——一动不动，就这样睡去也好……但是，我必须赶到13号礼堂去。我必须控制住自己，默默地坐上两个小时！我只能一动不动地坐着，但是，我心中想做的是吼叫和用力跺脚！

讲课开始了，太奇怪了，今天的机器演讲者的声音变了，不再是金属般富有节奏的声音，而是软绵绵的、毛茸茸的，还有点苍老的声音。哦，这是个女人的声音，她的形象在我的脑中一闪而过，她弯着腰，瘪着嘴，满脸皱纹，就像古宅门口的那个老太太。

古宅……一想到它，我就热血沸腾，思绪一下子充斥着我的头脑，如喷泉一般。我一定要控制住自己，以免我会喊叫起来。那软绵绵、有点苍老的声音充斥着我的耳膜。我只听到儿童和儿童学的话。我就像照相感光板一样，将眼前的景象，精确无比地印刻了下来：金色的镰刀（应该是扩音机上的反光），还有个孩子，作为实物……他正向扬声器的方位挪过去。嘴里咬着制服的衣角，小拳头握着，大拇指按着，胖乎乎的手上有肉褶。我仍然精确无误地印刻下这一切：那孩子的一条腿露

了出来，伸到了桌子的外边，五个脚趾像小扇子一样张开着……眼看，他就要摔下来了！

此时，我听到了一声尖叫。这是一个女性号码的声音，像扇动着翅膀一样，她飞到了台上，护住了孩子，嘴唇吻到了孩子手腕上的肉褶，孩子被挪到了桌子中间，她便转身走下了台。以下的场景也同样印刻在了我的脑海中：那粉红的、如新月般的嘴唇，还有泪汪汪的蓝眼睛。原来是O。我很轻松地找到了这个因果公式的答案，觉得这实在是件太无关紧要的小事。

她坐在我左手边，位置稍稍靠后一些。我回头看了她一眼。她不声不响地将眼光从孩子的身上移开，转向了我，目不转睛地看着我。因此，她、我与台上的桌子又形成了三个点，我迅速将三点连成三条直线，觉得这是某种未知的事件的映射。

我走在幽暗的、暮色浓重的街道上，走向通往回家的路，路灯仿佛是一只只眼睛，不断地盯着我瞧。而我则化身为钟表，不停地滴答作响。我感觉我身上的指针，就要脱离钟摆的控制，再这样走下去，我将没有任何退路了。她要让某个人认为她跟我在一起。而我只要她，至于她需要些什么，又跟我有什么关系呢？我不想一个人待在窗帘后面——我不乐意，就是这样。

身后传来了熟悉的踩水洼的声音。我用不着回头，一定是S。他没准会一直跟着我走到大门口，然后可能就在人行道上盯着看，想着用他钻头般的眼睛钻进我的屋里来，直到我放下窗帘。

他是我的守护天使吗？不是的。我已经想好了。我进了房间，打开灯。我以为我看错了，我实在不敢相信：居然O赫然站在我的桌子

旁，“站”似乎不准确，应该说是“挂”。她就像一件衣服那样挂在那儿。衣服里面仿佛没有了肉体，只有单薄的衣服架子，她的手脚都没有了弹性，直挺挺地站在那里。

“我过来是想问问，你收到我的信了吗？你收到了吧！我需要知道你的答复，今天必须要给我答复。”

我耸了耸肩。我很喜欢看她充满泪水的蓝眼睛，仿佛是她做错了事。我犹豫着，不知道该说什么好。后来，我挑衅地说道：“答复？要什么答复？……你信里说的，都是对的。”

“那，好吧……（她笑了一下，想用这个笑来掩饰她的颤抖，但是被我发现了。）好！我马上……马上就走。”

她并没有走，而是靠着桌子挂在那儿。眼睛、手和腿都耷拉了下来。桌上还有I的粉红票子。我连忙将《我们》的手稿打开，盖住了粉红票子。我这么做，只是不想让自己看到它，并不是因为O。

“看，我仍然在写着。已经完成101页了……里面还有一些意外的事……”

她默默地接着说道：“你记得吗？……在第7页上……我还洒了些墨渍……”

她的蓝眼睛里已经盛满了泪水，它们急匆匆地迅速滑落到了脸颊上，接着，快速的语句也跟着泪水溢了出来：

“我无法忍受了，我立刻就走……我以后不会再来了……但是，我仍然希望，我一定要有你的孩子。我必须要！你给我留下一个孩子，这样，我不会再来！”

我看到了她的身体在颤抖，制服也随之抖动着，我突然感到，我也要.....我将手背到身后，笑着说：

“怎么？难道你想尝尝死刑机的滋味吗？”

她的话如决堤的洪水般涌了过来。

“我不在乎。我只是想感觉，感觉到他在我的腹中，哪怕就几天也好.....只要能看到，只有一次也好，看到他手上的小褶子，就像今天在礼堂看到的那个孩子。哪怕只有一天，我也乐意！”

三个点：她、我，还有桌上那带肉褶的小拳头.....我想起了我的小时候，有一次，我们被带去参观电塔。当塔的顶端，我探身往下看，看到下面的人都成了小点点儿。那时候，我的心里突然发紧，但是又很激动，我想着：“如果我跳下呢？”但是，手却抓得更紧了。而如今，我却真的要跳下去了。“你真的想这样吗？你要清楚.....”

好像怕被阳光照到，她闭上了眼睛，而脸上却洋溢着欣喜的微笑。

“是的！我想这样做！”

我迅速地从手稿下抽出那张粉红票子，这是另一个女人的票子。我飞快地跑到了值班控制室。此时O抓住我的手，喊了一声，可我并没有听清楚，直到我返回来才意识到，她说了什么。

她坐在床边上，两只手紧紧地夹在膝盖中间。

“这.....这是她的票子吗？”

“这有什么所谓？嗯，是她的。”

有个声音咔嚓一响。可能是O身子挪动的声音。她依然坐着，双手夹在膝盖中间。

“怎么了？赶紧地……”我粗暴地使劲捏了她的手腕，在如孩子般胖乎乎的肉褶旁，出现了一道红印子，大概明天就会变成青紫色……这是我最后的记忆片段……我按下了窗帘开关，思想也随之消失，一片漆黑，只有少许飞溅的火星，我从栏墙上跳了下去……

笔记之二十

放电

思想的材料

零度悬崖

放电，用这个词来形容此刻的我，再合适不过了。我觉得最近自己确实像经历了放电一样，这些日子我的脉搏变得越加干燥，感到频繁的紧张，阴阳两极越加靠近，已经出现了干裂之声，若再移近一毫米，就会爆炸——随之，便安静下来。

此刻，我的内心很平静，我仿佛待在一个空荡荡，没有一人的空间里。只有我，静静躺在病床上，我能够清晰地听到思想断裂的咔嚓声。

可能，通过这次“放电”，我的“灵魂病”被彻底治愈了。我又变得跟大家一样了，至少目前，当我想到若此刻O站在立方体高台之上，或坐在气钟罩之下时，我没有丝毫的难过。若她告发了我，我也觉得无所谓。在我生命的最后时刻，我一定会虔诚地、带着感恩之心泪流满面地亲吻全知全能者的惩罚之手。在联合国，每个接受惩罚的号码都有这个权利。我会好好享受这项权利。任何一个号码都不会，也不愿意拒绝这唯一属于我们自己的特权，他们都备感珍惜。

.....正负极的思想依然在脑海中冲突着，我仍然能听到犹如金属般的咔嚓声。我仿佛被飞船载着飞往抽象思维的蓝色高空。这里空气稀薄，在这纯净的空间中，我感觉自己“有效权利”的观念，如轮胎一样破裂了，“啪”的一声脆响。我知道，这应该是一种返祖现象，受这种现象的传染，我才会思考起“权利”来。

有的思想是黏土质的，而有的思想则是金子的，或者是由十分宝贵的玻璃雕凿而成的，它们会永存于世。若想知道某种思想的材质，只要在上面滴一滴强酸溶液就可以了。古人将这种酸液称为脱氧剂。但是他们惧怕它，他们不敢这样做。因此，他们宁愿要黏土质的思想，将它认作是人间天堂，而这其实就是孩子们的玩具罢了。而我们（要感谢全知全能者），我们是成年人，我们不玩玩具。那么，我们就来做测试吧，连那些古人当中的最有头脑者也明白：权利来自力量，只有力量才会产生权利。我们眼前有一架托盘天平：一个盘中是一克的重量，而另一个盘子里则放了一吨的重量；一克相对一吨，正如这个托盘中是“我”，而另一个则是我们，即联合国。结果很明显了，觉得“我”有某种权利，就意味着一克与一吨相等。因此，结论也就不言自明了：若要给一吨以权利，就要给一克以义务。只有这样，才能从渺小到伟大，因此，必须要忘记自己是一克，而要牢记一克只是百万分之一吨.....

你们这些面色红润、身材魁梧的金星人啊，还有这些脸皮黝黑，如铁匠般的天王星人！在这片蓝色寂静中，我感受到了你们的满腹牢骚。可是，你们不要忘记：一切伟大都源于简单至极；在所有的原理中，只有四则运算是坚固的和永恒的。因而，只有在此基础之上的道德，才是伟大的、亘古不变的。这真理是几百年来人们艰难跋涉、不畏困苦奋力攀登的金字塔的顶峰后才得到的。身处于这样的高峰之巅，你才会意识到人类内心中残存的祖先的野性，他们仍然像蛆虫一样缓慢蠕动着；身处这样的高峰之巅，你会看到O的母性、谋杀，还有褻渎全知全能者的那个狂妄的诗人，这都是犯罪，他们都犯了死罪。这才是最公正的审判，那些住在石头屋子中的古人曾抱着天真的幻想，想要的所谓公正的宣判，在这里已经出现了。在历史的某个最初阶段，这种审判曾经出现过，那就是他们的上帝将诽谤神圣教会的人处以极刑之时。

你们这些神情严肃的、有着黑皮肤的天王星人，你们很聪明，就如同古代的西班牙人一样，他们发明了火刑，你们此刻不说话，但是我知道你们与我同在。什么？肤色白皙的金星人，你们在议论，你们在说着刑讯、惩罚和回到野蛮时代的话。亲爱的星球人！我怜悯你们，因为你们远离了数学的哲理。

要知道人类历史的进程，如飞船般盘旋上升。然而圆周与圆周又有着区别：有的金色的，而有的则是血红的。但是相同的是，它们都旋转360度。从0度开始旋转，10度，20度，200度直至360度，最后又回到0度。是的，我们又回到了原点。但是对于有着数学逻辑的头脑来说，这个零已经不是之前的那个零了。这是全新的开始，我们从零开始向右出发，却从零的左边回来，负零已经取代了正零。你们懂我的意思吗？

这个零出现在我眼前，它像一条狭长的、静默的巨大的悬岩，它尖如利刃般矗立着。在黑暗的夜色之中，我们屏住呼吸，离开了零度悬岩

黑夜的这一边。经历了几百年，我们这些哥伦布们不断地远航.....我们环绕了整个地球，最终，我们得胜凯旋！众人爬上了桅杆，喜悦地看着眼前这个全新的零度悬岩。它笼罩在联合国的北极光中，这里漂浮着浅蓝色的浮冰，有彩虹，也有太阳，闪着光，明亮刺眼。仿佛有几百个太阳，几亿道彩虹.....

仅仅一把刀子的厚度，就将我们与零度悬岩的黑暗隔开，这是怎么回事呢？刀刃是人类的杰作，它是最坚固、最不朽、最充满灵性的天才之物。刀是断头台的主角，刀是斩断困境的极致工具，刀刃切开的是谬误邪说，而无畏的思想之路正如同刀刃一般.....

笔记之二十一

作者的责任

膨胀的冰

难捉摸的爱

昨天是她应该出现的日子，但是，她依然没有出现，又派人送了一张纸条给我，上面潦草地写了几个字，含糊不清。但是我内心却十分平静，没有一点波澜。我依然照她信中吩咐的去做，将她的粉红票交给了值班员，获得准许之后，便放下窗帘，独自一人待在屋里。我之所以这么做，并不是因为我没法忤逆她的意。仅仅是因为，窗帘能将一切隔绝

开来，这一切包括那如膏药般的微笑，敷衍的话语。只有这样，我才能安静地完成我的笔记。当然，还有一个原因是，我不想失去解谜的钥匙，即I-330，只有从她那里，我才能找到答案，像柜子之谜，以及我的短暂死亡等等。因为这是我的责任，作为笔记的书写者，我必须要将这些未知数解开。况且，人并不喜欢未知数。所谓智人，只有当他的语言符号中，不存在问号，只有惊叹号、逗号和句号的时候，人才是完美的智慧化身。

我觉得身为记事作者，我有责任解开谜团。因此，在今天16点的时候，我坐上了飞船，前往古宅。当时风很大，也很急，飞船非常艰难地前行着，就像眼前是一座密林，很多的树枝不停抽打着船身，让它寸步难行。而下方的城市，却像被蓝色的坚冰垒筑而成的。突然，眼前出现了云，飞掠而来，将城市遮挡住。接着，冰层膨胀，变成了如铅块般沉重的存在。就像春天，你站在岸边看河面的冰层，眼看着它就要断裂、破碎了。可是，一分钟之后，它仍然毫无动静。接着，又过了一分钟，它还没有动，但是你的心却怦怦跳，一直跳个不停，而且越跳越快.....不过，我为什么要这样写呢？怎么会有这么奇怪的感受呢？事实上，我们所生活的世界是那么坚固、透明，又恒久不变的，怎么会有破碎呢？

古宅门口并没有人，我沿着房子的四周走了一圈，终于，在绿墙附近找到了看门的老太太。她支着手掌来挡日光，朝上看着。在墙的边缘，有几只小鸟盘旋着，它们长得像尖三角似的，边叫边俯冲过去，胸脯冲撞到了无形的电压网，它们跌了回去，不断抽搐着。

在她深深的布满皱纹的脸上，我见到瞬间闪现的阴影，她飞快地看了我一眼，便说道：

“谁也没有，谁都不在那！所以，你不必来。是的.....”

我不必来？这种说法多么奇怪啊，为什么就认定我是某个号码的影子呢？应该是你们所有人都是我的影子才对！难道不对吗？我将你们所有人都写进了记事本里。你们住进了那个过去是一页页四方形的空白纸上。若是缺了我，那些由我引路在一页页文字小路中行走的人们，能遇见你们吗？当然，这些话我并没有说出来。经验告诉我，最痛苦的是让人怀疑自己是否真实存在。因此，我便板着面孔告诉她，她的任务只是给来人开门。于是，我顺利地进了院子。

院子里空无一物，没有一点儿声息。墙外的风声犹在，但似乎已经远去了，就像那天的情形一样。我仍然记得那天，我们从走廊里出来，两人肩并肩，合二为一的情况——如果那确实存在的话。我来到了石砌的拱门下面，脚步声通过潮湿的拱顶回荡着，接着又落到了我身后。我觉得似乎有人跟着我。眼前是露着红色小砖头的斑驳的墙壁，通过墙面上的眼睛，也就是它的方形窗户，它观察着我的一举一动。看着我打开吱扭作响的谷仓门，看我左顾右盼地研究那些角落，以及各处的通道……我仔细看了看围墙上的门，门外是一片荒地——这里有二百年大战的纪念碑，地上还有东倒西歪的砖石斜脊，墙基上还有裸露的黄砖，以及古代炉灶，上头还有个烟囱，看起来就像一艘永恒的舰艇化石，停泊在此处。

这些黄砖，我记得在哪里见过它们，但是我实在想不起来了。此刻我就像透过水层，看到了水底的东西一样。我开始四处搜寻：我跌进坑里，摔倒了，脚下是绊住我的石块，生锈的铁条钩住了我的衣服，我汗流浹背，咸涩的汗水进入了我的眼睛。

没有，我没有发现从地下走廊到地面的出口——什么也没有。不过，可能这样更好一些，这至少表明，所有的一切都是我的荒唐的“梦境”。

我已经没有力气了，我直起身来，带着满身的蛛网、尘垢，疲惫地推开了围墙门，准备回到大院里去。突然，我听到了身后轻轻脚步声，还有类似踩水般的声音。S出现在了 my 面前，依然露出他那粉红色的招风耳和佝偻的身形。

他眯起眼，小钻头直接钻进我的眼中，问道：

“你在散步？”

我没有应声。我的双手真够重的。

“怎么样，你觉得好些了吗？”

“是的，谢谢你。我快要健康如常了。”

他不再问了，而是抬眼往上望去，头仰着，第一次，我见到了他的喉结。

在不远处的上空，大概离我们头顶五十米的地方，有飞船。它们飞得不高，也很慢，每架飞船上都有一支长筒观察镜。我看出这是安全卫士局的飞船。与往常不同的是，今天数量很多，足有10架到12架之多（非常抱歉，我只能说个约数）。

“怎么会有这么多？”我大着胆子问了一句。

“怎么？嗯.....通常好医生都是在病人还没有患病的时候，就开始准备治疗了；而事实上，可能病人要明天、后天，或者一星期后才会生病。这是有效的预防！”

他点了一下头，便啪嗒啪嗒踩着院中的石板离开了。临走前，他转

过头来，侧着身子说道：“小心！”

剩下我一个，一切又安静了下来，我感觉到空洞。绿墙之外，鸟儿依然在盘旋，凉风阵阵。他为什么这么说？我乘坐飞船，在空中飞行。云彩的阴影投射过来。底下是蓝色的屋顶，还有如冰层般的玻璃立方体，慢慢地，它们又变成了铅色，日益膨胀.....

傍晚

我再次拿起笔，我想将那快要来临的伟大的一致日记录下来，写写我的想法，我觉得这些想法对你们，即我的读者们是非常有好处的。但是当我静静地坐下来书写的时候，我发觉，我没法写它。此刻，我只是静静地倾听风的拍打玻璃墙的声音，我忍不住四处张望了一番，似乎在等着什么。等着什么呢？连我自己也说不清楚。只是，当我见到红棕色的鱼鳃来到我屋里的时候，我非常高兴。这是真的，我很庆幸此刻她过来了。她坐了下来，认真仔细地将制服的褶皱扯平，随即给了我一个熨帖的微笑，这微笑迅速蔓延我的全身，我觉得很舒服，就像古代的婴儿一样，被牢牢地粘紧在襁褓里。

“你知道吗，今天，当我走进教室（她工作的地方是儿童教育工厂）的时候，就看到墙上的漫画。我没有说谎，他们居然把我画得像条鱼。可能，我确实.....”

“不不，不是这样的。”我连忙对她说。（其实，如果仔细看她的话，你会觉得并没有什么地方长得像鱼鳃。这点是确定无疑的，至于我以前在笔记中提到的鱼鳃之类的话，是不严谨的。）

“嗯，其实说到底也没有什么大不了的。但是，你要知道，这样的行为，的确很不好。因此，我就报告给了安全卫士们。我很爱孩子，我

认为，最伟大的，也是最难能可贵的爱就是严酷。你明白吗？”

当然。她说的话跟我的想法非常相似。我忍不住将记事二十章中的内容读给她听，这段开头的那句是：“思想依然在脑海中冲突着，我仍然能听到犹如金属般的咔嚓声……”我感觉到她红棕色的脸颊正在发颤，她离我越来越近，愈来愈向我凑近过来，此刻，她瘦削的甚至有些扎人的手指正放在我的手里：“交给我，请将这个交给我！我要抄下这些话，让孩子们背下来。跟那些外星人相比，我们更加需要它。此刻需要，今天、明天、后天都需要。”

她环顾四周，随后压低声音说道：“你知道吗？听说，在一致日那天……”

我猛地站了起来：“什么？听说了什么？一致日会怎样？”

那道舒适的围墙消失了，我自己仿佛被猛然抛到了外面，狂风在肆虐着，乌云越压越低……

U沉稳而决然地搂住了我的肩，我意识到她的手指也在微微颤抖，她被我的激动情绪所感染了。

“先坐下来，亲爱的，别激动。什么话没有呢？我们未必都要相信啊。再者，只要你愿意，那天我会陪着你的，我会和你在一起的。亲爱的，其实，你也是个孩子啊，只要你需要……”

“不不，”我连忙摆着手说，“不必这样！千万不要这样。你真的觉得我只是个孩子，认为我没法一个人……不是的！”（必须说实话，那天我还有别的打算。）

她笑着，那笑容的意思好像在说：“呵，多固执的孩子！”她又坐下

了，耷拉着眼睛。手又开始不住地摆弄制服裙上的褶皱。又用出乎意料的语调说道：

“我想，我已经决定了……为了你……但是，请你，请你，不要催促我，我还得再想想……”

我并没有催促她。虽然我心里面清楚，我可能是幸运的，也深知若能让别人在晚年感觉幸福，我也会非常荣幸的。

……做了一夜的梦。那个奇怪的翅膀不断拍打着我，我用手护着头，躲着它。接着又梦到一把椅子，它居然能蹦，像马一样。它长得怪模怪样的，类似古代的木椅。我骑着这把椅子跑啊跑，最后跑到了床上。我很喜欢这把椅子，虽然坐在上面并不舒服。

太奇怪了，就不能想出什么办法来消除梦境吗？或者哪怕让它变得理性一些，至少要让它对健康发挥些作用吧。

笔记之二十二

凝固的波浪

一切都在完善之中

我是个细菌

若你此时站在岸边，阵阵波浪带着节拍向你扑来，退去、扑来……突然，波浪静止了，它不再涌动，而是凝固住了，这是多么反常啊。若是某一天我们正依照守时戒律表的规定散步，突然散了队形，乱了阵脚，被迫终止，使得一切都显得混乱而失控。上一次发生类似的事件是在119年以前：一块巨型陨石从天而降，它滋滋燃烧着滑进了队列之中。昨天就差点出现这样的情况。我们跟平常一样，步伐整齐地在散步。那情形跟亚述古迹上雕刻的战士们相类似，1000个脑袋，仿佛是一个人一般，甩动着速率统一的两条腿和频率相同的两只手。在街道的尽头，蓄电发出令人畏惧的轰鸣声。从那里走过来一个四方队形：队列的四周都是卫兵，在方块的中间有三个穿制服的号码。但他们的胸章已经被摘掉了。我们十分清楚发生了什么。高塔顶端有一只巨大的钟，它高耸入云，从底下望上去就像一张脸，一分一秒地向下吐出时间来，傲然地等着。此时是13点06分，四方形队列有些骚动。迎面走来的人靠得很近，我能看得十分真切。我一下便记住了那个青年的细长脖颈，还有太阳穴上鼓起的血管，它们就如同一个神秘世界的河流分支。而这个神秘莫测的世界，就是这个青年。他好像看见了我们队列中的某个人，只见他蹠起脚，伸着脖子张望。一个卫兵用电鞭子抽打着他，他的后背上闪出蓝色的火花，他便如小狗一般尖叫了起来。接着，每相隔两秒钟就能听到清脆的抽打声，随着而来的是一声尖利的叫喊。如此循环……我们依然一板一眼地步伐整齐地散步。我看见火花迸射时闪现的优美曲线，心想着：“人类社会在不断前行，永无止境。古代人所用的鞭子多么难看啊……而我们的却如此地美……”

突然，如同一个脱离了轨道的螺母，从我们的队列中跑出一个女人，她瘦弱的身形结结实实地扑过去，并喊道：“住手！不要再打了！”她径直冲向了四方形队列。如同119年前的那枚陨石一般；散步的队列被迫停了下来，凝固了，就如蓝色海浪被寒流冻住了一样。我和其

他人怀着同样的心情看着她。她此时已经不是号码了，而是一个人，她此时所做的是对联合国的侮辱。但是，她突然转过身，将腿向左边扭了一下。这个动作使我一下子认出了她。是她，是那个我再熟悉不过的身体，如鞭子般柔韧，我的眼、我的唇，我的手都触碰过它。当时我非常肯定就是她。

两个卫兵朝她奔了过去，他们试图抓住她。在如镜面般明亮通透的马路上，他们就要抓住她了。她就要被他们抓住了。我的心猛地一跳。我已经来不及思考什么了：这样做是对还是不对，是合理还是不合理——我直接冲了过去.....

几千双惊恐万分的眼睛直直地盯着我看，但这一举动只是让那个野性的、汗毛浓重的充满原始野性的我，更奋不顾身地冲了过去。他占据了 my 全部身体，而且越跑越快，只差两步就要追上她了，突然她一转身.....

一张雀斑点点的脸，颤抖而扭曲着，还有棕红的眉毛.....不是！天哪，不是I-330！

我兴奋极了，这兴奋来自内心压抑不住的快乐。我想喊：“不要，不要放过她！”但是，我仅仅听到自己喉咙发出了几声低语。而此时，一只手已经重重地压在了我的肩头。我被抓住了，并且被押解着朝前走。我连忙解释：

“你们得听我说啊，你们不知道，我本来以为.....”

但是我也没法解释清楚，我为什么要这样做。也弄不明白我的病症的因由，因此，我垂着头，一言不发。任凭他们押着我走.....就像一阵疾风刮落了树叶，默默地卑微地坠落着，不断飘落的时候，它仍然想抓

住每一根靠近它的熟悉的枝条。我就是这片树叶，想抓住每一个身旁的物体，那些球形的脑袋，那屋墙的透明玻璃，还有那蓄电塔上的蓝色指针。

而今，当厚重的帷幕要将我与世界隔绝开来的时候，我突然见到了一个熟悉的身影。他正沿着镜面般的人行道快速走过来，那个有着大脑袋和一对粉红色招风耳的人。他用我所熟悉的、扁平的声音说道：

“我有义务在此证明，号码D-503有病，他不能控制自己的情绪。而且，我确信，他只是因为不满……”

“对的，就是这样。”我连忙接着说，“我当时还喊了‘抓住她！’”背后有人说道：“你什么都没说。”

“但是我确实是想喊的，我可以向全知全能者起誓。”

一根黑色冰冷的尖锥钻进了我身体里，足有一秒钟。我也不知道他是不是相信我说的话，可能，他觉得我说的（差不多）是真话，或者他还有其他的原因，想先放过我一次。反正，最后写了张条子，交给了那个卫兵。因此，我自由了。也就是说，我又被那些整齐划一的、不见首尾的亚述人队列所包裹了。

而那个四方阵，和它们所押解的雀斑脸和太阳穴，拐过街口了，就消失不见了。我们的队列继续整齐划一地走着。这是一个有着百万个脑袋的身躯，它的每一个细胞都有着充满理性之美的快乐。它体内的号码们就跟分子、原子或者细胞一样，为成为它的一分子而欣喜若狂。

古时候的基督徒，想必也有跟我们相类似的感受。他们是我们唯一的祖先，虽然他们非常不完美，当他们仍然懂得：顺从即为美，骄傲自

满则是罪，“我们”为上帝所造，而“我”则来自于魔鬼。

如今，我也和大家一样步伐整齐，但又有些不一样。经历了刚才的情感，我还在不断发抖，就像一列古代火车刚通过的大桥，余颤不断。我感觉到了自己。但是，我过去仅在被风迷了眼睛、手指感染和患牙痛的时候才会感觉到自己，意识到个性的存在。所以，这就十分清楚明白了，有了个性的人就得了病。

也许，我再也不是一个认真地、平静地吞食细菌（有蓝色太阳穴和雀斑脸的细菌）的吞噬细胞。我也成为了细菌。也可能在我们的身边，已经有了成千上万个细菌了。可能，也跟我一样，他们假装是吞噬细胞而已……

若今天发生的事，并不是很严重的话，那么，这可能仅仅是一个开始，是第一块陨石，在它后面还有很多如石头般沉重的燃烧着的巨石，如果它们就这样不断涌来，那将会怎样呢？

笔记之二十三

鲜花

晶体的融化

只要（？）

据说，有的花百年才会开一回。那么，为何就不存在千年一开的花呢？其实我并不了解这些，但是今天我却感受了一次千年一开花的情形。

我乐颠颠地沉浸在幸福之中。从房间走到值班控制员那里去。我看到了很多千年一开的花，她们争奇斗艳地绽放着。周围的一切都吐着花蕊：椅子、鞋子、金色号码牌、电灯泡、某个人的长睫毛黑眼睛、玻璃栏杆、遗失在台阶上的头巾、值班员的小桌子，还有坐在桌旁的U的浅棕色的有点雀斑的脸颊，所有的一切都变了。它们全是新的，鲜亮的，滋润的。

U接过我手中的粉红票子。在她头部的上方，我见到玻璃墙外高悬的月亮，它像挂在枝头上，发着微微泛蓝的光。我兴奋地指着月亮说：“月亮，你看到了吗？”

U抬眼看了看我，接着又瞧了瞧票上的号码，随即用她那熟悉的纯洁的动作，将裙褶弄平。

“亲爱的，你脸色很不好。看起来像是生病了，但是生病和不正常是一样的。你在作践自己，没有人会这么告诫你，没有人。”

这个“没有人”显然指的是票子上的号码。I-330。可爱的U，善良的U，你说得很对。我生病了，我还有了灵魂，我甚至成为了细菌。但是开花，开花不就是某种疾病吗？花蕾绽开的时候，它不会觉得疼痛吗？你难道不认为，精子是最可怕的微生物吗？

我重新走到楼上，回到自己的房间里。I静静地坐在宽大的软椅里。而我则双手抱着她的两条腿，头枕在她的膝盖上，我们都没有说话。一切都是静悄悄的，只能听到脉搏的跳动声……我就像一个晶状

体，在她，在I的身上融化开来。我明显地意识到，那几面将我限制在空间中的光滑切面慢慢溶解、消失。我越变越小；但同时，我又不断膨胀、越来越大，大到没有边际。因为她已经不是I，而是整个宇宙。此刻，我与这充满快乐的床边的软椅融为一体。还有，古宅门口那个亲切含笑的老太太，绿墙外的荒野的丛林，古怪的银黑色的瓦砾堆（它就像那个老太太一样打着瞌睡），还有那一扇在远处发出砰然响声的门——这一切都包容在我身上，进入我的体内，倾听我的心跳，在这美妙的一瞬间悄悄流逝。

我语无伦次地说个没完没了，我想告诉她，我是个晶体，在我身上有扇门，我觉得在这把软椅上我非常快乐——但是我说得颠三倒四，又乱七八糟。最终我只是说了一些毫无意义的废话，我只好闭上嘴，感到非常惭愧。我怎么会突然说这些话呢？

“亲爱的I，请原谅我！我不知道是怎么啦，说了这么多蠢话！”

“怎么你会觉得这是些蠢话呢？这难道不好吗？如果我们像教人们智慧一样费尽心机地花费千百年来教人们愚蠢，也许早就已经培养出了某种极其珍贵的东西了。”

“是的……”（我觉得她是对的，此时她说什么话都是真理！）

“……因为你的蠢话，还因为你昨天散步时做的事，我更加爱你了。”

“那么，你为什么要折磨我呢？你为什么不来呢？你为什么给我送来票子，为什么又让我……”

“也许，我是想要考验考验你。又或者，我要确认，你是不是会按

照我要求的那样做，完全属于我。”

“是的，我完全属于你！”

她用手捧住我的脸，试图抬起我的头。

“那么，每个诚实号码的义务呢？啊？”

她微笑着，露出那甜蜜的、锋利的满口小白牙。她坐在宽敞的软椅里，就像一只蜜蜂，既有尖刺，又有蜜汁。

是啊，义务.....我在脑海中翻阅着我的笔记：的确，记事里哪儿也没写，甚至我连想都不曾想过，而其实，我有义务.....

我没有回答。我只是快乐地同时情绪激动地微笑着（可能那个样子非常傻）。我盯着她的眼睛，从这个瞳孔看到那个瞳孔，在两只眼睛里，我都看到了我自己：我很小很小，被缩放在那仅有一毫米高的小小的彩虹房子里。接着，我又享受到了她的嘴唇和花朵绽开时甜蜜的疼痛。

联合国的每个号码体内，都有一个看不见的、轻声作响的节拍器默默跳着，因此，我们不看表，就能精确地知道时间，误差不超过五分钟。但是，现在我的节拍器停了。我不知道过了多久，我战战兢兢地从枕头下抽出带表的胸牌.....

感谢全知全能者，我还有二十分钟！但是这接下来的一分一秒又是多么微不足道！它们转瞬即逝！可是我还有多少话要对她说，我要把自己的一切都告诉她。我要告诉她O写的信，还有那个我给了她一个孩子的可怕晚上；不知怎么了，我还想聊聊我的童年，讲讲我的数学老师，还有-1的平方根的问题；以及我首次参加一致日的事，那次我居然伤心

地哭了，在这么神圣的节日，我居然因为制服上的墨水渍而难受。

I将自己的脑袋枕着胳膊，嘴角两边是又深又长的两道线，挑起的深色眉毛弯成了弓形，露出一个未知的X。

“也许到那一天……”她微微皱着眉头，停顿了一下，随即抓住我的手，紧紧捏着，说，“告诉我，你不会忘记我，你永远记得我的！”

“你为什么要这么问？出了什么事了？I，亲爱的？”

她没有回答，而是沉默着，也没看着我，她的目光穿过我望向更远的地方去。突然我听到，风从外面用巨大的翅膀扑打着玻璃墙面（当然，外面一直在刮风，只是我刚才没有注意到而已）。不知怎么地我突然想起了绿墙上那些乱飞的飞鸟。

I仿佛要甩掉什么东西似的甩了一下头。她整个人又一次紧贴着我，随后离开，短短的一秒钟，就像一架飞船着陆前的那一秒钟飞快地全力回弹时一样。

“好了，把长袜给我！快！”

她的长袜在桌子上，正好在摊开到第124页手稿旁边。匆忙之中我蹭着了手稿，稿纸散落了一地，想要将它们重新按顺序放好估计是件困难的事。最要命的是，即使我照原样弄好了，它也不可能恢复真正的秩序了。随它去吧，反正有着重重阻碍使我难以做到这个，一些尚不知晓的未知数X就横在那里。

“我不能忍受这种情况，”我说道，“你在这里，现在就在我身边，但好像你和我隔着那不透亮的古墙。透过那道墙，我能听到墙里的沙沙声，还有说话声，但是我听不清说的是什么，我也没法知道那儿有些什

么。我没法再忍受下去了。你好像有什么事情瞒着我；你从来没告诉过我，那次在古宅我究竟到了什么地方，那些长廊通往何处？那医生怎么会在那里？也许这一切从来都没有发生过？”

I-330将手搭在我的肩上，慢慢地、深深地看进我的眼睛：

“你想知道这一切吗？”

“是的，我想，我很想知道。”

“你什么地方都敢跟我走？任我把你带到哪里去？”

“是的，天涯海角也可以！”

“好吧。我可以答应你，等过了节日，只要……哦，还有你的‘积分号’呢。这事我总忘了问：它快要完成了吗？”

“没有，你说‘只要’什么？”

她已经到了门口，说：“以后你就清楚了……”

只剩我一个人。她留下的只有一股淡淡的香气，闻起来很像绿墙后面的阵阵甜蜜的、干燥的黄色花粉香；此外，她还给我留下了许多的问号，这些问号就像古代人用来钓鱼的鱼钩（在史前博物馆里我看到过）。

……为什么她突然问起“积分号”呢？

笔记之二十四

函数的极限

复活节

全部划掉

我就像一台超速运转的马达，轴承已经很烫了，再过一分钟，融化的金属就会滴答滴答淌下来，整台机器就要彻底坏掉了。快浇些冷水，给我一丝逻辑吧！我一桶一桶地往上浇，但是逻辑只是在火热的金属表面发出啾啾的响声，很快就升腾成白色蒸汽，在空中消失不见了。

这十分清楚，为了给函数确立真正的意义，应该考虑设定函数的值域。非常确定的是，昨天荒唐的“在宇宙中的融化”过程的值域就是死亡。因为死亡正是自我在宇宙中最完美的溶化。因此，如果用公式表达就是，L代表爱情，C则代表死亡，那么就是 $L=f(C)$ ，即爱情是死亡的函数。

是啊，就是这样。就是因为这个，我才害怕I，我和她斗争着，我不情愿.....但是，为什么在我的思想里，“我不愿意”和“我不由自主地愿意”总是同时存在呢？最可怕的正是这一点：我不断地思念着昨天幸福的死亡。虽然我已经推算出逻辑函数，而且清楚地知道它毕竟引向死亡。但是我的手、我的胸膛、我的嘴唇，以及我肉体的每一毫米都在思念着它.....

明天是一致日了。她肯定会出现的。那样，我就能见到她了，但只能在远处看她。隔着距离，那会让我十分痛苦，因为我更希望靠近她，

我多么渴望能和她在一起，触摸她的手、她的肩膀、她的头发……即使是这种痛苦，我都十分憧憬，我愿意……让它赶快来吧……伟大的全知全能者啊！我在胡说些什么，我居然想要痛苦。这太不可思议了。谁都清楚，痛苦是负值，加在一起的负值会减少我们的幸福，这会……唉，到了现在什么都没有了……只有空虚，只有无能为力。

傍晚。

从大楼房间的玻璃门望出去，我看到一场激动人心的日落，尽管风还在刮着。我把软椅转过来，以躲避这片粉红色的霞光。我翻笔记，我发现自己居然忘了：写这些笔记不是为了我自己，而是为了你们，我的那些素不相识的读者们，我热爱你们，我也怜悯你们，因为你们至今还生活在几个世纪之前的时代。

因此，我有必要解释一下明天即将到来的伟大日子。我觉得这节日对我们来说，有点像古代人的复活节对于他们的意义。我记得，在节日前夕，我总会准备一份标着小时的时间表；每过一小时，我就认真地划掉一小时——这样就离节日越来越近了，只差一小时了，不到一小时了……此刻，我仍然十分确信的是，若没有别人看到的话，我还会随身带上这么一张时间表，随时关注离明天还差多久。

（有人来了，我的思路被打断了：刚刚缝纫工厂送来了做好的新制服——按照惯例，在一致日前夕，每个号码都会得到新制服。走廊里喧哗了起来，到处都是脚步声，还有兴高采烈的欢呼声。）

我继续往下写着。到了明天，我仍然会看到每年都会出现的动人场景。每回看到这一景象，我都会想第一次见到它时的欣喜，那是万众一心、同心同德的景象，所有人都齐刷刷地举起胳膊。明天是每年选举全

知全能者的节日。明天我们又将向全知全能者敬献上我们幸福坚固的玻璃王国的钥匙。当然了，这跟古代人那些乱糟糟的，没有秩序可言的选举完全两样。说来可笑，古代人在选举之前居然对选举结果一无所知。这太荒谬了！更荒谬的是，他们竟毫无预见，凭偶然性盲目地建设国家。但是，要让他们明白这些道理，恐怕至少要经历几百年的时间。

不用多说，我们在这件事上，就像所有发生的其他事情一样，根本不需要偶然性的出现，也不可能发生任何意外。选举本身具有的是一种象征意义。这表明我们是一个统一的、强大的由百万个细胞构成的机体，用古人《福音书》的话说：我们是统一的教会。在联合国历史上这个神圣的日子里，没有任何声音敢破坏这庄严肃穆的齐声合唱——一个也没有。

听说，古代人习惯像小偷一样，秘密地，偷偷地投选票。历史学家还指出：他们甚至会改换姓名、躲躲闪闪地参加选举，甚至还要精心化装一番。现在就来想象一下吧，这是一幅多么荒诞阴森的图景啊：深夜，在广场上，沿着墙根有一些身着黑色披肩的影子，他们蹑手蹑脚地走着，火把的红色火舌被风吹得时明时灭……为什么要这么偷偷摸摸？对于这问题，至今也没有合理的解释。也许，是因为选举总是和某种神秘主义的、迷信的，甚至可能是犯罪的仪式有关吧。而我们可没有什么需要掩饰的，我们也不觉得有什么值得羞愧的事：我们在光天化日之下进行选举，选举是公开的，坦诚的。我看着所有号码都投了全知全能者的票，所有的号码也都看着我投了全知全能者的票。难道还有什么别的可能性吗？既然“大家”和“我”，都是统一的“我们”，那就不会投给别人。与古代人的那种怯懦、猥琐的贼头贼脑的选举相比，我们的选举要更加地光明正大、更加地高尚。此外，这种选举也合理得多。为了预防那绝不可能出现的事，即在常规的单音和声里响起某个不谐和音，那些

隐身的安全卫士总是散落其中，在人群中，在各个角落里。在我们队伍里，他们寻找着那些有可能犯错误的号码，将他们导向正轨，以防止他们进一步犯错。联合国是众号码们的！最后，还有.....

透过墙壁，我看到左边有一个女性号码正站在柜门的镜子前；她匆忙地解开制服纽扣，有一秒钟的时间，我隐约见到她的眼睛、她的嘴唇，还有她高耸的粉红色的胸膛.....窗帘落了下来。接着，我脑子里又出现了昨天的情景，那一切又再度觉醒。我不知道“最后，还有”后面要接什么话。我没法写下去了。是的，我只想要她，对，我只想要I-330。我希望她时时刻刻总和我在一起——只和我在一起，不和别人在一起。而我所写下的关于一致日的内容，都是废话，刚才我写下的话，我真想划掉它，或者把它们撕成碎片，扔掉。因为我明白（就算我所说的是违背天理的话，但这也是我的心里话），只有与她同在，只有当我们俩肩并肩在一起时，才是我的喜庆节日。如果没有她，在我的眼中，明天的太阳也就是个白铁皮的圆圈罢了，而天空也只是一片涂了蓝色的大铁片，而我自己仅仅是.....

我连忙抓起了话筒：

“I，你在吗？”

“是的，我在，你怎么这么晚打电话？”

“可能还不晚。我想请求你.....我希望你明天和我待在一处。亲爱的.....”

我压低声音说出“亲爱的”这三个字，不知怎么地，今天早晨，在我看到操作台之后，脑子突然一闪：人们似乎在开玩笑，将一块表放在百吨级汽锤之下.....汽锤猛地一砸，百吨的重量轻轻地、绵软地接触到了

脆性的表.....

电话那头沉默着，我好像听到电话那边有人在同I窃窃私语，后来她说话了：

“不行，我不能这样。你也知道，我已经有了安排.....不，这不可能，我做不到。至于‘为什么’，明天你就会明白了。”

长夜漫漫。

笔记之二十五

自天而降

历史上最大的灾祸

已知的到此结束

清晨，所有号码都起床了，赞美歌如一幅庄严肃穆的幕布，悄悄笼罩着我们，音乐机器想起，几百支铜管和几百万人齐声高唱国歌，歌声震天。顿时，我忘记了一切：忘记了I说过的话，那有关今天节日的暗示性的警告，仿佛连I这个人我也忘记了。现在，我又恢复成了从前的模样，那个当年在一致日上因为一滴制服上的小墨水渍而哭泣的小男孩。虽然周围人并没有看出我身上那洗不掉的黑墨斑。但我自己心里清

楚，我是个有罪的人，不是吗？我知道在这些坦荡无私的人群中，像我这样一个罪犯是不该有位置的。唉，如果我能够站起来，尽我所能大喊着冲出去，招认我的所有罪过，那多美好！虽然我会遭殃，但那又如何，随它来吧！至少，我会有一秒钟觉得自己是天真和纯洁无瑕的，如同纯净的蓝天一般。

所有的眼睛都朝上看：清晨纯净的天空湛蓝而明澈，还闪烁着小小的夜露。但很快，它就渐渐变大了，此刻，它正沐浴在阳光之中。这是他——新耶和華，他乘着飞船而来。他和古代耶和華一样睿智，神圣又冷酷。时间一分一秒地过去，他离我们越来越近。成百万颗心一起向他扑去。他已经可以看见我们了。我觉得自己和他仿佛在同一个高度鸟瞰着这一切：那圆形的观众台上围着一圈圈蓝点的同心圆，在上面有一些细小光点（那些都是号码牌），如同蜘蛛网上的一道道丝。在蛛网的中央，有一个白色的睿智的蜘蛛，他就是全知全能者，他就要入席了。他用幸福的有益健康的蜘蛛网将我们的手脚束缚住。

壮观的全知全能者自天而降仪式结束了。管乐的颂歌暂时停止了，全体坐下。这时我立刻领悟到：确实如此，所有的一切就如同一张薄薄的蜘蛛网，它紧绷着，细细地、颤抖着伸展着，好像马上就会抻断，发生一件不可思议的意外似的……

我坐直身子，朝四周看了一遍。我看到许多双亲切的眼睛，它们带着充满敬爱而又惶恐的神情，一张脸一张脸地看过去。我看到有一个人举起了手，手指微微地、几乎难以觉察地向另一个人打手势。对方也同样打手势回答，以及……我懂了，他们是安全卫士。我知道，他们紧张不安，可能他们看出了问题。蜘蛛网绷得很紧，在颤动。我的心仿佛也被调到了同一波段，和它一起颤抖着。

讲台上，一位诗人正在朗诵颂诗，这是选举前的程序。可是我一个字也没听见，我只听到诗歌韵律富有节奏地颤动着，随着摆锤的每一次颤动，我都觉得某一个时刻越来越逼近了。我不断地在人群中搜寻熟悉的脸庞，我一张一张的脸看过去，如同翻阅一页一页的书页。但是，我一直没有找到我想见的那个唯一的脸庞。我必须马上找到她，因为随着诗歌节律的颤动，马上就.....

突然，我看到了他。他，在下面，主席台前闪闪发光的玻璃上，我见到一对粉红色的招风耳朵一闪而过。玻璃地面上映出一个佝偻的S形体。他正急匆匆地朝观众台奔去，仿佛一个绳套，正要套中某个号码。

S和I之间，依我看来应该有着某种联系。我一直觉得有一条线将他们连着，虽然到目前为止我也不清楚这到底是什么，但早晚我会弄明白的。我眼睛紧紧盯住了他。他往远处跑去，身后牵着一团线。好，现在他停下来了.....那里，我仿佛被雷电击穿了，我浑身僵直，目瞪口呆。在我这圆形横排离我仅有40度角的位置，S站住了，他弯下了腰。我看到了I-330。她旁边坐着微笑的有着厚嘴唇的R-13。

我脑海中闪现的第一个念头是，冲过去，向她质问道：“你为什么要和他在一起？为什么不想和我.....”但是，那张无形的有益的蛛网将我的手脚牢牢缠住。我咬着牙，如铁人一般沉沉地坐在那儿，一动不动，而眼睛却死死盯着他们。我感到疼痛，这疼痛来自我的心里，如针扎般。我记得当时想着：“由于非肉体原因引起的肉体上的疼痛，显然是.....”

很可惜，我并没有得出什么结论。只记得一时间脑海中闪现的都是关于“心”的想法：还有一句古代熟语叫“心惊胆战”。诗歌朗诵结束了，我战战兢兢地一动不动：这下就要开始了吧，但到底是什么呢？

按照规定，在选举前所有号码有5分钟的休息时间。这时通常总是静默的时间。但是，今天的静默显然有些不同，它不是平常的那种真正虔诚的、肃穆的平静，反而更像是古代暴风雨来临前的宁静。在古代，他们还没有发明先进的电塔，因此，天空还是会偶尔发脾气的，时常雷雨交加，狂风大作。

此刻空气像是由透明的铸铁蒸腾出的蒸汽制成。你必须大口大口地吸气。我的耳朵紧张得发疼，记录着周遭的一切声响：听到远处传来如耗子般偷偷摸摸的窃窃私语。我垂下眼睛，不用看，我就知道那两个人，I和R，他们正并肩地坐在一起，我膝盖上的两只手不断地颤抖着，那不是我的手，那么令人厌恶、那么毛茸茸的……

每个人都看着自己的胸牌，计算着时间，一分，两分，三分……五分……台上终于传来了一个铸铁般凝重的声音：

“赞成的，请举手。”

但愿我能有勇气如从前一般直视他的双眼！我能忠诚地用心呼唤：“我的一切都在这儿。一切都在这儿。我会毫无保留地献给你！请允许我投上一票吧！”但是，此刻我没有勇气。我只能极其艰难地举起手，就像所有的关节都被锈住了一样。

几百万只手簌簌响着举了起来。有人低低感叹“啊！”我觉得出事了，但是我不明白到底出了什么事，我甚至没有勇气抬眼去看看……

“反对的人请举手。”

以往，这是节日中最伟大庄严的时刻。所有人都肃穆端坐着，在这个众号码之王提供的有益枷锁下快乐地低垂着脑袋，喜不自胜。但是，

此时，我却惊恐地听到一阵簌簌的响声，这声音就如同一声喘息般轻微，但却比演奏的《联合国颂歌》的铜管乐还要响亮。那声音仿佛是一个人在生命终结时吐出的最后一口气，他周围的人都脸色苍白地看着他，额头上布满了冷汗……我抬起眼睛，看到……

只有百分之一秒就能看清楚：在这一瞬间，我愕然地看到成千上万只“反对”的手整齐地高举着，又整齐地落下。我看见了I那张打着未知数X的苍白脸颊，和她举起的手。我眼前一黑。

又是一个百分之一秒，这是死一般的沉默，只有脉搏声隐约响起。然后，就像是全场都听从一个疯子的指挥似的，看台上霎时发出了各种声响，有咔嚓声、有喊叫声，有无数制服在奔跑，如旋风一般，还有安全卫士的身影，他们惊慌失措地到处乱跑；我见到有人的一双双的鞋底在我眼前乱晃，还有使劲张着嘴，发出撕裂的喊叫声，就像正在上演的一幕幕恐怖的电影——不知为什么这个片段像刀刻般印刻在我的记忆中。

同样也像一幕电影似的，在下边远处，一瞬间，我瞥见了O，看到她面无血色的嘴唇。她紧贴着通道的墙站着，双手护住腹部。不过一眨眼，她就消失不见了，像是被浪头冲走了，或者是我干脆忘了，因为……

以下发生的事不是电影中的情节，而是确实发生在我身边，它发生在我脑子里，在我抽紧的心里，在我疯狂地跳动不停的太阳穴中。在我的左上方，R-13突然从长凳上跳了起来，他满嘴唾沫，脸色通红，如同疯子一般。他手上搂着I-330，她同样地脸色惨白，她的制服被撕裂了，从肩头到胸口，露出白皙的皮肤，皮肤上还淌着鲜红的血。她紧紧勾住了R的颈脖。而他跨着大步从一条长凳跳到另一条长凳，如同大猩猩一

般灵活，他们一同跑开。

就像古代大火灾中一样，我四周一片通红。我的心里仅有一个念头：冲过去，跟着他们，抓住他们。现在我也解释不清楚，我哪来的力气，像个冲锤似的冲开人群，踩着人们的肩膀，跳过一条条长凳，很快地，我赶了过去，我用尽力气抓住了R的衣领：

“放开她，你放开她！你敢！你听见没有，立即……”

幸运的是，没有人能听到我在喊些什么。因为所有的人都在喊叫，都在狂奔。

“谁？怎么回事？这是怎么啦？”R-13回过头来，喷着吐沫的嘴唇在发抖。他大概猜测是安全卫士逮住了他。

“我不愿意……我不乐意……马上放下她来。”

但是他只是愤愤地口吐飞沫，摇摇头，又使劲往前跑去。于是，下面我要写的事真让我惭愧，但是我必须如实记录下所发生的一切。你们，我的那些素不相识的读者们，只有这样，你们才能对我的病史做全面的研究。于是，我使出浑身力气，将拳头朝他的脑袋使劲儿挥了过去。你们懂吗，我打了他！这一点我记得十分清楚。我还记得，这一拳下去之后，我居然有种超脱的感觉，全身觉得轻松无比。

I-330一下子从他的手中挣脱了出去。

“你走吧，”她对R大声喊道，“你看不出来，他……走吧，R，走吧！”

R齙着黑人般的白牙，冲我口吐飞沫地喷出一句话，转身就消失不

见了。我抱起I，将她紧紧贴在身上，抱着她走了。

我的心使劲地狂跳，心脏膨胀变大，每跳一下，都涌出一股炽热的、快乐的波浪！尽管天塌地陷，我仿佛什么都顾不得了！一个念头在我脑中闪现：“让他们骚乱拥挤吧，就算有什么东西崩溃，有什么东西粉碎，又有什么要紧！只要这样抱着她走就可以了，只要抱着她走.....”

同一天深夜，**22**点。

我几乎握不动笔了。今天早上发生了这么多令人头晕目眩的事情，我觉得十分疲惫。联合国保障我们安全的、坚不可摧的大墙难道就这样轰然坍塌了吗？难道我们又将再次变成头无片瓦的人，难道我们还将回到远祖那样野蛮的生活状态？难道我们将永远失去了全知全能者？反对票.....在一致日居然出现了反对票？我觉得他们应该感到羞愧、他们应该惭愧自己的举动。但是，“他们”是谁？而我又是谁呢？“他们”，还是“我们”.....我清楚吗？

我将她抱上了最高一级的看台。此刻，她正坐在晒得发烫的玻璃长凳上。她从右肩一直到那美妙的、难以计算的弧线部位都裸露着，一道纤细的鲜血流在上面。她似乎对这些都不在意，这道血迹以及裸露着的胸.....不，不应该这样说。她其实注意到了这一切，但她觉得这样正合适，若她穿着整齐的制服的话，她没准会将它撕开，可能.....

“等到明天，”她使劲咬紧牙，透过齿缝深深地吸着气说，“明天，没人会知道发生了什么。你懂吗，不仅我不知道，其他人也不知道，因为它是未知的！你知道吗？这是多么值得高兴的事。我们已知的一切坚不可摧的事都已经结束了，将来.....将是全新的无法揣测的，难以预测

的。”

下面，人海还在沸腾，飞溅着浪花，吼叫着。但这一切都离我们远去了，而且愈来愈远，因为她正看着我，将我慢慢地拉进她的瞳孔的窗户里去。我们就这样互相看着，我们沉默地看着，坐着。不知怎么地，我突然想起，有一天，我隔着绿墙，也朝外看到一双莫名其妙的眼睛，那双奇怪的黄色眼睛，当时，在大墙上还有飞鸟在盘旋着（大概鸟是另一次看到的吧）。

“听着，如果明天没有什么意外发生的话，我会带你到那去，你懂我的意思吗？”

不，我不懂。但我仍然默默地点头。我已经溶化了，成了一个无限的小点，只是一个点……

但是，说到点，归根到底还有点逻辑性，一种适用于今天的逻辑：点，包含最多的未知数，只要这个点移动或微微晃动一下，它就可以变成成千上万条曲线，也可以形成几百个主体形态。

现在，我害怕移动。一旦移动，我不知道我会变成什么？我觉得，所有号码都和我一样，不敢动。

比如，此刻当我写这篇记事的时候，所有的号码都关在自己的玻璃斗室里，看事态的发展。平时的这个时间，走廊里会传来嗡嗡的电梯声、笑声和脚步声。而如今，这些声音都不见了。偶尔还能听到两个两个的号码在走廊里走着，踮着脚尖，悄悄说话，不住张望……

明天会发生什么事？明天我又会变成什么呢？

笔记之二十六

世界是存在的

斑疹

41度体温

清晨来临。透过玻璃天花板，我看到天空依然跟往常一样，那么结实，那么圆，就像红红的脸颊。我觉得我看到这块正常的天空，比看到天上有个四方形的太阳，或者看到的是披着各种颜色兽皮的人们，而四周的墙都是不透亮的砖墙都更加惊奇。这样看来，世界——我们的世界，是确实存在的。也许世界之所以存在，仅仅是因为惯性的作用，难道发动机已经关闭，而它的齿轮还在继续转动，还要再转上两圈、三圈，直到最后，它才会停下来？

你有过这种奇特的体验吗？你半夜醒来，睁开眼，发现周围一片漆黑，你发觉自己失去了方向，你只能四处搜寻，你想要寻找你所熟悉的和牢靠的东西。就是怀着这样的心情，我看到了《联合国报》，我在上面寻找，我快速地找着……找到了：

“大家翘首以待的一致日庆典昨天举行了。无数次证明自己英明智慧的我们的全知全能者获得了一致通过，连续第48次全票当选。选举庆典中出现了某些骚乱。这些骚乱分子都是反对幸福的敌人，他们破坏了庆典的美好气氛。幸运的是，他们人数很少，因为他们的行为，他们丧

失了保持作为联合国新任政权基础的普通一分子的权利。众所周知，他们的选票全部作废。就像音乐大厅里正演奏一曲雄壮的英雄交响乐时，大厅里几个病人发出的咳嗽声，我们是不会将这当成是交响曲的一部分的.....”

啊，伟大的全知全能者！这么说，我们最终还是得救了！对这段充满着透彻逻辑性的三段推理，谁还能提出异议呢？下面还有几行字：

“今天12点钟，行政局、卫生局和安全卫士局将召开联合会议。近日将制定一项重要的国家法令。”

哦，绿墙仍然屹然挺立。它们还在！我能感觉到它们的存在。至于那种失落无措的感觉，那种不知道自己身在何方的感觉，已经消失不见了。当我看见蓝色的天空和圆圆的太阳的时候，我再也不觉得有什么奇怪了，大家都像往常一样去工作了.....

我走在街上，迈着坚实有力的步伐。我觉得，身边所有的号码跟我一样，他们也迈着坚定的步伐走着。走到了十字路口，正要转弯的时候，我发现有点奇怪。每个人都绕着拐角上的那幢楼房走，就像那栋房子的墙边有条管子裂开了，水正朝外洒出来一样，人们便不得不绕着它走。

我往前走了约五步到十步的距离，我也感到有一股凉水朝我劈头盖脸浇来，也不由自主地躲到了一旁：在大约二米左右高的墙上，贴着一张四方形的纸，上面用毒汁似的绿墨水写着两个潦草的大字：

魔菲[3]

纸的下面站着一个S身形的佝偻身影，背朝着我，他的两只透明的

招风耳朵由于愤怒，或者是由于激动在发颤。他伸出了右胳膊使劲扯着那张纸，而左胳膊像一只受伤的翅膀一般耷拉着。他又蹦又跳，想方设法想扯下那张纸来。但是他怎么也够不着纸，大约差半米左右。

[3]魔菲：《浮士德》中的魔鬼魔菲斯特的简称。

可能，每个过路人都这么想着：“这里有这么多人，如果我上去帮忙的话，他可能会以为是我干的。我做贼心虚，所以……”

说实话，我也是这样想的。但是，当我想到，有那么多次数，他都充当过我的真正的护佑神，还救过我，于是我便鼓足勇气伸出了援助之手，将那张纸撕了下来。S转过身来，无数根芒刺迅疾地朝我飞了来，钻进我的心里，在那里找到了些什么。随后，他朝墙上之前贴着“魔菲”的地方眨眨眼，微笑着，那神情仿佛很高兴似的。奇怪，这让我有点受惊了。不过这有什么可奇怪的呢？医生总是想让病人出斑疹，体温烧到40度，而不愿病人在潜伏期令人心焦地慢慢地上升体温。这样才能更快地确认病情，我终于明白他为什么发笑了。

我下了地下铁道，脚下干净的玻璃梯级上又贴着一张“魔菲”的白纸。隧道口的墙上，车里的长椅上还有车厢的镜子上，到处都贴着这些白色的斑疹点。看起来是匆忙贴上去的，所以还歪歪扭扭的。

我不得不承认，在这种充满着离奇的、令人不寒而栗的事情过了几天之后，我才真正懂得了S微笑的含义。

人们都沉默着，车轮的嗡嗡声在寂静中显得分外响，就像被传染的

血液在悲鸣一般。有个号码被人无意间碰了一下肩膀，他一哆嗦，手里拿的报纸也掉了下来。我左边的一个号码正在读报纸，只见他的眼睛死死盯着一行字看个没完没了，他手上的报纸还在微微颤抖着。我感觉到周遭的所有一切（车轮，手，报纸，甚至眼睫毛）都在跳动着，而且越跳越快……没准儿今天我和I-330到那儿的时候，温度会升高到39度，40度，甚至是41度，或者更高些……

在制造台，也同样的寂静，只能听到远处我们看不见的螺旋桨的嗡嗡声。车床好像也陷入了阴沉的沉思中，默默无语。只有起重机悄悄地、蹑手蹑脚地滑动着，不时弯腰，用它们的大爪子抱起一团团冷缩的空气，装进“积分号”的货舱里去。第一次试航的准备工作已经就绪了。

“怎么样，一周之内能送她上天吗？”我问副设计师。他的脸像一个瓷盘，画着可爱的蓝色和娇嫩的粉花（那是眼睛和他的嘴唇），但是，今天这些小花好像都凋谢了，褪色了似的。我们大声数着数。突然，我在一个词上停住了，张着大嘴愣在那儿：在苍穹之上，装载着蓝色空气团的大起重机上面，隐隐约约地有一块小小的正方形白纸。我不由地颤抖了起来，大概是因为笑得太厉害了。真的，我居然感觉到了自己在笑着（你曾亲耳听过自己的笑声吗？）。

“听着，想象你坐在一架古代飞机上，高度有5000千米，突然一只机翼折断了，你头朝下栽了下去……但在坠落的过程中，你居然还在忙着计算‘明天12点到2点钟该做什么事……2点到6点该做什么事……5点钟是吃饭的时间！’这是不是很可笑呢？我们现在不正是如此吗？”我对副设计师说。

蓝花转动了起来，他瞪大了眼睛看着。幸好我不是个玻璃人，他没法看到我体内的变化。幸好他也不知道三四小时以后会发生什么……

笔记之二十七

没有提要了

我一个人待在无止境的走廊里。这条走廊我曾经来过.....就我一个人，头顶上是黯黑的天空，仿佛是水泥浇灌而成的。不知从哪里来的水滴答滴答地落在石头上。我的前面是那扇熟悉的、沉重的、不透亮的大门.....门后传出了低沉的嘈杂声。

她说过的：16点的时候出来见我。但是现在已经过了5分钟了，10分钟，甚至15分钟。她仍然没有出现。突然之间，只有一瞬间的感觉，我发觉我又变成了原来的我。一想到这扇门会被打开，就感到害怕。

“再等最后5分钟，如果她再不出来，我就.....”

不知从哪里来的水滴滴答滴答滴在石头上。仍然没有人出现。我又喜又悲，觉得自己得救了。我慢慢地转过身，沿着长廊往回走。天花板上成串的盏盏小灯在颤抖，灯光越来越暗淡。突然，我后面的门响了一声，随之是匆匆忙忙的脚步声。声音撞到廊顶和四壁，又轻轻折回空中。是她，她像一只鸟一样轻灵地飞奔而来，张着嘴微喘着说：

“我知道你会在这里，你肯定会来的！我就知道，你.....”

覆盖着浓密睫毛的眼睛，不断忽闪着，像是让我进去的意思.....她

的嘴唇印在了我的嘴唇上，这种古代的那种荒唐的，但是却令人心碎不已的礼仪。怎么来形容此刻我心灵的感觉呢？如一股狂风般席卷了一切，除了她，什么都没有留下。的确，她确实就在我心里，我说的正是我的灵魂，你们要笑就笑个够吧。

她费力地缓缓抬起眼睑，一字一顿地说道：

“好了，现在我们得走了。”

门开了。眼前呈现的是一排古老、破损的台阶。还有嘈杂的声音简直让人难以忍受，还有尖哨声，亮光.....

自此以后，一昼夜已经过去了。我的心里已经平静了下来。不过，我仍然难以用言语做出准确的描绘，哪怕大致描绘我的所见所闻也无能为力。我脑袋里仿佛有一枚炸弹瞬间爆炸了一样.....那一张张张嘴、翅膀、喊叫声、树叶、说话声、石块.....它们都纷纷涌到了我身旁，让我应接不暇.....

我记得，我的第一个反应是：我得赶紧回来。因为我发觉，当我在长廊里等待的时候，他们想必已经炸毁了破坏了绿墙。墙外的乱七八糟的东西都涌了进去，在过去，我们的城市里是见不到这些低级世界的脏物的。可能是我对I说了这类话，她居然笑了起来：

“不不！事实上是我们已经离开了绿墙，走了出来。”

我努力睁开了眼睛。果然如此，现在我面对面地、清醒地看到了我们号码们谁也不曾见过的事物，过去我们只是透过绿墙，模模糊糊地看着这些东西，它们那时被缩小了1000倍。

太阳.....不再是我们那个均匀地洒照在马路玻璃面上的太阳。这些

光点像是活生生的有着生命的碎片，它不停地跳动着放射出令人头晕目眩的道道亮光。而那些树木，它们直窜天空，像一根根笔直的蜡烛，有的还像是趴在地上的蜘蛛，用笨拙的瓜子支撑着身体，又像是无声无息的绿色喷泉……所有的一切都在运动、跳跃、沙沙作响。一个毛糙的小圆球在我的脚下，它滚动着过去了……我仿佛像被钉住了一般，一动不动——因为我脚下没有任何平坦的平面，你明白吗，而是讨厌的、软绵绵的、弯弯曲曲的、有柔韧的活生生的生物。

我被吓到了。简直喘不过气来——对，喘不过气来。这个词来形容我此时的处境最恰如其分。我站在那儿，双手紧紧抓住了一根晃晃悠悠的树枝。

“不要紧，没关系的！因为你头一次来，这一切都是正常的。勇敢一点！”

和I一起站在那跳动得令人头晕的绿色网上的，是某个纸剪的薄薄的侧影……不，不该说是“某个”，我认识这个人。我想起来了，他是那位医生。我恍然大悟，我发觉他们抓着我的胳膊，笑着拉着我往前走。我的脚磕磕绊绊，在地上打着滑……四周都是可怕的声音、乌鸦哑哑的叫声，青苔和坑洼，老鹰，还有树枝、树干、翅膀、树叶……

树林分开，眼前是一片明亮的空地。空地上站着很多人，或者更准确的说法是，很多生灵。现在我该讲述最难以叙述的部分了，因为这已超出了我的一切可能的想象。现在我终于知道，为什么在此之前，I避而不谈这些。即使说了，我也不会相信的，连她自己也一样。也许到了明天，我自己也不会相信了，我会觉得在这里我所写的事全部是胡说八道。

在空地上，有一块像头盖骨似的光秃秃的石头，在石头旁边有大概三四百人……人，是的，暂时称他们为“人”吧，真不知该用什么词来描述他们才好。就像在人头攒动的石头高台周围，放眼望去，你只能辨认熟悉的脸颊；在此处，我首先看见的是身着灰蓝色制服的人。不过，很快地，我就从制服群中辨认出黑色、红棕、金黄、深褐、灰色和白色的人们——看来，他们都是人。

他们不曾穿衣服，披着亮晶晶的短毛，如同史前博物馆的马类标本一样。但是这里的女性的脸和我们的女性一样，几乎没有什么差别，粉嫩、娇艳、光滑而无毛，她们的胸部也具有几何曲线的美感。而那些男性，只有脸部没有毛，就如同我们的祖先一样。

这一切太不可思议了，简直令人难以置信。以至于我只能呆立着，看看周围，我就像一架天平秤，因为一个称盘里放了太多的重量，任凭另一端你再放多少，再放多重的东西，指针都一动不动……

突然，我发觉只剩我独自一人了。I-330不在我身旁。我不知道她怎么就消失不见了，也不知道她去了哪里。我的周围全是那些披着毛皮的人，在阳光下他们身上的毛像晶亮的缎子闪闪发亮。我抓住了其中一个热乎乎、结实的黑色肩膀：

“请听我说，看在全知全能者的分儿上，能告诉我她去哪儿了吗？她刚才还在这里，怎么突然就……”

两条毛茸茸的、紧蹙的眉毛转向我：

“嘘——！别出声！”他朝林中空地中央那块头盖骨似的黄石头扬了扬眉。

我越过所有脑袋看到了她。太阳光明晃晃地从对面直射进眼睛，而她站在蓝色天幕上，太阳从她的背后射过来，因而，我只能看到她的黑色轮廓。如黑炭似的黑色身影，在距离她的头顶不远处的天空中飘浮着云彩。又不像是云，更像是石头在移动着，而她仿佛就站在那石头之上，后面是人群，空地像一艘船一样静悄悄地漂动着，脚下的大地轻轻地飘向远方.....

“弟兄们.....”她说着，“弟兄们！你们都清楚，在绿墙里，他们正在建造‘积分号’。你们也知道，摧毁绿墙以及所有的墙的日子已经快到了。到那时，绿色的风会毫无障碍地吹向全世界。但是，‘积分号’却要将那些墙带上太空，传到成千上万别的世界去，这些星球深夜都在黑色的树叶孔隙闪闪烁烁地向我们低语.....”

人的浪潮，水花，还有风向岩石涌过去。

“打倒‘积分号’！打倒它！”

“不，弟兄们，不必打倒它。‘积分号’必将为我们所用，成为我们的武器。当它第一次离开地球驶向太空的时候，我们将一起登上它。因为‘积分号’的设计师和我们在一起。他走出了高墙，和我站在了一起，他加入了我们的阵营。设计师万岁！”

霎时间，我飘了起来。我的下方是无数个脑袋，一个个的脑袋.....还有呼喊着的张大的嘴，不断举起又放下的手臂.....这情景让人沉醉，迷迷糊糊，我觉得我高出了所有的人。我是我，一个单独的个体，一个独立的世界，我不再是整体的一部分，而今，我成了一个组织.....

我又落回到了石头旁边。就像刚刚经历过恋人的热情拥抱一样，我浑身兴奋地颤抖着，软绵而无力。太阳照耀着我，周围传来各种声音，

还有I的迷人微笑。我身旁有个金发女人，她的全身像缎子般晶亮，身上有着药草的香味，她手里拿着一只木制的杯子。她的嘴唇殷红，她轻轻地喝了一小口，随后将杯子递给了我。我闭上眼睛，激动地喝着这甘美、亮晶晶的辛辣液体，想用它来浇灭我胸中焦灼的火焰。

但是，很快地我浑身的血液和整个世界都以1000倍的速度流动和旋转起来，大地仿佛在轻快地飞旋，如黎明一般轻盈。我感到身上轻松，简单，明快。直到现在，我才注意到石块上有两个我曾见过的硕大的字“魔菲”。不知为什么，在这里见到它们，我觉得并不吃惊，甚至是理所当然的。它们像一条简单的、牢固的线将一切都串联起来。在岩石上还有一幅十分粗糙的画：这是一个粗线勾勒的青年人体图像，他长着翅膀，全身透明，而只有心脏处是一块夺目的、燃烧着的红彤彤的煤块。我又看明白了这块煤块的意义.....也许不应该这样说，应该说我是感觉到了它的意义。I-330仍在说着话，但我却听不清楚她说的每一个字；我感觉到大家都步调一致地呼吸着，就像它们很快就要变成鸟一样，飞往自己想去的任何地方.....

突然，从我身后，从一片乱糟糟的人群中传出一个响亮的声音：

“可是，这是发疯！”

这时，仿佛是我，是的，我想就是我，我喊了起来，而且我还跳上了岩石，站在岩石上，我看到了太阳，众人的脑袋，还有黑色背景前的一排排绿色的海洋，我喊道：

“没错，说得一点都没错！我们必须发疯，我们必须让所有人都发疯！要尽快这样！我知道，这是必须的。”

I就在我身旁，她微笑着，嘴角朝上扬起两道深色的沟印.....我胸

中有一块燃着的煤块，这感觉仅仅一瞬，我觉得轻松无比，但又有些疼痛，这十分美妙……过后，在我心里只剩下残余的碎片在刺痛着我。

一只鸟慢慢地飞翔着。我发现，它同我一样，也是有生命的存在，它跟人一样，一会儿看看左边，一会儿看看右边，圆溜溜的黑眼珠向我投来锥子般的眼光……

接着，我又看见一个人的背部，长着亮闪闪的古代象牙色的皮毛。一只翅膀透明的黑色小飞虫在背上面爬着，他抖动了一下，想把那虫子赶走，接着又抖动了一下……

我还见到一个从树林间投射下的影子，是个交织的网状的影子。在暗影里有些人躺着，嚼着一些古怪的食物，那些食物像传说中的古代食品。是一个长条状的黄色果物还有一块黑色的食品。有个女人还给了我一块，我感觉可笑极了。不知道该不该尝尝。

……还有一个个脑袋、胳膊、腿脚和嘴巴。这些人的脸有时很快抬起来，随后又低下不见了——就如同气泡一样瞬间破了，消失不见。突然，可能是我的幻觉吧，我好像看到了那对透明的、忽闪着而过的招风耳，他一晃而过，一秒钟就消失不见了。

我使劲捏住了I的手臂。她转过头来，看着我说：

“你怎么啦？”

“他在这儿……我觉得……”

“谁在这？”

“他，S，就在刚才……在人群中一晃而过……”

细细的乌黑的眉毛向上一挑——一个尖利的三角形出现了——她笑了。我不知道她怎么会笑呢？她这样笑又意味着什么呢？

“你知道的，I，对不对？若是他，或者他们中的那帮人，有谁来到这儿，这究竟意味着什么？”

“你真可笑！墙里的人怎么会知道我们在这里呢？你可以好好回想一下，就拿你来说吧，以前难道你曾想过，这是可能的吗？这些人正在全城搜捕我们呢.....让他们忙去吧。你真是疯了！”

她愉快地笑了起来，那轻松的笑容也感染了我。我也跟着笑了。整个大地也随之陶醉了，它快活地、兴高采烈地飘荡着.....

笔记之二十八

她俩

熵^[4]和能

不透明的身体

若是你们的世界和我们古代的世界相似，你们应该很容易想象这种感觉：就像你们无意中突然发现了第六或第七块新大陆一样，类似于亚特兰蒂斯之类的地方，在那里，还会发现我们闻所未闻的城市，类似于

古希腊神话中的迷宫。还有那些可以借助翅或者飞船，在天空中自由飞翔的人们，还有仅仅凭目力就可以举起的石块。反正，那些东西，都是你连做梦都没有想到的事情。这就是我此时的感觉，我昨天遇到的就是这类情况。自200年大战之后，从未有任何人走出绿墙之外——这一点我曾告诉过你们。

我的那些素不相识的朋友们，我深知我有义务向你们详尽地描述我昨天的所见所闻，在那个新奇又不可思议的世界里，我所经历的一切。但是，到目前为止，我还不想再谈论这个话题。因为这些新的事件都太离奇了，它们一件接一件地发生，就如同暴雨般倾泻而来，我还没有能力全盘接受。我使出浑身力气扯起了制服的衣襟去接纳，伸开双手去捧，但是整桶整桶的雨水泼洒过来。我只能抓住能接到的点滴，将它们记录在纸上.....

起初，我听到我背后的房间门外有人在大声吵闹，我听出了I的声音，那声音清脆而悦耳，而另一个声音，则沉闷而显得死气沉沉的，像把木尺一样，这应该是U的声音。接着，我的房门被推开了，她俩同时出现在了 my 面前，用“弹射”来形容她们的速度更为恰当。

[4]熵：是热力学的第二定律。物理学上指热能除以温度所得的商，标志热量转化为功的程度。

I将手放在我的椅背上，向右侧着头看着U，露出一丝笑意。这样的笑容，如果是面对着，我一定会神魂颠倒了。

“在我看来，”I对我说，“这个女人好像是觉得她有责任，把你像个孩子似的保护起来，不让你接触我。这得到了你的允许了吗？”

还没等我答话，U脸上的鱼鳃直颤，她说道：“是的，他的确是一个孩子。就是这样！所以他没有发现，你这样对待他只是为了.....这一切不过是场不公平的游戏。就是这样！而我的责任.....”

有那么一会儿，我见到镜子里闪现出我那折断了的、颤抖着的眉毛。我很快就站了起来，使劲克制住另一个我，那个有着毛茸茸拳头的人。我费力地从牙缝里挤出话来，看着她的鱼鳃似的脸颊，说道：

“马上出去！出去！马上滚出去！”

鱼鳃脸先是涨成了猪肝色，接着又鼓了起来，变成了灰色。她张大了嘴想说些什么，但是什么也没说，而是掉头走开了。

我扑向了I：

“这件事我永远，永远无法原谅自己，她怎么赶这样来阻拦你.....但你不会这样想吧，她.....我明白，因为她想登记我，但是我.....”

“幸好，她来不及登记了，不过，像她这样的人，即便有1000个，我也不在乎。我知道，你不会去相信她们的话的，因为你只相信我一个。昨天的事情发生以后，我的整个人都完全地属于你了。我已经是你的人了。你随时都可以去.....”

随时可以去.....什么？我立即就明白了她的意思。血顿时涌上我的耳朵和脸颊。我喊道：“别这么说，千万不要这么说！难道你不知道，那是另一个我，从前的我或许会，但是如今.....”

“谁知道呢？一个人就像一本小说，没有看到最后一页，谁都猜不出结局。但是，正因为这样他才值得一读啊。”

她抚摸着我的头。我无法看到她的脸，但是从她的声音里我可以感觉到，她正凝望着远处，眼睛可能正看着一片云彩，默默地想着它会飘向何处。

突然，她温柔而又毅然地将我推开。

“听我说，我之所以过来，是想要告诉你……这可能是我们最后的日子了……你明白吗，今晚以后，所有的礼堂都要关闭。”

“关闭？”

“是的。刚才我路过的时候，看见里面正在准备着，里面一张张桌子，还有穿白大褂的医生。”

“这又是什么意思呢？”

“不清楚。现在谁都不知道是怎么回事。这是最糟糕的。我只感觉到，他们要行动了，这是暴风雨前的宁静，不是今天就是明天……但是，可能他们已经来不及准备了。”

我早已不再考虑，他们是谁，我们又是谁。我也搞不清楚，我希望的是是什么。到底是希望来得及还是来不及呢？我只知道一点：I-330此刻已经走在悬崖边缘，马上就要……

“但是这太不明智了！”我说，“你和联合国对抗，这无异于用手去捂住枪口，指望能将子弹挡过去……这实在太蠢！”

I笑了。

“‘我们全部都必须发疯，要尽快发疯！’你还记得吗？昨天有人说过的话.....”

是啊，这句话已经清楚地记录在了我的笔记里。这是千真万确的。所以，这一切都是真实的。我默不作声地看着她的脸，此刻她脸上那深色的X分外明显。

“I，亲爱的，此刻还为时不晚.....要是你愿意的话，我可以舍掉一切，忘记过去，我和你走出绿墙，我们和他们在一起.....虽然我到目前还不清楚他们到底是谁。”

她摇着头。透过她眼睛的两扇窗户，我看到她体内已经燃起的熊熊烈火，炉火正旺，火苗直往上蹿，上面还有一堆干柴。我明白了：已经晚了，多说无益.....

她站起来，要离开了。可能这已是最后的日子，可能是最后的几分钟.....我紧紧握住她的手。

“不！求你多待一会儿，看在.....看在.....”

她拿起我毛茸茸的手，将它举到亮处。我最不喜欢这双手，想要将它抽出来，但她抓得更紧了。

“你的手.....你当然不清楚，很少有人清楚这一点，从这城里去的女人常常会爱上那些男人。很可能，你的体内也流淌着几滴太阳和森林的血。可能这就是我爱上你的原因.....”

随即，她沉默了。真奇怪，因为这阵沉默，因为这突如其来的空寂

和一无所有——我的心狂跳个不停，我喊道：

“啊！你还不能走！你不能走！你必须要跟我说说，说说他们.....因为，因为你爱他们.....但我连他们是谁都不知道，他们来自何方？.....”

“他们是谁？他们是我们丢失的那一半，H₂和O本来是两个部分，但是为了获得水、小溪、大海、瀑布、浪涛和暴风雨，他们结合到了一起，成为了H₂O.....”

当时她的每个动作我都记得清清楚楚。我记得，她从桌上拿起一块玻璃三角尺。一边说话，一边用尺子的边棱抵住自己的脸颊，上面有一道白色的印记，很快就平复了，接着变成了粉红色，最后又消失不见了。很奇怪，我并没有记住她说了些什么，特别是开头说的话，我只记住了她说的一些个别的意象和颜色。

我记得，起初她谈到了200年大战。先是提到了红色，接着是绿色的草地，上面是殷红的鲜血，还有黑色的土地、蓝色的雪地上.....随处可见那些永不干涸的红色水洼。接着，她提到了黄色；这是一片片被太阳晒得焦枯的黄草地，还有黄皮肤的人们，他们赤身裸体、面容憔悴、蓬首垢面，他们躺着，旁边还有毛发蓬乱的死狗，以及被饿死的人的尸体.....当然这一切都发生在绿墙之外，因为城市已经取得了胜利，它已经制造出了我们今天的汽油食物。深夜.....有黑沉沉的片片烟雾，它们在树林和村庄的上空飘浮着，还有缓缓移动的烟柱。人们发出的低沉的号哭声，看不到尽头的黑压压的人流，被驱赶进城市，被武力胁迫着，被鞭笞着进入幸福。

“这一切你应该都清楚吧？”

“是的，差不多都清楚。”

“但是有一点你并不知道，当然，也只有很少的人知道：当初有一小部分人活了下来，他们勇敢地留在了绿墙之外。他们赤身裸体，只能躲进森林。在那里他们向树林、野兽、飞禽、花草和太阳学习。不久，他们身上有了长长的毛发，而在那毛发之下仍然有一颗鲜红的心，可以说，他们从未改变过。但是，你们却糟糕多了。你们的身上到处都是号码，这些号码像虱子一样爬到你们的身上各处。你们应该将这些东西撕下来，扒得光光的，然后跑到森林里去。这样，你们就会懂得什么是恐惧，什么是喜悦，什么是激怒，什么是因寒冷而发颤！你们应该向火祷告，而我们魔菲，我们想要……”

“等一下，‘魔菲’？‘魔菲’是什么意思？”

“魔菲吗？这是过去的一个人名，他就是……你还记得在绿墙外边刻在一块大石头上的青年人形吗？……不，我还是用你们的语言解释给你听吧。这样你能更好地明白它。这世界上有两种力量：熵和力，前者会带来舒适的平静和幸福的平衡，而后者则会导致平衡的破坏，导向不安定，甚至动荡的状态。我们的祖先，更确切地说，你们的祖先基督徒们崇尚熵。但我们不是基督徒，我们……”

正在这时，我听到了极轻的叩门声，随即，一个人飞快地冲了进来。就是那个帽子压到眼睛上、鼻子扁平的人，他曾经不止一次地给我传过I的便条。他迅速地跑到我们跟前，如空气泵一般大口大口地喘着气，连一句话也说不出。铁定他是一路狂奔过来的。

“快说呀！出了什么事了？”I用力抓住他的手问道。

“他们向这边来了……”空气泵总算缓了一口气，“安全卫士们来

了.....还有那个.....怎么说呢.....像驼背模样的人.....”

“S？”

“是啊！就是他，他们已经过来了，进到楼里来了。快点儿，快点儿！”

“别着急！来得及.....”I微笑着，眼睛里闪烁着快活的火花。她这种表现，要么就是荒唐又不理智的勇气，要么就是还有什么我不知道的事情。

“I，亲爱的，看在全知全能者的分儿上！你要清楚，这确实是.....”

“看在全知全能者的分儿上。”她又笑了，脸上露出一个尖锐的三角形。

“好吧，好吧.....看我的分儿上.....我请求你。”

“噢，好吧，我本来还有件事情要和你谈一下.....算了，下次吧。没关系，明天见。”

她愉快地（确实是十分愉快地）朝我点点头，那个人也从前额的帽檐下露了露脸，朝我点了点头。他们便一起离开了。只剩下我一个人了。

快些坐到书桌旁去！我匆忙地打开笔记，拿起了笔。这样他们就会看到我正忙于做一件对联合国非常有益的事情。突然，我的头发一根根地活了，我竟然想道：“如果他们突然看到了我最近写的那几篇内容呢？哪怕只读上一页，就惨了！”

想到这，我呆住了。我一动不动地坐在书桌旁，我四周的墙壁都在旋转着，手里的笔也在发抖，眼前的字似乎都挤到了一起。将笔记藏起来吧，但是藏到哪里去呢？四周都是玻璃的。那么烧了它们呢？也不行，从走廊和隔壁的房间里就会看到火光。而且，我也实在没法狠心将这些承载着我的痛苦、欢乐和激动心情，令我倍感珍贵的文件烧毁，它们成为了我身心的一部分了.....

远处走廊里已经传来了说话声和脚步声。我所能做的就是将一摞稿页塞在屁股下面，然后一动不动地坐在椅子上，就像焊在了椅子上似的。我似乎能感觉到椅子上每个最小的粒子都在颤动，而我脚下的地板晃悠得像船上的甲板上下颠簸着.....我自己缩成一小团，仿佛那个躲在帽檐下的信使一样，从蹙紧的眉头下偷偷地观察着别人的一举一动：他们挨着房间搜查过来，从走廊的右边的房间查起，越来越近.....我看到有些号码坐在房间里一动不动，跟我一样，也有些号码立马站起身来欢迎他们，将大门大敞四开。他们真幸福！如果我跟他们一样，那么.....

“全知全能者是人类不可或缺的最佳、最优质的消毒剂。因此，联合国的机体内不允许任何害虫捣鬼.....”我使劲捏住不断抖动的笔，写下这些纯属废话的语言，而我的头则越趴越低，身体里有一股疯狂的情绪在酝酿着.....甚至连我的后背都凝神听着动静.....我听见了门把咔嚓拧动的声音.....一阵风吹了进来.....我坐着的椅子晃动着.....

此时，我才恋恋不舍地离开了笔记，朝进屋的人转过脸去（演一场滑稽戏可真不容易.....是啊，今天有人对我说起过类似的事）。首先映入眼帘的是S，他站在这些人最前面，他绷着脸，不说话，目光像锥子似的深深钻进我的心里，钻进我的椅子以及我手中的稿纸。然后，在我门口闪过几张我所熟悉的、每天都见到的面孔；这些脸孔中，有一张脸显得与众不同，那脸上鼓着棕红色的鱼鳃.....

我突然想起了半小时之前所发生的一切，所以我很清楚，此刻为什么他们要来到这里了.....

我的全身有些发抖，而心也狂跳不已（幸好那部分是不透明的），我用稿页遮着它。U站在S身后，她小心翼翼地拉了一下他的袖子，低声说：“这是D-503，‘积分号’的设计师。你大概听说过吧！他总是这样，坐在他的书桌旁努力干活.....从来不放松自己！”

.....天哪，我真无颜以对了！.....这是一个多么亲切，好心的女人啊！.....S不声不响地溜到我背后，俯身往桌上看去。我正用胳膊肘挡住刚刚写下的话。他厉声命令道：

“请马上向我们出示你写的内容！”

我有些惭愧地将那页纸交给他。他看了一遍，我发现他眼角里流露出一丝笑意，这笑意悄悄爬到他的脸上，摇晃着小尾巴，又转移到了他嘴唇的右角上，“语言有点含混不清，但是还不错.....嗯，你可以继续写下去，我们不再打扰了。”

他啪嗒啪嗒地走了出去，那声音就像在水面上的蹾水似的。他渐渐走远，每走一步，我就觉得我的腿、我的胳膊，还有我的手指，都逐渐回到了我身上，我的灵魂又均匀地布满了全身，我又可以呼吸了.....

最后，U最后一个走出了我的房间，她临走之前，来到我跟前，弯下腰凑到我耳边低声说：“这是你运气，我.....”

她为什么说这些，我不清楚。后来，再也没有人提起那天的事。但是我仍然听说，他们带走了三个号码。所有人都对这件事缄口不言，因为我们都受过教育，我们知道隐藏在我们之中的安全卫士，他们无时无

刻不在认真工作。因此，号码们谈论的主要是天气的变化以及温度计气温骤然下降的事。

笔记之二十九

脸上的线条

萌芽

一种不自然的压缩

天气真奇怪，气压计的水银柱不断下降，但是却没有风。非常平静。但是在头顶的上空，却已经开始刮起了风暴，乌云正飞速地翻卷成形，只是目前还不够多，仅仅是一些分散的、零碎的碎片；就好像上空有座城市被摧毁了，而大墙和塔楼的残垣断壁正迅速地往下坠落，它们下降的速度是惊人的，但是它们要想穿过那蓝色的无限空间，掉落在位于最底层的我们身上，仍然需要花费几天的时间，因为距离太远了。

地面上，眼下仍然是一片平静。空中飘浮着一些细细的、难以觉察的几乎看不见的细条，不知到底是什么。每到秋季来临，它们就会从绿墙外飘过来。它们慢慢悠悠地飘荡着，突然之间，你会觉得脸上有什么东西粘上了，你想弄掉它，但是不行，任凭你怎么挥也挥之不去。不行，没有任何办法。若是在绿墙附近，早晨，当你沿着绿墙边走时，这样的线条就更多了。I与我约好在古宅碰面，因此，早上我便来到了这

里。

当我走进锈红色、不透明的古宅大院的时候，突然听到了身后传来的急促的小碎步，还有短促的呼吸声。我扭头看了一眼，发现居然是O-90，她正努力地追赶我。她浑身上下变得和以前不同了，更加地圆润，更加地富有弹性。我非常熟悉她的一切，她的双手、她的胸部，还有她的身体，此刻都被制服紧绷着，好像她的身躯很快就要将薄薄的制服撑破了，不由得使我想到了春天绿色的草丛，那些幼芽就是这样，用顽强的力量顶出地面，只是为了伸展枝条，开出花朵。

她沉默了几秒钟，随后，蓝色的眼睛眼波流转地望着我。

“一致日那天，我看到你了。”

“我也看见你了。”我立即想起来了：她当时站在狭窄的过道里，紧紧贴着墙，双手护着腹部。想到这里，我便不由自主地看了看她的腹部，它隆起着，显得圆滚滚的。她显然也意识到了我的目光，随即脸色变得圆润又粉红，娇媚地微笑了起来：

“我非常幸福，非常幸福.....我觉得很美满，你懂吗？我觉得太幸福了。当我走路的时候，我什么都看不见，什么都听不见.....我只是听到我身体里边的动静，感觉我身体里面.....”

我默不作声。脸上有种难以形容的陌生感觉。突然，她的蓝色眼睛里有着光彩，她的眼睛显得更蓝了。她使劲抓住我的手.....我能够感觉到她印在我手上的吻.....这是一种我非常陌生的古代礼节.....我生平第一次感受到，我觉得太丢脸了，并且觉得有一阵心疼。因此，我迅速地甚至有些粗暴地抽出了自己的手。

“听着，你是不是疯了？这的确是……你怎么会觉得幸福呢？难道你不知道未来等待着你的将是什么吗？即使现在还没事，但是不代表你能逃过一个月或两个月之后……”

她脸上的光彩消失了。圆圆的身体开始变得瘪起来了。我心中一阵难过，同时又觉得十分不快，我甚至能感觉到心脏病态地收缩着。（心脏应该是一个完美的气泵。如果在气泵的运转过程中出现了收缩的现象，只能说明这是一件技术上十分荒谬的事。所以，所有有关于“爱情”“怜悯”之类的话，这些凡是能引起心脏收缩的感情，就其本质而言，都是荒谬的，甚至是可悲的。）

我们都没有说话，在我们的左侧是绿墙朦胧的绿色玻璃。而我的前面是朱红色的古宅。这两种颜色共处一个空间，让我有了一个非常好的想法。

“等一等！我想到了！我有办法救你了！我一定要救你，让你躲过这可怕的命运……只要能看一眼自己的孩子，然后就离开人世。不能这样，你应该抚养他长大成人，你懂吗？要让他到你的怀里长大，变得茁壮丰满，就像果实……”

她抖动着，使劲抓住了我。

“你还记得她吗？很久以前，我们在散步的时候见过的那个女人。I-330，此刻，她就在这里，这座古宅里面。我们这就去找她，我敢保证，我会很快将这一切安排好的。”

我好像已经看见，我和I，我们带领着O在长廊里走……随后，她被带到那边有花草和绿叶的世界里去……但是她没有跟我走，反而向后退了一步，粉红色的半月形的嘴角颤动起来，她撇着嘴。

“就是她吗？”她问。

“是的……”不知怎的，我居然有点难为情，“是的，就是她。”

“你想让我去她那里，让我去求她……求她……请你以后再也不要提这件事了！”

她踉跄着，走开了……突然，她好像又想起了什么，转过头来，大声喊道：

“死有什么关系！我不在乎……这也和你无关，也不是你该在乎的！”

我不知道该说什么好。在我们的头顶上，天空中，蓝色的大墙和塔楼的残砖碎瓦不停坠落着，速度非常快……也许，它们还要在无限的空间飞行几个小时，甚至更久……空气中有很多看不见的细丝，它们粘在我的脸上，不管我怎么弄，它们也不离开我。简直拿它们毫无办法。

我慢慢地一步一步地走向古宅，我的心脏仍然在收缩着，荒唐地、痛苦地收缩着，那感觉越来越强烈……

笔记之三十

最后一个数字

伽利略的错误

这样不是更好吗？

以下所记载的就是昨天我和I在古宅里的谈话。在交谈的过程中，周围出现的各种色彩不断干扰着我：红的、绿的、黄铜色的、白的、橙黄的……这些杂乱的色彩让我无法进行逻辑思考……还有那个有着翘鼻子的古代诗人，他总是笑着居高临下地看着我们的一举一动。

我想一字不落地将我们的谈话内容记录下来，因为我觉得，这些内容会对联合国的命运产生重大的、决定性的意义。不仅是这样，甚至连宇宙的命运也会受到左右。此外，你们，我的那些素不相识的读者们，没准可以为我找到几句开脱的话……

I-330将所有的计划一股脑地告诉了我：“我知道，后天就是‘积分号’首次试飞的日子。到时候，我们会把它夺过来。”

“什么？后天？”

“是的。你坐下，别慌。我们一分钟也不能浪费。昨天，安全卫士局逮捕了几百个涉嫌分子，里面有20个魔菲。再过两三天，他们就活不成了。”

我默不作声。

“在试飞开始之前，他们会派去电气师、技师、医生和气象学家……到12点钟，你一定要记住这个时间点，当午饭铃打响之后，大家去食堂的时候，我们就偷偷留在通道里，把其他的人都锁在食堂里——这样‘积分号’就是我们的了……你明白吗？我们必须要做到这一点。

“我们一旦有了‘积分号’，我们就有了武器。它能痛快地解决一切问题。至于他们的飞船.....那算得了什么！它们只不过是渺小的蚊子罢了，哪儿能和苍鹰相比呢？到时候，如果是无法避免的话，我们可以将发动机的筒口拨向地面，就靠这点就可以.....”

我忍不住跳了起来。

“这太不可思议了！简直荒唐至极！难道你不明白，现在你在搞革命吗？”

“是的，革命！你怎么会觉得这荒唐呢？”

“因为革命是不可能实现的。因为，我们的，我的意思是，我的和你的，就是上次我们所做的革命是最后一次了——以后不会，也不可能再有革命发生了。这是谁都明白的道理.....”

她露出了一个尖刻的讥讽的吊梢眉三角形：

“亲爱的，你是个数学家，哦，对。你不仅是数学家，还是个哲学家。好吧，那请你告诉我最后的数字。”

“什么？我.....我不明白，什么最后的数字？”

“就是那最后的、最高的、最大的数字啊。”

“可是，I-330，这是荒唐的。数是无穷尽的，怎么可能有什么最大的数呢？”

“那么你所说的最后一次革命又是什么呢？.....怎么会有最后的革命呢？革命是无穷尽、永无止境的。所谓的‘最后一次’的革命只是哄孩

子的玩意罢了。无穷尽会吓到孩子，他们因此会晚上睡不着觉的，所以，我们就编造一个谎话来骗他们.....”

“看在全知全能者的分儿上，你为什么要做这些呢？我们已经拥有了幸福，做这些又有什么意义呢？”

“好吧，就算像你所说的那样吧。那么，以后呢？”

“多可笑啊！这简直是孩子所问的问题啊。你跟孩子说得清清楚楚，最后，他们还会问：‘那然后呢？’其实根本就没有什么‘然后’。在这个世界上，随处都均匀地分布。”

“嗨，‘随处’‘均匀地！’这就是问题所在，这是心理上的熵。身为一名数学家，难道你不清楚吗？生命之所以存在就因为有差异，温度的差异，热的差异。所以说，要是整个世界到处都分布着均匀的温度，或者均匀的寒冷.....那我们就必须改变它！让它迸发火花，爆炸，随之燃烧，从而推动它们发生质的变化！”

“但是，I，你得想想，我们祖先在200年大战期间已经做过这些了.....”

“噢，他们是对的，一千个对。但是，有一点他们做错了：后来他们竟认定自己是最后一个数字，其实这样的数字在自然中并不存在。这个错误就跟伽利略的错误一样，他认为地球围绕太阳转，这是对的。但是他却不知道，整个太阳系又围绕着另一个中心旋转，他不知道地球真正的轨道并不是一个简单的圆形.....”

“那你们呢？”

“我们，至少到目前为止，我们知道没有所谓的最后的数字。也

许，多年以后，我们也会忘了这一点。是的，当我们老了以后，我们很可能会忘记这个。世间万物不可避免地都会变老，这是避无可避的。正如秋天的落叶，季节到了它就会落下来，就像你们后天.....不不，亲爱的，我并不是说你。你和我们同在，你和我们在一起！”

我从来没有见过她这个样子。此刻她就像团炽烈的熊熊燃烧的烈火，像疾速的狂风，像飞速运转的火星。她疯狂地拥抱着我，我融化了.....

最后，她坚定地、一动不动地望着我的眼睛说：

“记住：12点整。”

我回答：

“好的，记住了。”

她离开了。剩下我独自一人待着，四周的嘈杂声震耳欲聋，各种色彩混杂着：蓝色的、红色的、绿色的、金黄色的、橙色的.....

是的，12点整.....突然，我感觉脸上被什么东西粘住了，怎么弄也弄不掉。接着我的脑海中浮现起了昨天早晨的情景，U冲着I喊叫的情形.....怎么会想到这个？太荒唐了！

我匆匆忙忙地往外走，想赶快回家去.....

我身后传来了鸟儿清脆的啼鸣，在我眼前的是落日的余晖，我看到那个整齐的闪闪发亮的红火的圆屋顶，还有巨大的燃烧方块制成的房子，还有那高耸入云的电塔顶上的尖针。眼前的这一切，是这么完美无瑕，难道，我将亲手破坏.....难道毫无办法了吗？没有其他的方法了

吗？

我路过了一个礼堂（不记得它是第几号礼堂了）。大厅里的长凳都整齐地放在了墙角，中间摆着一些大桌子，桌子上是雪白的玻璃罩布，白单子上有夕阳的余晖……这些都暗示着一个未知数——明天！那无人知晓的、可怕的明天！这是反常的：让一个有思想、有视觉的人去面对没有结果、一切未知的明天。哦，未知，那未知的X。这太让人难受了，就像别人蒙住了你的眼睛，什么都是黑的，你只能凭感觉摸索，磕磕绊绊地往前走，但是你却不知道，分界线就近在咫尺，只要再跨出一步，你就会摔成一块烂泥……此刻，我就是这种感觉。

……如果我什么都不想，彻底栽下去呢？……这或者是唯一的办法了，到时候所有的问题都将迎刃而解了！

笔记之三十一

伟大的手术

我宽恕了一切

列车相撞

在最后一刻，在你感觉到没有任何指望，眼前已经是世界末日的时候，在这最后一刻……我们竟然得救了！

仿佛你已经走向了通往可怕死亡的死刑机台阶，仿佛玻璃气钟罩已咣啷啷响着罩住了你，在你生命的最后时刻，你留恋地看着蓝色的天空……突然，你醒了过来，原来这一切是个噩梦。太阳依然是粉红色的，快快活活的。而那墙，那冷冰冰的墙能够触手可及，是多么幸福！还有那枕头——我能轻松无比地感觉到脑袋正枕着低陷的小坑里……这就是今天早上我读完《联合国报》的感受。过去的一切都是场可怕的噩梦，现在梦已经醒了。而我，曾经是如此地胆小怕事，如此地背信弃义，居然已经想到了身不由己的死亡。现在我再谈起昨天笔记中写的最后几段文字。我觉得羞愧得很。但随它去吧，这已经无关紧要了，就让它们作为一种回忆吧。它曾有过可能，但以后不会再发生……不会发生了。翻开《联合国报》，头版上赫然入目的是：

欢呼雀跃吧！

因为从今以后，我们将是完美的！

从今以后，我们将比我们所创造的机器更加完美！

为什么更完美？

因为发动机所迸溅的每个火花，都是充满了理性之光的火花；活塞的每一次的运动，都是无可指责的完美演绎逻辑。在你们的体内，难道不也同样存在着这种准确无误吗？

起重机、压力机、抽水机的哲理，完美而明晰，如同圆形的圈一样。而我们的哲理呢，难道不如这圆圈完美吗？机械之美，就像钟摆和节律一样，在于永远保持着精确无误。难道我们这些从小受泰勒体系熏

陶的人，会比不上钟摆精确吗？

是的，不过还有一点差异，就是：

机械没有幻想。

你们是否见过，某个正在工作的压力泵会迷迷糊糊、心不在焉，甚至浮现出毫无意义的微笑？你们听说过，起重机在深夜休息的时候，不停地辗转反侧，不住叹气？

没有！

但是在你们的脸上（你们真应该感到羞愧！），安全卫士们愈来愈频繁地发现你们脸上有这样的微笑，还有你们的唉声叹气。你们应该感到无比羞愧，联合国的历史学家正申请退休，他们不想再记录这类羞愧可耻的事。

但是，这并不是你们的错，因为你们病了，你们全部都患上了一种叫作幻想的疾病。

幻想是一种虫子，它们会在你们的额头啮咬出一道道黑色的皱纹。幻想是狂热，它逼迫着你们向远方不停地奔跑，而那所谓的“远方”正是幸福消失的地方。幻想是通向幸福之途的最后路障。

欢呼吧，路障已经被炸毁啦。

道路已经畅通无阻通。

王国的伟大科学家们最近发现：幻想的要害是位于大脑中心位置有一个不起眼的脑神经结。如果用X射线对神经结做三次烧灼手术，幻想

症就可以治愈，而且永不复发！

你们是如此地完美无缺，你们是如此地机器化，通向百分之百的幸福之路已经通达无阻。你们所有人，不论老少，请立即来接受这项伟大的手术吧，赶快来礼堂吧，在那里接受这伟大的手术。伟大的手术万岁！联合国万岁！全知全能者万岁！

亲爱的读者们，如果你们读到这些话，这真像是一本古代荒诞的小说。如果你们和我一样，手中也拿着这样一份报纸，它正散发着油墨香，捏着它的手在颤抖着……如果你们也和我一样，知道这一切都是不可思议的现实——即使不是今天，也有可能在未来成为现实，那么，你们也一定和我有着同样的感觉：同样地感觉到头晕目眩！同样地感觉到欢欣鼓舞！同样地觉得背部和手上会冒出鸡皮疙瘩，觉得好像有无数根小针扎着它！同样地感觉到那既甜丝丝，又麻酥酥的舒坦！你们会感到自己像是成为了巨人，是大力神！只要你们直起腰来，头就会碰到玻璃天花板啦！

我抓起了电话筒：

“I-330……对，转到I-330号。”我声音急促地喊道，“你在家啊？你看报纸了吗？你正在看吗？天哪，这难道……这难道……不是件激动人心的大好事吗？”

“嗯……”一阵漫长、阴郁的沉默，那头半天不吭声。话筒发出低微的嗡嗡声，像是在思考。

“我今天必须要见你。是的，在我这儿，16点以后，不见不散。”

多可爱！亲爱的，她太可爱了！“不见不散”……我脸上挂着笑，简直没法合上嘴。我觉得自己将带着微笑上街，让它像盏灯似的高高照着我的脑袋。

街上的风扑面而来，呼啸着，打着旋，如鞭子般抽打着肌肤，但我觉得快乐：“任你号吧，任你吼吧，绿墙是不会被摧毁的。”天空沉铁般的飞云倾泻下来，由它去吧！我不会介意，反正太阳是挡不住的！我们就是数不清的约书亚^[5]，我们会用铁索将太阳牢锁在天顶。

在街口，礼堂的旁边，我见到了一群群的约书亚们，他们的额头紧贴在玻璃墙上。呆呆地朝墙里面看过去，里面有一张白得耀眼的桌子，上面躺着一个号码。在白布的掩映下，隐隐约约可以看见他两只向外撇着的黄色脚掌……几个穿大白褂的医生，正俯身在他头部，一只白色的手伸向空中，抓着一个吸了药水的针管。

^[5]约书亚：《圣经》中记载的一个希伯来人领袖，是摩西的继任者。他带领以色列人离开旷野进入应许之地，在他的领导下，以色列人在许多战争中获得了辉煌的胜利。

“你们怎么不进去呀？还在等什么？”我没有具体问哪个人，而是问向大家。

“那你呢？”一个圆脑袋转过来对着我问道。

“我，哦。过一会儿。我要先去……”

我觉得脸有些热，窘迫地走开了。我确实必须要先见见I，至于为什么，我也回答不上来.....

制造台上，“积分号”晶蓝如冰地静静躺在那里，机舱里发动机呜呜响着，好像温情地不停地重复着那个我熟悉的词语。我俯下身来，轻轻地拍了拍发动机身上冷丝丝的长管。多可爱啊.....简直太可爱了。明天它就会获得生命，明天它机体内会迸溅出灼热的火星，它会因此而首次感到生命的震颤.....

如果一切仿如昨日，我会用什么眼光来打量它呢？如果我知道，明天12点过后，我会出卖它.....是的，我会出卖它的话.....有人轻轻地碰了碰我的臂肘。我转过身来，迎面看到的是副设计师圆盆似的扁平的脸。

“你已经知道了？”他问道。

“什么？手术吗？当然啦。想想看.....只要一下子，就都解决了.....”

“不，不是这件事。因为手术的缘故，试飞取消了，不在明天，改期到后天了.....我们白忙了，白费那么多时间赶出来.....”

“因为手术”.....他多么可笑啊，又是那么单纯。他只能看到自己脸盘那么点儿事，其他的什么都看不到。如果他知道，要不是因为明天有手术，明天12点，他会被锁在玻璃房里急得团团转，徒劳无功地看着一切发生呢.....

12点30分，我进入自己的房间，一进门，就见到U在我屋里。她坐在我的桌子边，坐得笔直，右手托着右颊。可能她已经等了我很久了，

因为她见到我，马上就站了起来，能够明显地看到她脸颊上残留的五个手指印。

只需要一秒钟，我的脑海中便闪过了那个不愉快的早晨：也是在这里，她站在I身边，气愤地吵闹着.....但这个回忆只有一秒钟时间，一秒钟过后，一切都消散不见了。这情形就像是：天气晴朗，你走进屋里，漫不经心地打开了电灯。灯亮了，但有些不合时宜，顿时你觉得它既有点多余，又有点滑稽可笑.....

我毫不犹豫地向她伸出手去，我原谅了她。她抓住我的两只手，使劲捏着，弄得我有点疼。她松垂的两颊激动地颤抖，很像古代人的某种装饰品。她说：

“我一直在等你.....只需要一点时间.....我过来是想要告诉你：我为你感到高兴，多幸福啊！你明白吗，过了明天，你就会康复了，你会获得新生的.....”

我意识到我昨天的笔记，它仍然静静地摊开在桌上，这是我昨天写的最后两页，我收笔时没有合上它。她会不会看到我所写的内容？.....不过，这些都无关紧要。这都已经成为了历史。这一切太遥远，简直有些可笑，就像你倒拿着望远镜所看见的远景一样可笑。

“是的，”我说，“告诉你，我刚从街上来，我见到前面有一个人，他的影子映在马路上，你知道吗，他的影子清清楚楚。我觉得，不，我更相信，明天之后不会再有影子了，任何人和任何东西都不会有影子，因为太阳会照透一切.....”

她温柔地说：“你真是个幻想家！我可不让我学校的孩子说这样的话.....”

她说起她学校的孩子们。她说他们全部被领去做手术了，在那里必须用绳子将他们捆绑起来，还说我们“要爱，就不能手软，不能有怜悯之情”，还有，她可能要最后做出决定了……

她将两膝之间灰蓝色的裙子抚平，默默地用她的微笑将我的全身抚慰个遍，然后离开了。

幸好，今天太阳仍然大大地照耀着大地，16点到了……我敲了敲门……我的心狂跳个不停……

“请进！”

我坐在她软椅旁的地板上，拥抱她的双脚，我仰着头，凝望着她的眼睛。看一下左眼，又看一下右眼，我一直看个不停，在她的眼睛里，我看到了那个拜倒在她石榴裙下的自己……

墙外正风雨交加，黑云压城，随它们去吧！我满脑袋都是激动的话语，语言像瀑布一样急流直下，我大声地说着，像我要和太阳一起飞到某个地方一样……不，此刻我已经知道我们要飞去那里了。在我身后的还有其他的星球，它们喷着火焰，上面开满了唱歌的花朵；还有沉默不语的蓝色的星球，那里理智的石块已经组成了井然有序的社会，还有像我们地球一样的行星，它们已经达到了绝对的幸福巅峰。

突然，I的声音飘过了我的头顶：

“你难道不认为，真正抵达巅峰的是那些有组织的理性的石块？”

她脸上的三角形越来越尖利，越来越阴暗：

“幸福……幸福到底是什么？欲望是令人痛苦的，对吗？所以，幸

福就是不存在任何的欲望，连一丝一毫的欲望都不存在。我们直到现在还给幸福打正号，这是多大的错误，多么荒唐的偏见！不，绝对幸福应该打上负号，打上最为神圣的负号！”

我记得，当时我窘迫地说道：

“绝对的负值， -273°C ……”

“对，就是 -273°C 。有些冷，但事实本身不正好说明，我们处于巅峰吗？”

跟很久之前一样，她好像在替我说话，将我的所思所想都说了出来。但是，她说话的语调里却有一种可怕的令人畏惧的东西，我不得不……我必须打断她，终于，我挤出了一个“不”字。

“不，”我说，“你……你在嘲笑我……”

她笑了起来，笑得很大声——那声音太大了，甚至有些过了头。翻过了某个看不见的最高极限，但只一秒钟，她就猛然停住了……接着，便没有了声音。

她站起来，将两只手搭在我的肩上，久久地、目不转睛地望着我。然后把我拉入她的怀中。顿时，我忘记了一切，沉浸在她火辣辣的双唇中。

“永别了！”

这一声道别仿佛来自很远很远的地方，在我头顶上空飘落了下来，我没有立即听到，而是过了一分钟，或许两分钟才听得到。

“为什么……怎么说‘永别’了呢？”

“你病了，不是吗？因为我，你犯了罪，难道你不觉得痛苦吗？现在好了，你可以做手术了，你会治好因为我而生的病。所以，我说，我们永别了。”

“不！”我喊道。

她白皙的脸上显出一个无情的尖利黑三角：

“怎么？难道你不想得到幸福了吗？”

我的脑袋要裂开了，两列逻辑的火车相撞了，它们撞了个正着，车身断裂，发出轰响，这一切都令人窒息……

“那好吧，由你来决定：要么你去接受手术去获得百分之百的幸福，要么……”

“我不能没有你……没有你，我还有什么……没有你……”我说道，或许我并没有说，只是心里这样想着。我搞不清，但是显然，I听见了。

“是的，我明白，”她在回答着我。后来，她的手一直放在我的肩头，眼睛一动不动地盯着我，说：“那么——明天见。明天——12点钟，你还记得吗？”

“不行。试航被推迟了，要到后天……”

“那样更好，就后天12点钟。”

我一个人沿着暮色的街道往家走去。风呼啸着，扑打着我的旋着圈，

推着我朝前走去，我就像一张纸。黑压压的天空上残云疾速地飞驰着.....它们还要在无限的天空中飞舞一天、两天.....

迎面过来很多穿制服的号码，我们擦肩而过。但我仍然觉得只有我一个人，默默走着。我很清楚，大家都将得救，但是我不能，我不愿意被拯救.....

笔记之三十二

我不相信

拖拉机

小人影

你们相信吗？人是会死的。是的，人都难免一死。因为我是一个
人，所以.....不，我要说的不是这个，这个道理，我们都明白。

我要问的其实是：你们是否真的相信这种说法，而且是深信不疑地，毫无保留地相信，并不是通过理智去相信，而是通过自己的身体去感觉：相信有朝一日，此刻你们拿着这页纸的手指会变得枯黄、变得冰凉.....

不，你们肯定不相信，正因为不相信，所以，你们到现在都没有从

十层楼往马路上往下跳，所以你们到现在还在吃着饭，看着书，刮着胡子，含着笑，写着文章.....

我现在就是这样想的，是的，我正处于这种情况。我知道，钟表上的那根黑色的小指针，会这样一直走下去，它会移向午夜，然后又慢慢开始上升，再越过最后的界限。不可想象的明天就会到来。这些我都十分清楚，但是不知道怎的，我还是不相信这一切。也许，在我看来，24小时就是24年。因此，我还能做很多事，我可以赶到某处去一趟，解答别人的提问，从航梯登上“积分号”。我还可以感受“积分号”在水面上如何摇晃；我还记得，我应该抓住冰冷的玻璃扶手。我还能见到那些透明的起重机，像长颈鹿一样弯着长颈，伸出嘴，爱护地、深情地给“积分号”发动机喂炸药食物。在下边的河面上，我能见到被风吹皱的河水的涟漪.....但这一切仿佛又离我很远很远，它们像是互不相干的，单独存在的；它们又像是陌生的、干巴巴的，就像绘图纸上的平面图一样。当副设计师那张扁平的脸出现在我眼前时，我奇怪地看着他，他突然就说起了话来：

“你看，我们要给发动机上多少燃料呢？如果作三小时计算.....或者三个半小时.....”

在我面前，在投影图纸上方，是我握着计算器的手，上面显示着我按下的数字15。

“15吨。不过最好上.....对，最好上1000吨.....”

我这么回答，是因为我心中有数，我知道明天.....

我注意到，我手里握着的刻度表盘难以察觉地开始颤抖。

“1000吨？为什么要用这么多燃料？这些足够用一个星期的。还不止，还可以更长！”

“以防不测嘛.....谁知道会有什么意外.....”

我就知道.....

风呼啸着，就像空气里充塞着很多看不见的物质，将天空填得满满的，让人无法呼吸。我无比艰难地走着，在街尾的电塔上的钟表的指针也艰难地、缓慢地爬着。塔顶的尖顶直冲云霄，它发着蓝幽幽的黯然的光。它仿佛正在低吟，默默地吸储着云中的电。音乐机器的铜管乐声正吼叫着。

同往常一样，号码们四人一排地走着。但是队伍有些散乱，还不停摇晃着，可能是因为风刮的。人们佝偻着身形，抬不起头来。在路口，队伍好像被什么挡住了，往后退着。人们停了下来，挤到了一起。他们紧张而急促地呼吸着，所有人都像鹅一样伸长了脖子看着。

“看！不，往那里看，快看啊！”

“他们！那些是他们？”

“.....啊，要是我，我不会同意的！决不会，我宁可将头颅送进死刑机.....”

“小声些！你疯啦.....”

在路口的礼堂大门敞开着，从里面走出来一支由五十来个人组成的队伍，他们脚步缓慢又沉重。用“人”来形容他们显得不太恰当。应该说是装着大轮子的钢铁机器人，他们靠着某种看不见的机制驱动着前进。

他们并非人，而是人形拖拉机。每个都高举着一面白旗，旗子在风中啪啪作响，旗上绣着金色的太阳，几行字光芒四射：“我们是开创者！我们已经做过了手术！其他人，跟随着我们来吧！”

他们慢慢地、毫不迟疑地穿过人群。不消说，如果挡在他们前面的不是我们，而是一堵墙，或者一排树或房屋，他们也会毫不迟疑踩踏而过的。他们已经到了大路中央。面朝着我们，他们紧紧地，像拧上螺丝一般，挽起了手成为了一条链子。而我们这一堆十分紧张的人群都伸着脑袋，汗毛倒竖，惊恐地等待着。乌云依然在翻滚，狂风依然在呼啸。突然，长链条左右的侧翼两方围拢过来，朝着我们包抄过来。速度越来越快，就像一架从山上滚落下来的沉重机器一样。长列紧缩成圆圈，将圈里的人们往礼堂敞开的门边推过去，推过去……

一个声嘶力竭的呼喊声传了过来：“他们要把我们撵进去！快逃啊！”

瞬间，一切都涌动了起来。紧挨着墙有一扇狭窄的可以出去的缺口，所有人都争着往那里冲去。所有的脑袋都变成了楔子，四处钻着，用臂肘、肋骨、肩膀拱出路来……周围都是散乱的脚步、挥动着的手臂，还有飞起的制服，它们就像扇面似的往四周扩散开来，仿佛是消防水龙带挤压出来的喷水。

突然，有个身影在我眼前一晃而过，是那熟悉的双曲线S，还有那双透明的招风耳朵——但只一晃就不见了。我独自在混乱的手和脚中挣扎着、奔跑着……

我冲到了一栋房子门口，背紧贴在门上使劲地喘着气。突然，像风似的吹进来一个小小的身影，犹如纸片，贴在了我面前的地上。

“我一直.....我一直在跟着你.....我不想.....你知道吗，我不想.....我愿意去.....”

抚摸着我的衣袖的是一双胖乎乎的小手；还有那双圆圆的蓝眼睛。是她，O-90。她倚着墙，慢慢地滑到地板上，最后蜷缩在冰冷的台阶上，成了圆圆的一团。我俯身看着她，轻抚着她的头和脸。我的手是潮湿的。此刻，我觉得自己很强大。而她却很弱小，好像她是我身体的一小部分。这是一种不同于I的感觉。此刻我觉得，我对O，就像是古代人对待他们自己的孩子一样的感觉。

她用双手捂着脸，声音从指缝里漏了出来，低低的，几乎像是在耳语：

“我每天夜里.....我不能！我不能忍受他们的手术.....每天夜里.....我都独自一个，在黑暗中，我想着他，想着将来他是什么样，我会怎样地疼爱他.....若是我被治好了，我活下去就没有什么意思了。你懂吗？因此，你应该.....你必须.....”

多么荒唐的想法啊，但是我确实这样认为：我有责任，我必须帮助她。之所以说它荒唐，是因为我的这一义务又是我的罪行。白和黑不可能是一回事，责任和罪行同样不是一回事。但是，可能生活中既没有黑，也没有白，而颜色只取决于主要的逻辑前提。如果这个前提是：我非法地让她有了孩子.....

“好的。只是你不要这样.....”我说，“我很清楚，我一定会把你带到I那儿去，就像我上次说过的那样，只有这样，她.....”

“好的。”（她慢慢放下了捂着脸的手，低低地答道。）

我将她搀扶起来，我们沿着暮色沉沉的街道走着，默默想着自己的心事，也许我们想的是同一件事……我们在静静的悄无声息的铅灰色的房屋中走着，狂风怒号，任意抽打着枝条……

透过呼啸的风声，突然，我清晰地听到了背后响起那熟悉的、啪啪踩在水洼里的脚步声。当我拐弯的时候，我扭头看过去：在马路模糊的玻璃上的颠倒地飞翔着的乌云的倒影中，我看见了S。霎时间，我的手有些不听使唤了，甩手的节奏也有些乱了。我开始大声同O讲话，我说，明天……是的，就在明天，“积分号”要进行首次试航，这是真正空前的、伟大的、震撼人心的大事件。

O惊愕地圆瞪着蓝眼睛瞧着我，她露出疑惑的表情地使劲看着我不断晃动的胳膊。我没给她说话的机会，自己不停地说着。同时我的脑子里十分紧张地思考着。一个念头不断地翻腾着，它反复敲击着我的大脑，这个想法只有我一人知道：“不能这样……得想个主意……不能把他引到I那里去……”

本来我应该向左拐的，但我却拐向了右边。大桥像恭顺的奴才拱着背，任凭我们三个踩踏过去：我、O，还有S。对岸幢幢大楼里的无数灯光洒在水面上，碎裂成无数个小块，它们剧烈地跳动着，与水中的白色泡沫融为一体。在我们不远处，风呜呜响着，那声音像极了大提琴的低音鸣响。在低音里仍然时不时传来那个噼噼啪啪的踩水般的脚步声……

我家到了。O在门口站住了。她大声喊出来：

“不！你不是答应过……”

我没让她把话说完，就匆忙地将她推进了门里。我们一起进了大

厅。在大厅控制台前，我看见了那熟悉的松弛的脸颊，正激动得颤抖着。桌子四周围着一群号码，好像正在争论着什么。他们都将脑袋探出二楼栏杆，往下看，接着又一个接一个跑下楼去。但这些以后再说.....我连忙将O带到大厅的对面一个无人的角落里。

我朝外看了一眼，我看到墙外人行道上，一个脑袋很大的黑影正来回走着。我赶紧掏出了记事本。O-90慢慢地、无力地在自己的衣服堆里坐下，就像她自己很快要溶化掉了一样，渐渐地只剩下了一件空空的衣服，还有一个空洞的眼神，好像要将我吸进这蓝色的海洋里一样。她十分疲倦地说：

“为什么带我到这里来？你骗我？”

“嘘.....别吱声！你瞧，那里，看到墙外有什么了吗？”

“嗯，有个影子。”

“他一直在跟踪我.....我不能，你懂吗？我不能让他.....所以，现在我得写个便条，你带着这个条子，自己去找她。我敢肯定，她会守在这里的。”

在制服下面，她的血肉之躯又充满了生机，她的脸上出现了一点淡淡的朝霞之光。我将便条塞给她，我又使劲握了握那冰冷的手，最后一次深深地看了看她的蓝眼睛。

“永别了！可能，以后会.....”

她抽出了手，微微弓腰慢慢地离开了。刚迈开两步，又飞快地转过身来，回到了我身边。她的嘴唇蠕动着，用她的眼神和嘴巴重复着我听不清楚的话。那么令人伤痛的笑啊！这是多么难受的场景啊！

后来，她那拱肩驼腰的瘦弱身影走出了门口，走出了墙外，她不曾回头，很快就消失不见了，越走越快.....

我来到U的桌子旁。她激动地、懊恼地鼓着鱼鳃一样的腮帮子对我说：

“所有人都疯了！这个人居然一口咬定，他在古宅里看见了全身覆盖着毛发的光身子的人.....”

从那群茫然的人里头发出一个声音：

“千真万确！我没有说谎，我确实是看见了！”

“怎么，你喜欢这些是吗？真是胡说八道！”

“简直胡扯！”她说完这几个字。我不禁自问道：“没准，最近发生在我身上的事，还有我周围的事，可能真的是一场梦？”可是，我看了看我那原始人般毛茸茸的手，又想起了她的话：“可能你身上有森林的血液.....就因为这个我才爱上了你.....”

不，幸好这不是做梦。哦，不对。不幸的是，这不是在做梦。

笔记之三十三

匆忙的最后一篇

这一天到了

我连忙拿起报纸。也许报纸上.....我眼巴巴地迅速读着报纸（确实是这样，我觉得眼睛此刻就像钢笔，就像计算机，它成为了一种工具，一种身外之物，你可以拿在手上，并且能够感觉到它们）。报纸首页用大号黑字印着头版内容：

幸福的敌人已经醒来。你们必须要用双手护卫自己的幸福！明日，所有工作都必须停止。全体号码都要参加手术治疗。拒不参加者，必将受到全知全能者死刑机的惩治。

明天！怎么还会有明天呢？

我习惯性地，像每天一样，伸出手（也是一个工具罢了！）到书架上，将今天的报纸和其他的报纸一样，放在金色硬皮夹里。但我的手却停在了半空中：“做这些又有什么用呢？已经无所谓了。我再也不会回来了.....我再也不会再在夹子里放进报纸了。”就这样，手一松，报纸落到了地板上。

我站在屋里，环顾着整个房间。看着眼前的一切，将那些我舍不得留下的东西，都塞进自己头脑中那个无形的箱子里：桌子、书籍和软椅。哦，I曾经坐过这里，那时候我坐在她脚下地板上.....还有我的床.....

过了一分钟，两分钟，我呆立着，等待着此刻会有奇迹出现——会不会电话铃响了，会不会她告诉我.....但是，没有，什么也没有.....

我要离开这里了，我要走向未知。这是我最后的记录。永别了，我的那些素不相识的读者们，我和你们一起分享了我最近的生活，我这个患有灵魂疾病的人，将我的一切毫无保留地告诉给了你们。直到一根磨坏的螺丝钉，直到最后一条破损的发条.....我要走了.....

笔记之三十四

获释的农奴

阳光明媚的夜

无线电女神

啊，但愿我已经摔成了碎片！但愿我已经和她一起到了绿墙之外，和那些齙着黄牙的野兽待在一起！但愿我永远也不再回到这里来，那该有多好。无论如何，也比此刻要强！至少强上一千倍、百万倍。但是此刻——怎么办呢？让我去扼杀自己的灵魂吗？不行。可这有用吗？不！D-503，你要冷静。你要将自己放到坚实的逻辑轴线上，尽管可能时间很短暂，至少使出全力压住杠杆，就像古代的奴隶那样，推动三段论的罗盘——直到你能清楚地记录下，并彻底理解之前所发生的一切.....

当我登上“积分号”时，大家都各就各位，这巨大的玻璃蜂箱内的所有蜂房都有人在。从甲板上望出去，可以看到到处都是蚂蚁般的小人，他们正忙着发电报，摆弄着发电机、变压器、测高计、整流器、发动机、泵，以及各种导管……在公共大厅里，有一些人正俯身在图表和仪器上，没准是科学局的人。副设计师和他的两位助手也在旁边待着。他们三人的脑袋都像乌龟似的缩在肩膀里，脸色发青，一副没什么精神的样子。

“怎么样？”我问道。

“还好……就是有点紧张。”其中一个笑了笑，脸色依然发青，给人不见阳光的感觉。

“也许我们会降落到某个陌生的地方也说不定。此外，也没人清楚……”

我甚至没什么勇气看他们，因为再过一小时，我就用自己的这双手，将他们从守时戒律表井然有序的數字中彻底勾掉，永远地将他们从联合国伟大母亲的怀抱中扯开。他们使我想起了《三个获释的农奴》中的悲剧形象。这是我们小学时候学到的内容。

故事的主人公是三个号码，他们参加了一项试验，他们被解除了一个月的劳动，在这段时间里，他们想干什么都行。这三个可怜的家伙只能在过去工作的地方晃来晃去，东张西望，不住地看着人们忙碌着。他们甚至会站在广场上不由自主地重复工作时的动作，因为这已经成为了他们的习惯，到了规定的时间不做这些动作，他们的身体会受不了。但此刻，他们只能对着空气拉锯子，推刨子，就像手中握着锤子似的在叮叮当当锤打看不见的铸铁块。终于，挨到了第十天，他们忍无可忍，最

后选择手拉手，在《进行曲》的乐声中，走向河水深处，让河水淹没他们的痛苦……

我再重申一遍：我没法看向副设计师他们，我没有勇气，想赶紧离开这里。

“我去检查一下发动机房，我们就出发。”我说着。

他们问了我一些问题，比方说发射点火要用多少电压？船尾液舱需要多重水压载？我身体内部有台留声机，它能将一切问题对答如流，而且精确无误。可是我，我内在的自我，正默默地盘算着自己的事。

狭窄的走廊上，不时地有灰色制服的号码走来走去，迎面都是一张张灰青色的脸。我突然看到一张脸一闪而过，虽然可能只有一秒钟的时间。但我认出了他，那压着低低的头发，那鼓起的额头，还有深陷的眼睛。是他，没错！看到他我立即明白了，他们已经到了。这一切我是躲不开的，我的时间已经非常有限，总共只有几十分钟……我忍不住浑身颤抖起来，虽然十分微弱，但我觉得它不会停止，直到事件结束也不会。好像我化身成了一幢房子，而房子的基座就是一台硕大的马达，它实在太强了，以至于所有的墙壁、隔墙、电缆、房梁、所有的灯……都在发颤。

我还不确定，她是不是也来了。但是现在已经没有时间想这些了。他们已派人来，命令我赶紧上去，前往指挥室。要出发了……又要驶往哪儿去呢？

四周都是灰色的、缺乏光泽的脸。下面，在水面上映着一道道的蓝色的涟漪。天空是沉重的、铸铁般的层层云块。我几乎没有力气，将如铸铁一般的手臂抬起来，我抓起沉重的话筒说道：

“起飞，45度！”

响起了沉闷的爆炸声，机身抽动了一下，飞船尾部掀起了绿白色的烟柱，脚下的甲板动了，它变得软软的，就像橡胶一样。我脚下的一切，我的全部生活，永别了……我离开那里越来越远，那蓝色水晶的城市、那圆顶、那蓄电塔，还有它上面的孤零零的手指——这一切只一秒钟就都深深地坠入了旋涡里，眼前是一团棉花似的云彩。我们穿越了过去……几秒钟，我们就穿过了云层，迎着太阳和蓝天。蓝天颜色越来越深，逐渐变成了黑色，星星像冰冷的银白的汗珠出现在天幕上……

这是一个夜，那么可怕，那么炫目又那么黑，又是个阳光灿烂的星夜。仿佛突然之间，我变聋了，虽然明明能听到铜管正在喷射的声音，可是我却觉得四周悄无声息，太阳也变得无声无息。但这是很自然的事，也在我们的预料之中。很明显，我们已经冲出了大气层。但是，这一切来得太快，太突然了。以至于我们每个人都胆怯了，默默地静寂了下来。而我……却在这充满幻想的、沉默无声的太阳下，变得分外轻松了些。仿佛我已经经历了最后一次阵痛，已经跨过了不可能跨过的边界。我的躯壳已经扔在了下面，而我自己正朝着一个全新的世界飞翔。在这里，一切都会不同，将是全新的旅程……

“继续前进！”我对指挥话筒发出号令。或者，这只是我体内的留声机在机械地下令。我像机器一样，将话筒交给了副设计师。我全身的分子都在微微发颤。我冲下升降扶梯，四处寻找……

这是大厅的门……再过一个小时，这扇门就会哐啷啷地重重地关上……门口站着一个我不认识的号码，他身材矮小，脸孔毫无特征，和成千上万个号码一样，混在人群中难以辨认，但是他的胳膊却很长，简直长到了膝盖。好像一个组装错了的零件，本应该安装在腿上，却被粗

心地安装到了肩膀上。

他伸出一只长手挡住了我：

“你去哪儿？”

显然，他不认识我。好吧，我没有其他的办法。随他去吧，也许这样更好。我俯视着他，大声地一本正经地说：“我是‘积分号’的设计师。是我在指挥这次试航，你懂吗？”

胳膊撤走了。

我进入了大厅。在仪器和地图上方，凑着几个灰头发的脑袋，还有黄头发的、秃头的、暗黄的秃脑袋。我迅速地扫视了一遍，随后退了出来，通过走廊，我下了舷梯，来到机舱。这里热极了，轰鸣声不绝于耳，爆炸后管道变得十分灼热；仿佛喝醉酒了，醉醺醺地跳着舞；刻度表盘的指针一秒不停地晃动着……好了，终于找到了。我一眼就看到了那个有着鼓突额头的人，他手中拿着一本笔记，正低头记录着……

“请问（机器轰响，我只得冲着他的耳朵大声喊）……她在这儿吗？她在哪儿？”

帽檐底下露出了微笑：

“她？她在无线电机房……”

我连忙赶了过去。那里一共有三个人。都头戴有耳机的头盔。好像她比平时高出了一头，戴着耳机似乎闪闪发亮，要飞起来似的。她就像古代的传说中的女神。身上迸发出无线电的蓝色火花……还有那股淡淡的、闪电过后总会出现的新鲜空气的香气。

“我需要人手……嗯，那就你吧。”因为跑步，我气喘吁吁地对她说，“我需要向下面，向地面，向飞车站，发出信号……来吧，由我口授。”

机房旁是一个小得像盒子般的舱房。我们肩并肩坐在桌子旁边。我抓到她的手，使劲捏着。

“你觉得，以后会怎么样呢？”

“不知道。你能体会吗？这一切简直太美妙了：我们在飞行着，却不知道要飞往何处……很快就到12点了，一切皆有可能……等到晚上……晚上，我们又会在哪里呢？没准我们会在草丛里，在干枯的树叶堆里……”

她身上迸发出蓝色的火花，还有闪电的气味。我颤抖得更加厉害了。

“请记住，”我大声地气喘吁吁（因为刚才的奔跑）地说：“时间：11点30分，速度：5800……”

她低下戴着帽盔的头，眼睛看着纸，小声说：“……昨天晚上，她来找我了，带着你的便条……我知道，我全都知道，你别吱声……那孩子是你的吧。我将她送走了，她已经出了绿墙。她会活下去的……”

我又回到了指挥室。眼前又是那黑漆漆的黑夜，还有炫目的阳光。墙上的时钟指针正机械地慢慢地走着，一分一秒都在消逝。周围的一切都沉浸在迷雾之中，几乎难以察觉地颤抖着（只有我一个人知道）。不知怎么地，我突然觉得，要是这一切不发生在这儿，而是发生在下面，发生在离地球更近的地方，可能会更好。

“停止！”我向话筒发出命令。

“积分号”凭借惯性继续向前，但速度逐渐慢了下来。最后，“积分号”在空中停留了一秒钟，就像被一根无形的头发丝缠住了一样，接着那根头发丝断了，“积分号”像块石头似的急速下坠，速度越来越快。时间一分分过去，我甚至能听到脉搏的跳动声。眼看着时钟的指针越来越接近12点钟了。我懂得：若我是块石头，我就是地球。即使被抛向了天空，我仍然急不可耐地要往下坠落，摔到地球上，即使砸个粉碎也心甘情愿……可是……下方出现了蓝色的云海……可是……

我体内的留声机依然准确地、机械地拿起了话筒发出命令：“低速行驶！”石块停止了下降。此刻只有飞船下部的四条管子（两个位于船尾，两个位于船首），在疲惫地喷着气，这样发出的动力，可以维持“积分号”原地不动。“积分号”震颤着，就像抛了锚似的牢牢停住在空中，离地面大约有1000米。

所有人都涌上了甲板（快到12点钟了，马上就要响起开饭的铃声了），他们从玻璃船舷上面探出身子，贪婪地看着眼前陌生的世界。下面有各种色彩：淡黄色、绿色、蓝色。还有秋天的金黄的树林、草原，湛蓝的湖泊。在一个如蓝碟子般的湖边上，有几堆黄色的废墟，还有一根有些吓人的枯黄的手指——可能是古代留下的教堂大塔楼。

“看，那边，看啊，在右边！”

那里，在绿色的荒原上，有一个飞快移动着的棕色块状物体。我下意识地抓起了望远镜看出去：那是一群棕色的马正扬着马尾在草原上飞奔，野草已经淹没了它们的腿，而骑在马背上的，是他们，黑皮肤的、白皮肤的，还有深色皮肤的人……

我听到身后有人说：

“我敢肯定，我看到一张脸。”

“得了吧！对别人瞎说去吧！”

“好吧，给你们望远镜……”

但是马群已经消失不见了。眼前只有一片望不到边际的绿色荒原……突然，在荒原上方响起了刺耳的铃声，这声音响彻了整个荒原，震到了我整个人以及整个飞船上的所有人。午餐时间到了，再过一分钟就是12点整。

我周遭的一切似乎有些乱了。在台阶上，有个人的金色胸章掉到地上。这无所谓吧。我一脚踩了上去，它咔嚓一声碎了。有人大声说着：“我敢肯定，那是一张人脸！”大厅的四方大门敞开着；眼前出现了一副白色细密的小牙齿，还有她含着的微笑……那时候，钟声不断响着，一声接一声，敲得人心惊胆战。

走在最前面的人已经开始朝门口走了……突然，那四方的大门被两只熟悉的，特别长的胳膊拦住了。

“站住！”

她的手指甲深深陷入我的手掌，是I-330。她正站在我的旁边：

“他是谁？你认识他吗？”

“难道……难道他……”

他已经被什么人扛在了肩头。下面是上百张脸，他高踞在众人之

上，他那张脸像千百大众的脸一样平淡无奇，可是却又和所有的脸不同。

“我代表安全卫士局，告诉你们，你们每个人都能听到我的声音！告诉你们，我们已经十分清楚。虽然我们还不知道你们的号码，但是，我们已经掌握了除此之外的其他所有信息。‘积分号’不会被你们占领！试航将进行到底，现在不许你们再乱动。你们给我乖乖地执行这次试航。以后……好了，我就说到这里。”

四周静悄悄的。我脚下的玻璃地面变软了，如棉花一般，我的脚也是，软绵无力。我旁边的I，露出苍白而无力的笑容，她迸发出疯狂的蓝色火花。透过牙缝，她对我耳语道：

“啊，你干得真好！你终于‘履行了义务’了！可真不赖啊……”她迅速地抽出自己的手，那长着愤怒翅膀的头盔一下子就赶到了我前面很远的地方。只留下我一个人，目瞪口呆地站着，我只能一言不发地跟着大家去餐厅……

“但是，这跟我没有关系啊。并不是我，并不是我啊！我跟什么人从来没有说过啊，除了那些不会说话的白纸……”

我的心无声地、绝望地朝她喊着。她与我隔着一张桌子坐着，她连看都不看我一眼。她旁边是一个年纪大的，肤色暗黄的秃头。我听见有人在说话（是I的声音）：

“‘高尚之举’？但是，亲爱的教授先生，对这个词只要进行一点粗浅的词源学研究，谁都明白，它只是一个迷信，是古代封建时代的残余，而我们……”

我感到自己的脸越来越苍白，别人很快就会注意到的.....但是我体内的留声机，仍然对每块食物做着规定的50下咀嚼动作。我自我封闭起来，将自己关在一间不透明的房间里；我用石块将门堵死，然后又挂上了窗帘.....

后来，指挥者的话筒又回到了我手上。我们又一次穿过了云层，在寒气逼人的、濒临死亡的忧伤中飞行，又一次见到繁星点点、星光灿烂的夜空。几分钟，几小时，时间不断飞逝.....无须赘言，我体内的逻辑马达在全速运转着。因为突然在我的记忆中，出现了我的书桌，还有坐在桌旁的U，她伏在桌上，看向我忘了合上的那页笔记。我终于明白了，不是别人，而是她.....一切都清清楚楚了。

我必须赶到无线电机房.....那带翅膀的头盔，那蓝色闪电的气味.....我记得，后来我极力同她说话，我还记得，她的目光穿过我不看向我，仿佛我是透明的。她的声音就像来自遥远的外太空：

“我正忙着，我正接收地面发来的信号。请你向她口授吧.....”

在盒子般的小机舱里，我思索了一秒钟，毫不迟疑地发出命令：

“时间：14点40分。下降！熄灭发动机。任务完成。”

我又返回到指挥舱。“积分号”的机器心脏已经停止了工作。我们正在下降。我的心没法跟上“积分号”下降的速度，快要跳出了嗓子眼。我们穿过云层.....眼前是一片绿色的斑块，越来越近，越来越清楚，像疾风似的扑向我们。“很快就要结束了。”

眼前是副设计师那张不寻常的斜眉歪脸的白瓷脸。大概他狠狠推了我一下，我的头撞上了什么东西。我眼前一阵发黑，迷迷糊糊听见他

说：

“开动尾部推进器——全速前进！”

飞船猛烈地向上一冲……其他的我也不记得了。

笔记之三十五

被箍住了

胡萝卜

杀人

我整夜无法入睡，一直在反复想着这件事……

因为昨天的事故，我的头被绷带紧紧缠着。但我感觉，这并不是绷带，而是头箍，是毫不留情的玻璃钢箍。我一直在想一件事：我要杀死U。杀了U之后，我再去找I，然后对她说：“现在你相信我了吧？”最让我厌恶的是，杀人是最肮脏、最原始的勾当。要去砸碎别人的脑袋，一想到这一点，我就觉得嘴里有种奇怪的作呕的甜腻味道。我连口水都没法咽下去，我只能将口水吐到手帕里，这样嘴就更加地干了。

我的壁橱里，有一个沉重的活塞杆，因为在铸造的时候裂开了，我便将它带回来，本想着用显微镜观察一下断裂的情况。我把笔记手稿卷

成卷（这次让她彻底看个够），塞在活塞杆的断截里就下楼去了。楼梯像总也走不完一样，台阶又湿又滑，真让人生气，我的嘴里还不断地流出口水来，我不得不用手帕擦着……

终于来到了底层，我的心一沉。我停下脚步，抽出断杆，向控制台走去……但是U不在那，我只看到一张空荡荡的、冰冷的办公桌。我想起来了，今天的工作全部停止，所有的号码都去做手术了。所以，她没必要留下来，因为没人会来登记的。

我来到街上，此刻正刮着风。满天都是一块块飞驰着的沉重的铁块。这景象跟昨天很像：那时，整个世界都碎裂成锋利的、零碎的小片，这些小片急促地掉下来，从我眼前飞过，仅仅停留一秒钟的时间，转眼就消失得无影无踪了。这就像是原本一张写满字的纸，这些原本工工整整的黑色字母，突然间偏离了原来的位置，它们惊慌失措地逃离，到处乱窜，而纸张上一个字也不剩。只有些毫无意义的感叹词，如“嗯、啊、呀”。街上人们也是这样，变得毫无秩序可言，乱七八糟的，有朝前的，有往后的，有斜着走的，甚至还有竖着走的。

这会儿，街上又没有一个人了。我飞速地跑着，突然之间，我停住了：在二层楼一间仿佛吊在空中的小玻璃方格房间里，有一男一女，他们在接吻。她整个身子朝后仰着，心痛地说着：“这是最后一次，永别了。”

在街角处，有一撮人头在摆动，像一丛刺灌木丛似的。他们的脑袋上方飘着一面旗帜，上面写着：“打倒机器！打倒手术！”我默默思考着，“是不是每个人都忍着某种剧烈的痛苦，要想彻底消除它，只能将心一起剝出来不可……这样的话，每个人都必须……否则……”突然，我觉得世界上什么都不存在了，眼前只有我原始的、毛茸茸的手掌，还

有这一卷铸铁般沉重的记事稿.....

突然，街上出现了一个飞奔的小男孩，他整个身子都朝前探着，下唇像卷起的袖子一样鼓出来，他扭曲着脸，哭喊着，脸都变了样，好像有人在后面追赶他，我听到了后边响起的脚步声.....

这孩子使我想起了U。“对了，她现在应该在学校，我必须赶过去。”我连忙冲进了最近的地铁入口。在门口，有个人正往上跑，嘴里说着：“没有车！今天火车不开！那里正.....”我冲下台阶去，那里简直是一个梦的世界。许许多多的水晶玻璃像太阳一样闪着亮光，一眼望去，月台上全是脑袋，黑压压一片，火车是空的，迟钝地停在轨道上。

静默中，突然我听到了一个声音。那是她，虽然我看不见她，但是我确信这是我所熟悉的那个清脆、柔韧的、活力充沛的、如鞭子般抽打出来的声音，我好像已经看到了那个眉梢高挑的尖三角.....我喊道：

“让开，让我过去！让我到那边去！.....”

但是我的手和肩膀不知被谁使劲拉住，无法脱身。我只能在这片静默中倾听：

“.....不，你们快去吧。到他们那去！他们会治好你们的病，用发酵的幸福喂饱你们。这样，你们就会安安静静地入睡，秩序井然、节奏统一地打鼾——难道你们还听不到这伟大的鼾声交响曲吗？愚蠢的人们啊！他们正打算把你们从那些折磨着的问号中解放出来。从此以后，你们就会远离那些弯弯扭扭像蛆虫一样的问号。你们怎么还站在这里？快上去啊，去接受这伟大的手术！我一个人待在这里，和你们又有什么关系呢？你们别管了，我要战斗，一个人绝望地战斗下去！若是我所争取的是无法实现的东西.....”

另一个沉重而缓慢的声音响起：

“啊哈！争取无法实现的东西？这就是说，你要追求那些愚蠢的幻想，那些幻想在你面前耍花招？不，我们要抓住它，让它们不再捣鬼，然后……”

“然后，吃掉它们，再倒头就睡，鼾声大作。然后又会出现一个新的幻想。据说古时候有一种动物叫驴。为了让它们不停地向前走，人们就在前面车辕上，吊一根胡萝卜，勾引着它，让它吃不到，但是始终能看到……如果它真咬到了，那么……”

钳制突然不见了，我急忙朝她讲话的地方冲过去。但是，这个时候你推我挤地一团乱，我身后有人喊道：“他们来这儿啦！他们来啦！”灯光闪了一下就灭了，是有人切断了电缆。到处都是如潮的人流、呼喊声、呻吟声、脑袋、手掌……

我不知道，在地铁里这样乱哄哄的环境中，我待了多久。我只记得我摸到了台阶，看到了昏暗的光线，渐渐变得越来越亮。于是，我们来到了街上，像扇形似的四散跑开……

又剩下我一个了。仍然刮着风，灰暗的暮霭低垂下来，微弱的月光若隐若现。在人行道潮湿的玻璃板底下很深的地方，倒映着灯光、房墙和移动着脚步的人影。我手里的稿纸分外沉重，它把我使劲往下拖。

我来到了楼下大厅里，U依然不在，她的房里也黑着灯，并没有人。我上楼回到了自己的房间，打开灯。太阳穴仍然在突突跳着。我不停地在屋子里踱步：桌子、桌子上的白色稿纸、床、门……我左边的房间里垂着窗帘。右边房间那个满是疙瘩的秃脑袋，正在看书，他的额头像一个巨大的抛物线，额上的皱纹像一行行难以辨认的黄字。我们有时

目光相遇，这时我会觉得，他额头的皱纹与我相关的。

后来的事情发生在21点整。U突然出现了，我记得我听到了自己粗重的喘息声，简直震到了我的耳朵，我想小点儿声，可是没有用。

她坐下来，把膝盖中间的制服裙扯平。粉红的褐色鱼鳃抖动着。

“啊，亲爱的，你真的受伤了？我刚听说就马上赶来了……”

那个活塞杆就放在我面前的桌子上。我跳起身来，气喘得更厉害了。她也听见了，话说了一半就惊讶地站了起来。我已经瞄准了她的脑壳，感觉嘴里有某种甜得发腻的东西……手帕呢？我找不到，那就把口水吐在地板上。

右边那个额头上写着我的事的黄色皱纹，好像总在看着我。不能让他瞧见，我按下了电钮，我并没有下窗帘的权利，但是现在顾不了那么多了。窗帘落了下来。

她显然意识到了什么，慌忙朝门外奔去。我赶在她前面，用钥匙锁上了门，呼哧呼哧地喘着粗气，死死盯着她的脑壳不放……

“你……你疯了！你怎么敢……”她往后退去，倒在了床上，瑟瑟发抖的手夹在两个膝盖中间。我浑身是劲，眼睛死死盯着她，缓缓地伸出手（只有一只手能动），抓起了活塞杆。

“求求你！只要等一天……一天。明天，明天，我就去……”

她在胡说些什么？我已扬起了手……好像，她就要死了。是的，我的那些素不相识的读者们，你们可以叫我杀人犯。我知道，我的活塞杆马上就要砸中她的脑袋了，但是，她突然大声尖叫道：

“看在……看在……我答应你……我……等我一下……”她颤抖地扯开制服，一个苍黄的、肌肉松弛的、肥大的躯体倒在了床上……

我突然明白过来：她以为我放下窗帘是想要……

这太离谱了，太荒谬了，我忍不住哈哈大笑了起来，这一笑，我体内的那根紧绷着的发条断了，手垂了下来，活塞杆应声落地。

从这段经历中，我明白过来：笑是最可怕的武器。它能毁灭一切，包括杀人。我坐在桌子那边，哈哈大笑。这是绝望的、歇斯底里的笑。我不知道如何摆脱这处境，太荒唐了，如果让事态自然发展下去，我不清楚，会有什么结果。不过，一个新的情况出现了：电话铃响了。

我连忙去接。使劲捏住话筒：可能是她打来的？但是，电话那头是一个陌生的声音：“稍等。”

话筒嗡嗡地没完没了地响着，让人心中慌乱。铸铁般的脚步声由远及近，终于说话了。

“D-503？嗯……我是全知全能者。立即到我这里来！”

叮当一声，电话挂上了，这声音就像钥匙插进了锁眼。

U还躺在床上，闭着眼睛，鱼鳃向两边撑开了，像在笑。我从地板上捡起她的衣服，扔到她身上，从牙缝中挤出话来：

“喂！快点儿，快点儿！”

她用胳膊肘微微撑起身体，乳房垂到了一边，眼睛睁得圆圆的，像一尊蜡像。

“你说什么？”

“让你穿上衣服！”

她的脸扭曲着，紧紧地抓住衣服，声音瘪瘪地说：“转过身去……”

我转过身，额头靠在玻璃上。我看到灯火、人影、火花都在黑色的潮湿的镜子中颤动。不，这是我，这就是我……他为什么要见我？难道他知道了一切，关于我，关于她的一切？

U已经穿好了衣服，站在门口。我朝她跨前两步，使劲捏住她的手，就像要挤出所有的答案似的。

“听着……她的名字你是知道的，你明白我的意思……你必须告诉我实话……我不在乎会发生什么事，你报告了她的名字了吗？”

“没有。”

“没有？为什么呢，既然你……”

她下唇像我见到的那个小男孩一样，噘了起来。她的两腮淌下了泪水……

“因为我……我怕要是这样做了……你将再也不会爱我……哦，我不能，我做不到！”

我明白了，这是真话。荒唐而又可笑，但是是符合人性的真话！我打开了门。

笔记之三十六

空白页

基督教的上帝

我的母亲

奇怪，在这一页内容上，我只能留下空白了。究竟我是怎么走到那儿的，怎么等待着（我知道我肯定等过一会儿），我都记不清了。关于这部分，没有留下任何的声音、面容和动作。就像我和世界的所有的联系被切断了一样。

等我头脑清醒的时候，我发觉我已经站在他面前了，瑟缩着低着头，我只能见到他那两只放在膝盖上的铸铁般的巨掌。这双手那么重，似乎要将他的膝盖压弯了。他慢慢地动了动手指。他的脸高高在上，好像要高入云端了。因此声音是从这么高的地方传过来的，所以并不似巨雷那般震耳欲聋，反而像一个普通人的声音。

“这么说，连你也是。你是‘积分号’的设计师！你十分有幸地会成为最伟大的征服者！你的名字本应该在联合国历史上揭开灿烂的光辉篇章！连你也……”

热血涌上了我的脑袋和面颊——关于这部分内容，我的脑海又是一片空白。我只能感觉到太阳穴怦怦地跳，至于上面洪亮的声音所表达的内容，我一个字也没听到。只是当他说完以后，我才清醒过来。我看见

他那千斤重的手慢慢移动起来，伸出一根手指指着我说：

“怎么？你为什么不说话？我是刽子手？这是真的，还是假的？”

“是的。”我顺从地答道。突然我又能听清楚他的话了。

“很好！那又如何？你以为我害怕这个词吗？难道你不曾去撕下这个词的外壳，看一看它究竟意味着什么吗？让我来告诉你.....你记得这个场景吧：在黄昏时分，一座小山上，竖着一个十字架，还有一群人。他们浑身是血，正忙着将一个人钉在十字架上，而山下的另一些人，正泪流满面地朝上面看着。你是否觉得，山丘上面的那些人所扮演的角色才是最困难的，最重要的！如果没有他们，那么这幕伟大庄严的悲剧将如何上演呢？愚昧的人群向他们喝倒彩。然而，这场悲剧的创造者，正是上帝本人！他更应该慷慨地犒劳他们。所谓最仁慈的上帝自己，不也是将一切不顺从的异教徒投入地狱之火慢慢烧死吗？难道他就不是刽子手？被基督徒烧死的人难道会比烧死的基督徒更少吗？你要清楚，这位上帝，就是几个世纪以来一直被人们赞颂，称他为仁慈的上帝。这是不是很荒唐？不，这并不荒唐。这就是一个用鲜血写就的证明。它证明人难移的本性，即理智。即使在当人还是野蛮的、满身披毛的时候，他们也意识到：对人类真正的、符合几何原理的爱，必然是反人性的，真理的必然特征就是残酷。正如火的必然特征就是灼烧一样！你能找到一种不会烧人的火吗？好吧，你来论证一下，来反驳我吧！”

我怎么能反驳呢？这些思想曾经也是我的所思所想啊，我哪能反驳呢？只是我从来不会把它们形之于如此辉煌、坚韧的外部形式而已。因此，我只能默不作声.....

“如果你的沉默表示赞同的话，那么就让我们往下谈吧。我们要彻

底谈谈，就像已经打发了孩子们去睡觉，只剩下成年人那样。首先我要问你个问题：人自出生以后，就开始祈祷，幻想，渴望着的东西是什么呢？他渴望有个人来告诉他什么是幸福，然后用锁链将他和幸福拴在一起。我们现在所做的一切不都是为了这件事吗？古人曾幻想死后能进入天堂……而天堂是什么？天堂里的人没有欲望，没有怜悯，没有爱。他们全部都生活在幸福之中，天使是幸福的，因为他们被摘除了幻想……如今，我们正要进入这种幸福之中，我们正要将它好好抓住了（他紧紧攥住自己的拳头，如果他手里捏着块石头，可能也会从石头里挤出水来），现在我们只差包裹好奖品，将它平分给所有人，可是恰恰在这个时候，你……”

沉重的铸铁般的说话声突然停顿了。我全身像是被铁锤敲击过的红色铁块，满脸涨得通红。锤子又举了起来，我等待着……等待着……突然：

“你几岁？”

“32。”

“年纪不小了，但是你比只有你一半年龄的儿童更加幼稚！听着，难道你真的从来没有想过，他们——虽然我们还不能确定他们的号码，但我相信，从你那儿，我会知道一切的。他们需要你，只因为你是‘积分号’的设计师，只是想利用你……”

“不！不是这样的！”我喊叫了起来。但是，这就像用手挡住了飞过来的子弹，是那样徒劳无力。甚至你还能听见自己那可笑的“不是这样的”，而子弹已经穿过了你，你已经倒地了。

是的，不错，我是“积分号”的设计师……是的，没错……突然，我

脑海中又浮现了那天早晨U那张愤怒的、颤抖的鱼鳃腮帮，那会儿她们.....

我记得自己傻笑着抬起眼，在我面前坐着一个苏格拉底式的秃头男人，秃头上渗出细细的汗珠。

一切都是那么简单、那么明了！简单得甚至有些荒唐！我笑得喘不过气来。笑得呛住了，我用手掌堵着嘴，疯狂地冲了出来。

一级级的台阶，大风，潮湿的跳动着的灯光，还有不断闪现的人脸.....我不顾一切地奔跑着：“不，我必须见她！得再见她一面！”

接下来发生的一切又是一片空白。我只记得一双双脚，看不到人，只见到他们的脚：这些脚混乱地走在人行道上，就像落下一阵沉重的脚步的雨点.....我甚至还听到了有人快活地、俏皮地大喊着：“嗨，嗨！来这边，上我们这里来！”像是冲我喊的。

之后，我发觉自己站在空荡荡的广场上，只有我一个人。广场中心是一台乌蒙蒙的、骇人的、沉重的庞然大物——全知全能者的死刑机。看到它，我的脑海中立即出现了这样的场景：雪白的枕头，枕头上面有一个半闭着双眸的、向后仰着头的脸，她露出甜蜜的、尖利的洁白小牙齿.....将这一切和死刑机联想到一起，这太荒唐了！太可怕了！我明白我为什么会这样想，但是我不想再想下去了。也不想喊出来：我不愿意！这样不行！

我闭上了双眼，坐在通向死刑机的台阶上。可能是因为正在下雨，我的脸湿漉漉的。远处，隐隐听见沉闷的喊叫声。但是谁也听不见，没有人能听见我的呼喊：救我出去！救救我吧！

如果我像古代人那样，有位母亲，该多好啊！一个只属于我自己的母亲。那样，在她的眼中，我不是“积分号”的设计师，不是号码D-503，不是联合国的一分子，只是一个活生生的人，是她身体里的一部分，是一个被蹂躏、被窒息、被抛弃的一部分.....即使我被别人钉在十字架上，或者别人把我钉上十字架（也许这没什么分别），但她总能听到我的呼喊，但愿她用那布满皱纹的、皱成一团的瘪嘴来亲吻我.....

笔记之三十七

鞭毛虫

世界末日

她的房间

早晨在食堂里，我左边的人忧心忡忡地低声对我说：

“你吃呀！怎么不吃？他们都看着你哪！”

我用力挤出笑容，觉得这笑就像脸皮裂开了一道口子，我继续笑，这裂口越来越大，我觉得越来越疼.....

后来，我用叉子叉起了一块食物举到嘴巴，突然叉子从手中滑落了下来，还敲着了盘子。桌子、墙壁、杯盘，连空气都颤抖了，发出铮铮

的响声。外面也是一样，响起了震天巨响，那声音越过我们头顶，越过房屋，慢悠悠地波及到远处，接着逐渐变弱，最后消失不见了，就像水面上泛起的阵阵涟漪，完全不见了。

霎时间，我见到一张张骇人的苍白的脸，那些正使劲咀嚼的嘴，像突然坏掉了一样，停住了，叉子也停留在了半空中。之后，一切都乱了套，脱离了永恒不变的轨道。所有的人都从座位上跳了起来（连颂歌都没有唱完），也不顾节拍，匆忙咽下正在咀嚼的食物，相互抓住对方问道：“怎么了？到底怎么回事？”这台伟大的机器，这台有条不紊的机器，此刻突然散了架子，出现了一堆乱七八糟的碎片……所有人都朝楼下跑去，奔向电梯……到处都是支离破碎的脚步声，还有片语只言，就像信纸的碎片吹上了天……

旁边的房子里的人也都涌了出来。过了一会儿，大街上就像显微镜下的一滴水；封闭在透明的、玻璃一样的滴液里的鞭毛虫，正在四处乱窜，前后左右，动个不停。

“啊！”我听到了一声喊叫。我看见他的后脑勺，还有他的一根手指向上指去。沿着那个方向，所有人朝那方的天空看去。

天空中，乌云好像在逃避无形的侦缉队的追捕。它们彼此碾压、你追我赶朝前飞奔。安全卫士的飞行器正在空中巡查。在远远的西方，有一群……似乎是……刚开始，谁也看不清那到底是什么，我也是。虽然我应该比别人看得明白。那似乎是一大群黑色的飞船，飞得很高，几乎令人难以置信，它们成了一个个飞速移动的小黑点。

它们越飞越近，嘶哑的、嗷嗷的啼鸣慢慢地传到了地面，终于，我们看清了，那是一群飞鸟。天空中布满了这些黑色的、尖声鸣叫着往下

降落的三角形；强大的气浪将它们朝下驱赶着，它们着陆在圆屋顶上、房顶上、木杆上，还有阳台上。

“啊！哈！”激动的脖子转了过来，我一眼就看到了那个额头凸鼓的人，但是，他好像换了一个人，喜气洋洋，容光焕发地，在风的呼啸声中，在飞鸟的聒噪声中，他对我大声喊道：

“你明白吗，绿墙，绿墙已经被炸坍了！你明白吗？”

在离街很远的那边，我看到，几个人影闪动。他们伸着脑袋，匆忙地跑到屋里去。而在人行道的另一边，有一大群做过手术的人，正匆促而又缓慢地向西走去……

他的嘴角和眼角都是毛茸茸的……我拽住他的手，问道：

“告诉我，I在哪里？她在绿墙那边吗？还是……我一定要找到她，你懂吗？必须要找到她，我不能……”

“在这里！”他陶醉似的大声叫道，露出黄色的牙齿，“她就在这里，在城里，她在行动。噢……我们干了件大事！”

“我们？”“我”是谁？

他身边有五十来个人，他们都露出相似的表情，都容光焕发，声音洪亮，乐乐呵呵地露出一口坚固的牙齿。他们迎着狂风，手里挥舞着电绳索（他们从哪里弄到的？），他们朝着西边走去，来到48号大街，将那些已经做过手术的人团团围住……

我脚步踉跄，在逆风中奔跑，我朝她的方向跑去。去做什么？我也不清楚。我踉跄着……又是空无一人的大街……城市变了样，它看起来

是那么陌生，那么野蛮，到处都是鸟儿欢天喜地的鸣叫声，还有胜利的喧闹声。好像世界已经走到了尽头！

透过许多房子的玻璃，我惊讶地看到在几个房间里，女号码和男号码无耻地做爱，甚至都不放下窗帘，也没有粉红票子，就在大白天.....

她住的地方到了，大门茫然地敞开着。在控制台那里，我没有看到人。电梯停在升降井的半中央。我喘着粗气沿着没完没了的楼梯走着，终于冲到了走廊。我飞快地一间间房门看过去，门上的号码就像轮子里的辐条，320，326，330，I-330！

透过玻璃门，我看到屋里的所有东西都散乱着，一片狼藉，一把椅子倒在地上，也许是匆忙中被碰翻了。还有桌子，四脚朝天地翻倒在地上，就像死掉了的畜生。床歪斜地抵在墙边，地板上乱七八糟，全是凌乱的粉红票子。

我弯下腰拾起一张，一张，又一张。每张写的全是我，D-503，都是我，它们是我融化了的、炽热的感情。只剩下这些了.....

不知怎的，我觉得不应该将它们就这么洒落在地上。我捡拾起一把，将它们小心地放在桌上，轻轻地捋平，看着它们，然后，我忍不住大笑了起来。我以前从来都不知道，现在我可算知道了，你们也许懂吧，笑可以有很多不同的色彩。它只是你内心爆发的回声：它可能是红色、蓝色、金黄色的节日焰火，也可能是炸飞到空中的血肉之躯.....

我注意到有几张票子上，写着一个陌生的号码。我不记得数字子，只记住了字母F。我把桌上的票子都扫到地上，用脚踩着它们，也踩着自己.....然后，转身离开了.....

在走廊里，我坐在对面的窗台上，好像在等待着什么。我这样呆坐了很久。突然，走来了一个老人，他的脸上满是皱纹，那张脸就像是扎了窟窿、漏了气的气球；扎破的孔眼里还渗出透明的水滴，正在慢慢地流淌着，这也许是眼泪。老人走远了，我才意识到，并大声地喊道：

“喂，请告诉我，你认识I-330吗？”

老人转过身来，绝望地甩了一下手，一瘸一拐地走远了……

黄昏，我回了家。西边灰蓝色的天空每分每秒都在紧张地抽搐、发颤，还有雷电的咆哮声，屋顶上布满了焦炭似的黑鸟。

我躺下了，噩梦像野兽一样朝我压了过来，我要窒息了……

笔记之三十八

我不知道要怎么写提要

要不就叫被扔掉的香烟吧

我睡醒了。眼睛被一阵刺目的光线刺痛。我眯起眼睛，脑子里弥漫着蓝色的烟雾，一切都似在迷雾中。我默默地回想着：

“可是我没有开灯呀，为什么……”

我惊跳了起来，睁大眼睛一看，桌子后面坐着I，她用手支着下巴，正笑吟吟地看着我。她那会儿就坐在这张桌旁，待了大概十到十五分钟。这短暂的时光已经过去很久了，但是我仍然觉得，好像她刚刚离开。我还能追上她，抓住她的双手——可能她还会笑着对我说……

I就坐在桌子那儿。我朝她奔去。

“是你，是你！真的是你！我一直在找……我进入你的房间，我为你……”

但是，我只是说了一半的话，她长矛枪似的尖硬的睫毛顶住了我。我止住了脚步。我想起来了，在“积分号”上，她就是用这样冰冷的眼神看着我的。我知道，我必须要把一切都告诉她，在最短的时间内让她了解真相……让她完全信任我，否则她永远也不会……

“听着，I，我必须……我必须把一切都告诉你……不，让我先喝口水……”

嘴里太干了，好像里面贴满了吸墨水纸。我倒了杯水，喝下去，但仍然很干……我把杯子放在桌上，双手紧紧地抓住水瓶……

这时，我才意识到那蓝烟是香烟的烟雾。她将香烟送到嘴边，深深地吸了一口，那贪婪的神气，就像我喝水一样，接着她又吐了一口烟，随后说道：

“不必了。安静点。你还看不出来吗？我还是来了。下面有人在等我……你想要这几分钟吗？这是我们最后的几分钟……”

她用力将香烟扔到地上。身体向后仰，此刻她还倚着软椅的扶手（而想要按住墙上的按钮是十分困难的）……我记得，软椅一晃，椅子

两只脚就离开了地面，跷了起来。紧接着窗帘被落了下来。

她凑近我，搂住我。透过衣裙，她慢慢地、温柔地，朝我身躯注入能愈合我所有创伤的毒液。

突然.....常常会有这类情形出现：当你陷入甜蜜、温馨的睡梦中时，你猛然地被什么东西刺痛，你心中一惊就睁大了眼睛.....现在就是这样：我突然想起来在她房间里的那些踩脏的粉红票子，还有票子上的字母F以及几个数字.....此刻我的脑子里搅成了一团。直到现在我也没法说明白这到底是种什么感情，我狠狠地碾压着她，她失声叫了起来.....

在这10分钟还是15分钟里，只剩下最后的1分钟。雪白的枕头托着她向后仰着头，她双眼微微闭合着，露出一排整齐的小尖牙.....这情景又让我想起了那些令人颤抖的事情，那些荒唐的又无法驱赶走的事情。我越加温柔地也越加残暴地对待她，用手指在她身上留下了更多的青紫色指痕.....

她并没睁开眼睛（我注意到了这一点），问道：

“听人说，你昨天去见了全知全能者？是真的吗？”

“是的。”

她的眼睛猛然睁开了，我饶有兴致地看着她的脸，却发觉她的脸色逐渐变白，直到最后毫无血色，仿佛整张脸都隐没了——只剩下一双眼睛。我把一切都告诉了她，只有一件事，我没有说（我也不知道为什么没有说，不对，其实我是知道的），就是全知全能者最后讲的那些话，他们之所以需要我，只是因为我.....

她的脸慢慢又显现出来了，就像在显影液里的一张照片：脸颊、洁白的牙齿和嘴唇。她站起身来，走到壁橱的镜子面前。我的嘴又开始干了，我又倒了杯水，却怎么也喝不下去，最后，我将杯子放回桌上，问她：

“你来到这儿，就是因为你想了解这件事？”

她从镜子里望着我。我见到一个尖刻的、嘲讽的三角形。她转过身来，想说些什么，但是她什么也没说。

没必要说了，我明白。

和她告别吧，我挪动着自己的不太灵光的腿，不小心撞到了椅子上。椅子翻了，它趴在地下，四脚朝天，跟她屋里的那把椅子一样。她的嘴唇冰冷……就跟我房间的地板一样冰冷。

她走后，我坐在地板上，低着头，看着那个烟头。

我没法写了，不想写了！

笔记之三十九

结局

所有这一切，就像在饱和液中扔进的一颗盐粒：很快地，它就分解

成了针状晶体，硬结了，凝固了，我非常清楚：一切已成定局。我也下了决心，明天早上我就要去安全卫士局，这无异于自杀，但是，只有这样，才能得到重生，因为只有死去后才能重生。

西边的天空每隔一秒钟，就猛烈抽搐一下。我的头发热，太阳穴突突地跳着。我整夜睡不好觉，直到早上七点才睡去，这时黑暗已经退去，天空变成了灰色，停栖着黑鸟的屋顶也逐渐清晰了起来.....

等我再次醒来时，已经是十点钟了（看来，今天铃声没有响过），桌上还有昨晚那杯没有喝的水。我口渴极了，很快地喝完了这杯水。然后冲出门：我要赶紧去做这件事，越快越好。

天空依然是空空荡荡，一片蔚蓝，就像被狂风暴雨洗劫了一样。影子的形象尖锐锋利.....一切仿佛都是秋天的蓝色的空气裁出来的，稀薄的，不敢用手碰，看起来十分脆弱。我也是这样：我不能想，思考是件危险的事，否则.....

我什么都不想，甚至我连看都不看周围一眼，我所看到的可能只是些隐约印象而已。人行道上布满了不知从哪里伸展出的树枝，叶子是绿色的，还有黄色的、深红色的；天空里飞鸟和飞船互相冲撞着。我周围都是人们的脑袋和张开的嘴，还有挥动着树枝的手.....可能，周围是一片嘈杂的吵闹声、鸟鸣声.....

接着，是一条条空无人烟的街，就像被瘟疫肆虐过一样。我记得，我的脚被一个绵软的东西绊住了，它一动不动躺在地上。我弯腰看了一下，是具尸体。他平躺着，双脚叉开，还有，他的脸.....我认出了那厚厚的黑人般的嘴唇，还有他说话时吐沫横飞的样子。

此刻，他仿佛还在冲着我笑。我只停留了一秒钟，就飞快地跨过

他，跑了起来.....我不能停下.....我必须了结所有的事情，否则，我会像超量载重的铁轨一样断裂，坍塌.....

幸好，离安全卫士局只有二十来步路了。我已经能看到那金色的招牌了，终于来到了门口，我深深吸了一口气，走了进去。

走廊里站着看不到头的一排号码，他们一个挨着一个排着，手里拿着小张纸，或是厚厚的笔记本。他们慢慢地挪动着，走一点就停住不动了。我在队伍旁来回地窜，脑袋就要炸开了。我拉住他们的衣袖，恳求着，就像一个病人渴望能得到一种良药，即使要忍受疼痛也在所不惜。

有一个身着制服的女人，她腰束皮带，胸部两个半球形明显地撅着。她不停地扭来扭去，好像她的眼睛正长在半球上似的。她冲我笑着，说：

“他肚子疼！将他带到厕所去，在右边第二扇门.....”

所有人都哄笑着，这笑声让我的喉咙发痒，好像什么东西堵住了似的。我想要叫起来，再不然.....再不然.....

突然，背后有人拉我的胳膊。我转过身，看到了一对透明的招风耳朵。它们不是平时的粉红色，今天变得红彤彤的。他说话的时候，喉结上下移动着，好像要蹦出来似的。

“你来干什么？”他问道，尖尖的芒刺使劲钻进来。

我连忙抓住他。

“快啊，求求你.....去你的办公室吧！.....我要说出一切.....立刻！能向你报告，这太好了.....但是，要向你本人报告，这有点可

怕.....但这样也好.....也好.....”

他也认识她，这会使这件事更让人难以接受。但是，也许他听了我的话会和我一样颤抖.....那这件事就是我们两个人的了.....我不想一个人面对.....

门被“砰”的一声关上了。我还记得，在门底下卡了一张纸。关门的时候，它在地板上蹭着。接着，屋里突然罩上了一种奇特的、令人窒息的沉默。如果，他说上一句话，哪怕是一个无关紧要的字也好，我会马上全部都说出来的。但是他始终一言不发。我非常紧张，紧张得连耳朵都鸣响起来。我对他说（眼睛不敢正视他）：

“我想，我一开始是恨她的.....我心里有斗争.....不过，不不，不要相信我说的，我本来可以，但我不想拯救我自己。我愿意毁灭，我愿意那样，因为，那对我来说是最珍贵的.....也就是说，不是毁灭，是希望她.....哪怕是现在，即便我知道了一切，我仍然.....你知道，你知道吧，全知全能者召见了。”

“是的，知道。”

“而他对我说的话.....你懂吗，他所说的话，就像是从我脚底下把地板给抽走了，只剩下我，还有桌上所有的东西：稿纸、墨水啦.....墨水会泼出来的，洒到所有东西上.....”

“还有什么，快点说！快点说！好多人在排队等着呢。”

于是，我磕磕巴巴、颠三倒四地将所有的事，所有本子里写的事都告诉给了他。还说起了那个真正的我，还有那个毛茸茸的我。还说到了她当时谈起我的手.....是的，所有的一切就是从那时开始的.....我还讲

到我如何对自己说谎，她怎么给我弄了假证明，我又怎样一天天地变坏，还有地下长廊以及绿墙外的种种见闻.....

我说得乱七八糟、颠三倒四，甚至有时候我还结结巴巴，不知道有些话该怎么讲。他那两片双曲线的嘴唇上，挂着一丝讪笑，就帮我补充上，我说不出的那些话，我十分感激地点点头.....后来（不知怎么地），他已经开始替我讲述了！我只有听着他讲述的份儿，只能点头说：“对，是的.....对，就是这样，很对！”

我感觉自己嘴唇周围一片冰凉，就像服用了醚麻剂一样，从脖子根儿开始发凉，我艰难地问道：

“但是，你怎么会得知这一切的呢.....”

又一个讥诮的冷笑，他嘴唇的双曲线弯得更厉害。他回答道：

“我看出来了，你还是有隐瞒的部分。比方说，你列举了你在绿墙之外所见到的所有人，但是，你却漏掉了一个。你否认得了吗？你记不记得在那里见过我，只有一秒钟？是的，那就是我。”

我呆住了。

突然，我脑子里像闪电似的一亮，我懂了：我感到无地自容，原来他，跟他们也是一伙的.....我突然意识到，我所供出的这些东西——我自己的痛苦，还有我之前之后的所有想法，以及我来到这里的原因，就像我做了一件多么了不起的事一样。而其实，这一切都非常可笑！就像古代笑话里所写的关于亚伯拉罕和以撒的故事[6]一样。当亚伯拉罕浑身冷汗，要举刀杀死自己的儿子的时候，突然天上传来了声音，大喊：“别当真！我只是在开玩笑.....”

我的眼睛紧紧盯着他嘴上的冷笑，我双手紧紧撑住了桌子边沿，慢慢地推开椅子，扭头疯狂地冲了出去，我顾不得别人的喊叫，跳下台阶.....许许多多张大张的嘴都从我眼前一晃而过.....

[6]上帝耶和華想考驗亞伯拉罕對他的忠誠度，就吩咐亞伯拉罕將愛子以撒獻祭。亞伯拉罕帶着以撒上山，將以撒綁起來，舉起尖刀要刺穿以撒的時候，上帝阻止了這場玩笑，還由衷地讚美了亞伯拉罕的忠誠。

我迷迷糊糊地來到了一間公共休息室，這是一個地鐵站。在地面上，一切都在毀滅。歷史上最偉大、最理智的文化在崩潰；而在这里，一切還是那樣美好。四壁發着光，水聲輕快地在潺潺流淌，那看不見的透明音樂也像水流一樣流淌着.....可想一想，這一切都會毀滅！這一切都會被埋沒在荒草叢中，只剩下傳說.....

我痛苦地大聲呻吟起來。左邊有個人輕輕地拍了拍我的肩膀。他是我的鄰居，那個有着巨大的拋物線大額頭的人，我再次看到他額頭上深淺不一的皺紋。那上面寫的都是關於我的事。

“我明白，我非常理解你，”他說道，“但你必須要冷靜！你一定要冷靜下來！一切都會回來的，必定會回來。大家都必須知道我的發現，這十分重要。現在我要第一個告訴你：我已經計算出來了，沒有無窮大！根本就不存在！”

我奇怪地看着他。

“真的，我跟你說，不存在無窮大。如果世界是無限的，那麼物質

的平均密度应该等于零。但是，既然我们都知道，它不是零，那么宇宙就必然是有限的。它是球形的，它的半径的平方 r^2 等于平均密度乘以.....剩下的就是计算出数值系数，那么.....你懂了吗？这意味着一切都是有限的，简单的，是可以计算的.....你懂了吗？而你，我尊敬的朋友，你刚才大喊大叫，妨碍了我的演算.....”

我不知道是哪件事更令我崩溃：是他的发现呢，还是他对我这个突然醒悟的時刻的描述？但是，这时我才发现，他手上有个笔记本，还有一张对数刻度表。我突然意识到，即使全世界都毁灭了，我也要完成我的笔记。（将它留给我的那些素不相识的读者们。）

我从他那里弄了几张纸。在这些纸上记下了我最后的记事.....

我打算结束我的笔记，就像古代人在埋葬死者后，在墓穴上插上十字架一样。突然，铅笔哆嗦了一下，从我的手指缝上掉了下去.....

“听着，”我拉着他的衣袖说，“你说的那个有限宇宙的最终极限在哪儿？它的后面又有什么呢？”

他还没来得及回答，上面台阶上就响起了脚步声.....

笔记之四十

事实

气钟罩

我确信

白天。天气晴朗。气压计标注760毫米。有没有可能，这些笔记真的是我写的呢？D-503，真的写过这些内容吗？难道过去我确实这样感受过，或者只是我自以为这些是我的感受？

笔迹确实是我的没错。但是，幸运的是，只是笔迹相同而已，现在，我可不会写什么类似梦呓这类荒唐无比的隐喻了。没有任何的感情流露，我只记录事实。因为我非常健康，我绝对的健康。此刻，我正在微笑呢，我总是忍不住想微笑：因为我脑袋里的那根刺已经被拔除掉了，现在觉得无比轻松，空空如也。准确地说，不是空空如也，也是没有任何陌生的无法掌控的东西侵入，所有那些妨碍我微笑的东西都不存在了。（微笑才是一个人该有的常态。）

以下就是我的真实记录：那天晚上，我，还有那位发现宇宙有限之说的邻居，以及其他和我们在一起的人，都被带到了附近的礼堂。（礼堂的号码是112，不知为什么，我总是觉得这号码很熟悉。）我们被捆在手术台上，接受了伟大的手术。第二天，我，D-503，谒见了全知全能者，将我所知道的一切都和盘托出。怎么以前我会感到难以说出口呢？真有点不可思议！唯一合理的解释就是我生病了，患了灵魂病。

还是在当天晚上，我和全知全能者大人同桌而坐。我有生以来第一次坐在气钟罩室内。她们带来了一个女人。当着我的面，对她进行取证。这女人嘴巴很硬，一直不肯开口，始终冷笑着。我发现她的小牙齿雪白而尖利，还挺好看的。

后来，她被押到气钟罩下。她的脸变得很白很白，还有黑幽幽的大

眼睛，真是很好看。当开始从气钟罩里抽出空气时，她的头向后仰去，眼睛闭上了，嘴唇抿着。这个动作仿佛似曾相识。她使劲抓住椅子把手，眼睛一动不动地看着我，直到眼睛完全合上为止。然后，把她拖出来。电极很快使她苏醒过来。接着她又被送进了气钟罩。这样反复了三遍，她仍然一个字也不说。

和这个女人一起押来的人比她要老实多了。很多人只受了一次刑，就招供了。明天他们全都要被送上全知全能者的死刑机，被处以极刑。这事已经不能再拖延了。因为西部街区依然混乱一片，到处都是哭喊声，还有尸体，还有野兽.....此外，十分遗憾，还有为数不少的号码背叛了理性。

但是，庆幸的是，在40号横向大街上，已经筑起了一堵临时高压电墙。我希望，我们会取得胜利。不仅如此，我确信，我们终将取得胜利。因为理性必胜。

we

RECORD ONE

An Announcement

The Wisest of Lines

A Poem

This is merely a copy, word for word, of what was published this morning in the State newspaper:

"In another hundred and twenty days the building of the Integral will be completed. The great historic hour is near, when the first Integral will rise into the limitless space of the universe. One thousand years ago your heroic ancestors subjected the whole earth to the power of the United State. A still more glorious task is before you: the integration of the indefinite equation of the Cosmos by the use of the glass, electric, fire-breathing Integral. Your mission is to subjugate to the grateful yoke of reason the unknown beings who live on other planets, and who are perhaps still in the primitive state of freedom. If they will not understand that we are bringing them a mathematically faultless happiness, our duty will be to force them to be

happy. But before we take up arms, we shall try the power of words.

"In the name of the Well-Doer, the following is announced herewith to all Numbers of the United State:

"Whoever feels capable must consider it his duty to write treatises, poems, manifestoes, odes, and other compositions on the greatness and the beauty of the United State.

"This will be the first cargo which the Integral will carry."Long live the United State! Long live the Numbers!! Long live the Well-Doer!!!"

I feel my cheeks burn as I write this. To integrate the colossal, universal equation! To unbend the wild curve, to straighten it out to a tangent—to a straight line! For the United State is a straight line, a great, divine, precise, wise line, the wisest of lines!

I, D-503, the builder of the Integral, I am only one of the many mathematicians of the United State. My pen, which is accustomed to figures, is unable to express the march and rhythm of consonance; therefore I shall try to record only the things I see, the things I think, or, to be more exact, the things we think. Yes, "we"; that is exactly what I mean, and We, therefore, shall be the title of my records. But this will only be a derivative of our life, of our mathematical, perfect life in the United State. If this be so, will not this derivative be a poem in itself, despite my limitations? It will. I believe it, I know it.

My cheeks still burn as I write this. I feel something similar to what a woman probably feels when for the first time she senses within herself the

pulse of a tiny, blind, human being. It is I, and at the same time it is not I. And for many long months it will be necessary to feed it with my life, with my blood, and then with a pain at my heart, to tear it from myself and lay it at the feet of the United State.

Yet I am ready, as everyone, or nearly everyone of us, is. I am ready.

RECORD TWO

Ballet

Square Harmony

X

SPRING. From behind the Green Wall, from some unknown plains the wind brings to us the yellow honeyed pollen of flowers. One's lips are dry from this sweet dust. Every moment one passes one's tongue over them. Probably all women whom I meet in the street (and certainly men also) have sweet lips today. This somewhat disturbs my logical thinking. But the sky! The sky is blue. Its limpidness is not marred by a single cloud. (How primitive was the taste of the ancients, since their poets were always inspired by these senseless, formless, stupidly rushing accumulations of vapor!) I love, I am sure it will not be an error if I say we love, only such a sky—a

sterile, faultless sky. On such days the whole universe seems to be moulded by the same eternal glass, like the Green Wall, and like all our buildings. On such days one sees their wonderful equations, hitherto unknown. One sees these equations in everything, even in the most ordinary, everyday things.

Here is an example: this morning I was on the dock where the Integral is being built, and I saw the lathes; blindly, with abandon, the balls of the regulators were rotating; the cranks were swinging from side to side with a glimmer; the working beam proudly swung its shoulder; and the mechanical chisels were dancing to the melody of unheard tarantellas. I suddenly perceived all the music, all the beauty, of this colossal, this mechanical ballet, illumined by light blue rays of sunshine. Then the thought came: why beautiful? Why is the dance beautiful? Answer: because it is an unfree movement. Because the deep meaning of the dance is contained in its absolute, ecstatic submission, in the ideal non-freedom. If it is true that our ancestors would abandon themselves in dancing at the most inspired moments of their lives (religious mysteries, military parades), then it means only one thing: the instinct of non-freedom has been characteristic of human nature from ancient times, and we in our life of today, we are only consciously—

I was interrupted. The switchboard clicked. I raised my eyes—O-90, of course! In half a minute she will be here to take me for the walk.

Dear O-! She always seems to me to look like her name, O-. She is approximately ten centimeters shorter than the required Maternal Norm. Therefore she appears round all over; the rose-colored O of her lips is open to meet every word of mine. She has a round soft dimple on her wrist. Children

have such dimples. As she came in, the logical flywheel was still buzzing in my head, and following its inertia, I began to tell her about my new formula which embraced the machines and the dancers and all of us.

"Wonderful, isn't it?" I asked.

"Yes, wonderful...Spring!" she replied, with a rosy smile.

You see? Spring! She talks about Spring! Females!... I became silent.

We were down in the street. The avenue was crowded. On days when the weather is so beautiful, the afternoon personal hour is usually the hour of the supplementary walk. As always, the big Musical Tower was playing the March of the United State with all its pipes. The Numbers, hundreds, thousands of Numbers in light blue unifs (probably a derivative of the ancient uniform) with golden badges on the chest—the State number of each one, male or female—the Numbers were walking slowly, four abreast, exaltedly keeping step. I, we four, were but one of the innumerable waves of a powerful torrent: to my left, O-90 (if one of my long—haired ancestors were writing this a thousand years ago he would probably call her by that funny word, mine); to my right, two unknown Numbers, a she—Number and a he—Number.

Blue sky, tiny baby suns in each one of our badges; our faces are unclouded by the insanity of thoughts. Rays Do you picture it? Everything seems to be made of a kind of smiling, a ray—like matter. And the brass measures: Tm—ta—ta—tam...Tra—ta—ta—tam...Stamping on the brassy steps that sparkle in the sun, with every step you rise higher and higher into

the dizzy blue heights Then, as this morning on the dock, again I saw, as if for the first time in my life, the impeccably straight streets, the glistening glass of the pavement, the divine parallel—epipeds of the transparent dwellings, the square harmony of the grayish-blue rows of Numbers. And it seemed to me that not past generations, but I myself, had won a victory over the old god and the old life, that I myself had created all this. I felt like a tower: I was afraid to move my elbow, lest the walls, the cupola, and the machines should fall to pieces.

Then without warning—a jump through centuries: I remembered (apparently through an association by contrast) a picture in the museum, a picture of an avenue of the twentieth century, a thundering, many-colored confusion of men, wheels, animals, billboards, trees, colors, and birds They say all this once actually existed!

It seemed to me so incredible, so absurd, that I lost control of myself and laughed aloud. A laugh, as if an echo of mine, reached my ear from the right. I turned. I saw white, very white, sharp teeth, and an unfamiliar female face.

"I beg your pardon," she said, "but you looked about you like an inspired mythological god on the seventh day of creation. You look as though you are sure that I, too, was created by you, by no one but you. It is very flattering."

All this without a smile, even with a certain degree of respect (she may know that I am the builder of the Integral). In her eyes, nevertheless, and on her brows, there was a strange irritating X, and I was unable to grasp it, to find an arithmetical expression for it. Somehow I was confused; with a somewhat hazy mind, I tried logically to explain my laughter.

"It was absolutely clear that this contrast, this impassable abyss, between the things of today and of years ago—"

"But why impassable?" (What bright, sharp teeth!) "One might throw a bridge over that abyss. Please imagine: a drum battalion, rows—all this existed before and consequently—"

"Oh, yes, it is clear," I exclaimed.

It was a remarkable intersection of thoughts. She said almost in the same words the things I had written down before the walk! Do you understand? Even the thoughts! It is because nobody is one, but one of. We are all so much alike—

"Are you sure?" I noticed her brows that rose to the temples in an acute angle—like the sharp corners of an X. Again I was confused, casting a glance to the right, then to the left. To my right—she, slender, abrupt, resistant flexible like a whip, 1—330 (I saw her number now). To my left, O—, totally different, all made of circles with a childlike dimple on her wrist; and at the very end of our row, an unknown he—Number, double—curved like the letter S. We were all so different from one another...

The one to my right, I—330, apparently caught the confusion in my eye, for she said with a sigh, "Yes, alas!"

I don't deny that this exclamation was quite in place, but again there was something in her face or in her voice...

With an abruptness unusual for me, I said, "Why, 'alas'? Science is

developing and if not now, then within fifty or one hundred years—"

"Even the noses will—"

"Yes, noses!" This time I almost shouted, "Since there is still a reason, no matter what, for envy... Since my nose is button—like and someone else's is—"

"Well, your nose is rather classic, as they would have said in ancient days, although your hands— No, no, show me your hands!"

I hate to have anyone look at my hands; they are covered with long hair—a stupid atavism. I stretched out my hand and said as indifferently as I could, "Apelike."

She glanced at my hand, then at my face.

"No, a very curious harmony."

She weighed me with her eyes as though with scales. The little horns again appeared at the corners of her brows.

"He is registered in my name," exclaimed O—90 with a rosy smile.

I made a grimace. Strictly speaking, she was out of order. This dear O—, how shall I say it? The speed of her tongue is not correctly calculated; the speed per second of her tongue should be slightly less than the speed per second of her thoughts—at any rate not the reverse.

At the end of the avenue the big bell of the Accumulating Tower

resounded seventeen. The personal hour was at an end. I—330 was leaving us with that S—like he—Number. He has such a respectable, and I noticed then, such a familiar, face. I must have met him some— where, but where I could not remember. Upon leaving me I—330 said with the same X—like smile:

"Drop in day after tomorrow at auditorium 112."

I shrugged my shoulders: "If I am assigned to the auditorium you just named—"

She, with a peculiar, incomprehensible certainty: "You will be."

The woman had a disagreeable effect upon me, like an irrational component of an equation which you can— not eliminate. I was glad to remain alone with dear O—, at least for a short while. Hand in hand with her, I passed four lines of avenues; at the next corner she went to the right, I to the left. O—timidly raised her round blue crystalline eyes.

"I would like so much to come to you today and pull down the curtains, especially today, right now "

How funny she is. But what could I say to her? She was with me only yesterday and she knows as well as I that our next sexual day is day after tomorrow. It is merely another case in which her thoughts are too far ahead. It sometimes happens that the spark comes too early to the motor.

At parting I kissed her twice—no, I shall be exact, three times, on her wonderful blue eyes, such clear, unclouded eyes.

RECORD THREE

A Coat

A Wall

The Tables

I looked over all that I wrote down yesterday and I find that my descriptions are not sufficiently clear. That is, everything would undoubtedly be clear to one of us, but who knows to whom my Integral will someday bring these records? Perhaps you, like our ancestors, have read the great book of civilization only up to the page of nine hundred years ago. Perhaps you don't know even such elementary things as the Hour Tables, Personal Hours, Maternal Norm, Green Wall, Well-Doer. It seems droll to me, and at the same time it is very difficult to explain these things. It is as though, let us say, a writer of the twentieth century should start to explain in his novel such words as coat, apartment, wife. Yet if his novel had been translated for primitive races, how could he have avoided explaining what a coat meant? I am sure that the primitive man would look at a coat and think, "What is this for? It is only a burden, an unnecessary burden." I am sure that you will feel the same, if I tell you that not one of us has ever stepped beyond the Green Wall since the Two Hundred Years' War.

But, dear readers, you must think, at least a little. It helps.

It is clear that the history of mankind, as far as our knowledge goes, is a history of the transition from nomadic forms to more sedentary ones. Does it not follow that the most sedentary form of life (ours) is at the same time the most perfect one? There was a time when people rushed from one end of the earth to another, but this was the prehistoric time when such things as nations, wars, commerce, different discoveries of different Americas still existed. Who has need of these things now?

I admit that humanity acquired this habit of a sedentary form of life not without difficulty and not all at once. When the Two Hundred Years' War had destroyed all the roads, which later were overgrown with grass, it was probably very difficult at first. It must have seemed uncomfortable to live in cities which were cut off from each other by green debris. But what of it? Man soon after he lost his tail probably did not learn at once how to chase away flies without its help. I am almost sure that at first he was even lonesome without his tail; but now, can you imagine yourself with a tail? Or can you imagine yourself walking in the street naked, without clothes? (It is possible you go without clothes still.) Here we have the same case. I cannot imagine a city which is not surrounded by a Green Wall; I cannot imagine a life which is not surrounded by the figures of our Tables.

Tables...Now even, purple figures look at me austerely yet kindly from the golden background of the wall. Involuntarily I am reminded of the thing which was called by the ancients "Sainted Image," and I feel a desire to compose verses, or prayers, which are the same. Oh, why am I not a poet, so as to be able to glorify the Tables properly, the heart and pulse of the United

State!

All of us and perhaps all of you read in childhood, while in school, that greatest of all monuments of ancient literature, the Official Railroad Guide. But if you compare this with the Tables, you will see side by side graphite and diamonds. Both are the same, carbon. But how eternal, transparent, how shining the diamond! Who does not lose his breath when he runs through the pages of the Guide? The Tables transformed each one of us, actually, into a six—wheeled steel hero of a great poem. Every morning, with six—wheeled precision, at the same hour, at the same minute, we wake up, millions of us at once. At the very same hour, millions like one, we begin our work, and millions like one, we finish it. United into a single body with a million hands, at the very same second, designated by the Tables, we carry the spoons to our mouths; at the same second we all go out to walk, go to the auditorium, to the halls for the Taylor exercises, and then to bed.

I shall be quite frank: even we have not attained the absolute, exact solution of the problem of happiness. Twice a day, from sixteen to seventeen o'clock and from twenty—one to twenty—two, our powerful united organism dissolves into separate cells; these are the personal hours designated by the Tables. During these hours you would see the curtains discreetly drawn in the rooms of some; others march slowly over the pavement of the main avenue or sit at their desks as I sit now. But I firmly believe, let them call me an idealist and a dreamer, I believe that sooner or later we shall somehow find a place in the general formula even for these hours. Somehow, all of the 86,400 seconds will be incorporated in the Tables of Hours.

I have had opportunity to read and hear many improbable things about

those times when human beings still lived in the state of freedom, that is, in an unorganized primitive state. One thing has always seemed to me most improbable: how could a government, even a primitive has always seemed to me most improbable: how could a government, even a primitive government, permit people to live without anything like our Tables—without compulsory walks, without precise regulation of the time to eat, for instance? They would get up and go to bed whenever they liked. Some historians even say that in those days the streets were lighted all night, and all night people went about the streets.

That I cannot understand. True, their minds were rather limited in those days. Yet they should have understood, should they not, that such a life was actually wholesale murder, although slow murder, day after day? The State (humanitarianism) forbade in those days the murder of one person, but it did not forbid the killing of millions slowly and by inches. To kill one person, that is, to reduce the individual span of human life by fifty years, was considered criminal, but to reduce the general sum of human life by fifty million years was not considered criminal! Isn't it droll? Today this simple mathematical moral problem could easily be solved in half a minute's time by any ten—year—old Number, yet they couldn't do it! All their Immanuel Kants together couldn't do it! It didn't enter the heads of all their Kants to build a system of scientific ethics, that is, ethics based on adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing.

Further, is it not absurd that their State (they called it State!) left sexual life absolutely without control? On the contrary, whenever and as much as they wanted...absolutely unscientific, like beasts! And like beasts they blindly

gave birth to children! Is it not strange to understand gardening, chicken farming, fishery (we have definite knowledge that they were familiar with all these things), and not to be able to reach the last step in this logical scale, namely, production of children—not to be able to discover such things as Maternal and Paternal Norms?

It is so droll, so improbable, that while I write this I am afraid lest you, my unknown future readers, should think I am merely a poor jester. I feel almost as if you may think I want simply to mock you and with a very serious face try to relate absolute nonsense to you. But first I am incapable of jesting, for in every joke a lie has its hidden function. And second, the science of the United State contends that the life of the ancients was exactly what I am describing, and the science of the United State does not make mistakes! Yet how could they have State logic, since they lived in a condition of freedom like beasts, like apes, like herds? What could one expect of them, since even in our day one hears from time to time, coming from the bottom, the primitive depths, the echo of the apes?

Fortunately it happens only from time to time, very seldom. Happily, it is only a case of small parts breaking; these may easily be repaired without stopping the eternal great march of the whole machine. And in order to eliminate a broken peg we have the skillful heavy hand of the Well-Doer, we have the experienced eyes of the Guardians...

By the way, I just thought of that Number whom I met yesterday, the double—curved one like the letter S; I think I have seen him several times coming out of the Bureau of Guardians. Now I understand why I felt such an instinctive respect for him and a kind of awkwardness when I saw that

strange I—330 at his side...I must confess that, that I...they ring the bell, time to sleep, it is twenty-two-thirty. Till tomorrow, then.

RECORD FOUR

The Wild Man with a Barometer

Epilepsy

If

Until today everything in life seemed to me clear (that is why, I think, I always had a sort of partiality toward the word "clear"), but today...I don't understand. First, I really was assigned to auditorium 112, as she said, although the probability was 500 to 10,000,000 or 1:20,000. (Five hundred is the number of auditoriums and there are 10,000,000 Numbers.) And second...But let me relate things in proper order.

The auditorium: an enormous half-globe of glass with the sun piercing through. The circular rows of noble, globelike, closely shaven heads. With joy in my heart I looked around. I believe I was looking in the hope of seeing the rose-colored scythe, the dear lips of O- somewhere among the blue waves of the unifs. Then I saw extraordinarily white, sharp teeth like the...But no! Tonight at twenty—one o'clock O— was to come to me; therefore my desire

to see her was quite natural. The bell. We stood up, sang the Hymn of the United State, and our clever phono-lecturer appeared on the platform with a sparkling golden loud-speaker.

"Respected Numbers, not so long ago our archaeologists dug up a book written in the twentieth century. In this book the ironical author tells about a Wild Man and a barometer. The Wild Man noticed that every time the barometer's hand stopped on the word 'rain,' it actually rained. And as the Wild Man craved rain, he let out as much mercury as was necessary to put it at the level of the word 'rain' (on the screen a Wild Man with feathers, letting out the mercury. Laughter).

"You are laughing at him, but don't you think the 'European' of that age deserves more to be laughed at? He, like the Wild Man, wanted rain—rain with a little 'r,' an algebraic rain; but he remained standing before the barometer like a wet hen. The Wild Man at least had more courage and energy and logic, although primitive logic. The Wild Man showed the ability to establish a connection between cause and effect: by letting out the mercury he made the first step on the path which.... "

Here (I repeat, I am not concealing anything, I am setting down everything) I suddenly became impermeable to the quickening currents coming from the loud-speaker. I suddenly felt I had come here in vain (why in vain and how could I not have come here, since I was assigned to come here?). Everything seemed to me empty like a shell. I succeeded with difficulty in turning my attention in again when the phono-lecturer came to the main theme of the evening—to our music as a mathematical composition (mathematics is the cause, music the effect). The phono-lecturer began the

description of the recently invented musicometer.

"...By merely rotating this handle anyone is enabled to produce about three sonatas per hour. What difficulties our predecessors had in making music! They were able to compose only by bringing themselves to attacks of inspiration, an extinct form of epilepsy. Here you have an amusing illustration of their achievements: the music of Scriabin, twentieth century. This black box"—a curtain parted on the platform, and we saw an ancient instrument—"this box they called the 'Royal Grand.' They attached to this idea of regality, which also goes to prove how their music... "

And I don't remember anything further. Very possibly because...I'll tell you frankly, because she, I—330, came to the "Royal" box. Probably I was simply startled by her unexpected appearance on the platform.

She was dressed in a fantastic dress of the ancient time, a black dress closely fitting the body, sharply delimiting the white of her shoulders and breasts, and that warm shadow waving with her breath between...And the dazzling, almost angry teeth. A smile, a bite, directed downward. She took her seat; she began to play something wild, convulsive, loud like all their life then—not a shadow of rational mechanism. Of course all those around me were right; they were laughing. Only a few...But why is it that I, too, I....?

Yes, epilepsy, a mental disease, a pain. A slow, sweet pain, bite, and it goes deeper and becomes sharper. And then, slowly, sunshine—not our sunshine, not crystalline, bluish, and soft, coming through the glass bricks. No, a wild sunshine, rushing and burning, tearing everything into small bits...

The Number at my left glanced at me and chuckled. I don't know why but I remember exactly how a microscopic saliva bubble appeared on his lips and burst. That bubble brought me back to myself. I was again I.

Like all the other Numbers I heard now only the senseless, disorderly crackling of the chords. I laughed; I felt so light and simple. The gifted phono-lecturer represented to us only too well that wild epoch. And that was all.

With what a joy I listened afterward to our contemporary music. It was demonstrated to us at the end of the lecture for the sake of contrast. Crystalline, chromatic scales converging and diverging into endless series; and synthetic harmony of the formulae of Taylor and McLauren, wholesome, square, and massive like the "trousers of Pythagoras." Sad melodies dying away in waving movements. The beautiful texture of the spectrum of planets, dissected by Fraunhofer lines...what magnificent, what perfect regularity! How pitiful the willful music of the ancients, not limited except by the scope of their wild imaginations!

As usual, in good order, four abreast, all of us left the auditorium. The familiar double-curved figure passed swiftly by, I respectfully bowed.

Dear O- was to come in an hour. I felt agitated, agreeably and usefully. Home at last! I rushed to the house office, handed over to the controller on duty my pink ticket, and received a certificate permitting the use of the curtains. This right exists in our State only for the sexual days. Normally we live surrounded by transparent walls which seem to be knitted of sparkling air; we live beneath the eyes of everyone, always bathed in light. We have

nothing to conceal from one another; besides, this mode of living makes the difficult and exalted task of the Guardians much easier. Without it many bad things might happen. It is possible that the strange opaque dwellings of the ancients were responsible for their pitiful cellish psychology, "My (sic!) home is my fortress" How did they manage to think such things?

At twenty-two o'clock I lowered the curtain and at the same second O— came in smiling, slightly out of breath. She extended to me her rosy lips and her pink ticket. I tore off the stub but I could not tear myself away from the rosy lips up to the last moment, twenty—two—fifteen.

Then I showed her my diary and I talked; I think I talked very well on the beauty of a square, a cube, a straight line. At first she listened so charmingly, she was so rosy; then suddenly a tear appeared in her blue eyes, then another, and a third fell straight on the open page (page 7). The ink blurred; well, I shall have to copy it again.

"My dear O-, if only you, if... "

"What if? If what?"

Again the old lament about a child or perhaps something new regarding, regarding., the other one? Although it seems as though some... But that would be too absurd!

RECORD FIVE

The Square

The Rulers of the World

An Agreeable and Useful Function

Again with you, my unknown reader; I talk to you as though you were, let us say, my old comrade, R-13, the poet with the lips of a Negro—well, everyone knows him. Yet you are somewhere on the moon, or on Venus, or on Mars. Who knows you? Where and who are you?

Imagine a square, a living, beautiful square. Imagine that this square is obliged to tell you about itself, about its life. You realize that this square would hardly think it necessary to mention the fact that all its four angles are equal. It knows this too well. This is such an ordinary, obvious thing. I am in exactly the same square position. Take the pink checks, for instance, and all that goes with them: for me they are as natural as the equality of the four angles of the square. But for you they are perhaps more mysterious and hard to understand than Newton's binomial theorem. Let me explain: an ancient sage once said a clever thing (accidentally, beyond doubt). He said, "Love and Hunger rule the world." Consequently, to dominate the world, man had to win a victory over hunger after paying a very high price. I refer to the great Two Hundred Years' War, the war between the city and the land. Probably on account of religious prejudices, the primitive peasants stubbornly held on to their "bread."[\[7\]](#)

This word came down to us for use only as a poetic form, for the chemical constitution of this substance is unknown to us.

[Z]This word came down to us for use only as a poetic form, for the chemical constitution of this substance is unknown to us.

In the thirty-fifth year before the foundation of the United State our contemporary petroleum food was invented. True, only about two tenths of the population of the globe did not die out. But how beautifully shining the face of the earth became when it was cleared of its impurities!

Accordingly the 0.2 which survived have enjoyed the greatest happiness in the bosom of the United State. But is it not clear that supreme bliss and envy are only the numerator and the denominator, respectively, of the same fraction, happiness? What sense would the innumerable sacrifices of the Two Hundred Years' War have for us if a reason were left in our life for jealousy? Yet such a reason persisted because there remained buttonlike noses and classical noses (cf: our conversation during the promenade). For there were some whose love was sought by everyone, and others whose love was sought by no one.

Naturally, having conquered hunger (that is, algebraically speaking, having achieved the total of bodily welfare), the United State directed its attack against the second ruler of the world, against love. At last this element also was conquered, that is, organized and put into a mathematical formula. It is already three hundred years since our great historic Lex Sexualis was promulgated: "A Number may obtain a license to use any other Number as a sexual product."

The rest is only a matter of technique. You are carefully examined in the laboratory of the Sexual Department where they find the content of the sexual hormones in your blood, and they accordingly make out for you a Table of sexual days. Then you file an application to enjoy the services of Number so and so, or Numbers so and so. You get for that purpose a checkbook (pink). That is all.

It is clear that under such circumstances there is no reason for envy or jealousy. The denominator of the fraction of happiness is reduced to zero and the whole fraction is thus converted into a magnificent infiniteness. The thing which was for the ancients a source of innumerable stupid tragedies has been converted in our time into a harmonious, agreeable, and useful function of the organism, a function like sleep, physical labor, the taking of food, digestion, etc., Hence you see how the great power of logic purifies everything it happens to touch. Oh, if only you unknown readers can conceive this divine power! If you will only learn to follow it to the end!

It is very strange. While I was writing today of the loftiest summit of human history, all the while I breathed the purest mountain air of thought, but within me it was and remains cloudy, cobwebby, and there is a kind of cross—like, four—pawed X. Or perhaps it is my paws and I feel like that only because they are always before my eyes, my hairy paws. I don't like to talk about them. I dislike them. They are a trace of a primitive epoch. Is it possible that there is in me...?

I wanted to strike out all this because it trespasses on the limits of my synopsis. But then I decided: no, I shall not! Let this diary give the curve of the most imperceptible vibrations of my brain, like a precise seismograph,

for at times such vibrations serve as forewarnings... Certainly this is absurd! This certainly should be stricken out; we have conquered all the elements; catastrophes are not possible any more.

Now everything is clear to me. The peculiar feeling inside is a result of that very same square situation of which I spoke in the beginning. There is no X in me. There can be none. I am simply afraid lest some X will be left in you, my unknown readers. I believe you will understand that it is harder for me to write than it ever was for any author throughout human history. Some of them wrote for contemporaries, some for future generations, but none of them ever wrote for their ancestors, or for beings like their primitive, distant ancestors.

RECORD SIX

An Accident

The Cursed "It's Clear"

Twenty-four Hours

I must repeat, I have made it my duty to write concealing nothing. Therefore I must point out now that, sad as it may be, the process of the hardening and crystallization of life has evidently not been completed even

here in our State. A few steps more and we will be within reach of our ideal. The ideal (it's clear) is to be found where nothing happens, but here I will give you an example: in the State paper I read that in two days the holiday of justice will be celebrated on the Plaza of the Cube. This means that again some Number has impeded the smooth running of the great State machine. Again something that was not foreseen, or forecalculated, happened.

Besides, something happened to me. True, it occurred during the personal hour, that is during the time specifically assigned to unforeseen circumstances, yet...

At about sixteen (to be exact, ten minutes to sixteen), I was at home. Suddenly the telephone:

"D-503 ?"—a woman's voice.

"Yes."

"Are you free?"

"Yes."

"It is I, I-330. I shall run over to you immediately. We shall go together to the Ancient House. Agreed?"

I-330!... This I-irritates me, repels me. She almost frightens me; but just because of that I answered, "Yes."

In five minutes we were in an aero. Blue sky of May. The bright sun in its own golden aero buzzed behind us without catching up and without

lagging behind. Ahead of us a white cataract of a cloud. Yes, a white cataract of a cloud, nonsensically fluffy like the cheeks of an ancient cupid. That cloud was disturbing. The front window was open; it was windy; lips were dry. Against one's will one passed the tongue constantly over them and thought about lips.

Already we saw in the distance the hazy green spots on the other side of the Wall. Then a slight involuntary sinking of the heart, down—down—down, as if from a steep mountain, and we were at the Ancient House.

That strange, delicate, blind establishment is covered all around with a glass shell, otherwise it would undoubtedly have fallen to pieces long ago. At the glass door we found an old woman all wrinkles, especially her mouth, which was all made up of folds and pleats. Her lips had disappeared, having folded inward; her mouth seemed grown together. It seemed incredible that she should be able to talk, and yet she did.

"Well, dear, come again to see my little house?"

Her wrinkles shone, that is, her wrinkles diverged like rays, which created the impression of shining.

"Yes" Grandmother," answered I-330.

The wrinkles continued to shine.

"And the sun, eh, do you see it, you rogue, you! I know, I know. It's all right. Go all by yourselves—I shall remain here in the sunshine.

Hmm....Apparently my companion, was a frequent guest here.

Something disturbed me, probably that unpleasant optical impression, the cloud on the smooth blue surface of the sky. While we were ascending the wide, dark stairs, I-330 said, "I love her, that old woman."

"Why?"

"I don't know. Perhaps for her mouth—or perhaps for nothing, just so."

I shrugged my shoulders. She continued walking up-stairs with a faint smile, or perhaps without a smile at all.

I felt very guilty. It is clear that there must not be "love, just so," but "love because of." For all elements of nature should be, ..

"It's clear..." I began, but I stopped at that word and cast a furtive look at I-330. Did she notice it or not? She looked somewhere, down; her eyes were closed like curtains.

It struck me suddenly: evening about twenty-two; you walk on the avenue and among the brightly lighted, transparent, cubic cells are dark spaces, lowered curtains, and there behind the curtains... What has she behind her curtains? Why did she phone me today? Why did she bring me here? and all this.

She opened a heavy, squeaking, opaque door and we found ourselves in a somber disorderly space (they called it an "apartment"). The same strange "royal" musical instrument and a wild, unorganized, crazy loudness of colors and forms like their ancient music. A white plane above, dark blue walls, red, green, orange bindings of ancient books, yellow bronze candelabra, a statue

of Buddha, furniture with lines distorted by epilepsy, impossible to reduce to any clear equation.

I could hardly bear that chaos. But my companion apparently possessed a stronger constitution.

"This is my most beloved" she suddenly caught herself (again a smile, bite, and white sharp teeth)—'to be more exact, the most nonsensical of all "apartments."

"Or, to be most exact, of all the States. Thousands of microscopic States, fighting eternal wars, pitiless like—"

"Oh, yes, it's clear," said I-330 with apparent sincerity.

We passed through a room where we found a few small children's beds (children in those days were also private property). Then more rooms, glimmering mirrors, somber closets, unbearably loud—colored divans, an enormous "fireplace," a large mahogany bed. Our contemporary beautiful, transparent, eternal glass was represented here only by pitiful, delicate, tiny squares of windows.

"And to think; here there was love 'just so'; they burned and tortured themselves." (Again the curtain of the eyes was lowered.) "What a stupid, uneconomical spending of human energy. Am I not right?"

She spoke as though reading my thoughts, but in her smile there remained always that irritating X. There behind the curtains something was going on, I don't know what, but something that made me lose my patience. I

wanted to quarrel with her, to scream at her (exactly, to scream), but I had to agree. It was impossible not to agree.

We stopped in front of a mirror. At that moment I saw only her eyes. An idea came to me: human beings are built as nonsensically as these stupid "apartments," human heads are opaque, and there are only two very small windows that lead inside, the eyes. She seemed to have guessed my thoughts; she turned around: "Well, here they are, my eyes...Well" (this suddenly, then silence).

There in front of me were two gloomy, dark windows and behind them, inside, such strange hidden life. I saw there only fire, burning like a peculiar "fireplace," and unknown figures resembling...

All this was certainly very natural; I saw in her eyes the reflection of my own face. But my feelings were unnatural and not like me. Evidently the depressing influence of the surroundings was beginning to tell on me. I definitely felt fear. I felt as if I were trapped in a strange cage. I felt that I was caught in the wild hurricane of ancient life.

"Do you know..." said I-330. "Step for a moment into the next room." Her voice came from there, from inside, from behind the dark window eyes, where the fireplace was blazing.

I went in, sat down. From a shelf on the wall there looked straight into my face, somewhat smiling, the snub-nosed, asymmetrical physiognomy of one of the ancient poets; I think it was Pushkin.

"Why do I sit here enduring this smile with such resignation, and what is

this all about? Why am I here? And why all these strange sensations, this irritating, repellent female, this strange game?"

The door of the closet slammed; there was the rustle of silk. I felt it difficult to restrain myself from getting up and, and...I don't remember exactly; probably I wanted to tell her a number of disagreeable things. But she had already appeared.

She was dressed in a short, bright-yellowish dress, black hat, black stockings. The dress was of light silk. I saw clearly very long black stockings above the knees, an uncovered neck, and the shadow between

"It's dear that you want to seem original. But is it possible that you—?"

"It is clear," interrupted I-330, "that to be original means to stand out among others; consequently, to be original means to violate the law of equality. What was called in the language of the ancients 'to be common' is with us only the fulfilling of one's duty. For—"

"Yes, yes, exactly," I interrupted impatiently, "and there is no use, no use..."

She came near the bust of the snub-nosed poet, lowered the curtain on the wild fire of her eyes, and said (this time I think she was really in earnest, or perhaps she merely wanted to soften my impatience with her, but she said a very reasonable thing):

"Don't you think it surprising that once people could stand types like this? Not only stand them, but worship them? What a slavish spirit, don't you

think so?"

"It's clear...that is...!" I wanted...(damn that cursed "it's clear!").

"Oh, yes, I understand. But in fact these poets were stronger rulers than the crowned ones. Why were they not isolated and exterminated? In our State —"

"Oh, yes, in our State—" I began.

But suddenly she laughed. I saw the laughter in her eyes. I saw the resounding sharp curve of that laughter, flexible, tense like a whip. I remember my whole body shivered. I thought of grasping her..., and I don't know what I had to do something, it mattered little what; automatically I looked at my golden badge, glanced at my watch—ten minutes to seventeen!

"Don't you think it is time to go?" I said in as polite a tone as possible.

"And if I should ask you to stay here with me?"

"What? Do you realize what you are saying? In ten minutes I must be in the auditorium."

"And all the Numbers must take the prescribed courses in art and science," said I-330 with my voice.

Then she lifted the curtain, opened her eyes—through the dark windows the fire was blazing.

"I have a physician in the Medical Bureau, he is registered to me; if I ask

him, he will give you a certificate declaring that you are ill. All right?"

Understood! At last I understood where this game was leading.

"Ah, so! But you know that every honest Number as a matter of course must immediately go to the office of the Guardians and—"

"And as a matter not of course?" (Sharp smile-bite.) "I am very curious to know: will you or will you not go to the Guardians?"

"Are you going to remain here?"

I grasped the knob of the door. It was a brass knob, a cold, brass knob, and I heard, cold like brass, her voice:

"just a minute, may I?"

She went to the telephone, called a Number (I was so upset it escaped me), and spoke loudly: "I shall be waiting for you in the Ancient House. Yes, yes, alone."

I turned the cold brass knob.

"May I take the aero?"

"Oh, yes, certainly, please!"

In the sunshine at the gate the old woman was dozing like a plant. Again I was surprised to see her grown-together mouth open, and to hear her say:

"And your lady, did she remain alone?"

"Alone."

The mouth of the old woman grew together again; she shook her head; apparently even her weakening brain understood the stupidity and the danger of that woman's behavior.

At seventeen o'clock exactly I was at the lecture. There I suddenly realized that I did not tell the whole truth to the old woman. I-330 was not there alone now. Possibly this fact, that I involuntarily told the old woman a lie, was torturing me now and distracting my attention. Yes, not alone—that was the point.

After twenty—one—thirty o'clock I had a free hour; I could therefore have gone to the office of the Guardians to make my report. But after that stupid adventure I was so tired; besides, the law provides two days. I shall have time tomorrow; I have another twenty-four hours.

RECORD SEVEN

An Eyelash

Taylor

Henbane and Lily of the Valley

Night. Green, orange, blue. The red royal instrument. The yellow dress. Then a brass Buddha. Suddenly it lifted the brass eyelids and sap began to flow from it, from Buddha. Sap also from the yellow dress. Even in the mirror, drops of sap, and from the large bed and from the children's bed and soon from myself... It is horror, mortally sweet horror!...

I woke up. Soft blue light, the glass of the walls, of the chairs, of the table was glimmering. This calmed me. My heart stopped palpitating. Sap! Buddha! How absurd! I am sick, it is clear; I never saw dreams before. They say that to see dreams was a common normal thing with the ancients. Yes, after all, their life was a whirling carousel: green, orange, Buddha, sap. But we, people of today, we know all too well that dreaming is a serious mental disease. I...Is it possible that my brain, this precise, clean, glittering mechanism, like a chronometer without a speck of dust on it, is...? Yes, it is, now. I really feel there in the brain some foreign body like an eyelash in the eye. One does not feel one's whole body, but this eye with a hair in it; one cannot forget it for a second

The cheerful, crystalline sound of the bell at my head. Seven o'clock. Time to get up. To the right and to the left as in mirrors, to the right and to the left through the glass walls I see others like myself, other rooms like my own, other clothes like my own, movements like mine, duplicated thousands of times. This invigorates me; I see myself as a part of an enormous, vigorous, united body; and what precise beauty! Not a single superfluous gesture, or bow, or turn. Yes, this Taylor was undoubtedly the greatest genius of the ancients. True, he did not come to the idea of applying his method to the whole life, to every step throughout the twenty-four hours of the day; he

was unable to integrate his system from one o'clock to twenty-four. I cannot understand the ancients. How could they write whole libraries about some Kant and take only slight notice of Taylor, of this prophet who saw ten centuries ahead?

Breakfast was over. The hymn of the United State had been harmoniously sung; rhythmically, four abreast we walked to the elevators, the motors buzzed faintly, and swiftly we went down—down—down, the heart sinking slightly. Again that stupid dream, or some unknown function of that dream. Oh, yes! Yesterday in the aero, then down—down! Well, it is all over, anyhow. Period. It is very fortunate that I was so firm and brusque with her.

The car of the underground railway carried me swiftly to the place where the motionless, beautiful body of the Integral, not yet spiritualized by fire, was glittering in the docks in the sunshine. With closed eyes I dreamed in formulae. Again I calculated in my mind what was the initial velocity required to tear the Integral away from the earth. Every second the mass of the Integral would change because of the expenditure of the explosive fuel. The equation was very complex, with transcendent figures. As in a dream I felt, right here in the firm calculated world, how someone sat down at my side, barely touching me and saying, "Pardon." I opened my eyes.

At first, apparently because of an association with the Integral, I saw something impetuously flying into the distance—a head; I saw pink wing ears sticking out on the sides of it, then the curve of the overhanging back of the head, the double-curved letter S.

Through the glass walls of my algebraic world again I felt the eyelash in

my eye. I felt something disagreeable, I felt that today I must...

"Certainly, please." I smiled at my neighbor and bowed.

I saw Number S-4711 glittering on his golden badge (that is why I associated him with the letter S, from the very first moment: an optical impression which remained unregistered by consciousness). His eyes sparkled, two sharp little drills; they were revolving swiftly, drilling in deeper and deeper. It seemed that in a moment they would drill in to the bottom and would see something that I do not even dare to confess to myself...

That bothersome eyelash became wholly clear to me. S-was one of them, one of the Guardians, and it would be the simplest thing immediately, without deferring, to tell him everything!

"I went yesterday to the Ancient House..." My voice was strange, husky, flat—I tried to cough.

"That is good. It must have given you material for some instructive deductions."

"Yes...but...You see, I was not alone; I was in the company of I-,330, and then..."

"1-330? You are fortunate. She is a very interesting, gifted woman; she has a host of admirers."

But he, too—then during the promenade...Perhaps he is even assigned as her he-Number! No, it is impossible to tell him, unthinkable. This was perfectly clear.

"Yes, yes, certainly, very." I smiled, more and more broadly, more stupidly, and felt as if my smile made me look foolish, naked.

The drills reached the bottom; revolving continually they screwed themselves back into his eyes. S- smiled double-curvedly, nodded, and slid to the exit.

I covered my face with the newspaper (I felt as if everybody were looking at me), and soon I forgot about the eyelash, about the little drills, about everything, I was so upset by what I read in the paper: "According to authentic information, traces of an organization, which still remains out of reach, have again been discovered. This organization aims at liberation from the beneficial yoke of the State."

Liberation! It is remarkable how persistent human criminal instincts are! I use deliberately the word "criminal," for freedom and crime are as closely related as—well, as the movement of an aero and its speed: if the speed of an aero equals zero, the aero is motionless; if human liberty is equal to zero, man does not commit any crime. That is clear. The way to rid man of criminality is to rid him of freedom. No sooner did we rid ourselves of freedom (in the cosmic sense centuries are only a "no sooner") than suddenly some unknown pitiful degenerates...No, I cannot understand why I did not go immediately yesterday to the Bureau of Guardians. Today, after sixteen o'clock, I shall go without fail.

At sixteen-ten I was in the street; at once I noticed O-90 at the corner; she was all rosy with delight at the encounter. She has a simple, round mind.

A timely meeting; she would understand and lend me support. Or, no, I did not need any support; my decision was firm.

The pipes of the Musical Tower thundered out harmoniously the March—the same daily March. How wonderful the charm of this dailiness, of this constant repetition and mirror-like smoothness!

"Out for a walk?" Her round blue eyes opened toward me widely, blue windows leading inside; I penetrate there unhindered; there is nothing in there, I mean nothing foreign, nothing superfluous.

"No, not for a walk. I must go." I told her where. And to my astonishment I saw her rosy round mouth form a crescent with the horns downward as if she tasted something sour. This angered me.

"You she—Numbers seem to be incurably eaten up by prejudices. You are absolutely unable to think abstractly. Forgive me the word, but this I call bluntness of mind."

"You?... to the spies? How ugly! And I went to the Botanical Garden and brought you a branch of lily of the valley..."

"Why 'and I'? Why this 'and'? just like a woman!"

Angrily (this I must confess), I snatched the flowers. "Here they are, your lilies of the valley. Well, smell them! Good? Yes? Why not use a little bit of logic? The lilies of the valley smell good; all right! But you cannot say about an odor, about the conception of an odor, that it is good or bad, can you? You can't, can you? There is the smell of lilies of the valley, and there is

the disagreeable smell of henbane. Both are odors. The ancient States had their spies; we have ours..., yes, spies! I am not afraid of words. But is it not clear to you that there the spies were henbane; here they are lilies of the valley? Yes, lilies of the valley. Yes!"

The rosy crescent quivered. Now I understand that it was only my impression, but at that moment I was certain she was going to laugh. I shouted still louder:

"Yes, lilies of the valley! And there is nothing funny about it, nothing funny!"

The smooth round globes of heads passing by were turning toward us. O-90 gently took my hand.

"You are so strange today..., are you ill?"

My dream....Yellow color....Buddha....It was at once home clearly upon me that I must go to the Medical Bureau.

"Yes, you are right, I am sick," I said with joy (that seems to me an inexplicable contradiction; there was nothing to be joyful about).

"You must go at once to the doctor. You understand that; you are obliged to be healthy; it seems strange to have to prove it to you."

"My dear O-, of course you are fight..Absolutely fight."

I did not go to the Bureau of Guardians; I could not; I had to go to the Medical Bureau; they kept me there until seventeen o'clock.

In the evening (incidentally, the Bureau of Guardians is closed evenings) —in the evening O- came to see me. The curtains were not lowered. We busied ourselves with the arithmetical problems of an ancient textbook. This occupation always calms and purifies our thoughts. O- sat over her notebook, her head slightly inclined to the left; she was so assiduous that she poked out her left cheek with the tongue from within. She looked so child-like, so charming....I felt everything in me was pleasant, precise, and simple.

She left. I remained alone. I breathed deeply two times (it is very good exercise before retiring for the night). Suddenly—an unexpected odor reminiscent of something very disagreeable! I soon found out what was the matter: a branch of lily of the valley was hidden in my bed. Immediately everything was aroused again, came up from the bottom. Decidedly, it was tactless on her part to put these lilies of the valley there surreptitiously. Well, true I did not go; I didn't, but was it my fault that I had felt indisposed?

RECORD EIGHT

An Irrational Root

R—13

The Triangle

It was long ago, during my school days, when I first encountered the square root of minus one. I remember it all very clearly: a bright globelike class hall, about a hundred round heads of children, and Plappa—our mathematician. We nicknamed him Plappa; it was a very much used-up mathematician, loosely screwed together; as the member of the class who was on duty that day would put the plug into the socket behind, we would hear at first from the loud-speaker, "Plap—plap—plap—plap—tshshsh...." Only then the lesson would follow. One day Plappa told us about irrational numbers, and I remember I wept and banged the table with my fist and cried, "I do not want that square root of minus one; take that square root of minus one away!" This irrational root grew into me as something strange, foreign, terrible; it tortured me; it could not be thought out. It could not be defeated because it was beyond reason.

Now, that square root of minus one is here again. I read over what I have written and I see clearly that I was insincere with myself, that I lied to myself in order to avoid seeing that square root of minus one. My sickness is all nonsense! I could go there. I feel sure that if such a thing had happened a week ago I should have gone without hesitating. Why, then, am I unable to go now?...Why?

Today, for instance, at exactly sixteen-ten I stood before the glittering Glass Wall. Above was the shining, golden, sun-like sign: "Bureau of Guardians." Inside, a long queue of bluish-gray unifs awaiting their turns, faces shining like the oil lamps in an ancient temple. They had come to accomplish a great thing: they had come to put on the altar of the United State their beloved ones, their friends, their own selves. My whole being

craved to join them, yet...I could not; my feet were as though melted into the glass plates of the sidewalk. I simply stood there looking foolish.

"Hey, mathematician! Dreaming?"

I shivered. Black eyes varnished with laughter looked at me—thick Negro lips! It was my old friend the poet, R-13, and with him rosy O-. I turned around angrily (I still believe that if they had not appeared I should have entered the Bureau and have torn the square root of minus one out of my flesh).

"Not dreaming at all. If you will, 'standing in adoration,'" I retorted quite brusquely.

"Oh, certainly, certainly! You, my friend, should never have become a mathematician; you should have become a poet, a great poet! Yes, come over to our trade, to the poets. Eh? If you will, I can arrange it in a jiffy. Eh?"

R-13 usually talks very fast. His words run in torrents, his thick lips sprinkle. Every "p" is a fountain, every "poets" a fountain.

"So far I have served knowledge, and I shall continue to serve knowledge."

I frowned. I do not like, I do not understand jokes, and R-13 has the bad habit of joking.

"Oh, to the deuce with knowledge. Your much-heralded knowledge is but a form of cowardice. It is a fact! Yes, you want to encircle the infinite with a wall, and you fear to cast a glance behind the wall. Yes, sir! And if

ever you should glance beyond the wall, you would be dazzled and close your eyes—yes—"

"Walls are the foundation of every human," I began.

R-13 sprinkled his fountain. O- laughed rosily and roundly. I waved my hand. "Well, you may laugh, I don't care." I was busy with something else. I had to find a way of eating up, of crushing down, that square root of minus one. "Suppose," I offered, "we go to my place and do some arithmetical problems." (The quiet hour of yesterday afternoon came to my memory; perhaps today also)

O- glanced at R-, then serenely and roundly at me; the soft, endearing color of our pink checks came to her cheeks.

"But today I am... I have a check to him today." (A glance at R-.) "And tonight he is busy, so..."

The moist, varnished lips whispered good-naturedly: "Half an hour is plenty for us, is it not, O-? I am not a great lover of your problems; let us simply go over to my place and chat."

I was afraid to remain alone with myself or, to be more correct, with that strange new self who by some curious coincidence bore my number, D-503. So I went with R-. True, he is not precise, not rhythmic, his logic is jocular and turned inside out, yet we are... Three years ago we both chose our dear, rosy O-. This tied our friendship more firmly together than our school days did. In R-'s room everything seems like mine: the Tables, the glass of the chairs, the table, the closet, the bed. But as we entered, R- moved one chair

out of place, then another—the room became confused, everything lost the established order and seemed to violate every rule of Euclid's geometry, R- remained the same as always; in Taylor and in mathematics he always lagged at the tail of the class.

We recalled Plappa, how we boys used to paste the whole surface of his glass legs with paper notes expressing our thanks (we all loved Plappa). We recalled our priest (it goes without saying that we were not taught the "law" of ancient religion but the law of the United State). Our priest had a very powerful voice; a real hurricane would come out of the loud-speaker. And we children would yell the prescribed texts after him with all our lung power. We recalled how our scapegrace, R-13, used to stuff the priest with chewed paper; every word was thus accompanied by a paper wad shot out. Naturally, R- was punished, for what he did was undoubtedly wrong, but now we laughed heartily—by we I mean our triangle, R-, O-, and I. I must confess, I, too.

"And what if he had been a living one? Like the ancient ones, eh? We'd have b...b..." a fountain running from the fat bubbling lips. The sun was shining through the ceiling, the sun above, the sun from the sides, its reflection from below. O- on R-13's lap and minute drops of sunlight in O-'S blue eyes. Somehow my heart warmed up. The square root of minus one became silent and motionless

"Well, how is your Integral? Will you soon hop off to enlighten the inhabitants of the planets? You'd better hurry up, my boy, or we poets will have produced such a devilish lot that even your Integral will be unable to lift the cargo. 'Every day from eight to eleven'..." R- wagged his head and

scratched the back of it. The back of his head is square; it looks like a little valise (I recalled for some reason an ancient painting "In the Cab"). I felt more lively.

"You, too, are writing for the Integral? Tell me about it. What are you writing about? What did you write today, for instance?"

"Today I did not write; today I was busy with something else." ("B-b-busy" sprinkled straight into my face.)

"What else?"

R- frowned. "What? What? Well, if you insist I'll tell you. I was busy with the Death Sentence. I was putting the Death Sentence into verse. An idiot—and to be frank, one of our poets For two years we all lived side by side with him and nothing seemed wrong. Suddenly he went crazy. 'I,' said he, 'am a genius! and I am above the law.' All that sort of nonsense....But it is not a thing to talk about."

The fat lips hung down. The varnish disappeared from the eyes. He jumped up, turned around, and stared through the wall. I looked at his tightly closed little "valise" and thought, "What is he handling in his little valise now?"

A moment of awkward, asymmetric silence. I could not see clearly what was the matter, but I was certain there was something

"Fortunately the antediluvian time of those Shakespeares and Dostoevskys (or what were their names?) is past," I said in a voice

deliberately loud.

R- turned his face to me. Words sprinkled and bubbled out of him as before, but I thought I noticed there was no more joyful varnish to his eyes.

"Yes, dear mathematician, fortunately, fortunately. We are the happy arithmetical mean. As you would put it, the integration from zero to infinity, from imbeciles to Shakespeare. Do I put it right?"

I do not know why (it seemed to me absolutely un— called for) I recalled suddenly the other one, her tone. A thin, invisible thread stretched between her and R— (what thread?). The square root of minus one began to bother me again. I glanced at my badge; sixteen—twenty— five o'clock! They had only thirty—five minutes for the use of the pink check.

"Well, I must go." I kissed O—, shook hands with R—, and went to the elevator.

As I crossed the avenue I turned around. Here and there in the huge mass of glass penetrated by sunshine there were grayish—blue squares, the opaque squares of lowered curtains, the squares of rhythmic, Taylorized happiness. On the seventh floor I found R—13's square. The curtains were already lowered.

Dear O-....Dear R-....He also has (I do not know why I write this "also," but I write as it comes from my pen), he, too, has something which is not entirely dear in him. Yet I, he, and O-, we are a triangle; I confess, not an isosceles triangle, but a triangle nevertheless. We, to speak in the language of our ancestors (perhaps to you, my planetary readers, this is the more

comprehensible language), we are a family. And one feels so good at times, when one is able for a short while, at least, to close oneself within a firm triangle, to close oneself away from anything that...

RECORD NINE

Liturgy

Iambus

The Cast—iron Hand

A solemn, bright day. On such days one forgets one's weaknesses, inexactitudes, illnesses, and everything is crystalline and imperturbable like our new glass

The Plaza of the Cube. Sixty-six imposing concentric circles-stands. Sixty-six rows of quiet, serene faces. Eyes reflecting the shining of the sky, or perhaps it is the shining of the United State. Red like blood are the flowers—the lips of the women. Like soft garlands the faces of the children in the first rows, nearest the place of action. Profound, austere, Gothic silence.

To judge by the descriptions that reach us from the ancients, they felt somewhat like this during their "church services." But they served their

nonsensical, unknown god; we serve our rational god, whom we know most thoroughly. Their god gave them nothing but eternal, torturing seeking; our god gives us absolute truth—that is, he has rid us of any kind of doubt. Their god did not invent anything cleverer than sacrificing oneself, nobody knows what for; we bring to our god, the United State, a quiet, rational, carefully thought-out sacrifice.

Yes, it was a solemn liturgy for the United State, a reminiscence of the great days, years, of the Two Hundred Years' War—a magnificent celebration of the victory of all over one, of the sum over the individual!

That one stood on the steps of the Cube which was filled with sunlight. A white, no not even white but already colorless, glass face, lips of glass. And only the eyes—thirsty, swallowing black holes leading into that dreadful world from which he was only a few minutes away. The golden badge with the number already had been taken off. His hands were tied with a red ribbon. (A symbol of ancient custom. The explanation of it is that in the old days, when this sort of thing was not done in the name of the United State, the convicted naturally considered that they had the right to resist, hence their hands were usually bound with chains.)

On the top of the Cube, next to the Machine, the motionless, metallic figure of him whom we call the Well-Doer. One could not see his face from below. All one could see was that it was bounded by austere, magnificent, square lines. And his hands....Did you ever notice how sometimes in a photograph the hands, if they were too near the camera, appear to be enormous? They then compel your attention, overshadow everything else. Those hands of his, heavy hands, quiet for the time being, were stony hands

—it seemed the knees on which they rested must have ached in bearing their weight.

Suddenly one of those hands rose slowly. A slow, cast-iron gesture; obeying the will of the lifted hand, a Number came out on the platform. It was one of the State poets, whose fortunate lot it was to crown our celebration with his verses.

Divine, iambic brass verses thundered over the many stands. They dealt with the man who, his reason lost and lips like glass, stood on the steps and waited for the logical consequences of his own insane deeds.

...A blaze....Buildings were swaying in those iambic lines, and sprinkling upward their liquefied golden substance, they broke and fell. The green trees were scorched, their sap slowly ran out and they remained standing like black crosses, like skeletons. Then appeared Prometheus (that meant us):

"...he harnessed fire

With machines and steel

And fettered chaos with Law..."

The world was renovated; it became like steel—a sun of steel, trees of steel, men of steel. Suddenly an insane man "unchained the fire and set it free," and again the world had perished.....Unfortunately I have a bad memory for poetry, but one thing I am sure of: one could not choose more instructive or more beautiful parables.

Another slow, heavy gesture of the cast-iron hand and another poet appeared on the steps of the Cube. I stood up. Impossible! But...thick Negro lips—it was he. Why didn't he tell me that he was to be invested with such high... His lips trembled; they were gray. Oh, I certainly understood; to be face to face with the Well-Doer, face to face with the hosts of Guardians! Yet one should not allow oneself to be so upset.

Swift, sharp verses like an ax....They told about an unheard-of crime, about sacrilegious poems in which the Well-Doer was called....But no, I do not dare to repeat....

R-13 was pale when he finished, and looking at no one (I did not expect such bashfulness of him) he descended and sat down. For an infinitesimal fraction of a second I saw right beside him somebody's face—a sharp, black triangle—and instantly I lost it; my eyes, thousands of eyes, were directed upward toward the Machine. Then—again the superhuman, cast-iron, gesture of the hand.

Swayed by an unknown wind, the criminal moved; one step...one more...then the last step in his life. His face was turned to the sky, his head thrown back—he was on his last....Heavy, stony like fate, the Well-Doer went around the machine, put his enormous hand on the lever....Not a whisper, not a breath around; all eyes were upon that hand....What crushing, scorching power one must feel to be the tool, to be the resultant of hundreds of thousands of wills! How great his lot!

Another second. The hand moved down, switching in the current. The lightning-sharp blade of the electric ray....A faint crack like a shiver, in the

tubes of the Machine....The prone body, covered with a light phosphorescent smoke; then, suddenly, under the eyes of all, it began to melt—to melt, to dissolve with terrible speed. And then nothing; just a pool of chemically pure water which only a moment ago had been so red and had pulsed in his heart....

All this was simple; all of us were familiar with the phenomenon, dissociation of matter—yes, the splitting of the atoms of the human body! Yet every time we witnessed it, it seemed a miracle; it was a symbol of the superhuman power of the Well-Doer.

Above, in front of Him, the burning faces of the female Numbers, mouths half-open from emotion, flowers swaying in the wind.[\[8\]](#)According to custom, ten

women were covering with flowers the unif of the Well-Doer, which was still wet with spray. With the magnificent step of a supreme priest He slowly descended, slowly passed between the rows of stands. Like tender white branches there rose toward Him the arms of the women; and, millions like one, our tempestuous cheers! Then cheers in honor of the Guardians, who all unseen were present among us....Who knows, perhaps the fancy of the ancient man foresaw them centuries ahead, when he created the gentle and formidable "Guardian Angels" assigned to each person from the day Of his birth?

[\[8\]](#)These flowers naturally were brought from the Botanical Museum. I, personally, am unable to see anything beautiful in flowers, or in anything else that belongs to the lower kingdom which now exists only beyond the Green

Wall. Only rational and useful things are beautiful: machines, boots, formulae, food, etc.

Yes, there was in our celebration something of the ancient religions, something purifying like a storm.... You whose lot it may be to read this, are you familiar with such emotions? I am sorry for you if you are not.

RECORD TEN

A Letter

A Membrane

Hairy I

Yesterday was for me, like the filter paper that chemists use for filtering their solutions (all suspended and superfluous particles remain on the paper). This morning I went downstairs all purified and distilled, transparent.

Downstairs in the hall the controller sat at a small table, constantly looking at her watch and recording the Numbers who were leaving. Her name is U—....well, I prefer not to give her Number, for I fear I may not write kindly about her—although, as a matter of fact, she is a very respectable, mature woman. The only thing I do not like in her is that her cheeks fold

down a little like the gills of a fish (although I don't see anything wrong in this appearance). She, scratched with her pen and I saw on page "D-503" — and suddenly, splash! an ink blot. No sooner did I open my mouth to call her attention to that than she raised her head and blotted me with an inky smile. "There is a letter for you. You will receive it, dear. Yes, yes, you will."

I knew a letter, after she had read it, must go through the Bureau of Guardians (I think it is unnecessary to explain in detail this natural order of things); I would receive it not later than twelve o'clock. But that tiny smile confused me; the drop of ink clouded the transparency of the distilled solution. At the Integral's dock I could not concentrate; I even made a mistake in my calculations, something that had never happened to me before.

At twelve o'clock, again the rosy-brown fish gills' smile, and at last the letter was in my hands. I cannot say why I did not read it right there; instead, I put it in my pocket and ran into my room. I opened it, scanned it quickly, and...sat down. It was an official notice to the effect that Number I-330 had had me assigned to her, and that today at twenty-one o'clock I was to go to her. Her address was given.

No! After all that had happened! After I had shown her frankly my attitude toward her! Besides, how could she know that I did not go to the Bureau of Guardians? She had no way of knowing that I have been ill and could not....And despite all this..."

A dynamo was whirling and buzzing in my head. Buddha....yellow....lilies of the valley...rosy crescent....Besides-besides, O-wanted to come to see me today! I was sure she would not believe (how

could one believe?) that I had absolutely nothing to do with the matter, that... I was also sure that we (O- and I) would have a difficult, foolish, and absolutely illogical conversation. No, anything but that! Let the situation solve itself mechanically; I would send her a copy of the official communication.

While I was hastily putting the paper in my pocket, I noticed my terrible ape-like hand. I remembered how that day, during our walk, she had taken my hand and looked at it. Is it possible that she really...that she...

A quarter to twenty-one. A white northern night. Everything was glass, greenish. But it was a different kind of glass, not like ours, not genuine but very breakable, a thin glass shell, and within that shell things were flying, whirling, buzzing. I wouldn't have been surprised if suddenly the cupola of the auditorium had risen in slow, rolling clouds of smoke; or if the ripe moon had sent an inky smile, like that one at the little table this morning; or if in every house suddenly all the curtains had been lowered, and behind the curtains...

I felt something peculiar; my ribs were like iron bars that interfered, decidedly interfered, with my heart, giving it too little space. I stood at a glass door on which were the golden letters I-330. I-330 sat at the table with her back to me; she was writing something. I stepped in.

"Here"—I held out the pink check—"I received the notice this noon and here I am!"

"How punctual you are! Just a minute, please, may I? Sit down. I shall

finish in a minute."

She lowered her eyes to the letter. What had she there, behind her lowered curtains? What would she say? What would she do in a second? How to learn it? How to calculate it, since she comes from beyond, from the wild, ancient land of dreams? I looked at her in silence. My ribs were iron bars. The space for the heart was too small....When she speaks, her face is like a swiftly revolving, glittering wheel; you cannot see the separate bars. But at that moment the wheel was motionless. I saw a strange combination: dark eyebrows running right to the temples—a sharp, mocking triangle; and still another dark triangle with its apex upward—two deep wrinkles from the nose to the angles of the mouth. And these two triangles somehow contradicted each other. They gave the whole face that disagreeable, irritating X, or cross—a face marked obliquely by a cross.

The wheel started to turn; its bars blurred.

"So you did not go to the Bureau of Guardians, after all?"

"I did... I did not feel well...I could not."

"Yes? I thought so; something must have prevented you, it matters little what"—sharp teeth—a smile. "But now you are in my hands. You remember: 'Any Number who within forty-eight hours fails to report to the Bureau is considered...'"

My heart banged so forcibly that the iron bars bent. If I were not sitting...like a little boy, how stupid! I was caught like a little boy, and stupidly I kept silent. I felt I was in a net; neither my legs nor my arms...

She stood up and stretched herself lazily. She pressed the button, and the curtains on all four walls fell with a slight rustle. I was cut off from the rest of the world, alone with her.

She was somewhere behind me, near the closet door. The unif was rustling, falling. I was listening, all listening. I remembered—no, it glistened in my mind for one hundredth of a second—I once had to calculate the curve of a new type of street membrane. (These membranes are handsomely decorated and are placed over all the avenues, registering all street conversations for the Bureau of Guardians.) I remembered a rosy, concave, trembling membrane, a strange being consisting of one organ only, an ear. I was at that moment such a membrane.

Now the "click" of the snap at her collar, at her breast, and...lower. The glassy silk rustled over her shoulders and knees, over the floor. I heard—and it was clearer than actually seeing—I heard how one foot stepped out of the grayish-blue heap of silk, then the other....Soon I'd hear the creak of the bed, and...

The tensely stretched membrane trembled and registered the silence—no, the sharp, hammerlike blows of the heart against the iron bars, and endless pauses between beats. And I heard, saw, how she, behind me, hesitated for a second, thinking. The door of the closet....It slammed; again silk...silk...

"Well, all right."

I turned around. She was dressed in a saffron-yellow dress of an ancient

style. This was a thousand times worse than if she had not been dressed at all. Two sharp points glowing with rosiness through the thin tissue; two burning embers piercing through ashes; two tender, round knees...

She was sitting in a low armchair. In front of her on a small square table I noticed a bottle filled with something poisonously green, and two small glasses with thin stems. In the corner of her mouth she had a very thin paper tube; she was ejecting smoke formed by the burning of that ancient smoking substance whose name I do not now remember,

The membrane was still vibrating. Within, the sledge hammer was pounding the red-hot iron bars of my chest. I heard distinctly every blow of the hammer, and...What if she, too, heard it?

But she continued to produce smoke very calmly; calmly she looked at me; and nonchalantly she flicked ashes on the pink check!

With as much self-control as possible I asked, "If you still feel that way, why did you have me assigned to you? And why did you make me come here?"

As if she had not heard at all, she poured some of the green liquid from the bottle into one of the small glasses, and sipped it.

"Wonderful liqueur! Want some?"

Then I understood: alcohol! Like lightning there came to memory what I had seen yesterday: the stony hand of the Well-Doer, the unbearable blade of the electric ray; there on the Cube, the head thrown back, the stretched-out

body! I shivered.

"Please listen," I said. "You know, do you not, that anyone who poisons himself with nicotine, and more particularly with alcohol, is severely treated by the United State?"

Dark brows raised high to the temples, the sharp mocking triangle.

"It is more reasonable to annihilate a few than to allow many to poison themselves....And degeneration,'...etc....This is true to the point of indecency."

"Indecency?"

"Yes. To let out into the street such a group of bald-headed, naked little truths. Only imagine, please. Imagine, say, that persistent admirer of mine—S —, well, you know him. Then imagine: if he should discard the deception of clothes and appear in public in his true form....Oh!" She laughed. But I clearly saw her lower, sorrowful triangle: two deep grooves from the nose to the mouth. And for some reason these grooves made me think: that double-curved being, half-hunched, with winglike ears—he embraced her? Her, such...Oh!

Naturally, I try now merely to express my abnormal feelings of that moment. Now, as I write, I understand perfectly that all this is as it should be; that he, S-4711, like any other honest Number, has a perfect right to the joys of life, and that it would be unjust....But I think the point is quite clear.

I-330 laughed a long, strange laugh. Then she cast a look at me, into me.

"The most curious thing is that I am not in the least afraid of you. You are such a dear, I am sure of it! You would never think of going to the Bureau and reporting that I drink liqueurs and smoke. You will be sick or busy, or I don't know what...Furthermore, I am sure you will drink this charming poison with me."

What an impertinent, mocking tone! I felt definitely that in a moment I would hate her. (Why in a moment? In fact, I hated her all the time.)

I-330 tilted the little glass of green poison straight into her mouth. Then she stood up, and all rosy through the translucent saffron-yellow tissue, she made a few steps and stopped behind my chair...Suddenly her arms were about my neck...her lips grew into mine, no, even somewhere much deeper, much more terribly....I swear all this was very unexpected for me. That is why perhaps...for I could not—at this moment I see clearly— I could not myself have the desire to...

Unbearably sweet lips. (I suppose it was the taste of the liqueur.) It was as though burning poison were being poured into me, and more, and more

I tore away from the earth and began revolving as an independent planet, down, down, following an incalculable curve

What happened next I am able to describe only in an approximate way, only by way of more or less suitable analogies.

It never occurred to me before but it is true: we who live on the earth, we are always walking over a seething red sea of fire which is hidden in the womb of the earth. We never think of it. But imagine the ground under our

feet suddenly transformed into a thin glass shell; suddenly we should behold...!

I became glass-like and saw within myself. There were two selves in me. One, the former D-503, Number D-503; and the other...Before, that other used only to show his hairy paws from time to time, but now that whole other self left his shell. That shell was breaking, and in a moment...

Grasping the last straw (the arms of the chair) with all my strength, I asked loudly (so as to hear my first self), 'Where, where did you get this poison?'

"Oh, this? A physician, one of my..."

"One of my? one of my' what?" And my other self jumped up suddenly and yelled: "I won't allow it! I want no one but me...I shall kill anyone who...Because I...You..."I saw my other self grasp her rudely with his hairy paws, tear the silk, and put his teeth in her flesh!...I remember exactly, his teeth!...

I do not remember how, but I-330 slipped away and I saw her straighten, her head raised high, her eyes overlaid by that cursed, impenetrable curtain. She stood leaning with her back against the closet door and listening to me.

I remember I was on the floor; I embraced her limbs, kissed her knees, and cried supplicatingly, "At once, fight away, fight away."

Sharp teeth...The sharp, mocking triangle of the brows...She bent over and in silence unbuttoned my badge.

"Yes, yes, dear——dear."

I began hastily to remove my unif. But I-330, silent as before, lifted my badge to my eyes, showing me the clock upon it. It was twenty-two—twenty-five.

I became cold. I knew what it meant to be out in the street after twenty-two-thirty. My insanity disappeared at once. I was again I. I saw clearly one thing: I hated her, hated her, hated... Without saying good-by, without looking back, I ran out of the room. Hurriedly trying to fasten the badge back in its place, I ran down the stairs (I was afraid lest someone notice me in the elevator), and tore out into a deserted street.

Everything was in its place; life so simple, ordinary, orderly. Glittering glass houses, pale glass sky, a greenish, motionless night. But under that cool glass something wild, something red and hairy, was silently seething. I was gasping for breath, but I continued to run so as not to be late.

Suddenly I felt that my badge which I had hurriedly pinned on was detaching itself; it came off and fell to the sidewalk. I bent over to pick it up and in the momentary silence I heard somebody's steps. I turned. Someone small and hunched was disappearing around the corner. At least so it seemed, I started to run as fast as I could. The wind whistled in my ears. At the entrance to my house I stopped and looked at the clock; one minute to twenty-two-thirty! I listened; nobody behind. It was my foolish imagination, the effect of the poison.

The night was full of torture. My bed seemed to lift itself under me, then

to fall again, then up again! I used autosuggestion: "At night all the Numbers must sleep; sleeping at night is a duty just like working during the day. To sleep at night is necessary for the next day's work. Not to sleep at night is criminal." Yet I could not sleep—I could not. I was perishing! I was unable to fulfill my duties to the United State! I...

RECORD ELEVEN

No, I Can't; Let It Be without Headings!

Evening. It is somewhat foggy. The sky is covered with a milky-golden tissue, and one cannot see what is there, beyond, on the heights. The ancients "knew" that the greatest, bored skeptic-their god-lived there. We know that crystalline, blue, naked, indecent .Nothing is there. I no longer know what is there. I have learned too many things of late. Knowledge, self-confident knowledge, which is sure that it is faultless, is faith. I had firm faith in myself; I believed that I knew all about myself. But then...I look in the mirror. And for the first time in my life, yes,for the first time in my life I see clearly, precisely, consciously and with surprise, I see myself as some "him"! I am "he." Frowning, black, straight brows; between them, like a scar, there is a vertical wrinkle. (Was that wrinkle there before?) Steel-gray eyes encircled by the shadow of a sleepless night. And behind that steel...I understand; I never knew before what there was behind that steel. From there (this "there"

is at once so near and so infinitely distant!) I look at myself—at "him." And I know surely that "he" with his straight brows is a stranger, that I meet him here for the first time in my life. The real I is not he.

No. Period. All this is nonsense. And all these foolish emotions are only delirium, the result of last night's poisoning....Poisoning with what? With a sip of that green poison, or with her? It matters little. I write all this merely in order to demonstrate how strangely confused our precise and sharp human reason may become. This reason, strong enough to make infinity, which the ancients feared so much, understandable by means of....The switch buzzes. "Number R-13." Well, I am even glad; alone I should...

Twenty minutes later:

On the plane of this paper, in a world of two dimensions, these lines follow each other, but in another world they....I am losing the sense for figures...Twenty minutes! Perhaps two hundred or two hundred thousand!...

It seems so strange, quietly, deliberately, measuring every word, to write down my adventure with R-. Imagine yourself sitting down at your own bed, crossing your legs, watching curiously how you yourself shrivel in the very same bed. My mental state is similar to that.

When R-13 came in , I was perfectly quiet and normal. With sincere admiration I began to tell him how wonderfully he succeeded in versifying the death sentence of that insane man, and that his poem, more than anything else, had smothered and annihilated the transgressor of the law.

"More than that," I said, "if I were ordered to prepare a mathematical

draft of the Machine of the Well-Doer, I should undoubtedly, undoubtedly, put on that draft some of your verses!" Suddenly I saw R-'s eyes becoming more and more opaque, his lips acquiring a gray tint.

"What's the matter?"

"What? Well...Merely that I am dead sick of it. Everybody keeps on: 'The death sentence, the death sentence!' I want to hear no more of it! You understand? I do not want..." He became serious, rubbing his neck—that little valise filled with luggage which I cannot understand. A silence. There! He found something in that little valise of his, removed it, unwrapped it, spread it out; his eyes became covered with the varnish of laughter. He began:

"I am writing something for your Integral. Yes....I am! " He was himself again: bubbling, sprinkling lips, words splashing like a fountain.

"You see, it is the ancient legend of paradise." ("p" like a fountain.) "That legend referred to us of today, did it not? Yes. Only think of it, think of it a moment! There were two in paradise and the choice was offered to them: happiness without freedom, or freedom without happiness. No other choice. Tertium, non datur. They, fools that they were, chose freedom. Naturally, for centuries afterward they longed for fetters, for the fetters of yore. This was the meaning of their world weariness, Welts-chmerz. For centuries! And only we found a way to regain happiness....No, listen, follow me! The ancient god and we, side by side at the same table! Yes, we helped god to defeat the devil definitely and finally. It was he, the devil, who led people to transgression, to taste pernicious freedom—he, the cunning serpent. And we came along, planted a boot on his head, and ...squash! Done with him! Paradise again! We

returned to the simple- mindedness and innocence of Adam and Eve. No more meddling with good and evil and all that; everything is simple again, heavenly, childishly simple! The Well-Doer, the Machine, the Cube, the giant Gas Bell, the Guardians—all these are good. All this is magnificent, beautiful, noble, lofty, crystalline, pure. For all this preserves our non-freedom, that is, our happiness. In our place those ancients would indulge in discussions, deliberations, etc. They would break their heads trying to make out what was moral or unmoral. But we ...Well, in short, these are the highlights of my little paradise poem. What do you think of it? And above all the style is most solemn, pious. Understand me? Nice little idea, is it not? Do you understand?"

Of course I understood. I remember my thoughts at that moment: "His appearance is nonsensical and lacking in symmetry, yet what an orderly-working mind he has!" This made him dear to me, that is to the real me. (I still insist that that I of before is the real one; my I of late is, certainly, only an illness.)

Apparently R-read my thought in my face; he put his hand on my shoulders and laughed: "Oh, you!...Adam. By the way, about Eve..." He searched for something in his pockets, took out a little book, turned over a few leaves, and said, "For the day after tomorrow—oh, no, two days from now—O-90 has a pink check on you. How about it? ...As before? ... You want her to?"

"Of course, of course.

"All right then, I'll tell her. You see she herself is very bashful ...What a

funny story! You see, for me she has only a pink-check affection, but for you ...And you, you did not even come to tell us how a fourth member sneaked into our triangle! Who is it? Repent, sinner! Come on!"

A curtain arose inside me; rustle of silk, green bottle, lips ... For no reason whatsoever I exclaimed (oh, why didn't I restrain myself at that moment?), "Tell me, R-, did you ever have an opportunity to try nicotine or alcohol?"

R- sucked in his lips, looked at me from under his brows. I distinctly heard his thoughts: "Friend though he is, yet..."And he answered:

"What shall I say? Strictly speaking, no. But I know a woman ..."

"I-330?" I cried.

"What! You? You, also?" R- was full of laughter; he chuckled, ready to splash over.

My mirror was hanging in such a way that in order to see R- clearly I had to turn and look across the table. From my armchair I could see now only my own forehead and eyebrows. Then I, the real I, suddenly saw in the mirror a broken, quivering line of brow; I, the real I, heard suddenly a wild, disgusting cry: "What? What does that 'also' mean? What does that 'also' mean? I demand..."

Widely parted Negro lips...Eyes bulging, I (the real I) grasped my other wild, hairy, heavily breathing self forcibly. I (the real I) said to him, to R-, "In the name of the Well-Doer, please forgive me. I am very sick; I don't sleep; I

do not know what is the matter with me."

A swiftly passing smile appeared on the thick lips.

"Yes, yes, I understand, I understand. I am familiar with all this—
theoretically, of course. Good-by."

At the door he turned around like a little black ball, came back to the table and put a book upon it. "This is my latest book. I came to bring it to you. Almost forgot. Good-by." ("b" like a splash.) The little ball rolled out.

I am alone. Or, to be more exact, I am tete-a-tete with that other self. I sit in the armchair and, having crossed my legs, I watch curiously from some indefinite "there" how I, myself, am shriveling in my bed!

Why, oh, why is it, that for three years R-, O-, and I were so friendly together and now suddenly—one word only about that other female, about I-330, and...Is it possible that that insanity called love and jealousy does What seems most strange is that I, I! ... Equations, formulae, figures, and suddenly this! I can't understand it, I can't! Tomorrow I shall go to R- and tell him... No, it isn't true; I shall not go; neither tomorrow nor day after tomorrow, nor ever... I can't, I do not want to see him. This is the end. Our triangle is broken up.

I am alone. It is evening. There is a light fog. The sky is covered by a thin, milky-golden tissue. If I only knew what is there—higher. If I only knew who I am. Which I am I?

RECORD TWELVE

The Delimitation of the Infinite

Angel

Meditations on Poetry

I continue to believe that I shall recover, that I may recover. I slept very well. No dreams or any other symptoms of disease. Dear O-90 will come tomorrow. Everything will again be simple, regular, and limited like a circle. I am not afraid of this word "limited." The work of the highest faculty of man, judgment, is always directed toward the constant limiting of the infinite, toward the breaking up of the infinite into comfortably digestible portions, differentials. This is what gives divine beauty to my vocation, mathematics. And it is exactly this beauty that that other female lacks. But this last thought of mine is only an accidental mental association.

These thoughts swarmed in my mind while I was listening to the regular, rhythmic sounds of the underground railway. Silently I followed the rhythm of its wheels and recited to myself R-'s verses (from the book which he gave me yesterday), and I felt that behind me someone was leaning over my shoulder and looking at the open pages. I did not turn around but with the corner of my eye I noticed pink ears, spread like wings, the double-curved... like me letter....It was he, but I did not want to disturb him. I feigned not to

have noticed him. How he came in, I do not know. I did not see him when I got into the car.

This incident, insignificant in itself, had an especially good effect upon me; it invigorated me, I should say. It is pleasant to feel that somebody's penetrating eye is watching you from behind your shoulder, lovingly guarding you from making the most minute mistake, from the most minute incorrect step. It may seem to you too sentimental, but I do see in all this the materialization of the dream of the ancients about a Guardian Angel. How many things, of which the ancients had only dreams, are materialized in our life!

At the moment when I became aware of the presence of the Guardian Angel behind me, I was enjoying a poem entitled "Happiness." I think I am not mistaken when I say that it is a piece of rare beauty and depth of thought. These are the first four lines:

Two times two—eternal lovers;

Inseparable in passion four...

Most flaming lovers in the world,

Eternally welded, two times two.

And the rest is in the same vein: on the wisdom and the eternal happiness of the multiplication table. Every poet is inevitably a Columbus. America existed before Columbus for ages, but only Columbus found it. The multiplication table existed before R-13 for ages, but only R-13 could find in

the virginal forest of figures a new Eldorado. Is it not true? Is there any happiness more wise and cloudless in this wonderful world? Steel may rust. The ancient god created ancient man, i.e., the man capable of mistakes; ergo, the ancient god himself made a mistake. The multiplication table is more wise and more absolute than the ancient god, for the multiplication table never (do you understand—never) makes mistakes! There are no more fortunate and happy people than those who live according to the correct, eternal laws of the multiplication table. No hesitation! No errors! There is but one truth, and there is but one path to it; and that truth is: four, and that path is: two times two. Would it not seem preposterous for these happily multiplied twos suddenly to begin thinking of some foolish kind of freedom?—i.e. (is it not clear?), of a mistake? It seems undeniable, axiomatic, that R-13 knows how to grasp the most fundamental, the most....

At that moment again I felt (first near the back of my head, then on my left ear) the warm, tender breath of the Guardian Angel. He apparently noticed that the book on my lap had long been closed and that my thoughts were somewhere very far....Well, I am ready this minute to spread before him the pages of my brain. This gives one such a feeling of tranquillity and joy. I remember I even turned around and gazed long and questioningly into his eyes; but either he did not understand, or he did not want to understand me. He did not ask me anything....The only thing left for me is to relate everything to you, my unknown readers. You are to me now as dear and as near and as far out of reach as he was at that moment.

This was my way of thinking: from the part to the whole—R-13 is the part, the whole is our Institution of State Poets and Authors. I thought: how

was it that the ancients did not notice the utter absurdity of their prose and poetry? The gigantic, magnificent power of the artistic word was spent by them in vain. It is really funny; anybody wrote whatever happened to come into his head! It was as foolish as the fact that in the days of the ancients the ocean blindly splashed on the shore for twenty-four hours a day, without interruption or use. The millions of kilogram meters of energy which were hidden in the waves were used only for the stimulation of sweethearts! We obtained electricity from the amorous whisper of the waves! We made a domestic animal out of that sparkling, foaming, rabid one! And in the same manner, we domesticated and harnessed the wild element of poetry. Now poetry is no longer the unpardonable whistling of nightingales, but a State Service! Poetry is a commodity.

Our famous "Mathematical Norms"! Without them in our schools, how could we love so sincerely and dearly our four rules of arithmetic? And "Thorns"! This is a classical image: the Guardians are thorns about a rose, thorns that guard our tender State Flower from coarse hands. Whose heart could resist, could remain indifferent, when seeing and hearing the lips of our children recite like a prayer: "A bad boy caught the rose with his hand, but the thorn of steel pricked him like a needle; the bad boy cried and ran home," etc., etc. And the "Daily Odes to the Well-Doer!" Who, having read them, will not bow piously before the unselfish service of that Number of all Numbers? And the dreadful red "Flowers of Court Sentences!" And the immortal tragedy, "Those Who Come Late to Work!" And the popular book, Stanzas on Sex Hygiene!

Our whole life in all its complexity and beauty is thus stamped forever

in the gold of words. Our poets do not soar any longer in the unknown; they have descended to earth and they march with us, keeping step to the accompaniment of our austere and mechanical March of the musical State Tower. Their lyre is the morning rubbing sound of the electric toothbrushes, and the threatening crack of the electric sparks coming from the Machine of the Well-Doer, and the magnificent echo of the Hymn of the United State, and the intimate ringing of the crystalline, shining washbasins, and the stimulating rustle of the falling curtains, and the joyous voices of the newest cookbooks, and the almost imperceptible whisper of the street membranes....

Our gods are here, below. They are with us in the Bureau, in the kitchen, in the shops, in the rest rooms. The gods have become like us, ergo we have become like gods. And we shall come to you, my unknown readers on another planet, we shall come to you to make your life as godlike, as rational, and as correct as our own...

RECORD THIRTEEN

Fog

Thou

A Decidedly Absurd Adventure

I awoke at dawn. The rose-colored firmament looked into my eyes. Everything was beautiful, round. "O-90 is to come tonight. Surely I am healthy again." I smiled and fell asleep. The Morning Bell! I got up; everything looked different. Through the glass of the ceiling, through the walls, nothing could be seen but fog—fog everywhere, strange clouds, becoming heavier and nearer; the boundary between earth and sky disappeared. Everything seemed to be floating and thawing and falling...Not a thing to hold on to. No houses to be seen; they were all dissolved in the fog like crystals of salt in water. On the sidewalks and inside the houses dark figures, like suspended particles in a strange milky solution, were hanging, below, above, up to the tenth floor. Everything seemed to be covered with smoke, as though a fire were raging somewhere noiselessly.

At eleven-forty-five exactly (I looked at the clock particularly at that time to catch the figures, to save at least the figures), at eleven-forty-five, just before leaving, according to our Table of Hours, to go and occupy myself with physical labor, I dropped into my room for a moment. Suddenly the telephone rang. A voice—a long needle slowly penetrating my heart:

"Oh, you are at home? I am very glad! Wait for me at the corner. We shall go together Where? Well, you'll see.

"You know perfectly well that I am going to work now."

"You know perfectly well that you'll do as I say! Au revoir. In two minutes!..."

I stood at the corner. I had to wait to try to make clear to her that only

the United State directs me, not she. "You'll do as I say!" How sure she is! One hears it in her voice. And what if... ?

Unifs, dull gray as if woven of damp fog, would appear for a second at my side and then soundlessly redis-solve. I was unable to turn my eyes away from the clock ...I seemed myself to have become that sharp, quivering hand that marked the seconds. Ten, eight minutes ...three ...two minutes to twelve....Of course! I was late! Oh, how I hated her. Yet I had to wait to prove that I...

A red line in the milky whiteness of the fog-like blood, like a wound made by a sharp knife—her lips.

"I made you wait, I think. And now you are late for your work anyway?"

"How...? Well, yes, it is too late now."

I glanced at her lips in silence. All women are lips, lips only. Some are rosy lips, tense and round, a ring, a tender fence separating one from the world. But these! A second ago they were not here, and suddenly... the slash of a knife! I seemed even to see the sweet, dripping blood

She came nearer. She leaned gently against my shoulder; we became one. Something streamed from her into me. I felt, I knew, it should be so. Every fiber of my nervous system told me this, every hair on my head, every painfully sweet heartbeat. And what a joy it was to submit to what should be. A fragment of iron ore probably feels the same joy of submission to precise, inevitable law when it clings to a lodestone. The same joy is in a stone which, thrown aloft, hesitates a little at the height of its flight and then rushes down

to the ground. It is the same with a man when in his final convulsion he takes a last deep breath and dies.

I remember I smiled vaguely and said for no reason at all, "Fog ...very."

"Thou lovest fog, dost thou?"

This ancient, long-forgotten thou—the thou of a master to his slave—penetrated me slowly, sharply....Yes, I was a slave....This, too, was inevitable, was good.

"yes, good..." I said aloud to myself, and then to her, "I hate fog. I am afraid of fog."

Then you love it. For if you fear it because it is stronger than you, hate it because you fear it, you love it. For you cannot subject it to yourself. One loves only the things one cannot conquer."

"Yes, that is so. That is why...that is precisely why I..."

We were walking—as one. Somewhere beyond the fog the sun was singing in a faint tone, gradually swelling, filling the air with tension and with pearl and gold and rose and red....The whole world seemed to be one unembraceable woman, and we who were in her body were not yet born; we were ripening in joy. It was clear to me, absolutely clear, that everything existed only for me: the sun, the fog, the gold—for me. I did not ask where we were going; what did it matter? It was a pleasure to walk, to ripen, to become stronger and more tense....

"Here ..." I-330 stopped at a door. "It so happens that today there is

someone on duty who... I told you about him in the Ancient House."

Carefully guarding the forces ripening within me, I read the sign: "Medical Bureau." Only automatically I understood.

...A glass room, filled with golden fog; shelves of glass, colored bottles, jars, electric wires, bluish sparks in tubes; and a male Number—a very thin flattened man. He might have been cut out of a sheet of paper. Wherever he was, whichever way he turned, he showed only a profile, a sharply pointed, glittering blade of a nose, and lips like scissors.

I could not hear what I-330 told him. I merely saw her lips when she was talking, and I felt that I was smiling, irrepressibly, blissfully. The scissors-like lips glittered and the doctor said, "Yes, yes, I see. A most dangerous disease. I know of nothing more dangerous." And he laughed. With his thin, flat, papery hand he wrote something on a piece of paper and gave it to I-330; he wrote on another piece of paper and handed it over to me. He had given us certificates, testifying that we were ill, that we were unable to go to work. Thus I stole my work from the United State; I was a thief; I deserved to be put beneath the Machine of the Well-Doer. Yet I was indifferent to this thought; it was as distant from me as though it were written in a novel. I took the certificate without an instant's hesitation. I, all my being, my eyes, my lips, my hands, knew it was as it should be.

At the corner, from a half-empty garage, we took an aero. I-330 took the wheel as she had done before, pressed the starter, and we tore away from the earth. We soared. Behind us the golden haze, the sun. The thin, blade-like profile of the doctor seemed to me suddenly so dear, so beloved. Formerly I

knew everything revolves around the sun. Now I knew everything was revolving around me. Slowly, blissfully, with half-closed eyes....

At the gate of the Ancient House we found the same old woman. What a dear mouth, with lips grown together and raylike wrinkles around it! Probably those lips have remained grown together all these days; but now they parted and smiled.

"Ah! you mischievous girl, you! Work is too much for you? Well, all right, all right. If anything happens, I'll run up and warn you. "

A heavy, squeaky, opaque door. It closed behind us, and at once my heart, opened painfully, widely, still wider.... My lips ...hers....I drank and drank from them. I tore myself away; in silence I looked into her widely open eyes, and then again....

The room in half dusk....Blue and saffron-yellow lights, dark green morocco leather, the golden smile of Buddha, a wide mahogany bed, a glimmer of mirrorsAnd my dream of a few days before became so comprehensible, so clear to me; everything seemed saturated with the golden prime juice of life, and it seemed that I was overflowing with it—one second more and it would splash out....Like iron ore to a lodestone, in sweet submission to the precise and unchangeable law, inevitably, I clung to her.... There was no pink check, no counting, no United State; I was myself no more. Only, drawn together, the tenderly sharp teeth were there, only her golden, widely open eyes, and through them I saw deeper within....And silence...Only somewhere in a corner, thousands of miles away it seemed, drops of water were dripping from the faucet of the washstand. I was the

Universe! ...And between drops whole epochs, eras, were elapsing....

I put on my unif and bent over I-330 to draw her into me with my eyes—for the last time.

"I knew it....I knew you," said I-330 in a very low voice. She passed her hand over her face as though brushing something away; then she arose brusquely, put on her unif and her usual sharp, bite-like smile.

"Well, my fallen angel, you perished just now, do you know that? No? You are not afraid? Well, au revoir. You shall go home alone. Well?"

She opened the mirror door of the cupboard and, looking at me over her shoulder, she waited. I left the room obediently. Yet no sooner had I left the room than I felt it was urgent that she touch me with her shoulder— only for one second with her shoulder, nothing more. I ran back into the room, where, I presumed, she was standing before the mirror, busily buttoning up her unif; I rushed in, and stopped abruptly. I saw—I remember it clearly—I saw the key in the keyhole of the closet, and the ancient ring upon it was still swinging, but I-330 was not there. She could not have left the room as there was but one exit....Yet I-330 was not there! I looked around everywhere. I even opened the cupboard and felt of the different ancient dresses, nobody....

I feel somewhat ridiculous, my dear planetary readers, relating to you this most improbable adventure. But what else can I do since it all happened exactly as I relate it? Was not the whole day, from early morning, full of improbable adventures? Does it not all resemble the ancient disease of dream seeing? If this be so, what does it matter if I relate one absurdity more, or one

less? Moreover, I am convinced that sooner or later I shall be able to include all these absurdities in some kind of logical sequence. This thought comforts me as I hope it will comfort you.

... How overwhelmed I am! If only you knew how overwhelmed!

RECORD FOURTEEN

"Mine"

Impossible

A Cold Floor

I shall continue to relate my adventures of yesterday. I was busy during the personal hour before retiring to bed, and thus I was unable to record everything last night. But everything is graven in me; especially, for some reason, and apparently forever, I shall remember that unbearably cold floor....

I was expecting O-90 last evening, as it was her regular day. I went downstairs to the controller on duty to get a permit for the lowering of my curtains.

"What is the matter with you?" asked the controller. "You seem so

peculiar tonight."

"I...I am sick."

Strictly speaking, I told her the truth. I certainly am sick. All this is an illness. Presently I remembered; of course, my certificate! I touched it in my pocket. Yes, there it was, rustling. Then all this did happen! It did actually happen!

I held out the paper to the controller. As I did so, I felt the blood rushing to my cheeks. Without looking directly at her, I noticed with what an expression of surprise she gazed at me.

Then at twenty-one-thirty o'clock....In the room to the left the curtains were lowered, and in the room to the right my neighbor was sitting over a book. His head is bald and covered with bulging lumps. His forehead is enormous—a yellow parabola. I was walking up and down the room suffering. How could I meet her, after all that happened? O-90, I mean. I felt plainly, to my right, how the eyes of my neighbor were staring at me. I clearly saw the wrinkles on his forehead like a row of yellow, illegible lines; and for some reason I was certain that those lines dealt with me.

A quarter of an hour before twenty-two the cheerful, rosy whirlwind was in my room; the firm ring of her rosy arms closed about my neck. Then I felt how that ring grew weaker and weaker; and then it broke and her arms dropped....

"You are not the same, not the same man! You are no longer mine!"

"What curious terminology: 'mine,' I never belonged—" I faltered. It suddenly occurred to me: true, I had belonged to no one before, but now...Is it not clear that now I no longer live in our rational world but in the ancient delirious world, in a world of the square root of minus one?

The curtains fell. There to my right my neighbor let his book drop at that moment from the table to the floor. And through the last narrow space between the curtain and the floor I saw a yellow hand pick up the book. Within I felt: "Only to seize that hand with an my power. "

I thought...I wanted to meet you during the hour for the walk, I wanted... I must talk to you about so many things, so many...

Poor, dear O-90. Her rosy mouth was a crescent with its horns downward. But I could not tell her everything, could I, if for no other reason than that it would make her an accomplice to my crimes? I knew that she would not have the courage to report me to the Bureau of Guardians, consequently...

"My dear O-, I am sick, I am exhausted. I went again today to the Medical Bureau; but it is nothing, it will pass. But let us not talk about it; let us forget it."

O-90 was lying down. I kissed her gently. I kissed that childish, fluffy fold at her wrist. Her blue eyes were closed. The pink crescent of her lips was slowly blooming, more and more like a flower. I kissed her....

Suddenly I clearly realized how empty I was, how I had given away...No, I could not—impossible! I knew I must ...but no—impossible! I

ought...but no—impossible! My lips cooled at once. The rosy crescent trembled, darkened, drew together. O-90 covered herself with the bedspread, her face hidden in the pillow.

I was sitting near the bed, on the floor. What a desperately cold floor! I sat there in silence. The terrible cold from the floor rose higher and higher. There in the blue, silent space among the planets, there probably it is as cold.

"Please understand, dear; I did not mean..." I muttered, "With all my heart, I..."

It was the truth. I, my real self, did not mean....Yet how could I express it in words? How could I explain to her that the piece of iron did not want to? ...But that the law is precise, inevitable!

O-90 lifted her face from the pillow and without opening her eyes she said, "Go away." But because she was crying she pronounced it "Oo aaa-ay." For some reason this absurd detail will not leave my memory.

Penetrated by the cold, and torpid, I went out into the ball. I pressed my forehead against the cold glass. Outside a thin, almost imperceptible film of haze was spread. "Toward night," I thought, "it will descend again and drown the world. How sad a night it will be!"

O-90 passed swiftly by, going toward the elevator. The door slammed.

"Wait a minute!" I screamed. I was frightened.

But the elevator was already groaning, going down, down, down....

"She robbed me of R-, she robbed me of O-90, yet, yet....
nevertheless..."

RECORD FIFTEEN

The Bell

The Mirror—like Sea

I Am to Bum Eternally

I was walking on the dock where the Integral is being built, when the Second Builder came to meet me. His face, as usual, was round and white, a porcelain plate. When he speaks it seems as if he serves you a plate of something unbearably tasty.

"You chose to be ill, and without the Chief we had sort of an accident yesterday."

"An accident?"

"Yes, sir. We finished the bell and started to let it down, and imagine; the men caught a male without a number. How he got in I can't make out. They took him to the Operation Department. Oh, they'll get the answers out

of the fellow there; 'why' and 'how,' etc....He smiled delightedly.

Our best and most experienced physicians work in the Operation Department under the direct supervision of the Well-Doer himself. They have all kinds of instruments, but the best of all is the Gas Bell. The procedure is taken from an ancient experiment of elementary physics: they used to put a rat under a gas bell and gradually pump out the air; the air becomes more and more rarefied, and... you know the rest.

But our Gas Bell is certainly a more perfect apparatus, and it is used in combination with different gases. Furthermore, we don't torture a defenseless animal as the ancients did. We use it for a higher purpose: to guard the security of the United State—in other words, the happiness of millions. About five centuries ago, when the work of the Operation Department was only beginning, there were yet to be found some fools who compared our Operation Department with the ancient Inquisition. But this is as absurd as to compare a surgeon performing a tracheotomy with a highway cutthroat. Both use a knife, perhaps the same kind of knife, both do the same thing, viz., cut the throat of a living man; yet one is a well-doer, the other is a murderer; one is marked plus, the other minus....All this becomes perfectly clear in one second, in one turn of our wheel of logic, the teeth of which engage that minus, turn it upward, and thus change its aspect.

One other matter is somewhat different: the ring in the door was still oscillating, apparently the door had just closed, yet she, I-330, had disappeared, she was not there! The wheel of logic could not turn this fact. A dream? But even now I still feel in my right shoulder that incomprehensibly sweet pain of I-330 near me in the fog, pressing herself against me. "Thou

lovest fog?" Yes, I love the fog, too. I love everything, and everything appears to me wonderful, new, tense; everything is so good!...

"So good," I said aloud.

"Good?" The porcelain eyes bulged out. "What good do you find in that? If that man without a number contrived to sneak in, it means that there are others around here, everywhere, all the time, here around the Integral, they —"

"Whom do you mean by 'they'?"

"How do I know who? But I sense them, all the time."

"Have you heard about the new operation which has been invented? I mean the surgical removal of fancy?" (There really were rumors of late about something of the sort.)

"No, I haven't. What has that to do with it?"

"Merely this: if I were you, I should go and ask to have this operation performed upon me. "

The plate distinctly expressed something lemonlike, sour. Poor fellow! He took offense if one even hinted that he might possess imagination. Well, a week ago I, too, would have taken offense at such a hint. Not now though, for I know that I have imagination; that is what my illness consists of. And more than that: I know that it is a wonderful illness—one does not want to be cured, simply does not want to!

We ascended the glass steps; the world spread itself below us like the palm of a hand.

You, readers of these records, whoever you may be, you have the sun above you. And if you ever were ill, as I am now, then you know what kind of sun there is or may be in the morning; you know that pinkish, lucid, warm gold; the air itself looks a little pinkish; everything seems permeated by the tender blood of the sun; everything is alive; the stones seem soft and living, iron living and warm, people full of life and smiles. Perhaps in a short while all this will disappear, in an hour the pinkish blood of the sun will be drained out; but in the meantime everything is alive. And I see how something flows and pulsates in the sides of the Integral; I see the Integral; I think of its great and lofty future, of the heavy cargo of inevitable happiness which it is to carry up there into the heights, to you, unseen ones, to you who seek eternally and who never find. You shall find! You shall be happy! You must be happy, and now you have not very long to wait!

The body of the Integral is almost ready; it is an exquisite, oblong ellipsoid, made of our glass, which is everlasting like gold and flexible like steel. I watched them within, fixing its transverse ribs and its longitudinal stringers; in the stem they were erecting the base of the gigantic motor. Every three seconds the powerful tail of the Integral will eject flame and gases into universal space, and the Integral will soar higher and higher, like a flaming Tamerlane of happiness! I watched how the workers, true to the Taylor system, would bend down, then unbend and turn around swiftly and rhythmically like levers of an enormous engine. In their hands they held glittering glass pipes which emitted bluish streaks of flame; the glass walls

were being cut into with flame; with flame were being welded the angles, the ribs, the bars. I watched the monstrous glass cranes easily roiling over the glass rails; like the workers themselves, they would obediently turn, bend down, and bring their loads inward into the bowels of the Integral. All seemed one: humanized machine and mechanized humans. It was the most magnificent, most stirring beauty, harmony, music!

Quick! Down! To them and with them! And I descended and mingled with them, fused with their mass, caught in the rhythm of steel and glass. Their movements were measured, tense and round. Their cheeks were colored with health, their mirrorlike foreheads unclouded by the insanity of thinking. I was floating upon a mirror-like sea. I was resting....Suddenly one of them turned his carefree face toward me.

"Well, better today?"

"What, better?"

"You were not here yesterday. And we thought something serious..." His forehead was shining—a childish and innocent smile.

My blood rushed to my face. No, I could not lie, facing those eyes. I remained silent; I was drowning....Above, a shiny, round, white porcelain face appeared in the hatchway.

"Hey! D-503! Come up here! Something is wrong with a frame and brackets here, and..."

Not waiting until he had finished, I rushed to him, upstairs; I was

shamefully saving myself by flight. I had not the power to raise my eyes. I was dazed by the sparkling glass steps under my feet, and with every step I felt more and more hopeless. I, a corrupted man, a criminal, was out of place here. No, I shall probably never again be able to fuse myself into this mechanical rhythm, nor float over this mirror-like, untroubled sea. I am to burn eternally from now on, running from place to place, seeking a nook where I may hide my eyes, eternally, until I...A spark cold as ice pierced me. "I myself, I matter little, but is it necessary that she also....? I must see that she..."

I crawled through the hatchway to the deck and stood there; where was I to go now? I did not know what I had come for! I looked aloft. The midday sun, exhausted by its march, was fuming dimly. Below was the Integral, a gray mass of glass—dead. The pink blood was drained out! It was obvious to me that all this was my imagination and that everything was the same as before; yet it was also clear to me that...

"What is the matter with you, D-503? Are you deaf ? I call and call you. What is the matter with you?" It was the Second Builder yelling directly into my ear; he must have been yelling that way for quite a while.

What was the matter with me? I had lost my rudder; the motor was groaning as before, the aero was quivering and rushing on, but it had no rudder. I did not even know where I was rushing, down to the earth or up to the sun, to its flame....

RECORD SIXTEEN

Yellow

A Two-dimensional Shadow

An Incurable Soul

I have not written for several days; I don't know how many. All my days are alike. All are of one color, yellow, like dry, overheated sand. Not a patch of shade, not a drop of water, only an infinity of yellow sand. I cannot live without her, but she, since she disappeared that day so mysteriously in the Ancient House...

Since that time I have seen her only once, during the hour for the Walk, two, three, four days ago, I do not remember exactly. All my days are alike. She only passed swiftly by and for a second idled up my yellow, empty world. With her, arm in arm, reaching not higher than her shoulder, were the double-curved S- and the thin papery doctor, and a fourth person whose fingers only I remember well; they streamed out, those fingers, from the sleeve of the unif like a bundle of rays, uncommonly thin, white, long. I-330 raised her hand and waved to me, then she bent toward the one with the raylike fingers, over the head of S-. I overheard the word Integral. All four turned around to look at me, and then they disappeared in the bluish-gray sea, and my road was once more dry and yellow.

That same evening she had a pink check on me. I stood before the switchboard and with hatred and tenderness I implored it to click and soon show the number I-330. I would rush out into the hall at every sound of the elevator. The door of the latter would open heavily. Pale, tall, blond, and dark they would come out of the elevator, and here and there curtains were falling....But she was not there. She did not come. And it is quite possible that now, at this minute, as I write these lines, at twenty-two o'clock exactly, with her eyes closed she is pressing her shoulder against somebody else in the same way, and in the same way she may be asking someone: "Do you love me?" Whom? Who is he? That one with raylike fingers, or that thick-lipped, sprinkling R-? Or S-? S-! Why is it that I have heard his steps splashing behind me as though in a ditch all these days? Why has he been following me all these days like a shadow? Ahead of me, to my side, behind me, a grayish-blue, two-dimensional shadow; people cross it, people step on it, but it remains nearby, attached to me by unseen ties. Perhaps that tie is I-330. I do not know. Or perhaps they, the Guardians I mean, already know that I...

If someone should tell you your shadow sees you, sees you all the time, would you understand? All at once peculiar sensations arise in you; your arms seem to belong to someone else; they are in the way. That is how I feel; very frequently now I notice how absurdly I wave my hands without any rhythm. I have an irresistible desire to glance behind me, but I am unable to do so; my neck might as well be forged of iron. I flee, I run faster and faster, and even with my back I feel that shadow following me as fast as I can run; and there is no place to hide myself—no place!

At length I reach my room. Alone at last! But here I find another thing,

the telephone. I pick up the receiver. "Yes, I-330, please." And again I hear a light noise through the receiver; someone's step in the hall there, passing the door of her room, and—silence....I drop the receiver.I cannot, cannot bear it any longer, and I run to see her!

This happened yesterday. I ran there and for a whole hour from sixteen to seventeen I wandered near the house in which she lives. Numbers were passing by in rows. Thousands of feet were beating the time like a behemoth with a million legs passing by. I was alone, thrown out by a storm on an uninhabited island, and my eyes were seeking and seeking among the grayish-blue waves. "There, soon," I thought, "will appear from somewhere the sharp mocking angles of the brows lifted to the temples, and the dark window eyes, and there behind them a flaming fireplace and someone's shadow....And I will rush straight in behind those windows and say to her, "Thou"—yes, "thou" without fail. "Thou knowest I cannot live without thee any longer, then why...?" But silence reigned.

Suddenly I heard the silence; suddenly I heard the Musical Tower silenced, and I understood! It was after seventeen already; everyone had already left. I was alone. It was too late to return home. Around me—a desert made of glass and bathed with yellow sunshine. I saw, as if in water, the reflection of the walls in the glass smoothness of the street, sparkling walls, hanging upside down. Myself also upside down, hanging absurdly in the glass.

"I must go at once, this very second, to the Medical Bureau, or else...Or perhaps this would be best: to remain here, to wait quietly until they see me and come and take me into the Operation Department and put an end to

everything at once, redeem everything...." A slight rustle—and the double-curved S- was before me. Without looking I felt his two gray steel-drill eyes bore quickly into me. I plucked up all my strength to show a smile and to say (I had to say Something), "I...I must go to the Medical Bureau."

"Who is detaining you? What are you standing here for?"

I was silent, absurdly hanging upside down.

"Follow me," said S- austere.

I followed obediently, waving my unnecessary foreign arms. I could not raise my eyes. I walked through a strange world turned upside down, where people had their feet pasted to the ceilings, and where engines stood with their bases upward, and where, still lower, the sky merged in the heavy glass of the pavement. I remember what pained me most was the fact that looking at the world for the last time in my life I should see it upside down rather than in its natural state; but I could not raise my eyes.

We stopped. Steps. One step...and I should see the figures of the doctors in their white aprons, and the enormous, dumb Bell.

With force, with some sort of an inner twist, I succeeded at last in tearing my eyes away from the glass beneath my feet, and I noticed the golden letters, "Medical Bureau." Why did he bring me here rather than to the Operation Department? Why did he spare me? About this I did not even think at the moment. I made all the steps in one jump, firmly closed the door behind me, and took a very deep breath—as if I had not breathed since morning, as if my heart had not beaten for the same length of time, as if only

now I started to breathe and only now a sluice opened in my chest....

Inside there were two of them, one a short specimen with heavy legs, his eyes like the horns of a bull tossing the patients up, the other extremely thin with lips like sparkling scissors, a nose like a blade—it was the same man who...I ran to him as to a dear friend, straight over close to the blade, and muttered something about insomnia, dreams, shadows, yellow sand. The scissors lips sparkled and smiled.

"Yes, it is too bad. Apparently a soul has formed in you.

A soul? That strange, ancient word that was forgotten long ago

"Is it...v-very dangerous?" I stuttered.

"Incurable," was the cut of the scissors.

"But more specifically, what is it? Somehow I cannot imagine—"

"You see...how shall I put it? Are you a mathematician?"

"Yes."

"Then you see...imagine a plane, let us say this mirror. You and I are on its surface. You see? There we are, squinting our eyes to protect ourselves from the sunlight, or here is the bluish electric spark in that tube, there the shadow of that aero that just passed. All this is on the surface, is momentary only. Now imagine this very same surface softened by a flame so that nothing can glide over it any longer, so everything will instead penetrate into that mirror world which excites such curiosity in children. I assure you, children

are not so foolish as we think they are! The surface becomes a volume, a body, a world. And inside the mirror—within you—there is the sunshine, and the whirlwind caused by the aero propeller, and your trembling lips and someone else's lips also. You see, the cold mirror reflects, throws out, while this one absorbs; it keeps forever a trace of everything that touches it. Once you saw an imperceptible wrinkle on someone's face, and this wrinkle is forever preserved within you. You may happen to hear in the silence a drop of water falling—and you will hear it forever!"

"Yes, yes, that is it!" I grasped his hand. I could hear drops of water dripping in the silence from the faucet of a washstand, and I knew at once it was forever.

"But tell me please, why suddenly...suddenly, a soul? There was none, yet suddenly.... Why is it that no one has it, yet I ..." I pressed the thin hand; I was afraid to loosen the safety belt.

"Why? Well, why don't we grow feathers or wings but have only shoulder blades, bases for wings? We have aeros; wings would only be in the way. Wings are needed in order to fly, but we don't need to fly anywhere. We have arrived at the terminus. We have found what we wanted. Is that not so?"

I nodded vaguely. He glanced at me and laughed a scalpel-like, metallic laugh. The other doctor overheard us and stamped out of his room on his heavy legs. He picked up the thin doctor with his horn eyes, then picked me up.

"What is the matter—a soul? You say a soul? Oh, damn it! We may

soon retrogress even to the cholera epidemics. I told you"—he tossed the thin one on the horns—"I told you the only thing to do is to operate on them all, wholesale! Simply extirpate the center for fancy. Only surgery can help here, only surgery." He put on a pair of enormous X-ray spectacles and remained thus for a long while, looking into my skull, through the bones into my brain, and making notes.

"Very, very curious! Listen." He looked firmly into my eyes."Wouldn't you consent to have me perform an extirpation on you? It would be invaluable to the United State; it might help us prevent an epidemic. If you have no special reasons, of course..."

Some time ago I should probably have said without hesitation, "I am willing," but now—I was silent. I caught the profile of the thin doctor; I implored him!

"You see," he said at last, "Number D-503 is building the Integral, and I am sure the operation would interfere"

"Ah-h!" grumbled the other, and stamped back into his room.

We remained alone. The paper-like hand was put lightly and caressingly upon mine, the profile-like face came nearer, and he said in a very low voice: "I shall tell you a secret. You are not the only one. My colleague is right when he speaks of an epidemic. Try to remember, haven't you noticed yourself, someone with something similar, very similar, identical?"

He looked at me closely. What was he alluding to? To whom?...Is it possible? ...

"Listen." I jumped up from my seat. But he had already changed the subject. In a loud, metallic tone:

"...As for the insomnia and the dreams you complain of, I advise you to walk a great deal. Tomorrow morning you must begin taking long walks... say, as far as the Ancient House."

Again he pierced me with his eyes and he smiled thinly. It seemed to me that I saw enveloped in the tender tissue of that smile a word, a letter, a name, the only name... Or was it only my imagination? I waited impatiently while he wrote a certificate of illness for today and tomorrow. Once more I gently and firmly pressed his hand; then I ran out.

My heart now feels light and swift like an aero; it carries me higher and higher....I know joy will come tomorrow. What joy? ...

RECORD SEVENTEEN

Through Glass

I Died

The Corridor

I am puzzled. Yesterday, at the very moment when I thought everything was untangled, and that all the X's were at last found, new unknowns appeared in my equation. The origin of the coordinates of the whole story is of course the Ancient House. From this center the axes of all the X's, Y's, and Z's radiate, and recently they have entered into the formation of my whole life.

I walked along the X—axis (Avenue 59) toward the center. The whirlwind of yesterday still raged within me: houses and people upside down; my own hands torturingly foreign to me; glimmering scissors; the sharp sound of drops dripping from the faucet; all this existed, all this existed once! All these things were revolving wildly, tearing my flesh, rotating wildly beneath the molten surface, there where the "soul" is located.

In order to follow the instructions of the doctor I chose the road that followed not the hypotenuse but the two legs of a triangle. Soon I reached the road running along the Green Wall. From beyond the Wall, from the infinite ocean of green, there arose toward me an immense wave of roots, branches, flowers, leaves. It rose higher and higher; it seemed as though it would splash over me and that from a man, from the finest and most precise mechanism which I am, I would be transformed into... But fortunately there was the Green Wall between me and that wild green sea. Oh, how great and divinely limiting is the wisdom of walls and bars! This Green Wall is, I think, the greatest invention ever conceived. Man ceased to be a wild animal the day he built the first wall; man ceased to be a wild man only on the day when the Green Wall was completed, when by this wall we isolated our machine-like, perfect world from the irrational, ugly world of trees, birds, and beasts

The blunt snout of some unknown beast was to be seen dimly through the glass of the Wall; its yellow eyes kept repeating the same thought which remained incomprehensible to me. We looked into each other's eyes for a long while. Eyes are shafts which lead from the superficial world into a world which is beneath the surface. A thought awoke in me: "What if that yellow—eyed one, sitting there on that absurd dirty heap of leaves, is happier than I, in his life which cannot be calculated in figures!" I waved my hand. The yellow eyes twinkled, moved back, and disappeared in the foliage. What a pitiful being! How absurd the idea that he might be happier! Happier than I he may be, but I am an exception, am I not? I am sick.

I noticed that I was approaching the dark red walls of the Ancient House, and I saw the grown-together lips of the old woman. I ran to her as fast as I could.

"Is she here?"

The grown-together lips opened slowly.

"Who is 'she'?"

"Who? I-330, of course. You remember we came together, she and I, in an aero the other day."

"Oh, yes, yes, yes—yes."

Ray wrinkles around the lips, artful rays radiating from the eyes. They were making their way deeper and deeper into me.

"Well, she is here, all right. Came in a while ago."

"Here!" I noticed at the feet of the old woman a bush of silver-bitter wormwood. (The court of the Ancient House, being a part of the museum, is carefully kept in its prehistoric state.) A branch of the bush touched the old woman, she caressed that branch; upon her knees lay stripes of sunshine. For a second, I, the sun, the old woman, the wormwood, those yellow eyes, all seemed to be one; we were firmly united by common veins, and one common blood—boisterous, magnificent blood—was running through those veins.

I am ashamed now to write down all this, but I promised to be frank to the end of these records: yes, I bent over and kissed that soft, grown-together mouth of the old woman. She wiped it with her hand and laughed.

Running, I passed through familiar, half-dark, echoing rooms, and for some reason I ran straight to the bedroom. When I had reached the door, a thought flashed: "And if she is in there... not alone?" I stopped and listened. But all I heard was the tick-tock of my heart, not within me, but somewhere near, outside me.

I entered. The large bed—untouched. A mirror...another mirror in the door of the cupboard, and in the key-hole an ancient key upon an ancient ring. No one was there. I called softly: "I-330, are you here?" And then in a still lower voice, with dosed eyes, holding my breath— in a voice as though I were kneeling before her, "I-, dear." Silence. Only the water was dripping fast into the white basin of the washstand. I cannot now explain why, but I disliked that sound. I turned the faucet hard and went out. She was not there, so much was clear. She must be in another "apartment."

I ran down a wide, somber stairway, pulled one door, another, a third-locked. Every room was locked save that of "our" apartment. And she was not there. I went back again to the same apartment, without knowing why. I walked slowly, with difficulty; my shoe soles suddenly became as heavy as cast iron. I remember distinctly my thought, "It is a mistake that the force of gravity is a constant; consequently all my formulae..."

Suddenly—an explosion! A door slammed down below; someone stamped quickly over the flagstones. I became lightfooted again, extremely light! I dashed to the railing to bend over, and in one word, one exclamation, expressed everything: "You!"

I became cold. Below, in the square shadow of the window frame, flapping its pink wing ears, the head of S- passed by!

Like lightning I saw only the naked conclusion. Without any premises (I don't recall any premises even now) the conclusion: he must not see me here! And on the tips of my toes, pressing myself against the wall, I sneaked upstairs into the unlocked apartment.

I stopped for a second at the door. He was stamping upward, here. If only the door... I prayed to the door, but it was a wooden one; it squeaked, it squealed. Like a wind something red passed my eyes, something green, and the yellow Buddha. In front of the mirror door of the cupboard my pale face; my ears still following those steps, my lips...Now he was .already passing the green and yellow, now he was passing Buddha. Now at the door-sill of the bedroom...

I grasped the key of the cupboard; the ring oscillated. This oscillation reminded me of something. Again a conclusion, a naked conclusion without premises; a conclusion, or, to be more exact, a fragment of one: "Now, I-330 is..." I brusquely opened the cupboard and, when inside in the darkness, shut the door firmly. One step!...The floor shook under my feet. Slowly and softly I floated somewhere downward; my eyes were dimmed—I died!

Later, when I sat down to describe all these adventures, I sought in my memory and consulted some books; and now I understand, of course! I was in a state of temporary death. This state was known to the ancients, but as far as I am informed it is unknown to us. I have no conception of how long I was dead, probably not longer than five or ten seconds, but after a while I arose from the dead and opened my eyes. It was dark. But I felt I was falling down, down, down. I stretched out my hand to attach myself to something, but the rough wall scratched my fingers; it was running away from me, upward. I felt blood on my fingers. It was clear that all this was not merely a play of my sick imagination. But what was it? What?

I heard my own frequent, trembling breaths. (I am not ashamed to confess this, it was all unexpected and incomprehensible.) A minute, two, three passed; I was still going down. Then a soft bump. The thing that had been falling away from under my feet was motionless. I found in the darkness a knob, and turned it; a door opened; there was a dim light. I now noticed behind me a square platform, traveling upward. I tried to run back to it but it was too late. "I am cut off here," I thought. Where "here" might be I did not know.

A corridor. A heavy silence. The small lamps on the vaulted ceiling

resembled an endless, twinkling, dotted line. The corridor was similar to the "tube" of our underground railways but it was much narrower, and made not of our glass but of some other, very ancient material. For a moment I thought of the underground caves where they say many tried to save themselves during the 'Two Hundred Years' War. There was nothing to do but to walk ahead.

I walked, I think, for about twenty minutes. A turn to the right, the corridor became wider, the small lamps brighter. There was a dim droning somewhere ...Was it a machine or voices? I did not know. I stood before a heavy, opaque door from behind which came the noise. I knocked. Then I knocked again, louder. Now there was silence behind the door. Something clanked; the door opened slowly and heavily.

I don't know which of us was the more dumfounded; the thin, blade-like doctor stood before me!

"You here!" His scissors opened and remained open.

And I, as if I did not know a human word, stood silent, merely stared, without comprehending that he was talking to me. He must have told me to leave, for with his thin paper stomach he slowly pressed me to the side, to the more brightly lighted end of the corridor, and poked me in the back.

"Beg your pardon...I wanted...I thought that she, I-330...but behind me..."

"Stay where you are," said the doctor brusquely, and he disappeared.

At last! At last she was nearby, here, and what did it matter where "here" was? I saw the familiar saffron-yel-low silk, the smile bite, the eyes with their curtains drawn....My lips quivered, so did my hands and knees, and I had a most stupid thought: "Vibrations make sounds. Shivering must make a sound. Why, then, don't I hear it?"

Her eyes opened for me widely. I entered into them.

"I could not...any longer! ...Where have you been? ...Why? ..."

I was unable to tear my eyes away from her for a second, and I talked as if in a delirium, fast and incoherently, or perhaps I only thought without speaking out: "A shadow...behind me. I died. And from the cupboard...Because that doctor of yours...speaks with his scissors...I have a soul...incurable...and I must walk..."

"An incurable soul? My poor boy!" I-330 laughed. She covered me with the sparkles of her laughter; my delirium left me. Everywhere around her little laughs were sparkling! How good it was!

The doctor reappeared from around the turn, the wonderful, magnificent, thinnest doctor.

"Well?" He was already beside her.

"Oh, nothing, nothing. I shall tell you later. He got here by accident. Tell them that I shall be back in about a quarter of an hour."

The doctor slid around the corner. She lingered. The door closed with a heavy thud. Then slowly, very slowly, piercing my heart with a sharp sweet

needle, I-330 pressed against me with her shoulder and then with her arm, with her whole body, and we walked away as if fused into one.

I do not remember now where we turned into darkness; in the darkness we walked up some endless stair-way in silence. I did not see but I knew, I knew that she walked as I did, with closed eyes, blind, her head thrown a little backward, biting her lips and listening to the music—that is to say, to my almost audible tremor.

I returned to consciousness in one of the innumerable nooks in the courtyard of the Ancient House. There was a fence of earth with naked stone ribs and yellow teeth of walls half fallen to pieces. She opened her eyes and said, "Day after tomorrow at sixteen." She was gone.

Did all this really happen? I do not know. I shall learn day after tomorrow. One real sign remains: on my right hand the skin has been rubbed from the tips of three fingers. But today, on the Integral, the Second Builder assured me that he saw me touch the polishing wheel with those very same fingers. Perhaps I did. It is quite probable. I don't know. I don't know anything.

RECORD EIGHTEEN

Debris of Logic

Wounds and Plaster

Never Again

Last night, as soon as I had gone to bed, I fell momentarily to the bottom of the ocean of sleep like an overloaded ship that has been wrecked. The heavy mass of wavy green water enveloped me. Then, slowly, I floated from the bottom upward, and somewhere in the middle of that course I opened my eyes—my room! The morning was still green and motionless. A fragment of sunshine coming from the mirror on my closet door shone into my eyes. This fragment did not permit me to sleep, being thus an obstacle in the way of fulfilling exactly the rules of the Tables, which prescribe so many hours of sleep. I should have opened the closet but I felt as though I were in a spider web, and cobweb covered my eyes; I had no power to sit up.

Yet I got up and opened the closet door; suddenly, there behind that door, making her way through the mass of garments that hung there, was I-330! I have become so accustomed of late to most improbable things that as far as I remember I was not even surprised; I did not even ask a question. I jumped into the closet, slammed the mirror door behind me, and breathlessly, brusquely, blindly, avidly I clung to her. I remember clearly even now: through the narrow crack of the door a sharp sun ray like lightning broke into the darkness and played on the floor and walls of the closet, and a little higher the cruel ray blade fell upon the naked neck of I-330, and this for some reason seemed to me so terrible that I could not bear it, and I screamed—and again I opened my eyes. My room!

The morning was still green and motionless. On the door of my closet was a fragment of the sunshine. I was in bed. A dream? Yet my heart was still wildly beating, quivering and twitching; there was a dull pain in the tips of my fingers and in my knees. This undoubtedly did happen! And now I am no longer able to distinguish what is dream from what is actuality; irrational numbers grow through my solid, habitual, tridimensional life; and instead of firm, polished surfaces, there is something shaggy and rough.

I waited long for the Bell to ring. I was lying thinking, untangling a very strange logical chain. In our superficial life, every formula, every equation, corresponds to a curve or a solid. We have never seen any curve or solid corresponding to my square root of minus one. The horrifying part of the situation is that there exist such curves or solids. Unseen by us they do exist, they must, inevitably; for in mathematics, as on a screen, strange, sharp shadows appear before us. One must remember that mathematics, like death, never makes mistakes, never plays tricks. If we are unable to see those irrational curves or solids, it means only that they inevitably possess a whole immense world somewhere beneath the surface of our life.

I jumped up without waiting for the waking Bell and began to pace up and down the room. My mathematics, the only firm and immovable island of my shaken life, this, too, was torn from its anchor and was floating, whirling. Then it means that that absurd thing, the "soul," is as real as my uniform, as my boots, although I do not see them since they are behind the door of the closet. If boots are not a sickness, why should the "soul" be one? I sought, but I could not find, a way out of the logical confusion. It looked to me like that strange and sad debris beyond the Green Wall; my debris of logic, too, is

filled with extraordinary, incomprehensible, wordless, but speaking beings. It occurred to me for a moment that through some strange, thick glass I saw it; I saw it at once infinitely large and infinitely small, scorpion-like, with hidden but ever perceptible sting; I saw the square root of minus one. Perhaps it was nothing else but my "soul," which, like the legendary scorpion of the ancients, was voluntarily stinging itself with...

The Bell! The day began. All I saw and felt neither died nor disappeared; it merely became covered with daylight, as our visible world does not die or disappear at the end of the day but merely becomes covered with the darkness of night. My head was filled with a light, a thin haze. Through that haze I perceived the long glass tables and the globe-like heads busy chewing—slowly, silently, in unison. At a distance, through the haze, the metronome was slowly beating its tick-tock, and to the accompaniment of this customary and caressing music I joined with the others in counting automatically to fifty: fifty is the number of chewing movements required by the law of the State for every piece of food. And auto-maritally then, keeping time, I went downstairs and put my name down in the book for the outgoing Numbers, as everyone did. But I felt I lived separately from everybody; I lived by myself separated by a soft wall which absorbed noises; beyond that wall there was my own world.

Here a thought occurred to me. If that world is only my own, why should I tell about it in these records? Why should I recount all these absurd "dreams" about closets, endless corridors? With great sorrow I notice that! instead of a correct and strictly mathematical poem in honor of the United State I am writing a fantastic novel, Oh! if only it were a novel and not my

actual life, full of X's, square roots of minus one, and downfalls! Yet all may be for the best. Probably you., my unknown readers, are children still as compared with us. We are brought up by the united State; consequently we have reached the highest summits attainable by man. And you, being children, may swallow without crying all the bitter things I am to give you only if they be coated with the syrup of adventures.

The Same Evening

Are you familiar with the following sensation? You are in an aero and you dash upward along a blue spiral line; the window is open and the wind rushes past your face, whistling, There is no earth. The earth is forgotten. The earth is as far from you as Venus, Saturn, or Jupiter. That is how I live now. A hurricane wind beats into my face; I forget the earth, forget rosy, dear O-90, Yet the earth does exist, and sooner or later I must plane down to that earth; only I close my eyes to avoid seeing the date at which the name O-90 is written on my Tables.

This evening the distant earth reminded me of itself. In order to fulfill the recommendation of the doctor (I desire sincerely, most sincerely I desire, to be cured), I wandered for two hours and eight minutes over the straight lines of the deserted avenues. Everybody was in the auditoriums, in accordance with the Table. Only I, cut off from the rest, I was alone. Strictly speaking, it was a very unnatural situation. Imagine a finger cut off from the whole, from the hand; a separate human finger, somewhat hunched, running over the glass sidewalk. I was such a finger. What seemed most strange and unnatural was that the finger had no desire to be with its hand, with its fellows. I want either to be alone or with her; to transfuse my whole being

into hers through a contact with her shoulder or through our interwoven fingers.

I came home as the sun was setting. The pink dust of evening was covering the glass of the walls, the golden peak of the Accumulating Tower, the voices and smiles of the Numbers. Isn't it strange: the passing rays of the evening sun fall to the earth at the same angle as the awakening rays of the morning, yet they make everything seem so different; the pink tinge is different. At sunset it is so quiet, somewhat melancholy; at sunrise it is resounding, boisterous.

When I entered the hall downstairs I saw U-, the controller. She took a letter from the heaps of envelopes covered with pink dust and handed it to me. I repeat: she is a very respectable woman, and I am sure she has only the very best feelings toward me. Yet, every time I see those cheeks hanging down, which look like the gills of a fish, I ...

Holding out her dry hand with the letter, U- sighed. But that sigh only very slightly moved in me the curtains which separate me from the rest of the world. I was completely engrossed by the envelope which trembled in my hand. I had no doubt that it was a letter from I-330.

At that moment I heard another sigh, such a deliberate one, underscored with two lines, that I raised my eyes from the envelope and saw a tender, cloudy smile coming from between the gills, through the bashful blinds of lowered eyes. And then:

"You poor, poor dear!" A sigh underscored with three lines, and a glance

at the letter, an imperceptible glance. (What was in the letter she naturally knew, ex officio.)

"No, really? ...Why?"

"No, no, dear, I know better than you. For a long time I have watched you, and I see that you need someone with years of experience of life to accompany you.

I felt all pasted around by her smile. It was like a plaster upon the wounds which were to be inflicted upon me by the letter I held in my hand. Finally, through the bashful blinds of her eyes, she said in a very low voice: "I shall think about it, dear. I shall think it over. And be sure that if I feel myself strong enough..."

"Great Well-Doer! Is it possible that is my lot? ... Is it possible that she means to say, that she?... "

My eyes were dimmed and filled with thousands of sinusoids; the letter was trembling. I went near the light to the wall. There the light of the sun was going out; from the sun the dark, sad, pink dust was falling thicker and thicker, covering the floor, my hands, the letter. I opened the envelope and found the signature as fast as I could—the first wound! It was not I-330; it was O-90! And another wound: in the right-hand corner a slovenly splash, a blot! I cannot bear blots. It matters little whether they are made by ink or by...Well, it doesn't matter by what. Heretofore, such a blot would have had only a disagreeable effect, disagreeable to the eyes; but now—why did that small gray blot seem like a cloud, and seem to spread about me a leaden,

bluish darkness? Or was it again the "soul" at work? Here is a transcript of the letter:

You know, or perhaps you don't...I cannot write well. Little it matters! Now you know that without you there is for me not a single day, a single morning, a single spring, for R- is only ...Well, that is of no importance to you. At any rate, I am very grateful to him, for without him, alone all these days, I don't know what would...During these last few days and nights I have lived through ten years, or perhaps twenty years. My room seemed to me not square but round; I walk around without end, round after round, always the same thing, not a door to escape through. I cannot live without you because I love you; and I should not, I cannot be with you any more because I love you! Because I see and I understand that you need no one now, no one in the world save that other, and you must realize that it is precisely because I love you that I must...

I need another two or three days in order to paste together the fragments of myself and thus restore at least something similar to the O-90 of old. Then I shall go myself, and I myself shall state that I take your name from my list, and this will be better for you; you must feel happy now. I shall never again... Good-by, O-.

Never again. Yes, that is better. She is right. But why, then? ...Why, then?...

RECORD NINETEEN

The Infinitesimal of the Third Order

From Under the Forehead

Over the Railing

There in the strange corridor lighted by the dotted line of dim little electric lamps...or no, no, later, when we had already reached one of the nooks in the courtyard of the Ancient House, she had said, "Day after tomorrow." That "day after tomorrow" is today...And everything seems to have wings and to fly; the day flies; and our Integral, too, already has wings. We finished placing the motor, and tried it out today, without switching it in. What magnificent, powerful salvos! To me each of them sounded like a salute in honor of her, the only one—in honor of today!

At the time of the first explosion about a dozen loaf— ing Numbers from the docks stood near the main tube— and nothing was left of them save a few crumbs and a little soot. With pride I now write that this occurrence did not disturb the rhythm of our work for even a sec— ond. Not a man shrank. We and our lathes continued our rectilinear or curved motions with the same sparkling and polished precision as before, as if nothing had happened. As a matter of fact, what did happen? A dozen Numbers represent scarcely one hundred millionth part of the United State. For practical consideration, that is but an infinitesimal of the third order. Pity, a result of arithmeti— cal ignorance, was known to the ancients; to us it seems absurd.

It also seems droll to me, that yesterday I was think— ing, even relating in these pages about a gray blot! All that was only the "softening of the surface" which is nor— mally as hard as diamond, like our walls. (There is an an— cient saying: "Shooting beans at a stone wall... ")

Sixteen o'clock. I did not go for the supplementary walk; who knows, she might come now, when the sun is so noisily bright?

I am almost the only one in this room. Through the walls full of sunshine I see for a distance to the right and to the left, and below strings of other rooms, repeating each other as if in a mirror, hanging in the air and empty. Only on the bluish stairway, striped by the golden ink of the sun, a thin, gray shadow is seen rising. Already I hear steps, and I see through the door, and I feel a smile pasted to my face like a plaster. But it passed to another stairway and down. The click of the switchboard! I threw myself to that little white slit and.., an unfamiliar male Number! (A consonant means a male Number.)

The elevator groaned and stopped. A big, slovenly, slanting forehead stood before me, and the eyes...They impressed me strangely; it seemed as if the man talked with his eyes which were deep under the forehead.

"Here is a letter from her, for you." (From under the awning of that forehead.) "She asked that everything...as requested in the letter...without fail." This, too, from under the forehead, from under the awning, and he turned, looked about.

"No, there is nobody, nobody. Quickly! the letter!"

He put the letter in my hand and went out without a word.

A pink check fell out of the envelope. It was hers, her check! Her tender perfume! I felt like running to catch up with that wonderful under-the-forehead one. A tiny note followed the check from the envelope; three lines: "The check...Lower the curtains without fail, as if I were actually with you. It is necessary that they should think that I...I am very, very sorry."

I tore the note into small bits. A glance at the mirror revealed my distorted, broken eyebrows. I took the check and was ready to do with it as I had done with the note. "She asked that everything...as requested in the letter...without fail." My arms weakened and the hands loosened. The check was back on the table. She is stronger than I, stronger than I. It seemed as if I were going to act as she wished. Besides...However, it is a long time before evening.

The check remained on the table. In the mirror—my distorted, broken eyebrows. Oh, why did I not have a doctor's certificate for today? I should like to go and walk, walk without end around the Green Wall and then to fall on my bed...to the bottom of...Yet I had to go to Auditorium No.13, and I should have to get hold of myself, so as to bear up for two hours! Two hours without motion, at a time when I wanted to scream and stamp my feet!

The lecture was on. It was very strange to hear from the sparkling tube of the phono-lecturer not the usual metallic voice but a soft, velvety, mossy one. It was a woman's voice, and I seemed to have a vision of the woman: a little, hooklike old woman, like the one at the Ancient House.

The Ancient House! Suddenly from within me a powerful fountain of ...I had to use all my strength to control myself, so as not to fill the auditorium with screams. The soft, mossy words were piercing me, yet only empty words about children and child production reached my ear. I was like a photographic plate: everything was making its imprint with a strange, senseless precision on me; the golden scythe which was nothing more than the reflection of light from the loud-speaker of the lecture apparatus: under the loud-speaker a child, a living illustration. It was leaning toward the loud-speaker, a fold of its infinitesimal unif in its mouth, its little fist clenched firmly, its thumb squeezed into the fist, a light fluffy pleat of skin at the wrist. Like a photographic plate I was taking in the impression of all this. Now I saw how its naked leg hung over the edge of the platform, the pink fan of its finger waved in the air....One minute more, one second, and the child would be on the floor!

A females scream, a wave of translucent wings, her unif on the platform! She caught the child, her lips clung to the fluffy pleat of the baby's wrist; she moved the child to the middle of the table and left the platform. The imprints were registering in me: a pink crescent of a mouth, the horns downward! Eyes like small blue saucers filled with liquid! It was O-90. And as if reading a consequential formula, I suddenly felt the necessity, the naturalness of that insignificant occurrence.

She sat down behind me, somewhat to my left. I looked back. She quietly removed her gaze from the table and the child and looked straight into me. Within again: she, I, the table on the platform—three points. And through those three points lines were drawn, a projection of some as-yet-

unforeseen events!

Later I went home through the green dusky street, which seemed many-eyed because of the electric lights. I heard myself tick-tocking like a clock. And the hands of that clock seemed to be about to pass a figure: I was going to do something, something that would cut off every avenue of retreat. She wants somebody, whom I do not know, to think she is with me. I want her; what do I care what she wants? I do not want to be alone behind the curtains, and that is all there is to it!

From behind came sounds of a familiar gait, like splashing in a ditch. I did not need to look back, I knew it was S-. He would follow me to the very door, probably. Then he would stay below on the sidewalk, and he would try to drill upward into my room with his boring eyes, until the curtains would fall, concealing something criminal.

Was he my Guardian Angel? No! My decision was made.

When I came into my room and turned on the light, I could not believe my eyes! O-90 stood at my table, or, to be more exact, she was hanging like a creased empty dress. She seemed to have no tensility, no spring beneath the dress; her arms and legs were springless, her voice was hanging and springless.

"About my letter, did you receive it? Yes? I must know your answer, I must—today."

I shrugged my shoulders. I enjoyed looking into her blue eyes which were filled with tears as if she were the guilty one, I lingered over my answer.

With pleasure I pricked her:

"Answer? Well... You are right. Undoubtedly. In everything."

"Then..."(She tried to cover the minute tremor with a smile, but it did not escape me.) "Well, all right. I shall... I shall leave you at once."

Yet she remained drooping over the table. Drooping eyelids, drooping arms and legs. The pink check of the other was still on the table. I quickly opened this manuscript, We, and with its pages I covered the check, trying to hide it from myself, rather than from O-.

"See, here, I am still busy writing. Already 101 pages! Something quite unexpected comes out in this writing."

In a voice, in a shadow of a voice, "And do you remember ... how the other day I ...on the seventh page... and it dropped "

The tiny blue saucers filled to the borders; silently and rapidly the tears ran down her cheeks. And suddenly, like the dropping of the tears, rushing forth, words:

"I cannot...I shall leave you in a moment. I shall never again...and I don't care...Only I want, I must have a child! From you! Give me a child and I will leave. I will!"

I saw she was trembling all over beneath her unif, and I felt...I, too, would soon ...would ...I put my hands behind my back and smiled.

"What? You desire to go under the Machine of the Well-Doer?"

Like a stream her words ran over the dam.

"I don't care. I shall feel it for a while within me. I want to see, to see only once the little fold of skin here at the wrist, like that one on the table in the Auditorium. Only for one day!"

Three points: she, I, and a little fist with a fluffy fold of skin there on the table!

I remember how once when I was a child they took me up on the Accumulating Tower. At the very top I bent over the glass railing of an opening in the Tower. Below, people seemed like dots; my heart contracted sweetly. "What if..." On that occasion I only clenched my hands around the railing; now I jumped over.

"So you desire ...being perfectly aware that ... "

Her eyes were closed as if the sun were beating straight into her face. A wet, shining smile!

"Yes, yes! I want it!"

Quickly I took out the pink check of the other from under the manuscript and down I went to the controller on duty. O-90 caught my hand, screamed out something, but what it was I understood only later, when I returned.

She was sitting on the edge of the bed, hands firmly clasped about the knees.

"Is it, is it her cheek?"

"what does it matter? Well, it is hers, yes."

Something cracked. It must have been the springs of the bed, for O-90 made a slight motion only. She remained sitting, her hands upon her knees.

"Well, quick..." I roughly pressed her hand. A red spot was left on her wrist (tomorrow it will become purple), where the fluffy, infantile fold ...I turned the switch; my thoughts went out with the light. Darkness, a spark, and I had jumped over the railing, down ...

RECORD TWENTY

Discharge

The Material of an Idea

The Zero Rock

Discharge is the best word for it. Now I see that it was actually like an electric discharge. The pulse of my last few days had been becoming dryer and dryer, more and more rapid, more intense. The opposite poles had been drawing nearer and nearer, and already I could hear the dry crackling; one millimeter more, and—an explosion! Then silence.

Within me there is quiet now, and emptiness like that of a house after everybody has left, when one lies ill, all alone, and hears so dearly the distinct, metallic tick-tock of thoughts.

Perhaps that "discharge" cured me at last of my torturing "soul." Again I am like all of us. At least at this moment as I write I can see, as it were, without any pain in my mental eye, how O-90 is brought to the steps of the Cube; or I see her in the Gas Bell. And if there in the Operation Department she should give my name, I do not care. Piously and gratefully I would kiss the punishing hand of the Well-Doer at the last moment. I have this right with regard to the United State: to receive my punishment. And I shall not give up this right. No Number ought, or dares, to refuse this one personal, and therefore most precious, privilege.

...Quietly, metallicity, distinctly, do the thoughts rap in the head. An invisible aero carries me into the blue height of my beloved abstractions. And I see how there in the height, in the purest rarefied air, my judgment about the only "right" bursts with a crack, like a pneumatic fire. I see clearly that only an atavism, the absurd superstition of the ancients, gives me this idea of "right."

There are ideas of moulded clay and ideas moulded of gold, or of our precious glass. In order to know the material of which an idea is made, one needs only to let fall upon it a drop of strong acid. One of these acids was known to the ancients under the name of *reductio ad absurdum*. This was the name for it, I think. But they were afraid of this poison; they preferred to believe that they saw heaven, even though it was a toy made of clay, rather than confess to themselves that it was only a blue nothing. We, on the other

hand (glory to the Well-Doer!), we are adults, and we have no need of toys. Now if we put a drop of acid on the idea of "right". Even the ancients (the most mature of them) knew that the source of right was—might! Right is a function of might. Here we have our scale: on the one side an ounce, on the other a ton. On one side "I," on the other "we," the United State. Is it not dear? To assume that I may have any "right" as far as the State is concerned is like assuming that an ounce may equilibrate a ton in a scale! Hence the natural distribution: tons—rights, grams—duties. And the natural road from nothingness to greatness is to forget that one is a gram and to feel that one is one millionth of a ton!

You ripe-bodied, bright Venerians; you sooty, black-smith-like Uranians, I almost hear your protests in this silence. But only think, everything that is great is simple. Remember, only the four rules of arithmetic are unshakable and eternal And only that mortality will be unshakable and eternal which is built upon those four rules. This is the superior wisdom, this is the summit of that pyramid around which people, red with sweat, fought and battled for centuries trying to crawl up!

Looking from this summit down to the bottom, where something is still left swarming like worms, from this summit all that is left over in us from the ancients seems alike. Alike are the unlawful coming motherhood of O-90, a murder, and the insanity of that Number who dared to throw verses into the face of the United State; and alike is the judgment for them—premature death. This is that divine justice of which those stone-housed ancients dreamed, lit by the naive pink rays of the dawn of history. Their "God" punished sacrilege as a capital crime.

You Uranians, morose and as black as the ancient Spaniards, who were wise in knowing so well how to burn at the stake, you are silent; I think you agree with me. But I hear you, pink Venerians, saying something about "tortures, executions, return to barbarism." My dear Venerians, I pity you! You are incapable of philosophical, mathematical thinking. Human history moves upward in circles, like an aero. The circles are at times golden, sometimes they are bloody, but all have 360 degrees. They go from 0° to 10°, 20°, 200°, 360°—and then again 0°. Yes, we have returned to zero. But for a mathematically working mind it is obvious that this zero is different: it is a perfectly new zero. We started from zero to the fight and came to zero on the left. Hence instead of plus zero we are at minus zero. Do you understand?

This zero appears to me now as a silent, immense, narrow rock, sharp as a blade. In cruel darkness, holding our breath, we set sail from the black night side of the zero rock. For centuries we, Columbooses, floated and floated; we made the circuit of the whole world and at last! Hurrah! Salute! We climbed up the masts; before us now was a new side of the zero rock, hitherto unknown, bathed in the polar light of the United State—a blue mass covered with rainbow sparkles! Suns!—a hundred suns! A million rainbows! What does it matter if we are separated from the other black side of the zero rock only by the thickness of a blade? A knife is the most solid, the most immortal, the most inspired invention of man. The knife served on the guillotine. The knife is the universal tool for cutting knots. The way of paradoxes follows its sharp edge, the only way becoming to a fearless mind

RECORD TWENTY-ONE

The Duty of an Author

The Ice Swells

The Most Difficult Love

Yesterday was her day and again she did not come. Again there came her incoherent note, explaining nothing. But I am tranquil, perfectly tranquil. If I act as I am told to in the note, if I go to the controller on duty, produce the pink check, and then, having lowered the curtains, if I sit alone in my room, I do all this not because I have no power to act contrary to her desire. That seems funny? Decidedly not! It is quite simple: separated from all curative, plaster-like smiles I am enabled quietly to write these very lines. This, first. And second: I am afraid to lose in her, in I-330, perhaps the only clue I shall ever have to an understanding of all the unknowns, like the story of the cupboard, or my temporary death, for instance. To understand, to discover these unknowns as the author of these records, I feel to be my simple duty. Moreover, the unknown is naturally the enemy of man. And Homo sapiens only then becomes man in the complete sense of the word, when his punctuation includes no question marks, only exclamation points, commas, and periods.

Thus, guided by what seems to me my simple duty as an author, I took an aero today at sixteen o'clock and went to the Ancient House. A strong wind was blowing against me. The aero advanced with difficulty through the

thicket of air, its transparent branches whistling and whipping. The city below seemed a heap of blue blocks of ice. Suddenly—a cloud, a swift, oblique shadow. The ice became leaden; it swelled. As in springtime, when you happen to stand at the shore and wait, in one more minute everything will move and pull and crack! But the minute passes and the ice remains motionless; you feel as though you yourself are swelling, your heart beats more restlessly, more frequently.... But why do I write about all this? And whence all these strange sensations? For is there such an iceberg as could ever break the most lucid, solid crystal of our life?

At the entrance of the Ancient House I found no one. I went around it and found the old janitress near the Green Wall. She held her hand above her eyes, looking upward. Beyond the Wall, the sharp black triangles of some birds; they would rush, cawing, in onslaught on the invisible fence of electric waves, and as they felt the electricity against their breasts, they would recoil and soar once more beyond the Wall.

I noticed oblique, swift shadows on the dark, wrinkled face, a quick glance at me.

"Nobody here, nobody, nobody! No! And no use coming here..."

In what respect is it "no use," and what a strange idea, to consider me somebody's shadow. Perhaps all of you are. only my shadows. Did I not populate these pages, which only recently were white quadrangular deserts, with you? Without me could they whom I shall guide over the narrow paths of my fancies, could they ever see you?

Of course I did not say all this to the old woman. From experience I know that the most torturing thing is to inoculate someone with a doubt as to the fact that he or she is a three-dimensional reality and not some other reality. I remarked only, quite dryly, that her business was to open the gate, and she let me into the courtyard.

It was empty. Quiet. The wind remained beyond the walls, distant as on that day when shoulder to shoulder, two like one, we came out from beneath, from the corridors—if it ever really happened. I walked under stone arches; my steps resounded against the damp vaults and fell behind me, sounding as though someone were continually following me. The yellow walls with patches of red brick were watching me through their square spectacles, windows—watching me open the squeaky doors of a barn, look into corners, nooks, and hidden placesA gate in the fence and a lonely spot. The monument of the Two Hundred Years' War. From the ground naked stone ribs were sticking out. The yellow jaws of the Wall. An ancient oven with a chimney like a ship petrified forever among red-brick waves.

It seemed to me that I had seen those yellow teeth once before. I saw them still dimly in my mind, as at the bottom of a barrel, through water. And I began to search. I fell into eaves occasionally; I stumbled over stones; rusty jaws caught my unif a few times; salt drops of sweat ran from my forehead into my eyes.

Nowhere could I find that exit from below, from the corridors—nowhere! There was none. Well, perhaps it was better that it happened so. Probably all that was only one of my absurd "dreams."

Tired out, covered with cobwebs and dust, I opened the gate to return to the main yard, when suddenly...a rustle behind me, splashing steps, and there before me were the pink wing-like ears and the double-curved smile of S-. Half-closing his eyes, he bored his little drills into me and asked:

"Taking a walk?"

I was silent. My arms were heavy.

"Well, do you feel better now?"

"Yes, thank you. I think I am becoming normal again.

He let me go. He lifted his eyes, looked upward, and I noticed his Adam's apple for the first time; it resembles a broken spring sticking out from beneath the upholstery of a couch.

Above us, not very high (about fifty meters), aeros were buzzing. By their low, slow flight and by the observation tubes which hung down I recognized them. They were the aeros of the Guardians. But there were not two or three, as usual, there were about ten or twelve (I regret to have to confine myself to an approximate figure).

"Why are there so many today?" I dared to ask S-.

"Why? Hm... A real physician begins to treat a patient when he is still well but on the way to becoming sick tomorrow, day after tomorrow, or within a week. Prophylaxis! Yes!"

He nodded and went splashing over the stones of the yard. Then he

turned his head and said over his shoulder, "Be careful!"

Again I was alone. Silence. Emptiness. Far beyond the Green Wall the birds and the wind. What did he mean? My aero ran very fast with the wind. Light and heavy shadows from the clouds. Below blue cupolas, cubes of glass ice were becoming leaden and swelling

The Same Evening

I took up my pen just now in order to write upon these pages a few thoughts which, it seems to me, will prove useful to you, my readers. These thoughts are concerned with the great Day of Unanimity which is now not far away. But as I sat down, I discovered that I Could not write at present; instead, I sit and listen to the wind beating the glass with its dark wings; all the while I am busy looking about and I am waiting, expecting... What? I do not know. So I was very glad when I saw the brownish-pink gills enter my room, heartily glad, I may say. She sat down and innocently smoothed a fold of her unif that fell between her knees, and very soon she pasted upon me, all over me, a host of smiles, a bit of a smile on each crack of my face, and this gave me pleasant sensations, as if I were tightly bound like an infant of the ancients in a swaddling cloth.

"Imagine! Today, when I entered the classroom"—she works in the Child-Educational Refinery—"I suddenly noticed a caricature upon the blackboard. Indeed! I assure you! They had pictured me in the form of a fish! Perhaps I really—"

"No, no! Why do you say that?" I hastily exclaimed. When one was near

her, it was clear indeed that she had nothing resembling gills. No. When I referred to gills in these pages I was certainly irreverent.

"Oh, after all it does not matter. But the act as such, think of it! Of course I called the Guardians at once. I love children very much and I think that the most difficult and the most exalted love is—cruelty. You understand me, of course."

"Certainly!" Her sentence so closely resembled my thoughts! I could not refrain from reading to her a passage from my Record No. 20, beginning "Quietly, metallically, distinctly, do the thoughts"...etc. I felt her brownish-pink cheeks twitching and coming closer and closer to me. Suddenly I felt in my hands her firm, dry, even slightly prickling fingers.

"Give, give this to me, please. I shall have it transcribed and make the children learn it by heart. Not only your Venerians need all this, but we ourselves right now, tomorrow, day after tomorrow."

She glanced around and said in a very low voice:

"Have you heard? They say that on the Day of Unanimity—"

I sprang to my feet.

"What? What do they say? What—on the Day of Unanimity?"

The coziness of my room, its very walls, seemed to have vanished. I felt myself thrown outside, where the tremendous, shaggy wind was tossing about and where the slanting clouds of dusk were descending lower and lower...

U-boldly and firmly grasped me by the shoulders. I even noticed how her fingers, responding to my emotion, trembled slightly.

"Sit down, dear, and don't be upset. They say many things; must we believe them all? Moreover, if only you need me, I shall be near you on that day. I shall leave the school children with someone else and I shall stay with you, for you, dear, you, too, are a child and you need..."

"No, no!" I raised my hands in protest. "Not for anything! You really think then that I am a child and that I can not do without a ... Oh, no! Not for anything in the world." (I must confess I had other plans for that day!)

She smiled. The wording of that smile apparently was: "Oh, what a stubborn, what a stubborn boy!" She sat down, eyelids lowered. Her hands modestly busied themselves with fixing the fold of the unif which fell again between her knees, and suddenly, about something entirely different, she said:

"I think I must decide ...for your sake ...But I implore you, do not hurry me. I must think it over."

I did not hurry her, although I realized that I ought to have been delighted, as there is no greater honor than to crown someone's evening years.

... All night strange wings were about. I walked and protected my head with my hands from those wings. And a chair, not like ours, but an ancient chair, came in with a horse-like gait; first the right foreleg and left hind leg,

then the left foreleg and right hind leg. It rushed to my bed and crawled into it, and I liked that wooden chair, although it made me uncomfortable and caused me some pain.

It is very strange; is it really impossible to find any cure for this dream sickness, or to make it rational, perhaps even useful?

RECORD TWENTY-TWO

The Benumbed Waves

Everything Is Improving

I Am a Microbe

Please imagine that you stand at the seashore. The waves go rhythmically up, down, up Suddenly, when they have risen, they remain in that position, benumbed, torpid! It was just as weird and unnatural when everything became confused and our regular walk, which is prescribed by the Tables, suddenly came to an end. The last time such a thing happened was one hundred and nineteen years ago, when according to our historians a meteorite fell hissing and fuming into the very midst of the marchers. We were walking yesterday as usual, that is like warriors on the Assyrian monuments, a thousand heads and two composite, integrated legs and two

swinging, integrated arms. At the end of the avenue, where the Accumulating Tower was formidably resounding, a quadrangle appeared: on the sides, in front, and behind—guards; in the center—three Numbers. Their unifs were already stripped of the golden State badge; everything was painfully clear. The enormous dial on the top of the Tower looked like a face; it bent down from the clouds and, spitting down its seconds, it waited with indifference. It showed six minutes past thirteen exactly. There was some confusion in the quadrangle. I was very close, and I saw the most minute details. I clearly remember a thin, long neck and on the temple a confused net of small blue veins like rivers on the map of a small unfamiliar world, and that unknown world was apparently still a very young man. He evidently noticed someone in our ranks; he stopped, rose upon his tiptoes, and stretched his neck. One of the guards snapped his back with the bluish spark of the electric whip—he squealed in a thin voice like a puppy. The distinct snaps followed each other at intervals of approximately two seconds; a snap and a squeal, a snap and a squeal....We continued to walk as usual, rhythmically, in our Assyrian manner. I watched the graceful zigzags of the electric sparks and thought: "Human society is constantly improving, as it should. How ugly a tool was the ancient whip and how much beauty there is—"

At that moment, like a nut flying from a wheel revolving at full speed, a female Number, thin, flexible, and tense, tore herself from our rows, and with a cry, "Enough! Don't you dare!" she threw herself straight into the quadrangle. It was like the meteorite of one hundred and nineteen years ago; our march came to a standstill and our rows appeared like the gray crests of waves frozen by sudden cold. For a second I looked at that woman's figure with the eye of a stranger, as all the others did. She was no Number any

longer; she was only a human being, and she existed for us only as a substantiation of the insult which she cast upon the United State. But a motion of hers, her bending while twisting to the left upon her hips, revealed to me clearly who she was. I knew, I knew that body, flexible as a whip! My eyes, my lips, my hands knew it; at that moment I was absolutely certain....Two of the guards dashed to catch her. One more moment, and that limpid, mirror-like point on the pavement would have become the point of meeting of their trajectories, and she would have been caught! My heart fell, stopped. Without thinking whether it was permissible or not, whether it was reasonable or absurd, I threw myself straight to that point..

I felt thousands of eyes bulging with horror fixed upon me, but that only added a sort of desperately joyful power to that wild being with hairy paws which arose in me and ran faster and faster. Two more steps—she turned around—

I saw a quivering face covered with freckles, red eye-brows....It was not she! Not I-330!

A rabid, quivering joy took hold of me. I wanted to shout something like: "Catch her! Get her, that—" But I heard only my whisper. A heavy hand was already upon my shoulder; I was caught and led away. I tried to explain to them:

"But listen, you must understand that I thought that..."

But could I explain even to myself all the sickness which I have described in these pages? My light went out; I waited obediently. As a leaf

that is torn from its branch by a sudden gust of wind falls humbly, but on its way down turns and tries to catch every little branch, every fork, every knot, so I tried to catch every one of the silent, globe-like heads, or the transparent ice of the walls, or the blue needle of the Accumulating Tower which seemed to pierce the clouds.

At that moment, when a heavy curtain was about to separate me from this beautiful world, I noticed not far away a familiar, enormous head gliding over the mirror surface of the pavement and wagging its winglike ears. I heard a familiar, flat voice:

"I deem it my duty to testify that Number D-503 is ill and is unable to regulate his emotions. Moreover, I am sure that he was led by natural indignation—"

"Yes! Yes!" I exclaimed. I even shouted, 'Catch her!'"

From behind me: "You did not shout anything."

"No, but I wanted to. I swear by the Well-Doer I wanted to!"

For a second I was bored through by the gray, cold, drill eyes. I don't know whether he believed that what I said was the truth (almost!), or whether he had some secret reason for sparing me for a while, but he wrote a short note, handed it to one of those who had held me, and again I was free. That is, I was again included in the orderly, endless Assyrian rows of Numbers.

The quadrangle, the freckled face, and the temple with the map of blue veinlets disappeared forever around the corner. We walked again—a million-

headed body; and in each one of us resided that humble joyfulness with which in all probability molecules, atoms, and phagocytes live.

In the ancient days the Christians understood this feeling; they are our only, though very imperfect, direct fore-runners. The greatness of the "Church of the United Flock" was known to them. They knew that resignation is virtue, and pride a vice; that "We" is from "God," "I," from the devil.

I was walking, keeping step with the others yet separated from them. I was still trembling from the emotion just felt, like a bridge over which a thundering ancient steel train has passed a moment before. I felt myself. To feel one's self, to be conscious of one's personality, is the lot of an eye inflamed by a cinder, or an infected finger, or a bad tooth. A healthy eye, or finger, or tooth is not felt; it is nonexistent, as it were. Is it not clear, then, that consciousness of oneself is a sickness?

Apparently I am no longer a phagocyte which quietly, in a businesslike way, devours microbes (microbes with freckled faces and blue temples); apparently I am myself a microbe, and she, too, I-330, is a microbe, a wonderful, diabolic microbe! It is quite possible that there are already thousands of such microbes among us, still pretending to be phagocytes, as I pretend. What if today's accident, although in itself not important, is only a beginning, only the first meteorite of a shower of burning and thundering stones which the infinite may have poured out upon our glass paradise?

RECORD TWENTY-THREE

Flowers

The Dissolution of a Crystal

If Only (?)

They say there are flowers that bloom only once in a hundred years. Why not suppose the existence of flowers that bloom only once in a thousand years? We may have known nothing about them until now only because today is the "once in a thousand years."

Happy and dizzy, I walked downstairs to the controller on duty, and quickly under my gaze, all around me and silently, the thousand-year-old buds burst, and everything was blooming: armchairs, shoes, golden badges, electric bulbs, someone's dark heavy eyes, the polished columns of the banisters, the handkerchief which someone had lost on the stairs, the small, ink-blotted desk of the controller, and the tender, brown, somewhat freckled cheeks of U-, everything seemed not ordinary, but new, tender, rosy, moist. U- took the pink stub from me while the blue, aromatic moon, banging from an unseen branch, shone through the glass of the wall and over the head of U-. With a solemn gesture I pointed my finger and said:

"The moon. You see?"

U- glanced at me, then at the number of the stub, and again made that familiar, charmingly innocent movement with which she fixes the fold of the unif between her knees.

"You look abnormal and ill, dear. Abnormality and illness are the same thing. You are killing yourself. And no one would tell you that, no one!"

That "No one" was certainly equivalent to the number on the stub, I-330. This thought was confirmed by an ink blot which fell close to the figure 330. Dear, wonderful U-! You are right, of course. I am not reasonable. I am sick. I have a soul. I am a microbe. But is blooming not a sickness? Is it not painful when the buds are bursting? And don't you think that spermatozoa, are the most terrible of all microbes?

Back upstairs to my room. In the widely open cup of the armchair was I-330. I, on the floor, embracing her limbs, my head on her lap. We were silent. Everything was silent. Only the pulse was audible. Like a crystal I was dissolving in her, in I-330. I felt most distinctly how the polished facets which limited me in space were slowly thawing, melting away, I was dissolving in her lap, in her, and I became at once smaller and larger, and larger, unembraceable. For she was not she but the whole universe. For a second I and that armchair near the bed, transfixed with joy, we were one. And the wonderfully smiling old woman at the gate of the Ancient House, and the wild debris beyond the Green Wall, and some strange silver wreckage on a black background, dozing like the old woman, and the slam of a door in the distance—all this was within me, was listening to my pulse and soaring through the happiest of seconds.

In absurd, confused, overflowing words I attempted to tell her that I was a crystal and that there was a door in me, and that I felt how happy the armchair was. But something nonsensical came out of the attempt and I stopped. I was ashamed. And suddenly:

"Dear I-! Forgive me! I understand nothing. I talk so foolishly!"

"And why should you think that foolishness is not fine? If we had taken pains to educate human foolishness through centuries, as we have done with our intelligence, it might perhaps have been transformed into something very precious."

And I think she is right! How could she be wrong at that moment?

"... And for this foolishness of yours and for what you did yesterday during the walk, I love you the more, much more.

"Then why did you torture me? Why would you not come? Why did you send me the pink check and make me—?"

"Perhaps I wanted to test you. Perhaps I must be sure that you will do anything I wish, that you are completely mine."

"Yes, completely."

She took my face, my whole self, between her palms, lifted my head.

"And how about, 'It is the duty of every honest Number'? Eh?"

Sweet, sharp white teeth—a smile. In the open cup of the armchair she

was like a bee, sting and honey combined.

Yes, duty....I turned over in my mind the pages of my records; indeed there is not a thought about the fact that strictly speaking I should...

I was silent. Exaltedly, and probably stupidly, I smiled, looking into the pupils of her eyes. I followed first one eye and then the other, and in each of them I saw myself, a millimetric self imprisoned in those tiny rainbow cells. Then again the lips and the sweet pain of blooming.

In each Number of the United State there is an unseen metronome that tick-tocks silently; without looking at the clock we know exactly the time of day within five minutes. But now my metronome had stopped, and I did not know how much time had passed. In fright I grasped my badge with its clock from under the pillow. Glory be to the Well-Doer! I had twenty minutes more! But those minutes were such tiny, short ones! They ran! And I wanted to tell her so many things. I wanted to tell her all about myself; about the letter from O- and about that terrible evening when I gave her a child; and for some reason also about my childhood, about our mathematician Plappa, and about the square root of minus one; and how, when I attended the glorification on the Day of Unanimity for the first time in my life, I wept bitterly because there was an inkstain on my unif—on such a holy day!

I-330 lifted her head. She leaned on her elbow. In the corners of her lips two long, sharp lines and the dark angle of lifted eyebrows—a cross.

"Perhaps on that day..." her brow grew, darker; she took my hand and pressed it hard. "Tell me, will you ever forget me? Will you always

remember me?"

"But why such talk? What is it, I-, dear? "

She was silent. And her eyes were already sliding past me, through me, away into the distance. I suddenly heard the wind beating the glass with its enormous wings. Of course it had been blowing all the while, but I had not noticed it until then. And for some reason those cawing birds over the Green Wall came to my mind.

I-330 shook her head with a gesture of throwing something off. Once more she touched me for a second with her whole body, as an aero before landing touches the ground for a second with all the tension of a recoiling spring.

"Well, give me my stockings, quick!"

The stockings were on the desk, on the open manuscript, on page 124. Being in haste, I caught some of the pages and they were scattered over the floor, so that it was hard to put them back in the proper order. Moreover, even if I put them in that order there will be no real order; there are obstacles to that anyway, some undiscoverable unknowns.

"I can't bear it," I said. "You are here, near me, yet you seem to be behind an opaque ancient wall; through that wall I hear a rustle and voices; I cannot make out the words, I don't know what is there. I cannot bear it. You seem always to withhold something from me; you have never told me what kind of place it was where I found myself that day beneath the Ancient House. Where did those corridors lead? Why was the doctor there—or

perhaps all that never happened?"

I-330 put her hands on my shoulders and slowly entered deeply into my eyes.

"You want to know all?"

"Yes, I do."

"And you would not be afraid to follow me anywhere? Wherever I should lead you?"

"Anywhere!"

"All right then. I promise you, after the holiday, if only ...Oh, yes, there is your Integral. I always forget to ask; will it soon be completed?"

"No. 'If only' what? Again! 'If only' what?"

She, already at the door: "You shall see."

I was alone again. All that she left behind her was a barely perceptible scent, similar to that of a sweet, dry, yellow dust of flowers from behind the Green Wall; also, sunk deeply within me, question marks like small hooks similar to those the ancients used for fishing (vide the Prehistoric Museum).

...Why did she suddenly ask about the Integral?

RECORD TWENTY-FOUR

The Limit of the Function

Easter

To Cross Out Everything

I am like a motor set in motion at a speed of too many revolutions per second; the bearings have become too hot, and in one more minute the molten metal will begin to drip and everything will go to the devil. Cold water! Quick! Some logic! I pour on pailfuls of it, but my logic merely sizzles on the hot metal and disappears into the air in the form of vapor.

Of course it is clear that in order to establish the true meaning of a function one must establish its limit. It is also clear that yesterday's "dissolution in the universe" taken to its limit is death. For death is exactly the most complete dissolution of the self in the universe. Hence: $L=f(D)$, love is the function of death.

Yes, exactly, exactly! That is why I am afraid of I-330; I struggle against her, I don't want...But why is it that within me "I don't want to" and "I want to" stand side by side? That is the chief horror of the matter; I continue to long for that happy death of yesterday. The horror of it is that even now, when I have integrated the logical function, when it becomes evident that that function contains death hidden within it, still I long for it with my lips, my arms, my heart, with every millimeter....

Tomorrow is the Day of Unanimity. She will certainly be there and I shall see her, though from a distance. That distance will be painful to me, for I must be, I am inevitably drawn, close to her, so that her hands, her shoulder, her hair...I long for even that pain....Let it come....Great Well-Doer! How absurd to desire pain! Who is ignorant of the simple fact that pains are negative items that reduce that sum total we call happiness? Consequently...Well, no "consequently"...Emptiness....Nakedness!

The Same Evening

Through the glass wall of the house I see a disquieting, windy, feverishly pink sunset. I move my armchair to avoid that pinkness and turn over these pages, and I find I am forgetting that I write this not for myself but for you unknown people whom I love and pity, for you who still lag centuries behind, below. Let me tell you about the Day of Unanimity, about that Great Day. I think it is for us what Easter was for the ancients. I remember I used to prepare an hour calendar on the eve of that day; solemnly I would cross out every time the figure of the hour elapsed: nearer by one hour! one hour less to wait!...If I were certain that nobody would discover it, I assure you I should now, too, make out such a calendar and carry it with me; and I should watch how many hours remain until tomorrow....When I shall see, at least from a distance...

(I was interrupted. They brought me a new unif from the shop. As is customary, new unifs are given to us for tomorrow's celebration. Steps in the hail, exclamations of joy, noises.)

I shall continue; tomorrow I shall see the same spectacle which we see

year after year, and which always awakes in us fresh emotions, as if we saw it for the first time: an impressive throng of piously lifted arms. Tomorrow is the day of the yearly election of the Well-Doer. Tomorrow we shall again hand over to our Well-Doer the keys to the impregnable fortress of our happiness. Certainly this in no way resembles the disorderly, unorganized election days of the ancients, on which (it seems so funny!) they did not even know in advance the result of the election. To build a state on some nondiscountable contingencies, to build blindly—what could be more nonsensical? Yet centuries had to pass before this was understood!

Needless to say, in this respect as in all others we have no place for contingencies; nothing unexpected can happen. The elections themselves have rather a symbolic meaning. They remind us that we are an united, powerful organism of millions of cells, that—to use the language of the "gospel" of the ancients—we are a united church. The history of the United State knows not a single case in which upon this solemn day even a solitary voice has dared to violate the magnificent unison.

They say that the ancients used to conduct their elections secretly, stealthily like thieves. Some of our historians even assert that they would come to the electoral celebrations completely masked. Imagine the weird, fantastic spectacle! Night. A plaza. Along the walls the stealthily creeping figures covered with mantles. The red flame of torches dancing in the wind....Why was such secrecy necessary? It has never been satisfactorily explained. Probably it resulted from the fact that elections were associated with some mystic and superstitious, perhaps even criminal, ceremonies. We have nothing to conceal or to be ashamed of; we celebrate our election

openly, honestly, in daylight. I see them all vote for the Well-Doer, and everybody sees me vote for the Well-Doer. How could it be otherwise, since "all" and "I" are one "we"? How ennobling, sincere, lofty this is, compared with the cowardly, thievish "secrecy" of the ancients! And how much more expedient! For even admitting for a moment the impossible—that is, the outbreak of some dissonance in our customary unity—our unseen Guardians are always right there among us, are they not, to register the Numbers who might fall into error and save them from any further false steps? The United State is theirs, the Numbers'! And besides...

Through the wall to my left a she.Number before the mirror door of the closet; she is hastily unbuttoning her unif. For a second, swiftly—eyes, lips, two sharp, pink...the curtains fell. Within me, all that happened yesterday instantly awoke, and now I no longer know what I meant to say by "besides..." I no longer wish to—I cannot. I want one thing. I want I-330, I want her every minute, every second, to be with me, with no one else. All that I wrote about Unanimity is of no value; it is not what I want; I have a desire to cross it out, to tear it to pieces and throw it away. For I know (be it a sacrilege, yet it is the truth) that a glorious Day is possible only with her and only when we are side by side, shoulder to shoulder. Without her tomorrow's sun will appear to me only as a little circle cut out of a tin sheet, and the sky a sheet of tin painted blue, and I myself...I snatched the telephone receiver.

"I-330, are you there?"

"Yes, it is I. Why so late.?"

"Perhaps not too late yet. I want to ask you ... I want you to be with me

tomorrow—dear!"

I said "Dear" in a very low voice. And for some reason a thing I saw this morning at the docks flashed through my mind: just for fun someone had put a watch under the hundred-ton sledge hammer.... A swing, a breath of wind in the face, and the silent, hundred-ton, knife-like weight on the breakable watch...

A silence. I thought I heard someone's whisper in I-330's room. Then her voice:

"No, I cannot. Of course you understand that I myself...No, I cannot.'Why?' You shall see tomorrow."

Night.

RECORD TWENTY-FIVE

The Descent from Heaven

The Greatest Catastrophe in History

The Known—Is Ended

At the beginning all arose, and the Hymn, like a solemn mantle, slowly

waved above our heads. Hundreds of tubes of the Musical Tower, and millions of human voices. For a second I forgot everything; I forgot that alarming something at which I-330 had hinted in connection with today's celebration; I think I even forgot about her. At that moment I was the very same little boy who once wept because of a tiny inkstain on his unif, which no one else could see. Even if nobody else sees that I am covered with black, ineffaceable stains, I know it, don't I? I know that there should be no place for a criminal like me among these frank, open faces. What if I should rush forward and shout out everything about myself all at once! The end might follow. Let it happen! At least for a second I would feel myself clear and clean and senseless like that innocent blue sky....

All eyes were directed upward; in the pure morning blue, still moist with the tears of night, a small dark spot appeared. Now it was dark, now bathed in the rays of the sun. It was He, descending to us from the sky, He—the new Jehovah—in an aero, He, as wise and as lovingly cruel as the Jehovah of the ancients. Nearer and nearer He came, and higher toward Him were drawn millions of hearts. Already He saw us. And in my mind with Him I looked over everything from the heights: concentric circles of stands marked with dotted blue lines of unifs— like circles of a spiderweb strewn with microscopic suns (the shining badges). And in the center the wise white spider would soon occupy His place—the Well-Doer clad in white, the Well-Doer who wisely tangled our hands and feet in the salutary net of happiness.

His magnificent descent from the sky was accomplished. The brassy Hymn came to silence; all sat down. At once I perceived that everything was really a very thin spiderweb the threads of which were stretched tense and

trembling—and it seemed that in a moment those threads might break and something improbable...

I half-rose and looked around, and I met many lovingly worried eyes which passed from one face to another. I saw someone lifting his hand and almost imperceptibly waving his fingers—he was making signs to another. The latter replied with a similar finger sign. And a third....I understood; they were the Guardians. I understood; they were alarmed by something—the spider-web was stretched and trembling. And within me, as if tuned to the same wave-length, within me there was a corresponding quiver.

On the platform a poet was reciting his preelectoral ode. I could not hear a single word; I only felt the rhythmic swing of the hexametric pendulum, and with its every motion I felt how nearer and nearer there was approaching some hour set for... I continued to turn over face after face like pages, but I could not find the one, the only one, I was seeking, the one I needed to find at once, as soon as possible, for one more swing of the pendulum, and...

It was he, certainly it was he! Below, past the main platform, gliding over the sparkling glass, the ear wings flapped by, the running body gave a reflection of a double-curved S-, like a noose which was rolling toward some of the intricate passages among the stands. S-, I-330,—there is some thread between them. I have always felt some thread between them. I don't know yet what that thread is, but someday I shall untangle it. I fixed my gaze on him; he was rushing farther away, behind him that invisible thread....There, he stopped...there... I was pierced, twisted together into a knot as if by a lightning-like, many-volted electric discharge; in my row, not more than 4° from me, S- stopped and bowed. I saw I-330, and beside her the smiling, repellent,

Negro-lipped R-13.

My first thought was to rush to her and cry, "Why with him? Why did you not want...?" But the salutary, invisible spiderweb bound fast my hands and feet; so gritting my teeth, I sat stiff as iron, my gaze fixed upon them. A sharp physical pain at my heart. I remember my thought: "If non-physical causes produce physical pain, then it is clear that..."

I regret that I did not come to any conclusion. I remember only that something about "heart" flashed through my mind; a purely nonsensical ancient expression, "His heart fell into his boots, passed through my head. My heart sank. The hexameter came to an end. It was about to start. What "It"?

The five-minute preelection recess established by custom. The custom-established, pre-electional silence. But this time it was not that pious, really prayer-like silence that it usually was. This time it was like the ancient days when the sky, still untamed, would roar from time to time with its "storms." It was like the "lull before the storm" of the ancient days. The air seemed to be made of transparent, vaporized east iron. You wanted to breathe with your mouth wide open. My hearing, intense to the point of pain, registered from behind a mouse-like, gnawing, worried whisper. Without lifting my eyes I saw those two, I-330 and R-13, side by side, shoulder to shoulder—and on my knees my trembling, foreign, hateful, hairy hands

Everybody was holding a badge with a clock in his hands. One....Two....Three....Five minutes. From the main platform a cast-iron, slow voice:

"Those in favor shall lift their hands."

If only I dared look straight into his eyes as I always had! If only I could think devotedly: "Here I am, my whole self!. Take me!" But now I did not dare, I had to make an effort to raise my hand, as if my joints were rusty.

The whisper of millions of hands. Someone's subdued "Ah," and I felt something was coming, falling heavily, but I could not understand what it was, and I did not have the strength or courage to take a look

"Those opposed?" ...

This was always the most magnificent moment of our celebration: all would remain sitting motionless, joyfully bowing their heads under the salutary yoke of that Number of Numbers. But now, to my horror again I heard a rustle—light as a sigh, yet it was even more distinct than the brass tube of the Hymn. Thus the last sigh in a man's life, around hI lifted my eyes, and ...

It took one hundredth of a second only; I saw thousands of hands arise "opposed" and fall back. I saw the pale, cross-marked face of I-330 and her lifted hand. Darkness came upon my eyes.

Another hundredth of a second, silence. Quiet. The Pulse. Then, as if at the sign of some mad conductor, from all over the stands a rattling, a shouting, a whirl-wind of unifs lifted by the rush, the perplexed figures of the Guardians running to and fro. Someone's heels in the air near my eyes, and close to those heels someone's wide-open mouth tearing itself in an inaudible scream. For some reason this picture remains particularly distinct in my

memory: thousands of mouths noiselessly yelling as if on the screen of a monstrous cinema. Also, as if on a screen, somewhere below at a distance, for a second, O-90, pressed against the wall in a passage, her lips white, defending her abdomen with her crossed arms. She disappeared as if washed away by a wave, or else I simply forgot her because ...

This was not on the screen any more but within me, within my compressed heart, within the rapidly pulsating temples. Over my head, somewhat to the left, R-13 suddenly jumped upon a bench, all sprinkling, red, rabid. In his arms was I-330, pale, her unif torn from shoulder to breast, red blood on white. She held him firmly around the neck, and he with huge leaps from bench to bench, repellent and agile, like a gorilla, was carrying her upward, away.

As if it were in a fire of ancient days, everything became red around me. Only one thing in my head: to jump after them, to catch them. At this moment I cannot explain to myself the source of that strength within me, but like a battering-ram I broke through the crowd, over somebody's shoulders, over a bench, and I was there in a moment and caught R-13 by the collar.

"Don't you dare! Don't you dare, I say! Immediately—"

Fortunately no one could hear my voice, as everyone was shouting and running.

"Who is it? What is the matter? What—" R-13 turned around; his sprinkling lips were trembling. He apparently thought it was one of the Guardians.

"I do not want—I won't allow— Put her down at once!"

But he only sprinkled angrily with his lips, shook his head, and ran on. Then I—I am terribly ashamed to write all this down but I behave I must, so that you, my unknown readers, may make a complete study of my disease— then I hit him over the head With all my might. You understand? I hit him. This I remember distinctly. I remember also a feeling of liberation that followed my action, a feeling of lightness in my whole body.

I-330 slid quickly out of his arms.

"Go away!" she shouted to R-. "Don't you see that he—? Go!"

R-13 showed his white Negro teeth, sprinkled into my face some word, dived down, and disappeared. And I picked up I-330, pressed her firmly to myself, and carried her away.

My heart was beating forcibly. It seemed enormous. And with every beat it would splash out such a thundering, such a hot, such a joyful wave! A flash: "Let them, below there, let them toss and rush and yell and fall; what matter if something has fallen, if something has been shattered to dust? Little matter! Only to remain this way and carry her, carry and carry ..."

The Same Evening, Twenty-two O'clock

I hold my pen with great difficulty. Such an extraordinary fatigue after all the dizzying events of this morning. Is it possible that the strong, salutary, centuries-old walls of the United State have fallen? Is it possible that we are again without a roof over our heads, back in the wild state of freedom like

our remote ancestors? Is it possible that we have lost our Well-Doer? "Opposed!" On the Day of Unanimity—opposed! I am ashamed of, them, painfully, fearfully ashamed...But who are "they"? And who am I? "They," "We"... ? Do I know?

I shall continue.

She was sitting where I had brought her, on the uppermost glass bench which was hot from the sun. Her right shoulder and the beginning of the wonderful and incalculable curve were uncovered—an exceedingly thin serpent of blood. She seemed not to be aware of the blood, or that her breast was uncovered. No, I will say rather: she seemed to see all that and seemed to feel that it was essential to her, that if her unif had been buttoned she would have torn it open, she would have ...

"And tomorrow!" She breathed the words through sparkling white clenched teeth. "Tomorrow, nobody knows what ... do you understand? Neither I nor anyone else knows; it is unknown! Do you realize what a joy it is? Do you realize that all that was certain has come to an end? Now...things will be new, improbable, unforeseen!"

Below the human waves were still foaming, tossing, roaring, but they seemed to be very far away, and to be growing more and more distant. For she was looking at me. She slowly drew me into herself through the narrow golden windows of her pupils. We remained like that, silent, for a long while. And for some reason I recalled how once I had watched some queer yellow pupils through the Green Wall, while above the Wall birds were soaring (or was this another time?).

"Listen, if nothing particular happens tomorrow, I shall take you there; do you understand?"

No, I did not understand, but I nodded in silence. I was dissolved, I became infinitesimal, a geometrical point...

After all, there is some logic—a peculiar logic of today—in this state of being a point. A point has more unknowns than any other entity. If a point should start to move, it might become thousands of curves, or hundreds of solids.

I was afraid to budge. What might I have become if I had moved? It seemed to me that everybody, like myself, was afraid now of even the most minute of motions.

At this moment, for instance, as I sit and write, everyone is sitting hidden in his glass cell, expecting something. I do not hear the buzzing of the elevators, usual at this hour, or laughter, or steps; from time to time Numbers pass in couples through the hall, whispering, on tip-toe...

What will happen tomorrow? What will become of me tomorrow?

RECORD TWENTY-SIX

The World Does Exist

Rash

Forty-one Degrees Centigrade

Morning. Through the ceiling the sky is, as usual, firm, round, red-checked. I think I should have been less surprised had I found above some extraordinary quadrangular sun, or people clad in many-colored dresses made of the skins of animals, or opaque walls of stone. Then the world, our world, does exist still? Or is it only inertia? Is the generator already switched out, while the armature is still roaring and revolving; two more revolutions, or three, and at the fourth it will die away?

Are you familiar with that strange state in which you wake up in the middle of the night, when you open your eyes into the darkness, and then suddenly feel you are lost in the dark; you quickly, quickly begin to feel around, seeking in the Journal of the United State; quickly, quickly—I found this:

The celebration of the Day of Unanimity, long awaited by all, took place yesterday. The same Well-Doer who so often has proved his unshakable wisdom was unanimously reelected for the forty-eighth time. The celebration was clouded by a little confusion, created by the enemies of happiness, who by their action naturally lost the right to be the bricks for the foundation of the renovated United State. It is clear to everyone that to take their votes into account would mean to consider as a part of a magnificent, heroic symphony the accidental cough of a sick person who happened to be in the concert hall."

Oh, great Sage! Is it really, true that despite everything we are saved? What objection, indeed, can one find to this most crystalline syllogism? And further on a few more lines:

"Today at twelve o'clock a joint meeting of the Administrative Bureau, Medical Bureau, and Bureau of Guardians will take place. An important State decree is to be expected momentarily."

No, the Walls still stand erect. Here they are! I can feel them. And that strange feeling of being lost somewhere, of not knowing where I am—that feeling is gone. I am no longer surprised to see the sky blue and the sun round and all the Numbers going to work as usual

I walked along the avenue with a particularly firm, resounding step. It seemed to me that everyone else walked exactly like me. But at the crossing, on turning the corner, I noticed people strangely shying away, going around the corner of a building sidewise, as if a pipe had burst in the wall, as if cold water were spurting like a fountain on the sidewalk and it was impossible to cross it.

Another five or ten steps and I, too, felt a spurt of cold water that struck me and threw me from the sidewalk; at a height of approximately two meters a quadrangular piece of paper was pasted to the wall, and on that sheet of paper, unintelligible, poisonously green letters:

MEPHI

And under the paper—an S-like curved back and wing ears shaking with anger or emotion. With fight arm lifted as high as possible, his left arm

hopelessly stretched out backward like a hurt wing, he was trying to jump high enough to reach the paper and tear it off, but he was unable to do so. He was a fraction of an inch too short.

Probably every one of the passers-by had the same thought: "if I go to help him, I, only one of the many, will he not think that I am guilty of something and that I am therefore anxious to..."

I must confess I had that thought. But remembering how many times he had proved my real Guardian Angel and how often he had saved me, I stepped toward him and with courage and warm assurance I stretched out my hand and tore off the sheet. S- turned around. The little drills sank quickly into me to the bottom and found something there. Then he lifted his left brow, and winked toward the wall where "Mephi" had been hanging a minute ago. The tail of his little smile even twinkled with a certain pleasure, which greatly surprised me. But why should I be surprised? A doctor always prefers a temperature of 40°C. and a rash to the slow, languid rise of the temperature during the incubation period of a disease; it enables him to determine the character of the disease. Today "Mephi" broke out on the walls like a rash. I understood his smile.

In the passage to the underground railway, under our feet on the clean glass of the steps, again a white sheet: "Mephi." And also on the walls of the tunnel, and on the benches, and on the mirror of the car (apparently pasted on in haste as some were hanging on a slant). Everywhere, the same white, gruesome rash.

I must confess that the exact meaning of that smile became clear to me

only after many days which were overfilled with the strangest and most unexpected events.

The roaring of the wheels, distinct in the general silence, seemed to be the noise of infected streams of blood. Some Number was inadvertently touched on the shoulder, and he started so that a package of papers fell out of his hands. To my left another Number was reading a paper, his eyes fixed always on the same line; the paper perceptibly trembled in his hands. I felt that everywhere, in the wheels, in the hands, in the newspapers, even in the eyelashes, the pulse was becoming more and more rapid, and I thought it probable that today when I-330 and I found ourselves there, the temperature would rise to 39°C., 40°, perhaps 41°and...

At the docks—the same silence filled with the buzzing of an invisible propeller. The lathes were silent as if brooding. Only the cranes were moving almost inaudibly as if on tiptoe, gliding, bending over, picking up with their tentacles the lumps of frozen air and loading the tanks of the Integral. We are already preparing the Integral for a trial flight.

"Well, shall we have her up in a week?" This was my question addressed to the Second Builder. His face is like porcelain, painted with sweet blue and tender little pink flowers (eyes and lips), but today those little flowers looked faded and washed out. We were counting aloud when suddenly I broke off in the midst of a word and stopped, my mouth wide open; above the cupola, above the blue lump lifted by the crane, there was a scarcely noticeable small white square. I felt my whole body trembling—perhaps with laughter. Yes! I myself heard my own laughter. (Did you ever hear your own laughter?)

"No, listen," I said. "Imagine you are in an ancient air-plane. The altimeter shows 5,000 meters. A wing breaks; you are dashing down like ...And on the way you calculate: 'Tomorrow from twelve to two ... from two to six ...and dinner at five!' Would it not be absurd?"

The little blue flowers began to move and bulge out. What if I were made of glass and he could have seen what was going on within me at that moment? If he knew that some three or four hours later...

RECORD TWENTY-SEVEN

No Headings. It Is Impossible!

I was alone in the endless corridors. In those same corridors ...A mute, concrete sky. Water was dripping somewhere upon a stone. The familiar, heavy, opaque door—and the subdued noise from behind it.

She said she would come out at sixteen sharp. It was already five minutes, then ten, then fifteen past sixteen. No one appeared. For a second I was my former self, horrified at the thought that the door might open.

"Five minutes more, and if she does not come out ..."

Water was dripping somewhere upon a stone. No one about. With

melancholy pleasure I felt: "Saved," and slowly I turned and walked back along the corridor. The trembling dots of the small lamps on the ceiling became dimmer and dimmer. Suddenly, a quick rattle of a door behind me. Quick steps, softly echoing from the ceiling and the walls. It was she, light as a bird, panting somewhat from running.

"I knew you would be here, you would come! I knew you—you... "

The spears of her eyelashes moved apart to let me in and ...How can I describe what effect that ancient, absurd, and wonderful rite has upon me when her lips touch mine? Can I find a formula to express that whirl-wind which sweeps out of my soul everything, everything save her? Yes, yes, from my soul. You may laugh at me if you will.

She made an effort to raise her eyelids, and her slow words, too, came with an effort:

"No. Now we must go."

The door opened. Old, worn steps. An unbearably multicolored noise, whistling and light....

Twenty-four hours have passed since then and everything seems to have settled in me, yet it is most difficult for me to find words for even an approximate description....It is as though a bomb had exploded in my head ... Open mouths, wings, shouts, leaves, words, stones, all these one after another in a heap....

I remember my first thought was: "Fast—back!" For it was clear to me

that while I was waiting there in the corridors, they somehow had blasted and destroyed the Green Wall, and from behind it everything rushed in and splashed over our city which until then had been kept clean of that lower world. I must have said something of this sort to I-330. She laughed.

"No, we have simply come out beyond the Green Wall. "

Then I opened my eyes, and close to me, actually, I saw those very things which until then not a single living Number had ever seen except depreciated a thousand times, dimmed and hazy through the cloudy glass of the Wall.

The sun—it was no longer our light evenly diffused over the mirror surface of the pavements; it seemed an accumulation of living fragments, of incessantly oscillating, dizzy spots which blinded the eyes, And the trees! Like candies rising into the very sky, or like spiders that squatted upon the earth, supported by their clumsy paws, or like mute green fountains. And all this was moving, jumping, rustling. Under my feet some strange little ball was crawling....I stood as though rooted to the ground. I was unable to take a step because under my foot there was not an even plane, but (imagine!) something disgustingly soft, yielding, living, springy, green!...

I was dazed; I was strangled—yes, strangled; it is the best word to express my state. I stood holding fast with both hands to a swinging branch.

"It is nothing. It is all right. It is natural, the first time. It will pass. Courage!"

At I-330's side, bouncing dizzily on a green net, someone's thinnest

profile, cut out of paper. No, not "someone's." I recognized him. I remembered. It was the doctor. I understood everything very dearly. I realized that they both caught me beneath the arms and laughingly dragged me forward. My legs twisted and glided Terrible noise, cawing, stumps, yelling, branches, tree trunks, wings, leaves, whistling....

The trees drew apart. A bright clearing. In the clearing, people, or perhaps, to be more exact, beings. Now comes the most difficult part to describe, for this was beyond any bounds of probability. It is clear to me now why I-330 was stubbornly silent about it before; I would not have believed it, would not have believed even her. It is even possible that tomorrow I shall not believe myself, shall not believe my own description in these pages.

In the clearing, around a naked, skull-like rock, a noisy crowd of three or four hundred ...people. Well, let's call them people. I find it difficult to coin new words. Just as on the stands you recognize in the general accumulation of faces only those which are familiar to you, so at first I recognized only our grayish-blue unifs. But one second later and I saw distinctly and clearly among the unifs dark, red, golden, black, brown, and white humans—apparently they were humans. None of them had any, clothes on, and their bodies were covered with short, glistening hair, like that which may be seen on the stuffed horse in the Prehistoric Museum. But their females had faces exactly, yes, exactly, like the faces of our women: tender, rosy, and not overgrown with hair. Also their breasts were free of hair, firm breasts of wonderful geometrical form. As to the males, only a part of their faces were free from hair, like our ancestors', and the organs of reproduction were similar to ours.

All this was so unbelievable, so unexpected, that I stood there quietly (I assert positively that I stood quietly) and looked around. Like a scale: overload one side sufficiently and then you may gently put on the other as much as you will; the arrow will not move.

Suddenly I felt alone. I-330 was no longer with me. I don't know how or where she disappeared. Around me were only those, with their hair glistening like silk in the sunlight. I caught someone's warm, strong, dark shoulder.

"Listen, please, in the name of the Well-Doer, could you tell me where she went? A while, a minute ago, she..."

Long-haired, austere eyebrows turned to me.

"Sh....sh ... silence!" He made a sign with his head toward the center of the clearing where there stood the yellow skull-like stone.

There above the heads of all I saw her. The sun beat straight into my eyes, and because of that she seemed coal-black, standing out on the blue cloth of the sky—a coal-black silhouette on a blue background. A little higher the clouds were floating. And it seemed that not the clouds but the rock itself, and she herself upon that rock, and the crowd and the clearing—all were silently floating like a ship, and the earth was light and glided away from under the feet....

"Brothers!" (It was she.) "Brothers, you all know that there inside the Wall, in the City, they are building the Integral. And you know also that the day has come for us to destroy that Wall and all other walls, so that the green wind may blow over all the earth, from end to end. But the Integral is going

to take these walls up, up into the heights, to the thousands of other worlds which every evening whisper to us with their lights through the black leaves of night...."

Waves and foam and wind were beating the rock:

"Down with the Integral! Down!"

"No, brothers, not 'down.' The Integral must be ours. And it shall be ours. On the day when it first sets sail into the sky we shall be on board. For the Builder of the Integral is with us. He left the wails, he came with me here in order to be with us. Long live the Builder!"

A second—and I was somewhere above everything. Under me: heads, heads, heads, wide-open, yelling mouths, arms rising and falling....There was something strange and intoxicating in it all. I felt myself above everybody; I was, I, a separate world; I ceased to be the usual item; I became unity....

Again I was below, near the rock, my body happy, shaken, and rumped, as after an embrace of love. Sunlight, voices, and from above—the smiles of I-330. A golden-haired woman, her whole body silky-golden and diffusing an odor of different herbs, was nearby. She held a cup, apparently made of wood. She drank a little from it with her red lips, and then offered the cup to me. I closed my eyes and eagerly drank the sweet, cold, prickly sparks, pouring them down on the fire which burned within me.

Soon afterward my blood and the whole world began to circulate a thousand times faster; the earth seemed to be flying: light as dawn. And within me everything was simple, light, and clear. Only then I noticed on the

rock the familiar, enormous letters: M E P H I, and for some reason the inscription seemed to me necessary. It seemed to be a simple thread binding everything together. A rather rough picture hewn in the rock—this, too, seemed comprehensible; it represented a youth with wings and a transparent body and, in the place ordinarily occupied by the heart, a blinding, red, blazing coal. Again I understood that coal—or no, I felt it as I felt without hearing every word of I-330's (she continued to speak from above, from the rock); and I felt that all of them breathed one breath, and that they were all ready to fly somewhere like the birds over the Wall.

From behind, from the confusion of breathing bodies, a loud voice:

"But this is folly!"

It seems to me it was I—yes, I am certain it was I who then jumped on the rock; from there I saw the sun, the heads, a green sea on a blue background, and I cried:

"Yes, yes, precisely. All must become insane; we must become insane as soon as possible! We must: I know it."

I-330 was at my side. Her smile—two dark lines from the angles of her mouth directed upward....And within me a blazing coal. It was momentary, light, a little painful, beautiful.... And later, only stray fragments that remained sticking in me....

... Very low and slowly a bird was moving. I saw it was living, like me. It was turning its head now to the right and then to the left like a human being, and its round black eyes drilled themselves into me

... Then: a human back glistening with fur the color of ancient ivory; a mosquito crawling on that back, a mosquito with tiny transparent wings. The back twitched to chase the mosquito away; it twitched again

... And yet another thing: a shadow from the leaves, a woven, net-like shadow. Some humans lay in that shadow, chewing something, something similar to the legendary food of the ancients, a long yellow fruit and a piece of something dark. They put some of it in my hand, and it seemed strange to me for I did not know whether I might eat it or not....

...And again: a crowd, heads, legs, arms, mouths, faces appearing for a second and disappearing like bursting bubbles. For a second (or perhaps it was only a hallucination?) the transparent, flying wing ears appeared

With all my might I pressed the hand of I-330. She turned to me.

"What is the matter?"

"He is here! I thought, I-"

"Who?"

"S-, a second ago, in the crowd."

The ends of the thin, coal-black brows moved to the temples—a smile like a sharp triangle. I could not see clearly why she smiled. How could she smile?

"But you understand, I-330, don't you, you understand what it means if he, or one of them, is here?"

"You are funny! How could it ever enter the heads of those within the Wall that we are here? Remember; take yourself. Did you ever think it was possible? They are busy hunting us there—let them! You are delirious!"

Her smile was light and cheerful and I, too, was smiling; the earth was drunken, cheerful, light, floating....

RECORD TWENTY-EIGHT

Both of Them

Entropy and Energy

The Opaque Part of the Body

If your world is similar to the world of the ancients, then you may easily imagine that one day you suddenly come upon a sixth or a seventh continent, upon some Atlantis, and you find there unheard-of cities, labyrinths, people flying through the air without the aid of wings or aeros, stones lifted into the air by the power of a gaze—in brief, imagine that you see things that cannot come to your mind even if you suffer from dream sickness. That is how I feel now. For you must understand that no one has ever gone beyond the Green Wall since the Two Hundred Years' War, as I have already told you.

I know it is my duty to you, my unknown friends, to give more details about that unsuspected, strange world which has opened to me since yesterday. But for the time being I am unable to return to that subject. Everything is so novel, so novel it is like a rainstorm, and I am not big enough to embrace it all. I spread out the folds of my unif, my palms—and yet pailfuls splash past me and only drops can reach these pages

At first I heard behind me, behind the door, a loud voice. I recognized her voice, the voice of I-330, tense, metallic—and another one, almost inflexible, like a wooden ruler, the voice of U-. Then the door burst open with a crack and both of them shot into the room. Shot is the right word. I-330 put her hand on the back of my armchair and smiled over her shoulder, but only with her teeth, at U-. I should not care to stand before such a smile.

"Listen," she said to me, "this woman seems to have made it her business to guard you from me like a little child. Is it with your permission?"

"But he's a child. Yes! That is why he does not notice that you ...that it is only in order...That all this is only a foul game! Yes! And it is my duty... "

For a second (in the mirror) the broken, trembling line of brows. I leaped, controlling with difficulty the other self within me, the one with the hairy fists. With difficulty, pushing every word through my teeth, I cried straight into her face, into her very gills:

"Get out of here at once! Out! At once!"

The gills swelled at first into brick-red lumps, then fell and became gray. She opened her mouth to say something, but without a word she slammed it

shut and went out.

I threw myself toward I-330.

"Never, never will I forgive myself! She dared! You ...But you don't think, do you, that you, that she ...This is all because she wants to register on me, but I..."

"Fortunately she will not have time for that now. Besides, even a thousand like her ... I don't care....I know you will not believe that thousand, but only me. For after all that happened yesterday, I am all yours, all, to the very end, as you wanted it. I am in your hands; you can now at any moment...."

"What, 'at any moment'?" (But immediately I understood what. The blood rushed to my ears and cheeks.) "Don't speak about that, you must never speak about that! The other I, my former self...but now..."

"How do I know? Man is like a novel: up to the last page one does not know what the end will be. It would not be worth reading otherwise."

She was stroking my head. I could not see her face, but I could tell by her voice that she was looking somewhere far into the distance; she had hooked herself on to that cloud which was floating silently, slowly, no one knows where to.

Suddenly she pushed me away with her hand, firmly but tenderly.

"Listen. I came to tell you that perhaps we are now...our last days...You know, don't you, that all Auditoriums are to be closed after tonight?"

"Closed?"

"Yes. I passed by and saw that in all Auditoriums preparations are going on: tables, medics all in white ..."

"But what does it all mean?"

"I don't know. Nobody knows as yet. That's the worst of it. I feel only that the current is on, the spark is jumping, and if not today, then tomorrow....Yet perhaps they will not have time...."

It has been a long while since I ceased to understand who they are and who we are. I do not understand what I want; do I want them to have or not to have enough time? One thing is clear to me: I-330 is now on the very edge, on the very edge, and in one second more...

"But it is folly," I said. "You, versus the United State! It's the same as if you were to cover the muzzle of a gun with your hands and expect that way to prevent the shot....It is absolute folly!"

A smile.

"We must all go insane—as soon as possible go insane. It was yesterday, do you remember?"

Yes, she was right; I had even written it down. Consequently, it really had taken place. In silence I looked into her face. At that moment the dark cross was especially distinct.

"I-, dear, before it is too late... If you want...I'll leave everything, I'll forget everything, and we'll go there beyond the Wall, to them....I do not even know who they are....

She shook her head. Through the dark windows of her eyes I saw within her a flaming oven, sparks, tongues of flame, and above them a heap of dry wood. It was clear to me that it was too late, my words could be of no avail.

She stood up. She would soon leave. Perhaps these were the last days, or the last minutes....I grasped her hand.

"No, stay a little while longer...for the sake...for the sake..."

She slowly lifted my hand toward the light, my hairy paw which I detest. I wanted to withdraw it, but she held it tightly.

"Your hand...You undoubtedly don't know, and very few do know, that women from here occasionally used to fall in love with them. Probably there are in you a few drops of that blood of the sun and the woods. Perhaps that is why I..."

Silence. It was so strange that because of that silence, because of an emptiness, because of a nothing, my heart should beat so wildly. I cried:

"Ah, you shall not go yet! You shall not go until you tell me about them, for you love...them, and I don't even know who they are, nor where they come from."

"Where are they? The half we have lost. —H₂and O, two halves, but in order to get water—H₂O, creeks, seas, waterfalls, storms—those two halves

must be united."

I distinctly remember every movement of hers. I remember she picked up a glass triangle from my table, and while talking she pressed its sharp edge against her cheek; a white scar would appear, then it would fill again and become pink and disappear. And it is strange that I cannot remember her words, especially the beginning of the story. I remember only different images and colors. At first, I remember, she told me about the Two Hundred Years' War. Red color.... On the green of the grass, on the dark clay, on the pale blue of the snow—everywhere red ditches that would not become dry. Then, yellow; yellow grass burned by the sun, yellow, naked wild men and wild dogs side by side near swollen cadavers of dogs or perhaps of men. All this certainly beyond the Walls, for the City was already the victor, and it already possessed our present—day petroleum food. And at night...down from the sky... heavy black folds. The folds would swing over the woods, the villages— blackish-red, slow columns of smoke. A dull moaning; endless strings of people driven into the City to be saved by force and to be whipped into happiness.

"...You knew almost all this."

"Yes, almost."

"But you did not know, and only a few did, that a small part of them remained together and stayed to live beyond the Wall. Being naked, they went into the woods. They learned there from the trees, beasts, birds, flowers, and sun. Hair soon grew over their bodies, but under that hair they preserved their warm red blood. With you it was worse; numbers covered your bodies;

numbers crawled over you like lice. One ought to strip you of everything, and naked you ought to be driven into the woods. You ought to learn how to tremble with fear, with joy, with wild anger, with cold; you should pray to fire! And we Mephi, we want... "

"Wait a minute! 'Mephi,' what does it mean?"

"Mephi? It is from Mephisto, You remember, there on the rock, the figure of the youth? Or, no. I shall explain it to you in your own language, and you will understand better. There are two forces in the world, entropy and energy. One leads into blessed quietude, to happy equilibrium, the other to the destruction of equilibrium, to torturingly perpetual motion. Our, or rather your ancestors, the Christians, worshiped entropy like a God. But we are not Christians, we..."

At that moment a slight whisper was suddenly heard, a knock at the door, and in rushed that flattened man with the forehead low over his eyes, who several times had brought me notes from I-330. He ran straight to us, stopped, panting like an air pump, and could say not a word, as he must have been running at top speed.

"But tell me! What has happened?" I-330 grasped him by the hand.

"They are coming here," panted the air pump, "with guards....And with them that what's-his-name, the hunchback..."

"S-?"

"Yes. They are in the house by this time. They'll soon be here. Quick,

quick!"

"Nonsense, we have time!" I-330 was laughing, cheerful sparks in her eyes. It was either absurd, senseless courage, or else there was something I did not understand.

"I-, dear, for the sake of the Well-Doer! You must understand that this..."

"For the sake of the Well-Doer!" The sharp, triangle smile.

"Well... well, for my sake, I implore you!"

"Oh, yes, I wanted to talk to you about some other matters....Well, never mind.... We'll talk about them tomorrow."

And cheerfully (yes, cheerfully) she nodded to me; the other came out for a second from under his forehead's awning and nodded also. I was alone.

Quick! To my desk! I opened this manuscript and took up my pen so that they should find me at this work, which is for the benefit of the United State. Suddenly I felt every hair on my head living, separated, moving. "What if they should read even one page of these most recently written?"

Motionless I sat at the table, but everything around me seemed to be moving, as if the less than microscopic movements of the atoms had suddenly been magnified millions of times; I saw the walls trembling, my pen trembling, and the letters swinging and fusing together. "To hide them! But where?" Glass all around. "To burn them?" But they would notice the fire through the corridor and in the neighboring room. Besides, I felt unable, I felt

too weak, to destroy this torturing and perhaps dearest piece of my own self....

Voices from a distance (from the corridor), and steps. I had time only to snatch a handful of pages and put them under me and then, as if soldered to the armchair—every atom of which was quivering—I remained sitting, while the floor under my feet rolled like the deck of a ship, up and down....

All shrunk together and hidden under the awning of my own forehead, like that messenger, I watched them stealthily; they were going from room to room, beginning at the right end of the corridor. Nearer...nearer....I saw that some sat in their rooms, torpid like me; others would jump up and open their doors wide—lucky ones! If only I, too, could....

"The Well-Doer is the most perfect fumigation humanity needs; consequently, no peristalsis in the organism of the United State could...."I was writing this nonsense, pressing my trembling pen hard, and lower and lower my head bent over the table, and within me some sort of crazy forge...With my back I was listening....and I heard the click of the doorknob.... A current of fresh air....My armchair was dancing a mad dance Only then, and even then with difficulty, I tore myself away from the page and turned my head in the direction of the newcomers (how difficult it is to play a foul game!). In front of all was S-, morose, silent, his eyes swiftly drilling deep shafts within me, within my armchair, and within the pages which were twitching in my hands. Then for a second—familiar, everyday faces at the door; one of them separated itself from the rest with its bulging, pinkish-brown gills....

At once I recalled everything that had happened in the same room half an hour ago, and it was clear to me that they would presently...

All my being was shriveling and pulsating in that fortunately opaque part of my body with which I was covering the manuscript. U-came up to S-, gently plucked his sleeve, and said in a low voice:

"This is D-503, the builder of the Integral. You have probably heard of him. He is always like that, at his desk—does not spare himself at all!"

... And I thought... What a dear, wonderful woman!...

S- slid up to me, bent over my shoulder toward the table. I covered the lines I had written with my elbow, but he shouted severely:

"Show us at once what you have there, please!"

Dying with shame, I held out the sheet of paper. He read it over, and I noticed a tiny smile jump out of his eyes, scamper down his face, and, slightly wagging its tail, perch upon the right angle of his mouth....

"Somewhat ambiguous, yet...Well, you may continue; we shall not disturb you any further."

He went splashing toward the door as if in a ditch of water. And with every step of his I felt coming back to me my legs, my arms, my fingers—my soul again distributed itself evenly throughout my whole body; I breathed....

The last thing: U- lingered in my room to come back to me and say right in my ear, in a whisper: "It is lucky for you that I..."

I did not understand. What did she mean by that? The same evening I learned that they had led away three Numbers, although nobody speaks aloud about it, or about anything that happened. This ostensible silence is due to the educational influence of the Guardians who are ever present among us. Conversations deal chiefly with the quick fall of the barometer and the forthcoming change in the weather.

RECORD TWENTY-NINE

Threads on the Face

Sprouts

An Unnatural Compression

It is strange: the barometer continues to fall, yet there is no wind. There is quiet. Above, the storm which we do not yet hear has begun. The clouds are rushing with terrific speed. There are few of them as yet, separate fragments; it is as if above us an unknown city were being destroyed and pieces of walls and towers were rushing down, coming nearer and nearer with tremendous speed, but it will take some days of rushing through the blue infinite before they reach the bottom, that is us, below. And below there is silence.

There are thin, incomprehensible, almost invisible threads in the air; every autumn they are brought here from beyond the Wall. They float slowly, and suddenly you feel something foreign and invisible on your face; you want to brush it off, but no, you cannot rid yourself of it. You feel it especially near the Green Wall, where I was this morning. I-330 made an appointment with me to meet her in the Ancient House in that "apartment" of ours.

I was not far from the rust-red, opaque mass of the Ancient House when I heard behind me short, hasty steps and rapid breathing. I turned around and saw O-90 trying to catch up to me. She seemed strangely and perfectly rounded. Her arms and breast, her whole body, so familiar to me, was rounded out, stretching her unif. It seemed as though it would soon tear the thin cloth and come out into the sun, into the light. I think that there in the green debris, in springtime, the unseen sprouts try thus to tear their way through the ground in order to send forth their branches and leaves and to bloom.

For a few seconds she stared into my face with her blue eyes, in silence.

"I saw you on the Day of Unanimity."

"I saw you, too." I at once remembered; below, in a narrow passage she had stood, pressing herself to the wall, protecting her abdomen with her arms; and automatically I now glanced at her abdomen which rounded the unif. She must have noticed, for she became pink, and with a rosy smile:

"I am so happy...so happy! I am so full of...you understand, I am...I walk

and I hear nothing around me.... And all the while I listen within, within me.... "

I was silent. Something foreign was shadowing my face and I was unable to rid myself of it. Suddenly, all shining, light blue, she caught my hand; I felt her lips upon it.... It was the first time in my life.... It was some ancient caress as yet unknown to me.... And I was so ashamed and it pained me so much that I swiftly, I think even roughly, pulled my hand away.

"Listen, you are crazy, it seems.... And anyway you... What are you happy about? Is it possible that you forget what is ahead of you? If not now, then within a month or two "

Her light went out, her roundness sagged and shrank. And in my heart an unpleasant, even a painful compression, mixed with pity. Our heart is nothing else than an ideal pump: a compression, i.e., a shrinking at the moment of pumping, is a technical absurdity. Hence it is clear how essentially absurd, unnatural, and pathological are all these "loves" and "pities," etc., etc., which create that compression....

Silence. To the left the cloudy green glass of the Wall. And just ahead the dark red mass. Those two colors combined gave me what I thought was a splendid idea.

"Wait! I know how to save you! I shall save you from... To see one's own child for a few moments only, and then be sent to death! No! You shall be able to bring it up! You shall watch it and see it grow in your arms, and ripen like a fruit.... "

Her body quivered and she seemed to have chained herself to me.

"Do you remember that woman, I-330? That...of...of long ago?...Who during that walk? ...Well, she is now right here, in the Ancient House. Let us go to her and I assure you that I shall arrange matters at once."

I already pictured us, I-330 and I, leading O-90 through the corridors... then how she would be brought amidst flowers, grass, and leaves But O-90 stepped back, the little horns of her rosy crescent trembling and bending downward.

"Is she that same one?" she asked.

"That is... " I was confused for some reason. "Yes, of course... that very same...."

"And you want me to go to her, to ask her...to...Don't you ever dare to say another word about it!"

Leaning over, she walked away....Then, as if she had remembered something, she turned around and cried:

"I shall die; all right! And it's none of your business...What do you care?"

Silence. From above pieces of blue towers and walls were falling downward with terrific speed...they will have perhaps hours or days to fly through the infinite Unseen threads were slowly floating through the air, planting themselves upon my face, and it was impossible to brush them off, impossible to rid myself of them.

I walked slowly toward the Ancient House, and in my heart I felt that absurd, tormenting compression....

RECORD THIRTY

The Last Number

Galileo's Mistake

Would It Not Be Better?

Here is my conversation with I-330, which took place in the Ancient House yesterday in the midst of loud noise, among colors which stifled the logical course of my thoughts, red, green, bronze, saffron yellow, orange colors...and all the while under the motionless, marble smile of that snub-nosed ancient poet.

I shall reproduce the conversation word for word, for it seems to me that it may have an enormous and decisive importance for the fate of the United State—more than that, for the fate of the universe. Besides, in reading it, you, my unknown readers, may find some justification for me. I-330, without preliminaries, at once brought everything down upon my head.

"I know that the day after tomorrow the first trial trip of the Integral is to take place. On that day we shall take possession of it."

"What! Day after tomorrow?"

"Yes. Sit down and don't be upset. We cannot afford to lose a minute. Among the hundreds who were arrested yesterday there are twenty Mephis. To let two or three days pass means that they will perish."

I was silent.

"As observers on the trial trip they will send electricians, mechanics, physicians, meteorologists, etc.... At twelve sharp—you must remember this—when the bell rings for dinner, we shall remain in the passage; lock them all up in the dining hall, and the Integral will be ours. You realize that it is essential, happen what may! The Integral in our hands will be a tool that will help to put an end to everything at once without pain.... Their aeros?... Bah! They would be insignificant mosquitoes against a buzzard. And then, if it proves inevitable, we may direct the tubes of the motors downward, and by their work alone..."

I jumped up.

"It is inconceivable! It is absurd! Is it not clear to you that what you are planning is a revolution? Absurd, because a revolution is impossible! Because our—I speak for myself and for you—our revolution was the last one. No other revolutions may occur. Everybody knows that."

A mocking, sharp triangle of brows.

"My dear, you are a mathematician, are you not? More than that, a philosopher-mathematician? Well, then, name the last number."

"What is...I ...I cannot understand, which last?"

"The last one, the highest, the largest."

"But I-330, that's absurd! Since the number of numbers is infinite, how can there be a last one?"

"And why then do you think there is a last revolution ...their number is infinite....The 'last one' is a child's story. Children are afraid of the infinite, and it is necessary that children should not be frightened, so that they may sleep through the night."

"But what is the use, what is the use of it all? For the sake of the Well-Doer! What is the use since all of us are happy already?"

"All right! Even suppose that is so. And then what?"

"How funny! A purely childish question. You tell a story to children, come to the very end, and they will invariably ask you, 'and then what?' and 'what for'? And then nothing! Period. In the whole world, evenly, everywhere, there is distributed..."

"Ah, 'evenly!' 'Everywhere!' That is the point, entropy! Psychological entropy. Don't you as a mathematician know that only differences—only differences—in temperature, only thermic contrasts make for life? And of all over the world there are evenly warm or evenly cold bodies, they must be pushed off!... in order to get flame, explosions! And we shall push!..."

"But I-330, please realize that our ancestors during the Two Hundred Years' War did exactly that!"

"Oh, they were right! A thousand times right! But they did one thing wrong: later they began to believe that they were the last number, a number that does not exist in nature. Their mistake was the mistake of Galileo; he was right in that the earth revolves around the sun, but he did not know that our whole solar system revolves around some other center, he did not know that the real, not relative, orbit of the earth is not a naive circle."

"And you, the Mephi?"

"We? For the time being we know that there is no last number. We may forget that, someday. Of course, we shall certainly forget it when we grow old, as everything inevitably grows old. Then we shall inevitably fall like autumn leaves from the trees, like you the day after tomorrow....No, no, dear, not you personally. You are with us, aren't you? You are with us?"

Flaming, stormy, sparkling! I never before had seen her in such a state. She embraced me with her whole self, and my self disappeared.

Her last word, looking steadily, deeply into my eyes:

"Then, do not forget: at twelve o'clock sharp."

And I answered:

"Yes, I remember."

She left. I was alone amidst a rebellious, multivoiced commotion of blue, red, green, saffron-yellow, and orange

Yes, at twelve!...Suddenly a feeling of something foreign on my face, of something implanted, that could not be brushed off. Suddenly, yesterday morning, and U- and all she had shouted into the face of I-330! Why, how absurd!

I hastened to get out of the house and home, home! Somewhere behind me I heard the chattering of the birds beyond the Wall. And ahead of me in the setting sun the balls of cupolas made of red, crystallized fire, enormous flaming cubes—houses—and the sharp point of the Accumulating Tower high in the sky like a paralyzed streak of lightning. And all this, all this impeccable, most geometric beauty, shall I, I myself, with my own hands ...? Is there no way out? No path? No trail?

I passed by an auditorium (I do not recall its number). Inside, the benches were stacked along the walls. In the middle, tables covered with snow-white glass sheets, with pink stains of sunny blood on the white....There was foreshadowed in all that some unknown and therefore alarming tomorrow. It is unnatural for a thinking and seeing human being to live among irregularities, unknowns, X's. If suddenly your eyes were covered with a bandage and you were left to feel around, to stumble, ever aware that somewhere very close to you there was a border line, and one step only and nothing but a compressed, smothered piece of flesh would be left of you....I now feel somewhat like that.

... And what if, without waiting for anything, I should ...just head

down....Would it not be the only correct thing to do? To disentangle everything at once?

RECORD THIRTY-ONE

The Great Operation

I Forgave Everything

The Collision of Trains

Saved! At the very last moment, when it seemed that there was nothing to hold on to, that it was the end!...

It was as if you already ascended the steps toward the threatening machine of the Well-Doer, or as if the great glass Bell with a heavy thud had already covered you, and for the last time in life you looked at the blue sky to devour it with your eyes ...when suddenly, it was only a dream! The sun is pink and cheerful and the wall ...What happiness to be able to touch the cold wall! And the pillow! To delight endlessly in the little cavity formed by your own head in the white pillow! ...This is approximately what I felt, when I read the State Journal this morning. It has all been a terrible dream, and the dream is over. And I was so feeble, so unfaithful, that I thought of selfish, voluntary death! I am ashamed now to reread yesterday's last lines. But let

them remain as a memory of that incredible what-might-have-happened, which will not happen! On the front page of the State Journal the following gleamed:

REJOICE!

For from now on we are perfect!

Until today your own creation, engines, were more perfect than you.

WHY?

For every spark from a dynamo is a spark of pure reason; each motion of a piston, a pure syllogism. Is it not true that the same faultless reason is within you?

The philosophy of the cranes, presses, and pumps is complete and clear like a circle. But is your philosophy less circular? The beauty of a mechanism lies in its immutable, precise rhythm, like that of a pendulum. But have you not become as precise as a pendulum, you who are brought up on the system of Taylor?

Yes, but there is one difference:

MECHANISMS HAVE NO FANCY.

Did you ever notice a pump cylinder with a wide, dis— tant, sensuously dreaming smile upon its face while it was working? Did you ever hear cranes that were restless, tossing about and sighing at night during the hours de— signed for rest?

NO!

Yet on your faces (you may well blush with shame!) the Guardians have more and more frequently seen those smiles, and they have heard your sighs, And (you should hide your eyes for shame!) the historians of the United State have all tendered their resignations so as to be relieved from having to record such shameful occurrences.

It is not your fault; you are ill. And the name of your illness is:

FANCY.

It is a worm that gnaws black wrinkles on one's forehead. It is a fever that drives one to run further and further, even though "further" may begin where happiness ends. It is the last barricade on our road to happiness.

Rejoice! This Barricade Has Been Blasted at Last! The Road Is Open!

The latest discovery of our State science is that there is a center for fancy—a miserable little nervous knot in the lower region of the frontal lobe of the brain. A triple treatment of this knot with X-rays will cure you of fancy,

Forever!

You are perfect; you are mechanized; the road to one-hundred-percent happiness is open! Hasten then all of you, young and old, hasten to undergo the Great Operation! Hasten to the auditoriums where the Great Operation is being performed! Long live the Great Operation! Long live the United State! Long live the Well-Doer!

You, had you not read all this in my records—which look like an ancient, strange novel—had you, like me, held in your trembling hands the newspaper, smelling of typographic ink...if you knew, as I do, that all this is a most certain reality—if not the reality of today, then that of tomorrow—would you not feel the very things I feel? Would your head not whirl as mine does? Would there not run over your back and arms those strange, sweet, icy needles? Would you not feel that you were a giant, an Atlas?—that if you only stood up and straightened out you would reach the ceiling with your head?

I snatched the telephone receiver.

"I-330. Yes...Yes. Yes...330!" And then, swallowing my own words, I shouted, "Are you at home? Yes? Have you read? You are reading now? Isn't it, isn't it stupendous?"

"Yes..."A long, dark silence. The wires buzzed almost imperceptibly. She was thinking.

"I must see you today without fail. Yes, in my room, after sixteen, without fail!"

Dear...she is such a dear!..."Without fail!" I was smiling,, and I could not stop! I felt I would carry that smile with me into the street like a light above my head.

Outside the wind ran over me, whirling, whistling, whipping, but I felt even more cheerful. "All night, go on, go on moaning and groaning! The

Walls cannot be torn down." Flying leaden clouds broke over my head...well, let them! They could not eclipse the sun! We chained it to the zenith like so many Joshuas, sons of Nun!

At the corner a group of such Joshuas, sons of Nun, were standing with their foreheads pasted to the glass of the wall. Inside, on a dazzling white table, a Number already lay. You could see two naked soles emerging from under the sheet in a yellow angle ...White medics bent over his head—a white hand, a stretched-out hand holding a syringe filled with something....

"And you, what are you waiting for?" I asked nobody in particular, or rather all of them.

"And you?" Someone's round head turned to me.

"I? Oh, afterward! I must first ..." Somewhat confused, I left the place. I really had to see I-330 first. But why first? I could not explain to myself ...

The docks. The Integral, bluish like ice, was glisten—ing and sparkling. The engine was caressingly grumbling, repeating some one word, as if it were my word, a familiar one. I bent down and stroked the long, cold tube of the motor. "Dear! What a dear tube! Tomorrow it will come to life, tomorrow for the first time it will tremble with burning, flaming streams in its bowels."

With what eyes would I have looked at the glass monster had everything remained as it was yesterday? If I knew that tomorrow at twelve I should betray it, yes, betraySomeone behind cautiously touched my elbow. I turned around. The plate-like, fiat face of the Second Builder.

"Do you know already?" he asked.

"What? About the Operation? Yes. How everything, everything... suddenly..."

"No, not that. The trial flight is put off until day after tomorrow, on account of that Operation. They rushed us for nothing; we hurried ..."

"On account of that Operation!" Funny, limited man. He could see no further than his own platter! If only he knew that, but for the Operation, tomorrow at twelve he would have been locked up in a glass cage, tossing about, trying to climb the walls!

At twelve-thirty when I came into my room I saw U-. She was sitting at my table, firm, straight, bone-like, resting her right cheek on her hand. She must have been waiting for a long while, because when she rose brusquely to meet me the five white imprints of her fingers remained on her cheek.

For a second that terrible morning came back to me: she beside I-330, indignant. But for a second only. All that was at once washed away by today's sun—as happens sometimes when you enter your room on a bright day and absent-mindedly turn on the light, and the bulb shines but is out of place, comical, unnecessary.

Without hesitation I held out my hand to her; I forgave her everything. She firmly grasped both my hands and pressed them till they hurt. Her cheeks quivering and hanging down like ancient precious ornaments, she said with emotion:

"I was waiting ...I want only one moment I only wanted to say...how happy, how joyous I am for you! You realize, of course, that tomorrow or day after tomorrow you will be healthy again, as if born anew."

I noticed my papers on the table; the last two pages of my record of yesterday were in the place where I had left them the night before. If only she knew what I had written there! But I didn't really care. Now it was only history; it was a ridiculously far-off distance, like an image seen through a reversed opera glass.

"Yes," I said. "A while ago, while passing along the avenue, I saw a man walking ahead of me. His shadow stretched along the pavement—and think of it! His shadow was luminous! I think—more than that, I am absolutely certain—that tomorrow all shadows will disappear. Not a shadow from any person or any thing!The sun will be shining through everything."

She, gently and earnestly:

"You are a dreamer! I would not allow my children in school to talk that way."

She told me something about the children: that they were all led in one herd to the Operation; that it was necessary to bind them afterward with ropes; that one must love pitilessly, "yes, pitilessly," and that she thought she might finally decide to ...

She smoothed out the grayish-blue fold of the unif that fell between her knees, swiftly pasted her smiles all over me, and went out.

Fortunately the sun did not stop today. The sun was running. It was already sixteen o'clock I was knocking at the door, my heart was knocking

"Come in!"

I threw myself upon the floor near her chair, to embrace her limbs, to lift my head upward and look into her eyes, first into one, then into the other, and in each of them to see the reflection of myself in wonderful captivity

There beyond the wall it looked stormy, there the clouds were leaden—let them be! My head was overcrowded with impetuous words, and I was speaking aloud, and flying with the sun I knew not whereNo, now we knew where we were flying; planets were following me, planets sparkling with flame and populated with fiery, singing flowers, and mute planets, blue ones where rational stones were unified into one organized society, and planets which like our own earth had already reached the apex of one-hundred-percent happiness.

Suddenly, from above:

"And don't you think that at the apex are, precisely, stones unified into an organized society?" The triangle grew sharper and sharper, darker and darker.

"Happiness ...well? ...Desires are tortures, aren't they? It is clear, therefore, that happiness is when there are no longer any desires, not a single desire any more. What an error, what an absurd prejudice it was, that we used to mark happiness with the sign 'plus'! No, absolute happiness must be marked 'minus'—divine minus!"

I remember I stammered unintelligibly:

"Absolute zero!—minus 273°."

"Minus 273°—exactly! A somewhat cool temperature. But doesn't it prove that we are at the summit?"

As before she seemed somehow to speak for me and through me, developing my own thoughts to the end. But there was something so morbid in her tone that I could not refrain...with an effort I drew out a "No."

"No," I said. "You, you are mocking...."

She burst out laughing loudly, too loudly. Swiftly, in a second, she laughed herself to some unseen edge, stumbled, and fell over....Silence.

She stood up, put her hands upon my shoulders, and looked into me for a long while. Then she pulled me toward her and everything seemed to have disappeared save her sharp, hot lips....

"Good-by."

The words came from afar, from above, and reached me not at once but only after a minute, perhaps two minutes later.

"Why...why 'good-by'?"

"You have been ill, have you not? Because of me you have committed crimes. Hasn't all this tormented you? And now you have the Operation to look forward to. You will be cured of me. And that means—good-by."

"No!" I cried.

A pitilessly sharp black triangle on a white background.

"What? Do you mean that you don't want happiness?"

My head was breaking into pieces; two logical trains collided and crawled upon each other, rattling and smothering....

"well, I am waiting. You must choose; the Operation and one-hundred-percent happiness, or..."

"I cannot...without you...I must not...without you..." I said, or perhaps I only thought—I am not sure which—but I-330 heard.

"Yes, I know," she said. Then, her hands still on my shoulders and her eyes not letting my eyes go, "Then...until tomorrow. Tomorrow at twelve. You remember?"

"No, it was postponed for a day. Day after tomorrow!"

"So much the better for us. At twelve, day after tomorrow!"

I walked alone in the dusky street. The wind was whirling, carrying, driving me like a piece of paper; fragments of the leaden sky were soaring, soaring—they had to soar through the infinite for another day or two....

Unifs of Numbers were brushing my sides—yet I was walking alone. It was clear to me that all were being saved but that there was no salvation for me. For I do not want salvation....

RECORD THIRTY-TWO

I Do Not Believe

Tractors

A Little Human Splinter

Do you believe that you will die? Oh, yes, "Man is mortal; I am a man; consequently..." No, not that; I know that; you know it. But I ask: Has it ever happened that you actually believed it? Believed definitely, believed not with your reason but with your body, that you actually felt that someday those fingers which now hold this page will become yellow, icy?...

No, of course you cannot believe this. That is why you haven't jumped from the tenth floor to the pavement before now; that is why you eat, turn over these pages, shave, smile, write.

This very thing, yes, exactly this is alive in me today. I know that that small black hand on the clock will slide down here toward midnight, then it will again start to ascend, and it will cross some last border and the improbable tomorrow will have arrived. I know it, but somehow I do not believe it—or perhaps I think that twenty-four hours are twenty-four years. So I am still able to act, to hurry, to answer questions, to climb the rope

ladder to the Integral. I am still able to feel how the Integral shakes the surface of the water and I still understand that I must grasp the railing, and I am still able to feel the cold glass in my hand. I see the transparent, living cranes, bending their long necks, carefully feeding the Integral with the terrible explosive food which the motors need I still see below on the river the blue veins and knots of water swollen by the wind....Yet all this seems very distant from me, foreign, flat, like a draft on a sheet of paper. And it seems to me strange, when the fiat draft-like face of the Second Builder suddenly asks:

"Well, then. How much fuel for the motors shall we load on? If we count on three, or say three and a half hours ..."

I see before me, over a draft, my hand with the counter and the logarithmic dial at the figure 15.

"Fifteen tons. But you'd better take...yes, better take a thousand."

I said that because I know that tomorrow ...I noticed that my hands and the dial began to tremble.

"A thousand! What do you need such a lot for? That would last a week! No, more than a week!"

"Well, nobody knows ..."

I do know....

The wind whistled, the air seemed to be stuffed to the limit with something invisible. I had difficulty in breathing, difficulty in walking, and

with difficulty, slowly but without stopping for a second, the hand of the Accumulating Tower was crawling, at the end of the avenue. The peak of the Tower reached into the very clouds—dull, blue, groaning in a subdued way, sucking electricity from the clouds. The tubes of the Musical Tower resounded.

As always—four abreast. But the rows did not seem as firm as usual; they were swinging, bending more and more, perhaps because of the wind. There! They seemed to stumble upon something at the corner; they drew back and stopped, congealed, a close mass, a clot, breathing rapidly; at once all of them stretched their necks like geese.

"Look! No, look, look—there, quick!"

"They? Are those they?"

"Ah, never! Never! I'd rather put my head straight into the Machine...."

"Silence! Are you crazy?"

On the corner, the doors of the auditorium were ajar, and a wide column of about fifty people—the word "people" is not the right one. These were heavy-wheeled automatons seemingly bound in iron and moved by an invisible mechanism. Not people, but a sort of human-like tractor. Over their heads, floating in the air—a white banner with a golden sun embroidered on it, and the rays of the sun: "We are the first! We have already been operated upon! Follow us, all of you!"

Slowly, unhesitatingly they moved through the crowd, and it was clear

that if they had had in their way a wall, a tree, a house, they would have moved on just as unhesitatingly through the wall, the tree, the house. In the middle of the avenue they fused and stretched out into a chain, arm in arm, their faces turned toward us. And we, a human clot, tense, the hair pricking our heads, we waited. Our necks were stretched out goose fashion. Clouds. The wind whistled. Suddenly the wings of the chain from right and left bent quickly around us, and faster, faster, like a heavy engine descending a hill, they closed the ring and pulled us toward the yawning doors and inside....

Somebody's piercing cry: "They are driving us in! Run!"

Everybody ran. Close to the wall there was still an open, living gate of human beings. Everybody dashed through it, heads forward. Their heads became sharp wedges, and with their ribs, shoulders, hips... Like a stream of water compressed in a fire hose they spurted out in the form of a fan, and all around me stamping feet, raised arms, uniforms.... The double curved S- with his transparent wing ears appeared for a moment close before my eyes; he disappeared as suddenly; I was alone among arms and legs appearing for a second and disappearing. I was running....

I dashed to the entrance of a house to stop to catch my breath, my back close to the door—and suddenly, like a splinter borne by the wind, a human being was thrown toward me.

"All the while I ...I have been following you. I do not want... do you see? I do not want...I am ready to...

Small round hands on my sleeves, round dark blue eyes—it was O-90.

She just slipped along my body like a unif which, its hanger broken, slips along the wall to fall upon the floor. Like a little bundle she crumpled below me on the cold doorstep, and I stood over her, stroking her head, her face. My hands were wet. I felt as if I were very big and she very small, a small part of myself. I felt something quite different from what I feel toward I-330. I think the ancients must have had similar feelings toward their private children.

Below, filtering through her hands with which she was covering her face, a voice came to me:

"Every night I...I cannot! If they cure me...Every night I sit in the darkness alone and think of him, and of what he will look like when I... If I am cured I would have nothing to live with—do you understand me? You must...you must..."

An absurd feeling, yet it was there; I really must! Absurd, because this "duty" of mine was nothing but another crime. Absurd, because white and black cannot be one, duty and crime cannot coincide. Or perhaps there is no black and white in life, but everything depends upon the first logical premise? If the premise is that I unlawfully gave her a child...

"It's all right, but don't, only don't..." I said, "Of course I understand....I must take you to I-330, as I once offered to, so that she..."

"Yes." (This in a low voice, without uncovering her face.)

I helped her rise. Silently we went along the darkening street, each busy with his own thoughts, or perhaps with the same thought....We walked between silent, leaden houses, through the tense, whipping branches of the

wind....

All at once, through the whistling of the wind, I heard, as if splashing through ditches, the familiar footsteps coming from some unseen point. At the corner I turned around, and among the clouds, flying upside down in the dim glass reflection of the pavement, I saw S-. Instantly my arms became foreign, swinging out of time, and I began to tell O-90 in a low voice that tomorrow, yes, tomorrow, was the day of the first flight of the Integral, and that it was to be something that had never happened before in all history, great, miraculous.

"Think of it! For the first time in life to Fred myself outside the limits of our city and see—who knows what is beyond the Green Wall?"

O-90 looked at me extremely surprised, her blue eyes trying to penetrate mine; she looked at my senselessly swinging arms. But I did not let her say a word—I kept talking, talking....And within me, apart from what I was saying and audible only to myself, a thought was feverishly buzzing and knocking. "Impossible! You must somehow...you must not lead him to I-330!"

Instead of turning to the right I turned to the left. The bridge submissively bent its back in a slavish way to all three of us, to me, to O-, to him behind. Lights were falling from the houses across the water, falling and breaking into thousands of sparks which danced feverishly, sprayed with the mad white foam of the water. Somewhere not far away the wind was moaning like the tensely stretched string of a double bass. And through this bass, behind us, all the while...

The house where I live. At the entrance O- stopped and began:

"No! You promised, did you not, that..."

I did not let her finish. Hastily I pushed her through the entrance and we found ourselves in the lobby. At the controller's desk the familiar, hanging, excitedly quivering cheeks—a group of Numbers around. They were quarreling about something, heads bending over the banisters on the second floor; they were running downstairs one by one. But about that later. I drew O-90 at once into the opposite, unoccupied corner and sat down with my back to the wall. I saw a dark, large-headed shadow gliding back and forth over the sidewalk. I took out my notebook. O-90 in her chair was sinking slowly, as if she were evaporating from under her unif, as if her body were thawing, as if only her empty unif were left, and empty eyes taking one into the blue emptiness. In a tired voice:

"Why did you bring me here? You lied to me."

"No, not so loud! Look here! Do you see? Through the wall?"

"Yes, I see a shadow."

"He is always following me... I cannot...Do you understand? I cannot, therefore...I am going to write a few words to I-330. You take the note and go alone. I know he will remain here."

Her body began again to take form and to move beneath the unif; on her face a faint sunrise, dawn. I put the note between her cold fingers, pressed her hand firmly, and for the last time looked into her blue eyes.

"Good-by. Perhaps someday..." She freed her hand. Bending over slightly, she slowly moved away, made two steps, turned around quickly, and again we were side by side. Her lips were moving; with her lips and with her eyes she repeated some inaudible word. What an unbearable smile! What suffering!

Then the bent-over human splinter went to the door; a bent-over little shadow beyond the wall; without turning around she went on faster, still faster....

I went to U-'s desk. With emotion filling her indignant gills, she said to me:

"They have all gone crazy! He, for instance, is trying to assure me that he himself saw a naked man covered with hair near the Ancient House... "

A voice from the group of empty raised heads: "Yes. I repeat it, yes."

"Well, what do you think of that? Oh, what a delirium!" The word "delirium" came out of her mouth so full of conviction, so unbending, that I asked myself: "Perhaps it really was nothing but delirium, all that has been going on around me lately." I glanced at my hairy hand, and I remembered: "There are, undoubtedly, some drops of that blood of the sun and woods in you. That is why perhaps you..." "No, fortunately it was not delirium; or no, unfortunately it was not delirium.

RECORD THIRTY-THREE

This Without a Synopsis, Hastily, the Last The day.

Quick, to the newspaper! Perhaps there...I read the paper with my eyes (exactly; my eyes now are like a pen, or like a counting machine which you hold and feel in your hands like a tool, something foreign, an instrument). In the newspaper, on the first page, in large print:

THE ENEMIES OF HAPPINESS ARE AWAKE! HOLD TO YOUR HAPPINESS WITH BOTH HANDS. TOMORROW ALL WORK WILL STOP AND ALL NUMBERS ARE TO COME TO BE OPERATED UPON. THOSE WHO FAIL TO COME WILL BE SUB—MITIED TO THE MACHINE OF THE WELL—DOER.

Tomorrow! How can there be, how can there be any tomorrow?

Following my daily habit, I stretched out my arm (instrument!) to the bookshelf to put today's paper with the rest within a cover ornamented with gold. While doing this: "What for? What does it matter? Never again shall I... Within this cover, never..." And out of my hands, down to the floor it fell.

I stood looking all around, over all my room; hastily I was taking away, feverishly putting into some unseen valise, everything I regretted leaving here: my desk, my books, my chair. Upon that chair I-330 had sat that day, I was below on the floor...My bed...Then for a minute or two I stood and waited for some miracle to happen; perhaps the telephone would ring,

perhaps she would say that...But no, no miracle...

I am leaving, going into the unknown. These are my last lines. Farewell you, my unknown beloved ones, with whom I have lived through so many pages, before whom I have bared my diseased soul, my whole self to the last broken little screw, to the last cracked spring...I am going...

RECORD THIRTY-FOUR

The Forgiven Ones

A Sunny Night

A Radio-Valkyrie

Oh, if only I had actually broken myself to pieces! If only I had actually found myself with her in some place beyond the Wall, among beasts showing their yellow tusks. If only I had never actually returned here! It would be a thousand, a million times easier! But now—what? Now to go and choke that —! But would it help? No, no, no! Take yourself in hand, D-503! Set into yourself the firm hub of logic; at least for a short while weigh heavily with all your might on the lever and, like the ancient slave, turn the millstones of syllogisms until you have written down and understood everything that happened

When I boarded the Integral, everyone was already there and in his place; all the cells of the gigantic hive were filled. Through the decks of glass—tiny, ant-like people below, at the telegraph, dynamo, transformers, altimeters, ventilators, indicators, motor, pumps, tubes....In the saloon people were sitting over tables and instruments, probably those commissioned by the Scientific Bureau; near them the Second Builder and his two aides. All three had their heads down between their shoulders like turtles, their faces gray, autumnal, rayless.

"Well?" I asked.

"Well, somewhat uncanny" one of them replied, smiling a gray, rayless smile. "Perhaps we shall have to land in some unknown place. And, generally speaking, nobody knows..."

I could hardly bear to look at them, when in an hour or so I was to throw them out with my own hands, to cast them out from the cozy figures of our Table of Hours, to tear them away forever from the mother's breast of the United State. They reminded me of the tragic figures of "The Three Forgiven Ones"—a story known to all of our school children. It tells about three Numbers, who by way of experiment were exempted for a whole month from any work.[\[9\]](#)"Go wherever you will, do what you will," they were told. The unhappy three spent their whole time wandering around their usual place of work and gazing within with hungry eyes. They would stop on the plazas and busy themselves for hours repeating the motions which they had been used to making during certain hours of the day; it became a bodily necessity for them to do so. They would saw and plane the air; with unseen sledge hammers they would bang upon unseen stakes. Finally, on the tenth day, they could bear it

no longer; they took one another by the hand, entered the river, and to the accompaniment of the March they waded deeper and deeper until the water ended their sufferings forever.

I repeat, it was hard for me to look at them, and I was anxious to leave them.

"I just want to take a glance into the engine room, and then off" I said.

[9]It happened long ago, in the third century A.T. (After the Tables).

They were asking me questions: "What voltage should be used for the initial spark, how much ballast water was needed in the tank aft?" As if a phonograph were some where within me, I was giving quick and precise answers, but I, my inner self, was busy with my own thoughts.

In the narrow passage gray unifs were passing, gray faces, and, for a second, one face with its hair low over the forehead, eyes gazing from deep beneath it—it was that same man. I understood: they had come, and there was no escape from it for me; only minutes remained, a few dozen minutes....An infinitesimal, molecular quiver of my whole body. This quivering did not stop to the very end—it was as if an enormous motor had been placed under the very foundation of my body, which was so light that the walls, partitions, cables, beams, lights— everything was quivering....

I did not yet know whether she was there. But I had no time...They were calling me: quick! To the commander's bridge; time to go...where?

Gray, rayless faces. Below in the water—tense blue veins. Heavy, cast-

iron patches of sky. It was so difficult to lift my cast-iron hand and take up the receiver of the commander's telephone!..."Up! Forty—five degrees!"

A heavy explosion—a jerk—a rabid, greenish-white mountain of water aft—the deck beneath my feet began to move, soft as rubber; and everything below, my whole life, forever...For a second, falling deeper and deeper into a sort of funnel, becoming more and more compressed—the icy-blue relief map of the City, the round bubbles of cupolas, the lonely leaden finger of the Accumulating Tower...Then, instantaneously, a cotton curtain of cloud...We pierced it, and there was the sun and the blue sky! Seconds, minutes, miles—the blue was hardening, fast filling with darkness; like drops of cold, silver sweat the stars appeared....

A sad, unbearably bright, black, starry, sunny night As if one had become deaf, one still saw that the pipes were roaring, but one only saw; dead silence all about. The sun was mute. It was natural, of course. One might have expected it; we were beyond the terrestrial atmosphere. The transition was so quick, so sudden, that everyone became timid and silent. Yet I...I thought I felt easier under that fantastic, mute sun. I had bounded over the inevitable border, having left my body somewhere there below, and I was soaring bodiless to a new world, where everything was to be different, upside down.

"Keep the same course!" I shouted into the engine room, or perhaps it was not I but a phonograph in me, and the same machine that I was, with a mechanical, hinge-like movement, handed the commander's trumpet to the Second Builder. Permeated by that most delicate, molecular quiver known only to me, I ran down the companionway, to seek...

The door of the saloon....An hour later it was to latch and lock itself....At the door stood an unfamiliar Number. He was small, with a face like a hundred or a thousand others which are usually lost in a crowd, but his arms were exceptionally long—they reached down to his knees, as if they had been taken by mistake from another set of human organs and fastened to his shoulders.

The long arm stretched out and barred the way.

"Where do you want to go?"

It was obvious that he was not aware that I knew everything. All right! Perhaps it had to be that way. From above him, in a deliberately significant tone, I said:

"I am the Builder of the Integral, and I am directing the test flight. Do you understand?"

The arm drew away.

The saloon. Heads covered with bristles, gray iron bristles, and yellow heads, and bald, ripe heads were bent over the instruments and maps. Swiftly, with a glance, I gathered them in with my eyes; off I ran, back down the long passage, then through the hatch into the engine room. It was hot there from the red tubes, overheated by the explosions: a constant roar—the levers were dancing their desperate, drunken dance, moving ceaselessly with a barely noticeable quiver; the arrows on the dials...There! At last! Near the tachometer, a notebook in his hand, was that man with the low forehead.

"Listen," I shouted straight into his ear (because of the roar). "Is she here? Where is she?"

"She? There, at the radio."

I dashed over. There were three of them, all with receiving helmets on. And she seemed a head taller than usual, wingy, sparkling, flying like an ancient Valkyrie; the bluish sparks from the radio seemed to emanate from her—from her also that ethereal, lightning—like odor of ozone.

"Someone—well, you, for instance," I said to her, panting from having run, "I must send a message down to earth, to the docks. Come, I shall dictate it to you."

Close to the apparatus there was a small, box-like cabin. We sat at the table side by side. I found her hand and pressed it hard.

"Well, what is going to happen?"

"I don't know. Do you realize how wonderful it is? To fly without knowing where...no matter where? it will soon be twelve o'clock and nobody knows what...And when night...Where shall you and I be tonight? Perhaps somewhere on the grass, on dry leaves..."

Blue sparks emanated from her, and the odor of lightning, and the vibration within me became more and more frequent.

"Write down," I said loudly, panting (from having run). "Time: eleven-twenty; speed, 5,800..."

"Last night she came to me with your note. I know... I know everything; don't talk...But the child is yours. I sent her over; she is already beyond the Wall. She will live..."

I was back on the commander's bridge, back in the delirious night with its black starry sky and its dazzling sun. The hands of the clock on the table were slowly moving from minute to minute. Everything was permeated by a thin, hardly perceptible quivering (only I noticed it). For some reason a thought passed through my head: it would be better if all this took place not here but somewhere below, nearer to earth.

"Stop!" I commanded.

We kept moving by inertia, but more and more slowly. Now the Integral was caught for a second by an imperceptible little hair, for a second it hung motionless, then the little hair broke and the Integral, like a stone, dashed downward with increasing speed. That way minutes, tens of minutes passed in silence. My pulse was audible; the hand of the clock before my eyes came closer and closer to twelve. It was clear to me that I was a stone, I-330 the earth, and the stone was under irresistible compulsion to fall downward, to strike the earth and break into small particles. What if...? Already the hard, blue smoke of clouds appeared below...What if...? But the phonograph within me, with a hinge-like motion and precision, took the telephone and commanded: "Low speed!" The stone ceased falling. Now only the four lower tubes were growling, two ahead and two aft, only enough to hold the Integral motionless; and the Integral, only slightly trembling, stopped in the air as if anchored, about one kilometer from the earth.

Everybody came out on deck (it was shortly before twelve, before the sounding of the dinner gong) and leaned over the glass railing; hastily, in huge gulps, they devoured the unknown world which lay below, beyond the Green Wall. Amber, blue, green, the autumnal woods, prairies, a lake. At the edge of a little blue saucer some lone yellow debris, a threatening, dried-out yellow finger—it must have been the tower of an ancient "church" saved by a miracle....

"Look, there! Look! There to the right!"

There—over the green desert—a brown blot was rapidly moving. I held a telescope in my hands and automatically I brought it to my eyes: the grass reaching their chests, a herd of brown horses was galloping, and on their backs—they, black, white, and dark...

Behind me:

"I assure you, I saw a face!"

"Go away! Tell it to someone else!"

"Well, look for yourself! Here is the telescope."

They had already disappeared. Endless green desert— and in that desert, dominating it completely and dominating me, and everybody, the piercing vibrations of the gong; dinnertime, one minute to twelve.

For a second the little world around me became incoherent, dispersed. Someone's brass badge fell to the floor. It mattered little. Soon it was under my heel. A voice: "And I tell you, it was a face!" A black square, the open

door of the main saloon. White teeth pressed together, smiling...And at that moment, when the clock began slowly to strike, holding its breath between beats, and when the front rows began to move toward the dining saloon, the rectangle of the door was suddenly crossed by the two familiar, unnaturally long arms.

"STOP!"

Someone's fingers sank piercing into my palm. It was I-330. She was beside me.

'Who is it? Do you know him?'

"Is he not? ...Is he not?..."

He was already lifted upon somebody's shoulders. Above a hundred other faces, his face like hundreds, like thousands of other faces, yet unique among them all

"In the name of the Guardians! You, to whom I talk, they hear me, every one of them hears me. I talk to you: we know! We don't know your numbers yet, but we know everything else. The Integral shall not be yours! The test flight will be carried out to the end and you, you will not dare to make another move! You, with your own hands, will help to go on with the test and afterward...well, I have finished!"

Silence. The glass plates under my feet seemed soft, cotton-like. My feet, too—soft, cotton-like. Beside me—she with a dead-white smile, angry blue sparks. Through her teeth to me:

"Ah! It is your work! You did your 'duty'! Well... " She tore her hand from mine; the Valkyrie helmet with indignant wings was soon to be seen some distance in front of me. I was alone, torpid, silent. Like everyone else I followed into the dining saloon.

But it was not I, not I! I told nobody, save these white, mute pages ...I cried this to her within me, inaudibly, desperately, loudly. She was across the table, directly opposite me, and not once did she even touch me with her gaze. Beside her someone's ripe, yellow, bald head. I heard (it was I-330's voice):

"'Nobility' of character! But my dear professor, even a superficial etymological analysis of the word shows that it is a superstition, a remnant of the ancient feudal epoch. We..."

I felt I was growing pale, and that they would soon notice it. But the phonograph within me performed the prescribed fifty chewing movements for every bite. I locked myself into myself as though into an opaque house; I threw up a heap of reeks before my door and lowered the window blinds....

Afterward, the telephone of the commander was again in my hands, and again we made the flight through the clouds with icy, supreme anxiety into the icy, starry, sunny night. Minutes, hours passed...Apparently all that time the motor of logic within me was working feverishly at full speed. For suddenly somewhere, at a distant point of the dark blue space, I saw my desk, and the gill-like cheeks of U- bent over it, and the forgotten pages of my records! It became clear to me; nobody but her...everything was dear to me!

If only I could reach the radio room soon...wing-like helmets, the odor of blue lightning...I remember telling her something in a low voice, and I remember how she looked through me, and how her voice seemed to come from a distance:

"I am busy. I am receiving a message from below. You may dictate yours to her."

The small, box-like little cabin...I thought for a second and then dictated in a firm voice:

"Time fourteen-forty. Going down. Motors stopped. The end of all."

The commander's bridge. The machine heart of the Integral stopped; we were falling; my heart could not catch up and would remain behind and rise higher and higher into my throat....Clouds....And then a distant green spot—everything green, more and more distinct, running like a storm toward us. "Soon the end."

The porcelain-like distorted white face of the Second Builder! It was he who struck me with all his strength; I hurt my head on something; and through the approaching darkness, I heard while falling:

"Full speed—aft!"

A brusque jolt upward....

RECORD THIRTY-FIVE

In a Ring

A Carrot

A Murder

I did not sleep all night. But one thought the whole night... As a result of yesterday's mishap my head is tightly bandaged—it seems to me not a bandage but a ring, a pitiless ring of glass iron, riveted about my head. And I am busy with the same thought, always the same thought in my riveted circle: to kill U-. To kill U- and then go to her and say: "Now do you believe?" What is most disquieting is that to kill is dirty, primitive. To break her head with something—the thought of it gives me a peculiar sensation of something disgustingly sweet in my mouth, and I am unable to swallow my saliva; I am always spitting into my handkerchief, yet my mouth feels dry.

I had in my closet a heavy piston rod which had cracked during the casting, and which I had brought home in order to find out with a microscope the cause of the cracking. I made my manuscript into a tube (let her read me to the last letter!), pushed the broken piston into that tube, and went downstairs. The stairway seemed endless, the steps disgustingly slippery, liquid. I had to wipe moisture from off my mouth very frequently. Downstairs ...my heart dropped. I took the piston out and went to the controller's table. But she was not there; instead, an empty, icy desk with ink blots. And then I remembered that today all work had stopped; everyone was

to go to be operated on. There was no need for her to stay here. There was nobody to be registered...

The street. It was windy. The sky seemed to be composed of soaring panels of cast iron. And exactly as it had seemed for one moment yesterday, the whole world was broken up into separate, sharp, independent fragments, and each of these fragments was falling at full speed; each would stop for a second, hang before me in the air, and disappear without a trace. It was as if the precise, black letters on this page should suddenly move apart and begin to jump hither and thither in fright, so that there was not a word on the page, only nonsensical "ap," "jum," "wor." The crowd seemed just as nonsensical, dispersed (not in rows), going forward, backward, diagonally, transversely....

Then nobody. For a second, suddenly stopping in my mad dashing, I saw on the second floor, in the glass cage of a room hanging in the air, a man and a woman—a kiss; she, standing with her whole body bent backward, brokenly: "This is for the last time, forever..."

At a corner a thorny, moving bush of heads. Above the heads separate, floating in the air, a banner: "Down with the machines! Down with the Operation!" And, distinct from my own self, I thought: "Is it possible that each one of us bears such a pain, that it can be removed only with his heart? ...That something must be done to each one, before he..." For a second everything disappeared for me from the world, except my beast-like hand with the heavy, cast-iron package it held

A boy appeared. He was running, a shadow under his lower lip. The lower lip turned out like the cuff of a rolled-up sleeve. His face was distorted;

he wept loudly; he was running away from someone. The stamping of feet was heard behind him...

The boy reminded me: "U- must be in school. I must hurry!" I ran to the nearest opening of the Underground Railway. At the entrance someone passed me and said, "Not running. No trains today... there!" I descended. A sort of general delirium was reigning. The glitter of cut-crystal suns; the platform packed closely with heads. An empty, torpid train..

in the silence—a voice. I could not see her but I knew, I knew that intense, living, flexible,, whip-like, flogging voice! I felt there that sharp trangle of brows drawn to the temples....

"Let reel Let me reach her! I must! ..."

Someone's tentacles caught my arm, my shoulders. I was nailed, In the silence I heard:

"No. Go up to them. There they will cure you; there they will overfeed you with that leavened happiness. Satiated, you will slumber peacefully, organized, keeping time, and snoring sweetly. Is it possible that...you do not hear yet that great symphony of snoring? Foolish people! Don't you realize that they want to liberate you from these gnawing, worm-like, torturing question marks? And you remain standing here and listening to me? Quick Up! To the Great Operation! What is your concern, if I remain here alone? What does it matter to you if I want to struggle, hopelessly struggle? So much the better! What does it matter to you that I do not want others to desire for me? I want to desire for myself. If I desire the impossible... "

Another voice, slow, heavy:

"Ah, the, impossible! Which means to run after your stupid fancies; those fancies would whirl from under your very noses like a tail. No, we shall catch that tail, and then ..."

"And then—swallow it and fall snoring; a new tail will become necessary. They say the ancients had a certain animal which they called 'ass.' In order to make it go forward they would attach a carrot to a bow held in front of its nose, so that it could not reach it....If it had caught and swallowed it..."

The tentacles suddenly let me go; I threw myself toward the place she was speaking from; but at that very moment everything was brought down in confusion. Shouts from behind: "They are coming here! Coming here!" The lights twinkled and went out—someone had cut the cable—and everything was like a lava of cries, groaning, heads, fingers....

I do not know how long we were rolled about that way in the underground tube. I only remember that underneath my feet steps were felt, dusk appeared, becoming brighter and brighter, and again we were in the street, dispersing fan wise in different directions.

Again I was alone. Wind. Gray, low twilight crawling over my head. In the damp glass of the sidewalk, somewhere very deep, there were light, topsy-turvy walls and figures moving along, feet upward. And that terribly heavy package in my hands pulled me down into that depth, to the bottom.

At the desk again. U- was not yet there; her room was dark and empty. I

went up to my room and turned on the light. My temples, tightly bound by the iron ring, were pulsating. I paced and paced, always in the same circle: my table, the white package on the table, the bed, my table, the white package on the table... In the room to my left the curtains were lowered. To my right, the knotty bald head bent over a book, the enormous, parabolic forehead. Wrinkles on the forehead like a series of yellow, illegible lines. At times our eyes met, and then I felt that those lines were about me.

...It happened at twenty-one o'clock exactly. U- came in on her own initiative. I remember that my breathing was so loud that I could hear it, and that I wanted to breathe less noisily but was unable to.

She sat down and arranged the fold of her unif on her knees. The pinkish-brown gills were waving.

"Oh, dear, is it true that you are wounded? I just learned about it, and at once I ran..."

The piston was before me on the table. I jumped up, breathing even louder. She heard, and stopped halfway through a word and rose. Already I had located the place on her head; something disgustingly sweet was in my mouth...My handkerchief! I could not find it. I spat on the floor.

The fellow with the yellow, fixed wrinkles which think of me! He must not see. It would be even more disgusting if he could...I pressed the button (I had no right to, but who cared about fights at that moment?). The curtains fell.

Evidently she felt and understood what was coming, for she rushed to

the door. But I was quicker than she, and I locked the door with the key, breathing loudly and not for a second taking my eyes from that place on her head

"You...you are mad! How dare you..." She moved backward toward the bed, put her trembling hands between her knees...Like a tense spring, holding her firmly with my gaze, I slowly stretched out my arm toward the table (only one arm could move), and I snatched the piston.

"I implore you! One day—only one day! Tomorrow I shall go and attend to the formalities..."

What was she talking about? I swung my arm...And I consider I killed her. Yes, you my unknown readers, you have the right to call me murderer. I know that I should have dealt the blow on her head had she not screamed:

"For... for the sake...I agree....I ...one moment..." With trembling hands she tore off her unif—a large, yellow, drooping body, she fell upon the bed....

Then I understood; she thought that I pulled the curtains...in order to...that I wanted...

This was so unexpected and so stupid that I burst out laughing. Immediately the tense spring within me broke, and my hand weakened, and the piston fell to the floor.

Here I learned from personal experience that laughter is the most terrible of weapons; you can kill anything with laughter, even murder. I sat at my table and laughed desperately; I saw no way out of that absurd situation. I

don't know what would have been the end if things had run their natural course, but suddenly a new factor in the arithmetical chain: the telephone rang.

I hurried, grasped the receiver. Perhaps she... I heard an unfamiliar voice:

"Wait a minute."

Annoying, infinite buzzing. Heavy steps from afar, nearer and louder like cast iron, and...

"D-5037 The Well-Doer speaking. Come at once to me."

Ding! He hung up the receiver. Ding! like a key in a keyhole.

U- was still in bed, eyes closed, gills apart in the form of a smile. I picked up her clothes, threw them on her, and said through clenched teeth:

"Well. Quick! Quick!"

She raised her body on her elbow, her breasts hanging down to one side, eyes round. She became a figure of wax.

"What?"

"Get dressed, that is what!"

Face distorted, she firmly snatched her clothes and said in a fiat voice, "Turn away... "

I turned away, pressed my forehead against the glass. Light, figures, sparks were trembling in the black, wet mirror....No, all this was I, myself—within me..... What did HE call me for? Is it possible that HE knows already about her, about me, about everything?

U-, already dressed, was at the door. I made a step toward her and pressed her hand as hard as though I hoped to squeeze out of it, drop by drop, what I needed.

"Listen... Her name, you know whom I am talking of, did you report her name? No? Tell the truth, I must ... I don't care what happens, but tell the truth!"

"No."

"No? But why not, since you..."

Her lower lip turned out like the lip of that boy and her face...tears were running down her cheeks.

"Because I... I was afraid that if I did you might...you would stop lov— Oh, I cannot, I could not!"

I understood, It was the truth, Absurd, ridiculous, human truth. I opened the door.

RECORD THIRTY-SIX

Empty Pages

The Christian God

About My Mother

It is very strange that a kind of empty white page should be left in my hand. How I walked there, how I waited (I remember I had to wait), I know nothing about it; I remember not a sound, not a face, not a gesture, as if all communicating wires between me and the world were cut.

When I came to, I found myself standing before Him. I was afraid to raise my eyes; I saw only the enormous cast-iron hands upon His knees. Those hands weighed upon Him, bending His knees with their weight. He was slowly moving His fingers. His face was somewhere above, as if in fog. And, only because His voice came to my ears from such a height, it did not roar like thunder, it did not deafen me but appeared to be an ordinary, human voice.

"Then you, too, you, the Builder of the Integral! You, whose lot it was to become the greatest of all conquistadores! You, whose name was to have been at the head of a glorious new chapter in the history of the United State! You..."

Blood ran to my head, to my cheeks—and here again a white page; only the pulsation in my temples and the heavy voice from above; but I remember

not a word. Only when He became silent, I came to and noticed how His hand moved heavily like a thousand pounds, and crawled slowly—His finger threatened me.

"Well? Why are you silent? Is it true, or not? Executioner? So!"

"So," I repeated submissively. And then I heard clearly every one of His words.

"Well, then? Do you think I am afraid of the Word? Did you ever try to take off its shell and look into its inner meaning? I shall tell you....Remember a blue hill, a crowd, a cross? Some up on the hill, sprinkled with blood, are busy nailing a body to the cross; others below, sprinkled with tears, are gazing upward. Does it not occur to you that the part which those above must play is the more difficult, the more important part? If it were not for them, how could that magnificent tragedy ever have been staged? True, they were hissed by the dark crowd, but for that the author of the tragedy, God, should have remunerated them the more liberally, should He not? And the most clement, Christian God himself, who burned all the infidels on a slow fire, is He not an executioner? Was the number of those burned by the Christians less than the number of burned Christians? Yet (you must understand this!), yet this God was for centuries glorified as the God of love! Absurd? Oh, no. Just the contrary. It is instead a testament to the imperishable wisdom of man, written in blood. Even at the time when he still was wild and hairy, man knew that real, algebraic love for humanity must inevitably be inhuman, and that the inevitable mark of truth is cruelty—just as the inevitable mark of fire is its property of causing the sensation of burning. Could you show me a fire that would not hurt? Well, now prove your point! Proceed! Argue!"

How could I argue? How could I argue when those thoughts were once mine, though I was never able to dress them in such a splendid, tempered armor? I remained silent.

"If your silence is intended to mean that you agree with me, then let us talk as adults do after the children have gone to bed; let us talk to the logical end. I ask: what was it that man from his diaper age dreamed of, tormented himself for, prayed for? He longed for that day when someone would tell him what happiness is, and then would chain him to it. What else are we doing now? The ancient dream about a paradise... Remember: there in paradise they know no desires any more, no pity, no love; there they are all—blessed. An operation has been performed upon their center of fancy; that is why they are blessed, angels, servants of God....And now, at the very moment when we have caught up with that dream, when we hold it like this" (He clenched his hand so hard, that if he had held a stone in it sap would have run out!) "...At the moment when all that was left for us was to adorn our prize and distribute it among all in equal pieces, at that very moment you, you... "

The cast-iron roar was suddenly broken off. I was as red as a piece of iron on an anvil under the moulding sledge hammer. The hammer seemed to have stopped for a second, hanging in the air, and I waited, waited ...until suddenly:

"How old are you?"

"Thirty-two."

"Just double the age, and as simple as at sixteen! Listen. Is it possible

that it really never occurred to you that they (we do not yet know their names, but I am certain you will disclose them to us), that they were interested in you only as the Builder of the Integral? Only in order to be able, through the use of you—"

"Don't! Don't!" I cried. But it was like protecting yourself with your hands and crying to a bullet: you may still be hearing your own "don't," but meanwhile the bullet has burned you through, and writhing with pain you are prostrated on the ground.

Yes, yes: the Builder of the Integral...Yes, yes.... At once there came back to me the angry face of U- with twitching, brick-red gills, on that morning when both of them...

I remember now, clearly, how I raised my eyes and laughed. A Socrates-like, bald-headed man was sitting before me; and small drops of sweat dotted the bald surface of his head.

How simple, how magnificently trivial everything was! How simple... almost to the point of being ridiculous! Laughter was choking me and bursting forth in puffs; I covered my mouth with my hand and rushed wildly out....

Steps. Wind. Damp, leaping fragments of lights and faces... And while running: "No! Only to see her! To see her once more!"

Here again an empty white page. All I remember is feet: not people, just feet, hundreds of feet, confusedly stamping feet, falling from somewhere in the pavement, a heavy rain of feet... And some cheerful, daring voice, and a

shout that was probably for me: Hey, hey! Come here! Come along with us!"

Afterward—a deserted square heavily overloaded with tense wind. In the middle of the square a dim, heavy, threatening mass—the Machine of the Well-Doer. And a seemingly unexpected image arose within me in response to the sight of the Machine: a snow-white pillow, and on the pillow a head thrown back, and half-closed eyes, and a sharp, sweet line of teeth... All this seemed so absurdly, so terribly connected with the Machine. I know how this connection has come about, but I do not yet want to see it nor to say it aloud—I don't want to! I don't!

I closed my eyes and sat down on the steps which led upward to the Machine. I must have been running hard, for my face was wet. From somewhere far away cries were coming. But nobody heard them; nobody heard me crying: "Save me from it—save me!"

If only I had a mother as the ancients had—my mother, mine, for whom I should be not the Builder of the Integral, and not D-530, not a molecule of the United State, but merely a living human piece, a piece of herself, a trampled, smothered, cast-off piece... And though I were driving the nails into the cross, or being nailed to it (perhaps it is the same), she would hear what no one else could hear, her old, grown-together, wrinkled lips...

RECORD THIRTY-SEVEN

Infusorian

Doomsday

Her Room

This morning while we were in the refectory my neighbor to my left whispered to me in a frightened tone:

"But why don't you eat? Don't you see, they are looking at you"

I had to pluck up all my strength to show a smile. I felt it—like a crack in my face; I smiled, and the borders of the crack drew apart wider and wider; it was quite painful.

And then: no sooner had I lifted the small cube of paste upon my fork, than the fork jerked from my hand and tinkled against the plate. And at once the tables, the walls, the plates, even the air, trembled and rang; outside, too, an enormous, iron, round roar reaching the sky—floating over heads and houses, it died away in the distance in small, hardly perceptible circles like those upon water.

I saw faces instantaneously grow faded and bleached; I saw mouths filled with food suddenly motionless, and forks hanging in air. Then everything became confused, jumped off the centuries-old tracks; everybody jumped up from his place (without singing the Hymn!) and confusedly, in disorder, hastily finishing chewing, choking, grasping one another.... They were asking: "What? What happened? What?..." And the disorderly

fragments of the Machine, which was once perfect and great, fell down in all directions—down the elevators, down the stairs.... Stamping of feet... Pieces of words like pieces of torn letters carried by the wind....

The same outpour from the neighboring houses. A minute later the avenue seemed like a drop of water seen under a microscope: the infusoria locked up in the transparent, glass-like drop of water were tossing around, from side to side, up and down.

"Ah!" Someone's triumphant voice. I saw the back of a neck, and a finger pointing to the sky. I remember very distinctly a yellowish-pinkish nail, and under the nail a crescent crawling out as if from under the horizon. The finger was like a compass; all eyes were raised to the sky.

There, running away from invisible pursuit, masses of cloud were rushing upon each other; colored by the clouds, the aeros of the Guardians were floating with their tube-like antennae. And farther to the west—something like... At first nobody could understand what it was, even I, who knew (unfortunately) more than the others. It was like a great hive of black aeros swarming somewhere at an extraordinary height—they looked like hardly noticeable, swiftly moving points... Nearer and nearer... Hoarse, guttural sounds began to reach the earth, and finally we saw birds just over our heads! They filled the sky with their sharp, black, descending triangles. The furious wind drove them down, and they began to land on the cupolas, on the roofs, poles, and balconies.

"Ah-ah!" and the triumphant back of the neck turned; again I saw that man with the protruding forehead, but it seemed that the name, so to speak,

was all that was left of him: he seemed to have crawled out from under his forehead, and on his face, around the eyes and lips, bunches of rays were growing. Through the noise of the wind and the wings and the cawing he cried to me:

"Do you realize? Do you realize! They have blown up the Wall! The Wall has been blown up! Do you understand?"

Somewhere in the background figures with their heads drawn in were hastily rushing by and into the houses. In the middle of the pavements was a mass of those who had already been operated upon; they moved toward the west...

...Hairy bunches of rays around the lips and eyes... I grasped his hands:

"Tell me. Where is she? Where is I-3307 There? Beyond the Wall, or ...? I must... Do you hear me? At once... I cannot..."

"Here!" he shouted in a happy, drunken voice, showing strong yellow teeth, "here in town, and she is acting! Oh, we are doing great work!"

Who are those "we"? Who am I?

There were about fifty around him. Like him, they seemed to have crawled out from under their foreheads. They were loud, cheerful, strong-toothed, swallowing the stormy wind. With their simple not at all terrible-looking electrocutors (where did they get them?), they started to the west, toward the operated ones, encircling them, keeping parallel to avenue Forty-eight...

Stumbling against the tightly drawn ropes woven by the wind, I was running to her. What for? I did not know. I was stumbling... Empty streets... The city seemed foreign, wild, filled with the ceaseless, triumphant hubbub of the birds. It seemed like the end of the world, Doomsday.

Through the glass of the walls in quite a few houses (this cut into my mind), I saw male and female Numbers in shameless embraces—without curtains lowered, without pink checks, in the middle of the day!...

The house—her house; the door ajar. The lobby, the control desk, all were empty. The elevator had stopped in the middle of its shaft. I ran panting up the endless stairs. The corridor. Like the spokes of a wheel figures on the doors dashed past my eyes: 320, 326, 330—I-330! Through the glass wall I could see everything in her room upside down, confused, creased: the table overturned, its legs in the air like a beast; the bed absurdly placed away from the wall, obliquely; strewn over the floor—fallen, trodden petals of pink checks.

I bent over and picked up one, two, three of them; all bore the name D-503. I was on all of them, drops of myself, of my molten, poured-out self. And that was all— that was left...

Somehow I felt they should not lie there on the floor and be trodden upon. I gathered a handful of them, put them on the table, and carefully smoothed them out, glanced at them, and... laughed aloud! I never knew it before but now I know—and you, too, know—that laughter may be of different colors. Laughter is but a distant echo of an explosion within us; it may be the echo of a holiday—red, blue, and golden fireworks—or at times it

may represent pieces of human flesh exploded into the air....

I noticed an unfamiliar name on some of the pink checks. I do not remember the figures but I do remember the letter—F. I brushed the stubs from the table to the floor, stepped on them, on myself, stamped on them with my heels—and went out ...

In the corridor I sat on the window sill in front of her door and waited long and stupidly. An old man appeared. His face was like a pierced, empty bladder with folds; from beneath the puncture something transparent was still slowly dripping. Slowly, vaguely, I realized—tears. And only when the old man was quite far off I came to and exclaimed:

"Please... listen Do you know... Number I-330?"

The old man turned around, waved his hand in despair, and stumbled farther away....

I returned home at dusk. On the west side the sky was twitching every second in a pale blue, electric convulsion; a subdued, heavy roar could be heard from that direction. The roofs were covered with black, charred sticks — birds.

I lay down; and instantly, like a heavy beast, sleep came and stifled me....

RECORD THIRTY-EIGHT

I Don't Know What Title—Perhaps the Whole

Synopsis May Be Called a Castoff Cigarette Butt

I awoke. A bright glare painful to look at. I half-closed my eyes. My head seemed filled with some caustic blue smoke. was fog, and through fog:

"But I did not turn on the light...then how is it..."

I jumped up. At the table, leaning her chin on her hand and smiling, sat I-330, looking at me.

She was at the very table at which I am now writing. Those ten or fifteen minutes are already well behind me, cruelly twisted into a very firm spring. Yet it seems to me that the door closed after her only a second ago, and that I could still overtake her and grasp her hand, and that she might laugh out and say...

I-330 was at the table. I rushed toward her.

"You? You! I have been...I saw your room... I thought you..." But midway I hurt myself upon the sharp, motionless spears of her eyelashes, and I stopped. I remembered: she had looked at me in the same way before, in the Integral. I felt I had to tell her everything in one split second, and in such a way that she would surely believe, or she would never...

"Listen, I-330, I must... I must... everything! No, no, one moment—let me have a glass of water first."

My mouth was as dry as if it were lined with blotting paper. I poured a glass of water but I couldn't...I put the glass back upon the table, and with both hands firmly grasped the carafe.

Now I noticed that the blue smoke came from a cigarette. She brought the cigarette to her lips, and eagerly drew in and swallowed the smoke as I did water; then she said:

"Don't. Be silent. Don't you see it matters very little? I came, anyway. They are waiting for me below.... Do you want these minutes, which are our last...?"

Abruptly she threw the cigarette on the floor and bent backward, over the side of the chair, to reach the button in the wall (it was quite difficult to do), and I remember how the chair swayed slightly, how two of its legs were lifted. Then the curtains fell.

She came close to me and embraced me. Her knees, through her dress, were like a slow, gentle, warm, enveloping, and permeating poison...

Suddenly (it happens at times)you plunge into sweet, warm sleep—when all at once, as if something pricks you, you tremble and your eyes are again widely open. So it was now; there on the floor in her room were the pink checks stamped with traces of footsteps, some of them bore the letter F- and some figures... Plus and minus fused within my mind into one lump... I could not say even now what sort of feeling it was, but I crushed her so that

she cried out with pain...

One more minute out of those ten or fifteen; her head thrown back, lying on the bright white pillow, her eyes half-dosed, a sharp, sweet line of teeth... And all this reminded me in an irresistible, absurd, torturing way about something forbidden, something not permissible at that moment. More tenderly, more cruelly, I pressed her to myself, brighter grew the blue traces of my fingers...

She said, without opening her eyes (I noticed this), "They say you went to see the Well-Doer yesterday; is it true?"

"Yes."

Then her eyes opened widely and with delight I looked at her and saw that her face grew quickly paler and paler, that it effaced itself, disappearing—only the eyes remained.

I told her everything. Only for some reason, why I don't know (no, that's not true, I know the reason), I was silent about one thing: His assertion at the end that they needed me only in order...

Like the image on a photographic plate in a developing fluid, her face gradually reappeared: the cheeks, the white line of teeth, the lips. She stood up and went to the mirror door of the closet. My mouth was dry again. I poured water but it was revolting to drink it; I put the glass back on the table and asked:

"Did you come to see me because you wanted to inquire...?"

A sharp, mocking triangle of brows drawn to the temples looked at me from the mirror. She turned around to say something, but said nothing.

It was not necessary; I knew.

To bid her good-by, I moved my foreign limbs, struck the chair with them. It fell upside down, dead, like the table in her room. Her lips were cold...just as cold was once the floor, here, near my bed... When she left I sat down on the floor, bent over the cigarette butt...

I cannot write any more—I no longer want to!

RECORD THIRTY-NINE

The End

All this was like the last crystal of salt thrown into a saturated solution; quickly, needle-like crystals began to appear, to grow more substantial and solid. It was all clear to me; the decision was made, and tomorrow morning I shall do it! It amounts to suicide, but perhaps then I shall be reborn. For only what is killed can be reborn.

Every second the sky twitched convulsively there in the west. My head was burning and pulsating inside; I was up all night, and I fell asleep only at

about seven o'clock in the morning, when the darkness of the night was already dispelled and becoming gray, and the roofs crowded with birds became visible...

I woke up; ten o'clock. Evidently the bell did not ring today. On the table—left from yesterday—stood the glass of water. I gulped the water eagerly and I ran; I had to do it quickly, as quickly as possible.

The sky was deserted, blue, all eaten up by the storm. Sharp corners of shadows... Everything seemed to be cut out of blue autumnal air—thin, dangerous to touch; it seemed so brittle, ready to disperse into glass dust. Within me something similar; I must not think; it was dangerous to think, for...

And I did not think, perhaps I did not even see properly; I only registered impressions. There on the pavement, thrown from somewhere, branches were strewn; their leaves were green, amber, and cherry-red. Above, crossing each other, birds and aeros were tossing about. Here below heads, open mouths, hands waving branches... All this must have been shouting, buzzing, chirping... Then—streets empty as if swept by a plague. I remember I stumbled over something disgustingly soft, yielding yet motionless. I bent down—a corpse. It was lying fiat, the legs apart. The face... I recognized the thick Negro lips, which even now seemed to sprinkle with laughter. His eyes, firmly screwed in, laughed into my face. One second...I stepped over him and ran: I could no longer... I had to have everything done as soon as possible, or else I felt I would snap, I would break in two like an overloaded sail...

Luckily it was not more than twenty steps away; I already saw the sign

with the golden letters: "The Bureau of Guardians." At the door I stopped for a moment to gulp down as much air as I could, and I stepped in.

Inside, in the corridor, stood an endless chain of Numbers, holding small sheets of paper and heavy notebooks. They moved slowly, advancing a step or two and stopping again. I began to be tossed about along the chain; my head was breaking to pieces. I pulled them by the sleeves, I implored them as a sick man implores to be given something that would, even at the price of sharpest pain, end everything forever.

A woman with a belt tightly clasped around her waist and with two distinctly protruding, squatty hemispheres tossing about as if she had eyes on them, chuckled at me:

"He has a bellyache! Show him to the room second door to the right!"

Everybody laughed, and because of that laughter something rose in my throat; I felt I would either scream or...or ...

Suddenly from behind me someone touched my elbow. I turned around. Transparent wing ears! But they were not pink as usual; they were purplish red; his Adam's apple was tossing about as though ready to tear the covering...

Quickly boring into me: "What are you here for?"

I seized him.

"Quickly! Please! Quickly! ...into your office... I must tell everything... right away... I am glad that you...It may be terrible that it should be you to

whom...But it is good, it is good...."

He, too, knew her; this made it even more tormenting for me. But perhaps he, too, would tremble when he heard ...And we would both be killing ... And I would not be alone at that, my supreme second...

The door closed with a slam. I remember a piece of paper was caught beneath the door, and it rustled on the floor when the door closed. And then a strange, airless silence covered us as if a glass bell had been put over us. If only he had uttered a single, most insignificant word, no matter what, I would have told him everything at once. But he was silent. So keyed up that I heard a noise in my ears, I said without looking at him:

"I think I always hated her from the very beginning ...I struggled...Or, no, no, don't believe me; I could have, but I did not want to save myself. I wanted to perish; this was dearer to me than anything else...and even now, even this minute, when I already know everything...Do you know that I was summoned to the Well-Doer?"

"Yes, I do."

"But what he told me! Please realize that it was equivalent to ...it was as if someone should remove the floor from under you this minute, and you and everything here on the desk, the papers, the ink...the ink would splash out and cover everything with blots..."

"What else? What further? Hurry up, others are waiting!"

Then, stumbling, muttering, I told him everything that is recorded in

these pages... About my real self, and about my hairy self, and about my hands... yes... exactly, that was the beginning... And how I lied to myself, and how she obtained false certificates for me, and how I grew worse and worse, every day, and about the long corridors underground, and there beyond the Wall...

All this I threw out in formless pieces and lumps. I would stutter and fail to find words. The lips double-curved in a smile would prompt me with the word I needed, and I would nod gratefully: "Yes, yes!"...Suddenly, what was it? He was talking for me, and I only listened and nodded: "Yes, yes," and then, "Yes, exactly so... yes, yes ... "

I felt cold around my mouth as though it were wet with ether, and I asked with difficulty:

"But how is it...You could not learn anywhere..."

He smiled a smile growing more and more curved; then:

"But I see that you do want to conceal something from me. For example, you enumerated everything you saw beyond the Wall, but you failed to mention one thing. You deny it? But don't you remember that once, just in passing, just for a second, you saw me there? Yes, yes, me!"

Silence.

Suddenly, like a flash of lightning, it became shame-lessly clear to me: he—he, too— And everything about myself, my torment, all that I had brought here, crushed by the burden,plucking up my last strength as if

performing a great feat, all appeared to me only funny—like the ancient anecdote about Abraham and Isaac: Abraham all in a cold sweat, with the knife already raised over his son, over himself, and suddenly a voice from above: Never mind...I was only joking."

Without taking my eyes from the smile that grew more and more curved, I put my hands on the edge of the desk and slowly, very slowly pushed myself with my chair away from him. Then instantly gathering myself into my own hands, I dashed madly out, past loud voices, past steps and mouths...

I do not remember how I got into one of the public rest rooms, in a station of the Underground Railway. Above, everything was perishing; the greatest civilization, the most rational in human history was crumbling, but here, by some irony, everything remained as before, beautiful. The walls shone; water murmured cozily; and like the water, the unseen, transparent music... Only think of it! All this is doomed; all this will be covered with grass someday; only myths will remain..

I moaned aloud. At the same instant I felt someone gently patting my knee. It was from the left; it was my neighbor who occupied a seat on my left—an enormous forehead, a bald parabola, yellow, unintelligible lines of wrinkles on his forehead, those lines about me.

"I understand you. I understand completely," he said. "Yet you must calm yourself. You must. It will return. It will inevitably return. It is only important that everybody should learn of my discovery. You are the first to whom I talk about it. I have calculated that there is no infinity! No!"

I looked at him wildly.

"Yes, yes, I tell you so. There is no infinity. If the universe is infinite, then the average density of matter must equal zero; but since we know it is not zero, therefore the universe is finite; it is spherical in form, and the square of its radius— R^2 —is equal to the average density multiplied by...The only thing left is to calculate the numerical coefficient and then...Do you realize what it means? It means that everything is final, everything is simple... But you, my honored sir, you disturb me, you prevent my finishing my calculations by your yelling!"

I do not know which shattered me more, his discovery, or his positiveness at that apocalyptic hour. Only then did I notice that he had a notebook in his hands, and a logarithmic dial. I understood then that even if everything was perishing it was my duty (before you, my unknown and beloved) to leave these records in a finished form.

I asked him to give me some paper, and here in the rest room, to the accompaniment of the quiet music, transparent like water, I wrote down these last lines.

I was about to put down a period as the ancients would put a cross over the caves into which they used to throw their dead, when all of a sudden my pencil trembled and fell from between my fingers...

"Listen" I pulled my neighbor. "Yes, listen, I say. There, where your finite universe ends, what is there? What?"

He had no time to answer. From above, down the steps stamping...

RECORD FORTY

Facts

The Bell

I Am Certain

Daylight. It is clear. The barometer—760 ram. Is it possible that I, D-503, really wrote these—pages? Is it possible that I ever felt, or imagined I felt, all this?

The handwriting is mine. And what follows is all in my handwriting. Fortunately, only the handwriting. No more delirium, no absurd metaphors, no feelings—only facts. For I am healthy—perfectly, absolutely healthy...I am smiling; I cannot help smiling; a splinter has been taken out of my head, and I feel so light, so empty!.To be more exact, not empty, but there .is nothing foreign, nothing that prevents me from smiling. (Smiling is the normal state for a normal human being.)

The facts are as follows: That evening my neighbor who discovered the finiteness of the universe, and I, and all others who did not have a certificate showing that we had been operated on, all of us were taken to the nearest auditorium. (For some reason the number of the auditorium, 112, seemed

familiar to me.) There they tied us to the tables and performed the great operation, Next day, I, D-503, appeared before the Well-Doer and told him everything known to me about the enemies of happiness. Why, before, it had seemed hard for me to go, I cannot understand. The only explanation seems to be my illness—my soul.

That same evening, sitting at the same table with Him, with the Well-Doer, I saw for the first time in my life the famous Gas Chamber. They brought in that woman. She was to testify in my presence. She remained stubbornly silent and smiling. I noticed that she had sharp and very white teeth which were very pretty.

Then she was brought under the Bell. Her face became very white, and as her eyes were large and dark, all was very pretty. When they began pumping the air from under the Bell she threw her head back and half-closed her eyes; her lips were pressed together. This reminded me of something. She looked at me, holding the arms of the chair firmly. She continued to look until her eyes closed. Then she was taken out and brought back to consciousness by means of electrodes, and again she was put under the Bell. The procedure was repeated three times, yet she did not utter a word.

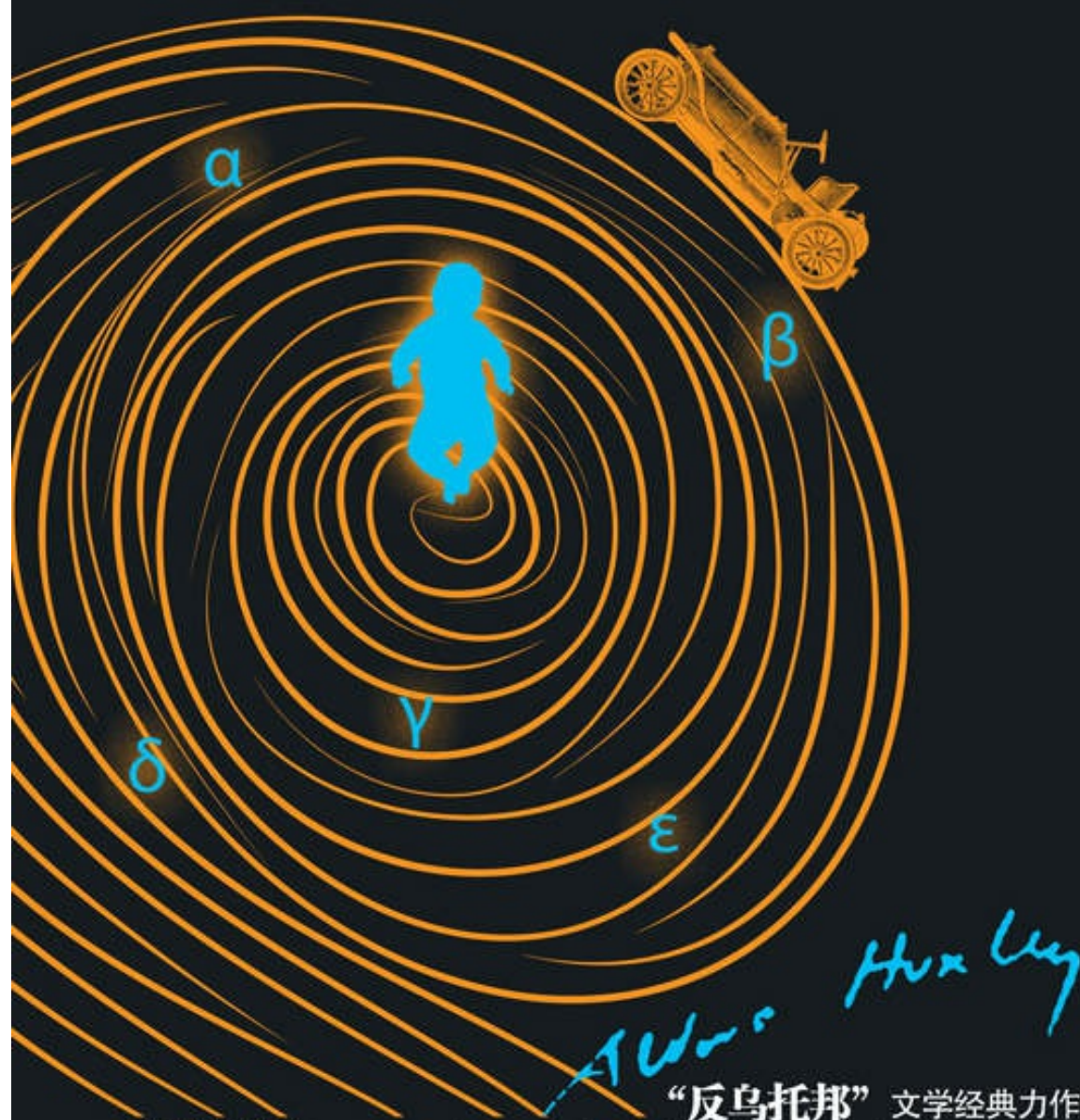
The others who were brought in with that woman proved to be more honest; many of them began to speak after the first trial. Tomorrow they will all ascend the steps to the Machine of the Well-Doer. No postponement is possible, for there still is chaos, groaning, cadavers, beasts in the western section; and to our regret there are still quantifies of Numbers who have betrayed Reason.

But on the transverse avenue Forty we have succeeded in establishing a temporary Wall of high-voltage waves. And I hope we win. More than that; I am certain we shall win. For Reason must prevail.



B [英] A.L. 赫胥黎 / 著
Brave New World 李毅 / 译

美妙的新世界



武汉出版社
WUHAN PUBLISHING HOUSE

“反乌托邦”文学经典力作
20 世纪最伟大的一百部英语小说之一

目录

[美妙的新世界:英汉对照](#)

[译序](#)

[第一章](#)

[第二章](#)

[第三章](#)

[第四章](#)

[第五章](#)

[第六章](#)

[第七章](#)

[第八章](#)

[第九章](#)

[第十章](#)

[第十一章](#)

[第十二章](#)

[第十三章](#)

[第十四章](#)

[第十五章](#)

[第十六章](#)

[第十七章](#)

[第十八章](#)

[Chapter One](#)

[Chapter Two](#)

[Chapter Three](#)

[Chapter Four](#)

[Chapter Five](#)

[Chapter Six](#)

[Chapter Seven](#)

[Chapter Eight](#)

[Chapter Nine](#)

[Chapter Ten](#)

[Chapter Eleven](#)

[Chapter Twelve](#)

[Chapter Thirteen](#)

[Chapter Fourteen](#)

[Chapter Fifteen](#)

[Chapter Sixteen](#)

[Chapter Seventeen](#)

[Chapter Eighteen](#)

版权信息

书名：美妙的新世界:英汉对照

作者：赫胥黎

出版社：武汉出版社

出版时间：2013.2

ISBN：9787543073449

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美妙的新世界:英汉对照

译序

你期待新世界吗？

《美妙的新世界》是英国作家奥尔德斯·伦纳德·赫胥黎于1932年出版的科幻小说。把它归类为科幻小说，是因为本书描画的主题是未来世界。在那个世界，工业与科学的过度发达导致了人类社会的畸变：看似和谐稳定，内在却充满了冷漠与阴暗，道德沦丧，人性消亡。

在作者描绘的世界里，孕育、母亲、父亲，这些维系人类社会的伟大词汇，变成了肮脏下流、腐败落后的渣滓。每一个人都是实验室里技术人员配置的结果，你的身高、你的性别、你的生理缺陷、你对疾病的抵抗能力，甚至你的命运，都在试管和烧瓶里已然被决定了。胚胎分为由低到高的不同种姓，接受不同的训练。低种姓者矮小丑陋，承担社会里最低层的工作；高种姓者高大漂亮，构成社会的上层。在新世界里，每个人都很快乐。但这种快乐不是自由意志选择下的结果，所有社会成员的快乐一模一样，没有选择，也没有空间包容别样的快乐。

书里的几个主要人物都有自我意识觉醒的时刻，列宁娜半夜醒来，发现枕头下传来睡眠教育的录音，从而思考背后的意义；飞过焚化炉时，亨利·福斯特突然感叹每一道热风都代表一条生命永恒的消逝。但这些时刻转瞬即逝，他们终归又回到新世界里快乐而麻木的人群中去。而那些回不去的人，作者也没有安排他们成为颠覆社会秩序的英雄。野蛮人约翰自杀，贝尔纳和亥姆霍兹被送去了孤岛。

如果本书仅仅是一部纯科幻小说，那么它绝不会被誉为“二十世纪

最伟大的一百部英语小说之一”。在科幻小说的外壳下，作者探讨的是物质文明泛滥时人类社会的发展方向。书中刻画未来社会的笔触充满了讽刺与绝望。精神由物质主宰，人性自由被技术和秩序消解，反抗只是恢宏乐章下的片刻杂音，刹那间即被淹没。这种对技术发展的反思，对人类命运的忧虑，使得本书成为二十世纪“反乌托邦”文学里的一面旗帜。

另外值得一提的是，本书从头到尾充满了各种奇妙的隐喻：“Brave new world”的书名出自莎士比亚名作《暴风雨》；绝大部分角色的名字都实有其人，美国汽车大王福特（Ford）取代了上帝God.....

由于中英文两种语言的差异，加上翻译时间及译者水平的有限，本书可能并未能完全体现原文的所有精妙之处，在此，特向读者致以深切的歉意。原文主旨宏阔、寓意深远，但愿手中粗劣之笔不影响读者对原文的理解，本人便心满意足了。

第一章

一幢只有三十四层的灰白色矮楼。入口处的一行大字十分醒目：中央伦敦培育所与条件设置中心。大字旁的盾牌图案上我们看见了世界国的格言：社会，和谐，稳定。

一楼大厅面朝北方。现在是夏天，户外的气温低得反常，可室内却热得像在赤道一样。一道纤细而又锐利的光线穿透了窗户，试图找寻某种被布盖上的苍白的人体模型或是长着鸡皮疙瘩的学者形象，但这种尝试被证明是徒劳无功的。屋里只有实验室的玻璃、镍和黯淡的陶瓷。寒冷回应着寒冷。工人们穿着白色的大褂，手上戴着白色的橡胶手套，这种白通常只有在尸体上才能看到。光线在此刻冻结了，死亡了，如幽灵一般。只有在显微镜焦黄的镜头下，才能找到某种丰润的生命物质。它躺在一排排光亮的试管里，像黄油一样，往辽远处无限延伸。

“这，”主任开了门，“就是受精室。”

他是培育与条件设置中心的主任。此时，受精室里一片安静，三百个孕育员弯腰靠在仪器上，有的人全神贯注；有的人则心不在焉地自言自语，还吹着口哨。主任身后是一群新来的学生。他们年轻而稚嫩，粉红的脸蛋，紧张的神态，一看就知道涉世未深。每个人手上都有一个笔记本，疯狂地记下主任所说的每一个字。可以亲耳听到伟大人物的教诲是多么罕见的特权啊！中央伦敦培育与条件设置中心主任始终相信：必须亲自带领他的新学生们参观每一个部门。

“只是让你们对全局有大致的了解。”他向学生们解释道。因为如果

想要出色地完成工作(即便这些工作有点儿微不足道),就必须了解些总体情况。只有这样,他们才有可能成为社会中和谐、快乐的成员。众所周知,美德与幸福源自细节;而全局则是理智上的必要之恶。社会的脊梁永远是锯工和集邮者,而不会是哲学家。

“明天,”主任微笑地看着他们,可这种亲切里却混杂了一丝威胁。他继续说道:“你们马上就要投身于严肃的工作中,将不再有时间了解全局。与此同时.....”

与此同时,这也是一种特权:话语从大人物的口中直接落到笔记本的扉页上。学生们疯狂地记着。

主任朝屋里走去。这个男人修长、瘦削,身姿挺拔,下巴很长,大门牙向外突出,不说话时勉强能被厚厚的嘴唇包住。他是年老?年轻?三十岁?五十岁?五十五岁?很难说。不过在弗德纪元632年这个安定的时代里,没有谁会去问一问。

“我将从头说起,”主任说道。更多积极的学生在笔记本上记下了这位大人物的话:从头说起。“这些,”他挥了挥手,“是培育器。”打开绝缘门,主任开始向孩子们展示一架架已经编好号的试管。“这全都是本周供应的卵子,必须保持在——”他解释道,“血液温度;而男性精子的温度,”这时,他开了另一道门,“则必须保持在三十五度而不能是三十七度。血液温度对它们来说太高,会导致所配精子失去繁殖功能。”要知道,热度箱里的公羊是不可能配出崽的。

主任靠在培育器上,对现代的授精过程做着简述。学生们的铅笔在本子上匆匆划过,一页又一页。外科手术,当然是简述里的第一项——“手术不仅对社会有益,同时也可以为个人带来一笔价值其半年工

资的高额报酬。”然后，主任谈到了保证剥离卵巢存活的技术；对于最佳温度、最佳盐度及最佳黏度的考量，还有存放剥离下来的成熟卵子之用的特殊液体。此时，他把那群年轻人领到了工作台前，向他们现场展示这种特殊液体从试管里抽取的过程：一滴滴注入经过特殊加温处理的显微镜玻片上；检视液体中卵子的异常性；卵子计数；如何将其移至一种指定的带孔容器内；把此容器浸入到有活跃精子的浓稠液体中（此时，在主任的带领下，学生们兴致勃勃地观看了这项技术的操作过程）——他一再强调指定液体里的精子密度至少为十万/立方厘米。浸泡十分钟后，从液体里取出带孔容器，再次检验其中的培育状况。如果依然存在未受精卵，则需进行二次浸泡，如有必要，还可执行第三次浸泡操作。最后受精卵将回到培育器里。三十六个小时后，取出伽玛、德尔塔和伊普西龙的卵子执行“波卡程序”，而阿尔法类和贝塔类的卵子则将继续留在培育器里直到最终入瓶。

主任强调了一遍：“波卡程序。”受教的年轻人们纷纷在笔记本里对这个词划上了重点记号。

一个卵子——一个胚胎——一个成人，这是自然界的常规。但卵子经过波卡程序的处理后会产生出芽、增殖、分裂等变化，最终生成八至九十六个胚胎，每个胚胎最终都能发育成一个健全的成人。现在，九十六个人诞生于一个受精卵，而从前一个卵子只能孕育出一个人。多么伟大的进步啊！

“本质上来说，”主任总结道，“波卡程序是对生物发育的抑制。对卵子进行波卡处理后，我们再来观察它的成长状态，令人惊讶的结果：出芽。”

出芽。铅笔又开始忙碌起来。

主任继续指点着。眼前，一条传送带把装满试管的货架缓缓地送入巨大的金属柜中，此时在传送带的另一端，出现了又一个满载试管的货架。轻微的轰隆轰隆的声音，这是机器运行的声音。主任对这幅画面补充道：“试管通过金属柜需要八分钟。”八分钟的强力X光照射通常是卵子可以承受的最大照射量。照射过程中，一些卵子会死亡。在剩下的卵子里，最不敏感的卵子会一分为二，而其他大部分卵子会出芽产生四个胚胎，有些则是八个。然后，它们又会全部被送回培育器等待胚胎继续发育。两天之后，培育器里的卵子们将被突然冷冻、抑制生长。二——四——八，出芽后的胚胎再次出芽；随之用酒精使它们再次濒临死亡，结果是胚胎的第三次出芽——胚胎再次长出新胚胎，新胚胎又生长出新胚胎——此时，如果继续进行抑制程序，一般会造成胚胎的集体死亡。所以，余下的工作便是任其自由生长。到这个阶段，原始卵已经分裂成八至九十六个胚胎。这是自然界里巨大的飞跃，我想你们会同意这个观点。完全相同的多个胚胎，不同于母体分娩时代的双胞胎或三胞胎，它们只是产生于卵子的偶然分裂。现在，一个卵子最终会变成几十甚至上百个人。

“上百个！”主任伸展开双臂，犹如在抛洒金币一般，“上百个！”

有个孩子不识实务地问道：“那么，好处在哪儿呢？”

“我的好孩子！”主任猛地转过身，面对这个蠢蛋：“难道你看得出来？难道你连这也看得出来？！”他举起一只手，脸上带着庄严的表情：“波卡程序是稳定社会的主要工具！”

稳定社会的主要工具。

标准化的男性和女性，都是批量培育的产物。这样，一个“波卡”卵

子就能满足一整个小工厂的工人需求。

“九十六个一模一样的多胞胎同时操控九十六部一模一样的机器！”由于内心里一股莫名的热忱，主任的声音几乎颤抖了起来。“你们真正明白了自己在社会里的位置，这是历史的新开端。”他引用了世界格言：“社会，和谐，稳定。”这些字眼多么有分量。“如果波卡程序能够被无穷尽的执行，我们的世界还会有任何问题吗？”

标准化的伽玛、标准化的德尔塔、标准化的伊普西龙，数以百万计的标准化多胞胎能解决所有的问题。工业里的标准化大规模生产原则终于——终于在生物学里运用了！

“但是，唉！”主任摇摇头，“波卡程序有尽头。”

“波卡”卵子的分裂极限是九十六，平均值是七十二。这已经是一枚卵子受精（使用同一名男性的精子）而批量生成标准化多胞胎的最好成绩（遗憾的是，这只能够算是次好成绩），虽然如此，可是往往连这样的成绩都很难达到。

“两百个卵子自然成熟需要三十年之久。但目前的任务只是稳定人口，此时的，此地的。难道我们还需要为了表现科学的进步而耗费四分之一一个世纪吗？”

显然没有必要。但是新的“破瓷”技术大幅度提高了成熟速率。有了“破瓷”技术，我们就可以保证两年之内生产出至少一百五十个成熟的卵子。卵子受精之后经过波卡处理——用数字表示，就是全部乘以七十二，这样平均能得到一万一千个胚胎，即两年之内出生一百五十批一模一样的多胞胎。

“甚至存在用一个卵子培养出一万五千个成年人的特例。”

一个浅色头发的强壮男子刚好路过这群庞大的学习队伍。主任对他招了招手，叫道“福斯特先生”，那青年走了过来。“福斯特先生，你能向大家说明我们实验室的培育纪录么？”

“本中心的最高纪录，同一个卵子培育出了一万六千零一十二个胚胎。”福斯特先生立马回答道，没有一丝犹豫。他的蓝眼睛里闪烁着愉悦的光彩，显然这是个热爱数字的人。“一万六千零一十二个，共是一百八十九批多胞胎。当然，那些位于赤道地区的培育中心，”他滔滔不绝地继续说道，“数量会更多。新加坡常常超过一万六千五百个，而蒙巴萨已经突破了一万七千的纪录。不过，他们是靠着不公平的优势。你们要是能看到黑人卵子对脑垂体的活跃反应就好了！简直是惊人！但凡是习惯了使用欧洲材料作业的人都会十分震惊。可是，”他大笑了声（眼神里闪现着战斗胜利的光彩，翘起的下巴也颇有几分挑战意味），“可是，我们还是企图超越他们。目前，我正在培养的德尔塔减型卵子，才十八个月，已经有了一千九百个孩子，有的已经换瓶，有的还处于出芽分裂状态，个个都很健壮。我们一定会超过他们的。”

“这就是我喜欢的精神！”主任拍了拍福斯特先生的肩膀，高声说道：“来吧，和我们分享你的专业知识，让这些孩子受益终生。”

福斯特先生谦虚地笑了笑：“再乐意不过了，主任先生。”

装瓶室，喧闹而和谐，忙乱而有序。小电梯从位于地下第二层的器官库处升起，发出“吱——吱”的声音，运送着已经切割成适当大小的母猪腹膜片（全都是新鲜的）。“咔哒”，电梯门从中间打开，腹膜片顺着传送带飘了出来。装瓶工伸出一只手，抓起腹膜片，插进瓶里，压平，

才刚刚把瓶子放到传送带上，就听见了又一声“咔哒”！电梯门打开，一块新的腹膜片从里面送了出来，等待着被塞进新的瓶子——传送带上漂流着无穷无尽的瓶子中的一个。

装瓶工旁边的是收纳员。生命的制造进程前进着。卵子们脱离了试管，进入了更大的容器；精准地撕开腹膜衬，桑葚胚从中落了出来，毫无意外地落入容器中，然后灌入盐溶液.....到了这个阶段，瓶子里的工序就结束了，接下来轮到标签工跟瓶子外表较劲。遗传状况、授精日期、波卡分组的细节等等信息需从试管转移到瓶子外。从此，这些生命不再是匿名的了，它们被署上了名，标上了身份。生命的进程继续缓缓地前进着，穿过了墙壁上的一道开口，来到了“社会性参数前定室”。

“卡片索引文件的体积总共有八十八立方米。”福斯特先生这句满溢得意之情的句子同大家一同步入了社会性参数前定室。

“这个数据当然是包括了全部的相关资料。”主任补充道。

“每天早上资料都会更新。”

“每天下午还要再次调整。”

“根据数据进行计算。”

“每个种群的个体数量。”福斯特先生说。

“分配的量。”

“每个时刻的最佳出瓶率。”

“意外损耗的迅速补充。”

“迅速补充！”福斯特先生又重复了一遍，“你们得知道，上次日本地震之后，我们可加了不少班。”他温和地笑了笑，然后摇了摇头。

“社会性参数设定员把数据发给授精员。”

“等着授精员给他们合适的胚胎。”

“参数设定员对送来的胚胎瓶进行详细的设置。”

“然后再把瓶子送到胚胎库房办理入库。”

“也正是我们现在的目的地。”

福斯特先生领着大家，开了一道门，走下台阶，来到了地下室。

赤道似的灼热高温。他们越走越暗，身处的这条通道设有两道门及两个拐弯，目的就是确保地下室不受任何光线的破坏和侵扰。

“胚胎就像胶卷，”在推开第二道门时，福斯特先生诙谐地说道，“它们都只能面对红色的光线。”

实际上，他们进去的地方到处都是暗红色，那种暗红就好像夏天午后在阳光下闭上眼的感觉。一排排、一层层排列整齐的烧瓶反射着暗红的光线，像无数的红色宝石。在烧瓶架间行走的人群，每一个都是暗红色的幽灵，紫色的眼眸，似乎每个人都是狼疮患者。机器运转所发出的声响使空气也轻微地颤抖起来。

“福斯特先生，给他们几个数字。”由于长时间的教导，主任已经不太想开口了。

福斯特先生则十分喜悦，因为他热爱数字。

长为二百二十米、宽二百米、高十米，福斯特先生指了指上头。像小鸡喝足水抬头一样，学生们纷纷抬头望向高处的天花板。

架子有三层：地面走廊、一层走廊、二层走廊。

蛛网似的钢制走廊一层一层向前延伸，消失在黑暗里。架子边，三个暗红色的幽灵正忙着从电梯上取下烧瓶。

电梯来自社会性参数设置室。

放瓶子的架子一共有十五个。同时，可能你们没有发现，每个架子也都是一条传送带，传送速度为每小时三十三点三厘米。二百六十七天，每天八米，算下来总共是两千一百三十六米。地下室的一条环道同地面走廊同高，一条同一层走廊同高，另外还有半条同二层走廊同高。在第二百六十七天的清晨，当阳光照进换瓶室的时候，“独立生命”就诞生了。

“但是在现在的阶段，”福斯特先生总结道，“我们已经投入了很多的精力。嗯，相当相当多的精力。”他笑了，笑声里张扬着洞悉与胜利。

“这就是我喜欢的精神！”主任又一次说到这句话，“我们一起再转转。你，福斯特先生，跟他们说说所有的东西。”

福斯特先生尽职地讲解。

他向学生们介绍了腹膜床上的胚胎；让他们尝了尝给胚胎食用的黏稠的代血浆；解释了为什么需要用胎盘素和甲状腺激素的刺激；说明了黄体素的提取过程；带领他们参观喷射口（这种喷射口每隔十二米就自动喷射一次黄体素）；谈到了在全程（长度为二千零四十米）的最后九

十六米处，将逐渐增加脑垂体黏液。描述了一百一十二米处向每个烧瓶内放入人工母体循环器；让他们看了代血浆储存库，保证液体流过胎盘、合成肺及废物过滤器的离心泵。此外，还涉及了胚胎极有可能产生贫血，因此需要供应大量的猪胃提取液及马胚胎的肝。

学生们来到了一台简单的仪器前，每过六米，这台仪器会摇晃胚胎瓶，目的在于使它们能适应移动。福斯特先生介绍了在换瓶过程中可能遭遇的风险及种种预防措施，即对瓶里的胚胎进行适应性训练。另外，他还解释了在二百米左右进行的性别测试及标签体系。字母T代表男性，O代表女性，而白底上打了黑色问号的将注定成为没有生育能力的女性。

“当然，”福斯特先生说，“在绝大部分情况下，良好的生育机能没有任何意义。一千二百个卵子里只要有一个多产卵就能满足需求。不过如果想保证每个胚胎都是精挑细选的结果，还是得保险点儿。所以，最多有百分之三十的女性胚胎可以正常发育。剩下的，在接下来的过程中，每隔二十四米就会被注射一定剂量的雄性激素。最终的结果就是到了换瓶阶段，我们得到了身体机能正常的不孕女性。”不过福斯特先生也不得不承认，“这些注射过雄性激素的女性后来都有一种轻微的长胡子的倾向，但可以保证，她们没有任何的生育能力。”福斯特先生继续道：“这些带领我们走出了对自然的模仿（这种模仿还停留在奴隶阶段，把自然当做主人）从而真正进入了人类发明的世界。”

福斯特先生搓了搓手。培育出胎盘当然不是他们的全部目标，这是连母牛都能做到的事情。

“我们还能设置人的各项条件以及决定他的社会命运。通过换瓶，胚胎就拥有了社会身份，成为了阿尔法或伊普西龙中的一员，也就是未

来的下水道工人或.....”福斯特先生原本想说“统治世界”，可话到嘴边却改了口，“做未来的培育中心主任。”

培育中心主任微笑着接受了这句赞美。

一行人经过了位于三百二十米处的第十一号货架。一个年轻的贝塔减技工正忙着用螺丝刀和扳手处理瓶子里的代血浆泵。随着他拧紧螺丝，马达的嗡嗡声也变得更加低沉。往下，往下.....最后再拧一下，随即看了一眼循环台，任务完成。他沿着传送带走了两步，开始处理下一个胚胎瓶。

“减少每分钟的旋转次数，”福斯特先生继续解释着，“就等于降低了代血浆的循环速度，这样一来它们流经肺部所需的时间增加，输送的氧气总量也就减少。对于达到抑制胚胎的生物机能而言，没有比减少氧气量更好的方法了。”说完，福斯特先生再次搓了搓手。

“为什么要抑制生物机能？”一个天资聪颖的学生提问道。

“笨蛋！”过了很久，主任终于开口，“难道你想不出来伊普西龙的胚胎必须得有伊普西龙环境和伊普西龙遗传吗？”

这名学生显然从来未曾想过这个问题，因此感到分外的惶恐和疑惑。

“种姓越低，”福斯特先生说，“供氧量越少。大脑是最早被影响的器官，随即是骨骼。供氧量减少三成，胚胎就会发育成侏儒；如减少七成以上，我们将得到没有眼睛的怪胎。”

“也就是完全没有价值的废物。”福斯特先生总结道。

“然而，”福斯特先生的语气既谨慎又热切，“如果能发明一种技术能够缩短胚胎的成熟期，这将是多么伟大的壮举，对社会，又是多么大的贡献啊！”

“想想马这种动物。”

学生们听话地立刻开始思考。

马的成熟期为六年，大象十年，而人到十三岁也没有真正进入性成熟阶段，要等到二十岁才完全成熟。当然，身体发育上缓慢带来的是智力上的高度发展。

“但伊普西龙胚胎，”福斯特先生用一种公正的口吻陈述着，“并不需要人类的智慧。”

“既不需要，也根本没有。十岁时，伊普西龙的智力发育就已经结束不再继续，可身体发育却需要十八年时间。也就是十八岁后，他们的身体条件才能满足工作要求。这么长的身体发育期是极其浪费的。如果我们能够加快他们的身体发育速度，比如跟牛一样的成熟期，我们的社会将节省多少资源！”

“不可思议！”学生们受到了启发，低声议论着。福斯特先生话语里隐含的热忱感染了他们。

接下来的讲话偏重技术方面。福斯特先生开始说明内分泌失调导致的发育迟缓，原因可能是胚胎期的突变。这种突变的影响是否能消除呢？是否可以通过某种技术使伊普西龙的胚胎出现返祖现象，拥有如狗或牛般的常态？这就是问题的重点。不过，这个问题已经基本上解决了。

在蒙巴萨，皮尔金顿实验室已经成功培育出四岁性成熟、六岁半发育完成的个体。这是科学领域毋庸置疑的一次胜利，但还不能投入实际应用。六岁人愚蠢至极，连伊普西龙人的工作都做不了。而这个科学程序却是不可折中的，除了不变和彻底的改变，没有其他的选项。实验员们仍然在尝试在二十年及六年的成熟期区间里寻求一个平衡点，不过到目前为止都没有任何进展。福斯特先生不由得叹了口气，摇了摇头。

他们继续在暗红色的光线里进行生命的漫步。他们来到了位于一百七十米处的九号架附近，马上就要走到尽头了。此时，眼前出现了一个隧道，隧道上有很多两三米宽的开口，胚胎瓶在狭长的隧道里停止了漂流。

“开口的作用是调节温度。”福斯特先生解释道。

冷、热隧道交替地排列。冰冻加重了强力X射线造成的不适。这些胚胎在换瓶时经历了刺骨的寒冷。经过社会性参数设置，这些胚胎将来会出现在热带地区从事矿工、人造丝缫丝工及钢铁工人的工作。过后，还要训练他们的精神，这样才能更好地支持身体。“通过设置不同的条件，我们会让这批胚胎适应炎热的气候，在高温中茁壮成长，”福斯特先生最后总结道，“楼上的同事们会培养他们爱上这种炎热。”

“那就是，”主任引用了句格言，“那就是‘幸福与美德在于——热爱一切无法改变的事情。’这也正是所有参数、条件设置的目的：让人们爱上逃脱不了的社会命运。”

在两条隧道中间，一名护士正在用细长的针管仔细地检查每个瓶子里的凝胶物质。参观者们安静地观察着。

“嗯，列宁娜。”看到护士抽回针管站直了身子，福斯特先生终于开

了口。

那姑娘吓了一跳，转过身子来。尽管满室暗红色的光线令她的皮肤像得了狼疮一样，眼睛也变成了紫色，她的美丽却依然让人注目。

“亨利！”列宁娜朝他投去了微笑，露出了贝齿。

“迷人，迷人！”主任喃喃自语道，然后轻轻地拍了拍她，得到了一个恭敬的微笑。

“你在加什么？”福斯特先生刻意专业地问道。

“啊，是普通的伤寒和昏睡症疫苗。”

“在一百五十米处，要对赤道工人胚胎注射疫苗。”福斯特先生向学生解释道。“这时胚胎还有鳃。注射了疫苗，以后就不会患上相关的疾病。”说完，他转向了列宁娜，“今天下午四点五十分在楼上，”他说，“照旧。”

“迷人。”主任重复了一遍，最后又拍了列宁娜一下，接着和别人一起走开了。

第十号货架上未来的化学工人胚胎正在接受一系列训练提高对铅、苛性钠、沥青和氯的忍耐度。第三号货架上的是未来的航天工程师，一批二百五十个，刚刚经过了一千一百米处的标牌。一种特殊的机器使它们的胚胎瓶一直保持旋转的状态。“为了增强他们的平衡能力，”福斯特先生解释道，“在太空里修理火箭可是件十分困难的事情。他们直立时，我们就放慢代血浆的循环速度，这样胚胎们就会处于半饥饿状态；他们倒立时，我们则会加倍地供应代血浆。这样，他们会形成倒立和舒适相联系的条件反射。于是，只有倒立时，他们才能感受到真正的快

乐。”

“现在，”福斯特先生继续说道，“我要给你们展示阿尔法加知识分子的性格设置，十分有趣。在一层走廊的五号架上有一大批阿尔法加。一层走廊！”他朝已经往地面走廊走去两个男孩子叫道。

“在九百米附近，”福斯特先生解释道，“在胚胎的尾巴消失以前是没法进行智力条件设置的。请各位跟随我来。”

此时，主任看了看他的表。“三点差十分，”他说，“恐怕没有时间看知识分子胚胎了，我们得在孩子们午觉结束前回到育婴室。”

福斯特先生有些失望。他请求道：“至少看一下换瓶室吧。”

“那好吧，”主任温和地笑了笑，“那就看一眼吧。”

第二章

培育与条件设置中心主任和他的学生们走进了电梯，留下福斯特先生在换瓶室里。

育婴室。牌子上写着“新型巴甫洛夫条件设置室”。

主任打开了门。进门后，他们来到了一个巨大的没有遮蔽的房间。一整面南墙都是透明的玻璃，明亮的阳光照亮了屋子里的每个角落。六个护士正忙着把玫瑰花摆放到地板上。她们统一地穿着白色制服（纤维胶亚麻的上衣和长裤），头发收进了白色的帽子里。玫瑰花被密集地种植在巨大的花盆里。数以千计的花瓣弥漫着成熟的丝质光泽，好像小天使的脸庞。在明亮的光线下，这些脸庞并不都是雅利安型和粉红型，其间还有灿烂的中国型和墨西哥型。有些花瓣天使可能是在天堂里吹了太多的喇叭，形态僵硬的如同中风病人；还有些苍白到带上了死亡的气息，同大理石一样病态的苍白。

看到主任，护士们马上站直了。

“把书拿出来吧。”主任吩咐道。

在一片静谧中，护士们把幼儿用书摆放到了巨大的玫瑰花盆间。每本书都是摊开的，书页上满满都是自然界飞禽走兽的美丽色彩。

“现在，把孩子们带进来。”

护士们匆匆忙忙地走出房间。两分钟她们回来，每人都推着一部手

推车。推车上有四层钢丝网架，每层都躺着一名婴儿，全都八个月大，全都一模一样（显然是和谐组波卡化的胚胎）。因为这些婴儿属于德尔塔，所以一律穿着卡其色的衣服。

“把他们放到地板上。”

婴儿们被转移到了地板上。

“现在，把他们转过来，让他们看看玫瑰和书本。”

刚转过身时，婴儿们突然变得特别安静，然后就被书页上丰富的色彩和形状所吸引，朝它们爬了过去。在他们靠近的过程中，之前遮住太阳的那片云飘走了，阳光又一次充满了整个房间。玫瑰花好像突然迸发了生命内在的热情，变得更加明媚艳丽，书页在阳光的抚摸下仿佛也焕发了新的光彩。婴儿们喜欢眼前看到的生动景象，发出了激动的叫声和欢快的笑声。

主任搓了搓手。“棒极了！”他说，“简直像提前训练过似的。”

婴儿中速度最快的那个已经到达目标了。他努力地伸出小手，摸着，抓着，玫瑰花变了形，花瓣扯掉了，书本也被揉皱了。主任在旁静静地等待着。终于，所有的婴儿们都开心地忙碌起来时，他举起手发布了指令。“你们看着吧。”

早早就站在房间另一头的护士长收到了指令，按下了仪表盘上的按钮。

剧烈的爆炸声、汽笛声、警铃声纷纷响起，极度地刺耳。

婴儿们害怕得尖叫起来，小脸也因为恐惧而变形、扭曲。

“现在，”因为巨大的噪音，主任不得不大声地吼叫，“现在用轻微的电击来复习一下刚才的教训。”

主任再次挥了挥手，护士长随即按下了第二枚按钮。婴儿们的尖叫声也随之变了调，声音里夹杂着绝望甚至疯狂。小小的身子开始痉挛，逐渐僵硬，四肢颤抖起来，好像有看不见的线在拉扯。

“这整片地板都可以通电，”主任大声地解释道，“但是，已经够了，”他又做了个手势。

爆炸声停止了，汽笛和警报的尖锐声音也渐渐平息。婴儿们放松了僵硬的身体，已经减弱的啜泣和呜咽却又变成了惊吓时的哭嚎。

“再给他们花和书。”

护士们按照主任的命令行事。可是当玫瑰花和书页里色彩鲜艳的小猫、小鸡、黑山羊才刚刚开始靠近，婴儿们就吓得躲避起来，哭喊的声音也突然更加刺耳。

“观察，”主任说道，像赢得了某种胜利，“观察。”

书本与噪音，花朵与电击——这些东西在婴儿的内心里已经勉强地结合到了一起。经过两百次这样类似的训练后，婴儿就会形成不可逆的条件反射。这种人造的联系连自然也是无能为力的。

“这种婴儿时期建立的条件反射，也就是心理学家称之为‘本能’的东西，将伴随他们长大。整个成长过程中，他们都会厌恶书籍和鲜花。条件反射是不可逆的，也就是说他们一辈子都无需害怕书籍和植物的危险。”说完，主任转过身面对着护士，“把他们带走吧。”

这些婴儿又重新被塞回车上，尽管他们仍然在哭喊着。手推车被推走了，留下的是婴儿身上已经发酸的奶味和此时此刻被大家无比珍惜的宁静。

一位学生举起手提问：“我十分理解禁止让低种姓的人在书本上浪费时间（何况这时间根本不属于他们个人，而属于全体社会），况且读书实在太危险了，很有可能破坏他们经过长期的训练而生成的条件反射，但是关于那些花……晤，我实在不能理解那些花，为什么要花尽力气去让德尔塔婴儿厌恶花朵呢？”

培育及条件设置中心主任对这个问题耐心地做出了解答，训练那群婴儿厌恶玫瑰花是出于经济上的考量。很久以前（其实不能算做很久，仅仅才相距一个世纪），伽玛、德尔塔甚至伊普西龙其实是被训练成喜欢花朵的，确切地说，是喜欢自然，目的就是让他们产生亲近自然的欲望，使他们不得不花费更多的钱在交通上。

“交通消费扩大了吗？”学生问。

“相当大，”主任回答道，“但是，仅仅是交通费。”

月见草和风景，主任进一步指出道，都有一个致命的缺点：免费。对大自然的爱使工厂根本繁忙不起来。于是热爱大自然的训练被废除了（至少在低种姓的人群中），但是交通消费却不能取消，这是极为重要的。必须让他们去农村，即使厌恶也得去。关键是为交通消费找出一个经济上更为恰当的理由，而不是喜欢月见草或风景。幸运的是，我们找到了。

“我们让群众厌恶乡村，”主任总结道，“与此同时，训练他们喜欢一切乡村运动。另外，我们还注意提高所有乡村运动器材的损耗率；这

样一来，他们既得在交通上花费钱财又得消费工业用品。因此，我们使用了电击。”

“我明白了。”学生沉默了，迷失在对主任以及对这项政策的崇敬里。

大家安静了一会儿后，主任清了清嗓子，继续说道：“从前，在我主弗德仍然在世时，有一个小孩，名叫热本·拉宾诺维奇。他的父母说波兰语，”主任插了句题外话，“我想，你们应该知道什么是波兰语吧？”

“是一种已经消失的语言。”

“与法语和德语一样。”另一个学生做了补充，炫耀自己知道这些已经消失语言的名字。

“那‘父母’呢？”主任继续发问。

沉默，突如其来的尴尬，好几个小伙子的脸都涨红了。他们还不会分辨粗俗与纯科学之间巨大而微妙的差异。最后，终于有一个勇士举起了手。

“人类以前是.....嗯.....”他犹豫了，感觉全身的血液都涌上了脸颊，“以前是胎生的。”

“非常正确。”主任朝他点点头以示赞许。

“胚胎换瓶时.....”

“‘出生’时。”主任出声纠正了这名学生的不当用词。

“嗯……他们是父母生——我想说，跟现在的胚胎不一样，当然是不一样；他们是其他那些。”小伙子慌张到不知道自己在说什么。

“总之呢，”主任说道，“父母，也就是‘爸爸’和‘妈妈’。”粗俗才是真正的科学。这个观念让孩子们陷入了一片难堪的沉默，彼此都不敢注视对方的眼睛。“妈妈，”主任有意打破了沉默，往椅子上一靠，“这些，”他严肃地说道，“都是令人不愉快的事实。不过，历史就是由这些不愉快的事实所构成的。”

话题又回到了小热本身上——小热本。某个晚上，由于疏忽，小热本的爸爸妈妈离开时，忘记了关掉小热本房间里的收音机。

（因为你们得知道，在当年那个野蛮的胎生时代，那个还没有国家条件设置中心的年代里，孩子们都是被所谓的“爸爸妈妈”抚养长大的。）

小热本进入了梦乡，这时，突然响起了伦敦的广播节目。第二天早上，发生了一件令他的爸爸妈妈惊讶不已的事（又一次听到这个粗俗的词汇，人群中甚至有几个粗俗大胆学生心有灵犀地咧嘴笑了起来）。起床后，小热本居然开始背诵起一位古怪老作家的长篇演说，而且一字不差。那是乔治·贝尔纳·萧的作品（“少数几个仍有作品流通的作家，其余古老年代的作品都已经因为思想问题被禁止出现在市面上。”），他通过传统的笔触表现了自身的天赋。小热本背诵这篇著名演讲的时候，又眨眼又怪笑。因为小热本这些怪异的表现还有一直嘟囔着的根本听不懂的语言，他的父母马上把他带到了医生那儿。幸运的是，医生会说英语，听到小热本的自言自语后，马上就联想到了前一天晚上广播里播放的萧·贝尔纳的演讲。此事具有重大的医学价值，于是这名医生便致信医学刊物报告了此事。

“睡眠教学，或者睡眠学习法的原理就这样被发现了。”说完这句话后，主任有意停顿了一下。

从原理的发现到真正的实际推广和应用，这两者又间隔了漫长的岁月。

“小热本的案例是在我主弗德的T型车进入市场之后二十三年出现的。”（此时，主任在肚子上画了个T字，学生们也虔诚地照做。）“可是……”

学生们又在笔记本上疯狂地写着。“睡眠教学的第一次正式应用却是在弗德纪元二一四年。如此早地发现，如此晚地应用，其间原因有两个。”

“第一，先行者们搞错了方向。”主任说道，“他们认为睡眠学习法是智力开发的手段之一……”

一个小男孩在床上休息。他向右侧卧着，手臂垂落在床边，床边的小盒子里轻轻地流出了一段录音：

“尼罗河的长度为非洲第一，世界第二，仅次于密西西比河。但是其流域长度却为世界之首，穿越了三十五个纬度。”

第二天早餐时，有人问：“汤米，非洲最长的河是什么河？”对方摇摇头。“那你记得以‘尼罗河……’开头的那句话吗？”

“尼罗河的长度为非洲第一，世界第二，仅次于密西西比河。”这些字句不经思索就脱口而出。

“那么，现在你知道了，非洲最长的河是什么河？”

“我不知道。”

“是尼罗河，汤米。”

“尼罗河的长度为非洲第一，世界第二，仅次于密西西比河。”

“那么，汤米，最长的河是哪一条呢？”

小男孩着急地哭喊着：“我不知道！”

主任解释道，正是那声无助而急切的哭泣声使当时的研究人员最终决定放弃实验。至此之后，再也没有科研人员尝试在孩子们睡觉时进行尼罗河的地理教育了。而这才是正确的。每个人都不可能掌握科学，如果他不了解科学到底是为了什么。

“如果他们当初选择进行道德教育就好了。”主任领着学生们向门口走去。学生们在纸上拼命写着：“道德教育无论如何也不应该是理性的。”

“安静。”十四层，电梯门打开，人群走了出来，听到扩音喇叭低沉的声音，“安静。”每一条走廊里都能听到这样的声音，不断地重复着。不仅是学生们，连主任都下意识地垫起了脚尖，小心翼翼地行走着。当然了，他们都是高种姓的阿尔法，但即使是他们，在胚胎时间及成长过程里也是被充分地训练过的。“安静”，十四楼的空气里似乎都弥漫着命令的气息。

就这样小心翼翼地走了快五十米，他们来到了一道门前。主任轻轻开了门，跨过门槛，进入了一个光线昏暗的宿舍，昏暗是因为百叶窗全都被拉上了。墙边摆了八十张小床，排成一排。均匀的呼吸和持续的低语，好像是来自无限遥远处的微弱之声。

一个护士看到他们进屋就立刻站了起来，走到主任面前，立正站好。

“下午上的什么课？”

“前四十分钟是《性学基础》，”她回答道，“现在是《阶级意识启蒙》。”

主任慢慢地走着，观察小床上躺着的孩子。他们呼吸轻柔，显得自在而放松。每个枕头下都有一个小小的扩音器，播放着指定的内容。主任在一张小床前停下了脚步，俯下身子，认真地听着。

“刚才你说的是《阶级意识启蒙》？用喇叭让大家都听听。”

主任走到了墙边，摁了下按钮。

“.....都穿绿色，”广播开始了，声音温柔清晰，“而德尔塔儿童则穿卡其色。噢，我可不想和德尔塔一起做游戏。伊普西龙更糟，他们太蠢了，连读写都不会；另外，他们还穿黑色，多么粗鄙的颜色。真高兴我是个贝塔。”

广播停顿了一下，又继续播放起来。

“阿尔法的儿童衣着是灰色。他们的工作很辛苦，因为他们比我们聪明。我很幸运我是贝塔，这样我就不用辛勤地劳动。而且我们要优于伽玛和德尔塔。伽玛十分愚蠢，穿着绿色衣服，德尔塔穿着卡其色衣服。我不愿意和他们一起玩耍。伊普西龙要糟糕得多，他们是十足的笨蛋...”

主任按下按钮关掉了广播，扩音喇叭里的声音消失了，可那声音依然存在于那八十个枕头里。

“今天，这些内容还要重复播四五十遍，星期四、六还要复习巩固。三十个月，每周三次，每次一百二十遍，然后这个课程就结束了。接下来，他们会接受更高级的训练。”

玫瑰花与电击，德尔塔人的衣服颜色是卡其色……在孩子们学会说话之前，这些事物间的联系便深深地刻进了他们的意识里。但是，普通的条件设置是很笼统的，不可能达到教育他们区别微妙差异及学习复杂行为的效果。所以必须加上语言，非理性的语言。简而言之，必须有“睡眠学习法”。

“这是历史上最伟大的道德与社会化的力量。”

这些话，每一字每一句，全都化成了年轻人的笔记。

主任又打开了广播。

“聪明得吓人，”一个温和且永远不知疲倦的声音说道，“我超级高兴，因为我是贝塔，因为……”

有人用“水滴石穿”来形容这种训练模式，其实不太恰当。虽然水以柔克刚的力量是大家有目共睹的。准确地说，它更像蜡滴：干脆地落下——缓缓地封住——逐渐坚硬起来。蜡油会和落下的地方融为一体，把岩石包成个红疙瘩。

“这种训练让孩子们的思想里只有接受到的信息，所有这些信息也就构成了他们的思想。不仅是此时的思想，也是未来的思想——贯穿整个人生。可以说，以后他们对事情的判断全都来源于这些信息。而这些

伟大的信息正是经过我们安排的信息！”说到这儿，主任愈加激动起来，“我们接受国家的旨意而安排的。”他不禁捶了下身旁的桌子。“接下来的……”

不和谐的噪声响起，主任不得不回过了头。

“啊，弗德！”他的声调不再激动，“我只顾着自己居然把他们都弄醒了。”

第三章

游戏时间，地点：花园。六月天的酷热让花园里的六七百个孩子脱光了衣服。这些男孩女孩们有的在草地上奔跑、嬉闹，有的聚在一起玩球，有的则躲进了开着鲜花的灌木丛中。玫瑰正热烈地绽放，夜莺在森林里密语，树上的布谷鸟欢乐地歌唱。一种有节奏感的嗡嗡声（这声音来自近处的蜜蜂和远处的直升机）给夏日增添了一种懒洋洋的困意。

经过“调皮狗离心球”的时候，参观的人群停了下来。这个游戏的核心设备是一座铬钢塔。皮球被扔到塔顶的小平台上，落进塔里，被高速旋转的圆盘甩出来。二十个孩子为一组围着钢塔，小球一旦飞出便争先恐后地抢夺。

结束了观察后，大家纷纷转身离开。主任暗自思考着：“真想不通为什么在过去的年代，绝大部分的游戏只需要一两个球、几根棍子，顶多再加上一张网。这些玩意儿对促进消费可没有任何贡献，简直毫无意义。现在，如果一个新游戏所需要的设备比现有的游戏简单，根本就不可能问世。”正想着，思绪突然被别的事物打断了。

“那几个小家伙多可爱。”他指着远处。

手指之处，有两丛繁茂高大的地中海石楠，中间是一小片草地。一名七岁左右的小男孩和另一名比他略微大上一岁的女孩正以科学家致力科研的精神玩着性的启蒙游戏。

主任被眼前的景致打动了：“迷人，迷人！”

“迷人。”学生们附和着大人物，但笑容里却有着明显的优越感。不久前他们刚刚脱离这种幼稚的把戏，所以又看到的时候，难免有些过来人的轻蔑。迷人？不过只是孩子气的胡闹而已。

“我始终认为.....”主任刚开口，就被一阵“哇哇”大哭所打断。

从旁边的小树林里走出来了几个人。一个护士牵着个号啕大哭的小男孩，后面小跑着跟着一个满脸焦急的小姑娘。

“怎么了？”

护士耸了耸肩：“没什么。只是他不太愿意参加性游戏，以前有过两三次，没想到今天又犯了。就在刚才，他开始大叫.....”

“我，真的，”跟在最后的小女孩着急地解释道，“我没有任何伤害他的意思，真的。”

“亲爱的，你当然没有。”护士柔声安慰着小女孩，“所以，”她转过身，面对着主任，“现在，我要带他去心理助理主任那儿检查一下他究竟是哪儿不正常。”

主任赞许道：“很好！带他过去吧。小姑娘，你留下来。”在护士带走了男孩之后，主任继续问道：“你叫什么名字？”

“玻莉·托洛茨基。”

“好名字！走吧，再找一个小伙伴陪你玩刚才的游戏。”

那姑娘蹦蹦跳跳地跑向灌木丛，消失在视野里。

“可爱的小家伙！”主任看着小女孩逐渐远去的背影，转过身看着学

生们说道，“我现在要说的，也许难以置信。但是，大多数情况下，历史都是让你们啧啧称奇的。”

主任开始讲述那件令人惊讶的事情。在弗德纪元前漫长的时期里，儿童之间的性游戏都被视为不正常的表现（人群中爆发出一阵阵笑声）；有时不仅是不正常，甚至被视作不道德、羞耻，因此被严厉地压制着。

在场的人都露出了不可思议的表情：难道让小家伙们享受一下快乐也是罪恶吗？简直是天方夜谭。

“甚至像你们这样的少年都禁止有性游戏的权利……”，

“不可能！”

“除了私下里不为人知的自慰和同性恋行为，其他什么都不可能。”

“一切？”

“通常，二十岁以后才有这些权利。”

“二十岁？”学生们异口同声地叫了出来。

“二十岁。正如我开头所说的，这确实是让人不敢相信。”

“后来呢？结果呢？”学生们追问道。

“结果很可怕。”一个陌生的厚实的声音插了进来。

不知何时，人群旁多出了个陌生人——中等个头，黑发鹰鼻，嘴唇丰厚，目光犀利而幽深。

“很可怕。”他又重复了一次。

已经在花园的钢架塑胶长凳上坐下来的主任（这种供人休息的凳子，在园子里随处可见），在发现那个陌生人的一刻，立马就站了起来。他展开双手，向那人跑了过去，大门牙也因为夸张的笑容露了出来。

“总统！多么美丽的惊喜！孩子们，你们还愣着干吗？这是总统，是穆斯塔法·孟德阁下。”

此时，中心的四千个房间里同时响起了电子钟报时的声响。四点了。播音喇叭里传来了无形的声音：

“早班下班，晚班接班；早班下班……”

亨利·福斯特和参数设置中心的助理主任一同前往更衣室。在电梯里，两人碰上了心理局来的访客。看清来者是声名狼藉的贝尔纳·马克斯后，二人便立即移开了脸。

机器运行时微弱的轰鸣声轻轻地震动着胚胎室里暗红的空气，轮班的人不断交替着，一张狼疮病人似的面孔替换了另一张，而传送带则永恒地前进，承载着未来的男人与女人们。

列宁娜·克朗往门边轻快地走去。

尊敬的穆斯塔法·孟德阁下！学生们的眼睛几乎要从眼眶里蹦出去了。穆斯塔法·孟德，西欧总统，世界上仅有的十个总统之一！总统坐在了主任先前坐的长凳上，他打算要待上一会儿。是的，他想跟他们说说话……这些话语将直接来自权威，直接来自总统阁下。

两个穿着褐色衣服的孩子从树林里冒了出来，大大的眼睛里满是惊

讶，看了一会儿，就又回到树林里快乐去了。

“你们全都记得，”那个厚实的声音继续说道，“我想，你们全都记得，我主弗德那句美丽又充满启示的话：历史全是废话。历史，”他语速缓慢地说道，“全是废话。”

他挥了挥手，仿佛拿着一柄无形的拂尘。拂尘一甩，一些灰尘被扫去了。那些灰尘里有巴基斯坦的哈拉帕，有迦勒底的乌尔；扫走了蜘蛛网，就是底比斯、巴比伦、克诺索斯和希腊的迈锡尼。再扫——奥德修斯、约伯、丘庇特、乔达摩和耶稣不知了去向。再扫——扫开了雅典、罗马、耶路撒冷和中央王国的古老尘埃。扫，弗德纪元前的意大利变成了空城。扫，教堂不见了；扫，李尔王与帕斯卡的思想消逝了。扫，激情；扫，安魂曲，扫，交响曲；扫……

“晚上去看感官剧吗，亨利？”助理主任问道。“我听说阿罕布拉那儿上映了一部大受好评的感官剧。有场爱情戏是在熊皮毯上，听他们说那场戏棒极了，熊皮上的每一根毛发都能看得清清楚楚，前所未有的触感体验。”

“这也就是不给你们上历史课的原因。”总统说，“不过现在是时候了……’

主任紧张地看着总统，他想起了一些离奇的谣言：总统书房的保险箱里藏着一些已经被禁止的古老书籍，圣经还是诗？只有弗德知晓！

穆斯塔法·孟德感受到了主任的焦虑，嘴角冷冷一笑。

“没问题的，主任，”总统的话里带着轻微嘲讽的色彩，“我可不会把他们腐蚀了。”

主任又困惑又惶恐。

如果觉得自己被人排挤轻蔑，那么自己也会表现出鄙视别人的样子。贝尔纳·马克斯露出轻蔑的笑容，每根毛发都看得相当清楚！

“看来我确实应该去看看。”亨利·福斯特说。

穆斯塔法·孟德身子往前一倾，伸出一根指头晃了晃，“试着想象一下，想象自己有一个‘妈妈’是什么感觉。”

又是那个粗俗的字眼，不过这回学生中可没人开口笑了。

“想象一下‘一家人共同生活’意味着什么。”

他们努力地想着，可脑袋一片空白。

“有任何人知道‘家’是什么意思吗？”

摇头。

坐着电梯，列宁娜·克朗从暗红色的房间来到了十七层楼，电梯出来往右拐，沿着长廊一直走，就来到了女更衣室。她打开门，钻进了一片嘈杂中，满眼都是女性的胳膊、胸脯和内衣。一百个浴缸里，热水倾泻而入，从小管子里汩汩地流出。轰轰——嘶嘶——八十个真空振动按摩仪器正同时为八十位年轻的女性保养着她们故意晒黑的曼妙躯体。背景的喧闹让每个人都必须扯着嗓子说话。合成音响里微微发颤地放送着超级短号的独奏。

“你好，法妮。”列宁娜对身旁的年轻女性打招呼道。

法妮在换瓶室工作，她也姓克朗，不过因为这地球上的二十亿人只有一万个姓，所以也不算是真正的巧合。

列宁娜拉下了外套前面及裤子两侧的拉链，脱下内衣，穿着鞋袜往浴室走去。

家——几个狭窄的房间，一个男人、一个定期怀孕的女人和一群什么年纪都有的孩子。没有新鲜空气、没有空间，就像那种未经消毒的监狱，充满了黑暗、疾病及难闻的味道。

（人群中最敏感的男孩听到总统这番极富感染力的描述后，脸色立马变得煞白，几乎要吐了出来。）

列宁娜走出浴室，擦干身体，拿起旁边一根连着墙壁的软管，对准了自己，好像自杀似地扣动了扳机——一阵混杂着爽身粉的热气从管口喷出。浴缸上面有喷洒香水的小龙头，包括古龙水在内，一共有八种不同的香水可供选择。她选择了左边第三个的西普香水，然后就拿着鞋袜往按摩仪器那边走去了。

家是一个物质和精神上都一样肮脏的地方。精神上是个兔子洞，是垃圾堆，极端拥挤，充斥着感情与臭气。让人窒息的亲密！危险、疯狂又见不得人的关系！母亲像母猫一样紧紧地搂住孩子，差别只在这猫会说话，不停地叫着：“我的宝贝儿，我的宝贝儿”，一遍又一遍。“我的宝贝，噢，在我的胸口，他的小手，他饿了，难受了，他不会表达。最

后，宝贝睡着了，嘴边还挂着可爱的牛奶泡泡。我的小宝贝终于睡着了……”

“是，”穆斯塔法·孟德点头道，“简直是不寒而栗！”

按摩完，列宁娜像身体里面藏了颗珍珠，整个人散发着粉红色的光芒。她问法妮：“今天晚上你要跟谁出去？”

“没人。”

列宁娜惊讶地抬起了眉头。

“最近，我一直觉得不太舒服，威迩仕医生让我吃一点代妊娠素。”

“可是，亲爱的，你才十九岁，二十一岁前是不会强迫服用的。”

“我知道，亲爱的。但有的人早点使用会更好。威迩仕医生说，像我这种大骨盆的棕色女性，在十七岁时就应该开始服用了。所以我非但不是早了两年，反而晚了两年呢。”法妮打开了储物柜，指着上排架子上一排小盒子和带标签的瓶子。

列宁娜大声地读出了标签上的名字。“妊娠素精糖浆。卵巢素，质保期：弗德纪元六三二年八月前使用。乳腺精，饭前加少许水服用，一日三次。胎盘素，使用方式：静脉注射；用量：五毫升；使用频率：三日一次……呃！”列宁娜打了个寒战。“真不喜欢静脉注射。你呢，法妮，难道你不讨厌吗？”

“我讨厌，可如果它们对人有好处……”法妮是个理性的姑娘。

我主弗德，由于一些不可说的原因，在谈及心理学范畴的问题时，他更愿意称呼自己为弗洛伊德。他是揭示家庭中种种骇人听闻的危险的第一人。这个世界满是父亲，即满是悲惨；满是母亲，即满是堕落（从性虐到贞操）；满是弟兄姊妹叔伯姑婶，也就满是疯狂和自杀。

“可是，在沿新几内亚海边的某些岛上，萨摩亚岛的野蛮人间……”

孩子们在木槿花间嬉戏打闹，热带地区的阳光像蜜糖一样洒在他们赤裸的身上。他们没有家，或者说那二十间用棕榈叶搭成的屋子哪间都是他们的家。在特洛布里安岛人的观念里，家是属于那些古老鬼魂的，没有半个活着的人听说过“父亲”是什么玩意儿。

“极端，”总统说道，“相遇了。极端是注定会相遇的。”

“威逊仕博士说服用三个月的代妊娠素能在未来三四年间给我的健康带来相当大的好处。”

“是的，希望如此。”列宁娜说，“但法妮，难道接下来的三个月里你都不打算……”

“哦，当然不，亲爱的，顶多一两个星期而已。晚上，我打算去俱乐部玩音乐桥牌。我想你要出去？”

列宁娜点了点头。

“跟谁？”

“跟亨利·福斯特。”

“又是他？”法妮月亮般的圆脸上挂着一种不认可的惊讶和痛苦的表情，“你是说你还在和亨利一块儿出去？”

母亲、父亲、兄弟、姐妹，但还有丈夫、妻子、情人。另外，还有一夫一妻制度和爱情故事。

“虽然你们可能根本不知道我在说什么，”穆斯塔法·孟德说。

他们摇摇头。

家庭、一夫一妻制度还有爱情等等这些都具有独占性，禁锢了所有的冲动和精力，导致他们只能在一条狭窄的通道里发泄。

“但每一个人都属于其他人。”他总结道，引用了睡眠学习里的名句。

学生们毫不犹豫地地点头表示同意，这句话在黑暗里重复了六万两千次，早已融入他们的血液。所以不仅仅是同意，而且是不言自明、不容辩驳地同意。

“但是，”列宁娜争道，“我们在一起仅仅才四个月。”

“仅仅才四个月！我喜欢你这句话，”法妮指着列宁娜责问道，“四个月，只有亨利没有别人，是吗？”

列宁娜又气又羞，满脸通红，但眼睛和声音里仍然带着挑衅的意思，“对，没有别人，”她的声音变得有些粗鲁，“而我也不明白为什么应该有别人！”

“哦，她也不明白为什么应该有别人。”法妮重复道，看着列宁娜的左后方，好像那儿站着一个看不见的第三人似的。突然，法妮换了个语调，“认真的，你得小心了。一直跟同一个男人厮混。可太糟糕了。如果你今天是三十五、四十岁，这样做还不至于太伤风败俗。但你，列宁娜，在你这个年纪！真的，别再继续了。你比任何人都清楚主任是多么反对过热和长时间的相处。而你，四个月，只有亨利·福斯特一个人，完全没有别人！天哪，想想要是主任知道了得多么生气……”

“想象一下管子里的水，想象一下它们所承受的压力。”学生们听话地开始在大脑里幻想起来。“如果我们在水管上扎一个小洞，”总统继续说道，“会有一条水柱喷射出来！”

在水管上扎二十个洞，就会有二十个迷你喷泉。

“我的宝贝，我的宝贝……”

“妈妈！”疯狂是会传染的。

“我的小心肝，我唯一仅有的、珍贵的、心爱的宝贝……”

母亲、一夫一妻制度、爱情。水柱很高，带着发狂的泡沫，愤怒地撒着野。所有的冲动只有一个出口。我的爱，我的宝贝！如此看来，那些早期现代人的疯狂、邪恶与悲惨是注定了的。那个世界不允许轻易地获取，不允许生存的人们拥有理智、美德与快乐。因为母亲和情人，因

为不愿意遵守的禁令（那个年代可没有条件设置中心），因为无穷尽的诱惑和孤独的忏悔，因为疾病和苦痛，因为所有的不确定和贫穷，造成他们不得不努力地去感受。一旦努力感受（更可怕的是，在孤独中努力感受，在无望的自我孤立中去努力感受），那么怎么可能稳定呢？

“当然不需要放弃，时不时地和别人来往一下就行了。他可也有别的女孩儿，难道不是吗？”

列宁娜点了点头。

“我就知道一定会有的。你得知道，亨利·福斯特是个体贴人，完美的绅士。他会考虑到主任的，别忘了主任是多么顽固……”

列宁娜点点头道：“今天下午，他还拍了我的屁股呢。”

“你看！”法妮很得意，“这就是主任支持的：最严格的社会传统。”

“稳定，稳定。没有社会的稳定，就没有文明。没有社会的稳定，就没有个人的稳定。”总统的声音像乐器中的小号，让人们纷纷觉得自己变得更加的高大与兴奋。

机器运行，运行，也必须永无止境地运行，停下来即死亡。十亿人挣扎在地球的坚硬外壳上。轮开始转动，一百五十年后，地球上就会有二十亿人口。如果停下所有的轮，一百五十个星期后仍然会有十亿人，十亿因为饥饿而死亡的人。

轮必须永不停歇，稳定，有序，有人看管。这些轮必须有人看守。看守者应该同轮轴上的轮一样稳定，此外还要具备理智、服从、坚韧及满足的美德。

哭泣：我的宝贝，我的母亲，我的唯一；唯一的爱在叹息：我的罪，我可怕的上帝；因痛苦而尖叫；因灼热而呓语，因衰老、贫穷而呜咽.....这样的人如何看守轮的转动？如果做不到.....那十亿男性和女性的尸体要如何埋葬或烧毁呢？

“毕竟，”法妮以劝诱的口吻说道，“和亨利以外的男人交往也并不是什么痛苦或讨厌的事，你确实应该更放纵一些.....”

“稳定，”总统坚持道，“稳定，这是首要也是终极的需求。是稳定带来了今天我们拥有的一切。”

他伸出手，指了一圈：花园，条件设置中心的宏伟大楼，以及在灌木丛中嬉闹、草地上奔跑的没穿衣服的孩子们。

列宁娜摇摇头。“莫名其妙地，最近我没怎么想过放纵。有些时刻，人们会不愿意放纵。你发现过这一点吗，法妮？”

法妮点头表示她的同情和理解，“就算是这样，也得努力。游戏得进行到底，毕竟，每一个人都是属于其他人的。”

“是的，每一个人都属于其他人。”列宁娜重复道，语速缓慢，然后叹了口气，沉默了一会儿。她抓住法妮的手，轻轻地压了一下，“你是对的，法妮。我要和往常一样努力。”

冲动的河流若遇阻挡，则必将洪水滔天。奔腾的水是感觉，是激情，还是疯狂，这取决于洪水的力量与大坝的坚强。如果河流能自在流淌，则必将温柔流往幸福的方向。胚胎如饥饿，代血浆泵将不停运转，速率八百次/分钟，昼夜不停。换瓶的婴儿如嚎叫，护士就会拿来外分泌瓶。感觉悄悄地潜伏在欲望的产生与满足间。间隔一缩短，障碍就解除。

“孩子们！”总统说道，“我们不惜一切代价，只为了让你们成为没有情感的幸运儿。”

“我主弗德在他的小汽车里，”主任喃喃自语，“世界一片和谐。”

“列宁娜·克朗？”亨利·福斯特一边拉裤子拉链，一边跟助理主任交谈，“哦，她很吸引人，非常性感，真意外你居然没得到过她。”

“我也很意外。但我肯定能得到她的，只要给我一次机会。”

贝尔纳·马克斯在更衣室的走道对面，无意间听到上面的谈话，脸色苍白起来。

“老实说，”列宁娜说，“我的确已经开始觉得不新鲜了，每天都是亨利，太无聊了。”她拉起了左边的袜子。“嘿，你知道贝尔纳·马克斯吗？”列宁娜故作随意地问道。

法妮露出吃惊的神色：“难道你指的是……。”

“怎么了？他可是个阿尔法加，而且他还问我要不要一起去蛮族保留地看看。那地方我一直想去呢。”

“可是贝尔纳的名声？”

“我一定得在意那个吗？”

“我听说他讨厌玩障碍高尔夫。”

“听说，听说。”列宁娜嘲笑道。

“可他总是一个人，一个人。”法妮的语气里藏着几分害怕的意味。

“那么，和我在一起他就不是一个人了。另外，为什么大家要对他如此残忍？我倒挺喜欢他的，他很可爱。”列宁娜脸上泛起了笑容。贝尔纳在她面前常常露出羞涩的神情，多荒谬！好像她是世界总统，而他是最下等的伽玛减，负责看守机器而已。

“思考下你们自己的生活，”总统先生说，“有人遇到过无法解决的困难吗？”

沉默代替了回答。

“有谁体验过欲望长时间得不到满足？”

“呃。”一个孩子犹豫了，不知该不该开口。

“说，”主任说，“别让总统阁下等。”

“有次我想要个姑娘，最后等了快四个星期。”

“所以你应该感受到了一种强烈的感情吧？”

“强烈得可怕！”

“确实可怕！我们的祖先愚蠢又短视，当先驱们提出要消灭这些无谓的感情时，他们竟对这个提议不以为然。”

“只把她当块肉在评论。”贝尔纳咬牙切齿，“在这儿占有她，或是在那儿占有她。羊肉，她被贬低成了一块羊肉。她说她考虑考虑，她说这个星期能给我答复。啊，弗德，弗德，我的弗德！”他真想冲过去给那两个杂种几耳光。

“是的，我真心建议你试试看她。她非常美！”亨利·福斯特还在鼓励着。

“比如体外发育，普费茨纳和川口早就解决了所有的技术难题。可政府有把这当回事儿吗？没有。还有所谓‘基督教’这种东西，竟然强迫妇女去怀孕生孩子。”

“他太丑了！”法妮说。

“可我喜欢他的样子。”

“他还矮。”法妮做了个鬼脸；矮小可是低种姓的标志，可怕又典型的标志。

“我觉得小个头很可爱。叫人想爱抚他，你知道，像爱抚猫一样。”

法妮惊讶得不行了。“他们说当他还是个胚胎时，流水线上的工人搞错了，以为他是伽玛，往代血浆里加了乙醇，所以他才这么矮小。”

“这全都是没有意义的废话！”列宁娜愤怒了。

“英格兰曾经明令禁止过睡眠教学。当时有种所谓‘自由主义’的东西。议会，如果你们知道那玩意儿的话，曾经通过了一条禁止睡眠教学的法令。根据记录，当时有无数关于国民自由的演讲——做无能之人的自由，过悲惨生活的自由，与世界格格不入的自由。”

“小伙子，你很受欢迎。我向你保证，你很讨人喜欢。”亨利·福斯特拍了拍助理主任的肩膀。“毕竟，每一个人都是属于其他人的。”

一周三个晚上，这句话以这样的频率重复着，整整四年。睡眠学习

法的专家贝尔纳·马克斯沉思着，六万二千四百次的重复所造就的真理。白痴！

“比如种姓制度，不断地提出，不断地否决。还有种所谓‘民主’的玩意儿，好像人与人之间不只是物理、化学上的平等。”

“够了。我只想说，我会接受他的邀请。”

贝尔纳痛恨他们，痛恨他们。但他们有两个人，身材高大，体格魁梧。

“九年战争始于弗德纪元一百四十一年。”

“即使他的代血浆里掺了酒精。”

“碳酰氯、三氯硝基甲烷、碘乙酸乙酯、二苯代肼、三氯甲基、氯甲酸酯、硫代氯乙烷.....所有的化学武器都用上了，更不用说氢氰酸。”

“我根本不相信。”列宁娜做了结论。

“一万四千架飞机以散开的队形前进着，发出阵阵轰鸣声。但是在库达姆大街和第八区，炭疽炸弹的爆炸声就跟拍破一个纸袋发出的声响差不多。”

“因为我确实想去参观蛮族保留地。”

$\text{CH}_3\text{C}_6\text{H}_2(\text{NO}_2)_3 + \text{Hg}(\text{CNO})_2 =$ 呃，等于什么呢？地上的一个大窟窿，一堆破砖瓦，几片碎肉和黏液，一条穿靴子的腿，飞上天，“叭”的一下，落到血红的天竺葵丛里。那年的夏天简直是场精彩绝伦的表演。

“你完蛋了，列宁娜。不可救药，我放弃了。”

“俄罗斯在感染水源的供给方面有极其天才的技术。”

背对背，法妮和列宁娜的交流在一片寂静中继续着。

“九年战争和大萧条。世界的控制和毁灭，只能二选一。要么稳定，要么……”

“法妮·克朗也不错。”助理主任说。

在育婴室，阶级意识基础课已经上完，现在则是匹配未来的工业供应与需求的时间。“我的确喜欢坐飞机，”他们窃窃私语着，“我的确喜欢坐飞机。我的确喜欢穿新衣服，我的确喜欢……”

“虽然自由主义确实死在了炭疽杆菌的手上，但武力依然不是所有问题的灵丹妙药。”

“她没列宁娜丰满，一点儿也比不上。”

“但是旧衣服令人厌恶，”他们继续不知疲倦地低语着，“我们总是把旧衣服扔掉。扔掉比修补好，扔掉比修补好，扔掉比……”

“管理，是坐下来去领导，而不是暴力。要用头脑，用屁股去管理，绝非是拳头。例如，促进消费。”

“我已经准备好了。”列宁娜对法妮说道。但法妮仍然一言不发，垂头丧气地把身子倒向一边。“我们休战吧，亲爱的法妮。”

“为了工业利益，强迫每个男人、女人和孩子每年必须达到额定的消费。唯一的结果就是……”

“扔掉比修补好。修补越多，财富越少。修补越多……”

“总有一天，”法妮十分难过，‘你会有麻烦的’。

“良心上强烈的反对。零消费，回归自然。”

“我的确爱坐飞机，我的确爱坐飞机。”

“回到文化上。对，实际上是文化。如果老坐着读书，其余什么也不干，你的消费能高到哪儿去？”

“我看上去还好吗？”列宁娜问。她的衣服是深绿色的人造纤维丝，袖口和领子同样是绿色，不过材质是纤维胶毛皮。

“在高尔德斯草场，八百个职业军人死在机关枪下。”

“扔掉比修补好，扔掉比修补好。”

脱下了绿色的灯芯绒短裤和白色的纤维胶羊毛袜。

“后来是著名的大英博物馆大屠杀，用硫化二氯甲基消灭了两千名文化狂热者。”

一顶绿白相间的轻便鸭舌帽遮住了列宁娜的眼睛；她穿着翠绿色皮鞋，擦得锃亮锃亮的。

“最后，”穆斯塔法·孟德说，“总统们意识到使用武力毫无作用，于是便倒向了缓慢但是绝对有效的一些方法，比如体外发育、新巴甫洛夫条件设置法和睡眠学习法……”

在腰上，列宁娜戴上了一条镶银的绿色人造摩洛哥皮药囊带，“药囊带”上略微隆起的地方有避孕药，通过定时渗入身体来达到避孕的效果（列宁娜不是不孕女）。

“普费茨纳和川口的发现终于进入了应用阶段。于是，一场声势浩大的反怀孕的文化运动开始了……”

“太完美了！”法妮尖叫道，她喜欢列宁娜身上带着的那股魅力。“这条马尔萨斯带简直无懈可击！”

“同时掀起的，还有一场反传统的运动：博物馆被关闭了，历史建筑被摧毁了（大部分工作在九年战争期间就已经完成了）；所有弗德纪元一五零年以前出版的所有书籍全都被查封了。”

“我也得有像这样的一条带子。”法妮说。

“比如，那时还有所谓‘金字塔’的一种建筑。”

“我那条旧的黑带子……”

“有叫莎士比亚的人，当然，你们从来没听过。”

“太丢脸了——我的那条带子。”

“这就是纯正的科学教育的益处。”

“越缝越穷，越缝越……”

“我主弗德第一辆T型车出现那年……”

“这腰带用了快三个月了。”

“被定为新纪元的元年。”

“扔掉比修补好；扔掉比修补好。”

“我以前说过，有个叫做基督教的东西。”

“扔掉比修补好。”

“是推崇低消费的伦理学和哲学.....”

“我喜欢新衣服，我喜欢新衣服，我喜欢.....”

“在低消费时代，基督教是不可或缺的，但是在机器和固氮的时代，基督教毫无疑问会是反社会的罪行。”

“亨利·福斯特送我的。”

“所以，所有的十字架变成了T字架。所谓‘上帝’，变成了弗德.....”

“那是真正的代摩洛哥皮。”

“现在我们有了世界联邦。弗德日的庆典，社会的歌谣，以及团结一致。”

“弗德啊，我恨他们！”贝尔纳·马克思思忖着。

“那时有个东西叫做天堂，但人们仍然大肆地饮酒。”

“只是肉，只是肉。”

“还有两种东西，一个是灵魂，另一个是永恒。”

“一定要问问亨利这带子是从哪儿弄来的。”

“那时使用的是吗啡和可卡因。”

“更糟的是，她把自己也只看做是肉而已。”

“弗德纪元一七八年，两千个药剂师和生物学家得到了资助。”

“他看上去确实不开心。”助理主任指着贝尔纳·马克斯说。

“六年后就量产了，商业化得很成功。你们知道，那完美的药。”

“我们来耍耍他……”

“精神欢愉，放松镇定，美好的幻象。”

“不开心，马克斯，不开心。”突然有人拍了他肩膀一下，贝尔纳吓了一跳，抬头看去，是粗鲁的亨利·福斯特，“一克唆麻，能解决你的问题。”

“有基督教和酒精的一切好处，却没有它们的坏处。”

“弗德！我应该杀了他！”尽管贝尔纳心里充满了愤懑，但他依然只说了句，“不用，谢谢。”便推开了福斯特递过来的那管药片。

“只要个人觉得需要，便可以随时放假，不理睬现实。回来的时候头疼和神话全都不翼而飞。”

“吃了它，”亨利·福斯特坚持着，“吃了它。”

“实际上就保证了稳定。”

“只需一小片，烦恼全不见。”助理主任引用了一句睡眠学习法里家喻户晓的格言。

“剩下来的唯一任务就是征服衰老。”

“滚蛋，滚蛋！”贝尔纳·马克斯大声吼道。

“哎呀，哎呀。”

“性激素，输血（需要年轻血液），镁盐……”

“记住，唆麻一吞，苦恼飞奔。”他们俩大笑着离开了更衣室。

“老年人身上的红斑全都不见了。当然，随之不见的还有……”

“别忘了向问马尔萨斯带的事。”

“精神上的怪癖。不过，性格没法改变，终身一样。”

“……在黄昏前打两局障碍高尔夫。我必须得坐飞机。”

“工作，游戏。六十岁时，我们的精力和品味还能和十七岁的人一样。在那个不幸的年代，衰老等于消极、退却、迷信，靠着读书和思考打发残年！”

“白痴，弱智！”贝尔纳·马克斯一边自言自语一边顺着走廊走向电梯。

“现在，一切都进步了。老年人依然可以工作、性交，没有时间、没有空闲，坐下来思考片刻的工夫都没有。即使由于这样那样的原因，不幸的有了那么一点点空闲的时间，交给唆麻吧。可口的唆麻，半克就是半个假日；一克就是一个周末；两克可以来个奇妙的东方之旅；三克便可在漆黑的月球上享受来世永恒。从唆麻假日里返回时，烦恼的事情已经无踪影，余下的是每天按部就班地工作和玩乐，像接力赛似的，一部感官剧接着另一部感官剧，一个丰满的姑娘接着另一个丰满的姑娘，一个电磁高尔夫球场到……”

“走开，小姑娘。”主任愤怒了，“走开，小家伙们！难道你们看不见总统阁下正在忙吗？去别的地方继续你们的性游戏。”

“随他们去吧。”总统说道。

缓慢地，威严地，伴随着机器运行的轻微声响，传送带继续前进着，速度三十三厘米/小时。在红色的黑暗里，无数的红宝石正在散发微弱的光芒。

第四章

电梯里全是从阿尔法更衣室里出来的小伙子，列宁娜一进来就有不少人冲她点头微笑致意。她很受欢迎，几乎和电梯里所有人都发生过关系。

列宁娜也向他们打招呼回礼。都是可爱迷人的男性！不过，她仍然觉得乔治·艾泽尔的耳朵小点儿会更好（也许在传送带三百二十八米处时，工人多打了点儿甲状腺？）；看到本尼托·胡佛，不禁想到他脱掉衣服时的画面，身上的毛发太茂密了。

列宁娜转过身，眼睛因为想起了本尼托卷曲的黑色体毛而带了些悲伤的色彩。但是，在角落里，她看见了一个瘦弱又单薄的身体和贝尔纳·马克斯的忧郁面庞。

“贝尔纳！”她向他走去，“我刚刚正找你呢。”即使在电梯里，列宁娜的声音依然清脆动听。周围的人朝他们俩投了好奇的目光。“我想谈谈咱们去新墨西哥的计划。”从余光中，列宁娜瞥见了本尼托·胡佛惊讶的神情。那神情叫她心烦意乱，“他没想到我会再约他一块儿出去！”列宁娜在心里想着，然后她比往常都热情地大声地说道：“六月时，我想和你共度一个星期。”（总之，她在公开证明她并不仅仅只有亨利一个人。这下，法妮应该高兴了，即使对象是贝尔纳。）“对，”列宁娜对他露出了深情款款的微笑，“如果你还想要我。”

一朵红晕出现在贝尔纳过去苍白的脸上。“怎么脸红了？”她好奇，有些惊讶，但同时也明白这奇怪的反应是源于她的魅力。

“要不另外找个地方谈谈吧？”他结结巴巴地，看起来极为不自在。

“好像我说了什么过分的话似的，”列宁娜想道，“即使我跟他开个下流的玩笑，比如问他的妈妈是谁，他也不会比现在更心烦意乱的。”

“我想说，难道要在大家面前……”他脑子一片混乱，慌张得说不出话来。

列宁娜露出了坦诚又温和的笑容。“你真有趣！”她说；她也确实觉得他有趣。“至少提前一星期告诉我，好吗？”她换了一种语气，“我想我们应该会乘坐蓝色太平洋号火箭？从切林T字形塔楼起飞，是吗？还是从汉浦斯泰德起飞？”

在贝尔纳还没来得及开口之前，电梯停了。

“屋顶到了！”

电梯工长得像猴子，声音刺耳，个头很小，穿着黑色的束腰外套，半白痴伊普西龙减的标志。

“屋顶到了！”

他猛地打开大门，午后的温暖阳光让他吃了一惊，不由得眨了眨眼，“哦，屋顶到了！”他的语气里带着一种莫名的兴高采烈，好像从一片让人窒息的黑暗里突然快乐地苏醒过来，“屋顶到了。”

他冲着那些比他高出许多的客人们微笑，带着狗一样的崇拜表情。客人们说说笑笑地走出电梯，而电梯工一直目送他们离去。

“屋顶到了？”电梯工又说了一遍，不过这一次是问句。

电梯内一声铃响，天花板上的扩音器轻柔又威严地响起。

“下行，下行。十八楼。下行，下行。十八楼。下行……”

电梯工“砰”的一声关上门，按下按钮，电梯便又回到了一片狭窄的昏暗中，那才是他习惯到已经麻木的环境。

屋顶上温暖而明亮。夏日午后总是让人昏昏欲睡，尤其是加上过往的直升机“嗡嗡”的声音。上空五六英里处，火箭飞机加速飞过，发出更深沉的轰鸣，就像在抚摸温柔的空气。贝尔纳·马克斯深深地吸了口气，然后抬头看向天空，再看向四周蔚蓝的地平线，最后才把目光转到了列宁娜的脸上。

“真美！”他的声带颤抖着。

列宁娜对他投去了微笑，表情里有最深的同情和理解，“这个天气太适合玩障碍高尔夫，”她兴高采烈道，“现在我要飞了，贝尔纳。让亨利等太久他会发疯的。时间定好了记得通知我。”穿过平坦辽阔的屋顶，列宁娜挥着手走向了飞机库。贝尔纳依然留在原地，目光追随着她的白袜折射的光芒，捕捉着晒黑的膝盖走路时的活泼，观察着外套下合身的灯芯绒短裤柔软地起伏。他脸上逐渐露出了痛苦。

“不得不说她真漂亮。”一个洪亮又快活的声音说道。

贝尔纳吃惊得到处张望。本尼托·胡佛的大胖脸上堆满了笑容，真心诚意的笑容。本尼托脾气好，这是众所周知的。大家都说他可以一辈子不碰唆麻。一般人遇到那些倒霉事儿非得来个唆麻假日不可，而他从来都不介意，他的世界永远有明媚阳光。

“而且很丰满！可我不得不说，你啊，的确满脸的忧愁，你现在需

要一克唆麻，”本尼托从裤子右边的荷包里掏出一个小药瓶，“只需一小片，烦恼全不见……嘿！”

没等他说完，贝尔纳已经转过身匆匆走掉了。

本尼托目不转睛地看着他的背影，思忖道：“这家伙究竟怎么了？”他茫然地摇了摇头，决定相信关于那个可怜鬼的传言——代血浆里掺进了酒精。“伤害了大脑，我看是。”

他收起了唆麻瓶，掏出了一包性激素口香糖，拿出一片，塞进嘴里，纳闷地向飞机库慢慢走去。

亨利·福斯特已经把他的飞机从库里推了出来，等列宁娜走进时，他已坐入了驾驶舱里。

“迟到了四分钟。”当她爬上飞机坐下来时，他只说了这么一句。亨利发动引擎，挂好档，直升飞机直冲上天。一加速，螺旋桨尖锐的轰鸣声从马蜂变成了黄蜂，又从黄蜂变成了蚊子。仪表片上显示他们的飞机正以每分钟两公里左右的速度上升。伦敦突然变成了一座缩微模型。才几秒钟时间，巨大的顶楼停机坪变成一只蘑菇，在公园和花园的绿野间拔地而起。旁边还有一株个头苗条点儿的长型蘑菇，它的头部是发光的混凝土圆盘，那就是切林T字形塔楼。

就像神话中大力士的躯干，几朵巨大的白云飘浮在他们上方，游荡在蔚蓝色的天空里。突然，一只鲜艳的红色小虫落在了其中一位巨人的肩膀上，嗡嗡地鸣叫着。

“那是红色火箭，”亨利说，“刚从纽约飞来。”他看看表，“延误了七分钟，”他摇了摇头，“这些大西洋航班——一点也不准时，太可耻

了。”

他轻轻地抬起了脚，松开飞机加速器，头顶螺旋桨的轰鸣声又重新变成黄蜂、马蜂，然后是蜜蜂、金龟子、鹿角甲虫。飞机放缓了向上爬行的速度，过了会儿他们便悬浮在了空中，一动不动。亨利推了根杆，“咔嚓”一声，面前的螺旋桨开始旋转起来。由慢到快，而后越来越快，在眼前形成了一种圆形的光晕。水平方向上的风变得猛烈，声音也刺耳起来，这时他们前面的螺旋桨开始旋转起来。迎面而来的水平风吹得嗖嗖作响。亨利聚精会神地盯着仪表盘，当指针到达1200，便重新打开了头顶的螺旋桨。前冲力已经足够维持飞机继续在地球上飞行。

列宁娜低头，目光穿过双腿间的缝隙。从飞机底盘的窗户看下去，他们正飞行在公园区上方，公园区有六英里长，隔离了伦敦的中心城区和卫星城。绿地上仿佛爬满了密密麻麻的蛆虫。无数的调皮狗离心游戏塔组成了一座新的森林，穿插在树丛间闪着微光。在牧羊人森林旁边，两千对贝塔减的混双选手正在进行黎曼曲面网球赛。诺丁山-维尔施登的主干道两旁是五号自动扶梯球场。依林运动场上德尔塔们正在表演体操和集体歌曲。

“卡其色是多么丑陋的一种颜色啊。”列宁娜说，显然，睡眠教学在她身上很成功，她一直对自己的高种姓有优越感。

杭斯洛感官片摄制厂占地七公顷半。制片厂旁边有一队劳工正忙着为西大道重新铺设路面，他们穿着黑色和卡其色的制服，辛勤地工作。列宁娜和亨利飞过时，一个移动坩埚正好打开，流出了炽热滚烫的玻璃熔浆，发出耀眼的光芒。石棉压路机来来去去，绝缘洒水车开过的路上蒸腾起一片白茫茫的水雾。

在不伦特福德，电视机工厂俨然是座小镇。

“现在准是换班时间。”列宁娜说。

就像蚜虫和蚂蚁一样，身穿叶绿色制服的伽玛姑娘和黑色制服的半白痴们互相推挤着，有些在门口，有些则站在队伍中准备坐上单轨电车。紫红色制服的贝塔减在人群中走来走去。顶楼上直升机停停走走，一片生机勃勃的景象。

“说心里话，”列宁娜转头对亨利说，“幸好我不是个伽玛。”

十分钟后，他们来到了斯托克伯吉斯，开始了今天第一局障碍高尔夫。

贝尔纳急匆匆地走着，眼睛望着地上，不小心瞄到了人，便马上悄无声息地躲开。他好像正被敌人追捕，但他不想见到那些敌人的样子，唯恐他们比自己预想的更可怕。而他本人，则陷入一种深深的内疚和孤独中，无法自拔。

“可怕的本尼托·胡佛！”虽然那人的用心是好的，但只会把事情变得更糟。居心良好的人和居心不良的人做得一模一样。另外，列宁娜也让他备受煎熬。他还记得，在那几个星期里，他是多么希望能鼓起勇气问问她的决定，但是他不敢面对被拒绝的可能。那可是羞辱！假如她能同意，他又会多么的欣喜若狂啊！现在，虽然她已经明确表了态，可他却仍然不开心——列宁娜居然认为那个下午最适合用来打障碍高尔夫，还匆匆地跑去找亨利·福斯特。而且她应该会觉得他可笑，因为他不愿在公开场合谈论他们俩人最私密的事情。总之，他不开心，因为她和任

何一个健康、有道德的正常英格兰姑娘一样，那么平庸，毫无与众不同之处。

他打开自己的机库仓门，叫来一对正在闲逛的德尔塔减，让他俩把飞机推到屋顶上。这两个飞机库工人来自同一个波卡胚胎组，个头一样矮，皮肤一样黑，面容一样丑。贝尔纳用一种相当尖锐、傲慢甚至带有攻击性的语气发出指令，就像对自身的优越感不太有把握的人常常所做的那样。对贝尔纳来说，跟低种姓的家伙们打交道是一件非常痛苦的事。因为他的身高比阿尔法的标准身高低了八厘米，身材瘦弱，整个体型反倒是跟一般的伽玛差不多。到底是为什么，这里面的原因就不得而知了（代血浆里误加酒精的流言极有可能是真实的，毕竟这世界是由意外所构成）。和低种姓的人交往时，贝尔纳总是想起自己的身体缺陷。“我是我，可我却希望不是我。”强烈的自我意识压得他喘不过气来。每一次，当他发现自己是平视，而非低头看着一个德尔塔的脸时，他便禁不住感到备受侮辱。那家伙是以应有的尊重对待我吗？他对别的阿尔法也是这种态度吗？类似的问题日夜笼罩着他，让他辗转反侧。但这并非毫无道理的庸人自扰。因为低种姓的家伙们经过条件设置和睡眠学习，总是把社会地位与个子大小联系起来。事实上，正是由于睡眠教学里重复了无数次的真理，人们普遍更喜欢高个儿。所以他的矮让他追求的女人嘲笑他，和地位相同的男人看不起他。这些嘲笑使他觉得自己与他们格格不入。他是个局外人。既然以局外人自居，他的行为举止也愈发地与众不同起来。但这些不合群的动作反而让大家对他的偏见更加深了，他感受到了更多的轻视和敌意。这样一来，局外感和孤独感便愈发的深化。对于被轻蔑，他逐渐产生了一种惯性的害怕，于是他变得总是愿意回避他的同辈，处理下属的事情时愿意带上过分刻意的自尊。他对亨利·福斯特和本尼托·胡佛那些人充满了苦涩的妒忌。他们不需刻意用音量证明自己的尊严，和往常一样说话就可以让一个伊普西龙执行他

们的命令；他们心安理得地享受着优越的地位，在种姓制度里如此如鱼得水，自在无比。他们不去思考自我的位置，也完全忽略了自己环境的优越和舒适。

贝尔纳仿佛觉得那两个德尔塔减随从在推行飞机的时候有些不情愿，态度懒散。

“快！”贝尔纳急躁起来。随从中有人瞥了他一眼。从那双空洞的灰白色眼眸里，他感受到了一种野兽般的蔑视。“快！”他吼得更大声了，声音丑陋又刺耳。

终于，他爬上了飞机。一分钟，他便整装待发，向南边的河流那儿飞去。

好几个宣传局和情绪工程学院都位于舰队大街的六十层大楼里。地下室和最下面几层用于伦敦三大报的办公和印刷——《准点播报》（供高种姓人群阅读的报纸）、浅绿色的《伽玛报》及百分百单音节的卡其色《德尔塔镜报》。继续往上走，则分别是电视宣传局、感官片管理局和合成声与音乐局——一共占了二十二层。它们的上头是一些实验室和软垫房，供音轨作家和合成音乐作曲家创作精妙的乐曲。最上面的十八层则全部都是情绪工程学院的地盘。

贝尔纳降落在宣传大厦的楼顶。

“给下面的亥姆霍兹·沃森先生打个电话通知一下，”他命令门房的伽玛加，“就说贝尔纳·马克斯正在顶楼等候。”

他点了支烟，坐了下来。

电话打过去时，亥姆霍兹·沃森先生正在写作。

“跟他说我马上到。”他挂上了话筒，转身对秘书说，“这些东西就由你来收拾。”语气是一贯的公事公办，没有半点人情味。他对女秘书的灿烂微笑视而不见，站起身子，大步流星地走到了门边。

他是一个有力量的男人，胸膛厚实，肩膀宽阔，身材魁梧，行动迅速，步履矫捷而轻盈。脖子是根圆木，结实地撑起轮廓美丽的头颅，深色卷发，棱角分明，英俊非凡。正如他秘书乐此不疲重复的名言：每一公分都是个阿尔法加。他的职业是情绪工程学院写作系的讲师。在讲学的空当，他还是名情绪工程师。另外，他定期为《准点播报》撰稿，写感官剧剧本，而且精通口号和睡眠教学的技巧。

“能干，”这是他上司们的评价，“也许，（这时他们会摇摇头，意味深长地压低了嗓门）过分能干了点。”

的确，过分能干了点，他们没有错。智力上的超常给亥姆霍兹·沃森带来的后果和贝尔纳生理缺陷带来的后果很有些类似。身材矮小瘦弱让贝尔纳不愿和同伴们待在一起。这种关系上的疏远，不论从哪条现行的标准来看，都是心灵的负担，而这种负担更加剧了疏远。让亥姆霍兹意识到自己与众不同且十分孤独的，却是他出众的才干。两人都认同他们是孤独的个体。然而贝尔纳因为生理上的缺陷自始至终都在感受孤独，可亥姆霍兹·沃森的孤独却是最近的事儿，因为逐渐了解到自己的能干，他越来越明白他与周围的人完全不一样。这位自动扶梯壁球冠军，这位不知疲倦的情人（据说，不到四年，他就有过六百四十个不同的姑娘），这位可敬的委员，这位交际能手最近才突然明白：对他来说，游戏、女人、社交只能算是次等的好事。真正令他兴趣盎然的是另外一些事。到底是什么事呢？什么事呢？贝尔纳此行的目的正是跟他讨论这个问题。不过，鉴于亥姆霍兹总是滔滔不绝地发表他的意见，所以

我们可以说，贝尔纳只是来再次听听他朋友的谈话。

亥姆霍兹刚踏出电梯，便被合成声宣传局的三个迷人姑娘给拦住了。

“哦，亥姆霍兹，亲爱的，今天晚上在埃克斯穆尔高地公园，我们一起野餐。”她们哀求道。

他摇摇头，从包围圈中费力地挤了出来。“不行，不行。”

“我们没邀请别的男人，只有你。”

面对如此美妙的承诺，亥姆霍兹依然无动于衷。“不行，”他重复道，“我很忙。”话一说完，他便头也不回地走掉了。可姑娘们依旧不肯放弃，一直跟在他身后，直到他上了贝尔纳的飞机，最后“砰”的一声关上门，热情的女人们才放弃了追逐。不过，她们也并非对此没有怨言。

“这些女人！”飞机升上天空，亥姆霍兹摇了摇头，“这些女人！”“是呀，太可怕了！”贝尔纳附和着他的话，假惺惺地表示同意，其实自己恨不得像亥姆霍兹那样拥有那么多的姑娘和那么少的烦恼。他突然感受到一种强烈的自吹自擂的需要，“我要带列宁娜到新墨西哥州去。”他竭尽全力装出一副无所谓的样子。

“是吗？”亥姆霍兹对此毫无兴趣。沉默了片刻，他又继续说道，“这一两个星期，我推掉了所有的委员会会议，谢绝了所有的姑娘。这在学院里可引起了轩然大波，你根本无法想象那混乱的局面。不过，还是挺值得的。其结果是……”他犹豫了一下，“总之，他们很古怪，古怪。”

生理上的缺陷可能导致心理上的负担，但这过程似乎是可逆的。过

重的心理负担可以导致自我孤立，看不见听不到，拒绝外界的一切信息，生理上的欲望也被人为地消灭了。

旅程里余下的时间是在沉默中度过的。不过，当他们到达了贝尔纳的房间，在松软的气垫沙发上自在地躺下来之后，亥姆霍兹又开始了谈话。

他的语速很慢。“你是否曾经感觉到，身体里有种不知名的东西一直在等机会宣泄。某种你一直未曾使用的精力，就好像水都往下流成了瀑布，而不是形成漩涡。”他脸上充满了疑问。

“你是说，不一样的状况下人们会感受到不同的情绪吗？”

亥姆霍兹摇了摇头。“不完全是。我指的是，一种奇怪的感觉，有一些重要的话要说，也有力量去说，但我不知道要说什么，也不知道如何利用那股力量。如果有另一种写作的方式，或者能写一些其他的事情……”他沉默了一会儿，继续道：“你看，在说话方面，我是相当厉害的。我知道哪些话能让你突然间激动地蹦起来，像被针扎了一样。这些话听上去如此新颖，如此令人兴奋，虽然它们的实质不过是睡眠学习里重复了一万遍的道理。可是这样还不够。辞藻华丽是不够的，内容才是最重要的。”

“可是你话语里的内容都是好的，亥姆霍兹。”

“在它们行得通的时候，确实都是好的。”亥姆霍兹耸了耸肩，“可我的话不大行得通，在某种程度上它们甚至并不重要。我相信我可以做一些更重要的事情。是的，一些我认为会更迫切的事情。可究竟是什么呢？更重要的事究竟是什么？如果写的都是别人要求的东西，你怎么可能感受到迫切？语言像X光，如果使用得当，便能穿透一切，一读就觉

得洞悉了你的心。那是我努力教给学生的东西之一：如何让文字拥有匕首一般的力量。可是把一篇论《本分歌》或是芳香乐器最新发展的文章写得穿透有力又如何？而且，在写那些东西的时候，你真的能够入木三分吗？真的能够像最强劲的X射线吗？没有意义的东西难道你能写出意义来吗？这就是我想说的。我一再努力……”

“嘘！小声点！”贝尔纳忽然伸出一根指头警告；二人听了听，“我觉得门口有人。”他低声说。

亥姆霍兹踮起脚尖，轻轻地穿过房间，突然打开了门。没有任何人，当然没有。

“对不起，”贝尔纳觉得自己是傻瓜，尴尬极了，“我太紧张了，大概是这样。你知道的，当别人怀疑你，你也就开始怀疑别人了。”

贝尔纳擦了擦眼睛，叹了一口气，辩护的声音带着些伤感：“如果你知道我最近遭遇到的那些倒霉事就好了。”他的眼泪几乎都快流了出来，对自我的怜悯好像突然间一涌而出的泉水，“你要是知道就好了！”

亥姆霍兹·沃森感到一种莫名的不安。“可怜的贝尔纳！”他自语道。不过，同时他也在为这个朋友感到羞愧。他希望贝尔纳能拿出更多的尊严。

第五章

晚上八点，天黑了。斯托克波吉俱乐部大楼高塔上的扩音喇叭宣布又到了高尔夫球场的关门时间，那机器的声音简直比男高音还要美妙。列宁娜和亨利结束了游戏，一起朝俱乐部走去。托拉斯内外分泌中心的牧场上传来数千头牛的叫声，它们的荷尔蒙和奶一直作为原材料供应给伐恩汉皇家森林外的大工厂。

直升飞机的“嗡嗡”声填充了暮光里的每一道空隙。每隔两分半钟，铃声和气笛声便会响起，昭示着单轨轻轨列车的离开。这种列车是低种姓高尔夫球爱好者们唯一的交通工具，连接了球场与都市。

列宁娜和亨利坐上了飞机，在八百米处，亨利放慢了直升机螺旋桨的旋转速度，在逐渐模糊的景色里盘旋了一两分钟。贝恩汉沙滩的森林好像一片广袤的黑色水域，与西方明亮的海岸线融为一体。一道深红色的地平线预示着落日的最后一抹余晖也褪去了它的颜色。往上，天空是调色板，呈现着橘红到黄到水绿的渐变。往北越过森林，内外分泌工厂整栋大楼灯火通明，电的光辉和力量轻而易举地穿透了窗户。旁边的高尔夫球俱乐部大楼比工厂矮得多，那只是低种姓的营房。一道隔离墙为阿尔法和贝塔们划出了他们的小宿舍。通向单轨火车站台的路上仿佛有蚂蚁迁徙的队伍，黑压压的一片。仔细一看，那是低种姓的人们你推我搡地赶往站台。从玻璃拱门里，一列亮着灯的火车驶入了旷野。目光随着火车一直东行，穿过了暗黑的平原，停在了泥沼火葬场的宏伟建筑上。为了照顾夜间飞行的飞机安全，几束泛光灯打亮了四座高耸入云的烟囱，烟囱顶上还附带着暗红色的危险标志。这是一个路标。

“烟囱口那里阳台似的玩意儿是什么？”列宁娜询问道。

“磷回收，”亨利简洁地解释道，“火化后产生的气体通过烟囱排向天空。在气体上升的过程中，将有四道不同的工序对其进行处理。以前，人体火化的过程中， P_2O_5 （五氧化二磷）会全部流失，而现在，百分之九十八都能被收集起来再次利用。一个成年人可以提供一千五百克以上的五氧化二磷。英格兰每年消费的四百吨磷中绝大部分都来自这一途径。”亨利的脸上有种快乐的骄傲感，他是打心眼儿里为这项成就感到自豪，就好像那是由他亲手创造的一样。“想想在我们死了之后，还能对社会有益，这是多么值得高兴的事情！我们的尸体能帮助植物生长。”

此时，列宁娜已经把目光转向了别的地方，她俯瞰着正下方的单轨火车站。“我完全同意。但在帮助植物生长的方面，阿尔法和贝塔们并不能比恶心的低种姓们，比如伽玛、德尔塔、伊普西龙，发挥更大的力量。这难道不是件奇怪的事儿吗？”

“从理化的角度来看，人是平等的。而且，即使是伊普西龙也是社会不可或缺的部分。”

“即使是伊普西龙……”听到这些话语，突然间，一幕回忆浮现在了列宁娜的脑海中。那时她还很小，还是上学的年纪。一天夜里，她不知怎么地醒了过来，第一次，她发现了每次入睡后缠绕着她的喃喃细语。飞机上的列宁娜仿佛又一次地看到了那晚的月光，那一长排小小的白色的床；她又听到了那个温柔的声音，那声音说道：“每个人都为别人服务。我们离不开每一个人，即使伊普西龙也是有用的，我们离不开伊普西龙。每个人都为别人服务，我们离不开任何人……”（在无数的夜晚里这些话语被无数次地重复，遗忘它们成了不可能的任务。）列宁娜忆

起了当时她的害怕和惊讶，她是第一次体验到这些陌生的感觉；当时，她思考了半个小时，然后在这些无止境重复的话语的影响下，她的心灵又渐渐地得到了安慰，平静了下来，困意也又一次偷偷地向她袭去。

“我想伊普西龙们并不在意他们自己是不是伊普西龙。”她大声说道。

“这是当然的，他们不可能在乎。他们压根不知道做其他种姓人的感觉。但是我们在乎，因为我们有不同的条件设置，有不同的社会参数。另外，我们也有着不同的遗传。”

“真高兴我不是个伊普西龙。”

“可如果你是，你的条件设置也会让你为自己不是个贝塔、阿尔法而感激万分的。”亨利挂上了档，直升飞机向前冲去，飞往伦敦的方向。在他们身后，西方的暗红色和橙色几乎已经暗到看不见了，一大片乌云爬上了天空。当他们经过火葬场时，飞机被烟囱里冒出的热气托了起来，直到后来遇上了一团冷气流，才又降了回去。

“喔！在天空里上上下下，这感觉真棒！”列宁娜很开心。

但一时间，亨利的声音里有种类似忧伤的感情。“你知道这代表什么吗？有一个人永远地消失了，他化作了一股热气，升上天空。那是一个怎么样的人呢？男人还是女人，是个阿尔法还是个伊普西龙……”他叹了口气，然后声音变得愉悦而坚定，“无论如何，有一件事我们是确定的：不管他曾经是谁，在他活在这世上的时候，他很快乐很幸福。因为在现在这个时代，每一个人都又快乐又幸福。”

“是的，每个人都很幸福。”列宁娜附和着。曾经每天晚上，他们都

在睡眠学习里听着这些话，不断地重复重复，一百五十遍，一共十二年。

他们停在了亨利公寓楼的顶楼，这栋四十层的大楼位于威斯敏斯特大教堂。下了飞机，他们走进电梯，直接前往餐厅。在那儿，两人同一群喧闹开心的伙伴共度了美妙的晚餐时光。咖啡时间，唆麻是饭后甜点。列宁娜来了两颗半，亨利吃了三颗。九点二十，两人走到了街道另一边的威斯敏斯特大教堂歌舞餐厅，全新开张。天空里没什么云，月亮也藏匿起来，只有星星寥落地点缀着夜幕，但两人完全没意识到这幕冷清的景象。高空广告牌电力十足，光彩夺目，掩盖了天空的暗淡。“加尔文·司徒普和他的十六位萨克斯风手。”威斯敏斯特大教堂新的大门上，几个巨大的字邀请着每个路过的陌生人。“伦敦最佳色香乐队演奏——最新合成音乐”。

他们走了进去，空气里充溢着龙涎香和檀香的独特味道，让人觉得又热又闷，心浮气躁。大厅的天花板是球面的，色调转换器在那儿投射出了一幅热带地区落日的风景。十六位萨克斯风手正在演奏过去的一首经典歌曲：“没有瓶子比得上你，可爱的小瓶子，我最亲爱的。”在打过蜡的光滑地板上，四百对人正翩翩起舞。列宁娜和亨利走进了舞池，成了里面的第四百零一对。萨克斯风的呜咽像是月光下的小猫咪在对叫，男高音的吟唱则像是正在经历一场小小的死亡。这美妙的和声层次分明，颤抖的声音向上爬升，到达高潮，越来越高，越来越高——终于，随着指挥的一挥手，释放了这飘飘仙乐的最后一个破碎的音符，十六名乐手呆若木鸡般灵魂出窍。降A大调石破天惊，接着是一片宁静与黑暗，减弱的乐声在寂静与黑暗中以四分之一音的梯级逐渐下滑，下滑为如耳语般轻柔的主和弦。那和弦久久萦绕（背景音是四五拍子的旋律），把强烈的企盼寄托在了昏沉中的每一秒钟。最终，企盼实现了，

突然勾画出旭日东升的场面，十六个声音齐声高唱：

“我的瓶子，我永远需要你！

我的瓶子，为何我得换瓶出世？

在你的庇护下，天色蔚蓝，

在你的身畔，四季如春般温暖；

因为，

没有瓶子比得上你，

可爱的小瓶子，

我最亲爱的。”

一圈，一圈，又一圈。列宁娜和亨利在舞池里同他人一样的旋转，在威斯敏斯特大教堂里跳着五步圆舞曲，同时在另外一个世界里他们也在进行着美妙的舞步——唆麻假日世界，一个温暖、华丽又无限友好的世界。那个世界里的每一个人都内心无比善良，外貌无比优异，心情无比舒畅安详，每一个人！“我的瓶子，我永远需要你……”列宁娜和亨利已经拥有了他们需要的……他们在瓶子里，此刻，他们正安稳地待在里头，天气温暖如春，天空永远蔚蓝。但十六个乐手精疲力竭地放下萨克斯风后，音响里开始播放最新的马尔萨斯忧伤曲，他们俩变成了一对孪生胚胎，玻璃瓶里是一片代血浆的海洋，两人随着波涛轻柔地荡漾。

“晚安，亲爱的朋友们。晚安，亲爱的朋友们。”扩音器里响起了催促人们离场的号令，这号令却披着亲切悠扬的客套外衣。“晚安，亲爱

的朋友们.....”

众人一起离开了大楼。暗淡的天空里，星星，比起刚才，已经孤独地走了很长一段距离。尽管绝大部分高空广告牌都已经熄灭了，但丝毫也没有影响到两个年轻人的心情。他们依旧欢乐舒畅，忽略了夜晚的黑。

在舞会结束前的半小时，他们吞下了今天的第二剂唆麻。药效发挥，在现实世界和思维间筑起了一堵密不透风的墙壁。他们又回到了瓶子里，穿过了街道；在瓶子里，他们坐上了电梯，来到了二十八层楼的亨利的家。不过即便是在瓶子里，尽管列宁娜已经服用了两剂唆麻，她依然记得按规则做好所有的避孕措施，一条也没漏掉。多年的睡眠学习和训练了五年的马尔萨斯操，从十二岁到十七岁每周三次，让这些措施已经变成了肢体行为中天生的一部分，就像眨眼一样，不可回避也不可缺少。

“哦，这倒提醒了我，”从浴室出来的列宁娜说道，“法妮·克朗想知道，你送给我那条可爱的绿色摩洛哥皮药剂带，到底是从哪儿弄到的。”

每隔半个月的礼拜四，贝尔纳都要参加团结礼拜日的活动。在爱神会堂（最近，按照第二条款的要求，亥姆霍兹经过选举成为了这儿的管理委员会的委员）早早吃过晚餐，贝尔纳与朋友们道过别，登上了屋顶，坐进了一架计程飞机里，前往弗德森社区歌厅。飞机爬升了几百米后，开始向东行驶，转弯时，那庄严又宏伟的Singery大楼便映入了眼帘。泛光灯照亮了它的白色人造卡拉拉大理石外表，三百二十米的高

度，为所在的鲁德山增加了一个永远不灭的白色光环。大楼楼顶的停机坪四角各有一个巨大的T字架，在夜色里闪耀着暗红色的光芒，二十四个镀金大喇叭正因神圣的合成乐曲隆隆作响。

“见鬼，迟到了。”贝尔纳一眼就瞧见了大亨利钟上的时刻。在他掏出钱付账的时候，钟声就敲响了。“福”，金色的喇叭吟唱出了低沉又洪亮的调子，“福，福，福……”到第九下才停下来。贝尔纳急忙朝电梯跑去。

大楼底层是这一次弗德庆祝日与群众歌会的礼堂。礼堂上面是团结小组每半个月举行仪式的地方，每层一百个房间，像这样的房间整栋大楼一共有七千个。贝尔纳乘坐电梯下到了第三十三层，快速地穿过走廊，来到了三二一零室前。他在门口迟疑了一会儿，为自己鼓了鼓劲，开门走了进去。

谢天谢弗德！他不是最后一个。房间里，十二张椅子围成一圈，还有三张是空的。于是，他偷偷地溜到了最近的椅子旁边，并打算对后来人皱眉头。要知道，迟到可不是好事！

他刚坐下，左边的姑娘便转过身问道：“今天下午，你玩的什么？障碍高尔夫还是电磁球？”

贝尔纳望了她一眼（天哪！是莫甘娜·罗斯柴尔德），红着脸承认道哪个也不是。莫甘娜惊讶极了，望着他，不知说些什么才好。于是，两人陷入一阵尴尬的沉默。

她赶紧又转过身，和左边那个更爱运动的小伙子寒暄起来。

“真是一个相当好的开始。”贝尔纳觉得自个儿很悲催，预感到这一

回自我救赎的计划又失败了。如果刚才他不是匆匆忙忙地坐在这儿，而是先观察观察环境就好了！没准现在他的旁边就坐着菲菲·布莱德劳芙和乔安娜·迪塞尔了。可他却像瞎了眼似的让自己坐到了莫甘娜身旁。莫甘娜！我主弗德呀！瞧瞧她那两道黑眉毛！——或者，完全可以说是一道！因为它们可不像其他同类那样是分开的，即使是在鼻子上面，左右的眉毛仍然紧密地团结在一起。弗德！贝尔纳的右边是克莱拉·笛特汀。好吧，笛特汀倒是没有一字眉，可是她胖得已经有点过分了。菲菲和乔安娜倒是一切都刚刚好：凹凸有致的身形，一头美丽的金发，身高也恰如其分比他稍矮……而她俩中间，她俩中间坐的却是那个大笨蛋川口汤姆！

最后一位到场的组员萨落基尼·恩格斯姗姗来迟。

“你迟到了，希望这是最后一次。”组长严厉地批评道。

萨落基尼道了歉，溜到唯一空着的座位上，坐在了吉姆·波卡诺夫斯基和赫伯特·巴枯宁中间。人都到齐了，组成了一个毫无瑕疵的完美的团结圈。男，女，男……围绕着桌子，性别无穷地交替着。坐在一起的十二人共同等待着被融成一个统一的个体，为此他们愿意放弃自己独立的身份。

组长站起来，在胸前画了个T字，开启了合成音响，鼓点和乐器的合奏弥漫了整个房间，轻柔而舒缓。旋律不停地重复着，逃不开躲不掉。现在听到的，是团结圣诗第一章。一遍，一遍，又一遍，耳朵渐渐地失去了听觉，是腹部在感受着这激昂的节拍。圣诗里挥之不去的恸哭和尖叫，萦绕在，哦不，不是脑海，萦绕在每个人的恻隐之心中。

组长第二次在胸前画了道T字，然后坐了下来。仪式开始。中央的

桌子上放着大无畏的唆麻药片，传递着的爱之杯里放着草莓唆麻冰激凌。它从一只手流动到了另一只，伴随它还有一句不停被重复的口号“为我的覆灭干杯”，一共响起了十二回。然后在管弦乐队的伴奏下，大家一起唱起了团结圣诗第一章：

“弗德啊，让我们十二人变成共同体，

就像流入社会之河的水滴，

啊，现在就把我们变成共同体，

如您的汽车一样驰骋于这天地。”

十二节圣诗唱完了，爱之杯第二次被传递。这一回，口号变成了“为更大的生命干杯”。每个人都干了杯。不知疲倦的音乐继续着，鼓点继续着，旋律里的恸哭和嚎叫继续着，萦绕在慈悲的心间。第二章团结圣诗开始了。

“来吧，更大的生命，社会的朋友，

十二人的牺牲只为你的成就。

我们期待死亡，因为我们的挥手，

将换来更大的生命世间存留。”

又是十二个小节。现在，唆麻开始发挥作用。眼神在闪耀，面颊变红润，大爱之光化作每个人脸上的友善笑容。连贝尔纳都觉得自己被眼前的气氛所感染了。当莫甘娜·罗斯柴尔德回头对他微笑的时候，他也全力以赴地以微笑回报。但是那眉毛，那可怕又可笑的连成一道的眉

毛，一眼就能看到。贝尔纳做不到视而不见那眉毛，做不到，怎么努力也勉强不了。只能说，目前环境的感染作用对他是极为有限的。不过，如果他坐在了菲菲和乔安娜之间，也就.....爱情之杯第三次传递。“为他的降临干杯。”莫甘娜·罗斯柴尔德欢欣鼓舞地说道。传杯仪式正好从她那开始。喝过唆麻，她将爱之杯传给了贝尔纳。“为他的降临干杯。”贝尔纳重复着她的话，虔诚万分地试图去感受他的即将到来，但莫甘娜的那道眉毛仍然在他脑海里打转。对贝尔纳来说，他的降临还遥遥无期。他把杯子传给了笛特汀。“又要失败了，”他心想，“我就知道。”不过，他仍然竭尽全力地欢笑着。

又一轮传递的结束，组长举起了手，开始合唱团结圣诗第三章：

“感觉更大的生命如何降临！

欢乐吧，在欢乐里成为死亡的贵宾！

在音乐的鼓点里你我融合！

因为你是我，而我也是你！”

圣诗一节接着一节，声音开始颤抖，带着前所未有的激情。即将到来的降临就像天空里的电压。组长关上了音乐，最后一节的最后一个音符消失了，接下来是绝对的寂静——被伸展的期望在带电的生命里颤抖爬行。组长伸出了一只手；突然，突然出现了一个声音，一个浑厚强大的声音，它比所有人类的声音都要悦耳，都要丰富，都要温暖，都要富有爱与怜悯。这个美妙的、神秘的、超自然的声音出现在人们的头顶，它缓慢地说道，“哦，弗德，弗德，弗德。”声音渐渐地低了下来。对于每一个聆听者，一种奇异的温暖从心口涌现扩散至四肢的末端。他们热泪盈眶；他们的眼睛，他们的肺腑好像拥有了独立的生命，在身体内部

自由地移动。“弗德！”他们融化了，“弗德！”分解了，消失了。那个声音突然变了个调，像喇叭一样震惊。“听！听！”他们听着。停顿了一下，那声音又变成了低声的私语，可那私语却比最大声的哭号拥有更多打动人心的力量。“更大的生命的脚步，”它继续道，又重复了一遍，“更大的生命的脚步。”那私语几乎快听不见了。“它的脚步就在楼梯上”，又一次，绝对的寂静；暂时放松的期待又一次被拉紧了，越来越紧，越来越紧，几乎到了撕裂的边缘。更大的生命的脚步，他们听到了，他们听到了，轻柔地走下了台阶，走下了那看不见的台阶，离他们越来越近。他的脚步。突然间期待的断裂点到达了。瞪大了眼睛，张大了嘴巴，莫甘娜·罗斯柴尔德突然跳了起来。

“我听见他了，”她哭叫道，“我听见他了。”

“他来了。”萨落基尼·恩格斯尖叫道。

“是的，他来了，我听见了。”菲菲·布莱德劳芙和川口汤姆同时跳了起来。

“哦，哦，哦！”乔安娜激动得说不出话来。

“他来了！”吉姆·波卡诺夫斯基大声喊道。

组长往前一弯，按下按钮，室内顿时响起了铙钹和铜管的呓语，以及手鼓的急响。

“啊，他来了！”克莱拉·笛特汀尖叫道。“啊！”她的喉咙仿佛被什么东西割断了。

贝尔纳觉得自己也应该做点什么表示表示，连忙跳了起来，大声叫道：“我听见他来了，他来了。”可那不是真的，他什么也没听见。对贝

尔纳来说，谁也没有来。没有人，尽管有音乐，尽管大家越来越激动。不过，虽然什么也没听到，但贝尔纳还是挥着他的胳膊，跟着大家一起欣喜地尖叫。当别人开始手舞足蹈的时候，他也加入了进来。

十二个人围成圈跳起舞来，每个人的手都搭在前边人的屁股上，一圈又一圈，齐声呼喊，跟着音乐的节奏跺着脚，手也跟着前奏拍打着前边人的屁股；十二双手像一双手一样，虽然都拍打着前面的屁股，却只响起了一个声音。十二个人是一个人，十二个人是一个人。“我听到了，我听到他来了。”音乐加快了，脚下的舞步加快了，按节奏击打的手也加快了。突然，巨大的合成声音低沉地宣布救赎的降临和团结的实现，即将到来的十二合一，更伟大生命的代表。“狂欢吧！放纵吧！”那低音歌唱道，手鼓又一次敲起，奏出了激昂的节拍：

“狂欢吧放纵吧！弗德和欢乐，

亲亲姑娘们，把她们变成一个；

男男女女静静地拥抱着；

狂欢和放纵，解脱一切的坎坷。”

“狂欢吧放纵吧，”十二个人渐渐地和唱了起来，“弗德和快乐，亲亲姑娘们……”唱着唱着，灯光慢慢变暗了——暗了，同时变得更温暖、更丰润、更鲜红，最后变成了胚胎库里那种暗红的颜色。十二个人在这暗红的暮光里共舞。“狂欢吧放纵吧……”在血红的颜色和胚胎瓶似的昏暗里，他们继续转圈，继续舞蹈，继续敲打出永不疲倦的节拍。“狂欢吧放纵吧……”温柔地，那低沉的声音在浅唱在低语；在红色的暮光里好像出现了一只巨大的黑色鸽子仁慈地盘旋在正低头抬首的人群上空。

他们站在屋顶上；大亨利钟刚刚敲响了十一点的钟声。这个夜晚宁静而温暖。

“棒极了，不是吗？”菲菲·布莱德劳芙说。“真的棒极了，不是吗？”她兴高采烈地望着贝尔纳，可这欢乐里丝毫没有激动和兴奋的痕迹——因为兴奋意味着贪得无厌仍不满足。她有的是达到圆满之后那种平静的狂喜，她的宁静，绝非因为苍白而空洞的满足感，而是那种生活平衡、精力充沛、万事和谐时才能感受到的宁静状态。一种丰富而充满生机的宁静。因为团结祈祷式既是给予也是索取，拿掉是为了再填满。她变得更充实，更完美，不再仅仅是她自己。“你不觉得这一切都很棒吗？”她看着贝尔纳的脸，眼睛里闪烁着超越自然的光亮。

“当然，我认为这非常棒，”他撒了谎，把视线移开看向别处；看到她那张变形的脸对贝尔纳是一种指控，是在讽刺着他的异常。贝尔纳现在的孤独感和仪式开始前一些深，他的内心的空洞没有得到丝毫的填充。在别人融合成更伟大的生命的时候，他却置身事外，没有赎罪；即使在莫甘娜的怀抱里，他却感到比此生任何时刻都要多得多的无望的孤独。灯光从深红变回明亮时，他的自我意识已经强烈到让他觉得痛苦不堪。他很不幸，也许，也许这是他自己的错（她明亮的眼睛仿佛在指责他）。“棒极了，”他重复道，但他此时唯一能想到的却只有莫甘娜的眉毛。

第六章

“另类，另类，很是另类，”列宁娜是如此评价贝尔纳·马克斯的。“着实太另类了”，这使得她在之后的几个星期内不止一次考虑是否要改变跟他去墨西哥的计划，也许应该和本尼托·胡佛同前往北极。不过，她已然去过北极了，就在去年夏天跟乔治·埃泽去的，而且觉得那儿异常痛苦。整天无所事事，毫无新鲜趣味可言，旅馆又土得要命，卧房内既没有设电视，也没有芳香风琴，唯独有那恶心的合成音乐，二十五个自动扶梯壁球场要容纳两百多人。显然，她再也不想去北极了。话说回来，她也曾走马观花式地游过美国一程，不过未玩尽兴。她当时在纽约度过的那个周末简直毫无档次可言的，跟让·雅克·哈比布拉或跟波坎诺夫斯基·琼斯一起，具体是谁她已经想不起来了。不过，这点不重要。因此，再飞一趟西部，并足足地呆上一个星期的旅游计划，这倒是很吸引她。而且在此期间会安排至少三天在野蛮人（指印第安人）居留区度过。整个中心只有六七个人去过那儿，其中阿尔法加心理学家贝尔纳，就是少数具有批准资格的人之一。对列宁娜来说，这机会难得。也难得碰见如此另类的贝尔纳，所以她犹豫不决。其实她还真想过要不要顶风尝试一次，和那搞怪的老本尼托再去北极一次。至少本托尼还算正常，而贝尔纳却.....

“代血浆里掺了酒精”，每当法妮认为别人的举动古怪时，她就会这么说。一天晚上，列宁娜和亨利一起过夜。睡觉前，她有些焦虑地说起了她那位新恋人，可怜的贝尔纳，不过亨利则认为这人简直是头犀牛。

“难道你能教会犀牛变戏法？”他精简有力地点评道，“连条件设置都不能正常反应的人，还真跟犀牛差不多，可怜的家伙！贝尔纳就是其中一个。如果不是他的业务做得还行，主任早就开除他了。不过，我觉得他还过得去。”他安慰性地加了一句。

也许是过得去，不过还是够令人发愁的。首先他有一个怪癖，就是总喜欢私下行动，说白了就是无所事事。私人活动有什么意思呢（上床除外，不过一个人总不能整天耗在床上吧）。实际还真没什么可干。他们俩第一次出去约会，那天下午天气明朗怡人，列宁娜想先去牛津联会吃饭，再去托开乡村俱乐部游泳，但是贝尔纳觉得人太多。于是列宁娜又提议去圣安德鲁打电磁高尔夫，但贝尔纳仍然不愿意，认为玩电磁高尔夫是浪费时间。列宁娜诧异地问道：“那你的时间是用来干什么的？”

当然是去湖边散个步。贝尔纳这么想也这么提议了：在苏崎岛上岸，然后去石楠林里转转。“只有你和我，只有我们，列宁娜。”

“可是我们整个晚上都将单独相处，贝尔纳。”

贝尔纳脸红了，望了望别处。“我是说，单独聊聊天。”他小声说。

“聊聊？有什么好聊的呢？”把一个美好的下午用来散步和聊天，是多么奇怪呀。

她最终说服了贝尔纳，虽然他还是极其不情愿。不过，他们还是一起飞到了阿姆斯特丹去看女子重量级摔跤比赛四分之一决赛。

“哪儿都是人，”他小声地埋怨道，“这和平常有什么两样？”整个下午他都闷闷不乐，不愿跟列宁娜的朋友们说话（在摔跤比赛期间，去唆麻冰激凌店时，他们遇见了一群列宁娜的朋友）。尽管他很不开心，却

断然拒绝了列宁娜硬塞给他的半克树莓唆麻冰激凌。“我宁愿做我自己，”他说，“就算自己讨人嫌，也不想效仿他人的生活，即使他们很快乐。”

“及时一克唆麻，胜过平时九克。”列宁娜引用了睡眠教学中传授的宝贵智慧。

贝尔纳心里很不耐烦，推开了她递来的杯子。

“现在可别放任你那坏脾气，”她说，“记住，‘只需一小片，烦恼全不见’。”

“看在弗德的分上，别胡闹了。”他叫了出来。

“一克唆麻，好过烦恼。”列宁娜耸了耸肩膀，庄重地做了结论，吃光了所有冰激凌。

回程时，路过英吉利海峡，贝尔纳坚持要关掉推进器，靠直升机的螺旋桨盘旋于海浪上空一百英尺的地方。天气开始变糟，刮起了西南风，天空也愈发地阴郁。

“看外面。”他指示道。

“真可怕。”列宁娜从窗口缩了回来。她很害怕，害怕夜色中飞驰的空虚，害怕身下汹涌的黑浪，害怕乌云里时隐时现的苍白的月亮。这一切都令人毛骨悚然。“把收音机打开！快点儿！”她伸出手去找仪表盘上的旋钮，随即拧开。

“.....你心中的天空如此蔚蓝，”十六个震颤的假音，“万里无.....”

那声音像打了个嗝，停了下来——贝尔纳把电源关了。

“我想安静地观海，”他说，“那种繁杂的噪音会抹灭人看海的心情。”

“我觉得这音乐很好听，而且我没兴趣看海。”

“但我想看，”他坚持地说，“海让我感觉.....”他稍作犹豫，“寻思着用什么话语来表达自己的意思，‘更像我自己了，如果你能听懂的话。就好像自己能够决定自己，而非完全从属于别人，不仅仅是社会集体的一个细胞。你也会这么想吗，列宁娜？’”

列宁娜却惊叫了起来。“太可怕了，太可怕了！不愿意做社会中的一员？你居然说出了这样的话。每一个人都应该为别人服务，因为没有别人我们就会一事无成。就连伊普西龙.....”

“对，我知道。”贝尔纳不无嘲讽地说，“‘就连伊普西龙也可以利用’，我也可以利用。他妈的，我真恨不得自己是没有用处的废物！”

他言辞中流露出的亵渎意味让列宁娜震惊极了。“贝尔纳！”她用惊诧且痛苦的声调抗议道，“你怎么能这样说？”

“我为什么不能这样说？”他沉思了片刻，换了一种语调说，“不，主要的问题是在于：我为什么不能讲？或者这么说吧——我清楚地知道我为什么不能讲——如果我能讲会怎么样呢？如果我是自由的，不为条件设置所奴役，会怎么样？”

“但是贝尔纳，你的这些言论实在太可怕了。”

“你不想要自由吗，列宁娜？”

“我没明白你的想法，我始终是自由的，有享受美好时光的自由。如今每个人都幸福快乐。”

他大笑道：“没错，‘如今每个人都幸福快乐’，从孩子五岁开始我们就这样教育他们。可是，你不想换一种方式自由地拥有幸福吗，列宁娜？你自己选择的幸福。不是和其他人都一样的方式，而是你自己的方式。”

“我不明白你想说什么。”她转过身，声音里带着哀求，“我们回去吧，贝尔纳。这个地方让我厌恶。”

“跟我在一起你不开心吗？”

“当然开心，贝尔纳。只是这个可怕的地方让我讨厌。”

“我还以为在这儿我们能……更加接近彼此——你看这儿，除了大海和月亮，别无他物，比在人群里接近得多，甚至比在我屋里还接近。你明白吗？”

“我什么都不明白。”她语调坚定，绝对不能让她的“蒙昧”受污染。“什么都不明白。”她换了个语调，“当那些糟糕的念头出现时，为什么不吃点唆麻？那样你就能把它们通通忘掉，剩下的就只有快活，无比地快活了。”列宁娜妩媚地笑了笑，试图以这种性感淫逸的方式来劝服他，尽管她的眼神里仍然流露出一种迷惑的焦虑。

他一声不响，严肃坚定地盯着她，毫无反应。几秒钟后，列宁娜收回了她那期待着的眼神，发出一声无预兆的短笑，试图找出新话题，却无能为力。僵持在沉默中。

贝尔纳终于开口了，声音低沉而疲惫。“好吧，”他说，“我们回去吧。”他狠劲地踩下加速器，像火箭似的冲上了天空。在四千米高的时候他开始启动螺旋桨，两人在天上沉默地飞行了一两分钟，贝尔纳突然大笑起来。列宁娜觉得他笑得很奇怪，但不管怎样，他终究是笑了。

“感觉好些了吗？”她鼓起勇气问。

他的回答是，从操纵器上抬起一只手，环抱住她，开始抚摸她的乳房。

“谢天谢弗德，”她心想，“他恢复正常了。”

半小时后他们回到了贝尔纳的房间里。一口气吞下四片唆麻的贝尔纳，打开收音机和电视，便开始解衣。

第二天下午两人在屋顶上约会时，列宁娜很调皮地问道，“怎样，你觉得昨天玩得尽兴吗？”

贝尔纳点点头。二人上了飞机。一阵微震后，出发了。

“大家都说我很丰满。”列宁娜拍着双腿，若有所思地说。

“是很丰满！”可是贝尔纳的眼神中却流露出痛苦，“像一团肉。”他心想。

列宁娜有些焦急地抬头看他，“你不会是嫌我太胖吧？”

他摇摇头。但心里想的却是：像一堆肉。

“你觉得我好吗？”他还是点点头。“任何地方都好吗？”

“简直完美无瑕。”他大声说道，但心里却想，“这是她定义自己的方式。她并不介意自己是一团没有灵魂的肉。”

列宁娜露出了胜利的笑容，但是她得意得太早。

“尽管如此，”贝尔纳稍作停顿后说，“我仍然希望我们昨天不是那样结束的。”

“不那样结束？还能有别的形式结束吗？”

“我不希望是用我俩上床的方式结束。”他清楚地解释。

列宁娜猛然一惊。

“不是马上上床，前一天就上床。”

“那应该是怎么样？”

他开始说很多晦涩难懂又极其危险的胡话，列宁娜想方设法阻止那些胡言乱语钻进她的大脑，可总是有漏网之鱼。“.....试试控制我的冲动会有什么结果，”她听着，心灵的某根弦似乎被触动了。

“及时行乐。永远别把欢乐推迟。”她郑重地说。

“每周两次，从下午两点到四点半，每次重复两百遍。”他这样评价。他继续肆意发表着疯狂的谬论，“我想知道什么是激情，我想感受一些强烈的东西。”

“个人动了感情，社会就会动荡。”列宁娜说道。

“让社会晃一下有什么不好？”

“贝尔纳！”

但是贝尔纳丝毫未感到羞耻。

“成年人是理智和工作，”他接着说，“感觉和欲求是孩子。”

“弗德喜欢孩子。”

对于她的插话，他未予理会。“那天我突然觉得，”贝尔纳继续说道，“想一直持续成年人状态还是有可能的。”

“我不懂。”列宁娜态度强硬。

“我知道你不会懂的。我们昨天上了床，像孩子一样，成人会懂得等待。”

“可是很好玩，”列宁娜坚持己见。“难道不是吗？”

“好玩到极致了。”他答道，然而声音里有出乎寻常地悲切，表情里深藏着挣扎与痛苦。列宁娜的胜利感瞬间烟消云散，也许，他就是嫌她太胖了吧。

“我早就跟你说过。”列宁娜找法妮倾诉遭遇时，法妮如是说，“这一切都是因为他的代血浆里掺多了酒精。”

“无论如何，”列宁娜口气很肯定，“我确实喜欢他。他那双手——简直是太棒了。还有他耸动肩膀的样子——真令我心醉神迷，”她叹了一口气，“要是他不那么另类就好了。”

在主任办公室门口站了一会儿的贝尔纳，深吸了一口气，端正了身姿，准备迎接即将到来的抵触和反对——他知道进了这屋后这一切都是不可避免的。他敲敲门，便走了进去。

“有份证件请您签字批准，主任。”把证件放在写字台上，他尽可能轻快地说。

主任看他的眼神里流露出不满，但这证件上方是世界总统办公室的大印，下方则是穆斯塔法·蒙德总统阁下的亲笔签名，笔迹又粗又黑，遒劲有力。材料里的每一项都清清楚楚，主任根本没有办法拒绝，只能用铅笔签上了他姓名的首字母——在穆斯塔法·蒙德下面签上。两个灰色的字母立在那里，显得卑微无助，寒碜极了。他本打算沉默地将证件还给他，却无意中瞄到了正文里的几句话。

“你要去新墨西哥的保留地？”他抬头看着贝尔纳，一脸焦虑和惊讶。他的惊讶使贝尔纳觉得很诧异，他点点头。屋子里陷入了片刻的沉默。

主任身子往椅背一靠，皱着眉头说：“那事儿到现在多少年了？”与其说他在跟贝尔纳说话，不如说他在自言自语。“我看有二十年了。不对，应该多少有二十五年了。当时我的年纪应该与你相仿……”哎，他长叹了口气，接着摇了摇头。

贝尔纳感到很别扭。像主任那样传统守旧循规蹈矩的人，竟然会这般地失态！他简直想埋头跑出屋去。这倒不是因为他见不得别人回忆过去——那种偏见完全是出于睡眠教学的训练，是他（自认为）早已经完全摆脱了的。让他觉得窘迫的是主任不赞成这事——但是，既然不同意，为什么又背叛原则，去做被严令禁止的行为呢？受到了什么内在驱

动力吗？虽然别扭，贝尔纳还是迫不及待地想听下去。

“那时，我恐怕和你有一样的主意，”主任说道，“想见识下野蛮人。拿到了去新墨西哥的批准书之后，我打算跟当时的女朋友一起去那儿度暑假。她是一个贝塔减，我想。”（他双眼微闭）“我觉得她的头发应该是黄色的，总之很丰腴，特别的丰腴，妩媚动人，这些我都记忆犹新。嗯，我记得我们在那经历了很多，看到了野蛮人，也骑马到处跑。然而，大概就是在假期最后一天，她不见了。我们俩在山上骑马，天气出奇地闷热，让人窒息。吃过饭，我们就去午睡。至少我的确是睡了。她应该是一个人出去溜达。反正，当我醒来时她并没在房间。当时，一场可怕的暴风雨正凶猛地袭过来，雷电交加，倾盆暴雨。我们的马也乘机挣脱缰绳逃走了。我本想勒住它们，却不慎摔倒弄伤了膝盖，根本走不了什么路。可我还是边喊边找，边找边喊，却连个人影都没有见着。我猜没准她已经一个人回去了，于是又沿原路爬下山谷。中间，我受伤的膝盖疼得不行，可唆麻又被我弄丢了。走了几个小时，直到深夜，我才终于回到住处，可是她还是不在，还是不在。”主任不断重复着，沉默片刻。“嗯，”他还是继续说了下去，“第二天我又开始找，但她依旧杳无音讯。她一定是在什么地方失足掉进山沟了，或是喂了山中的狮子。只有弗德知道！总之，那真是可怕极了，悲痛欲绝，我敢说肯定超出了应有的极限——毕竟，这种意外是有可能发生在每个人身上的；不过就算构成社会的细胞发生变化，整个社会集体仍然可以永世留存。”然而，睡眠教学的安慰作用似乎不大凑效。主任摇了摇头，“事实上，我还是时不时地梦见这段经历，”他的声音变得很低沉，“在梦里面，我被震耳的雷声吓醒，但她却不见了；在梦里面，我自己一个人在树下不断地寻找再寻找。”他缄默了，似乎精神还停留在那段回忆里。

“您一定受到了严重的惊吓。”贝尔纳近乎嫉妒地说道。

听到了贝尔纳这番话，主任才突然意识到自己方才的失态，一种罪恶感开始悄悄滋生。他瞥了贝尔纳一眼，小心地回避着他的眼神，脸上一片通红；又瞥了他一眼，突然产生了疑心，更为自己刚才说了那么多有失身份的话而气愤。“别想歪了。”他说，“别以为我跟那姑娘有什么不得体的联系。我们之间没有情感，更没有扯不清的关系，一切都很正常，很健康。”他把签过名的批准书还给了贝尔纳。“我真想不通自己怎么会用这件琐碎的往事打扰你。”他有些恼羞成怒，埋怨自己透露了一个不光彩的秘密，却又把怒气撒到了贝尔纳身上。主任的目光里突然透出明显的恶意。“趁此机会，我想告诉你，马克斯先生，我收到了你的业余时间行为的报告，对此我很不满意。你可能觉得这事与我无关，可这就是我的职责。我得维护本中心的名誉。我不能接受这里的工作人员受到质疑，尤其是最高种姓的人。阿尔法有特殊的条件设置，即他们在情感上不一定要像婴孩，可正是如此，他们才更应该努力遵守规则。就算自身不情愿，也应该承担责任，要表现得像个婴儿一样。正是这样，马克斯先生，给你一个郑重的警示。”他的声音颤抖起来，之前出自尴尬而产生的怒气已经消失了，现在是因为正义感和无私而愤怒，好像是代表社会在进行谴责。“如果我再次听到你违背行为规范，我会申请把你调走，去下级中心——最好是冰岛。再见。”他抓起笔写了起来。

“这样可以好好教训下他。”主任心想。不过显然，他的设想太过美好。贝尔纳“砰”的一声关上门，大摇大摆、欣喜若狂地走出房间，他为自己孤军一人挑战现有的社会规则而骄傲无比。他突然深刻地意识到自己的存在和重要性，陶醉于其中，愈发兴奋。就算即将面临困境他也不会妥协，反而会更精神抖擞。他觉得自己有足够的力量去面对困难，战胜困难，甚至有能力和冰岛。他之所以这么自信，也是因为他不相信人家真的会让他去面对这些。没有人会因为这种理由而被调离岗位。关于冰岛，那只不过是一种恐吓，一种激发斗志、振奋精神的恐吓。他在

走廊里大步向前，居然还吹起了口哨。

英勇豪迈——这是他对当天会见主任时的自我表现所做的评述。“随后，”他用此段话做了总结，“我就是告诉他滚回过去的无底洞吧，然后大步流星地离开。如此而已。”他热切地望着亥姆霍兹·沃森，等待着他的同情、鼓励和钦佩。可是亥姆霍兹却一言不发，安静地坐那儿，盯着地板。

他一直喜欢贝尔纳；也很感激他，因为在他所相识的人群里，他是唯一一个能跟他探讨一些重要话题的人。不过，贝尔纳身上也有让他厌恶的缺点，比如他总爱吹牛，夸夸其谈，但有时身上又会出现一种带奴性的自哀。他还有个可悲的毛病，爱在事后充英勇、冷静。可正是因为亥姆霍兹喜欢贝尔纳，他才讨厌这些毛病。时间一分一秒地走着，亥姆霍兹还是呆呆地看着地板。贝尔纳突然脸红了，转过身去。

一路风平浪静。蓝太平洋火箭提前两分半钟到达新奥尔良，过德克萨斯州时遇上龙卷风延误了四分钟，在西经九十五度又幸运地遇上顺行气流，所以最终到达圣塔菲时只比原定时间迟了四十秒钟。

“六个半小时的航程只迟到四十秒，还不错。”列宁娜赞赏道。

那天晚上他们睡在圣塔菲。旅馆豪华得无与伦比，列宁娜去年夏天住过的极光宫和这里完全无法相提并论。房间里配备了液态空气、电视、真空振动按摩、收音机、热咖啡因液、避孕用品，连卧室的香水都有八种，贴心极了。进大厅时合成音响正播放着美妙的乐曲，让他俩顿时觉得能住在这里真是件幸运的事情。电梯里还贴着张通知，告诉客人旅馆里设有六十个自动扶梯壁球场，公园里还能玩障碍高尔夫和电磁高

尔夫。

“听起来美妙极了！”列宁娜赞叹道，“我真希望能常住于此。有六十个自动扶梯壁球场.....”

“保留地可一个都没有，”贝尔纳提醒她，“也没有香水和电视，甚至连热水都没有。你要是不能忍受，最好是待在这儿等我回来。”

列宁娜不由得生气了：“我百分百能受得了。我只是说这儿很好，因为.....因为进步总是美好的，对不对？”

“从十三岁到十七岁，每周都要重复五百次。”贝尔纳小声说道，像是自言自语般，声音里有种显而易见的厌倦。

“你在讲什么？”

“我是说进步是美好的，所以你没有必要去保留地，除非你真心想去。”

“可是我是真想去。”

“好吧。”贝尔纳说，这句话像是一种恐吓。

他们的批准书需要保留地的总督签字，第二天一大早两人就来到了总督的办公室。一个伊普西龙加黑人门房把贝尔纳的名片送了进去后，很快就被准许接见了。

那是个金头发白皮肤的阿尔法减，小个儿，大圆脸，面色红润，肩膀宽阔，他的声音洪亮有磁性，十分适合用来表现睡眠教学里的深刻道理。他像是一座矿藏，里头全是不相关的信息和没有用的建议，一旦开

启了话题，他就没完没了地开始说起来。

“.....把五十六万平方公里明确地划分成了四块保留区，区与区之间界限明确，由高压电网隔离。”

这一刻，毫无原因地，贝尔纳突然想起了在离开家时他忘了关掉浴室的古龙水龙头，香水还在不停地喷洒。

“.....是由大峡谷水电站保证隔离网高压电的供应。”

“等到我回去时肯定已经白白地流掉好多钱了。”他仿佛看见了香水仪表上的指针还在一圈圈地走着，好似蚂蚁般地不知疲倦。“我得赶快跟亥姆霍兹·沃森通个话。”

“.....有五千多公里电网，电压则为六千伏特。”

“不可能吧？”列宁娜客气地说。实际上她并不明了总督究竟说什么，只是从他那戏剧性的停顿中得到了某种暗示而已。她在总督的大嗓门开闸之前就已经偷偷地吞服了半克唆麻，因此才可以心平气和地坐那儿，充耳不闻，神游太虚，不过还是得保持用她那蓝色的大眼睛故作认真地盯住总督的脸。

“一旦接触电网，顷刻即亡！从保留地里溜出去那就更不可能了。”

“溜”这个字给了他一种暗示。“也许，”贝尔纳挺直身子，准备站起来，“我们得告辞了。”那小黑针正快步急走着，像一只饥虫，侵蚀着时间，也侵蚀着他的钱。

“溜出去是不可能的。”总督反复地说着，摆手示意他们回到自己的位子上。贝尔纳也只得照做，毕竟批准书的字还没签。“所有出生在保

留地的人，记着，可爱的女士，”他颇为猥琐地盯着列宁娜，轻浮地低声说道，“记着，在保留地，孩子还是胎生的。没错，虽然这很叫人厌恶，但他们确实是生下来的……”（他希望列宁娜会因为这个下流的话题而脸红，岂料她只是机械性地微笑说道：“不可能吧。”总督大失所望，只得继续说下去。）“我得强调：生在保留地的人，死也注定要在这个地方。”

注定会死……一分钟十分之一升古龙香水，一小时就是六升。“也许，”贝尔纳又想告辞，“我们应该……”

这时，总督弯下身子，食指叩了叩桌子，“如果你问我有多少人住在保留地，那么，我的回答将会是”——他不禁得意起来——“我不知道，只能靠猜测。”

“真的吗？”

“我可爱的女士，是真的。”

六乘以二十四……不，应该有六乘以三十六了。贝尔纳脸没了一丝血色，焦急得发颤。可那个“嗡嗡”的说话声还在无情地唠叨中。

“……差不多有六万印第安人和混血儿……都是百分百的野蛮人……我们的监察官偶尔会去视察……在此之外，与文明世界便无丝毫交集……那里至今还保留着他们那些令人作呕的习惯和风俗……婚姻，如果你明白是什么意思的话，可爱的女士；还有家庭……没有条件设置……极端荒谬的迷信行为……基督教、图腾崇拜还有祖先崇拜……早已灭绝了的语言，比如祖尼语和西班牙语、阿萨巴斯卡语……美洲狮、箭猪和其他凶猛的动物……传染病……祭司……毒蜥蜴……”

“不可能吧。”

最终，他们总算得以脱身。贝尔纳飞奔到电话前。快！快！可单拨通亥姆霍兹的电话就浪费了他将近三分钟。“我们是已经在野蛮人中间了吗？”他埋怨道，“真他妈没效率！”

“要不来一克吧。”列宁娜好心提议。

他不肯，宁愿在那生气。后来，感谢弗德，终于通了，是亥姆霍兹。他向亥姆霍兹讲述了刚发生的事，亥姆霍兹允诺即刻去关龙头，即刻去，好，马上去。不过亥姆霍兹也趁此时告知了他关于昨天夜里主任在开会时做的讲话……

“你说什么？他正寻找人来替代我？”贝尔纳的语气显得很苦涩。“已经确定了吗？他提及调往冰岛的事没？他真的提到了？哦，弗德！那可是冰岛啊！……”他挂了电话，转身对着列宁娜，面色苍白，表情极端沮丧。

“出什么事了？”她问。

“什么事？”他往后一靠，无力地倒在椅子上，“我将被调到冰岛去了。”

他曾多次设想过要经受一些严峻的考验（是靠他的内在力量，不用唆麻），体验如临深渊般的痛，尝试遭受迫害的感觉，寻找苦难的感觉。就是一周前，在主任的办公室里，他还想象过自己实行了伟大的反抗，坚忍地默默承受了苦难。主任的威胁反而让他兴奋，让他觉得自己的形象伟岸多了。可是直到现在他才意识到，他实际并未认真地思考过主任的恐吓言辞。因为他根本就不相信，主任会对此实施任何手段。如

今看来，那恐吓要变为现实了。贝尔纳面如白纸，惊愕不已，他那想象中的坚忍和勇气此时早已消退得无影无踪。

他跟自己生起气来——真是个蠢货！——敢跟主任对着干——真不公平，居然没给他再一次机会。如果有第二次机会，他绝对会全力以赴争取的。可是冰岛，冰岛……。

列宁娜摇了摇头。“过去和未来都叫我痛苦，”她引用道，“吞下唆麻现在就幸福。”

最终他被她说服，吞下了四片唆麻。五分钟以后，一切烦恼之根果皆消除，只剩下当下之花正灿烂地绽放。门房带来了消息，按照总督的指示，一个保留地卫士开来了一架飞机，在旅馆屋顶候命。他们立即去了屋顶。一个穿绿制服的伽玛混血儿（一般指有八分之一黑人血统的黑白混血儿）敬了个礼，便开始向他们报告上午的安排。

首先，有十来个首要的印第安村庄待他们在空中鸟瞰，接着会降落在马尔佩斯享用午餐。那里的招待所比其他的要舒适，而且村里的野蛮人可能要欢度夏令节，因此，在那儿过夜是再惬意不过了。

他们就座后，飞机就出发了，十分钟后便穿过了文明社会与野蛮区的交界。飞机不太平稳地飞过盐漠、沙漠与森林，深入大峡谷的紫色阴影里，跃过峭壁、山峰和台地。绵延的电网像条势不可挡的直线，在地面上勾画着代表人类征服意志的几何图腾。电网之下星星点点地分布着白骨，黄土地上还残留着未完全腐烂的深色尸体，应该是被腐腥味招来的野鹿、公牛、豹子、箭猪、郊狼或是贪婪的兀鹰，它们靠近了致命的电线，挨了电击，遭受了罪有应得的审判！

“他们从不引以为戒，”身着绿色制服的驾驶员指着机下的茫茫白骨

说道，“也从未打算引以为戒。”他又补充一句，笑了，仿佛从被电死的动物身上得到了一种自我成就感。

贝尔纳也露出了笑容，两克唆麻下肚，不知为何，这些玩笑听着觉得风趣了。片刻之后，他便倒头沉睡了起来。睡梦中他飞跃了陶斯、特苏基，飞过了南姆、比克里司和波瓦基，飞过了西雅和克奇逊，飞过了拉古纳、阿科马和被下过咒的高山台地，飞过了祖尼、锡沃拉和奥左卡连特。等飞机降落时，他终于从梦中醒了过来，看见列宁娜提着箱子走进一间方形的小屋，那个穿伽玛绿的混血儿正跟一个印第安青年用他们完全不懂的语言对话。

“马尔佩斯，”贝尔纳下飞机时驾驶员随即解释道，“这就是招待所。印第安村里会有一场舞会，就在今天下午。他会带你们去。”他指着那个闷闷不乐的印第安青年说。“希望你们能玩得尽兴。”驾驶员撇开嘴笑道。“他们做的事情都很有意思。”刚说完，就上了飞机，启动了引擎。“记住，明天我会来接你们！”他向列宁娜郑重承诺，“他们被驯服得很听话，您大可放心，绝对不会伤害你们一根汗毛。他们挨过太多的毒气弹，所以不会跟我们玩任何花样。”他笑着给直升机螺旋桨挂了挡，一踩加速器飞走了。

第七章

远看平顶山，像一艘船静静停泊在棕黄色沙尘的海湾边。海峡在险峻的山谷间蜿蜒前行，来回撞击一道道崖壁，直到穿过山谷，一片绿色便映入眼中——那是河流和原野。海峡中央“石船”的船首处头，露出一片形状整齐的光滑岩层，马尔佩斯印第安人村就坐落于此处，仿佛是“石船”的组成部分。村里的高楼是一层层堆积起来的，越高的楼层体积越小，犹如被蓝天削去顶端的金字塔。下面是零零散散的小屋和纵横交错的围墙。悬崖的三面倾斜而下融入平原。此时没有风，几缕炊烟笔直上升，而后消散到空气中。

“真古怪！”列宁娜说，“太古怪了。”这个词是她谴责抱怨时的口头禅。“我不喜欢这里，也不喜欢那个人。”她指着那个受命护送他们去蛮族村落的印第安向导说。很显然，向导也抱有相同的情绪。他远远地站在前面，背影透露着敌意和不屑的愠怒。

“而且，”她细声说，“他身上怪臭的。”

贝尔纳没有提出异议。他们继续前行着。

忽然，似乎周遭的空气都开始雀跃激动起来，体内的血液也跟着不知疲倦地翻腾着——在高处的马尔佩斯，有人正在敲鼓。伴着心跳一般神秘的节拍，他们加快步伐，沿路走到悬崖底下。他们头上则耸立着那硕大的“石船”的峭壁，地面距离“船舷”整整三百米。

“早知道就带飞机过来了，”列宁娜仰望着那高耸入云的峭壁，愤恨

地说，“我不喜欢走路，尤其是在高山脚下走路，显得自己微不足道。”

他们在平顶山的阴影下里继续行进，绕过一排岩石，在一道水蚀皱谷中，有一条小径通向“舰艇扶梯”。他们开始往上爬。山路险峻，扶梯于山谷两侧晃来晃去。有节奏的鼓声有时微弱得几乎听不见，有时又仿佛近在拐角处。

爬到半山腰时，一只苍鹰擦身飞过，脸上还能感觉到它的翅膀带来的一股凉气。忽见岩石的裂缝内有一堆白森森的骨头。一切都散发着诡异而压抑的气氛，而印第安向导的气味也越发浓重。终于，他们走出了阴沉的峡谷，迎接来阳光。远眺那平顶山的头顶就像一块平整的“甲板”。

“很像切林T字形塔楼。”列宁娜评述道。还没等她多观赏一会这个让她自豪的发现，一阵轻快的脚步声传过来，他们转身朝声音方向望去，只见两个印第安人，赤裸着上身，黑棕色的身子上画着一道道白条（后来列宁娜描述说“好像铺满沥青的网球场”），脸上布满猩红色、黑色和赭色的涂料，不像是人的模样。他们的黑发编成辫子，饰以狐狸毛和红色的法兰绒，肩膀上围着的火鸡毛迎风扑扇着，头上戴着硕大鲜艳的羽毛头冠。银手镯、骨制项链和绿松石珠串随着脚步发出叮叮当当的响声。两人穿着鹿皮靴，步履轻盈地跑上前来。其中一人握着一把羽毛掸子，另一人两只手好像各抓了三四条粗绳，其中一条不安分地摇摆着。列宁娜惊奇地发现那竟然是蛇。

两人越来越近；他们那黑亮的眼睛早瞧见了她，却毫无表示，丝毫没有似曾相识或在意她的神情。那条摇摆的蛇松软地垂了下去，跟别的蛇一样悬挂着。两人就这么走开了。

“我不喜欢这儿，”列宁娜说，“很不喜欢。”

可是，更叫她不喜欢的还在村口等待着她。在那儿，向导径直把他俩扔下，自己去接受指令了。先是肮脏的泥土，再来是垃圾堆、灰尘、狗、苍蝇！她的脸不自觉地扭成一团，表达出极度的厌恶，同时拿出手绢捂住了鼻子。

“他们这样怎么活得下去？”她愤慨地喊道，深深地觉得不可思议。（太离谱了！）

贝尔纳耸了耸肩，很富哲理性地说：“说到底，五六千年来他们都如此生活，现在估计早就习以为常了。”

“可是‘清洁卫生，弗德开心’。”她不服气地说。

“没错，‘文明意味着完全杀菌’。”贝尔纳嘲讽地引用了睡眠教学卫生基础知识第二讲的名言。 “但是，我主弗德对他们来说是闻所未闻的，他们可不是文明人。所以说这些也没有意义……。”

“啊！”她捏了一下他的胳膊，“快看！”

附近一幢房子二楼的平台上，一个近乎全裸的印第安人正沿着楼梯小心翼翼、颤巍巍地往下爬。那是一位年迈的老人，肤色黝黑，皱纹很深，好像戴了个黑曜石面具。那早已掉光了牙的嘴凹陷下去。下颚及嘴边两端有几根长长的胡须，与黝黑的肤色一对比，仿佛闪着白光。蓬乱的头发并没有编成辫子，披散在脸边，掺着灰白的发丝。他瘦得皮包骨头，身躯弯成了弓形。他沿着楼梯缓慢地走下来，每挪一步，就要靠着扶手歇一歇，然后冒险地踏出下一步。

“他怎么会这样？”列宁娜悄声问道，睁大的眼睛里写满了恐惧和诧异。

异。

“只不过是上年纪了。”贝尔纳尽可能表现得毫不在意。实际上他也感到很震撼，只是想尽力隐藏这种情绪。

“上年纪了？”她重复了一遍答案，“可是主任不也老了吗，那么多人都老了，没有人像他这副模样。”

“那是因为我们不允许他们衰老。我们阻止他们生病，通过人工调节，让内分泌系统维持年轻时候的平衡状态。镁钙比值从来不能低于三十岁的水平。还要时不时地注射年轻人的血液，永久性地刺激新陈代谢。所以，他们自然不会老成那样了。另外，”他补充道，“这儿绝大部分人还活不到这个老家伙的年龄。这些人到六十岁时身体还很健康，没有任何损伤，然后，‘咔嚓’，突然一下就完了。”

但列宁娜早就没心思听他说话了。她呆呆地注视那老人，看着他缓慢且迟钝地向下爬，脚落了地，转过身来。深深凹陷的眼窝里，双眼异常的明亮。老人面无表情地看着她，没有一丝惊讶，好像她根本不存在一样。然后他缓缓地挪动佝偻的身体，从他们身边擦过。

“这儿可真恐怖，”列宁娜气息微弱地说，“真可怕，我们就不该来这儿。”她慌忙地伸手去摸兜里的唆麻，却发现自己史无前例的疏忽：唆麻给忘在招待所了。贝尔纳的口袋也空无一物。

列宁娜只好无助地面对马尔佩斯的种种恐怖：恐怖的场面接二连三地发生。她看见两个年轻的母亲给孩子喂奶，羞得急忙扭过脸。她生平第一次见到如此下流猥亵的事。让她更窘迫的是，贝尔纳对这羞耻的胎生场面不仅没有及时回避，反倒公然表示感慨。之前服下唆麻渐渐失去效用，他开始为早上在招待所的懦夫表现感到羞愧，于是迅速改变态

度，表现自己的强悍与对正统的挑战。

“多么美好的亲密关系啊，”他特意说得不堪入耳，“生育会产生多么深厚的感情啊！我时常思考：我们可能会因为没有母亲而缺失什么，而列宁娜，你也可能因为没有做过母亲而不完整。想象一下你坐在那儿哺育着自己的孩子吧……”

“贝尔纳！你怎么能胡说八道！”这时，她发现了一位患眼疾和皮肤病的老妇人，本来愤怒的她迅速转移了注意力。

“离开这儿吧，”她哀求他，“我真是一点都不喜欢这里。”

正说着，他们的向导回来了，示意他们跟在后面，带领着他们穿过房屋之间狭窄的街道，转过一个街角。垃圾堆里躺着一只死狗；一个长着甲状腺肿瘤的妇人在一个小女孩的头发里捉虱子。向导走到一个梯子旁边，停住了，然后竖直地举起手，朝水平方向一指。顺着他无声的指示，他们爬上梯子，踏进门，走进一个狭长的房间。阴暗的空间里弥散着一股难闻的烟味、食物的油脂味和久穿未洗的破衣服味。房间尽头又是一扇门，一束阳光射过，清晰地传来一阵喧闹的鼓声。

跨过门槛，他们看到一片广袤的平台。下面就是村落的广场，四周都是高高的建筑物，广场里挤满了印第安人：亮泽的毛毡，插着羽毛的乌黑头发，闪闪发光的绿松石，因为热情而发光的黝黑皮肤……列宁娜又忍不住拿出手绢捂鼻子。广场中央的空地上有两个圆形的平台，是用石头和结实的泥土筑成的，显然是地下室的房顶。因为在每个台子正中都开有一个天窗，隐约看见漆黑的天窗下面还架着楼梯。地下偶有笛声传来，却被持续不断的鼓声无情地掩盖。

列宁娜正陶醉在那鼓声中。她闭紧双眼，身体沉浸在轻柔反复

的“雷鸣”中，任由其逐渐进入到她的意志，直到完全占领。末了，她的世界变得空悠悠，仅剩下一阵阵深沉的搏动。这声音让她欣然地回想起团结祈祷日和弗德庆典时所放的合成音乐。“纵情啊狂欢”，她自言自语地默念道。与这鼓点的节奏完全一样。

一瞬间，振聋发聩的歌声喷薄而出——几百个男人激烈地高声齐唱，整齐的声音像尖锐的金属；几个长音符之后，静了下来——雷鸣般的鼓点归于寂静。随后响起一阵高声部的女声，如马嘶般高亢尖锐，这是女人们的唱和。紧随其后的又是鼓点。接着，男人们那低沉的声音再次响起，用粗蛮的方式印证着他们的男性气魄。

古怪——毋庸置疑。地方怪，音乐怪，服饰、瘤子、皮肤病和老人都怪，不过这表演倒没那么奇怪。

“让我联想到低种姓的社区合唱。”她对贝尔纳说。

不过，接下来的场景就不那么让她好受了。一众面目狰狞的“魔鬼”瞬间从那圆形的地下室里钻了出来，头上戴着让人毛骨悚然的面具，完全辨别不出人脸的特征，围着广场正瘸瘸拐拐跳着一种奇怪的舞。一圈又一圈，边唱边跳，一圈又一圈，鼓点越来越急促，舞动的节奏也随之加快，就像发烧时剧烈跳动的脉搏。四周的人群跟着唱和起来，嗓音不断提升。人群中一个女人发出尖叫，其他女人一个接着一个地尖叫开来，仿佛要被杀掉一样。接着领舞人脱离了舞蹈的人群，跑到广场尽头的一个大木箱旁，揭开盖，随手拽出了两条黑蛇。“哇！”人群中爆发出欢呼，其他舞者都伸着手，向他跑去。领舞人把蛇扔向离他最近的一批人，然后又把手伸向柜子里，扔出一条条黑蛇、黄蛇和花蛇。舞蹈的节奏再次变换。舞员们手握着蛇一圈圈地舞着，双膝及腰部如蛇一样绕柔地摆动。此时领舞人发出指令，舞者们都把蛇扔向广场中心。

从地下室钻出来一个老头，向蛇堆中抛撒玉米片。一个女人从另一个地下室钻了出来，从黑罐里舀出水来洒到蛇身上。然后老头双手举过头顶，现场突然静得惊人，一片死寂。鼓声停息，仿佛生命也即将停息。老头用手指了指通向地下室的两个洞口。被地下看不见的手推动着，一个洞口浮起一张鹰的画像，另一个洞口则升起一幅钉在十字架上的赤裸人像。两幅画仿佛无所依恃地兀自悬浮在空中，观察着人群。老人拍拍手，从人群中走出一个十八岁上下的小伙子，裸露着全身，独腰间缠着一块白棉布。小伙子两手交叉放在胸前，低着头站在老人面前。老人在他头上画了一个十字，便转身离去。小伙子走向那堆扭动着的蛇群，围着绕起圈来。转完一圈，第二圈转到一半时，舞群中走出一个大高个，戴着野狼面具，手执一根皮鞭，朝小伙子走去。小伙子继续转圈，就像其他人不存在。“野狼”高举皮鞭，停了好一会，似乎在酝酿什么，忽然猛地一抽，鞭子呼啸地划过空气，打在了血肉之躯上，发出厚实响亮的声音。小伙子颤抖了一下，然后默不吭声地继续他那缓慢而坚定的步伐。“野狼”一鞭接着一鞭地抽过去，起初，每次抽打都让人群屏住呼吸，继而发出低沉的呻吟。小伙子接着转圈，两圈，三圈，走到第四圈时，身上涌出鲜红的血，五圈，六圈……列宁娜用手蒙住脸呜咽起来。“快阻止他们，让他们别打了！”她哀求道。但是鞭子还是毫不留情地挥舞，落下。七圈。小伙子摇晃着脚步，向前扑倒在地，依然没有出声。老头走到他面前弯下身，拿一根白色的长羽毛蘸取他背上的血，举起来向人群展示，触目的鲜红，然后在蛇堆上抖了三下。几滴血滴落。瞬间又响起激烈而紧张的鼓声，人群大声呼叫。舞者向前奔去，拽起蛇跑出了广场。男女老少们都蜂拥地跟随其后。不到一会儿，广场上就空荡荡的，只剩下那小伙子形单影只地趴在跌倒的地方，一动不动。不久，一间屋里走出三个老妇人，上前吃力地扶起他，拖进了屋子。只剩下那只鹰和十字架上的人守护着空寂的印第安村庄。过了一会儿，他们好像是看腻了似的，慢慢地下沉，回归到“地下世界”。

列宁娜还在哽咽，“太吓人了，太吓人了。”她不停地呼喊。贝尔纳怎么安慰都没有用。“那血！太吓人了！”她害怕得浑身哆嗦，“啊，要是带了唆麻就好了。”

房内传来脚步声。

列宁娜坐在那儿没有动，用手捂住脸不敢看，但贝尔纳还是转过头。

一个穿印第安服装的小伙子正走上台阶。不过，他那编成小辫的头发却是小麦金色，淡蓝色的眼睛，皮肤已晒成了古铜色，但是能看出来原先的皮肤是白的。

“哈罗，早晨好！”陌生人说的是英语，没有语病但有音调古怪。“你们是文明人吧？应该是从‘那边’来的，保留地外面，是吗？”

“怎么回事……？”贝尔纳大吃一惊地发问。

小伙子叹着气摇了摇头，“那个可怜人，”他指着广场中央的血迹说，“你们看见那该死的血迹了吗？”他用激愤而颤抖的语气问。

“一克唆麻，好过烦恼。”列宁娜捂着脸机械式地重复着，“要是带了唆麻就好了。”

“趴那儿的人应该是我，”年轻人接着说，“他们为何不拿我去献祭？我可以转十圈，十二圈，甚至十五圈。帕罗蒂瓦只转了七圈。从我身上，他们可以得到双倍的血，把一碧无垠的海水染成一片殷红。”他挥出双臂慷慨激昂地做了个手势，又失落地放了下来。“但他们不愿让我去。因为他们不喜欢我的肤色，他们一直都这样，一直都是。”泪水

涌上了他的眼睛，年轻人羞愧地背过身去。

惊讶暂时医好了列宁娜对唆麻的渴求。她放下手，第一次看清楚眼前这个青年，“你是说你想挨鞭子？”

年轻人仍然背对着她，做了一个肯定的手势。“是的。为了村庄，为了降雨，为了作物的成长，为了让菩公和耶稣高兴，也为了证明我能够一声不吭地忍受痛苦，我愿意。”声音忽然变得响亮，他挺起胸膛，骄傲而不服气地扬起下颚，“为了证明我是顶天立地的男子汉……啊！”他目瞪口呆，屏住了呼吸，不再说话：他生平第一次遇见这样的姑娘，肤色并非是巧克力色或狗皮色；棕红色的头发自然地卷曲；脸上写满友好真切的关怀（新奇得难以置信）。列宁娜对他微笑。她正想着，这个小伙子真帅气，身材真好。小伙子的热血直往脸上涌，他赶紧低下头，好一会儿才抬起来，却发现她依然看着自己微笑。他不知所措，只好转过头去，装作在寻找广场对面的什么东西。

贝尔纳一连串地提问转移了注意力。他问小伙子是什么人，怎么来的，何时而来，又来自何处。小伙子盯着贝尔纳的脸（他热切地想再看看那姑娘的微笑，又不敢看她），简单地介绍了自己：在保留地，琳达和他都是外来人。琳达是他的妈妈（列宁娜一听妈妈两字就浑身不自在）。他出生之前，琳达和一个男人从“那边”来到这里的，那男人就是他的父亲（贝尔纳竖起了耳朵）。当年，琳达独自一人从山上往北边走，不慎跌落山崖，撞破了头。（“快，接着说”，贝尔纳非常激动。）几个马尔佩斯的猎人发现了她，就把她带回了村庄。之后，琳达再也没有见过他的父亲。他的名字叫托马金（那就对了，主任的名字就是托马金。他一定是自己一个人飞回“那边”了，丢下孤苦无依的琳达——真是铁石心肠的坏人）。

“于是我在马尔佩斯出生了。”他结束了自我介绍。“在马尔佩斯.....”他摇摇头。

就在村庄外边那间肮脏的小屋里！

尘土和垃圾像一个屏障，把小屋划分出村庄。小屋门前的垃圾里，两条饥肠辘辘的脏狗正在猥琐地嗅着。他们走了进去，屋内又暗又臭，只听见苍蝇的嗡嗡声。

“琳达！”年轻人呼唤着。

“来了。”一个沙哑的女声回答道。

他们等待着。装着剩饭的碗散落在地上，可能是好几顿的剩饭。

门开了，只见一个肥硕的金发白肤印第安女人从门槛迈了进来，目瞪口呆地望着两个陌生的客人，傻傻地杵在那儿，不敢相信眼前的一切。但是她的形象却让列宁娜觉得反胃：那女人的两颗门牙都掉了，没掉的牙的颜色也.....她不禁打了一个寒战，浑身起鸡皮疙瘩。比之前看到的老头还糟。她太肥了，脸上都是褶子，皮肉松弛，爬满皱纹，下垂的两颊上长着发紫的斑点。鼻子上鼓着红色的血管，眼睛里布满血丝。再看她那脖子——这还能称作是脖子吗.....头上还裹着又脏又破的毛毡。麻袋形状的褐色长袍也不能遮掩那肥腻下垂的乳房、臃肿的肚子和臀部。啊，比那个老头的样子更无法忍受！突然，这个“怪物”开始唧唧呱呱地念叨，还张开双手向她跑来——弗德呀！弗德呀！那“怪物”一下抱住列宁娜，乳房和肚脐贴近过来，还亲吻她。弗德呀！真让人作呕，再这样下去她真要吐了。她唾沫飞溅地亲吻着，浑身恶臭，肯定从来没洗过澡。这气味跟放进德尔塔和伊普西龙瓶里的东西一样，很可能是酒精（关于贝尔纳的传言不会是真的吧）。列宁娜奋力挣脱开这恶心的怀

抱。

她眼前的那张脏脸哭得又肿又歪，那“怪物”在哭诉着。

“哦，我的小宝贝。”不间断的絮叨中夹杂着啜泣声。“这么多年了，从没再看见过文明人的脸！你知道我有多高兴吗？真的，连文明人的衣服都看不到。我还以为永远都见不到真正的人造丝衣服了。”她伸出手触摸列宁娜的衬衫袖子和黑色的纽扣。“还有这迷人的粘胶棉绒短裤！我的宝贝，你知道吗？我仍保存着那些旧衣服，就是之前我穿来的，都好好地存放在箱子里，以后有机会让你们看看，虽然粘胶都破了。我还有条惹人爱的白腰带——我得承认，你这条摩洛哥绿皮带更加精致。”说着她的流泪又开始泛滥。“我想约翰已经告诉过你了，我在这里受尽了苦头，一点唆麻都没有。只能偶尔喝点波佩带来的龙舌兰酒。波佩是我以前的一个熟人。但喝完那酒以后特别难受。佩瑶特也是，而且喝了它，第二天会有有一种可怕的羞耻感。我真觉得耻辱。你想想看，我一个贝塔，居然生了个孩子出来，你站在我的角度想想看。”（听到这个提议列宁娜就颤抖起来）“但是这真的不是我的错，我发誓！我至今也不明白到底怎么出的错，我一向都按时做马尔萨斯操，你知道吧，按照顺序，一、二、三、四，没有偷懒过，我发誓。但还是出事了。当然，这里是没有人流中心的。顺便问一下，人流中心还在切尔西吗？”列宁娜点了点头。“星期二和星期五还是有泛光灯照明吗？”列宁娜又点点头。“那可爱的粉红玻璃大厦呀！”可怜的琳达抬起头，闭上眼睛。那记忆中的绚丽图景在她脑中如梦似幻地翻腾着。“还有那河上的夜色。”她低声说着，豆大的泪珠从她紧闭的眼角慢慢滑落。“夜晚从斯托克伯吉斯飞回家，冲一个热水澡，做一次真空振动按摩……啊！”她深深地吸了口气，摇摇头，再次睁开双眼，擤了两下鼻子，用手抹了把鼻涕，在自己的衣襟上一擦。“噢，不好意思。”她看见列宁娜本能地做

出厌恶的表情，“对不起，我不该这么粗鲁，可是换做是你，没有手绢该拿什么擦鼻涕？我当初是多么的苦恼，到处是脏东西，都没有消过毒。他们把我带过来时，我头上有一个严重的伤口。你想象不到他们拿什么涂在伤口上，都是些污秽的东西。我老对他们说‘文明意味着完全杀菌’，甚至像带孩子一样对他们唱童谣：‘草色链球菌马儿，带我去班伯里T区，去T区有何贵干？去漂亮的洗手间看看。’尽管如此，他们还是不开窍。他们这些人怎么可能会明白呢？后来，我也就慢慢习惯了。这儿连热水管都没有安，怎么可能收拾得干干净净呢？你瞧瞧这些衣裳。这种野兽毛不像人造丝，总穿也不会有破损。如果破了，他们还要你缝补。我可是贝塔啊！工作一直是在受精室，从来没有人指导我做过这种粗活，毕竟这不是我工作范围内的事。更何况，文明人根本不需要缝补衣服。衣服破了洞就该扔了，换新装。‘越缝越穷’，不就是说的这个理儿吗？缝补是反社会的行径。可在这儿情况截然不同，如同跟一群疯子一起生活。他们做的每一件事都那么疯狂。”她环顾四周，只见约翰和贝尔纳已经走开了，在屋外的沙土和垃圾中不断徘徊，但她还是压低了嗓音，佝着腰亲密地凑过来了，列宁娜身体死板地往后一退。她还是靠得很近，列宁娜面额上的汗毛都被她的臭气吹动，这臭味足以用来毒害胚胎了。“比如说，”她用沙哑的声音轻声说，“他们这儿的男女关系太疯狂了，我跟你说，那是绝对的疯狂。人人属于彼此——他们也是这样吗？是吗？”她扯着列宁娜的袖子反问道。

列宁娜点了点头，把头扭到一边，换了一口气（她刚才一直是屏住呼吸的），然后设法再吸一口相对不那么污浊的空气。“哼，在这儿，一个人是不会属于多个人的。你要是以正常方式和男人相处，其他人反而说你不正经、反社会，然后厌恶你、鄙视你。记得有一次，一群凶婆娘来我家大闹了一场，因为她们的男人常常来找我。哼，怎么就不能来找我呢？之后，她们冲了过来……那场景实在太恐怖了！我真没法给你

形容。”琳达赶紧用手捂住脸，身体瑟瑟地颤抖着。“这里的女人太可怕了；她们不仅疯狂，还残忍粗暴。可想而知，她们是不会懂得马尔萨斯操、培养瓶、换瓶程序这类东西的，所以她们会一直生孩子——跟狗一样。糟糕透了。一想到我竟然也……啊，弗德，弗德，弗德啊！不过话说回来，约翰是我心中最大的安慰。如果没有他，我真不敢想象会做出什么傻事。虽然他常常因为我和男人的关系而伤心……从他很小的时候起就这样了。记得有一回（那是在他稍大一点的时候），他甚至想杀死可怜的华西瓦——或者是波佩，仅仅是因为我跟他们上床了。我不知道怎么做才能让他明白，这是文明人都会做的事。也许疯狂是会传染的，约翰似乎从印第安人那儿感染了疯狂。因为他经常跟那些人在一起。即使他们对他的态度坏到极点，也从不让他参与集体活动。不过这未尝不是件好事。因为这样，我才能帮他设置条件。你想象不到这有多么困难。我有太多不懂的事情，而且我本来就没有义务懂这些事。当孩子问你：直升飞机是怎么飞的或者这个世界是谁造的——你也知道，如果你是个一直在受精室工作的贝塔，怎么可能答得上来？又能编出什么答案？”

第八章

屋外面，在一地沙尘和垃圾间（现在还得加上四条狗），贝尔纳与约翰正踱来踱去。

“我不能理解这一切。”贝尔纳说，“我们仿佛不是在同一个星球上生活，不是生活在同一个纪元。这里有母亲，有污垢，有耶稣，人会衰老，人还会生病……”他困惑地摇了摇头。“简直难以置信。除非你能阐明这一切，不然我永远也不能理解。”

“你要我阐述什么？”

“这个，”他的手指向印第安村庄，“那个”，村外边的那间房子。“这里发生的一切，你们全部的生活。”

“但是那有什么好讲的呢？”

“那你就从头说起，从你最初对世事有记忆时开始说。”

“啊，从我最初的记忆开始。”约翰的眉头皱了起来，陷入了沉思。

那时，天气酷热，他们吃了很多玉米饼和甜玉米。琳达说：“孩子，来躺我这儿。”母子俩躺在大床上。“唱歌”，琳达开始唱“草色链球菌马儿，带我去班伯里T区”和“再见吧，宝贝班亭，你马上就要换瓶”。声音越来越低，渐渐听不真切……

这时，约翰被一阵声响震醒了，看见一个男人在和琳达说话，逗得

琳达直笑。盖在身上的毛毯被那男人掀了开来。那人的头发编着，像两根黑色的麻绳，手臂上缠着一个漂亮的银臂镯，上面还嵌着蓝色的石头。那臂镯让约翰喜欢得不行，可他还是被吓到了。他把脸埋在琳达身子里，琳达抱着他，这给了他安全感。他听着琳达说着他不太能理解的话，“不可以，约翰还在这儿呢。”那人瞅了瞅他，然后面向琳达情意绵绵地又说了几句。琳达坚持着，“不可以。”只见那男人俯下身来面对着他。那张脸又大又恐怖，他那两条黑绳似的发辫触到了毛毯。“不行。”琳达急忙说，他感到她的手抱得更用力了。“不，不。”这时他的一条胳膊却叫那人抓住了，被抓得疼痛难忍，他嘶叫了出来。那人伸出另一只手想把他举起来。可是琳达仍然抱住他不放，“不可以，这不可以。”那人生气地说了两句，话语很短促。琳达突然松开了手。“琳达，琳达。”他一边蹬着一边挣扎着被那人抱到门口，打开门，把他放到屋子中央，然后出去把门拴住了。他慌忙站了起来，跑到门前，垫着脚将就着能够到那大门闩；他端起木闩用力往外推；但却打不开。“琳达。”他大声喊道，琳达却没有任何回应。

他又记得有一个大房间，房内非常阴暗。屋里摆放着稀奇古怪的木制品，上面拴着很多线，四周围着很多妇女。琳达说那是在编制毛毡，还要他坐在屋角，同所有孩子一起，而她则去帮女人们干活。而这期间他就一直在跟孩子们玩。突然，人们大声地嚷了起来，女人们正往外推着琳达。琳达哭了，她只好走出门。他跑上前去，问她那些女人因为什么发火。“因为我把东西弄坏了。”她答道，接着琳达也气坏了，“我怎么会懂她们那种野蛮的编织法？”她说，着一群凶恶的野蛮人！”他马上又问野蛮人是什么。他们回家时看见在门口等候已久的波佩，他跟着进了屋子。波佩有一个大葫芦，里边盛着类似水的液体，但不是水，而是种发臭又烧嘴，喝过之后让人咳嗽不已的液体。琳达和波佩每人都喝了一些，接着琳达便开始放声大笑和喧哗着，然后她便跟波佩步入了别

的屋子……他在波佩走掉以后走进屋去，发现琳达躺在床上，睡得很死，怎么都叫不醒她。

当时波佩到访得很频繁，他称葫芦里的液体为龙舌兰酒，但琳达却叫它唆麻，可就是喝过之后浑身难受。他对波佩是厌恶的，同样厌恶周围所有的人——所有跟琳达有接触的男人。那是一个下午，他正在跟别的小朋友玩耍——他依稀记得，天特别冷，积雪覆盖在山上，他回到家中听见屋子内有暴怒的吼声。那声音是女人发出的，说着他不懂的话，但他能分辨出那些是不好的词句。接着，跟随着“叭”的一声，像是什么东西翻倒了。他听见屋内大家在快速地跑动。“叭”，又一个声响，然后就是鞭子抽打驴子的声音，可又不全像是抽打驴子，驴子身上的骨头更多些。琳达撕心裂肺地叫道：“啊！不，不要，不要再打了！”他冲进屋，看见有三个披着黑毯子的妇女，琳达则被架在床上：手腕被其中一个妇女按着；腿则被另一个妇女压着，别让她乱蹬；第三个妇女在不停地抽打着她。一鞭，两鞭，三鞭，鞭鞭都让琳达皮开肉绽。他被这幅场景吓倒，冲过去拉着那妇人的毡子边哭边喊着，“求求你们不要，求求你们不要。”那女人一手把他拉开了，继续抽了起来，琳达继续嘶喊着。他一把拽住那妇人棕色的手掌，拼尽全力咬了下去。那妇人开始叫喊，猛地缩回了手，狠狠地用手把他推到了地上，又趁他还没有爬起来，往他身上抽了三鞭子，那鞭子抽下来比他以往所感受到的所有的痛苦还要深刻——像火烧一样。鞭声又响起了，但这次嘶喊的却是琳达。

“为什么她们会打你，琳达？”他当天夜里问道。他在哭，因为自己背上那些血红的鞭痕还刺痛着；也因为大人们蛮横不讲道理；因为自己是个孩子，无力反抗。琳达也哭了。她虽然已经成年，可她孤身一人，敌不过三人的攻击。因此这对她来说也是不平等的。“为什么她们要伤害你，琳达？”

“不知道，我又怎么可能知道呢？”她躺在床上，把头埋在枕头里，声音听起来模糊不清。“她们说那是她们的男人。”她说着说着，听起来不像是跟他在说话；倒像是跟自己的心中的某人在倾诉。说了一大堆，其实她自己也不知道在说什么；最后她哭了，哭得比以往都惨烈。

“啊，不哭，琳达，不要哭。”

他贴近她，贴得格外近，小手搂住了她的颈部。琳达大叫了声，“哦，别碰我，我的肩膀！哎呦！”她用力一推。他的小脑袋磕在墙壁上。“小蠢蛋！”她骂着，继而开始扇他巴掌。“叭！叭！……”

“琳达，”他喊出了声，“哦，妈妈。不要打我！”

“你妈妈不是我，我才不想做你妈妈。”

“但是琳达……啊！”她又扇了他一巴掌。

“沦落成了野蛮人，”她喊道。“像禽兽一样生幼崽……如果不是因为你，我就会去找检查员，那样是有机会离开的。可不能领着孩子去。那真是丢尽了人。”

看见她又要动手，他便举起手臂来护着自己的脸。“哦，琳达，不要打，求你不要打我。”

“小畜生！”她拉下他的两只胳膊，看见了他的小脸。

“不要，琳达。”他喊着闭上了双眼，动也不动地等着被打。

可她这次并没有出手。等了好一会儿，他终于张开双眼，看见她正在望着他。他用力挤出了个勉强的微笑。突然，她用手抱住他，开始亲

他，不停地亲吻着。

琳达有时会几天不出门，躺在床上暗自神伤，或是喝波佩送来的液体，喝够了开始狂笑，接着再睡。她生病的时候，会经常不记得要给他洗脸洗澡，那时他除了冷玉米饼再没有其他吃的。他还能想起琳达第一次在他头发里看见那些小虫子时，尖叫得没完没了。

每当她向他讲述“那边”的情况时便是最幸福的时候。“只要你想飞，无论何时，你就可以飞。”

“无论何时都行。”她告诉他，悦耳的音乐是从盒子里出来的，细细描述每一个游戏、每一道美味；想要光明只需按按墙上的按钮；图画可不只有颜色，还有声音、味道和触感；还有散发香味的盒子；山一样高的楼房，五彩缤纷。那儿每个人都很开心，不会有人哀伤或愤怒。每个人都属于其他人。还有些盒子是让你看到听到世界另一头发生了什么，还有瓶子中的婴儿——全部都洁净如新，没有恶臭，没有污垢，没有人觉得孤独，大家其乐融融生活在一起，像这里的夏令舞会一样。但一切都比这要快乐得多，每天都要快乐得多……他听着，时间一小时一小时地流逝。有时，他跟小伙伴们玩累了，也会去听村落里的老人讲故事。讲伟大的创世者的故事；讲右手跟左手、干和湿之间的长期斗争的传说（即西方密教的传说中代表正义的白魔法与代表邪恶的黑魔法的斗争）；讲晚上一动思想就出了大雾，然后又把全世界从雾里救出来的阿沃纳微罗那（他是祖尼印第安人神话中的造物者）的故事；讲地母和天父的故事；讲阿海雨塔和玛塞列玛（他们都是阿沃纳微罗那所造）——代表战争与机遇的孪生子；讲耶稣和菩公的传说；讲玛利和伊萨娜乐琪女神让自己青春重现的故事；讲拉古纳的黑石头和艾可玛的大鹰和圣母。尽是些不着边际的故事，由于是用另外的语言讲述，而且又听不大懂，所以他甚至觉得这些故事更有趣。他时常趴在床上幻想着天堂、伦

敦、艾克马圣母、一列列小宝宝躺在消毒瓶里。天空中有耶稣，也有琳达，还有世界培育中心的主任，伟大的阿沃纳微罗那也在一起飞翔。

后来，越来越多的男人都过来找琳达。孩子们开始对他指指点点，他们用那陌生语言说琳达不是好人。他们侮辱她，他虽听不懂，却明白那不会是好话。有一天他们唱起歌来，内容是关于琳达的，一遍又一遍地唱。他拿石头扔他们，他们也毫不客气地回扔他，一块锋利的石头砸伤了他的脸，血开始不住地往外流，染得全身都是……

小时候琳达指导他认字，她在墙上用一块木炭绘画——有只小动物趴着，瓶子里装着一个婴儿，然后她简单地写了几个字：垫子上的小猫咪，瓶子里的小朋友。他很快就学会了，很容易。墙上所有的字他都学会后，琳达开启了她那大木箱，一本薄薄的册子藏在她那未曾穿过的滑稽红色短裤下。这本书，他之前也见过好几次。“当你成年了，”她说，“就可以读这本书了。”如今他终于长大了，这让他觉得很光荣。“你可能不喜欢这本书，”她说道，“但我的东西就只剩它了。”她长叹口气，“如果你能见着我们在伦敦常用的那些朗读机就更好了！”他开始朗读：《胚胎的条件设置——化学与细菌学》、《胚胎库工作守则——贝塔人员》。念个标题就用了十五分钟的时间。他把书甩到了地上，哭闹了起来：“讨厌，讨厌的书！”

孩子们依旧唱着那首关于琳达的歌曲，他们还经常讥笑他那破烂不堪的衣服。琳达根本不懂缝补，只好任由衣服破着。琳达跟他说如果在“那边”，只要是衣服破了点口子，一定要扔掉买新的。“破乞丐，破乞丐！”孩子们朝他嚷着。“但是我可以念书识字，”他想着，“他们不行，他们根本就不知道什么是读书。”每当他被嘲笑时，他只要专心想着还可以读书，便可以装着根本不在意他们的所作所为。所以，他又从琳达那要回了那本书。

孩子们越是对他指指点点，越是唱那首可怕的歌，他就越是勤奋。很快就能念出所有的字，就连最长的字符也不例外。可是这些词都代表着什么呢？每次问琳达，她都解释不清楚。其实绝大部分时候，她根本不知如何解释。

“化学药剂是什么意思？”他有时会问。

“哦，好比是镁盐，又或是一种酒精，能使德尔塔和伊普西龙瘦小、低智；再或是诸如用来制造骨头的碳酸钙。”

“可化学药品是如何生产的呢，琳达？从哪儿来的？”

“这我不清楚，每次我们都是直接从小瓶子里倒出来，用完了就再去仓库拿。我估计是产自仓库的人做的。不过也可能是他们派人去工厂那里拿来的，我真不清楚。我不是研究化学的。培育胚胎才是我的工作。”类似的问题他问了很多，但都没从琳达那得到过答案。反而村子里的老人却不同，他们的答案要明确得多。

“阿沃纳微罗那用繁衍神雾造出人和一切生物的种子，太阳的种子，大地的种子，天的种子。有四个子宫存在这世界上，在最低的子宫里放入这些种子。渐渐地，种子便开始发芽……”

一天（约翰事后推算应该是在他刚刚过完十二岁生日时），他在卧室内看到一本此前从未见过的书。厚厚的一本，式样很古老，封皮已经被老鼠啃烂了；部分书页掉了下来，皱在一起。他弯腰拾起来，翻了翻，书名是《威廉·莎士比亚全集》。

琳达还趴在床上休息，正呷着一杯散发着恶臭的龙舌兰酒，“是波佩带过来的那本书。”她说。嗓音粗糙沙哑，听着根本就不像是她的声

音。“原本存放在羚羊圣窟一个箱子里的这本书，一放就是好几百年。这也就配放在箱子里，我翻看了几页，里边竟是些胡诌八扯的东西，根本谈不上文明，但用来教你读书识字倒是不错。”最后一口下肚，顺手将杯子放在床下，扭身打了几个嗝，便睡着了。

他随便翻看着这本书，只见上面写道：

“不，生活在一张汗臭冲鼻、充满油垢的温床里；

只知道在腐堕里翻腾，在龌龊的猪窝里寻欢做爱。”

那些奇怪的话在他脑海中翻腾，犹如雷神激怒的咆哮；犹如夏令舞会上的鼓语——若是大鼓亦能言语的话；亦如男人激情演唱的玉米之颂，美妙！美妙！妙不可言，催人泪下；有如老米西玛对着他的羽翎，雕花手杖和碎石骨所念的咒语——卡萨拉，斯鲁，塞罗畏，塞罗畏，塞罗畏，嘅阿，斯洛，斯洛，斯色洛——但这又比米西玛的咒语要更神妙，内涵更深，因为那似一种互动，如在跟他对话；又叙述得如此精妙，让人似懂非懂，简直是一种美丽得慑人的咒语；这个叙述与琳达有关，那个躺在那儿打呼噜的琳达，还有床铺旁边地板上的空杯。它说的是琳达与波佩，琳达与波佩……

他越发的痛恨波佩。“有人能笑呀笑的，但仍然是个恶棍……一个不知悔改的、奸诈的、荒淫的、没有人性的恶棍。”这些句子要表达出什么意思？他仿佛知道却又不能完整地理解其中的意思，但是这个“咒语”强烈地吸引着他，如雷鸣般地刺激着他的每一根神经。他恍然醒悟，自己不曾真正地痛恨过波佩，因为他根本不知道如何描述他的恨意。此时他有了这些“咒语”，好似鼓声、歌声、巫术。这些“咒语”以及这个光怪陆离的故事（虽说他看不懂内容，但依然觉得精彩纷呈），这

让他有了痛恨波佩的原因，让仇恨变得真实了，也让波佩本身更真实了。

一次，他玩耍后回到家，屋子的门敞开着，只见两人睡在一张床上——白白的琳达和在她对比下简直像黑炭一样的波佩。琳达枕着波佩的胳膊，乳房上是波佩的另一只手，他长长的辫子缠住了她的脖子，好像一条想要勒死她的黑蛇。床边的地板上放着波佩的葫芦和一个杯子。琳达鼾声四起。

他的心仿佛瞬间蒸发了，剩下一个洞。整个人被挖空了，空洞冰冷，他感到头晕恶心，整个世界都在转。他靠在墙上，“不知悔改的、奸诈的、荒淫的……”这些话在他脑海中反复回荡，回荡，如同激昂的鼓点，如慷慨玉米之颂，如神奇的咒语……忽然，他的身体由冰冷转为燥热，一股热血燃上了他的脸颊，眼前不停旋转的屋子，越来越暗。他咬紧牙齿愤愤说道：“我要杀了他。杀了他，杀了他！”突然更多的话语冒了出来：

“让我寻个更好的机会：当他烂醉如泥、大发雷霆、淫榻寻欢……”

“咒语”与他在一条战线上同仇敌忾，咒语能解释一切并发号施令。他退出到屋子外。“当他烂醉如泥……”那火炉边的地板上就摆把切肉的刀子。他顺手抄起刀轻声走向屋前。“当他烂醉如泥，烂醉如泥……”他冲进屋去，直直地一刀插了进去，啊，血！——紧接着又是一刀。波佩从熟睡中惊醒过来，一把截住了他准备再次行刺的手，他的手腕被举了起来——哦，哦！被反拧开来。他再也动不了，已被降住了。波佩逼近他，用他那乌黑的小眼睛死死地盯着他的眼睛。他扭过头，看着别处，那两道伤口清晰地印在波佩的左肩上。“啊，看！血！”琳达在叫道，“有血！”她一直都不能直视流血的场面。他的另一只手被波佩举起

——波佩要揍他，他心想着，于是挺直了身躯，等着被揍。但是那手只是扶正了他的下颚，好让他的脸转过来直视波佩的脸。他俩始终这么对视着，几小时后接着又是几个小时。这时，他忍不住哭了出来——因为他实在熬不住了。波佩大笑了起来，“走吧”，另一种印第安语从他嘴里说出，“走吧，勇敢的阿海尤塔。”约翰冲进了另外一间屋藏住他的眼泪去了。

“你已经十五了，”老米西玛用印第安话说，“现在我可以把制陶的技术传授给你了。”

于是两人一同蹲到了江边。

“第一步，”米西玛手捧一块潮湿的泥土说，“我们来把它变成月亮。”说着老头把泥土按成了一块饼，然后把饼周围的一圈立起来；月亮便成了个矮矮的杯。

他很生疏地、慢吞吞地模仿着老人。

“月亮，杯子，然后是蛇”，米西玛把另一坨泥巴搓成了一根长条，做成圆圈，粘在杯口上。“之后再做一条蛇，再一条，又是一条。”一圈圈地捏制出了罐子的边沿。那罐子本来很窄，然后鼓，到了罐口又变窄。米西玛开始挤、按、抹、割。罐子做好了，就跟最常见的水罐一模一样，只不过罐身是乳白，而不是黑色，而且摸起来很柔软。跟米西玛的罐子摆在一块，约翰的罐子是个蹩脚的山寨版。他对比着两个罐子，不由得笑了起来。

“熟能生巧。下一个会更好。”他打湿了另外的泥块。

土胚转啊转，慢慢地成型，他感觉自己的手开始变得娴熟有力——这让他找到了非同寻常的乐趣。“A，B，C 呀，维他命D，”他在自己的歌声中快乐工作，“肝脏里的脂肪，海洋中的鲟鱼。”米西玛也跟着唱了起来——不过歌词里讲的是杀熊的故事。整整一天的工作，使他体内充斥着酣畅淋漓的喜悦。

“等到明年的冬季，”老米西玛说，“让你学着做弓。”

他一直站在门外。屋子里的仪式终于办完了，人从打开的门里走了出来。领头的是科史鲁，他右手伸在前面，紧紧握着，仿佛里头有贵重的宝贝。跟在后面的是季雅纪美，同样她也伸出只手，紧紧攥着。他们静静前行，后面跟着同一辈的所有亲戚和村庄里全部的老人。

从印第安村落走出的他们，翻越了台地，最后在悬崖边上停了下来，面朝清晨的太阳。科史鲁终于张开了手，里头是一把白粉粉的玉米面，他对着玉米面一吹，低声地说了几句，然后对着太阳把手里的白色粉末撒了出去。季雅纪美也如是照做。接着是季雅纪美的父亲，他举起一根带羽翎的祈祷杖，祈祷了许久，然后把祈祷杖同玉米面一齐抛了出去。

“礼毕！”米西玛大声宣布道：“他们俩正式结为夫妇。”

“其实，”当人们转过身来时，琳达说道，“我唯一想说的是：这事也真是劳师动众。在文明世界里，一个男孩如果想得到一个女孩……喂，你要去哪，约翰？”

约翰没有理会她，只顾着跑，跑，跑，跑到一个能独自呆着的地方去。

礼毕！在他的脑子里不断重复着老米西玛的这句话。礼毕，礼毕……他爱过的季雅纪美，静静地、远远地，但亦是强烈地，义无反顾地，不带任何奢望地爱着她。可现在，一切都已经“礼毕”了。在他十六岁那年。

在月圆的夜晚，羚羊圣堂内，无数的秘密被倾听了，完成了，或诞生了。走进羚羊圣堂时还是孩子，出来时就能成为真正的男子汉。男孩们个个又害怕又期待。而那一天终于到了。

太阳已谢幕退下，月亮露出脸来，他跟几个人一同到了那儿。夜幕中，依稀能看见几个男人站在圣堂门口，梯子下面有红色的光。带头的几个男孩已经开始往下爬，一个男人突然走过来，抓住他的胳膊，把他拖出了队伍。他奋力地挣脱，躲躲闪闪地回到方才的位置。但这一次，那人打了他，扯住他的头发说：“你可没有资格参加，白毛！你这狗娘养的小杂种！”男孩们全都大笑起来。“滚！”可他还是在人群旁徘徊。“滚！”人们嚎叫道。还有人捡石头扔他。“滚，滚，滚！”一阵飞石朝他袭来。他被砸得浑身冒血，不得不跑开，躲进了暗处。随着最后一个男孩爬下梯子，那红灯闪耀的圣堂里响起了歌声，只有他被留在寂寞里。

他彻底地孤苦无依了，只身被留在村外光秃秃的台地上。月光照耀下的岩石像是褪了色的骷髅，山谷里有郊狼在对月而嚎。伤口很疼，还在流血，但他的眼泪却并非因为痛楚，而是因为孤独。只有他被赶了出来，被赶进了这个月光和岩石的骷髅世界。他在悬崖边上背着月光坐了下来，低头一片漆黑，他看到了死亡的影子。只要向前一步，轻轻一跳……他把右手伸进月光里，手腕上的伤口还在渗血，几秒钟一滴，黑色的，在死亡的月色下失去了颜色。一滴，一滴，又一滴。明天，明天，还有明天……。

他发现了时间、死亡以及上帝。

“孤独，一直都感到孤独。”小伙子说。

这话在贝尔纳心中激起悲切的共鸣。孤独，孤独……“我也是，”内心油然而生一种想要倾诉的欲望，“孤独得可怕。”

“你也会孤独吗？”约翰显然对此感到惊讶，“我还以为在‘那个地方’……琳达总是跟我说，‘那个地方’的人从来不会孤独。”

贝尔纳的脸“刷”的一下红了。“事实上，”他咕哝道，尴尬地转移开了视线，“我觉得自己跟大部分的人都不太一样。如果一个人换瓶时就跟别人不同，那自然……”

“对，就是这么回事。”小伙子点点头，“跟别人不一样就势必会孤独。人们对与众不同的人很无情。你知道吗？他们完全把我排挤到一个孤立的世界里。当其他年轻人都去山上过夜时——这是我们梦想守护兽的仪式——他们不准我跟去；也不肯告诉我任何秘密。虽然如此，我还是自己去了。”他补充道。“整整五天没有吃东西，然后某天晚上，我一个人去了那边的山上。”他指了指远处。

贝尔纳不以为然地笑了笑，“你梦到什么了吗？”他问。

他点了点头。“是的，但是我不能告诉你。”他沉默了一会儿，用低沉的嗓音说，“我曾经做过一件其他人从未做过的事：那是某天中午，炎热的夏天，我靠在一块岩石上，向两侧举起双臂，和耶稣被钉在十字架上的姿势一样。”

“那是要干什么？”

“我想知道被钉在十字架上承受暴晒是什么滋味……”。

“啊？为什么？”

“为什么？嗯……”他沉思了片刻，“因为我觉得应该这么做。既然耶稣能够承受这痛苦，我也应该做得到。再说，如果做错了什么事，就需要……还有一个原因，就是我不快乐。”

“真有趣，你用这种方法治好你的不快乐？”贝尔纳说。可他转念一想，也并非毫无道理，不管怎么说，总比依靠唆麻强……

“不一会儿我就晕倒了，”小伙子说。“脸朝下倒在了地上。你看见我当时留下的伤口了吗？”他撩起额头上一撮浓密的金发，露出了右太阳穴上的伤疤，一道灰白的褶皱。

看到伤疤，贝尔纳微微一震，迅速把脸撇开。条件设置让他对这种场面感到格外反感，而不是心生同情。只要提起疾病或者伤痛，他就会感觉毛骨悚然，甚至难受恶心，像见到什么污秽、残缺或是衰老的东西似的。他赶忙移转话题。

“你愿意跟我们一起回伦敦吗？”他问道，跨出了战争的第一步。自从在小房间里意识到野蛮人“父亲”的身份后，他就开始秘密地策划这个战略，“你想去吗？”

小伙子脸上流露出惊喜的神采。“你说的是真的吗？”

“当然，如果我能得到批准就没问题。”

“琳达也会去吧？”

“嗯……”他犹豫斟酌了一番。带那个恶心的怪物回去！不，绝对不行。除非，除非……突然，贝尔纳灵机一动，觉得她那丑恶的模样可能正是一个巨大的筹码。“那是当然！”他大声喊出来，一改他起初的迟疑，热情得过了火。

小伙子深深地吸了一口气。“真不敢相信梦想这么快就能实现，这可是我平生的梦想啊！你还记得米兰达说过的话吗？”

“米兰达是谁？”

显然，小伙子没有听到提问，而是动情地说，“啊，奇迹！”眼睛闪耀着光辉，面颊焕发出光彩。“那儿有多么美妙的生灵啊！人类多么善良！”他脸上泛起越来越深的红晕。他想到了列宁娜，一个穿深绿色粘胶衣裳的天使，花样的年华和肌肤保养品使她显得光彩照人，加之那丰腴的身材和友善的微笑……他的声音激动地颤抖。“啊，美妙的新世界！”他突然停了下来，面颊的血色褪去，苍白得像张白纸。

“你跟她结婚了吗？”他问。

“我跟她什么？”

“结婚。用印第安话说就是：永远的结合，从此再也不分离。”

“哦，弗德！没有这种事。”贝尔纳忍不住笑了。

约翰也笑了，但和贝尔纳的笑不同，他是打心眼里的高兴。

“啊，美妙的新世界，”他重复着诗颂，“有那么多出色的人！我们马上启程吧。”

“有时候你讲话的方式很特别。”贝尔纳用一种迷惑而惊奇的眼神打量着小伙子，“再说，还是等到你真正看见新世界后再下结论吧。”

第九章

经历了一整天的离奇与恐惧，列宁娜感觉自己迫切地需要来一次完整而绝对的唆麻假期。一回房间，她就马上吞下了六克半的唆麻。躺上床，十分钟不到，列宁娜已经飘向了月亮的永恒里，估计到她醒来至少还得等上十八个小时。

与此同时，在一片黑暗里，贝尔纳正瞪着眼睛，躺在床上思考，一直到凌晨时分才坠入梦乡。不过，这回的失眠可不是一无所获，一项计划在他心中悄悄地成形了。

第二天早上十点，飞机准时降落，穿绿色制服的混血儿走了出来，贝尔纳在龙舌兰丛中等着他。

“克朗小姐在享受她的‘唆麻假期’，”他解释道，“五点以前是不会醒来了。所以，我们有七个小时的时间。”

从现在到她醒来的这段间隙，足够贝尔纳先飞到圣塔菲办事，然后再飞回马尔佩斯。时间十分充裕。

“她在这儿不会有任何危险，对吗？”

“不会，我保证，就跟躺在直升飞机里一样安全。”混血儿说道。

两人登上飞机随即出发了。十点三十四分，降落在圣塔菲邮局的楼顶；十点三十七分，贝尔纳接通白厅世界总统办公室的电话；十点三十九分，他与总统阁下的四秘交谈；十点四十四分，他向总统办一秘重述

本次电话的初衷：十点四十七分半，电话里传来一个深沉而洪亮的声音，那便是穆斯塔法·孟德总统阁下本人。

“我冒昧地认为，总统阁下您会发现这件事情的学术价值，它将震撼整个科学界……”贝尔纳结结巴巴地结束了这段讲话。

“是的，我的确这么认为。那么，你把他们带回伦敦吧。”

“这样的话，总统阁下，我可能需要一张特别许可证……”

“目前我们已经向保留地总督传达相关指令，你现在出发前往他的官邸便可。再见，马克斯先生。”

电话里突然一片寂静。贝尔纳放下话筒，匆匆赶到楼顶停机坪。

“去总督官邸。”他对伽玛绿混血儿说。

十点五十四分，贝尔纳和总督握手。

“很荣幸，马克斯先生，很荣幸。”他的大嗓门里透着股尊敬的意味，“我们刚刚才收到总统办公室的特别指令……”

“我知道，”贝尔纳打断了他，“我与总统阁下的电话刚刚才结束。”那厌倦的语气暗示着这个人已习惯了与总统阁下的电话交谈，每周七天一天也不落。贝尔纳倒在椅子上，“麻烦你尽快采取所有的必要措施，一定要尽快。”他重复了好几遍“尽快”以示强调，完全沉浸在一种自我欣赏的陶醉氛围里。

十一点零三分，他的口袋里已经装进了所有需要的文件。

“再见。”在电梯口，贝尔纳向送他的总督道别，语气里透露着自以

为高人一等的味道。“再见。”

他步行回到招待所，洗了澡，按了摩，剃了胡子，听了早间新闻，看了半小时电视，再从容地享用了午餐，下午两点半才同混血儿一道飞回了马尔佩斯。

小伙子站在招待所门外。

“贝尔纳，贝尔纳！”他喊道，可是没有人回答。

他穿着双鹿皮靴，步履轻盈安静。跑上台阶，拽了拽门，门锁了。

他们走了！真的走了！这是他年轻生命里发生过的最糟糕的事情。列宁娜邀请他来，可是，他们居然走了。小伙子坐在台阶上，难过得哭了起来。

半小时后，他突然想起可以透过窗子看看里面是什么情况。第一眼他就瞄到了一只绿色的手提箱，盖子上印着两个大写字母L. C，那是主人的姓名缩写。一种欢愉在他心里像火一样地燃烧了起来。他拣起一块石头，“啪”的一声把玻璃砸碎，玻璃碎片叮叮锵锵地落到地上。片刻之后他走进屋，打开绿色的手提箱，一种香气弥漫了出来。那是列宁娜的香水味，那芬芳，是她的体香，径直沁入了他的心脾。心脏发狂地跳了起来，有那么一瞬间，他感觉似乎要晕厥过去。他俯下身，凝望着这个珍贵的绿箱子，小心翼翼地轻抚一番后，将它移到了光亮处检视。乍一看，列宁娜那条人造棉绒短裤上的拉链让他有些摸不着头脑，不过琢磨透之后，他便发现那很有意思：拉过来，拉过去，再拉过来，又拉过去……他上瘾了。箱子里还有一双列宁娜的绿色拖鞋，这是他头一回见

到如此精致的玩意儿。欣赏完拖鞋，他打开了一件带拉链的连体束身内衣，明白这东西的用途，他羞红了脸，赶紧放回了原处。接着，他翻出了一条人造丝手绢，亲吻了一下，又把另外一条围巾戴到了脖子上。然后他又看到了一个漂亮的小盒子，打开盒子时一股香粉喷了出来，满手都是。他把香粉擦在胸口上，肩膀上，胳膊上。多么怡人的香气啊！他闭上了眼，用脸蹭了蹭还残余着香粉的胳膊。又细又滑，这是他的脸碰到胳膊时的唯一感受。一股麝香的气味钻进了他的鼻孔——这是真正的她。“列宁娜，”他喃喃低语着，“列宁娜！”

不知哪里传来的声响让他吓了一跳，心虚地转过身去，急忙将刚才偷偷拿出来东西全塞回了手提箱，关上了盖子；然后仔细地听了听，看了看。没有人影，也没有声音。可他刚才确实，确实是听见了什么声音。那声音像是人在叹气，又像是木板发出的咯吱声。为了一探究竟，他踮起脚尖悄悄地走到门边，谨慎地打开门，发现门外是一处宽阔的平台，对面是另一道虚掩着的门。他穿过去，推开门，偷偷窥视了起来。

一张矮床上，列宁娜躺在中间，被子给踢开了。她穿着一件粉红色的拉链睡衣，卷发在头下散开，把面颊衬托得优雅而美丽。粉红色的脚趾，还有睡熟后安稳的神态，都像孩子般地惹人怜爱；柔软的手掌，垂落的胳膊，无助里透出了信任和坦然。这一幅画面让他眼眶里含满了泪水。

他费尽心机采取了各种措施不想吵醒熟睡中的列宁娜。其实这一切都没有必要，因为想要让一个人提前结束唆麻假期，除了开枪别无他法。他走进屋子，跪到床边，凝望着那个可人儿。下意识地，他扣紧了双手，嘴唇似乎动了一下，低语着：“她的眼睛。”

“你告诉我她是多么的美丽，

她的眼睛，她的头发，她的面庞，她的步态，她的语调……

一切洁白的东西，和她的玉手一比，

都会变成墨水一样黝黑，写下它们自己的罪行；

比起她柔荑的一握来，天鹅的绒毛都坚硬无比，……”

（莎士比亚《特洛埃勒斯与克雷雪达》）

一只苍蝇嗡嗡地飞进来，绕着列宁娜打圈。他挥手将它赶走，于是又想到“苍蝇”，

“污秽的苍蝇都可以接触亲爱的朱丽叶的皎洁的玉手，

从她的嘴唇上偷取天堂中的幸福，

那两片嘴唇是这样的纯洁贞淑，永远含着娇羞，

好像觉得它们自身的相吻也是一种罪恶……”

（莎士比亚《罗密欧与朱丽叶》）

他迟疑不定地一点点伸过手去，仿佛要抚摸一只羞怯又危险的鸟。在距离列宁娜的手指还有一寸的地方，在即将要碰到想象中那种柔软的时刻，他的手定住了，悬停在空中，不住地颤抖着。他有勇气去碰触吗？他有勇气用自己卑微的手去亵渎吗？不，他没有勇气。这只美丽的鸟太危险。他的手又放了回去。她多么美！多么美！

突然，他发现自己在思考：只要顺着列宁娜的脖子轻轻地拉下睡衣拉链……他赶忙闭上眼，使劲摇头，就像落水狗一样来回甩着自己的耳

朵。下流的想法！他为自己感到羞愧。“.....纯洁贞淑，永远含着娇羞.....”

空气中再度传来“嗡嗡”的声音：又有苍蝇想偷取天堂中的幸福吗？难道是黄蜂？他四处张望，什么都没有。可那声音并未消失，反而渐响，离窗户越来越近。是飞机！他惊慌失措地站起来，迅速钻进另一间房，从窗口跳出去，直奔那条位于高大的龙舌兰丛间的小径。在树丛间奋力奔跑时，他看见了从直升飞机上走下来的贝尔纳。

第十章

四千个房间里，四千座电钟的指针齐齐指向了两点二十七分。这是在布鲁姆斯伯里中心，也就是主任口中的“蜂巢工厂”。工人们像勤劳的蜜蜂“嗡嗡”地忙碌着，每个人都各司其职、有条不紊地工作。显微镜下，精子兴奋地甩着长尾巴，争先恐后地往卵子里钻。受精后，卵子渐渐膨胀、分裂。经过波卡化的卵子则会出芽并分裂成一大群各自独立的胚胎。命运设定室通过隆隆作响的自动扶梯驶进地下室。暗红的灯光下，胎儿躺在冒着热气的腹膜垫上，贪婪地摄入代血浆和荷尔蒙，一点一点地长大。部分胎儿根据设定接受毒素，生长进程和速度被压抑，继而发育成矮小愚钝的伊普西龙。瓶架发出细微的嗡鸣声和咔哒声，那是新生命在艰难而缓慢的蠕动，一周又一周，仿佛永恒一般漫长。直到成熟的那一天，新生儿们在换瓶室里发出人生中第一声惊恐而好奇的尖叫。

地下室再下面一层，发电机轰隆隆地响着，电梯快速地升降。整整十一个楼层的育婴室里安置着一千八百个婴儿，他们身上都小心地贴好了标签。哺乳时间到了，婴儿们像接受到指令，同时从一千八百个奶瓶里吮吸起巴氏消毒过的外分泌液体，分量是一品脱。

育婴室往上的十个楼层都是宿舍。尚年幼的男童和女童还需要午睡，但是他们实际上并不比其他人清闲。他们并没有意识到，自己在睡梦中也在孜孜不倦地学习：他们听着睡眠教学中的各类课程，涉及卫生保健、社会交际、阶级意识以及儿童爱情生活。再往上走便是幼童娱乐室，这会儿天气转变为下雨，九百个稍微年长的儿童兴趣盎然地堆积

木，捏橡胶泥，还有的在玩“找拉链”和性爱游戏。

“蜂巢”的嗡嗡声歌唱着忙碌而欢快的生活。姑娘们照料试管之余无忧无虑地哼歌，命运设定工边工作边吹口哨。换瓶室的空瓶上方，工人们谈笑风生，好不快活！然而，与亨利·福斯特一起进入受精室的主任却是一脸严肃，皮肤绷紧得像木头。

“这个车间是社会的榜样和模范。”主任说。“要知道，这屋里的高种姓人员比中心的其他任何部门都多。我让他两点半来这里见我。”

“他的工作表现还不赖。”亨利虚伪地表现自己的宽容和公正。

“这我承认，但正因如此更应该严格要求他。拥有过人的才智，就必须受到更多道德责任的约束。想想看，越有本事的人就越有能力煽动他人走上邪路。与其让大伙都被影响和玷污，不如让一个人吃点苦。福斯特先生，抛开感情因素考虑这个问题，你会明白，一切过错都不像异端思想那么不可原谅。杀人犯只不过能毁灭个别人的生命，而个别人的生命有什么价值？”他扬起手臂指了指一排排显微镜、试管和培育器。“创造生命是轻而易举的事，只要我们愿意，想造多少就造多少。可是，离经叛道的行为不仅仅威胁个别人的生命，更能严重打击整个社会。对，受害者是整个社会。”他再次强调。“啊，正好来了。”

贝尔纳走进屋，在一排排授精员的空隙中向他们走来。他摆出一副毫无顾虑、自信满满的表情，以掩饰心中的紧张不安。“早上好，主任。”他问好的声调高得有些滑稽，为了弥补这个失误，他补充道：“你要我来这里跟你谈一谈。”可这次的声音却柔和得离谱，像老鼠吱吱叫。

“对，马克斯先生。”主任神情倨傲地说，“我的确要求你来见我。”

我知道你度完假回来了，昨天晚上到的。”

“是。”贝尔纳回答。

“是——是。”主任拉长尾音重复了一次，像蛇一样发出嘶嘶的声音。随即张大嗓门说，“女士们，先生们，”声音像小号一样嘹亮激昂，“女士们，先生们。”

姑娘们的歌声和显微镜操作员的口哨声戛然而止，房间忽然静得可怕，所有人都疑惑地环顾四周。

“女士们，先生们，”主任再次重复道，“很抱歉打断了各位的辛勤劳动。我肩负着沉重的社会责任，所以必须做出一个痛苦的决定。因为，我们社会的安全和稳定岌岌可危。是的，岌岌可危！女士们，先生们。”他指着贝尔纳愤愤地说，“现在站在你们面前的这个阿尔法加，接受了许许多多的社会福利，本应该为集体做出卓越的贡献。然而，你们这位同事——我还是提前称呼他为‘前同事’吧——无耻地辜负了大伙对他的信任。他对娱乐活动和唆麻的看法严重违背社会纲常；他无视正统性爱观，过着为人不齿的性生活；他拒绝遵循我主弗德的教诲，常常违反‘下班后保持婴儿状态’的原则（主任边说边比划了一个T字）。这一切都有力地证明他已经成为社会的敌人，成为秩序和稳定的颠覆者，成为文明的背叛者。女士们，先生们，出于上述原因，我严正提议开除他，撤销他在本中心的职务，让他声名狼藉。我建议立即向上级请示，把他调到最低层次的下级中心去。为了最大限度地维护社会利益，最好加重惩罚，把他送到远离文明核心的地方去，越远越好。到了冰岛，他就穷途末路了，再也不能煽动他人背叛光明的弗德。”主任停下来，双手交叉在胸前，盛气凌人地转向贝尔纳。“马克斯，”他说道，“对于我给你的处分，你有什么疑义吗？”

“我有。”贝尔纳的声音特别响亮。

这反应让主任有些吃惊，不过他依然保持了上级的威严：“请说。”

“当然我会说的。只是，不是现在。我的理由马上就出现，请各位稍安勿躁。”贝尔纳跑到门边，用力将门打开，向外头的什么东西命令道：“进来。”贝尔纳口中的“理由”终于出现在了大家面前。

抽气声此起彼伏，显然所有人都被吓倒了，惊讶和恐惧使屋子里响起了阵阵私语。一个年轻的姑娘开始尖叫；另一个人因为距离太远看不真切，于是站上椅子，却不慎打翻了两根精子试管。引起轰动的是一个肥胖松垂的身影，那是走进来的琳达。在这群人的青春躯体和精致面庞的衬托下，她成了突兀可怕的中年妖怪。虽然她努力地想让脸上的微笑多一些风情，可一切只是徒劳，那微笑依然破碎而苍白。走路时她摆动着腰肢自忖性感迷人，却不知那过于硕大的臀部上下翻动，十足令人倒胃。贝尔纳一直跟在她的旁边。

“就是他。”贝尔纳指着主任。

“难道你认为我会认不出他？”琳达愤愤不平道，然后转过身面朝主任，“我当然认得出你，托马金。不管你在哪儿，即便你混在一千个人里面，我也能一眼认出你来。不过，你可能把我给忘了。你记得吗？记得我吗，托马金？我可是你的琳达。”她站在那儿凝望着他，头歪向一边，脸上仍然带着微笑。不过在主任脸上分明的僵硬与厌恶前，那微笑越来越不坚定，开始动摇，最后全部消失。“难道你当真记不起来了，托马金？”她重复道，语带颤抖，眼神里充满了焦躁和痛苦。那张长斑下垂的老脸慢慢扭曲，变成了一副悲痛欲绝的怪相，很有些滑稽。“托马金！”她伸出双臂深情唤道。人群中传出了窃笑。

“这是在干吗？”主任问道，“这个丑陋的……”

“托马金！”她向前跑来，拖着毛毡，甩出手臂搂住他的脖子，最后把脸埋进了他的胸膛。

哄堂大笑。

“……这种下流的恶作剧太卑鄙了！”主任大吼道。

满脸通红的主任试图挣脱，却被死死地搂住。“我是琳达，我是琳达。”她的话语被满室的笑声盖过。“你让我怀了个孩子！”她终于尖叫道，现场的骚动一下子消失了，取而代之的是一种可怕的寂静；每个人的目光都游移不定，不知该停在哪儿。主任脸上一片苍白。他突然忘记了挣扎，静静站着，抓着琳达的手腕，低头盯着她，整个人都呆滞了。“是的，一个孩子，我就是他的母亲。”她有些故意地把这个粗俗词汇扔进了满室的寂静里，像在接受某种挑战一样。然后她猛地推开了主任，双手掩面，羞耻地哭了起来。“不是我的错，托马金。我从来不会忘记做操，你记得吗？是不是？从来不忘……我不知道怎么会……你能想象那有多么恐怖吗？托马金……但儿子对我也是种安慰。”她转身对着门外喊道，“约翰！约翰！”

约翰在门口往里看了一圈，踏着鹿皮靴安静地穿过房间，迅速来到了主任身前。他“扑通”一声跪下，清楚地叫了声：“父亲！”

这个可笑的下流字眼却意外地缓和了屋子里的紧张。（因为“父亲”的言外之意与生育并无太多关联之处，没有道德上的堕落感，也就没那么令人憎恶。可以说，这个词粗俗却还不至于淫秽。）这一回爆发的哄堂大笑近乎到了歇斯底里的程度。不间断的笑声让人不禁开始怀疑它是否有结束的时候。父亲——主任！主任——父亲！我主弗德！这一

幕简直太精彩了！喧闹声、哄笑声，一波接着一波，嘴都快笑裂了，眼泪已经笑了出来。又有六支精子试管被打翻了。

“我的父亲！”

主任脸色惨白，神色几近疯狂。他怒气冲冲地瞪着约翰，内心却感受到一种被羞辱的痛苦。

“我的父亲！”渐渐平静的人群因为这句话又爆出满堂笑声，甚至比之前还要喧闹。主任捂住耳朵冲出了房间。

第十一章

受精室“神奇一幕”后，伦敦简直热开了锅，高等种姓都急不可待地想看看这个奇妙的野蛮人：他居然给培育与条件设置中心主任下跪了。或者应该说前主任，因为这可怜人随后就辞了职，从此再没有踏入中心半步。野蛮人“扑通”一声跪在他面前叫“父亲”，这个笑话简直精彩得难以置信！琳达倒是没有引起轰动；没有人对她感兴趣。称呼一个人为妈妈，已经远远超过了恶作剧的底线，是绝对的亵渎。况且，她并不是一个真正意义上的野蛮人，像其他人一样，她从瓶里培育出来，然后接受条件设置，不会有什么异于常人的稀奇想法。但说到底，人们不愿意去看琳达的最大原因在于她糟糕透顶的外形：肥胖臃肿，毫无青春气息，满口七零八落的坏牙，晦暗的皮肤上布满斑点。更别提那身材了，天哪！你看到她一定觉得反胃。聪明人是坚决不会去见琳达的。而琳达自己呢，也没有兴趣去见那些人。对她来说，得到唆麻就像是回归到文明，只想终日躺在床上，度过一个又一个假期，不用忍受头疼和呕吐带来的煎熬，也不会像喝了佩瑶特后那样难受：仿佛犯下了大逆不道的罪行，耻辱得再也抬不起头。唆麻不会带来任何不适，它给予的假期绝妙无双。如果假期过后的那个早晨感到低落，也不是真正的感觉，而是相比之下不像唆麻假期中那样逍遥自在罢了。缓解低落的办法就是延续唆麻假期。琳达贪而无厌地要求加大剂量，而且服用得越来越频繁。肖医生起初不赞同，最后还是满足了她的要求，她每天的服用量居然多达20克。

“这样下去，她最多还能活两个月。”医生向贝尔纳吐露实情，“终有一天，她的呼吸系统会瘫痪，直到停止呼吸死亡。这倒也不是坏事。

如果我们能返老还童，谁都愿意重获青春。可惜我们做不到。”

当所有人都对琳达的唆麻假期毫无异议时，约翰出乎意料地提出反对。

“给她这么大剂量的唆麻，不是要缩短她的寿命么？”

“某种意义上来说，是这样，”肖医生承认，“但是换个角度来看，我们是在延长她的寿命。”小伙子疑惑不解地盯着他。“唆麻确实会减短几年寿命，”医生继续说，“但是想想看，它超越现实时间带来的岁月的延续，长到无法计算。每一个唆麻假期，都是我们祖先口中的永恒。”

约翰慢慢明白了。“原来永恒只在口中和眼里。”他嘀咕着。

“你说什么？”

“没什么。”

肖医生继续说：“对于那些有重要工作的人，我们当然不能让他们随意离开到永恒去。可琳达并没有任何重要工作，不是么？”

“尽管如此，”约翰坚持地说，“我还是反对这么做。”

医生耸了耸肩。“好吧，也许你希望听她一直疯狂地尖叫……”

最后，约翰不得不让步。琳达如愿得到了唆麻。从那以后，她再也没出过三十七楼贝尔纳公寓的小屋，终日躺在床上，永远开着收音机和电视机，广藿香油不停的滴着，唆麻药片放在触手可及的范围内——她的肉体呆在那里，可灵魂仿佛早已经神游到渺远的地方，一个虚无的异世界。在那里，收音机里的音乐像是一个奇妙多彩、惊险刺激的迷宫，

曲折蜿蜒地通向绝对信仰的中心；在那里，电视机中舞动的身影美轮美奂，演员们的歌声悠扬迷人；在那里，天竺薄荷尤为芬芳，那感觉像太阳，像百万支萨克斯管合奏，更像是和波佩做爱时的愉悦，甚至比那还要美妙，美妙得无可比拟，没有尽头。

“确实，我们做不到返老还童。”肖医生总结道，“但有机会看到人类衰老的样本真是一件乐事。感谢你让我过来。”他热情地跟贝尔纳握手。

从那以后，约翰成为了唯一的关注焦点。人们只有通过他的正式监护人贝尔纳，才能与约翰会面。贝尔纳现在发现，自己不仅生平以来首次受到正常对待，还成为了至关重要的大人物。再也没有人说他的血液替代品是酒精了，也再也没人嘲笑他的外貌。亨利·福斯特也罕见地对他示好；贝尼托·胡佛送给他六盒性激素口香糖作为礼物。命运预订助理为了能参加贝尔纳举办的晚宴，不惜卑躬屈膝请求邀请函。至于那些女人们，只要得到贝尔纳邀约的暗示，就争相投入他的怀抱。

“我收到贝尔纳的邀请了，下周三和野蛮人见面。”法妮带着胜利的口吻宣布。

“我太高兴了，”列宁娜说，“现在你得承认之前错看了贝尔纳。他其实很可爱，不是么？”

法妮点点头。“我还得承认，我为此感到很惊喜。”

装瓶主任、命运预测总督、受精指挥官的三个副助理、情感工程学院的感官教授、威斯敏斯特社区合唱团负责人、波卡化主管……总之，贝尔纳的贵宾名单没完没了。

“我上周得手了六个姑娘，”他向亥姆霍兹·沃森透露，“星期一一个，星期二两个，星期五又两个，星期六一个。如果我有更多时间，或者更有兴趣的话，至少还有十来个姑娘排着队等着……”

听着他自吹自擂，亥姆霍兹只是阴着脸沉默不语，这让贝尔纳很生气。

“你嫉妒我”，他说。

亥姆霍兹摇了摇头，“我只是有点悲伤”，他回答说。

贝尔纳气呼呼地走了。他对自己说，以后再也不和亥姆霍兹说话了，再也不。

时光一天天流逝，成功冲昏了贝尔纳的头脑。他就像喝了一杯醉人的美酒，与那个他曾经不满的世界一笔勾销了冤仇。只要他被当做重要人物，一切秩序就都是美好的。但是，尽管他个人的成功使他与社会秩序和解了，他不会放弃批判社会的特权。因为批判这种行为让他感到自己更加重要和伟大。况且，他是真的认为有些事情值得批判（同时，他也真的很喜欢做一个风云人物，拥有美丽的姑娘）。在那些为了野蛮人而向他谄媚的人面前，贝尔纳总是摆出一副吹毛求疵、离经叛道的模样。人们当他面只是礼貌地听着，背后都摇着头说：“那小子最后总会倒霉的。”他们议论纷纷，充满信心地预言自己早晚会见到贝尔纳的悲惨下场。“到那时，再也没有第二个野蛮人来帮助他了。”话虽这么说，只要第一个野蛮人还在那，他们就得保持表面的客气。如此一来，贝尔纳越发觉得自己特别伟大，快活得飘飘然，简直飞上了云层。

“快活地飞上云层。”贝尔纳指着天空说。

如同天空中的一颗珍珠，气象部门的探测气球高高飘着，在阳光中闪烁着玫瑰色的光芒。

“.....向所谓的野蛮人，”贝尔纳指点地说，“展示了文明生活的各个方面.....”

现在向野蛮人展示的是现代文明生活的鸟瞰图：从切林T字形塔楼上俯视的景象。站长和气象学专家为他做向导，贝尔纳却滔滔不绝，他极其兴奋，表现得像一个正在参观的世界总统。他又飘飘然了。

从孟买来的绿色火箭从空中降落，乘客们走了出来，乘务员从八个舷窗往外看着——是八个一模一样的达罗毗荼多生子，穿着卡其色制服。

“每小时一千二百五十公里，”站长不无自豪地说，“野蛮人先生，你觉得如何？”

约翰觉得挺不错。“不过，”他说，“埃里厄尔四十分钟就能绕地球一圈。”

“野蛮人，”贝尔纳在给穆斯塔法·孟德的报告中这样写道，“对文明社会的各种发明一点儿也不感到惊奇或是敬畏。当然，有部分原因在于一个叫琳达的女人讲述过这些。琳达是他的母.....”

(穆斯塔法·孟德皱了皱眉，“这个蠢家伙难道以为我就如此脆弱，连看到完整的‘母亲’一词都受不了么？”)

“另外，他的注意力集中在一种被他称作‘灵魂’的东西上，他坚称那是一种脱离物质环境而独立存在的实体。然而，我试图向他解释.....”

总统快速掠过后面的几段，正想翻页找出一些更具体有趣的内容，忽然，他的目光被一连串不同寻常的话吸引住了。“.....但是我必须承认，”他读出声来，“在这点上我和野蛮人意见一致。那就是，文明时代的婴幼儿时期确实过于简单，就像他说的，不够昂贵。我想借此机会，向阁下建议.....”

一瞬间的愤怒后，穆斯塔法·孟德猛地大笑起来。这家伙竟然一本正经地给总统上起课来了，还说什么社会秩序过于荒诞不经，他是疯了吗？“我得给他点儿教训，”他自言自语道，然后仰头大笑了起来。就目前而言，还没有教训他的必要。

他们来到一个生产直升飞机灯具的小工厂，是电力设备公司的分公司，在屋顶见到了前来接待的技术主管和人事经理（总统的推荐信具有奇效）。他们走下楼梯，进入工厂。

“每一个环节，”人事经理解释着，“都尽可能由一个单独的波卡小组负责。”

实际上，八十三个圆头圆脑，黑皮肤，几乎看不见鼻子的德尔塔人负责冷压缩；五十六个姜黄皮肤，鹰钩鼻的伽玛人熟练操作着五十四个四轴车床；一百零七个被设置为耐高温的塞内加尔伊普西龙人在铸造车间工作；三十三个茶色皮肤，长脸，窄盆骨，身高一米六九（误差不超过二十毫米）的德尔塔女人负责拧螺丝钉。集装室内，两组伽玛加侏儒把发电机都归集到一起。两张矮工作台面对面的放着，中间的传送带上正传送着零件；四十七个金发白肤的工人面对着四十七个棕发工人；四十七个塌鼻子的工人对着四十七个鹰钩鼻的工人；四十七个下巴后缩的工人对着四十七个下巴突出的工人。完成的机件由十八个长得一模一样的伽玛女孩儿检查，她们留着棕色卷发，身着绿色制服。然后由三十四

个短腿的左撇子德尔塔打包装箱，再由六十三个亚麻色头发、蓝眼睛、长雀斑的伊普西龙傻子搬运到等候的货车上去。

“啊，美妙的新世界……”记忆仿佛在恶意地开玩笑：野蛮人发现自己正背诵着米兰达的诗颂，“美妙的新世界，有这样的人在里头！”

“我向你保证，”当他们离开工厂的时候，人事经理总结道，“我们的工人从来不惹事。我们总是发现……”

野蛮人突然离开那些陪同参观的人，到灌木丛后剧烈地干呕起来，仿佛坚实的大地变成陷入大气漩涡中的直升飞机般颠簸摇晃。

“野蛮人，”贝尔纳写道，“不愿服用唆麻，而且因为他的母……琳达一直处在唆麻假日中，显得特别悲伤。有一点很有趣，尽管他母……的衰老状态和丑陋外貌极其令人厌恶，野蛮人还是频繁地看望她，并且流露出深刻的依恋之情——这例子很有意思，说明了早期条件设置可以改变甚至战胜天然冲动（此例中为躲避丑恶事物的冲动）。 ”

他们降落在伊顿公学的屋顶上。学校操场的对面，五十二层高的卢普顿大楼在阳光的照耀下闪着白光。左边是一间大学，右边是学校社区合唱厅，安装着庄重的钢铁架构和维他玻璃。在广场的正中央，矗立着一尊铬钢制作的，古色古香的弗德像。

下飞机后，学院院长加夫尼博士和女主任济慈小姐接待了他们。

“这里也有很多多生子吗？”参观开始前，野蛮人忐忑不安地问。

“不多，”院长回答，“伊顿只接收上层阶级家庭的孩子们。一卵只能长成一个成年人。当然，这让教育变得尤为困难。但是，我们没得选择，他们将来是要身负重任的，还要处理突发事件。”他叹着气说。

与此同时，贝尔纳已经对济慈小姐浮想联翩。“如果你哪个周一，周三或周五晚上有空的话……”他边说边用手指戳了野蛮人一下，“你知道，他很古怪，”贝尔纳又加了一句，“怪得很稀奇。”

济慈小姐笑了（这笑容在他眼里着实迷人），说了句谢谢，并表示愿意去参加他的晚宴。这时，院长打开了一扇门。

在阿尔法双加教室里，约翰度过了迷惑不解的五分钟。

“基本相对论是什么？”他小声问贝尔纳。贝尔纳试图解释一下，但马上改变了主意，建议他们先去别的教室看看。

在走廊上，能听到贝塔减地理教室门后一个洪亮的女高音在叫喊，“一、二、三、四，跟着我做。”声音中带着疲倦和焦躁。

“这是马尔萨斯体操，”女主任解释着，“当然，我们这里大部分女孩儿都不能生育，我自己就是。”她对贝尔纳一笑，“但是我们还有大约八百个未绝育的女孩儿，她们需要定时做操。”

在贝塔减地理教室，约翰了解到：蛮族保留地是不值得去耗费精力文明化的地区：那里气候和地理条件恶劣，或者自然资源匮乏。“咔哒”一声，百叶窗关上了，房间暗下来；老师头顶的屏幕上，展出了阿科马的忏悔者拜倒在圣女像前的影像。约翰曾听过他们痛哭，在基督十字架和菩公的鹰形图案前忏悔罪过。年轻的伊顿学生们哄堂大笑。忏悔者们依然在痛哭，然后站起身来，脱掉外套，用带有绳结的鞭子一下一下地抽打自己。即使忏悔者们痛哭和呻吟声渐长，但还是被更大的笑声淹没了。

“他们为什么要笑？”野蛮人悲痛而困惑地问道。

“为什么？”院长向他转过身，露齿而笑，“为什么？因为这的确太好笑了。”

在屏幕的微光下，贝尔纳冒险采取了一个行动，要是放在以前，即使在完全漆黑的情况下，他也不敢做。仗着他自以为傲的重要身份，他伸出手臂搂住女主任的腰。柳腰轻摇了下，屈服了。他正想趁机偷偷亲吻她一两下，或者掐她一把，百叶窗“咔哒”一声又打开了。

“我们继续参观吧，”济慈小姐边说边向门口走去。

过了一会儿后，院长说：“这儿是睡眠学习控制室。”

成百上千个合成音乐盒，每个宿舍一个，排列在三面墙边的架子上；第四面墙边的鸽笼式文件柜里是录音带，收录了睡眠学习的课程录音。

“把录音带放进这里，”贝尔纳打断了加夫尼博士的话，解释说，“按下这个开关……”

“不对，是那边的开关。”院长愠怒着纠正。

“好吧，那个开关。录音带就打开了，硒电池将光脉冲转换为声波，然后……”

“然后你就能听到了。”加夫尼博士总结。

“他们会读莎士比亚的作品么？”他们在去生物化学实验室的半途路过了学校图书馆，野蛮人问道。

“当然不”，女主任红着脸说。

“我们的图书馆，”加夫尼博士说，“只有参考书。年轻人若是需要消遣娱乐，可以去感官剧院。沉溺于单独的娱乐活动可不是好事。”

五辆校车从他们身边的玻璃化公路上驶过，上面载满了孩子，有的在唱歌，有的在安静地拥抱。

“这些学生刚从泥沼火葬场回来，”加夫尼博士解释说。此时贝尔纳正偷偷地与女主任定下了特别之夜的约会。“他们从十八个月大时开始接受死亡条件设置。孩子们每周都要花两个早上的时间去医院上课，那里面有最好的玩具，接受设置的那些天，他们会得到巧克力奶油点心。他们学着把死亡视为是理所当然的事。”

“和其他生理过程一样。”女主任专业地补充道。

约会定好了，八点钟在萨伏伊。

回伦敦的途中，他们在布伦特弗德的电视公司工厂前停了下来。

“你不介意等我一下吧？我去打个电话。”贝尔纳问。

野蛮人边等边看着。正好到了早晚换班时间，低等种姓的工人们正在单轨火车站门前排队，大约有七八百个伽玛、德尔塔和伊普西龙男女，却只有十来种不同的面孔和身高。售票员递车票的时候，会顺带递过一个小纸盒。长长的队伍正缓慢地向前蠕动。

“那里面是什么？（想起了《威尼斯商人》）那些纸盒里。”野蛮人向刚刚回来的贝尔纳打听。

“一天用量的唆麻，”贝尔纳含糊不清地回答。因为他正在咀嚼贝尼托·胡佛送给他的口香糖。“下班后领取，四粒半克药片，星期六能得到

六粒。”

他亲切地拉着约翰的手臂，向直升机走去。

列宁娜欢快地哼唱着走进更衣室。

“你看起来挺高兴的。”法妮说。

“是啊，高兴得不得了。”她回答，“嘶拉”一声拉开拉链。“半小时前，贝尔纳打来电话。”“嘶拉，嘶拉”！她脱掉了短裤。“他突然邀约，”“嘶拉”！“问我今晚能不能带野蛮人去看感官剧，我得快点儿了。”她匆忙地奔向浴室。

“她真幸运！”法妮自言自语着看着列宁娜走远。

善良的法妮只是在陈述一个事实，没有丝毫嫉妒的意味。列宁娜确实很幸运，她和贝尔纳共享了野蛮人的盛名。原本不起眼的她立刻反射出时尚的光辉。青年妇女弗德协会的秘书不是已经邀请她做过一次演讲了么？爱美神俱乐部不是已经邀请她去参加年度晚宴了么？她不是已经上感官新闻，有形有声地出现在全球无数人面前了么？

显赫人物对她的恭维和关注也让她得意洋洋。文明世界总统的第二秘书曾邀请她共进晚餐和早餐，弗德大法官和坎特伯雷的首席歌唱家分别和她共度了周末，内外分泌公司董事长不停给她打电话，欧洲银行副董事长带她去了一趟多维尔。

“感觉妙极了，但是有时我觉得自己像在糊弄人。”她向法妮承认，“因为，大家最想知道的自然还是跟野蛮人做爱的感觉。我却只能说

我不知道。”她摇了摇头。“大多数人都都不相信我。但这是真的。虽然我也不希望是真的，”她悲伤地叹了口气，“他英俊极了，你不觉得么？”

“他不是挺喜欢你的吗？”法妮问。

“我觉得他对我忽冷忽热。他常常躲着我。我一进屋，他就会出去；从来不碰我；甚至都不看我。但有时我突然转身，会发现他正在盯着我；你知道的，当一个男人爱上你的时候，他会用怎样的眼神看你。”

是的，法妮很清楚。

“我真想不明白。”列宁娜说。

因为想不明白，她更加困惑和失落。

“因为我喜欢他。你懂我吧，法妮？”

她越来越喜欢他。现在，正好有机会了。她洗完澡，一边给自己身上拍香粉一边想。“啪，啪，啪”——真正的机会。她愉悦的心情化成了歌声。

“亲爱的，抱着我直到我心醉；

亲吻我直到我情迷；

抱着我，亲爱的甜心；

爱像唆麻一样美丽。”

芳香风琴正在演奏一曲让人心情愉悦、耳目一新的香草狂想曲——

百里香、薰衣草、迷迭香、罗勒、桃金娘和龙蒿有节奏的翩翩起舞发出琶音；馨香的旋律经过一系列强烈的变奏融入了龙涎香，然后在檀香木、樟脑、雪松和新割干草的气息中回转（伴随着极其细微的不和谐的杂音——少许猪腰布丁和猪粪的气味），慢慢地变回最初淳朴的香气。尾音的百里香芬芳逐渐消失时，掌声响起，满堂喝彩，灯光也全都亮了起来。音乐合成音箱里的录音带开始播放。高音小提琴、超级大提琴和交替双簧管的三重奏让整个空气中都充满了惬意慵懒的氛围。三四十个小节之后，一个远远超过于人声的天籁之音开始婉转歌唱，配合着乐器旋律，时而发喉音，时而发头音，时而如笛声绕梁不绝，时而满载着和谐与渴望，毫不费力地从加斯帕德·福斯特破纪录的低音升到了极高的海豚音，比高音C调还高很多——这种具有穿透力的高音，在历史上众多的歌唱家中，只有卢克瑞嘉·阿胡加里唱出过。那是1770年，在帕尔马公爵歌剧院里的演唱，连莫扎特也为之震惊。

列宁娜和野蛮人陷在他们的充气座椅中，边嗅边听。接下来是运用眼睛和皮肤的时候了。

灯光熄灭，黑暗中漂浮着火焰般闪耀的大字：立体感观剧——《直升机里的三星期》，环绕立体声，合成对话，鲜艳多彩的立体画面，芳香风琴同步伴奏。

“紧握住你椅子扶手上的金属球形把手，”列宁娜低声说，“否则就体会不到感官效果了。”

野蛮人按她说的做了。

火焰般的字母消失了，音乐厅完全暗下来。十秒钟后，炫彩夺目、天下无双的画面突然出现：一个身形巨大的黑人和一个金发短头颅贝塔

减女人互相搂抱着，这比现实生活中的血肉之躯还要真实得多，漂亮得多。

野蛮人开始发现嘴唇上异样的感觉。他摸了摸嘴，酥麻的感觉缓解了，手一放回金属把手上，又开始酥麻。芳香风琴似乎在演奏纯净的麝香味道。录音带上，那合成的声音，像是一只奄奄一息的超级鸽子，发出“哦——哦——”的声音，每秒钟只颤动三十二次。一个比非洲贝斯还要低的声音唱和着“啊——啊——”，“哦——啊！哦——啊！”屏幕上立体的男人女人再次亲吻起来。豪华宫殿般的剧院中，六千个观众脸部的敏感地带都像通过电流般酥麻，快感和刺激几乎让人无法承受，“哦……”

故事情节非常简单。第一声“哦啊”过后几分钟后（伴随着一段二重奏，两个男女在价值连城的熊皮上激情地做爱——命运预测师助理说得太对了，每一根头发都如此的清晰可感），黑人遭遇了直升机事故，头朝下栽下去。“砰！”额头上传来剧痛，观众席不禁发出“哎哟”的声音。

头部碰撞完全改变了黑人的条件设置。他对金发碧眼的贝塔女人产生了一种近乎发狂的独特热情。女人抗拒，但黑人还是坚持，挣扎，追求，攻击情敌，最后还惊心动魄地绑架了女人。金发贝塔被迷昏带到了天上，与黑人疯子单独在一起，整整三天都在听他讲反社会的无耻言论。最后，经历了一系列的冒险和空中的翻滚打斗，三个年轻英俊的阿尔法成功解救了她。黑人被送到了成人重新设置中心。故事以金发碧眼的女人成为三个拯救者的情妇圆满结束。他们合唱了一首合成四重奏，有最好的管弦乐队伴奏，还有芳香风琴的梔子花香。最后给了熊皮一个特写的镜头，中间穿插着高分贝的萨克斯音乐。一个立体的吻消失在黑暗中，最后那点儿酥麻快感在唇上颤动，像是飞蛾扑火后留下的微光，不停颤动，越来越弱，最后慢慢平静，归于静止。

但列宁娜心中的飞蛾并没有死去。甚至直到灯都亮起来，他们随着人流向电梯走去的时候，飞蛾的幽灵仍然在她唇上振翅，在她的皮肤上探索欲望和快感的痕迹。她的脸颊绯红，用力地搂住野蛮人的手臂，贴在自己的胸前，整个人变得瘫软。他垂眸看着她，脸色变得苍白，心痛而渴望着，又为自己的情欲感到羞愧。他配不上她，配不上……他们四目交对，她那会说话般的眼睛真像是珍宝一样！那是女王的气质。他匆忙将目光移开，抽出被俘虏的手臂。他吓坏了，害怕她不再是那个自己配不上的圣洁姑娘。

“我觉得你不该看这种东西，”他说，急于把过去和未来有可能毁掉列宁娜完美形象的原因转嫁到客观环境上去了。

“哪种东西，约翰？”

“类似这种可怕戏剧的东西。”

“可怕？”列宁娜非常吃惊。“我觉得很美好啊。”

“太低俗了，”他愤怒地说，“太下流了。”

她摇摇头。“我不明白你是什么意思。”他怎么这么奇怪？怎么会突然一反常态地破坏气氛？

在计程飞机里，他几乎没看她一眼。被从未说出口的承诺束缚着，遵从着那早已不起作用的法则，他扭过身体坐着，一声不吭。他的身体有时会激烈地抽动，就像绷得紧紧的琴弦被拨动一样。

计程飞机降落在列宁娜公寓的屋顶上。“终于到了”，她走出驾驶室时高兴地想。终于到了，即使他刚才那么奇怪。站在灯下，她拿出小镜子照了照。终于到了。她的鼻子有点儿泛油光。在他付计程费时，她抖

了抖粉盒儿，在泛油光的地方补上粉。她想：“他简直太帅了，其实不用像贝尔纳那样腼腆的。要是换了别人，肯定早就上床了。好了，现在终于得手了。”镜中的自己露出了笑靥。

“晚安！”一个冰冷的声音从她身后传来。列宁娜转过身。约翰站在计程飞机的登机口处，直直地盯着她看；显然，从她开始补妆时，他就一直在看着等着。他在等什么？也许是在犹豫，试图下定决心，也许一直想，想——她猜不透他的心思。“晚安，列宁娜！”他重复道，想努力对她微笑，却只做出一个奇怪的表情。

“等等，约翰……我以为你……我的意思是，你难道不想……？”

他关上门，向前探身对司机说了什么，计程飞机飞向云端。

从窗户向下看，野蛮人能看见列宁娜扬起的脸，在灰蓝灯光的映射下显得苍白。她张嘴喊了些什么，她逐渐变小的身影急速离他而去；逐渐缩小的方形屋顶在黑暗中慢慢消散。

五分钟后，他回到自己的房间。从他藏东西的地方拿出被老鼠啃过的书，虔诚地翻阅着那脆弱褪色的书页。他在读《奥赛罗》，他记得奥赛罗是黑人，就像《直升机里的三星期》的男主角一样。

列宁娜擦干了眼泪，穿过屋顶走到电梯前。下到二十七楼之前，她拿出了唆麻药瓶。她觉得一克是不够的，一克唆麻并不足以治愈她的心痛。但是如果吃两克，可能明早就不能按时醒来。她做了折中的选择，向左手的掌心倒出了三粒半克的药片。

第十二章

紧闭的门前，贝尔纳无奈地叫喊着，野蛮人不肯开门。

“所有人都在等你。”

“那就等着吧。”门后传来模糊低沉的回答。

“约翰，你很清楚，（要让高声嘶叫具有说服力是多么困难啊！）他们是特地来看你的。”

“你应该先问问我愿不愿意见他们。”

“你以前一直都见的。”

“正是如此，所以我现在不想见了。”

“就当是为了我！”贝尔纳近乎咆哮般劝说着，“让我高兴一下不好吗？”

“不好。”

“你说真的？”

“真的。”

“我可怎么办呐？”贝尔纳绝望地哀嚎起来。

“去死！”屋子里约翰被激怒了，大声吼道。

“但是坎特伯雷的社区首席歌唱家今晚来。”贝尔纳都快哭出来了。

“哎呀塔克哇！”只有用祖尼语，野蛮人才能准确表达自己对社区首席歌唱家的感觉。“哈尼！”他想了一下又补充道，然后带着恶狠狠的嘲笑口气说：“松斯唉索切纳。”他向地上吐了一口痰，换作是波佩也会这样做。

最后，贝尔纳不得不绝望地回到他的屋里，向等得不耐烦的客人们交代：野蛮人今晚来不了。这个消息引起了众怒。男士们愤恨难平，觉得自己被骗了，以前竟然对这个卑微无用、声名狼藉、愤世嫉俗的家伙客客气气。社会地位越高的人，恨他就越深。

“竟然这样戏弄我！”首席歌唱家不停重复着，“戏弄我！”

女人们也满怀怒气，认为自己听信了假话——被那个瓶子里误加了酒精，只有伽玛减个头的小矮人骗了。太过分了！她们责骂着，声音越来越大。伊顿公学的女主任尤其不留情面。

只有列宁娜什么也没说。她脸色苍白，碧蓝的眼睛笼上了一层罕见的忧郁色彩，她坐在角落里，把自己孤立起来，因为没有人能了解她的情绪。她原本是带着一种急切的狂喜来参加这个聚会的。“再过几分钟”，她进屋时还在自言自语地说，“我就能看见他了，我要和他说话，要告诉他，”（因为她下定了决心才来的。）“我爱他，超过对其他所有人的爱。也许他会回答……”

他会怎么回答呢？她的脸涨得通红。

“那天晚上，看完感官剧之后，他怎么那么奇怪呢？太古怪了。但

是我很肯定他很喜欢我，我很肯定……”

就在这时，贝尔纳宣布了野蛮人缺席的消息。

列宁娜突然体会到激情替代治疗中才会有的感觉，空虚得让人恐惧，担心得无法呼吸，晕眩反胃，心脏仿佛停止了跳动。

“也许他并不爱我，”她对自己说。这种可能性在她心里瞬间变成了不可撼动的事实：约翰没来，是因为不喜欢她，不喜欢她……

“太可耻了！”伊顿的女主任对火葬场兼磷回收站站长说，“一想到我曾经……”

“就是，”法妮·克朗说，“酒精的事肯定是真的。我朋友的朋友当年在胚胎室工作，她对我朋友说的，我朋友又告诉了我……”

“过分，真过分。”亨利·福斯特非常同情社区首席歌唱家。“你知道吗，我们前任主任曾经准备把他送去冰岛。”

每一个词都掷地有声。贝尔纳之前的自信如同膨胀的气球，现在千疮百孔，不成模样。他脸色苍白，忧心忡忡，焦虑不安地在客人间穿梭，语无伦次，结结巴巴地道歉，向他们保证下次野蛮人一定会来参加聚会，乞求他们坐下来尝尝胡萝卜三明治，维他命A馅饼，或是喝一杯香槟替代饮品。他们确实吃了，却完全无视他；一边喝东西，一边当着他的面指责，或是和别人一起对他指手画脚，就好像他是个透明人。

“现在，朋友们，”坎特伯雷首席歌唱家用弗德庆典领唱时那铜铃般优美洪亮的声音说，“我想我该告辞了！”他站起身，放下了杯子，掸掉他那紫色纤维胶马甲上的食品残渣，整理了一下衣服，向门口走去。

贝尔纳急忙跑去挽留他。

“首席歌唱家先生，您现在就要走吗？.....时间还早呢。我恳请您能.....”

是的，他没想到歌唱家先生会这么做。列宁娜曾偷偷告诉贝尔纳，如果给首席歌唱家发出邀请，他一定会接受的。“你知道吗，他非常亲切。”她曾向贝尔纳展示过在伦敦朗伯斯区度周末时，首席歌唱家送给她的T字形金拉链纪念品。贝尔纳还高兴地在每张邀请函上都写道：“坎特伯雷首席歌唱家将与野蛮人先生会面。”野蛮人什么时候不选，偏偏选在今天把自己锁在房间，还大喊“哈尼！”甚至“松斯唉索切纳！”（还好贝尔纳不懂祖尼语的意思）这个晚上，本应该是贝尔纳事业生涯最辉煌的时刻，现在却成了他最耻辱的时刻。

“我曾经希望.....”他结结巴巴地重复着，看着歌唱家，眼睛里充满了乞求和惊慌。

“年轻人，”首席歌唱家庄重严厉地说，整个厅里顿时鸦雀无声，“我给你一个忠告。”他向贝尔纳晃动一根手指头，“趁着还没太迟，我给你个有用的忠告。”（他的声音变得格外阴沉。）“你要改邪归正啊，年轻人，改邪归正。”他在贝尔纳的头顶上画了个T字，转身离开了。“亲爱的列宁娜，”他变换了语气，“跟我走。”

列宁娜顺从地跟在他身后，没有笑，也没有兴高采烈（完全没有受宠若惊的神情）。其他的客人也都有秩序地、恭敬地跟着出去了。“砰”的一声，最后一个客人重重关上门，只留下贝尔纳一个人在那里。

他跌坐在椅子上，像一个泄了气的皮球，双手捂住脸开始哭泣。然

而，过了几分钟，他想通了，吞下四片唆麻。

楼上的房间里，野蛮人在读《罗密欧与朱丽叶》。

列宁娜跟着首席歌唱家走出飞机，走上朗伯斯官邸的房顶。“年轻的朋友，快一点。我在说你呢，列宁娜。”首席歌唱家在电梯门口不耐烦地说。列宁娜停下来，看了会儿月亮，然后低下头，快步地穿过屋顶，到他身边。

穆斯塔法·孟德刚刚读完一份名为《生物学新理论》的文章。他坐了一会儿，皱眉沉思，然后提笔在标题页上写道：“作者采用数学方法诠释目标设置，非常新颖独特，但属于异端思想，对当前社会秩序不利，有潜在的危险性和颠覆性。不予发表。”他在最后四个字下划线强调。“严密监视该书作者，必要时把他打发到圣赫勒拿岛海洋生物站工作。”他签名的时候暗暗觉得可惜，因为这的确是一篇佳作。但是如果承认了目标设置方面的解释，后果将不堪设想。一不留神，这种思想就可能动摇高等种姓中立场不坚定的分子，让他们对幸福这至高的善失去信仰，转而相信真正的目标在当前社会之外，不再把维持安乐幸福当成人生目标，而是追求意识的深入和知识的拓展。这个追求本身并不赖，总统想，但在现有环境下必须斩草除根。他又拿起笔，在“不予发表”下边又划了一道线，比第一道更粗，颜色更深；然后叹了口气，“如果不用去考虑幸福，”他想，“那该有多好！”

约翰闭着眼睛，脸上焕发着神魂颠倒的神采，对着空房间柔声歌颂：

“啊！火炬远不及她的明亮；

她皎洁地悬挂在幕天的颊上，

像黑奴耳边璀璨的珠环；

她是天上明珠降落人间……”

金质的T字架在列宁娜的胸前格外闪耀。首席歌唱家抓住它，闹着玩似的晃了几下。长久的沉默后，列宁娜突然说：“我觉得我得吃点唆麻。”

此时的贝尔纳早已进入甜梦，在只属于他的天堂里微笑，微笑，微笑。但他床头上的电子钟的表针每隔三十秒钟都会向前跳一步，发出轻微的“滴答”声。滴答，滴答，滴答……天亮了，贝尔纳又回到了充满痛苦的时空。他情绪落到了冰点，搭乘计程飞机到条件设置中心上班。曾让他陶醉不已的成功像残留的酒精蒸发消逝，他又回到了卑微渺小的那个自己。如果说之前几周的他像飘飘然的气球，现在，他史无前例地感到身体像灌了铅一样沉重。

野蛮人出人意料地对泄了气的贝尔纳表现出同情。

“你现在更像在马尔佩斯时的样子，”贝尔纳诉说完他悲怆的遭遇后，野蛮人说，“还记得我们第一次的交谈么？在那所小房子外，你跟那时一模一样。”

“这是因为我又回到了不开心的生活。”

“换做是我，我宁愿不开心也不想通过弄虚作假来获得快乐。”

“可是我喜欢那样。”贝尔纳满腔苦楚。“都是你的错，不来参加我的聚会，让他们都背弃了我！”贝尔纳明知自己的话多么荒谬而不公

正，他在心里承认（甚至差点说出口），野蛮人说得对，因为这么点小事就反目成仇的人没有被称为“朋友”的资格。尽管他明白并承认这一切，尽管约翰对他的支持和同情是他现在唯一的精神支柱，贝尔纳还是藏起心中真挚的感激，倔强地酝酿着怨恨，想要小小地报复一下野蛮人。毕竟，对首席歌唱家有再多不满，也没有任何发泄机会，又没办法报复装瓶主任和宿命设置助理主任。对贝尔纳来说，野蛮人比其他所有人更适合作报复对象，因为只有可能报复他。朋友的最主要的功能之一就是接受（以一种较温和的、象征性的形式）我们想施加却无法施加于敌人的惩罚。

另一个受害的朋友就是亥姆霍兹。遭遇挫败后，贝尔纳又想重新拉拢亥姆霍兹，然而，在他最光彩的时期，他一点也没想过维持这段友谊。亥姆霍兹接受了他，没有任何责备和挖苦，好像他早已经忘记了那次争吵。贝尔纳深受感动，同时又为亥姆霍兹的宽宏大量感到羞耻。他越是宽宏大量，贝尔纳就越觉得丢脸，因为这份宽容完全来源于亥姆霍兹的人格，而非唆麻的力量。接受他的不是唆麻假期中的亥姆霍兹，而是在生活中不计前嫌、胸襟开阔的亥姆霍兹。贝尔纳心怀感激（朋友的失而复得对他来说是极大的安慰），却也心怀怨恨（最好能报复一下他的过分宽容）。

在两人失和后第一次见面时，贝尔纳倾诉了他的悲惨遭遇，接受了安慰。直到几天后他才吃惊而羞愧地意识到，他并不是唯一深陷泥沼的人，亥姆霍兹也与领导起了冲突。

“事情起源于几首韵律诗，”亥姆霍兹解释道，“当时我正在给大三学生上高级情绪工程课。分十二讲，第七讲关于韵律诗，确切地说是韵律诗在道德宣传中的运用。我通常会在讲课时列举很多实际例子。于是，我给他们读了我自己写的韵律诗。这的确很疯狂，但是我实在心痒

痒。”他笑起来，“我很好奇他们会有怎样的反应。另外，”他严肃地补充，“我想宣传一下自己的想法，想让他们也体会到我写诗时的感受。弗德在上！”他又笑了，“一下子就闹大了。校长威胁说要立即解雇我，所以我被盯上了。”

“你写了什么样的韵律诗？”贝尔纳问。

“主题是孤独。”

贝尔纳眉毛扬了起来。

“你想听，我可以给你背一遍。”亥姆霍兹开始背诵：

“昨夜召开委员会，

破鼓咚咚不停歇，

午夜迷城寂寞多，

长笛一奏魂魄飞。

朱唇闭，睡意浓，

机器停转静无声。

曾是杂乱喧闹地，

人群往来不肯休，

如今冷清多寂寥。

放声哭，低声泣，

却听故人诉衷肠，
不知其声似何人，
苏珊娜？艾瑞雅？
玉臂酥胸身边靠，
红唇翘臀惹人娇。
似梦似真不可辨，
懵懂不知在何方。
多愚蠢，真荒谬，
世上何存忘忧草！
助我度过凄冷夜，
鱼水之欢多无聊，
污秽空虚何时了？”

“哼，我就举了这个例子，他们就去校长那儿告状了。”

“这不奇怪，”贝尔纳说，“你的诗抨击了他们的睡眠教学。记住，他们为了反对孤独，已经发出过二十五万次警告。”

“我知道，但我想看看诗的效果如何。”

“喏，现在你看到了。”

亥姆霍兹只是笑，“我觉得，”他沉吟了一会儿说，“我终于有了写东西的灵感。仿佛身体里产生了一种力量供我使用，一种额外的潜在能量。我似乎会有什么新的际遇。”贝尔纳心想，尽管亥姆霍兹遇到了麻烦，他反倒挺开心的模样。

亥姆霍兹和野蛮人一见如故，惺惺相惜，这让贝尔纳疯狂地嫉妒起来。这两人即刻建立起来的友谊，比他和野蛮人共处几周的情谊还要深。看着他们交流，听着他们聊天，贝尔纳不时怨恨地想：如果没有介绍他们认识就好了。他为自己的嫉妒感到羞愧，交替着使用意志力和唆麻来控制情绪，但是徒劳无功；在唆麻假期的间隔中，总有难受的感觉侵袭而来。

第三次和野蛮人见面时，亥姆霍兹背诵了那段抒写孤独的韵律诗。

“你觉得怎么样？”背诵完后他问。

野蛮人摇摇头，回答说：“你听听这个。”打开放着被老鼠啃过的书的抽屉，翻开一本读道：

“让那歌喉最响亮的鸟雀，

飞上独立的凤树枝头，

宣布讣告，把哀乐奏响……”

亥姆霍兹越听越激动，从“凤树枝头”这句开始兴奋，听到“你这叫声刺耳的狂徒”时，他突然快活地微笑，又听见“任何专横跋扈的暴君”，热血直往上涌；但当他听到“死亡之音”时，他的脸色变得苍白，被一种前所未有的感情所感染，颤抖起来。野蛮人继续读：

“物性仿佛已失去规矩，
本身竟可以并非本身，
形体相合又各自有名，
既分为二又合二为一。
理智本身也无能为力，
分明看到合一的分离。”

“哦哈哈！”贝尔纳发出不悦的笑声，打断了朗诵。“这不就是一首赞美团结的颂歌嘛。”他这是在报复，因为两个朋友的亲密程度超过了跟他的友谊。

接下来的两三次见面中，他不断地重复着这样的报复伎俩。这是最简单有效的报复，因为看到水晶般剔透的诗歌受到这样的破坏和玷污，亥姆霍兹和野蛮人都非常痛苦。亥姆霍兹威胁他，如果他敢再这么捣乱，就将他赶到屋子外面去。然而，谁也没想到，接下来的一次打岔，最丢脸的一次，竟然是亥姆霍兹一手造成的。

当时野蛮人正带着强烈和颤抖的热情大声朗读《罗密欧与朱丽叶》（他一直都幻想自己是罗密欧，列宁娜是朱丽叶），亥姆霍兹带着困惑和兴趣欣赏情人们初次会面的场景。果然那一幕如诗的语言让他陶醉，但是表达出来的感情让他忍不住想笑。追求一个女孩需要那样的大费周章，实在是可笑。但是，从语言的细腻上来说，这段描写真是感情工程学中的杰作！“这位作家老先生，”他说，“能让我们最好的宣传专家甘拜下风。”野蛮人得意地笑了，又继续朗读。一切都很正常，直到第三幕最后一场，凯普莱特先生和太太威逼朱丽叶嫁给帕里斯伯爵时，朗诵

这一幕期间亥姆霍兹一直在发出声响；当野蛮人模仿朱丽叶的语气，凄惨地大喊：

“天知道我心里是多么难过，

难道它竟会不给我一点慈悲吗？

啊，亲爱的妈妈！

请让婚礼延迟一个月，哪怕一个星期也行；

如果您不答应，

就把我的婚床放在提伯尔特长眠的幽暗坟茔里！”

听到朱丽叶的悲痛诉说，亥姆霍兹终于控制不住，狂笑起来。

妈妈和爸爸（真是荒唐下流的称呼）逼迫自己的女儿嫁给不喜欢的人！这女孩居然傻到不告诉他们自己心有所属（至少当时心是有所属的）！如此荒谬疯狂的场景实在滑稽。他之前还在竭力控制笑意；但听到那句“亲爱的妈妈”（再加上野蛮人那悲伤而颤抖的声调），又想到蒂伯尔特死后没有火葬，浪费了很多磷，他实在是压抑不住了。他不停笑，不停笑，笑到眼泪都掉下来，还是制止不住。野蛮人感到被侮辱，脸色变得惨白，从书中抬起头盯着他，笑声依旧。野蛮人愤慨地合上书站起来，像是把不慎丢到猪面前的珍珠捡起来，把书锁进了抽屉。

“不过，”亥姆霍兹终于喘上口气，能够道歉了。为了安抚野蛮人，他解释说：“我知道，戏剧需要这种滑稽疯狂的场景，营造冲突感，不这样写，就写不出好作品。那个老先生简直是渲染气氛的天才。他能描述出那么悲痛又癫狂的情节，让你难受，让你心烦，否则，你就体会不

到那像X射线一样深邃尖锐的美好语言。可是，那些‘爸爸’‘妈妈’的称呼，”他摇了摇头，“实在让我严肃不起来。再说，谁会因为一个男孩儿得到或失去一个女孩儿而兴奋激动呢？”（野蛮人脸部肌肉在抽搐；但是亥姆霍兹一直望着天花板沉思，没有看见。）“没有谁会兴奋的。”他叹了口气得出结论，“我们需要更多疯狂和暴力场面。但是，什么样的场面？在哪里找？”他沉默了；然后摇头说，“我不知道，”最后又加上一句，“我不知道。”

第十三章

胚胎室若隐若现的灯光下，亨利·福斯特的身影靠近过来。

“今晚想不想看场感官剧？”

列宁娜沉默地摇了摇头。

“和别人有约吗？”他对朋友中的花边新闻总是颇有兴趣。“是贝尼托么？”他问道。

她再次摇头。

亨利看到她紫色眼睛里的疲倦，皮肤上的斑点也隐藏不了脸色的苍白，暗红色的唇毫无笑意，流露着悲伤。“你不会是病了吧？”他有点儿担心地问，害怕她感染上尚未被消灭的传染病中的一种。

列宁娜还是摇头。

“不管怎样，你应该去看看医生，”亨利说，“一天一医生，疾病远离人。”他真诚的引用了睡眠学习的格言，然后拍了拍她的肩膀说，“你可能需要点代妊娠素，”他建议，“或者是一次超强度的激情替代治疗。你知道的，有时候，标准强度的治疗不够……”

“天呐，看在我主弗德的分上，”列宁娜终于张口说话了，“请闭嘴！”她转身去处理刚刚疏忽遗漏的胚胎。

去你的激情替代治疗！要不是现在痛苦地想哭，她一定会笑出声。

难道她现在的情绪还不够强烈吗？她一边吸满注射器，一边深深地叹了口气。“约翰！”她喃喃地说，“约翰……”忽然，她喊了声，“天呐！”她糊涂了，“我给这个胚胎打过昏睡预防针了吗？没打过？”她完全忘记了。最后，她决定不要冒险重复注射，于是拿起了下一排的瓶子。

也许二十二年八个月零四天后，一个年轻有为的阿尔法减，可能是姆万扎的管理者，会死于嗜眠病——半个世纪来头一遭。列宁娜叹了口气，继续她的工作。

一个小时后，在更衣室，法妮提出了严重抗议，“让你自己变成这个样子，简直是荒谬，太荒谬了！”她重复着，“而且仅仅是因为一个男人，一个男人。”

“他是我唯一想要的男人。”

“世上有千千万万的男人。”

“他们都不是我想要的。”

“你不试试怎么知道？”

“我试过了。”

“试过几个？”法妮不屑地耸耸肩，“一个，两个？”

“几十个。但是，”她摇头，“没有一个合适，”她补充道。

“你得持之以恒，”法妮说教道。但是很明显她对自己开出的药方并不是很自信。“一分坚持，一分收获。”

“但是我总……”

“别再想他了。”

“我控制不住。”

“那就服用唆麻。”

“我吃过了。”

“那就再吃。”

“药效一消失，我就明白自己还是喜欢他，永远都会喜欢他。”

“如果是这样，”法妮果断地说，“你干脆霸王硬上弓，管他愿不愿意。”

“可你不知道他有多奇怪！”

“如果你下定决心，一切就都不是问题。”

“说起来容易。”

“别想那些有用没用的了，行动！”法妮用喇叭般洪亮的声音说；她以前准在弗德女青年协会给贝塔减青少年训过话。“没错，上，现在就上。”

“我害怕。”列宁娜说。

“那就先服半克唆麻壮壮胆。好了，我去洗澡啦。”法妮拖着浴巾走开了。

那个下午，野蛮人一直焦急地等着亥姆霍兹出现（他最终下定决心

要和亥姆霍兹袒露他对列宁娜的感情，这个秘密，他实在藏不住了），门铃一响，他就跳起身去开门。

“我猜到是你了，亥姆霍兹。”他边开门边喊。

门口站着的却是列宁娜，她穿着绸缎海军衫，斜扣着一顶潇洒的小圆帽。

“天呐！”野蛮人好像遭受了当头一棒，惊呆了。

半克唆麻足以让列宁娜忘记害怕和尴尬。“你好，约翰！”她笑着说，从他身侧走进房间。他无意识地关上门跟在她身后。列宁娜坐了下来，长时间的沉默。

“看见我来，你好像一点儿都不高兴？”她终于开口。

“不高兴？”野蛮人带着责备的眼神看着列宁娜；突然间跪在她面前，握住她的手，恭敬的亲吻。“怎会不高兴？我多想你能明白我的心意。”他低语，勇敢地抬起眼睛看着她，“美丽的列宁娜，”他继续说下去，“我真的很仰慕你，你是世界上最值得珍惜的人。”列宁娜对他笑了笑，迷人而温柔。“你是如此的完美，”（她的嘴唇微张，慢慢向他靠近），“碧玉无暇，举世无双，”（嘴唇越来越近）“你是稀世珍宝。”（嘴唇近在咫尺）野蛮人突然站起身。“所以我才想，”他边说边把脸转开，“想要做些什么，向你证明，我配得上你。也许我永远没有足够的资格，但我想证明自己并非完全配不上你。我应该做些什么。”

“有什么必要……”列宁娜开口，却没有说完。声音中有一丝愤怒。当她慢慢靠近，想要亲吻他时，他却像个傻子一样突然站起来，让她扑了个空。即使那半克唆麻还在血液里生效，也免不了让她生气。

“在马尔佩斯，”野蛮人语无伦次地嘀咕，“得先送一张狮子皮，我是说，如果要娶哪个姑娘的话。或者送狼皮也行。”

“英格兰没有狮子！”列宁娜几乎要爆发了。

“即使这儿有，”野蛮人忽然带着鄙视和不满说，“人们肯定也是坐着直升机，用毒气之类的东西捕杀狮子。我不会这么做的，列宁娜。”他挺起胸膛，鼓起勇气看她，却看见列宁娜带着烦闷和不解盯着自己。他困惑了，“我会为你做任何事，”他越来越前言不搭后语，“只要是你想要的，我都会做。你知道，有些事的确不那么轻松，但是也可以做得很开心。我就是这么想的。我的意思是，如果你要我擦地板，我会很乐意。”

“我们这里有真空吸尘器啊，”列宁娜不解地说，“没必要擦地。”

“对，当然没必要。但是卑贱的工作有时也需要高贵的灵魂。我想要勇敢去经历，完成一些事。你能明白么？”

“可是，我们有真空吸尘器……”

“我想说的不是这个。”

“而且这些活是伊普西龙半傻子做的，”她继续说，“那么，老实说，你到底是为什么……”

“为什么？就是为了你啊。我想证明……”

“可是真空吸尘器和狮子能有什么关系？”

“证明我有多……”

“狮子和见到我很高兴又有什么关系？”她越来越恼怒。

“我有多爱你，列宁娜。”他近乎绝望地说出来。

内心惊喜的潮水仿佛推动血液往脸上涌，列宁娜脸涨得通红。“你是认真的吗，约翰？”

“原本我不打算说出来的，”野蛮人紧握着拳头，痛苦地喊出来。“想等到.....列宁娜，你知道吗，在马尔佩斯，人们会结婚。”

“结什么？”刚刚消失的怒气，又出现在她声音里，他现在还胡扯什么啊？

“永远，他们会承诺永远生活在一起。”

“这个想法太可怕了！”列宁娜这回真的被吓到了。

““心灵的美丽比外表的美丽来得持久，因为心灵再生的速度远比血液衰老的速度要快得多。””

“什么？”

“就像莎士比亚说的，‘但在一切神圣的仪式没有充分给你许可之前，你不能侵犯她处女的尊严.....’”

“看在弗德的分上，约翰，别胡说了。你说的话，我一句也听不懂。开始是真空吸尘器；然后又是什么结，我快被你逼疯了。”她跳起来，抓住他的手腕，好像害怕他会突然跑开，也害怕他的心会飞走。“告诉我：你真的爱我吗，还是闹着玩儿的？”

沉默了一会儿，野蛮人轻柔地说：“我爱你，胜过爱这个世界上的

一切。”

“那你为什么不早说？”她喊起来，那样的气恼，以至于她的长指甲陷进他手腕的皮肤里。“却一直在跟我说什么结、真空吸尘器、狮子什么的。你知不知道这几个星期我有多难过。”

她松开手，生气地把他的手腕甩开。

“要不是我如此爱你，”她说，“一定会对你发火。”

突然，她双臂环住他的脖子，软软的嘴唇贴上他的唇。那么柔软芳香，那么温暖酥麻，让他措手不及。他不可避免地想到了《直升机里的三星期》中那个拥抱。啊！啊！立体的金发女人，哦！哦！比现实还要真实的黑人。恐怖，恐怖，还是恐怖……他想要推开她，但是列宁娜抱得更紧了。

“为什么之前不告诉我？”她低语呢喃，挪开脸看着他，眼神中既有责备，也有爱怜。

“即使是最幽冥的暗室中，在最方便的场合（良心像雷鸣般富有诗意的呼喊），有伺隙而来的魔鬼的最强烈的煽惑，也不能使我的廉耻化为肉欲。不，绝不！”他断然地说。

“你这个笨蛋！”她说，“我如此渴求你，如果你也渴求我，还等什么……”

“但是，列宁娜……”他开始反对。她快速抽回手臂，走远了几步。他以为她明白了没有说出口的话。然而，当她解开白色的腰带，把它小心地搭在椅背上时，他怀疑自己想错了。

“列宁娜！”他焦虑地重复道。

她把手放在脖子前的拉链上，向下一拉；白色的海军衫落到地上。怀疑的迷雾凝结成过于坚实的事实。“列宁娜，你要干什么？”

“嘶拉，嘶拉！”她无声地回答了他，慢慢地褪下她的喇叭裤。她的拉链内衣是像贝壳般的灰粉色。社区首席歌唱家送给她的金T字架在她的胸前晃动。

“那对透过窗棂映射到男人眼里的雪白乳峰……”雷鸣般的诗歌，魔力般的语言，让她看起来更加危险妖娆。柔软，柔软的乳峰，如此打动人心！它们钻破了理智，刺穿了决心。“血液中的火焰一燃烧起来，最坚强的誓言也形同草秆。节制一些吧，否则……”

“嘶拉！”两个圆圆的、闪耀粉红光彩的乳房像分成两半的苹果，一下子暴露出来。两只胳膊一晃，右脚一抬，左脚一抬，拉链内衣也被褪到了地上，好像失去生命一样泄了气。

她仍然穿着鞋袜，头上的小圆帽调皮地倾斜。她走向他，“亲爱的，亲爱的！你要是早点儿说出来就好了！”她伸出双手。

可是野蛮人没有伸出双手，同样回以“亲爱的”，他害怕地退却了，向她做出驱赶的手势，好像面前站的是猛兽一样。连退四步，他已经背靠墙壁。

“甜心！”列宁娜呼唤着，把手搭在了他的肩上，紧紧地靠向他。“搂着我！”她命令道，“抱着我直到我心醉，亲爱的。”她的命令也充满了诗意，她知道有些歌词像咒语，像鼓点。“亲吻我！”她闭上了眼睛，她把声音放低变成喃喃低语，“亲吻我直到我情迷。抱着我，亲爱

的，温柔地……”

野蛮人抓住她的手腕，从自己肩膀上掰开，粗鲁地把她推到几尺之外。

“好疼！你怎么……天呐！”她突然间不敢出声，恐惧让她忘记了疼痛。她看到了他的脸，不，那不是他的脸，是一张残忍的陌生人的脸，苍白、扭曲、发狂般的抽搐，带着莫名的暴怒。她被吓得目瞪口呆，小声地问，“约翰，你怎么了？”他没有回答，只是用癫狂的眼神死死盯着她，握着她手腕的手不停地颤抖。他强烈而不规则地喘着粗气。她突然听到他咬牙的声音，害怕得快要晕倒过去。“怎么回事？”她近乎尖叫着说。

他仿佛被她的尖叫唤醒了，抓着她的肩膀前后晃动。“荡妇！”他大喊着，“你个厚颜无耻的妓女！”

“不要，啊！不要！”她的抗议声因为身体的晃动而奇怪地颤抖。

“婊子！”

“求求你放开我。”

“该下地狱的婊子！”

“一，一克唆，唆麻，好过烦恼……”她断断续续地说出格言。

野蛮人猛地将她推开，她踉踉跄跄地跌倒在地。“滚！”他气势汹汹地俯视她，“再也别出现在我视野里，否则我会杀了你。”他拳头握得咯吱作响。

列宁娜抬起手挡住脸。“求你别这样，约翰……”

“快滚！”

列宁娜战战兢兢地看着他每一个举动，一只胳膊仍然护着额头，慌慌张张地爬起来，然后飞奔向浴室。

他一个巴掌挥过去，把她向前推了好几步，像是射出膛的子弹。

“哇啊！”列宁娜踉跄地往前一蹿。

她安全冲进浴室，反锁上门后，才开始慢慢查看身上的伤。她背对着镜子扭头看，望见左肩上五个红手指印，在雪白肌肤的映衬下尤为明显。她小心翼翼地揉了揉伤处。

浴室外，野蛮人在房间中来回走动，踏着像咒语、像鼓点的节奏。“鸬鹚都在干那把戏，金苍蝇也当着我的面公然交合。”他的耳朵里回荡着这样的声音。“其实她自己干起那回事来，比艾融和骚马还要浪得多。她们上半身虽然是女人，下半身却是淫荡的妖怪；腰带以上虽属于天神，腰带以下全属于魔鬼。那儿是地狱，那儿是黑暗，那儿是火坑，吐着熊熊的烈焰，发出熏人的恶臭，把一切烧成了灰。呸，呸，呸，痛苦啊痛苦！亲爱的药师，给我称一两麝香，让我净化一下我的想象。”

“约翰！”浴室里传来哀求声。“约翰！”

“你这野草闲花啊！你的颜色是这样娇美，你的香气是这样芬芳，人家看见你嗅到你就会心疼。这一本美丽的书册，是要让人家写上‘娼妓’两个字的吗？天神见了它要掩鼻而过……”

但是她的芬芳仍然包围着他，他白色的夹克上沾上了粉，那是她之前拍在天鹅绒般滑腻皮肤上的香粉。“不要脸的淫妇，不要脸的淫妇，不要脸的淫妇！”那无情的节奏兀自重复着，“不要脸的……”

“约翰，可以让我穿上衣服吗？”

他捡起喇叭裤，衬衫和拉链内衣。

“开门！”他踢着门命令道。

“不要，我不开。”声音里满是恐惧和反抗。

“那我怎么给你衣服？”

“从门上的通风口递进来。”

他照做了，又焦躁地在房里来回踱步。“不要脸的淫妇，不要脸的淫妇。那个屁股肥胖，手指粗得像马铃薯般的荒淫的魔鬼……”

“约翰。”

他不想应声。“屁股肥胖，手指粗得像马铃薯般。”

“约翰。”

“干吗？”他粗暴地问。

“能不能请你把马尔萨斯腰带递给我。”

列宁娜坐着，听着外面房间的脚步声，猜想着野蛮人要这样来来回回走多久；是不是得等到野蛮人离开，她才能脱身；或者给他一些时

间，让他消消气，冷静一下，然后再打开浴室门，飞快地冲出去？会不会太危险？

她被自己杂乱的猜测弄得心神不定，直到外屋里响起电话铃，踱步的鼓点戛然而止。她听见野蛮人接电话。

“你好。”

.....

“我就是。”

.....

“我就是，我不能冒充我自己。”

.....

“是的，你听不懂我的话吗？我就是野蛮人。”

.....

“什么？谁病了？我当然想知道。”

.....

“病得厉害吗？她很不舒服？我马上就去.....”

.....

“不在她房间了？她被送到哪儿去了？”

.....

“天啊！请告诉我地址。”

.....

“公园街三号是吗？三号？谢谢。”

列宁娜听到挂电话的声音，然后是匆匆离去的脚步和“砰”的关门声。随后一片寂静。他真的走了么？

她小心谨慎地把门拉开一条缝，窥探了半天，惊喜地发现没有人。她又把门开大了一些，把头探出去，最后蹑手蹑脚地走出来。她的心怦怦直跳，站了好一会，仔细地听了又听，然后突然向门口狂奔，开门，快速溜出去，关上门，撒腿就跑。直到冲进电梯，开始下降时，她才松了口气。

第十四章

公园街垂危病人医院是一座六十四层的塔楼，外墙上都镶着报春花色的瓷砖。野蛮人刚一踏出计程飞机，就看到一架色彩鲜艳的空中灵车轰鸣着从屋顶起飞，穿过公园，向西边的泥沼火葬场飞去。在电梯门口，门房回答了他的提问。他坐电梯上到17层，来到81号病房（门房告诉他那是急性衰老病房）。

那是一间很大的病房，墙壁上刷着黄色涂漆，阳光照进来，显得很明亮。病房里共有20张床，都住满了人。琳达躺在那里，奄奄一息——和其他病人一起，享受着现代化设备。空气中永远流淌着合成的优美旋律，每张床的床尾处都有一台电视机，朝向垂危的病人，从早开到晚，像是一直开着的水龙头。每隔十五分钟，屋子里就会自动变换一种香味。“我们做了很多努力，”接待野蛮人的护士解释着，“试图营造一种舒适怡人的气氛，介于顶级酒店和感官剧院两种氛围之间，你明白我的意思吧。”

“她在哪儿？”野蛮人问，完全不搭理护士善意的解释。

护士很不高兴地说，“你很赶时间么？”

“还有希望么？”他问。

“你的意思是，救活她的命？”他点点头。“不，当然没希望了。送到这儿来的人都没有希……”或许是被他惨白的脸上那种痛苦的表情吓到了，她突然住了嘴。“怎么了，有什么大不了的？”她问。像野蛮人这

样的探病者显然让她很不适应。（不管怎么说，这儿的探病者一向就不多：凭什么探病者会多呢？）“你是不是哪里不舒服？”

他摇了摇头。“她是我的母亲。”他的声音小得快听不到。

护士用一种受惊、恐慌的目光看了他一眼，然后很快移开视线，她的脸从太阳穴红到了脖子根。

“带我去看她。”野蛮人竭力保持平稳的语气。

护士红着脸把他带到病房。当他们走进病房时，病人们转过脸看他们，面孔看起来丰润年轻（急性衰老的病症非常快，心脏和大脑迅速老化，面孔还来不及衰老）。他们用空洞茫然的眼神追随着探病者的身影，就像回到了婴儿初生时的状态。野蛮人感到不寒而栗。

琳达躺在最顶头的那张床上。她坐靠在枕头上，正在看南美洲黎曼球场的网球锦标赛半决赛，电视无声地放映，画面被缩小了。在那发光的方形屏幕上，运动员们无声地跑动着，像鱼缸里的鱼一样——在另一个世界激情而无声地活动着。

琳达继续看着电视，带有迷糊而痴傻的微笑。她那张苍白臃肿的脸上，流露出傻子一样的欢愉。她时不时合上眼睛，好像是在打盹儿，然后微微一惊，又醒过来，看着“鱼缸”里那些滑稽可笑的网球运动员，听着超高音歌唱家伍利策瑞安娜的《抱着我直到我心醉，亲爱的》，闻着她头上的气窗吹进来的马鞭草的香吻。她醒了过来，或者说，她又来到了现实的梦中：血液中的唆麻让电视、歌声和香氛变得更为美妙，构成了完美的梦境。她带着婴儿式的满足，再次露出残败而褪色的微笑。

“好了，我得走了。”护士说，“一大帮孩子要过来了，再说，还要

看紧三号床。”她指着另一边的病床说，“那人随时都可能死掉。那么，你请便。”护士匆匆离开了。

野蛮人在床边坐下来。

“琳达！”他抓着她的手，低声呼唤。

听见有人喊她的名字，琳达转回头。那双无神的眼睛，在看到他后突然亮了起来。她紧紧地握着他的手，笑了，嘴唇动了动，突然，脑袋向前一倾，她又睡着了。他坐在那儿看着她——抚摸着她那疲惫的身体，试图找回曾经在马尔佩斯时留在他记忆中的那张年轻明亮的脸。他找到了，闭上眼睛，他回忆着她的声音，她的一举一动，他们一起度过的每时每刻。“草色链球菌马儿，带我去班伯里T区……”她的歌声是多么动听！儿时的歌谣是多么的迷人和神秘，像是有魔力一样。

“A，B，C呀，维他命D：

肝脏里的脂肪，海洋中的鲑鱼。”

回忆起那些童谣和琳达的歌声，他热泪盈眶。他又想起阅读课：娃娃在瓶子里，猫咪在垫子上，还有《胚胎室贝塔工人初级操作指南》。他们在火堆边一坐就是一个晚上，夏天在小屋的房顶上，她给他讲述保留地之外的那个最美最美的地方——一个充满善良和美丽的天堂。虽然接触到这个现实的伦敦和那些现实的文明人，他对那个天堂依然保持着完整而纯洁的回忆。

突如其来的尖叫声让他睁开了眼睛，他胡乱地擦干眼泪，环顾四周。一群八岁的多生子男孩儿鱼贯而入，像是延绵不绝的小溪。一个跟着一个，一个接着一个，他们的到来就像是噩梦。他们的脸，一样的脸

——那么多人却只有一张面孔，长得像哈巴狗一样，大鼻孔，无神的大眼睛。他们的制服都是卡其色的。他们进来的时候，都张着嘴高声地喋喋不休。一瞬间，病房像是爬满了蛆虫。他们穿梭在病床间的空隙处挤来挤去，有的爬上病床，有的在床下穿行，有的挤到电视机前张望，有的对病人们做鬼脸。

琳达的样子让他们吃惊，更让他们害怕。一群人挤在她的床尾，像是突然看到了不明的怪物一样带着恐惧和愚蠢的好奇盯着她。

“哇，快看，快看！”他们压低的声音中夹杂着惊慌，“她怎么这副样子？为什么这么肥？”

他们从没有见过这样一张脸，既不年轻，皮肤也不紧绷，身材胖得走样，还驼背。医院里六十多岁的垂死老人都有着小女孩儿般的容貌，四十四岁的琳达却与其他人形成鲜明对比，像个身躯松弛扭曲的老怪物。

“她太可怕了！”一些孩子窃窃私语着，“看她的牙齿！”

突然，一个哈巴狗脸的多生子从床底下钻出来，跳到约翰的椅子和墙壁中间，盯着琳达熟睡的脸颊。

“我说……”他刚张开嘴说话，还没说完就变成了尖叫。野蛮人抓着他的领子，把他从椅子边拎了起来，结结实实地给了他一个耳光，打得他嚎叫着跑掉了。

听到嚎叫声的护士长急忙赶了过来。

“你对他做了什么？”她凶狠地追问道，“我不准你打孩子！”

“那好，你让他们离这病床远点儿。”野蛮人的声音愤怒得有些颤抖。“这些乳臭未干的脏孩子到这里来干吗？不成体统！”

“不成体统？你这是什么意思？他们正在接受死亡条件设置啊。我告诉你，”她粗暴地警告他，“如果再让我发现你干扰死亡设置，我就叫门房把你扔出去。”

野蛮人站起身向她靠近，他咄咄逼人的行动和表情让护士长害怕地往后退。他竭尽全力控制住自己，没有说话，转身又回到床边坐了下来。

护士长松了口气，用刺耳的声音不太有把握地维护尊严：“我警告过你了，”护士长说，“我可警告过你了，”护士长又说，“你记住。”她最后还是把那些好奇心旺盛的多生子们带走了，让他们去玩“找拉链”。她的同事正在病房的另一边组织游戏。

“去喝你的咖啡饮料吧，亲爱的。”她对另外一个护士说。成功维护权威的快慰让她恢复了自信和好心情。“好了，孩子们！”她呼唤道。

琳达不安地动起来，睁着眼睛朦胧地看了一会儿周围，又一次昏睡过去。野蛮人坐在她身边，努力捕捉回几分钟前的心境。“A，B，C呀，维他命D。”他重复着，好像这是魔咒，会让逝去的往昔起死回生一样。可惜咒语并未奏效，美好的记忆并没有回来，那些关于嫉妒、丑陋和痛苦的记忆像梦魇般复活了。肩膀被砍伤、滴着血的波佩；睡相丑陋的琳达；床边打翻的龙舌兰酒瓶上嗡嗡乱飞的苍蝇；琳达走过时，给她起难听外号的顽童……啊，不，不！他闭上了眼睛，使劲地摇着头，竭力拒绝这些回忆。“A，B，C呀，维他命D……”他试着回忆小时候，坐在琳达的膝盖上，她抱着他，一遍又一遍地唱着，轻轻地摇着他，摇着

他，哄他睡着。“A，B，C呀，维他命D，维他命D，维他命D……”

伍利策瑞安娜的超级高音逐渐上升到如泣如诉的高度，香味循环系统中的马鞭草的香气突然变成浓郁的广藿香。琳达动了动，醒了过来，莫名其妙地盯着半决赛的画面看了几秒钟，然后抬起脸来，闻了闻刚刚变换了香味的空气，突然笑了——带着孩子般的得意。

“波佩！”她呢喃着，闭上了眼睛。“啊，我真喜欢这样，真喜欢……”她叹了口气，又倒进枕头里。

“琳达！”野蛮人哀求地说，“你还认识我吗？”他已经尽了最大的努力，她为什么总是忘不了他？他紧握着她那双无力的手，甚至有些过于用力，好像希望通过这种方式强迫她从猥亵的春梦中醒来，让她摆脱这种低俗、可耻的记忆。回到现在，回到现实中来，回到这个可怕的现在，这个糟糕的现实中来——但这现实又是伟大的，是有意义的，是极其重要而且恰如其分的，因为那种即将到来的死亡，会让人们畏惧。“你不认识我了吗，琳达？”

他隐约感觉到了她的手无力地攥了一下，作为回答。他的眼睛湿润了，弯下腰吻了吻她。

她的嘴唇动了动，“波佩！”她又喃喃低语。约翰感觉好像是被人泼了一脸粪便。

他怒火中烧。第二次的受挫让他的悲伤有了另一种发泄的渠道，变成了极度痛苦的愤怒。

“可是我是约翰啊！”他大声叫喊。“我是约翰！”他因为痛苦，愤怒地抓住她的肩膀摇晃起来。

琳达突然睁开了眼睛，她看到了他，认出了他，“约翰！”但是又把那张现实中的脸和那双真实有力的手带回了想象中的世界——把他放在广藿香和高音伍利策之间，放在变形的回忆和离奇的梦之中。她知道那是约翰，是她的儿子，但是却把他幻想为闯入马尔佩斯天堂的入侵者，那儿是她和波佩一起度唆麻假期的地方。约翰很愤怒，因为她爱波佩；他不断地摇晃她，因为波佩在她的床上——好像她哪里做错了一样，好像其他文明人都不会这么做似的。“每个人都属于彼此……”她的声音突然变得毫无生气，她呼吸困难地张着嘴，却没有一点儿声音。她张着嘴，绝望地想多吸入一点空气，却好像忘记了怎样呼吸。她想叫喊，却怎么都发不出声；只有从那圆睁着、充满恐惧的眼睛中，才能看出她巨大的痛苦。她的手放在脖子上，然后抓着空气——抓着她再也不能吸入的空气，抓着渐渐离她远去的空气。

野蛮人站起来，向她弯下腰。“你说什么，琳达？你说什么？”他哀求着，求她让他放心。

她看着他，眼神中流露着不可言说的恐惧，在他看来，那是一种责备。

她试图自己从床上坐起来，但最终还是跌回到枕头上。她的脸恐怖地扭曲着，嘴唇也变得乌青。

野蛮人转身向病房外跑。

“来人！快来人！”他大喊着，“快！”

护士长站在玩游戏的多生子们围成的圈里，转过头。她起初一惊，随即就变得正气凛然。“别喊了！为这些孩子想想。”她皱着眉说，“你可能会破坏他们的条件设置，你到底在干吗？”他已经钻进了圆圈

中。“啊，小心点！”一个孩子喊着。

“快，快去！”他拉着她的衣服袖子，拖着她快步前进，“快！出事了！我害死了她。”

他们回到病房时，琳达已经死了。

野蛮人像冻结般沉默地站在那儿，然后跪在床边，双手捂面，无法抑制地啜泣起来。

护士犹豫不决地站在旁边，看着跪在床前的人（多么可耻的场景），又看了看孩子们（他们真可怜）。多生子们已经停止了“找拉链”，从病房的另一头向这边望过来，瞪着大眼睛，看着20号病床边这场丑恶的表演。她应该和他说句话吗？让他停止这种有伤风化的举动？告诉他现在在哪儿，提醒他这么做会对这些无辜的孩子造成多么致命的伤害，用这种恶心的声音来破坏有利身心的死亡条件设置——就好像死亡有多可怕一样，就好像死亡有多严重一样！这可能会使孩子们产生毁灭性的想法，可能会扰乱他们，让他们做出与社会伦理背道而驰的行为。

护士长走上前，拍拍他的肩膀说：“你不能老实点儿吗？”她恼怒地低声劝诫。然而，她环顾四周，看到六七个孩子已经起身向病房这边走过来了。圆圈马上要散了。马上就.....不行，这太危险了。如果这次的条件设置失败了，那么这群孩子的条件设置会被推迟六七个月。她赶紧回到受到威胁的孩子们身边。

“现在，谁想吃一块巧克力蛋糕？”她用活泼的语气大声地问。

“我！”整个波卡组的孩子们异口同声地叫起来，20号病床被忘光

了。

“哦，上帝，上帝，上帝啊！”野蛮人不断地自言自语，在悲伤与懊悔夹杂的混乱中，唯一清楚的词汇就是上帝。“上帝啊！”他低声呼唤，“上帝……”

“他到底在说什么啊？”一个声音问道，那声音很近，很清晰，从高音伍利策婉转的歌声中穿透出来。

野蛮人猛然地转过身，松开捂着脸的双手，往四周看了看。五个穿着卡其色制服的多生子站成一排，像哈巴狗似的盯着他，每个人手里都拿着半块点心。他们相同的面容上，沾满不同形状的融化了的巧克力。

他们和约翰一对上视线，就不约而同地笑起来，其中一个还用长条状的蛋糕指着琳达。

“她死了么？”他问。

野蛮人默默地瞪了他们一会儿，然后，又默默地站起来，默默地向门口走。

“她死了么？”那个好奇的多生子跟在他身后，又问。野蛮人低头看着他，默默地把他推开。那孩子摔倒在地上，立刻大哭起来。野蛮人头也不回地走掉了。

第十五章

公园街垂危病人医院一共有一百六十二个卑贱的下等工人，分成两个波卡小组，其中一组是八十四个红发多生女，另一组是七十八个暗色皮肤的长脸多生男。一般情况下，他们六点下班，两个小组在医院前厅集合，在会计助理那里领取定量的唆麻。

从电梯出来后，野蛮人的思想被死亡、悲痛、懊悔充斥着。他就像机器人一样，意识不到自己在做什么，径直往人群中间挤。

“你挤什么挤？你以为自己在哪儿？”

混杂的人群中传出两个声音，一高一低，一个支支吾吾，一个咆哮不停，像是在一大排镜子前不停地重复。两类脸恶狠狠地朝向他：一类长着雀斑，没有毛，如同被橘黄色的光环包围的月亮；一类脸瘦长，尖嘴，蓄着两天没有刮的胡茬。两个声音和撞在他肋骨上的手肘唤回了他的意识。他立刻回到了现实，环顾他的周围，带着一种恐惧和厌恶的情绪，明白了眼前的景况。日夜复发的狂乱病和蚁群般无法辨别的相同面孔，如噩梦般永无止境。多生子，多生子……他们像蛆虫一样穿梭在琳达死亡的迷雾里。现在，蛆虫又出现在他面前，只是大了好多倍，长成了人。他用迷惑恐惧的眼神盯着那些卡其色的怪物。他站在他们面前，足足高出一头。“那儿有多么美妙的生灵啊！”那歌声不无嘲讽：“人类多么善良！啊！美妙的新世界……”

“发唆麻了，”一个声音高喊着：“都排好队，快一点。”

门开了，桌子和椅子已经挪到了走廊里。说话的是一个年轻的阿尔法，他搬着一个黑铁钱箱进来了。多生子满怀期待，发出满意的呢喃。他们一心关注着桌上的黑铁钱箱，早已将野蛮人抛掷脑外。马上就要开箱了！箱盖被揭开。

“哇哈！”一百六十二个人异口同声地欢呼，仿佛在看烟花表演。

年轻人掏出一把小药盒，专横地说，“现在往前走，一个一个来，不准拥挤。”

多生子没有拥挤，一个个地往前走。先是两个男人，然后一个女人，接着一个男人，三个女人，如此轮流……

野蛮人看着这一切，“啊！美妙的新世界。啊！美妙的新世界！”在他心里，歌声似乎变了调。在他如此痛苦和懊悔的时刻，每个歌词都尖酸地嘲讽着他。它们像恶魔一样狂笑，用令人作呕的、丑陋的噩梦嘲弄他。突然，这歌声变成豪迈的号角，召唤他战斗。“啊！美妙的新世界！”米兰达宣扬着美好生活的可能性：让噩梦变成美好事物的可能性。“啊！美妙的新世界！”这是一种挑战，一种命令。

“喂，那边不要挤！”会计助理狂怒地叫嚷着。他“砰”地关上了钱箱，“你们要是不遵守秩序，我就不发了。”

德尔塔们小声咕哝了几句，相互推搡了几下，停了下来。威胁生效了。还有什么比扣发唆麻更加可怕呢？

“这下好多了。”年轻人说着，打开了他的钱箱。

琳达沦落成一个奴隶，现已命丧黄泉。其他人应该获得自由，世界应该变得美好。这是一种补偿，一种责任。突然，像是出现了一道光

芒，让野蛮人明白了自己应该做什么。就像是一道百叶窗打开了，窗帘拉了起来。

“下一个，”会计助理说。

另一个女卡其上前。

“停！”野蛮人大叫着，“停！”

德尔塔们惊愕地看着他向桌边挤去。

“弗德啊！”会计助理屏住呼吸，“是野蛮人！”他不禁心生恐惧。

“我恳求你，”野蛮人诚挚地说，“让我借一下你们的耳朵。”他从来没有在公共场合讲过话，现在发现表达自己想说的话太难了。“不要碰那些东西，那是毒品，是毒品啊。”

“我说，野蛮人先生，”会计助理试图用微笑平息事端，“你不介意让我先.....

“那是侵蚀灵魂和肉体的毒药！”

“也许吧。但是让我先发完了好不好？你是个明事理的好先生。”他拍打着野蛮人的肩膀，就像充满温柔地抚摸一只凶猛的动物，“就让我先.....”

“绝对不行！”野蛮人大叫着。

“老兄，听我说.....”

“把那些可怕的毒品全部扔掉。”

“全部扔掉”几个字刺穿了德尔塔们朦胧的意识，人群中传出了愤怒的呢喃。

“我是来带给你们自由的。”野蛮人转身面向多生子们，“我是来.....”

会计助理没有继续听下去，他偷偷溜出门厅，在电话簿上查询一个号码。

“没在他自己的房间。”贝尔纳总结道，“没在我的房间，没在你的房间，没在爱美神馆，也没在大学中心。他会去哪儿呢？”

亥姆霍兹耸了耸肩。他们下班后以为野蛮人在平常见面的某个地点等他们，却半天不见踪影，真让人恼火。本打算乘亥姆霍兹的四架直升飞机到比亚利茨去的，如果野蛮人还不出现，晚餐怕是赶不上了。

“再等五分钟吧。”亥姆霍兹说，“如果他还不出现，我们就.....”

电话铃声打断了他。他接起电话说：“你好，请讲。”他听了一会，咒骂道：“弗德在上！我马上过去。”

“出什么事了？”贝尔纳问。

“那家伙在公园街医院。”亥姆霍兹说，“野蛮人就在那，好像要疯了。情况很紧急。你和我一起去吗？”

两人匆匆坐上电梯。

“你们喜欢做奴隶吗？”当他们走进医院时，野蛮人正发表着演说，他的脸涨得通红，眼睛里充满了热情和义愤。“还是你们喜欢做婴儿？哇哇哭、还吐奶的婴儿。”他补充道。他想要拯救的人们是那么愚昧，让他不禁恼怒而说出侮辱性的话。那些话语撞在愚昧的厚壳上被反弹回来。他们面无表情地盯着他，眼神里流露出阴沉的迟钝和怨恨。“还在吐奶的婴儿！”他理直气壮地大喊。现在，伤心、怨恨、同情和责任都被置之脑后。那些禽兽不如的怪物激起了他的憎恨，这浓烈的感情驾驭了他。“难道你们不想成为人，获得自由吗？难道你们连什么是人类，什么是自由都不明白？”愤怒使他滔滔不绝，话语迸溅而出。“难道你们不明白？”他不断发问，却没有得到答案，“好吧。”他的声调变得冷酷，“让我来教你们。你们想也好，不想也好，我都会给你们自由。”他推开一扇朝向医院庭院的窗户，把装唆麻的小药盒一把一把扔出去。

一时间，卡其色怪物们呆若木鸡。面对这种渎圣的行为，他们只感到惊愕和恐惧。

“他疯了。”贝尔纳睁圆了眼睛小声说着，“他会被杀的，他会……”突然，怪物们发出一声叫喊，人群气势汹汹地向野蛮人涌去。“弗德保佑！”贝尔纳惊恐地转移目光，不敢看下去。

“弗德保佑自救之人。”亥姆霍兹·沃森笑了，笑声掺杂着癫狂与喜悦。他推开人群，走上前去。

野蛮人大喊着“自由，自由”，一只手继续往窗外扔唆麻，另一只手击打着袭击者们千篇一律的脸。“自由！”突然，亥姆霍兹站在了他的身边。“亥姆霍兹，好兄弟。”他也挥起了拳头。“终于做人了！”亥姆霍兹边说边也往窗外扔毒品。“对，做人了，做人了！”毒品全部被扔掉了，他抓起钱箱，向他们展示空空如也的黑色内胆，“你们自由了！”

德尔塔们暴怒着咆哮。

站在战争边缘的贝尔纳迟疑不决，“他们完了！”他嗟叹着，突然有一股冲动，想上前帮助他们；但转念一想又心生顾虑。他为帮不上忙感到羞愧，正想上前，又忍不住退缩了。他为自己的犹豫感到羞耻，苦恼地站在那里。如果他不帮忙，朋友们可能会被杀，如果他去帮忙，可能连自己的命都搭进去。正在这时，谢天谢弗德！一群警察冲了过来，戴着凸起的护目镜和猪鼻子形状的防毒面具。

贝尔纳一路短跑迎接他们，他挥着胳膊，心想至少自己还能做点什么。他一遍遍大喊：“救命，救命！”声音一次比一次大，仿佛试图说服自己确实帮上了忙。“救命！救命！”

警察把他推开，继续执行任务。三个警察肩上扛着喷雾剂，往空气中不停地喷射唆麻浓烟；两个警察在手提合成箱前忙碌着；还有四个警察冲进人群，用装满强麻醉剂的喷枪攻击打得不可开交的人们。

“快点，快点！”贝尔纳大叫着。“再不快点，他们会被杀死的。他们会……哎呀！”一个警察对他的喋喋不休很恼火，就给了他一麻醉枪。他立刻觉得晕头转向，站都站不稳，好像没有了骨头和肌肉似的，变成了两根冰棍，最后连冰棍也不是了，化成了水。他摇晃了一两秒钟就摔倒了，绵绵地瘫在地上。

忽然，合成音乐箱里传出了一个声音，充满理智与善意。合成录音带正在播放二号（中等强度）反暴乱演说，这声音仿佛发自一个不存在的心灵深处。“我的朋友们，亲爱的朋友们！”这个声音如此哀伤，温柔中蕴含责备。即使那些戴着防毒面具的警察们也瞬间泪眼朦胧，“你们这是在干什么？为什么大家不能幸福快乐地待在一起？幸福快乐！”那

个声音重复着，“和平相处，和平相处。”声音颤抖着，变成轻柔细语，再慢慢消失。“我希望你们都能幸福。”声音又出现了，带着一种真挚的渴望。“我希望你们都能快乐，请你们快乐……”

两分钟后，演说和唆麻雾气起作用了。德尔塔们含着眼泪互相亲吻拥抱着，六七个多生子们彼此理解地抱成一团。亥姆霍兹和野蛮人也差点哭了出来。有人从会计室里拿出一个新的药盒箱，匆忙开始新一轮分发。随着男中音告别辞的结束，多生子们也分散开来，哽咽着，仿佛心都要碎了。“再见了，我最亲爱的朋友，弗德保佑你。再见，我最亲爱的朋友。弗德保佑！再见，我最亲爱的朋友……”

等到德尔塔都离开后，警察关掉了演说，那天使般的声音也随之消失。

“你们是安静地跟我走，还是？”警官问道，指了指他的麻醉枪。

“我们安静地跟你走。”野蛮人答道，轻轻擦拭嘴唇上的伤口、擦伤的脖子和被咬伤的左手。

亥姆霍兹用手帕捂着不停流血的鼻子，点头表示同意。

贝尔纳醒了，腿也有了知觉。他想趁这会没人注意，偷偷溜出去。

“喂，你！”警长一声令下，一个戴猪鼻子面具的人快步穿过房间，按住了年轻人的肩膀。

贝尔纳转过身来，露出愤怒无辜的表情。逃跑？做梦都没想过要逃跑。“你们找我做什么？”他问那个警官，“我一点儿都不明白。”

“你是被抓的那两个人的朋友，对吧？”

“呃……”贝尔纳犹豫了，但他不得不承认事实，“对，我不能和他们做朋友吗？”他问。

“那就跟我们走吧。”警官说。然后把他们带到了门口停警车的地方。

第十六章

三人被带进总统的书房。

“总统阁下一会儿就来。”男管家留下他们，自己走了。

亥姆霍兹大笑起来。

“他想请我们喝咖啡吗？这可不像审讯。”他说完便陷进了奢华的气垫沙发里。“振作点，贝尔纳！”瞧见朋友那张气恼得发绿的脸，他补充道。贝尔纳可振作不起来，他没有搭腔，连看都没有看亥姆霍兹一眼，而是别有用心地选了一张最朴素而不舒服的椅子坐下，暗暗希望这个举动可以缓解总统的愤怒。

野蛮人在屋里焦躁地来回踱步，带着模糊的好奇观察着书架上的书、录音带和编号孔里的机械线筒。窗下的桌子上放着一本巨大的书，黑色人造皮封面上印着一个金色大字母“T”。他拿起书翻阅。《我的人生与事业》，我主弗德著，由弗德知识宣传会在底特律出版。他悠闲地翻动书页，这儿看一句，那儿看一段，正准备说书的内容太无趣时，门开了，驻西欧世界总统轻快地走进了房间。

穆斯塔法·孟德跟三个人都握了手，却只对野蛮人一个人发话，“野蛮人先生，看样子你不太喜欢我们的文明。”他说。

野蛮人看着他。他原本打算说谎，气势汹汹地回答或是干脆绷着脸不说话，但是总统脸上那种诙谐的聪明使他打消了念头，他决定讲实话：“是的，不喜欢。”他摇了摇头。

贝尔纳满脸无措和惊恐。总统会怎么想到约翰直截了当地告诉总统不喜欢文明，而自己跟这样的人做朋友，要承担多大的罪名，太可怕了。“等等，约翰……”贝尔纳正要说什么，穆斯塔法·孟德凌厉的一瞥让他卑微地闭上了嘴。

野蛮人继续开诚布公地讲，“当然，这里也有很多美好的事物，比如说空中的音乐……”

“有时成千的叮叮咚咚的乐器在我耳边鸣响。”总统说。

野蛮人忽然容光焕发，惊喜地问：“你也读过莎士比亚的作品？”他问，“我以为在英格兰这种地方没人知道呢。”

“几乎没人，我是少数知道的人之一。你明白，这是本禁书。但是我是制定法律的人，自然也可以不遵守，我有豁免权。而马克斯先生，”他转过身对贝尔纳说，“恐怕你不能不遵守。”

贝尔纳陷入了绝望的深渊。

“为什么是禁书？”野蛮人问道。由于发现一个读过莎士比亚作品的人，他沉浸在兴奋中，暂时忘记了其他一切。

总统耸了耸肩，“主要的原因是它太古老了，古旧的东西在我们这里没有用。”

“就算它们很美好也没有用？”

“就是美好，所以才更没有用。美好的事物充满吸引力，我们不希望人们被老套的东西吸引，他们应该喜欢新事物。”

“可是新事物是那么愚蠢和恐怖。那些新话剧毫无内容，只有些飞来飞去的直升飞机和虚拟可感的亲吻。”他做了个鬼脸。“都是羊跟猴子！”只有在《奥赛罗》的世界里他才能为蔑视和仇恨找到合适的词语。

“它们是温顺而驯服的动物。”总统喃喃地插话道。

“为什么不让他们看《奥赛罗》？”

“我已经告诉你了，因为它很古老，再说他们也读不懂。”

这倒是真的，他记得亥姆霍兹是怎样嘲笑《罗密欧和朱丽叶》的。“好吧！”停顿了片刻，他说，“弄点像《奥赛罗》一样的新东西，他们能读懂的那种。”

“那正是我们想要写的东西。”亥姆霍兹打破了沉默。

“那是你永远写不出来的东西。”总统说道，“如果像《奥赛罗》，就没人能读懂，不管它有多新；况且，如果是新东西，就不可能像《奥赛罗》。”

“为什么不可能？”

“是啊，为什么不可能？”亥姆霍兹重复着，他也忘记了自己所处的危险境地。只有贝尔纳没忘，他绿着脸，满心焦急和顾虑，其他人都忽略了他。“为什么不可能？”

“因为我们的世界和《奥赛罗》的世界截然不同。没有钢就造不出汽车，同理，没有社会动荡就写不出悲剧。我们的社会安逸稳定，民众幸福，他们想要什么就有什么，不该得到的东西从不会奢求；他们富裕

而安全，没有疾病烦恼，从不畏惧死亡；他们满心喜悦，感受不到激情和衰老；他们无需为父母忧愁，没有妻子、儿女和情人，不会产生强烈的感情。一旦接受了条件设置，就不会超越设定的条件行动。万一出了岔子，还有唆麻来维持安定。对，就是你以自由之名丢到窗外的东西，野蛮人先生，哈哈，自由！”他大笑起来，“想要德尔塔们明白什么是自由，还想让他们读懂《奥赛罗》，你真是个天真的孩子！”

野蛮人稍作沉默，固执地坚持道：“无论如何，《奥赛罗》是好的，比任何感官剧都好。”

“这是当然，”总统表示同意，“但是我们需要为社会安定付出代价。人们必须在幸福生活和所谓的高雅艺术之间做出选择。最后，我们选择牺牲高雅艺术，以感官剧和芳香风琴来代替。”

“可那些东西毫无意义。”

“意义在于它们本身为观众带来了愉悦的感官享受。”

“但是它们不过是……傻子讲述的故事。”

总统大笑道：“你对你的朋友沃森先生很不礼貌啊，他可是最杰出的情感工程师之一。”

“约翰说得没错，”亥姆霍兹沮丧地说，“明明没什么可写的，还偏要写，我的确是个傻子。”

“正是如此，才需要巨大的创造力。什么都不用，仅仅利用感官就创造出艺术，相当于用最少的钢材去制造一辆汽车。”

野蛮人不住摇头：“对我来说太可怕了。”

“当然可怕。与苦难所得到的补偿相比，现实的幸福显得格外肮脏；稳定远没有动乱那样跌宕起伏、引人入胜；心满意足的生活不具备与灾难做斗争那种惊心动魄的魅力，也不像与诱惑决斗或是推翻激情和怀疑那样栩栩如生。幸福从来就不是伟大的。”

“确实如此。”沉默片刻后，野蛮人说：“但是为什么要创造这些多生子，走到如此糟糕的境地？”他用手擦了擦眼睛，试图擦去装配台前一排排相同面孔的侏儒的身影，擦去那些在布冷特福单轨火车站门口排成长队的多生子的影像，擦去琳达垂死之际在床边爬行的人蛆，擦去攻击者那无穷无尽重复的面孔。他看着缠在左手上的绷带，不由地打起寒战，“太恐怖了！”

“但是多生子们极其有用！我知道你不喜欢我们的波卡群，但是我很肯定地告诉你，他们是建立其他一切东西的基础；他们是陀螺仪，稳固国家这架火箭飞机，使其不脱离正常轨道。”那深沉的声音仿佛能够震动心魄，充满激情的手势暗示着整个宇宙和不可抵抗的社会机制洪流，穆斯塔法·孟德的能言善辩几乎达到了合成音乐的制作标准。

“我想知道，”野蛮人说着，“既然你从那些瓶子里能够得到任何你想要的东西，为什么你不把每个人培养成阿尔法双加呢？”

穆斯塔法·孟德哑然失笑：“因为我们不希望别人割断我们的喉咙，”他答道，“幸福与稳定是我们的信仰。一个仅有阿尔法的社会必然会出现不安定和痛苦。不妨设想一下，如果一家工厂里全都是阿尔法：阿尔法是互相分离、互不联系的个体。他们遗传优秀，条件设置为在一定限制下能够做出自由选择和承担责任。你想象一下吧。”他重复道。

野蛮人尝试着去想象，但没想出什么实质性的东西。

“结果就是荒谬。一个按照阿尔法标准换瓶、接受阿尔法条件设置的人怎么能干伊普西龙的工作呢，那些半白痴的工作会让他们发狂——对，发狂，或是摔东西。阿尔法并非不能社会化，但是得满足一个条件：让他们做阿尔法的工作。伊普西龙那种牺牲自我奉献社会的行为只能由伊普西龙完成，因为对他们来说，这不是一种自我牺牲。他们是最没有抵抗力的一群人，条件设置决定了他们的人生轨迹，他们只能循着这条路走下去，因为命运早已被决定，不可避免。即使换了瓶，他们仍然被禁锢在一个无形的瓶子里——保持着婴儿或胚胎的生活形态。”“当然，我们每个人都一样。”总统沉吟着说道，“都在瓶子里度过人生。如果有幸生为阿尔法，瓶子相对而言会广阔很多。被关在狭小瓶里的阿尔法，将犹如困兽一般痛苦。这道理很浅显，你不能把高种姓的香槟倒进低种姓的瓶子里。而且我们也在实践中证实了这一点：塞浦路斯实验的结果很有说服力。”

“塞浦路斯实验？”野蛮人问。

穆斯塔法·孟德笑着说：“如果你愿意，可以叫它重新换瓶实验。实验开始于弗德纪元四七三年，当时的总统撤离了塞浦路斯岛上所有居民，让预先选好的两万两千个阿尔法住了进去，给他们配备所有农业和工业设备，让他们自行管理岛屿。结果与理论猜想不谋而合，土地荒芜低产，工厂罢工不断，法律如同虚设，命令不予执行，被分配做低等工作的人用尽心机谋取高等职位，从事高等工作的人互相勾结、不计代价地维护其优势地位。不到六年时间，就爆发了激烈的内战，二万二千人中死去了一万九千人。幸存者一致请愿，要求世界总统恢复对岛屿的统治。这就是结局，史上唯一仅有的阿尔法社会就这样消亡了。

野蛮人深深地叹了口气。

“按照冰山模式，”穆斯塔法·孟德说，“人口的最佳比例为：九分之八在水下，九分之一在水上。”

“在水下的人们幸福吗？”

“比水上的人幸福。比如说，比你旁边这两位朋友幸福。”他指着两个阿尔法说。

“但他们做着那么可怕的工作。”

“可怕？他们可不这么想。相反，他们乐在其中，不仅清闲，还简单得像小孩子的玩意，没有身心负担。七个半小时的体力活不算繁重，之后还能领取唆麻，尽情地游戏、性交和欣赏感官剧。他们别无所求了。”他继续补充，“当然，他们可能会要求缩短工作时间，我们也会满足他们。从技术上讲，可以毫不费力地把低等工种的工作时间缩短为一天三到四个小时。问题是，他们会为此感到更幸福吗？答案是不会。一个半世纪之前，进行了一次实验，将整个爱尔兰岛的工作时间改为一天四小时，结果怎样呢？社会开始动荡，唆麻消费量剧增，仅此而已。三个半小时的额外闲暇远远不能成为幸福的源泉，相反，人们倍感拘束，都选择去度唆麻假日。发明局里有数千份节省劳力的计划案。”穆斯塔法·孟德做了一个手势，强调数量极大。“为什么我们不执行这些方案？是为劳动者着想：过多的闲暇对他们来说是残酷的折磨。不仅是工业，农业上也一样。如果我们愿意，可以人工合成所有食物，但是我们宁愿保留三分之一的农业人口，维护他们的利益，因为从土地上收获食物比工厂制造食物要慢得多。此外，考虑到社会的稳定性，我们避免进行改变，每一次改变都可能威胁社会稳定。这就是为什么我们对采用新发明格外谨慎。纯粹的科学发现具有潜在的颠覆性，有时，甚至得把科学看待为敌人。是的，即使是如此有用的科学。”

科学？野蛮人皱起了眉头。他听过这个词，但是究竟是什么，他也不说不清楚。莎士比亚和印第安村的老人从未提到过科学，从琳达那里也只了解到几条浅显的线索：科学是用来制造直升飞机的东西，是让玉米舞显得可笑的东西，是让人不长皱纹、不掉牙齿的东西。他竭尽全力想理解总统的意思。

“没错，”穆斯塔法·孟德说，“这是为保证稳定而付出的另一个代价。不光是艺术，科学也跟幸福相悖。科学具有危险性，我们必须提防它，给它拴上锁链，戴上口络。”

“什么？”亥姆霍兹大吃一惊，“可我们都认为科学就是一切。这是睡眠学习中的陈词滥调。”

“每周三次，每次从十三点到十七点。”贝尔纳抓住机会插话。

“还有我们在大学里做的宣传……”

“对，但是宣传的是哪种科学？”穆斯塔法·孟德尖酸讽刺地说，“你们没有接受过科学训练，所以没法判断。我年轻时是个杰出的物理学家，心地太纯良，根本没意识到我们的科学不过是本烹饪书。谁都不能质疑书上的正统烹饪理论。没有厨师长的特别允许，谁都不能向书中添加新的菜谱。现在我成为了厨师长，但曾经我也是个爱打破沙锅问到底的年轻洗碗工，那时，我依自己的想法，搞一些邪门歪道、不合法的烹饪。其实就是真正的科学。”他沉默了。

“那后来呢？”亥姆霍兹·沃森问。

总统叹了口气：“几乎和你们这些年轻人一样，我差点被送到一个岛上。”

这些话对贝尔纳来说犹如晴空霹雳，刺激他说出不得体的话：“把我送到小岛上？”他从座位上跳了起来，飞快地穿过房间，冲到总统面前手舞足蹈地解释。“你们不能把我送去岛上，我没做过任何坏事，都是他们做的，我发誓是他们做的。”他带着责备的意味指着亥姆霍兹和野蛮人。“我求求您，别送我去冰岛，我保证以后只做分内的事，再给我一次机会，请您再给我一次机会。”眼泪哗哗流出。“听我说，这都是他们的错！”他啜泣着，“别送我去冰岛，我求您，总统阁下，求您了……”他如此卑微落魄，屈着双腿跪倒在总统面前。穆斯塔法·孟德试着扶他起来，但贝尔纳坚持要跪着，“吱吱呀呀”说个没完，最后总统只好按铃召来第四秘书。

“带三个人过来，”他命令道，“把马克斯先生带到卧室，给他注射一剂唆麻，让他上床睡一会。”

三个穿绿制服的多生子侍从跟从第四秘书进入房间，拉走了仍然在叫喊和啜泣的贝尔纳。

门关上时，总统说：“别人肯定以为我要把他的喉咙割掉呢。如果他还有点脑子，应该明白对他的惩罚其实是种奖励。被送到岛上，就能遇到世界上最有趣的男人和女人。那里的人因为种种原因而变得过于独立自主，不能融入集体社会。他们有自己的想法，不喜欢正统观念。几乎每个人都有自己的个性和特点。我几乎要嫉妒你了，沃森先生。”

亥姆霍兹大笑着说：“那你为什么不去岛上？”

“因为最终我还是更喜欢这里！”总统回答说，“他们当时给我两个选择：被送到岛上，在那里继续搞纯科学研究；或者进入总统委员会，将有机会成功继任总统。我选择了后者，放弃了科学。”一小会儿的沉

寂之后，他接着说，“有时候，我为自己放弃科学感到遗憾。幸福是个难伺候的主人，特别是别人的幸福。如果人们没有被设置为毫无疑问地接受幸福，那么幸福远远比真理更难伺候。”他叹着气，又陷入沉默，然后换了一种轻快的语调说，“好吧，职责就是职责，不能为自己的喜好讨价还价。我喜欢科学，爱好真理。但真理威胁社会，科学危害公众。他们是双刃剑，有用但危险。我们利用它实现了历史上最稳定的平衡。跟我们的安稳社会比起来，从前的国家简直是无可救药的动荡；即使是原始社会的母系氏族也比不上我们的稳定。我要再次表达对科学的感谢。但是，我们不能让科学毁掉自己的成果，这就是为什么我们要小心谨慎地限制科学研究范围——也就是为什么我差点被遣送到岛上。科学只能被用来处理目前最紧急的问题，其他任何探索都应刻意回避和遏止。”

稍作停顿之后，他说：“有件事很有趣，就是阅读我主弗德时代的人们写下的关于科学进步的书。他们似乎猜想科学可以无视其他限制而无穷无尽地发展。当时，知识是最高尚的品德，真理拥有无上的价值；其他一切都处于次要和附属地位。但观念在慢慢地改变，我主弗德做了很大的努力，将对真理和美丽的追求转变到舒适和幸福。大规模的生产需要这种转变。不同于真和美，众人的幸福是社会齿轮稳定转动的唯一保证。况且，只要群众掌握了政权，幸福就会是最重要的，而非真理和美丽。尽管如此，当时并没有限制科学研究。人们还是把真理和美当做至高的善，继续热切讨论和研究，直到爆发九年战争。九年战争彻底改变了论调。但你身处炭疽炮弹的烟雾之中，那些真理、美和知识又有什么意义？九年战争之后，科学第一次受到控制。那时的人们连食欲都得控制才能生存下去。为了安稳的生活可以做任何事，包括进行多方控制。诚然，我们牺牲了部分真理，却造就了幸福。俗话说有得必有失，要想得到幸福就得付出代价。所以，沃森先生，你现在就得付出代价，

因为你碰巧太过追求美丽。我曾经太过追求真理，也付出过代价。”

长时间的沉寂，野蛮人打破沉默说：“但你没有被流放到岛上。”

总统微笑道：“我付出的代价就是提供幸福，为他人提供，而不是为我自己。”停了一会，他补充道：“你们很幸运，世界上有很多不同的小岛，多到我不知道应该把你们送去哪个岛了。把你们放进毒气室如何？顺便问一下，沃森先生，你喜欢热带气候吗？马库塞斯岛怎样？萨摩亚群岛呢？或是什么让你更心旷神怡的地方？”

亥姆霍兹从气垫椅上站了起来，“我宁愿去气候恶劣的地方，”他回答说：“气候越恶劣，我越有可能写出好作品。最好时常有一些狂风暴雨。”

总统充满赞许地点头：“沃森先生，我很欣赏你的精神。欣赏的程度不亚于我站在总统立场上反对它的程度。”他笑着，“弗兰克群岛怎样？”

“这主意不错，”亥姆霍兹回答说。“现在，如果你不介意，我想去看看可怜的贝尔纳。”

第十七章

“艺术、科学.....你们似乎为幸福付出了很高的代价。”只剩两人时，野蛮人问：“还牺牲了别的什么吗？”

“当然还有宗教。”总统回答说。“九年战争之前，曾经有些被称为上帝的东西。我基本都忘了，你知道关于神的一切，对吧？”

“嗯.....”野蛮人犹豫了。他本想说说寂寞、夜晚、月下苍白的山坡、从悬崖上堕入黑暗和死亡，他想畅所欲言，却找不到合适的词，即使在莎士比亚的世界里也找不到。

总统走到屋子另一边，打开一个嵌在书架隔墙间的大保险柜。厚重的柜门晃动着打开，总统在黑暗的柜子里翻寻着什么。“我曾经对这个课题很感兴趣，”他说着，搬出了一本黑色的厚书，“没读过这本书吧？”

野蛮人接过书，大声朗读书名——“《圣经：新旧约全书》。”

“这本呢，也没读过吧？”他拿出一本已丢失封面的小书。

“《效法基督》。”

“这本也是。”他又递过一本。

“《宗教经验种种》，威廉·詹姆士著。”

“我还有很多这样的书，”穆斯塔法·孟德接着说，“一整套肮脏古旧

的书。看，上帝在保险柜里，弗德在书架上。”他大笑着指着他所谓的图书馆：一排排书柜，摆得满满的阅读机线圈和录音带盘。

“既然你知道上帝，为什么不告诉他们？”野蛮人愤愤不平地问，“为什么不让他们读关于上帝的书？”

“和禁止《奥赛罗》的理由一样：太过古老。它们记载着成百上千年前的上帝，而不是现在的上帝。”

“但是上帝不会变。”

“人却会变。”

“那又有什么问题？”

“天大的问题。”穆斯塔法·孟德说，他又站了起来，走向保险柜，“从前有个叫纽曼的人，”他说，“是个红衣主教，”他补充道，“还是那种社区一流的歌唱家。”

“哦，红衣主教潘杜尔夫，来自迷人的米兰，我在莎士比亚的作品里读到过。”

“对，你肯定读到过。嗯，我刚刚说到有个纽曼主教，这是他写的书。”他抽出书本，“既然要谈这本书，还得说说另一本，德·拜伦写的。他是个哲学家——如果你知道哲学家是什么的话。”

“是那种梦想不多的人，想的东西比天地间的事物少得多。”野蛮人马上回答。

“对。现在我就给你读一段确实由他梦想出来的东西，听听这位古

代一流歌唱家说的话。”他翻到夹着小纸条的那一页读起来：“我们对自己的支配远比不上对拥有物的支配。我们不是自己的主人，而是上帝的财产。因为我们既没有创造自己，也不能超越自己。这样看待问题，难道不会更加幸福吗？从属于自己又能得到什么慰藉和幸福呢？富有的青年才俊可能不这么想，他们认为按照自己的设想和方法做事很伟大，可以不依赖任何人，不用顾虑视野之外的风景，没有不停认知、不停祈祷、不停询问他人的烦恼。但是随着岁月流逝，他们会和其他人一样，发现人类本不应该独立——独立是一种不自然的状态。维持一段时间独立固然可能，但不能让我们安然走到生命尽头。”穆斯塔法·孟德停下来，放下第一本书，翻开第二本，“以这一段为例，”他打开低沉的嗓音读起来：“人总是要老的；随着年月的增长，会强烈地感觉到脆弱、疲惫和不安。为了平息这种恐怖的感觉，他会想象自己病了，告诉自己这种窘境来源于某些特殊原因，和疾病一样是可以克服和痊愈的。但这是徒劳无用的遐想！他们患上的是名为‘衰老’的可怕疾病。有人说，驱使老年人依附宗教的正是对死亡和死后世界的恐惧。但我的自身体验让我坚信：宗教感情与此类恐惧或遐想并没有联系，而是随着年龄的增长而增长。年轻时理智总是被想象、欲望和妄想扰乱，当岁月磨平了激情，消钝了想象力和敏感度，理智就能够不受干扰地活动。有如拨开云雾见青天，上帝出现在面前。我们的灵魂看到、感觉到光明的源头，并向它靠近过去，那么自然而不可避免。从此，寄予感官世界的生命和魅力开始离我们而去；从此，那些非凡的存在不再受到内在或外在印象的支撑。我们需要依靠一些持续存在、不会欺骗我们的东西——现实，一种纯粹而永恒的真理。是的，对上帝的依附是不可避免的。因为宗教情绪的本质是那么纯净，带给灵魂的感受是那么愉悦，几乎弥补了所有的失落。”

穆斯塔法·孟德合上书，整个人靠在椅背上。“天地间有千千万万哲

学家想象不到的事，比如说我们。（他挥开手臂）我们这个现代化的世界。‘拥有青春和财富才能独立于上帝，独立并不能让人安然走到生命尽头。’而现在的我们，恰恰拥有青春和财富并安然走到最后。结论很明显，我们能够独立于上帝。‘宗教感情将抚慰我们所有的失落’，可我们从未感到失落，不需要抚慰。宗教感情是累赘的。既然青春的欲望永不熄灭，为何要寻求欲望的代替品？既然古老单纯的活动能让人尽情享受，为何要寻求娱乐的替代品？既然在日常活动中保持身心愉快，休息又有何用？既然唆麻能安抚我们的情绪，安慰又有何用？既然社会平稳有序，永恒不变的依赖又有何用？”

“所以说，你认为上帝不存在？”

“那倒不是，我认为应该是存在的。”

“为什么……”

穆斯塔法·孟德制止了提问，“在不同人面前，上帝具有不同的形态。现代化社会到来之前，上帝表现出这本书中描述的形态。而现在……”

“现在是什么形态？”野蛮人问。

“虚无。就像从未存在过。”

“这都怪你们。”

“不，这都怪文明。机械、医学和普遍的幸福不容许神的存在。这是个艰难的选择。我们的文明选择了机械、医学和幸福。正因如此，这些书被锁在保险柜里。它们太过肮脏，会让人觉得不舒服……”

野蛮人打断了他：“感受到上帝存在不是自然而然的吗？”

“你怎么不问，穿裤子拉拉链是自然而然的吗？”总统讽刺地说：“说到这，我想起一个叫布拉德利的老家伙，他认为哲学就是为人类出于本能相信的东西找一个糟糕的理由。好像人类生来就有信仰似的。人相信什么是由条件设置决定的。因为某些糟糕的理由而产生信仰，然后又去寻找新的糟糕理由，这就是哲学。人们信仰上帝，是因为他们被设置为有这种信仰。”

“尽管如此，”野蛮人坚持说，“当你感到孤独——特别是在夜晚思考死亡时，会自然地想到上帝。”

“如今世界可没有孤独的人，”穆斯塔法·孟德说，“我们教他们憎恨孤独；况且，他们的生活早已被设置好，没有感受孤独的空隙。”

野蛮人沮丧地点了点头。在马尔佩斯，人们冷眼拒绝他参与印第安人集体活动，他深受孤独之苦；在文明都市伦敦，他逃离不开日日夜夜的社交活动，找不到安静与孤独，还是深深的痛苦。

“不知你是否记得《李尔王》中的一段话，”野蛮人沉默许久后终于说话。“‘公正的天神将我们的风流罪过化作惩罚我们的工具；他在黑暗淫邪的地方生下了你，结果丧失了他的眼睛。’你记得吗，当时艾德蒙受了伤，在垂死边缘回答，‘你说得不错；天道的车轮已经循环过来了。’这说的难道不正是扬善惩恶的上帝吗？”

“哦？是这样吗？”总统反问道，“即使你跟一个不孕的淫妇肆意放荡风流，也没有什么风险，不会有儿子的情妇来挖你的眼睛。‘天道的车轮循环，我就在这儿。’如果艾德蒙生在今日会怎样？坐在气垫椅里，揽着美女的腰，一边嚼性激素口香糖一边看感官剧。天神当然是公

正的，但是神的法典由社会的高层组织者来传播执行。神要遵从人的指令。”

“你确定吗？”野蛮人问道：“你真有把握说，坐在气垫椅里的艾德蒙没有像那个受伤濒死的艾德蒙一样遭受严重的惩罚？公正的天神难道不会因为他的淫乱风流而让他堕落吗？”

“为什么要惩罚他？一个快乐开朗、勤奋工作、合理消费的完美公民？当然，如果你采用不同的判断标准，可以认为他堕落了。但是人们得遵循同一套原则，不能玩着电磁高尔夫，却用着调皮狗离心球的规则。”

“但是价值不取决于个人的意愿。”野蛮人说：“首先它本身得有宝贵之处，然后需要评判人承认它的珍贵，才能得到肯定和尊重。”

“行了，行了！”穆斯塔法·孟德抗议道，“我们离题千里了。”

“如果你想到上帝，就不会允许自己堕入邪恶的深渊。你会在信念的支持下坚强地忍耐、勇敢地处事。我在印第安人身上看到了这一切。”

“你看到过这些，我相信。”穆斯塔法·孟德说。“但是我们不是印第安人，没有必要让文明人忍受磨难和困苦。至于勇敢处事——这种观念为弗德所禁止。如果各行其是、肆意而为，社会秩序将荡然无存。”

“那克己精神呢？如果信仰上帝，就有了克制自己的理由。”

“只有消除克己观念，工业文明才能长存。为了社会齿轮的顺利运转，我们需要自我放纵，越放纵越好，直到健康与经济无法承受。”

“有了上帝，你们会洁身自爱！”野蛮人有些脸红地说。

“贞洁意味着热情和神经衰弱，两者都意味着不稳定，不稳定意味着文明的终止。文明的长久依赖于淫邪放荡。”

“一切高贵、美好和英勇的事物都依赖于上帝的存在，如果你们信仰上帝……”

“亲爱的孩子，”穆斯塔法·孟德说：“你得知道，高贵和英勇的事物对我们的文明没有意义。这些东西都意味着政策的低效。我们的社会井然有序、组织严密，没有人有机会成为高贵之人或英雄。只有社会动荡不稳，才能产生这种机会。高贵和英勇的品质什么时候能显现作用？战火绵延时、人心分裂时、抵抗诱惑时、保护所爱之人并为之奋斗时。但是现在没有任何战争；最需要防范遏止的是对某人太过依恋。没有观念分歧和人心分裂；每个人都被设置为做好自己分内的事。没有任何诱惑需要抵抗，因为要做的事情总是很愉快，又可以肆意放纵原始的冲动。就算不幸发生让人不悦的事情，还能依靠唆麻无忧无虑地度个假，忘记现实的烦恼。唆麻还能平息怒火，化解敌对与争执，增加耐心和忍耐力。过去，人们需要付出极大努力，经过数年的精神训练才能达到这点，而现在，吞下两三片半克唆麻足矣。任何人都可以轻易变得高尚。一瓶唆麻能装下至少一半分量的美德。可以说，唆麻就是没有眼泪的基督教。”

“眼泪是必不可少的。难道你不记得《奥赛罗》里的话？‘要是每一次暴风雨之后，都有这样和煦的阳光，那么尽管让狂风肆意地吹，把死亡都吹醒吧！’有个印第安老人讲过一个故事，主角是个叫玛特莎吉的姑娘，想娶她的年轻小伙子必须到她的园子里干一上午的农活。这个任务看起来轻而易举，但是园子里有许多有魔力的苍蝇和蚊子。几乎没有

人能够忍受蚊虫的叮咬，除了一个小伙子，他最终赢得了美人的芳心。”

“好个精彩的故事！但是在文明的国度，”总统说，“不用干农活就能拥有美丽的姑娘，也没有苍蝇蚊子的骚扰。我们早在几个世纪前就消灭了蚊虫。”

野蛮人双眉紧蹙地点了点头：“你们消灭了蚊虫。的确，这很像你们的处事方式。消灭一切不愉快的事物，而不会学着去忍受。‘是否应默默地忍受坎坷命运的暴虐毒箭，还是应该拿起武器与苍茫苦海愤然为敌。’结果你们两者都没有选择，既不选择忍受，也不选择对抗，而是直接废止了毒箭，如此简单。”

他忽然沉默无语，想起了母亲。在三十七层的房间里，琳达漂浮在歌声的海洋中，有璀璨的光辉，有芳香的抚慰。她漂浮而去，脱离了空间，脱离了时间，脱离了苦涩回忆、陈年旧习、臃肿身躯的牢狱。至于托马金，曾经的培育及条件设置主任，现在还在度唆麻假日——这是他逃避屈辱和痛苦的唯一手段。在那个世界，他听不到冷言冷语，听不到尖酸嘲讽，看不到狰狞面孔，感觉不到两只松弛潮湿的手臂搭在自己的臂膀。那是一个美妙的世界……

“你们需要改变，”野蛮人继续，“需要创造些带来眼泪的东西。这儿的東西都没有眼泪值钱。”

（当野蛮人这么提议时，亨利·福斯特曾经抗议说：“一千二百五十万美元，是新条件设置中心的造价，一分都不少。”）

“‘为了一个颗粒不收的弹丸之地，敢于面对死亡和一切没有把握的事情，面对命运、死亡与危险。’从这里难道得不到什么启发吗？”他

抬头凝视着穆斯塔法·孟德，“与上帝无关——当然上帝也可能是理由之一。危险的生活难道没有什么好处吗？”

“好处很多，”总统回答，“所以男男女女都应该时不时刺激一下肾上腺。”

“什么？”野蛮人一头雾水。

“这是确保完全健康的条件之一。所以我们才强制推行V.P.S治疗。”

“V.P.S治疗？”

“激情替代治疗，每月定时执行一次。我们向身体各个系统注入肾上腺激素。这样，可以在生理上达到与恐惧和狂怒相同的效果。这个治疗能够迅速补充激情，程度不亚于杀死苔丝狄蒙娜和被奥赛罗杀死时的情绪波动，还没有任何不方便。”

“与之相比，我更喜欢不方便。”

“我们不一样，”总统说，“我们更青睐舒舒服服办事。”

“我不渴求舒适，我渴求上帝，渴求诗歌，渴求真正的危险，渴求自由，渴求善良，渴求罪恶。”

“实际上，你在要求遭受苦难的权利。”穆斯塔法·孟德说。

“那好，”野蛮人挑衅地说，“我现在要求遭受苦难。”

“你还没有提到衰老、丑陋和阳痿的权利，患梅毒、癌症的权利，匮乏、饥饿的权利，惹人厌恶的权利，无时无刻不在惧怕未来的权利，

患伤寒的权利，承受难以名状的折磨的权利。”许久的沉默冻结了空气。

“我要求这一切。”野蛮人最后说。

穆斯塔法·孟德耸耸肩：“那就如你所愿。”

第十八章

贝尔纳和亥姆霍兹走进半开的门。

“约翰！”

浴室里传出来了野蛮人特有的声音，其中明显夹杂着几分不畅快。

“怎么回事？”亥姆霍兹高声询问。

没人回答。不畅快的声音紧接着又重复了两次，而后是一片寂静。

片刻后，浴室的门“咔嗒”一声打开了，野蛮人脸色苍白地走出来。

“我说，”亥姆霍兹担心地说：“你肯定是生病了，约翰！”

“是不是吃了什么不好消化的东西？”贝尔纳问道。

野蛮人点点头。“我把‘文明’吞下了肚。”

“什么？”

“我中了它的毒，染了它的污浊。然后，”他压低嗓子说，“我还吞了自己的‘邪恶’。”

“好吧，不过你究竟……我的意思是说，刚才你……”

“我已经洗净了灵魂，”野蛮人说，“刚刚我喝了芥末水。”

两个人都目瞪口呆地看着他：“你是故意这么折腾自己的？”贝尔纳问道。

“印第安人就是用这种方法来净化身心的。”野蛮人坐了下来，叹了口气，抹了抹额头。“我得休息一会，”他说，“我真的很累。”

“嗯，累是肯定的。”亥姆霍兹寻思了片刻说道，“我们是来道别的。”他用另外一种声调说，“明天一早就出发。”

“对，我们明天就走了。”贝尔纳说，从他的脸上，野蛮人察觉出一种屈服于命运的决心。“还有，约翰，”贝尔纳坐了下来，身子前倾，手放在野蛮人的膝盖上，“我想说，关于昨天发生的一切我深感歉疚。”他的脸刷地红了，“我很惭愧！”尽管他的声音听着起伏不定，但他还是说了下去，“我真的非常……”

野蛮人突然打断了他，亲切地握紧了他的手。

“亥姆霍兹对我很好，”贝尔纳停顿了一会，说：“如果不是他，我早就……”

“够了，够了。”亥姆霍兹抗议道。

一阵沉默。此时大家都很伤感，因为他们都彼此爱护——正因如此，三个年轻人又释怀了。

“今天早上，我去见了总统。”野蛮人终于开口打破沉默。

“去干什么？”

“问他是否能让我和你们去一个岛。”

“他怎么说？”亥姆霍兹急切地问。

野蛮人摇了摇头：“他不准。”

“为什么？”

“他想继续这个试验。但是我绝对不会配合的！”野蛮人突然暴怒了：“他妈的，我才不做他的试验品，就算全世界所有的总统来找我，我也不会屈服。明天我就走人。”

“可是你能去哪里呢？”两人异口同声地问。

野蛮人耸了耸肩。“哪儿都行，我不在乎。让我孤孤单单就好。”

从吉尔福德到朴茨茅斯的下行路线是途经韦峡谷到达戈德尔明，穿过米尔福德、威特利和黑斯尔米尔，再从彼得斯菲尔德挺进目的地。上行线路基本和这条路平行，需穿过沃普赖斯顿、东哈姆、帕特纳姆、爱斯特德和格雷舒特。这两条路线都分布在拱脊山和鹿头谷之间，有几处距离很近的地方，相隔不到六七公里。对于某些粗心大意的飞行员来说，这距离近得过于危险了，特别是在夜里服用了一克唆麻后。这个地带曾经出现几起严重的事故。曾有人打算将上行路线向西挪几公里。因此，在格雷舒特和东哈姆之间修建了四座空中灯塔，照亮朴茨茅斯到伦敦的航程。如今已经废弃了。灯塔顶上是一片荒寂的天空。而塞尔伯恩、伯顿和法纳姆的上空，则有直升飞机不停地盘旋和轰鸣。

野蛮人选择了旧灯塔作为隐居地，地点位于帕特纳姆和埃尔斯特德中间的山顶上。建筑是钢筋水泥铸成的，至今还算牢固。野蛮人最初考察这个地方时，觉得过于舒适了，可以说是现代文明中的奢华之地。因此，他发誓要更加严格自律、诚心忏悔，以洗涤罪恶和抚慰良心。在隐

居地度过的第一个夜晚，他坚忍着一夜未眠。他长时间跪地祷告，就像愧疚的克劳迪斯祈祷得到宽恕一样，时而用祖尼语向阿瓮纳威龙祷告，时而又向基督和菩公祷告，还向他的守护神灵——老鹰祈祷。他不时地平伸双臂，就像被钉在了十字架上，然后长时间保持姿势，直到手臂渐渐变得酸痛、颤抖，疼到难以忍受。他自愿承受着十字架苦刑，忍痛咬紧牙关（此时，那不断渗出的汗水也顺势往下淌着），不时地挤出几句话来：“啊，请宽恕我吧！啊，请净化我吧！啊，请助我保持善良！”他一遍又一遍地重复，直到痛得临近晕厥。

晨曦时分，他觉得自己已经获得了定居灯塔的权利；尽管大部分窗户上镶着玻璃，但是从瞭望台上看出去，那风景着实优美怡人。对于他来说，选择到灯塔隐居的理由，几乎成为他要另寻他处的原因。之所以选择灯塔，是因为这里风景如画，仿佛可以看到上帝那无形的圣体。可是，他又算得了什么人物，有资格每天、每小时都享受美妙的风景，和上帝的圣体生活在一起？他只配住在肮脏的猪棚或漆黑的地洞。熬过一夜之后，他仍浑身僵硬酸疼，但也是这种疼痛让他觉得良心稍安。他爬上塔顶的瞭望台，观赏着这个被明媚日出照亮的世界，他欣然授予自己在此居住的资格。他的视线被北面拱脊山那绵延的白垩山脉挡住了，群山东边尽头的后方矗立着七座摩天大楼，标志着吉尔福德。野蛮人看着那些大楼露出苦涩的表情。但是随着时间的推移，他不得不与它们和谐相处。在夜里，它们有时像几何形的星星般喜气洋洋地眨着眼睛，有时像发出火焰光芒的手指，庄严地指向那深不可测的神秘天堂。那手势的意义，整个英格兰除了野蛮人之外，恐怕再也没人能体会。

灯塔矗立的小山和拱脊山之间是个峡谷，里面有个不起眼的小村落，叫帕特纳姆，一共有九层，有竖井，有家禽农场，还有一个维他命D小工厂。灯塔的南面是一个长长的斜坡，上面开满了杜鹃花，地势向

下延伸，通向一连串的池塘。

池塘后森林的上空，十四层楼高的埃尔斯特德大楼拔地而起。英格兰典型的昏暗阴霾天气让鹿头谷和塞尔伯恩若隐若现。但是，吸引野蛮人来到这座灯塔的并非朦胧的远景，近处的风景也同样充满诱惑。葱郁的森林，绵延的杜鹃花，鲜艳的金雀花，还有一片片苏格兰冷杉。在那碧波荡漾的池塘上，桦树的枝条探出手来轻抚水面，池塘中的睡莲和灯芯草安然摇曳，这些景色都太美了，对于早已习惯了美洲沙漠的干涸双眼来说，此等美景太过震撼心灵。而且，这是个人迹罕至的地方。许多天来，他却始终没见过一个人影。坐飞机从切林T字形塔楼到灯塔只需一刻钟，但是萨里的荒原比马尔佩斯的群山还要荒僻。每天蜂拥着离开伦敦的人群目标往往是电磁高尔夫球和网球。帕特纳姆没有高尔夫球场，而最近的黎曼网球场在吉尔福德。这儿最迷人的东西就是鲜花和美景。所以，如果没有特别的理由，基本不会有人来这里。野蛮人度过了一段不受打扰、与世无争的时光。

他初到伦敦时曾领取过一笔生活费，大部分都花在了装备上面了。离开伦敦前，他买了四张纤维胶羊毛毯、绳子和线、五金件、胶水、必要工具、火柴（不过他打算以后做个火钻）、锅碗瓢盆、两打盒装的种子以及十公斤小麦粉。“不，不要人工合成淀粉和废棉替代面粉。”他曾态度坚决地说，“多营养都不要。”但是，面对着腺素饼干和维他命化牛肉替代品时，他没能拒绝店主的劝诱。看着买来的一盒盒罐头，他为自己的懦弱而自责。这些可憎的文明产品！他下定决心，即使饿到不行，也永远不吃这些东西。“这样会给他们一些教训”，他怀恨地想。但这也会给他自己一些教训。

他数了数剩下的钱，希望仅有的这点钱足够让他度过寒冷的冬天。等到明年春天的时候，他的菜园里就会收获足够的粮食，让他脱离外面

的世界，开始独立的生活。再说还能捕猎。他曾看到过很多野兔，池塘那边也有很多水禽。他立即开始做起弓箭来。

灯塔附近有很多白杨树，灌木丛中也长满了漂亮笔直的榛树树苗，这些都是做箭杆的好材料。他先试着折断一棵白杨树的树苗，然后砍下了六英尺长的没有枝丫的树干，一刀一刀地削掉了树皮，刮掉白色的树痂，按照老米西玛所教他的方法，削出一根和他一样高的杆子，中间的部分很粗很硬，保证弓的结实，两端偏细，便于增加韧性。这项工作让他乐在其中。在伦敦，无论做什么都不需要自己动手，如果想要任何东西，只需按下按钮或是转一下把手。经历过无所事事的文明生活后，这种需要技术和耐心去完成的工作给约翰带来一种纯粹的快乐。

当他快要将杆子削成型时，他突然意识到自己在唱歌——唱歌！就好像他从外面回来时，恰好撞上自己在干坏事。他觉得自己的行为简直罪大恶极，愧疚得涨红了脸。毕竟，他来这里并不是为了唱歌和享受，而是为了躲避文明社会的污泥，为了净化受玷污的自己，为了积极地赎罪。他惊愕地意识到，在他专心致志做弓箭的时候，竟然完全忘记了许下的誓言。他曾发誓要永远记得可怜的琳达，记得自己对她致命的伤害，记得那些无视琳达的死亡、像成群虱子般爬来爬去的多生子。这些场景不仅是对他的悲伤和忏悔的嘲讽，更是对神灵的侮辱。他发誓会记得这一切，发誓要永不止息地赎罪。可现在他却高高兴兴地坐在这里做弓箭，还唱起歌来，居然还唱歌……

他走进屋里，打开芥末酱，掺上水，在炉火上煮起来。

半小时后，三个同一波卡小组的德尔塔减农民碰巧从帕特纳姆驱车驶往爱斯特德，到达山顶的时候，发现一个年轻人站在荒废的灯塔外，正在用带有绳结的鞭子抽打自己，背上烙下一条条鲜红的鞭印，每一鞭

下去，都有血淌出来。卡车司机停下车，和两个同伴一起盯着这不可思议的场面，目瞪口呆。一下，两下，三下，他们在数鞭打的次数。在第八下之后，年轻人停下了自我鞭笞，跑到树林边激烈地呕吐，之后又回来抓起鞭子使劲地抽打。九下，十下，十一，十二……

“弗德啊！”那个司机小声惊呼，其他两个多生子也发出了同样的惊呼。

“我主弗德啊！”他们喊道。

三天之后，像是土耳其秃鹰发现了尸体一样，记者们纷纷而至。

通过慢火的烘烤和硬化，弓箭做好了。野蛮人忙着做箭杆。三十只榛树树枝也已经被削好、烘干，他小心地在前端镶上了锋利的箭头。一天深夜，他在帕特纳姆的家禽农场发起了一次突袭，所得到的羽毛足以装饰整个武器库的弓箭。当他给弓箭加装羽毛的时候，第一个记者找到了他。记者穿着一双气垫无声鞋，悄然出现在他身后。

“哈罗！野蛮人先生！”他说，“我是《准点播报》的记者。”

仿佛被毒蛇咬了一口，野蛮人惊得跳了起来，弓箭、羽毛、胶水壶和刷子散落一地。

“对不起，吓到您了，”记者诚恳地道歉，“我不是故意的……”他碰了一下头上的帽子——那是一顶铝制的大礼帽，上边装着无线电接收器和发射器。“请原谅我不能脱帽行礼，”他说，“这帽子有些重。好了，正如我刚才所说，我代表《准点播报》……”

“你想干什么？”野蛮人戒备地盯着他。那记者又换上了谄媚的笑脸。

“呃，是这样，我们的读者对您很感兴趣……”他向一边侧了侧头，那笑容几乎是在卖弄风情，“我们想采访您，说个只言片语就好。”他熟练地将两根电线连接到腰间捆着的便携式电池上，又将它们插到铝制礼帽的两侧，按压帽子一侧的弹簧，天线“哧”地伸出来，又触碰另一侧的弹簧，话筒像惊奇盒里的小丑一样跳出来，悬挂在他鼻子前六英寸的地方摆来摆去。他将耳机架在耳朵上，按下帽子左边的按钮，只听里边传来了一阵黄蜂的嗡鸣；再转动帽子右边的把手，嗡鸣被一阵“呼哧呼哧”“吱吱咯咯”的声音取代。“喂，”他对着话筒说。“喂，喂……”这一系列动作一蹴而就，无比神速。突然，帽子里响起了一阵铃声：“埃兹尔，是你么？我是普利莫·梅隆。我找到野蛮人先生了，他即将拿起话筒说上几句，野蛮人先生，可以开始么？”他抬起头来看着野蛮人，脸上挂上了另外一种胜利般的笑容。“请告诉我们的读者您为什么会来到这里？为什么与都市伦敦不辞而别？（别挂机，埃兹尔！）当然，还想谈谈您鞭打自己的事儿。”（野蛮人愣了一下，他们怎么知道抽鞭子的事？）“我们对此非常好奇。然后不妨再谈谈文明生活。对于这些，您都是很清楚的，最好能说说‘对于文明姑娘的看法’。麻烦您给我们讲两句，哪怕是几个词……”

野蛮人按照他的建议说了五个词，一个词一个词地往外蹦。就是之前对贝尔纳说过的，评价坎特伯雷首席歌唱家的那几个词——“哈尼！松斯—唉索—切—纳！”他抓住了记者的肩膀，强扭过180度（这个年轻人出门前用心打扮了一番，穿得很时髦），瞄准目标，使出足球冠军才有的力气和技术，漂亮地一脚将他踹飞。

八分钟后，最新一期的《准点播报》新鲜出炉，在伦敦的大街小巷滚烫发售。头版标题赫然在目：“《准点播报》记者尾椎骨惨遭神秘野人踢伤，轰动萨里。”

“哈，还轰动了伦敦。”记者回来读到这篇文章时想道。但他的骨头也被“轰动”得挺厉害，连坐下吃饭都得小心翼翼，生怕触到痛处。

他受伤的事件并没有吓倒兢兢业业的记者同僚，另外四个来自《纽约时报》、《法兰克福四维联合报》、《弗德箴言科学报》和《德尔塔镜报》的记者在当天下午就拜访了灯塔野人，无一例外受到了更加残暴的“接待”。

跑到安全距离之后，《弗德箴言科学报》的记者一边揉受伤的屁股一边喊：“无知的混小子！吃了唆麻不就没烦恼了嘛。”

“滚远点！”野蛮人晃了晃拳头。

对方往后退了几步，又转身说：“服用几克唆麻后，你就会发现，坏事根本就不存在。”

“阔哈克瓦，伊雅托奇呀伊！”声音中充满了嘲笑和威胁。

“疼痛将会变成幻觉。”

“哦，是么？”野蛮人边说边捡起了一根粗大的榛树树干，大步走上前。

《弗德箴言科学报》的记者狼狈地冲回直升飞机里，躲了起来。

那之后，野蛮人的生活恢复了片刻平静。随后，几架直升飞机停到灯塔上空好奇地盘旋。野蛮人拉起弓，瞄准离他最近的那架纠缠不休的飞机，一箭击穿了机舱的铝地板，尖叫声划破长空，然后飞机调动了最大马力，像火箭发射般冲向云霄。之后，其他的飞机都在远处盘旋，不敢越雷池半步。他无视它们讨厌的轰鸣声（他把自己想象为玛特莎吉少

女的追求者，坚定不移地忍受长翅害虫的骚扰），专心开垦着他未来的菜园。过了一阵，那些害虫明显看腻了种菜的野人，一个个飞走了。天空恢复了明朗和安宁，只听见百灵鸟的歌唱。

天气闷得让人喘不上气来，空中电闪雷鸣。他整个上午都在锄地，现在伸展四肢躺在地上休息。突然，列宁娜的身影出现在脑海中，赤裸着身体，真切可感。她只穿着鞋袜，周身散发着香气，对他说“亲爱的！”，“搂着我！”那个不要脸的淫妇！可是，哦！她的手臂环上他的脖子，她起伏的胸脯和红唇近在眼前！永恒只在口中和眼里。列宁娜.....不，不，不！他跳了起来，半裸着身体跑出了屋子。杜鹃花的尽头处是一片灰白的杜松林。他猛地冲过去抱住那些枝干，绿色的松针刺向他的怀中，代替了他欲念中的那个光滑细腻的肉体。锐利的松针无情地刺痛了他。他努力回想可怜的琳达，想起她呼吸困难到说不出话，想起她紧握着他的双手和那难以形容的恐惧眼神。他曾发誓要永远记住可怜的琳达，但是萦绕在他脑海、不断折磨着他的身影依旧是列宁娜，那个他发誓要永远忘记的列宁娜。即使承受着针扎般的苦痛，他蜷缩的肉体还是无法控制地感受着列宁娜，那么真切。“甜心，甜心.....我如此渴求你，如果你也渴求我，还等什么.....”

鞭子就挂在了门边的钉子上，本来是用于“迎接”记者的。野蛮人疯狂地冲回屋，解下鞭子朝自己挥舞起来，绳结深深地嵌到他的肉里。

“婊子！婊子！”他每抽一下就大喊一声，就好像是在抽打列宁娜（他近乎疯狂地希望自己在抽打她），那个白皙、温暖、芳香、邪恶的列宁娜。“婊子！”随后，他用绝望的语气说：“琳达，原谅我。上帝，原谅我。我有罪。我是恶人.....不，不！你这个婊子，你这个婊子！”

三百米外，来自感官摄制厂的摄影大师达尔文·波拿巴藏在他小心

搭起来的树木遮蔽物后目睹了这整个过程。他的耐心和技巧终于得到了回报。他在一棵假橡树的树干中待了三天，在杜鹃花丛中趴了三个晚上，把麦克风藏在金雀花丛中，电线埋在了松软的灰沙里。七十二小时的艰苦磨难换来了这个荣耀的时刻——继他拍完那部叫好又叫座的感官剧《黑猩猩的婚礼》后最伟大的时刻。达尔文·波拿巴在他的摄影设备中爬行，拍下这所有的一切。“太棒了！”当野蛮人开始这一幕惊人的表演时，他自言自语道。“无与伦比！”他用望远镜照相机小心地对焦，镜头紧紧跟着移动着的目标。他调到更大的功率，拍下野蛮人扭曲狂乱的脸部特写（好极了）。按下转换按钮，使用慢镜头拍摄了半分钟（他很肯定这会产生绝妙的喜剧效果）；同时，听那鞭笞声、痛苦的呻吟、狂野的咆哮，都被录进了胶片旁边的录音带上，他尝试了声音加大的效果（天啊，无可置疑的精彩），能清楚听到叫声的间隙中，穿插着百灵鸟的欢叫；如果野蛮人能转过身去该有多好，就能给他血迹斑斑的背部一个完美的特写了——就在这一刻，野蛮人无比配合的转过身（真是难以置信的好运），让他的拍摄毫无缺憾。

“啧啧，简直太完美了！”拍摄结束后他不禁夸耀起自己，“太完美了！”他擦了擦脸上的尘土。只要把这些镜头拿到感官剧工作室，加上感官特效，一定会成为跨时代的伟大剧目。达尔文·波拿巴想，这简直可以和《抹香鲸的爱情生活》媲美了。弗德啊！未来多么美好！

十二天后，《萨里的野蛮人》公映了，在西欧所有豪华剧院里都可以切身看到、听到、感觉到这个震人心魄的故事。

达尔文·波拿巴的新片造成了巨大的反响和效果，公映次日的下午和晚上，约翰在穷乡僻巷的安逸与孤独被一群乘着飞机闻风而来的不速之客彻底破灭。

当时，他正在菜园里挖掘，也在他脑海中挖掘，努力寻找思想的本质。死亡——他一下又一下的挥动着铁锹，没有停歇。我们所有的昨天，不过替傻子们照亮了到死亡的土壤中去的路。他正思考的时候，响起了一声惊雷。他又铲起了一铁锹的泥土。琳达为何而死？为什么要让她一点点、一点点丧失做人的尊严，最后变成……他打了一个寒战。一块可亲可吻的腐肉。他把脚踏在铁锹上狠狠地压实土地。葛罗斯特说：“天神掌握着我们的命运，正像顽童捉到飞虫一样，为了戏弄的缘故而把我们杀害。”又一声惊心的轰雷。这是千真万确的道理，比真理本身还要真实。但是，同样也是葛罗斯特将天神称作仁慈的神明。睡眠是你所渴慕的最好的休息，可是死是永恒的宁静，你却对它心惊胆寒。死即睡眠，它不过如此！但在睡眠中可能有梦。他突然铲到了一块石头，弯腰把它拾了起来。那么，在死亡的睡眠中，会有什么样的梦呢？

头上嗡嗡的轰鸣声已经变成咆哮，他突然间被笼罩在了阴影中，有什么东西隔开了他与太阳。他从挖掘和沉思中惊醒，抬起头望去，惊呆了，眼花缭乱，天旋地转。他的思维方才还徜徉在那个比真实还要真实的异世界中，还沉浸在死亡与神明的无边虚境。抬起头却看到头顶上“嗡嗡”作响的飞机，像蝗虫一样盘旋飞来，降落在了他周围的杜鹃花丛中。从这些巨大的“蝗虫”的肚子中，走出一群穿着白粘胶法兰绒衬衫的男人和穿着绸质睡衣裤或棉绒短裤、低胸无袖衬衣的女人（天气实在是太闷热了），每架飞机上都走下一对。短短的几分钟时间，已经下来了十几对。他们在灯塔周围站成一圈，睁大眼睛看着，欢快地笑着，“咔嚓咔嚓”地按动照相机快门，像是喂猴子一样向他扔坚果、整盒的性激素口香糖和腺素黄油饼干。每一分钟，都有越来越多的人穿过拱脊山到达这里，络绎不绝的直升飞机像小溪一样流淌而至。这是一场噩梦的开端，从开始的十几个人变成了后来的几十个人，再变成了成百上千人。

野蛮人躲到藏身处，摆出困兽的姿态，无助地靠在灯塔里的墙上，看着数不清的面孔，恐惧得说不出话，像是一个失去了意识的人。

一盒口香糖精准地砸到他的脸上，迫使他从迷茫懵懂中回过神来，面对眼前的事实。他疼得一抖，带着强烈的愤怒彻底清醒过来。

“滚！”他大喊着。

猿人说话了！人群中爆发出掌声和笑声。“野蛮人老朋友，来一个，来一个！”在嘈杂的人群中，他听到了一声尖叫：“鞭子，鞭子，甩鞭子！”

这话语提醒了野蛮人，他从门后的钉子上解下那根带绳结的鞭子，向那些丑恶的施暴者挥舞着。

人群中响起讥讽的喝彩和掌声。

他凶神恶煞地走向人群，有个女人害怕地尖叫起来。鞭子不断地挥舞着，首当其冲的几个人开始还犹豫退缩，但随后就站直身，动也不动。压倒性的数量优势使得观光客们勇气倍增，这是野蛮人万万没有料到的，他大吃一惊，收回鞭子，环顾四周。

“你们为什么不让我清清静静地生活？”他愤怒的声音中夹杂着悲怆。

离野蛮人最近的敌人递过一小包零食：“尝尝这些镁盐大杏仁！你知道，这很美味，”他继续说道，笑容中带有一丝劝说的意味，“镁盐大杏仁有助于你保持青春。”

野蛮人不予理会。“你们想要我怎样？”他问，目光从一张狰狞的笑

脸转到另一张狰狞的笑脸，“你们到底想要我怎样？”

“抽鞭子呀，”上百个声音参差不齐地回答，“表演一下抽鞭子，我们想看！”

然后声音变得一致、低沉而有节奏，“我——们——要——看——抽——鞭——子，”他背后的人群也叫喊起来，“我——们——要——看——抽——鞭——子。”

其他人立刻响应，鹦鹉学舌般不断重复着那句话，一遍又一遍，音量不断增大，直到第七八次重复的时候，已经完全整齐划一，“我——们——要——看——抽——鞭——子。”

如同全民狂欢般，他们沉浸在喧闹的快感中，享受着团结的乐趣，沉迷于亢奋的节奏，仿佛可以持续不断地叫下去，永不停止。大概重复到第二十五次时，声音突然被打断。一架直升飞机穿过拱脊山飞了过来，在人群上方盘旋着，然后在离野蛮人几码远的地方降落，停在人群和灯塔间的空地上。人群的叫喊一时被螺旋桨的呼啸声压下来。在飞机着陆，引擎熄灭的一瞬间，“我们要看抽鞭子”的叫喊声再次响起，同样的节奏，同样的声调。

直升飞机的门打开了，一个英俊潇洒的年轻男人走出来，脸色红润得像红宝石，跟在他身后的，是一个穿着绿色棉绒短裤、白色衬衫，头戴骑兵帽的年轻女人。

看到那个年轻女人的一瞬间，野蛮人震惊得后退了几步，脸色煞白。

年轻的女人站在那里，对着他微笑，笑容中掺杂着不确定、恳求和

悲伤的绝望。几秒钟后，她的嘴唇张开，说了些什么，但是她的声音完全淹没在观光客的高声叫喊中。

“我——们——要——看——抽——鞭——子！我——们——要——看——抽——鞭——子。”

年轻女人双手都放在左侧，她那蜜桃般甜美、洋娃娃般娇俏的脸上，露出一一种渴求和悲痛交织的不自然的表情，碧蓝的眼睛似乎变得更大，更清澈。突然，两滴珍珠般的眼泪滑落脸颊。她又说话了，还是听不到。她突然迅速而热切地伸出双臂，向野蛮人走去。

“我——们——要——看——抽——鞭——子！我——们——要——看……”

观光客们的愿望忽然得到了满足。

“婊子！”野蛮人歇斯底里地朝她冲过去，“畜生！”他陷入狂乱，用带着绳结的鞭子向她猛地抽过去。

女人吓得泪眼婆娑，转身就跑，跌跌撞撞地摔倒在杜鹃花丛中。“亨利，亨利！”她大声呼救，但是那个面色红润的俊俏伙伴早就躲到了直升飞机后面，以免受到牵连。

在一片如愿以偿的喝彩声中，成堆的人群刹那间散开，蜂拥奔向精彩表演的中心。疼痛啊，是一种动人心魄的恐惧！

“惩戒淫欲，惩戒淫欲！”野蛮人又一次疯狂地抽打她。

人群充满渴望的集结在一起，推推搡搡地乱挤乱拱，就像是猪猡在抢夺饲料。

“啊，肉欲！”野蛮人咬着牙，将鞭子挥到自己的肩膀上。“消灭肉欲！消灭肉欲！”

对痛苦的恐惧像是迷人的魔法、让人上瘾的毒品。当野蛮人一次又一次地抽打自己反叛堕落的身体时，深深根植于文明人内心的条件设置发挥了作用，人群被一种共同合作的冲动所驱使，被一种集体一致的欲望所控制，他们开始疯狂地模仿野蛮人的姿势，互相扭打攻击，或者殴打那杜鹃花丛中因疼痛而不断翻滚的丰腴身体——那是荒淫邪恶的象征。

“消灭肉欲，消灭肉欲，消灭肉欲……”野蛮人不停地大喊。

突然，有人开始唱“纵情啊狂欢”。很快，所有人都在副歌部分一起唱起来，还跳起了舞。纵情啊狂欢，旋转，旋转，再旋转，拍击着六八拍的节奏。纵情啊狂欢……

静默的午夜，最后一架直升机方才离开。服用了唆麻后，野蛮人昏昏沉沉，长时间的疯狂放纵让他筋疲力尽，他躺在杜鹃花丛中睡去。当他再次睁开双眼，太阳已经升得老高。他躺在地上，像猫头鹰一样对着强烈的阳光困惑地眯起眼睛，然后突然回想起一切。

“上帝，上帝！”他用手捂住了双眼。

当天晚上，成群的直升飞机轰鸣着穿过拱脊山时，就像是一朵绵延十公里的乌云。前一天晚上的赎罪狂欢会已经登上了各大报纸的头条。

“野蛮人！”第一批客人刚下飞机就迫不及待地高喊，“野蛮人先生！”

一片寂静。

灯塔的门微开，他们推开门，走进昏暗的房间。从房间的另一侧拱门望去，可以看到楼梯通向更高的楼层。就在那个拱门的门框上，垂下了一双脚。

“野蛮人先生！”

那双脚慢慢地，慢慢地摇晃着，像是两根不慌不忙的圆规的脚，向右边转了过来，然后向北，东北，东，东南，南，西南，停了一会儿，又缓慢地向左边转过去，南，西南，南，东南，东……

1932年

Chapter One

A SQUAT grey building of only thirty-four stories. Over the main entrance the words, CENTRAL LONDON HATCHERY AND CONDITIONING CENTRE, and, in a shield, the World State's motto, COMMUNITY, IDENTITY, STABILITY.

The enormous room on the ground floor faced towards the north. Cold for all the summer beyond the panes, for all the tropical heat of the room itself, a harsh thin light glared through the windows, hungrily seeking some draped lay figure, some pallid shape of academic goose-flesh, but finding only the glass and nickel and bleakly shining porcelain of a laboratory. Wintriness responded to wintriness. The overalls of the workers were white, their hands gloved with a pale corpse-coloured rubber. The light was frozen, dead, a ghost. Only from the yellow barrels of the microscopes did it borrow a certain rich and living substance, lying along the polished tubes like butter, streak after luscious streak in long recession down the work tables.

“And this,” said the Director opening the door, “is the Fertilizing Room.”

Bent over their instruments, three hundred Fertilizers were plunged, as the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning entered the room, in the scarcely breathing silence, the absent-minded, soliloquizing hum or whistle, of absorbed concentration. A troop of newly arrived students, very young, pink

and callow, followed nervously, rather abjectly, at the Director's heels. Each of them carried a notebook, in which, whenever the great man spoke, he desperately scribbled. Straight from the horse's mouth. It was a rare privilege. The D. H. C. for Central London always made a point of personally conducting his new students round the various departments.

"Just to give you a general idea," he would explain to them. For of course some sort of general idea they must have, if they were to do their work intelligently—though as little of one, if they were to be good and happy members of society, as possible. For particulars, as every one knows, make for virtue and happiness; generalities are intellectually necessary evils. Not philosophers but fretsawyers and stamp collectors compose the backbone of society.

"To-morrow," he would add, smiling at them with a slightly menacing geniality, "you'll be settling down to serious work. You won't have time for generalities. Meanwhile..."

Meanwhile, it was a privilege. Straight from the horse's mouth into the notebook. The boys scribbled like mad.

Tall and rather thin but upright, the Director advanced into the room. He had a long chin and big rather prominent teeth, just covered, when he was not talking, by his full, floridly curved lips. Old, young? Thirty? Fifty? Fifty-five? It was hard to say. And anyhow the question didn't arise; in this year of stability, A. F. 632, it didn't occur to you to ask it.

"I shall begin at the beginning," said the D.H.C. and the more zealous

students recorded his intention in their notebooks: Begin at the beginning. “These,” he waved his hand, “are the incubators.” And opening an insulated door he showed them explained, “at blood heat; whereas the male gametes,” and here he opened another door, “they have to be kept at thirty-five instead of thirty-seven. Full blood heat sterilizes.” Rams wrapped in thermogene beget no lambs.

Still leaning against the incubators he gave them, while the pencils scurried illegibly across the pages, a brief description of the modern fertilizing process; spoke first, of course, of its surgical introduction— “The operation undergone voluntarily for the good of Society, not to mention the fact that it carries a bonus amounting to six months’ salary”; continued with some account of the technique for preserving the excised ovary alive and actively developing; passed on to a consideration of optimum temperature, salinity, viscosity; referred to the liquor in which the detached and ripened eggs were kept; and, leading his charges to the work tables, actually showed them how this liquor was drawn off from the test-tubes; how it was let out drop by drop onto the specially warmed slides of the microscopes; how the eggs which it contained were inspected for abnormalities, counted and transferred to a porous receptacle; how (and he now took them to watch the operation) this receptacle was immersed in a warm bouillon containing free-swimming spermatozoa—at a minimum concentration of one hundred thousand per cubic centimetre, he insisted; and how, after ten minutes, the container was lifted out of the liquor and its contents re-examined; how, if any of the eggs remained unfertilized, it was again immersed, and, if necessary, yet again; how the fertilized ova went back to the incubators; where the Alphas and Betas remained until definitely bottled; while the

Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons were brought out again, after only thirty-six hours, to undergo Bokanovsky's Process.

"Bokanovsky's Process," repeated the Director, and the students underlined the words in their little notebooks.

One egg, one embryo, one adult-normality. But a bakanovskified egg will bud, will proliferate, will pidge. From eight to ninety-six buds, and every bud will grow into a perfectly formed embryo, and every embryo into a full-sized adult. Making ninety-six human beings grow where only one grew before. Progress.

"Essentially," the D.H.C. concluded, "bakanovskification consists of a series of arrests of development. We check the normal growth and, paradoxically enough, the egg responds by budding."

Responds by budding. The pencils were busy.

He pointed. On a very slowly moving band a rack-full of test-tubes was entering a large metal box, another, rack-full was emerging. Machinery faintly purred. It took eight minutes for the tubes to go through, he told them. Eight minutes of hard X-rays being about as much as an egg can stand. A few died; of the rest, the least susceptible pided into two; most put out four buds; some eight; all were returned to the incubators, where the buds began to develop; then, after two days, were suddenly chilled, chilled and checked. Two, four, eight, the buds in their turn budded; and having budded were dosed almost to death with alcohol; consequently burgeoned again and having budded—bud out of bud out of bud—were thereafter—further arrest

being generally fatal—left to develop in peace. By which time the original egg was in a fair way to becoming anything from eight to ninety-six embryos— a prodigious improvement, you will agree, on nature. Identical twins—but not in piddling twos and threes as in the old viviparous days, when an egg would sometimes accidentally pidge; actually by dozens, by scores at a time.

“Scores,” the Director repeated and flung out his arms, as though he were distributing largesse. “Scores.”

But one of the students was fool enough to ask where the advantage lay.

“My good boy!” The Director wheeled sharply round on him. “Can’t you see? Can’t you see?” He raised a hand; his expression was solemn. “Bokanovsky’s Process is one of the major instruments of social stability!”

Major instruments of social stability.

Standard men and women; in uniform batches. The whole of a small factory staffed with the products of a single bokanovskified egg.

“Ninety-six identical twins working ninety-six identical machines!” The voice was almost tremulous with enthusiasm. “You really know where you are. For the first time in history.” He quoted the planetary motto. “Community, Identity, Stability.” Grand words. “If we could bokanovskify indefinitely the whole problem would be solved.”

Solved by standard Gammas, unvarying Deltas, uniform Epsilons. Millions of identical twins. The principle of mass production at last applied to biology.

“But, alas,” the Director shook his head, “we can’t boganovskify indefinitely.”

Ninety-six seemed to be the limit; seventy-two a good average. From the same ovary and with gametes of the same male to manufacture as many batches of identical twins as possible—that was the best (sadly a second best) that they could do. And even that was difficult.

“For in nature it takes thirty years for two hundred eggs to reach maturity. But our business is to stabilize the population at this moment, here and now. Dribbling out twins over a quarter of a century—what would be the use of that?”

Obviously, no use at all. But Podsnap’s Technique had immensely accelerated the process of ripening. They could make sure of at least a hundred and fifty mature eggs within two years. Fertilize and boganovskify—in other words, multiply by seventy-two—and you get an average of nearly eleven thousand brothers and sisters in a hundred and fifty batches of identical twins, all within two years of the same age.

“And in exceptional cases we can make one ovary yield us over fifteen thousand adult individuals.”

Beckoning to a fair-haired, ruddy young man who happened to be passing at the moment. “Mr. Foster,” he called. The ruddy young man approached. “Can you tell us the record for a single ovary, Mr. Foster?”

“Sixteen thousand and twelve in this Centre,” Mr. Foster replied without hesitation. He spoke very quickly, had a vivacious blue eye, and took an

evident pleasure in quoting figures. "Sixteen thousand and twelve; in one hundred and eighty-nine batches of identicals. But of course they've done much better," he rattled on, "in some of the tropical Centres. Singapore has often produced over sixteen thousand five hundred; and Mombasa has actually touched the seventeen thousand mark. But then they have unfair advantages. You should see the way a negro ovary responds to pituitary! It's quite astonishing, when you're used to working with European material. Still," he added, with a laugh (but the light of combat was in his eyes and the lift of his chin was challenging), "still, we mean to beat them if we can. I'm working on a wonderful Delta-Minus ovary at this moment. Only just eighteen months old. Over twelve thousand seven hundred children already, either decanted or in embryo. And still going strong. We'll beat them yet."

"That's the spirit I like!" cried the Director, and clapped Mr. Foster on the shoulder. "Come along with us, and give these boys the benefit of your expert knowledge."

Mr. Foster smiled modestly. "With pleasure." They went.

In the Bottling Room all was harmonious bustle and ordered activity. Flaps of fresh sow's peritoneum ready cut to the proper size came shooting up in little lifts from the Organ Store in the sub-basement. Whizz and then, click! the lift-hatches hew open; the bottle-liner had only to reach out a hand, take the flap, insert, smooth-down, and before the lined bottle had had time to travel out of reach along the endless band, whizz, click! another flap of peritoneum had shot up from the depths, ready to be slipped into yet another bottle, the next of that slow interminable procession on the band.

Next to the Liners stood the Matriculators. The procession advanced; one by one the eggs were transferred from their test-tubes to the larger containers; deftly the peritoneal lining was slit, the morula dropped into place, the saline solution poured in...and already the bottle had passed, and it was the turn of the labellers. Heredity, date of fertilization, membership of Bokanovsky Group—details were transferred from test-tube to bottle. No longer anonymous, but named, identified, the procession marched slowly on; on through an opening in the wall, slowly on into the Social Predestination Room.

“Eighty-eight cubic metres of card-index,” said Mr. Foster with relish, as they entered.

“Containing all the relevant information,” added the Director. “Brought up to date every morning.”

“And co-ordinated every afternoon.”

“On the basis of which they make their calculations.”

“So many individuals, of such and such quality,” said Mr. Foster.

“Distributed in such and such quantities.”

“The optimum Decanting Rate at any given moment.”

“Unforeseen wastages promptly made good.”

“Promptly,” repeated Mr. Foster. “If you knew the amount of overtime I had to put in after the last Japanese earthquake!” He laughed

goodhumouredly and shook his head.

“The Predestinators send in their figures to the Fertilizers.”

“Who give them the embryos they ask for.”

“And the bottles come in here to be predestined in detail.”

“After which they are sent down to the Embryo Store.”

“Where we now proceed ourselves.”

And opening a door Mr. Foster led the way down a staircase into the basement. The temperature was still tropical. They descended into a thickening twilight. Two doors and a passage with a double turn insured the cellar against any possible infiltration of the day.

“Embryos are like photograph film,” said Mr. Foster waggishly, as he pushed open the second door. “They can only stand red light.” And in effect the sultry darkness into which the students now followed him was visible and crimson, like the darkness of closed eyes on a summer’s afternoon. The bulging flanks of row on receding row and tier above tier of bottles glinted with innumerable rubies, and among the rubies moved the dim red spectres of men and women with purple eyes and all the symptoms of lupus. The hum and rattle of machinery faintly stirred the air.

“Give them a few figures, Mr. Foster,” said the Director, who was tired of talking. Mr. Foster was only too happy to give them a few figures. Two hundred and twenty metres long, two hundred wide, ten high. He pointed upwards. Like chickens drinking, the students lifted their eyes towards the

distant ceiling.

Three tiers of racks: ground floor level, first gallery, second gallery.

The spidery steel-work of gallery above gallery faded away in all directions into the dark. Near them three red ghosts were busily unloading demijohns from a moving staircase.

The escalator from the Social Predestination Room.

Each bottle could be placed on one of fifteen racks, each rack, though you couldn't see it, was a conveyor traveling at the rate of thirty-three and a third centimetres an hour. Two hundred and sixty-seven days at eight metres a day. Two thousand one hundred and thirty-six metres in all. One circuit of the cellar at ground level, one on the first gallery, half on the second, and on the two hundred and sixty-seventh morning, daylight in the Decanting Room. Independent existence—so called.

“But in the interval,” Mr. Foster concluded, “we’ve managed to do a lot to them. Oh, a very great deal.” His laugh was knowing and triumphant.

“That’s the spirit I like,” said the Director once more. “Let’s walk around. You tell them everything, Mr. Foster.”

Mr. Foster duly told them.

Told them of the growing embryo on its bed of peritoneum. Made them taste the rich blood surrogate on which it fed. Explained why it had to be stimulated with placentin and thyroxin. Told them of the corpus luteum extract. Showed them the jets through which at every twelfth metre from zero

to 2040 it was automatically injected. Spoke of those gradually increasing doses of pituitary administered during the final ninety-six metres of their course. Described the artificial maternal circulation installed in every bottle at Metre 112; showed them the reservoir of blood-surrogate, the centrifugal pump that kept the liquid moving over the placenta and drove it through the synthetic lung and waste product filter. Referred to the embryo's troublesome tendency to anæmia, to the massive doses of hog's stomach extract and foetal foal's liver with which, in consequence, it had to be supplied.

Showed them the simple mechanism by means of which, during the last two metres out of every eight, all the embryos were simultaneously shaken into familiarity with movement. Hinted at the gravity of the so-called "trauma of decanting," and enumerated the precautions taken to minimize, by a suitable training of the bottled embryo, that dangerous shock. Told them of the test for sex carried out in the neighborhood of Metre 200. Explained the system of labelling—a T for the males, a circle for the females and for those who were destined to become freemartins a question mark, black on a white ground.

"For of course," said Mr. Foster, "in the vast majority of cases, fertility is merely a nuisance. One fertile ovary in twelve hundred—that would really be quite sufficient for our purposes. But we want to have a good choice. And of course one must always have an enormous margin of safety. So we allow as many as thirty per cent of the female embryos to develop normally. The others get a dose of male sex-hormone every twenty-four metres for the rest of the course. Result: they're decanted as freemartins—structurally quite normal, except," he had to admit, "that they do have the slightest tendency to

grow beards, but sterile. Guaranteed sterile. Which brings us at last,” continued Mr. Foster, “out of the realm of mere slavish imitation of nature into the much more interesting world of human invention.”

He rubbed his hands. For of course, they didn’t content themselves with merely hatching out embryos: any cow could do that.

“We also predestine and condition. We decant our babies as socialized human beings, as Alphas or Epsilons, as future sewage workers or future...” He was going to say “future World controllers,” but correcting himself, said “future Directors of Hatcheries,” instead.

The D.H.C. acknowledged the compliment with a smile.

They were passing Metre 320 on Rack 11. A young Beta-Minus mechanic was busy with screw-driver and spanner on the blood-surrogate pump of a passing bottle. The hum of the electric motor deepened by fractions of a tone as he turned the nuts. Down, down...A final twist, a glance at the revolution counter, and he was done. He moved two paces down the line and began the same process on the next pump.

“Reducing the number of revolutions per minute,” Mr. Foster explained. “The surrogate goes round slower; therefore passes through the lung at longer intervals; therefore gives the embryo less oxygen. Nothing like oxygen-shortage for keeping an embryo below par.” Again he rubbed his hands.

“But why do you want to keep the embryo below par?” asked an ingenuous student.

“Ass!” said the Director, breaking a long silence. “Hasn’t it occurred to you that an Epsilon embryo must have an Epsilon environment as well as an Epsilon heredity?”

It evidently hadn’t occurred to him. He was covered with confusion.

“The lower the caste,” said Mr. Foster, “the shorter the oxygen.” The first organ affected was the brain. After that the skeleton. At seventy per cent of normal oxygen you got dwarfs. At less than seventy eyeless monsters.

“Who are no use at all,” concluded Mr. Foster.

Whereas (his voice became confidential and eager), if they could discover a technique for shortening the period of maturation what a triumph, what a benefaction to Society!

“Consider the horse.”

They considered it.

Mature at six; the elephant at ten. While at thirteen a man is not yet sexually mature; and is only full-grown at twenty. Hence, of course, that fruit of delayed development, the human intelligence.

“But in Epsilons,” said Mr. Foster very justly, “we don’t need human intelligence.”

Didn’t need and didn’t get it. But though the Epsilon mind was mature at ten, the Epsilon body was not fit to work till eighteen. Long years of superfluous and wasted immaturity. If the physical development could be

speeded up till it was as quick, say, as a cow's, what an enormous saving to the Community!

“Enormous!” murmured the students. Mr. Foster's enthusiasm was infectious.

He became rather technical; spoke of the abnormal endocrine coordination which made men grow so slowly; postulated a germinal mutation to account for it. Could the effects of this germinal mutation be undone? Could the individual Epsilon embryo be made a revert, by a suitable technique, to the normality of dogs and cows? That was the problem. And it was all but solved.

Pilkington, at Mombasa, had produced individuals who were sexually mature at four and full-grown at six and a half. A scientific triumph. But socially useless. Six-year-old men and women were too stupid to do even Epsilon work. And the process was an all-or-nothing one; either you failed to modify at all, or else you modified the whole way. They were still trying to find the ideal compromise between adults of twenty and adults of six. So far without success. Mr. Foster sighed and shook his head.

Their wanderings through the crimson twilight had brought them to the neighborhood of Metre 170 on Rack 9. From this point onwards Rack 9 was enclosed and the bottle performed the remainder of their journey in a kind of tunnel, interrupted here and there by openings two or three metres wide.

“Heat conditioning,” said Mr. Foster.

Hot tunnels alternated with cool tunnels. Coolness was wedded to

discomfort in the form of hard X-rays. By the time they were decanted the embryos had a horror of cold. They were predestined to emigrate to the tropics, to be miner and acetate silk spinners and steel workers. Later on their minds would be made to endorse the judgment of their bodies. “We condition them to thrive on heat,” concluded Mr. Foster. “Our colleagues upstairs will teach them to love it.”

“And that,” put in the Director sententiously, “that is the secret of happiness and virtue—liking what you’ve got to do. All conditioning aims at that: making people like their unescapable social destiny.”

In a gap between two tunnels, a nurse was delicately probing with a long fine syringe into the gelatinous contents of a passing bottle. The students and their guides stood watching her for a few moments in silence.

“Well, Lenina,” said Mr. Foster, when at last she withdrew the syringe and straightened herself up.

The girl turned with a start. One could see that, for all the lupus and the purple eyes, she was uncommonly pretty.

“Henry!” Her smile flashed redly at him—a row of coral teeth.

“Charming, charming,” murmured the Director and, giving her two or three little pats, received in exchange a rather deferential smile for himself.

“What are you giving them?” asked Mr. Foster, making his tone very professional.

“Oh, the usual typhoid and sleeping sickness.”

“Tropical workers start being inoculated at Metre 150,” Mr. Foster explained to the students. “The embryos still have gills. We immunize the fish against the future man’s diseases.” Then, turning back to Lenina, “Ten to five on the roof this afternoon,” he said, “as usual.”

“Charming,” said the Dhector once more, and, with a final pat, moved away after the others.

On Rack 10 rows of next generation’s chemical workers were being trained in the toleration of lead, caustic soda, tar, chlorine. The first of a batch of two hundred and fifty embryonic rocket-plane engineers was just passing the eleven hundred metre mark on Rack 3. A special mechanism kept their containers in constant rotation. “To improve their sense of balance,” Mr. Foster explained. “Doing repairs on the outside of a rocket in mid-air is a ticklish job. We slacken off the circulation when they’re right way up, so that they’re half starved, and double the flow of surrogate when they’re upside down. They learn to associate topsy-turvydom with well-being; in fact, they’re only truly happy when they’re standing on their heads.

“And now,” Mr. Foster went on, “I’d like to show you some very interesting conditioning for Alpha Plus Intellectuals. We have a big batch of them on Rack 5. First Gallery level,” he called to two boys who had started to go down to the ground floor.

“They’re round about Metre 900,” he explained. “You can’t really do any useful intellectual conditioning till the foetuses have lost their tails. Follow me.”

But the Director had looked at his watch. “Ten to three,” he said. “No time for the intellectual embryos, I’m afraid. We must go up to the Nurseries before the children have finished their afternoon sleep.”

Mr. Foster was disappointed. “At least one glance at the Decanting Room,” he pleaded.

“Very well then.” The Director smiled indulgently. “Just one glance.”

Chapter Two

MR. FOSTER was left in the Decanting Room. The D.H.C. and his students stepped into the nearest lift and were carried up to the fifth floor.

INFANT NURSERIES. NEO-PAVLOVIAN CONDITIONING ROOMS, announced the notice board.

The Director opened a door. They were in a large bare room, very bright and sunny; for the whole of the southern wall was a single window. Half a dozen nurses, trousered and jacketed in the regulation white viscose-linen uniform, their hair aseptically hidden under white caps, were engaged in setting out bowls of roses in a long row across the floor. Big bowls, packed tight with blossom. Thousands of petals, ripe-blown and silkily smooth, like the cheeks of innumerable little cherubs, but of cherubs, in that bright light, not exclusively pink and Aryan, but also luminously Chinese, also Mexican, also apoplectic with too much blowing of celestial trumpets, also pale as death, pale with the posthumous whiteness of marble.

The nurses stiffened to attention as the D.H.C. came in.

“Set out the books,” he said curtly.

In silence the nurses obeyed his command. Between the rose bowls the books were duly set out—a row of nursery quartos opened invitingly each at some gaily coloured image of beast or fish or bird.

“Now bring in the children.”

They hurried out of the room and returned in a minute or two, each pushing a kind of tall dumb-waiter laden, on all its four wire-netted shelves, with eight-month-old babies, all exactly alike (a Bokanovsky Group, it was evident) and all (since their caste was Delta) dressed in khaki.

“Put them down on the floor.”

The infants were unloaded.

“Now turn them so that they can see the flowers and books.”

Turned, the babies at once fell silent, then began to crawl towards those clusters of sleek colours, those shapes so gay and brilliant on the white pages. As they approached, the sun came out of a momentary eclipse behind a cloud. The roses flamed up as though with a sudden passion from within; a new and profound significance seemed to suffuse the shining pages of the books. From the ranks of the crawling babies came little squeals of excitement, gurgles and twitterings of pleasure.

The Director rubbed his hands. “Excellent!” he said. “It might almost have been done on purpose.”

The swiftest crawlers were already at their goal. Small hands reached out uncertainly, touched, grasped, unpetaling the transfigured roses, crumpling the illuminated pages of the books. The Director waited until all were happily busy. Then, “Watch carefully,” he said. And, lifting his hand, he gave the signal.

The Head Nurse, who was standing by a switchboard at the other end of the room, pressed down a little lever.

There was a violent explosion. Shriller and ever shriller, a siren shrieked. Alarm bells maddeningly sounded.

The children started, screamed; their faces were distorted with terror.

“And now,” the Director shouted (for the noise was deafening), “now we proceed to rub in the lesson with a mild electric shock.”

He waved his hand again, and the Head Nurse pressed a second lever. The screaming of the babies suddenly changed its tone. There was something desperate, almost insane, about the sharp spasmodic yelps to which they now gave utterance. Their little bodies twitched and stiffened; their limbs moved jerkily as if to the tug of unseen wires.

“We can electrify that whole strip of floor,” bawled the Director in explanation. “But that’s enough,” he signalled to the nurse.

The explosions ceased, the bells stopped ringing, the shriek of the siren died down from tone to tone into silence. The stiffly twitching bodies relaxed, and what had become the sob and yelp of infant maniacs broadened out once more into a normal howl of ordinary terror.

“Offer them the flowers and the books again.”

The nurses obeyed; but at the approach of the roses, at the mere sight of those gaily-coloured images of pussy and cock-a-doodle-doo and baa-baa black sheep, the infants shrank away in horror, the volume of their howling

suddenly increased.

“Observe,” said the Director triumphantly, “observe.”

Books and loud noises, flowers and electric shocks—already in the infant mind these couples were compromisingly linked; and after two hundred repetitions of the same or a similar lesson would be wedded indissolubly. What man has joined, nature is powerless to put asunder.

“They’ll grow up with what the psychologists used to call an ‘instinctive’ hatred of books and flowers. Reflexes unalterably conditioned. They’ll be safe from books and botany all their lives.” The Director turned to his nurses. “Take them away again.”

Still yelling, the khaki babies were loaded on to their dumb-waiters and wheeled out, leaving behind them the smell of sour milk and a most welcome silence.

One of the students held up his hand; and though he could see quite well why you couldn’t have lower-cast people wasting the Community’s time over books, and that there was always the risk of their reading something which might undesirably decondition one of their reflexes, yet...well, he couldn’t understand about the flowers. Why go to the trouble of making it psychologically impossible for Deltas to like flowers?

Patiently the D.H.C. explained. If the children were made to scream at the sight of a rose, that was on grounds of high economic policy. Not so very long ago (a century or thereabouts), Gammas, Deltas, even Epsilons, had been conditioned to like flowers—flowers in particular and wild nature in

general. The idea was to make them want to be going out into the country at every available opportunity, and so compel them to consume transport.

“And didn’t they consume transport?” asked the student.

“Quite a lot,” the D.H.C. replied. “But nothing else.”

Primroses and landscapes, he pointed out, have one grave defect: they are gratuitous. A love of nature keeps no factories busy. It was decided to abolish the love of nature, at any rate among the lower classes; to abolish the love of nature, but not the tendency to consume transport. For of course it was essential that they should keep on going to the country, even though they hated it. The problem was to find an economically sounder reason for consuming transport than a mere affection for primroses and landscapes. It was duly found.

“We condition the masses to hate the country,” concluded the Director. “But simultaneously we condition them to love all country sports. At the same time, we see to it that all country sports shall entail the use of elaborate apparatus. So that they consume manufactured articles as well as transport. Hence those electric shocks.”

“I see,” said the student, and was silent, lost in admiration.

There was a silence; then, clearing his throat, “Once upon a time,” the Director began, “while our Ford was still on earth, there was a little boy called Reuben Rabinovitch. Reuben was the child of Polish-speaking parents.”

The Director interrupted himself. “You know what Polish is, I suppose?”

“A dead language.”

“Like French and German,” added another student, officiously showing off his learning.

“And ‘parent’?” questioned the D.H.C.

There was an uneasy silence. Several of the boys blushed. They had not yet learned to draw the significant but often very fine distinction between smut and pure science. One, at last, had the courage to raise a hand.

“Human beings used to be...” he hesitated; the blood rushed to his cheeks. “Well, they used to be viviparous.”

“Quite right.” The Director nodded approvingly.

“And when the babies were decanted...”

“‘Born,’” came the correction.

“Well, then they were the parents—I mean, not the babies, of course; the other ones.” The poor boy was overwhelmed with confusion.

“In brief,” the Director summed up, “the parents were the father and the mother.” The smut that was really science fell with a crash into the boys’ eye-avoiding silence. “Mother,” he repeated loudly rubbing in the science; and, leaning back in his chair, “These,” he said gravely, “are unpleasant facts; I

know it. But then most historical facts are unpleasant.”

He returned to Little Reuben—to Little Reuben, in whose room, one evening, by an oversight, his father and mother (crash, crash!) happened to leave the radio turned on.

(“For you must remember that in those days of gross viviparous reproduction, children were always brought up by their parents and not in State Conditioning Centres.”)

While the child was asleep, a broadcast programme from London suddenly started to come through; and the next morning, to the astonishment of his crash and crash (the more daring of the boys ventured to grin at one another), Little Reuben woke up repeating word for word a long lecture by that curious old writer (“one of the very few whose works have been permitted to come down to us”), George Bernard Shaw, who was speaking, according to a well-authenticated tradition, about his own genius. To Little Reuben’s wink and snigger, this lecture was, of course, perfectly incomprehensible and, imagining that their child had suddenly gone mad, they sent for a doctor. He, fortunately, understood English, recognized the discourse as that which Shaw had broadcasted the previous evening, realized the significance of what had happened, and sent a letter to the medical press about it.

“The principle of sleep-teaching, or hypnopædia, had been discovered.” The D.H.C. made an impressive pause.

The principle had been discovered; but many, many years were to elapse

before that principle was usefully applied.

“The case of Little Reuben occurred only twenty-three years after Our Ford’s first T-Model was put on the market.” (Here the Director made a sign of the T on his stomach and all the students reverently followed suit.) “And yet...”

Furiously the students scribbled. “Hypnopædia, first used officially in A.F. 214. Why not before? Two reasons. (a)...”

“These early experimenters,” the D.H.C. was saying, “were on the wrong track. They thought that hypnopædia could be made an instrument of intellectual education...”

(A small boy asleep on his right side, the right arm stuck out, the right hand hanging limp over the edge of the bed. Through a round grating in the side of a box a voice speaks softly.

“The Nile is the longest river in Africa and the second in length of all the rivers of the globe. Although falling short of the length of the Mississippi-Missouri, the Nile is at the head of all rivers as regards the length of its basin, which extends through 35 degrees of latitude...”

At breakfast the next morning, “Tommy,” some one says, “do you know which is the longest river in Africa?” A shaking of the head. “But don’t you remember something that begins: The Nile is the...”

“The - Nile - is - the - longest - river - in - Africa - and - the - second - in - length - of - all - the - rivers - of - the - globe...” The words come rushing

out. “Although -falling - short - of...”

“Well now, which is the longest river in Africa?”

The eyes are blank. “I don’t know.”

“But the Nile, Tommy.”

“The - Nile - is - the - longest - river - in - Africa - and - second...”

“Then which river is the longest, Tommy?”

Tommy burst into tears. “I don’t know,” he howls.)

That howl, the Director made it plain, discouraged the earliest investigators. The experiments were abandoned. No further attempt was made to teach children the length of the Nile in their sleep. Quite rightly. You can’t learn a science unless you know what it’s all about.

“Whereas, if they’d only started on moral education,” said the Director, leading the way towards the door. The students followed him, desperately scribbling as they walked and all the way up in the lift. “Moral education, which ought never, in any circumstances, to be rational.”

“Silence, silence,” whispered a loud speaker as they stepped out at the fourteenth floor, and “Silence, silence,” the trumpet mouths indefatigably repeated at intervals down every corridor. The students and even the Director himself rose automatically to the tips of their toes. They were Alphas, of course, but even Alphas have been well conditioned. “Silence, silence.” All the air of the fourteenth floor was sibilant with the categorical imperative.

Fifty yards of tiptoeing brought them to a door which the Director cautiously opened. They stepped over the threshold into the twilight of a shuttered dormitory. Eighty cots stood in a row against the wall. There was a sound of light regular breathing and a continuous murmur, as of very faint voices remotely whispering.

A nurse rose as they entered and came to attention before the Director.

“What’s the lesson this afternoon?” he asked.

“We had Elementary Sex for the first forty minutes,” she answered. “But now it’s switched over to Elementary Class Consciousness.”

The Director walked slowly down the long line of cots. Rosy and relaxed with sleep, eighty little boys and girls lay softly breathing. There was a whisper under every pillow. The D.H.C. halted and, bending over one of the little beds, listened attentively.

“Elementary Class Consciousness, did you say? Let’s have it repeated a little louder by the trumpet.”

At the end of the room a loud speaker projected from the wall. The Director walked up to it and pressed a switch.

“...all wear green,” said a soft but very distinct voice, beginning in the middle of a sentence, “and Delta Children wear khaki. Oh no, I don’t want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They’re too stupid to be able to read or write. Besides they wear black, which is such a beastly colour. I’m so glad I’m a Beta.”

There was a pause; then the voice began again.

“Alpha children wear grey They work much harder than we do, because they’re so frightfully clever. I’m really awfully glad I’m a Beta, because I don’t work so hard. And then we are much better than the Gammas and Deltas. Gammas are stupid. They all wear green, and Delta children wear khaki. Oh no, I don’t want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They’re too stupid to be able...”

The Director pushed back the switch. The voice was silent. Only its thin ghost continued to mutter from beneath the eighty pillows.

“They’ll have that repeated forty or fifty times more before they wake; then again on Thursday, and again on Saturday. A hundred and twenty times three times a week for thirty months. After which they go on to a more advanced lesson.”

Roses and electric shocks, the khaki of Deltas and a whiff of asafœtida—wedded indissolubly before the child can speak. But wordless conditioning is crude and wholesale; cannot bring home the finer distinctions, cannot inculcate the more complex courses of behaviour. For that there must be words, but words without reason. In brief, hypnopædia.

“The greatest moralizing and socializing force of all time.”

The students took it down in their little books. Straight from the horse’s mouth.

Once more the Director touched the switch.

“...so frightfully clever,” the soft, insinuating, indefatigable voice was saying, “I’m really awfully glad I’m a Beta, because...”

Not so much like drops of water, though water, it is true, can wear holes in the hardest granite; rather, drops of liquid sealing-wax, drops that adhere, incrust, incorporate themselves with what they fall on, till finally the rock is all one scarlet blob.

“Till at last the child’s mind is these suggestions, and the sum of the suggestions is the child’s mind. And not the child’s mind only. The adult’s mind too—all his life long. The mind that judges and desires and decides—made up of these suggestions. But all these suggestions are our suggestions!” The Director almost shouted in his triumph. “Suggestions from the State.” He banged the nearest table. “It therefore follows...”

A noise made him turn round.

“Oh, Ford!” he said in another tone, “I’ve gone and woken the children.”

Chapter Three

OUTSIDE, in the garden, it was playtime. Naked in the warm June sunshine, six or seven hundred little boys and girls were running with shrill yells over the lawns, or playing ball games, or squatting silently in twos and threes among the flowering shrubs. The roses were in bloom, two nightingales soliloquized in the boskage, a cuckoo was just going out of tune among the lime trees. The air was drowsy with the murmur of bees and helicopters.

The Director and his students stood for a short time watching a game of Centrifugal Bumble-puppy. Twenty children were grouped in a circle round a chrome steel tower. A ball thrown up so as to land on the platform at the top of the tower rolled down into the interior, fell on a rapidly revolving disk, was hurled through one or other of the numerous apertures pierced in the cylindrical casing, and had to be caught.

“Strange,” mused the Director, as they turned away, “strange to think that even in Our Ford’s day most games were played without more apparatus than a ball or two and a few sticks and perhaps a bit of netting. imagine the folly of allowing people to play elaborate games which do nothing whatever to increase consumption. It’s madness. Nowadays the Controllers won’t approve of any new game unless it can be shown that it requires at least as much apparatus as the most complicated of existing games.” He interrupted himself.

“That’s a charming little group,” he said, pointing.

In a little grassy bay between tall clumps of Mediterranean heather, two children, a little boy of about seven and a little girl who might have been a year older, were playing, very gravely and with all the focussed attention of scientists intent on a labour of discovery, a rudimentary sexual game.

“Charming, charming!” the D.H.C. repeated sentimentally.

“Charming,” the boys politely agreed. But their smile was rather patronizing. They had put aside similar childish amusements too recently to be able to watch them now without a touch of contempt. Charming? but it was just a pair of kids fooling about; that was all. Just kids.

“I always think,” the Director was continuing in the same rather maudlin tone, when he was interrupted by a loud boo-hooing.

From a neighbouring shrubbery emerged a nurse, leading by the hand a small boy, who howled as he went. An anxious-looking little girl trotted at her heels.

“What’s the matter?” asked the Director.

The nurse shrugged her shoulders. “Nothing much,” she answered. “It’s just that this little boy seems rather reluctant to join in the ordinary erotic play. I’d noticed it once or twice before. And now again to-day. He started yelling just now...”

“Honestly,” put in the anxious-looking little girl, “I didn’t mean to hurt him or anything. Honestly.”

“Of course you didn’t, dear,” said the nurse reassuringly. “And so,” she went on, turning back to the Director, “I’m taking him in to see the Assistant Superintendent of Psychology. Just to see if anything’s at all abnormal.”

“Quite right,” said the Director. “Take him in. You stay here, little girl,” he added, as the nurse moved away with her still howling charge. “What’s your name?”

“Polly Trotsky.”

“And a very good name too,” said the Director. “Run away now and see if you can find some other little boy to play with.”

The child scampered off into the bushes and was lost to sight.

“Exquisite little creature!” said the Director, looking after her. Then, turning to his students, “What I’m going to tell you now,” he said, “may sound incredible. But then, when you’re not accustomed to history, most facts about the past do sound incredible.”

He let out the amazing truth. For a very long period before the time of Our Ford, and even for some generations afterwards, erotic play between children had been regarded as abnormal (there was a roar of laughter); and not only abnormal, actually immoral (no!): and had therefore been rigorously suppressed.

A look of astonished incredulity appeared on the faces of his listeners. Poor little kids not allowed to amuse themselves? They could not believe it.

“Even adolescents,” the D.H.C. was saying, “even adolescents like yourselves...”

“Not possible!”

“Barring a little surreptitious auto-erotism and homosexuality—absolutely nothing.”

“Nothing?”

“In most cases, till they were over twenty years old.”

“Twenty years old?” echoed the students in a chorus of loud disbelief.

“Twenty,” the Director repeated. “I told you that you’d find it incredible.”

“But what happened?” they asked. “What were the results?”

“The results were terrible.” A deep resonant voice broke startlingly into the dialogue. They looked around. On the fringe of the little group stood a stranger—a man of middle height, black-haired, with a hooked nose, full red lips, eyes very piercing and dark.

“Terrible,” he repeated. The D.H.C. had at that moment sat down on one of the steel and rubber benches conveniently scattered through the gardens; but at the sight of the stranger, he sprang to his feet and darted forward, his hand outstretched, smiling with all his teeth, effusive.

“Controller! What an unexpected pleasure! Boys, what are you thinking

of? This is the Controller; this is his fordship, Mustapha Mond.”

In the four thousand rooms of the Centre the four thousand electric clocks simultaneously struck four. Discarnate voices called from the trumpet mouths.

“Main Day-shift off duty. Second Day-shift take over. Main Day-shift off...”

In the lift, on their way up to the changing rooms, Henry Foster and the Assistant Director of Predestination rather pointedly turned their backs on Bernard Marx from the Psychology Bureau: averted themselves from that unsavoury reputation.

The faint hum and rattle of machinery still stirred the crimson air in the Embryo Store. Shifts might come and go, one lupus-coloured face give place to another; majestically and for ever the conveyors crept forward with their load of future men and women.

Lenina Crowne walked briskly towards the door.

His fordship Mustapha Mond! The eyes of the saluting students almost popped out of their heads. Mustapha Mond! The Resident Controller for Western Europe! One of the Ten World Controllers. One of the Ten...and he sat down on the bench with the D.H.C., he was going to stay, to stay, yes, and actually talk to them...straight from the horse's mouth. Straight from the mouth of Ford himself.

Two shrimp-brown children emerged from a neighbouring shrubbery,

stared at them for a moment with large, astonished eyes, then returned to their amusements among the leaves.

“You all remember,” said the Controller, in his strong deep voice, “you all remember, I suppose, that beautiful and inspired saying of Our Ford’s: History is bunk. History,” he repeated slowly, “is bunk.”

He waved his hand; and it was as though, with an invisible feather whisk, he had brushed away a little dust, and the dust was Harappa, was Ur of the Chaldees; some spider-webs, and they were Thebes and Babylon and Cnossos and Mycenae. Whisk. Whisk—and where was Odysseus, where was Job, where were Jupiter and Gotama and Jesus? Whisk—and those specks of antique dirt called Athens and Rome, Jerusalem and the Middle Kingdom—all were gone. Whisk—the place where Italy had been was empty. Whisk, the cathedrals; whisk, whisk, King Lear and the Thoughts of Pascal. Whisk, Passion; whisk, Requiem; whisk, Symphony; whisk...

“Going to the Feelies this evening, Henry?” enquired the Assistant Predestinator. “I hear the new one at the Alhambra is first-rate. There’s a love scene on a bearskin rug; they say it’s marvellous. Every hair of the bear reproduced. The most amazing tactual effects.”

“That’s why you’re taught no history,” the Controller was saying. “But now the time has come...”

The D.H.C. looked at him nervously. There were those strange rumours of old forbidden books hidden in a safe in the Controller’s study. Bibles, poetry—Ford knew what.

Mustapha Mond intercepted his anxious glance and the corners of his red lips twitched ironically.

“It’s all right, Director,” he said in a tone of faint derision, “I won’t corrupt them.”

The D.H.C. was overwhelmed with confusion.

Those who feel themselves despised do well to look despising. The smile on Bernard Marx’s face was contemptuous. Every hair on the bear indeed!

“I shall make a point of going,” said Henry Foster.

Mustapha Mond leaned forward, shook a finger at them. “Just try to realize it,” he said, and his voice sent a strange thrill quivering along their diaphragms. “Try to realize what it was like to have a viviparous mother.”

That smutty word again. But none of them dreamed, this time, of smiling.

“Try to imagine what ‘living with one’s family’ meant.”

They tried; but obviously without the smallest success.

“And do you know what a ‘home’ was?”

They shook their heads.

From her dim crimson cellar Lenina Crowne shot up seventeen stories, turned to the right as she stepped out of the lift, walked down a long corridor

and, opening the door marked GIRLS' DRESSING-ROOM, plunged into a deafening chaos of arms and bosoms and underclothing. Torrents of hot water were splashing into or gurgling out of a hundred baths. Rumbling and hissing, eighty vibro-vacuum massage machines were simultaneously kneading and sucking the firm and sunburnt flesh of eighty superb female specimens. Every one was talking at the top of her voice. A Synthetic Music machine was warbling out a super-cornet solo.

“Hullo, Fanny,” said Lenina to the young woman who had the pegs and locker next to hers.

Fanny worked in the Bottling Room, and her surname was also Crowne. But as the two thousand million inhabitants of the plant had only ten thousand names between them, the coincidence was not particularly surprising.

Lenina pulled at her zippers-downwards on the jacket, downwards with a double-handed gesture at the two that held trousers, downwards again to loosen her undergarment. Still wearing her shoes and stockings, she walked off towards the bathrooms.

Home, home—a few small rooms, stiflingly over-inhabited by a man, by a periodically teeming woman, by a rabble of boys and girls of all ages. No air, no space; an understerilized prison; darkness, disease, and smells.

(The Controller's evocation was so vivid that one of the boys, more sensitive than the rest, turned pale at the mere description and was on the point of being sick.)

Lenina got out of the bath, toweled herself dry, took hold of a long flexible tube plugged into the wall, presented the nozzle to her breast, as though she meant to commit suicide, pressed down the trigger. A blast of warmed air dusted her with the finest talcum powder. Eight different scents and eau-de-Cologne were laid on in little taps over the wash-basin. She turned on the third from the left, dabbed herself with chypre and, carrying her shoes and stockings in her hand, went out to see if one of the vibro-vacuum machines were free.

And home was as squalid psychically as physically. Psychically, it was a rabbit hole, a midden, hot with the frictions of tightly packed life, reeking with emotion. What suffocating intimacies, what dangerous, insane, obscene relationships between the members of the family group! Maniacally, the mother brooded over her children (her children)...brooded over them like a cat over its kittens; but a cat that could talk, a cat that could say, "My baby, my baby," over and over again. "My baby, and oh, oh, at my breast, the little hands, the hunger, and that unspeakable agonizing pleasure! Till at last my baby sleeps, my baby sleeps with a bubble of white milk at the corner of his mouth. My little baby sleeps..."

"Yes," said Mustapha Mond, nodding his head, "you may well shudder."

"Who are you going out with to-night?" Lenina asked, returning from the vibro-vac like a pearl illuminated from within, pinkly glowing.

"Nobody."

Lenina raised her eyebrows in astonishment.

“I’ve been feeling rather out of sorts lately,” Fanny explained. “Dr. Wells advised me to have a Pregnancy Substitute.”

“But, my dear, you’re only nineteen. The first Pregnancy Substitute isn’t compulsory till twenty-one.”

“I know, dear. But some people are better if they begin earlier. Dr. Wells told me that brunettes with wide pelvises, like me, ought to have their first Pregnancy Substitute at seventeen. So I’m really two years late, not two years early.” She opened the door of her locker and pointed to the row of boxes and labelled phials on the upper shelf.

“SYRUP OF CORPUS LUTEUM,” Lenina read the names aloud. “OVARIN, GUARANTEED FRESH: NOT TO BE USED AFTER AUGUST 1ST, A.F. 632. MAMMARY GLAND EXTRACT: TO BE TAKEN THREE TIMES DAILY, BEFORE MEALS, WITH A LITTLE WATER. PLACENTIN: 5cc TO BE INJECTED INTRAVENALLY EVERY THIRD DAY...Ugh!” Lenina shuddered. “How I loathe intravenals, don’t you?”

“Yes. But when they do one good...” Fanny was a particularly sensible girl.

Our Ford—or Our Freud, as, for some inscrutable reason, he chose to call himself whenever he spoke of psychological matters—Our Freud had been the first to reveal the appalling dangers of family life. The world was full of fathers—was therefore full of misery; full of mothers—therefore of every kind

of perversion from sadism to chastity; full of brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts—full of madness and suicide.

“And yet, among the savages of Samoa, in certain islands off the coast of New Guinea...”

The tropical sunshine lay like warm honey on the naked bodies of children tumbling promiscuously among the hibiscus blossoms. Home was in any one of twenty palm-thatched houses. In the Trobriands conception was the work of ancestral ghosts; nobody had ever heard of a father.

“Extremes,” said the Controller, “meet. For the good reason that they were made to meet.”

“Dr. Wells says that a three months’ Pregnancy Substitute now will make all the difference to my health for the next three or four years.”

“Well, I hope he’s right,” said Lenina. “But, Fanny, do you really mean to say that for the next three months you’re not supposed to...”

“Oh no, dear. Only for a week or two, that’s all. I shall spend the evening at the Club playing Musical Bridge. I suppose you’re going out?”

Lenina nodded.

“Who with?”

“Henry Foster.”

“Again?” Fanny’s kind, rather moon-like face took on an incongruous

expression of pained and disapproving astonishment. “Do you mean to tell me you’re still going out with Henry Foster?”

Mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters. But there were also husbands, wives, lovers. There were also monogamy and romance.

“Though you probably don’t know what those are,” said Mustapha Mond.

They shook their heads.

Family, monogamy, romance. Everywhere exclusiveness, a narrow channelling of impulse and energy.

“But every one belongs to every one else,” he concluded, citing the hypnopædic proverb.

The students nodded, emphatically agreeing with a statement which upwards of sixty-two thousand repetitions in the dark had made them accept, not merely as true, but as axiomatic, self-evident, utterly indisputable.

“But after all,” Lenina was protesting, “it’s only about four months now since I’ve been having Henry.”

“Only four months! I like that. And what’s more,” Fanny went on, pointing an accusing finger, “there’s been nobody else except Henry all that time. Has there?”

Lenina blushed scarlet; but her eyes, the tone of her voice remained defiant. “No, there hasn’t been any one else,” she answered almost

truculently. "And I jolly well don't see why there should have been."

"Oh, she jolly well doesn't see why there should have been," Fanny repeated, as though to an invisible listener behind Lenina's left shoulder. Then, with a sudden change of tone, "But seriously," she said, "I really do think you ought to be careful. It's such horribly bad form to go on and on like this with one man. At forty, or thirty-five, it wouldn't be so bad. But at your age, Lenina! No, it really won't do. And you know how strongly the D.H.C. objects to anything intense or long-drawn. Four months of Henry Foster, without having another man—why, he'd be furious if he knew..."

"Think of water under pressure in a pipe." They thought of it. "I pierce it once," said the Controller. "What a jet!"

He pierced it twenty times. There were twenty piddling little fountains.

"My baby. My baby...!"

"Mother!" The madness is infectious.

"My love, my one and only, precious, precious..."

Mother, monogamy, romance. High spurts the fountain; fierce and foamy the wild jet. The urge has but a single outlet. My love, my baby. No wonder these poor pre-moderns were mad and wicked and miserable. Their world didn't allow them to take things easily, didn't allow them to be sane, virtuous, happy. What with mothers and lovers, what with the prohibitions they were not conditioned to obey, what with the temptations and the lonely remorse, what with all the diseases and the endless isolating pain, what with

the uncertainties and the poverty—they were forced to feel strongly. And feeling strongly (and strongly, what was more, in solitude, in hopelessly individual isolation), how could they be stable?

“Of course there’s no need to give him up. Have somebody else from time to time, that’s all. He has other girls, doesn’t he?”

Lenina admitted it.

“Of course he does. Trust Henry Foster to be the perfect gentleman—always correct. And then there’s the Director to think of. You know what a stickler...”

Nodding, “He patted me on the behind this afternoon,” said Lenina.

“There, you see!” Fanny was triumphant. “That shows what he stands for. The strictest conventionality.”

“Stability,” said the Controller, “stability. No civilization without social stability. No social stability without individual stability.” His voice was a trumpet. Listening they felt larger, warmer.

The machine turns, turns and must keep on turning—for ever. It is death if it stands still. A thousand millions scabbled the crust of the earth. The wheels began to turn. In a hundred and fifty years there were two thousand millions. Stop all the wheels. In a hundred and fifty weeks there are once more only a thousand millions; a thousand thousand thousand men and women have starved to death.

Wheels must turn steadily, but cannot turn untended. There must be men

to tend them, men as steady as the wheels upon their axles, sane men, obedient men, stable in contentment.

Crying: My baby, my mother, my only, only love groaning: My sin, my terrible God; screaming with pain, muttering with fever, bemoaning old age and poverty—how can they tend the wheels? And if they cannot tend the wheels...The corpses of a thousand thousand thousand men and women would be hard to bury or burn.

“And after all,” Fanny’s tone was coaxing, “it’s not as though there were anything painful or disagreeable about having one or two men besides Henry. And seeing that you ought to be a little more promiscuous...”

“Stability,” insisted the Controller, “stability. The primal and the ultimate need. Stability. Hence all this.”

With a wave of his hand he indicated the gardens, the huge building of the Conditioning Centre, the naked children furtive in the undergrowth or running across the lawns.

Lenina shook her head. “Somehow,” she mused, “I hadn’t been feeling very keen on promiscuity lately. There are times when one doesn’t. Haven’t you found that too, Fanny?”

Fanny nodded her sympathy and understanding. “But one’s got to make the effort,” she said, sententiously, “one’s got to play the game. After all, every one belongs to every one else.”

“Yes, every one belongs to every one else,” Lenina repeated slowly and,

sighing, was silent for a moment; then, taking Fanny's hand, gave it a little squeeze. "You're quite right, Fanny. As usual. I'll make the effort."

Impulse arrested spills over, and the flood is feeling, the flood is passion, the flood is even madness: it depends on the force of the current, the height and strength of the barrier. The unchecked stream flows smoothly down its appointed channels into a calm well-being. The embryo is hungry; day in, day out, the blood-surrogate pump unceasingly turns its eight hundred revolutions a minute. The decanted infant howls; at once a nurse appears with a bottle of external secretion. Feeling lurks in that interval of time between desire and its consummation. Shorten that interval, break down all those old unnecessary barriers.

"Fortunate boys!" said the Controller. "No pains have been spared to make your lives emotionally easy—to preserve you, so far as that is possible, from having emotions at all."

"Ford's in his flivver," murmured the D.H.C. "All's well with the world."

"Lenina Crowne?" said Henry Foster, echoing the Assistant Predestinator's question as he zipped up his trousers. "Oh, she's a splendid girl. Wonderfully pneumatic. I'm surprised you haven't had her."

"I can't think how it is I haven't," said the Assistant Predestinator. "I certainly will. At the first opportunity."

From his place on the opposite side of the changing-room aisle, Bernard Marx overheard what they were saying and turned pale.

“And to tell the truth,” said Lenina, “I’m beginning to get just a tiny bit bored with nothing but Henry every day.” She pulled on her left stocking. “Do you know Bernard Marx?” she asked in a tone whose excessive casualness was evidently forced.

Fanny looked startled. “You don’t mean to say...?”

“Why not? Bernard’s an Alpha Plus. Besides, he asked me to go to one of the Savage Reservations with him. I’ve always wanted to see a Savage Reservation.”

“But his reputation?”

“What do I care about his reputation?”

“They say he doesn’t like Obstacle Golf.”

“They say, they say,” mocked Lenina.

“And then he spends most of his time by himself—alone.” There was horror in Fanny’s voice.

“Well, he won’t be alone when he’s with me. And anyhow, why are people so beastly to him? I think he’s rather sweet.” She smiled to herself; how absurdly shy he had been! Frightened almost—as though she were a World Controller and he a Gamma-Minus machine minder.

“Consider your own lives,” said Mustapha Mond. “Has any of you ever encountered an insurmountable obstacle?”

The question was answered by a negative silence. “Has any of you been compelled to live through a long time-interval between the consciousness of a desire and its fulfilment?”

“Well,” began one of the boys, and hesitated.

“Speak up,” said the D.H.C. “Don’t keep his lordship waiting.”

“I once had to wait nearly four weeks before a girl I wanted would let me have her.”

“And you felt a strong emotion in consequence?”

“Horrible!”

“Horrible; precisely,” said the Controller. “Our ancestors were so stupid and short-sighted that when the first reformers came along and offered to deliver them from those horrible emotions, they wouldn’t have anything to do with them.”

“Talking about her as though she were a bit of meat.” Bernard ground his teeth. “Have her here, have her there.” Like mutton. Degrading her to so much mutton. She said she’d think it over, she said she’d give me an answer this week. Oh, Ford, Ford, Ford.” He would have liked to go up to them and hit them in the face—hard, again and again.

“Yes, I really do advise you to try her,” Henry Foster was saying.

“Take Ectogenesis. Pfitzner and Kawaguchi had got the whole technique worked out. But would the Governments look at it? No. There was something

called Christianity. Women were forced to go on being viviparous.”

“He’s so ugly!” said Fanny.

“But I rather like his looks.”

“And then so small.” Fanny made a grimace; smallness was so horribly and typically low-caste.

“I think that’s rather sweet,” said Lenina. “One feels one would like to pet him. You know. Like a cat.”

Fanny was shocked. “They say somebody made a mistake when he was still in the bottle—thought he was a Gamma and put alcohol into his blood-surrogate. That’s why he’s so stunted.”

“What nonsense!” Lenina was indignant.

“Sleep teaching was actually prohibited in England. There was something called liberalism. Parliament, if you know what that was, passed a law against it. The records survive. Speeches about liberty of the subject. Liberty to be inefficient and miserable. Freedom to be a round peg in a square hole.”

“But, my dear chap, you’re welcome, I assure you. You’re welcome.” Henry Foster patted the Assistant Predestinator on the shoulder. “Every one belongs to every one else, after all.”

One hundred repetitions three nights a week for four years, thought Bernard Marx, who was a specialist on hypnopædia. Sixty-two thousand four

hundred repetitions make one truth. Idiots!

“Or the Caste System. Constantly proposed, constantly rejected. There was something called democracy. As though men were more than physico-chemically equal.”

“Well, all I can say is that I’m going to accept his invitation.”

Bernard hated them, hated them. But they were two, they were large, they were strong.

“The Nine Years’ War began in A.F. 141.”

“Not even if it were true about the alcohol in his blood-surrogate.”

“Phosgene, chloropicrin, ethyl iodoacetate, diphenylcyanarsine, trichlormethyl, chloroformate, dichlorethyl sulphide. Not to mention hydrocyanic acid.”

“Which I simply don’t believe,” Lenina concluded.

“The noise of fourteen thousand aeroplanes advancing in open order. But in the Kurfurstendamm and the Eighth Arrondissement, the explosion of the anthrax bombs is hardly louder than the popping of a paper bag.”

“Because I do want to see a Savage Reservation.”

$\text{Ch}_3\text{C}_6\text{H}_2(\text{NO}_2)_3 + \text{Hg}(\text{CNO})_2$ =well, what? An enormous hole in the ground, a pile of masonry, some bits of flesh and mucus, a foot, with the boot still on it, flying through the air and landing, flop, in the middle of the

geraniums—the scarlet ones; such a splendid show that summer!

“You’re hopeless, Lenina, I give you up.”

“The Russian technique for infecting water supplies was particularly ingenious.”

Back turned to back, Fanny and Lenina continued their changing in silence.

“The Nine Years’ War, the great Economic Collapse. There was a choice between World Control and destruction. Between stability and...”

“Fanny Crowne’s a nice girl too,” said the Assistant Predestmator. In the nurseries, the Elementary Class Consciousness lesson was over, the voices were adapting future demand to future industrial supply. “I do love flying,” they whispered, “I do love flying, I do love having new clothes, I do love...”

“Liberalism, of course, was dead of anthrax, but all the same you couldn’t do things by force.”

“Not nearly so pneumatic as Lenina. Oh, not nearly.”

“But old clothes are beastly,” continued the untiring whisper. “We always throw away old clothes. Ending is better than mending, ending is better than mending, ending is better...”

“Government’s an affair of sitting, not hitting. You rule with the brains and the buttocks, never with the fists. For example, there was the conscription of consumption.”

“There, I’m ready,” said Lenina, but Fanny remained speechless and averted. “Let’s make peace, Fanny darling.”

“Every man, woman and child compelled to consume so much a year. In the interests of industry. The sole result...”

“Ending is better than mending. The more stitches, the less riches; the more stitches...”

“One of these days,” said Fanny, with dismal emphasis, “you’ll get into trouble.”

“Conscientious objection on an enormous scale. Anything not to consume. Back to nature.”

“I do love flying. I do love flying.”

“Back to culture. Yes, actually to culture. You can’t consume much if you sit still and read books.”

“Do I look all right?” Lenina asked. Her jacket was made of bottle green acetate cloth with green viscose fur; at the cuffs and collar.

“Eight hundred Simple Lifers were mowed down by machine guns at Golders Green.”

“Ending is better than mending, ending is better than mending.”

Green corduroy shorts and white viscose-woollen stockings turned down below the knee.

“Then came the famous British Museum Massacre. Two thousand culture fans gassed with dichlorethyl sulphide.”

A green-and-white jockey cap shaded Lenina’s eyes; her shoes were bright green and highly polished.

“In the end,” said Mustapha Mond, “the Controllers realized that force was no good. The slower but infinitely surer methods of ectogenesis, neo-Pavlovian conditioning and hypnopædia...”

And round her waist she wore a silver-mounted green morocco-surrogate cartridge belt, bulging (for Lenina was not a freemartin) with the regulation supply of contraceptives.

“The discoveries of Pfitzner and Kawaguchi were at last made use of. An intensive propaganda against viviparous reproduction...”

“Perfect!” cried Fanny enthusiastically. She could never resist Lenina’s charm for long. “And what a perfectly sweet Malthusian belt!”

“Accompanied by a campaign against the Past; by the closing of museums, the blowing up of historical monuments (luckily most of them had already been destroyed during the Nine Years’ War); by the suppression of all books published before A.F. 150.”

“I simply must get one like it,” said Fanny.

“There were some things called the pyramids, for example.

“My old black-patent bandolier...”

“And a man called Shakespeare. You’ve never heard of them of course.”

“It’s an absolute disgrace—that bandolier of mine.”

“Such are the advantages of a really scientific education.”

“The more stitches the less riches; the more stitches the less...”

“The introduction of Our Ford’s first T-Model...”

“I’ve had it nearly three months.”

“Chosen as the opening date of the new era.”

“Ending is better than mending; ending is better...”

“There was a thing, as I’ve said before, called Christianity.”

“Ending is better than mending.”

“The ethics and philosophy of under-consumption...”

“I love new clothes, I love new clothes, I love...”

“So essential when there was under-production; but in an age of machines and the fixation of nitrogen—positively a crime against society.”

“Henry Foster gave it me.”

“All crosses had their tops cut and became T’s. There was also a thing called God.”

“It’s real morocco-surrogate.”

“We have the World State now. And Ford’s Day celebrations, and Community Sings, and Solidarity Services.”

“Ford, how I hate them!” Bernard Marx was thinking.

“There was a thing called Heaven; but all the same they used to drink enormous quantities of alcohol.”

“Like meat, like so much meat.”

“There was a thing called the soul and a thing called immortality.”

“Do ask Henry where he got it.”

“But they used to take morphia and cocaine.”

“And what makes it worse, she thinks of herself as meat.”

“Two thousand pharmacologists and bio-chemists were subsidized in A.P. 178.”

“He does look glum,” said the Assistant Predestinator, pointing at Bernard Marx.

“Six years later it was being produced commercially. The perfect drug.”

“Let’s bait him.”

“Euphoric, narcotic, pleasantly hallucinant.”

“Glum, Marx, glum.” The clap on the shoulder made him start, look up. It was that brute Henry Foster. “What you need is a gramme of soma.”

“All the advantages of Christianity and alcohol; none of their defects.”

“Ford, I should like to kill him!” But all he did was to say, “No, thank you,” and fend off the proffered tube of tablets.

“Take a holiday from reality whenever you like, and come back without so much as a headache or a mythology.”

“Take it,” insisted Henry Foster, “take it.”

“Stability was practically assured.”

“One cubic centimetre cures ten gloomy sentiments,” said the Assistant Predestinator citing a piece of homely hypnopædic wisdom.

“It only remained to conquer old age.”

“Damn you, damn you!” shouted Bernard Marx.

“Hoity-toity.”

“Gonadal hormones, transfusion of young blood, magnesium salts...”

“And do remember that a gramme is better than a damn.” They went out, laughing.

“All the physiological stigmata of old age have been abolished. And along with them, of course...”

“Don’t forget to ask him about that Malthusian belt,” said Fanny.

“Along with them all the old man’s mental peculiarities. Characters remain constant throughout a whole lifetime.”

“...two rounds of Obstacle Golf to get through before dark. I must fly.”

“Work, play—at sixty our powers and tastes are what they were at seventeen. Old men in the bad old days used to renounce, retire, take to religion, spend their time reading, thinking—thinking!”

“Idiots, swine!” Bernard Marx was saying to himself, as he walked down the corridor to the lift.

“Now—such is progress—the old men work, the old men copulate, the old men have no time, no leisure from pleasure, not a moment to sit down and think—or if ever by some unlucky chance such a crevice of time should yawn in the solid substance of their distractions, there is always soma, delicious soma, half a gramme for a half-holiday, a gramme for a week-end, two grammes for a trip to the gorgeous East, three for a dark eternity on the moon; returning whence they find themselves on the other side of the crevice, safe on the solid ground of daily labour and distraction, scampering from feely to feely, from girl to pneumatic girl, from Electromagnetic Golf course to...”

“Go away, little girl,” shouted the D.H.C. angrily. “Go away, little boy! Can’t you see that his lordship’s busy? Go and do your erotic play somewhere else.”

“Suffer little children,” said the Controller.

Slowly, majestically, with a faint humming of machinery, the Conveyors moved forward, thirty-three centimeters an hour. In the red darkness glinted innumerable rubies.

Chapter Four

THE LIFT was crowded with men from the Alpha Changing Rooms, and Lenina's entry was greeted by many friendly nods and smiles. She was a popular girl and, at one time or another, had spent a night with almost all of them.

They were dear boys, she thought, as she returned their salutations. Charming boys! Still, she did wish that George Edzel's ears weren't quite so big (perhaps he'd been given just a spot too much parathyroid at Metre 328?). And looking at Benito Hoover, she couldn't help remembering that he was really too hairy when he took his clothes off.

Turning, with eyes a little saddened by the recollection, of Benito's curly blackness, she saw in a corner the small thin body, the melancholy face of Bernard Marx.

"Bernard!" she stepped up to him. "I was looking for you." Her voice rang clear above the hum of the mounting lift. The others looked round curiously. "I wanted to talk to you about our New Mexico plan." Out of the tail of her eye she could see Benito Hoover gaping with astonishment. The gape annoyed her. "Surprised I shouldn't be begging to go with him again!" she said to herself. Then aloud, and more warmly than ever, "I'd simply love to come with you for a week in July," she went on. (Anyhow, she was publicly proving her unfaithfulness to Henry. Fanny ought to be pleased,

even though it was Bernard.) “That is,” Lenina gave him her most deliciously significant smile, “if you still want to have me.”

Bernard’s pale face flushed. “What on earth for?” she wondered, astonished, but at the same time touched by this strange tribute to her power.

“Hadn’t we better talk about it somewhere else?” he stammered, looking horribly uncomfortable.

“As though I’d been saying something shocking,” thought Lenina. “He couldn’t look more upset if I’d made a dirty joke—asked him who his mother was, or something like that.”

“I mean, with all these people about...” He was choked with confusion.

Lenina’s laugh was frank and wholly unmalicious. “How funny you are!” she said; and she quite genuinely did think him funny. “You’ll give me at least a week’s warning, won’t you,” she went on in another tone. “I suppose we take the Blue Pacific Rocket? Does it start from the Charing-T Tower? Or is it from Hampstead?”

Before Bernard could answer, the lift came to a standstill.

“Roof!” called a creaking voice.

The liftman was a small simian creature, dressed in the black tunic of an Epsilon-Minus Semi-Moron.

“Roof!”

He flung open the gates. The warm glory of afternoon sunlight made him start and blink his eyes. “Oh, roof!” he repeated in a voice of rapture. He was as though suddenly and joyfully awakened from a dark annihilating stupor. “Roof!”

He smiled up with a kind of doggily expectant adoration into the faces of his passengers. Talking and laughing together, they stepped out into the light. The liftman looked after them.

“Roof?” he said once more, questioningly.

Then a bell rang, and from the ceiling of the lift a loud speaker began, very softly and yet very imperiously, to issue its commands.

“Go down,” it said, “go down. Floor Eighteen. Go down, go down. Floor Eighteen. Go down, go...”

The liftman slammed the gates, touched a button and instantly dropped back into the droning twilight of the well, the twilight of his own habitual stupor.

It was warm and bright on the roof. The summer afternoon was drowsy with the hum of passing helicopters; and the deeper drone of the rocket-planes hastening, invisible, through the bright sky five or six miles overhead was like a caress on the soft air. Bernard Marx drew a deep breath. He looked up into the sky and round the blue horizon and finally down into Lenina’s face.

“Isn’t it beautiful!” His voice trembled a little.

She smiled at him with an expression of the most sympathetic understanding. "Simply perfect for Obstacle Golf," she answered rapturously. "And now I must fly, Bernard. Henry gets cross if I keep him waiting. Let me know in good time about the date." And waving her hand she ran away across the wide flat roof towards the hangars. Bernard stood watching the retreating twinkle of the white stockings, the sunburnt knees vivaciously bending and unbending again, again, and the softer rolling of those well-fitted corduroy shorts beneath the bottle green jacket. His face wore an expression of pain.

"I should say she was pretty," said a loud and cheery voice just behind him.

Bernard started and looked around. The chubby red face of Benito Hoover was beaming down at him—beaming with manifest cordiality. Benito was notoriously good-natured. People said of him that he could have got through life without ever touching soma. The malice and bad tempers from which other people had to take holidays never afflicted him. Reality for Benito was always sunny.

"Pneumatic too. And how!" Then, in another tone: "But, I say," he went on, "you do look glum! What you need is a gramme of soma." ping into his right-hand trouser-pocket, Benito produced a phial. "One cubic centimetre cures ten gloomy...But, I say!"

Bernard had suddenly turned and rushed away.

Benito stared after him. "What can be the matter with the fellow?" he wondered, and, shaking his head, decided that the story about the alcohol

having been put into the poor chap's blood-surrogate must be true. "Touched his brain, I suppose."

He put away the soma bottle, and taking out a packet of sex-hormone chewing-gum, stuffed a plug into his cheek and walked slowly away towards the hangars, ruminating.

Henry Foster had had his machine wheeled out of its lock-up and, when Lenina arrived, was already seated in the cockpit, waiting.

"Four minutes late," was all his comment, as she climbed in beside him. He started the engines and threw the helicopter screws into gear. The machine shot vertically into the air. Henry accelerated; the humming of the propeller shrilled from hornet to wasp, from wasp to mosquito; the speedometer showed that they were rising at the best part of two kilometres a minute. London diminished beneath them. The huge table-topped buildings were no more, in a few seconds, than a bed of geometrical mushrooms sprouting from the green of park and garden. In the midst of them, thin-stalked, a taller, slenderer fungus, the Charing-T Tower lifted towards the sky a disk of shining concrete.

Like the vague torsos of fabulous athletes, huge fleshy clouds lolled on the blue air above their heads. Out of one of them suddenly dropped a small scarlet insect, buzzing as it fell.

"There's the Red Rocket," said Henry, "just come in from New York." Looking at his watch. "Seven minutes behind time," he added, and shook his head. "These Atlantic services—they're really scandalously unpunctual."

He took his foot off the accelerator. The humming of the screws overhead dropped an octave and a half, back through wasp and hornet to bumble bee, to cockchafer, to stag-beetle. The upward rush of the machine slackened off; a moment later they were hanging motionless in the air. Henry pushed at a lever; there was a click. Slowly at first, then faster and faster, till it was a circular mist before their eyes, the propeller in front of them began to revolve. The wind of a horizontal speed whistled ever more shrilly in the stays. Henry kept his eye on the revolution-counter; when the needle touched the twelve hundred mark, he threw the helicopter screws out of gear. The machine had enough forward momentum to be able to fly on its planes.

Lenina looked down through the window in the floor between her feet. They were flying over the six kilometre zone of park-land that separated Central London from its first ring of satellite suburbs. The green was maggoty with fore-shortened life. Forests of Centrifugal Bumble-puppy towers gleamed between the trees. Near Shepherd's Bush two thousand Beta-Minus mixed doubles were playing Riemann-surface tennis. A double row of Escalator Fives Courts lined the main road from Notting Hill to Willesden. In the Ealing stadium a Delta gymnastic display and community sing was in progress.

"What a hideous colour khaki is," remarked Lenina, voicing the hypnopædic prejudices of her caste.

The buildings of the Hounslow Feely Studio covered seven and a half hectares. Near them a black and khaki army of labourers was busy revitrifying the surface of the Great West Road. One of the huge travelling crucibles was being tapped as they flew over. The molten stone poured out in

a stream of dazzling incandescence across the road, the asbestos rollers came and went; at the tail of an insulated watering cart the steam rose in white clouds.

At Brentford the Television Corporation's factory was like a small town.

"They must be changing the shift," said Lenina.

Like aphides and ants, the leaf-green Gamma girls, the black Semi-Morons swarmed round the entrances, or stood in queues to take their places in the monorail tram-cars. Mulberry-coloured Beta-Minuses came and went among the crowd. The roof of the main building was alive with the alighting and departure of helicopters.

"My word," said Lenina, "I'm glad I'm not a Gamma."

Ten minutes later they were at Stoke Poges and had started their first round of Obstacle Golf.

With eyes for the most part downcast and, if ever they lighted on a fellow creature, at once and furtively averted, Bernard hastened across the roof. He was like a man pursued, but pursued by enemies he does not wish to see, lest they should seem more hostile even than he had supposed, and he himself be made to feel guiltier and even more helplessly alone.

"That horrible Benito Hoover!" And yet the man had meant well enough. Which only made it, in a way, much worse. Those who meant well behaved in the same way as those who meant badly. Even Lenina was

making him suffer. He remembered those weeks of timid indecision, during which he had looked and longed and despaired of ever having the courage to ask her. Dared he face the risk of being humiliated by a contemptuous refusal? But if she were to say yes, what rapture! Well, now she had said it and he was still wretched—wretched that she should have thought it such a perfect afternoon for Obstacle Golf, that she should have trotted away to join Henry Foster, that she should have found him funny for not wanting to talk of their most private affairs in public. Wretched, in a word, because she had behaved as any healthy and virtuous English girl ought to behave and not in some other, abnormal, extraordinary way.

He opened the door of his lock-up and called to a lounging couple of Delta-Minus attendants to come and push his machine out on to the roof. The hangars were staffed by a single Bokanovsky Group, and the men were twins, identically small, black and hideous. Bernard gave his orders in the sharp, rather arrogant and even offensive tone of one who does not feel himself too secure in his superiority. To have dealings with members of the lower castes was always, for Bernard, a most distressing experience. For whatever the cause (and the current gossip about the alcohol in his blood-surrogate may very likely—for accidents will happen—have been true) Bernard's physique as hardly better than that of the average Gamma. He stood eight centimetres short of the standard Alpha height and was slender in proportion. Contact with members of the lower castes always reminded him painfully of this physical inadequacy. "I am I, and wish I wasn't"; his self-consciousness was acute and stressing. Each time he found himself looking on the level, instead of downward, into a Delta's face, he felt humiliated. Would the creature treat him with the respect due to his caste? The question haunted him. Not without

reason. For Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons had been to some extent conditioned to associate corporeal mass with social superiority. Indeed, a faint hypnopædic prejudice in favour of size was universal. Hence the laughter of the women to whom he made proposals, the practical joking of his equals among the men. The mockery made him feel an outsider; and feeling an outsider he behaved like one, which increased the prejudice against him and intensified the contempt and hostility aroused by his physical defects. Which in turn increased his sense of being alien and alone. A chronic fear of being slighted made him avoid his equals, made him stand, where his inferiors were concerned, self-consciously on his dignity. How bitterly he envied men like Henry Foster and Benito Hoover! Men who never had to shout at an Epsilon to get an order obeyed; men who took their position for granted; men who moved through the caste system as a fish through water—so utterly at home as to be unaware either of themselves or of the beneficent and comfortable element in which they had their being.

Slackly, it seemed to him, and with reluctance, the twin attendants wheeled his plane out on the roof.

“Hurry up!” said Bernard irritably. One of them glanced at him. Was that a kind of bestial derision that he detected in those blank grey eyes? “Hurry up!” he shouted more loudly, and there was an ugly rasp in his voice.

He climbed into the plane and, a minute later, was flying southwards, towards the river.

The various Bureaux of Propaganda and the College of Emotional Engineering were housed in a single sixty-story building in Fleet Street. In

the basement and on the low floors were the presses and offices of the three great Lodon newspapers—The Hourly Radio, an upper-caste sheet, the pale green Gamma Gazette, and, on khaki paper and in words exclusively of one syllable, The Delta Mirror. Then came the Bureaux of Propaganda by Television, by Feeling Picture, and by Synthetic Voice and Music respectively—twenty-two floors of them. Above were the search laboratories and the padded rooms in which Sound-Track Writers and Synthetic Composers did the delicate work. The top eighteen floors were occupied the College of Emotional Engineering.

Bernard landed on the roof of Propaganda House and stepped out.

“Ring down to Mr. Helmholtz Watson,” he ordered the Gamma-Plus porter, “and tell him that Mr. Bernard Marx is waiting for him on the roof.”

He sat down and lit a cigarette.

Helmholtz Watson was writing when the message came down.

“Tell him I’m coming at once,” he said and hung up the receiver. Then, turning to his secretary, “I’ll leave you to put my things away,” he went on in the same official and impersonal tone; and, ignoring her lustrous smile, got up and walked briskly to the door.

He was a powerfully built man, deep-chested, broad-shouldered, massive, and yet quick in his movements, springy and agile. The round strong pillar of his neck supported a beautifully shaped head. His hair was dark and curly, his features strongly marked. In a forcible emphatic way, he was handsome and looked, as his secretety was never tired of repeating, every

centimetre an Alpha Plus. By profession he was a lecturer at the College of Emotional Engineering (Department of Writing) and the intervals of his educational activities, a working Emotional Engineer. He wrote regularly for The Hourly Radio, composed feely scenarios, and had the happiest knack for slogans and hypnopædic rhymes.

“Able,” was the verdict of his superiors. “Perhaps, (and they would shake their heads, would significantly lower their voices) a little too able.”

Yes, a little too able; they were right. A mental excess had produced in Helmholtz Watson effects very similar to those which, in Bernard Marx, were the result of a physical defect. Too little bone and brawn had isolated Bernard from his fellow men, and the sense of this apartness, being, by all the current standards, a mental excess, became in its turn a cause of wider separation. That which had made Helmholtz so uncomfortably aware of being himself and all alone was too much ability. What the two men shared was the knowledge that they were individuals. But whereas the physically defective Bernard had suffered all his life from the consciousness of being separate, it was only quite recently that, grown aware of his mental excess, Helmholtz Watson had also become aware of his difference from the people who surrounded him. This Escalator-Squash champion, this indefatigable lover (it was said that he had had six hundred and forty different girls in under four years), this admirable committee man and best mixer had realized quite suddenly that sport, women, communal activities were only, so far as he was concerned, second bests. Really, and at the bottom, he was interested in something else. But in what? In what? That was the problem which Bernard had come to discuss with him—or rather, since it was always Helmholtz who

did all the talking, to listen to his friend discussing, yet once more.

Three charming girls from the Bureau of Propaganda by Synthetic Voice waylaid him as he stepped out of the lift.

“Oh, Helmholtz, darling, do come and have a picnic supper with us on Exmoor.” They clung round him imploringly.

He shook his head, he pushed his way through them. “No, no.”

“We’re not inviting any other man.”

But Helmholtz remained unshaken even by this delightful promise. “No,” he repeated, “I’m busy.” And he held resolutely on his course. The girls trailed after him. It was not till he had actually climbed into Bernard’s plane and slammed the door that they gave up pursuit. Not without reproaches.

“These women!” he said, as the machine rose into the air. “These women!” And he shook his head, he frowned. “Too awful,” Bernard hypocritically agreed, wishing, as he spoke the words, that he could have as many girls as Helmholtz did, and with as little trouble. He was seized with a sudden urgent need to boast. “I’m taking Lenina Crowne to New Mexico with me,” he said in a tone as casual as he could make it.

“Are you?” said Helmholtz, with a total absence of interest. Then after a little pause, “This last week or two,” he went on, “I’ve been cutting all my committees and all my girls. You can’t imagine what a hullabaloo they’ve been making about it at the College. Still, it’s been worth it, I think. The

effects..." He hesitated. "Well, they're odd, they're very odd."

A physical shortcoming could produce a kind of mental excess. The process, it seemed, was reversible. Mental excess could produce, for its own purposes, the voluntary blindness and deafness of deliberate solitude, the artificial impotence of asceticism.

The rest of the short flight was accomplished in silence. When they had arrived and were comfortably stretched out on the pneumatic sofas in Bernard's room, Helmholtz began again.

Speaking very slowly, "Did you ever feel," he asked, "as though you had something inside you that was only waiting for you to give it a chance to come out? Some sort of extra power that you aren't using—you know, like all the water that goes down the falls instead of through the turbines?" He looked at Bernard questioningly.

"You mean all the emotions one might be feeling if things were different?"

Helmholtz shook his head. "Not quite. I'm thinking of a queer feeling I sometimes get, a feeling that I've got something important to say and the power to say it—only I don't know what it is, and I can't make any use of the power. If there was some different way of writing...Or else something else to write about..." He was silent; then, "You see," he went on at last, "I'm pretty good at inventing phrases—you know, the sort of words that suddenly make you jump, almost as though you'd sat on a pin, they seem so new and exciting even though they're about something hypnopædically obvious. But

that doesn't seem enough. It's not enough for the phrases to be good; what you make with them ought to be good too."

"But your things are good, Helmholtz."

"Oh, as far as they go." Helmholtz shrugged his shoulders. "But they go such a little way. They aren't important enough, somehow. I feel I could do something much more important. Yes, and more intense, more violent. But what? What is there more important to say? And how can one be violent about the sort of things one's expected to write about? Words can be like X-rays, if you use them properly—they'll go through anything. You read and you're pierced. That's one of the things I try to teach my students—how to write piercingly. But what on earth's the good of being pierced by an article about a Community Sing, or the latest improvement in scent organs? Besides, can you make words really piercing—you know, like the very hardest X-rays—when you're writing about that sort of thing? Can you say something about nothing? That's what it finally boils down to. I try and I try..."

"Hush!" said Bernard suddenly, and lifted a warning finger; they listened. "I believe there's somebody at the door," he whispered.

Helmholtz got up, tiptoed across the room, and with a sharp quick movement flung the door wide open. There was, of course, nobody there.

"I'm sorry," said Bernard, feeling and looking uncomfortably foolish. "I suppose I've got things on my nerves a bit. When people are suspicious with you, you start being suspicious with them."

He passed his hand across his eyes, he sighed, his voice became

plaintive. He was justifying himself. "If you knew what I'd had to put up with recently," he said almost tearfully—and the uprush of his self-pity was like a fountain suddenly released. "If you only knew!"

Helmholtz Watson listened with a certain sense of discomfort. "Poor little Bernard!" he said to himself. But at the same time he felt rather ashamed for his friend. He wished Bernard would show a little more pride.

Chapter Five

BY EIGHT O'CLOCK the light was failing. The loud speaker in the tower of the Stoke Poges Club House began, in a more than human tenor, to announce the closing of the courses. Lenina and Henry abandoned their game and walked back towards the Club. From the grounds of the Internal and External Secretion Trust came the lowing of those thousands of cattle which provided, with their hormones and their milk, the raw materials for the great factory at Farnham Royal.

An incessant buzzing of helicopters filled the twilight. Every two and a half minutes a bell and the screech of whistles announced the departure of one of the light monorail trains which carried the lower caste golfers back from their separate course to the metropolis.

Lenina and Henry climbed into their machine and started off. At eight hundred feet Henry slowed down the helicopter screws, and they hung for a minute or two poised above the fading landscape. The forest of Burnham Beeches stretched like a great pool of darkness towards the bright shore of the western sky. Crimson at the horizon, the last of the sunset faded, through orange, upwards into yellow and a pale watery green. Northwards, beyond and above the trees, the Internal and External Secretions factory glared with a fierce electric brilliance from every window of its twenty stories. Beneath them lay the buildings of the Golf Club—the huge Lower Caste barracks and, on the other side of a piding wall, the smaller houses reserved for Alpha and

Beta members. The approaches to the monorail station were black with the ant-like pullulation of lower-caste activity. From under the glass vault a lighted train shot out into the open. Following its southeasterly course across the dark plain their eyes were drawn to the majestic buildings of the Slough Crematorium. For the safety of night-flying planes, its four tall chimneys were flood-lighted and tipped with crimson danger signals. It was a landmark.

“Why do the smoke-stacks have those things like balconies around them?” enquired Lenina.

“Phosphorus recovery,” explained Henry telegraphically. “On their way up the chimney the gases go through four separate treatments. P_2O_5 used to go right out of circulation every time they cremated some one. Now they recover over ninety-eight per cent of it. More than a kilo and a half per adult corpse. Which makes the best part of four hundred tons of phosphorus every year from England alone.” Henry spoke with a happy pride, rejoicing wholeheartedly in the achievement, as though it had been his own. “Fine to think we can go on being socially useful even after we’re dead. Making plants grow.”

Lenina, meanwhile, had turned her eyes away and was looking perpendicularly downwards at the monorail station. “Fine,” she agreed. “But queer that Alphas and Betas won’t make any more plants grow than those nasty little Gammas and Deltas and Epsilons down there.”

“All men are physico-chemically equal,” said Henry sententiously. “Besides, even Epsilons perform indispensable services.”

“Even an Epsilon...” Lenina suddenly remembered an occasion when, as a little girl at school, she had woken up in the middle of the night and become aware, for the first time, of the whispering that had haunted all her sleeps. She saw again the beam of moonlight, the row of small white beds; heard once more the soft, soft voice that said (the words were there, unforgotten, unforgettable after so many night-long repetitions): “Every one works for every one else. We can’t do without any one. Even Epsilons are useful. We couldn’t do without Epsilons. Every one works for every one else. We can’t do without any one...” Lenina remembered her first shock of fear and surprise; her speculations through half a wakeful hour; and then, under the influence of those endless repetitions, the gradual soothing of her mind, the soothing, the smoothing, the stealthy creeping of sleep....

“I suppose Epsilons don’t really mind being Epsilons,” she said aloud.

“Of course they don’t. How can they? They don’t know what it’s like being anything else. We’d mind, of course. But then we’ve been differently conditioned. Besides, we start with a different heredity.”

“I’m glad I’m not an Epsilon,” said Lenina, with conviction.

“And if you were an Epsilon,” said Henry, “your conditioning would have made you no less thankful that you weren’t a Beta or an Alpha.” He put his forward propeller into gear and headed the machine towards London. Behind them, in the west, the crimson and orange were almost faded; a dark bank of cloud had crept into the zenith. As they flew over the crematorium, the plane shot upwards on the column of hot air rising from the chimneys, only to fall as suddenly when it passed into the descending chill beyond.

“What a marvellous switchback!” Lenina laughed delightedly.

But Henry’s tone was almost, for a moment, melancholy. “Do you know what that switchback was?” he said. “It was some human being finally and definitely disappearing. Going up in a squirt of hot gas. It would be curious to know who it was—a man or a woman, an Alpha or an Epsilon....” He sighed. Then, in a resolutely cheerful voice, “Anyhow,” he concluded, “there’s one thing we can be certain of; whoever he may have been, he was happy when he was alive. Everybody’s happy now.”

“Yes, everybody’s happy now,” echoed Lenina. They had heard the words repeated a hundred and fifty times every night for twelve years.

Landing on the roof of Henry’s forty-story apartment house in Westminster, they went straight down to the dining-hall. There, in a loud and cheerful company, they ate an excellent meal. Soma was served with the coffee. Lenina took two half-gramme tablets and Henry three. At twenty past nine they walked across the street to the newly opened Westminster Abbey Cabaret. It was a night almost without clouds, moonless and starry; but of this on the whole depressing fact Lenina and Henry were fortunately unaware. The electric sky-signs effectively shut off the outer darkness. “CALVIN STOPES AND HIS SIXTEEN SEXOPHONISTS.” From the façade of the new Abbey the giant letters invitingly glared. “LONDON’S FINEST SCENT AND COLOUR ORGAN. ALL THE LATEST SYNTHETIC MUSIC.”

They entered. The air seemed hot and somehow breathless with the scent of ambergris and sandalwood. On the domed ceiling of the hall, the colour organ had momentarily painted a tropical sunset. The Sixteen

Sexophonists were playing an old favourite: “There ain’t no Bottle in all the world like that dear little Bottle of mine.” Four hundred couples were five-stepping round the polished floor. Lenina and Henry were soon the four hundred and first. The saxophones wailed like melodious cats under the moon, moaned in the alto and tenor registers as though the little death were upon them. Rich with a wealth of harmonics, their tremulous chorus mounted towards a climax, louder and ever louder—until at last, with a wave of his hand, the conductor let loose the final shattering note of ether-music and blew the sixteen merely human blowers clean out of existence. Thunder in A flat major. And then, in all but silence, in all but darkness, there followed a gradual deturgescence, a diminuendo sliding gradually, through quarter tones, down, down to a faintly whispered dominant chord that lingered on (while the five-four rhythms still pulsed below) charging the darkened seconds with an intense expectancy. And at last expectancy was fulfilled. There was a sudden explosive sunrise, and simultaneously, the Sixteen burst into song:

“Bottle of mine, it’s you I’ve always wanted!

Bottle of mine, why was I ever decanted?

Skies are blue inside of you,

The weather’s always fine; For There ain’t no Bottle in all the world
Like that dear little Bottle of mine.”

Five-stepping with the other four hundred round and round Westminster Abbey, Lenina and Henry were yet dancing in another world—the warm, the richly coloured, the infinitely friendly world of soma-holiday. How kind, how

good-looking, how delightfully amusing every one was! “Bottle of mine, it’s you I’ve always wanted...” But Lenina and Henry had what they wanted... They were inside, here and now-safely inside with the fine weather, the perennially blue sky. And when, exhausted, the Sixteen had laid by their saxophones and the Synthetic Music apparatus was producing the very latest in slow Malthusian Blues, they might have been twin embryos gently rocking together on the waves of a bottled ocean of blood-surrogate.

“Good-night, dear friends. Good-night, dear friends.” The loud speakers veiled their commands in a genial and musical politeness. “Good-night, dear friends...”

Obediently, with all the others, Lenina and Henry left the building. The depressing stars had travelled quite some way across the heavens. But though the separating screen of the sky-signs had now to a great extent dissolved, the two young people still retained their happy ignorance of the night.

Swallowing half an hour before closing time, that second dose of soma had raised a quite impenetrable wall between the actual universe and their minds. Bottled, they crossed the street; bottled, they took the lift up to Henry’s room on the twenty-eighth floor. And yet, bottled as she was, and in spite of that second gramme of soma, Lenina did not forget to take all the contraceptive precautions prescribed by the regulations. Years of intensive hypnopædia and, from twelve to seventeen, Malthusian drill three times a week had made the taking of these precautions almost as automatic and inevitable as blinking.

“Oh, and that reminds me,” she said, as she came back from the

bathroom, “Fanny Crowne wants to know where you found that lovely green morocco-surrogate cartridge belt you gave me.”

Alternate Thursdays were Bernard’s Solidarity Service days. After an early dinner at the Aphroditzeum (to which Helrnholtz had recently been elected under Rule Two) he took leave of his friend and, hailing a taxi on the roof told the man to fly to the Fordson Community Singery. The machine rose a couple of hundred metres, then headed eastwards, and as it turned, there before Bernard’s eyes, gigantically beautiful, was the Singery. Flood-lighted, its three hundred and twenty metres of white Carrara-surrogate gleamed with a snowy incandescence over Ludgate Hill; at each of the four corners of its helicopter platform an immense T shone crimson against the night, and from the mouths of twenty-four vast golden trumpets rumbled a solemn synthetic music.

“Damn, I’m late,” Bernard said to himself as he first caught sight of Big Henry, the Singery clock. And sure enough, as he was paying off his cab, Big Henry sounded the hour. “Ford,” sang out an immense bass voice from all the golden trumpets. “Ford, Ford, Ford...” Nine times. Bernard ran for the lift.

The great auditorium for Ford’s Day celebrations and other massed Community Sings was at the bottom of the building. Above it, a hundred to each floor, were the seven thousand rooms used by Solidarity Groups for their fortnight services. Bernard dropped down to floor thirty-three, hurried along the corridor, stood hesitating for a moment outside Room 3210, then, having wound himself up, opened the door and walked in.

Thank Ford! he was not the last. Three chairs of the twelve arranged round the circular table were still unoccupied. He slipped into the nearest of them as inconspicuously as he could and prepared to frown at the yet later comers whenever they should arrive.

Turning towards him, “What were you playing this afternoon?” the girl on his left enquired. “Obstacle, or Electro-magnetic?”

Bernard looked at her (Ford! it was Morgana Rothschild) and blushing had to admit that he had been playing neither. Morgana stared at him with astonishment. There was an awkward silence.

Then pointedly she turned away and addressed herself to the more sporting man on her left.

“A good beginning for a Solidarity Service,” thought Bernard miserably, and foresaw for himself yet another failure to achieve atonement. If only he had given himself time to look around instead of scuttling for the nearest chair! He could have sat between Fifi Bradlaugh and Joanna Diesel. Instead of which he had gone and blindly planted himself next to Morgana. Morgana! Ford! Those black eyebrows of hers—that eyebrow, rather—for they met above the nose. Ford! And on his right was Clara Deterding. True, Clara’s eyebrows didn’t meet. But she was really too pneumatic. Whereas Fifi and Joanna were absolutely right. Plump, blonde, not too large...And it was that great lout, Tom Kawaguchi, who now took the seat between them.

The last arrival was Sarojini Engels.

“You’re late,” said the President of the Group severely. “Don’t let it

happen again.”

Sarojini apologized and slid into her place between Jim Bokanovsky and Herbert Bakunin. The group was now complete, the solidarity circle perfect and without flaw. Man, woman, man, in a ring of endless alternation round the table. Twelve of them ready to be made one, waiting to come together, to be fused, to lose their twelve separate identities in a larger being.

The President stood up, made the sign of the T and, switching on the synthetic music, let loose the soft indefatigable beating of drums and a choir of instruments—near-wind and super-string—that plangently repeated and repeated the brief and unescapably haunting melody of the first Solidarity Hymn. Again, again—and it was not the ear that heard the pulsing rhythm, it was the midriff; the wail and clang of those recurring harmonies haunted, not the mind, but the yearning bowels of compassion.

The President made another sign of the T and sat down. The service had begun. The dedicated soma tablets were placed in the centre of the table. The loving cup of strawberry ice-cream soma was passed from hand to hand and, with the formula, “I drink to my annihilation,” twelve times quaffed. Then to the accompaniment of the synthetic orchestra the First Solidarity Hymn was sung.

“Ford, we are twelve; oh, make us one,

Like drops within the Social River, Oh, make us now together run

As swiftly as thy shining Flivver.”

Twelve yearning stanzas. And then the loving cup was passed a second time. “I drink to the Greater Being” was now the formula. All drank. Tirelessly the music played. The drums beat. The crying and clashing of the harmonies were an obsession in the melted bowels. The Second Solidarity Hymn was sung.

“Come, Greater Being, Social Friend,

Annihilating Twelve-in-One! We long to die, for when we end,

Our larger life has but begun.”

Again twelve stanzas. By this time the soma had begun to work. Eyes shone, cheeks were flushed, the inner light of universal benevolence broke out on every face in happy, friendly smiles. Even Bernard felt himself a little melted. When Morgana Rothschild turned and beamed at him, he did his best to beam back. But the eyebrow, that black two-in-one—alas, it was still there; he couldn’t ignore it, couldn’t, however hard he tried. The melting hadn’t gone far enough. Perhaps if he had been sitting between Fifi and Joanna...For the third time the loving cup went round; “I drink to the imminence of His Coming,” said Morgana Rothschild, whose turn it happened to be to initiate the circular rite. Her tone was loud, exultant. She drank and passed the cup to Bernard. “I drink to the imminence of His Coming,” he repeated, with a sincere attempt to feel that the coming was imminent; but the eyebrow continued to haunt him, and the Coming, so far as he was concerned, was horribly remote. He drank and handed the cup to Clara Deterding. “It’ll be a failure again,” he said to himself. “I know it will.” But he went on doing his best to beam.

The loving cup had made its circuit. Lifting his hand, the President gave a signal; the chorus broke out into the third Solidarity Hymn.

“Feel how the Greater Being comes!

Rejoice and, in rejoicings, die! Melt in the music of the drums!

For I am you and you are I.”

As verse succeeded verse the voices thrilled with an ever intenser excitement. The sense of the Coming’s imminence was like an electric tension in the air. The President switched off the music and, with the final note of the final stanza, there was absolute silence—the silence of stretched expectancy, quivering and creeping with a galvanic life. The President reached out his hand; and suddenly a Voice, a deep strong Voice, more musical than any merely human voice, richer, warmer, more vibrant with love and yearning and compassion, a wonderful, mysterious, supernatural Voice spoke from above their heads. Very slowly, “Oh, Ford, Ford, Ford,” it said diminishingly and on a descending scale. A sensation of warmth radiated thrillingly out from the solar plexus to every extremity of the bodies of those who listened; tears came into their eyes; their hearts, their bowels seemed to move within them, as though with an independent life. “Ford!” they were melting, “Ford!” dissolved, dissolved. Then, in another tone, suddenly, startlingly. “Listen!” trumpeted the voice. “Listen!” They listened. After a pause, sunk to a whisper, but a whisper, somehow, more penetrating than the loudest cry. “The feet of the Greater Being,” it went on, and repeated the words: “The feet of the Greater Being.” The whisper almost expired. “The feet of the Greater Being are on the stairs.” And once more there was silence;

and the expectancy, momentarily relaxed, was stretched again, tauter, tauter, almost to the tearing point. The feet of the Greater Being—oh, they heard them, they heard them, coming softly down the stairs, coming nearer and nearer down the invisible stairs. The feet of the Greater Being. And suddenly the tearing point was reached. Her eyes staring, her lips parted. Morgana Rothschild sprang to her feet.

“I hear him,” she cried. “I hear him.”

“He’s coming,” shouted Sarojini Engels.

“Yes, he’s coming, I hear him.” Fifi Bradlaugh and Tom Kawaguchi rose simultaneously to their feet.

“Oh, oh, oh!” Joanna inarticulately testified.

“He’s coming!” yelled Jim Bokanovsky.

The President leaned forward and, with a touch, released a delirium of cymbals and blown brass, a fever of tom-tomming.

“Oh, he’s coming!” screamed Clara Deterding. “Aie!” and it was as though she were having her throat cut.

Feeling that it was time for him to do something, Bernard also jumped up and shouted: “I hear him; He’s coming.” But it wasn’t true. He heard nothing and, for him, nobody was coming. Nobody—in spite of the music, in spite of the mounting excitement. But he waved his arms, he shouted with the best of them; and when the others began to jig and stamp and shuffle, he also jigged and shuffled.

Round they went, a circular procession of dancers, each with hands on the hips of the dancer preceding, round and round, shouting in unison, stamping to the rhythm of the music with their feet, beating it, beating it out with hands on the buttocks in front; twelve pairs of hands beating as one; as one, twelve buttocks slabbily resounding. Twelve as one, twelve as one. "I hear Him, I hear Him coming." The music quickened; faster beat the feet, faster, faster fell the rhythmic hands. And all at once a great synthetic bass boomed out the words which announced the approaching atonement and final consummation of solidarity, the coming of the Twelve-in-One, the incarnation of the Greater Being. "Orgy-porgy," it sang, while the tom-toms continued to beat their feverish tattoo:

"Orgy-porgy, Ford and fun, Kiss the girls and make them One. Boys at one with girls at peace; Orgy-porgy gives release."

"Orgy-porgy," the dancers caught up the liturgical refrain, "Orgy-porgy, Ford and fun, kiss the girls..." And as they sang, the lights began slowly to fade—to fade and at the same time to grow warmer, richer, redder, until at last they were dancing in the crimson twilight of an Embryo Store. "Orgy-porgy..." In their blood-coloured and foetal darkness the dancers continued for a while to circulate, to beat and beat out the indefatigable rhythm. "Orgy-porgy..." Then the circle wavered, broke, fell in partial disintegration on the ring of couches which surrounded—circle enclosing circle—the table and its planetary chairs. "Orgy-porgy..." Tenderly the deep Voice crooned and cooed; in the red twilight it was as though some enormous negro dove were hovering benevolently over the now prone or supine dancers.

They were standing on the roof; Big Henry had just sung eleven. The night was calm and warm.

“Wasn’t it wonderful?” said Fifi Bradlaugh. “Wasn’t it simply wonderful?” She looked at Bernard with an expression of rapture, but of rapture in which there was no trace of agitation or excitement—for to be excited is still to be unsatisfied. Hers was the calm ecstasy of achieved consummation, the peace, not of mere vacant satiety and nothingness, but of balanced life, of energies at rest and in equilibrium. A rich and living peace. For the Solidarity Service had given as well as taken, drawn off only to replenish. She was full, she was made perfect, she was still more than merely herself. “Didn’t you think it was wonderful?” she insisted, looking into Bernard’s face with those supernaturally shining eyes.

“Yes, I thought it was wonderful,” he lied and looked away; the sight of her transfigured face was at once an accusation and an ironical reminder of his own separateness. He was as miserably isolated now as he had been when the service began—more isolated by reason of his unreplenished emptiness, his dead satiety. Separate and unatoned, while the others were being fused into the Greater Being; alone even in Morgana’s embrace—much more alone, indeed, more hopelessly himself than he had ever been in his life before. He had emerged from that crimson twilight into the common electric glare with a self-consciousness intensified to the pitch of agony. He was utterly miserable, and perhaps (her shining eyes accused him), perhaps it was his own fault. “Quite wonderful,” he repeated; but the only thing he could think of was Morgana’s eyebrow.

Chapter Six

Odd, odd, odd, was Lenina's verdict on Bernard Marx. So odd, indeed, that in the course of the succeeding weeks she had wondered more than once whether she shouldn't change her mind about the New Mexico holiday, and go instead to the North Pole with Benito Hoover. The trouble was that she knew the North Pole, had been there with George Edzel only last summer, and what was more, found it pretty grim. Nothing to do, and the hotel too hopelessly old-fashioned—no television laid on in the bedrooms, no scent organ, only the most putrid synthetic music, and not more than twenty-five Escalator-Squash Courts for over two hundred guests. No, decidedly she couldn't face the North Pole again. Added to which, she had only been to America once before. And even then, how inadequately! A cheap week-end in New York—had it been with Jean-Jacques Habibullah or Bokanovsky Jones? She couldn't remember. Anyhow, it was of absolutely no importance. The prospect of flying West again, and for a whole week, was very inviting. Moreover, for at least three days of that week they would be in the Savage Reservation. Not more than half a dozen people in the whole Centre had ever been inside a Savage Reservation. As an Alpha-Plus psychologist, Bernard was one of the few men she knew entitled to a permit. For Lenina, the opportunity was unique. And yet, so unique also was Bernard's oddness that she had hesitated to take it, had actually thought of risking the Pole again with funny old Benito. At least Benito was normal. Whereas Bernard...

“Alcohol in his blood-surrogate,” was Fanny's explanation of every

eccentricity. But Henry, with whom, one evening when they were in bed together, Lenina had rather anxiously discussed her new lover, Henry had compared poor Bernard to a rhinoceros.

“You can’t teach a rhinoceros tricks,” he had explained in his brief and vigorous style. “Some men are almost rhinoceroses; they don’t respond properly to conditioning. Poor Devils! Bernard’s one of them. Luckily for him, he’s pretty good at his job. Otherwise the Director would never have kept him. However,” he added consolingly, “I think he’s pretty harmless.”

Pretty harmless, perhaps; but also pretty disquieting. That mania, to start with, for doing things in private. Which meant, in practice, not doing anything at all. For what was there that one could do in private. (Apart, of course, from going to bed: but one couldn’t do that all the time.) Yes, what was there? Precious little. The first afternoon they went out together was particularly fine. Lenina had suggested a swim at Toquay Country Club followed by dinner at the Oxford Union. But Bernard thought there would be too much of a crowd. Then what about a round of Electro-magnetic Golf at St. Andrew’s? But again, no: Bernard considered that Electro-magnetic Golf was a waste of time.

“Then what’s time for?” asked Lenina in some astonishment.

Apparently, for going walks in the Lake District; for that was what he now proposed. Land on the top of Skiddaw and walk for a couple of hours in the heather. “Alone with you, Lenina.”

“But, Bernard, we shall be alone all night.”

Bernard blushed and looked away. “I meant, alone for talking,” he mumbled.

“Talking? But what about?” Walking and talking—that seemed a very odd way of spending an afternoon.

In the end she persuaded him, much against his will, to fly over to Amsterdam to see the Semi-Demi-Finals of the Women’s Heavyweight Wrestling Championship.

“In a crowd,” he grumbled. “As usual.” He remained obstinately gloomy the whole afternoon; wouldn’t talk to Lenina’s friends (of whom they met dozens in the ice-cream soma bar between the wrestling bouts); and in spite of his misery absolutely refused to take the half-gramme raspberry sundae which she pressed upon him. “I’d rather be myself,” he said. “Myself and nasty. Not somebody else, however jolly.”

“A gramme in time saves nine,” said Lenina, producing a bright treasure of sleep-taught wisdom. Bernard pushed away the proffered glass impatiently.

“Now don’t lose your temper,” she said. “Remember one cubic centimetre cures ten gloomy sentiments.”

“Oh, for Ford’s sake, be quiet!” he shouted.

Lenina shrugged her shoulders. “A gramme is always better than a damn,” she concluded with dignity, and drank the sundae herself.

On their way back across the Channel, Bernard insisted on stopping his

propeller and hovering on his helicopter screws within a hundred feet of the waves. The weather had taken a change for the worse; a south-westerly wind had sprung up, the sky was cloudy.

“Look,” he commanded.

“But it’s horrible,” said Lenina, shrinking back from the window. She was appalled by the rushing emptiness of the night, by the black foam-flecked water heaving beneath them, by the pale face of the moon, so haggard and distracted among the hastening clouds. “Let’s turn on the radio. Quick!” She reached for the dialling knob on the dash-board and turned it at random.

“...skies are blue inside of you,” sang sixteen tremoloing falsettos, “the weather’s always...”

Then a hiccough and silence. Bernard had switched off the current.

“I want to look at the sea in peace,” he said. “One can’t even look with that beastly noise going on.”

“But it’s lovely. And I don’t want to look.”

“But I do,” he insisted. “It makes me feel as though...” he hesitated, searching for words with which to express himself, “as though I were more me, if you see what I mean. More on my own, not so completely a part of something else. Not just a cell in the social body. Doesn’t it make you feel like that, Lenina?”

But Lenina was crying. “It’s horrible, it’s horrible,” she kept repeating. “And how can you talk like that about not wanting to be a part of the social

body? After all, every one works for every one else. We can't do without any one. Even Epsilons..."

"Yes, I know," said Bernard derisively. "'Even Epsilons are useful'! So am I. And I damned well wish I weren't!"

Lenina was shocked by his blasphemy. "Bernard!" She protested in a voice of amazed distress. "How can you?"

In a different key, "How can I?" he repeated meditatively. "No, the real problem is: How is it that I can't, or rather—because, after all, I know quite well why I can't—what would it be like if I could, if I were free—not enslaved by my conditioning."

"But, Bernard, you're saying the most awful things."

"Don't you wish you were free, Lenina?"

"I don't know what you mean. I am free. Free to have the most wonderful time. Everybody's happy nowadays."

He laughed, "Yes, 'Everybody's happy nowadays.' We begin giving the children that at five. But wouldn't you like to be free to be happy in some other way, Lenina? In your own way, for example; not in everybody else's way."

"I don't know what you mean," she repeated. Then, turning to him, "Oh, do let's go back, Bernard," she besought; "I do so hate it here."

"Don't you like being with me?"

“But of course, Bernard. It’s this horrible place.”

“I thought we’d be more...more together here—with nothing but the sea and moon. More together than in that crowd, or even in my rooms. Don’t you understand that?”

“I don’t understand anything,” she said with decision, determined to preserve her incomprehension intact. “Nothing. Least of all,” she continued in another tone, “Why you don’t take soma when you have these dreadful ideas of yours. You’d forget all about them. And instead of feeling miserable, you’d be jolly. So jolly,” she repeated and smiled, for all the puzzled anxiety in her eyes, with what was meant to be an inviting and voluptuous cajolery.

He looked at her in silence, his face unresponsive and very grave—looked at her intently. After a few seconds Lenina’s eyes flinched away; she uttered a nervous little laugh, tried to think of something to say and couldn’t. The silence prolonged itself.

When Bernard spoke at last, it was in a small tired voice. “All right then,” he said, “we’ll go back.” And stepping hard on the accelerator, he sent the machine rocketing up into the sky. At four thousand he started his propeller. They flew in silence for a minute or two. Then, suddenly, Bernard began to laugh. Rather oddly, Lenina thought, but still, it was laughter.

“Feeling better?” she ventured to ask.

For answer, he lifted one hand from the controls and, slipping his arm around her, began to fondle her breasts.

“Thank Ford,” she said to herself, “he’s all right again.”

Half an hour later they were back in his rooms. Bernard swallowed four tablets of soma at a gulp, turned on the radio and television and began to undress.

“Well,” Lenina enquired, with significant archness when they met next afternoon on the roof, “did you think it was fun yesterday?”

Bernard nodded. They climbed into the plane. A little jolt, and they were off.

“Every one says I’m awfully pneumatic,” said Lenina reflectively, patting her own legs.

“Awfully.” But there was an expression of pain in Bernard’s eyes. “Like meat,” he was thinking.

She looked up with a certain anxiety. “But you don’t think I’m too plump, do you?”

He shook his head. Like so much meat.

“You think I’m all right.” Another nod. “In every way?”

“Perfect,” he said aloud. And inwardly. “She thinks of herself that way. She doesn’t mind being meat.”

Lenina smiled triumphantly. But her satisfaction was premature.

“All the same,” he went on, after a little pause, “I still rather wish it had

all ended differently.”

“Differently?” Were there other endings?

“I didn’t want it to end with our going to bed,” he specified.

Lenina was astonished.

“Not at once, not the first day.”

“But then what...?”

He began to talk a lot of incomprehensible and dangerous nonsense. Lenina did her best to stop the ears of her mind; but every now and then a phrase would insist on becoming audible. “...to try the effect of arresting my impulses,” she heard him say. The words seemed to touch a spring in her mind.

“Never put off till to-morrow the fun you can have to-day,” she said gravely.

“Two hundred repetitions, twice a week from fourteen to sixteen and a half,” was all his comment. The mad bad talk rambled on. “I want to know what passion is,” she heard him saying. “I want to feel something strongly.”

“When the individual feels, the community reels,” Lenina pronounced.

“Well, why shouldn’t it reel a bit?”

“Bernard!”

But Bernard remained unabashed.

“Adults intellectually and during working hours,” he went on. “Infants where feeling and desire are concerned.”

“Our Ford loved infants.”

Ignoring the interruption. “It suddenly struck me the other day,” continued Bernard, “that it might be possible to be an adult all the time.”

“I don’t understand.” Lenina’s tone was firm.

“I know you don’t. And that’s why we went to bed together yesterday—like infants—instead of being adults and waiting.”

“But it was fun,” Lenina insisted. “Wasn’t it?”

“Oh, the greatest fun,” he answered, but in a voice so mournful, with an expression so profoundly miserable, that Lenina felt all her triumph suddenly evaporate. Perhaps he had found her too plump, after all.

“I told you so,” was all that Fanny said, when Lenina came and made her confidences. “It’s the alcohol they put in his surrogate.”

“All the same,” Lenina insisted. “I do like him. He has such awfully nice hands. And the way he moves his shoulders—that’s very attractive.” She sighed. “But I wish he weren’t so odd.”

Halting for a moment outside the door of the Director’s room, Bernard

drew a deep breath and squared his shoulders, bracing himself to meet the dislike and disapproval which he was certain of finding within. He knocked and entered.

“A permit for you to initial, Director,” he said as airily as possible, and laid the paper on the writing-table.

The Director glanced at him sourly. But the stamp of the World Controller’s Office was at the head of the paper and the signature of Mustapha Mond, bold and black, across the bottom. Everything was perfectly in order. The director had no choice. He pencilled his initials—two small pale letters abject at the feet of Mustapha Mond—and was about to return the paper without a word of comment or genial Ford-speed, when his eye was caught by something written in the body of the permit.

“For the New Mexican Reservation?” he said, and his tone, the face he lifted to Bernard, expressed a kind of agitated astonishment.

Surprised by his surprise, Bernard nodded. There was a silence.

The Director leaned back in his chair, frowning. “How long ago was it?” he said, speaking more to himself than to Bernard. “Twenty years, I suppose. Nearer twenty-five. I must have been your age...” He sighed and shook his head.

Bernard felt extremely uncomfortable. A man so conventional, so scrupulously correct as the Director—and to commit so gross a solecism! It made him want to hide his face, to run out of the room. Not that he himself saw anything intrinsically objectionable in people talking about the remote

past; that was one of those hypnopaedic prejudices he had (so he imagined) completely got rid of. What made him feel shy was the knowledge that the Director disapproved—disapproved and yet had been betrayed into doing the forbidden thing. Under what inward compulsion? Through his discomfort Bernard eagerly listened.

“I had the same idea as you,” the Director was saying. “Wanted to have a look at the savages. Got a permit for New Mexico and went there for my summer holiday. With the girl I was having at the moment. She was a Beta-Minus, and I think” (he shut his eyes), “I think she had yellow hair. Anyhow she was pneumatic, particularly pneumatic; I remember that. Well, we went there, and we looked at the savages, and we rode about on horses and all that. And then—it was almost the last day of my leave—then...well, she got lost. We’d gone riding up one of those revolting mountains, and it was horribly hot and oppressive, and after lunch we went to sleep. Or at least I did. She must have gone for a walk, alone. At any rate, when I woke up, she wasn’t there. And the most frightful thunderstorm I’ve ever seen was just bursting on us. And it poured and roared and flashed; and the horses broke loose and ran away; and I fell down, trying to catch them, and hurt my knee, so that I could hardly walk. Still, I searched and I shouted and I searched. But there was no sign of her. Then I thought she must have gone back to the rest-house by herself. So I crawled down into the valley by the way we had come. My knee was agonizingly painful, and I’d lost my soma. It took me hours. I didn’t get back to the rest-house till after midnight. And she wasn’t there; she wasn’t there,” the Director repeated. There was a silence. “Well,” he resumed at last, “the next day there was a search. But we couldn’t find her. She must have fallen into a gully somewhere; or been eaten by a mountain lion. Ford knows.

Anyhow it was horrible. It upset me very much at the time. More than it ought to have done, I dare say. Because, after all, it's the sort of accident that might have happened to any one; and, of course, the social body persists although the component cells may change." But this sleep-taught consolation did not seem to be very effective. Shaking his head, "I actually dream about it sometimes," the Director went on in a low voice. "Dream of being woken up by that peal of thunder and finding her gone; dream of searching and searching for her under the trees." He lapsed into the silence of reminiscence.

"You must have had a terrible shock," said Bernard, almost enviously.

At the sound of his voice the Director started into a guilty realization of where he was; shot a glance at Bernard, and averting his eyes, blushed darkly; looked at him again with sudden suspicion and, angrily on his dignity, "Don't imagine," he said, "that I'd had any indecorous relation with the girl. Nothing emotional, nothing long-drawn. It was all perfectly healthy and normal." He handed Bernard the permit. "I really don't know why I bored you with this trivial anecdote." Furious with himself for having given away a discreditable secret, he vented his rage on Bernard. The look in his eyes was now frankly malignant. "And I should like to take this opportunity, Mr. Marx," he went on, "of saying that I'm not at all pleased with the reports I receive of your behaviour outside working hours. You may say that this is not my business. But it is. I have the good name of the Centre to think of. My workers must be above suspicion, particularly those of the highest castes. Alphas are so conditioned that they do not have to be infantile in their emotional behaviour. But that is all the more reason for their making a special effort to conform. It is their duty to be infantile, even against their inclination.

And so, Mr. Marx, I give you fair warning.” The Director’s voice vibrated with an indignation that had now become wholly righteous and impersonal—was the expression of the disapproval of Society itself. “If ever I hear again of any lapse from a proper standard of infantile decorum, I shall ask for your transference to a Sub-Centre—preferably to Iceland. Good morning.” And swivelling round in his chair, he picked up his pen and began to write.

“That’ll teach him,” he said to himself. But he was mistaken. For Bernard left the room with a swagger, exulting, as he banged the door behind him, in the thought that he stood alone, embattled against the order of things; elated by the intoxicating consciousness of his individual significance and importance. Even the thought of persecution left him undismayed, was rather tonic than depressing. He felt strong enough to meet and overcome amiction, strong enough to face even Iceland. And this confidence was the greater for his not for a moment really believing that he would be called upon to face anything at all. People simply weren’t transferred for things like that. Iceland was just a threat. A most stimulating and life-giving threat. Walking along the corridor, he actually whistled.

Heroic was the account he gave that evening of his interview with the D.H.C. “Whereupon,” he concluded, “I simply told him to go to the Bottomless Past and marched out of the room. And that was that.” He looked at Helmholtz Watson expectantly, awaiting his due reward of sympathy, encouragement, admiration. But no word came. Helmholtz sat silent, staring at the floor.

He liked Bernard; he was grateful to him for being the only man of his acquaintance with whom he could talk about the subjects he felt to be

important. Nevertheless, there were things in Bernard which he hated. This boasting, for example. And the

outbursts of an abject self-pity with which it alternated. And his deplorable habit of being bold after the event, and full, in absence, of the most extraordinary presence of mind. He hated these things—just because he liked Bernard. The seconds passed. Helmholtz continued to stare at the floor. And suddenly Bernard blushed and turned away.

The journey was quite uneventful. The Blue Pacific Rocket was two and a half minutes early at New Orleans, lost four minutes in a tornado over Texas, but flew into a favourable air current at Longitude 95 West, and was able to land at Santa Fé less than forty seconds behind schedule time.

“Forty seconds on a six and a half hour flight. Not so bad,” Lenina conceded.

They slept that night at Santa Fé. The hotel was excellent—incomparably better, for example, than that horrible Aurora Bora Palace in which Lenina had suffered so much the previous summer. Liquid air, television, vibro-vacuum massage, radio, boiling caffeine solution, hot contraceptives, and eight different kinds of scent were laid on in every bedroom. The synthetic music plant was working as they entered the hall and left nothing to be desired. A notice in the lift announced that there were sixty Escalator-Squash-Racket Courts in the hotel, and that Obstacle and Electro-magnetic Golf could both be played in the park.

“But it sounds simply too lovely,” cried Lenina. “I almost wish we could stay here. Sixty Escalator-Squash Courts...”

“There won’t be any in the Reservation,” Bernard warned her. “And no scent, no television, no hot water even. If you feel you can’t stand it, stay here till I come back.”

Lenina was quite offended. “Of course I can stand it. I only said it was lovely here because...well, because progress is lovely, isn’t it?”

“Five hundred repetitions once a week from thirteen to seventeen,” said Bernard wearily, as though to himself.

“What did you say?”

“I said that progress was lovely. That’s why you mustn’t come to the Reservation unless you really want to.”

“But I do want to.”

“Very well, then,” said Bernard; and it was almost a threat.

Their permit required the signature of the Warden of the Reservation, at whose office next morning they duly presented themselves. An Epsilon-Plus negro porter took in Bernard’s card, and they were admitted almost immediately.

The Warden was a blond and brachycephalic Alpha-Minus, short, red, moon-faced, and broad-shouldered, with a loud booming voice, very well adapted to the utterance of hypnopædic wisdom. He was a mine of irrelevant

information and unasked-for good advice. Once started, he went on and on—boomingly.

“...five hundred and sixty thousand square kilometres, pided into four distinct Sub-Reservations, each surrounded by a high-tension wire fence.”

At this moment, and for no apparent reason, Bernard suddenly remembered that he had left the Eau de Cologne tap in his bathroom wide open and running.

“...supplied with current from the Grand Canyon hydro-electric station.”

“Cost me a fortune by the time I get back.” With his mind’s eye, Bernard saw the needle on the scent meter creeping round and round, antlike, indefatigable. “Quickly telephone to Helmholtz Watson.”

“...upwards of five thousand kilometres of fencing at sixty thousand volts.”

“You don’t say so,” said Lenina politely, not knowing in the least what the Warden had said, but taking her cue from his dramatic pause. When the Warden started booming, she had inconspicuously swallowed half a gramme of soma, with the result that she could now sit, serenely not listening, thinking of nothing at all, but with her large blue eyes fixed on the Warden’s face in an expression of rapt attention.

“To touch the fence is instant death,” pronounced the Warden solemnly. “There is no escape from a Savage Reservation.”

The word “escape” was suggestive. “Perhaps,” said Bernard, half rising,

“we ought to think of going.” The little black needle was scurrying, an insect, nibbling through time, eating into his money.

“No escape,” repeated the Warden, waving him back into his chair; and as the permit was not yet countersigned Bernard had no choice but to obey. “Those who are born in the Reservation—and remember, my dear young lady,” he added, leering obscenely at Lenina, and speaking in an improper whisper, “remember that, in the Reservation, children still are born, yes, actually born, revolting as that may seem...” (He hoped that this reference to a shameful subject would make Lenina blush; but she only smiled with simulated intelligence and said, “You don’t say so!” Disappointed, the Warden began again.) “Those, I repeat who are born in the Reservation are destined to die there.”

Destined to die...A decilitre of Eau de Cologne every minute. Six litres an hour. “Perhaps,” Bernard tried again, “we ought...”

Leaning forward, the Warden tapped the table with his forefinger. “You ask me how many people live in the Reservation. And I reply”—triumphantly—“I reply that we do not know. We can only guess.”

“You don’t say so.”

“My dear young lady, I do say so.”

Six times twenty-four—no, it would be nearer six times thirty-six. Bernard was pale and trembling with impatience. But inexorably the booming continued.

“...about sixty thousand Indians and half-breeds...absolute savages...our inspectors occasionally visit...otherwise, no communication whatever with the civilized world...still preserve their repulsive habits and customs...marriage, if you know what that is, my dear young lady; families...no conditioning...monstrous superstitions...Christianity and totemism and ancestor worship...extinct languages, such as Zuñi and Spanish and Athapascan...pumas, porcupines and other ferocious animals...infectious diseases...priests...venomous lizards...”

“You don’t say so?”

They got away at last. Bernard dashed to the telephone. Quick, quick; but it took him nearly three minutes to get on to Helmholtz Watson. “We might be among the savages already,” he complained. “Damned incompetence!”

“Have a gramme,” suggested Lenina.

He refused, preferring his anger. And at last, thank Ford, he was through and, yes, it was Helmholtz; Helmholtz, to whom he explained what had happened, and who promised to go round at once, at once, and turn off the tap, yes, at once, but took this opportunity to tell him what the D.H.C. had said, in public, yesterday evening...

“What? He’s looking out for some one to take my place?” Bernard’s voice was agonized. “So it’s actually decided? Did he mention Iceland? You say he did? Ford! Iceland...” He hung up the receiver and turned back to Lenina. His face was pale, his expression utterly dejected.

“What’s the matter?” she asked.

“The matter?” He dropped heavily into a chair. “I’m going to be sent to Iceland.”

Often in the past he had wondered what it would be like to be subjected (soma-less and with nothing but his own inward resources to rely on) to some great trial, some pain, some persecution; he had even longed for affliction. As recently as a week ago, in the Director’s office, he had imagined himself courageously resisting, stoically accepting suffering without a word. The Director’s threats had actually elated him, made him feel larger than life. But that, as he now realized, was because he had not taken the threats quite seriously, he had not believed that, when it came to the point, the D.H.C. would ever do anything. Now that it looked as though the threats were really to be fulfilled, Bernard was appalled. Of that imagined stoicism, that theoretical courage, not a trace was left.

He raged against himself—what a fool!—against the Director—how unfair not to give him that other chance, that other chance which, he now had no doubt at all, he had always intended to take. And Iceland, Iceland...

Lenina shook her head. “Was and will make me ill,” she quoted, “I take a gramme and only am.”

In the end she persuaded him to swallow four tablets of soma. Five minutes later roots and fruits were abolished; the flower of the present rosily blossomed. A message from the porter announced that, at the Warden’s orders, a Reservation Guard had come round with a plane and was waiting on

the roof of the hotel. They went up at once. An octoroon in Gamma-green uniform saluted and proceeded to recite the morning's programme.

A bird's-eye view of ten or a dozen of the principal pueblos, then a landing for lunch in the valley of Malpais. The rest-house was comfortable there, and up at the pueblo the savages would probably be celebrating their summer festival. It would be the best place to spend the night.

They took their seats in the plane and set off. Ten minutes later they were crossing the frontier that separated civilization from savagery. Uphill and down, across the deserts of salt or sand, through forests, into the violet depth of canyons, over crag and peak and table-topped mesa, the fence marched on and on, irresistibly the straight line, the geometrical symbol of triumphant human purpose. And at its foot, here and there, a mosaic of white bones, a still unrotted carcase dark on the tawny ground marked the place where deer or steer, puma or porcupine or coyote, or the greedy turkey buzzards drawn down by the whiff of carrion and fulminated as though by a poetic justice, had come too close to the destroying wires.

"They never learn," said the green-uniformed pilot, pointing down at the skeletons on the ground below them. "And they never will learn," he added and laughed, as though he had somehow scored a personal triumph over the electrocuted animals.

Bernard also laughed; after two grammes of soma the joke seemed, for some reason, good. Laughed and then, almost immediately, dropped off to sleep, and sleeping was carried over Taos and Tesuque; over Nambe and Picuris and Pojoaque, over Sia and Cochiti, over Laguna and Acoma and the

Enchanted Mesa, over Zuñi and Cibola and Ojo Caliente, and woke at last to find the machine standing on the ground, Lenina carrying the suit-cases into a small square house, and the Gamma-green octoroon talking incomprehensibly with a young Indian.

“Malpais,” explained the pilot, as Bernard stepped out. “This is the rest-house. And there’s a dance this afternoon at the pueblo. He’ll take you there.” He pointed to the sullen young savage. “Funny, I expect.” He grinned. “Everything they do is funny.” And with that he climbed into the plane and started up the engines. “Back to-morrow. And remember,” he added reassuringly to Lenina, “they’re perfectly tame; savages won’t do you any harm. They’ve got enough experience of gas bombs to know that they mustn’t play any tricks.” Still laughing, he threw the helicopter screws into gear, accelerated, and was gone.

Chapter Seven

THE MESA was like a ship becalmed in a strait of lion-coloured dust. The channel wound between precipitous banks, and slanting from one wall to the other across the valley ran a streak of green—the river and its fields. On the prow of that stone ship in the centre of the strait, and seemingly a part of it, a shaped and geometrical outcrop of the naked rock, stood the pueblo of Malpais. Block above block, each story smaller than the one below, the tall houses rose like stepped and amputated pyramids into the blue sky. At their feet lay a straggle of low buildings, a criss-cross of walls; and on three sides the precipices fell sheer into the plain. A few columns of smoke mounted perpendicularly into the windless air and were lost.

“Queer,” said Lenina. “Very queer.” It was her ordinary word of condemnation. “I don’t like it. And I don’t like that man.” She pointed to the Indian guide who had been appointed to take them up to the pueblo. Her feeling was evidently reciprocated; the very back of the man, as he walked along before them, was hostile, sullenly contemptuous.

“Besides,” she lowered her voice, “he smells.”

Bernard did not attempt to deny it. They walked on.

Suddenly it was as though the whole air had come alive and were pulsing, pulsing with the indefatigable movement of blood. Up there, in Malpais, the drums were being beaten. Their feet fell in with the rhythm of

that mysterious heart; they quickened their pace. Their path led them to the foot of the precipice. The sides of the great mesa ship towered over them, three hundred feet to the gunwale.

“I wish we could have brought the plane,” said Lenina, looking up resentfully at the blank impending rock-face. “I hate walking. And you feel so small when you’re on the ground at the bottom of a hill.”

They walked along for some way in the shadow of the mesa, rounded a projection, and there, in a water-worn ravine, was the way up the companion ladder. They climbed. It was a very steep path that zigzagged from side to side of the gully. Sometimes the pulsing of the drums was all but inaudible, at others they seemed to be beating only just round the corner.

When they were half-way up, an eagle flew past so close to them that the wind of his wings blew chill on their faces. In a crevice of the rock lay a pile of bones. It was all oppressively queer, and the Indian smelt stronger and stronger. They emerged at last from the ravine into the full sunlight. The top of the mesa was a flat deck of stone.

“Like the Charing-T Tower,” was Lenina’s comment. But she was not allowed to enjoy her discovery of this reassuring resemblance for long. A padding of soft feet made them turn round. Naked from throat to navel, their dark brown bodies painted with white lines (“like asphalt tennis courts,” Lenina was later to explain), their faces inhuman with daubings of scarlet, black and ochre, two Indians came running along the path. Their black hair was braided with fox fur and red flannel. Cloaks of turkey feathers fluttered from their shoulders; huge feather diadems exploded gaudily round their

heads. With every step they took came the clink and rattle of their silver bracelets, their heavy necklaces of bone and turquoise beads. They came on without a word, running quietly in their deerskin moccasins. One of them was holding a feather brush; the other carried, in either hand, what looked at a distance like three or four pieces of thick rope. One of the ropes writhed uneasily, and suddenly Lenina saw that they were snakes.

The men came nearer and nearer; their dark eyes looked at her, but without giving any sign of recognition, any smallest sign that they had seen her or were aware of her existence. The writhing snake hung limp again with the rest. The men passed.

“I don’t like it,” said Lenina. “I don’t like it.”

She liked even less what awaited her at the entrance to the pueblo, where their guide had left them while he went inside for instructions. The dirt, to start with, the piles of rubbish, the dust, the dogs, the flies. Her face wrinkled up into a grimace of disgust. She held her handkerchief to her nose.

“But how can they live like this?” she broke out in a voice of indignant incredulity. (It wasn’t possible.)

Bernard shrugged his shoulders philosophically. “Anyhow,” he said, “they’ve been doing it for the last five or six thousand years. So I suppose they must be used to it by now.”

“But cleanliness is next to fordliness,” she insisted.

“Yes, and civilization is sterilization,” Bernard went on, concluding on a

tone of irony the second hypnopædic lesson in elementary hygiene. “But these people have never heard of Our Ford, and they aren’t civilized. So there’s no point in...”

“Oh!” She gripped his arm. “Look.”

An almost naked Indian was very slowly climbing down the ladder from the first-floor terrace of a neighboring house—rung after rung, with the tremulous caution of extreme old age. His face was profoundly wrinkled and black, like a mask of obsidian. The toothless mouth had fallen in. At the corners of the lips, and on each side of the chin, a few long bristles gleamed almost white against the dark skin. The long unbraided hair hung down in grey wisps round his face. His body was bent and emaciated to the bone, almost fleshless. Very slowly he came down, pausing at each rung before he ventured another step.

“What’s the matter with him?” whispered Lenina. Her eyes were wide with horror and amazement.

“He’s old, that’s all,” Bernard answered as carelessly as he could. He too was startled; but he made an effort to seem unmoved.

“Old?” she repeated. “But the Director’s old; lots of people are old; they’re not like that.”

“That’s because we don’t allow them to be like that. We preserve them from diseases. We keep their internal secretions artificially balanced at a youthful equilibrium. We don’t permit their magnesium-calcium ratio to fall below what it was at thirty. We give them transfusion of young blood. We

keep their metabolism permanently stimulated. So, of course, they don't look like that. Partly," he added, "because most of them die long before they reach this old creature's age. Youth almost unimpaired till sixty, and then, crack! the end."

But Lenina was not listening. She was watching the old man. Slowly, slowly he came down. His feet touched the ground. He turned. In their deep-sunken orbits his eyes were still extraordinarily bright. They looked at her for a long moment expressionlessly, without surprise, as though she had not been there at all. Then slowly, with bent back the old man hobbled past them and was gone.

"But it's terrible," Lenina whispered. "It's awful. We ought not to have come here." She felt in her pocket for her soma—only to discover that, by some unprecedented oversight, she had left the bottle down at the rest-house. Bernard's pockets were also empty.

Lenina was left to face the horrors of Malpais unaided. They came crowding in on her thick and fast. The spectacle of two young women giving breast to their babies made her blush and turn away her face. She had never seen anything so indecent in her life. And what made it worse was that, instead of tactfully ignoring it, Bernard proceeded to make open comments on this revoltingly viviparous scene. Ashamed, now that the effects of the soma had worn off, of the weakness he had displayed that morning in the hotel, he went out of his way to show himself strong and unorthodox.

"What a wonderfully intimate relationship," he said, deliberately outrageous. "And what an intensity of feeling it must generate! I often think

one may have missed something in not having had a mother. And perhaps you've missed something in not being a mother, Lenina. Imagine yourself sitting there with a little baby of your own...."

"Bernard! How can you?" The passage of an old woman with ophthalmia and a disease of the skin distracted her from her indignation.

"Let's go away," she begged. "I don't like it."

But at this moment their guide came back and, beckoning them to follow, led the way down the narrow street between the houses. They rounded a corner. A dead dog was lying on a rubbish heap; a woman with a goitre was looking for lice in the hair of a small girl. Their guide halted at the foot of a ladder, raised his hand perpendicularly, then darted it horizontally forward. They did what he mutely commanded—climbed the ladder and walked through the doorway, to which it gave access, into a long narrow room, rather dark and smelling of smoke and cooked grease and long-worn, long-unwashed clothes. At the further end of the room was another doorway, through which came a shaft of surdight and the noise, very loud and close, of the drums.

They stepped across the threshold and found themselves on a wide terrace. Below them, shut in by the tall houses, was the village square, crowded with Indians. Bright blankets, and feathers in black hair, and the glint of turquoise, and dark skins shining with heat. Lenina put her handkerchief to her nose again. In the open space at the centre of the square were two circular platforms of masonry and trampled clay—the roofs, it was evident, of underground chambers; for in the centre of each platform was an

open hatchway, with a ladder emerging from the lower darkness. A sound of subterranean flute playing came up and was almost lost in the steady remorseless persistence of the drums.

Lenina liked the drums. Shutting her eyes she abandoned herself to their soft repeated thunder, allowed it to invade her consciousness more and more completely, till at last there was nothing left in the world but that one deep pulse of sound. It reminded her reassuringly of the synthetic noises made at Solidarity Services and Ford's Day celebrations. "Orgy-porgy," she whispered to herself. These drums beat out just the same rhythms.

There was a sudden startling burst of singing—hundreds of male voices crying out fiercely in harsh metallic unison. A few long notes and silence, the thunderous silence of the drums; then shrill, in a neighing treble, the women's answer. Then again the drums; and once more the men's deep savage affirmation of their manhood.

Queer—yes. The place was queer, so was the music, so were the clothes and the goitres and the skin diseases and the old people. But the performance itself—there seemed to be nothing specially queer about that.

"It reminds me of a lower-caste Community Sing," she told Bernard.

But a little later it was reminding her a good deal less of that innocuous function. For suddenly there had swarmed up from those round chambers underground a ghastly troop of monsters. Hideously masked or painted out of all semblance of humanity, they had tramped out a strange limping dance round the square; round and again round, singing as they went, round and

round—each time a little faster; and the drums had changed and quickened their rhythm, so that it became like the pulsing of fever in the ears; and the crowd had begun to sing with the dancers, louder and louder; and first one woman had shrieked, and then another and another, as though they were being killed; and then suddenly the leader of the dancers broke out of the line, ran to a big wooden chest which was standing at one end of the square, raised the lid and pulled out a pair of black snakes. A great yell went up from the crowd, and all the other dancers ran towards him with out-stretched hands. He tossed the snakes to the first-comers, then dipped back into the chest for more. More and more, black snakes and brown and mottled—he flung them out. And then the dance began again on a different rhythm. Round and round they went with their snakes, snakily, with a soft undulating movement at the knees and hips. Round and round. Then the leader gave a signal, and one after another, all the snakes were flung down in the middle of the square; an old man came up from underground and sprinkled them with corn meal, and from the other hatchway came a woman and sprinkled them with water from a black jar. Then the old man lifted his hand and, startingly, terrifyingly, there was absolute silence. The drums stopped beating, life seemed to have come to an end. The old man pointed towards the two hatchways that gave entrance to the lower world. And slowly, raised by invisible hands from below, there emerged from the one a painted image of an eagle, from the other that of a man, naked, and nailed to a cross. They hung there, seemingly self-sustained, as though watching. The old man clapped his hands. Naked but for a white cotton breech-cloth, a boy of about eighteen stepped out of the crowd and stood before him, his hands crossed over his chest, his head bowed. The old man made the sign of the cross over him and turned away. Slowly, the boy began to walk round the writhing heap of snakes. He had completed the first

circuit and was half-way through the second when, from among the dancers, a tall man wearing the mask of a coyote and holding in his hand a whip of plaited leather, advanced towards him. The boy moved on as though unaware of the other's existence. The coyote-man raised his whip, there was a long moment of expectancy, then a swift movement, the whistle of the lash and its loud flat-sounding impact on the flesh. The boy's body quivered; but he made no sound, he walked on at the same slow, steady pace. The coyote struck again, again; and at every blow at first a gasp, and then a deep groan went up from the crowd. The boy walked. Twice, thrice, four times round he went. The blood was streaming. Five times round, six times round. Suddenly Lenina covered her face with her hands and began to sob. "Oh, stop them, stop them!" she implored. But the whip fell and fell inexorably. Seven times round. Then all at once the boy staggered and, still without a sound, pitched forward on to his face. Bending over him, the old man touched his back with a long white feather, held it up for a moment, crimson, for the people to see then shook it thrice over the snakes. A few drops fell, and suddenly the drums broke out again into a panic of hurrying notes; there was a great shout. The dancers rushed forward, picked up the snakes and ran out of the square. Men, women, children, all the crowd ran after them. A minute later the square was empty, only the boy remained, prone where he had fallen, quite still. Three old women came out of one of the houses, and with some difficulty lifted him and carried him in. The eagle and the man on the cross kept guard for a little while over the empty pueblo; then, as though they had seen enough, sank slowly down through their hatchways, out of sight, into the nether world.

Lenina was still sobbing. "Too awful," she kept repeating, and all Bernard's consolations were in vain. "Too awful! That blood!" She

shuddered. "Oh, I wish I had my soma."

There was the sound of feet in the inner room.

Lenina did not move, but sat with her face in her hands, unseeing, apart. Only Bernard turned round.

The dress of the young man who now stepped out on to the terrace was Indian; but his plaited hair was straw-coloured, his eyes a pale blue, and his skin a white skin, bronzed.

"Hullo. Good-morrow," said the stranger, in faultless but peculiar English. "You're civilized, aren't you? You come from the Other Place, outside the Reservation?"

"Who on earth...?" Bernard began in astonishment.

The young man sighed and shook his head. "A most unhappy gentleman." And, pointing to the bloodstains in the centre of the square, "Do you see that damned spot?" he asked in a voice that trembled with emotion.

"A gramme is better than a damn," said Lenina mechanically from behind her hands. "I wish I had my soma!"

"I ought to have been there," the young man went on. "Why wouldn't they let me be the sacrifice? I'd have gone round ten times—twelve, fifteen. Palowhtiwa only got as far as seven. They could have had twice as much blood from me. The multitudinous seas incarnadine." He flung out his arms in a lavish gesture; then, despairingly, let them fall again. "But they wouldn't let me. They disliked me for my complexion. It's always been like that.

Always.” Tears stood in the young man’s eyes; he was ashamed and turned away.

Astonishment made Lenina forget the deprivation of soma. She uncovered her face and, for the first time, looked at the stranger. “Do you mean to say that you wanted to be hit with that whip?”

Still averted from her, the young man made a sign of affirmation. “For the sake of the pueblo—to make the rain come and the corn grow. And to please Pookong and Jesus. And then to show that I can bear pain without crying out. Yes,” and his voice suddenly took on a new resonance, he turned with a proud squaring of the shoulders, a proud, defiant lifting of the chin “to show that I’m a man...Oh!” He gave a gasp and was silent, gaping. He had seen, for the first time in his life, the face of a girl whose cheeks were not the colour of chocolate or dogskin, whose hair was auburn and permanently waved, and whose expression (amazing novelty!) was one of benevolent interest. Lenina was smiling at him; such a nice-looking boy, she was thinking, and a really beautiful body. The blood rushed up into the young man’s face; he dropped his eyes, raised them again for a moment only to find her still smiling at him, and was so much overcome that he had to turn away and pretend to be looking very hard at something on the other side of the square.

Bernard’s questions made a person. Who? How? When? From where? Keeping his eyes fixed on Bernard’s face (for so passionately did he long to see Lenina smiling that he simply dared not look at her), the young man tried to explain himself. Linda and he—Linda was his mother (the word made Lenina look uncomfortable)—were strangers in the Reservation. Linda had

come from the Other Place long ago, before he was born, with a man who was his father. (Bernard pricked up his ears.) She had gone walking alone in those mountains over there to the North, had fallen down a steep place and hurt her head. (“Go on, go on,” said Bernard excitedly.) Some hunters from Malpais had found her and brought her to the pueblo. As for the man who was his father, Linda had never seen him again. His name was Tomakin. (Yes, “Thomas” was the D.H.C.’s first name.) He must have flown away, back to the Other Place, away without her—a bad, unkind, unnatural man.

“And so I was born in Malpais,” he concluded. “In Malpais.” And he shook his head.

The squalor of that little house on the outskirts of the pueblo!

A space of dust and rubbish separated it from the village. Two famine-stricken dogs were nosing obscenely in the garbage at its door. Inside, when they entered, the twilight stank and was loud with flies.

“Linda!” the young man called.

From the inner room a rather hoarse female voice said, “Coming.”

They waited. In bowls on the floor were the remains of a meal, perhaps of several meals.

The door opened. A very stout blonde squaw stepped across the threshold and stood looking at the strangers staring incredulously, her mouth open. Lenina noticed with disgust that two of the front teeth were missing. And the colour of the ones that remained...She shuddered. It was worse than

the old man. So fat. And all the lines in her face, the flabbiness, the wrinkles. And the sagging cheeks, with those purplish blotches. And the red veins on her nose, the bloodshot eyes. And that neck—that neck; and the blanket she wore over her head—ragged and filthy.

And under the brown sack-shaped tunic those enormous breasts, the bulge of the stomach, the hips. Oh, much worse than the old man, much worse! And suddenly the creature burst out in a torrent of speech, rushed at her with outstretched arms and—Ford! Ford! it was too revolting, in another moment she'd be sick—pressed her against the bulge, the bosom, and began to kiss her. Ford! to kiss, slobberingly, and smelt too horrible, obviously never had a bath, and simply reeked of that beastly stuff that was put into Delta and Epsilon bottles (no, it wasn't true about Bernard), positively stank of alcohol. She broke away as quickly as she could.

A blubbered and distorted face confronted her; the creature was crying.

“Oh, my dear, my dear.” The torrent of words flowed sobbingly. “If you knew how glad—after all these years! A civilized face. Yes, and civilized clothes. Because I thought I should never see a piece of real acetate silk again.” She fingered the sleeve of Lenina's shirt. The nails were black. “And those adorable viscose velveteen shorts! Do you know, dear, I've still got my old clothes, the ones I came in, put away in a box. I'll show them you afterwards. Though, of course, the acetate has all gone into holes. But such a lovely white bandolier—though I must say your green morocco is even lovelier. Not that it did me much good, that bandolier.” Her tears began to flow again. “I suppose John told you. What I had to suffer—and not a gramme of soma to be had. Only a drink of mescal every now and then, when Popé

used to bring it. Popé is a boy I used to know. But it makes you feel so bad afterwards. the mescal does, and you're sick with the peyotl; besides it always made that awful feeling of being ashamed much worse the next day. And I was so ashamed. Just think of it: me, a Beta—having a baby: put yourself in my place.” (The mere suggestion made Lenina shudder.) “Though it wasn't my fault, I swear; because I still don't know how it happened, seeing that I did all the Malthusian Drill—you know, by numbers, One, two, three, four, always, I swear it; but all the same it happened, and of course there wasn't anything like an Abortion Centre here. Is it still down in Chelsea, by the way?” she asked. Lenina nodded. “And still floodlighted on Tuesdays and Fridays?” Lenina nodded again. “That lovely pink glass tower!” Poor Linda lifted her face and with closed eyes ecstatically contemplated the bright remembered image. “And the river at night,” she whispered. Great tears oozed slowly out from behind her tight-shut eyelids. “And flying back in the evening from Stoke Poges. And then a hot bath and vibro-vacuum massage...But there.” She drew a deep breath, shook her head, opened her eyes again, sniffed once or twice, then blew her nose on her fingers and wiped them on the skirt of her tunic. “Oh, I'm so sorry,” she said in response to Lenina's involuntary grimace of disgust. “I oughtn't to have done that. I'm sorry. But what are you to do when there aren't any handkerchiefs? I remember how it used to upset me, all that dirt, and nothing being aseptic. I had an awful cut on my head when they first brought me here. You can't imagine what they used to put on it. Filth, just filth. ‘Civilization is Sterilization,’ I used to say them. And ‘Streptocock-Gee to Banbury-T, to see a fine bathroom and W.C.’ as though they were children. But of course they didn't understand. How should they? And in the end I suppose I got used to it. And anyhow, how can you keep things clean when there isn't hot water

laid on? And look at these clothes. This beastly wool isn't like acetate. It lasts and lasts. And you're supposed to mend it if it gets torn. But I'm a Beta; I worked in the Fertilizing Room; nobody ever taught me to do anything like that. It wasn't my business. Besides, it never used to be right to mend clothes. Throw them away when they've got holes in them and buy new. 'The more stitches, the less riches.' Isn't that right? Mending's anti-social. But it's all different here. It's like living with lunatics. Everything they do is mad." She looked round; saw John and Bernard had left them and were walking up and down in the dust and garbage outside the house; but, none the less confidentially lowering her voice, and leaning, while Lenina stiffened and shrank, so close that the blown reek of embryo-poison stirred the hair on her cheek. "For instance," she hoarsely whispered, "take the way they have one another here. Mad, I tell you, absolutely mad. Everybody belongs to every one else—don't they? don't they?" she insisted, tugging at Lenina's sleeve. Lenina nodded her averted head, let out the breath she had been holding and managed to draw another one, relatively untainted. "Well, here," the other went on, "nobody's supposed to belong to more than one person. And if you have people in the ordinary way, the others think you're wicked and anti-social. They hate and despise you. Once a lot of women came and made a scene because their men came to see me. Well, why not? And then they rushed at me...No, it was too awful. I can't tell you about it." Linda covered her face with her hands and shuddered. "They're so hateful, the women here. Mad, mad and cruel. And of course they don't know anything about Malthusian Drill, or bottles, or decanting, or anything of that sort. So they're having children all the time—like dogs. It's too revolting. And to think that I...Oh, Ford, Ford, Ford! And yet John was a great comfort to me. I don't know what I should have done without him. Even though he did get so upset

whenever a man...Quite as a tiny boy, even. Once (but that was when he was bigger) he tried to kill poor Waihusiwa—or was it Popé?—just because I used to have them sometimes. Because I never could make him understand that that was what civilized people ought to do. Being mad's infectious I believe. Anyhow, John seems to have caught it from the Indians. Because, of course, he was with them a lot. Even though they always were so beastly to him and wouldn't let him do all the things the other boys did. Which was a good thing in a way, because it made it easier for me to condition him a little. Though you've no idea how difficult that is. There's so much one doesn't know; it wasn't my business to know. I mean, when a child asks you how a helicopter works or who made the world—well, what are you to answer if you're a Beta and have always worked in the Fertilizing Room? What are you to answer?"

Chapter Eight

OUTSIDE, in the dust and among the garbage (there were four dogs now), Bernard and John were walking slowly up and down.

“So hard for me to realize,” Bernard was saying, “to reconstruct. As though we were living on different planets, in different centuries. A mother, and all this dirt, and gods, and old age, and disease...” He shook his head. “It’s almost inconceivable. I shall never understand, unless you explain.”

“Explain what?”

“This.” He indicated the pueblo. “That.” And it was the little house outside the village. “Everything. All your life.”

“But what is there to say?”

“From the beginning. As far back as you can remember.”

“As far back as I can remember.” John frowned. There was a long silence.

It was very hot. They had eaten a lot of tortillas and sweet corn. Linda said, “Come and lie down, Baby.” They lay down together in the big bed. “Sing,” and Linda sang. Sang “Streptocock-Gee to Banbury-T” and “Bye Baby Banting, soon you’ll need decanting.” Her voice got fainter and fainter...

There was a loud noise, and he woke with a start. A man was saying something to Linda, and Linda was laughing. She had pulled the blanket up to her chin, but the man pulled it down again. His hair was like two black ropes, and round his arm was a lovely silver bracelet with blue stones in it. He liked the bracelet; but all the same, he was frightened; he hid his face against Linda's body. Linda put her hand on him and he felt safer. In those other words he did not understand so well, she said to the man, "Not with John here." The man looked at him, then again at Linda, and said a few words in a soft voice. Linda said, "No." But the man bent over the bed towards him and his face was huge, terrible; the black ropes of hair touched the blanket. "No," Linda said again, and he felt her hand squeezing him more tightly. "No, no!" But the man took hold of one of his arms, and it hurt. He screamed. The man put up his other hand and lifted him up. Linda was still holding him, still saying, "No, no." The man said something short and angry, and suddenly her hands were gone. "Linda, Linda." He kicked and wriggled; but the man carried him across to the door, opened it, put him down on the floor in the middle of the other room, and went away, shutting the door behind him. He got up, he ran to the door. Standing on tiptoe he could just reach the big wooden latch. He lifted it and pushed; but the door wouldn't open. "Linda," he shouted. She didn't answer.

He remembered a huge room, rather dark; and there were big wooden things with strings fastened to them, and lots of women standing round them—making blankets, Linda said. Linda told him to sit in the corner with the other children, while she went and helped the women. He played with the little boys for a long time.

Suddenly people started talking very loud, and there were the women pushing Linda away, and Linda was crying. She went to the door and he ran after her. He asked her why they were angry. "Because I broke something," she said. And then she got angry too. "How should I know how to do their beastly weaving?" she said. "Beastly savages." He asked her what savages were. When they got back to their house, Popé was waiting at the door, and he came in with them. He had a big gourd full of stuff that looked like water; only it wasn't water, but something with a bad smell that burnt your mouth and made you cough. Linda drank some and Popé drank some, and then Linda laughed a lot and talked very loud; and then she and Popé went into the other room. When Popé went away, he went into the room. Linda was in bed and so fast asleep that he couldn't wake her.

Popé used to come often. He said the stuff in the gourd was called mescal; but Linda said it ought to be called soma; only it made you feel ill afterwards. He hated Popé. He hated them all—all the men who came to see Linda. One afternoon, when he had been playing with the other children—it was cold, he remembered, and there was snow on the mountains—he came back to the house and heard angry voices in the bedroom. They were women's voices, and they said words he didn't understand, but he knew they were dreadful words. Then suddenly, crash! Something was upset; he heard people moving about quickly, and there was another crash and then a noise like hitting a mule, only not so bony; then Linda screamed. "Oh, don't, don't, don't!" she said. He ran in. There were three women in dark blankets. Linda was on the bed. One of the women was holding her wrists. Another was lying across her legs, so that she couldn't kick. The third was hitting her with a whip. Once, twice, three times; and each time Linda screamed. Crying, he

tugged at the fringe of the woman's blanket. "Please, please." With her free hand she held him away. The whip came down again, and again Linda screamed. He caught hold of the woman's enormous brown hand between his own and bit it with all his might. She cried out, wrenched her hand free, and gave him such a push that he fell down. While he was lying on the ground she hit him three times with the whip. It hurt more than anything he had ever felt—like fire. The whip whistled again, fell. But this time it was Linda who screamed.

"But why did they want to hurt you, Linda?" he asked that night. He was crying, because the red marks of the whip on his back still hurt so terribly. But he was also crying because people were so beastly and unfair, and because he was only a little boy and couldn't do anything against them. Linda was crying too. She was grown up, but she wasn't big enough to fight against three of them. It wasn't fair for her either. "Why did they want to hurt you, Linda?"

"I don't know. How should I know?" It was difficult to hear what she said, because she was lying on her stomach and her face was in the pillow. "They say those men are their men," she went on; and she did not seem to be talking to him at all; she seemed to be talking with some one inside herself. A long talk which she didn't understand; and in the end she started crying louder than ever.

"Oh, don't cry, Linda. Don't cry."

He pressed himself against her. He put his arm round her neck. Linda cried out. "Oh, be careful. My shoulder! Oh!" and she pushed him away,

hard. His head banged against the wall. “Little idiot!” she shouted; and then, suddenly, she began to slap him. Slap, slap...

“Linda,” he cried out. “Oh, mother, don’t!”

“I’m not your mother. I won’t be your mother.”

“But, Linda...Oh!” She slapped him on the cheek.

“Turned into a savage,” she shouted. “Having young ones like an animal...If it hadn’t been for you, I might have gone to the Inspector, I might have got away. But not with a baby. That would have been too shameful.”

He saw that she was going to hit him again, and lifted his arm to guard his face. “Oh, don’t, Linda, please don’t.”

“Little beast!” She pulled down his arm; his face was uncovered.

“Don’t, Linda.” He shut his eyes, expecting the blow.

But she didn’t hit him. After a little time, he opened his eyes again and saw that she was looking at him. He tried to smile at her. Suddenly she put her arms round him and kissed him again and again.

Sometimes, for several days, Linda didn’t get up at all. She lay in bed and was sad. Or else she drank the stuff that Popé brought and laughed a great deal and went to sleep. Sometimes she was sick. Often she forgot to wash him, and there was nothing to eat except cold tortillas. He remembered the first time she found those little animals in his hair, how she screamed and screamed.

The happiest times were when she told him about the Other Place. “And you really can go flying, whenever you like?”

“Whenever you like.” And she would tell him about the lovely music that came out of a box, and all the nice games you could play, and the delicious things to eat and drink, and the light that came when you pressed a little thing in the wall, and the pictures that you could hear and feel and smell, as well as see, and another box for making nice smells, and the pink and green and blue and silver houses as high as mountains, and everybody happy and no one ever sad or angry, and every one belonging to every one else, and the boxes where you could see and hear what was happening at the other side of the world, and babies in lovely clean bottles—everything so clean, and no nasty smells, no dirt at all—and people never lonely, but living together and being so jolly and happy, like the summer dances here in Malpais, but much happier, and the happiness being there every day, every day....He listened by the hour. And sometimes, when he and the other children were tired with too much playing, one of the old men of the pueblo would talk to them, in those other words, of the great Transformer of the World, and of the long fight between Right Hand and Left Hand, between Wet and Dry; of Awonawilona, who made a great fog by thinking in the night, and then made the whole world out of the fog; of Earth Mother and Sky Father; of Ahaiyuta and Marsailema, the twins of War and Chance; of Jesus and Pookong; of Mary and Etsanatilehi, the woman who makes herself young again; of the Black Stone at Laguna and the Great Eagle and Our Lady of Acoma. Strange stories, all the more wonderful to him for being told in the other words and so not fully understood. Lying in bed, he would think of Heaven and London and Our Lady of Acoma and the rows and rows of babies in clean bottles and

Jesus flying up and Linda flying up and the great Director of World Hatcheries and Awonawilona.

Lots of men came to see Linda. The boys began to point their fingers at him. In the strange other words they said that Linda was bad; they called her names he did not understand, but that he knew were bad names. One day they sang a song about her, again and again. He threw stones at them. They threw back; a sharp stone cut his cheek. The blood wouldn't stop; he was covered with blood.

Linda taught him to read. With a piece of charcoal she drew pictures on the wall—an animal sitting down, a baby inside a bottle; then she wrote letters. THE CAT IS ON THE MAT. THE TOT IS IN THE POT. He learned quickly and easily. When he knew how to read all the words she wrote on the wall, Linda opened her big wooden box and pulled out from under those funny little red trousers she never wore a thin little book. He had often seen it before. “When you're bigger,” she had said, “you can read it.” Well, now he was big enough. He was proud. “I'm afraid you won't find it very exciting,” she said. “But it's the only thing I have.” She sighed. “If only you could see the lovely reading machines we used to have in London!” He began reading. The Chemical and Bacteriological Conditioning of the Embryo. Practical Instructions for Beta Embryo-Store Workers. It took him a quarter of an hour to read the title alone. He threw the book on the floor. “Beastly, beastly book!” he said, and began to cry.

The boys still sang their horrible song about Linda. Sometimes, too, they laughed at him for being so ragged. When he tore his clothes, Linda did not know how to mend them. In the Other Place, she told him, people threw away

clothes with holes in them and got new ones. “Rags, rags!” the boys used to shout at him. “But I can read,” he said to himself, “and they can’t. They don’t even know what reading is.” It was fairly easy, if he thought hard enough about the reading, to pretend that he didn’t mind when they made fun of him. He asked Linda to give him the book again.

The more the boys pointed and sang, the harder he read. Soon he could read all the words quite well. Even the longest. But what did they mean? He asked Linda; but even when she could answer it didn’t seem to make it very clear, And generally she couldn’t answer at all.

“What are chemicals?” he would ask.

“Oh, stuff like magnesium salts, and alcohol for keeping the Deltas and Epsilons small and backward, and calcium carbonate for bones, and all that sort of thing.”

“But how do you make chemicals, Linda? Where do they come from?”

“Well, I don’t know. You get them out of bottles. And when the bottles are empty, you send up to the Chemical Store for more. It’s the Chemical Store people who make them, I suppose. Or else they send to the factory for them. I don’t know. I never did any chemistry. My job was always with the embryos. It was the same with everything else he asked about. Linda never seemed to know. The old men of the pueblo had much more definite answers.

“The seed of men and all creatures, the seed of the sun and the seed of earth and the seed of the sky—Awonawilona made them all out of the Fog of Increase. Now the world has four wombs; and he laid the seeds in the lowest

of the four wombs. And gradually the seeds began to grow...”

One day (John calculated later that it must have been soon after his twelfth birthday) he came home and found a book that he had never seen before lying on the floor in the bedroom. It was a thick book and looked very old. The binding had been eaten by mice; some of its pages were loose and crumpled. He picked it up, looked at the title-page: the book was called *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*.

Linda was lying on the bed, sipping that horrible stinking mescal out of a cup. “Popé brought it,” she said. Her voice was thick and hoarse like somebody else’s voice. “It was lying in one of the chests of the Antelope Kiva. It’s supposed to have been there for hundreds of years. I expect it’s true, because I looked at it, and it seemed to be full of nonsense. Uncivilized. Still, it’ll be good enough for you to practice your reading on.” She took a last sip, set the cup down on the floor beside the bed, turned over on her side, hiccoughed once or twice and went to sleep.

He opened the book at random.

Nay, but to live In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed, Stew’d in corruption, honeying and making love Over the nasty sty...

The strange words rolled through his mind; rumbled, like talking thunder; like the drums at the summer dances, if the drums could have spoken; like the men singing the Corn Song, beautiful, beautiful, so that you cried; like old Mitsima saying magic over his feathers and his carved sticks and his bits of bone and stone—kiathla tsilu silokwe silokwe silokwe. Kiai silu

silu, tsithl—but better than Mitsima’s magic, because it meant more, because it talked to him, talked wonderfully and only half-understandably, a terrible beautiful magic, about Linda; about Linda lying there snoring, with the empty cup on the floor beside the bed; about Linda and Popé, Linda and Popé.

He hated Popé more and more. A man can smile and smile and be a villain. Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain. What did the words exactly mean? He only half knew. But their magic was strong and went on rumbling in his head, and somehow it was as though he had never really hated Popé before; never really hated him because he had never been able to say how much he hated him. But now he had these words, these words like drums and singing and magic. These words and the strange, strange story out of which they were taken (he couldn’t make head or tail of it, but it was wonderful, wonderful all the same)—they gave him a reason for hating Popé; and they made his hatred more real; they even made Popé himself more real.

One day, when he came in from playing, the door of the inner room was open, and he saw them lying together on the bed, asleep—white Linda and Popé almost black beside her, with one arm under her shoulders and the other dark hand on her breast, and one of the plaits of his long hair lying across her throat, like a black snake trying to strangle her. Popé’s gourd and a cup were standing on the floor near the bed. Linda was snoring.

His heart seemed to have disappeared and left a hole. He was empty. Empty, and cold, and rather sick, and giddy. He leaned against the wall to steady himself. Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous...Like drums, like the men singing for the corn, like magic, the words repeated and repeated themselves in his head. From being cold he was suddenly hot. His cheeks

burnt with the rush of blood, the room swam and darkened before his eyes. He ground his teeth. "I'll kill him, I'll kill him, I'll kill him," he kept saying. And suddenly there were more words.

When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed...

The magic was on his side, the magic explained and gave orders. He stepped back in the outer room. "When he is drunk asleep..." The knife for the meat was lying on the floor near the fireplace. He picked it up and tiptoed to the door again. "When he is drunk asleep, drunk asleep..." He ran across the room and stabbed—oh, the blood!—stabbed again, as Popé heaved out of his sleep, lifted his hand to stab once more, but found his wrist caught, held and—oh, oh!—twisted. He couldn't move, he was trapped, and there were Popé's small black eyes, very close, staring into his own. He looked away. There were two cuts on Popé's left shoulder. "Oh, look at the blood!" Linda was crying. "Look at the blood!" She had never been able to bear the sight of blood. Popé lifted his other hand—to strike him, he thought. He stiffened to receive the blow. But the hand only took him under the chin and turned his face, so that he had to look again into Popé's eyes. For a long time, for hours and hours. And suddenly—he couldn't help it—he began to cry. Popé burst out laughing. "Go," he said, in the other Indian words. "Go, my brave Ahaiyuta." He ran out into the other room to hide his tears.

"You are fifteen," said old Mitsima, in the Indian words. "Now I may teach you to work the clay."

Squatting by the river, they worked together.

“First of all,” said Mitsima, taking a lump of the wetted clay between his hands, “we make a little moon.” The old man squeezed the lump into a disk, then bent up the edges, the moon became a shallow cup.

Slowly and unskilfully he imitated the old man’s delicate gestures.

“A moon, a cup, and now a snake.” Mitsima rolled out another piece of clay into a long flexible cylinder, trooped it into a circle and pressed it on to the rim of the cup. “Then another snake. And another. And another.” Round by round, Mitsima built up the sides of the pot; it was narrow, it bulged, it narrowed again towards the neck. Mitsima squeezed and patted, stroked and scraped; and there at last it stood, in shape the familiar water pot of Malpais, but creamy white instead of black, and still soft to the touch. The crooked parody of Mitsima’s, his own stood beside it. Looking at the two pots, he had to laugh.

“But the next one will be better,” he said, and began to moisten another piece of clay.

To fashion, to give form, to feel his fingers gaining in skill and power—this gave him an extraordinary pleasure. “A, B, C, Vitamin D,” he sang to himself as he worked. “The fat’s in the liver, the cod’s in the sea.” And Mitsima also sang—a song about killing a bear. They worked all day, and all day he was filled with an intense, absorbing happiness.

“Next winter,” said old Mitsima, “I will teach you to make the bow.”

He stood for a long time outside the house, and at last the ceremonies within were finished. The door opened; they came out. Kothlu came first, his

right hand out-stretched and tightly closed, as though over some precious jewel. Her clenched hand similarly outstretched, Kiakimé followed. They walked in silence, and in silence, behind them, came the brothers and sisters and cousins and all the troop of old people.

They walked out of the pueblo, across the mesa. At the edge of the clid they halted, facing the early morning sun. Kothlu opened his hand. A pinch of corn meal lay white on the palm; he breathed on it, murmured a few words, then threw it, a handful of white dust, towards the sun. Kiakimé did the same. Then Khakimé's father stepped forward, and holding up a feathered prayer stick, made a long prayer, then threw the stick after the corn meal.

"It is finished," said old Mitsima in a loud voice. "They are married."

"Well," said Linda, as they turned away, "all I can say is, it does seem a lot of fuss to make about so little. In civilized countries, when a boy wants to have a girl, he just...But where are you going, John?"

He paid no attention to her calling, but ran on, away, away, anywhere to be by himself.

It is finished Old Mitsima's words repeated themselves in his mind. Finished, finished...In silence and from a long way off, but violently, desperately, hopelessly, he had loved Kiakimé. And now it was finished. He was sixteen.

At the full moon, in the Antelope Kiva, secrets would be told, secrets would be done and borne. They would go down, boys, into the kiva and come out again, men. The boys were all afraid and at the same time impatient. And

at last it was the day. The sun went down, the moon rose. He went with the others. Men were standing, dark, at the entrance to the kiva; the ladder went down into the red lighted depths. Already the leading boys had begun to climb down. Suddenly, one of the men stepped forward, caught him by the arm, and pulled him out of the ranks. He broke free and dodged back into his place among the others. This time the man struck him, pulled his hair. "Not for you, white-hair!" "Not for the son of the she-dog," said one of the other men. The boys laughed. "Go!" And as he still hovered on the fringes of the group, "Go!" the men shouted again. One of them bent down, took a stone, threw it. "Go, go, go!" There was a shower of stones. Bleeding, he ran away into the darkness. From the red-lit kiva came the noise of singing. The last of the boys had climbed down the ladder. He was all alone.

All alone, outside the pueblo, on the bare plain of the mesa. The rock was like bleached bones in the moonlight. Down in the valley, the coyotes were howling at the moon. The bruises hurt him, the cuts were still bleeding; but it was not for pain that he sobbed; it was because he was all alone, because he had been driven out, alone, into this skeleton world of rocks and moonlight. At the edge of the precipice he sat down. The moon was behind him; he looked down into the black shadow of the mesa, into the black shadow of death. He had only to take one step, one little jump....He held out his right hand in the moonlight. From the cut on his wrist the blood was still oozing. Every few seconds a drop fell, dark, almost colourless in the dead light. Drop, drop, drop. To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow...

He had discovered Time and Death and God.

"Alone, always alone," the young man was saying.

The words awoke a plaintive echo in Bernard's mind. Alone, alone... "So am I," he said, on a gush of confidingness. "Terribly alone."

"Are you?" John looked surprised. "I thought that in the Other Place... I mean, Linda always said that nobody was ever alone there."

Bernard blushed uncomfortably. "You see," he said, mumbling and with averted eyes, "I'm rather different from most people, I suppose. If one happens to be decanted different..."

"Yes, that's just it." The young man nodded. "If one's different, one's bound to be lonely. They're beastly to one. Do you know, they shut me out of absolutely everything? When the other boys were sent out to spend the night on the mountains—you know, when you have to dream which your sacred animal is—they wouldn't let me go with the others; they wouldn't tell me any of the secrets. I did it by myself, though," he added. "Didn't eat anything for five days and then went out one night alone into those mountains there." He pointed.

Patronizingly, Bernard smiled. "And did you dream of anything?" he asked.

The other nodded. "But I mustn't tell you what." He was silent for a little; then, in a low voice, "Once," he went on, "I did something that none of the others did: I stood against a rock in the middle of the day, in summer, with my arms out, like Jesus on the Cross."

"What on earth for?"

“I wanted to know what it was like being crucified. Hanging there in the sun...”

“But why?”

“Why? Well...” He hesitated. “Because I felt I ought to. If Jesus could stand it. And then, if one has done something wrong...Besides, I was unhappy; that was another reason.”

“It seems a funny way of curing your unhappiness,” said Bernard. But on second thoughts he decided that there was, after all, some sense in it. Better than taking soma...

“I fainted after a time,” said the young man. “Fell down on my face. Do you see the mark where I cut myself?” He lifted the thick yellow hair from his forehead. The scar showed, pale and puckered, on his right temple.

Bernard looked, and then quickly, with a little shudder, averted his eyes. His conditioning had made him not so much pitiful as profoundly squeamish. The mere suggestion of illness or wounds was to him not only horrifying, but even repulsive and rather disgusting. Like dirt, or deformity, or old age. Hastily he changed the subject.

“I wonder if you’d like to come back to London with us?” he asked, making the first move in a campaign whose strategy he had been secretly elaborating ever since, in the little house, he had realized who the “father” of this young savage must be. “Would you like that?”

The young man’s face lit up. “Do you really mean it?”

“Of course; if I can get permission, that is.”

“Linda too?”

“Well...” He hesitated doubtfully. That revolting creature! No, it was impossible. Unless, unless...It suddenly occurred to Bernard that her very revoltingness might prove an enormous asset. “But of course!” he cried, making up for his first hesitations with an excess of noisy cordiality.

The young man drew a deep breath. “To think it should be coming true—what I’ve dreamt of all my life. Do you remember what Miranda says?”

“Who’s Miranda?”

But the young man had evidently not heard the question. “O wonder!” he was saying; and his eyes shone, his face was brightly flushed. “How many goodly creatures are there here! How beauteous mankind is!” The flush suddenly deepened; he was thinking of Lenina, of an angel in bottle-green viscose, lustrous with youth and skin food, plump, benevolently smiling. His voice faltered. “O brave new world,” he began, then-suddenly interrupted himself; the blood had left his cheeks; he was as pale as paper.

“Are you married to her?” he asked.

“Am I what?”

“Married. You know—for ever. They say ‘for ever’ in the Indian words; it can’t be broken.”

“Ford, no!” Bernard couldn’t help laughing.

John also laughed, but for another reason—laughed for pure joy.

“O brave new world,” he repeated. “O brave new world that has such people in it. Let’s start at once.”

“You have a most peculiar way of talking sometimes,” said Bernard, staring at the young man in perplexed astonishment. “And, anyhow, hadn’t you better wait till you actually see the new world?”

Chapter Nine

LENINA felt herself entitled, after this day of queerness and horror, to a complete and absolute holiday. As soon as they got back to the rest-house, she swallowed six half-gramme tablets of soma, lay down on her bed, and within ten minutes had embarked for lunar eternity. It would be eighteen hours at the least before she was in time again.

Bernard meanwhile lay pensive and wide-eyed in the dark. It was long after midnight before he fell asleep. Long after midnight; but his insomnia had not been fruitless; he had a plan.

Punctually, on the following morning, at ten o'clock, the green-uniformed octoroon stepped out of his helicopter. Hemard was waiting for him among the agaves.

"Miss Crowne's gone on soma-holiday," he explained. "Can hardly be back before five, which leaves us seven hours."

He could fly to Santa Fé, do all the business he had to do, and be in Malpais again long before she woke up.

"She'll be quite safe here by herself?"

"Safe as helicopters," the octoroon assured him.

They climbed into the machine and started off at once. At ten thirty-four

they landed on the roof of the Santa Fé Post Office; at ten thirty-seven Bernard had got through to the World Controller's Office in Whitehall; at ten thirty-seven he was speaking to his lordship's fourth personal secretary; at ten forty-four he was repeating his story to the first secretary, and at ten forty-seven and a half it was the deep, resonant voice of Mustapha Mond himself that sounded in his ears.

"I ventured to think," stammered Bernard, "that your lordship might find the matter of sufficient scientific interest..."

"Yes, I do find it of sufficient scientific interest," said the deep voice. "Bring these two individuals back to London with you."

"Your lordship is aware that I shall need a special permit..."

"The necessary orders," said Mustapha Mond, "are being sent to the Warden of the Reservation at this moment. You will proceed at once to the Warden's Office. Good-morning, Mr. Marx."

There was silence. Bernard hung up the receiver and hurried up to the roof.

"Warden's Office," he said to the Gamma-green octroon.

At ten fifty-four Bernard was shaking hands with the Warden.

"Delighted, Mr. Marx, delighted." His boom was deferential. "We have just received special orders..."

"I know," said Bernard, interrupting him. "I was talking to his lordship

on the phone a moment ago.” His bored tone implied that he was in the habit of talking to his fordship every day of the week. He dropped into a chair. “If you’ll kindly take all the necessary steps as soon as possible. As soon as possible,” he emphatically repeated. He was thoroughly enjoying himself.

At eleven three he had all the necessary papers in his pocket.

“So long,” he said patronizingly to the Warden, who had accompanied him as far as the lift gates. “So long.”

He walked across to the hotel, had a bath, a vibro-vac massage, and an electrolytic shave, listened in to the morning’s news, looked in for half an hour on the televisor, ate a leisured luncheon, and at half-past two flew back with the octoroon to Malpais.

The young man stood outside the rest-house.

“Bernard,” he called. “Bernard!” There was no answer.

Noiseless on his deerksin moccasins, he ran up the steps and tried the door. The door was locked.

They were gone! Gone! It was the most terrible thing that had ever happened to him. She had asked him to come and see them, and now they were gone. He sat down on the steps and cried.

Half an hour later it occurred to him to look through the window. The first thing he saw was a green suit-case, with the initials L.C. painted on the lid. Joy flared up like fire within him. He picked up a stone. The smashed glass tinkled on the floor. A moment later he was inside the room. He opened

the green suit-case; and all at once he was breathing Lenina's perfume, filling his lungs with her essential being. His heart beat wildly; for a moment he was almost faint. Then, bending over the precious box, he touched, he lifted into the light, he examined. The zippers on Lenina's spare pair of viscose velveteen shorts were at first a puzzle, then solved, a delight. Zip, and then zip; zip, and then zip; he was enchanted. Her green slippers were the most beautiful things he had ever seen. He unfolded a pair of zippicamiknicks, blushed, put them hastily away again; but kissed a perfumed acetate handkerchief and wound a scarf round his neck. Opening a box, he spilt a cloud of scented powder. His hands were floury with the stuff. He wiped them on his chest, on his shoulders, on his bare arms. Delicious perfume! He shut his eyes; he rubbed his cheek against his own powdered arm. Touch of smooth skin against his face, scent in his nostrils of musky dust—her real presence. "Lenina," he whispered. "Lenina!"

A noise made him start, made him guiltily turn. He crammed up his thieveries into the suit-case and shut the lid; then listened again, looked. Not a sign of life, not a sound. And yet he had certainly heard something—something like a sigh, something like the creak of a board. He tiptoed to the door and, cautiously opening it, found himself looking on to a broad landing. On the opposite side of the landing was another door, ajar. He stepped out, pushed, peeped.

There, on a low bed, the sheet flung back, dressed in a pair of pink one-piece zippyjamas, lay Lenina, fast asleep and so beautiful in the midst of her curls, so touchingly childish with her pink toes and her grave sleeping face, so trustful in the helplessness of her limp hands and melted limbs, that the

tears came to his eyes.

With an infinity of quite unnecessary precautions—for nothing short of a pistol shot could have called Lenina back from her soma-holiday before the appointed time—he entered the room, he knelt on the floor beside the bed. He gazed, he clasped his hands, his lips moved. “Her eyes,” he murmured,

“Her eyes, her hair, her cheek, her gait, her voice; Handlest in thy discourse O! that her hand, In whose comparison all whites are ink Writing their own reproach; to whose soft seizure The cygnet’s down is harsh...”

A fly buzzed round her; he waved it away. “Flies,” he remembered,

“On the white wonder of dear Juliet’s hand, may seize. And steal immortal blessing from her lips, Who, even in pure and vestal modesty, Still blush, as thinking their own kisses sin.”

Very slowly, with the hesitating gesture of one who reaches forward to stroke a shy and possibly rather dangerous bird, he put out his hand. It hung there trembling, within an inch of those limp fingers, on the verge of contact. Did he dare? Dare to profane with his unworthiest hand that...No, he didn’t. The bird was too dangerous. His hand dropped back. How beautiful she was! How beautiful!

Then suddenly he found himself reflecting that he had only to take hold of the zipper at her neck and give one long, strong pull...He shut his eyes, he shook his head with the gesture of a dog shaking its ears as it emerges from the water. Detestable thought! He was ashamed of himself. Pure and vestal modesty...

There was a humming in the air. Another fly trying to steal immortal blessings? A wasp? He looked, saw nothing. The humming grew louder and louder, localized itself as being outside the shuttered windows. The plane! In a panic, he scrambled to his feet and ran into the other room, vaulted through the open window, and hurrying along the path between the tall agaves was in time to receive Bernard Marx as he climbed out of the helicopter.

Chapter Ten

THE HANDS of all the four thousand electric clocks in all the Bloomsbury Centre's four thousand rooms marked twenty-seven minutes past two. "This hive of industry," as the Director was fond of calling it, was in the full buzz of work. Every one was busy, everything in ordered motion. Under the microscopes, their long tails furiously lashing, spermatozoa were burrowing head first into eggs; and, fertilized, the eggs were expanding, piding, or if bokanovskified, budding and breaking up into whole populations of separate embryos. From the Social Predestination Room the escalators went rumbling down into the basement, and there, in the crimson darkness, stewingly warm on their cushion of peritoneum and gorged with blood-surrogate and hormones, the foetuses grew and grew or, poisoned, languished into a stunted Epsilonhood. With a faint hum and rattle the moving racks crawled imperceptibly through the weeks and the recapitulated aeons to where, in the Decanting Room, the newly-unbottled babes uttered their first yell of horror and amazement.

The dynamos purred in the sub-basement, the lifts rushed up and down. On all the eleven floors of Nurseries it was feeding time. From eighteen hundred bottles eighteen hundred carefully labelled infants were simultaneously sucking down their pint of pasteurized external secretion.

Above them, in ten successive layers of dormitory, the little boys and girls who were still young enough to need an afternoon sleep were as busy as

every one else, though they did not know it, listening unconsciously to hypnopædic lessons in hygiene and sociability, in class-consciousness and the toddler's love-life. Above these again were the playrooms where, the weather having turned to rain, nine hundred older children were amusing themselves with bricks and clay modelling, hunt-the-zipper, and erotic play.

Buzz, buzz! The hive was humming, busily, joyfully. Blithe was the singing of the young girls over their test-tubes, the Predestinators whistled as they worked, and in the Decanting Room what glorious jokes were cracked above the empty bottles! But the Director's face, as he entered the Fertilizing Room with Henry Foster, was grave, wooden with severity.

"A public example," he was saying. "In this room, because it contains more high-caste workers than any other in the Centre. I have told him to meet me here at half-past two."

"He does his work very well," put in Henry, with hypocritical generosity.

"I know. But that's all the more reason for severity. His intellectual eminence carries with it corresponding moral responsibilities. The greater a man's talents, the greater his power to lead astray. It is better that one should suffer than that many should be corrupted. Consider the matter dispassionately, Mr. Foster, and you will see that no offence is so heinous as unorthodoxy of behaviour. Murder kills only the individual—and, after all, what is an individual?" With a sweeping gesture he indicated the rows of microscopes, the test-tubes, the incubators. "We can make a new one with the greatest ease—as many as we like. Unorthodoxy threatens more than the life

of a mere individual; it strikes at Society itself. Yes, at Society itself,” he repeated. “Ah, but here he comes.”

Bernard had entered the room and was advancing between the rows of fertilizers towards them. A veneer of jaunty self-confidence thinly concealed his nervousness. The voice in which he said, “Good-morning, Director,” was absurdly too loud; that in which, correcting his mistake, he said, “You asked me to come and speak to you here,” ridiculously soft, a squeak.

“Yes, Mr. Marx,” said the Director portentously. “I did ask you to come to me here. You returned from your holiday last night, I understand.”

“Yes,” Bernard answered.

“Yes-s,” repeated the Director, lingering, a serpent, on the “s”. Then, suddenly raising his voice, “Ladies and gentlemen,” he trumpeted, “ladies and gentlemen.”

The singing of the girls over their test-tubes, the preoccupied whistling of the Microscopists, suddenly ceased. There was a profound silence; every one looked round.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” the Director repeated once more, “excuse me for thus interrupting your labours. A painful duty constrains me. The security and stability of Society are in danger. Yes, in danger, ladies and gentlemen. This man,” he pointed accusingly at Bernard, “this man who stands before you here, this Alpha-Plus to whom so much has been given, and from whom, in consequence, so much must be expected, this colleague of yours—or should I anticipate and say this ex-colleague?—has grossly betrayed the trust imposed

in him. By his heretical views on sport and soma, by the scandalous unorthodoxy of his sex-life, by his refusal to obey the teachings of Our Ford and behave out of office hours, ‘even as a little infant,’” (here the Director made the sign of the T), “he has proved himself an enemy of Society, a subverter, ladies and gentlemen, of all Order and Stability, a conspirator against Civilization itself. For this reason I propose to dismiss him, to dismiss him with ignominy from the post he has held in this Centre; I propose forthwith to apply for his transference to a Subcentre of the lowest order and, that his punishment may serve the best interest of Society, as far as possible removed from any important Centre of population. In Iceland he will have small opportunity to lead others astray by his unfordly example.” The Director paused; then, folding his arms, he turned impressively to Bernard. “Marx,” he said, “can you show any reason why I should not now execute the judgment passed upon you?”

“Yes, I can,” Bernard answered in a very loud voice.

Somewhat taken aback, but still majestically, “Then show it,” said the Director.

“Certainly. But it’s in the passage. One moment.” Bernard hurried to the door and threw it open. “Come in,” he commanded, and the reason came in and showed itself.

There was a gasp, a murmur of astonishment and horror; a young girl screamed; standing on a chair to get a better view some one upset two test-tubes full of spermatozoa. Bloated, sagging, and among those firm youthful bodies, those undistorted faces, a strange and terrifying monster of middle-

agedness, Linda advanced into the room, coquettishly smiling her broken and discoloured smile, and rolling as she walked, with what was meant to be a voluptuous undulation, her enormous haunches. Bernard walked beside her.

“There he is,” he said, pointing at the Director.

“Did you think I didn’t recognize him?” Linda asked indignantly; then, turning to the Director, “Of course I knew you; Tomakin, I should have known you anywhere, among a thousand. But perhaps you’ve forgotten me. Don’t you remember? Don’t you remember, Tomakin? Your Linda.” She stood looking at him, her head on one side, still smiling, but with a smile that became progressively, in face of the Director’s expression of petrified disgust, less and less self-confident, that wavered and finally went out. “Don’t you remember, Tomakin?” she repeated in a voice that trembled. Her eyes were anxious, agonized. The blotched and sagging face twisted grotesquely into the grimace of extreme grief. “Tomakin!” She held out her arms. Some one began to titter.

“What’s the meaning,” began the Director, “of this monstrous...”

“Tomakin!” She ran forward, her blanket trailing behind her, threw her arms round his neck, hid her face on his chest.

A howl of laughter went up irrepressibly.

“...this monstrous practical joke,” the Director shouted.

Red in the face, he tried to disengage himself from her embrace. Desperately she clung. “But I’m Linda, I’m Linda.” The laughter drowned

her voice. “You made me have a baby,” she screamed above the uproar. There was a sudden and appalling hush; eyes floated uncomfortably, not knowing where to look. The Director went suddenly pale, stopped struggling and stood, his hands on her wrists, staring down at her, horrified. “Yes, a baby—and I was its mother.” She flung the obscenity like a challenge into the outraged silence; then, suddenly breaking away from him, ashamed, ashamed, covered her face with her hands, sobbing. “It wasn’t my fault, Tomakin. Because I always did my drill, didn’t I? Didn’t I? Always...I don’t know how...If you knew how awful, Tomakin...But he was a comfort to me, all the same.” Turning towards the door, “John!” she called. “John!”

He came in at once, paused for a moment just inside the door, looked round, then soft on his moccasined feet strode quickly across the room, fell on his knees in front of the Director, and said in a clear voice: “My father!”

The word (for “father” was not so much obscene as—with its connotation of something at one remove from the loathsomeness and moral obliquity of child-bearing—merely gross, a scatological rather than a pornographic impropriety); the comically smutty word relieved what had become a quite intolerable tension. Laughter broke out, enormous, almost hysterical, peal after peal, as though it would never stop. My father—and it was the Director! My father! Oh Ford, oh Ford! That was really too good. The whooping and the roaring renewed themselves, faces seemed on the point of disintegration, tears were streaming. Six more test-tubes of spermatozoa were upset. My father!

Pale, wild-eyed, the Director glared about him in an agony of bewildered humiliation.

My father! The laughter, which had shown signs of dying away, broke out again more loudly than ever. He put his hands over his ears and rushed out of the room.

Chapter Eleven

After the scene in the Fertilizing Room, all upper-caste London was wild to see this delicious creature who had fallen on his knees before the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning—or rather the ex-Director, for the poor man had resigned immediately afterwards and never set foot inside the Centre again—had flopped down and called him (the joke was almost too good to be true!) “my father.” Linda, on the contrary, cut no ice; nobody had the smallest desire to see Linda. To say one was a mother—that was past a joke: it was an obscenity. Moreover, she wasn’t a real savage, had been hatched out of a bottle and conditioned like any one else: so couldn’t have really quaint ideas. Finally—and this was by far the strongest reason for people’s not wanting to see poor Linda—there was her appearance. Fat; having lost her youth; with bad teeth, and a blotched complexion, and that figure (Ford!)—you simply couldn’t look at her without feeling sick, yes, positively sick. So the best people were quite determined not to see Linda. And Linda, for her part, had no desire to see them. The return to civilization was for her the return to soma, was the possibility of lying in bed and taking holiday after holiday, without ever having to come back to a headache or a fit of vomiting, without ever being made to feel as you always felt after peyotl, as though you’d done something so shamefully anti-social that you could never hold up your head again. Soma played none of these unpleasant tricks. The holiday it gave was perfect and, if the morning after was disagreeable, it was so, not intrinsically, but only by comparison with the joys of the holiday.

The remedy was to make the holiday continuous. Greedily she clamoured for ever larger, ever more frequent doses. Dr. Shaw at first demurred; then let her have what she wanted. She took as much as twenty grammes a day.

“Which will finish her off in a month or two,” the doctor confided to Bernard. “One day the respiratory centre will be paralyzed. No more breathing. Finished. And a good thing too. If we could rejuvenate, of course it would be different. But we can’t.”

Surprisingly, as every one thought (for on soma-holiday Linda was most conveniently out of the way), John raised objections.

“But aren’t you shortening her life by giving her so much?”

“In one sense, yes,” Dr. Shaw admitted. “But in another we’re actually lengthening it.” The young man stared, uncomprehending. “Soma may make you lose a few years in time,” the doctor went on. “But think of the enormous, immeasurable durations it can give you out of time. Every soma-holiday is a bit of what our ancestors used to call eternity.”

John began to understand. “Eternity was in our lips and eyes,” he murmured.

“Eh?”

“Nothing.”

“Of course,” Dr. Shaw went on, “you can’t allow people to go popping off into eternity if they’ve got any serious work to do. But as she hasn’t got any serious work...”

“All the same,” John persisted, “I don’t believe it’s right.”

The doctor shrugged his shoulders. “Well, of course, if you prefer to have her screaming mad all the time...”

In the end John was forced to give in. Linda got her soma. Thenceforward she remained in her little room on the thirty-seventh floor of Bernard’s apartment house, in bed, with the radio and television always on, and the patchouli tap just dripping, and the soma tablets within reach of her hand—there she remained; and yet wasn’t there at all, was all the time away, infinitely far away, on holiday; on holiday in some other world, where the music of the radio was a labyrinth of sonorous colours, a sliding, palpitating labyrinth, that led (by what beautifully inevitable windings) to a bright centre of absolute conviction; where the dancing images of the television box were the performers in some indescribably delicious all-singing feely; where the dripping patchouli was more than scent—was the sun, was a million saxophones, was Popé making love, only much more so, incomparably more, and without end.

“No, we can’t rejuvenate. But I’m very glad,” Dr. Shaw had concluded, “to have had this opportunity to see an example of senility in a human being. Thank you so much for calling me in.” He shook Bernard warmly by the hand.

It was John, then, they were all after. And as it was only through Bernard, his accredited guardian, that John could be seen, Bernard now found himself, for the first time in his life, treated not merely normally, but as a

person of outstanding importance. There was no more talk of the alcohol in his blood-surrogate, no gibes at his personal appearance. Henry Foster went out of his way to be friendly; Benito Hoover made him a present of six packets of sex-hormone chewing-gum; the Assistant Predestinator came out and cadged almost abjectly for an invitation to one of Bernard's evening parties. As for the women, Bernard had only to hint at the possibility of an invitation, and he could have whichever of them he liked.

"Bernard's asked me to meet the Savage next Wednesday," Fanny announced triumphantly.

"I'm so glad," said Lenina. "And now you must admit that you were wrong about Bernard. Don't you think he's really rather sweet?"

Fanny nodded. "And I must say," she said, "I was quite agreeably surprised."

The Chief Bottler, the Director of Predestination, three Deputy Assistant Fertilizer-Generals, the Professor of Feelies in the College of Emotional Engineering, the Dean of the Westminster Community Singery, the Supervisor of Bokanovskification—the list of Bernard's notabilities was interminable.

"And I had six girls last week," he confided to Helmholtz Watson. "One on Monday, two on Tuesday, two more on Friday, and one on Saturday. And if I'd had the time or the inclination, there were at least a dozen more who were only too anxious..."

Helmholtz listened to his boastings in a silence so gloomily

disapproving that Bernard was offended.

“You’re envious,” he said.

Helmholtz shook his head. “I’m rather sad, that’s all,” he answered.

Bernard went off in a huff. Never, he told himself, never would he speak to Helmholtz again.

The days passed. Success went fizzily to Bernard’s head, and in the process completely reconciled him (as any good intoxicant should do) to a world which, up till then, he had found very unsatisfactory. In so far as it recognized him as important, the order of things was good. But, reconciled by his success, he yet refused to forego the privilege of criticizing this order. For the act of criticizing heightened his sense of importance, made him feel larger. Moreover, he did genuinely believe that there were things to criticize. (At the same time, he genuinely liked being a success and having all the girls he wanted.) Before those who now, for the sake of the Savage, paid their court to him, Bernard would parade a carping unorthodoxy. He was politely listened to. But behind his back people shook their heads. “That young man will come to a bad end,” they said, prophesying the more confidently in that they themselves would in due course personally see to it that the end was bad. “He won’t find another Savage to help him out a second time,” they said. Meanwhile, however, there was the first Savage; they were polite. And because they were polite, Bernard felt positively gigantic–gigantic and at the same time light with elation, lighter than air.

“Lighter than air,” said Bernard, pointing upwards.

Like a pearl in the sky, high, high above them, the Weather Department's captive balloon shone rosily in the sunshine.

"...the said Savage," so ran Bernard's instructions, "to be shown civilized life in all its aspects...."

He was being shown a bird's-eye view of it at present, a bird's-eye view from the platform of the Charing-T Tower. The Station Master and the Resident Meteorologist were acting as guides. But it was Bernard who did most of the talking. Intoxicated, he was behaving as though, at the very least, he were a visiting World Controller. Lighter than air.

The Bombay Green Rocket dropped out of the sky. The passengers alighted. Eight identical Dravidian twins in khaki looked out of the eight portholes of the cabin—the stewards.

"Twelve hundred and fifty kilometres an hour," said the Station Master impressively. "What do you think of that, Mr. Savage?"

John thought it very nice. "Still," he said, "Ariel could put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes."

"The Savage," wrote Bernard in his report to Mustapha Mond, "shows surprisingly little astonishment at, or awe of, civilized inventions. This is partly due, no doubt, to the fact that he has heard them talked about by the woman Linda, his m——."

(Mustapha Mond frowned. "Does the fool think I'm too squeamish to see the word written out at full length?")

“Partly on his interest being focussed on what he calls ‘the soul,’ which he persists in regarding as an entity independent of the physical environment, whereas, as I tried to point out to him...”

The Controller skipped the next sentences and was just about to turn the page in search of something more interestingly concrete, when his eye was caught by a series of quite extraordinary phrases. “...though I must admit,” he read, “that I agree with the Savage in finding civilized infantility too easy or, as he puts it, not expensive enough; and I would like to take this opportunity of drawing your lordship’s attention to...”

Mustapha Mond’s anger gave place almost at once to mirth. The idea of this creature solemnly lecturing him—him—about the social order was really too grotesque. The man must have gone mad. “I ought to give him a lesson,” he said to himself; then threw back his head and laughed aloud. For the moment, at any rate, the lesson would not be given.

It was a small factory of lighting-sets for helicopters, a branch of the Electrical Equipment Corporation. They were met on the roof itself (for that circular letter of recommendation from the Controller was magical in its effects) by the Chief Technician and the Human Element Manager. They walked downstairs into the factory.

“Each process,” explained the Human Element Manager, “is carried out, so far as possible, by a single Bokanovsky Group.”

And, in effect, eighty-three almost noseless black brachycephalic Deltas were cold-pressing. The fifty-six four-spindle chucking and turning machines

were being manipulated by fifty-six aquiline and ginger Gammas. One hundred and seven heat-conditioned Epsilon Senegalese were working in the foundry. Thirty-three Delta females, long-headed, sandy, with narrow pelvises, and all within 20 millimetres of 1 metre 69 centimetres tall, were cutting screws. In the assembling room, the dynamos were being put together by two sets of Gamma-Plus dwarfs. The two low work-tables faced one another; between them crawled the conveyor with its load of separate parts; forty-seven blonde heads were confronted by forty-seven brown ones. Forty-seven snubs by forty-seven hooks; forty-seven receding by forty-seven prognathous chins. The completed mechanisms were inspected by eighteen identical curly auburn girls in Gamma green, packed in crates by thirty-four short-legged, left-handed male Delta-Minuses, and loaded into the waiting trucks and lorries by sixty-three blue-eyed, flaxen and freckled Epsilon Semi-Morons.

“O brave new world...” By some malice of his memory the Savage found himself repeating Miranda’s words. “O brave new world that has such people in it.”

“And I assure you,” the Human Element Manager concluded, as they left the factory, “we hardly ever have any trouble with our workers. We always find...”

But the Savage had suddenly broken away from his companions and was violently retching, behind a clump of laurels, as though the solid earth had been a helicopter in an air pocket.

“The Savage,” wrote Bernard, “refuses to take soma, and seems much

distressed because of the woman Linda, his m——, remains permanently on holiday. It is worthy of note that, in spite of his m——’s senility and the extreme repulsiveness of her appearance, the Savage frequently goes to see her and appears to be much attached to her—an interesting example of the way in which early conditioning can be made to modify and even run counter to natural impulses (in this case, the impulse to recoil from an unpleasant object).”

At Eton they alighted on the roof of Upper School. On the opposite side of School Yard, the fifty-two stories of Lupton’s Tower gleamed white in the sunshine. College on their left and, on their right, the School Community Singery reared their venerable piles of ferro-concrete and vita-glass. In the centre of the quadrangle stood the quaint old chrome-steel statue of Our Ford.

Dr. Gaffney, the Provost, and Miss Keate, the Head Mistress, received them as they stepped out of the plane.

“Do you have many twins here?” the Savage asked rather apprehensively, as they set out on their tour of inspection.

“Oh, no,” the Provost answered. “Eton is reserved exclusively for upper-caste boys and girls. One egg, one adult. It makes education more difficult of course. But as they’ll be called upon to take responsibilities and deal with unexpected emergencies, it can’t be helped.” He sighed.

Bernard, meanwhile, had taken a strong fancy to Miss Keate. “If you’re free any Monday, Wednesday, or Friday evening,” he was saying. Jerking his thumb towards the Savage, “He’s curious, you know,” Bernard added.

“Quaint.”

Miss Keate smiled (and her smile was really charming, he thought); said Thank you; would be delighted to come to one of his parties. The Provost opened a door.

Five minutes in that Alpha Double Plus classroom left John a trifle bewildered.

“What is elementary relativity?” he whispered to Bernard. Bernard tried to explain, then thought better of it and suggested that they should go to some other classroom.

From behind a door in the corridor leading to the Beta-Minus geography room, a ringing soprano voice called, “One, two, three, four,” and then, with a weary impatience, “As you were.”

“Malthusian Drill,” explained the Head Mistress. “Most of our girls are freemartins, of course. I’m a freemartin myself.” She smiled at Bernard. “But we have about eight hundred unsterilized ones who need constant drilling.”

In the Beta-Minus geography room John learnt that “a savage reservation is a place which, owing to unfavourable climatic or geological conditions, or poverty of natural resources, has not been worth the expense of civilizing”. A click; the room was darkened; and suddenly, on the screen above the Master’s head, there were the Penitentes of Acoma prostrating themselves before Our Lady, and wailing as John had heard them wail, confessing their sins before Jesus on the Cross, before the eagle image of Pookong. The young Etonians fairly shouted with laughter. Still wailing, the

Penitentes rose to their feet, stripped off their upper garments and, with knotted whips, began to beat themselves, blow after blow. Redoubled, the laughter drowned even the amplified record of their groans.

“But why do they laugh?” asked the Savage in a pained bewilderment.

“Why?” The Provost turned towards him a still broadly grinning face. “Why? But because it’s so extraordinarily funny.”

In the cinematographic twilight, Bernard risked a gesture which, in the past, even total darkness would hardly have emboldened him to make. Strong in his new importance, he put his arm around the Head Mistress’s waist. It yielded, willowily. He was just about to snatch a kiss or two and perhaps a gentle pinch, when the shutters clicked open again.

“Perhaps we had better go on,” said Miss Keate, and moved towards the door.

“And this,” said the Provost a moment later, “is Hypnopædic Control Room.”

Hundreds of synthetic music boxes, one for each dormitory, stood ranged in shelves round three sides of the room; pigeon-holed on the fourth were the paper sound-track rolls on which the various hypnopædic lessons were printed.

“You slip the roll in here,” explained Bernard, interrupting Dr. Gaffney, “press down this switch...”

“No, that one,” corrected the Provost, annoyed.

“That one, then. The roll unwinds. The selenium cells transform the light impulses into sound waves, and...”

“And there you are,” Dr. Gaffney concluded.

“Do they read Shakespeare?” asked the Savage as they walked, on their way to the Bio-chemical Laboratories, past the School Library.

“Certainly not,” said the Head Mistress, blushing.

“Our library,” said Dr. Gaffney, “contains only books of reference. If our young people need distraction, they can get it at the feelies. We don’t encourage them to indulge in any solitary amusements.”

Five bus-loads of boys and girls, singing or in a silent embracement, rolled past them over the vitrified highway.

“Just returned,” explained Dr. Gaffney, while Bernard, whispering, made an appointment with the Head Mistress for that very evening, “from the Slough Crematorium. Death conditioning begins at eighteen months. Every tot spends two mornings a week in a Hospital for the Dying. All the best toys are kept there, and they get chocolate cream on death days. They learn to take dying as a matter of course.”

“Like any other physiological process,” put in the Head Mistress professionally.

Eight o’clock at the Savoy. It was all arranged.

On their way back to London they stopped at the Television Corporation's factory at Brentford.

"Do you mind waiting here a moment while I go and telephone?" asked Bernard.

The Savage waited and watched. The Main Day-Shift was just going off duty. Crowds of lower-caste workers were queued up in front of the monorail station-seven or eight hundred Gamma, Delta and Epsilon men and women, with not more than a dozen faces and statures between them. To each of them, with his or her ticket, the booking clerk pushed over a little cardboard pillbox. The long caterpillar of men and women moved slowly forward.

"What's in those" (remembering *The Merchant of Venice*) "those caskets?" the Savage enquired when Bernard had rejoined him.

"The day's soma ration," Bernard answered rather indistinctly; for he was masticating a piece of Benito Hoover's chewing-gum. "They get it after their work's over. Four half-gramme tablets. Six on Saturdays."

He took John's arm affectionately and they walked back towards the helicopter.

Lenina came singing into the Changing Room.

"You seem very pleased with yourself," said Fanny.

"I am pleased," she answered. Zip! "Bernard rang up half an hour ago." Zip, zip! She stepped out of her shorts. "He has an unexpected engagement." Zip! "Asked me if I'd take the Savage to the feelies this evening. I must fly."

She hurried away towards the bathroom.

“She’s a lucky girl,” Fanny said to herself as she watched Lenina go.

There was no envy in the comment; good-natured Fanny was merely stating a fact. Lenina was lucky; lucky in having shared with Bernard a generous portion of the Savage’s immense celebrity, lucky in reflecting from her insignificant person the moment’s supremely fashionable glory. Had not the Secretary of the Young Women’s Fordian Association asked her to give a lecture about her experiences? Had she not been invited to the Annual Dinner of the Aphroditeum Club? Had she not already appeared in the Feelytone News—visibly, audibly and tactually appeared to countless millions all over the planet?

Hardly less flattering had been the attentions paid her by conspicuous individuals.

The Resident World Controller’s Second Secretary had asked her to dinner and breakfast. She had spent one week-end with the Ford Chief-Justice, and another with the Arch-Community-Songster of Canterbury. The President of the Internal and External Secretions Corporation was perpetually on the phone, and she had been to Deauville with the Deputy-Governor of the Bank of Europe.

“It’s wonderful, of course. And yet in a way,” she had confessed to Fanny, “I feel as though I were getting something on false presences. Because, of course, the first thing they all want to know is what it’s like to make love to a Savage. And I have to say I don’t know.” She shook her head.

“Most of the men don’t believe me, of course. But it’s true. I wish it weren’t,” she added sadly and sighed. “He’s terribly good-looking; don’t you think so?”

“But doesn’t he like you?” asked Fanny.

“Sometimes I think he does and sometimes I think he doesn’t. He always does his best to avoid me; goes out of the room when I come in; won’t touch me; won’t even look at me. But sometimes if I turn round suddenly, I catch him staring; and then—well, you know how men look when they like you.”

Yes, Fanny knew.

“I can’t make it out,” said Lenina.

She couldn’t make it out; and not only was bewildered; was also rather upset.

“Because, you see, Fanny, I like him.”

Liked him more and more. Well, now there’d be a real chance, she thought, as she scented herself after her bath. Dab, dab, dab—a real chance. Her high spirits overflowed in a song.

“Hug me till you drug me, honey; Kiss me till I’m in a coma; Hug me, honey, snuggly bunny; Love’s as good as soma.”

The scent organ was playing a delightfully refreshing Herbal Capriccio—rippling arpeggios of thyme and lavender, of rosemary, basil, myrtle,

tarragon; a series of daring modulations through the spice keys into ambergris; and a slow return through sandalwood, camphor, cedar and newmown hay (with occasional subtle touches of discord—a whiff of kidney pudding, the faintest suspicion of pig’s dung) back to the simple aromatics with which the piece began. The final blast of thyme died away; there was a round of applause; the lights went up. In the synthetic music machine the sound-track roll began to unwind. It was a trio for hyper-violin, super-cello and oboe-surrogate that now filled the air with its agreeable languor. Thirty or forty bars—and then, against this instrumental background, a much more than human voice began to warble; now throaty, now from the head, now hollow as a flute, now charged with yearning harmonics, it effortlessly passed from Gaspard’s Forster’s low record on the very frontiers of musical tone to a trilled bat-note high above the highest C to which (in 1770, at the Ducal opera of Parma, and to the astonishment of Mozart) Lucrezia Ajugari, alone of all the singers in history, once piercingly gave utterance.

Sunk in their pneumatic stalls, Lenina and the Savage sniffed and listened. It was now the turn also for eyes and skin.

The house lights went down; fiery letters stood out solid and as though self-supported in the darkness. THREE WEEKS IN A HELICOPTER . AN ALL-SUPER-SINGING, SYNTHETIC-TALKING, COLOURED, STEREOSCOPIC FEELY. WITH SYNCHRONIZED SCENT-ORGAN ACCOMPANIMENT.

“Take hold of those metal knobs on the arms of your chair,” whispered Lenina. “Otherwise you won’t get any of the feely effects.”

The Savage did as he was told.

Those fiery letters, meanwhile, had disappeared; there were ten seconds of complete darkness; then suddenly, dazzling and incomparably more solid-looking than they would have seemed in actual flesh and blood, far more real than reality, there stood the stereoscopic images, locked in one another's arms, of a gigantic negro and a golden-haired young brachycephalic Beta-Plus female.

The Savage started. That sensation on his lips! He lifted a hand to his mouth; the titillation ceased; let his hand fall back on the metal knob; it began again. The scent organ, meanwhile, breathed pure musk. Expiringly, a soundtrack super-dove cooed "Oo-ooh"; and vibrating only thirty-two times a second, a deeper than African bass made answer: "Aa-aah." "Ooh-ah! Ooh-ah!" the stereoscopic lips came together again, and once more the facial erogenous zones of the six thousand spectators in the Alhambra tingled with almost intolerable galvanic pleasure. "Ooh..."

The plot of the film was extremely simple. A few minutes after the first Oohs and Aahs (a duet having been sung and a little love made on that famous bearskin, every hair of which—the Assistant Predestinator was perfectly right—could be separately and distinctly felt), the negro had a helicopter accident, fell on his head. Thump! whata twinge through the forehead! A chorus of ow's and aie's went up from the audience.

The concussion knocked all the negro's conditioning into a cocked hat. He developed for the Beta blonde an exclusive and maniacal passion. She protested. He persisted. There were struggles, pursuits, an assault on a rival,

finally a sensational kidnapping. The Beta blond was ravished away into the sky and kept there, hovering, for three weeks in a wildly anti-social tête-à-tête with the black madman. Finally, after a whole series of adventures and much aerial acrobacy three handsome young Alphas succeeded in rescuing her. The negro was packed off to an Adult Re-conditioning Centre and the film ended happily and decorously, with the Beta blonde becoming the mistress of all her three rescuers. They interrupted themselves for a moment to sing a synthetic quartet, with full super-orchestral accompaniment and gardenias on the scent organ. Then the bearskin made a final appearance and, amid a blare of saxophones, the last stereoscopic kiss faded into darkness, the last electric titillation died on the lips like a dying moth that quivers, quivers, ever more feebly, ever more faintly, and at last is quiet, quite still.

But for Lenina the moth did not completely die. Even after the lights had gone up, while they were shuffling slowly along with the crowd towards the lifts, its ghost still fluttered against her lips, still traced fine shuddering roads of anxiety and pleasure across her skin. Her cheeks were flushed. She caught hold of the Savage's arm and pressed it, limp, against her side. He looked down at her for a moment, pale, pained, desiring, and ashamed of his desire. He was not worthy, not...Their eyes for a moment met. What treasures hers promised! A queen's ransom of temperament. Hastily he looked away, disengaged his imprisoned arm. He was obscurely terrified lest she should cease to be something he could feel himself unworthy of.

"I don't think you ought to see things like that," he said, making haste to transfer from Lenina herself to the surrounding circumstances the blame for any past or possible future lapse from perfection.

“Things like what, John?”

“Like this horrible film.”

“Horrible?” Lenina was genuinely astonished. “But I thought it was lovely.”

“It was base,” he said indignantly, “it was ignoble.”

She shook her head. “I don’t know what you mean.” Why was he so queer? Why did he go out of his way to spoil things?

In the taxicopter he hardly even looked at her. Bound by strong vows that had never been pronounced, obedient to laws that had long since ceased to run, he sat averted and in silence. Sometimes, as though a finger had plucked at some taut, almost breaking string, his whole body would shake with a sudden nervous start.

The taxicopter landed on the roof of Lenina’s apartment house. “At last,” she thought exultantly as she stepped out of the cab. At last—even though he had been so queer just now. Standing under a lamp, she peered into her hand mirror. At last. Yes, her nose was a bit shiny. She shook the loose powder from her puff. While he was paying off the taxi—there would just be time. She rubbed at the shininess, thinking: “He’s terribly good-looking. No need for him to be shy like Bernard. And yet...Any other man would have done it long ago. Well, now at last.” That fragment of a face in the little round mirror suddenly smiled at her.

“Good-night,” said a strangled voice behind her. Lenina wheeled round.

He was standing in the doorway of the cab, his eyes fixed, staring; had evidently been staring all this time while she was powdering her nose, waiting—but what for? or hesitating, trying to make up his mind, and all the time thinking, thinking—she could not imagine what extraordinary thoughts. “Good-night, Lenina,” he repeated, and made a strange grimacing attempt to smile.

“But, John...I thought you were...I mean, aren’t you?...”

He shut the door and bent forward to say something to the driver. The cab shot up into the air.

Looking down through the window in the floor, the Savage could see Lenina’s upturned face, pale in the bluish light of the lamps. The mouth was open, she was calling. Her foreshortened figure rushed away from him; the diminishing square of the roof seemed to be falling through the darkness.

Five minutes later he was back in his room. From its hiding-place he took out his mouse-nibbled volume, turned with religious care its stained and crumbled pages, and began to read Othello. Othello, he remembered, was like the hero of Three Weeks in a Helicopter—a black man.

Drying her eyes, Lenina walked across the roof to the lift. On her way down to the twenty-seventh floor she pulled out her soma bottle. One gramme, she decided, would not be enough; hers had been more than a one-gramme affliction. But if she took two grammes, she ran the risk of not waking up in time to-morrow morning. She compromised and, into her cupped left palm, shook out three half-gramme tablets.

Chapter Twelve

BERNARD had to shout through the locked door; the Savage would not open.

“But everybody’s there, waiting for you.”

“Let them wait,” came back the muffled voice through the door.

“But you know quite well, John.” (how difficult it is to sound persuasive at the top of one’s voice!) “I asked them on purpose to meet you.”

“You ought to have asked me first whether I wanted to meet them.”

“But you always came before, John.”

“That’s precisely why I don’t want to come again.”

“Just to please me,” Bernard bellowingly wheedled. “Won’t you come to please me?”

“No.”

“Do you seriously mean it?”

“Yes.”

Despairingly, “But what shall I do?” Bernard wailed.

“Go to hell!” bawled the exasperated voice from within.

“But the Arch-Community-Songster of Canterbury is there to-night.” Bernard was almost in tears.

“Ai yaa tákwa!” It was only in Zuñi that the Savage could adequately express what he felt about the Arch-Community-Songster. “Háni!” he added as an after-thought; and then (with what derisive ferocity!): “Sons éso tse-ná.” And he spat on the ground, as Popé might have done.

In the end Bernard had to slink back, diminished, to his rooms and inform the impatient assembly that the Savage would not be appearing that evening. The news was received with indignation. The men were furious at having been tricked into behaving politely to this insignificant fellow with the unsavoury reputation and the heretical opinions. The higher their position in the hierarchy, the deeper their resentment.

“To play such a joke on me,” the Arch-Songster kept repeating, “on me!”

As for the women, they indignantly felt that they had been had on false pretences—had by a wretched little man who had had alcohol poured into his bottle by mistake—by a creature with a Gamma-Minus physique. It was an outrage, and they said so, more and more loudly. The Head Mistress of Eton was particularly scathing.

Lenina alone said nothing. Pale, her blue eyes clouded with an unwonted melancholy, she sat in a corner, cut off from those who surrounded her by an emotion which they did not share. She had come to the party filled with a

strange feeling of anxious exultation. “In a few minutes,” she had said to herself, as she entered the room, “I shall be seeing him, talking to him, telling him” (for she had come with her mind made up) “that I like him—more than anybody I’ve ever known. And then perhaps he’ll say...”

What would he say? The blood had rushed to her cheeks.

“Why was he so strange the other night, after the feelies? So queer. And yet I’m absolutely sure he really does rather like me. I’m sure...”

It was at this moment that Bernard had made his announcement; the Savage wasn’t coming to the party.

Lenina suddenly felt all the sensations normally experienced at the beginning of a Violent Passion Surrogate treatment—a sense of dreadful emptiness, a breathless apprehension, a nausea. Her heart seemed to stop beating.

“Perhaps it’s because he doesn’t like me,” she said to herself. And at once this possibility became an established certainty: John had refused to come because he didn’t like her. He didn’t like her....

“It really is a bit too thick,” the Head Mistress of Eton was saying to the Director of Crematoria and Phosphorus Reclamation. “When I think that I actually...”

“Yes,” came the voice of Fanny Crowne, “it’s absolutely true about the alcohol. Some one I know knew some one who was working in the Embryo Store at the time. She said to my friend, and my friend said to me...”

“Too bad, too bad,” said Henry Foster, sympathizing with the Arch-Community-Songster. “It may interest you to know that our ex-Director was on the point of transferring him to Iceland.”

Pierced by every word that was spoken, the tight balloon of Bernard’s happy self-confidence was leaking from a thousand wounds. Pale, distraught, abject and agitated, he moved among his guests, stammering incoherent apologies, assuring them that next time the Savage would certainly be there, begging them to sit down and take a carotene sandwich, a slice of vitamin A pâté, a glass of champagne-surrogate. They duly ate, but ignored him; drank and were either rude to his face or talked to one another about him, loudly and offensively, as though he had not been there.

“And now, my friends,” said the Arch-Community-Songster of Canterbury, in that beautiful ringing voice with which he led the proceedings at Ford’s Day Celebrations, “Now, my friends, I think perhaps the time has come...” He rose, put down his glass, brushed from his purple viscose waistcoat the crumbs of a considerable collation, and walked towards the door.

Bernard darted forward to intercept him.

“Must you really, Arch-Songster?...It’s very early still. I’d hoped you would...”

Yes, what hadn’t he hoped, when Lenina confidentially told him that the Arch-Community-Songster would accept an invitation if it were sent. “He’s really rather sweet, you know.” And she had shown Bernard the little golden

zipper-fastening in the form of a T which the Arch-Songster had given her as a memento of the week-end she had spent at Lambeth. To meet the Arch-Community-Songster of Canterbury and Mr. Savage. Bernard had proclaimed his triumph on every invitation card. But the Savage had chosen this evening of all evenings to lock himself up in his room, to shout “Háni!” and even (it was lucky that Bernard didn’t understand Zuñi) “Sons éso tse-ná!” What should have been the crowning moment of Bernard’s whole career had turned out to be the moment of his greatest humiliation.

“I’d so much hoped...” he stammeringly repeated, looking up at the great dignitary with pleading and distracted eyes.

“My young friend,” said the Arch-Community-Songster in a tone of loud and solemn severity; there was a general silence. “Let me give you a word of advice.” He wagged his finger at Bernard. “Before it’s too late. A word of good advice.” (His voice became sepulchral.) “Mend your ways, my young friend, mend your ways.” He made the sign of the T over him and turned away. “Lenina, my dear,” he called in another tone. “Come with me.”

Obediently, but unsmiling and (wholly insensible of the honour done to her) without elation, Lenina walked after him, out of the room. The other guests followed at a respectful interval. The last of them slammed the door. Bernard was all alone.

Punctured, utterly deflated, he dropped into a chair and, covering his face with his hands, began to weep. A few minutes later, however, he thought better of it and took four tablets of soma.

Upstairs in his room the Savage was reading *Romeo and Juliet*.

Lenina and the Arch-Community-Songster stepped out on to the roof of Lambeth Palace. "Hurry up, my young friend—I mean, Lenina," called the Arch-Songster impatiently from the lift gates. Lenina, who had lingered for a moment to look at the moon, dropped her eyes and came hurrying across the roof to rejoin him.

"A New Theory of Biology" was the title of the paper which Mustapha Mond had just finished reading. He sat for some time, meditatively frowning, then picked up his pen and wrote across the title-page: "The author's mathematical treatment of the conception of purpose is novel and highly ingenious, but heretical and, so far as the present social order is concerned, dangerous and potentially subversive. Not to be published." He underlined the words. "The author will be kept under supervision. His transference to the Marine Biological Station of St. Helena may become necessary." A pity, he thought, as he signed his name. It was a masterly piece of work. But once you began admitting explanations in terms of purpose—well, you didn't know what the result might be. It was the sort of idea that might easily decondition the more unsettled minds among the higher castes—make them lose their faith in happiness as the Sovereign Good and take to believing, instead, that the goal was somewhere beyond, somewhere outside the present human sphere, that the purpose of life was not the maintenance of well-being, but some intensification and refining of consciousness, some enlargement of knowledge. Which was, the Controller reflected, quite possibly true. But not, in the present circumstance, admissible. He picked up his pen again, and under the words "Not to be published" drew a second line, thicker and

blackier than the first; then sighed, "What fun it would be," he thought, "if one didn't have to think about happiness!"

With closed eyes, his face shining with rapture, John was softly declaiming to vacancy:

"Oh! she doth teach the torches to burn bright. It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night, Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear; Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear..."

The golden T lay shining on Lenina's bosom. Sportively, the Arch-Community-Songster caught hold of it, sportively he puled, pulled. "I think," said Lenina suddenly, breaking a long silence, "I'd better take a couple of grammes of soma."

Bernard, by this time, was fast asleep and smiling at the private paradise of his dreams. Smiling, smiling. But inexorably, every thirty seconds, the minute hand of the electric clock above his bed jumped forward with an almost imperceptible click. Click, click, click, click...And it was morning. Bernard was back among the miseries of space and time. It was in the lowest spirits that he taxied across to his work at the Conditioning Centre. The intoxication of success had evaporated; he was soberly his old self; and by contrast with the temporary balloon of these last weeks, the old self seemed unprecedentedly heavier than the surrounding atmosphere.

To this deflated Bernard the Savage showed himself unexpectedly sympathetic.

"You're more like what you were at Malpais," he said, when Bernard

had told him his plaintive story. "Do you remember when we first talked together? Outside the little house. You're like what you were then."

"Because I'm unhappy again; that's why."

"Well, I'd rather be unhappy than have the sort of false, lying happiness you were having here."

"I like that," said Bernard bitterly. "When it's you who were the cause of it all. Refusing to come to my party and so turning them all against me!" He knew that what he was saying was absurd in its injustice; he admitted inwardly, and at last even aloud, the truth of all that the Savage now said about the worthlessness of friends who could be turned upon so slight a provocation into persecuting enemies. But in spite of this knowledge and these admissions, in spite of the fact that his friend's support and sympathy were now his only comfort, Bernard continued perversely to nourish, along with his quite genuine affection, a secret grievance against the Savage, to mediate a campaign of small revenges to be wreaked upon him. Nourishing a grievance against the Arch-Community-Songster was useless; there was no possibility of being revenged on the Chief Bottler or the Assistant Predestinator. As a victim, the Savage possessed, for Bernard, this enormous superiority over the others: that he was accessible. One of the principal functions of a friend is to suffer (in a milder and symbolic form) the punishments that we should like, but are unable, to inflict upon our enemies.

Bernard's other victim-friend was Helmholtz. When, discomfited, he came and asked once more for the friendship which, in his prosperity, he had not thought it worth his while to preserve. Helmholtz gave it; and gave it

without a reproach, without a comment, as though he had forgotten that there had ever been a quarrel. Touched, Bernard felt himself at the same time humiliated by this magnanimity—a magnanimity the more extraordinary and therefore the more humiliating in that it owed nothing to soma and everything to Helmholtz's character. It was the Helmholtz of daily life who forgot and forgave, not the Helmholtz of a half-gramme holiday. Bernard was duly grateful (it was an enormous comfort to have his friend again) and also duly reseritful (it would be pleasure to take some revenge on Helmholtz for his generosity).

At their first meeting after the estrangement, Bernard poured out the tale of his miseries and accepted consolation. It was not till some days later that he learned, to his surprise and with a twinge of shame, that he was not the only one who had been in trouble. Helmholtz had also come into conflict with Authority.

“It was over some rhymes,” he explained. “I was giving my usual course of Advanced Emotional Engineering for Third Year Students. Twelve lectures, of which the seventh is about rhymes. ‘On the Use of Rhymes in Moral Propaganda and Advertisement,’ to be precise. I always illustrate my lecture with a lot of technical examples. This time I thought I’d give them one I’d just written myself. Pure madness, of course; but I couldn’t resist it.” He laughed. “I was curious to see what their reactions would be. Besides,” he added more gravely, “I wanted to do a bit of propaganda; I was trying to engineer them into feeling as I’d felt when I wrote the rhymes. Ford!” He laughed again. “What an outcry there was! The Principal had me up and threatened to hand me the immediate sack. I’m a marked man.”

“But what were your rhymes?” Bernard asked.

“They were about being alone.”

Bernard’s eyebrows went up.

“I’ll recite them to you, if you like.” And Helmholtz began:

“Yesterday’s committee, Sticks, but a broken drum, Midnight in the City, Flutes in a vacuum, Shut lips, sleeping faces, Every stopped machine, The dumb and littered places Where crowds have been:…All silences rejoice, Weep (loudly or low), Speak—but with the voice Of whom, I do not know. Absence, say, of Susan’s, Absence of Egeria’s Arms and respective bosoms, Lips and, ah, posteriors, Slowly form a presence; Whose? and, I ask, of what So absurd an essence, That something, which is not, Nevertheless should populate Empty night more solidly Than that with which we copulate, Why should it seem so squalidly?

Well, I gave them that as an example, and they reported me to the Principal.”

“I’m not surprised,” said Bernard. “It’s flatly against all their sleep-teaching. Remember, they’ve had at least a quarter of a million warnings against solitude.”

“I know. But I thought I’d like to see what the effect would be.”

“Well, you’ve seen now.”

Helmholtz only laughed. “I feel,” he said, after a silence, “as though I

were just beginning to have something to write about. As though I were beginning to be able to use that power I feel I've got inside me—that extra, latent power. Something seems to be coming to me.” In spite of all his troubles, he seemed, Bernard thought, profoundly happy.

Helmholtz and the Savage took to one another at once. So cordially indeed that Bernard felt a sharp pang of jealousy. In all these weeks he had never come to so close an intimacy with the Savage as Helmholtz immediately achieved. Watching them, listening to their talk, he found himself sometimes resentfully wishing that he had never brought them together. He was ashamed of his jealousy and alternately made efforts of will and took soma to keep himself from feeling it. But the efforts were not very successful; and between the soma-holidays there were, of necessity, intervals. The odious sentiment kept on returning.

At his third meeting with the Savage, Helmholtz recited his rhymes on Solitude.

“What do you think of them?” he asked when he had done.

The Savage shook his head. “Listen to this,” was his answer; and unlocking the drawer in which he kept his mouse-eaten book, he opened and read:

“Let the bird of loudest lay On the sole Arabian tree, Herald sad and trumpet be...”

Helmholtz listened with a growing excitement. At “sole Arabian tree” he started; at “thou shrieking harbinger” he smiled with sudden pleasure; at

“every fowl of tyrant wing” the blood rushed up into his cheeks; but at “defunctive music” he turned pale and trembled with an unprecedented emotion. The Savage read on:

“Property was thus appall’d, That the self was not the same; Single nature’s double name Neither two nor one was call’d Reason in itself confounded Saw pision grow together...”

“Orgy-porgy!” said Bernard, interrupting the reading with a loud, unpleasant laugh. “It’s just a Solidarity Service hymn.” He was revenging himself on his two friends for liking one another more than they liked him.

In the course of their next two or three meetings he frequently repeated this little act of vengeance. It was simple and, since both Helmholtz and the Savage were dreadfully pained by the shattering and defilement of a favourite poetic crystal, extremely effective. In the end, Helmholtz threatened to kick him out of the room if he dared to interrupt again. And yet, strangely enough, the next interruption, the most disgraceful of all, came from Helmholtz himself.

The Savage was reading *Romeo and Juliet* aloud—reading (for all the time he was seeing himself as Romeo and Lenina as Juliet) with an intense and quivering passion. Helmholtz had listened to the scene of the lovers’ first meeting with a puzzled interest. The scene in the orchard had delighted him with its poetry; but the sentiments expressed had made him smile. Getting into such a state about having a girl—it seemed rather ridiculous. But, taken detail by verbal detail, what a superb piece of emotional engineering! “That old fellow,” he said, “he makes our best propaganda technicians look

absolutely silly.” The Savage smiled triumphantly and resumed his reading. All went tolerably well until, in the last scene of the third act, Capulet and Lady Capulet began to bully Juliet to marry Paris. Helmholtz had been restless throughout the entire scene; but when, pathetically mimed by the Savage, Juliet cried out:

“Is there no pity sitting in the clouds, That sees into the bottom of my grief? O sweet my mother, cast me not away: Delay this marriage for a month, a week; Or, if you do not, make the bridal bed In that dim monument where Tybalt lies...”

When Juliet said this, Helmholtz broke out in an explosion of uncontrollable guffawing.

The mother and father (grotesque obscenity) forcing the daughter to have some one she didn’t want! And the idiotic girl not saying that she was having some one else whom (for the moment, at any rate) she preferred! In its smutty absurdity the situation was irresistibly comical. He had managed, with a heroic effort, to hold down the mounting pressure of his hilarity; but “sweet mother” (in the Savage’s tremulous tone of anguish) and the reference to Tybalt lying dead, but evidently uncremated and wasting his phosphorus on a dim monument, were too much for him. He laughed and laughed till the tears streamed down his face—quenchlessly laughed while, pale with a sense of outrage, the Savage looked at him over the top of his book and then, as the laughter still continued, closed it indignantly, got up and, with the gesture of one who removes his pearl from before swine, locked it away in its drawer.

“And yet,” said Helmholtz when, having recovered breath enough to

apologize, he had mollified the Savage into listening to his explanations, “I know quite well that one needs ridiculous, mad situations like that; one can’t write really well about anything else. Why was that old fellow such a marvellous propaganda technician? Because he had so many insane, excruciating things to get excited about. You’ve got to be hurt and upset; otherwise you can’t think of the really good, penetrating, X-rayish phrases. But fathers and mothers!” He shook his head. “You can’t expect me to keep a straight face about fathers and mothers. And who’s going to get excited about a boy having a girl or not having her?” (The Savage winced; but Helmholtz, who was staring pensively at the floor, saw nothing.) “No.” he concluded, with a sigh, “it won’t do. We need some other kind of madness and violence. But what? What? Where can one find it?” He was silent; then, shaking his head, “I don’t know,” he said at last, “I don’t know.”

Chapter Thirteen

HENRY FOSTER loomed up through the twilight of the Embryo Store.

“Like to come to a feely this evening?”

Lenina shook her head without speaking.

“Going out with some one else?” It interested him to know which of his friends was being had by which other. “Is it Benito?” he questioned.

She shook her head again.

Henry detected the weariness in those purple eyes, the pallor beneath that glaze of lupus, the sadness at the corners of the unsmiling crimson mouth. “You’re not feeling ill, are you?” he asked, a trifle anxiously, afraid that she might be suffering from one of the few remaining infectious diseases.

Yet once more Lenina shook her head.

“Anyhow, you ought to go and see the doctor,” said Henry. “A doctor a day keeps the jim-jams away,” he added heartily, driving home his hypnopædic adage with a clap on the shoulder. “Perhaps you need a Pregnancy Substitute,” he suggested. “Or else an extra-strong V.P.S. treatment. Sometimes, you know, the standard passion surrogate isn’t quite...”

“Oh, for Ford’s sake,” said Lenina, breaking her stubborn silence, “shut up!” And she turned back to her neglected embryos.

A V.P.S. treatment indeed! She would have laughed, if she hadn’t been on the point of crying. As though she hadn’t got enough V. P. of her own! She sighed profoundly as she refilled her syringe. “John,” she murmured to herself, “John...” Then “My Ford,” she wondered, “have I given this one its sleeping sickness injection, or haven’t I?” She simply couldn’t remember. In the end, she decided not to run the risk of letting it have a second dose, and moved down the line to the next bottle.

Twenty-two years, eight months, and four days from that moment, a promising young Alpha-Minus administrator at Mwanza-Mwanza was to die of trypanosomiasis—the first case for over half a century. Sighing, Lenina went on with her work.

An hour later, in the Changing Room, Fanny was energetically protesting. “But it’s absurd to let yourself get into a state like this. Simply absurd,” she repeated. “And what about? A man—one man.”

“But he’s the one I want.”

“As though there weren’t millions of other men in the world.”

“But I don’t want them.”

“How can you know till you’ve tried?”

“I have tried.”

“But how many?” asked Fanny, shrugging her shoulders contemptuously. “One, two?”

“Dozens. But,” shaking her head, “it wasn’t any good,” she added.

“Well, you must persevere,” said Fanny sententiously. But it was obvious that her confidence in her own prescriptions had been shaken. “Nothing can be achieved without perseverance.”

“But meanwhile...”

“Don’t think of him.”

“I can’t help it.”

“Take soma, then.”

“I do.”

“Well, go on.”

“But in the intervals I still like him. I shall always like him.”

“Well, if that’s the case,” said Fanny, with decision, “why don’t you just go and take him. Whether he wants it or no.”

“But if you knew how terribly queer he was!”

“All the more reason for taking a firm line.”

“It’s all very well to say that.”

“Don’t stand any nonsense. Act.” Fanny’s voice was a trumpet; she might have been a Y.W.F.A. lecturer giving an evening talk to adolescent Beta-Minuses. “Yes, act—at once. Do it now.”

“I’d be scared,” said Lenina

“Well, you’ve only got to take half a gramme of soma first. And now I’m going to have my bath.” She marched off, trailing her towel.

The bell rang, and the Savage, who was impatiently hoping that Helmholtz would come that afternoon (for having at last made up his mind to talk to Helmholtz about Lenina, he could not bear to postpone his confidences a moment longer), jumped up and ran to the door.

“I had a premonition it was you, Helmholtz,” he shouted as he opened.

On the threshold, in a white acetate-satin sailor suit, and with a round white cap rakishly tilted over her left ear, stood Lenina.

“Oh!” said the Savage, as though some one had struck him a heavy blow.

Half a gramme had been enough to make Lenina forget her fears and her embarrassments. “Hullo, John,” she said, smiling, and walked past him into the room. Automatically he closed the door and followed her. Lenina sat down. There was a long silence.

“You don’t seem very glad to see me, John,” she said at last.

“Not glad?” The Savage looked at her reproachfully; then suddenly fell

on his knees before her and, taking Lenina's hand, reverently kissed it. "Not glad? Oh, if you only knew," he whispered and, venturing to raise his eyes to her face, "Admired Lenina," he went on, "indeed the top of admiration, worth what's dearest in the world." She smiled at him with a luscious tenderness. "Oh, you so perfect" (she was leaning towards him with parted lips), "so perfect and so peerless are created" (nearer and nearer) "of every creature's best." Still nearer. The Savage suddenly scrambled to his feet. "That's why," he said speaking with averted face, "I wanted to do something first...I mean, to show I was worthy of you. Not that I could ever really be that. But at any rate to show I wasn't absolutely un-worthy. I wanted to do something."

"Why should you think it necessary..." Lenina began, but left the sentence unfinished. There was a note of irritation in her voice. When one has leant forward, nearer and nearer, with parted lips—only to find oneself, quite suddenly, as a clumsy oaf scrambles to his feet, leaning towards nothing at all—well, there is a reason, even with half a gramme of soma circulating in one's blood-stream, a genuine reason for annoyance.

"At Malpais," the Savage was incoherently mumbling, "you had to bring her the skin of a mountain lion—I mean, when you wanted to marry some one. Or else a wolf."

"There aren't any lions in England," Lenina almost snapped.

"And even if there were," the Savage added, with sudden contemptuous resentment, "people would kill them out of helicopters, I suppose, with poison gas or something. I wouldn't do that, Lenina." He squared his shoulders, he ventured to look at her and was met with a stare of annoyed

incomprehension. Confused, “I’ll do anything,” he went on, more and more incoherently. “Anything you tell me. There be some sports are painful—you know. But their labour delight in them sets off. That’s what I feel. I mean I’d sweep the floor if you wanted.”

“But we’ve got vacuum cleaners here,” said Lenina in bewilderment. “It isn’t necessary.”

“No, of course it isn’t necessary. But some kinds of baseness are nobly undergone. I’d like to undergo something nobly. Don’t you see?”

“But if there are vacuum cleaners...”

“That’s not the point.”

“And Epsilon Semi-Morons to work them,” she went on, “well, really, why?”

“Why? But for you, for you. Just to show that I...”

“And what on earth vacuum cleaners have got to do with lions...”

“To show how much...”

“Or lions with being glad to see me...” She was getting more and more exasperated.

“How much I love you, Lenina,” he brought out almost desperately.

An emblem of the inner tide of startled elation, the blood rushed up into Lenina’s cheeks. “Do you mean it, John?”

“But I hadn’t meant to say so,” cried the Savage, clasping his hands in a kind of agony. “Not until...Listen, Lenina; in Malpais people get married.”

“Get what?” The irritation had begun to creep back into her voice. What was he talking about now?

“For always. They make a promise to live together for always.”

“What a horrible idea!” Lenina was genuinely shocked.

“Outliving beauty’s outward with a mind that cloth renew swifter than blood decays.”

“What?”

“It’s like that in Shakespeare too. ‘If thou cost break her virgin knot before all sanctimonious ceremonies may with full and holy rite...’”

“For Ford’s sake, John, talk sense. I can’t understand a word you say. First it’s vacuum cleaners; then it’s knots. You’re driving me crazy.” She jumped up and, as though afraid that he might run away from her physically, as well as with his mind, caught him by the wrist. “Answer me this question: do you really like me, or don’t you?”

There was a moment’s silence; then, in a very low voice, “I love you more than anything in the world,” he said.

“Then why on earth didn’t you say so?” she cried, and so intense was her exasperation that she drove her sharp nails into the skin of his wrist. “Instead of drivelling away about knots and vacuum cleaners and lions, and

making me miserable for weeks and weeks.”

She released his hand and flung it angrily away from her.

“If I didn’t like you so much,” she said, “I’d be furious with you.”

And suddenly her arms were round his neck; he felt her lips soft against his own. So deliciously soft, so warm and electric that inevitably he found himself thinking of the embraces in *Three Weeks in a Helicopter*. Ooh! ooh! The stereoscopic blonde and anh! The more than real black-amoor. Horror, horror, horror...he fired to disengage himself; but Lenina tightened her embrace.

“Why didn’t you say so?” she whispered, drawing back her face to look at him. Her eyes were tenderly reproachful.

“The murkiest den, the most opportune place” (the voice of conscience thundered poetically), “the strongest suggestion our worser genius can, shall never melt mine honour into lust. Never, never!” he resolved.

“You silly boy!” she was saying. “I wanted you so much. And if you wanted me too, why didn’t you?...”

“But, Lenina...” he began protesting; and as she immediately untwined her arms, as she stepped away from him, he thought, for a moment, that she had taken his unspoken hint. But when she unbuckled her white patent cartridge belt and hung it carefully over the back of a chair, he began to suspect that he had been mistaken.

“Lenina!” he repeated apprehensively.

She put her hand to her neck and gave a long vertical pull; her white sailor's blouse was ripped to the hem; suspicion condensed into a too, too solid certainty. "Lenina, what are you doing?"

Zip, zip! Her answer was wordless. She stepped out of her bell-bottomed trousers. Her zippicamiknicks were a pale shell pink. The Arch-Community-Songster's golden T dangled at her breast.

"For those milk paps that through the window bars bore at men's eyes...." The singing, thundering, magical words made her seem doubly dangerous, doubly alluring. Soft, soft, but how piercing! boring and drilling into reason, tunnelling through resolution. "The strongest oaths are straw to the fire i' the blood. Be more abstemious, or else..."

Zip! The rounded pinkness fell apart like a neatly pided apple. A wriggle of the arms, a lifting first of the right foot, then the left: the zippicamiknicks were lying lifeless and as though deflated on the floor.

Still wearing her shoes and socks, and her rakishly tilted round white cap, she advanced towards him. "Darling. Darling! If only you'd said so before!" She held out her arms.

But instead of also saying "Darling!" and holding out his arms, the Savage retreated in terror, flapping his hands at her as though he were trying to scare away some intruding and dangerous animal. Four backwards steps, and he was brought to bay against the wall.

"Sweet!" said Lenina and, laying her hands on his shoulders, pressed

herself against him. “Put your arms round me,” she commanded. “Hug me till you drug me, honey.” She too had poetry at her command, knew words that sang and were spells and beat drums. “Kiss me”; she closed her eyes, she let her voice sink to a sleepy murmur, “Kiss me till I’m in a coma. Hug me, honey, snuggly...”

The Savage caught her by the wrists, tore her hands from his shoulders, thrust her roughly away at arm’s length.

“Ow, you’re hurting me, you’re...oh!” She was suddenly silent. Terror had made her forget the pain. Opening her eyes, she had seen his face—no, not his face, a ferocious stranger’s, pale, distorted, twitching with some insane, inexplicable fury. Aghast, “But what is it, John?” she whispered. He did not answer, but only stared into her face with those mad eyes. The hands that held her wrists were trembling. He breathed deeply and irregularly. Faint almost to imperceptibility, but appalling, she suddenly heard the gneding of his teeth. “What is it?” she almost screamed.

And as though awakened by her cry he caught her by the shoulders and shook her. “Whore!” he shouted “Whore! Impudent strumpet!”

“Oh, don’t, do-on’t,” she protested in a voice made grotesquely tremulous by his shaking.

“Whore!”

“Plea-ease.”

“Damned whore!”

“A gra-amme is be-etter...” she began.

The Savage pushed her away with such force that she staggered and fell. “Go,” he shouted, standing over her menacingly, “get out of my sight or I’ll kill you.” He clenched his fists.

Lenina raised her arm to cover her face. “No, please don’t, John...”

“Hurry up. Quick!”

One arm still raised, and following his every movement with a terrified eye, she scrambled to her feet and still crouching, still covering her head, made a dash for the bathroom.

The noise of that prodigious slap by which her departure was accelerated was like a pistol shot.

“Ow!” Lenina bounded forward.

Safely locked into the bathroom, she had leisure to take stock of her injuries. Standing with her back to the mirror, she twisted her head. Looking over her left shoulder she could see the imprint of an open hand standing out distinct and crimson on the pearly flesh. Gingerly she rubbed the wounded spot.

Outside, in the other room, the Savage was striding up and down, marching, marching to the drums and music of magical words. “The wren goes to’t and the small gilded fly does lecher in my sight.” Maddeningly they rumbled in his ears. “The fitchew nor the soiled horse goes to’t with a more riotous appetite. Down from the waist they are Centaurs, though women all

above. But to the girdle do the gods inherit. Beneath is all the fiend's. There's hell, there's darkness, there is the sulphurous pit, burning scalding, stench, consumption; fie, fie, fie, pain, pain! Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination."

"John!" ventured a small ingratiating voice from the bathroom. "John!"

"O thou weed, who are so lovely fair and smell'st so sweet that the sense aches at thee. Was this most goodly book made to write 'whore' upon? Heaven stops the nose at it..."

But her perfume still hung about him, his jacket was white with the powder that had scented her velvety body. "Impudent strumpet, impudent strumpet, impudent strumpet." The inexorable rhythm beat itself out. "Impudent..."

"John, do you think I might have my clothes?"

He picked up the bell-bottomed trousers, the blouse, the zippicamiknicks.

"Open!" he ordered, kicking the door.

"No, I won't." The voice was frightened and defiant.

"Well, how do you expect me to give them to you?"

"Push them through the ventilator over the door."

He did what she suggested and returned to his uneasy pacing of the

room. "Impudent strumpet, impudent strumpet. The devil Luxury with his fat rump and potato finger..."

"John."

He would not answer. "Fat rump and potato finger."

"John."

"What is it?" he asked gruffly.

"I wonder if you'd mind giving me my Malthusian belt." Lenina sat, listening to the footsteps in the other room, wondering, as she listened, how long he was likely to go tramping up and down like that; whether she would have to wait until he left the flat; or if it would be safe, after allowing his madness a reasonable time to subside, to open the bathroom door and make a dash for it.

She was interrupted in the midst of these uneasy speculations by the sound of the telephone bell ringing in the other room. Abruptly the tramping ceased. She heard the voice of the Savage parleying with silence.

"Hullo."

...

"Yes."

...

"If I do not usurp myself, I am."

...

“Yes, didn’t you hear me say so? Mr. Savage speaking.”

...

“What? Who’s ill? Of course it interests me.”

...

“But is it serious? Is she really bad? I’ll go at once...”

...

“Not in her rooms any more? Where has she been taken?”

...

“Oh, my God! What’s the address?”

...

“Three Park Lane—is that it? Three? Thanks.”

Lenina heard the click of the replaced receiver, then hurrying steps. A door slammed. There was silence. Was he really gone?

With an infinity of precautions she opened the door a quarter of an inch; peeped through the crack; was encouraged by the view of emptiness; opened a little further, and put her whole head out; finally tiptoed into the room; stood for a few seconds with strongly beating heart, listening, listening; then

darted to the front door, opened, slipped through, slammed, ran. It was not till she was in the lift and actually dropping down the well that she began to feel herself secure.

Chapter Fourteen

THE Park Lane Hospital for the Dying was a sixty-story tower of primrose tiles. As the Savage stepped out of his taxicopter a convoy of gaily-coloured aerial hearses rose whirring from the roof and darted away across the Park, westwards, bound for the Slough Crematorium. At the lift gates the presiding porter gave him the information he required, and he dropped down to Ward 81 (a Galloping Senility ward, the porter explained) on the seventeenth floor.

It was a large room bright with sunshine and yellow paint, and containing twenty beds, all occupied. Linda was dying in company—in company and with all the modern conveniences. The air was continuously alive with gay synthetic melodies. At the foot of every bed, confronting its moribund occupant, was a television box. Television was left on, a running tap, from morning till night. Every quarter of an hour the prevailing perfume of the room was automatically changed. “We try,” explained the nurse, who had taken charge of the Savage at the door, “we try to create a thoroughly pleasant atmosphere here—something between a first-class hotel and a feely-palace, if you take my meaning.”

“Where is she?” asked the Savage, ignoring these polite explanations.

The nurse was offended. “You are in a hurry,” she said.

“Is there any hope?” he asked.

“You mean, of her not dying?” (He nodded.) “No, of course there isn’t. When somebody’s sent here, there’s no...” Startled by the expression of distress on his pale face, she suddenly broke off. “Why, whatever is the matter?” she asked. She was not accustomed to this kind of thing in visitors. (Not that there were many visitors anyhow: or any reason why there should be many visitors.) “You’re not feeling ill, are you?”

He shook his head. “She’s my mother,” he said in a scarcely audible voice.

The nurse glanced at him with startled, horrified eyes; then quickly looked away. From throat to temple she was all one hot blush.

“Take me to her,” said the Savage, making an effort to speak in an ordinary tone.

Still blushing, she led the way down the ward. Faces still fresh and unwithered (for senility galloped so hard that it had no time to age the cheeks—only the heart and brain) turned as they passed. Their progress was followed by the blank, incurious eyes of second infancy. The Savage shuddered as he looked.

Linda was lying in the last of the long row of beds, next to the wall. Propped up on pillows, she was watching the Semi-finals of the South American Riemann-Surface Tennis Championship, which were being played in silent and diminished reproduction on the screen of the television box at the foot of the bed. Hither and thither across their square of illuminted glass the little figures noiselessly darted, like fish in an aquarium—the silent but

agitated inhabitants of another world.

Linda looked on, vaguely and uncomprehendingly smiling. Her pale, bloated face wore an expression of imbecile happiness. Every now and then her eyelids closed, and for a few seconds she seemed to be dozing. Then with a little start she would wake up again—wake up to the aquarium antics of the Tennis Champions, to the Super-Vox-Wurlitzeriana rendering of “Hug me till you drug me, honey,” to the warm draught of verbenas that came blowing through the ventilator above her head—would wake to these things, or rather to a dream of which these things, transformed and embellished by the soma in her blood, were the marvellous constituents, and smile once more her broken and discoloured smile of infantile contentment.

“Well, I must go,” said the nurse. “I’ve got my batch of children coming. Besides, there’s Number 3.” She pointed up the ward. “Might go off any minute now. Well, make yourself comfortable.” She walked briskly away.

The Savage sat down beside the bed.

“Linda,” he whispered, taking her hand.

At the sound of her name, she turned. Her vague eyes brightened with recognition. She squeezed his hand, she smiled, her lips moved; then quite suddenly her head fell forward. She was asleep. He sat watching her—seeking through the tired flesh, seeking and finding that young, bright face which had stooped over his childhood in Malpais, remembering (and he closed his eyes) her voice, her movements, all the events of their life together. “Streptocock-

Gee to Banbury T...” How beautiful her singing had been! And those childish rhymes, how magically strange and mysterious!

A, B, C, vitamin D: The fat’s in the liver, the cod’s in the sea.

He felt the hot tears welling up behind his eyelids as he recalled the words and Linda’s voice as she repeated them. And then the reading lessons: The tot is in the pot, the cat is on the mat; and the Elementary Instructions for Beta Workers in the Embryo Store. And long evenings by the fire or, in summertime, on the roof of the little house, when she told him those stories about the Other Place, outside the Reservation: that beautiful, beautiful Other Place, whose memory, as of a heaven, a paradise of goodness and loveliness, he still kept whole and intact, undefiled by contact with the reality of this real London, these actual civilized men and women.

A sudden noise of shrill voices made him open his eyes and, after hastily brushing away the tears, look round. What seemed an interminable stream of identical eight-year-old male twins was pouring into the room. Twin after twin, twin after twin, they came—a nightmare. Their faces, their repeated face—for there was only one between the lot of them—puggishly stared, all nostrils and pale goggling eyes. Their uniform was khaki. All their mouths hung open. Squealing and chattering they entered. In a moment, it seemed, the ward was maggoty with them. They swarmed between the beds, clambered over, crawled under, peeped into the television boxes, made faces at the patients.

Linda astonished and rather alarmed them. A group stood clustered at the foot of her bed, staring with the frightened and stupid curiosity of animals

suddenly confronted by the unknown.

“Oh, look, look!” They spoke in low, scared voices. “Whatever is the matter with her? Why is she so fat?”

They had never seen a face like hers before—had never seen a face that was not youthful and taut-skinned, a body that had ceased to be slim and upright. All these moribund sexagenarians had the appearance of childish girls. At forty-four, Linda seemed, by contrast, a monster of flaccid and distorted senility.

“Isn’t she awful?” came the whispered comments. “Look at her teeth!”

Suddenly from under the bed a pug-faced twin popped up between John’s chair and the wall, and began peering into Linda’s sleeping face.

“I say...” he began; but the sentence ended prematurely in a squeal. The Savage had seized him by the collar, lifted him clear over the chair and, with a smart box on the ears, sent him howling away.

His yells brought the Head Nurse hurrying to the rescue.

“What have you been doing to him?” she demanded fiercely. “I won’t have you striking the children.”

“Well then, keep them away from this bed.” The Savage’s voice was trembling with indignation. “What are these filthy little brats doing here at all? It’s disgraceful!”

“Disgraceful? But what do you mean? They’re being death-conditioned.

And I tell you," she warned him truculently, "if I have any more of your interference with their conditioning, I'll send for the porters and have you thrown out."

The Savage rose to his feet and took a couple of steps towards her. His movements and the expression on his face were so menacing that the nurse fell back in terror. With a great effort he checked himself and, without speaking, turned away and sat down again by the bed.

Reassured, but with a dignity that was a trifle shrill and uncertain, "I've warned you," said the nurse, "I've warned you," said the nurse, "so mind." Still, she led the too inquisitive twins away and made them join in the game of hunt-the-zipper, which had been organized by one of her colleagues at the other end of the room.

"Run along now and have your cup of caffeine solution, dear," she said to the other nurse. The exercise of authority restored her confidence, made her feel better. "Now children!" she called.

Linda had stirred uneasily, had opened her eyes for a moment, looked vaguely around, and then once more dropped off to sleep. Sitting beside her, the Savage tried hard to recapture his mood of a few minutes before. "A, B, C, vitamin D," he repeated to himself, as though the words were a spell that would restore the dead past to life. But the spell was ineffective. Obstinate the beautiful memories refused to rise; there was only a hateful resurrection of jealousies and uglinesses and miseries. Popé with the blood trickling down from his cut shoulder; and Linda hideously asleep, and the flies buzzing round the spilt mescal on the floor beside the bed; and the boys calling those

names as she passed....Ah, no, no! He shut his eyes, he shook his head in strenuous denial of these memories. “A, B, C, vitamin D...” He tried to think of those times when he sat on her knees and she put her arms about him and sang, over and over again, rocking him, rocking him to sleep. “A, B, C, vitamin D, vitamin D, vitamin D...”

The Super-Vox-Wurlitzeriana had risen to a sobbing crescendo; and suddenly the verbenas gave place, in the scent-circulating system, to an intense patchouli. Linda stirred, woke up, stared for a few seconds bewilderedly at the Semi-finalists, then, lifting her face, sniffed once or twice at the newly perfumed air and suddenly smiled—a smile of childish ecstasy.

“Popé!” she murmured, and closed her eyes. “Oh, I do so like it, I do...” She sighed and let herself sink back into the pillows.

“But, Linda!” The Savage spoke imploringly, “Don’t you know me?” He had tried so hard, had done his very best; why wouldn’t she allow him to forget? He squeezed her limp hand almost with violence, as though he would force her to come back from this dream of ignoble pleasures, from these base and hateful memories—back into the present, back into reality: the appalling present, the awful reality—but sublime, but significant, but desperately important precisely because of the immensity of that which made them so fearful. “Don’t you know me, Linda?”

He felt the faint answering pressure of her hand. The tears started into his eyes. He bent over her and kissed her.

Her lips moved. “Popé!” she whispered again, and it was as though he

had had a pailful of ordure thrown in his face.

Anger suddenly boiled up in him. Balked for the second time, the passion of his grief had found another outlet, was transformed into a passion of agonized rage.

“But I’m John!” he shouted. “I’m John!” And in his furious misery he actually caught her by the shoulder and shook her.

Linda’s eyes fluttered open; she saw him, knew him—“John!”—but situated the real face, the real and violent hands, in an imaginary world—among the inward and private equivalents of patchouli and the Super-Wurlitzer, among the transfigured memories and the strangely transposed sensations that constituted the universe of her dream. She knew him for John, her son, but fancied him an intruder into that paradisaical Malpais where she had been spending her soma-holiday with Popé. He was angry because she liked Popé, he was shaking her because Popé was there in the bed—as though there were something wrong, as though all civilized people didn’t do the same. “Every one belongs to every...” Her voice suddenly died into an almost inaudible breathless croaking. Her mouth fell open: she made a desperate effort to fill her lungs with air. But it was as though she had forgotten how to breathe. She tried to cry out—but no sound came; only the terror of her staring eyes revealed what she was suffering. Her hands went to her throat, then clawed at the air—the air she could no longer breathe, the air that, for her, had ceased to exist.

The Savage was on his feet, bent over her. “What is it, Linda? What is it?” His voice was imploring; it was as though he were begging to be

reassured.

The look she gave him was charged with an unspeakable terror—with terror and, it seemed to him, reproach.

She tried to raise herself in bed, but fell back on to the pillows. Her face was horribly distorted, her lips blue.

The Savage turned and ran up the ward.

“Quick, quick!” he shouted. “Quick!”

Standing in the centre of a ring of zipper-hunting twins, the Head Nurse looked round. The first moment’s astonishment gave place almost instantly to disapproval. “Don’t shout! Think of the little ones,” she said, frowning. “You might decondition...But what are you doing?” He had broken through the ring. “Be careful!” A child was yelling.

“Quick, quick!” He caught her by the sleeve, dragged her after him. “Quick! Something’s happened. I’ve killed her.”

By the time they were back at the end of the ward Linda was dead.

The Savage stood for a moment in frozen silence, then fell on his knees beside the bed and, covering his face with his hands, sobbed uncontrollably.

The nurse stood irresolute, looking now at the kneeling figure by the bed (the scandalous exhibition!) and now (poor children!) at the twins who had stopped their hunting of the zipper and were staring from the other end of the ward, staring with all their eyes and nostrils at the shocking scene that was

being enacted round Bed 20. Should she speak to him? try to bring him back to a sense of decency? remind him of where he was? of what fatal mischief he might do to these poor innocents? Undoing all their wholesome death-conditioning with this disgusting outcry—as though death were something terrible, as though any one mattered as much as all that! It might give them the most disastrous ideas about the subject, might upset them into reacting in the entirely wrong, the utterly anti-social way.

She stepped forward, she touched him on the shoulder. “Can’t you behave?” she said in a low, angry voice. But, looking around, she saw that half a dozen twins were already on their feet and advancing down the ward. The circle was disintegrating. In another moment...No, the risk was too great; the whole Group might be put back six or seven months in its conditioning. She hurried back towards her menaced charges.

“Now, who wants a chocolate éclair?” she asked in a loud, cheerful tone.

“Me!” yelled the entire Bokanovsky Group in chorus. Bed 20 was completely forgotten.

“Oh, God, God, God...” the Savage kept repeating to himself. In the chaos of grief and remorse that filled his mind it was the one articulate word. “God!” he whispered it aloud. “God...”

“Whatever is he saying?” said a voice, very near, distinct and shrill through the warblings of the Super-Wurlitzer.

The Savage violently started and, uncovering his face, looked round. Five khaki twins, each with the stump of a long éclair in his right hand, and

their identical faces variously smeared with liquid chocolate, were standing in a row, puggily goggling at him.

They met his eyes and simultaneously grinned. One of them pointed with his éclair butt.

“Is she dead?” he asked.

The Savage stared at them for a moment in silence. Then in silence he rose to his feet, in silence slowly walked towards the door.

“Is she dead?” repeated the inquisitive twin trotting at his side.

The Savage looked down at him and still without speaking pushed him away. The twin fell on the floor and at once began to howl. The Savage did not even look round.

Chapter Fifteen

THE menial staff of the Park Lane Hospital for the Dying consisted of one hundred and sixty-two Deltas pided into two Bokanovsky Groups of eighty-four red headed female and seventy-eight dark dolychcephalic male twins, respectively. At six, when their working day was over, the two Groups assembled in the vestibule of the Hospital and were served by the Deputy Sub-Bursar with their soma ration.

From the lift the Savage stepped out into the midst of them. But his mind was elsewhere—with death, with his grief, and his remorse; mechanically, without consciousness of what he was doing, he began to shoulder his way through the crowd.

“Who are you pushing? Where do you think you’re going?”

High, low, from a multitude of separate throats, only two voices squeaked or growled. Repeated indefinitely, as though by a train of mirrors, two faces, one a hairless and freckled moon haloed in orange, the other a thin, beaked bird-mask, stubbly with two days’ beard, turned angrily towards him. Their words and, in his ribs, the sharp nudging of elbows, broke through his unawareness. He woke once more to external reality, looked round him, knew what he saw—knew it, with a sinking sense of horror and disgust, for the recurrent delirium of his days and nights, the nightmare of swarming indistinguishable sameness. Twins, twins....Like maggots they had swarmed

defilingly over the mystery of Linda's death. Maggots again, but larger, full grown, they now crawled across his grief and his repentance. He halted and, with bewildered and horrified eyes, stared round him at the khaki mob, in the midst of which, overtopping it by a full head, he stood. "How many goodly creatures are there here!" The singing words mocked him derisively. "How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world..."

"Soma distribution!" shouted a loud voice. "In good order, please. Hurry up there."

A door had been opened, a table and chair carried into the vestibule. The voice was that of a jaunty young Alpha, who had entered carrying a black iron cash-box. A murmur of satisfaction went up from the expectant twins. They forgot all about the Savage. Their attention was now focused on the black cash-box, which the young man had placed on the table, and was now in process of unlocking. The lid was lifted.

"Oo-oh!" said all the hundred and sixty-two simultaneously, as though they were looking at fireworks.

The young man took out a handful of tiny pill-boxes. "Now," he said peremptorily, "step forward, please. One at a time, and no shoving."

One at a time, with no shoving, the twins stepped forward. First two males, then a female, then another male, then three females, then...

The Savage stood looking on. "O brave new world, O brave new world..." In his mind the singing words seemed to change their tone. They had mocked him through his misery and remorse, mocked him with how

hideous a note of cynical derision! Fiendishly laughing, they had insisted on the low squalor, the nauseous ugliness of the nightmare. Now, suddenly, they trumpeted a call to arms. “O brave new world!” Miranda was proclaiming the possibility of loveliness, the possibility of transforming even the nightmare into something fine and noble. “O brave new world!” It was a challenge, a command.

“No shoving there now!” shouted the Deputy Sub-Bursar in a fury. He slammed down the lid of his cash-box. “I shall stop the distribution unless I have good behaviour.”

The Deltas muttered, jostled one another a little, and then were still. The threat had been effective. Deprivation of soma—appalling thought!

“That’s better,” said the young man, and reopened his cash-box.

Linda had been a slave, Linda had died; others should live in freedom, and the world be made beautiful. A reparation, a duty. And suddenly it was luminously clear to the Savage what he must do; it was as though a shutter had been opened, a curtain drawn back.

“Now,” said the Deputy Sub-Bursar.

Another khaki female stepped forward.

“Stop!” called the Savage in a loud and ringing voice. “Stop!”

He pushed his way to the table; the Deltas stared at him with astonishment.

“Ford!” said the Deputy Sub-Bursar, below his breath. “It’s the Savage.” He felt scared.

“Listen, I beg of you,” cried the Savage earnestly. “Lend me your ears...” He had never spoken in public before, and found it very difficult to express what he wanted to say. “Don’t take that horrible stuff. It’s poison, it’s poison.”

“I say, Mr. Savage,” said the Deputy Sub-Bursar, smiling propitiatingly. “Would you mind letting me...”

“Poison to soul as well as body.”

“Yes, but let me get on with my distribution, won’t you? There’s a good fellow.” With the cautious tenderness of one who strokes a notoriously vicious animal, he patted the Savage’s arm. “Just let me...”

“Never!” cried the Savage.

“But look here, old man...”

“Throw it all away, that horrible poison.”

The words “Throw it all away” pierced through the enfolding layers of incomprehension to the quick of the Delta’s consciousness. An angry murmur went up from the crowd.

“I come to bring you freedom,” said the Savage, turning back towards the twins. “I come...”

The Deputy Sub-Bursar heard no more; he had slipped out of the vestibule and was looking up a number in the telephone book.

“Not in his own rooms,” Bernard summed up. “Not in mine, not in yours. Not at the Aphroditaum; not at the Centre or the College. Where can he have got to?”

Helmholtz shrugged his shoulders. They had come back from their work expecting to find the Savage waiting for them at one or other of the usual meeting-places, and there was no sign of the fellow. Which was annoying, as they had meant to nip across to Biarritz in Helmholtz’s four-seater sporticopter. They’d be late for dinner if he didn’t come soon.

“We’ll give him five more minutes,” said Helmholtz. “If he doesn’t turn up by then, we’ll...”

The ringing of the telephone bell interrupted him. He picked up the receiver. “Hullo. Speaking.” Then, after a long interval of listening, “Ford in Flivver!” he swore. “I’ll come at once.”

“What is it?” Bernard asked.

“A fellow I know at the Park Lane Hospital,” said Helmholtz. “The Savage is there. Seems to have gone mad. Anyhow, it’s urgent. Will you come with me?”

Together they hurried along the corridor to the lifts.

“But do you like being slaves?” the Savage was saying as they entered the Hospital. His face was flushed, his eyes bright with ardour and

indignation. “Do you like being babies? Yes, babies. Mewling and puking,” he added, exasperated by their bestial stupidity into throwing insults at those he had come to save. The insults bounced off their carapace of thick stupidity; they stared at him with a blank expression of dull and sullen resentment in their eyes. “Yes, puking!” he fairly shouted. Grief and remorse, compassion and duty—all were forgotten now and, as it were, absorbed into an intense overpowering hatred of these less than human monsters. “Don’t you want to be free and men? Don’t you even understand what manhood and freedom are?” Rage was making him fluent; the words came easily, in a rush. “Don’t you?” he repeated, but got no answer to his question. “Very well then,” he went on grimly. “I’ll teach you; I’ll make you be free whether you want to or not.” And pushing open a window that looked on to the inner court of the Hospital, he began to throw the little pill-boxes of soma tablets in handfuls out into the area.

For a moment the khaki mob was silent, petrified, at the spectacle of this wanton sacrilege, with amazement and horror.

“He’s mad,” whispered Bernard, staring with wide open eyes. “They’ll kill him. They’ll...” A great shout suddenly went up from the mob; a wave of movement drove it menacingly towards the Savage. “Ford help him!” said Bernard, and averted his eyes.

“Ford helps those who help themselves.” And with a laugh, actually a laugh of exultation, Helmholtz Watson pushed his way through the crowd.

“Free, free!” the Savage shouted, and with one hand continued to throw the soma into the area while, with the other, he punched the indistinguishable

faces of his assailants. “Free!” And suddenly there was Helmholtz at his side— “Good old Helmholtz!” –also punching— “Men at last!” –And in the interval also throwing the poison out by handfuls through the open window. “Yes, men! men!” and there was no more poison left. He picked up the cash-box and showed them its black emptiness. “You’re free!”

Howling, the Deltas charged with a redoubled fury.

Hesitant on the fringes of the battle. “They’re done for,” said Bernard and, urged by a sudden impulse, ran forward to help them; then thought better of it and halted; then, ashamed, stepped forward again; then again thought better of it, and was standing in an agony of humiliated indecision—thinking that they might be killed if he didn’t help them, and that he might be killed if he did—when (Ford be praised!), goggle-eyed and swine-snouted in their gas-masks, in ran the police.

Bernard dashed to meet them. He waved his arms; and it was action, he was doing something. He shouted “Help!” several times, more and more loudly so as to give himself the illusion of helping. “Help! Help! HELP!”

The policemen pushed him out of the way and got on with their work. Three men with spraying machines buckled to their shoulders pumped thick clouds of soma vapour into the air. Two more were busy round the portable Synthetic Music Box. Carrying water pistols charged with a powerful anæsthetic, four others had pushed their way into the crowd and were methodically laying out, squirt by squirt, the more ferocious of the fighters.

“Quick, quick!” yelled Bernard. “They’ll be killed if you don’t hurry.

They'll...Oh!" Annoyed by his chatter, one of the policemen had given him a shot from his water pistol. Bernard stood for a second or two wambling unsteadily on legs that seemed to have lost their bones, their tendons, their muscles, to have become mere sticks of jelly, and at last not even jelly-water: he tumbled in a heap on the floor.

Suddenly, from out of the Synthetic Music Box a Voice began to speak. The Voice of Reason, the Voice of Good Feeling. The sound-track roll was unwinding itself in Synthetic Anti-Riot Speech Number Two (Medium Strength). Straight from the depths of a non-existent heart, "My friends, my friends!" said the Voice so pathetically, with a note of such infinitely tender reproach that, behind their gas masks, even the policemen's eyes were momentarily dimmed with tears, "what is the meaning of this? Why aren't you all being happy and good together? Happy and good," the Voice repeated. "At peace, at peace." It trembled, sank into a whisper and momentarily expired. "Oh, I do want you to be happy," it began, with a yearning earnestness. "I do so want you to be good! Please, please be good and..."

Two minutes later the Voice and the soma vapour had produced their effect. In tears, the Deltas were kissing and hugging one another—half a dozen twins at a time in a comprehensive embrace. Even Helmholtz and the Savage were almost crying. A fresh supply of pill-boxes was brought in from the Bursary; a new distribution was hastily made and, to the sound of the Voice's ricuy affectionate, baritone valedictions, the twins dispersed, blubbering as though their hearts would break. "Good-bye, my dearest, dearest friends, Ford keep you! Good-bye, my dearest, dearest friends, Ford keep you. Good-

bye my dearest, dearest...”

When the last of the Deltas had gone the policeman switched off the current. The angelic Voice fell silent.

“Will you come quietly?” asked the Sergeant, “or must we anaesthetize?” He pointed his water pistol menacingly.

“Oh, we’ll come quietly,” the Savage answered, dabbing alternately a cut lip, a scratched neck, and a bitten left hand.

Still keeping his handkerchief to his bleeding nose Helmholtz nodded in confirmation.

Awake and having recovered the use of his legs, Bernard had chosen this moment to move as inconspicuously as he could towards the door.

“Hi, you there,” called the Sergeant, and a swine-masked policeman hurried across the room and laid a hand on the young man’s shoulder.

Bernard turned with an expression of indignant innocence. Escaping? He hadn’t dreamed of such a thing. “Though what on earth you want me for,” he said to the Sergeant, “I really can’t imagine.”

“You’re a friend of the prisoner’s, aren’t you?”

“Well...” said Bernard, and hesitated. No, he really couldn’t deny it. “Why shouldn’t I be?” he asked.

“Come on then,” said the Sergeant, and led the way towards the door

and the waiting police car.

Chapter Sixteen

THE ROOM into which the three were ushered was the Controller's study.

"His fordship will be down in a moment." The Gamma butler left them to themselves.

Helmholtz laughed aloud.

"It's more like a caffeine-solution party than a trial," he said, and let himself fall into the most luxurious of the pneumatic arm-chairs. "Cheer up, Bernard," he added, catching sight of his friend's green unhappy face. But Bernard would not be cheered; without answering, without even looking at Helmholtz, he went and sat down on the most uncomfortable chair in the room, carefully chosen in the obscure hope of somehow deprecating the wrath of the higher powers.

The Savage meanwhile wandered restlessly round the room, peering with a vague superficial inquisitiveness at the books in the shelves, at the sound-track rolls and reading machine bobbins in their numbered pigeon-holes. On the table under the window lay a massive volume bound in limp black leather-surrogate, and stamped with large golden T's. He picked it up and opened it. MY LIFE AND WORK, BY OUR FORD. The book had been published at Detroit by the Society for the Propagation of Fordian Knowledge. Idly he turned the pages, read a sentence here, a paragraph there,

and had just come to the conclusion that the book didn't interest him, when the door opened, and the Resident World Controller for Western Europe walked briskly into the room.

Mustapha Mond shook hands with all three of them; but it was to the Savage that he addressed himself. "So you don't much like civilization, Mr. Savage," he said.

The Savage looked at him. He had been prepared to lie, to bluster, to remain sullenly unresponsive; but, reassured by the good-humoured intelligence of the Controller's face, he decided to tell the truth, straightforwardly. "No." He shook his head.

Bernard started and looked horrified. What would the Controller think? To be labelled as the friend of a man who said that he didn't like civilization—said it openly and, of all people, to the Controller—it was terrible. "But, John," he began. A look from Mustapha Mond reduced him to an abject silence.

"Of course," the Savage went on to admit, "there are some very nice things. All that music in the air, for instance..."

"Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments will hum about my ears and sometimes voices."

The Savage's face lit up with a sudden pleasure. "Have you read it too?" he asked. "I thought nobody knew about that book here, in England."

"Almost nobody. I'm one of the very few. It's prohibited, you see. But as I make the laws here, I can also break them. With impunity, Mr. Marx," he

added, turning to Bernard. "Which I'm afraid you can't do."

Bernard sank into a yet more hopeless misery.

"But why is it prohibited?" asked the Savage. In the excitement of meeting a man who had read Shakespeare he had momentarily forgotten everything else.

The Controller shrugged his shoulders. "Because it's old; that's the chief reason. We haven't any use for old things here."

"Even when they're beautiful?"

"Particularly when they're beautiful. Beauty's attractive, and we don't want people to be attracted by old things. We want them to like the new ones."

"But the new ones are so stupid and horrible. Those plays, where there's nothing but helicopters flying about and you feel the people kissing." He made a grimace. "Goats and monkeys!" Only in Othello's word could he find an adequate vehicle for his contempt and hatred.

"Nice tame animals, anyhow," the Controller murmured parenthetically.

"Why don't you let them see Othello instead?"

"I've told you; it's old. Besides, they couldn't understand it."

Yes, that was true. He remembered how Helmholtz had laughed at Romeo and Juliet. "Well then," he said, after a pause, "something new that's

like Othello, and that they could understand.”

“That’s what we’ve all been wanting to write,” said Helmholtz, breaking a long silence.

“And it’s what you never will write,” said the Controller. “Because, if it were really like Othello nobody could understand it, however new it might be. And if were new, it couldn’t possibly be like Othello.”

“Why not?”

“Yes, why not?” Helmholtz repeated. He too was forgetting the unpleasant realities of the situation. Green with anxiety and apprehension, only Bernard remembered them; the others ignored him. “Why not?”

“Because our world is not the same as Othello’s world. You can’t make flivvers without steel—and you can’t make tragedies without social instability. The world’s stable now. People are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can’t get. They’re well off; they’re safe; they’re never ill; they’re not afraid of death; they’re blissfully ignorant of passion and old age; they’re plagued with no mothers or fathers; they’ve got no wives, or children, or lovers to feel strongly about; they’re so conditioned that they practically can’t help behaving as they ought to behave. And if anything should go wrong, there’s soma. Which you go and chuck out of the window in the name of liberty, Mr. Savage. Liberty!” He laughed. “Expecting Deltas to know what liberty is! And now expecting them to understand Othello! My good boy!”

The Savage was silent for a little. “All the same,” he insisted obstinately,

“Othello’s good, Othello’s better than those feelies.”

“Of course it is,” the Controller agreed. “But that’s the price we have to pay for stability. You’ve got to choose between happiness and what people used to call high art. We’ve sacrificed the high art. We have the feelies and the scent organ instead.”

“But they don’t mean anything.”

“They mean themselves; they mean a lot of agreeable sensations to the audience.”

“But they’re...they’re told by an idiot.”

The Controller laughed. “You’re not being very polite to your friend, Mr. Watson. One of our most distinguished Emotional Engineers...”

“But he’s right,” said Helmholtz gloomily. “Because it is idiotic. Writing when there’s nothing to say...”

“Precisely. But that require the most enormous ingenuity. You’re making fiivvers out of the absolute minimum of steel—works of art out of practically nothing but pure sensation.”

The Savage shook his head. “It all seems to me quite horrible.”

“Of course it does. Actual happiness always looks pretty squalid in comparison with the over-compensations for misery. And, of course, stability isn’t nearly so spectacular as instability. And being contented has none of the glamour of a good fight against misfortune, none of the picturesqueness of a

struggle with temptation, or a fatal overthrow by passion or doubt. Happiness is never grand.”

“I suppose not,” said the Savage after a silence. “But need it be quite so bad as those twins?” He passed his hand over his eyes as though he were trying to wipe away the remembered image of those long rows of identical midgets at the assembling tables, those queued-up twin-herds at the entrance to the Brentford monorail station, those human maggots swarming round Linda’s bed of death, the endlessly repeated face of his assailants. He looked at his bandaged left hand and shuddered. “Horrible!”

“But how useful! I see you don’t like our Bokanovsky Groups; but, I assure you, they’re the foundation on which everything else is built. They’re the gyroscope that stabilizes the rocket plane of state on its unswerving course.” The deep voice thrillingly vibrated; the gesticulating hand implied all space and the onrush of the irresistible machine. Mustapha Mond’s oratory was almost up to synthetic standards.

“I was wondering,” said the Savage, “why you had them at all—seeing that you can get whatever you want out of those bottles. Why don’t you make everybody an Alpha Double Plus while you’re about it?”

Mustapha Mond laughed. “Because we have no wish to have our throats cut,” he answered. “We believe in happiness and stability. A society of Alphas couldn’t fail to be unstable and miserable. Imagine a factory staffed by Alphas—that is to say by separate and unrelated individuals of good heredity and conditioned so as to be capable (within limits) of making a free choice and assuming responsibilities. Imagine it!” he repeated.

The Savage tried to imagine it, not very successfully.

“It’s an absurdity. An Alpha-decanted, Alpha-conditioned man would go mad if he had to do Epsilon Semi-Moron work—go mad, or start smashing things up. Alphas can be completely socialized—but only on condition that you make them do Alpha work. Only an Epsilon can be expected to make Epsilon sacrifices, for the good reason that for him they aren’t sacrifices; they’re the line of least resistance. His conditioning has laid down rails along which he’s got to run. He can’t help himself; he’s foredoomed. Even after decanting, he’s still inside a bottle—an invisible bottle of infantile and embryonic fixations. Each one of us, of course,” the Controller meditatively continued, “goes through life inside a bottle. But if we happen to be Alphas, our bottles are, relatively speaking, enormous. We should suffer acutely if we were confined in a narrower space. You cannot pour upper-caste champagne-surrogate into lower-caste bottles. It’s obvious theoretically. But it has also been proved in actual practice. The result of the Cyprus experiment was convincing.”

“What was that?” asked the Savage.

Mustapha Mond smiled. “Well, you can call it an experiment in rebottling if you like. It began in A.F. 473. The Controllers had the island of Cyprus cleared of all its existing inhabitants and re-colonized with a specially prepared batch of twenty-two thousand Alphas. All agricultural and industrial equipment was handed over to them and they were left to manage their own affairs. The result exactly fulfilled all the theoretical predictions. The land wasn’t properly worked; there were strikes in all the factories; the laws were set at naught, orders disobeyed; all the people detailed for a spell of low-

grade work were perpetually intriguing for high-grade jobs, and all the people with high-grade jobs were counter-intriguing at all costs to stay where they were. Within six years they were having a first-class civil war. When nineteen out of the twenty-two thousand had been killed, the survivors unanimously petitioned the World Controllers to resume the government of the island. Which they did. And that was the end of the only society of Alphas that the world has ever seen.”

The Savage sighed, profoundly.

“The optimum population,” said Mustapha Mond, “is modelled on the iceberg—eight-ninths below the water line, one-ninth above.”

“And they’re happy below the water line?”

“Happier than above it. Happier than your friend here, for example.” He pointed.

“In spite of that awful work?”

“Awful? They don’t find it so. On the contrary, they like it. It’s light, it’s childishly simple. No strain on the mind or the muscles. Seven and a half hours of mild, unexhausting labour, and then the soma ration and games and unrestricted copulation and the feelies. What more can they ask for? True,” he added, “they might ask for shorter hours. And of course we could give them shorter hours. Technically, it would be perfectly simple to reduce all lower-caste working hours to three or four a day. But would they be any the happier for that? No, they wouldn’t. The experiment was tried, more than a century and a half ago. The whole of Ireland was put on to the four-hour day.

What was the result? Unrest and a large increase in the consumption of soma; that was all. Those three and a half hours of extra leisure were so far from being a source of happiness, that people felt constrained to take a holiday from them. The Inventions Office is stuffed with plans for labour-saving processes. Thousands of them.” Mustapha Mond made a lavish gesture. “And why don’t we put them into execution? For the sake of the labourers; it would be sheer cruelty to afflict them with excessive leisure. It’s the same with agriculture. We could synthesize every morsel of food, if we wanted to. But we don’t. We prefer to keep a third of the population on the land. For their own sakes—because it takes longer to get food out of the land than out of a factory. Besides, we have our stability to think of. We don’t want to change. Every change is a menace to stability. That’s another reason why we’re so chary of applying new inventions. Every discovery in pure science is potentially subversive; even science must sometimes be treated as a possible enemy. Yes, even science.”

Science? The Savage frowned. He knew the word. But what it exactly signified he could not say. Shakespeare and the old men of the pueblo had never mentioned science, and from Linda he had only gathered the vaguest hints: science was something you made helicopters with, some thing that caused you to laugh at the Corn Dances, something that prevented you from being wrinkled and losing your teeth. He made a desperate effort to take the Controller’s meaning.

“Yes,” Mustapha Mond was saying, “that’s another item in the cost of stability. It isn’t only art that’s incompatible with happiness; it’s also science. Science is dangerous; we have to keep it most carefully chained and

muzzled.”

“What?” said Helmholtz, in astonishment. “But we’re always saying that science is everything. It’s a hypnopædic platitude.”

“Three times a week between thirteen and seventeen,” put in Bemard.

“And all the science propaganda we do at the College...”

“Yes; but what sort of science?” asked Mustapha Mond sarcastically. “You’ve had no scientific training, so you can’t judge. I was a pretty good physicist in my time. Too good—good enough to realize that all our science is just a cookery book, with an orthodox theory of cooking that nobody’s allowed to question, and a list of recipes that mustn’t be added to except by special permission from the head cook. I’m the head cook now. But I was an inquisitive young scullion once. I started doing a bit of cooking on my own. Unorthodox cooking, illicit cooking. A bit of real science, in fact.” He was silent.

“What happened?” asked Helmholtz Watson.

The Controller sighed. “Very nearly what’s going to happen to you young men. I was on the point of being sent to an island.”

The words galvanized Bernard into violent and unseemly activity. “Send me to an island?” He jumped up, ran across the room, and stood gesticulating in front of the Controller. “You can’t send me. I haven’t done anything. It was the others. I swear it was the others.” He pointed accusingly to Helmholtz and the Savage. “Oh, please don’t send me to Iceland. I promise

I'll do what I ought to do. Give me another chance. Please give me another chance." The tears began to flow. "I tell you, it's their fault," he sobbed. "And not to Iceland. Oh please, your fordship, please..." And in a paroxysm of abjection he threw himself on his knees before the Controller. Mustapha Mond tried to make him get up; but Bernard persisted in his grovelling; the stream of words poured out inexhaustibly. In the end the Controller had to ring for his fourth secretary.

"Bring three men," he ordered, "and take Mr. Marx into a bedroom. Give him a good soma vaporization and then put him to bed and leave him."

The fourth secretary went out and returned with three green-uniformed twin footmen. Still shouting and sobbing. Bernard was carried out.

"One would think he was going to have his throat cut," said the Controller, as the door closed. "Whereas, if he had the smallest sense, he'd understand that his punishment is really a reward. He's being sent to an island. That's to say, he's being sent to a place where he'll meet the most interesting set of men and women to be found anywhere in the world. All the people who, for one reason or another, have got too self-consciously inpidual to fit into community-life. All the people who aren't satisfied with orthodoxy, who've got independent ideas of their own. Every one, in a word, who's any one. I almost envy you, Mr. Watson."

Helmholtz laughed. "Then why aren't you on an island yourself?"

"Because, finally, I preferred this," the Controller answered. "I was given the choice: to be sent to an island, where I could have got on with my

pure science, or to be taken on to the Controllers' Council with the prospect of succeeding in due course to an actual Controllership. I chose this and let the science go." After a little silence, "Sometimes," he added, "I rather regret the science. Happiness is a hard master—particularly other people's happiness. A much harder master, if one isn't conditioned to accept it unquestioningly, than truth." He sighed, fell silent again, then continued in a brisker tone, "Well, duty's duty. One can't consult one's own preference. I'm interested in truth, I like science. But truth's a menace, science is a public danger. As dangerous as it's been beneficent. It has given us the stablest equilibrium in history. China's was hopelessly insecure by comparison; even the primitive matriarchies weren't steadier than we are. Thanks, I repeat, to science. But we can't allow science to undo its own good work. That's why we so carefully limit the scope of its researches—that's why I almost got sent to an island. We don't allow it to deal with any but the most immediate problems of the moment. All other enquiries are most sedulously discouraged. It's curious."

He went on after a little pause, "to read what people in the time of Our Ford used to write about scientific progress. They seemed to have imagined that it could be allowed to go on indefinitely, regardless of everything else. Knowledge was the highest good, truth the supreme value; all the rest was secondary and subordinate. True, ideas were beginning to change even then. Our Ford himself did a great deal to shift the emphasis from truth and beauty to comfort and happiness. Mass production demanded the shift. Universal happiness keeps the wheels steadily turning; truth and beauty can't. And, of course, whenever the masses seized political power, then it was happiness rather than truth and beauty that mattered. Still, in spite of everything, unrestricted scientific research was still permitted. People still went on

talking about truth and beauty as though they were the sovereign goods. Right up to the time of the Nine Years' War. That made them change their tune all right. What's the point of truth or beauty or knowledge when the anthrax bombs are popping all around you? That was when science first began to be controlled—after the Nine Years' War. People were ready to have even their appetites controlled then. Anything for a quiet life. We've gone on controlling ever since. It hasn't been very good for truth, of course. But it's been very good for happiness. One can't have something for nothing. Happiness has got to be paid for. You're paying for it, Mr. Watson—paying because you happen to be too much interested in beauty. I was too much interested in truth; I paid too."

"But you didn't go to an island," said the Savage, breaking a long silence.

The Controller smiled. "That's how I paid. By choosing to serve happiness. Other people's—not mine. It's lucky," he added, after a pause, "that there are such a lot of islands in the world. I don't know what we should do without them. Put you all in the lethal chamber, I suppose. By the way, Mr. Watson, would you like a tropical climate? The Marquesas, for example; or Samoa? Or something rather more bracing?"

Helmholtz rose from his pneumatic chair. "I should like a thoroughly bad climate," he answered. "I believe one would write better if the climate were bad. If there were a lot of wind and storms, for example..."

The Controller nodded his approbation. "I like your spirit, Mr. Watson. I like it very much indeed. As much as I officially disapprove of it." He smiled.

“What about the Falkland Islands?”

“Yes, I think that will do,” Helmholtz answered. “And now, if you don’t mind, I’ll go and see how poor Bernard’s getting on.”

Chapter Seventeen

ART, SCIENCE—you seem to have paid a fairly high price for your happiness,” said the Savage, when they were alone. “Anything else?”

“Well, religion, of course,” replied the Controller. “There used to be something called God—before the Nine Years’ War. But I was forgetting; you know all about God, I suppose.”

“Well...” The Savage hesitated. He would have liked to say something about solitude, about night, about the mesa lying pale under the moon, about the precipice, the plunge into shadowy darkness, about death. He would have liked to speak; but there were no words. Not even in Shakespeare.

The Controller, meanwhile, had crossed to the other side of the room and was unlocking a large safe set into the wall between the bookshelves. The heavy door swung open. Rummaging in the darkness within, “It’s a subject,” he said, “that has always had a great interest for me.” He pulled out a thick black volume. “You’ve never read this, for example.”

The Savage took it. “The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments,” he read aloud from the title-page.

“Nor this.” It was a small book and had lost its cover.

“The Imitation of Christ.”

“Nor this.” He handed out another volume.

“The Varieties of Religious Experience. By William James.”

“And I’ve got plenty more,” Mustapha Mond continued, resuming his seat. “A whole collection of pornographic old books. God in the safe and Ford on the shelves.” He pointed with a laugh to his avowed library—to the shelves of books, the rack full of reading-machine bobbins and sound-track rolls.

“But if you know about God, why don’t you tell them?” asked the Savage indignantly. “Why don’t you give them these books about God?”

“For the same reason as we don’t give them Othello: they’re old; they’re about God hundreds of years ago. Not about God now.”

“But God doesn’t change.”

“Men do, though.”

“What difference does that make?”

“All the difference in the world,” said Mustapha Mond. He got up again and walked to the safe. “There was a man called Cardinal Newman,” he said. “A cardinal,” he exclaimed parenthetically, “was a kind of Arch-Community-Songster.”

“‘I Pandulph, of fair Milan, cardinal.’ I’ve read about them in Shakespeare.”

“Of course you have. Well, as I was saying, there was a man called Cardinal Newman. Ah, here’s the book.” He pulled it out. “And while I’m about it I’ll take this one too. It’s by a man called Maine de Biran. He was a philosopher, if you know what that was.”

“A man who dreams of fewer things than there are in heaven and earth,” said the Savage promptly.

“Quite so. I’ll read you one of the things he did dream of in a moment. Meanwhile, listen to what this old Arch-Community-Songster said.” He opened the book at the place marked by a slip of paper and began to read. “‘We are not our own any more than what we possess is our own. We did not make ourselves, we cannot be supreme over ourselves. We are not our own masters. We are God’s property. Is it not our happiness thus to view the matter? Is it any happiness or any comfort, to consider that we are our own? It may be thought so by the young and prosperous. These may think it a great thing to have everything, as they suppose, their own way—to depend on no one—to have to think of nothing out of sight, to be without the irksomeness of continual acknowledgment, continual prayer, continual reference of what they do to the will of another. But as time goes on, they, as all men, will find that independence was not made for man—that it is an unnatural state—will do for a while, but will not carry us on safely to the end...’” Mustapha Mond paused, put down the first book and, picking up the other, turned over the pages. “Take this, for example,” he said, and in his deep voice once more began to read: “‘A man grows old; he feels in himself that radical sense of weakness, of listlessness, of discomfort, which accompanies the advance of age; and, feeling thus, imagines himself merely sick, lulling his fears with the

notion that this distressing condition is due to some particular cause, from which, as from an illness, he hopes to recover. Vain imaginings! That sickness is old age; and a horrible disease it is. They say that it is the fear of death and of what comes after death that makes men turn to religion as they advance in years. But my own experience has given me the conviction that, quite apart from any such terrors or imaginings, the religious sentiment tends to develop as we grow older; to develop because, as the passions grow calm, as the fancy and sensibilities are less excited and less excitable, our reason becomes less troubled in its working, less obscured by the images, desires and distractions, in which it used to be absorbed; whereupon God emerges as from behind a cloud; our soul feels, sees, turns towards the source of all light; turns naturally and inevitably; for now that all that gave to the world of sensations its life and charms has begun to leak away from us, now that phenomenal existence is no more bolstered up by impressions from within or from without, we feel the need to lean on something that abides, something that will never play us false—a reality, an absolute and everlasting truth. Yes, we inevitably turn to God; for this religious sentiment is of its nature so pure, so delightful to the soul that experiences it, that it makes up to us for all our other losses.’”

Mustapha Mond shut the book and leaned back in his chair. “One of the numerous things in heaven and earth that these philosophers didn’t dream about was this” (he waved his hand), “us, the modern world. ‘You can only be independent of God while you’ve got youth and prosperity; independence won’t take you safely to the end.’ Well, we’ve now got youth and prosperity right up to the end. What follows? Evidently, that we can be independent of God. ‘The religious sentiment will compensate us for all our losses.’ But

there aren't any losses for us to compensate; religious sentiment is superfluous. And why should we go hunting for a substitute for youthful desires, when youthful desires never fail? A substitute for distractions, when we go on enjoying all the old fooleries to the very last? What need have we of repose when our minds and bodies continue to delight in activity? Of consolation, when we have soma? Of something immovable, when there is the social order?"

"Then you think there is no God?"

"No, I think there quite probably is one."

"Then why?..."

Mustapha Mond checked him. "But he manifests himself in different ways to different men. In premodern times he manifested himself as the being that's described in these books. Now..."

"How does he manifest himself now?" asked the Savage.

"Well, he manifests himself as an absence; as though he weren't there at all."

"That's your fault."

"Call it the fault of civilization. God isn't compatible with machinery and scientific medicine and universal happiness. You must make your choice. Our civilization has chosen machinery and medicine and happiness. That's why I have to keep these books locked up in the safe. They're smut. People would be shocked it..."

The Savage interrupted him. “But isn’t it natural to feel there’s a God?”

“You might as well ask if it’s natural to do up one’s trousers with zippers,” said the Controller sarcastically. “You remind me of another of those old fellows called Bradley. He defined philosophy as the finding of bad reason for what one believes by instinct. As if one believed anything by instinct! One believes things because one has been conditioned to believe them. Finding bad reasons for what one believes for other bad reasons—that’s philosophy. People believe in God because they’ve been conditioned to.”

“But all the same,” insisted the Savage, “it is natural to believe in God when you’re alone—quite alone, in the night, thinking about death...”

“But people never are alone now,” said Mustapha Mond. “We make them hate solitude; and we arrange their lives so that it’s almost impossible for them ever to have it.”

The Savage nodded gloomily. At Malpais he had suffered because they had shut him out from the communal activities of the pueblo, in civilized London he was suffering because he could never escape from those communal activities, never be quietly alone.

“Do you remember that bit in King Lear?” said the Savage at last. “‘The gods are just and of our pleasant vices make instruments to plague us; the dark and vicious place where thee he got cost him his eyes,’ and Edmund answers—you remember, he’s wounded, he’s dying—‘Thou hast spoken right; tis true. The wheel has come full circle; I am here.’ What about that now? Doesn’t there seem to be a God managing things, punishing, rewarding?”

“Well, does there?” questioned the Controller in his turn. “You can indulge in any number of pleasant vices with a freemartin and run no risks of having your eyes put out by your son’s mistress. ‘The wheel has come full circle; I am here.’ But where would Edmund be nowadays? Sitting in a pneumatic chair, with his arm round a girl’s waist, sucking away at his sex-hormone chewing-gum and looking at the feelies. The gods are just. No doubt. But their code of law is dictated, in the last resort, by the people who organize society; Providence takes its cue from men.”

“Are you sure?” asked the Savage. “Are you quite sure that the Edmund in that pneumatic chair hasn’t been just as heavily punished as the Edmund who’s wounded and bleeding to death? The gods are just. Haven’t they used his pleasant vices as an instrument to degrade him?”

“Degrade him from what position? As a happy, hard-working, goods-consuming citizen he’s perfect. Of course, if you choose some other standard than ours, then perhaps you might say he was degraded. But you’ve got to stick to one set of postulates. You can’t play Electro-magnetic Golf according to the rules of Centrifugal Bumble-puppy.”

“But value dwells not in particular will,” said the Savage. “It holds his estimate and dignity as well wherein ’tis precious of itself as in the prizer.”

“Come, come,” protested Mustapha Mond, “that’s going rather far, isn’t it?”

“If you allowed yourselves to think of God, you wouldn’t allow yourselves to be degraded by pleasant vices. You’d have a reason for bearing

things patiently, for doing things with courage. I've seen it with the Indians."

"I'm sure you have," said Mustapha Mond. "But then we aren't Indians. There isn't any need for a civilized man to bear anything that's seriously unpleasant. And as for doing things—Ford forbid that he should get the idea into his head. It would upset the whole social order if men started doing things on their own."

"What about self-denial, then? If you had a God, you'd have a reason for self-denial."

"But industrial civilization is only possible when there's no self-denial. Self-indulgence up to the very limits imposed by hygiene and economics. Otherwise the wheels stop turning."

"You'd have a reason for chastity!" said the Savage, blushing a little as he spoke the words.

"But chastity means passion, chastity means neurasthenia. And passion and neurasthenia mean instability. And instability means the end of civilization. You can't have a lasting civilization without plenty of pleasant vices."

"But God's the reason for everything noble and fine and heroic. If you had a God..."

"My dear young friend," said Mustapha Mond, "civilization has absolutely no need of nobility or heroism. These things are symptoms of political inefficiency. In a properly organized society like ours, nobody has

any opportunities for being noble or heroic. Conditions have got to be thoroughly unstable before the occasion can arise. Where there are wars, where there are pided allegiances, where there are temptations to be resisted, objects of love to be fought for or defended—there, obviously, nobility and heroism have some sense. But there aren't any wars nowadays. The greatest care is taken to prevent you from loving any one too much. There's no such thing as a pided allegiance; you're so conditioned that you can't help doing what you ought to do. And what you ought to do is on the whole so pleasant, so many of the natural impulses are allowed free play, that there really aren't any temptations to resist. And if ever, by some unlucky chance, anything unpleasant should somehow happen, why, there's always soma to give you a holiday from the facts. And there's always soma to calm your anger, to reconcile you to your enemies, to make you patient and long-suffering. In the past you could only accomplish these things by making a great effort and after years of hard moral training. Now, you swallow two or three half-gramme tablets, and there you are. Anybody can be virtuous now. You can carry at least half your mortality about in a bottle. Christianity without tears—that's what soma is."

"But the tears are necessary. Don't you remember what Othello said? 'If after every tempest came such calms, may the winds blow till they have wakened death.' There's a story one of the old Indians used to tell us, about the Girl of Mátaski. The young men who wanted to marry her had to do a morning's hoeing in her garden. It seemed easy; but there were flies and mosquitoes, magic ones. Most of the young men simply couldn't stand the biting and stinging. But the one that could—he got the girl."

“Charming! But in civilized countries,” said the Controller, “you can have girls without hoeing for them, and there aren’t any flies or mosquitoes to sting you. We got rid of them all centuries ago.”

The Savage nodded, frowning. “You got rid of them. Yes, that’s just like you. Getting rid of everytfung unpleasant instead of learning to put up with it. Whether ’tis better in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them... But you don’t do either. Neither suffer nor oppose. You just abolish the slings and arrows. It’s too easy.”

He was suddenly silent, thinking of his mother. In her room on the thirty-seventh floor, Linda had floated in a sea of singing lights and perfumed caresses—floated away, out of space, out of time, out of the prison of her memories, her habits, her aged and bloated body. And Tomakin, ex-Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning, Tomakin was still on holiday—on holiday from humiliation and pain, in a world where he could not hear those words, that derisive laughter, could not see that hideous face, feel those moist and flabby arms round his neck, in a beautiful world...

“What you need,” the Savage went on, “is something with tears for a change. Nothing costs enough here.”

(“Twelve and a half million dollars,” Henry Foster had protested when the Savage told him that. “Twelve and a half million—that’s what the new Conditioning Centre cost. Not a cent less.”)

“Exposing what is mortal and unsure to all that fortune, death and

danger dare, even for an eggshell. Isn't there something in that?" he asked, looking up at Mustapha Mond. "Quite apart from God—though of course God would be a reason for it. Isn't there something in living dangerously?"

"There's a great deal in it," the Controller replied. "Men and women must have their adrenals stimulated from time to time."

"What?" questioned the Savage, uncomprehending.

"It's one of the conditions of perfect health. That's why we've made the V.P.S. treatments compulsory."

"V.P.S.?"

"Violent Passion Surrogate. Regularly once a month. We flood the whole system with adrenin. It's the complete physiological equivalent of fear and rage. All the tonic effects of murdering Desdemona and being murdered by Othello, without any of the inconveniences."

"But I like the inconveniences."

"We don't," said the Controller. "We prefer to do things comfortably."

"But I don't want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin."

"In fact," said Mustapha Mond, "you're claiming the right to be unhappy."

"All right then," said the Savage defiantly, "I'm claiming the right to be

unhappy.”

“Not to mention the right to grow old and ugly and impotent; the right to have syphilis and cancer; the right to have too little to eat; the right to be lousy; the right to live in constant apprehension of what may happen tomorrow; the right to catch typhoid; the right to be tortured by unspeakable pains of every kind.” There was a long silence.

“I claim them all,” said the Savage at last.

Mustapha Mond shrugged his shoulders. “You’re welcome,” he said.

Chapter Eighteen

THE DOOR was ajar; they entered. “John!”

From the bathroom came an unpleasant and characteristic sound.

“Is there anything the matter?” Helmholtz called.

There was no answer. The unpleasant sound was repeated, twice; there was silence.

Then, with a click the bathroom door opened and, very pale, the Savage emerged. “I say,” Helmholtz exclaimed solicitously, “you do look ill, John!” “Did you eat something that didn’t agree with you?” asked Bernard.

The Savage nodded. “I ate civilization.”

“What?”

“It poisoned me; I was defiled. And then,” he added, in a lower tone, “I ate my own wickedness.”

“Yes, but what exactly?...I mean, just now you were...”

“Now I am purified,” said the Savage. “I drank some mustard and warm water.”

The others stared at him in astonishment. “Do you mean to say that you

were doing it on purpose?" asked Bernard.

"That's how the Indians always purify themselves." He sat down and, sighing, passed his hand across his forehead. "I shall rest for a few minutes," he said. "I'm rather tired."

"Well, I'm not surprised," said Helmholtz. After a silence, "We've come to say good-bye," he went on in another tone. "We're off to-morrow morning."

"Yes, we're off to-morrow," said Bernard on whose face the Savage remarked a new expression of determined resignation. "And by the way, John," he continued, leaning forward in his chair and laying a hand on the Savage's knee, "I want to say how sorry I am about everything that happened yesterday." He blushed. "How ashamed," he went on, in spite of the unsteadiness of his voice, "how really..."

The Savage cut him short and, taking his hand, affectionately pressed it.

"Helmholtz was wonderful to me," Bernard resumed, after a little pause. "If it hadn't been for him, I should..."

"Now, now," Helmholtz protested.

There was a silence. In spite of their sadness—because of it, even; for their sadness was the symptom of their love for one another—the three young men were happy.

"I went to see the Controller this morning," said the Savage at last.

“What for?”

“To ask if I mightn’t go to the islands with you.”

“And what did he say?” asked Helmholtz eagerly.

The Savage shook his head. “He wouldn’t let me.”

“Why not?”

“He said he wanted to go on with the experiment. But I’m damned,” the Savage added, with sudden fury, “I’m damned if I’ll go on being experimented with. Not for all the Controllers in the world. I shall go away to-morrow too.”

“But where?” the others asked in unison.

The Savage shrugged his shoulders. “Anywhere. I don’t care. So long as I can be alone.”

From Guildford the down-line followed the Wey valley to Godalming, then, over Milford and Witley, proceeded to Haslemere and on through Petersfield towards Portsmouth. Roughly parallel to it, the upline passed over Worplesden, Tongham, Puttenham, Elstead and Grayshott. Between the Hog’s Back and Hindhead there were points where the two lines were not more than six or seven kilometres apart. The distance was too small for careless flyers—particularly at night and when they had taken half a gramme too much. There had been accidents. Serious ones. It had been decided to deflect the upline a few kilometres to the west. Between Grayshott and Tongham four abandoned air-lighthouses marked the course of the old

Portsmouth-to-London road. The skies above them were silent and deserted. It was over Selborne, Bordon and Farnham that the helicopters now ceaselessly hummed and roared.

The Savage had chosen as his hermitage the old light-house which stood on the crest of the hill between Puttenham and Elstead. The building was of ferro-concrete and in excellent condition—almost too comfortable the Savage had thought when he first explored the place, almost too civilizably luxurious. He pacified his conscience by promising himself a compensatingly harder self-discipline, purifications the more complete and thorough. His first night in the hermitage was, deliberately, a sleepless one. He spent the hours on his knees praying, now to that Heaven from which the guilty Claudius had begged forgiveness, now in Zuñi to Awonawilona, now to Jesus and Pookong, now to his own guardian animal, the eagle. From time to time he stretched out his arms as though he were on the Cross, and held them thus through long minutes of an ache that gradually increased till it became a tremulous and excruciating agony; held them, in voluntary crucifixion, while he repeated, through clenched teeth (the sweat, meanwhile, pouring down his face), “Oh, forgive me! Oh, make me pure! Oh, help me to be good!” again and again, till he was on the point of fainting from the pain.

When morning came, he felt he had earned the right to inhabit the lighthouse; yet, even though there still was glass in most of the windows, even though the view from the platform was so fine. For the very reason why he had chosen the lighthouse had become almost instantly a reason for going somewhere else. He had decided to live there because the view was so beautiful, because, from his vantage point, he seemed to be looking out on to

the incarnation of a pine being. But who was he to be pampered with the daily and hourly sight of loveliness? Who was he to be living in the visible presence of God? All he deserved to live in was some filthy sty, some blind hole in the ground. Stiff and still aching after his long night of pain, but for that very reason inwardly reassured, he climbed up to the platform of his tower, he looked out over the bright sunrise world which he had regained the right to inhabit. On the north the view was bounded by the long chalk ridge of the Hog's Back, from behind whose eastern extremity rose the towers of the seven skyscrapers which constituted Guildford. Seeing them, the Savage made a grimace; but he was to become reconciled to them in course of time; for at night they twined gaily with geometrical constellations, or else, flood-lighted, pointed their luminous fingers (with a gesture whose significance nobody in England but the Savage now understood) solemnly towards the plumbless mysteries of heaven.

In the valley which separated the Hog's Back from the sandy hill on which the lighthouse stood, Puttenham was a modest little village nine stories high, with silos, a poultry farm, and a small vitamin-D factory. On the other side of the lighthouse, towards the South, the ground fell away in long slopes of heather to a chain of ponds.

Beyond them, above the intervening woods, rose the fourteen-story tower of Elstead. Dim in the hazy English air, Hindhead and Selborne invited the eye into a blue romantic distance. But it was not alone the distance that had attracted the Savage to his lighthouse; the near was as seductive as the far. The woods, the open stretches of heather and yellow gorse, the clumps of Scotch firs, the shining ponds with their overhanging birch trees, their water

lilies, their beds of rushes—these were beautiful and, to an eye accustomed to the aridities of the American desert, astonishing. And then the solitude! Whole days passed during which he never saw a human being. The lighthouse was only a quarter of an hour's flight from the Charing-T Tower; but the hills of Malpais were hardly more deserted than this Surrey heath. The crowds that daily left London, left it only to play Electro-magnetic Golf or Tennis. Puttenham possessed no links; the nearest Riemann-surfaces were at Guildford. Flowers and a landscape were the only attractions here. And so, as there was no good reason for coming, nobody came. During the first days the Savage lived alone and undisturbed.

Of the money which, on his first arrival, John had received for his personal expenses, most had been spent on his equipment. Before leaving London he had bought four viscose-woollen blankets, rope and string, nails, glue, a few tools, matches (though he intended in due course to make a fire drill), some pots and pans, two dozen packets of seeds, and ten kilogrammes of wheat flour. “No, not synthetic starch and cotton-waste flour-substitute,” he had insisted. “Even though it is more nourishing.” But when it came to pan-glandular biscuits and vitaminized beef-surrogate, he had not been able to resist the shopman's persuasion. Looking at the tins now, he bitterly reproached himself for his weakness. Loathesome civilized stuff! He had made up his mind that he would never eat it, even if he were starving. “That'll teach them,” he thought vindictively. It would also teach him.

He counted his money. The little that remained would be enough, he hoped, to tide him over the winter. By next spring, his garden would be producing enough to make him independent of the outside world. Meanwhile,

there would always be game. He had seen plenty of rabbits, and there were waterfowl on the ponds. He set to work at once to make a bow and arrows.

There were ash trees near the lighthouse and, for arrow shafts, a whole copse full of beautifully straight hazel saplings. He began by felling a young ash, cut out six feet of unbranched stem, stripped off the bark and, paring by paring, shaved away the white wood, as old Mitsima had taught him, until he had a stave of his own height, stiff at the thickened centre, lively and quick at the slender tips. The work gave him an intense pleasure. After those weeks of idleness in London, with nothing to do, whenever he wanted anything, but to press a switch or turn a handle, it was pure delight to be doing something that demanded skill and patience.

He had almost finished whittling the stave into shape, when he realized with a start that he was singing-singing! It was as though, stumbling upon himself from the outside, he had suddenly caught himself out, taken himself flagrantly at fault. Guiltily he blushed. After all, it was not to sing and enjoy himself that he had come here. It was to escape further contamination by the filth of civilized life; it was to be purified and made good; it was actively to make amends. He realized to his dismay that, absorbed in the whittling of his bow, he had forgotten what he had sworn to himself he would constantly remember—poor Linda, and his own murderous unkindness to her, and those loathsome twins, swarming like lice across the mystery of her death, insulting, with their presence, not merely his own grief and repentance, but the very gods themselves. He had sworn to remember, he had sworn unceasingly to make amends. And there was he, sitting happily over his bow-stave, singing, actually singing....

He went indoors, opened the box of mustard, and put some water to boil on the fire.

Half an hour later, three Delta-Minus landworkers from one of the Puttenham Bokanovsky Groups happened to be driving to Elstead and, at the top of the hill, were astonished to see a young man standing outside the abandoned lighthouse stripped to the waist and hitting himself with a whip of knotted cords. His back was horizontally streaked with crimson, and from weal to weal ran thin trickles of blood. The driver of the lorry pulled up at the side of the road and, with his two companions, stared open-mouthed at the extraordinary spectacle. One, two three—they counted the strokes. After the eighth, the young man interrupted his self-punishment to run to the wood's edge and there be violently sick. When he had finished, he picked up the whip and began hitting himself again. Nine, ten, eleven, twelve...

"Ford!" whispered the driver. And his twins were of the same opinion.

"Fordey!" they said.

Three days later, like turkey buzzards setthug on a corpse, the reporters came.

Dried and hardened over a slow fire of green wood, the bow was ready. The Savage was busy on his arrows. Thirty hazel sticks had been whittled and dried, tipped with sharp nails, carefully nocked. He had made a raid one night on the Puttenham poultry farm, and now had feathers enough to equip a whole armoury. It was at work upon the feathering of his shafts that the first of the reporters found him. Noiseless on his pneumatic shoes, the man came

up behind him.

“Good-morning, Mr. Savage,” he said. “I am the representative of The Hourly Radio.”

Startled as though by the bite of a snake, the Savage sprang to his feet, scattering arrows, feathers, glue-pot and brush in all directions.

“I beg your pardon,” said the reporter, with genuine compunction. “I had no intention...” He touched his hat—the aluminum stove-pipe hat in which he carried his wireless receiver and transmitter. “Excuse my not taking it off,” he said. “It’s a bit heavy. Well, as I was saying, I am the representative of The Hourly...”

“What do you want?” asked the Savage, scowling. The reporter returned his most ingratiating smile.

“Well, of course, our readers would be profoundly interested...” He put his head on one side, his smile became almost coquettish. “Just a few words from you, Mr. Savage.” And rapidly, with a series of ritual gestures, he uncoiled two wires connected to the portable battery buckled round his waist; plugged them simultaneously into the sides of his aluminum hat; touched a spring on the crown—and antennae shot up into the air; touched another spring on the peak of the brim—and, like a jack-in-the-box, out jumped a microphone and hung there, quivering, six inches in front of his nose; pulled down a pair of receivers over his ears; pressed a switch on the left side of the hat—and from within came a faint waspy buzzing; turned a knob on the right—and the buzzing was interrupted by a stethoscopic wheeze and cackle, by hiccoughs

and sudden squeaks. “Hullo,” he said to the microphone, “hullo, hullo...” A bell suddenly rang inside his hat. “Is that you, Edzel? Primo Mellon speaking. Yes, I’ve got hold of him. Mr. Savage will now take the microphone and say a few words. Won’t you, Mr. Savage?” He looked up at the Savage with another of those winning smiles of his. “Just tell our readers why you came here. What made you leave London (hold on, Edzel!) so very suddenly. And, of course, that whip.” (The Savage started. How did they know about the whip?) “We’re all crazy to know about the whip. And then something about Civilization. You know the sort of stuff. ‘What I think of the Civilized Girl.’ Just a few words, a very few...”

The Savage obeyed with a disconcerting literalness. Five words he uttered and no more-five words, the same as those he had said to Bernard about the Arch-Community-Songster of Canterbury. “Háni! Sons éso tse-ná!” And seizing the reporter by the shoulder, he spun him round (the young man revealed himself invitingly well-covered), aimed and, with all the force and accuracy of a champion foot-and-mouth-baller, delivered a most prodigious kick.

Eight minutes later, a new edition of The Hourly Radio was on sale in the streets of London. “HOURLY RADIO REPORTER HAS COCCYX KICKED BY MYSTERY SAVAGE,” ran the headlines on the front page. “SENSATION IN SURREY.”

“Sensation even in London,” thought the reporter when, on his return, he read the words. And a very painful sensation, what was more. He sat down gingerly to his luncheon.

Undeterred by that cautionary bruise on their colleague's coccyx, four other reporters, representing the New York Times, the Frankfurt Four-Dimensional Continuum, The Fordian Science Monitor, and The Delta Mirror, called that afternoon at the lighthouse and met with receptions of progressively increasing violence.

From a safe distance and still rubbing his buttocks, "Benighted fool!" shouted the man from The Fordian Science Monitor, "why don't you take soma?"

"Get away!" The Savage shook his fist.

The other retreated a few steps then turned round again. "Evil's an unreality if you take a couple of grammes."

"Kohakwa iyathtokyai!" The tone was menacingly derisive.

"Pain's a delusion."

"Oh, is it?" said the Savage and, picking up a thick hazel switch, strode forward.

The man from The Fordian Science Monitor made a dash for his helicopter.

After that the Savage was left for a time in peace. A few helicopters came and hovered inquisitively round the tower. He shot an arrow into the importunately nearest of them. It pierced the aluminum floor of the cabin; there was a shrill yell, and the machine went rocketing up into the air with all the acceleration that its super-charger could give it. The others, in future, kept

their distance respectfully. Ignoring their tiresome humming (he likened himself in his imagination to one of the suitors of the Maiden of Mátsaki, unmoved and persistent among the winged vermin), the Savage dug at what was to be his garden. After a time the vermin evidently became bored and flew away; for hours at a stretch the sky above his head was empty and, but for the larks, silent.

The weather was breathlessly hot, there was thunder in the air. He had dug all the morning and was resting, stretched out along the floor. And suddenly the thought of Lenina was a real presence, naked and tangible, saying “Sweet!” and “Put your arms round me!”—in shoes and socks, perfumed. Impudent strumpet! But oh, oh, her arms round his neck, the lifting of her breasts, her mouth! Eternity was in our lips and eyes. Lenina... No, no, no, no! He sprang to his feet and, half naked as he was, ran out of the house. At the edge of the heath stood a clump of hoary juniper bushes. He flung himself against them, he embraced, not the smooth body of his desires, but an armful of green spikes. Sharp, with a thousand points, they pricked him. He tried to think of poor Linda, breathless and dumb, with her clutching hands and the unutterable terror in her eyes. Poor Linda whom he had sworn to remember. But it was still the presence of Lenina that haunted him. Lenina whom he had promised to forget. Even through the stab and stmg of the juniper needles, his wincing fiesh was aware of her, unescapably real. “Sweet, sweet...And if you wanted me too, why didn’t you...”

The whip was hanging on a nail by the door, ready to hand against the arrival of reporters. In a frenzy the Savage ran back to the house, seized it, whirled it. The knotted cords bit into his flesh.

“Strumpet! Strumpet!” he shouted at every blow as though it were Lenina (and how frantically, without knowing it, he wished it were), white, warm, scented, infamous Lenina that he was dogging thus. “Strumpet!” And then, in a voice of despair, “Oh, Linda, forgive me. Forgive me, God. I’m bad. I’m wicked. I’m...No, no, you strumpet, you strumpet!”

From his carefully constructed hide in the wood three hundred metres away, Darwin Bonaparte, the Feely Corporation’s most expert big game photographer had watched the whole proceedings. Patience and skill had been rewarded. He had spent three days sitting inside the bole of an artificial oak tree, three nights crawling on his belly through the heather, hiding microphones in gorse bushes, burying wires in the soft grey sand. Seventy-two hours of profound discomfort. But now the great moment had come—the greatest, Darwin Bonaparte had time to reflect, as he moved among his instruments, the greatest since his taking of the famous all-howling stereoscopic feely of the gorillas’ wedding. “Splendid,” he said to himself, as the Savage started his astonishing performance. “Splendid!” He kept his telescopic cameras carefully aimed—glued to their moving objective; clapped on a higher power to get a close-up of the frantic and distorted face (admirable!); switched over, for half a minute, to slow motion (an exquisitely comical effect, he promised himself); listened in, meanwhile, to the blows, the groans, the wild and raving words that were being recorded on the soundtrack at the edge of his film, tried the effect of a little amplification (yes, that was decidedly better); was delighted to hear, in a momentary lull, the shrill singing of a lark; wished the Savage would turn round so that he could get a good close-up of the blood on his back—and almost instantly (what astonishing luck!) the accommodating fellow did turn round, and he was able

to take a perfect close-up.

“Well, that was grand!” he said to himself when it was all over. “Really grand!” He mopped his face. When they had put in the feely effects at the studio, it would be a wonderful film. Almost as good, thought Darwin Bonaparte, as the Sperm Whale’s Love-Life—and that, by Ford, was saying a good deal!

Twelve days later *The Savage of Surrey* had been released and could be seen, heard and felt in every first-class feely-palace in Western Europe.

The effect of Darwin Bonaparte’s film was immediate and enormous. On the afternoon which followed the evening of its release John’s rustic solitude was suddenly broken by the arrival overhead of a great swarm of helicopters.

He was digging in his garden—digging, too, in his own mind, laboriously turning up the substance of his thought. Death—and he drove in his spade once, and again, and yet again. And all our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death. A convincing thunder rumbled through the words. He lifted another spadeful of earth. Why had Linda died? Why had she been allowed to become gradually less than human and at last...He shuddered. A good kissing carrion. He planted his foot on his spade and stamped it fiercely into the tough ground. As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods; they kill us for their sport. Thunder again; words that proclaimed themselves true—truer somehow than truth itself. And yet that same Gloucester had called them ever-gentle gods. Besides, thy best of rest is sleep and that thou oft provok’st; yet grossly fear’st thy death which is no more. No more than sleep. Sleep.

Perchance to dream. His spade struck against a stone; he stooped to pick it up. For in that sleep of death, what dreams?...

A humming overhead had become a roar; and suddenly he was in shadow, there was something between the sun and him. He looked up, startled, from his digging, from his thoughts; looked up in a dazzled bewilderment, his mind still wandering in that other world of truer-than-truth, still focused on the immensities of death and deity; looked up and saw, close above him, the swarm of hovering machines. Like locusts they came, hung poised, descended all around him on the heather. And from out of the bellies of these giant grasshoppers stepped men in white viscose-flannels, women (for the weather was hot) in acetate-shantung pyjamas or velveteen shorts and sleeveless, half-unzippered singlets—one couple from each. In a few minutes there were dozens of them, standing in a wide circle round the lighthouse, staring, laughing, clicking their cameras, throwing (as to an ape) peanuts, packets of sex-hormone chewing-gum, pan-glandular petite beurres. And every moment—for across the Hog's Back the stream of traffic now flowed unceasingly—their numbers increased. As in a nightmare, the dozens became scores, the scores hundreds.

The Savage had retreated towards cover, and now, in the posture of an animal at bay, stood with his back to the wall of the lighthouse, staring from face to face in speechless horror, like a man out of his senses.

From this stupor he was aroused to a more immediate sense of reality by the impact on his cheek of a well-aimed packet of chewing-gum. A shock of startling pain—and he was broad awake, awake and fiercely angry.

“Go away!” he shouted.

The ape had spoken; there was a burst of laughter and hand-clapping. “Good old Savage! Hurrah, hurrah!” And through the babel he heard cries of: “Whip, whip, the whip!”

Acting on the word’s suggestion, he seized the bunch of knotted cords from its nail behind the door and shook it at his tormentors.

There was a yell of ironical applause.

Menacingly he advanced towards them. A woman cried out in fear. The line wavered at its most immediately threatened point, then stiffened again, stood firm. The consciousness of being in overwhelming force had given these sightseers a courage which the Savage had not expected of them. Taken aback, he halted and looked round.

“Why don’t you leave me alone?” There was an almost plaintive note in his anger.

“Have a few magnesium-salted almonds!” said the man who, if the Savage were to advance, would be the first to be attacked. He held out a packet. “They’re really very good, you know,” he added, with a rather nervous smile of propitiation. “And the magnesium salts will help to keep you young.”

The Savage ignored his offer. “What do you want with me?” he asked, turning from one grinning face to another. “What do you want with me?”

“The whip,” answered a hundred voices confusedly. “Do the whipping

stunt. Let's see the whipping stunt."

Then, in unison and on a slow, heavy rhythm, "We-want-the whip," shouted a group at the end of the line. "We-want-the whip."

Others at once took up the cry, and the phrase was repeated, parrot-fashion, again and again, with an ever-growing volume of sound, until, by the seventh or eighth reiteration, no other word was being spoken. "We-want-the whip."

They were all crying together; and, intoxicated by the noise, the unanimity, the sense of rhythmical atonement, they might, it seemed, have gone on for hours-almost indefinitely. But at about the twenty-fifth repetition the proceedings were startlingly interrupted. Yet another helicopter had arrived from across the Hog's Back, hung poised above the crowd, then dropped within a few yards of where the Savage was standing, in the open space between the line of sightseers and the lighthouse. The roar of the air screws momentarily drowned the shouting; then, as the machine touched the ground and the engines were turned off: "We-want-the whip; we-want-the whip," broke out again in the same loud, insistent monotone.

The door of the helicopter opened, and out stepped, first a fair and ruddy-faced young man, then, in green velveteen shorts, white shirt, and jockey cap, a young woman.

At the sight of the young woman, the Savage started, recoiled, turned pale.

The young woman stood, smiling at him—an uncertain, imploring,

almost abject smile. The seconds passed. Her lips moved, she was saying something; but the sound of her voice was covered by the loud reiterated refrain of the sightseers.

“We–want–the whip! We–want–the whip!”

The young woman pressed both hands to her left side, and on that peach-bright, doll-beautiful face of hers appeared a strangely incongruous expression of yearning distress. Her blue eyes seemed to grow larger, brighter; and suddenly two tears rolled down her cheeks. Inaudibly, she spoke again; then, with a quick, impassioned gesture stretched out her arms towards the Savage, stepped forward.

“We–want–the whip! We–want...”

And all of a sudden they had what they wanted.

“Strumpet!” The Savage had rushed at her like a madman. “Fitchew!” Like a madman, he was slashing at her with his whip of small cords.

Terrified, she had turned to flee, had tripped and fallen in the heather. “Henry, Henry!” she shouted. But her ruddy-faced companion had bolted out of harm’s way behind the helicopter.

With a whoop of delighted excitement the line broke; there was a convergent stampede towards that magnetic centre of attraction. Pain was a fascinating horror.

“Fry, lechery, fry!” Frenzied, the Savage slashed again.

Hungrily they gathered round, pushing and scrambling like swine about the trough.

“Oh, the flesh!” The Savage ground his teeth. This time it was on his shoulders that the whip descended. “Kill it, kill it!”

Drawn by the fascination of the horror of pain and, from within, impelled by that habit of cooperation, that desire for unanimity and atonement, which their conditioning had so ineradicably implanted in them, they began to mime the frenzy of his gestures, striking at one another as the Savage struck at his own rebellious flesh, or at that plump incarnation of turpitude writhing in the heather at his feet.

“Kill it, kill it, kill it...” The Savage went on shouting.

Then suddenly somebody started singing “Orgy-porgy” and, in a moment, they had all caught up the refrain and, singing, had begun to dance. Orgy-porgy, round and round and round, beating one another in six-eight time. Orgy-porgy...

It was after midnight when the last of the helicopters took its flight. Stupefied by soma, and exhausted by a long-drawn frenzy of sensuality, the Savage lay sleeping in the heather. The sun was already high when he awoke. He lay for a moment, blinking in owlish incomprehension at the light; then suddenly remembered—everything.

“Oh, my God, my God!” He covered his eyes with his hand.

That evening the swarm of helicopters that came buzzing across the

Hog's Back was a dark cloud ten kilometres long. The description of last night's orgy of atonement had been in all the papers.

"Savage!" called the first arrivals, as they alighted from their machine.
"Mr. Savage!"

There was no answer.

The door of the lighthouse was ajar. They pushed it open and walked into a shuttered twilight. Through an archway on the further side of the room they could see the bottom of the staircase that led up to the higher floors. Just under the crown of the arch dangled a pair of feet.

"Mr. Savage!"

Slowly, very slowly, like two unhurried compass needles, the feet turned towards the right; north, north-east, east, south-east, south, south-south-west; then paused, and, after a few seconds, turned as unhurriedly back towards the left. South-south-west, south, south-east, east....