



# 出版家和爱国者 富兰克林

[美] 鲁思·克罗默·韦尔 著

管淑琴 译 周永亮 校

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THIS BOOK has been written with the help of many persons who have kept the memory of the real Benjamin Franklin alive. Grateful acknowledgment is made for the kindly advice of Morton Bodfish, trustee of the International Benjamin Franklin Society, and to his associate, Ralph J. Lueders. These men are especially interested in helping boys and girls to an intelligent understanding and practical application of Benjamin Franklin's philosophies, as valuable now as when he wrote them down, two and a half centuries ago.

RUTH CROMER WEIR

## 作者的话

本书是在许多对富兰克林本人记忆犹新的人的帮助下写成的。我非常感谢国际富兰克林协会理事莫顿·博德菲什和他的助手拉尔夫·杰·律德斯提出的友好建议。他们对帮助孩子们深刻理解和实际应用富兰克林的哲理特别感兴趣。现在这些哲理的价值和两个半世纪以前富兰克林写下它们时相比，丝毫没有降低。

鲁思·克罗默·韦尔

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## Chapter One

### The Worth of a Whistle

Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!

The joyous cry rang through the Boston streets. Sleigh bells jingled merrily. In the distance a horse whinnied, and there was the sound of happy laughter. Tunes of the old English carols still floated through the air, and Ben Franklin, seven years old, hummed softly.

A bright moon shone on the white ground and peaked housetops. Ben lagged behind his twelve brothers and sisters who still lived at home. He liked to hear the sound of the snow crunching under his feet.

Ben watched the others enter the door where a blue ball, the sign of the candlemaker, hung above. Then his mother called. Ben stomped the snow from his boots and followed the others into the house.

"It has been a happy evening, hasn't it, Josiah?" Ben's mother was speaking to his father. "The carols never seemed more beautiful. And you played so well, Papa."

Ben watched his father put his violin case in the



corner. Josiah Franklin often played hymns at home in the evening, but it was a rare occasion when he took his violin out of the house. Tonight Ben saw that his father's face looked pink and happy.

Suddenly one of the older Franklin children shouted, "Let's have parched corn! Stir up the fire! Get the kettles ready!" The big room buzzed with excitement as Ben's brothers and sisters rushed about. His favorite sister, Sally, told each one what to do.

The kettles were warming on the crane in the big fireplace. "Keep shaking the kettles," Sally directed. "Listen!"

*Pop ... pop ... pop-pop ... pop-pop-pop-pop* came the welcome sound of the dry corn breaking through its skin.

"Ben, get the butter bowl," cried Sally.

Ben dashed to the back porch and brought the huge wooden oval bowl his mother used for making butter. It was heavy for him to carry; he put it on the table with a thud.

Sally smiled and patted him on the head.

"Ready?" she asked. The others brought the kettles to the table and dumped the golden corn into the bowl. Then Sally poured sizzling melted butter over it all and stirred.

"Mmmm," the young folks murmured as they dipped hungrily into the big bowl.

A knock sounded at the door.

"It's the pastor," someone whispered.

"Come in. Come in, Reverend." Ben's father rose from his chair to welcome the guest. "You're just in time. Our food is plain. But the good company we have to visit us always makes up for that."

On the long table were rosy apples and chunks of maple sugar. But Ben almost forgot what he was eating, the conversation was so interesting.

Ben tried to keep awake. He tried to think of what he would buy with the coins he had been given for the holiday. Even that did not work. His eyelids felt heavier and heavier. Before long the warmth of the friendly room seemed to close around him. The voices sounded farther and farther away. Ben put his head on his arm and fell fast asleep.

The next morning Ben skipped gaily down the street. The slippery snow made skipping more fun than usual. The coins in his pocket jingled. Ben felt the pennies and halfpennies. He began to think of what he might buy with his money.

Suddenly he heard a loud, shrill noise. An older boy burst from a house down the street, blowing a whistle. Ben stopped.

The boy's cheeks puffed out and his face turned red. He blew the whistle as though he would never stop.

Ben was impressed. "Where did you get it?" he asked.

The boy paid no attention.

"Where did you get that whistle?" Ben screamed.

The boy seemed annoyed to stop blowing the whistle even for a moment. But he took it from his mouth just long enough to answer, "At the store."

"The store!" Ben spun around and began to run. Now he knew what he would buy with his coppers. A whistle.

Ben was excited and out of breath when he reached the store. He had been there a few times with Sally, but never alone. He reached up to lift the latch and open the door. As he went in, a little bell above the door tinkled softly. Ben walked past the big barrels on the floor. Before, he had peeped inside to see the sugar, salt, tea, and pickles in them. This time he was not interested.

At the counter Ben hesitated. Some bright new pocketknives caught his attention, but only for a moment. "I want a whistle," he said. "A real loud whistle."

"Do you have any money?" the storekeeper asked.

Proudly Ben dug in his pocket and pulled out his coins — all of them.

The storekeeper looked surprised to see a small boy with so much money. Quickly he reached behind the

counter and brought out several bright-colored whistles. "There you are. Take your pick," he said.

Ben picked up the first one and blew. The whistle made a loud, shrill noise. Ben left the store blowing happily. "Now I can make as much noise as that boy," he said proudly. "I can make as much noise as *anybody*."

All the way home Ben blew his whistle. It made a screeching, ear-splitting noise. Ben loved it! Down the street and right into the Franklin house, Ben blew. And he kept right on blowing.

"Horrors!" Big brother James put his hands over his ears. And Sally asked, "Dear me, Ben, wherever did you get such a noisemaker?"

"I bought it," answered Ben. "I bought it with my holiday money."

"You spent all your money for that crazy whistle?" one of Ben's brothers asked. "You spent your four pennies and two halfpennies?"

Ben nodded.

"Why, you spent four times what it was worth!"

Suddenly everyone was staring at him. Ben felt alone in a room full of people.

Then someone began to laugh. Ben could bear it no longer. Tears filled his eyes. He loved that whistle. He had spent all his money for it. Was the whistle no good? He thought he had never been so miserable.

Ben started to run to his mother. He knew she would comfort him.

"What's this all about?" Ben's father had come into the room. "If it's a joke, I'd like to laugh, too. But it seems to be at your brother's expense." Mr. Franklin looked sternly at Ben's brothers and sisters.

The laughter stopped as quickly as it had started. Everyone began explaining at once. "Ben spent all his money for that silly whistle." ... "He paid too much for his whistle!"

The words rang over and over in Ben's ears. "He paid too much for his whistle!"

Ben's father found out the whole story. He lifted Ben onto his lap. He took a big handkerchief from a pocket and began to wipe away Ben's tears. Ben's questioning gray eyes met his father's. His father was wise and kind and good. Whatever his father said, Ben knew he would believe.

Mr. Franklin never tried to keep the truth from his son. He nodded his head. "Yes, you paid too much for the whistle," he said at last.

Then Ben knew that it was true. He had paid too much for the whistle. He never wanted to blow that whistle again. He never wanted to see it again.

For a long time Ben thought about the whistle. Finally he made a promise to himself. "I will never again pay too much — for anything!"

## 第一章 一个哨子的价值

欢乐的圣诞节！欢乐的圣诞节！

快活的喧闹声响彻波士顿大街。雪车上的铃儿发出欢乐的叮当声。远处一匹马在嘶鸣，还有欢快的笑声。传统的英国圣诞颂歌的曲调仍然在空中飘荡。七岁的本·富兰克林柔声哼着小调。

一轮明月照在白皑皑的大地和尖尖的房顶上。本慢慢走在当时没有外出工作的十二个哥哥和姐姐的后面。他喜欢听脚下白雪发出的嘎吱嘎吱的声音。

本看着其他人进了门，门上方悬挂着一个蓝色的球，这是蜡烛制造商的标记。接着，本听到妈妈的喊声，本踩着靴子上的雪，跟着其他人进了屋。

“今晚过得真痛快，不是吗，乔赛亚？”本的妈妈对爸爸说。“圣诞颂歌似乎从来没有这样优美。你拉得真好，孩子他爹！”

本看着爸爸把小提琴盒子放到一个角落里。晚上乔赛亚·富兰克林常在家里拉赞歌，而他很少把小提琴带出家门。这天晚上本看到爸爸的脸色红润，显得很愉快。

突然，富兰克林家的大孩子喊道：“咱们爆玉米花吃吧，把炉火通旺！把壶准备好！”本的哥哥姐姐们四处忙碌着，大屋子里充满了兴奋的噼噼喳喳声。他特别喜爱的姐姐萨利给每个人分配工作。

铁壶在壁炉里的吊钩上吊着。“要不断地晃动铁壶，”萨利指挥着。“听！”

劈劈……啪啪……劈劈啪啪……劈劈啪啪，发出了干玉米

粒爆裂的悦耳声。

“本，把黄油碗拿来。”萨利喊道。

本跑到后门廊，拿来了他妈妈做黄油用的椭圆形大木碗。他还有点儿拿不动呢；他砰的一声把碗墩在桌子上。

萨利笑了，拍了拍他的头。

“熟了吗？”她问。别的孩子把壶拿到桌子上，把黄橙橙的玉米花倒在碗里，然后萨利把融化的滋滋响的黄油浇在碗里，搅拌起来。

“嗯！”孩子们一边贪婪地往碗里伸手，一边嘟哝着。

这时传来了敲门声。

“是牧师。”有人低声说。

“请进，请进，神父。”本的父亲从椅子上站起来迎接客人。“你来得正好。我们的饭很简单，不过贵客临门，总可以弥补这一不足了。”

长桌上放着红色的苹果和槭糖块。但是本几乎忘了他在吃什么，因为爸爸和客人的谈话非常有趣。

本极力支撑着不让自己睡着。他尽力想能用节日得来的钱买点儿什么。但这也无济于事，他感到眼皮越来越沉。不久，屋子里的温暖友好的气氛似乎把他包围住了。谈话声也似乎越来越远。本把头枕在胳膊上酣睡起来。

第二天早晨，本蹦蹦跳跳地来到街上。在滑溜溜的雪上又蹦又跳，似乎比往常更有意思。他口袋里的硬币叮当叮当地响着。本摸着那些一便士和半便士的硬币，开始琢磨可以用它买点什么。

他突然听到一个刺耳的声音。一个比他大一点儿的男孩从一所房子里跑到街上，嘴里吹着哨子。本停住了脚步。

那孩子的腮帮子鼓鼓的，脸也涨红了，他吹得可带劲了，好

象要永远吹下去似的。

本动了心。“你从哪儿弄到的这玩艺儿？”他问。

那孩子毫不理采。

“你从哪儿弄到的这个哨子？”本尖叫起来。

那个孩子因为要他停一会吹，似乎有点儿恼火，但他还是从嘴里拿出哨子，简单地说了声：“在商店，”接着又吹了起来。

“商店！”本转身就跑。现在他知道该用他的钱买什么了。买一个哨子！

他心情激动，等到了商店已累得喘不过气来。他曾和萨利一起来过这儿几次，但从未一个人来过。他伸手抬起门闩，开了门。他正往里走的时候，门上方一个小铃叮叮当地柔声响起来。本从放在地上的大桶旁走过。过去他曾偷看过大桶里的糖、盐、茶叶和咸菜。这次他没有心思了。

到了柜台，本犹豫了。崭新锃亮的小刀吸引着他，但这只是刹那间的事。“我要一个哨子，”他说，“一个真正响亮的哨子。”

“你有钱吗？”掌柜的问。

本骄傲地把手伸到口袋里，把他的硬币全都掏了出来。

掌柜的看到一个小孩有这么多钱，似乎有点儿吃惊。他很快伸手从柜台后拿出几个颜色鲜艳的哨子，“给你，挑吧！”他说。

本拿起头一个哨子吹起来。这个哨子的声音又尖又响。本兴高采烈地吹着哨子离开了商店。“现在我可以和那个男孩吹得一样响了，”他自豪地说，“我可以和任何人吹得一样响了。”

本在回家路上，一直吹着哨子。哨子发出尖锐刺耳的声音。可是本喜欢它呀！本沿街吹着，一直吹到家里。他吹个不停。

“真讨厌！”大哥詹姆斯用手捂住耳朵。萨利问：“哎呀，本，你这是从哪儿弄来的一个噪音器？”

“我买的。”本回答说，“我用节日得来的钱买的。”



“你买了这个宝贝哨子，把钱都花光了吧？”本的一个哥哥问，你把你的四个一便士的和两个半便士的硬币都花了吗？”

本点了点头。

“怎么，你多付了三倍的价钱！”

突然每个人都盯着他看。本在一个满是人的屋里感到孤独。

接着有人笑了起来。本再也忍不住了。眼里充满了泪水，他喜欢那个哨子。为了买它，他花了所有的钱。难道这哨子不好吗？他认为他从来没有这样痛苦过。本朝着妈妈跑过去，他知道妈妈会安慰他的。

“这是怎么回事？”本的父亲已经进了屋，“如果这是在开玩笑，我也想笑，但你们似乎在拿你们的弟弟开心。”富兰克林先生严肃地看了看本的哥哥姐姐们。

笑声就象突然开始一样，又突然停止了。每个人立刻解释起来。“本花了所有的钱买了这个倒霉哨子。”……“他为他的哨子花的钱太多了！”

这些话不停地在本的耳朵里回响着。“他为他的哨子花的钱太多了！”

本的父亲弄清了事情的来龙去脉。他把本抱到膝上，从口袋里掏出一块大手帕，开始给他擦眼泪。本疑惑的灰色的目光和父亲的目光相遇。他的父亲精明善良。本知道，不管他父亲说什么，他都深信不疑。

富兰克林先生不想对儿子说假话，他点了点头。“确实，你为哨子花的钱太多了。”他最后说。

本这才知道这确实是真话。他为哨子花的钱太多了。他再也不想吹这个哨子。他再也不想看它一眼。

好长一段时间，本都在想这个哨子的事儿。最后他给自己许下诺言，“我绝不再付高价买任何东西。”