

WORLD FAMOUS FICTIONS

大 街
MAIN STREET

SINCLAIR LEWIS 著
伍 光 建 選 譯

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By
SINCLAIR LEWIS

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原 著 者 Sinclair Lewis

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(本書校對者馮寶武)

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大 街

作者傳略

留伊斯是美國最有名的一個並世大作家，他此時還在盛年，將來還有許多發展。他生長於一個小鄉村。那時候鄉村的第三四等人物開闢美國西部的中區，因此致富，就驕蹇自滿，自以為文明達極點，凡是他們所不懂的與所不贊成的，都是不值得懂的，不該考慮的，考慮就是罪過；且以為不能再發展，亦不求再發展；其實他們是自滿於毫無生機的安逸，以有生機的活動為多事，崇拜消極為積極美德，崇拜無生趣的頑固為上帝；作者造一個名詞，稱這種行為與思想為中了鄉下毒。他所著的最出名的小說「大街」，就是帶着憤怒，諷刺這許多人。他描寫大街的各式各樣人物，有特寫個人的，有總寫若干人的，互相反應，所寫的都是極平常的瑣事，平平淡淡，並不過火的，却寫得極其細密準確，很能令讀者相信，尤妙在能令許多讀者很享受其中的諷刺，方且以為是諷刺他人，諷刺隔壁的某甲某乙，並非諷刺讀者自己，其實他所說的雖然是美國西部中區的一個村子，即是說幾千個村子，不獨說這裏的大街是這樣，別處的大街也是這樣，不獨這一州是這樣，別一州也是這樣。從前英國的小說大家司各脫(Sir Walter Scott)曾說過，大叫大喊與大吹大擂，他自己優為之，至於實寫日常瑣事，使其饒有興趣，則敬謝不敏；可見這樣的筆墨

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是很不容易的，只要寫得來逼真，寫得來有趣，就可以名世。這部小說以卡祿爾 (Carol) 及她的丈夫為樞紐。她是個很受過教育的女子，嫁與一個醫生，來住在大街。作者就從她眼中所見的大街的人們，與他們眼中所見的她，為這些人們寫照，成為一部絕妙小說，為美國文學史開一新紀元，且介紹新趨勢與新指示，不愧稱為名作。

民國二十三年清明日伍光建記

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CHAPTER IV

IV

The recently built house of Sam Clark, in which was given the party to welcome Carol, was one of the largest in Gopher Prairie. It had a clean sweep of clapboards, a solid squareness, a small tower, and a large screened porch. Inside, it was as shiny, as hard, and as cheerful as a new oak upright piano.

Carol looked imploringly at Sam Clark as he rolled to the door and shouted, "Welcome, little lady! The keys of the city are yours!"

Beyond him, in the hallway and the living-room, sitting in a vast prim circle as though they were attending a funeral, she saw the guests. They were *waiting* so! They were waiting for her! The determination to be all one pretty flowerlet of appreciation leaked away. She begged of Sam, "I don't dare face them! They expect so much. They'll swallow me in one mouthful—glump!—like that!"

"Why, sister, they're going to love you—same as I would if I didn't think the doc here would beat me up!"

"B-but — I don't dare! Faces to the right of me, faces in front of me, volley and wonder!"

She sounded hysterical to herself; she fancied that to Sam Clark she sounded insane. But he chuckled, "Now you just cuddle under Sam's wing, and if anybody rubbers¹

¹rubber, 審視, 諦視.

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第四回 第四章

〔卡祿爾(Carol)是一個最容易受印像的摩登女子，在鬧市受過很多的教育，嫁與一個姓甘尼略(Kennicott)名維爾(Will)的醫師，夫婦往美國西方中部，住在一個鄉下的大街，她見這裏的人無知識無進步，語言無味，無事不減於故步，她就大不滿意，毅意以改進自任，鄉下人不愛，反對她。這一回先說鄉下人開會，歡迎她這個新嫁娘。——譯者註。〕

他們在沙木卡拉克(Sam Clark)新近蓋的房子歡迎卡祿爾，這是哥甫巴利利(Gopher Prairie)鄉最大的房子。四圍都有護牆板，是一所結實的四方房子，有一座小塔，有一座有遮欄的大廊子。屋裏頭是發光的，堅硬的，見了令人起興的，如同一架新的，橡木的，挺得直直的鋼琴。

當沙木卡拉克滾到大門口大喊道，『新夫人，我們歡迎你！本市的鑰匙都給了你！』卡祿爾兩眼帶着哀求的神色看着他。

她看見在他後面；在堂屋過這裏及住房裏，坐了一大圓圈的很嚴肅的客人們，好像是坐在那裏送殯的。他們在那裏等。他們等的是她！他們打定主意在那裏要賞鑒一朵好看的小花，神氣全露出來。她哀求沙木，說道，『我不敢見他們！他們的期望太過啦。他們一口就把我吞下去——咯一聲！——就吞我下去啦！』

『妹妹，爲什麼說這樣的話，他們要親愛你——如同我想親愛你一樣，不過醫師會打我！』

『但是——我不敢！我的右邊是他們的臉，我的前面，又是他們的臉，齊齊看我，當我是一件新奇東西！』

她自己覺得好像是犯了神經擾亂的病，她猜沙木聽她的說話，會以爲她是個瘋子。他只是哭，說道，『你躲在沙木的翼下，倘若有人諷笑你太久，我會闕他們走。我們

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at you too long, I'll shoo 'em off. Here we go! Watch my smoke—Sam'l, the ladies' delight and the bridegrooms' terror!"

His arm about her, he led her in and bawled, "Ladies and worser halves, the bride! We won't introduce her round yet, because she'll never get your bum¹ names straight anyway. Now bust up this star-chamber!"

They tittered politely, but they did not move from the social security of their circle, and they did not cease staring.

She was led about the circle. Her voice mechanically produced safe remarks:

"Oh, I'm sure I'm going to like it here ever so much," and "Yes, we did have the best time in Colorado—mountains," and "Yes, I lived in St. Paul several years. Euclid P. Tinker? No, I don't *remember* meeting him, but I'm pretty sure I've heard of him."

Kennicott took her aside and whispered, "Now I'll introduce you to them, one at a time."

"Tell me about them first."

"Well, the nice-looking couple over there are Harry Haydock and his wife, Juanita. Harry's dad owns most of the Bon Ton, but it's Harry who runs it and gives it the pep. He's a hustler. Next to him is Dave Dyer the druggist—you met him this afternoon—mighty good duck-shot. The tall husk² beyond him is Jack Elder—Jackson Elder—owns the planing-mill, and the Minniemashie House, and quite a share in the Farmers' National Bank. Him and his wife are good sports—him and Sam and I go hunting together a lot. The

¹ bum, 流浪的, 昏沈的. ² husk, 人 (鄙視語).

進去吧！看我的烟——沙木是太太們所喜歡的，是新郎們所最怕的！』

他用膀護住她，領她進去，大喊道，『太太們，爺們，這是新娘子！我們現在尚不走一圈介紹他，因為她不會立刻記得你們的說不清楚的名姓。現在你們可以散了這個高等法庭啦！』

他們很客氣的笑，他們都坐得穩穩的不動，他們不停的瞪眼看新娘。

沙木領她走一圈，她的聲音很呆板的說妥當話。

她答道，『我很曉得我會很喜歡的。』她又答道，『是呀，我們在柯洛拉杜 (Colorado) 山上過很歡樂的日子，』又答道，『丁克爾 (Tinker) 麼？我不記得曾會過他，我相信我曾聽見這個名字』。

甘尼喀拉她到一邊低聲說道，『我今逐個介紹你見他們。』

『你得先把他們的名姓及行業告訴我。』

『好吧，那一邊有一對好看的夫婦就是哈里海多 (Harry Haydock) 同他的太太朱安尼塔。邦湯 (Bon Ton 店名) 的大部分是哈里的父親該的，但是辦事是他，他是這個店的主腦。他是一個善於向前擠的人。坐在他旁邊的就是開藥店的第甫泰爾 (Dave Dyer) ——你今天下午會過他——他是一個打鴨的好手。在他那一邊的高子就是查克愛爾特 (Jack Elder)，即是查克生愛爾特——他開創板廠，與米尼詩西 (Minniemashie) 字號，他在農業國立銀行有很大的股子。他夫婦兩個都是好獵手——他與沙木與我常同去打獵。那個老年的頭等人物就是路加多生 (Luke

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old cheese¹ there is Luke Dawson, the richest man in town. Next to him is Nat Hicks, the tailor.”

“Really? A tailor?”

“Sure. Why not? Maybe we’re slow, but we are democratic. I go hunting with Nat same as I do with Jack Elder.”

“I’m glad. I’ve never met a tailor socially. It must be charming to meet one and not have to think about what you owe him. And do you——Would you go hunting with your barber, too?”

“No but——No use running this democracy thing into the ground. Besides, I’ve known Nat for years, and besides, he’s a mighty good shot and——That’s the way it is, see? Next to Nat is Chet Dashaway. Great fellow for chinning.² He’ll talk your arm off, about religion or politics or books or anything.”

Carol gazed with a polite approximation to interest at Mr. Dashaway, a tan person with a wide mouth. “Oh, I know! He’s the furniture-store man!” She was much pleased with herself.

“Yump, and he’s the undertaker. You’ll like him. Come shake hands with him.”

“Oh no, no! He doesn’t—he doesn’t do the embalming and all that—himself? I couldn’t shake hands with an undertaker!”

“Why not? You’d be proud to shake hands with a great surgeon, just after he’d been carving up people’s bellies.”

She sought to regain her afternoon’s calm of maturity. “Yes. You’re right. I want—oh, my dear, do you know

¹cheese, 頭等人物。 ²chinning, 好說話, 多言

Dawson), 是當地的首富。在他旁邊的就是那特希克士 (Nat Hicks), 是個裁縫。

『當真的麼? 是一個裁縫麼?』

『當真的。爲什麼不當真? 我們雖然是遲緩無進步, 我們却是一視同仁不分貴賤的。我同那特去打獵, 如同我同查克愛爾特去打獵一樣。』

『我聽了很高興。我向來未在應酬場中會過一個裁縫, 同一個裁縫應酬, 又用不着想到你欠他的裁縫帳, 必定是很有趣味的。你也肯與你的剃頭司務一同去打獵麼?』

『我是不肯的, 不過——我們不必把不分貴賤的民主制掃地。況且我認得那特多年, 況且他又是一個善放槍的好手——我們這裏就是這樣, 你明白麼? 在那特那邊的就是齊特特沙維 (Chet Dashaway)。他是一個最好說話的人。他說起宗教, 或政治, 或書本, 或無論什麼, 可以說到你的手臂斷了。』

卡祿爾頗客氣, 近乎注意的, 看看特沙維, 原來是一個有一個大口, 有一片褐黃色臉的人。說道, 『我認得他! 他是家具店的人!』她很高興。

『哼, 他是一個司殮殮的人。你將喜歡他。來, 來, 同他拉手。』

『不! 不! 他並不親自動手用油保存屍體呀? 我不能同一個司殮殮的人拉手!』

『爲什麼不? 你肯同一個大外科醫生拉手, 在他開過病人肚子之後同他拉手。』

她現在是個成年的人啦, 她要恢復本日下午的鎮靜。她說這, 『是呀。你說得不錯。我的寶貝, 我要——你曉得

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how much I want to like the people you like? I want to see people as they are."

"Well, don't forget to see people as other folks see them as they are! They have the stuff. Did you know that Percy Bresnahan came from here? Born and brought up here!"

"Bresnahan?"

"Yes—you know—president of the Velvet Motor Company of Boston, Mass.—make the Velvet Twelve—biggest automobile factory in New England."

"I think I've heard of him."

"Sure you have. Why, he's a millionaire several times over! Well, Perce comes back here for the black-bass fishing almost every summer, and he says if he could get away from business, he'd rather live here than in Boston or New York or any of those places. *He* doesn't mind Chet's undertaking."

"Please! I'll—I'll like everybody! I'll be the community sunbeam!"

He led her to the Dawsons.

Luke Dawson, lender of money on mortgages, owner of Northern cut-over¹ land, was a hesitant man in unpressed soft gray clothes, with bulging eyes in a milky face. His wife had bleached cheeks, bleached hair, bleached voice, and a bleached manner. She wore her expensive green frock, with its passementieried² bosom, bead tassels, and gaps between the buttons down the back, as though she had bought it secondhand and was afraid of meeting the former owner. They were shy. It was "Professor" George Edwin Mott, superintendent of schools, a Chinese

¹ cut-over, 斫了樹木的。 ² passementieried, 絲帶穿珠的。

麼，我要喜歡你新喜歡的人。我要看人的本色。』

『好呀，你不要忘記，看人如同他人之看人看本色！他們有本領。你曉得麼卜列尼汗(Bresnahan)就是這裏人？生長在這裏的！』

『卜列尼汗麼？』

『是呀——你曉得的——他是波士頓的維爾維汽車公司的東家——新英吉利的最大汽車廠。』

『我想我曾聽見過他。』

『你必定聽見過。他有幾百萬家當！他每年夏天幾乎必回來釣里鱸魚，他說只要他能夠走開，他寧願住在這裏，不願住在波士頓或紐約或任何其他地方。他不理會齊特是個殯殮死屍的。』

『請你不要說啦！我將喜歡無論什麼人！我要變作這裏社會的太陽光線！』

他領她去見多生們！

路加多生是一個執抵押品的借貸家，北方斫了樹木的地主，是一個說話遲疑的人，穿了軟的灰色衣服，一副乳白面孔，兩隻突眼。他的太太有漂白臉，漂白頭髮，漂白聲音，漂白態度。她穿很值錢的綠褂子，胸前用絲帶穿珠，有珠縫，後頭的扣子之間有空處，好像是買的故衣，惟恐原主看見。他們夫婦都畏羞。抓住卡祿爾的手，歡迎她的原是『教授』毛特(Mott)，是幾個學校的監督，是一個變了

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mandarin turned brown, who held Carol's hand and made her welcome.

When the Dawsons and Mr. Mott had stated that they were "pleased to meet her," there seemed to be nothing else to say, but the conversation went on automatically.

"Do you like Gopher Prairie?" whimpered Mrs. Dawson.

"Oh, I'm sure I'm going to be ever so happy."

"There's so many nice people." Mrs. Dawson looked to Mr. Mott for social and intellectual aid. He lectured:

"There's a fine class of people. I don't like some of these retired farmers who come here to spend their last days—especially the Germans. They hate to pay school-taxes. They hate to spend a cent. But the rest are a fine class of people. Did you know that Percy Bresnahan came from here? Used to go to school right at the old building!"

"I heard he did."

"Yes. He's a prince. He and I went fishing together, last time he was here."

The Dawsons and Mr. Mott teetered upon weary feet, and smiled at Carol with crystallized expressions. She went on:

"Tell me, Mr. Mott: Have you ever tried any experiments with any of the new educational systems? The modern kindergarten methods or the Gary system?"

"Oh. Those. Most of these would-be reformers are simply notoriety-seekers. I believe in manual training, but Latin and mathematics always will be the backbone of sound Americanism, no matter what these faddists¹

¹faddist 奇僻的理想家, 偏執已見的。

棕色的中國官員。

多生們及毛特說道，『他們喜歡會她』之後就沒得話說了，但是談話依然進行，如同一架自動機一般。

多生太太低聲說好像害怕的話，『你喜歡哥甫巴利利麼？』

『呀，我很相信我將來必定是很歡樂的。』

多生太太說道，『這裏有許多好人。』她說完這一句，就看看毛特，要他給她應酬上與知識上的取力。他就演講道：

『這裏有一等很好的人。我不喜歡有幾個歸隱的田舍翁，他們到這裏來過他們的餘年，——尤其是德國人。他們不喜歡納學校稅。他們不喜歡花一文銅錢。其餘的都是一等很好的人。你曉得卜列尼汗是這裏人麼？他常到在舊房子的學校！』

『我聽說他曾到過。』

『是呀。他是一個王爵。當他最後一次在這裏的時候，他與我同去釣魚。』

多生們與毛特的疲倦腳，上下的動，帶着結晶的神色對着卡祿爾微笑。她往下說道：

『毛特先生，我請你告訴我。你會試過無論那個新系統的教育麼？你會識過摩登幼稚園，或格雷法麼？』

『呀，那兩種新法。大多數這樣自命為改革家，不過是要揚名的。我相信操練手工，但是無論這許多奇怪的理想家們主持什麼——惟有天曉得他們要什麼——我猜他們

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advocate—heaven knows what they do want—knitting, I suppose, and classes in wiggling the ears!”

The Dawsons smiled their appreciation of listening to a savant.¹ Carol waited till Kennicott should rescue her. The rest of the party waited for the miracle of being amused.

Harry and Juanita Haydock, Rita Simons and Dr. Terry Gould—the young smart set of Gopher Prairie. She was led to them. Juanita Haydock flung at her in a high, cackling, friendly voice:

“Well, this is *so* nice to have you here. We’ll have some good parties—dances and everything. You’ll have to join the Jolly Seventeen. We play bridge and we have a supper once a month. You play, of course?”

“N-no, I don’t.”

“Really? In St. Paul?”

“I’ve always been such a book-worm.”

“We’ll have to teach you. Bridge is half the fun of life.” Juanita had become patronizing, and she glanced disrespectfully at Carol’s golden sash, which she had previously admired.

Harry Haydock said politely, “How do you think you’re going to like the old burg?”

“I’m sure I shall like it tremendously.”

“Best people on earth here. Great hustlers, too. Course I’ve had lots of chances to go live in Minneapolis, but we like it here. Real he-town. Did you know that Percy Bresnahan came from here?”

Carol perceived that she had been weakened in the biological struggle by disclosing her lack of bridge. Roused

¹ savant, 行家, 科學專家.

要學生們練習針織，與練習搖動兩耳！學拉丁文與算學歸根常是結實的美國主義學制的脊骨！』

多生們細聽一個行家演講，微笑以示他們領略。卡祿爾在那裏等甘尼喀來救她。其餘的人們在那裏等候消遣的奇蹟。

哥甫巴利利的最時髦的少年就是哈里海多，與朱安尼塔海多，利塔西曼士 (Rita Simons) 與特爾利孤爾特醫生 (Dr. Terry Gould)。有人領她去見他們。朱安尼塔海多用一種高的聲音，好像放炮仗一般，又是表示友誼的聲音，對她說話。

『你到我們這裏來是很好的。我們將來就有好聚會——跳舞會等等。你要入快活十七歲會，我們打紙牌，每月晚餐一次。你自然是會打紙牌的？』

『不！我不打紙牌。』

『當真的麼？在聖保羅地方不打麼？』

『我常是一個書獃子。』

『我們將來教你打。打紙牌是人生樂趣的一事。』朱安尼塔已經變作要保護他，很有德色，她剛才稱讚卡祿爾的金色帶子，現在斜眼看看，有點不禮的神色。

哈里海多很客氣的說道，『你看你將來會喜歡這個老地方麼？』

『我很相信我將來會很喜歡這個地方的。』

『世上最好的人住在這裏。我們這裏的人又是麻利敏捷的。我自然很有過機會去住米尼亞普里 (Minneapolis)，但是我們喜歡住在這裏。這是個男子漢的市鎮。你曉得麼，卜列尼汗是我們此地人？』

『卡祿爾揭露也不會打紙牌 (Bridge 有數解，一解作一解作鼻子上部的骨，這裏有雙關意義。——譯者註。) 就覺得致弱了生物奮鬥的力量。他被激動，要恢復她紙牌，