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■ Edith Wharton (美) 著

■ Susan Kingsley (英) 改写

Ethan Frome

伊桑·弗罗姆



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- Edith Wharton (美) 原著
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- 金 辉 译

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内容简介

20 世纪早期，马萨诸塞州农场上的生活并不轻松。新英格兰地区的冬季气候恶劣，冰雪覆盖大地长达数月之久，夜晚漫长而寒冷。像伊桑·弗罗姆这样的穷苦农民，生活中很少有快乐的时候。

伊桑是个慢性子，少言寡语的，但他对事物的感受很强烈，他感受着身边世界的美丽——没有月亮的夜晚，星星在天空中闪烁；阳光映照的白雪上，树木投下蓝色的影子。他体味着生活中那份悲哀的孤独——囚禁在无爱的婚姻中，妻子齐娜冷漠寡言，只在乎自己的病情。但齐娜的表妹玛蒂·西尔弗来到了农场，与他们住在一起。时间一个月一个月地过去，一种幸福感悄悄地进入了伊桑的生活。他喜欢隔着餐桌注视玛蒂的脸庞，看她甜美的笑容，听她柔和的声音，和她手挽手走过雪野。

齐娜很少说什么，可她那双冷酷、警觉的眼睛却能看到一切……

ETHAN FROME

In the early years of the 20th century, life on a farm in Massachusetts is not easy. The New England winters are hard; snow and ice cover the fields for months, and the nights are long and cold. For a poor farmer like Ethan Frome, life has few bright moments.

Ethan is a slow, quiet man, but he feels things strongly. He feels the beauty of the world around him — stars shining in a moonless sky, the blue shadows of trees on sunlit snow. He feels the sad loneliness of his life, locked in a loveless marriage to Zeena, a cold, silent woman, whose only interest is her own ill health. Then Zeena's cousin, Mattie Silver, comes to live in the farmhouse, and as the months pass, Ethan feels a new happiness stealing into his life. He loves to watch Mattie's face across the dinner table, to see her sweet smile and hear her soft voice, to walk arm in arm with her across the snowy fields.

His wife Zeena says very little, but her cold, watchful eyes see everything. . .

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1

Beginnings

If you know Starkfield, Massachusetts, you know the post office there. If you know the post office, you have probably seen Ethan Frome driving up to it in his buggy; and you have probably wondered who he was.

It was there that, several years ago, I saw him for the first time. He was a noticeable figure. His tall, strong body was badly twisted, and much shorter on the right side than on the left. He moved slowly and painfully, pulling himself along. Just the few steps from his buggy to the post office were clearly difficult for him. His face had a sad, grim look. It was the face and body of an old man, and I was surprised to hear that he was only fifty-two.

I learnt this from Harmon Gow, a man who knew all the families around Starkfield.

‘He’s been like that since his bad accident, nearly twenty-four years ago,’ said Harmon. ‘But Fromes don’t die young. Ethan’ll live to a hundred, probably.’

‘He looks like a dead man already,’ I said.

‘I guess he’s been in Starkfield too many winters,’ said Harmon. ‘Most smart people get out of here.’

‘Why didn’t he get out?’ I asked.

‘He had to stay and take care of his family — first his father got hurt, then his mother fell sick, then his wife.’

1. 开端

你若是知道马萨诸塞州的斯塔克菲尔德镇，想必该知道那儿的邮局；若是知道那儿的邮局，就可能看到过伊桑·弗罗姆驾着他的四轮马车到那儿，或许你还曾对他感到过好奇：这个人是谁？

几年前，就是在那儿，我第一次见到了他。他很引人注目，个子高高的，身体强壮却扭曲得厉害，右侧身子明显低于左侧。他拖着身体向前，走得缓慢而痛苦。从他的四轮马车到邮局只有几步路，对他来讲却显然很困难。他脸上带着哀伤、阴郁的神色。这种表情和身体属于老年人，因此当听说他只有52岁时，我感到很惊讶。

这是我是在哈蒙·高那儿听到的，哈蒙认识斯塔克菲尔德镇上所有的人家。

“大约24年前发生了那场严重的事故后，他就变成那样子了。”哈蒙说，“但弗罗姆家的人都长寿。伊桑可能会活到100岁。”

“可他看起来好像已经死了。”我说。

“我猜他在斯塔克菲尔德熬过太多个冬天了，”哈蒙说，“大部分聪明人都搬走了。”

“那他怎么不搬走？”我问。

“他必须留下来照顾家人——先是他父亲受伤了，之后他母亲又病倒了，再后来就是他妻子。”



buggy *n.* a light horse-drawn vehicle for one or two people 〈美〉四轮单马轻便马车 **noticeable** *adj.* easily seen or noticed 值得注意的 **grim** *adj.* looking very serious 严肃的

‘And then the accident?’

Harmon gave a little smile. ‘That’s right. He had to stay then.’

Ethan Frome used to drive in from his farm every day at about midday, and because I picked up my mail at about the same time, I often saw him. He came to the post office only for a newspaper, and sometimes for a packet from a medicine company for ‘Mrs Zeena Frome’. Starkfield people understood that he did not want to stop and talk, and on most days Frome climbed slowly back into his buggy and drove away without a word to anyone.

At that time my company had sent me on an engineering job near Starkfield, and I was staying at the home of a lady called Mrs Ruth Hale. Before she was married, her name had been Ruth Varnum, but her husband Ned Hale was now dead, and she had returned to live with her mother in the Varnum home. It was a grand house, large and white, with tall dark trees outside. Although it was clear that the Varnums no longer had much money, theirs was still the finest house in the village.

Ruth Hale enjoyed talking about her neighbours, and I hoped that she could tell me more about Ethan Frome. But when I asked her, she just looked unhappy and said in a low voice:

‘Yes, I knew them both... it was awful...’

I asked other people, and everybody in Starkfield agreed that Ethan Frome had had more troubles in his life

“然后他就出了事?”

哈蒙笑了笑。“是的，所以他不得不留下来。”

过去，伊桑·弗罗姆常常在大概每天中午的时候驾着马车从他的农场来邮局，我也是在那时去取信，所以经常看到他。他来邮局就是为了取份报纸，有时候也会取个包裹，那是一家医药公司寄给“齐娜·弗罗姆夫人”的。斯塔克菲尔德镇的人都知道他不想停来说话，大部分时候他都会慢慢地爬到他的马车上，一言不发地驾车离开。

当时，我被公司派到斯塔克菲尔德附近来做一项工程，住在一位女士家中，大家叫她露丝·黑尔夫人。她婚前名叫露丝·瓦纳姆，如今她的丈夫内德·黑尔已经过世，于是她回到娘家和母亲一起住。房子很大，很气派，漆成白色，屋外长着高大、苍翠的树木。尽管瓦纳姆家显然已不再富裕，但她们的房子却仍是村子里最好的。

露丝·黑尔夫人喜欢和邻居聊天，而我也希望她能多告诉我一些伊桑·弗罗姆的故事。但每当我问她时，她就会显得有些悲伤，用低沉的声音对我说：

“是的，他们两个我都认识……太可怕了……”

我问过其他人，斯塔克菲尔德镇上每个人都认为伊桑·弗罗姆一生中遭遇的麻

engineering *n.* the application of science to the design, building, and use of machines, constructions, etc.
工程 **grand** *adj.* very impressive 壮观的

than most people. But nobody explained why he had that sad, grim look on his face.

In the end, I learnt the story, piece by piece, from several people. As often happens, the story was different each time, but I slowly began to put it together. And my interest in Ethan Frome grew stronger when — a little later — I met the man himself.

It happened like this. Every day I had to travel about three miles to the station, where I got my train to work. I usually hired a horse from Denis Eady, the rich village shopkeeper. But in the middle of winter his and most of the other Starkfield horses caught an illness. For a day or two I could not find a horse to hire anywhere, until Harmon Gow had an idea.

‘Why don’t you ask Ethan Frome to drive you?’ He said. ‘His horse ain’t sick, and he needs a dollar or two. That Frome farm and saw-mill don’t make enough money to keep a cat alive.’

So Ethan Frome agreed to drive me, and every day for a week I sat beside him in his sleigh as his thin horse pulled us over the hard snow to the station. Then, in the icy evenings, he brought me back to Starkfield.

He was not unfriendly, but during the hour’s drive he never turned to look at me, and spoke very little. Once I said something about Florida and he told me that he had been there. Another time he showed interest in a science book

烦事比大多数人都多，但却没人解释为什么他的脸看上去那么悲伤、阴郁。

最后，从好几个人那里，我一点一滴地得知了他的故事。正如通常那样，每次我听到的说法都不一样，但我开始慢慢地把它拼凑了起来。后来不久，见到伊桑·弗罗姆本人时，我对他更感兴趣了。

事情是这样的：每天我都要赶三英里路到火车站，在那儿乘火车去我工作的地方。通常我会从村中一个富裕的店主丹尼斯·伊迪那里租一匹马。但隆冬时节，他的马和斯塔克菲尔德镇上的大多数马都染了病。有那么一两天我根本找不到马匹，这时哈蒙·高想到个主意。

“干吗不让伊桑·弗罗姆驾车送你呢？”他说，“他的马没得病，况且他也需要点儿钱。弗罗姆家的农场和锯木场挣的钱连只猫都养不活。”

伊桑·弗罗姆答应驾车送我，接下来一个星期，我每天都和他并肩坐在他的雪橇上，他那匹瘦马拉着我们，驶过硬邦邦的积雪，直到火车站。然后，在冰冷的晚上，他把我送回斯塔克菲尔德。

不能说他这人不友善，然而在一个小时的路途中，他从不转头看我一眼，也几乎不和我说话。一次，我聊起了佛罗里达州，他告诉我他曾经去过那儿。还有一天早晨，

saw-mill *n.* a factory in which wood is sawn mechanically into planks or boards 锯木场 **sleigh** *n.* a vehicle that is pulled by animals and used for travelling over snow 雪橇

of mine, which I had left in his sleigh by mistake in the morning. But most of the time Frome drove without a word, and I began to feel that he was like the land around him. This sad, silent man and the snow-covered fields had the same kind of cold loneliness. Anything warm and alive inside him was locked away, under the deep icy cold of too many Starkfield winters.

After about a week, we were driving back one night in terrible weather. Heavy snow was falling, hiding everything in a soft white cloud, and the air had an icy coldness. The old horse was getting tired, and I got out to walk beside him, but I found it hard to keep moving.

After a time Frome looked into the darkness and said:

‘That’s my place down there. We’ve had enough of this.’

I understood that he was offering me a bed for the night, and we turned down towards the poor, lonely-looking farmhouse. After I had helped him put away the sleigh and take care of the horse, we fought our way through the snow to the front of the house. I followed him inside, and from behind a door on our right I heard a woman’s voice, a thin, high, whining voice.

Frome opened the door of the room, ‘Come in,’ he said to me, and as he spoke, the whining voice fell silent.

That was the night when I began to understand Ethan Frome, and to put together his story...

我不小心把一本科学书落在了他的雪橇上，看得出他对那本书挺感兴趣。但大多数时候，弗罗姆赶车时都一声不吭。我开始感到，他就像他身边的土地一样。这个哀伤沉默的人与这白雪覆盖的田地一样冷漠而孤独。他胸中所有热情与活力都在斯塔克菲尔德冬天的刺骨严寒中封存了起来。

大概过了一个星期，我们驾车回家，当晚天气十分恶劣。大雪纷飞，一切都笼罩在白茫茫的雪团之中，空气冷得刺骨。驾辕的老马越来越累，我于是跳下车来，在旁边走，却发现走起来很费劲。

过了一会儿，弗罗姆看了看夜色，对我说：

“我家就在那儿。咱们也受够了这鬼天气。”

我知道他是在请我留宿一晚，于是我们朝着那破败的、孤零零的农舍走去。我帮他收好雪橇，把马安顿好后，我们顶着雪来到了农舍前。我跟着他走进屋里，我们右侧的门后传来一个女人尖细的声音。

弗罗姆打开屋子的门。“请进。”他对我说，他说这话时，那尖细的声音静默了下来。

就是在那夜，我开始了解伊桑·弗罗姆，并将他的故事拼凑了起来……

* * *



put away to put (a thing) back in the place where it is normally kept 把……收起，放好 **whining** adj. (of a sound) long, high and unpleasant (声音)长而尖锐的

2

Coming home from the dance

It was a cold, clear night, and the village lay under deep snow. Bright, icy stars shone from a dark sky down on the silent whiteness below.

Young Ethan Frome walked quickly down the empty, moonlit street. He passed Eady's fine new shop and the Varnums' house with its two tall black trees. Below that was the slope of the Corbury road. On clear nights this was often full of young people coasting down, laughing and shouting as they went. But there was not a sound from the icy slope as Ethan passed by. Tonight all Starkfield's life was in a room in the church. Its windows sent yellow light across the snow, and the sound of dance music flowed out into the still midnight air. Ethan hid in the shadows outside the church, and looked in through the nearest window.

The room was hot, bright, and filled with young men and girls. The music had finished, and people were getting ready to leave. Suddenly, a lively young man with thick black hair jumped into the middle of the floor. He went into the crowd and pulled out a young girl. She was dark-haired, and had a bright red scarf around her head. The music started again, and soon the floor was alive with dancing figures.

Outside in the cold, Ethan's heart was beating fast. His

2. 舞会归家路

这是一个寒冷而晴朗的夜晚，厚厚的积雪铺满了整个村子。明朗清亮的星星在黑色的夜空中俯照着这片寂静的白色大地。

月光下，空无一人的街道上，年轻的伊桑·弗罗姆快步走来。他走过伊迪家的新店铺，走过瓦纳姆屋外两棵阴森的大树。那下面就是科贝里路的斜坡，晴朗的夜晚，许多年轻人会在这儿滑斜坡，一边玩儿，一边笑着、叫着。但伊桑经过时，这冰雪覆盖的斜坡却悄然无声。这一晚，斯塔克菲尔小镇的居民都聚在教堂的一个房间内。黄色的灯光透过窗子照在屋外的积雪上，舞曲飘出屋子，在寂静的夜空中飘荡。教堂外，伊桑藏在阴影中，从离他最近的窗子向房间内望去。

屋里气氛热烈，灯火通明，全是小伙子和年轻姑娘。音乐已经结束，人们正准备离开。突然，一个活泼的长着浓密黑发的小伙子跳到屋子中间，从人群中拽出个年轻姑娘。姑娘长着深色头发，头上系着鲜亮的红头巾。音乐又响了起来，不一会儿，屋子里又都是跳舞的人们了。

屋外寒冷的黑夜中，伊桑的心跳得厉害。

coast v. to ride or move, usually downhill, without use of power (沿山坡)向下滑行