

插图·中文导读英文版



My Uncle Jules

# 我的叔叔于勒

[法] 莫泊桑 著

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北京

## 内 容 简 介

本书精选了法国著名作家莫泊桑的短篇小说17篇,其中包括《我的叔叔于勒》《一家人》《一个农庄女佣的故事》《暗号》《珠宝》《菲菲小姐》和《被收养的儿子》等世界短篇小说文学宝库中的经典名篇。这些小说被翻译成世界上各种文字,影响了一代又一代世界各地的读者,并且被无数次地改编成戏剧、电影、电视剧和卡通片等。无论作为语言学习的课本,还是作为通俗的文学读本,这些短篇小说中的经典名篇对当代中国的读者都将产生积极的影响。为了使读者能够了解英文故事概况,进而提高阅读速度和阅读水平,在每篇的开始部分增加了中文导读。同时,为了让读者更好地理解故事内容,书中加入了大量插图。

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# 前言

莫泊桑，全名居伊·德·莫泊桑（Guy de Maupassant，1850—1893），19世纪末法国最伟大的短篇小说家，在法国文坛享有“短篇小说之王”的美誉，与欧·亨利、契诃夫并称为世界三大短篇小说之王。

1850年8月5日，莫泊桑出生在法国诺曼底省迪耶普城附近一个没落的贵族家庭。从童年时代起，母亲就培养他写诗，母亲是他走上文学创作道路的启蒙老师。1870年，莫泊桑中学毕业后到巴黎入大学学习法律。这一年普法战争爆发，他应征入伍。在军队中，他亲眼目睹了危难中的祖国和在血泊中呻吟的士兵，他把自己的所见所闻写下来，以激发人们的爱国热情。1871年，战争结束后，莫泊桑退役回到巴黎，先后在海军部和教育部任职。

1878年，他在教育部工作之余开始从事写作，同时拜舅舅的同窗好友、大文学家福楼拜为自己文学上的导师，并且因此与福楼拜结下了亲如父子的师徒关系。福楼拜决心把自己创作的经验传授给莫泊桑，莫泊桑在导师的悉心指导下刻苦磨砺达十年之久。1880年，莫泊桑发表了他的成名之作《羊脂球》。该作品使他一鸣惊人，从此莫泊桑一跃登上了法国文坛。此后，莫泊桑共创作了《一家人》《我的叔叔于勒》《米隆老爹》《两个朋友》《项链》等300多篇思想性和艺术性完美结合的短篇小说佳作。莫泊桑的长篇小说也达到很高的



成就，共创作了 6 部长篇佳作：《一生》《漂亮朋友》《温泉》《皮埃尔和若望》《像死一般坚强》和《我们的心》。

莫泊桑的文学艺术成就，对世界文学宝库做出了巨大贡献。他在写作艺术技巧方面的成就，不仅在法国文学史上占有重要地位，而且对世界其他国家的短篇小说创作产生了很大的影响。屠格涅夫认为他是 19 世纪末法国文坛“最卓越的天才”。托尔斯泰认为他的小说具有“形式的美感”和“鲜明的爱憎”，他之所以是天才，是因为“他不是按照他所希望看到的样子而是照事物本来的样子来看事物”，因而“就能揭发暴露事物，而且使得人们爱那值得爱的，恨那值得恨的事物”。左拉认为他的作品“无限地丰富多彩，无不精彩绝妙，令人叹为观止”。恩格斯说：“应该向莫泊桑脱帽致敬。”

一个世纪以来，莫泊桑的作品在全世界产生了巨大的影响，始终拥有大量的读者。本书精选了他的短篇小说 17 篇，采用中文导读英文版的形式出版。在中文导读中，我们尽力使其贴近原作的精髓，也尽可能保留原作的故事主线。我们希望能够编出为当代中国读者所喜爱的经典读本。读者在阅读英文故事之前，可以先阅读中文导读，这样有利于了解故事背景，从而加快阅读速度。同时，为了让读者更好地理解故事内容，书中加入了大量插图。我们相信，该经典著作的引进对加强当代中国读者，特别是青少年读者的人文修养是非常有帮助的。

本书的主要内容由王勋、纪飞编译。参加本书故事素材搜集整理及编译工作的还有郑佳、刘乃亚、赵雪、熊金玉、李丽秀、熊红华、王婷婷、孟宪行、胡国平、李晓红、贡东兴、陈楠、邵舒丽、冯洁、王业伟、徐鑫、王晓旭、周丽萍、熊建国、徐平国、肖洁、王小红等。限于我们的科学、人文素养和英语水平，书中难免会有不当之处，衷心希望读者朋友批评指正。



我的叔叔于勒/My Uncle Jules .....	1
一个农庄女佣的故事/The Story of a Farm Girl .....	15
懊悔/Regret .....	46
港口/The Port .....	57
菲菲小姐/Mademoiselle Fifi .....	73
在树林里/In the Wood .....	95
雨伞/The Umbrella .....	104
一家人/A Family .....	119
一场政变/A Coup D'Etat .....	129
索娃格大妈/Mother Sauvage .....	147
坟墓/The Grave .....	160
暗号/The Signal .....	168
被收养的儿子/The Adopted Son .....	178
一束头发/A Tress of Hair .....	189
保护人/The Patron .....	201
珠宝/The False Gems .....	211
他是如何获得勋章的/How He Got the Legion of Honor .....	223

# 我的叔叔于勒

My Uncle Jules



我的同伴约瑟夫·达夫朗什给了一个老乞丐五法郎。他施舍是因为这个贫穷的人让他想到了一个一直不能忘怀的故事，他说。

我的家并不富裕。虽然父亲每天辛勤工作，但赚的钱很少，而且家中又有三个孩子，所以生活很艰难。

母亲因为清苦的生活经常埋怨父亲。每当这时，父亲都会难过地张开手掌，试图擦掉额头上的汗，虽然他的额头上并没有汗。在生活上，全家人都很注意节俭，不敢接受邀请，买东西也只买大减价的商品。每天吃的是单调的汤和牛肉，这让我十分想换换口味。

每个星期天，全家都会穿上最好的衣服，到港口的防浪堤上散步。在港口，每当看到有从远方回来的大轮船时，父亲总感叹说：“如果于勒在船上，那多叫人惊喜啊！”

于勒是父亲的兄弟，最初并不受欢迎，可是后来却成为了全家唯一的希望。我从小就听见大家谈论他，以至于虽然没有见过面，但是却对他的过往很熟悉。他过去曾经大肆挥霍过一段时间，这对于贫穷的家庭来讲是一个灾难。后来全家人都忍无可忍，就让他搭上了到纽约的轮船。



施舍给老乞丐五法郎



在那里，于勒叔叔开始做生意了，并且来信说自己赚到了钱，希望能够弥补过去所犯下的过失。这封信让全家十分激动，于勒叔叔也不再是令人讨厌的人物了。

两年后，于勒叔叔又写信告诉大家，他在那边很好，准备去南美洲旅行，并准备发财之后回来。这封信给了全家人生活的希望。

十年过去了，我们再没有收到过于勒叔叔的信，但是父亲和母亲都坚信于勒会带着一大笔钱回来的。

所以每个星期天，看到从远方回来的大轮船时，全家人都希望于勒叔叔就在船里面。


全家人都幻想着于勒回来之后，大家会过上幸福的生活。一个办公室职员在看了信之后，下决心向我的二姐求婚。我们立刻答应了他的请求，并决定在婚礼之后，全家旅行一次。

在旅行的船上，父亲惊讶地发现一个衣衫褴褛的卖牡蛎的老水手看起来很像于勒。很快母亲便证实了那就是于勒——那个在信中说自己发财了的于勒。从船长的口中，父亲知道了真相：于勒在美洲曾经很富有，但是后来破产了，过上了流浪的生活。

父亲和母亲发现于勒贫穷了，都害怕再被缠上，他们决定离于勒越远越好。他们给了我五法郎，让我出面支付买牡蛎的钱后就走开了。我看着眼前这个卖牡蛎的老人，虽然知道这就是我的叔叔于勒，但是却不能与他相认。

后来我们是搭别的船回来的，为了避免与他再碰到，从此我就再也没有见过我的叔叔于勒了。

这就是为什么我施舍给一个老乞丐五法郎的原因。

 white-haired old man begged us for alms. My

companion, Joseph Davranche, gave him five francs. Noticing my surprised look, he said:

“That poor unfortunate reminds me of a story which I shall tell you, the memory of which continually pursues me. Here it is:

My family, which came originally from Havre, was not rich. We just managed to make both ends meet. My father worked hard, came home late from the office, and earned very little. I had two sisters.

My mother suffered a good deal from our reduced circumstances, and she often had harsh words for her husband, veiled and sly reproaches. The poor man then made a gesture which used to distress me. He would pass his open hand over his forehead, as if to wipe away perspiration which did not exist, and he would answer nothing. I felt his helpless suffering. We economized on everything, and never would accept an invitation to dinner, so as not to have to return the courtesy. All our provisions were bought at bargain sales. My sisters made their own gowns, and long discussions would arise on the price of a piece of braid worth fifteen centimes a yard. Our meals usually consisted of soup and beef, prepared with every kind of sauce.

They say it is wholesome and nourishing, but I should have preferred a change.

I used to go through terrible scenes on account of lost buttons and torn trousers.

Every Sunday, dressed in our best, we would take our walk along the breakwater. My father, in a frock coat, high hat and kid gloves, would offer his arm to my mother, decked out and beribboned like a ship on a holiday. My sisters, who were always ready first, would await the signal for leaving; but at the last minute some one always found a spot on my father's frock coat, and it had to be wiped away quickly with a rag moistened with benzine.

My father, in his shirt sleeves, his silk hat on his head, would await the completion of the operation, while my mother, putting on her spectacles, and taking off her gloves in order not to spoil them, would make haste.

Then we set out ceremoniously. My sisters marched on ahead, arm in arm. They were of marriageable age and had to be displayed. I walked on the left of my mother and my father on her right. I remember the pompous air of my poor parents in these Sunday walks, their stern expression, their stiff walk. They moved slowly, with a serious expression, their bodies straight, their legs stiff, as if something of extreme importance depended upon their appearance.

Every Sunday, when the big steamers were returning from unknown and distant countries, my father would invariably utter the same words:

'What a surprise it would be if Jules were on that one! Eh?'

My Uncle Jules, my father's brother, was the only hope of the family, after being its only fear. I had heard about him since

childhood, and it seemed to me that I should recognize him immediately, knowing as much about him as I did. I knew every detail of his life up to the day of his departure for America, although this period of his life was spoken of only in hushed tones.

It seems that he had led a bad life, that is to say, he had squandered a little money, which action, in a poor family, is one of the greatest crimes. With rich people a man who amuses himself only sows his wild oats. He is what is generally called a sport. But among needy families a boy who forces his parents to break into the capital becomes a good-for-nothing, a rascal, a scamp. And this distinction is just, although the action be the same, for consequences alone determine the seriousness of the act.

Well, Uncle Jules had visibly diminished the inheritance on which my father had counted, after he had swallowed his own to the last penny. Then, according, to the custom of the times, he had been shipped off to America on a freighter going from Havre to New York.

Once there, my uncle began to sell something or other, and he soon wrote that he was making a little money and that he soon hoped to be able to indemnify my father for the harm he had done him. This letter caused a profound emotion in the family. Jules, who up to that time had not been worth his salt, suddenly became a good man, a kind-hearted fellow, true and honest like all the Davranches.

One of the captains told us that he had rented a large shop and

was doing an important business.

Two years later a second letter came, saying: ‘my dear Philippe, I am writing to tell you not to worry about my health, which is excellent. Business is good. I leave tomorrow for a long trip to South America. I may be away for several years without sending you any news. If I shouldn’t write, don’t worry. When my fortune is made I shall return to Havre. I hope that it will not be too long and that we shall all live happily together....’

This letter became the gospel of the family. It was read on the slightest provocation, and it was shown to everybody.

For ten years nothing was heard from Uncle Jules; but as time went on my father’s hope grew, and my mother, also, often said:

‘When that good Jules is here, our position will be different. There is one who knew how to get along!’

And every Sunday, while watching the big steamers approaching from the horizon, pouring out a stream of smoke, my father would repeat his eternal question:

‘What a surprise it would be if Jules were on that one! Eh?’

We almost expected to see him waving his handkerchief and crying:

‘Hey! Philippe!’

Thousands of schemes had been planned on the strength of this expected return; we were even to buy a little house with my uncle’s money — a little place in the country near Ingouville. In fact, I

wouldn't swear that my father had not already begun negotiations.

The elder of my sisters was then twenty-eight, the other twenty-six. They were not yet married, and that was a great grief to every one.

At last a suitor presented himself for the younger one. He was a clerk, not rich, but honorable. I have always been morally certain that Uncle Jules' letter, which was shown him one evening, had swept away the young man's hesitation and definitely decided him.

He was accepted eagerly, and it was decided that after the wedding the whole family should take a trip to Jersey.

Jersey is the ideal trip for poor people. It is not far; one crosses a strip of sea in a steamer and lands on foreign soil, as this little island belongs to England. Thus, a Frenchman, with a two hours' sail, can observe a neighboring people at home and study their customs.

This trip to Jersey completely absorbed our ideas, was our sole anticipation, the constant thought of our minds.

At last we left. I see it as plainly as if it had happened yesterday. The boat was getting up steam against the quay at Granville; my father, bewildered, was superintending the loading of our three pieces of baggage; my mother, nervous, had taken the arm of my unmarried sister, who seemed lost since the departure of the other one, like the last chicken of a brood; behind us came the bride and groom, who always stayed behind, a thing that often made me turn

round.

The whistle sounded. We got on board, and the vessel, leaving the breakwater, forged ahead through a sea as flat as a marble table. We watched the coast disappear in the distance, happy and proud, like all who do not travel much.

My father was swelling out his chest in the breeze, beneath his frock coat, which had that morning been very carefully cleaned; and he spread around him that odor of benzine which always made me recognize Sunday. Suddenly he noticed two elegantly dressed ladies to whom two gentlemen were offering oysters. An old, ragged sailor was opening them with his knife and passing them to the gentlemen, who would then offer them to the ladies. They ate them in a dainty manner, holding the shell on a fine handkerchief and advancing their mouths a little in order not to spot their dresses. Then they would drink the liquid with a rapid little motion and throw the shell overboard.

My father was probably pleased with this delicate manner of eating oysters on a moving ship. He considered it good form, refined, and, going up to my mother and sisters, he asked:

‘Would you like me to offer you some oysters?’

My mother hesitated on account of the expense, but my two sisters immediately accepted. My mother said in a provoked manner:

‘I am afraid that they will hurt my stomach. Offer the children

some, but not too much, it would make them sick.'then, turning toward me, she added:

'As for Joseph, he doesn't need any. Boys shouldn't be spoiled.'

However, I remained beside my mother, finding this discrimination unjust. I watched my father as he pompously conducted my two sisters and his son-in-law toward the ragged old sailor.

The two ladies had just left, and my father showed my sisters how to eat them without spilling the liquor. He even tried to give them an example, and seized an oyster. He attempted to imitate the ladies, and immediately spilled all the liquid over his coat. I heard my mother mutter:

'He would do far better to keep quiet.'

But, suddenly, my father appeared to be worried; he retreated a few steps, stared at his family gathered around the old shell opener, and quickly came toward us. He seemed very pale, with a peculiar look. In a low voice he said to my mother:

'It's extraordinary how that man opening the oysters looks like Jules.'

Astonished, my mother asked:

'What Jules?'

My father continued:

'Why, my brother. If I did not know that he was well off in



America, I should think it was he.'

Bewildered, my mother stammered:

'You are crazy! As long as you know that it is not he, why do you say such foolish things?'

But my father insisted:

'Go on over and see, Clarisse! I would rather have you see with your own eyes.'

She arose and walked to her daughters. I, too, was watching the man. He was old, dirty, wrinkled, and did not lift his eyes from his work.

My mother returned. I noticed that she was trembling. She exclaimed quickly:

'I believe that it is he. Why don't you ask the captain? But be very careful that we don't have this rogue on our hands again!'

My father walked away, but I followed him. I felt strangely moved.

The captain, a tall, thin man, with blond whiskers, was walking along the bridge with an important air as if he were commanding the Indian mail steamer.

My father addressed him ceremoniously, and questioned him about his profession, adding many compliments:

'What might be the importance of Jersey? What did it produce? What was the population? The customs? The nature of the soil?' etc., etc.