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Agatha Christie

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[英] 阿加莎·克里斯蒂 著



商务印书馆
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阿加莎·克里斯蒂(Agatha Christie 1890 - 1976)是英国著名女侦探小说家、剧作家,三大推理文学宗师之一,被誉为举世公认的推理小说女王。其作品已被翻译成一百多种语言,曾多次被搬上银幕。代表作有《东方快车谋杀案》和《尼罗河谋杀案》等,在中国有大批爱好者,读者接受度很高。

这套“阿加莎·克里斯蒂经典侦探作品集”丛书,是英国柯林斯出版公司精选的阿加莎·克里斯蒂的经典作品,由英国语言和文学专家专门为世界各地母语非英语的读者改编设计,每篇小说经过适当删减,其中的词汇和语法也做了简化,是适合中等以上英语水平读者学习的英语读物。

为方便读者使用,中文注释本以脚注的形式给难词标注词性和释义;提供英汉对照的作者简介、出场人物表及文化注释;书后

所配的光盘由英国本土人士录制,声情并茂地再现精彩的故事内容。

希望这套“阿加莎·克里斯蒂经典侦探作品集”丛书,能够帮助读者在欣赏英文小说的同时学习英语、提高英语能力,成为读者英语阅读和学习的最佳选择。

商务印书馆编辑部

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作者简介



Agatha Christie

Agatha Christie (1890-1976) is known throughout the world as the Queen of Crime. Her books have sold over a billion copies in English with another billion in over 100 foreign languages. She is the most widely published and translated author of all time and in any language; only the Bible and Shakespeare have sold more copies. She is the author of 80 crime novels and short story collections, 19 plays, and six other novels. *The Mousetrap*, her most famous play, was first staged in 1952 in London and is still performed there—it is the longest-running play in history.

Agatha Christie's first novel was published in 1920. It featured Hercule Poirot, the Belgian detective who has become the most popular detective in crime fiction since Sherlock Holmes. Collins has published Agatha Christie since 1926.

阿加莎·克里斯蒂

阿加莎·克里斯蒂(1890—1976)在世界各地被誉为“侦探小说女王”。她以英语出版的作品销量超过十亿册,而以一百多种外语出版的作品销量也达到了十亿册。她是迄今为止以各语种得到最广泛出版和译介的作家,其作品销量仅次于《圣经》和莎士比亚的作品。她著有 80 部侦探题材的长篇小说和短篇小说集、19 部剧作及其他 6 部小说。《捕鼠器》是她最有名的剧作,1952 年在伦敦被首次搬上舞台,直到今天还在上演——它也成为历史上演出时间最长的戏剧。

阿加莎·克里斯蒂的第一部小说出版于 1920 年,其中塑造了比利时大侦探赫尔克里·波洛这一人物——他已成为自歇洛克·福尔摩斯以来犯罪小说里最知名的侦探。柯林斯出版公司自 1926 年至今一直在出版阿加莎·克里斯蒂的作品。

人 物 表



Tommy (Thomas) Beresford/Meadowes 先生：第一次世界大战中在英国情报局工作的中年男子

Tuppence Beresford/ Blenkinsop 夫人：Tommy 的妻子，同样在英国情报局工作

Deborah Beresford：Beresford 夫妇的女儿，在英国情报局的密码解码部门工作

Carter 先生/ Easthampton 勋爵：曾担任英国情报局负责人，已退休

Grant 先生：英国情报局的员工

Perenna 夫人：寄宿旅馆 Sans Souci 的拥有者

O'Rourke 夫人：住在 Sans Souci 旅馆的客人，来自爱尔兰

Bletchley 少校：曾经的军官，现在也是住在 Sans Souci 旅馆的客人

Carl von Deinim：来自德国的逃亡者

Minton 小姐：上了岁数的未婚女人，住在 Sans Souci 旅馆的客人

Cayley 先生：住在 Sans Souci 旅馆的中年残疾人

Cayley 夫人：Cayley 先生的妻子

Betty Sprot：Sprot 夫人的女儿

Sheila Perenna：Perenna 夫人的女儿

Haydock 中校：退休的皇家海军军官，现在住在 Sans Souci 旅馆附近

Appledore：Heydock 中校的男仆

Albert：曾为 Beresford 夫妇工作，现在是一家酒吧的拥有者

Tony Marsdon: Deborah 的同事

Derek Beresford: Deborah 的哥哥, 皇家空军的飞行员

Rowley 夫人: Deborah 的女房东

Gladys: Rowley 夫人的女佣

Anna: 级别较低的德国间谍

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Agatha Christie

N or M ?

Chapter 1



It was the spring of 1940. Tommy Beresford made sure he was smiling as he walked into the sitting-room where his wife sat knitting^①. Mrs Beresford looked up at him. ‘Anything interesting in the evening newspaper?’

‘Things look bad in France,’ Tommy said. ‘Well, why don’t you ask me how it went?’

‘Darling, I don’t need to ask,’ said Tuppence. ‘You are smiling the unhappiest smile I have ever seen.’

‘As bad as that?’

‘Much worse!’

‘I tell you, Tuppence, it’s terrible when a man of forty-six is made to feel like a grandfather. Army, Navy, Air Force, Foreign Office, they all say the same — I’m too old. They don’t want me in any job.’

‘It’s the same for me,’ complained Tuppence. ‘They don’t want people of my age for nursing. They’d rather have a schoolgirl who’s never seen a wound than a woman who worked in the Great War.’

‘Well, it is comforting that Deborah has a job,’ Tommy said.

‘I could do as much as our daughter,’ remarked Tuppence.

Tommy grinned^②. ‘She wouldn’t think so.’

Tuppence gave a cry of anger. ‘Are we too old to do things? Isn’t it true that we once caught a dangerous criminal? Isn’t it true that we rescued a girl and important secret documents, and

① knit v. 编织, 针织 ② grin v. 露齿而笑, 咧嘴笑

were thanked by a grateful country? Us! That was us! I'm so disappointed in Mr Carter.'

'But he no longer works in Intelligence^①. He's old. He lives in Scotland and fishes.'

Tuppence sighed^② sadly. 'I wish we could find a job — any job. I imagine the worst when I have so much time to think.' As she spoke she looked at the photograph of a very young man in an Air Force uniform, with the same wide smile as his father Tommy's.

The doorbell rang. Tuppence got up. She opened the door to see a broad-shouldered man with a large, fair moustache and a cheerful red face.

'Are you Mrs Beresford? My name is Grant. I'm a friend of Lord Easthampton's. He suggested that I visit you and your husband.'

'Oh, come in.'

She led him into the sitting room. 'Tommy, Mr Grant is a friend of Mr Car... of Lord Easthampton's.'

Lord Easthampton was the proper title of their old friend. But Tuppence always thought of him as *Mr Carter*—the name he used when he was Chief of Intelligence and their boss.

For a few minutes the three talked together, then Tuppence left the room. She returned a few minutes later with sherry and some glasses. Then Mr Grant said to Tommy, 'I understand you're looking for a job? Well, active service^③ is only for the young men, but I can offer you some office work, which is better than nothing. Come to my office one day this week and...'

① intelligence *n.* 情报机关 ② sigh *v.* 叹气 ③ active service *n.* 军中服役

The telephone rang and Tuppence picked it up. ‘Hello – yes – what?’

A loud voice, obviously in pain, spoke from the other end.

‘Oh, my dear, of course, I’ll come now...’ She put down the phone. ‘Tommy, that was Maureen. I’m so sorry, Mr Grant, but I must go. My friend has fallen and hurt her ankle and I must go and help her. Do forgive me.’

‘Of course, Mrs Beresford.’

Tuppence hurried out. The door of the flat shut noisily.

Tommy poured another glass of sherry for his guest.

‘Thank you. In one way, your wife leaving is fortunate for us. It will save time. You see, Beresford, if you had come to the Ministry, I would have asked you to do something special. Easthampton told us you were the man for the job.’

Tommy was delighted^①. ‘Tell me.’

‘This is confidential^②. Not even your wife must know. Officially you will be working in Scotland, in a secret army area where your wife cannot join you. In fact you will be somewhere very different. You’ve read in the newspapers of the Fifth Column^③? You know what that means?’

‘The enemy within,’ Tommy said.

‘Exactly. You know the war started badly for us. We did not want war and had not prepared for it. Well, we are correcting our mistakes and we can win this war – but only if we do not lose it first. And the danger of losing it comes, not from Germany, but from within. The Fifth Column is here, men and women in positions of power who believe in Nazi aims and want a Nazi government here.

① *delighted adj.* 高兴的 ② *confidential adj.* 机密的, 保密的 ③ *Fifth Column n.* 第五纵队 (参见 112 页文化注释)

‘And we don’t know who they are. We know there are at least two in powerful positions in the Navy, one in the army and three in the Air Force — and several members in Intelligence. We know because secret information is being given to the enemy.’

‘But what can I do? I don’t know any of these people.’

Grant nodded. ‘Exactly. And they don’t know you. But these people do know our agents, so I cannot use them. That is why I went to Easthampton and he thought of you. It’s twenty years since you worked for the department. Your face and name are not known. What do you say? Will you take the job?’

Tommy could not stop smiling. ‘I certainly will!’

‘Well, Beresford, you’ll take the place of the best man we had, Farquhar. He was hit by a lorry — and that was not an accident. All he managed to say before he died was, “N or M. Song Susie.”’

‘That doesn’t seem helpful!’

Grant smiled. ‘N and M are two of the most important German agents. N, we know, is a man. M is a woman, and they are in England.’

‘I see. And Farquhar?’

‘Farquhar must have been on their trail^①. Song Susie sounds very strange — but Farquhar spoke French badly. There was a train ticket in his pocket, to Leahampton, a town on the south coast. Lots of hotels and guesthouses. There is one called *Sans Souci*, which means, of course, “without worries” in French — a good name for a guesthouse!’

Tommy said, ‘Song Susie — *Sans Souci*. I see. And your idea is that I go there and see what I can find.’

① on their trail 追踪(某人)