

外教社—皇家焰火英语小说系列

# A CHARM OF SILVER

## 寻父记

CAMERON FERGUSON / 著  瞿宗德 / 注释



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## 故事梗概

故事发生在 19 世纪末美国蒙大拿州西部的比尤特市。这里是爱尔兰人、英格兰人和华人等移民群集的矿区城市。少女莫莉的母亲是爱尔兰人，父亲是英格兰矿工。母亲在她年幼时去世，不久父亲又不知去向，再也没有来看过她。莫莉由爱尔兰人的外祖母抚养。外祖母在该市的爱尔兰人社区中有一定的社会地位，但为人比较高傲、势利，看不起社会下层的人们，对英格兰人怀有偏见，对莫莉的父亲更是耿耿于怀，反对莫莉的母亲与他结合。此外，她对莫莉管教极严，一心想把莫莉培养成名媛淑女，以实现她在莫莉母亲身上未能实现的夙愿。

外祖母对莫莉父母以及对她本人的态度引起莫莉的反感，更激发了她对父亲的思念、了解父亲的渴望以及找到父亲的决心。她先到英格兰人社区，在探询父亲踪迹的过程中也接触了英格兰人的社会风情，并得到了有关其父亲的初步线索。后又顺藤摸瓜，来到唐人街的商店里打听有关父亲的情况。通过跟踪一个姓陈的华人青年在一个废弃的矿井里数历惊恐之后终于找到了正在与几个华工一起干活的父亲。她恳求父亲回去与她一起生活，但其父不愿马上回到她的身边，也不肯告诉她来这里的原因，而是在第二天就将莫莉送出矿井，并叮嘱她对所看到的情况绝对保密。后来姓陈的华人青年来找莫莉，说莫莉的矿井之行造成了他与莫莉父亲那一伙人的矛盾。他恐有生命危险，要莫莉在他父亲去世后，帮他取出藏匿的钱，送到华人首领处为其父办理丧事。他并告诉莫莉有关她父亲的内情：她父亲在那个矿井中已废弃了的第一层中发现了银子的富矿矿脉。他瞒着矿主独自找几个华人来偷采那里的银矿。他们从另一处挖了一条通道，直通到那个矿井的第一层，偷挖银矿。

最后莫莉同意帮助陈。在完成陈的委托的过程中，一直对中国文化颇感兴趣的莫莉又增加了对中国传统风俗的了解。

后来英格兰矿工发现了偷采银矿的迹象，他们怀疑是爱尔兰人干的。当莫莉从爱尔兰矿工工会代表那里听到此事，立即再次下到其父所在的矿井，力劝其父放弃已采的矿石，立即逃离。但其父不听，并将莫莉阻留在矿井中。莫莉决心逃跑。在逃跑的过程中掉进了一个竖井，历尽艰险之后，终于逃出了矿井，但她没有告诉任何人。后来，当她听说偷采银矿事件的矛盾已经激化，可能会引起爱尔兰和英格兰两族矿工之间的暴力冲突时，莫莉决定前往矿井去说明真相。当她与一名英格兰少年矿工来到矿井时，两族矿工已经开始冲突。她竭力向英格兰矿工头头陈明真相，但未被接受。她又千方百计阻止矿工之间的冲突。尔后遇到那位爱尔兰矿工工会代表，又向他陈明真情，并领他找到了其父及其随同华工以证实她的话。但莫莉父亲发现所采的银矿石已被偷换成废矿石。他们怀疑是华人陈干的。出于某种目的，工会代表要求莫莉父亲向英格兰矿工谎称是英格兰矿主指使他造成有人偷采矿石的假象，以此作为帮他脱身的条件。其父为了自身安全，同意照办。但莫莉坚持正义，不让其父嫁祸于人并携不义之财逃跑。此时英格兰矿工和爱尔兰矿工已先后赶到，要严惩其父。危急之中，莫莉告诉其父脚边有一个可以暂时藏身的竖井（也就是她曾掉进去过的竖井）。他可以跳进去隐蔽起来造成坠井身亡的假象。其父照做，保住了性命，后来逃离了该地。

莫莉回家以后，得知彼德舅舅要与他们共同的朋友、一位贫贱的矿工寡妇结婚。高兴之余，又担心外祖母是否会反对。外祖母在与莫莉的谈话中，为自己曾经阻碍女儿与英格兰矿工的婚事而造成他们的痛苦感到后悔，并决心改变旧观念，为彼德及其未婚妻的联姻祝福。

小说情节构思曲折巧妙，引人入胜。塑造了莫莉这样一个机智勇敢、勇于探索、有独立思想、富有正义感、乐于助人的美

好形象。批判了种族偏见和门第观念,揭示了资本主义发展初期资本家残酷剥削工人、草菅人命,造成工人极端贫困、生命无保障的悲惨境况。

小说的特色之一是对美国早期移民中各民族的文化背景的描述。莫莉生活在爱尔兰家庭,曾跟舅舅访问爱尔兰贫民区,看到了爱尔兰矿工家庭的贫困现状,又通过爱尔兰的节日增加了对爱尔兰传统风俗的了解。她在寻父的过程中,克服了家庭的种族偏见,有意无意地接触了其他民族的传统文化,比如英格兰人的生活习惯,华人对家庭的传统观念等。她能以开放包容的态度与其他种族的人们进行友好的交往、沟通并互相帮助。小说不惜笔墨,对中国传统文化作了栩栩如生的描述。不论作者对中国传统文化的视野是否中肯,是否到位,至少能让中国读者了解西方人是如何认识和看待中国传统文化的,从而唤起读者对文学作品中文化冲突和文化交流问题的关注。

此外,小说以有趣生动的讲故事的形式,表达了深刻的哲理和东西方人的价值观念,达到寓教于乐的目的。

## 主要人物一览表

Andrew Harrington: 安德鲁·哈林顿,爱尔兰裔,莫莉的小舅舅,矿工。

Bridget O'Neill: 布丽奇特·奥尼尔,爱尔兰人,事故中丧生矿工的寡妇,彼德及莫莉之友。

Cattie Harrington: 凯蒂·哈林顿,爱尔兰人,莫莉的外祖母及监护人,爱尔兰社区团体要员。

Eugene Gallagher: 尤金·加拉赫,爱尔兰人,西部矿工联合会的工会代表。

John Trelawny: 约翰·特劳尼,英格兰人,莫莉之父,矿工。

Molly Harrington: 莫利·哈林顿,小说主人公,矿工的女儿,父亲是英格兰人,母亲是爱尔兰人。

Peter Harrington: 彼德·哈林顿,爱尔兰裔,莫莉的大舅舅,矿工,工会积极分子。

Quan: 陈,矿区华裔青年,唐人街华人店主之子。

Zhenhui Chen: 贞慧·陈,华人,唐人街店主之妻。

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## CHAPTER ONE

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### THE DESCENT

Just as before, the alley was full of Chinese men, bustling about, wearing high-necked jackets with buttons down the front, *loose, baggy trousers* <sup>(1)</sup>, *floppy* <sup>(2)</sup> slippers and large, broadbrimmed hats. Many had their hair *braided in long queues* <sup>(3)</sup> hanging down to their waists. Some carried baskets of laundry tied to the opposite ends of *poles propped upon their shoulders* <sup>(4)</sup>. Others pushed handcarts of odd-looking fruits and vegetables. *Butte* <sup>(5)</sup> had a thriving Chinatown in the year 1889, right near the middle of the city.

Fifteen-year-old Molly struggled to get through this crowd, trying to spot that young Chinese man with the eyeglasses and the western style clothes who was carrying the large sack over his back. As she reached Main Street and passed the last Chinese *noodle parlor* <sup>(6)</sup> on her left, the character of the neighborhood immediately changed. Now she was among stately buildings of commerce, banks, offices, and fancy shops, much like the center of any well developed city.

"Where are you going, young miss, in such a hurry?" a *burly* <sup>(7)</sup> police officer, who was standing on the corner, exclaimed with a strong Irish accent. Molly knew this man. He was a relative of some kind or

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{ 1 } 灯笼裤。baggy: a. 宽松下垂的。

{ 2 } 松软的。

{ 3 } 编成长辫。braid: vi. 把……编成辫子。

{ 4 } 担在肩上的扁担。prop: vt. 支撑

{ 5 } 比尤特(美国蒙大拿州西南部最初以银矿为中心发展起来的重要矿业、工业及商业城市)。

{ 6 } 面馆。parlor: n. (美)营业室。

{ 7 } 粗壮的,结实的。



other, but she didn't have time to respond. She would apologize later. She had just caught sight of that young Chinese man named Quan headed north along Main Street a couple of blocks ahead.

Molly sped after him, *dodging* <sup>[1]</sup> the people along the way. She saw him again as he crossed the street and headed to the east, but he was moving quickly, too, and she was barely narrowing the distance between them. A block later, a *skinner*, <sup>[2]</sup> driving a heavy wagon cram full of mine ore, came *careening* <sup>[3]</sup> down the hill, *cussing* <sup>[4]</sup> loudly as a skinner always did and ringing his bells. She knew the driver couldn't stop the wagon even if he wanted to, and he probably wouldn't, even if he could.

After a brief but wise wait to let the wagon pass, she started up again, sprinting to catch Quan to ask him about her father. When she next spotted him a block later, she saw him glance backward over his shoulder. Something about his manner conveyed the impression that he was trying to see if anyone was following him.

She slowed her pace a little, and then *his similar backward glance within another block confirmed her suspicion*. <sup>[5]</sup> Perhaps he wouldn't tell her anything. Perhaps she could learn more if she just followed him secretly far enough behind to see where he would go. Quickly, she ducked into the open doorway of the first building available, a saloon fronting the street.

She stood hidden from his backward view in the saloon entrance as long as she patiently could, bearing the stares of the drinking men inside. When she felt that Quan *had a large enough lead*, <sup>[6]</sup> she stepped back onto the wooden sidewalk bordering the street, hoping to see him in the distance, but Quan was out of sight.

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[1] 躲开。

[2] (口)赶牲口的人。

[3] (车等)歪歪斜斜地疾驰。

[4] 咒骂。

[5] 在另一街区他同样回头一瞥,证实了她的怀疑(即他似乎怕有人跟踪他)。  
confirm; vt. 证实。

[6] 已与她拉开较长的距离。lead: n. 领先的距离。

In an anxious moment, she remembered that Quan had a *miners dinner pail* [1] within his sack, and she figured that he might be headed toward a mine. With this in mind, she raced along the street in the direction of the closest mines located upon the hill not too far away. She soon left the stores, hotels, and saloons behind. In another couple of blocks, even the rows of miners' cottages ended. Just ahead loomed several mine *headframes* [2], *eerily silhouetted* [3] by the setting sun against the eastern mountains. There was nothing of the color green anywhere. The mine buildings and the surrounding land with the large mounds of *mine tailings* [4] were black, brown, and dirty yellow.

With continued courage, she charged up the long flight of wooden stairs leading to the first set of weather-worn buildings. Somewhere in the distance, she heard the *rasping* [5] sound of *buzz saws* [6] cutting timbers for the mines and the thundering noise of *skip cages* [7] dumping ore into railroad *gondolas* [8]. She saw a train approaching from the valley, spewing black cinders, its engine overheated by the long steep grade up to the mines, but still no young Chinese man.

Taking a few more steps upward, she glanced about again, searching the area around the mine buildings. The *putrid* [9] smell of roasting ore from a nearby pit was quite *unsettling*. [10] So was the ringing of bells and the screeching of *pulley wheels* [11] announcing the movement of a cage of miners in a nearby mine. So was the feeling of a sud-

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[1] 矿工的手提饭盒。pail: *n.* 提桶。

[2] (矿)井架。

[3] 现出怪异的轮廓。eerie: *adj.* 怪异的; silhouette: *vt.* 使现出轮廓。

[4] 矿渣。tailings: *n.* 残渣。

[5] 刺耳的。rasp: *vi.* 发出刺耳声。

[6] 圆锯。

[7] (矿)竖井中的升降翻斗车。

[8] (铁路上的)敞篷货车。

[9] 难闻的。

[10] 使人不安的。

[11] 皮带轮。

den ground *tremor* <sup>[1]</sup> caused by a deep blast of dynamite somewhere close.

Molly turned around again, and this time she looked below her to the mostly barren terrain to the southeast. She searched among the *slag* <sup>[2]</sup> heaps and piles of debris until there, in the distance, she thought she saw the outline of a man carrying a sack over his back. With no further thought, she *scurried* <sup>[3]</sup> down the steps and ran along a rough path in the man's direction, *maneuvering through* <sup>[4]</sup> pieces of old rusted mine equipment.

She passed under power lines which *bizarrely* <sup>[5]</sup> crisscrossed above her head and over railroad tracks which branched and twisted like snakes as they followed the uneven contour of the land to reach the numerous mines up on the hillside. By the time she reached the collapsed remains of some old mine buildings, she thought she heard a scraping noise, like metal on metal.

She stopped and looked about, just in time to see Quan slide a large, flat metal plate across the ground. She then knelt down, hiding, and silently watched as he slipped out of sight into a hole in the ground and then pulled the rusty plate back over his head to cover the opening.

Molly dropped further to her hands and knees. She carefully *inched her way* <sup>[6]</sup> over the rough ground between some rotted timbers to reach the metal plate. Over to the far corner, the plate didn't quite cover the entire opening. Molly peered down through this small space into a deep, dark hole, which she assumed was the top of a *shaft* <sup>[7]</sup> to an abandoned mine. As she did, she observed a source of light reflecting upward, which *flickered* <sup>[8]</sup> like a candle. The light sunk farther

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[1] 震颤。

[2] 矿渣。

[3] 疾走。

[4] 机动敏捷地穿行于。

[5] 古怪地。

[6] 一步一步地慢慢移动。inch: v. (使)缓慢移动,(使)渐进。

[7] (矿井)竖井。

[8] (火光)摇曳不定。

and farther down the shaft as she watched. All the while, she heard the *clunking* <sup>(1)</sup> sound of footsteps echoing upward from the shaft below, sounding fainter and fainter, as the man descended farther down the shaft.

Nearby, Molly spied a can containing several candles, some long wooden matches, and also a couple of enclosed glass lamps with handles, suitable for holding a candle. Molly lit one of the candles and placed it in a lamp. Then, when she could no longer see any light below nor hear any noise, she slid the metal plate as quietly as possible about half way across the opening. Now looking downward, she could clearly see a wooden ladder attached to one side of the shaft, which extended below as far as she could see.

Molly reached over with one of her hands and grabbed the top of the ladder. She tried to shake it as hard as she could to see if it was secure. It didn't *budge* <sup>(2)</sup>. After all, she reasoned, Quan had just used the ladder to descend into the mine, and *as slim as he was*, <sup>(3)</sup> he must still weigh more than she did. She quickly twisted around and put one of her feet on the ladder, and then a little more slowly, she placed her other foot.

For a moment, some of her grandmother's words about how dangerous an abandoned mine could be entered her mind, *but Molly forced them out*. <sup>(4)</sup> Instead, she thought about that silver necklace which Quan had left for sale in the Chinatown merchandise store, and she thought about that tune which he had been humming there. *There was simply too much to remind her of her father to be mere coincidence she assured herself*. <sup>(5)</sup> Her father must be somewhere down in this mine, and Quan would lead her to him. So she pushed all contrary thoughts

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[ 1 ] (声音)沉闷的。

[ 2 ] 微微移动。

[ 3 ] 尽管他身材削瘦。as ... as ... : 尽管。

[ 4 ] 但莫莉竭力不去想这些话。

[ 5 ] 大量的迹象向她表明她父亲就在这儿,这么多的迹象不可能仅仅是巧合,她对此深信不疑。此处 too much ... to be mere coincidence 是否定结构。she assured herself 是后置的主句。

out of her mind, stepped downward and grabbed the top of the ladder with her hands.

As she climbed down, the ladder rungs, at first *dry to the touch* <sup>(1)</sup>, soon within several steps, began to feel cold, wet and *slimy* <sup>(2)</sup>. Here and there as she continued down she could see a few trickles of water *oozing* <sup>(3)</sup> down the timbers lining the shaft walls. She carefully held her lamp so it wouldn't bang against the ladder or against the wall behind the ladder.

Molly looked up toward the top of the shaft. What at the beginning of her descent had appeared to be a large opening now resembled a *pinhole*, <sup>(4)</sup> leading back to the upper world.

Suddenly, she felt one of her feet slip a little, and she grabbed the ladder more tightly. As she did she knocked a small rock free from the shaft wall, which *caromed* <sup>(5)</sup> noisily against the walls as it fell downward, until a few seconds later, it hit the pool of water at the bottom of the shaft with a *plopping* <sup>(6)</sup> noise.

But before her confidence totally *faltered* <sup>(7)</sup>, in just a few more steps, Molly reached an opening in one of the shaft walls. This was the *landing* <sup>(8)</sup> to a tunnel, which, she could see extended on the level far deep into the mine. The landing was an area cut into the rocky earth about the size of a small room. Greatly relieved, Molly jumped from the ladder onto this solid ground. With the dim candlelight, she peered down the tunnel as far as she could see. There was no sign of Quan, but she assumed that he must be somewhere farther along the tunnel.

Because she had no desire to get back onto the ladder, Molly moved cautiously through this tunnel, walking between the narrow

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(1) 摸起来很干燥。

(2) 粘滑的。

(3) 渗出。

(4) 针眼。

(5) 撞击反弹。

(6) 发出扑通声。

(7) 动摇。

(8) 阶梯平台。

*gauge* <sup>[1]</sup> mine ore car rails running *lengthwise* <sup>[2]</sup> on the rocky floor, trying to catch up to Quan. She held her lamp with one hand behind her back, trying to shield as much of the forward spread of the light as possible. She wanted to see the backward reflection of Quan's light before he saw her light.

Now and then to steady herself, Molly extended her other hand from side to side to touch the hard rock walls of the tunnel. The regularly spaced timbers supporting the tunnel ceiling above her head were just high enough so she didn't have to *duck* <sup>[3]</sup>. The stirred up dust still in the air gave assurance that someone else had recently passed through the tunnel. Except for that, the countless small rocks lying on top of the tracks gave her the impression that the tunnel had seen little use for many years.

Occasionally, the tunnel took a slight bend, but its unchanging appearance and the regularly spaced timbers, gave her no point of reference to tell how far she had come or how far she might still have to go to catch up to Quan.

All along the way she heard the sound of water drops falling from the tunnel ceiling above, landing in small pools of water on the tunnel floor below, *reverberating in different pitches*. <sup>[4]</sup> Now and then, a drop of water struck her head or her shoulders. The humidity seemed to increase as she proceeded farther into the mine. A sense of staleness pervaded the air, unlike in an operating mine, where a system of fans and vents would provide circulating freshness.

There was also the constant creaking and knocking sounds of the timbers, straining to support the tunnel walls and ceiling. Molly looked up from time to time, looking for any lengthy cracks or signs of rotting. Then she stopped and listened carefully and looked as far ahead as her candlelight would allow, but she could neither hear nor see any sign

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[1] (铁道的)轨距。

[2] 纵向地。

[3] 迅速低下头。

[4] 回荡着忽高忽低的音调。reverberate: *v.* 回响; pitch: *n.* 音高。

of human activity.

The walls seemed to be closer together than at first. Even the ceiling seemed lower. Her candle seemed to give less light. Perhaps all of that was just an illusion. She was starting to feel *constricted*, <sup>(1)</sup> and she had thoughts about turning around and running back to the ladder. But if she could just push ahead a little farther, she decided, she could find Quan and then her father. There had *as yet* <sup>(2)</sup> been no *turnoffs* <sup>(3)</sup> in the tunnel so she knew that Quan was still somewhere ahead of her.

She did press along, and she soon arrived at a *well pronounced bend* <sup>(4)</sup> in the tunnel. As she turned to follow the bend, there, just a few steps beyond her own two eyes, she met two other eyes, but these were two huge blazing red eyes belonging to someone or rather something else. Below the eyes, protruding menacingly in her direction, was a long, pointed, green *snout* <sup>(5)</sup>. Below the snout, inside a *gaping* <sup>(6)</sup> mouth, rows and rows of shiny white, daggerlike teeth extended toward her. From out of the mouth, shot bright orange *plumes* <sup>(7)</sup> of fire.

Molly screamed and released her grip on the lamp which fell to the ground. The glass broke and the candle went out, and all became darkness. She dropped to the ground, covered her face with her hands and waited for whatever it was to devour her.

She waited and waited. Nothing happened. She waited some more. No claws or teeth pierced her body. No hot breath, no flash of light, no sound at all, no movement, nothing appeared. She just stayed there, curled like a ball, afraid to move in any direction.

After a few more moments she slowly removed her hands from her

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[ 1 ] (紧张引起的)身体收缩。

[ 2 ] 至今还。

[ 3 ] 岔道。

[ 4 ] 十分明显的弯道。pronounced: *adj.* 显著的,明显的。

[ 5 ] 猪一般的长嘴。

[ 6 ] 张大的。gape: *v.* 张嘴

[ 7 ] 团团(火焰)。plume: *n.* 羽状物(如烟云等)。

eyes and looked upward, but she could see nothing in the complete darkness. *Whatever it was might be toying with her*,<sup>[1]</sup> still waiting to *pounce*<sup>[2]</sup>... or could it be imaginary? she wondered. No, the image was still too vividly fresh in her mind to be just imaginary.

Her modest relief, *such as it was*,<sup>[3]</sup> was soon shattered as she realized that she was now in utter darkness, trapped in the bowels of a mine, just like her grandmother had said would happen if she ever ventured below. She had no other source of light. She began to cry a little, then more. All of the terrible dangers of a mine came to her mind *in rapid succession*<sup>[4]</sup>. Then she wondered why she had come to this dreadful place, and how she had found the courage. She thought about everything which had placed her on this course to find her father, beginning with that argument she had with her grandmother on the day before *St. Patrick's Day*<sup>[5]</sup>, a couple of months ago.

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[1] 究竟是什么怪物会在耍弄她。Whatever it was 是句子的主语从句; toying with: 戏耍。

[2] 猛扑。

[3] 虽然才稍稍松了一口气。此短语原意为“虽然情况的改善不过如此(用于对不够好的事物表示谦意或贬抑)”。

[4] 一个紧接着一个,一连串地。succession: 连续。

[5] 圣帕特里克节(三月十七日,爱尔兰人节日,圣帕特里克为爱尔兰守护神)。



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## CHAPTER TWO

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### A SPAT<sup>[1]</sup>

On that day before St. Patrick's Day, Molly first sensed a feeling of strain with her grandmother while she was sitting on the parlor couch in her home. She was looking out the picture window watching *a flurry of snowflakes* <sup>[2]</sup> fall gently to the ground when she heard her grandmother sharply exclaim, "Molly, have you heard a word I said?"

"I've heard some of what you said," Molly replied hesitantly.

"I said," her grandmother *snapped* <sup>[3]</sup> irritably, "and you best be listening to me this time. With all this snow, you should wear your high boots for the parade tomorrow, that's what you should do. But now, get off that couch and help me. We've got lots of house cleaning to do before tomorrow."

"Just a moment longer," Molly pleaded, while she kept staring out the window. She didn't like to *jump at her grandmother's every command*, <sup>[4]</sup> and there was never a shortage of commands. Still though, she well knew her grandmother's limited patience. So, she turned away from the window, slid off the *highly cushioned* <sup>[5]</sup>, flower print couch and asked what she could do to help.

"Dusting! Dusting! Dusting, there's always dusting!" Cattie almost shouted. Her grandmother's first name was Cattie. "No matter what I do," Cattie continued, "that filthy dust from those stinking

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[1] 口角。

[2] 一小阵雪花。flurry: *n.* 小雨, 小雪。

[3] 厉声说。

[4] 对外祖母唯命是从。jump at: 抢着接受, 急切投入。

[5] 放着高垫子的。cushion: *vt.* 给……放上垫子。