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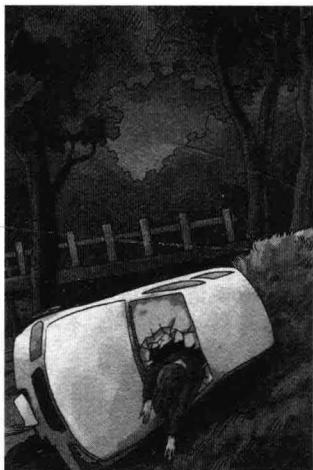
■ Joyce Hannam (英) 著

# The Death of Karen Silkwood

## 卡伦·西尔克伍德之死



外语教学与研究出版社  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS



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- Joyce Hannam (英) 著
- 刘艺姝 译

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北京 BEIJING

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## 内容简介

一个真实的故事和一个虚构的故事的区别在于：虚构的故事有结局，而真实的故事没有。当我们读完虚构故事的最后一页时，我们知晓了一切，再也没有挖掘的空间；而在真实的故事中，却总是有更多东西等着我们去发掘，因为我们永远不可能洞悉一切。

人们常说真实的生活比小说更离奇。它当然也可能像小说一样令人恐惧——有时候远比小说更加让人忧心。

这是一个关于卡伦·西尔克伍德之死的真实故事。她的死亡是一个谜。那是一起车祸吗？长久以来，人们都会有这样的一个疑问：“她是自己掉下去的，还是被人推下去的？”我们不得而知。但是总有人知道。世上总会有那么一个人知道她的死到底是不是一起单纯的车祸。的确有人知道——这个人在美国的某个地方活得好好的，过着平常的生活，并且仍记得当时到底发生了什么……

## THE DEATH OF KAREN SILKWOOD

The difference between a true story and a fictional one is this: a fictional story has an ending, but a true story does not. When we have read the last page of a fictional story, we know everything: there is nothing more to discover. In a true story, there is always more to find out, because we can never know it all.

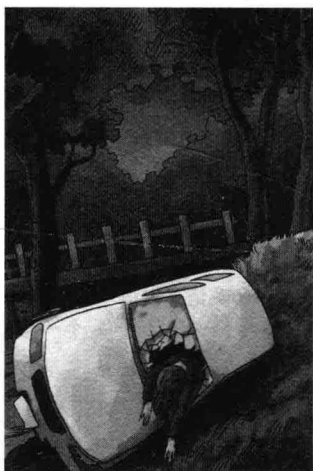
People often say that real life is stranger than fiction. It can certainly be just as frightening – and sometimes much more worrying.

This is a true story about the death of Karen Silkwood. Her death is a mystery. Was it an accident? It's the old, old question: 'Did she fall, or was she pushed?' We don't know. But somebody does. Somebody out there, in the real world, knows if her death was an accident, or if it was not. Somebody knows – somebody who is alive and well and living an ordinary life, somewhere in America, and who remembers what *really* happened. . .

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## 1

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## The accident

It was dark. Nobody saw the accident. The small white car was found on its side by the bridge. A river ran underneath the road there, and the car was lying next to the bridge wall, below the road. Inside the car was a dead woman. Her name was Karen Silkwood and she was twenty-eight years old. It was November 13th, 1974.

How did the car come off the road? Why was it on the wrong side of the road? Why was it so far from the road? There was nothing wrong with the car. Karen Silkwood was a good driver. Everybody knew that.

The police thought that there was an easy answer to these questions. Karen was tired after a long day, so she fell asleep while she was driving. It could happen to anyone very easily. They took the car to a garage and they took Karen's body to a hospital.

But some people were not happy about the accident. First of all, her boyfriend, Drew Stephens. Also a newspaper journalist from the *New York Times* and a Union official from Washington. These three men were waiting for Karen on the night of the accident. She was bringing them some papers and some photographs in a big brown envelope. The papers were very important. The men were waiting for Karen in a hotel room a few miles from the accident. But



## 1

## 车祸

当时天色很暗，没有人目睹了那起车祸。那辆白色的小汽车被发现侧翻在桥边。一条河在那条马路下流过，而汽车就倒在马路下面的坝墙旁。车里面是一位死去的女子，名叫卡伦·西尔克伍德，28岁。那天是1974年11月13日。

汽车是怎么从马路上掉下来的？为什么它当时在逆向车道上？为什么它冲出马路那么远？汽车本身并没有任何故障。卡伦·西尔克伍德开车技术不错，这人人人都知道。

警方认为这些问题的答案显而易见：卡伦在漫长的一天之后感到疲倦，所以她开车的时候睡着了。任何人都很容易出现这种情况。他们把车送到了修理厂，把卡伦的遗体送到了医院。

但是这场事故让有些人很不开心。首先是卡伦的男友，德鲁·斯蒂芬斯，还有一名《纽约时报》的新闻记者和一位来自华盛顿的工会官员。车祸当晚，这三个男人都在等卡伦。她要把一个棕色的大信封带给他们，里面装着一些文件和照片，这些文件非常重要。这些人就在距离车祸现场几英里外的一间旅馆房间里等待卡伦，但是她一直没有



*Inside the car was a dead woman.*

**accident** *n.* a crash involving cars, trains, planes etc 交通事故；车祸；失事

**underneath** *prep.* directly under another object or covered by it 在……下面，在……底下

**journalist** *n.* someone who writes news reports for newspapers, magazines, television, or radio 新闻工作者；新闻记者

**union** *n.* an organization formed by workers to protect their rights 工会  
**official** *n.* someone who does important work for a union, a government etc 官员；高级职员

**envelope** *n.* a thin paper cover in which you put and send a letter 信封

she never arrived. When they heard about the accident, the men looked for the brown envelope at once. They looked for it inside the white car. They looked for it at the hospital and at the police station. The next morning they looked all around the wall and in the river, but they never found it. Nobody ever found that brown envelope.

出现。当他们听说了这场车祸之后便立刻开始寻找那个棕色信封。他们在白色汽车里找过，也去医院和警察局找过。第二天早上，他们找遍了坝墙四周，还到河里去找，但是一直都没有找到。从此再没有人找到过那个棕色信封。

## 2

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## The new job

The story of Karen and her brown envelope began in 1972 when she took a new job at a nuclear factory in Oklahoma. Before that, she worked as a secretary, but in 1972 she was really tired of a secretary's life. She looked in the newspaper and saw that there was a job at the nuclear factory. The pay was much better than a secretary's pay, and the work was more interesting. She went to see Mr Bailey, the manager of the factory, and she was surprised and happy when he gave her the job immediately. He asked Karen to start work the next day.

On her first day at the factory Karen learnt a lot. Mr Bailey told her that she had to wear a special white coat, some special shoes and a white hat.

'These clothes protect you from radioactive dust,' he said. 'There isn't really any danger, of course. Everything is safe here. We check everything all the time.'

'I see,' said Karen.

'You need an identity card to get into the factory every morning. Just give me a photograph of you and I'll give you a card. A pretty picture of a pretty girl.'

He smiled. Karen didn't like that smile.

'He thinks I'm stupid,' she thought. 'Why do men always think that pretty girls are stupid?'

## 2

## 新工作

卡伦和她的棕色信封的故事要从1972年讲起，那年她在俄克拉何马的一家核能工厂找到了一份新工作。在此之前，她是一个秘书，但到了1972年她实在是厌倦了当秘书的日子。她在报纸上看到了核能工厂的招聘启事。这份工作的薪水比当秘书高很多，而且工作内容也更有意思些。她去见了工厂经理贝利先生。当他即刻录用她的时候，她感到既惊讶又开心。贝利先生让卡伦第二天就开始上班。

在工厂上班的第一天卡伦就学到了很多。贝利先生告诉她，她必须要穿上特制的白色外套、特制的鞋子，戴上白色的帽子。

“这些衣服能让你免受放射性尘埃的伤害。”他说，“当然，其实并没有什么危险。这里一切都很安全。我们一直在对所有东西进行检查。”

“我知道了。”卡伦说。

“每天早上你需要凭身份证件才能进入工厂。给我一张你的照片就行，我会发给你一张身份证件的。漂亮的女孩要给张漂亮的照片。”

他笑了，卡伦不喜欢那副笑容。

“他觉得我很蠢。”她想，“为什么男人总以为漂亮的女孩子都蠢呢？”

**nuclear** *adj.* relating to or involving the energy made by breaking the central part of an atom into two pieces 核的，核能的

**manager** *n.* someone whose job is to manage part or all of a company or other organization (公司或其他机构的) 经理，管理者

**immediately** *adv.* without delay 即刻，马上

**radioactive dust** very, very small pieces of broken atoms which come from nuclear materials or explosions 放射性尘埃

**check** *v.* to look at something carefully to see if it is right, good, safe etc 检查，核查

**identity card** a card with your name, date of birth, and photograph on it, that proves who you are 身份证件

**pretty** *adj.* nice-looking, lovely 漂亮的，标致的

He was still speaking.

‘Now I’ll call Mrs Phillips. She’ll take you round the factory and show you your laboratory. The manager there will explain the job to you. Don’t worry – it’s very easy.’

He smiled his thin smile again.

The door opened and Mrs Phillips came in. She was about forty years old and a little fat. She looked afraid.

‘You wanted me, Mr Bailey?’

‘Yes, Susan. This is Karen Silkwood. She’s going to work with you in your laboratory. Could you take her round the factory and tell her about the work?’

‘Oh, I see. Of course, Mr Bailey. Please follow me, Miss Silkwood.’

When the office door closed, Mrs Phillips smiled at Karen, and said,

‘That was lucky! Usually if he calls me, he wants to shout at me about something. Please call me Susan. Can I call you Karen?’

‘Of course,’ said Karen.

They walked down a long corridor with heavy doors on both sides. Susan opened one of the doors.

‘This is our laboratory.’

Karen saw six or seven people in the room. They were all wearing white gloves and their hands were inside a big glass box. There were holes in the side of the box – just big enough for hands. Everyone looked at Karen.

‘What’s in the box?’ Karen asked Susan.

他还在说着。

“现在我把菲利普斯夫人叫来。她会带你参观工厂，然后把你领到你的实验室。那里的管理人员会向你说明工作内容。别担心——很容易的。”

他又露出了那种似有似无的笑容。

门开了，菲利普斯夫人走进来。她四十岁上下，微微有些胖，看起来有点提心吊胆。

“您找我，贝利先生？”

“是的，苏珊。这位是卡伦·西尔克伍德。她将在你的实验室和你一起工作。你可以带她在工厂参观一下，给她讲讲这份工作吗？”

“哦，我明白了。当然没问题，贝利先生。请跟我来，西尔克伍德小姐。”

当办公室门关上之后，菲利普斯夫人微笑着对卡伦说：

“这回真是走运！一般他叫我来，都是为了什么事想对我大呼小叫一通。请叫我苏珊吧。我可以叫你卡伦吗？”

“当然可以。”卡伦说。

她们走过一条长长的走廊，走廊两边是一扇扇厚重的门。苏珊打开了其中的一扇。

“这是我们的实验室。”

卡伦看到房间里有六七个人。他们都戴着白手套，双手伸在一个大玻璃箱里。玻璃箱的一侧有一些洞——大小刚好够把手伸进去。所有人都看着卡伦。

“箱子里是什么？”卡伦问苏珊。



*'This is our laboratory.'*

**laboratory** *n.* a building or room where scientists work 实验大楼；实验室

**explain** *v.* to tell someone about something in a way that is clear or easy to understand 解释，说明

**corridor** *n.* a long narrow passage with doors into rooms 走廊

**glove** *n.* a piece of clothing that you wear on your hand in order to protect it or keep it warm 手套

Everyone laughed.

‘Not chocolate,’ said one worker.

‘Or beer,’ said another.

‘Don’t listen to them,’ said Susan. ‘It’s fuel rods and uranium. We put uranium into the fuel rods. That’s why you must always wear your gloves. And when you leave the laboratory, always remember to take off your gloves and check your hands in front of the scanner.’

She showed Karen the scanner, which was near the door.

‘If there’s any radioactive dust on your hands, the scanner knows at once. An alarm rings all over the factory.’

‘And when the alarm rings, the party begins,’ said one man.

‘Party?’ Karen asked.

‘You can take off all your clothes and have a swim . . . with lots of water.’

‘He means they wash you in a shower,’ said Susan. ‘It doesn’t happen very often.’

Karen went home happy at the end of the day. She didn’t think that the work was difficult. And the money was good . . . very good.



大家都笑了起来。

“不是巧克力。”一个工人说。

“也不是啤酒。”另一个说。

“别理他们。”苏珊说，“里面是燃料棒和铀。我们把铀添入燃料棒中，这就是你必须一直戴着手套的原因。当你离开实验室的时候，一定要记得把手套脱下来，在扫描仪前检查一下你的双手。”

她让卡伦看了看门旁边的扫描仪。

“如果你手上有任何放射性尘埃，扫描仪立刻就会检查出来。整个工厂都会响起警报。”

“警报器一响，派对就开始了。”一个男人说。

“派对？”卡伦问。

“你可以脱掉所有衣服，放很多水……游一回泳。”

“他的意思是，有人会给你冲洗一下。”

苏珊说，“但是这不常发生。”

一天结束后，卡伦开心地回到家。她觉得这项工作并不难，而且薪水不错……非常不错。

**uranium** *n.* a heavy grey metal that sends out radioactive waves, and is used to make nuclear energy 铀

**scanner** *n.* a machine which can see very small things on or inside the body, which the human eye cannot see 扫描器, 扫描仪

**alarm** *n.* a piece of equipment that makes a loud noise to warn you of danger 警报器

**shower** *n.* an act of washing your body under water that falls from above 淋浴