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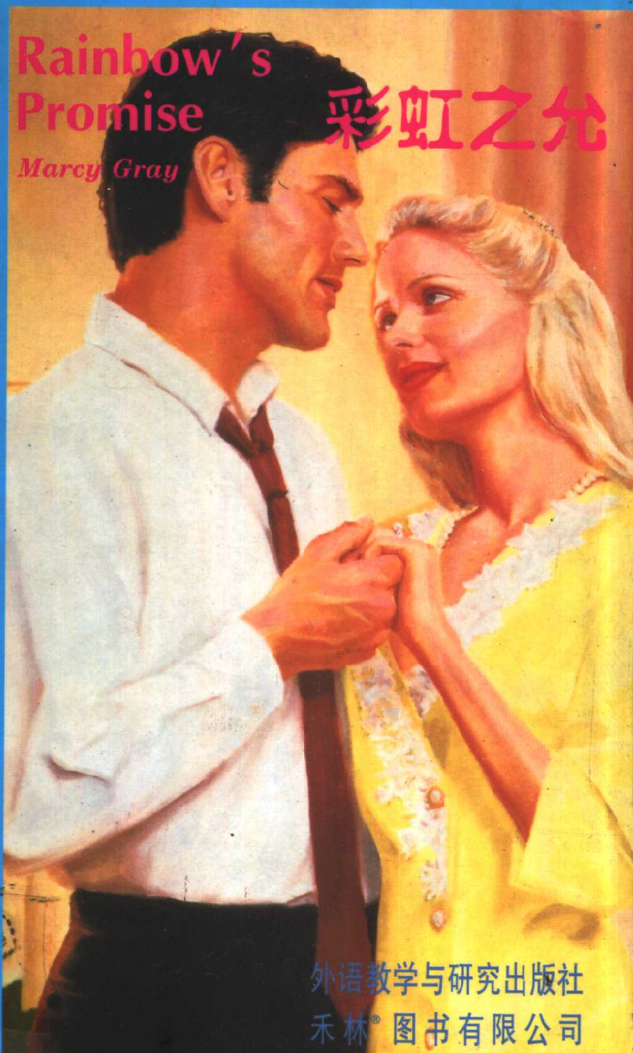
 *Silhouette*



Rainbow's Promise

Marcy Gray

彩虹之允



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出版说明

加拿大禾林图书有限公司出版了一套“诗露”爱情小说系列,该系列中的每部小说都讲述了一个曲折的爱情故事,作者非常精心地在小说中安排和构设情节走向,设计情绪节奏和阅读兴奋点,牵引着读者能够以最快的读速在极短的时间里将一部小说读完,并随即翻开另一部。

“诗露”小说在西方极其畅销,这或许不只是说明了该类读物独具的市场生命力,是否还可以认为同样会是一个细致的出版者对当今读者的别样关切?

外语教学与研究出版社始终致力于我国外语的普及,孜孜以求掀起外语阅读的风气。外语学习也许不必尽是辛劳的苦事,不苦不累、轻轻松松、且又乐在其中的外语阅读已为越来越多的外语学习者所欢迎。因此,“edutainment”(寓教于乐)就成了外研社在图书出版中做出的一种新的尝试。这次外研社与禾林图书有限公司达成出版协议,以谨慎的态度推出这套系列小说的英汉版本(配设译文),此为原因之一。同时还应说明的是,选择了爱情小说作为这种读物的内容,其目的并不在于营造温馨浪漫,推销款款情语。因为,读者可能注意得到,言情类型小说的语言尽管大半缺乏风格,语言大半缺乏创造

性,但是它的通俗流畅和透明,倒是值得我们英语学习者品味品味的。爱情小说免不了涉及人类多种多样的情绪心理。某种意义上说,爱情小说是人类丰富情感的展示“橱窗”:相思之苦,别离之伤,误解之涩,相拥之喜,生死之痛,所有这一切情感的表达方式和词汇,都文汇在言情小说里,因此言情小说应该被我们视为一种语库,而为读者系统并具规模地提供这种语库,正是外研社出版“诗露”系列的第二个原因。

爱情小说尽管少了些凝重和深沉,但小说中叙述的男女两性的情感生活,也或多或少地传达出一些西方世界爱情与婚姻的文化。前些时候美国言情小说《廊桥遗梦》风靡中国,并引发了国人对婚外恋情的讨论。这一现象表明,即使是言情类型小说,也能够敏感地传达出一个时代里人们价值观念的细微变化。正是在这层意义上,禾林爱情系列小说在一定程度上便拥有了文化的内涵,读者可以从小说中窥探到西方社会生活价值观念的迁变。是为原因之三。

值得一提的是,这套系列英语读物的译文别具一格,它并非与原文字字对应。译者都是台湾译坛上的妙手,他们采取的是一种宽松的意译方法,行文通俗流畅。译者们如此处理,只希望不致引起读者的误解,同时我们也希望读者在禾林提供的爱情故事中品尝悲喜苦乐,在明快畅晓的小说叙述语言的环绕中坐看云起云消……

“*You’re not interested in this job,*” said Josh.

“I can’t waste time hiring another housekeeper who won’t last—someone who’ll run out on us when the going gets rough.”

“I won’t run out on you. I promise.”

“That’s just it, Lily Ann. I can’t imagine why a beautiful young lady like you would *want* this job.”

Abruptly he lifted his hands and placed them on her shoulders. His grip was warm and hard, and Lily Ann’s heart missed a beat, then began pounding wildly. She stood very still, waiting for him to touch her face. Gazing at his eyes, drowning in a smoky gray sea, she felt herself relinquishing all thought of returning home.

And for twenty-four hours a day, every day, she was going to have to be on guard against this man’s charm.

Taking another unsteady breath, she said quietly, “I want the job. I’m sure of it.”

Chapter One

The man set the box on the living-room floor and gave it a nudge with the scuffed toe of his shoe. "That's all of it, kid. That's all there is left of your daddy's stuff. I been keeping it in the closet, like you asked me to do."

Lily Ann stared at the carton without moving from sofa. "Not much to show for more than fifty years of living, is it?"

Her father's oldest friend shook his gray, shaggy head. "Not a whole lot. Sorry about that, kid."

"Hey, don't apologize to me, Homer. I'm grateful you were there for Pop before he died...and afterward, too, cleaning out his place and going through his clothes and everything the way you did. I'm glad I didn't have to handle that." Her throat tightened, and in the sudden quiet she heard Homer snifle.

A warm spring breeze fluttered the curtains at the open window and stirred the air in the small house, sneaking under her hair and tickling the back of her neck. It made Lily Ann laugh, and her sense

of humor surfaced. "Don't you go feeling sorry for me, Homer. Not when I'm about to take possession of the family jewels!"

Homer managed to grin as he sank into his worn easy chair. They both knew that when Ned Jones died six months earlier, he'd had nothing of value to leave his only child.

The fact was, her father had never had much of anything. Never in his entire life. He had been, Lily Ann admitted with bittersweet affection, a perennial loser. Someone who only worked when he had to, and only when he wasn't drinking. Someone who probably would have drifted from place to place if he hadn't stumbled upon Wichita, Kansas, as a young man and been too contented to leave. Or too lazy.

Back when she and her father still shared the run-down apartment of her childhood and teen years, Lily Ann had often found herself wanting to shake him, to force him to take a long look at the mess he'd made of his life. He'd had little enough gumption even when her mother was alive; after her premature death, Lily Ann had felt more like the parent than Ned. She'd sworn to herself that if she had been the one in charge, she would have made sure that her family had three square meals a day and something

besides other people's cast-offs to wear. But her easygoing Pop had never understood her need. He'd never realized she held him accountable for her mother's unhappiness, either.

"Don't you want to have a look at them papers?" Homer prodded her after she'd sat lost in somber memories for a quarter of an hour. "Not that I'm rushing you. When you told me you was coming, I kinda hoped you'd stay all weekend. But you said you have to head right on back to Springfield soon as you catch your breath."

Lily Ann didn't really have urgent business awaiting her. This was Saturday; she didn't have to be back at work at the insurance company until Monday, and her closest friends were out of town. But she couldn't bear to stay here, talking over old times with Homer. His gruff voice and two-day-old beard reminded her too poignantly of her father. He especially reminded her of the fact that she would never see Ned again. That the moment she graduated from high school she had moved to Missouri and so had been able to visit Ned only infrequently. That she hadn't been with him at the hospital when he died. Despite the differences in father and daughter — and there had been a definite chasm between them — she

had loved Ned.

Maybe it was guilt driving her now, but Lily Ann couldn't wait to get away from Wichita. She almost wished that instead of tackling this long-overdue job, she'd gone camping with Kathleen and Dina.

Muffling her sigh, she slid off the couch in a graceful move, then settled down on the rug. She crossed her long, slim, jeans-clad legs Indian fashion, folded back the sleeves of her chambray shirt and drew the box closer. "Is it really necessary for me to read all this, or can I take it home and stick it on a closet shelf for another ten or twenty years?" she asked, only half joking.

"Might want to read it," Homer said with an air of mystery that wasn't at all like him.

It would have been a lot less painful just to store the stuff, she thought as she sorted through the pitiful collection of items Ned Jones had saved: a matchbox full of loose pearls from the strand her mother used to wear... every report card Lily Ann had ever received... the gaudy tie tack with the American flag on it that she had given Ned for Christmas the year she was nine... the blue ribbon she'd won when she ran the fifty-yard dash faster

than any other seventh-grade girl at John F. Kennedy Junior High School.

Lily Ann fingered the satiny award, recalling that both her parents had watched her run that race. Later, to celebrate, her father had taken them out to eat hamburgers. He hadn't been drinking, and her mother, for once, had seemed young and free of problems.

By the time she turned back to the box, Lily Ann's throat felt raw. Here was her parents' marriage license... her own birth certificate... her mother's death notice, clipped from the *Wichita Herald* ten years ago, when Lily Ann was fourteen.

Determined not to dwell on her sorrow, Lily Ann flipped through a stack of Ned's paycheck stubs — the history of his irregular employment — and then picked up a bundle of vouchers of some kind, printed on onionskin paper and held together with a rubber band. "What's this?"

Homer shrugged. "I thought you might know."

She shook her head and sent thick blond hair whipping back and forth across her face. Distracted, she pushed a long strand back from her cheek. "These look like the kind of receipts you get when you purchase a cashier's check." She thumbed

through the forms, noting that a Wichita bank had issued them. "They're all made out to someone named Joshua Delaney, for amounts varying from one hundred dollars up to... let's see... two hundred and fifty dollars." She whistled, amazed to think of her father spending that much money on something other than rent or food... or booze. "There are monthly receipts for over four years... right up until the month he died. What do you make of that, Homer?"

He had straightened up in his chair as he watched her. "You don't know who Joshua Delaney is?"

"I've never heard of him."

"Me, neither." Homer slumped again.

"Could Pop have been buying something from him?"

"Like what? I never saw Ned with anything that cost more than a couple hundred bucks — at least, not after the court took away his driver's license and he sold his car. When his TV went on the blink, he gave it to the Salvation Army. Said he couldn't afford to fix it."

"Well, if he wasn't buying anything, then why did he shell out thousands of dollars to this... this Joshua Delaney?" Her blue eyes narrowed. "Wait a

sec. . . where's your phone book? I'm going to look him up and — ”

“You won't find him in the Wichita phone book, kid,” Homer interrupted her. “Joshua Delaney lives in Oklahoma. Bartlesville, Oklahoma.”

“I thought you didn't know him.”

“I don't, but his address is in there.” He gestured to the box. “There's a stack of envelopes, all stamped and ready to go, except for being empty. It appears to me your daddy expected he'd be sending Mr. Delaney a bunch more of them cashiers' checks.”

When she found the envelopes, she focused anxiously on Homer. “Listen. . . you don't think. . . could Joshua Delaney have been blackmailing my father?”

Homer's seamed face grew glum. “That thought did occur to me. I was afraid it might have something to do with Ned losing his license. He sure didn't want folks to find out the truth about that — especially you. I was off visiting my son in California when it happened — seems like it was four years ago last fall. Guess I musta been gone six months. By the time I got home, Ned had already been to court and sold his car. He never would talk about it straight out, but

one time he let it slip that he had a car wreck."

"A wreck!" The news stunned her. "When I found out Pop's license had been suspended, I just assumed it was because he'd been caught driving while intoxicated again." She frowned, regretting that she'd only been able to see him every six months or so before he died. No telling how many other secrets he'd kept! "Why didn't he tell me, Homer?"

"Probably because you'd always warned him to quit drinking before he had an accident. Guess he didn't want you to be disappointed in him. Or mad."

Nodding, Lily Ann recalled all her dire predictions that Ned would kill himself — or somebody else — if he didn't give up the bottle. "I was so proud when he *did* quit drinking." On every visit home, she had praised Ned for staying sober, but now that she looked back on it, her praise had only seemed to depress him. She snorted. "He must've already had the accident by then. Did he keep on drinking behind my back?"

"No, he really did quit. Honest, kid."

He'd done too little, too late, she thought. "Was it a bad accident?"

Homer shrugged. "Beats me. I don't think he got hurt, but he sure was ashamed. They only took

away his license for a year, but he never wanted to drive again. I think maybe Delaney must have found out about the accident somehow and Ned started paying him to keep quiet. Fact is, he made me swear on a stack of Bibles I'd never tell you. I'd say his biggest fear was that you'd get wind of it."

Unwonted sympathy stabbed Lily Ann as she pictured her ill father, hunched over as he walked the two miles to work at the grain elevators. Unaware that he was slowly dying of alcohol-induced liver disease. Too poor to be able to repair his television set. Too poor to go to the doctor, although whenever she asked if she could help him out, he always said he was doing okay. And all the time he was sending money to some . . . some leech named Joshua Delaney! Money that could have made a difference in the quality of his own life those last few years!

Her eyes flashing, she grabbed one of the envelopes bearing Joshua Delaney's address and scrambled to her feet. "I'm going to get to the bottom of this. If this man bled Pop dry, I promise you he's about to regret it!"

"Now, kid, maybe you ought to just let things be —"

But Lily Ann was already out the door, her

exhaustion overcome by indignant energy.

Three hours later she reached the western city limits of Bartlesville, Oklahoma, and pulled her thirsty, tired Volkswagen in to a service station. All she wanted to do at the moment was sit there and never move again.

She'd noticed while driving that Joshua Delaney's address was on a rural mail route. Finding it could prove tricky, especially since it was almost dark. On top of that, Lily Ann had been at the wheel nearly all day. She'd started out early from Springfield, with only a brief stop at Homer's place, and the miles were catching up to her.

Just then her stomach rumbled a reminder that she hadn't eaten since noon. She was going to indulge in a steak and then get a motel room, she told herself as the station attendant approached. Tomorrow would be soon enough to confront her father's blackmailer.

While the young man filled up her gas tank, she asked him how to find Route Three.

Evidently she was close. Too close to wait till morning, she decided as she paid the attendant.

It wasn't until she followed the highway two

miles out of town and located the mailbox, with the address and the name J. Delaney stenciled on its side — it wasn't until she sat staring at the large, attractively rustic, stone-and-timber farmhouse set amid tall pine, elm and native oak trees that Lily Ann stopped to wonder if she might be putting herself in danger.

Hovering there on the side of the road, her engine idling in the late April dusk, it occurred to her that Joshua Delaney could turn out to be one tough character. If he *had* been blackmailing her father, he might be willing to commit violence in order to cover up his crime. He must've had some kind of power to make Ned send him money every month.

Spurred on by that thought, Lily Ann swung her car into the driveway and parked at the front of the house. As she walked up the paved path to the big porch she noticed that it was dark enough by now that the lights should have been on. Was Joshua Delaney away from home, or was he just trying to fool her into thinking he wasn't there?

Good grief, she must be punch-drunk from driving too long! Delaney didn't even know she existed. Why should he pretend not to be at home?

She had just lifted her hand to ring the bell when