

有声名著精选

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O Pioneers!

哦，拓荒者们！

Willa Cather



西蒙与舒斯特国际出版公司
世界图书出版公司

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Willa Cather 原著

Frieda Amiri 改写

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北京·广州·上海·西安

A PACEMAKER CLASSIC: O Pioneers!

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This Chinese edition jointly published by Beijing World Publishing Corporation and Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1998

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书 名:哦,拓荒者们! (有声名著精选)

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出 版:世界图书出版公司北京公司

西蒙与舒斯特国际出版公司

印 刷:北京中西印刷厂

发 行:世界图书出版公司北京公司(北京朝内大街137号,100010)

销 售:各地新华书店和外文书店

开 本:32 印张:3.5 字数:7万字

版 次:1998年1月第1版 1998年1月第1次印刷

印 数:00001-10000

书 号:ISBN 7-5062-3427-0/I·58

版权登记:图字01-97-0668

定 价:5.70元

序

世界图书出版公司北京公司出版的《有声名著精选》乃是很好的泛读及听说材料,适合高中及大学低年级学生学英语之用,对于自学英语的人也非常合适。其特点大致有四:

一、简写本出自西方语言学专家之手,文字流畅,语言规范,用词造句都是经过深思熟虑的,完全合乎现代英语习惯。改写者极为重视词汇、语法及修辞的基本用法,力求文字清新流畅,浅显易懂,准确而且实用。很多句子本身便是某一词汇、语法用法的很好的例句。

二、简写本多为欧美文学经典作品,这些作品在不同程度上反映欧美社会的各个方面。尤其是一些进步作家如:狄更斯、马克·吐温,他们在作品中深刻地剖析了他们自己所处的社会,读这些作品比读西方政治经济学还有益处。文化背景知识不是可有可无的,只有较广泛地了解欧美社会的各个方面,欧美人的生活、风俗、习惯,以及各种价值观念,才有可能在实际工作中得心应手地使用语言,应付裕如。

三、简写本的中文前言分别对原著作者、时代背景、内容梗概及作品特点作了介绍,并附有人物表,相信对读者进一步理解作品会有所帮助。

四、与简写本配套的朗读磁带,语音语调纯正,可以作为学习发音的楷模。

广泛阅读是学习英语的必由之径。精泛并举,“两条腿走路”,方能掌握语言。精读提供理性知识,泛读提供感性知识,二者不可或缺。通过泛读,许多语言现象会被自然而然地吸收、掌握。这些

词汇及语法现象在泛读中重复出现多次,读者不需强记便能正确地掌握他们,而且不会忘记。所以广泛阅读乃是学习外语的重要环节,不可忽视。简写本为泛读提供了方便。

这些简写本的出版非常及时,希望以后还有更多的简写本出版,以飨读者。

上海复旦大学外文系教授

索天章

1997年5月

前言

本书原著作者薇拉·凯瑟(Willa Cather, 1873~1947)出生于弗吉尼亚州戈尔镇。1883年父亲带领全家搬到内布拉斯加州紫云镇,于是凯瑟发现自己从弗吉尼亚宁静的田园生活被带到了富有开拓精神的边疆。她开始讨厌变迁并满怀激情地赞美古老的传统习俗。事实上,她的作品既表现了美国人民努力征服新环境的勇气,又反映了他们对传统的眷恋之情。

凯瑟于1895年毕业于内布拉斯加大学,她曾先后就职于几家报社和杂志社。在成为《麦克鲁尔杂志》(McClure's Magazine)的编辑前,凯瑟曾教过5年中学。她的第一部小说《亚历山大的桥》(Alexander's Bridge)就是于1912年以连载的形式在此杂志上发表的。凯瑟于当年辞职,将有生之年全部用在文学创作上。

1922年,凯瑟因创作《我们中的一员》(One of Ours, 1922)获“普利策奖”。1927年,凯瑟发表了《主教之死》(Death Comes for the Archbishop, 1927),许多评论家认为这是她作品中最好的一部。

《哦,拓荒者们!》(O Pineers!, 1913)和《我的安东尼亚》(My Antonia, 1918)是凯瑟的草原小说中最好的两部。小说描绘了移民来的农人们希望改善生活的强烈愿望和对土地的爱,表现了他们的勇气和坚毅。

亚历山德拉(Alexandra)是一个瑞典移民的女儿。遵照父亲临终托付,她照料着一家人的生活。他们居住的底维德镇经历了一段艰难时光。朋友卡尔·林斯托(Carl Lingstrum)一家人离开了底维德。亚历山德拉的两个弟弟娄(Lou)和奥斯卡(Oscar)也想卖掉家宅,但她说服他们把房子留下来,并尽可能买更多的土地。

16年过去了,底维德镇繁荣起来,亚历山德拉家的农场成为全底维德镇最富有的农场之一。小弟弟爱弥尔(Emil)从大学放假回到家里,发现儿时的恋人玛丽·托维斯基·莎巴塔(Marie Tovesky Shabata)已结了婚。

卡尔·林斯托也回来了,但她告诉亚历山德拉自己一事无成。

娄和奥斯卡提醒亚历山德拉,卡尔是个流浪汉,眼里只盯着她的钱。爱弥尔也不理解她对卡尔的感情。只有玛丽表示支持。

爱弥尔告诉姐姐她想辍学一年去墨西哥。接着卡尔也为了向她证明自己而去了拉斯维加斯。一时间,亚历山德拉觉得自己失去了一切。

第二年春天,爱弥尔从墨西哥回来了,并要玛丽和他一起走。玛丽拒绝了。他说如果玛丽说爱他,那他就走开。一星期后,爱弥尔来向玛丽告别。他发现玛丽躺在她最喜欢的一棵桑树下,就走过去和她在一起。玛丽的丈夫出来找自己的妻子,目睹此景,举枪杀死了玛丽和爱弥尔。

亚历山德拉受了很大刺激。卡尔得知噩耗,赶了回来。他们决定结婚,并将永远在底维德的土地上耕耘、生活。

北京外国语学院英语系 苏琦

1997年4月

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Cast of Characters

Alexandra Bergson	The eldest child of John Bergson; a Swedish immigrant farmer who becomes the head of the household upon his death
Emil Bergson	Alexandra's youngest brother; a blend of Swedish determination and American restlessness willfulness, and spirit
Carl Linstrum	A person who grew up on a farm next to the Bergson's. He drifts in and out of Alexandra's life but is her one true friend.
Marie Tovesky Shabata	Emil's childhood playmate and Alexandra's closest neighbor
Lou and Oscar Bergson	Alexandra's brothers; narrow-minded, unimaginative men who resent Alexandra's success and mistrust Carl Linstrum
Frank Shabata	Marie's hardworking but angry husband
Ivar	An old, eccentric man who loves animals and has a way with them
Amédée Chevalier	Emil's best friend
Signa	One of the young Swedish girls hired by Alexandra to do housework
Mrs. Lee	Lou's mother-in-law who comes to visit Alexandra every winter

1 The Wild Land

One January day in 1883, the little town of Hanover, Nebraska, was trying hard not to be blown away. It was a bitter wind that howled down the frozen street that ran through the middle of town. The wind piled snow high around the shops that lined each side of the street. In front of one of the stores sat a little Swedish boy about five years old. He was crying and looking up at a telegraph pole beside him. A stranded gray kitten sat at the top of the pole.

"My kitten. Oh, my kitten! She will freeze!" the boy sobbed.

At last he seemed to feel a ray of hope. His sister, who had just been to the doctor's office, was coming toward him. She was a tall, strong girl who walked rapidly, with purpose in every step. Alexandra did not see her brother until he pulled her by the coat. Then she stopped short and stooped down to wipe his wet face.

"Why, Emil! I told you to stay in the store and not to come out. What is the matter with you?"

"My kitten, Sister, my kitten! A man put her out, and a dog chased her up there." He pointed to the



poor animal atop the tall pole.

"Oh, Emil! Didn't I tell you she'd get us into trouble of some kind if you brought her? What made you pester me so? But then, I ought to have known better myself."

Alexandra called to the kitten, but it only meowed and fluttered its tail. Alexandra decided to ask her friend Carl Linstrum to help them. She found him in the drugstore. Carl was a tall, thin boy of 15, with dark eyes and a pale face. He listened closely as Alexandra explained the trouble. Then he followed her to the corner, where Emil still sat by the pole.

Using the spikes on his shoes, Carl climbed the

tall pole. He pulled the kitten from her spot at the top and came down with her. Then he handed the cat to her master and told him, "Now go into the store with her, Emil, and get warm." He opened the door for the shivering child.

Then Carl turned to Alexandra, "Wait a minute. Can't I drive for you as far as our place? It's getting very cold. By the way, have you seen the doctor?"

"Yes. He is coming over tomorrow. But he says father can't get better . . . can't get well." The girl's lip trembled. Carl did not say anything, but she felt his kindness and understanding. Carl then left to see to Alexandra's team of horses. Alexandra stepped inside the store to find Emil. She found him playing with a little Bohemian girl named Marie Tovesky. Marie had come from Omaha to visit her Uncle Joe. She was a dark, pretty child, with brown curly hair and round, yellow-brown eyes.

Alexandra let the children continue playing with the kitten until Marie's uncle came in. His children were all boys, so he truly adored his niece. He picked her up and set her on his shoulders for everyone to see. With that, several of his friends who were in the store gave Marie a bag of candy.

"Let me down, Uncle Joe," she said. "I want to give some of my candy to that nice little boy I found."

As she walked over to Emil, she was followed by her uncle's friends. They formed a circle around the

two children, admiring Marie and teasing the boy, until he hid his face in his sister's skirts.

Soon Carl came in. "Let's go," he said to Alexandra. "I've fed and watered the team. The wagon is ready." Then he carried Emil out and tucked him down in the straw of the wagon box. Alexandra was glad to have Carl's company on the long ride home.

It was only four o'clock in the afternoon, but darkness was coming quickly. The old wagon bumped along slowly over the frozen road. Still, it wasn't long before the little town fell behind the swell of the prairie. Now the land was dotted mostly with windmills and sod houses. But the great fact was the land itself. It seemed larger than the beginnings made by the settlers.

It was from facing the difficult life here that Carl's face had become hard. Men were too weak, he felt, to make any mark here; the land wanted to be left alone. Today he and Alexandra had even less to say to each other than usual. Perhaps it was the cold.

"Did Lou and Oscar go to the Blue to cut wood today?" Carl asked.

"Yes. I'm almost sorry I let them go. It has turned so cold. But mother worries if the wood gets low." Then Alexandra added, "I don't know what is to become of us, Carl, if father has to die. I don't dare to think about it."

"Does your father know?"

"Yes, I think he does. He lies and counts on his fingers all day. I think he is trying to count up what he is leaving for us. I wish we could keep his mind off such things, but I don't have much time to be with him now."

Carl thought that at least here was something he could do. "I wonder if he'd like to have me bring my magic lantern over some evening? It works ever so well; it makes fine big pictures."

Alexandra seemed cheered. "Do bring it over, Carl. I'm sure it will please father. Now, you must leave me here, mustn't you? It's been nice to have company."

Carl got down from the wagon and ran off across the fields to the Linstrum homestead. Alexandra drove away, the rattle of the wagon lost in the howling of the wind. She headed for the low log house in which John Bergson lay dying.

The day after Alexandra's trip to town, the doctor came. After he left, John Bergson lay thinking about his 11 years on the divide. He had spent the first five years there getting into debt; and he had spent the last six getting out. Still, he had the old-world belief that land, in itself, was desirable.

He had to admit though that this land was a puzzle. It was like a horse that no one knows how to break. His neighbors knew even less about farming than he did. Many had never worked on a farm.

They had been tailors and locksmiths and cigar makers before trying to carve out new lives on the divide. Bergson himself had worked in a shipyard.

For weeks, the 46-year-old man had been thinking about these things. Often he called Alexandra in to talk with him. He had come to depend more and more upon her good judgment. His sons Lou and Oscar were hard workers, but he could never teach them to use their heads about their work. He often said to himself that Alexandra was like her grandfather. This was his way of saying that she was intelligent. In Alexandra he saw his father's strength of will and simple, direct way of working things out. He would much rather have seen this in one of his sons, but it was not a question of choice.

As night came on, the sick man heard his wife strike a match in the kitchen to begin the evening meal. Although John Bergson had married beneath him, he had married a good housewife. Alexandra often said that if her mother landed on a desert island, she would thank God. Then she would make a garden and find something to can. Mrs. Bergson worked very hard to remake her old life in the new world.

John Bergson turned painfully in his bed. He called his daughter to him. "Alexandra," he said, "you will have to do the best you can for your brothers. Everything will fall on you."

"I will do all I can, Father."

"Don't let them get discouraged and go off like Uncle Otto. I want them to keep the land."

"We will, father. We will never lose the land."

At the sound of heavy feet in the kitchen, Alexandra went and called her brothers. They were large boys of 17 and 19. Oscar, the older boy, was heavy and slow. Lou was quicker but unsure of himself.

"Boys," said the father wearily, "I want you to keep the land together and to be guided by your sister. As long as there is one house, there must be one head. Alexandra is the oldest, and she knows my wishes. When you marry, the land will be divided fairly. But for the next few years you will have it hard. You must all keep together. Alexandra will manage the best she can."

Oscar, being the older boy, spoke first. "Yes, father. It would be so anyway, without your speaking. We will all work the place together."

"And you will be guided by your sister, boys, and be good brothers to her? And be good sons to your mother? That is good. She has been a good mother to you, and she has always missed the old country."

When they went back to the kitchen, the boys sat in silence at the table. During the meal they looked only down at their plates. They ate little and did not lift their reddened eyes.

2 The Land Fights Back

One day in mid-July, six months after John Bergson's death, Carl Linstrum heard a wagon coming up the hill road. Looking up, he saw that it was the four Bergson children. Oscar stopped the horses and waved to him.

"Want to go with us?" Lou called. "We're going to Crazy Ivar's to buy a hammock."

"Sure," Carl shouted back. He ran to the wagon, climbed over the wheel, and sat down by Emil. "I've always wanted to see Ivar's pond. They say it's the biggest in the country."

"Did you ever hear him howl, Carl?" Emil asked. "People say that sometimes he runs around at night howling because he is afraid the Lord will destroy him."

With that the boys began to tease Emil about Ivar. But then Carl said, "He wouldn't hurt you, Emil. He came to doctor our mare . . ."

"I don't think he knows anything at all about doctoring," Oscar cut in. "They say that when horses are sick Ivar takes the medicine. Then he prays over them!"

Alexandra spoke up. "Some days his mind is