

双语名著无障碍阅读丛书

第三级

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神犬莱西 下

Lassie Come-Home

[美国] 埃里克·奈特 著

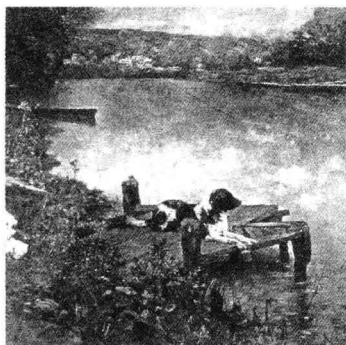
李风华 冯立增 译



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Chapter 14

For to Kill the Beasties

Two men crouched in a rude, stone hut. The moonlight coming through the gap in the wall above them **revealed**^① them faintly. They were dressed alike, in rough homespun tweed, except that the younger one wore a peaked cap and the other a great woolen tam-o'-shanter. For a long time there was nothing but the sound of their breathing. Then the younger one stirred.

At that moment the older put out his hand to quiet him.

"Whist," he said.

They froze into stillness.

"Did ye hear aught, Andrew?" the younger whispered.

"I thocht..."

Silently they rose and stared out through the **rectangular**^② gap in the wall. Stretching away below them was the **moonlit**^③ land, the grassy fields looking like those of a well-ordered park in the faint smoky-blue of a thin mist.

They stared a long time, their eyes and ears alert...

"Nay, Andrew, I don't hear a thing."

The older man nodded, so that the **tuft**^④ on his tam-o'-shanter

两个男人蹲在一间简陋的小石头房子里，月光透过墙上的窗洞射进来，朦胧地洒在他们身上。他们穿着相同，都穿自家织的土布花呢，只是年轻一点儿的男子头戴一顶鸭舌帽，而另一位则戴一顶苏格兰宽顶无沿圆帽。很长一段时间，周围鸦雀无声，只能听到两人的呼吸声。年轻一点儿的男子动了动。

这时，年长点儿的伸出手示意他安静下来。

“嘘，”他说。

他们都一动不动。

“你听见动静了，安德鲁？”年轻点儿的小声问。

“我想……”

他们默默站起身，透过墙上的长方形窗洞往外望去。眼前是洒满月光的田野，烟灰色薄雾隐隐笼罩下的草地宛如公园里井然有序的草坪。

他们全神贯注、警觉地凝视了很久。

“没有动静，安德鲁。我什么也没听见。”

① reveal /ri'vi:l/ v. 显示，透露

② rectangular /rek'tæŋgjulə/ a. 矩形的，长方形的

③ moonlit /'mu:nlit/ a. 月光普照的

④ tuft /tʌft/ n. (头发，羽毛等)一绺

bobbed back and forth.

"I just thocht I did."

With the tension lifted, the younger man absent-mindedly took his pipe from his pocket. The other regarded him disapprovingly.

"I wadn't smoke, Jock. Och, they'd smell it clear."

"Aye—that's so. But I'm dying for a smoke. And they'd smell them first, wouldn't they?"

Jock nodded his head toward a great pen in the field below. There, in the moonlight, the great flock of sheep stood unmoving and still. They were packed so close together that their backs made a sea of gray.

"And they'd hear **aught**^① long afore us," Jock continued, **motioning**^② with his head back over his shoulder. "At least, ma Donnie would."

Hearing his name, one of the two dogs in the shelter lifted his head expectantly. The other sighed and watched alertly to see if the long **vigil**^③ was at last over.

"I don't see the idea o' keeping them in here, anyhow, Andrew. We should leave 'em ootside by the sheep."

"Na, na, Jock. If they're ootside, them devils'll never come. They're that canny, lad, it passed understanding."

"Aye, they maun be canny all richt," the younger agreed. "Six nights we sit up on guard, and not a sign of 'em. The seventh we gang to our homes for sleep, and no sooner are our ee's closed, nor doon they come on us, ravening and **slaughtering**^④. Seven lambs and two ewes! Seven lambs, mind you! Why do they no come one o' the nights we were ready for 'em?"

The older man ignored the last question.

"Ye should be thankful, Jock. Sixteen it was Archie Forsythe lost

年长点儿的点点头，帽顶上的绒球来回摇动着。

“我刚才以为听见了。”

年轻点儿的松了一口气，心不在焉地从衣袋里掏出烟斗。同伴不满地看他一眼。

“我可不会抽烟，乔克。哎，他们会闻到烟味。”

“是——没错。但我实在想抽。他们会先闻到羊的气味，是不是？”

乔克朝着低处田野里宽大的羊栏点了点头。栏内的一大群羊在月光下静静地站着，一动不动。他们一个紧挨着一个，连成灰蒙蒙的一大片。

“狗会比我们先听到动静，”乔克回过头来接着说。“起码，我的多尼会听到。”

小屋里有两只狗，其中一只听到主人叫他的名字，抬起头，准备待命。另外一只狗舒了一口气，警觉地望着主人，想知道长时间的守望是否该结束了。

“无论如何，我觉得把狗留在这儿不是个好主意，安德鲁。应该让狗留在羊群那儿。”

“不，不，乔克。如果狗留在外面，那些恶魔就不会来了。他们太狡猾，伙计，想不到的狡猾。”

“没错，他们是很狡猾，”年轻一点儿的说。“我们在这儿曾经守了六个晚上，连他们的影子都没看见。第七天晚上我们回家睡觉了，连眼皮还没合上，他们就来觅食。一阵残杀，我们失去了七只羊羔和两只母羊！别忘了，是七只羊羔！他们怎么不在我们有所准备的时候来呢？”

① aught /ɔ:t/ n. 任何事物

② motion /'məʊʃən/ v. 移动，向……打手势

③ vigil /'vidʒil/ n. 值夜（监视）

④ slaughter /'slɔ:tə(r)/ v. 屠杀

the Sabbath. And McKenzie thirteen the nicht afore."

"Ah, the brutes. The Sabbath and all ither days is the same to them devils. The black-haired creatures o' Satan! If I ever caught one on 'em..."

The younger man left the rest unsaid.

"What makes 'em do it, Andrew?"

"Ah, lad, that's one o' those things pairhaps it's not given us to onderstand. But I suppose dogs is like humans, Jock. Most on 'em is honest and trusty. But every so often there's one born that has greed and cruelty and dishonor in his heart, and while he **poses**^① daytimes as a pairfeet Galahad, as soon as dark hides him he becomes what he is—a **ravening**^② devil."

"Aye, Andrew. Ye knaw, Heaven above knaws I hae a love for dogs. Why, yon beastie o' mine, there's not a thing I wadn't do for him, or a care I wadn't gie him—or a trust I wadn't put in him. But they devils o' sheepkillers—they're not dogs. Ye knaw, Andrew, what I think sometimes?"

"What, Joek?"

"Weel, ye may laugh. But times I think them sheepkillers is not dogs, but they're the ghosts o' murderers who've been hanged that return disguisedi' the body o' animals!"

The young man said that in such an **eerie**^③ tone that they both shuddered. Then the older shook off the feeling.

"Na, na, Jock. They're just dogs—and ravening ones that's gone bad. And we should hae no pity on 'em."

"Ah, I'll hae no pity—if I ever see one. If I draw a bead on one o' em..."

年长一点儿的对这最后一句话并没有在意。

“你知足吧，乔克。阿奇·弗思特在安息日那天被咬死了16只，前天晚上，麦肯奇死了13只。”

“哎，这些该死的东西！安息日和其他日子对这些魔鬼来说没有什么区别。黑了心的魔鬼！要是让我抓住一个的话……”

年轻一点儿的没有再说下去。

“他们为什么会这样，安德鲁？”

“哎，伙计，这我们可弄不明白。可是，我猜狗跟人一样，乔克，大多数是忠诚可信的。可常常也有那么一只，生性贪婪、残忍、内心龌龊，白天装得高尚纯洁，一到晚上便露出凶残的本相——贪婪的魔鬼。”

“没错，安德鲁。老天作证我是个爱狗的人。狗是我最爱的动物，我能为他们做一切，我照料他们、信任他们。可那些吃羊的魔鬼——他们不是狗。你知道，安德鲁，我有时是怎么想的吗？”

“怎么想的，乔克？”

“噢，你会笑话我的。可是，我有时认为吃羊的不是狗，而是被绞死的杀人犯的鬼魂，他们化作动物的模样回到世上！”

年轻点儿的胆怯语调让两人都不寒而栗。年老点儿的人转念一想，不再害怕。

“不，不，乔克。就是狗干的——觅食的疯狗。对他们可不能有丝毫同情。”

“哼，如果让我看到他们，我可不会有同情心。如果我瞄准了一个……”

“嘘！”

① pose /pəʊz/ v. 摆姿势，装模作样，提出……讨论

② ravening /'rævnɪŋ/ a. 贪婪的，掠食的

③ eerie /'iəri/ a. 怪诞的，可怕的，奇异的

"Whist!"

They froze again as the older man gave his signal.

"There it is!"

"Where?"

"Just dipped over the rise, Jock! Get yet gun, man. Quick!"

The younger grasped his rifle that leaned against the wall, and they waited. The silence grew too long.

"Ah, ye're seeing things, Andrew," the younger said finally, "there's naught. Nor will be, while we're here. The devils, they know we're waiting. They know it!"

"Hush, Jock. Be still, will ye?"

The younger **complied**^①. But the long minutes dragged, and the **tedium**^② was too much for him. He spoke again.

"Andrew."

"Aye?"

"Ye know, I were just thinking. It's curious that wi' us, a dog should be our greatest helper and also our greatest enemy."

"That's it, Jock. It's because they're so clever to help us, they become so clever to hurt us when they turn bad. And any of 'em can turn bad, too, Jock. Don't forget that. Even your ain beastie that ye treasure so much. Once they taste sheep blood, they become killers."

"Not ma Donnie!"

"Nay, nor I think ma Vic, either. But it's true. Once any of 'em kill, they're started, and they go on killing not for food, but for the joy o' bloody slaughtering."

"Ma Donnie wadn't!"

"Ye can never tell, Jock. There's some dogs, now, that'll be

① comply /kəm'plai/ v. 顺从，服从

② tedium /'ti:diəm,-djəm/ n. 单调乏味

年长点儿的人示意他别出声，两人又不动了。

“来了！”

“在哪儿？”

“刚下土坡儿，乔克。拿起枪，伙计，快点儿。”

年轻点儿的抓起靠在墙上的枪。两人慢慢地等着，又是一阵长时间的寂静。

“嗨，你看错了，安德鲁，”年轻一点儿的忍不住说，“什么也没有。我们在这儿，他们不会来的。那些该死的家伙，知道我们在这儿等着。他们知道！”

“别出声，乔克。别说了，好吧？”

年轻的不作声了。时间过得很慢，他忍受不住这样的沉闷，又开口了。

“安德鲁。”

“干吗？”

“你知道，我刚才在想，你说怪不怪，狗是我们最好的帮手，也是最大的敌人。”

“说得对，乔克。他们太聪明，所以能帮人们干活儿；可一旦变坏，就会狡诈地伤害我们。任何一只狗都有可能变坏，杰克。记住这一点，即使是你现在的爱犬也一样。一旦狗尝到羊血的味道，就会变成吃羊的狗。”

“我的多尼不会。”

“是的，我想我的威克也不会。可这是事实。一旦有一只狗吃过一次羊，那其他的狗也会吃羊，以后会继续吃，并不是为了填饱肚子，而是以血腥屠杀为乐。”

pairfect and upricht wi' their ain flock. Then, comes nicht, they'll travel far awa'—sometimes meeting like by appointment wi' ithers o' their kind. Then like a pack o' wolves they'll descend ravening on the flock, and they'll tear through'em, killing and slaughtering, and they'll be awa' again afore help comes. Then they'll separate, and each steal back hame. And come the next day, they'll guard their ain flock as if butter wadn't melt i' their mouths."

"Ah, but not ma Donnie. If I thocht he did..."

They were silent a while. Then Jock spoke again.

"It seems sad that us wha hae the greatest fondness for dogs must destroy 'em."

"Aye—but little destroying we'll do if we keep chattering all nicht. They'd never come."

The silence settled again, and the patch of moonlight moved across the floor of the rude **croft**^①. And then, at last, the older man spoke again, this time his voice trembling with emotion.

"Here they come!"

The other jumped to position, leaning his rifle on the ledge. They both stared, breath-held, at the landscape far to their left.

"Aye, there!"

Jock sighted along his rifle. There was a movement by the stone wall. Then, beyond the lined sights of the gun he saw a dog. There was no air of **stealth**^② to it. It came over the wall and trotted plainly into view.

It was Lassie. It was a week since she had left her den, but she still traveled with a limp. She came over the field in the clear moonlight, going straight and steady as if following a **compass**^③ route.

“多尼不会的。”

“这可说不准，乔克。有一些狗白天跟着羊群忠于职守；可是夜幕降临后，他们会跑出去很远——有时像赴约一样碰到其他同伴，然后像一群狼似的冲进羊群，狂咬乱杀。等人来了，他们早跑了。他们会分开，各自溜回家。等到第二天，又会守护自家的羊群，看上去一副老实样子。”

“是啊，可多尼不会这样。如果我发现他会这么干……”

他们一时沉默不语。乔克又继续说：

“像我们这样爱狗的人却要亲手杀狗，真是让人难过。”

“是的——可如果我们整晚都喋喋不休，恐怕一个也杀不了。他们听到说话声不会来的。”

两人不吱声了。月光照在小屋的地面上。终于，年长的开口了，由于激动而声音发抖。

“来了！”

年轻点儿的冲到最佳位置，把枪放在窗洞上。两人屏息注视着左前方的田野。

“是的，在那儿！”

乔克瞄准着，石头墙边有动静。在猎枪瞄准器的刻度之外，他看见一只狗。这只狗走起路来并不偷偷摸摸、躲躲闪闪。她从墙边过来，两人看清楚了。

这是莱西。她离开荆豆丛已有一个星期，可走路仍然一瘸一拐。在皎洁的月光下，她穿过田野，沉着地一直往前，仿佛在按照指南针测出的方向行进。

① croft /krɒft/ n. 小田地，小农地

② stealth /stelθ/ n. 秘密行动，秘密，鬼祟

③ compass /'kʌmpəs/ n. 指南针

In the stone hut the older man released his **pent**^① breath.

"Let him have it, Jock," he cried, in a **hoarse**^② whisper.

The younger man **cuddled**^③ his rifle, but did not fire.

"Where's the others?"

"What's the odds? Let him have it."

"It's a collie—d'ye ken wha's it is?"

"Nay. It's a **stray**^④—one o' them wild ones, forebye. Let it have it, lad. Don't miss, now."

Jock turned his head.

"I handled one o' these things in the war, Andrew. I dinna miss—not when I pay for ma own **ammunition**^⑤."

"Then let fly, Jock!"

The younger man cuddled the stock of his rifle again. He held his breath. Slowly he brought the sights in line—now he saw over the vee of the **hindsight**^⑥ the steady, unwavering tip of the foresight. Above it was the tiny figure of a trotting collie. The collie moved, but it always stayed in the tip of the foresight as the gun followed it along.

Jock took up the slack on the trigger. He felt the "second pull" beginning to take up.

"Hurry, Jock, now!"

Jock lifted his head and laid the rifle down.

"I canna do it, Andrew."

"Shoot it, man, shoot it!"

"Na, na, Andrew. It doesna look like one o' them devils. Look, it pays no **heed**^⑦ to aught. Let's see if it gangs near the sheep. For it seems to be paying no heed to them at all. Look."

"It's a stray. We have a richt to shoot it!"

- ① pent /pent/ a. 被关住的
 ② hoarse /hɔ:s/ a. 沙哑的, 嘶哑的, 刺耳的
 ③ cuddled /'kʌdl/ v. 抚抱, 抱着睡, 拥抱

- ④ stray /streɪ/ n. 走失的家畜, 浪子

- ⑤ ammunition /'æmjʊ'nɪʃən/ n. 弹药, 军火

- ⑥ hindsight /'haɪndsaɪt/ n. 枪的照门

- ⑦ heed /hi:d/ n. 注意, 留心

小房子里的年长男子舒了口气。

“给她一枪，乔克，”他用沙哑的嗓音小声说。

年轻点儿的端着枪，但没有开火。

“其他的在哪儿呢？”

“那有什么要紧？给她一枪。”

“是只柯利牧羊犬——你看清了吗？”

“不，是疯狗群中走散的一只。给她一枪，伙计。别打偏了，快！”

乔克回过头。

“我在战场上碰到过这种事，安德鲁。我没有打偏过——现在自己买弹药，也不会打偏。”

“那就快开枪吧，乔克！”

年轻点儿的又端起枪托，屏住呼吸，慢慢调整前后准星——通过后瞄准器的V字口看着前瞄准器一动不动的顶端，顶端之上就是一只小跑着的柯利牧羊犬的身影。柯利狗移动着，枪也随着动，但狗总停留在前瞄准器的准星之上。

乔克把手放在扳机上，似乎感到子弹射出后的回力。

“快点儿，乔克。射击！”

乔克抬起头，把枪放下。

“我不能开枪，安德鲁。”

“快打，伙计，给她一枪。”

“不，不行，安德鲁。这只狗看起来不像恶狗。你瞧，她对什么都不在意。咱们看看她是不是靠近羊群。她看起来心思一点都不在羊身上。你瞧。”

“是只走散的恶狗。我们有权利打死她！”

“Let’s see if it gangs near the sheep. If it does...”

“Och, ye **gormless**^①! Shoot it!”

The older man’s voice rose in **urgent**^② tones. The cry floated over the night to where Lassie trotted. She paused in her tracks and turned her head. Then it all struck her together—the sound of men, the scent of them, the movement in the window of the stone hut. It was man—man that would chain her, man that she must avoid.

She wheeled and sprang away in a sudden lope.

“There! It’s seen us! Let him have it!”

The sudden dash of Lassie half convinced the younger man that he had misjudged the dog below. For Lassie’s actions were like those of a guilty dog.

He lifted the rifle quickly, cuddled the stock, and fired.

At the crack that shattered the night, Lassie leaped away. The **ugly**^③ whine of a bullet passing by her left shoulder made her veer quickly to the right. She raced across the field. There was another shot, and she felt a burning shock in her flank.

“Nay, I hit it.”

“Ye didna. Look at it go!”

Inside the small shelter the voices of the men mixed with the noise of the dogs, who now cried **pandemonium**^④.

“Let ’em out!”

The old man raced to the door and opened it. The dogs, then the men, **tumbled**^⑤ out, and raced away after Lassie’s tracks.

“Go get it! Sic ’em!” yelled Andrew.

The dogs raced along, **baying**^⑥ at the chase. They went down the slope, bellies flat and their bodies almost doubling in two with the

① gormless /'gɔ:mlis/ a. 笨头笨脑的

② urgent /'ʊ:dʒənt/ a. 急迫的, 紧要的, 紧急的

③ ugly /'ʌgli/ a. 险恶的, 危险的

④ pandemonium
/pændi'məʊniəm/ n. 混战
场, 喧哗吵闹

⑤ tumble /'tʌmbəl/ v. 滚动, 摔倒

⑥ bay /bei/ v. 吠叫

“看她会不会靠近羊群, 如果靠近……”

“哎呀, 笨蛋! 快开枪!”

年长一点儿的提高嗓门催促着, 喊声划破寂静的夜空传到莱西耳边。她停了下来, 转过头来, 然后突然一惊——人的声音, 人的气味, 还有石屋窗洞晃动的人影。是人——他们会抓住她, 必须躲开。

她突然转身大步跃起, 箭一般地跑开了。

“你看, 她看见咱们了! 快给她一枪。”

莱西的突然快跑使年轻点儿的有点儿相信自己确实看错了, 因为莱西的这一举动真像那些恶狗。

他迅速端起枪, 托住枪托, 开火了。

枪声在宁静的夜空炸响。莱西猛然跃起, 子弹从她左肩呼啸而过, 她迅速向右一转, 在田野里狂奔起来。接着又是一枪, 她顿时觉得大腿外侧火辣辣的。

“不! 我打中她了。”

“没有, 看她还跑呢!”

小屋里的两条狗顿时狂叫起来, 与人的说话声混在一起, 响彻全屋。

“把狗放出去。”

年长一点儿的一个箭步冲到门口, 打开门。狗和人一起蹿出去, 沿着莱西的足迹跑起来。“去抓她! 冲上去抓住她!” 安德鲁大喊着。

狗狂叫着追过去。他们肚皮紧贴地面, 身影如离弦的箭一般成一条直线, 冲下山坡。两个人紧随其后, 但很快就被拉下了。两只狗突然急转弯, 叫得更凶——因为他们找到了痕迹——新鲜