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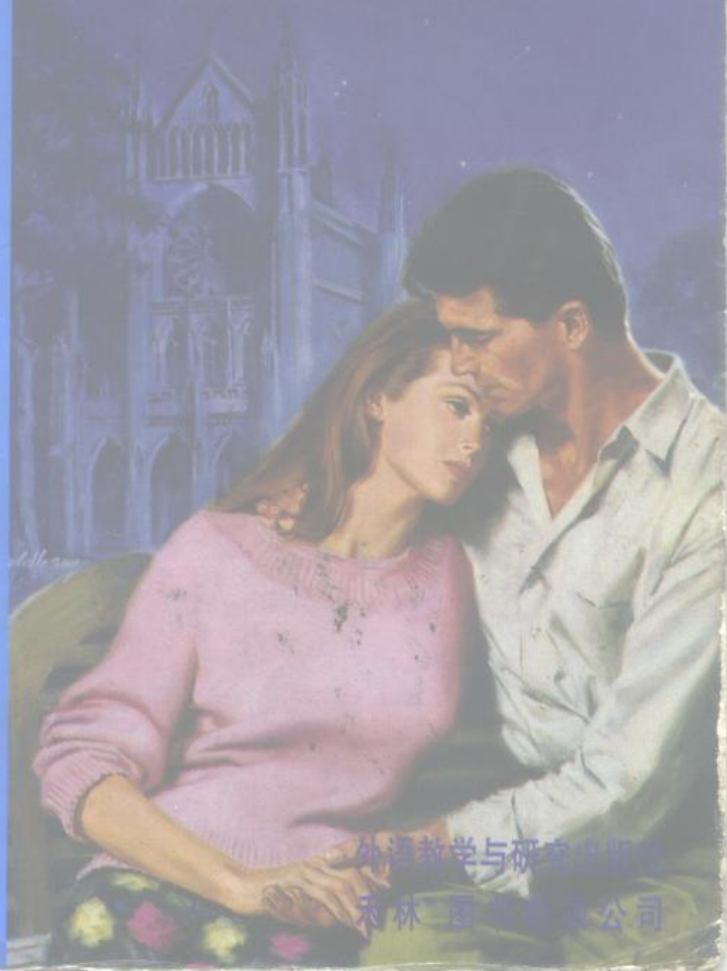


Silhouette



Passionate Possession 老屋华尔兹

Penny Jordan



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Passionate Possession

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Passionate Possession

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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造情节走向,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。外语学习也许不全是辛劳的苦事,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,都交汇在言情小说里,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,也能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,读者可以从小说中触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境中坐看云起云消……

“*I don't think we've met.*”

His voice was deep. Its tone measured and polite, but certainly not effusive. He was being courteous, but not making any kind of attempt to impress her.

“No, not yet...not officially,” she agreed.

“I'm Lucy Howard.”

“Yes.”

He didn't smile at her, and a tiny trickle of nervous awareness touched her skin. It seemed that her prejudices against him were matched, if not surpassed, by his against her. Certainly there was no warmth in his eyes when he looked at her. Rather the opposite. He was openly studying her, assessing her, and not in the way that she was used to being assessed by the male sex.

— *Passionate Possession*

林愛情小說以二十六種文字風行一百多個國家和地區一九九二年銷售兩億本平均每秒賣出

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Chapter One

‘Of course I haven’t met him yet, but, from what Don has been telling me about him, he’s going to prove a marvellous asset to us locally. I mean, all that money, for one thing. It’s a pity he’s involved with someone, though. Not that they’re married, but they *are* living together, at least they will be once she comes back from New York. Apparently she’s over there on some kind of secondment. I’m arranging a small dinner party, just eight or ten of us, to introduce him into the local community, and of course we’ll want you to be there. Lucy, are you listening to me?’

Lucy forced herself to smile.

‘Yes, of course I am, Verity. You were telling me about Don’s new client.’

‘Yes, I was, but I don’t think you were listening properly,’ Verity complained. ‘I suppose you’re still worrying about that stupid old man. Honestly, Lucy, why don’t you simply sell the place and —?’

‘I can’t sell it because he’s a sitting tenant,’

Lucy interrupted her patiently, 'and I haven't got the money to do the repairs that are needed.'

'He must *know* that. I'll bet that's why he's complaining.'

'He's complaining,' Lucy corrected her gently, 'because he has every right to do so. The house is in a bad state of repair, but I can't use it as security to borrow money against to have it seen to and I don't have any other way of raising any money. Unless I sell my flat.'

'But you can't do that,' Verity protested. 'Where on earth would you live?'

Lucy shook her head. Verity was kind-hearted enough, but she was also a rather self-centred and slightly spoiled woman who had never had to confront any major kind of financial problem in her whole life.

Lucy knew she did not really understand her own position, and if it had not been for the fact that Don, her husband, was Lucy's boss, coupled with the other fact that in her grandparent's time Lucy's family had been rather well-to-do and very well known in the neighbourhood, Lucy doubted that she would have been accepted socially by Verity.

Now both Lucy's grandparents and her parents were dead, and all that was left of the assets her

family had once owned locally was the small, very run-down cottage property which Lucy had recently inherited from a several-times-removed cousin.

Lucy had been appalled when she had first heard the news from her cousin's solicitor. She knew the cottage, of course, but she had assumed that her cousin had sold it long ago to its long-time tenant. The news that she had not done so, and that she Lucy, was now its owner and responsible for its appalling state of repair, had stunned her.

She had tentatively suggested that old Mr Barnes might wish to consider buying the cottage, but the letter she had received direct from him had made it plain that he had no intentions of doing any such thing... of wasting *his* money on repairing the cottage when it was *her* responsibility to do so.

Lucy had taken what advice she could, and as far as she could see there was no way out of the situation. She was undisputedly the owner of the cottage.

If she had been the type to give way to tears she would have given way to them then. She had struggled so hard to repair her life since the dreadful accident in which her parents had lost their lives. She had been seventeen then, with her whole future

ahead of her: Her parents weren't wealthy, but with careful management they had decided that it would be possible for them to send Lucy to university.

With their death that had become impossible. Her father had been a lovable and loving man, but a rather impractical one. He had not been properly insured; the house had had a large mortgage, and Lucy had quickly come to realise that her tiny inheritance was nowhere near enough to support her through university.

At first she had been too shocked, too filled with grief to think of the future... of her future, but, kind though everyone was, there had eventually come a time when Lucy had realised that she could not go on living with the family friends who had taken her in; that the pitifully small amount in what was now her sole bank account was not going to last forever and that it was time for her to make plans for her future.

She had taken a secretarial course, one that concentrated on the basic secretarial skills and computer familiarisation. It had been an expensive intensive course, but very worthwhile, giving her a thorough grounding in those basics. To them she added the languages she had learned at school and

then polished at night school, so that she was proficient in both German and French.

Initially she had planned to look for work in London, but, excellent though the salaries had seemed, she had soon realised that with the very high cost of living she would barely be able to manage, and so instead she had taken a junior typist's job locally, and, taking her solicitor's advice, she had used her small inheritance to buy a tiny one-bedroom flat in a conversion development being built on the outskirts of the town in what had once been a large Victorian house.

That, she now acknowledged, had been one of the best pieces of advice anyone could have given her.

There was certainly no way now she could ever have afforded to buy even such a modest property of her own at present-day costs. Don paid her well, she lived comfortably, ran a small compact car, took her annual holidays abroad, entertained her friends, and even occasionally splurged on good clothes, but there was no way she could find the many thousands of pounds required to repair Cousin Emily's run-down cottage.

Her only savings were the small insurance pension she had started on her twenty-first birthday,

and the few hundred pounds she had in her building-society account.

Lucy did not consider herself poor nor hard done by; after all, she had a good and very pleasant job, working for a man she liked and who made it plain that he valued her professional skills. She had good friends, enough money to get by on, and she had her health.

She also had her pride, something she had discovered in those awful months after her parents' death, when she had abruptly come to hear herself being described as 'that poor child', and had realised sensitively that people felt sorry for her; that in some way they blamed her parents for not making better provision for her. There had even been whispered conversations about how dreadful it was that a family which had been so prominent locally and been so wealthy should have fallen so far, almost as though her poor parents had been responsible for the disappearance of that wealth, which Lucy knew was not the case at all.

She had longed to defend her parents, to tell their friends that neither her father nor her mother had considered money to be of prime importance, but at seventeen they were still treating her like a child.

She had resolved then to find a way of standing on her own two feet, and now her independence, as well as being something she privately cherished, was so much a part of her that occasionally the braver of her friends would tease her a little about it.

Perhaps she was a little over-independent, over-determined to prove she could manage, but her friends had never been in her situation, had never discovered almost overnight that they were no longer a loved and protected only child with caring parents, but completely alone in the world with only themselves to rely on.

If anyone had asked her Lucy would have answered quickly, and she believed honestly, that at twenty-six she was completely over the trauma of losing her parents, and of the consequent discovery of her vulnerability emotionally and financially, but the shock of discovering all the problems attached to her unexpected and unwanted inheritance had shaken that belief. She felt vulnerable and afraid again, so much so that she had broken one of her unwritten rules and had confided her dilemma to Don.

As an accountant, he had warned her of the problems she was likely to face in view of the property's run-down state and its sitting tenant; as a

friend, he had consoled her as best he could, and unfortunately, as a husband, he had discussed the situation with Verity.

Not that Lucy had expected him not to. Verity, after all, was a good friend, but she was a terrible gossip, and Lucy suspected that there could be very few people who did not know about her problems with the cottage now, thanks to Verity.

The trouble with Verity was that she did not have enough to occupy her time or her mind. Their two sons were away at public school, and Verity spent most of her time either shopping or gossiping. She also had a tendency to embroider the facts, and Lucy tensed now as she heard Verity exclaiming sympathetically and indignantly, 'It's all Eric Barnes's fault... trying to make all this trouble for you... he's been living in that cottage for years. He should have complained to your cousin.'

'He did,' Lucy told her patiently. 'But Emily was virtually senile. I doubt she even read his letters, never mind understood them. I used to go and visit her, you know. The people in the home were very kind, but she barely recognised them, let alone me.'

'But there must be something you can do,' Verity consoled.

‘Yes. There is. Sell my flat,’ Lucy repeated grimly. She got up, putting her fragile china tea cup down.

Don was away on business, and she had called round with some papers she had been translating for him. Don had several clients who were investing in properties in France, and it fell to Lucy to translate the correspondence received from France concerning these properties.

‘Oh, you don’t have to go yet, do you?’ Verity complained. ‘I haven’t finished telling you about Niall Cameron. You’d never guess he was Scotch.’

‘A Scot,’ Lucy corrected her automatically. ‘Scotch is a drink.’

‘Scotch... Scottish... what does it matter?’ Verity demanded slightly petulantly, adding quickly, ‘Anyway, as I was telling you, he’s incredibly wealthy. Apparently he’s built up this huge business to do with computers, and he’s opening a factory not far away on that new industrial park just outside Tetfield. He’s bought Hawkins Farm as well —’

‘Yes, Verity, I do know,’ Lucy interrupted her, adding wryly, ‘I work for Don, remember.’

‘Yes, but you were away when it happened. You haven’t even met him yet.’

'No, ' Lucy agreed.

She didn't particularly want to meet Niall Cameron either, she decided with distaste. He sounded the type of man she most disliked. Arrogant... full of his own importance, forever boasting about his achievements.

She was glad she had been away when he had moved to the area, although it seemed that she wasn't going to be allowed to put off meeting him much longer, not if Verity had her way and organised this dinner party.

'I wish Don would buy us a property in France,' Verity was saying poutingly now. 'All our friends are doing it. I mean, you pick up the most marvellous things over there for next to nothing. The Martindales have bought the most fabulous château... with fifteen bedrooms.'

'And no bathrooms nor any running water,' Lucy told her wryly.

She knew. She had been over in France for the last month, working for Don, acting as both his representative and a translator for those of his clients who were involved in buying French properties

It had been a hectic six weeks, demanding and challenging; she had enjoyed the work, although

sometimes she had found the attitude of Don's clients hard to understand. Many of them seemed to have no conception at all of what the purchase of their French properties was going to involve.

In many cases the properties themselves were virtually derelict, and yet the new owners were talking happily of summers spent lavishly entertaining the friends they expected to come hurrying over from England to admire and envy their newest acquisitions.

It was true that there were some who genuinely seemed to know what they were getting themselves into and who seemed to be prepared to make all the adjustments they would need to make to be able to live in such rural communities. For the most part, though... She sighed a little to herself, remembering the look on the face of one woman when she had discovered that her fourteenth-century farmhouse had neither any sanitation nor any electricity, and that when it rained the lane to it became a marshy bog through which their immaculate Daimler saloon could not possibly travel.

'I must go,' she told Verity.

'Oh-ho... got a date tonight?' Verity asked archly.