

诗露·英汉对照读物

 *Silhouette*



The Bachelor Prince

翩翩佳偶

Debbie Macomber



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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合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绕中坐看云起云消……

采林爱情小说以二十六种文字风行一百多个国家和地区一九九二年销售两亿本平均每秒卖出一大本采林爱情小说以二十六种文字风行一百多个国家和地区

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"I shall remember and treasure this evening always."

Prince Stefano reached for Hope's hand.

"So will I," she told him, forcing herself to smile.

She didn't expect him to kiss her, but when he brought his mouth to hers, it seemed natural and perfect.

She parted her lips to him and groaned when he deepened the contact. He couldn't seem to get enough of her, or her of him. By the time he broke away, they were both panting and breathless, clinging to each other as the only solid object in a world that had suddenly been knocked off its axis.

Stefano shook his head and briefly closed his eyes. "Thank you for the most beautiful evening of my life." He paused, and she watched his facial features tighten as if he were bracing himself for something. "Please understand and forgive me when I tell you I can never see you again."

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Prologue

Prince Stefano Giorgio Paolo needed a wife.
A very rich one. And soon.

He couldn't put off the inevitability of marriage any longer, not if he planned to save his country from the international embarrassment of bankruptcy.

Tightly clenching the Minister of Finance's latest report, he paced the royal office, his mind racing as he tread past the series of six-foot sandstone windows adorned with heavy red draperies.

The view of the courtyard with the huge stone fountain, which dated from the seventeenth century, escaped his attention. At one time the scene below would have given him great joy. But no longer. Now it brought a heaviness to his chest. All because the courtyard was empty of tourists.

San Lorenzo, a tiny European principality, had once thrived as a fairy-tale kingdom, and drawn hordes of sightseers from all across the globe. But with the civil unrest in the Balkan states so close to its borders, the tourists stayed away.

It didn't help that San Lorenzo had no internation-

al airport of its own and the closest one was now closed to commercial traffic because of the fighting.

A knock against the heavy oak door distracted him. "Yes," Stefano blurted out impatiently. He'd left word he wasn't to be disturbed. Only a fool would dare interrupt him.

His personal secretary and traveling companion, Pietro, stepped inside the room. Stefano amended his earlier thought. Only a fool *or a friend* would dare intrude on him now.

"I thought you might need this," Pietro said, carrying in an elaborate silver tray with two glasses and a cut-crystal decanter.

"You know I don't drink during the day," Stefano chastised, but without any real censure.

"Generally that's true," Pietro agreed, "but I also know you're thinking about marriage, and the subject, as always, depresses you."

"Once again you're right, my friend." His shoulders sagging, Stefano rubbed a hand over his face and stared out the window at his small kingdom.

"Have you made your decision?" Pietro asked, lifting the stopper from the decanter and splashing two fingers into the glasses. He handed the first to Stefano, who gratefully accepted it.

"Do I have any choice, but to marry?" He felt as if he were sentencing himself to the gallows. He savored his life as a bachelor, and the freedom it offered him to sample the favors of some of the world's most beautiful women.

Frankly, he enjoyed the title of the Bachelor Prince that the tabloids had bestowed on him. The papers, if they were to be believed, claimed he was the perfect romantic prince. They touted him as tall, dark and handsome, with enough charm to sink a flotilla.

It was true he was tall—six foot two—and his skin was tanned a healthy shade of bronze from the many hours he spent out-of-doors. The handsome part, he took with a grain of salt. His features were aristocratic, he supposed. His forehead was high and his chin stately, but then his family had reined over San Lorenzo for nearly seven hundred years.

"Have you decided upon the lucky lady?" Pietro asked in that casual way of his that made Stefano's most troublesome worries appear minimal.

Frowning, Stefano thought for a moment, one hand clenched behind his back. "No." He gestured with his drink toward his friend. "I prefer to marry an American," he decided suddenly.

“Having attended Duke University, you’re well acquainted with their ways. American women can be most charming.”

Stefano slapped his drink down on the desk. “I don’t need charm, I need money.”

“Trust me, Stefano, I know that.” Pietro reached inside his perfectly tailored black suit and withdrew a piece of paper. “I’ve taken the liberty of listing several eligible American women for your consideration.”

Stefano paused and steadily regarded his friend. Oftentimes he wondered if Pietro could read his mind. “How well you know me.”

Pietro bowed slightly. “It was a lucky guess.”

Stefano laughed, doubting that. Pietro was much too thorough to leave anything to guesswork. In some ways his secretary knew him better than he did himself.

Like a spoiled child, Stefano had put off dealing with the unpleasantness of his situation. He sat down and rested against the back of the plush velvet chair. “Tell me what you’ve learned.”

“There are a number of excellent young women from whom to choose,” Pietro began.

For the next half hour, his secretary provided him

with a list of names and the information he'd collected on each woman. There wasn't one who even mildly captured Stefano's curiosity. Perhaps Stefano was just old-fashioned enough to believe in marrying for love. When it came to choosing a wife, he would have preferred to cherish his bride with all his heart and soul, without an eye on her purse strings. But courtly ideals weren't going to save San Lorenzo.

"Well?" Pietro asked, when he'd finished.

Stefano gestured weakly with his hand. "You choose."

Pietro's eyebrows arched. "As you wish."

His companion ran his index finger down the list, pausing at one name and then another. His frown grew darker. Gauging from his reaction, Pietro was having as difficult time choosing as Stefano.

"Priscilla Rutherford," Pietro announced thoughtfully.

"Priscilla," Stefano repeated, attempting to remember what he could about the woman. "The shipping magnate's daughter?"

"She's the one." Having made his decision, Pietro relaxed and sampled the first taste of his drink.

"Why her?"

Pietro shrugged. "I'm not sure. I've seen her pic-

ture."

"She's beautiful?"

It took Pietro a moment to respond. "Yes."

"You don't sound convinced."

One side of Pietro's mouth quirked upward. "She's not a flawless beauty, if that's what you want, but she's a gentle, kind woman all San Lorenzo will love."

"Do you have as much faith she'll fall in love with me?" Stefano asked.

"But, of course." Pietro crossed to the other side of the room and pulled open a drawer. "I've even come up with a way for the two of you to meet."

Stefano slowly shook his head. "You never cease to amaze me, my friend."

"Do you remember the letter we received last week from Ms. Marshall from Seattle?"

"Marshall, Marshall," Stefano repeated, running the name through his memory. "Wasn't she the one who wrote to invite me as her guest of honor to some kind of conference? Some group, something nonsensical. . . I don't recall what—only that I'd rather be shot than attend."

"She's the one, and it was a Romance Lovers' Convention."

"I sincerely hope you declined," Stefano said with an elongated sigh. "For the love of heaven, I have no time for such nonsense." Romance had no place in the life of a man who was forced to marry for money.

"Fortunately, I haven't responded one way or the other."

"Fortunately?" Stefano eyed his companion wearily.

"I have it on good authority that Priscilla Rutherford will be attending the convention. It would be the ideal way of casually meeting her."

Stefano resumed his pacing, circling his desk a number of times, his hands clasped behind his back. "You can't be serious? The Marshall woman had come up with some ridiculous idea of raffling off a date with me. Dear sweet heaven, Pietro, has it come to this?"

"This conference can help you achieve your goal."

Stefano's gaze narrowed. Surely his friend wasn't serious. He had no desire to stand on the auction block and be awarded to the highest bidder.

"The Romance Lovers' get-together offers you the perfect opportunity to meet Priscilla Rutherford," Pietro reiterated.

"You're serious?"

"Yes, Your Highness, I am."

"See to the arrangements, then," Stefano murmured. This had to be the low point of his life. He was about to become a sideshow at the circus, but if that was what it took to save his country, then Stefano would gladly sacrifice his considerable pride.

Chapter One

“**T**he phone’s for you.”

Hope Jordan glanced irritably toward the wall of her minute coffee shop on Seattle’s Fifth Avenue and dragged her wet hands across the white butcher’s apron tied about her waist. She hurried toward the phone and reached for the receiver.

“Hello, Mom,” she said, not waiting for her mother to announce herself.

“How’d you know it was me?” Doris Jordan asked, her voice revealing her surprise.

“Because no one else phones me when I’m this busy.”

“I’m sorry, sweetheart,” her mother said, not sounding the least bit contrite, “but you work too hard as it is.”

“Mom, unless this is really important, I have to get off the phone. I’ve got three runners waiting for orders.” Hope smiled apologetically toward the trio.

“You’ll phone me back?”

“Yes. . . I promise. But sometime this afternoon, all right?”

"Sure. It's important, Hope. I'll give you the details later, but I want you to know that I've invested twenty five dollars in tickets to win a date with Prince Stefano Giorgio Paolo of San Lorenzo."

Hope's head bobbed with each one of his names. She'd recently read a lengthy article about Prince Stefano, and his beautiful country. "You want to date someone young enough to be your son?"

"No," Doris said with an impatient sigh. "I bought the tickets for you."

"Mom. . ."

The line went abruptly dead. Hope stared at the phone for several seconds before replacing the receiver. Her mother was bound and determined to see her married, but buying her raffle tickets for a date was 'one step over the line' of what Hope found acceptable.

Not that it would do her any good to argue. Her mother wanted her married. The wedding itself wasn't the important point. Grandchildren were. Her mother's three closest friends were all grandmothers. It had become a matter of social status for Doris to see Hope married and pregnant. In that order, of course. And if Hope needed a bit of encouragement along the way, well. Doris was more than