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FICTION FACTORY

万花筒

系列读物

John J. Graves
Jeff Starre

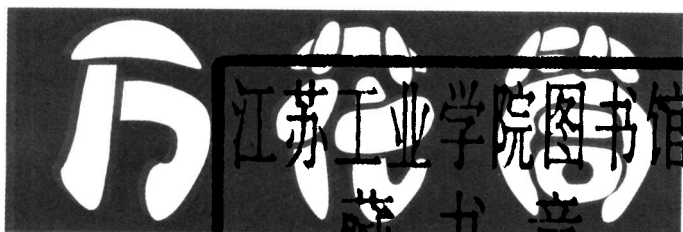
畅销世界百万册的英语读物



上海外语教育出版社

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系 列 藏 译 章 物

★ *John J. Graves Jeff Starre*

★ 注释 韩天霖

上海外语教育出版社

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前 言

万花筒出版社出版的英语微型小说 *Fiction Factory* 系列,畅销世界百余万册,上海外语教育出版社从中精选引进出版《万花筒系列读物》。本系列读物由英美语言专家用浅显易懂的英语撰写,供以英语为外国语的学生阅读,增长知识,开阔视野,提高用英语直接获取信息的能力。故事题材丰富,内容生动有趣,情节跌宕起伏,让人手不释卷。另配有故事内容精选录音,不但有助于全面感受故事的魅力,而且能提高听力水平。

全套读物按文字难度分 A、B、C、D 4 个级别,每级 2 本;A 级适合初二、初三学生阅读,B 级适合高一学生阅读,C 级适合高二学生阅读,D 级适合高三及更高水平的学生阅读。本书为系列中的 C1,由《黑剑客》(The Swordsman)和《爱克斯光》(The X-Rays)两个分册组成。

THE SWORDSMAN

黑剑客

John J. Graves



内容简介

这是一个根据真人真事撰写的故事。

18 世纪,牙买加的黑人奴隶雅各布·布莱特从小受到良好的教育,相貌英俊,被新主人托马斯·杰克逊带到了伦敦,并成为上流社会的宠儿。他与白人女仆莫利相爱了,也因此更招致托马斯的哥哥贾斯珀·杰克逊的嫉恨。贾斯珀·杰克逊对雅各布百般刁难。为了保护雅各布,托马斯·杰克逊设法让他获得了自由,谁知这竟将雅各布引入了一种更危险的生活!要想知道雅各布·布莱特的最终命运如何,请看《黑剑客》(**The Swordsman**)。

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Tiger in the Fire

The year is 1773. The city is London. The night is cold and wet. A bell in a clock-tower strikes two. The sound echoes^① through the deserted^② streets. Light is streaming^③ out of a window in a nearby house. Inside the house a girl is sitting next to an open coal-fire. The girl is very pretty, with golden hair and clear white skin. She is rubbing her hands together. Not because she is cold, but because she is afraid. Time is passing very slowly for her. . .

Molly gazed^④ into the fire. The coals were red and the heat was intense^⑤. She knew that some people believed you could see into the future by looking at the coals. Molly didn't want to see into the future and she turned her head away. She had a terrible feeling that something terrible was waiting for them in the future. Only she didn't know what it was.

Was a burning tiger waiting in the fire? A tiger that wanted to tear them both to pieces^⑥?

Jacob was very late. Later than he usually was. Molly tried not to worry, but it was hopeless. Every time he went out she was afraid he wouldn't come back.

Sometimes she felt that a devil had taken control of him. Jacob

① to echo 发出回声 ② deserted 空无一人的 ③ to stream 流出 ④ to gaze 凝视 ⑤ intense 强烈的 ⑥ tear sth. to pieces 把(某物)撕成碎片

had changed so much. He had made many enemies and lost many friends. He walked around London like he owned the city and he could do whatever he wanted.

Molly rubbed her cold hands together again and wished he would come home. Waiting and not knowing was the worst thing. She looked into the flames^① once more.

Molly remembered some of the things Jacob had told her. Jacob had been a slave all his life. He had been born a slave. His mother and father had been slaves. He had been given orders and told what to do for most of his life. Now, suddenly, Jacob was a free man. Molly was sure this was the root of most of their problems. Jacob just didn't know what to do with his freedom. He needed time to get used to it.

Molly sighed and rubbed her cold hands together. She didn't know what to do, but she knew she was going to stay with him. Stay with him and wait until the crisis^② was over. Molly recalled what he had said before he left the house:

"I'm free, Molly. I'm free and I want to do... I want to do... absolutely^③ everything."

"All right, if that's what you want, Jacob. Just be careful and always come back home."

"Don't worry about me, Molly. I'm lucky and I'm the best swordsman^④ in all London. Nobody is going to push me around or tell me what to do anymore. I'm free."

"I know, Jacob, I know. Only don't go looking for trouble. You don't have to prove anything to me or anyone else."

① flame 火焰 ② crisis 危机 ③ absolutely 完全地 ④ swordsman 剑手, 剑客

“Don’t look like that, Molly. I can take care of myself now. I’ll be back later on with my pockets full of gold. Tomorrow I’ll buy you a dress made for a princess^①. ”

“I don’t need another dress, Jacob. I’ve got a room full of pretty dresses. Let’s get away from London, Jacob. Let’s buy a little farm in the country. Stay at home tonight, Jacob. Don’t go out tonight and fight, please!”

“I can’t stay, Molly. We haven’t got enough money. You’ll have to wait. ”

“I’ve a bad feeling about tonight, Jacob. ”

“Oh, Molly, sweetheart^②. Hundreds of people are waiting to see my sword in action. It feels great when I hear them clapping^③ and shouting out my name. ‘Ja-cob, Ja-cob, Ja-cob’. It makes me feel ten feet tall. ”

“Half of them want to see you lose, Jacob. ”

“I know that, Molly. That’s why I like to win so much. It’s wonderful to see their faces when I win. ”

“Jacob, is it worth it? You’re free now. What more do you want?”

“I want to show them. . . ”

“Show them what, Jacob?”

“I want to show them. . . I want to show them all that I’m just as good as they are. I want to show them that. . . that I’m here!”

Molly tried hard not to criticize^④ Jacob too much. Anyway, it did no good. These days Jacob didn’t really listen to her.

① princess 公主 ② sweetheart 甜心 ③ to clap 鼓掌 ④ to criticize 批评

She knew that her long, worried face irritated^① him. Jacob liked Molly to smile and look happy when he gave her expensive presents. The money came from Jacob's sword. He was an exceptional^② swordsman. He not only gave lessons in swordplay^③ to rich, young gentlemen, Jacob also fought in exhibition matches for prize money. The idea was not to kill in these matches, only to find out who was the best swordsman. Usually, nobody was seriously hurt. There was a bit of blood, a few cuts, but a lot of action for the large crowds who came to watch.

Often, after the swordplay, the match would continue with boxing. The boxing could last for hours. Fifty or sixty rounds was normal. They boxed until only one man was left standing on his feet. Jacob didn't like boxing, but sometimes he was forced into the ring. He preferred to^④ earn his money with the sword.

Recently, Jacob had started gambling^⑤. What he liked most was playing cards. Nothing pleased him more than to come home with his pockets full of gold after a long night at the gambling-tables. Jacob said it was 'easy money'.

Molly had heard people talking about Jacob behind his back. They didn't like his attitude. They called him arrogant^⑥, provocative^⑦ and big-headed^⑧.

Molly knew there was some truth in this. Jacob was simply drunk with freedom. He wanted it all. He bought the finest clothes, smoked the best tobacco and drank the most expensive coffee. He

① to irritate 激怒 ② exceptional 优秀的 ③ swordplay 剑术, 舞剑 ④ prefer to (更)喜欢 ⑤ to gamble 赌博 ⑥ arrogant 骄傲自大的 ⑦ provocative 挑衅的 ⑧ big-headed 自负的

said whatever he wanted, and, in reality, he respected no one. It was as though he wanted to show the whole world that he was afraid of nothing and no one. He bought a brand-new^① carriage with four white horses to pull it. Typically he named the horses after the four richest men in London.

Jacob liked to ride through the narrow streets of London with Molly at his side for everyone to see. A tall, handsome black man together with a young, pretty, white woman. Sometimes Molly wished that she had jet-black^② skin like Jacob. It would make life easier. Molly knew that Jacob liked to provoke^③ people. But nobody said a word when Jacob was close. They all knew that his sword was as sharp as a razor^④ and he knew how to use it.

Molly smiled to herself and put some more coal on the fire. It was strange. There were so many things people didn't like about Jacob, but he'd been taught all of them by white men. They had trained him like a dancing bear. Only now he had started to dance to his own tune^⑤. That was what they didn't like and could not accept.

Suddenly she heard the sound of carriage wheels coming down the street and she rushed to the window. It wasn't Jacob's carriage. It was Thomas Jackson's. Molly knew immediately that something was wrong.

She watched the door swing open. Molly bit^⑥ her bottom lip^⑦,

① brand-new 崭新的 ② jet-black 乌黑发亮的 ③ to provoke 对……挑衅
④ razor 剃刀 ⑤ tune 曲调 ⑥ to bite 咬 ⑦ bottom lip 下嘴唇

and shivered^①, when she saw three men lift Jacob out and carry him towards the door. She ran down the stairs as the men began to hammer^② on the door. Molly ran as fast as she could. The maid was slowly moving towards the door, but Molly ran past her and opened it herself. When Molly saw Jacob covered in blood her legs collapsed^③ under her body. Thomas Jackson caught hold of her and stopped her falling to the floor.

"It's bad, Molly. Jacob's lost a lot of blood. I arrived too late to stop it happening. It was all my brother Jasper's work. He had a gang of^④ cut-throats^⑤ waiting for Jacob outside Caxton Hall. I found him lying in the doorway half dead. I feel so ashamed. It's all my fault, Molly."

Molly could only half understand what Thomas was saying. All she could think about was Jacob. Was it true? Was he dying? They carried Jacob upstairs and Thomas sent a man for the doctor.

Ten minutes later he arrived dressed in his nightshirt. He examined Jacob.

"I'm sorry. I can't lie to you. I don't think he'll last until morning. I'm sorry. I've never seen anyone beaten like this. I'm sorry. There's nothing I can do for him. All you can do is pray^⑥. His life is in the hands of the Lord^⑦."

Molly thanked him, paid him and sat down next to Jacob on the bed. Jacob's face was grey and his lips were blue. His chest moved up and down very slowly.

"Shall I stay with you, Molly?" Thomas asked.

"No, go, Thomas. I'll be all right."

① to shiver 颤抖 ② to hammer 接连锤打 ③ to collapse 倒下 ④ a gang of 一帮 ⑤ cut-throat 谋杀者 ⑥ to pray 祈祷 ⑦ Lord 上帝

“If you need anything, Molly, send word to me and I'll come at once.”

“Thank you, Thomas. What about your brother Jasper?”

“He's not at home, Molly. He was drunk when I talked to him before. I don't know where he is. But I swear^① if Jacob dies, I'll find Jasper and make him pay for this. I swear it, Molly.”

Thomas Jackson left and Molly looked into the fire once more. She could see shapes in the glowing coals. There were faces she knew and faces she had never seen before.

She started to remember how it all began. So much had happened to them all. It had all started in Major Jackson's house. The large, old house, down by the Thames^②.

① to swear 发誓 ② Thames 泰晤士河

The Black Prince

The first time she heard Jacob Bright's name Molly was on her knees. She was kneeling^① on the floor before Miss Priscilla Jackson.

Molly had just put Priscilla's shoes on and now she was lacing them up^②. Priscilla's shoes were brand-new and still a little tight. Priscilla had just received a letter from her brother, Thomas, who was in Jamaica inspecting the family's sugar plantation^③. Priscilla was reading the letter aloud to two of her rich friends, Sarah and Mildred:

"... I was in a card game with a rich slave owner my dearest, Priscilla. This gentleman only comes to Kingston once a year. Anyway, he ran out of money and wanted to give me a piece of paper with his name on it, but I said 'no'. So he was forced to use his best slave, 'Jacob' to cover^④ his bet. He said Jacob was worth more than four hundred pounds. Anyway, my dearest sister, I won the game, all the money and Jacob! Afterwards he tried to buy Jacob back, but I refused. I'm going to give Jacob to mother as a present when I get back to England. I'm nearly finished with our affairs out here.

Jacob's master owned one of the biggest sugar plantations on the island and over five hundred first-class field slaves. He's never worked as a common field slave and his hands are as smooth as a

① to kneel 跪着 ② lace sth. up 系紧(鞋带) ③ plantation 种植园, 大农场

④ to cover 支付

gentleman's. He's been trained carefully since he was a child to work indoors. He really is a first-class servant. It's amazing^①, but he actually knows how to read! Jacob knows a little Greek and Latin too. His former owner was also a very fine swordsman and he had trained Jacob as a fencing^② partner. He taught him to use both the sabre^③ and the rapier^④. I hate swords, but I've started to teach him to play cards. He learns exceptionally quickly, dearest Priscilla. I'll have to be very careful with him or I'll lose all my money, and he'll end up owning me!

Your dear brother, Thomas

P. S. He's nearly twenty. He looks like a statue^⑤ of a Greek god."

Soon the whole house was buzzing^⑥ with rumours^⑦ about Jacob Bright.

The first time Molly saw him he was dressed in red velvet^⑧ from top to toe. He was wearing a bright red velvet jacket and tight trousers that stopped at the knees. His silk stockings were white. His shoes were red and shiny^⑨. They had big, silver buckles^⑩. His hands were hidden by spotless, white gloves. His shirt was made of white silk. Jacob was wearing a very fashionable white, powdered wig^⑪. It was decorated^⑫ with a large, black velvet bow at the back.

Molly thought Jacob was the most beautiful man she had ever seen.

① amazing 令人惊奇的 ② to fence 击剑 ③ sabre 佩剑 ④ rapier 双刃长剑, 轻剑 ⑤ statue 雕像 ⑥ to buzz 私下传播 ⑦ rumour 传言 ⑧ velvet 天鹅绒 ⑨ shiny 有光泽的 ⑩ buckle 鞋子的扣形饰物 ⑪ wig 假发 ⑫ to decorate 装饰