



CHEMICAL **SECRET**

Tim Vicary

化学秘密



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简 介

犯罪有两种形式,一种是有意识的,一种是无意识的。很少人刻意去犯罪,但大多数人对某些罪行视而不见。

然而,什么是犯罪?是应该以法律规定为依据还是以我们的内心感觉来判断?罪孽多种多样——贪婪、施暴、凶狠、仇恨。但是也有不太明显的罪恶——比如我们破坏这个世界:破坏天空、海洋、陆地。我们犯下的这些罪孽摧毁了未来和后代,但我们闭着双眼假装看不到这一切。

约翰·邓肯是一个生物学家。当他开始在化工厂工作时,他想他是在保护他的孩子们。他想为孩子们提供生活中最美好的东西,如一幢大房子、一艘船以及精彩的假期……然而他到底将给他们带来一个什么样的前途呢?

本书的作者蒂姆·维卡里从事英语教学数年,他在纽约生活工作。

1

A new start

‘**M**r Duncan? Come in please. Mr Wilson will see you now.’

‘Thank you.’ John Duncan stood up and walked nervously towards the door. He was a tall, thin man, about forty-five years old, in an old grey suit. It was his best suit, but it was ten years old now. He had grey hair and glasses. His face looked sad and tired.

Inside the room, a man stood up to welcome him. ‘Mr Duncan? Pleased to meet you. My name’s David Wilson. This is one of our chemists, Mary Carter.’

John Duncan shook hands with both of them, and sat down. It was a big office, with a thick carpet on the floor and beautiful pictures on the walls. David Wilson was a young man, in an expensive black suit. He had a big gold ring on one finger. He smiled at John.

‘I asked Miss Carter to come because she’s one of our best chemists. She discovered our wonderful new paint, in fact. When... I mean, if you come to work here, you will work with her.’

‘Oh, I see.’ John looked at Mary. She was older than Wilson — about thirty-five, perhaps — with short brown hair, and a pretty, friendly face. She was wearing a white coat with a lot of pens in the top pocket. She smiled at him kindly, but

1 崭新的开始

“邓肯先生吗？请进。威尔逊先生现在要见你。”

“谢谢。”约翰·邓肯起身胆怯地往门口走。他瘦高个子，大约四十五岁，身着一套灰色旧西服。尽管这套西服已穿了10年，但仍是他最好的西服。他头发灰白，戴一副眼镜，面带忧郁和倦容。

屋内，一个男人站起来欢迎他。“邓肯先生吗？很高兴见到你。我叫大卫·威尔逊。这是玛丽·卡特，我们其中的一位化学师。”

约翰·邓肯与他俩握手后坐下。这是一间宽大的办公室，地上铺着厚地毯，墙上悬挂着美丽的画。大卫·威尔逊很年轻，身着一套昂贵的黑色西服，一只手指上戴着一个硕大的金戒指。他对着约翰微笑。

“我让卡特小姐来是因为她是我们最好的化学师之一。事实上是她发现了我们最奇妙的新油漆……我是说，如果你来这里工作，你将与她一起工作。”

“噢，我明白了。”约翰望着玛丽。她比威尔逊岁数大——也许大约三十五岁，留着棕色短发，长着一副漂亮友善的面孔。她身穿一件白外套，上方的口袋里插着许多钢笔。她友善地对约翰微笑，但约翰却感到痛苦。



chemist *n.* a scientist who studies chemistry. 化学师。

paint *n.* a colored liquid used to change the color of other things. 油漆。



John felt miserable.

I'll never get this job, he thought. I'm too old! Employers want younger people these days.

David Wilson was looking at some papers. 'Now, Mr Duncan,' he said, 'I see that you are a very good biologist. You worked at a university . . . and then for two very famous companies. But . . . you stopped working as a biologist nine years ago. Why was that?'

'I've always had two interests in my life,' John said, 'biology and boats. My wife was a famous sailor . . . Rachel Horsley . . . Perhaps you remember her. She sailed around the world alone in a small boat.'

'Yes,' said David Wilson, 'I remember her.'

'So we started a business,' said John. 'We made small boats together, and sold them.'

'And did the business go well?' asked Wilson.

'Very well at first. Then we wanted to build bigger, better boats. We borrowed too much money. And then my wife . . .'

John stopped speaking.

'Yes, the Sevens Race. I remember now,' said David Wilson.

Both men were silent for a moment. Wilson remembered the newspaper reports of the storm and the lives lost at sea. He looked at the man who sat sadly in front of him.

'So, after my wife died,' continued John, 'I closed the business. That was five years ago.'

他想：我永远不会得到这份工作。我太老了！雇主们现在想聘更年轻的人。

大卫·威尔逊正在看一些文件。“我说，邓肯先生，我知道你是一个非常出色的生物学家。”他说道，“你曾在大学工作过，然后又在这两家著名的公司干过。但是你作为一个生物学家9年前停止了工作，这是为什么？”

“在我一生中我永远有两种兴趣，”约翰答道，“生物学和划船。我太太是一位有名的水手……雷切尔·霍斯利……也许你记得她。她独自乘小船环绕世界。”

“是的，我记得她，”大卫·威尔逊说道。

“所以我们开始做生意，”约翰说。“我们共同制造小船，并且出售。”

“生意进展得好吗？”威尔逊问道。

“一开始很好，然后我们就想造更大更好的船。我们借了太多钱。其后我的太太……”约翰停住了讲话。

“是的，赛文斯比赛，我现在想起来了，”大卫·威尔逊说道。

俩人都陷入片刻沉默。威尔逊记起报纸上报道的那场风暴和海上死亡事件。他望着忧伤地坐在他面前的这个人。

“所以，我太太去世后，”约翰继续说，“我停止了生意，那是5年前的事了。”

employer *n.* a person who gives you work to do. 雇主。
biologist *n.* a scientist who studies animals and plants. 生物学家。

'I see,' said David Wilson. 'It's a hard world, the world of business.' He looked at John's old grey suit. 'So now you want a job as a biologist. Well, this is a chemical company, Mr Duncan. We make paint. But we need a biologist to make sure that everything in this factory is safe. We want someone to tell the government that it's safe to work here, and that it's safe to have a paint factory near the town. That's important to us.'

'And if something's not safe, then of course we'll change it,' Mary Carter said. David Wilson looked at her, but he didn't say anything.

'Yes, I see,' John began nervously. 'Well, I think I could do that. I mean, when I worked for Harper Chemicals in London I...' He talked for two or three minutes about his work. David Wilson listened, but he didn't say anything. Then he smiled. It was a cold, hard smile, and it made John feel uncomfortable. He remembered his old suit and grey hair, and he wished he hadn't come.

'You really need this job, don't you, Mr Duncan?' David Wilson said. 'You need it a lot.'

'Yes, I do,' he said quietly. But he thought: I hate you, Wilson. You're enjoying this. You like making people feel small. I hate people like you.

Wilson's smile grew bigger. He stood up, and held out his hand. 'OK,' he said. 'When can you start?'

'What?' John was very surprised. 'What did you say?'

“我明白了，”大卫·威尔逊说，“生业界是很艰难的。”他望着约翰那灰色的旧西服。“这么说你想得到一份生物学家的的工作。这是一家化学公司，邓肯先生。我们制造油漆。我们需要一名生物学家以保证工厂的一切都安全。我们需要有人告诉政府在这里工作是安全的，并且告诉他们城市附近有油漆厂也是安全的。这对我们很重要。”

“如果有什么不安全的，我们当然要改变它，”玛丽·卡特说。大卫·威尔逊看着她，但没有说任何话。

“是的，我知道。”约翰紧张地说，“我想我能够做。我的意思是，当我在伦敦为哈波化学公司工作时，我……”他谈了两三分钟关于他的工作的事。大卫·威尔逊听着，但没插话，然后他微笑着。那是一种冰冷、严酷的笑，它使约翰感到很不舒服。他想起他的旧西服和灰头发，他后悔来这里。

“你真的很需要这份工作，是吧，邓肯先生？”大卫·威尔逊说，“你非常迫切地需要它。”

“是的，”他轻声地回答。但是他想：我恨你，威尔逊。你喜欢看着我的这副样子。你喜欢使人感到渺小，我恨你这样的人。

威尔逊的笑容变得更灿烂。他站起身，伸出手说：“好吧，你什么时候能开始？”

“什么？”约翰很惊讶，“你说什么？”

chemical ① *adj. of chemistry.* 化学的。② *n. something solid or liquid used in chemistry.* 化学制品（常用复数）。**government** *n. the group of people who control a country.* 政府。

'I said, "When can you start?", Mr Duncan. We need you in our factory as soon as possible. Will Monday be OK?'

'You mean I've got the job?'

'Of course. Congratulations!' Wilson shook John's hand. 'My secretary will tell you about your pay. You'll have your own office, and a company car, of course. I'd like you to start work with Mary on Monday. Is that OK?'

'I... Yes, yes, of course. That's fine. Thank you, thank you very much.'

“我说‘你什么时候能开始?’邓肯先生。我们需要你尽快到我们工厂,星期一行吗?”

“你是说我已得到这份工作了?”

“当然,祝贺你!”威尔逊握着约翰的手。
“我的秘书将告诉你有关你的工资的事,你当然还有自己的办公室和公司配给你的车。我想让你星期一就开始与玛丽一起工作,那样行吗?”

“我……行,当然可以。这很好,谢谢你,非常感谢。”

congratulations *n.* a word said to someone who has been lucky or done well. 对某人幸运或成功时所说的祝贺之词。

2

At home

‘**H**i, Dad. Your supper’s in the kitchen.’
John’s sixteen-year-old daughter, Christine, was sitting at the table doing her homework. His son Andrew, who was thirteen, was watching television.

‘Thanks, Christine,’ John said. ‘I’m sorry I’m late. Is everything OK?’

‘Fine, thanks.’ Christine gave him a quick smile, then continued with her work. John got his food from the kitchen. Fried fish and chips. The food was dry and didn’t taste very good. But he didn’t say anything about that. John was not a good cook himself and his children were no better. His wife had been a good cook, he remembered.

John tried to eat the terrible supper and looked around the small, miserable flat. The furniture was twenty years old, the wallpaper and carpets were cheap and dirty. The rooms were all small, and he could see no trees or gardens from the windows — just the lights from hundreds of other flats. And there were books, clothes, and newspapers on the floor.

Once, when his wife had been alive, he had had a fine house. A beautiful big house in the country, with a large garden. They had had lots of new furniture, two cars, expensive holidays — everything they needed. He had had a good job; they hadn’t needed to think about money. And then he had

2 在家中

“喂，爸爸。你的晚餐在厨房里。”

约翰 16 岁的女儿克里斯汀正坐在桌旁做功课。他 13 岁的儿子安德鲁正在看电视。

“谢谢你，克里斯汀，”约翰说。“很抱歉，我回来晚了，你一切都好吗？”

“好，谢谢。”克里斯汀朝他匆匆一笑，又继续做作业。约翰从厨房端出食物——炸鱼和薯条。食物很干，不怎么好吃，但是他什么也没说。约翰自己不善于烹饪，他的孩子们更不行。他回想起他的太太曾是很好的厨师。

约翰努力吃下这难咽的晚餐，环视着这又小又简陋的公寓。家具是 20 年前买的，壁纸和地毯既廉价又脏。所有的房间都很小，从窗口往外看去见不到树林或花园，只有从数百家别的公寓里透出的灯光。地上到处扔着书、衣服和报纸。

以前他太太活着的时候，他有一座很好的房子，一座坐落在乡村，有很大花园的漂亮的大房子。他们曾有很多崭新的家具、两部汽车、奢侈的假期——应有尽有。他有一份满意的工作，他们不用考虑钱。然后他创办



continue *v.* to go on doing. 继续。 **chip** *n.* a long thin piece of potato cooked in deep fat. 薯条。

started the boat-building company, and his luck had ended.

When Rachel had died, John had been terribly unhappy — much too unhappy to think about business. A few months later his company had closed, and he had lost all his money. John had had to sell his beautiful house in the country, and move to this miserable flat.

And for the last two years, he hadn't had a job at all. He was a poor man, and an unlucky one, too. He had tried for lots of jobs, and got none of them. There were too many bright young biologists. But now that was all going to change. He looked at his daughter and smiled.

'Did you have a good day at school, Christine?' he asked her.

'Oh, all right, I suppose,' she said. She didn't look very happy. 'I've got a letter for you.'

She pushed the letter across the table, and he opened it. It was from her school. One of the teachers was taking the children on a skiing holiday to the mountains in Switzerland. It cost £ 400 for ten days. Parents who wanted their children to go had to send the money to the school before February 25th.

John's smile grew bigger. 'Do you want to go on this holiday, Christine?' he asked.

She looked at him strangely. 'Of course I do, Dad,' she said. 'But I can't, can I? We haven't got £ 400.'

'No, I suppose not.' He looked at her carefully through his thick glasses. She was a clever, strong girl — good at her

了造船公司,接着他的运气结束了。

雷切尔死后,约翰一直很忧郁,太忧郁以至于无心考虑生意。几个月以后他的公司关闭了,他失去了所有的钱。约翰不得不卖掉乡村房子,搬进这简陋的公寓。

在过去的两年中他根本没有工作。他是一个贫穷的人,也是一个倒霉的人,他试找了许多工作,但没有得到一份工作。智慧、年轻的生物学家太多了。但是现在这一切都将发生变化。他微笑着望着他女儿。

“今天你在学校过得愉快吗,克里斯汀?”他问她。

“噢,我想还行,”她说。她看上去并不很高兴。“我有一封给你的信。”

她把信从桌上推过来,他打开信。信来自她的学校。有个老师要带学生们到瑞士的山上去滑雪度假。10天的费用是400英镑。想让自己的孩子去的家长得在2月25日前把钱交到学校。

约翰的笑容更加灿烂了。“克里斯汀,你想参加这次度假吗?”他问。

她奇怪地望着他。“我当然想,爸爸。”她说,“但是我不能去,对吧?我们没有400英镑。”

“是的,我估计不能。”他透过厚厚的眼镜小心地看着她。她是一个聪明坚强的女孩,她功课、体育都很好。但是她从来没有

bright adj. clever. 聪明的.
skating n. a sport when people move over snow on skis. 滑雪运动。

schoolwork, good at sports. But she had never been skiing; John hadn't had enough money.

'Are your friends going?' he asked her.

'Some of them, yes. Miranda, Jane, Nigel — the rich ones, you know. But they often go skiing; it's easy for them. I know I can't go, Dad. Throw the letter away.'

John looked at her, and felt his heart beating quickly. 'No, don't do that, Christine,' he said. 'Perhaps you can go, if you want to. Why not?'

Christine laughed. 'What's happened, Dad? Have you robbed a bank or something?'

John stood up. He went into the kitchen and got himself a drink. 'No,' he said, when he came back. 'But something interesting happened today. Put your homework away, Christine — and turn that TV off, Andrew. I've got something to tell you.'

'Oh, not now, Dad!' said Andrew. 'This is an exciting story.'

John smiled. 'I've got an exciting story, too, Andrew. Come and listen.'

John Duncan's children lived in an old, untidy flat, they had no money, and they often ate awful food. But they could still talk to their father. So Andrew turned off the TV, and sat down in a big armchair beside his father and Christine.

The story didn't sound very exciting at first. 'I went to a factory today,' John said. 'That paint factory by the river.'

滑过雪,因为约翰没有足够的钱。

“你的朋友去吗?”他问她。

“有些人去,那些较富的同学,如米兰达、珍妮、奈杰尔。他们经常去滑雪,这对他们来说很容易。我知道我不能去,爸爸。把信扔掉吧。”

约翰望着她,感到心跳加快。“不,别这样做,克里斯汀,”他说,“也许你能够去,如果你想去。为什么不能呢?”

克里斯汀笑了。“发生什么事了,爸爸?难道你抢了银行或什么?”

约翰站起身,走进厨房为自己倒了一杯饮料。“没有,”他回来时说,“但是,今天发生了有趣的事情。克里斯汀,先把你的作业放一下,安德鲁,把那电视关上,我有事要告诉你们。”

“哦,等一下关,爸爸,”安德鲁说,“这是一个精彩的故事。”

约翰笑着说:“我也有一个精彩的故事,安德鲁,过来听听。”

约翰·邓肯的孩子们住在一间旧式杂乱的公寓里,他们没有钱,经常吃糟糕的食品。但是他们仍愿跟他们的父亲交谈。所以安德鲁关掉电视,坐在他的父亲和克里斯汀旁边的一张长沙发里。

故事一开始听起来并不很精彩。约翰说:“今天我去了一个工厂。河边的那家油

throw v. to move your arm quickly to send something through the air. 扔。
rob v. to take sth. by force. 抢劫。
untidy adj. not clean. 不整洁。