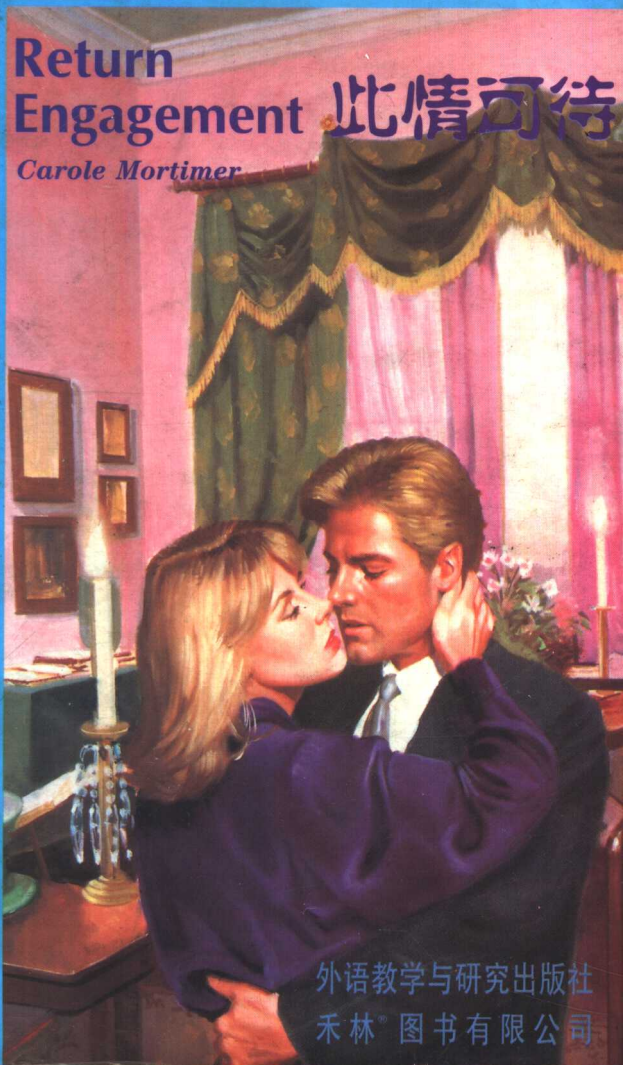


诗露·英汉对照读物



Return Engagement 此情可待

Carole Mortimer



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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涌……

禾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

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***“I’m hardly in a
desperate state about
the wedding being called off.”***

Wolf's tone of voice suggested he found the topic tiresome. “And that's because——” he continued.

“You didn't love her!” Cyn finished accusingly. “I already knew that. You're Incapable of loving anyone! That's why I——” She broke off as she realized she'd been about to admit to having encouraged Rebecca to think very seriously before she committed herself to a marriage she wasn't sure of; that would be all the ammunition Wolf would need to rip her to pieces!

“Yes?” Wolf prompted, silkily soft.

Her cheeks were no longer pale now but darkly flushed. “Why I didn't marry you myself seven years ago!”

“All right, Cyn,” he ground out harshly, a nerve pulsing in his rigidly clenched jaw. “I'll go. But if I ever find out you were instrumental in Rebecca's sudden flight, I'll——”

六本禾林爱情小说以二十六种文字风行一百多个国家和地区

Chapter One

‘**T**ouches of *Lady Chatterley*, do you think?’
Janie giggled.

Cyn made a slight acknowledging movement of the remark, although her attention was still held by the scene they were unwittingly witnessing.

They had been shown into this small reception-room only seconds ago by the rather haughty butler, while he left them to go off in search of Rebecca Harcourt, the young mistress of the house.

She and Janie had driven into town especially to see the Harcourts, and had been suitably impressed by the house from the outside. Grand old houses like this one weren’t so unusual in London, but the amount of ground attached to it was, Cyn was sure, given the expense of property in London and its immediate vicinity.

It was because of the size of the grounds that the Harcourts needed the gardener at all, she would say. And what a gardener — a tall golden god of a man, about twenty-five, his skin bronzed from the amount of time he obviously worked outside.

He had been working on one of the extensive borders outside when Cyn and Janie were shown into the reception-room, obviously absorbed in his work. He had seemed to remain so, when a young girl of about twenty crossed the landscaped lawn to enter the wooden-structure gazebo that stood in one corner of the garden facing away from the house. But seconds later he had straightened, glanced casually about him, before he too went into the gazebo.

Hence Janie's teasing remark! The girl who had crossed the garden hadn't looked like a maid, or anyone else who worked in the house for that matter. Her blaze of red hair was expertly styled, her make-up perfectly applied, the suit she was wearing designer-label, if Cyn wasn't mistaken.

God, she hoped it *wasn't* Rebecca Harcourt...! Because Cyn very much doubted that that Adonis of a gardener was her intended bridegroom.

Gerald Harcourt had actually been the one to make the appointment for Cyn to come here today, claiming his motherless daughter needed help organising her wedding, which was to take place in August. And organising weddings, and dealing with all the problems that seemed to bring along with it, was what Cyn did in her business, Perfect Bliss.

Gerald Harcourt, a man in his early forties, had been a guest at one of the weddings Cyn had organised last weekend. Gerald Harcourt spoke to her during the wedding reception. He had been most impressed when he learnt that Cyn had organised the wedding.

Gerald had questioned Cyn about Perfect Bliss, explaining that his own daughter, his only child, was being married later in the year, and, as his wife had died more than a dozen years ago, Rebecca was finding the whole thing rather a headache on her own. Cyn found his tall, distinguished looks, dark hair lightly sprinkled with grey at the temples, blue eyes warm in a face that was maturely handsome, more than passingly attractive. She found the idea of organising his daughter's wedding, the 'society wedding' she had been seeking, even *more* attractive, and she was more than willing to drive up from her little office in Feltham to the Harcourt home and talk to the daughter in person.

Even as Cyn stood there watching, the gazebo door opened once again and the girl emerged, but from her distressed state she was obviously in floods of tears.

Not a happy bride!

Cyn turned away with a sigh, *more than ever* convinced that her journey here today had been a wasted one. She looked across the room as the door opened to admit, not Rebecca Harcourt, but Gerald himself.

‘My dear Cyn!’ he greeted her warmly, giving her one of his welcoming smiles. He was dressed in a dark business suit today and looking very lean and handsome. ‘I’m so sorry you’ve been kept waiting,’ he said regretfully as he crossed the room to her side, ‘but we seem to be having a little difficulty locating Rebecca.’

Cyn knocked Janie’s arm as she sensed that her young assistant had been about to blab Rebecca’s presence in the garden; unless she was very much mistaken, Rebecca Harcourt wouldn’t want her father to know she had been anywhere near the garden.

‘That’s perfectly all right,’ she returned smoothly. ‘We were just admiring your home.’

Gerald looked pleased by her comment. He was obviously a man who enjoyed what his wealth could give him. ‘We like it,’ he dismissed. ‘Did you —?’

‘Aren’t you going to introduce us, Gerald?’ interrupted a silkily soft voice.

A voice Cyn instantly recognised!

But it couldn't be. Not here. *Why* here?

Wolf Thornton's voice. . .

She couldn't move. She knew her face was as pale as alabaster.

Wolf Thornton was standing somewhere behind her, and she doubted if he was going to be any more pleased to see her than she was to see him.

It was seven years since she had last seen him; of course she had changed! Her hair was no longer that cascade of moonlight silver-blond it had been when she was twenty, but styled to her shoulders in a feathered cut. Her even features were the same, of course — the slightly too short nose, the wide smiling mouth, the small pointed chin. And she still wore some of the clothes she had owned seven years ago. She couldn't afford to replace them, so she knew she hadn't put on any weight!

'Glad you could make it,' Gerald was greeting the other man now. 'I've only just got in from the office myself. Although it's just as well we decided to meet here after all; Rebecca seems to have done one of her disappearing acts again,' he added indulgently.

'She'll turn up,' the other man dismissed

smoothly. 'She always does.'

Oh, God, that voice. Cyn shivered in reaction, feeling waves of sheer terror coursing through her now. The last time she had seen Wolf Thornton she had made it perfectly clear exactly what she thought of him, and she had no reason to believe that the intervening years — she had had no contact with him during that time — had done anything to soften *his* feelings towards her.

Wolf ran Thornton Industries, and Gerald Harcourt ran his own company, which was just as powerfully successful; so why *shouldn't* the two businessmen be friends? But why had the two men had to meet today, and here of all places?

She could see Janie looking at her curiously now — when the girl could tear her gaze away from the man standing over by the door, that was! Wolf still had that animal magnetism that was so attractive to women, Cyn saw with dismay.

She turned determinedly, that pointed chin at a defensive angle, her breath catching in her throat as she looked at Wolf. He *hadn't* changed; that dark blond hair was still too long to be fashionable, several straight tendrils falling over his forehead, his golden-brown eyes surrounded by the longest dark lashes Cyn

had ever seen on a man or a woman, his nose long and straight, his mouth — His mouth *wasn't* the same, she realised with a frown. In the past his mouth had been a sensual invitation, but now it was a thin slash of cynicism.

He seemed to sense her gaze on him and looked across at her, an instant flare of recognition in his expression. His eyes narrowed to steely slits as he straightened challengingly. Whereas in the past he had seemed possessed of a timeless quality, a natural enthusiasm that made it difficult to pinpoint his age, today he looked every one of his thirty-five years.

Cyn swallowed hard. She had never felt more like fleeing in her life before — fleeing *for* her life! There had been a time in her life when she feared Wolf *might* actually kill her.

'Gerald —?' Wolf's control never wavered as he turned pointedly to the other man, still obviously waiting for that introduction.

As if he didn't know exactly who she was! She refused to believe he had forgotten her.

'Sorry, Wolf,' the older man smiled easily, completely unaware of any tension in the room. 'This is Lucynda Smith, of Perfect Bliss.'

Wolf didn't look as if he found anything in the

least amusing about her name, or her! And the speculative look he gave the other man seemed to question just how much of a 'friend' of hers Gerald considered himself to be.

It was an interesting question; as well as asking Cyn to call here when they had spoken on Saturday, Gerald had also invited her out to dinner. The first she had been only too happy to organise, the latter she had said they would talk about further when they met again. She hadn't envisaged Wolf Thornton also being present when that happened. In fact, she had always pushed firmly from her mind any thoughts that she and Wolf would *ever* meet again!

'And this is my assistant, Janie Harrison,' she put in firmly.

Wolf Thornton wasn't *presentable*, Cyn thought slightly resentfully; his ignoring of Janie, in order to continue looking at *her* with that chilling intensity, bordered on rudeness.

'Miss Smith?' Wolf said softly in answer to Gerald's introduction.

Colour warmed her cheeks at his unspoken implication. She knew to what he was referring, of course; the last time they had met it had looked as if she was about to marry Roger Collins.

‘A case of “always the bridesmaid, never the bride,” I’m afraid,’ she returned lightly, meeting his gaze with an effort now.

Why was he continuing to behave as if the two of them had never met before?

‘Then forgive me for asking. But if that’s the case, by what experience do you claim to be able to organise other brides’ weddings for them, especially one like Rebecca’s?’

He was meaning to be insulting — and he succeeded! He knew very well about her own working-class back-ground, the distaste she had for so-called ‘society’.

‘Oh, come on, Wolf,’ Gerald dismissed lightly, still unaware of the undercurrents to the conversation taking place between Cyn and Wolf. ‘You don’t have to have been knocked over by a bus to know what the consequences will be.’

Gerald frowned now. ‘I’ll go and have another look for Rebecca,’ he told them absently before leaving the room.

Cyn had never been so grateful for Janie’s pleading to come with her that morning than she was at this moment. Otherwise she would have been left alone in the room with Wolf.

She wasn't used to seeing him quite so formally dressed as he was today. His dark three-piece suit and snowy white shirt were austere in their impeccable tailoring; a grey silk tie was knotted severely at his throat. His only adornment was a plain gold watch strapped to his left wrist above one long sensitive hand.

Wolfram James Thornton. She had expected to hear more of the name over the last seven years, but the only thing she had heard it used in connection with was Thornton Industries. The business section of the newspapers often carried articles about the rapidly expanding company; it seemed the family business had prospered under his guidance. Strange, she had never thought of Wolf as a businessman. But then seven years ago he hadn't been. . .

'So — Cyn, wasn't it?' he drawled hardily, challengingly, 'you're going to wave your magic wand and make this wedding perfect for Rebecca?'

Her cheeks felt warm at the insult behind his taunt. 'I hope so, yes,' she confirmed tautly.

He strode further into the room. 'A flowing white gown, a cake with little cupids decorating it, a horse and carriage to drive the bride and groom from the church to the wedding reception?'

Cyn paled as he used his words like sharp barbs to wound her; he hadn't forgotten a thing! She drew in a shaky breath. 'The latter might be a little difficult to organise in the middle of London,' she dismissed sharply.

'I'm sure it could be arranged — if that's what the bride would really like,' Wolf returned harshly.

She swallowed hard, deliberately turning away to look at Janie. 'I seem to have forgotten to bring my notebook in with me — do you think you could go out to the van and get it for me?' she requested warmly — the notebook in question feeling as if it were burning a hole through her handbag into her hip as she told the lie!

'Of course,' Janie agreed readily, shooting Wolf a longing look as she sidled past him and then out of the door.

'Just how long have you been a "friend" of Gerald's?'

She drew in a sharp breath at the deliberate provocation of the remark. 'I —'

'It can't have been for very long,' Wolf added scathingly. 'He only dropped his last mistress a matter of weeks ago.'

'I'm not his mistress!' Cyn hissed the denial.