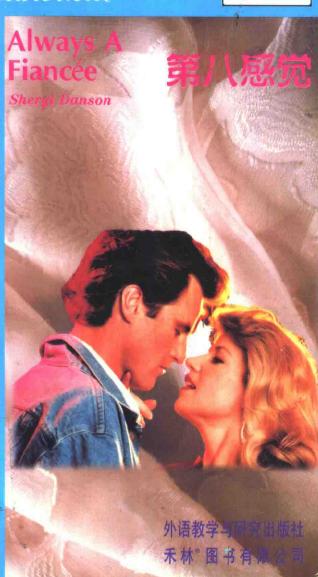
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第八應觉

Always a Fiancée

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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设情节走向,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?

外语数学与研究出版社始终致力于我国外语的普及,教教以求掀起外语阅读的风气。外语学习也许不然尽是幸劳的苦事,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疑重和深沉,但小说中叙述的男女两性的情感生活,也放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》风廉中国,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,也放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,未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,沂文遗俗浓畅。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题喜苦乐,在明快畅晓的小说叙述语言的环绕中坐看云起云演……

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禾林要情小说以二十六种文字风行一百多个国家和地区一九

"I haven't told you about my seven ex-fiancés."

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"Seven?" Grady's voice rose a full octave.

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She groaned wearily... "... That's exactly what they said.

Grady's face took on a determined expression that Hilary had never seen before. "None of that matters."

"It does matter, Grady!" She had to convince him. "Go find some nice sensible woman with a station wagon and support hose...."

Grady grasped her arms and gazed into her eyes. "I don't want a sensible woman, dammit! Hilary, I want you!"

-Always a Fiancée

Chapter One

I tall began with a crash — three simultaneous crashes, actually — and the horrible sound of grinding steel. There were no squealing tires, no blaring horns, no screams warning of imminent disaster. It happened so fast, no one had a chance to anticipate it. No one, of course, including the man with his dark head slumped over the steering wheel of his Thunderbird hardtop. He was not in pain or unconscious, but outraged by the sheer senselessness of the accident that had left his vintage car embracing a lamppost in row five of the Giant Eagle Supermarket parking lot.

"Damn!" Grady Thompson swore, his fingers tightening on the wheel. It was probably all that was left intact of the automobile that had embodied his oldest, fondest dreams. His obsession with the 1964 T-Bird dated back to the year the model was new—six long years before he'd even learned to drive. He'd vowed then that one day he'd have one, though at the time he'd had no idea what owning the car would entail. A classic T-Bird wasn't simply a means of

transportation; it was the investment of a lifetime.

He'd paid several times Ford's original sticker price, and that had been only the beginning. Every inch of the automobile had been lovingly restored, at considerable time and expense. The insurance was positively extortionary. There was also the cost of maintaining his other car, the Clunker, which was twenty-five years and twenty-five thousand miles newer and served as his primary vehicle. It ventured out in the snow and rain and salt while the T-Bird sat safely inside its garage. He'd been so careful to protect it from the elements and bad neighborhoods and careless drivers, but had never considered that he could wind up being his car's worst enemy. In the end, he had been the one who had done it in — and simply by smacking it into a stationary object.

Though he didn't want to do it, he raised his head and peered over the dash for a preliminary appraisal of the damage. The grille, bumper, hood, and one fender were all going to need extensive work, and those were merely the most evident of the casualties. He was sure that once he took a good look at it, there was going to be more. Much more.

Cursing at that thought, he got out of the car and slammed the door behind him. After glancing at the two other collisions that had been coincidental with his and muttering his sincere relief that he hadn't been alone in his idiocy, he marched over to the red Mazda hatchback in row six and brusquely ordered its occupant, "Don't go anywhere! I want to talk to you when I'm finished!" Without waiting for an answer, he spun on his heel and stalked away from the woman.

Hilary Campbell gaped after him as he crossed the parking lot. She couldn't help noticing that he had nice buns.

He didn't look like the kind of man who was in a perpetual snit with the world. But what on earth had set him off at her? She hadn't done anything — not that she remembered, anyway — unless maybe she'd bumped into his cart with hers, breaking his eggs in the process? Though she hadn't noticed any sign of injury before he'd gone stomping off, she wondered if his crankiness might be the result of thumping his head during the car wreck. She hadn't seen it, but she'd heard it quite clearly.

His shoulders were as broad and solid as his tush was tight and firm. Acting on impulse, without taking time to think it through, she sent a piercing wolf whistle flying through the air after him That it

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found its mark was confirmed by the killing look he shot back at her a second later. Undaunted by the tacit reproach in that glare, she flashed him a saucy grin that only seemed to aggravate him further.

Grumbling a few choice words about the relative intelligence level of a woman who could wreak this much havoc without batting an eyelash, he made his way toward the head-on collision. While both drivers involved in that crash were shaken, angry and embarrassed the good news was that neither had been injured. "I'm a police officer," he assured them. "We're gonna have to file a report on this. Let me check on the other guy, and then I'll be back to take statements from both of you."

As he walked away from the two men, Grady glanced around, looking for the woman who belonged to the little red Mazda. Though she seemed to have vanished into thin air, the Mazda itself was still parked in row six. He hoped the fact that she was on foot meant she hadn't gone far and intended to return sometime soon.

The second accident was worse than the first. This driver had hit three parked cars before finally coming to a halt. After verifying that no one had been hurt, he took statements from everyone

involved, called for tow trucks, and located and placated the owners of the parked cars. They were every bit as irate as Grady had expected them to be, particularly when neither he nor the driver who had hit them would explain what had caused the accident.

Once all the drivers and smashed vehicles were on their way and the peace maintained (more or less), he walked back to his own car and saw that the cause of the accidents had returned to the scene of the crime.

She was perched on the crumpled hood of the T-Bird, one pink-suede-thonged foot propped on the mangled bumper while the other dangled from her crossed leg, its shoe slapping restlessly against her sole. His gaze raked up shapely bare legs to the hem of an indecently short Calvin Klein jean miniskirt made even more so by her present position. Above that was an abbreviated pink top that was scarcely more than a bra, and revealed more than it hid of her generously rounded breasts. Her complexion was like gleaming opal, and her features were as fine and delicate. A pile of hair, somewhere between blond brown. tumbled around her shoulders. Dominating her face were the brightest blue eyes he'd ever seen.

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Grady knew he'd looked too long, but he didn't care. From the looks of his car, he was already going to pay for it through the nose. He might as well get his money's worth.

"See anything you like?"

She sounded peevish, like a passerby who had seen the whole thing but didn't want to get involved and wished she'd had the foresight to bolt before anyone realized she was a potential witness. Didn't she know that her role in the fiasco far exceeded that of innocent bystander? That she'd been single-handedly responsible for all those wrecked cars? That she was heaping gross insult on top of grievous injury by sitting on his? If anyone had a right to be peevish, it certainly wasn't her. "What are you doing up there?" he demanded.

"Waiting. Just like you told me to." She shrugged.

That motion of her shoulders managed to be provoking, but he felt a strong jolt of indignant disbelief at her nonchalant attitude toward a calamity everyone else knew she'd precipitated. "Get off there," he snapped irritably. "And where did you go, before?"

"I went to get cigarettes. I'm back." She hopped

off the hood of the car. As she dropped the cigarette and ground it out under the toe of one pink sandal, he couldn't help noticing that her toenails were polished to match. "So, what do you want with me? I didn't see any of the accidents."

"No kidding. What were you doing?"

"I was taking off my sweater."

"Exactly." It was at the precise moment when she'd pulled the sweater over her head, revealing what had appeared to be a nude torso underneath, that all hell had broken loose.

"Exactly?" Hilary echoed skeptically. It was quite simple, actually, or at least she thought it ought to be. She'd put on the sweater before going into the air-conditioned chill of the supermarket, and then taken it off again once she'd come back out into the eighty-degree heat — unseasonable for April in Pittsburgh but there nonetheless. "Is there a law against that?"

"Come on." He stalked around to the passenger side of the wrecked T-Bird, and she automatically followed. "You're coming with me."

At that announcement, she balked, eyeing him cagily as she asked, "You want to think about that one some more?"

He yanked open the car door and frowned at her. "Get in."

Experience with the phenomenon had taught her that all she had to do was wait until it was over.

In the meantime, she told him patiently but firmly, "I'm not going anywhere with you."

"I'd say you don't have a whole hell of a lot of choice in the matter," he muttered disgruntledly. "You're under arrest."

"What?"

"You heard me — get in there." He jabbed his finger into the opening, emphasizing his command.

In her moment of shocked reaction, she actually did as he ordered. After shutting the door, he strode around to the other side of the car and slid behind the wheel. "We'll have to take your car, though. This one's not going anywhere until the wrecker comes back to haul it away."

"I'm not going anywhere with you," Hilary repeated, as if saying it again would make it a fact. As she recovered from the initial impact of the word arrest, she twisted around in the seat, going for the door handle — and freedom.

Before she could open the door, he caught her by the elbow, holding it firmly as he reached for the microphone of the police radio with his other, free hand. "Stay put until I get through here."

She stayed, having no viable alternative. While his grip wasn't tight enough to hurt, it was as secure as a vise — as she discovered when her attempt to extricate her arm only succeeded in grinding the back of his hand into her breast. Covered as it was by a single layer of thin, pink cotton, she could feel each of his hard knuckles press into her soft flesh. She guessed he did, too, because he paused momentarily in his discussion with the dispatcher to turn his head and frown at her as if she'd done it on purpose.

"Come on, let's go," he said as soon as he signed off.

"I told you already. I'm not going anywhere with you." She crossed her arms over her chest and wriggled her bottom into the seat, figuring the wrecker could just haul her away with the car.

Exasperation apparent on his face, he got out of the car, locked the radio in the trunk, and circled to the passenger door. Opening it, he extended his hand to her.

[&]quot;No."

[&]quot;Get out of the car."

[&]quot;Are you crazy?"

"I wasn't crazy until twenty minutes ago." He looked as if he was telling the truth, verifying her earlier speculation that he was ordinarily the most reasonable of men. At the moment, however, reason was still on vacation. His hand closed over her forearm. "You have the right to remain silent..."

As much as she hadn't wanted to get into the car earlier, she most definitely didn't want to get out now. She planted both feet on the floorboards and stared up at him. "What are you doing?"

"Arresting you." He continued Mirandizing her.

The reiteration of the word arrest was more than she could dismiss. "I know that. I watch television. What I don't understand is why."

"Attractive nuisance."

"I thought that was a swimming pool without a fence," she pointed out.

"It's also a half-naked woman in a parking lot," he barked. "Do you realize that you wrecked seven cars?"

"I didn't do anything! My car wasn't even involved! It wasn't even running! I wasn't even in it!" She braced herself against the inside of the doorframe and held on.

"Last chance to go peaceably!"

"What're you gonna do? Shoot me?"

"Resisting arrest! Let go, dammit!" he added as he bent down, seized her around the waist, and swung her up and over his shoulder in a fireman's carry. She noted that he felt every bit as solid as he looked. While her altered perspective might have confirmed the corollary that his buns were spectacular, she didn't have leisure time to look.

"Put me down!" Hilary insisted, wriggling. She thumped her fist against his back, just once to get his attention.

"Assaulting a police officer..." Grady swatted her rear.

She squawked angrily. Instead of denim, his hand landed against warm, smooth skin and something silky. He winced as his eyes skittered sideways to verify his suspicion. Yep, shiny pink nylon. He blushed and reached to tug the hem of the skirt so it would cover her now-exposed behind. His hand closed to grip the hem of the skirt and grabbed something else altogether.

Her yowl of indignation was even louder and Grady tried to retrieve his hand. If only she hadn't reacted to the intrusion by clamping her thighs together, trapping his hand between them. He hoped

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