



Vol. 108



# *Steal Away Home*

寻父记



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**SIMPLE ENGLISH READERS**

**Vol. 108**

# *Steal Away Home*

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## 内 容 提 要

本书描述的是十九世纪五十年代美国南卡罗来纳州两个黑孩子历尽千辛万苦，终于从庄园主的魔爪下挣脱出来，千里迢迢找到他们父亲的故事。文字浅显，适合英语初学者阅读。

简易英语注释读物

### 寻 父 记

简·克里斯托夫 著

桥 才 注 释

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# 1

I will begin the story of our escape<sup>1</sup> where it began in my own mind — in the little slave cabin where I was born and brought up in Chesterfield County, South Carolina.<sup>2</sup> It was a warm Sunday evening in May 1853. That was a long time ago and I've grown a lot and learned a lot since then, but I still remember that evening just as if it was yesterday:<sup>3</sup> the warm air, the smell of food cooking inside and flowers outside, the nice feeling of Mama moving around in the cabin.<sup>4</sup> My brother Obadiah<sup>5</sup> was sitting by me in the doorway. We had just got back from a church' meeting<sup>6</sup> and were eating our supper of thin soup and corn buns<sup>7</sup> in the light of the setting sun.<sup>8</sup> Mama hadn't gone to the meeting because our little sister was sick — she was sick almost all the time — so she was questioning us to see if we had paid attention.<sup>9</sup>

“What were the hymns,<sup>10</sup> Amos?”<sup>11</sup> she started.

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1. I will begin ... escape: 我将从我最初考虑偷跑时的情景开始讲述我逃跑的故事。这一句中第一个 where ... 是状语从句说明 will begin; 第二个 where ... 是定语从句说明 slave cabin (奴隶住的小屋)。 2. South Carolina ['sauθ, kærəlainə]: (美国) 南卡罗来纳州。 3. just as if it was yesterday: 就象在昨天一样。(虚拟语态)。 4. the nice feeling of Mama moving around in the cabin: 因为屋里有妈妈在忙来忙去而感到幸福安宁的心情。(nice 在口语体中意思很泛。例如: nice weather, a nice dinner, a nice girl, a nice mess.) 5. Obadiah [ˌɒbəˈdaɪə]: 奥巴迪亚。 6. church meeting: 做礼拜。 7. corn buns: 玉米面做的圆面包。 8. in the light of the setting sun: 在落日的余辉中。 9. she was questioning us to see if ... attention: 她正在考问我们, 看我们在做礼拜时是否用心听了。if ... 是一个宾语从句。 10. hymns [himz]: 赞美诗。 11. Amos ['eɪməs]: 阿莫斯。

I remembered three or four for her.<sup>1</sup>

“And Obie,<sup>2</sup> what did the Preacher<sup>3</sup> talk about?”

Obie hadn't been sitting still most of the time at the meeting and I didn't think he'd know, so I tried to help him out.<sup>4</sup>

“It was something about Abel, and then Noah, and then Abraham,<sup>5</sup> and how they all had a lot of faith,” I said.

But Obie surprised me. He must have been listening<sup>6</sup> after all<sup>7</sup> because he remembered the Preacher's very words.<sup>8</sup>

“Abraham, he was called to go out, and he went out not knowing where ....”

He turned and smiled at Mama, and looking into the dark of the cabin I saw her long, dark face light up a little bit with pride.<sup>9</sup>

“And, Mama, you know what? Preacher Prentice<sup>10</sup> walked back over this way after the meeting and was visiting some people here and —” Obie stopped suddenly and we both got to our feet<sup>11</sup> as the Preacher himself, white haired and walking slowly, came round the corner of our cabin.

Preacher Prentice was just about everything we could hope to become.<sup>12</sup> He was a freedman,<sup>13</sup> he could read and write, and he worked for himself, travelling about the country with a horse and cart, repairing and selling pots and pans. The white people

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1. I remembered three or four for her: 我给她讲了三、四首。remember 在这里指把想起来的事提出来。 2. Obie ['oubi]: Obadiah 的简称。 3. Preacher ['pri:tʃə]: 牧师。用大写专指当地某牧师。 4. help him out: 帮他摆脱困境。 5. Abel ['eɪbəl] 艾贝尔, Noah ['nouə] 诺亚, Abraham ['eɪbrəhəm] 亚伯拉罕(都是圣经中人名)。 6. He must have been listening = I was sure he had been listening. 7. after all: 毕竟。 8. Preacher's very words: 牧师的原话。 9. looking into ...pride: 我朝着小屋的暗处看去,发现她狭长的黑脸颊上浮起了一丝自豪的笑容。 10. Prentice ['prentɪs]: 普伦蒂斯。 11. got to our feet: (我们)站起来。 12. Preacher Prentice was ... become: 牧师就是我们指望要做的那种人。 13. freedman: 已被解放的黑奴。

called him a tinker, but to us he was the Preacher.

“Saw you boys at the meeting, didn’t I?” he asked.

We both nodded. We hoped he hadn’t come to tell Mama that Obie hadn’t sat very quietly.<sup>1</sup>

“Do I know your pa?”

I shook my head. “No, sir.” And Obie explained, “Pa’s been gone these five years. He belonged to Master Smithers,<sup>2</sup> and they moved up to Maryland<sup>3</sup> when we were little.”

Mama joined us in the doorway now, and the Preacher looked at her.

“So you must be the wife of Henry that used to be hired out<sup>4</sup> to do carpentry work.<sup>5</sup>”

“That’s right,” said Mama. “I’m Henry’s wife. The Smithers moved away just after my little girl was born, and they took Henry along, as the boy said.”

“I used to know him a little,” said the Preacher. Then he looked quickly around and lowered his voice. “Can I come inside a minute?”

Mama looked surprised,<sup>6</sup> but she went back into the cabin. We all followed her. Then, standing away from the door, the Preacher took off his hat and pulled out a piece of paper. He handed it to Mama.

“I’ve got a letter for you from Henry,” he said. “I’d just been trying to find the right cabin without asking too many questions.<sup>7</sup> Here it is.<sup>8</sup>”

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1. We hoped ... quietly: 我们但愿他来不是为了要在妈妈面前告 Obie, 说他没有安静地听讲。 2. Master Smithers ['smiðəz]: 史密瑟斯庄园主。  
3. Maryland ['mærilənd]: (美) 马里兰州。 4. be hired out: 雇出去。  
5. carpentry ['kɑ:pəntri] work: 木工活。 6. Mama looked surprised: 妈妈显出吃惊的样子。 7. I'd just been trying ... questions: 我想设法不要问得太多, 就能找到所要找的屋子。 8. Here it is: 信就在这里。

Mama studied the piece of paper for a while. There was no excitement on her face, but I could see that the hand that held the letter was trembling. Then she said softly.

“I can’t read.”

The Preacher stood right beside the door,<sup>1</sup> trying to get some of the light without letting himself be seen from the outside. It was hard for him to make out<sup>2</sup> the words, and he read slowly, word by word.

“My dear wife, I am sorry that I did not write to you for so long, but I could not send any more letters in the usual way.”<sup>3</sup>

“I guess he doesn’t want to send any more letters by Master Bricker,” said Obie excitedly.

“Quiet, son,” Mama said sharply, and the Preacher put a finger to his lips.

The letter went on: “Master Smithers fell ill and died last October. He set me free before he died, so I went north. I have taken the name of Carpenter and am living in a small town called Lemhorn near the city of Philadelphia.<sup>4</sup> There is a lot of building going on here and I always have work, I save all the money I can,<sup>5</sup> and I hope in maybe four years or even a little less<sup>6</sup> I will have enough money to buy you and little Sally from Master Bricker. I wish Amos and Obadiah were here to help me. God bless and keep you all.<sup>7</sup> Your loving husband.”

For a minute nobody spoke. Then Mama said softly, “Four years.” I couldn’t tell whether she was sad or happy.

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1. right beside the door: 正好在门边。 2. make out: 认出。 3. in the usual way: 通常的方式。 4. Philadelphia [ˌfɪləˈdelfiə]: (美) 费拉德尔菲亚 (即费城)。 5. I save all the money I can: 我尽量把钱节省下来。 6. in maybe four years or even a little less: 大约在四年或更短一点的时间之后。 7. God bless and keep you all: 愿上帝保佑你们 (这句用的是虚拟语态, 表示愿望)。

“What about us?” said Obie. “He says he’s going to ask to buy Mama and Sally, but what about us?”

He sounded just about ready to cry,<sup>1</sup> so I said quickly:

“He said he wished we were there, Obie. But he won’t have money, not for all four of us<sup>2</sup>. He wants Mama the most, and Master would maybe sell Sally cheap because she’s not strong.”

Obie felt better then. “Maybe he wants us to run away and go north and help him.”

Mama and I started to tell him not to say such things when the Preacher said slowly,<sup>3</sup> “Maybe that’s just what he does want.”<sup>4</sup>

We all stared at him. Obie was the most surprised of all at the idea that he might be right.<sup>5</sup>

The Preacher went on. “He couldn’t say just what he meant. He knows we can’t talk openly here, and even my letters get read at the post office<sup>6</sup> before I ever see them. But what he says about wishing Amos and Obadiah could be with him, that’s written larger and darker than the rest of the letter. It’s got to have<sup>7</sup> some special meaning.”

“But they’re just little children,” whispered Mama, “Amos, he’s only twelve, and Obie’s nine. And they’re both small

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1. He sounded just about ready to cry: 他快要哭出声来。 2. he won't have money ... us: 他(四年以后)不会有钱——不会有足够赎买我们四口人的钱。 not for all four of us = not have money for all four of us. 3. Mama and I started ... when the Preacher said slowly: 妈和我正要叫他别讲这些, 就在这时候, 牧师却慢吞吞地说……。这里 when = just at that moment 4. that's just what he does want: 这正是他的愿望。 does 用以加强语气。 5. Obie ... at the idea that ... right 他可能猜对了, 对这一点最感到惊讶的是 Obie 自己。名词从句 that ... 是 idea 的同位语。 6. even my letters get read ... office: 连我的信也有人在邮局先看过了。 get 和过去分词连用强调动作, 例如 get killed, get wounded 等。 7. It's got to have ... = It must have ....



and thin for their age.”

The Preacher looked at us and rubbed his head. “I guess they know how to do a full day’s work though,<sup>1</sup>” he said.

We nodded. We had to know how. Every able-bodied<sup>2</sup> slave worked from sun-up to late afternoon on the Bricker plantation.<sup>3</sup>

“And they look clever boys,” the Preacher went on.

“Yes, indeed they are,” said Mama. “They’re like their pa. Amos, he’s — well, he’s quite grown-up although he’s so young. He’s been the man<sup>4</sup> around here these five years, since he was small. And my Obie,” she smiled a little bit, “he’s very clever at talking, he could talk his way out of anything.”<sup>5</sup>”

Obie was full of excitement. “We could do it,<sup>6</sup> Mama,” he told her. “Amos and I are very good walkers. Remember last Christmas we walked all the way to Searsville and back, and we weren’t even tired. That must have been twelve miles at least. We could do it.”

“We could try, Mama,” I added, trying to sound braver than I felt.

Mama shook her head. “It must be hundreds and hundreds of miles. I don’t know how far ... And they wouldn’t even know the way.”<sup>7</sup>

That was true enough. We all knew that we lived in South Carolina and that North Carolina<sup>8</sup> began just a little way past

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1. I guess ... though: 不过我猜想他们能全天劳动。 2. able-bodied ['eɪbl 'bɒdɪd]: *adj.* 体格健壮的。 3. plantation [plæn'teɪʃən] *n.* 种植园, 庄园。 4. the man: (家里的) 唯一男劳力。 5. could talk his way out of anything: 凭他那张咀任何场合都可以混过去。 6. We could do it: 我们能做到的。 7. they wouldn't even know the way: 他们甚至连路都不认得。 would 表示猜想。 8. North Carolina ['nɔ:θ 'kærə'leɪnə]: (美) 北卡罗来纳州。

Searsville. But where was Philadelphia? We only knew that it was up north<sup>1</sup> and very far away.

That didn't seem to worry the Preacher though. "There are people who would help them along the way," he said. "I could put them on the underground railroad."

"The what?"

"The underground railroad." The Preacher explained that name which then meant nothing to us<sup>2</sup> but soon would mean so much. The "railroad" was people, people who hid and helped runaway slaves and sent them on to the next "station"<sup>3</sup> on the road north to freedom.

Mama was still shaking her head and saying how little we were when he finished explaining, but somehow I already knew we would go.

"You don't need to make up your mind right now," the Preacher said finally. "But if you decide, this is what you can do. Does Master Bricker give you a day off<sup>4</sup> on July 4th<sup>5</sup>?"

We nodded.

"Well, the fourth comes on a Monday this year. If you were to<sup>6</sup> get away Saturday night or Sunday morning early, you'd have two days' start<sup>7</sup> before anyone would notice you were gone. You should be able to walk to the new bridge over the Pee Dee River in that time. It's no more than twenty-five miles, I guess. Well, you sit there on the river bank under the bridge — no one will see you there. I'll come with my cart

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1. up north: 北方那一头。 2. which then meant nothing to us: (那个名字)当时对我们来说还没有什么意义。 3. sent them on to the next "station": 把他们继续送往下一“站”。 4. day off: 休假日。 5. July 4th: 美利坚合众国成立纪念日。 6. were to...: 打算要……。 (to be to do... 指一个预先计划好的动作) 7. have two days' start: (比追捕者)早两天出发。

some time on July 5th. I'll stop near the bridge and go down to the river for some water. When I start singing that means it's safe for you to come out from under the bridge and get into my cart. I can take you up as far as Raleigh, maybe, and I'll leave you with someone<sup>1</sup> who'll send you up farther on the underground railroad."

"But what about Mama?" I asked. "If we ran away Master Bricker would punish her."

Mama put her arm around me. "If you boys were free," she said, "there wouldn't be anything Master Bricker could do that would hurt me."<sup>2</sup>

"Besides," the Preacher added, "you could fix it<sup>3</sup> so he wouldn't know just what happened to you, whether you'd run away, got stolen or drowned or what."

"Can we go, Mama?" begged Obie.

"I've got to think some more," she answered uncertainly. "It's so far to go and you're so little." Then turning to the Preacher she asked, "Couldn't you pick them up<sup>4</sup> some place nearer than that bridge?"

He shook his head. "It's not safe for me to be in the neighbourhood when any slave runs away. If the white people begin to think I am helping them, I can't be of any more use."<sup>5</sup>

Then he asked me to look outside and see if he could leave without being seen. I told him yes, and then showed him the way along the path to the main road where he had slept the night before.

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1. leave you with someone: 将你们交给某一个人。 2. If you boys were free ... me: 你们两个孩子如真获得自由,那么不管 Bricker 庄园主对我怎么样,我也不会在乎了。这句用 were 和 would, could 表示虚拟语气。 3. fix it: 布置好。 4. Pick ... up: 接……上车。 5. of ... use = useful.

As he went off he put his hand on my shoulder. "I'll see you, I guess. July 5th, by the new Pee Dee Bridge."

I walked slowly back to the cabin. All of a sudden<sup>1</sup> I could feel my head full of new thoughts and my heart full of new feelings. Everything seemed strange and dangerous and exciting. Some slaves had got together behind the cabins and were singing, as they often did on Sunday night. Through the dark I heard the words of the song; they moved me very much:

"Didn't my Lord deliver Daniel, deliver Daniel, deliver Daniel?"<sup>2</sup>

"Didn't my Lord deliver Daniel, then why not every man?"

## 2

The next few weeks were different from any that had gone before. I was doing the same things, mostly<sup>3</sup> hoeing, weeding and watering in the vegetable garden or in the cotton fields, but I did it all with a strange new feeling that after thirty, after twenty, after ten, and then at last after one more day I would never work in those fields again. When I talked to one of the other boys I was always remembering that pretty soon<sup>4</sup> he wouldn't see me any more, and he didn't even know it. And in the evening when I looked around our bare little cabin, and especially when I talked to Mama and Sally, the excitement and adventure got all mixed up with a sad feeling that I would soon be leaving them.

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1. All of a sudden = suddenly. 2. "Didn't my Lord deliver Daniel ... Daniel": 这是一首宗教色彩的歌。黑奴借此寄托他们渴望自由的心情。词中 Lord 就是上帝。deliver 意思是释放。 3. mostly: 大部分, 多半。 4. pretty soon: 不久。

I knew that Obie was feeling the same way, and with him everything showed more.<sup>1</sup> Every few days<sup>2</sup> Mama or I would have to tell him not to talk so openly, not to look at me in a kind of knowing way,<sup>3</sup> or not to smile so much.

Saturday night, July 2nd, finally came, and as soon as we had washed ourselves and eaten, we got everything ready for the next morning. Obie and I got out our fishing poles — we'd decided that nobody would notice two black boys walking away from their master's plantation if they carried fishing poles.<sup>4</sup> Mama was going to tell the master on Monday night that we'd gone fishing and hadn't come back. That would perhaps make him think that we might have got lost or drowned instead of making him sure we'd run away.

Mama packed up some food in a bag for us. The Mistress (Master's wife) sometimes gave her eggs for little Sally, and she had saved four of them and cooked them hard for us. She put in some vegetables, too, and a lot of corn-bread. After that we all lay down and tried to sleep. It must have been several hours before I fell asleep,<sup>5</sup> and then I kept waking up wondering if it was time to get up, but Mama, who was lying on her bed wide awake, would<sup>6</sup> tell me it was still night. Sometime after midnight I really went to sleep but was soon woken up by Obie shaking my shoulder and whispering excitedly. "Amos, get up, get up. It must be time."

I went out and looked at the sky, but it was still very dark.

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1. with him everything showed more: 就他而言, 一切都表露得更明显。  
2. every few days: 每隔几天。 3. look at me in a kind of knowing way: 用心照不宣的样子瞧着我。 4. fishing poles: 钓鱼竿。 5. It must be several hours before ... asleep: 估计是过了好几个小时之后我才入睡。 6. would: 在这里和本页第2—3行 would have to tell ... 一样不表示过去将来时, 而是说明一个过去经常重复的动作。

After that none of us slept any more and finally Mama told us we could get up and dress. She gave us each a big plate of porridge she had made the night before. She couldn't make it hot because she didn't want anyone to smell the fire so early in the morning. I tried to eat because I knew it would be the last real meal I'd have for two days, but I found that eating was just as hard as sleeping. I felt sick,<sup>1</sup> and every mouthful of cold porridge made me feel sicker. Obie was the same, so after telling us to eat several times Mama took the plates away. Then she went to a box where she kept her few things and brought out a small bag of candies which she put in our food bag.

"There's a little present I got for you boys," she said.

"How'd you get them, Mama?"

"Remember the Master gave me ten cents when I found his hunting knife just after Christmas?"

We both felt the love behind that present<sup>2</sup> and were very moved. Obie took two candies out of the bag, took them over to Sally and put them into her hand.

"That's for you, Sally," he said solemnly, "from me and Amos."

Mama put her arms around us and told us to say a prayer to God before we left. The three of us went down on our knees on the dirt floor, and Mama's lips were moving, but no words came, only a kind of crying sound. At last she whispered in a broken, almost angry voice, "I can't do any more for them, Lord. You've got to help them now."

We got up, took our fishing poles and the bag of food, kissed Mama, and went out of the door — for the last time.<sup>3</sup> Obie

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1. sick: 恶心。 2. felt the love behind that present: 体会到礼物所包含的一片深情。 3. for the last time: 最后一次(再也不会回来了)。

was crying bitterly — crying for both of us,<sup>1</sup> I guess — as we walked up the path to the road in the early morning light. The sky had already turned from black to gray, and we could hardly see the stars any more. Once we got to the main road Obie's crying soon got quieter.

"In four years we'll be almost grown-up," he said after a while.

"When we get North we can help Pa, and then he'll be able to get Mama sooner," I reminded him.<sup>2</sup>

"Maybe we could get Mama sooner if we didn't ask for Sally at the same time." He said a little bit more hopefully.

"Obie, you know Mama would never leave Sally all alone." I tried to sound shocked,<sup>3</sup> and didn't tell him that I'd had the same idea myself.

"Maybe when we're all together again we can have a little farm. Maybe we could even get a dog ..."

The sun was slowly rising and our spirits were going up a little bit,<sup>4</sup> too, by the time we got to the woods. Here we left the road and went over to the stream where we often went fishing. We had already decided to walk in the stream as much as we could because the Master might send dogs out to find us. A slave had run away the year before from a neighbouring farm and had been found by dogs.

It was pretty slow going, walking in the stream.<sup>5</sup> The water was running so fast it was hard to keep on our feet.<sup>6</sup> Sud-

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1. crying for both of us: 为我们两个人哭。 2. reminded him: 提醒他。 3. I tried to sound shocked: 我装作很吃惊地说。 4. our spirits were going up a little bit: 我们的情绪也稍为好了一点。 5. It was pretty slow going, walking in the stream. 在溪水里走,进展颇慢。it 是形式上的主语,代表逻辑主语 walking. 6. keep on our feet: 站稳我们的脚跟。

denly we stopped. There, about fifty feet ahead of us, fishing in the stream, were Bricker's sons, Master Fred<sup>1</sup> and Master Frank. We stared at them and they stared back at us. Then Obie and I started whispering and pulling at each other<sup>2</sup> at the same moment.

He was pulling me back and whispering, "Come on, run."

I was pulling him forward, saying, "Don't do anything. Don't run. They've already seen us."

But I was too nervous to walk right past them.<sup>3</sup> They were sitting on the right bank, so, holding firmly onto Obie's shirt, I climbed up the left bank and walked, just as slowly as I could, into the trees. I knew we shouldn't look back, but I just couldn't help it.<sup>4</sup> Master Fred and Master Frank were also whispering to each other and pointing towards us. We walked on.

"Hey, come here a minute," called a voice behind us.

Obie and I looked at each other in despair.<sup>5</sup> The Bricker boys were a couple of years older than me and much bigger. There was no time to think, and we were so used to doing what we were told that we turned around,<sup>6</sup> crossed the stream again and stood before them.

"Have you caught any fish, Master Fred?" I asked weakly.

"No, we just got here."

Nobody said anything for a long minute. Then Master Fred went on, speaking in a strange voice, "Listen, if you won't tell anyone that you saw us fishing, we'll give you a jam bun."<sup>7</sup>

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1. Master Fred: Master 与男孩名连用时, 意为某某少爷。 2. pulling at each other: 互相拉着。 3. too nervous to walk right past them: 心情太紧张, 无法从他们身旁走过去。 4. I just couldn't help it: 身不由己(回头看了)。 5. in despair [dis'peə]: 失望。 6. we were so used to ... around: 我们一向顺从惯了, 这时也就回过身去。 7. jam bun: 果酱圆面包。



Obie's mouth fell open and I wasn't afraid any more. Master Frank noticed our surprise.

"Mother doesn't like us fishing on Sundays," he explained.

"A couple of weeks ago<sup>1</sup> someone saw us and told her and there was ... well, kind of trouble. And we don't want to ... to worry her again so soon ....<sup>2</sup>"

"We won't tell anybody," I promised.

"Cross your heart and hope to die,<sup>3</sup> Amos?"

I was surprised they knew my name. The Master and the Mistress never knew the names of their slave children.

"Cross my heart and hope to die," I said and Obie repeated.

Then Master Frank opened the food box beside him, carefully studied the three jam buns, and after deciding which was the smallest, handed it to me. We thanked them with real feeling and set off again across the stream and through the trees. It was all I could do to keep Obie from jumping with happiness.<sup>4</sup>

As soon as they couldn't see or hear us we sat down to rest our legs and get over our fright.<sup>5</sup> Obie wanted to eat the bun at once.

"You can eat it," I said. "I don't want to take anything more from the Brickers."

"What d'you mean? Take it. They gave it — it is like a goodbye present."

"Well, I don't want any present from them."

Obie thought I was silly and took the bun out of the food

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1. a couple of weeks ago: 两三个星期以前。 2. we don't want to ... soon ...: 我们不愿这么快又惹她生气。 3. Cross your heart and hope to die: 小孩赌咒的话。意指: 死也不会失信。(一面说一面在胸前画十字,同时发誓如违反诺言,愿受上帝惩罚而死去。) 4. It was all I could do to ... happiness: 我竭尽了全力才使 Obie 不至因高兴而跳将起来。 5. get over our fright: 使惊恐的心情安定下来。