

诗露·英汉对照读物

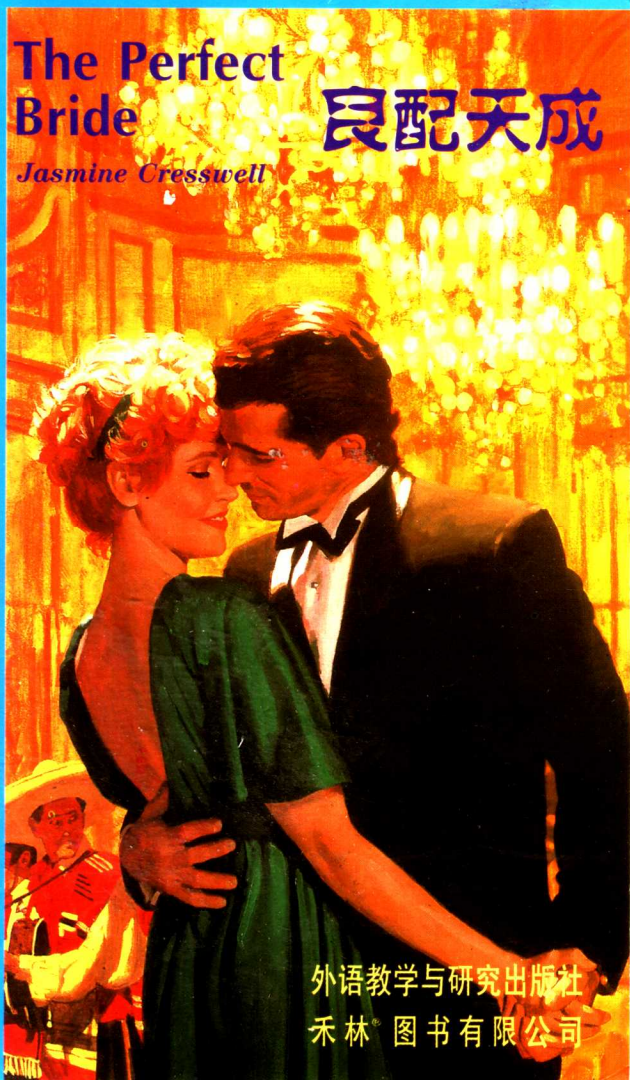
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The Perfect Bride

良配天成

Jasmine Cresswell



外语教学与研究出版社
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心 (台湾) 译

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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,读者所能注意得到,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,但小说中叙述的男女两性的情感生活,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波变化。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消……

永林爱情小说以二十六种文字风行一百多个国家和地区——九

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"I've decided to get married."

Caitlin felt the blood leave her face. Why did she feel so shocked—so betrayed? She swallowed hard. Alec was her friend. If he'd fallen in love—found a woman to marry—she ought to feel happy for him.

"Congratulations," she said, injecting as much zing into her voice as she possibly could. "I'm so pleased for you, Alec. Who is...who is the lucky woman?"

Alec smiled cheerfully. "I've no idea. Not yet."

Caitlin stared at him blankly. "What on earth do you mean? How can you decide to get married without knowing who you want for your wife?"

"Easily," he said. "With your help. You're my best friend, you've known me for years, plus you've got loads of experience interviewing job applicants. I'm counting on you to find the right woman for me."

永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

SAM ALWAYS CHOSE five-thirty Friday afternoon to throw a tantrum. The staff at Services Unlimited had grown accustomed to having their weekends kicked off by Sam hyperventilating over some crisis or other. This time, unfortunately, Sam had decided to stage his weekly scene over one of Caitlin's projects.

He stormed into her office, looking as threatening as a man can look when he's chubby, five foot four and blessed with no more than a dozen silvery hairs carefully arranged over his bald pink scalp.

He shook a fistful of papers under Caitlin's nose. "This reference from the Countess of Yardleigh stinks. How come you're still recommending this Tittleswit guy for the job? Why didn't you recommend Jackson? Jackson is already in Washington, and he's got a slew of solid American references."

Caitlin drew a deep breath and managed a reassuring smile. She loved her job, her colleagues and her life in general. Most days, she even loved her boss, Sam Bergen. This afternoon, however, she admitted

to feeling frazzled. It had already been a long tough week. "The man's name is Littlethwaite, Sam. Algernon Littlethwaite. Not Tittleswit."

"Yeah, and his references stink."

"Sam, I called the Countess of Yardleigh and spoke to her in person for twenty minutes. She thinks Algernon Littlethwaite is an excellent butler, but she's very restrained and uppercrust British. Her definition of lavish praise is to say that Algernon 'fulfilled his duties to the best of his ability.' Don't worry, Sam, we've found the perfect butler for the Japanese ambassador."

Sam had no intention of being mollified. Late on Fridays, he seemed to enjoy worrying. "What about Littlethwaite's work permits? God knows what kind of runaround they'll give you at Immigration if his paperwork isn't in order."

Caitlin reminded herself that she was paid an excellent salary and that the job market in Washington, DC, was tight. "As you can see if you've read the file, Sam, Mr. Littlethwaite faxed us copies of his visas and documentation three weeks ago. He has absolutely everything he could possibly need to work legally in this country, and I'm sure he'll arrive from London tomorrow afternoon right on schedule."

A tap on the door of her office was followed by the immediate entry of Dot, her secretary. "Sorry to interrupt, Sam, but Caitlin has to sign these letters right away if we want them to catch tonight's mail. As it is, I'll have to take them to the late pickup box."

Caitlin flashed her secretary a grateful smile. "Sorry, Sam, but I really must read these through before I sign them."

Sam left Caitlin's office, gloomily predicting that Mr. Littlethwaite would turn out to be a con man.

Dot shook her head. "What is it about Friday nights?" she asked. "From Monday morning until quitting time on Friday, Sam Bergen is an intelligent, considerate, efficient employer. The clock strikes five on Friday and suddenly he grows fangs and turns into a monster."

"I think he misses his wife. Friday nights used to be special for them. It was the only time he absolutely refused to allow business to intrude. Now he has nothing to look forward to except an empty house and a lonely weekend."

"Poor man, but Shirley's been dead for two years now. He should get out and about more. Find himself a nice woman to liven up his lonely weekends."

Caitlin finished signing letters and handed the bulging folder back to her secretary. "Dot, I left home so that I wouldn't be surrounded by people who think getting married is the cure for all the world's problems. Don't you start, please."

Dot held up her hands in protest. "Caitlin, honey, I never said one single word about Sam needing a wife. I said he needed a nice woman he could date, that's all. I'm no fan of matrimony."

"Sure. That's why you've been married three times."

"Right, and divorced twice and widowed once. It's taken me twenty years, but I finally got smart. From now on, the men in my life are gonna be strictly shortterm and strictly by appointment. Marriage is a one-way street, with all the advantages going in the man's direction."

"You're too cynical," Caitlin said, although in her heart of hearts she didn't really disagree with her secretary.

"Wait until you're married—then we'll have this conversation again."

"We'll have to wait a long time. I'm not planning to get married for the next hundred years or so."

"Huh, you're too pretty to stay that smart. Chest-

nut hair, green eyes, curves in all the right places. Honey, you're a surefire bride-in-waiting if ever I saw one." Dot grabbed her jacket and purse, tucked the package of mail under her arm and waved from the doorway. "See you on Monday, boss. Have a good weekend. And if you're seeing that gorgeous hunk Alec Woodward tonight, give him a kiss from me."

"Gorgeous hunk? *Alec*?"

Dot shot her a curious glance. "In case you haven't noticed, honey, he's endowed with one heck of a body hidden under those conservative lawyer's suits of his. Not to mention that he has a pair of wicked blue eyes, expressly designed to make any normal woman sit up and beg for attention. If you're determined to stay single, I recommend you keep away from Alec Woodward."

Caitlin chuckled in genuine amusement. "I'm not in the least danger, Dot, I promise you. Alec and I don't think of each other that way."

"You're not blind, girl. How can you avoid thinking of him that way?"

"Easily, because he's my friend. Alec moved in next door when I was eight. That means I've known him for twenty years, and in all that time, I can

honestly say I've never noticed his wicked blue eyes. So I don't suppose they're going to start driving me insane with longing any time soon, do you?"

"Keep it that way, hon, and you'll live a happy life. Lovers and husbands are two a penny. Good friends are a heck of a lot harder to find. Especially of the male variety." She shrugged, gazing at Caitlin thoughtfully. "Of course, if a woman ever did manage to find a lover who was also a friend, then I guess she'd have a match made in heaven."

Caitlin grimaced. "Don't hold your breath."

"Honey, I've lived long enough to know that anything can happen in this world. Sometimes even the good things. Have a nice weekend." Whistling under her breath, Dot ran for the elevator.

Relieved of the secretary's cheerful presence, the office suddenly seemed so quiet as to be oppressive. Thank heaven it was Friday, Caitlin thought, as she tidied away the papers for her newest client. It was good to know that her hard work had paid off and that she personally had filled three important positions during the past week. In addition to Mr. Littlethwaite, she'd found a housekeeper for the chairman of the World Bank and a sous-chef for the White House, but she'd worked too many fourteen-hour

days recently, and she desperately needed a break.

Perhaps she'd call Alec and see if he could join her for a drink after work. Or, better yet, they could spend the entire evening together. They could have a pizza at Mama Maria's, the Italian restaurant they'd discovered a few months ago, and then catch the late show at one of the nearby movie theaters.

Talking to Dot had reminded her it must be more than two weeks since she'd seen Alec. Now that she stopped to think about him, Caitlin realized she'd missed Alec a lot. In fact, she was surprised how much she hoped he hadn't already made a hot date with one of the luscious female law students who swarmed around his office.

She stopped filing papers and reached for the phone, but before she could dial the number for Alec's office, her other line buzzed. She almost didn't answer the call, then discipline won out over personal feelings. She switched lines and responded politely.

"Hello, this is Caitlin Howard."

"Oh, Lin, can you believe it? I'm pregnant! The doctor confirmed it this afternoon. He says I'm seven weeks pregnant and everything's fine. Jeff and I are so happy we're practically swinging from the chande-

liers."

Her sister's excitement fizzed and bubbled over the miles of fiber-optic cable. Caitlin experienced the oddest little lurch in the pit of her stomach. It was a second or two before she managed to reply, and her sister's voice came again, more tentatively.

"Hey, Lin, are you still there?"

Caitlin shook off a wave of sudden, inexplicable exhaustion. "Yes, I'm here. Merry, that's wonderful news. Congratulations! I'm so pleased for you and Jeff. I know how much you both wanted to start a family. It's going to be a first grandchild for Jeff's parents, isn't it?"

"Yes, they're almost as thrilled as we are. After two years and no success, we were beginning to wonder if I'd ever get pregnant!" Merry giggled. "And it sure wasn't for want of trying, believe me. Jeff and I really worked at this project! Gosh, this is the most exciting day of our lives. We're driving into Youngstown this weekend to look at cribs and to buy curtains for the nursery. Megan and George are coming, too, but they're leaving the boys with Mom and Dad—you know how carsick they get."

"I sure do," Caitlin said with feeling, remembering a disastrous outing at Christmas when she had

been responsible for entertaining her two young nephews, Zach and Matt, the sons of her other sister, Megan.

Merry laughed sympathetically. "You're so smart, Lin, but I swear you don't have an ounce of common sense. I don't know how you manage to run that agency of yours."

"So when is this special baby due exactly? Sometime next spring?" she asked. "I'll have to be sure to save some vacation time for visiting with my new niece or nephew."

"May fifteenth, can you believe it? Wouldn't it be wonderful if our baby arrived right on your birthday?"

"The best present I could have," Caitlin said. "And I plan to lobby hard to be chosen as one of the godparents."

"You're already chosen. Jeff and I couldn't think of anyone we love more, even though we don't understand you." Merry's cheerful voice became somewhat wistful. "Megan and I were talking about how the baby's due on your birthday and all. Do you realize you're going to be twenty-nine next May, which is only one year away from being thirty? Gosh, Lin, aren't you worried?"

“What about?” Caitlin asked, although she knew very well what her sister was trying to say. “Last time I checked with the dentist, she assured me my teeth aren’t going to fall out any time soon. And the doctor seems to think I can hold off on ordering my wheelchair for at least another five years, maybe even ten.”

Merry refused to be diverted. “You know that isn’t what I mean. It’s not your health we’re worried about—it’s the fact that you’re still single. With all those glamorous men in Washington, Megan and I can’t understand why you haven’t managed to get yourself settled yet. Haven’t you met any exciting men recently?”

Merry sounded almost pleading, and Caitlin resisted the impulse to snap at her youngest sister. She forced a laugh. “Sure, I met this marvelous English butler, who wears starched wing collars and is called Algernon Littlethwaite. I didn’t believe there were people outside TV sitcoms who had names like that, did you?”

“Caitlin, don’t joke. I meant have you met any *eligible* men. Men you’ve gone out with on a date. Men you might want to marry.”

Caitlin sighed. She knew from long experience of