

*The Sorrows of Young Werther*

# 少年维特的烦恼

〔德〕约翰·沃尔夫冈·冯·歌德 著  
王勋 纪飞 等 编译





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## 内 容 简 介

《少年维特的烦恼》是世界文学宝库中的经典名著。故事的主人公维特是一位多愁善感、坦诚可爱，向往平等、自由生活的朝气少年。为了追求自由的生活，他离家来到瓦尔海姆。在一次乡村舞会上，维特结识了天使一般的少女夏绿蒂。虽然夏绿蒂已经和别人订婚，可维特依然不顾一切地爱恋着她。为了忘掉这段不可能有结果的感情，维特离开夏绿蒂，去了一个很远的地方任低级官员。由于不得志，维特愤然辞职并回到夏绿蒂生活的地方，而此时的夏绿蒂已结婚。爱情的挫折、理想与现实的冲突把他逼入了绝望，困境中的维特最后用自杀的方式结束了自己年轻的生命。

该书一经出版即风靡整个欧洲大陆，掀起了一股“维特热”，并很快成为第一部产生重大国际影响的德国文学作品。两百多年来，该书被译成世界上几十种语言。书中所展现的苦涩爱情故事震撼了一代又一代青少年的心灵。无论作为语言学习的课本，还是作为通俗的文学读本，本书对当代中国的青少年都将产生积极的影响。为了使读者能够了解英文故事概况，进而提高阅读速度和阅读水平，在每章的开始部分增加了中文导读。同时，为了读者更好地理解故事内容，书中加入大量的插图。

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约翰·沃尔夫冈·冯·歌德(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1749-1832), 德国杰出的文学家、画家、批评家、哲学家、政治家和自然科学家。

1749年8月28日, 歌德生于莱茵河畔的法兰克福, 父亲是德国皇家参议员。1765年, 歌德就读于莱比锡大学法律专业, 1768年因病辍学。1770年入斯特拉斯堡大学继续攻读法律, 1771年获法学博士学位。1773年, 歌德出版第一部戏剧类小说《铁手骑士》, 这部作品使他开始蜚声德国文坛。1774年, 他出版了《少年维特的烦恼》, 该书一出版便轰动了整个欧洲, 并使他享誉世界。他以惊人的毅力、历经几十年, 在晚年完成了文学巨著《浮士德》。歌德一生创作了许多名扬世界的文学作品, 除《铁手骑士》、《少年维特的烦恼》、《浮士德》外, 他的主要作品还有《托夸多·塔索》、《罗马哀歌》、《亲合力》、《颜色学》、《诗与真》、《意大利游记》、《出征法国记》、《威廉·迈斯特的漫游时代》等。歌德多才多艺, 不仅善绘画, 对自然科学也有广泛研究; 他还从事政务工作, 是欧洲启蒙运动后期最伟大的作家。世界文学史学家将他与荷马、但丁和莎士比亚并称为世界四大文豪。恩格斯称歌德是“站在奥林帕斯山上的宙斯”。

在歌德的众多杰作中, 《少年维特的烦恼》是他最重要的作品之一。这是一部书信体小说, 歌德创作该作品时年仅二十五岁。小说描写了进步青年对当时德国社会的体验和感受, 表现了作者对封建道德等级观念的反对以及对个性解放的强烈要求; 歌德以诗意的语言、浓郁的伤感气息、细致入微的心理刻画, 写出人类的共同追求, 即对自由、个性和感情的追求。《少年维特的烦恼》的出版被认为是德国文学史上一件划时代的大事, 它曾震撼了当时德国乃至欧洲整整一代青年的心。200多年来, 维特的命运感动了一代又一代的少年、青年。这部作品作为德国狂飙突进运动的群星之中最明亮的一颗, 伴随凄美绝伦的爱情, 人性的至洁至纯, 与维特这个名字紧紧连在一起, 激励着一代又一代的读者, 珍惜自己的热血和青春,



做一个真正的人，做一个纯洁善良的人。该书自 1774 年出版以来，一直畅销至今，它是全世界公认的世界文学名著之一，同时也是在中国影响最大的西方经典文学作品之一。

1922 年，中国著名文学家郭沫若将小说翻译成中文，在五四运动以后的中国曾掀起了维特热，至今这部小说仍受到各国读者的喜爱，成为了经久不衰的世界名著。目前，在国内数量众多的《少年维特的烦恼》书籍中，主要的出版形式有两种：一种是中文翻译版，另一种是英汉对照版。其中的英汉对照版越来越受到读者的欢迎，这主要是得益于中国人热衷于学习英语的大环境。从英文学习的角度来看，直接使用纯英文素材更有利于英语学习。考虑到对英文内容背景的了解有助于英文阅读，使用中文导读应该是一种比较好的方式，也可以说是该类型书的第三种版本形式。采用中文导读而非中英文对照的方式进行编排，这样有利于国内读者摆脱对英文阅读依赖中文注释的习惯。基于以上原因，我们决定编译《少年维特的烦恼》，并采用中文导读英文版的形式出版。在中文导读中，我们尽力使其贴近原作的精髓，也尽可能保留原作故事主线。我们希望能够编出为当代中国读者所喜爱的经典读本。读者在阅读英文故事之前，可以先阅读中文导读内容，这样有利于了解故事背景，从而加快阅读速度。同时，为了读者更好地理解故事内容，书中加入大量的插图。我们相信，该经典著作的引进对加强当代中国读者，特别是青少年读者的人文修养是非常有帮助的。

本书主要内容由王勋、纪飞编译。参加本书故事素材搜集整理及编译工作的还有郑佳、刘乃亚、赵雪、熊金玉、李丽秀、熊红华、王婷婷、孟宪行、胡国平、李晓红、贡东兴、陈楠、邵舒丽、冯洁、王业伟、徐鑫、王晓旭、周丽萍、熊建国、徐平国、肖洁、王小红等。限于我们的科学、人文素养和英语水平，书中难免会有不当之处，衷心希望读者朋友批评指正。



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# 第一部分

## Part One



五月四日

人的感情真是奇怪的东西，总是让人特别烦恼！利奥诺拉的真情告白让我心动，可我却对她姐姐有好感。唉！我要尽情地享受现在的生活，小镇四周的美景美不胜收。

*M*AY 4.

How happy I am that I am gone! My dear friend, what a thing is the heart of man! To leave you, from whom I have been inseparable, whom I love so dearly, and yet to feel happy! I know you will forgive me. Have not other attachments been specially appointed by fate to torment a head like mine? Poor Leonora! And yet I was not to blame. Was it my fault, that, whilst the peculiar charms of her sister afforded me an agreeable entertainment, a passion for me was engendered in her feeble heart? And yet am I wholly blameless? Did I not encourage her emotions? Did I not feel charmed at those truly genuine expressions of nature, which, though but little mirthful in reality, so often amused us? Did I not—but oh! What is man, that he dares so to accuse himself? My dear friend, I promise you I will improve; I will no longer, as has ever been my habit, continue to ruminate on every petty vexation which fortune may dispense; I will enjoy the present, and the past shall be for me the past. No doubt you are right, my best of friends, there would be far less suffering amongst mankind, if men—and

God knows why they are so fashioned—did not employ their imaginations so assiduously in recalling the memory of past sorrow, instead of bearing their present lot with equanimity.

Be kind enough to inform my mother that I shall attend to her business to the best of my ability, and shall attend her the earliest information about it. I have seen my aunt, and find that she is very far from being the disagreeable person our friends allege her to be. She is a lively, cheerful woman, with the best of hearts. I explained to her my mother's wrongs with regard to that part of her portion which has been withheld from her. She told me the motives and reasons of her own conduct, and the terms on which she is willing to give up the whole, and to do more than we have asked. In short, I cannot write further upon this subject at present; only assure my mother that all will go on well. And I have again observed, my dear friend, in this trifling affair, that misunderstandings and neglect occasion more mischief in the world than even malice and wickedness. At all events, the two latter are of less frequent occurrence.

In other respects I am very well off here. Solitude in this terrestrial paradise is a genial balm to my mind, and the young spring cheers with its bounteous promises my oftentimes misgiving heart. Every tree, every bush, is full of flowers; and one might wish himself transformed into a butterfly, to float about in this ocean of perfume, and find his whole existence in it.

The town itself is disagreeable; but then, all around, you find an inexpressible beauty of Nature. This induced the late Count M—to lay out a garden on one of the sloping hills which here intersect each other with the most charming variety, and form the most lovely valleys. The garden is simple; and it is easy to perceive, even upon your first entrance, that the plan was not designed by a scientific gardener, but by a man who wished to give himself up here to the enjoyment of his own sensitive heart. Many a tear have I already shed to the memory of its departed master in a summer-house which is now reduced to ruins, but was his favourite resort, and now is mine. I shall soon be master of the place. The gardener has become attached to me within the last few days, and he will lose nothing thereby.

五月十日

我独自一人沉醉于美景中过着平静的生活。在这里我感受到了大自然的美妙，感受到宇宙迷人的气息，任何言语都无法形容这极致之美！

MAY 10.

A wonderful serenity has taken possession of my entire soul, like these sweet mornings of spring which I enjoy with my whole heart. I am alone, and feel the charm of existence in this spot, which was created for the bliss of souls like mine. I am so happy, my dear friend, so absorbed in the exquisite sense of mere tranquil existence, that I neglect my talents. I should be incapable of drawing a single stroke at the present moment; and yet I feel that I never was a greater artist than now. When, while the lovely valley teems with vapour around me, and the meridian sun strikes the upper surface of the impenetrable foliage of my trees, and but a few stray gleams steal into the inner sanctuary, I throw myself down among the tall grass by the trickling stream; and as I lie close to the earth, a thousand unknown plants are noticed by me: when I hear the buzz of the little world among the stalks, and grow familiar with the countless indescribable forms of the insects and flies, then I feel the presence of the Almighty, who formed us in his own image, and the breath of that universal love which bears and sustains us, as it floats around us in an eternity of bliss; and then, my friend, when darkness overspreads my eyes, and heaven and earth seem to dwell in my soul and absorb its power, like the form of a beloved mistress, —then I often think with longing. Oh, would I could describe these conceptions, could impress upon paper all that is living so full and warm within me, that it might be the mirror of my soul, as my soul is the mirror of the infinite God! O my friend—but it is too much for my strength—I sink under the weight of the splendour of these visions!

五月十二日

看着从大理石中喷涌的泉水、茂盛的树木，在这夏日的清凉和放松中，这一切都像在天堂一般。

MAY 12.

I know not whether some deceitful spirits haunt this spot, or whether it be the warm, celestial fancy in my own heart which makes everything around me seem like paradise. In front of the house is a fountain, —a fountain to which I am bound by a charm like Melusina and her sisters. Descending a gentle slope, you come to an arch, where, some twenty steps lower down, water of the clearest crystal gushes from the marble rock. The narrow wall which encloses it above, the tall trees which encircle the spot, and the coolness of the place itself, —everything imparts a pleasant but sublime impression. Not a day passes on which I do not spend an hour there. The young maidens come from the town to fetch water,—innocent and necessary employment, and formerly the occupation of the daughters of kings. As I take my rest there, the idea of the old patriarchal life is awakened around me. I see them, our old ancestors, how they formed their friendships and contracted alliances at the fountain-side; and I feel how fountains and streams were guarded by beneficent spirits. He who is a stranger to these sensations has never really enjoyed cool repose at the side of a fountain after the fatigue of a weary summer day.

五月十三日

现在的我情绪总是变化无常,《荷马史诗》已成为我最好的“催眠曲”。

MAY 13.

You ask if you shall send me books. My dear friend, I beseech you, for the love of God, relieve me from such a yoke! I need no more to be guided, agitated, heated. My heart ferments sufficiently of itself. I want strains to lull me, and I find them to perfection in my Homer. Often do I strive to allay the burning fever of my blood; and you have never witnessed anything so unsteady, so uncertain, as my heart. But need I confess this to you, my dear friend, who have so often endured the anguish of witnessing my sudden transitions from sorrow to immoderate joy, and from sweet melancholy to violent passions? I treat my poor heart like a sick child, and gratify its every fancy. Do not mention

this again: there are people who would censure me for it.

五月十五日

我已经渐渐融入了此处的生活氛围，可以根据不同人的身份，用适当的语言与其交流。

MAY 15.

The common people of the place know me already, and love me, particularly the children. When at first I associated with them, and inquired in a friendly tone about their various trifles, some fancied that I wished to ridicule them, and turned from me in exceeding ill-humour. I did not allow that circumstance to grieve me: I only felt most keenly what I have often before observed. Persons who can claim a certain rank keep themselves coldly aloof from the common people, as though they feared to lose their importance by the contact; whilst wanton idlers, and such as are prone to bad joking, affect to descend to their level, only to make the poor people feel their impertinence all the more keenly.

I know very well that we are not all equal, nor can be so; but it is my opinion that he who avoids the common people, in order not to lose their respect, is as much to blame as a coward who hides himself from his enemy because he fears defeat.

The other day I went to the fountain, and found a young servant-girl, who had set her pitcher on the lowest step, and looked round to see if one of her companions was approaching to place it on her head. I ran down, and looked at her. "Shall I help you, pretty lass?" said I. She blushed deeply. "Oh, sir!" she exclaimed. "No ceremony!" I replied. She adjusted her head-gear, and I helped her. She thanked me, and ascended the steps.

五月十七日

在这里我有了很多朋友，但不知为何总是不能够深交，这让我想起已经过世的青梅竹马的好朋友。最近新认识了一个性格外向的小伙子，他总是喜欢在别人面前表现自己的学识；还结识了本区令人尊敬的法官，受他

的邀请我打算去拜访他。

MAY 17.

I have made all sorts of acquaintances, but have as yet found no society. I knew not what attraction I possess for the people, so many of them like me, and attach themselves to me; and then I feel sorry when the road we pursue together goes only a short distance. If you inquire what the people are like here, I must answer, "The same as everywhere." The human race is but a monotonous affair. Most of them labour the greater part of their time for mere subsistence; and the scanty portion of freedom which remains to them so troubles them that they use every exertion to get rid of it. Oh, the destiny of man!

But they are a right good sort of people. If I occasionally forget myself, and take part in the innocent pleasures which are not yet forbidden to the peasantry, and enjoy myself, for instance, with genuine freedom and sincerity, round a well-covered table, or arrange an excursion or a dance opportunely, and so forth, all this produces a good effect upon my disposition; only I must forget that there lie dormant within me so many other qualities which moulder uselessly, and which I am obliged to keep carefully concealed. Ah! This thought affects my spirits fearfully. And yet to be misunderstood is the fate of the like of us.

Alas, that the friend of my youth is gone! Alas, that I ever knew her! I might say to myself, "You are a dreamer to seek what is not to be found here below." But she has been mine. I have possessed that heart, that noble soul, in whose presence I seemed to be more than I really was, because I was all that I could be. Good heavens! Did then a single power of my soul remain unexercised? In her presence could I not display, to its full extent, that mysterious feeling with which my heart embraces Nature? Was not our intercourse a perpetual web of the finest emotions, of the keenest wit, the varieties of which, even in their very eccentricity, bore the stamp of genius? Alas! The few years by which she was my senior brought her to the grave before me. Never can I forget her firm mind or her heavenly patience.

A few days ago I met a certain young V—, a frank, open fellow, with a most pleasing countenance. He has just left the university, does not deem

himself over-wise, but believes he knows more than other people. He has worked hard, as I can perceive from many circumstances, and, in short, possesses a large stock of information. When he heard that I am drawing a good deal, and that I know Greek (two wonderful things for this part of the country), he came to see me, and displayed his whole store of learning, from Batteaux to Wood, from De Piles to Winkelmann: he assured me he had read through the first part of Sultzzer's theory, and also possessed a manuscript of Heyne's work on the study of the antique. I allowed it all to pass.

I have become acquainted, also, with a very worthy person, the district judge, a frank and open-hearted man. I am told it is a most delightful thing to see him in the midst of his children, of whom he has nine. His eldest daughter especially is highly spoken of. He has invited me to go and see him, and I intend to do so on the first opportunity. He lives at one of the royal hunting-lodges, which can be reached from here in an hour and a half by walking, and which he obtained leave to inhabit after the loss of his wife, as it is so painful to him to reside in town and at the court.

There have also come in my way a few other originals of a questionable sort, who are in all respects undesirable, and most intolerable in their demonstrations of friendship. Good-by. This letter will please you; it is quite historical.

五月二十二日

我不时地感叹人类的可怜：一生主要都为满足日常生存需要而忙碌，却不能坚持完成自己的梦想。成年人其实也和孩子一样，忙忙碌碌却不知为何，能够心平气和地看待自己与周围的一切，这样才会感到幸福。

MAY 22.

That the life of man is but a dream, many a man has surmised heretofore; and I, too, am everywhere pursued by this feeling. When I consider the narrow limits within which our active and inquiring faculties are confined; when I see how all our energies are wasted in providing for mere necessities, which again have no further end than to prolong a wretched existence; and then that all our satisfaction concerning certain subjects of investigation ends in nothing better



少年歌德

than a passive resignation, whilst we amuse ourselves painting our prison-walls with bright figures and brilliant landscapes, —when I consider all this, Wilhelm, I am silent. I examine my own being and find there a world, but a world rather of imagination and dim desires, than of distinctness and living power. Then everything swims before my senses, and I smile and dream while pursuing my way through the world.

All learned professors and doctors are agreed that children do not comprehend the cause of their desires; but that the grownup should wander about this earth like children, without knowing whence they come, or whither they go, influenced as little by fixed motives, but guided like them by biscuits, sugar-plums, and the rod, —this is what nobody is willing to acknowledge; and yet I think it is palpable.

I know what you say in reply; for I am ready to admit that they are happiest, who, like children, amuse themselves with their playthings, dress and undress their dolls, and attentively watch the cupboard, where mamma has locked up her sweet things, and, when at last they get a delicious morsel, eat it greedily, and exclaim, “More!” These are certainly happy beings; but others also are objects of envy, who dignify their paltry employments, and sometimes even their passions, with pompous titles, representing them to mankind as gigantic achievements performed for their welfare and glory. But the man who humbly acknowledges the vanity of all this, who observes with what pleasure the thriving citizen converts his little garden into a paradise, and how patiently even the poor man pursues his weary way under his burden, and how all wish equally to behold the light of the sun a little longer, —yes, such a man is at peace, and creates his own world within himself; and he is also happy, because he is a man. And then, however limited his sphere, he still preserves in his bosom the sweet feeling of liberty, and knows that he can quit his prison whenever he likes.

五月二十六号

我总是随遇而安，也早已习惯了这里的农家生活，沉溺于大自然的田园、绿野及山水中。看到诸多美丽的景色，我将之体现于我的画笔下，一幅幅还原真实情景、趣意盎然的画展现了大自然和人类的和谐美景。

MAY 26.

You know of old my ways of settling anywhere, of selecting a little cottage in some cosy spot, and of putting up in it with every inconvenience. Here, too, I have discovered such a snug, comfortable place, which possesses peculiar charms for me.

About a league from the town is a place called Walheim. It is delightfully situated on the side of a hill; and by proceeding along one of the footpaths which lead out of the village, you can have a view of the whole valley. A good old woman lives there, who keeps a small inn. She sells wine, beer, and coffee, and is cheerful and pleasant notwithstanding her age. The chief charm of this spot consists in two linden-trees, spreading their enormous branches over the little green before the church, which is entirely surrounded by peasants' cottages, barns, and homesteads. I have seldom seen a place so retired and peaceable; and there often have my table and chair brought out from the little inn, and drink my coffee there, and read my Homer. Accident brought me to the spot one fine afternoon, and I found it perfectly deserted. Everybody was in the fields except a little boy about four years of age, who was sitting on the ground, and held between his knees a child about six months old; he pressed it to his bosom with both arms, which thus formed a sort of armchair; and notwithstanding the liveliness which sparkled in its black eyes, it remained perfectly still. The sight charmed me. I sat down upon a plough opposite, and sketched with great delight this little picture of brotherly tenderness. I added the neighbouring hedge, the barn-door, and some broken cart-wheels, just as they happened to lie; and I found in about an hour that I had made a very correct and interesting drawing, without putting in the slightest thing of my own. This confirmed me in my resolution of adhering, for the future, entirely to Nature. She alone is inexhaustible, and capable of forming the greatest masters. Much may be alleged in favour of rules; as much may be likewise advanced in favour of the laws of society: an artist formed upon them will never produce anything absolutely bad or disgusting; as a man who observes the laws and obeys decorum can never be an absolutely intolerable neighbour nor a decided villain: but yet, say what you will of rules, they destroy the genuine feeling of

Nature, as well as its true expression. Do not tell me “that this is too hard, that they only restrain and prune superfluous branches, etc.” My good friend, I will illustrate this by an analogy. These things resemble love. A warmhearted youth becomes strongly attached to a maiden: he spends every hour of the day in her company, wears out his health, and lavishes his fortune, to afford continual proof that he is wholly devoted to her. Then comes a man of the world, a man of place and respectability, and addresses him thus: “My good young friend, love is natural; but you must love within bounds. Divide your time: devote a portion to business, and give the hours of recreation to your mistress. Calculate your fortune; and out of the superfluity you may make her a present, only not too often, —on her birthday, and such occasions.” Pursuing this advice, he may become a useful member of society, and I should advise every prince to give him an appointment; but it is all up with his love, and with his genius if he be an artist. O my friend! Why is it that the torrent of genius so seldom bursts forth, so seldom rolls in full-flowing stream, overwhelming your astounded soul? Because, on either side of this stream, cold and respectable persons have taken up their abodes, and, forsooth, their summer-houses and tulip-beds would suffer from the torrent; wherefore they dig trenches, and raise embankments betimes, in order to avert the impending danger.

五月二十七日

我曾画过一对兄弟相依偎的情景，画中的哥哥听从妈妈的话，很乖地照顾着弟弟。离开时我留了些钱给兄弟俩，让他们可以更好地生活。他们安稳快乐的情绪让我繁杂的心平静下来，以后我要经常去陪伴那些孩子。

MAY 27.

I find I have fallen into raptures, declamation, and similes, and have forgotten, in consequence, to tell you what became of the children. Absorbed in my artistic contemplations, which I briefly described in my letter of yesterday, I continued sitting on the plough for two hours. Towards evening a young woman, with a basket on her arm, came running towards the children, who had not moved all that time. She exclaimed from a distance, “You are a good boy,