

书虫·牛津英汉双语读物

■ John Escott (英) 著

# *Agatha Christie, Woman of Mystery*

神秘女人 ——  
阿加莎·克里斯蒂



外语教学与研究出版社

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- John Escott (英) 著
- 刘姗姗 译

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**神秘女人——阿加莎·克里斯蒂**

著 (英) John Escott

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\* \* \*

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## 关于本书

很多人都喜欢读神秘的谋杀案,因为它们都是些难解之谜。侦探在书末才会把凶手的名字公布于众,而在此之前我们能否猜出凶手的名字呢?摔坏的椅子只是一次意外,还是一条重要线索呢?凶手是如何进入房子的呢?他或她难道有钥匙吗?桌子上为何有三个咖啡杯?

阿加莎·克里斯蒂写的神秘谋杀案世界闻名。她一共写过 70 多本书,销售量达千万册。她的小说还被拍成了多部电视剧和电影。她笔下的侦探,赫尔克里·波洛和马普尔小姐,也都大名鼎鼎——一个是身材矮胖,留着黑色胡子的比利时人,一个是身材矮小却非常可爱的老太太,她会看见、听到并且记住一切。

这本书写的就是阿加莎·克里斯蒂的生活。她是怎样的一个人?我们对她的了解有多深?她富有,赫赫有名,有过两次婚姻。而在她的生活中也有一个未解之谜……

## AGATHA CHRISTIE, WOMAN OF MYSTERY

Many people enjoy reading murder mysteries, because they are puzzles. Can we guess the murderer's name before the detective tells us at the end of the book? Was the broken chair an accident, or is it an important clue? How did the murderer get into the house? Did he (or she) have a key? Why were there *three* coffee cups on the table?

Agatha Christie's murder mysteries are famous all over the world. She wrote more than seventy books and they have sold millions of copies. There have been many television plays and films of her stories. Her detectives, Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple, are famous too—a short round Belgian with a black moustache, and a dear little old lady, who sees, hears, and remembers everything.

This is a story about Agatha Christie's life. What kind of person was she? How much do we know about her? She was rich, famous, and twice married. And there was a mystery in her life, too . . .

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1

## ‘Why don’t you write a story?’

**A**gatha Mary Clarissa Miller was bored. It was a winter morning in 1908, and she was in bed because she was ill.

‘I’m feeling much better today,’ she said to her mother, Clara. ‘I think I’ll get up.’

‘You’re still ill,’ said Clara. ‘The doctor told you to stay in bed and keep warm. And that’s what you’re going to do!’

Agatha was eighteen years old at this time, but in those days daughters had to do what their mothers told them.

‘But I’m *bored*!’

‘Well, do something, then,’ said her mother. ‘Read a book. Or write a story. Yes, why don’t you write a story?’

‘Write a story?’ said Agatha, surprised.

‘Yes,’ her mother said. ‘Like Madge.’

Madge was Agatha’s sister. She was eleven years older than Agatha, and sometimes wrote short stories for magazines like *Vanity Fair*.

‘I don’t think that I can write stories,’ said Agatha.

‘How do you know?’ said her mother. ‘You’ve never tried.’ And she went to find a pencil and paper.

Soon after, Agatha sat up in bed and began to write a

# 1. “为什么不写个故事呢?”



阿加莎·玛丽·克拉丽莎·米勒感觉其是无聊。这是 1908 年冬天的一个上午，她生病躺在床上。

“今天我感觉好多了，”她对母亲克拉拉说，“我想起床。”

“你的病还没好呢，”克拉拉说，“医生让你在床上躺着，并注意保暖。你必须这样做！”

阿加莎那时候已经 18 岁了，可在当时女儿必须顺从母亲。

“可是我很无聊啊！”

“嗯，那就找点事情做吧。”母亲说，“读书，或者写写故事。对了，为什么不写个故事呢？”

“写故事？”阿加莎吃惊地说道。

“对，”母亲说，“就像玛奇一样。”

玛奇是阿加莎的姐姐。她比阿加莎大 11 岁，偶尔给《名利场》这样的杂志写些短篇故事。

“我想我是写不了故事的。”阿加莎说。

“你怎么知道呢？”母亲说，“你从来没试过。”她找来了纸笔。

不一会儿，阿加莎便在床上坐起来，开始写

**bore** *vt.* make (sb.) feel tired and uninterested by being dull or tedious. (因单调或乏味)使(某人)感到厌烦。 **magazine** *n.* paper covered periodical, usu. weekly or monthly, with articles, stories, etc. by various writers. 杂志, 期刊。



story. It was called *House of Beauty*, a strange story about dreams.

It wasn't a very good story. She typed it on Madge's old typewriter, and sent it off to a magazine. But they sent it back with a letter: *Thank you for sending us your story. We are afraid we cannot publish it . . .*

'You must try again,' said her mother. Clara was always sure that her daughters could do anything.

So Agatha went on writing stories, and sending them out to magazines—but they all came back. She was a little disappointed.

'I'll try writing a novel,' she decided.

An idea came to her. She remembered seeing a beautiful young girl in a hotel in Cairo when she was visiting Egypt with Clara. The girl was always with two men, one on each side of her. One day, Agatha heard someone say, 'That girl will have to decide between them some time.'

It was all that Agatha needed for an idea, and she began writing. It was not a detective novel. It was the story of a young girl who lived in Cairo, and it was called *Snow Upon the Desert*. It was really two long stories put together to make a book. When it was finished, Agatha sent it to three or four publishers, but they all sent it back.

'Oh dear,' said Agatha. 'What shall I do now?'

'Why don't you show it to Eden Phillpotts?' said Clara.

Eden Phillpotts was a writer who lived near the Millers.

故事了。故事取名《美丽之屋》，是一个关于梦的神奇故事。

这个故事并不很吸引人。她在玛奇那台旧打字机上完成后，寄给了一家杂志。可是稿子被退了回来，还附带有一封信：感谢您能寄来您的故事，但恐怕我们不能将它出版……

“你一定要再努力一次。”母亲说。克拉拉始终坚信她的女儿们无所不能。

于是阿加莎继续写着，并将这些故事寄给各个杂志——但是它们全都被退了回来。她有一点点失望。

“我要试着写一部小说。”她下定决心。

她有了个构想。她记得和克拉拉在埃及旅行时曾在开罗一家旅馆见到过一个年轻漂亮的女孩，身边总是有两个男人一左一右地陪着她。一天，阿加莎听见有人说：“总有一天这个女孩要在他们两个之间选择一个。”

这就是阿加莎所需要的全部灵感。她开始动手写了起来。这不是一部侦探小说，而是关于住在开罗的一个年轻女孩的故事，故事的名字叫做《沙漠之雪》。它其实是由两个很长的故事拼起来的一本书。写完后，阿加莎把它寄给了三四家出版社，可稿子全部被退了回来。

“啊，天哪！”阿加莎说，“我现在该怎么办呢？”

“为什么不把它拿给伊登·菲尔波茨看看呢？”克拉拉说。

伊登·菲尔波茨是一个住在米勒家附



**typewriter** *n.* machine for producing characters similar to those of print by pressing keys which cause raised metal letters, etc. to strike the paper, usu. through inked ribbon. 打字机。 **send ... off** send sth. by post; dispatch. 寄出或发出某物。 **disappointed** *adj.* sad or dissatisfied because sb. has failed, some desired event has not happened, etc. 失望的；失意的；受挫的。 **detective** *n.* person, esp. a police officer, whose job is to investigate and solve crimes. 侦探。 **detective story** story in which the main interest is a puzzling crime and the process of solving. 侦探小说。 **publisher** *n.* person or firm that publishes books, newspapers, etc. 出版者；出版商；出版社。

During his life, he wrote more than a hundred popular novels, and many plays for the theatre. Agatha was a little afraid of sending her novel to this famous man, but she agreed to do it and sent it off.

Mr Phillpotts was a good writer, and also a kind man. He read Agatha's novel carefully and wrote her a letter.

*Some of your writing is very good, so I am sending you a letter to take to my agent, Hughes Massie ...*

Agatha—still only eighteen years old—went to London on the train. It was a long journey—more than 200 miles from her home in Torquay in Devon, and the trains were not so fast in those days.

She was very shy, and Hughes Massie was a big, frightening man. Agatha gave him the letter from Eden Phillpotts. Massie read it, talked with Agatha for a while, then kept her book to read.

Agatha went home to wait.

Some months later, Massie returned *Snow Upon the Desert* to her. *I do not think that I can find a publisher for it*, he wrote to her. *The best thing is to stop thinking about it any more and to write another book.*

Agatha was disappointed. She did write another book, but some other important things happened in her life first.

近的作家。他一生中共写过 100 多部很受欢迎的小说,还有多部剧本。阿加莎有点害怕把她的小小说送到这么一位名人手里,但后来她还是同意了,把小说寄了出去。

菲尔波茨先生是个优秀的作家,也是个很和善的人。他仔细阅读了阿加莎的小说后给她去了一封信。

有些地方你写得还是很不错的,你可以拿着我给你的信去找我的经纪人,休斯·马西……

年仅 18 岁的阿加莎乘火车去了伦敦。路途很遥远——离她在德文郡托基的家有 200 多英里,而且当时的火车车速还不是很快。

她非常害羞,而休斯·马西则是个身材魁梧让人心生恐惧的人。阿加莎把伊登·菲尔波茨的信拿给他。马西看后和阿加莎谈了一会儿,然后留下了她的书。

于是阿加莎回家等消息。

几个月后,马西把《沙漠之雪》退还给了她。我找不到一家能够出版这本书的出版社。他写道,最好还是不要想它了,开始另写一本吧。

阿加莎失望至极。她后来的确又写了一本书,但在此之前她的生活中发生了其他一些重要的事情。



**agent** *n.* person who acts for, or manages the affairs of, other people in business, politics, etc. (商业、政治等方面的)代理人,经纪人。**frightening** *adj.* causing fear. 引起恐惧的;惊恐的;可怕的。



2

## A shy young man

**A**gatha's father, Frederick, died in 1901, when Agatha was eleven years old. He was an American, and was ten years older than Clara. After he died, Clara began to travel a lot, and often took Agatha with her.

In 1911, when Agatha was twenty-one, Clara was ill.

'You need to go somewhere warm and sunny to get better,' Clara's doctor told her.

So Clara decided to go to Egypt again, and she took Agatha with her. They stayed in a hotel in Cairo. There were some English soldiers staying near the hotel, and they often came to the hotel dances.

Agatha was a shy young woman, but she loved to dance. During her stay in Cairo, she went to fifty dances. She met a lot of exciting young men and had a wonderful time.

When she came back to England, she was soon getting invitations to garden parties, tennis parties, dances, and to country houses for the weekend.

Then a young army officer called Reggie Lucy came home from Hong Kong. Agatha was a friend of Reggie's three sisters, and often played tennis with them. But she did not know Reggie. He was a very shy young man who did not go out very much. He liked to play golf but did not like parties or dances.

## 2. 腼腆的年轻人

阿加莎的父亲弗雷德里克于1901年去世，当时阿加莎只有11岁。他是一个美国人，比克拉拉年长10岁。他去世以后，克拉拉开始到处旅行，并且经常把阿加莎带在身边。

1911年，阿加莎21岁的时候，克拉拉病了。

“您需要去一个气候温暖、阳光充足的地方才能够康复。”克拉拉的医生告诉她。

于是克拉拉决定带着阿加莎重返埃及。她们住在开罗的一家旅馆里。旅馆附近住着一些英国士兵，他们经常来旅馆参加舞会。

尽管阿加莎是个害羞的年轻女子，可她非常热衷于参加舞会。在开罗逗留期间，她参加了50场舞会，遇见了很多让人心动的年轻男子，度过了一段很美好的时光。

回到英国后，很快她便接到了很多邀请，请她去参加游园会、网球聚会、舞会，或是去乡下别墅度周末。

当时，一个名叫雷吉·卢西的年轻军官刚从香港回来。阿加莎与雷吉的三个妹妹是朋友，经常在一起打网球，但是她并不认识雷吉。这个年轻人非常腼腆，不爱外出。他喜欢打高尔夫球，却讨厌参加那些聚会或是舞会。

**dance** *n.* social gathering at which people dance. 舞会。**invitation** *n.* request to go or come somewhere, or do sth. 邀请某人去或来某处或做某事。**golf** *n.* outdoor game in which the player tries to hit a small hard ball into a series of 9 or 18 holes using as few strokes as possible. 高尔夫球运动。



‘I like to play golf, but I’m not very good at it,’ Agatha said when she met him.

‘I—I could help you,’ said Reggie, shyly. He had dark hair and brown eyes. Agatha liked him.

So, while Reggie was in England, he and Agatha played golf nearly every day.

One very warm day they played golf for a little while, then Agatha said, ‘I’m hot, Reggie! Shall we have a rest?’

They sat under a tree, out of the sun, and talked. Then, suddenly, Reggie said, ‘I want to marry you, Agatha. Did you know that? Perhaps you did. But you are still very young, and—’

‘No, I’m not!’ said Agatha. ‘Not very young.’

‘Of course, a pretty girl like you could marry anybody,’ said Reggie.

‘I don’t think I want to marry *anybody*,’ Agatha said. ‘I—yes, I think I’d like to marry you!’

‘I have to go back to Hong Kong in ten days’ time,’ said Reggie. ‘And I’ll be there for two years. But when I come back, if there isn’t anybody ...’

‘There won’t be anybody,’ said Agatha.

So Reggie went back to Hong Kong.

Agatha wrote letters to him, and he wrote to her. It was all agreed. When Reggie came home again, they would get married.

“我喜欢打高尔夫球，可打得不好。”阿加莎见到他时说。

“我——我可以教你。”雷吉害羞地说。他有着黑色的头发和棕色的眼睛。阿加莎喜欢上了他。

于是，雷吉在英国期间几乎每天都和阿加莎在一起打高尔夫球。

一天，天气非常暖和，打了一会儿高尔夫球之后，阿加莎说道：“雷吉，我觉得很热！我们休息会儿好吗？”

他们坐在一棵能遮住太阳的树下，开始聊天。突然，雷吉说：“我想和你结婚，阿加莎。你知道吗？或许知道吧。可是你还很小，并且——”

“不，我不是！”阿加莎说，“不是很小了。”

“当然了，像你这样的漂亮女孩儿可以嫁给任何人。”雷吉说。

“我不是任何人都想嫁，”阿加莎说，“我——是的，我想嫁给你！”

“十天后我就必须返回香港了，”雷吉说，“我要在那儿呆两年。如果我回来的时候仍然没有其他人……”

“不会有其他人了。”阿加莎说。

于是雷吉返回香港了。

他们的信件你来我往。一切都已经安排好。雷吉再回来时，他们就结婚。



marry v. take (sb.) as a husband or wife. 与(某人)结婚;嫁或娶(某人)。



### 3

## Tea at the railway station

**O**n October the 12th, 1912, when Agatha was twenty-two, she went to a dance at the home of Lord and Lady Clifford. They lived near Chudleigh, twelve miles from Torquay, and there were many young people there for Agatha to talk to.

During the evening a young army officer came up to her.

‘Will you dance with me?’ he asked Agatha.

‘Me?’ said Agatha. ‘Oh, yes, all right.’

He was tall and good-looking, with friendly blue eyes, and his name was Archibald Christie. Agatha liked him immediately. They danced together many times that evening, and Archie told her his plans.

‘I want to fly,’ he said, ‘and I’m trying to get into the Royal Flying Corps.’

‘How exciting!’ said Agatha.

A week later, she was having tea with some friends at a house opposite Ashfield, her home, when there was a telephone call for her. It was her mother.

‘Come home, will you, Agatha?’ said Clara. ‘There’s a young man here. He’s just arrived and I’m giving him tea. I don’t know him, and I think he wants to see you.’

Agatha had to leave her friends and hurry home, so she was not very pleased. But when she got home, she found