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Parson's Pleasure

Roald Dahl



牧师的喜悦

外语教学与研究出版社

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(英) 罗尔德·达尔 著

王家湘 译注

夏祖燿 校

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著者简介

罗尔德·达尔(Roald Dahl)一九一六年生于南威尔士，父亲是挪威人。第二次世界大战爆发后参加英国皇家空军，作为战斗机驾驶员在利比亚、希腊和叙利亚服过役，负过伤。一九四二年被派往华盛顿任空军武官助理，开始创作短篇小说。六十二篇的内容都是有关飞行的，收入短篇小说集《飞向你》(Over to You)。他先后出版了《像你的一个人》(Someone Like You)、《吻，吻》(Kiss, Kiss)、《出人意料的故事》(Tales of the Unexpected)等。一九六一年后罗尔德开始写儿童读物，著有《詹姆斯和巨桃》(James and the Giant Peach)、《神指》(The Magic Finger)等。罗尔德·达尔的作品被译成多种文字，颇受欢迎。他的短篇小说中有受压抑而具有畸形心理的人物，有令人憎恶的极端自我主义者，有使人毛骨悚然的怪诞情节，有滑稽可笑但充满讥刺的生动对话，以及意想不到的结尾。罗尔德作品中人物刻画生动，语言诙谐幽默，反映出了资本主义社会生活的一些侧面。

——译者

本书简介

英国作家罗尔德·达尔著《牧师的喜悦》(Parson's Pleasure) 描写一个开设古董家具店的商人乔装成牧师到乡间去收买古旧家具。他施展种种伎俩，欺诈哄骗，贱买贵卖，财运亨通。有一次，他以极其低廉的价格，从一个农民手里买到一种珍贵的家具，结果弄巧成拙，枉费心机。这篇小说人物刻画得栩栩如生，耐人寻味。

本书有中译文，可对照阅读，书后附有详细注释。

~~Paron's~~ Pleasure *parson's*

Mr Boggis¹ was driving the car slowly, leaning back comfortably in the seat with one elbow resting on the sill of the open window. How beautiful the countryside², he thought; how pleasant to see a sign or two of summer once again. The primroses especially. And the hawthorn. The hawthorn was exploding white and pink and red³ along the hedges and the primroses were growing underneath in little clumps, and it was beautiful.

He took one hand off the wheel and lit himself a cigarette. The best thing now, he told himself, would be to make for the top of Brill Hill.⁴ He could see it about half a mile ahead. And that must be the village of Brill, that cluster of cottages among the trees right on the very summit. Excellent. Not many of his Sunday sections had a nice elevation like that to work from.

He drove up the hill and stopped the car just short of the summit on the outskirts of the village. Then he got out and looked around. Down below, the countryside was spread out before him like a huge green carpet. He could see for miles. It was perfect. He took a pad and pencil⁵ from his pocket, leaned against the back of the car, and allowed his practised eye to travel slowly over the landscape.

He could see one medium farmhouse over on the right⁶ back in the fields, with a track leading to it from the road. There was another larger one beyond it. There was a house surrounded by tall elms that looked as though it might be a Queen Anne,⁷ and there were two likely farms⁸ away over on the left. Five places in all. That was about the lot in this direction.

Mr Boggis drew a rough sketch on his pad showing the position of each so that he'd be able to find them easily when he was down below, then he got back into the car and drove up through the village to

牧师的喜悦

博吉斯先生慢慢地开着车，舒服地往后靠着，一只胳膊肘搭在车窗摇下了玻璃的窗框上。乡间多么美丽啊，他想到；再次看到一些夏天的痕迹是太令人愉快了！特别是那些樱草花。还有那山楂。沿着树篱怒放着白的、粉红的和鲜红的山楂花，下面长着一丛丛的樱草花，实在太美了。

他一只手离开方向盘，点了一枝香烟。现在最美的事，他对自己说，莫过于开到布里尔小山的顶上去。他看得见它在他前方半英里远。山岗顶上树丛中的那一簇村舍想必就是布里尔村了。太好了。他的星期日巡访地段中没有多少能让他这样居高临下地着手干的。

他开上山坡去，把车子停在村子外面差一点儿不到山顶的地方。他走下车向四面张望。山脚下面，田野像块巨大的绿色地毯在他面前铺展开去。他能看到几英里以外的地方。太理想了。他从口袋里拿出一枝铅笔和一个拍纸簿，靠在车身后边，使自己训练有素的眼光慢慢掠过眼前的大地。

他遥遥看见右边有一个中等大小的农舍，前面有田地，有一条小道从大路通向屋子。稍远处还有一个较大的农舍。还有一所房子，四周有高高的榆树的、看上去可能是安女王时代的建筑。左边远处有两处农庄可以去试一试，一共五个地方。在这个方向上大概就这些了。

博吉斯先生在拍纸簿上画了个草图，标明每所房子的位置，以便在下山时能很容易地找到它们，然后回到车里，开车穿过村子来到山岗的另一侧。从那里他又发现了六个有可能性

the other side of the hill. From there he spotted six more possibles¹—five farms and one big white Georgian² house. He studied the Georgian house through his binoculars. It had a clean prosperous look, and the garden was well ordered. That was a pity. He ruled it out immediately. There was no point in calling on the prosperous.

In this square then, in this section, there were ten possibles in all. Ten was a nice number, Mr Boggis told himself. Just the right amount for a leisurely afternoon's work. What time was it now? Twelve o'clock. He would have liked a pint of beer in the pub before he started, but on Sundays they didn't open until one. Very well, he would have it later. He glanced at the notes on his pad. He decided to take the Queen Anne first, the house with the elms. It had looked nicely dilapidated³ through the binoculars. The people there could probably do with⁴ some money. He was always lucky with Queen Annes, anyway. Mr Boggis climbed back into the car, released the handbrake, and began cruising slowly down the hill without the engine.

Apart from the fact that he was at this moment disguised in the uniform of a clergyman, there was nothing very sinister about Mr Cyril Boggis. By trade he was a dealer in antique furniture, with his own shop and showroom in the King's Road, Chelsea.⁵ His premises were not large, and generally he didn't do a great deal of business, but because he always bought cheap, very very cheap, and sold very very dear, he managed to make quite a tidy little income⁶ every year. He was a talented salesman, and when buying or selling a piece he could slide smoothly into whichever mood suited the client best. He could become grave and charming for the aged, obsequious for the rich, sober for the godly, masterful for the weak, mischievous for the widow, arch and saucy for the spinster. He was well aware of his gift, using it shamelessly on every possible occasion; and often, at the end of an unusually good performance, it was as much as he could do to prevent himself from turning aside and taking a bow or two as the thundering applause of the audience went rolling through the theatre.⁷

的地方——五个农庄，一所很大的白色乔治王朝时代的宅子。他从望远镜里仔细察看着这所宅子，它看上去干净、富裕，花园整理得井井有条。真可惜。他立刻把它排除在外。去拜访富裕人家是没有用的。

那么在这个方格里，在这个地段，一共有十个有可能性的地方。十是个很合适的数目，博吉斯先生对自己说。正好一个下午可以从从容容地干完。现在几点了？十二点。他很想动手以前，到小酒店里去喝上一升啤酒，可是酒店星期日要到一点钟才开门。好吧，他等会儿再喝。他看了一眼拍纸簿上记下的，决定先解决四周有榆树的那所安女王时代的房子。刚才在望远镜里看去，它显得相当破旧，这正合他的心意。住在那儿的人也许很缺些钱用。反正他碰见安女王时代的房子一向都是交好运的。博吉斯先生重新上了车，松开手闸，慢慢停着火滑下山去。

此时此刻，西里尔·博吉斯先生乔装打扮成一个牧师。除此之外，在他身上看不出什么很阴险之处。他是个古董家具商，在切尔锡区国王路上有自己的商店和陈列室。他的店面不大，而且一般说来生意也并不兴隆，但由于他总是非常非常贱地买进，非常非常贵地卖出，所以每年都能有一笔相当不错的可观收入。他是个天才的推销员，在买卖一些家具的时候，他惯于见什么人装什么样，很不费力地使出最适合对手的腔调。对上年纪的人他会变得庄重可爱，对有钱人奉承巴结，对虔诚信教的人严肃持重，对弱者盛气凌人，对寡妇调皮挑逗，对老处女则狡黠俏皮。他清楚地意识到自己的才能，在一切可能的场合毫不知耻地加以利用。常常是在一次极为精彩的表演之后，他要竭尽全力才能控制自己不至于转身去鞠上一两个躬，以感谢在想象中的观众响彻全剧场的如雷般的掌声。

In spite of this rather clownish quality of his, Mr Boggis was not a fool. In fact, it was said of him by some that he probably knew as much about French, English, and Italian furniture as anyone else in London. He also had surprisingly good taste, and he was quick to recognize and reject an ungraceful design, however genuine the article might be. His real love, naturally, was for the work of the great eighteenth-century English designers, Ince,¹ Mayhew,² Chippendale,³ Robert Adam,⁴ Manwaring,⁵ Inigo Jones,⁶ Hepplewhite,⁷ Kent,⁸ Johnson,⁹ George Smith,¹⁰ Lock,¹¹ Sheraton,¹² and the rest of them, but even with these he occasionally drew the line. He refused, for example, to allow a single piece from Chippendale's Chinese or Gothic period¹³ to come into his showroom, and the same was true of some of the heavier Italian designs of Robert Adam.

During the past few years, Mr Boggis had achieved considerable fame among his friends in the trade by his ability to produce unusual and often quite rare items with astonishing regularity. Apparently the man had a source of supply that was almost inexhaustible, a sort of private warehouse, and it seemed that all he had to do was to drive out to it once a week and help himself. Whenever they asked him where he got the stuff, he would smile knowingly and wink and murmur something about a little secret.

The idea behind Mr Boggis's little secret was a simple one, and it had come to him as a result of something that had happened on a certain Sunday afternoon nearly nine years before, while he was driving in the country.

He had gone out in the morning to visit his old mother, who lived in Sevenoaks,¹⁴ and on the way back the fanbelt on his car had broken, causing the engine to overheat and the water to boil away. He had got out of the car and walked to the nearest house, a smallish farm building about fifty yards off the road, and had asked the woman who answered the door if he could please have a jug of water.

While he was waiting for her to fetch it, he happened to glance in through the door to the living-room, and there, not five yards from where he was standing, he spotted something that made him

尽管他在这一点上颇像个小丑，博吉斯先生却并不是个傻瓜。事实上，有人说很可能他对法国、英国和意大利的家具的知识决不少于伦敦其他任何一个人。他还有惊人的审美观，尽管一件家具是货真价实的真品，只要其式样不雅，他是一定会很快地识出并加以摒弃的。他真正喜爱的自然是英国那些十八世纪名匠所制作的家具，像英斯、梅休、奇彭代尔、罗伯特·亚当、曼纳林、伊尼戈·琼斯、赫普尔怀特、肯特、约翰逊、乔治·史密斯、洛克、谢拉顿等等，但是即使是这些人的作品他偶尔也有不肯降格以求的时候。譬如凡是奇彭代尔的中国式或哥特式时期的作品，他决不许进入他的陈列室，对罗伯特·亚当的一些过分造作的意大利式样的家具也是如此。

在过去几年里，博吉斯先生由于能够以惊人的经常性提供稀有的而且常常是相当珍贵的家具，在同行业的朋友中取得了相当的声誉。看来，这人有着一个几乎取之不尽的货源，一种私人仓库之类，而且似乎他只须一星期开车到那儿去一次就可以手到拿来。每当别人问他从哪儿搞来的这些东西，他总是心照不宣地一笑，眼睛一眨，咕噜着说些什么这是他的一个小小的秘密之类的话。

在博吉斯先生的小小的秘密背后是个很简单的主意。大约九年前某个星期日下午他开车经过乡间时发生了一件事情，从此他就打定了这个主意。

那天上午他去看望他住在七棵橡树镇的老母亲，在回来的路上他汽车上的风扇传动带断了，引起马达过热，水箱里的水全蒸发掉了。他下了车往最近的一所房子走去。这是一所小农舍，离大路五十码左右。他问给他开门的妇女能不能劳驾给一罐水。

在他等着她去拿水的时候，恰巧从门里看到了起居室，就

so excited the sweat began to come out all over the top of his head. It was a large oak armchair of a type that he had only seen once before in his life. Each arm, as well as the panel at the back, was supported by a row of eight beautifully turned spindles. The back panel itself was decorated by an inlay of the most delicate floral design, and the head of a duck was carved to lie along half the length of either arm. Good God, he thought. This thing is late fifteenth century!¹

He poked his head in further through the door, and there, by heavens, was another of them on the other side of the fireplace!

He couldn't be sure, but two chairs like that must be worth at least a thousand pounds up in London.² And oh, what beauties they were!

When the woman returned, Mr Boggis introduced himself and straight away asked if she would like to sell her chairs.

Dear me, she said. But why on earth should she want to sell her chairs?³

No reason at all, except that he might be willing to give her a pretty nice price.

And how much would he give? They were definitely not for sale, but just out of curiosity, just for fun, you know, how much would he give?

Thirty-five pounds.

How much?

Thirty-five pounds.

Dear me, thirty-five pounds. Well, well, that was very interesting. She'd always thought they were valuable. They were very old. They were very comfortable too. She couldn't possibly do without them, not possibly. No, they were not for sale but thank you very much all the same.

They weren't really so very old, Mr Boggis told her, and they wouldn't be at all easy to sell, but it just happened that he had a client who rather liked that sort of thing. Maybe he could go up

在那儿，在离他站的地方不到五码的地方，他发现有一样使他激动得满脑袋顶冒汗的东西。

这是一张大橡木扶手椅，这种式样的椅子在这以前他这辈子只看见过一次。每个扶手和椅背上那块镶板都是用一排八个车得非常漂亮的纺锤状柱支承的。椅背镶板本身装饰着最精细的嵌花图案。每个扶手上面有一半长度雕成一只鸭头。老天爷！他想道。这是件十五世纪后期的古董！

他把头再往门里伸了伸，天啊，就在那儿，在壁炉另一侧是另一张一模一样的椅子！

他不能十分肯定，但是两张这样的椅子在伦敦至少要值一千镑。而且，啊，它们是多完美的精品啊！

当那位妇女重新出来时，博吉斯先生向她进行了自我介绍，并立刻问她是否愿意卖那两张椅子。

哎呀，她说道，她干吗要卖掉椅子呢？

没有任何别的原因要卖，他说，只不过是他也愿意出个相当好的价钱。

他愿意出多少钱？椅子是肯定不卖的，她说，但只不过是出于好奇、好玩，你知道，他愿意出多少钱？

三十五镑。

多少？

三十五镑。

哎呀，三十五镑，啊，啊，这倒挺有意思。她一直就认为这两把椅子很值钱。很古老的椅子，坐着也很舒服。她离不开它们，简直离不开。不，椅子是不卖的，不过还是十分谢谢你。

椅子并不真那么古老，博吉斯先生告诉她说，而且要出手也不那么容易，但是正巧他有个主顾喜欢这类家具。也许他可

another two pounds — call it thirty-seven. How about that?

They bargained for half an hour, and of course in the end Mr Boggis got the chairs and agreed to pay her something less than a twentieth of their value.

That evening, driving back to London in his old station-wagon with the two fabulous chairs tucked away snugly in the back, Mr Boggis had suddenly been struck by what seemed to him to be a most remarkable idea.

Look here, he said. If there is good stuff in one farmhouse, then why not in others? Why shouldn't he search for it? Why shouldn't he comb the countryside? He could do it on Sundays. In that way, it wouldn't interfere with his work at all. He never knew what to do with his Sundays.

So Mr Boggis bought maps, large scale maps of all the counties around London, and with a fine pen he divided each of them up into a series of squares. Each of these squares covered an actual area of five miles by five,¹ which was about as much territory, he estimated, as he could cope with on a single Sunday, were he to comb it thoroughly.² He didn't want the towns and the villages. It was the comparatively isolated places, the large farmhouses and the rather dilapidated country mansions, that he was looking for; and in this way, if he did one square each Sunday, fifty-two squares a year, he would gradually cover every farm and every country house in the home counties.³

But obviously there was a bit more to it than that. Country folk are a suspicious lot. So are the impoverished rich. You can't go about ringing their bells and expecting them to show you around their houses just for the asking⁴, because they won't do it. That way you would never get beyond the front door. How then was he to gain admittance? Perhaps it would be best if he didn't let them know he was a dealer at all. He could be the telephone man, the plumber, the gas inspector. He could even be a clergyman. : : :

From this point on, the whole scheme began to take on a more

以再加两镑——不妨说三十七镑，怎么样？

他们讨价还价了半个小时，最后博吉斯先生自然是把椅子搞到了手，价钱比椅子的价值的二十分之一还要少些。

那天晚上，他开着那辆旧客货两用车，车后稳稳地藏着一两张神话般的椅子返回了伦敦。在路上，一个在他看来绝顶高明的主意突然出现在博吉斯先生脑子里。

嗨，他说，如果在一所农舍里有好东西，那么为什么别的农舍里不会有呢？为什么他不应该搜寻一下呢？为什么他不应该把乡间搜个遍呢？他可以在星期日去。这样一点也不会影响他的生意。他反正从来也不知道星期天该怎么过。

这样博吉斯先生买了地图，一些伦敦周围所有村镇的大比例地图，用一枝细尖钢笔把每张图划分成一系列的大方块，每个方块相当于面积五英里见方的一个地区，他估计假如要彻底搜遍的话，他一个星期日最多可以对付这么一大片了。他不去市镇和村庄，他找的是那些较为孤立的所在，那些大农舍和破落了的乡间邸宅；这样，如果他每个星期日能解决一个方块，一年就是五十二个方块，他就可以逐一跑遍伦敦附近各郡的每一个庄院，每一所乡间宅第。

但是显然事情不会如此简单。乡下人是一帮多疑之辈，破落的富家也是如此。不能到处去按门铃，然后指望你一开口他们就会领你在房子里到处转，因为他们不会这么做的。要是这样，你永远连大门也进不了。那么他打算怎样得到允许进入人家的门呢？也许最好根本不要让人家知道他是个家具商。他可以装成修电话的、修水管子的、查煤气表的。他甚至可以装成个牧师……。

想到这里以后，整个计划开始变得比较切实可行。博吉斯先生订购了大量高级名片，用雕板印上了下列字句：

practical aspect. Mr Boggis ordered a large quantity of superior cards on which the following legend was engraved:

THE REVEREND
CYRIL WINNINGTON BOGGIS

President of the Society
for the Preservation of
Rare Furniture

In association with
The Victoria and
Albert Museum

From now on, every Sunday, he was going to be a nice old parson spending his holiday travelling around on a labour of love for the 'Society', compiling an inventory of the treasures that lay hidden in the country homes of England. And who in the world was going to kick him out when they heard that one?¹

Nobody.

And then, once he was inside, if he happened to spot something he really wanted, well — he knew a hundred different ways of dealing with that.

Rather to Mr Boggis's surprise, the scheme worked. In fact, the friendliness with which he was received in one house after another through the countryside was, in the beginning, quite embarrassing, even to him. A slice of cold pie, a glass of port, a cup of tea, a basket of plums, even a full sit-down Sunday dinner with the family, such things were constantly being pressed upon him. Sooner or later, of course, there had been some bad moments and a number of unpleasant incidents, but then nine years is more than four hundred Sundays, and that adds up to a great quantity of houses visited. All in all, it had been an interesting, exciting, and lucrative business.

And now it was another Sunday and Mr Boggis was operating in the county of Buckinghamshire,² in one of the most northerly squares on his map, about ten miles from Oxford,³ and as he drove down the hill and headed for his first house, the dilapidated Queen Anne, he began to get the feeling that this was going to be one of his lucky days.

He parked the car about a hundred yards from the gates and got out to walk the rest of the way. He never liked people to see his car until after a deal was completed. A dear old clergyman and a

名贵家具保

与维多利亚和艾

护会会长

伯特博物馆合作

从那以后，每个星期日他都要装扮成一个和善的老牧师，把假日用来为“保护会”义务地奔波效劳，编制散落在英国乡村家宅中珍贵家具的目录。当他们听到这一套话时，世界上有谁会把他踢出门外呢？

没有人会这样做。

而一旦他进到了房子里面，如果他恰好看到他真想要的东西，那么——他有对付这种局面的上百种不同办法。

使博吉斯相当惊奇的是，这个计划真奏效了。事实上，他在乡下一所又一所房子里所受到的友好接待，起初甚至连他都感到相当难为情。一块凉馅饼，一杯葡萄酒，一杯茶，一篮李子，甚至和全家人一起坐下来吃一顿丰盛的星期日正式餐，人家常常硬要他接受这些好意。当然，时间一长，总难免有些难堪的局面，发生一些令人不愉快的事情。但是~~九年~~里有四百多个星期日，拜访过的住宅的数目~~算来~~是相当可观的。总而言之，这是桩有趣的、令人兴奋的、生财有道的行当。

现在又是一个星期了，博吉斯先生正在白金汉郡离牛津约十英里的地方活动。那是他地图上最北的方块之一。当他开车下山驶向他的第一个目标，那破旧的安女王时代的房子时，他开始感到这天将是他一个走运的日子。

他把车子停在离大门约一百码以外的地方，下车走完了这段路。他从不愿意在交易做成之前让人家看见他的车。一个亲切可爱的老牧师和一辆大客货两用车放在一起总有点不相称。而且步行这一小段路也可以给他时间来从外表仔细观察这房子，选定可能最适合于目前情况的那种表情腔调。