

· 纯爱英文馆·美国少女成长系列 ·

· 中文导读英文版 ·



Aunt Jane's Nieces

加州之旅

[美] 莱曼·弗兰克·鲍姆 著

中国国际广播出版社

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序 言

《加州之旅》是“纯爱英文馆·美国少女成长”系列的第八本，讲述的是约翰叔叔和两个侄女在露易丝的加州农场度假时，发生在农场里一所老房子的奇特故事。

在约翰的三个侄女中，帕齐，个子不高，身材略为丰满，脸上有雀斑，一头红头发，一双蓝色的、爱笑的眼睛，个性有点淘气，但为人真实，自然，很受朋友喜欢；贝丝，比帕齐小一岁，富有同情心，足智多谋，这一点从她识破米格尔就可看出。同帕齐一样，贝丝简单平实，但性格上略有保守，对陌生人有点羞怯；而露易丝，两年前嫁给了亚瑟，同他生活在加利福尼亚州的一个农场，还生下了宝贝简。约翰叔叔不满意露易丝雇佣的墨西哥保姆，于是带着帕齐、贝丝和贝丝推荐的一个受过专门培训的保姆——米尔德里德，一起去加州探望露易丝及出生不久的婴儿简。米尔德里德小时候对这个农场非常熟悉，她到这里是为了寻找父亲遗留给她的财富。

如果说《一个忙碌的假期》最让人印象深刻的人物是流浪汉史密斯，那本书中最让人震撼的便是米尔德里德，她也

是本书中最复杂、最矛盾的人物。米尔德里德是美国和墨西哥边境走私犯的女儿，年幼遭遇不幸，成长经历曲折，父亲入狱后靠自己生活。父亲的不堪经历让她蒙羞，带给她很大的恐惧和苦恼，造成了她多疑、冷酷的性格，但她保持了正直、善良、真诚的优良品德，心中依然充满爱。作者在前几章对她的描写未用过多笔墨，而是通过侧面描写她的眼神来体现她的性格，这也增添了人物的神秘色彩，为全书设下悬念。作者在多处描写了她充满仇视、冷酷的眼神，用词如concealing（遮掩的），vengeful（复仇的），cruel（残酷的），imperturbable（冷静的），到后来的用词，如pleading（恳求的），frank（坦诚的），earnest（热心的），眼神的变化反映了她心态和心理的变化，其从怨恨、仇视一切到最终释怀。她的眼神是本书的点睛之笔和最大的悬念所在，反映了作者高超的写作水平。

另外两个关键人物是墨西哥籍保姆伊内兹和农场工人米格尔。伊内兹诚实、正直、讲义气、是非分明，对宝贝简非常疼爱，因米尔德里德到来帮忙照顾简，所以对她产生嫉妒之心并产生不和，但最终两人和好并成为好朋友；农场工人米格尔，表面上看他是个爱拍马屁、滑稽可笑的人，实则深藏不露、老奸巨猾、鬼迷心窍，但他好的一面是勤恳，对两个主人非常忠诚。

在写作方面，该书同样以巧设悬念见长，米尔德里德怪异、仇视的眼神，米格尔的鬼鬼祟祟都不同寻常，让人好奇。另外，在该书中宝贝简失踪和米尔德里德寻找财富是两大主线，简和两位保姆被困墙内到解救只是一夜的时间，作者却用了

十一章的篇幅进行描写。一开始，作者未直接阐明简不见的原因，只是描写大家的猜测，众说纷纭，这就更加重了作品的悬疑色彩。简不见后，故事渐渐笼罩在紧张、压抑的气氛里，众人惊慌失措，四处寻找，彻夜未眠。在外出寻找的过程中发生了一些有趣、可笑的事，有人将一对母子误以为是简和其中一位保姆，大家匆忙赶到却发现不是简……一次次满怀希望最后失望而归，情节可谓百转千回。而回到农场后在他们居住的老房子里，则接连发生了一连串诡异、奇怪的事，先是上校误以为房间有鬼，吓得跑出房间，后有鲁尼恩突然跌落到墙内部。在被困的过程中两位保姆消除先前的误会，彼此坦诚相见，米尔德里德告诉伊内兹她的身世和来此地的原因。于是一个个谜团渐渐被解开，米尔德里德的惊人秘密也被揭晓，一段上世纪的往事浮出水面。两位保姆不顾自己，想舍身保全宝贝简的行为让人感动。

从深层意义上说，该书探讨了一个主题，那就是“金钱与幸福”。米尔德里德为找到父亲留给自己的财富，不惜从纽约跟随约翰来到加利福尼亚州；米格尔一时见钱眼开，不惜违背自己的良心，但最后也良心发现。对于该如何对待金钱，伊内兹说了一段非常深刻的话，她说，穷人要工作，富人也要工作，已去世的有钱的 Cristoval 先生比我们更幸福吗？不是的。如果一个人不工作，那他不会幸福。如果一个人必须工作，有没有钱不会妨碍他的幸福。所以，当米尔德里德发现她仍然很贫穷，没有她渴望的钱和蕾丝时，她会像以前一样工作，一样幸福。她的话打动了米格尔，让他悔悟。相比之下，约翰叔叔的财富观更值得推崇，文中是这样写的：

A modest little man, who had made an enormous fortune in the far Northwest—almost before he realized it—John Merrick had never allowed the possession of money to deprive him of his simple tastes or to alter his kindly nature。虽然身为纽约的百万富翁，他从未让金钱丧失掉简单、和蔼的性情。所以说，金钱固然重要，但它不是人生的全部，为金钱违背自己的良心、牺牲自己的人格更是错误至极。拥有一个良好的心态，才能真正地享受生活。这也是鲍姆想告诉孩子们的。

总之，本书是一本情节复杂、寓意深刻的小说，丰富的人物形象和跌宕起伏、充满悬疑的故事情节让本书更具吸引力。同时，作者流畅的表达和用词的精巧更让本书成为读者学习英文的好材料。

在场人物

约翰·梅里克（百万富翁）*John Merrick*

露易丝 *Louise*

帕齐 *Patsy*

贝丝 *Beth*

道尔（帕齐父亲）*Doyle*

米尔德里德·特拉弗斯（保姆）*Mildred Travers*

伊内兹（保姆）*Inez*

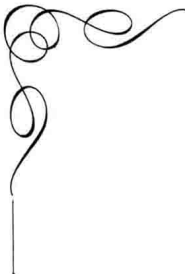
简（露易丝之女）*Jane*

米格尔（农场工人）*Miguel*

鲁尼恩（亚瑟的朋友）*Mr. Ronyon*

哈恩夫妇（亚瑟的朋友）*Mr. and Mrs. Hahn*

雷顿（米尔德里德父亲）*Leighton*



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Chapter 1

UNCLE JOHN DECIDES

纽约的冬天要到了，约翰本打算去气候条件好的百慕大过冬，后来发生的一件事让他改变了主意，转变了行程……

"And now, " said Major Doyle, rubbing his hands together as he half reclined in his big chair in a corner of the sitting room, "now we shall enjoy a nice cosy winter in dear New York."

"Cosy?" said his young daughter, Miss Patricia Doyle, raising her head from her sewing to cast a glance through the window at the whirling snowflakes.

"Ab-so-lute-ly cosy, Patsy, my dear, " responded the major. "Here we are in our own steam-heated flat—seven rooms and a bath, not counting the closets—hot water any time you turn the faucet; a telephone call brings the butcher, the baker, the candlestick-maker; latest editions of the papers chucked into the passage ! What more do you want? "

"Tcha! "

This scornful ejaculation came from a little bald-headed man seated in the opposite corner, who had been calmly smoking his pipe and dreamily eyeing the flickering gas-log in the grate. The major gave a start and turned to stare fixedly at the little man. Patsy, scenting mischief, indulged in a little laugh as she threaded her needle.

"Sir! what am I to understand from that brutal interruption?" demanded Major Doyle sternly.

"You're talking nonsense," was the reply, uttered in a tone of cheery indifference. "New York in winter is a nightmare. Blizzards^①, thaws, hurricanes, ice, la grippe^②, shivers—grouches."

① blizzard: 暴风雪

② grippe: 流行性感冒

"Drumsticks!" cried the major indignantly. "It's the finest climate in the world—bar none^①. We've the finest restaurants, the best theatres, the biggest stores and—and the stock exchange. And then, there's Broadway! What more can mortal desire, John Merrick?"

The little man laughed, but filled his pipe without reply.

"Uncle John is getting uneasy," observed Patsy. "I've noticed it for some time. This is the first snowstorm that has caught him in New York for several years."

"The blizzard came unusually early," said Mr. Merrick apologetically. "It took me by surprise. But I imagine there will be a few days more of decent weather before winter finally sets in. By that time —"

"Well, what then?" asked the major in defiant^② accents, as his brother-in-law hesitated.

"By that time we shall be out of it, of course," was the quiet reply. Patsy looked at her uncle reflectively, while the major grunted and shifted uneasily in his chair. Father and daughter were alike devoted to John Merrick, whose generosity and kindness had rescued them from poverty and thrust upon them all the comforts they now enjoyed. Even this pretty flat building in Willing Square, close to the fashionable New York residence district, belonged in fee to Miss Doyle, it having been a gift from her wealthy uncle. And Uncle John made his home with them, quite content in a seven-room-flat when his

① bar none: 无例外

② defiant: 挑剔的, 目中无人的

millions might have purchased the handsomest establishment in the metropolis. Down in Wall Street and throughout the financial districts the name of the great John Merrick was mentioned with awe; here in Willing Square he smoked a pipe in his corner of the modest sitting room and cheerfully argued with his irascible^① brother-in-law, Major Doyle, whose business it was to look after Mr. Merrick's investments and so allow the democratic little millionaire the opportunity to come and go as he pleased.

The major's greatest objection to Uncle John's frequent absences from New York—especially during the winter months—was due to the fact that his beloved Patsy, whom he worshiped with a species of idolatry^②, usually accompanied her uncle. It was quite natural for the major to resent being left alone, and equally natural for Patsy to enjoy these travel experiences, which in Uncle John's company were always delightful.

Patsy Doyle was an unprepossessing^③ little thing, at first sight. She was short of stature and a bit plump; freckled and red-haired; neat and wholesome^④ in appearance but lacking "style" in either form or apparel. But to her friends Patricia was beautiful. Her big blue eyes, mischievous and laughing, won hearts without effort, and the girl was so genuine—so natural

① irascible: 易怒的

② idolatry: 偶像崇拜, 盲目崇拜

③ unprepossessing: 不吸引人的, 不讨人喜欢的

④ wholesome: 健全的

and unaffected—that she attracted old and young alike and boasted a host of admiring friends.

This girl was Uncle John's favorite niece, but not the only one. Beth De Graf, a year younger than her cousin Patsy, was a ward^① of Mr. Merrick and lived with the others in the little flat at Willing Square. Beth was not an orphan, but her father and mother, residents of an Ohio town, had treated the girl so selfishly and inconsiderately that she had passed a very unhappy life until Uncle John took her under his wing and removed Beth from her depressing environment. This niece was as beautiful in form and feature as Patsy Doyle was plain, but she did not possess Patsy's cheerful and uniform temperament and was by nature reserved and diffident^② in the presence of strangers.

Yet Beth had many good qualities, among them a heart-felt sympathy for young girls who were not so fortunate as herself. On this disagreeable winter's day she had set out to visit a settlement school where she had long since proved herself the good angel of a score of struggling girls. The blizzard had developed since she left home, but no one worried about her, for Beth was very resourceful.

There was another niece, likewise dear to John Merrick's heart, who had been Louise Merrick before she married a youth named Arthur Weldon, some two years before this story begins. A few months ago Arthur had taken his young wife to

① ward: 病房; 保卫

② diffident: 羞怯的, 缺乏自信的

California, where he had purchased a fruit ranch, and there a baby was born to them which they named "Jane Merrick Weldon"—a rather big name for what was admitted to be a very small person.

This baby, now five months old and reported to be thriving, had been from its birth of tremendous interest to every inhabitant of the Willing Square flat. It had been discussed morning, noon and night by Uncle John and the girls, while even the grizzled^① major was not ashamed to admit that "that Weldon infant" was an important addition to the family. Perhaps little Jane acquired an added interest by being so far away from all her relatives, as well as from the fact that Louise wrote such glowing accounts of the baby's beauty and witcheries that to believe a tithe of what she asserted was to establish the child as an infantile marvel.

Now, Patsy Doyle knew in her heart that Uncle John was eager to see Louise's baby, and long ago she had confided to Beth her belief that the winter would find Mr. Merrick at Arthur Weldon's California ranch, with all his three nieces gathered around him and the infantile marvel in his arms. The same suspicion had crept into Major Doyle's mind, and that is why he so promptly resented the suggestion that New York was not an ideal winter resort. Somehow, the old major "felt in his bones" that his beloved Patsy would be whisked away to California, leaving her father to face the tedious winter

① grizzled: 头发斑白的

without her; for he believed his business duties would not allow him to get away to accompany her.

Yet so far Uncle John, in planning for the winter, had not mentioned California as even a remote possibility. It was understood he would go somewhere, but up to the moment when he declared "we will be out of it, of course, when the bad weather sets in, " he had kept his own counsel and forbore to express a preference or a decision.

But now the major, being aroused, decided to "have it out" with his elusive brother-in-law.

"Where will ye go to find a better place? " he demanded.

"We're going to Bermuda, " said Uncle John.

"For onions? " asked the major sarcastically.

"They have other things in Bermuda besides onions. A delightful climate, I'm told, is one of them."

The major sniffed. He was surprised, it is true, and rather pleased, because Bermuda is so much nearer New York than is California; but it was his custom to object.

"Patsy can't go, " he declared, as if that settled the question for good and all. "The sea voyage would kill her. I'm told by truthful persons that the voyage to Bermuda is the most terrible experience known to mortals. Those who don't die on the way over positively refuse ever to come back again, and so remain forever exiled from their homes and families—until they have the good luck to die from continually eating onions."

Mr. Merrick smiled as he glanced at the major's severe