

TO BUILD A FIRE
THE HEATHEN

by Jack London

傑克·倫敦

短篇小說選

中英對照



今日世界社出版

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傑克·倫敦短篇小說選

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The Heathen

I met him first in a hurricane; and though we had gone through the hurricane on the same schooner, it was not until the schooner had gone to pieces under us that I first laid eyes on him. Without doubt I had seen him with the rest of the Kanaka crew on board, but I had not consciously been aware of his existence, for the *Petite Jeanne* was rather overcrowded. In addition to her eight or ten Kanaka seamen, her white captain, mate, and supercargo, and her six cabin passengers, she sailed from Rangiroa with something like eighty-five deck passengers — Paumotans and Tahitians, men, women, and children each with a trade box, to say nothing of sleeping mats, blankets, and clothes bundles.

The pearling season in the Paumotus was over, and all hands were returning to Tahiti. The six of us cabin passengers were pearl buyers. Two were Americans, one was Ah Choon, one was a German, one was a Polish Jew, and I completed the half dozen.

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異教徒

我是在颶風中遇見他的，雖然我們同在一艘帆船上經歷那一次颶風，但直到那帆船變成碎片沉沒了，我才第一次注意他。當然，我見過他和一羣卡拿卡水手在一起，但「小珍妮」號實在太擠了，我沒有特別注意到他。除了那八或十個卡拿卡船員、白人船長、大副、管貨員和六位房艙客外，她駛離朗吉羅亞時，還加載了八十五個甲板乘客——包慕杜斯人、大溪地人、男人、女人、和孩子，除了睡蓆、毛氈和衣包外，每人都帶了貨物。

包慕杜斯的採珠季節已過，工人都要回大溪地去了。我們六個房艙乘客都是購珠商人：兩個美國人，一個叫亞昌的中國人，一個德國人，一個波蘭籍的猶太人，連我剛好半打。

It had been a prosperous season. Not one of us had cause for complaint, nor one of the eighty-five deck passengers either. All had done well, and all were looking forward to a rest-off and a good time in Papeete.

Of course the *Petite Jeanne* was overloaded. She was only seventy tons, and she had no right to carry a tithe of the mob she had on board. Beneath her hatches she was crammed and jammed with pearl shell and copra. Even the trade room was packed full with shell. It was a miracle that the sailors could work her. There was no moving about the decks. They simply climbed back and forth along the rails.

In the nighttime they walked upon the sleepers, who carpeted the deck, I'll swear, two deep. Oh, and there were pigs and chickens on deck, and sacks of yams, while every conceivable place was festooned with strings of drinking coconuts and bunches of bananas. On both sides, between the fore and main shrouds, guys had been stretched, just low enough for the foreboom to swing clear; and from each of these guys at least fifty bunches of bananas were suspended.

It promised to be a messy passage, even if we did make it in the two or three days that would have been required if the southeast trades had been blowing fresh. But they weren't blowing fresh. After the first five hours the trade died away in a dozen or so gasping fans. The calm continued all that night and the next day—one of those glaring, glassy calms, when the very thought of opening one's eyes to look at it is sufficient to cause a headache.

那是一個收穫甚豐的採珠季節，我們沒有什麼可埋怨的，那八十五個甲板乘客也一樣。大家的成績不壞，都希望在帕皮伊退度假，過一段舒適的日子。

「小珍妮」是載得過重了。她只有七十噸，裝載船上乘客十分之一都嫌太多。艙裏堆滿了蚌壳和椰子肉，辦公室裏也塞滿了蚌壳。船員能駛動她真是奇蹟。因為甲板上不能走動，他們只得攀着欄杆爬來爬去。

夜裏，他們就踏在鋪滿甲板的、睡着的人上面。我敢發誓，人疊人，有兩層。噢！甲板上還有豬、小雞、一袋袋的甜薯。到處都繫結着成串的飲用椰子和香蕉。船的兩面，前桅和主桅索之間，也拴着繩子，低得只容帆杠轉動，每條繩子最少都掛上五十束香蕉。

那是糟透了的航程，要是有很好的東南貿易風，也要航行兩三天。但風力却不勁。航行了五個多小時後，風在十來次喘息的扇動後中止了。——跟着來的平靜從晚上持續到第二天——那眩目、透明的靜止，當有人起了睜開眼看看的念頭，也會覺得頭痛。

The second day a man died — an Easter Islander, one of the best divers that season in the lagoon. Smallpox — that is what it was; though how smallpox could come on board, when there had been no known cases ashore when we left Rangiroa, is beyond me. There it was, though — smallpox, a man dead, and three others down on their backs.

There was nothing to be done. We could not segregate the sick, nor could we care for them. We were packed like sardines. There was nothing to do but rot and die — that is, there was nothing to do after the night that followed the first death. On that night the mate, the supercargo, the Polish Jew, and four native divers sneaked away in the large whaleboat. They were never heard of again. In the morning the captain promptly scuttled the remaining boats, and there we were.

That day there were two deaths; the following day three; then it jumped to eight. It was curious to see how we took it. The natives, for instance, fell into a condition of dumb, stolid fear. The captain — Oudouse, his name was, a Frenchman — became very nervous and voluble. He actually got the twitches. He was a large, fleshy man, weighing at least two hundred pounds, and he quickly became a faithful representation of a quivering jelly mountain of fat.

The German, the two Americans, and myself bought up all the scotch whisky and proceeded to stay drunk. The theory was beautiful — namely, if we kept ourselves soaked in alcohol, every smallpox germ that came into contact with us would immediately be scorched to a cinder. And the theory worked,

第二天，有一個人死了，是復活島上的人，這一季最好的礁湖潛水家。他死於天花，我真不明白天花症怎會傳到船上來，因為當我們離開朗吉羅亞時，岸上根本沒有這種病。但事情就是這樣，一個人死了，另外三個倒了下來。

我們不能隔離病者，也不能照顧他們，只有聽天由命了。我們已經擠得像沙丁魚。我們只好等着衰弱與死亡——那是說，死了人的第二天，我們已經無計可施了；因為那一夜，大副、管貨員、波蘭籍猶太人和四個本地潛水手，坐着一艘大捕鯨艇走了，以後就沒有消息。第二天清早，船長就將餘下的艇鑿了洞；這樣，我們只得留在船上了。

那一天，死了兩個；第二天三個；然後，一躍而至八個。各人的反應不同，就說土人吧，他們嚇得呆住了，不發一言。那位法國船長烏杜斯，却神經過敏起來，不斷地說話，還抽搐不已。他原是一個大胖子，最少有兩百磅重，所以他很快就變成一座顫抖的脂肪山了。

我和那德國人，兩個美國人，將所有的威士忌拿出來，預備喝個大醉。那美好的定理是這樣的——假如我們將自己浸在酒精裏，那和我們接觸的天花菌就會給燒成灰。辦法倒真行得

though I must confess that neither Captain Oudouse nor Ah Choon were attacked by the disease either. The Frenchman did not drink at all, while Ah Choon restricted himself to one drink daily.

It was a pretty time. The sun, going into northern declination, was straight overhead. There was no wind, except for frequent squalls, which blew fiercely for from five minutes to half an hour, and wound up by deluging us with rain. After each squall the awful sun would come out, drawing clouds of steam from the soaked decks.

The steam was not nice. It was the vapor of death, freighted with millions and millions of germs. We always took another drink when we saw it going up from the dead and dying, and usually we took two or three more drinks, mixing them exceptionally stiff. Also we made it a rule to take an additional several each time they hove the dead over to the sharks that swarmed about us.

We had a week of it, and then the whisky gave out. It is just as well, or I shouldn't be alive now. It took a sober man to pull through what followed, as you will agree when I mention the little fact that only two men did pull through. The other man was the heathen — at least that was what I heard Captain Oudouse call him at the moment I first became aware of the heathen's existence. But to come back.

It was at the end of the week, with the whisky gone and the pearl buyers sober, that I happened to glance at the barometer that hung in the cabin companionway. Its normal register

通。但我得聲明，烏杜斯船長和阿昌也沒有受傳染。那法國人滴酒不沾，阿昌自限日喝一次。

天氣糟透了。向北赤緯線移動的太陽，正在我們頭上。沒有風；只有幾陣狂風，猛烈地吹上五分鐘至半小時後，帶來了一陣大雨，就把我們都弄濕了。每一次狂風過後，可怕的太陽便露臉，將甲板上的水化為雲層的蒸氣。

蒸氣並不妙。那是死亡的氣體，充滿千千萬萬的細菌。當我們看見，氣體從屍體和垂死者身上冒升時，我們就得再喝一杯，通常是將幾杯混在一起，使得酒格外強烈。而每一次，人們把死屍拋進壟集在我們周圍的鯊魚羣中時，我們又多喝一些，也成了一種規矩。

這樣過了一星期，威士忌酒喝完了。還是這樣好些，不然我不能活到現在，因為跟着來的日子，要清醒的人才能渡過。等一會兒你會同意我的說法，因為只有兩個人脫離險境。另外一個是異教徒——我第一次看見他時，烏杜斯船長這樣叫他。還是言歸正傳吧！

是周末，威士忌完了，購珠客清醒過來，我偶然看到掛在船倉升降道的氣壓計。在包慕杜斯，它的正常紀錄是二十九。

in the Paumotus was 29.90, and it was quite customary to see it vacillate between 29.85 and 30.00, or even 30.05; but to see it as I saw it, down to 29.62, was sufficient to sober the most drunken pearl buyer that ever incinerated smallpox microbes in scotch whisky.

I called Captain Oudouse's attention to it, only to be informed that he had watched it going down for several hours. There was little to do, but that little he did very well, considering the circumstances. He took off the light sails, shortened right down to storm canvas, spread life lines, and waited for the wind. His mistake lay in what he did after the wind came. He hove to on the port tack, which was the right thing to do south of the Equator if — and there was the rub — *if* one were *not* in the direct path of the hurricane.

We were in the direct path. I could see that by the steady increase of the wind and the equally steady fall of the barometer. I wanted him to turn and run with the wind on the port quarter until the barometer ceased falling, and then to heave to. We argued till he was reduced to hysteria, but budge he would not. The worst of it was that I could not get the rest of the pearl buyers to back me up. Who was I, anyway, to know more about the sea and its ways than a properly qualified captain? was what was in their minds, I knew.

Of course the sea rose with the wind frightfully; and I shall never forget the first three seas the *Petite Jeanne* shipped. She had fallen off, as vessels do at times when hove to, and the first sea made a clean breach. The life lines were only for

九度；通常，它停留在二十九・八或三十度之間，甚至三十・〇五度也不大礙事。但我看的時候，它竟然跌到二十九・六二度，這就夠使一個爛醉如泥的購珠客，用蘇格蘭威士忌酒燒天花菌的人清醒過來。

我請烏杜斯船長注意氣壓計，他說看它下降，已經有幾個小時之久了。他不能有什麼安排，但在這種環境下，他的安排算好的了。他將輕帆除下，縮成暴風蓬，撒開救生繩，然後等待風來。風來後，他却作錯了事，用左舷頂着風。但，這種方法要在赤道以南，不在暴風直接途徑下才用得着，難也就難在這裏。

風勢逐漸增加，氣壓計也逐漸降低，我們正好受暴風的正面衝擊。我要船長轉過船來，用左舷順着風走，一直到氣壓計停止降低時才停航。我們爭論不已，他暴躁如狂，但死也不肯讓步。最糟的是，我不能獲得其他購珠客的支持。我算什麼，不管怎麼樣，怎能比一個合格的船長知道更多海洋的事？我知道他們心裏都這樣想。

浪自然兇猛地跟着風來了。我永不會忘記「小珍妮」起初受的三個大浪。她已處於背風，船停航時有時如此，第一個大

the strong and well, and little good were they even for them when the women and children, the bananas and coconuts, the pigs and trade boxes, the sick and the dying, were swept along in a solid, screeching, groaning mass.

The second sea filled the *Petite Jeanne's* decks flush with the rails; and as her stern sank down and her bow tossed skyward, all the miserable dunnage of life and luggage poured aft. It was a human torrent. They came head first, feet first, sideways, rolling over and over, twisting, squirming, writhing, and crumpling up. Now and again one caught a grip on a stanchion or a rope; but the weight of the bodies behind tore such grips loose.

One man I noticed fetch up, head on and square on, with the starboard bitt. His head cracked like an egg. I saw what was coming, sprang on top of the cabin, and from there into the mainsail itself. Ah Choon and one of the Americans tried to follow me, but I was one jump ahead of them. The American was swept away and over the stern like a piece of chaff. Ah Choon caught a spoke of the wheel and swung in behind it. But a strapping Rarotonga *wahine* (woman) — she must have weighed two hundred and fifty — brought up against him and got an arm around his neck. He clutched the Kanaka steersman with his other hand; and just at that moment the schooner flung down to starboard.

The rush of bodies and sea that was coming along the port runway between the cabin and the rail turned abruptly and poured to starboard. Away they went — *wahine*, Ah Choon,