

THE BRAVEST THING

(美) 唐娜·乔·纳波利 著

少年文学英汉对照作品选集

勇敢的兔外婆



学苑出版社

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Dear Readers,

All young adults in America have to read fiction in school and then discuss it from the stance of literary analysis. That is, they have to talk about the character development, the plot, the setting, and the writing style in the book. Many of these young people read fiction for pleasure outside of school, as well. But others don't. The ones who don't often find reading a chore and they have enough chores in their life without picking up a book.

When I write for young adults, I always remember that reading can be a chore—so I want to make that chore worth it for them. My goal is to get the reader to care so much about the characters, that turning the page is a joy. I don't think about trying to send a message or anything didactic like that. I think only of trying to tell a good story—one that helps the reader get inside the skin of my characters and truly understand them.

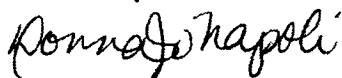
When I was a child, I lived in a poor family. I didn't have many opportunities to

know much about life outside the small environment I lived in. But I was very lucky: I loved to read. And reading opened up the world for me. It taught me that there were other cultures, other languages, other ways of living. I became such a good reader that school was easy for me and I was lucky again: I got a scholarship to go to college. Then I studied further and became a university professor. And now I am a writer, as well.

When I write, I remember the child I was—I remember how reading opened up doors for me. My job as a writer is to give the gift of loving to read to children and young adults. That way maybe I can help open up doors for them, too. So I never write only for the "good" reader. I try to write for everyone. I try to entice everyone, grab their hearts, make them laugh or cry or both.

I hope you enjoy these books. I wrote them for you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donna Jo Napoli".

Donna Jo Napoli

作者致中国读者

亲爱的读者：

小说是美国青少年在校学习的一项内容，他们不但要读，还要从文学分析的角度进行讨论。他们要讨论人物的成长、情节、背景及作品的写作风格。不少年轻人都把课外读小说当作一种乐趣。不过，也有一些人把它当成负担，在他们看来，生活中的负担本来就不少，哪有心思去读书？

因此，在为青少年写书时，我总是提醒自己：读书可能是乏味的事。记住这一点就能促使我为他们写出值得一读的作品。我的创作目标是让读者对书中的描述更感兴趣，从而把读书当成一件快乐的事。我不想有意说教，而只想讲一个有意思的故事——一个能让读者设身处地地体验书中人物，从而真正了解他们的故事。

我小时候家里很穷，除了自己生活的小天地，很少有机会去了解外面的世界。但幸运的是，我有读书的嗜好。读书使我开阔了眼界，从书上我知道世界上还有别文化、别的语言和别的生活方式。爱读书的习惯还使我成了一名好学生，并使我幸运地拿到了上大学的奖学金。这样我才得以继续深造，后来当上了大学教授。现在我还是一名作家。

每次写书的时候，我总会想起自己的孩提时代，我清楚地记得读书是怎样为我打开了认识世界的大门。作为一名作

家，我要把培养爱读书的习惯作为一份礼物送给我们的青少年，或许这样也能为他们打开一扇认识世界的门。正因为这个原因，我的书不只是写给那些爱读书的人们，而是写给所有的人。我要用自己的作品去唤起他们的兴趣，抓住他们的心，让他们跟着我的故事开怀大笑或伤心落泪。

希望你们喜欢我的这些书，因为这些书就是为你们而写的。

唐娜·乔·纳波利

译者的话

我国的英语阅读教学长期存在费时较多、成效较少的问题。究其原因，主要是课文讲解单调枯燥，占时过多，学生自主读书的时间和选择余地太少，尤其是难以读到时代气息较浓、适合他们年龄的当代英语少年文学读物。

为改变这种状况，首都师范大学英语系两年前率先在《英语沙龙》杂志上开办了“阅读伴我成长”栏目，以介绍美国少年文学作品为目的，在青少年读者中引起了强烈反响。而后又结合教学科研，利用选编的少年文学阅读材料在北京市一些高中进行了学生阅读兴趣的调查。结果表明，学生们普遍认为，英语教材应适量增加文学体裁文章的比重，所选文章应与他们的现实生活与心理需求有关连，有时代感，不应只局限在传统文学经典范围之内，非常希望能够读到更多的海外少年文学作品，认为这种体裁的读物故事性强、篇幅短、语言浅显、通俗易懂，描述的又正好是他们这个年龄层次所特有的理想与烦恼，易于产生阅读兴趣。

同学们的反响坚定了我们运用少年文学进行阅读教学改革的决心，促使我们更加努力地选编、翻译、推荐国外当代优秀少年文学作品，致力于同世界范围的文化组织——国际读书协会接轨，打通引进国外优秀少年文学作品的渠道，使这些作品能够陆续同国内广大青少年读者见面。

此次与学苑出版社密切合作，首次在中国大陆推出美国

九十年代女作家唐娜·乔·纳波利的六部少年儿童小说，是我们近年来不断努力的结果。唐娜·乔·纳波利是美国 Swarthmore 学院的资深语言学教授，作为五个孩子的母亲，她非常了解少年人心理，善于运用孩子的语言为青少年写故事，她的作品深受美国青少年读者的欢迎，自 1990 年起已有十五、六部作品问世，其中多部获奖。

这次选译的六部作品，语言诙谐，在平凡的叙事中给人以美感与启迪。简练的文体、幽默的语言让人在阅读过程中尽享轻松、愉快；曲折的情节和巧妙的构思又给人们提供了品味英语词汇的多种语境；可以让青少年读者在快乐的心境中了解海外同龄人的生活，在提高英语阅读能力的同时接受文学作品及地道英语的熏陶。

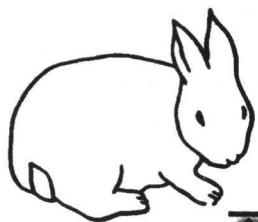
我们希望，这一套英汉对照读物的出版，对于丰富我国英文图书市场，激发学生读英文书兴趣，强化课外阅读起到推动作用。

首都师范大学英语读书协会

王小萍 杨 阳

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褚陵燕 译

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Death

It all started with a death.

Two, actually.

We were coming home from Aunt Lizzy's house. She lives in Charleston, South Carolina, which is a giant tourist trap^①, my father says, but beautiful, my mother says. (My mother is Aunt Lizzy's sister.)

We stopped for dinner, and Mom let Arthur and me go into the shop next door to the restaurant. (Arthur is my little brother. He's six.) Arthur found a corn cob pipe^② in the bathroom. I promised not to tell Mom where he found it because if she found out, she'd make him throw it away. And I told him he owed me big.

I looked around the shop for something nice to give to Rodriguez. Like dried brine shrimp^③. Rodriguez used to gobble up those smelly little things fast. But they had nothing like that at the shop, even though Charleston is pretty close to the sea. Instead, I bought licorice^④ and went to the car to put a small bite into Rodriguez's fishbowl. He had his own big tank with a rock at

一、死亡

事情得从一只，不，实际上是两只小动物的死说起。

我们当时从莉斯姨妈那儿回家——她住在南卡罗莱纳州的查尔斯敦。爸爸说去那儿旅游太挨宰，可妈妈却说那儿风景如画（因为妈妈是莉斯姨妈的妹妹）。

半路上我们停下来吃饭，妈妈让我和阿瑟去饭馆旁的一家商店逛逛（阿瑟是我的弟弟，才6岁）。阿瑟在洗手间里捡了一个玉米芯烟斗。我答应他不告诉妈妈他是在哪儿捡的，因为要是妈妈知道了，肯定会让他把这东西扔掉的。不过我告诉阿瑟，这回他欠了我一个大人情。

我在商店里到处转悠，想给罗得里格斯买点干鱼虫之类的好吃的——它吃起这些有腥味的小东西来简直是狼吞虎咽。虽然查尔斯敦离海边这么近，可商店里居然没有这类东西。没办法，我只好买了些甘草代替。回到车上，我掰了一块放进罗得里格斯呆的鱼缸里。在家的時候，它呆在一个有石头的大缸里，每次出门

①tourist trap: 蔽旅客竹杠的地方。

②corn cob pipe: 玉米芯烟斗。

③brine shrimp: 干鱼虫。

④licorice: 甘草糖。

home, but he travels in a little fishbowl—or did, I mean. That’s when I found him dead.

Mom helped me bury him in the dirt near the parking lot. She said, “Rodriguez had a good long life for a newt^①.”

I blinked back my tears. “Three months isn’t long.”

“Maybe to a newt it is.”

I know about things like newt lifespans, and I knew Mom was wrong. She knows I know that sort of thing, too, but she always has to say something positive. It’s a disease with her. I picked up goodlooking rock to give to Charlotte (she’s my best friend), and I got in the car.

Rodriguez had been a good newt. He’d done all the things a newt is supposed to do and more. I used to love to watch him swim, his orange belly glowing. He was graceful. And once I put my hand in the tank with my fingers, and he swam in and out of my fingers.

I rubbed the rock and wondered if I’d done anything to cause Rodriguez to die.

I hardly talked for the next hour.

Dad was too busy with the traffic to notice. But Mom did.

“Listen, Laurel,” said Mom, “you’ve got to change your attitude. Heaven knows we’ve seen enough deaths with all your pets. And, sweetie, really, if you’re going to be a veterinarian^②, you’ve got to get used to things like death.” She glanced over at Arthur, who sat on the other side of the backseat with his forehead against the window. “Arthur, what is that sticking out of your

旅行我就把它放在这个小鱼缸里。不过这是以前的事了，因为就在我放甘草时发现它死了。

妈妈帮我把它埋在停车场附近的土里，她跟我说：“对一只蝾螈来说，罗得里格斯已经活得不短了。”

我使劲眨了眨眼，把眼泪忍了回去：“三个月可不算长啊。”

“对一只蝾螈来说也许够长了。”

我知道蝾螈一般寿命有多长，妈妈说的不对，她心里也明白我知道，但她总得说些安慰的话，这是她的老毛病。我捡了一块挺好看的石子准备送夏洛特（她是最要好的朋友），随后便上了车。

罗得里格斯是一只很棒的蝾螈，它做了一只蝾螈应做的一切，甚至更多。我过去常看它在水里游来游去，它那桔黄色的肚皮闪闪发亮，看上去很漂亮。当我张开五指把手伸进水缸时，它就会在我的指缝间游来游去。

我一边搓着石子一边在想：我是不是做错了什么把罗得里格斯给弄死了。

在随后的一个小时里，我一直没吭声。

爸爸忙着开车没注意到我，可是妈妈却看出来

了。
“听着，劳瑞尔，”妈妈说，“你得改改了，我们已经不止一次看到你养的小动物死了。说真的，亲爱的，如果你将来要当一名兽医，你就得对这种事习以为常。”她瞥了一眼坐在后排另一边的阿瑟，他正把头贴在车窗玻璃上。“阿瑟，你兜里鼓鼓囊囊的是什么？”

①newt：甘草糖。

② veterinarian：= veterinary surgeon。

pocket?"

"Huh?" said Arthur.

"It's a corncob pipe. I can see it. Where did you get that corncob pipe?" Mom's voice had a worried edge. Arthur had been known to steal before. Mom called it taking without paying.

"I found it," said Arthur.

"Where?"

"In that shop."

Mom's voice rose in a little shriek^①. "You took it without paying?"

"I found it on the floor," said Arthur. I noticed he didn't say the bathroom floor.

"Oh," said Mom. Her face told all: She was trying hard to believe him.

"It's true," I said. I looked at Arthur meaningfully. Now he really owed me big.

"Well, you should have given it to the shopkeeper," said Mom. "He would have put it back on the shelf and sold it."

"No," said Arthur.

"What?" said Mom.

"He saw it in my hand, and when I told him I found it. he said I could keep it."

Likely story, I thought. But I kept my mouth shut. After all, I hadn't seen Arthur lie before, and it was interesting to discover he had hidden talents.

Mom twisted her mouth. "Hmmm."

“什么？”阿瑟问。

“是玉米芯烟斗，我都看见了，你从哪儿弄来的？”妈妈的声音里带着一丝焦虑。过去我们曾发现阿瑟偷别人的东西，妈妈管这叫白拿。

“我捡的，”阿瑟说。

“哪儿捡的？”

“在那商店里捡的。”

妈妈提高了嗓门：“你没付钱就拿走了？”

“我是在地上捡的，”阿瑟答道。我注意到他没提洗手间。

妈妈噢了一声，她的神色表明她对阿瑟的话还将信将疑。

“是真的。”我说着有意朝阿瑟看了一眼，现在他欠我情可欠大了。

“那你也该把它交给售货员，”妈妈说，“他会把它放回到货架上卖了。”

“不！”阿瑟说。

“什么？”妈妈问。

“他看到我拿着它，我告诉他这是我捡的，他就让我自己留着了。”

听起来还真像那么回事，我心里这么想，却一句话也没说。我以前没见过阿瑟撒谎，这次才发现他居然有这方面的才能，觉得倒是挺有趣。

妈妈抿嘴“嗯”了一声。

①shriek：尖叫。

"Mom?" said Arthur. "Is this silver?" Arthur held up the corncob pipe.

Mom looked at Arthur as though he were an idiot. Then she turned to me and accused me with her eyes.

It wasn't my fault. Sure, I used to teach Arthur all kinds of wrong things. When he was one, he loved to make machine noises. So I gave him my Yo-Yo^① and told him it was a special kind of car. He went around the house rolling the Yo-Yo and screaming, "Brrrooom, brrrooom." When guests were over, I'd say, "See how dumb my baby brother is?" And that was just the beginning. But I hadn't taught Arthur wrong things for a while now. I liked him a lot better these days.

Arthur asked, "Is it, Mom? Is this silver?"

Mom was still staring at me. She raised an eyebrow.

I shrugged.

Mom looked at Arthur and cleared her throat. "It's yellow and brown, Arthur. You know your colors."

"But the man said it was silver."

"The shopkeeper?"

"Yup^②. He said I could keep it as my silver ear."

Mom laughed. Dad laughed. Arthur's face got red.

I leaned over and touched his wrist. "It's a souvenir, not a silver ear. A souvenir is something you keep to remember something or someplace or whatever." I glared at the back of Mom's laughing head.

Arthur went back to pressing his forehead against the window.