

MAN WOMAN
AND CHILD



男人女人和孩子

外语教学与研究出版社

英语学习读物丛书

Man, Woman and Child

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Erich Segal 原著

阿 炳注释

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Bob and Sheila Beckwith have been happily married for eighteen years. They cherish one another, delight in one another and, most of all, trust one another. With their two high-spirited young daughters, the Beckwiths seem the ideal family.

Then comes the overseas telephone call. A long-forgotten voice from France reveals a secret so incredible that Bob and Sheila's marriage may not withstand the shock. Shattered, distraught, swept far from their moorings, the Beckwiths know that somehow they must keep explosive truth from their children and from their young summer visitor.

前 言

贝克威思一家过着美满幸福的生活。他们的两个女儿生气勃勃令人喜爱。婚后十八年来贝克威思夫妇一直和谐相处，彼此信任，相亲相爱，亲密无间。朋友们无不**为**贝克威思夫妇之间忠贞的爱情感到由衷的高兴和羡慕。

一天，大洋彼岸突如其来的长途电话震撼了贝克威思家庭中的每一个成员。幸福美满的家庭中掀起了轩然大波，濒临崩溃。十多年前贝克威思去法国出席学术会议，一次极偶然的机会他与激进的法国女医生盖兰相遇钟情。但此后他们断绝了联系。贝克威思一直对爱妻隐瞒着这一段私情。现在盖兰医生在一次车祸中不幸丧生，她与贝克威思的私生子让·克洛德成了无人抚养的孤儿。他们的一位老朋友不得不与贝克威思取得联系，并安排让·克洛德——贝克威思毫无知晓的儿子——来美国在贝克威思家暂住。故事正是围绕着让·克洛德的到来所引起的家庭风波展开的。贝克威思夫妇的婚姻和家庭在这场风波中历经考验，几经沉浮。故事情节曲折，描写细腻感人，对每一个处境相似的现代家庭不无教育意义。

本书是美国耶鲁大学教授埃里奇·西格尔（Erich Segal）继《爱情的故事》和《奥立弗的故事》之后所著的又一畅销读物。该书于1980年出版，并被拍成电影搬上电视屏幕。

书中文字规范，简明易懂，适合初中级的英语读者阅读。

本书于一九八七年在《英语学习》杂志上连载，深受广大读者的欢迎。这次补全了连载时删去的几处情节。

《英语学习》编辑部的同志与出版社编辑部的同志给予我们许多帮助和支持，我们在此向他们表示感谢。

注释者

一九八八年元月于北京

主要人名地名

Robert Beckwith (Bob) ['rɒbət 'bekwiθ]

罗伯特·贝克威思 (鲍勃), 麻省理工学院统计学教授

Sheila ['ʃi:lə]

希拉, 鲍勃之妻

Jessica (Jessie) ['dʒesikə]

洁西卡, 鲍勃之女

Paula ['pɔ:lə]

波拉, 鲍勃之女

Nicole Guérin

尼柯尔·盖兰, 法国女医生

Jean-Claude

让·克洛德, 盖兰与鲍勃的私生子

Bernie Ackerman ['bɜ:ni 'ækəmən]

伯尔尼·阿克曼, 鲍勃的好友

Nancy ['nænsi]

南希, 伯尔尼之妻

Davey ['deivi]

戴维, 伯尔尼之子

Margo ['mɑ:gəu]

马戈, 希拉的女友

Gavin Wilson ['gævin 'wilsn]

盖文·威尔逊, 希拉的新交

Boston ['bɒstən]

波士顿, 美国麻省首府

Lexington [ˈleksɪŋtən]

(美) 列克星敦, 鲍勃家庭住地地名

Cape Cod [keɪp kɒd]

(美) 科德角, 麻省东南的海滨胜地

New Haven [ˈnjuː ˈheɪvən]

(美) 纽黑文, 耶鲁大学所在地

Cambridge [ˈkeɪmbɪdʒ]

(美) 坎布里奇, 哈佛大学所在地

Montpellier

(法) 蒙彼利埃, 法国南部城市

Sete

(法) 塞特, 法国地中海海滨城市

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CHAPTER ONE

“ I HAVE an important message for you, Dr. Beckwith.”

“I’m tied up right now. Can I get back to you?”

“Actually, Professor, I’d prefer to speak to you in person.”

A phone call from the French consulate^① had summoned Robert Beckwith from the final departmental meeting of the term.

“Can you get to Boston before five?” the deputy consul^② asked.

“It’s almost four thirty now,” said Bob.

“I will wait for you.”

“Is it *that* important?”

“Yes, I believe so. ”

Bob hurried to his car and began threading his way across the Charles River through the heavy rush-hour traffic. Moving slower than the passing joggers^③, he had plenty of time to speculate on what could possibly be so urgent. And the more he thought, the more the odds seemed to suggest one thing: They’re giving me the

① consulate[ˈkɒnsjʊlɪt]: 领事馆。

② deputy consul[ˈdepjʊti ˈkɒnsəl]: 副领事。

③ jogger[ˈdʒɒgə]: 缓慢跑步的人。

Legion of Honor^①.

It's not so impossible, he told himself. After all, I've lectured lots of times in France — twice at the Sorbonne^②.

That must be it. Sheila and the girls will be proud.

“THIS message came to us by Telex^③,” said M. Bertrand Pelletier^④ the moment Bob sat down in his elegant high-ceilinged office. The deputy consul held a narrow slip of paper.

The award, thought Bob. He tried not to smile too soon.

“It requests that Dr. Beckwith of MIT^⑤ contact a Monsieur Venargues in Sete^⑥ immediately.” He handed Bob the paper.

“Sete?” repeated Bob. And thought, Oh, no, it

① The more ... the Legion of Honor: 他愈想愈觉得很可能是这件事: 他们将给我颁发荣誉勋章。 the odds, 可能性。 Legion of Honor [ˈli:dʒən əv ˈɒnə], 法国拿破仑于 1802 年所设立的荣誉勋章, 奖励在文职或军职工作中做出杰出贡献的人士。

② the Sorbonne [sɔ:ˈbɒn]: 巴黎大学。

③ Telex [teleks]: 电传 (以电传打字机传递的电报)。

④ M. Bertrand Pelletier: 贝特朗·佩尔蒂埃先生。

⑤ MIT = Massachusetts Institute of Technology: (美国) 马萨诸塞州理工学院。

⑥ Monsieur Venargues in Sete: monsieur = Mr., 缩写成 M.. Sete, 塞特, 法国地名。

can't be.

“Charming town,” said M. Pelletier. “Do you know the south of France?”

“Uh—yes.” Bob grew even more uneasy when he noticed that the consular official wore a rather solemn expression^①.

“Monsieur Pelletier, what's this all about?”

“I was only informed that it concerns the late Nicole Guérin^②.”

Nicole. So long ago, so well suppressed he had almost convinced himself it had never happened. The single infidelity^③ in all his years of marriage. Why now? Why after all this time? And hadn't she herself insisted they would never meet again, never contact one another? Wait a minute.

“Monsieur Pelletier, did you say the *late* Nicole Guérin? She's dead?”

The deputy consul nodded. “I regret that I have no details. May I offer my *condoléances*^④, Dr. Beckwith?”

Bob stood up. “Thank you, Monsieur Pelletier.” They shook hands, and a bit unsteadily, Bob walked

① wore a rather solemn expression: 脸上的表情相当严肃。

② the late Nicole Guérin: 已故的尼科尔·盖兰。

③ infidelity [ɪnfi'delɪti]: (夫妻间的) 不忠实; 不忠实的行为。

④ May I offer my *condoléances* (= condolences [kən'dəʊlənsɪz]): 请接受我的哀悼。

out. He was parked right near the Ritz^①. Should he get a quick shot of courage at the bar^②? No. Better make that phone call first. From somewhere private.

The corridor was silent. Everyone seemed to have left for the summer. Bob closed his office door, sat at the desk and dialed the number he had been given in Sete, France.

“*Oui?*” croaked a sleepy voice with a thick Provençal accent^③.

“This is Robert Beckwith. May I speak to Monsieur Venargues!”

“Bobbie — it is me, Louis! At last I have found you. What a task...” Even after all these years, that voice was unmistakable.

“Louis the mayor?”

“*Ex-mayor*^④. Can you imagine? They put me out to pasture like some ancient dinosaur^⑤. The council...”

Bob was much too tense for lengthy anecdotes^⑥.

① Ritz: 一家豪华的大饭店。

② Should he get ... at the bar? 他要不要喝杯酒壮壮胆子?

③ “*Oui?*” ... accent: “找谁?” 一个普罗旺斯口音很重的睡意朦胧的声音问道。Provençal [ˌprɒvɑ-nˈsɔ:l]: (法) 普罗旺斯的。

④ *Ex-mayor*: 前市长。

⑤ dinosaur [ˈdaɪnəsɔ:]: 恐龙。

⑥ Bob ... of lengthy anecdotes: 鲍勃心情紧张, 无心恭听冗长的轶闻。

“Louis, what is this about Nicole?”

“ Oh, Bobbie, what a tragedy! Five days ago. Head-on collision^①. She was coming from a cardiac emergency^②. The whole town is in mourning. She was so young. A saint, unselfish.”

He paused to sigh. Bob seized the opportunity.

“ Louis, this is terrible news. But I don't see why you wanted me to call you. It's been ten years since I last saw her.”

Suddenly a silence on the line. Then Louis answered almost in a whisper, “Because of the child.”

“Child? Was Nicole married?”

“No, no. Of course not. She was an independent mother, so to speak^③. She raised the boy herself.”

“I still don't see what this has to do with me,” said Bob.

“He is your child too,” said Louis Venargues.

For a moment there was silence on both sides of the Atlantic^④. Bob was stunned. Then anger helped him

① Head-on collision: (汽车) 迎面相撞。

② She was ... cardiac emergency [ˈka:diæk iˈmæ:dʒənsi]: 她为一个心脏病病人急诊回来。

③ She was an independent mother, so to speak: 她可以说是个单身的母亲 (即没有丈夫)。so to speak 是插入语, 作“可以这么说”解。

④ there was silence ... the Atlantic: 大西洋两岸都沉默了。(因为通话人分别在大西洋两岸的美国和法国)

to regain his powers of speech. "I don't believe it," he replied.

"But it's true. I was her confidant in everything^①."

"But what makes you so sure that *I'm* the father?"

"Bobbie" Louis answered gently, "you were here in May. The demonstrations, you recall? The little boy came, so to speak, on schedule. There was no one else in her life at the time. She would have told me. Of course, she never wanted you to know."

Bob thought, this is incredible. "Louis, even if it's true, I'm not responsible for —"

"Bobbie, tranquilize^② yourself. No one's saying that you have responsibility. Jean-Claude is well provided for^③. Believe me — I am the executor. But there is one small problem."

Bob trembled at the possibilities^④. "What?" he asked.

"Nicole had no other family. The boy is all alone." Louis paused. "Ordinarily we would take him in,

① I was her confidant in everything: 她什么事都和我说。 confidant [ˌkɒnfɪ'dænt]: 密友; 知己。

② tranquilize ['træŋkwilaɪz]: (使) 平静, 镇定。

③ Jean-Claude is well provided for: 让·克洛德的生活很有保障。

④ Bob trembled at the possibilities: 鲍勃想到可能发生的情况不寒而栗。

Marie—Thérèse and I. We are his guardians. But my wife is gravely ill, Bob. She doesn't have much time^①.”

“I'm sorry,” Bob said softly.

“What can I say? We had a honeymoon of forty years. But now you see why it's impossible. Unless we can find some alternative — and quickly — the authorities will take the boy away^②.”

At last Bob sensed where this was leading. He grew angrier with every breath. And frightened.

“The child is inconsolable^③,” Louis continued. “His grief is so great he cannot even cry. He just sits there — ”

“Get to the point,” said Bob.

Louis hesitated. “I want to tell him that you exist.”

“No! Are you crazy? How could that possibly help?”

“I just want him to know that somewhere in this world he has a father. It would be *something*, Bobbie.”

“Louis, I'm a married man with two young daughters. Look, I'm truly sorry about Nicole. I'm sorry about the boy. But I refuse to get involved in this. I will

① She doesn't have much time: 她活不了多久了。

② Unless we can find ... the boy away: 我们要不尽快想出某种解决办法，市政当局就会把孩子领走。（因为孩子已成为无人抚养的孤儿。）

③ inconsolable [ˌɪnkən'səʊləbl]: 极度悲伤的。

not hurt my family. I can't. I *won't*. That's final."

There was another pause. "All right," said Louis. "I'll trouble you no more. But I do confess I'm very disappointed." Yet one more pause (for Bob to reconsider), and then capitulation. "Goodby, Bobbie," he mumbled, and hung up.

Bob put down the receiver and buried his head in his hands. This was too difficult to take in all at once. After so many years, Nicole Guérin, back in his life. And could their brief affair really have produced a child? A son? *Oh, God, what should I do?*

He sat frozen, staring at the telephone. He felt a desperate inward struggle, heart and mind at war. Don't be crazy, Bob. Don't risk your marriage. nothing's worth it. But an impulse he could not control made him pick up the phone.

"Hello, Louis. It's me, Bob."

"Ah, good. I knew that you would reconsider."

"Listen, I need time to think. I'll call you back tomorrow."

They hung up. Now Bob was terrified. He had placed his whole existence in jeopardy^①. What made

① He had placed ... in jeopardy ['dʒepədi]. 他把一切都置于危险之中。