

Ned Inead

耐德·斯尼德 著

陈鸿志 温泉 译



威利和乔

两个普通的神灵

Willie & Joe

Two Ordinary Spirits



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· 桂林 ·

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PREFACE



This book is fiction, intended for entertainment purposes only. No character depicted herein is representative of any real person, living or dead.

本书纯属娱乐虚构，书中人物不代表任何现实或作古人物。

That's a fair question. I have read a good bit on the subject, and I have had some 'experiences' that have left me certain about some things without being able to explain why I am so sure. What I 'know' seems to make more sense than all the stuff I have read and heard on the subject in 63 years of going to half a dozen different kinds of churches and listening to thousands of sermons. I have gotten tired of people trying to explain 'spirit world'.

It would also be fair to ask, "How come you know so much about the 'spirit world'?"

Willie and Joe are two of the most common names in the U.S.A., but I would not be completely fair if I did not mention a cartoon by Bill Mundy that I saw during the Great War of 1918-1943. Two GIs with beards were trying to sleep under one blanket amid the rubble of war. A big rat was standing on his hind legs on top of the blanket and one man's toe. One of the GIs was pointing a .45 pistol at the rat, and the other was saying, "Ain't between the eyes. Sometimes they change when they're wounded."

PREFACE

Shortly after I ran for public office in 1988, I wrote a series of articles that were printed in a newspaper in which I had a financial interest. A few of those articles were fictional dialogs between two roving spirits that I called Willie and Joe. In the last couple of years I have written enough more of these little yarns to fill a little booklet.

Willie and Joe are two of the most common names in the USA, but I would not be completely fair if I did not mention a cartoon by Bill Mauldin I saw during the Great War of 1939-1945. Two GI's with beards were trying to sleep under one blanket amid the rubble of war. A big rat was standing on his hind legs on top of the blanket and one man's toe. One of the GI's was pointing a .45 pistol at the rat, and the other was saying, "Aim between the eyes. Sometimes they charge when they're wounded."

It would also be fair to ask, "How come you know so much about the spirit world?"

That's a fair question. I have read a good bit on the subject, and I have had some 'experiences' that have left me certain about some things without being able to explain why I am so sure. What I 'know' seems to make more sense than all the stuff I have read and heard on the subject in 65 years of going to half a dozen different kinds of churches and listening to thousands of sermons. I have gotten tired of people trying to explain

序

在 1988 年我竞选完得克萨斯州州长之后,我开始在一家报纸上连载一些自己的文学创作,我也是这家报纸的股东之一。其中有许多文章都是关于两个四处周游的神灵威利和乔的对话。最近几年我一直继续把这个虚幻的故事编写出来,以至于可以成册出版。

威利和乔是两个最常见的美国人名字。但为公正起见,我一定要提及在 1939—1945 世界大战期间由比尔·毛丁创作的一个卡通故事。两个长着大胡子的美国兵在一堆废墟下裹着一条毛毯正在试图睡觉,却发现一只大老鼠用两条后腿站在毛毯上,一只脚正踩在其中一个美国兵的脚趾上。一个美国兵用一支 45 口径的手枪瞄准那只老鼠,另一个美国兵说:“瞄准老鼠两眼正中,不然受伤的老鼠会向你进攻的”。

人们也许会问:“你怎么会对神灵世界如此精通?”

这是一个很公正的问题。我阅读过很多有关神灵的文章。我的一些“经历”让我悟出事物之真谛,却无从解释为何我会如此自信。我“理解”的似乎比在过去 65 年中我在六个不同的教堂里听到的上千个训诫

things to me that they don't understand themselves.

Religion has done a lot of good in the world, especially when they talk about treating other people the way you would like to be treated yourself. But religious people have caused a lot of trouble when they insist that everybody believe, talk, eat, drink, smoke, sleep, dress, make love and act just like they do.

If it turns out that I'm badly wrong about some of this, you are welcome to look me up and try to help me after we are sure. But please wait until we are both dead.

The first edition to *Willie and Joe* was inspired before Sherron and I were married, and she was still working as a consultant dietician for a dozen or more small hospitals and nursing homes. I was not about to marry anybody until I knew her a lot better than I had known my first wife, so I was serving as her chauffeur while she was still recovering from a crash in my little seaplane on Lake Buchanan in 1982.

One of her visits was to a nursing home in Austin devoted to the severely handicapped. One patient was curled up in a baby bed. He (she or it) was old enough to be an adult, but was still as dependent as a newborn. I had never believed that "*every life is precious*," but here was evidence that it was not God's idea either.

My friend, Larry Simpson, designed the cover and printed 150 copies which I sent to my closest friends, asking for their comments. I was surprised and pleased that a quarter of them responded in writing. I asked the respondents for permission to print their (mostly) positive comments, which are included in the "Feedback" section near the end of this volume. This made the second edition several pages larger than the first.

The inspiration for this, the third edition, started when Sherron and I were driving home from a visit to the University of Texas' big telescopes out near Fort Davis. We had spent a couple of days getting close enough

更有道理。我对那些自欺欺人的说教已深恶痛绝了。

宗教对世界做过很多好事,尤其是教导人们应对待他人如同期望别人对待自己一样。但是当信教的人们要求所有的人都像他们一样地信仰、言论、吃、喝、抽烟、睡觉、穿着、做爱,众多麻烦就会从中而起。

假如你确认我写的某些东西真的非常错误,欢迎指教。但请等到我们都到了天堂。

《威利与乔》第一稿的创作灵感源于我还没有迎娶我现在的妻子之前。我现任的妻子——雪莉,她是一位优秀的营养师,至今还忙碌在十几家大小医院和疗养院里。当我发现我对她的了解远胜于对我第一位妻子的了解时,我知道她将是那位陪我走过我最后一段生命历程的人。所以在她从1982年我们那小小的水上飞机于布坎南湖上发生的撞机事故中完全康复之前,我就充当着她的暖手炉。

记得有一次,她曾去拜访一家位于奥斯汀的疗养院,该院是为有严重生理缺陷的病人所设。有一位病人整个身体只蜷缩在一个婴儿的床里。他(她,或它)的年龄相当于一个成年人,却只能像婴儿那样生活。我从不相信所谓的“世间每条生命都是珍贵的”。果然,从这里可以看出上帝也不这么认为。

这部小说曾由我现在的一位好友拉里·西普逊帮忙设计了封面,并且印了一百五十多本,分发给我最亲密的朋友们,征求他们的建议。让我感到意外和喜悦的是,有四分之一的朋友给我寄来了亲笔信。在得到他们的允许后,我把这些积极的评语也编进了本书中,就这样第二版应运而生了,比第一版厚上了好些页。

有一次我和雪莉去参观得克萨斯大学位于戴威斯附近的一座天文望远镜。就在我们结束参观开车回家的途中,第三版的创作灵感开始

to touch the big, new telescope and listening to lectures by, and eating barbecue with professional astronomers.

One evening I noticed a bright star and asked one of the astronomers if it was Jupiter. He didn't know. I asked another astronomer how far north and south the Sun rises and sets between winter and summer. He didn't know either. Finally I asked the same question of the big shot astronomer in charge. He quickly gave me an answer (23.5-degrees) which I later learned was almost right, but not quite.

We learned that nobody was actually looking through the big telescopes except the technicians getting them adjusted. The light they gather goes into a spectroscope in the basement.

In the last lecture we learned that with a few more years work and a few million more dollars, they would be able to tell us what happened in the first quarter of a second after the *Big Bang*.

As we were driving home, I asked Sherron when she thought was the last time astronomers had done anything useful.

Then I answered my own question, "Maybe it was 400 years ago when they invented gravity." Sherron's answer was, "Maybe it was 4,000 years ago when they invented arithmetic." That started me writing the *Astro Yams*.

More recently I have been asking myself and others what I should do when I grow up. I have sung in a dozen choirs, listened to a thousand sermons, and been baptized three times by different Christian sects. Lately I have decided that I have learned all I can from going to church, although we still go occasionally.

Then when Sherron and I were driving home from her 95-year-old mother's funeral in Brady I realized that all of Vivian's surviving friends

在脑中浮现。接下来的一段时间，我们花了好些天来近距离地和这座巨大的、先进的天文望远镜接触。我们去听教授的讲座，和天文学家们一起吃烧烤。

一天晚上，我观察到了一颗很耀眼的星星，我问其中的一位天文学家，它是否就是木星，他说他不知道。我又接着问另外一位天文学家，南回归线与北回归线的纬度是多少，他也不清楚。最后我把这个问题抛给那里的一个头头——一位大名鼎鼎的天文学家，他很快给了我一个答案(23.5度)。后来得知他的答案和正确的答案很接近，但还不是精确。

我还了解到，那时还没有人真正地通过这座天文望远镜遥望过太空，除了安装它的技师们在调适时透过镜筒往外看过。光线全都被收集进了密封仓的分光镜里。

在最后一场讲座上，我了解到他们只投入了几百万美元和几年的努力，就弄清楚了在宇宙大爆炸后的四分之一秒内发生了什么。

在我们开车回家的途中，我问雪莉，在她觉得天文学家们做过的有成就的事中，最近的一次是在什么时候。

然后我自己先回答自己道：“可能是四百年前他们发现了地球引力。”雪莉的回答是：“大概是四千年前他们发明了算术。”这激发我开始创作一本叫做《宇宙畅想》的书。

最近，我总是不停地问自己和我的朋友们，在我百年之后，我应做些什么呢？我已经在十几个唱诗班里虔诚地唱过主的赞美歌，听过几千遍牧师们冗长的说教，在基督教的不同宗派里洗礼过三次。最近我确定，我把能从宗教中学会的东西都学了，不过我们仍不时去教堂。

然后，当那次我和雪莉参加完她 95 岁老母亲的葬礼后开车回家的

need some *Good News* to offset the bad news that we will all soon be just as dead as that unlucky deer alongside the highway. My fictional characters, Willie and Joe, could be some comfort and perhaps more fun than what we hear in church, but don't take them too seriously.

途中,我感悟到所有一只脚已经踏进棺材里的老年朋友们,确定需要一些福音来抵消对即将来临的死亡的恐惧,因为人死以后,就像高速公路边那腐臭的鹿尸一样。我虚构的两个角色,威利与乔,也许能给这些朋友带来一些心灵上的慰藉,至少要比教堂里听到的那些东西要有趣得多,不过呢,也别太把这些当回事。

BACKGROUND ‘*INFORMATION*’ ABOUT SPIRITS

Somewhere, perhaps within the Milky Way Galaxy, and perhaps very far beyond, two spirits met. These encounters don't happen frequently because of the vast size of the universe. As you know, spirits, not being confined by any bodily limitations, are able to travel anywhere they wish at the speed of thought.

There are lots of spirits, many, many billions at least, but they are always busy, doing the things that spirits do, finding planets and other sites suitable for various forms of life, experimenting with farming, breeding, evolution and organizations.

Because spirits without bodies have no need for air, water, food, shelter, etc., they are not dependent on each other like we are, but they do like to get together once in a while to shoot the bull and take advantage of the experience gained by other spirits, just like we do. They do it faster, because they don't suffer from our language problems, and they don't get upset when they learn something new.

Time doesn't mean much to them personally, of course, but the experimental plots they are watching are very much time dependent. Particularly when new mutations of genes and new social experiments are first introduced, the plots need just the right amount of energy, fluids, nutrients and cultivation at just the right time, or they are likely to fizzle without ever being tried. So a spirit needs to watch his experimental plots pretty closely,

神灵的背景

在遥远的银河系的某个地方,两个神灵相遇了。由于宇宙之阔,两个神灵相遇的机会并不多。你知道神灵不受身体局限,可以用与思维同等的速度穿行到宇宙的任何地方。

宇宙间有很多神灵,至少成千上万。但他们都在忙于神灵应该从事的工作——发现新的行星或其他天体,以适应不同的生命形式,试验耕种、繁殖、进化、管理等等。

虽然精灵无体,不需要空气、水、食物及住宅,不像人类那样相互依赖,但他们仍然像人类一样愿意偶尔相聚,相互交流彼此的新经历。这些交流很顺捷,因为他们之间没有语言障碍,也从不会因为听到新鲜事而气恼。

当然,时间对神灵来说是无足轻重的,但他们所从事的试验项目却与时间息息相关。尤其当首次推出新基因变种和新社会试验时,这些构想需要在最佳时间得到恰到好处的能量、水分、营养和培植,以避免死于萌芽状态。正因如此,一个神灵需要精心观测他的新试验构想,在