

血脉（节选第 11 章）

Bloodlines (Chapter 11)

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Starting at the beginning again, Dora Makken thinks, bottom rung of the ladder.

She lays the quartered sheet lengthways along the board and leans on its creases with the iron. The steam brings the comforting smell of lightly scalded cotton.

Amazing that no matter how hard you struggle, pull yourself up, read and learn, learn your kids, you can land up at the bottom of the ladder again. After leaving school she began like this. Never mind getting her Shakespeare off by heart, never mind the accountancy correspondence course. Bright but black, her father Sam said, our lowliness depends on our blackness, you can't change the system. So house work it was at first, house work and nanny work, waking dizzy-headed at four in the morning, rocking with back pain, seven days a week.

What Joe would say when she told him about the job.

'A luta continua, mama.'

Committed to the extent of joking.

'Bright and black, ma, that's our future.'

When she complained of her bunions burnt raw by the secondhand shoes. When she stuck pictures of thin white women cut out of magazines on the food cupboard door, he'd toss the lines from the side of his mouth. 'Mama, remember, always the struggle.'

Dora puts the ironed sheet in an empty basket and draws another out of the tangled pile of clean laundry on the bed.

朵拉·迈肯认为，生活总是可以从头再来。

她将被单的四分之一处纵向铺在熨衣板上，沿着折痕将其抚平。棉花受到蒸汽的熨烫，散发出舒适宜人的气味。

她深切地感受到，无论她多么拼命挣扎，振作起来阅读、学习、抚养孩子，她的努力总会顷刻间烟消云散。离开学校后，她一直这样努力着，她可以背下莎士比亚的作品，学习会计函授课程。她的父亲山姆说过，虽然你头脑聪明，但你是黑人，黑色皮肤决定了我们卑微的地位，你无法改变这个世界的规则。是的，她最初的工作是家政、之后是家政兼保姆，每天凌晨四点昏昏沉沉醒来，腰酸背痛，一周七天，天天如此。

如果约瑟夫知道了她工作的事情，他会说什么呢？

他也许会开玩笑似的说：“妈妈，斗争仍在继续。”

“我们是聪明的黑人，妈妈，这才是我们未来的模样。”

当朵拉抱怨二手鞋磨出拇囊炎时；当她剪下杂志上风姿绰约的白人女人照片，并将其贴在食品柜上时；约瑟夫总会随口冒出那句话，“妈妈，记住要斗争到底。”

朵拉把熨过的床单放进空篮子里，然后从床上那一堆乱糟糟的干净衣服中抽出另一件继续熨烫。

Stash away a kitty for the rainy day that will be Joseph's trial, that's why she took this no-hope extra work. Bernice saw it advertised in the canteen at her discount warehouse.

Washing and Ironing. Afternoons only. Phone Mrs Arnold. If she did the early shift at the factory Dora could fit it in.

But within days the extra became the necessity. The factory manager matched a name on his payroll to a name in the papers. The call came down to the table where she sat checking toothpaste tubes, where for years she'd dreamed of other, better Jobs, a sudden breakthrough, Mrs Makken, I'm writing to offer you, despite your lack of qualifications, the post of Library Assistant... This table where the women she supervised knew anyway but said nothing.

'Mrs Makken?' The manager looked worried, whether on his account or hers was difficult to say. His eyes smalled by his glasses were not unkind.

She had never seen such a dusty office,

He said, 'Any relation?'

And she, no use dodging, 'Can I please work out the month?'

'I'd rather you left at the end of the week, Mrs Makken. We'd want to avoid associations.'

In spite of how carefully she does her job, of how she was working for the supervisor's diploma, sitting up past midnight studying-her name sticking out like a sore thumb.

'Makken. Mak-ken. Sounds like nothing, mama.' Joe home from school, thirteen and sulky, kicking the table leg. 'The teacher says, McConnell, McKenna? McKen? Now is that meant to be Scottish? Irish? *Maak* it, Makken, *Maak* it, the boys say. Like they're asking me to roll a spliff.'

'You be proud, my Joseph.' Watching his blunt foot hammer the table leg. 'That's one unique name. It was your

这份额外兼职看似毫无意义，但朵拉想着在约瑟夫被审判之前多挣些钱，以备不时之需。

柏妮丝是在仓储折扣店的餐厅里看到了这则招聘广告：“洗涤熨烫，下午上班。联系人：阿诺德夫人”。她想着朵拉如果将工厂的工作换成早班，就能接下这份兼职。

但没过几天，这份兼职就成了朵拉唯一的收入来源。因为她所在工厂的经理拿着刊登嫌疑犯信息的报纸，在员工名单上逐一排查。那天，朵拉正在办公桌前检查牙膏管，桌上的电话突然响了起来。多年以来，朵拉一直幻想着一个机遇，能让自己获得一份更好的工作，例如一封突如其来的信——迈肯女士，我写信是来通知您，尽管您缺乏学历资质，但我们还是愿意为您提供一个图书馆助理的职位……坐这张桌子受她监管的那些女人们都知道这事，不过她们从没提起过接到这样的电话。

“迈肯夫人？”经理看起来忧心忡忡，不知道是因为朵拉还是他自己。他的眼睛被眼镜遮住了，但眼神并非毫无善意。

朵拉突然感觉这间办公室从未像今天一般如此肮脏。

经理问道：“报刊上的嫌疑犯是你的亲属吗？”

朵拉知道躲是躲不过了，她直接问：“我可以在这儿做满一个月吗？”

“我想你还是这周末离开为好，迈肯女士。我们也不想被牵扯进去。”

无论她多么认真工作，无论她为了拿到主管职位多么努力，无论她怎么熬夜学习——她的姓氏依旧十分扎眼，像脚底的拇指囊肿一般根深蒂固。

“迈肯。迈——肯——听起来没什么特别的，妈妈。”十三岁的约瑟夫放学回家，他踢着桌腿，面露愠色，“老师说，‘麦康奈尔？麦肯纳？麦肯？这是苏格兰姓氏吗？还是爱尔兰的？’那些男孩说，‘卖一个，麦肯，卖一个’。听起来就像要我抽大麻一样。”

“你应该感到骄傲，约瑟夫。”朵拉看着他的钝脚不停地踢着桌腿，“这是一个独一无

oupa Sam's name, and his mother's, my ouma, a strong fighting lady who loved songs. She had it from a fighting man she knew, her man. So be proud.'

Half making it up. The family story full of fuzzy patches, puzzles, snags. But a soldier in it somehow, she remembered hearing. Bernice definitely remembered their father saying. Now Dora said it for Joe's benefit.

'A soldier in our family. Like you, a fighting man. Who's to worry what people he belonged to? And the Irish anyway, what about them? What a nation of battlers.'

Joe kicking the table.

Around the time his voice broke he could go sullen on her like that. Shuffling about and pouting when John was on the drink. Scowling at her for asking why he was out late.

'Hai Joey, I'm your ma, remember!'

It's that he's proud like she's proud.

The ugly Saturday night he was about sixteen and, on the way out to the toilet, surprised John squelching drunkenly in the mud along the fence. One of the teenage hoers from the shebeen up the road with her mouth in John's trousers.

Joseph running straight back into the house, fisting his side.

'Now you see why they pull their front teeth,' Dora shrugged. 'Like Bernice says, make more room.'

For a week then he didn't speak to her.

Proud like she's proud, struggling for better things just like she has struggled.

Dora holds the second cubed and warmed sheet to her cheek before putting it in the basket. Nice to see the heap of ironed things grow, the pile of sheets like a stack of coins. Martha the new Coloured ironing girl works neatly, Mrs Arnold helpfully tells her neighbours in her young, so tired voice. If they pay the extra, Martha'll stay behind on Fridays. There will be a small charge for the use of the Arnolds' ironing board and electricity.

二的姓氏。它是你爷爷山姆的姓氏，也是你爷爷的母亲——也就是我太奶奶的姓氏。你的曾祖母是个爱唱歌的坚强女人。这个姓氏是她从一位勇士，也就是她的男人那儿得到的。所以你应该感到骄傲。”

朵拉的话一半都是编造的。这个家族的历史模糊不清，打满了补丁和问号。但不知怎么地，在朵拉的记忆里，祖上确实出现过一名士兵，就连柏妮丝也听父亲提起过这位士兵。如今她说起这段家族史是为了给约瑟夫打气。

“家族里曾经出现过一位士兵，与你一样都是勇士。英雄不问出处，就算是把你当成爱尔兰人又怎么样呢？那可是个充满血性的民族。”

约瑟夫仍在踢桌子。

他在变声期的时候，总是会像这样对朵拉生闷气。

约瑟夫喝了酒，走路总是拖着步子，撅着嘴。朵拉问他为什么这么晚才回来，他瞪了她一眼。

“乔伊，记住，我是你的母亲！”

这对母子都有着同样的傲骨。

在那个糟糕的星期六夜晚，十六岁的约瑟夫出去上厕所。他沿着篱笆，在泥泞路上醉醺醺地走着，路边小酒馆里的一个雏妓突然冒出来，把嘴放在了他的裤子上。

约瑟夫吓得径直跑回屋，紧握着拳头不敢松开。

朵拉听到这件事时耸了耸肩，说道：“现在你知道她们为什么要拔门牙了吧，就像柏妮丝说的，为了让嘴里的空间更大些。”

结果，整整一个星期，约瑟夫都没跟她说话。

约瑟夫就像她一样骄傲，像她一样努力追求更好的东西。

朵拉把第二张床单叠得方方正正，上面还有熨烫的余温，于是她把被单放在脸颊上贴了一会儿，然后放进篮子里。她很高兴看见这堆熨好的衣物越堆越高，就像堆硬币一样。阿诺德夫人年轻的声音里带着疲惫，她热心地告诉邻居们：那个新来的黑人熨衣工叫玛莎，她干活十分利索。如果有人想雇她，她会一直待到周五，大家只需要付上少量的熨衣板租用费和电费。

Martha Christian, that was Bernice's idea. Her manager's name at the discount warehouse, an alias meant in good faith, 'And a more unchristian cow, Dor, you've never seen. You take her name and make it different.'

Outside the sunlight strikes the swimming pool, flashes a bright diamond star on the crystal swan standing in the window. Dora squints. She angles the ironing board away from the light.

But she can't say it isn't beautiful though, this glittery house, the thousands of gleamy things Mrs Arnold has in it. The first days on the job she had enough to do taking it in. Letting her hands do the ironing and taking it all in. The enamel doorknobs, the light switches made of brass, the bronze animal pictures, that silver rose-bowl glinting on the polished chest of drawers. Looking at these things she can forget herself, for minutes at a time she can forget even about Joe.

Joe detained. Joe charged.

These days, these weeks, over a month now, of no real news, no messages. What do they do to him in there? The one time she took him clean clothes, they told her he could wash and wear the two sets he had and sent her home.

Looking at the sky-blue pool under the frangipani trees she can sometimes forget. The broken handle on her front door, still broken. Joe's mattress vomiting its stuffing into the red mud in the back yard. The day the three policemen kicked open the door and roughed her to one side, shrieking for him, a bomb suspect.

Their voices go up high with their anger and excitement.

Two days later they found him. Easter Monday. A safe house in the north, Ladysmith maybe. She heard it on the radio. Three weeks later she heard the news that he was charged on the radio.

'Bernice, what do they do to them inside?'

'Better not think, Dor, better not think.'

'The violence done to us, mama.' How many times Joe said this. Late at night sitting on the odds-and-ends kas on the back stoep talking. 'The violence done to us, mama, the violence they go on doing, the cowered

玛莎·克里斯蒂安,这个名字是柏妮丝取的。这是她工作的折扣仓库经理的名字,一个善意的别名,“她不信基督教,勤奋起来像头牛。朵拉,你之前没见过她。你就用这个名字吧,让这个名字变得与众不同。”

阳光透过窗户,照射在游泳池里,窗前的水晶天鹅沐浴在日光中,上面闪烁着一颗明亮的星星钻石。朵拉瞥了一眼,把熨衣板移到了阴凉处。

她不得不承认这个房子十分漂亮,阿诺德夫人的屋子里摆放着成千上万光彩夺目的东西。刚开始工作的几天,她放任自己沉浸在熨烫和整理工作中,忙得不可开交。搪瓷门把手、黄铜电灯开关、青铜动物雕像、擦得锃亮的五斗橱上的流光溢彩的银色玫瑰碗……她看着这些东西的时候,会暂时会忘记自己是谁,甚至有几分钟不会去想约瑟夫的事情。

约瑟夫被拘留了,约瑟夫被指控了。

一天又一天,一周又一周,到现在已经一个多月了,仍然没有传来任何关于他的新闻或消息。那些人在监狱里会对他做什么?有一次,朵拉去给约瑟夫送干净衣服,他们说牢房里有两套换洗衣物便足够,随即打发她回家了。

朵拉望着鸡蛋花树下蔚蓝的泳池,微微有些出神。家里前门的把手坏了,一直没有修好。约瑟夫床垫里掉落的填充物还埋在后院的红泥里。那天,三名警察踹开了门,粗暴地把她推到一边,大吼大叫着寻找一个炸弹嫌疑犯。

他们兴奋地怒吼着,一声比一声高。

朵拉从收音机里得知警察在爆炸发生两天后抓到了约瑟夫,并将他押往北部的一个安全屋,好像在雷帝史密斯镇上。三周后,她又从收音机里听到了约瑟夫被指控的消息。

“柏妮丝,那些人对他会做什么?”

“别想,朵拉,最好什么都不要想。”

“妈妈,我们遭受着暴力。”这句话约瑟夫不知道说过多少次了。深夜,他坐在门廊后的杂物堆上高谈阔论。“我们遭受着暴力,妈妈,这些持续不断的暴力,让我们只能过着日日夜

existence we lead.’

Mrs Arnold’s house shines. Dora takes time each ironing after to gaze at the fancy-frame mirrors, the Tiffany lamps, the low-slung glass chandelier in the hallway, the spotless white skirting boards everywhere. These bright shining gymkhana and angling trophies clustered here on their special shelf in the guest room. Thinking how glad she is her job isn’t Grace’s. Wherever she goes in the house is Grace’s bent back, her right hand rubbing like a pendulum. Grace the Zulu woman who says few words, Hamba kahle, Go well, at the end of the day.

Probably doesn’t have much schooling, Dora suspects, nothing like what she herself has got. She hopes that’s not a bad thought.

Would Joe put her right?

‘So divide and rule, ma? Here’s Grace in the kitchen who can’t write. And you with your Standard Nine Certificate, perfect English and old school books wrapped in plastic, ironing in a quiet back room. Divide and rule as always, take care to keep those different blacks apart.’

But how is he? she wanted to ask.

When the police came for her to sign his detention papers, calmer this second time, she wanted to ask, How is he, my son? Do you know? Are you the ones who took him?

His soft amazed eyes in the morning.

Did he look up from sleep, confused where he was, when you broke into his safe house? I’m asking you as a mother. How is he, my son?

Dora shakes out a last piece for today. Silly nylon panties with lace insets there in front. Right *there*, true’s true. She turns the iron to low.

‘Bernice, you can’t imagine.’ Chatting at the end of the first day. ‘Even her undies. Ironed smooth she wants them. Extra shiny. How can she take it? Someone else fiddling with her smalls. And the panties themselves! Show more than cover.’

But Bernice was already grinning, her skirt hitched up, what a fast one. Standing there with nothing but a

夜提心吊胆的生活。”

阿诺德夫人的房子琳琅满目。下午熨衣服的时候，朵拉每次都会抽出一些时间，盯着这些花式框架的镜子、蒂芙尼的台灯、走廊里低垂的枝形玻璃吊灯，以及四周一尘不染的白色壁脚板。客房有个特别的架子，上面放满了闪闪发光的马术竞赛和钓鱼赛奖杯。她非常庆幸自己干的不是格蕾丝的工作。格蕾丝整天弯着腰，右手像钟摆一样擦拭着这间屋子的物品。格蕾丝，那个少言寡语的祖鲁女人，只有在每天工作结束的时候会用南非祖鲁语说，再见，祝你顺利。

朵拉猜测格蕾丝可能没受过多少教育，和她完全不同。朵拉希望这样的猜测不算是一个坏行为，如果约瑟夫知道了，他会纠正她吗？

约瑟夫可能会说：“那叫分而治之，妈妈。格蕾丝不会写字，所以让她待在厨房里工作。而你拥有初中毕业证书，精通英语，热爱学习，因此你可以在安静的后室里熨烫衣服。他们总是这么做，分而治之，好让我们这些黑人各司其职。”

朵拉回过神，她很想知道约瑟夫现在怎么样了。

当警察找到朵拉，让她在拘留文件上签字时，这一次，她显得比之前更加冷静。但她依然想知道，我的儿子，他怎么样了？你知道吗？是你们带走他的吗？

那天早上醒来，他的眼神一定柔和又惊讶。

你们闯入他的安全屋时，他从睡梦中醒来了吗？他知道自己在哪里吗？我以一个母亲的身份向你询问我的儿子，他怎么样了？

朵拉抖开今天最后一件衣物——一条带着蕾丝花边的丝质尼龙内裤。没错，就是那儿。她拿低了熨斗。

“柏妮丝，你无法想象。”第一天工作结束时，她和柏妮丝说道，“她连内衣都要求熨得光滑细腻，这些多余的光泽。她怎么受得了？竟然让别人摆弄她的内衣。还有那些内裤！完全是为了观赏而不是蔽体！”

可是柏妮丝已经开始大笑，她飞快地把裙子掀起来。她站在那儿，身上什么都没有，只

string of lace arched tight across her coffee-cream hip.

‘And what’s this then, Dora? Now tell me, doesn’t this beat what Mrs Arnold has to brag about?’

‘But to let another woman, I mean, *see, touch*. I don’t know, Bernice.’

Giggling so hard they had to hold on to each other. And giggling again yesterday evening, when Bernice showed Dora the washing line hung across the back yard loaded with clothes, Dora’s big cotton knickers flapping at one end.

‘I did it while you were at work. Don’t say a thing, my sister. You need all the help you can get.’

Dora arranges the panties in their drawer in the main bedroom. Pink and beige, red, black. A special favour for Mrs Arnold, a rainbow pattern, so in the morning she can reach straight for what she wants.

She leans against the chest of drawers a moment resting, smooths a fold in a doily. Mrs Arnold’s make-up is laid out in little baskets and enamel bowls floating on crocheted doilies. Tubes, sticks, tubs of make-up, all new, gleamy. Strawberry Glacé. Pearl Ice. Names like sweeties. The Crimson Smoulder lipstick Mrs Arnold has promised her at the end of the month. ‘Doesn’t go with my light skin, Martha.’

Good war paint for the trial, put up a fighting show.

Mrs Arnold on the phone, Dora has noticed, traces the tip of her tongue along her top lip. Tirelessly tests and retouches her make-up even without a mirror, even when talking to Dora about the ironing. Stroking her eyelashes against a finger held like a mascara stick. Dora recognises that technique.

Years ago she didn’t worry too much about trying out the missus’s make-up on the quiet. See how the stuff felt on. Doing her lashes and glossing her lips by touch, the missus in the next room. See how blue shadow looked on brown skin.

A lot like a bruise.

Now it would be the fridge only. That only, if she had a choice, she’d want to take home. On these warm autumn days whenever Grace is having her tea, Dora goes to stand

有一条蕾丝花边紧紧地绑在她浅咖色的臀部上。

“那这是什么？朵拉，告诉我，这难道不比阿诺德夫人吹嘘的更厉害吗？”

“但她让另一个女人，我是说，看啊摸啊什么的。算了，我也不知道，柏妮丝。”

两个女人笑得直不起腰，不得不互相搀扶着对方。昨天晚上，柏妮丝给朵拉看后院的晾衣绳时，她们也是这样大笑不止——晾衣绳上挂满了衣服，朵拉的纯棉大裤衩就在一端晃动着。

“我趁你上班的时候做的。什么也别，我的妹妹。你需要尽可能地接受一切帮助。”

朵拉把内裤整理好，放进主卧的抽屉。粉色，米色，红色和黑色。她特地为阿诺德夫人按彩虹图案进行摆放，这样早上她就可以很快找到她想要的了。

她靠在五斗橱上休息半晌，抚平了一块桌布上的褶皱。阿诺德夫人的化妆品放在小篮子和搪瓷碗里，就连桌垫也十分精致，是钩针编织而成的。那里面放的都是全新的化妆品，管状的，棍状的，正在闪闪发光。草莓系列，冰珍珠系列，这些化妆品的名字听起来就像甜心一样。阿诺德夫人答应这个月底把那只绛红色口红给她，并说：“它和我浅色的皮肤不相配，玛莎。”

审讯当天一定要盛装打扮，起码得有抗争的造势。

朵拉注意到，阿诺德夫人打电话的时候，舌尖会沿着上唇描绘。甚至在和朵拉讨论熨烫的时候，就算没有镜子，她也会时时刻刻检查和修补她的妆容。她的手指轻轻拨弄睫毛，好像手里有睫毛膏似的——朵拉认出了那个动作。

几年前，她不太担心私下试用这些化妆品这件事。阿诺德夫人在隔壁房间的时候，她抚摸自己的睫毛和嘴唇，试着涂抹这些东西，瞧那蓝色阴影涂在棕色皮肤上是什么样子。

结果看上去像瘀伤一样。

如今朝脸上扑的只有冰箱里的冷气了。如果朵拉可以选择，她想把这台冰箱也带回家。在温暖的秋日里，每当格蕾丝喝茶的时候，朵

in front of the big white monument of the fridge and opens both doors, freezer and main section. Feeling first the cool freezer smoke brushing her cheeks, then a heavy wave of cold air tumbling on to her bare feet.

She'd like to do that at home, cool burning cheeks. She'd like the food too. The deep-frozen fresh meat to fry up late at night when the sudden hunger comes. In bed, after biscuits, any odd time since Joe was charged. Fresh meat, brisket chunks, offal, she'd take old off-cuts even, as long as fresh, brown-fried in cardamom, Maggi sauce. It's only meat fills this gnawing space inside.

She walks down the long passage, past closed doors, shiny doorknobs, pale pictures of flowers and horses, dust-free skirting boards, untying her apron, feeling a heaviness in her legs. Pity you can't sit down to iron, to dust. This work that never ends, Grace's, Martha's.

'Throw the things away if you've always got to clean.' Joe said that more than once.

At home she doesn't mind dusting though. Doing her own things, just the few bits, the bed with its curly plastic mouldings they took three years paying for, the orange Jug and glasses set on the front room dresser, and next to that her treasured books, *The Standard Nine Reader*, her tatty schoolroom *Macbeth*, *Coriolanus* underlined in at least four different ballpoints, a *Great Expectations*, the jumble-sale copy of *Jane Eyre* she's read so many times she's lost count, the books arranged large to small and supported between varnished bricks. And the framed pictures of Joseph, they're the best things for dusting, the ten of them all over the house, that she does very slowly. And worst, worst for dusting, is the soft leather hat hung on its hook that draws the dust like a licked ice-cream on a windy day.

'Throw it away, ma. What are we doing with that thing anyway? A Boer hat?'

'It's in the family, Joseph, somehow. Since when didn't us Coloureds have a bit of Boer inside?'

But each time she says it she feels her cheeks grow hot. Doesn't know for sure anyway, the family story full of those twists and snags. The past's a sleeping beast that's best left undisturbed.

拉都会站在如同纪念碑一般大的冰箱面前，打开冷冻柜和主柜的门。先是一阵冷烟拂过她的脸颊，然后裸露的双足会感受到一股沉重的冷空气。

她也想在家里这样做，好让火辣辣的脸颊凉快点。冰箱里的食物也是她的最爱。当饥饿感在深夜来袭时，她会拿出冷冻的鲜肉用油煎着吃。无论是躺上床的时候，还是刚吃完烤松饼，自从乔被起诉后，她就开始喜欢这样进食。她会买新鲜的肉，大块的胸脯肉，内脏，甚至是下脚料，只要是新鲜的，都可以配上豆蔻和美极辣酱进行油炸。只有肉能填满朵拉痛苦的内心。

朵拉解开围裙，穿过长长的走廊，经过紧闭的门，闪亮的门把手，一幅幅画着花和马的苍白挂画，一尘不染的壁脚板，脚步仿佛有千斤重。她很遗憾不能坐着熨烫或打扫。这份工作对玛莎和格蕾丝而言没完没了，永无休止。

约瑟夫不止一次告诉朵拉，如果你总是要打扫那些东西，还不如把它们扔掉。

不过在家里，朵拉并不介意打扫。对她来说，这不过是一些小事。这都是她自己的东西，一张花了三年时间才买到的卷曲塑料床，前厅梳妆台上放着的橙色水壶和玻璃杯，旁边是她珍藏的书籍，例如《九级标准读物》，从破旧教室里翻到的《麦克白》，还有至少用四种圆珠笔做过标注的《科里奥兰纳斯》《远大前程》，义卖活动上的《简·爱》复印本，她已经数不清自己读过多少遍了。这些书从大到小排列在漆砖之间。还有约瑟夫的镶框照片，这是朵拉最爱打扫的物件，也是家里打扫起来最慢的十件物品之一。最麻烦的是挂在钩子上的软皮帽子，它就像刮风天里被舔过的冰淇淋一样爱粘灰尘。

“扔掉吧，妈。我们要一顶布尔帽干什么？”

“这关乎家族，约瑟夫。我们有色人种难道就没有一点布尔血统吗？”

但她每次说这句话的时候，都会感到脸颊发热。反正她也无法确定，这个家族的故事充满了曲折和坎坷。过去就像一头熟睡的野兽，最好不要去打搅它。

The television is muttering in the lounge. She waits at the door collecting herself. Mr Arnold is by himself this evening, Mrs Arnold is at tennis. Not looking in the mirror opposite Dora straightens her apron, her collar, strokes back her hair.

‘La lotta continua, ma.’

So proud. So proudly brought up.

‘What a good speaker,’ his friends said. ‘He made us feel good about ourselves. His words were big. He made us want to get up, organise and fight.’

It paid off. Joe sitting on the sofa with his blunt bare feet sticking out in front of him, any number of weekday afternoons.

‘Now listen carefully, Joey, and say it again. I don’t know what they must be teaching you at that fifth-class *skollie* school. Reading and learning is the only way to get on, yes, even for a black person, even for a Coloured. I myself, your own ma, read everything I could lay hands on. Everything I’ve done, the correspondence course the supervisor’s position, I got it on my own, on my own steam. Now say after me. Brown as a berry, busy as a bee, drunk as a lord, happy as Larry.’

‘Brown as a berry, busy as a bee—Hey, ma, have you ever seen a brown berry?’

‘Now Joey, no backchat.’ But smiling at him for noticing. ‘I said listen carefully. Learn good sentences. Good sentences open doors, proverbs are handles for speaking with, berries are brown in cloudy England. England is where education and laws come from. Foul can be fair and fair can be foul, that’s what people over there say. Now let’s begin again. Busy as a bee, drunk as a lord, happy as Larry.’

‘Ma, why a lord? As in Lord God?’

The bip-bip of the evening news.

Dora knocks and quickly goes in.

‘Martha?’ says Mr Arnold fixed on the screen.

起居室传来微弱的电视声音。她镇定地站在门口等候。阿诺德夫人去打网球了，今晚只有阿诺德先生一个人在家。朵拉整理好自己的围裙和衣领，把头发向后一捋，没有看对面的镜子。

“斗争仍在继续，妈妈。”

约瑟夫如此骄傲，如此自豪地成长着。

“他是个优秀的演讲者，”他的朋友们说，“他使我们对自己充满信心。他的话十分鼓舞人心，因为他，我们想要站起来，组织起来，然后战斗。”

这是值得的。许多工作日的下午，约瑟夫都会伸着赤足，坐在沙发上。

“现在仔细听着，乔伊，我再说一遍。我不知道在那所学校里老师都教了你什么，但读书和学习是出人头地的唯一途径，是的，对黑人，对有色人种来说都是这样。我，你的妈妈，读了我能获得的所有书籍。我所做的一切，函授课程，主管职位，都是靠我自己，靠我自己争取来的。好了，接着跟我读，黑里透红、忙忙碌碌、花天酒地、喜不自禁。^[1]”

“黑里透红、忙忙碌碌——嘿，妈妈，你见过黑里还能透红的颜色吗？”

“乔伊，别顶嘴。”但她笑了，因为乔在听她说话，“仔细听，学习这些优美的句子。精彩的表达如同开门的钥匙一般重要，而那些成语是演讲的关键。英国常年阴云密布，那儿的浆果就是黑里透红的。英国是教育和法律的发源地。那儿的人说，美即是丑，丑即是美。好了，让我们重新开始。黑里透红，日不暇给，花天酒地，喜不自禁。”

“妈妈，为什么是‘天’？它说的是上帝吗？”

晚间头条新闻开始了。

朵拉敲敲门，很快走了进去。

阿诺德先生盯着屏幕问道：“是玛莎吗？”

[1] 原文为“Brown as a berry, busy as a bee, drunk as a lord, happy as Larry”，均为英语中的俗语，这里朵拉在教约瑟夫表达技巧，译者综合上下文考虑将其翻译为对应的成语。

News pictures. What Bernice has been saying she mustn't see, mustn't hear.

'It's poisoned, Dora, what they put on the news.'

And it does look poisoned, that face. A police mug-shot glaring from the screen.

No.

'First picture of the man charged with the Clacton bombing. Further evidence has emerged linking the self-confessed bomber suspect to the crime.'

Joey.

But they must've done something to his face. He's not that dark, he's too purple around the eyes. They've bruised him. The helicopter, she's heard people whisper, is it that? Blood to the head. They hang political suspects upside down, spin them round, smash at them, spin them round, smash at them even harder since they heard their authority would one day be coming to an end. Blood to the brain.

Dora can taste her spit thick and sour in the back of her throat. The first sight of him since he walked out of the house with his sports bag that Saturday two weekends before Easter. 'I'll be gone a fortnight, maybe a month, ma. Don't worry.'

Blood to the head.

They're talking about shredded trainers. Football youths, members of the team he played in, have recognised the shredded trainers carried in the bomber's bag. But does it matter? Haven't they beaten and twisted enough evidence out of him?

And to think that all afternoon she's been living in another world-the world before they caught him. Living on memories of him, pictures, like then. When he walked out the door he could be gone weeks. She had her framed photos on the dresser, on the wall, beside the bed.

'Bernice, what do they do to them inside?'

'Better not think, Dor, better not think.'

The mug-shot is still there, flickering.

Force must be answered with force must be answered with force, Joey's words. We must keep them to the mark, burn them out of power, and when a fire's burning who's to stop it? She feels she wants to lie down. She puts her hand on the door frame. Good sentences, good speech, learn

电视里的新闻图片。柏妮丝警告过朵拉，不要看，也不要听。

“朵拉，那些新闻都经过恶意丑化。”

事实的确如此。屏幕上的罪犯照面目狰狞。不是这样的。

“第一张照片是克拉克顿爆炸案的嫌疑犯。警方进一步的证据表明，这名自首者确实与这起爆炸案有关。”

那是乔伊。

但是他们一定对他的脸做了什么。他没那么黑，眼睛周围全是淤青。他们打了他。她听到了人们的窃窃私语，是那架直升飞机吗？他们把政治嫌疑犯倒挂起来，让他们在空中打转，对他们拳打脚踢，狠狠地砸他们。尤其是施罚者听到各种反动言论时，会变本加厉地惩罚他们。

朵拉感觉喉咙里又腥又酸。她想起上一次见到约瑟夫是复活节两周前的星期六，他背着运动包走出家门，说：“我要离开两周，或许一个月，妈，别担心。”

可他现在满头是血。

人们在议论那双炸成碎片的运动鞋。约瑟夫所在足球队的几个年轻成员认出了炸弹包里的运动鞋碎片。但这有什么用？难道他们没有从约瑟夫嘴中拷问出足够多的证据吗？

想想整个下午她都生活在另一个世界——那个约瑟夫还没被抓捕的世界。朵拉靠着回忆和照片活着，仿佛从前一样。约瑟夫走出家门，可能只是离家几周而已。朵拉把照片装在相框里，挂在梳妆台上，墙上，床边。

“别想，朵拉，最好别去想。”

嫌疑犯的照片在屏幕里一闪而过。

“以牙还牙，以眼还眼。”乔伊说。我们必须让他们坚持到底，耗尽他们的力量。当火焰燃烧时，谁会来阻止它？她感觉有些疲惫，于是她扶住门框。表达技巧、演讲方法、书本知识，这些都是她教给他的。这事儿做了就做了。

your books, that's what she taught him. If it were done when it's done. Maybe he stopped studying when he got more political, or studied in a different way, but still she's proud of how he's turned out, yes she is, of how he cares, how he presses on, of his determination. If the bomb was his, it was sabotage, the deaths were accidental. The anger in this country, it infects everyone. She believes in him. All the victims were white, it's a sad pity, but usually the victims are black. She's said it to those journalists who crowd at the front door.

Wouldn't it have to be something huge that would drive a son of hers to take lives? A huge, life-long wrong?

His eyes, his wounded eyes.

My son.

The image is suddenly gone. She hears herself say no, hard, like a cough. She notices her hand on the door frame. She brings the hand to her side. Thank God Mr Arnold doesn't turn around. He has found a comfortable angle to the side of the sun's reflection, a square of late evening light lying on the screen.

The newsreader begins another story. Galloping interest rates; a soaring rate of rape, both of women and of minors. Dora sees a thin film of dust on the screen that has escaped Grace.

Mr Arnold holds up an envelope weighted on the one side with coins. Still without turning.

'Thank you, Martha. See you next week.'

Dora backs out. She doesn't trust herself to speak. She wants to cry in a high voice to release the choking taste at the back of her throat. She's sure she still sees the after-image there, behind the golden film of the sun's reflection.

That bruised face.

It was on television. My son, how they beat him.

当他开始关心政治的时候,也许就已经停止了学习,或者以另一种方式学习,但她依然为这种结果而骄傲,是的,她很骄傲,为他的谨慎,为他的努力,为他的决心而骄傲。如果爆炸是他做的,那就是蓄意破坏,而死亡是意外。整个国家都非常愤怒,这激怒了所有人。但她相信约瑟夫。她对挤在门前的记者们这么说,很遗憾所有的受害者都是白人,但通常情况下受害者都是黑人。

难道不是因为某个重要的原因,她的儿子才会这么犯下这种伴随他一生的大错吗?

他的眼睛……他受伤的眼睛……我的儿子啊……

电视机上的画面突然消失了。她听见自己否认的声音,十分吃力,听起来像是在咳嗽。她注意到自己的手抓着门框。她收回手。感谢上帝,阿诺德先生没有回头。他对着屏幕反射的眩光,找到了一个舒适的观看角度,此时一小块暮色已经落在了电视机屏幕上。

新闻广播员开始了另一个故事。飞涨的利率、飙升的强奸率——受害者既有女性也有未成年人。朵拉发现屏幕上有一层薄薄的灰尘,格蕾丝没有擦干净。

阿诺德先生举起一个装着硬币的信封,他仍然没有回头。

“谢谢你,玛莎。下周见。”

朵拉退出房间。她已经说不出话了。她想大哭,以此释放喉咙深处令人窒息的味道。她眼前还闪烁着电视屏幕上的那张照片,就在阳光反射下泛金的屏幕里。

电视上那张伤痕累累的脸庞。

那是我的儿子,他们到底对他做了什么?

教师点评: 文章节选自艾勒克·博埃默创作的南非英语文学《血脉》,该小说的翻译已获得作者授权。原作涉及大量南非历史背景与文化常识,以及南非荷兰语的语言表达。这要求译者有一定的知识储备,并具备开阔的文化视野。该译文在通顺流畅上的基础上,也不失其文学性的语言表达,严格遵照了“信达雅”的翻译策略。为尽可能传播南非文化,译文保留了原文特色,但由于中英语言的差异,有些句子的表达还不够简洁准确,对作者情感的把握还有待提升。总的来说,从译文中可以看出译者做了充分的准备工作,并展示了较好的翻译水平。

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