

Ethan Frome

《伊奮·傅羅方》

作者：Edith Wharton (1862-1937) 伊迪絲·華頓

譯者：蕭若碧

譯序：

Edith Wharton 身世顯赫，家族來自紐約上流社會。她得獎的名著 *The Age of Innocence* 就是以她熟悉的生活背景作為題材，其他不少著作，都是與此有關。1902 至 1911 年，她在麻省西部一處叫做倫諾思 (Lenox) 的小鎮住了頗長的一段時間，憑她在該處的所見所聞，寫下唯一觸及新英倫貧窮階層的兩個故事；一是 *Summer* (我譯作《夏日雲煙》)，另一是 *Ethan Frome* (我譯作《伊奮·傅羅方》)。雖然故事的題材不是來自她熟悉的生活，但她以旁觀者的敏銳觸覺巧妙地捕捉了它的底蘊，並以豐富的想像力填補了空白處。Edith Wharton 享譽盛名的作品，道盡紐約上流社會生活的虛偽和無形桎梏，而在這兩本寫新英倫農村的小說中，則細膩地描繪實際氣候和地理環境對底下階層造成的壓迫；女性欠缺謀生技能，是更無助的受害者。

《夏日雲煙》和《伊奮·傅羅方》的兩個主角都是出身寒微的年輕人，生活在偏遠的新英倫小村鎮，而不甘囿於落後和無知。他們對城市生活憧憬不已，但又由於種種的限制，無法開拓個人的命運。他們都因一個外地人的來臨而改變一生，結局則有好有壞。

《夏日雲煙》中，慈諦的身世比伊奮·傅羅方更為不堪，不過孑然一身反而對她有點好處，加上性格反叛奔放，沒那麼多羈絆，在夏日熾熱的氛圍下，無知的她，心甘情願一頭栽進異鄉人塑造出來的粉紅迷夢裏，差點永不翻身。最終她的救贖，來自另一個尋求救贖的萊亞律師。書末，兩人都在這陣夏日雲煙中成長，彼此扶持作伴，一起迎接一個新生命的來臨。雖然以後在冷漠保守的村民眼皮底下過活，可能並不容易，不過他們抱有信念，要在北多馬“好好地安居”。這三人小家庭給予讀者無窮的希望，是我年前把它先譯出來的原因。

伊奮·傅羅方卻沒那麼幸運。首先，他受到嚴寒氣候的影響，作出人生第一個重大的錯誤決定；其後，在嚴冬下激起的跌宕情懷，反使他落得身體殘障、半死不活；但最可怕的是，那曾給予他無限憧憬、希望、生命力的外地人，後來性情大變，將他原本苦澀靜寂的世界變成一座永不超生的人間煉獄。伊奮這個平凡的小人物，親情綁架了他，愛情曾令他一度煥發光彩，兩者合起來，結果把他推進萬劫不復的深淵。究竟情為何物？伊奮的悲劇，是性格連累了他抉斷的能力？還是現實環境綑綁着他的意願？他的性格又多少由環境造成？最後他為什麼沒撞上大榆樹？蜜娣這個女孩子哪方面最吸引他？一度他還以為她是自己靈魂的代言人！從她的性格，可預見最終三人同陷沉淪的結果嗎？這是個叫人不忍卒讀的故事，讀後也唯有掩卷嘆息而已！可能這也是 **Edith Wharton** 用了那麼長的時間才成書的原因吧！

2011 年，我經由何鎮源副校長的介紹，開始在九龍華仁書院安省舊生會的網上發表文章，後來因此認識了余晃英先生，得到他很多指導和鼓勵，非常感激！謹以此未經 AI 處理的‘粗糙’譯本獻給我這位書友。一笑！

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<p>I had the story, bit by bit, from various people, and, as generally happens in such cases, each time it was a different story.</p> <p>If you know Starkfield, Massachusetts, you know the post-office. If you know the post-office you must have seen Ethan Frome drive up to it, drop the reins on his hollow-backed bay and drag himself across the</p>	<p>下面這個故事，是我點點滴滴從村鎮居民處聽來，再加以拼湊寫成的。只不過，凡是這類傳聞，經由不同的人講述，整件事就改變了。</p> <p>如你熟悉麻省的獨方鎮，就應知道它的郵局在哪兒。你知道郵局在哪，就一定會見過伊奮·傅羅方駕着馬車來取信。他把韁繩往他那匹棗紅馬的癆背上一扔，然後拖着身軀、一拐一拐</p>
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brick pavement to the white colonnade: and you must have asked who he was.

It was there that, several years ago, I saw him for the first time; and the sight pulled me up sharp. Even then he was the most striking figure in Starkfield, though he was but the ruin of a man. It was not so much his great height that marked him, for the "natives" were easily singled out by their lank longitude from the stockier foreign breed: it was the careless powerful look he had, in spite of a lameness checking each step like the jerk of a chain. There was something bleak and unapproachable in his face, and he was so stiffened and grizzled that I took him for an old man and was surprised to hear that he was not more than fifty-two.

I had this from Harmon Gow, who had driven the stage from Bettsbridge to Starkfield in pre-trolley days and knew the chronicle of all the families on his line.

步過磚砌的行人道，走上白柱矗立的郵局門廊。你見到這樣的一個人，就不得不問那是誰。

多年前，我就是郵局門口首次遇見伊奮·傅羅方；他那副樣子使我陡地嚇了一跳。就算在那時，他也是獨方鎮上最矚目的人物，其實說是「人」不大恰當，因為他是落得不似人形。矚目的不是身材特別高，本地人都是瘦長個子，與外來較粗壯的男性相比，很易分辨，而是他顯示出來的那股犖勁；他每跨出一步，癱腿都像緊卡住的鏈條猝然發動，而他似一無所覺，繼續一步一步掙扎前行。他的面容看上去慘澹、拒人於千里之外，加上身軀僵硬，長了滿臉鬍子，最初我還以為他是個老人家，原來只不過是五十二歲，知道後大感意外。

我先從夏蒙·覺爾處聽到他的故事。有軌電車未出現之前，夏蒙是個往來畢士橋和獨方鎮的馬車夫，清楚這條路綫上所有人家的歷史。

「自從失事受傷之後，他就是那個樣子。明年二月，就足足廿四年了。」

"He's looked that way ever since he had his smash-up; and that's twenty-four years ago come next February," Harmon threw out between reminiscent pauses.

The "smash-up" it was--I gathered from the same informant--which, besides drawing the red gash across Ethan Frome's forehead, had so shortened and warped his right side that it cost him a visible effort to take the few steps from his buggy to the post-office window. He used to drive in from his farm every day at about noon, and as that was my own hour for fetching my mail I often passed him in the porch or stood beside him while we waited on the motions of the distributing hand behind the grating. I noticed that, though he came so punctually, he seldom received anything but a copy of the Bettsbridge Eagle, which he put without a glance into his sagging pocket. At intervals, however, the post-master would hand him an envelope addressed to Mrs. Zenobia--or Mrs. Zeena-Frome, and usually bearing conspicuously in the upper left-hand corner the address of some manufacturer of patent medicine and the name of his specific. These documents my neighbour would also pocket without a glance, as if too much used to them to wonder at their

車子每次停下來，他叨念着往事，就迸出一兩句話。

他也說了，這次「失事」，除了在伊奮·傅羅方的額頭從左至右留下一道深深的紅色疤痕，也使他的右邊身軀歪了，就像短了一截，導致他從單馬輕便馬車走到郵局窗口的幾步路，也明顯地費勁。他每天大約中午從農場駕車來到，剛好那也是我取郵件的時間，所以我常在門廊上和他擦身而過；又或者我在窗格前，等候職員拿來我的信件，剛好就站在他的身旁。我留意到，雖則他準時來取信，除了一份《畢士橋蒼鷹》外，從沒收到多少函件。那份通訊，他看也不看就塞進癩陷的口袋裏。不過有時候，郵局局長會遞過來寫着「倩內比」或「倩娜·傅羅方太太收啓」的信件，上面的左上角大大的印着某間藥廠的地址和藥名。這類函件他也是直接塞進口袋裏，看也不看，似乎收慣了，數量、種類再多，亦挑不起他的好奇心。接過信後，他跟郵局局長點點頭，一聲不發，就轉身離去。

number and variety, and would then turn away with a silent nod to the post-master.

Everyone in Starkfield knew him and gave him a greeting tempered to his own grave mien; but his taciturnity was respected and it was only on rare occasions that one of the older men of the place detained him for a word. When this happened he would listen quietly, his blue eyes on the speaker's face, and answer in so low a tone that his words never reached me; then he would climb stiffly into his buggy, gather up the reins in his left hand and drive slowly away in the direction of his farm.

"It was a pretty bad smash-up?" I questioned Harmon, looking after Frome's retreating figure, and thinking how gallantly his lean brown head, with its shock of light hair, must have sat on his strong shoulders before they were bent out of shape.

"Wust kind," my informant assented. "More'n enough to kill most men. But the Fromes are tough. Ethan'll likely touch a hundred."

獨方鎮的居民都認識他，見到他那副嚴肅的面容，自然不會報以熱情的招呼；大家都尊重他的沉默，只偶有本地較年長的人叫停他，跟他閒談一兩句。在這些時刻，他會靜靜聆聽，藍眼珠望着對方的臉。他回答的聲量極低，從來都沒有半言半語飄進我的耳朵中。然後他僵硬地挪動身軀爬上馬車，把韁繩纏在左手，朝他的農場慢慢地駕去。

「那次失事嚴重嗎？」我望着傅羅方逐漸遠去的身影，向夏蒙問道。同時心裏想，他那瘦削的頭形，配襯黝深的膚色、濃密的淺金頭髮，在那原來未坍塌的堅實肩膀上會是多挺拔好看！

「嚴重極了。」夏蒙回答。「要是其他人多半沒命了。幸好傅羅方一家子夠硬朗，伊奮也許會活到一百歲哩！」

「不是吧？」我叫起來。在那刻，伊奮·傅羅方已爬到座位上，他彎過身來，看看放在後座那個有藥商標貼的

"Good God!" I exclaimed. At the moment Ethan Frome, after climbing to his seat, had leaned over to assure himself of the security of a wooden box--also with a druggist's label on it--which he had placed in the back of the buggy, and I saw his face as it probably looked when he thought himself alone. "That man touch a hundred? He looks as if he was dead and in hell now!"

Harmon drew a slab of tobacco from his pocket, cut off a wedge and pressed it into the leather pouch of his cheek. "Guess he's been in Starkfield too many winters. Most of the smart ones get away."

"Why didn't he?"

"Somebody had to stay and care for the folks. There warn't ever anybody but Ethan. Fust his father--then his mother--then his wife."

"And then the smash-up?"

Harmon chuckled sardonically. "That's so. He had to stay then."

"I see. And since then they've had to care for him?"

木盒是否放得穩妥，於是我望到他的臉——那張他以為沒人見到的臉。

「那人會活到一百歲？現在就像個活在地獄的死人！」

夏蒙從袋中抽出一方煙草，切下一小塊，塞進他硬梆梆的腮幫子內。「也許他在獨方鎮耽得太久，捱過太多個冬天了。聰明的小夥子大都離開。」

「為什麼他不走？」

「總得有人留下來照顧家人呀！伊奮家沒人，只得他一個。最初要照顧的是他爸，接着是他媽，後來是他老婆。」

「然後就出了事故？」

夏蒙帶着諷刺意味，「嘿」的一聲笑了：「對！以後被迫留下來。」

「原來如此。家人就要照顧他了？」

Harmon thoughtfully passed his tobacco to the other cheek. "Oh, as to that: I guess it's always Ethan done the caring."

Though Harmon Gow developed the tale as far as his mental and moral reach permitted there were perceptible gaps between his facts, and I had the sense that the deeper meaning of the story was in the gaps. But one phrase stuck in my memory and served as the nucleus about which I grouped my subsequent inferences: "Guess he's been in Starkfield too many winters."

Before my own time there was up I had learned to know what that meant. Yet I had come in the degenerate day of trolley, bicycle and rural delivery, when communication was easy between the scattered mountain villages, and the bigger towns in the valleys, such as Bettsbridge and Shadd's Falls, had libraries, theatres and Y. M. C. A. halls to which the youth of the hills could descend for recreation. But when winter shut down on Starkfield and the village lay under a sheet of snow perpetually renewed from the pale skies, I began to see what life there--or rather its negation--must

夏蒙若有所思，把煙草挪到另一邊腮幫子去。「噢！談到照顧，我看哪，總是由伊奮照顧家人。」

夏蒙·覺爾恪於個人的腦筋和修養，雖已努力去勾畫整個故事，中間情節還留下若干空白。我相信這些空白之處才是故事的重點。不過，他的一句話使我留下深刻的印象，我以後的推斷都是以此為軸心：「也許他在獨方鎮耽得太久，捱過太多個冬天了。」

在我工作完結、離開那一帶之前，我已明白了那是什麼意思。不過，我在那裏勾留的時候，經已是有軌電車、單車、農業運輸流行得靡爛的年代。山中村落之間，交通方便，而那些較大的村鎮如畢士橋鎮、沙特瀑布鎮，都建有圖書館、戲院，還有基督教青年會中心，山中的青年可去消遣娛樂。不過當冬季降臨獨方鎮，村子封閉在一片冰雪之下，黯淡的天空飄雪不輟，我開始明白到：在伊奮·傅羅方的青年時代，處身那地方，生活——應說是死氣沉沉的生活——會是怎的一個樣子。

have been in Ethan Frome's young manhood.

I had been sent up by my employers on a job connected with the big power-house at Corbury Junction, and a long-drawn carpenters' strike had so delayed the work that I found myself anchored at Starkfield—the nearest habitable spot—for the best part of the winter. I chafed at first, and then, under the hypnotising effect of routine, gradually began to find a grim satisfaction in the life. During the early part of my stay I had been struck by the contrast between the vitality of the climate and the deadness of the community. Day by day, after the December snows were over, a blazing blue sky poured down torrents of light and air on the white landscape, which gave them back in an intenser glitter. One would have supposed that such an atmosphere must quicken the emotions as well as the blood; but it seemed to produce no change except that of retarding still more the sluggish pulse of Starkfield. When I had been there a little longer, and had seen this phase of crystal clearness followed by long stretches of sunless cold; when the storms of February had pitched their white tents about the devoted village and the wild cavalry of March winds had charged down to their

我的僱主遣派我去那個地區，處理位於歌巴利路口大電廠的一項工程。碰上木匠進行罷工，久久不能解決，工程都給延誤了，我被逼滯留獨方鎮——那裏算是最近便、又可寓居之地，度過了冬季最嚴寒的日子。起初我是為此而大感懊惱的，但天天如此，也就慣了，慢慢感受到這種生活嚴酷得來還不錯。開始的時候，目睹那裏氣候的凜凜生威，對比着居民的死氣沉沉，我頗以為異。十二月的大雪過後，藍得耀眼的天空向白皚皚的大地投下強烈的光柱和氣流，而大地把光折射上去，使天空閃爍得更亮，逐日如是。你會以為這種天氣一定使人血液運行加速、情懷激盪，奇怪的是它沒為居民帶來什麼改變，只有令獨方鎮本已慢吞吞的節奏更減緩下來。我在那裏耽久了，最初見到周圍是一片晶瑩澄澈，繼而轉為黯淡無光的連日嚴寒，然後二月冰風暴在這條摯愛村子駐紮不走，再有三月的狂風繼來助陣，於是我開始明白經過這六個月的圍攻，為什麼獨方鎮像是個飢餓兵團，飽受蹂躪後就投降了。廿年前，反抗的途徑想必少得多，村子苦苦地

support; I began to understand why Starkfield emerged from its six months' siege like a starved garrison capitulating without quarter. Twenty years earlier the means of resistance must have been far fewer, and the enemy in command of almost all the lines of access between the beleaguered villages; and, considering these things, I felt the sinister force of Harmon's phrase: "Most of the smart ones get away." But if that were the case, how could any combination of obstacles have hindered the flight of a man like Ethan Frome?

During my stay at Starkfield I lodged with a middle-aged widow colloquially known as Mrs. Ned Hale. Mrs. Hale's father had been the village lawyer of the previous generation, and "lawyer Varnum's house," where my landlady still lived with her mother, was the most considerable mansion in the village. It stood at one end of the main street, its classic portico and small-paned windows looking down a flagged path between Norway spruces to the slim white steeple of the Congregational church. It was clear that the Varnum fortunes were at the ebb, but the two women did what they could to preserve a decent dignity; and Mrs. Hale, in particular, had a certain wan refinement

支撐，而村子之間的通路，又差不多全給敵人控制。想到這裏，我體會到夏蒙那句話「聰明的小夥子大都離開」其中的險惡意味。縱使如此，這些障礙一併算上，又怎會阻擋伊奮·傅羅方這一表人才的小夥子離開？

當時我被迫在獨方鎮淹留，在一位本地人稱呼為「尼德·希爾太太」的中年寡婦家借寓。希爾太太的父親是上一輩村民中唯一的律師。華南律師的房子，堪稱是村中最有氣勢的大屋，房東太太和她媽媽仍住那裏。它佇立大街的末端，古式古香的門廊和小格子玻璃窗對外是一條兩旁種着挪威雲杉的石板路；遠望過去，就是位於大街另一頭的公理會教堂，白色尖頂高高豎立。華南家道中落，大家都清楚，不過兩位女士盡可能保持體面；特別是希爾太太，她有股文弱的氣質，跟那古老房子的褪色情調頗為合襯。

not out of keeping with her pale old-fashioned house.

In the "best parlour," with its black horse-hair and mahogany weakly illuminated by a gurgling Carcel lamp, I listened every evening to another and more delicately shaded version of the Starkfield chronicle. It was not that Mrs. Ned Hale felt, or affected, any social superiority to the people about her; it was only that the accident of a finer sensibility and a little more education had put just enough distance between herself and her neighbours to enable her to judge them with detachment. She was not unwilling to exercise this faculty, and I had great hopes of getting from her the missing facts of Ethan Frome's story, or rather such a key to his character as should co-ordinate the facts I knew. Her mind was a store-house of innocuous anecdote and any question about her acquaintances brought forth a volume of detail; but on the subject of Ethan Frome I found her unexpectedly reticent. There was no hint of disapproval in her reserve; I merely felt in her an insurmountable reluctance to speak of him or his affairs, a low "Yes, I knew them both... it was awful..." seeming to be the utmost concession that her distress could make to my curiosity.

每一個晚上，在佈置得「最講究」的客廳裏，處身黑馬毛皮和桃花心木之間，在「瀝瀝」作響的卡素油燈的昏暗光綫下，我聽到另一本描繪得更細膩的獨方鎮地方志。希爾太太不覺得自己比周圍的人地位優越，也沒扮出高高在上的姿態，只不過恰好賦性敏銳，所受的教育也多一點，使她跟鄰近居民不多不少造成距離，讓她可客觀地作出品評。對於月旦他們的作為，她並沒有什麼避忌。所以我亟想從她口中，聽見發生在伊奮·傅羅方身上那些不廣為人知的事，又或者找到主要的綫索，揣摩出他的性格，將已知的事實組織起來。她的腦袋裏收藏了大量無傷大雅的小故事，只要問及她認識的人，她就能提供一大堆細節。但一提到伊奮·傅羅方，我發覺她變得異常沉默。她不肯多說，不是表示不滿，而是極不願意提及。在我的好奇追問下，她低聲拋下一句「對，我認識他倆... 那件事真可怕...」似乎就是她不安的心情下，可以作出的唯一答覆。

So marked was the change in her manner, such depths of sad initiation did it imply, that, with some doubts as to my delicacy, I put the case anew to my village oracle, Harmon Gow; but got for my pains only an uncomprehending grunt.

"Ruth Varnum was always as nervous as a rat; and, come to think of it, she was the first one to see 'em after they was picked up. It happened right below lawyer Varnum's, down at the bend of the Corbury road, just round about the time that Ruth got engaged to Ned Hale. The young folks was all friends, and I guess she just can't bear to talk about it. She's had troubles enough of her own."

All the dwellers in Starkfield, as in more notable communities, had had troubles enough of their own to make them comparatively indifferent to those of their neighbours; and though all conceded that Ethan Frome's had been beyond the common measure, no one gave me an explanation of the look in his face which, as I persisted in thinking, neither poverty

她的態度與其他時候相比，是如此明顯有別，她的話又似乎牽動極大的傷痛，我就不再考慮通過其他委婉的方式，再度向熟悉村中掌故的夏蒙·覺爾直接查問伊奮·傅羅方其人其事了。我雖則問了，得回的不過是他不明不白地咕嚕幾句。

「露芙·華南老是神經兮兮，一點事都經受不起。不過，話得說回來，他們被救上來時，她可是第一個見到他倆的人。出事的地點正在華南家的下方、歌巴利路的彎角上。那時露芙剛和尼德·希爾訂了婚，大家都還年輕，都是朋友。我猜她是不願提，受不了，自己的煩惱已夠多。」

一如那些較大的村鎮，獨方鎮所有居民的個人煩惱都很多，致使他們對鄰舍的煩惱不大關心。雖然人人都認為伊奮·傅羅方的煩惱超越常人，卻沒有哪一個能解釋他面上為何有那種神色。我一直在想，純是貧窮或肉體的折磨都不會造成那個樣子。不過，這些零零碎碎的話拼湊出來的故事，本來已足以滿足我的好奇心，只是希爾

nor physical suffering could have put there. Nevertheless, I might have contented myself with the story pieced together from these hints had it not been for the provocation of Mrs. Hale's silence, and--a little later--for the accident of personal contact with the man.

On my arrival at Starkfield, Denis Eady, the rich Irish grocer, who was the proprietor of Starkfield's nearest approach to a livery stable, had entered into an agreement to send me over daily to Corbury Flats, where I had to pick up my train for the Junction. But about the middle of the winter Eady's horses fell ill of a local epidemic. The illness spread to the other Starkfield stables and for a day or two I was put to it to find a means of transport. Then Harmon Gow suggested that Ethan Frome's bay was still on his legs and that his owner might be glad to drive me over.

I stared at the suggestion. "Ethan Frome? But I've never even spoken to him. Why on earth should he put himself out for me?"

Harmon's answer surprised me still more. "I don't know as he would; but I know he wouldn't be sorry to earn a dollar."

太太的緘默太也奇怪；兼且，不久之後，我偶然跟他有了私人接觸。

我剛抵達獨方鎮那段日子裏，那個富有的愛爾蘭裔雜貨店老闆——米高·伊弟可提供類似馬廄的租車服務，應承每天可送我去歌巴利平原，在那裏轉乘火車去歌巴利路路口。但就在仲冬，他的馬匹染上了本地一場時疫，全病倒了。疫症傳播開去，波及獨方鎮其他的馬廄。有一兩天，我要到處另找交通工具。然後夏蒙·覺爾提出伊奮·傅羅方的棗紅馬仍是好好的，牠的主人會樂於載我過去。

我怔住了。「伊奮·傅羅方？我跟他一句話也未交談過，他怎會主動提出幫忙？」

夏蒙的回答令我更感奇怪。「不知道他會不會，但我知道如能多賺點收入，他一定不會拒絕。」

I had been told that Frome was poor, and that the saw-mill and the arid acres of his farm yielded scarcely enough to keep his household through the winter; but I had not supposed him to be in such want as Harmon's words implied, and I expressed my wonder.

"Well, matters ain't gone any too well with him," Harmon said. "When a man's been setting round like a hulk for twenty years or more, seeing things that want doing, it eats inter him, and he loses his grit. That Frome farm was always 'bout as bare's a milkpan when the cat's been round; and you know what one of them old water-mills is wuth nowadays. When Ethan could sweat over 'em both from sunup to dark he kinder choked a living out of 'em; but his folks ate up most everything, even then, and I don't see how he makes out now. Fust his father got a kick, out haying, and went soft in the brain, and gave away money like Bible texts afore he died. Then his mother got queer and dragged along for years as weak as a baby; and his wife Zeena, she's always been the greatest hand at doctoring in the county. Sickness and trouble: that's what Ethan's had his plate full up with, ever since the very first helping."

村民都說伊奮家很窮，鋸木坊和貧瘠田地的收入很少，很艱難才可度過寒冬；但從夏蒙話中的含意，我才知道原來已是去到如此拮据地步。於是我只好好奇地追問。

「嗯，他一直都不順境。」夏蒙說。
「一個男人像隻廢船般虛置了廿多年，眼白白看着有活不能幹，就把他吃癟，什麼膽量都給消磨了。傅羅方農場從來都是空晃晃的，打個比方，空得就像放在貓兒旁邊的奶鍋。你知道今天一座老磨坊值多少。當年伊奮從大清早幹活到晚，還可混得溫飽，但那時家人把所有都耗盡了。今天更不知他如何過日子。首先是他老爹晾草時給馬踢了一腳，腦子糊塗了，去世前到處派錢，就像派福音書。然後他老媽病了，拖了好多年，虛弱得動也不能動。接着就是他老婆倩娜，地方上看醫生最拿手的人就是她。患病、麻煩事，一樁接一樁，吃得他癟癟的。」

The next morning, when I looked out, I saw the hollow-backed bay between the Varnum spruces, and Ethan Frome, throwing back his worn bearskin, made room for me in the sleigh at his side. After that, for a week, he drove me over every morning to Corbury Flats, and on my return in the afternoon met me again and carried me back through the icy night to Starkfield. The distance each way was barely three miles, but the old bay's pace was slow, and even with firm snow under the runners we were nearly an hour on the way. Ethan Frome drove in silence, the reins loosely held in his left hand, his brown seamed profile, under the helmet-like peak of the cap, relieved against the banks of snow like the bronze image of a hero. He never turned his face to mine, or answered, except in monosyllables, the questions I put, or such slight pleasantries as I ventured. He seemed a part of the mute melancholy landscape, an incarnation of its frozen woe, with all that was warm and sentient in him fast bound below the surface; but there was nothing unfriendly in his silence. I simply felt that he lived in a depth of moral isolation too remote for casual access, and I had the sense that his loneliness was not merely the result of his personal plight, tragic as I guessed that to

第二天早上，我望出窗外，見到停在華南家兩排雲杉之間，是伊奮·傅羅方家那匹癩背的棗紅馬。他見我步出，就把他披着的禿熊皮毯子掀起，空出雪橇旁邊的座位給我。之後的一個星期，他每天早上載我去歌巴利平原，下午再來接我，在冰冷的晚上回到獨方鎮。每程路不外三英里，但那匹老馬的步伐很慢，就算雪橇滑板下的雪夠硬實，也花上差不多一個小時。伊奮·傅羅方從不吭聲，左手鬆鬆地持着韁繩，像是個頭盔的便帽帽沿下，他滿布皺紋的啡色側面面龐，映照着高高的雪堆，就像個英雄的青銅塑像。他從不朝我望，也不說話。有時我有點事要問，或試圖跟他寒暄，他的回覆亦只限於一兩個字。他似是含着默默哀愁大地的一部分，是苦痛結成冰雪的活人版，所有熱力和感受都牢牢封固在底下；不過他的緘默並沒有不友善意味。我只覺得他堅守着自己的信條，與世深深隔絕，不容外人隨便進入他的個人世界。我也覺得他的孤獨處境雖然悲慘，但不會單是源於個人的不幸遭遇，而是正如夏蒙·覺爾那句話的意思所指，是獨方鎮多年來的嚴冬導致的結果。

be, but had in it, as Harmon Gow had hinted, the profound accumulated cold of many Starkfield winters.

Only once or twice was the distance between us bridged for a moment; and the glimpses thus gained confirmed my desire to know more. Once I happened to speak of an engineering job I had been on the previous year in Florida, and of the contrast between the winter landscape about us and that in which I had found myself the year before; and to my surprise Frome said suddenly: "Yes: I was down there once, and for a good while afterward I could call up the sight of it in winter. But now it's all snowed under."

He said no more, and I had to guess the rest from the inflection of his voice and his sharp relapse into silence.

Another day, on getting into my train at the Flats, I missed a volume of popular science--I think it was on some recent discoveries in bio-chemistry--which I had carried with me to read on the way. I thought no more about it till I got into the sleigh again that evening, and saw the book in Frome's hand.

"I found it after you were gone," he said.

我跟伊奮·傅羅方的隔閡有一兩次曾短暫地消除了。其間我們曾交換幾瞥，使我對他的好奇心進一步加強。有一次，我談及早一年在佛羅里達州參與了一項工程，感慨那裏冬天的景色與本地差異之大。奇怪的是傅羅方突然開腔了：「是呀！那裏我也去過一次，後來好一段日子，我都想起那兒冬天的模樣，但印象現在都給冰雪埋沒了。」

他不再說話。我須從他語調的變化和急轉沉默的態度去推想其餘。

有一天，上了火車之後，我發覺一本普及科學的書不在身上。它的內容跟生物化學的最新發現有關，我通常把它帶在身邊，然後在火車上閱讀。我都忘了這事，直至傍晚坐上雪橇，見到傅羅方手裏持着它才想起。

「您下車後我才見到。」他說。

I put the volume into my pocket and we dropped back into our usual silence; but as we began to crawl up the long hill from Corbury Flats to the Starkfield ridge I became aware in the dusk that he had turned his face to mine.

"There are things in that book that I didn't know the first word about," he said.

I wondered less at his words than at the queer note of resentment in his voice. He was evidently surprised and slightly aggrieved at his own ignorance.

"Does that sort of thing interest you?" I asked.

"It used to."

"There are one or two rather new things in the book: there have been some big strides lately in that particular line of research." I waited a moment for an answer that did not come; then I said: "If you'd like to look the book through I'd be glad to leave it with you."

我把書放回口袋裏，之後大家就如常陷進沉默。不過從歌巴利平原爬上獨方鎮脊地時，暮色中，我發覺他的臉轉向我。

「那本書講的一些東西，我全不懂。」他說。

他的話我不大覺得奇怪；最奇怪的反而是他聲調透出一絲憤懣，明顯的是他因自己的無知而覺得意外，亦為此而感到有點生氣。

「您對那類東西有興趣嗎？」我問。

「從前是的。」

「書裏面有一兩個說法是很新穎的；那範疇的研究近來邁進一大步。」我等了一會，他仍不答話，我就接下去：「如您有興趣從頭到尾讀一次，我就不取回，留下給您。」

他遲疑了。他可能感到自己又將會一如既往，不作反應，於是簡短地回答：「多謝！那我就留下了。」

He hesitated, and I had the impression that he felt himself about to yield to a stealing tide of inertia; then, "Thank you--I'll take it," he answered shortly.

I hoped that this incident might set up some more direct communication between us. Frome was so simple and straightforward that I was sure his curiosity about the book was based on a genuine interest in its subject. Such tastes and acquirements in a man of his condition made the contrast more poignant between his outer situation and his inner needs, and I hoped that the chance of giving expression to the latter might at least unseal his lips. But something in his past history, or in his present way of living, had apparently driven him too deeply into himself for any casual impulse to draw him back to his kind. At our next meeting he made no allusion to the book, and our intercourse seemed fated to remain as negative and one-sided as if there had been no break in his reserve.

Frome had been driving me over to the Flats for about a week when one morning I looked out of my window into a thick snow-fall. The height of the white waves massed against the garden-fence and along the wall of the church showed that the storm must have

我希望這事能促使我倆有更直接的溝通。傅羅方的話很簡單直接。我敢說他對那書好奇，純然是對那範疇有興趣。他已落得如斯田地，還擁有這份求知欲、這等愛好，內心需求與身處環境的反差，造成的失落感是更大了。我希望他在表達內心欲望之時，起碼可以打破沉默。但可能是他過往某些事，又或者目前生活中某些東西，明顯地促使他把自己埋藏得更深，任何一刻的陡然衝動，也不會誘使他重新和人接近。第二天見面時，他沒再提那書，我倆的溝通似乎篤定了是消極和單方面的。他那次打破一貫沉默的舉動，像是從沒出現過。

有整個星期，傅羅方差不多天天載我到平原去。然後有個早晨，我望向窗外，發覺昨夜下過一場大雪，花園柵欄和教堂外牆那裏，雪都堆得高高的，大風雪應是吹了一整夜，曠野上的積雪定必很厚。我猜火車多半會延誤，可是那天下午，我須到電廠去，

been going on all night, and that the drifts were likely to be heavy in the open. I thought it probable that my train would be delayed; but I had to be at the power-house for an hour or two that afternoon, and I decided, if Frome turned up, to push through to the Flats and wait there till my train came in. I don't know why I put it in the conditional, however, for I never doubted that Frome would appear. He was not the kind of man to be turned from his business by any commotion of the elements; and at the appointed hour his sleigh glided up through the snow like a stage-apparition behind thickening veils of gauze.

I was getting to know him too well to express either wonder or gratitude at his keeping his appointment; but I exclaimed in surprise as I saw him turn his horse in a direction opposite to that of the Corbury road.

"The railroad's blocked by a freight-train that got stuck in a drift below the Flats," he explained, as we jogged off into the stinging whiteness.

"But look here--where are you taking me, then?"

在那裏逗留一兩小時。我決定了，假如傅羅方來到，我會叫他盡力駕到平原去，然後我在那裏等候火車。但我不知道為什麼會用上「假如」這詞，因為我從沒想過傅羅方會不來；他不是那種有任務在身，而會被氣候劇變嚇怕的人。果然在約定的時間，他的雪橇穿越冰雪滑至，就像舞台上，層疊紗布後出現的幽靈。

我開始清楚他的性格，並不因他準時到來而表示驚奇或感激，但見到他指示馬匹，轉向歌巴利路的相反方向，就脫口「噫」的一聲叫出來。

「路軌不通，有部貨運火車在平原下給積雪堵住了。」他一面解釋，一面載着我緩緩滑入冷氣刺骨的白色雪地。

「不過，您要載我上哪？」

「抄捷徑直去歌巴利路口。」他手持馬鞭指向學堂山崗上面。

"Straight to the Junction, by the shortest way," he answered, pointing up School House Hill with his whip.

"To the Junction--in this storm? Why, it's a good ten miles!"

"The bay'll do it if you give him time. You said you had some business there this afternoon. I'll see you get there."

He said it so quietly that I could only answer: "You're doing me the biggest kind of a favour."

"That's all right," he rejoined.

Abreast of the schoolhouse the road forked, and we dipped down a lane to the left, between hemlock boughs bent inward to their trunks by the weight of the snow. I had often walked that way on Sundays, and knew that the solitary roof showing through bare branches near the bottom of the hill was that of Frome's saw-mill. It looked exanimate enough, with its idle wheel looming above the black stream dashed with yellow-white spume, and its cluster of sheds sagging under their white load. Frome did not even turn his head as we drove by, and

「在大風雪中直去路口？那足足有十英哩長的路程啊！」

「這馬捱得到，只要讓牠慢慢走就行。您說過今天下午在那裏有事要辦，我就送您過去。」

他的聲音低微，我只能回答說：「您這可幫了我個大忙。」

「沒什麼。」他答道。

路在校舍前分叉，我們轉向左邊，滑下一條小徑，兩旁的鐵杉樹樑都積了厚厚的雪，被壓得朝下彎。星期天我常漫步上那兒，近山腳處，光禿禿樹梢露出來的一方屋頂，我知道那就是傅羅方家的鋸木坊。它看似廢置，不轉動的木輪屹立在翻着黃白泡末的黑色小溪上，幾座小棚被白雪壓得似不勝負荷。傅羅方駕着雪橇經過時，一眼也沒轉過頭去望。我們保持靜默，爬上下一個山坡。繼續前行，在一條陌生的小徑走了一哩後，來到一座果園，裏頭的蘋果樹都已乾癟，歪歪曲曲地長在山坡上那些巉岩之間。那些

still in silence we began to mount the next slope. About a mile farther, on a road I had never travelled, we came to an orchard of starved apple-trees writhing over a hillside among outcroppings of slate that nuzzled up through the snow like animals pushing out their noses to breathe. Beyond the orchard lay a field or two, their boundaries lost under drifts; and above the fields, huddled against the white immensities of land and sky, one of those lonely New England farm-houses that make the landscape lonelier.

"That's my place," said Frome, with a sideway jerk of his lame elbow; and in the distress and oppression of the scene I did not know what to answer. The snow had ceased, and a flash of watery sunlight exposed the house on the slope above us in all its plaintive ugliness. The black wraith of a deciduous creeper flapped from the porch, and the thin wooden walls, under their worn coat of paint, seemed to shiver in the wind that had risen with the ceasing of the snow.

"The house was bigger in my father's time: I had to take down the 'L,' a while back," Frome continued, checking with a twitch of the left rein the bay's evident intention of turning in through the broken-down gate.

岩石只在雪中冒出一小截，就像野獸伸出鼻子呼吸。果園後有一兩塊田地，中間的分界已給積雪埋掉了。田地較高那處，在廣袤無際的天空和大地之間，蜷伏了一間農舍，看上去就跟新英倫那些常見的伶仃農舍一樣。在這情景下，周圍風景顯得更荒涼了。

「那是我的家。」他癱了的臂膀向那邊一晃。目睹那慘澹消沉的景象，我不知說什麼才好。雪停了，一道充滿水氣的陽光射向山坡上的房子，將它的破敗慘狀顯露無遺。門廊上，大幅枯乾了的爬山虎籐蔓給風吹得一甩一甩的，像是黑色的幽靈展翼，褪色的單薄木板牆似在風中顫抖。雪停了，風也隨即起了。

「我爹在生時，那屋子大些。不久之前，我需得把 L 型橫向那截拆掉。」傅羅方繼續說。那馬想從破爛的柵欄轉進去，他一甩左邊韁繩，把牠止住了。

I saw then that the unusually forlorn and stunted look of the house was partly due to the loss of what is known in New England as the "L": that long deep-roofed adjunct usually built at right angles to the main house, and connecting it, by way of storerooms and tool-house, with the woodshed and cow-barn. Whether because of its symbolic sense, the image it presents of a life linked with the soil, and enclosing in itself the chief sources of warmth and nourishment, or whether merely because of the consolatory thought that it enables the dwellers in that harsh climate to get to their morning's work without facing the weather, it is certain that the "L" rather than the house itself seems to be the centre, the actual hearth-stone of the New England farm. Perhaps this connection of ideas, which had often occurred to me in my rambles about Starkfield, caused me to hear a wistful note in Frome's words, and to see in the diminished dwelling the image of his own shrunken body.

"We're kinder side-tracked here now," he added, "but there was considerable passing before the railroad was carried through to the Flats." He roused the lagging bay with

我於是發覺屋子看上去特別細小、特別孤零零，部分原因就是它沒有橫向那截。新英倫的房子都有個附建的組屋，屋頂深長，跟主屋組成直角，分成儲藏食物和工具的不同空間，另一頭連接堆放木頭的小棚和養了牛的穀倉。不知是否由於它的象徵意味，這等建築式樣的屋子顯示出與泥土的密切關係，內裏是取暖和食糧的主要來源；又或者它是個貼心的設計，使到居民在嚴寒氣候下，不用走到戶外的風雪中，就可開展早上的工作。所以可見得那橫向的一截才是整座房屋的中心，等同新英倫的農舍內一個家的所在位置。我在獨方鎮一帶漫遊時，心裏常常升起這些想法。可能就是這原故，致使我在傅羅方的話中，聽到他那一絲遺憾意味，與及在那縮小了的房子中，看到他自己坍塌的形象。

「現在這裏不再是交通要道，就像給岔開了。」他接着說：「從前鐵路未建到平原時，來往的人多着呢！」他又再抖一抖韁繩，叫慢下來的馬兒加緊腳步；然後，似乎只是讓我看看那

another twitch; then, as if the mere sight of the house had let me too deeply into his confidence for any farther pretence of reserve, he went on slowly: "I've always set down the worst of mother's trouble to that. When she got the rheumatism so bad she couldn't move around she used to sit up there and watch the road by the hour; and one year, when they was six months mending the Bettsbridge pike after the floods, and Harmon Gow had to bring his stage round this way, she picked up so that she used to get down to the gate most days to see him. But after the trains begun running nobody eve come by here to speak of, and mother never could get it through her head what had happened, and it preyed on her right along till she died."

As we turned into the Corbury road the snow began to fall again, cutting off our last glimpse of the house; and Frome's silence fell with it, letting down between us the old veil of reticence. This time the wind did not cease with the return of the snow. Instead, it sprang up to a gale which now and then, from a tattered sky, flung pale sweeps of sunlight over a landscape chaotically tossed. But the bay was as good as Frome's word, and we pushed on to the Junction through the wild white scene.

屋子的景象，就對我開啓了心扉，毋須再扮作矜持了，他慢吞吞地接着說：「我老是覺得我媽的最大問題就是因這個而起。她後期的風濕越來越嚴重，不能走動，就常坐在那裏，每個鐘頭就觀觀大路上來了什麼人。有一年，畢士橋的收費站給洪水沖壞了，修了六個月，夏蒙·覺爾駕的車要改走這邊，她知道後，慣了天天走到柵欄邊等，跟他打個招呼。不過，火車開動以後，就再沒有人上這邊來跟她說句話兒。老媽無法理解究竟是什麼原因，離世前一直都在納悶。」

轉入歌巴利路，雪又飄下來了，我們最後望見的屋子景象，就此封閉。傅羅方也沉默下來，在我倆之間，垂下平日無言的輕紗。這時風並沒有隨着飄雪而止息，反而驟然發飆，把天空剖開、刮成一片片，並不時投下幾道慘白的陽光，映照那風雪蹂躪後的大地。但那匹老馬跟傅羅方所說的一樣，拉着我們的雪橇穿越白茫茫的郊野，最後抵達歌巴利路口。

In the afternoon the storm held off, and the clearness in the west seemed to my inexperienced eye the pledge of a fair evening. I finished my business as quickly as possible, and we set out for Starkfield with a good chance of getting there for supper. But at sunset the clouds gathered again, bringing an earlier night, and the snow began to fall straight and steadily from a sky without wind, in a soft universal diffusion more confusing than the gusts and eddies of the morning. It seemed to be a part of the thickening darkness, to be the winter night itself descending on us layer by layer.

The small ray of Frome's lantern was soon lost in this smothering medium, in which even his sense of direction, and the bay's homing instinct, finally ceased to serve us. Two or three times some ghostly landmark sprang up to warn us that we were astray, and then was sucked back into the mist; and when we finally regained our road the old horse began to show signs of exhaustion. I felt myself to blame for having accepted Frome's offer, and after a short discussion I persuaded him to let me get out of the sleigh and walk along through the snow at the bay's side. In this way we struggled on for

下午風雪稍停，懵然無知的我，以為西面澄澈的天空預告傍晚天氣會放晴，雪不再下。我盡快完成事務，然後啓程回獨方鎮，心想晚餐前可抵華南家。可是當夕陽西下，雲層又變厚了，傍晚提早來臨。風倒沒有吹，只有大雪不歇止地從天空一直下降，四方八面，茫茫一片，比起晨早的強風渦流，景象更覺迷離，天色漸趨昏暗，冬夜似逐層褪落在我們的身上。

在雪橇前方，燈籠微約的光很快就給這蒙蓋物湮沒，甚至傅羅方的方向感和棗紅老馬識途的本性，最後全都失去作用。有兩、三次，前面冒出鬼魅似的路標，警告我們走錯了，然後它又被霧雪吮吸回去。終於我們找對了路，但那匹老馬已差不多虛脫。我覺得早前實在不應接受傅羅方的建議，是我不對，所以跟他稍稍商量後，說服了他，讓我從雪橇下來，傍着馬在雪地上行走。就是這樣，我們在雪中奮力前進了一兩哩路。最後走到某處，在我眼中，前方還是茫茫一片的

another mile or two, and at last reached a point where Frome, peering into what seemed to me formless night, said: "That's my gate down yonder."

The last stretch had been the hardest part of the way. The bitter cold and the heavy going had nearly knocked the wind out of me, and I could feel the horse's side ticking like a clock under my hand.

"Look here, Frome," I began, "there's no earthly use in your going any farther--" but he interrupted me: "Nor you neither. There's been about enough of this for anybody."

I understood that he was offering me a night's shelter at the farm, and without answering I turned into the gate at his side, and followed him to the barn, where I helped him to unharness and bed down the tired horse. When this was done he unhooked the lantern from the sleigh, stepped out again into the night, and called to me over his shoulder: "This way."

Far off above us a square of light trembled through the screen of snow. Staggering along in Frome's wake I floundered toward it, and in the darkness almost fell into one of the deep drifts against the front of the

黑夜，但傅羅方眯着眼說：「下面就是我家的柵欄。」

最後那段路是最辛苦的，徹骨的寒冷，加上蹣跚竭力前行，令我的肺部差不多無法呼吸。我扶着馬的側腹，感覺它像時鐘般一下一下地抖動。

「哎！傅羅方！」我開口叫他：「您再往前走不成啊...」他打斷我的話：「您也一樣。今天大家都被這場雪折騰得夠了。」

我明白他的意思，他是準備讓我在農場留宿一晚，就不再回答，跟他一起從柵欄進去。我隨着他走向穀倉，在那裏為筋疲力盡的馬兒卸下馬具，讓牠躺下休息。之後他從雪橇的掛勾取下燈籠，再次走到黑夜之中，扭頭過來叫我：「這邊走。」

從遠遠的高處，一道輕微抖動的方形光束從雪幕透射下來，我蹣跚隨着傅羅方的後頭，朝着它掙扎前進。黑暗中，我差點跌進屋前一個大雪堆裏。門廊的階級滑溜極了，傅羅方幾乎像

house. Frome scrambled up the slippery steps of the porch, digging a way through the snow with his heavily booted foot. Then he lifted his lantern, found the latch, and led the way into the house. I went after him into a low unlit passage, at the back of which a ladder-like staircase rose into obscurity. On our right a line of light marked the door of the room which had sent its ray across the night; and behind the door I heard a woman's voice droning querulously.

Frome stamped on the worn oil-cloth to shake the snow from his boots, and set down his lantern on a kitchen chair which was the only piece of furniture in the hall. Then he opened the door.

"Come in," he said; and as he spoke the droning voice grew still...

It was that night that I found the clue to Ethan Frome, and began to put together this vision of his story.

The village lay under two feet of snow, with drifts at the windy corners. In a sky of iron

是爬行般才走得上去。他用厚重的靴子在積雪上踩出一條路，然後他高舉燈籠，找到門栓，把它拉開，就領前入屋。我跟隨着他，來到一條沒有燈的低矮通道，末處有道陡得像梯子的樓梯，不知引向哪層。我們的右邊透出一道光綫，勾出一扇門的框邊，那應是原先在黑夜中投射微光的房間吧！門後傳來一把女聲，嘵嘵不休地抱怨。

傅羅方在塊破油布上大力頓足，抖落靴子上的積雪，把燈籠擱在一把廚房椅子上，看來那是門廳裏唯一的家具。然後把門打開。

「請進。」他說，裏面嘵嘵不休的女聲就靜下來了...

那天晚上，我找到破解傅羅方這個謎樣人物的線索，然後拼湊出下面推想出來的故事。

整條村子陷在兩呎深的積雪裏，在那些當風的角落，雪堆得更高。鐵灰色

the points of the Dipper hung like icicles and Orion flashed his cold fires. The moon had set, but the night was so transparent that the white house-fronts between the elms looked gray against the snow, clumps of bushes made black stains on it, and the basement windows of the church sent shafts of yellow light far across the endless undulations.

Young Ethan Frome walked at a quick pace along the deserted street, past the bank and Michael Eady's new brick store and Lawyer Varnum's house with the two black Norway spruces at the gate. Opposite the Varnum gate, where the road fell away toward the Corbury valley, the church reared its slim white steeple and narrow peristyle. As the young man walked toward it the upper windows drew a black arcade along the side wall of the building, but from the lower openings, on the side where the ground sloped steeply down to the Corbury road, the light shot its long bars, illuminating many fresh furrows in the track leading to the basement door, and showing, under an adjoining shed, a line of sleighs with heavily blanketed horses.

的天空下，北斗星的尖端像冰柱般懸掛，而獵戶星則揚起它冰冷的火焰。月亮已落下，但夜晚仍是如此剔透明亮，被榆樹分隔的成排房子，臨街的白牆在雪光映襯下，顯得一片灰暗，屋前的矮樹叢映照其上，像是塗抹的黑色污痕。遠處教堂的地庫窗戶，散發着一道道黃色的光，遠遠穿越高高低低的地勢直射過來。

年輕的伊奮·傅羅方急步走在冷清的馬路上，走過銀行和米高·伊弟磚建的新雜貨店，也走過華南律師家柵欄前兩棵黑色的挪威雲杉。在華南家柵欄對面，馬路開始下斜轉向歌巴利山谷，教堂的纖細白尖頂和窄長柱廊在那裏高高矗立。年輕人朝着教堂走去，上層窗戶在建築物的側牆上形成了一個黑色的拱廊；但低層向着大街下斜歌巴利路的那一段，卻透出強光。它照見了地庫門前小徑上多個新墳起的土堆，也照見了旁邊的棚子內，一整排的雪橇和披上厚毯子的馬群。

The night was perfectly still, and the air so dry and pure that it gave little sensation of cold. The effect produced on Frome was rather of a complete absence of atmosphere, as though nothing less tenuous than ether intervened between the white earth under his feet and the metallic dome overhead. "It's like being in an exhausted receiver," he thought. Four or five years earlier he had taken a year's course at a technological college at Worcester, and dabbled in the laboratory with a friendly professor of physics; and the images supplied by that experience still cropped up, at unexpected moments, through the totally different associations of thought in which he had since been living. His father's death, and the misfortunes following it, had put a premature end to Ethan's studies; but though they had not gone far enough to be of much practical use they had fed his fancy and made him aware of huge cloudy meanings behind the daily face of things.

As he strode along through the snow the sense of such meanings glowed in his brain and mingled with the bodily flush produced by his sharp tramp. At the end of the village he paused before the darkened front of the church. He stood there a moment, breathing quickly, and looking up and down the street,

夜晚靜極了，空氣是如此乾淨，令人不感到寒冷。在於傅羅方，更是渾然不覺，腳下白雪鋪蓋的大地和頭上鐵灰色穹蒼之間，一無阻隔，唯一的阻隔只是微小的以太物質。他想：「就像在個冷卻過程後的真空接收瓶內。」四、五年前，他在伍斯特一所工專讀了一年，跟一個和藹的物理教授在實驗室裏弄這弄那。那段時光的某些景象，仍會無來由地忽然冒出來。儘管往後的日子，他腦子裏想的事根本無可能引發那些聯想。他父親的逝世，隨之而來的連串噩運，逼使伊奮輟學。其實他所學到的東西並不多，未能帶來什麼實質的用途，不過就滿足了他的好奇心，使他明白到日常事物的背後，隱藏着難以清楚了解的龐大意義。

他在雪地大步前行時，這些意義在他腦袋裏發光，與急步產生的體內熱力交織。到了村子的末端，他在教堂暗下來的前方停下。他靜立了一會，呼吸急速起來，望望路的兩端，一條人影也沒有。華南律師家的雲杉對下，

in which not another figure moved. The pitch of the Corbury road, below lawyer Varnum's spruces, was the favourite coasting-ground of Starkfield, and on clear evenings the church corner rang till late with the shouts of the coasters; but to-night not a sled darkened the whiteness of the long declivity. The hush of midnight lay on the village, and all its waking life was gathered behind the church windows, from which strains of dance-music flowed with the broad bands of yellow light.

The young man, skirting the side of the building, went down the slope toward the basement door. To keep out of range of the revealing rays from within he made a circuit through the untrodden snow and gradually approached the farther angle of the basement wall. Thence, still hugging the shadow, he edged his way cautiously forward to the nearest window, holding back his straight spare body and craning his neck till he got a glimpse of the room.

Seen thus, from the pure and frosty darkness in which he stood, it seemed to be seething in a mist of heat. The metal reflectors of the gas-jets sent crude waves of light against the whitewashed walls, and the iron flanks of the stove at the end of the

就是歌巴利路那幅空地，是獨方鎮居民最喜愛的滑雪場。天放晴的傍晚，教堂旁那個角落常常傳來的他們此起彼落的叫喊聲，直至夜深才靜下來。但今夜，長長的斜坡上，竟無輕雪橇玷染那一大片白雪。午夜的靜默覆蓋着整條村子，沒入睡的人與及他們那份生氣都聚結在教堂窗子後，那裏有跳舞音樂隨着一道道強烈的黃光流瀉過來。

那年輕人沿着建築物邊緣，從斜坡步下，走向地庫的門口。為了避開那道強光照射的範圍，使身影無所遁形，他故意繞路步上遠處無人踐踏的雪地，再逐漸走近地庫較遠的牆角，然後在那裏挨着牆邊，在陰影下逐步走到最近的窗子。他瘦長挺拔的身軀往後縮，只是伸長脖子，直至能窺見室內。

站在那純淨雪地的暗處往內望，室內似是一片沸騰的煙幕。煤氣燈的金屬反光片折射出強烈的光線，照在髹成白色的牆上。大堂末端那座暖爐外圍的鐵板煽動着，似乎內裏的火山快將

hall looked as though they were heaving with volcanic fires. The floor was thronged with girls and young men. Down the side wall facing the window stood a row of kitchen chairs from which the older women had just risen. By this time the music had stopped, and the musicians--a fiddler, and the young lady who played the harmonium on Sundays--were hastily refreshing themselves at one corner of the supper-table which aligned its devastated pie-dishes and ice-cream saucers on the platform at the end of the hall.

The guests were preparing to leave, and the tide had already set toward the passage where coats and wraps were hung, when a young man with a sprightly foot and a shock of black hair shot into the middle of the floor and clapped his hands. The signal took instant effect. The musicians hurried to their instruments, the dancers--some already half-muffled for departure--fell into line down each side of the room, the older spectators slipped back to their chairs, and the lively young man, after diving about here and there in the throng, drew forth a girl who had already wound a cherry-coloured "fascinator" about her head, and, leading her up to the end of the floor, whirled her down its length to the bounding tune of a Virginia reel.

爆發。地板上擠滿了年輕的女孩和男士。面向窗子的那幅側牆，放了一排廚房椅子，有些較年長的婦女剛好離座。正在這時候，音樂停了，樂師——其實只包括一個小提琴手和星期日演奏小風琴的年輕女士——走到大堂後面的台上，從杯盤狼藉的餐桌一角，匆匆忙忙拿些剩餘的餡餅和冰淇淋裹腹。賓客都準備走了，一部分人已開步走向掛了大衣和圍巾的通道。忽然有個長了一頭濃密黑髮兼腳步輕快的小夥子跑到大堂中央，大力拍了幾下手掌。這訊號馬上生效，樂師趕回他們的樂器旁，準備跳舞的人在兩邊排成一隊——有部分其實已披上圍巾或戴了帽子，準備離去；較年長的觀眾溜回她們的座位上；而那個活潑的小夥子，在人群中左穿右插，拽出一個女孩子。她也像那些準備離開的人，頭上已蒙上一塊櫻桃紅的網眼頭巾。他拖她走到大堂的一端，跟隨維吉尼亞裡爾舞曲的跳躍節奏，領着她踏步轉圈，一直轉到去大堂的另一端。

Frome's heart was beating fast. He had been straining for a glimpse of the dark head under the cherry-coloured scarf and it vexed him that another eye should have been quicker than his. The leader of the reel, who looked as if he had Irish blood in his veins, danced well, and his partner caught his fire. As she passed down the line, her light figure swinging from hand to hand in circles of increasing swiftness, the scarf flew off her head and stood out behind her shoulders, and Frome, at each turn, caught sight of her laughing panting lips, the cloud of dark hair about her forehead, and the dark eyes which seemed the only fixed points in a maze of flying lines.

The dancers were going faster and faster, and the musicians, to keep up with them, belaboured their instruments like jockeys lashing their mounts on the home-stretch; yet it seemed to the young man at the window that the reel would never end. Now and then he turned his eyes from the girl's face to that of her partner, which, in the exhilaration of the dance, had taken on a look of almost impudent ownership. Denis Eady was the son of Michael Eady, the ambitious Irish grocer, whose suppleness and effrontery had given Starkfield its first

傅羅方的心急遽跳動。他一直努力用眼睛搜索櫻桃紅頭巾下的深色頭髮，竟然有人的眼睛比他更尖！真的！那裡爾舞曲的引領者，似乎是因為帶有愛爾蘭血統，跳得很出色，而舞伴的熱情都給燃點起來了。她順着整排人，從一隻手換到另一隻手，纖小的身軀轉了一圈又一圈，越轉越快，她的紅頭巾飛揚，褪到肩膊上面，每次轉過頭來，傅羅方就望見她咧口喘氣的笑臉、額上如雲的棕色頭髮、與及那對點漆眸子，它們就像一堆飛舞中亂綫的定點。

跳舞的人越跳越快，樂師為了趕上他們的節奏，也把樂器播弄得更急，就像到了賽事直路衝刺那段，騎師的馬鞭狠狠地揮下。站在窗後的年輕人覺得舞曲似是永遠不會停止。他的視線不時從女孩的臉上轉向她的伴侶。那小夥子由於跳舞帶來的快感，樣子很放肆，好像女孩完全任他擺佈於掌下。丹尼斯就是那個愛爾蘭雜貨店主米高·伊弟的兒子。他父親做生意有份狠勁，經營手法可說是沒什麼原

notion of "smart" business methods, and whose new brick store testified to the success of the attempt. His son seemed likely to follow in his steps, and was meanwhile applying the same arts to the conquest of the Starkfield maidenhood. Hitherto Ethan Frome had been content to think him a mean fellow; but now he positively invited a horse-whipping. It was strange that the girl did not seem aware of it: that she could lift her rapt face to her dancer's, and drop her hands into his, without appearing to feel the offence of his look and touch.

Frome was in the habit of walking into Starkfield to fetch home his wife's cousin, Mattie Silver, on the rare evenings when some chance of amusement drew her to the village. It was his wife who had suggested, when the girl came to live with them, that such opportunities should be put in her way. Mattie Silver came from Stamford, and when she entered the Fromes' household to act as her cousin Zeena's aid it was thought best, as she came without pay, not to let her feel too sharp a contrast between the life she had left and the isolation of a Starkfield farm. But for this--as Frome sardonically reflected--it would hardly have occurred to

則，厚顏無恥之極，讓獨方鎮首度見識了何謂「醒目」商人。那座磚建的新店舖就說明了他有多成功。他的兒子似乎克紹箕裘，用了同等的手段去俘虜鎮上的少女。以前伊奮·傅羅方只當他是個可厭的人，現在就覺得他的所作所為，是在叫他應該出手，拿馬鞭直抽過去。奇怪的是，那女孩似是毫不為意，她全神貫注地望着舞伴的臉，把手放在他的掌心，對於他的眼神、他的觸摸，一點也不覺得受到冒犯。

獨方鎮晚間少有什麼消遣，如有玩樂的話，傅羅方太太的表妹蜜娣·思花或會參加。之後，傅羅方慣了步往村子接她回家。當初這個女孩來投靠他們，他的妻子倩娜就說村裏如有什麼樂子，她可以去。蜜娣·思花來自士淡福，最初她來幫忙倩娜做家務，是沒有薪水可領的。他們的農場既是地處偏遠，孤零零地全無鄰居，她來了之後，不應讓她感到生活跟以往有太大差別，所以有機會去玩，不如就讓她去。除了這點，倩娜又怎會考慮到女孩可有消遣？想到這裏，傅羅方不無譏諷之意。

Zeena to take any thought for the girl's amusement.

When his wife first proposed that they should give Mattie an occasional evening out he had inwardly demurred at having to do the extra two miles to the village and back after his hard day on the farm; but not long afterward he had reached the point of wishing that Starkfield might give all its nights to revelry.

Mattie Silver had lived under his roof for a year, and from early morning till they met at supper he had frequent chances of seeing her; but no moments in her company were comparable to those when, her arm in his, and her light step flying to keep time with his long stride, they walked back through the night to the farm. He had taken to the girl from the first day, when he had driven over to the Flats to meet her, and she had smiled and waved to him from the train, crying out, "You must be Ethan!" as she jumped down with her bundles, while he reflected, looking over her slight person: "She don't look much on housework, but she ain't a fretter, anyhow." But it was not only that the coming to his house of a bit of hopeful young life was like the lighting of a fire on a cold

當初倩娜提出讓蜜娣偶然晚上外出玩玩，他心裏有點不情願，在農場勞碌完一天已夠辛苦了，還要來回村子每程走上兩哩路？不過不久之後，他就覺得假如獨方鎮每個晚上有節目，會是多好的事！

蜜娣·思花在他家住下有一年了，從清晨至晚餐的一段時間內，他常有機會見到她；但即使有她在場，從沒有一刻可跟這些時光相比——她挽着他的臂，輕盈的腳步半蹦半跳地在路上走，好趕上他踏出的大步。他們就是這樣，結伴穿越黑夜回到農場去。其實第一天見到她，他就喜歡上她了。那天他駕車穿過平原去接她，她在火車上微笑揮手，拿着大包小包跳下來，大聲叫道：「你一定就是伊奮！」他望着她嬌小的身裁，想道：「不像個慣做家務的人，不過也不像個經常犯愁的女子！」她降臨他家，不只帶來一絲年輕人對生命的希冀，更像是把冷冷的壁爐點燃了火。他最初只把她當是個明媚的家務助理，其

hearth. The girl was more than the bright serviceable creature he had thought her. She had an eye to see and an ear to hear: he could show her things and tell her things, and taste the bliss of feeling that all he imparted left long reverberations and echoes he could wake at will.

It was during their night walks back to the farm that he felt most intensely the sweetness of this communion. He had always been more sensitive than the people about him to the appeal of natural beauty. His unfinished studies had given form to this sensibility and even in his unhappiest moments field and sky spoke to him with a deep and powerful persuasion. But hitherto the emotion had remained in him as a silent ache, veiling with sadness the beauty that evoked it. He did not even know whether anyone else in the world felt as he did, or whether he was the sole victim of this mournful privilege. Then he learned that one other spirit had trembled with the same touch of wonder: that at his side, living under his roof and eating his bread, was a creature to whom he could say: "That's Orion down yonder; the big fellow to the right is Aldebaran, and the bunch of little ones--like bees swarming--they're the

實不止這樣；她的眼睛能看得見，耳朵能聽得到；他可向她展示很多事物、可告訴她很多東西，他的話說出口，就造成長長的迴響，那種感覺多美好啊！

就是這些晚上，他倆漫步回家的時刻，他就最能嚐到兩人契交的甜蜜。面對大自然之美，他的感受向來比周圍的人更為敏銳。學業中輟，令這份意識具體呈現了。儘管他有時極度不快樂，天空和田野仍會與他對話，深而有力地撫慰他的心靈。不過，以往大自然之美所觸動的悲哀，他的內心只能默默地承受煎熬。他不知道世上還有沒有人跟他的感覺相似，抑或只有他不幸地享有這份美麗的哀愁。然後，他知道了，有另一個靈魂因感觸到同一份奇妙感覺而顫抖；這個人就在他身邊，住在同一屋簷下，吃他供給的麵包，而他可跟她說：「遠遠那顆就是獵戶座；右邊大大的一顆是畢宿第五星，另外那群像是蜜蜂的小星星是昴宿星團...」又或者，面對一塊從蕨草叢中突出來的長花崗岩礁石，

Pleiades..." or whom he could hold entranced before a ledge of granite thrusting up through the fern while he unrolled the huge panorama of the ice age, and the long dim stretches of succeeding time. The fact that admiration for his learning mingled with Mattie's wonder at what he taught was not the least part of his pleasure. And there were other sensations, less definable but more exquisite, which drew them together with a shock of silent joy: the cold red of sunset behind winter hills, the flight of cloud-flocks over slopes of golden stubble, or the intensely blue shadows of hemlocks on sunlit snow. When she said to him once: "It looks just as if it was painted!" it seemed to Ethan that the art of definition could go no farther, and that words had at last been found to utter his secret soul....

As he stood in the darkness outside the church these memories came back with the poignancy of vanished things. Watching Mattie whirl down the floor from hand to hand he wondered how he could ever have thought that his dull talk interested her. To him, who was never gay but in her presence, her gaiety seemed plain proof of indifference. The face she lifted to her dancers was the same which, when she saw him, always looked like a window that has

在他概述冰河期及以後歷次的間冰期時候，她聽得目迷神眩。她固然是對他的學識佩服極了，對他所教的東西也聽得津津有味；但他的快樂不止於此，還有其他更難形容、而又更細緻的感受把他倆拉近。有時忽然之間，他們靜默下來，心裏升起一陣陣欣喜：冬雪蒙蓋的山丘背後，映照着夕陽冷紅的光芒；滿布金黃殘梗的斜坡上方，團簇雲朵在天空追逐，高飛遠颺；陽光照耀下的皚皚白雪，映襯着翳藍的鐵杉樹影。有次她跟他說：「就像一幅圖畫！」伊奮覺得最好的形容，莫過乎此！他深藏的靈魂最後找到了代言人。

當他在教堂外，佇立在黑暗之中，這些回憶掀起來了，同時也有股無奈之感，覺得某些東西經已消逝！望着蜜娣在舞池中轉圈，從一隻男性手掌換到第二隻，他不禁奇怪：怎會認為自己那些悶極的話題會令她覺得動聽。他只有跟她一起時才會快樂，而她現時很明顯表示她是無所謂，跟誰在一起也會快樂。她抬頭望向舞伴的一張臉，跟望着他時候沒什麼兩樣，仍是

caught the sunset. He even noticed two or three gestures which, in his fatuity, he had thought she kept for him: a way of throwing her head back when she was amused, as if to taste her laugh before she let it out, and a trick of sinking her lids slowly when anything charmed or moved her.

The sight made him unhappy, and his unhappiness roused his latent fears. His wife had never shown any jealousy of Mattie, but of late she had grumbled increasingly over the house-work and found oblique ways of attracting attention to the girl's inefficiency. Zeena had always been what Starkfield called "sickly," and Frome had to admit that, if she were as ailing as she believed, she needed the help of a stronger arm than the one which lay so lightly in his during the night walks to the farm. Mattie had no natural turn for housekeeping, and her training had done nothing to remedy the defect. She was quick to learn, but forgetful and dreamy, and not disposed to take the matter seriously. Ethan had an idea that if she were to marry a man she was fond of the dormant instinct would wake, and her pies and biscuits become the pride of the county; but domesticity in the abstract did not interest her. At first she was

一道映照着燦爛夕陽的窗子。他特別留意到她有兩三個表情，還傻得一度以為是她專向他展示的哩！例如，她覺得他的話好笑時，頭向後仰，似先要嚐嚐滋味，才笑出聲來；又有時受到某些事物吸引，生了感觸，眼皮就會慢慢地垂下。

眼前的景象令他戚然，由此勾起了一些隱憂。他的妻子從沒作出妒忌蜜梯的表示，但最近她常對家務透露出不滿，用了迂迴的法子令他知道女孩的種種不是。在獨方鎮居民口中，倩娜一直是個懨懨的病號，傅羅方也得承認，如她真的病得有自己想像中那麼重，她需要的是一雙更強壯有力的手臂，而非每次晚上步回農場，掛在他臂彎上輕輕巧巧的那隻。蜜梯沒有持家的天份，過去也沒有接受過任何訓練，可改善這方面的缺失。她學得很快，可是善忘，喜歡做夢，並非真的用心去學。伊奮想到：要是她嫁了個她喜歡的男人，她蒙昧的天性或會被喚醒，然後她做的糕點和餡餅會是全鎮之光。但單是做家務，並不能喚起她的學習興趣。最初她的笨拙使他不禁哈哈大笑，不過她也隨着他笑起

so awkward that he could not help laughing at her; but she laughed with him and that made them better friends. He did his best to supplement her unskilled efforts, getting up earlier than usual to light the kitchen fire, carrying in the wood overnight, and neglecting the mill for the farm that he might help her about the house during the day. He even crept down on Saturday nights to scrub the kitchen floor after the women had gone to bed; and Zeena, one day, had surprised him at the churn and had turned away silently, with one of her queer looks.

Of late there had been other signs of her disfavour, as intangible but more disquieting. One cold winter morning, as he dressed in the dark, his candle flickering in the draught of the ill-fitting window, he had heard her speak from the bed behind him.

"The doctor don't want I should be left without anybody to do for me," she said in her flat whine.

He had supposed her to be asleep, and the sound of her voice had startled him, though she was given to abrupt explosions of speech after long intervals of secretive silence.

來，就此他倆的友情反增進一步。他盡力去彌補她在家務方面之不足，比往常起得更早，替她點燃廚房的爐火，隔晚就把要用的木頭搬進來，為了日間在屋子內幫忙，磨坊和農場的工作都忽略了。每個星期六晚，等到女人家都上了床，他還偷偷下樓去，洗擦廚房的地板。有一次，冷不防倩娜在攪拌器旁出現，見到他在攪牛乳，默默地轉身離去，面上掛着她那令人費解的表情。

近來，她幾度都流露出一不高興的態度，並不明顯，但就更令人不安了。某個寒冷的冬日清晨，他在黑暗中起床穿衣，大風從破窗子的罅隙鑽進來，吹得蠟燭的火光搖晃不定，從身後的床傳來她的話語聲。

「醫生說我不能沒有人在家幫忙。」她以慣常的抱怨腔調直板板地說。

他本以為她仍在睡夢中，被她的話聲嚇了一跳；雖然平日有時她常會把自己收藏起來，好長一段時間沉默不語，然後忽然連珠砲發地開口說話。

He turned and looked at her where she lay indistinctly outlined under the dark calico quilt, her high-boned face taking a grayish tinge from the whiteness of the pillow.

"Nobody to do for you?" he repeated.

"If you say you can't afford a hired girl when Mattie goes."

Frome turned away again, and taking up his razor stooped to catch the reflection of his stretched cheek in the blotched looking-glass above the wash-stand.

"Why on earth should Mattie go?"

"Well, when she gets married, I mean," his wife's drawl came from behind him.

"Oh, she'd never leave us as long as you needed her," he returned, scraping hard at his chin.

"I wouldn't ever have it said that I stood in the way of a poor girl like Mattie marrying a smart fellow like Denis Eady," Zeena

他轉過頭來，望着她在深色印花布被下沒什麼線條的身體。她高顴骨的臉，襯着白色枕頭，是暗淡的。

「沒有人在家幫忙？」他重複她的話。

「蜜娣走後，如你沒能力雇個女孩回來替代她。」

傅羅方轉頭回去，執起剃鬚刀，頸向前伸，在盥洗架上方的斑駁鏡子內斜看自己揚起的側面。

「幹嘛蜜娣要走？」

「這個嘛！結婚就走唄。」他身後傳來妻子懶洋洋的語聲。

「噢！只要妳留下她做幫手，以後她就哪兒都不去。」他大力地刮着下巴，一面答她。

「無論如何，我怎也不想人家說我閒話，貧家女蜜娣嫁不成丹尼斯·伊弟

answered in a tone of plaintive self-effacement.

Ethan, glaring at his face in the glass, threw his head back to draw the razor from ear to chin. His hand was steady, but the attitude was an excuse for not making an immediate reply.

"And the doctor don't want I should be left without anybody," Zeena continued. "He wanted I should speak to you about a girl he's heard about, that might come--"

Ethan laid down the razor and straightened himself with a laugh.

"Denis Eady! If that's all, I guess there's no such hurry to look round for a girl."

"Well, I'd like to talk to you about it," said Zeena obstinately.

He was getting into his clothes in fumbling haste. "All right. But I haven't got the time now; I'm late as it is," he returned, holding his old silver turnip-watch to the candle.

那醒目小夥子，都是我從中作梗。」倩娜自傷自憐地說。

伊奮在鏡中瞪着自己的臉，把頭一仰，手持剃刀從耳朵刮至下巴。他的手很穩定，不過這麼一動，就可用作不用馬上回答的藉口。

「醫生不想我沒人在家幫忙，」她繼續說道：「他叫我跟你講，他知道有個女孩可以來——」

伊奮放下剃刀，伸直身子，笑一笑。

「丹尼斯·伊弟！如只有他，那就不用急忙雇人。」

「我不是說了？就是要跟你商量。」倩娜仍抓着話題不放。

他摸索着、急急穿上戶外衣服。「好呀！但現在可沒時間，已夠遲了。」他轉過身來，拿起他那式樣笨拙的古老銀錶湊近蠟燭看。

Zeena, apparently accepting this as final, lay watching him in silence while he pulled his suspenders over his shoulders and jerked his arms into his coat; but as he went toward the door she said, suddenly and incisively: "I guess you're always late, now you shave every morning."

That thrust had frightened him more than any vague insinuations about Denis Eady. It was a fact that since Mattie Silver's coming he had taken to shaving every day; but his wife always seemed to be asleep when he left her side in the winter darkness, and he had stupidly assumed that she would not notice any change in his appearance. Once or twice in the past he had been faintly disquieted by Zenobia's way of letting things happen without seeming to remark them, and then, weeks afterward, in a casual phrase, revealing that she had all along taken her notes and drawn her inferences. Of late, however, there had been no room in his thoughts for such vague apprehensions. Zeena herself, from an oppressive reality, had faded into an insubstantial shade. All his life was lived in the sight and sound of Mattie Silver, and he could no longer conceive of its being otherwise. But now, as he stood outside the church, and saw

倩娜明顯地覺得已有結論，躺在床上不作聲。他把伸縮褲帶掛上兩邊肩膀，之後把手臂插進大衣衣袖內，她一直在旁看着。但在他走向房門時，她忽然尖刻地說：「怪不得常遲了出門，現在你天天早上都剃鬚。」

那項指控令他心下懼怕，比她隱約提到丹尼斯·伊弟的意圖更甚。自從蜜娣·思花來了，他確是天天剃鬚；但在冬日清晨，每天摸黑從她身邊起來，她總是沒有動，似乎還在睡夢之中，而他蠢得以為她不覺察他外表上的任何變化。以前他以為倩娜諸事不理，而致並不作聲；但有一兩次，他發覺有些事發生多個星期後，她隨隨便便說的一句話，顯示她把一切都記在心裏，並已作出某些推斷，他為此有點不安。近來，他的腦海裏，已容不下這些隱隱的顧慮。倩娜本是個實在的個體，壓迫着他，現已化為淡淡的陰影。他目下完全活在蜜娣·思花的形象和聲音之中，他想像不出，如沒有了她，日子還可怎樣過。可是，現在他站在教堂外面，看着蜜娣跟丹尼斯·伊弟在舞池中轉着圈舞過來，

Mattie spinning down the floor with Denis Eady, a throng of disregarded hints and menaces wove their cloud about his brain....

II

As the dancers poured out of the hall Frome, drawing back behind the projecting storm-door, watched the segregation of the grotesquely muffled groups, in which a moving lantern ray now and then lit up a face flushed with food and dancing. The villagers, being afoot, were the first to climb the slope to the main street, while the country neighbours packed themselves more slowly into the sleighs under the shed.

"Ain't you riding, Mattie?" a woman's voice called back from the throng about the shed, and Ethan's heart gave a jump. From where he stood he could not see the persons coming out of the hall till they had advanced a few steps beyond the wooden sides of the storm-door; but through its cracks he heard a clear voice answer: "Mercy no! Not on such a night."

She was there, then, close to him, only a thin board between. In another moment she

一大堆從前沒理會的暗示、帶有威脅性的話，在他腦中交織成一團...

二

跳完舞的人從大堂蜂湧而出，傅羅方縮進敞開的擋風套門板後面，觀望着那些一堆堆被圍巾和大衣包裹得怪模怪樣的人。每當有人持燈籠經過，就照出一張張被食物和舞步染成紅酡酡的臉。鎮上居民可以走路回家，率先走上斜坡，步上大街。住在鄰近郊外的村民，隨後步往木棚，陸續登上雪橇坐穩。

「蜜娣！妳不坐嗎？」木棚旁那群人當中，一把女聲喊過來。伊奮的心猛地一跳。從他站的地方，他看不見從大堂出來的人。如要看清楚，就要等他們繼續前行，直到離開套門數步之外；不過從套門的隙縫裏，傳來一把清脆的嗓子說道：「不！拜託了。這等晚上誰會？」

原來她就在那裏！只和他隔着一塊薄薄的木板。在下一刻，她就會踏進黑

would step forth into the night, and his eyes, accustomed to the obscurity, would discern her as clearly as though she stood in daylight. A wave of shyness pulled him back into the dark angle of the wall, and he stood there in silence instead of making his presence known to her. It had been one of the wonders of their intercourse that from the first, she, the quicker, finer, more expressive, instead of crushing him by the contrast, had given him something of her own ease and freedom; but now he felt as heavy and loutish as in his student days, when he had tried to "jolly" the Worcester girls at a picnic.

He hung back, and she came out alone and paused within a few yards of him. She was almost the last to leave the hall, and she stood looking uncertainly about her as if wondering why he did not show himself. Then a man's figure approached, coming so close to her that under their formless wrappings they seemed merged in one dim outline.

"Gentleman friend gone back on you? Say, Matt, that's tough! No, I wouldn't be mean enough to tell the other girls. I ain't as low-down as that." (How Frome hated his cheap banter!) "But look a here, ain't it lucky I got

夜裏；不過他的眼睛已習慣了昏暗，會分辨出她的身影，清晰得一如她站在日光下。一份害羞感突然襲來，驅使他縮入牆壁的暗角。他靜靜地站在那裏，不讓她知道。打從一開始和她交往，他發覺跟他相比，她的心思更快、更細緻、更擅於表達自己。但兩人相處的時候，奇怪的是她從沒令他感到無地自容，而是讓他感染了她那份自然和奔放。可是現在他又覺得回到學生時代了，就像跟伍斯特的女孩野餐聚會，他想去討好她們，而傻呼呼地手足無措。

他向後一縮，望見她單獨步出，在他十多呎前停下來。整批人中，她差不多是最後離開大堂的一個。她站在空地上，四下張望，樣子有點疑惑，似乎不明白為何他沒有來接。然後有個男子身影走到她身邊，他走得那麼近，單看兩人大衣和圍巾組成的臃腫外形，朦朧地似乎聯成一體。

「蜜娣！給紳士朋友放鴛子啦？真慘！我不會損人，跑去跟其他女孩說的。我還沒有那麼沒品。」（傅羅方多討厭他那類低級調笑！）「不過

the old man's cutter down there waiting for us?"

Frome heard the girl's voice, gaily incredulous: "What on earth's your father's cutter doin' down there?"

"Why, waiting for me to take a ride. I got the roan colt too. I kinder knew I'd want to take a ride to-night," Eady, in his triumph, tried to put a sentimental note into his bragging voice.

The girl seemed to waver, and Frome saw her twirl the end of her scarf irresolutely about her fingers. Not for the world would he have made a sign to her, though it seemed to him that his life hung on her next gesture.

"Hold on a minute while I unhitch the colt," Denis called to her, springing toward the shed.

She stood perfectly still, looking after him, in an attitude of tranquil expectancy torturing to the hidden watcher. Frome noticed that she no longer turned her head from side to side, as though peering through the night for

嘛！真好運！我有老爹的雪橇等着咱們呢！」

傅羅方聽到女孩的聲音似是又高興、又不可置信：「你爸的雪橇？幹嘛在這兒？」

「不就是等我我去駕一趟？我還要了那隻雜毛小馬。哈！我早就猜着了，今晚會用得上雪橇。」丹尼斯·伊弟很是得意，不過吹噓之時，意圖加進一絲柔情。

女孩似改變了原來的決定。傅羅方見到她不置可否，手指繞弄着圍巾的末端。他無論如何也不會向她出聲示意！雖然他的命運似乎繫於她下一個舉措。

「妳等一會，我去把小馬的韁繩解開。」丹尼斯跑向木棚，同時向身後的她喊道。

她站在那裏，望着他的背影，一動也不動。那安然佇候的站姿，令到躲在一旁的旁觀者心中，承受着何等的煎熬！她不再轉頭四望、似在黑夜中搜

another figure. She let Denis Eady lead out the horse, climb into the cutter and fling back the bearskin to make room for her at his side; then, with a swift motion of flight, she turned about and darted up the slope toward the front of the church.

"Good-bye! Hope you'll have a lovely ride!" she called back to him over her shoulder.

Denis laughed, and gave the horse a cut that brought him quickly abreast of her retreating figure.

"Come along! Get in quick! It's as slippery as thunder on this turn," he cried, leaning over to reach out a hand to her.

She laughed back at him: "Good-night! I'm not getting in."

By this time they had passed beyond Frome's earshot and he could only follow the shadowy pantomime of their silhouettes as they continued to move along the crest of the slope above him. He saw Eady, after a moment, jump from the cutter and go toward the girl with the reins over one arm. The other he tried to slip through hers; but she eluded him nimbly, and Frome's heart, which had swung out over a black void,

索另一個人的身影。她只是站着，等到丹尼斯把馬牽出來，爬上雪橇，執起那幅熊皮毯子扔到後座，騰出旁邊的位置，她就以逃跑的速度，轉身跑上教堂前方的斜坡。

「拜拜！好好玩兒啊！」她朝後面的他喊道。

丹尼斯笑着，抽了馬兒一鞭，很快已趕到已開步離去的她，攔在前面。

「跟我來呀！快上車！這彎位滑溜死人的！」他叫道，同時彎身遞手給她。

她也向他笑道：「晚安！我不坐了！」

這時他們走遠了，傅羅方已聽不到兩人的話語聲，只看到他倆的身影繼續在他上方的斜坡頂移動，仿如觀看一套影子默劇。過了一刻，他見到丹尼斯從雪橇上跳下來，臂上掛着韁繩，走向女孩，另一隻手意圖去挽她的臂彎；不過她輕巧地避開了。傅羅方的心原本已盪到黑暗的虛空中，現在抖

trembled back to safety. A moment later he heard the jingle of departing sleigh bells and discerned a figure advancing alone toward the empty expanse of snow before the church.

In the black shade of the Varnum spruces he caught up with her and she turned with a quick "Oh!"

"Think I'd forgotten you, Matt?" he asked with sheepish glee.

She answered seriously: "I thought maybe you couldn't come back for me."

"Couldn't? What on earth could stop me?"

"I knew Zeena wasn't feeling any too good to-day."

"Oh, she's in bed long ago." He paused, a question struggling in him. "Then you meant to walk home all alone?"

"Oh, I ain't afraid!" she laughed.

顫着回到安全地點。下一刻，他聽到雪橇離去的叮噠鈴聲，然後辨認出教堂前面、向着茫茫大片雪地蹣跚前行的身影。

在華南家雲杉的黑暗樹蔭下，他趕上了她。她轉身過來，很快地說聲：「噢！」

「蜜兒，妳以為我忘了來接？」他靦腆地問道。

她認真地回答：「我想你或者來不了。」

「來不了？有什麼事可阻住我？」

「我知道今天倩娜不大舒服。」

「她早就上床了。」他停頓下來，有個問題在他心內翻騰。「妳原先就準備獨個兒步行回家？」

「噯！我不怕。」她笑着回答。

They stood together in the gloom of the spruces, an empty world glimmering about them wide and grey under the stars. He brought his question out.

"If you thought I hadn't come, why didn't you ride back with Denis Eady?"

"Why, where were you? How did you know? I never saw you!"

Her wonder and his laughter ran together like spring rills in a thaw. Ethan had the sense of having done something arch and ingenious. To prolong the effect he groped for a dazzling phrase, and brought out, in a growl of rapture: "Come along."

He slipped an arm through hers, as Eady had done, and fancied it was faintly pressed against her side, but neither of them moved. It was so dark under the spruces that he could barely see the shape of her head beside his shoulder. He longed to stoop his cheek and rub it against her scarf. He would have liked to stand there with her all night in the blackness. She moved forward a step or two and then paused again above the dip of the Corbury road. Its icy slope, scored by

他倆一起站在雲杉的陰影中，繁星下，周圍空無一人的淺灰色世界是那麽廣闊，散發着微光。他開口問了。

「如果妳以為我來不了，為什麼不跟丹尼斯·伊弟坐雪橇回家？」

「什麼？你在哪？怎知道的？我從頭到尾都見不到你。」

她的驚詫跟他的笑聲結合在一起，就像春天時份，冰塊在小溪中溶化。伊奮覺得自己巧妙地耍了個小把戲。為了延長戲謔效果，他搜索腦袋，想找句精警的俏皮話，結果壓低了的嗓子只是開心地說道：「走吧！」

他把手臂輕輕穿過她的臂彎，跟丹尼斯·伊弟的動作一樣，然後覺得自己的臂膀似輕壓在她的腰側。兩個人都沒有動，雲杉下是如此昏暗，他只勉強見到她的頭倚向自己肩膀的綫條。他渴望把臉湊過去，挨在她包着頭的圍巾上。要是能夠和她並肩在黑暗中站上整夜，會是多好的事！她往前走了一兩步，然後在斜下歌巴利路那處停下來。那道結了冰的斜坡，被無數

innumerable runners, looked like a mirror scratched by travellers at an inn.

"There was a whole lot of them coasting before the moon set," she said.

"Would you like to come in and coast with them some night?" he asked.

"Oh, would you, Ethan? It would be lovely!"

"We'll come to-morrow if there's a moon."

She lingered, pressing closer to his side.

"Ned Hale and Ruth Varnum came just as near running into the big elm at the bottom. We were all sure they were killed." Her shiver ran down his arm.

"Wouldn't it have been too awful? They're so happy!"

"Oh, Ned ain't much at steering. I guess I can take you down all right!" he said disdainfully.

He was aware that he was "talking big," like Denis Eady; but his reaction of joy had unsteadied him, and the inflection with

雪橇輾過，就像是塊旅館鏡子，給旅客弄出了一道道細痕。

「月落之前，滑雪橇的人可多着呢！」她說。

「不如哪一晚也跟他們一起滑幾趟？」他問。

「伊奮，由你帶我？多好呀！」

「如明晚有月光，我們就來。」

她的腳步停下來，把身軀再靠近些。

「尼德·希爾和露芙差點在下面撞上大榆樹，我們都以為他倆死定了。」他的臂膀感受到她的戰慄。「真撞上去就不堪想像了。他們是那麼開心！」

「噢！尼德駕雪橇不拿手。我駕妳應該沒事。」他不屑地說。

他知道他在夸夸其談，就跟丹尼斯·伊弟一樣；但歡欣的感受激盪了他，還有，她提到已訂婚的那一對時，

which she had said of the engaged couple "They're so happy!" made the words sound as if she had been thinking of herself and him.

"The elm is dangerous, though. It ought to be cut down," she insisted.

"Would you be afraid of it, with me?"

"I told you I ain't the kind to be afraid" she tossed back, almost indifferently; and suddenly she began to walk on with a rapid step.

These alterations of mood were the despair and joy of Ethan Frome. The motions of her mind were as incalculable as the flit of a bird in the branches. The fact that he had no right to show his feelings, and thus provoke the expression of hers, made him attach a fantastic importance to every change in her look and tone. Now he thought she understood him, and feared; now he was sure she did not, and despaired. To-night the pressure of accumulated misgivings sent the scale drooping toward despair, and her indifference was the more chilling after the flush of joy into which she had plunged him by dismissing Denis Eady. He mounted School House Hill at her side and walked on

「他們是那麼開心」，語調有點特別，聽起來就似乎在說他倆。

「那棵榆樹確是太危險了，應把它砍掉。」她堅持道。

「由我駕，妳也怕？」

「我早說了我不會怕。」她的頭向後一仰，就像是沒什麼所謂的樣子。忽然她快步繼續前行。

她的情緒不住變換，或使伊奮·傅羅方沮喪，或使他歡喜。她腦袋裏想的是什麼，就像在林梢飛掠的小鳥那般難以猜測。但是他沒有權利去表達心聲，不可能知道她會如何回應，所以他對她每個表情和語調的變化都異常重視。一度他以為她明白他，心下惴惴不安；一度他肯定她並不，失望極了。今晚多重疑慮造成的壓力使天秤側向失望那一邊；她拒絕了丹尼斯·伊弟，本來使他快樂極了，繼後一副無所謂的樣子，反而更令他心下感到冷颯颯。兩人並肩步上學堂山崗，大家都沒說話，直至到達通往鋸木坊的

in silence till they reached the lane leading to the saw-mill; then the need of some definite assurance grew too strong for him.

"You'd have found me right off if you hadn't gone back to have that last reel with Denis," he brought out awkwardly. He could not pronounce the name without a stiffening of the muscles of his throat.

"Why, Ethan, how could I tell you were there?"

"I suppose what folks say is true," he jerked out at her, instead of answering.

She stopped short, and he felt, in the darkness, that her face was lifted quickly to his. "Why, what do folks say?"

"It's natural enough you should be leaving us" he floundered on, following his thought.

"Is that what they say?" she mocked back at him; then, with a sudden drop of her sweet treble: "You mean that Zeena--ain't suited with me any more?" she faltered.

小徑上，他按捺不住了，希望得到某個實在的表示。

「如你沒留下來跟丹尼斯跳最後那隻舞，不就見到我了？」他不自然地發話。提到那名字時，他喉嚨的肌肉禁不住抽緊。

「什麼？伊奮，我怎知你來了？」

「村民所說想是對的吧？」他沒回答，反而拋出一句。

她忽地停下來。在黑暗中，他覺得她馬上揚起臉，朝向他。「村民說什麼了？」

「妳當然會離開我們家。」他的話，循着思路道出來，仍然上句不搭下句。

「他們這樣說了？」她嘲弄道。然後，她甜美的高音嗓子突然變低了：「你意思是倩娜——不想要我啦？」她的聲音帶着顫抖。

Their arms had slipped apart and they stood motionless, each seeking to distinguish the other's face.

"I know I ain't anything like as smart as I ought to be," she went on, while he vainly struggled for expression. "There's lots of things a hired girl could do that come awkward to me still--and I haven't got much strength in my arms. But if she'd only tell me I'd try. You know she hardly ever says anything, and sometimes I can see she ain't suited, and yet I don't know why." She turned on him with a sudden flash of indignation. "You'd ought to tell me, Ethan Frome--you'd ought to! Unless you want me to go too--"

Unless he wanted her to go too! The cry was balm to his raw wound. The iron heavens seemed to melt and rain down sweetness. Again he struggled for the all-expressive word, and again, his arm in hers, found only a deep "Come along."

They walked on in silence through the blackness of the hemlock-shaded lane, where Ethan's sawmill gloomed through the night, and out again into the comparative clearness of the fields. On the farther side of the hemlock belt the open country rolled

他倆的臂膀經已悄悄分開，兩人站着不動，搜索對方的臉。

「我知道我不夠聰明伶俐。」她繼續說道，他努力想回應，但說不出話來。「有許多該是女傭做的事，我仍然笨手笨腳——臂膀又不夠力。不過只要她叫我去做，我會盡力。你知道她不愛說話，不過有時我知道她不高興我，不知道是什麼原因。」她突然來了股怒氣，發泄在他身上。「伊奮·傅羅方，你應告訴我，她為什麼惱了我，你應這樣做，除非你也想我走——」

除非他也想她走！那喊出來的一句話立時為他的新傷口塗上了香油，鐵打的天堂似在融化，灑下蜜汁。他又去搜索某個足以表達一切感受的字詞，不過挽着她的臂彎，仍是只能低低迸出那句：「來吧！」

在沉默中，他們穿過鐵杉樹蔭下的黑暗小徑，伊奮的鋸木坊在夜裏黑黝黝地矗立。走出鐵杉林之後，就是較平坦的田野。在更遠的林邊，曠野在他們面前展開，星空下，是一片漫漫灰

away before them grey and lonely under the stars. Sometimes their way led them under the shade of an overhanging bank or through the thin obscurity of a clump of leafless trees. Here and there a farmhouse stood far back among the fields, mute and cold as a grave-stone. The night was so still that they heard the frozen snow crackle under their feet. The crash of a loaded branch falling far off in the woods reverberated like a musket-shot, and once a fox barked, and Mattie shrank closer to Ethan, and quickened her steps.

At length they sighted the group of larches at Ethan's gate, and as they drew near it the sense that the walk was over brought back his words.

"Then you don't want to leave us, Matt?"

He had to stoop his head to catch her stifled whisper: "Where'd I go, if I did?"

The answer sent a pang through him but the tone suffused him with joy. He forgot what else he had meant to say and pressed her against him so closely that he seemed to feel her warmth in his veins.

白的寂寥。有時，他們會走過一堆雲朵下的陰影，或穿越朦朧的禿樹叢。田野遠處，間或有一兩農舍佇立，瘡冷一如墓碑。夜是如此的寂靜，致使他們聽到腳下冰雪迸裂的細微響聲。遠處林子裏，有些樹枝不堪積雪重壓而折斷了，掉下來的響音，像火槍聲般造成迴響。有隻狐狸吠叫了一聲，蜜梯向後縮，靠近伊奮，把腳步加快。

最後，他們見到伊奮家柵門前那排落葉松。知道快要到家，路程將要結束，他又開口了。

「蜜兒，妳是說不想離開我們？」

他要把頭下垂，才聽到蒙在圍巾後的低語：「我要是離開，能上哪兒去？」

她的回答，令到他心內一陣刺痛；但她的語氣，又令他滿是欣喜，他已忘了要說的話，臂膀緊緊繞着她，體內脈管似感受到她傳來的溫暖。

"You ain't crying are you, Matt?"

"No, of course I'm not," she quavered.

They turned in at the gate and passed under the shaded knoll where, enclosed in a low fence, the Frome grave-stones slanted at crazy angles through the snow. Ethan looked at them curiously. For years that quiet company had mocked his restlessness, his desire for change and freedom. "We never got away--how should you?" seemed to be written on every headstone; and whenever he went in or out of his gate he thought with a shiver: "I shall just go on living here till I join them." But now all desire for change had vanished, and the sight of the little enclosure gave him a warm sense of continuance and stability.

"I guess we'll never let you go, Matt," he whispered, as though even the dead, lovers once, must conspire with him to keep her; and brushing by the graves, he thought: "We'll always go on living here together, and some day she'll lie there beside me."

「蜜兒，妳哭啦？」

「不，我怎會？」她顫聲答道。

他們從柵門走進去，經過樹蔭下的圓丘，那裏有道矮矮的圍牆，裏面傅羅方先人的多方墓碑歪歪仄仄從積雪冒出來。伊奮有點好奇地望着它們，多年來，它們靜靜地在他身旁，嘲笑他的躁動和他渴求改變，追尋自由的願望。「我們從沒離去——你又怎會？」每塊墓碑上似乎都寫上這句。每次他經過那柵門，就想到：「我會在這裏住到死為止，然後和他們作伴。」閃過這想法之同時，亦帶來一絲顫抖。但現在所有冀求改變的欲望經已消散，見到那一小圈圍起來的丘地，內裏蘊含的延綿、安穩意味，心中泛起了暖意。

「蜜兒，我們怎會讓妳走？永遠不會。」他低聲說道，就似乎一度相愛的逝者，一定會暗中為他撐腰，要她留下。走過墳墓時，他又想：「我們會一起在這兒生活下去；有一天，她會躺在我的身旁。」

He let the vision possess him as they climbed the hill to the house. He was never so happy with her as when he abandoned himself to these dreams. Half-way up the slope Mattie stumbled against some unseen obstruction and clutched his sleeve to steady herself. The wave of warmth that went through him was like the prolongation of his vision. For the first time he stole his arm about her, and she did not resist. They walked on as if they were floating on a summer stream.

Zeena always went to bed as soon as she had had her supper, and the shutterless windows of the house were dark. A dead cucumber-vine dangled from the porch like the crape streamer tied to the door for a death, and the thought flashed through Ethan's brain: "If it was there for Zeena--" Then he had a distinct sight of his wife lying in their bedroom asleep, her mouth slightly open, her false teeth in a tumbler by the bed...

They walked around to the back of the house, between the rigid gooseberry bushes. It was Zeena's habit, when they came back late from the village, to leave the key of the kitchen door under the mat. Ethan

走上山崗，朝着家門進發，他一直讓這景象盤踞腦袋。和她一起的時刻固然好，但仍比不上這些狂想，能令他那麼快樂。在山崗的半途，蜜娣給什麼東西絆了一下，急忙抓住他的衣袖才沒摔倒。他覺得一陣熱流貫注全身，就像剛才幻想景象的延續。他第一次悄悄伸手用臂攬着她，她也沒抗拒。兩人一直繼續前行，就像浮游在夏日的溪流上。

倩娜通常晚餐後就上床，沒裝百頁的窗子顯得漆黑一片。有條枯乾的黃瓜藤在門廊垂吊下來，就像喪家在門上懸掛的黑色帶子。伊奮倏地閃過一個想法：「如那是為了倩娜掛的——」接着他就憶起他妻子在房間床上睡着的清晰影像，口微微張開，假牙擱在床邊的一個闊口杯裏...

他們走到屋後，硬挺挺的醋栗矮樹叢中間，就是廚房的門口。要是他們從村子回來晚了，倩娜通常會把廚房鑰匙放在門墊下。伊奮站在門前，腦子

stood before the door, his head heavy with dreams, his arm still about Mattie. "Matt--" he began, not knowing what he meant to say.

She slipped out of his hold without speaking, and he stooped down and felt for the key.

"It's not there!" he said, straightening himself with a start.

They strained their eyes at each other through the icy darkness. Such a thing had never happened before.

"Maybe she's forgotten it," Mattie said in a tremulous whisper; but both of them knew that it was not like Zeena to forget.

"It might have fallen off into the snow," Mattie continued, after a pause during which they had stood intently listening.

"It must have been pushed off, then," he rejoined in the same tone. Another wild thought tore through him. What if tramps had been there--what if...

裏亂糟糟滿載着夢想，手臂仍攬着蜜娣的肩膀。「蜜兒——」他開口，卻不知道要說什麼。

她從他臂彎中輕輕脫身出來，沒有說話。他彎身去摸索那條鑰匙。

「沒在這兒啊！」他伸直身體，吃驚地道。

在冰封的黑暗中，他倆努力地看着對方的臉。這種事從未發生過。

「也許她忘了。」蜜娣的低語帶着顫抖；不過他們都知道倩娜是不會忘記的。

他們不作聲，站在那裏傾耳聆聽。
「可能跌進雪堆裏。」蜜娣再度開口。

「那一定給埋到哪兒去了。」他以同樣的語調接着說。另一個荒誕想法升起，在腦袋裏「轟」了一下，可能流浪漢闖進來，可能...

Again he listened, fancying he heard a distant sound in the house; then he felt in his pocket for a match, and kneeling down, passed its light slowly over the rough edges of snow about the doorstep.

He was still kneeling when his eyes, on a level with the lower panel of the door, caught a faint ray beneath it. Who could be stirring in that silent house? He heard a step on the stairs, and again for an instant the thought of tramps tore through him. Then the door opened and he saw his wife.

Against the dark background of the kitchen she stood up tall and angular, one hand drawing a quilted counterpane to her flat breast, while the other held a lamp. The light, on a level with her chin, drew out of the darkness her puckered throat and the projecting wrist of the hand that clutched the quilt, and deepened fantastically the hollows and prominences of her high-boned face under its ring of crimping-pins. To Ethan, still in the rosy haze of his hour with Mattie, the sight came with the intense precision of the last dream before waking. He felt as if he had never before known what his wife looked like.

他再次聆聽，似乎屋子內遠遠傳來聲音。他從口袋裏摸到一枝火柴，跪下來，把它擦着，湊近門階旁，仔細照看那些尖突的雪塊。

他仍是跪着的姿勢，眼睛剛好跟大門底板停在同一水平，看到下面透出一道微光。誰會在寂靜的屋子裏走動？他聽到樓梯有腳步聲，有一刻，流浪漢闖入的想法又在腦袋裏「轟」的一下閃過。然後，門開了，他見到他妻子站在那裏。

映襯着背後黑暗的廚房，她看上去身裁高大、棱角處處。她一隻手拿着塊棉芯床罩掩在平坦的胸上，另一隻手提着燈。燈光正好投在她下巴的位置，黑暗中照出她皮膚皺摺的喉嚨、緊抓床罩而凸起的腕骨；在一排排捲髮夾下，她高高顴骨造成的高低陰影太也分明，怪異得很。伊奮仍停留在與蜜娣相處的快樂迷霧裏，她這副模樣，太嚇人了，恰似一個叫人忽然驚醒的惡夢。在這刻，他覺得以前似乎從不知道他妻子的長相。

She drew aside without speaking, and Mattie and Ethan passed into the kitchen, which had the deadly chill of a vault after the dry cold of the night.

"Guess you forgot about us, Zeena," Ethan joked, stamping the snow from his boots.

"No. I just felt so mean I couldn't sleep."

Mattie came forward, unwinding her wraps, the colour of the cherry scarf in her fresh lips and cheeks. "I'm so sorry, Zeena! Isn't there anything I can do?"

"No; there's nothing." Zeena turned away from her. "You might 'a' shook off that snow outside," she said to her husband.

She walked out of the kitchen ahead of them and pausing in the hall raised the lamp at arm's-length, as if to light them up the stairs.

Ethan paused also, affecting to fumble for the peg on which he hung his coat and cap.

她沒哼聲，身子側向後退，讓蜜娣和伊奮踏進廚房內。經過一個晚上的乾冷，它像座陵墓，瀰漫着徹骨的寒意。

「倩娜，忘記我們啦？」伊奮打趣說，一面大力頓腳，揮去靴子上的雪。

「沒有。我不舒服，睡不着。」

蜜娣步上前，把一層層的頭巾和披肩打開。圍巾的櫻桃紅，也是她年輕的嘴唇和面靨的顏色。「倩娜，真慘！我可幫忙嗎？」

「妳幫不了我。」倩娜從她身邊走開。然後跟她丈夫說：「你幹嗎不在外頭揮雪？」

她走在他們前頭，出了廚房，然後在通道停下來，把燈高高提起，似乎好讓它照着他們上樓。

伊奮也停下腳步，假裝去摸索用來掛大衣和便帽的勾子。樓上梯口的過道

The doors of the two bedrooms faced each other across the narrow upper landing, and to-night it was peculiarly repugnant to him that Mattie should see him follow Zeena.

"I guess I won't come up yet awhile," he said, turning as if to go back to the kitchen.

Zeena stopped short and looked at him.
"For the land's sake--what you going to do down here?"

"I've got the mill accounts to go over."

She continued to stare at him, the flame of the unshaded lamp bringing out with microscopic cruelty the fretful lines of her face.

"At this time o' night? You'll ketch your death. The fire's out long ago."

Without answering he moved away toward the kitchen. As he did so his glance crossed Mattie's and he fancied that a fugitive warning gleamed through her lashes. The next moment they sank to her flushed cheeks and she began to mount the stairs ahead of Zeena.

狹窄得很，兩間睡房的門口相對，今天晚上，他特別不想蜜娣見到他尾隨倩娜進房。

「我等會才上去。」他說，轉身似要回到廚房去。

倩娜突然停住了，望着他。「攪什麼鬼？你在下面幹嘛？」

「我要算算鋸木坊那盤賬。」

她繼續瞪着他。沒罩的燈下，光綫是如許明亮，殘酷地投在她臉上，將顯示疑惑的皺紋照得纖毫畢現。

「在半夜？你一定會凍死！火早就熄了。」

他沒回答，轉到廚房去。在中途，視線跟蜜娣交接，他覺得她睫毛下偷偷投來一個警戒眼神，然後，睫毛在紅撲撲的面龐上垂下。她走在倩娜前面，開始上樓。

"That's so. It is powerful cold down here," Ethan assented; and with lowered head he went up in his wife's wake, and followed her across the threshold of their room.

III

There was some hauling to be done at the lower end of the wood-lot, and Ethan was out early the next day.

The winter morning was as clear as crystal. The sunrise burned red in a pure sky, the shadows on the rim of the wood-lot were darkly blue, and beyond the white and scintillating fields patches of far-off forest hung like smoke.

It was in the early morning stillness, when his muscles were swinging to their familiar task and his lungs expanding with long draughts of mountain air, that Ethan did his clearest thinking. He and Zeena had not exchanged a word after the door of their room had closed on them. She had measured out some drops from a medicine-bottle on a chair by the bed and, after swallowing them, and wrapping her head in a piece of yellow flannel, had lain down with her face turned away. Ethan undressed

「對！這裏凍得厲害。」伊奮表示同意，垂着頭跟在他妻子後面，跨過門檻進房去。

三

第二天，植林低地那邊，有堆木頭要拉，伊奮一早就起來了。

冬日的早晨清澈如水晶，天空澄湛，旭日紅灑灑地映照林邊翳藍的陰影，白花花閃爍着雪光的田野遠處，那些林子似是幾道烟雲。

在清晨一片寧靜之中，伊奮舒展肌肉，從事慣常的勞動，他的肺部上下擴張，深深吸入山中空氣。這是他最能清晰思考的時刻。昨天晚上，房門關上後，他和倩娜再沒交談。床邊的椅子上擱了個藥瓶，她小心擠出幾滴藥水，吞服之後，用塊黃色法蘭絨把頭包起來，在床上把臉轉去另一邊睡下。伊奮趕快脫下衣服，把蠟燭吹熄，不想在她身旁躺下時望見她。他

hurriedly and blew out the light so that he should not see her when he took his place at her side. As he lay there he could hear Mattie moving about in her room, and her candle, sending its small ray across the landing, drew a scarcely perceptible line of light under his door. He kept his eyes fixed on the light till it vanished. Then the room grew perfectly black, and not a sound was audible but Zeena's asthmatic breathing. Ethan felt confusedly that there were many things he ought to think about, but through his tingling veins and tired brain only one sensation throbbed: the warmth of Mattie's shoulder against his. Why had he not kissed her when he held her there? A few hours earlier he would not have asked himself the question. Even a few minutes earlier, when they had stood alone outside the house, he would not have dared to think of kissing her. But since he had seen her lips in the lamplight he felt that they were his.

Now, in the bright morning air, her face was still before him. It was part of the sun's red and of the pure glitter on the snow. How the girl had changed since she had come to Starkfield! He remembered what a colourless slip of a thing she had looked the day he had met her at the station. And all the first winter, how she had shivered with

躺在床上的時候，聽到蜜娣在她房內走動，她點燃的蠟燭從過道那邊透來微光，在他睡房門下形成一道隱隱約約的光綫。他牢牢望着它，直至它消失。然後房間變成漆黑一片，沒一絲聲響，只剩下倩娜帶有哮喘的呼吸聲。伊奮感到很混亂，有太多事需要他好好地去思考，但在身心均是疲累之際，有種單一感覺仍在搏動：就是蜜娣的肩膀挨着他時傳過來的溫暖。就在他攬着她肩膀時，為什麼不吻下去？一兩個小時前，他不會問自己這個問題；就算是幾分鐘前，只有他倆站在屋子前面，他也沒膽量想像去吻她。可是，自從在燈下見到她的櫻唇，他就覺得它是屬於他的。

此刻在明亮的清晨空氣中，她的臉仍在他眼前，是彤紅朝陽和澄明白雪的一部分。跟初抵獨方鎮時相比，她的變化可大了！他記得在車站接她的時候，她的臉兒慘白，是個瘦伶伶的小東西。然後首度飽嚙此地的冬天滋

cold when the northerly gales shook the thin clapboards and the snow beat like hail against the loose-hung windows!

He had been afraid that she would hate the hard life, the cold and loneliness; but not a sign of discontent escaped her. Zeena took the view that Mattie was bound to make the best of Starkfield since she hadn't any other place to go to; but this did not strike Ethan as conclusive. Zeena, at any rate, did not apply the principle in her own case.

He felt all the more sorry for the girl because misfortune had, in a sense, indentured her to them. Mattie Silver was the daughter of a cousin of Zenobia Frome's, who had inflamed his clan with mingled sentiments of envy and admiration by descending from the hills to Connecticut, where he had married a Stamford girl and succeeded to her father's thriving "drug" business. Unhappily Orin Silver, a man of far-reaching aims, had died too soon to prove that the end justifies the means. His accounts revealed merely what the means had been; and these were such that it was fortunate for his wife and daughter that his books were examined only after his impressive funeral. His wife died of

味，北風將單薄的護牆板吹得「劈啪」作響、雪片像冰雹般狠狠打在鬆垮的窗子上。整個冬季，她經常冷得不斷哆嗦！

他原本害怕她會厭惡這等日子，不單艱苦，兼且那麼寒冷、那麼孤清，不過她全沒流露任何不滿的表示。倩娜覺得她已無處可去，只好在獨方鎮這地方盡量使自己活得愜意。可是伊奮不認同，倩娜她自己就不信這一套，總之就沒有身體力行。

他認為蜜娣的身世更值得同情，因為遭逢不幸，才被逼像個女傭般來投靠他們。蜜娣·思花是倩內比·傅羅方一個表兄的女兒。他的際遇令族人議論紛紛，既羨慕、又妒忌。他從山區下來，在康涅狄格州認識了一個來自士淡福的女孩，承繼了她父親蓬勃的成藥業務。可是很不幸，擁有遠大理想的奧連·思花死得太早了，未能以成績證明經營得法。他遺下的賬簿，顯示他運用了哪些經營方法；幸好在他風光下葬後，這本帳簿才掀開，讓家人翻閱。他妻子一見之下，很快就一命歸西，剩下蜜娣一個。她那時二

the disclosure, and Mattie, at twenty, was left alone to make her way on the fifty dollars obtained from the sale of her piano. For this purpose her equipment, though varied, was inadequate. She could trim a hat, make molasses candy, recite "Curfew shall not ring to-night," and play "The Lost Chord" and a pot-pourri from "Carmen." When she tried to extend the field of her activities in the direction of stenography and book-keeping her health broke down, and six months on her feet behind the counter of a department store did not tend to restore it. Her nearest relations had been induced to place their savings in her father's hands, and though, after his death, they ungrudgingly acquitted themselves of the Christian duty of returning good for evil by giving his daughter all the advice at their disposal, they could hardly be expected to supplement it by material aid. But when Zenobia's doctor recommended her looking about for someone to help her with the house-work the clan instantly saw the chance of exacting a compensation from Mattie. Zenobia, though doubtful of the girl's efficiency, was tempted by the freedom to find fault without much risk of losing her; and so Mattie came to Starkfield.

十歲，把自己的鋼琴賣了，得到五十元，以後的生活就靠它維持。她懂得不少零零碎碎的東西，卻都不是足以謀生的本事。她能拾掇帽子、做蜜漿糖果、背誦索普的詩《戒嚴鐘聲不能響起》、演奏沙利文的歌曲《失落的和弦》與及歌劇《卡門》裏幾首曲子。她想去學速記和簿記，意圖擴闊自己的本事，但就病倒了。接着有六個月站在百貨公司櫃台後面，也未能使她恢復健康。她的近親早前聽了她父親的話，將積蓄交給他投資，在他去世之後，亦沒有微言，盡了基督徒以德報怨的本分，就他們所知，盡量給他女兒出主意，所以也不能指望他們再有任何物質幫助了。不過，當族人聽到倩內比的醫生建議她找個人幫忙做家務，他們就馬上想到蜜娣，這差事如落到她身上，也可消消他們的怨氣。倩內比雖然不知道她合不合適做這份工作，但想到她可任由自己挑剔，也不會辭工不幹，也就成事了。蜜娣就是在這情況下來到獨方鎮的。

Zenobia's fault-finding was of the silent kind, but not the less penetrating for that. During the first months Ethan alternately burned with the desire to see Mattie defy her and trembled with fear of the result. Then the situation grew less strained. The pure air, and the long summer hours in the open, gave back life and elasticity to Mattie, and Zeena, with more leisure to devote to her complex ailments, grew less watchful of the girl's omissions; so that Ethan, struggling on under the burden of his barren farm and failing saw-mill, could at least imagine that peace reigned in his house.

There was really, even now, no tangible evidence to the contrary; but since the previous night a vague dread had hung on his sky-line. It was formed of Zeena's obstinate silence, of Mattie's sudden look of warning, of the memory of just such fleeting imperceptible signs as those which told him, on certain stainless mornings, that before night there would be rain.

His dread was so strong that, man-like, he sought to postpone certainty. The hauling was not over till mid-day, and as the lumber was to be delivered to Andrew Hale, the Starkfield builder, it was really easier for

倩內比找蜜娣的碴，並非大聲嚷嚷那種，但也不因此而欠缺穿透力度。頭幾個月，伊奮上一刻心中火燒，渴望見到蜜娣跟她對抗，下一刻又不禁心下慌張，害怕對抗帶來的後果。然後，緊張的氣氛開始有所緩和。純淨的空氣，加上夏季長時間留在戶外，使蜜娣回復生氣，情緒不再那麼繃緊；而倩娜呢，多了時間去關注個人複雜的病癥，就不再虎視眈眈，去找女孩的錯處。伊奮在他貧瘠的農莊和快倒閉的鋸木坊辛苦幹活時，可至少想像家中是一片寧靜。

說真的，直至現在，沒有什麼實質證據說他家不平靜；不過自從前晚開始，有股隱隱的恐懼懸在他的天空綫上。倩娜一直堅持沉默不語、蜜娣突然變得警戒的神色，加上他剛省起早晨晴空上那些一閃而逝、不大明顯的現象，就是素來黃昏會下雨的徵兆，這些都叫他恐懼。

他的恐懼是那麼深，但作為男子漢，就應去抵住要來的東西。他拉木頭要拉至中午；接着送去位於獨方鎮的建築商安德魯·希爾處。伊奮叫他的雇

Ethan to send Jotham Powell, the hired man, back to the farm on foot, and drive the load down to the village himself. He had scrambled up on the logs, and was sitting astride of them, close over his shaggy grays, when, coming between him and their streaming necks, he had a vision of the warning look that Mattie had given him the night before.

"If there's going to be any trouble I want to be there," was his vague reflection, as he threw to Jotham the unexpected order to unhitch the team and lead them back to the barn.

It was a slow trudge home through the heavy fields, and when the two men entered the kitchen Mattie was lifting the coffee from the stove and Zeena was already at the table. Her husband stopped short at sight of her. Instead of her usual calico wrapper and knitted shawl she wore her best dress of brown merino, and above her thin strands of hair, which still preserved the tight undulations of the crimping-pins, rose a hard perpendicular bonnet, as to which Ethan's clearest notion was that he had to pay five dollars for it at the Bettsbridge Emporium. On the floor beside her stood his old valise and a bandbox wrapped in newspapers.

工約坦·保華走路回農莊，自己則運木頭去村子，本來這確是較便利的安排。他已爬上那堆木頭，跨坐上面，和他兩隻披着亂糟糟鬃毛的灰馬距離很近，在那一刻，望着面前淌着汗的馬頸，想起昨晚蜜娣投過來的警戒眼神。

「如有什麼麻煩，我應在場。」他茫茫然地想。然後，大出那雇工的意外，伊奮忽然叫他解開馬兒，帶牠們回穀倉去。

回家那段路程非常費力，他倆一步接一步穿過積雪的田野，走得很慢。當兩個男人從廚房入屋時，蜜娣正從爐子上提咖啡壺，倩娜則已坐到桌旁。她丈夫望見她的模樣，不禁陡地停下了腳步。她的家常服是厚棉袍和勾織披肩，今日卻換上她最好的外出衣服：啡色細羊毛裙子，給髮夾壓成齊整波浪紋的薄頭髮上，戴的是那頂硬梆梆繫帶的直角形帽子；伊奮記得最清楚，那是在畢士橋的百貨公司買的，他被逼花費了整整五塊錢。在她

"Why, where are you going, Zeena?" he exclaimed.

"I've got my shooting pains so bad that I'm going over to Bettsbridge to spend the night with Aunt Martha Pierce and see that new doctor," she answered in a matter-of-fact tone, as if she had said she was going into the store-room to take a look at the preserves, or up to the attic to go over the blankets.

In spite of her sedentary habits such abrupt decisions were not without precedent in Zeena's history. Twice or thrice before she had suddenly packed Ethan's valise and started off to Bettsbridge, or even Springfield, to seek the advice of some new doctor, and her husband had grown to dread these expeditions because of their cost. Zeena always came back laden with expensive remedies, and her last visit to Springfield had been commemorated by her paying twenty dollars for an electric battery of which she had never been able to learn the use. But for the moment his sense of relief was so great as to preclude all other

身旁地板上，是他的舊行李篋，和一個用報紙包起來的硬盒子。

「怎麼了，倩娜？妳上哪兒去？」他脫口叫道。

「刺痛越來越厲害，我要上畢士橋去，在瑪花·皮雅斯孀娘處歇一晚，看那個新來的醫生。」她淡淡道來，就像說要去儲物室看看泡菜，或上閣樓翻翻毯子，那類平常不過的事。

雖則她不愛動，但在過往日子裏，這類猝然決定也不是沒有先例的。之前有兩三次，她忽然執拾衣物，裝在伊奮的舊行李篋內，啓程到畢士橋去。有次更遠至春田，去光顧那裏一個新醫生。她丈夫一聽見這類探險式旅程，就心下恐慌，不知又會花多少醫藥費。倩娜常常帶回來大量昂貴的藥方，最後上春田那次是難忘的「經典」之作，她用廿塊買了個有電池的裝置，但從沒學懂怎樣使用。不過此刻，他只是有種如釋重負之感，其他的感受也就渾然不覺了。他現在毫不

feelings. He had now no doubt that Zeena had spoken the truth in saying, the night before, that she had sat up because she felt "too mean" to sleep: her abrupt resolve to seek medical advice showed that, as usual, she was wholly absorbed in her health.

As if expecting a protest, she continued plaintively; "If you're too busy with the hauling I presume you can let Jotham Powell drive me over with the sorrel in time to catch the train at the Flats."

Her husband hardly heard what she was saying. During the winter months there was no stage between Starkfield and Bettsbridge, and the trains which stopped at Corbury Flats were slow and infrequent. A rapid calculation showed Ethan that Zeena could not be back at the farm before the following evening....

"If I'd supposed you'd 'a' made any objection to Jotham Powell's driving me over--" she began again, as though his silence had implied refusal. On the brink of departure she was always seized with a flux of words. "All I know is," she continued, "I can't go on the way I am much longer. The pains are clear away down to my ankles now, or I'd 'a' walked in to Starkfield on my own feet,

懷疑早一晚她說的是真話，睡不着是由於不舒服；她忽然決定去看醫生，就如平日一樣，一心只關注到個人的健康問題。

她以為他會提出反對，聲調悽悽戚戚地往下說：「如你仍未拉完木頭，趕不及，可叫約坦·保華駕那匹紅馬載我去平原坐火車。」

她的丈夫根本沒聽清她在說什麼。冬季那幾個月，獨方鎮與畢士橋之間，沒有驛馬車行走，在歌巴利平原停站的火車，並不定時來到，且走得很慢。他快速計算一下，明晚之前，倩娜不可能回到農莊...

「你不是不想約坦·保華駕我去平原那頭吧——」她再度開口，以為他的沉默意味着反對。每次要離家上哪兒去，她就忽然有一大堆話要說。「我只知再也捱不下去了。現在刺痛明顯去到腳踝；不如我行路到獨方鎮去，不用麻煩你，而且可更快去到。我會問米高·依弟可不可以坐趟便車到平

sooner'n put you out, and asked Michael Eady to let me ride over on his wagon to the Flats, when he sends to meet the train that brings his groceries. I'd 'a' had two hours to wait in the station, but I'd sooner 'a' done it, even with this cold, than to have you say--"

"Of course Jotham'll drive you over," Ethan roused himself to answer. He became suddenly conscious that he was looking at Mattie while Zeena talked to him, and with an effort he turned his eyes to his wife. She sat opposite the window, and the pale light reflected from the banks of snow made her face look more than usually drawn and bloodless, sharpened the three parallel creases between ear and cheek, and drew querulous lines from her thin nose to the corners of her mouth. Though she was but seven years her husband's senior, and he was only twenty-eight, she was already an old woman.

Ethan tried to say something befitting the occasion, but there was only one thought in his mind: the fact that, for the first time since Mattie had come to live with them, Zeena was to be away for a night. He wondered if the girl were thinking of it too....

原那頭。他的貨車橫豎要到火車站裝載運來的雜貨。但我可要在火車站等上兩個鐘頭，不過我寧願抵着冷行路，也不想聽到你說——」

「當然約坦會駕妳過去。」伊奮回過神來，回答道。他忽地醒覺倩娜跟他說話時，他一直望着蜜娣；現在他費力地叫自己將視線轉向他的妻子。她坐在窗子對面，外間的雪堆反射的微光，照到她臉容上，望過去，神色比平日更憔悴、更慘淡，耳朵和面頰之間的三條平行皺紋，也更分明，而且從削薄的鼻子到嘴角之間，劃出幾條苦紋。雖然她只比丈夫大七歲——他也不過廿八而已，看上去已像個老婦人。

伊奮想在這境況下說句適合的話，但腦袋裏就只想到一件事：自從蜜娣遷來後，倩娜第一次離家外宿。他忖測蜜娣會否跟他一樣，也想到了這一點...

He knew that Zeena must be wondering why he did not offer to drive her to the Flats and let Jotham Powell take the lumber to Starkfield, and at first he could not think of a pretext for not doing so; then he said: "I'd take you over myself, only I've got to collect the cash for the lumber."

As soon as the words were spoken he regretted them, not only because they were untrue--there being no prospect of his receiving cash payment from Hale--but also because he knew from experience the imprudence of letting Zeena think he was in funds on the eve of one of her therapeutic excursions. At the moment, however, his one desire was to avoid the long drive with her behind the ancient sorrel who never went out of a walk.

Zeena made no reply: she did not seem to hear what he had said. She had already pushed her plate aside, and was measuring out a draught from a large bottle at her elbow.

"It ain't done me a speck of good, but I guess I might as well use it up," she remarked; adding, as she pushed the empty bottle toward Mattie: "If you can get the taste out it'll do for pickles."

他知道倩娜一定會奇怪為什麼他不說由他載她到平原去，而改由約坦·保華拉木頭去獨方鎮。他即時想不出藉口，於是說道：「我本可載妳過去的，只是我要收木頭的貨款。」

話一出口，他就後悔，不單是因為是謊話——他不可能從希爾處收到錢——而是從過往經驗中，知道每逢倩娜離家赴診的前夕，如他不夠謹慎，讓倩娜誤以為他手頭寬裕，那就會造成什麼後果。但在此刻，他的唯一願望就是不用和她一起坐在那匹老到只能步行的棗紅馬後面，看着牠挨步走完漫長的旅程。

倩娜沒回答，似乎聽不到他剛才說的話。她已把碟子推開，從肘旁一個大瓶子，倒出一份適量藥水。

「啥用都沒有，不過嘛，我瞧還是把它喝光吧！」她落下這句話，然後把空瓶子一把推向蜜娣，說：「把那股味兒弄走，就可用來裝泡菜了。」

IV

As soon as his wife had driven off Ethan took his coat and cap from the peg. Mattie was washing up the dishes, humming one of the dance tunes of the night before. He said "So long, Matt," and she answered gaily "So long, Ethan"; and that was all.

It was warm and bright in the kitchen. The sun slanted through the south window on the girl's moving figure, on the cat dozing in a chair, and on the geraniums brought in from the door-way, where Ethan had planted them in the summer to "make a garden" for Mattie. He would have liked to linger on, watching her tidy up and then settle down to her sewing; but he wanted still more to get the hauling done and be back at the farm before night.

All the way down to the village he continued to think of his return to Mattie. The kitchen was a poor place, not "spruce" and shining as his mother had kept it in his boyhood; but it was surprising what a homelike look the mere fact of Zeena's absence gave it. And he pictured what it would be like that

四

一等到他妻子坐上雪橇離家，伊奮就從勾子取下大衣和便帽。蜜娣正在洗碟子，嘴裏哼着昨天晚上的一首跳舞曲。他說：「掰！蜜兒！」她也高高興興地回答：「掰！伊奮！」只不過如此。

廚房裏又和暖、又明亮。南面的窗子斜斜投進來的大片陽光，照在女孩移動的身軀上，也照在椅上瞌睡的小貓、與及從門前搬進來的天竺葵上。花是伊奮夏季時候栽下的，目的是給蜜娣造個「花園」。他想繼續留在屋內，看她把一切收拾好，然後坐下來縫紉。但他更想把木頭運送完，那麼傍晚降臨之前，就可回到農莊來。

往村子的路上，他繼續憧憬着傍晚時分回到蜜娣的身邊。廚房很寒儉，失去了小時母親把它弄得整齊光潔的樣子；不過奇怪的是，只要倩娜不在，它就像個家。他在腦子裏想像，晚餐

evening, when he and Mattie were there after supper.

For the first time they would be alone together indoors, and they would sit there, one on each side of the stove, like a married couple, he in his stocking feet and smoking his pipe, she laughing and talking in that funny way she had, which was always as new to him as if he had never heard her before.

The sweetness of the picture, and the relief of knowing that his fears of "trouble" with Zeena were unfounded, sent up his spirits with a rush, and he, who was usually so silent, whistled and sang aloud as he drove through the snowy fields. There was in him a slumbering spark of sociability which the long Starkfield winters had not yet extinguished. By nature grave and inarticulate, he admired recklessness and gaiety in others and was warmed to the marrow by friendly human intercourse. At Worcester, though he had the name of keeping to himself and not being much of a hand at a good time, he had secretly gloried in being clapped on the back and hailed as "Old Ethe" or "Old Stiff"; and the cessation of such familiarities had increased the chill of his return to Starkfield.

後，他和蜜娣獨處，會是怎樣的一個情景。

他們會是首次在戶內單獨相處，兩人各坐火爐旁一邊，就像對夫妻，穿上長襪子、叼着煙斗的他，和笑着、說着傻話的她。她的話可有趣了，聽起來總是透着新鮮。

腦袋泛起這幅甜蜜的圖畫，又知道了倩娜沒有特別用心，釋除了疑慮，他的情緒忽地高漲。平日的他，素來是不言不語的，現在駕着雪橇穿越雪地，竟然吹起口哨，大聲唱着歌來。他不是個喜歡社交的人，但內心深處，仍存有少許湊湊熱鬧的脾性，沒全被獨方鎮冗長的冬季埋滅。他天生嚴肅而寡言，但就很羨慕別人能夠恣意尋歡作樂。人家如友善對待，他會覺得暖意直透入骨髓。在伍斯特那地方，雖然人人都知道他性格內向，不擅於玩樂，但他私底下，卻以被人在背上拍一記，叫聲「老伊」或「硬梆兒」而感到高興。不過回到獨方鎮後，再沒有人用這樣親切的方式稱呼他，使他更感到日子的冷峭。

There the silence had deepened about him year by year. Left alone, after his father's accident, to carry the burden of farm and mill, he had had no time for convivial loiterings in the village; and when his mother fell ill the loneliness of the house grew more oppressive than that of the fields. His mother had been a talker in her day, but after her "trouble" the sound of her voice was seldom heard, though she had not lost the power of speech. Sometimes, in the long winter evenings, when in desperation her son asked her why she didn't "say something," she would lift a finger and answer: "Because I'm listening"; and on stormy nights, when the loud wind was about the house, she would complain, if he spoke to her: "They're talking so out there that I can't hear you."

It was only when she drew toward her last illness, and his cousin Zenobia Pierce came over from the next valley to help him nurse her, that human speech was heard again in the house. After the mortal silence of his long imprisonment Zeena's volubility was music in his ears. He felt that he might have "gone like his mother" if the sound of a new voice had not come to steady him. Zeena seemed to understand his case at a glance.

在那裏，靜默的氛圍一年比一年加深。自從他父親遇上意外，他就獨自挑起打理農莊和鋸木坊的擔子，再沒時間到村子閒逛去。及後，母親也生病了，屋子內的孤單感覺比留在田野上更是難捱。他的母親精神還好時，本是個話匣子，但自從發病後，雖則沒有失去說話的能力，屋子裏再也很少響起她的話語聲。有時候，在冬季漫漫長夜之中，他抵受不住靜默，問她為什麼不說句話，她就豎起一隻手指說：「我在聽呢！」有時在風暴肆虐的晚上，屋外頭風聲怒吼，如他問她為什麼不說話，她就會不滿地說：「他們在外頭說話吵死了！聽不見你的話。」

直至她去世前最後那次病倒，他的表姐倩內比·皮雅斯從另一個山谷來幫忙照顧，屋子內才重新聽到人聲。經過長時間的完全靜默幽禁，倩娜喋喋的語音聽在耳裏，就像美妙音樂。他覺得要不是來了把新的人聲，令他精神安定下來，可能就會跟他母親一樣「落了魂魄」。倩娜似乎一眼就看穿

She laughed at him for not knowing the simplest sick-bed duties and told him to "go right along out" and leave her to see to things. The mere fact of obeying her orders, of feeling free to go about his business again and talk with other men, restored his shaken balance and magnified his sense of what he owed her. Her efficiency shamed and dazzled him. She seemed to possess by instinct all the household wisdom that his long apprenticeship had not instilled in him. When the end came it was she who had to tell him to hitch up and go for the undertaker, and she thought it "funny" that he had not settled beforehand who was to have his mother's clothes and the sewing-machine. After the funeral, when he saw her preparing to go away, he was seized with an unreasoning dread of being left alone on the farm; and before he knew what he was doing he had asked her to stay there with him. He had often thought since that it would not have happened if his mother had died in spring instead of winter...

When they married it was agreed that, as soon as he could straighten out the difficulties resulting from Mrs. Frome's long illness, they would sell the farm and saw-mill and try their luck in a large town. Ethan's

了他。她嘲笑他連最簡單的看護工作也不懂，叫他乾脆幹自己的事去，由她擔起一切。他聽從她的指示，可以重拾自己一貫的工作，跟其他男士閒聊幾句，紊亂的心也就踏實下來。為此，他對她的感激之情，深深增添了不少。她的能幹令他羞愧，也感到迷惑。她似乎天生有持家的本事，而他則是自幼及長，學習多年，仍未諳曉。到臨終那一刻，是她叫他快去套馬、召殯儀師到來辦理後事。她還說奇怪哪！怎沒預先想到母親遺下的衣物和縫紉衣車送給誰。葬禮完結後，他見到她準備離去，忽然想到農莊只剩下他一人，大起無名恐慌，在沒意識自己在幹什麼之前，已開口叫她留下來和他作伴。之後他常常想到：假如母親是在春天而非冬天去世，他就不會開口說出這話...

他們結婚時就說好了，一旦清還了因傅羅方太太久病而欠下的債務，就會把農莊和鋸木坊賣了，搬去大市鎮試試運氣。伊奮雖酷愛大自然，卻不喜歡農耕。他一直想做個工程師，搬到

love of nature did not take the form of a taste for agriculture. He had always wanted to be an engineer, and to live in towns, where there were lectures and big libraries and "fellows doing things." A slight engineering job in Florida, put in his way during his period of study at Worcester, increased his faith in his ability as well as his eagerness to see the world; and he felt sure that, with a "smart" wife like Zeena, it would not be long before he had made himself a place in it.

Zeena's native village was slightly larger and nearer to the railway than Starkfield, and she had let her husband see from the first that life on an isolated farm was not what she had expected when she married. But purchasers were slow in coming, and while he waited for them Ethan learned the impossibility of transplanting her. She chose to look down on Starkfield, but she could not have lived in a place which looked down on her. Even Bettsbridge or Shadd's Falls would not have been sufficiently aware of her, and in the greater cities which attracted Ethan she would have suffered a complete loss of identity. And within a year of their marriage she developed the "sickliness" which had since made her notable even in a community rich in pathological instances.

城市去住，聽演講、到大圖書館去，見識有能為的人做事。他在伍斯德讀書的時候，找到一份佛羅里達州初級工程師的工作，使他對自己的本事加強了信心，也使他更想去看看這個世界。他很肯定，加上一個如倩娜般「能幹」的妻子，不用多久，他就會出人頭地。

倩娜原本居住的村子，比獨方鎮大一點，也更近火車站。她一早就讓丈夫知道，婚後並不準備在一座孤零零的農莊上過日子。但有興趣的買家不多，一直等待的時候，伊奮發覺其實要她搬到別處去，是不可能的事。她覺得她可以瞧不起獨方鎮，不過如搬到瞧不起她的地方居住，她又不願意。就算是畢士橋或沙特瀑布鎮，她也不會惹人注目，更不用說那些吸引伊奮的大市鎮；在那裏她只會默默無聞。婚後一年，她已變得病懨懨的，就算在這條擁有眾多病例的村子中，她亦成了個著名的病號。當初她來照顧伊奮的母親，在伊奮眼中，她像個保健天才，不過很快之後，他就發覺

When she came to take care of his mother she had seemed to Ethan like the very genius of health, but he soon saw that her skill as a nurse had been acquired by the absorbed observation of her own symptoms.

Then she too fell silent. Perhaps it was the inevitable effect of life on the farm, or perhaps, as she sometimes said, it was because Ethan "never listened." The charge was not wholly unfounded. When she spoke it was only to complain, and to complain of things not in his power to remedy; and to check a tendency to impatient retort he had first formed the habit of not answering her, and finally of thinking of other things while she talked. Of late, however, since he had reasons for observing her more closely, her silence had begun to trouble him. He recalled his mother's growing taciturnity, and wondered if Zeena were also turning "queer." Women did, he knew. Zeena, who had at her fingers' ends the pathological chart of the whole region, had cited many cases of the kind while she was nursing his mother; and he himself knew of certain lonely farm-houses in the neighbourhood where stricken creatures pined, and of others where sudden tragedy had come of their presence. At times, looking at Zeena's shut face, he felt the chill of such

她的看護技巧，原來都是來自個人病癥的深入觀察。

然後，她也沉默下來了，也許是所有在這農莊過活的人，都會變成這樣子；又也許如她間中所指稱，伊奮「從不聽她說話」。這項指控並非毫無根據，要是她開口了，就會是抱怨，而她所抱怨的事，都不是他可改過來的。最初為了避免自己不耐煩地頂撞她，他慣了不回答；其後，更變成她一說話，他就去想其他東西。近來，因為有需要就近觀察她，發覺了她的緘默有異，而開始有點擔心。他想起母親當日一天比一天少話，心下忐忑，不知倩娜是否也「有問題」了。他知道女人家就是這樣。倩娜對於整個地區的病例清楚不過，誰有病都瞭如指掌。在照顧他的母親時，就舉出不少同類病例。他也知道這一帶的孤零零農莊裏，有些病人抵受着疾病的折磨，一天差似一天捱下去，有些則悽慘地猝然離世。有些時候，看着倩娜木然的臉容，這類預感閃上心

forebodings. At other times her silence seemed deliberately assumed to conceal far-reaching intentions, mysterious conclusions drawn from suspicions and resentments impossible to guess. That supposition was even more disturbing than the other; and it was the one which had come to him the night before, when he had seen her standing in the kitchen door.

Now her departure for Bettsbridge had once more eased his mind, and all his thoughts were on the prospect of his evening with Mattie. Only one thing weighed on him, and that was his having told Zeena that he was to receive cash for the lumber. He foresaw so clearly the consequences of this imprudence that with considerable reluctance he decided to ask Andrew Hale for a small advance on his load.

When Ethan drove into Hale's yard the builder was just getting out of his sleigh.

"Hello, Ethe!" he said. "This comes handy."

Andrew Hale was a ruddy man with a big gray moustache and a stubbly

頭，令他為之惕凜。但另一些時候，她的緘默不語，又似是有些隱晦意圖，或是有些沒來由的懷疑、莫名的怨恨，而得出某些奇怪結論，然後想故意收藏起來。她這類私底下的臆測令他更為擔憂，昨晚見到她站在廚房門口的樣子，心裏就泛起了不安。

現在她離家上畢士橋去了，他懸起的一顆心又放下來，所有的心思都轉去將會跟蜜娣單獨共處的晚上。他只擔心一件事，就是曾對倩娜說會收到木頭的貨款。他可清楚預見一時不慎會造成的後果，所以雖則很不願意，也決定了要跟安德魯·希爾說提早收一點錢。

伊奮剛去到希爾的院子，就見到他從雪橇上下來。

「伊奮，你好！來得正合時。」他說。

安德魯·希爾這個建築商面色紅潤，唇上長有濃密的灰鬍子，滿是鬚根的

double-chin unconstrained by a collar; but his scrupulously clean shirt was always fastened by a small diamond stud. This display of opulence was misleading, for though he did a fairly good business it was known that his easygoing habits and the demands of his large family frequently kept him what Starkfield called "behind." He was an old friend of Ethan's family, and his house one of the few to which Zeena occasionally went, drawn there by the fact that Mrs. Hale, in her youth, had done more "doctoring" than any other woman in Starkfield, and was still a recognised authority on symptoms and treatment.

Hale went up to the grays and patted their sweating flanks.

"Well, sir," he said, "you keep them two as if they was pets."

Ethan set about unloading the logs and when he had finished his job he pushed open the glazed door of the shed which the builder used as his office. Hale sat with his feet up on the stove, his back propped against a battered desk strewn with papers: the place, like the man, was warm, genial and untidy.

雙下巴堆在衣領外，扣子也扣不上；不過，他盡力保持乾淨的恤衫上常插着一顆小鑽石領扣。這炫富表現其實誤導了人們，雖然他的生意還不錯，但他向來手頭疏爽，兼且家累很大，獨方鎮村民都說他經常入不敷支。他是伊奮家的多年朋友，是倩娜偶往探訪的少數人家之一；原因是希爾太太年輕時，在獨方鎮所有婦女當中，看醫生看得最是頻密，到現在仍是斷症、提供療法的權威人物。

希爾走到灰馬身邊，輕拍牠們冒汗的側軀。

「先生！你可真把牠們當作寵物養呀！」他說。

伊奮把木頭逐一卸下，完成後，推開棚子的嵌玻璃木門，走進希爾的辦公室。希爾坐在火爐前面，一雙腿高高擱起，背靠在一張亂糟糟擺放着文件的破桌子。這房間恰如其人，透着一股溫暖、友善、不怎整潔的味道。

"Sit right down and thaw out," he greeted Ethan.

The latter did not know how to begin, but at length he managed to bring out his request for an advance of fifty dollars. The blood rushed to his thin skin under the sting of Hale's astonishment. It was the builder's custom to pay at the end of three months, and there was no precedent between the two men for a cash settlement.

Ethan felt that if he had pleaded an urgent need Hale might have made shift to pay him; but pride, and an instinctive prudence, kept him from resorting to this argument. After his father's death it had taken time to get his head above water, and he did not want Andrew Hale, or anyone else in Starkfield, to think he was going under again. Besides, he hated lying; if he wanted the money he wanted it, and it was nobody's business to ask why. He therefore made his demand with the awkwardness of a proud man who will not admit to himself that he is stooping; and he was not much surprised at Hale's refusal.

The builder refused genially, as he did everything else: he treated the matter as

「坐下來暖和暖和！」他招呼伊奮道。

伊奮不知如何開口，最後終於說出來，希望他先付五十元貨款。見到希爾驚詫的反應，他登時覺得不好意思，血一下子衝上他薄薄的皮膚。希爾通常每三個月清付貨款一次，現金交收可說是從無先例。

伊奮知道如真急於用錢，向希爾提出要求幫忙，他或可從哪裏先挪些錢來墊付；但傲氣加上天生的謹慎，使他不願用這方法。他父親去世後，好一段時間才脫離經濟窘境，他不想安德魯·希爾或任何獨方鎮居民以為他又陷於財困。此外，他不喜歡說謊，他要錢用，就要了，不需向其他人交代原因。所以他就像世間那等驕傲、不肯放下身段的男子，神情不自然地提出要求，於是也就無怪乎希爾拒絕了。

那建築商「拒絕」的方式倒是笑嘻嘻的，就如平日的一貫作風。他把整件

something in the nature of a practical joke, and wanted to know if Ethan meditated buying a grand piano or adding a "cupolo" to his house; offering, in the latter case, to give his services free of cost.

Ethan's arts were soon exhausted, and after an embarrassed pause he wished Hale good day and opened the door of the office. As he passed out the builder suddenly called after him: "See here--you ain't in a tight place, are you?"

"Not a bit," Ethan's pride retorted before his reason had time to intervene.

"Well, that's good! Because I am, a shade. Fact is, I was going to ask you to give me a little extra time on that payment. Business is pretty slack, to begin with, and then I'm fixing up a little house for Ned and Ruth when they're married. I'm glad to do it for 'em, but it costs." His look appealed to Ethan for sympathy. "The young people like things nice. You know how it is yourself: it's not so long ago since you fixed up your own place for Zeena."

Ethan left the grays in Hale's stable and went about some other business in the

事當作一個玩笑，問伊奮是否正考慮買個大鋼琴，或為屋子加個圓拱型頂閣子；要是後者，他可免費為他造一個。

伊奮再沒其他伎倆可使，尷尬地不回答，然後說聲「再見」就開門出去。建築商在他後頭忽然喊道：

「喂！是不是手頭緊啦？」

「才不哩！」伊奮的傲氣使他馬上頂回去，想也沒多想。

「那就好了，因為我有點周轉不來。我正想問你，下次付款的時間，可不可以寬限幾天。首先，近來生意不大好，然後又要為尼德和露芙建間小房子，讓他們婚後住。能為他們盡點力，我很樂意，可是花費不少。」他望向伊奮，神情是希望得到他的諒解。「年輕人都圖個漂漂亮亮。你也一樣，你家為倩娜佈置一新，還不是很久之前的事哩！」

伊奮把灰馬留在希爾的馬廄裏，到村子裏辦點事。他步行離開的時候，那

village. As he walked away the builder's last phrase lingered in his ears, and he reflected grimly that his seven years with Zeena seemed to Starkfield "not so long."

The afternoon was drawing to an end, and here and there a lighted pane spangled the cold gray dusk and made the snow look whiter. The bitter weather had driven every one indoors and Ethan had the long rural street to himself. Suddenly he heard the brisk play of sleigh-bells and a cutter passed him, drawn by a free-going horse. Ethan recognised Michael Eady's roan colt, and young Denis Eady, in a handsome new fur cap, leaned forward and waved a greeting. "Hello, Ethe!" he shouted and spun on.

The cutter was going in the direction of the Frome farm, and Ethan's heart contracted as he listened to the dwindling bells. What more likely than that Denis Eady had heard of Zeena's departure for Bettsbridge, and was profiting by the opportunity to spend an hour with Mattie? Ethan was ashamed of the storm of jealousy in his breast. It seemed unworthy of the girl that his thoughts of her should be so violent.

建造商最後的一句話仍留在耳邊。他慘然想到與倩娜結縈的七年歲月，對獨方鎮村民來說，「還不是很久之前的事」！

下午快過去了，玻璃窗子東一處、西一處已有燈光亮起，在昏暗的寒冷薄暮中閃爍，使積雪顯得更白。苦寒的天氣把居民都驅回家去，整條村鎮大路只剩下伊奮一人。忽然路上傳來雪橇的急促鈴聲，一座小雪橇滑過他身邊，拉雪橇的是匹奔放的馬兒，他認得是米高·伊弟家的雜色小馬；駕雪橇的正是丹尼斯·伊弟。他頭上戴了頂新的毛皮便帽，向前探身跟他揮手招呼，喊道：「伊奮！你好！」然後就溜走了。

雪橇朝着傅羅方農莊遠去，伊奮聽着漸逝的鈴聲，心下一凜。丹尼斯·伊弟一定風聞倩娜上畢士橋去了，藉此良機去找蜜娣，在她身邊耽上個把小時，多好呀！伊奮為心中的嫉妒而羞愧起來，自己大大萌發醋意，是否對這個女孩兒不公道？

He walked on to the church corner and entered the shade of the Varnum spruces, where he had stood with her the night before. As he passed into their gloom he saw an indistinct outline just ahead of him. At his approach it melted for an instant into two separate shapes and then conjoined again, and he heard a kiss, and a half-laughing "Oh!" provoked by the discovery of his presence. Again the outline hastily disunited and the Varnum gate slammed on one half while the other hurried on ahead of him. Ethan smiled at the discomfiture he had caused. What did it matter to Ned Hale and Ruth Varnum if they were caught kissing each other? Everybody in Starkfield knew they were engaged. It pleased Ethan to have surprised a pair of lovers on the spot where he and Mattie had stood with such a thirst for each other in their hearts; but he felt a pang at the thought that these two need not hide their happiness.

He fetched the grays from Hale's stable and started on his long climb back to the farm. The cold was less sharp than earlier in the day and a thick fleecy sky threatened snow for the morrow. Here and there a star pricked through, showing behind it a deep well of blue. In an hour or two the moon would push over the ridge behind the farm,

他繼續前行，走過教堂的角落，來到華南家雲杉的樹蔭下。昨天晚上，他和她就站在那兒。他剛走到樹蔭下，就望見前面一團朦朧的人影。走近一點，見到人影首先融化為二，很快又合而為一，然後聽到接吻的聲音。繼而兩人察覺到他的身影，笑着叫出來：「噢！」兩人再度迅速分開，華南家的半邊柵門「砰」聲關上，另一人匆匆往前方走了。伊奮為他造成的狼狽情況微笑起來。尼特·希爾和露芙·華南被人撞見在親吻，又有什麼打緊？在獨方鎮，人人都知道他倆訂了婚。伊奮一方面感到好笑，昨夜他跟蜜娣站在那裏，心中盡是想着對方，現在一對戀人反被他嚇跑；另一方面卻又感到一陣刺痛，因為這雙戀人並不需要把快樂收藏起來。

他從希爾的馬廄把灰馬牽出，踏上回農莊的斜坡長路。寒氣已沒有晨早那麼刺骨，絨毛厚雲覆蓋的天空是預警，明天應會下雪。稀疏的幾顆星星透過雲層一閃一閃，顯示出背後的一泓深藍。一兩小時後，月亮會從農莊後的山脊升起來，把雲層燒出一道金

burn a gold-edged rent in the clouds, and then be swallowed by them. A mournful peace hung on the fields, as though they felt the relaxing grasp of the cold and stretched themselves in their long winter sleep.

Ethan's ears were alert for the jingle of sleigh-bells, but not a sound broke the silence of the lonely road. As he drew near the farm he saw, through the thin screen of larches at the gate, a light twinkling in the house above him. "She's up in her room," he said to himself, "fixing herself up for supper"; and he remembered Zeena's sarcastic stare when Mattie, on the evening of her arrival, had come down to supper with smoothed hair and a ribbon at her neck.

He passed by the graves on the knoll and turned his head to glance at one of the older headstones, which had interested him deeply as a boy because it bore his name.

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF

ETHAN FROME AND ENDURANCE HIS WIFE,

WHO DWELLED TOGETHER IN PEACE

邊口子，然後被吞噬其中。田野間瀰漫着一片靜穆，又帶有哀傷，土地似乎覺得嚴寒暫斂了，可在漫長的冬眠中向四方舒展。

伊奮傾耳去聽雪橇的鈴聲，但那條冷清的路上只是一片寂靜。趨近農莊的時候，他透過柵門前一排稀疏的落葉松，看見上面屋子內有閃爍的燈光。「她在上面的房間，」他跟自己說，「為晚餐打扮整齊。」他記起蜜娣來到他們家的首個晚上，下樓進晚餐時，髮絲梳得平平滑滑，還在頸項束了條絲帶，倩娜瞪着她望，一副不屑的樣子。

經過圓丘時，他扭頭望向那裏的墳墓，尋覓其中一塊較舊的豎立墓碑。他小時對它深感興趣，因為上面的名字跟他一樣。

懷念伊奮·傅羅方先生

及

安度蘭絲·傅羅方夫人

共享五十年寧靜歲月

FOR FIFTY YEARS.

He used to think that fifty years sounded like a long time to live together, but now it seemed to him that they might pass in a flash. Then, with a sudden dart of irony, he wondered if, when their turn came, the same epitaph would be written over him and Zeena.

He opened the barn-door and craned his head into the obscurity, half-fearing to discover Denis Eady's roan colt in the stall beside the sorrel. But the old horse was there alone, mumbing his crib with toothless jaws, and Ethan whistled cheerfully while he bedded down the grays and shook an extra measure of oats into their mangers. His was not a tuneful throat--but harsh melodies burst from it as he locked the barn and sprang up the hill to the house. He reached the kitchen-porch and turned the door-handle; but the door did not yield to his touch.

Startled at finding it locked he rattled the handle violently; then he reflected that Mattie was alone and that it was natural she should barricade herself at nightfall. He

從前他總覺得共處五十年是好悠長的時間，但現在似乎只是一瞬即逝。忽然間他想到多諷刺啊！輪到他和倩娜離世的時候，不知墓碑上會不會刻上相同的墓誌銘。

他打開穀倉的門，伸頸去望昏暗的內間，心下忐忑不安，怕見到丹尼斯·伊弟的雜毛小馬站在棗紅馬旁邊。但那匹老馬只是孤單地站在馬廄內，用甩掉牙的上下顎齧咬飼槽。伊奮給灰馬鋪好睡覺的禾草，一面開心地吹起口哨來，並在馬槽裏放下雙份的燕麥。他不擅長吹口哨，不過在他鎖上穀倉、急步走向山丘上的屋子時，荒腔走板的曲調在他的喉嚨迸發。他來到廚房的門廊，扭動門把想進屋去，但廚房門紋風不動。

他發覺門給鎖上了，感到很奇怪，大力去搖門把；之後想起了蜜娣單獨留在家中，出於安全考慮，晚上把整間屋子鎖上是自然不過的事。他站在黑

stood in the darkness expecting to hear her step. It did not come, and after vainly straining his ears he called out in a voice that shook with joy: "Hello, Matt!"

Silence answered; but in a minute or two he caught a sound on the stairs and saw a line of light about the door-frame, as he had seen it the night before. So strange was the precision with which the incidents of the previous evening were repeating themselves that he half expected, when he heard the key turn, to see his wife before him on the threshold; but the door opened, and Mattie faced him.

She stood just as Zeena had stood, a lifted lamp in her hand, against the black background of the kitchen. She held the light at the same level, and it drew out with the same distinctness her slim young throat and the brown wrist no bigger than a child's. Then, striking upward, it threw a lustrous fleck on her lips, edged her eyes with velvet shade, and laid a milky whiteness above the black curve of her brows.

She wore her usual dress of darkish stuff, and there was no bow at her neck; but

暗之中，期待她走近的步音；可是沒有聲音，雖則傾耳細聽，仍是一片杳然。他大聲喊道：「喂！蜜兒！」聲音帶着欣喜的顫抖。

回應他的仍是靜默。不過一兩分鐘之後，他聽到樓梯有聲響，接着門邊透出一綫光，情景跟昨晚竟然差不多一模一樣！在聽到鑰匙轉動之時，他半期待一如昨夜，會是妻子站在門檻旁。可是，門打開後，站在他的面前是蜜娣。

她站立的姿勢，跟倩娜完全無異，手高高持着燈，背後是黑暗的廚房。她持燈的高度，跟倩娜一樣，所以清楚地照出同一身體部位：但她年輕的喉嚨是纖細的，淡褐色的手腕幼如小孩；燈光往高一晃，照亮了她的嘴唇，給她的眼角投下溫柔的陰影，但弓形的黑色眉毛上方，就增添了一道奶白的光芒。

她穿的是家常暗色裙子，頸上沒繫蝴蝶結，可是髮際戴了條深紅絲帶。這

through her hair she had run a streak of crimson ribbon. This tribute to the unusual transformed and glorified her. She seemed to Ethan taller, fuller, more womanly in shape and motion. She stood aside, smiling silently, while he entered, and then moved away from him with something soft and flowing in her gait. She set the lamp on the table, and he saw that it was carefully laid for supper, with fresh doughnuts, stewed blueberries and his favourite pickles in a dish of gay red glass. A bright fire glowed in the stove and the cat lay stretched before it, watching the table with a drowsy eye.

Ethan was suffocated with the sense of well-being. He went out into the passage to hang up his coat and pull off his wet boots. When he came back Mattie had set the teapot on the table and the cat was rubbing itself persuasively against her ankles.

"Why, Puss! I nearly tripped over you," she cried, the laughter sparkling through her lashes.

Again Ethan felt a sudden twinge of jealousy. Could it be his coming that gave her such a kindled face?

個有別於平日的打扮簡直是神來之筆！在伊奮的眼中，她變得高大了、豐滿了，外形和動作都更有女人味道。她站開一步，讓他進入門內，面上靜靜地掛着微笑，然後在他身邊走開，步伐輕柔，有種蕩漾的節奏。她將燈擱在桌上，他瞥見這頓晚餐費了特別心思，有新造的甜甜圈、燴藍莓，他最愛的泡菜擺放在一個喜洋洋的紅玻璃碟子內。火在爐子燒得很旺，貓兒伸長身軀躺在前面，瞌睡的眼睛留意着餐桌。

伊奮的胸臆給幸福感填滿，覺得快要不能呼吸。他走到通道那兒掛好大衣、除下濕靴子。回到廚房來，蜜娣已將茶壺放在桌子上，小貓在她的足踝邊挨擦，向人討求什麼。

「貓咪！我差點給你絆跌了！」她叫出來，睫毛後閃耀着笑意。

伊奮忽然又感到一陣妒忌。是他來過了？所以令她的面靨增添了光彩？

"Well, Matt, any visitors?" he threw off, stooping down carelessly to examine the fastening of the stove.

She nodded and laughed "Yes, one," and he felt a blackness settling on his brows.

"Who was that?" he questioned, raising himself up to slant a glance at her beneath his scowl.

Her eyes danced with malice. "Why, Jotham Powell. He came in after he got back, and asked for a drop of coffee before he went down home."

The blackness lifted and light flooded Ethan's brain. "That all? Well, I hope you made out to let him have it." And after a pause he felt it right to add: "I suppose he got Zeena over to the Flats all right?"

"Oh, yes; in plenty of time."

The name threw a chill between them, and they stood a moment looking sideways at each other before Mattie said with a shy laugh. "I guess it's about time for supper."

「蜜兒！有訪客啦？」他扔出一句，同時不經意地彎身去檢查爐子關好了沒有。

她點點頭，笑着說：「對呀！有一個。」他登時感到陰霾襲上眉頭。

「是誰？」他問。站起來時，皺着眉斜投過去一瞥。

她的眼神帶着捉弄意味，閃閃發亮。「不就是約坦·保華唄！他返抵農莊後就進來，想喝杯咖啡才回家。」

陰霾一掃而光，伊奮腦子內清明一片。「就這樣？希望妳把他招呼得妥當。」過了一會，他覺得最好加上一句：「他應把倩娜好好送到平原吧？」

「噢有呀！早就到了。」

提到那名字，一陣寒意降臨兩人之間。他們站着好一會，側覷着對方。然後蜜娣羞怯地笑說：「該用餐了。」

They drew their seats up to the table, and the cat, unbidden, jumped between them into Zeena's empty chair. "Oh, Puss!" said Mattie, and they laughed again.

Ethan, a moment earlier, had felt himself on the brink of eloquence; but the mention of Zeena had paralysed him. Mattie seemed to feel the contagion of his embarrassment, and sat with downcast lids, sipping her tea, while he feigned an insatiable appetite for dough-nuts and sweet pickles. At last, after casting about for an effective opening, he took a long gulp of tea, cleared his throat, and said: "Looks as if there'd be more snow."

She feigned great interest. "Is that so? Do you suppose it'll interfere with Zeena's getting back?" She flushed red as the question escaped her, and hastily set down the cup she was lifting.

Ethan reached over for another helping of pickles. "You never can tell, this time of year, it drifts so bad on the Flats." The name had benumbed him again, and once more he felt as if Zeena were in the room between them.

"Oh, Puss, you're too greedy!" Mattie cried.

他們把自己的椅子搬到桌旁。突然間，小貓跳進中間屬於倩娜的空椅上。「貓咪！」蜜娣叫起來。兩人又笑了。

伊奮前一刻覺得自己有很多話要傾訴，但一提及倩娜，他就開不了口。蜜娣似乎受到他的尷尬傳染，坐下呷茶時眼皮下垂，而他扮作胃口大開，甜甜圈和泡菜吃過不停。最後，他不知道怎樣開口最適宜，就呷了一大口茶，清清喉嚨說道：「似乎雪還會下好一陣子。」

她扮作極有興趣聽的模樣。「真的嗎？倩娜會不會受阻回不來了？」冷不防這問題溜出了口，她登時臉都漲紅了，提起一半的杯子也馬上擱下。

伊奮再度伸手過去舀泡菜。「這種氣候說不準，平原那邊，雪堆得那麼高。」那名字又令他動彈不得，感到倩娜再次在廚房裏梗在兩人中間。

「貓咪！你好貪吃！」蜜娣叫道。

The cat, unnoticed, had crept up on muffled paws from Zeena's seat to the table, and was stealthily elongating its body in the direction of the milk-jug, which stood between Ethan and Mattie. The two leaned forward at the same moment and their hands met on the handle of the jug. Mattie's hand was underneath, and Ethan kept his clasped on it a moment longer than was necessary. The cat, profiting by this unusual demonstration, tried to effect an unnoticed retreat, and in doing so backed into the pickle-dish, which fell to the floor with a crash.

Mattie, in an instant, had sprung from her chair and was down on her knees by the fragments.

"Oh, Ethan, Ethan--it's all to pieces! What will Zeena say?"

But this time his courage was up. "Well, she'll have to say it to the cat, any way!" he rejoined with a laugh, kneeling down at Mattie's side to scrape up the swimming pickles.

She lifted stricken eyes to him. "Yes, but, you see, she never meant it should be used,

小貓在他倆不為意時，無聲無息地從倩娜的空椅爬到桌上，瞄準盛奶的闊口瓶偷偷伸長牠的身軀。闊口瓶就在伊奮和蜜娣中間，他們同時伸手去拿，兩人的手剛好在瓶把上相觸。伊奮沒馬上縮開，仍留在瓶把及蜜娣的手上面，時間長了一點兒。小貓覷準這不尋常的情況，意圖偷偷溜走，後退的足恰巧踏在泡菜碟子上。那碟子「砰」的一聲，從桌子跌到地面。

蜜娣飛快從椅上彈起來，跪在地面的碎片旁。

「呀！伊奮...伊奮...都碎成一片片！倩娜會說啥？」

但這時他的勇氣來了。「那她要向貓兒說了。」他笑了一笑，跪在蜜娣的身旁，去撿那水淋淋的泡菜。

她抬起驚懼的眼睛望着他。「不過哪，你知道她從不用這碟子，招呼客

not even when there was company; and I had to get up on the step-ladder to reach it down from the top shelf of the china-closet, where she keeps it with all her best things, and of course she'll want to know why I did it--"

The case was so serious that it called forth all of Ethan's latent resolution.

"She needn't know anything about it if you keep quiet. I'll get another just like it tomorrow. Where did it come from? I'll go to Shadd's Falls for it if I have to!"

"Oh, you'll never get another even there! It was a wedding present--don't you remember? It came all the way from Philadelphia, from Zeena's aunt that married the minister. That's why she wouldn't ever use it. Oh, Ethan, Ethan, what in the world shall I do?"

She began to cry, and he felt as if every one of her tears were pouring over him like burning lead. "Don't, Matt, don't--oh, don't!" he implored her.

She struggled to her feet, and he rose and followed her helplessly while she spread out the pieces of glass on the kitchen dresser. It

人時也不用，我要爬上高梯子，從瓷器櫃子的頂層拿下來。那裏放的全是她最好的東西，她一定會問為什麼我拿來用... 」

事情可嚴重了，它喚起伊奮所有潛藏的決心和意志。

「只要妳不作聲，她就什麼也不知道了。她在哪裏買的？就算遠至沙特瀑布鎮，我也會去！」

「噢！那裏也不會有的。它是件結婚禮物，你不記得了？打老遠來自費城，是倩娜嫁給牧師的姨母送的，所以她從不捨得用。伊奮... 伊奮！我該怎麼辦？」

她哭起來了。他覺得她的每顆淚珠像是燒熔了的鉛水滴在身上。「不要！蜜兒！不要哭哦！」他哄求她。

她從地上爬起身，他也站起來，無助地跟着她，見她把碎片鋪在廚房的半

seemed to him as if the shattered fragments of their evening lay there.

"Here, give them to me," he said in a voice of sudden authority.

She drew aside, instinctively obeying his tone. "Oh, Ethan, what are you going to do?"

Without replying he gathered the pieces of glass into his broad palm and walked out of the kitchen to the passage. There he lit a candle-end, opened the china-closet, and, reaching his long arm up to the highest shelf, laid the pieces together with such accuracy of touch that a close inspection convinced him of the impossibility of detecting from below that the dish was broken. If he glued it together the next morning months might elapse before his wife noticed what had happened, and meanwhile he might after all be able to match the dish at Shadd's Falls or Bettsbridge. Having satisfied himself that there was no risk of immediate discovery he went back to the kitchen with a lighter step, and found Mattie disconsolately removing the last scraps of pickle from the floor.

身櫃子上。他覺得，就恰似他倆共度的晚上，已碎成片片。

「把那些碎片都拿過來。」他的聲音忽然變得有權威性。

她站過一旁，不自覺地聽從他的指示。「噢！伊奮！你想幹什麼？」

他沒回答，把玻璃碎片放在他那寬闊的掌心，走出廚房到通道去。在那裏，他點着一枝殘燭，打開磁器櫃子，長長的手臂伸到最高的一層，極之巧妙地把碎片拼成碟子原來的模樣。他小心地檢視一下，要是從下面往上看，一定無法見到碟子是破的。如他第二天早上用膠水黏起來，他妻子可能有幾個月也不會發現，然後他最終或許會在沙特瀑布鎮或畢士橋找到類似的東西。他覺得看上去還可以，不會有即時敗露的危險，就步履輕快地回到廚房去，見到蜜娣噙着淚去撿走地上餘下的幾條泡菜。

"It's all right, Matt. Come back and finish supper," he commanded her.

Completely reassured, she shone on him through tear-hung lashes, and his soul swelled with pride as he saw how his tone subdued her. She did not even ask what he had done. Except when he was steering a big log down the mountain to his mill he had never known such a thrilling sense of mastery.

V

They finished supper, and while Mattie cleared the table Ethan went to look at the cows and then took a last turn about the house. The earth lay dark under a muffled sky and the air was so still that now and then he heard a lump of snow come thumping down from a tree far off on the edge of the wood-lot.

When he returned to the kitchen Mattie had pushed up his chair to the stove and seated herself near the lamp with a bit of sewing. The scene was just as he had dreamed of it that morning. He sat down, drew his pipe from his pocket and stretched his feet to the

「蜜兒！不打緊了。過來！晚餐還未吃完呢！」他命令說。

得到他的保證，她垂淚的睫毛下，望過來的眸子是亮晶晶的。他見到自己的語調能令她平靜下來，心裏漲滿自豪之感。她連問也沒問他做了什麼。這份可以主宰一切的豪情，只有把大木頭從山上拉到鋸木坊才会有。

五

晚飯過後，蜜娣清理桌子，伊奮則走去查看牛隻，在屋子周圍巡視最後一匝。低翳的天空下，大地是漆黑一片，空氣是如此寂靜，乃至林子那邊，外排的樹冠偶有沉重的覆雪墜下，「蓬」的一聲，也是宛然可聞。

當他回到廚房來，蜜娣已把他的椅子推回火爐旁，自己則坐近燈下，在縫着什麼，那情景就跟他早上想像中一樣。他坐下來，從口袋抽出煙斗，把雙腳伸向爐火那邊。在冷冽的氣溫

glow. His hard day's work in the keen air made him feel at once lazy and light of mood, and he had a confused sense of being in another world, where all was warmth and harmony and time could bring no change. The only drawback to his complete well-being was the fact that he could not see Mattie from where he sat; but he was too indolent to move and after a moment he said: "Come over here and sit by the stove."

Zeena's empty rocking-chair stood facing him. Mattie rose obediently, and seated herself in it. As her young brown head detached itself against the patch-work cushion that habitually framed his wife's gaunt countenance, Ethan had a momentary shock. It was almost as if the other face, the face of the superseded woman, had obliterated that of the intruder. After a moment Mattie seemed to be affected by the same sense of constraint. She changed her position, leaning forward to bend her head above her work, so that he saw only the foreshortened tip of her nose and the streak of red in her hair; then she slipped to her feet, saying "I can't see to sew," and went back to her chair by the lamp.

下，經過一整天的辛苦幹活，他很快就變得懶洋洋，心情都放鬆了，迷迷糊糊地似乎去了第二個世界，那裏充滿溫暖與和諧，就算時間也不能令它改變。這種幸福之感只有一個缺憾，就是他坐的地方看不見蜜娣；但他完全不想動了。過了一刻，他開口道：「過來火爐旁坐呀！」

倩娜空空的搖椅面向着他。蜜娣順從地站起來，坐在上面。百家衲的靠墊之上，平日是他妻子的憔悴面容，現在卻兀地出現她年輕、長着棕髮的臉，伊奮猝然嚇了一跳。似乎那另一張臉——被取代了的婦人面容仍在，把年輕的入侵者泯滅。過了一會，蜜娣似乎也同樣感受到壓迫，她挪動坐姿，身體前俯，低頭專注在手中的針線活兒。於是他只能見到她正面的鼻尖與及暗紅的髮絲。然後，她悄悄地站起來說：「太暗了，我縫不到。」回到她燈旁的椅子坐下。

Ethan made a pretext of getting up to replenish the stove, and when he returned to his seat he pushed it sideways that he might get a view of her profile and of the lamplight falling on her hands. The cat, who had been a puzzled observer of these unusual movements, jumped up into Zeena's chair, rolled itself into a ball, and lay watching them with narrowed eyes.

Deep quiet sank on the room. The clock ticked above the dresser, a piece of charred wood fell now and then in the stove, and the faint sharp scent of the geraniums mingled with the odour of Ethan's smoke, which began to throw a blue haze about the lamp and to hang its grayish cobwebs in the shadowy corners of the room.

All constraint had vanished between the two, and they began to talk easily and simply. They spoke of every-day things, of the prospect of snow, of the next church sociable, of the loves and quarrels of Starkfield. The commonplace nature of what they said produced in Ethan an illusion of long-established intimacy which no outburst of emotion could have given, and he set his imagination adrift on the fiction that they had always spent their evenings thus and would always go on doing so...

伊奮站起來假裝要為火爐添柴，回到座位時把椅子推過一點，好讓他能望見她的側面，和映照着燈光的一雙手。貓兒一直在旁看着，對這些不尋常舉動很是困惑。牠跳上倩娜的椅子，把身體蜷成一個球狀，躺在那裏眯着眼觀察他們。

室內是深深的靜默，時鐘在櫃子上「滴答」作響，一塊又一塊燒過了的木柴不時在火爐裏倒下來，天竺葵的刺鼻香味化成淡淡一道，跟伊奮煙斗冒出來的菸草味混和。菸草的煙，在燈旁形成一圈淡藍煙霧，並在室內的暗角佈上灰色的薄網。

兩人之間的侷促消失殆盡，從此刻開始，交談就容易了，大家只說些簡單的東西。他們談及日常的事：明天還下雪嗎？幾時是教堂的下一次聚會？獨方鎮居民誰吵架了、誰在戀愛，諸如此類。家常話的那種平平凡凡的味道，使伊奮產生了錯覺，以為他倆之間的親密是長久養成的，而非感情的爆發所能引致。他讓浮想聯翩，他們一直以來就是如此度過每一個晚上，以後也會一樣 ...

"This is the night we were to have gone coasting. Matt," he said at length, with the rich sense, as he spoke, that they could go on any other night they chose, since they had all time before them.

She smiled back at him. "I guess you forgot!"

"No, I didn't forget; but it's as dark as Egypt outdoors. We might go to-morrow if there's a moon."

She laughed with pleasure, her head tilted back, the lamplight sparkling on her lips and teeth. "That would be lovely, Ethan!"

He kept his eyes fixed on her, marvelling at the way her face changed with each turn of their talk, like a wheat-field under a summer breeze. It was intoxicating to find such magic in his clumsy words, and he longed to try new ways of using it.

"Would you be scared to go down the Corbury road with me on a night like this?" he asked.

Her cheeks burned redder. "I ain't any more scared than you are!"

「蜜兒！這個晚上咱們不是說好去滑雪橇嗎？」最後他說，心內滿以為以後哪一個晚上都可以去，日子可長着呢！

她報以一笑。「我以為你忘了。」

「怎會；但外頭黑魘魘的。明天如見到月亮升起，我們就去。」

她高興地笑了，頭向後仰，燈光在嘴唇和牙齒上閃爍。「伊奮，多好呀！」

他目不轉瞬地望着她，驚嘆她的面容隨着不同話題而流動變換，就像夏季的薰風拂過麥田。他笨拙的話，竟然起了魔術作用，令他有微醺之感。他希望多運用幾次。

「晚上這麼黑，跟我滑下歌巴利路，妳不怕嗎？」他問道。

她的臉更紅了。「總不會遜給你。」

"Well, I'd be scared, then; I wouldn't do it. That's an ugly corner down by the big elm. If a fellow didn't keep his eyes open he'd go plumb into it." He luxuriated in the sense of protection and authority which his words conveyed. To prolong and intensify the feeling he added: "I guess we're well enough here."

She let her lids sink slowly, in the way he loved. "Yes, we're well enough here," she sighed.

Her tone was so sweet that he took the pipe from his mouth and drew his chair up to the table. Leaning forward, he touched the farther end of the strip of brown stuff that she was hemming. "Say, Matt," he began with a smile, "what do you think I saw under the Varnum spruces, coming along home just now? I saw a friend of yours getting kissed."

The words had been on his tongue all the evening, but now that he had spoken them they struck him as inexpressibly vulgar and out of place.

「我可怕了；我不敢。大榆樹旁，有個危險的彎角。一不提神，就會撞上去。」他覺得他的話帶着權威性，也能予人安全感，令他陶陶然沉浸其中。為了延長及加強那份快感，他加上一句：「妳說，這裏不是也很好嗎？」

她的眼皮慢慢垂下來，正是他喜歡見到的神情。「是的，在這裏很好。」她嘆一口氣。

她的語調是如此惹人憐愛，他從嘴上取下煙斗，把椅子拉近桌邊。她在桌子的另一端，手持一塊啡色長布條在納線；他彎身伸手去觸靠近他那一端的布條，笑一笑開口：「蜜兒哦！剛才回家，在華南家的雲杉下，妳猜我見着誰來？妳的好友和人接吻呢！」

整個晚上，這句話就在唇邊，現在終於說出口，不過，他發覺原來是太粗俗、太突兀了。

Mattie blushed to the roots of her hair and pulled her needle rapidly twice or thrice through her work, insensibly drawing the end of it away from him. "I suppose it was Ruth and Ned," she said in a low voice, as though he had suddenly touched on something grave.

Ethan had imagined that his allusion might open the way to the accepted pleasantries, and these perhaps in turn to a harmless caress, if only a mere touch on her hand. But now he felt as if her blush had set a flaming guard about her. He supposed it was his natural awkwardness that made him feel so. He knew that most young men made nothing at all of giving a pretty girl a kiss, and he remembered that the night before, when he had put his arm about Mattie, she had not resisted. But that had been out-of-doors, under the open irresponsible night. Now, in the warm lamplit room, with all its ancient implications of conformity and order, she seemed infinitely farther away from him and more unapproachable.

To ease his constraint he said: "I suppose they'll be setting a date before long."

蜜娣面上的緋紅直漲上髮根，她很快地連縫幾針，把布條不覺地從他那端抽走。「應是露芙和尼德吧？」她低聲說道，就好像他忽然提及某件嚴肅的事項。

最初伊奮以為用這事作楔子，接下來就可進入無傷大雅的輕鬆交談，然後，或可有輕微的身體接觸，能摸摸她的手也是好的。但現在她緋紅的面龐，卻似在她周圍豎起了紅色的警戒標誌。他想可能是他天生笨拙，才有此感覺。他知道大多數男生對於去親親個漂亮女孩，不當作是一回事。他也記起昨天晚上，他用臂膀攬住她的肩膊，她並沒反抗。不過那是在戶外，漫漫夜空下，可以任意妄為。現在卻是一燈熒然，室內融融暖意，涵含着亙古以來的習俗和秩序，她似是遙不可及，更難接近。

為了解除侷促，他說：「他們很快會訂下婚期吧？」

"Yes. I shouldn't wonder if they got married some time along in the summer." She pronounced the word married as if her voice caressed it. It seemed a rustling covert leading to enchanted glades. A pang shot through Ethan, and he said, twisting away from her in his chair: "It'll be your turn next, I wouldn't wonder."

She laughed a little uncertainly. "Why do you keep on saying that?"

He echoed her laugh. "I guess I do it to get used to the idea."

He drew up to the table again and she sewed on in silence, with dropped lashes, while he sat in fascinated contemplation of the way in which her hands went up and down above the strip of stuff, just as he had seen a pair of birds make short perpendicular flights over a nest they were building. At length, without turning her head or lifting her lids, she said in a low tone: "It's not because you think Zeena's got anything against me, is it?"

His former dread started up full-armed at the suggestion. "Why, what do you mean?" he stammered.

「不錯，說不定就是在這個夏天結婚。」她吐出「結婚」兩個字，腔調有股愛撫味兒，就像個「簌簌」作響的隱閉樹叢，背後深處是塊誘人的空曠草地。伊奮心內一陣刺痛，在椅上轉過身去，背着她說：「下一個就輪到妳了？」

她不置可否地笑笑。「為什麼老說這個？」

他也報以一笑。「多說幾次，也好早早習慣。」

他回過身來，仍坐在桌旁，看着她睫毛下垂，靜靜地縫紉。他驚詫她在布邊上下飛舞的手，仿似某處見過的一對鳥兒造巢，在巢邊上下來回地飛。最後，她還是維持那姿勢，沒抬起眼、沒轉過身來，低低地說：「不是因為你覺得倩娜瞧着我礙眼吧？」

他之前的疑懼，在聽到她的話後，完全都給掀起來了。「什麼？妳是什麼意思？」他變得有點結巴。

She raised distressed eyes to his, her work dropping on the table between them. "I don't know. I thought last night she seemed to have."

"I'd like to know what," he growled.

"Nobody can tell with Zeena." It was the first time they had ever spoken so openly of her attitude toward Mattie, and the repetition of the name seemed to carry it to the farther corners of the room and send it back to them in long repercussions of sound. Mattie waited, as if to give the echo time to drop, and then went on: "She hasn't said anything to you?"

He shook his head. "No, not a word."

She tossed the hair back from her forehead with a laugh. "I guess I'm just nervous, then. I'm not going to think about it any more."

"Oh, no--don't let's think about it, Matt!"

The sudden heat of his tone made her colour mount again, not with a rush, but gradually, delicately, like the reflection of a

她抬頭向他直望，眼神帶着不安，手中的啡布條落到了中間的桌面上。

「我不知道。昨晚我覺得她是這樣。」

「我想知道究竟為了什麼。」他憤聲說道。

「誰都猜不透倩娜。」這是兩人第一次公開談論倩娜對她的態度。再度提及那名字後，「倩娜」這兩個字音好像一直傳到廚房的遠角，然後造成長長的迴響，一道道回到他們的耳中。蜜娣等了一會，似乎是讓迴響消失，才開口：「她有跟你說什麼嗎？」

他搖搖頭，答道：「一個字也沒透露。」

她的頭一揚，把額上的髮絲甩到後面，笑起來。「也許是我太神經質了。我不會再去想。」

「噢！蜜兒，我們不要多想！」

他聲調中突然高漲的熱情，令她臉上再現緋紅，不是驟地一大片飛紅，而

thought stealing slowly across her heart. She sat silent, her hands clasped on her work, and it seemed to him that a warm current flowed toward him along the strip of stuff that still lay unrolled between them. Cautiously he slid his hand palm-downward along the table till his finger-tips touched the end of the stuff. A faint vibration of her lashes seemed to show that she was aware of his gesture, and that it had sent a counter-current back to her; and she let her hands lie motionless on the other end of the strip.

As they sat thus he heard a sound behind him and turned his head. The cat had jumped from Zeena's chair to dart at a mouse in the wainscot, and as a result of the sudden movement the empty chair had set up a spectral rocking.

"She'll be rocking in it herself this time tomorrow," Ethan thought. "I've been in a dream, and this is the only evening we'll ever have together." The return to reality was as painful as the return to consciousness after taking an anaesthetic. His body and brain ached with indescribable weariness, and he could think of nothing to say or to do that should arrest the mad flight of the moments.

是輕輕、逐漸地浮現出來，恰似有份心思偷偷襲上心頭的景象。她坐着沒說話，手緊執正在縫的東西，他覺得有道暖流從兩人中間攤開的長布條傳過來。他的掌心向下，小心翼翼地滑過桌面，直至手指沾到布條的末端。她的睫毛輕微顫動，似表示她知曉了他的舉措，暖流回傳過去。她雙手不動，就擱在布條的另一端。

他們就此坐着，聽到一下聲響。他扭頭去看，原來是貓兒從倩娜的椅子跳起、撲向壁板上的一隻老鼠。那出其不意的一股力，晃動了空椅，它就搖起來。

明天在同一時間，倩娜就會坐在那椅上搖晃。」伊奮心想，「我是在做夢，只有今晚我們才可單獨相處。」回到現實，那種痛苦就像剛從麻醉狀態中恢復意識神智。他的身軀、腦袋是說不出的疲憊，他想不到可說什麼或做什麼，可稍稍抓住飛逝的時間。

His alteration of mood seemed to have communicated itself to Mattie. She looked up at him languidly, as though her lids were weighted with sleep and it cost her an effort to raise them. Her glance fell on his hand, which now completely covered the end of her work and grasped it as if it were a part of herself. He saw a scarcely perceptible tremor cross her face, and without knowing what he did he stooped his head and kissed the bit of stuff in his hold. As his lips rested on it he felt it glide slowly from beneath them, and saw that Mattie had risen and was silently rolling up her work. She fastened it with a pin, and then, finding her thimble and scissors, put them with the roll of stuff into the box covered with fancy paper which he had once brought to her from Bettsbridge.

He stood up also, looking vaguely about the room. The clock above the dresser struck eleven.

"Is the fire all right?" she asked in a low voice.

He opened the door of the stove and poked aimlessly at the embers. When he raised himself again he saw that she was dragging

他變換過的情緒似乎傳遞給了蜜娣，她慵懶地抬頭望他，就好像眼皮濃濃帶着睡意，要費力才可抬起來。她的視線落到他的手上，這時他的手掌已完全蓋在布條的另一端，並緊緊抓住了它，就像那是她身體的一部分。他看見她的臉上掠過一絲微不可覺的顫抖，就不由自主，低頭去吻手中緊握的東西。在他的嘴唇還停留在上面之際，發覺它開始在唇下慢慢溜走。他見到蜜娣已站起來，不作聲地把布條捲起，用針別好，再撿起頂針和剪刀，一起放進裱了花紙的盒子內；那花紙是他有次從畢士橋給她捎來的。

他也站起來，惘然望望四周。半身櫃上的時鐘敲響，是十一時了。

「火沒問題吧？」她低聲問道。

他打開爐子的門，把餘燼胡亂地撥過來，又撥過去。等到他站起來，見到

toward the stove the old soap-box lined with carpet in which the cat made its bed. Then she recrossed the floor and lifted two of the geranium pots in her arms, moving them away from the cold window. He followed her and brought the other geraniums, the hyacinth bulbs in a cracked custard bowl and the German ivy trained over an old croquet hoop.

When these nightly duties were performed there was nothing left to do but to bring in the tin candlestick from the passage, light the candle and blow out the lamp. Ethan put the candlestick in Mattie's hand and she went out of the kitchen ahead of him, the light that she carried before her making her dark hair look like a drift of mist on the moon.

"Good night, Matt," he said as she put her foot on the first step of the stairs.

She turned and looked at him a moment. "Good night, Ethan," she answered, and went up.

When the door of her room had closed on her he remembered that he had not even touched her hand.

她正在把內裏鋪了地毯的舊肥皂箱子拖近火爐，那是貓兒的睡舖。然後再走到廚房的另一頭，從冷颼颼的窗邊捧走兩盆天竺葵。他跟在她後頭，也移走了其餘幾盆天竺葵、種在一個破吉士碗內的風信子球根、與及纏繞在一把舊槌球球門上的德國長春籐。

這些晚間例行公事完了之後，再沒有什麼可幹，最後是從過道那裏取來錫燭台，點燃蠟燭，然後吹熄油燈。伊奮把燭台遞到蜜娣手中，她就在他前頭，走出廚房去了。她持在身前的燭光，把她的棕色頭髮映照得像月亮上面的一道霞霧。

「蜜兒，晚安！」見到她的腳已踏上第一級梯級，他喚道。

她轉身望着他，一刻後，答道：「伊奮，晚安。」就上樓去了。

聽到她關上房門的聲音，他想起連她的手也沒碰過。

VI

The next morning at breakfast Jotham Powell was between them, and Ethan tried to hide his joy under an air of exaggerated indifference, lounging back in his chair to throw scraps to the cat, growling at the weather, and not so much as offering to help Mattie when she rose to clear away the dishes.

He did not know why he was so irrationally happy, for nothing was changed in his life or hers. He had not even touched the tip of her fingers or looked her full in the eyes. But their evening together had given him a vision of what life at her side might be, and he was glad now that he had done nothing to trouble the sweetness of the picture. He had a fancy that she knew what had restrained him...

There was a last load of lumber to be hauled to the village, and Jotham Powell--who did not work regularly for Ethan in winter--had "come round" to help with the job. But a wet snow, melting to sleet, had fallen in the night and turned the roads to glass. There was more wet in the air and it seemed likely to

六

第二天早餐的桌子上，約坦·保華坐在兩人之間。伊奮為了隱藏他的快樂，故意扮作異常冷淡的樣子，身往後仰，半躺在椅上，然後把麪包屑拋給貓兒，喃喃埋怨着天氣，連蜜娣站起身清理杯碟時，也沒作出幫忙的表示。

他不知道為何傻乎乎地感到快樂，因為他或她的生活都沒改變。他連她的指尖碰也沒碰過，也沒從她的眸子進入她的內心深處。但昨夜這個單獨相處的晚上，讓他想像出跟她廝守一生的情景。現在他感欣慰的是沒做什麼，把那甜蜜的一幕擾亂了。他就是覺得，她明白是什麼克制着他...

還有最後一堆木頭要拉到村子去。冬季時候，約坦·保華並非定期受雇於伊奮，今天來了，是需要他幫忙裝卸。但昨夜下了場濕雪，化成了雨霰，把路變成玻璃般滑溜，空氣的濕

both men that the weather would "milden" toward afternoon and make the going safer. Ethan therefore proposed to his assistant that they should load the sledge at the wood-lot, as they had done on the previous morning, and put off the "teaming" to Starkfield till later in the day. This plan had the advantage of enabling him to send Jotham to the Flats after dinner to meet Zenobia, while he himself took the lumber down to the village.

He told Jotham to go out and harness up the greys, and for a moment he and Mattie had the kitchen to themselves. She had plunged the breakfast dishes into a tin dish-pan and was bending above it with her slim arms bared to the elbow, the steam from the hot water beading her forehead and tightening her rough hair into little brown rings like the tendrils on the traveller's joy.

Ethan stood looking at her, his heart in his throat. He wanted to say: "We shall never be alone again like this." Instead, he reached down his tobacco -pouch from a shelf of the dresser, put it into his pocket and said: "I guess I can make out to be home for dinner."

度更高了。兩個男人認為近午天氣會緩和下來，那時上路會安全一點。伊奮於是向他的助手建議，在林子那邊先把木頭合力裝上雪橇，就像早一天那樣，稍後才分頭工作。這計劃有個好處，就是午餐後，他可叫約坦到平原那邊去接倩娜，而自己則負責拉運木頭到獨方鎮去。

他叫約坦去給兩匹灰馬套上韁繩，廚房就只剩下他和蜜娣兩個。她已把早餐碟子投進大錫盆內，彎腰站着在它上頭，裸露出手肘以下的纖細部分；熱水散發的蒸氣在她額上形成水珠，將她蓬鬆的頭髮黏成一個個棕色小圈，就像葡萄葉鐵綫蓮長出來的捲鬚。

伊奮站在那裏望着她，一顆心就在喉嚨邊；他想說：「以後我們再沒機會這樣單獨相處。」可是，他從半身櫃的層架上取了菸草包，放進口袋之後，只是說道：「照我估計，應可以趕得及回來午餐。」

She answered "All right, Ethan," and he heard her singing over the dishes as he went.

As soon as the sledge was loaded he meant to send Jotham back to the farm and hurry on foot into the village to buy the glue for the pickle-dish. With ordinary luck he should have had time to carry out this plan; but everything went wrong from the start. On the way over to the wood-lot one of the greys slipped on a glare of ice and cut his knee; and when they got him up again Jotham had to go back to the barn for a strip of rag to bind the cut. Then, when the loading finally began, a sleety rain was coming down once more, and the tree trunks were so slippery that it took twice as long as usual to lift them and get them in place on the sledge. It was what Jotham called a sour morning for work, and the horses, shivering and stamping under their wet blankets, seemed to like it as little as the men. It was long past the dinner-hour when the job was done, and Ethan had to give up going to the village because he wanted to lead the injured horse home and wash the cut himself.

He thought that by starting out again with the lumber as soon as he had finished his dinner he might get back to the farm with the

她答：「好的，伊奮。」他出門之際，聽到她一面洗碟子，一面唱着歌。

他打算木頭都上了雪橇後，就馬上叫約坦回農莊，自己則趕快走路到村子去買黏補泡菜碟子的膠水。一般情況，他該有足夠時間去實行他的計劃；但打從一開始，倒霉事接連發生。走向林子的路上，一隻灰馬在冰面上滑了一交，膝上劃破了道口子，他們把牠扶起來之後，約坦需回穀倉找塊布條給牠包紮傷口。最後，終於可以裝木頭了，雨霰又下起來，木頭變得滑溜溜的，把它們抬起來，再卸到雪橇上堆疊好，比平日多用了一倍時間。約坦會叫這時刻做「晨早苦差」，馬兒在濕漉漉的毯子下顫抖、跺着腳，跟人一樣，也覺得苦不堪言。裝好木頭後，早已過了午餐時間。伊奮不得不放棄上村子的計劃，因他要把受傷的馬牽回家，由他來洗傷口。

他又盤算，午餐後馬上拉木頭到村子去，在約坦駕着棗紅馬從平原接載倩

glue before Jotham and the old sorrel had had time to fetch Zenobia from the Flats; but he knew the chance was a slight one. It turned on the state of the roads and on the possible lateness of the Bettsbridge train. He remembered afterward, with a grim flash of self-derision, what importance he had attached to the weighing of these probabilities...

As soon as dinner was over he set out again for the wood-lot, not daring to linger till Jotham Powell left. The hired man was still drying his wet feet at the stove, and Ethan could only give Mattie a quick look as he said beneath his breath: "I'll be back early."

He fancied that she nodded her comprehension; and with that scant solace he had to trudge off through the rain.

He had driven his load half-way to the village when Jotham Powell overtook him, urging the reluctant sorrel toward the Flats. "I'll have to hurry up to do it," Ethan mused, as the sleigh dropped down ahead of him over the dip of the school-house hill. He worked like ten at the unloading, and when it was over hastened on to Michael Eady's for the glue. Eady and his assistant were both "down street," and young Denis, who

娜回來之前，他可買到膠水回家。但他知道機會不大，要視乎路面情況，也要看看畢士橋的火車會否延誤。後來，他記得當日為這些盤算煞費思量，慘然地笑自己多麼的傻。

午餐後，他馬上往林子去，不敢等約坦動身後才離家。他的雇工仍坐在火爐邊去烘被雨霰沾濕了的腳，他只能向蜜娣急急投去一瞥，壓低聲音說：「我會早些回來。」

他覺得她似有點點頭，表示明白。帶着那一絲撫慰，他就冒着雨霰跋涉了。

他拉着木頭朝村子出發，走到半路上，約坦·保華已從後頭趕過他，催着老大不情願的棗紅馬往平原去。「我得趕快了。」伊奮一面盤算，一面駕着雪橇滑下前面學校山的斜坡。卸下木頭時，他拼命加快速度，像多了幾雙手。然後，趕去米高·伊弟的店舖買膠水，但是伊弟和他的助手上

seldom deigned to take their place, was lounging by the stove with a knot of the golden youth of Starkfield. They hailed Ethan with ironic compliment and offers of conviviality; but no one knew where to find the glue. Ethan, consumed with the longing for a last moment alone with Mattie, hung about impatiently while Denis made an ineffectual search in the obscurer corners of the store.

"Looks as if we were all sold out. But if you'll wait around till the old man comes along maybe he can put his hand on it."

"I'm obliged to you, but I'll try if I can get it down at Mrs. Homan's," Ethan answered, burning to be gone.

Denis's commercial instinct compelled him to aver on oath that what Eady's store could not produce would never be found at the widow Homan's; but Ethan, heedless of this boast, had already climbed to the sledge and was driving on to the rival establishment. Here, after considerable search, and sympathetic questions as to what he wanted it for, and whether ordinary flour paste wouldn't do as well if she couldn't find it, the widow Homan finally hunted down

街去了。年輕的丹尼斯甚少屈尊到店裏，替代父親和店夥的舖面工作，這時他跟幾個獨方鎮的大好青年閒閒地聚在火爐旁。他們跟伊奮打招呼，有人說句陰陽怪氣的話，有人愉快地表示歡迎；但沒有人知道膠水放在哪裏。伊奮焦灼極了，盼望還可與蜜娣獨處多一刻，在店內不耐煩地佇候。丹尼斯在隱閉角落裏東翻西找，找來找去都找不到。

「似乎都賣光了。你如能等到老爸回來，他也許知道放在哪兒。」

「麻煩你了。我會到荷文太太那邊問問。」伊奮答道，五內如焚，巴不得馬上離開。

但丹尼斯卻繼承了商人天性，他誓言他們店子沒有的東西，斷不會在荷文寡婦那兒找得到。伊奮沒理會他的誇口大言，已爬上雪橇，朝他們的商業對手進發。在這間店舖內，荷文太太找了好一會，又同情地問了他作何用途，如她找不到，普通的麪粉糊行嗎？最後，在放咳藥水和腰封、絲帶

her solitary bottle of glue to its hiding-place in a medley of cough-lozenges and corset-laces.

"I hope Zeena ain't broken anything she sets store by," she called after him as he turned the greys toward home.

The fitful bursts of sleet had changed into a steady rain and the horses had heavy work even without a load behind them. Once or twice, hearing sleigh-bells, Ethan turned his head, fancying that Zeena and Jotham might overtake him; but the old sorrel was not in sight, and he set his face against the rain and urged on his ponderous pair.

The barn was empty when the horses turned into it and, after giving them the most perfunctory ministrations they had ever received from him, he strode up to the house and pushed open the kitchen door.

Mattie was there alone, as he had pictured her. She was bending over a pan on the stove; but at the sound of his step she turned with a start and sprang to him.

"See, here, Matt, I've got some stuff to mend the dish with! Let me get at it quick," he

之間的隱閉角落，她找到碩果僅存的一瓶膠水。

「希望倩娜沒打破心愛的東西！」在他示意灰馬轉頭回家時，她在後面喊道。

一陣又一陣的雪霰變成雨，下個不停，就算不用運貨，馬兒也難以敞開腳步。有一兩次，伊奮聽到雪橇的鈴聲，轉過頭去，心想是否倩娜和約坦趕過了他。可是老紅馬並沒出現在視線內。他不顧濺到臉上的雨水，催促步伐沉重的灰馬前行。

他駕着馬兒回到穀倉時，裏面是空的。他打破一向的慣例，胡亂地執拾一下，讓牠們休息，就大步朝屋子走，推開廚房門進去。

就如他的想像，廚房內只得蜜娣一個。她站在爐子前面，彎腰在煎鍋上，聽到他的腳步聲，猛地轉身過來，快步朝他走近。

「唏！蜜兒！我找到黏補碟子的東西了，我馬上拿它下來動手！」他喊

cried, waving the bottle in one hand while he put her lightly aside; but she did not seem to hear him.

"Oh, Ethan--Zeena's come," she said in a whisper, clutching his sleeve. They stood and stared at each other, pale as culprits.

"But the sorrel's not in the barn!" Ethan stammered.

"Jotham Powell brought some goods over from the Flats for his wife, and he drove right on home with them," she explained.

He gazed blankly about the kitchen, which looked cold and squalid in the rainy winter twilight.

"How is she?" he asked, dropping his voice to Mattie's whisper.

She looked away from him uncertainly. "I don't know. She went right up to her room."

"She didn't say anything?"

"No."

道，揮動手中的小瓶，輕輕推她到一旁。但她似乎沒聽見。

「噢！伊奮... 倩娜回家了。」她抓緊他的衣袖，悄聲說道。兩人站着對望，像罪犯似的面無人色。

「但... 紅馬不在穀倉裏！」伊奮變得結巴。

「約坦·保華從平原那邊捎來給他老婆的東西，所以駕了牠直接回家去。」她解釋說。

他茫然四顧，在暮色四合的冬季雨中，廚房是如此冷清、窳陋！

「她還好吧？」他也壓低聲綫，跟蜜娣一樣。

她移開視線，不肯定地說：「不知道，她即時上樓去了。」

「她有說什麼嗎？」

「沒有。」

Ethan let out his doubts in a low whistle and thrust the bottle back into his pocket. "Don't fret; I'll come down and mend it in the night," he said. He pulled on his wet coat again and went back to the barn to feed the greys.

While he was there Jotham Powell drove up with the sleigh, and when the horses had been attended to Ethan said to him: "You might as well come back up for a bite." He was not sorry to assure himself of Jotham's neutralising presence at the supper table, for Zeena was always "nervous" after a journey. But the hired man, though seldom loth to accept a meal not included in his wages, opened his stiff jaws to answer slowly: "I'm obliged to you, but I guess I'll go along back."

Ethan looked at him in surprise. "Better come up and dry off. Looks as if there'd be something hot for supper."

Jotham's facial muscles were unmoved by this appeal and, his vocabulary being limited, he merely repeated: "I guess I'll go along back."

To Ethan there was something vaguely ominous in this stolid rejection of free food and warmth, and he wondered what had

伊奮低低「啾哨」一聲，以抒散他的疑慮，把瓶子塞回袋裏。「不用擔心，夜裏我下來黏補。」他說，然後套上濕透的外衣，再到穀倉去餵灰馬。

接着約坦·保華從家駕着雪橇從家來了。馬兒都照料妥當後，伊奮對他說：「不如上來吃點東西？」每逢倩娜外出回到家中，總是「神經兮兮」的，有約坦作伴坐到晚餐桌上，可以緩和氣氛。伊奮安心地這樣想。可是他的雇工雖然平常不會拒絕一頓免費餐，這次卻郁動僵硬的上下顎，慢慢地回答：「謝了！我還是回家好。」

伊奮驚詫地望着他。「上來烘乾衣物呀！好像煮了些熱呼呼的東西呢！」

約坦的面頰肌肉沒因他的籲請而郁動。拙於言辭的他，只重複那一句：「我還是回家好。」

伊奮覺得，他固執地拒絕免費晚餐和暖火爐，似乎是個隱隱的凶兆。他不

happened on the drive to nerve Jotham to such stoicism. Perhaps Zeena had failed to see the new doctor or had not liked his counsels: Ethan knew that in such cases the first person she met was likely to be held responsible for her grievance.

When he re-entered the kitchen the lamp lit up the same scene of shining comfort as on the previous evening. The table had been as carefully laid, a clear fire glowed in the stove, the cat dozed in its warmth, and Mattie came forward carrying a plate of doughnuts.

She and Ethan looked at each other in silence; then she said, as she had said the night before: "I guess it's about time for supper."

VII

Ethan went out into the passage to hang up his wet garments. He listened for Zeena's step and, not hearing it, called her name up the stairs. She did not answer, and after a moment's hesitation he went up and opened her door. The room was almost dark, but in the obscurity he saw her sitting by the window, bolt upright, and knew by the

知道回家那段路程中發生了什麼事，使到約坦現在堅拒他的招待。是倩娜見不着新醫生嗎？他的話不中聽嗎？伊奮知道，每逢遇上這情況，她就會拿第一個見到的熟人出氣。

再踏進廚房內，情景跟昨晚一樣，燈光照出一室的暖意。桌子上食具已整齊地擺放好了，火爐的火燒得正旺，貓兒在打瞌睡，蜜娣捧着一碟甜甜圈朝他走來。

她和伊奮沉默對望，然後，她開口，話跟昨晚一樣：「該用餐了。」

七

伊奮走去過道那邊，掛起他濕漉漉的外套，以為會聽見倩娜下樓的聲音，可是沒有。他就從樓梯喊上去了，她也沒回答。他遲疑一會，就上樓去。打開房門，內裏差不多是全黑，在昏暗之中，他見到她坐在窗旁，背脊挺

<p>rigidity of the outline projected against the pane that she had not taken off her travelling dress.</p> <p>"Well, Zeena," he ventured from the threshold.</p> <p>She did not move, and he continued: "Supper's about ready. Ain't you coming?"</p> <p>She replied: "I don't feel as if I could touch a morsel."</p> <p>It was the consecrated formula, and he expected it to be followed, as usual, by her rising and going down to supper. But she remained seated, and he could think of nothing more felicitous than: "I presume you're tired after the long ride."</p> <p>Turning her head at this, she answered solemnly: "I'm a great deal sicker than you think."</p> <p>Her words fell on his ear with a strange shock of wonder. He had often heard her pronounce them before--what if at last they were true?</p>	<p>得直直的。從玻璃窗映照出來的僵直綫條，他知道她還沒換掉外出衣服。</p> <p>「倩娜！」他在門檻邊大着膽子叫她。</p> <p>她沒有動。他繼續說：「晚餐好了，還不下來？」</p> <p>她答道：「我沒胃口，什麼也吃不下。」</p> <p>這是她奉行的例牌程序；他以為接下來，跟平日一樣，她就會站起來，下樓進晚餐。不過這次她仍坐着，他想不出別句好話，只得開口道：「坐雪橇走了那麼久，妳一定累了。」</p> <p>她轉過頭來望着他，一臉儼然之色。「你不知道我的病有多重。」</p> <p>她的話聽在他的耳中，驟地泛起一個新的念頭，他怔住了。她以往常說這句話，假如今次是真的呢？</p>
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He advanced a step or two into the dim room. "I hope that's not so, Zeena," he said.

She continued to gaze at him through the twilight with a mien of wan authority, as of one consciously singled out for a great fate. "I've got complications," she said.

Ethan knew the word for one of exceptional import. Almost everybody in the neighbourhood had "troubles," frankly localized and specified; but only the chosen had "complications." To have them was in itself a distinction, though it was also, in most cases, a death-warrant. People struggled on for years with "troubles," but they almost always succumbed to "complications."

Ethan's heart was jerking to and fro between two extremities of feeling, but for the moment compassion prevailed. His wife looked so hard and lonely, sitting there in the darkness with such thoughts.

"Is that what the new doctor told you?" he asked, instinctively lowering his voice.

他挪前一兩步，踏入昏暗的房中。
「倩娜，不會吧？」他說。

在薄暮中，她繼續盯着他，蒼白的面容透出疲憊，卻帶着股威嚴，就像那些知曉自己給命運挑中擔負偉大任務的人。「我還有併發症。」

伊奮知道那詞有特別意思。這一帶的人個個都有「問題」，都是清楚地發生在某部位；只有某些被挑中的人才會有「併發症」。有就似是勝人一籌，雖然在大多數情形下，也就是走上死亡之路的通行證。一個人有「問題」，往往可拖上許多年，有了「併發症」，多半就此殞命。

伊奮的心本在兩種完全不同的情緒之間迭盪；但在這一刻，是同情心佔了上風。他妻子看上去好不孤單、好不憐，坐在黑暗中，想的竟是這些念頭。

「是那新醫生告訴你的嗎？」他很自然地壓低聲綫問。

"Yes. He says any regular doctor would want me to have an operation."

Ethan was aware that, in regard to the important question of surgical intervention, the female opinion of the neighbourhood was divided, some glorying in the prestige conferred by operations while others shunned them as indelicate. Ethan, from motives of economy, had always been glad that Zeena was of the latter faction.

In the agitation caused by the gravity of her announcement he sought a consolatory short cut. "What do you know about this doctor anyway? Nobody ever told you that before."

He saw his blunder before she could take it up: she wanted sympathy, not consolation.

"I didn't need to have anybody tell me I was losing ground every day. Everybody but you could see it. And everybody in Bettsbridge knows about Dr. Buck. He has his office in Worcester, and comes over once a fortnight to Shadd's Falls and Bettsbridge for consultations. Eliza Spears was wasting away with kidney trouble before she went to him, and now she's up and around, and singing in the choir."

「是。他說無論哪個正式醫生都會主張替我動手術。」

伊奮知道，如涉及動手術這重大問題，這一帶的女士有兩派意見：一派覺得動過手術，似是取得一項榮譽，身價都高了；另一派則不主張做，怕身子骨捱不過來，同時又覺得難為情。伊奮出自經濟考慮，向來很慶幸倩娜是屬於後一派。

她宣布的消息是如許嚴重，他心情激動，想快快找句話去撫定情緒：「妳怎知這醫生可靠？這番話沒有人說過。」

話一出口，他就知自己錯了，她需要的是同情，不是撫慰。

「我不需要人告訴我，我的情況越來越差，大家都見到，只有你見不到。在畢士橋，人人都認識弼克醫生。他在伍斯特有診所，每兩星期才來沙特瀑布鎮和畢士橋候診一天。伊莉莎·施比斯的腎有問題，本來是一天差似一天，現在可到處跑，還參加了合唱團哩！」

"Well, I'm glad of that. You must do just what he tells you," Ethan answered sympathetically.

She was still looking at him. "I mean to," she said. He was struck by a new note in her voice. It was neither whining nor reproachful, but drily resolute.

"What does he want you should do?" he asked, with a mounting vision of fresh expenses.

"He wants I should have a hired girl. He says I oughtn't to have to do a single thing around the house."

"A hired girl?" Ethan stood transfixed.

"Yes. And Aunt Martha found me one right off. Everybody said I was lucky to get a girl to come away out here, and I agreed to give her a dollar extry to make sure. She'll be over to-morrow afternoon."

Wrath and dismay contended in Ethan. He had foreseen an immediate demand for money, but not a permanent drain on his scant resources. He no longer believed what Zeena had told him of the supposed

「很好呀！那妳要聽從他的囑咐。」他同情地說。

她仍是盯着他望。「我會的。」她說。他覺着她的腔調跟以往不同，不是訴苦、不是埋怨，而是乾脆地透着決心。

「他說妳需要做些什麼？」他問道，心裏開始想到各種新開支。

「他要我雇個女孩在家幫忙，說我一點家務都不應該做。」

「雇個女孩？」伊奮站定，怔住了。

「是呀！瑪花嬸嬸馬上就給我找到一個。人人都說我走運，竟然有個女孩肯上這兒來。為了讓她安心，我答應多給她一塊錢。明天下午，她就到了。」

伊奮又驚又怒，兩種情緒在內心交煎。他已預見馬上有新開支，但沒想到會在他微薄的收入添上長期負擔。他不再相信倩娜的話，說她的病況其

seriousness of her state: he saw in her expedition to Bettsbridge only a plot hatched between herself and her Pierce relations to foist on him the cost of a servant; and for the moment wrath predominated.

"If you meant to engage a girl you ought to have told me before you started," he said.

"How could I tell you before I started? How did I know what Dr. Buck would say?"

"Oh, Dr. Buck--" Ethan's incredulity escaped in a short laugh. "Did Dr. Buck tell you how I was to pay her wages?"

Her voice rose furiously with his. "No, he didn't. For I'd 'a' been ashamed to tell him that you grudged me the money to get back my health, when I lost it nursing your own mother!"

"You lost your health nursing mother?"

"Yes; and my folks all told me at the time you couldn't do no less than marry me after--"

"Zeena!"

實很嚴重，他覺得這趟去畢士橋，是她和那夥皮雅斯親戚想出來的詭計，強要他花錢雇個用人。這次是憤怒情緒佔了上風。

「你如要雇個女孩，應早跟我說，才去找人。」他說。

「我怎可早跟你說？我怎知弼克醫生會說什麼？」

「嘿！弼克醫生——」伊奮竊笑出來，暴露了他的疑心。「弼克醫生有告訴妳我怎付她人工嗎？」

她的聲音跟他一樣，因憤怒而提高。「當然沒有。因為我不好意思告訴他不願花錢去醫好我的病。我的病都是當年照顧你母親惹下的！」

「妳的病都是當年照顧我母親惹下的？」

「對呀！我家裏人那時都說，這事一了，你最起碼應份做的事，就是娶我——」

Through the obscurity which hid their faces their thoughts seemed to dart at each other like serpents shooting venom. Ethan was seized with horror of the scene and shame at his own share in it. It was as senseless and savage as a physical fight between two enemies in the darkness.

He turned to the shelf above the chimney, groped for matches and lit the one candle in the room. At first its weak flame made no impression on the shadows; then Zeena's face stood grimly out against the uncurtained pane, which had turned from grey to black.

It was the first scene of open anger between the couple in their sad seven years together, and Ethan felt as if he had lost an irretrievable advantage in descending to the level of recrimination. But the practical problem was there and had to be dealt with.

"You know I haven't got the money to pay for a girl, Zeena. You'll have to send her back: I can't do it."

「倩娜！」

他倆的臉給室內的昏暗遮掩了；但心裏的念頭從嘴中扔向對方，似是毒蛇吐信。伊奮倏地被這恐怖一幕唬住了，羞愧自己是其中的一方。他倆就似是敵人，在黑暗中近身肉搏，既無聊，又野蠻！

他轉身走去煙囪，在上面的架子摸到了火柴，點着室內唯一一枝蠟燭。最初微弱的火光沒照見什麼，隔了一會，倩娜神情嚴峻的臉在沒被窗簾掩蓋的玻璃上顯現。玻璃窗已從灰色變成黑暗。

結縈以來的慘澹七年，他們之間的不和首次爆發。伊奮覺得淪落到彼此對罵，本來高地是屬於他的，現已失去了。但現實的問題仍然存在，必須解決。

「倩娜，妳知我沒錢雇個女孩。妳要把她遣走。我負擔不來。」

"The doctor says it'll be my death if I go on slaving the way I've had to. He doesn't understand how I've stood it as long as I have."

"Slaving!--" He checked himself again, "You sha'n't lift a hand, if he says so. I'll do everything round the house myself--"

She broke in: "You're neglecting the farm enough already," and this being true, he found no answer, and left her time to add ironically: "Better send me over to the almshouse and done with it... I guess there's been Fromes there afore now."

The taunt burned into him, but he let it pass. "I haven't got the money. That settles it."

There was a moment's pause in the struggle, as though the combatants were testing their weapons. Then Zeena said in a level voice: "I thought you were to get fifty dollars from Andrew Hale for that lumber."

"Andrew Hale never pays under three months." He had hardly spoken when he remembered the excuse he had made for not accompanying his wife to the station the

「醫生說我如繼續操勞，像以往那樣做牛做馬，就會死掉。他奇怪我能捱了那麼久。」

「做牛做馬！——」他止住下面的話。「他說啥就啥，妳一根指頭也無須動，家務全由我來負責——」

她截斷他的話：「農場一貫的活兒，你經已比以前少幹了。」她說的是實情，他無言以對，讓她有時間加上一句冷言冷語：「乾脆送我去救濟院了事... 以前那裏也有姓傅羅方的人入住吧？」

她的譏諷是入心入肺，不過他忍住了。「我沒有錢。話說完了。」

對峙之中來了段靜默，似是雙方各在檢查兵器。然後，倩娜以平平的聲綫地說道：「我以為你會從安德魯·希爾那兒拿到五十元木料錢。」

「安德魯·希爾從來不在三個月到期前付款。」話一出口，他就想起了昨日不陪妻子到火車站的藉口，面上的緋紅登時漲至緊蹙的眉頭。

day before; and the blood rose to his frowning brows.

"Why, you told me yesterday you'd fixed it up with him to pay cash down. You said that was why you couldn't drive me over to the Flats."

Ethan had no suppleness in deceiving. He had never before been convicted of a lie, and all the resources of evasion failed him. "I guess that was a misunderstanding," he stammered.

"You ain't got the money?"

"No."

"And you ain't going to get it?"

"No."

"Well, I couldn't know that when I engaged the girl, could I?"

"No." He paused to control his voice. "But you know it now. I'm sorry, but it can't be helped. You're a poor man's wife, Zeena; but I'll do the best I can for you."

「什麼？昨天你不是告訴我，你跟他講好了會先付些錢，所以不能載我到平原那邊。」

伊奮不擅欺騙，從未被人指控過他說謊，這刻完全想不到如何彌縫。「可能是誤會了。」他結結巴巴地說道。

「你沒有錢？」

「沒有哦！」

「不能想個法子？」

「不能。」

「我雇那個女孩時可不知道。對吧？」

「對。」他停下來，令聲綫穩定。

「但妳現在知道了，對不起。我是沒法子。倩娜，妳嫁了個窮漢，但我一定會盡心照顧妳。」

For a while she sat motionless, as if reflecting, her arms stretched along the arms of her chair, her eyes fixed on vacancy. "Oh, I guess we'll make out," she said mildly.

The change in her tone reassured him. "Of course we will! There's a whole lot more I can do for you, and Mattie--"

Zeena, while he spoke, seemed to be following out some elaborate mental calculation. She emerged from it to say: "There'll be Mattie's board less, any how--"

Ethan, supposing the discussion to be over, had turned to go down to supper. He stopped short, not grasping what he heard. "Mattie's board less--?" he began.

Zeena laughed. It was an odd unfamiliar sound--he did not remember ever having heard her laugh before. "You didn't suppose I was going to keep two girls, did you? No wonder you were scared at the expense!"

He still had but a confused sense of what she was saying. From the beginning of the discussion he had instinctively avoided the mention of Mattie's name, fearing he hardly

有一刻，她動也不動，手臂伸長擱在椅子的扶手上，眼望着虛空，似乎在想什麼。「噢！我們總會有法子。」她的語調緩和下來。

她改變了語調，令他感到安心。「當然我們會！我可為妳做的事，多着哩！還有蜜娣——」

他說話的時候，倩娜像是仔細籌劃什麼，終於想好了，就說道：「無論如何，蜜娣的食用減省了——」

伊奮以為討論已告一段落，已轉身準備下樓晚餐，聽到她的話，就停下來，一時之間，不明白她在說什麼。「蜜娣的食用減省了？」他開口問。

倩娜笑起來，笑聲很奇怪、很陌生——在他記憶中，從沒聽過她笑。「你不會以為我準備養着兩個女孩吧？怪不得你怕花費太大！」

他對於她的話，仍感到混亂。打從一開始，他就自然而然，避開蜜娣的名字不提，怕不知會惹來什麼話。倩娜

knew what: criticism, complaints, or vague allusions to the imminent probability of her marrying. But the thought of a definite rupture had never come to him, and even now could not lodge itself in his mind.

"I don't know what you mean," he said.

"Mattie Silver's not a hired girl. She's your relation."

"She's a pauper that's hung onto us all after her father'd done his best to ruin us. I've kep' her here a whole year: it's somebody else's turn now."

As the shrill words shot out Ethan heard a tap on the door, which he had drawn shut when he turned back from the threshold.

"Ethan--Zeena!" Mattie's voice sounded gaily from the landing, "do you know what time it is? Supper's been ready half an hour."

Inside the room there was a moment's silence; then Zeena called out from her seat: "I'm not coming down to supper."

不外是批評她、投訴她、或暗示她快將嫁人。可是他從沒想到會有明確的決裂；就算是現在，也覺得不能置信。

「我不明白妳的意思。」他說。「蜜娣·思花不是個女傭，是妳的親戚。」

「她爸爸幹了那麼多好事，把我們都害慘了，然後窮得叮噹響的來投靠我們。我已收留了她一整年；輪到第二家人養她。」

她尖銳的話如同砲轟，其間伊奮聽到敲門聲。剛才他從門檻轉身過來時，把它帶上了。

「伊奮——倩娜！」蜜娣從樓梯過道傳來的聲音很愉快，「你們知道時間嗎？晚餐擱在那裏，已有半小時了。」

室內靜默下來，隔一會，倩娜在椅上喊出去：「我不吃了。」

"Oh, I'm sorry! Aren't you well? Sha'n't I bring you up a bite of something?"

Ethan roused himself with an effort and opened the door. "Go along down, Matt. Zeena's just a little tired. I'm coming."

He heard her "All right!" and her quick step on the stairs; then he shut the door and turned back into the room. His wife's attitude was unchanged, her face inexorable, and he was seized with the despairing sense of his helplessness.

"You ain't going to do it, Zeena?"

"Do what?" she emitted between flattened lips.

"Send Mattie away--like this?"

"I never bargained to take her for life!"

He continued with rising vehemence: "You can't put her out of the house like a thief--a poor girl without friends or money. She's done her best for you and she's got no place to go to. You may forget she's your kin but everybody else'll remember it. If you do a

「噢！怎麼了？妳不舒服嗎？不如我給妳端點東西上來？」

伊奮強打起精神，把房門打開：「蜜兒，妳先下去。倩娜只是有點兒累，我隨後就來。」

他聽見她說「好的」，然後就是她下梯級的輕快腳步聲。他關上門，重新走到房內。他妻子的神態沒改變，面孔凜然不可犯；頹然無助之感從而襲來。

「妳不會這樣做吧？倩娜？」

「做什麼？」她抿着咀唇吐出。

「就這樣——把蜜娣遣走？」

「我從沒想過要養她一輩子！」

他繼續往下說，越來越激動了。「妳不能把她當作個賊般趕走——她沒朋友，也沒有錢。她已盡心盡力幫妳做家務，也沒有其他地方可去。妳也許忘了她是妳的親戚，其他人可不會忘

thing like that what do you suppose folks'll say of you?"

Zeena waited a moment, as if giving him time to feel the full force of the contrast between his own excitement and her composure. Then she replied in the same smooth voice: "I know well enough what they say of my having kep' her here as long as I have."

Ethan's hand dropped from the door-knob, which he had held clenched since he had drawn the door shut on Mattie. His wife's retort was like a knife-cut across the sinews and he felt suddenly weak and powerless. He had meant to humble himself, to argue that Mattie's keep didn't cost much, after all, that he could make out to buy a stove and fix up a place in the attic for the hired girl-- but Zeena's words revealed the peril of such pleadings.

"You mean to tell her she's got to go--at once?" he faltered out, in terror of letting his wife complete her sentence.

記。妳這樣做了，村民會說什麼閒話？」

倩娜等了一會，似乎是讓他有時間去充分體會兩人之間的不同反應；他是如此激昂，而她是如此平靜。她回答時，仍是那一副平平的聲綫。「把她留下那麼久，我很清楚他們怎樣說。」

伊奮的手在門把上鬆開、墜下；打從叫蜜娣下樓、關上房門開始，他一直緊捏着門把。妻子的反駁，像把刀子鏢開他手掌的筋腱。突然之間，他覺得泄了勁、軟弱無力。他本想放下身段，辯說蜜娣的食用花費不了多少；兼且，他還有辦法湊錢買個火爐，在閣樓騰出地方給新來的女傭住。可是倩娜說的話，顯示如他情辭懇切地申辯，會導致什麼即時危險。

「妳準備跟她說——馬上就要走？」他遲疑道，怕聽妻子下面的話。

As if trying to make him see reason she replied impartially: "The girl will be over from Bettsbridge to-morrow, and I presume she's got to have somewheres to sleep."

Ethan looked at her with loathing. She was no longer the listless creature who had lived at his side in a state of sullen self-absorption, but a mysterious alien presence, an evil energy secreted from the long years of silent brooding. It was the sense of his helplessness that sharpened his antipathy. There had never been anything in her that one could appeal to; but as long as he could ignore and command he had remained indifferent. Now she had mastered him and he abhorred her. Mattie was her relation, not his: there were no means by which he could compel her to keep the girl under her roof. All the long misery of his baffled past, of his youth of failure, hardship and vain effort, rose up in his soul in bitterness and seemed to take shape before him in the woman who at every turn had barred his way. She had taken everything else from him; and now she meant to take the one thing that made up for all the others. For a moment such a flame of hate rose in him that it ran down his arm and clenched his fist against her. He took a wild step forward and then stopped.

像是試圖跟他講道理，她心平氣和地說：「那女孩明天就從畢士橋過來，總得有地方給她睡吧！」

伊奮望着她，心裏泛起厭惡。她不再是那個長伴身邊的家裏人，那個老是自顧自生悶氣、沒精打采的生物；而是個神秘的外來者，多年來不言不語，不知在想什麼心事，慢慢孕育出來的一股邪惡力量。他覺得很無助，厭惡感就更強了。她向來就是硬繃繃的，跟她說什麼都沒有用；但只要他可以不理這個人，仍有話事權，他就無所謂了。現在倒過來，她控制了他，他就痛恨她起來。蜜娣是她的親戚，不是他的，他沒法子逼她把人留在她的屋簷下。他長年以來的鬱悶、年輕歲月經歷過的挫敗和艱辛、虛耗的努力，它們積在心裏泛起一陣苦澀，似已幻化成為面前這個婦人，每次拐彎，她總是攔在前頭不讓過。她已剝奪了他的所有，現在有個人足可補償一切，她卻要趕走她。有一刻，他只感到滿腔恚恨。他的恨意直逼手臂，使他握緊拳頭，不由自主地朝她踏前一步；然後，他就停下來了。

"You're--you're not coming down?" he said in a bewildered voice.

"No. I guess I'll lay down on the bed a little while," she answered mildly; and he turned and walked out of the room.

In the kitchen Mattie was sitting by the stove, the cat curled up on her knees. She sprang to her feet as Ethan entered and carried the covered dish of meat-pie to the table.

"I hope Zeena isn't sick?" she asked.

"No."

She shone at him across the table. "Well, sit right down then. You must be starving." She uncovered the pie and pushed it over to him. So they were to have one more evening together, her happy eyes seemed to say!

He helped himself mechanically and began to eat; then disgust took him by the throat and he laid down his fork.

Mattie's tender gaze was on him and she marked the gesture.

「妳——妳不下去？」他的聲音迷亂。

「不了，我上床躺一會兒。」她溫和地說。於是他轉身走出房間。

廚房內，蜜娣坐在火爐旁，貓兒蜷成一團坐在她膝上。一見到伊奮，她就從椅上跳起來，把蓋好了的一碟肉餡餅端到桌上。

「倩娜怕不是病了吧？」她問。

「沒病。」

她坐在對面，望着他，神采飛揚。

「那就坐下來吧！你一定餓壞了。」她打開餡餅的蓋子，把碟子推過來。她開心的眼睛像是說：他倆又可獨處一個晚上了！

他機械地取來餡餅，開始進食。然後，煩惡直沖喉嚨，他把刀叉放下。

蜜娣溫柔的眼波，一直逗留在他身上，馬上注意到了。

"Why, Ethan, what's the matter? Don't it taste right?"

"Yes--it's first--rate. Only I--" He pushed his plate away, rose from his chair, and walked around the table to her side. She started up with frightened eyes.

"Ethan, there's something wrong! I knew there was!"

She seemed to melt against him in her terror, and he caught her in his arms, held her fast there, felt her lashes beat his cheek like netted butterflies.

"What is it--what is it?" she stammered; but he had found her lips at last and was drinking unconsciousness of everything but the joy they gave him.

She lingered a moment, caught in the same strong current; then she slipped from him and drew back a step or two, pale and troubled. Her look smote him with compunction, and he cried out, as if he saw

「伊奮，什麼事？味道不對？」

「對——棒極了。只是我——」他把碟子推開，站起來，繞過桌邊走到她身旁。她一陣愕然，驚恐地望着他。

「伊奮，有麻煩了？我知道一定是！」

她似乎驚惶極了，身體一軟，向他倒過來。他連忙伸手去扶，順帶把她攬進懷內。擁着她，他感到她的睫毛在自己的面頰上一開一合，就像落在網中的蝴蝶。

「發生——發生了什麼事？」她口齒不清地問。不過他終於找到她的嘴唇；啣吸它帶來如許快樂！其他事物都渾然不覺了。

她好一會沒動，沉溺在同一激流中；然後，她從他懷內溜出來，退後一兩步，面色蒼白，帶着疑慮。她的神情直刺心底，令他頓生歉疚。像是夢中

her drowning in a dream: "You can't go, Matt! I'll never let you!"

"Go--go?" she stammered. "Must I go?"

The words went on sounding between them as though a torch of warning flew from hand to hand through a black landscape.

Ethan was overcome with shame at his lack of self-control in flinging the news at her so brutally. His head reeled and he had to support himself against the table. All the while he felt as if he were still kissing her, and yet dying of thirst for her lips.

"Ethan, what has happened? Is Zeena mad with me?"

Her cry steadied him, though it deepened his wrath and pity. "No, no," he assured her, "it's not that. But this new doctor has scared her about herself. You know she believes all they say the first time she sees them. And this one's told her she won't get well unless she lays up and don't do a thing about the house--not for months--"

見到她遇溺，他喊道：「蜜兒！妳不能走！我不會讓妳走！」

「走——走？」她變得口吃。「要我走嗎？」

那句話在兩人之間產生迴響，就像在一片黑暗的大地上，示警的火炬飛快地從一隻手傳遞到另一隻手中。

伊奮覺得自己太魯莽了，就此殘酷無情地向她抖露這消息，心內滿是悔咎。他的頭開始在轉，要靠在桌邊才能穩定身軀。似乎他還是在吻她，可是又像尋覓不到她的嘴唇，饑渴極了。

「伊奮，是什麼事？倩娜惱了我？」

她的叫喊令他恢復鎮定，但又使到他的忿恨和憐憫加深。「不，不！」他安慰道。「沒那樣的事。是那新醫生為她診斷，把她嚇壞了。妳知道她每次看過新醫生，對他們的話都深信不疑。這個醫生告訴她，如要恢復健康，就得整日臥床，臥上幾個月，家裏事全不能碰——」

He paused, his eyes wandering from her miserably. She stood silent a moment, drooping before him like a broken branch. She was so small and weak-looking that it wrung his heart; but suddenly she lifted her head and looked straight at him. "And she wants somebody handier in my place? Is that it?"

"That's what she says to-night."

"If she says it to-night she'll say it to-morrow."

Both bowed to the inexorable truth: they knew that Zeena never changed her mind, and that in her case a resolve once taken was equivalent to an act performed.

There was a long silence between them; then Mattie said in a low voice: "Don't be too sorry, Ethan."

"Oh, God--oh, God," he groaned. The glow of passion he had felt for her had melted to an aching tenderness. He saw her quick lids beating back the tears, and longed to take her in his arms and soothe her.

他停下來，痛苦地從她身上移開視線。她靜靜地站在他面前，樣子頹然，就像一株折斷的樹榦。她看上去是那麼嬌小、荏弱，令他的心絞成一團。忽然間，她抬起頭，盯着他問：「她要找個比我更好的替手，對嗎？」

「今晚她是這樣說。」

「她今晚說了，明天不會有二樣。」

兩人不得不接受殘酷的事實：他們都知道倩娜的心意不會改，她一貫的處事方法是決定了什麼，就等如已把它付諸實行。

他們靜默下來，好久不作聲。然後蜜娣低聲地說：「伊奮，不用太擔心。」

「天呀！天！」他對她的滿腔激情，溶化為錐心的柔情蜜意。他見到她的眼皮快速眨動，意圖制止淚水掉下來，渴望把她攬進懷裏，好好溫存撫慰。

"You're letting your supper get cold," she admonished him with a pale gleam of gaiety.

"Oh, Matt--Matt--where'll you go to?"

Her lids sank and a tremor crossed her face. He saw that for the first time the thought of the future came to her distinctly. "I might get something to do over at Stamford," she faltered, as if knowing that he knew she had no hope.

He dropped back into his seat and hid his face in his hands. Despair seized him at the thought of her setting out alone to renew the weary quest for work. In the only place where she was known she was surrounded by indifference or animosity; and what chance had she, inexperienced and untrained, among the million bread-seekers of the cities? There came back to him miserable tales he had heard at Worcester, and the faces of girls whose lives had begun as hopefully as Mattie's.... It was not possible to think of such things without a revolt of his whole being. He sprang up suddenly.

「你這樣哪！晚餐都擱涼了。」她轉了稍稍輕快的語調責怪他說。

「噢！蜜兒——蜜兒——妳會上哪兒去？」

她的眼皮垂下，面頰一下輕微抽搐。他知道直到現在，她才清晰地想到前途問題。「我在士淡福或可找到事做。」她的語調不穩定，似乎知道他也明白是沒可能的事。

他跌坐椅中，雙手摀着臉。想到她再度單身一人，四處尋覓工作，他猝然絕望了！在那唯一有人認識她的地方，人情是如許冷漠、甚至被親友敵視；而她既沒工作經驗，又沒受過什麼訓練，怎跟來自城市的千萬個打工者競爭？這時他想起了在伍斯特聽到的悲慘故事，那些女孩起初跟蜜梯一樣，都是滿懷希望，她們的面龐當日是何等朝氣勃勃... 想到這些，他覺得五臟都掀翻了，整個人陡地從椅上跳起來。

"You can't go, Matt! I won't let you! She's always had her way, but I mean to have mine now--"

Mattie lifted her hand with a quick gesture, and he heard his wife's step behind him.

Zeena came into the room with her dragging down-at-the-heel step, and quietly took her accustomed seat between them.

"I felt a little mite better, and Dr. Buck says I ought to eat all I can to keep my strength up, even if I ain't got any appetite," she said in her flat whine, reaching across Mattie for the teapot. Her "good" dress had been replaced by the black calico and brown knitted shawl which formed her daily wear, and with them she had put on her usual face and manner. She poured out her tea, added a great deal of milk to it, helped herself largely to pie and pickles, and made the familiar gesture of adjusting her false teeth before she began to eat. The cat rubbed itself ingratiatingly against her, and she said "Good Pussy," stooped to stroke it and gave it a scrap of meat from her plate.

Ethan sat speechless, not pretending to eat, but Mattie nibbled valiantly at her food and asked Zeena one or two questions about

「蜜兒，妳不能走！我不會讓妳走！每次她說了就算，這次我要作主...」

蜜娣急急打個手勢。這時他聽到妻子的步聲從背後傳來。

倩娜仍是用她一貫的步伐，拖着那雙塌了跟的鞋子走到廚房來，沒有作聲，坐在慣常的中間位置。

「我覺得好了一丁點兒。弼克醫生說我就算沒有胃口，也要盡量多吃，才有體力。」她說話的腔調是一貫的單調、帶着抱怨意味，一面伸手過去蜜娣那邊取茶壺。她的外出衣裙經已除下來，換了家居的黑粗布袍子，加上啡色的針織披肩，樣子和態度也就因此跟平日無異。她為自己倒了杯茶，摻了大量牛奶，取了好大塊餡餅和一大堆泡菜；然後按照習慣，先校好假牙的位置，就開始進餐。貓兒表示討好，在她腳邊挨擦，她說聲「乖貓兒」，彎身去摸挲，並從碟子撿起一丁點肉碎丟給牠。

伊奮坐在那裏，沒有作聲，並不扮作進餐的樣子。但蜜娣卻勇敢地一小

her visit to Bettsbridge. Zeena answered in her every-day tone and, warming to the theme, regaled them with several vivid descriptions of intestinal disturbances among her friends and relatives. She looked straight at Mattie as she spoke, a faint smile deepening the vertical lines between her nose and chin.

When supper was over she rose from her seat and pressed her hand to the flat surface over the region of her heart. "That pie of yours always sets a mite heavy, Matt," she said, not ill-naturedly. She seldom abbreviated the girl's name, and when she did so it was always a sign of affability.

"I've a good mind to go and hunt up those stomach powders I got last year over in Springfield," she continued. "I ain't tried them for quite a while, and maybe they'll help the heartburn."

Mattie lifted her eyes. "Can't I get them for you, Zeena?" she ventured.

"No. They're in a place you don't know about," Zeena answered darkly, with one of her secret looks.

口、一小口地把東西送入口，間中問了倩娜一兩個與畢士橋旅程有關的問題，倩娜回答的腔調跟平日一樣。然後，這話題逐漸挑動她的興致，遂栩栩如生地複述多宗親友的腸胃病病癥。她說話時盯着蜜娣，面上帶着若有若無的微笑，嘴角的苦紋顯得更深了。

晚餐完了，她從椅子站起來，手按在平平無奇的胸脯上，說道：「蜜兒，妳做的餡餅總是覺着有點兒膩。」語調並不帶有惡意。她很少用「蜜兒」的簡稱，如用了，就多半是表示親切。

「我得去找找去年在春田買到的胃散。」她接着說。「有陣子沒服了，或許能紓緩胃痛。」

蜜娣抬起眼睛，怯怯問道：「倩娜，讓我去找吧！」

「不用了，放的地方妳不知道。」她陰惻惻地說，神情透着神秘。

She went out of the kitchen and Mattie, rising, began to clear the dishes from the table. As she passed Ethan's chair their eyes met and clung together desolately. The warm still kitchen looked as peaceful as the night before. The cat had sprung to Zeena's rocking-chair, and the heat of the fire was beginning to draw out the faint sharp scent of the geraniums. Ethan dragged himself wearily to his feet.

"I'll go out and take a look around," he said, going toward the passage to get his lantern.

As he reached the door he met Zeena coming back into the room, her lips twitching with anger, a flush of excitement on her sallow face. The shawl had slipped from her shoulders and was dragging at her down-trodden heels, and in her hands she carried the fragments of the red glass pickle-dish.

"I'd like to know who done this," she said, looking sternly from Ethan to Mattie.

There was no answer, and she continued in a trembling voice: "I went to get those powders I'd put away in father's old spectacle-case, top of the china-closet, where I keep the things I set store by, so's folks shan't meddle with them--" Her voice

她從廚房出去了。蜜娣站起來，開始執拾桌子的碟子。經過伊奮的座位時，兩人的視線相遇，惘然地糾結在一起。那寂寂、暖和的廚房一如昨夜，仍是那麼寧靜，貓兒已跳上倩娜的安樂椅上，爐火的燠熱開始逼出了天竺葵淡淡刺鼻的香味。伊奮倦懶地撐直身體站起來。

「我出去巡巡。」他說，走向通道那邊去取燈籠。

走到門邊，剛好見到倩娜又回轉廚房來。她的嘴唇因怒火而抽搐，蠟黃的臉也因為受到刺激而發紅。她的披肩不知何時已從肩膊滑下，拖在塌了跟的鞋子旁邊，她的手裏，拿着紅泡菜玻璃碟子的碎片。

「我想知道是誰幹的？」她問，視線凜然從伊奮掃向蜜娣。

聽不到回答，她繼續往下說，聲音帶着顫抖：「我去磁器櫃子拿放在爸爸舊眼鏡盒子內的胃散，放在最上頭全是那些要收起來、不讓人碰的東西——」她的聲音哽咽，兩顆小淚珠掛在

broke, and two small tears hung on her lashless lids and ran slowly down her cheeks. "It takes the stepladder to get at the top shelf, and I put Aunt Philura Maple's pickle-dish up there o' purpose when we was married, and it's never been down since, 'cept for the spring cleaning, and then I always lifted it with my own hands, so's 't shouldn't get broke." She laid the fragments reverently on the table. "I want to know who done this," she quavered.

At the challenge Ethan turned back into the room and faced her. "I can tell you, then. The cat done it."

"The cat?"

"That's what I said."

She looked at him hard, and then turned her eyes to Mattie, who was carrying the dish-pan to the table.

"I'd like to know how the cat got into my china-closet" she said.

"Chasin' mice, I guess," Ethan rejoined.

"There was a mouse round the kitchen all last evening."

沒有睫毛的眼眶下，然後慢慢流下面頰。「最高那一層，要長梯子才攀得着。我們結婚後，我是故意把費露華·梅寶阿姨送的泡菜碟子放在那兒，從沒取過下來，只除了春季大掃除，那時我都親手捧起來移開，免得打碎。」她必恭必敬地把碎片鋪在桌子上，顫聲說：「我要知道是誰幹的。」

在逼問之下，伊奮回到廚房，面對着她，說道：「那我可以告訴妳，是貓兒幹的。」

「貓？」

「我不是說了？」

她瞪着他，然後轉頭去望蜜娣。蜜娣正拿着盛載碟子的大盆走向桌邊。

「我想知道貓兒怎會走到磁器櫃子裏去？」她問。

「捉耗子吧！」伊奮加上一句：「昨晚有隻耗子在廚房內跑來跑去。」

Zeena continued to look from one to the other; then she emitted her small strange laugh. "I knew the cat was a smart cat," she said in a high voice, "but I didn't know he was smart enough to pick up the pieces of my pickle-dish and lay 'em edge to edge on the very shelf he knocked 'em off of."

Mattie suddenly drew her arms out of the steaming water. "It wasn't Ethan's fault, Zeena! The cat did break the dish; but I got it down from the china-closet, and I'm the one to blame for its getting broken."

Zeena stood beside the ruin of her treasure, stiffening into a stony image of resentment, "You got down my pickle-dish-what for?"

A bright flush flew to Mattie's cheeks. "I wanted to make the supper-table pretty," she said.

"You wanted to make the supper-table pretty; and you waited till my back was turned, and took the thing I set most store by of anything I've got, and wouldn't never use it, not even when the minister come to dinner, or Aunt Martha Pierce come over from Bettsbridge--" Zeena paused with a

倩娜的視線繼續在兩人身上來回掃射，然後發出一下她獨有的怪異嗤笑聲。「我知道貓兒聰明，」她高聲說道：「但不知道牠成精了，懂得撿起碎片，在牠闖了禍的層架上逐塊拼砌成原狀！」

蜜娣突然從冒着白煙的熱水中抽出雙手。「倩娜！不關伊奮的事！確是貓兒打破碟子的；不過是我從櫃子取出來用。打破了應該怪我。」

倩娜站在那碎成片片的珍品旁，惱怒得一動也不動，就似尊石像。「妳取泡菜碟子下來，幹啥？」

蜜娣的面頰登時漲紅一大片。「我想佈置餐桌。」她答道。

「妳想佈置餐桌；一見到我轉身外出，就去動我最珍貴藏起來的東西。我從不捨得用，就算牧師來進晚餐，或者瑪花·皮雅斯孀娘從畢士橋來——」倩娜停下來，深深吸一口氣，像是被自己嚇壞了，竟然如此大不敬去

gasp, as if terrified by her own evocation of the sacrilege. "You're a bad girl, Mattie Silver, and I always known it. It's the way your father begun, and I was warned of it when I took you, and I tried to keep my things where you couldn't get at 'em--and now you've took from me the one I cared for most of all--" She broke off in a short spasm of sobs that passed and left her more than ever like a shape of stone.

"If I'd 'a' listened to folks, you'd 'a' gone before now, and this wouldn't 'a' happened," she said; and gathering up the bits of broken glass she went out of the room as if she carried a dead body...

VIII

When Ethan was called back to the farm by his father's illness his mother gave him, for his own use, a small room behind the untenanted "best parlour." Here he had nailed up shelves for his books, built himself a box-sofa out of boards and a mattress, laid out his papers on a kitchen-table, hung on the rough plaster wall an engraving of Abraham Lincoln and a calendar with "Thoughts from the Poets," and tried, with these meagre properties, to produce some

揭露這罪行！「蜜娣·施花，妳是個壞胚子，我早已知道。你老爸就是這副德性，我收留妳時，人家就警告我了。所以我盡量把東西收好，不讓妳碰——現在，我最心愛的東西，給妳毀了——」她的話中斷，抽泣起來；然後止了哭，比之前更像一尊石像。

「如我有聽親人勸告，妳早就離了我家門，這事也不會發生。」她說。她撿起玻璃碎片步出廚房，就像捧着個遺體...

八

當日因父親患病，伊奮被召回農莊，他母親在客廳後面留了個小房間，給他作私人用途。在裏面，他釘了幾個木架子來放置書本；另外，他拿木板砌了個方型箱子，上面鋪了床褥，就成為一張箱型沙發。他再擺放一張廚房桌子，把筆記、文件什麼的都攤在上面。粗糙不平的灰泥牆上，掛了林肯的雕像和詩人雋言的月曆各一。他用了這幾樣簡陋的擺設，盡量去重塑

likeness to the study of a "minister" who had been kind to him and lent him books when he was at Worcester. He still took refuge there in summer, but when Mattie came to live at the farm he had to give her his stove, and consequently the room was uninhabitable for several months of the year.

To this retreat he descended as soon as the house was quiet, and Zeena's steady breathing from the bed had assured him that there was to be no sequel to the scene in the kitchen. After Zeena's departure he and Mattie had stood speechless, neither seeking to approach the other. Then the girl had returned to her task of clearing up the kitchen for the night and he had taken his lantern and gone on his usual round outside the house. The kitchen was empty when he came back to it; but his tobacco-pouch and pipe had been laid on the table, and under them was a scrap of paper torn from the back of a seedsman's catalogue, on which three words were written: "Don't trouble, Ethan."

Going into his cold dark "study" he placed the lantern on the table and, stooping to its light, read the message again and again. It was the first time that Mattie had ever

他見過的牧師書房。他在伍斯特讀書時，有位牧師對他很好，還借書給他看。這個小房間可說是他的避靜所，夏季他仍會在裏面耽着；但蜜梯來了農莊以後，裏面的火爐給他搬到她房間去，所以這一年以來，多個月份都不可以使用了。

屋子靜下來後，他就即時下樓躲進小房間去。床上傳來倩娜穩定的呼吸聲，他安心地知道廚房那一幕不會有續集了。倩娜離開後，蜜梯和他站着不動，無話可說，也沒走近對方。然後女孩繼續晚間執拾廚房的工作，他則手提燈籠走到屋子外頭去，作例行巡查。他回來時，廚房已空無一人，但他的菸草包和烟斗都擱在桌子上，下面壓着從種子商的目錄背頁撕下來的半張紙，寫着：「伊奮，不要擔心。」

走進那又黑又冷的「書房」內，他把燈籠放在桌上，彎身湊近燭光，把那句話讀了一次又一次。這是蜜梯第一

written to him, and the possession of the paper gave him a strange new sense of her nearness; yet it deepened his anguish by reminding him that henceforth they would have no other way of communicating with each other. For the life of her smile, the warmth of her voice, only cold paper and dead words!

Confused motions of rebellion stormed in him. He was too young, too strong, too full of the sap of living, to submit so easily to the destruction of his hopes. Must he wear out all his years at the side of a bitter querulous woman? Other possibilities had been in him, possibilities sacrificed, one by one, to Zeena's narrow-mindedness and ignorance. And what good had come of it? She was a hundred times bitterer and more discontented than when he had married her: the one pleasure left her was to inflict pain on him. All the healthy instincts of self-defence rose up in him against such waste...

He bundled himself into his old coon-skin coat and lay down on the box-sofa to think. Under his cheek he felt a hard object with strange protuberances. It was a cushion which Zeena had made for him when they were engaged--the only piece of needlework

次寫東西給他，拿着那張紙，他覺得她就在身旁，不過這感受是新的；但也令他更覺痛苦，它使他明白以後他倆再沒有其他溝通的渠道。她淺笑中洋溢的生命力、她聲音傳遞過來的溫情暖意，替代的將會是冷冷的紙張、死硬的文字！

他想到反抗，腦袋裏冒出種種念頭，但它們並不清晰，只在腦子裏翻滾；他還年輕力壯，生命力充沛，人生的希望和理想不應就此輕易被人摧毀。難道他的一生，就只能在這鎮日訴苦的怨婦身旁消磨掉？他本有其他機會，但都叫倩娜那份小家敗氣、愚昧無知而逐一犧牲了。可是又有什麼用？比起最初嫁他時，她的怨恨多了一百倍、生活得更不愜意；她現在剩下的唯一樂事，就是折磨他！所有正面的自衛情緒在他心中湧起：我不能就此虛耗此生...

他用舊浣熊皮衣把自己裹起來，躺在沙發箱上思量，覺着面頰下有件古怪東西，硬硬的、又凸凸凹凹。原來是訂婚時倩娜給他造的軟墊——那是他

he had ever seen her do. He flung it across the floor and propped his head against the wall...

He knew a case of a man over the mountain--a young fellow of about his own age--who had escaped from just such a life of misery by going West with the girl he cared for. His wife had divorced him, and he had married the girl and prospered. Ethan had seen the couple the summer before at Shadd's Falls, where they had come to visit relatives. They had a little girl with fair curls, who wore a gold locket and was dressed like a princess. The deserted wife had not done badly either. Her husband had given her the farm and she had managed to sell it, and with that and the alimony she had started a lunch-room at Bettsbridge and bloomed into activity and importance. Ethan was fired by the thought. Why should he not leave with Mattie the next day, instead of letting her go alone? He would hide his valise under the seat of the sleigh, and Zeena would suspect nothing till she went upstairs for her afternoon nap and found a letter on the bed...

His impulses were still near the surface, and he sprang up, re-lit the lantern, and sat down at the table. He rummaged in the

見過她縫的唯一針綫活兒。他一把將它扔到遠處，頭頸抵在牆上，半躺臥着...

他知道大山那邊有個跟他年紀差不多的小夥子，不想再受這種苦，離家和自己喜歡的女孩逃到西部去。他妻子跟他簽紙分手，他則和那女孩結了婚，日子過得很好。去年夏天在沙特瀑布鎮，他見到這對男女回來探親。同行的是他們的小女孩兒，她長着一頭金色卷髮，頸上掛着金鏈墜，穿戴得像個小公主。那個被遺棄的妻子也過得不錯，丈夫把農莊給了她，她就把它賣了，加上贍養費，在畢士橋開了間餐館，日子過得很充實，身份也不同了。想到這裏，伊奮內心大為振奮、滿是憧憬。翌日他和蜜娣何不索性結伴離開，為什麼要讓蜜娣單獨上路？他可把行李收在雪橇的座位下，那就不會引起倩娜的疑心。等到她上樓睡午覺，才會發現床上有封信...

他按捺不住興沖沖的勁頭，跳起身來，重新點着了燈籠，坐到桌旁，在

drawer for a sheet of paper, found one, and began to write.

"Zeena, I've done all I could for you, and I don't see as it's been any use. I don't blame you, nor I don't blame myself. Maybe both of us will do better separate. I'm going to try my luck West, and you can sell the farm and mill, and keep the money--"

His pen paused on the word, which brought home to him the relentless conditions of his lot. If he gave the farm and mill to Zeena what would be left him to start his own life with? Once in the West he was sure of picking up work--he would not have feared to try his chance alone. But with Mattie depending on him the case was different. And what of Zeena's fate? Farm and mill were mortgaged to the limit of their value, and even if she found a purchaser--in itself an unlikely chance--it was doubtful if she could clear a thousand dollars on the sale. Meanwhile, how could she keep the farm going? It was only by incessant labour and personal supervision that Ethan drew a meagre living from his land, and his wife, even if she were in better health than she imagined, could never carry such a burden alone.

抽屜亂翻，終於給他找到張紙，提筆就寫：

「倩娜，我能為妳做的，都已做了；不過似乎都無補於事。我不怪妳，也不會怪自己。或者我們分開，大家的日子會更好過。我會去西部試試運氣，妳可把農莊和鋸木坊賣了，錢歸妳——」

寫到這裏，他的筆就擱下來，因為他省起這塊地貧瘠極了。要是把農莊和鋸木坊都給了倩娜，他還有什麼本錢去籌劃將來的生活？到達西部之後，他很肯定可以找到工作；單是他一個人，他並不怕，大可到處碰機會，但蜜娣跟着他，靠他養活，那就不同了。倩娜以後的日子又會怎樣過？農莊和鋸木坊都做盡了按揭，就算她找到個買家——其實可能性不大——還清按揭後，也不知道是否有一千元到手。而且，她怎去經營這農莊？現在靠着日夜幹活，親自打點，才取得微薄的收入，勉強可過活。他妻子假使身體比她想像中好，也不可能單獨把擔子挑起來。

Well, she could go back to her people, then, and see what they would do for her. It was the fate she was forcing on Mattie--why not let her try it herself? By the time she had discovered his whereabouts, and brought suit for divorce, he would probably-- wherever he was--be earning enough to pay her a sufficient alimony. And the alternative was to let Mattie go forth alone, with far less hope of ultimate provision...

He had scattered the contents of the table-drawer in his search for a sheet of paper, and as he took up his pen his eye fell on an old copy of the Bettsbridge Eagle. The advertising sheet was folded uppermost, and he read the seductive words: "Trips to the West: Reduced Rates."

He drew the lantern nearer and eagerly scanned the fares; then the paper fell from his hand and he pushed aside his unfinished letter. A moment ago he had wondered what he and Mattie were to live on when they reached the West; now he saw that he had not even the money to take her there. Borrowing was out of the question: six months before he had given his only security to raise funds for necessary repairs to the mill, and he knew that without security

那她可回到親人那裏，讓他們籌謀個法子。那不是她逼蜜娣接受的出路嗎？倒不如讓她也來試試。等到她找到他倆，提出離婚的訴求，無論他在何方，他多半可賺夠錢，有能力負擔一筆足以過活的贍養費。另一項選擇是讓蜜娣一個人走，面臨往後更無依無靠的日子...

在找紙張時，他把桌子抽屜的東西都翻了出來。一提起筆，就瞥見一本舊雜誌《畢士橋蒼鷹》，有份廣告單張摺在最上頭，上面是誘人的字眼：
「西部旅程：費用減價。」

他持着燈籠湊近，焦灼地查閱車費；然後，手中的單張溜下，他把未寫完的信推開。一刻之前，他還在想蜜娣和他抵達西部之後，將何以維生；現在他知道他根本沒有錢帶她去。借錢是沒可能的了，不過是六個月前，他拿了唯一的抵押品，才借到錢去修理鋸木坊。他知道在獨方鎮這地方，如沒有東西作抵押，十元也借不到。這

no one at Starkfield would lend him ten dollars. The inexorable facts closed in on him like prison-warders handcuffing a convict. There was no way out--none. He was a prisoner for life, and now his one ray of light was to be extinguished.

He crept back heavily to the sofa, stretching himself out with limbs so leaden that he felt as if they would never move again. Tears rose in his throat and slowly burned their way to his lids.

As he lay there, the window-pane that faced him, growing gradually lighter, inlaid upon the darkness a square of moon-suffused sky. A crooked tree-branch crossed it, a branch of the apple-tree under which, on summer evenings, he had sometimes found Mattie sitting when he came up from the mill. Slowly the rim of the rainy vapours caught fire and burnt away, and a pure moon swung into the blue. Ethan, rising on his elbow, watched the landscape whiten and shape itself under the sculpture of the moon. This was the night on which he was to have taken Mattie coasting, and there hung the lamp to light them! He looked out at the slopes bathed in lustre, the silver-edged darkness of the woods, the spectral purple of the hills against the sky, and it

些殘酷的事實四面八方逼過來，就像獄卒給囚犯套上手銬。再沒有其他出路——全沒有。他一生人已給囚禁起來了，現在連唯一的一綫光明也快將熄滅。

他疲倦地爬回沙發箱子上，攤開的四肢如鉛塊般沉重，似乎再也不能驅使它們活動。淚水湧至他的喉間，灼熱地流到眼簾去。

他側臥在那裏，面向的玻璃窗開始逐漸透出一點光，黑暗的房間，給嵌了個月色溶溶的四方型天空，有枝彎曲的樹榦橫梗在中間，那是株蘋果樹的樹梢。夏天晚上，他從鋸木坊上來，有時會見到蜜娣坐在樹下。慢慢地包圍着月亮的水氣給燃點了，透出火焰的顏色，之後消散，一輪皓月懸掛在藍天之上。伊奮用手肘撐起自己，望着大地開始變亮，並隨着月光的照射，地上塑造出各種形狀。這本是他應承帶蜜娣坐雪橇的晚上，那就是給他倆照明用的燈！他往外望，整個斜坡沐浴在月光之中，陰暗的林子邊緣給鍍上銀光，山丘映襯天空，是詭異

seemed as though all the beauty of the night had been poured out to mock his wretchedness...

He fell asleep, and when he woke the chill of the winter dawn was in the room. He felt cold and stiff and hungry, and ashamed of being hungry. He rubbed his eyes and went to the window. A red sun stood over the grey rim of the fields, behind trees that looked black and brittle. He said to himself: "This is Matt's last day," and tried to think what the place would be without her.

As he stood there he heard a step behind him and she entered.

"Oh, Ethan--were you here all night?"

She looked so small and pinched, in her poor dress, with the red scarf wound about her, and the cold light turning her paleness sallow, that Ethan stood before her without speaking.

"You must be frozen," she went on, fixing lustreless eyes on him.

的一片深紫。似乎這片美麗的夜色，也在盡情地嘲笑他的淒慘遭遇...

他不知何時入睡。醒來後，室內滿是冬晨的峭寒，冷極了。他感到身體僵硬，而且饑腸轆轆。竟然還感到肚餓，令他羞愧不已。他揉揉眼睛，走到窗邊。紅日已昇至田野大地的灰色水平綫上，前方的樹林看來枯黑、脆弱易斷。他對自己說：「今天是蜜娣最後的一天。」他想像假使蜜娣不在了，這裏會是什麼模樣。

還是站在窗邊時，背後傳來腳步聲，是她進來了。

「伊奮——昨晚你整夜就在這裏？」

她看起來是如此弱小、瘦削，穿的是條舊裙子，頸上還是圍了那紅巾，本來白皙的臉在冷冷的晨光照射下，顯得蒼白。伊奮站在她面前，沒有說話。

「你一定凍僵了。」她繼續說，端詳着他的眼睛黯淡無光。

He drew a step nearer. "How did you know I was here?"

"Because I heard you go down stairs again after I went to bed, and I listened all night, and you didn't come up."

All his tenderness rushed to his lips. He looked at her and said: "I'll come right along and make up the kitchen fire."

They went back to the kitchen, and he fetched the coal and kindlings and cleared out the stove for her, while she brought in the milk and the cold remains of the meat-pie. When warmth began to radiate from the stove, and the first ray of sunlight lay on the kitchen floor, Ethan's dark thoughts melted in the mellower air. The sight of Mattie going about her work as he had seen her on so many mornings made it seem impossible that she should ever cease to be a part of the scene. He said to himself that he had doubtless exaggerated the significance of Zeena's threats, and that she too, with the return of daylight, would come to a saner mood.

He went up to Mattie as she bent above the stove, and laid his hand on her arm. "I don't

他走近一步，問：「妳怎知我在這兒？」

「我上床後，聽到你再下樓的腳步聲。我整晚都在聽，知道你沒再上來。」

他心內的柔情蜜意都湧到唇邊，望着她，說道：「我馬上去把廚房的火爐點上。」

他們回到廚房去。他拿來煤塊和木柴，代她掃走爐子內的灰燼；她則端來牛奶和吃剩的冷餡餅。當爐子開始散發出溫暖，晨光照到廚房的地板上，伊奮陰翳的念頭在稍稍回暖的空氣中就消散了。蜜娣每天早上在廚房忙這忙那，他已見慣，她又怎會從這情景中消失？沒可能。他對自己說，毫無疑問，他把倩娜的恫嚇看得太嚴重了。今早起床後，在晨光下，跟他一樣，倩娜也一定會變得較有理性，心平氣和地看待這事。

蜜娣正彎腰在爐子上弄什麼，他走近她身邊，手放在她臂上，跟她說：

want you should trouble either," he said, looking down into her eyes with a smile.

She flushed up warmly and whispered back:
"No, Ethan, I ain't going to trouble."

"I guess things'll straighten out," he added.

There was no answer but a quick throb of her lids, and he went on: "She ain't said anything this morning?"

"No. I haven't seen her yet."

"Don't you take any notice when you do."

With this injunction he left her and went out to the cow-barn. He saw Jotham Powell walking up the hill through the morning mist, and the familiar sight added to his growing conviction of security.

As the two men were clearing out the stalls Jotham rested on his pitch-fork to say:
"Dan'l Byrne's goin' over to the Flats to-day noon, an' he c'd take Mattie's trunk along, and make it easier ridin' when I take her over in the sleigh."

「我說呀！妳也不用擔心。」他微笑着，直望到她眸子裏。

她的臉熱熾熾地紅了，低聲說：
「不，伊奮，我不會的。」

「事情總會解決。」他加上一句。

她沒回答，只見她眼皮快速眨動。他往下說：「她今早有說什麼嗎？」

「沒有，我沒見着她。」

「見到她毋須太在意。」

留下這戒嚴指示後，他就離開她身邊，走到穀倉去。約坦·保華正在晨曦薄霧中步上小丘來，這景象是如此熟悉，他的內心更覺平靜。

兩個男人在馬廄內清理了好一會，約坦把身軀挨在長叉上，說道：「丹尼爾·拜仁今天正午會去平原那邊，可先載蜜娣的行李箱過去。等我載她時，雪橇就好走得多了。」

Ethan looked at him blankly, and he continued: "Mis' Frome said the new girl'd be at the Flats at five, and I was to take Mattie then, so's 't she could ketch the six o'clock train for Stamford."

Ethan felt the blood drumming in his temples. He had to wait a moment before he could find voice to say: "Oh, it ain't so sure about Mattie's going--"

"That so?" said Jotham indifferently; and they went on with their work.

When they returned to the kitchen the two women were already at breakfast. Zeena had an air of unusual alertness and activity. She drank two cups of coffee and fed the cat with the scraps left in the pie-dish; then she rose from her seat and, walking over to the window, snipped two or three yellow leaves from the geraniums. "Aunt Martha's ain't got a faded leaf on 'em; but they pine away when they ain't cared for," she said reflectively. Then she turned to Jotham and asked: "What time'd you say Dan'l Byrne'd be along?"

The hired man threw a hesitating glance at Ethan.

伊奮不解地望着他。他繼續說：「傅羅方太太說新來的女孩五時會到平原，叫我載蜜娣走，讓她坐六時的火車到士淡福去。」

伊奮感到血液直衝上太陽穴，要等一刻，才開得了口：「噢！蜜娣要走？不一定吧——」

「是嗎？」約坦不置可否地說。然後他倆繼續工作。

伊奮和約坦回到廚房時，兩位女士已在進早餐。倩娜比平日顯得更有精神、更有活力。她連喝了兩杯咖啡，把餡餅碟上的碎屑餵給貓兒；然後站起來，走到窗邊，折下兩三塊枯黃的天竺葵葉子。「瑪花阿姨種的花，一塊枯葉也沒有。不去打理它，它就蔫了。」她帶着深思說。然後她轉身過來問約坦：「你昨天說丹尼爾·拜仁會來，是什麼時間？」

那雇工遲疑地向伊奮投以一瞥。

"Round about noon," he said.

Zeena turned to Mattie. "That trunk of yours is too heavy for the sleigh, and Dan'l Byrne'll be round to take it over to the Flats," she said.

"I'm much obliged to you, Zeena," said Mattie.

"I'd like to go over things with you first," Zeena continued in an unperturbed voice. "I know there's a huckabuck towel missing; and I can't take out what you done with that match-safe 't used to stand behind the stuffed owl in the parlour."

She went out, followed by Mattie, and when the men were alone Jotham said to his employer: "I guess I better let Dan'l come round, then."

Ethan finished his usual morning tasks about the house and barn; then he said to Jotham: "I'm going down to Starkfield. Tell them not to wait dinner."

The passion of rebellion had broken out in him again. That which had seemed incredible in the sober light of day had really come to pass, and he was to assist as a

「正午左右吧！」他答道。

倩娜轉向蜜娣。「妳的箱子太重，雪橇載不了，丹尼爾·拜仁會過來，早點兒把它載到平原那邊去。」她說。

「倩娜，謝謝妳。」蜜娣回答。

「我先和妳清點一下東西，」倩娜平和的聲音往下說：「我知有塊粗毛巾不見了；還有，客廳內平日放在貓頭鷹標本後面的火柴匣子，妳把它弄去哪？」

她出去了，蜜娣跟在後頭。廚房剩下兩個男人，約坦跟他僱主說：「我就叫丹尼爾來哦！」

伊奮做完了家中和穀倉早上要做的事，就對約坦說：「我要到獨方鎮去，告訴她們不用等我午餐了。」

他內心又湧起激情，他要反抗！清明晨光中覺得不會發生的事，現在成真了。而他坐視蜜娣被趕走，沒一點法

helpless spectator at Mattie's banishment. His manhood was humbled by the part he was compelled to play and by the thought of what Mattie must think of him. Confused impulses struggled in him as he strode along to the village. He had made up his mind to do something, but he did not know what it would be.

The early mist had vanished and the fields lay like a silver shield under the sun. It was one of the days when the glitter of winter shines through a pale haze of spring. Every yard of the road was alive with Mattie's presence, and there was hardly a branch against the sky or a tangle of brambles on the bank in which some bright shred of memory was not caught. Once, in the stillness, the call of a bird in a mountain ash was so like her laughter that his heart tightened and then grew large; and all these things made him see that something must be done at once.

Suddenly it occurred to him that Andrew Hale, who was a kind-hearted man, might be induced to reconsider his refusal and advance a small sum on the lumber if he were told that Zeena's ill-health made it necessary to hire a servant. Hale, after all, knew enough of Ethan's situation to make it

子，不就是參與這行動的其中一人？想到自己被逼扮演的角色，想到蜜娣會如何看待他，他就蔫了，男子漢的顏面何存？他大步走向村子之時，各種亂糟糟的衝動念頭在心內此起彼伏。他決定要做些事，但要做什麼，卻不知道。

晨早的薄霧經已消散，陽光下，田野大地形成一塊似是銀鑄的盾。冬日陽光偶爾會從初春的薄靄透射出來，一閃一閃的，景象一如今天。路上每段路，都帶有蜜娣活生生的倩影；沒有哪株伸向天空的樹梢、哪棵長在路旁帶刺的矮樹叢，不沾上點點鮮明的回憶。一片幽靜之中，岑樹上傳來鳥鳴，跟她的笑聲如此相似，他的心先揪緊了，然後慢慢漲滿。這些回憶爬上心頭，他覺得馬上要作出行動。

忽然間他想到：那好心腸的安德魯·希爾如聽到倩娜健康欠佳，需要僱個女傭，或者會改變初衷，先付一部分木材貨款。反正希爾清楚伊奮家中情況，就算他再開口問，也不會太傷自

possible for the latter to renew his appeal without too much loss of pride; and, moreover, how much did pride count in the ebullition of passions in his breast?

The more he considered his plan the more hopeful it seemed. If he could get Mrs. Hale's ear he felt certain of success, and with fifty dollars in his pocket nothing could keep him from Mattie...

His first object was to reach Starkfield before Hale had started for his work; he knew the carpenter had a job down the Corbury road and was likely to leave his house early. Ethan's long strides grew more rapid with the accelerated beat of his thoughts, and as he reached the foot of School House Hill he caught sight of Hale's sleigh in the distance. He hurried forward to meet it, but as it drew nearer he saw that it was driven by the carpenter's youngest boy and that the figure at his side, looking like a large upright cocoon in spectacles, was that of Mrs. Hale. Ethan signed to them to stop, and Mrs. Hale leaned forward, her pink wrinkles twinkling with benevolence.

"Mr. Hale? Why, yes, you'll find him down home now. He ain't going to his work this forenoon. He woke up with a touch o'

尊心。況且，自尊心比起他胸內澎湃的熱情，又算得上什麼？

他越想就越覺得這法子行得通。如也能讓希爾太太知道，就有十成把握了。口袋裏裝着五十塊錢，就沒有什麼能阻隔他和蜜娣...

他首要的任務是在希爾開工前到達獨方鎮；他知道希爾在歌巴利路有項工程，所以會很早離家。隨着急速轉動的腦筋，伊奮的大步跨得更快了。走到學堂山腳時，就遠遠見到希爾家的雪橇，他連忙趨前招呼。及至走近一點，他見到駕雪橇的人是木匠的小兒子，坐在他旁邊，像個戴了眼鏡豎立的巨繭，就是希爾太太。伊奮打手勢請他們停下來。希爾太太的身體前傾，臉上粉紅色的皺紋發亮，氣色透着和善。

「希爾先生？他在家哪！今早不幹活了。他醒來後，覺得腰有點痛，我剛

lumbago, and I just made him put on one of old Dr. Kidder's plasters and set right up into the fire."

Beaming maternally on Ethan, she bent over to add: "I on'y just heard from Mr. Hale 'bout Zeena's going over to Bettsbridge to see that new doctor. I'm real sorry she's feeling so bad again! I hope he thinks he can do something for her. I don't know anybody round here's had more sickness than Zeena. I always tell Mr. Hale I don't know what she'd 'a' done if she hadn't 'a' had you to look after her; and I used to say the same thing 'bout your mother. You've had an awful mean time, Ethan Frome."

She gave him a last nod of sympathy while her son chirped to the horse; and Ethan, as she drove off, stood in the middle of the road and stared after the retreating sleigh.

It was a long time since any one had spoken to him as kindly as Mrs. Hale. Most people were either indifferent to his troubles, or disposed to think it natural that a young fellow of his age should have carried without repining the burden of three crippled lives. But Mrs. Hale had said, "You've had an awful mean time, Ethan Frome," and he felt less alone with his misery. If the Hales were

讓他貼了塊老奇特醫生給的膠布，在火爐邊歇着呢！」

她彎身向前，望着伊奮的眼神就像個母親般和藹，說道：「我剛從希爾先生那裏，聽到倩娜上畢士橋看新醫生去了。知道她又病倒，我真難過呀！希望醫生能給她開個方子。這一帶的人沒有誰比倩娜更多病了。我常對希爾先生說，如沒有你照顧她，她不知會變成啥樣子。從前，你媽還在時，我也常這樣說。伊奮，真苦了你！」

她滿腔同情地朝他點一點頭，就沒往下說了。她的兒子「唵哨」一聲，催馬兒開步。看着她離去，伊奮站在路中央，瞪着逐漸遠去的雪橇。

許久以來，沒人跟他說話，用了如希爾太太般親切的口吻；大多數人不是對他的窘困表現冷漠，就是覺得他這個年紀的年輕人，挑起照顧三個病人的重擔是應份做的事，不應抱怨。但希爾太太剛才說：「伊奮，真苦了你！」他覺得不再是那麼孤單地捱苦

sorry for him they would surely respond to his appeal...

He started down the road toward their house, but at the end of a few yards he pulled up sharply, the blood in his face. For the first time, in the light of the words he had just heard, he saw what he was about to do. He was planning to take advantage of the Hales' sympathy to obtain money from them on false pretences. That was a plain statement of the cloudy purpose which had driven him in headlong to Starkfield.

With the sudden perception of the point to which his madness had carried him, the madness fell and he saw his life before him as it was. He was a poor man, the husband of a sickly woman, whom his desertion would leave alone and destitute; and even if he had had the heart to desert her he could have done so only by deceiving two kindly people who had pitied him.

He turned and walked slowly back to the farm.

IX

受罪。如希爾一家同情他，就一定會應承他的要求...

他朝通往希爾家那條路上走，走了不遠，就陡然停下，熱血直沖上他的面頰。剛聽到的幾句話令他開始省悟，自己會做出什麼事。他是準備利用希爾一家的同情心，用個假藉口騙他們提早付款。原先他直闖獨方鎮，是什麼意圖自己也說不清，現在希爾太太的話有如當頭棒喝，直指他的本心！

忽然看清楚自己做事荒唐至此，他那份痴迷就消退，看清楚了自己的一生。他是個窮鬼，一個病懨懨婦人的丈夫；如她給他遺棄了，就會無依無靠，孤苦伶仃。就算他真的忍心遺棄她，也必得要欺騙兩個同情他的好人。

他回轉身來，慢慢朝農場走去。

九

At the kitchen door Daniel Byrne sat in his sleigh behind a big-boned grey who pawed the snow and swung his long head restlessly from side to side.

Ethan went into the kitchen and found his wife by the stove. Her head was wrapped in her shawl, and she was reading a book called "Kidney Troubles and Their Cure" on which he had had to pay extra postage only a few days before.

Zeena did not move or look up when he entered, and after a moment he asked: "Where's Mattie?"

Without lifting her eyes from the page she replied: "I presume she's getting down her trunk."

The blood rushed to his face. "Getting down her trunk--alone?"

"Jotham Powell's down in the wood-lot, and Dan'l Byrne says he darsn't leave that horse," she returned.

Her husband, without stopping to hear the end of the phrase, had left the kitchen and sprung up the stairs. The door of Mattie's

在廚房門外，丹尼爾·拜仁坐在雪橇上，拖雪橇的是隻大骨架的灰馬。牠的蹄不住去扒雪，長長的馬頸不耐煩地左右擺動。

伊奮踏進廚房內，見到他的妻子坐在火爐旁。她常用的圍巾把雙肩連帶頭都裹上了，在看一本叫《腎病及治療法》的書。為了它，他需付額外郵費，寄來了才幾天。

他進來時，倩娜沒動，也沒望。過了一會，他問：「蜜娣呢？」

她的視線並沒離開書本，答道：「可能正在搬行李箱子下來吧？」

他的臉登時漲紅。「一個人——搬箱子？」

「約坦·保華在林子那邊；丹尼爾·拜仁呢？他說一步也不敢離那匹馬。」她頂回去。

伊奮沒等她說完，已走出廚房，跑上樓梯去。蜜娣的房門是閉上的。他在

room was shut, and he wavered a moment on the landing. "Matt," he said in a low voice; but there was no answer, and he put his hand on the door-knob.

He had never been in her room except once, in the early summer, when he had gone there to plaster up a leak in the eaves, but he remembered exactly how everything had looked: the red-and-white quilt on her narrow bed, the pretty pin-cushion on the chest of drawers, and over it the enlarged photograph of her mother, in an oxydized frame, with a bunch of dyed grasses at the back. Now these and all other tokens of her presence had vanished and the room looked as bare and comfortless as when Zeena had shown her into it on the day of her arrival. In the middle of the floor stood her trunk, and on the trunk she sat in her Sunday dress, her back turned to the door and her face in her hands. She had not heard Ethan's call because she was sobbing and she did not hear his step till he stood close behind her and laid his hands on her shoulders.

"Matt--oh, don't--oh, Matt!"

過道上遲疑了一會。「蜜兒！」他低低叫喚；可是沒聽到應聲，就伸手去扭門把。

他從沒進過她的房間；只除了一次。那是初夏時分，他要去修補她房外簷下的罅隙。不過他完全記得裏面的擺設：小床上的紅白棉被、半身櫃上的美麗針墊，她媽媽放大的照片立在上頭，相架泛黑、是銀製的，後面擺放了一束染色的乾草。現在這些和其他所有代表她存在的東西都消失了，房間就像那天她剛到埗、倩娜領她進去時一樣，是那麼空晃晃、冷生生！地板中央放着她的行李箱，她穿着上教堂的裙子，坐在上面，背向門口，手摀着臉，沒聽到伊奮的叫喚，因為她在輕聲抽泣，連伊奮走近了也不知道。伊奮立在她身後，很近、很近，手按到她的肩膀上，她才察覺。

「蜜兒——噢！不要——噢！蜜兒！」

She started up, lifting her wet face to his.
"Ethan--I thought I wasn't ever going to see you again!"

He took her in his arms, pressing her close, and with a trembling hand smoothed away the hair from her forehead.

"Not see me again? What do you mean?"

She sobbed out: "Jotham said you told him we wasn't to wait dinner for you, and I thought--"

"You thought I meant to cut it?" he finished for her grimly.

She clung to him without answering, and he laid his lips on her hair, which was soft yet springy, like certain mosses on warm slopes, and had the faint woody fragrance of fresh sawdust in the sun.

Through the door they heard Zeena's voice calling out from below: "Dan'l Byrne says you better hurry up if you want him to take that trunk."

They drew apart with stricken faces. Words of resistance rushed to Ethan's lips and died

她吃了一驚，抬起淚痕漉漉的面龐迎向他。「伊奮——我以為以後也見不着你了！」

他把她拉到懷內，緊緊攬着，然後伸出顫抖的手，把她額上的髮絲輕輕撥開。

「再也見不着我？為什麼這樣說？」

她哭出聲來：「約坦說你告訴他我們不用等你午餐，我以為——」

「你以為我不回來了？」他沉鬱地代她說下去。

她依偎着他，沒說話。他把唇印在她的頭髮上，髮絲柔軟而富於彈性，就像溫暖的斜坡上某種苔蘚，還透着新木糠在陽光下發出的那股微香。

門外傳來下面倩娜的喊話：「丹尼爾·拜仁說，如妳要他幫忙載行李，那就得趕快。」

倆人分開了，神色慘然。反抗的話剛衝上伊奮的唇邊，就消散無蹤。蜜娣

there. Mattie found her handkerchief and dried her eyes; then,--bending down, she took hold of a handle of the trunk.

Ethan put her aside. "You let go, Matt," he ordered her.

She answered: "It takes two to coax it round the corner"; and submitting to this argument he grasped the other handle, and together they manoeuvred the heavy trunk out to the landing.

"Now let go," he repeated; then he shouldered the trunk and carried it down the stairs and across the passage to the kitchen. Zeena, who had gone back to her seat by the stove, did not lift her head from her book as he passed. Mattie followed him out of the door and helped him to lift the trunk into the back of the sleigh. When it was in place they stood side by side on the door-step, watching Daniel Byrne plunge off behind his fidgety horse.

It seemed to Ethan that his heart was bound with cords which an unseen hand was tightening with every tick of the clock. Twice he opened his lips to speak to Mattie and found no breath. At length, as she turned to

找到她的手絹，揩乾了眼睛；然後，彎腰去提行李箱的一個把手。

伊奮示意她退後，命令：「蜜兒，妳鬆手。」

她答道：「要兩個人才能拽它出這角落呢！」他只得聽從；於是他抓住另一把手，兩人合力把那沉重的箱子抬到樓梯的過道上。

「現在妳鬆手。」他再度說。然後，他把行李箱子扛在肩上，從樓梯下去，穿過通道，回到廚房。倩娜已坐到火爐邊她慣常的座位上，他經過時仍埋首於書本上，頭也不抬，沒望他一眼。蜜娣隨着他走出門外，幫他把箱子扛到雪橇後面。一切妥當後，他倆並肩站在門前階級上，看着丹尼爾·拜仁一抖韁繩，驅策那浮躁不安的馬兒離去。

伊奮覺得他整顆心被繩索束縛着，隨着時間分秒的流逝，有隻無形之手把它勒得越來越緊。他兩度想開口跟蜜娣說話，但發不出聲來。最後，當她

re-enter the house, he laid a detaining hand on her.

"I'm going to drive you over, Matt," he whispered.

She murmured back: "I think Zeena wants I should go with Jotham."

"I'm going to drive you over," he repeated; and she went into the kitchen without answering.

At dinner Ethan could not eat. If he lifted his eyes they rested on Zeena's pinched face, and the corners of her straight lips seemed to quiver away into a smile. She ate well, declaring that the mild weather made her feel better, and pressed a second helping of beans on Jotham Powell, whose wants she generally ignored.

Mattie, when the meal was over, went about her usual task of clearing the table and washing up the dishes. Zeena, after feeding the cat, had returned to her rocking-chair by the stove, and Jotham Powell, who always lingered last, reluctantly pushed back his chair and moved toward the door.

轉身準備回屋子時，他伸身止住了她。

「蜜兒，我會載妳過去。」他悄聲道。

她也壓低了聲音跟他說：「但倩娜要我跟約坦走。」

「我會載妳過去。」他重複道。她就進廚房去了，沒有回答。

午餐時，伊奮全沒胃口，吃不下。每當他抬起眼睛，就會望到倩娜消瘦的臉，覺得她薄成一綫的嘴唇唇尖牽動，似是抿出個微笑。她的胃口很好，說天氣暖和了，她的病也去了一點；並硬要多給約坦·保華一杓豆子，平日她從不理他，可沒那麼殷懃。

午餐過後，蜜娣如常清理桌子和洗滌杯碟。倩娜餵完了貓，就回到火爐邊坐上她的安樂椅。約坦·保華通常是能耽多久，就耽多久，這時不情不願地把椅子推回原位，走向門邊。

On the threshold he turned back to say to Ethan: "What time'll I come round for Mattie?"

Ethan was standing near the window, mechanically filling his pipe while he watched Mattie move to and fro. He answered: "You needn't come round; I'm going to drive her over myself."

He saw the rise of the colour in Mattie's averted cheek, and the quick lifting of Zeena's head.

"I want you should stay here this afternoon, Ethan," his wife said. "Jotham can drive Mattie over."

Mattie flung an imploring glance at him, but he repeated curtly: "I'm going to drive her over myself."

Zeena continued in the same even tone: "I wanted you should stay and fix up that stove in Mattie's room afore the girl gets here. It ain't been drawing right for nigh on a month now."

踏到門檻上，他轉身向伊奮說道：
「我幾點來接蜜娣？」

伊奮站在窗邊，一面看着蜜娣在廚房裏忙這忙那，一面機械地把煙絲裝進煙斗。他答道：「你不用來了；我會載她過去。」

他見到蜜娣別過臉去，臉上已是一片緋紅；也見到倩娜很快抬起頭來。

「伊奮，這個下午，我想你留在這兒。」他妻子說。「約坦可載蜜娣去。」

蜜娣向他投來一瞥，透着央求的意味；他簡短地重複那一句：「我會載她過去。」

倩娜仍然不徐不疾地往下說：「我想你留在屋子裏，在那女孩來到之前，把蜜娣房內的爐子修理好。它的通氣管有問題，差不多整個月都是這樣子。」

Ethan's voice rose indignantly. "If it was good enough for Mattie I guess it's good enough for a hired girl."

"That girl that's coming told me she was used to a house where they had a furnace," Zeena persisted with the same monotonous mildness.

"She'd better ha' stayed there then," he flung back at her; and turning to Mattie he added in a hard voice: "You be ready by three, Matt; I've got business at Corbury."

Jotham Powell had started for the barn, and Ethan strode down after him aflame with anger. The pulses in his temples throbbed and a fog was in his eyes. He went about his task without knowing what force directed him, or whose hands and feet were fulfilling its orders. It was not till he led out the sorrel and backed him between the shafts of the sleigh that he once more became conscious of what he was doing. As he passed the bridle over the horse's head, and wound the traces around the shafts, he remembered the day when he had made the same preparations in order to drive over and meet his wife's cousin at the Flats. It was little more than a year ago, on just such a soft afternoon, with a "feel" of spring in the air.

伊奮的聲音因憤怒而提高。「如果爐子對蜜娣還管用，雇來的女孩也就管用。」

「那新雇的女孩說，她以前打工的人家有暖氣爐。」倩娜仍是不慍不火，聲調平板地堅持己見。

「這樣嘛！她不如留在那裏更好。」他回贈一句。然後，轉向蜜娣，他聲音重濁地說道：「蜜兒，三時妳準備好；我在歌巴利有點事。」

約坦·保華已往穀倉去了。伊奮大步走在他的後頭，怒火高漲；他感到太陽穴在跳動，眼睛昏花。他照樣做日常的工作，但不知是什麼力量驅使着他，也不知跟隨指令郁動的手腳是誰的。直至他把棗紅馬牽出來，驅趕牠後退至雪橇的兩根長桿中間，才知道自己要幹什麼。他套上馬轡、把繩子繞在長桿上面，這時記起當日去平原那邊接載妻子的表妹，也做了這套預備功夫。那是一年多之前，在一個和煦的下午，周圍的氣息散發着一絲春天來臨的味道，棗紅馬圓圓的大眼瞪着他，拿牠的鼻子去拱他的掌心，就

The sorrel, turning the same big ringed eye on him, nuzzled the palm of his hand in the same way; and one by one all the days between rose up and stood before him...

He flung the bearskin into the sleigh, climbed to the seat, and drove up to the house. When he entered the kitchen it was empty, but Mattie's bag and shawl lay ready by the door. He went to the foot of the stairs and listened. No sound reached him from above, but presently he thought he heard some one moving about in his deserted study, and pushing open the door he saw Mattie, in her hat and jacket, standing with her back to him near the table.

She started at his approach and turning quickly, said: "Is it time?"

"What are you doing here, Matt?" he asked her.

She looked at him timidly. "I was just taking a look round--that's all," she answered, with a wavering smile.

They went back into the kitchen without speaking, and Ethan picked up her bag and shawl.

跟今天一樣。之後的日子逐一浮起，在他面前再度顯現...

他把熊皮毛毯子甩到雪橇內，爬上座位，駕到屋前去。踏進廚房時，裏面沒有人；但蜜娣的袋子和披肩已整齊地放在門邊。他走到樓梯下細聽，上面沒傳出任何聲音；可是這時他似乎聽到有人在他廢置的書房內走動。他推開門，見到已穿上外套和帽子的蜜娣背着他站在桌子旁。

他開門聲驚動了她。她很快地轉過身來，說道：「是時候了？」

「蜜兒，妳在這裏幹嘛？」他問。

她怯怯地望着他。「只是到處看看——沒什麼。」她回答說。面上掛着個無力的笑容。

他倆都沒再說話，回到廚房來。伊奮拿起她的旅行包和披肩。

"Where's Zeena?" he asked.

"She went upstairs right after dinner. She said she had those shooting pains again, and didn't want to be disturbed."

"Didn't she say good-bye to you?"

"No. That was all she said."

Ethan, looking slowly about the kitchen, said to himself with a shudder that in a few hours he would be returning to it alone. Then the sense of unreality overcame him once more, and he could not bring himself to believe that Mattie stood there for the last time before him.

"Come on," he said almost gaily, opening the door and putting her bag into the sleigh. He sprang to his seat and bent over to tuck the rug about her as she slipped into the place at his side. "Now then, go 'long," he said, with a shake of the reins that sent the sorrel placidly jogging down the hill.

「倩娜呢？」他問。

「午餐後，她就上樓去了。她說又有一陣陣刺痛，叫我們不要去騷擾她。」

「她有跟妳道別嗎？」

「沒有，再沒其它話。」

伊奮緩慢地看了廚房四周一眼，打了一個冷顫，對自己說：幾個小時後回來，他就會是孤零零一個。那種不真實的感受又襲來了，他不能相信這時蜜娣會是最後一次站在他的面前。

「來吧！」他幾乎有點開心地說；然後打開廚房大門，提起她的旅行包放進雪橇去。他跳上他的座位，等到她輕輕巧巧也坐上了旁邊位置，就彎身拿熊皮毛毯子把她全身上下包得嚴嚴密密。「喲！開步！」他發施號令，一抖韁繩，棗紅馬就柔順地快步下山。

"We got lots of time for a good ride, Matt!" he cried, seeking her hand beneath the fur and pressing it in his. His face tingled and he felt dizzy, as if he had stopped in at the Starkfield saloon on a zero day for a drink.

At the gate, instead of making for Starkfield, he turned the sorrel to the right, up the Bettsbridge road. Mattie sat silent, giving no sign of surprise; but after a moment she said: "Are you going round by Shadow Pond?"

He laughed and answered: "I knew you'd know!"

She drew closer under the bearskin, so that, looking sideways around his coat-sleeve, he could just catch the tip of her nose and a blown brown wave of hair. They drove slowly up the road between fields glistening under the pale sun, and then bent to the right down a lane edged with spruce and larch. Ahead of them, a long way off, a range of hills stained by mottlings of black forest flowed away in round white curves against the sky. The lane passed into a pine-wood with boles reddening in the afternoon sun and delicate blue shadows on

「蜜兒！我們有的是時間，可以到處走走。」他大聲說道，把臂伸進毛毯子下摸索她的手，把它緊握在掌心。這刻他感到臉上發麻，有點暈眩，就像溫度跌到零度某天，在獨方鎮的酒吧喝上一杯的感覺。

去到柵門，他沒叫棗紅馬往獨方鎮走，反而轉右，踏上畢士橋路的方向。蜜娣靜靜地坐着，沒表示意外；但過了一會，她說：「你是繞影子塘過去吧？」

他笑了，答道：「我知妳準會猜得着。」

她在熊皮毛毯子下向他靠近，於是他從自己的外套袖子側望，就只能見到她的鼻尖和迎風揚起的一縷卷曲棕髮。在白冷的太陽下，兩旁田野微微閃爍着光，他們的雪橇在路上緩慢地前行。不久之後，就右轉走上兩旁矗立着雲杉和櫟樹的小路。遠遠的前方是一列圓丘，雪白的山巔斑駁地長着黑色林子，一簇簇朝天空湧去。小路的盡頭是個松林，樹幹被下午的太陽都映照得發紅，在雪地上投下淡淡的

the snow. As they entered it the breeze fell and a warm stillness seemed to drop from the branches with the dropping needles. Here the snow was so pure that the tiny tracks of wood-animals had left on it intricate lace-like patterns, and the bluish cones caught in its surface stood out like ornaments of bronze.

Ethan drove on in silence till they reached a part of the wood where the pines were more widely spaced, then he drew up and helped Mattie to get out of the sleigh. They passed between the aromatic trunks, the snow breaking crisply under their feet, till they came to a small sheet of water with steep wooded sides. Across its frozen surface, from the farther bank, a single hill rising against the western sun threw the long conical shadow which gave the lake its name. It was a shy secret spot, full of the same dumb melancholy that Ethan felt in his heart.

He looked up and down the little pebbly beach till his eye lit on a fallen tree-trunk half submerged in snow.

"There's where we sat at the picnic," he reminded her.

藍色陰影。一走進松林內，微風稍息，松針無聲從樹梢墜落，予人一片靜謐而暖和之感。這裏的雪是如此純淨，以致林子內的小動物都留下了纖巧細緻的痕跡，泛藍的松果落在雪地上，就像是青銅製的裝飾物。

伊奮不作聲，繼續驅馬前行，直至松林較廣闊處，才停下來，然後扶蜜梯下座。他們穿越那些透着香氛的樹幹，腳步踩在雪上，清脆地「吱吱」作響；最後來到一個結了冰的湖旁邊，就站住了。湖的周邊是斜坡，陡峭地長滿樹木，冰面的遠處是一座孤零零的山，在下午太陽斜照下，它投下長大的圓錐形影子，這就是湖名「影子塘」的由來。它是個隱閉的秘密地方，就像伊奮內心深處，蘊含着那股說不出來的哀愁。

他的視線落在佈滿卵石的小灘上，周圍張望，終於高興地找到半埋在雪中的一截樹幹。

「那次野餐，我們就坐在那裏。」他提醒她。

The entertainment of which he spoke was one of the few that they had taken part in together: a "church picnic" which, on a long afternoon of the preceding summer, had filled the retired place with merry-making. Mattie had begged him to go with her but he had refused. Then, toward sunset, coming down from the mountain where he had been felling timber, he had been caught by some strayed revellers and drawn into the group by the lake, where Mattie, encircled by facetious youths, and bright as a blackberry under her spreading hat, was brewing coffee over a gipsy fire. He remembered the shyness he had felt at approaching her in his uncouth clothes, and then the lighting up of her face, and the way she had broken through the group to come to him with a cup in her hand. They had sat for a few minutes on the fallen log by the pond, and she had missed her gold locket, and set the young men searching for it; and it was Ethan who had spied it in the moss.... That was all; but all their intercourse had been made up of just such inarticulate flashes, when they seemed to come suddenly upon happiness as if they had surprised a butterfly in the winter woods...

他提及的那件樂事，是他們一起參加的寥寥幾次活動之一：去年夏季，教會辦了個野餐聚會。在一個悠長的下午，那個冷僻的湖邊滿載着歡樂。原先蜜娣央求他陪她去，他沒應承。到了夕陽西下，他從山上伐木回來，碰到幾個玩瘋了、到處亂跑的人，給拉到湖邊去加入大隊。蜜娣在那裏，圍在身邊的是一群浮滑的青年，他們用樹叉搭了個三腳架，中間吊着咖啡壺，她正在野火上面攪拌。在闊邊帽子映襯下，她的面龐像顆紫莓般明媚。他記得自己是山裏人一身粗布的打扮，羞怯地走近，而她一見到他，臉就陡地亮起來了，手持斟了咖啡的杯子，穿越人群，朝他走來。兩人一同走到湖邊一株倒下的樹幹旁，坐了幾分鐘，忽然她發覺她的盒式金吊墜不知丟在何方。那些小夥子連忙到處去找，結果是伊奮瞥見它躺在苔蘚之內... 就只得這些；但他們之間的所有交往都不外是這類零碎片段，忽地叫人滿心歡喜；就像在冬日林子裏，乍見一隻止息的蝴蝶，驚起翩翩飛去...

"It was right there I found your locket," he said, pushing his foot into a dense tuft of blueberry bushes.

"I never saw anybody with such sharp eyes!" she answered.

She sat down on the tree-trunk in the sun and he sat down beside her.

"You were as pretty as a picture in that pink hat," he said.

She laughed with pleasure. "Oh, I guess it was the hat!" she rejoined.

They had never before avowed their inclination so openly, and Ethan, for a moment, had the illusion that he was a free man, wooing the girl he meant to marry. He looked at her hair and longed to touch it again, and to tell her that it smelt of the woods; but he had never learned to say such things.

Suddenly she rose to her feet and said: "We mustn't stay here any longer."

「就是在這裏找到妳的盒式吊墜哩！」他踢踢一群稠密的紫莓樹叢說。

「我從沒見過有人的眼睛像你那麼利！」她答道。

在陽光中，她坐到樹幹上，他也在她身旁坐下來。

「妳戴了那頂粉紅帽子，漂亮得像個畫中人。」他說。

她開心地笑了。「噢！可能是因為那頂帽子。」她答道。

他們從沒如此坦白地吐露心聲。伊奮有一刻，還以為自己未婚，正在對心儀的女孩展開追求。他望着她的髮端，渴望再度撫摸它，並告訴她聞起來它帶有樹林的香氛；不過，他從沒學懂說這套話。

忽然她站起來，說道：「不能在這裏耽擱了。」

He continued to gaze at her vaguely, only half-roused from his dream. "There's plenty of time," he answered.

They stood looking at each other as if the eyes of each were straining to absorb and hold fast the other's image. There were things he had to say to her before they parted, but he could not say them in that place of summer memories, and he turned and followed her in silence to the sleigh. As they drove away the sun sank behind the hill and the pine-boles turned from red to grey.

By a devious track between the fields they wound back to the Starkfield road. Under the open sky the light was still clear, with a reflection of cold red on the eastern hills. The clumps of trees in the snow seemed to draw together in ruffled lumps, like birds with their heads under their wings; and the sky, as it paled, rose higher, leaving the earth more alone.

As they turned into the Starkfield road Ethan said: "Matt, what do you mean to do?"

She did not answer at once, but at length she said: "I'll try to get a place in a store."

他仍是惘惘地望着她，似在睡夢之中，答道：「還有時間哩！」

他們互相凝望，眼睛像是竭力要把對方的形象嵌進心底、牢固在那裏。有些事他必須在離別前向她傾訴；可是他不可以在那滿載夏天回憶的地方開口。所以他默默地跟隨她回到雪橇旁。他們離去時，太陽已落到山背後，松樹幹的顏色從發紅變得灰暗。

在田野間左拐右轉，他們終於繞路回到獨方鎮的大路上。廣闊的天空下，夕陽餘暉仍在，坐東的山巔映照出一片冷冷的彤紅。大地上，白雪蒙蓋的樹木蓬鬆地東一叢、西一叢立着，就像一群鳥兒各自把頭藏到翅膀下。天色逐漸黯淡下來，天空就似是更高了，雪地更覺一片孤清。

在轉入獨方鎮路時，伊奮問：「蜜兒，妳準備找份什麼工？」

起初她沒回答，最後才說：「到商店試試看。」

"You know you can't do it. The bad air and the standing all day nearly killed you before."

"I'm a lot stronger than I was before I came to Starkfield."

"And now you're going to throw away all the good it's done you!"

There seemed to be no answer to this, and again they drove on for a while without speaking. With every yard of the way some spot where they had stood, and laughed together or been silent, clutched at Ethan and dragged him back.

"Isn't there any of your father's folks could help you?"

"There isn't any of 'em I'd ask."

He lowered his voice to say: "You know there's nothing I wouldn't do for you if I could."

"I know there isn't."

"But I can't--"

「妳知道妳幹不來，空氣不好，妳又不能整天站立；從前那趟，命也差不多送掉。」

「比起初到獨方鎮時，我現在身體好多了。」

「那妳現在想糟蹋養好了的身體？」

她似乎無話可答。兩人不再說話，繼續前行。這條路上，某處兩人曾佇立、或笑語、或默然相對，每一處都牽動伊奮的心弦，拉他回去。

「妳父親那邊，沒有親人可幫妳嗎？」

「我還可上哪兒問呢？」

他低低說道：「妳該知道，只要我能力所及，什麼事都會為妳去做。」

「可是我知道沒有了。」

「不過，我不可以一一」

She was silent, but he felt a slight tremor in the shoulder against his.

"Oh, Matt," he broke out, "if I could ha' gone with you now I'd ha' done it--"

She turned to him, pulling a scrap of paper from her breast. "Ethan—I found this," she stammered. Even in the failing light he saw it was the letter to his wife that he had begun the night before and forgotten to destroy. Through his astonishment there ran a fierce thrill of joy. "Matt--" he cried; "if I could ha' done it, would you?"

"Oh, Ethan, Ethan--what's the use?" With a sudden movement she tore the letter in shreds and sent them fluttering off into the snow.

"Tell me, Matt! Tell me!" he adjured her.

She was silent for a moment; then she said, in such a low tone that he had to stoop his head to hear her: "I used to think of it sometimes, summer nights, when the moon was so bright I couldn't sleep."

她沒作聲；可是從相倚的肩膀，傳來她輕微的顫抖。

「蜜兒！」他衝口而出：「如我現在能跟妳一起走，我會的！」

她轉身面向他，從胸前抽張紙出來。她嚶嚶道：「伊奮——我找到這個。」就算暮色四合，他也認得是昨晚他寫給妻子的信；他忘記把它毀了。雖然吃了一驚，他仍猛地滿心歡喜。「蜜兒——」他大聲道：「如我會，妳呢？」

「噢！伊奮，伊奮——有用嗎？」她忽地一使勁，把信撕爛，碎片紛飛，飄落雪地裏。

「說呀！蜜兒，妳說呀！」他懇求她。

她靜默了一會；然後開口說話了，聲音低至他要垂下頭才聽得到。「夏天晚上，有時我就會這樣作夢。月光太好了，我睡不着。」

His heart reeled with the sweetness of it. "As long ago as that?"

She answered, as if the date had long been fixed for her: "The first time was at Shadow Pond."

"Was that why you gave me my coffee before the others?"

"I don't know. Did I? I was dreadfully put out when you wouldn't go to the picnic with me; and then, when I saw you coming down the road, I thought maybe you'd gone home that way o' purpose; and that made me glad."

They were silent again. They had reached the point where the road dipped to the hollow by Ethan's mill and as they descended the darkness descended with them, dropping down like a black veil from the heavy hemlock boughs.

"I'm tied hand and foot, Matt. There isn't a thing I can do," he began again.

"You must write to me sometimes, Ethan."

"Oh, what good'll writing do? I want to put my hand out and touch you. I want to do for you and care for you. I want to be there

這句話太甜蜜了，他的內心掀起一陣波瀾。「那麼早啊？」

她答了，似乎日子早在腦中生根：「第一次是影子塘那天。」

「所以妳捧咖啡過來，第一個遞給我？」

「我有嗎？不知道。本來我叫你一起去野餐，你不肯，我就沒了興致；然後見到你從那條路走過來，我以為你回家時故意繞到湖邊來，多高興！」

兩人又沉默下來。這時他們已去到大路斜向鋸木坊旁的山坳處，從那裏往下滑，黑暗隨着雪橇的軌跡而趨近，夜幕似從濃密的鐵杉樹梢間逐漸卸下。

「蜜兒，我行動沒有自由，什麼也做不了。」他再度開口。

「伊奮，你有空一定要寫信給我。」

「光寫信有啥用？我想伸手觸摸到妳，想為妳做事，想照顧妳。如妳病

when you're sick and when you're lonesome."

"You mustn't think but what I'll do all right."

"You won't need me, you mean? I suppose you'll marry!"

"Oh, Ethan!" she cried.

"I don't know how it is you make me feel, Matt. I'd a'most rather have you dead than that!"

"Oh, I wish I was, I wish I was!" she sobbed.

The sound of her weeping shook him out of his dark anger, and he felt ashamed.

"Don't let's talk that way," he whispered.

"Why shouldn't we, when it's true? I've been wishing it every minute of the day."

"Matt! You be quiet! Don't you say it."

了，什麼時候感到孤單寂寞，就會有我在妳身旁。」

「你不要這樣想；我會好好的。」

「意思是妳不需要我了？妳是去嫁人吧？」

「噢！伊奮！」她叫道。

「我對妳的感情，我說不出。蜜兒！我差不多寧願妳死了，也不想妳去嫁人！」

「啊！我寧願死掉！我寧願死掉！」她抽泣起來。

她抽泣的聲音把他從鬱憤中喚醒，他頓時心下有愧。

「我們不要說那些話。」他低聲道。

「既然是真話，為什麼不？每分鐘我都是這樣想。」

「蜜兒！不要再說！不許妳這樣說！」

"There's never anybody been good to me but you."

"Don't say that either, when I can't lift a hand for you!"

"Yes; but it's true just the same."

They had reached the top of School House Hill and Starkfield lay below them in the twilight. A cutter, mounting the road from the village, passed them by in a joyous flutter of bells, and they straightened themselves and looked ahead with rigid faces. Along the main street lights had begun to shine from the house-fronts and stray figures were turning in here and there at the gates. Ethan, with a touch of his whip, roused the sorrel to a languid trot.

As they drew near the end of the village the cries of children reached them, and they saw a knot of boys, with sleds behind them, scattering across the open space before the church.

"I guess this'll be their last coast for a day or two," Ethan said, looking up at the mild sky. Mattie was silent, and he added: "We were to have gone down last night." Still she did

「一直以來，只有你對我好。」

「也不要說這個，我丁點兒也幫不到妳！」

「是呀！但真的是只有你對我好。」

他們已到達學堂山崗頂，在薄暮中，獨方鎮在他們腳下。有部輕雪橇從村子的大路上來了，輕快的鈴聲「叮噹」地響，經過他倆身邊。他們把身子坐直，換上正經的樣子。大街上，屋子的前面開始透出燈光，零落的行人陸陸續續轉入各家的柵門。伊奮一抖鞭，催動棗紅馬小步跑起來。

走到村子的末尾，傳來孩子的呼喊聲。有群男孩拖着輕雪橇，在教堂前停下，分據空地的不同地點。

「照我估計，這一兩天內，他們只能滑這最後一趟。」伊奮抬頭望望明淨的天空說道。蜜娣沒作聲。他往下

not speak and, prompted by an obscure desire to help himself and her through their miserable last hour, he went on discursively: "Ain't it funny we haven't been down together but just that once last winter?"

She answered: "It wasn't often I got down to the village."

"That's so," he said.

They had reached the crest of the Corbury road, and between the indistinct white glimmer of the church and the black curtain of the Varnum spruces the slope stretched away below them without a sled on its length. Some erratic impulse prompted Ethan to say: "How'd you like me to take you down now?"

She forced a laugh. "Why, there isn't time!"

"There's all the time we want. Come along!" His one desire now was to postpone the moment of turning the sorrel toward the Flats.

"But the girl," she faltered. "The girl'll be waiting at the station."

說：「我們本說好昨晚去滑的。」她仍沒說話。然後，他隱隱覺得要做些什麼，讓兩人捱過這悽慘的最後一刻。他岔開話題說道：「奇怪啊！去年冬天，我們怎麼一次也沒滑過？」

她答說：「我又不是常常可到村子去。」

「也是真的。」他說。

他們已去到歌巴利路的坡頂，一邊依稀可見的是微微發白的教堂建築，另一邊是華南家前排雲杉所形成的黑幕，下臨一大幅斜坡，上面一部輕雪橇也不見。一股倏然的衝動驅使伊奮說：「不如現在由我載妳滑一趟？」

她勉強一笑，說道：「什麼？時間不夠了。」

「我們的時間多的是。來吧！」他現在的唯一欲望是盡量推遲棗紅馬朝平原出發的時間。

「但那女孩呢？」她遲疑地說：「她在火車站等着哩！」

"Well, let her wait. You'd have to if she didn't. Come!"

The note of authority in his voice seemed to subdue her, and when he had jumped from the sleigh she let him help her out, saying only, with a vague feint of reluctance: "But there isn't a sled round anywheres."

"Yes, there is! Right over there under the spruces." He threw the bearskin over the sorrel, who stood passively by the roadside, hanging a meditative head. Then he caught Mattie's hand and drew her after him toward the sled.

She seated herself obediently and he took his place behind her, so close that her hair brushed his face. "All right, Matt?" he called out, as if the width of the road had been between them.

She turned her head to say: "It's dreadfully dark. Are you sure you can see?"

He laughed contemptuously: "I could go down this coast with my eyes tied!" and she laughed with him, as if she liked his audacity. Nevertheless he sat still a

「就讓她等好了。本來妳不一樣要等她！來呀！」

他的聲音內有股令她懾伏的力量。於是他跳下雪橇之後，她就讓他摻扶下來，只稍稍推搪地說：「這頭可是一部輕雪橇也沒有呢！」

「有呀！就在那邊雲杉下面。」他把熊皮毛毯子扔到馬背上。那馬懶懶地站在路邊，似在低首沉思。然後他抓住蜜娣的手，拖着她走向輕雪橇。

她順從地坐在輕雪橇的前方，他在她身後坐下，兩人相距是如此之近，以致他的面龐不時被她的髮絲拂過。

「蜜兒，準備好了？」他叫道，就像兩人相隔整條路那麼遠。

她轉頭說道：「黑得很，你真的看得見？」

他不屑地笑起來，「就算把我的眼蒙住，我也可滑下去！」她也笑了，似乎很喜歡他這份膽量。雖則如此，他

moment, straining his eyes down the long hill, for it was the most confusing hour of the evening, the hour when the last clearness from the upper sky is merged with the rising night in a blur that disguises landmarks and falsifies distances.

"Now!" he cried.

The sled started with a bound, and they flew on through the dusk, gathering smoothness and speed as they went, with the hollow night opening out below them and the air singing by like an organ. Mattie sat perfectly still, but as they reached the bend at the foot of the hill, where the big elm thrust out a deadly elbow, he fancied that she shrank a little closer.

"Don't be scared, Matt!" he cried exultantly, as they spun safely past it and flew down the second slope; and when they reached the level ground beyond, and the speed of the sled began to slacken, he heard her give a little laugh of glee.

They sprang off and started to walk back up the hill. Ethan dragged the sled with one hand and passed the other through Mattie's arm.

坐定後，有一會動也不動，努力去望清楚下面那段長長的斜坡，因為這是傍晚最昏暗的時刻，天邊的夕陽餘暉與四周的暮靄匯合，令到景物朦朦朧朧，遠近都分不清楚了。

「來呀！」他叫道。

輕雪橇猛地向前一拋，在薄暮中，他們往前衝，越向下，就越快、越滑溜，空虛的夜似在下面張開，耳邊傳來「嗚嗚」風聲，像風琴的低鳴。蜜娣一動也不動，但當他們去到山腳的彎角，那棵大榆樹的橫杈似是狠狠地撲過來，他覺得她似乎向後一縮，在他懷內偎得更深。

「蜜兒，不用怕！」他開心地大叫，輕雪橇無驚無險、飛快地拐過那橫杈，繼續衝落第二個斜坡。最後他們落到平地上，輕雪橇速度減慢，他聽到她笑了。

他們跳下輕雪橇，走回山頂上。伊奮一隻手拖輕雪橇，另一隻手繞着蜜娣的臂彎。

"Were you scared I'd run you into the elm?" he asked with a boyish laugh.

"I told you I was never scared with you," she answered.

The strange exaltation of his mood had brought on one of his rare fits of boastfulness. "It is a tricky place, though. The least swerve, and we'd never ha' come up again. But I can measure distances to a hair's-breadth-always could."

She murmured: "I always say you've got the surest eye..."

Deep silence had fallen with the starless dusk, and they leaned on each other without speaking; but at every step of their climb Ethan said to himself: "It's the last time we'll ever walk together."

They mounted slowly to the top of the hill. When they were abreast of the church he stooped his head to her to ask: "Are you tired?" and she answered, breathing quickly: "It was splendid!"

With a pressure of his arm he guided her toward the Norway spruces. "I guess this sled must be Ned Hale's. Anyhow I'll leave it

「妳怕不怕我會撞上那棵榆樹？」他問，笑得像個大男孩。

「不是已說了，跟你一起，我就什麼也不怕。」她答道。

突如其來的情緒高漲，使他罕有地夸夸其談。「這裏可難掌握！只要一點兒拿不準，我們就永遠不能上來了。不過我雙眼可準了，毫釐不差！」

她喃喃說道：「我常說你一雙眼最厲害...」

傍晚的天空沒有星星，周圍是一片死寂；兩人肩膀偎依，沒再說話。但每攀上斜坡一步，伊奮就對自己說：「能夠並肩而行，這是最後一次。」

他們慢慢走回山頂上。差不多到達教堂時，他俯下頭，好跟她說話：「累不累？」她喘着氣答道：「棒極了！」

他輕壓她的臂彎一下，示意走向挪威雲杉那邊。「這輕雪橇一定是尼德·

where I found it." He drew the sled up to the Varnum gate and rested it against the fence. As he raised himself he suddenly felt Mattie close to him among the shadows.

"Is this where Ned and Ruth kissed each other?" she whispered breathlessly, and flung her arms about him. Her lips, groping for his, swept over his face, and he held her fast in a rapture of surprise.

"Good-bye-good-bye," she stammered, and kissed him again.

"Oh, Matt, I can't let you go!" broke from him in the same old cry.

She freed herself from his hold and he heard her sobbing. "Oh, I can't go either!" she wailed.

"Matt! What'll we do? What'll we do?"

They clung to each other's hands like children, and her body shook with desperate sobs.

希爾的，不管什麼，在這裏拿，就放回原位吧。」他把輕雪橇拖到華南家的柵門前，把它靠在圍欄上。當他伸直站起來時，發覺蜜娣在樹影下站得很近。

「這就是尼德與露芙接吻的地方？」她呼吸緊迫地悄語，然後伸開雙臂摟抱他。她的嘴唇為了尋覓他的，在他面頰上挨擦而過。意料不到的一陣狂喜，使他把她緊緊攬住。

「再... 再見...」她口齒不清地說，然後嘴唇又再印上來。

「噢！蜜兒！我不能讓妳走！」他喊出來的還是同一句話。

她從他懷中掙脫出來。他聽見她在啜泣。「呀！我也捨不得走！」她叫起來。

「蜜兒！我們怎辦？怎辦？」

他們像小孩般緊緊捏着對方的手；她的身體因猛烈抽泣而搖晃起來。

Through the stillness they heard the church clock striking five.

"Oh, Ethan, it's time!" she cried.

He drew her back to him. "Time for what? You don't suppose I'm going to leave you now?"

"If I missed my train where'd I go?"

"Where are you going if you catch it?"

She stood silent, her hands lying cold and relaxed in his.

"What's the good of either of us going anywheres without the other one now?" he said.

She remained motionless, as if she had not heard him. Then she snatched her hands from his, threw her arms about his neck, and pressed a sudden drenched cheek against his face. "Ethan! Ethan! I want you to take me down again!"

"Down where?"

在靜寂中，他們聽到教堂的鐘聲，五時了。

「伊奮！時間到了！」她叫道。

他把她拉近。「說什麼時間？妳以為現在我還會讓妳走？」

「如趕不上火車，我怎辦？」

「趕上了，妳會去哪？」

她站着不再說話，被他握着的手雖冷，卻是安然不動。

「現在誰走，誰就撇下對方。孤身上路，還有什麼意思？」他說。

她站着不動，似乎沒聽到他的話。忽然她大力掙脫他的手，雙臂騰起攬着他的脖子，條地把濕透的臉貼着他。

「伊奮！伊奮！我想你再和我下去！」

「去哪？」

"The coast. Right off," she panted. "So 't we'll never come up any more."

"Matt! What on earth do you mean?"

She put her lips close against his ear to say:

"Right into the big elm. You said you could. So 't we'd never have to leave each other any more."

"Why, what are you talking of? You're crazy!"

"I'm not crazy; but I will be if I leave you."

"Oh, Matt, Matt--" he groaned.

She tightened her fierce hold about his neck. Her face lay close to his face.

"Ethan, where'll I go if I leave you? I don't know how to get along alone. You said so yourself just now. Nobody but you was ever good to me. And there'll be that strange girl in the house... and she'll sleep in my bed, where I used to lay nights and listen to hear you come up the stairs..."

「滑下去，一直滑，」她急促地喘氣，「我們以後再也上來了。」

「蜜兒！妳想幹嘛？」

她把嘴唇貼近他耳邊說：「朝着大榆樹滑下去。你說你做得到。那麼以後我們再也不用分開了。」

「妳在說什麼？妳瘋了。」

「我沒有瘋；反而離開你，我就會瘋。」

「蜜兒！蜜兒——」他呻吟似的叫喚她的名字。

她緊箍着他脖子的雙臂更用力了，面龐偎貼上來。

「伊奮，離了你，我能到哪兒去？剩下我孤零零一個，日子怎過？你剛才不也這樣說了。除了你，從沒有人對我好。之後，屋子裏來了個新女孩... 她會睡在我床上。我慣了晚上躺在那裏，聽着你上樓的腳步聲... 」

The words were like fragments torn from his heart. With them came the hated vision of the house he was going back to--of the stairs he would have to go up every night, of the woman who would wait for him there. And the sweetness of Mattie's avowal, the wild wonder of knowing at last that all that had happened to him had happened to her too, made the other vision more abhorrent, the other life more intolerable to return to...

Her pleadings still came to him between short sobs, but he no longer heard what she was saying. Her hat had slipped back and he was stroking her hair. He wanted to get the feeling of it into his hand, so that it would sleep there like a seed in winter. Once he found her mouth again, and they seemed to be by the pond together in the burning August sun. But his cheek touched hers, and it was cold and full of weeping, and he saw the road to the Flats under the night and heard the whistle of the train up the line.

The spruces swathed them in blackness and silence. They might have been in their coffins underground. He said to himself:

這些話伊奮聽在耳裏，等同心被撕開，一片片落下來。它們使他想起他將要回去的屋子，裏面的景象是那麼可恨——那道每晚必須上去的樓梯、樓上那個等待着他的女人。蜜娣吐露的心聲是如此甜蜜，他一直悽悽惶惶，最終知道了她跟他是同一條心，太好了！聽到她的心底話，之前想起的屋子景象更是令人憎厭，那種日子怎可再過...

在一陣陣抽泣聲中，她仍不斷懇求，但他已聽不清她在說什麼。她的帽子不知何時滑下，他撫摸着她的頭髮，想把那種感覺深印掌心，把它埋在裏面，就像是冬天潛藏的種子。有一刻他又尋覓到她的嘴唇，兩人似乎回到八月的炎熱太陽下，湖邊野餐那一幕。但他的臉貼着的面頰，卻是冰冷一片，它已被淚水濕透。望過去，是夜裏去平原的路，耳邊傳來火車到站的哨子聲。

成排的雲杉把他們裹在黑暗和寂靜之中，就像是處身在地下棺木裏面。他對自己說：「被埋在地下大概是這種

"Perhaps it'll feel like this..." and then again:
"After this I sha'n't feel anything..."

Suddenly he heard the old sorrel whinny across the road, and thought: "He's wondering why he doesn't get his supper..."

"Come!" Mattie whispered, tugging at his hand.

Her sombre violence constrained him: she seemed the embodied instrument of fate. He pulled the sled out, blinking like a night-bird as he passed from the shade of the spruces into the transparent dusk of the open. The slope below them was deserted. All Starkfield was at supper, and not a figure crossed the open space before the church. The sky, swollen with the clouds that announce a thaw, hung as low as before a summer storm. He strained his eyes through the dimness, and they seemed less keen, less capable than usual.

He took his seat on the sled and Mattie instantly placed herself in front of him. Her hat had fallen into the snow and his lips were in her hair. He stretched out his legs, drove his heels into the road to keep the

感覺吧... 」然後又說：「之後就什麼都不知道了... 」

突然間，路那邊的棗紅老馬嘶嘯起來。他想：「牠奇怪還沒晚餐吃... 」

「來呀！」蜜娣低語，大力拽他的手。

她那股沉鬱的猛力逼迫着他：纖小的身軀竟似是宿命的工具。他從雲杉下的陰影裏，把輕雪橇拖到空曠的雪地上。在那片暮光浮暉中，他的雙眼並不習慣，像隻貓頭鷹般連眨幾次。下面的斜坡空晃晃的，獨方鎮村民都回家晚餐去了，教堂前的空地一個人影也不見。天上厚厚的滿佈雲霞，宣示天氣轉趨暖和。雲層掛得很低，跟夏季風暴前夕相若。暮色迷茫中，他費力去望，眼睛似乎沒有平日那麼銳利、那麼管用。

他坐到輕雪橇上，蜜娣就立即佔了前面的位置。她的帽子早前在雪地飛落，所以他的嘴唇就直接印到她的秀髮上。他伸長雙腿，用腳跟抵着地，

<p>sled from slipping forward, and bent her head back between his hands. Then suddenly he sprang up again.</p> <p>"Get up," he ordered her.</p> <p>It was the tone she always heeded, but she cowered down in her seat, repeating vehemently: "No, no, no!"</p> <p>"Get up!"</p> <p>"Why?"</p> <p>"I want to sit in front."</p> <p>"No, no! How can you steer in front?"</p> <p>"I don't have to. We'll follow the track."</p> <p>They spoke in smothered whispers, as though the night were listening.</p> <p>"Get up! Get up!" he urged her; but she kept on repeating: "Why do you want to sit in front?"</p>	<p>防止輕雪橇滑出去；雙手捧着她的頭，使它後仰。之後，他忽然跳起來。</p> <p>「妳起來。」他命令說。</p> <p>通常他用這種腔調跟她說話，她會順從；但這次卻縮在座位上，連聲地說：「不、不、不！」</p> <p>「起來！」</p> <p>「為什麼？」</p> <p>「我要坐在前面。」</p> <p>「不，不！你在前面怎駕？」</p> <p>「不用駕，照軌跡滑下去就是。」</p> <p>他們都壓低了聲綫，悄悄低語，似乎夜晚在聆聽。</p> <p>「起來！起來！」他催促着；但她只是重複：「你為什麼要坐到前面去？」</p>
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"Because I--because I want to feel you holding me," he stammered, and dragged her to her feet.

The answer seemed to satisfy her, or else she yielded to the power of his voice. He bent down, feeling in the obscurity for the glassy slide worn by preceding coasters, and placed the runners carefully between its edges. She waited while he seated himself with crossed legs in the front of the sled; then she crouched quickly down at his back and clasped her arms about him. Her breath in his neck set him shuddering again, and he almost sprang from his seat. But in a flash he remembered the alternative. She was right: this was better than parting. He leaned back and drew her mouth to his...

Just as they started he heard the sorrel's whinny again, and the familiar wistful call, and all the confused images it brought with it, went with him down the first reach of the road. Half-way down there was a sudden drop, then a rise, and after that another long delirious descent. As they took wing for this it seemed to him that they were flying indeed, flying far up into the cloudy night, with Starkfield immeasurably below them, falling away like a speck in space... Then the big elm shot up ahead, lying in wait for

「因為——因為我喜歡妳抱着我。」他囁嚅道，一邊把她拉起來。

這答案似乎令她滿意；又或者她被他聲音中的力量所懾服。暮色迷濛，四周已看不清了。他彎身去觸摸早前滑雪橇的人留下的透明軌道，小心地把兩塊滑行板裝在輕雪橇下面，然後交叉雙腳坐到前面。她一直等候，他坐穩後，就馬上在他身後縮起來，雙臂緊摟着他。他的脖子感受到她呼吸噴出來的氣，使他再次顫抖，差不多要從座位上跳起來。石光電閃間，他想到另一條路。她說得對：這樣做比分開好。他的頭向後仰，讓她的嘴唇印上來...

開始滑的時候，他又聽到棗紅馬在嘶嘯。那熟悉的渴望叫聲，與及它帶來的所有混亂景象，在首段路程中隨着他一起下滑。其間輕雪橇突然往下一挫，繼而又一躍而起，之後就是又一趟快得令人暈眩的長長下坡路。下滑時，他覺得他們真像在飛，翱翔直上夜空的雲間，獨方鎮遠遠在他們腳下，遠得像太空一粒微塵... 然後大榆樹在面前乍現，在路的彎角佇候他

them at the bend of the road, and he said between his teeth: "We can fetch it; I know we can fetch it--"

As they flew toward the tree Mattie pressed her arms tighter, and her blood seemed to be in his veins. Once or twice the sled swerved a little under them. He slanted his body to keep it headed for the elm, repeating to himself again and again: "I know we can fetch it"; and little phrases she had spoken ran through his head and danced before him on the air. The big tree loomed bigger and closer, and as they bore down on it he thought: "It's waiting for us: it seems to know." But suddenly his wife's face, with twisted monstrous lineaments, thrust itself between him and his goal, and he made an instinctive movement to brush it aside. The sled swerved in response, but he righted it again, kept it straight, and drove down on the black projecting mass. There was a last instant when the air shot past him like millions of fiery wires; and then the elm...

The sky was still thick, but looking straight up he saw a single star, and tried vaguely to reckon whether it were Sirius, or--or--The effort tired him too much, and he closed his heavy lids and thought that he would sleep...

們，他從齒縫迸出：「我們會撞中；我知道會撞中——」

輕雪橇朝着榆樹飛快地滑下去，蜜娣把他摟得更緊，她的血似已進入他的脈管內。有一兩次，輕雪橇滑偏了，他就把身體側向一邊，使它對正榆樹的方向。他一遍又一遍跟自己說：

「我們會撞中。」她說過的片言隻語在他腦袋內掠過、在他前面的空中飛舞。那棵大樹越來越近了，就在他們向它猛撲過去時，他想：「它在等待我們；似乎早知曉了。」可是，他妻子那張皺摺、可怕的臉突然閃出來，橫互在他和榆樹之間。他的自然反應是把它撥開。輕雪橇順應他的動作偏離開去，但他又糾正方向，朝着那橫岔出來的黑色一團直撞過去。最後空氣迎面撲上來，像千萬根火辣辣的綫，然後就是榆樹...

天空雲層仍很厚，但直望上去，還可見到孤清清的一顆星。他昏亂地想：是天狼星嗎？還是——還是——想不到，太難了。他沉重的眼皮合上，

The stillness was so profound that he heard a little animal twittering somewhere near by under the snow. It made a small frightened cheep like a field mouse, and he wondered languidly if it were hurt. Then he understood that it must be in pain: pain so excruciating that he seemed, mysteriously, to feel it shooting through his own body. He tried in vain to roll over in the direction of the sound, and stretched his left arm out across the snow. And now it was as though he felt rather than heard the twittering; it seemed to be under his palm, which rested on something soft and springy. The thought of the animal's suffering was intolerable to him and he struggled to raise himself, and could not because a rock, or some huge mass, seemed to be lying on him. But he continued to finger about cautiously with his left hand, thinking he might get hold of the little creature and help it; and all at once he knew that the soft thing he had touched was Mattie's hair and that his hand was on her face.

He dragged himself to his knees, the monstrous load on him moving with him as he moved, and his hand went over and over her face, and he felt that the twittering came from her lips...

差不多要睡着... 四周是如此寂靜，連一隻小動物在雪堆某處「噤啞」的聲音也聽得到。牠的發聲像隻受驚田鼠，瑟縮地「吱吱」叫着。他昏昏沉沉，懶得去想牠是否受傷了。過了一會，他明白牠一定是受了傷，現在非常非常的痛。但不知為何，這劇痛也鑽進他的身體內。他朝那邊翻身，但做不到，於是躺在雪地上伸長他的左手去摸。現在他似乎觸着了什麼，而不單是聽見；牠好像在他的手掌下，蓬鬆柔軟的一團。想到那小動物承受着痛苦，他就無法按捺得住了。他掙扎爬起身來，但好像有塊石頭，或者是一塊很大的東西把他的身體壓着，不能動彈。不過他的左手繼續到處慢慢摸索，希望可以找到那小東西，救救牠。突然間，他醒覺：觸手柔軟的那團東西是蜜娣的頭髮，他的手就在她的臉上。

他辛苦地撐起身來跪在雪地上，那詭異的重壓感跟隨他的動作而移動，沒有離開。他的手掌在她臉上來回地撫摸，「噤啞」的叫聲似是來自她的嘴唇...

He got his face down close to hers, with his ear to her mouth, and in the darkness he saw her eyes open and heard her say his name.

"Oh, Matt, I thought we'd fetched it," he moaned; and far off, up the hill, he heard the sorrel whinny, and thought: "I ought to be getting him his feed..."

THE QUERULOUS DRONE ceased as I entered Frome's kitchen, and of the two women sitting there I could not tell which had been the speaker.

One of them, on my appearing, raised her tall bony figure from her seat, not as if to welcome me--for she threw me no more than a brief glance of surprise--but simply to set about preparing the meal which Frome's absence had delayed. A slatternly calico wrapper hung from her shoulders and the wisps of her thin grey hair were drawn away from a high forehead and fastened at the back by a broken comb. She had pale opaque eyes which revealed nothing and reflected nothing, and her narrow lips were of the same sallow colour as her face.

他湊近她的臉，耳朵靠在她唇邊。在黑暗中，他見到她張開眼睛，叫喚他的名字。

「噢！蜜兒，我以為我們會撞中。」他呻吟道。遠遠的山頂上，他聽到棗紅馬的嘶嘯，想起：「我該去餵牠...」

嗷嗷不休的爭執聲在我踏入傅羅方的廚房時停止了。我見到有兩位女士坐在裏面，不知道剛才說話的是誰。

其中一位見到我進去，就從她的椅子站起來。她的個子很高，骨棱棱的身架子，站起來不是歡迎我——因為她只投來一瞬，神情有點意外——而是去端晚餐。傅羅方遲了回家，晚餐因此還沒開出來。她的肩上披着塊邋邋的粗布圍巾，額頭高高的，稀薄的灰白髮絲全向後掠，用把破爛的梳子插緊。她的眼球混濁，眼珠顏色很淡，沒透露什麼，也沒反映什麼；嘴唇很薄，跟她的臉一樣，是蒼白無華的。

The other woman was much smaller and slighter. She sat huddled in an arm-chair near the stove, and when I came in she turned her head quickly toward me, without the least corresponding movement of her body. Her hair was as grey as her companion's, her face as bloodless and shrivelled, but amber-tinted, with swarthy shadows sharpening the nose and hollowing the temples. Under her shapeless dress her body kept its limp immobility, and her dark eyes had the bright witch-like stare that disease of the spine sometimes gives.

Even for that part of the country the kitchen was a poor-looking place. With the exception of the dark-eyed woman's chair, which looked like a soiled relic of luxury bought at a country auction, the furniture was of the roughest kind. Three coarse china plates and a broken-nosed milk-jug had been set on a greasy table scored with knife-cuts, and a couple of straw-bottomed chairs and a kitchen dresser of unpainted pine stood meagrely against the plaster walls.

"My, it's cold here! The fire must be 'most out," Frome said, glancing about him apologetically as he followed me in.

另一位女士的身裁則纖小得多。她蜷坐在火爐邊的安樂椅裏，聽到我進來，就很快地轉過頭來，可是身軀完全沒有相應的動作。她的頭髮跟另一女人一樣，是灰白的；臉也是癟陷、沒有血色，不同處是皮膚淡褐，臉上黝黑的陰影令到鼻子顯得更尖、太陽穴更深陷。她的身體在皺成一團的衣裳下軟癱不動，深色的眼珠很亮，像個女巫般瞪着人望。脊椎有問題的人有時就會是那個樣子。

就算是在那一帶郊野，這廚房也顯得破陋；除了深色眼珠婦人坐的那張椅子——它是件污舊的昂貴傢具，可能購自鄉下拍賣會——其他的擺設都粗糙不堪。佈滿深刻刀痕的油膩桌上，放了三隻粗瓷餐碟，牛奶瓶的瓶嘴斷了一截；桌旁是幾張有草墊的椅子，然後就是一個沒髹油的松木廚櫃靠在灰土牆邊，看上去好不寒傖。

傅羅方在我後頭步入，望望廚房周圍，不好意思地說：「啊！廚房好冷！一定是火快要熄了。」

The tall woman, who had moved away from us toward the dresser, took no notice; but the other, from her cushioned niche, answered complainingly, in a high thin voice. "It's on'y just been made up this very minute. Zeena fell asleep and slep' ever so long, and I thought I'd be frozen stiff before I could wake her up and get her to 'tend to it."

I knew then that it was she who had been speaking when we entered.

Her companion, who was just coming back to the table with the remains of a cold mince-pie in a battered pie-dish, set down her unappetizing burden without appearing to hear the accusation brought against her.

Frome stood hesitatingly before her as she advanced; then he looked at me and said: "This is my wife, Mis' Frome." After another interval he added, turning toward the figure in the arm-chair: "And this is Miss Mattie Silver..."

那高瘦婦人已從我們身邊走到廚櫃那頭，並沒有理睬；但另一個婦人，蜷在她有墊的窩內開口了。她的聲音又高又尖，埋怨說：「剛剛才點的火呀！倩娜睡着了，一直沒起來，我叫她叫了好久。我都快要凍僵了。」

於是我知道入屋之前，說話的人就是她。

她的同伴端個崩了邊的盤子過來，裏面盛了賸餘的冷餡餅，瞧着就叫人失去胃口。但她把它擱在桌面上，似乎就完事大吉了，像是沒聽到對她的投訴。

她走過來時，傅羅方遲疑地站在她的面前；然後望着我說：「這是內子，傅羅方太太。」他停頓下來，轉向安樂椅上的婦人，加上一句：「這位是蜜娣·施花小姐。」

Mrs. Hale, tender soul, had pictured me as lost in the Flats and buried under a snow-drift; and so lively was her satisfaction on seeing me safely restored to her the next morning that I felt my peril had caused me to advance several degrees in her favour.

Great was her amazement, and that of old Mrs. Varnum, on learning that Ethan Frome's old horse had carried me to and from Corbury Junction through the worst blizzard of the winter; greater still their surprise when they heard that his master had taken me in for the night.

Beneath their wondering exclamations I felt a secret curiosity to know what impressions I had received from my night in the Frome household, and divined that the best way of breaking down their reserve was to let them try to penetrate mine. I therefore confined myself to saying, in a matter-of-fact tone, that I had been received with great kindness, and that Frome had made a bed for me in a room on the ground-floor which seemed in happier days to have been fitted up as a kind of writing-room or study.

"Well," Mrs. Hale mused, "in such a storm I suppose he felt he couldn't do less than take you in--but I guess it went hard with Ethan. I

希爾太太這位好心腸的婦人，原本以為我在平原上迷路，已給埋到大雪下。翌日早晨，見到我平安無恙回來，她是欣慰莫名。我心想：這趟險惡旅程，使她大幅提高對我的關愛之情。

聽到在這場冬季大風雪中，伊奮·傅羅方的老馬能夠載我來回歌巴利路口，她跟華南老太都驚詫得了不得；但更令她們驚奇的是，牠的主人竟然帶我回家度宿一宵。

在她們嘖嘖稱奇之際，我覺得她們私下有股好奇心，想知道我經歷這一晚後，對這家人有何看法。我覺得如要令她們拋開顧慮，最佳方法是我先不要有什麼保留。所以我用了以事論事的語調，說在傅羅方家得到非常好的款待。此外，在地下那層一個房間內——似乎日子還不錯時用作書室，傅羅方為我準備了一鋪床。

希爾太太盤算着：「噢！這麼大的一場風暴，他不得不讓你留宿吧？不過對他來說，真不容易。難以置信呀！

don't believe but what you're the only stranger has set foot in that house for over twenty years. He's that proud he don't even like his oldest friends to go there; and I don't know as any do, any more, except myself and the doctor..."

"You still go there, Mrs. Hale?" I ventured.

"I used to go a good deal after the accident, when I was first married; but after a while I got to think it made 'em feel worse to see us. And then one thing and another came, and my own troubles... But I generally make out to drive over there round about New Year's, and once in the summer. Only I always try to pick a day when Ethan's off somewheres. It's bad enough to see the two women sitting there--but his face, when he looks round that bare place, just kills me... You see, I can look back and call it up in his mother's day, before their troubles."

Old Mrs. Varnum, by this time, had gone up to bed, and her daughter and I were sitting alone, after supper, in the austere seclusion of the horse-hair parlour. Mrs. Hale glanced at me tentatively, as though trying to see how much footing my conjectures gave her;

不過廿多年來，你確是唯一一個踏進那屋子的陌生人。他太要強了，連老朋友想去探訪，也不願意；我不知道有誰去過，除了醫生和我... 」

「妳還有去嗎？希爾太太。」我試探地問。

「意外發生後，我常常去；那是我婚後不久。但後來，我逐漸明白，見到其他人，他們更是難堪。然後發生了一連串的事，我自己也遇上不少麻煩... 不過，每逢過新年，我都會駕車過去探訪；另外有一次是在夏季。只是我每次都會揀伊奮不在家的日子。單是見到兩位女士屋內對坐的情況，已夠慘了——再加上他望着自己那間破屋的樣子，真叫我傷心... 真的啊！我記得以前沒災沒難，他母親還在世時他家的景況。」

晚餐後，華南老太上床就寢，這時只剩下我和她女兒兩人，在擺了馬毛傢具的素淡客廳內單獨共處。希爾太太投來一瞥，若有所待，似乎在估計我的推斷有多少地方跟她一致，才可措辭。我認為她保持緘默至今，是因為

and I guessed that if she had kept silence till now it was because she had been waiting, through all the years, for some one who should see what she alone had seen.

I waited to let her trust in me gather strength before I said: "Yes, it's pretty bad, seeing all three of them there together."

She drew her mild brows into a frown of pain. "It was just awful from the beginning. I was here in the house when they were carried up—they laid Mattie Silver in the room you're in. She and I were great friends, and she was to have been my bridesmaid in the spring... When she came to I went up to her and stayed all night. They gave her things to quiet her, and she didn't know much till to'rd morning, and then all of a sudden she woke up just like herself, and looked straight at me out of her big eyes, and said... Oh, I don't know why I'm telling you all this," Mrs. Hale broke off, crying.

She took off her spectacles, wiped the moisture from them, and put them on again with an unsteady hand. "It got about the next day," she went on, "that Zeena Frome had sent Mattie off in a hurry because she

她看到一些人所不知的東西，多年來一直等待一個和她看法相似的人，才肯打開胸襟。

我沒立即說話，等待她估量過，認為我確可信任，才開口：「對！見到他們三個同住一屋簷下，可真慘。」

她柔淡的眉毛蹙緊，很痛心的樣子。「那件事徹頭徹尾可怕極了。他們被抬上來時，我在屋子裏——他們把蜜娣·施花抬到你的房間裏卸下。我跟她是好朋友，第二年的春天，說好了由她擔任我婚禮上的伴娘... 她醒過來後，我在她房間內整夜陪伴。他們用了很多方法，使她安靜下來，可是她還是意識不清。到了差不多天亮，忽然間，她清醒過來了，一雙大眼睛牢牢瞪着我，說道... 噢！我不知道為什麼要告訴你這些。」希爾太太的話中斷，開始落淚。

她除下眼鏡，把鏡片抹乾，再度戴上，手有點抖簸。她繼續說：「第二天有個傳言，說倩娜·傅羅方匆匆把蜜娣遣走，是因為她雇用了一個女孩，快要上工。村民都不清楚那晚她

had a hired girl coming, and the folks here could never rightly tell what she and Ethan were doing that night coasting, when they'd ought to have been on their way to the Flats to ketch the train... I never knew myself what Zeena thought--I don't to this day. Nobody knows Zeena's thoughts. Anyhow, when she heard o' the accident she came right in and stayed with Ethan over to the minister's, where they'd carried him. And as soon as the doctors said that Mattie could be moved, Zeena sent for her and took her back to the farm."

"And there she's been ever since?"

Mrs. Hale answered simply: "There was nowhere else for her to go;" and my heart tightened at the thought of the hard compulsions of the poor.

"Yes, there she's been," Mrs. Hale continued, "and Zeena's done for her, and done for Ethan, as good as she could. It was a miracle, considering how sick she was--but she seemed to be raised right up just when the call came to her. Not as she's ever given up doctoring, and she's had sick spells right along; but she's had the strength given her to care for those two for over twenty years, and before the accident came

和伊奮兩個為什麼要滑雪橇，因為他們本要去平原那邊趕火車的... 我從不知道倩娜怎樣想... 到今天仍不知道。沒有人知道倩娜心內想什麼。總之，她一聽到這樁意外，就馬上趕過來，陪着伊奮，直至他們把他抬到牧師家。一等到所有醫生說蜜娣可移動了，倩娜就通知我們，說可送回農莊去。」

「那她一直就留在那裏？」

希爾太太簡短地答：「她沒其他地方可去。」想到窮苦人家生活上的諸多掣肘，我的心都揪緊了。

「對，她留到如今，」希爾太太往下說：「倩娜有照顧她，也有照顧伊奮，盡了她最大的能力。這可說是個奇蹟，她本來不是個多病多痛的人嗎？只不過一有需要，她就挺住了。她不是不再需要看醫生，她的病還是不時會發作的，不過上天予她力量，使她有能力去照顧他們，足足超過廿

she thought she couldn't even care for herself."

Mrs. Hale paused a moment, and I remained silent, plunged in the vision of what her words evoked. "It's horrible for them all," I murmured.

"Yes: it's pretty bad. And they ain't any of 'em easy people either. Mattie was, before the accident; I never knew a sweeter nature. But she's suffered too much--that's what I always say when folks tell me how she's soured. And Zeena, she was always cranky. Not but what she bears with Mattie wonderful--I've seen that myself. But sometimes the two of them get going at each other, and then Ethan's face'd break your heart... When I see that, I think it's him that suffers most... anyhow it ain't Zeena, because she ain't got the time... It's a pity, though," Mrs. Hale ended, sighing, "that they're all shut up there'n that one kitchen. In the summertime, on pleasant days, they move Mattie into the parlour, or out in the door-yard, and that makes it easier... but winters there's the fires to be thought of; and there ain't a dime to spare up at the Fromes."

年了。意外發生之前，她以為連自己也照顧不來哩！」

希爾太太停頓了一刻，我沒作聲，只顧得從她的話去想像那情景。「三個人都受罪。」我喃喃道。

「是的，真慘。他們全不是易擺布的人。那趟意外之前，蜜娣的性情好極了，我未見過比她更和善的女子。但她受的苦太深了——人家告訴我她變得怎樣尖酸，我都是這樣解釋。倩娜呢？她的脾氣向來難捱，但後來蜜娣說什麼做什麼，她都忍受了——我親眼見過。不過有時她們還會相持不下，那時伊奮的樣子看上去真叫人傷心... 我覺得是他最受苦... 總之不會是倩娜，因她已忙不過氣來，沒時間... 可憐啊！」希爾太太說完了，嘆一口氣道：「他們都困在一間廚房裏。夏季天氣好的時候，他們把蜜娣移到客廳、或前庭去，那還好... 但冬天要考慮到升火問題；傅羅方一家可是多一毛錢也沒有。」

Mrs. Hale drew a deep breath, as though her memory were eased of its long burden, and she had no more to say; but suddenly an impulse of complete avowal seized her.

She took off her spectacles again, leaned toward me across the bead-work table-cover, and went on with lowered voice: "There was one day, about a week after the accident, when they all thought Mattie couldn't live. Well, I say it's a pity she did. I said it right out to our minister once, and he was shocked at me. Only he wasn't with me that morning when she first came to... And I say, if she'd ha' died, Ethan might ha' lived; and the way they are now, I don't see's there's much difference between the Fromes up at the farm and the Fromes down in the graveyard; 'cept that down there they're all quiet, and the women have got to hold their tongues."

希爾太太深深吸一口氣，似乎記憶的重壓，都給清除了，她的話就完了。但忽然間，她生出一股衝動，要把心底話全部傾訴出來。

她再次除下眼鏡，從綴珠檯布的另一邊探身過來，低聲地往下說：「大概意外發生一周後，有一天，他們以為蜜娣捱不過去了。我認為呢，她能捱得過去，並非好事。在牧師面前，我就是這樣說，把他嚇壞了。其實那天早上她剛甦醒過來，他不在場，我可是一直陪着她 ... 我覺得呢，如她死了，伊奮也許能活。他們現在那個樣子，儘管在農莊上活着，其實跟墳場裏埋着的先人沒有多大差別；唯一的差別是：入土的先人都是靜靜地躺着，那些女人都不能再哼聲了。」