

(4) HEARTS AND CROSSES

[四]心與十字

BALDY WOODS REACHED FOR THE BOTTLE, and got it. Whenever Baldy went for anything he usually -- but this not Baldy's story. He poured out a third drink that was larger by a finger than the first and second. Baldy was in consultation; and the consultee is worthy of his hire.

吳光頭伸手拿到那只酒瓶。光頭不論要甚麼，就得甚麼--可是這篇並非有關光頭的故事。他從酒瓶裏倒出第三杯酒，比前兩杯都高上一個指幅左右。他正在為人做參謀，那個來找他徵求他的意見的人，倒是帶來不錯的孝敬。

'I'd be king if I was you,' said Baldy, so positively that his holster creaked and his spurs rattled.

[假如我是你的話，我要當王，]光頭說，他的語氣是這麼肯定，連槍套也發響，馬刺也振盪。

Webb Yeager pushed back his flat-brimmed Stetson, and made further disorder in his straw-colored hair. The tonsorial recourse being without avail, he followed the liquid example of the more resourceful Baldy.

伊偉博把他的西部帽往腦後一推，把他原來不怎麼整齊的枯黃色頭髮弄得更亂。反正這個時候也不可能理髮，他便模仿比較有腦筋的光頭的榜樣，借酒消愁。

'If a man marries a queen, it oughtn't to make him a two-spot,' declared Webb, epitomizing his grievances.

[假如一個人娶了皇后，他不應該成為小么兒兩點，]偉博這麼宣佈，一語道出自己的心酸。

'Sure not,' said Baldy, sympathetic, still thirsty, and genuinely solicitous concerning the relative value of the cards. 'By rights you're a king. If I was you, I'd call for a new deal. The cards have been stacked on you -- I'll tell you what you are, Webb Yeager.'

[當然不，]光頭說，一面表示同情，一面依然口渴，而且是真正關心那几張牌的相對價值。[依法訂權力來說，你是個王。假如我是你，我會要求從新發牌。這些牌是硬加在你頭上的，我告訴你你是甚麼，伊偉博。]

'What?' asked Webb, with a hopeful look in his pale-blue eyes.

[我是甚麼?]偉博問道，在他淺藍色眼睛裏閃亮著希望。

'You're a prince-consort.'

[你是個夫王子。]

‘Go easy,’ said Webb. ‘I never black-guarded you none.’

[慢點，慢點，]偉博說。[我不曾含含糊糊地罵過你。]

‘It’s a title,’ explained Baldy, ‘up among the picture-cards; but it don’t take no tricks. I’ll tell you, Webb. It’s a brand they’ve got for certain animals in Europe. Say that you or me or one of them Dutch dukes marries in a royal family. Well, by and by our wife gets to be queen. Are we king? Not in a million years. At the coronation ceremonies we march between little casino and the Ninth Grand Custodian of the Royal Hall Bedchamber. The only use we are is to appear in photographs, and accept the responsibility for the heir-apparent. That ain’t any square deal. Yes, sir, Webb, you’re a prince-consort; and if I was you, I’d start a interregnum or a habeas corpus or something’; and I’d be king if I had to turn from the bottom of the deck.’

[那是個頭銜，]光頭解釋說，[在撲克牌裏也有的；但是並不須要玩甚麼手腳。我來告訴你，偉博。那是在歐洲人們給一種類的動物取的名字。譬如說，你，我或者一個荷蘭公爵和皇家結了親。那麼，不久我們的太太成了女皇。我們成了國王嗎？甬想。在加冕禮上，我們走在無名小卒和皇家寢宮的第九號掌宮之間。我們唯一的功用是在照片裏亮相，來承擔王儲的責任。這交易是不公平的。是的，偉博，你是個夫王子；假如我是你，我會給它搞個新舊王交接之間的無王狀態或者提獄明罪之類的勾當；即使我必須從一副牌牌底翻身，我也要當王。]

Baldy emptied his glass to the ratification of his Warwick pose.

光頭舉杯向他承認的英國皇家亮相者乾杯。

‘Baldy,’ said Webb, solemnly, ‘me and you punched cows in the same outfit for years. We been runnin’ on the same range, and ridin’ the same trials since we was boys. I wouldn’t talk about my family affairs to nobody but you. You was line-rider on the Nopalito Ranch when I married Santa McAllister. I was foreman then; but what am I now? I don’t amount to a knot in a stake rope’

[光頭，]偉博嚴肅地說，[我和你在同一個牧場趕了好几年的牛。從小跑同樣的圍場，走同樣的路。除了你，我不會向任何人道家務事。我和馬姍忒結婚的時候，你是諾帕理牧場の後圍。那時候我是領班；可是我現在是甚麼？我連拴馬繩上的一個結都不如。]

‘When old McAllister was the cattle king of West Texas,’ continued Baldy with Satanic sweetness, ‘you was some tallow. You had as much to say on the ranch as he did.’

[老馬還是西德克薩士畜牧之王的時候，]光頭帶著惡魔似的甜言蜜語接著說，[你有斤有兩的。你的話和老馬的話一樣有份量。]

‘I did,’ admitted Webb, ‘up to the time he found out I was tryin’ to get my rope over Santa’s

head. Then he kept me out on the range as far from the ranch-house as he could. When the old man died they commenced to call Santa the "cattle queen." I'm boss of the cattle -- that's all. She 'tends to all the business; she handles all the money; I can't sell even a beef-steer to a party of campers, myself. Santa's the "queen"; and I'm Mr. Nobody.'

[我是，]偉博承認，[一直到他發現我正在把他女兒姍忒。之後呢，他把我趕在牧場裏離場房遠遠的地方。老馬死了以後，人家開始稱姍忒<畜牧之后>。我則是牲畜的老闆--就是如此。她經手所有生意；掌管所有金錢出入；我連賣頭牛給露營的人都不行。姍忒是<皇后>，我則是甚麼都不是先生。]

'I'd be a king if I was you,' repeated Baldy Woods, the royalist. 'When a man marries a queen he ought to grade up with her -- on the hoof -- dressed -- dried -- corned -- any way from the chaparral to the packing-house. Lots of folks thinks it's funny, Webb, that you don't have the say-so on the Nopalito. I ain't reflectin' none on Miz Yeager -- she's the finest little lady between the Rio Grande and next Christmas -- but a man ought to be boss of his own camp.'

[假如我是你的話，我要當王，]這個皇室派的吳光頭重複地說。[一個人和皇后結婚，他理應提昇到和她並駕齊驅--打從立足點起--同樣的作料--同樣烘乾--同樣剁碎--從吃的牧草開始到包裝房為止。很多人都覺得奇怪，偉博，你怎麼在諾帕理牧場無聲無息的。我並不是說伊太太怎麼樣--她是大河到不知道那裏之間最好的小婦人--可是呢，一個男人應該是一營之主才是。]

The smooth, brown face of Yeager lengthened to a mask of wounded melancholy. With that expression, and his rumpled yellow hair and guileless blue eyes, he might have been likened to a schoolboy whose leadership had been usurped by a youngster of superior strength. But his active and sinewy seventy-two inches and his girded revolvers forbade the comparison.

伊先生光滑晒黑的臉拉得長長的好像一張受委屈的幽鬱面具。這副表情，加上他麥草色頭髮，再加上他天真無邪的淺藍眼睛，實在可以比喻成一個學生王，他的領導地位被氣力更強的小鬼所篡奪。可是呢，他靈活又筋節的六呎之軀和他隨身配帶的左輪槍，相形之下又不成比例。

'What was that you called me, Baldy?' he asked. 'What kind of a concert was it?'

[你剛剛稱呼我甚麼，光頭?]他問。[甚麼樣的音樂會，你說?]

'A "consort,"' corrected Baldy -- "'a prince-consort.'" It's a kind of short-card pseudonym. You came in sort of between Jack-high and a four-card flush.'

[一個<夫子，>]光頭糾正他--[<一個夫王子。>那也可以是個打牌時候的用語。大概身價在老J當頭的同花或者四張同花之間。]

Webb Yeager sighed, and gathered the strap of his Winchester scabbard from the floor.

伊偉博嘆了口氣，然後一面拿起放在地板上的來福槍套指帶。

‘I’m ridin’ back to the ranch to-day,’ he said, half-heartedly. ‘I’ve got to start a bunch of beeves for San Antone in the morning.’

[我要騎馬回牧場去，]他說，無精打睬地。[明天早晨我得打發一群肉牛到聖安東尼。]

‘I’m your company as far as Dry Lake,’ announced Baldy. ‘I’ve got a round-up camp on the San Marcos cuttin’ out two-year-olds.’

[我可以陪你一直到乾湖，]光頭說。[我在聖馬克有個聚營，要把兩歲的牛分開來。]

The two companeros mounted their ponies and trotted away from the little railroad settlement, where they had foregathered in the thirsty morning.

兩伙伴上了馬，緩步騎出這個火車小鎮。他們早上口渴的時候在這兒碰頭喝了兩杯。

At Dry Lake, where their routes diverged, they reined up for a party cigarette. For miles they had ridden in silence save for the soft drum of the ponies’ hoofs on the matted mesquite grass, and the rattle of the chaparral against their wooden stirrups. But in Texas discourse is seldom continuous. You may fill in a mile, a meal, and a murder between your paragraphs without detriment to your thesis. So, without apology, Webb offered an addendum to the conversation that had begun ten miles away.

在乾湖，他們將各走各的路，他們在這裏勒停了馬，抽根別菸。到此之前，他們行了几哩，除了馬蹄落在塵墊一般的美士凱草皮沙沙作響，還有莢芭樂枝敲擊木製馬蹬叮叮咚咚的聲音之外，一切靜悄悄的。但是在德州這地方，對話很少是接續式的。講話的時候，在每個段落之間，隔上一哩，一頓飯，甚至於一場謀殺都不會打斷你的話題。所以嘛，偉博也不道歉，徑給十哩之外的話題加上一條附款。

‘You remember, yourself, Baldy, that there was a time when Santa wasn’t quite so independent. You remember the days when old McAllister was keepin’ us apart, and how she used to send me the sign that she wanted to see me? Old man Mac promised to make me look like a colander if I ever come in gun-shot of the ranch. You remember the sign she used to send, Baldy -- the heart with a cross inside of it?’

[你自己還記得，光頭，以前有一段時候，姍忒並不這麼獨立。你記得老馬硬要把我們兩個分開的時候，她怎麼傳遞記號要我去看她？老馬誓言只要我接近牧場場房到射程之內，就要把我零零落地射成一張刷蕃薯條的籤板子。你還記得她送給我的記號，光頭--一顆心，裏面有個十字？]

‘Me?’ cried Baldy, with intoxicated archness.

[我?]光頭混合著醉意和玩笑的口氣高聲說。

‘You old sugar-stealing coyote! Don’t I remember! Why, you dadblamed old long-horned turtle-dove, the boys in camp was all cognosconscious about them hieroglyphs. The “Gizzard-and-crossbones” we used to call it. We used to see ‘em on truck that was sent out from the ranch. They was marked in charcoal on the sacks of flour and in lead-pencil on the newspapers. I see one of ‘em once chalked on the back of a new cook that old man McAllister sent out from the ranch -- danged if I didn’t.’

[你這隻偷糖吃的老土狼！我記不記得！怎麼，你這個連老爹都責怪，頭上長了角的野鴿子，在營裏每個人都認識那個象形文。我們稱它<雞鷄死人骨>。我們以前常在由牧場送東西來的車子上看到。用木炭畫在麵粉袋上，用鉛筆寫在報紙上。有一次我看到老馬差遣來的新廚子的背上也畫了一個--不記得才有鬼！]

‘Santa’s father’ exclaimed Webb gently, ‘got her to promise that she wouldn’t write to me or send me any word. That heart-and-cross sign was her scheme. Whenever she wanted to see me in particular she managed to put that mark on somethin’ at the ranch that she knew I’d see. And I never laid eyes on it but when I burnt the wind for the ranch the same night. I used to see her in that coma mott back of the little horse-corrall.’

[珊忒的父親，]偉博有點激動的說，[要她答應他不送任何信息給我。那個心和十字的標記是她想出來的。她刻意想見我的時候，就在牧場裏把它畫在她知道我隨後會看見的東西上面。我只要一看到，一定當天晚上快馬加鞭趕到牧場。我以前常在馬圈後面那個小樹叢裏見她。]

‘We knew it,’ chanted Baldy; ‘but we never let on. We was all for you. We knew why you always kept that fast paint in camp. And when we see that gizzard-and-crossbones figured out on the truck from the ranch we knowed old Pinto was goin’ to eat up miles that night instead of grass. You remember Scurry -- that educated horse-wrangler we had -- the college fellow that tangle-foot drove to the ranch? Whenever Scurry saw that come-met-your-honey brand on anything from the ranch, he’d wave his hand like that and say, ‘Our friend Lee Andrews will again swim the Hell’s point to-night.’”

[我們都知道，]光頭唱和地說，[我們從來沒洩過密。因為我們和你站在一邊。我們知道為甚麼你一直把那匹快馬放在營裏。每次我們看到牧場送東西來的車上有雞鷄死人骨標誌的時候，就知道當天晚上老馬拼途要辛苦跑路，而不是吃草料了。你記得死趕路--我們那個受過教育的套馬賊--那個小楞子載到牧場的大學生，他每次看到這個來看你甜心的標記就像這樣子揮手然後說，<我們的朋友安德禮今天晚上又要游地獄角了。>]

‘The last time Santa sent me the sign, ‘said Webb, ‘was once when she was sick. I noticed it as soon as I hit camp, and I galloped Pinto forty mile that night. She wasn’t at the coma mott. I went to the house; and old McAllister met me at the door. “Did you come here to get killed?” says he; “I’ll disoblige you for once. I just started a Mexican to bring you. Santa wants you. Go in that

room and see her. And then come out here and see me.”

[最後一次姍忒傳遞那個記號給我，]偉博說，[是她生病的時候。我一到營就注意到，當晚我猛騎了拼途四十哩路。她並沒在小樹叢。我到場房，老馬在門口接我。[你是來這裏送死的不?]他說，[我原諒你這一次。我剛剛派了一個墨西哥人去找你。姍忒要見你。到房間裏去看她，然後出來見我。]

‘Santa was lyin’ in bed pretty sick. But she gives out a kind of a smile, and her hand and mine lock horns, and I sets down by the bed -- mud and spurs and chaps and all. “I’ve heard you ridin’ across the grass for hours, Webb,” she says. “I was sure you’d come. You saw the sign?” she whippers. “The minute I hit camp,” says I. “‘Twas marked on he bag of potatoes and onions.” “They’re always together,” says she, soft like -- “always together in life.” “They go well together,” I says, “in a stew.” “I mean hearts and crosses,” says Santa. “Our sign -- to love and to suffer -- that’s what they mean.”

[姍忒躺在床上，病得蠻重的。可是她勉強地笑了笑，我們倆的手像兩隻鬥角的公牛一樣牢牢地扣著，我在床旁坐下--滿靴子的泥，戴著馬刺，皮套褲，和其它東西。<我聽說你騎馬奔馳好几小時，偉博，>她說。<我知道你一定會來。你看見那記號了？>她喃喃地說。<我一回到營地就看到了，>我說，<畫在馬鈴薯和洋蔥袋上。><它們永遠在一起，>她情意綿綿地說，<在生命中永遠在一起。><他們很對味，>我說，<放在牛肉湯裏。><我是說心和十字，>姍忒說。<我們的記號--相親相愛，共患共難--這是它們的意思。>

‘And there was old Doc Musgrove amusin’ himself with whisky and a palm-leaf fan. And by and by Santa goes to sleep; and Doc feels her forehead; and he says to me: “you’re not such a bad febrifuge. But you’d better slide out now, for the diagnosis don’t call for you in regular doses. The little lady’ll be all right when she wakes up.”

[老醫生莫士格在那裏，一面喝威士忌，一面搖一把棕梠扇子自得其樂。不久姍忒睡著了；醫生摸了摸她的前額；然後跟我說：<把你當成退燒藥來用還不賴。可是呢，現在你還不如退出去，據我診斷，按時間吃的藥裏也用不著你。這小女士醒來的時候也就會好了。>

‘I seen old McAllister outside. “She’s asleep,” says I. “And now you can start in with your colander-work. Take your time; for I left my gun on my saddle-horn.”

[我出來見老馬。<她睡著了，>我說。<你現在可以開始把我打成一塊籤板子。不用著急，反正我把槍放在馬鞍上，沒帶進來。>

‘Old Mac laughs, and he says to me: “Pumpin’ lead into the best ranchboss in West Texas don’t seem to me good business policy. I don’t know where I could get as good a one. It’s the son-in-law idea, Webb, that makes me admire for to use you as a target. You ain’t my idea for a member of the family. But I can use you on the Nopalito if you’ll keep outside of a radius with the ranch-house in the middle of it. You go upstairs and lay down on a cot, and when you get some sleep

we'll talk it over.”

[老馬笑了。他對我說：<把子彈往西德克薩士首屈一指的牧牛場老闆射擊對我來說並非最好的生意經。打著燈籠也找不到一個這麼好的。是女婿這件事，令我想把你當成個槍靶子打個稀爛。你並不是我理想中家庭的一員。我可以在諾帕理牧場用你，只要你以場房為圓心畫一個圓，不要進到裏面來就好了。你到樓上找個床躺躺，等你睡睡覺之後，我們再好好談。>

Baldy Woods pulled down his hat, and uncurled his leg from his saddlehorn. Webb shortened his rein, and his pony danced, anxious to be off. The two men shook hands with Western ceremony.

[吳光頭把帽子往前拉低，把一隻腳從馬鞍上放下來。偉博勒短韁繩，他騎的馬躍躍準備前進。兩個人以美國大西部的方式握手道別。

‘Adios, Baldy,’ said Webb. ‘I’m glad I seen you and had this talk.’

[再見，光頭，]偉博說。[我很高興見到你，而且這麼談了談。]

With a pounding rush that sounded like the rise of a covey of quail, the riders sped away toward different points of the compass. A hundred yards on his route Baldy reined in on the top of a bare knoll and emitted a yell. He swayed on his horse; had he been on foot, the earth would have risen and conquered him; but in the saddle he was a master of equilibrium, and laughed at whisky, and despised the centre of gravity.

一陣蹄響，聽起來好像一小群鶉鳥起飛一樣，兩位騎士各朝各的方向奔馳而去。在一百碼的地方，光頭勒住馬，停在一處禿禿的高地上，發出一聲叫喊。他在馬上搖晃著；假如在地上的話，他早就一筋斗栽倒地上；然而，這是在馬鞍上，那他可是個平衡高手，尚能嘲弄威士忌，看扁地心引力。

Webb turned in his saddle at the signal.

偉博聽到那信號，在馬鞍上轉過身來。

‘If I was you,’ came Baldy’s strident and perverting tones, ‘I’d be king!’

[假如我是你的話，]光頭以沙啞而誤人子弟的音調說，[我要當王！]

At eight o’clock on the following morning Bud Turner rolled from his saddle in front of the Nopalito ranch-house, and stumbled with whizzing rowels toward the gallery. Bud was in charge of the bunch of beef-cattle that was to strike the trail that morning for San Antonio. Mrs. Yeager was on the gallery watering a cluster of hyacinths growing in a red earthenware jar.

隔天早晨八點鐘，騰布德在諾帕理牧場場房前面滾鞍下馬，由於腳步不怎麼穩，弄得他的

馬刺休休作響，他走到場房走廊。布德掌管這群今天早上啓程往聖安東尼的肉牛。伊太太正在廊上，給養在紅陶盆子裏的風信子花澆水。

‘King’ McAllister had bequeathed to his daughter many of his strong characteristics -- his resolution, his gay courage, his contumacious self-reliance, his pride as a reigning monarch of hoofs and horns. Allegro and fortissimo had been McAllister’s tempo and tone. In Santa they survived, transposed to the feminine key. Substantially, she preserved the image of the mother who had been summoned to wander in other and less finite green pastures long before the waxing herds of kine had conferred royalty upon the house. She had her mother’s slim, strong figure and grave, soft prettiness that relieved in her the severity of the imperious McAllister eye and the McAllister air of royal independence.

[國王]老馬遺傳給他女兒許多艱強的個性--他的堅定意志，他的欣然勇氣，他執著的自主，還有他那個身為統治帶蹄長角動物之王，引以為榮的驕傲。老馬動作起來節拍快速，講起話來聲音宏亮。這些特質都在姍忒的個性裏保存下來，只是轉化成了女性的音調。在另一方面，她也大大地保存了她母親的形象，她早在逐漸增長的牛群尚未給馬家封王之前，被娶過門來，陪伴在別處沒這麼界線分明的綠野裏萍跡放牧。她有她母親苗條和健康的身裁，莊重而溫和的美，把馬氏帝王眼的厲色和馬氏自主獨尊之氣質和緩起來。

Webb stood on one end of the gallery giving orders to two or three subbosses of various camps and outfits who had ridden in for instructions.

偉博站在走廊的另一端，給兩，三處營地和工作班來這裏聽候指示的二層老闆們下達工作指示。

‘Morning,’ said Bud, briefly. ‘Where do you want them beeves to go in town -- to Barber’s, as usual?’

[早，]布德簡捷地說。[你要我把那些肉牛趕到城裏那個地方--照舊趕到巴柏那裏是不是？]

Now, to answer that had been the prerogative of the queen. All the reins of business -- buying, selling, and banking -- had been held by her capable fingers. The handling of the cattle had been entrusted fully to her husband. In the days of ‘King’ McAllister, Santa had been his secretary and helper; and she had continued her work with wisdom and profit. But before she could reply, the prince-consort spake up with calm decision:

現在嘛，回答這樣的問題是皇后的專利。所有生意的大權--買，賣，銀行--都經由她能幹的手指頭。牲畜的處理則全權交給她丈夫。在老馬的<王朝>時代，姍忒是他的秘書兼助手，而且接下這工作之後，著實表現得明智而且賺錢。可是呢，在她來得及回答之前，那個夫王子突然鎮定而果斷地說：

‘You drive that bunch to Zimmerman and Nesbit’s pens, I spoke to Zimmerman about it some

time ago.’

[你把那群肉牛趕到金家和芮家的圈裏，我在前些日子和金家說過了。]

Bud turned on his high boot-heels.

布德聽了轉身就要走。

‘Wait!’ called Santa quickly. She looked at her husband with surprise in her steady gray eyes.

[等一等！] 珊忒叫停他。她看著她先生，鎮定的灰色眼睛裏有點吃驚。

‘Why, what do you mean, Webb?’ She asked, with a small wrinkle gathering between her brows. ‘I never deal with Zimmerman and Nesbit. Barber has handled every head of stock from this ranch in that market for five years. I’m not going to take the business out of his hands.’ She faced Bud Turner. ‘Deliver those cattle to Barber,’ she concluded positively.

[你這是甚麼意思，偉博？] 她問，在她眉頭之間出現了小小的皺紋。[我從來沒和金家和芮家交易過。巴柏這五年來包辦了我們這裏在那個市場的所有買賣。我沒有意思要把生意從他手上拿掉。] 她轉向騰布德。[把那些牛送到巴柏家，] 就這麼敲定了。

Bud gazed impartially at the water-jar hanging on the gallery, stood on his other leg, and chewed a mesquite-leaf.

布德沒甚麼表情地看著吊在走廊上的水瓶，換了另一隻腳站著，一面嘴裏嚼著美士凱樹葉子。

‘I want this bunch of beeves to go to Zimmerman and Nesbit,’ said Webb, with a frosty light in his blue eyes.

[我要這群肉牛送到金家和芮家，] 偉博說，他的淺藍色眼睛裏結了冷霜一般。

‘Nonsense,’ said Santa impatiently. ‘You’d better start on, Bud, so as to noon at the Little Elm waterhole. Tell Barber we’ll have another lot of culls ready in about a month.’

[胡說，] 珊忒不耐煩地說。[你最好趕快出發，布德，好在中午的時辰在小榆樹水塘休息。跟巴柏講，再過一個月我們會有另一批選好的肉牛能給他送來。]

Bud allowed a hesitating eye to steal upward and meet Webb’s. Webb saw apology in his look, and fancied he saw commiseration.

布德遲疑了一下，抬起眼睛偷看了偉博一眼。偉博從他的表情裏看到抱歉之意，又好像看到同情的眼色。

‘You deliver them cattle,’ he said grimly, ‘to--’

[你把牛送到，]他不樂地說，[...]

‘Barber,’ finished Santa sharply. ‘Let that settle it. Is there anything else you are waiting for, Bud?’

[巴柏那裏，]她干脆利落地替他把話結束。[就這麼辦了。你還等甚麼嗎，布德？]

‘No, m’m,’ said Bud. But before going he lingered while a cow’s tail could have switched thrice; for a man is man’s ally; and even the Philistines must have blushed when they took Samson in the way they did.

[沒，沒有甚麼，女士，]布德說。可是，即將離開之前，他逗留了大約一頭牛可以掃三次尾巴的時間，因為男人永遠是男人的同伙；即使是非力斯丁人把大力士神桑綁走的時候，也是紅著臉不好意思的。

‘You hear your boss!’ cried Webb, sardonically. He took off his hat, and bowed until it touched the floor before his wife.

[你聽你老闆的！]偉博提起嗓子冷笑地說。他拿掉帽子，向他太太行個大禮，一直把帽子碰到了地板。

‘Webb,’ said Santa rebukingly, ‘you’re acting mighty foolish today.’

[偉博，]冊忒責備他說，[你今天行動像傻瓜一樣。]

‘Court fool, your Majesty,’ said Webb, in his slow tones, which had changed their quality. ‘What else can you expect? Let me tell you. I was a man before I married a cattle-queen. What am I now? The laughing-stock of the camps. I’ll be a man again.’

[宮庭小醜，陛下，]偉博以他變了質的遲緩音調說。[你還要我怎麼樣呢？我告訴你。我在和畜牧皇后結婚之前是個男子漢大丈夫。我現在成了甚麼？成了營裏的笑柄。我即將再度成爲一個男子漢。]

Santa looked at him closely.

冊忒緊緊地瞪著他。

‘Don’t be unreasonable, Webb,’ she said calmly. ‘You haven’t been slighted in any way. Do I ever interfere in your management of the cattle? I know the business side of the ranch much better than you do. I learned it from Dad. Be sensible.’

[不要不講理，偉博，]她冷靜地說。[你沒有在那一點被看輕了。你看過我干涉過你處理牛隻的事嗎？我在牧場的生意方面比你懂得多多。我是從爹學的。講講道理。]

‘Kingdoms and queendoms,’ said Webb, ‘don’t suit me unless I am in the pictures, too. I punch the cattle and you wear the crown. All right. I’d rather be High Lord Chancellor of a cow-camp than the eight-spot in a queen-high flush. It’s your ranch; and Barber gets the beeves.’

[王朝或女王朝，]偉博說，[都不適合我，除非我也被考慮在內。我趕牛，妳戴后冠。好。我寧可在牧牛營當個內閣總理，不願意在老O當頭的一手同花裏面當八點子。牧場是妳的。肉牛到巴柏家去吧。]

Webb’s horse was tied to the rack. He walked into the house and brought out his roll of blankets that he never took with him except on long rides, and his ‘slicker’, and his longest stake-rope of plated rawhide. These he began to tie deliberately upon his saddle. Santa, a little pale, followed him.

偉博的馬拴在欄杆上。他走進屋去，拿出他的毯子，除非出遠門，否則他不會用得著的。還有他的油布雨衣，還有他那條最長的生牛皮編起來的拴馬繩。他開始故意把它們綁到馬鞍上。珊忒臉色有點蒼白，跟著他走。

Webb swung up into the saddle. His serious, smooth face was without expression except for a stubborn light that smouldered in his eyes.

偉博翻身上馬。他嚴肅而光滑的臉幾乎沒有表情，除了兩點固執的餘炭悶悶地在眼睛裏燃燒。

‘There’s a herd of cows and calves,’ said he, ‘near the Hondo Waterhole on the Frio that out to be moved away from timber. Lobos have killed three of the calves. I forgot to leave orders. You’d better tell Simms to attend to it.’

[在弗利奧走道的洪渡水塘附近有一群大大小小的牛，]他說，[牠們必須趕離有林木的地方。野狼已經獵殺了三隻小牛。我忘了交代他們。妳最好告訴席姆去照料照料。]

Santa laid a hand on the horse’s bridle, and looked her husband in the eye.

珊忒把一隻手放在那匹馬的轡環上，看著她丈夫。

‘Are you going to leave me, Webb?’ she asked quietly.

[你要離我而去嗎，偉博？她低聲地問他。]

[我要再度去當個男子漢，]他回答。

'I wish you success in a praiseworthy attempt,' she said, with a sudden coldness. She turned and walked directly into the house.

[祝你令人稱道的企圖功成名就，]她突然冰冷地說。然後一轉身走進屋裏去。

Webb Yeager rode to the southeast as straight as the topography of West Texas permitted. And when he reached the horizon he might have ridden on into blue space as far as knowledge of him on the Nopalito went. And the days, with Sundays at their head, formed into hebdomadal squads; and the weeks, captained by the full moon, close ranks into menstrual companies carrying 'Tempus fugit' on their banners; and the months marched on toward the vast camp-ground of years; but Webb Yeager came no more to the dominions of his queen.

伊偉博往東南直走。當他走到水平線的時候，根據他在諾帕理牧場的記憶，差不多已經到達天邊，再多走一點就要進太空裏面。日子成了七人一伍的阿兵哥，以星期天為伍長；星期呢，又以滿月為排長，帶領著三十餘人的整齊隊伍，展現[時光易逝]的旗幟；月份則向年的寬闊營地邁開大步前進；但是偉博始終沒有再進到他女王的地盤一步。

One day a being named Bartholomew, a sheep-man -- and therefore of little account -- from the lower Rio Grande country, rode in sight of the Nopalito ranch-house, and felt hunger assail him. Ex consuetudine he was soon seated at the mid-day dining-table of that hospitable kingdom. Talk like water gushed from him; he might have been smitten with Aaron's rod -- that is your gentle shepherd when an audience is vouchsafed him whose ears are not overgrown with wool.

一天，有個從大河下游一帶地方來的牧羊人叫巴賽露的來到諾帕理牧場這附近。因為肚子餓的關係，不久便在這好客王國的餐桌上一起吃中飯。好像被亞榮的箭射中了一樣，他滔滔不絕地講話。只要是聽眾還賞臉聽聽的話，牧羊人總是這樣子。

'Missis Yeager,' he babbled, 'I see a man the other day on the Rancho Seco down in Hidalgo County by your name -- Webb Yeager was his. He'd just been engaged as manager. He was a tall, light-haired man, not saying much. Maybe he was some kin of yours, do you think?'

[伊太太，]他說，[那天我在西大閣郡的賽哥牧場看到一位你們同宗--叫伊偉博。他剛剛當了牧場經理。個子高高的，淺色頭髮，不怎麼講話。他可是你們親戚不是？]

'A husband,' said Santa cordially. 'The Seco has done well. Mr. Yeager is one of the best stockmen in the West.'

[是個丈夫，]珊忒熱心地說。[賽哥牧場幹得不錯。伊先生是美國西部最好的牧人之一。]

The dropping out of a prince-consort rarely disorganizes a monarchy. Queen Santa had appointed as mayordomo of the ranch, a trusty subject, named Ramsay, who had been one of her father's

faithful vassals. And there was scarcely a ripple on the Nopalito ranch save when the gulf-breeze created undulations in the grass of its wide acres.

一個夫王子的退出並不怎麼弄得一個王國亂糟糟的。姍忒女王指定了一個叫藍賽的當牧場總管。這個人是她父親忠實僕從之一，一位妥當的子民。牧場鮮有波浪，除非是由墨西哥灣來的風颳得海洋一般的牧草上下起伏。

For several years the Nopalito had been making experiments with an English breed of cattle that looked down with aristocratic contempt upon the Texas long-horns. The experiments were found satisfactory; and a pasture had been set apart for the blue-bloods. The fame of them had gone forth into the chaparral and pear as far as men ride in saddles. Other ranches woke up, rubbed their eyes, and looked with new dissatisfaction upon the long-horns.

好幾年來，諾帕理牧場一直在實驗改良一種英國血統的牛，這些牛以貴族的眼光瞧不起德州長角牛。實驗相當成功，有一區草原是專門留給牠們的。牠們在畜牧界變得遠近知名。其他牧場相繼由睡夢覺醒，紛紛揉眼睛，開始覺得德州長角牛不怎麼令人滿意。

As a consequence, one day a sunburned, capable, silk-kerchiefed nonchalant youth, garnished with revolvers, and attended by three Mexican vaqueros, alighted at the Nopalito ranch and presented the following business-like epistle to the queen thereof.

也就是爲了這緣故，三個墨西哥牧童陪伴了一位太陽晒得黑黑的，能幹，圍了絲巾，態度穩重，掛了兩把左輪槍的年輕人，來到諾帕理牧場，他呈給女王以下這封商業性文書。

Mrs. Yeager -- The Nopalito Ranch:

Dear Madam:

I am instructed by the owners of the Rancho Seco to purchase 100 head of two and three-year-old cows of the Sussex Breed owned by you. If you can fill the order please deliver the cattle to the bearer; and a check will be forwarded to you at once.

Respectfully,
Webster Yeager,
Manager of the Rancho Seco.

諾帕理牧場--伊太太：

敬愛的女士：

我接獲賽哥牧場主人指示，欲向貴場購買100頭兩歲至三歲蘇塞種牛。假如能交訂單的話，請將牛隻交給帶信人，付款支票隨即送來。

賽哥牧場經理
伊偉博敬啓

Business is business, even -- very scantily did it escape being written 'especially' -- in a kingdom.

買賣畢竟還是買賣，即使在王國裏，還是很難特意寫得不像封商業書信。

That night the 100 head of cattle were driven up from the pasture and penned in a corral near the ranch-house for delivery in the morning.

當晚，一百頭牛由草原被趕到牧場場房附近的牛圈裏，準備隔天早上交貨。

When the night closed down and the house was still, did Santa Yeager throw herself down, clasping that formal note to her bosom, weeping, and calling out a name that pride (either in one or the other) had kept from her lips many a day? Or did she file the letter, in her business way, retaining her royal balance and strength?

當晚夜闌人靜的時候，伊姍忒是否懷抱那封信哭倒床上，一面唸著爲了（不論是哪方面的）驕傲而天天不准掛在唇上的名子？還是維持女王的平衡和自尊，一本正經的好比另一封商業文書一樣把它放進檔案櫃裏？

Wonder if you will; but royalty is sacred; and there is a veil. But this much you shall learn.

隨便你怎麼想；然而，皇權神聖；蓋了一層面紗一樣。不管怎麼樣，你應該知道這些。

At midnight Santa slipped softly out of the ranch-house, clothed in something dark and plain. She paused for a moment under the live-oak trees. The prairies were somewhat dim, and the moonlight was pale orange, diluted with particles of an impalpable, flying mist. But the mockbird whistled on every bough of vantage; leagues of flowers scented the air; and a kindergarten of little shadowy rabbits leaped and played in an open space near by. Santa turned her face to the southeast and threw kisses thitherward; for there was none to see.

子夜的時候，姍忒溜到屋子外面，身穿暗色而樸素的衣服。她在一株榭樹下停留了一會兒。大草原暗淡無光，月光淡而發黃，由於一層輕飄而几乎看不出來的霧氣，使得月色更現迷朦。但是呢，模傲鳥依然在每一枝樹枝上輕唱；整個原野的野花飄香；一群弄影的小兔子在左近的空地裏追逐嬉戲。姍忒轉身面向東南，往那個方向飛吻，因爲誰也看不到她。

Then she sped silently to the blacksmith-shop, fifty yards away; and what she did there can only be surmised. But the forge glowed red; and there was a faint hammering such as Cupid might make when he sharpens his arrow-points.

她又悄悄地跑到五十碼遠的鐵匠間；她在那兒幹甚麼只可臆測，不可言傳。鐵爐燒得通紅，而且發出細細地鏗鏘，好比愛神在磨祂的箭一般的聲音。

Later she came forth with a queer-shaped, handled thing in one hand, and a portable furnace, such as are seen in branding-camps, in the other. To the corral where the Sussex cattle were penned

she sped with these things swiftly in the moonlight.

不久之後，她一手拿著一支模樣特別，有個把手的東西，另一手拿著一只烙牛營用的活動手爐。她趁著月光，快快跑到圍著那群酥塞牛的地方。

She opened the gate and slipped inside the corral. The Sussex cattle were mostly a dark red. But among this bunch was one that was milky white -- notable among the others.

她打開圈門溜進欄裏。酥塞種牛通常是深紅色。但是其中有一頭有奶白色皮膚--很容易引起注意。

And now Santa shook from her shoulder something that we had not seen before -- a rope lasso. She freed the loop of it, coiling the length in her left hand, and plunged into the thick of the cattle.

珊忒從她肩膀上解下一個我們剛才沒有注意到的東西--是個套牛繩。她把套圈放開，把餘繩用左手理好，然後縱身直撲那群牛聚集的地方。

The white cow was her object. She swing the lasso, which caught one horn and slipped off. The next throw encircled the forefeet and the animal fell heavily. Santa made for it like a panther; but it scrambled up and dashed against her, knocking her over like a blade of grass.

她的目標是那頭白牛。她甩起套圈，套到一隻牛角，卻又溜掉了。甩地二次的時候，把兩隻前腳給圈住，那頭牛跌了個狗吃屎。珊忒像一隻山豹一樣向它直撲，但是這隻牛很快地理起腿站起來把她碰了個踉蹌，就好比一瓣柔軟的草一樣被碰倒在地上。

Again she made the cast, while the aroused cattle milled round the four sides of the corral in a plunging mass. This throw was fair; the white cow came to earth again; and before it could rise Santa had made the lasso fast around a post of the corral with a swift and simple knot, and had leaped upon the cow again with the rawhide hobbles.

她再度把圈套擲向那頭白牛，所有圈裏的牛繞著四邊的欄杆團團地奔跑。這次，她擲得不差；白牛再度倒下來；在牠能站起來之前，珊忒很快地打了一個簡單的結把繩的另一端綁到欄柱上，然後拿起牛皮腳繚飛躍那頭牛身上。

In one minute the feet of the animal were tied (no record-breaking deed) and Santa leaned against the corral for the same space of time, panting and lax.

牛的前腳很快被綁起來（當然不是甚麼破紀錄的速度），珊忒隨即倚著欄圈，喘著氣，軟趴趴地。

And then she ran swiftly to her furnace at the gate and brought the branding-iron, queerly shaped and white-hot.

接著，她又很快地跑到欄門的地方，去拿手爐和那只奇形怪狀燒得白熱的烙鐵。

The bellow of the outraged white cow, as the iron was applied, should have stirred the slumbering auricular nerves and consciences of the nearby subjects of the Nopalito, but it did not. And it was amid the deepest nocturnal silence that Santa ran like a lapwing back to the ranch-house and there fell upon a cot and sobbed -- sobbed as though queens had hearts as simple ranchmen's wives have, and as though she would gladly make kings of prince-consorts, should they ride back again from over the hills and far away.

烙鐵烙上的時候，那頭牛大叫了一聲，照理，在鄰近沉睡中的諾帕理牧場子民都應該被驚動了才對，事實上沒有。在夜最深靜的時候，珊忒像隻田鳩般快跑回到屋裏，然後哭倒床上--好比女王也有一般牧牛人太太一樣平易的心，好比她寧可將王位讓給夫王子，只要他從遠遠的叢叢山嶺的另一邊回到身邊。

In the morning the capable, revolvered youth and his vaqueros set forth, driving he bunch of Sussex cattle across the prairies to the Rancho Seco. Ninety miles it was; and six day's journey, grazing and watering the animals on the way.

隔一天大早，那位能幹，掛兩隻左輪槍的年輕人和他的三位騎士趕著那群酥塞種牛出發了，要經過大草原到賽哥牧場。路程九十哩，六天行程，沿途吃草喝水而行。

The beasts arrived at Rancho Seco one evening at dusk; and were received and counted by the foreman of the ranch.

這群牲畜終於在一個傍晚到達賽哥牧場；牧場領班點收妥當。

The next morning at eight o'clock a horseman loped out of the brush to the Nopalito ranch-house. He dismounted stiffly, and strode, with whizzing spurs, to the house. His horse gave a great sigh and swayed foam-streaked, with down-drooping head and closed eyes.

隔天早上八點，一位騎士奔出矮樹林，抵達諾帕理牧場。他僵硬地下馬，大步跑到場房，馬刺振得咻咻作響。他的乘騎喘了一口大氣，滿口泡沫地頻搖頭，頸項下垂，兩眼緊閉。

But waste not your pity upon Belshazzar, the flea-bitten sorrel. Today, in Nopalito horse-pasture he survives, pampered, beloved, unriden, cherished record-holder of long-distance rides.

請別可憐巴夏煞，這匹蚤斑栗色馬。如今，牠在諾帕理牧場自由在地，被人溺愛，因為牠打破了長途聘馳的紀錄。

The horseman stumbled into the house. Two arms fell around his neck and someone cried out in the voice of woman and queen alike: 'Webb -- oh, Webb!'

這騎士踉踉蹌蹌地走進屋裏。兩隻手臂圍抱他的頸子，而發出女人和女皇同為一體的呼聲

，[偉博，噢，偉博！]

‘I was a skunk,’ said Webb Yeager.

[我是隻臭鼠，]伊偉博說。

‘Hush,’ said Santa, ‘did you see it?’

[噓，]姍忒說，[你看到了嗎？]

‘I saw it,’ said Webb.

[我看到了，]偉博說。

What they meant God knows; and you shall know, if you rightly read the primer of events.

他們在講甚麼老天曉得；假如你把前文好好讀了的話，你也應該知道。

‘Be the cattle-queen,’ said Webb; ‘and overlook it if you can. I was a mangy, sheep-stealing coyote.’

[當個畜牧女王，]偉博說，[原諒所發生的，假如可能的話。我是隻可憐，偷羊吃的土狗。]

‘Hush!’ said Santa again, laying her fingers upon his mouth. ‘There’s no queen here. Do you know who I am? I am Santa Yeager, First Lady of the Bedchamber. Come here.’

[噓！]，姍忒再度叫他，把手指頭放在他唇上。[這裏並沒甚麼女皇。你知道我是甚麼人嗎？我是伊姍忒，皇家寢宮的第一夫人。跟我來。]

She dragged him from the gallery into the room to the right. There stood a cradle with an infant in it -- a red, ribald, unintelligible, babbling, beautiful infant, sputtering at life in an unseemly manner.

她拉著他走出走廊，進入右手邊的一個房間。有一個搖籃在那裏，裏面有個小嬰孩--皮膚通紅，手腳躍舞，喃喃作嬰兒語的漂亮寶寶，頻頻發出嬰兒之聲，充滿了活力。

‘There’s no queen on this ranch,’ said Santa again. ‘Look at the king. He’s got your eyes, Webb. Down on your knees and look at his Highness.’

[在這個牧場沒有女皇，]姍忒再度說。[看看這國王。他有你的眼睛，偉博。請跪下，好好看看國王陛下。]

But jingling rowels sounded on the gallery, and Bud Turner stumbled there again with the same

query that he had brought, lacking a few days, a year ago.

一陣馬刺圈的咻咻響聲，騰布德搖搖擺擺地走到那裏，問同樣的問題。再差几天就是一年之前，他問了同樣的問題。

‘Morning. Them beeves is jus turned out on the trail. Shall I drive ‘em to Barber’s, or --’

[早。那群肉牛剛剛上路。是不是照舊趕到巴柏，或者--]

He saw Webb and stopped, open-mouthed.

他看見偉博，嘴巴張得大大地楞住了。

‘Ba-ba-ba-ba-ba--ba!’ shrieked the king in his cradle, beating the air with his fists.

[爸-爸-爸-爸-爸-爸！]國王在他的搖籃裏叫，一面小拳頭揮動著。

‘You hear your boss, Bud,’ said Webb Yeager, with a broad grin -- just as he had said a year ago.

[你聽你老闆的，布德，]伊偉博說，笑得合不攏嘴--和他一年之前說的完全一樣。

And that is all, except that when old man Quinn, owner of the Rancho Seco, went out to look over the heard of Sussex cattle that he had bought from the Nopalitio ranch, he asked his new manager:

故事到此結束。只不過，秦老頭，也就是賽哥牧場老闆出去看他剛剛從諾帕理牧場買來的酥塞牛的時候，他問他新任的經理：

‘What’s the Nopalitio ranch brand, Wilson?’

[諾帕理牧場的標記是甚麼，威爾？]

‘X Bar Y’, said Wilson.

[X一槓Y，]威爾回答。

‘I thought so,’ said Quinn. ‘But look at that white heifer there; she’s got another brand -- a heart with a cross inside of it. What brand is that?’

[我也這麼想，]秦老頭說。[可是你看看那頭白牡牛，她有不同標記--一顆心裏面有個十字。那是那門子的烙印？]