

<<宠儿>>

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内容概要

《宠儿》的主要情节取材于一个真实的历史事件，19世纪50年代，一名女黑奴携子女从奴隶庄园中出逃，但奴隶主追踪而知，为了使儿女不再重复自己做奴隶的悲惨命运，她抄起一把斧头，毅然决定为他们选择死亡，但实质是杀死了一个女儿。

作者看到这个故事后，经历了十年的酝酿和三年的写作，《宠儿》才终于问世。

在小说中，女主人公的名字叫塞丝，而那昭示绝望、疯狂、极端的爱的凶器也变成了一把更危险的手锯。

小说发表后在美国文学界、文化界的强烈震动。

各大报刊纷纷刊文给予最高规格的赞誉，认为它是美国黑人历史的一座纪念碑。

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作者简介

托妮·莫里森 (Toni Morrison) 1931年2月18日出生于美国俄亥俄州，毕业于霍华德大学本科，获康奈尔大学文学硕士学位。她曾在兰登书屋做过编辑，在纽约州立大学，耶鲁大学任教。1987年起任普林斯顿大学教授，讲授写作至今。1993年，托妮·莫里森被瑞典文学院授予诺贝尔文学奖。

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章节摘录

"My woman? You mean my mother? If she did, I don't remember. I didn't see her but a few times out in the fields and once when she was working indigo. By the time I woke up in the morning, she was in line. If the moon was bright they worked by its light. Sunday she slept like a stick. She must of nursed me two or three weeks that's the way the others did. Then she went back in rice and I sucked from another woman whose job it was. So to answer you, no. I reckon not. She never fixed my hair nor nothing. She didn't even sleep in the same cabin most nights I remember. Too far from the line-up, I guess. One thing she did do. She picked me up and carried me behind the smokehouse. Back there she opened up her dress front and lifted her breast and pointed under it. Right on her rib was a circle and a cross burnt right in the skin. She said, This is your maam. This, and she pointed. I am the only one got this mark now. The rest dead. If something happens to me and you can't tell me by my face, you can know me by this mark. Scared me so. All I could think of was how important this was and how I needed to have something important to say back, but I couldn't think of anything so I just said what I thought. Yes, Maam, I said. But how will you know me? How will you know me? Mark me, too, I said. Mark the mark on me too." Sethe chuckled. DENVER SECRETS were sweet. Accompanied every time by wild veronica until she discovered cologne. The first bottle was a gift, the next she stole from her mother and hid among boxwood until it froze and cracked. That was the year winter came in a hurry at suppertime and stayed eight months. One of the War years when Miss Bodwin, the whitewoman, brought Christmas cologne for her mother and herself, oranges for the boys and another good wool shawl for Baby Suggs. Talking of a war full of dead people, she looked happy—flush-faced, and although her voice was heavy as a mans, she smelled like a roomful of flowers excitement that Denver could have all for herself in the boxwood. Back beyond I 24 was a narrow field that stopped itself at a wood. On the yonder side of these woods, a stream. In these woods, between the field and the stream, hidden by post oaks, five boxwood bushes, planted in a ring, had started stretching toward each other four feet off the ground to form a round, empty room seven feet high, its walls fifty inches of murmuring leaves.

Bent low, Denver could crawl into this room, and once there she could stand all the way up in emerald light.

It began as a little girls houseplay, but as her desires changed, so did the play. Quiet, primate and completely secret except for the noisome cologne signal that thrilled the rabbits before it confused them. First a playroom (where the silence was softer), then a refuge (from her brothers fright), soon the place became the point. In that bower, closed off from the hurt of the hurt world, Denvers imagination produced its own hunger and its own food, which she badly needed because loneliness wore her out. Wore her out. Veiled and protected by the live green walls, she felt ripe and clear, and salvation was as easy as a wish. Once when she was in the boxwood, an autumn long before Paul D moved into the house with her mother, she was made suddenly cold by a combination of wind and the perfume on her skin. She dressed herself, bent down to leave and stood up in snowfall: a thin and whipping snow very like the picture her mother had painted as she described the circumstances of Denvers birth in a canoe straddled by a whitegirl for whom she was named. FULLY DRESSED woman walked out of the water. She barely gained the dry bank of the stream before she sat down and leaned against a mulberry tree. All day and all night she sat there, her head resting on the trunk in a position abandoned enough to crack the brim in her straw hat. Everything hurt but her lungs most of all. Sopping wet and breathing shallow she spent those hours trying to negotiate the weight of her eyelids. The day breeze blew her dress dry; the night wind wrinkled it. Nobody saw her emerge or came accidentally by. If they had, chances are they would have hesitated before approaching her. Not because she was wet, or dozing or had what sounded like asthma, but because amid all that she was smiling. It took her the whole of the next morning to lift herself from the ground and make her way through the woods past a giant temple of boxwood to the field and then the yard of the slate-gray house. Exhausted again, she sat down on the first handy place—a stump not far from the steps of I24. By then keeping her eyes open was less of an effort. She could manage it for a full two minutes or more. Her neck, its circumference no wider than a parlor-service saucer, kept bending and her chin brushed the bit of lace edging her dress.

Women who drink champagne when there is nothing to celebrate can look like that: their straw hats with broken

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brims are often askew; they nod in public places; their shoes are undone. But their skin is not like that of the woman breathing near the steps of I24. She had new skin, lineless and smooth, including the knuckles of her hands. By late afternoon when the carnival was over, and the Negroes were hitching rides home if they were lucky—walking if they were not—the woman had fallen asleep again. The rays of the sun struck her full in the face, so that when Sethe, Denver and Paul D rounded the curve in the road all they saw was a black dress, two unlaced shoes below it, and Here Boy nowhere in sight. I T W A S T I M E to lay it all down. Before Paul D came and sat on her porch steps, words whispered in the keeping room had kept her going. Helped her endure the chastising ghost; refurbished the baby faces of Howard and Buglar and kept them whole in the world because in her dreams she saw only their parts in trees; and kept her husband shadowy but there—somewhere. Now Halles face between the butter press and the churn swelled larger and larger, crowding her eyes and making her head hurt. She wished for Baby Suggs fingers molding her nape; reshaping it, saying, "Lay em down, Sethe. Sword and shield. Down. Down. Both of em down. Down by the riverside. Sword and shield. Dont study war no more. Lay all that mess down. Sword and shield." And under the pressing fingers and the quiet instructive voice, she would. Her heavy knives of defense against misery, regret, gall and hurt, she placed one by one on a bank where clear water rushed on below. Nine years without the fingers or the voice of Baby Suggs was too much. And words whispered in the keeping room were too little. The butter-smearred face of a man God made none sweeter than demanded more: an arch built or a robe sewn.. Some fixing ceremony. Sethe decided to go to the Clearing, back where Baby Suggs had danced in sunlight. Before I24 and everybody in it had closed down, veiled over and shut away; before it had become the plaything of spirits and the home of the chafed, I24 had been a cheerful, buzzing house where Baby Suggs, holy, loved, cautioned, fed, chastised and soothed. Where not one but two pots simmered on the stove; where the lamp burned all night long. Strangers rested there while children tried on their shoes. Messages were left there, for whoever needed them was sure to stop in one day soon. Talk was low and to the point—for Baby Suggs, holy, didnt approve of extra. "Everything depends on knowing how much," she said, and "Good is knowing when to stop. "

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媒体关注与评论

1989年春天，出于对虚掷光阴的恐惧，而且为作品中叙述文字的敷张扬厉和对话描写的简约生动所吸引，潘岳和我开始尝试合，作翻译美国黑人女作家托妮·莫里森刚刚获普利策奖的长篇小说《宠儿》。

起初对出版也没抱什么希望，只是凭着青春的热情一次。

次地进行修改、斟酌、打磨；而这种不期然的相遇竟导致我们沉迷于莫里森的精神世界数载之久，甚至思维方式、情感方式和审美方式也深受影响，却是始料所不及的。

1996年《宠儿》正式由中国文学出版社出版后，某电视台曾为此书做专题节目，请我们介绍故事的梗概；谈着谈着，我们也会像小说中的主人公一样从话题的一侧偏出，纠缠于某个细节而不能自己，就好像我们曾经身临其境，为那些惊心动魄的时刻作见证。

1989年秋《宠儿》初稿译毕后，我们曾在讨论中认定，这是一部在艺术质量上可与古今任何伟大小说相媲美的杰作，它的作者应当能够在十年之内摘得诺贝尔文学奖桂冠；1993年10月托妮·莫里森获奖消息传出，远在大洋彼岸的潘岳便马上打来电话与我分享喜悦；当然，举世称誉和惊叹的众声喧哗中，不可能有人知晓和在意的两个中国年轻人的莫名激动。

我国读者对托妮·莫里森应当不陌生。

她的《秀拉》、《所罗门之歌》和《宠儿》已出版了中译本，《所罗门之歌》和《宠儿》还有不止一个版本。

作家本人也曾在80年代访问过我国。

在1999年9月揭晓的“20世纪百部文学经典”调查活动(由外研社与《中华读书报》合办的《国际文化》专刊主办)中，《宠儿》名列第30位。

托妮·莫里森(Toni Morrison)，本名克娄·安东尼·沃福德(Chloe Anthony Wofford)，1931年2月18日出生于美国俄亥俄州洛雷恩镇一个造船工人家庭。

父母皆自信而富艺术细胞，母亲是教堂唱诗班的领唱，父亲是个讲述黑人民间传说和鬼故事的高手，这都对她产生了潜移默化的影响，她儿时的理想就是做一名芭蕾舞演员。

1949年，莫里森以优等生从洛雷恩高中毕业，1953年，从华盛顿市的霍华德大学本科毕业，1955年在康奈尔大学获文学硕士学位，其毕业论文的题目是《论威廉·福克纳和弗吉尼亚·伍尔芙作品中的自杀主题》。

莫里森一生从事的职业无非两种，不是教师就是编辑。

她先是在德克萨斯南方大学和霍华德大学教英语，然后在兰登书屋下属的辛格出版公司做教科书编辑，1967年任兰登书屋高级编辑。

1971年起，她相继在纽约州立大学、耶鲁大学授课；到1984年，她辞去兰登书屋的工作，任纽约州立大学教授；1987年起任普林斯顿大学罗伯特·戈辛教席教授，讲授写作至今。

1958年，她与牙买加建筑师哈罗德·莫里森结婚，育有二子。

但这桩婚姻仅维持六年便告破裂。

此后她一直独身。

1993年，托妮·莫里森被瑞典文学院授予诺贝尔文学奖，理由是她“以其富于洞察力和诗情画意的小说把美国现实的一个重要方面写活了”。

按照莫里森本人的说法，她“从来没有准备成为一名作家”。

当她的婚姻出现危机时，她积极参加一个写作小组的活动，聊以暂时逃避不幸的婚姻生活。

她的一篇匆匆写就的短篇小说得到大家的称许，该小说取材于她的童年生活，写的是她相识的一个黑人小女孩祈求上帝给自己一双蓝眼睛的故事。

离婚以后，莫里森独自抚养两个孩子，每天晚上安顿他们睡着后开始写作，并且从中感受到了前所未有的乐趣。

她翻检出那个短篇，借助自己非凡的想象力把它敷演扩充成一个篇幅不大的长篇，名为《最蓝的眼睛》(The Bluest Eye, 1967)。

在小说中，又黑又丑、无人理睬的佩可拉对生活也有非分之求——一双美丽的蓝眼睛，可到头来这奢

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望只能在疯狂的幻觉中得以实现；她的悲剧就在于她生长在一个名叫美国的国家，这个国家钟爱的仅仅是她金色头发、蓝色眼睛的孩子。

这部揭示白人文化和价值观侵蚀和挤压下黑人精神世界的畸变与扭曲的小说几经周折，终于于1970年出版，并获得评论界的好评，而此时莫里森已近40岁了。

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编辑推荐

一些介于报告文学和小说之间的文字。
一个黑人奴隶家庭在庄园中为争取自由和平等作出的重中挣扎和悲情的结局。
这样一个故事，这样一段历史，这样一种感情定会让读者深深为之震动。

1988年度《宠儿》被授予普里策奖。

进入90年代以后，《宠儿》已经跻身于现代文学的经典之列了。

在《宠儿》中，作者展现了高超的写作技巧和深刻的思想基础。

在揭示黑人奴隶被剥削和虐待下的精神状况和心理活动方面尤其到位。

这样的特点使得直到现在，心理分析、结构主义、女性主义、西方马克思主义、叙述学等学派纷纷从中找到证明自己理论的材料。

《宠儿》就是这样一本文字具有极强的震撼力，内容具有巨大的吸引力，思想具有最深刻的感染力的好书，这样的好书，不容错过！

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