

<<本杰明·富兰克林>>

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内容概要

本杰明·富兰克林是殖民地时期美洲最著名的人士之一。

他出身贫寒，只受过两年的传统教育，却凭借自身的努力，成了成功的商人、杰出的科学家和卓越的政治家。

富兰克林首创了美国的一些公共机构（如图书馆），签署了《独立宣言》，帮助起草了美国宪法，并成功赢得了法国的支持，从而帮助美国人民赢得了独立战争。

富兰克林还非常具有好奇心，他积极探索闪电等自然现象的奥秘，为后人留下了诸如避雷针等创造发明。

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作者简介

作者：(美)斯特雷古斯

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书籍目录

一、闻名遐迩的富兰克林博士二、创造自己的财富三、费城的富兰克林四、不列颠使命之行五、殖民地接踵而至的麻烦六、响彻世界的枪声七、为新生国工作

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章节摘录

书摘1778年2月的一天，一辆四轮大马车停在法国国王路易十六宏伟的宫殿——凡尔赛宫巨大的铁门前。

当一个体态发福的老绅士从马车上下来时，宫殿的卫兵肃然而立。

72岁的他行动非常小心。

卫兵立刻认出了他，请他进入了宫殿。

他被带领着穿过了一个好像看不到尽头的走廊来到了接待室。

在那里，宫廷的官员们正聚集在一起，等待着国王的到来。

他们身着华服，头戴白色假发。

绅士们身穿用大量花边和金边修饰的外套。

女士们做工考究的丝制裙装拖曳在地面上。

而那个体态发福的老绅士却衣着朴素，穿着一件无刺绣的棕色天鹅绒外套。

为了出席这个场合，他曾特地买了一个假发。

但他还是决定不戴它，因为那不适合他的头型。

于是他便戴了一个浣熊皮的帽子，那是他在所居住的北美英殖民地购买的。

他的脸圆圆的，额头高高的。

眼镜后是警觉而冷静的双眼。

随后路易十六出现了。

他的衣饰在众人中显得最为华丽，十分符合他国王的身份。

他的配剑闪闪发光，就像他的白色裘毛礼袍上无价的宝石那样耀眼。

每个人都深深地鞠了一躬。

那个老绅士也鞠了一躬，同时彬彬有礼地脱去了他那寒碜的帽子。

虽然本杰明·富兰克林在这些法国贵族中间显得毫不起眼，但实际上他已经给他们留下了深刻的印象。

他们都知道他就是“富兰克林博士”，以他在自然哲学(科学的旧称)方面的渊博知识而闻名遐迩。

富兰克林的电学实验，尤其是他就闪电所进行的实验举世闻名。

然而富兰克林并不是以一个科学家的身份出现在宫殿之中的。

他是一位大使，受那些开始反叛英国殖民统治的美洲领导人的派遣而来。

富兰克林一直住在凡尔赛宫与法国首都巴黎之间的一所房子里。

他竭尽可能会见了许多重要人物，鼓励他们出钱、武器和物资来援助美州的独立战争。

他还一直在为两个条约进行磋商，这两个条约将使法国成为殖民地人民的官方同盟。

长期以来法国一直是英国的对手。

两个国家均在北美筑起了要塞并建立了殖民地。

两国之间进行了几十年的战争，结果英国人控制了北美大陆的大部分。

富兰克林在穿着上颇费了一番心思，想借此来提醒法国人他是一名来自“新大陆”的使者。

他们异想天开地认为“新大陆”是一个野蛮的原始大陆。

一个法国贵族这样形容他，“他衣着简朴，举止朴素但威严，说话直截了当，头发没有涂脂抹粉。

”“(他)就好像是通过魔术来到了我们这个柔弱的、盲从的时代。

”这个贵族还提到法国是一个“对自由充满热爱”的国家。

富兰克林似乎就是这一理想的化身。

外交官约翰·亚当斯在巴黎的时候评论道“几乎没有一个农民或市民不认为(本杰明·富兰克林)是人类的朋友。

”富兰克林自己也写道“这已形成了共识，我们的事业是全人类的事业。

在捍卫自身自由的同时，我们也在为全人类的自由而奋斗。

”如果美洲人民赢得了这场战争，他们将建立一个民主国家，而不再受国王乔治三世的统治。

路易十六可能会想，如果美洲人民胜利了，其他君主是否会受到威胁。

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他理所当然地会质疑法国能否负担得起在美洲的这场危险战争的投资。

然而，不管怎样，路易十六在1778年2月6日签署了条约。

富兰克林为殖民地赢得了一个重大的胜利。

一个法国人谈到富兰克林时说道，“他从天空抓到了闪电，从暴君手中夺回了权力。

”但是，富兰克林曾经是英国国王忠诚的拥护者。

事实上，他早期的生活经历中没有任何征兆显示他会夺得任何事物。

他出生在一个贫寒的工人家庭——英格兰埃克顿的富兰克林家。

ONE, FEBRUARY DAY IN 1778, A HORSE-DRAWN COACH drew up to the immense iron gates of Versailles, the grand palace of Louis XVI, king of France. The palace guards stood smartly at attention as a portly old gentleman climbed down from the coach. At seventy-two, he moved gingerly. The guards recognized him immediately and admitted him to the palace, where he was taken down a seemingly endless hall to the reception room. There members of the court were waiting together for the arrival of the king. They dressed in high style in large, white-powdered wigs and colorful finery. The men wore coats richly embellished with lace and gold trim. The women's elaborate silk dresses swept across the floor. The portly old gentleman was simply clad, however, in an unembroidered brown velvet coat. He had bought a wig for this occasion, but he'd decided not to wear it. It didn't sit well on his head. Instead he had donned a coonskin cap he had acquired in the British colonies in North America, where he lived. His face was rounded, his forehead high. Behind his spectacles, his eyes were alert and cool.

Then Louis appeared. He looked most magnificent of all, as befitting a king. His sword glittered, as did the priceless gems on his white fur robe. Everyone took a deep bow. The old gentleman took his bow as well and politely removed his humble cap. Although Benjamin Franklin looked unimpressive among these French aristocrats, he had in fact already deeply impressed them. They knew him as "Doctor Franklin," a man renowned for his knowledge of natural philosophy (as science was called). Franklin's experiments with electricity and especially with lightning -- were known around the world. But it was not as a scientist that Franklin stood before the court. He was an ambassador, sent by American leaders who had begun a revolt against the rule of Great Britain. Franklin had been living in a house between Versailles and Paris, the French capital. He had met as many important people as possible, encouraging them to send money, arms, and supplies to aid the American Revolution. He had also been negotiating two treaties that would make France an official ally of the colonists. France was a long-time rival of Great Britain. Both nations had built forts and established colonies in North America. Decades of war between the two had left the British in control of much of that continent. Franklin's attire may have been calculated to remind the French that he was an emissary from the "New World," a place they romanticized as wild and pure. "His clothing was rustic, his bearing simple but dignified, his language direct, his hair unpowdered," wrote one French nobleman. "It was as though [he] had been brought by magic into our effeminate and slavish age." France was a stir, wrote the same Frenchman, with "a universal love of liberty." Franklin seemed to embody this ideal. When diplomat John Adams stayed in Paris, he observed, "There was scarcely a peasant or a citizen ... who did not consider [Benjamin Franklin] a friend to human kind." Franklin himself wrote, " 'Tis a common observation here, that our Cause is the Cause of all Mankind, and that we are fighting for their Liberty in defending our own." If the Americans won their war, they would begin a democracy and no longer be ruled by King George III. It is possible that Louis XVI wondered whether other monarchs might be threatened if the Americans succeeded. Certainly he questioned whether France could afford to invest in America's risky war. Regardless, Louis did sign the treaties on February 6, 1778. Franklin had won a major victory for the colonists. "He seized the lightning from the sky, and the scepter from the tyrants," one Frenchman said of Franklin. But Franklin had once been a fiercely loyal subject of the British king. His earlier life held no sign that he would seize anything, in fact. He came from a humble working family -- the Franklins of Ecton, England. P6-11

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