第7期:榆树街上的交通事故

Seven: Accident on Elm Street

7：榆树街上的交通事故

The junction between Elm Street and Beech Street was an accident black spot.

榆树街和山毛榉街的交叉处是交通事故的高发地段。

It was easy to assume that no one would be coming the other way, and if a driver was not attentive enough he could easily come to grief.

人们往往会以为对面不会有人来，加之司机不够注意，不幸就很容易发生。

People attributed this to the fact that children would often assemble at the junction, making it hard for drivers to assess the traffic situation.

人们把责任归结于孩子们经常聚集在这个交叉路口，使司机很难估测前方的交通情况。

Local residents would often assert that the only way to make the junction safe would be to augment the poorly lit stop signs with a set of lights,

当地居民则坚持认为，确保这一交叉路口安全的唯一办法是修缮昏暗的停车路标，在上面增设一套交通信号灯；

or at the very least, to assign a lollipop person to the junction at the times when children were going to and from school.

或至少在交叉路口分派一个交通警察，在孩子们上下学时指挥那里的交通。

The local police were sympathetic to these requests, but to no avail.

虽然当地警察赞同这一请求，但却毫无效果。

They claimed they lacked the authority to install a set of lights.

他们声称自己并没有增设信号灯的权利。

Things had been tight since the previous year's local government audit, and funds were unlikely to be forthcoming.

自从上一年地方政府对他们的审查以来，财务状况便紧张了起来，资金不大可能批下来。

However, they would, when asked, frequently assure the questioner that they hoped the government would soon augment their budget

可每当有人问及此事，他们又保证他们希望政府很快增加他们的预算，

and allow them increased autonomy in making financial decisions, in which case dealing with the Elm Street junction would be a top priority.

扩大他们在财务决策中的自主权，这样他们就可以首先解决榆树街交叉路口的交通问题了。

Many people pointed out that simply to wait for the government to act was pointless,

与此同时，许多人指出仅靠等待政府政策采取措施是无济于事的，

that maybe a set of traffic lights could be purchased cheaply in an auction,

一套交通信号灯在拍卖会上也许很便宜就可以买到，

or that a lollipop person, besides making the junction safer for the children, would cheer the place up and be an authentic asset to the community.

此外，交通警察除了保证孩子们更安全地通过交叉路口外，还可以活跃当地的气氛。

But it seemed that for ordinary people to suggest improvements to their own community merely served to astonish the police.

但普通民众提出的这一改进本地社区状况的建议似乎使得警察大为震惊。

The matter was settled in a rather unlikely fashion.

后来，问题以相当不可思议的方式解决了。

At the beginning of March a collision occurred between the Chief of Police and the auxiliary fire service chief who was speeding to attend a fire.

3月初发生了一起交通事故，警长的车与火速赶去参加救火的消防副队长的车相撞。

The Chief of Police saw the accident coming and sounded his horn go give aural warning of his approach,

眼看就要发生事故了，警察鸣笛示意，给他以听觉上的警告——他的车就要开过来了。

but the auxiliary fire service chief was already attempting to avoid a small boy and was unable to assimilate the warning signals in time.

可与此同时，消防副队长正设法躲开一个小男孩，没能及时听到警报声。

The auxiliary fire service chief and his associate, who was in the back seat, were unhurt.

消防副队长和坐在后面的助手没有受伤，

The Chief of Police, however, was slightly concussed.

但警长有些轻微的脑震荡。

He got out of his vehicle and staggered around with a slightly bemused expression on his face, as though he was about to attain nirvana,

他走下车来，跌跌撞撞，表情有些茫然，好像自己已身在天堂。

after which he spent twenty minutes trying to attach a parking ticket to the hole where the fireman's windscreen had been.

然后，他花了20分钟的时间试图把停车罚款单贴在消防车挡风玻璃撞碎后留下的空洞上……