



高级英语选修课教材·名篇详注系列




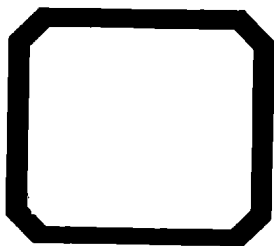
英语短篇小说

名篇详注

主编◎罗益民 赵洪尹

Novellette

 中国人民大学出版社



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主编 罗益民 赵洪尹

编者（以编排章节目录为序）

康 方 钟 杰 吴冬月 罗春霞 张雪梅
晏清皓 曾 静 马春丽 胡 艳

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Preface

This book has grown out of the former anthology *Short Stories of the English Language: A Course Book* published by Chongqing University Press in 2009. In that book we have laid heavy emphasis on language, theme, characters, plot, and stylistic matters. Here this *Great Stories* anthology aims to read those same stories as in the *Course Book* more profoundly and more academically. For this purpose, we have deleted the after-text exercises, added short summaries and commentary entailed by a further reading list, and most importantly, supplied each story with more detailed linguistic and cultural notes in order that our readers—students and teachers—can understand more tangibly.

This anthology has continued using English as the working language because we believe this to be a more authentic and effective approach to best understand the original text.

There are always better editions of the same kind, but everything under the roof of heaven is in change, so do anthologies of short stories in English. We hope that our edition can be more pleasurable and more helpful. We dare not say that ours is the best and thus leaves no space for further improvement. Anyhow, we have our own perspectives and therefore expect that conscientious readers may find it valuable to read and, if possible, to enjoy.

We would like to express our thanks to the former editors of the one out of which this edition has grown for their arduous work. And we are especially grateful to the editors of this edition, and to three great friends of professor of Professor Yang Quanhong, Professor Chen Caiyi and Professor Cao Shunfa for their help in various ways.

We welcome advice as well as constructive, friendly criticism for the sake of truth, and of the virtue buried in it: *magis amica veritas* (I love Truth more—Aristotle).

LUO YIMIN, ZHAO HONGYIN
Southwest University

1 June 2011

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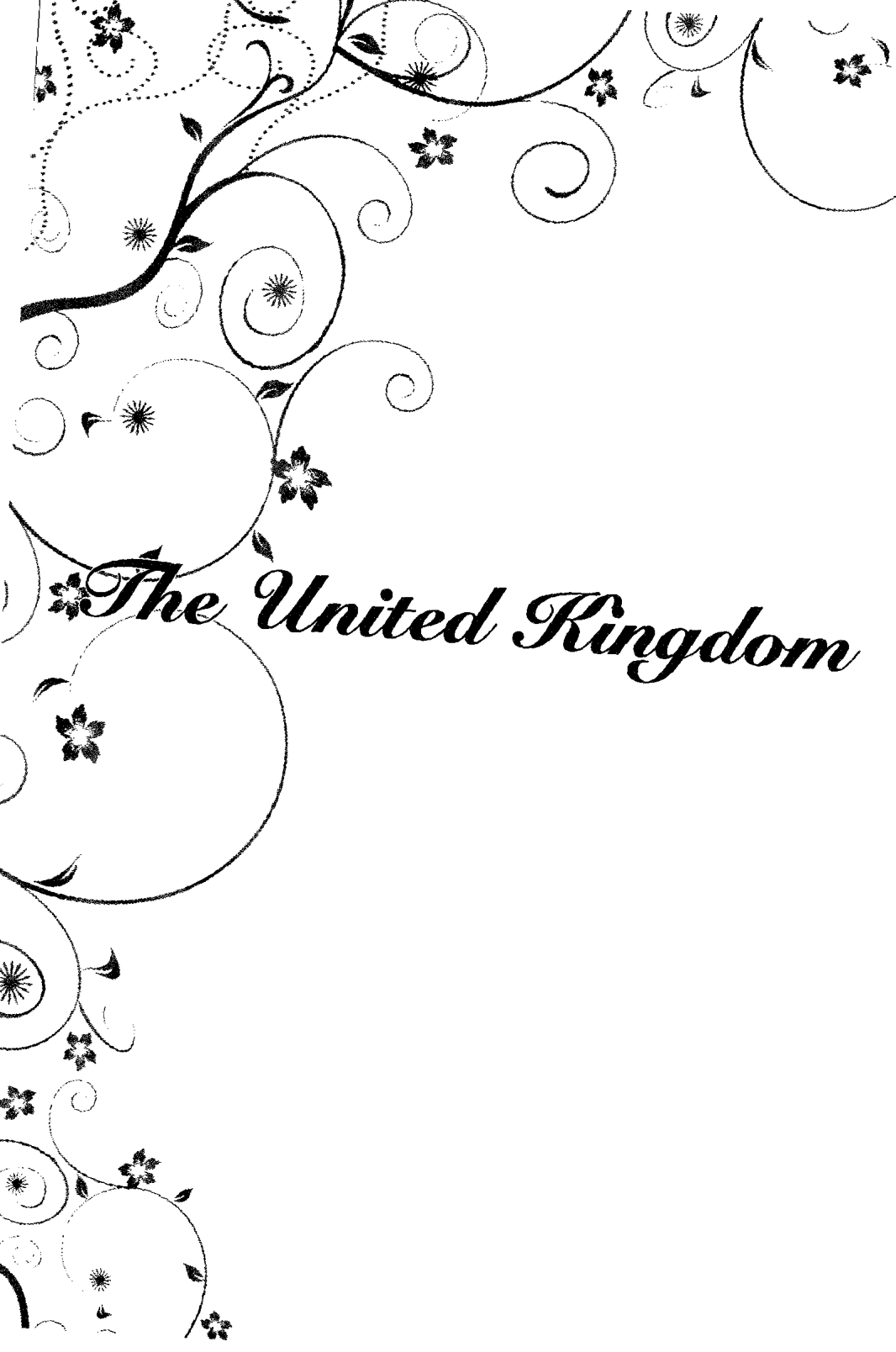
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The United Kingdom

Thomas Hardy

(1840—1928)

About the Author

Thomas Hardy spent most of his life in his native Dorset (the “Wessex” of his novels). A recurrent theme in Hardy’s work is the struggle of human beings against the indifferent force that inflicts the sufferings and ironies of life. His major novels include *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* (1891), and *Jude the Obscure* (1896). He turned to writing poetry in the late 1890s and published eight volumes of poems, as well as a drama in blank verse, *The Dynasts* (1904—1908).

About the Work

“The Withered Arm” tells a supernatural story. Rhoda Brook, a dairymaid who has been seduced some years earlier by a prosperous local farmer, now lives with her son in a poor cottage. Gertrude Lodge is the farmer’s young and pretty wife. After Farmer Lodge brings Gertrude home, Rhoda’s obsession with Gertrude leads to a nightmare in which the latter takes the form of an incubus visiting her and by protection Rhoda attacks Gertrude’s left arm violently. Gertrude soon befriends Rhoda and confides to her that there are some inexplicable symptoms developing on her arm. The symptoms have begun at precisely the moment of Rhoda’s nightmare. Gertrude’s condition deteriorates, her arms becomes partially paralysed as well. She gradually loses her beauty and her husband’s love. She then urges Rhoda’s company to visit Conjuror Trendle, a wise man who is also a practitioner of white magic, for a cure. Trendle shows Gertrude the image of her enemy which looks

like Rhoda overtly. Rhoda frightens and disappears with her son. With the second attempt Gertrude learns that a cure may be affected by laying the arm on the neck of newly hanged man. In desperation she tries this remedy but finally fails. The newly hanged man is exactly the son of Rhoda and Lodge.

Hardy initially submits the tale to *Longman's Magazine* while the refusal attributes to the macabre theme which seems unsuitable for its readership. Finally and originally published in *Blackwood's Magazine* in January 1888, it is then collected in *Wessex Tales*. The story gives forth a supernatural or paranormal smell and is based on a grisly superstition. It is evident from Hardy's autobiography that at that time he is taking close interest in Dorset traditions and superstitions, and also the 1896 preface to *Wessex Tales* recalls that during Hardy's childhood "there was still living an old woman who, for the cure of some eating disease, has been taken in her youth to have her blood turned by a convict's corpse in the manner described in this story". The story opens in a pastoral vein with a milking scene but then quickly moves into the uncanny and the sinister, and reaches its climax in a tableau of horror and tragedy. The sombre tale is narrated in a chronological record in which many details of local topography, including journeys across Egdon Heath, provide a realistic frame for the central theme of the supernatural or paranormal. Rhoda, who seems in the earlier part of the story to have some of the qualifications of a witch, is developed into a figure of genuine pathos. She not only bears the hard work but also the mental suffering. The unexpected intimacy with Gertrude brings her oppressive guilty which leads her escape. Gertrude is no more an innocent woman destroyed by the misdoings of her husband. Conjuror Trendle has much in common with Mr. Fall, the weather-prophet in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. As usual, in keeping with the "Wessex" feature of the title, the story

is predominantly local and historical, drawing heavily on regional customs, traditions and folk relieves, such as the magic proceedings and the hanging execution in Casterbridge. Albeit in most respects Hardy's conforms to the accepted norms of Victorian English, he readily departs from these for a particular effect. He popularizes the dialect in blurring the distinction between different cases of pronouns. The retention of reflective pronouns where they are now generally omitted is an archaic feature surviving in a dialect, thus contributing to the "Wessex" character of Hardy's language.

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THE WITHERED ARM

I

A Lorn Milkmaid

It was an eighty-cow dairy¹, and the troop of milkers, regular and supernumerary², were all at work; for, though the time of year was as yet but early April, the feed lay entirely in water-meadows³, and the cows were “in full pail⁴”. The hour was about six in the evening, and three-fourths of the large, red, rectangular animals having been finished off, there was opportunity for a little conversation.

“He do bring home his bride tomorrow, I hear. They’ve come as far as Anglebury⁵ today.”

The voice seemed to proceed from the belly of the cow called Cherry, but the speaker was a milking-woman, whose face was buried in the flank of that motionless beast.

“Hav’ anybody seen her?” said another.

There was a negative response from the first. “Though they say she’s a rosy-cheeked, tisty-tosty⁶ little body enough,” she added; and as the milkmaid spoke she turned her face so that she could glance past her cow’s tail to the other side of the barton, where a thin, fading woman of thirty milked somewhat apart from the rest.

1. **eighty-cow dairy**: an exceptionally large herd by Dorset standards.

2. **supernumerary**: (dairy workers) in addition to those regularly employed.

3. **water-meadows**: meadows flooded with a thin sheet of moving water which protected them from frost in the very early spring and provided grass for grazing just as winter feed ran out.

4. **in full pail**: in the spring after calving a cow’s milk production is at its highest.

5. **Anglebury**: Wareham.

6. **tisty-tosty**: round like a ball.

"Years younger than he, they say," continued the second, with also a glance of reflectiveness in the same direction.

"How old do you call him, then?"

"Thirty or so."

"More like forty," broke in an old milkman near, in a long white pinafore¹ or "wropper"², and with the brim of his hat tied down, so that he looked like a woman. "'A³ was born before our Great Weir was builded, and I hadn't man's wages when I laved water there."

The discussion waxed so warm that the purr of the milk streams became jerky, till a voice from another cow's belly cried with authority, "Now then, what the Turk do it matter to us about Farmer Lodge's age, or Farmer Lodge's new mis'ess? I shall have to pay him nine pound a year for the rent of every one of these milchers⁴, whatever his age or hers. Get on with your work, or 'twill be dark afore⁵ we have done. The evening is pinking in a'ready." This speaker was the dairyman himself, by whom the milkmaids and men were employed.

Nothing more was said publicly about Farmer Lodge's wedding, but the first woman murmured under her cow to her next neighbour. "'Tis hard for she," signifying the thin worn milkmaid aforesaid⁶.

"O no," said the second. "He ha'n't spoke to Rhoda Brook for years."

When the milking was done they washed their pails and hung them on a many-forked stand made as usual of the peeled limb of an oak-tree, set upright in the earth, and resembling a colossal⁷ antlered⁸ horn.

1. **pinafore**: a sleeveless wraparound garment tied at the back, worn to protect the clothes.

2. **wropper**: (dialect) wrapper or overall.

3. **'A**: (dialect) I; he or she.

4. **milchers**: cows that yield milk.

5. **afore**: (dialect) before.

6. **aforesaid**: said or mentioned earlier or previously.

7. **colossal**: extremely large.

8. **antler**: Middle English aunteler, from Anglo-French antiler which denotes one of the paired deciduous solid bony processes that arise from the frontal bone on the head of an animal of the deer family.

The majority then dispersed in various directions homeward. The thin woman who had not spoken was joined by a boy of twelve or thereabout, and the twain went away up the field also.

Their course lay apart from that of the others, to a lonely spot high above the water-meads¹, and not far from the border of Egdon Heath², whose dark countenance was visible in the distance as they drew nigh to their home.

“They’ve just been saying down in barton that your father brings his young wife home from Anglebury tomorrow,” the woman observed. “I shall want to send you for a few things to market, and you’ll be pretty sure to meet ’em.”

“Yes, Mother,” said the boy. “Is Father married then?”

“Yes... You can give her a look, and tell me what she’s like, if you do see her.”

“Yes, Mother.”

“If she’s dark or fair, and if she’s tall—as tall as I. And if she seems like a woman who has ever worked for a living, or one that has been always well off, and has never done anything, and shows marks of the lady on her, as I expect she do.”

“Yes.”

They crept up the hill in the twilight and entered the cottage. It was built of mud-walls, the surface of which had been washed by many rains into channels and depressions that left none of the original flat face visible, while here and there in the thatch³ above a rafter showed like a bone protruding through the skin.

She was kneeling down in the chimney-corner, before two pieces of

1. **meads**: (poet and dialect) meadows.

2. **Egdon Heath**: Hardy’s name for the heathlands stretching from Dorchester to Poole.

3. **thatch**: a roof covering of straw, reeds, or similar material; material used for such a covering.