

有声名著精选

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The Time Machine

时间机器

H.G.Wells



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H.G. Wells 原著

T. Ernesto Bethancourt 改写

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A PACEMAKER CLASSIC: The Time Machine
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序

世界图书出版公司北京公司出版的《有声名著精选》乃是很好的泛读及听说材料,适合高中及大学低年级学生学英语之用,对于自学英语的人也非常合适。其特点大致有四:

一、简写本出自西方语言学专家之手,文字流畅,语言规范,用词造句都是经过深思熟虑的,完全合乎现代英语习惯。改写者极为重视词汇、语法及修辞的基本用法,力求文字清新流畅,浅显易懂,准确而且实用。很多句子本身便是某一词汇、语法用法的很好的例句。

二、简写本多为欧美文学经典作品,这些作品在不同程度上反映欧美社会的各个方面。尤其是一些进步作家如:狄更斯、马克·吐温,他们在作品中深刻地剖析了他们自己所处的社会,读这些作品比读西方政治经济学还有益处。文化背景知识不是可有可无的,只有较广泛地了解欧美社会的各个方面,欧美人的生活、风俗、习惯,以及各种价值观念,才有可能在实际工作中得心应手地使用语言,应付裕如。

三、简写本的中文前言分别对原著作者、时代背景、内容梗概及作品特点作了介绍,并附有人物表,相信对读者进一步理解作品会有所帮助。

四、与简写本配套的朗读磁带,语音语调纯正,可以作为学习发音的楷模。

广泛阅读是学习英语的必由之径。精泛并举,“两条腿走路”,方能掌握语言。精读提供理性知识,泛读提供感性知识,二者不可或缺。通过泛读,许多语言现象会被自然而然地吸收、掌握。这些

词汇及语法现象在泛读中重复出现多次,读者不需强记便能正确地掌握它们,而且不会忘记。所以广泛阅读乃是学习外语的重要环节,不可忽视。简写本为泛读提供了方便。

这些简写本的出版非常及时,希望以后还有更多的简写本出版,以飨读者。

上海复旦大学外文系教授

索天章

1997年5月

前 言

本书原著作者 H.G. 威尔斯 (Herbert George Wells, 1866 ~ 1946) 是英国著名小说家。他出生于英国一个贫困的小资产阶级家庭。14 岁时辍学, 为生计所迫做过学徒、信差和售货员。18 岁获奖学金进入伦敦大学学习生物学, 曾受过赫胥黎的指导。他所学的现代科学的丰富思想在其许多文学作品中有所反映。

威尔斯具有多方面的创作才能。他不仅是位文学家, 而且是位历史学家、社会学家和新闻记者。其作品达 100 多部。他的早期作品以科学幻想小说为主, 并以其独特且精练简洁的创作方法著称。他的晚期作品大多流于冗长。

威尔斯的主要成就是科学幻想小说, 其主要作品有《莫洛博士岛》(The Island of Dr. Moreau, 1896)、《隐身人》(The Invisible Man, 1897)、《星际战争》(The War of the Worlds, 1898)、《首先登上月球的人》(The First Men in the Moon, 1901)、《神食》(The Food of the Gods, 1904) 等。他还创作了一些社会生活小说, 如《安·维罗尼卡》(Ann Veronica, 1909)、《托诺一班格》(Tono Bungay, 1909) 等。

威尔斯生活在一个社会动荡不安、科学不断变革的时代。当时, 英国维多利亚女王时代的物理学研究取得了飞跃: 光速的研究; 相对论的出现动摇了原来的物理学概念; 万有引力显现了其局限性; 空间和时间概念再也不能人为地分割等。威尔斯的科幻小说反映了当时物理学所发生的深刻变革, 宣传了当时的科学成就, 指出了科学发展的可能性。他的《时间机器》则是第一次用生动通俗的语言反映了时空的新概念。

《时间机器》(The Time Machine)发表于1895年,是其处女作,描述了一位科学家发明了时间旅行机,并用它进入到公元802701年的世界,发现地球上的人类已经变成两类:不劳而食的“埃洛依”(Eloi)和终日劳动养活着“埃洛依”的“莫洛克”(Morlock)。“埃洛依”饱食终日,其体力、智慧已退化萎缩。“莫洛克”则终日劳碌,为“埃洛依”优雅安逸的生活创造一切,而夜间则以猎取“埃洛依”为食。小说以幻想的形式表达了作者对人类社会中被剥削阶级和被剥削阶级的对立前景的看法。

威尔斯是一位改良主义者。他主张通过教育和技术改造资本主义。他的科幻小说不仅充满引人入胜的科学预言和幻想,同时也对现代社会制度中的不合理现象进行了讽刺和批判。他的小说基于幻想,又不脱离现实。有评论家说威尔斯以其精练简洁的风格,加上其丰富的想象,使他在科学幻想领域内超越了凡尔纳。凡尔纳只注重科学技术的现实问题,而威尔斯则关心科学技术的发展对人类社会的影响。他善于借助幻想的形象,荒诞的人物,离奇的情节及夸张的手法揭露人类社会的各种弊端,反映社会的矛盾和冲突。当代的西方科幻小说多以威尔斯的创作方法为楷模。

北京外国语大学 朱雪云

1997年4月

Cast of Characters

The narrator	A friend of the Time Traveler's
The Time Traveler	A very bright inventor
Weena	A woman in the future
The Eloi	The beautiful small people of the future
The Morlocks	The white ape-like creatures of the future

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1 A Look at the Time Machine

The Time Traveler (we will call him that) was talking about deep matters. His usually pale face was bright. His eyes were shining as he spoke. Six of us were gathered at his house that night in 1895: a doctor, a very young man, a mayor, a psychologist, a storekeeper named Filby, and myself.

We were all good friends of the Time Traveler. Each of us admired his bright mind and his inventions. In fact, he had invented the chairs we sat on. We had eaten a very good dinner. And now, we were sitting around the table, making small talk. At least, I thought it was small talk. But it soon became plain that the Time Traveler was very serious. I had never seen him so excited.

"You must follow me carefully," he said, pointing a finger in the air. "Most of what you have learned in school about mathematics is wrong."

"Really," said Filby. "You ask a lot of us." (Filby liked to argue.)

"I don't ask you to believe anything without proof," said the Time Traveler. "And I can prove what I say. For instance: All things have shape

and form. You can measure them by how high, wide, and deep they are. Right?"

"Of course," said the doctor. "We all know that."

"But you have left out time," said the Time Traveler. "It is the fourth way to measure things."

"I don't follow you," said the mayor.

"Let me put it this way," said the Time Traveler. "For something to be real to us, it has to be more than just wide, deep, and high. It has to last long enough in time for us to know that it's there."

"I don't understand," Filby said. "Either something is, or it isn't. Of course it lasts in time. Otherwise, it wouldn't be real. Time isn't the same as space."

"Ah, that's where you're wrong, Filby," said the Time Traveler. "Just because you can't travel in time, you think that nothing or no one *can* travel in time."

"This is really too deep for me," the mayor sighed.

"Not at all," said the Time Traveler. "It's all in how you look at it. Now, let's say you are a person in a cartoon in a newspaper. You can't cross over into the next box of the cartoon. But that doesn't mean it isn't there, does it?"

"I suppose not," said the doctor.

"Well, it's the same thing with time," the Time Traveler explained. "We think of time as some-

thing that can't be changed. What is past is gone forever. And we just have to wait for what is to come. In our own way, we are like the people in a cartoon. But just because we can't cross the lines doesn't mean that the past and the future aren't there. And I say these lines can be crossed."

"I think I see what you mean," the doctor said. "Things all have *four* dimensions: they are high, wide, deep, and exist in time. Time is like space. It's just another way to measure things. And it is just as real as the others."

"Now you have it!" cried the Time Traveler.

"But there is a difference," the doctor said, wagging his finger. "We can travel in space. We can go up, down, back, and forth. But we can't travel in time."

"Ah, but we can," said the Time Traveler, with a smile. "That's why I have called you all here tonight. I have been working for some years on this idea. I have invented a machine that will let me travel in time. At least, I have finished a small model of one. Now I will prove to you that it works."

"It can travel through time?" asked the young man. "What an idea!"

"It would be wonderful for history teachers," said the psychologist. "They could travel back and see what really happened."

"Well, what about the future?" said the young man. "You could put all your money in the bank to earn interest. Then you could travel years ahead and be rich."

"Well, if you ask me, this is all just small talk," Filby said. "You can't prove it."

"Oh, but I can," answered the Time Traveler.

"Prove it?" I said. "This I have to see!"

"And so you shall," said the Time Traveler.

"Of course, it's all a trick," Filby added.

"Trick or not, let's see it," said the mayor.

The Time Traveler smiled. Then he got up from the table and went out of the room. We heard him walk down the hall to his workshop. While he was gone, Filby started to tell us about a magician he once saw. But before he could finish his story, the Time Traveler came back.

The Time Traveler was holding something that was no bigger than the palm of his hand. It was about the size of a small clock. I have to admit it was well made—whatever it was. It had rods of bright metal. Some parts looked like glass, but they glowed without light shining on them. There were other things on it that I had never seen before.

"This is a small model of a machine I am building," explained the Time Traveler. He put the model on a small table near the fireplace. The only other thing on the table was an oil lamp. But there

were many candles lit in the room. I could see everything clearly.

We all drew closer and looked carefully at the model. I think we were looking for some kind of trick. Because of this, I watched very closely. I was sure that with all of us watching, the Time Traveler could not trick us.

"Well?" said the psychologist.

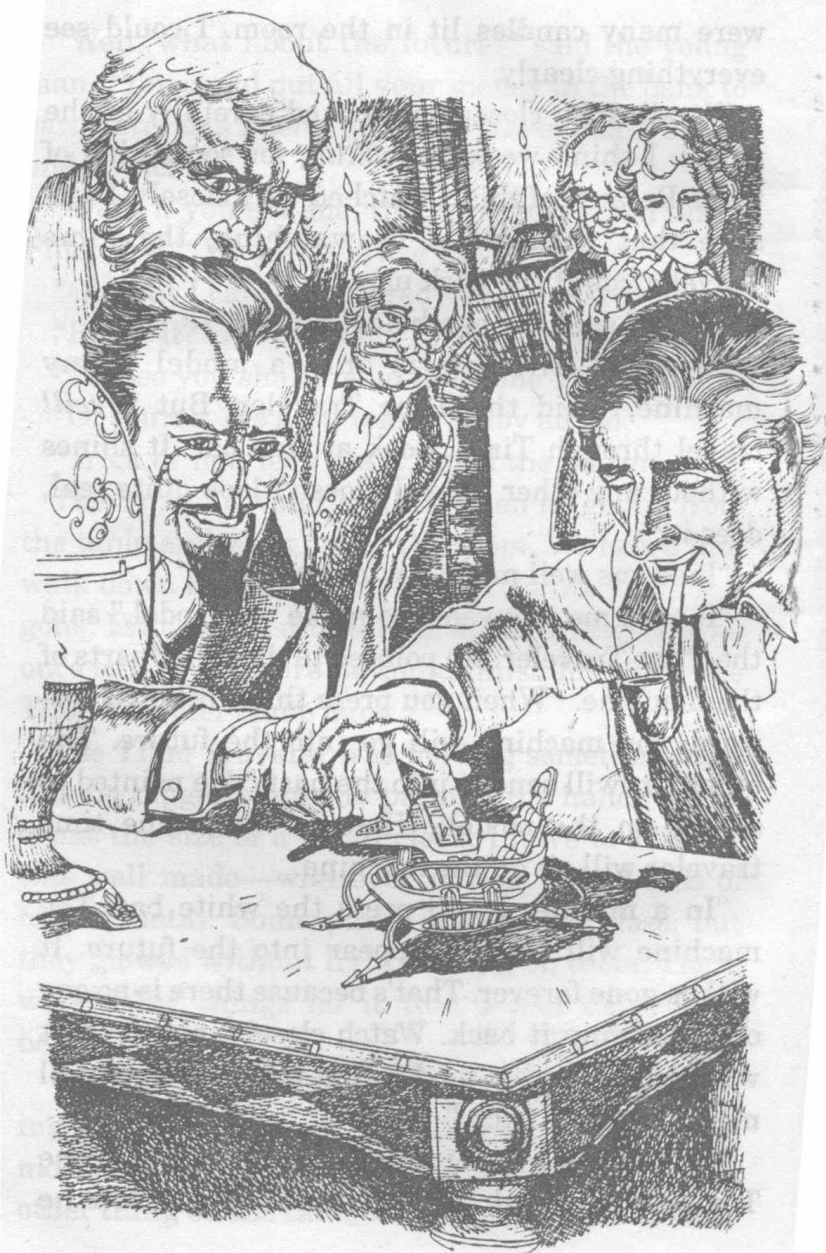
"First of all, this is only a model of my machine," said the Time Traveler. But it *will* travel through Time. Look at this bar. It shines without any other light. It doesn't look quite real, does it?"

"It seems well made," said the doctor.

"It took me two years to make the model," said the Time Traveler. He pointed to the other parts of the machine. "When you press this white bar forward, the machine will go into the future. The other bar will send it into the past." He pointed to a seat on the model. "Here is where the time traveler will sit on the machine.

"In a minute, I will press the white bar. The machine will then disappear into the future. It will be gone forever. That's because there is no one on it to bring it back. Watch closely, now. I don't want to waste this model, and then have you tell me it was all a trick."

We were all quiet for a moment. The Time Traveler reached for the white bar. Then he



stopped. He turned to the psychologist and said, "No, I shouldn't do this. Here. Lend me your finger."

We watched the psychologist press the white bar with his finger. The machine began to glow. Then it began to blur. It seemed to spin. You could almost see through it, as if it were a ghost of a machine. Suddenly, it was gone! At the moment it disappeared, a candle near the fireplace was blown out. Now the small table was bare, except for the lamp.

The psychologist was the first of us to move. He looked under the table for the machine. I'm sure he thought it had been a trick. The Time Traveler laughed.

"Well, what do you think?" he asked.

"Do you mean to tell us that your machine is now in the future?" the doctor asked.

"That's right," answered the Time Traveler. He smiled. "What's more, I have nearly finished building a big machine. I plan to travel into time, myself."

"Hold on, now," said Filby. "It's one thing to show us a trick toy. It was good for some after-dinner fun. But tomorrow, in the daylight . . . That's another thing."

The Time Traveler smiled. "Would you like to see the Time Machine itself, then?" he asked. He stood up.

We followed him down the hall to his workshop. The machine was, indeed, a larger model of the one that had disappeared. But this one wasn't finished. The control bars weren't in place yet. I picked one up. Like the bar on the model, it was made of some kind of glass. It seemed to glow from the inside. On a table nearby, I saw some plans and drawings.

"All right," said the doctor. "We've seen it. Now stop joking with us. Do you mean to say that you're really going to travel through time on this thing? Or is this a trick—like the ghost you showed us last Christmas?"

"I have never been more serious in my life," said the Time Traveler. "I am going to travel into the future on this machine!"

None of us knew what to say. I looked at Filby. His face showed that he didn't believe a bit of it. He gave me a wink, too.