

高等学校试用教材

大学英语

(文理科本科用)

泛读

EXTENSIVE READING

4 下

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第 四 册

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张砚秋 主编

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16. A MAN WHO HAD NO EYES

Two men encounter each other on the street, quite by accident. One is a blind beggar in dirty old clothes, trying to sell cigarette lighters to anyone who will take pity on him. The other is an insurance salesman, handsome and well-groomed in a spotless suit and hat. His air of strength and prosperity are a further contrast to the blind peddler's sad state of affairs. It is the irony of fate that brings these two men together....

10 A beggar was coming down the avenue just as Mr. Parsons emerged from his hotel.

He was a blind beggar, carrying the traditional battered cane,¹ and thumping his way before him with the cautious, half-furtive effort of the sightless.²
15 He was a shaggy, thick-necked fellow; his coat was greasy about the lapels and pockets, and his hand splayed over the cane's crook with a futile sort of clinging.³ He wore a black pouch slung over his shoulder. Apparently he had something to sell.

20 The air was rich with spring; the sun was warm and yellowed on the asphalt.⁴ Mr. Parsons, standing there in front of his hotel and noting the clack-clack approach of the sightless man, felt a sudden and foolish sort of pity for all blind creatures.

25 And, thought Mr. Parsons, he was very glad to be alive. A few years ago he had been little more than a skilled laborer;⁵ now he was successful, respected, admired.... Insurance.... And he had done it alone, unaided, struggling beneath handicaps⁶.... And he was still young. The blue air

of spring, fresh from its memories of windy pools and lush shrubbery, could thrill him with eagerness.

He took a step forward just as the tap-tapping blind man passed him by. Quickly the shabby fellow turned.

35

"Listen, guv'nor.⁷ Just a minute of your time."

Mr. Parsons said, "It's late. I have an appointment. Do you want me to give you something?"

"I ain't no beggar,⁸ guv'nor. You bet I ain't.⁹ I got a handy little article here"--he fumbled until he could press a small object into Mr. Parsons' hand --"that I sell. One buck.¹⁰ Best cigarette lighter made."¹¹

40

Mr. Parsons stood there, somewhat annoyed and embarrassed. He was a handsome figure with his immaculate gray suit and gray hat and malacca stick.¹² Of course the man with the cigarette lighters could not see him.... "But I don't smoke," He said.

45

"Listen. I bet you know plenty people who smoke. Nice little present," wheedled the man. "And, mister, you wouldn't mind helping a poor guy out?" He clung to Mr. Parsons' sleeve.

50

Mr. Parsons sighed and felt in his vest pocket. He brought out two half dollars and pressed them into the man's hand. "Certainly. I'll help you out. As you say, I can give it to someone. Maybe the elevator boy would--" He hesitated, not wishing to be boorish and inquisitive, even with a blind peddler. "Have you lost your sight entirely?"

55

The shabby man pocketed the two half dollars. "Fourteen years, guv'nor." Then he added with an insane sort of pride: "Westbury, sir. I was one of 'em."

60

"Westbury," repeated Mr. Parsons. "Ah, yes. The chemical explosion.... The papers haven't

65

mentioned it for years. But at the time it was supposed to be one of the greatest disasters in--"

"They've all forgot about it." The fellow shifted his feet wearily. "I tell you, guv'nor, a
70 man who was in it don't forget about it. Last thing I ever saw was C shop going up in one grand smudge, and that damn' gas pouring in at all the busted windows."¹³

Mr. Parsons coughed. But the blind peddler was
75 caught up with the train of his one dramatic reminiscence¹⁴. And, also, he was thinking that there might be more half dollars in Mr. Parsons' pocket.

"Just think about it, guv'nor. There was a hundred and eight people killed, about two hundred
80 injured, and over fifty of them lost their eyes. Blind as bats--" He groped forward until his dirty hand rested against Mr. Parsons' coat. "I tell you, sir, there wasn't nothing worse than that in the war¹⁵. If I had lost my eyes in the war, okay. I
85 would have been well took care of¹⁶. But I was just a workman, working for what was in it¹⁷. And I got it¹⁸. You're damn' right I got it, while the capitalists were making their dough¹⁹! They was insured, don't worry about that. They--"

90 "Insured," repeated his listener. "Yes. That's what I sell--"

"You want to know how I lost my eyes?" cried the man. "Well, here it is!" His words fell with the bitter and studied drama of a story often
95 told²⁰, and told for money. "I was there in C shop, last of all the folks rushing out. Out in the air there was a chance, even with buildings exploding right and left. A lot of guys made it safe out the door and got away. And just when I was about there,
100 crawling along between those big vats, a guy behind

me grabs my leg. He says, "Let me past, you---!"
Maybe he was nuts. I dunno.²¹ I try to forgive him
in my heart, guv'nor. But he was bigger than me. He
hauls me back and climbs right over me! Tramples me into
the dirt. And he gets out, and I lie there with all 105
that poison gas pouring down on all sides of me, and
flame and stuff...." He swallowed--a studied sob--
and stood dumbly expectant. He could imagine the
next words: Tough luck, my man. Damned tough. Now,
I want to--"That's the story, guv'nor." 110

The spring wind shrilled past them, damp and quiver-
ing.

"Not quite," said Mr. Parsons.

The blind peddler shivered crazily. "Not quite?
What you mean, you--?" 115

"The story is true," Mr. Parsons said, "except
that it was the other way around."²²

"Other way around?" He croaked unamiably. "Say,
guv'nor--"

"I was in C shop," said Mr. Parsons. "It was the 120
other way around. You were the fellow who hauled
back on me and climbed over me. You were bigger than
I was, Markwardt."

The blind man stood for a long time, swallowing
hoarsely. He gulped: "Parsons. By God. By God! I 125
thought you--" And then he screamed fiendishly: "Yes.
Maybe so. Maybe so. But I'm blind! I'm blind, and
you've been standing here letting me spout to you, and
laughing at me every minute! I'm blind!"

People in the street turned to stare at him. 130

"You got away, but I'm blind! Do you hear? I'm--"

"Well," said Mr. Parsons, "don't make such a row
about it, Markwardt.... So am I."

From Road to Reading, ed., Anna
Maria Malkoc, Washington, D.C.
Approximately 1200 words.

NOTES

1. the traditional battered cane: the old, worn-out walking stick blind beggars usually carry
2. ... and thumping his way before him with the cautious, half-furtive effort of the sightless: ... feeling his way forward carefully and somewhat sneakingly
3. with a futile sort of clinging: with a near hopeless effort to grasp the cane
4. ... and yellowed on the asphalt: ... and was shining yellow on the black pavement
5. ... he had been little more than a skilled laborer: he had only been a skilled laborer
6. struggling beneath handicaps: struggling to overcome difficulties
7. guv'nor: governor, (slang) sir, mister
8. I ain't no beggar: I'm not a beggar.
9. You bet I ain't.: You can be sure that I'm not a beggar.
10. one buck: one dollar
11. best cigarette lighter made: This is the best cigarette lighter ever made.
12. with his immaculate gray suit...and malacca stick: with his clean gray suit and fashionable walking stick
13. ... C shop going up in one grand smudge, and that damn' gas pouring in at all the busted windows: ...C shop going up in a big fiery smoke cloud and the gas pouring in at all the smashed windows
14. ... was caught up with the train of his one dramatic reminiscence: He was lost deep in thought of his past experience.
15. ... there wasn't nothing worse than that in the war: (nonstandard usage) There wasn't anything worse than that in the war.

16. I would have been well took care of.: (nonstandard usage) I would have been well taken care of.
17. working for what was in it: I was only a wage earner.
18. And I got it.: And I was punished; I became blind.
19. making their dough: making their money
20. With the bitter and studied drama of a story often told: He told bitterly his story which was well planned and had been told many times.
21. Maybe he was nuts. I dunno.: Maybe he was mad. I don't know.
22. ... it was the other way around: It was just the opposite.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What did Mr. Parsons use to be? How did he become successful in life?
2. How did Mr. Parsons and the blind peddler differ in their appearance and attitude toward difficulties?
3. In what way was the story the blind peddler told true? In what way was the story false?
4. What does the last sentence "So am I" mean?
5. Does the story have a surprising end? How do you feel about the two men at the beginning of the story? How do you feel about them at the end of the story?
6. What is the main point of the story? How is it that these two men were both blinded in a disaster, but still had completely different futures?

COMPREHENSION CHECK QUESTIONS

1. The expression "to be boorish and inquisitive" means
 - a. to be stingy and selfish

- b. to be bookish and ignorant
 - c. to be indifferent and unconcerned
 - d. to be rude and overcurious
2. When the blind peddler mentioned the chemical explosion at Westbury Mr. Parsons coughed, because
- a. he felt guilty and embarrassed.
 - b. though it was spring, it was still very cold outdoors.
 - c. what the blind peddler said brought him back to C shop. When he thought of the smoke and the gas he couldn't help coughing.
 - d. he was not interested in the story and was getting impatient.
3. Mr. Parsons did not recognize the blind beggar as Markwardt immediately, because
- a. Markwardt had changed so much since they last met.
 - b. Mr. Parsons was a blind man too.
 - c. Markwardt had disguised himself.
 - d. there were so many beggars in the street that he could not tell one from another.
4. When the blind peddler learned who the man talking with him was, he was
- a. angry.
 - b. shocked.
 - c. ashamed.
 - d. hysterical.
5. Which of the following statements is true?
- a. The blind man made up part of the story because he thought Parsons had died in the big fire.
 - b. The man the author refers to in the title is the blind peddler.
 - c. Mr. Parsons wanted to help the blind peddler because he had done wrong to him.
 - d. When Mr. Parsons recognized the blind peddler he was very much annoyed.

17. DIARY OF A DISASTER

A diary is a daily record, especially of personal observations and experiences. Jinnie Huglin, a Californian kept a diary of an unfortunate event that happened off the coast of her state in 1969. In that year, an oil leak polluted the water and spoiled the beaches of the southern California coast at Santa Barbara,¹ near Los Angeles. Although several years have passed since then, similar incidents threaten to pollute other coastal areas around the world today. 5

January 29, 1969: The California night is clear and cold. Ahead of me, five miles out in the Pacific Ocean, is Platform A² where an oil well "blew out"³ just a few days ago. Since then the oil has been bubbling up into the ocean. 10

This evening's newspaper headline said the words that we've all been dreading: GIANT OIL SLICK SPREADING IN SANTA BARBARA CHANNEL. 15

But perhaps luck will be with us. Perhaps the oil leak will be sealed quickly and the wind will blow the oil out to sea. 20

January 30: Today's headline--OIL SLICK NEARS RINCON BEACH--does not reassure me. The winds are keeping the slick away, but only two miles away!

The newspaper says that planes are dropping a chemical on the oil to try to break up the slick and that workmen on Platform A are trying to stop the leak with a special kind of mud. There are two pictures of oil-covered birds on the front page. A professor of biology at the University of California told the newspaper, "Particularly sad is the fate of 25 30

the birds. They...swallow the oil, which is poisonous."

The oil slick now covers 390 square kilometers.

January 31: OIL MASS REACHES CARPINTERIA SHORE.

35 That's just a little south of us.

Before I went to bed last night, I looked outside my cottage window. I could see the brilliant lights on Platform A. Today the TV newsmen explained that workmen on the platform have been trying all
40 night to cap the well so that the oil would stop flowing.

A government ornithologist made a list of the oil-soaked birds he found on some of the beaches. "Nearly all of the birds will be dead within a short
45 time," he said.

The oil slick now covers 520 square kilometers.

February 1: There's a little notice in today's paper about putting rescued birds in cardboard boxes and taking them to a bird-rescue station to be cleaned.

50 February 2: Beautiful words!⁴ WINDS BLOWING OIL MASS AWAY FROM SOUTH COAST SHORE.

February 3: The Secretary of the Interior⁵ flew in⁶ from Washington, D.C., last night to look at the damage. Today he announced that "the pollution
55 is much more severe than I expected," and he asked the oil companies to stop drilling. They did.

The oil slick now covers 900 square kilometers.

February 4: I drove down to the harbor this afternoon and watched while the workmen inflated
60 long, plastic booms. If the oil continues to spread, these floating booms will be placed across the harbor entrance to keep out the oil and protect the boats.

The oil slick now covers 1300 square kilometers.

65 February 5: This afternoon's headline was:

SANTA BARBARA BEACHES, HARBOR, BLACKENED BY OIL.

A boating friend phoned me from the harbor.
"Those plastic booms they put across the harbor
last night didn't keep the oil out. And the rain
splashed the oil up as high as two feet on the sides 70
of the boats. Now we can't go near our boats--there
is too much danger of fire."

I drove down to the harbor and stood in the rain,
looking down at the water. The thick oil was every-
where--six inches deep, splashing against the boats 75
and the boulders and the docks.

On the beach, men were spreading yellow straw on
the oil and raking the wet straw into huge piles.
"Straw soaks up forty times its own weight in oil,"
one of the men said. 80

The oil slick now covers 2000 square kilometers.

February 6: I was awake long before dawn, lying
in bed and listening to the rain splash against my
windows. When light finally came, I pulled the cur-
tains open and there it was: black waves, black 85
driftwood, a gray sky, rain, and the smell of oil.

February 7: In this evening's paper there is a
picture of the first seal being rescued and cleaned
of oil. I worry about the seals that live on a near-
by island; the island is now completely surrounded by 90
oil. Perhaps the seals will have the instinct to
stay safely on land.

The entire beach in front of my cottage is covered
with oil as far as I can see.

February 8: LEAK STOPPED, SAY OIL OFFICIALS. 95
Hallelujah!

Yesterday afternoon 1500 barrels an hour of mud
were pumped into the oil well. Finally, by midnight,
the flow of oil into the sea had stopped.

I had been looking at pictures of oil-covered 100

birds in the newspapers. Now I am finding these birds here on my beach. The sight fills me with helpless anger. We know that most of the birds are doomed,⁷ but still we do what we can. We lift
105 them from pools of thick oil or from the straw and put them carefully into cardboard boxes.

February 9: I drove down to the bird-rescue station this evening with my first load of birds. The rescue station is at the children's zoo.

110 A tall college student took one of the birds from me and gently lowered it into a washtub full of soap. As he held the frightened bird, another boy quickly washed it clean and passed it down the line to two girls. They rinsed it in warm water and cleaned the
115 inside of its beak and eyes with cotton. Then some margarine was pushed down its throat.

I asked, "Why the margarine?"

"It helps dissolve and clean out the oil inside them," I was told.

120 Another girl began drying the bird with some rags. "We asked for rags on the radio," she said, nodding toward a huge pile of them in the corner. "A lot of people brought bread, too, bless their hearts."⁸ But the birds won't touch it. If they can
125 eat, small fish are the thing."⁹

She finished drying the bird. I helped her carry several cleaned birds to a small house nearby.

"We've had hundreds of people calling up to see if they could help us here," she added.

130 We put the birds on the floor and watched them move weakly toward a group of others crowded under heat lamps.

"In spite of what we're doing," the girl said, "they have very little chance."

135 February 11: This morning I talked to one of

the teen-agers who was walking along our waterfront, looking for crippled birds. It was cold work in the rain, and I thanked him for what he was doing.

"This isn't much. Some of my friends are working twelve and fourteen hours a day to help save the birds." he told me. 140

February 12: Our President has entered the picture, thank heavens. He has appointed a group of scientists and engineers to figure out¹⁰ how to solve this problem and how to prevent it from happening again. 145

The next best news is that the seals are staying high and dry on their island. They apparently realize the danger and are keeping out of the oily water.

February 13: The early morning beach is solid black¹¹ with the oil-straw-driftwood mixture. Workmen keep moving it and bringing clean straw. The same process is repeated again and again, day after day. 150

The evening paper has just come. Tonight's headline: OIL IS FLOWING AGAIN FROM THE CHANNEL LEAK. 155

February 15: Some visiting Congressmen were walking along the beach just now in business suits¹² and overshoes. The County Supervisor told them, "Keep in mind that there is still a lot of oil in the ocean which has not come ashore. And no one knows when it will." 160

After leaving the harbor yesterday one of the Congressmen said, "This is a horrible mess."

That, sir, is the understatement of the year. 165

February 16: Stormy seas, fog, and rain. Every day there are fewer birds in the sea and on the sand. The devastation of the birds seems terrible, but it is no worse than the death of our fish deep in the ocean. 170

February 23: I really dread opening the paper these days. Tonight there were more unhappy headlines: NEW OIL LEAK REPORTED SIGHTED NEAR PLATFORM A. THE FLOW OF OIL INTO THE SANTA BARBARA CHANNEL
175 APPEARS TO BE INCREASING.

Another sad note¹³ in the paper: 1,200 birds have been brought in for help; only 300 are still alive, and most of them are expected to die.

February 26: The ocean--as far as I can see--
180 is covered with enormous oil patches. As the patches move in toward my beach, the sun shines on their surfaces. There is nothing, nothing anyone can do to stop them. Nothing.

February 27: The smell of oil and the oil itself leaks slowly through the walls of my small cottage. We all seem to live in a bath of oil. It is tracked in everywhere and ends up on door handles, clothes, carpets, and furniture.¹⁴
185

March 1: Perhaps our luck is changing. A cheerful note in today's paper: OIL LEAKAGE IS CUT
190 BACK¹⁵ SUBSTANTIALY. Evidently the mud pumped down into the well is stopping the leak.

March 10: A bad day. Heavy waves and cold. The entire rainswept ocean seems to be solid oil.

May 7: It's hard for me to believe that this
195 is the one-hundredth day since the oil started leaking into the ocean. One hundred days! And still it pours out.

June 12: Blue skies. By now the workmen have
200 washed all our cottages with soap. The blackened rocks have been removed or steam cleaned. A huge job of polishing this beach has been done by the oil company. Fine! But other beaches, farther from the public eye, have not been so lucky.

A friend from the East dropped by¹⁶ a few
205 minutes ago and said, "Well, this mess has been

cleaned up. Now I hope you'll just forget about it."

I suddenly realized that the memory of the disaster was fading. And I think it is terribly important that we do not forget it--because it can happen again, 210 and it can be worse!

June 25: I walked to the Point¹⁷ this morning and sat on a steam-cleaned boulder. The sun was warm; the sea and the sky were blue; the big waves were filled with young boys. I thought about the 215 future of this small beach. What would it be like when those boys had children of their own?

Spring 1970: It all started more than a year ago, and I have just been to a crowded, emotional, anniversary meeting of the disaster. There was one 220 moment that was unforgettable--an eight-year-old girl told us about the world she wanted to live in.

In her light young voice she spoke of drinking "cold water from clean streams..." and of walking "through fields where trees and flowers grow and 225 through forests where birds sing."

I wondered: Can we leave her a world like that? Or will those forests where birds sing be only a dimly-remembered dream from her childhood?

Oil is still leaking from the ocean floor. On my 230 walk today I saw a neighbor walking along the beach with his water skis over one shoulder.

"How was it?" I called.

"The oil is still out there," he answered. "I keep running into it every time I ski," 235

As I walked home, I wondered whether or not any good would come from our Santa Barbara disaster. Perhaps someday we will look back and see it as a turning point---the moment when we began to take action to end the pollution of our air, land, and 240 water. Perhaps then we will have stopped wrecking