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# 近代歐美短篇小說選

第一集

MODERN SHORT STORIES

FOR CHINESE STUDENTS

FIRST SERIES



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石景宜先生贈書

年 月 日



S9008124

臺灣開明書店印行

內政部著作權註冊執照警字第一一〇二號

**近代歐美短篇小說選 第一集**

民國四十六年十月臺一版

基本定價六角

編 注 者 臺灣開明書店

臺北市中山北路

發 行 者 臺灣開明書店

代表人 劉雨琴

印 刷 者 臺灣開明書店

有著作權・不准翻印

## FOREWORD

I hope this series of modern European and American stories would find favour with the Chinese readers. It is designed mainly for college and middle school students who may use it as supplementary reading materials for their English courses. Moreover, the reading public who are interested in the English language may also in their moments of leisure turn to these pages with pleasure and profit.

In making this selection, I have in mind only one guiding principle. I do not presume to make an anthology of representative modern short stories, nor do I claim to have included in it the works famous Western story writers. I am merely trying to present to our students some twenty or so tales by authors whose names may not even be popularly known, but whose works as represented here are the best specimens of Western fiction writing with intrinsic merits of their own. As literature is universal in the emotional appeal it makes these stories, I think, do contain elements which are the hallmark of all great writings. Composed years

ago in distant lands, they speak to us across the barriers of time and space, as their voice is that of the human heart which, when laid bare and stripped of the trappings and vesture, beats in unison with ours. The chords that are played upon are those of love, sacred or profane, devotion and sacrifice, happiness and sorrow, pity, sympathy, and hatred, which last quivers in smouldering personal fury or flares up in glowing flames of war. It is these that make our life worth living or failing them, worth dying; they are embodied here in fictitious stories which are true to life and in imaginary characters who are more alive than we, because they do live intensely and passionately.

Another criterion in the selection of these stories is the simplicity and plainness of their language. All of them can be readily understood by the common reader if he will but take time to study them carefully. To simplify his task, I have added some Chinese notes which I hope will be of help to him. They are aimed, however, not to be comprehensive; I have annotated only those words, phrases, and allusions that are obscure or not often found in ordinary reference books. As for the sweating but sweet labour of turning to the dictionary for accessible, though difficult, words, I leave it to my gentle readers.

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## THE MAN WITH THE TWISTED LIP

Arthur Conan Doyle

"Holmes," I whispered, "what on earth were you doing in that den?"

"I suppose, Watson," said he, "that you imagine that I have added opium smoking to cocaine injections, and all the other little weakness on which you have favoured me with your medical views."

"I was certainly surprised to find you there."

"But not more so than I to find you."

"I came to find a friend."

"And I to find an enemy."

"An enemy?"

"Yes, one of my natural enemies, or shall I say, my natural prey. Briefly, Watson, I am in the midst of a very remarkable inquiry, and I have hoped to find a clue in the incoherent ramblings of these sets, as I have done before now. Had I been recognized in that den, my life would not have been worth an hour's

purchase; for I have used it before now for my own purposes, and the rascally lascar who runs it has sworn to have vengeance upon me. There is a trapdoor at the back of that building, near the corner of Paul's Wharf, which could tell some strange tales of what has passed through it upon the moonless nights "

"What! You do not mean bodies?"

"Aye, bodies, Watson: We should be rich men if we had 1,000 pounds for every poor devil who has been done to death in that den. It is the vilest murder trap on the whole riverside, and I fear that Neville St. Clair has entered it never to leave it more. But come with me in my dogcart, won't you?"

"If I can be of use."

"Oh, a trusty comrade is always of use; and a chronicler still more so. The room at the Cedars is a double-bedded one."

"The cedars?"

"Yes, that is Mr. St. Clair's house. I am staying there while I conduct the inquiry."

"Where is it, then?"

"Near Lee, in Kent. We have a seven-mile drive before us."

"But I am all in the dark."

"Of course you are. You'll know all about it



presently."

He flicked his horse with his whip, and we dashed away through the endless succession of somber and deserted streets, which widened gradually until we were flying across a broad, balustraded bridge, with the murky river flowing sluggishly beneath us. Thin clouds were drifting slowly across the sky, and a star or two twinkled dimly here and there through the rifts. Holmes drove in silence, with his head sunk upon his breast, and the air of a man who is lost in thought, while I sat beside him, curious to learn what this new quest might be which seemed to tax his powers so sorely and yet afraid to break in upon the current of his thoughts. We had driven several miles, and were beginning to get to the fringes of the belt of suburban villas, when he shook himself, shrugged his shoulders, and lit up his pipe with the air of a man who has satisfied himself that he is acting for the best.

"You have a grand gift of silence, Watson," said he. "It makes you quite invaluable as a companion. Upon my word, it is a great thing for me to have some one to talk to, for my own thoughts are not over-pleasant. I was wondering what I should say to this dear little woman to-night when she meets me at the door."

"You forget that I know nothing about it."

"I shall just have time to tell you the facts of the case before we get to Lee. It seems absurdly simple, and yet, somehow, I can get nothing to go upon. There's plenty of thread, no doubt, but I can't get the end of it into my hand. Now, I'll state the case clearly and concisely to you, Watson, and may be you can see a spark where all is dark to me."

"Proceed, then."

"Some years ago, to be definite, seven years ago, there came to Lee a gentleman, Neville St. Clair by name, who appeared to have plenty of money. He took a large villa, laid out the ground very nicely, and lived generally in good style. By degrees he made friends in the neighborhood, and the next year he married the daughter of a local brewer, by whom he now has two children. He had no occupation, but was interested in several companies, and went into town as a rule in the morning, returning by the 5:4 from Cannon Street every night. Mr. St. Clair is now thirty-seven years old, is a man of temperate habits, a good husband, a very affectionate father, and a man who is popular with all who know him. I may add that his whole debts at the present moment, as far as we have been able to ascertain, amount to 88 pounds and 10 shillings, while he

has 220 pounds standing to his credit in the Capital and Countries Bank. There is no reason, therefore, to think that money troubles have been weighing upon his mind.

"Last Monday Mr. St. Clair went into town rather earlier than usual, remarking before he started that he had two important commissions to perform, and that he would bring his little boy home a box of bricks. Now, by the merest chance, his wife received a telegram upon this same Monday, very shortly after his departure, to the effect that a small parcel of considerable value which she had been expecting was waiting for her at the offices of the Aberdeen Shipping Company. Now if you are well up in your London, you will know that the offices of the company is in Fresno Street, which branches out of upper Swandam Lane, where you found me to-night. Mrs. St. Clair had her lunch, started for the city, did some shopping, proceeded to the company's office, got her packet, and found herself at exactly 4:35 walking through Swandam Lane on her way back to the station. Have you followed me so far?"

"It is very clear."

"If you remember. Monday was an exceedingly hot day, and Mrs. St. Clair walked slowly, glancing about in the hope of seeing a cab, as she did not like the neighborhood in which she found herself. While she

was walking in this way down Swandam Lane, she suddenly heard an ejaculation or cry, and was struck cold to see her husband looking down at her, and as it seemed to her, beckoning to her from a second-floor window. The window was open, and she distinctly saw his face, which she describes as being terribly agitated. He waved his hands frantically to her, and then vanished from the window so suddenly that seemed to her that he had been plucked back by some irresistible force from behind. One singular point which struck her quick feminine eye was that, although he wore some dark coat, such as he had started to town in, he had on neither collar nor necktie.

"Convinced that something was amiss with him, she rushed down the steps—for the house was none other than the opium den in which you found me to-night—and running through the front room, she attempted to ascend the stairs which led to the first floor. At the foot of the stairs, however, she met this lascar scoundrel of whom I have spoken, who thrust her back, and aided by a Dane, who acts as assistant there, pushed her out into the street. Filled with the most maddening-doubts and fears, she rushed down the lane; and by rare good fortune, met, In Fresno Street, a number of constables with an inspector, all on their way to their beat. The

inspector and two men accompanied her back, and in spite of the continued resistance of the proprietor, they made their way to the room in which Mr. St. Clair had last been seen. There was no sign of him there. In fact, in the whole of that floor there was no one to be found, save a crippled wretch of hideous aspect, who, it seems, made his home there. Both he and the lascar stoutly swore that no one else had been in the front room during the afternoon. So determined was their denial that the inspector was staggered, and had almost come to believe that Mrs. St. Clair had been deluded, when, with a cry, she sprang at a small deal box which lay upon the table, and tore the lid from it. Out there fell a cascade of children's bricks. It was the toy which he had promised to bring home.

"This discovery, and the evident confusion which the cripple showed made the inspector realize that the matter was serious. The rooms were carefully examined, and results all pointed to an abominable crime. The front room was painly furnished as a sitting room, and led into a small bedroom, which looked upon the back of one of the wharves. Between the wharf and the bedroom window is a narrow strip, which is dry at low tide, but is covered at high tide with at least four and a half feet of water. The bedroom window was a broad

one and opened from below. On examination, traces of blood were to be seen upon the window sill, and several scattered drops were seen upon the wooden floor of the bedroom. Thrust away behind a curtain in the front room were all the clothes of Mr. Neville St. Clair, with the exception of his coat: His boots, his socks, his hat, and his watch—all were there. There were no signs of violence upon any of these garments and there were no other traces of Mr. St. Clair. Out of the window he must apparently have gone, for no other exit could be discovered, and the ominous bloodstains upon the sill gave little promise that he could save himself by swimming, for the tide was at its very highest at the moment of the tragedy.

“And now as to the villains who seemed to be immediately implicated in the matter. The lascar was known to be a man of the vilest antecedents, but as, by Mrs. St. Clair’s story, he was known to have been at the foot of the stair within a very few seconds of her husband’s appearance at the window, he could hardly have been more than an accessory to the crime. His defense was one of absolute ignorance, and he protested that he had no knowledge as to the doings of Hugh Boone, his lodger, and that he could not account in any way for the presence of the missing gentleman’s clothes.

"So much for the lascar manager. Now for the sinister cripple who lives upon the second floor of the opium den, and who was certainly the last human being whose eyes rested upon Neville St. Clair. His name is Hugh Boone, and his hideous face is one which is familiar to every man who goes much to the city. He is a professional beggar, though, in order to avoid the police regulations, he pretends to a small trade in wax matches. Some little distance down Thread-needle Street, upon the left-hand side, there is, as you may have remarked, a small angle in the wall. Here it is that this creature takes his daily seat, cross-legged, with his tiny stock of matches on his lap, and as he is a hideous spectacle, a small rain of charity descends into the greasy leather cap which lies upon the pavement beside him. I have watched the fellow more than once, before I ever thought of making his professional acquaintance, and I have been surprised at the harvest which he has reaped in a short time. His appearance, you see, is so remarkable that no one can pass him without observing him. A shock of orange hair, a pale face disfigured by a horrible scar, which, by its contraction, had turned up the outer edge of his upper lip, a bulldog chin, and a pair of very penetrating dark eyes, which present a singular contrast to the color of

his hair, all mark him out from amid the crowd of common mendicants; and so, too, does his wit, for he is ever ready with a reply to any piece of chaff which may be thrown at him by the passers-by. This is the man whom we now learn to have been the lodger at the opium den, and to have been the last man to see the gentleman or whom we are in quest."

"But a cripple!" said I. "What could he have done single-handed against a man in the prime of life?"

"He is a cripple in the sense that he walks with a limp, but in other respects he appears to be a powerful and well-nurtured man. Surely, your medical experience would tell you, Watson, that weakness in one limb is often compensated for by exceptional strength in the others."

"Pray, continue your narrative."

"Mrs. St. Clair had fainted at the sight of the blood upon the window, and she was escorted home in a cab by the police, as her presence could be of no help to them in their investigations. Inspector Barton, who had charge of the case, made a very careful examination of the premises, but without finding anything which threw any light upon the matter. One mistake had been made in not arresting Boone instantly, as he was allowed some few minutes during which he might have com-



municated with his friend the lascar, but this fault was soon remedied, and he was seized and searched, without anything being found which could incriminate him. There were, it is true, some bloodstains upon his right shirt sleeve, but he pointed to his ring finger, which had been cut near the nail, and explained that the bleeding came from there, adding that he had been to the window not long before, and that the stains which had been observed there came doubtless from the same source. He denied strenuously having ever seen Mr. Neville St. Clair, and swore that the presence of the clothes in his room was as much a mystery to him as to the police. As to Mrs. St. Clair's assertion that she had actually seen her husband at the window, he declared that she must have been either mad or dreaming. He was removed, loudly protesting, to the police station, while the inspector remained upon the promises in the hope that the ebbing tide might afford some fresh clue.

"And it did, though they hardly found upon the mud bank what they had feared to find. It was Neville St. Clair's coat, and not Neville St. Clair, which lay uncovered as the tide receded. And what do you think they found in the pockets?"

"I cannot imagine."