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在 人 间

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导 读

高尔基是苏联无产阶级文学最伟大的奠基者。他耸立在新旧历史接合点上,以多样化的创作真实地纪录了旧世界的崩溃和新世界的诞生。开创了无产阶级文学的新时期,列宁称他是“世界无产阶级艺术最伟大的代表。”

高尔基原名阿列克谢·马克西莫维奇·彼什科夫。马克西姆·高尔基是他的笔名。一八六八年三月二十八日,他出生于伏尔加河畔诺夫哥罗德城的细木工匠家庭。高尔基三岁时丧父,母亲带他住在外公家。外公是个贪婪残暴的小市民,多次毒打外孙。外婆是高尔基童年时代惟一的保护人,她还用童话和歌谣激发了幼年高尔基对民间文学的爱好和对美好生活的憧憬。高尔基十岁时,母亲去世,外公的作坊破产,他离开学校,结束了“童年”,被抛入“人间”。

一九〇五年的一天,在意大利的卡普里岛上,高尔基对列宁讲起自己苦难的童年和艰辛的流亡生涯。列宁听完以后,对他说:“你应该把这些全写下来,老朋友,应该写!这一切都是非常有益的,非常有益……”

于是高尔基前后用了十一年时间创作了自传体三部曲——《童年》、《在人间》和《我的大学》。

《在人间》创作于一九一四年,最初发表于一九一五年一至十二月各期《俄罗斯言论报》;一九一六年至一九一七年间首次在柏林出版单行本。

《在人间》描述高尔基少年时代出外谋生的苦难历程。主人公奥列沙刚满十一岁,就离开抚养他长大的外婆,外出独立谋生。他当过皮鞋店和圣像作坊里的学徒。轮船上的洗碗工,还在当绘图师的表舅

家里当过帮工。历经坎坷，饱尝人世间的痛苦。在轮船上当洗碗工时，奥列沙结识了正直的厨师斯穆雷，并在他的帮助下开始读书，激发了对正义和真理的追求。五年后，主人公怀着进大学的希望准备到喀山去。

《在人间》中，作家用大量篇幅叙述他寻觅书，阅读书，传播书的经历，说明书籍在他的生活中占有十分重要的位置。高尔基后来写了几篇关于读书的文章，如《我怎样读书》、《谈读书》等，他总结说：“凡是我身上一切好的东西，都要归功于书籍。”“书籍使我的智慧和心灵受到鼓舞，帮助我从生活的泥沼中爬出来。如果没有书籍。我会在泥潭中被愚蠢和庸俗憋死，书籍渐渐开拓了我的眼界，它告诉我，人们在追求美好生活的斗争中是多么伟大，多么坚强。它告诉我，人们在世界上完成了多少丰功伟业，并为此经受了令人难以置信的苦难。”

一九三六年六月十八日，世界文坛的一颗巨星殒落了，高尔基在哥尔克逝世。

希望高尔基的这部自传体小说能让广大读者朋友受益无穷。

译 者

So HERE I am—an apprentice. I am the “boy” in a “stylish footwear” shop on the main street of the town.

My master is a round little creature with a bleary face, greenish teeth, and bilge-water eyes. It seems to me that he is blind, and I make faces at him in the hope of confirming this.

“Don’t screw up your mug,” he says to me quietly, but firmly.

I hate to think that those murky eyes see me, and I don’t believe they do—perhaps the master just guesses that I am making faces.

“I told you once not to screw up your mug,” he insists even more quietly, scarcely moving his thick lips.

“And stop scratching your hands.” His dry whisper seems to come crawling after me. “Remember—you are serving in a first-class shop on the main street of the town. The boy should stand at the door stiff as a stachy.”

I have no idea what a “stachy” is, and I cannot resist scratching my arms and hands, which are covered to the elbow with red blotches and ulcers—the itch-mite burrowing mercilessly under my skin.

“What was your job at home?” asks the master, glancing at my hands.

When I tell him, he shakes his bullet head, all pasted over with grey hair, and says hurtfully:

“Scavenging—that’s worse than begging, worse than stealing.”

于是我就到了这里——成了一名学徒工。我在城里中心大街上一家“摩登皮鞋店”里当“伙计”。

我的老板是个圆乎乎的小个子，脸色发灰，牙齿发黄，眼中布满眼屎。我老觉得他是个瞎子，为了证实这一点，我就朝他做鬼脸。

“不要做鬼脸。”他轻轻地、但是坚决地对我说。

一想到那双混浊的眼睛看我，我就恨，我不相信它们能看见——也许老板只是猜测我在做鬼脸。

“我跟你说过不要做鬼脸。”他强调，声音更轻，那两片厚唇几乎没动。

“别挠你的手，”他干巴巴的低语，好像爬到了我的身上，“记住——你是在本城中心大街上第一家第一流的店里干活。小伙计就得像雕像那样，站在店门口一动不动。”

我不知道“雕像”是什么，我也不能不挠手和双臂，因为我的两只手，直到胳膊肘那儿，长满了红斑和烂疮——疥癣虫咬得我奇痒难熬。

“你在家是干什么的？”老板瞥了一眼我的双手，问道。

我跟他讲了，他晃动着紧贴一头灰色头发的圆脑袋，傲慢地说：

“捡破烂啊——还不如要饭的，还不如偷东西的呢。”

“I stole too,” I announce, not without pride.

At that he leans on his palms like a cat on its paws, fixes me with vacuous, starting eyes, and hisses over the counter:

“Wh-a-a-t!” You say you stole?

I explain how and what.

“Well, we’ll let that pass. But if you go stealing my boots or my money, I’ll have you in jail before you ever come of age.”

He says this very calmly, but I am frightened, and dislike him all the more.

Besides the master, there are two assistants in the shop: my cousin Sasha (son of Yakov), and the senior assistant, a slick, slimy, ruddy fellow. Sasha wears a brown frock coat, a starched shirt front, and a cravat, and he is too proud to notice me.

The day grandfather brought me to the master and asked Sasha to help me learn the business, Sasha frowned, importantly and said:

“First he’ll have to learn to obey me.”

Grandfather put his hand on my head and gave it a push.

“Obey him,” he said. “He’s above you in years and position.”

Sasha rolled his eyes impressively.

“Remember grandfather’s words!”

From the very first day he took ruthless advantage of his seniority.

“Stop goggling, Kashirin!” the master warned him.

于是,我不无得意地说:“我也偷过东西。”

一听我的话,他就伸过两只手往一张柜台上一摞,就像猫伸出了两个爪子,吃惊地睁大他那双瞎子似的眼睛瞪着我,嘶哑地说:

“什——么! 你说你偷过东西?”

我把事情的原委告诉了他。

“唔,那倒是小事。可是你如果在我的店里偷鞋子、偷钱,我就会把你送进监狱,关到你长大。”

他不动声色地说了这番话,但是可把我给吓坏了,因此也就愈发地不喜欢他了。

除了老板,在这家店里做买卖的还有我的表兄,亚科夫家的萨沙和大掌柜,一个脸色红润、动作利索、喜欢唠叨的人。萨沙穿一件褐色的常礼服,里面衬着胸衣,脖子上系着领结,他傲气十足,根本不会把我放在眼里。

外公带我去见老板那天,让萨沙帮助我学习做买卖,萨沙趾高气扬地把眉头一皱,说:

“那他首先得学会听我的话。”

外公把一只手放在我头上,使我弯下脖子。

“要听他的话,无论年龄还是职务,他都在你之上。”他说。

萨沙瞪着两只眼睛,教训我说:

“记住外公的话!”

打从第一天起,他就开始充分利用他比我大的优势。

“卡什林,别瞪着眼!”老板警告他。

“I—I wasn't,” answered Sasha, dropping his head, but the master was not through with him:

“And don't pull in your chin—the customers may take you for a goat.”

The senior assistant laughed ingratiatingly and the master stretched his ugly lips, while Sasha, blushing furiously, ducked under the counter.

I disliked such talk. These people used so many strange words that sometimes it seemed to me they were speaking a foreign tongue.

Whenever a lady entered the shop, the master would take his hand out of his pocket, lightly touch his moustaches, and glue on a saccharine smile which covered his cheeks with wrinkles without changing the expression of his vacuous eyes. The senior assistant would draw himself up, his elbows pressed to his sides, his hands flapping fawningly. Sasha would blink in the effort to hide his bulging orbs, while I would remain at the door furtively scratching my hands and watching the ceremonial of the sale.

The assistant always spread his fingers in an amazing manner when kneeling before a lady to try on shoes. His hands would be all aquiver, and he would touch the leg as if afraid of breaking it, although it was usually a fat leg, resembling a droop-shouldered bottle turned upside down.

Once one of the ladies squirmed and kicked out her toe, saying:

“Oh dear! How you do tickle!”

“That's just out of politeness, ma'am,” was the assistant's quick rejoinder.

It was comical to see him hovering about

“我——我没有。”萨沙低下头说,可老板并不就此罢休:

“你别老拉着脸——顾客会误认为你是只公山羊的。”

大掌柜谦卑地笑着,老板丑陋地龇牙咧嘴,萨沙脸涨得通红,躲到柜台后面去了。

我不喜欢这些话。这些人用的许多字眼我都听不明白,有时我觉得,他们说的似乎是外语。

每当一位女士进店的时候,老板便从口袋里抽出一只手,轻轻地摸摸髭须,满脸堆起甜蜜的微笑,现出无数的皱纹,可是那对瞎子似的眼睛却没有一点变化。大掌柜挺起身子,两个胳膊肘贴住腰部,双手恭敬地摊在空中。萨沙眨巴着眼睛,竭力想藏起自己一对金鱼般的眼睛,我却站在门口,偷偷地抓挠双手,留意着他们做买卖的一套规矩。

大掌柜总是跪在地上,张开五指替女士试鞋。他的手在发抖,触摸那双脚的时候好像唯恐把它们碰断似的,尽管那双脚通常都很肥胖,好像一个倒置的歪脖子酒瓶。

有一次,一位女士不停地抖动她的脚,缩起身子说:

“唉哟!你弄得我痒酥酥的!”

“这只是出于礼貌。”大掌柜机灵而热情地解释说。

看他那纠缠女士的样子,真叫

the ladies and I had to turn away to keep from laughing. But I could never resist the temptation to turn back, so ludicrous were the shop assistant's devices. And it seemed to me that never in my life could I make my fingers stick out so politely, or fit shoes to other people's feet so deftly.

Often the master would retire to a little room at the back of the shop and call Sasha, leaving the senior assistant alone with a customer. I remember his once touching the instep of a large blonde and then drawing his finger tips together and kissing them.

"Oh, what a naughty fellow you are!" giggled the woman.

"Ah-h-h-h!" said he, smacking his lips.

I laughed so hard that I grabbed the door-knob to keep from falling; the door opened, my head banged against the glass, and the glass fell out. The assistant stamped his foot at me and my master rapped me over the head with his heavy gold signet ring. Sasha tried to tweak my ears, and that evening as we were going home he warned me severely:

"You'll get the sack if you behave like that. What was so funny anyhow?"

Then he explained that the more enchanting the ladies found the shop assistant, the better for business.

"Even if a lady doesn't need shoes, she'll buy herself an extra pair just to get another look at a nice man. Can't you understand that? There's no teaching you anything!"

His words offended me. No one in the shop had ever tried to teach me anything, least of all Sasha.

人好笑,为了不笑出声来,我不得不转过脸去。可是我憋不住,还是要转回头来,大掌柜做买卖的手法确实可笑。与此同时,我又觉得我永远也学不会那么彬彬有礼地张开手指,那么灵巧地把鞋子穿到别人的脚上。

老板常常会走进店堂后面的一个小房间里,然后把萨沙叫进去,大掌柜于是就同顾客单独留下来了。我记得有一次,他在触摸了一位棕红头发女士的脚以后,将几个手指头撮在一起,放在嘴边吻了一下。

"噢,"女士惊叹道,"你真是个调皮鬼!"

他又咂了一下嘴,说:"啧啧!"

我不由得哈哈大笑,为了不摔倒,我便去扶门把手;结果门开了,我一头撞在玻璃上,把玻璃碰掉了。大掌柜不住地对我跺脚,老板用他戴大金戒指的手指敲我的脑袋。萨沙也动手拧我的耳朵,那天晚上,在回老板家的路上,他严厉地训斥我:

"你这样,人家会让你滚蛋的。到底有什么可笑的?"

接着他解释说,大掌柜那样做也是为了拉住顾客,女士们高兴了,店里的生意就好了。

"女士只为了看一眼讨人喜欢的伙计,即使不需要鞋子,也会跑来买上一双的。你难道不明白吗?真叫人替你操心!"

他的话使我感到委屈。因为店里没有任何人为我操心,尤其是萨沙。

Every morning the cook, an ailing cantankerous woman, would wake me up an hour earlier than my cousin. I would heat the samovar, bring in wood for all the stoves, scour the dinner pots, and brush the clothes and clean the boots of my master, the senior assistant, and Sasha. At the shop I swept, dusted, made tea, delivered packages, and then went home to fetch the dinner. While I was busy with these chores, Sasha had to take my place at the door, and finding this beneath his dignity, he would shout at me:

“You lout! Me having to do your work for you!”

Accustomed as I was to living an independent life in fields and woods, along the banks of the turbid Oka, or on the sandy streets of Kunavino, I found my present existence boring and irksome. I missed Granny and my friends, I had no one to talk to, and I was chafed by the false, seamy side of life as I now saw it.

Frequently the ladies would leave the shop without buying a thing, and then my master and his two assistants would become indignant.

“Kashirin, put away the shoes!” the master would command, pocketing his saccharine smile.

“Had to poke her snout in here, the pig! Got tired of sitting home, so the old fool decided to do the shops! Oho, if she was my wife, wouldn’t I show her a thing or two though!”

His wife was a lean, dark-eyed woman with a large nose, who shouted and stamped her

每天早晨,病恹恹的、脾气暴躁的厨娘总是比我表兄早一个小时把我叫起来。我得擦好老板、大掌柜和萨沙他们的皮鞋,刷好他们的衣服,烧好茶炊,给所有的炉子准备好木柴,把午餐用的饭盒洗干净。一到店里,我就得扫地,掸灰尘,准备茶水,送货上门,然后再回家取午饭。当我在忙着这些的时候,就由萨沙替代我站到门口,当他意识到这个差使有损于他的尊严后,就开口骂我:

“你这家伙! 让我来替你干活!”

我心里很难受,觉得现在的生活很寂寞,因为我过惯了放荡不羁的生活,终日在田野上、树林里,在浑浊的奥卡河畔,在庫納維諾的沙土铺设的大街小巷周游。这里没有外婆,没有我的朋友,没有可以交谈的人,在这里,生活开始向我展示它十分丑陋的一面,几乎让我无法忍受。

经常有女士什么东西也没买就走了,这时候老板和两个店员就觉得受到了委屈。

“卡什林,快把货收起来!”老板收起他甜蜜的微笑,命令道。

“这头母猪,拱到这儿来了! 这傻老娘儿们在家闲得无聊,就出来逛逛商店! 哼,她要是我的老婆,看我怎么收拾她!”

他的老婆身材干瘪,长着一对黑眼睛和一个大鼻子,她对待他像

foot at him as though he were the serving-man.

Often, after seeing out a lady with polite bows and gracious remarks, the master and his assistants would say filthy, shameful things about her, making me want to run out into the street, catch up with her, and tell her what they had said.

Naturally I knew that people were inclined to say nasty things behind your back, but it was particularly exasperating to hear these three speak about everybody as though they themselves were the finest people on earth and had been appointed to pass judgment on all others. They envied most people, praised no one, and knew some unsavoury bit of gossip about everyone.

Into the shop one day came a bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked young woman wearing a velvet cloak with a black fur collar. Her face surmounted the fur like an amazing flower. She became even prettier when she had thrown her cloak over Sasha's arm; diamond drops glittered in her ears and her graceful figure was shown off to advantage by a tight-fitting, blue-grey gown. She reminded me of Vasilissa the Lovely, and I was sure that she must be at least the wife of the Governor. They received her with particular deference, bowing before her like fire worshippers and muttering honeyed words. All three of them rushed madly about the shop, their reflections flashing in the glass of the showcases, and it seemed as if everything were flaming and fusing and would presently assume new forms and contours.

When she left, after having quickly selected

对待佣人一样,动辄就跺脚发威,大吼大叫。

常常这样,老板和两个店员见到女士便殷勤地鞠着躬,说奉承话,送走她们以后,便不干不净地说起她的坏话来,那时候,我真想冲到街上去,追上她,把他们说的话告诉她。

当然,我知道人们彼此都在背后说坏话,可是这三个人议论起别人尤其可恶,好像有人认定他们是全世界最优秀的,可以担任其他所有人的审判官。大多数人他们都嫉妒,从来不赞美任何人,对每个人都知道一些他们的短处。

有一天,一个年轻女人来到店里,她脸庞红润,双瞳明亮,身披一件镶着黑皮领子的丝绒斗篷。毛皮衣领衬着她的脸蛋,仿佛一朵绽放的鲜花。她摘下斗篷,交给萨沙,越发显得漂亮了:窈窕的身材,外面裹着一件青灰色的绸衣,耳朵上钻石闪闪发亮。她使我联想起美丽的瓦西丽莎,我敢肯定,她肯定至少是个省长夫人。他们格外恭敬地接待她,在她面前点头哈腰,如同面对火焰一样,喋喋不休地说着恭维话。三个人全都像着了魔似的在店堂里跑来跑去,他们的影子在橱窗玻璃上晃动,看上去仿佛周围的一切都着了火,正在消失,眼看就要变成另一种样子,另一种形式。

当她迅速挑选了几双昂贵的

an expensive pair of shoes, the master clicked his tongue and hissed:

"The hussy!"

"In a word—an actress," murmured the shop assistant superciliously.

And they went on to tell each other about the lady's lovers and the gay life she led.

After dinner the master lay down to take a nap in the little room at the back of the shop. Removing the back from his gold watch, I dripped some vinegar into the works. It gave me the greatest pleasure to see how, on waking, he entered the shop with the watch in his hand, muttering:

"What do you think of that—all of a sudden my watch takes to sweating. Such a thing never happened before. Sweating, mind you! Perhaps that's a bad sign, eh?"

Despite the bustle in the shop and all the work at home, I went about in a stupor of boredom and kept thinking ever more often; "What could I do to make them get rid of me?"

Snowy people sped past the doors of the shop. They seemed to be late-comers at a funeral who were now hurrying to the cemetery, trying to catch up with the coffin. Dray horses jerked their carts through impeding snowdrifts. Every day the bells of the church behind the shop pealed drearily, for the season was Lent. Their incessant ringing was like pillow-blows over the head—painless, but stunning.

One day while in the yard unpacking a new case of goods, I was approached by the church watchman, a lopsided old man, soft as a rag

鞋子离去之后,老板咂了一下嘴巴,吹着口哨说:

"这条母狗!"

"总之一句话——是一个臭演戏的。"大掌柜轻蔑地小声说。

接着他们就开始大讲特讲这位女士的情人,以及她那花天酒地的生活。

吃过午饭,老板总要到店堂后面的一个小房间里去休息。有一次我趁机打开他的怀表,往里面滴了几滴醋。我怀着无比的快意看着他睡醒以后,手里拿着那块表,一边走进店里,一边喃喃地说:

"真是怪事——我的怀表忽然冒汗了。从来没有过这样的事。冒汗,想想看!也许这不是个好兆头,嗯?"

尽管店里的杂事很多,家里的活儿也不少,但我仿佛在令人难以忍受的忧闷中沉沉昏睡,我越来越经常地想:"我要怎么做,才能让他们把我赶走呢?"

身披雪花的人们默默地从商店门前闪过。仿佛他们是在为谁送葬到墓地去,因为耽误了时间,现在忙着追赶棺材一样。马慢吞吞地拖着车子,很吃力地越过雪堆。商店后面教堂的钟楼上,钟声每天都凄凉地响着;因为是大斋期。钟声一下一下像枕头撞着人的脑袋——不痛,但却使人麻木和发聋。

有一天,正当我在院子里清理刚刚收到的一只货箱时,教堂的撞钟人走到我身旁,他是个歪肩膀的

doll and tattered as though he had been mauled by dogs.

"Would you be stealing me a pair of galoshes, my lad?" he asked.

I said nothing. He sat down on an empty packing case, yawned, made the sign of the cross over his lips, and repeated his request:

"Would you now?"

"It's wrong to steal," I informed him.

"But it's done. Come, lad, out of respect for my years."

He was pleasantly unlike the people who surrounded me. He seemed so sure I would steal that I consented to slip him a pair of galoshes through the window.

"Good," he said calmly, and without any particular satisfaction. "You wouldn't fool me now, would you? All right, all right, I see you're not one to fool people."

For a minute or two he went on sitting there scraping the toe of his boot over the wet, dirty snow, then he lighted his clay pipe, and all of a sudden gave me a fright:

"And what if I be fooling *you*? What if I take those same galoshes back to the master and say you sold them to me for half a ruble, eh? The cost is over two, and you sold them for a half. Just for a little pocket money, eh?"

I looked at him dumbly, as though he had already done what he threatened, and he kept on talking quietly, nasally, his eyes on his boot, his head wreathed in blue smoke:

"What if it's the master himself as sicked me on: 'Go try out that boy of mine—see

老头，浑身软绵绵的，好像一个破布娃娃，他衣衫褴褛不堪，好像是被狗咬烂的。

"我的孩子，你给我偷一双套鞋好吗？"他问道。

我没有吭声。他在一只空箱子上坐下来，打了个哈欠，在嘴上画了个十字，又说道：

"好吗？"

"偷东西是不对的。"我对他说。

"可是大家都在偷。嗨，孩子，你可要敬重我这个老人啊。"

他和我周围的人不一样，挺讨人喜欢的。他似乎确信我会偷东西，于是我答应他从窗户里把一双套鞋偷偷递给他。

"这就好。"他平静地说，并没有显得特别高兴。"你不会骗我的，是吧？是的，是的，我看得出来，你不是那种骗人的人。"

他默默地坐了一会儿，用靴底来回蹭着潮湿的脏雪，然后点燃了用陶土制成的烟斗，突然，他吓唬我说：

"可是如果我在骗你呢？如果我拿到套鞋以后就去你老板那儿，说你半个卢布就卖给我了，嗯？而实际上它应该卖两卢布，你却半个卢布就把它给卖了。只是为了私吞这点儿钱，嗯？"

我呆呆地看着他，好像他已经照他威胁的那样做了似的。他眼睛盯着自己的长靴，吐着青烟，慢条斯理地继续用鼻音说：

"如果我是受了老板本人的嘱托：'你替我去探一探那小伙计

‘how much of a thief he is.’ What then?”

“I won’t give you the galoshes,” I said angrily.

“You can’t get out of it now, once you’ve promised!”

He took my hand and pulled me over. Tapping my forehead with a cold finger, he drawled:

“How did you come to agree, just like that: ‘Here, take your galoshes,’ eh?”

“You asked for them, didn’t you?”

“I could ask for lots of things. If I asked you to rob the church—would you rob it? How can you go trusting people like that, you little ninny?”

He pushed me away and got up.

“I’m not needing any stolen galoshes. I’m not so fine a gentleman as to be wearing galoshes anyway. I was just joking. But since you trust me, I’ll let you up in the belfry come Eastertide. You can ring the bell and have a look at the town.”

“I know the town.”

“It’s much prettier from the belfry.”

He walked slowly away, pushing the toes of his boots into the snow, at last disappearing around a corner of the church. As I watched him go I wondered with pained uneasiness whether the old man had really been having his fun with me, or whether he had been sent by the master to test me. I was afraid to go back into the shop.

“What the devil you doing here so long?” cried Sasha, running out into the yard.

——看他会不会做贼?’那该怎么办?”

“我不会给你套鞋的,”我生气地说。

“你既然答应了,就不能出尔反尔!”

他拉住我的手,把我拉到他面前。他伸出一根冰凉的手指,敲敲我的脑门,懒懒地说:

“你怎么能轻易地说:‘给,拿去你的套鞋吧!’嗯?”

“是你自己问我要的,不是吗?”

“我可以问你要许许多多的东西。如果我要你去抢劫教堂——你会去吗?你怎么能随随便便相信一个人呢,你这个傻瓜?”

他把我推开,站起来。

“我不需要偷来的套鞋。我不是贵族老爷,用不着穿套鞋。我只是开个玩笑。但是因为你对我的信任,到了复活节,我会让你到钟楼上去敲敲钟,看看城市的景物。”

“这城市我熟悉。”

“从钟楼上,它更好看一些。”

他将靴子尖伸进雪里,慢慢地走开了,最后消失在教堂的拐角后面。我望着他离去的背影,颓丧地、惊恐地想道:这老头是真的开玩笑呢,还是真的是老板派来考验我的?我害怕得都不敢进鞋店了。

萨沙跑进院子,叫道:“你呆在这儿这么久,在搞什么鬼呢?”

In a sudden wave of fury I shook the pliers at him.

I knew that he and shop assistant stole from the master. They would hide a pair of boots or shoes in the stove chimney until closing time, when they would leave with the stolen goods up a coat sleeve. This displeased and frightened me, for I had not forgotten the master's warning.

"Do you steal?" I asked Sasha.

"Not me. It's the senior assistant does it," he said severely. "I only help him. He says: 'Do what I tell you!' He'll play some mean trick on me if I don't. As for the master—he was a shop assistant once himself. He knows all the tricks. But you hold your tongue!"

As he spoke he kept looking in the mirror and adjusting his tie, his fingers sticking out in the affected manner of the senior assistant. He was forever impressing on me the fact that he was older and could boss me about. He would shout at me in a bass voice and gesture imperiously when giving me orders. Although I was taller and stronger than he, I was lanky and clumsy, while he was soft, stocky, and slippery. I found him very impressive in his frock coat, but a bit ridiculous. He hated the cook, who was indeed a strange woman—you could never decide whether she was good or bad.

"Best of all I like fights," she would say, opening wide her burning black eyes. "And it's all the same to me who does the fighting—cocks, or dogs, or muzhiks—all the same to me!"

If cocks or pigeons started fighting out in

我突然火冒三丈，举起火钳就想打他。

我知道他和大掌柜都经常偷老板的东西。他们常常把一双靴子或便鞋先藏在炉子的烟囱里，直到打烊的时候再把偷来的东西放在大衣的袖子里带出去。我不喜欢这种勾当，而且感到害怕，因为我忘不掉老板的威胁。

我问萨沙：“你偷东西？”

“不是我偷。是大掌柜偷，”他严厉地说：“我只是帮他的忙，他说：‘照我说的去做！’我只能听他的话，要不他会难为我。至于老板——以前他自己也做过大掌柜。他什么都知道。但是你对谁也不能说！”

他一边说一边照镜子，学着大掌柜的派头，不自然地伸开指头整理领带。他总是让我牢记住一个事实：他比我大，他有权支配我。当他吩咐我的时候，总是扯开嗓门朝我吼叫，一边伸出一只手做推开的姿势。虽然我个头比他高，气力比他大，但我瘦削而笨拙，他却丰润、柔软、油光满面。我觉得他穿上常礼服很潇洒，但是又有一点儿可笑。他恨厨娘，厨娘的确是个古怪的女人——你永远也弄不清她是好人还是坏人。

“我最喜欢的事就是看打架，”她睁大那双乌黑热烈的眼睛说，“不管什么样的打架，对我来说都一样——公鸡也好，狗也好，大男也好——对我来说都一样！”

她一看见院子里的公鸡或者

the yard she would drop whatever she was doing and stand at the window until the tussle was over, deaf to everything else. In the evenings she would say to Sasha and me:

“What are you sitting here for, youngsters? Why don't you go out and have a good fight?”

Sasha would fume:

“I'm no youngster, you old fool—I'm the junior assistant!”

“Well now, that's hard to see. For me you'll be a youngster till your wedding day.”

“You old fool with a foolish noddle!”

“The devil's smart, but God don't like him.”

Sasha was especially annoyed by her manner of speech. When he teased her she would annihilate him with a glance and say:

“Phoooh, you little cockroach—God's big mistake.”

More than once he tried to talk me into putting pins into her pillow, smearing her face with wax or soot when she was asleep, or playing some other practical joke. But I was afraid of the cook and was sure she would catch me, for she was a very light sleeper. Often she would wake up, light the lamp, and sit staring into some corner. Sometimes she would come over to my bed behind the stove and shake me as she whispered hoarsely:

“I can't sleep somehow, Alyosha. Scary-like. Tell me something.”

Only half awake, I would tell her some tale, and she would sit there silently rocking back and forth. It seemed to me that her hot

鸽子斗起来,不管正在干什么,都马上放下手里的活,站在那儿望着窗外,全神贯注,从头看到尾。到了晚上,她总是对我和萨沙说:

“你们这两个孩子,坐在这儿干什么?你们为什么不出去好好地打一架呢?”

萨沙生气了:

“傻娘儿们,我可不是什么孩子——我是二掌柜!”

“哟,这我倒没看出来。只要还没有娶媳妇,在我看来你就是个孩子。”

“傻娘儿们,榆木脑袋!”

“魔鬼聪明,可上帝不喜欢他。”

她说的俗语,尤其使萨沙感到恼怒。于是他就戏弄她,她呢,轻蔑地斜视着他,说:

“呸,你个蟑螂仔子——上帝让你投错胎了吧?”

他不止一次教唆我趁她睡着了的时候往她脸上抹鞋油和煤烟,或者往她的枕头里放大头针,或者跟她开别的“玩笑”。可我怕那个厨娘,另外她睡得不沉,我总是觉得她会抓住我。她常常在醒来后,点亮油灯,坐在床上,眼睛盯着某个角落出神。有时候她绕过炉子,走到我床边来,把我摇醒,用沙哑的声音小声说:

“我怎么也睡不着,奥列沙。我心里有点怕。你跟我说说话吧。”

我迷迷糊糊地跟她说了些什么,她默默地坐着,前后摇晃着身体。我似乎觉得从她那热乎乎的