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Approaching English Short Stories

英美短篇 小说解析

主 编 / 张军丽

副主编 / 李 娜 张 亮



上海交通大学出版社

SHANGHAI JIAO TONG UNIVERSITY PRESS

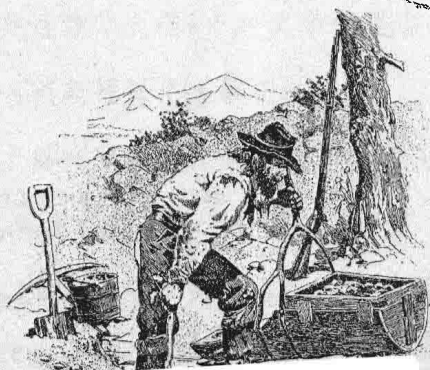
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内容提要

本书精选了 26 位英语短篇小说巨匠的代表作品,将短篇小说要素和文本阅读有机结合,涵盖了英美文学发展的主要阶段。所选作品力求兼具思想性和文学性、故事性和多样性,以提高学生的阅读兴趣,让学生充分领略文学作品的魅力。在培养学生文本释读能力的同时,增强学生对西方文学及文化的了解,提高学生的跨文化交际能力。本书适合英语专业本科学生以及有一定英语水准的读者使用。

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前言

短篇小说是文学创作类别中的一朵“奇葩”，以其处理单一人物、单一事件和单一情感而形成的短小精悍的文字而著称。它不求全面但求聚焦生活瞬间，为读者描绘现实，以启迪思想，感悟人生。通过阅读英语短篇小说，学生不仅可以更多了解英语国家的政治、历史、地理、社会以及文化传统，而且可以洞察不同社会阶层中的人际关系以及人类自身的心理状态和精神风貌。

因此，编者在北京联合大学专业核心课程——“英国文学选读”建设项目（京联教[2016]13号）、北京联合大学“十三五”规划教材建设项目（京联教[2016]16号）和北京联合大学英语专业建设项目（2016年）的资助下，根据教育部《高等学校英语专业英语教学大纲》中对文学课程的要求，为英语专业学生组织修订了该部教材——《英美短篇小说解析》。

本书分上下两篇，上篇按照短篇小说的基本要素分为六章：情节、人物、场景、视角、主题和风格。每章内容由七部分组成：短篇小说要素介绍、作者简介、小说解析、小说原文、注释、思考题和拓展阅读。下篇按照短篇小说类型分为三章：莫泊桑式小说、契诃夫式小说和爱伦坡式小说。每章内容由六部分组成：小说特点介绍、作者简介、小说解析、小说原文、思考题和拓展阅读。本书将短篇小说要素和文本阅读有机结合，涵盖了英美文学发展的主要阶段，精选了26位英语短篇小说巨匠的代表作品。所选作品力求兼具思想性和文学性、故事性和多样性，以提高学生的阅读兴趣，让学生充分领略文学作品的魅力。在培养

学生文本释读能力的同时,增强学生对西方文学及文化的了解,提高学生的跨文化交际能力。

《英美短篇小说解析》的编写成员有:主编张军丽、副主编张亮和李娜。三位编者均为北京联合大学师范学院的英语教师,多年从事英语专业的教学和研究工作。其中张军丽负责上篇的第五、六章和下篇第二部分的编写工作;张亮负责上篇的第一、二、三和四章的编写工作;李娜负责下篇第一和第三部分的编写工作。编者从方便教和学的角度设计教材内容,希望提高学生的鉴赏能力和跨文化交际的能力。

本书在编写过程中参阅了大量国内外同行的研究成果,在此一并表示感谢。由于编者水平有限,教材中难免存在纰漏,敬请广大读者批评指正。

编 者



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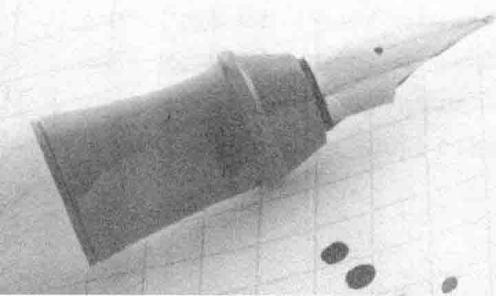
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Part One

Essential Elements of Short Stories







Chapter One Plot

Definition of Plot

The plot is how the author arranges events to develop his basic idea. In other words, what is more important for a writer is not the simple setting down of events, but rather the arrangement of those events according to the causal relationships. Hence, a plot is a plan or groundwork for a story, based on conflicting motivation, with the actions resulting from believable and realistic human response.

Plot vs Story

Without a plot, we do not have a story. It is the sequence of events in a story or play. The plot is a planned, logical series of events having a beginning, middle, and end. The short story usually has one plot so it can be read in one sitting.

Conflict in Plot

Conflict is essential to plot. Without conflict there is no plot. It is the opposition of forces which ties one incident to another and makes the plot move. Conflict is not merely limited to open arguments; rather it is any form of opposition that faces the main character. Within a short story there may be only one central struggle, or one dominant struggle with many minor ones.

Classification of Conflicts

◆ External Conflict

A struggle between a character and an outside force is an external conflict, say, physical confrontation. It may take the form of a basic opposition between man and nature, as is the case in Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, or between man and society, for instance, Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*, or between man and man, as it does in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's detective story, in which Sherlock Holmes is asked to match wits with a cunning criminal or as in the case in *Pride and Prejudice*,

the opposition between the protagonist Mr. Darcy and Wickham's false account of him and Elizabeth's own prejudice.

◆ Internal Conflict

A struggle that takes place in a character's mind is called an internal conflict. It focuses on two or more elements contesting within the protagonist's own character. That is to say, a character may have to decide between right and wrong or between two solutions to a problem, or must deal with his or her own mixed feelings or emotions, as is the case in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.

Development of Plot

◆ Exposition

Exposition is the beginning of the story where the author provides the necessary background information of the story, describes the setting, and introduces characters. It helps the reader make sense of the action that occurs later in the story.

◆ Complication

Complication is also referred to as the rising action, in which the events in the story become complicated and the conflict in the story is revealed (events between the introduction and climax).

◆ Crisis

Crisis, also referred to as the climax, is the highest point of interest and turning point of the story. The reader wonders what will happen next and whether the conflict will be resolved or not.

◆ Falling Action

Falling action is the moment when the events and complications begin to resolve themselves. The reader knows what has happened next and whether the conflict was resolved or not (events between climax and resolution).

◆ Resolution

Resolution, also referred to as the conclusion or denouement, is the final outcome or untangling of events in the story, where the complications are resolved and the outcome of the conflict is reached.

Terms Related to Plot

◆ Flashback

It is also called retrospect, the most frequently used device for a writer to interrupt a chronologically ordered plot, through which a writer can bring in the past whenever it is most relevant to the present. For instance, Mary Gavell's *The Swing*, in which a lot of flashbacks—memories of the past life are employed in the very beginning.

◆ Foreshadowing

A device of equal importance in writing, by which a writer prepares the reader for what is yet to happen by presenting some details implying the direction the story will take. Hence a device most often seen in detective stories as “clues or hints” as is the case in Somerset Maugham’s *Mr. Know-all*.

◆ Suspense

A sense of anticipation or worry that the author instills in readers. M. H. Abrams, quoted on *A Teacher Writes*, defined suspense as “a lack of certainty, on the part of a concerned reader, about what is going to happen.” As Daphne Du Maurier does in her masterpiece—*Rebecca*, a lot of suspenseful and secretive atmosphere is produced to create the intense and expectant uncertainty as to the outcome of the story.

◆ Subplot

A sequence of events distinct, at least in part, from the main plot. In most cases, the subplot is closely related to the main plot, and used as an analogy to the main plot, as is the case in Kate Chopin’s *The Story of an Hour*.

Story One

After Twenty Years (1906)

About the Author

O. Henry (1862–1910), the pseudonym of William Sydney Porter, was an American short story writer, whose stories are known for their surprise endings and witty narration. In his day he was called the American answer to Guy de Maupassant. While both authors wrote plot twist endings, O. Henry’s stories were considerably more playful. Most of O. Henry’s stories are set in his own time, the early 20th century. Many took place in New York City and dealt for the most part with ordinary people: policemen, waitresses, etc. O. Henry’s work is wide-ranging, and his characters can be found roaming the cattle-lands of Texas, exploring the art of the con man, or investigating the tensions of class and wealth in turn-of-the-century New York. O. Henry had an inimitable hand for isolating some element of society and describing it with an incredible economy and grace of language. Some of his best and least-known work is contained in *Cabbages and Kings*, a series of stories which explore some individual aspects of life in a paralytically sleepy Central American town, while advancing some aspects of the larger plot and relating back one to another. Among his most famous stories are “the Gift of Magi”, “the Last Leaf”, “the Ransom of Red Chief”, “The Cop and the Anthem”, “A Retrieved Reformation”, “The Caballero’s Way”, etc. In 1918, The O. Henry Award



was first presented and funded by the Society of Arts and Sciences. Now it is a prestigious annual prize given to short stories of exceptional merits.

Tips for Reading

“After Twenty Years” is frequently included in anthologies of short stories. It was originally published in O. Henry’s 1906 collection *The Four Million*. The skill of the legendary master of the twist ending in short stories is perhaps nowhere better exemplified than in “After Twenty Years”. The story centers on the main plot in which two old friends made a pact to meet at a specific time and place. Bob, a noted criminal from Chicago, arrives on time and speaks to a patrolman who happens to be walking by. Later, it’s revealed that this patrolman was Jimmy Wells, Bob’s friend for whom he’s been waiting. The story contains many memories of the past old days, which manifest scenes during the twenty years and enhance the suspense of the plot accordingly. Friendship is at the heart of the story. O. Henry puts the focus on the friendship between Bob and Jimmy, keeping readers interested in the fact that their relationship could survive even though they have not been in contact for such a long time. However, what makes the story extraordinary is the plot twist, which usually happens near the end of the story, especially if it changes one’s view of the preceding events, is known as a surprise ending. “After Twenty Years” presents an unexpected conclusion with a note from Jimmy to Bob. It turns out that Jimmy is the patrolman who talked a lot with Bob without being recognized. As an old friend, Jimmy cannot but send another one to arrest Bob, the criminal wanted for some time.

The Story

The policeman **on the beat**¹ moved up the avenue impressively. The impressiveness was habitual and not for show, for spectators were few. The time was barely 10 o’clock at night, but chilly **gusts of wind**² with a taste of rain in them had well nigh de-peopled the streets.

Trying doors as he went, twirling his **club**³ with many intricate and artful movements, turning now and then to cast his watchful eye adown the pacific thoroughfare, the officer, with his **stalwart form**⁴ and slight **swagger**⁵, made a fine picture of a guardian of the peace. The vicinity was one that kept early hours. Now and then you might see the lights of a cigar store or of an all-night lunch counter; but the majority of the doors belonged to business places that had long since been closed.

When about midway of a certain block the policeman suddenly slowed his walk. In the doorway of a darkened hardware store a man leaned, with an unlighted cigar in his mouth. As the policeman walked up to him the man spoke up quickly.

“It’s all right, officer,” he said, reassuringly. “I’m just waiting for a friend. It’s an

appointment made twenty years ago. Sounds a little funny to you, doesn't it? Well, I'll explain if you'd like to make certain **it's all straight**⁶. About that long ago there used to be a restaurant where this store stands—'Big Joe' Brady's restaurant."

"Until five years ago," said the policeman. "It was torn down then."

The man in the doorway struck a match and lit his cigar. The light showed a pale, square-jawed face with keen eyes, and a little white scar near his right eyebrow. His scarf pin was a large diamond, oddly set.

"Twenty years ago to-night," said the man, "I dined here at 'Big Joe' Brady's with Jimmy Wells, my best chum, and the finest chap in the world. He and I were raised here in New York, just like two brothers, together. I was eighteen and Jimmy was twenty. The next morning I was to start for the West to make my fortune. You couldn't have dragged Jimmy out of New York; he thought it was the only place on earth. Well, we agreed that night that we would meet here again exactly twenty years from that date and time, no matter what our conditions might be or from what distance we might have to come. We figured that in twenty years each of us ought to have our destiny worked out and our fortunes made, whatever they were going to be."

"It sounds pretty interesting," said the policeman. "Rather a long time between meets, though, it seems to me. Haven't you heard from your friend since you left?"

"Well, yes, for a time we corresponded," said the other. "But after a year or two we lost track of each other. You see, the West is a pretty big proposition, and I kept hustling around over it pretty lively. But I know Jimmy will meet me here if he's alive, for he always was the truest, staunchest old chap in the world. He'll never forget. I came a thousand miles to stand in this door to-night, and it's worth it if my old partner turns up."

The waiting man pulled out a handsome watch, the lids of it set with small diamonds.

"Three minutes to ten," he announced. "It was exactly ten o'clock when we parted here at the restaurant door."

"Did pretty well out West, didn't you?" asked the policeman.

"You bet! I hope Jimmy has done half as well. He was a kind of **plodder**⁷, though, good fellow as he was. I've had to compete with some of the sharpest wits going to get my pile. A man gets in a groove in New York. It takes the West to put a **razor-edge**⁸ on him."

The policeman twirled his club and took a step or two.

"I'll be on my way. Hope your friend comes around all right. **Going to call time on him sharp**⁹?"

"I should say not!" said the other. "I'll give him half an hour at least. If Jimmy is alive on earth he'll be here by that time. So long, officer."

"Good-night, sir," said the policeman, passing on along his beat, trying doors as he went.

There was now a fine, cold drizzle falling, and the wind had risen from its uncertain puffs into a steady blow. The few foot passengers astir in that quarter hurried dismally and silently along with coat collars turned high and pocketed hands. And in the door of the hardware store the man who had come a thousand miles to fill an appointment, uncertain almost to absurdity, with the friend of his youth, smoked his cigar and waited.

About twenty minutes he waited, and then a tall man in a long overcoat, with collar turned up to his ears, hurried across from the opposite side of the street. He went directly to the waiting man.

"Is that you, Bob?" he asked, doubtfully.

"Is that you, Jimmy Wells?" cried the man in the door.

"Bless my heart!" exclaimed the new arrival, grasping both the other's hands with his own. "It's Bob, sure as fate. I was certain I'd find you here if you were still in existence. Well, well, well! —Twenty years is a long time. The old restaurant's gone, Bob; I wish it had lasted, so we could have had another dinner there. How has the West treated you, old man?"

"Bully; it has given me everything I asked it for. You've changed lots, Jimmy. I never thought you were so tall by two or three inches."

"Oh, I grew a bit after I was twenty."

"Doing well in New York, Jimmy?"

"Moderately. I have a position in one of the city departments. Come on, Bob; we'll go around to a place I know of, and have a good long talk about old times."

The two men started up the street, arm in arm. The man from the West, his **egotism**¹⁰ enlarged by success, was beginning to outline the history of his career. The other, submerged in his overcoat, listened with interest.

At the corner stood a drug store, brilliant with electric lights. When they came into this glare each of them turned simultaneously to gaze upon the other's face.

The man from the West stopped suddenly and released his arm.

"You're not Jimmy Wells," he snapped. "Twenty years is a long time, but not long enough to change a man's nose from a Roman to a pug."

"It sometimes changes a good man into a bad one," said the tall man. "You've been under arrest for ten minutes, 'Silky' Bob. Chicago thinks you may have dropped over our way and wires us she wants to have a chat with you. Going quietly, are you? That's sensible. Now, before we go on to the station here's a note I was asked to hand you. You may read it here at the window. It's from Patrolman Wells."

The man from the West unfolded the little piece of paper handed him. His hand was steady when he began to read, but it trembled a little by the time he had finished. The note was rather short.

"Bob: I was at the appointed place on time. When you struck the match to light your

cigar I saw it was the face of the man wanted in Chicago. Somehow I couldn't do it myself, so I went around and got a plain clothes man to do the job. Jimmy."

Notes

1. on the beat: 在巡逻中。
2. gusts of wind: 一阵阵风。
3. club: 警棍。
4. stalwart form: 身体强壮, 身形雄健。
5. swagger: 大摇大摆地走。
6. It's all straight: 一切顺利, 正常。
7. plodder: 常指做事慢吞吞且不太聪明的人。
8. razor-edge: 原意指剃刀锋口, 可用来指危急关头。
9. Going to call time on him sharp?: 到时间他没来你就会走吗?
10. egotism: 自负。

Questions for Discussion

1. What are the writing techniques here? Please try to identify them in the story.
2. What is the plot of this text?
3. What are the possible themes of the story?
4. What happened during the twenty years? And take some details as example.
5. Analyze the images of Bob and Jimmy, and interpret your understanding of the two characters.

Internet Resources

1. <http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/131/the-four-million/2414/lost-on-dress-parade/>
2. <http://www.english.upenn.edu/Projects/Buck/biography.html>
3. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/O._Henry
4. <http://www.pearlsbncn.org/e/index.asp?classid=1&Nclassid=1>
5. <http://www.rappler.com/nation/special-coverage/1905-a-surprise-ending>

Story Two

Period Piece: The Case of Lord Cornphillip (1964)

About the Author

Evelyn Waugh (1903—1966) was an English writer of novels, biographies and travel books. He was also a prolific journalist and reviewer of books. Waugh is recognized as one of the great prose stylists of the English language in the 20th century. His most famous works include the early satires *Decline and Fall* (1928) and *A Handful of Dust* (1934),

the novel *Brideshead Revisited* (1945) and the Second World War trilogy *Sword of Honour* (1952—1961). The son of a publisher, Waugh was educated at Lancing College and then at Hertford College, Oxford, and briefly worked as a schoolmaster before he became a full-time writer. He was a perceptive writer who used the experiences and the wide range of people he encountered in his works of fiction, generally to humorous effect. Evelyn Waugh died after Mass on Easter Sunday, 1966, and left a world impoverished of one of its great stylists, humorists, provocateurs and characters. Though his faith and politics and temperament remain as out of step with the norms of literary culture today as they were at the time of his death, he is perennially in print and likely to survive as one of the giants of 20th-century English literature and one of the greatest English stylists of any age.



Tips for Reading

The story is selected from Evelyn Waugh's *The Complete Short Stories*. Lady Amelia was in her declining years and began to pick up novels to kill her time. She employed Miss Myers to choose books and read stories to her. One afternoon, when they finished a story, they had some discussion about the story, which reminded Lady Amelia of the story of Lord Cornphillip with whom she was quite familiar in the old days. Then, the heroine Lady Amelia becomes the narrator of another story, who recalled memories of the past life and told stories concerning people from terrible homes. It is worth mentioning that the story of Lord Cornphillip is a story within story, which is a literary device in which one character within a narrative narrates. The inner stories are told either simply to entertain or more usually to act as an example to the other characters. In either case the story often has symbolic and psychological significance for the characters in the outer story. There is often some parallel between the two stories, and the fiction of the inner story is used to reveal the truth in the outer story. Through the story of Lord Cornphillip, Lady Amelia shows Miss Myers what the life of the people from the terrible homes is really like.

The Story

Lady Amelia had been educated in the belief that it was the height of impropriety to read a novel in the morning. Now, **in the twilight of her days**¹, when she had singularly little to occupy the two hours between her appearance downstairs at quarter past eleven, hatted and fragrant with lavender water, and the announcement of luncheon, she adhered rigidly to this principle. As soon as luncheon was over, however, and coffee had been served in the drawing room; before the hot milk in his saucer had sufficiently cooled for