

朗文英汉对照世界文学丛书



# British and American Short Stories

## 英美短篇小说集

简写本

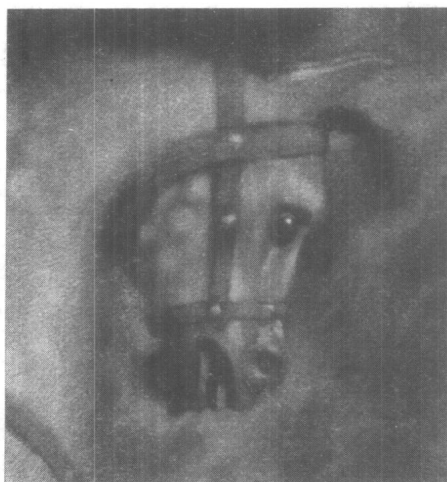
G.C.索恩利改写 胡晓燕翻译

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英美短篇小说集

(简写本)

G·C·索恩利 改写 胡晓燕 译

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## Introduction

The essence of the modern short story is its closeness to recognisable everyday life. Even when it surprises us (as any good story should) a story, even a supernatural one, should not depart completely from realism. And yet it should always be clear to us that what we are being offered is not fact but fiction. This is so even when the narrator insists that the story is true, for such assurances are not really meant to deceive us but merely to help build up an atmosphere of vividness and realism.

Some short stories are too densely packed with summarised events. They are like compressed novels, trying to tell whole life stories. But many modern short-story writers have learnt to be much more selective. They often plunge straight into the middle of a situation without any preliminary explanation (see the openings of "The Catbird Seat", "The Barber's Uncle" and "The Open Window" in this book), and concentrate on some master-image (such as the living man asleep at the bottom of an open grave in "Silas The Good") or on a single dramatic scene. Their stories thus have something in common with either symbolic poems or one-act stage plays.

The best of these *British and American Short Stories* demonstrate this closeness to reality and this wise selection of scenes and events. Most of the stories are comedies, with one or two sinister or tragic ones for contrast.

"Silas the Good", by Herbert Ernest Bates (1905-1974), is based on a simple but effective idea of contrast and reversal, in which an angry, disapproving person is converted into a friendly, sympathetic one. Perhaps the germ of the story was a visual image: the paradoxical presence of a live man inside a grave. Bates was no doubt familiar, ever since his Northamptonshire boyhood, with the sight of cheerful gravediggers at work deep in the rich earth of country churchyards. Or perhaps his source of inspiration was a literary one: the scene

## 前 言

现代短篇小说的精髓在于它贴近我们熟稔的日常生活。一篇小说，哪怕是一篇神怪小说，即便它的情节出人意料（任何一篇优秀小说都应如此），也不应该完全背离现实。不过有一点我们必须始终明白——摆在我们面前的并非真人真事，而是杜撰出来的。即使叙述者再三强调故事的真实性，情况也是如此。这种保证不是真的要欺骗我们，而只是为了有助于营造一种生动逼真的气氛。

有些短篇小说中塞满了对各项事件的概括陈述。它们就像小说的浓缩本那样，力图讲述完整的生活故事。但许多现代短篇小说的作者已懂得应该有所取舍。他们往往径直插入一个没有任何铺垫的场景（参看本书中《猫鸟的座位》，《理发师的叔叔》及《打开的窗户》的开头部分），并着重刻画某一个主要的形象（譬如《我的叔叔赛拉斯》里的那个活人睡在敞开的坟墓底部），或者某一个戏剧性的场面。这样，他们的小说同象征性诗歌或者独幕剧便有了些共同之处。

这本《英美短篇小说集》里的佳作正体现了上述的贴近生活以及对场景、事件的合理取舍的特点。大部分的小说是喜剧，此外，还收进两篇叙述不幸的或带有悲剧性的作品作为对照。

赫伯特·欧内斯特·贝茨（1905—1974）的《我的叔叔赛拉斯》，建立在对立与转换这样一个简单而有效的构思上，文中一个怒气冲冲、爱找茬的人变得亲切而富有同情心了。在小说中，一个活生生的人悖乎常理地在坟墓里出现，这个生动的画面也许就是构成这篇小说的基础。贝茨的童年是在北安普顿郡度过的。毫无疑问，他从此对乐呵呵的挖墓人在乡村教堂墓地的沃土深处干活的情景十分熟悉。也可能，他的灵感源于一部文学作品，即《哈姆雷特》的最后一幕中那些诙谐的挖墓人的

of the comic gravediggers in the last act of *Hamlet*, in which strong drink also plays a part. But for all his resemblance to Shakespeare's First Gravedigger, Silas is a typical H. E. Bates character. He is free-and-easy and unconventional, and enjoys the more basic pleasures of life to the full. The woman in the story has a more severe attitude to life, but she is obviously a little eccentric herself. Thus the change in her behaviour is more believable than it would be if this were just a bare little anecdote about an easygoing, pleasure-loving person and a strict, disapproving one. Nevertheless the story does resemble an oral anecdote, or joke, transformed by an artist into something more subtle and poetic; and the appearance of Silas's nephew here and there as a narrator strengthens this resemblance.

"The Catbird Seat", by the American humorist James Thurber (1894-1961), is rather similar to "Silas The Good", with the sexes reversed. It too places a free-and-easy personality in conflict with a stricter one. In this case the extrovert Ulgine Barrows is set against the dry, careful Mr Martin, who manages to get rid of her. But the account of his scheming is much more elaborate than anything in "Silas The Good". Thurber's method is to build up a complicated "detective story" plot within a comic situation, and then to allow that plot to collapse and be replaced by a series of purely comic (but equally ingenious) episodes. It would not really have been possible, in a comic short story, to show Mr Martin successfully committing a murder, but by describing in such detail his preparations for one Thurber plays upon our sense of shock at the incongruity of murder in a comedy, and of someone like Martin becoming a murderer and using gangster-like language, ("rubbing out" Mrs Barrows). The detailed description also builds up tension, which is released as soon as Martin abandons his murder plan. The story thus moves towards its climax in two stages. At the end of the first stage the climax, to our relief, is replaced by an apparent anti-climax when the expected murder does not happen. This second

场景，其间烈酒也在起作用。赛拉斯虽然和莎士比亚笔下的“第一个掘墓人”相似，他却是个典型的H·E·贝茨笔下的人物。他自由自在，不拘礼节，尽情享受生活中最基本的乐趣。小说中的那位妇女对生活持比较严谨的态度，但她本身的性格显然有些怪诞。这样，和仅仅述叙一个随和的乐天派和一个古板、难相处的人之间的简单的趣闻相比，她行为的转变就更令人信服。尽管如此，这篇小说确实是像一则口述轶闻或笑话，经过艺术家的加工，变得更精湛，更富有诗意；而且赛拉斯侄子以叙述人的身份在文中多次出现，也强化了这种相似性。

美国幽默作家詹姆斯·瑟伯（1894—1961）的《猫鸟的座位》与《我的叔叔赛拉斯》颇为相似，只是性别对调一下。这篇小说也把一个无拘无束的人物性格同一个较为刻板的人物性格置于相对立的地位。在这里，性格外向的额尔琴·拜罗斯反衬着乏味谨慎的马丁先生，他正想方设法要除掉她。不过，对于他的计谋的陈述远比《我的叔叔赛拉斯》里的一切来得详尽。瑟伯的手法是在喜剧情景中营造一个复杂的“侦探小说”似的情节，然后让那情节突然土崩瓦解，取而代之的是一系列喜剧效果十足（但同样富于机巧）的情节。事实上，真要在一篇喜剧性质的短篇小说中展现马丁先生成功地进行谋杀是不大可能的，但通过对马丁先生杀人前所作准备的细节描写，瑟伯不断地试图让我们对那种矛盾的特点产生惊愕的感觉，诸如在喜剧中发生谋杀案，马丁那样的人成了杀人犯还说着痞气十足的话（“干掉”拜罗斯太太）。细节描写营造出剑拔弩张的气氛，后因马丁放弃谋杀计划而随即缓和。因此，这个故事通过两个阶段达到高潮。第一阶段的末尾处，高潮被显而易见的反高潮替代，预料中的谋杀没有发生，我们如释重负。第一阶段刚刚

stage begins as soon as the first has ended, when the words "It wouldn't do" are soon followed by "an idea came to life". During his visit to Mrs Barrows's flat Martin realises that by behaving "impossibly" there, and then denying everything, he will be able to make it seem that Mrs Barrows has gone mad. This produces what, from his point of view, is a happy ending. The final climax is Martin's successful removal of Mrs Barrows from her job.

In "Mabel", William Somerset Maugham (1874-1965) takes a suitably simple idea, treats it concisely, and succeeds in keeping it alive. In length and subject, the story is very like an orally-told joke or anecdote; and indeed Maugham does his best, in this and in many of his other short stories, to preserve this resemblance, partly by the use of a personal but detached narrator and partly by using a simple style that suggests spoken rather than written English. He once wrote that his type of story could be told over the dinner table or in a ship's smoking room, and that it would hold the attention of the listeners there.

The story of George and Mabel is based on a comic reversal of roles. George is now a devoted husband, so happy with Mabel for a wife that he feels it is only five minutes since they were married. But Mabel is away and George is very lonely without her. After this opening presentation of the situation Maugham turns to the past, which is comically different. George, we hear, was a very reluctant bridegroom, and fled all over Asia in an attempt to escape from marrying Mabel. But Mabel was a capable and determined woman, and pursued him wherever he went until she finally caught and married him. Near the end Maugham adds a rather subtle touch that helps to raise the story above the anecdotal level: we learn that not only George but also Mabel had had doubts about marrying a person she had not seen for seven years. But perhaps Mabel was not being entirely truthful with George when she told him this.

"The Barber's Uncle", by the Armenian-American writer



结束，第二阶段马上开始——“那不管用”字眼后紧跟着便是“一个念头产生了”。马丁在去拜罗斯太太的公寓拜访时，意识到通过在那儿表现得“不可思议”，再把所有的事情推个一干二净，他就能造成拜罗斯太太精神错乱的假象。这样做，在他看来，将会产生一个称心如意的结局。最后的高潮就是马丁先生成功地让拜罗斯太太丢了工作。

在《梅宝》中，威廉·萨默塞特·毛姆（1874—1965）取材简繁适中，叙述扼要，并成功地使之活灵活现。就篇幅和主题而言，这篇小说极像一则口头流传的笑话或逸闻；事实上，在本篇及作者其他许多短篇小说中，毛姆都尽量保持了这种相似之处。为了做到这一点，他一方面在小说中安排了一位亲临其境又客观冷静的叙述者，一方面又使用了一种读上去像口语而非书面语的简洁文风。他曾经写道，他的这类故事可以在餐桌上或轮船的吸烟室里讲述，并且能在这种场合引人入胜。

乔治和梅宝的故事建立在角色喜剧性的转换上。乔治如今是个忠诚的丈夫，与爱妻梅宝相处如此幸福和谐以至于他觉得两人结婚才不过五分钟。但梅宝现在出门了，乔治备感孤独。在这段开场白之后，毛姆笔锋一转，回到了令人捧腹、截然不同的从前。我们被告知，乔治曾是个非常不情愿的新郎，他在亚洲到处逃窜，为的就是不娶梅宝。但梅宝这个女人精明能干，意志坚强，无论他去往何方，她一路查寻直至最终逮住他并与之成婚。临近结尾，毛姆添了意味深长的一笔，使这篇小说不再流于一般趣事的水准：我们得知，不单是乔治，梅宝也对和一个她七年未见的人结婚曾心怀疑虑。但梅宝在对乔治讲此番话时，可能并不是十分诚实的。

美籍亚美尼亚作家威廉·萨罗扬（1908—1981）的《理发师的叔叔》，大概是这本集子里最“现代”的故事了。萨罗扬专

William Saroyan (1908–1981), is perhaps the most “modern” story in the collection. Saroyan specialised in the kind of short story in which very little happens, the kind that is more like a rambling, reminiscent essay than a carefully plotted story. It is typical of his deliberately casual artistry that the most memorable part of “The Barber’s Uncle” is probably not the sensational story of Misak and the tiger but the boy’s visit to the eccentric barber that frames it. The story begins with some humorous anecdotes illustrating the boy’s need for a haircut, which are combined with a more serious description of his feelings about life. All this introduces the second main character, Aram the barber, a thoughtful, unworldly man with whom the boy has much in common. Misak, the unfortunate hero of the story told by the barber, is another unworldly person, a man who is too innocent and good to succeed or even to survive in this world. Each of these three characters has an almost religious attitude of openness to life, and all in their varying degrees are unconventional. The boy and the barber make more concessions to the ordinary prudent rules of society than Misak does, and so it is he that loses his life. But all three characters are linked by a kind of similarity that helps to give unity to Saroyan’s story.

David Herbert Lawrence (1885–1930) wrote “The Rocking-Horse Winner” in 1926, as his contribution to a book of ghost stories edited by his friend Lady Cynthia Asquith. The boy in the story was partly modelled on a girl called Leonora Brooke, who used to bet on horses through a servant when her parents were away. Perhaps Lawrence had also seen some nervous or unhappy child persistently bouncing and swinging its surplus energy away on a favourite rocking-horse. Probably he also had in mind another doomed, highly-strung boy of literature, Paul Dombey in Dickens’s *Dombey and Son*, for the dialogue about luck and money between Lawrence’s Paul and his mother is strangely reminiscent of one about money between Paul Dombey and his father. “What is money?” Paul

门写这类几乎没发生什么事件的短篇小说。与构思严谨的小说相比，这些更像是漫谈回忆文章。在《理发师的叔叔》中，最令人难忘的部分可能不是米赛和老虎之间惊心动魄的故事，而是男孩对那位讲述这个故事的古怪理发师的拜访。这典型地体现了他那刻意从容不迫、舒展随意的艺术技巧。这篇小说以一些风趣的轶事开头，点出男孩需要理发，其中穿插着他对生活的感受比较严肃的描写。所有这些引出了第二主人公，即理发师艾拉姆。他是一个富有思想但不谙世故的男子，男孩与他有很多共同点。至于理发师口中那位不幸的英雄米赛则是另一个不谙世故的人，他太单纯、太善良、无法在这个世界上取得成功，甚至连生存都有困难。这三个人物，个个对生活抱有一种近乎虔诚的开放态度，不同程度上都算不得是循规蹈矩之人。但对社会上普遍存在的条条框框，理发师和男孩比米赛做了更多的让步，所以丢了性命的是后者。然而这三个人物因相似而相联，从而使萨罗扬的小说完整统一。

1929年，大卫·赫伯特·劳伦斯(1885—1930)创作了《木摇马上的赢家》，向他的朋友辛西娅·艾斯奎什夫人主编的一本鬼魂故事集投稿。小说中的男孩以一个名叫列奥娜拉·布鲁克的女孩为部分原型，她常在父母出门时通过仆人给赛马下注。也许劳伦斯见到过某个紧张不安或郁郁寡欢的孩子，长时间地在心爱的摇动木马上跳啊，摇啊，借以消耗多余的体力。也很可能，他的脑海中还有一个文学作品里的男孩形象，即狄更斯的《董贝父子》中命运多舛、敏感易怒的保罗·董贝，因为劳伦斯笔下的保罗与母亲那段关于运气和金钱的对话，很奇怪地令人联想到保罗·董贝和他父亲的那段关于钱的对话。“钱是什么？”保罗·董贝想知道，“它能干什么？”董贝先生回答说它

Dombey wants to know, "What can it do?" Mr Dombey answers that it can do anything — almost. But Paul knows that money could not keep his mother alive, and cannot make him strong and well himself. He even suspects that money is a cruel thing. Like Dickens's novel, Lawrence's ghost story is a satire on bourgeois life, especially on the money-worship that he thought bourgeois people guilty of. The family in the story are full of pride in their social class, but both emotionally and materially there is falsehood and pretence. The mother does not really love her husband or her children, and the parents feel there is not enough money for the way of life they want to lead. The children, and even the son's rocking-horse and the other toys get to know about the need for more money. The boy Paul sets out to get more money by riding wildly on his rocking-horse. As he rides he gets advance knowledge of the winners of real horse races, and he makes a fortune by betting on these. He manages to give some of this money to his mother but despite this ghostly voices in the house begin to talk more urgently than ever of the need for more money. One night Paul's mother finds him frantically riding his rocking-horse instead of sleeping. After announcing the name of the winner of the next race "in a powerful, strange voice", he collapses unconscious. As he lies on his deathbed, bets are laid in accordance with this supernaturally acquired information. He thus becomes richer than ever, and shortly before he dies he boasts of his "luck". The bitter dramatic irony behind his words here (he is not really "lucky" in any real sense) suggests a possible moral to the story: "Live simply, and do not greedily seek money or social position, which are vain and empty things."

The criminal and humorist William Sydney Porter (1862–1914) borrowed the name O. Henry from one of the guards at his prison, the Ohio State Penitentiary. In his short stories he liked to use an informal, conversational manner and neat plots, sometimes with a twist at the end. In "Springtime" he also amuses himself by playing with different possible ways of

无所不能——几乎如此。但保罗明白钱没法让母亲不死，也不能使自己健康强壮。他甚至怀疑钱是一种无情的东西。正如狄更斯的小说那样，劳伦斯的鬼故事同样嘲讽了资产阶级的生活方式，尤其是他心目中资产阶级所犯的拜金主义的错误。小说里的那个家庭对他们所处的社会阶层充满了自负，但在精神和物质两方面都充斥着虚伪和矫饰。母亲并不真的爱丈夫和孩子们，而且父母也觉得没有足够的钱过他们想过的日子。那些孩子，甚至儿子的摇动木马，还有其他玩具也逐渐了解到家里需要更多的钱。男孩保罗开始靠他骑在马上拼命地摇动来多挣钱。他骑的时候，就可以预先得知真正的马赛中的胜利者，他给这些马下注后得到一大笔钱。他设法把其中一部分给了母亲。尽管如此，房子里飘忽的声音却开始比以往更急切地谈论——得有更多的钱。一天夜里，保罗的母亲发现他没在睡觉，而是骑在木马上疯狂地摇动。他用“奇特而有力的声音”宣布了下一轮马赛的获胜者名字后，垮了下来，失去知觉。他在临终前，根据他用超自然力获得的信息下了赌注。于是他比以前任何时候都富有了，在咽气之前仍在吹嘘他的“运气”。他此时的话语背后充满了苦涩而戏剧性的讽刺含义（他无论在哪方面都称不上是真的“幸运”），这道出了这篇小说的寓意：“简简单单地生活，不要奢求名利，那些全是过眼烟云。”

集罪犯、幽默作家于一身的威廉·西德尼·波特（1862—1914）从他所在监狱，即俄亥俄州立监狱的一名看守那里借用了欧·亨利这个名字。在他的短篇小说中，他惯用非正式的、谈话式的风格，配以巧妙的情节，结尾处时有波折，出人意料。在《春光》中，他又摆弄了各种可行的小说开头方式以自娱。其中心

beginning a story. The central situation — the solitary typist at work in her room, almost completely cut off from other people — is vividly imagined, not without a touch of poetry and pathos.

"The Open Window" by Hector Hugh Munro (1870–1916), who used the pen name Saki, is a good example of the neatly planned story with a (double) twist. Saki liked to write about clever young liars, and the liar in this story shows herself to be superior (in the childlike, amoral world of Saki's fiction) both to the timid, nervous Framton Nuttel and to her own family. Just as "The Catbird Seat" is a kind of "anti-"detective story (that is, a story that seems at first to be a complicated crime story, or else a parody of one, but then turns out to be a pure black comedy), Saki manages to create a miniature ghost story within his little social comedy, before dismissing it as merely one of the niece's made-up stories. The effect of this is to ridicule ghost stories in general and in particular those weak-minded people, such as Framton Nuttel, who take them seriously.

"The Income-Tax Man" by Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens, 1835–1910) is close to the subject matter and manner of a humorous lecture. It is a lively mixture of fact and exaggeration, on a theme that must appeal to every taxpayer, with a satisfying reversal of fortune towards the end.

Although "The Upper Berth" by Francis Marion Crawford (1854–1909) is a ghost story, it is firmly rooted in the facts of everyday life, and the author recreates the experience of crossing the Atlantic and the life of the ship's passengers and crew with a satisfying solidity. Like a Maugham story, this one gains in realism from the smoking room manner of its introduction.

"My Bank Account" by Stephen Leacock (1869–1944) belongs to the same genre as the Twain story, but it is even better, for its exaggeration of typical, everyday anxieties, embarrassments and mistakes only goes very slightly beyond what is true or plausible.

场景——形单影只的打字员在她的房间里工作，几乎完全与外人隔绝——是经过生动想象而来，颇有诗意，令人同情。

海科特·休·芒罗（1870—1916）笔名萨基，他的《打开的窗户》是一部构思精密，并有一个（双重）曲折的小说的典范。萨基喜爱描写聪明的年轻骗子，而本文的这个骗子（在萨基虚构的天真烂漫、没有是非观念的世界里）显示了她高人一筹，对怯懦、神经质的弗莱姆顿·纳特尔或她的家人而言均如此。正如《猫鸟的座位》是一种“反”侦探小说（意即，小说开头像是一个错综复杂的描写犯罪的故事或对这类故事的诙谐模仿，随后却成了纯粹的黑色喜剧），萨基设法在他这篇小小的社会喜剧中创作了一个小型的鬼故事，然后把它说成不是真实的，而只是侄女编造的故事。总的说来，这一安排要起的作用是嘲弄鬼怪故事，同时也特别讽刺了像弗莱姆顿·纳特尔那种对它们信以为真的低能儿。

马克·吐温（原名塞缪尔·兰霍恩·克莱门斯，1835—1910）的《征收所得税的人》，题材与风格均接近一篇幽默的训诫。它是事实与夸张的生动混和，临近结尾运气得到令人满意的扭转，这样的主题肯定会吸引每一位纳税人。

弗兰西斯·马利昂·克劳福德（1854—1909）的《上铺》尽管是一个鬼的故事，却牢牢扎根于日常生活的事实之中，作者再现了横渡大西洋的经历以及航船上乘客和船员们的生活，读来浑然一体，令人满意。这篇小说和毛姆的小说一样也从吸烟室开头，这种引入方式增强了它的写实性。

史蒂芬·李科克（1869—1944）的《我的银行账户》和马克·吐温的小说同属一类，但更为出色，因为它对典型的、随处可见的焦虑、窘迫及过失的夸张，与真实的或者看上去可信的事物相比，只不过超出了极其微小的一步而已。

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