

A Guide to the Study of

College English

BOOK 3

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● 河南大学出版社

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Book III

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前 言

本书为杨立民、徐克容编著的《大学英语教程》(College English) 第三册阅读指导及教学用书, 是编者多年教学实践的总结。编者根据国家教委制订的英语专业基础阶段教学大纲的要求, 从学生的实际出发, 在本书的编写中以课文分析和鉴赏为重点, 指导学生深入理解课文内容、主题思想和写作特点, 帮助学生掌握英语知识和提高运用英语的能力。本书供全国大专院校英语专业二年级学生和教师使用, 亦适用于水平相当的英语自学者。

本书主要内容有:

- 一、课文引入 以与课文有关的背景知识为主线自然引入课文;
- 二、作者简介;
- 三、难句讲解 包括对难句的释义、翻译和语法分析;
- 四、作品分析 包括文章的主题思想、篇章结构、段落划分及段落大意、体裁、写作技巧、修辞手段、同义词辨析。

参加本书的编者有: 吕长发 (LL3, 6&7), 胡金环 (LL1, 4, 11, & 16), 王振华 (LL2, 5, 8, 9, & 14), 刘名阁 (LL10&12), 胡天赋 (LL13&15), 全书由吕长发、秦英骏同志核定。胡金环、王振华也参加了部分定稿工作。

美籍教师 Rebecca Neufeld 女士和 Holly Rollins 女士通读了全书, 提出了宝贵意见, 在此谨致谢意。

由于时间仓促, 水平有限, 书中不足之处恳请读者指正。

， 编 者

1991 年 8 月

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Lesson One

Christmas Day in the Morning

by Pearl S. Buck

I. Introductory Remarks

When love is mentioned, people might think it is the feeling of fondness between people of the opposite sex. That is true. It is a kind of profoundly tender, passionate affection for a person of the opposite sex. But love has a wider sense as well. It is the feeling of warm personal attachment or deep affection for a parent, a child, a friend or any other kind of companions. In religious sense, it is the benevolent affection of God for His creatures; or the reverent affection due from them to God. In humanistic sense, it is the warm concern and ardent help for people who are in need of help both spiritually and materially. So in this world, in addition to sexual love, various kinds of love exist, they are: the charity of God, the close relation of parent and child, the regard of friends for each other, the mutual feeling and aid among human beings and also the strong attachment of people to their own nations and motherlands.

But not all the people have realized the relation between parent and child is love. Is it love or just the tie of blood? Have you seen mothers and fathers waiting patiently in front of the primary school for school to be over so that they can take their children home? Think back to the days during which your parents worked hard to provide you with a better condition when you busied yourself in

preparation for the college entrance exam! Recall the moment when you saw the tears in your parents' eyes on the day when you were notified of your admission to your college or university! It is love, passionate and touching parental love. Maybe it is this kind of love that has wakened your love for your parents and made you decide to do something in return for their tender love for you.

The story we are going to read is of this sort of love and the consciousness of the love and the great value of the love in human life.

II. About the Author

Pearl Sydenstricker Buck (1892-1973), a 20th century American novelist, was born on June 26, 1892, in Hillsboro, West Virginia. Her parents, Presbyterian missionaries in China, brought her to China in her infancy.

China was Pearl Buck's home for 42 years. She learned to speak Chinese before she learned English. All her schooling was in China until she attended Randolph-Macon College and, later, Cornell University in the United States.

Her marriage to Dr. John Buck, an agricultural missionary took her to a small town in northern China. She described the region in her best-known novel, *The Good Earth* (1931). After 5 years she moved to Nanking and taught English literature to university students. In 1935, she was divorced from Dr. Buck and married Richard J. Walsh but was widowed in 1960. After that she made her home in Pennsylvania.

Of her many novels about China, the best-known is *The Good Earth* (1931) which portrays the Chinese peasant life. Well-known for her interpretive insight, she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1932 and the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1938.

III. Difficult Sentences in the Text

1. Strange how the habits of his youth clung to him still!

It was strange how stubbornly he still adhered to the habits he had formed in his youth. It was unusual that he still had the habits that were formed when he was young.

说也真怪,他至今仍保持着他年轻时的习惯。

This is an elliptical exclamatory sentence. "Still" at the end of the sentence emphasizes the meaning of it.

2. Now that he thought of it, the stars seemed always large and clear before the dawn of Christmas Day:

As he thought of the fact that the stars were extraordinary, he drew a conclusion from his observation that the stars were always large and clear on Christmas night. As he thought of it, his observation of the stars in the past years led to the conclusion that the stars seemed always large and clear before the dawn of Christmas Day.

想到了这一点,他发现,在圣诞节黎明前,天上的星星似乎总是这么大,这么亮。

3. He slipped back in time, as he did so easily nowadays:

He suddenly found himself thinking of his past. He often did this recently. He recalled the past and he often did this recently.

他忆起了往昔,他近来常常这样缅怀过去。

"As" in the sentence is a relative pronoun introducing an attributive clause with "as" indicating the fact that he slipped back in time.

4. He had never thought of it before, taking for granted the tie of their blood:

He had never thought of the fact that his father loved him

because he believed the relationship between father and son was rather a natural thing. They were bound together by the tie of their blood.

他从来没有想到这是父亲对他的爱，因为他认为父子之间的血缘关系是理所当然的事儿。

In this sentence, the present participial phrase "taking for granted ..." is used as an adverbial of reason.

5. Now that he knew his father loved him, there would be no more loitering in the mornings and having to be called again:

Since he had learned his father loved him, he would never waste his time getting up slowly nor waiting for his father to call him to get up in the mornings.

既然知道了父亲爱他，他就再也不会早上磨磨蹭蹭或等父亲叫他起床了。

"Now(that)" is used as a conjunction, meaning "as a result of the fact that," to introduce an adverbial clause of reason.

6. He got up after that, stumbling blind with sleep, and pulled on his clothes:

He got up after he heard what his father and mother had talked about. He walked unsteadily because of sleepiness and he put on his clothes in a hurry.

于是，他一骨碌爬了起来，赶忙穿上衣服，睡眼惺忪磕磕绊绊地走着。

In this sentence, the present participial phrase "stumbling blind with sleep" is used adverbially to denote manner, and the preposition "with" within the phrase means "because of".

7. They were poor, and most of the excitement was in the turkey they had raised themselves and in the mince pies his mother made:

The family was poor, all they could enjoy was the turkey they had raised and the mince pies his mother made. The fam-

ily was poor and could not afford to buy expensive things at Christmas. However, they could have a good time with some home-made, delicious food such as a turkey or some mince pies.

他们是贫苦人家，过节的乐趣不过是吃上一顿自己饲养的火鸡和他母亲亲手做的馅饼。

In the sentence, after the linking verb “was”, the predicative is made up of two prepositional phrases, in each of which there is an attributive clause.

8.A Thought struck him like a silver dagger:

An idea came into his mind quickly and clearly. He hit upon an idea all of a sudden.

他突然想出了一个好主意。

9. He got up and crept downstairs, careful of the creaky boards, and let himself out:

He got up and moved quietly downstairs with great care for fear that he would make any noise on the broken, worn boards of the floor and stairs, and then he went out of the house into the yard.

他起床后，蹑手蹑脚地爬下楼梯，他小心翼翼，唯恐使破旧的楼梯板发出响声，然后出了门。

The adjective phrase “careful of the creaky board,” is used as an adverbial here.

10. Milking for once was not a chore:

This was the first time he milked willingly and it was the first time milking was not a tiresome, boring task for him.

这次挤奶再不是一件苦差事了。

11. His father was laughing, a queer sobbing sort of a laugh:

His father was laughing, but the laugh he made sounded as a sob; the sound of laughing he uttered seemed a sound of

sobbing; he was so moved and excited that he was choked with emotion and therefore he laughed with a sobbing sound.

他的父亲大笑起来，可是笑声中却带着哽咽。

IV. Analysis of the Text

1. Theme

The theme of the story is love. The author is trying to make it clear that love is a valuable thing which can change the colour of life. The one who can love others is the happiest and the one who doesn't have the ability to love is the loneliest in the world. Love alone can waken love. In the present story, it was the tender paternal love that wakened the love within the son and it changed the colour of his life. And it was the love he received from his father and cultivated in his heart that made him love his wife more tenderly and thus it changed the colour of their life. Although they lived alone, in their old age, they could have a happier Christmas, and a bright life was before them because love was in their hearts.

2. Division of the Text

This text can be divided into 3 parts.

Part I: Paragraphs 1—8 The Christmas Robert would
have with his wife

Part II: Paragraphs 9—42 The Christmas Robert once had
had with his parents

Part III: Paragraphs 42—46 The Christmas morning Robert
had as an old man

3. Writing Techniques

1) Analysis in Terms of the Structure of the Text

This text as a whole is a narration loosely-written in informal, modern English. It centers on the main character's recollections of the past.

The story took place on Christmas morning. Very early that morning Robert woke up and he lay in his bed thinking hard. There is a flashback in Part I, which presents the old man and his wife's conversation the night before about the celebration of their own Christmas. Part II is another flashback to represent another earlier event the main character experienced when he was only fifteen. Three scenes take place in this flashback—(1) a few days before Christmas Day, Robert overheard his parents talking and he realized his father loved him, (2) on that Christmas Eve he hit upon an idea of preparing a special gift of true love for his father, (3) on the Christmas morning, he got up very early to make his gift and his father was deeply moved by what he had done. Part III gives us a narration of the main character's feelings and actions after he recalled the important moment in his life. With his love still alive in his heart, he got up quietly, went downstairs softly and trimmed the tree all by himself and then he got his gifts to his wife ready as well—a dainty diamond brooch and a letter for her to read and keep forever.

In terms of structure, another point should be made clear. In the story, the author describes two incidents clearly: one is the Christmas morning Robert had when he was a boy of fifteen and the other is the Christmas morning he had when he was an old man of over sixty. These two incidents are connected with another one, which is mentioned though not fully described. It is the story of the birth of Jesus Christ. These three incidents are connected together with some causality and they bear some similarity as well.

(1) Causality:

The story of Jesus Christ's birth tells us that it was in a barn that Jesus Christ was born, and it was to the barn that the shepherds and the Wise Men had come to give the new-born baby their

Christmas gifts. Robert thought of this and this made him decide to do something similar in their barn — to prepare a special gift of true love for his father.

In the description of what Robert did that Christmas morning when he was fifteen, the author tells us that the boy learned he had been loved by his father, and his love for his father had been awakened by the love he had received. Then when he was old, he didn't feel lonely because he still had the love and the ability to love in him. So about fifty years later, he gave his gift of true love to his beloved wife.

(2) Similarity

These three incidents all took place early on Christmas morning. All the characters in these three incidents were trying to give some special gifts to the persons they loved. And all of them, the Wise Men, the Shepherds and Robert, were led to the barn by the bright star in the sky when they went to prepare and deliver their special gifts of true love.

2) Analysis in Terms of Linguistics

Since the text is a narration, the author uses informal, colloquial and plain language to tell her moving story, making it easier to understand. The author employs vivid descriptive adjectives to present to the reader pictures of what she wants to show, the verbs to present specific actions which are vivid and characteristic. She takes some special means to show emphasis, such as employment of end focus, auxiliary verbs, repetition and questions. The author uses symbolism and figures of speech rather naturally to reinforce her theme and to make the meaning of the story deeper.

(1) Word choice

A. ...The habits of his youth clung to him still.

B. For it was still night, a clear and starry night.

- C. He slipped back in time.
- D. There would be no more loitering in the mornings...
- E. ...stumbling blind with sleep...
- F. ...creep into the barn...
- G. A thought struck him...
- H. ...careful of the creaky boards...
- I. ...a big star hung low over the roof ...
- J. ...two strong streams rushing into the pail...
- K. ...and barred the door behind him...
- L. ...his dancing heart was ready to jump from his body...
- M. He found his father and clutched him in a great hug.
- N. The words broke from him of their own will.
- O. He put out the light and went tiptoeing up the stairs.

(2) Emphasis

- A. ...the habits of his youth clung to him still .(end focus)
- B. The cows looked at him, sleepy and surprised . (end focus)
- C. ... two strong streams rushing into the pail, frothing and fragrant .(end focus)
- D. I do hate to wake him.(auxiliary verb)
- E. He wanted to tell —to tell her how much he loved her.
(repetition)
- F. ...and the first rays of the sun were gleaming in the east,
such a happy, happy Christmas.(repetition)
- G. Why should he not give his father a special gift, out there in the barn?(question)
- H. "Thought you'd fool me, did you?" (tag question)

(3) Symbolism

Symbolism is the practice of representing things by symbols. A symbol is an object we can see or read in literature that leads us to a further meaning beyond that of the object itself. We are surrounded

by symbols in our daily lives, many of them very external and visible: the Red Five-Star flag symbolizes our country, the red cross stands for medical care, and the image of a dove symbolizes peace.

In the text, the author uses the following symbols:

A. The barn—the original meaning of a “barn” is a place for housing livestock, such as cows or horses. But in our text it leads us to a further meaning. It is the place where Jesus Christ was born to send the love of God to mankind. It is the place where the Wise Men presented their gifts to the new born baby and it is the place where Robert prepared his first gift of true love for his dear father. So, the barn here in the story symbolizes the birthplace of love.

B. The stars—again and again the author mentions “bright stars” “the star” in her story. When Jesus Christ was born, the shepherds and the Wise Men were led by a very bright star in the sky to the barn to present their gifts. (This is not described in detail in the text, but the story of the birth of Jesus Christ is mentioned. People naturally think of the details of the story.) When Robert went out of his house to the barn to prepare his gift of love, “a big star hung low over the roof, a reddish gold.” When he was lying in bed recalling his past experience, “the stars were extraordinary!” and he could not help exclaiming that the stars seemed always large and clear before the dawn of Christmas Day. Does he mean the night was bright and clear only because of the stars in the sky? No, the symbolic meaning of stars is love—the brightness of stars can light the sky and the brightness of love can light human life. It can change the colour of human life and make it more valuable.

C. The morning—in this story all the incidents described took place in the morning. Morning which is the start of daytime here symbolizes the start of a new life, the awakening to love. The last sentence of the text goes like this: “The stars in the sky were

gone, and the first rays of the sun were gleaming in the east, such a happy, happy Christmas!" The night passed and the morning full of brightness (of sunlight and of love) came and Robert and his wife would start to have a happy day—a happy Christmas of their own and a happy life.

(4) Figures of speech

- A. He slipped back in time. (Synecdoche. "He" is used for "His mind".)
- B. A thought struck him like a silver dagger. (Simile. Here two unlike things are explicitly compared—a thought and a silver dagger. "Like" is used as a comparative indicator.)
- C. He must have waked twenty times, striking a match each time to look at his old watch. (Hyperbole. "Twenty times" means "many times", not exactly 20.)
- D. Back in his room he had only a minute to pull off his clothes and jump into bed. (Hyperbole. "A minute" means "a very short period of time".)
- E. The minutes were endless—ten, fifteen, he did not know how many. (Hyperbole.)