



北美

故事

Harry J. Huang 著

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Short
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Harry J. Huang's Short Short Stories

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Contents

On Spousal Separation (论夫妻分居)	1
My Son (我的儿子)	10
Auction (拍卖会)	19
A Donated Kidney (捐肾杂记)	29
Ice Clearing (除冰)	37
Truly His – Donna May (多娜·美)	46
Morality, Eh? (道德?呸!)	57
Entertainment at the Library (图书馆趣事)	66
Sexual Harassment (性骚扰)	72
Windows (窗户)	79
Car Sale (卖车记)	85
Old Honda (旧本田)	92
Children for Rent (小孩出租)	98
Human Animals (人类动物)	107
Night Business (夜间交易)	113
Oh, Mmm—Honey! (哦,钱爱的!)	119
Child Business (财童)	124
Extra Income (额外收入)	132
A Job on the Side (副业)	140
A Mysterious Arrest (神奇的逮捕)	147



On Spousal Separation

Ladies and gentlemen: I am no expert in law, but you, the best-educated professionals in the country, all have faith in me. You have shown your faith today by paying a thousand dollars for your admission ticket. I thank you for that. Yet I must repeat once more that by the end of my lecture, anybody who is not fully satisfied with my service will have his or her money fully funded right here, at the platform.

Today, I am only going to talk about one law in Canada. Or is it really a law? I don't know. But whether it is or not makes no difference to us.

译文

论夫妻分居

女士们、先生们：我不是法律专家。然而，诸位——我国各界精英们——却如此抬举我。各位都花一千元买了入场票，我为此表示谢意。但我还要重申：讲座结束后，谁对我的服务有丝毫不满，谁都可以当场索回百分之百的入场费。

今天，我想探讨的是加拿大的一条法律。不过这到底算不算法律呢？我也拿不准。法律也罢，不是法律也罢，这无关紧要。



Couples can be “separated” before they divorce—you all know that. In spite of the stupidity of this arrangement and the great revenue losses to the government it causes, and the agony of broken marriages it prolongs, you have to know how to use it to your advantage. My advice is very simple and unprofessional because I am functionally illiterate. Honestly, I cannot add well once figures are larger than ten and I do not recognize the twenty-six letters of the alphabet well, either. I always have trouble with “b” and “d”. But I can assure you once again, as I did in the brochure, that you will be happy you have come!

Now here's a question for you: You and your wife or husband are both working, you have at least two

译文

夫妻离婚之前可以先“分居”，这大家都知道。尽管这种做法愚蠢，不仅给政府带来惨重的财政损失，而且也延长破裂婚姻的痛苦。然而大家都应懂得如何去利用它。

我在这儿提供的见解浅薄而不具专业水准，因为我自己属功能性文盲。坦率地说，数字若大于十，我就加不准。字母表中的二十六个字母我也辨别不清，“b”和“d”我就总是搞乱。不过我再次向你们保证，就像小册子所说的一样，你们会高兴而来，满意而归。

首先，我想问大家一个问题。你们夫妇都在工



children, and you are all happy with your family. But have you ever tried to separate or thought of separating?

No! None of you put up your hands. That's why you have to be here today!

The second question is: Do you know that being separated can benefit you and your husband or wife? Please put up your hands if you do.

Just as I thought! No one knows this!

The third question I have is: Do you know how to be separated without being separated?

Again, you are all shaking your heads.

The naked truth is that many of you live a life that is much worse than that of a fifteen-year-old single mother (which is a topic I don't want to get into today). My

译文

作，都生养至少两个孩子，家庭都很幸福，可你们曾试图分居？或考虑过同您先生或太太分居？

没有，没人举手。这正是你们应该参加这次活动的原因。

第二个问题是：你们知道不知道分居对您或您先生或太太都有好处？知道的请举手。

如我所料，没人知道。

第三个问题是，各位知道不知道怎样分居而又不分居？

大家又在摇头。

铁的事实告诉我们，你们当中，许多人的生活



simple advice is that if you really want to improve your hard life, you have to take action immediately.

To begin with, sell your house if you have one. Then rent a house with two legal units in it. That's the most convenient dwelling you can get. You pay the rents separately, but you can still get into your wife's or husband's bedroom easily. You can even dine together as before. If your children are under twelve years old, don't even bother to tell them about what you're doing. They won't understand any of it anyway. In other words, you'll be legally separated, but you can still live a normal married life with all your children around you. It's a standard practice.

There are more creative ways of fooling the gov-

译文

远远比不上那些十五岁的未婚母亲。(这是一个不同的题目，我不想在这儿多谈。)一针见血地说，假如各位真的想改善贫困的生活，就应该立即采取行动。

首先，有房的卖房。然后，租一座带着两个单元的房子。这是最佳的住宅。夫妻分开交租金，但仍可以随心所欲进入您先生或您太太的卧房里，也可与先前一样，在同一张饭桌上吃饭。孩子如果还不到十二岁，大人的事说都用不着跟他们说。反正他们也不会明白这些。换句话说，你们合法分居，却仍然和孩子们住在一起，过着正常夫妻的生活，这是当前的标准做法。



ernment, and success stories are told everyday. But I would advise you to take one step at a time. Follow the classic model first, then be creative later on.

Once you're separated, the benefits are endless. Say both you and your spouse work, each making sixty thousand dollars a year, and you have two children. If you are not separated but cling to the traditional family, governments take away much more than half of your money. If you are separated, each keeping one child, you are both entitled to claim the "equivalent-to-spouse amount", which in 1997 was \$ 5380. Let's make it easy for me to count. Say you can get five thousand dollars more with one hand. When I put my hands together, you get ten thousand dollars. By being separated, your family

译文

当然还有更多可以糊弄政府的更具有创造性的做法。成功的例子每天都在社会上流传着。不过，我劝大家一步一步来。先效仿传统做法，然后再发挥个人的创造才能。

一旦分居，就有说不完的好处。比如说，双职工的夫妇俩养两个小孩，每方年薪为六万元。如果不分居，政府每年抢走你们的一大半收入，如果分居了，每人各带一个小孩，那么夫妻各自可以小孩的名义申报“等同配偶免税额”——一九九七年度为 5380 元。把数字简单化，就算五千元吧，也就是我的一只手。我这两只手一合并，你们可就多赚一



gets ten thousand more without doing one extra bit of work.

Besides, you are entitled to claim day care and numerous other items you can find out if you talk to a professional consultant. If you stay separated for fifteen years and just buy Canadian Savings Bonds with ten thousand dollars every year, I am pretty sure you will be much better off by the time you retire. What's more, if one of you is laid-off, you can enjoy social assistance forever. You make more than ten thousand dollars without doing a single thing. Only fools would stay married nowadays, don't you agree?

I'm glad you are all nodding. But for your own protection, please pay a few bucks to hire a lawyer to file

译文

万元啦。通过分居，您的家不费吹灰之力便多赚一万元。

此外，你们还有资格申请日托补贴和数不清的福利项目。这些您去请教专业顾问就全明白了。如果你们分居十五年，把每年多赚的一万元都拿去购买加拿大国库券，我敢保证，你们退休时一定会宽裕许多。再说，夫妻当中谁被解雇了，还可以永远享受社会福利。不用多动一根毫毛，每年便可多捞一万元。时下只有傻瓜才会抱住婚姻不放，你们说对不对？

我很高兴，大家都在点头。不过，分居手续最



your separation.

My last words to you are: You would be as stupid as the government if you continued to believe in the unpopular word “family” — a concept nobody and no government cares about anymore.

Thank you for coming! And best luck to all of you, married parents with lofty traditional beliefs!

Now, does anybody want me to refund their admission ticket?

No?

Thank you again, ladies and gentlemen!

7

译文

好是花儿块钱，请位律师办理，这样才保险。

最后，我想重复的是，谁如果继续迷信“家庭”这个各级政府和个人都不再理睬的字眼，谁就会像政府那般愚蠢可悲。

谢谢光临，具有崇高的传统信念的已婚夫妇们，我祝福你们！

对了，有没有谁想退入场票的？

没有？

再次感谢各位，女士们、先生们！



Comprehension questions

1. Who is the speaker in the story?
 - (A) A lawyer.
 - (B) One of the best-educated professionals.
 - (C) A mathematician.
 - (D) None of the above.
2. What does the speaker talk about?
 - (A) How to reduce the pain of couples who what to separate.
 - (B) How to tell the difference between "b" and "d".
 - (C) How to gain benefits by separating without really being separated.
 - (D) How to enjoy various child benefits.
3. How well informed are those present about the topic?
 - (A) They have no knowledge at all.
 - (B) They have good knowledge about it.
 - (C) Some of them know the topic quite well.
 - (D) None of the above.
4. Which of the following is not a true statement?
 - (A) The lecturer asks the audience to sell their houses.
 - (B) Separated couples should rent a house with two legal units in it.
 - (C) Couples who want to separate should not hire a lawyer to file their separation.
 - (D) Once couples are separated, their benefits are endless.
5. How do the married fathers and mothers respond to the lecture?
 - (A) They become very confused, not knowing what to do.
 - (B) Many still strongly believe in the family.



- (C) They disagree with the lecturer and think they should stay married.
- (D) They agree with the lecturer and think they should separate.

Essay and discussion topics

1. Discuss the satire in the story.
2. In what way does this story differ from those you have read?
3. The pain and gain of being separated or divorced.



My Son

It is all about my son, but he is not my son.

Ed and I remained childless for ten years. Then somehow I started to long for a child more desperately than ever before. I dreamed of a child day and night. I thought of adopting one, but it cost thirty thousand dollars, I was told, and we didn't have the money. I thought of kidnapping one, but never had the courage to do so.

In our eleventh year of marriage, at long last, I became pregnant. How excited we were! We were expecting a baby boy.

While I was in my fourth month of pregnancy, Ed

译文

我的儿子

我讲的都是有关我儿子的事儿，但他并不是我的儿子。

我和爱德婚后十年一直没有孩子。此后，不知何故，我便更加疯狂地渴望得到一个小孩。我想过收养一个，但听说要花三万元，而我们付不起这笔钱。我也想过拐一个来，可没有这个勇气。

婚后的第十一年，我怀孕了。我们就要有一个宝贝儿子了，多么令人兴奋啊！



had to go on a military mission to the Balkans. My baby did not want to wait. He gave signs of coming out, when he was twenty-six weeks old. Since Ed was at war, I had to travel to the hospital with a visiting relative – my mother's sister's niece from Finland.

The whole village looked forward to the birth of my baby. How disappointed we were. We travelled two hundred miles from the country to the large hospital in the city, only to lose the baby.

I could not go back home without a baby. I could not tell my husband I had lost it. My relative knew what I wanted. She disguised herself as a nurse and went into the ward three doors from us and picked up a baby boy for a bath, as she told them. We left town, with me

译文

我怀孕的第四个月，爱德到巴尔干半岛执行军事任务去了，儿子呢，却不愿等，二十六周就来到了人间。因为爱德不在家，我只好由从芬兰到我家作客的、我姨妈的侄女陪同我上医院去。

全村都盼望着孩子的出生。多么令人失望！我们从乡下来到市里的大医院，路途足足二百里，结果却保不住儿子。

我不能没有小孩独自回家啊！我怎么能告诉我丈夫独生子夭折了？陪同我的亲戚知道我想要什么，她佯装成护士，走进我们隔壁的第三个病房，抱走一个男婴去洗澡，她就是这样对他们说的。我抱着哭



cradling the crying boy and my relative carrying the dead baby in the travelling bag.

The evening news said a baby boy was stolen by someone disguised as a nurse, and the police were looking for them everywhere. Two weeks later, at a garbage site five hundred miles from the hospital, the police found the decaying body of an infant. They believed it was the lost baby and therefore closed the case. I was relieved that things turned out well. My relative returned to Finland; only then did I call my husband in Macedonia to tell him that I had given birth to a baby boy.

When our son was three months old, my overjoyed husband returned home as a hero. We held a double celebration – for his safe return and for the birth of our

译文

泣的男婴，亲戚提着装死婴的旅行袋，我们双双离开了医院。

晚间新闻报道说，有一男婴被一个假护士偷走，警方正四处寻找他们的下落。两周之后，警察在距离医院五百里的垃圾堆里，找到了一具已经腐烂的男婴尸体，警方断定他就是被拐走的男婴，就此结案。一切发展顺利，我终于松了一口气。结案后，我的亲戚启程回国。这时我才打电话到麦斯多尼亚，告诉我丈夫他有了个儿子。

儿子出生后的第三个月，我那兴高采烈的丈夫凯旋归来。我们举行了一个双庆会，庆祝他安全回