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FICTION FACTORY

万花筒

系列读物

Andrew Monrow
Peter Bullet

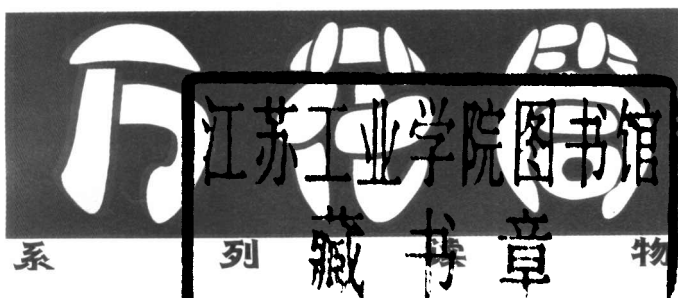
畅销世界百万册的英语读物



上海外语教育出版社

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藏书章

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◆ *Andrew Monrow - Peter Bullet*

◆ 注释 钱明丹

上海外语教育出版社

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外教社

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

万花筒系列读物. D1 = Fiction Factory/(英)莫洛(Monrow, A.),
(英)布利特(Bullet, P.)编;钱明丹注释.

—上海:上海外语教育出版社,2003

ISBN 7-81080-783-8

I. 万... II. ①莫... ②布... ③钱... III. 英语—语言读物
IV. H319.4

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2003)第 010815 号

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出版发行: **上海外语教育出版社**

(上海外国语大学内) 邮编: 200083

电 话: 021-65425300(总机), 35051812(发行部)

电子邮箱: bookinfo@sflep.com.cn

网 址: <http://www.sflep.com.cn> <http://www.sflep.com>

责任编辑: 廖红雁

印 刷: 江苏省丹阳教育印刷厂
经 销: 新华书店上海发行所
开 本: 850×1168 1/32 印张 5.625 字数 134 千字
版 次: 2004 年 2 月第 1 版 2004 年 2 月第 1 次印刷
印 数: 10 000 册

书 号: ISBN 7-81080-783-8 / G · 396

定 价: 13.50 元

本版图书如有印装质量问题,可向本社调换

前 言

万花筒出版社出版的英语微型小说 *Fiction Factory* 系列,畅销世界百余万册,上海外语教育出版社从中精选引进出版《万花筒系列读物》。本系列读物由英美语言专家用浅显易懂的英语撰写,供以英语为外国语的学生阅读,增长知识,开阔视野,提高用英语直接获取信息的能力。故事题材丰富,内容生动有趣,情节跌宕起伏,让人手不释卷。另配有故事内容精选录音,不但有助于全面感受故事的魅力,而且能提高听力水平。

全套读物按文字难度分 A、B、C、D 4 个级别,每级 2 本;A 级适合初二、初三学生阅读,B 级适合高一学生阅读,C 级适合高二学生阅读,D 级适合高三及更高水平的学生阅读。本书为系列中的 D1,由《黑色闪电》(*Black Lightning*)和《警察与强盗》(*Cops and Robbers*)2 个分册组成。



BLACK LIGHTNING

黑色闪电

Andrew Monrow

内容简介

天鞋运动产品公司急需找到一个天才来为他们赢得奥林匹克运动会 100 米短跑冠军。他将使天鞋公司闻名全球,从而极大地提高他们产品的销量。为此,天鞋公司与他的死对头安东尼斯公司在运动场上展开了殊死的竞争。《黑色闪电》(*Black Lightning*)给你讲述一个令人激动的故事,也让我们看到体育运动的商业化以及兴奋剂问题带来的危险。

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A Man with Four Legs

“Adonis have almost twenty percent of the world market for sports-wear and we at Skyshoes have only ten. Two years from now I want all that changed. I’m going to crush^① Adonis, once and for all!”

Katherine could see, and hear, that her boss, Mr. Swartz, was especially angry today.

He bit the end off his cigar and spat it out into the air. The cigar stump^② shot out of his mouth like a bullet, flew over his desk, past Katherine’s left ear and bounced^③ on the antique^④ Persian carpet behind her. Mr. Swartz angrily crushed the rest of the havana cigar^⑤ in his fist and threw the remains into the waste-paper bin^⑥. He then dragged himself out of his huge leather chair and began to pace his office. He walked backwards and forwards and round and round, like he was looking for something he had lost.

He reminded Katherine of a tiger in a zoo, walking crazily up and down behind the bars of its cage, slowly, very slowly going mad.

Suddenly he stopped moving about and closed his eyes.

“I’m going to tell you . . . I’m going to tell you something nobody else knows. I’m going to tell you about my dream. We . . . we . . . need a superstar, Kathy . . . ,” he said triumphantly^⑦.

① to crush 压倒 ② stump 残余部分 ③ to bounce 反跳, 弹起 ④ antique 陈旧的; 古式的 ⑤ havana cigar 哈瓦那雪茄 ⑥ bin 垃圾箱 ⑦ triumphantly 得意洋洋地

“Yes, Sir.”

“We really do . . .”

“Yes, Sir, we really do . . . need something,” she answered and thought about the latest sales figures. They were terrible. Skyshoes weren’t catching up with Adonis. Adonis were selling more and more all the time. The great race between Adonis and Skyshoes looked like it was already over.

“We need a superstar and a real winner. Look, the most famous race in the world is the Olympic one hundred metres. Last night I had a dream. I dreamt that I saw the next Olympic one hundred metres. Do you know what, Kathy? I’ll tell you, the winner was wearing our running shoes on his feet! What do you think of that? You understand what I mean, don’t you, Kathy?”

Katherine nodded, she understood perfectly. Mr. Swartz wiped the sweat from his face and carried on. His voice was shaking and he sounded excited.

“The winner of that race will receive massive^①, global publicity^②. Every kid and sportsman on the planet will know his name and recognize his face. They will also see that he uses our running shoes, our shorts, our track suits^③, our bags . . . our damn everything! All our products will be linked to his name and his face. His success will rub off on^④ our sales. People will associate^⑤ ‘winning’ with Skyshoes. They won’t know it, but, somewhere deep inside them, they will all do it.”

“But?” Katherine said quietly.

① massive 巨大的 ② publicity 名声 ③ track suit 田径服 ④ rub off on 使……受影响 ⑤ to associate 把……联系起来

Mr. Swartz spun^① around quickly and looked down at her angrily.

“I don't like the word ‘but’, Kathy. It usually means ‘no’ or something just as negative^②. I like positive words like ‘yes’ and ‘will’ and ‘do’.”

“I know, Sir. Please, Mr. Swartz, listen to me for just a moment. I don't want to pour cold water on your idea. In principle it would work, I understand that. But I'm not paid just to say ‘yes’ all the time. There are a few important practical details which we have to think about. They're irritating, but they exist. I don't think you'll find the answers in your dream, Sir.”

“All right, Kathy. Tell me what's on your mind. What are these ‘problems’?”

Katherine took a deep breath and began to speak,

“Adonis have Arnold Arrow under an exclusive^③ world contract. Arnold Arrow is . . .”

Mr. Swartz cut her short and snapped^④,

“I know exactly who Arnold Arrow is, Kathy. He is the fastest man on earth, probably in the whole universe.”

Kathy still went on,

“No one has beaten him for over four years. He holds the world and Olympic records for the 100, the 200 and the 400 metres. No one can beat Arnold Arrow. At least nobody with just two legs.”

“Ha, ha, ha,” laughed Mr. Swartz. His enormous^⑤ body heaved^⑥ up and down like a giant grey jelly^⑦. “Well . . . well, I

① to spin 旋转 ② negative 消极的, 否定的 ③ exclusive 专有的, 惟一的
④ to snap 怒气冲冲地打断 ⑤ enormous 巨大的 ⑥ to heave 起伏 ⑦ jelly 果子冻, 肉冻

want you to find me a man with four legs then, Kathy. Ha, ha, ha. ”

Katherine didn't know if she should laugh or cry. Mr. Swartz was obsessed^① with his battle against Adonis. Katherine looked down at her new red stiletto-heeled^② shoes. They were beautiful, but she couldn't move her toes at all. She desperately^③ wanted to get back to her office and pull them off for a few minutes. It's hard to think when you are in pain. But then she looked up into Mr. Swartz's face and she realized that he was serious.

“I want you to find me a man with four legs, Kathy,” he repeated.

“But . . . but finding new talent isn't my area, Sir. I'm a marketing expert. I don't really know much about sport and athletes. I've had to learn about sport because of my work, but I . . . ”

“Kathy, I talked to you first about my dream because I knew that you wouldn't think I was mad. You have imagination and an almost artistic^④ talent for marketing. I've seen your work. You're good at your job and you can think for yourself, Kathy. ”

“Then . . . then, please let me go on doing what I'm good at, Sir. ”

Swartz shook his head and smiled,

“You have a fresh outlook^⑤, Kathy. I . . . I respect your honesty as well. You are one of the few people at Skyshoes who tell me the truth. You're a leader, Kathy, just like I am. I can see leadership potential^⑥ in a person when I meet him. Think of this as a test, Kathy. It's like a fairy-tale. I'm the king and I've given you an im-

① to obsess 使着迷 ② stiletto-heeled 细高跟的 ③ desperately 极强烈地, 非常 ④ artistic 艺术的 ⑤ outlook 观点,看法 ⑥ potential 潜力

possible task to complete. But, if you can do it . . .”

“I get half the kingdom and the princess?” Katherine joked.

Mr. Swartz smiled and returned to his giant leather chair. He lit another huge cigar, blew the thick blue smoke-rings up into the air. Then he stopped smiling and looked Katherine deep in the eye.

“This king isn’t married, Kathy. You’ll just have to be satisfied with half my kingdom.”

Katherine pressed her hands together tightly. Swartz was not joking. He sounded like he was serious! Katherine forgot all about the pain in her toes and thought about what he was saying to her.

Half of Skyshoes would be around two hundred million dollars. Swartz had gone totally bananas^①. Finally Katherine replied,

“Men with four legs don’t exist,” she said almost sadly. This dream was not going to come true. Not for her and especially not for Mr. Swartz.

“Then you make one if you can’t find one, Kathy. Money isn’t a problem. I’ll pay whatever I have to. Find someone who can do a simple leg transplant^②, ha, ha, ha.”

Katherine could hear that Mr. Swartz was in one of his ‘strange’ moods. There were times when he said the strangest, weirdest^③, craziest things to people. But nobody dared call him mad. Rich powerful people are never mad, they are just . . . eccentric^④.

He picked up the enormous gold lighter^⑤ on his desk and relit his cigar. Katherine looked at Mr. Swartz carefully. It was strange. Skyshoes spent millions of dollars on advertising, marketing and

① bananas 疯狂的;激动得发狂的 ② transplant 移植 ③ weird 怪诞的,离奇的
④ eccentric 古怪的 ⑤ lighter 打火机

public relations, and the man who was the brains behind the whole thing weighed around two hundred kilos, drank like a fish, smoked like a chimney, ate like a pig and spent most of his free-time gambling his money away in the casinos^① in Las Vegas.

Mr. Swartz was about as far away from the image of the super-clean healthy athlete as you could get. For Katherine there was something grotesque^② about it all. The public image of Skyschoes was so different from the reality.

“So you want me to create a miracle man for you?” Katherine asked.

“Precisely, Kathy. Something just tells me that you are the perfect person for this job. I like to follow my instincts^③, and my instincts tell me you can do it.”

Katherine thought about what Mr. Swartz had said and she realized that he was not going to take ‘no’ for an answer.

“All right, Sir. I’ll do my best to make your dream come true. I’ll start right away. It’s summertime and I should be able to go to lots of athletics meetings all over the country. Do you just want me to look in Canada?”

“No, Kathy I want you to look all over North America, try Europe, too, if you have to. Go anywhere and do anything, but find me someone who can beat Arnold Arrow. Go to the moon if you have to, Kathy.”

Katherine stood up and walked towards the door.

“If you could find someone, here, in Canada, that would be just fantastic^④, Kathy. I would love that.”

① casino 卡西诺赌场 ② grotesque 奇异的, 怪诞的 ③ instinct 直觉 ④ fantastic 极好的

“Oh, I get it,” Katherine answered. “Arrow is an American, our boy will be a Canadian. Tiny Canada taking on^① Big Brother U. S. A. The whole David and Goliath^② story all over again.”

“Yeah, exactly, Kathy. Little Canada beating the big, bad U. S. of A., that would be wonderful for me, Skyshoes and all of us. It’s what we all dream about if we are honest.”

On the way home Katherine thought about what Mr. Swartz had said to her and about her work at Skyshoes.

Katherine was not totally happy working at Skyshoes. It was not the type of work she had dreamt about when she was young. Still, it was a job, and a well-paid job. Behind his back nearly everyone at Skyshoes called Mr. Swartz ‘Mr. Slime^③’, Mr. Simon ‘Slime’ Swartz. There was a joke that he couldn’t actually walk at all and that everywhere he went he left a sticky trail of slime behind him like a giant snail. But Katherine didn’t really dislike Mr. Swartz.

He had worked hard all his life and he had built Skyshoes up from nothing. When Swartz came to Canada from Hungary^④, he had nothing but the clothes he stood up in. He thought he was coming to the land of milk and honey and, compared to Hungary, that was right. Slowly Simon Swartz changed himself into a ‘real’ Canadian. Or what he thought a ‘real’ Canadian was.

In many ways he became more Canadian than most people born in the country. He was very patriotic and he had an enormous red and white Canadian flag hanging on the wall of his office.

① take on 同(对手)较量,对付 ② David and Goliath 据《圣经》记载,古以色列的勇士大卫和非利士族勇士歌利亚代表两个部落进行了一场比赛,结果歌利亚被大卫杀死,后来大卫成为古以色列国王 ③ slime 粘质物,粘液 ④ Hungary 匈牙利

Simon Swartz had a strange attitude to Adonis. He had an intense^① feeling of being in competition with Adonis and everything it represented. What Adonis represented for Simon Swartz was the whole United States. Back in Hungary he had desperately wanted to go to the U. S. A. Unfortunately for him the authorities^② refused to let him in, but Canada accepted him as an immigrant^③.

Simon Swartz wanted above all things to show all Americans, and not just Adonis, that they had been wrong. They had been wrong when they refused to let the poor shoemaker's son into the promised land^④.

① intense 强烈的 ② authorities 当局, 官方 ③ immigrant 移民 ④ promised land 期望中的乐土

Black Lightning!

Katherine had been searching and searching, looking and looking, hoping and hoping. But it was all just a waste of time. She had seen no one who had the potential to beat Arnold Arrow. Half the Sky-shoes kingdom was slowly slipping through her long fingers.

She was not just looking for someone who could run fast. There were many fast runners in Canada. Katherine was looking for somebody who was 'hungry', very 'hungry'. A person who really wanted to win and be the very best. She was looking for a man who was special, a person with 'star quality'. Most athletes were so 'ordinary', ordinary and boring. It was difficult to get excited about them, and it was difficult to sell them to the public.

True, it was better than it used to be. Before, when professionals^① had been banned^② from the Olympics, it had been a lot worse. Now the Olympics were open to everyone and things had got much more exciting. There was also a lot more money in athletics now. Sport was openly commercialized^③. A top athlete like Arnold Arrow could earn as much as a famous rock or film star.

Arnold Arrow was unique. He was the first of a new kind of athletes. He had made professional athletics popular with the masses. Now there were professional athletics meetings in all the major towns and cities in North America. Athletes competed for big prize money at each meeting.

① professional 职业运动员 ② to ban 禁止,取缔 ③ to commercialize 商业化