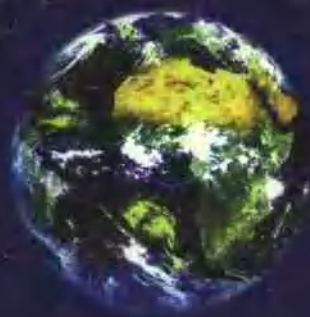


THE CLASSICAL & PRACTICAL ENGLISH

实用英文经典

英文故事经典



中国对外翻译出版公司

实用英文经典



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The Homecoming	Adopted from Homer's Epics(163)
重返家园	改编自荷马史诗(180)
Great Grandma's Book	From Reader's Digest (无作者)(196)
曾祖母的书	选自《读者文摘》(201)
The Echo	Fables(205)
回声	民间寓言(无作者)(207)
The ant and the Dove	Fables(208)
蚂蚁和鸽子	民间寓言(无作者)(209)
The Two Pots	Fables(210)
两个罐子	民间寓言(无作者)(211)
The Lark and Her Young Ones	Fables(212)
云雀和小云雀	民间寓言(无作者)(214)
The Sea Princess	Hans Andersen(215)
海公主	安徒生(229)
The Sea Lady	Hermione Oram(240)
海姑娘	荷米欧·奥兰姆(248)
The Three Girls In a Cave	Michael West(255)
洞中三姑娘	麦克·威斯特(262)
Alexander Graham Bell	Science stories (268)
亚历山大·格雷厄姆·贝尔	科普故事(无作者)(273)
Thomas Alva Edison	Science stories(277)
托马斯·阿尔瓦·爱迪生	科普故事(无作者)(282)
George Washington Carver	Science stories(286)
乔治·华盛顿·卡弗	科普故事(无作者)(291)
The Wright Brothers	Science stories(295)
赖特兄弟	科普故事(无作者)(300)
Albert Einstein	Science stories(304)
阿尔伯特·爱因斯坦	科普故事(无作者)(309)





How John Bosco Outsung the Devil


Arthur . P . Davis


Well sir, speaking about singing, the folks down in my section in Virginia still talked about old John Bosco and how he outsung the Devil himself.

Now this John Bosco was a bass singer. He had the sweetest and deepest bass that anybody had ever listened to on this earth. A tall black fellow, John was no great big man. He was just tall and thin and had no great bellows of chest like some singers. He was just tall and hollow looking, like one of them big pipes or a pipe organ.

But as I said John could really sing. When he hit those high notes, his voice was as sweet and silver-toned as a sleigh bell. As some folks say that even the birds used to shut up when John sung those sweet high notes. They kept quiet, just listened with their heads bent one side as if they were trying to learn something from John. And when he went down a scale, the low notes, there was something in his singing that just tore at your inside. He went down that scale so far you could feel yourself agog and everything around you were shaking.

John brought more folks to church by his singing than the preacher did by his preaching. The whole county, white and black alike, used to come to hear John sing.





Of course, the other singers in the church choir didn't like John. He just drowned them out. Besides, John knew he was good and let everybody else know it, too much and too often. He got prouder and prouder and harder than ever to live with. He began to lose friends.


Well, the pastor saw John changing too. So, one Sunday he preached a red hot sermon "On Pride". He told how the Devil got kicked out of heaven because of pride. And then the pastor brought that sermon right home to John Bosco. He told how a man could let a voice, a voice that god had given him to do good, go to his head and turn him against his friends. And here he turned around and looked right at John Bosco up there in the choir while everybody else in the church held their breath.


But John didn't care. He didn't even listen. But John's wife did not miss a word. She told him how bad she felt to hear the pastor, preaching right at her husband up there in public. But John was experienced in damned church, the preacher and everybody in it. He didn't need them, He didn't need anybody. To hell with them!

Well, after that, John's pride got complete control of him, He no longer cared about his family. He forgot about everything except his own greatness. He kept saying, "I am the best bass singer in the county. Soon it became, "the best bass singer in the state." Then John began to boast, "I am the best bass singer in the United States."

One Saturday he walked into the village store and announced to all the folks there, "I am the best bass singer in the whole world, and I know it. In fact I am the best damn bass singer in the universe, including the stars above and the regions below."

That was going too far. The folks felt god should cut him down. But god took no notice of John's wild talk. But there was someone else that did, Old Satan.





"Do you hear that fool?" Satan said, "I am going to step up there and teach him a thing or two."

So pretty soon as John Bosco walked out into the fields, he met old Satan. He looked like any other dirt farmer. But John knew right away, it was the Devil.

"How do you do, Sir?" John said pleasantly to Satan. The Devil said with a kind of sneer, "I hear you think you can sing bass."

Now devil or no devil, John didn't like that. "I don't think I can sing bass?" John came right back, "I know I can, more bass than anybody, anybody in the world."

"How about the universe, including the stars above and the regions below?"

Old John felt the sting, He forgot everything and blurted out, "Yes Sir, I mean just that. No less."


"If you sing a deeper bass than I do," the Devil said, "I will give you anything you name. But if I beat you, I'll take your soul right now."

Old John Bosco swelled up like a bull—frog. "Let's get down to business."

"Just a minute," said the Devil, "you haven't told me what you want if you win."

"All I want", said John, "is a hall that will hold a million people. I want an orchestra, a 1000 of the best players and a chorus of 1000 of the best singers in the world. And then I want to give a concert. All the history books will talk about it, the concert of John Bosco, the greatest bass singer in the universe."

Well, they agreed what to sing: "A Sleep in the Deep." John sang first. A pretty part. It was so sweet that all the angels must have been listening, wishing they could sing like that.



Then John started down the scale. You can hear him clear over in the next state. He was down so low that the rumbling shook every house for miles around. The folks knew that it was John Bosco singing.


Then they heard another voice after John finished. "We missed the second voice singing the pretty first part of the song." Folks showed an uneasy look in their eyes. The voice was sweet. They had to admit, but there was something too sweet about it, a kind of sinfully sweet, like the taste of forbidden fruit.

Next, the second singer hit the lows and all hell seemed to break loose. The rumble was so low and so great, it was like 99 earthquakes rolled into one. When John heard this he knew he was weak, unless he got some help. He fell on his knees, raised his eyes to god and tried to pray. But he could not say a word.

He started to think about his pride and how it had brought him down. For the first time in many days, he remembered his wife and children, the trouble he had caused them. He was deeply moved, moved to tears. All of a sudden his mouth was free and he could pray. He lifted his hands and his eyes to heaven and cried, "O, Lord, I have been a fool. Save me, Lord! if it's not asking too much. But if you don't save me, look out for my wife and poor fatherless children. That's all I ask for."


The Lord answered John, not by words or signs. But John knew that Lord had answered. He felt a new power within him. He fixed his eyes on old Satan and said politely, "I believe I've got a second chance coming to me."

Then he began to sing again. His voice at first was so natural born sweet that folks fell down on their knees and started to pray. Then John took it down a scale. Some folks said it was the deepest roll of thunder



that the ear of mortal men had ever heard. John said it was not thunder but god's voice all mixed up with his own. He felt so good, so at peace with the world, that he had love in his heart, even for old Satan. But Satan had gone. When he heard John's last note, he knew what had happened and Satan did not want to be around when god is speaking.

John Bosco came home a changed man. There was no more bragging about his greatness. He went back to the church and to the choir. He became a friend and a helper to all his friends and brothers in the county. He was a good steady worker in the vineyard of the Lord until god decided to gather him to his bosom.





约翰·博斯科是怎样制胜魔王的

阿瑟·P·戴维斯

先生，且说在我家乡所在的弗吉尼亚州那地方的人们，一谈到歌唱方面的事就会谈论起老约翰·博斯科以及他如何以他的歌声制胜魔王的事。

当时，这个约翰·博斯科是一位男低音歌唱家，凡是聆听过他的歌声的人都认为他有着一个世上稀有的最甜美、最深沉的男低音嗓子。约翰身材颇长，面色黝黑，但不是一个魁伟的男子汉。他只是又高又瘦，没有象有些歌唱家们那样宽阔的胸腔。他的身体看上去只是象一根大管乐器的管子或一根管风琴的管子似的又长又空。

但正象我所说的，约翰的歌确实唱得不错，当他唱到高音符时，他的歌声就象雪橇上的铃声一样甜美、悦耳。正象当地一些人们所说，甚至鸟儿在约翰唱到那些甜美的高音符时也常会停了下来，静静地、把头侧在一边倾听着，好象要从约翰那里学到些东西。当他降低一个音阶、唱低音时，你会觉得他的歌声里有某种东西在撕裂着你的内心。他把音阶降得那么低，使你觉得你在兴奋起来，而且感到你周围的一切在震荡着。

约翰以他的歌声吸引了比牧师讲道还要多的当地人们到教堂来。整个县城，不论白人和黑人，都常常爱来聆听约翰的演唱。

当然，在教堂歌唱队里的其他歌手都不喜欢约翰，因为他的歌声淹没了他们的歌声。再说，约翰觉得自己了不起，而且往往



要过分表现自己，好让别人都知道。他变得越来越骄傲，使大家很难和他相处，朋友们都开始疏远他了。

且说，牧师也看到了约翰的变化，因此在一个星期日，他措辞激烈，辛辣地讲了一道，他所说的主题是《论骄傲》。他讲了魔鬼如何因骄傲而被逐出天堂的故事，然后，牧师直接针对约翰说教了。他讲了一个人怎么能让他的嗓子，上帝赋予他要他去做好事的嗓子冲昏了头脑，用来反对他自己的朋友们。讲到这里，他转过身来双眼直盯着正在歌唱队席位上的约翰·博斯科，而在教堂里的所有其他的人都屏住了呼吸。


但约翰并不在乎，他甚至连听都不听，可是约翰的妻子却句句入耳。她告诉他丈夫说她听到牧师在大庭广众面前，直接针对她丈夫讲道感到很不好受，可是约翰认为对这该死的教堂，牧师和教堂中每个人已感到习以为常了。他不需要他们，也不需要任何人，让他们见鬼去吧。

从那以后，骄傲控制了他的整个心灵！他不再照顾他的家庭，他把一切都忘得一干二净，只觉得自己是十分了不起的人物。他不断地说：“我是这县城中最好的男低音歌唱家”，不久这句话变成“我是州里最好的歌唱家”，然后他开始大吹起来，“我是美国最好的男低音歌唱家”。

在一个星期六，他走进村上商店，对那里所有村民宣称道：“我是世界上最好的男低音歌唱家。事实上，我知道我是宇宙间最好的男低音歌唱家，包括上空的星球和下面的地狱。”

他真是狂妄到极点了，当地的人们觉得上帝应把他的高傲气焰打下去，但上帝没注意到约翰的狂妄之言。有一个人却注意他了，就是魔王撒旦。“你们听到这个傻瓜的话了吗？”撒旦说，“我准备到他那儿去教训他一二件事。”

于是当约翰，博斯科出门到田野时，就立即碰到了老撒旦，他看上去和别的农夫没什么两样，满身泥巴，但约翰一眼就认出



了这就是魔王。

“你好哇，先生，”约翰愉快地对撒旦招呼道。魔王却带着一种讥讽的口气说：“我听说你能唱男低音。”

且说，不论他是不是魔王，约翰可不喜欢那种话，“我难道会认为我不会唱男低音吗？”约翰针锋相对地说，“我知道我能唱得比任何人，世界上任何人都好。”

“比起宇宙间，包括地球上和地狱下的任何人呢？”

老约翰觉得话中有刺，但他忘乎所以，脱口说：“是这样，先生，我就是这个意思，一点也不错。”

“如果你唱的男低音比我更低沉，”魔王说，“你要什么，就给你什么，但如果我胜过你，我就马上把你的魂灵带走。”

老约翰·博斯科气鼓鼓的象一只牛蛙，说道：“让我们来讲正经事吧！”

“且慢，”魔王说，“你还没有告诉我如果你赢了，你要什么？”


“我所要的，”约翰说，“就是一个能容纳百万人的大厅。我要有一个由一千个世界上最好歌手组成的乐队，和一个由一千个最好歌手组成的合唱团，随后我要举行一个音乐会，所有的历史书籍都会讲到这件事，宇宙间最伟大的男低音歌唱家约翰·博斯科的音乐会。”

于是他们同意唱《在深谷里沉睡》这首歌。约翰先唱，唱其中的一个美妙部分。他唱得那么甜润，以致所有的天使一定都在倾听，希望他们能够唱得象他那样好。

随后，约翰开始降低了一个音阶，人们在邻近的州里都能清楚地听到他的歌声。他把音调降得那么低沉象是隆隆雷声震撼着方圆几里外的每一所房子，当地的人们都知道这是约翰·博斯科在歌唱。

过了一会儿，约翰唱完了，他们又听到了另一个人的歌声。





“我们很想听第二个人唱的这首歌的美妙部分。”当地人们的眼神中显出一种不安的神色，他们不得不承认这歌声是甜美的，但其中有些地方太甜美了，是一种令人感到邪恶的甜美，象天堂里的禁果的滋味那样。


接着第二个歌唱者唱起低音阶，这时就象整个地狱被打开了似的。这雷鸣般的声音是那么浑厚，那么宏亮，就象九十九个地震滚在一起似的。约翰听到这歌声就知道他被击败了，除非他能得到某些帮助，他跪了下来，抬头望着上帝，打算祈祷，但他说不出一句话来。

他开始想到他的骄傲，以及这骄傲怎么使他失败，好多天来，他第一次想起了他妻子和孩子们，想到他给他们带来的麻烦，他感到内心激动，流下了眼泪。突然他的嘴能说话了并能做祷告了，他举起双手，双眼朝天哭喊着，“啊，上帝，我是个傻瓜。如果拯救我不是过高的要求的话，上帝请救救我吧。如果你不救我，照顾照顾我妻子和可怜的没父亲的孩子吧。那就是我所要求的一切。”

上帝既不用话也不用什么表示来回答约翰的请求，但约翰知道上帝已回答了他。他觉得内心有了一种新的力量。他双眼直盯着老撒旦，有礼貌地说：“我相信第二次机会来临了。”

接着他又开始唱了起来，他的歌声开始时是那么自然，甜美悦耳，使得当地的人们都跪倒在地做起祷告来。然后约翰放低一个音阶，当地的一些人说这是人世间所曾听到过的最深沉的雷鸣般的滚动声。约翰说这并不是雷鸣，而是上帝的声音和他的声音混和在了一起了。他感觉到这个世界是那么美好，那么平安，使他的心充满着爱，甚至爱老撒旦。但撒旦已走了，当他听到约翰唱到最后一个音符时，他知道已发生了什么事了。撒旦不想在上帝讲话时呆在附近的地方。

约翰回家时，人已全变样了。他不再吹嘘他自己的伟大，他





回到了教堂，回到了歌唱队。在县城里，他成了他的所有朋友和兄弟们的朋友和帮助者。他踏踏实实地在上帝的乐园里认真工作着，直到上帝决定收他做门徒。





The Devil And Tom Walker


Washington Irving


Before we begin our story, let us go back 300 years, to the late 1600's. In those years, one of the most famous man in the world was Captain William Kidd. Captain Kidd was a pirate, sailing the seas and capturing any ships he found. He and his men took money from these ships. Captain Kidd hid this money in different places.

Captain Kidd was captured by the English in Boston, Massachusetts, and was put to death in the year 1701. From that time on, people all over the world searched many places for Captain Kidd's stolen money.

The people who lived in Massachusetts in the 1700's believed Captain Kidd buried some of his treasure near Boston. Not far from Boston there was a small river which ran into the Atlantic Ocean. An old story said that Captain Kidd had come up this river from the ocean. Then he buried his gold and silver and jewels under a big tree. The story said that this treasure was protected by the Devil himself who was a good friend of Captain Kidd.

In the year 1727, a man named Tom Walker lived near this place. Tom Walker was not a pleasant man. He loved only one thing—money. There was only one person worse than Tom. That was his wife. She also loved money. These two were so hungry for money that they even stole things from each other.





One day, Tom Walker was returning home through a dark forest. He walked slowly and carefully so that he would not fall into a pool of mud. At last, he reached a piece of dry ground. Tom sat down on a tree that had fallen. As he rested, he dug into the earth with a stick. He knew the story that Indians had killed prisoners here as sacrifices to the Devil. But this did not trouble him. The only devil Tom was afraid of was his wife.

Tom's stick hit something hard. He dug it out of the earth and saw that it was a human skull. In the skull was an Indian ax.

Suddenly, Tom Walker heard an angry voice: "Don't touch that skull!" Tom looked up. He saw a giant sitting on a broken tree. Tom had never seen such a man. He wore the clothes of an Indian. His skin was almost black and covered with ashes.

His eyes were big and red. His black hair stood up from his head. He carried a large ax. The giant asked: "What are you doing on my land?" But Tom Walker was not afraid. He answered: "What do you mean? This land belongs to Mr. Peabody."

The strange man laughed and pointed to the tall trees. Tom saw that one of the trees had been cut by an ax. He looked more closely and saw that the name Peabody had been cut into the tree. Mr. Peabody was a man who got rich by stealing from Indians.

Tom looked at the other trees. Every one had the name of some rich, important man from Massachusetts. Tom looked at the tree on which he was sitting. It also had a name cut into it—the name of Absalom Crowninshield. Tom remembered that Mr. Crowninshield was a very rich man. People said he got his money as Captain Kidd did—by stealing ships.

Suddenly, the giant shouted: "Crowninshield is ready to be burned! I'm going to burn many trees this winter!"

