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英语趣味小品菁华

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译注者前言

恩格斯说：“幽默是具有智慧、教养和道德上优越感的表现。”列宁也曾说：“幽默是一种优美的、健康的品质。”你的幽默表现出你性格的开朗、情趣的高尚、待人的真诚和心地的善良。

我们向广大读者奉献的这一套《英语趣味小品菁华》(首批1~3册),其中精选出来的英语幽默小故事大都文字精炼、风格流畅、简明易懂、雅俗共赏。它们的内容不但幽默风趣,而且寓意深刻,读来文采斐然,令人忍俊不禁。它寓学于乐,让读者在学习英语的同时,还在心领神会的笑声中获得道德情操上的教益和生活工作中的启迪。

本套书照顾到英语初学者的词汇量不够大,语法学习得也不够深这一特点,每个故事都由原文、译文和注释等三个部分组成,以便读者阅读时对照参考。

译注者

1995年10月

1



Some villagers were going to celebrate an important wine festival in a few days' time, so they borrowed a huge barrel from the nearest town, put it in the village square, and determined that each of them should empty a bottle of the best wine he had into it, so that^① there should be plenty at the feast.

One of the villagers thought he would be very clever. "If I pour a bottle of water in, instead of wine,

no one will notice it," he said to himself, "because there will be so much excellent wine in the barrel that the water will be lost in it."②

The night of the feast arrived. Everybody gathered in the village square with their jugs and their glasses for the wine. The tap on the barrel was opened—but what came out was pure water. Everyone in the village had had the same idea.

[参考译文]

一些村民们打算在几天之后庆祝一个隆重的葡萄酒节。因此，他们从最近的一个镇上借来一个大酒桶，并把它放在村子里的广场上。同时还决定，每一个村民都要把他家里藏的最好的一瓶酒倒进这个大桶里去，这样，节日里就会有很多很多的酒了。

村民当中有一个人认为他自己是非常聪明的。“如果我不倒酒而倒一瓶水进去，那也不会有人发现的。”“他暗自说道，‘因为桶里将会有那么多美酒。水也就显不出来了。’”

节日之夜来到了，人人都拿着酒罐和玻璃杯聚集在村中的广场上，酒桶上的塞子拔开了——但流出来的却全都是清水，原来村子里的每一个人动的都是同样一个念头。

[注 释]

① so that 引导的状语从句可以表示目的或结果，试区别：

He rested so that he could work better.

他休息是为了更好地工作。(目的)

Everybody lent a hand, so that the work was finished ahead of time. 人人动手,故任务提前完成(结果)

- ② 由 so...that, 或 such...that (如此...以致) 引导的结果状语从句在使用上有区别, 试看:

She was so fragile (形容词) that tears came to her eyes. 她是如此脆弱, 以致一下子变得热泪盈眶。

She is such a fragile girl (名词) that tears came to her eyes.

她是一个这样脆弱的姑娘以致一下子变得热泪盈眶。

2

A man was telling one of his friends the secret of his contented married life, "My wife makes the all small decisions," he explained, "and I make all the big ones, so we never interfere in each other's business and never get annoyed with each other. ^① We have no complaints and no arguments. ^②"

"That sounds reasonable," answered his friend sympathetically. ^③ "And what sort of decisions does your wife make?"

"Well," answered the man, "she decides what jobs I apply for, what sort of house we live in, what furniture we have, where we go for our holidays, and things like that. "

His friend was surprised. "Oh?" he said. "and what do you consider important decisions then?"

"Well," answered the man, "I decide who should be Prime Minister, whether we should increase our help to poor countries, what we should do about the atom bomb, and things like that. "

[参考译文]

一个人把他婚姻生活美满的秘密告诉他的一位朋友。“我的妻子只作一切细小的决定，”他解释道，“而我却作出所有重大的决定，因此，我们不干涉彼此的事务，同时也从不生对方的气，我们之间既没有埋怨，也没有争吵。”

“这听起来倒是合情合理的。”他的朋友赞许地回答道，“可你妻子作的是什么样的决定呢？”

“哦，”这个人回答道：“她决定我从事什么职业，我们住什么样的房子，买什么家具，到什么地方去度假等这类的事情。”

他的朋友大为惊异了。“啊？”他说道，“那么你认为什么才算是重大决定呢？”

“哈，”这人回答道：“我决定谁该当总理，是否该增加对贫穷国家的援助以及关于原子弹我们应该做点什么等等诸如此类的事情。”

[注 释]

- ① so we never interfere ... and never get annoyed with each other. never 是个副词，意为“决不”，“从来没有”，往往用来加强语气。如：I never said such a thing. 我从来没有说过这种事情。另外还有一点要注意的是：当 never 用于句首，特别予以强调时，句中主谓语要采用倒装词序。如：Never in my life have I seen such a big plant.
我生平还从来没有见过这样的大工厂。
- ② no 是一个形容词，用它来表示否定时，否定的只能是名词，而 not 是副词，用它来表示否定时，只能否定动词（包

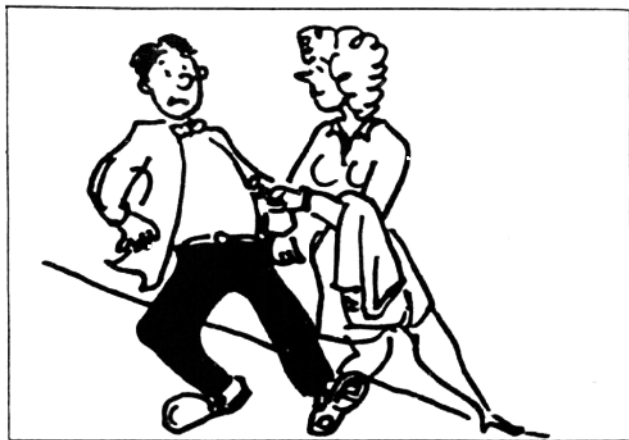
括不定式,分词等)。试比较:

No difficulties in the world can daunt the Chinese people.
世界上任何困难都吓不倒中国人民。

上一句中的 no 否定名词 difficulty. 如果用 not, 在否定动词时, 此句就该写成: Any difficulties in the world can not daunt the Chinese people.

- ③ sound 可以作系动词用, 后面接形容词、分词等作表语, 翻译成: “听起来……”如: That sounds all right, but in reality it is not. 那听起来全都对, 但事实上并不如此。
又如: How sweet the music sounds! 这音乐听起来多美啊!

3



The judge entered the court, and everybody stood up and bowed. The defedant had beautiful, wavy hair and was nicely dressed. ① He wore a tie and even had a flower in his pocket on the chest.

The lawyer began, "So you broke into the same ladies' shop five times in one night. And what did you steal from it?"

"A lady's overcoat."

“One?” said the lawyer, raising his brows high.

“Yes, but my wife made me go back and change it for another one four times.”

[参考译文]

法官走进了法庭,所有到庭的人都起立鞠躬致敬。被告有着一头漂亮的,波浪型的卷发,穿着非常讲究。他打着领结,甚至胸前的口袋里还插着一朵花。

律师开始提问了,“这么说,你一个晚上接连五次破门进入了同一家妇女用品商店。那么,你从商店里偷走了什么东西呢?”

“一件女式大衣。”

“就一件吗?”律师问道,两道眉毛扬得高高的。

“是的,不过我老婆总是要我回去再换另外的一件,一连换了四次。”

[注 释]

① defendant [di'fendənt] n. 被告

be nicely dressed: 穿着讲究

be dressed in ... 穿着...

She likes to be dressed in red. 她喜欢穿红衣服。

4

At the entrance to a big office in London there was a book which all employees had to sign when they arrived each morning. At nine o'clock, the manager's secretary, who lived in a small flat above the office, had to draw a red line under the last name in the book, and anyone who came after that had to explain why he was late.

Whenever there was a thick fog in the city, the first person to arrive late usually wrote "Delayed by fog" under the red line in the book, and then everybody else^① who came after that just put "ditto" underneath.

But one foggy morning, the first man to arrive late wrote "My wife had a baby early this morning" instead of "Delayed by fog" under the red line in the book.^② Twenty or thirty people who came after him put "ditto" underneath this as usual.

[参考译文]

在伦敦一个大的政府机关的入口处,备有一个签到簿。每

天早晨来上班时,所有的雇员都得在这本簿子上签名。九点钟一到,住在该机关楼上一间小房里的经理秘书就得在签到簿上的最后一个名字下面划一条红线,于是,任何一个在这以后到达的人就必须说明迟到的原因。

每当伦敦城里起浓雾时,第一个迟到的人通常是在签到簿的红线下写道:“为雾所耽搁”,于是,其他每一个在那以后到来的人都仅仅只在下面写上“同上”两个字。

但是,有一个迷雾的早晨,第一个迟到的人在签到簿的红线下写的是“我妻子今天清晨生孩子了”而不是写的“为雾所耽搁”。大约有二十到三十个在他之后迟到的人也象往常一样在这句话下面写道“同上”。

[注 释]

- ① else 是一个形容词,意为“别的”,“其他的”,常接在疑问代词和不定代词之后使用。如

What else did he say? 他还说了些什么?

Anything else I can do for you? 我还能为你做些别的事吗?

- ② instead of 有两个用法:

a. 用作介词,意思是“代替”,如: He will go instead of you. 他将代替你去。

b. 起连词作用,意思是“而不是…”如

They went there on foot instead of by bus.

他们是步行而不是乘公共汽车到那里去的。

5

A serious old gentleman hated people who were always looking around for other friends while they were speaking to him, and never listening to him attentively. Once he was having a conversation with a quite interesting old friend, when one of the most boring men he knew joined them.

"Good evening," said this man, "How is your wife?"

"I killed her this morning."

"Oh, good, good," replied the other without a moment's hesitation looking around to see if he could find a more important person to talk to.

"With an axe," the first man continued.

"How nice for you both!" the other man answered.

"And what are you going to do now?"

"I am going to kill you next," answered the first man.

"Oh, good," said the other absent-mindedly.

“That’s very kind of you. ① Well, I must go and speak to Lord Hampton now.”

[参考译文]

有位严肃的老绅士非常讨厌这样一种人：他们一边跟你在交谈，一边却又根本不注意听你的讲话，老是东张西望，寻找别的他所熟识的人。有一次，这位老绅士正在跟一个非常投机的老朋友交谈，这时，一个他所认识的上述这种极端可厌的人中途插了进来。

“晚上好哇，”这个人说道：“尊夫人近况如何？”

“今天早晨我把她杀了。”

“啊！那太好了，太好了。”这个人毫不迟疑地回答道，一面左顾右盼，看是不是能找到一个更为重要的人物而上前去与之攀谈。

“我是用斧头干掉她的。”老绅士继续说道。

“可您老俩口都是多么好的人啦！”这个人回答道。“那么您现在还打算干点什么呢？”

“我打算下一步就把你宰了。”老绅士答道。

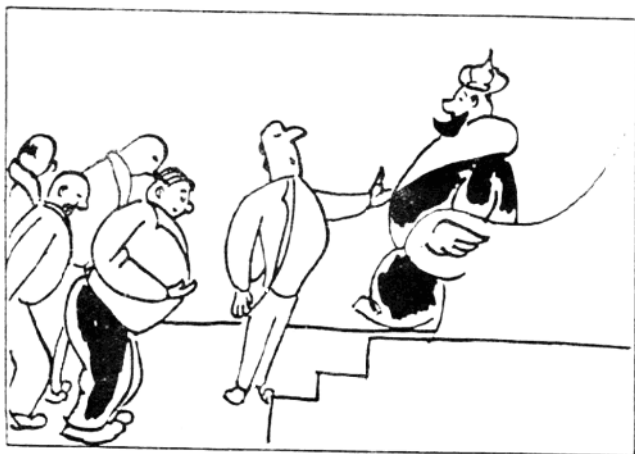
“啊，妙极了，”这人心不在焉地回答道：“您太客气了。喔，现在我得到那边去跟汉普顿勋爵聊聊了。”

[注 释]

- ① That’s (It’s) very kind of you. 是一个用于表达客气和感谢意思的常用句型。

It’s very kind of you to repair the bike for me. 非常感谢您为我修自行车。

6



The ruler of an ancient kingdom wanted to disprove the statement that the men of his domain were ruled by their wives. He had all the males in his kingdom brought^① before him and warned that any man who did not tell the truth would be punished severely.

Then he asked all the men who obeyed their wives' directions and counsel^② to step to the left side of the

hall. All the men did so but one little man who moved to the right.

"It's good to see," said the king, "that we have one real man in the kingdom. Tell these chicken-hearted^① dunces why you alone among them stand on the right side of the hall."

"Your Majesty," came the reply in a squealing voice, "it is because before I left home my wife told me to keep out of crowds."

[参考译文]

古代有位国王,想驳斥一种传言,说他所辖臣民中的男人都受妻子统制。他将全国的男人都召来,并警告说:谁不讲真话将受到严厉惩处。

然后,他命令唯妻子之命是从的男人站到大厅的左边去,所有的人都走到了左边,只有一个小个子男人却朝右边走去。

"真不错,"国王说:"我们国内总算还有一位真正的男子汉,告诉这些胆小如鼠的笨蛋,为什么这么多人只有你站在大厅的右边。"

"陛下"传来了一种尖声细语的问答:"这是因为离家前,我老婆叮嘱我,哪儿人多就不准往那儿去。"

[注 释]

- ① He had all the males ... brought before him. 他叫人把所有的男人都集合到他面前来。

这是一种 have + 名词 + 过去分词的结构。

例: The head of the company had the old house rebuilt within two weeks. 公司的领导下令在两个星期之内把旧房子加以重建。

② direction [di'rekʃən] n. 指导

counsel ['kaunsəl] n. 劝告

③ chicken-hearted ['tʃikən'hɑ:tɪd] a. 胆怯的