

THE BEST EUROPEAN
SHORT STORIES
of
TO DAY



最近歐洲二十七國短篇小說選

華文詳註

THE WORLD'S
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EDITED BY H. D. LING

THE BEST CONTINENTAL
SHORT STORIES OF THE DAY

VOL. III

WITH CHINESE NOTES

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下 冊

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編纂者：林漢達
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發刊旨趣

近代各國，表現國民性的國民文學，已突破了國界，一變而爲具有國際性的世界文學了。各國的文壇已有共通的傾向，而築上了一個世界的文壇：各國的文學共同站在這個世界文壇上。我們中國，一則因爲言語文字和歐美的相去得實在太遠了，二則因爲中國新文學尙在創造的中途，所以我國文學還不能插足於世界文壇。然而我國文學必然要進入世界文壇裏去的，只是時間的遲早問題罷了。現在，我們發刊這部世界近代英文名著集的目的，約有三端：

(一) 促成新文學的創造 中國的文學，要站到世界的文壇裏去，新文學的創造，實爲必要。十年來，我國白話文的打倒文言文，只是做到了文腔革新的一步。新文學的創造，實還是在開始進行的時期。要創造新文學，吸收西洋文學的精華，便是首先的方法也是必需的方法。這部世界近代英文名著集，都是西洋感動萬人的作品，正足以指示我們文學上的種種新途徑。且書中所有成語，典古，均有中文註釋，又附作者傳略，述其身世，評其思想，故即略通英文者，亦能閱讀，得益不少。

(二) 改進英文的研究 英語在當代，幾乎已有成爲世界語的傾向。英文的研究於是也幾乎成爲人人的必修科。從前我國的英文研究書，所取材料都是斷片的，乾燥的，現在這部世界近代英文名著集，第一因爲是西洋名著，所以文學均極優美，第二因爲所選名著均首尾完全，所以是整篇的，興味的。讀者不僅能得英文研究上的進益，且能得到文學上的修養，文學上的興趣。

(三) 補助學生修業 我國學校所用英語讀本，不是外人選給外人讀的，便是本國人模倣外人而選的，二者是「半斤八兩」，都不能適合國人情趣；教授中國學生，實少裨益。現在這部世界近代英文名著集，既盡係西洋名人傑作，文學的趣味自能使學生讀之津津有味；選材方面盡可能的以供給我國青年的需要以介紹學者不得不知的思想爲標準，且將原文的生字，難句，成語，土話，一一加以中文註釋，足以掃除學生閱讀時的困難，故以本集作爲各校教本或參攷書之用，實最相宜。

這部世界近代英文名著集，現在已包有了數十國的作品，以後當陸續編纂，以成全集。海內外宏遠，苟有以裨益本集，那不獨是本集的幸福呢！

一九二九年 沈知方

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THE BEST CONTINENTAL SHORT STORIES OF THE DAY

THE FORGOTTEN GHOST

BY KORNEL MAKUSZYNSKI (POLAND)

M. VALENTINE ZIEBA bore the name of a bird, but had not the looks of one; at any rate not of a small bird; he may have looked like a *marabou*, but then a marabou is not a real bird. Like it, *M. Zieba* was thin, bald, and absent-minded. 大我鳥

What he was in the habit of thinging about, no man knew. How could anyone guess what was going on in that curious bird's head, so remarkably bald, belonging to ~~the~~ great Zieba?

Notwithstanding his early almost complete absence of hair, he always put a little *pomade* on his head, a process to which he attached very great importance. (8)

Apart from this, *M. Zieba* was in every way a very sympathetic and very polite person.

Like a *kangaroo*, he used to jump from one place to another in a way vastly shocking to his

THE BEST SHORT STORIES

better half. Occasionally he would even try to stand on his head. But whatever his wife might think it her duty to say to him, he always found her charming, beautiful and a credit to her sex.

She was a fat woman and had an odd trick of sticking her finger in her *voluminous* chest till it was completely buried in the folds of flesh. She was not easy tempered, and *when she got going the very pots and pans in the kitchen trembled.* Likewise the sparrows in the yard and the policeman on the road. It was rumored that a few passers-by had died of the *resultant* shock.

丁曼 This *redoubtable* person had a daughter, Helusia Ziebanka, whose lily-white complexion was much admired. She was always so elegantly dressed and looked so smart that Zieba sometimes thought she would look much better on his arm than his actual wife.

In M. Zieba's head an idea *germinated*: it was not an original idea, at least, many people have had it before M. Zieba. It was simply this: (to acquire wealth.) It was for Helusia's sake.

Not that he actually wanted to get rid of his wife by *illegal means*; he was a gentle, decent man and he did not relish the prospect of appearing in the dock of a criminal court, nor of being forsaken by his friends.

Began & m

THE FORGOTTEN GHOST

carry on

The first step was obviously || to acquire a small fortune. He felt that would help him a lot in his *courtship*. So his ingenious brain began to cast about for ways of getting rich. At last a plan occurred to him: he would be a ghost.

m

|| That would bring in enough money to secure a divorce and enable him to attain the desired end.

He started haunting *spiritualistic seances* and endeavoured to learn all he could from watching performers on the stage. At night he would make such a noise in his room that his wife first of all ran to tell all the neighbours and then turned on him, shouting angrily: "Only an idiot like you would carry on like that! || Thumping the floor all night long so that no one in the house can sleep a wink! If you go on like that I believe I will have a nervous attack and Helusia, poor child, will go into convulsions."

降神

m

But Helusia, poor child, was immensely interested in the proceedings, far too much so to worry about convulsions or anything of the kind.

M. Zieba only had to fix his eyes for a few minutes on the ceiling for him to conjure up all sorts of spirits, known and unknown. But Helusia had an *aggravating* habit of talking

conjure up

begin + inf

THE BEST SHORT STORIES

during the seances which prevented full success. Also, she bruited them abroad to her friends so that one Friday a perfect deputation, consisting of two actors, one medical man and a well-known writer, came to witness a seance at M. Zieba's house. He began to be known by the flattering designation of "The Devil's Brother."

This seance was a great success. One of the ghosts managed to bread a small bottle and another lodged for some time in the *gynæcológist's* beard, only leaving that refuge to pat M. Zieba's bald head in benevolent fashion. Another spirit positively refused to perform till the piano had been played.

M. Zieba rose and asked in a deep, solemn voice:

"Ghost . . . are you there? Spirit! Who are you?"

Some far-away voice returned an answer:

"I am the spirit of Alexander the Great."

"Kindly inform us whether you are a good or a bad spirit."

"Bad—decidedly bad."

"Tell us why you are bad."

"That's *none of your business!*"

"Perhaps you are not a Christian ghost."

"I am not. I died in India."

beyond measure

THE FORGOTTEN GHOST

Here M. Zieba interjected a remark to his audience: "Isn't he wonderful?"

The ghost proceeded:

"I am Satan's spirit."

A tremor ran through the spectators: "Oh . . . oh . . . Satan's spirit ! ! !"

Just then they actually saw Satan's hoofs. No doubt was now possible.

"Poor Alexander the Great!" said some one. "Whoever would have thought he would become so utterly bad!"

M. Zieba himself was astonished.

II

M. Zieba sat alone in his room the next day, still wondering at the events of the night before, which had surprised him beyond measure. He lit a cigar and watched the blue smoke drift out of the room. He felt a mixture of interest and fear. . . .

Suddenly, in the blue smoke, he espied a ghost. He behaved as any decent man would under such circumstances: he turned as white as a *sheet* and muttered: "My Lord!" The three hairs left to him *stood on end*.

"Who are you?" he timidly enquired, moving away from the ghost;

under such circumstances
hair

beginning

THE BEST SHORT STORIES

In a bolder tone he repeated: "Who are you?"

Large beads of perspiration were trickling down his brow and he felt generally uneasy. He also felt his face must look ghastly in the lamplight.

"I am Alexander the Great," answered the ghost.

"Dear me!" thought M. Zieba. "Playing with spirits is a dangerous game!" He suddenly realised he was afraid, and that was an awful sensation. But he made an effort to pull himself together and said to himself, "Don't be an *ass*! Mr. Alexander the Great can't harm you. Besides, he was a famous, influential man. He may be of use to you. Look straight at him. God is with you!"

Presently the spirit began to assume a more definite form: he could see its nose, its eyes and its mouth. This gave him confidence and he started bravely:

"Spirit! Are you truly the spirit (you say you are)?"

"Yes."

"In the name of the Father and the Son and the . . ."

THE FORGOTTEN GHOST

"Holy Ghost," the spirit obligingly completed.

M. Zieba took a deep breath. This must be a good spirit. Nevertheless he determined to cross-examine a little:

"If you really are the spirit of a heathen king, how is it || you can recite our Christian prayers?"

"Who told you I was a heathen?"

"You yourself. You said you were Alexander the Great."

The ghost's lips parted in a smile.

"Oh, Alexander the Great. . . . Yes, so I did, come to think of it. But I am not he, M. Zieba."

"Merciful heavens!" thought Zieba, "he knows my name!"

"How do you know my name?" he asked the ghost.

"|| From the plate on your door. But what are you trembling for? If you will disturb me during your seances, you will have to put up with the consequences."

"Consequences . . ." muttered he.

"Oh, nothing terrible. Just wait and see!" said the ghost.

"*B-but* what have I done?"

Once (Conj.)

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"You woke me up, so you just have to send me to sleep again."

"Can't you do that yourself?"

"No. You must conjure me up once more."

"Oh, bother!" said M. Zieba.

"Bother? Don't you laugh at me, M. Zieba! Ah, well, I'll let you off this time. Good-bye!"

"~~Thank~~ you kindly!" said M. Zieba and collapsed in his armchair.

But the spirit still stalked about the room, from the armchair to the table. M. Zieba could not see him very distinctly now, but he felt his presence all around him.

"I cannot close my eyes!" remarked M. Zieba.

"I cannot sleep anywhere," retorted the ghost sympathetically.

M. Zieba's fears were *evaporating*. This seemed a decent sort of ghost once you got used to him. He felt he even liked him. The adventure was beginning to be almost amusing. He enquired:

"So you are not the spirit of Alexander the Great, Sir?"

The ghost uttered a cry like an owl.

"What does that mean?" asked M. Zieba with interest.

break it off over there

THE FORGOTTEN GHOST

"Nothing. I was only wondering how you dare talk like that."

"Sorry, I didn't mean anything by it."

"A bad habit—you had better break it off."

"But do tell me what you mean."

"You want to know who I was when I died long ago? Three years ago it was. I have nothing to do with Alexander the Great."

"How is that?"

"You might light that cigar again and send the smoke my way," remarked the ghost irrelevantly. "I like it."

M. Zieba obligingly *relit* his cigar and blew a mouthful of smoke in the direction of the voice.

"That better?" he enquired.

"Thank you. . . . There are three kinds of people in the world."

"And what about over there?"

"Over where?"

"I mean ~~after~~ this earthly life."

"Oh, it's simply awful there."

"You don't say so?"

"Well, I ought to know, since I have just come from there and you have not."

M. Zieba asked politely, "When am I to die?"

"Not the foggiest idea."

9
You don't say so?

arterio-sclerosis

THE BEST SHORT STORIES

M. Zieba was disappointed and he showed it.
"So you don't even know that?"

"How should I? People may have gravel or *arterio-sclerosis*, but we have no time to take such a minute interest in ordinary mortals."

"But tell me . . . is it really and truly so awful over there?"

"Not really. But it's so sad and monotonous. Of course we ghosts do not care in a seance to speak of the other life. It might be bad for us. To come back to earth is such a treat for us poor ghosts that we prefer to forget about the existence we normally lead."

"But you will not mind telling me?"

"Please send over another *whiff* of cigar smoke. I like that. It's a long time since I had such a treat . . . lying on a sofa and smoking a good cigar. Those are really good cigars you keep. On this earth I never could afford them."

"How was that?"

"Well, you see, I was a university professor."

M. Zieba hung his head in confusion at having suspected a university professor of being able to afford good cigars.

"I wonder," remarked the ghost, "at your not being afraid of me."

"Oh, but I was very much afraid."

It all depends

THE FORGOTTEN GHOST

“That’s gone now, is it? All the better. Only stupid people fear us spirits, for we can do them no harm.”

“Can you not do any harm?”

“Well, I can make a noise, break an *electric light bulb* and *rummage* the furniture about. That’s about all.”

“And the others?”

“It all depends. I know a spirit who was an editor in earthly life and was greatly bothered by his creditors. So he became furiously *hysterical*. Now he spends his time breaking window panes, shutting off the lights, shouting in an uncanny voice, tripping people up and throwing them under motor cars. || Quite a dangerous fellow. But I have no wish to have such adventures.”

“I am sorry for you.”

“That will be accounted unto you for righteousness. You are a good man, Zieba. I wonder if I might ask you a favour?”

“Fire away.”

“The cigar is about out now. . . . Is that brandy on the *mantelpiece*?”

“It is.”

“Might I ask you to pour out a few drops into a glass and place it on the table next to me?”

q Fire away 快说