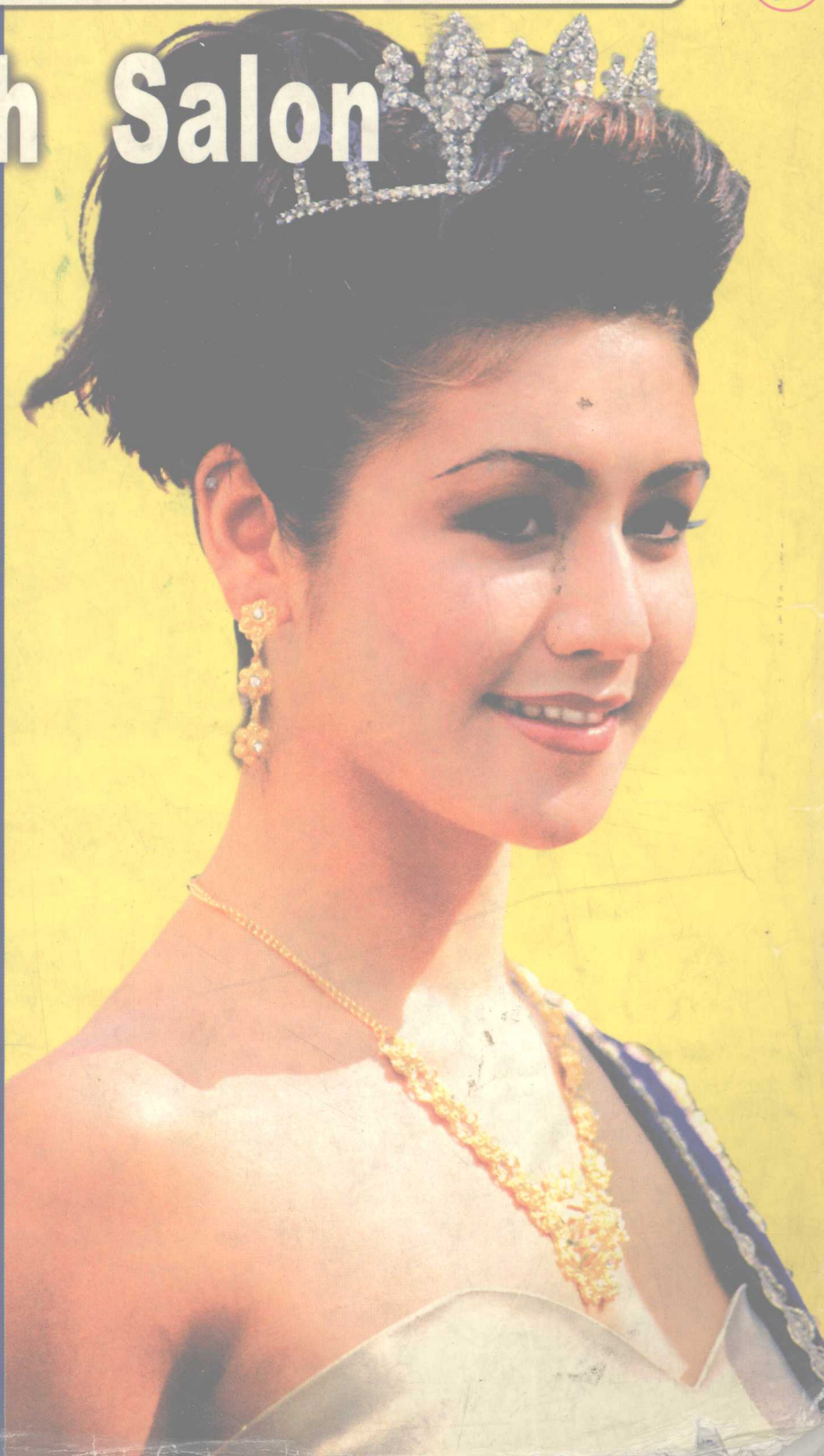
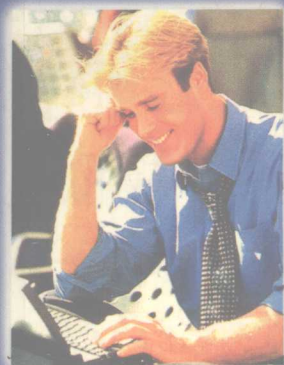


英语沙龙

增刊

小说
版

English Salon



世界知识出版社

《英语沙龙》增刊·小说版

主编 吴龙森

世界知识出版社



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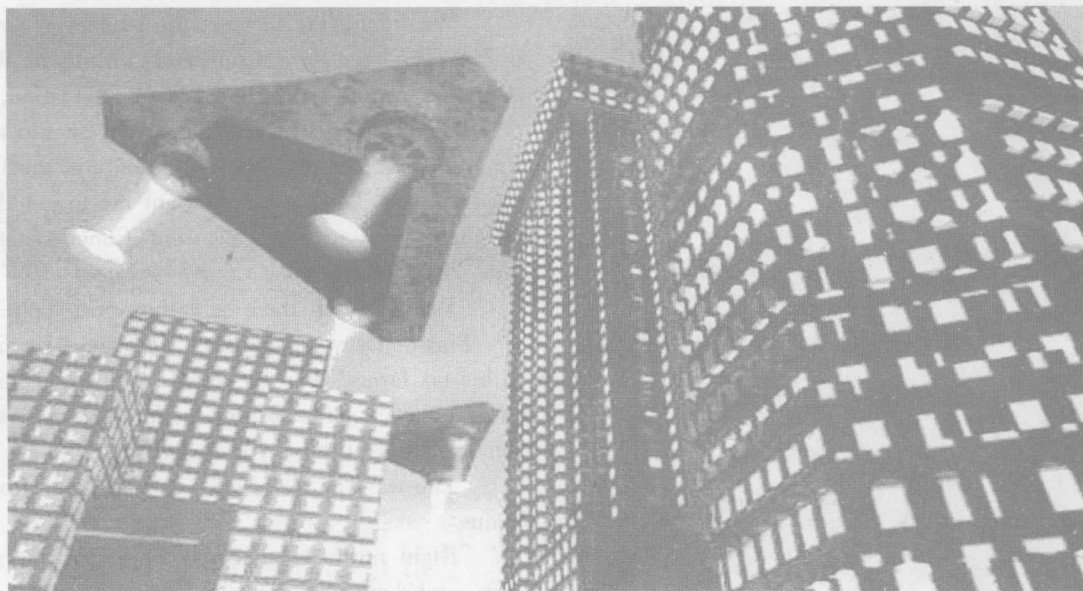
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The Watery Place

水 泥 泥

湿 地

by Isaac Asimov

Some workers are too busy to notice the things around them. Bart Cameron is such a person. But what will happen when visitors from another planet interrupt his work?

We're never going to have space travel. What's more, no visitors from other planets will land on Earth-not anymore.

I know that space travel is possible. In fact, alien visitors have landed here. But we'll never join them in space-all because of a stupid mistake.

It was Bart Cameron's mistake. He's the sheriff at Twin Gulch, Idaho. I'm his deputy. Bart Cameron is an impatient man. He becomes most impatient when he's working on his income tax.

You see, Bart has several jobs, besides being sheriff. He runs the general store. He owns part of a sheep ranch. He also has some other business projects. All these things make his tax forms difficult to do.

April 14 is the day before taxes are due. By April 14, no one can get near Bart.

It's too bad the flying saucer landed on April 14, 1956.

I saw it land. I was sitting in the sheriff's office, looking at the stars out the window. I could hear Bart muttering. He was going over his tax figures for the 127th time.

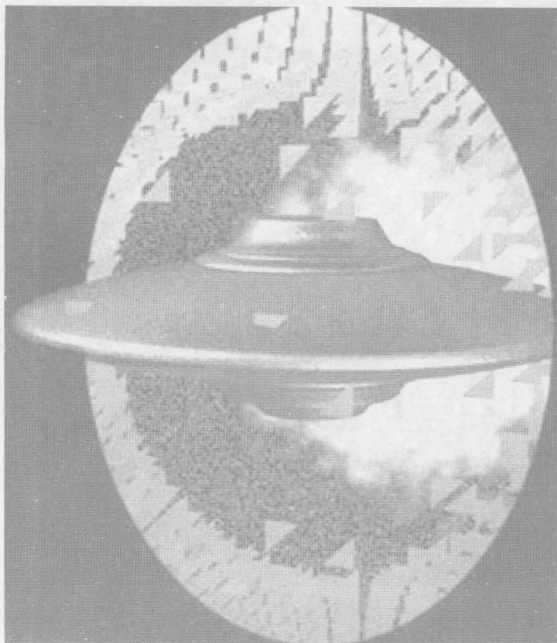
It looked like a shooting star at first. Then the streak of light got larger. The saucer landed without a sound. Two men got out.

I was too surprised to move or speak. I just sat there Bart didn't even look up.

There was a knock on the door. Then the two men from the flying saucer walked in.

I would have thought they were city fellows if I hadn't seen their ship. They wore gray suits, white shirts, and black shoes. They had dark hair and brown eyes, and they looked very much alike.

I was scared. But Bart just looked up and frowned. On any other day, he would have laughed to see clothes like that in Twin Gulch. But he was too involved in his income tax. He didn't even smile. ►



He said, "What can I do for you folks?" He tapped his tax forms impatiently.

One of The Visitors said, "We have been watching your people for a long time." He pronounced each word very carefully.

"My people?" Bart said. "All I have is a wife. Why would you want to watch her?"

"We chose to begin our visit here because it is quiet and peaceful," said the visitor. "We know that you are the leader here."

"I'm the sheriff, if that's what you mean," said Bart.

"We have been careful to dress like you," said the visitor.

"That isn't the way I dress," said Bart, frowning at the visitor's suit.

"We have also learned your language."

Then Bart began to get the idea. "Are you guys foreigners?" he asked.

The man from the saucer nodded. "Indeed we are. We come from the watery place your people call Venus."

I had to believe this. After all, I had seen the flying saucer land. These men -- or whatever they were -- were from the planet Venus!

But Bart didn't blink an eye. "All right," he said. "This is the U. S. A. I'm at your service. What can I do for you?"

"We would like to meet the leaders of your U. S. A. We must have discussions with them. We want your people to join our great organization."

Bart turned red with anger. "Why should we join your organization? We're already in the United Nations. I suppose you want me to get the President out here. Do you want Congress too? How about the Supreme Court?"

"Yes, send for them -- if they will help."

Bart really went to pieces. He banged his fist on his tax forms. Then he yelled, "I have no time for wise guys! I have no time for foreigners! If you don't leave, I'll throw you in jail!"

"You want us to leave?" said the man from Venus.

"Right now! Go back to wherever you're from, and don't ever return. I don't want to see you again. No one else around here does, either."

Bart and the man from Venus stared at each other. Then the man from Venus spoke.

"I can see in your mind that you wish very much to be alone. We will not force ourselves or our organization upon you. You want privacy. So we will leave. We will not return. We will surround your world with a warning shield. No one else will enter, and your people won't have to leave."

Bart said, "Mister, if you're not out of here by the count of three. . ."

They turned and left. I knew that everything they said would be true. I had been listening to them, and Bart hadn't. He had been too busy thinking about his income tax.

When they left, I got my voice back. I yelled at Bart. "They're from outer space! Why did you send them away?"

"From outer space?" he said, staring at me.

I pushed him over to the window. When he saw what was going on out there, he gasped.

Those two men were getting into the flying saucer. The saucer was large, round, and powerful. It took off without a sound. It glowed on one side for a while. Then it got smaller and smaller, until it faded away.

"Sheriff," I said, "why did you send them away? They had to see the President. Now ►



they'll never return, and we will never have space travel."

Bart said, "I thought they were foreigners. They said they had to learn our language. They looked Italian. I thought they were Italian."

"How could they be Italian?" I said. "They said they were from the planet Venus. I heard

[参考译文]有些工作人员太忙了,忙到没注意周围发生的事情。巴特·卡梅伦就是这样的人。但是,当另一个星球的来访者打断他的工作时,会发生什么事呢?

我们永远不会去太空旅行了。而且,也不会有另一个星球的来访者降落在地球上——再也不会了。

我知道太空旅行是可能的。事实上,天外来客确曾在这里登陆。但是,我们永远不会在外层空间与他们会合了——这一切全都是由一个愚蠢的错误造成的。

是巴特·卡梅伦的错误。他是爱达荷州吐温哥茨郡的郡长。我是他的副职。巴特·卡梅伦是个没有耐心的人。当他忙着算他的所得税时,就更没有耐心了。

你知道,巴特除了当郡长之外还干着好几份工作。他开着郡上的杂货店,是一个牧羊场若干个所有者之一。此外他还做别的生意。所有这些使他的税单不好填。

4月14号是交税前的最后一天。

4月14号那天谁也不敢走近巴特。

糟糕的是飞碟就在1956年4月14号那天在地球登陆了。

我看着它着陆的。我当时正坐在郡长办公室里,正朝窗外看星星。我听得见巴特嘀嘀咕咕的声音。他已经是第127次算他的税款了。

起初,它看上去像个流星。后来,光带变大了。飞碟着陆时一点声音都没有。两个人走了出来。

这一下真把我吓得目瞪口呆,死死地坐在那儿,动弹不得。而巴特却连头都没抬一下。

有人敲门。然后,那两个人走了进来。

如果我不是看见他们的飞船,我肯定会以为他们是城里人。他们穿着灰色西服、白衬衫、黑皮鞋。他们长着黑头发,褐色的眼睛。两人很相像。

我很害怕。而巴特却只是抬头看了一下,皱了皱眉头。要是在别的日子,在吐温哥茨看见有人穿这样的服装,他会大笑起来。但这时他为所得税的事忙得焦头烂额,连微笑一下的力气都没有。

他说,“请问两位有何贵干?”他不耐烦地敲着税单。

them say so."

"The planet Venus?" Bart said, amazed.

"They said it. They called it the watery place. You know, Venus has a lot of water on it."

Bart whispered, "Venus? When they talked about the watery place, I thought they meant Venice."

一个来访者说,“我们观察你的人有好长一段时间了。”他一个一个字小心地说。

“我的人?”巴特说。“我家里只有我妻子。你们干吗要观察她?”

“我们将贵地选做造访的头一站,是因为它宁静、平和,”来访者说。“我们知道你是这儿的领导人。”

“我是郡长,如果你指的是这个的话,”巴特说。

“我们费了心思穿得和你们一样,”来访者说。

“我不是这样穿的,”巴特说,朝来访者的衣服直皱眉头。



“我们也学了你们的语言。”

巴特这时开始明白了。“你们是外国人吗?”他问。

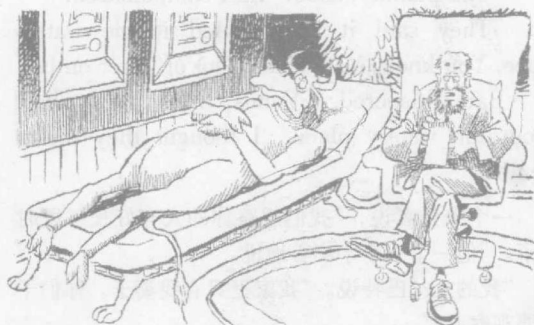
从飞船下来的人点了点头。“我们就是。我们来自你们称之为金星的湿地。”

我得相信这一切。不管怎么说,我看见了飞碟着陆。这些人——或者不管他们是什么——是从金星来的。

但是巴特连眼皮都不眨一下。“好吧,”他说。“这里是美国。有什么事,尽管吩咐。我愿为二位效劳。”

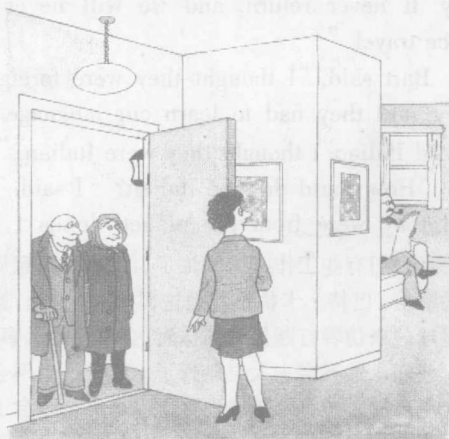
“我们想见你们美国的领导人。我们需要和他们进行讨论。我们想要你们的人加入我们的组织。”

巴特气得满脸通红。“我们干吗要加入你们的组织?我们已经是联合国的成员国了。我想你是要我



"No, I wouldn't call you a mad cow exactly -- I'd say you're a cow with issues."

漫
画



"It's your grandparents, claiming their visitation rights."



总统找来吧。还要找国会吗？联邦法院要不要也找来？”

“是，叫他们来——如果他们来了有用的话。”

巴特彻底崩溃了。他将拳头砰地击在税单上，然后，大声喊道，“我没时间浪费在你们这帮聪明人身上！我没时间浪费在外国人身上！你们要是不走，我就把你们扔进监狱！”

“你要我们走吗？”从金星来的人说。

“立刻！你们从哪儿来就回到哪儿去，再也别回来。我再也不想见到你们了。这儿也没有任何人想再见到你们。”

巴特和金星人目不转睛地盯着对方。后来金星人说话了。

“我看得出来，你心里非常希望一个人呆着。我们不会把我们和组织强加给你。你需要清静，所以我们会离开。我们不会再回来。我们会用一道警告屏包围你们的星球。再没有人会进入，而你们的人也不必出去。”

巴特说，“先生，如果我数到三你们还不离开……”

他们转身离去。我知道他们所说的是当真的。我一直在听他们说话，而巴特没有听。他太忙着想他的所得税了。

他们离开以后我能张口说话了。我朝巴特大声嚷

起来。“他们是从外层空间来的！你为什么把他们赶走？”

“从外层空间来的？”他说，直瞪着我。

我把他推到窗户那儿。当他看到外面的情形时，他倒抽了一口冷气。

那两个人正走进飞碟。飞碟又大又圆，功率强大。起飞时一点声音都没有。在短时间里有一边在发光。后来它变得越来越小，直至消失。

“郡长，”我说，“你为什么把他们赶走？他们得见总统。现在他们再也不会回来了。我们永远不能去太空旅行了。”

巴特说，“我以为他们是外国人。他们说他们曾学我们的语言。他们看起来像意大利人。我以为他们是意大利人。”

“他们怎么可能是意大利人呢？”我说。“他们说他们是从金星来的。我听他们说的。”

“金星？”巴特说，万分惊讶。

“他们是这么说的。他们把它叫作湿地。你知道，金星上有很多水。”

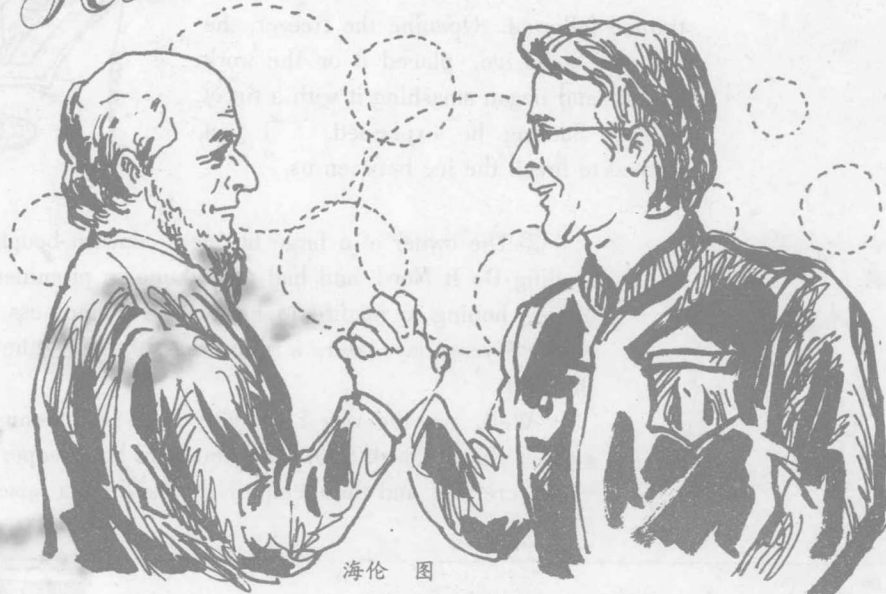
巴特低声说道，“金星”当他们说湿地时，我以为他们指的是威尼斯呢。”

（萧凝 选译）



Give Him A Drag

拉
他
一
把



海伦 图

Traffic was slow on the Mount Hope Bridge in Bristol as Don Armstrong, a college hockey coach, drove home from practice. Soon Armstrong saw the problem--a car was stopped at the crest of the bridge, its right blinker on and its motor running. The driver was slouched behind the wheel, smoking a cigarette. One by one, others' cars pulled slowly around the parked vehicle.

"As I drove past, I tried to make eye contact with the driver," Armstrong said, "but he just motioned me away." Armstrong started to drive off, then suddenly pulled over. "I was thinking about the Dumpster thing again," he said.

A week before, Armstrong had seen an elderly man hanging around a pizzeria Dumpster. "He was looking for pizza in the garbage," Armstrong said. "He gave me a funny look. Then he pulled a pizza box out of the trash and walked away. Later I said to myself, 'You blew it. You had \$5 in your pocket. You should have given it to him.'"

The incident flashed through Armstrong's mind as he got out of his car and headed toward

the motorist on the bridge. When he knocked on the window, the man rolled it down. "Hey, buddy -- you ain't thinking of going over, are you?" Armstrong asked.

"Yeah," he answered. "Now go away and leave me alone."

Armstrong kept talking, trying to buy some time. He told the man his hockey team had lost a few games in a row. The man's eyes lit up. "You coach hockey?" he asked. "My son played hockey." After they chatted a few more minutes, Armstrong asked the man what was wrong.

His wife had been sick for a while, he explained. Before that, they hadn't been getting along. He'd also been laid off from his job. He was 53 years old and wanted to end his life.

"Don't do this," Armstrong said. "Drive off the bridge, and we'll go to my office and talk."

The man agreed. He followed Armstrong to Roger Williams college, where one of the school's counselors talked with him. Eventually, the local police took him to a nearby hospital for treatment. ►



① There was a mutual attraction between my sister and a trainee who worked at her office. However, both being shy, they could barely even speak to each other.

During an office party, my sister went into the kitchen to get a drink and the trainee followed. Opening the freezer, he took out some ice, placed it on the work surface and began smashing it with a tin of coffee. Smiling he explained, "I just wanted to break the ice between us."



② The owner of a large business concern bought a number of signs reading Do It Now! and had them hung in prominent places around his office, hoping to inspire in his people promptness and energy in their work. Several days later, a friend asked him how the scheme had affected the staff.

"Well, not the way I thought," the businessman answered. "The cashier skipped with \$30,000, the head bookkeeper eloped with my private secretary, and three employees asked for a raise."

(大为 选)

The man made rapid progress, and when he was discharged two days later, Armstrong was there to pick him up. The man looked at Armstrong in his eyes and said, "Thank you." Armstrong [参考译文] 唐·阿姆斯特朗是一所大学的冰球教练, 一天练完球回家的路上途经布里斯托尔的希望山大桥时, 车流行驶得很缓慢。阿姆斯特朗很快知道了问题所在——有一辆车停在了桥中间最高处。车的右警戒灯一闪一闪的, 发动机开着, 司机则抽着烟耷拉着身子坐在方向盘后面。车子一辆接一辆慢慢地绕开这辆停在路中间的车往前行驶。

"当我经过这车时, 我试图与司机进行眼神交流," 阿姆斯特朗说, "但他只做了个手势让我走开。" 阿姆斯特朗便开车想离去, 突然, 他把车开到路边停了下来。"我又想起了那次在垃圾箱发生的事情," 他说。

一个星期前, 阿姆斯特朗曾看见一个年迈的老人在一个比萨店的垃圾箱转悠。"他在垃圾箱里找比萨饼," 阿姆斯特朗说。"他看了我一眼, 样子很滑稽, 然后从垃圾堆里拽出一个比萨饼盒就走开了。之后, 我对自己说: '你没把事办好。你兜里有 5 英镑。你应该给他。'"

阿姆斯特朗下了车在向桥上停车的那位司机走去时, 这件事在他脑海里闪过。他敲了敲车窗, 那人把窗子摇了下来。"嘿, 朋友——你不是在想把车开到桥上

strong gave him a firm hand-shake and said, "You are a good guy who are just down on your luck. Everybody needs a drag from others sometime in his life."

去吧?" 阿姆斯特朗问道。

"正是," 他回答说。"现在你走开, 别管我。"

阿姆斯特朗继续与他说话, 以赢得时间。他告诉那人他的冰球队接连输了好几场比赛。那人眼睛一亮。"你是冰球教练?" 那人问。"我儿子以前也打冰球。" 又聊了几分钟后, 阿姆斯特朗问那人出什么事了。

他解释说 he 妻子生病有一段时间了。之前他们关系也不好。他刚被解了职。他今年 53 岁, 想就此了结一生。

"别这样," 阿姆斯特朗说。"开过桥去, 我们一起去我办公室谈谈。"

那人同意了。他随着阿姆斯特朗来到了罗杰·威廉斯大学, 在那儿学校的一位辅导员和他谈了话。最后, 当地的警察送他到附近的医院接受治疗。

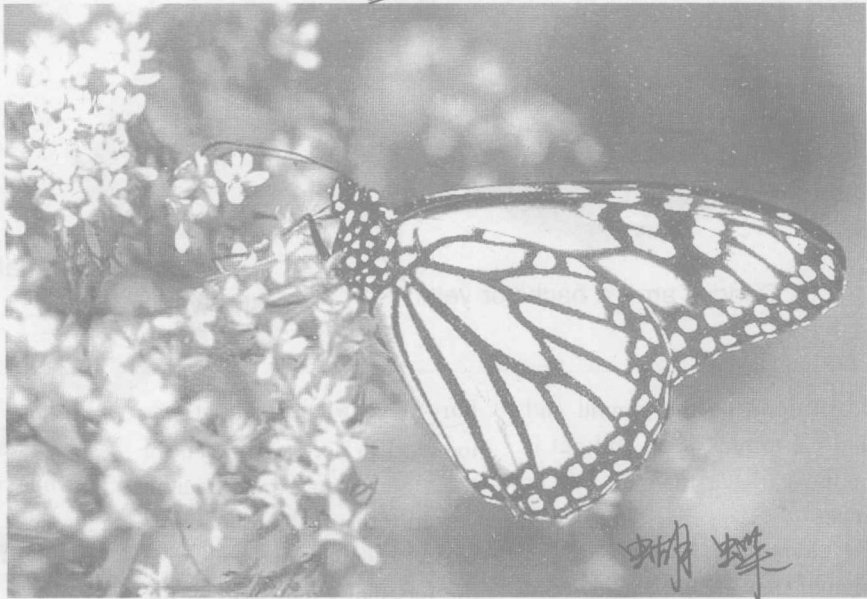
那人恢复很快, 两天后出院时, 阿姆斯特朗到医院去接他。那人看着阿姆斯特朗的眼睛说: "谢谢你!" 阿姆斯特朗用力握了握他的手说: "你是个好人, 但正碰上时运不济, 每个人一生中都会碰到需要有人拉一把的时候。"

(如方 编译)



Butterfly

Jewellery Jewelry



蝴蝶

There was a time in my life when beauty meant something special to me. I guess that would have been when I was about six or seven years old, just several weeks or maybe a month before the orphanage turned me into an old man.

I would get up every morning at the orphanage, make my bed just like the little soldier and then I would get into one of the two straight lines and march to breakfast with the other twenty or thirty boys who also lived in my dormitory.

After breakfast one Saturday morning I returned to the dormitory and saw the house parent chasing the beautiful monarch butterflies who lived by the hundreds in the azalea bushes strewn around the orphanage.

I carefully watched as he

caught these beautiful creatures, one after the other, and then stuck straight pins through their head and wings, pinning them onto a heavy cardboard sheet.

How cruel it was to kill something of such beauty. I had walked many times out into the bushes, all by myself, just so the butterflies could land on my head, face and hands so I could look at them up close.

When the telephone rang the house parent laid the large cardboard paper down on the cement step and went inside to answer the phone. I walked up to the cardboard and looked at the one butterfly who he had just pinned to the paper. It was still moving about so I reached down and touched it on the wing causing one of the pins to

fall out. It started flying around and around trying to get away but it was still pinned by the one wing with the other straight pin. Finally its wing broke off and the butterfly fell to the ground and just quivered.

I picked up the torn wing and the butterfly and tried to get the wing stuck back on so it could fly away and be free before the house parent came back. But it didn't work.

The next thing I knew the house parent came walking back and started yelling at me. I told him that I did not do anything wrong but he did not believe me. He picked up the cardboard paper and started hitting me on the top of the head. There were all kinds of butterfly pieces going everywhere. He threw the card-▶



漫画



“Daddy, am I a bachelor yet?”

“We believe that in a former life she was an editor.”

(乐乐 选)

board down on the ground and told me to pick it up and put it in the garbage then he left in anger.

I sat there in the dirt, by a big old tree, for the longest time trying to fit all the butterfly pieces back together so I could

[参考译文]在我一生中有一段时间里,我对一切美丽的事物曾有过一种特殊的感情。我想那可能是在我大约六、七岁的时候,可是后来一切都变了。在我住的孤儿院里发生过一件事,数月或一个月之后我已成了一个老人。

那时,我每天在孤儿院起床后,都会像一名小兵似的整理被褥,然后加入到两排纵队中的一列,和同寝室的其他二三十名男孩子走去吃早餐。

有一天星期六早饭过后,我回到寝室,看见生活老师正在追逐着美丽的君主蝶。有成百只这种蝴蝶生活在孤儿院周围的杜鹃花丛中。

我仔细观察,只见他抓了一只又一只这种美丽的生灵,然后用大头针将它们的头和翅膀钉在一块厚重的纸板上。

杀害这样的美丽生灵该是多么的残忍呀!我曾无数次独自一人

bury them whole, but it was too hard to do. So I prayed for them and then I put them in an old torn up shoe box and I buried them in the bottom of the fort that I had built in the ground, out by the large bamboos, near the blackberry 走进灌木丛中,以便让蝴蝶可以落到我的头上、脸上和胳膊上,这样我可以仔细地近距离地观赏它们。

这时候电话铃响了,生活老师将那个大纸板放在水泥台阶上,随后进屋接电话。我走到那个纸板旁,看见一只刚刚被钉在纸上的蝴蝶仍在挣扎着。我于是弯下身,用手碰了碰翅膀,弄掉了钉在上面的一枚大头针。蝴蝶于是开始左右扑腾,但是它的另一只翅膀依然被大头针钉着。挣扎了一会儿,终于翅膀折断了。蝴蝶掉在地上,抖动着。

我捧起了那段被撕裂的翅膀和那只蝴蝶,试图将翅膀粘回到它身体上,这样它就能在生活老师回来之前飞走获得自由了。但是我没有成功。

说时迟,那时快,就在这时生活老师回来了,向我咆哮起来。我

bushes.

Every year when the butterflies would return to the orphanage and try to land on me I would try and shoo them away because they did not know that the orphanage was a bad place to live and a very bad place to die.

告诉我我没有做什么错事,但是他不相信。然后他抄起纸板劈头盖脸向我打来。一时间,到处都是蝴蝶的碎片,纷纷飘落到地上。他将纸板摔到地上,命令我拾起扔到垃圾箱中,然后愤然离去。

我坐在一棵大树旁的地上,花了我生命中最长的时间试着将所有蝴蝶碎片拼成一只只完整的蝴蝶,这样我可以将它们一只只完整地掩埋。但是这项工作实在是太难了。于是我开始为它们祈祷,然后将它们放入一个破旧的鞋盒中,埋进我在远离孤儿院的高大的竹林旁、紧挨着黑莓丛的地方挖造的一个城堡的底下。

从此,每年当蝴蝶返回孤儿院要落到我身上的时候,我都会尽力将它们赶开,因为它们不知道孤儿院既不是一个好生也不是一个好死的地方。

(许歆 选译)



Dancing With Nonny

与奶奶共舞

By Rusty Fischer

When I married my wife Martha, it was the most beautiful day of my life.

We were young and healthy, tanned and handsome. Every picture taken that day shows us smiling, hugging, and kissing. We were the perfect hosts, never cranky or tired. We were as happy and carefree as the porcelain couple on our towering wedding cake.

Halfway through the reception, in between the pictures and the cake and the garter and the bouquet, my grandmother tapped me gently on the shoulder. I hugged her in a flurry of other well-wishers and barely heard her whisper, "Will you dance with me, sweetheart?"

"Sure, Nonny," I said, smiling and with the best of intentions, even as some out of town guests pulled me off in their direction. An hour later my grandmother tried again. And again I readily agreed, smiling and reaching for her with an outstretched hand but letting some old college buddies place a fresh beer there instead, just before dragging me off for some last-minute wedding night advice!

Finally, my grandmother gave up.

There were kisses and hugs and rice and tin cans and then my wife and I were off on our honeymoon. A nagging concern grew in the back of my mind as we wined and dined our way down to Miami for a week-long cruise and then back

again when it was over.

When we finally returned to our new home, a phone message told us our pictures were waiting at the photographer's. We unpacked slowly and then moseyed on down to pick them up. Hours later, after we had examined every one with fond memories, I held one out to reflect upon in private.

It was a picture of two happy guests, sweaty and rowdy in their dancing. But it wasn't the grinning couple I was focusing on. There, in the background, was my grandmother, Nonny.

I had spotted her blue dress right away. Her simple pearls. The brand new hairdo I knew she'd gotten special for that day, even though she was on a fixed income. I saw her scuffed shoes and a run in her stocking and her tired hands clutching at a well-used handkerchief.

In the picture, my grandmother was ►



海伦 图



crying. And I didn't think they were tears of joy. That nagging concern that had niggled at me the entire honeymoon finally solidified--I had never danced with my grandmother.

I kissed my wife on the cheek and drove to my grandmother's tiny apartment a few miles away. I knocked on the door and saw that her new perm was still fresh and tight, but her tidy blue dress had been replaced with her usual faded house dress.

A feeble smile greeted me, weak arms wrapped around me and, naturally, Nonny wanted to know all about our honeymoon. Instead, all I could do was apologize.

"I'm sorry, I never danced with you, Nonny," I said honestly, sitting next to her on the threadbare couch. "It was a very special day and that was the only thing missing from making it perfect."

Nonny looked me in the eye and said something I'll never forget: "Nonsense, dear. You've danced enough with this old broad in her lifetime. Remember all those Saturday nights you spent here when you were a little boy? I'd put the Lawrence Welk Show on and you'd dance on top of my fuzzy slippers and laugh the whole time. Why, I don't know any other grandmother who has memories like that. I'm a lucky woman."

"And while you were being the perfect host and making all of your guests feel so special, I sat back and watched you and felt nothing but pride. That's what a wedding is, honey. Something old, something new. Something borrowed, something blue."

[参考译文]我和妻子玛萨结婚那天是我一生中最好的一天。

当时我们年轻健康,皮肤晒成深褐色,人也长得漂亮。那天拍下的每一张照片都是我们在微笑,在拥抱,在亲吻。我们是最完美的主人,一点也不怪里怪气,也没显出一丝疲惫的神态。我们就像高高的结婚蛋糕上的那对小瓷人,幸福快活,无忧无虑。

婚礼进行中,不知是在拍照,切蛋糕,还是在扔袜带,抛花束间的什么时候,我的祖母曾温柔地拍拍我的肩头。我在一阵良好祝愿者的祝贺声中拥抱了她一下,几乎没有听见她的轻声请求,“亲爱的,可以和我跳



海
伦
图

"Well, this OLD woman, who was wearing BLUE, watched you dance with your beautiful NEW bride, and I knew I had to give you up, because I had you so many years to myself, but I could only BORROW you until you found the woman of your dreams--and now you have each other and I can rest easy in the knowledge that you're happy."

Both of our tears covered her couch that day.

That was the day Nonny taught me what it meant to be a grandson, as well as a husband.

And after my lesson, I asked Nonny for that wedding dance.

Unlike me, she didn't refuse...

一曲吗?"

"当然可以,奶奶,"我说,微笑着,是真心实意的,但正好让一些从外地赶来的客人拉走了。一小时后我的祖母又试了一次。同样我一口答应了,微笑着,向她伸去一只手,但一杯鲜啤酒却抢先占据了我的手,一些大学老同学又把我拽走了,要给我最后的新婚之夜的忠告。

最后我的祖母放弃了。

在不断的亲吻、拥抱之后,在撒大米、扔锡罐种种热闹之后,我和新婚妻子就告别众人去度蜜月。我们一路又吃又喝到了迈阿密,乘船游览了一周然后回▶



来,但这期间却有某种不安在我的脑子里隐隐不断作怪,让我有些心神不宁。

当我们终于返回我们的新家后,一个电话留言告诉我们婚礼照片正在摄影师那里等着我们呢。我们慢慢地悠悠地开启行囊,然后慢慢地悠悠地散步到摄影师那里去取照片。数小时后,我们带着深情的回忆,一张张细看那些照片之后,我手里攥着其中的一张独自陷入了沉思。

那张照片上有两个开心的宾客,汗淋淋地,又吵又叫地跳着舞。但我注意的不是这两个咧着嘴的客人,而是在背景处,我的祖母,奶奶。

我即刻注意到她的蓝色套裙。她简单的珍珠饰物。新做的头发我知道是专门为那天做的,尽管她的收入有限。我看到了她脚上那双已有些磨损的鞋子,看到了袜子上的一处抽丝,还看到了她那双疲惫的手紧抓着一块已用多时的手帕。

照片中,我的祖母在哭泣。我知道那不是喜悦的眼泪。那让我整个蜜月为之伤神的隐隐不安终于落到实处——我竟没能和祖母跳上一曲。

我吻了吻妻子的面颊,驱车前往几英里外祖母那小小的公寓。我敲响了她的房门,看到她新烫的头发依然成型,利落,但她合体的蓝色套裙已换成日常在家穿的已褪了色的便服。

迎候我的是祖母那无力的微笑和软弱的双臂。奶奶自然想知道我们蜜月的一切。而我所能做的只

是道歉。

“对不起,我没能跟您跳舞,奶奶,”我诚恳地说,和她一起落坐在那布面已磨薄的沙发上。“那是一个非常特殊的日子,而就是没能与您共舞使其不能成为一个完美的日子。”

奶奶望着我的眼睛说了些我永远难以忘怀的话语:“亲爱的,瞎说些什么呢。在我的一生中你已和我这个老婆子跳了足够多的舞了。还记得你小时候在这里度过的那些周六的晚上吗?我会放些劳伦斯·威尔可的音乐,而你踩着我的绒毛拖鞋跳,还一直笑个不停。有什么遗憾的呢?我还不知道任何别的祖母能有如此甜蜜的回忆。我是个幸运的女人。”

“当你身为完美的主人让所有的宾客都感到非常特殊时,我坐在后边看着你,心中有的只是骄傲。婚礼就该是那样的,亲爱的。有旧有新,有借有蓝。”

“你瞧,这个老妇人,穿着蓝色的衣服,看着你和你那美丽的新娘跳舞。我知道我得把你拱手让出了,因为我曾拥有你那么多年,但在你找到你梦中的女人之前我只能借用你——现在你们拥有彼此,我知道你是幸福的,便无需牵肠挂肚了。”

那天我们两个人的眼泪流满了她的沙发。

就在那天奶奶让我领会到作为一个孙儿意味着什么,作为一个丈夫又意味着什么。上了这么一课之后,我请求奶奶跳一曲新婚舞。

不像我,她没有拒绝……

(忆玫 译)



① A young man ^我approached the ^{柜台}counter at which Christmas cards were being sold.

“Have you anything sentimental?” he asked.

“Here’s lovely one,” replied the salesgirl.

“To The Only Girl I Ever Loved.”

“That’s fine, I’ll take four -- no -- six of those, please.”

“and while I am telling it we might as well save the candle.” And he put it out.

“You need not tell the story,” said the youth. “I understand.”

② An old farmer was once asked by a young man how it was he had become so rich.

“It is a long story,” said the old man,

③ Like every other president, William Howard Taft had to endure his share of abuse. One night at the dinner table, his youngest boy made a disrespectful remark to him. There was a sudden hush. Taft looked thoughtful.

“Well,” said Mrs. Taft, “aren’t you going to punish him?”

“If the remark was addressed to me as his father, he certainly will be punished,” said Taft. “However, if he addressed it to the President of the United States, this is his constitutional privilege.”

(明涛 选)