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泰戈尔短篇小说选



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SHORT STORIES

With Chinese Notes

by

Wu Dan

吴 丹

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内 容 提 要

本书包括泰戈尔的九个短篇故事。在这些故事中，作者塑造了许多善良可敬的人物，表露了对劳动人民的深切同情，同时对庸俗丑恶的人给予讽刺和鞭挞。全书文字浅易，笔调清新，适合初、中等英语程度的读者阅读。

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泰戈尔短篇小说选

〔印〕泰戈尔著

吴 丹 注释

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泰 戈 尔 像 禾禾绘

作者简介

泰戈尔 (Rabindranath Tagore, 1861—1941) 是印度最杰出的作家之一。他出生于一个地主家庭,十几岁时就开始写作,后来到英国学习,回国后大力从事创作活动,在一生中写了五十本诗集,二十个剧本,十二部中篇和长篇小说,和一百多篇短篇小说。此外他还从事作曲和绘画,作了不少爱国歌曲;他从事教育工作,也支持民族解放运动,发表过不少演说,还多次参加示威游行。他访问过中国和苏联,对我国人民有深厚的感情。

这里收集的是他的九个短篇小说,虽然在他整个作品中这只是极小的一部分,但通过它们我们可以窥见泰戈尔作品的某些特点。他文笔朴实而优美,有清新的风格,充满了对善良的人们、特别是受苦受难的劳动人民的深切同情,同时对自私自利、庸俗和卑劣也进行了讽刺和鞭笞。他动人的描绘,清丽的笔调,盎然的诗意和淡淡的幽默,使这些作品读来亲切感人,意味深长。

这几个短篇是由不同译者翻译的,有的还出自作者的手笔,在很大程度上保持了原著的风格。由于文字浅近,适合一般中等程度的读者阅读。

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MASHI

I

"Mashi!"¹

"Try to sleep, Jotin; it is getting late."

"Never mind if it is. I have not many days left. I was thinking that Mani should go to her father's house. — I forget where he is now."

"Sitarampur."

"Oh, yes! Sitarampur. Send her there. She should not remain any longer near a sick man. She herself is not strong."

"Just listen to him! How can she bear to leave you in this state?"

"Does she know what the doctors — ?"

"But she can see for herself! The other day² she cried her eyes out at the merest hint of³ having to go to her father's house."

We must explain that in this statement there was a slight distortion of truth,⁴ to say the least of it.⁵ The actual talk with Mani was as follows: —

"I suppose, my child, you have got some news from your father? I thought I saw your cousin Anath here."

1. Mashi: 姨妈。

2. The other day: 几天以前。

3. at the merest hint of: 只要稍稍一提到。

4. there was a slight distortion of truth: 有一些不合事实的地方。

5. to say the least of it: 说得再轻一些。

“Yes! Next Friday will be my little sister’s *annaprashan* ceremony.¹ So I’m thinking — ”

“All right, my dear. Send her a gold necklace. It will please your mother.”

“I’m thinking of going myself. I’ve never seen my little sister, and I want to ever so much.”²

“Whatever do you mean?³ You surely don’t think of leaving Jotin alone? Haven’t you heard what the doctor says about him?”

“But he said that just now there’s no special cause for — ”

“Even if he did,⁴ you can see his state.”

“This is the first girl after three brothers, and she’s a great favourite. — I have heard that it’s going to be a grand affair. If I don’t go, mother will be very — ”

“Yes, yes! I don’t understand your mother. But I know very well that your father will be angry enough if you leave Jotin just now.”

“You’ll have to write a line to him saying that there is no special cause for anxiety, and that even if I go, there will be no — ”

“You’re right there; it will certainly be no great loss if you do go. But remember, if I write to your father, I’ll tell him plainly what is in my mind.”

“Then you needn’t write. I shall ask my husband, and he will surely — ”

“Look here, child, I’ve borne a good deal from you,⁵ but

1. *annaprashan* ceremony: 孩子第一次吃饭时举行的一种宗教仪式。往往也在这一天命名。

2. I want to (go) ever so much: 我极想去。(ever 用来加强语气。)

3. Whatever do you mean: (这

里 ever 也用来加强语气。)

4. Even if he did: 就算他说了这样的话。

5. I’ve borne ... from you: 我已经对你多多包涵了。

if you do that, I won't stand it for a moment. Your father knows you too well for you to deceive him."

When Mashī had left her, Mani lay down on her bed in a bad temper.

Her neighbour and friend came and asked what was the matter.

"Look here! What a shame it is! Here's my only sister's *annaprashan* coming, and they don't want to let me go to it!"

"Why! Surely you're never thinking of going, are you, with your husband so ill?"

I don't do anything for him, and I couldn't if I tried. It's so deadly dull in this house, that I tell you frankly I can't bear it."

"You are a strange woman!"

"But I can't pretend, as you people do, and look glum¹ lest any one should think ill of me."

"Well, tell me your plan."

"I must go. Nobody can prevent me."

"Isss! What an imperious² young woman you are!"

II

Hearing that Mani had wept at the mere thought of going to her father's house, Jotin was so excited that he sat up in bed. Pulling his pillow towards him, he leaned back, and said: "Mashī, open this window a little, and take that lamp away."

The still night stood silently at the window like a pilgrim of eternity; and the stars gazed in, witnesses through untold ages of countless death-scenes.³

1. glum: 忧郁低沉。

2. imperious [im'piəriəs]: 傲慢; 骄横。

3. witnesses through ... death-scenes: 在无数的岁月中这些星星看到了无数死亡的场面。

Jotin saw his Mani's face traced¹ on the background of the dark night, and saw those two big dark eyes brimming over with tears, as it were for all eternity.²

Mashi felt relieved when she saw him so quiet, thinking he was asleep.

Suddenly he started up, and said: "Mashi, you all thought that Mani was too frivolous³ ever to be happy in our house. But you see now —"

"Yes, I see now, my Baba, I was mistaken⁴ — but trial tests a person."

"Mashi!"

"Do try to sleep, dear!"

"Let me think a little, let me talk. Don't be vexed, Mashi!"

"Very well."

"Once, when I used to think I could not win Mani's heart, I bore it silently. But you —"

"No, dear, I won't allow you to say that; I also bore it."

"Our minds, you know, are not clods of earth⁵ which you can possess by merely picking up. I felt that Mani did not know her own mind,⁶ and that one day at some great shock —"

"Yes, Jotin, you are right."

"Therefore I never took much notice of her waywardness."⁷

Mashi remained silent, suppressing a sigh. Not once,

1. traced: 印衬在, 被……勾画出。

2. as it were ... eternity: 就像永远会这样似的。

3. frivolous: 轻浮。

4. I see now, ... mistaken: 孩子, 我现在明白我过去错了。(baba 本来是“爸爸”的意思, 这里用作呢

称。)

5. clods of earth: 泥块。

6. didn't know her mind: 还没拿定准主意。

7. Therefore I ... of her waywardness: 因此我对她的任性从来不太介意。

but often she had seen Jotin spending the night on the verandah wet with the splashing rain, yet not caring to go into his bedroom. Many a day he lay with a throbbing head, longing, she knew, that Mani would come and soothe his brow, while Mani was getting ready to go to the theatre. Yet when Mashī went to fan him, he sent her away petulantly.¹ She alone knew what pain lay hidden in that distress. Again and again she had wanted to say to Jotin: “Don’t pay so much attention to that silly child, my dear; let her learn to want, — to cry for things².” But these things cannot be said, and are apt to be misunderstood. Jotin had in his heart a shrine set up to the goddess Woman, and there Mani had her throne. It was hard for him to imagine that his own fate was to be denied his share of the wine of love poured out by that divinity.³ Therefore the worship went on, the sacrifice was offered, and the hope of a boon never ceased.

Mashi imagined once more that Jotin was sleeping, when he cried out suddenly:

“I know you thought that I was not happy with Mani, and therefore you were angry with her. But, Mashi, happiness is like those stars. They don’t cover all the darkness; there are gaps between. We make mistakes in life and we misunderstand, and yet there remain gaps through which truth shines. I do not know whence comes this gladness that fills my heart tonight.”

Mashi began gently to soothe Jotin’s brow, her tears unseen in the dark.

1. petulantly [ˈpetjuləntli]: 不耐烦地。

2. let her learn ... things: 让她慢慢体会没有想要得到的东西时是什么味道。(现在她什么都有,她是

不觉得可贵的,等失去了时她才知道没有这些是什么味道。)

3. his own fate ... divinity: 他命中却得不到一点这位女神倾出的爱情之酒。

“I was thinking, Mashi, she's so young! What will she do when I am — ?”

“Young, Jotin? She's old enough. I too was young when I lost the idol of my life, only to find him in my heart for ever. Was that any loss, do you think? Besides, is happiness absolutely necessary?”

“Mashi, it seems as if just when Mani's heart shows signs of awakening I have to¹ —”

“Don't you worry about that, Jotin. Isn't it enough if her heart awakes?”

Suddenly Jotin recollected the words of a village minstrel's song which he had heard long before:

O my heart! you woke not when the man of my heart came to my door.

At the sound of his departing steps you woke up.

Oh, you woke up in the dark!

“Mashi, what is the time now?”

“About nine.”

“So early as that! Why, I thought it must be at least two or three o'clock. My midnight, you know, begins at sundown. But why did you want me to sleep, then?”

“Why, you know how late last night you kept awake talking; so today you must get to sleep early.”

“Is Mani asleep?”

“Oh, no, she's busy making some soup for you.”

“You don't mean to say so, Mashi?² Does she — ?”

1. just when Mani's heart ...
I have to —: 正当 Mani 的感情
开始觉醒的时候我却不得不——。

2. You don't ... Mashi? 是
真的吗, 姨妈?

“Certainly! Why, she prepares all your food, the busy little woman.”

“I thought perhaps Mani could not — ”

“It doesn’t take long for a woman to learn such things. With the need it comes of itself¹.”

“The fish soup, that I had in the morning, had such a delicate flavour, I thought you had made it.”

“Dear me, no! Surely you don’t think Mani would let me do anything for you? Why, she does all your washing herself. She knows you can’t bear anything dirty about you. If only you could see your sitting-room, how spick and span she keeps it!² If I were to let her haunt your sick-room³, she would wear herself out. But that’s what she really wants to do.”

“Is Mani’s health, then — ?”

“The doctors think she should not be allowed to visit the sick-room too often. She’s too tender-hearted⁴.”

“But, Mashi, how do you prevent her from coming?”

“Because she obeys me implicitly⁵. But still I have constantly to be giving her news of you.”

The stars glistened in the sky like tear-drops. Jotin bowed his head in gratitude to his life that was about to depart, and when Death stretched out his right hand towards him through the darkness, he took it in perfect trust.

Jotin sighed, and, with a slight gesture of impatience, said:

1. With the need it comes of itself: 在有必要时自然就会了。

2. how spick and ... keeps it: 她把房间收拾得多么干净。

3. haunt ...: 经常到……。

4. too tender-hearted: 感情太脆弱。

5. implicitly: 绝对地。

“Mashi, if Mani is still awake, then, could I — if only for a — ?”

“Very well! I’ll go and call her.”

“I won’t keep her long, only for five minutes. I have something particular to tell her.”

Mashi, sighing, went out to call Mani. Meanwhile Jotin’s pulse began to beat fast. He knew too well that he had never been able to have an intimate talk with Mani. The two instruments were tuned differently¹ and it was not easy to play them in unison². Again and again, Jotin had felt pangs of jealousy on hearing Mani chattering and laughing merrily with her girl companions. Jotin blamed only himself, — why couldn’t he talk irrelevant trifles³ as they did? Not that he could not, for with his men friends he often chatted on all sorts of trivialities. But the small talk that suits men is not suitable for women. You can hold a philosophical discourse in monologue⁴, ignoring your inattentive audience altogether, but small talk requires the co-operation of at least two. The bagpipes⁵ can be played singly, but there must be a pair of cymbals⁶. How often in the evenings had Jotin, when sitting on the open verandah with Mani, made some strained attempts at conversation, only to feel the thread snap⁷. And the very silence of the evening felt ashamed. Jotin was certain that Mani longed to get away. He had even wished earnestly that a third person would come. For talking is easy with three, when it is hard for two.

1. The two instruments ... differently: 两个乐器调子不同。

2. in unison: 和谐地。

3. irrelevant trifles: 不相干的琐事。

4. hold a philosophical ... mo-

nologue: 单独作一次哲学讲演。

5. bagpipe: 风笛。

6. cymbal: 钹。

7. only to feel the thread snap: 结果只能感觉谈话像线一样断掉。

He began to think what he should say when Mani came. But such manufactured talk would not satisfy him. Jotin felt afraid that this five minutes of tonight would be wasted. Yet, for him, there were but few moments left for intimate talk.

III

"What's this, child, you're not going anywhere, are you?"

"Of course, I'm going to Sitarampur."

"What do you mean? Who is going to take you?"

"Anath."

"Not today, my child; some other day."

"But the compartment has already been reserved."

"What does that matter? That loss can easily be borne¹. Go tomorrow, early in the morning."

"Mashi, I don't hold by your inauspicious days². What harm if I do go today?"

"Jotin wants to have a talk with you."

"All right! there's still some time. I'll just go and see him."

"But you mustn't say that you are going."

"Very well, I won't tell him, but I shan't be able to stay long. Tomorrow is my sister's *annaprashan*, and I must go today."

"Oh, my child! I beg you to listen to me this once. Quiet your mind for a while and sit by him. Don't let him see your hurry."

"What can I do? The train won't wait for me. Anath will be back in ten minutes. I can sit by him till then."

1. That loss ... be borne: 受
这点损失没有关系。

2. I don't hold ... days: 我不
能按你定的不吉利的日子去。

“No, that won’t do. I shall never let you go to him in that frame of mind¹.... Oh, you wretch!² the man you are torturing is soon to leave this world; but I warn you, you will remember this day till the end of your days! That there is a God! that there is a God! you will some day understand!”

“Mashi, you mustn’t curse me like that.”

“Oh, my darling boy! my darling! why do you go on living longer? There is no end to this sin³, yet I cannot check it!”

Mashi after delaying a little returned to the sick-room, hoping by that time Jotin would be asleep. But Jotin moved in his bed when she entered. Mashi exclaimed:

“Just look what she had done!”

“What’s happened? Hasn’t Mani come? Why have you been so long, Mashi?”

“I found her weeping bitterly because she had allowed the milk for your soup to get burnt! I tried to console her, saying, ‘Why, there’s more milk to be had!’ But that she could be so careless about the preparation of *your* soup made her wild. With great trouble I managed to pacify her and put her to bed. So I haven’t brought her today. Let her sleep it off⁴.”

Though Jotin was pained when Mani didn’t come, yet he felt a certain amount of relief. He had half feared that Mani’s bodily presence would do violence to his heart’s image of her⁵. Such things had happened before in his life. And the gladness

1. in that frame of mind: 怀着这种心情。

2. Wretch! 可恶的人!

3. There is ... this sin: 这种罪孽竟没完没了。

4. Let her sleep it off: 让她一觉把难过的情绪睡掉。

5. Mani’s bodily presence ... of her: Mani的身子出现会损害她在他心里的形像。

of the idea that Mani was miserable at burning *his* milk filled his heart to overflowing.

“Mashi!”

“What is it, Baba?”

“I feel quite certain that my days are drawing to a close¹. But I have no regrets. Don't grieve for me.”

“No, dear, I won't grieve. I don't believe that only life is good and not death.”

“Mashi, I tell you truly that death seems sweet.”

Jotin, gazing at the dark sky, felt that it was Mani herself who was coming to him in Death's guise². She had immortal youth and the stars were flowers of blessing, showered upon her dark tresses by the hand of the World-Mother. It seemed as if once more he had his first sight of his bride under the veil of darkness³. The immense night became filled with the loving gaze of Mani's dark eyes. Mani, the bride of this house, the little girl, became transformed into a world-image, — her throne on the altar of the stars at the confluence of life and death⁴. Jotin said to himself with clasped hands: “At last the veil is raised, the covering is rent⁵ in this deep darkness. Ah, beautiful one! how often have you wrung my heart, but no longer shall you forsake me!”

“I'm suffering, Mashi, but nothing like you, imagine. It

1. are drawing to a close: 快结束了。

2. in Death's guise: 以死神的形式。

3. under the veil of darkness: 在暗夜的轻纱下(印度新娘新郎第一

次见面时头上披薄纱)。

4. at the confluence ... death: 在生死互相会合的时候。

5. rent: 撕破; 扯掉。

6. wrung my heart: 使我的心痛苦。