

大学英语阶梯阅读系列教程

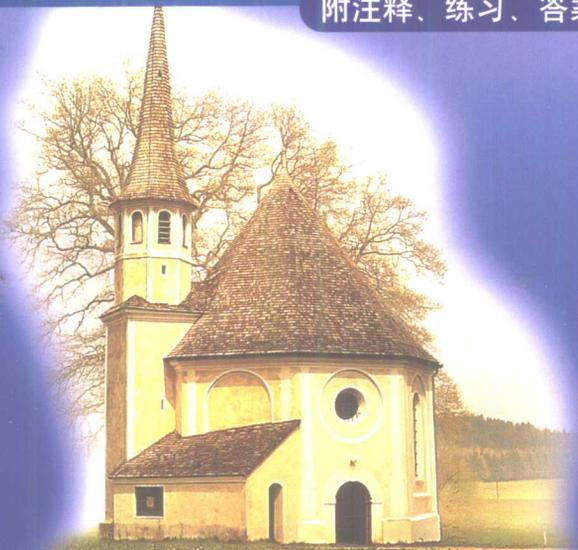
Band 3

郭浩儒 朱国振 主编

Selections of Famous Short Stories

# 著名短篇小说选

附注释、练习、答案



郭 巍 选编

北京航空航天大学出版社

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## 内 容 简 介

本书精选海明威、哈代、欧·亨利等名家之著名短篇小说 11 篇,阅读中除理解小说内容外,还可以了解不同作家的写作特点及风格。

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## 前 言

在进入新世纪的时候,大学生们无不在通过各种途径提高英语水平,以使自己拥有一个得心应手的交际工具,在激烈的人才竞争中占据有利位置。强烈的学习欲望应该令人称道,但也容易出现饥不择食、把别人成功的方法不加分析地照搬过来,或是人云亦云,受一些商业广告的诱惑,尝试那些似乎是有效的作法。这样做,其学习成效之低犹如寒流到来,学习愿望也会一下子降到零度。这的确令人十分遗憾。究其原因,恐怕是浮躁的学习心态使然。

语言知识的学习是一个认知过程,语言技能的掌握是一个在大量实践活动中一点一滴积累的过程。指导学习活动的方法只有符合了语言能力形成的规律才会发生作用。既然语言能力的形成是个相对漫长的过程,因而不能将提高英语水平寄希望于什么“捷径”或“速成”上。学好一种语言,非得下苦功不可,学好英语除了要多听、多说外,还要大量阅读。在阅读中,可以巩固课堂里学过的知识;可以扩大眼界;可以实践各种各样的阅读技巧;可以熟悉了解西方文化、社会习俗、风土人情、最新科技动态;可以了解英语各种文体的写作方法……一句话,你可以在轻松自然的状态下吸收语言,获得乐趣。何乐而不为!

在大学阶段,教师的主导作用逐渐转化为指导作用,语言环境和学习材料的重要性相对上升,学习者的能动性将发挥很大的作用。英语教学将从单纯课堂教学的模式,转化为大学英语课堂教学与学生课外自主学习相结合的双渠道模式。北京航空航天大学面向 21 世纪,在双渠道教学模式方面进行了探索和实践,要求学生每月读一本外语书,并且以不同方式进行检查。实践证明这不仅可行,而且得到学生的认同。

基于上述认识,我们组织编写了这套阶梯阅读系列教程。由学生根据个人兴趣爱好选读。由于不是指令性阅读,在很大程度上

上要靠阅读材料本身能够吸引学生。因此每一级读物有若干本,使学生有选择余地。在每一级读物中,有经典名著的简写本,有英美短篇小说选,有介绍最新科技的科技荟萃,有汇集西方社会热门话题的时文选读。此外,由于课外阅读的目的是巩固扩展语言知识,实践阅读技巧,熟悉了解西方文化,因此我们每四五千字设计了一个练习。练习分为内容理解和语言知识两部分,以主观题为主,题型多样。在适当的时候,有的书还要配上磁带,把文字阅读和有声阅读结合起来。

编者

1999年6月于北京航空航天大学

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## 1. Polar Night

*Norah Burke*

As the hot arctic<sup>1</sup> summer drew to a close, till the magenta<sup>2</sup> sun only slid along the horizon to sink again at once, the polar bear knew that a hard time lay ahead for her.

During the months of night, fifty degrees below zero, her cubs would be born. The great task of motherhood was already begun, the time soon coming when she would bury herself deep down under the snow to give birth. From then until the day when she and the cubs burrowed up into daylight again, she would not eat. She and they must live on what she had stored in her body during the summer, and on what she could catch and eat now. She must finish fattening herself up for the ordeal<sup>3</sup>. And there was not much time left.

At the moment she was hunting along the edge of the ice, because where there was water there were seals, also fish, and the chance of a porpoise<sup>4</sup> or walrus<sup>5</sup>. As winter closed the roots and berries and lichen<sup>6</sup> and seaweed of the polar islands into glass, the bears moved to the ice-edge for their food.

This was the arctic region, the area north of the limit of tree-growth. The shores of Greenland, Siberia, Alaska, Canada bordered upon this spectral<sup>7</sup> sea. It was a landscape of snow and old ice and new ice, of drifting pack ice<sup>8</sup>, and berg ice<sup>9</sup> from the glaciers<sup>10</sup>, all in constant motion, lanes and pools of pure cobalt looking-glass<sup>11</sup> opening and closing all the time in the pack. Where the old ice had been pushed up together in terraces<sup>12</sup>, ice-eaves<sup>13</sup> burned green and lilac<sup>14</sup> underneath. In summer the ivory gulls<sup>15</sup> and other birds made the air raucous<sup>16</sup> with quarrels, but now all that the bear could hear was the wash of blue water against grinding ice.

Under the dark sky, on the white land, in the desolation<sup>17</sup> of the arctic landscape, she was part of its white power, moving with a long swinging walk and huge flat yellow hairy snowman footfalls. Strong and dangerous, the largest of bears, able to swim forty miles out to sea if need be, she stalked her kingdom in which no natural enemy challenged her reign. Her feet, bristled underneath to give grip on<sup>18</sup> the ice, carried her huge weight with a light and silent tread; while the low swinging head searched the ice all the time for food.

She was not clearly aware of what was happening in her body, but the instinct<sup>19</sup> was there to love the unborn cubs, to prepare for them and to protect them; she did not risk her body in careless adventures as she would at other times.

But food? Food —

Already the iron of winter was in the clean cold air, though she felt the cold only with her eyes and black nose and black lips, where the air stung her, and on the long pinkish gray tongue, moving all the time to prevent freezing, that slung in and out of her mouth among the large cruel teeth.

Suddenly, away down the ice-field, where a dark blue lead showed in the pack, she saw a blackish slug on the ice — a seal. It was essential to catch him. In a moment she had decided on her approach, and slipped silently into the water to cut off his line of retreat. The ice rocked as her great weight left it.

The bear was as much at home in the water as on land — buoyant<sup>20</sup>, swimming like a dog, but on top or submerged — and the water much warmer than the air on her face. Not wet, either; inside the layer of fat and the shaggy oily watertight coat, she felt as dry as on land.

By a series of cunning<sup>21</sup> dives and approaches, and keeping under the shoulder of ice, she got near to the seal. Breathing carefully, every nerve keyed to the task of silent approach, ready to spring — to dive — to slaughter, she slid nearer — nearer —

Suddenly the seal saw her. Terror convulsed<sup>22</sup> his face. A moment of awful indecision — whether to plunge into the sea, his natural line of escape, and perhaps fall straight into her jaws, or to struggle across the ice to that other hole —

He swung away from her, humping<sup>23</sup> madly along. The bear lunged up out of the water, on to the ice, on to the terrified seal.

The water sloughed off<sup>24</sup> her everywhere like a tidal wave. There was a flurry of snow and water and fighting seal. His quick struggling body flapped under her as she slew him. Blood spurted on to the snow.

When the seal was dead, the bear attended first to herself, getting rid of the wet from her coat before it could freeze, although oil had kept off the frost so far. She shook, and the drops flew off in rainbows in all directions. She rolled and nosed along in the snow, wiping her flanks<sup>25</sup>, her chin, and soon all was dry. A few hairs crisped up and stuck to each other with frost.

Now for the seal. She ripped up the body, turning back the skin and blubber, letting out a cloud of steam, and ate greedily of the hot crimson<sup>26</sup> meat. Seal meat was her favorite, full of flavor, a hot meal, not like the white icy flakes of cod<sup>27</sup>.

Then, although the bear had no natural enemies, she stopped suddenly as she ate, lifted her head, looked, listened, scented. Blood dripped from her chin onto the snow.

There was nothing.

All the same<sup>28</sup> she trusted her instinct and, leaving the rest of

the meal, slipped into the water, where she could keep her cubs safe, where it was warmer, and easier to move.

Presently she saw upright seals coming along the shore. They were rather rare creatures, these, and dangerous for all they were so weak. The places where they lived had light and noise, and smelled full of good food. The she-bear often drew near the places, attracted by those smells. She hunted these land-seals too, and ate them when she could. They were not like the sea-seals, though. They wore seal fur, and their skins were rubbed with seal blubber, but there was a different taste inside.

They in their turn hunted bear, as the she-bear knew well. She had sometimes found the place of the kill, and seen the white empty skins hanging up by the camps, smelled the dark red gamy<sup>29</sup> flesh cooking.

Now as she watched the approaching men, she considered whether to kill them, but the unborn life in her said get away. So she dived and swam and melted out of their radius.

In the next few days the bear gorged on<sup>30</sup> fish and seal. No longer the hot rocks and scree of summer gave forth good-tasting moss and lichens or the sharp-fleshed berries and sweet roots. She dived into the cold blue ocean for her food.

But now the arctic day was over. In the pink twilight, a snowy owl was flitting silently across the waste, moving south and south as life was squeezed out of the arctic desert by the polar night.

Then came the freezing of the sea. Crystals formed below the surface and rose, and needles of ice shot across from one to another, joining them together, thickening, hardening, adding more ice to the floes already many years old. The ice talked, grinding its teeth, sending out every now and then a singing crack. Curtains of colored

flame rippled<sup>31</sup> in the sky. The polar night began.

Now the real cold came. Now the food disappeared, and old male bears grew lean and savage.

The she-bear chose her den.

There was a great raw range of decayed ice that had been pushed up into mountains whose hollows were packed with snow. Icicles<sup>32</sup> yards long hung on the south side from the summer, and behind this curtain of ice, she found a great purple cave, carved in diamond and full of snow.

This was the place.

Her body was ready now for the ordeal. Thick fat, gathered from seal and halibut<sup>33</sup>, lined her skin.

She burrowed down into<sup>34</sup> the violet snow on the floor of the cave. It was so light that the wind of moving blew it about like feathers and she could breathe in it. She burrowed deeper and deeper, while the snow sifted and fell in soundlessly behind her, till presently she was deep enough.

She curled and rolled herself round and round, pushing the snow, packing it, shaping the den. All the sides of it melted with her heat, then froze again into slippery walls. And the hot breath passed up through the way she had dug, melting the sides of the channel which also froze again and left a tube which would supply her with air until she came up in the spring.

Inside the snow and ice — inside her thick oily fur and the layer of blubber, she was warm, full fed and sleepy. She slept and waited.

In the fullness of time, the first familiar pang<sup>35</sup> of birth trembled in her stomach. Pain fluttered like a butterfly and was gone.

She stirred, lifted her head, rearranged herself.

It came again, stronger, longer.

She moved uneasily.

Then in long strong accomplishing strokes it was there — hard, forcing, contracting, out of her control. Moving to a crescendo<sup>36</sup>. She grunted, tensed all her muscles, pressed and gasped. Another spasm, and on the smooth strong river of pain, she felt the first cub come out.

A wave of relief relaxed her.

There he lay mewling<sup>37</sup>, so wet and tiny, hardly alive, and she nuzzled him delightedly, starting to clean him up.

But now another spasm — the same long final one as before, though easier — and the second cub was born.

It was over now. She felt the diminishing contractions, the subsidence<sup>38</sup> of pain, pulsing quieter.

Now to clean them up. She licked and licked them, turning them over, rolling and caressing them; then life strengthened in them as they dried, as they fed. She lay in bliss, feeling her own life flowing from her heart.

Meanwhile in the world above, the sun had returned, first a green glow, then a rosy one, then touching the topmost peaks, days before the first sunrise.

Deep in the snow cave, the bear knew it as the snow grew luminous with the light pressing through.

One day she heard voices. The snow vibrated with footsteps, the ice ceiling cracked.

She rose, shook herself free of the cubs and stood ready in case the land-seals saw the warm yellow air hole that marked her den — in case one of them walked over her and fell in. . .

She stood fierce, lean, ready, to defend her cubs, her heart

pounding hot and loud as fever in her thin body.

Gradually the voiced and the footsteps died away.

Presently it was time to come out into the world again. The cubs' eyes were open, their coats grown, they were walking, getting stronger everyday. Now they must come out and face the world and swim and fight and catch seals. There was everything to teach them, and while they were still learning — still babies, they had got to be kept safe and fed. All this she had to do alone. Other years she'd had a male to help her, but this time he was gone — lost — those white skins hanging by the camps —

She began to tear her way out, the giant paws and black nails breaking open the ice walls of their den. The ice gave, snow fell in.

They climbed out.

Clean frozen air, dazzling with sun, hit them like the stroke of an axe. Light entered the brain in needles through the eyes. Only gradually, as the pupils contracted, did it become possible to see.

Under an iridescent<sup>39</sup> sun-halo<sup>40</sup>, the arctic landscape blazed white and navy blue. Everything hit them at once — light, noise, wind — the blast of a new world.

Down there was the water —

The mother bear plunged joyfully into the buoyant cleanness. All the dirt and staleness of winter were washed away. It was like flight. She plunged and rose and shook and plunged again in sheer joy. So fresh, so clean, the salt cold water running through her teeth —

Then she resumed the heavy duties of parenthood, turned to the cubs. They were sitting on the edge, squeaking with fright, and she began urging them to come in. They kept feeling forward, then scrambling back. Suddenly one ventured too far down the ice, and

slithered, shrieking, into the sea, where he bobbed up again like a cork.

His brother, seeing this, plucked up courage<sup>41</sup> and plunged in too in one desperate baby-jump, landing with a painful *smack!* and blinking<sup>42</sup> in the spray.

They found they could swim.

Presently she pushed them up on to the ice again where they shook and dried, and the next thing was food. She left them while she killed a seal, and the three of them ate it.

After that there were lessons, how to fish, how to kill. Living was thin at first, for three hunters cannot move as silently as one, but they got along.

Until the day when land-seals approached them unseen from behind an ice ridge. The first they knew of it was an explosion, and one cub gasped and doubled up as he was hit. The bears dived for the water, even the wounded little one. He managed to keep up with them, and his mother and brother would die rather than desert him.

They all swam on, but slowly — slowly. Both cubs were still so small and *slow*, and they must hurry —

Blood ran in the sapphire<sup>43</sup> water.

Other shots splattered beside them.

Anxiety roared in the she-bear's blood. Her heart was bursting. She pushed the cubs on, and turned to meet her enemies. Reared up on to the ice and galloped<sup>44</sup> towards them, a charge<sup>45</sup> that nothing could stop — not even death — if they'd stay to face it, but they broke and ran.

The bear returned to her cubs.

The wounded one was sinking lower and lower in the water,

breathing waves, and she managed to push him out at last on to distant ice. Then she licked him as he lay suffering in the snow, and his brother licked him too, whimpering with distress as he worked.

So that presently the blood stopped, and after a long time the suffering too. The cub sniffed the air. In the first real moment of recovery he consented to take food.

Pain went away from her heart.

Before them lay all the arctic lands, the snow in retreat. The floes<sup>46</sup>, soft and friable<sup>47</sup> from solar radiation, were being broken up by the waves. Plant life teemed<sup>48</sup> in the water, the more open sea colored bright green by diatoms<sup>49</sup>. Millions of wild flowers studded the rocky scree<sup>50</sup>. There was everything to eat at once — lichen and moss and roots and halibut and seals. Salmon<sup>51</sup> swam the green water, and cod. Seaweed washed round the rocks. On the land there were hares and young birds.

The summer gathered to almost tropical heat. Snow water dribbled into pools. Icicles glistened with wet, dropped and broke like glass.

And the mother bear, in the snow, with her cubs did not know why she behaved as she did. There was pain and there was happiness, and these two things drove her according to unfathomable<sup>52</sup> laws. When the summer ended, and the polar night began, she would do the same things over again, and her children after her.

### Notes:

- |                                  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. arctic 北极的                    | 4. porpoise 海豚                  |
| 2. magenta — bright crimson 洋红色的 | 5. walrus 海象                    |
| 3. ordeal 严酷考验                   | 6. lichen (长在石头, 墙或树根上的) 石耳, 地衣 |

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 7. spectral 光谱的                          | 30. gorge on — eat greedily            |
| 8. pack ice 海中的积冰块                       | 31. ripple 起伏                          |
| 9. berg ice 冰山断裂下来的大冰块                   | 32. icicle 冰柱                          |
| 10. glacier 冰山                           | 33. halibut 大比目鱼                       |
| 11. pure cobalt looking-glass 像纯钴蓝色玻璃一样的 | 34. burrow into — dig                  |
| 12. in terraces 呈梯形的                     | 35. pang 阵痛                            |
| 13. eave 檐                               | 36. crescendo 渐趋高潮, 这里指疼痛逐渐加剧          |
| 14. lilac 紫丁香; 淡紫色的                      | 37. mewling 咪咪叫                        |
| 15. ivory gull 象牙色的海鸥                    | 38. subsidence 减弱, 平息                  |
| 16. raucous 沙哑的                          | 39. iridescent 彩虹般的                    |
| 17. desolation 荒芜                        | 40. sun-halo 日晕                        |
| 18. give grip on 抓住                      | 41. pluck up courage 鼓起勇气              |
| 19. instinct 本能                          | 42. blink 眨眼                           |
| 20. bouyant 能漂浮的; 心情快活的                  | 43. sapphire — bright blue color       |
| 21. cunning 机智的; 狡猾的                     | 44. gallop — run fast                  |
| 22. convulse 使剧烈震动                       | 45. charge 突袭                          |
| 23. hump 拱起背                             | 46. floe 浮冰块                           |
| 24. slough off — come off                | 47. friable 易碎的                        |
| 25. flanks 身体的两侧                         | 48. teem — be present in large numbers |
| 26. crimson 猩红色的                         | 49. diatoms 硅藻                         |
| 27. cod 鳕鱼                               | 50. scree 布满碎石的山坡                      |
| 28. all the same 尽管如此                    | 51. salmon 鲑鱼                          |
| 29. gamy 有猎物气味的                          | 52. unfathomable 深不可测的                 |

## Exercise One

### Section A Understanding

#### I. Interpretations of the story.

1. What did the she-bear have to do before the long darkness came?
2. In paragraph four the author gave us a detailed description of the place where the bear lived, what kind of place do you think it was? What was the author's purpose here?
3. Do you think the she-bear was a powerful figure? In what sense?
4. Where did threat to the bear come from? Did she have any natural enemies?
5. In the first paragraph, the author said that the polar bear would have a hard time. What hard time do you know she had from the story? Please list four at least.
6. Does male bears help bring up cubs? Why did the she-bear in the story have to protect and train her cubs alone?

#### II. Arrange the following descriptions in a correct order.

- ( ) giving birth to cubs
- ( ) digging up a den for the long night
- ( ) capturing a seal for fattening herself up
- ( ) meeting face to face with land-seals
- ( ) training her cubs to swim
- ( ) cleaning herself in the water

#### III. Rewrite the story in less than 200 words with the following sentences as your reference.

1. The polar bear was brave and powerful figure.
2. She had a strong parental love and a clear sense of responsi-