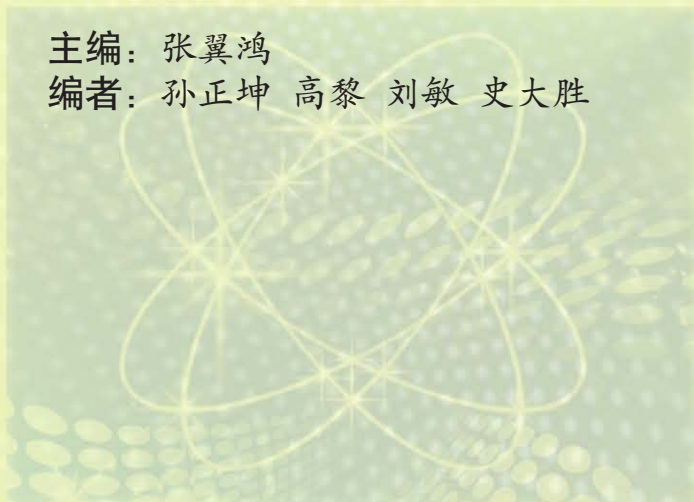


北京市属高等学校人才强教计划资助项目

英美短篇小说赏析

*Selected Readings of
British and American Short Stories*

主编：张翼鸿
编者：孙正坤 高黎 刘敏 史大胜



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编者说明

1、体例

本书包括二十二个单元,涉及十九世纪初至二十世纪中叶二十二位英美短篇小说名家的二十三篇佳作。每个单元由六部分组成:“作者简介”、“短篇佳作”、“注释”、“工具箱(文学名词解释)”、“赏析练习”和“相关链接及参考文献”。

2、使用说明

本书适合用做大学本科英语专业和非英语专业三、四年级文学类课程教材或泛读材料,也适合广大英语爱好者自学使用,提高文学鉴赏能力。

欣赏一篇佳作须经历以下三个步骤:①阅读作者简介及原作,然后完成课后练习一(判断正误的练习),检验第一次阅读理解程度;②借助注释和文学名词解释,理解难点,与同学讨论并回答练习二中的问题,加深对原作的理解;③查阅相关链接和参考文献,选择一个兴趣焦点,完成书面作业。经历这三个步骤,读者方可比较透彻地理解、欣赏一篇佳作。

3、作者及鸣谢

前言以及第二、三、十一、十四、十五、十七、十九、二十一共八个单元由张翼鸿编写;第七、九、十、十三、十六共五个单元由孙正坤编写;第一、四(第一篇)、五、二十、二十二共五个单元由高黎编写;第四(第二篇)、八、十二、十八共四个单元由刘敏编写;第六单元由史大胜编写。全书由张翼鸿统筹;图书出版相关事宜由史大胜负责。

在本书的编写过程中,我们参阅了相关资料,列举在每个单元的相关链接和参考文献中,在此再次表示感谢。由于本书作者水平有限,时间仓促,难免出现纰漏,请专家、学者和读者予以批评指正。

编 者

2010年5月

序 言

一、短篇小说的定义及其起源

理解短篇小说的定义和起源是赏析短篇小说的出发点。

短篇小说,顾名思义,是一种篇幅较短的小说,属叙事文学。它往往选取和描绘富有典型意义的生活片断,着力刻画主要人物的性格特征,反映生活的某一侧面。(It usually presents a single significant episode or scene involving a limited number of characters, from *Britanica Concise Encyclopedia*)。

从篇幅上,人们通常将两千至两万字的小小说定义为短篇小说(short story,两千字以下的定义为小小说(short short story))。

短篇小说(short story)作为一种独立的文学体裁形成于十九世纪,“short story”一词出现于十九世纪末。虽仅有 150 多年的历史,然而其渊源却可追溯到六千年前的古埃及故事。此后数千年的历史进程中,短篇小说的前身短篇故事(short tales)以多种形式在世界各地讲述着各具特色的故事:民间故事(folk tales,《一千零一夜》(*Arabian Nights*))、动物寓言故事(fable,《伊索寓言》(*Aesop's Fables*)公元前 6 世纪)、宗教或道德寓言(parable,《圣经》中记录的 *Jesus Parables*)、逸闻趣事(anecdote,《罗马人传奇》(*Gesta Romanorum*))、札记(sketch,如美国作家华盛顿·欧文的《见闻札记》, *The Sketch Book*)、童话故事(fairy tales),如《格林童话集》(*Grimm's Fairy Tales*)、故事(tales),乔叟的《坎特伯雷故事集》(*The Canterbury Tales*)。

短篇小说在过去的 150 多年中发展迅速,世界各国涌现出一批又一批卓越的短篇小说作家和文学批评家,如大家耳熟能详的短篇小说大师爱伦·坡(1809—1849)、莫泊桑(1850—1893)、契诃夫(1860—1905)、欧·亨利(1862—1910)等。短篇小说日趋成熟,形成鲜明特色。凭借短小的篇幅、简洁的情节、鲜明的人物以及精巧的结构,短篇小说受到读者青睐,呈现出一片繁荣景象。

短篇小说根据风格、体裁、题材等还可细分为奇幻小说(fantasy)、幽默与讽刺小说(humor and satire)、人物研究小说(character study)、忏悔小说(confession)、自传体小说(biography)、爱情小说(romance)、历史小说(history)、教育小说(education)、宗教小说(religion)、乡土小说(local color)、恐怖小说(horror)、悬疑小说(mystery)、惊悚小说(thriller)、侦探小说(detective story)、科幻小说(science fiction)以及犯罪小说(crime)等等,种类繁多,数不胜数。

二、短篇小说基本要素

赏析短篇小说首先须理解其七个基本要素:环境(setting)、情节(plot)、人物(character)、视角(point of view)、主题(theme)、语气(Tone)和风格(style)。

2.1 环境(Setting)

环境旨在为人物刻画、情节发展和主题深化提供背景知识,营造氛围,引起读者的阅读兴趣。环境含自然环境和社会环境。自然环境包括地理环境,即故事发生的地点,如国家、城市(乡村)、居住环境等;时间背景指故事发生的时间,如时代、年份、季节、时段等。社会环境包括人物背景,如宗教、职业、道德观、情绪状况等。环境须同人物的表现、心情、身份、时代相适应。作者通常在开篇部分提供以上信息,但有的作家也会在开篇后逐渐交代环境信息,加大了阅读难度。但只要

读者理解环境的含义和作用,无论以上信息出现在何处,都能顺利捕捉。

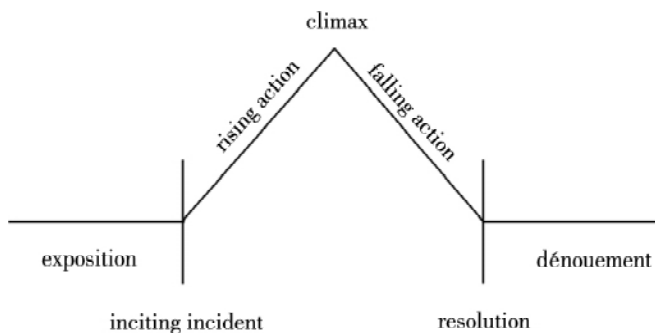
氛围(atmosphere,mood)是环境的一部分,是作者通过环境和人物关系营造的某种情绪或基调。例如,故事发生在明媚的春天里,晴朗的夏日里,阴雨连绵的夜晚,白雪纷飞的冬日会营造出不同的氛围。

2.2 情节(Plot)

情节指作者为达到某种效果对事件的艺术安排。事件按一定的因果关系被有机地排列,形成开始、中间和结尾。

传统的情节在冲突(conflict)的推动下发展。冲突可分为内部冲突(internal conflict),即人物内心冲突和外部冲突(external conflict),主要人物与其他人物或社会或自然力量的冲突。

情节的发展可以划分为不同的阶段。可以借用德国十九世纪戏剧家和小说家噶斯塔夫·弗莱塔克(Gustav Freytag,1816—1895)评述古希腊和莎士比亚戏剧时设计的图表(见图一)说明小说情节发展的不同阶段。



图一 情节发展图

如图所示,传统的情节发展可以分为以下七个阶段:

1. 序幕(Exposition):作者介绍环境。
2. 开端(Inciting Incident):预示主要冲突开始的起始事件。
3. 发展(Rising Action):一系列事件的发生导致冲突发展,复杂,深化。
4. 高潮(Climax):冲突激化,达到顶点,是情节发展的最精彩阶段。
5. 回落(Falling Action):情节出现转折(reversal),高潮导致的后续事件,为结局做铺垫。
6. 结局(Resolution):人物自己或他人为他解决主要问题或冲突。

7. 尾声(Dénouement 或者 the Ending):冲突解决后遗留的疑问得到解释。有时作者不做任何解释,将思考空间留给读者。

然而,现当代作家越来越摒弃情节,注重刻画人物内心活动的复杂性。例如,英国作家詹姆斯·乔伊斯在《阿拉比》等短篇作品中,集中再现人物的“顿悟”,而淡化了情节的发展和结局。

短篇小说作家常用的情节写作技巧包括倒叙(flashback)、铺垫(foreshadowing)和巧合(coincidence)。

2.3 人物(Character)

这里人物是指为文学作品虚构的人物。

小说中的人物根据不同的划分标准,可划分不同的组合。英国作家福斯特在《小说面面观》一书中根据人物的真实程度将人物划分为圆形人物(round characters)和扁平人物(flat characters)。

圆形人物指性格比较复杂、刻画深刻的三维人物,既能令读者惊喜,又不失可信度。扁平人物指性格单一,不能带给读者任何惊喜的两维人物。

根据作品中的地位可以将人物划分为主要人物(major characters)和次要人物(minor characters)。主要人物包括主人公(protagonist)和他的冲突对手(antagonist)。冲突将围绕他们展开。通常主人公是圆形人物,性格最丰满。对手也常常是圆形人物,但也有作家将之写成扁平人物。次要人物在小说中起到陪衬、烘托等作用,包括主人公的知己(confidant(confidante))、陪衬人物(foil)、模式化人物(stereotyped character,也被称为 stock character 或 type character)等。

根据变化程度可将人物分为动态人物(active 或 dynamic character)和静态人物(static character)。动态人物指由于情节发展,性格、命运等发生了变化的人物。而静态人物则指人物的性格等一成不变的人物。

作家对人物的性格描述可分为:直接人物描述和间接人物描述。直接人物描述指故事叙述者或其他人物告知读者某一人物的性格特征。间接人物描述指叙述者或小说的人物不加评论地描写其他人物的外貌和行为,以此来展示人物的性格特征。人物的行为举止是否有合理的行为动机(motivation),即是否与其性格和情节发展相吻合,是评判一个作家人物塑造水平的标准。

2.4 视角(Point of view)

视角指作者的叙事角度,包括第一人称(first person point of view—I(常用),we(罕见)和第三人称(third person point of view—he, she, they)。

第一人称叙述者可以是主要人物、次要人物或者事件的旁观者。第三人称叙述者又可分为全知全能第三人称视角(omniscient third person point of view,叙述者无所不知)和有限第三人称视角(limited third person point of view,作者只展示某个人物所知、所想)。现代短篇小说常常采用客观视角或戏剧性视角(objective point of view or dramatic point of view)。该视角也属于有限第三人称视角,叙述者犹如新闻记者,只展现人物和事件,不发表任何评论。

2.5 主题(Theme)

主题是作者要表达的思想。主题通常不是由作者在小说中陈述,而是由读者领悟,因此可以有不同的解读。读者可以通过解读小说的标题、重复出现的意象、思想、词语、事物(motifs)、作者的语气以及其他作者描述的事实,结合原有的知识和经验,提炼小说的主题思想,然后用凝练的语句加以概括。一篇小说可能表达多个主题。

2.6 语气(Tone)

语气指作者表达的态度。作者通过对环境和人物的细节描写、通过对话以及叙述者的直接评述表达不同的语气:严肃的(serious)、反省的(introspective)、讽刺的(satirical),悲伤的(sad)、反讽的(ironic)、嘲弄的(mocking)、玩笑的(playful)、高傲的(condescending),正式的(formal)以及非正式的(informal)等。

2.7 风格(Style)

风格指小说的文体风格,即作者如何运用语言讲述故事,塑造人物,刻画主题思想。分析小说的风格时,读者须考查作者的语言运用情况。1)词法(diction)。考查作者的词语选择情况,看其用词属于哪一类:普遍/特定(general/specific)、正式/非正式(formal/informal)、抽象/具体(abstract/concrete)或者常见/术语(common/jargon)等。2)句法(syntax)。作家根据人物塑造的需求和个人喜好采用不同的句子结构:简单句(simple sentences)、复合句(complex sentences)、陈述

句(declarative sentences)、疑问句(interrogative sentences)、对话(dialogues)、独白(monologues)、内心独白(interior monologues)、直接引语(direct speeches)、间接引语(indirect speeches)等。3) 意境(imagery),指小说中所有诉诸于读者感官的描写,使读者亲临其境,感同身受。作者通过细节描写、修辞格的使用,塑造意象,营造意境。4) 修辞格(figurative language)。短篇小说作家常使用的修辞格有:明喻(simile)、暗喻(metaphor)、反讽(irony)、象征(symbolism)、拟人(personification)、夸张(hyperbole)、悖论(paradox)、类比(analogy)等。5) 语气(tone),见前文所述。6) 情节安排(organizational structure),指作者安排情节的顺序。通常故事情节按时间顺序发展(chronological),但有的作家运用倒叙、铺垫、多个叙述者等手法,打乱时间顺序。

三、短篇小说赏析

在阅读过程中读者可以围绕短篇小说七要素,思考以下十个方面的问题。在回答问题的过程中,读者可以在理解的基础上分析,在分析的基础上欣赏,最终全面解读作品。

1、该篇小说是什么类型的短篇小说?(是哥特式?现实主义?浪漫主义?还是现代主义?等等)

2、该篇小说发生在什么样的环境里?(什么时间?什么地点?)作者为什么选取这样的地理环境和时间环境?作者努力营造什么样的氛围?环境是否象征人物的某种情绪或者性格特征?环境如何影响人物性格?环境与主题有何关联?环境的选取是否恰当?

3、该篇小说创作于什么时代?时代背景是否与小说的人物性格和主题相关?

4、人物的外部形象或者名字等是否有深刻含义?人物有什么样的性格?人物的行为动机是什么?是否合理?人物在小说情节发展过程中是否发生什么变化?在小说的结尾人物是否与小说开篇有所不同?是有所感悟还是一成不变?

5、小说中有哪些反复重复出现的事物?它们如何深化主题?如何刻画人物性格?

6、小说中描绘了哪些冲突?情节的高潮在哪里?

7、小说的主题思想是什么?(可以是多个)

8、作者如何通过写作风格(词法、句法、修辞等)深化主题,塑造人物?

9、小说中是否有象征?象征与主题有何关联?

10、小说对比了哪些事物?为什么做这样的对比?

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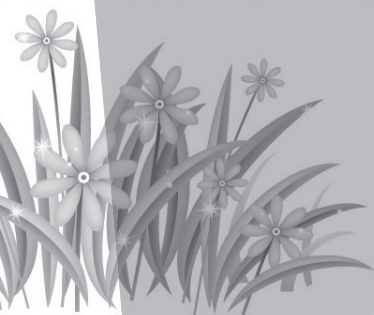
张翼鸿

2010年5月于北京

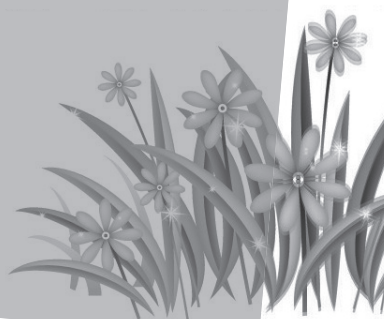


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 A graphic of an open book with the text "Unit 1" written inside it.

Unit 1

Nathaniel Hawthorne

About the Author

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804 – 1864), American novelist and short story writer, is a central figure of the American Renaissance. An original writer and a master of the art of writing, Hawthorne creatively developed the art forms of both short story and novel, helping to establish the American short story as a significant art form with his haunting tales of human loneliness, frustration, hypocrisy, eccentricity, frailty, and creating his own romance as a contrast to the traditional novel form. His writings are a unique blend of the profundity of New England Puritanism, the reason, doubt of Enlightenment and the boundless imagination of Transcendentalism that opened new grounds in American literature.



Nathaniel Hawthorne was born in Salem, Massachusetts in 1804. After his father died when he was only four years old, his mother withdrew to a life of seclusion, which greatly affected his way of life when he grew up. From 1821 to 1824, Hawthorne attended Bowdoin College where he made friends with the poet Longfellow and the future president Franklin Pierce. After he graduated from Bowdoin College in 1825, Hawthorne returned to his home in Salem and began to write in semi-seclusion.

As a descendant of a long line of New England Puritans, Hawthorne showed a keen interest in the Puritan way of life. However, his puritan background was both a drawback and a support. On the one hand, he always felt guilty for the notorious persecution his great grandfather did as one of the judges of the Salem Witchcraft Trials in 1692; on the other hand, the Puritan tradition of soul-searching provides Hawthorne with a way of seeing and interpreting and endows his writing with a lofty moral altitude. His puritan heritage also became a source of inspiration. In fact, many of his works are set in 17th century New England Puritanical community, and most of his writings focus on themes of sin, repentance, retribution and morality. Taking a rather dark view of human nature, Hawthorne explores human psychology through crafty use of symbolism and allegory.

Hawthorne called his novels “romance”, which, according to him, is radically different from novel by not being concerned with the possible or probable course of ordinary experience. His four major romances are *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), *The Blithedale Romance* (1852) and *The Marble Faun* (1860). His story collections include *Twice-*

Told Tales (1837), *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846) and *The Snow-Image* (1851). His most anthologized tales include “My Kinsman, Major Molineux” (1832), “Roger Malvin’s Burial” (1832), “Young Goodman Brown” (1835) and “Rappaccini’s Daughter” (1844). Besides short stories and romances, Hawthorne wrote several important books for children, the series called *Grandfather’s Chair* (1841–1842) and the two *Wonderbooks* (1852–1853).

Young Goodman Brown¹

Young Goodman Brown came forth at sunset into the street at Salem² village; but put his head back, after crossing the threshold, to exchange a parting kiss with his young wife. And Faith³, as the wife was aptly named, thrust her own pretty head into the street, letting the wind play with the pink ribbons⁴ of her cap while she called to Goodman Brown.

“Dearest heart,” whispered she, softly and rather sadly, when her lips were close to his ear, “pr’y thee⁵, put off your journey until sunrise and sleep in your own bed to-night. A lone woman is troubled with such dreams and such thoughts that she’s afraid of herself sometimes. Pray tarry⁶ with me this night, dear husband, of all nights in the year.”

“My love and my Faith,” replied young Goodman Brown, “of all nights in the year, this one night must I tarry away from thee. My journey, as thou callest it⁷, forth and back again, must needs be done ‘twixt⁸ now and sunrise. What, my sweet, pretty wife, dost thou doubt me already, and we but three months married?”

“Then God bless you!” said Faith, with the pink ribbons; “and may you find all well when you come back.”

“Amen!” cried Goodman Brown. “Say thy⁹ prayers, dear Faith, and go to bed at dusk, and no harm will come to thee.”

So they parted; and the young man pursued his way until, being about to turn the corner by the meeting-house, he looked back and saw the head of Faith still peeping after him with a melancholy air, in spite of her pink ribbons.

“Poor little Faith!” thought he, for his heart smote him. “What a wretch am I to leave her on such an errand! She talks of dreams, too. Methought¹⁰, as she spoke there was trouble in her face, as if a dream had warned her what work is to be done tonight. But no, no! ‘t would kill her to think it. Well, she’s a blessed angel on earth; and after this one night I’ll cling to her skirts and follow her to heaven.”

With this excellent resolve for the future, Goodman Brown felt himself justified in making more haste on his present evil purpose. He had taken a dreary road, darkened by all the gloomiest trees of the forest¹¹, which barely stood aside to let the narrow path creep through, and closed immediately behind. It was all as lonely as could be; and there is this peculiarity in such a solitude, that the traveller knows not who may be concealed by the innumerable trunks and the thick boughs overhead; so that with lonely footsteps he may yet be passing through an unseen multitude.

“There may be a devilish Indian behind every tree,” said Goodman Brown to himself; and he glanced fearfully behind him as he added, “What if the devil himself should be at my very elbow!”

His head being turned back, he passed a crook of the road, and, looking forward again, beheld the figure of a man¹², in grave and decent attire, seated at the foot of an old tree. He arose at Goodman Brown’s approach and walked onward side by side with him.

“You are late, Goodman Brown,” said he. “The clock of the Old South¹³ was striking as I came through Boston, and that is full fifteen minutes ago¹⁴. ”

“Faith kept me back a while,” replied the young man, with a tremor in his voice, caused by the sudden appearance of his companion, though not wholly unexpected.

It was now deep dusk in the forest, and deepest in that part of it where these two were journeying. As nearly as could be discerned, the second traveller was about fifty years old, apparently in the same rank of life as Goodman Brown, and bearing a considerable resemblance to him, though perhaps more in expression than features. Still they might have been taken for father and son. And yet, though the elder person was as simply clad as the younger, and as simple in manner too, he had an indescribable air of one who knew the world, and who would not have felt abashed¹⁵ at the governor’s dinner table or in King William’s¹⁶ court, were it possible that his affairs should call him thither¹⁷. But the only thing about him that could be fixed upon as remarkable was his staff¹⁸, which bore the likeness of a great black snake, so curiously wrought that it might almost be seen to twist and wriggle itself like a living serpent. This, of course, must have been an ocular¹⁹ deception, assisted by the uncertain light.

“Come, Goodman Brown,” cried his fellow-traveller, “this is a dull pace for the beginning of a journey. Take my staff, if you are so soon weary. ”

“Friend,” said the other, exchanging his slow pace for a full stop, “having kept covenant²⁰ by meeting thee here, it is my purpose now to return whence I came. I have scruples²¹ touching the matter thou wot’st²² of. ”

“Sayest thou so?” replied he of the serpent, smiling apart. “Let us walk on, nevertheless, reasoning as we go; and if I convince thee not, thou shalt turn back²³. We are but a little way in the forest yet. ”

“Too far! too far!” exclaimed the goodman²⁴, unconsciously resuming his walk. “My father never went into the woods on such an errand, nor his father before him. We have been a race of honest men and good Christians since the days of the martyrs²⁵; and shall I be the first of the name of Brown that ever took this path and kept”

“Such company, thou wouldst say,” observed the elder person, interpreting his pause. “Well said, Goodman Brown! I have been as well acquainted with your family as with ever a one among the Puritans; and that’s no trifle to say. I helped your grandfather, the constable, when he lashed the Quaker²⁶ woman so smartly through the streets of Salem; and it was I that brought your father a pitch-pine knot, kindled at my own hearth, to set fire to an Indian village, in King Philip’s war.²⁷

They were my good friends, both; and many a pleasant walk have we had along this path, and returned merrily after midnight. I would fain²⁸ be friends with you for their sake. ”

“If it be as thou sayest,” replied Goodman Brown, “I marvel they never spoke of these matters; or, verily, I marvel not, seeing that the least rumor of the sort would have driven them from New England. We are a people of prayer, and good works to boot²⁹, and abide no such wickedness. ”

“Wickedness or not,” said the traveller with the twisted staff, “I have a very general acquaintance here in New England. The deacons³⁰ of many a church have drunk the communion wine³¹ with me; the selectmen of divers³² towns make me their chairman; and a majority of the Great and General Court³³ are firm supporters of my interest. The governor and I, too — But these are state secrets. ”

“Can this be so?” cried Goodman Brown, with a stare of amazement at his undisturbed companion. “Howbeit³⁴, I have nothing to do with the governor and council; they have their own ways, and are no rule for a simple husbandman like me. But, were I to go on with thee, how should I meet the eye of that good old man, our minister, at Salem village? Oh, his voice would make me tremble both Sabbath day and lecture day³⁵. ”

Thus far the elder traveller had listened with due gravity; but now burst into a fit of irrepressible mirth, shaking himself so violently that his snake-like staff actually seemed to wriggle in sympathy.

“Ha! ha! ha!” shouted he again and again; then composing himself, “Well, go on, Goodman Brown, go on; but, prithee, don’t kill me with laughing. ”

“Well, then, to end the matter at once,” said Goodman Brown, considerably nettled³⁶, “there is my wife, Faith. It would break her dear little heart; and I’d rather break my own. ”

“Nay, if that be the case,” answered the other, “’en go thy ways³⁷, Goodman Brown. I would not, for twenty old women like the one hobbling before us, that Faith should come to any harm. ”

As he spoke he pointed his staff at a female figure on the path, in whom Goodman Brown recognized a very pious and exemplary dame, who had taught him his catechism³⁸ in youth, and was still his moral and spiritual adviser, jointly with the minister and Deacon Gookin.

“A marvel, truly, that Goody Cloyse should be so far in the wilderness at nightfall,” said he. “But with your leave, friend, I shall take a cut through the woods until we have left this Christian woman behind. Being a stranger to you, she might ask whom I was consorting with³⁹ and whither⁴⁰ I was going. ”

“Be it so,” said his fellow-traveller. “Betake⁴¹ you to the woods, and let me keep the path. ”

Accordingly the young man turned aside, but took care to watch his companion, who advanced softly along the road until he had come within a staff’s length of the old dame. She, meanwhile, was making the best of her way, with singular speed for so aged a woman, and mumbling some indistinct words — a prayer, doubtless — as she went. The traveller put forth his staff and touched her withered neck with what seemed the serpent’s tail.

“The devil!” screamed the pious old lady.

“Then Goody Cloyse⁴² knows her old friend?” observed the traveller, confronting her and leaning on his writhing stick.

“Ah, forsooth⁴³, and is it your worship⁴⁴ indeed?” cried the good dame. “Yea, truly is it, and in the very image of my old gossip⁴⁵, Goodman Brown, the grandfather of the silly fellow that now is. But — would your worship believe it? — my broomstick hath strangely disappeared, stolen, as I suspect, by that unhangd witch, Goody Cory, and that, too, when I was all anointed with the juice of smallage, and cinquefoil, and wolfs bane”⁴⁶

“Mingled with fine wheat and the fat of a new-born babe,” said the shape of old Goodman Brown.

“Ah, your worship knows the recipe,” cried the old lady, cackling aloud. “So, as I was saying, being all ready for the meeting, and no horse to ride on, I made up my mind to foot it; for they tell me there is a nice young man to be taken into communion to-night. But now your good worship will lend me your arm, and we shall be there in a twinkling.”

“That can hardly be,” answered her friend. “I may not spare you my arm, Goody Cloyse; but here is my staff, if you will.”

So saying, he threw it down at her feet, where, perhaps, it assumed life, being one of the rods which its owner had formerly lent to the Egyptian magi⁴⁷. Of this fact, however, Goodman Brown could not take cognizance⁴⁸. He had cast up his eyes in astonishment, and, looking down again, beheld neither Goody Cloyse nor the serpentine staff, but his fellow-traveller alone, who waited for him as calmly as if nothing had happened.

“That old woman taught me my catechism,” said the young man; and there was a world of meaning in this simple comment.

They continued to walk onward, while the elder traveller exhorted his companion to make good speed and persevere in the path, discoursing so aptly that his arguments seemed rather to spring up in the bosom of his auditor than to be suggested by himself⁴⁹. As they went, he plucked a branch of maple to serve for a walking stick, and began to strip it of the twigs and little boughs, which were wet with evening dew. The moment his fingers touched them they became strangely withered and dried up as with a week's sunshine. Thus the pair proceeded, at a good free pace, until suddenly, in a gloomy hollow of the road, Goodman Brown sat himself down on the stump of a tree and refused to go any farther.

“Friend,” said he, stubbornly, “my mind is made up. Not another step will I budge⁵⁰ on this errand. What if a wretched old woman do choose to go to the devil when I thought she was going to heaven; is that any reason why I should quit my dear Faith and go after her?”

“You will think better of this by and by,” said his acquaintance, composedly. “Sit here and rest yourself a while; and when you feel like moving again, there is my staff to help you along.”

Without more words, he threw his companion the maple stick, and was as speedily out of sight as if he had vanished into the deepening gloom. The young man sat a few moments by the

roadside, applauding himself greatly, and thinking with how clear a conscience he should meet the minister in his morning walk, nor shrink from the eye of good old Deacon Gookin. And what calm sleep would be his that very night, which was to have been spent so wickedly, but so purely and sweetly now, in the arms of Faith! Amidst these pleasant and praiseworthy meditations, Goodman Brown heard the tramp of horses along the road, and deemed it advisable to conceal himself within the verge of the forest, conscious of the guilty purpose that had brought him thither, though now so happily turned from it.

On came the hoof tramps and the voices of the riders, two grave old voices, conversing soberly as they drew near. These mingled sounds appeared to pass along the road, within a few yards of the young man's hiding-place; but, owing doubtless to the depth of the gloom at that particular spot, neither the travellers nor their steeds were visible. Though their figures brushed the small boughs by the wayside, it could not be seen that they intercepted, even for a moment, the faint gleam from the strip of bright sky athwart⁵¹ which they must have passed. Goodman Brown alternately crouched and stood on tiptoe, pulling aside the branches and thrusting forth his head as far as he durst without discerning so much as a shadow. It vexed him the more, because he could have sworn, were such a thing possible, that he recognized the voices of the minister and Deacon Gookin, jogging along quietly, as they were wont to do, when bound to some ordination⁵² or ecclesiastical council. While yet within hearing, one of the riders stopped to pluck a switch.

"Of the two, reverend sir," said the voice like the deacon's, "I had rather miss an ordination dinner than to-night's meeting. They tell me that some of our community are to be here from Falmouth⁵³ and beyond, and others from Connecticut and Rhode Island, besides several of the Indian powwows⁵⁴, who, after their fashion, know almost as much deviltry as the best of us. Moreover, there is a goodly young woman to be taken into communion."

"Mighty well, Deacon Gookin!" replied the solemn old tones of the minister. "Spur up, or we shall be late. Nothing can be done, you know, until I get on the ground."

The hoofs clattered again; and the voices, talking so strangely in the empty air, passed on through the forest, where no church had ever been gathered or solitary Christian prayed. Whither, then, could these holy men be journeying so deep into the heathen wilderness? Young Goodman Brown caught hold of a tree for support, being ready to sink down on the ground, faint and overburdened with the heavy sickness of his heart. He looked up to the sky, doubting whether there really was a heaven above him. Yet there was the blue arch, and the stars brightening in it.

"With heaven above and Faith below, I will yet stand firm against the devil!" cried Goodman Brown.

While he still gazed upward into the deep arch of the firmament⁵⁵ and had lifted his hands to pray, a cloud, though no wind was stirring, hurried across the zenith and hid the brightening stars. The blue sky was still visible, except directly overhead, where this black mass of cloud was sweeping swiftly northward. Aloft in the air, as if from the depths of the cloud, came a confused and doubtful sound of voices. Once the listener fancied that he could distinguish the accents of

towns-people of his own, men and women, both pious and ungodly, many of whom he had met at the communion table, and had seen others rioting at the tavern. The next moment, so indistinct were the sounds, he doubted whether he had heard aught⁵⁶ but the murmur of the old forest, whispering without a wind. Then came a stronger swell of those familiar tones, heard daily in the sunshine at Salem village, but never until now from a cloud of night. There was one voice of a young woman, uttering lamentations, yet with an uncertain sorrow, and entreating⁵⁷ for some favor, which, perhaps, it would grieve her to obtain; and all the unseen multitude, both saints and sinners, seemed to encourage her onward.

“Faith!” shouted Goodman Brown, in a voice of agony and desperation; and the echoes of the forest mocked him, crying, “Faith! Faith!” as if bewildered wretches were seeking her all through the wilderness.

The cry of grief, rage, and terror was yet piercing the night, when the unhappy husband held his breath for a response. There was a scream, drowned immediately in a louder murmur of voices, fading into far-off laughter, as the dark cloud swept away, leaving the clear and silent sky above Goodman Brown. But something fluttered lightly down through the air and caught on the branch of a tree. The young man seized it, and beheld a pink ribbon.

“My Faith is gone!”⁵⁸ cried he, after one stupefied moment. “There is no good on earth; and sin is but a name. Come, devil; for to thee is this world given.”

And, maddened with despair, so that he laughed loud and long, did Goodman Brown grasp his staff and set forth again, at such a rate that he seemed to fly along the forest path rather than to walk or run. The road grew wilder and drearier and more faintly traced, and vanished at length, leaving him in the heart of the dark wilderness, still rushing onward with the instinct that guides mortal man to evil. The whole forest was peopled with frightful sounds — the creaking of the trees, the howling of wild beasts, and the yell of Indians; while sometimes the wind tolled like a distant church bell, and sometimes gave a broad roar around the traveller, as if all Nature were laughing him to scorn. But he was himself the chief horror of the scene, and shrank not from its other horrors.

“Ha! ha! ha!” roared Goodman Brown when the wind laughed at him.

“Let us hear which will laugh loudest. Think not to frighten me with your devilry. Come witch, come wizard, come Indian powwow, come devil himself, and here comes Goodman Brown. You may as well fear him as he fear you.”

In truth, all through the haunted forest there could be nothing more frightful than the figure of Goodman Brown. On he flew among the black pines, brandishing⁵⁹ his staff with frenzied gestures, now giving vent to an inspiration of horrid blasphemy, and now shouting forth such laughter as set all the echoes of the forest laughing like demons around him. The fiend in his own shape is less hideous than when he rages in the breast of man. Thus sped the demoniac on his course, until, quivering among the trees, he saw a red light before him, as when the felled trunks and branches of a clearing have been set on fire, and throw up their lurid blaze against the sky, at the