

The Canterville Ghost and Other Stories

Oscar Wilde



He made me see what Life is, and what Death signifies, and why Love is stronger than both.

坎特维尔的幽灵

——王尔德奇趣短篇小说选

Oscar Wilde (英) 著 李家真 译

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LORD ARTHUR SAVILE'S CRIME A STUDY OF DUTY

亚瑟·萨维尔勋爵的罪行 关于责任的研究

Chapter 1

t was Lady Windermere's last reception before Easter, and Bentinck House was even more crowded than usual. Six Cabinet Ministers had come on from the Speaker's Levée in their stars and ribands, all the pretty women wore their smartest dresses, and at the end of the picture-gallery stood the Princess Sophia of Carlsrühe¹, a heavy Tartar-looking lady, with tiny black eyes and wonderful emeralds, talking bad French at the top of her voice, and laughing immoderately at everything that was said to her. It was certainly a wonderful medley of people. Gorgeous peeresses chatted affably to violent Radicals, popular preachers brushed coattails with eminent sceptics, a perfect bevy of bishops kept following a stout prima-donna from room to room, on the staircase stood several Royal Academicians, disguised as artists, and it was said that at one time the supper-room was absolutely crammed with geniuses. In fact, it was one of Lady Windermere's best nights, and the Princess stayed till nearly half-past eleven.

在温德米尔夫人复活节前的最后一次招待会上,本廷克宅邸 比平常还要热闹拥挤。六位阁员从下院议长招待会直接赶来,周 身的勋章和绶带,优雅迷人的妇人们穿着自己最漂亮的衣装。画 廊的尽头站着卡尔斯鲁厄的索菲娅公主,长相带有浓郁的鞑靼风 情,黑色的眼睛小之又小,戴着品质极佳的翡翠首饰。她用最高 的嗓门讲着十分糟糕的法语,无论对方说了什么都报以恣肆的笑 声。与会人等显然是一盘妙不可言的大杂烩:珠光宝气的贵妇人 温言软语地跟狂躁的激进分子谈着天,众人爱戴的牧师与赫赫有 名的无神论者擦肩而过,一帮子主教大人跟着一位身材臃肿的歌 剧女主角从一个房间转到又一个房间,楼梯上还站着几个装扮成 艺术家的皇家艺术院院士。有人说,晚餐室一度被天才人物挤了 个满满当当。事实上,这是温德米尔夫人办过的顶尖晚会之一, 连公主殿下都呆到了将近十一点半才走。

As soon as she had gone, Lady Windermere returned to the picture-gallery, where a celebrated political economist was solemnly explaining the scientific theory of music to an indignant virtuoso from Hungary, and began to talk to the Duchess of Paisley. She looked wonderfully beautiful with her grand ivory throat, her large blue forget-me-not eyes, and her heavy coils of golden hair. Or pur they were—not that pale straw colour that nowadays usurps the gracious name of gold, but such gold as is woven into sunbeams or hidden in strange amber; and gave to her face something of the frame of a saint, with not a little of the fascination of a sinner. She was a curious psychological study. Early in life she had discovered the important truth that nothing looks so like innocence as an indiscretion; and by a series of reckless escapades, half of them quite harmless, she had acquired all the privileges of a personality. She had more than once changed her husband; indeed, Debrett² credits her with three marriages; but as she had never changed her lover, the world had long ago ceased to talk scandal about her. She was now forty years of age, childless, and with that inordinate passion for pleasure which is the secret of remaining young.

Suddenly she looked eagerly round the room, and said, in her clear contralto voice, 'Where is my chiromantist?'

'Your what, Gladys?' exclaimed the Duchess, giving an involuntary start.

'My chiromantist, Duchess; I can't live without him at present.'
'Dear Gladys! you are always so original, 'murmured the

Dear Gladys! you are always so original, murmured the Duchess, trying to remember what a chiromantist really was, and

 [《]德布雷特英国贵族年鉴》,初版由英国出版家 John Debrett 于1803年编纂出版,主要内容是英国贵族的家谱及家史。

公主殿下一走,温德米尔夫人就回到了画廊里,跟佩斯利公爵夫人聊起天来。在那里,一位声名卓著的政治经济学家正在一本正经地解释音乐的科学道理,听众是一位表情愤慨的匈牙利艺术大师。公爵夫人艳色倾城,象牙色的颈项高贵非凡,大大的眼睛带着勿忘我的蓝色,还有一头浓密的金色卷发。头发是纯金的颜色——不是如今僭用金子高名的那种浅黄的麦秸色,而是织人阳光或是藏于珍奇琥珀之中的那种金色。她的面庞因之带上了圣徒的轮廓,完全弃绝了罪人的魅惑。她是个引人人胜的心理学样本,涉世之初就发现了一条重要真理,那就是轻率与单纯最为神似。经由一连串不管不顾的出轨行为——其中半数无伤大雅——她赢得了一个名人的所有特权。她换过不止一个丈夫,按《德布雷特英国贵族年鉴》的说法是结了三次婚,不过,由于她从来没有换过情人,大众早已不再拿她的丑闻当作谈资。她现年四十岁,没有子女,却还有着超常命分的享乐激情,并借此留住了青春。

突然间,温德米尔夫人心急火燎地扫视了一下房间,然后用 清晰的女低音说道:"我的手相师上哪儿去了?"

"你的什么,格拉迪丝?"公爵夫人叫道,不由自主地惊跳了一下。

"我的手相师,公爵夫人,这阵子缺了他我就没法过。"

"亲爱的格拉迪丝!你老这么有创意,"公爵夫人咕哝着,一边拼命回想手相师究竟是什么东西,一边暗自期望这跟手足病医

hoping it was not the same as a chiropodist.

'He comes to see my hand twice a week regularly, 'continued Lady Windermere, 'and is most interesting about it.'

'Good heavens!' said the Duchess to herself, 'he is a sort of chiropodist after all. How very dreadful. I hope he is a foreigner at any rate. It wouldn't be quite so bad then.'

'I must certainly introduce him to you.'

'Introduce him!' cried the Duchess; 'you don't mean to say he is here?' and she began looking about for a small tortoise-shell fan and a very tattered lace shawl, so as to be ready to go at a moment's notice.

'Of course he is here, I would not dream of giving a party without him. He tells me I have a pure psychic hand, and that if my thumb had been the least little bit shorter, I should have been a confirmed pessimist, and gone into a convent.'

'Oh, I see!' said the Duchess, feeling very much relieved; 'he tells fortunes, I suppose?'

'And misfortunes, too,' answered Lady Windermere, 'any amount of them. Next year, for instance, I am in great danger, both by land and sea, so I am going to live in a balloon, and draw up my dinner in a basket every evening. It is all written down on my little finger, or on the palm of my hand, I forget which.'

'But surely that is tempting Providence, Gladys.'

'My dear Duchess, surely Providence can resist temptation by this time. I think everyone should have their hands told once a month, so as to know what not to do. Of course, one does it all the same, but it is so pleasant to be warned. Now if someone doesn't go and fetch Mr Podgers at once, I shall have to go myself.'

生不是一类人。

"他定期来给我看手,每周两次,"温德米尔夫人接着说,"他对我的手非常有兴趣。"

"天哪!"公爵夫人暗想,"说到底,这还真是个医手足病的。 太可怕了。他可千万得是个外国人啊,那样还不至于太糟糕。"

"我一定得把他介绍给你。"

"介绍他!"公爵夫人叫了起来,"你该不是说他就在这里吧?" 说着,她开始环顾四周,看自己那把玳瑁做的小扇子以及旧的蕾 丝披肩放在哪里,以便做好随时告辞的准备。

"他当然在这里,我搞聚会的时候可不会撇下他。他说我的 手充满灵性,还说要是我的拇指再短哪怕一丁点儿的话,我就会 是一个无可救药的悲观主义者,就该当修女去了。"

"哦,我明白了!"公爵夫人说道,一下子松了口气,"他是预言运气的,是吧?"

"也预言霉运,"温德米尔夫人答道,"一点儿都不遗漏。比方说,他说我下一年在海上陆上都有大灾,所以我打算住到气球上去,每天用吊篮取晚餐。这兆头要么是写在我的小手指上,要么是写在我的手掌上,我记不清是哪一个了。"

"这样做可是在挑战命运啊,格拉迪丝。"

"亲爱的公爵夫人,我肯定命运至今还经得起挑战。照我看, 所有人都该每月看一次手相,这样就可以知道什么事不能干。当 然了,你可能还是会照干不误,不过事先有个提醒总是件很让人 高兴的事情。好了,要是没人立刻去叫波杰斯先生的话,我就要 自己去了。" 'Let me go, Lady Windermere,' said a tall handsome young man, who was standing by, listening to the conversation with an amused smile.

'Thanks so much, Lord Arthur; but I am afraid you wouldn't recognise him.'

'If he is as wonderful as you say, Lady Windermere, I couldn't well miss him. Tell me what he is like, and I'll bring him to you at once.'

'Well, he is not a bit like a chiromantist. I mean he is not mysterious, or esoteric, or romantic-looking. He is a little, stout man, with a funny, bald head, and great gold-rimmed spectacles; something between a family doctor and a country attorney. I'm really very sorry, but it is not my fault. People are so annoying. All my pianists look exactly like poets, and all my poets look exactly like pianists; and I remember last season³ asking a most dreadful conspirator to dinner, a man who had blown up ever so many people, and always wore a coat of mail, and carried a dagger up his shirt-sleeve; and do you know that when he came he looked just like a nice old clergyman, and cracked jokes all the evening? Of course, he was very amusing, and all that, but I was awfully disappointed; and when I asked him about the coat of mail, he only laughed, and said it was far too cold to wear in England. Ah, here is Mr Podgers! Now, Mr Podgers, I want you to tell the Duchess of Paisley's hand. Duchess, you must take your glove off. No, not the left hand, the other.'

^{3.} 社交季,起源于十八世纪的英国伦敦上流社会,是上流人士集中进行社交活动和户外活动的 时节。按照《德布雷特英国贵族年鉴》的说法,伦敦的社交季是在每年的四月到八月。美国 也有类似的社交季,时间与英国不同。

"让我去好了,温德米尔夫人,"一个颀长俊秀的年轻男子应 道。他一直站在旁边,带着愉快的微笑听着她俩的谈话。

"太谢谢了,亚瑟勋爵,可我担心你并不认识他。"

"要是他真像你说的那么神奇的话,温德米尔夫人,我应该不会认错的。告诉我他长什么样,我马上就把他找来。"

"好吧,他看起来可一点儿也不像手相师。我是说,他的样子不神秘,不高深,也没什么浪漫色彩。他矮小结实,有个滑稽的秃头,戴着硕大的金边眼镜,像个家庭医生,又像个乡村律师。这么说很不应该,可我也没办法。这些人就是这么烦人。我的钢琴师看着都像诗人,诗人又都跟钢琴师一模一样。我还记得,上个社交季我请了个最可怕的阴谋家来吃晚饭。这个人炸死过很多人,身上总穿着铠甲,袖子里还藏着匕首。可是,他来的时候看着就跟个慈祥的老教士似的,而且整个晚上都在讲笑话,你们能想象吗?当然,他非常有趣,如此等等,可我却失望透了。我问他铠甲是怎么回事,他却只是笑,还说在英格兰穿那个实在是太冷了。啊,波杰斯先生来了!好,波杰斯先生,我要你给佩斯利公爵夫人看看手相。公爵夫人,你得把手套脱掉。不,不是左手,是另外一只。"

'Dear Gladys, I really don't think it is quite right,' said the Duchess, feebly unbuttoning a rather soiled kid glove.

'Nothing interesting ever is,' said Lady Windermere: 'on a fait le monde ainsi. But I must introduce you. Duchess, this is Mr Podgers, my pet chiromantist. Mr Podgers, this is the Duchess of Paisley, and if you say that she has a larger mountain of the moon⁴ than I have, I will never believe in you again.'

'I am sure, Gladys, there is nothing of the kind in my hand,' said the Duchess gravely.

'Your Grace is quite right,' said Mr Podgers, glancing at the little fat hand with its short square fingers, 'the mountain of the moon is not developed. The line of life, however, is excellent. Kindly bend the wrist. Thank you. Three distinct lines on the *rascette*! You will live to a great age, Duchess, and be extremely happy. Ambition—very moderate, line of intellect not exaggerated, line of heart...'

'Now, do be indiscreet, Mr Podgers,' cried Lady Windermere.

'Nothing would give me greater pleasure,' said Mr Podgers, bowing, 'if the Duchess ever had been, but I am sorry to say that I see great permanence of affection, combined with a strong sense of duty.'

'Pray go on, Mr Podgers,' said the Duchess, looking quite pleased.

'Economy is not the least of your Grace's virtues,' continued Mr Podgers, and Lady Windermere went off into fits of laughter.

'Economy is a very good thing,' remarked the Duchess complacently; 'when I married Paisley he had eleven castles, and not a single house fit to live in.'

"亲爱的格拉迪丝,我真的觉得这不太好,"公爵夫人一边说, 一边勉为其难地脱下了污渍斑斑的小山羊皮手套。

"有趣的事情都不太好,"温德米尔夫人说,"这世道就是这样的。我得给你们介绍介绍。公爵夫人,这是波杰斯先生,我最可爱的手相师。波杰斯先生,这是佩斯利公爵夫人,要是你说她的月亮丘比我的还大的话,我就再也不相信你了。"

"我敢肯定,格拉迪丝,我手上根本就没有这样东西,"公爵 夫人一本正经地说。

"夫人您说得很对,"波杰斯先生说道,一边瞥了一眼她那只 多肉的小手,还有那些又短又粗的手指,"您的月亮丘没有发育。 不过,生命线长得非常好。麻烦您弯一下手腕,谢谢。手腕上有 三条清晰的线条!您将会非常长寿,公爵夫人,而且活得十分高 兴。野心——非常有限,智慧线不是特别突出,心脏线……"

"好了,有什么就说什么吧,波杰斯先生,"温德米尔夫人叫道。

"再乐意不过了,"波杰斯先生边说边鞠了个躬,"要是公爵夫人也有同感的话。不过,抱歉,我得说我在您手上看到了极其 持久的爱情,以及一种强烈的责任感。"

"请接着往下说,波杰斯先生,"公爵夫人说道,看起来相当 满意。

"节俭是夫人您的一项重要美德,"波杰斯先生继续说,温德 米尔夫人爆发出了阵阵笑声。

"节俭是好事情,"公爵夫人沾沾自喜地评论道,"我嫁给佩斯利的时候,他拥有十一座城堡,能住人的宅子却一座都没有。"

'And now he has twelve houses, and not a single castle,' cried Lady Windermere.

'Well, my dear,' said the Duchess, 'I like ...'

'Comfort,' said Mr Podgers, 'and modern improvements, and hot water laid on in every bedroom. Your Grace is quite right. Comfort is the only thing our civilisation can give us.'

'You have told the Duchess's character admirably, Mr Podgers, and now you must tell Lady Flora's;' and in answer to a nod from the smiling hostess, a tall girl, with sandy Scotch hair, and high shoulder-blades, stepped awkwardly from behind the sofa, and held out a long, bony hand with spatulate fingers.

'Ah, a pianist! I see,' said Mr Podgers, 'an excellent pianist, but perhaps hardly a musician. Very reserved, very honest, and with a great love of animals.'

'Quite true!' exclaimed the Duchess, turning to Lady Windermere, 'absolutely true! Flora keeps two dozen collie dogs at Macloskie, and would turn our town house into a menagerie if her father would let her.'

'Well, that is just what I do with my house every Thursday evening,' cried Lady Windermere, laughing, 'only I like lions' better than collie dogs.'

'Your one mistake, Lady Windermere,' said Mr Podgers, with a pompous bow.

'If a woman can't make her mistakes charming, she is only a female,' was the answer. 'But you must read some more hands

^{5.} 这里的lion是双关语,因为lion既可指"狮子"也可指"社交名流"。