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12  
讽刺故事  
Satiric Stories

# 装在套子里的人

The Man in a Case

恐惧如此强大，无处不在，  
无时不在，折磨得这个小人物**闷闷不乐、六神无主、**  
心慌气短、战战兢兢、**通宵噩梦、魂不附体……**

艾柯◎编译



文化艺术出版社  
Culture and Art Publishing House

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# 1

## 沸沸洋洋的家事

### The Family in a Hubbub

大多数人，毕其一生都醉心于快乐的追求，无论是通过何种形式：升职、加薪、文凭、外表等，一再借助外在的争逐，来满足心灵的渴望，却一次又一次地在达到目标之后，失意于莫名的空虚情绪。



## 我的叔叔于勒 My Uncle Jules



居伊·德·莫泊桑/Guy de Maupassant

居伊·德·莫泊桑 (Guy de Maupassant, 1850—1893), 19 世纪末法国著名小说家, 生于法国诺曼底一个没落贵族家庭。他曾参加普法战争, 体验了军队生活, 也激发了他的爱国热情, 这在他的第一篇成名作《羊脂球》中有所反映。莫泊桑富于创造性, 描绘真切, 笔法灵活多样, 富有情趣, 讽刺深刻, 幽默生动, 结构严谨, 语言优美。代表作有《俊友》《她的一生》等。

一个胡子花白的老人向我们乞讨, 我的同伴约瑟夫·达夫郎什给了他 5 法郎。看到我吃惊的表情, 他说道:

“这个不幸的人唤起了我的回忆, 我给你说吧, 我一直无法忘记这件事。你听我说:

“我家原来住在阿夫尔, 当时家境窘迫, 大家仅仅是想方设法糊口度日而已。父亲工作很辛苦, 深夜才从办公室赶回家, 赚的钱却很少。那时我还有两个姐姐。

“家里的日子日益窘迫, 母亲为此痛苦不堪, 她经常用刻薄的言语刁难父亲, 甚至指桑骂槐。而这个可怜的男人也只是保持一个姿态, 让我很伤心——他每次都把手张开, 把掌心贴在额头上, 好像要擦汗一样, 事实上哪里有汗。他总是缄默不语, 不去还击母亲。他为自己的无能为力而感到痛苦! 大家一切从简, 从来不受邀赴宴, 以免回请。家里所有的东西都是廉价品。姐姐们自己缝制礼服, 为了 15 生丁一码的穗带也要货比三家, 一碗汤再来个

牛肉杂烩就是一顿饭。据说这种吃法既干净又养人,不过我宁愿吃别的。

“常常因为丢了扣子,撕坏了裤子,我就要被大骂一顿。

“每周六,我们一家人都穿上最好的衣服,沿着防波堤散步。父亲穿上长礼服,戴上高高的帽子,套上山羊皮手套,而母亲则打扮得像插着彩旗度假的船只,挽着父亲的胳膊。我的姐姐们,总是整装一新,早已迫不及待地在那里等候出发的信号。不过到了最后,总有人发现父亲的长礼服上有污渍,于是不得不马上用浸着汽油的破布揩去。

“父亲仍然顶着丝制高帽,露出衬衣的袖子,让别人揩污渍。而母亲也忙个不停,戴上眼镜,摘掉手套,免得弄脏。

“然后,我们一家人就隆重地出发了。姐姐们挽着彼此的胳膊走在前面,她们都已到该嫁人的年龄,得好好展示一番。我和父亲一左一右簇拥着母亲。我仍记得我可怜的父母周末散步时那自命不凡的样子,一脸严肃,迈着僵硬的双腿。他们挺直身子,面容庄重,脚步僵硬地往前走,好像只有这样才能完成他们的重任。

“每周日,当有从远方异国开来的大汽船时,父亲总是说:

“‘如果于勒在这艘船上,那该多好啊!’

“父亲的弟弟,于勒叔叔,当初家人都疏远他,而今却成了家里的救命稻草。我很小的时候就听家人谈起过于勒叔叔,对他再熟悉不过了,好像见到他就能认出他。尽管他的那段生活总是被大家轻描淡写地谈及,我对他离开美洲以前的生活的点点滴滴却一清二楚。

“他好像过得不怎么好,也就是说,他曾经挥霍了一些钱。这对一个贫困的家庭来说,简直是犯罪。如果一个出身富有的人寻欢作乐干些糊涂事,人们顶多说他是花花公子。而在生活窘迫的家庭里,如果一个人迫使父母花掉老本,那他就是个废物、无赖、流氓。尽管做的事没有区别,但事情后果的严重性成为了二者唯一的区别。

“显然,于勒叔叔在把自己那份遗产挥霍掉后,父亲应得的那份也大大减少了。然后,依照当时的惯例,他被送上了一艘由本地开往纽约的货轮,前



往美洲。

“一到那里，叔叔就开始做买卖，很快写信回来说自己赚了一小笔钱，希望能补偿以前给父亲造成的损失，这封信在家里引起了不小的波澜。以前大家都说于勒是个废物，现在一下子变成了大好人，一个心地善良的人，真正的达夫郎什人，忠诚正直。

“一个船长告诉我们，于勒叔叔租了一家大店铺，在做一笔重要的生意。

“两年之后，于勒叔叔写来了第二封信，他写道：‘亲爱的菲利普，此次写信是为了让你不要为我的健康担心，我很好，生意也不错。明天我就要远行到南美。我可能离开几年，会和你失去联系。如果没有收到我的信，不必担心。交了财运，我一定会回阿夫尔。希望那一天不会让我等待太久，我们一家人又幸福地生活在一起……’

“这封信成了全家人的《福音书》，大家静静地读着它，拿给所有人看。

“整整 10 年，再也没听到于勒叔叔的消息。但是随着时间的流逝，父亲的希望也变得强烈起来，母亲也经常说：

“‘要是好心的于勒在这里，我们的境况将截然不同。他可是个有本事的人啊！’

“到了周日，父亲望着吐着浓烟的大汽船从地平线上开来时，总是重复着同样的话：

“‘如果于勒在这艘船上，那该多好啊！’

“大家都期望他挥着手帕，喊道：

“‘嗨，菲利普！’

“大家盘算过无数个于勒叔叔回来后的计划，甚至，我们还想用于勒的钱买一幢靠近安谷韦尔的乡村小别墅。事实上，我觉得父亲肯定与人商议过此事。

“我的大姐那时 28 岁了，二姐 26 岁，都还没嫁人，而这一直是家人的心病。

“最后有人向二姐求婚了，他是个职员，不富有，但还算体面。我一直从

心地里坚信那是于勒叔叔的信的功效。一天晚上,我把它拿给他看,他立刻向二姐求婚了。

“二姐立刻接受了他的求婚,大家决定婚礼后就去泽西岛旅行。

“泽西岛是穷人的理想旅行胜地,不远,乘汽船去要过海,途经异国国土,因为那个小岛属于英国。这样,法国人只要两个小时就可以在家看到外国,了解他们的风土人情。

“泽西岛之行吸引着我們,那是我們唯一的期待和不变的梦想。

“终于,我们起程了。我依然觉得一切恍如昨天。轮船在格朗维尔码头驶出;父亲手忙脚乱地监督着三包行李上船,母亲则紧张地挽着我未出阁的姐姐的胳膊,自从一个姐姐出嫁后,她就像掉了魂似的,这样,另一个姐姐就如同鸡窝里的最后一只小鸡,变得极为珍贵了;我们后面是对新婚夫妇,时常惹得我回头张望。

“汽笛响了,我们上了船,船离了岸,在大理石般的海面上驶向前方。看到海岸消失在我们的视野之内,大家都很开心、骄傲,好像我们都很少旅行似的。

“父亲的肚子,掩在大礼服内,而礼服上的污渍在当天早晨已被人仔仔细细擦拭干净了。他的周围散发出赶集市才能闻到的汽油味,那味道总使我觉得那天是周日。突然,他看到两个绅士正请两位穿着优雅的女士吃牡蛎。一位衣衫褴褛的老水手撬开了它的壳子交给两位绅士,他们跟着又交给那两个女士。她们姿态优雅地吃起牡蛎来,一面用精美的手帕托起了牡蛎,一面又向前伸着嘴巴以免弄脏裙子。随后迅速地喝了牡蛎汁,把壳子扔到海里。

“在一艘缓缓行驶的轮船上,她们吃牡蛎的优雅姿态,显然吸引了父亲那艳羡的目光。他觉得那样体面而优雅,于是走到母亲和姐姐那边,问道:

“‘你们愿意让我请你们吃牡蛎吗?’

“因为要花钱,母亲犹豫起来,但是两个姐姐马上表示赞同。母亲有些幸

灾乐祸地说：

“我怕闹肚子。给孩子们买些吧，不要太多，否则他们吃了会生病。”然后转身对着我，说道：

“约瑟夫嘛，就不要吃了，不要惯男孩子。”

“因此我留在了母亲身边，但我觉得这种区分是不公平的。我的目光跟随着父亲，只见他高傲地带着两个姐姐和他的女婿走向那位衣衫褴褛的老水手。

“那两位女士刚走开，父亲便教两个姐姐怎样吃牡蛎而不使汁流出来。他甚至想做出个样子，于是他托起个牡蛎，试着模仿那两位女士，牡蛎汁一下子全洒到了他的外套上。我听见母亲嘀咕着：

“‘安安分分多好。’

“但突然，父亲好像不安起来。他后退了几步，眼睛死死地盯着围在牡蛎贩子周围的姐姐和女婿，然后快步向我们走来，脸色苍白，表情怪异，小声对母亲说：

“‘好奇怪啊，那个牡蛎贩子看起来像于勒。’

“母亲呆住了，问道：

“‘哪个于勒啊？’

“父亲接了话：

“‘我的弟弟啊。如果我不知道他在美洲发了财，还真的以为那就是他呢。’

“母亲紧张起来，结结巴巴地说道：

“‘你疯了！既然知道那不是他，还要说这样的傻话？’

“但父亲仍然固执己见：

“‘过去看看，克拉丽斯！我想让你用自己的眼睛证明一下。’

“母亲起身走向两个女儿。我也看着那个人，他又老又脏、满脸皱纹，眼睛一直盯着手里的活。

“母亲回来了。我发现她浑身颤抖。她尖叫着，上气不接下气地喊道：

“‘肯定是他,我确信。为什么不去问问船长?但是小心点,免得那个无赖又来占我们的便宜!’”

“父亲走开了,我异常激动地跟着他。”

“船长是个长得又高又瘦的人,留着金色的胡须,正一脸严肃地沿着船桥散步,就像在指挥一艘开往印度的邮船。”

“父亲彬彬有礼地走上前去,一面问着他船上的事,一面对船长大加恭维道:

“‘泽西岛的主要特点在哪里?出产什么?人口怎么样?习俗呢?土质怎么样?’等等诸如此类的问题。”

“‘你们这里的牡蛎贩子倒是蛮有趣的。你知道他的底细吗?’”

“船长开始烦躁起来,冷冷地答道:

“‘那是去年我在美洲碰到的一个法国老流浪汉,我把他带了回来。他好像在阿尔夫还有亲戚,但是他不愿到亲戚那里,因为他欠他们钱。他叫于勒——于勒·达夫曼什或是达夫朗什,总之是和这个差不多的姓。好像以前在国外发过财,而现在您看见他这般落魄潦倒。’”

“父亲顿时脸色苍白,嗓子发哑,两眼无精打采,嘟哝着说:

“‘啊,啊,很好,很好。我一点也不惊奇。多谢船长。’”

“他离开了,船长吃惊地看着他走开。他回到母亲身边,神色忧郁地对她说道:

“‘坐下吧,快有人看出来。’”

“他一下子瘫坐在长凳上,结巴着说:

“‘是他,是他!’”

“然后他问道:

“‘怎么办?’”

“她立刻回答:‘我们必须把孩子们引开。既然约瑟夫知道了,让他去把他们引开。我们必须小心点,不要让女婿察觉。’”

“父亲好像完全愣住了,喃喃自语道:

“‘大祸临头了!’”

“母亲突然变得异常恼怒,尖叫道:

“‘我一向认为这个扒手做不了什么好事,总有一天又会来揩我们的油!怎么能指望从他的身上得到什么!’”

“父亲用手摸着额头,好像母亲责备他一样。母亲又说:

“‘把钱给约瑟夫,让他把牡蛎钱付了。现在,只差这个叫花子把我们认出来了。那样,就有好戏看了!我们去船那头吧,小心不要让他靠近我们!’”

“他们给了我5法郎就走了。

“姐姐们吃惊地等着父亲,我告诉她们母亲突然有点晕船,我问牡蛎贩子:

“‘我们该付多少钱,先生?’”

“我想笑,他是我叔叔!他答道:‘两个半金法郎。’”

“我拿出我的5法郎,他把零钱找给了我。我看着他的手,那是一双干瘪、爬满皱纹的水手的手。我又望着他那张忧伤苍老的脸,心里在说:

“‘那是我的叔叔,父亲的弟弟,我的叔叔!’”

“我拿了10个铜子给他做小费。他谢我道:

“‘上帝保佑你,少爷!’”

“那语气就像穷人接受施舍一样。我不禁想起他肯定在美洲讨过饭!姐姐们望着我,我的慷慨使她们惊呆了。我把2法郎还给了父亲,母亲吃惊地问道:

“‘要花3个法郎吗?不可能啊!’”

“我以坚定的口气答道:

“‘我给了他10个铜子的小费。’”

“母亲突然盯着我,喊道:

“‘你疯了!把10个铜子扔给那个懒蛋——’”

“父亲指了指女婿,向母亲使了个眼色,母亲马上住了口。然后所有的人都不做声了。

“远方地平线上，一片紫色的阴影仿佛从海面升起，展现在我们面前，那里就是泽西岛。

“快到防浪堤时，我心里涌起了一个强烈的念头，想再次见到于勒叔叔，走进他，说几句安慰贴心的话。但是早已无人吃牡蛎了，他也不见了踪迹，可能跑到穷人住的肮脏的地方去了吧。”

A white-haired old man begged us for alms. My companion, Joseph Davranche, gave him five francs. Noticing my surprised look, he said:

“That poor unfortunate reminds me of a story which I shall tell you, the memory of which continually pursues me. Here it is:

“My family, which came originally from Havre, was not rich. We just managed to make both ends meet. My father worked hard, came home late from the office, and earned very little. I had two sisters.

“My mother suffered a good deal from our reduced **circumstances**<sup>1</sup>, and she often had harsh words for her husband, veiled and sly reproaches. The poor man then made a gesture which used to distress me. He would pass his open hand over his forehead, as if to wipe away **perspiration**<sup>2</sup> which did not exist, and he would answer nothing. I felt his helpless suffering. We economized on everything, and never would accept an invitation to dinner, so as not to have to return the courtesy. All our provisions were bought at bargain sales. My sisters made their own gowns, and long discussions would arise on the price of a piece of braid worth fifteen centimes a yard. Our meals usually consisted of soup and beef, prepared with every kind of sauce. They say it is wholesome and nourishing, but I should have preferred a change.

“I used to go through terrible scenes on account of lost buttons and torn trousers.

“Every Sunday, dressed in our best, we would take our walk along the

breakwater. My father, in a frock coat, high hat and kid gloves, would offer his arm to my mother, decked out and **beribboned**<sup>3</sup> like a ship on a holiday. My sisters, who were always ready first, would await the signal for leaving; but at the last minute some one always found a spot on my father's frock coat, and it had to be wiped away quickly with a rag moistened with benzine.

"My father, in his shirt sleeves, his silk hat on his head, would await the completion of the operation, while my mother, putting on her spectacles, and taking off her gloves in order not to spoil them, would make haste.

"Then we set out ceremoniously. My sisters marched on ahead, arm in arm. They were of marriageable age and had to be displayed. I walked on the left of my mother and my father on her right. I remember the pompous air of my poor parents in these Sunday walks, their stern expression, their stiff walk. They moved slowly, with a serious expression, their bodies straight, their legs stiff, as if something of extreme importance depended upon their appearance.

"Every Sunday, when the big steamers were returning from unknown and distant countries, my father would invariably utter the same words:

"'What a surprise it would be if Jules were on that one! Eh?'

"My Uncle Jules, my father's brother, was the only hope of the family, after being its only fear. I had heard about him since childhood, and it seemed to me that I should recognize him immediately, knowing as much about him as I did. I knew every detail of his life up to the day of his departure for America, although this period of his life was spoken of only in hushed tones.

"It seems that he had led a bad life, that is to say, he had squandered a little money, which action, in a poor family, is one of the greatest crimes. With rich people a man who amuses himself only sows his wild oats. He is what is generally called a sport. But among needy families a boy who forces his parents to break into the capital becomes a good-for-nothing, a rascal, a scamp. And this distinction is just, although the action be the same, for

consequences alone determine the seriousness of the act.

“Well, Uncle Jules had visibly diminished the inheritance on which my father had counted, after he had swallowed his own to the last penny. Then, according to the custom of the times, he had been shipped off to America on a freighter going from Havre to New York.

“Once there, my uncle began to sell something or other, and he soon wrote that he was making a little money and that he soon hoped to be able to indemnify my father for the harm he had done him. This letter caused a profound emotion in the family. Jules, who up to that time had not been worth his salt, suddenly became a good man, a kind-hearted fellow, true and honest like all the Davranches.

“One of the captains told us that he had rented a large shop and was doing an important business.

“Two years later a second letter came, saying: ‘My dear Philippe, I am writing to tell you not to worry about my health, which is excellent. Business is good. I leave to-morrow for a long trip to South America. I may be away for several years without sending you any news. If I shouldn’t write, don’t worry. When my fortune is made I shall return to Havre. I hope that it will not be too long and that we shall all live happily together...’

“This letter became the *gospel* of the family. It was read on the slightest provocation, and it was shown to everybody.

“For ten years nothing was heard from Uncle Jules; but as time went on my father’s hope grew, and my mother, also, often said:

“‘When that good Jules is here, our position will be different. There is one who knew how to get along!’

“And every Sunday, while watching the big steamers approaching from the horizon, pouring out a stream of smoke, my father would repeat his eternal question:



“What a surprise it would be if Jules were on that one! Eh?”

“We almost expected to see him waving his handkerchief and crying:

“Hey! Philippe! ”

“Thousands of schemes had been planned on the strength of this expected return; we were even to buy a little house with my uncle’s money—a little place in the country near Ingouville. In fact, I wouldn’t swear that my father had not already begun negotiations.

“The elder of my sisters was then twenty-eight, the other twenty-six. They were not yet married, and that was a great grief to every one.

“At last a suitor presented himself for the younger one. He was a clerk, not rich, but honorable. I have always been morally certain that Uncle Jules’ letter, which was shown him one evening, had swept away the young man’s hesitation and definitely decided him.

“He was accepted eagerly, and it was decided that after the wedding the whole family should take a trip to Jersey.

“Jersey is the ideal trip for poor people. It is not far; one crosses a strip of sea in a steamer and lands on foreign soil, as this little island belongs to England. Thus, a Frenchman, with a two hours’ sail, can observe a neighboring people at home and study their customs.

“This trip to Jersey completely absorbed our ideas, was our sole anticipation, the constant thought of our minds.

“At last we left. I see it as plainly as if it had happened yesterday. The boat was getting up steam against the quay at Granville; my father, bewildered, was superintending the loading of our three pieces of baggage; my mother, nervous, had taken the arm of my unmarried sister, who seemed lost since the departure of the other one, like the last chicken of a brood; behind us came the bride and groom, who always stayed behind, a thing that often made me turn round.