



# Arnold Bennett

## THE PLAIN MAN AND HIS WIFE

# 平凡人和他的妻子

(英) 阿诺德·本涅特 著

外语教学与研究出版社

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS



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文·书系

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胡漾 译

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# 总序

外研社自创立之日起就一贯秉承“记载人类文明，沟通世界文化”的宗旨。上世纪九十年代以来，我们陆续出版了“九十年代英语系列丛书”、“大师经典文库”、“英美文学文库”等系列经典图书，在最大限度满足国内英语学习者阅读需求的同时，也为中华民族引进和吸收海外优秀文化发挥了重要的桥梁纽带作用。

在多年出版实践中我们发现，对原版图书简单地以外语形式呈现，会使一些初级和中级学习者望而却步；而纯粹的译著，在翻译过程中又容易失掉原著中的某些精妙之笔，甚至丢失信息，因为每种语言都蕴含着其他语言无法精确对应的情致、智慧和真善美的洞见。文化交流是一个双向互动的过程，因此在大量引入外文作品的同时，我们也不能忽略本民族文化在世界范围内的推广和传播，即把中国传递给世界。

基于上述考虑，我们应时推出“外研社双语读库”，立足经典，涵盖中外名家名作，涉及社会科学各个领域，以书系划分，采用双语编排，对文化背景附有注释。旨在积累世界各民族精粹文化的同时，向世界传递中国文化，也为广大英语学习者提供更为丰富和实用的学习读物。

读库第一批收录的20部西方经典，多出自十九、二十世纪著名作家、学者、思想家和哲学家笔下，作品题材丰富，类型多样，包括学术作品1部、传记2种、小说3本、游记4部、杂文9辑以及回忆录1册。文章难度介于普及性读物与专业性读物之间，可作为由一般英语学习者向专业英语使用者过渡时的教材使用。

翻开书，这边厢波涛荡荡，那边厢涟漪漾漾。在英语的海洋里戏水，水性再好的人也难免精疲力竭，那就到汉语的礁岛上歇歇脚吧。

买了书是缘，翻开书，则是海边度假了。

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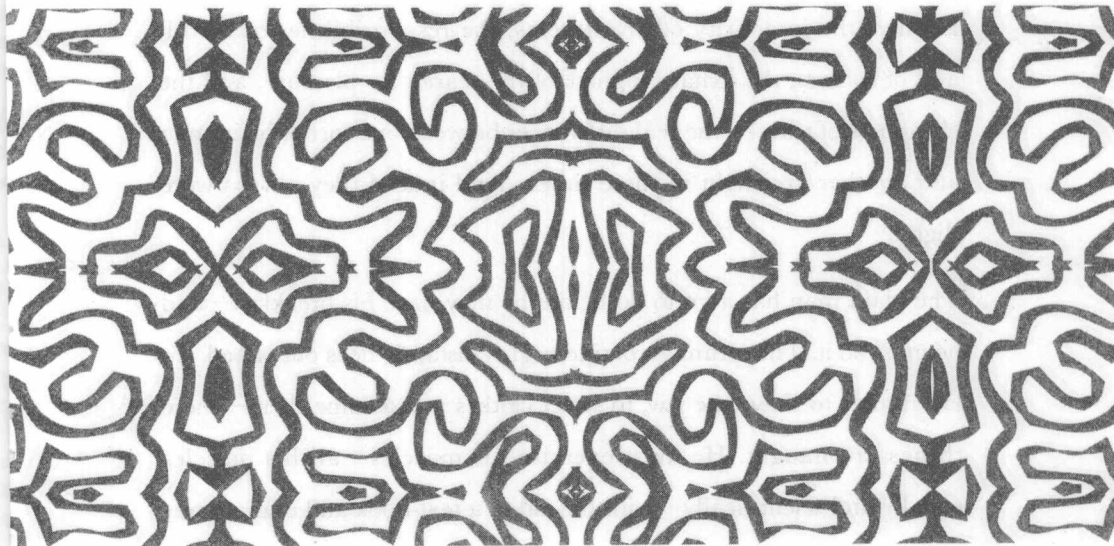
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CHAPTER I ALL MEANS AND NO  
END

Arnold Bennett

THE PLAIN MAN AND HIS WIFE



# CHAPTER I ALL MEANS AND NO END

## I

The plain man on a plain day wakes up, slowly or quickly according to his temperament, and greets the day in a mental posture which might be thus expressed in words:

“Oh, Lord! Another day! What a grind!”

If you ask me whom I mean by the plain man, my reply is that I mean almost every man. I mean you. I certainly mean me. I mean the rich and the poor, the successful and the unsuccessful, the idle and the diligent, the luxurious and the austere. For, what with the limits of digestion, the practical impossibility of wearing two neckties at once, the insecurity of investments, the responsibilities of wealth and of success, the exhaustingness of the search for pleasure, and the cheapness of travel—the real differences between one sort of plain man and another are slight in these times. (And indeed they always were slight.)

The plain man has a lot to do before he may have his breakfast—and he must do it. The tyrannic routine begins instantly he is out of bed. To lave limbs, to shave the jaw, to select clothes and assume them—these things are naught. He must exercise his muscles—all his muscles equally and scientifically—with the aid of a text-book and of diagrams



## 第一章 只有手段，没有目的

平凡人在平凡的一天醒来，依着心情的好坏而动作或快或慢，他迎接这一天的心理状态用语言表示就是：

“上帝啊！又是一天！真遭罪！”

你要是问我这个平凡人指谁，我的回答是：每个人，包括你，当然也包括我，包括富人、穷人，成功的人、不成功的人，懒散的人、勤快的人，奢侈的人和吝啬的人。每个人消化能力有限，同时戴两条领带也不现实，考虑到投资存在风险，富人和成功人士都有一定的责任，人们极尽所能地寻求乐趣以及廉价旅行——现今一种平凡人和另一种平凡人之间真正的差距很小。（其实一直以来都挺小的。）

平凡人吃早餐以前有很多事情要做——都是必须做的事儿。强制性的日程从一下床就开始了：洗漱、剃须、选了衣服比比划划——这些事情根本不算什么。必须做的事儿是锻炼肌肉——全面又科学地锻炼全身的肌肉——参考着教科书和一张大卡片上的图示。在家里等候访客时，他

on a large card; which card he often hides if he is expecting visitors in his chamber, for he will not always confess to these exercises; he would have you believe that he alone, in a world of simpletons, is above the faddism of the hour; he is as ashamed of these exercises as of a good resolution, and when his wife happens to burst in on them he will pretend to be doing some common act, such as walking across the room or examining a mole in the small of his back. And yet he will not abandon them. They have an empire over him. To drop them would be to be craven, inefficient. The text-book asserts that they will form one of the pleasantest parts of the day, and that he will learn to look forward to them. He soon learns to look forward to them, but not with glee. He is relieved and proud when they are over for the day.

He would enjoy his breakfast, thanks to the strenuous imitation of diagrams, were it not that, in addition to being generally in a hurry, he is preoccupied. He is preoccupied by the sense of doom, by the sense that he has set out on the appointed path and dare not stray from it. The train or the tram-car or the automobile (same thing) is waiting for him, irrevocable, undeniable, inevitable. He wrenches himself away. He goes forth to his fate, as to the dentist. And just as he would enjoy his breakfast in the home, so he would enjoy his newspaper and cigarette in the vehicle, were it not for that ever-present sense of doom. The idea of business grips him. It matters not what the business is. Business is everything, and everything is business. He reaches his office—whatever his office is. He is in his office. He must plunge—he plunges. The day has genuinely begun now. The appointed path stretches straight in front of him, for five, six, seven, eight hours.

Oh! But he chose his vocation. He likes it. It satisfies his instincts. It is

通常会把这张卡片藏起来，因为不愿承认自己在锻炼；平凡人想让你相信，在这个人人都头脑简单的世界，只有他一个人不追赶时髦；他对锻炼感到羞愧，就像羞愧于下决心改正自己一样，如果妻子正巧撞上他锻炼，平凡人会假装自己正在做些平常的事儿，比如在房间里踱步或是检查腰背上的一颗痣。然而他不会放弃锻炼，锻炼对他来说意义重大。放弃锻炼就意味着自己是个懦夫，是个没用的人。教科书里宣称锻炼会成为一天中最愉快的时光之一，所以他也会学会期待锻炼。很快平凡人就学会了期待锻炼，但心情却不怎么愉快。当天的锻炼结束后他会觉得松了口气，也觉得很骄傲。

平凡人早餐时胃口会不错，因为照着图示做动作很累人；若不是因为锻炼，早晨通常的匆忙中他会若有所思。占据平凡人思绪的是一种命中注定的感觉，一种自己已走上指定的轨道不敢偏离的感觉。火车、电车、或是汽车（都是一样的）正在等着他，无法取消，无法拒绝，无法避免。他强制自己离开，径直走向命运，就像是去看牙医。和在家享受早餐一样，要不是那挥之不去的命中注定之感，平凡人也会在车上很享受地读报和抽烟。而工作的念头攫住了他，是什么样的工作无关紧要。工作就是一切，一切都是工作。平凡人到了办公地点——不论他在什么样的地方办公。在自己的办公室里，他必须一头埋进去——他一头埋进去了。现在一天才真正开始。规定好的道路平铺在他面前，他要工作五、六、七或八个小时。

噢！但职业是平凡人自己选择的，他喜欢。职业能满

his life. (So you say.) Well, does he like it? Does it satisfy his instincts? Is it his life? If truly the answer is affirmative, he is at any rate not conscious of the fact. He is aware of no ecstasy. What is the use of being happy unless he knows he is happy? Some men know that they are happy in the hours of business, but they are few. The majority are not, and the bulk of the majority do not even pretend to be. The whole attitude of the average plain man to business implies that business is a nuisance, scarcely mitigated. With what secret satisfaction he anticipates that visit to the barber's in the middle of the morning! With what gusto he hails the arrival of an unexpected interrupting friend! With what easement he decides that he may lawfully put off some task till the morrow! Let him hear a band or a fire-engine in the street, and he will go to the window with the eagerness of a child or of a girl-clerk. If he were working at golf the bands of all the regiments of Hohenzollern<sup>1</sup> would not make him turn his head, nor the multitudinous blazing of fireproof skyscrapers. No! Let us be honest. Business constitutes the steepest, roughest league of the appointed path. Were it otherwise, business would not be universally regarded as a means to an end.

Moreover, when the plain man gets home again, does his wife's face say to him: "I know that your real life is now over for the day, and I regret for your sake that you have to return here. I know that the powerful interest of your life is gone. But I am glad that you have had five, six, seven, or eight hours of passionate pleasure"? Not a bit! His wife's face says to him: "I commiserate with you on all that you have been through. It is a great shame that you should be compelled to toil thus painfully. But I will try to make it up to you. I will soothe you. I will humour you. Forget anxiety

足他的本能，是他的生活。（可以这么说。）那么，平凡人喜欢这职业吗？工作能满足他的本能吗？是他的生活吗？即使这些答案真的是肯定的，至少平凡人自己还没有意识到。他感受不到喜悦。要是自己都不知道自己是快乐的，那快乐有什么用？有些人知道自己在工作时是快乐的，但这类人很少。大部分人不快乐的，而这些人中的大部分甚至连假装快乐都不会。一般的平凡人对工作的整体态度说明工作是件烦人的事儿，非常烦人。他内心期待上午十点多钟去理发的心情不知道有多满足！招呼那打断他工作的不速之客时不知道有多开心！决定可以把一些任务合理地推到明天时不知道有多轻松！听到街上有乐队或是消防车的声音，他就会像小孩或女店员一样急切地冲到窗边。要是正在玩高尔夫，即使霍亨索伦王室所有的军乐团都出动，他也不会转一下头，哪怕一大批防火的摩天大楼同时着火也不会让他分神。不！我们实话实说吧。工作是规定好的道路上最难接受、最棘手的一部分。要不然，工作是不会被普遍当作达成目的的手段的。

再者，平凡人又回到家，他妻子的表情会像是在这样说吗：“我知道你今天真正的生活已经结束，真为你难过你又要回到这里。我知道你生活中浓厚的兴趣已经没了，但我很高兴你充满热情地度过了五、六、七或八个小时的愉快时光”？根本不是！他妻子的表情会像是在说：“我同情你经受的一切，真不幸你不得不这么辛苦操劳。但我会试着补偿你、安慰你、逗你开心。在我的笑脸中忘记焦虑和疲惫吧。”她没有给他拿来舒服的拖鞋，部分原因是因

霍亨索伦王室，该王室于1415—1701年间统治勃兰登堡，1701—1918年间统治普鲁士，1871—1918年间统治德意志帝国。

and fatigue in my smiles.” She does not fetch his comfortable slippers for him, partly because, in this century, wives do not do such things, and partly because comfortable slippers are no longer worn. But she does the equivalent—whatever the equivalent may happen to be in that particular household. And he expects the commiseration and the solace in her face. He would be very hurt did he not find it there.

And even yet he is not relaxed. Even yet the appointed path stretches inexorably in front, and he cannot wander. For now he feels the cogs and cranks of the highly complex domestic machine. At breakfast he declined to hear them; they were shut off from him; he was too busy to be bothered with them. At evening he must be bothered with them. Was it not he who created the machine? He discovers, often to his astonishment, that his wife has an existence of her own, full of factors foreign to him, and he has to project himself, not only into his wife’s existence, but into the existences of other minor personages. His daughter, for example, will persist in growing up. Not for a single day will she pause. He arrives one night and perceives that she is a woman and that he must treat her as a woman. He had not bargained for this. Peace, ease, relaxation in a home vibrating to the whirl of such astounding phenomena? Impossible dream! These phenomena were originally meant by him to be the ornamentation of his career, but they are threatening to be the sole reason of his career. If his wife lives for him, it is certain that he lives just as much for his wife; and as for his daughter, while she emphatically does not live for him, he is bound to admit that he has just got to live for her—and she knows it!

To gain money was exhausting; to spend it is precisely as exhausting. He cannot quit the appointed path nor lift the doom. Dinner is finished

为在当今这个世纪妻子都不做这样的事了，还有部分原因是现在人们不穿舒服的拖鞋了。但她会做等同于拿拖鞋的事——不管在具体家庭中这个等同于拿拖鞋的事是什么。平凡人期待看到妻子脸上的同情和安慰。如果看不到，就会很受伤。

即使现在，平凡人也没有放松。现在规定好的道路还是在面前无情地延伸，他不能有丝毫懈怠，因为现在他感觉到的是高度复杂的家庭机器里的齿轮和曲柄。早餐时他拒绝听到这些，这些事被拒之门外；他忙得根本顾不上。到了晚上就逃不掉了。不就是他自己创造了这台机器吗？平凡人经常惊奇地发现，妻子是个独立的存在，很多方面自己都不了解她，而平凡人必须把自己置于他人的存在中，不光有他的妻子，还有其他小人物。比如说，女儿一直在长大，一天也不耽搁。有天晚上回到家，他发觉女儿已经长大成人了，自己则必须像对待女人那样对待她。他可没预料到会是这样。平静、安逸、放松，在一个被种种惊人现象搅得不得安宁的家中，这些可能吗？不可能，做梦去吧！这些现象原本该是他职业生涯中的点缀，却逐渐就要成为他工作的唯一原因。如果说妻子是为他而活，那么他肯定也同样地为妻子而活；至于女儿，虽然她显然不是为父亲而活，他必须得承认自己要为她而活——而且这一点女儿很清楚！

挣钱让人筋疲力尽，花钱也同样让人筋疲力尽。平凡人不能逃脱规定好的道路，也不能摆脱命中注定之感。还没有开始从家里的种种震惊中恢复过来，晚

ere he has begun to recover from the varied shock of home. Then his daughter may negligently throw him a few moments of charming cajolery. He may gossip in simple idleness with his wife. He may gambol like any infant with the dog. A yawn. The shadow of the next day is upon him. He must not stay up too late, lest the vigour demanded by the next day should be impaired. Besides, he does not want to stay up. Naught is quite interesting enough to keep him up. And bed, too, is part of the appointed, unescapable path. To bed he goes, carrying ten million preoccupations. And of his state of mind the kindest that can be said is that he is philosophic enough to hope for the best.

And after the night he wakes up, slowly or quickly according to his temperament, and greets the day with:

“Oh, Lord! Another day! What a grind!”

## 2

The interesting point about the whole situation is that the plain man seldom or never asks himself a really fundamental question about that appointed path of his—that path from which he dare not and could not wander.

Once, perhaps in a parable, the plain man travelling met another traveller. And the plain man demanded of the traveller:

“Where are you going to?”

The traveller replied:



餐已经结束了。然后女儿可能心不在焉地对他说些甜言蜜语，他也可能和妻子懒洋洋地说点闲话，或者像所有小孩子一样和狗一起嬉戏。打个呵欠。另一天的阴影又来了。他不能睡得太晚，否则会影响第二天必需的精力。此外他也不想熬夜，没什么东西让他有兴趣一直不睡。床也是不能逃避的规定道路的一部分。上床后，他的脑子里思绪万千。至于现在的思想状态，往最好了说，也只是他足够明智，希望一切尽可能地好。

这一夜过去，他醒来，依着心情的好坏而动作或快或慢，为迎接这天说道：

“上帝啊！又是一天！真遭罪！”

## 二

整个情况中有趣的一点是，平凡人很少或从不自问与规定道路——即他不敢也不能偏离的道路——有关的真正基本的问题。

一次，也许这只是在某个寓言中，平凡人在旅途中遇到了另一个旅人。平凡人问旅人：

“你要去哪儿？”

旅人回答：