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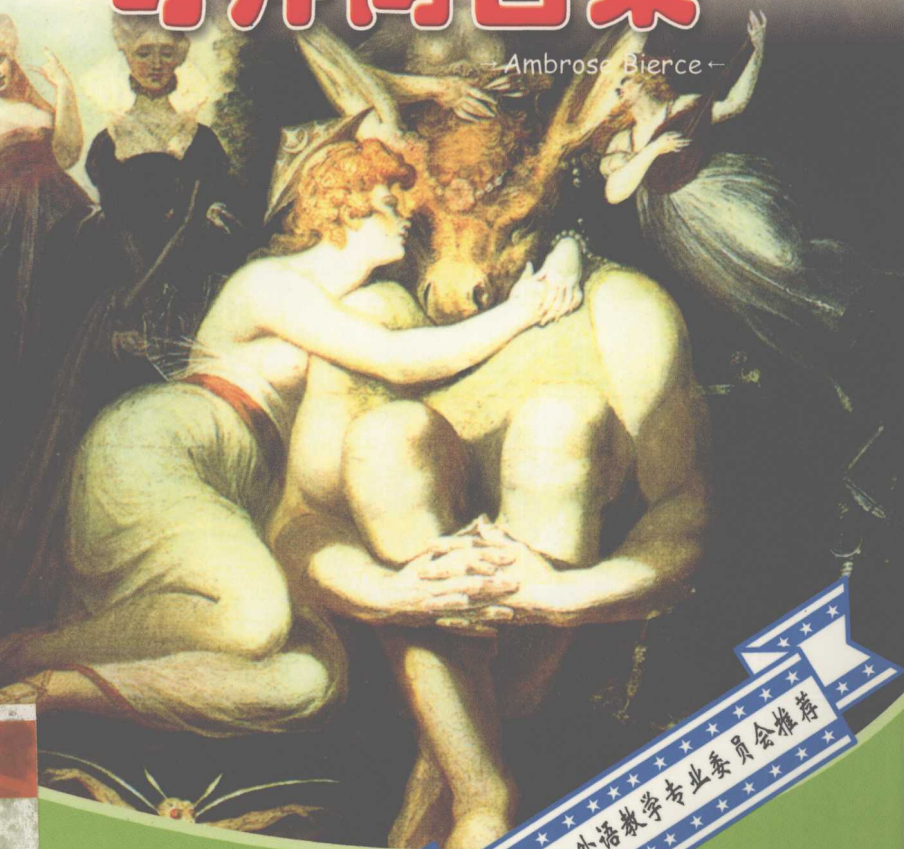
英语课程标准八级之一

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# Fantastic Fables

## 奇异寓言集

— Ambrose Bierce —



中国教育学会外语教学专业委员会推荐

中国电力出版社  
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CENTURY ORIENTAL 世纪东方

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— 第 8 级 —

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# 出·版·说·明

这是一套针对英语为外语的学生而出版的世界文学名著分级读物。丛书的编写紧密结合新《英语课程标准》的要求,按难易程度分为8个级别,适合各阶段学生的阅读需求,帮助学生在语言技能、语言知识、学习策略和文化意识等方面达到新课标的培养目标。

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囊括西方经典文学名著,在帮助学生提高语言水平的同时,能通过阅读与自己外语水平相当的简写本一窥文学名著之全貌。

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语言浅显、生动、地道,以英文注释的形式出版,既保留了英文的原汁原味,中英文双语注释又为读者在阅读英文时扫除了语言障碍,能够充分调动读者的阅读兴趣,使英语阅读更轻松。

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## 第 8 级

Title	书名
The Call of the Wild	《野性的呼唤》
Fantastic Fables	《奇异寓言集》
Heart of Darkness	《黑暗之心》
Famous Cases of Sherlock Holmes	《福尔摩斯探案集》
The Scandal of Father Brown and Other Stories	《布朗神父的丑闻》
The Murders in the Rue Morgue	《毛格街谋杀案》

简

介

1842年，安布罗斯·格文内特·比尔斯出生于美国的俄亥俄州。他的父亲是康涅狄格州的一个农民，与同时代的许多人一样，也移居西部。比尔斯没有受过正式的教育，从这个角度而言，他在文学和新闻作品方面取得的成就更令人叹服。

1866年，比尔斯移居圣弗朗西斯科，在那儿，他为自己起了一个笔名，然后开始创作幽默政治卡通。他找到了一份记者工作，其讽刺性的诗歌和散文尤为人们所赞赏。然而，比尔斯仍然继续写短篇故事，以此作为他的烦闷的工作、生活的解脱。1871年，他与玛丽·艾伦·戴结婚的那年，比尔斯的短篇故事集《鬼谷》在“大陆月刊”杂志上发表。

其后，比尔斯在英国居住了四年，在这期间，他发展了一种风格，甚至比他以前的风格更加具有尖刻的讽刺性。1876年，回到圣弗朗西斯科后，比尔斯重操新闻业，为一家出版商“Argonaut”的专栏“星期日观察”写作持续达9年。这个专栏对于加强比尔斯作为一名记者的名望发挥了很大的作用，在很长一段时间内，他一直被认为是该地区最有影响的批评家。比尔斯于1914年在墨西哥去世，死因不详。

比尔斯写的故事包括：《战士与平民的故事》（后更名为《内陆生活》）、《这样的事情可能吗》、《荒诞故事集》。《愤世嫉俗者的语录》则汇集了许多比尔斯的文摘和评论；比尔斯还将合集改名为《魔鬼词典》。

这本名为《奇异寓言集》的选集包含了比尔斯写作的特征性因素。作者以他尖锐的讽刺风格对社会持深刻的、严厉批评的态度，其总体效果因幽默的（有时甚至是恐怖的、离奇的）笔触而更为增色。





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THE FABLES

The Moral<sup>1</sup> Principle and  
the Material Interest

A Moral Principle met a Material Interest on a bridge wide enough for but one.

“Down, you base thing!” thundered<sup>2</sup> the Moral Principle, “and let me pass over you!”

The Material Interest merely<sup>3</sup> looked in the other’s eyes without saying anything.

“Ah,” said the Moral Principle, hesitatingly<sup>4</sup>, “let us draw lots to see which shall retire till the other has crossed.”

The Material Interest maintained<sup>5</sup> an unbroken silence and an unwavering stare.

“In order to avoid a conflict<sup>6</sup>,” the Moral Principle resumed, somewhat uneasily, “I shall myself lie down and let you walk over me.”

Then the Material Interest found a tongue, and by a strange coincidence<sup>7</sup> it was its own tongue. “I don’t think you are very good walking,” it said. “I am a little particular about what I have underfoot. Suppose you get off into the water.”

It occurred that way.

1. **moral:** concerning principles of right and wrong behaviour; ethical. 道德的, 伦理的
2. **thunder:** make a noise like thunder; sound loudly. 发出雷鸣般的声音; 响声大作
3. **merely:** only; simply. 仅, 只; 不过
4. **hesitatingly:** in the manner of discontinuous speaking or acting because one feels uncertain or unwilling. 犹豫, 迟疑
5. **maintain:** cause something to continue. 保持; 维持
6. **conflict:** serious disagreement; argument. 冲突; 争执
7. **coincidence:** occurrence of similar events or circumstances at the same time by chance. 巧合





## The Crimson Candle<sup>1</sup>

A man lying at the point of death called his wife to his bedside and said:

"I am about to leave you forever; give me, therefore, one last proof<sup>2</sup> of your affection and fidelity<sup>3</sup>, for, according to our holy religion, a married man seeking admittance at the gate of Heaven is required to swear<sup>4</sup> that he has never defiled<sup>5</sup> himself with an unworthy woman. In my desk you will find a crimson candle, which has been blessed by the High Priest and has a peculiar mystical significance<sup>6</sup>. Swear to me that while it is in existence you will not remarry."

The Woman swore and the Man died. At the funeral the Woman stood at the head of the bier<sup>7</sup>, holding a lighted crimson candle till it was wasted entirely away.

## The Blotted Escutcheon<sup>8</sup> and the Soiled Ermine<sup>9</sup>

A Blotted Escutcheon, rising to a question of privilege, said:

"Mr Speaker, I wish to hurl back an allegation<sup>10</sup> and explain that the spots upon me are the natural markings of one who is a direct descendant of the sun and a spotted fawn. They come of no accident of character, but inhere in the divine<sup>11</sup> order and constitution of

1. **crimson candle**: deep red candle. 深红色的蜡烛

2. **proof**: evidence that helps to show that sth. is true or is a fact. 证据; 证明

3. **fidelity**: loyalty; faithfulness. 忠诚; 忠贞

4. **swear**: declare solemnly in the name of God (swear; swore; sworn). 立誓; 发誓

5. **defile**: make (sth.) dirty or impure. 损坏(名誉)

6. **significance**: importance. 重大意义, 重要性

7. **bier**: frame to keep the coffin or dead body before burial. 棺材架; 停尸架

8. **escutcheon**: shield displaying a coat of arms. 带有文饰的盾

9. **ermine**: the white fur of a weasel. (鼬鼠的) 白色皮毛

10. **allegation**: statement made without proof. (无证据的) 陈词

11. **divine**: of, from or like God or a god. 上帝的, 神的



things.”

When the Blotted Escutcheon had resumed his seat a Soiled Ermine rose and said:

“Mr Speaker, I have heard with profound attention and entire approval the explanation of the honourable member, and wish to offer a few remarks on my own behalf. I, too, have been foully calumniated<sup>1</sup> by our ancient enemy, the Infamous Falsehood, and I wish to point out that I am made of the fur of the *Mustela maculata* which is dirty from birth.”

### The Ingenious Patriot<sup>2</sup>

Having obtained an audience of the King an Ingenious Patriot pulled a paper from his pocket, saying:

“May it please your Majesty, I have here a formula for constructing armour-plating<sup>3</sup> which no gun can pierce. If these plates are, adopted in the Royal Navy our warships will be invulnerable<sup>4</sup>, and therefore invincible<sup>5</sup>. Here, also, are reports of your Majesty’s Ministers, attesting<sup>6</sup> the value of the invention. I will part with my right in it for a million tumtums<sup>7</sup>.”

After examining the papers, the King put them away and promised him an order on the Lord High Treasurer of the Extortion<sup>8</sup> Department for a million tumtums.

“And here,” said the Ingenious Patriot, pulling another paper from another pocket, “are the working plans of a gun that I have invented, which will pierce that armour. Your Majesty’s Royal Broth

1. **calumniate**: spread false and harmful statements about. 诽谤

2. **ingenious patriot**: clever and loyal person. 机智的爱国者

3. **armour-plate**: sheet of metal used as armour. 装甲板

4. **invulnerable**: that cannot be wounded, hurt or damaged by attack. 不能攻破的

5. **invincible**: too strong to be overcome or defeated. 不可攻克的; 不可战胜的

6. **attest**: declare (sth.) to be true or genuine. 声称(某事物)属实或是真的

7. **tumtum**: the sound of a drum. 击鼓发出的声音; (此处指一种)钱币

8. **extortion**: action of obtaining sth. by violence or threats. 强夺; 勒索



er, the Emperor of Bang, is anxious to purchase it, but loyalty to your Majesty's throne<sup>1</sup> and person constrains<sup>2</sup> me to offer it first to your Majesty. The price is one million tumtums."

Having received the promise of another check, he thrust<sup>3</sup> his hand into still another pocket, remarking:

"The price of the irresistible<sup>4</sup> gun would have been much greater, your Majesty, but for the fact that its missiles can be so effectively averted<sup>5</sup> by my peculiar method of treating the armour plates with a new —"

The King signed to the Great Head Factotum to approach.

"Search this man," he said, "and report how many pockets he has."

"Forty-three, Sire," said the Great Head Factotum, completing the scrutiny<sup>6</sup>.

"May it please your Majesty," cried the Ingenious Patriot, in terror, "one of them contains tobacco."

"Hold him up by the ankles and shake him," said the King, "then give him a check for forty-two million tumtums and put him to death. Let a decree<sup>7</sup> issue declaring ingenuity a capital offence<sup>8</sup>."

## Two Kings

The King of Madagao, being engaged in a dispute<sup>9</sup> with King of Bornegascar, wrote him as follows:

"Before proceeding further in this matter I demand recall of your Minister from my capital."

Greatly enraged<sup>10</sup> by this impossible demand, the King of Borne-

1. **throne**: royal authority or power. 王权, 王位

2. **constrain**: make (sb.) do sth. by strong persuasion or by force. 力劝; 强迫(去做)

3. **thrust**: make a forward stroke at. 插入

4. **irresistible**: too strong to be resisted. 不可抗拒的

5. **avert**: avoid. 防止, 避免

6. **scrutiny**: careful and thorough examination. 仔细而彻底的检查

7. **decree**: judgement or decision of certain law-courts. (法院的)判决, 裁定

8. **capital offence**: one punishable by death. 死罪

9. **dispute**: debate; controversy. 争辩; 争端

10. **enrage**: make (sb.) very angry. 使(某人)非常愤怒



gascar replied:

"I shall not recall my Minister. Moreover, if you do not immediately retract<sup>1</sup> your demand I shall withdraw him!"

This threat so terrified the King of Madagao that in hastening<sup>2</sup> to comply he fell over his own feet, breaking the Third Commandment<sup>3</sup>.

## An Officer and a Thug<sup>4</sup>

A Chief of Police who had seen an Officer beating a Thug was very indignant, and said he must not do so any more on pain of dismissal<sup>5</sup>.

"Don't be too hard on me," said the Officer, smiling, "I was beating him with a stuffed club."

"Nevertheless," persisted the Chief of Police, "it was a liberty that must have been very disagreeable, though it may not have hurt. Please do not repeat it."

"But," said the Officer, still smiling, "it was a stuffed Thug."

In attempting to express his gratification<sup>6</sup>, the Chief of Police thrust out his right hand with such violence that his skin was ruptured<sup>7</sup> at the arm — pit and a stream of sawdust poured from the wound. He was a stuffed Chief of Police.

## The Conscientious<sup>8</sup> Official

While a Division Superintendent of a railway was attending closely to his business of placing obstructions<sup>9</sup> on the track and

1. **retract:** withdraw. 取消; 撤销

2. **hasten:** cause (sth.) to be done or to happen earlier. 催进, 促进

3. **Commandment:** command or mandate to a christian. 圣训; (基督教)十诫

4. **thug:** violent criminal or hooligan. 暴徒

5. **dismissal:** action of discharging. 开除, 解雇

6. **gratification:** state of being pleased or satisfied. 喜悦; 满意; 满足

7. **rupture:** breaking apart or bursting. 破裂

8. **conscientious:** careful to do what one ought to do. 认真的, 谨慎的

9. **obstruction:** action of obstructing; block. 阻碍, 障碍



tampering with the switches he received word that the President of the road was about to discharge him for incompetency<sup>1</sup>.

"Good Heavens!" he cried, "there are more accidents on my division than on all the rest of the line."

"The President is very particular," said the Man who brought him the news, "he thinks the same loss of life might be effected with less damage to the company's property."

"Does he expect me to shoot passengers through the car windows?" exclaimed the indignant official, spiking<sup>2</sup> a loose tire across the rails. "Does he take me for an assassin<sup>3</sup>?"

## How Leisure Came

A Man to Whom Time Was Money, and who was bolting<sup>4</sup> his breakfast in order to catch a train, had leaned his newspaper against the sugar-bowl and was reading as he ate. In his haste and abstraction<sup>5</sup> he stuck a pickle<sup>6</sup>-fork into his right eye, and on removing the fork the eye came with it. In buying spectacles the needless outlay for the right lens soon reduced<sup>7</sup> him to poverty, and the Man to Whom Time Was Money had to sustain<sup>8</sup> life by fishing from the end of a wharf.

## The Moral Sentiment

A Pugilist<sup>9</sup> met the Moral Sentiment of the Community, who was carrying a hat-box. "What have you in the hat-box, my friend?" in-

1. **incompetency**: lack of skill or ability to do a task successfully. 无能力, 不称职
2. **spike**: pierce or injure with a spike. 用尖物刺
3. **assassin**: one who kills important persons on purpose. 刺客
4. **bolt**: swallow quickly. 匆匆吞咽
5. **abstraction**: the state of not noticing what is happening. 心不在焉
6. **pickle**: food preserved in vinegar or salt water. 腌制
7. **reduce**: bring sb. (sth.) into a specified state or condition. 使陷入
8. **sustain**: keep (sb./sth.) alive or in existence. 维持; 支撑; 承受
9. **pugilist**: professional boxer. 职业拳击手





quired the Pugilist.

“A new frown<sup>1</sup>,” was the answer. “I am bringing it from the frowner — the one over there with the gilded<sup>2</sup> steeple<sup>3</sup>. ”

“And what are you going to do with the nice new frown?” the Pugilist asked.

“Put down pugilism — if I have to wear it night and day.” said the Moral Sentiment of the Community, sternly.

“That’s right,” said the Pugilist, “that is right, my good friend; if pugilism had been put down yesterday, I wouldn’t have this kind of Nose today. I had a rattling hot fight last evening with —”

“Is that so?” cried the Moral Sentiment of the Community, with sudden animation<sup>4</sup>. “Which licked<sup>5</sup>? Sit down here on the hat-box and tell me all about it!”

## The politicians

An Old Politician and a Young Politician were travelling through a beautiful country, by the dusty highway which leads to the City of Prosperous Obscurity. Lured<sup>6</sup> by the flowers and the shade and charmed by the songs of birds which invited to woodland paths and green fields, his imagination fired by glimpses of golden domes<sup>7</sup> and glittering palaces in the distance on either hand, the young Politician said:

“Let us, I beseech<sup>8</sup> thee, turn aside from this comfortless road leading, thou knowest whither, but not I. Let us turn our backs upon duty and abandon ourselves to the delights and advantages which beckon from every grove<sup>9</sup> and call to us from every shining

1. **frown**: expression of displeasure. 不悦

2. **gild**: make (sth.) bright as if with gold. 使(某物)如金子般发光

3. **steeple**: tall tower with a spire on top, rising above the roof of a church. 尖塔

4. **animation**: liveliness; vivacity. 生气, 活力

5. **lick**: touch lightly. 触及某物

6. **lure**: attract or tempt. 吸引, 诱惑

7. **dome**: rounded roof with a circular base. 穹顶; 圆屋顶

8. **beseech**: ask sb. earnestly. 恳求某人

9. **grove**: group of trees; small woods. 树丛, 小树林



hill. Let us, if so thou wilt, follow this beautiful path, which, as thou seest, hath a guide-board saying, 'Turn in here all ye who seek the Palace of Political Distinction.'

"It is a beautiful path, my son," said the Old Politician, without either slackening<sup>1</sup> his pace or turning his head, "and it leadeth among pleasant scenes. But the search for the Palace of Political Distinction is beset<sup>2</sup> with one mighty peril<sup>3</sup>."

"What is that?" said the Young Politician.

"The peril of finding it," the Old Politician replied, pushing on.

### The Thoughtful Warden<sup>4</sup>

The Warden of a Penitentiary<sup>5</sup> was one day putting locks on the doors of all the cells when a mechanic said to him:

"Those locks can all be opened from the inside — you are very imprudent<sup>6</sup>."

The Warden did not look up from his work, but said:

"If that is called imprudence, I wonder what would be called a thoughtful provision against the vicissitudes of fortune."

### The Treasury and the Arms

A Public Treasury, feeling Two Arms lifting out its contents, exclaimed<sup>7</sup>:

"Mr Shareman, I move for a division."

"You seem to know something about parliamentary<sup>8</sup> forms of speech," said the Two Arms.

1. **slacken**: become slower; less active. 放慢; 变迟缓

2. **beset**: threaten. 威胁

3. **peril**: serious danger. 严重危险

4. **warden**: governor of a prison. 监狱长

5. **penitentiary**: federal or state prison. (联邦或州的)监狱

6. **imprudent**: not wise or discreet. 不智的; 不谨慎的

7. **exclaim**: cry out suddenly and loudly from pain, anger, surprise. 惊叫(叹)

8. **parliamentary**: of or relating to parliament. 国会的, 议会的

