

 21 世纪英语专业系列教材

Selected Readings of English Short Stories



英语短篇小说
选读

方 岩 ◎主编
刘意青 ◎审定



北京大学出版社
PEKING UNIVERSITY PRESS

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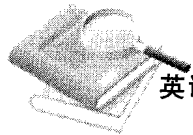
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序

新疆石河子大学作为飞速发展的西部边远地区大学,刚刚进入了国家 211 工程,在教学和科研各方面正积极进取,争取更大的成绩。在这样的大好形势下,我很高兴地看到了石河子大学外国语学院英美文学教师方岩积多年教学经验和体会率该院文学团队教师编写出来的文学阅读教材《英语短篇小说选读》。这是一本很有特色和个性的好教材,为此我欣然同意写上几句,谈谈我对英语教学、教材,特别是这本教材的看法。

自改革开放以来,普及英语并提高现有国人的英语水平已经成为发展中的中国最最紧要的任务之一。迄今为止,我国的图书市场上和教学领域里已经出现了大量帮助国人,特别是年轻学子学习英语的各种教材,各式各样的语法、词汇和训练四会技能的书籍,还有无数进行考前强化训练的习题集。英语教学书刊市场如此的繁盛从一个侧面显示了改革开放在中国的强劲势头,是一件可喜的事情。很多教材积极引进国外新理念,在形式上做了更活泼的变换,在内容上也力求更加贴近当代生活。然而,在肯定这些出版物的积极作用的同时,我们仍然不能不看到英语出版物存在的一些不足:比如因为出得快,急功近利而造成的一些质量问题,或因缺乏出版市场的总体协调而产生的内容重复,没有新意等现象。而且,由于各种相似的助学书刊已经充斥市场,再编写英语教材似乎难度更大,它需要有自己的特色和比同类教材优越的地方。然而,由新疆石河子大学英语教师编写的这本《英语短篇小说选读》却令我感到耳目一新,在选材和编写理念上编者不赶时髦或随波逐流,而是回归于老清华和西南联大坚持的开卷有益和以文学养语言等外语教学中最基本的准则。我以为这种返朴归真是值得大力提倡的。

其实,在英美这些西方国家里外语技能习得不是大学的任务,有专门的语言训练学校或中心来完成它。在国际上,外语本身从来算不上大学的一个学科。它们的外文系就如同中文系在中国,设置的专业和学科决不是听、说、读、写的技巧训练,而是英美和西方文学、文化和语言学等等。随着我国进入国际大家庭,随着大学课程和学科设置与国际接轨,我们就必须在训练语言技巧的同时,向该语言国的文学和文化等内容倾斜。目前国内的一些重点外语院校,比如北京大学英语系,已经有这种认识,从一年级就开设出英语文学、语言学、文化和文学理论等各种课程,并把这些课程与提高阅读和写作能力的语言训练紧密地结合



英语短篇小说选读

在一起。事实证明,通过这样的课程设置,学生的英语达到了比机械语言技能训练更高的层次,而且在英语思维和自由探讨问题方面都取得了与英美大学类似的水平。

基于这样的认识,我们就不难理解为什么老清华、北大和解放前的西南联大英文系教学中那么强调文学,除去专门把文学当作专业学习之外,在语言习得方面也以大量的文学阅读为主,然后配以写作训练。方岩等老师编写的这本阅读教材恰恰体现了这种办外语院系的理念,继承了老清华、北大的传统。首先,在选材上这本教材注重了英文名篇和文字质量,它让我想起我父亲手头保存并传流给我的一本老清华阅读教材,只不过由于考虑了新疆和西北地区英语起点较低的特殊性,老师们采用了可学性更强的简化英语版本。《英语短篇小说选读》中的选篇,如欧·亨利、爱伦·坡、海明威和曼斯菲尔德,都是著名作家,并以文字简练优美著称,很适合英语学习者提高理解水平,培养语感和了解英美社会和文化,从而达到一箭三雕的目的。从格式上,老师们也颇费心思地用“情节”、“视角”、“人物”、“背景”、“风格”、“主题”、“象征手法”和“反讽”几个写作要素来归类统领选篇。这样做又把这本阅读教材与国际上通用的写作教材挂上了钩,也就是说在提供读者美文阅读的同时加进去了文学分析的因素,并同时教授了一些写作技巧。此外,《英语短篇小说选读》还对每个作者做了简单介绍,为每篇读物的理解提供了启示性的指点,结合写作特点撰写了每篇的读后评论,并在教材后面附上了补充的阅读材料。这些设计和安排无一不是为了方便读者,为了让英语学习者最大程度地从阅读中获益,真正从接触文学文本来提高英语水平,拓宽知识面,并吸收人文教育的营养。

为此,我以为这样一本中规中矩、质量很好的阅读教材在我们目前外语教材市场上恰恰是难能可贵的。它看似不时髦,却能把英语学习者从枯燥的记背单词和语法条款的被动学习中解脱出来,让他们在享受美文的愉悦中获得语感。我希望读者们能够认真使用它,从而在英语学习的道路上迈出更大的步伐!

刘意青

北京大学教授

石河子大学挂职院长

前 言

在跨文化交际中,人文素质的高低和对目标语国家人文知识了解的多寡直接决定交际的成败与得失。而文学则是反映英语国家社会人文生活各个侧面的一面镜子,可以说培养文学鉴赏能力既是培养语感的需要,又是提高文化修养的重要方面,还能陶冶情操、提高语言修养、锻炼思维、增长知识。根据 2000 年年初国家教育部颁发的《全国高等学校英语专业教学大纲》,英语小说课程是高校英语本科专业的方向选修课之一,是专业学生在高年级阶段的一门文学知识拓展课程,更是了解英语国家不同社会阶层中人与人、人与社会、人与自然的关系以及人类自身的心理状态、精神风貌、价值观和时空观等的一个窗口。正是针对这样的使用对象、使用目的和要求,考虑到如何使广大英语读者,特别是学英语的学生,最大程度受益,《英语短篇小说选读》编者决定不采用这些名篇的原文,而是选编了最流畅、最忠实原文内容和色彩的简易版本,大大增加了可读性。但由于版权限制,我们不得不选编那些故去已经 50 年的作家的小说,忍痛割舍了福克纳等名作家的作品。

本自编教材是石河子大学 2008—2009 学年教材建设立项项目之一,共分八个章节。每章内容包括六部分:英语小说基本要素介绍、小说原文、注释、思考题、作家简介和小说评论。本教材具有以下特点:(一)介绍性文字,包括小说要素介绍和作家介绍,简洁明了,浅显易懂;(二)所选小说均为英语短篇小说中脍炙人口的作品,故事情节引人入胜,文字优美隽永,风格题材各异,长短难易适中,是感悟人生,了解世间百态的佳品;(三)第一至八章中每个小说后有一篇评论,目的是为了使用者更好地理解小说,理解小说要素;(四)教材后附有补充英语小说八篇,都是我们精心挑选的经典作品,并特别考虑了语言的可学性,以便更好地满足教学和学生阅读的需要。经过一个多学期的共同努力,这本教材编写的各项工作终于顺利完成了。

编写工作正式开始之时适逢北京大学刘意青教授挂职来石河子大学任外国语学院院长,非常感谢她对小说遴选和各部分内容设计提出的宝贵意见。

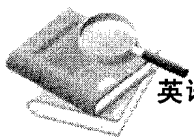
编写这样一本教材尚属尝试,由于经验不足,教材中的问题和错误在所难免,真诚欢迎批评和指正。

方岩

2009年8月15日

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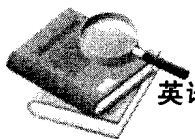
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Chapter One

Plot

Plot is the first and most obvious quality of a story. In fiction it is the sequence of events or actions which are related to one another. It may be simple or complicated, loosely constructed or closely-knitted.

Related literary terms in this chapter:

Action is generally introduced by the exposition. It rises to a crisis or climax during the process of development. This movement is called the rising action. The *falling action*, which follows the crisis or climax, shows a reversal of fortune for the protagonist. In a tragedy this reversal leads to disaster, while in a comedy it leads to a happy ending.

Allusion is usually a reference in a work of literature to a person, place, or thing in another work of literature, art, music, painting, mythology, or history.

Climax refers to the turning point of a story, usually the moment of the greatest tension, interest, or suspense at which the outcome is yet to be decided. All action after the climax is referred to as the falling action, or resolution. The term “crisis” is sometimes used interchangeably with climax.

Conclusion (also called falling action, or resolution, or denouement) is the final unraveling of the plot, the resolution of the mystery, or “the untying of the knot”, generally involving not only a satisfactory outcome of the main situation but also an explanation of all the secrets and misunderstandings connected with the plot complication.

Conflict is a struggle between two opposing forces or characters in a story. Conflict can be external or internal and it often takes one of these forms: (1) a person against another person; (2) a person against society; (3) a person against nature; and (4) two elements struggling for mastery within a person. Conflict is an important element in plot development and provides, among other things, the basis for suspense and tension.

Crisis refers to a moment of high tension in the plot which may be momentarily resolved, but then an even greater crisis—the turning point in the action—may occur.

Exposition is the beginning part of a story in which important background information is given.

Foreshadowing is the process of giving the reader hints or clues to suggest what will happen later in a story. It is used to create interest and to build suspense.

Surprise Ending means an unexpected twist at the end of a story that is not predicted by the reader beforehand and it depends on an unexpected resolution of

the main conflict.

Suspense is one of the qualities of a story that makes the reader uncertain or tense about the outcome of events and impels them to read on.



Story One

Text

A Retrieved Reformation

O. Henry

A guard came to the prison shoe-shop, where Jimmy Valentine was assiduously stitching uppers, and escorted him to the front office. There the warden handed Jimmy his pardon, which had been signed that morning by the governor. Jimmy took it in a tired kind of way. He had served nearly ten months of a four year sentence. He had expected to stay only about three months, at the longest. When a man with as many friends on the outside as Jimmy Valentine had is received in the "stir", it is hardly worthwhile to cut his hair.

"Now, Valentine," said the warden, "you'll go out in the morning. Brace up, and make a man of yourself. You're not a bad fellow at heart. Stop cracking safes, and live straight."

"Me?" said Jimmy, in surprise. "Why, I never cracked a safe in my life."

"Oh, no," laughed the warden. "Of course not. Let's see, now. How was it you happened to get sent up on that Springfield job? Was it because you wouldn't prove an alibi² for fear of compromising somebody in extremely high-toned society? Or was it simply a case of a mean old jury that had it in for you? It's always one or the other with you innocent victims."

"Me?" said Jimmy, still blankly virtuous. "Why, warden, I never was in Springfield in my life!"

"Take him back, Cronin!" said the warden, "and fix him up with outgoing clothes. Unlock him at seven in the morning, and let him come to the bull-pen.³ Better think over my advice, Valentine."

At a quarter past seven on the next morning Jimmy stood in the warden's outer office. He had on a suit of the villainously fitting, ready-made clothes and a pair of the stiff, squeaky shoes that the state furnishes to its discharged compulsory guests.

The clerk handed him a railroad ticket and the five-dollar bill with which the law expected him to rehabilitate himself into good citizenship and prosperity. The warden gave him a cigar, and shook hands. Valentine, 9762, was chronicled on the books, "Pardoned by Governor," and Mr. James Valentine walked out into the sunshine.

Disregarding the song of the birds, the waving green trees, and the smell of the flowers, Jimmy headed straight for a restaurant. There he tasted the first sweet joys of liberty in the shape of a broiled chicken and a bottle of white wine—followed by a cigar a grade better than the one the warden had given him. From there he proceeded leisurely to the depot⁴. He tossed a quarter into the hat of a blind man sitting by the door, and boarded his train. Three hours set him down in a little town near the state line⁵. He went to the café of one Mike Dolan⁶ and shook hands with Mike, who was alone behind the bar.

“Sorry we couldn’t make it sooner, Jimmy, my boy,” said Mike. “But we had that protest from Springfield to buck against, and the governor nearly balked. Feeling all right?”

“Fine,” said Jimmy. “Got my key?”

He got his key and went upstairs, unlocking the door of a room at the rear. Everything was just as he had left it. There on the floor was still Ben Price’s collar-button that had been torn from that eminent detective’s shirt-band when they had overpowered Jimmy to arrest him.

Pulling out from the wall a folding-bed, Jimmy slid back a panel in the wall and dragged out a dust-covered suit-case. He opened this and gazed fondly at the finest set of burglar’s tools in the East. It was a complete set, made of specially tempered steel, the latest designs in drills, punches, braces and bits, clamps, and augers, with two or three novelties, invented by Jimmy himself, in which he took pride. Over nine hundred dollars they had cost him to have it made at—, a place where they make such things for the profession.

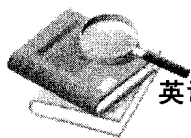
In half an hour Jimmy went down stairs and through the café. He was now dressed in tasteful and well-fitting clothes, and carried his dusted and cleaned suit-case in his hand.

“Got anything on?” asked Mike Dolan, genially.

“Me?” said Jimmy, in a puzzled tone. “I don’t understand. I’m representing the New York Amalgamated⁷ Short Snap Biscuit Cracker and Frazzled Wheat Company.”

This statement delighted Mike to such an extent that he offered Jimmy a seltzer-and-milk on the spot. He never touched “hard” drinks.

A week after the release of Valentine, 9762, there was a neat job of safe-burglary done in Richmond, Indiana, with no clue to the author. A scant eight hundred dollars was all that was secured⁸. Two weeks after that a patented, improved, burglar-proof safe in Logansport was opened like a cheese to the tune of fifteen hundred dollars, currency; securities and silver untouched. That began to interest the rogue-catchers⁹. Then an old-fashioned bank-safe in Jefferson City became the next target and threw out of its crater an eruption of bank-notes amounting to five thousand dollars. The losses were now high enough to bring the



matter up into Ben Price's class of work. By comparing notes, a remarkable similarity in the methods of the burglaries was noticed. Ben Price investigated the scenes of the robberies, and was heard to remark:

"That's Dandy Jim Valentine's autograph. He's resumed business. Look at that combination knob—jerked out as easy as pulling up a radish in wet weather. He's got the only clamps that can do it. And look how clean those tumblers were punched out! Jimmy never has to drill but one hole. Yes, I guess I want Mr. Valentine. He'll do his bit¹⁰ next time without any short-time or clemency foolishness."

Ben Price knew Jimmy's habits. He had learned them while working on the Springfield case. Long jumps, quick getaways, no confederates, and a taste for good society—these ways had helped Mr. Valentine to become noted as a successful dodger of retribution. It was given out that Ben Price had taken up the trail of the elusive cracksman, and other people with burglar-proof safes felt more at ease.

One afternoon Jimmy Valentine and his suit-case climbed out of the mail-hack¹¹ in Elmore, a little town five miles off the railroad down in the black-jack country¹² of Arkansas. Jimmy, looking like an athletic young senior just home from college, went down the side-walk toward the hotel.

A young lady crossed the street, passed him at the corner and entered a door over which was the sign, "The Elmore Bank." Jimmy Valentine looked into her eyes, forgot what he was, and became another man. She lowered her eyes and colored slightly. Young men of Jimmy's style and looks were scarce in Elmore.

Jimmy collared a boy that was loafing on the steps of the bank as if he were one of the stockholders, and began to ask him questions about the town, feeding him dimes at intervals. By and by the young lady came out, looking royally unconscious of the young man with the suit-case, and went her way.

"Isn't that young lady Polly Simpson?" asked Jimmy, with specious guile.

"Naw," said the boy. "She's Annabel Adams. Her pa owns this bank. Why'd you come to Elmore for? Is that a gold watch-chain? I'm going to get a bulldog. Got any more dimes?"

Jimmy went to the Planters' Hotel, registered as Ralph D. Spencer, and engaged a room. He leaned on the desk and declared his platform¹³ to the clerk. He said he had come to Elmore to look for a location to go into business. How was the shoe business, now, in the town? He had thought of the shoe business. Was there an opening?

The clerk was impressed by the clothes and manner of Jimmy. He, himself, was something of a pattern of fashion to the thinly gilded youth of Elmore, but he now perceived his shortcomings. While trying to figure out Jimmy's manner of tying his four-in-hand¹⁴ he cordially gave information.

Yes, there ought to be a good opening in the shoe line. There wasn't an

exclusive shoe-store in the place. The dry-goods and general stores handled them. Business in all lines was fairly good. Hoped Mr. Spencer would decide to locate in Elmore. He would find it a pleasant town to live in, and the people very sociable.

Mr. Spencer thought he would stop over in the town for a few days and look over the situation. No, the clerk needn't call the boy. He would carry up his suit-case, himself; it was rather heavy.

Mr. Ralph Spencer, the phoenix¹⁵ that arose from Jimmy Valentine's ashes—ashes left by the flame of a sudden attack of love—remained in Elmore, and prospered. He opened a shoe-store and secured a good run of trade.

Socially he was also a success, and made many friends. And he accomplished the wish of his heart. He met Miss Annabel Adams, and became more and more captivated by her charms.

At the end of a year the situation of Mr. Ralph Spencer was this: he had won the respect of the community, his shoe-store was flourishing, and he and Annabel were engaged to be married in two weeks. Mr. Adams, the typical, plodding, country banker, approved of Spencer. Annabel's pride in him almost equalled her affection. He was as much at home in the family of Mr. Adams and that of Annabel's married sister as if he were already a member.

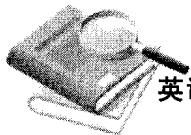
One day Jimmy sat down in his room and wrote this letter, which he mailed to the safe address of one of his old friends in St. Louis:

Dear Old Pal:

I want you to be at Sullivan's place, in Little Rock, next Wednesday night, at nine o'clock. I want you to wind up some little matters for me. And, also, I want to make you a present of my kit of tools. I know you'll be glad to get them—you couldn't duplicate the lot for a thousand dollars. Say, Billy, I've quit the old business—a year ago. I've got a nice store. I'm making an honest living, and I'm going to marry the finest girl on earth two weeks from now. It's the only life, Billy—the straight one. I wouldn't touch a dollar of another man's money now for a million. After I get married I'm going to sell out and go West, where there won't be so much danger of having old scores brought up against me. I tell you, Billy, she's an angel. She believes in me; and I wouldn't do another crooked thing for the whole world. Be sure to be at Sully's, for I must see you. I'll bring along the tools with me.

Your old friend,
Jimmy.

On the Monday night after Jimmy wrote this letter, Ben Price jogged unobtrusively into Elmore in a livery buggy¹⁶. He lounged about town in his quiet way until he found out what he wanted to know. From the drug-store across the street from Spencer's shoe-store he got a good look at Ralph D. Spencer.



“Going to marry the banker’s daughter are you, Jimmy?” said Ben to himself, softly. “Well, I don’t know!”

The next morning Jimmy took breakfast at the Adamses. He was going to Little Rock that day to order his wedding-suit and buy something nice for Annabel. That would be the first time he had left town since he came to Elmore. It had been more than a year now since those last professional “jobs,” and he thought he could safely venture out.

After breakfast quite a family party went downtown together—Mr. Adams, Annabel, Jimmy, and Annabel’s married sister with her two little girls, aged five and nine. They came by the hotel where Jimmy still boarded, and he ran up to his room and brought along his suit-case. Then they went on to the bank. There stood Jimmy’s horse and buggy and Dolph Gibson, who was going to drive him over to the railroad station.

All went inside the high, carved oak railings into the banking-room—Jimmy included, for Mr. Adams’s future son-in-law was welcome anywhere. The clerks were pleased to be greeted by the good-looking, agreeable young man who was going to marry Miss Annabel. Jimmy set his suit-case down. Annabel, whose heart was bubbling with happiness and lively youth, put on Jimmy’s hat, and picked up the suit-case. “Wouldn’t I make a nice drummer¹⁷?” said Annabel. “My! Ralph, how heavy it is! Feels like it was full of gold bricks.”

“Lot of nickel-plated shoe-horns in there,” said Jimmy, coolly, “that I’m going to return. Thought I’d save express charges by taking them up. I’m getting awfully economical.”

The Elmore Bank had just put in a new safe and vault¹⁸. Mr. Adams was very proud of it, and insisted on an inspection by every one. The vault was a small one, but it had a new, patented door. It fastened with three solid steel bolts thrown simultaneously with a single handle, and had a time-lock. Mr. Adams beamingly explained its workings to Mr. Spencer, who showed a courteous but not too intelligent interest. The two children, May and Agatha, were delighted by the shining metal and funny clock and knobs.

While they were thus engaged Ben Price sauntered in and leaned on his elbow, looking casually inside between the railings. He told the teller that he didn’t want anything; he was just waiting for a man he knew.

Suddenly there was a scream or two from the women, and a commotion. Unperceived by the elders, May, the nine-year-old girl, in a spirit of play, had shut Agatha in the vault. She had then shot the bolts and turned the knob of the combination as she had seen Mr. Adams do.

The old banker sprang to the handle and tugged at it for a moment. “The door can’t be opened,” he groaned. “The clock hasn’t been wound nor the combination set.”

Agatha’s mother screamed again, hysterically.