



短篇小說選讀

英漢對照

第 3 輯

THE ART OF THE SHORT STORY

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短篇小說選讀第三輯

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尼默洛夫等著 溫健騷等譯

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THE ART OF THE SHORT STORY Vol. 3

Commodity of Dreams by Howard Nemerov.

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HOWARD NEMEROV was born in 1920 and grew up in New York City. He joined the Royal Canadian Air Force (1942-1944) after graduating from Harvard, and during the war he served in the United States Army Air Corps (1944-1945) as a pilot. Since the war he has lived most of the time in Vermont, where he is a professor of English at Bennington College. He has published considerable literary criticism, three novels, and a book of short stories as well as five books of poems.

雷華德·尼默洛夫，一九二〇年出生，在紐約市長大。哈佛大學畢業後，即加入加拿大皇家空軍（一九四二——一九四四）；第二次世界大戰期間，在美國空降部隊服役，為飛行員。大戰後定居維蒙特州，任教於板寧頓書院，為英國文學教授。曾發表不少文學評論，出版了三部長篇小說，一部短篇小說集和五部詩集。

THE SORCERER'S EYE

By Howard Nemerov

1

AROUND THE CASTLE where I lived with my parents was a moat, half overgrown with weeds, where wild birds waded and swam. A corridor, which I liked to think was secret, led to a door at the water's edge, and there I used to go, against my father's absolute command, to meet the girl from outside. We spoke across the water.

"What is that you wear on the string around your neck?" she asked me once. I drew it from my shirt, a golden spoon it was, and showed it to her.

"Why a golden spoon?" she asked.

"Oh," I said, "it is something that happened long ago, a kind of family joke, though not a very good one. You wouldn't be interested."

法師的眼睛

霍華德·尼默洛夫著

—

我和父母親所住的城堡，環城有一條護城河，大半條河長着水藻，那裏有野禽鱸水，在河上浮來浮去。有一條甬道，通往臨河一道城門，我喜歡設想那是一條秘密甬道。我常常違反父親的嚴令，到那兒去私會一個來自外間的少女。我們隔着河水談話。

「你的頸項上掛的是甚麼？」她有一次問我。我把它從襯衣裏掏出來拿給她看，是隻金羹匙。

「幹嗎要掛金羹匙？」她問。

「啊，」我說，「那是很久以前的事了，是我們家裏的笑話，雖然不算怎麼好。你不會有興趣的。」

"You're a sad boy, aren't you?" said she. "Do they really joke, in your family? Tell me."

"When I was little," I said, "my father once told me, he seemed angry about it, that I had been born with a golden spoon in my mouth. That puzzled me, since I didn't know it was a proverb, and I tried to think what it was like to be born, and why one would have a golden spoon in one's mouth at that time, and finally, seeing that my father really meant something, which it made him angry to mean, I started to cry. My mother then, to turn it into a joke, took a real golden spoon from the dinner table, tapped me on the shoulder with it, and said I was her knight of the golden spoon. So I have kept the spoon."

The girl smiled. She was dressed in black rags, and so beautiful.

"You love your mother, don't you?" she said.

"She is sick," I replied. "She lies on a sofa all day, and has little heart-shaped white pastilles, for her heart ailment. She reads novels, and sometimes I read them to her, though Father does not like me to be reading novels."

"There's a great lot your father doesn't like."

"He doesn't like at all for me to meet you and talk to you."

"I know," said she. "We're both lonely."

"I am so lonely," said I. "For I read in books about how people live, out in the world, and meet others, and make friends, and love another. I love you, I think."

「你是個喜歡發愁的孩子，不是嗎？」她說。「在你家裏，他們真的開玩笑麼？告訴我。」

「我小的時候，」我說，「我父親有一次告訴我，他好像很生氣的樣子，說我生來嘴裏就銜着一隻金羹匙。我聽了莫名其妙，因為那時我不知道這是一句成語。我儘在想出生是個甚麼樣子，爲甚麼嘴裏要銜一隻金羹匙。後來，我看到父親的話確有所指，而且他所指的使他非常生氣，我便放聲哭了起來。於是，我母親要把這句話當做玩笑，從飯桌子上拿起一隻真的金羹匙，在我的肩膀上輕輕敲了一下，說我是她的金匙武士。於是我就把這隻金羹匙保存起來了。」

女孩子笑了。她穿的是破爛的黑衣裳，卻又如此美麗。

「你喜歡你的母親，是不是啊？」她說。

「她在病着，」我答道。「整天躺在沙發上，吃心形的白色小藥片，醫她的心病。她讀小說，有時我唸給她聽，雖然父親不喜歡我讀小說。」

「你父親不喜歡的事情，可真多啊。」

「他絕對不喜歡我跟你見面，和你聊天。」

「這個我知道，」她說。「我們兩個都寂寞。」

「我寂寞得很，」我說。「因為我在書本裏讀到，在外面的人世間，人怎麼過活，怎麼和別人相識，交朋友，彼此相愛。我想，我愛你。」

"I love you," she said, "but it would be better not to talk of that."

"Because of your father?" I asked.

"Because of him, yes."

"I know about your father," I said, "for my father told me the tale on my eighteenth birthday, only a while ago. I have even seen your father, through the telescope to the tower room. He sits in the woods, in a clearing in the woods, a mile away. He sits on a throne of sorts, I think, and stares at our castle all the time. He is a sorcerer, isn't he, a kind of wizard?"

"He is," said she.

"And my father is frightened of him," I went on, "for he built this castle of ours by magic, before I was born, and my father fears that if he is offended he may tear it down, also by magic."

"That's true, he could," she said. "Your father must have been in terrible trouble, to need my father's help."

"My father used to live in the world," I said. "He was a captain in one of the great regiments, and he had epaulets of silver, high boots, silver spurs. But he lived too well, and gambled, and was in debt. One night, when he was drunk and losing everything, he bet against a brother officer and on his side the wager was that this man, if he won, might spend a night with my mother."

"That was a bad thing to do," said the girl.

「我也愛你，」她說，「不過，最好不要談那個。」

「因為你父親？」

「是，是因為他。」

「你父親的事情，我聽到過，」我說，「前不久我過十八歲生日，我的父親講給我聽的。我甚至還看見過你的父親，用的是塔樓裏的望遠鏡。他坐在一哩路以外一座林子裏空地上。我想，他坐在一個甚麼寶座上的，老是盯着我們的城堡看。他是個法師，一種會妖術的法師，是麼？」

「他是個法師，」她說。

「而且我父親實在怕他，」我繼續說，「因為他在我出生以前，用法術蓋起這座城堡，我父親害怕，得罪了他，他就會大使法術，把城堡弄垮。」

「那沒錯，他做得到，」她說。「你父親一定倒霉透了，才要我父親幫忙。」

「我父親從前在名利場裏翻滾，」我說。「他在一個出名的部隊裏當隊長，有的是銀肩章，長銃靴，銀馬刺甚麼的。可是他過於養尊處優，又好賭博，欠了一身的債。一天晚上，他喝醉了酒，甚麼都輸光了，還跟一位同寅打賭，他這邊下的注子是，如果這人贏了，就可以和我母親過一夜。」

「那樣做真是大錯特錯了。」女孩子說。

"It was," I said, "for he lost. Everyone knew then that it was not only a bad bet but an impossible one, and they left him alone until sunrise, with a pistol on the table. My father was to shoot himself because of his dishonor; that was the understanding, in the regiment. But instead he went out and walked in the streets of the city until, near dawn, he met your father, who brought him into the deep forest, far away, and raised him up this fine castle which you see—all by a look of the eye he did this, and by a gesture of the hand."

"My father has a great and terrible power," the girl said. "There was a condition."

"The condition was simply this," I replied, "that we live here, that we never go outside."

"You are safe, at any rate."

"Yes," I said, "we are safe enough. But my father is unhappy, and that makes us all unhappy. He is unhappy because, I think, he believes still that he might somehow have got out of his desperate position and gone on to a grand career, and because my mother is ill and not much of a companion to him, and because she despises him, having never forgiven the wager. Finally," I said with some hesitation, "because he suspects, and fears, that after all his fellow officer might have taken advantage of his winning, on that night, so I would be not my father's child but his. About this, he has never asked my mother, as fearing her reply, as not wanting the burden of the knowledge, I don't know."

「是的，」我說。「因為他輸了。那時每個人都知道，那不單是混帳的賭法，而且行不通。他們把他單獨留下，直到天明，桌上放着一支手鎗。我父親這樣丟臉，本來應該自殺的；在軍團裏，大家都那麼以為。可是，他非但沒有自殺，反而走了出去，在城市的街道上徘徊；到了黎明時分，他碰上你的父親，把他帶到遠方一座深邃的林子裏，給他蓋起你親眼看見的這座美好的城堡——全由他眼睛一望，手一揮便把房子蓋好了。」

「我的父親具有無邊的可怕的法力。」女孩子說。
「那一定有個條件。」

「條件只不過是，」我答道，「我們住在這兒，永遠不要到外面去。」

「無論如何，你們是安全了。」

「是的，」我說，「我們是够安全了。不過，我父親並不快樂，他不快樂，把我們弄得都不快樂了。他不快樂，我想，是因為他仍然相信他可以想法子脫離他現在的困境，從事大事業，而且，因為我母親有病，對他也不算不得是個伴兒，還有，因為她瞧不起他，從來就沒有原諒過他那次打賭。最後，」我說得有些躊躇起來，「因為他懷疑，而且害怕他的同僚在那天夜裏乘勝佔了他的便宜，那麼，我就不是我父親的兒子而是那個人的兒子了。至於這一點，他從來沒有問過我母親；不曉得是因為害怕她的答覆，還是不想在知道了實情之後心情上有所負擔。」

We were silent. The waters of the moat glittered between us. Behind me the castle stood towering in courses of great blocks of stone, behind her the trees flickered their green leaves in the light wind and the sunshine.

"I never knew my mother," said the girl at last.

"I'm sorry for that," said I.

"Nor have I been in the world," she said. "I am as much a prisoner as you are, and perhaps my father is as much a prisoner as yours. The keeper is always bound to his charge, so neither can be free."

"I should like to go into the world," I said, "but only if you would go with me."

"My father has two eyes," she said, musingly, and as if not replying at all, "of which the right one, of flesh and blood, is the eye of action, and the left one, a glass orb, is the eye of thought. With the one, he does; with the other, he knows."

"That is a strange division," I said, "and yet, after all, quite appropriate in its way."

"I have been thinking," she said, "that as my father's eyes are fixed upon the castle, so that you and I are beneath his notice, we might go together, one time, and come up behind him, and you with your golden spoon could quickly remove an eye—"

"But that would be terrible," said I, "in itself and in its consequences."

"Terrible, how?" asked the girl. "I do not love my father."

我們誰都沒有說話，護城河水在我們之間閃閃發光。我的背後，城堡矗立，巨石層疊；她的背後，樹上的綠葉在微風和陽光中搖曳生姿。

「我從來沒有見過我的母親，」女孩子到後說。

「我真爲你難過，」我說。

「我也沒有到過塵世，」她說。「我和你一樣，是個囚徒，而且，也許我的父親和你父親一樣，也是個囚徒。看守的人常受責任牽制，所以兩者都不自由。」

「我很想到塵世去，」我說，「不過要你願意跟我一同去。」

「我父親有兩隻眼睛，」她說話時若有所思，好像並不在回答我的問題：「右面一隻有血有肉，是行動的眼睛；左面的一隻，是個玻璃珠子，是思想的眼睛。他用一隻行；用另一隻知。」

「這是個古怪的分法，」我說，「不過，照說究竟也十分恰當。」

「我一直在想，」她說，「我父親的眼睛盯住了城堡，那麼，你和我都在他注視之下；我們可以找個時候，一起去看他，到他的背後，你就可以用你的金鑰匙，迅速的挖掉他一隻眼睛——」

「不過，這樣做太可怕了，」我說，「後果也怕人。」

「怎麼個怕人法？」女孩子問。「我並不愛我的父親。」

"Nor I mine," I replied, "though I should be sorry to lose my mother. But the castle would fall."

"Not if you removed the glass eye," she said. "It would not hurt him to lose it, since it is glass, since it is the eye of knowledge he would never know he had lost it, so that it follows, surely, that he must keep the eye of action turned, as always, upon the castle, to keep it as it is, in being."

"That's true," I said, beginning to be fascinated with the idea. "But dangerous."

"You are afraid?" she asked, smiling again.

"I have never been afraid," I said, somewhat sternly, but yet not pridefully, for the fact was that my existence until this time had magically excluded the awareness of fear.

"When it is done," she said, "we shall go out into the world, away from castle and forest, and I promise to love you for as long as you will love me."

"I will do it for that promise," I said. "I will do it for you."

"Tonight," she said, "meet me here again, and I will lead you where he sits."

So we parted, agreeing to meet in the hour before dawn.