

The Canterville Ghost

坎特维尔 的幽灵



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奥·王尔德 著

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INTRODUCTION

Published in 1887, *The Canterville Ghost* is O. Wilde's earliest attempt at fiction.

The story combines many aspects of the writer's personality which will reappear in his later works. Wilde had a prodigious talent for story-telling, unbeatable wit and ironic humour which blend with elegance of expression. Fine examples of these traits can be found throughout this book. But the story hints at other distinguishing features of Wilde's works: his preoccupation with the problem of evil and consequent feelings of guilt which require a long expiation, his compassion for human suffering and his craving for a world of beauty and innocence.

The story is set in a century-old English castle which is purchased by an American family, the Otis, who upon their arrival at Canterville Chase, learn that the castle is haunted by the ghost of Sir Simon de Canterville.

A great deal of humour is provided by the reversal of a stock situation - instead of scaring people it is the ghost that gets frightened and persecuted -

导 言

1887年出版的《坎特维尔的幽灵》是奥·王尔德在小说领域中的最早尝试。

这部小说已然具备了作者多方面的写作特征。在其后来的作品中,这些特征又多次出现。王尔德具有令人惊异的叙述能力、无与伦比的机智和辛辣的幽默感;所有这一切又和优雅的表达方式融合在一起。读者可以在本书中找到所有这些特色的杰出佐证。但这部小说也隐约显示了王尔德作品的其它一些特点:他对于罪行、负罪感以及长期赎罪等问题的关注、对于人类苦难的同情以及对纯洁美好世界的向往。

故事发生在一座历史悠久的英国城堡中。来自美国的奥蒂斯家族购得了城堡的所有权。当他们到达坎特维尔庄园时,听说坎特维尔的旧主人西蒙爵士的幽灵在庄园中游荡。

将一种老套的情节顺序颠倒一下就能产生巨大的喜剧效果——不是人被幽灵惊吓,而是幽灵被人惊扰

and by the attitudes of the matter-of-fact members of the Otis family who dismiss the belief in the existence of ghosts as nonsense typical of a backward old world. But in their turn they are blind to their own superstitions such as their belief in the superiority of American culture or the infallibility of all that can be bought with money. Through the Americans Wilde makes fun of the snobbery of the English aristocracy and at the same time he ridicules the Americans and their businesslike and puritanical approach to life.

In the end it is innocent little Virginia Otis that recognizes how much she owes the ghost when she says: 'He made me see what Life is, and what Death signifies, and why Love is stronger than both.'

——被“实事求是”的奥蒂斯一家的态度弄得不知所措。这家人认为幽灵存在论是落后的欧洲所制造的典型废话。实际上，他们也在盲目恪守着自己所制造的迷信，例如美国文化优等论以及金钱万能论。王尔德通过这些美国人取笑了英国贵族的势利，同时也嘲讽了美国人那种公事公办和清教徒式的生活态度。

在故事的结尾，只有天真的小弗吉尼亚·奥蒂斯意识到她应该多么感激这个幽灵。她说：“是他使我看清了生活是什么，死亡又意味着什么，以及为什么爱比这两者更为强大。”

The Canterville Ghost

A Hylo-Idealistic Romance

I

WHEN Mr. Hiram B. Otis, the American Minister, bought Canterville Chase, every one told him he was doing a very foolish thing, as there was no doubt at all that the place was haunted. Indeed, Lord Canterville himself, who was a man of the most **punctilious** honour, had felt it his duty to mention the fact to Mr. Otis when they came to discuss terms.

‘We have not cared to live in the place ourselves,’ said Lord Canterville, ‘since my grand-aunt, the Dowager Duchess of Bolton, was frightened into a fit, from which she never really recovered, by two skeleton hands being placed on her shoulders as she was dressing for dinner, and I feel bound to tell you, Mr. Otis, that the ghost has been seen by several living members of my family, as well as by

haunted = visited by ghosts – Dowager Duchess = widow of a Duke – frightened into a fit = terribly shocked
– bound = obliged – ghost = phantom

一个唯物 - 唯心主义传奇故事

第一章

当美国公使海勒姆·B·奥蒂斯先生买下坎特维尔庄园时,所有的人都说他在做一件非常愚蠢的事情,因为毫无疑问,那个地方闹鬼。享有一丝不苟荣誉称号的坎特维尔勋爵在与奥蒂斯先生谈价钱时,也觉得自己有义务向后者指出这一事实。

“我们自己也从不愿意住在那儿,”坎特维尔勋爵说,“我的姑婆波尔顿公爵夫人有一次正在更衣准备用晚餐,忽然有两只骷髅一般的手放在了她的肩上,把她吓得晕厥过去。打那儿之后她就再也没有完全恢复过来。而且我认为自己有义务告诉您,奥蒂斯先生,我家有好几位依然健在的成员都看见过这个鬼魂,还有

the rector of the parish, the Rev. Augustus Dampier, who is a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge. After the unfortunate accident to the Duchess, none of our younger servants would stay with us, and Lady Canterville often got very little sleep at night, in consequence of the mysterious noises that came from the corridor and the library.'

'My Lord,' answered the Minister, 'I will take the furniture and the ghost at a valuation. I come from a modern country, where we have everything that money can buy; and with all our spry young fellows painting the Old World red, and carrying off your best actors and prima-donnas, I reckon that if there were such a thing as a ghost in Europe, we'd have it at home in a very short time in one of our public museums, or on the road as a show.'

'I fear that the ghost exists,' said Lord Canterville, smiling, 'though it may have resisted the overtures of your enterprising impresarios. It has been well known for three centuries, since 1584 in fact, and always makes its appearance before the death of any member of our family.'

'Well, so does the family doctor for that matter, Lord Canterville. But there is no such thing, sir, as a ghost, and I guess the laws of Nature are not going to be suspended for the British aristocracy.'

'You are certainly very natural in America,' answered Lord Canterville, who did not quite understand Mr. Otis's last observation, 'and if you

Fellow of... College = member of University institution
- spry = active - reckon = think

本教区教长尊敬的奥古斯塔斯·丹皮尔先生，他是剑桥皇家学院会员，也见过。自从公爵夫人发生了那起不幸事件以后，再没有任何一个年轻仆人愿意留下来和我们在一起。而坎特维尔勋爵夫人则经常在晚上被走廊或藏书室里发出的神秘声响弄得难以入眠。”

“我的勋爵，”公使答道，“我要把家具和幽灵估个价一起买下来。我来自一个现代化国家，那里任何东西都能用钱来买。我们那些生气勃勃的小伙子们总想来欧洲寻欢作乐，弄走你们最出色的演员和女歌唱家。所以我想，如果在欧洲真有这么一个幽灵，我们得尽快将他带回去，放在我们某家公共博物馆里，或者就在大街上作展览。”

“那幽灵恐怕的确存在，”坎特维尔勋爵微笑道，“不过他也许会拒绝你们那些雄心勃勃的演出经纪人的计划，他已经名声显赫了三个世纪，确切地说是从1584年以后。每当我们家有人要死去时，他就出现。”

“噢，就跟家庭医生似的，坎特维尔勋爵。不过幽灵之类的东西是不存在的，先生。我猜自然法则是不会为了英国贵族而被取消的。”

“你们在美国当然是依自然天性而行事，”坎特维尔勋爵没怎么听懂奥蒂斯先生的最后一句话，就答道，

don't mind a ghost in the house, it is all right. Only you must remember I **warned** you.'

A few weeks after this, the purchase was concluded, and at the close of the season the Minister and his family went down to Canterville Chase. Mrs. Otis, who, as Miss Lucretia R. Tappen, of West 53rd Street, had been a celebrated New York belle, was now a very handsome, middle-aged woman, with fine eyes, and a superb profile. Many American ladies on leaving their native land adopt an appearance of chronic **ill-health**, under the impression that it is a form of European refinement, but Mrs. Otis had never fallen into this error. She had a magnificent constitution, and a really wonderful amount of animal spirits. Indeed, in many respects, she was quite English, and was an excellent example of the fact that we have really everything in common with America nowadays, except, of course, language. Her eldest son, christened Washington by his parents in a moment of patriotism, which he never ceased to regret, was a fair-haired, rather good-looking young man, who had qualified himself for American diplomacy by leading the **German** at the Newport Casino for three successive seasons, and even in London was well known as an excellent dancer. Gardenias and the peerage were his only weaknesses. Otherwise he was extremely sensible. Miss Virginia E. Otis was a little girl of fifteen, lithe and lovely as a **fawn**, and with a fine freedom in her large blue eyes. She was

purchase = act of buying – ceased = stopped – peerage = aristocracy – lithe = graceful

“要是您不在乎屋子里有个幽灵，那么好吧。不过您需记住我曾经提醒过您。”

几周之后签了购买合同。禁猎期即将结束时，公使举家迁往坎特维尔庄园。奥蒂斯夫人原名卢克丽西娅·R. 塔彭小姐，是纽约著名的美人，住在西53大街。现在她虽人到中年，依然非常美丽，有一双媚目，面部轮廓非常精致。许多美国女士在离开故乡时都会采取一种慢性病一般的举止，认为这就是欧洲式的优雅姿态。但奥蒂斯夫人从没有出过这种错。她体格健美，朝气蓬勃。说真的，她在许多方面都更象英国人。从她身上可以看到这样一个事实，就是我们的确在每件事上都同现今的美国保持一致，当然，只除了语言。奥蒂斯夫人的长子教名是华盛顿，这个名字是其父母在一时的爱国心驱使下为他取的，他本人从始至终都对此感到遗憾。这是位长相颇为英俊的金发小伙子，他曾经连续三个季节在新港游乐场里领跳德国华尔兹舞，从而证明自己具备进入美国外交界的资格。甚至在伦敦，他也因跳舞而名声显赫，梔子花和贵族爵位是他仅有的两个盲点，其他方面都非常明智。弗吉尼亚·E. 奥蒂斯小姐是一位年方十五的少女，象小鹿一样柔美可爱，大大的蓝眼睛里流露着自由的光芒。她是一名出色的

a wonderful amazon, and had once raced old Lord Bilton on her pony twice round the park, winning by a length and a half, just in front of the Achilles statue, to the huge delight of the young Duke of Cheshire, who proposed for her on the spot, and was sent back to Eton that very night by his guardians, in floods of **tears**. After Virginia came the **twins**, who were usually called 'The Stars and Stripes,' as they were always **getting swished**.

They were delightful boys, and with the exception of the worthy Minister the only true republicans of the family.

As Canterville Chase is seven miles from Ascot, the nearest railway station, Mr. Otis had telegraphed for a **waggonette** to meet them, and they started on their drive in high spirits. It was a lovely July evening, and the air was delicate with the scent of the pinewoods. Now and then they heard a wood pigeon **brooding** over its own sweet voice, or saw, deep in the rustling **fern**, the burnished **breast** of the **pheasant**. Little **squirrels** peered at them from the **beech**-trees as they went by, and the **rabbits** scudded away through the brushwood and over the mossy knolls, with their white **tails** in the air. As they entered the avenue of Canterville Chase, however, the sky became suddenly overcast with clouds, a curious stillness seemed to hold the atmosphere, a great flight of **rooks** passed silently over their heads, and, before

proposed for her = asked her to marry him – The Stars and Stripes = the American flag – worthy = excellent – scent = perfume – mossy knolls = green low hills

女战士。有一次与比尔顿老爵士比赛马，骑着她的小马沿着公园跑了两圈，到达阿喀琉斯塑像前面时已领先了一个半马身，令年轻的柴郡公爵开心不已，立即向她求婚。当天晚上，涕泗滂沱的公爵被监护人送回了伊顿公学。弗吉尼亚之后是一对双胞胎，大家都管他们叫“星条旗”，因为他们总是吃鞭子。

这是一对讨人喜欢的男孩，除可敬的公使以外，家中真正的共和党人就只有他们俩了。

由于坎特维尔庄园离最近的阿斯科特火车站有七英里远，奥蒂斯先生事先发电报要了一辆四轮马车来接他们，于是他们兴致勃勃地上了路。这是七月间一个可爱的夜晚，空气中散发着松木的清香，他们时而听见斑尾林鸽的甜美低唱，时而在沙沙作响的蕨丛深处瞥见雉鸡闪着亮光的胸脯。小松鼠们在山毛榉树上注视着他们路过，野兔则穿越灌木丛和长满苔藓的小土丘疾奔而去，白白的小尾巴翘在空中。然而，当他们驶上通往庄园的林荫路时，天空突然乌云密布，一种奇特的寂静似乎攫住了空气，一大群秃鼻乌鸦静静地飞过他

