

大学英语阅读文丛

English Short Stories



英语短篇小说

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127

H319.4=114

B78

英语短篇小说

柏成鹏 编注

南京大学出版社

图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

英语短篇小说 / 柏成鹏编注. — 南京: 南京大学出版社, 2002. 4

(大学英语阅读文丛)

ISBN 7-305-03801-6

I. 英... II. 柏... III. 英语-语言读物, 小说
IV. H319.4: I

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2002)第 002382 号

丛 书 名 大学英语阅读文丛
书 名 英语短篇小说
编 注 者 柏成鹏
责任编辑 董 颖
出版发行 南京大学出版社
社 址 南京市汉口路 22 号 邮编 210093
电 话 025-3596923 025-3592317 传真 025-3303347
网 址 <http://press.nju.edu.cn>
电子函件 nupress1@public1.ptt.js.cn
经 销 全国各地新华书店
印 刷 常熟华顺印刷有限公司
开 本 787×960 1/32 印张 15.375 字数 357 千
版 次 2002 年 4 月第 1 版 2002 年 4 月第 1 次印刷
印 数 1-8000
ISBN 7-305-03801-6 / H·305
定 价 20.00 元

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前 言

大量阅读是提高英语水平的有效手段,而英语读物中最有趣的可能是短篇小说了。本书在篇目的选择上注意了趣味性、知识性和思想性。本书题材广泛,涵盖西方社会文化、风土人情、科学技术、价值观念、奇闻趣事等各个方面。

本书全是地地道道、原汁原味的英语,既有名家的传世之作,又有层出不穷的新人新作。在语言的难度方面,本书大部分篇目相当于大学英语四、六级水平。读者们可以从中感受世界上使用最广泛的语言之一——英语的神妙和韵致,可以扩大词汇量,增加有用的表达方式,提高英语的理解和使用能力。

编者凭借其近四十年的英语教学经验,对所选篇目作了认真的注释,对生词注上音标,对生僻的语法现象作了必要的解释,并提供了文化背景方面的知识,帮助学生扫清阅读中的障碍,轻轻松松地提高阅读能力。

阅读短篇小说需要掌握正确的方法。首先要弄清构成小说的五个基本要素:环境(setting)、人物(characters)、情节(plot)、风格(style)和主题(theme)。在这五个要素中,前面四个提供显性信息,作者正是利用这些显性信息向读者展示其真实意图,即主题。作者根据主题来安排情节,并且通过这些情节来展示一系列互为因果的关系。阅读时必须认清这些内在的逻辑关系,才能从整体上把握作者的意图。不过,

一些现代英语作家,只着力于故事情节的构筑,而把升华主题的思索留给了读者。除了理解小说要素的功能外,学生们还要了解英语国家一般的社会背景,了解各类英语文学修辞的手段,最后还要注意小说的基调,这样才能在小说中与作者全面地沟通、交流。

本书适合具有中级英语水平的读者使用,是备战大学英语四六级考试、研究生入学考试和 TOFEL 等外语考试的理想读物,也可作为广大英语爱好者的休闲读物。

本书编写过程中,南京大学出版社编审钱厚生先生建议和策划了本书的编注工作,并提供了具体指导。在此谨向钱先生表示深切的谢意。

柏成鹏

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How My Love Was Sawed in Half

Robert Fontaine

When I was fourteen, I ran away from home.

My mother and father thought I had gone to summer camp. I started for camp, but I got off the train because I saw a carnival^①. I meant to stay only until the next train came. Then I remembered the advice of my Uncle Louis: "If you do not see all of this world you will not be ready for the next."

I walked about the carnival as if in a dream. I smelled the popcorn and candied apples, I listened to the music, the shouting of the carnival people and I tasted sugar candy.

The next train came and another one after that. But I was still in my dream. I was in love with the carnival. Here at last was the place for me. Life here was fun.

I tried to find a job. But I just didn't look like a carnival person. Huge men with sweating faces smiled at me as they said no. Big women in colorful dresses gently patted my head as they said no. I was beginning to feel sad, but then I came to Ramia, the fortune teller.

"Let me see your hands," she said. She looked at them for a long time. "You will be disappointed in love," she said. And then, after a moment, she added, "But then, who isn't, eh?"

"Were you?" I asked.

"Always. First Hypo, the Hypnotist^②. Then

Greco, the strong man, even Haha, the laughter who runs the House of Mirrors.”

“I’m sorry,” I said. “About you I mean.”

She then felt the bumps^③ on my head. “The bumps are good,” she said. “The bump of progress is well developed, and this one here, the intelligence bump, is a good size. Perhaps I can help you. I have many friends at the carnival. Come back at dark. You can sleep in the wagon. You must wash dishes though, and stay on your own side of the room.” I left her with excitement. I walked everywhere and saw all of the carnival. At last I came to Hypo, the Hypnotist. He was a huge man, all painted white with two red spots on his cheeks.

I watched him as he sawed a girl in half.

She lay in the long box, her head out of one end, her legs out of the other end. She was smiling and looked so beautiful and brave. Her hair was golden and she had blue eyes. She did not seem troubled at all when the saw cut through her. And then, a miracle! In a few minutes she was put back together. What lovely magic!

“A trick,” a man said. “It’s done with mirrors.” A fat woman next to him agreed.

I listened, and I wondered. Some things might be tricks. But with my own eyes I had seen the saw go through the beautiful Belle-Linda^④ and I had seen her face turn white. Perhaps this man and woman did not have the same bumps on their heads as I had.

I went back to Ramia, the fortune teller. “You can stay with me,” she said. “There is enough to eat. People will talk but let them.”

I stayed and helped Ramia. I went into the middle

of the crowds and made friends. I told them how Ramia could see into the future and how she had told me about my past life. Her business grew.

After a few weeks I decided I was madly in love with Belle-Linda. I told Ramia and she laughed. "In a way," she said, "I feel sorry, but perhaps you will learn a lesson. You love the impossible, but so does every man. You love a girl with golden hair and blue eyes, and yet with the other side of your heart you love a dark, brown-eyed girl."

"I love Belle-Linda," I said proudly, "and no one else, except perhaps my mother and you."

Ramia put her arms around me. "You are a nice boy. Love whom you please while you have time."

The summer passed quickly and the time came for me to leave. The boys would be leaving summer camp, and I had to get home.

"I have loved you," I said to the girl with golden hair, "ever since the first time I saw you."

"You are a sweet boy," she said, and kissed me. She turned and was gone. In a moment the dark girl came to me. She laughed like a bell and said, "I am Linda." She kissed me—a warm and loving kiss—and then said "You are a sweet boy," and then she disappeared. I was alone again looking at myself in a hundred mirrors.

At last I found a way out. I felt alive and happy to be in the open air. I raced to Ramia and told her what had happened: "The girl, the one Hypo saws in half, kissed me. But another girl, a dark one, very different, also kissed me."

When I had calmed down, Ramia spoke. "I told you there always will be two women, very different.

The one whose face you know so well and the other who is just the opposite and you do not know at all.”
“But is she of one woman?” I asked.

“Now she is; then again, she is two. But we must get you ready for the train. I hope your summer was exciting. Not many boys have this sort of a summer camp.”

I put my arms around her. “It has been exciting,” I said. “and I’m in love. I am growing up quickly, too.”

When I got home everything was the same.

“You did not get very much sun,” my mother said.

Later, my wine-loving Uncle Louis said to me, “You have been up to something.^⑤ You must tell me sometime.” I told him. “Ah,” he said. “Well, there are two girls, you see. One is the head and she puts her legs under her to fit in the box. The other girl is the feet and she bends her body down to fit in the other part of the box. Only her legs show. The saw goes between the two girls. Understand? It is all a trick.”

I smiled to make him feel that I believed him. But he did not really understand at all. How could he? He was not in love.

Notes:

- ① carnival /ˈkɑːnɪvəl/: 狂欢节
- ② hypnotist /ˈhɪpnəˌtɪst/: 施行催眠术的人
- ③ bump /bʌmp/: 头盖骨上隆起部分(脑相家认为是才能的象征)
- ④ belle /bel/: 美女。Belle-Linda 是艺名。
- ⑤ You have...something: 你一直有心事。

The Lost Phoebe

Theodore Dreiser^①

Old Henry Reifsneider and his wife Phoebe^② loved one another the way people do who have lived together a long, long time. They were simple farm people. Their world was the fruit trees, the cornfield and the backyard with its pigs and chickens. The rest of the world was far away—like stars in the sky.^③

Sometimes Henry worried about death. During his worries he would raise his old voice and say, "Phoebe, where is my corn pipe? You are always taking things that belong to me."

"Now you hush, Henry," his wife would say. "If you keep talking like that, I will go away. And then what would you do? There is nobody to look after you. Your corn pipe is on the table where you put it."

Old Henry knew his wife would never leave him. The only leaving he feared was death. He often wondered how he could live without Phoebe. In the evening when he went to the door to see that they were safely shut in, it warmed his heart to know Phoebe was there with him. When Henry moved during the night, she always spoke to him.

"Now, Henry, be quiet! You are as jumpy as a chicken."

"Well, I cannot sleep, Phoebe."

"If you stop rolling around so much, you will sleep. Then I can get some rest, too."

Knowing she was there beside him in the dark

made Henry quiet again.

When she wanted a pail of water, Henry liked to say, "Do this ... do that ... always asking me to do something. Women are never satisfied." Phoebe would smile; she could see the inner happiness shining in his eyes. Henry talked sharply, but he never forgot to get water and wood for the fire. In this way, they lived happily in their simple world.

One day in the early spring Phoebe became sick and died. Old Henry—in a fog of sorrow and pain—watched them put her body in the earth. Neighbors asked Henry to come and live with them, but he would not leave. He wanted to be near the place where his Phoebe lay in the earth. He tried to work around the farm, but it was difficult to return to an empty house at night.

At night he read the newspaper. But most of the time he just sat—looking at the floor—wondering where Phoebe was and how soon he would die.

For five months he lived like this. Then there was a change. It happened one night after he had gone to bed. There was a bright moon in the sky; its silver light fell on the old chairs and table in the bedroom. The moonlight on the chair and the half-open door made a shadow. The shadow looked like Phoebe. She was sitting by the table the way she had done so many times before.

"Phoebe," he called in a weak voice, "have you come back?"

The shadow in the chair did not move. Henry got up and slowly walked toward it. When he came near the table, he saw that there was nothing on the chair but his old coat.

Another night, he seemed to see her again. He felt a soft wind blow in the room. When the wind blew away, the shadow of Phoebe went away too.

A third night, when he was sleeping, she came to the bed and put her hand on his head. "Poor Henry," she said gently, "I am sorry you are alone."

He awoke and was sure he saw her leave the room. Phoebe had come back. Night after night he waited. Then one morning he awoke with a surprising new thought. Perhaps she was not dead. Phoebe had just gone away. They had argued about the corn pipe and she had left the house. Yes—that was it.^④ She was always making jokes about leaving him; this time she really had gone.

That morning he started to walk to the nearest neighbors. "Why, hello, Henry," said farmer Dodge, who was taking grain to market. "Where are you going this morning?"

"Have you seen Phoebe?" asked Henry.

"Phoebe who?"^⑤ Farmer Dodge knew Henry's Phoebe was dead.

"My Phoebe," Henry said sharply. "Who do you think I mean?"

"You must be joking," said farmer Dodge. "You cannot be talking about your Phoebe. She is dead."

"Dead? Not my Phoebe! She left me this morning while I was sleeping. We argued about my corn pipe last night and that is why she left. But I can find her. She went over to Matilda Race's farm—yes—that is where she is."

Henry started to walk fast down the road.

"The poor old man is sick in his mind,^⑥" Dodge said to himself. "He has been living alone too long."

Henry met no one until he reached Matilda's farm. His Phoebe and Matilda Race had been good friends. Phoebe must be here. He opened the gate and walked to the house.

Matilda opened the door. "Why, Henry Reifsneider, what a surprise!"

"Is Phoebe here?" Henry asked.

"Phoebe? Which Phoebe?"

"Why, my Phoebe, of course." Henry smiled a little. "You do not have to keep it a secret. She is here—isn't she?" He looked inside the house.

"Well!" Matilda Race said. "You poor old man. So you have a sick mind now. Come and sit down while I get you some coffee and food. I will take you to Phoebe. I know where she is."

While Matilda worked in the kitchen, she talked to Henry. But he was not listening. He was thinking about Phoebe. He decided^⑦ she was not there. He must hurry to the next farm and get her.

"I will go now," he said, getting up. "I think she went over to the Murray farm." Then he was out on the road again.

It was like this for many weeks. Every night he returned to his house to see if Phoebe had come back. Soon everyone in the area knew old Henry and answered his questions. "I have not seen her," they would say—or—"No, Henry, she has not been here today."

For several years Henry walked in the sun and rain, looking for Phoebe. His white hair grew longer and longer. His black hat was the brown color of the earth and his clothes were dusty and torn.

It was in the seventh year of looking when Henry