

烫衣先生

The Ironing Man

Colin Campbell

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Colin Campbell 著

胡秀梅 译

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烫衣先生

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外研社·剑桥英语分级读物

亲爱的老师们、同学们,由外语教学与研究出版社和英国剑桥大学出版社联合出版的这套《外研社·剑桥英语分级读物》终于与国内读者见面了。它集原创性、针对性、时代性和多样性于一体,是一套理想的英语学习读物。

本套读物是我国目前引进的第一套专为非英语国家读者撰写的英语故事性读物,作者全部是经验丰富的英语教学专家。读物依据难易程度共分六级,每级四本,每本独立成篇。题材涉及广泛,包括喜剧、历险记、侦探小说、浪漫爱情故事和短篇故事等。内容涉及东西方多种地域和文化,情节扣人心弦,极富吸引力。读者在提高自身英语水平的同时,还会享受到阅读的巨大乐趣。

本套读物分为英汉对照版和英文注释版两种版本,以适应不同读者的不同需要。其中,英文注释版附有练习,为不同程度的英语学习者在阅读中提供了及时而必要的帮助。

如果你们喜欢这套读物,请把它推荐给你们的朋友。如果你们对这套读物有什么意见和建议,也请告诉我们。

在此,我们谨向那些为这套读物的出版给予帮助和关切的老师们表示衷心的感谢!

Characters

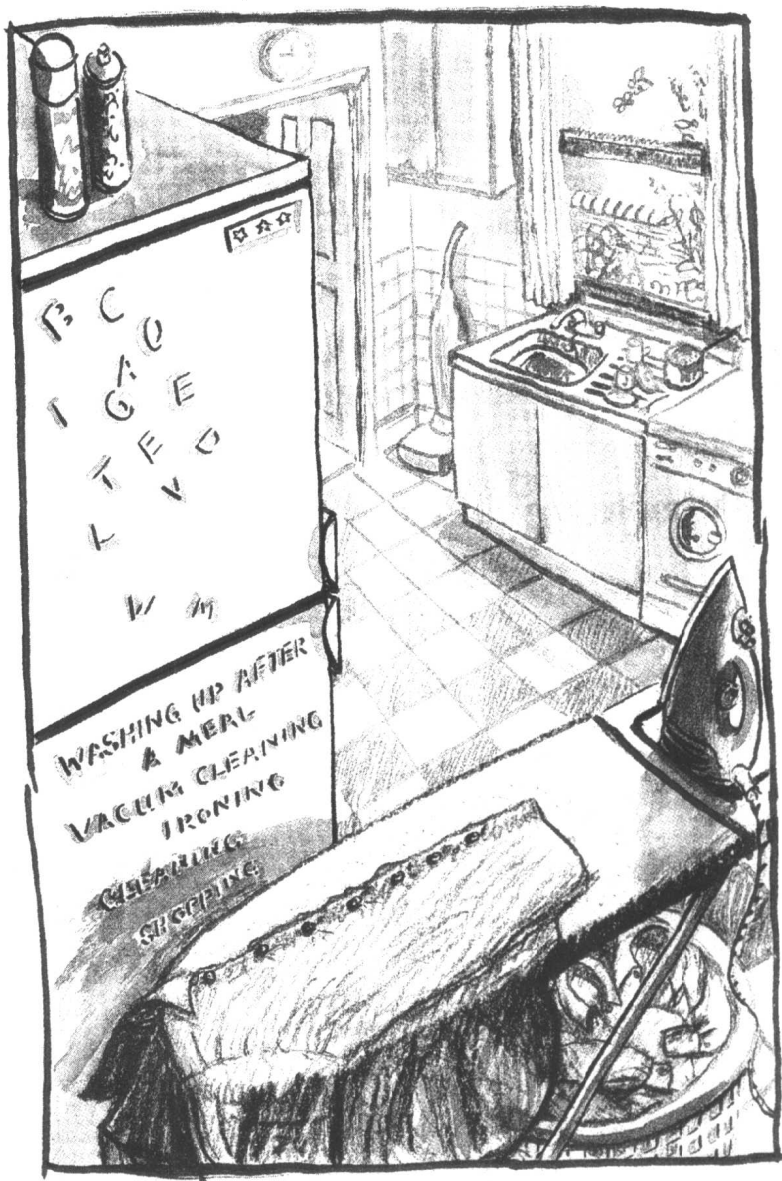
Tom: works in London and lives in a small village outside London

Marina: Tom's wife

Tracy: a beauty consultant and masseuse

Phil: a detective

The Ironing Man



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Chapter 1 *The fridge door*

Marina looked at the fridge for a moment and then read out the list of words written on the fridge door:

washing up after a meal

vacum cleaning

ironing

cleaning

shopping

This was her 'top five'. It was a bit like the 'top ten' on the radio. You know, the best selling records of the week. The only difference was that her 'top five' was actually her 'bottom five'. Let me explain. The thing that was top of her list was actually the thing she hated doing the most.

Sometimes it was very difficult to decide which *one* of the five she really hated the most. Then she might put two things in first place. Or three things. Sometimes she really wanted to put them all in first place. She hated all of them. She hated all kinds of housework. Full stop.

There were just two reasons why she did not put

vacum n. 吸尘器 (此处是作者故意拼错的应为 vacuum)
top five 前五名
in first place 第一位; full stop 句号

NOTES

everything in first place. Reason one: the fridge door was not wide enough. Reason two: changing the 'top five' was one of the only things that she enjoyed doing in the kitchen. It gave her the time to make a cup of coffee and drink it slowly, and it gave her time to think. Sometimes she played a game with herself and moved the letters around to make other words, words describing more interesting activities, like:

move out of the village

go back to London

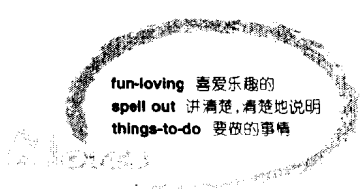
find a job and meet fun-loving people

The idea of the game was to use all the letters on the fridge to make new words. Once she used nearly all of them but then found that the letters she had left spelt out the words:

leave Tom

She put the letters back as they had been. She hated housework but she loved Tom. She did not want to leave him.

Tom and Marina had been married now for almost three years. The first two and a half years in London. Wonderful London. Fun London. Things-to-do and people-to-meet



fun-loving 喜爱乐趣的
spell out 讲清楚, 清楚地说明
things-to-do 要做的事情

London. TOO-FAR-AWAY-LONDON!! They now lived in a small village called Felton, near Cambridge. They had lived here, in the middle of nowhere land, for ninety-two days and (looking at the clock) four hours, thirty-eight minutes.

She looked again at the fridge door. The letters had little magnets on the back so that when you put them on anything metal they stayed there. Marina thought about what other people did with them. Leave little messages for their husbands and wives, like: 'Dear Bill, your dinner is in the cooker, I am in the West Indies' or 'The cat ran away from home. I have decided to join him.' When Tom had seen the list of words Marina had put on the fridge door he smiled and said:

'So this is your "things to do" list. Good idea.'

And then he added:

'There are two "u"s in "vacuum".'

When she explained to Tom about her 'top five' he thought for a moment. Then he looked sad and put his arm around her.

'Oh, you poor thing. I'm sorry. I know it's difficult for you to get used to living here, but you are not too unhappy, are you? Give it a little time. Maybe you could find something to do. Get a job in the village. Have coffee mornings for the other women. Start playing golf.'

in the middle of nowhere 在偏僻的地方

magnet *n.* 磁体, 磁铁

the West Indies 西印度群岛

look sad 看起来忧伤

get used to living 习惯了生活

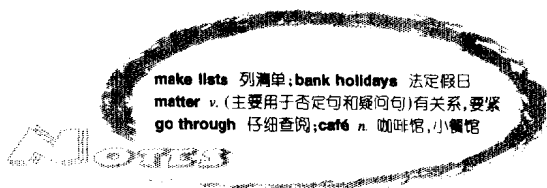
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Tom was making another list for her and she soon stopped listening. He enjoyed making lists. Things to do at work. Things to do at home. Things to read. He even made lists of other lists he would like to make when he had more time.

When they could not decide how to spend their bank holidays he would make a list of things they could do. Sometimes he spent the day just making a list of what they could do. By the time he had finished it was too late to go anywhere or do anything. This did not really matter as it always seemed to rain on bank holidays anyway. He made lists of places they could visit. He made lists of restaurants they could stop at on the way to those places. He made lists of things they could eat at those restaurants. Lists of friends they could invite to their house for dinner. This last list was very short. They had no friends in the village. There was no-one of their age in the village. Everyone was older. Even the grandchildren of the people who lived in the village were probably older than they were.

Tom went through his list of things she could do in the village. Marina did not speak. He talked, she listened. He made lists, she listened. But she did think about what he was saying and the lists he made.

- Find a job in the village? There was one shop in the village. There was also a café that opened in the summer.



Mrs Pringle-Smythe was the manager of both of these places and she didn't seem to need anyone else. Not many people lived in the village and not many people passed through the village and no tourists came to the village. Well, tourists came to the village if they had lost their way. So the shop and the café were not very busy, and there was nowhere else in the village to work.

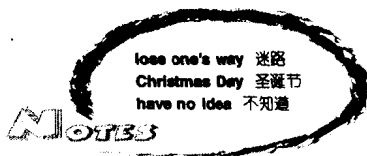
Coffee mornings? The women in the village probably enjoyed coffee mornings. The women she had met always enjoyed talking about the weather. They got very excited talking about the weather. They often compared the weather now with the weather when they were young, many, many years ago. For example, the women would say:

'Oh, it's not like it used to be. When we were young it was always hot in summer – long, hot, summer days. Do you remember, Susan, how hot it used to be?'

'Of course I do, Sally. And the winters were lovely too, short, cold days. And there was always snow on Christmas Day. But now, well, you never know what the weather's going to be like, do you? It's the end of the world.'

Or the women got sad, and sometimes almost angry as they talked about how the village had changed (and all the changes were bad changes!).

Marina had no idea what they were talking about. Nothing had changed in the village since Tom and Marina had come to live here. Well, that was not quite true. There



was a new sign for the National Lottery outside the village shop now. The women were probably thinking about that! Nothing else had changed since Queen Victoria had passed through the village as a young child almost two hundred years ago. (Her driver was new and they had got very lost.)

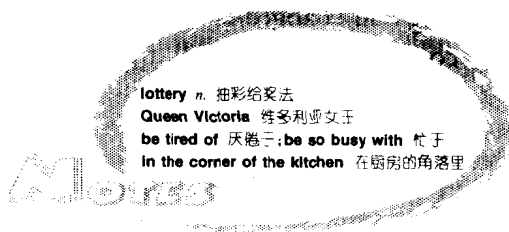
Start playing golf? For Marina, if there was one thing she did not understand about men, and actually there were many things she did not understand about men, it was why they got so excited running after balls. Little balls, big balls, round balls, not quite round balls, soft balls, hard balls. And when they were tired of running after balls or too old to run, they *walked* slowly after balls. Balls!

She looked again at the fridge door. Poor Tom. He was so busy with his new job that he did not see how bored she was becoming, how unhappy she was.

She put 'ironing' at the top of the list on the fridge. Then she walked over to the ironing board, which stood in the corner of the kitchen. She picked up a shirt and looked at it. She could not remember if she had already ironed this one. She probably had ironed it but it still looked as if someone had been playing football with it.

Balls, she thought, and smiled to herself. She looked at the shirt again.

She remembered once ironing a shirt. First she ironed one side, then she turned it over and ironed the other side.



But when she turned the shirt over again it still looked as if it needed ironing. She probably spent half an hour ironing the same shirt before she realised what she was doing. Now that was her idea of a bad time.

Marina stopped smiling as she remembered this. She looked at the small mountain of clothes on the floor waiting to be ironed. Actually it was not a *small* mountain at all. It was small in the same way that Mount Everest is small. How could two people have so many clothes? And why did they always need ironing? And why, oh why, could she not find someone else to do this boring ironing for her? And who ... and who was that at the door?



Mount Everest 即 Mount Qomolangma
珠穆朗玛峰的旧称

Notes



Give the best answer to each question:

1. True or false?

- a Marina was unhappy living in Felton.
- b Tom is very organised.
- c Tom and Marina have got a few friends in Felton.
- d Marina would like to have an interesting job.
- e At the moment Marina hates ironing most of all.

2. Who do you think is at the door? What do they want?

Chapter 2 *The Ironing Man*

When the door bell rang Marina did three things. Firstly, she did nothing because no-one ever rang the door bell. No-one came to visit, no-one came at all, so she did not believe it was ringing. Secondly, she put the iron down on top of the shirt she was ironing and looked up. Thirdly, she walked to the door. She walked slowly, carefully and quietly.

She looked through the small hole in the middle of the door. There was someone there. Someone was standing outside her front door. She could not see if it was a man or a woman because the hole was in the middle of the door. She could not see a face but there was definitely someone there. She looked again through the hole and then jumped as the bell rang again.

She tried to remember what to do when this happened. When they had lived in London she had just opened the door and not really thought too much about it. But in London people very often rang the door bell. Here in the village it almost never happened. People did not visit each other, people did not go from house to house selling things. Who could it be? Maybe it was a wrong number. No, wrong numbers were just on the telephone, weren't they?

The door bell rang again. It rang the same way, not more

NOTES

definitely adv. 明确地, 干脆地

impatient than the last time, not more impatient than the first time. She thought of the film on television she had watched the night before. It was a horror film about dead people who come back to life in a small village:

A young woman is alone in the old dark house on a night when the rain comes down like a river and the wind shakes the trees and the windows. The lights suddenly go out and there is a loud knock at the door, and then another knock, and another, heavier than before. The young woman goes to the door and asks 'Who's there?' in a shaking voice but before the words have left her mouth the door opens and the ...

But this was not a film and it wasn't raining and anyway Marina did not really believe in the 'living dead'. Not in the middle of the day, anyway, when it was light outside. The door bell rang again and this time Marina opened the door.

He was quite tall, good-looking (very good-looking) and he was wearing jeans and a white T-shirt. And he had a smile that you only see at the cinema or on television.

'Hello.'

'Hello.'

'I've come to do the ironing for you,' he said.

impatient *adj.* 不耐烦的, 急躁的
horror film 恐怖电影
come back to life 苏醒
go out 熄灭; **believe in** 相信
living dead 活死人, 鬼; **jeans** 牛仔裤

NOTES